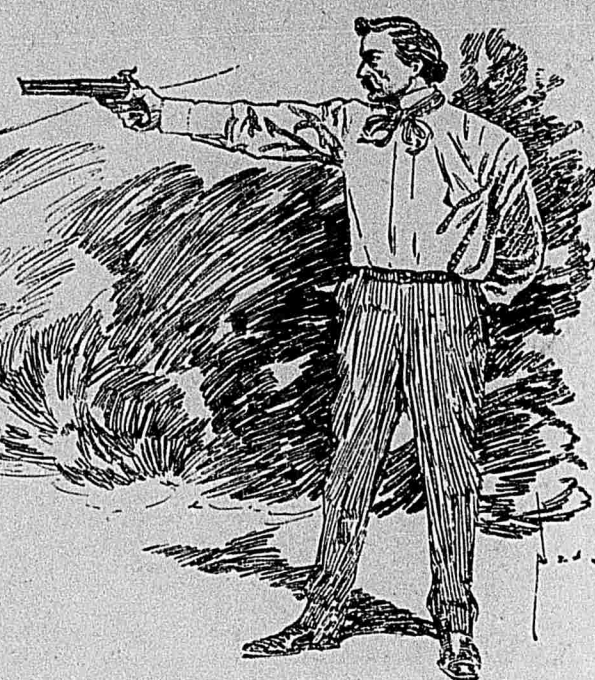




The DAY of THE DUEL

THE MISTRESS OF FATE



(Copyright, 1909, by the New York Herald Co. All Rights Reserved.)

THE tradition and practice which led men to submit their differences to personal combat on the field of honor, so called, have had their supporters and their opponents since the days of Philip the Bel, who first made duelling an institution in 1308. Some have held that where certain injuries for which legal redress is not provided are admitted as justifying the conduct of man to man is more surely contrived with a nice regard to individual rights. Others have believed, on the contrary, that duelling gives the brave and professional fighter a free swing for his brutality and immunity for his insults. The graver wrong which legislators the world over have seen in such contests is the offence against society involved in private and deadly adjustment of disputes.

In America the settlement of affairs of honor in former duels began with the Revolution and for a hundred years the code duello exercised a sinister influence upon national life. The first half of the last century saw duelling at its height, particularly in the South, and after the gold rush, in California. Up to 1850 few of the States had passed stringent measures against it, though at no time was it approved by the weight of public sentiment. At present every State and Territory has rigid provisions suppressing duels and since the early '80's there have been few such encounters.

The history of the famous American duels has been gathered from authentic and accurate sources. Subjoined is the story of the fatal meeting between Representative Cilley, of Maine, and Representative Graves, of Kentucky. The touch of romance is not based upon the records, though the characters and the description of the duel itself are drawn from existing documents.

POLITICAL thunderings found but a slight echo in the little Maine town where the young man and the young woman played the age-old game. Within the horizon of their lives was scarce a shadow, though the kin of both moved where clouds gathered most darkly. They were content if their idyl might find its quiet growth from day to day where love and happiness nourished it.

"I find your uncle has been grumbling again at the pricks of my cousin's pen," said Charles Davis one afternoon. The handsome lawyer sat upon a lower step, where he could look up at her in a manner dictated for summer courtship. Margaret Bell's dark eyes played upon his as she answered.

"By altering that figure somewhat you would make it more truthful," she said. "Your cousin reminds me of nothing so much as a tiny dancing insect—with a sting, perhaps, but merely a thing to be waved aside."

"Come, now, that's a little hard on a man of the importance of James Watson Webb. He's a pretty big figure in New York. Quite overtops your uncle, I assure you. I doubt if there are really twenty persons in the metropolis who could tell offhand whether Jonathan Cilley is Representative from Maine or from Florida, but every one knows the editor of the *Courier and Enquirer*."

"Another proof of your provincialism down there," retorted the girl. "There's no one in New England so wholly lacking in true perspective. Uncle is a national figure. We expect to see him Senator soon, and then—who knows? He is a big man. But that fussy, annoying editor who tries to manufacture an importance by rapping every one over the knuckles—you just needn't ask him to the wedding," she flashed out.

He thought her adorable in her simulation of anger against his cousin, and, as always in discussions between them, yielded the opposition he was supposed to hold for sweet compensation.

Approaching an Issue.

"From what I hear these two quarrelsome relatives of ours seem bent on bringing their affair to an issue," he said more seriously a moment later. "At least your uncle has given intimation that he will answer Webb in Congress. It will stir things up if he does."

"It all started through those insulting criticisms of Congressmen he printed and indorsed in his paper," she interposed quickly.

"I admit it freely," answered Davis. "My cousin said some very biting things, and the unfortunate part of it is that he gave them a bitter personal tinge. I have no sympathy with what he said. How do your people regard it?"

"They think it shameful," she said decidedly. He nodded.

"They would, of course. I never saw a family with such a pronounced clan feeling as your own. It's admirable, I suppose," he added hastily, "but somehow it seems a little out of date. Each one of them seems to think that his or her own honor is personally attained by anything reflecting in the slightest upon a relative."

"If you find us so very savage, sir," she began severely, but her mood changed on the second and she sprang to the walk.

"Come, I can see no excuse in this tiresome business for missing a glorious day, and your vacation ending this week. Betty can beat that pony of yours to the lake. I'll show you the difference between a thoroughbred and a cold blood."

Matthias Bell watched the two with a frown as they tore past in a cloud of dust down the road a few minutes later. He turned from the window to his wife, who sat at her sewing within.

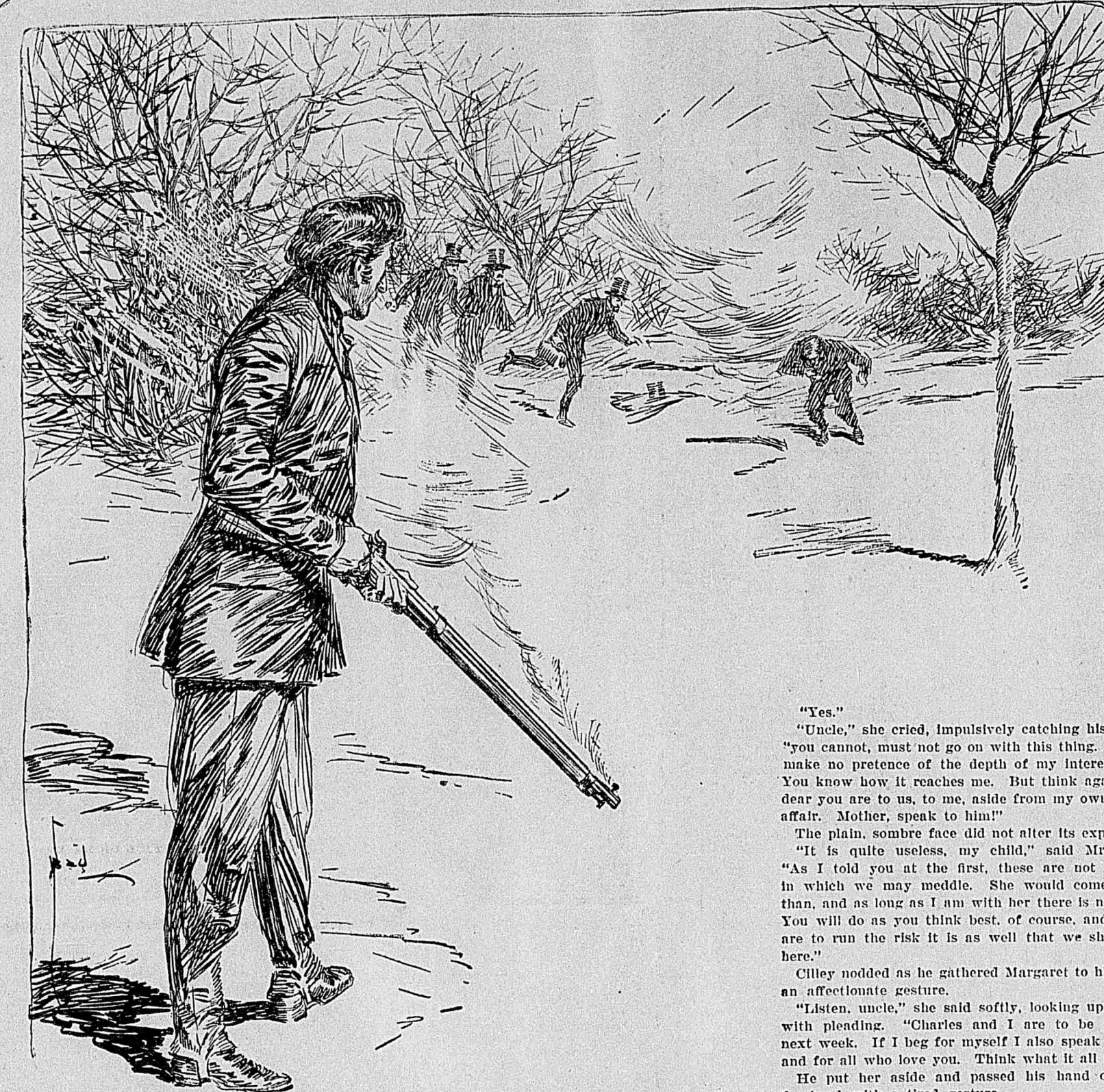
"When is Margaret to be married?" he asked abruptly.

"Some time early in March," answered the plain, sombre faced little woman.

"Have you heard from your brother by to-day's mail?"

"Yes; he says he is working on his answer to Webb."

"I wish this engagement had not been made so hurriedly," said Bell, pacing uneasily up and down the apartment. "People are talking already. The



AS THE SMOKE LIFTED CILLEY WAS SEEN TO STAGGER.

family name has been very closely touched by this scribbler's infamous statements, and here is Margaret affianced to the scandal monger's own cousin. I don't like it."

"Charles isn't really his cousin," suggested Mrs. Bell, timidly, looking up from her work.

"That makes no difference," was the curt answer. "He is of the tribe and he lives with Webb in New York. However," he added after a pause, "they are wrapped up in each other and I suppose it must go on."

The House was in session. One of the gentlemen from Alabama held the floor with a fulsome speech in favor of a local waterway project to which no one listened save the clerks. There was a light attendance and the Speaker rapped repeatedly to check the buzz of conversation that arose from various parts of the room. Out in the corridor members were grouped and talking with less restraint. The one topic of conversation was the arrival in Washington of Colonel Webb, of the New York *Courier and Enquirer*, following the dignified but vigorous speech directed against him by Representative Cilley, of Maine, upon the floor of the House eight days before.

The original cause of the affair was now many months old. A series of anonymous articles had appeared in Webb's paper signed "A Spy in Washington" and violently attacking certain Representatives for alleged corruption. Through the thin veil thrown about the identity of those attacked the name of Cilley had been plainly discernible. Colonel Webb had supported the articles in editorial comment. The middle aged Representative from Maine had consulted his leisure in replying, but when he had finally spoken it had been to some purpose. Webb's presence in the capital was expected to open a new phase of the matter.

Graves' Grim Mission.

Through the chatting throng moved the soldierly figure of William C. Graves, member of Congress from Kentucky. He stopped for no salutations, but bore on past the doorkeeper and into the House. Noting the position of Cilley, who was occupied with correspondence at his desk, he made his way to that side of the chamber and halted with stiff and ceremonious pose in the aisle. Cilley looked up.

The men had but slight acquaintance. Cilley greeted the member from Kentucky courteously. Graves bowed formally. He held a small, square sheet of paper in his hand.

"I am the authorized bearer of a communication to you from Colonel James Watson Webb," he announced.

Cilley's glance narrowed.

"With full respect to you, Mr. Graves," he said, "I can have no dealings at this time with Colonel Webb."

"I am under the necessity of informing you, sir, that this is a matter closely involving your honor," said Graves with precise utterance.

"I must still refuse to receive it," was the quiet reply.

"If you persist I can only view your action as a personal slur upon me as the representative of Colonel Webb," said Graves.

"Is it—Is it part of the same quarrel?"

"Yes," said Cilley, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

Webb," said Graves. "I demand a reason for your refusal which will fully exonerate me from all responsibility growing out of the affair."

"I reiterate my statement, Mr. Graves, that I hold you in highest respect and intend no slight upon you personally. Neither do I mean to intimate to you anything that might reflect upon the gentleman you come from. But I am sitting here this moment as a servant of the people of Maine, and I must again refuse to accept the message you bear. I cannot give other reason for my refusal without retracting remarks which I made in my official capacity."

Graves bowed again.

"A friend of mine will wait upon you this evening, Mr. Cilley," he said, and took his departure as solemnly and stiffly as he had come.

Discussing the Challenge.

It was an open secret next day about the capital among those who knew things that Graves, of Kentucky, had challenged Cilley, of Maine, under the procedure of the code duello, and that the challenge had been accepted. The conversation in the chamber had been overheard and the matter had been followed.

Representative George W. Jones, of Tennessee, had consented to act as second for Mr. Cilley, and Henry A. Wise, member of Congress from Virginia, for Mr. Graves. The story of Cilley's refusal to accept the cartel from Webb was also known, and there was a division of opinion in regard to his action. The majority inclined to the belief that he had conducted himself in a proper manner and that Graves had been a shade too punctilious in regarding his honor as impugned. It was widely recognized, however, that under the gods there was now no opportunity for withdrawal by either party.

Mr. Cilley, as the challenged, had the choice of weapons, and through his second announced that he would fight with rifles. The arrangements fixed the place of meeting as a field a short distance from Washington on the road to Marlborough and over the Maryland border. The time set was two days off.

On the evening before the duel a carriage drove up to the house occupied by Cilley and a young woman hurried to the door. She was followed more slowly by an older woman. Margaret Bell burst in upon her uncle as he sat in his study. Completely surprised by the visit, he extended a warm greeting to her and to her mother, who had accompanied her. The young woman was pale and excited.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, my dears," he said. "Is Matthias with you?"

"No, uncle," answered the girl, taking the command of the situation from her mother. "We were in New York, and when I heard that Colonel Webb had started here I could not stay. Is it true, uncle, that you are to fight?"

"It is true," said Cilley gravely, "but not with Colonel Webb."

There was a flash of momentary relief in the girl's eyes, though she tried to suppress it. He noted the change but returned not a flicker of resentment. She studied his face and read instinctively that the words did not hold the hope she had thought for.

"Is it—Is it part of the same quarrel?"

"Yes," said Cilley, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Yes."

"Uncle," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

"Yes," she cried, impulsively catching his sleeve. "You cannot, must not go on with this thing. I will make no pretence of the depth of my interest in it. You know how it reaches me. But think again how dear you are to us, to me, aside from my own selfish affair. Mother, speak to him!"

The plain, sombre face did not alter its expression. "It is quite useless, my child," said Mrs. Bell. "As I told you at the first, these are not matters in which we may meddle. She would come, Jonathan, and as long as I am with her there is no harm. You will do as you think best, of course, and if you are to run the risk it is as well that we should be here."

Cilley nodded as he gathered Margaret to him with an affectionate gesture.

"Listen, uncle," she said softly, looking up at him with pleading. "Charles and I are to be married next week. If I beg for myself I also speak for you and for all who love you. Think what it all means."

He put her aside and passed his hand over his forehead with a tired gesture.

All formalities having been gone through with, the others stood aside and Cilley and Graves were left face to face, with rifles at elbow rest and muzzles lowered toward the ground. At the word of command both swung quickly into position.

Cilley, an expert with his weapon, drew his trigger first. He remained with the rifle at his shoulder until Graves had fired, about two seconds later. Each lowered his arm and looked across at the other. Both had missed.

Representative Jones interposed with the suggestion that the honor and courage of the gentlemen concerned had been fully satisfied and established. He pointed out, with words of praise for both sides, that Cilley and Graves were not personal enemies nor was their dispute of a kind that must be fought to the end, as in the case of implacable foes. Cilley received this speech in dignified manner.

"I have ever entertained for Mr. Graves the highest respect and most kindly feelings," he said.

But Graves and his second, Wise, took an opposite opinion. They declined to meet the view taken by Jones. In this they were entirely within the prescriptions of the code duello, as strictly interpreted, a fact which Jones readily admitted. The weapons having been reloaded the principals resumed their respective stations.

Missed Again.

Again the word was given and again Cilley's shot preceded that of his opponent by a breath. Startling across at each other through the smoke they could see that the bullets had gone wide once more. Graves flinched in ill humor, while Cilley showed a trace of uneasiness. His nerve was sound and he was not used to missing his mark. Jones stepped forward with another suggestion that differences could now be adjusted. But Graves persisted and demanded another exchange. Cilley assented and for the third time there was the interval of silence, the sharp word and the two reports.

As the smoke lifted Cilley was seen to stagger. He dropped his rifle, lifted his hand to his breast and beckoned to Jones.

"I am shot!" he gasped.

Pressing both hands to his wound in agony, he fell before aid could reach him. For three minutes his surgeon and second worked over him. Graves meanwhile remained in his place, but finally walked forward and expressed vaguely a desire to be of some assistance.

"My friend is dead, sir," was the quiet reply of Jones.

The duel caused a furor of excitement in Washington and there was considerable feeling against both Webb and Graves. The affair took place on February 24. Two days later Mr. Cilley's death was announced in both houses of Congress. Senator Williams, of Maine, in addressing the Senate on that occasion rehearsed the quarrel from its inception. He recalled that Graves demanded an explanation of Cilley's refusal to accept Webb's cartel "on grounds which would exonerate Mr. Graves from all responsibility growing out of the affair." This, he pointed out, Cilley could not do without an admission that he had slandered Webb. In conclusion Senator Williams declared that "he accepted the call because the act was indispensable to avoid disgrace to himself, his family and his constituents."

The part of Graves in the matter was regarded as reprehensible by many. Having made the grievance of another his own he had pressed it with venom, and that against a fellow Representative whose alleged offence had been to defend that body from an anonymous attack. A committee of seven members of the House was appointed to investigate the duel and its causes. This they did fully, making a comprehensive report.

They found that Graves had violated the privileges of the House in challenging a member within its precincts, and recommended that he be dismissed therefrom; that Wise had insisted that the fight go on while having no full knowledge of the circumstances; and that he should be visited by the censure of the House; that Jones be censured for acting as second. As to Colonel Webb, while entertaining no doubt that he had been guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House, the committee reported that "the House will consult its own dignity and the public interest by bestowing upon him no further notice."

Word of the fatal event was brought to Margaret Bell, her mother and her father, who had joined them, within a few hours after its occurrence. The girl knew whom her father regarded as the real cause of his brother-in-law's death, and she knew that there would be no appeal from the stern order he issued to her when the news came. She did not rebel against the stroke to the heart as she was, for Matthias Bell was not the sole custodian of the family honor, and the blow, as Jonathan Cilley was in her, though not to her father. When Charles Davis a week later sought them out and made a desperate attempt to see her he was her own hand, that wrote the refusal to his frantic note.

Some months later one of the four Representatives who had been unattached witnesses to the duel called another side and asked him to walk to his room. There behind locked doors he brought out a rifle.

"This belonged to poor Cilley," he said. "Do you remember when he cast it aside?"

"Yes," answered the second Representative.

"Did you notice how it fell?"

"Now that you speak of it I remember seeing it drop from his hand, the butt striking the ground."

"And the ground was soft?"

"Yes."