

the diminution of the population is greatest, the influenza rages less severely than in Brittany—the Irish region of France in point of family fecundity and chronic misery.

As usual, light comes from the north. A Russian, Duroff—but not from Batignolles—is making hats full of money by exhibiting his trained 230 rats, of all sizes, ages and colours. He has imported his pets from Moscow, though he fills up vacancies in his troupe from rats born where he may be exhibiting. He addresses them in Russian, and summons them to him by means of an enchanted flute or a Pandean pipe. And they promenade over his body, climb upon chairs and tables, play hide-and-go seek on the stage, and indulge in numerous acrobatic feats. On the summit of a pole is a huge, black cat that would make the mouth of the president of the "Consolidated Company for the Amelioration of Black Cats"—object, sable production—water; this licks the famous happy family. It only requires two hours to tame a rat, and eight days to train one. Duroff is also a successful trainer of wild boars, game cocks, etc.

The suicide of M. Choubersky attracts attention on account of his popularizing the Russian stove in France, and by which he made a fortune. Lord Randolph Churchill maintains, only the Russians know how to heat a house in winter. Domestic trouble led the deceased to blow his brains out, and his medical adviser carries the extracted and flattened bullet in his pocket-book. The Church buried him. Z.

### THE HANDCOCK MURDER CASE.

THIS is the worst case that has happened in this century among an Anglo-Saxon race, of charging innocent parents with the awful crime of murdering their own child; especially having regard to the fact that after the second examination of the skull of the poor victim by really competent medical men—the prosecution, on the supposition of being gifted with average intelligence, ought to have known that the parents were innocent. If they were not convinced by such proof, then it is clear that they have mistaken their vocation.

It brings to mind the celebrated Cowper case in 1699, referred to by Macaulay, in Vol. V., of his "History of England." In that instance Cowper (an ancestor of the poet), who was a lawyer, had had occasion to call upon and pay to a Miss Stout a considerable sum of money, which he had collected on a mortgage due to her. She being in love with him (a passion not reciprocated), had pressed him to accept the hospitality of her parents; which he premeditatedly declined—staying elsewhere. The disconsolate young woman committed suicide that night. Opposite politicians, anxious to make political capital out of the affair, caused him to be arrested on a charge of murder—he having been the last person seen in her company. The charge was utterly preposterous, and was practically on the same mental plane, and with the same absence of evidence as that of the unfounded charge against Mr. and Mrs. Hancock. Of course Cowper was acquitted.

Hancock (a stranger to me) is a man of good character, of religious habits, and fond of his children—especially of his unfortunate child, Sophia. Being also a total abstainer, one fruitful cause of crime, was excluded from the enquiry. As he had donated a house to his daughter, he could not correctly be called a poor man. The detective also knew that the girl had been robbed of her purse and brooch, and that her handkerchief was missing, and that her habit was only to keep coppers in the till; also that her mother was absent from the house when the awful deed was done.

It appeared that the lives of the father, mother and daughter were insured in one of our Provident Societies, and with such institutions, in nineteen cases out of twenty, policies are made payable to the party who is to receive the sum specified to be paid. In the daughter's case it was the mother who was to receive the amount. But it will be news to tens of thousands of such insurers to learn that, according to Toronto officials, if a person so insuring dies by lawless violence, that that is sufficient evidence to warrant the arrest of the beneficiary for the awful crime of murder. Yet that actually happened in this case—the doubly outraged mother was arrested on a false charge of murder, and kept in prison for a week in the society of criminals, without the slightest shadow of any evidence against her. Had such an event happened in England, the whole country would have been roused, and justice would have been swiftly meted out to all offenders.

The unfortunate father was also arrested—the reasons for this appear to have been (1) that he had on discovering and lifting up his unfortunate daughter—then insensible—got some blood on his hands. (2) That, not dreaming of murder, he had made a foolish mistake as to the cause of the wounds, and that he stuck tenaciously to this unfounded belief—practically making the same sort of blunder as the coroner and the other doctor made at the post mortem examination; Hancock's theory being that they were made by a blow from the cellar trap-door, and that of the doctors that they were caused by a blow from an iron hammer, or some such article. (3) That, owning a grocery store elsewhere, he had, like the rest of the Toronto grocers at that period of financial stress, found it very difficult to collect debts due to him, and that in consequence he had murdered his favourite daughter in order to obtain a little ready money.

The theory formed by the prosecution—strengthened by the inefficient *post mortem* examination—was that the father had killed his daughter with the blow of a hammer, and a vain search was made for the imaginary lethal weapon. The real murderer—unless he had fled—doubtless did his best to strengthen these groundless suspicions against Hancock.

Up till then one can credit the fact that moderately gifted officials really believed that there was a slight case of suspicion against Hancock, but subsequent to the inquest, and after the second examination of the poor girl's skull by competent medical men, the case was altered. These skilled experts conclusively showed that she was killed by a pistol bullet, which had glanced off, leaving pieces of lead in the skull—and one of the experts searched for and found the spot where the bullet had struck. The detective—doubtless to prove the contrary—cut out the piece of wood where the bullet had struck and had it subjected to scientific examination, when it was proved that there was a trace of lead there also. Hancock never had a revolver and did not understand the use of fire-arms. These facts, combined with the other evidence, destroyed the case of the prosecution, and conclusively proved to unprejudiced people able to reason that the prisoner was innocent. As the judge pointed out, how was it possible that a blow from a hammer or other iron instrument could leave traces of lead upon the object struck? Sydney Smith's famous saying must be varied thus: it takes a surgical operation to get common-sense into some persons' skulls.

For nearly five months after he was thus proved to be innocent this outraged citizen was kept in prison to associate with criminals, bail being persistently refused—even when the prosecution in the absence of evidence declined to go to trial; and the exonerating fact of the lead on the woodwork was withheld from public knowledge, otherwise public opinion would, at the very least, have compelled his release on bail.

To speak plainly, it looks like this: that one or more persons connected with the prosecution then became aware that an awful blunder had been made, but had not sufficient moral courage to confess it. The poet who sarcastically wrote: "and wretches are hanged that jurymen may dine," might now write: "The innocent are outraged that the infallibility of officials may be maintained."

The fact of the prosecution still holding fast to their original blunder of the hammer theory, after the second examination, brings to mind the case of the ignorant coloured woman narrated by the greatest of American authors. She sets forth an argument under discussion, which the poor creature had not sufficient intelligence to understand or reason out; and she makes her wind up by dogmatically observing: "I am going to believe." But Canadians require a higher mental status than that in responsible and highly paid officials.

It is satisfactory that the judge did not stop the case when the prosecution had finished, because it allowed the overwhelming evidence of Hancock's innocence to be produced—otherwise the withheld evidence of the trace of lead on the woodwork, would not have been publicly produced. The jury of course did their plain duty.

Prosecuting counsel should make themselves acquainted with the manner in which counsel in England conduct prosecutions in difficult murder cases, and note their judicial style of dealing with such—presenting the facts impartially, and not imitating the style of an Indian stalking his foe.

My theory is this—that the deed was done by a neighbour who was known to and who knew something of the ways of the family; probably some one who desired (July) to go far away and needed funds. If he had been a stranger he would have fled when discovered on the wrong side of the counter. The evidence showed that a man could unperceived have got in by the cellar door. The murderer was secreted in the house—only premeditating robbery, and knew that the father (rather hard of hearing) was engaged in the garden, and he waited for his opportunity. When the girl went down into the cellar he came out from his hiding-place, and finding only coppers in the till, lost time by searching elsewhere, and she, returning quicker than anticipated and hearing sounds in the store, went there, and unfortunately for herself saw him on the wrong side of the counter. He being recognized knew that there would be trouble and fired, dragged her body so that no one coming into the store would see it, searched for and took her purse and also her brooch, and seeing the bullet on the floor put it into his pocket. Her handkerchief being missing shows that the murderer had some blood on him which he carefully wiped off. This strengthens the belief that he was a neighbour, for a tramp would be unlikely to stay a moment longer than he could help, or care so much about the blood. All the evidence points to the fact that he was an intelligent, quick, ready and prompt man, one used to handle firearms. A novice would probably have aimed at her body, but he pointed at her head, knowing that if not instantly fatal the wound would preclude the victim from speaking—whereas even a fatal wound in the body would probably have left her able to say a few words. The girl's brooch having been taken tends to show that the murderer had some female to whom he was attached. Had the father come in at the time he would also have been shot.

Probably it was some one who talked (July) of going a great journey and who needed funds. It seems likely, by his carefully picking up the bullet, that the pistol was one of unusual calibre, and one that would lead to his

guilt being traced—for at that awful and hurried moment he could not have thought that the medical men would make the blunder they did. He must have been certain that all would know that it was by a bullet. Are there any data to show whether covering any part of a revolver—say with the skirt of one's coat—will somewhat deaden the sound?

The Government should take some steps in the matter. Only last summer two policemen—one being an inspector—were proceeded against by the British Government for exceeding their duty. In other recent cases juries have awarded damages.

We must bear in mind that if Hancock had been a really poor man, and unable to go to great expense, innocent blood might have been shed a second time—for then there would not have been a second examination, and even if there had, the woodwork rebutting evidence would not have been forthcoming. Some of the points to be considered are:—

1. When very strong exonerating evidence comes to the knowledge of prosecuting officials in criminal cases, is it right to withhold it from the public?

2. Should they be allowed to arrest and keep in prison, upon such an awful charge, any person (in this instance the outraged mother), without a shadow of evidence in support of it?

3. Should officials be allowed to keep a man in prison for nearly five months, refusing bail, in the teeth of very strong evidence of his innocence?

4. Is any man who really believes that lead will come out of iron, a fit person to fill a responsible public situation?

FAIRPLAY RADICAL.

### CLUBS FOR WORKING GIRLS, AND THE RESULTS OF SUCH.

A BOOK with the title, "Clubs for Working Girls," was published last year by Macmillan and Company, in London, written by the Hon. Maude Stanley. It is suggestive of the tragedies without end that a great city shouts down with its roar—those mistakes so fearfully punished, those struggles of good and evil, those lost chances; as when Tennyson says of the young daring fellow—a robber for once indeed, but with little or nothing base, and fitted in a less tragic world to be a blessing to himself and others:—

The king should have made him a soldier,  
He would have been one of his best.

Those tragic lines might be taken as a motto for the fundamental reflections and suggestions in Miss Stanley's book concerning the other sex, with whom it is no less true that mirth means ruin; rather with women it is more true, at least as far as worldly consideration and position go.

And so, in the midst of such a population of working girls as live near the great business houses of Oxford Street and Regent Street—in the west end of London, be it remembered, often more wretched and neglected than the other quarter whose name has become a by-word—in the midst of all this young undisciplined life, generous enough often, weak enough perhaps more often, with frequent determination to be pure and honest, and with constant enticements to be just the opposite, there has been established the Soho Club for working girls, which is in connection with many other such institutions, both Catholic and Protestant, in various parts of London. These clubs are one of the many signs of how serious and unwearied are the efforts to prevent evil and to check it, even if the evil too is so tremendously strong. And the efforts made in any great city are an incitement to generous effort everywhere directly or indirectly; in no city are we without the evils; perhaps they are greater than we imagine, though not identical in one place with those in another; and even in smaller places or in the country (if freer from social dangers and evils) it is perhaps there above all that generous sympathy, and active sympathy, has to be called out for those whose difficulties seem in the time of youth especially almost insurmountable. And practically whatever be our theories, is there anything more ungenerous than the attitude of "civilized" society toward young fallen women, far more sinned against than sinning often, not sinned against so much by men indeed, as by their own natures, their mirthfulness, their *abandon*, their youthful longing for relief from monotony, their good looks, nay by their very spirit of devotion to others and their womanly self sacrifice?

This book is an unpretending account of what has been done by some who recognize this almost inevitable tragedy of many young lives if left without guidance, sympathy, and help; by some who are working in the spirit of that helper Maggie Tulliver looked for half blindly and could not find till too late. And Miss Stanley and her supporters are not only devoted and earnest, but seem also unaffected and sensible by their realizing what sort of a world this is they live in and what really are the natures of those around them; not like those good ladies who, to the present Bishop of Chester, not long ago remarked that they did not approve of these young women of the lower classes dancing; since needle-work or basket-making would be much more suitable and profitable in their clubs. The Bishop thought it would be well if the upper class young ladies would set the example among themselves, if indeed, he said, girls' physical bounding health can be satisfied by the recreations proposed. In the Soho Club and the others dancing is allowed, and with apparently good results; and