



venient that Thompson would decline the encounter and therefore the duel would be averted. The evidence in favor of this assumption is wholly insufficient. It is much easier to believe that the late hour of the night was chosen in order that the fight might not attract the attention of passersby, and that the snowstorm was a mere coincidence.

At any rate, the seconds of the two men agreed that the duel should be fought in University Place, New York City, at about eleven o'clock at night; that the weapons should be pistols, the distance eleven paces.

Those who dwell today in the literary and artistic environment of University Place, which is in the heart of the wholesale clothing and millinery section of New York, will marvel that a duel could be fought there and remain an unfathomable secret. But University Place was a lonesome town in 1804. However isolated it might have been then,

it was necessary to guard against uninvited witnesses. The Hamilton-Burr duel had aroused such resentment against the code that the hour of meeting must be late or it would land all the participants in jail.

Authentic details of the fight are not to be had; even hearsay evidence is scant and unsatisfactory. The men met in the midst of a snowstorm so blinding that they could scarcely see each other. The usual preliminaries were attended to, and each man shot wildly in the direction of his antagonist. Both missed, and the seconds tried to convince them that honor was satisfied. But Thompson would not withdraw his charge, and Coleman grimly handed his pistol over to his second to be reloaded. Again the two men straightened up, took uncertain aim in the drifting snow, and fired at the word. Both bullets again tore gaping holes in the atmosphere of University Place, but nothing more. Honor was now most certainly satisfied—from the

viewpoint of the seconds and the friends of the two men. Not so with Thompson, who was so constituted that it was almost a physical impossibility for him to take back anything he had said, even when he had such overwhelming evidence that it was untrue. As for Coleman, any weakness on his part would only prove the truth of Thompson's original charge. So the two men wiped the snow out of their eyes and handed the guns over to be loaded for the third time.

Four shots had now reverberated throughout University Place without disturbing the police; but there is another hove in sight as the men were taking aim for the third time, and that Thompson's second became excited and jostled his principal. The only well authenticated fact is that the men fired for the third time and Thompson called out, "I have got it!" He fell over into the snow, mortally