

FOREIGN FIENDS IN OUR MIDST.

Another mysterious tragedy was last night added to the series of sensational crimes which have alarmed the citizens of Niagara Falls during the present half of the week. A man, unknown, threw himself over the upper steel arch bridge at 5:30 last night and his frantically struggling body was watched by awed spectators until it was carried away beneath the urging waters.

Admirable as our police officers are in the execution of their trying and often thankless work, an epidemic of the fiendishness evinced by this succession of calamities calls for something more than being left to be dealt with through the ordinary police routine.

Perhaps the most regrettable of the multifarious duties which fall to the lot of the newspaper editor is the setting forth in his columns of the details of a murder. He would shirk the duty if he could, but he is the servant of the public, and to refrain from supplying the facts of a crime, however disagreeable to narrate, would mean sacrifices of far more importance than the popularity upon which his journal exists. The only course he can pursue with the hope of diminishing the unpleasant side of his professional work is to report tragedy so truthfully as to aid the authorities in reducing it to a minimum. One way of doing this is to describe details in such a way as to assist in bringing the culprit under the most merciful yet most just arms of the law. No fact which may throw light upon the motive of a murderer or lead to his or her identity should be withheld.

In the case of the murder of Michael Franco, reported in our issue of yesterday, this is no easy task. Some reports, selected evidently in good faith from the numerous stories which were afloat, stated that Franco was done to death over night, that is 12 hours before the body was found. This may or may not be true, but the condition of the body when we saw it yesterday morning, did not bear out the story. There had been heavy rain during the night, yet the clothing of the legs of the man bore no sign of having been wet, though they lay outside the mouth of the cave, exposed to the skies. The boots were bright and polished, as though the man had quite recently walked out of a shine shop. The theory was based on the statement of a young waterman that while in a boat on the river at nine at night he "heard a hollering on the cliffs." The stage of congelation reached by the blood, and the body being, as far as we could learn, in the state of rigor mortis accounted for, at least four hours of death, but beyond that length of time it may be difficult for even the medical examiner to form a conclusive estimate.

The more important question from the point of view of the safety of the public is the curious coincidence of the succession of outrages perpetrated by Italians during the last few weeks. There is an unravelled mystery surrounding the conduct of the two Italian engine cleaners who during the night time of Tuesday-Wednesday attempted to murder each other in the Grand Trunk yard, the one with an iron bar and the other with a razor.

These two men fought a terrific fight, lasting almost an hour, and ceased only when loss of blood from the wounds they inflicted on each other reduced them to a condition of exhaustion. A mystery surrounds the murder of Franco, a mystery which allusions to the smuggling of aliens does not sufficiently clear up. Again a mystery lies hidden in the suicide

from the upper steel arch bridge last night.

Coincidences are the most deceptive and most inexplicable phases of most crimes, and there may be no connection whatever between the double attempted murder in the night time of Tuesday-Wednesday and the murder of Franco in the night time of Thursday-Friday, nor again between the murder of Franco and the suicide of an unknown.

Nevertheless significant are the facts of the two assailants in the G. T. yard being more or less devoid of personal enmity after the ghastly fight, and one of the two having carried upon him a razor as a weapon of protection, apparently in anticipation of being at any moment assailed by an assassin, without warning. The possible significance of this is suggested to us by recollections of murders and feuds we had the painful duty to investigate a few years back in the Italian quarters of Saffron Hill and the haunts of the Anarchists of Soho. The fact is established that there are Italian secret societies which condemn members to death, the assassins being chosen by lot, and even when their intended victims are bosom friends, have no alternative other than to slay or be slain.

We can only hope that we have not among us members of one of these secret societies whose systems include assassination of members suspected of lack of sympathy with their doctrines. Michael Franco was dressed in his best. He may have prepared himself for attendance at a meeting of his society, if he belonged to one, or he may have dressed to meet a sweetheart, and the murder may be an isolated case arising solely from jealousy over a woman. It may even be that the man was suddenly attacked, when unprepared, by the woman herself. Such things are not rare. Then again, the solution of the problem may prove to be something simple, however sordid. Yet the fact cannot be denied that there are among us foreign immigrants of barbarous passions who are a danger to society, and it behoves law-abiding citizens to consider the advisability of calling upon the immigration department to consider whether the necessity is not urgent of revising the laws which permit such an influx of European foreigners, probably the dregs of European cities, as is alleged, were brought over in gangs of laborers to the peninsula in the last spring to work upon the construction of the Welland canal.