

ed, it happens in this case by the party who fell—always prescribed, in a duel proper, by *gentlemen*.—Now, sir, by the latter mode was Cilley murdered—fairly, honorably. Who here can gainsay it? None—no, not one of his own friends, who were the guardians of his life, will say he fell foully. He died *on the field of honor*; and here I say, in the face of Heaven, before the throne of the Almighty—in His dread presence who sits thereon—that I can go, with the falsest or most faithful friends he left on earth, and touch the bleeding wounds of Cilley with as clear a conscience as any of them, the basest or the best! I did my awful duty to my friend, [Mr. Graves,] and thank a gracious Providence he lives, and my conscience is at ease. And I now defy any member of that committee here present to rise and say there was a dishonorable act by either principal or second. Sinful, unlawful it was; and I am ready to submit to the laws, their trial and their punishment; but let no man accuse me of murder in that case, in any odious sense. If he does, he shall have the opportunity to commit such a murder himself.

Duelling is abhorrent to every feeling of humanity. I detest the practice. But, sir, your laws will never prevent, or punish, or reform the custom. Sir, I tell this House—aye, and these piled and crowded galleries, where hangs an eager populace, embracing the most refined of your metropolies—*men, and maids, and matrons*—enjoying, as they ever do, the conflicts of passion on this floor, as did the ancient Romans, in crowded amphi theatres, gaze on the combats of the gladiators—that as long as public sentiment is what it is, pass what penal laws you will,

they will be dead upon the statute book. I shall never heed them! I do condemn the horrible practice as much as any man; but there are, in the present state of society, but two alternatives. You must rely, for redress of certain personal wrongs, upon arms or upon public opinion. *I, in my unregenerated state, as long as I am a worldling*, choose the bright steel; it is more faithful, more true, safer, and a better security than the opinions of mankind. And if, for refusing to rely on the justice of public opinion, or on the glorious uncertainty of the law, I must consent to be branded with the mark of Cain, be dishonored with the name of murderer, disgraced with the character of *duelist*, I prefer it to that disgrace wherewith I am sure to be disgraced if I refuse to fight—disgraced even in the secret hearts of those who preach loudest against duel—*disgraced in the eyes of the fairest portion of our race even in the Puritan land*; and, sir, I must be permitted to bequeath this legacy to my children, to write upon my tomb, if I die in single combat: "*He would take the alternative to which honor pointed!*"

Who can look to the courts?—Bad men combine. *It is hard to pick twelve men with character enough to value character*. Your antagonist, if base, can beat you in bribing witnesses; go there, and he may prove the falsehood he utters, and that *public opinion* upon which you have me rely is generally *charitable* enough to take sides with slander. Besides, what *damages* can compensate for some injuries? And, at least, how can you distinguish in morals between *public* and *private* war? All these things are to be thought of—not to *justify*—to account for duelling. *When my*

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