

not indelicate and unseemly haste in applying to the French insurance company for money in respect of the policy on his English wife's life; that his demeanor after the discovery of his wife's body on the beach at Pontanello was distinctly callous; that Mrs. Possel was often seen by the hotel servants at Florence, weeping bitterly; and that Possel had been known to throw an ink bottle at his wife, and to chase her with a bread knife. Yet, some whim, caprice, or one of those unaccountable fancies which seems to establish the right of woman to follow a course irreconcilable in conception, and not in accordance with any known precedent, led Miss Becket to marry Herr Possel—despite knowledge of his evil ways and violent temper obtained during days of courtship, when he boarded in her mother's house.

This far from model husband, whose guilt is taken for granted by several London insurance journals, one of them styling him a "clumsy apprentice in crime," may have escaped the gallows by becoming his own executioner; but the letter written by him, before he was found dying in a Paris café, will at least leave an element of doubt about his guilt, sufficient to place the Tuscan mystery in the category of tragedies calculated to excite our curiosity and wonderment, and yet hidden from the understanding.

However, the end is not yet. The insurance on the English lady's life, said to have been effected in L'Urbaine of Paris, is now a matter of interest, because of the question of legal liability of the company. The *Review* (London) of 31st ult. says:—

"It has been held that the murder of an assured person, in default of a specific contract excluding murder as a cause of death, will not protect the company. This is English and American law, e.g., the Maybrick and Goss-Udderzook cases. But a criminal may not profit by the results of his crime. If, therefore, Possel had even been tried and executed for murder, the company would have to pay his heirs-at-law. Of course, if false representations were made, or if there was any personation, it would be a different matter. And French insurance law may be different from English in insurance, as in marriage laws. Under French law Miss Beckett was not married."

As poor Possel is charged among other crimes with having passed off another woman as his wife to the medical officer, when arranging for the policy of insurance, the heirs of this interesting foreigner are not likely to benefit by Mrs. Possel's fall from a cliff, on the coast of far away Tuscany. Beyond being another illustration of the part played by life insurance in the world of to-day, this story, with its melo-dramatic possibilities, might well be buried in the suicide's grave. But it also serves to show that great vigilance on the part of insurance companies is the only way of meeting a new menace to the safety of policy-holders.

**Direct from  
London.**

No reasonable objection can be lodged against the importation direct from London or Paris of anything novel, so long as it can be regarded as desirable or harmless. The duck of a bonnet; the new frock; the high hand-

shake; or even the accent acquired during a brief visit to Europe, are all harmless, if not desirable, and they serve to show that novelty is the great parent of pleasure. But the frequent reports in Montreal papers of brutal treatment of innocent, industrious Chinamen would lead one to think that some one has imported direct from London the notorious "Hooligan." Our London correspondent in a late letter thus described this product of the modern Babylon:—

"Hooligan is a tribal name, and is applied to the gangs of half-criminal, half-loafing roughs and rowdies who "bash" the innocent pedestrian, sometimes from motives of robbery, but equally as often from motives of pure brutality. All this is done in well-lighted, as well as dark thoroughfares, and the chorus of indignation raised by the dwellers in the infested districts meets with no response, either in the shape of more regular police protection or in organized attempts of the police to break the gangs up. Drastic measures are proposed which include punishing with the "cat" the captured Hooligans, the formation of voluntary defensive associations, and the wearing of revolvers."

Unless something is done to protect the Chinese population of Montreal, the Mongolian laundrymen, whose only known weakness is for playing the uncertain but captivating game of fan-tan, in a street called Lagauchetiere, cannot be blamed for declining to subscribe to a belief in the doctrines of modern Christianity, as explained to them by Montreal lawyers and magistrates. They will cling instead to any speculative truth, any grains of comfort, to be found in the political morality taught by Confucius and his disciples, which, although it does not inculcate the worship of any God, and can hardly be called a religion, embodies the views of life entertained by a great Chinese philosopher.

London proposes the merry cat o' nine tails for captured Hooligans. Why not try similar punishment for the half-criminal, half-loafing juvenile roughs who, when not basking in the sun, find amusement in entering Chinese laundries, and beating the innocent proprietors. To permit these Montreal Hooligans to escape with anything less than a touch of the cat is putting a premium upon brutal treatment of those whom the law, even now, is none too ready to protect.

If the ill-treatment of Chinese laundrymen in the city of Montreal is in any way traceable to the hostility of their white brethren, who claim that Ah Sin evades payment of taxes, the civic authorities are doubly at fault: in failing to protect these weak and defenceless foreigners, and in permitting them to conduct business without paying the tax imposed on same.

**Public  
Affairs.**

In the series of articles and tabulated statements, setting forth the revenue and expenditure of Canada in 1868, and for a series of years up to 1897, no comment has been made upon the administration of public affairs by any government. The figures furnished and the explanations thereof given in THE CHRONICLE are intended