

Heaven deliver me and my family from ever having our names appear in the society columns of a newspaper or in the police reports. I have no desire to pose as a leader of society, or as a woman of fashion. The black silk dress I have worn for several years is neither new enough nor stylish enough to be described by the society editress, thank heaven! And whose business is it what dress I wear? This society column is the freedom of the press carried into nihilism and anarchy. Out upon it!

### CHINESE HIGHBINDERS.

The frequent murders committed by Chinese upon their fellow-countrymen in San Francisco are causing considerable agitation among the people of the Pacific coast metropolis.

There is one phase of the war being waged between the rival highbinder societies in Chinatown which threatens a danger more far-reaching and far more serious in its effect on the city, the State and the nation than the death of half a dozen Chinese, more or less, or the stirring up of a local turbulence which the police find it no easy task to control, says the *Chronicle*.

The events of the last week must have emphasized in the minds of every newspaper reader the fact that any chance pedestrian through the Chinese quarter of San Francisco has to run no small risk of his life. Prudent residents of the city keep away from Chinatown unless they have business there, but not a day nor a night goes by that one or more parties of strangers do not make the tour of the Mongol quarter for the sake of "seeing the sights." Suppose, for the sake of the argument, that some prominent stranger, thus sightseeing in Chinatown, should fall a victim to the stray bullet of a murderous highbinder, what would be the result to the city? Surely an effort would be made to fasten the responsibility for such an occurrence on the municipal authorities who permitted a condition of affairs where an accident like that could occur. Suppose, again, that the stranger who might thus be shot was the accredited representative of a foreign government. Who shall say what international complications would follow?

In direct evidence of the reasonableness of this suggestion, it need only be said that the very risk here suggested was run in Chinatown last week. It so happened that Zozino Barroso, the Brazilian World's Fair commissioner, and special envoy from Brazil for the study of the Chinese question in this city, was escorted to Chinatown by a police officer detailed by chief Crowley, and that the development of a serious phase of the highbinder war made it necessary for the commissioner to abandon his trip.

It was detective Glennon who was escorting Mr. Barroso, and they had penetrated into the Chinese quarters as far as Jackson and Dupont streets when detective Cox signaled Glennon from a dark doorway, and said: "You had better take your friend out of here, partner. We are watching for a highbinder duel that is scheduled for hereabouts, and he might see more of Chinatown than he wants to." The distinguished foreigner at once manifested his desire to get out of the reach of any such danger, and the continuance of the official excursion was temporarily postponed as stated.

The Police sometimes receive information of Projected highbinder conflicts, as in the case referred to, but no one knows when two murderous highbinders may not begin firing upon each in broad daylight and in streets which are crowded with people. It will be noticed that in the case of the murderer last arrested in connection with the present war the police have a lively hope of securing conviction, since there were a number of white witnesses to the shooting. The very presence of these witnesses is in further confirmation of the danger that threatens the public safety. Two Chinese meet on the sidewalk. One draws a revolver and fires at the other. In this case five bullets are buried in the body of the highbinder who had no pistol, but the records of the police are full of instances where a general fusillade has taken place in the streets, and not a few white people have felt the force of the stray bullets thus scattered abroad.

At least three police officers have been killed by highbinders during the last six years. The death of Officer Osgood and Officer Nicholson will be recalled in this connection, and it will also be remembered that Officer Gillen, a brother of the present sergeant of police of the same name, also met his death at the hands of a highbinder whom he sought to rescue from the pranks of a lot of boys. Two of these officers were murdered, and the other, though perhaps not killed intentionally, was not the victim of a stray bullet exactly, but there have been other deaths and some narrow escapes in direct illustration of the danger under special consideration.

About ten years ago a merchant met his death by a stray rifle ball away down on the corner of Front and Jackson. It was proven beyond a doubt that the bullet came from a highbinder rifle fired up on the higher part of Washington street in Chinatown. A more recent instance was the killing of Kelleher, two years ago, at the corner of Dupont and Jackson streets, by Chin Yung, who, after several trials, is now serving a life sentence in San Quentin. It was claimed that Kelleher's taking off was accidental, though it was contended in court that the highbinder was guilty of murderous intent.

Another danger which threatens the peace of the general community must have been forcibly suggested by the foregoing facts. Only let one of a party of the tougher element of whites come within the range of a highbinder's bullet and the police would be of no avail in stemming the tide of revenge that would sweep through Chinatown. It is possible that the cooler counsel of the better class of people would prevail against a proposition of public vengeance in the case of the death of a single citizen from such a cause, but a second fatality in quick succession would surely result in a riot. San Franciscans are a law-abiding people, but their grievance against the Chinese is of so long standing, and their aggravations have been so many and so various, that it would take only a few straws in the way of highbinder murders of whites to break the back of public patience.

As regards the number of murders openly committed the present highbinder war beats the record. Three Chinese killed and another badly wounded within eight days is a little better, or worse, than has previously

been accomplished, but there have been more bitter battles than any that have yet taken place this time. About ten years ago, when two other tongs were at war with each other there were a number of pitched battles engaged in on the streets in which a great many Chinese took part on both sides, but it is not known that anybody was killed.

There is undoubtedly a small element of comparatively innocent denizens of Chinatown who are in fear of their own lives on account of highbinders, and the history of the societies warrants them in their fear. Three years and a half ago, in September, 1889, Fung Wing, a Chinese girl, 19 years of age, was killed on Dupont street because she failed to pay tribute to the tongs. She was going home from a restaurant with a companion when an unknown highbinder came out of a doorway, shot her twice and then made good his escape. It transpired that she had been persecuted by highbinder agents to pay tribute, that she had backed up her refusal with a complaint to the police and had been killed in revenge for her obstinacy. Two years later, in November, 1891, the body of a murdered Chinese was found in a clothes basket in Bull Run alley. There was no evidence forthcoming that he was a highbinder, and it was supposed that he was murdered simply because he had become possessed of some dangerous information. On the very day following this discovery another Chinese was known to have been killed by the Suey Sing Tongs, one of the societies now at war again, but the body did not fall into the hands of the police. At about the same time Ah Loy, a Chinese miner at Auburn, was killed by highbinders, and Chief Crowley traced the authority for the crime to a San Francisco tong. There was also a highbinder war in Los Angeles in 1891, and several murderers received life sentences. In the same year John Gibbs, a white man, was butchered by a Chinese hatchet man in Cum Cook alley for no apparent reason.

The crimes herein before referred to are by no means all that are attributable to the highbinders. A book may be written about their murderous operations. The police have from time to time unearthed highbinder conspiracies when they least expected to do so. On one occasion a Chinese arrested for a trivial offense was found clothed in a coat of mail, and under this coat were found documents which, being translated, afforded some very important clues. On another occasion a suspicious looking Chinese was arrested while reading a highbinder bulletin board at a street corner, and on his person was found a copy of highbinder rules, which proved to be very useful to the authorities. As a rule, however, the clever highbinder carries nothing compromising on his person. It is only novices who are thus caught napping. The different societies have a regular system of spies. They have innocent looking pickets stationed at given points to guard against surprise, and it is this system which has put the coolies on their guard against the alley raids, as shown in the accompanying illustration.

It has frequently been remarked that the highbinders seem to prefer the pistol as a means of assassination. The explanation of this is that the highbinder is theatrical beyond anything. The quiet cutting of a throat in a dark cor-