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The Donnellys: History, Legend, Literature

William Davison Butt

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CHAPTER 2

THE DONNELLY FAMILY

James Donnelly, Johannah Donnelly, and their newborn¹ son James Jr. arrived in the province of Canada in 1842.² They were natives of Tipperary County, Ireland,³ moving to Canada after the news that the Canada Company's Huron Tract land could be had by lease and without down payment. James Donnelly was five feet five inches tall; he had black hair and grey eyes and was twenty-six years old.⁴ Johannah was twenty-one; she was taller than her husband and almost as strong.⁵ The Donnelly family came to the village of London in Canada West, where James Donnelly worked for three years for other men,⁶ trying to gather capital to begin his own farm somewhere in the Huron Tract bush. There in London in the winter of 1845,⁷ the second Donnelly son, William, was born. Strong sons would be wanted to help build a farm, but William was born lame with a club foot.⁸

Early in the spring of 1845, James Donnelly went north on the Proof Line road into Biddulph township and onto the new Roman Line, where on the vacant⁹ lot eighteen of the sixth concession he built a shanty.¹⁰ In the fall of 1843 an earlier settler had leased that hundred acres, had failed, and had abandoned his lease and his land.¹¹ James Donnelly did not clear or plant on the land that was not yet his own. The Donnelly family did not stay in Biddulph that year.¹² But James Donnelly had marked the land that he hoped would be his own,

THE DONNELLYS:
HISTORY, LEGEND, LITERATURE

by

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Department of English

1
Vol. 1

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ABSTRACT

The murder of five members of the Donnelly family of Biddulph Township, Ontario, in 1880 is one of the most widely known of Canadian crimes. However, there has been little scholarly research into the history of the Donnelly family and of their neighbours. Thus considerable controversy has always existed, of what among the many crimes attributed to the Donnellys they were guilty, and to what extent they or their enemies respectively were to blame for their murders. A substantial quantity of oral tales, literature, and popular history has evolved concerning the family in the years from their deaths until the present, and such works reflect those confusions and prejudices which have always characterized public impressions of the Donnellys.

This thesis examines in detail the actual lives of the Donnellys in the context of that township which they shared with those who eventually murdered some of them. The historical account drawn from documentary sources is then supplemented by accounts of the Donnellys from people who knew them personally, or knew information about them, or knew people who did. In such accounts, material probably legendary is distinguished from material probably historical. Once detected, the germs of truth help to show further the Donnellys as they really were, and to explain why they have continued to be of much popular interest.

After some preliminary consideration of the ways in which history may be transformed into more intentionally artistic narrative forms, then,

with that historical record of the Donnelly's as a point of reference, the thesis proceeds to examine how selected writers have dealt with the Donnelly family. Reports of the Donnelly's in Canadian newspapers circa 1880 are discussed in terms of fictional forms and techniques which the journalists consciously are employing. Examples of subsequent treatments of the Donnelly story are studied, in such fictional forms as novel, drama, ballad, song, film, and in other purportedly more factual forms. The thesis assesses the extent to which each is or is not faithful to historical fact, and what artistic strategies are apparent in the work as each writer works to give clear shape to his collection of historical facts. Some attention is paid in conclusion to the ways in which other artists might structure the large body of historical material into various artistic forms which, rather than merely perpetuate current stereotypes, might articulate both imaginative and historical truth about this flawed but remarkable family.

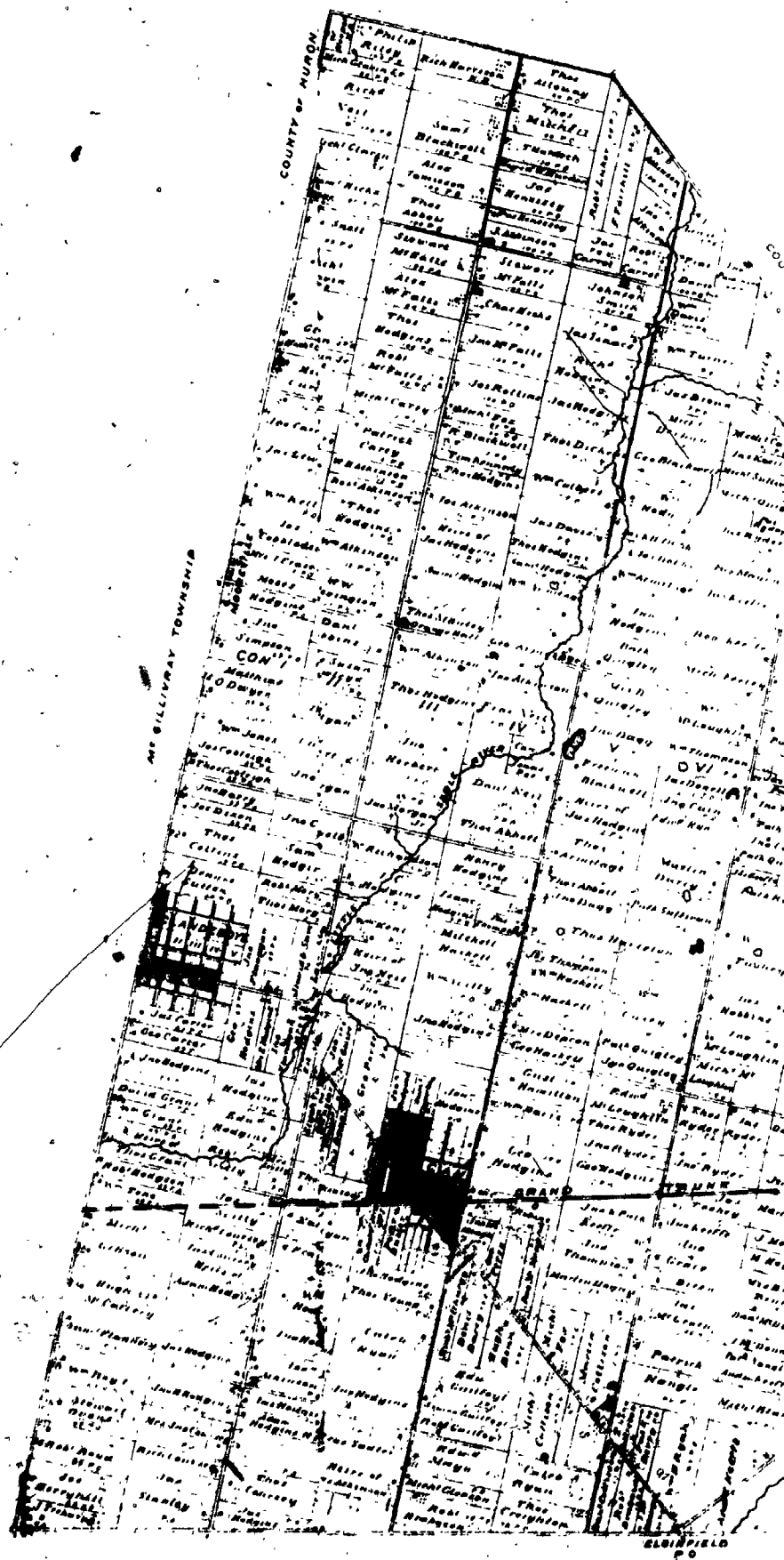
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people without whom this thesis would never have been attempted and completed. My interest in the history and culture of southwestern Ontario was first focussed on the Donnelly story during a graduate course conducted by James Reaney. Professor Reaney's creative energy and his enthusiasm for the Donnellys have always helped keep up my own. Professor Richard Stingle's discerning judgment and advice have rescued me from many a pitfall. Both advisers have been tolerant and sympathetic. Edward Phelps of the Regional Collection, with his dedication to regional history and his inimitable archival abilities, has been responsible for making available most of the Donnelly source materials without which this thesis would have been impossible. The Canada Council and the Department of English of the University of Western Ontario have been generous in their financial support, which has also been moral support. Always efficient and apparently tireless, my typist, Laura Barbe, has eased immensely the final trying period when the thesis was being typed and proofread and corrected. My largest debt is to my wife whose faith and patience have been wonderful, faced as she was with the burdensome task of sharing her home with the Donnellys.

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COUNTY OF HUDSON

MILLBURY TOWNSHIP

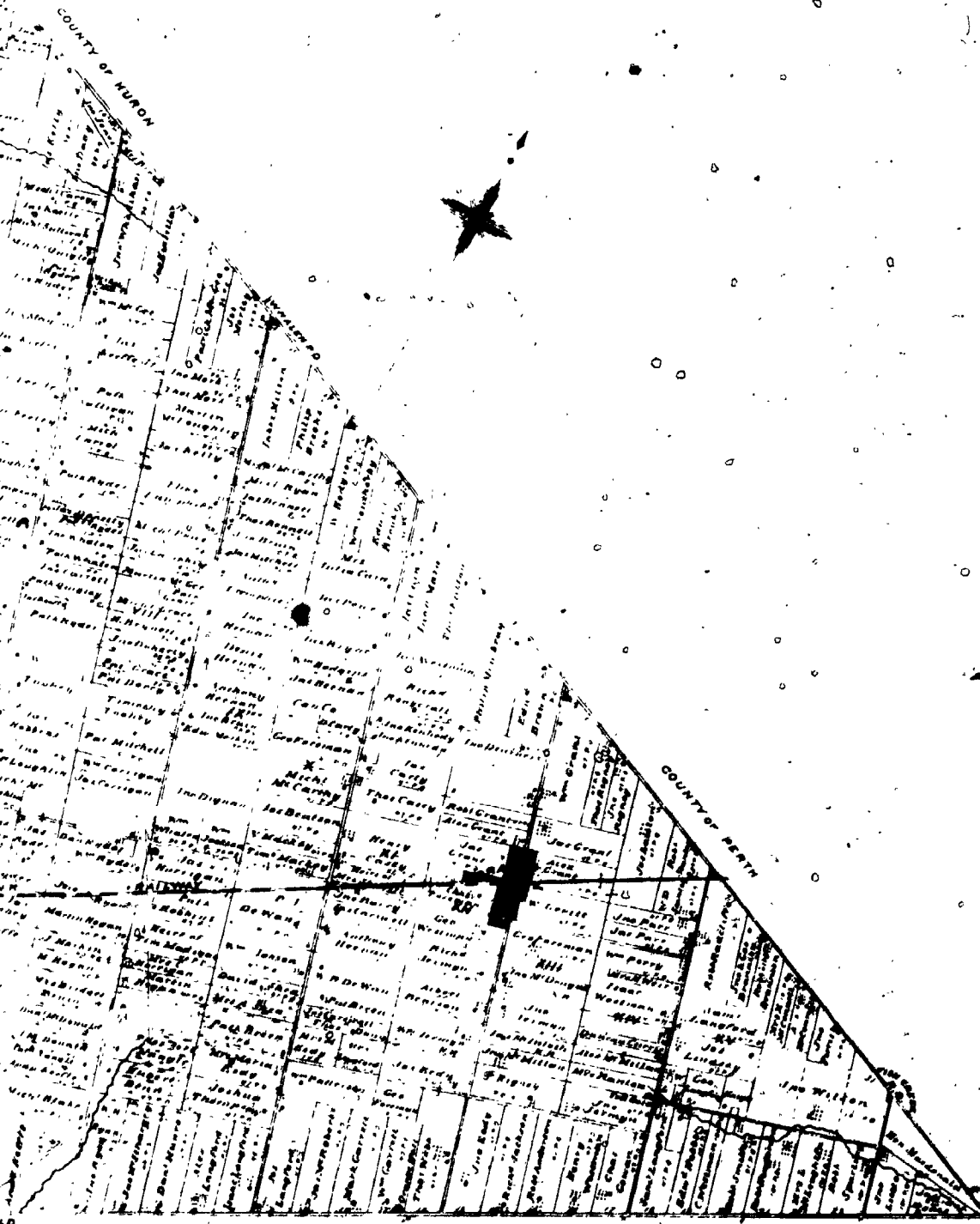
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BIDDULPH

Scale 80 Chains 1 Inch

Drawn by Jno Rogers



LONDON TOWNSHIP

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He asked me for godsake to forgive him

as he was led into it by others

I said I would if he would tell the whole thing....

-Patrick Donnelly,
Middlesex County Courthouse,
July 10, 1881

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VOLUME ONE

PROLOGUE

The land that would be called the township of Biddulph was formed by the last of the Pleistocene glaciers, twenty-five thousand years ago. The ice lobe advancing pushed silt and clay across the bedrock; melting and retreating it left its mixed till deposits behind. The glacier left a long moraine lying north-south through the west side of the township. It left a lower moraine, the township watershed, lying north-south through the middle concessions. It left in the rest of the township a till clay plain of low relief. To drain this re-shaped land, a river which would be called the Little Ausable entered the township from the north. It flowed along the east side of the larger western moraine, turning west to cut a deep gully through the moraine, north-east of where the village of Lucan would be, then leaving the township to join the Ausable River and thence into Lake Huron. In a shallow basin west of the watershed moraine, a creek began which would be called Medway Creek. It flowed south out of the township which it drained, to join the north branch of the Thames River and thence into Lake St. Clair.¹

Beneath the clay and silt of the glacial surface drift, below the reach of ice was the top zone of bedrock: limestone, sandstone, shale, the layered sediment of a Paleozoic ocean. Deeper under the township was igneous pre-Cambrian rock, rock among the oldest in the world, formed more than three billion years ago when the earth's crust first cooled to start continents. The surface has been.

evolving ever since, through a long and violent process of orogeny and erosion. Land was built up by sediment eroded from higher land by the actions of wind and water; land was built up (too) by the bodies of dead plants and creatures; with each climatic evolution, only the better-adapted survived. The land at the surface of the township is the last and continuing result of a pre-human history buried in the paleologic strata.²

When the last of the Pleistocene glaciers retreated, the climate began to grow warmer. Vegetation grew again; as the plants and trees grew and died in the cycle of new seasons, their remains were decayed by microbes into humus. Burrowing worms and rodents mixed the humus with inorganic mineral matter of the glacier's clay till. These actions and the actions of rainwater leaching downward covered the surface of the township with a rich podzolic soil.³ A mixed hardwood forest grew: maple, beech, black birch, cherry, walnut, hickory, butternut, basswood, ironwood, oak, elm, ash. In the swampy basin in the south-east of the township, cedar, tamarack, black ash and willow grew.⁴ Deer and wild turkey were the commonest creatures; they shared the forest with bear, beaver, moose, fox, lynx, wolf, grouse, goose and dozens of other wild species.⁵ They fed on vegetation and on each other; lived and reproduced and died, for ten thousand years unhindered by humans.

When the last of the glaciers retreated, waves of human beings crossed into the uncovered North American continent on the Bering land bridge from Asia. The first wave of migrants moved gradually south and eastward, to arrive in the area of Biddulph and eastern Canada about ten thousand years ago.⁶ As they spread more widely

these earliest humans, the Algonkians, separated into diverse tribes. The Neutral tribe inhabited the land north of Lake Erie and south of Georgian Bay. They were pressed into that Ontario peninsula by the lakes, by the Hurons in the north-east, and by the tribes of Iroquois in the east. Their palisaded villages were scattered through the peninsula lands which included Biddulph. They lived in large bark-covered cabins; with bows and chert-tipped arrows they hunted game, especially deer; with bone hoes they cultivated corn and beans and sunflowers; with plant-fibre nets and stone sinkers they caught mullet and catfish and pickerel and bass; they foraged for wild fruits and nuts; and they ate the flesh of their human enemies. They made tools of wood and bone, stone and shell and clay: they made arrow, knife, club, adze, axe, drill, scraper, chisel, awl, pipe, whetstone, mortar and cooking-pot. Their clothes were of the skins of animals; they wore bone amulets, and pendants and beads of shell and tooth and bone, and gorgets made from human skulls.⁷

The Europeans, French and Dutch, came to eastern North America at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Iroquois tribes traded in fur with the Dutch along New York's Hudson River; the Hurons in Ontario traded with the French. As beaver grew scarcer the Iroquois turned north to the land of the Hurons. In wars in 1648 and 1649, the Iroquois burned and completely destroyed the Huron villages and people. A fleeing remnant of Hurons took refuge with the Neutrals; in 1650 and 1651 the Iroquois destroyed the Neutrals too. Then the Iroquois returned to their lands in New York; the peninsula which included Biddulph was empty again of humans.⁸

The Chippewa tribes lived east of Georgian Bay and in the

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watershed north of Lakes Huron and Superior. In the hundred years after the destruction of the Neutrals, many Chippewa moved south into the empty peninsula. They grew corn and hunted game as the Neutrals had done before them.⁹ Biddulph township and the whole of the Ontario peninsula were theirs when the British Europeans came. The British had driven out the French in 1759; then by a steady succession of treaties they eroded the Chippewa claims to the land. On April 26, 1825, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs purchased for eleven hundred pounds per year a tract of more than a million acres which included the Biddulph land along its southeastern boundary. The Chippewa were left with eight square miles: at Walpole Island on the St. Clair River and at Kettle Point on Lake Huron.¹⁰ They were the second race, after the Neutrals, to lose the land to competitors.

This new British land was named the Queen's Bush, in honour of the wife of King George IV of England. In England that same year of 1825, the Canada Land Company received its charter, financed by a group of British capitalists who would sell wild lands in Canada to settlers. In July of 1826, for two shillings six-pence per acre¹¹ the British government sold to the Company one million wild acres of the Queen's Bush. So large and unexplored was the Canada Company's tract that not until the end of 1827 were its actual boundaries determined. When the bounds had been surveyed and allowance made for swampy and uninhabitable portions, the final size of the tract--called the Huron Tract--was 1,100,000 acres. The Huron Tract was divided into twenty-one townships which were named for the Canada Company directors. Robert Biddulph being one of those British

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financiers, one of the townships was named Biddulph, a piece of land nearly triangular in shape enclosing 33,049 acres¹² along the south-east edge of the Huron Tract.

John Galt, the Canada Company's commissioner in Canada, began by founding the town of Guelph on Company land east of the Huron Tract. Then in June of 1827 he plunged into the Tract, blazing a road west to reach Lake Huron at the mouth of the Maitland River, which he reached in November 1827 and where he founded the town of Goderich. By the end of 1828 crews had chopped out the Huron Road along the route Galt's party had marked. With advertisements in every major British newspaper and with a road ready leading into their lands, the Company's Huron Tract and the township of Biddulph were opened for the settlers.

CHAPTER 1

A TOWNSHIP GETTING STARTED

Because the village of London was only thirteen miles to the south through the populated township of London, Biddulph was one of the earliest of the Huron Tract townships to be settled. In September of 1829, London township's foremost landowner asked the Canada Company to build a road which would join the Huron Tract to London.¹ That same year the Company surveyed a route from their Huron Road south to Biddulph's lower boundary,² meeting London township's Proof Line Road which led down into London village. In February of 1830 the Company hired contractors to build that London-Coderich Road. By December of 1832 the road was corduroyed,³ the trees cut down two or three feet above the ground and their trunks piled to fill in the spaces between the stumps. Not until 1836 was the road turnpiked⁴-- the stumps burned out and dirt from the roadsides thrown up, to make drainage ditches and to level the surface. Before that time the road was scarcely passable.

Before the road was corduroyed, even before all of the roadside lots were surveyed, the first settlers came into the township of Biddulph. They were Negroes from Cincinnati in the United States. Although slave-holding was illegal in Ohio, harsh new state laws in 1829 oppressed Ohio's black population. In September of 1830 agents for a new black Colonization Society contracted to buy from the

Canada Company eight hundred acres along the London-Goderich Road, south of the Little Ausable River.⁵ About a dozen families left Ohio for the new Canadian haven. They hoped to buy and colonize the entire township, to elect their own member to Canada's Parliament, and to build a safe, strong, and free black community.⁶ They named their colony Wilberforce for the British emancipator.

In the first year they were cold and hungry⁷ until they could build their first rude cabins and harvest their first crop of corn⁸ between the hardwood stumps. Their homes were small and badly constructed, of log with mortar in the chinks. The roofs were of board and a wood-and-clay chimney rose on the outside of each house.⁹ Bred in the warm American South, the blacks did not prosper in Biddulph township's forest. The colonists' purchasing agents defaulted; the Company used the opportunity to refuse to sell any more lands to blacks. "At the risk of offending public feeling," the directors explained.¹⁰

Charitable Quakers from Connecticut in the United States heard of the Negro settlement's plight and helped them pay for the land.¹¹ The Company granted the first deeds in 1838. Its agents tried first to buy back the farms of any black settlers who would leave Biddulph; they delayed and discouraged the blacks as best they could.¹² Colony people sent abroad to raise funds kept the proceeds and did not return.¹³ The blacks had to beg bread and tobacco from travellers on the Company road through their colony.¹⁴ Ill-suited to the cold and the forests, cheated by their agents, discouraged by the Canada Company, the Negroes' scheme to own the township came to nothing. Their small fifty-acre farms huddled in a straggling

community which pressed against the London-Goderich Road south of the Little Ausable. A few families still persisted there when in the early 1830s their first competitors arrived to settle in Biddulph.

These were Irish Protestants--Methodists and Anglicans--who came from Tipperary County, Ireland. The first of them were following the Irish Protestants who had already settled London township to the south. They began to settle on Biddulph's first three concessions, the westernmost concessions closest to the London-Goderich Road.

These Protestants were fortunate men, able to leave Ireland with capital enough to make the twenty per-cent down payment¹⁵ which the Canada Company demanded for its one-hundred-acre lots. In 1833 the lots sold for seven shillings, eight-pence per acre; they had risen by the end of the decade to more than thirteen shillings.¹⁶

In Ireland ruled by Protestants, few Roman Catholics ever could hope to have the money to emigrate. The first Irish Protestant arrived in September of 1832, and stayed with London township friends until his cabin was erected on Biddulph's third concession.¹⁷ He had been a policeman in Borrisokane, Tipperary, when in 1829 at Borrisokane's summer fair, in a battle between Protestant constables and a Roman Catholic mob, he had chased and shot to death a Catholic rioter,¹⁸ also in 1829,¹⁹ he decided to come to Canada.

The Protestant police were sent to keep order among revellers at the fair. They tried to wrest sticks and staves from the crowd of three hundred Catholics. Picking up stones the Catholics turned on the constables who harrassed them. As the crowd turned noisy and angry, the captain of police read from a book which he pretended was

the Riot Act. "Go to the devil, yourself and your Riot Act,"²⁰ someone shouted from the crowd.

The Catholics threw stones at police and at the windows of Protestant houses. Mounted police reinforcements arrived, riding low in their saddles to avoid thrown stones, and striking down at the crowd with their swords. One horseman knocked a Catholic woman from the bridge at the edge of Borrisokane. Another rider was knocked from his horse by a stone which broke his skull. As he lay bleeding and the crowd closed in around him, his fellow constables turned back to help.

Flying stones broke policemen's guns and bayonets and swords. Police chased the mob through the town, over hedges and ditches, until the mob regrouped and drove them back. Then the captain of police ordered his men to fire. For ten minutes policemen shot at Catholics who tried to find cover. The policeman who would later lead settlers to Biddulph chased a Catholic into a dead-end alley between two houses. As the Catholic tried to climb the wall which blocked his escape at the back of the alley, the policeman fired his carbine. He shot the Catholic once in the temple and once in the lower back. The man fell back to the ground with the stones of the wall tumbling about him. The constable rushed up and stabbed him in the thigh with his bayonet. "I have left one Papist low,"²¹ he announced as he came from the alley.

He was tried with other policemen who had wounded or killed rioters, at the Summer Assizes in Clonmel, the Tipperary capital. Witnesses who travelled down from Borrisokane to testify were threatened on the dark streets the night before the trial. Defence lawyers

challenged any prospective juror who was Catholic; the chosen jury had only one Catholic and eleven Protestants. "A constable has a certain authority, necessarily incident to his situation, of preserving and assisting to preserve the public peace," the presiding judge told the jurymen, "but where he acts without lawful authority, or outsteps the bounds of his duty, he is then responsible for his acts as other men are."²² The Protestant jury ruled that the defendant policeman had acted in self-defence and they found him not guilty. But he decided to resign from the constabulary and three years later built a cabin in Biddulph.

Irish Protestants continued to arrive in Biddulph all through the 1830s. By March of 1836,²³ all of the township was surveyed-- concession four to concession fifteen in the easternmost corner of the triangular township. The concessions became steadily shorter to the east: concession four contained twenty-eight lots of one hundred acres, concession fifteen contained only three. There was a row of lots surveyed along the southern boundary, west of the London-Goderich road, and a row of lots along the length of the northeastern boundary. The cedar swampland covered the southern portions of concessions eight through eleven. The Irish Protestants filled the first five concessions.²⁴ Although one quarter of those who came abandoned their farms in those first ten years,²⁵ other Protestant settlers followed in their place. By the early 1840s the Irish Protestants surrounded the colony of Wilberforce blacks, along the London-Goderich road.

With the rest of the Huron Tract becoming populated, the government of upper Canada in 1838 established an administrative District of

Huron²⁶ which included Biddulph township. The land was no longer the Canada Company's Huron Tract; the Canada Company itself was just another taxpayer. In Goderich, the new District capital, the government erected a courthouse and a gaol. In 1842 District taxes paid to plank the London-Goderich road, marred by the traffic of all the new settlers.²⁷

Also in 1842 the Canada Company announced a new policy in its land sales to settlers. Sales had not been so rapid as the directors might wish, for few in the British Isles who might have emigrated could afford the twenty-percent down payment for Company land. Henceforth, after 1842, no down payment was required; settlers who would agree to clear four acres yearly could lease the hundred-acre lots on ten- or twelve-year arrangements. They would pay a gradually increasing annual rental, with the option when the lease expired to renew it or to purchase. Any settler who failed in his payments would still be paid for the improvements he had made in the lands which he had to abandon.²⁸ The long-term lease-purchase arrangement increased the total cost of land, to twenty-two shillings per acre from the cash-sale price of thirteen shillings.²⁹ But as of 1842 anyone could emigrate who could gather the price of ocean transportation.

In Tipperary, Ireland, poor Roman Catholics had watched Protestants leave for hundred-acre Canadian farms while they themselves often owned no land at all. The Canada Company agent in Biddulph was the Borrisokane ex-policeman who first had settled there; with the new rules for purchase he visited Tipperary, to attract what Catholics he could to his township.³⁰

In 1841 the government of Canada established a system of

district and township governments; in January of 1842, according to new statute, the settlers of Biddulph held their first annual township meeting. They chose a representative to the District Council, a township clerk, assessor, tax collector, councillors to form bylaws, school commissioners for every school district, and pathmasters for every concession.³¹ All of the officers were Irish Protestants; the blacks were few and weak and few Catholics had yet arrived. The Protestants were the ones keenest and most able to expand their enterprise and their influence beyond the limits of a hundred-acre farm.

Throughout the remainder of the 1840s, Catholics ~~from~~ Tipperary arrived to fill the central concessions numbered six to eleven.³²

The new road between the sixth and seventh concessions was called the Roman Line, the road between the eighth and ninth the Cedar Swamp Line. Scottish Presbyterians and Methodists came to settle the easternmost concessions, eleven to fifteen. The Scots kept to themselves; most of them quietly prospered.³³

In 1845 the bishop of the diocese created the new Catholic parish of St. Patrick's; he sent a priest regularly from London north to Biddulph to minister to the Irish Catholic settlers. In 1850 the Catholics of St. Patrick's parish built their first frame church, at the junction of the Roman Line and the London-Goderich road.³⁴

These settlers of the Roman and Cedar Swamp lines were not the desperate rabble who were driven to North America by Irish famine and potato rot in 1847 and 1848. They were people who through better luck and foresight and industry had saved money for passage before the worst of the famine years. In Ireland many were tenants of English and Protestant Irish landlords. They tilled small one- to

five-acre³⁵ garden plots with spade and hoe, living side by side with their Catholic neighbours on land so densely settled that the countryside was like one vast village.³⁶ Neighbours were close and sociable; bonds to the community were tight, and were governed by traditional values, by kinship and inter-marriage, and by the common thralldom of being Roman Catholic in a country that was firmly and brutally Protestant. Stiff ties to their Catholic kind were their prime defence; solidarity was a key to their survival.

The harvest of a small garden plot could not easily feed a large family; to earn enough to survive for another year, each man, when his own small harvest was over, joined with his neighbours in migrant bands which worked across Ireland and England for wealthier landholders who needed harvest help. Seasonally abandoned, Irish Catholic women depended for authority on the men too old to travel, and, especially, on their parish priests. In communities where few Catholics were entitled by law to education, few learned even the rudiments of reading and writing, and then under the most furtive of circumstances. With his academic and ecclesiastical knowledge the Irish Catholic priest was a figure of power.

This was the way of life for the Catholics in Ireland who chose instead to come to Canada. Ignorance and poverty and persecution bred bitterness, and strong defensive bonds between Catholic and Catholic. And their way of life bred hatred and violence against those who did not conform to community rules and bonds which made survival possible.

Throughout the 1840s and into the 1850s, these Catholic settlers, who had followed the Canada Company's ex-policeman agent struggled to

clear and build farms. Their hundred-acre forest lots were nothing like Ireland--not long continuous stretches of villages with gardens that had been cultivated for centuries, but instead the acres of hardwoods that were merely a burden, not valuable like the softwoods for lumber, too heavy anyway to haul to sawmills or to float down in the Little Ausable in the season when it held enough water.³⁷ For those at the southern ends of most of the Catholic concessions, the forest was not hardwood but swampland trees so thickly grown that no wind penetrated the foliage. The swamp sheltered wolves and foxes and bears. Bears came at night to plunder pigpens and outdoor larders; wolves howled at night and, evading the farmhouse dogs, raided the settlers' sheep-folds. No side-road could be laid through the swamp between the ninth and the tenth concessions. Although the black soil of the swampland was as rich as the podzolic soil of the hardwood forests, the swamp resisted settlers' axes and drains, and much of it was still thick swamp when the Donnellys were murdered in 1880.³⁸

In Ireland, many Protestants and most of the Catholics knew only how to cultivate small gardens with sickles and spades. In Biddulph, they had to learn to use the tools that were necessary to make farmland of forest³⁹--axe and saw, horses and oxen and wagon and sleigh, plow, harrow, seed drill, grain cradle, thresher. They had to cut trees, pull and burn stumps, square timbers for houses and stables and barns, split shingles, split rails for fences, dig wells, dig field stones and haul them to build wells and house foundations and door sills, dig and cover ditches and drains. They had to build and repair their concession roads, for the Canada Company would maintain only the main artery, the London-Goderich road; after the

Huron District was formed the Company resisted even that responsibility. The settlers performing their annual statute labour chopped trees on roadways, burned brush, dug ditches, hauled and spread gravel, and cut and hauled timber for ditches and stone for culverts.

In the spring they did their planting: potatoes, cabbages, turnips, mangolds, onions, carrots, peas--crops that could easily be dried or stored, in pits in the ground or in shallow earth cellars under cabins. To feed their livestock they sowed hay and oats and clover. They sowed wheat for their cash crop, selling it at the nearest mill or village to buy things which they could not grow or build themselves--tea and sugar, wire, glass, nails. Some money from the sale of wheat would go to purchase their leases, from the Canada Company or from absentee landlords who had bought the Canada Company land but who did not want to work to farm it.

In late spring and summer after sowing, the settlers had constantly to dig and cut weeds. In July they cut hay and picked wild berries; they cut and bound winter wheat, pulled peas, cut and bound oats and barley and hauled the sheaves to the threshing floor. They spread manure on the harvested fields and removed to the stacks what straw the livestock would need. In fall they cleaned and sorted and planted seed wheat again; they dug and stored potatoes and beets and turnips, picked and dried apples, and butchered a hog or a sheep for winter. All winter, almost every day, they cut and hauled wood for their fires. Each settler started with a shanty for his family and his ox, and his first part-acre of wheat and potatoes planted among the stumps of what few trees he had managed to cut. It would be years before a farm could be built in this manner from the forest.

This was life in early Biddulph; many people did not live, or did not survive the first clearing of forest and the digging for water and the raising of a shelter. In October of 1842 James Dagg died from a fall at a house-raising bee on the second concession.⁴¹ In the spring of 1846 a man and woman were found dead in an incompletely cleared field; their cause of death and their names unknown, they were buried in the field they were found in.⁴² In April of 1846 there was a chopping bee at a Catholic farm. "All hands look out," a chopper shouted, "the tree is about falling." Michael McCormick did not run. "Never fear, I am clear of the tree," he said. But the tree that was felled hit a small sapling which Michael McCormick was not clear of; the sapling falling hit and killed him.⁴³ In June of 1847 Richard Coursey, two years old, was found dead of unknown cause in a field near his father's house.⁴⁴ In September of 1847 Joshua Turner, fifteen months old, drowned in his father's still-uncovered well.⁴⁵ In September of 1849 James Atkinson was crushed to death by the wheels of an ox-cart.⁴⁶

Edward Kennedy in 1855 found Biddulph life hard and his own strength insufficient. He escaped into drink and began to doubt his wife Mary's respect and fidelity. Often when drunk he threatened to cut his throat. On April 11, 1855, he said to his wife, "I would rather be in hell through eternity than suffer a damn whore like you."⁴⁷ As he climbed on a chair with a rope around his neck, his wife Mary ran to get help. But by the time she returned he was hanging, dead, with his five-year-old daughter Lucy-Jane watching.

In February of 1857 while Thomas Shea chopped in the bush on his farm, the axe slipping from his cold or careless hands struck him

at the top of his right thigh; he bled to death.⁴⁸ Even years later, Irish axe-men still were becoming victims of the forest: on February 5, 1880, one day after the Donnellys were murdered, John Cutt, while chopping trees on the Roman Line, chopped one tree down upon himself. His leg was broken and pinned tight by the fallen trunk, while policemen searched the woods and concessions for murderers, Cutt froze to death.⁴⁹

In Biddulph, these settlers who in Ireland had had nothing fought fiercely to hold onto lands and possessions which they had suffered so much to acquire. Ownership was difficult and highly prized. Alice Shouldice charged Edward McDonald with trespass for walking through her field while her husband was away; her husband had turned him back before with a warning.⁵⁰ Henry Clark lived on the London-Goderich road in a house which he rented from William Ryan; when his term expired and he would not vacate, Ryan started to build a fence around the property. "So he would not have egress or ingress,"⁵¹ said Ryan. But Henry Clark threw down the fence as fast as Ryan and his helpers put it up. In the village of Cladeboye on Biddulph's western boundary, William Roach rented a house which William Cornish had rented the year before and which Cornish had not wanted to leave. Cornish in spite began to destroy the fence with a spade. Roach sent his son to the house with an axe. "An axe is as good as a spade,"⁵² he said as he drove William Cornish away.

The settlers quarrelled too over livestock which was as valuable as land. Robert Boyd, with no solid fence of his own, let down the fence of his neighbour James Varley. He drove out Varley's cattle, put in his own, and stood at the fence with a whip in his

hand. "I will cut your guts out,"⁵³ he threatened when Varley protested. Ten months later when Boyd tried to impound Varley's ox which was wandering loose, Varley sent his dog to worry the ox until it tore away from Boyd and was free.⁵⁴ When John O'Neil tried to impound George Hodgins' sheep which were straying on the flats of the Little Ausable, Hodgins raised a stick, dared him to fight, and called his sons to take back the animals.⁵⁵ Robert Seale quarrelled with his neighbour Abbott Lewis. "I will dog his cattle,"⁵⁶ Seale threatened. Lewis awoke in the night to hear a dog barking and a cowbell ringing; he found his bell cow with her hind legs torn.

The township roads too were a property over which Biddulph settlers drew boundaries. Where the twelfth concession met the road separating Biddulph and London townships, James Hodgins had stopped in his sleigh. A roadside brush heap blocked the way. John Ryan turning north onto the concession road tried to pass between Hodgins' sleigh and the brush. "Don't run over me,"⁵⁷ Hodgins called and he struck with his whip at Ryan's horses. Ryan's whiffletrees and traces bumped Hodgins' sleigh. "Bastard," Hodgins said and jumped out to pursue Ryan, who took refuge at a nearby shanty.

The bailiff called at the home of James Hogan, an improvident Biddulph Catholic, to garnishee property for a long-defaulted mortgage. Hogan was away in the United States; his wife Mary confronted the bailiff. "You robbed me once before and you shall not do it again,"⁵⁸ she said. When he tried to take the household clock she smashed it. When he tried to take the watch she snatched it into her bosom, daring the bailiff to try to remove it. "I will be damned if you shall seize anything," she said.

The settlers in Biddulph clung to their possessions and to the tiny patches of land they had cleared. They looked out aghast at the forest distances, so unlike their Tipperary villages and gardens. The forests were dangerous, as axemen felling trees discovered to their cost; they were places where other dangers too could hide. John Carter threatened Mary Hodgins while quarrelling in August of 1848. "I'll kill your son," he said, "I will waylay him in the woods."⁵⁹

Settlers unaccustomed to the forests clustered together as tightly as they could, to remember and approximate communal Tipperary. They united independently against outsiders. When an American traveller stopped in Biddulph, James Hodgins spat in his face and threw a glass of whisky which the American ducked to avoid. "I will not let the damned Yankees rule over us," Hodgins said.⁶⁰

Bees and statute labour crews were ways in which the settlers made common front against the forest. The heavy pressures to cooperate made some men rebellious: while a road crew in 1851 cut trees on a concession road, disgruntled George Carter quarrelled with pathmaster George Hodgins. He felled a tree onto the pathmaster's own fence. But the rest of the party rushed up to take his axe away, rebuked him, and later testified against him when Carter was charged with assault.⁶¹

Biddulph settlers clustered together too by marriages. Their families interlocked in pre-arranged alliances; parents and relatives negotiated carefully what each family would contribute to establish the affianced young couple. Dealings and agreement came prior to the marriage, which then united not just man and wife but two entire clans.⁶² Inter-marriages continued until dense networks of kinship bound many

in the Irish concessions tightly together.

The priest of St. Patrick's Catholic parish presided at many of these sacramental alliances. Since the organization of St. Patrick's in 1845, the parish priest, like the priests in Tipperary, exercised firm power to unite and control. Father James O'Flynn was the first priest of St. Patrick's, riding north from London to guide the Catholic settlers.⁶³ In November of 1850, before St. Patrick's first church was erected, Father O'Flynn presided at a wedding in a private home. The groom paid him five dollars before the marriage; Father O'Flynn demanded a note for four dollars more, in accordance with ecclesiastical law designed to expand the finances of the growing diocese. "Nine dollars is too much,"⁶⁴ said the father of the groom, reluctant to part with proceeds of hard labour on his Biddulph farm. He declined to give Father O'Flynn a note. "My word is good enough," he said. Then the priest refused to perform the ceremony.

"Give up the money, or marry the parties," said the father and the brother of the bride, "give up the money or we will make you do so." Father O'Flynn ordered them from the house. "Am I to be ruled by a factious mob?" said the priest in righteous wrath. He raised his cane and struck out at the sacreligious settlers. The father of the groom took the cane away before harm was done, but Father O'Flynn had established his authority. The marriage took place with no more disturbance. Afterwards the groom came to ask his priest's pardon. "Begone you rascal," said the indignant priest, determined not to let his authority slacken in this frontier parish where order was so important.

The Biddulph settlers also found comfort and community in taverns, centres where a man might escape for a time from the forest and its pressure on his shanty home and clearing. Honora Barry charged John Cary in March of 1853 for selling liquor without a license; on Sunday, February 27, she had found her husband buying spirits at Cary's cabin. Other men were calling for whisky, drinking, staggering, or sleeping on the floor.⁶⁵ The settlers looked in taverns for comfort from the tensions of pioneer lives, but those same tensions bred rowdiness and quarrelling. Thomas Grant was thrown from Robert Hodgson's tavern into the road; "I will have no such nuisance in my house,"⁶⁶ proprietor Hodgson said. The rowdy Thomas Grant died on the road, his liver enlarged by liquor, and his broken ribs hastening the fatal inflammation. Patrick Mooney lay drunk in the snow outside Thomas and Bernard Stanley's tavern; when Patrick Ryder tried to raise him up, Mooney thrashing in insensible wrath struck Patrick Ryder a blow on the head. "That is what I get for my civility," said Ryder.⁶⁷

Politics were another way of making a community against the forests. Party adherence united, and those of opposing political creed threatened a comforting kinship. To call oneself Reformer or Conservative was to have a label which--like Papist or Protestant or farm-owner or tavern-mate--brought one into the company of like-minded others. Politics formed a bond whose value in the forests transcended the ephemera of specific issues. Party ties were affirmed, reassuringly, in Canada's turbulent elections.

In December of 1857 in Canada West, the Liberal-Conservatives led by John A. Macdonald were opposed by George Brown's Reformers.

In Biddulph in the riding of Huron, Reformer John Holmes opposed William Cayley the Conservative. The Irish Protestants were Conservatives, the Irish Catholics primarily Reformers. Catholic Andrew Keefe's tavern on the London-Goderich road was in the middle of the two communities. When the Biddulph poll closed on the evening of December 24, warning reached the Conservatives that they should not go down the London road toward Keefe's tavern--"You will be beaten if you go down the road."⁶⁸

Then dozens of Tories gathered to cut stout clubs with their axes. "What is the fuss?" said Patrick McIlhargey, a peacemaking Catholic bystander. "We are going down the road," they answered. "If you do it will be an aggravation. If you do go there will be shouting and ill feelings," he said, "my advice is for all to go home peaceably. The election is all over." "We are going down the road," they said. "There will be bad work done before you return," Patrick McIlhargey predicted.

The Tories loaded into a dozen sleighs and set off in convoy south down the London road. There were Bernard and Thomas Stanley, Mitchell Haskett, William Kent and many others. At Andrew Keefe's tavern they leaped from their sleighs to attack a lone patron straggling in the tavern yard. They beat him with their clubs until Michael Ryan, Keefe's bartender, ran from the inn to rescue. "Shame boys, have mercy on the man," he cried as he tried to drag the man to shelter. "Strike him, strike him," the Protestant Tories cried and threw their clubs at the fleeing bartender. When Michael Ryan reached the inn he and Keefe shuttered the doors and windows. The mob attacked the yard with clubs and axes. Bernard Stanley was the

ringleader, marching back and forth in front of the tavern, urging them on in destruction. The mob cut down Andrew Keefe's inn sign, wrecked his pump, and chopped the spokes from a wagon in the yard. They tore the siding off the building and broke the lower windows to get inside. They smashed furniture and broke open liquor casks. Someone called for a light to find Ryan and Keefe the bloody Papists. Ryan and Keefe ran upstairs to hide. When the inn had been largely demolished, Bernard Stanley and the Tories returned in their sleighs up the London-Goderich road again.

Michael Ryan and Andrew Keefe charged twenty-eight of the attackers whom they had recognized in the crowded darkness. After magistrates' hearings on December 26 and 30, constables took the twenty-eight rioters by wagon to Goderich where they were bailed until a trial, at the Huron and Bruce Quarter Sessions in March,⁶⁹ on a charge of riot. Bernard Stanley threatened the life of James Hodgins, the chief of the committing magistrates. The other magistrates had to order Bernard Stanley to post bonds to keep the peace for one year toward Justice Hodgins.⁷⁰

But the rioters counter-charged Andrew Keefe and Michael Ryan and three other bar patrons with riot.⁷¹ In Goderich at the March Quarter Sessions, when no witnesses could be sure what each of the twenty-eight individual rioters had done, only three were indicted. On March 12 they were all acquitted.⁷² The charges against Andrew Keefe and his friends were postponed until the Spring Assizes and never tried.⁷³ Although later elections in the township of Biddulph were without that violence, politics were always a matter of daily life, and elections were organized with strict devotion.

In all of these many ways, the settlers in the forest constructed tight bonds of community and held fast to property and friends. And as those strong and essential bonds were created, enemies were created of those who refused the bonds. The pressure to fight the wilderness and to co-operate with one's kind led to tensions which in turn led to violence. The struggle for security led even to murder.

Robert McCormack, a Roman Catholic, drank at a Biddulph tavern which was frequented by Protestants. Although usually in the township's history the bonds of religion were firm but not violent, McCormack and a drunken Protestant band quarrelled. Four of the Protestants lived on the third concession; the other, Thomas Harlton, lived on the fifth,⁷⁴ which was the easternmost of the Protestant concessions. On December 20, 1845, Thomas Harlton and his comrades waylaid McCormack and killed him as he travelled in his sleigh through the Biddulph woods.⁷⁵

By December 22, constable Andrew Brown of McGillivray had warrants to arrest the five killers. He searched the London-Goderich road and along the third concession; empty-handed, he rode down the Proof Line road to London for the night. On December 23, with help from another constable, he searched on the Protestant concessions and east as far as the sixth, the westernmost of the Catholic concessions. On January 6, 1846, he searched the London-Goderich road again, and Thomas Harlton's fifth concession, and the third-concession homes of his fellow fugitives.⁷⁶ It was not until May that two of them were finally arrested. Tried at the Huron Spring Assizes at Goderich, both were acquitted. Bench warrants were issued for the other three

killers.⁷⁷

"The parties who killed Robert McCormack were still lurking about concealed in Biddulph,"⁷⁸ constable Andrew Brown learned in September. With help from a magistrate, he searched in Biddulph again, and that month Thomas Harlton was finally arrested. He was taken to the closest gaol, in London, behind the turretted courthouse in the centre of the town. At the Fall Assizes Thomas Harlton was tried for manslaughter; like his companions before him, he was found not guilty.⁷⁹ The other two fugitives were never discovered. Thomas Harlton returned to his fifth-concession Biddulph farm. He prospered: in 1873⁸⁰ he bought the hundred-acre farm behind his own, lot twenty-two on the sixth concession. His was the only Protestant land on the Roman Line. In 1877 Thomas Harlton became insane.⁸¹ After three days in the London gaol he was freed to return to his two hundred acres in Biddulph. He was living there still in 1880 when the Donnelly's were murdered.

Again in February of 1857, the common bonds that held Biddulph proved fatal to an alien. Richard Brimmacombe was an Englishman living near the village of St. Thomas south of London.⁸² He bought land on lot two of the seventh concession of Usborne township, which was what Biddulph's Roman Line became when it crossed Biddulph's northern boundary. In the fall of 1856, at the bee for the raising of Brimmacombe's new home, he intervened in a brawl between his framer and a Biddulph Catholic, whose name was William Casey and whose family's lands spilled over from Biddulph into Usborne. William Casey was losing the fight. He was cut on the head and angry. One of Brimmacombe's new neighbours helped hold Casey back until he

promised that he would be quiet. Then Casey turned on Richard Brimmacombe who had interrupted Casey's private quarrelling. "You will be marked yet some time between this and the gravel road," he promised, referring to the London-Goderich road which the year before had been gravelled for the first time.⁸³ "Me, man?" said Brimmacombe, "what have I done?" "Yes, you," said William Casey and repeated his threat. Then Casey went to a neighbouring farmhouse to have his head wound dressed. "They should not have beat me so badly," he said, "the company at the raising will catch it although it should be in ten years."

The day after the bee, William Casey came by Brimmacombe's home again. He threatened the man who had helped Brimmacombe restrain him. "For one cent I would come and twist your neck," he threatened, "and more besides you will get it when they do not know of it."

The next evening three Caseys stopped one of Brimmacombe's hired men. "Good evening," they said. "Good evening," the hired man replied. "Are you Brimmacombe's man?" they asked. "I am," he said. "You have to take a licking," they said, and clubbed him.

Shortly it was knowledge in Biddulph township that Richard Brimmacombe should not pass down the Roman Line, between his Usborne farm and the London-Goderich gravel road. Afraid of the Caseys, Brimmacombe wanted to sell and move. His wife Ann persuaded him to stay.

In mid-January of 1857, one of Brimmacombe's neighbours on his way home to Usborne passed up the Roman Line. William Casey's father-in-law Patrick Ryder invited him--forced him--into his house to drink. "I will murder Richard Brimmacombe," he assured the

neighbour, "the first time I see him on the line."

At the beginning of February 1857, Brimmacombe returned to St. Thomas for the last of his possessions, two cattle and some bags of grist. William Casey and Patrick Ryder his father-in-law made plans for the time when Brimmacombe would come back north through Biddulph. With his threats against Brimmacombe common knowledge, Casey had to work through an accomplice to avoid suspicion.

On February 6, Richard Brimmacombe returned, in his sleigh with a hired man and the grist and two cows. He stopped to warm himself and to deal in livestock at the tavern of Andrew Keefe, on the London-Goderich road near the Roman Line. As darkness was falling he continued toward the Roman Line to Usborne. An hour before, William Casey in his sleigh had returned north up the line from Patrick Ryder's after making their final arrangements. That afternoon Patrick Ryder had carved a club in his front yard while his neighbour Patrick Whelan watched.

Between the tavern and the Roman Line, a high drift of snow upset Brimmacombe's sleigh and men and cows and bags of grist toppled out. A passerby helped to right the sleigh. To lighten the sleigh's load, Brimmacombe decided to continue on foot, driving the cows. He sent his hired man ahead with the team and sleigh. When the hired man had disappeared ahead into the darkness on the Roman Line, Patrick Ryder came from behind and with his heavy wooden club hit Richard Brimmacombe, on the side of the head above the left eye. Richard Brimmacombe fell in the snow, with a five-inch skull-fracture and a rupture in a central artery to the brain. "It is too bad that the man was murdered," said William Casey's mother when she heard, "they

might have given him a beating and then let him go."

When Brimmacombe did not arrive where the hired man waited, he drove on home to Usborne. Before Richard Brimmacombe's body was cold the Roman Line settlers who had known he would be marked came from their cabins with lanterns to see. One settler went back to the tavern to tell Andrew Keefe. Another stayed to guard the body from being torn by the settlers' roaming hogs. Andrew Keefe took Brimmacombe's pocketbook and with one companion rode north into Usborne. First they told the hired man. Then they went to Brimmacombe's home to tell his wife. "Your husband is hurt," they told her, "and we want to get the team."

"Is he hurt very bad?" said Ann Brimmacombe. Andrew Keefe said he did not think that he was.

"Is he able to sit up in the sleigh?" she said. Andrew Keefe said that he did not think he was.

"Would it not be better to take a buffalo robe and a pillow," Ann Brimmacombe said as she dressed to go with them. But then they handed her her husband's pocketbook.

"Is he sensible?" Ann Brimmacombe asked.

"No," said the hired man, "nor ever will be more." Then the sleigh went off to bring back the body from Biddulph.

"I wish I had died two years before this death," said Andrew Keefe. The wife of the hired man asked him why. "Then I would not have known of this death," said Keefe. "It is too bad to have taken place in a Christian land. But he is better off than I am because a man cut off as he was is sure to go to heaven."

"We are commanded to watch and pray for the call," said the hired

man's wife, "for it cometh like a thief in the night."

Three days later, Andrew Keefe drove a county constable from Usborne to the home of Patrick Ryder. They asked Ryder peaceably to open his door. But Patrick Ryder came to his window, with a pistol in one hand and a shotgun in the other: "I will put into you the contents of what I have in my hand, if you do not leave the premises," he said. The constable saw a man run from Ryder's to a neighbouring farm for help. Knowing that he could not face a Biddulph mob alone, he left without arresting Patrick Ryder.

The nearest Biddulph magistrate was William Ryan who lived beside Andrew Keefe's tavern. He did nothing to investigate the murder; instead, he kept secret the names of known witnesses.⁸⁴ It was the Exeter coroner, John Hyndman, who organized an inquest. On February 9, 10, and 11, Usborne jurymen heard thirteen witnesses; but only four Biddulph settlers came to testify. The fearful jurymen concluded that Richard Brimmacombe had been murdered, by "person or persons unknown not having the fear of God before their eyes but moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil."⁸⁵ Shortly afterward, Patrick Ryder surrendered. The Biddulph coroner, Patrick Flanagan, urged that Patrick Ryder be bailed. When the Exeter coroner disagreed, Patrick Flanagan was furious. "There is no need of you being doubly dutiful in this case," Flanagan told constable Joseph Case who was given the charge of the prisoner Ryder. "How would you like your stones broken by them?" he warned.⁸⁶

On February 20 an anonymous Usborne settler wrote to tell the coroner about the massive evidence against Casey and Ryder. "My name I will not write," he said, "for my people is living right

amongst them.⁸⁷ But in Goderich at the Huron and Bruce Spring Assizes, the only evidence produced was reluctant and fragmentary. Biddulph settlers were unco-operative, and Usborne folk were afraid; all of them came to court armed for self-defence. The Crown prosecutor realized that there was not enough evidence to indict Patrick Ryder. But he ordered William Casey's arrest and arranged another magistrates' investigation, this time in Biddulph near the site of the murder.⁸⁸ A county constable spent thirteen days⁸⁹ summoning forty-two witnesses. After several days of testimony from reluctant Biddulph settlers, the magistrates committed William Casey for trial. On the way to Goderich gaol, handcuffed, William Casey escaped from two constable guards. One of the constables was Joseph Case whom Biddulph magistrate Patrick Flanagan had threatened. Both constables were indicted at the Huron May Quarter Sessions for allowing their prisoner to escape.⁹⁰ But both were freed on bail and neither was ever tried.⁹¹

Casey and Ryder remained in Biddulph, aided and sheltered by neighbouring settlers. Two whole years later, in March of 1859, a sturdy Biddulph magistrate, James Hodgins, filed secretly before Judge Robert Cooper of Huron County Court an information which again accused Patrick Ryder of the murder. Hodgins named people in Biddulph who were holding back important information: Patrick and Ann Whelan, John Whelan their son, Michael Carroll and seven other settlers.⁹² The county judge decided to tell the Canada West Attorney-General, John A. Macdonald, about conditions in this town-ship:

One case in particular, the murder of Brimmacombe, of which Ryder was accused, has given us much trouble and led to much expense, and Ryder is still at large. The state of the neighbourhood is very bad, owing to the fear each entertains of his neighbour and the fights which occasionally take place. The J.P.s are not safe. I for one always go thro' there in daylight. The coroner is in real danger. Now we have to get at the names of the witnesses, but if Ryder is arrested they will all bolt for fear of his violence should he be acquitted.

I have done my best in charges to the grand jury to persuade them against the old Irish system of shielding criminals--"won't be an informer"--and so forth...⁹³

On July 20 of that same year, 1859, William Casey was again arrested.⁹⁴

Judge Cooper tried his best to keep Casey in gaol in Goderich,⁹⁵ but with witnesses still shuffling and evading, Casey could not be tried at the Huron Fall Assizes. He was bailed again on October 5.⁹⁶

Two months later, the Huron and Bruce Clerk of the Peace, Ira Lewis, also reported the murders to Attorney-General Macdonald. "It is a most dangerous neighbourhood where the murder was committed,"⁹⁷ he said. In March of 1860, Osborne coroner Hyndman still argued that something must be done: "Get the whole crew up and strike terror if nothing else."⁹⁸ Although plans were made again for a Spring Assizes trial,⁹⁹ it was not until the Spring Assizes of 1862 that Casey and

Ryder finally were tried. The prosecutor stopped in the middle of proceedings when he could not extract anything of importance from his witnesses. The judge ordered the jury to acquit; he set the prisoners free. "It is to be hoped," he said, "that your future lives will be such that no such imputations could again be brought against you."¹⁰⁰

Three years later, in September of 1865, Patrick Ryder was beheaded by a train on the Grand Trunk Railway track in Biddulph.¹⁰¹

William Casey, like Thomas Harlton who had killed Robert McCormack, lived on unmolested in Biddulph. Like Harlton, he prospered and

bought another hundred-acre farm. His farms were next to Harlton's on the Roman Line.¹⁰² But unlike Thomas Harlton he did not become insane. William Casey was appointed a magistrate in the fall of 1879, and used his new judicial authority to help harrass the Donnellys.¹⁰³

In 1859 when Casey and Ryder had been at large for almost three years, there was one more Biddulph murder, and two more fugitive killers. On Christmas Day of 1859,¹⁰⁴ Michael Cain, a Roman-Line widower, went to search for his truant daughter who was not home on this special festive occasion. Drunk, he called at the home of William Cahalan where he suspected that his daughter might be. William Cahalan's terrified daughter ran to find her parents, who came to quarrel with Cain on the Roman Line in the cold. "Shame for arguing on Christmas Day," a passerby called. Michael Cain knocked Mrs. Cahalan down; William Cahalan knocked Michael Cain down. Michael Cain's twelve-year-old son James arrived. With the wooden seat-board from his father's sleigh he struck Cahalan three times and killed him, while Mrs. Cahalan begged him to stop and William Cahalan cried, "Oh Jim don't."

The day after Christmas, Coroner Hyndman of Exeter issued warrants for the arrest of James and Michael Cain. The three-year-old Brimacombe murder still irked him as he moved against the Cains. "Try to strike some terror into them," he urged, "and make the Ryder party tremble."¹⁰⁵ On December 27 a constable chased the Cains along the London-Goderich road, on Biddulph's southern boundary, on the ninth, tenth, eleventh, thirteenth and fourteenth concessions, and into Blanshard township to the east.¹⁰⁶ The coroner convened an

inquest at the dead man's house. After a brief hearing he adjourned, hoping that the killers could be taken.¹⁰⁷ On December 28 a constable rode east to St. Marys¹⁰⁸ while another constable searched in London.¹⁰⁹ On December 29 a constable chased the Cains on the sixth and seventh and tenth and eleventh concessions and along Biddulph's southern boundary.¹¹⁰ "Good God," the coroner wrote to County Judge Cooper in Goderich, "are men to be murdered and ruined in this shameful manner and no one to take steps in the matter only a poor devil of a county Doctor? Come or send and let us act together. I have no one here worth a snap."¹¹¹

On January 5, 1860, with neither of the Cains yet in custody, coroner Hyndman reconvened his inquest. The jury heard the story of the Cahalan widow and her children and of eleven other unwilling witnesses.¹¹² Judge Cooper sent Clerk of the Peace Ira Lewis from Goderich to help.¹¹³ When the jury agreed that murder had been committed, constables set off again in pursuit of the Cains: on January 6 on Biddulph's eleven concession, on January 8 and 9 in London and Nissouri townships, on January 14 on Biddulph's second and third concessions, on February 3 and 4 in McGillivray and Stephen townships, on February 5 on the Biddulph-Usborne town line and on Biddulph's tenth and eleventh concessions, and on February 17 and 18 in the city of London¹¹⁴ whence the Cains escaped finally to the United States. A tired and frustrated Biddulph constable complained that he had "served as many papers if regularly filed that would make a column at least my own height," that he "lay many a night under a log or fence bearing the hardships of the weather watching when it did not count one mile."¹¹⁵ Clerk of the Peace Ira Lewis reported

the escape to Attorney-General John A. Macdonald: "There is a section of the township of Biddulph inhabited by the lower order of Roman Catholics where a person's life is not considered of any value."¹¹⁶

A year later in early March of 1861, James and Michael Cain returned to Canada and to Biddulph, where they stayed unarrested. Clerk of the Peace Ira Lewis appealed again to the Attorney-General: "To have them arrested and safely brought out of their neighbourhood will require more than ordinary force and prudence. Our county magistrates are too indifferent in such matters."¹¹⁷ Finally in mid-April Michael Cain was arrested, but James his young son escaped again to the States.¹¹⁸ On July 1 with witnesses and evidence wanting, it was obvious that a trial would be futile. Michael Cain was set free on bail¹¹⁹ and never tried. The Cain family stayed in Biddulph until 1865 where Michael Cain farmed on three different lots without success.¹²⁰ His last home in Biddulph was on the south fifty acres of lot eighteen in the sixth concession. Their neighbours on the north half were the Donnelly family, who earlier had possessed the south half as well, had fought to keep it but had been evicted.¹²¹

Biddulph like much of the country in the 1850s was forested and violent. Its people wished for progress and for the civilizing virtues of technology. The colony of Canada was maturing; it was self-governing; it was growing in population and in economic strength. With passionate enthusiasm, railroads were being planned and constructed across the colony, railroads in transport networks that would transfigure a wilderness into an economic marvel. The

making of railroads would be the making of a modern Canada.¹²² Most ambitious and biggest of all was the Grand Trunk line, which would join all of Canada from east to west in one modern and prosperous whole. In the Ontario peninsula the Grand Trunk Railway would pass from Toronto through Guelph, Stratford, St. Marys, on its way to its terminus at Sarnia on Lake Huron. It would have to pass through the township of Biddulph.

Any land along the route of a railroad became automatically valuable.¹²³ The best property in Biddulph township would be near the junction of the Grand Trunk Railway and the London-Goderich road, the centre of traffic and commerce. The railroad would have to cross the gravel road not far southeast of where the road crossed the Little Ausable River. The land along this piece of road had always been prime and favoured land. The first Biddulph settlers, the blacks, had settled there. But then the white Irish Protestants had arrived, filling and controlling all of the western concessions near the London-Goderich road. Not content to be farmers, many Irish Protestants had aspired to be merchants and men of commercial stature. Some had coveted the roadside lands of the blacks near the river. They had tried to force the black men away from what was prime land even before the Grand Trunk Railway came.

Thomas Stanley was one of the earliest influential Irish-Protestant mercantiles. In 1848 on the London-Goderich road he owned a store which sold groceries and liquor. His establishment was a centre for ambitious and violent Irish Protestant settlers. Blacks lived beside him and across the road. Thomas Stanley rented one extra acre of roadside land from William Bell, the black man who

lived beside him. On that land Thomas Stanley erected a smith's forge as he began to expand his small Biddulph empire. But when he moved his forge across the London-Goderich road onto Negro land which he had not rented, resistant blacks pulled down Stanley's forge. They threw the pieces into the road and built a stronger fence around the property. Thomas Stanley and his Irish Protestant patrons built his forge up once again.¹²⁴ "We will look the best of the Negroes,"¹²⁵ Thomas Stanley's brother Benjamin vowed. "My brother is offended by a couple of people," said Bernard Stanley, another brother, "and he will be revenged if he goes to hell for it."

Irish Protestant Peter Johnson also was bent on owning Negro land, where the London-Goderich road met the road between the second and the third concessions. "If I do not get a certain piece of land," he said sardonically, "something very serious will happen and a gallow might be erected for me." "If I do not get satisfaction respecting that land," Peter Johnson said again two months later, "I will heat that corner hotter than ever it has been yet."

Then on October 19, 1848, Thomas and Bernard and Benjamin Stanley united with Peter Johnson and with eight other Irish Protestant settlers. They gathered all day brooding and plotting at Thomas Stanley's grocery. That night they set William Bell's hay and straw stacks burning. They burned the wheat and the hay and straw stacks of Daniel Turner, who was the black settlement's Methodist preacher. Another black named Ephraim Taylor awoke in time to see his stacks too in flames. The fire spread to Ephraim Taylor's barn and outbuildings where he had stored his fall harvest, one hundred and fifty bushels of wheat and two hundred bushels of oats.

A fourth black farmer named Peter Butler awoke to the cries of "Fire" in the settlement, and discovering that it was black men's property that was burning he hurried out into the night to guard his own buildings. Bernard and Thomas Stanley returned from the fires to the Stanley home again. No Irish Protestant settlers came to help put out the blazes.

Ephraim Taylor charged twelve Irish Protestants including Thomas and Benjamin and Bernard Stanley, Peter Johnson, and Stanley's blacksmith James Robinson. They were all arrested but the Irish Protestant magistrate who listened to their alibis refused to commit them for trial. Although the Attorney-General of Upper Canada offered a fifty-pound reward¹²⁶ for conviction of the arsonists, no one was ever tried or punished.

The few black colonists who had persisted since the early 1830s, in spite of the climate and the forest and the hostile Canada Company, would not be forced away by these latest enemies. Peter Johnson still coveted the land which was occupied by Negroes, the land on the south bank of the Little Ausable where the London-Goderich road crossed the second and third concession road. The property belonged to Mrs. Mary Ann Thompson. On March 13, 1849, five months after the arsons, Peter Johnson sat on her fence armed with a pitchfork. "You shall not go in there anymore," he said when Mary Ann Thompson arrived, "I have taken possession in your absence."¹²⁷ When she moved past him Peter Johnson hit her with his fist and pushed her from her door. She ran away, terrified, across the bridge and up the moraine hill on the other side to watch. Thomas Stanley's blacksmith James Robinson ran from his forge next door. He broke down

the Thompson door and with Peter Johnson, who still carried his pitchfork, threw her bedclothes and foodstuffs into the road. Mary Ann Thompson ran back to defend her possessions. Peter Johnson threw her on the floor and began to choke her with his hands. She screamed "Murder," and black neighbours arrived to help--Reverend Daniel Turner and William Bell, whose stacks and barns had burned the autumn before. Daniel Turner took Johnson by the collar and threw him out of Mary Ann Thompson's house. "Whatever is right will be done," said Reverend Turner. Johnson and James Robinson went away.

Biddulph disappointed the faith of Reverend Daniel Turner. In Goderich at the Huron Quarter Sessions in April, Peter Johnson and James Robinson were indicted for assault and forcible entry. But James Robinson was acquitted, and Peter Johnson escaped. He was never captured, tried, or punished.¹²⁸ The black men could not resist forever the cold and the woods and the Canada Company and now the ambitious Irish-Protestant merchant-settlers who surrounded them. The Wilberforce colony dwindled away. After the Neutral Indians and the Chippewas, the blacks were the third race to fail in Biddulph. Very few black families remained by the time the Donnellys were murdered in February of 1880.¹²⁹

The Grand Trunk Railway moved only slowly toward Biddulph and that land on the London-Goderich road which the black men had been unable to hold on to. The Grand Trunk's weak finances were hopelessly disproportionate to the vast expense of a railroad across Canada. In the spring of 1854, the company stopped its early work on the stretch of track from St. Marys to Sarnia,¹³⁰ the track that would pass through Biddulph township. In the spring of 1855 John A.

Macdonald's Liberal-Conservative government lent the railroad nine hundred thousand pounds to keep construction from foundering completely.¹³¹ The opposition party of George Brown's Reformers fought the railroad and the Conservative politicians, some of whom were Grand Trunk directors or shareholders. To Reformers the Grand Trunk was ill-conceived, over-costly, and corrupt.

In the spring of 1856, the railroad was bankrupt again. The Liberal-Conservative Inspector-General was William Cayley, whose Huron riding (which included Biddulph) the railroad still had not reached. Cayley led a battle in the Legislature for passage of a bill which would grant the Grand Trunk financiers the use of two million pounds in provincial bonds. Four hundred and fifty thousand pounds would be designated for the section from St. Marys to Sarnia through Cayley's own riding, through the township of Biddulph. During most of June of 1856, George Brown and the Reformers fought against that bill and the partnership of Grand Trunk financiers with Liberal-Conservatives who owned Grand Trunk stock. But William Cayley's bill received third reading in the Legislature on June 24. It passed the Legislative Council on June 27, and received the Governor-General's royal assent on July 1, 1856.¹³²

The railroad construction toward Biddulph continued. In the spring of 1857 the railroad needed Liberal-Conservative help again. Macdonald's government passed another helpful legislative measure which formally rendered the railroad's debt to the government of Canada a secondary and not a primary liability. It was 1858 when the Grand Trunk Railroad completed its final survey of a path through Biddulph en route to Sarnia. Only one black man's land was along

that line.¹³³

While capitalists and politicians struggled over the power which a railroad commanded, within the township of Biddulph too there was quarrelling over railroad profit. The Grand Trunk offered contracts to Biddulph settlers to cut trees in the railroad's path. Innkeeper Andrew Keefe on the London-Goderich road was one who wanted a railroad cutting contract. But the Grand Trunk's surveyed line crossed lot twenty-eight on both sides of the Roman Line,¹³⁴ and the father and son who owned those two farms wanted the cutting contract for themselves. In May of 1857, seven months before the time that a Protestant Conservative mob destroyed Andrew Keefe's tavern, a member of that Roman-Line family tried to hire Patrick Hogan to burn down that same tavern. When Patrick Hogan refused, after dark on July 25 five men of the competitor family and two of their comrades took matches and percussion caps and set Keefe's stables on fire. The same Patrick Hogan sighted them as they crept towards the inn itself where two large kegs of dynamite were stored. When Hogan sounded an alarm they fled. But Keefe's driving-house burned, and seven horses inside, and tons of hay and straw, and the wagon of a pedlar who was staying at Keefe's tavern for the night.¹³⁵

It was a month before the frightened Patrick Hogan told what he had seen to magistrate William Ryan. Ryan who lived beside Keefe's tavern did nothing to investigate the burning, just as he had done nothing to investigate the murder of Richard Brimmacombe seven months before. It was not magistrate William Ryan but Biddulph's reeve Henry Hodgins who issued warrants to arrest the seven arsonists. On August 31 county constables arrested them.¹³⁶ After four days of

hearings the magistrate committed them for trial.¹³⁷ Six constables escorted the seven prisoners on the overnight trip to the Huron County gaol at Goderich.¹³⁸

All were free on bail by the end of September.¹³⁹ For want of witnesses their trial was delayed until the April Sessions in 1859. By then the prime witness Patrick Hogan had lost courage. On April 29 their trial was postponed; Patrick Hogan had disappeared. The arsonists were discharged¹⁴⁰ and never after re-arrested. Two of those same arsonists still lived on Roman-Line farms in 1880 when the Donnellys were murdered.¹⁴¹

Thus amid the fighting for its land and its contracts and favours, the Grand Trunk Railway moved through Biddulph township. On November 21, 1859,¹⁴² the line was officially opened from St. Marys through to Sarnia. On land where Wilberforce had been, the railroad village of Lucan appeared. At the first auction of lots on the proposed new town site, almost all of the thirty-nine purchasers were Irish Protestants.¹⁴³ Only one black man, Peter Butler, still owned land there that could not be parcelled off at auction. The presence of the Grand Trunk Railway assured that the new village's commerce would succeed. In the year of the railroad's opening, Bernard and William Stanley built Lucan's first brick mansions with the profits from a grain mill and warehouse depot.¹⁴⁴ The Queen's Hotel, Central Hotel, grocery and foundry and hardware and liquor store came quickly. By 1880, the year of the Donnelly murders, Lucan had a population of more than a thousand.¹⁴⁵ Lucan merchants supplied the needs of farmers who no longer were pioneers. Other Lucan merchants bought their grain and their livestock, and shipped the produce on the Grand Trunk Railway to markets in far parts of the Dominion.¹⁴⁶

CHAPTER 2

THE DONNELLY FAMILY

James Donnelly, Johannah Donnelly, and their newborn¹ son James Jr. arrived in the province of Canada in 1842.² They were natives of Tipperary County, Ireland,³ moving to Canada after the news that the Canada Company's Huron Tract land could be had by lease and without down payment. James Donnelly was five feet five inches tall; he had black hair and grey eyes and was twenty-six years old.⁴ Johannah was twenty-one; she was taller than her husband and almost as strong.⁵ The Donnelly family came to the village of London in Canada West, where James Donnelly worked for three years for other men,⁶ trying to gather capital to begin his own farm somewhere in the Huron Tract bush. There in London in the winter of 1845,⁷ the second Donnelly son, William, was born. Strong sons would be wanted to help build a farm, but William was born lame with a club foot.⁸

Early in the spring of 1845, James Donnelly went north on the Proof Line road into Biddulph township and onto the new Roman Line, where on the vacant⁹ lot eighteen of the sixth concession he built a shanty.¹⁰ In the fall of 1843 an earlier settler had leased that hundred acres, had failed, and had abandoned his lease and his land.¹¹ James Donnelly did not clear or plant on the land that was not yet his own. The Donnelly family did not stay in Biddulph that year.¹² But James Donnelly had marked the land that he hoped would be his own,

1845 was also the year that Thomas Harlton and his companions murdered the Biddulph settler Robert McCormack.

In the fall of the following year, on October 27, 1846, that same lot eighteen of the sixth concession was leased by the Canada Company, not to James Donnelly, but to John Grace who lived on the second concession of London township.¹³ James Donnelly, who could not afford Canada Company terms, could deal with John Grace the new lessee. In the spring of 1847, the Donnelly family moved to Biddulph to stay--not at first on Grace's lot eighteen of the sixth concession, but across the Roman Line and almost one mile south, on lot twenty-one of the seventh concession which also belonged to John Grace.¹⁴ All around James Donnelly settlers were cutting trees to clear their land; James Donnelly was an inquest juror in April when Michael McCormick was killed by a falling sapling.¹⁵ The third Donnelly son, John, was born in September.¹⁶

In 1848 James Donnelly and his family returned to rent his earlier choice, John Grace's lot eighteen on the sixth concession.¹⁷ They did not move again. After six landless years in Canada, the Donnelly family had a farm and a home.

1848 was the year that the Irish Protestants of Biddulph burned the barns of the Wilberforce black men. In the Catholic section of the township, James Donnelly began in earnest to settle his own one hundred rented forest acres. He had no land cleared that spring of 1848, but he had saved to buy his first livestock, three hogs which could forage in the woods and in the clearing around the log shanty.¹⁸ At the township annual meeting in January of 1848, the settlers appointed James Donnelly a highway overseer for the Roman

Line road in front of his home.¹⁹ James Donnelly was both citizen and settler. In his first full year in Biddulph, James Donnelly's labour increased the value of his property by more than one dollar an acre.²⁰

In the summer of 1849 James Donnelly worked at his share of road-building along his concession,²¹ and he worked long and hard at the clearing of his own farmland. He planted four acres of wheat and two of potatoes. He harvested thirty bushels of potatoes and fifteen bushels of grain.²² That year the Donnelly family increased again: the fourth son was born and named Patrick, after his uncle, James Donnelly's brother, who still lived in Tipperary.²³ The Donnelly family farm in Biddulph was substantially cleared and established.

In 1853 and 1854 the price of wheat was high. Crimean warfare disrupted Britain's supply of grain from eastern Europe; wheat from the Canadian colony was needed to feed Britain at war.²⁴ Scores of Huron Tract settlers by the mid-1850s were able with harvest profits to buy their leases from the Canada Company, and so to own their land outright.²⁵ In those years the Donnelly family worked and saved toward purchase of the farm which still they only rented. By 1855 all of the Donnelly farm was cleared, with only the necessary woodlot left in forest.²⁶ In those same early years of the 1850s, three more Donnelly sons were born: Michael in the fall of 1850, Robert in 1853, Thomas in September of 1854.²⁷ Seven Donnelly sons had been born to James and Johannah: James Jr., William, John, Patrick, Michael, Robert, Thomas. The eldest had been born in Ireland, the second in London village; the rest had been born on lot eighteen of

Biddulph's sixth concession?

After two years of prosperity, on October 2, 1855, John Grace like so many others paid off his final installment, receiving the deed to the lot which the Donnellys farmed.²⁸ With land for the moment so valuable, John Grace decided to sell. On December 10, 1855, he sold the south fifty acres of his land to Michael Maher who lived in John Grace's own London township.²⁹ Grace sold for four pounds an acre the land which nine years ago when he had taken possession had sold for thirteen shillings.³⁰ Although part of that profit was due to the high price paid for the grain which those acres could yield, part was due also to James Donnelly's improvements. James Donnelly had no wish to pay so high a price for land which his own labour had helped to make valuable. He refused to give up that half of his farm which was sold to another.

Across the Roman Line and two lots north, on lot sixteen of the seventh concession, were the hundred acres where Patrick Farrell lived with his wife Sarah and five children.³¹ In a time of prosperity Patrick Farrell was falling in debt,³² finding it hard to hold on to the farm he had worked to clear. These two troubled settlers James Donnelly and Patrick Farrell quarrelled with each other in that same month when Donnelly saw half of his farm sold away. On December 19, 1855, the unhappy Donnelly fired a shot at his equally unfortunate neighbour.³³

Although a Biddulph magistrate issued a warrant the same day for Donnelly's arrest, no constable could be found to pursue him. "The man is likely to go at large," said the magistrate,³⁴ but a few days later James Donnelly surrendered.³⁵ After a magistrate's

examination on December 29, James Donnelly was freed on bail until a trial at the Huron Spring Assizes in Goderich.³⁶ On March 6, 1856, at his trial where Andrew Keefe the tavernkeeper was a witness, James Donnelly was bound for one year to keep the peace toward Patrick Farrell.³⁷

In the winter of 1856 the Crimean War had ended. Canadian grain prices fell disastrously. Many farmers had held their 1855 crop, hoping for prices to rise even higher. They were ruined. In the month of James Donnelly's trial for shooting at Farrell; a bankrupt farmer near London became insane; near Galt a farmer committed suicide.³⁸ James Donnelly stayed on his hundred-acre farm, but he did not pay his taxes that year,³⁹ unable and unwilling to pay for land which he seemed about to lose.

John Grace the owner and his buyer Michael Maher waited until late in the spring. Then on May 26, 1856, they sued to eject James Donnelly and to recover both halves of the hundred-acre property.⁴⁰ A hearing was convened in the Huron Court of Common Pleas, in Goderich on August 20. When James Donnelly did not appear,⁴¹ the court granted a writ of ejectment which was passed to the sheriff of Huron to execute.⁴²

But after all James Donnelly and his family were not evicted. John Grace stopped fighting the Donnelly will to stay and the Donnelly moral right to the farm they themselves had fashioned from wilderness. On September 2, 1856, John Grace sold the north half of the property to James Donnelly for one pound per acre.⁴³ The price was a quarter of what Maher had paid, a price that even in depression times the Donnelly family could afford. After fourteen years in

Canada the Donnellys owned land.

But the south fifty acres were gone, owned and occupied by Michael Maher. Maher lived there until 1864 when he sold to Michael Feeheley--for \$300, much less than the price Maher had paid.⁴⁴ Feeheley did not live on his land: it was occupied by Michael Cain who had murdered William Cahalan on Christmas Day in 1859.⁴⁵ One year later Feeheley sold, for \$1200, to John Cain of a different Cain family.⁴⁶ Michael Cain left Biddulph, permanently. John Cain was still the Donnellys' neighbour when they were murdered in February of 1880.

~~In 1856~~ grain prices had fallen ruinously and James Donnelly had lost half his land; in 1857 came a worse disaster. On June 25, 1857, James Donnelly arrived at a logging bee⁴⁷ on the farm of his friends, Cornelius and William Maloney, who lived across the Roman Line and one farm north, on lot seventeen of the seventh concession. This bee was eight months after the raising bee for Richard Brimmacombe where William Casey, interrupted from fighting, had threatened the life of Richard Brimmacombe. It was five months since Richard Brimmacombe had been murdered by William Casey and his father-in-law Patrick Ryder on the Roman Line.

At the logging bee James Donnelly was in a quarrelsome mood and not eager to work. The grog boss was lax; James Donnelly drank too much. Patrick Farrell was at the bee too, and drunk. In January of that depression year Patrick Farrell had had to mortgage his farm to George Goddhue, a London financier; in February he had had to sell fifteen acres outright. Like Donnelly, he seemed to be losing his hold in the township; like Donnelly, at the bee he was drunk and bitter.

There were eighteen men at the bee altogether, and three teams of oxen hauling logs. James Donnelly drove one team although he was growing too drunk to be efficient. After the noon meal, Patrick Farrell reopened his grudge against James Donnelly for shooting at him eighteen months before. Donnelly and Farrell walked aside into a potato field where they fought for twenty minutes, too drunk to do one another damage. By persuasion and by holding them apart, other workers stopped the fighting. "Are you beat? I am not," James Donnelly boasted. The grog boss gave them no more liquor; he gave up the bottle to William Maloney.

But neither Farrell nor Donnelly returned to help with logging. Donnelly asked a chew of tobacco from a logger. When Farrell's team was ready to lift their next log, the man at Farrell's end complained. "My comrade Farrell is away," he said. Donnelly and Farrell were fighting again, too drunk to swing their fists hard or even to stay standing. Farrell picked up a wooden handspike. Peacemakers pulled them apart again. "Do not touch me again," Farrell threatened the man who held him back. "I have had enough," he said, "I will fight no more."

But he would not give up the handspike. When the loggers walked away again, Farrell fell down on his hands and knees. In that moment when he knelt on the ground, James Donnelly picked up another wooden handspike and raised it with both arms above his head. One man rushed back, and when he realized that he would not be in time threw his own handspike in between to try to deflect the blow. But the single drunken blow of Donnelly's handspike hit the half-risen Farrell on the left side of the top of his head. Many who

could not see the fight heard the blow.

"The man is down," a logger cried, "Donnelly has struck him."
 "Donnelly the man is dead," others said, "Donnelly you have murdered
 the man." James Donnelly stood still; then he took off his shirt and
 walked away southwest, across the half-logged field toward his own
 home.

All of the teams stopped work. Men carried the body to
 William Maloney's home. A small boy was sent to tell Sarah Farrell.
 "Come over to the concession," he told her. "What is the matter?"
 she said, "Is Patrick Farrell hurt or killed? Who done it?" "Oh,
 who done it before," the boy answered and Sarah Farrell knew then
 that James Donnelly, who had shot at her husband before, had killed
 him. The body was brought back to Farrell's mortgaged home. There
 was a four-inch cut above his left ear. A main artery to his brain
 was ruptured. His skull was fractured: when a doctor tried to
 perform a post mortem, part of Farrell's skull came loose in his
 hand.

James Donnelly was at his own home on the day after the
 killing. On the second day after, he called on a neighbour to say
 that he was sorry for what he had done. On the third day after,
 coroner John Hyndman of Exeter convened an inquest. Five months
 earlier, coroner Hyndman had held an inquest into the murder of
 Richard Brimmacombe. Hyndman summoned twelve witnesses, but only
 nine would come.⁴⁸ After one day's hearing he adjourned, ordering
 constables to arrest James Donnelly. But Donnelly could not be
 found. Some rumours said that he was still in the neighbourhood,
 others that he had fled from Biddulph.

Already on June 27, two days after the killing, and on June 28 the first day of the inquest, one constable had tried to make the arrest.⁴⁹ But Donnelly had fled, from the London-Goderich road east into Nissouri township, west into London township and north again into Biddulph. Settlers along his way hid him in their homes. Two constables tried on June 30, pursuing from the London-Goderich road to Biddulph's eleventh concession and then south to the Proof Line road. Another tried on July 2, searched overnight and again on July 3, all along Biddulph's ninth concession. Three constables rode thirty-three miles searching on July 8 and 9. Then attempts to arrest James Donnelly ceased for that summer.

A Huron County magistrate at the September Quarter Sessions Court urged a reward for Donnelly's capture.⁵⁰ On September 26 the Huron County council posted a bounty of \$400, and asked the provincial government for funds to offer \$400 more. "The murderer Donnelly has since eluded justice although efforts have been made to arrest him," John Holmes the Huron warden informed the Provincial Secretary in Toronto, "yet such is the state of society in his neighbourhood that as soon as the officers of justice approach he is apprised thereof and hitherto has escaped."⁵¹

James Donnelly's trial for murder was scheduled for the Huron Fall Assizes in Goderich. But the trial was postponed and the logging bee witnesses were told that they need not come until Donnelly had been captured.⁵² At those same Huron Fall Assizes of 1857, Patrick Ryder and William Casey were to be tried for the February murder of Richard Brimmacombe; like Donnelly, those killers too were at large, and their trials were postponed.⁵³

With a \$400 bounty offered for Donnelly, constables began again to chase him.⁵⁴ On October 15 they travelled twenty-two miles searching. On October 16 they travelled ten more miles, and stayed all night watching in the cold woods by the Donnelly cabin, hoping that he would come home. The next day they rode four more miles in search; one of them hunted through Biddulph and north into Usborne. On October 18 and October 19 they pursued James Donnelly for thirty-five miles, through Biddulph and west into the township of McGillivray. Always Donnelly eluded them, and always Biddulph settlers helped him hide.

Four weeks later on November 12, two constables searched eighteen miles through the woods near Donnelly's house. On November 13 there were three of them hunting in those same woods. After these last wasted efforts in the forests and unfriendly neighbourhoods of Biddulph, constables would search no more. One officer tried, briefly, in January and February; then the pursuit was completely abandoned. In January the provincial government decided that there was no use in offering more reward.⁵⁵ In his home township James Donnelly could not be taken.

In the winter of 1858, the eighth and last Donnelly child was born. The last child was the only daughter, Jennie, born while her father was a fugitive.⁵⁶ In May, James Donnelly's brother Patrick arrived from Tipperary, Ireland.⁵⁷ Emigrating to build his own life afresh he stopped in Biddulph to help his brother's troubled family. For a summer, autumn, winter, and most of a spring James Donnelly had been in flight or in hiding. Then on May 7, with the help of his brother and of a fourth-concession friend, Mitchell Haskett, James

Donnelly surrendered to the Huron authorities.⁵⁸

Immediately, on May 8 and 9, the witnesses to the Farrell killing were subpoenaed,⁵⁹ in time for a trial at the Huron Spring Assizes. After only five days in the Goderich gaol, James Donnelly was indicted for murder. On May 14 he was tried and convicted and received his sentence from Justice John Beverley Robinson: "to be taken to gaol from whence he came thence on the seventeenth September to the place of execution there to be hanged by the neck until dead."⁶⁰

In Biddulph and in the townships adjacent which for ten months had sheltered James Donnelly, settlers were shocked at the sentence. Patrick Ryder and William Casey had plotted and murdered Brimmacombe deliberately; Donnelly while drunk and provoked had hit one unlucky blow. During May and June of 1858 settlers signed a petition to the Executive Council of the province of Canada, asking that James Donnelly's death sentence be commuted.⁶¹ The mayor and citizens of Goderich prepared another petition.⁶²

On July 26, 1858, the Executive Council of the province convened--the Governor-General Sir Edmund Head, John A. Macdonald, Georges Cartier and the seven government ministers, including William Cayley the Inspector-General and formerly the member for the riding of Huron and Bruce. The council considered a report of the trial from Justice John B. Robinson. Then, with a mind for the votes of the riding, the council advised the Governor-General to spare James Donnelly from hanging. Donnelly would be sent instead for seven years to the penitentiary at Kingston.⁶³ The sheriff and the warden of Huron county were informed.⁶⁴

On August 5 the sheriff took James Donnelly from his Goderich gaol cell, not to the place of execution but to Kingston.⁶⁵ They went by rail from Goderich to Paris and then to Toronto, and after an overnight stop continued by steamboat down Lake Ontario. The sheriff of Huron returned the next day. James Donnelly would return in July of 1865.

James Donnelly's brother Patrick stayed for several months, to help Johannah Donnelly and her infant daughter and her seven sons, the oldest of whom was only sixteen. But Biddulph was not where he would choose to build his life in North America; Patrick Donnelly left for the United States, for Toledo, Ohio, where he ran a hotel, and married, and raised his own family peacefully.⁶⁶

In Biddulph in 1858 the wheat crop failed; in 1859 poverty was widespread even among farm families that were not, like the Donnellys and Farrells, fatherless.⁶⁷ County and township taxes on the Donnellys' lot eighteen of concession six went unpaid in 1858 as they had for the two years previous.⁶⁸ On June 11, 1859, the debt-burdened Donnelly family mortgaged their farm, the fifty acres which for three years they had owned and on which they had lived for nine years more. James Donnelly in his prison cell and his wife Johannah on their threatened farm borrowed \$100 of the money of London broker Sidney B. Fripp, repayable in three years at usurious 24% interest, due twice yearly in January and July.⁶⁹

In May and June of 1859 Father P.F. Crinnan, parish priest of St. Patrick's,⁷⁰ gathered signatures on a petition to reduce James Donnelly's seven-year sentence.⁷¹ Settlers of Biddulph and of London township organized another petition which they sent to

Toronto in July.⁷² But the Executive Council refused to have the Governor-General intervene again. "As only one year of the convict's imprisonment has expired His Honour considers the application on his behalf to be altogether premature and he must decline therefore to grant the prayer of the petitioners."⁷³

One year later in July of 1860, the 1859 fall wheat crop was thin and sold at low prices.⁷⁴ At the January deadline Johannah Donnelly had paid the twelve-dollar interest due on the mortgage. But she could not pay interest in July, and she could not pay anything of the hundred-dollar capital. In the Middlesex Court of Chancery broker Sidney B. Fripp applied to foreclose. But before the suit could be completed, Johannah Donnelly managed to find him his money.⁷⁵ That fall she sent to the government private supplication that her husband be sent home soon.⁷⁶ Father Crinnan and parishioners and friends sent another petition on behalf of the family.⁷⁷ But the Executive Council wanted no more petitions. They refused to have the Governor-General act: "The Administration of the Government does not consider that any further exercise of the Royal Clemency would be justifiable in this case."⁷⁸

That same fall of 1860, the London broker George Goodhue foreclosed on the mortgage of the widow Sarah Farrell.⁷⁹ Goodhue rented the farm to another, Patrick Flannery. Sarah Farrell married Patrick Flannery and was able to stay with her family on that farm. But in 1866 Flannery too had to mortgage, and when he died in 1870 Sarah Farrell Flannery lost the farm by foreclosure. The twice-widowed woman and the Farrell and Flannery children were forced, finally, from the township of Biddulph.

Johannah Donnelly and her sons and her friends kept the Donnelly farm from foreclosure. In June, 1860, James Donnelly in the Kingston penitentiary showed his gratitude to the settlers of his parish, the people who had sheltered him for as long as he had wanted, and who with their petitions had saved his life and had worked for his early release. On June 8 he ceded a north-east corner of his hard-won farmland, forty feet along the Roman Line and fifty feet deep. For five shillings he gave it to the trustees of Biddulph School Section Three for a schoolyard.⁸⁰ Five growing Donnelly sons were pupils at the Donnelly school in 1861: William who was fifteen, John who was fourteen, Patrick, Michael, and Robert who were twelve, eleven, and nine.⁸¹

In June of 1862, Johannah Donnelly, again asked the government to send her husband home to her early.⁸² The government refused,⁸³ and that same month she had to mortgage the Donnelly farm again. In order to make the final payment to broker Sidney Fripp, the Donnelly family borrowed \$140 from John Burgess, a builder in London, repayable in three years at 12% interest.⁸⁴ That mortgage the Donnellys discharged in February of 1865, by borrowing \$250 with yet another mortgage.⁸⁵

Five months later, in July of 1865, James Donnelly Sr. was home from prison.⁸⁶ Thirty-five acres of his farm were cleared for crops, fifteen acres left for woodlot.⁸⁷ Wheat sold well that fall for \$1.56 a bushel in London;⁸⁸ by spring it sold for \$1.75.⁸⁹ The 1865 fall wheat crop was excellent and prices continued high--\$1.75 again by late September.⁹⁰ Wheat in 1867 for a time reached \$2.07;⁹¹

the 1869 grain crop was the best ever in the district.⁹² In the late fall of 1870 the barn burned down, but with the insurance they rebuilt, and the same year they had a builder frame over their hewed-log house.⁹³ In 1871 the builder added a full back kitchen.⁹⁴ There were more mortgages on the Donnelly farm in the years between James Donnelly's return from prison and his murder in 1880, but all were discharged successfully, and Donnelly possession of that land was never again insecure.⁹⁵

Although the farm had been held intact through the seven prison years, the strain had told on the Donnelly sons growing up fatherless. On August 11, 1857,⁹⁶ frightened and confused and resentful with their father in hiding all that summer charged with murder, James Jr. and John Donnelly, aged sixteen and ten, let themselves be led by James Atkinson, a rough Biddulph teen-aged boy.⁹⁷ The three quarrelled with a woman named Ann Robinson. All three struck at her; James Atkinson took the lead, knocked her down and tore off her hat. Ann Robinson reported the juvenile quarrel and the three boys were charged with assault. The next day a Biddulph magistrate fined James Atkinson one pound. He fined the two young Donnelly accomplices half as much, ten shillings each. He warned them sternly that, young as they were, if the fines and court costs were not paid by August 28 he would send them all for twenty days to the county gaol at Goderich.

One other time while the father was in prison the Donnelly sons had trouble with the law courts. In June of 1864 a Roman Line neighbour named Patrick Ryan⁹⁸ discovered that he was missing six fine sheepskins. He accused eighteen-year-old William Donnelly and his twenty-seven-year-old married friend Michael Sullivan, who also lived on the Roman Line.⁹⁹ His fleeces, he added, were hidden on the Donnelly farm presided over in her husband's absence by Johannah

Donnelly. Patrick Ryan charged Johannah with receiving stolen property. Biddulph township since 1862 was part of Middlesex and not of Huron County;¹⁰⁰ the county seat was fifteen miles south in London instead of forty-two miles away in Goderich to the northwest. In London at the Middlesex September Quarter Sessions, William Donnelly and Michael Sullivan were indicted for larceny.¹⁰¹

The prisoners asked that their trial be delayed until the Fall Assizes. Johannah Donnelly did not come to court. A bench warrant was issued, but no-one tried to arrest the forty-year-old mother of eight children whose husband was still in the penitentiary. Although at the Middlesex Fall Assizes the Grand Jury indicted Johannah Donnelly too, when she did not appear the case against her was passed on to County Court where it was never again pursued. William Donnelly her son and Michael Sullivan did appear, to plead not guilty. Their trial was postponed again until the next Assizes; neither was ever tried.

Nine months after this last courtroom encounter, James Donnelly Sr. was home from the penitentiary. The Donnelly reunion was brief: the older sons were coming of age and restless to build their own lives. In the fall of 1865 with his father only two months home, William Donnelly left Biddulph for the United States.¹⁰² In 1867 the oldest Donnelly son, James Jr., left home to farm on fifty vacant acres on the south half of lot twenty-six on Biddulph's eleventh concession.¹⁰³ In the same year the fourth son, Patrick, left Biddulph to serve an apprenticeship at a carriage works in London.¹⁰⁴

Patrick Donnelly never came home again to stay. William returned to Canada by the spring of 1868, twenty-three years old and

searching for an occupation. He lived for a time in London where he fell in with unpleasant companions. John Graham and Margaret Morrison were London drunkards who made their home a centre for illegal liquor sales and drinking.¹⁰⁵ William Donnelly visited there in April of 1868. He admired John Graham's pistol and took it in his hands to examine it. Minutes later an itinerant soldier who had drifted into the Graham and Morrison home took the revolver away--with the knowledge of William Donnelly who watched him but without the knowledge of the owner John Graham.

William Donnelly left London shortly after, to travel in the United States again. He returned to Biddulph restlessly in the fall of 1868.¹⁰⁶ Then he moved back to London, to a boardinghouse near the home of Graham and Morrison. He enrolled in a London school¹⁰⁷ to expand the education which he had received at S.S.3 Biddulph. Donnelly had been ten weeks in John Graham's neighbourhood when Graham remembered his lost revolver. He stopped William Donnelly on the street one day and asked to have it back. "I do not have it, a soldier has," said Donnelly, "it is not my duty to restore it."¹⁰⁸

John Graham charged him with larceny. It was William Donnelly's second larceny charge; when he appeared in London Police Court on April 22, 1869; he was practised and confident. Although he was young, and lame, his manner was sophisticated and self-assured. The police magistrate heard the shaky evidence of John Graham and Margaret Morrison; then he heard William Donnelly's deft cross-examination. "I am not guilty of course," said William Donnelly, "I know something about the affair, but I have nothing to do with it."¹⁰⁹ The magistrate told the court clerk to take down Donnelly's words as

evidence. "He may take it down, and welcome," William Donnelly said.

The police magistrate sent the case for trial. On June 10, 1869, at the Middlesex June Sessions, William Donnelly was indicted for larceny.¹¹⁰ He asked for bail and for adjournment until September Sessions.¹¹¹ In September the trial was postponed again until Fall Assizes. Finally on October 30 at the trial, the vanished pistol had not been recovered; the soldier suspect had disappeared; the supposed theft had been a year and a half ago; and the evidence of John Graham and Margaret Morrison was dubious. William Donnelly was acquitted.

In the summer of 1869 as he waited for that trial, William Donnelly experienced another charge of theft. From the Granton post office in the east end of Biddulph, someone in late June had stolen twenty dollars worth of stamps and some boots and shoes belonging to the postmaster. The postmaster blamed William Donnelly, and his older brother James who was farming on the eleventh concession, and John and Roderick Kennedy who also lived on their father's eleventh-concession farm.¹¹² Biddulph magistrate John McLoughlin convicted all four, but later in London the convictions were cancelled.¹¹³ The irate postmaster held to his suspicions but the matter was settled; no other magistrate would intervene again.¹¹⁴

Since his father's return from prison in July of 1865, William Donnelly had spent four years wandering, in Biddulph and in London and in the United States. In 1870, twenty-four years old, he was ready to settle. He assumed the care of the family farm. William Donnelly became his father's formal tenant and proprietor of the Donnelly fifty acres.¹¹⁵ He began too to drive the stagecoach of Hugh McPhee, a friend for several years and a Lucan hotelkeeper

whose stagecoach travelled the route between Lucan and Exeter.¹¹⁶

William's brother Michael joined him.¹¹⁷

William Donnelly was advancing in the Biddulph world. He had the care of a farm and the care of a stage; he was earning money. He had travel behind him, and strange companions, and easy adventures with crime and the law. He had flair and aggressive self-confidence. A Donnelly feel for family had brought him back to run the family homestead, but he had too a Donnelly boldness no fifty-acre farm could contain.

Since 1868, the first farm north of the Donnellys' was farmed¹¹⁸ by a bachelor named William Thompson, whose father William Sr.

farmed on the fourth concession of McGillivray township to the

west.¹¹⁹ William's eighteen-year-old sister Margret was sent from

McGillivray to keep his house.¹²⁰ William Thompson Jr. was a sallow

and thin-faced man with a low retreating forehead and cunning eyes.¹²¹

William Donnelly fell in love with Thompson's sister Margret.

William Donnelly managed the family farm until the end of 1872; in 1873 he was ready for his own home and for marriage. In a township where marriages were in large part planned and negotiated as commercial alliances, he made of his romance a quarrelsome and defiant adventure.

In courtship William Donnelly was faithful and kind. Margret was six years younger; she was timid and anxious to be sure that her favour for him was returned.¹²² She gave him her portrait in the

spring of 1873, "at the beginning of another term of our future summer," she said, "which we can look back upon with pleasure."¹²³

In a township where many were illiterate, William Donnelly and

Margret Thompson conducted their courtship in expressive and stately letters. William worried that love letters might be thought unmanly. "Do not think that I would say you are soft for writing so often," Margret wrote, "I think soft terms is very scarce about you."¹²⁴

In that spring of 1873 William asked her to marry him. Margret accepted. "There is no person in this world I sincerely love but you," she wrote, "this is my last and only secret."¹²⁵ But their romance could stay no longer secret; her parents must be told. "You can acquaint my parents about it any time you wish after the first of November next,"¹²⁶ said Margret nervously.

But Margret Thompson's friends heard of the love affair and letters. They told her father.¹²⁷ William Donnelly's father was a convicted-killer, and increasing rumours of unproven crimes were gathered about the Donnelly sons. Old William Thompson was furious. "I would rather see her going to her grave," he said, "than she should have my consent to marry William Donnelly."¹²⁸ That autumn he took his daughter from her brother's Roman Line home, took her back to McGillivray as far as he could from Donnellys, where he held her under strict and suspicious guard. Margret burned her letters from William Donnelly to keep them from her family's discovery. On Christmas Eve of 1873, Margret in a stolen moment at the nearest McGillivray post office wrote to William Donnelly to tell of her misery. "Dear William I would rather be in the grave than home at present," she wrote, "for the way my people abused me on your account hinders me of ever forgiving them. I will never have anything like a chance of fulfilling my promise of marriage with you except you come and take me away by force."¹²⁹

William Donnelly was a leader. He gathered a squad of his friends and followers to help in the rescue of Margret Thompson: his brothers Thomas and Michael, and Daniel Keefe who owned a sixth-concession farm, and James Keefe, Daniel's twenty-one-year-old cousin who farmed on the seventh concession, and William Atkinson who was a blacksmith in Lucan. Atkinson and Daniel Keefe were married, and much older,¹³⁰ but they were willingly at William Donnelly's command.

Margret Thompson's father learned of the Donnelly intention to have Margret despite his prohibition. He sent his daughter into hiding at the home of Roman Line friends. He determined to fight the Donnelly rabble. "I will send that crowd to Kingston," he promised.¹³¹

On the night of January 9, 1874, scarves about their faces for disguise, William Donnelly and his band pounded at the door of William Thompson's McGillivray township farmhouse. When neither old Thompson nor his wife would reveal where their daughter had been taken, the outwitted rescuers searched through the house and left. Old Thompson waited for five minutes, then ventured outside into the cold, to call for help and comfort at the home of Ellen Fogarty, a widow and his nearest neighbour.

The Donnelly crowd were waiting not far away. They followed Thompson in their sleigh hoping to be led to his daughter's hiding place. One of them fired a pistol shot in Thompson's direction. They pursued him right into the home of Ellen Fogarty. They searched in all the rooms for Margret. Ellen Fogarty asked what they wanted. "We want your daughter,"¹³² said one of the muffled men to Thompson.

"That, ~~Donnelly~~, you will never get," the old father answered. One frustrated kidnapper boxed William Thompson's ear. Then William Donnelly and his followers drove away. At four o'clock that morning they called at William Thompson Jr.'s farmhouse, where they searched, fruitlessly, in the house and the stable.

The next evening William Donnelly and Daniel Keefe met Margaret Thompson's brother in Lucan. William Donnelly called him over. "I want to speak to you," he said. He admitted that it was he who had been at both farmhouses disguised the night before. "We will go there again," he warned. William Thompson Jr. answered back angrily.

As letters were his way to tell his love for Margaret, so William Donnelly used letters to tell of his hatred for her father and brother. Two days later he wrote to old Thompson. "Your son William used some talk lately I shall never forget," he warned, "and if he wants to dwell in peace on the Roman Line you better tell him to be a little cautious as I have a little money and plenty of good friends to see me safe through all my undertakings."¹³³ Pleased with the band of allies he could muster, William Donnelly had no wish yet to end his quarrel with the family of the girl he could not marry. "You will be prepared to receive me and my adventurers before long again," he wrote. "I want you to understand that I will have my revenge."

A frightened friend of old William Thompson assured him that Donnellys were dangerous. "The Donnellys are a bad crowd to quarrel with," he said, "not only them but the crowd that will almost die for them."¹³⁴ It was on William Thompson Jr. that William Donnelly had revenge. Within three weeks of the thwarted abduction, William

Thompson married Mary Carroll whose father Michael farmed on the Roman Line.¹³⁵ William Thompson brought his bride to live in his farmhouse next door to the Donnelly home. On January 31, 1874, William Donnelly who could not marry Margret gathered his followers to chivaree her married brother. They fired pistols into the walls of Thompson's house, broke his chimney with their bullets, tore up his rail fence to build a bonfire and danced and whooped around the flames.¹³⁶ William and Mary Thompson never spoke to their Donnelly neighbours again in the seven years that remained before the Donnellys were murdered.¹³⁷

On February 2 the Thompson son and father travelled to London where they complained to the police magistrate about Biddulph township's Donnellys. A city detective came to Biddulph with warrants for William and Michael and Thomas Donnelly and their eager accomplices. The charge was shooting with intent to wound old William Thompson on the night of the attempted abduction. In London at a preliminary hearing on February 9, old Thompson could not with certainty identify all of the muffled intruders. He could not say which had fired a gun nor prove that a bullet had been aimed at him. And William Donnelly, able as always in his own defence, was able to prove that the search for Margret was at her own urging--that in effect it was old Thompson who had kidnapped his daughters.

The three Donnellys, Daniel Keefe and William Atkinson were committed for trial at the Middlesex June Sessions. On June 11 the Grand Jury refused to indict them for shooting with intent, returning a true bill for common assault only.¹³⁸ At the trial on June 16 and 17, the Donnelly crowd called no witnesses in defence; they were all

acquitted.¹³⁹

The following winter, at the end of January, 1875, William Donnelly was married. Not to the vanished Margret Thompson, but to Nora Kennedy whose family lived on Biddulph's eleventh concession. With her brothers, Rhody and John, William Donnelly had once been accused of the robbery of the Granton post office. Again in disregard of township customs of affiance, William Donnelly eloped with his bride.¹⁴⁰ Most of the family were delighted with the marriage. John Kennedy Jr., the eldest son, who stood to inherit the family farm, feared that someday he would lose that land to Donnelly. Both John and Rhody Kennedy, Donnelly's former wild companions, hated to have him as a brother-in-law.¹⁴¹ William Donnelly's second and last romance made two more Donnelly enemies. He took Nora Donnelly to live with him in Lucan where he had moved to give full time to his stagecoach career.¹⁴²

Patrick Donnelly, who in 1867 had left Biddulph to be a blacksmith and wagonmaker, had married a Protestant Biddulph girl, Mary Ryan, in October of 1871.¹⁴³ The single Donnelly daughter, Jennie, was married on February 9, 1874, to James Currie, a Protestant from Bothwell in the southwest corner of Middlesex county.¹⁴⁴ She moved from Biddulph to live with her husband. John Donnelly eloped to marry Fanny Durham, daughter of a fifth-concession Protestant farmer, in February of 1871. For a time they ran a modest hotel, the Dew Drop Inn, in Lucan. But in two months the marriage failed, the couple separated permanently, and the little hotel closed down.¹⁴⁵ John Donnelly moved back home.

In those early years of the 1870s, James Donnelly Sr. lived quietly and respectably, farming on his fifty-acre Roman Line property.

He had killed a man with one unlucky drunken blow, but that crime had happened many years ago, and his neighbours had sheltered and supported him afterwards. He had prospered modestly since and in the spring of 1874 increased his property holdings in Biddulph by twenty-five acres. He received for one dollar from his old friend Cornelius Maloney the north half of the south half of lot seventeen in the seventh concession.¹⁴⁶ The new Donnelly land was a piece of the farm where in June of 1857 at a logging bee to clear a field James Donnelly had killed his neighbour Patrick Farrell. Now in the 1870s James Donnelly was a pathmaster¹⁴⁷ on that Roman Line which, as pathmaster, he had helped to build in the 1840s. James Donnelly was a pathmaster until 1875, helping his neighbours on the township roads until the end of 1876,¹⁴⁸ when the troubles with the stage line which his sons owned in Lucan turned township favour against even the harmless father.

William Donnelly had learned the trouble of a Donnelly son trying to marry and to stay in Biddulph township. The other Donnelly brothers would find it difficult to make their way in Biddulph. The family farm of fifty and then seventy-five acres would not hold all the sons, and land in Biddulph was expensive. The oldest son, James Jr., had wanted land, and in the manner of his brother William in love he had not chosen methods that were tactful or legal. Since 1867 he had squatted on lot twenty-six on the eleventh concession of Biddulph. The Canada Company had first leased that land in 1843, since which time three legal lessees and one squatter had lived there with no lasting success.¹⁴⁹ The Grand Trunk Railway passed through the property on a two-and-a-half

acre allowance in the northwest corner.¹⁵⁰ The land had been vacant when James Donnelly Jr. moved onto the fifty-acre south half in 1867. He farmed there for five years¹⁵¹ without a lease from the Canada Company.

With an inviolable family loyalty that transcended any moral question, his younger brothers, Michael, Robert, and Thomas, who were twenty-two, twenty, and eighteen years old respectively, came in 1872,¹⁵² from the Donnelly homestead to help their brother on the eleventh concession. With his brothers to maintain the property, James Donnelly left Biddulph for two years to work in the United States.¹⁵³ But since 1869 the Canada Company had advertised that farm for rent. Finally at the end of 1873 it was leased to a Scotch farmer named Joseph Carswell, who had been renting other land on the eleventh concession.¹⁵⁴ The Donnelly sons would have to be evicted, as their family had been evicted seventeen years ago.

The Canada Company began an ejectment suit on December 26, 1873.¹⁵⁵ On December 31 Michael and Robert Donnelly were served with a summons, to appear in the Middlesex Court of Common Pleas there to challenge the suit if they wished. The Middlesex bailiff also served Thomas Donnelly personally and left a summons for the absent James Jr., nailed to the door of his cabin on the Canada Company's land.¹⁵⁶ The young Donnellys knew that they had no claim whatever; on February 9 when the Company's arguments were heard in the Court of Common Pleas, no Donnelly appeared to respond.¹⁵⁷ On March 16 the court issued a routine decision to eject the defendants.¹⁵⁸ The bailiff gave possession of the farm to Joseph Carswell two days later.¹⁵⁹ On March 19 he served Robert Donnelly with formal notice of eviction.

He served Michael on March 28 and Thomas on April 10. Twice in May he came to try to serve James Jr., but found that he was still from the country.¹⁶⁰

The ejectment was a straightforward legal procedure; the Donnelly brothers had not contested. They had no need anyway to worry about subpoenas: on the stagecoach from Lucan William and Michael were already personally serving Crown subpoenas, under the hire of the sheriff of Middlesex.¹⁶¹

Thus in March of 1874, Joseph Carswell and his wife and nine children moved without event onto that south half of lot twenty-six in the eleventh concession. Then, in the winter of 1875, James Donnelly Jr. returned to Biddulph. His loyal brother Robert called on Joseph Carswell, with an offer to pay him for improvements to the land if he would return it to James Donnelly again. Joseph Carswell agreed but James Donnelly Jr. did not want the land.¹⁶² He had not the money nor after all the temperament to become permanently a farmer. His brothers all were helping to operate a stagecoach line; he would help too. He moved to Lucan where he became a stagecoach hanger-on.¹⁶³ He showed no more interest in Joseph Carswell's farm.

But calamity hit Joseph Carswell and his family on their new-leased land. His straw stacks were completely destroyed by fire in December of 1874.¹⁶⁴ The Canada Company suspected an arsonist and offered a \$500 reward for his capture.¹⁶⁵ Although no proof of arson was ever discovered, so great was Joseph Carswell's terror of the Donnelly name that he believed that there were tracks in the snow from his burned straw stacks to the Donnelly homestead.

Whatever crimes the Donnellys had committed, rumours against

them increased without reason or proportion. William Donnelly had had three acquittals on charges of theft; he and Thomas and Michael had been acquitted of assault on William Thompson; James Jr. and John had been convicted for hitting a Biddulph woman in 1857; James Jr. and Michael and Thomas and Robert had squatted for years on the eleventh concession. In 1871, without Donnelly assistance, the village of Lucan was notorious for crime. When the bedroom of Robert Orme, a Lucan lumber merchant, was burglarized on August 25, 1871,¹⁶⁶ Orme had a young Lucan bartender named Thomas Grey arrested. Michael Donnelly, who was with Grey at the time, was taken into custody as a matter of course.

Robert Orme believed that in the darkness of his bedroom he had seen a man who resembled Thomas Grey. He had seen only one intruder; he had not seen Michael Donnelly. At the preliminary examination in London, with no evidence whatever against him, Michael Donnelly was discharged. At his trial on September 15 at the Fall Assizes, Thomas Grey was acquitted. But by rumour and association the Donnelly name had been degraded.

And by similar creeping suspicion, in February of 1874, Patrick Donnelly was arrested in London,¹⁶⁷ in the company of another man suspected of a robbery in Lucan several days before. At the preliminary hearing independent witnesses proved that on the day of the robbery Patrick Donnelly had been about his trade in London; Patrick was honourably discharged. He had left Biddulph seven years before to work on his own in the city, but the Donnelly name for crime had followed and had fastened once upon him.

Whatever the frightened suspicions of Joseph Carswell and of

others in Biddulph and in London, an itinerant fruit vendor named Thomas Gibbs had just cause to fear James Donnelly Jr. Early in the morning of April 6, 1875, James Donnelly stole breakfast oranges and lemons¹⁶⁸ from the vendor's loaded wagon at the stable of Alex Levitt's Revere House hotel in Lucan. The vendor's young son watching from the stable door ran to tell his father. Thomas Gibbs seizing James Donnelly told him to let his goods alone. James Donnelly turned around and hit him with steel knuckles. Seeing his father's bleeding face the small boy cried for help. James Donnelly was arrested. Lucan magistrates William Stanley and Robert O'Neil sent him to gaol in London to be tried on charges of assault and larceny. At his County Court trial on April 12, James Donnelly Jr. was acquitted of the interrupted larceny but convicted on the charge of assault. He paid a one-dollar fine and paid \$27.50 in costs and damages to his victim. In a time of growing troubles with the Donnelly stage, James Donnelly Jr. with his steel knuckles was regarded by many with fear.

On July 30, 1875, in this state of increasing innuendo, and six months after the first fire at the Carswell farm, Joseph Carswell's hay stacks were burned again. And someone on the same night took a scythe to two of Joseph Carswell's horses.¹⁶⁹ A mare with a suckling foal was slashed across the abdomen; her entrails hung exposed. In the morning the mare was dead. In the side of the other animal was a long deep wound that opened and closed with every breath. The horse was destroyed by its horrified owner. Although toughened by thirty and more years of crime in their township, the Biddulph council offered a \$200 reward for discovery of whoever was

responsible.¹⁷⁰ But the arsonist and mutilator was never discovered.

But Joseph Carswell understood that there was a rumour that James Donnelly, Jr. had been seen with marks on his sleeve that might have been blood. He believed that a man who used steel knuckles would use a scythe on a horse. When evicted, the Donnelly brothers had left his land unprotesting; but whether Donnellys had harrassed him since or not, Joseph Carswell had the notion that they had. When four years later in 1879 his farm finally failed and he lost his lease,¹⁷¹ Joseph Carswell blamed the Donnellys. Carswell¹⁷² stayed to rent the farm for one year more from its new owner, but most of his family had to move from Biddulph and Carswell blamed the Donnellys for that. When he went into Lucan he looked over his shoulder for Donnellys. By the time that the Donnellys were murdered in 1880, Joseph Carswell was a hopeless paranoid whose tales of persecution some folk believed but most did not, even though those tales were of Donnellys.¹⁷³

CHAPTER 3

STAGES

In 1831 a black man from Wilberforce on the London-Goderich road began the first stagecoach in Biddulph.¹ With two horses and a carriage Austin Steward delivered parcels, and occasionally passengers, to and from Wilberforce and the nearest villages. Steward's small farm could not support his family and the Carriada Company would sell no more land to blacks. Steward needed his coach trade to survive. But Steward made jealous enemies in the Wilberforce colony. Along his route one of his horses dropped down ill. He left it to recover at the stable of the nearest tavern and temporarily hired another. When he returned later to collect his own animal, it was dead in the tavern yard where penniless Indians were stripping its hide and iron shoes. He hired another horse and continued on his route. A few miles down the road that animal reeled over in the harness, dying even before Steward could unhitch it. He found that the beasts had been poisoned. Austin Steward could afford no more horses. He quit his coach route; later, he quit Biddulph.

In 1870, two years before William and Michael Donnelly began to drive a stage for McPhee and Keefe between the villages of Lucan and Exeter,² there were three other larger lines which travelled daily not only through Lucan and Exeter but south into the city of London.³ The stages of John Hawkshaw and of Ted Crawley were based in Exeter; the

third stage was based in London and carried the daily mail. Both Exeter stages left the village at six o'clock every morning, followed identical schedules and battled for the same trade. The Mail stage leaving London when the others left Exeter had no competition, until April of 1872, when the Mail stage reversed its arrival and departure times.⁴ But in March, foreseeing the Mail Stage intentions, Hawkshaw and Crawley joined forces, amalgamating their lines to cut competition.⁵

On coach routes to and from London in all directions, races to pick up passengers, and rate wars, and fist fights were common among rival stage lines. Pugilistic drivers drew double the pay of drivers who were peaceful.⁶ In October, Crawley quit completely, Hawkshaw absorbing his partner's interest.⁷ Then seven months later on May 21, 1873, the Mail stage again reversed the schedule of its daily runs, leaving from London every morning when Hawkshaw's stage left Exeter.⁸ Hawkshaw was left with no competition.

Travel was heavy on the Proof Line road to London. For special events like the visit to London of Barnum's circus, the Hawkshaw stage had to schedule extra trips.⁹ On one trip Hawkshaw's stage was so crowded it collapsed. On another trip an overloaded horse collapsed in harness and died.¹⁰ A stagecoach driver was a man of high status; his life was exciting and important.¹¹ Driving stage between two northern villages, William and Michael Donnelly could see the greater profit and the public distinction of the larger stage route to London. William Donnelly was restless and ambitious. On March 10, 1873, at the Central Hotel in Lucan, he quarrelled with William Brooks who drove stage for Hawkshaw.¹²

Then two days after the Mail stage ceased to compete with Hawkshaw, on May 23, 1873, William Donnelly began his own stage line.¹³ Hugh McPhee, his friend and employer, grew afraid of the fierceness of the competition. He sold out to his own driver and moved thirty miles east, to operate a hotel in Stratford.¹⁴ William Donnelly bought new equipment. Michael Donnelly helped drive. That summer they expanded the business. With a loan from their father and his neighbour Patrick Whelan, William and Michael Donnelly's stage won the contract to carry daily mail from Crediton to Centralia.¹⁵

Centralia and Crediton were two small villages close to the coach route from Lucan to Exeter. The contract was secure, but it could not compare with the market for a coach into London. In March of 1874, a London entrepreneur organized his own line, the Alex Calder and Company Stage. He offered daily trips from London to Exeter and return, timing them exactly to compete with John Hawkshaw; he ran another stage in the opposite direction to compete for business of the Mail stage; and he advertised extravagantly in a daily London newspaper.¹⁶ The stage lines undercut each other's prices until often a passenger rode free; rival drivers scuffled on the road, and raced from stop to stop to be the first to pick up travellers.¹⁷

Calder had purchased excellent equipment; his suppliers were William and Robert Donnelly¹⁸ who bred fine horses for their own smaller stage line. For one month William Donnelly watched Calder battle the other stages. Then in April of 1874, he told the Lucan postmaster that he did not want the Crediton-Centralia mail contract for another year.¹⁹ Supplying stock to the owners of other richer

stages was not the Donnelly way. The minor Donnelly stagecoach line prepared to expand. At the beginning of December of 1874, it did expand.²⁰ The new Donnelly route served Crediton and Lucan as before, but also continued south all the way into London. "The Opposition Stage" the defiant Donnellys called it, timing its arrivals and departures to oppose the stages of Hawkshaw and Alex Calder.²¹

Certainly there was not market enough for four stage lines into London. Before Christmas of 1874, Alex Calder's company folded. His stages and stables, his equipment and horses were auctioned away.²² Calder still owed to the Donnelly brothers more than two hundred dollars for stock they had sold him. In the Middlesex December Quarter Sessions court, William and Robert Donnelly sued, recovering from the defunct line what was due them.²³ Alex Calder moved to a securer enterprise, as chief engineer of London's street-railway company.²⁴ His rural former suppliers had driven him from business.

Only John Hawkshaw remained to compete against the Donnelly Stage. The Donnelly drivers were always polite, obliging and efficient. Their trade grew as their reputation for pleasing service spread.²⁵ The Hawkshaw line doubled its advertising in London newspapers.²⁶ Price wars and races for passengers intensified. But high speeds proved dangerous on the rough gravel road south to London. As Hawkshaw's driver William Brooks sped towards London on December 29, 1874, a young boy fell from the top of the stage. He split his head on the stones and was carried home senseless to London.²⁷ But for as long as a Donnelly stage existed, Hawkshaw's line out of Exeter competed.²⁸ And on all the length of the Lucan-to-London road, there

was not a single constable.²⁹

The time was growing late for any stage line north of London. The London, Huron and Bruce Railway was incorporated in February of 1871,³⁰ announcing its ambitions to join London and north Middlesex County to the fertile northern hinterlands in Huron and Bruce counties. For the four years following, the railroad's promoters sought contributions from the townships and villages, sold bonds and common stock, gathered provincial grants, and surveyed the route which their track would follow. At the beginning of 1875, construction began on what became one of the country's best-built railroads. During 1875 as track spread along the seventy-five miles between London and Wingham, the rich new northern railroad advertised heavily.³¹ Stage lines were doomed.

Nevertheless in January of 1875, two men in partnership started yet another stage north of London.³² One owner was Ted Crawley of Exeter who had operated a stage line before. The other was Patrick Flanagan who owned a hotel in the village of Clandeboye three miles north of Lucan.³³ Patrick Flanagan's father had founded the community and become a magistrate; his brother was a merchant and clerk of the Division Court; the Flanagan family was respected and well-established. The Donnelly Opposition Stage was threatened.

The Donnellys and Patrick Flanagan quarrelled instantly. In the first week of January, 1875, William and John and Michael Donnelly assaulted him, unhitched his horses, and drew away his passengers. Patrick Flanagan charged all three Donnellys with assault. William the proprietor was fined ten dollars; his brother assistants were fined five dollars each.³⁴ One week later, during

the night, persons undiscovered pulled Flanagan's stage from its storage shed. They dragged it for a quarter of a mile down the road where they chopped it into fragments.³⁵ But the Crawley and Flanagan line endured and prospered. By the end of January, the Opposition Stage had to advertise daily in the London newspaper.³⁶

The rival drivers fought almost every day. Two ladies in London wanted transport to Crediton, and although Flanagan's coach bypassed Crediton on its way straight north to Exeter, Patrick Flanagan offered to take them. To deprive the Donnelly stage of two fares, he would outfit a special stage to make the detour west to Crediton. As he helped the two ladies to climb into his coach, Michael Donnelly arrived at the depot. He demanded the two passengers. When Flanagan refused to surrender them, Michael Donnelly knocked him down. Flanagan filed a charge of assault, then settled out of court and absorbed the legal costs, his own pirate scheme having partly caused the disturbance.³⁷

In London a load of confectionery was consigned to the Clandeboye store of Patrick Flanagan's brother. The Donnelly driver took the load, arriving safe with his merchandise at the Flanagan store front door. Flanagan dollars had to pay for Donnelly service. John Flanagan seized his own parcel, threw it on the floor and trampled it to pieces. The Donnellys summoned him to court, for interfering with baggage still in their custody. Eventually they withdrew the suit, paying the small legal costs, an easy price for the pleasure of their mischievous victory.³⁸

In the first week of February, 1875, the hardest winter storm

in years struck London and northern Middlesex county. On February 4 the wind was so cold that Michael Donnelly could not ride on top of his stage. He passed the reins through the coach's front window and sat inside with his passengers. At the top of a moraine hill five miles north of London, a gust pushed the coach off the road and down the steep side of the embankment. When the coach and the people and the horses stopped falling everyone except one woman passenger climbed free. Then the frightened horses bolted with the woman still inside. Michael Donnelly jumped for the team and held tight until he could quiet them. He helped the woman to escape unhurt from the stage. But Michael Donnelly's head was badly bruised and he had to arrange another sleigh to send his customers the rest of the way to London.³⁹

When summer came it was not the weather but the rigours of competition that turned the stage trade deadly: On July 2, 1875, William Brooks made his daily trip south from Exeter with the Crawley and Flanagan stage. He stopped as usual at each small hamlet--Mooretown, Clandeboye, Lucan, Birr, St. Johns. As he turned in too sharply at a hotel in Lucan, he did not notice the nut working loose which fastened his right front wheel. At the brow of a moraine at the north end of London, he was driving his horses at a medium walk when Michael Donnelly's stage rose over the hill from behind and began to pass. Brooks accelerated until his horses almost galloped. With the jolt of the sudden speed, the loosened wheel nut tumbled free. Donnelly was alongside when the wheel of the Flanagan stage fell off completely. The stage tilted and Brooks fell to the road. A passenger on the top of the stage tumbled too, under Donnelly's horses' hooves which missed him by inches.

When the stage tilted, Brooks' driverless horses panicked. They galloped uncontrolled for a quarter of a mile until they ran upon the sidewalk and stopped, suddenly, nervous and trembling. A passenger jumped from the sagging coach as the team began to bolt. He ran to William Brooks' body in the road. Michael Donnelly pulled up his team and ran back too. "The driver's killed,"⁴⁰ the man said. They helped to lift Brooks onto a passing wagon. His arms and legs were bruised, he was bleeding from the mouth and the nose and left eye, and in his skull was a four-inch fracture that at the post-mortem the doctor's whole hand fitted into. He died that afternoon. William Brooks was twenty-eight years old;⁴¹ a widow and four children survived him. Eighty wagonloads of mourners attended his funeral in Exeter.

Henceforth the stagecoach competitions showed a more frantic and complicated violence that made all prior squabbles seem minor. That same month Flanagan and Crawley added another freshly-outfitted stage, which travelling daily between Exeter and Crediton joined Crediton to their main line south to London.⁴² In August the Donnelly brothers expanded their own stage route: their northern terminus was no longer Crediton but Crawley's own village of Exeter.⁴³ To supervise the expansion, Michael and William Donnelly temporarily moved from Lucan to Exeter.⁴⁴ Flanagan and Crawley on their route to London hired a new driver whose name was Robert McLeod.

On August 31, 1875, the Donnelly stage with Thomas Donnelly driving left London to return north to Lucan. He carried a heavy load. There were seven passengers inside, three more on top with the baggage, and a cargo of vinegar barrels for delivery to a merchant

in Lucan. At the eleventh concession of London township one mile south of the hamlet of Birr, Robert McLeod on the Flanagan stage came charging from behind and passed. Donnelly whipped his team on faster and stayed beside McLeod all the way into Birr, where both teams had to slow to a trot.

To the right by the road was Swartz's Hotel, with stables on its near side and hitching posts at the front door. In the yard ten feet from the hitching posts was a water pump, anchored at its base with large stones. Donnelly's jostled lady travellers asked to stop for a drink of water at Swartz's Hotel. McLeod was five feet ahead on Donnelly's left. His stage was abreast of the Donnelly horses. Opposite the stables and ten yards from the hotel door, Donnelly started to turn to the right off the road, aiming for the south and nearest hitching post in the Swartz's Hotel front yard. When Donnelly began to turn McLeod swerved too, not suddenly but steadily, edging him over, cutting him off, trying to be first to the posts. The two coaches were almost to the watering pump: "Be careful Tom," said a passenger riding on top, "he's not going to let you through."⁴⁵

Intent on the duelling, Donnelly did not hear. He tried to pull ahead of McLeod. McLeod struck his own horses with his whip, kept them ahead, kept squeezing to the right. When the stages reached the pump there was no space for Donnelly. He was trapped between the pump stones and the Flanagan stage. His right wheels rolled up onto the stones and his coach overturned toward McLeod's. The wheel of McLeod's coach jammed among Donnelly's harness and the legs of his horses. McLeod felt his own coach tip and sway beneath him. Both drivers leaped clear, then lunged to their feet to see the damage:

two stages lying on their sides, squealing horses tangled, passengers and luggage and barrels littering the road.

The Donnelly stage was badly damaged; one Donnelly horse had a cut hind foot; two of Donnelly's lady passengers were shaken and complaining. Onlookers gathered from the shops of Birr and from Swartz's Hotel. They looked at the tracks and passed judgments: clearly McLeod had swerved over, and clearly there was room for both coaches if McLeod had not crowded. Each driver blamed the other for the wreck. "What did you do that for?" said Donnelly. "I'd do the same again," said McLeod, "if I had the chance." Each driver had his excuse. Thomas said that he could not have stopped for the momentum of his heavy load. McLeod said that he had not seen the Donnelly stage for the luggage piled behind his head.

The next day Michael Donnelly called on Henry Ferguson, a magistrate at Birr, to charge Robert McLeod with malicious driving.⁴⁶ The magistrate convened his court, heard all the witnesses, and after consulting the London Crown Attorney⁴⁷ convicted Robert McLeod. He fined him and ordered him to pay one hundred dollars in Donnelly damages.⁴⁸ Two days later McLeod announced an appeal of his conviction, to the Middlesex Court of Quarter Sessions in December.⁴⁹

On September 13, Louisa and Martha Lindsay, an irate mother and daughter who were dumped from the Donnelly stage, filed a suit charging negligence on the part of the Donnelly owners.⁵⁰ Because magistrate Henry Ferguson's conviction of McLeod was a ruling that Thomas Donnelly had not been to blame, the owners and defendants William and Michael Donnelly contested the Lindsay ladies' suit. They pleaded not guilty and asked for a trial by jury.⁵¹

At the Quarter Sessions hearing in December, the Lindsays won a settlement from the Donnelly brothers: fifteen dollars compensation for Martha, twenty dollars for her mother Louisa, and the payment of all their legal costs which were ninety-five dollars more.⁵² But Donnellys made hard debtors. William Donnelly paid part, claimed he could not pay the rest, and chose instead to go to debtor's prison in London. After a ten-day term⁵³ he was free and running his stage again, clear of obligation. The Lindsays sent William Glass the sheriff of Middlesex to seize Donnelly property in payment. But the sheriff sympathized with the Donnellys. He returned empty-handed, for although their stage still rumbled daily from Lucan to London and back, the Donnellys had convinced him that they had nothing which he could appropriate. When three years had passed and there was no longer a Donnelly stage, he returned the writ of seizure, unserved.⁵⁴

The appeal of Robert McLeod was scheduled to be tried at the same Court of Quarter Sessions in December of 1875. The Lindsay suit pre-empted his own which reached trial instead at the Sessions in February. Bolstered by the precedent of the Lindsay judgment against the Donnelly stage, Robert McLeod won his appeal. His conviction was cancelled with his legal costs paid by his Donnelly opponents.⁵⁵

The Donnelly Opposition Stage was a family enterprise: William and Michael were owners, and Robert and Thomas both drove. The stage line meant less time at the Roman Line homestead. More and more the Donnelly sons were in Lucan--at their stables, at the Grand Trunk Railroad station, at the hotels where their customers gathered. William and Michael both lived in Lucan, and James Jr. too who that spring of 1875 had steel-knuckled a pedlar of lemons and oranges.⁵⁶

The Donnelly reputé for stage-driving and for fighting began to spread. Near the time of the stagecoach collision at Birr in September of 1875, a London township local bully named Joseph Berryhill came to Lucan to measure his own strength against Donnellys.

Joseph Berryhill drank in the barroom of Alex Levitt's Revere House in Lucan on the afternoon of September 17, 1875. At the bar he looked at James Keefe Jr. "I will lick you,"⁵⁷ Berryhill said. "I'll meet you to fight," James Keefe promised. James Keefe was with James Donnelly Jr. who was one of his closest of friends. Pressed with the lawsuits of McLeod and the Lindsay ladies, the Donnelly family mood was unpleasant.

That night while Joseph Berryhill drank and talked with the bartender in Lucan's Walker House, James Keefe plunged through the barroom door. He carried in his hand a rock the size of a closed fist. James and Thomas Donnelly followed close behind him. Joseph Berryhill spun around. He threw out an arm to defend himself and to strike the first blow. But James Keefe seized him with one hand by the waistcoat and hit him on the head with the stone in his other hand. The blow cut open Berryhill's head, through the thickness of his hat and his hatband. Keefe clutched Berryhill's beard pulling out pieces as he twisted him to the floor. "Give it to him, the son of a bitch," James Donnelly Jr. said. He picked up a bar chair and raising it high brought it down on Berryhill's shoulder. When a bar patron rushed in to help, James Donnelly struck him with a stone and Thomas Donnelly held him back from the fighting. The rescuer twisting free ran towards the kitchen as a volley of stones followed after.

Michael Donnelly arrived to separate them. He stopped the

fight and called James Donnelly and James Keefe away. Thomas Donnelly stayed calmly behind to drink and to watch the cleaning-up. Joseph Berryhill's arm hung limp and disabled from the shoulder; his head was cut and bleeding. A doctor came to wash him and to dress all his wounds. Someone gathered up the stones, counted them, weighed them, and kept them for evidence. The heaviest stone weighed two and a half pounds.

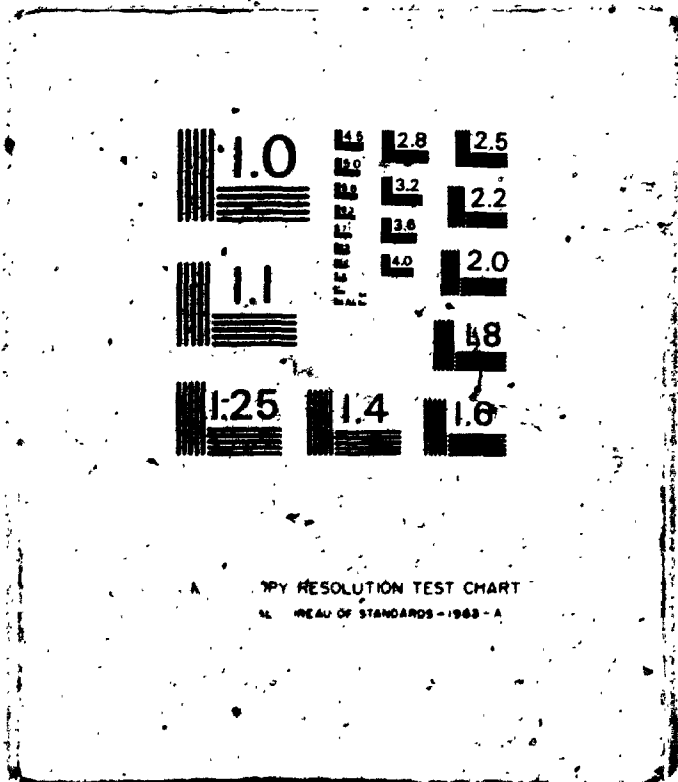
From London's safety, Joseph Berryhill charged James Keefe and the three Donnellys with assault.⁵⁸ More than a month later, on November 23, 1875, a London detective arrested Thomas Donnelly only, who agreed to come to London to be tried on November 30.⁵⁹ When Thomas arrived for his trial, Joseph Berryhill did not appear, nor did the majority of his witnesses. Thomas was freed for two more weeks in the care of his calmer brother Michael.⁶⁰ When Joseph Berryhill did appear on December 13, the trial took place in the absence of one important Lucan witness who was found lying on the police court steps. A detective hauled him away to a cell, much too drunk to testify. But when Joseph Berryhill showed the court the scars on his head and his shoulder, Thomas Donnelly was convicted and fined twenty dollars.⁶¹ Then a long time passed before Joseph Berryhill confronted his other attackers in court.

On the same night that Joseph Berryhill was stoned, the Lucan bars had claimed another foolish victim. James Curry⁶² of West Missouri township southeast of Biddulph was, like Joseph Berryhill, a stranger to Lucan. He was present in the barroom of the Walker Hotel at the time of the beating of Berryhill. Later that night on a Lucan street Curry himself was beaten and robbed. Curry was too drunk to

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remember when or by whom, but he had seen a man attacked by Donnellys. Like Joseph Carswell whose horses had been gutted that summer, James Curry began to ponder. He remembered drinking at Walker's Hotel when two or three Donnellys and James Keefe stoned Berryhill. He remembered leaving when the fight was over to drink at another tavern. On his way three or four men attacked him from behind, and three more who surely, he believed, were Thomas and James Donnelly and James Keefe. The men knocked him from the sidewalk into the ditch. James Donnelly jumped down on top of him. Someone kicked him in the head when he tried to rise. Someone else held his arms. Thomas Donnelly putting a hand into his pocket stole a five-dollar bill and some silver. A crowd stood and watched them, then faded away. When they had gone Curry climbed from the ditch and staggered back to Walker's Hotel.

On September 20, 1875, three days after being robbed in Lucan, James Curry charged James Keefe and James and Thomas Donnelly.⁶³ At the time of Thomas Donnelly's arrest for the stoning of Berryhill, a simultaneous trial was scheduled to hear Curry's charge.⁶⁴ On December 13, James Curry told his tale to the London Police Court magistrate. By then he remembered Patrick Donnelly too and amended his charge to include the third Donnelly. But when Curry had testified, three other patrons of the Walker House told what they had seen that night. All were drinking at the bar with Thomas Donnelly when Curry staggered in, babbling and drunk, bleeding from the ear and mumbling about a robbery. But Thomas Donnelly had been in the bar since the fight with Joseph Berryhill. Before those three witnesses had finished contradicting him, James Curry left the court, got

drunk, and disappeared. The magistrate dismissed the charge.⁶⁵
James Curry stayed away for three months more. But because his story was against Donnellys, it was not left to be forgotten.

At the time that James Curry was robbed and Joseph Berryhill was stoned, Lucan rumours had announced that the stables and the stages of Patrick Flanagan would be burned.⁶⁶ Flanagan boarded at the Queen's Hotel, where teams of his horses were also housed, despite the reluctance of the proprietor William Bowey who knew of the rumours of burning. About two weeks after the attacks on Curry and on Berryhill, Thomas and John and James Donnelly Jr. sat with a group of friends on the sidewalk in front of their own stable, talking and laughing, passing a whisky bottle, and offering drinks to passers-by. At eleven o'clock Patrick Flanagan checked his stables. He locked them tight and went to bed.

At one o'clock he awoke with the light from his burning stables shining in his eyes. He jumped from his bed and ran outside. The whole of the building was burning. Shouting men led frightened horses from the flames. Others pumped water and ran back and forth with pails. Some arrived early enough to notice where the arsonist had pried a board from the side wall to slide in his flame. Donnellys were present and helping to fight the fire: James Jr. helped to work a pump and Thomas carried pails of water. But even with Donnellys' assistance, the Queen's Hotel burned to the ground. And no one could tell who the arsonists had been.

Patrick Flanagan had new stables when the Queen's Hotel was reconstructed. Two months later, in the early morning of December 3, 1875,⁶⁷ he walked down the dark side alley by the new Queen's Hotel

on his way to tend his horses. When he opened the stable door, someone waiting behind battered his head with a wooden club and left him bleeding senseless on the floor. When Flanagan was discovered his friends searched the village. They found no suspects. On December 28 while Flanagan's stage waited empty at an Exeter stable, someone stuffed straw inside and ignited it: another Flanagan stage was destroyed.⁶⁸

The day before that attack on Flanagan at his stable, and two days after Thomas Donnelly's first appearance in London court on charges of robbing James Curry and stoning Joseph Berryhill, Rhody Kennedy, the brother-in-law of William Donnelly, quarrelled with Thomas and Robert Donnelly in Lucan. Kennedy who had lost an arm in a threshing machine⁶⁹ was no match for two Donnellys. But two days later, on December 4, 1875, both Donnellys summoned Kennedy before magistrate Ferguson of Birr, who convicting him on two counts of assault sent him to the London gaol for twenty-five days.⁷⁰ But on December 3, before he was locked in gaol, Kennedy began his revenge against the Donnellys he had fought with.

He told a magistrate in London that he had heard James Donnelly Jr. planning the burning of Flanagan's stables. In Kennedy's story, he had met James Donnelly in Lucan in mid-September. Donnelly offered him five dollars to burn the stables. "No I won't, I never did the like, burning any man's stables,"⁷¹ Rhody Kennedy said.

"You might as well and earn the five dollars."

"I won't do it," Rhody Kennedy said.

"A week from Sunday night I am going to burn Flanagan's stables and leave him not worth a shilling."

"If you do that Jim you will be sorry," said Kennedy.

"A week from Sunday you will hear of the place being burned to ashes."

"Jim you had better not do it," said Kennedy.

"I will do it, and then take Flanagan's life." But this charge against James Donnelly for conspiring to commit arson had to wait, while Kennedy spent most of December in the London gaol.

On December 29 when Kennedy was released, he called on a London magistrate to charge Thomas and Robert Donnelly with assault. The magistrate issued a warrant. Both were arrested and summoned for a trial to be held on January 13.⁷² On December 30, Kennedy testified in the trial of James Donnelly for conspiring to commit arson. With only his word against Donnelly denials, the magistrate ordered acquittal.⁷³

On January 4, 1876, the seventy-four miles of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway opened for traffic.⁷⁴ With the public praise and official well-wishing, and the host of railroad contracts to carry cargo, the end began for the small stage-lines north of London. The railroad passed within two miles of Lucan; stage-coach patrons were suddenly fewer, stage-coach competition fiercer and more frantic.

On January 11, 1876, William Donnelly charged Rhody Kennedy with perjury for having accused James Donnelly of conspiring to commit arson. The trial of Rhody Kennedy was scheduled before magistrate Henry Ferguson at Birr on January 13,⁷⁵ the same day already arranged for the trial in London of Thomas and Robert Donnelly for assaulting Kennedy on December 2, 1875. The Donnelly Brothers did not go to London for their trial,⁷⁶ preferring to forfeit bail bond

in return for the opportunity of prosecuting Kennedy in Birr. William Donnelly swore that Kennedy had accused James Donnelly Jr. of asking Kennedy's help to set a fire in Flanagan's stable. James Donnelly swore that he had said no such thing to Kennedy. Thomas Donnelly swore that James his brother had been with him day and night at the time of the alleged conversation and that James could not have met Kennedy without his, Thomas Donnelly's, knowledge.⁷⁷ The trial was fruitless, the testimony of enemies against each other. With the word of three Donnellys against one Rhody Kennedy, magistrate Henry Ferguson felt inclined to convict. Instead, he sent Kennedy to gaol in London to be dealt with there by superior authorities.⁷⁸ On January 20, Kennedy was released on bail until a trial on the charge of perjury at the Middlesex Spring Assizes.⁷⁹

Several times in that month of January, 1876, persons had tried without success to burglarize the stables of the Donnellys' stage coach opponents. On January 16 the prowlers were successful, dragging the stage down the road outside of Lucan where they chopped it into splinters.⁸⁰ One year before exactly, a coach of Patrick Flanagan's had been lost by identical manner of demolition. Then on January 19, 1876, someone sawed through the trestles of a London, Huron and Bruce Railway overpass north of Lucan.⁸¹ Michael Donnelly complained of public opinion accusing Donnellys when any other northern stage had as much to gain from harm done to the railroad.⁸²

In the first month of the railroad and before that second coach had been axed, Patrick Flanagan quit the London stage-coach trade. He kept only the smaller route from Exeter to Crediton.⁸³ His partner Ted Crawley found a new co-owner, a brave and

optimistic man from Lucan⁸⁴ whose name was Richard Bryant. The determined new owners hired Rhody Kennedy to do nothing but guard their stage.⁸⁵ They hired a new driver named Peter McKellar. But neither Donnelly's nor railroad ruined Richard Bryant. That same winter of 1876, his first and only staging season, he fell from the driver's seat on his moving stage. Richard Bryant never recovered. He lay bedridden and declining slowly until he died at the end of July.⁸⁶

Crawley and Bryant quarrelled with Donnelly's as Crawley and Flanagan had done. Early in the morning of January 24, 1876, driver Peter McKellar stopped his stage at the door of William Bowey's Queen's Hotel.⁸⁷ Beside him on the driver's seat was Rhody Kennedy his guard. The morning was cold; McKellar called for the buffalo robes that were kept for the stage inside the hotel. He called too for passengers boarding for London. Then he saw John and Robert Donnelly on the sidewalk.

"Come down off the stage and take a drink," they invited. Peter McKellar answered that he would rather not. "If you won't drink here at Bowey's then you must drink at McLean's," they said. McKellar decided then that he would not wait there for passengers. He drove down the street towards McLean's Hotel instead. Robert Donnelly ran after, alongside the coach until he caught the lead horse. He tugged on the reins to make the team stop. John Donnelly jumped on the wheel of the McKellar coach. He climbed up to the driver's seat where he seized McKellar's legs and pulled. "You son of a bitch," he said, "I'd like to have you down off that stage." McKellar stayed desperately in his seat. "If you keep driving this

stage for one more week, I'll have your life," John Donnelly promised.

"Let go the horses, Bob. Let me go," said McKellar. Rhody Kennedy his guard did not interfere. John Donnelly leaped down from the wheel, Robert Donnelly released the horses, and both Donnelly brothers ran away. Peter McKellar hurried out of Lucan on his daily trip south to London. That evening when he returned,⁸⁸ he had gathered for extra protection a friend from London township named Henry Brien. He carried a revolver which Brien had lent him.

Michael Donnelly driving the Opposition Stage had more angry abuse for McKellar as the two coaches arrived in Lucan after dark. McKellar and his allies stepped down at the Queen's Hotel. Then all the stage men with the thirst of a long day crossed to Alex Levitt's Revere House barroom. In the bar, Henry Brien and Michael Donnelly exchanged more insults and threats. They left to drink at McLean's Hotel. On the platform of McLean's Hotel, Michael Donnelly pulled out his roll of money and offered it all to McKellar if he would fight. In spite of his borrowed revolver Peter McKellar refused.

A crowd gathered around the two men disputing outside the hotel. Of McKellar's friends were Rhody Kennedy and Henry Brien, and a Lucan tinsmith named Henry Collins. William Donnelly joined his brother Michael. William Donnelly and Rhody Kennedy argued. As Peter McKellar turned to enter McLean's Hotel, William Donnelly was standing in the doorway. McKellar pulled out his borrowed revolver and thrust it at William Donnelly. "Leave my way, you son of a bitch," he said, "or I'll put a ball through you." William Donnelly moved; McKellar and his supporters passed inside. When they

ventured out again into the Lucan night, Henry Collins told McKellar to be careful. "I've a good pair of legs," answered Peter McKellar. Within a week, McKellar quit his brief job with the Bryant and Crawley stage.

But McKellar would fight Donnellys in court if not on the Proof Line road. McKellar and Henry Brien filed charges of abusive language against Michael Donnelly. On January 26, Michael was convicted of threatening the life of Peter McKellar. The London magistrate bound him to keep the peace for one year. Henry Brien tried to withdraw his charge but the magistrate would not permit it, convicting Michael Donnelly and fining him five dollars.⁸⁹

On the day before Michael Donnelly's first conviction, William his brother travelled south to London where on January 26 he was due to begin his ten-day prison sentence for the unpaid debt to the Lindsay ladies.⁹⁰ On his way, he stopped at Birr before magistrate Henry Ferguson where he charged Peter McKellar with pointing a revolver and threatening. McKellar collected his witnesses for the trial at Birr on that same afternoon. They denied that Peter McKellar had possessed a revolver on January 24 on the platform of McLean's Hotel.⁹¹ The troubled magistrate delayed his decision until he consulted Charles Hutchinson, the County Crown Attorney in London. "I have got into those unfortunate cases in and about Lucan," he began. "I am of the opinion that if something is not done there will be lives lost. Advise me what would be the best way to proceed."⁹²

Rhody Kennedy did not wait for Ferguson's decision. In London he acquired a warrant to arrest Robert Donnelly,⁹³ for having stopped the horses of the Bryant and Crawley stage so that John

Donnelly his brother could climb upon the wheel and threaten the driver Peter McKellar. County authorities appointed Rhody Kennedy a special constable to execute the warrant.⁹⁴ When he arrived in Lucan on January 28, with Peter McKellar on the Bryant and Crawley stage,⁹⁵ Kennedy saw Robert Donnelly on the platform of McLean's hotel. He jumped from the stage to seize him. "You are my prisoner in the name of the Queen," he said as he started to read his warrant. But Robert would not be arrested by one of his own most malevolent enemies. "Let me go," he ordered and drew a revolver. When Kennedy still clung fast, Robert smashed his face with the barrel. "Help me in the Queen's name," Kennedy roared at Lucan passers-by. But first to arrive was James Donnelly Jr. who pulled off his coat as he ran. James tugged at Rhody who in turn held Robert. "Let him go," he shouted and kicked Kennedy to his knees. John Donnelly arrived to encourage his brothers. When Kennedy still held madly to his prisoner, John rushed over to pull Robert free. Another constable arrived to help Kennedy escape. All three Donnellys vanished. Robert Donnelly left Biddulph completely, to live in the safety of the United States. When he returned in June of 1877, there were no prosecutions.⁹⁶

On January 31, 1876, the County Crown Attorney told magistrate Ferguson of Birr that with so much disputed testimony he should acquit Peter McKellar of William Donnelly's charge that on January 24 McKellar had pointed a pistol and threatened.⁹⁷ Immediately, on February 2, McKellar charged William Donnelly with perjury.⁹⁸ William was arrested on February 4 as he stepped from the London gaol at the end of his ten-day sentence for the debt to the Lindsay ladies. He was bailed until February 12,⁹⁹ when McKellar brought his witnesses

to the London Police Court, where the magistrate committed William Donnelly for a perjury trial at the Middlesex Spring Assizes, where a jury might decide who was lying.¹⁰⁰

While William waited for that Police Court hearing on the charge of perjury, and while Kennedy's smashed face healed of the wounds inflicted by Robert Donnelly's gun barrel, Kennedy charged William Donnelly with abusive language during the incident on the platform of McLean's Hotel on the evening of January 24. A London magistrate named February 17 the date for the trial.¹⁰¹ But William Donnelly filed an identical counter-charge against Kennedy, in the presence of magistrate Henry Ferguson of Birr, who tried Rhody Kennedy several days before February 17. Lost in the mazes of contradicting evidence, Ferguson appealed again to the County Crown Attorney who, realizing the hopelessness of distinguishing the truth from lies, told Henry Ferguson that Kennedy should be acquitted.¹⁰² But the stage-coach suits had become a plague, and Ferguson rebelled. On February 17, he ordered Rhody Kennedy to pay a seven-hundred-dollar bond to keep the peace, and made him find two sureties to guarantee the promise. When Kennedy needed a constable's assistance to find willing guarantors, Ferguson charged him for the constable's fees as well.¹⁰³

February 17, the day of his decision, was the day when Kennedy's complementary charge against William Donnelly was due to be tried in London.¹⁰⁴ But enraged and humiliated by magistrate Ferguson, Rhody Kennedy attacked the nearest Donnelly with words and blows and was promptly re-arrested.¹⁰⁵ When the time arrived for William Donnelly's trial in London, neither defendant nor prosecutor

appeared.¹⁰⁶ Defendant William Donnelly and his brother John were in Lucan where prosecutor Rhody Kennedy was arranging bail on the charge of disorderly conduct.¹⁰⁷ William did arrive, late, for his trial. In the absence of his prosecutor he agreed to return one week later.¹⁰⁸

Kennedy also arrived in London later that afternoon. At the courthouse he complained to Crown Attorney Charles Hutchinson. First, magistrate Ferguson at Birr had convicted him, against Charles Hutchinson's own advice, of using abusive language to William Donnelly. Second, Ferguson had forced him illegally to pay the costs of finding his own guarantors of his one-year bond to keep the peace.¹⁰⁹ Then Kennedy crossed to the Police Court magistrate before whom he laid charges against James and Robert Donnelly, who had beaten him on January 28 when he tried to arrest Robert Donnelly, for assaulting Peter McKellar on the morning of January 24.¹¹⁰ In answer to Kennedy's complaints, Crown Attorney Hutchinson ordered magistrate Ferguson to reimburse him. The Police Court issued warrants to arrest James and Robert Donnelly. But Patrick McIlhargey, a magistrate in Lucan, gaoled Kennedy for three weeks for having been disorderly at Birr.¹¹¹

While Rhody Kennedy with frantic belligerence conducted single-handedly his quarrels against Donnellys, Patrick Flanagan planned his own retribution. In January of 1876 when he abandoned the London stagecoach business, he hired, with the help of influential Lucan friends,¹¹² a private detective from Hamilton whose name was Hugh McKinnon. McKinnon was notorious, and huge, and heavy-muscled,¹¹³ a former Sergeant and Deputy Chief of the Hamilton police.

McKinnon had made his reputation when he was still a policeman, in the fall of 1865.¹¹⁴ A Toronto newspaper reporter published

accusations that McKinnon's brother, a Hamilton alderman, was guilty of embezzlement. Hugh McKinnon stopped the journalist on a street in downtown Hamilton. When he would not retract, McKinnon seized him by the waistcoat, punched him, knocked him down and kicked him in the head. With the fallen man's walking stick he clubbed him on the back. McKinnon started to walk away but when he saw his victim struggle to raise himself, he rushed back to hit him another blow on the back of the head which knocked him unconscious. With both eyes blackened and his face bleeding and swollen, the journalist made his way to the Hamilton police station.

Police sergeant Hugh McKinnon was arrested, tried, and convicted on the charge of assault to cause grievous bodily harm. The Police Chief suspended him and intervened to be sure of a heavy sentence: a six-month gaol term and a hundred-dollar fine. Many people of Hamilton thought Hugh McKinnon a rowdy and a bully. But others thought his sentence harsh and vindictive, and blamed the bias of the convicting magistrate who was a political enemy of Hugh McKinnon's brother the alderman. Two thousand persons signed petitions for his early release; the case was not finally settled until a winter sitting of Canada's Superior Court in Toronto. The attention and controversy encouraged ex-policeman Hugh McKinnon to persist in the ways that had made fame come so easily. He began a career as a private detective, interfering for pay in other people's quarrels.

The opportunity to wrangle with the Donnellys of Biddulph appealed to McKinnon's ambition. Already adept at physical bullying, McKinnon on this assignment tried to use guile as well. On February 1 he arrived in Lucan where he posed as a roving and sporting adventurer,

frequenting places where Donnellys could be found and listening in stealth for news of Donnelly crimes.¹¹⁵ But Donnellys were on guard at once and on the first day after the hopeful sleuth's arrival, Michael Donnelly told a policeman friend in London that a new detective was in Lucan to watch them. The Donnellys spied on McKinnon in turn, learned in advance what he was planning, and when he would next be in Lucan, and why.¹¹⁶ "I don't know if this is true," said McKinnon, "or if so, how they know."¹¹⁷ But detective McKinnon in five weeks of scouting could not uncover a single Donnelly crime.

Instead, he concentrated on earlier innuendoes. He located a man who claimed to have given matches to Donnellys on the night that Patrick Flanagan's stables burned. He tracked down a tale that Donnellys time and time again had threatened William Bowey that they would burn his Queen's Hotel. He trailed to Sarnia a man who was willing to say that he had watched Thomas Donnelly try to burn those stables on the night that Joseph Berryhill had been stoned. He gathered notes on anything mysterious which rumour or suspicion had blamed on Donnellys: a bundle of Henry Collins' hides and sheepskins was missing, a shipment of tea had vanished from a Lucan grocery. He scrutinized Lucan for Donnelly associates: a neighbour who paid for a Donnelly's bail, a bartender who sold them liquor, a person who proclaimed too loudly that he was a Donnelly man.¹¹⁸ He talked to Joseph Carswell about the burnings and mutilations and tried without success to have him file charges.¹¹⁹

In February of 1876, anti-Donnelly merchant magistrates in Lucan and Biddulph quietly gathered reinforcements against the Donnelly brothers. On the recommendation of magistrate Bernard

Stanley and one of his associates, the Middlesex General Sessions appointed new county constables in Biddulph: John Bawden and John Coursey on February 9, John Reid on February 21.¹²⁰ On the recommendation of Thomas Dight, Stanley's business partner and Lucan's reeve, the county supplied the new constables with handcuffs.¹²¹

McKinnon sifted through the list of recent incidents, trying to gather warrants against Donnellys. Before Rhody Kennedy had been gaoled for three weeks by magistrate Patrick McIlhargey of Lucan, for disorderly conduct at Birr on February 17, Kennedy had charged James and Robert Donnelly for having assaulted him in Lucan on January 28, on the occasion when Kennedy as a special county constable had tried to arrest Robert Donnelly, for having helped his brother John, on the morning of January 24 to stop the rival Bryant and Crawley stage and to threaten Peter McKellar. McKinnon got the warrant to arrest James Donnelly for the assault on Kennedy on January 28. He got a warrant to arrest John Donnelly on the charge of having assaulted Peter McKellar, when, on the morning of January 24, he had climbed upon the wheel of the rival stage to threaten McKellar its driver.¹²²

On February 15 John Bawden, one of Lucan's new constables, arrested John Donnelly on that charge of assaulting McKellar. John Donnelly was bailed until a trial which was scheduled to be held in London on February 17.¹²³ But John Donnelly did not appear for trial on February 17, because John and his brother William were in Lucan, where they were charging Rhody Kennedy for his disorderly conduct that morning at Birr.¹²⁴ Another warrant was issued for John Donnelly's re-arrest,¹²⁵ and detective Hugh McKinnon acquired that warrant, which he gave to the new Lucan constables.

Thus armed with warrants against James and John Donnelly, the constables and Hugh McKinnon and their employers the Lucan merchant magistrates were ready for an organized confrontation. They waited to choose the most damaging occasion.¹²⁶ On February 24, 1876, Thomas Ryder would be married.¹²⁷ He was one of a large and well-known Biddulph Catholic clan. For thirty years his father had been the Donnelly family's Roman-Line neighbour,¹²⁸ and Donnelly sons were invited to the celebrations in Lucan. The constables and the core of anti-Donnelly Lucan citizens made plans to arrest the two Donnellys, James and John, during the wedding feast for Thomas Ryder. To preserve his treasured but non-existent anonymity, detective Hugh McKinnon left Lucan until the uproar should be over.¹²⁹

On the afternoon of the wedding merry-makers filled the Lucan hotels.¹³⁰ The three county constables divided warrants among them. John Coursey took the warrant to arrest James Donnelly Jr. for having assaulted Rhody Kennedy while helping his brother Robert to resist arrest. John Reid took the warrant to arrest John Donnelly for having assaulted Peter McKellar on the driver's seat of the Bryant and Crawley stage. Coursey and John Bawden found James Donnelly in the barroom of Alex Levitt's Revere House, in the company of his brother William and other revellers. Coursey arrested him quietly. He led him out the door toward a waiting colluding magistrate. They were twenty feet down the street before the barroom crowd realized what had happened. William Donnelly ran to the door and shouted after his brother--"Jim, don't be dragged along the streets by that fellow."

James Donnelly turned and walked back to the Revere House

barroom, dragging the persistent constable who still held tightly. No force was stronger than Donnelly family loyalty; William drew a gun and pointed it at Coursey. "I'll blow the heart out of you or any man that would take Jim or any other one of the family," he said. With his brother's example James Donnelly tore off his coat. "There is no constable in Lucan able to take me," he said. Coursey considered James Donnelly Jr. in his shirtsleeves, and William Donnelly with his gun, and the hostile crowd of celebrants, and himself standing in the barroom alone. He left to gather his fellow constables.

The three constables decided to act together. With their warrants, for James and John Donnelly they proceeded to Fitzhenry's Hotel where the wedding celebrations continued. As John Bawden entered the barroom, John Donnelly approached him with his coat already removed. "Bawden, what's this about?" he said. "I've always acted as a man to you before, and you ought to mind your business for this day at least. When you arrested me before, I went with you like a man."

"Yes, when you had to," John Bawden sneered. Then Reid began to arrest John Donnelly and he and Coursey pulled him towards the door. "You son of a bitch," said John Donnelly, "if you don't let me go I'll kill you." Bawden called on the crowd to help in the name of the Queen. John Donnelly called for help too. The wedding guests pushed forward. Their sympathies were clear: a friend was being hauled away on a happy occasion. Three guests seized John Donnelly and tugged him back deeper into the barroom. Three times the constables wrestled John to the door, three times the wedding guests rescued him. They kicked at the constables' legs until they had to

let go their grip on John Donnelly.

John Donnelly returned to the bar where the constables rushed him again. John Bawden, reached him first and both fell clinching to the floor. "Let me go," John Donnelly ordered. William Donnelly was there with his revolver. "If you don't let him go," he said, "I'll shoot you." Then someone in the crowded barroom fired a shot. Coursey and Reid pulled Bawden and John Donnelly to their feet as someone in the doorway fired two more shots that scarcely missed John Coursey's head.

Constable Reid pulled his own gun. An ally of the Donnelly brothers named William Farrell hit John Reid with a walking stick. The blow broke his nose and knocked him to the barroom floor. Reid leaped up and fired at his attacker who turned and fled. Outside the hotel, Reid grasped William Farrell by the collar and tried to wrestle him down. Farrell pulled a gun and fired a shot which missed. Reid tripped on a sleigh tongue and fell with his man on top. Farrell's second shot hit Reid in the side.

In the barroom, John Bawden, without waiting to see who had fired, moved towards the door still grasping John Donnelly. Both tripped and fell heavily into the stove. William Donnelly had put his gun away and flourished a heavy cane. He ran at Bawden and hit him on the head. With blood in his eyes and with James Keefe another wedding guest kicking at him, Bawden had to let John Donnelly go. Bawden struggled to his feet and reached the front door with Coursey following. He and Bawden helped the wounded constable Reid to a doctor. James and John and William Donnelly and James Keefe and William Farrell escaped in a sleigh.

Lucan's Volunteer Militia mobilized. Wagon-loads of armed men hunted on the Biddulph roads. Bulletins were telegraphed to police in surrounding towns. Threats of Donnelly lynching moved through Lucan. Militia men found James Donnelly Jr. hiding in the home of Daniel Keefe, and trapped John Donnelly in a field near the Donnelly home-
stead. But William Donnelly escaped his trackers.¹³¹ It was almost two years before James Keefe was arrested,¹³² and William Farrell vanished forever.

The Donnelly brothers' Opposition Stage stopped its daily trips to London. In the confusion no-one's stages ran at all, temporarily. A single man on an old white horse had to be hired to carry the mail.¹³³

With momentum against the Donnellys, detective Hugh McKinnon returned to Middlesex. By paying a fine he arranged Rhody Kennedy's release from gaol.¹³⁴ On his first day of freedom Kennedy quarrelled with Michael Donnelly; on February 28 a London magistrate fined Donnelly five dollars and bound him to keep the peace.¹³⁵

Now that James and John Donnelly were in gaol, other Donnelly enemies were brave. Two days after the wedding fight, James Curry suddenly reappeared, to charge James Donnelly again with beating and robbing him in September of 1875.¹³⁶ Patrick Flanagan at McKinnon's signal arrived in London to charge James with arson.¹³⁷ John Bawden on March 2 filed more arson charges, against William Farrell and against Thomas and Robert and William Donnelly.¹³⁸ William Esdaile, a foundry worker and familiar drunk in Lucan and London, came forth to claim that Thomas Donnelly had robbed him a year before in a Lucan hotel.¹³⁹ Detective Hugh McKinnon learned of a robbery in

McGillivray township on February 21; he charged Thomas Donnelly and his friend Alex Levitt who kept the Revere House in Lucan. Without any evidence, nevertheless Lucan magistrates William and Bernard Stanley committed Levitt to gaol in London until a trial.¹⁴⁰ McKinnon took Levitt and Thomas Donnelly too into London. And he brought William Atkinson the blacksmith although he had no charge to lay against him.¹⁴¹ He telegraphed the police in St. Catharines, Ontario, where Patrick Donnelly was partner in a wagon-making business. He asked them to arrest Patrick Donnelly, although he had no warrant nor charges nor evidence. The police of St. Catharines refused.¹⁴²

McKinnon brought Michael Donnelly too to the gaol in London, where he charged him with arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables. When there was not evidence enough to commit him, McKinnon returned Michael Donnelly to Lucan where constable John Bawden kept him illegally in a room of McLean's Hotel. On March 6, Michael Donnelly decided that he had been harrassed enough. He waited until his guard was asleep and then, working his hands loose from the sloppy handcuffs, locked them gently onto Bawden instead. He escaped through the second-storey window¹⁴³ and soon he had the Donnelly stage running again.¹⁴⁴

On March 2, Hugh McKinnon and some Lucan henchmen had moved against William Atkinson.¹⁴⁵ McKinnon broke into Atkinson's bedroom at three a.m. and shook him roughly. "Dress yourself, I want you," he said, "I have a warrant." William Atkinson fumbled for a lantern. "Don't light the lamp," McKinnon warned. McKinnon and constable John Bawden seized Atkinson by the arms, leading him from the house and from his frightened wife. Outside, two more men waited at the

gate. They pushed him for two more blocks along the Lucan street. "Here boys, this has gone far enough," Atkinson said. But Hugh McKinnon only whistled and, on signal, four more men jumped from the shadows. McKinnon choked him at the throat; somebody kicked him; men bound and gagged him and threw him in a sleigh.

North of the village on the Little Ausable River flats, they stood William Atkinson beneath a tree with a rope around his neck. McKinnon pinned his arms behind him. "Now I want you to tell all you know about those Donnellys," he said. When Atkinson told them he knew nothing, he was pulled from above until he hung five feet in the air. The rope tightened into his neck. Pulling off his blindfold he saw two men in the tree above and a crowd of others on the ground below. McKinnon ordered the men in the tree to lower him. He blindfolded William Atkinson again and tied his hands tight behind him. "Now will you tell on those Donnellys?" he said, "where is young Bill Farrell now?"

"I don't know," said Atkinson, "I think he went to Seaforth."

"Who burned and cut up Bryant and Crawley's stages?"

"I don't know, I heard the Donnellys and Bill Farrell were blamed for it."

"Who stole Henry Collins' sheepskins?" McKinnon asked. Five times they hanged William Atkinson who would answer nothing. Then they threw him in the snow where someone kicked him until McKinnon ordered the man to stop.

They drove William Atkinson back to Lucan where constable John Bawden arrested him. He was locked and guarded in a room of the Queen's Hotel until McKinnon could transport him to London,

with Thomas and Michael Donnelly and Alex Levitt, on March 2. When McKinnon could bring no charges, William Atkinson was released. McKinnon's men threatened to kill him if he ever reported what had happened. But news of the hanging spread fast in Lucan when people saw Atkinson with his neck in bandages. The doctor who tended him saw the raw and swollen wounds at his throat. On March 9, William Atkinson left Lucan and did not return for six months.

In London where James and John and Thomas Donnelly were in gaol cells, the process of law was set into motion. At their first appearance before a London magistrate, on March 3, James and John Donnelly heard the list of charges-- against James Donnelly for resisting arrest at the wedding battle on February 24, for assaulting Rhody Kennedy while helping Robert his brother resist arrest on January 28, for arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables on October 4, 1875, for assault on Joseph Berryhill on September 17, 1875, and for robbery of James Curry the same evening; against John Donnelly for the arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables, for assault on constables Bawden and Reid at the wedding fight, and for assault on Peter McKellar on the driver's seat of the Bryant and Crawley stage on the morning of January 24. The magistrate re-committed both Donnellys until the prosecutors could organize the charges.¹⁴⁶

The first preliminary hearings were held on March 10, 1876. James Donnelly was committed for trial at the Spring Assizes on the charge of assaulting Joseph Berryhill.¹⁴⁷ James and John were committed for Spring Assizes trials on the charges of assaulting constables at the wedding brawl.¹⁴⁸ Their loyal and troubled father watched the Berryhill proceedings. "It's a pity you were hit, Joe

Berryhill," James Donnelly Sr. muttered to himself as he left the courtroom.¹⁴⁹

On March 11, James and John and Thomas Donnelly were led again from their cells, for preliminary hearing on the charge of burning Patrick Flanagan's stables. Detective Hugh McKinnon had uncovered another Donnelly accuser, a veterinarian named James Churchill who had lived in Lucan at the time of the arson, but who, since through fear of the Donnellys had moved to Sarnia seventy miles to the west. He claimed that he drank in Lucan with the Donnelly brothers and others on the night of September 17, 1875, the night that Joseph Berryhill was stoned and that James Curry was robbed and beaten. He claimed that later that evening he noticed William Atkinson at the end of the alley which led to Flanagan's stables in the Queen's Hotel. And he claimed that deeper in the alley Thomas Donnelly was climbing upon a board that lay against the stable wall. Thomas Donnelly lit a match but before he could touch his flame to the building, the board broke beneath him and he fell four feet to the ground. "I've failed this time but I'll have my revenge yet," he said. "If you ever reveal this, Churchill, I'll have your life."¹⁵⁰ Churchill left Lucan early in December because of what Thomas Donnelly had threatened, and he did not return until detective McKinnon discovered him and persuaded him to testify in London.

At that same preliminary hearing on March 11, Rhody Kennedy repeated his tale that James Donnelly had offered him five dollars to help burn the stables. Kennedy added another story, of a meeting with Thomas Donnelly three days after the Queen's Hotel fire. "There was big excitement in Lucan the night of the fire," Thomas Donnelly

said. Rhody agreed that there was. "The night of the Berryhill fight," Donnelly said, "I went to do that but got caught at it." When Rhody asked who had discovered him, Thomas Donnelly named James Churchill. "If he ever squeals on me," said Donnelly, "I'll take his life." And Rhody Kennedy added one more tale, of a talk with James Donnelly four days later. "Did you hear of the fire?" James Donnelly said. Rhody Kennedy said yes. "Did not I tell you that I was going to burn that stable?" Kennedy said yes. "I am the very man that did it," Kennedy said that Donnelly had said. And although Rhody Kennedy's hatred of Donnellys was well known, and although James Churchill's truthfulness was uncertain,¹⁵¹ and although neither witness had mentioned John Donnelly, John and James and Thomas Donnelly were committed for trial at the Middlesex Spring Assizes on the charge of arson of the stables of Patrick Flanagan.

A fugitive since the wedding battle, on March 15 William Donnelly in the company of a lawyer surrendered to his friend William Glass, the Middlesex Sheriff.¹⁵² On March 17 after preliminary hearing, William Donnelly was committed for Spring Assizes trial, for shooting with intent to kill John Bawden and for assaulting constable Coursey while helping James Donnelly Jr. to escape from arrest.¹⁵³ On that same day, March 17, Thomas Donnelly's preliminary hearing convened on the charge of beating and robbing James Curry.

Thomas Donnelly in December of 1875 had been acquitted of having robbed James Curry. But James Churchill the veterinarian from Sarnia, whom detective Hugh McKinnon had gathered in to testify against Thomas Donnelly at the arson hearings, claimed to remember being present when James Curry had been robbed on September 17, 1875.

"I saw James Curry who I knew lying on the road with his feet down in the ditch," said Churchill.¹⁵⁴ "It was a bright moonlight night. I saw Thomas Donnelly the prisoner walk up to him and put his hand in his pants pockets. Curry roused himself up and said, 'Take all I have but for God's sake don't touch me, I am bleeding to death now'. Then Donnelly the prisoner raised his foot and gave him a kick in the face. I saw James Donnelly there; he did not go up to Curry. They all passed on and left him lying there. I left then too." Thomas Donnelly was committed for trial at the Spring Assizes on the charge of having robbed James Curry.

On that same day of March 17, 1876, Thomas Donnelly's preliminary hearing convened on the charge of the larceny of William Esdale in Alex Levitt's Revere House hotel on the night of May 1, 1875. In the barroom William Esdale had been gambling and displaying a giant roll of money. Later he passed out drunk in his hotel room, and the next morning he missed his money. Thomas Donnelly was in the same hotel that evening; Alex Levitt who found him prowling in his stocking feet through the upstairs hall told him that he should go home. But two men in bed in the room adjoining William Esdale's said that they had seen Thomas Donnelly enter later in the night. He rummaged about the bed and clothing of William Esdale. Then he came to their room and showed them Esdale's wallet which was empty except for some keys. "Look, the old bugger has no money in his pocketbook," said Donnelly, "not a damn cent now."¹⁵⁵ Then Donnelly put the wallet back into William Esdale's pocket. When these witnesses had spoken, Thomas Donnelly was committed for Spring Assizes trial on the charge of the larceny of William Esdale.

On the next day, March 18, 1876, John and James and William Donnelly were led from the gaol again. John Donnelly received preliminary hearing on the charge of assaulting Peter McKellar on the Bryant and Crawley stage on the morning of January 24. Rhody Kennedy who had ridden on the stage with McKellar testified for the prosecution. John Donnelly was committed for a trial at the Spring Assizes.¹⁵⁶ After another hearing, James Donnelly Jr. was committed for trial at the Spring Assizes on the charge of assaulting constable Rhody Kennedy who had been trying on January 28 to arrest Robert Donnelly.¹⁵⁷ William Donnelly was convicted, and fined five dollars, on the charge of using abusive language to Rhody Kennedy, outside McLean's Hotel in Lucan on the evening of January 24, 1876,¹⁵⁸ a charge the trial of which had been scheduled first for February 18 and then for February 25, at which time William Donnelly was a fugitive in consequence of the wedding fight of February 24.¹⁵⁹

The Middlesex Spring Assizes commenced late in March of 1876, with a schedule of Donnelly trials. The charges were the Queen versus Thomas Donnelly, larceny of William Esdale; the Queen versus Thomas and James Donnelly, robbery of James Curry; the Queen versus Thomas, James and John Donnelly, arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables; the Queen versus James Donnelly, assault on Joseph Berryhill; the Queen versus James and William Donnelly, assault on John Coursey; the Queen versus John Donnelly, assault on Peter McKellar; the Queen versus John Donnelly, assault on John Bawden; the Queen versus William Donnelly, shooting with intent to murder John Bawden; and the Queen versus William Donnelly, perjury, the charge arising from William Donnelly's charge that on the evening of January 24, 1876, Peter

McKellar had threatened him with a revolver. There was also the Queen versus Rhody Kennedy, perjury, the charge arising from Kennedy's charge that James Donnelly had asked his help in the burning of the Queen's Hotel.¹⁶⁰ And there were charges against James Keefe Jr. and William Farrell, arising from their actions at the wedding riot on February 24, charges which had to be postponed because both Keefe and Farrell had disappeared.¹⁶¹

The lawyer defending the Donnelly brothers at the Spring Assizes was shrewd and partisan. His name was David Glass; he was a Queen's Counsel, a former mayor and alderman of London, a former Member of Parliament, and a member of a prominent London family.¹⁶² His brother William Glass was the Sheriff of Middlesex, who regularly sent subpoenas for delivery on the Donnelly stage, and who had neglected to seize Donnelly goods as requested, when William Donnelly had not paid his debt to the Lindsay ladies in January.¹⁶³

James Donnelly Jr. was convicted of the stoning of Joseph Berryhill and sentenced to nine months in the Toronto Central Prison.¹⁶⁴ The charge of having assaulted Rhody Kennedy and the charges of arson and assault to resist arrest were postponed until his release.¹⁶⁵ All of the trials of Thomas Donnelly were postponed: James Curry could not be found to prosecute his robbery case, Thomas' lawyer asked adjournment of the trial for the larceny of Esdale, and the trial for arson was delayed until James Donnelly Jr. his co-defendant would be released from prison in Toronto.¹⁶⁶ After trial for shooting with intent to kill John Bawden, William Donnelly was convicted of common assault and sentenced to nine months in the

Toronto Central Prison.¹⁶⁷ His trial on the charge of helping his brother James to resist arrest was postponed until their return from gaol.¹⁶⁸ Charles Hutchinson the Middlesex County Crown Attorney abandoned the unprovable perjury charge against William Donnelly, and the perjury charge against Rhody Kennedy.¹⁶⁹ John Donnelly was convicted of assault on constable John Bawden and sentenced to three months in Toronto's Central Prison.¹⁷⁰ He was not indicted on the charge of arson.¹⁷¹ His trial on the charge of assaulting Peter McKellar was postponed.¹⁷² On April 12 the guarded train, which gathered convicted prisoners after all of the southwestern Ontario Assizes, passed through London and continued east again with William and James and John Donnelly on board.¹⁷³

The massive list of charges had ended with only three convictions. Michael Donnelly against whom no charges had been laid appeared anyway at the Spring Assizes, where in the presence of his lawyer David Glass he offered to stand trial on any charge that might be brought against him. But the presiding justice at the Spring Assizes told Donnelly that he was free.¹⁷⁴ Unprosecuted himself, Michael Donnelly began a prosecution of constable John Bawden, who had held him a prisoner in McLean's Hotel in Lucan during the first week of March. Michael Donnelly's lawsuit would be ready for trial in time for the Middlesex Fall Assizes.¹⁷⁵

In April Michael Donnelly continued his litigious counter-offensive. He complained to County Crown Attorney Hutchinson that constables' costs had been assessed against him illegally when a London magistrate had bound him on February 28 to keep the peace toward Rhody Kennedy. Hutchinson directed the magistrate to pay a

refund.¹⁷⁶ And within two weeks of the departure of three of his brothers to prison in Toronto, Michael Donnelly was working for pay on behalf of Crown justice: he delivered as before on his own Opposition Stage subpoenas at request of William Glass, Middlesex Sheriff.¹⁷⁷ By September of 1876, such was the favour of Michael Donnelly that a Lucan magistrate felt justified in asking his appointment as a Middlesex county constable. But the prudent County Judge refused.¹⁷⁸

In Toronto's Central Prison, with one week served of a nine-month sentence, William Donnelly developed a fever and a mysterious pain in the spine. The prison's medical personnel transferred him from the criminal gaol to the comfortable debtors' wing. Although his wife Nqra was permitted to tend him daily, William Donnelly's condition did not improve. On April 30, 1876, after only eighteen days in Toronto's Central Prison, William Donnelly on compassionate grounds was discharged and granted a full official pardon.¹⁷⁹ Lucan rumour said that he had caused his illness deliberately by swallowing soap. Detective Hugh McKinnon wrote to Ontario's Attorney-General Oliver Mowat to demand William Donnelly's re-imprisonment.¹⁸⁰ Middlesex County's Crown Attorney Hutchinson was also suspicious. "There was more sham than reality in the illness," he told his Attorney-General.¹⁸¹ But the prison doctors had diagnosed otherwise and William Donnelly was free. One other charge pended against him, that of having helped his brother, James to escape from constable Coursey at the wedding brawl in Lucan on February 24. The trial was scheduled to be held at the Middlesex June Quarter Sessions. When he did not appear the Sessions Court issued a bench warrant, which

was entrusted to Sheriff William Glass.¹⁸² It was John Bawden, much later, who arrested William Donnelly, in time for the Fall Assizes.¹⁸³ There he was bailed again, until the next Assizes in the Spring of 1877, by which time the Crown Attorney had abandoned the charge completely.¹⁸⁴

Thomas Donnelly still waited in the Middlesex gaol, untried and unconvicted of any of the charges against him: the robbery of James Curry, the larceny of William Esdale, and the arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables. When Thomas Donnelly applied for bail, detective Hugh McKinnon lobbied again with the Attorney-General's department in Toronto.¹⁸⁵ This time McKinnon succeeded: Thomas Donnelly remained in the London gaol until the Middlesex Quarter Sessions in June.¹⁸⁶

Although Hugh McKinnon prodded him anxiously, Crown Attorney Hutchinson had no enthusiasm for any of the cases against Thomas Donnelly. The charge of arson depended upon the dubious testimonies of Rhody Kennedy and of James Churchill the veterinarian from Sarnia, who since had moved again, to Clinton, fifty miles north of London. "I question whether a jury would convict upon the evidence," the County Crown Attorney said.¹⁸⁷ The charge of robbing James Curry depended upon a prosecutor who could not be counted upon to appear in court when wanted. And a trial of Thomas Donnelly for the larceny of William Esdale seemed to be no more auspicious. "This case seems to depend upon the credibility of the witnesses," Hutchinson said. "If they are to be believed there is enough to convict, but they are none probably above suspicion."¹⁸⁸

The hesitant prosecutor was hampered by a court clerk who

sympathized with Thomas Donnelly. Until Hutchinson threatened to have him disciplined, he would not surrender the indictment certificates still in his possession since the Spring Assizes.¹⁸⁹ And Hutchinson had trouble locating the assortment of vagrant and unreliable witnesses upon whose word the cases depended. Rhody Kennedy was a fugitive after his part in a brawl in London on May 24 in which another man from Biddulph had been murdered.¹⁹⁰ Eventually, the chance to testify against Thomas Donnelly and the easy money in witness fees tempted Rhody Kennedy to appear in time.¹⁹¹ After much search and doubt and delay, Hutchinson found enough witnesses to proceed.¹⁹²

Thomas Donnelly's crafty lawyer David Glass made what obstacles he could. He was vague and evasive when Crown Attorney Hutchinson asked if the defence would be prepared in time for the June Quarter Sessions.¹⁹³ He argued that because the indictment against Donnelly for arson had been found at the Spring Assizes, the Inferior Sessions Court had no competent jurisdiction and hence the trial should be postponed until the Fall Assizes.¹⁹⁴ Then with all of the Crown witnesses finally assembled, the defence announced that the trials must be delayed because valuable witnesses could not be present.¹⁹⁵ Most important was William Atkinson, who in March had fled from Hugh McKinnon and the men who had hanged him on the Little Ausable River flats. William Atkinson had lived with relatives in Michigan until mid-May when he wrote to his wife to send him money for his fare back home. By the time funds were sent him at the end of May, William Atkinson had left to work his way home to Biddulph. By the time of the Middlesex June Sessions he was still somewhere in

Michigan. ¹⁹⁶

Detective McKinnon and constable Bawden were outraged when David Glass tried to exploit William Atkinson's convenient absence. According to the testimony of James Churchill, whom McKinnon himself had brought from Sarnia to testify in March, William Atkinson had stood guard while Thomas Donnelly tried to burn the Queen's Hotel on September 17, 1875; Bawden and McKinnon complained that Atkinson had fled to the United States to escape from being prosecuted, and not to escape from Bawden and McKinnon's hanging-tree. ¹⁹⁷ Hugh McKinnon

sifted through Biddulph in haste, to find another witness whom David Glass claimed to need in his defence. ¹⁹⁸ He pushed and worried the

Crown Attorney until ¹⁹⁹ Hutchinson in turn pressured David Glass.

"Such a breach of faith is all very well for the time," he told Glass,

"but you may depend on it, I'll bear it in mind!" ²⁰⁰

On June 15 David Glass capitulated. ²⁰¹ On June 16 Thomas

Donnelly was arraigned. He pleaded not guilty of the larceny of William Esdale, not guilty of the robbery of James Curry, not guilty of attempted arson of Patrick Flanagan's stables. ²⁰² On June 27

Thomas Donnelly was tried on a charge of attempted arson when,

according to James Churchill the vagrant veterinarian, Thomas had failed because he fell from a broken board. There were only Churchill

and Rhody Kennedy and Patrick Flanagan for the prosecution. Five

witnesses testified for Donnelly, and a close family friend from

Biddulph was on the jury which returned with a verdict of not

guilty. ²⁰³ On June 28 Thomas Donnelly was tried for the larceny of

William Esdale. David Glass did not bother to call any witnesses to contradict Esdale and the men from the next hotel room who claim

to have seen Donnelly with Esdale's empty wallet. The jury not believing them acquitted Thomas Donnelly.²⁰⁴ In the matter of the charges against Thomas Donnelly for the robbery of James Curry and the arson of the Flanagan stables, David Glass was successful at delay: trials of both charges were postponed until the Fall Assizes. Thomas Donnelly was set free on bail.²⁰⁵ By the fall the Crown Attorney had abandoned both charges. "I could not obtain a conviction on the evidence," he said.²⁰⁶ David Glass continued to do his best for the Donnelly family. In 1878 he lent money to James Donnelly Sr. with the sixth-concession fifty acres as collateral.²⁰⁷

On June 30, John Donnelly was released from the Central Prison in Toronto and arrived back home in Middlesex.²⁰⁸ The Quarter Sessions Court admitted him to bail the same day, to appear at the September Quarter Sessions to be tried on the charge of assaulting Peter McKellar,²⁰⁹ on the occasion when he had climbed to the driver's seat of the Bryant and Crawley stage. At the trial which was not held until the December Quarter Sessions, John Donnelly was found not guilty.²¹⁰

William Atkinson arrived home from Michigan. With the urging of William Donnelly he charged Hugh McKinnon and John Bawden and nine of their Lucan thugs with assaulting him, on the night of March 2, 1876, when they had hanged him from a tree on the Little Ausable River flats. A magistrate in London committed all eleven defendants for a trial at the Middlesex December Quarter Sessions.²¹¹ Thomas Donnelly delivered the witnesses' subpoenas and was paid of course by the Crown for his services.²¹² Detective Hugh McKinnon with much publicity had to return from the Hamilton area, where he was trying

to work in secret²¹³ on another investigation. Proclaiming his own professional integrity, McKinnon blustered vaguely that Atkinson's charge was fraudulent and absurd.²¹⁴

At the trial on December 15, 1876, Atkinson faced the eleven defendants who had been his attackers. The first witness was his wife, Rebecca, who told of her husband being seized from their bedroom. But during the Sessions Court's noon recess, prosecutor William Atkinson vanished. The witnesses who had testified at the preliminary hearing had no wish to accuse eleven defendants when the prosecutor himself was too frightened to stay. The case was dismissed.²¹⁵ But Hugh McKinnon's latest sleuthing had been much disrupted and the embarrassment was double for constable John Bawden, who earlier that fall had been sued by Michael Donnelly in the Fall Assizes court, for malicious arrest at the time when Bawden had held him illegally in a room of McLean's Hotel.²¹⁶

On December 30, 1876, James Donnelly Jr. returned from Toronto's Central Prison; his nine-month sentence for stoning Joseph Berryhill was over.²¹⁷ Charges still remained against him: of assaulting and resisting constable John Coursey at the Lucan wedding fight on February 24, and of assaulting and resisting constable Rhody Kennedy in Lucan on January 28.²¹⁸ The arson charge against him had been discontinued when Thomas Donnelly his co-defendant was acquitted at the Middlesex June Sessions.²¹⁹ In London on January 1, 1877, James Donnelly Jr. was released on bail with his father as a guarantor, to appear at future trials. The County Crown Attorney knew that the Coursey case was weak. Donnelly had not assaulted the constable; he had only taken off his coat and threatened.²²⁰ He never proceeded

with either charge.

And so the quarrelsome and complicated year of 1876 ended, and with it the stage-coach wars and the painful litigations. Patrick Flanagan had abandoned the stage-coach line to London, maintaining only his partnership with Crawley in the small branch line from Exeter to Crediton.²²¹ His successor Richard Bryant had died from a stage-coach fall.²²² Bryant's interest had been purchased in July by William Walker who owned a Lucan hotel.²²³ It was the whole stage line which William Walker bought: in the spring Walker's partner Ted Crawley had quit in disgust, retreating to his smaller Exeter-Crediton line which he co-owned with Patrick Flanagan.²²⁴ Ted Crawley had operated an Exeter-to-London stage with John Hawkshaw in 1872,²²⁵ and then in 1876 with Flanagan and Bryant and Walker successively. In Lucan William Walker found another associate, whose name was James Watson.²²⁶ Walker and Watson were not violent; they preferred not to quarrel. Throughout that year of 1876 the London, Huron and Bruce Railway, thriving, had eroded the stage-coach trade.²²⁷ The end of the stage lines was near; rivalry could only hasten the decline.

Thus it was that early in December of 1876, as the Quarter Sessions Court churned through the last of the stage-coach cases, the two Lucan stages formed a peaceful alliance. Thomas and William and Michael Donnelly met with James Watson and William Walker. They drank together, promised friendship, exchanged equipment.²²⁸ The Donnelly brothers rented stable space from Henry Collins, who hating Donnellys earlier had accused them of the theft of missing sheepskins. With Donnelly livestock housed in the stable of a former enemy, the

safety of the property of both seemed assured.²²⁹ Only Hawkshaw's stage out of Exeter still competed.²³⁰

But each hotel in Lucan offered daily stage service to and from the Grand Trunk railroad station where they tried to attract travellers overnight. At the time when the London-to-Lucan stage owners made peace, the hotel-coach drivers began to quarrel. At the station they disputed over passengers when every train arrived. Late in October of 1876 when one of the drivers pulled a knife on a rival, the village assigned to each hotel a hitching post at the Grand Trunk station, from which position and from nowhere else each driver was permitted to solicit his passengers. But although the compromise and the new regulations made temporary peace in Lucan, the threat of more quarrelling troubled the village which for two years past had been afflicted with crime because of the stage-lines to London.²³¹

In a village grown nervous and resentful of stage-coaches, violence began to cause more violence in a vicious and unstoppable reaction. Strife which first had centred on stage-lines spread cancerous throughout the whole life of Lucan. From the beginning of 1877 Lucan crime increased, random and aimless crime, the more frightening for being gratuitous and unpredictable. Three times in three weeks in January of 1877, men for no apparent purpose smashed in the front door of the Main Street butcher shop.²³² On January 13, someone unmotivated except by the urge to destroy burned the Lucan lumber mill. Carpenters' tool chests were lost in the flames, and new milling machinery that had just been installed, and lumber for several new Lucan houses. One of the Stanley brothers and Alex Levitt were badly burned trying to salvage remnants.²³³

The wagon shop of James Maloney burned at midnight on March 13, 1877. James Maloney was friendly with all Lucan stage-owners;²³⁴ they depended on a wagon-works to keep their coaches in repair. The wagon-maker's fire was a strike against all stages and not against a single individual. Four nights later, the Donnelly stable was set on fire. In the March cold the Lucan firemen's hoses froze and the building burned to the ground. Hay and grain were destroyed, and four valuable sets of William Walker's harnesses. One of the Donnelly horses died. The other Donnelly horse which boarded there was rescued, and a cow belonging to Henry Collins whose stable it had been.²³⁵ Collins' building had been no protection for the Donnellys, nor for Walker and Watson. The undiscovered arsonists seemed to be men who hated all Lucan stage-coach owners, remembering all the carnage which the Lucan coach lines had always caused. In Exeter, no one bothered the property of the Hawkshaw Stage.

To fill the demand for stage-coach work while Maloney the wagon-maker tried to re-build, a Lucan blacksmith whose name was John Judge began to repair and repaint coaches. On April 10, 1877, his house, and his blacksmith shop, his paint shop and wagon-works were burned. The fire destroyed four other nearby dwellings.²³⁶ The Donnelly brothers moved their coach from Lucan, storing it by night at Montgomery's Tavern, at the corner of the Proof Line road and London township's eighth concession. On the night after the Lucan blacksmith's fire, two arsonists rode down with cans of oil from Lucan to Montgomery's Hotel where they burned the Donnelly stage.²³⁷

Stages were a pestilence. On May 7 an old man from London township died, tumbling from the seat of the Mail stage when an axle

nut came loose near Birr. The Mail stage driver panicked and fled.²³⁸ Later that same week, someone crept from behind to club James Watson senseless on a Lucan sidewalk after dark.²³⁹ On May 11, someone burned the livery stables of Robert McLean's Central Hotel. Three valuable horses died, and the fire spreading to two other buildings burned them both down too. McLean's coach service to the Grand Trunk station was finished.²⁴⁰ Walker and Watson, as the Donnellys had done, removed their horses and equipment from Lucan. They put their animals to graze in pastures at the edge of the village. On the morning of May 22 they discovered the beasts with their throats slit, their bellies slashed, their entrails spread upon the ground. The one horse which still lived had to be shot.²⁴¹

In the same month of May, a personal loss deepened the grief of the Donnelly family. On May 15, 1877, James Donnelly Jr. the oldest Donnelly son died of appendicitis; he was thirty-five years old.²⁴² The shrinking Donnelly family and the Donnelly stage had about them the same sour feeling of mortality.

All through that spring of 1877, fire destroyed not only stage-coach properties: on March 8 the Lucan flax mill, on April 25 a barn and five horses, on May 12 Bernard Stanley's warehouse, on May 24 a photographer's studio, on June 8 the Post Office nearby at Whalen.²⁴³ Lucan organized a volunteer fire brigade, purchased new pumps and hoses, hired a full-time brigade captain, installed sunken water tanks along the village streets,²⁴⁴ appointed a village constable whose name was Samuel Everett,²⁴⁵ erected street lights, built a new lockup,²⁴⁶ and hired a watchman whose only duty was patrolling to find fire. On May 20, drunks at careless target

practice on Lucan's Main Street shot the guard accidentally in the leg.²⁴⁷ The fires continued.

William Bowey who operated the Queen's Hotel quit and moved away.²⁴⁸ Robert McFalls who assumed the lease established coach service to the Grand Trunk depot.²⁴⁹ Since the era of Patrick Flanagan, the Queen's Hotel had housed the stock and equipment of the stage which opposed the Donnelly stage. Thomas Donnelly warned Robert McFalls in his barroom in early May. "You will get a scorching inside of six weeks. It is laid out for you now," he said, "but I do not intend to do it myself or have anything to do with it."²⁵⁰ Robert McFalls tried to cancel his new lease; John O'Donohue the owner would not cancel. O'Donohue tried to raise his fire insurance by one thousand dollars, but no insurance company would accept the risk. The policy which O'Donohue had already purchased was cancelled in early June.

On the night of June 12, 1877, Robert McFalls took a coal-oil lamp, checked the outside basement door, locked his liquor cellar and went to bed. At half past one in the morning he awoke with his room full of smoke. Someone was ringing the doorbell and kicking at the door and yelling--"McFalls get up or you'll be burnt in your bed." Constable John Reid in passing had noticed smoke billowing from the basement door and windows, where among a pile of straw and empty wooden ale kegs someone had started yet another fire. McFalls and his tenants rushed from the building. The Lucan fire engine arrived too late: the Queen's Hotel for the second time burned down. Thomas Donnelly and William Atkinson were at the fire, watching. Robert McFalls gave up his lease to his braver relative, Alex McFalls.

But always it was the stage-coach lines which received both the blame and the damage. Early in June, William Walker and Thomas Donnelly attacked with fists and profanity one of their Lucan antagonists; the Lucan magistrates fined both stage-owners.²⁵¹ The Lucan mood against Donnellys and against all stages drew in another accusing trouble-maker. At the end of June, a thug from London was discovered prowling in the Lucan alleys, armed with a pistol and a dirk and a razor. He told the Lucan magistrates that the Donnellys had paid him to ride guard on their stage into Lucan. Donnellys watched for themselves; his claim was absurd. He was fined and gaoled, and no Donnellys were even questioned.²⁵² But the man typified the morbid hangers-on who presided over the stage-coach decline. Then someone sent a telegram from Lucan to London, begging for policemen's help before it was too late, claiming that Donnellys were rampaging all over Lucan. The three city detectives who arrived in haste found one minor fight in progress in the village. But no Donnelly was involved; no Donnelly was even in Lucan, except Michael who was peacefully at home.²⁵³

On July 5, 1877, Fitzhenry's Hotel in Lucan burned, and two adjoining stables and a storage shed. Inside one stable was the Donnellys' new stage-coach, built to replace the one that had burned at Montgomery's Tavern less than three months before.²⁵⁴ In the light from the flames of the burning coach and buildings, a Donnelly reeling from this last hard loss fought with a gawking and heckling fire-watcher.²⁵⁵ Four days after the fire at Fitzhenry's, Donnelly-stalkers made their last and most personal assault. Breaking into Michael Donnelly's home they set it afire while the family slept.

Michael Donnelly and Nellie his wife and Catherine their seventeen-month-old daughter, escaped. But before the fire engine and the volunteer brigade came, the entire inside of the house was gutted, with only the blackened outside shell surviving.²⁵⁶

The Donnelly brothers built yet another stage-coach. Through the rest of 1877 and into the winter of 1878, the Donnelly stage still travelled daily from Lucan to London and Exeter and back. The Donnelly stage still delivered passengers, and cargo, and county Crown subpoenas.²⁵⁷ But in February of 1878 it quietly folded,²⁵⁸ victim of the railroad and the rival stages, of the magistrates and courts and constables, of arsonists and Lucan enemies who would not let there be peace, and of the Donnellys' own violent drives. John Hawkshaw's stage out of Exeter folded in that same season.²⁵⁹ The London, Huron and Bruce Railway really left little for stages to carry.²⁶⁰ There was only a small local mail contract, for which Watson and Walker and Crawley and McFalls and Hawkshaw competed by tender, picking up the leavings of the railroad.²⁶¹

Michael Donnelly recognized the way of the future. He became a brakeman on the Grand Trunk Railway.²⁶² Later he joined the Canada Southern Railway which ran across southwestern Ontario. He moved his family to St. Thomas.²⁶³ Since the late fall of 1876, William Donnelly had not lived in Lucan, renting a farm instead on the eighth concession from a friend whose name was John Ryan.²⁶⁴ Progressively he had left the management of the Donnelly stage to Thomas and to Michael.²⁶⁵ When the stage line was finished he considered moving to London,²⁶⁶ but moved instead to the village of Whalen at the north end of the Cedar Swamp Line.²⁶⁷ William Donnelly

had two stables there and he still bred fine horses, as he had in the days when he had needed them to pull the Opposition Stage.²⁶⁸ Robert Donnelly moved to Glencoe. Like his brother William unwilling to abandon what he knew and loved best, Robert acquired wagons and horses and began a cartage business.²⁶⁹ Thomas and John Donnelly returned to help their parents on the Roman Line farm.²⁷⁰

CHAPTER 4

THE PEOPLE OF BIDDULPH

The Donnellys were strong men who drew followers easily to themselves. "Me and my adventurers," William Donnelly called them, "plenty of good boys to see me safe through all my undertakings."¹ "The Donnelly gang" and "the Ku-Klux"² other people called them.

Daniel Keefe who farmed on the Roman Line was one of Donnelly's "good boys."³ In 1871 Daniel Keefe spent six months in London's gaol for stabbing a man with a penknife in a brawl at a Lucan hotel.⁴ In January of 1874 he helped William Donnelly try to kidnap Margret Thompson. "You're a liar,"⁵ Daniel Keefe shouted when old William Thompson identified him in court. In February of 1874, the first day after his kidnapping trial, Daniel Keefe was drunk and vindictive in Fitzhenry's Hotel in Lucan. He tried to quarrel with his Roman Line neighbour James Toohey. Keefe boasted that he could beat Toohey, but Toohey stayed seated in his bar chair. "I do not want to raise a row in any man's house," said Toohey, "but if you want to fight I will fight you any place you appoint."⁶ Mrs. James Ryder came from the front sitting room to try to make peace. "You ought to be home, Dan," she said. Daniel Keefe pushed her back. "I will not take that from you," he said, "or from any man or from God Almighty." When James Ryder jumped up to defend his wife, James Toohey intervened. "Do not have anything to do with him," said Toohey, "it is me he

wants to quarrel with." Toohy and Keefe grappled and rolled to the barroom floor. Toohy struck him in the face and the ribs. When bar patrons separated them, Keefe's two eyes were blackened. He went home to his bed where William Donnelly visited him the next day.

Toohy and Daniel Keefe charged each other with assault. In Birr, magistrate Henry Ferguson convicted James Toohy;⁷ in Lucan, Robert O'Neil convicted Daniel Keefe.⁸ Toohy's conviction was cancelled in June when he appealed to the Middlesex Court of Quarter Sessions.⁹ James Toohy was one of the murderers of the Donnellys;¹⁰ Daniel Keefe was one of the reasons why.

Daniel Keefe continued to be a friend of the Donnelly family.

In February of 1876 Daniel Keefe's family sheltered James Donnelly Jr. in their house, while constables and Militia volunteers searched for him after the wedding brawl at Fitzhenry's tavern.¹¹ But Daniel Keefe himself was not at home: he was serving a five-year sentence in the Kingston penitentiary for the robbery of a drunk named Samuel Williams near Lucan in March of 1875.¹² Daniel Keefe was still in prison when the Donnellys were murdered.

William Atkinson, a blacksmith in Lucan, was another of Donnelly's adventurers. In 1874 he tried to rescue Margret Thompson.¹³ In September of 1875, James Curry claimed to have seen him standing guard at the mouth of an alley while Thomas Donnelly tried to burn Patrick Flanagan's stable.¹⁴ In March of 1876 he was hanged and tortured by detective Hugh McKinnon and his gang of Lucan thugs who wanted him to tell what he knew of Donnelly crimes. In October at William Donnelly's urging he charged the hangmen with assault, then changed his mind and vanished from the London courtroom during the

trial.¹⁵ In June of 1877, Atkinson was drinking and loitering with Thomas Donnelly in Lucan when the Queen's Hotel burned down.¹⁶ At the time of the Donnelly murders Atkinson still lived in Lucan.¹⁷

James Keefe Jr. was one of the closest of Donnelly associates. His father was a prosperous Roman-Line farmer; the Keefes were among the first Catholic settlers in Biddulph.¹⁸ In September of 1875 in a Lucan barroom, Keefe was challenged by Joseph Berryhill. He followed Berryhill to another bar where, with help from James and Thomas Donnelly, he stoned and maimed him.¹⁹ In February of 1876 at the wedding brawl, James Keefe Jr. kicked at a constable to help John Donnelly escape from arrest.²⁰ Keefe escaped too and it was December of 1877 before he was arrested. At the Court of Quarter Sessions in London in December, Keefe was acquitted both of assault on Joseph Berryhill and of assault on the constable.²¹

In the summer of 1877, four months before those trials, James Keefe Jr. fought in Lucan with Henry Collins, in whose stable the Donnellys kept their horses. Keefe was fined for assault and for breach of the village peace, and was bound to keep the peace for one year.²² In December of 1877 during the week before his trials, Keefe blackened a man's eye in another fight in Lucan. He was fined again and bound to keep the peace.²³ In January of 1878, one month after his trials, James Keefe and Thomas Donnelly and others invaded the tavern of Matthew Glass at Elginfield, where the Proof Line road entered Biddulph. Keefe and his companions smashed furniture and broke decanters of whisky and barrels of ale. Armed with an axe handle the barkeeper tried to stop them, but the vandals drove him from his tavern. He fled to Lucan where he begged magistrate Bernard

Stanley to send constables. Stanley told him to find his own constables. Neither James Keefe Jr. nor anyone else was ever charged for the destruction.²⁴

In May of 1878, James Keefe Jr. and a London companion whose name was John Cavanagh stole a team and buggy parked outside Alex McFall's Queen's Hotel in Lucan.²⁵ They drove it wildly around the township roads until the buggy was smashed and the horses exhausted. Although the victim himself was wise enough not to prosecute, a visitor to Lucan named John Flynn reported the theft. Constable Samuel Everett arrested James Keefe as he entered St. Patrick's Church on Sunday morning. James Keefe was released on bail until trial, and returned to the church before service was over. With his younger brother Patrick and his London friend John Cavanagh, he beat John Flynn on the steps of St. Patrick's Church as Flynn emerged from worship. The Keefes and Cavanagh were charged with assault; on August 2, 1878, Patrick Keefe was convicted by William Stanley, James McCosh and Michael Cronican.²⁶ When Constable Everett warned John Flynn, the prosecutor, to be careful, Flynn disappeared from court before James Keefe or Cavanagh could be tried. Without a prosecutor the two men were discharged.²⁷ Later that day while John Flynn hid in the kitchen of a Lucan hotel, a brick crashed through the window beside him. Brick and broken glass cut his head badly. John Flynn was never found in Lucan or London again. James Keefe Jr. was never tried for damaging the buggy nor for either attack on Flynn.²⁸ But enemies of the Donnelly gang remembered.²⁹ Keefe was twenty-eight years old when the Donnellys were murdered in February of 1880.³⁰

James Feeheley was on the fringe of the Donnelly gang.³¹ He was a family friend who often took meals at William Donnelly's home or at the Donnelly Roman Line homestead.³² James Feeheley's family's farm was on the sixth concession and two lots north of the Donnelly farm.³³ That home was not a pleasant one for James Feeheley and his five younger brothers and sisters. In 1868 after twenty-five years of marriage, James' father Michael turned violently on his family.³⁴ For the next five years he cursed and threatened and assaulted Bridget his wife. Often he drove his wife and children from the home; they took shelter with the parish priest or with neighbours, for several days at a time, until Michael Feeheley's temper subsided. Twice in May of 1872 he drove them away with a butcher knife, promising to kill Bridget if they ever returned. In February of 1873 he beat her with a stick of cordwood and drove them all away. In May he beat her with a horsewhip and drove them away again. After the years of mistreatment, James Feeheley's mother grew sickly and delicate. Afraid for her life and helpless to provide for her children, Bridget Feeheley filed for divorce in May of 1873. Henceforth Michael Feeheley was milder; Bridget cancelled her divorce petition. But although the family stayed intact, the Feeheley property disintegrated. At the time of the divorce petition Michael Feeheley owned three Biddulph farms worth more than nine thousand dollars; at the time of his death in 1881 all the Feeheley lands were mortgaged and the few remaining Feeheley possessions--household furniture, livestock, farm implements--could not begin to cover what was due to a host of Biddulph creditors.³⁵ Without a secure home and family of his own, James Feeheley drifted to the edges of the Donnelly gang, wanting to

belong somewhere but afraid to join with Donnellys completely.

In December of 1877 James Feeheley was convicted and fined nineteen dollars in Lucan for an assault that left his victim scarred about the eyes and forehead.³⁶ In January of 1878 he was only twenty years old when he helped Thomas Donnelly and James Keefe Jr. to demolish Glass's tavern at Elginfield.³⁷ Even the Donnelly murders did nothing to govern James Feeheley: in July of 1880, five months after the murders, he charged berserk into Alex McFall's Queen's Hotel where he attacked an old pedlar, threw him down and kicked him.³⁸ Tearing off his coat and shirt he rushed at McFalls who tried to restrain him. McFalls split Feeheley's head with one blow of a coal shovel, but bystanders still had to hold Feeheley back. Feeheley turned on one of those bystanders, knocked him down and pursued him outside into the street, where the man turned and split Feeheley's head a second time with a stone from the street, and finally Feeheley fell senseless. When a doctor had revived him and dressed his wounds, James Feeheley went home quietly. He was never charged for his rampage. Feeheley lived in Biddulph township for more than a year after the Donnelly murders.³⁹

Thomas Ryan was the youngest of the Donnelly gang, and the one who, in the end, did most to cause the Donnelly murders. Thomas Ryan's family had farmed since the 1840s on lot twenty-two of the seventh concession, one mile south of the Donnelly farm.⁴⁰ His father Patrick Ryan was present in 1857 when James Donnelly Sr. killed Patrick Farrell.⁴¹ Thomas Ryan in 1873 was only twelve years old, too young to have helped try to kidnap Margret Thompson. But in the summer of 1876 Thomas Ryan was sixteen, old enough to be tried

at the Fall Assizes in London for shooting with intent to murder.

On Sunday afternoon, July 9, 1876, a crowd of Biddulph boys gathered to throw the shoulder-stone in a Roman Line field. Each in turn raised the large stone with both hands to his shoulder, then heaved it as far as he could. Thomas Ryan was one of the boys. He carried a pistol which he had purchased three weeks earlier; he had bought the bullets on Saturday, July 8. Another competitor was James Carroll, brother of Mary Carroll who had married William Thompson, and son of Michael Carroll who lived opposite the Feeheley farm on the seventh concession. Michael Carroll also had been present at the 1857 killing of Patrick Farrell.

When James Carroll stooped to pick up the heavy shoulder-stone, Thomas Ryan for mischief shot a pebble from his sling which struck James Carroll in the side. Carroll turning around asked who had struck him. The others named Thomas Ryan. "What did you pelt at me for?" Carroll asked.⁴² "I did not do it," Thomas Ryan said. Still holding the shoulder-stone, Carroll ran at Ryan. Then he dropped it to pick up a smaller stone the size of a fist. "I will smash your teeth," Carroll said. "I'm not afraid of you although you have a revolver." From ten feet away he threw as hard as he could. His stone struck Thomas Ryan in the chest. "I'll pay you for that before I go home," Thomas Ryan promised. He took two stones from the ditch and threw them. Carroll threw one more stone and then returned to the shoulder-stone contests. But Ryan lifted a lump of clay in his hands as he climbed back up onto the road. He loitered and brooded for ten more minutes, then threw again at Carroll. Armed with more stones, Carroll pursued Thomas Ryan who ran out of range down the Roman Line.

One half hour later, leaving the shoulder-stone, James Carroll climbed up to the road to go home. But Thomas Ryan had returned and stood waiting. Carroll asked some of the crowd to accompany him home for safety. Ryan raised his new pistol and fired in Carroll's direction, the bullet stirring gravel ten feet from James Carroll. Carroll turned around. "Was there anything in that?" he asked the crowd. Someone said yes. "Was it at me that he fired?" Someone said yes again. "I'll make you pay for that tomorrow," he told Thomas Ryan. A peacemaking friend urged Ryan to go home, but they had walked only two hundred yards when Ryan turned to pursue James Carroll again. He fired one more shot as Carroll fled. Then Ryan returned to the shoulder-stone games, where he passed his pistol around to admiring boys.

On July 10, James Carroll charged Thomas Ryan with shooting with intent to murder. On July 14, magistrate William Stanley of Lucan committed him to gaol in London until a trial at the Middlesex Fall Assizes. On July 17 Thomas Ryan was released when his father and James Donnelly Sr. each provided five hundred dollars in bond. On the same day Thomas Ryan charged James Carroll with assault. On July 19, a London magistrate bailed Carroll until a trial at the Fall Assizes. But Carroll was not indicted at the Assizes. Thomas Ryan pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of assault and was fined twenty-five dollars. James Carroll's father became one of the Vigilant Committee which harrassed and later killed the Donnellys.⁴³

In 1878 Thomas Ryan's family moved away from Biddulph and its quarrels.⁴⁴ But Thomas Ryan was old enough to choose to stay, boarding with and working for farmers of the township. In the absence

of a family of his own, he grew friendlier with the Donnelly family. By 1878 Thomas Ryan was well-known in Biddulph. He carried not a sling and pistol anymore but a double-edged fighting-knife with a ten-inch blade. In early January of 1878, constable Everett of Lucan arrested him for possession of a dangerous weapon.⁴⁵ He put Thomas Ryan into the Lucan lockup. He stayed until three o'clock in the morning, guarding his prisoner against rumored attempts to rescue him. But when constable Everett went home to his bed, Thomas Ryan's friends came out of the dark and with crowbars and burglar tools set him free. The hole which they left in the lockup wall was four feet wide. Thomas Ryan left Biddulph in the fall of 1879, four months, before the Donnelly murders.⁴⁶

Thomas Ryan, James Feeheley, James Keefe Jr., William Atkinson, Daniel Keefe: these were some of the men whom the Donnellys had for friends, some of the men who were called the Donnelly gang. The Donnelly family had many other friends, peaceful and prosperous people. In Lucan were William Pratt, a Protestant merchant,⁴⁷ and Michael O'Connor a Catholic labourer;⁴⁸ on the Proof Line were Catholic farmers Dennis Darcy⁴⁹ and Andrew Keefe⁵⁰ and Timothy Collisson⁵¹ and Stephen McCormick; on the first concession were Robert Thompson, a Protestant carpenter,⁵³ and Joseph Simpson who kept a hotel;⁵⁴ on the second concession William Kent, a Protestant farmer,⁵⁵ on the fourth Mitchell Haskett,⁵⁶ on the fifth John Dagg;⁵⁷ on the sixth concession were Catholics William McLaughlin⁵⁸ and William and Cornelius Maloney,⁵⁹ on the seventh John Whelehan,⁶⁰ and Stephen Patton, a school teacher;⁶¹ on the eighth concession were Michael Powe⁶² and William Ryder⁶³ and Michael Grace,⁶⁴ and Martin

Hogan Sr. and Jr.;⁶⁵ on the tenth was James Powe⁶⁶ and on the eleventh concession John Kennedy Sr.⁶⁷ There were other Donnelly friends, many others. But those of the Donnelly gang were the ones that the people of Biddulph watched most closely. They were the ones people thought of whenever Donnellys were mentioned, or whenever any crime took place.

Edward Ryan was one who watched, closely and nervously. In the spring of 1878 Edward Ryan sold his fifty-acre farm on lot thirty-two at the south end of the eighth concession. The farm had been settled and cleared by his father, and Edward Ryan had farmed it for all of his working life.⁶⁸ He sold it in order to buy one hundred acres, lot nineteen of the sixth concession, one lot south of the Donnelly homestead. Edward Ryan prepared to move in among the Donnellys and the Donnelly gang.

Rich with the cash from the sale of his farm, Edward Ryan went to Lucan to celebrate. At Walker's Hotel on March 5, 1878, he saw Thomas Donnelly and James Feeheley his new neighbours. "Boys come and have a drink," Edward Ryan invited, thinking it wise to be liberal.⁶⁹ "Boys have another drink," Ryan said a little later. Thomas Donnelly and James Feeheley treated too. They moved on to McLean's Hotel, to Cain's Hotel, to Farrell's Hotel; to McFall's Hotel. Edward Ryan grew drunker, falling down, lying across the bars, taking all his money from his pocket, displaying it around the barrooms. He lent money to Thomas Donnelly, money to James Feeheley. He pulled out his money again for a drunken wager with a stranger who sat beside him; then he forgot the bet before it could be decided.

"Is it not time to go home," said Feeheley finally. "Hold on, it is time enough," Donnelly protested, but Edward Ryan said that he

must go home. Ryan staggered at dusk along the Lucan street with Thomas Donnelly's arm about his shoulder for support. Then someone's arms behind him which he understood to be James Feeheley's grasped him about the arms and body. A hand which he understood to be Thomas Donnelly's reached into his pocket. The arms from behind squeezed at his throat and threw him to the ground, where he passed out from drink and from choking.

Lucan pedestrians ignored him in the Main Street ditch. Then one man stopped who, failing to stir him, called for the village constable. Samuel Everett the constable tried for fifteen minutes to raise him. Then rather than carry Ryan to the Lucan lockup he turned him over to a relative. Edward Ryan was dragged to his cousin's nearby home where he vomited and passed out again for the night. He remembered nothing about losing any money. "My money's all right," he assured his cousin, during one moment that evening when he was able to speak.

But the next morning Edward Ryan missed his money. He remembered arms about his throat and a hand in his pocket, and he remembered drinking with Donnelly and Feeheley. He confronted James Feeheley who denied that they had taken his money, and who threatened him if he caused any trouble. Edward Ryan with warrants for their arrests went to the Lucan village constable. But Everett refused to make the arrest: because Ryan bore no marks of assault on his body, because Ryan could not (as he claimed to have done) cried for help on the Lucan Main Street without being heard, and because Ryan was so drunk when Everett came upon him that nothing Ryan could remember would be useful as evidence. "I do not get drunk often," Edward Ryan protested.

"I take a bit of a rip once in a while," he admitted, "I have lain in the bush all night with a jug of whisky."

A county constable who lived in Lucan and whose name was William Hodgins was eager to act when Samuel Everett was not. In June of 1878 he rode to the Donnelly homestead with Edward Ryan's warrant. But James Donnelly Sr. would not permit him to tie his horse at the gate. And Thomas Donnelly emerged from the house with a shotgun at his shoulder. "I will blow your brains out," he threatened.⁷⁰ The old man reassured the constable. "Tom is not going to shoot you," he said. William Hodgins could not leave his stallion untied and had to leave without making the arrest.

Thomas Donnelly stayed in Biddulph throughout that summer and autumn. In September of 1878 the barns and equipment burned on Edward Ryan's new farm near the Donnelly home. Some people blamed the fire on a lightning storm, and others accused Edward Ryan of setting it himself to collect the insurance.⁷¹ But Ryan remembered the robbery in March, and the threats of James Feeheley should Ryan try to prosecute.⁷² Later that fall of 1878, James Feeheley and Thomas Donnelly left to work in the Michigan lumber camps.⁷³ The warrants to arrest Donnelly and Feeheley remained unserved; Donnellys and their friends were stronger than Edward Ryan and the Biddulph constables. They seemed immune to any of the people in Biddulph who, with just cause or without, hated and accused them.

In Biddulph as in all of Ontario, constables were appointed by the County's Court of General Sessions.⁷⁴ Any official of a municipality, or any group of its citizens, could nominate somebody for appointment. Usually then the Sessions Court's appointments were

routine and automatic. These constables were under nobody's supervision; there was no chief constable. They worked whenever they wanted, on whatever cases attracted their attention. They received no salary, only commissions. Those who wished to do so could profit, seeking out and even generating crimes which could justify their intervention. Those who preferred to be inactive could completely or selectively ignore injustices. Those who wished to do so could use their position to satisfy private spites. Each was governed only by his constable's oath, to "truly, faithfully and impartially perform the duties appertaining to the said office."⁷⁵ Hence in the winter of 1876, constables John Bawden and John Reid and John Coursey were appointed by the Court of General Sessions at the request of William Stanley and other Lucan magistrates. These three constables on February 24, 1876 precipitated the brawl with the Donnellys and other wedding guests, provoking more crime and disturbance than these three constables ever prevented.

In June of 1877 during the worst of the troubles that came with the stage competitions, the Lucan town council hired their first full-time and salaried constable. His name was Samuel Everett. In April of 1879, the Lucan council fired him, for like the three constables at the wedding brawl Samuel Everett caused more strife than he controlled. But Everett stayed in Lucan making trouble until April of 1881 when, friendless and unemployed, he left for Chicago, where he dropped dead on a street in 1883.⁷⁶

Like defective Hugh McKinnon, Samuel Everett came from Hamilton where for criminal activity of his own he was fired from the city's police force.⁷⁷ In the fall of 1877, within months of his appointment,

Everett could be found almost any evening drinking in the Queen's Hotel; almost any morning he could be found unfit for constabulary functions.⁷⁸ One day in February of 1878 he was drunk when he brought a prisoner to the London gaol.⁷⁹ One day in August, reeking of whisky, he skulked behind two frightened ladies on the Main Street of Lucan.⁸⁰ He took bribes from people wanting suspects arrested, bribes from others who did not want to be arrested, and bribes for releasing those he already had arrested.⁸¹

Constable Samuel Everett was dedicated primarily to the pursuit of his own host of enemies. One enemy was John O'Donohue whose Queen's Hotel had had so many tenant-proprietors. Everett inhabited the Queen's Hotel often, drunk and insulting and authoritarian. He insulted O'Donohue in October of 1877, and assaulted him in November.⁸² In September of 1878 when O'Donohue charged him, Lucan's chief constable, with the theft of a mowing bar, Everett was committed for a trial in London. When no dependable witnesses were found to make a prosecution viable, Everett was never tried. He charged John O'Donohue with perjury, but magistrate Henry Ferguson dismissed the charge promptly.⁸³

Another enemy of Samuel Everett was Lucan's postmaster, William Porte, who was also, as a village councillor, one of Everett's employers. One night he accused Porte of public drunkenness and threw the councillor into the lockup.⁸⁴ Everett spread false rumours of improprieties in Porte's operation of the government's Post Office; an inspector had to come from Toronto to be sure the tales were untrue.⁸⁵ And after the murders of the Donnellys, Samuel Everett spread rumours that William Porte wrote constantly to Patrick Donnelly, reporting crimes in the township and village and urging Donnelly

revenge.⁸⁶

In the spring of 1879 the Lucan council asked their constable to take charge of lighting Lucan's street lamps, so that crime if unpoliced could at least be visible. But Constable Everett refused.⁸⁷ It was late in April when the council agreed to fire him, for insubordination and for breaches of the village peace. Constable Everett sued the corporation of Lucan, demanding his salary which had been withheld in the months when he would not light street lamps. In September of 1879 when the Middlesex County Court granted him his salary,⁸⁸ ex-constable Everett continued to live in Lucan to gloat and harrass.

It was not just the street lamps but a Lucan county constable who caused Samuel Everett's dethronement. On April 3, 1879, county constable William Hodgins arrested Thomas Donnelly who had just returned from the Michigan lumber camps.⁸⁹ Since the spring of 1878 Hodgins had held that warrant against Thomas Donnelly for the robbery of Edward Ryan, the warrant which Hodgins had tried to serve in June, when James Donnelly Sr. had not let him tie his stallion and Thomas Donnelly had threatened him with a shotgun. On April 8, 1879, Lucan magistrates James McCosh and Patrick McIlhargey acquitted Thomas Donnelly of robbery.⁹⁰ But William Hodgins had arrested Donnelly when Samuel Everett would not. He had thrown doubts on Everett's courage and skill and willingness to act against the township's notorious family.

• Thus on the evening of April 3, 1879, the day that constable William Hodgins arrested Thomas Donnelly, constable Samuel Everett was indignant. When someone in the crowd at the Queen's Hotel wondered

what the charge against Donnelly would come to, Samuel Everett volunteered his answer. "Tom Donnelly is going to be discharged," he predicted. "I think it a very foolish thing to bring him in. Often I could have had Tom Donnelly, but some men want to make a big man of themselves by running him in."⁹¹

Hearing of Everett's pronouncements, William Hodgins came to the Queen's Hotel. "Was it myself you had reference to?" he said.

"Yes," answered constable Everett.

"Then it is no such thing. I arrested Tom Donnelly because you dare not do so."

"You talk like a fool," said Samuel Everett. "You can have a chance to have my starvation job after my year is up and not before. I arrested Tom Donnelly before and could do it again if necessary."

"You dare not."

"You are a liar."

"You are another."

"You are a liar and a son of a bitch," said Everett. He approached the rival constable with his hand raised and a pointed finger waving emphatically.

"Don't put your hands upon me, go away from me," said Hodgins as he backed away.

"I could whip you on the ground you stand on," Everett said, "but I am not fool enough to lay myself liable to the law with such a slink as you are."

"You had better not," warned Hodgins retreating, "and do not follow me."

"I can go where I have a mind to," said Everett. Three times around

the Queen's Hotel stovepipe Hodgins backed away from the waving finger of Samuel Everett. Then Hodgins sat down on a settee by the stove, where Everett's own constable's baton happened to be resting. He picked up the baton and struck at Samuel Everett. His first blow struck Everett, his second hit the stovepipe. The two constables grappled. When a patron stepped in to separate them, Hodgins slipped away outside.

Constable Hodgins acquired a warrant to arrest constable Everett for assault. On April 7 as Everett left his home to interfere in a fight on the Lucan Main Street between Thomas Keefe of Biddulph and James Carroll of Stephen township, constable Hodgins confronted him on the sidewalk. "I have a warrant for you," said Hodgins, "and you are a prisoner in the Queen's name."

"All right," constable Everett said, "I will be on hand when wanted. I am going uptown to look after a fight that is going on."

"No you won't," said constable Hodgins, pacing along beside, "you will go straight in the lockup."

"The devil I must," said Everett.

"Yes, I want you to understand that I am running this town now."

When they reached the Lucan lockup, a crowd had gathered around the two shouting constables. Hodgins opened the door of the lockup and ordered constable Everett inside. "You do not want to act the fool, because you know how," said Everett. He shoved Hodgins aside to pass by. But Hodgins with his constable's baton rapped Everett on the head, several times, until a bystander stopped him. Someone suggested that Hodgins show his warrant. Still holding to his constable prisoner, William Hodgins with his other hand pulled the

warrant from his pocket. "I do not doubt your authority," Samuel Everett said.

"The warrant is for abusive language and assault against the very man who is executing the warrant, namely myself," constable Hodgins announced. Another bystander offered advice. "It won't do for you, Everett, to put the law at defiance, as the warrant is signed by a Justice of the Peace," he said. "You had better go in. You can get your redress afterwards."

Thus constable Samuel Everett was placed in his own lockup, where he stayed for six hours until he was bailed. But as Lucan's constable, Everett himself was in charge of the keys to the lockup. He refused to surrender them even while he was imprisoned. With the keys in the hands of a prisoner, the Lucan magistrates let all the other prisoners go. Then they changed the locks so that Everett's key would no longer fit. The village council still debated a motion to fire Samuel Everett.⁹²

On April 15, 1879, Everett was tried for assault on William Hodgins at the Queen's Hotel on April 3. Magistrate James McCosh preferred to acquit, but magistrate Patrick McIlhargey convicted.⁹³

On April 23, Samuel Everett counter-charged Hodgins with two counts of assault, at the Queen's Hotel on April 3 and at the Lucan lockup on April 7.⁹⁴ On April 24 Everett appealed his own conviction.⁹⁵

In London in June, the Middlesex Court of Quarter Sessions refused both indictments against William Hodgins, and when Everett offered nothing in support of his own appeals, the court did not consider them.⁹⁶ By then, Samuel Everett was no longer Lucan's constable.

Late in April, after Everett's quarrels with William Hodgins and

William Porte and John O'Donohue and so many others, and after the reeve of Lucan had resigned⁹⁷ when his council was even yet reluctant to discipline Everett, finally the councillors had fired him. To replace him they hired William Hodgins.⁹⁸

Erratic, dishonest, cantankerous as he was, it was constable Samuel Everett who through petty spite and spleen started in motion the process that ended with the murders of the Donnellys. On the evening of March 19, 1878, thirteen months before his dismissal, someone among the many enemies of Everett fired at him as he stood in the doorway of his house. Although it was dark and although the attacker shot from fifty feet away while crouched behind a woodpile, constable Everett decided that he had seen Robert Donnelly. Everett already resented Donnelly: he blamed him for Thomas Ryan's January escape through a hole in the wall of the Lucan lockup.⁹⁹

When Donnelly was arrested, charged with attempted murder, and put into that same lockup, many people in Lucan thought that Everett was a liar and that Donnelly was unjustly in gaol. Michael Donnelly's brother-in-law Thomas Hines, a painter in Lucan, tried to help Robert escape but failed.¹⁰⁰ When John Donnelly complained about his brother's imprisonment, constable William Hodgins, who wanted to participate in any project against any Donnellys, fought John Donnelly on a side street in Lucan while constable John Bawden with drawn revolver prevented spectators from interfering.¹⁰¹ Samuel Everett charged John Donnelly and Hodgins with disorderly conduct in breach of village bylaw; magistrate William Stanley convicted them both.¹⁰²

On March 27, magistrate William Stanley committed Robert Donnelly to gaol until a trial at the Spring Assizes for attempted

murder.¹⁰³ Charles Hutchinson the County Crown Attorney told Samuel Everett that Robert Donnelly would never be convicted on the testimony of Everett alone. Everett sought help in his prosecution from William Stanley, a merchant and magistrate and councillor.¹⁰⁴ Immediately before the trial began, Everett appeared with witnesses to swear that they had heard Robert Donnelly in the Lucan lockup admit that he had fired at Everett. Many people in Lucan realized that the tales of Everett's witnesses were false. "I wouldn't like them on the stand ever testifying against me in a case where I was innocent," a neutral Lucan merchant said.¹⁰⁵ At Robert Donnelly's trial on March 30 and April 1, James Donnelly Sr. and John Donnelly and James Keefe Jr. and William McBride, who was employed at the time on the Donnelly farm, all said that Robert had been at home in bed at the time of the shooting at Everett. But the jurymen believed Everett's lying helpers; they convicted Robert Donnelly. He was sentenced to spend two years in the Kingston penitentiary.¹⁰⁶

By the end of 1878, John Donnelly had prepared a petition to be sent to the Governor-General which protested his brother Robert's innocence and prayed for his release.¹⁰⁷ Prominent people in Middlesex County signed: in London David Glass the lawyer, William Glass the sheriff, Edmund Meredith who was Biddulph township's solicitor, William Ralph Meredith his brother who was London's Conservative member in the Provincial Legislature, John McDougall who was provincial Conservative member for the North Middlesex riding which included Biddulph, and Roman Catholic Bishop John Walsh of London Diocese. In Lucan William Porte the postmaster signed, Thomas Hossack the coroner, James McCosh a magistrate who owned a general store, and even

John Bawden the constable who had helped provoke the wedding riot. Many other villagers also signed. But Robert Donnelly stayed in prison.

A year after Robert Donnelly's trial, in April of 1879, which was the month of Samuel Everett's dismissal by the Lucan council, a second petition gathered more names.¹⁰⁸ Surrounded by suspicions, Samuel Everett in his last month as constable signed a legal affidavit confessing that he no longer knew who had been behind his woodpile, and confessing too that the witnesses at Robert Donnelly's trial had¹⁰⁹ lied. But Donnelly still remained in Kingston. Not because of a pardon but because of good behaviour, his sentence was shortened by only three months. He was freed in January of 1880,¹¹⁰ less than a month before the murder of his family. Robert Donnelly did not return to Biddulph; with his wife Annie from whom he had been separated for twenty-one prison months, Robert settled in Glencoe in the southwest corner of the county.¹¹¹ It was Lucan's ex-constable Samuel Everett who first demonstrated that it really was possible to dispose of Donnellys. All of the anti-Donnelly plotters at the time of the stage-coach wars had not succeeded, as Everett had succeeded.

Like the constables (with Everett's unfortunate exception), the magistrates in Biddulph township were only part-time magistrates. They were merchants and farmers, and not heroic. They were founders and citizens of their community; and it was their wish, for the sake of business, that they and their community should be at peace. Any magistrate's decision in any courtroom trial would prove unpopular with someone. Then trade and prosperity and even life would be in danger, from men like those who threw brick and broken glass at John

Flynn who had tried to prosecute. In the presence of such dangers, the Lucan merchant-magistrates became either partisan, or timid.

"My brother JPs do not wish to have anything to do with these violent parties,"¹¹² said magistrate Henry Ferguson of Birr, who almost alone tried to settle the stage-coach troubles. When a Roman Line farmer named John Regan was murdered by poison in August of 1877, a magistrate had to come from McGillivray township to convene a preliminary hearing. "My being identified with it," he complained, "arises wholly from the fact that the two JPs of that classic spot deliberately refused to issue a warrant."¹¹³ The coroner who helped to investigate that murder formed the same opinion of Biddulph magistrates. "They are perfectly useless in any case that requires immediate and decided action," he said.¹¹⁴ "Is there no way of reaching these magistrates," he wondered, "for failing to do their duty?"¹¹⁵ In February of 1879, when robbers armed with axes chopped through the locked door of a widow's farmhouse near Lucan, the woman fled to the magistrates, who turned her away. They suggested that if she could raise a fifty-dollar bribe, constable Samuel Everett might consent to help her. "We hope, for decency's sake, that this is not the case,"¹¹⁶ said a shocked watcher who nevertheless knew that it was. "Why do our magistrates," a frustrated citizen wondered, "allow the name of the village to become a reproach and a bye-word?"¹¹⁷ After the Donnellys were murdered in February of 1880, another observer recalling the events of several past years mourned all the magistrates' total failure "to put down with a firm hand the crimes and troubles."¹¹⁸

One magistrate lacking a firm hand was Martin Collisson, a

farmer on the London Road, appointed magistrate in 1874. Never in the ¹⁴⁸ six years until the Donnelly murders did Collisson make a single conviction. ¹¹⁹ Another was James McCosh, a Lucan general merchant, who did not want to be a magistrate at all: appointed in April of 1877, he delayed until June before he took his qualifying oath. ¹²⁰ Reluctant magistrate James McCosh preferred acquittal to conviction, even when co-magistrates voted otherwise. ¹²¹ He preferred when he could to avoid courtrooms entirely. "I hope I don't have to go to court, it would be inconvenient," said James McCosh when summoned as a witness in James Carroll's trial for the murder of Johannah Donnelly. ¹²² Ordered nevertheless to testify, he spoke in a voice so timid and low that almost nobody in the courtroom could hear. ¹²³ Another magistrate who lacked a firm hand was Robert H. O'Neil, partner in the grain dealership of Stanley and Dight, money broker, school trustee, and a citizen of Lucan since its founding. ¹²⁴ On the occasion of his only intervention in the stage-coach disputes, he issued a bail bond to Thomas and Robert Donnelly; then, reconsidering, hoping to void the document and his own involvement, O'Neil scratched out his signature at the bottom of the document. ¹²⁵

Merchants and civic leaders and men of standing, these magistrates were concerned for the fate of their businesses and their village. They were firm in the faith that their prosperity was Lucan's and everyone's. The millers and shippers and dealers in Lucan thrived when the farmers brought their harvests of grain to the Lucan market. When the farmers had money, all the merchants of Lucan prospered. ¹²⁶ But crime ruined trade: farmers grew reluctant to bring their grain to Lucan to market, for fear of being robbed, like

Edward Ryan, before they could arrive back home.¹²⁷ Weaker magistrates suffered, and feared to act.

But there were merchant-magistrates who were strong, who responded with wrath and vengeance. They struck back at those who threatened the peace and commerce in their township. Especially they struck at Donnellys and their violent associates. One such magistrate was William H. Ryan, owner of a brickyard on the London road, citizen of Biddulph since 1835, a township tax collector, a township reeve, and a magistrate since 1858.¹²⁸ At the time of James Carroll's trial for murder, he swore that William Donnelly was notorious, although he could cite nothing against him, and he praised the reputation of James Carroll, murderer of William Donnelly's parents.¹²⁹ In October of 1881, twenty-one months after the murders, when William and Robert were the only Donnellys who still lived in the township, magistrate Ryan committed them to the London gaol on an obviously false charge of arson.¹³⁰ Another magistrate strident against Donnellys was John McLaughlin, a Roman Line farmer. In July of 1869 he convicted William and James Donnelly Jr., and Rhody Kennedy and John Kennedy Jr., for robbery of the post office in the village of Granton; a higher court ruled that his conviction was unjust.¹³¹ In September of 1879 he asked for the appointment as a Middlesex county constable of James Carroll who had sworn to drive Donnellys from the township.¹³² In September of 1879 magistrate McLaughlin trespassed onto the Donnelly farm with a mob of other Biddulph men, to try to intimidate the Donnelly family.¹³³

Magistrates much more powerful and more dangerous than these were Bernard and William Stanley. They began their careers in

Biddulph in October of 1848 when they helped to burn the homes of Wilberforce Negroes who had come, long before the Stanleys came, to live on the land which the Stanleys wanted.¹³⁴ "Hot impulsive men,"¹³⁵ the Middlesex Crown Attorney called them. Bernard Stanley purchased land in 1858 when Lucan was first surveyed and divided. In 1859 he built a grain mill and depot, centre of commerce for the township and the new village. He built a brick mansion on Main Street, Lucan's first prestigious dwelling. On that same Main Street he owned a hardware and a grocery.¹³⁶

In 1879 he wanted a foundry too. In the late spring of 1879, John Jackson's Lucan foundry became bankrupt. Bernard Stanley was one of the largest creditors.¹³⁷ Another creditor whose name was Artemis Bice claimed a lien and tried to move the foundry building three miles north, onto his own property at Clandeboye. Bernard Stanley stopped him by legal injunction. Although he was warned about litigations against Bernard Stanley, Bice sued in the Middlesex Court of Chancery. The bankrupt Jackson refused to vacate his shut-down foundry until October 6 when, at Stanley's demand, the Middlesex deputy sheriff put Jackson and all his belongings into the street. Two nights later Jackson's stable, the only building on the foundry lot that still belonged to him, was set on fire. On October 26 the Court of Chancery awarded the foundry to Bernard Stanley. Two months later the barns of Artemis Bice burned down, like the barns of the Wilberforce blacks thirty-three years before. Although the wisest in Lucan suspected Stanley, he was never charged for either of the burnings. And he got the foundry he had wanted.

In 1878 Bernard Stanley led the petitioners before the County

Council requesting the incorporation of Lucan.¹³⁸ In 1880, the year of the Donnelly murders, he led the delegation which asked for a spur line into Lucan from the main line of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway, the railroad that had ruined the stage-coach trade.¹³⁹ He was a Biddulph township councillor before Lucan existed, a school trustee, a school board chairman.¹⁴⁰ With the profits from his mercantile interests in Biddulph, Bernard Stanley was a tourist in Europe, at a time when many residents in his township lived their entire lives within the borders of Middlesex County.¹⁴¹

Bernard Stanley was a ruler of the Conservative party in the riding of North Middlesex. Almost everyone in Lucan voted Conservative. He directed the mob of Conservative partisans which wrecked the tavern of Reformer Andrew Keefe on Christmas Eve of 1857.¹⁴² When Conservative dignitaries visited the riding, Bernard Stanley was present to greet them.¹⁴³ He appeared on the platform at riding political meetings.¹⁴⁴ Throughout the middle and late 1870s he made speeches in support of the National Policy of John A. Macdonald's Conservatives. He showed how Conservative policy would bring prosperity to Canada, to Lucan, and to Bernard Stanley's several businesses.¹⁴⁵ He equated Lucan's best interests with his own.¹⁴⁶ In the campaign of the 1875 provincial election, he drove his sleigh like a chariot of war among the Roman Line Catholic voters. He boasted that he turned them like sheep toward the polls to vote Conservative.¹⁴⁷ But the Donnellys in their Opposition Stage drove voters to the polls to vote Reform.¹⁴⁸ Bernard Stanley was a Donnelly enemy, because they opposed his political power; because Donnelly crime disturbed the commerce of his village; and because on May 12, 1877, during the

plague of crime connected with the stage-coach disputes, the ware-house behind Bernard Stanley's store was destroyed at midnight by fire.¹⁴⁹

In 1864 Bernard Stanley testified against William Donnelly when Donnelly was charged with the theft of Patrick Ryan's sheepskins.¹⁵⁰ In March of 1876 during the stage-coach wars, he gaoled Thomas Donnelly and his friend Alex Levitt on a robbery charge arranged by detective Hugh McKinnon.¹⁵¹ In July of 1876 he gaoled Thomas Ryan for firing his pistol at James Carroll.¹⁵² The Middlesex Crown Attorney called Bernard Stanley the "boon of the Vigilance faction."¹⁵³

His brother William Stanley was a magistrate, a co-owner of the grain mill and the grocery and hardware, owner of another Lucan brick mansion, and another North Middlesex Conservative leader.¹⁵⁴ In April of 1879 when the Lucan reeve resigned because the town council hesitated to fire Samuel Everett, councillor William Stanley became reeve by acclamation. No other councillor dared to be leader during such difficult times.¹⁵⁵ William Stanley stayed unopposed as Lucan's reeve throughout the rest of that year before the Donnelly murders, and for all of the year that followed.¹⁵⁶

William Stanley was as active as any Lucan magistrate. He was diligent against Donnellys and any other disturber of his village's peace. He gaoled Thomas Donnelly for robbery in March of 1876,¹⁵⁷ fined Thomas Donnelly for fighting in June of 1877, fined James Keefe Jr. for fighting in December of 1877, fined John Donnelly for disturbing the peace in April of 1878, fined Patrick Keefe for assault in August of 1878. Three days after the Donnellys were murdered, he

called them "the terror of the township."¹⁵⁸ Donnelly enemies in Lucan and Biddulph turned to William Stanley.

Against these men, some very few magistrates befriended the Donnelly family. Not strong like the Stanleys, these men were unable by any interventions to keep the village peace. One such magistrate was William Porte, appointed a magistrate in 1875 when the stage-coach troubles were beginning. Two days after the wedding brawl in February of 1876, Porte proclaimed in a Lucan hotel that he still was a loyal Donnelly man.¹⁵⁹ He remained a friend of Donnellys until the end of his life in the late 1890s.¹⁶⁰ But Porte's favour to Donnellys only caused resentment, and in his capacity as magistrate where he might have helped, Porte was entirely inactive. He presided at no trials, investigated no crimes, did nothing to control the strife around him.¹⁶¹ Another who was loyal to Donnellys was Michael Crunican¹⁶² --the only Roman Catholic and the only Reformer among the merchant-magistrates of Lucan, the only one of the party and faith of the Donnelly family.¹⁶³ Crunican was appointed magistrate in 1877, during the worst of the violence that came near the end of the stage-coach wars. But Crunican avoided the cases that seemed most dangerous. Like William Porte he added more trouble than he smoothed away. In court he floundered into illegal decisions, earning the rebukes of the County Crown Attorney.¹⁶⁴ Enemies in Conservative Lucan believed that his judgments favoured those of his own Reform party.¹⁶⁵ One more biased and error-ridden magistrate was Patrick McIlhargey. Furiously partisan on "the Donnellys' behalf, he too managed only to make trouble for them. Loyal Patrick McIlhargey in February of 1876 imprisoned Rhody Kennedy for disorderly conduct, illegally refusing him the

option of a fine. Kennedy and Hugh McKinnon were outraged; Charles Hutchinson the County Crown Attorney had to intervene and reprimand.¹⁶⁶

In the winter of 1879 when Patrick Keefe who had assaulted John Flynn was charged with yet another crime, Patrick McIlhargey in his magistrate's capacity received an affidavit of innocence from Keefe. The County Crown Attorney explained impatiently that his actions had no legal validity and only complicated the problems of prosecution.¹⁶⁷

During the stage-coach woes in September of 1876, it was magistrate McIlhargey who recommended the appointment of Michael Donnelly as a county constable. Prudently, the Court of Quarter Sessions declined.¹⁶⁸

Pro-Donnelly magistrates were foolish and abrasive; other magistrates hated Donnellys and their friends; still others cowered and kept out of the way. These were the people in Lucan and Biddulph commissioned to enforce the law, the people supposed to provide protection for angry frightened folk like Edward Ryan.

In the summer of 1878, one man named James Carroll came to Biddulph and believed that he was strong enough to protect the township's Edward Ryans. "I can lick all the Donnellys," he said.¹⁶⁹

Heavy-built, black-bearded, James Carroll was twenty-six years old and bitter at the world when he came to Biddulph.¹⁷⁰ In 1869 when he was seventeen, he left his family's farm in Stephen township, adjacent to Biddulph on the northwest. His mother having died and his father remarried, James Carroll quarrelled with his new stepmother and could not stay in her home. For seven and a half years he worked on railroads throughout the United States. He was a builder and construction crew foreman, a leader among the labourers and drifters on the track crews. When his father Rodger Carroll died in February

of 1874, the last will and testament left the proceeds from the Stephen townships farms to some of the surviving Carroll children. But Rodger Carroll left nothing at all to his absent son James, and very little to his younger sons William and Michael.

In May of 1877 James Carroll returned to Canada and to Stephen township. The farms comprising the estate of Rodger Carroll were fifty acres on the eighth concession and sixty-six acres on the ninth. James Carroll found that a tenant of the executors' choice occupied both of those farms. He found the rent divided among the Carroll children according to the terms of his father's will. He found that his two young brothers, William and Michael, lived with the executors of Rodger Carroll's estate, Bartholomew Carroll, the dead man's brother, and John Delahay, the dead man's brother-in-law. Since the death of their father, William and Michael Carroll had been unable to live at peace with their father's second wife. Neither worked nor tried to learn a trade as their father's will had requested. "I do not have to learn a trade for the executors," William Carroll said. "I will do what I like myself about that." In 1877 when James Carroll returned, his two younger brothers were both of adult age and no longer willing to live in the homes of their father's executors. They were smaller than James, delicate, aimless young men who needed direction.

James Carroll called on the executors, his uncles. He said that he wanted to rent his father's estate, commencing that fall after the harvest of the current tenant's crop. "It would be better if we are on the place ourselves," he said. But Bartholomew Carroll and John Delahay did not trust James Carroll nor the two young brothers

whom he spoke for. Later in that same summer of 1877, they rented the farm for another year to another and more trustworthy tenant. "There will be law over it," James Carroll told them. "I will make you curse the day you were made executors."

In London James Carroll hired a lawyer named John Joseph Blake, whose father and brother farmed on Biddulph's eighth concession. By 1877 John Blake, who was only twenty-seven, had risen from the farms of Biddulph to establish himself in the law courts of London.¹⁷¹ By threats of a lawsuit James Carroll and Joseph Blake forced a change in the administration of Rodger Carroll's estate. They forced the two executors to pay henceforth equal amounts to all of the Carroll children, including James Carroll himself.

But the family farms still were committed to another tenant, whose contract was binding for one full year. James Carroll would be landless until October of 1879 at the earliest. He still did not possess the farm he had come back to Canada to claim. What he had were two young followers, two brothers. He took William and Michael from the homes of their executor uncles, acting as leader as he had done for labouring crews on American railroads. Landless in Stephen township, James Carroll moved to Biddulph where he boarded in the home of his uncle James Maher, on lot twenty-seven of Biddulph's sixth concession, six farms north of the Donnelly farm. His two homeless brothers William and Michael came also to Biddulph, to work as farm labourers wherever they could be hired.

James Carroll himself did not need to do farm labour for another. From his years on the railroad he knew how to lead and direct men, and he knew how to build. - Shut out from farming, he

began a career as a framer of barns, directing construction for farmers of North Middlesex as he had for the builders of railroads. And because James Carroll could persuade and influence men, he began another career as a dealer in farm implements, selling equipment for other men's farms, although he had no farm of his own.¹⁷²

During the summer of 1878, James Carroll's first summer in Biddulph, someone mutilated the horses of his uncle James Maher by chopping off every horse's tail. James Maher said that it was the work of the Donnellys; nothing was too bad for Donnellys, he said.¹⁷³ He passed his opinions on to his nephew. James Carroll heard of the gang that the Donnellys were said to be leaders of, and of the crimes they were said to have committed. He heard of Robert Donnelly in prison in Kingston for shooting at constable Everett the preceding spring. The Donnellys owned two Roman-Line farms, while James Carroll owned no land and boarded with his uncle. The Donnellys had a gang which they controlled, while James Carroll controlled only two young brothers. The Donnellys had built a stage line and still were famous for the horses which they bred¹⁷⁴ --but here James Carroll could claim to be their equal, for he operated his own businesses, building barns and selling implements, and for years he had built railroads like the railroad that had ruined the Donnelly stage. James Carroll who owned no farm could nevertheless exercise power.

Thus at a Biddulph barn raising late in August of 1878, framer James Carroll announced to the farmers assembled, "Bob Donnelly got a light sentence."¹⁷⁵ He said that Donnelly's two-year sentence should have been twenty years. Soon there were rumours that threats had been made against James Carroll by the Donnelly sons. On the night of

October 12 at a Biddulph auction sale, James Carroll said again in Thomas Donnelly's presence that Robert Donnelly's sentence had been too lenient. "I can lick all the Donnellys," he said. At the Roman Line Donnelly homestead, Thomas Donnelly told his brothers John and William what Carroll had said at the auction. "I will ask Carroll why he used my name the first time I see him," John Donnelly said.

On October 13, John Donnelly went to the home of James Maher. "Where is Carroll that big fighting man?" he said. James Maher said that Carroll was not there. "I would like to ask Carroll civilly what he was saying about our Bob and the whole family at the sale last night," John Donnelly said. "If he wants to fight I will make his big head soft." William Donnelly spoke to Edward Maher, James Maher's brother and Carroll's uncle, who farmed on Biddulph's eleventh concession. "Carroll is a queer fellow," William Donnelly said. "What is it of Carroll's business how light a sentence Bob got?"

On October 14, James Carroll walked down the Roman Line from Maher's toward the Donnelly farms. He passed the Donnelly farm on lot seventeen of the seventh concession to his left, where Thomas Donnelly was ploughing. Ahead of Carroll, Thomas crossed to the yard of the Donnelly house, beside the field where John Donnelly was ploughing. He told John and William of the approach of James Carroll. Then John returned to his plough in the field. James Carroll came past the Donnelly schoolhouse to where John Donnelly ploughed.

"Leave Carroll alone," William Donnelly told Thomas, "if he challenges you every day of the week. He does not want to fight, he wants law." Thomas Donnelly went into the house; William sat down on the front steps to watch; Johannah Donnelly was milking cows in

the front yard by the gate; John was at his plough, across the fence and the ditch from Carroll standing on the Roman Line road.

"John what have you been saying about me yesterday?" said Carroll.

"I was saying nothing yesterday but what I could say today."

"Then you had best come out and do it," said Carroll as John Donnelly left his plough and started towards the road. "Meet me at Whalen's Corners at two o'clock," said Carroll, "and I will fight you there."

"There is no one here but the two of us. There is no use bringing a mob. Let us have it here," said John Donnelly, across the fence and ditch that separated him from Carroll. "Or you can get a man and I will get another, and we will have it out there if that is what you want, and no mobbing about it."

But as John came near to where Carroll stood, Carroll took a revolver from the pocket of his vest. "You son of a bitch," he said. "If you come one foot farther I'll blow your brains out." Johannah Donnelly called to her son from the gate--"Go on to your work and never mind the blackguard." John Donnelly returned to his plough. James Carroll turned his gun toward Johannah Donnelly. "I'd as leave shoot you as John," he said. Thomas Donnelly ran from the house with stones in his hand, toward the road where Carroll was passing. "I'll fight you Carroll," Thomas Donnelly said. But William told his younger brother to drop the stones, and Carroll continued south down the Roman Line.

By the end of that same day, October 14, 1878, in London James Carroll charged Johannah Donnelly with abusive language; he charged Thomas and William and John with assault and with the use of

threatening language; a London magistrate convicted John and William and fined them three dollars each; he postponed his decision concerning Thomas Donnelly; and in Lucan John Donnelly charged James Carroll with pointing a revolver and threatening to shoot.¹⁷⁶ On October 15, Lucan magistrates James McCosh and Michael Crunican dismissed John's charge, because no-one could prove that James Carroll's gun had been loaded.¹⁷⁷ On October 16 in London, Thomas Donnelly was acquitted of Carroll's charge of assault with stones.¹⁷⁸ On October 21 in London, Johannah Donnelly was tried for using abusive language toward Carroll; the magistrate reserved his verdict until October 22.¹⁷⁹ Also on October 21 in London, John Donnelly charged Carroll again with threatening to shoot, and although Carroll protested that other magistrates had already acquitted him, a London magistrate on October 26 committed him for a trial at the Middlesex December Quarter Sessions.¹⁸⁰ On October 22 Johannah Donnelly was convicted of abusive language; on October 23 she appealed; at the Adjourned Sessions Court in January of 1879, her appeal was granted and all of her legal costs charged against James Carroll.¹⁸¹ But at the Sessions Court in December, James Carroll was acquitted of threatening to shoot, and it was not until July of 1879 that he finally was made to pay the costs of Johannah Donnelly's appeal.¹⁸²

After that quarrel that began on October 14, 1878, people such as Edward Ryan whose barns had burned, and James Maher whose horses had been damaged, and other angry, frightened people in Biddulph took new notice. Railroad foreman, framer, implement dealer, but still not a landowner, James Carroll had not been afraid of Donnellys; Carroll had provoked them and had not been injured.

Then one other person came to Biddulph offering help and protection. Dismayed at the strife in the parish of St. Patrick's, John Walsh, the Roman Catholic Bishop of London, appointed a new pastor and spiritual director to St. Patrick's one hundred and thirty families; he summoned Father John Connolly of the city of Quebec.¹⁸³ John Connolly lived amid a wealth of good will; he was popular throughout the city of Quebec, respected by bishops and intellectuals and politicians.¹⁸⁴ John Connolly was a person of learning, a scholar born in Ireland¹⁸⁵ and trained for the Catholic priesthood at Maynooth College, near Dublin, one of the most famous and respected seminaries in Catholic Europe.¹⁸⁶ At Maynooth College John Connolly had studied an imposing curriculum: Dogmatical and Moral Theology, Natural Philosophy, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, English, Irish, French, Ecclesiastical History, Logic, Metaphysics, and Ethics.¹⁸⁷ After Maynooth he studied at another Catholic college in Paris, then emigrating in 1864 to Quebec where he taught as a professor at a diocesan institute. He was a man of intellect, of kindness, of prosperity, of success. "Thank God, I established a character before I came to Biddulph," he said. "I trust I have never yet compromised my priestly character."¹⁸⁸

Father John Connolly arrived in Biddulph on January 19, 1879.¹⁸⁹ St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church was a grand new brick building, exemplary in a rural community. His home was in the fine brick parsonage beside.¹⁹⁰ Here, it seemed, was a pious and generous congregation. Connolly's rapport was instant and solid with respectable Protestant merchants in Lucan, men such as Bernard and William Stanley who had travelled in Europe as he, John Connolly, had.¹⁹¹

But St. Patrick's was not the city of Quebec; his parishioners not scholars and prosperous officials. In this troubled parish some people were violent, some were frightened, some were angry. Many had paid from the profit of many years' harvests for their church and parsonage, built imposingly of brick like the mansions of the Stanleys in Lucan. These parishioners looked for direction to the church they had faithfully erected and served. But others went rarely to the church of their nominal faith;¹⁹² they did not admire their priest as the people in the city of Quebec had admired. But John Connolly's assignment from his Bishop in London was to bring control to disordered St. Patrick's.

The priest, the magistrates, the constables; the Donnellys and their peaceful friends, the Donnellys and their criminal friends; James Carroll and the other enemies who hated Donnellys; and the quiet people of St. Patrick's parish whose wish was only to be at peace with their church and their neighbours--these were the people of Biddulph in January of 1879.

CHAPTER 5

JANUARY 1879 TO JANUARY 1880

On Father John Connolly's first Sunday in St. Patrick's parish, he told his congregation that presently he would call to visit in the home of each.¹ Bundled against the January weather in a wolfskin coat, he set out in a sleigh with a child of the parish beside him to drive. On this first journey the priest's mind was poisoned when he stopped at homes of people who hated Donnellys and their violent friends. He stayed for two hours in the Roman Line home of one of the bitterest Donnelly enemies. Although he stopped too at the homes of folk friendly to the Donnelly family, stories and suspicions already in his mind would not go away. "When I came here and heard the depredations that had been committed by the Donnellys, I could hardly believe them," he said.² Donnelly enemies pressured him. Their stories kept him from sleeping. "Father Connolly is a fine man if let alone," John Donnelly said, "but he should find out before believing them whether the stories are true or not."³

Connolly called at William Donnelly's home. The Donnelly watchdog snarled at the unfamiliar figure covered in wolfskin. Nora Donnelly, not recognizing the new priest, did not kneel to pray and to bid him welcome. She told the caller that her husband was away. On Father Connolly's second Sunday in St. Patrick's, he told his congregation of that visit to a home where the people had not been

respectful.⁴

Continuing his calls, he came to the tenth-concession home of James Powe who was friendly to Donnelly's. Powe introduced the priest to William Donnelly who had also called to visit. The priest had heard that Donnelly was desperate and vile and would try to destroy him.⁵ The priest looked down at Donnelly's crippled foot. "Oh yes, you're William Donnelly," he said, "I was at your place a few days ago but you were not at home. I hope that in future things will be better in Biddulph. I intend to lay a good foundation with this end in view."⁶

Connolly called at the homestead of James and Johannah Donnelly. "I have heard about the boys' bad doings," he told Johannah, "they should change their ways or else I will straighten them." "There are worse than my sons in the neighbourhood," she answered, "but the biggest crowd are against them and myself and my family are persecuted."⁷

Edward Ryan thought that he too was persecuted. He was robbed in March of 1878 while drunk on a Lucan street, and his barns were burned in September. He blamed and feared and hated the Donnelly's but did not know how to oppose them. He waited until April of 1879 for constable William Hodgins to arrest Thomas Donnelly when Donnelly returned from the Michigan lumber camps. "Tom Donnelly is going to be discharged," constable Samuel Everett sneered when he quarrelled with William Hodgins in the Queen's Hotel.⁸ Magistrates James McCosh and Patrick McIlhargey tried Thomas Donnelly for robbery. Constable Hodgins was present in court; so was James Carroll who had met Edward Ryan and had learned, from Ryan and from James Maher, to hate Donnelly's. James Carroll addressed the court on Ryan's behalf. But

with no evidence but Ryan's drunken recollections, the magistrates acquitted.⁹ Then Carroll decided that it would be his responsibility to involve himself in renewed prosecutions concerning this unproven and unpunished Donnelly crime.

The day of Donnelly's trial was April 7, 1879, the same day that James Carroll on the Main Street of Lucan quarrelled with Thomas Keefe, who was a brother of Donnelly companions James and Patrick Keefe.¹⁰ While Keefe and Carroll bit and tore and wounded, constable Everett on his way to stop that quarrel quarrelled with William Hodgins at the Lucan lockup, and Everett was imprisoned, protesting, in one of his own cells. When he was bailed he arrested James Carroll for fighting. Another constable arrested Thomas Keefe, but without willing witnesses neither was ever tried. The Lucan council quarrelled over whether to fire Everett; the reeve resigned when the council seemed reluctant; merchant-magistrate William Stanley became Lucan's reeve by acclamation; and constable Everett finally was dismissed, to be replaced by William Hodgins.

On the Sunday after the fight between his parishioners Carroll and Keefe, Father John Connolly mentioned these disturbances from his pulpit. He warned that he had methods to keep his unruly flock subdued should they fail to heed his sermons for peace. Many listened dutifully; the magistrates and Lucan merchants were pleased; but those most responsible paid least attention.¹¹

Because James Carroll had spoken for Edward Ryan, the Donnelly family revived their quarrel against him. Before a magistrate in London they charged James Carroll with pointing a revolver at Johannah Donnelly, a charge of which Carroll had twice been acquitted.

On April 10, London Constables came to arrest him, at the home of James Maher. "It is too bad that people should be pulled about by such characters as those Donnellys," James Maher told them, "they would swear any decent man's life away. There will have to be something to stop it--to form a Vigilant Committee and get them out of the township."¹² "I am perfectly innocent of what is charged," Carroll told them. "I did not draw a revolver on Mrs. Donnelly." Carroll told the constables of a plan: that he himself would become a constable too, in order to arrest Thomas Donnelly who had twice been acquitted of robbing Edward Ryan. Although the Donnelly family did not pursue their latest charge against Carroll, the quarrel between them festered.

Father Connolly organized a peacemaking venture, the Father Matthew Total Abstinence Society of St. Patrick's.¹³ He invited all of his parishioners to join and to swear to avoid forever the curse of alcohol. Many came forth earnestly to follow the way of Father Matthew. John Donnelly joined, willing, if so permitted, to live at peace with his priest and his church. The magistrates and Lucan merchants applauded:¹⁴ while the constables of Lucan fought publicly and the council fought over Everett's dismissal, Father Connolly seemed firm and benign.

But trouble continued, beyond the bounds of the Abstinence Society. On Saturday night, May 10, 1879, someone stole a horse from the stable of James Kelly on the eighth concession. They drove the animal wildly by night, later to abandon it exhausted and ruined. "Do you know the party who took it out?" Father Connolly said on Sunday morning when Kelly reported the damage.¹⁵

"No," said James Kelly.

"You do," said Connolly, "but you are afraid to tell."

"I cannot tell, for I did not see them."

"This is Tom Ryan's work," Connolly decided, and he went to hunt Thomas Ryan. He met a group of boys on the road. "Is Tom Ryan among you?" he demanded, "do any of you belong to the Gang?" "Tom Ryan is not among us," they answered, "and we do not belong to any gang."

Learning that Ryan boarded with Michael Powe on the eighth concession, the priest called to tell Powe to discharge Thomas Ryan, and to leave the message that Ryan must call to see his priest on the morrow. But Ryan went instead to William Donnelly, asking Donnelly's help to defend himself against the charges of the priest. Donnelly wrote the priest a letter: he complained that the priest accused Thomas Ryan while ignoring other crime in his parish; he accused the priest of trying to drive Donnellys from his parish; he threatened that Ryan would prosecute whoever accused him falsely; and he invited the priest to call on himself or on Ryan anytime. "A very impertinent epistle to be addressed to a priest," Father John Connolly said.

"William Donnelly like many sons of Irishmen is a little too smart."¹⁶

Then Connolly heard a rumour: Donnelly had boasted that with letter-writing as his only strategy he could rid the parish of Father Connolly. "Such epistles would not intimidate me," said Connolly.¹⁷

On the next Sunday, May 18, 1879, the priest reported to his congregation: "I received a threatening letter from two parties who came to my house--one of them William Donnelly, a cripple and a devil."¹⁸ He cursed the person who had stolen James Kelly's horse and prophesied that the thief would be dead within a month. Thomas

Ryan did not die, nor anyone who could be suspected; but many who marked the priest's maledictions believed, as Connolly was coming to believe, that William Donnelly hoped to destroy him.

During that spring the second petition passed through Middlesex urging Robert Donnelly's release from the Kingston penitentiary, where he was locked, wrongly, for the shooting of Samuel Everett. The petition might succeed, for ex-constable Everett had admitted that he was unsure who had shot at him, and that the witnesses at Donnelly's trial had lied. Because Robert Donnelly had written no threatening letters to his priest; because law in the township must work fairly; and because he wanted peace with Donnellys and with everyone, John Connolly tried to help. He tried to influence the federal Conservative cabinet, speaking on Robert Donnelly's behalf with the Honourable Hector Langevin, the French Conservative leader, Postmaster-General, and member of Parliament for Trois-Rivieres, whom Connolly knew from his days in Quebec.¹⁹ But Connolly's intervention was not sufficient, and Donnelly stayed in prison.

During that spring, James Carroll and Michael his younger brother boarded at the farm of Martin Darcy on Biddulph's sixth concession. Six months had passed of the twelve-month lease of the tenant who farmed James Carroll's father's estate. In six months Carroll would have a chance to move onto his own farmland. Then he learned that a Stephen township farmer had inquired of the executors about renting the Carroll property across the road from his own farm. James and Michael Carroll visited his farmhouse where they spoke to the man's young son. "Is your father about renting the place across the road?"²⁰

"My father was thinking about renting it."

"I think you had better not have anything to do with it," James Carroll said, "they who have the least to do with it will be better off." When the boy told his father what Carroll had said, he gave up all idea of renting Carroll land. Another neighbour who spoke of renting the other Carroll farm received an anonymous and threatening letter. He burned the letter, and changed his mind about renting.

James Carroll summoned both executors before a magistrate, where he tried without success to force from them a lease of his father's estate. Then threatening letters came to both executors, more of the kind of letters they had received in the time since James Carroll had returned to Canada. Frightened, the executors thought of resigning. As rumours about Donnellys spread in Biddulph, in the ears of John Connolly and of everyone, so rumours spread in the township of Stephen: that James Carroll wanted his father's land and had threatened anyone who would touch it. But this was only June, 1879, and the Carroll farms were rented until October after harvest. James Carroll and his two young brothers still boarded in Roman Line homes.

Neither the sermons of Father Connolly, nor the London constables with warrants against him, had effected any change in James Carroll. The rest of St. Patrick's parish continued likewise, with private rituals of violence to settle its quarrels. Patrick Ryder Sr. lived beside the Donnelly's seventh-concession land and he owned another farm with an empty farmhouse, on lot twenty farther down the seventh concession, opposite the home of Martin Darcy where James Carroll boarded. In mid-June he found that someone had trespassed in his empty farmhouse.²¹ Patrick Ryder did not report to the priest

as James Kelly had done; Ryder was certain that he knew who was responsible. He stated that the intruders were the Whelan boys, younger sons of Patrick Whelan who lived beside his oldest son John on the seventh concession opposite the Donnelly homestead. So James the son of Patrick Ryder and John the son of Patrick Whelan met on June 20 on the Roman Line, to battle with fists for more than half an hour in the presence of fifty spectator neighbours. The watchers took sides; there were harsh words and drawn revolvers. Before the fight became a battle between two mobs, John Whelan cried that he had had enough. The duel concluded and the two mobs disbanded, satisfied with the resolution according to their own codes.

Father John Connolly had come from the city of Quebec, from decorous and scholarly circles. A priest could not hope to control the squalid quarrelling in St. Patrick's when faced with the threats and mockery of men like William Donnelly and his rowdy companions. The men of the congregation who considered their priest with proper respect must be made to stand against the mockers in the cause of their priest, the cause of order. Connolly decided to organize an anti-crime committee in his parish. He would counter the kind of primitive organization that had sanctioned the duel of James Ryder and John Whelan.

Connolly spoke to John J. Blake,²² the lawyer in London who had helped James Carroll in his fight against his father's executors.

Blake was one who, like William Donnelly, had risen from farm life into prominence, but not, like Donnelly, into prominent defiance.

"William Donnelly would have made a name for himself," said Connolly,

"if his talents had been properly directed."²³ The talents of John

Blake had already been directed, Blake had already made a name.

Connolly wanted John Blake's sanction of his anti-crime committee; John Blake's approval was assurance that a private war on crime would be legal.

Thus in June of 1879, Father John Connolly with John Blake's blessing composed a declaration which he placed in the porch of his church. He invited all loyal parishioners to sign:

We the undersigned Roman Catholics of St. Patrick's of Biddulph solemnly pledge ourselves to aid our spiritual director and parish priest in the discovery and putting down of crime in our mission, while we at the same time protest as Irishmen and as Catholics against any interference with him in the legitimate discharge of his spiritual duties.²⁴

Anyone should sign who disapproved of crime and who favoured the legitimate discharge of priestly duties. Anyone could sign such a creed; even Donnellys surely could sign. Whoever did not sign indicated thereby that they favoured crime and interference. Connolly explained to his congregation. "I will consider all those who decline to join as backsliders and sympathizers of the gang," he said, "and if any of those backsliders and sympathizers take sick, they are to send for William Donnelly to visit them instead of me."²⁵ He explained too that those who signed must agree to searches on their land for any stolen property.²⁶ Ninety-six men signed in a parish of one hundred and thirty families.

Many friends of the Donnelly family signed; to them, the priest's statement, which mentioned no names, asked only support of the priesthood and opposition to crime. Many enemies of the family signed; to them, William Donnelly was the interference referred to, and the crimes of the Donnelly gang the crime to be put down. James Donnelly wanted to sign. "If we do not join," he said, "the people

will think we are guilty of the crimes that are laid to us."²⁷ But William persuaded his father not to sign, because many who had signed were not to be trusted. Signing meant agreeing to have one's lands searched, an opportunity for enemies to leave stolen articles on Donnelly premises. No Donnelly signed the priest's declaration. Henceforth William Donnelly did not attend St. Patrick's church. "I did not feel like going to a church where I was called a devil and a cripple," he said.²⁸ Some friends of Donnellys stopped attending too.²⁹ There were fewer then to defend the Donnellys and to counteract the tales of their detractors.

Connolly spoke from his pulpit of Donnellys, cursing all Donnellys and especially the devil and cripple, nearly every Sunday throughout the summer of 1879.³⁰ Hearing more and wilder tales, he believed worse and worse of the family. Donnellys stole things, Connolly believed, which they planted on other people's property; then those folk thus implicated were forced to join the wicked gang, befriending Donnellys publicly while hating them in their hearts.³¹ Others of the congregation came also to believe these slanders. In July of 1879, cattle disappeared from a farm near the border of Blanchard township which adjoined Biddulph on the east; when the cattle turned up wandering astray in Biddulph, many said that Donnellys had stolen them.³²

John Connolly went about his other daily parish ministrings—temperance meetings, communions, catechism classes, prayer retreats, church bazaars.³³ He did not direct the men who had signed the oath which he had supplied. Although he had established an anti-crime society, some men in St. Patrick's formed their own conception of

that society's ends. The society of Connolly's inspiring was left to drift away from him, back into older codes and structures,³⁴ the codes of men who had assembled in two rival bodies to sanction a fist-fight over trespass into Patrick Ryder's deserted farmhouse.

In August the fall wheat was ready for threshing. Thomas Donnelly saw the crops of his prosecutor Edward Ryan and told the owner of the nearest threshing machine to have nothing to do with Ryan's grain.³⁵ The thresher, who wanted no trouble, complied. When no other thresher was willing to work for Ryan, Edward Ryan spoke to his priest and protector. Connolly confronted Thomas Donnelly, asking him as a favour to let Ryan's grain be threshed. Thomas said that he would consult his brother John. But John did not give the priest an answer, and still nobody threshed for Edward Ryan.

Friends of Edward Ryan gathered together, men such as John Kennedy and Martin McLaughlin who had signed Father Connolly's document, and men such as James Carroll who had not.³⁶ With Michael Blake, brother of John Blake the lawyer, these three men were the committee's prime creators. For this their first meeting, in August of 1879, they assembled at the schoolhouse on the Cedar Swamp concession road. The schoolhouse on the edge of the swamp was brick with a cupola and bell upon its roof. A large enclosed front porch opened into a single classroom. The room was heated by a black stove resting on four flat stones, its own iron legs having rusted away. At the end of the classroom opposite to the entrance from the porch, two doors led into a smaller room for the teacher and monitors. The inner room was furnished with a blackboard, and an ancient desk, and a tall bureau which was an altar before the new St. Patrick's church had been

built.³⁷

At this first meeting, one man was appointed secretary, responsible for rules and records. Five more men became an inner committee, meeting in the small back room to receive all future complaints of crimes. "Rings within rings," William Donnelly called the society's structure when he learned of the meetings.³⁸ The members signed their names on the secretary's foolscap, their own document and not Father Connolly's. Swearing an oath of secrecy they kissed the Bible. They decided to find a thresher for Edward Ryan's grain and to raise funds to pay for any damage to the machinery of whoever would thresh.³⁹

Martin Hogan Jr. of the eighth concession arrived at the schoolhouse during the meeting. A guard on the porch intercepted him, barring the door until he identified who was there.

"Have you joined this thing?" men asked him inside the porch.⁴⁰

"Joined what?" said Martin Hogan.

"You know what it means," they said.

"No I don't," said Hogan. They mentioned the book at the church and asked if he had signed it. "Will you take your oath?" they said and led him inside. But when the members voted on admitting Martin Hogan, because he was a friend to the Donnelly family almost every member voted to exclude him. Martin Hogan rose and left the schoolhouse. As James Carroll and James Maher had predicted to the London constables in April, a society had come into being whose aim would be to drive Donnellys from Biddulph.

Before the new Society had found a thresher for Edward Ryan, another complaint of crime came to their attention. On August 31, a heifer vanished from the farm of Mary and William Thompson, who for

five and a half years since their shivaree had not spoken to their Donnelly neighbours. Mary Thompson told James Carroll. "I heard a cow bawling at Donnelly's place which sounded like my cow," she said,⁴¹ although the distance from her home to the Donnelly farm was more than five hundred yards.

Edward Ryan's young son spread word of a Vigilant meeting. Men rode on horseback to the Cedar Swamp school.⁴² Martin McLaughlin who farmed on the Cedar Swamp Line acted as chairman at this second meeting.⁴³ He spoke of all the trouble in the parish and predicted that soon they would all be forced to move away. The Vigilants talked of William Thompson's heifer, not doubting that the animal had already been butchered and the meat hung to smoke in some chimney. They talked of the Donnelly gang and of young Thomas Ryan; one Vigilant mentioned that a few days earlier Ryan had threatened and insulted him. James Carroll had brought constable William Hodgins, who twice had proven eager to act against Thomas Donnelly. Hodgins had brought a warrant to arrest Thomas Ryan on the Vigilant's charge of abusive language. The Vigilants agreed to help arrest Ryan and to search at the Donnelly farm for William Thompson's heifer. With John Cain, the Donnellys' nearest neighbour to the south, William Thompson left the meeting at ten o'clock at night, to ask a search warrant from magistrate William Stanley. Most of the Vigilants waited at the schoolhouse.

William Stanley told them that it was too late at night to issue a warrant, too late anyway to search. He said to go to the Donnelly farm and to keep close watch from the road. He said that they were justified in searching; if they needed a warrant he would give one in the morning. Thompson returned to the schoolhouse to

report that they had the approval of the reeve of Lucan.⁴⁴

At dawn the Vigilants left the schoolhouse. Some rode in Michael Carroll's wagon where a rifle was hidden; others were on foot; many were armed with clubs.⁴⁵ They went first to the home of Michael Powe where Thomas Ryan worked and boarded. William Hodgins their constable arrested Ryan for threatening language. The Vigilants accused Ryan also of the theft of Thompson's heifer and raised him onto their wagon. They threatened Michael Powe for keeping Thomas Ryan. Leaving Powe they moved west along the sideroad, then south down the Roman Line toward the Donnelly farm. One Vigilant lent William Hodgins a horse and buggy to take his prisoner Ryan to the lockup in Lucan.⁴⁶

But on the previous evening, a Roman-Line neighbour had noticed William and Mary Thompson's heifer, strayed into an adjoining pasture and not in the Donnelly stable. Early in the morning as he went to tell the Thompsons, he saw that the heifer had already wandered back onto the Thompson farm. "If you were a little sooner," Mary Thompson told him, "you would see the Volunteers."⁴⁷

"Who are they and what are they doing?"

"They are looking for my cow," she said. He showed where her cow was grazing. But Mary Thompson did not send word to the searchers. They did not know that the cow had been found. Nor did the Vigilants know that the cow had been deliberately driven away, by James Carroll's younger brother William Carroll and by James Feeheley's younger brother William Feeheley, in order to make strife that Donnelly's could be blamed for.⁴⁸

At six o'clock in the morning, thirty Vigilants climbed the board fence between the Donnelly farmyard and the schoolyard. John

Kennedy Jr. was one of the first; Patrick Ryder Jr., who was called Grouch Ryder, was one of those who followed. Bridget Donnelly was the first to see them. She was James Donnelly's niece who had come from Ireland in January of 1879 to live in Biddulph.⁴⁹ "Johnny, Johnny, get up," she cried, "there's a lot of men at the barn."⁵⁰ The Vigilants moved to the Donnelly stable where James Carroll and William Thompson looked inside. Others searched under the two straw-roofed lean-tos which served as animal shelters in the yard.

John Donnelly came from his house with his old mother following, to face the mob at the corner of the granary. "What do you want, boys?" he said.

"I have lost a cow," said William Thompson.

"We are in search of a stolen cow," said another.

"Go and search," John Donnelly said, "you will find no cow there." Then the Vigilants considered that they had his permission.

"We have not searched the granary yet," said John Kennedy who held a club in his hand. "Search the granary then," said John Donnelly, "and be sure and make a good search." Carroll and Kennedy searched in the granary. "Go up to the priest," John Donnelly mocked, "and have him curse the man that took the cow. My belief is that James Carroll will be the man."

"We have the man that took the cow," said Carroll, "going in the buggy up the road." John Donnelly and his mother returned to their house.

The Vigilants who had found no cow moved toward the Donnelly home. They drank from the pump in the front yard. James Donnelly came from the house to confront them, still sleepy and still pulling on his pants. "Boys what brought you here?" he said, "what do you

want?" His son John came out again to support him.

"I have lost a stolen cow," said William Thompson.

"Well if you think the cow is here," said Donnelly, "do not leave one straw on top of another. Make a search for her."

"We need not," said a Vigilant from the crowd, "for we have the thief."

"Well if you have, give him the benefit of the law," said Donnelly.

Another Vigilant accused James Donnelly of harbouring Thomas Ryan. "I would harbour your father's son," James Donnelly told him placidly.

"We don't want anything," James Carroll said, "only to show you we are not afraid of you." Another Vigilant ran up to them.

"This work will be put down," he said, "and we will put it down."

James Maher lunged forward. "Who shaved my horses' tails?" he said.

"I do not know anything at all about your horses," John Donnelly answered. Another Vigilant lunged forward.

"Who rode my horse?" he said, "it was Tom Ryan." "It was not," John Donnelly said. "I will have satisfaction," the Vigilant warned, "if it is in twenty years."

"Who stole my pig?" said another.

"Kiss my ass," said another.

"You can kiss mine," James Donnelly answered, "you can all kiss my backside."

"Old man, would you like a couple of kicks?" said Carroll, "we could break your bones now and you could not help yourself."

"I was a man," James Donnelly said, "when you were not able to wipe your backside."

"We will make you keep quiet," said Vigilants in the crowd.

"I will be here if the devil would burn the whole of you," James

Donnelly said, "I am not in the least afraid of you." Then he turned away and went back into his house.

"We'll go to brother-in-law's now," John Kennedy said⁵¹ as the Vigilants left by the Donnelly front gate. They marched in a body up the Roman Line. Passing the Donnelly schoolhouse they met the teacher on his way to morning classes. Surprised at the size of the mob and at their roughness, he asked where in the name of God they were going.

"We are looking for a heifer," they said.⁵²

"Have you lost a heifer every one?"

"No," the Vigilants admitted.

"Have you looked through the woods for the cow," the teacher said, "before turning out like this?"

"We know the cow is skinned," they said, "and we are trying to smell the meat down the chimneys." Then the Vigilants passed James Keefe Sr.

"What are you men doing?" he asked.⁵³

"We are looking for a stolen heifer."

"I do not think the cow is stolen at all," said Keefe.

The Vigilants stopped for breakfast at the homes of William Thompson and of Patrick Ryder and Michael Carroll.⁵⁴ Then they continued their march north to the top of the Roman Line, and east to Whalen's Corners and the home of William Donnelly. Led by James Carroll and Martin McLaughlin, some went to the blacksmith shop of Edward Sutherby, who was Donnelly's friend and his landlord. They told the blacksmith that they were searching for a cow. "It would be better if you were home cutting thistles or ploughing," Edward Sutherby said, "surely you do not expect to find a stolen cow here in my shop."⁵⁵ The Vigilants threatened him with the sticks and the

pieces of rail which they carried. "We will visit you at all hours when you least expect it," Martin McLaughlin said.

Led by John Kennedy and by Edward Ryan, other Vigilants continued to the house of William Donnelly.⁵⁶ But William's old mother Johannah had come by the sideroad, by a shorter way, to warn him. Donnelly came to the door of his house; he carried a fiddle in his arm. The Vigilants sat down on the road to consider. William Donnelly said nothing, only played them a tune on his violin. The Vigilants listened, nervously, then shuffled to their feet and left. William Donnelly and his mother called taunts at the mob as they vanished.

Later that day, Johannah Donnelly spoke of the trespass to some of her neighbours. "Is this not a pretty way we are treated?" she said.⁵⁷ "Yes," said a neighbour, "if you do not deserve it." Johannah Donnelly listed the men who had trespassed. "Grouch was there with the rest," she said, "I will go out to the road and meet young Grouch, and put a blush on his face, and make him lie back on his back in his grand buggy."

"It is better," said the neighbour, "if you do not go out to the road."

Also that same day the Vigilants found a thresher for Edward Ryan. They guaranteed the safety of his machine. But during that afternoon as they helped with the threshing, they found that iron pins and horseshoes in the sheaves had ruined the teeth of the thresher's machine. The Vigilants considered the claim for damages. One Vigilant argued that they should not pay. He suspected that the thresher had done further damage to his own machine, hoping to collect more Vigilant compensation. The Vigilants decided not to pay.⁵⁸

In Lucan, magistrate William Stanley freed Thomas Ryan from

the lockup on bail provided by John Kennedy Sr. On September 6 he convicted Ryan of using abusive language.⁵⁹ Father John Connolly attended the trial where he accused Ryan of perjury during Ryan's testimony. Then the priest called at the home of Michael Powe, ordering him to discharge Ryan. He gave Powe money to pay Ryan's wages for the time left on his contract. He told Powe to put Ryan on a train out of the township. "I never earned twenty dollars so easily in my life,"⁶⁰ Thomas Ryan said when Powe gave him the money from the priest. Michael Powe drove him, not to the train, but to William Donnelly's home at Whalen's Corners. Donnelly found him a job with a travelling thresher and Thomas Ryan left Biddulph.

Connolly reprimanded John Kennedy Sr. for providing money for Thomas Ryan's bail. But Kennedy said that Ryan's family were his friends. "I consider Tom Ryan a quiet harmless boy if left alone," he said.⁶¹

"What are you going to do about your son-in-law?" Father Connolly said.

"What do you want me to do with him?"

"He is a devil," said Connolly, "the biggest devil I ever met, and Ryan is another. I want you to keep Donnelly away from your house."

"I will do no such thing," said Kennedy.

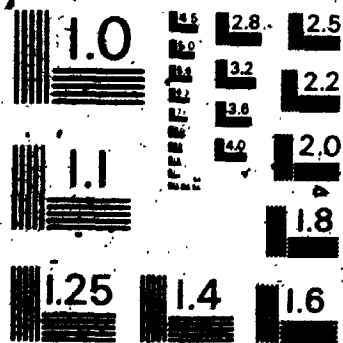
"If anybody takes sick in your house," the priest warned, "and you send for me and Donnelly is here when I come, I will take the patient to the yard and prepare him for death sooner than enter the house he is in." But John Kennedy Sr. answered him back again: "I have known William Donnelly since he was a child. I never saw anything wrong with him, and he is welcome to my house while I have one."

William Donnelly wrote another of his letters--to Connolly's

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superior, Bishop Walsh of London. He told of the Vigilant Society and of the priest who mentioned Donnellys from his pulpit while ignoring other crimes in the parish. He asked the bishop to intercede, to stop the Society, to bring the Donnelly family and the priest together, to make peace in the parish before it was too late. He listed the names of men willing to affirm that what he wrote was truth. The bishop passed the letter on to Connolly, who rebuked all the men whom Donnelly had named. "What kind of men are you?" he said, "do you want to get me out of the country?"⁶²

In London, John Donnelly reported to the Crown Attorney the Vigilants' intrusion of the Donnelly farm. On September 10 he laid a charge of trespass, before a London magistrate; neither John Donnelly nor Charles Hutchinson the Crown Attorney had faith in the magistrates of Lucan. Donnelly named thirteen Vigilants in his charge: Edward Ryan, James Carroll, John Kennedy, James Maher and nine more.⁶³ The Vigilants assembled to build their legal defence. They asked lawyer John Blake to defend them. The Vigilants had a lawyer and they had a magistrate, William Stanley, whom they could call on, and a constable, William Hodgins. But they wanted more men of their own Society to help in the use of law against Donnellys. They wanted their own constable, a man of ambition and energy, who hated Donnellys but did not fear them, who had time and freedom to pursue, who had not the burden of a farm and a family. James Carroll was the Vigilants' selection. John Blake prepared a formal petition asking his appointment. "Whereas for some time past," the document began, "certain evil minded persons have been violating the laws..."⁶⁴ With the signature of fifty-six men of Biddulph township, the petition arrived in the

Middlesex Court of Sessions. On September 20, 1879, as Carroll since April had plotted and expected, he was named a county constable.⁶⁵

Carroll travelled to London to qualify, swearing the oath of office to "truly, faithfully and impartially perform the duties appertaining to the said office, according to the best of my skill and ability. So help me God."⁶⁶ When he left the courthouse he met the same two constables who had come to arrest him in Biddulph the preceding April. They offered their congratulations. "I understand you are a constable," one said, "you are in a position to catch them now, the Donnellys."⁶⁷

"Yes," said Carroll, "I'll be the cause of the Donnellys being banished out of Biddulph."

Carroll had the leisure to be constable, for he had no farm. With the lease about to expire on his father's Stephen township farms, Carroll went again to the executors, his uncles, who twice before had refused to rent to him. They rejected him again, asking whom he could offer as security. "That is for me to know and you to find out," said Carroll.⁶⁸

John Blake prepared a written legal offer to rent. Carroll met his uncle John Delehay at the blacksmith shop of John Hall, on the boundary between Stephen and McGillivray townships. "You will have to be a witness," Carroll told the smith. But as Carroll showed the executor his document, the frightened smith made all the noise he could, to keep from hearing the threats that passed between them. Carroll offered his Roman Line uncle James Maher as guarantor that Carroll would pay the rent. Delehay refused; Maher's own farm was heavily mortgaged. Then Carroll offered Bernard Stanley, magistrate

and merchant in Lucan. Delehay refused again; Stanley was unknown in that Stephen township neighbourhood. Delehay would not take the document which Carroll shoved forward. Carroll threw it on the floor of the blacksmith's shop, and left.

Another Stephen township farmer thought of renting the Carroll properties for the coming year. James Carroll and his brother Michael called at the man's farmhouse where they spoke to his daughter. James Carroll asked if her father planned to rent the Carroll lands. "The man that has nothing to do with them is best off," Carroll said. The girl reported to her father, who, like other prospective renters, decided that he did not want that land.

But the two executors considered James Carroll unfit to be tenant of the lands they administered. In October they rented, for another year, to the same tenants. James Carroll, who had waited for two years, would have to be landless for at least twelve months more. He rented land in Biddulph instead, twenty-five acres at the north end of the Roman Line.⁶⁹ He and his two young brothers still boarded at the homes of other Biddulph farmers.

On September 20, the same day that Carroll became a county constable, magistrate John Peters from London travelled north to Lucan, to conduct the trial of the thirteen Vigilants for trespassing onto the Donnelly farm, a trial which the County Crown Attorney considered the Lucan magistrates unfit to handle. Father John Connolly attended this trial as he had the trial of Thomas Ryan. He showed his support for the men of the Society. "They are all respectable farmers," he said.⁷⁰ "Some of them are leading men in the township." He affirmed that these Vigilants were fulfilling his own mission. "I was sent to

that neighbourhood partly for the purpose of putting all lawless conduct down." John Donnelly answered him back in court: "If you had attended to your spiritual affairs and had not organized that Society, the present lawsuit would never have taken place."⁷¹ A host of Vigilants came to testify; magistrate John Peters arranged to continue the trial one week later, on September 27, in Lucan.

On that day of his appointment, James Carroll returned to Lucan while Peters was still in the village. Carroll led Edward Ryan before the magistrate, to tell again of being robbed by Thomas Donnelly a year and a half before. Then constable Carroll took the warrant issued by Peters, for the arrest of Thomas Donnelly, again, for robbery.⁷² During that week while the Vigilants waited for their trespassing trial to continue, Carroll their constable borrowed handcuffs and a revolver from William Hodgins.⁷³ He took too from Hodgins the old warrant against James Feeheley for abetting Thomas Donnelly in the Ryan robbery, the warrant which Hodgins had held for more than a year because Feeheley was still in Michigan, and because it was only Thomas Donnelly whom Ryan really wanted to prosecute. Carroll kept the Feeheley warrant, to be used as a threat when need might arise.⁷⁴ He kept handcuffs in his coat pocket always, and a constable's baton on a shelf in his uncle James Maher's kitchen.⁷⁵

On September 25 Carroll came in a buggy to the farm of Mitchell Haskett, where Thomas Donnelly was helping at threshing. He drew and cocked his revolver and ordered the crowd of workers to stand back. He read his warrant, clamped handcuffs onto Donnelly's wrists, and dragged him to the side of the buggy. "Do not make them so tight,"

said Donnelly,⁷⁶ who slipped as Carroll tried to push him onto the buggy. Carroll drew out his baton. "I'll give you this over the head," he said, "if you do not get in."

"You might as well kill the man at once while we're all here," said a farmer who saw how roughly Donnelly was handled. Another friend followed to bring Thomas Donnelly his coat. "Stand back or I will shoot you," said Carroll. He drove away to London with his prisoner.

In London, Thomas Donnelly was bailed to appear before John Peters in Lucan on September 27,⁷⁷ when Peters would be present to continue the Vigilants' trespass trial. At that trespass trial, James Donnelly recalled that he had told the Vigilants to search if they wanted, had told them to search straw by straw through his stack.

Peters acquitted all of the Vigilants.⁷⁸ Then he listened to Edward Ryan who told, yet another time, of being robbed. Peters bailed Thomas Donnelly again, to appear in London for a trial six days later. Samuel Everett, disgruntled ex-constable, helped pay for Thomas Donnelly's bail, out of spite against those who would arrest Thomas Donnelly when he, Everett, had said that the charge would come to nothing.⁷⁹

At Donnelly's trial in London, the charge after all did come to nothing. Although Carroll got a three-day adjournment, he could find no witnesses to corroborate Edward Ryan who had been so drunk on the night that he lost his money. Magistrate Peters dismissed the charge. "I will carry it further," James Carroll warned.⁸⁰ Ryan and Carroll spoke to John Blake, their lawyer in London. Blake led Edward Ryan to the office of Malcolm Cameron, the Crown prosecutor for the Middlesex Fall Assizes. Blake told the prosecutor that

magistrates were afraid to convict Thomas Donnelly. He asked that an indictment against Donnelly be sent to the Assizes Grand Jury. "Justice would be defeated," he claimed, "if a preliminary investigation were insisted on."⁸¹ Cameron the prosecutor was displeased and reluctant. "From all I can learn they are all a bad lot," he told Charles Hutchinson the Crown Attorney, "and a few months in gaol would do them all good."⁸² But Cameron presented the indictment; the Grand Jury returned a true bill; and on the same evening, October 8, the court issued a bench warrant for Thomas Donnelly's arrest once more.⁸³

James Carroll, waiting at the courthouse, had the warrant in his hand by ten o'clock. At two in the morning already he was hunting in Biddulph. During the night he called at the home of William Hodgins. By seven o'clock in the morning, both constables were at William Donnelly's door. "We are looking for Thomas Donnelly," they said,⁸⁴ and searched through the house and stables. They rode four miles north into Usborne township, searching. They rode back into Biddulph where at eleven o'clock they took time for breakfast at the home of James Maher. But William Donnelly had seen them at his stable and rode to the Roman Line homestead to warn his brother.

Carroll and Hodgins rode south from Maher's. As they passed William Thompson's gate, they saw Thomas Donnelly and his father and his brother John, digging potatoes in a field behind their strawstack and stable. Thomas Donnelly moved towards the wood at the back of the farm. Tying their horses, the constables entered by Thompson's gate. Carroll crossed the fence onto Donnelly land, cutting across a field of new fall wheat toward the field of potatoes. Hodgins continued farther back along the boundary, then turned south too onto Donnelly

land to cut off Donnelly's escape toward the woods.

Thomas Donnelly started to run, not towards the woods but back towards the Donnelly farmyard. When John Donnelly saw Carroll pursuing, he dropped his pail of potatoes and ran to the Donnelly stable. While Carroll was still in the field behind the strawstack, John Donnelly led a horse from the stable and gave it to Thomas who rode away. Carroll reached the stable yard in time to see Donnelly disappear down the Roman Line. William Hodgins, in the Donnelly woods, saw nothing. "I will make it hot for you when I get to Lucan," Carroll told John Donnelly, "you had no business to give that horse."

"I am not afraid of this case," said John, "I will beat you on it."

Constable Hodgins, asked help from a group of Vigilants who were threshing nearby. From the threshing pool they gave Hodgins a fresh horse, and left their work to help in the hunt.⁸⁵ One group watched from a field by the Donnelly homestead.⁸⁶ Hodgins and John Kennedy searched again at the home of William Donnelly.⁸⁷ Martin McLaughlin searched on horseback.⁸⁸ James Carroll came with his bench warrant to the blacksmith shop of Edward Sutherby. "Would it not be better for you to quit quarrelling with the Donnellys?" Edward Sutherby said.⁸⁹

"I will have the Donnellys out of Biddulph if it costs me my life," said Carroll.

On October 9, the day of Thomas Donnelly's escape, Carroll charged John Donnelly with aiding a felon to escape from arrest.⁹⁰ Magistrate James Grant received the charge; he was postmaster and founder of Granton in the east end of Biddulph, and a neighbour of John Kennedy Jr. from whom he had heard hateful things about

Donnellys.⁹¹ Grant issued a warrant for John Donnelly's arrest.

Thomas Donnelly escaped from the Vigilants, surrendering in London to legal authorities who were more to be trusted than his Biddulph pursuers. He was freed again on bail.⁹²

John Donnelly, member of the Abstinence Society, went to confession before Father John Connolly. False Vigilant rumours had told the priest that Donnelly had broken his pledge to abstain. Connolly believing the tale ignored the duties of his calling and refused to confess John Donnelly. He thought John capable of confessing to any untruth, perhaps to the robbery of Edward Ryan which constantly was charged against Thomas his brother.⁹³ The Vigilant Society which Connolly had inspired had passed from his control; the Society manipulated him in turn. On October 10 as Connolly and his Abstinence Society gathered to commemorate the birth of Father Matthew,⁹⁴ the men of the other Society, of Vigilants, still hunted Thomas Donnelly through the Biddulph woods.

The Vigilant Society controlled the township. Friends of Donnellys started to be afraid; many stopped calling at the Donnelly home.⁹⁵ James Feeheley's father Michael warned him against being seen in Donnelly company.⁹⁶ Those who stayed loyal were marked. John Kennedy Jr. threatened a farmer who bred his mare to William Donnelly's stallion.⁹⁷ Vigilants refused to help at the threshing of William McLaughlin, Vigilant Martin's own brother, when they learned that Donnellys had been invited.⁹⁸ The daughters of John Kennedy Sr., sisters-in-law of William Donnelly, were shunned by Vigilant men at a dance.⁹⁹ Another Donnelly friend received an anonymous letter; his livestock would be shot if he continued to invite anti-Vigilants into

his home.¹⁰⁰ A parishioner collecting grain for Father Connolly called at every Roman-Line home except the home of the Donnelly family.¹⁰¹

Vigilants said that Donnellys and their gang were responsible for every depredation;¹⁰² as the strength of the Vigilant Society increased, more people in the parish said so too. They recalled all the crime and destruction in the parish for several years past:

Patrick Flanagan's stables burned in October of 1875, Richard Raycraft's barn burned in the fall of 1876, Robert McLean's stable burned in May of 1877, William Haskett's barn burned in March of 1878, Edward Ryan's barn burned in September of 1878, William Walker's horses butchered in May of 1877. "I would say the Donnellys were to blame for nearly all," Vigilant Martin Darcy said of these crimes.¹⁰³ Michael Carroll's barn burned in September of 1877; Donnellys were blamed for that too.¹⁰⁴

People remembered the Sunday in the summer of 1878 when James and Patrick Keefe of the Donnelly gang beat a man on the steps of St. Patrick's church.¹⁰⁵ They remembered the horses taken from their stables and ridden to exhaustion.¹⁰⁶ Donnellys were blamed on the smallest of pretexts. When John Cain tried to sell his farm which adjoined the Donnelly homestead to the south, a man first offered to purchase, then refused. Cain blamed Johannah Donnelly. "I saw the old woman and the man talking together in the road," he said.¹⁰⁷

Rumours and allegations hardened into fact: "I am told on good authority that they shaved my horses' tails,"¹⁰⁸ said James McGrath of the seventh concession who joined the Society in October. "I didn't want it thought," he explained, "that I favoured the antics of those who were keeping the place in trouble." To be in the Society was safely to be distinct from those who were blamed for all of the

township's trouble. "I am going to be burned out," said John Kennedy Jr.,¹⁰⁹ "Bill Donnelly is the man who will do it, for he has threatened to do it. We have to watch, I am watching. If he burns me out I will shoot him. It is a pity one family should bully a township."

The Vigilant momentum brought more members to their side, men such as James McGrath. James Carroll and Edward Ryan recruited Patrick Whelan, the Donnellys' neighbour across the Roman Line, and took him to a meeting at the Cedar Swamp schoolhouse.¹¹⁰ But no Donnelly associates were welcome. "We wanted no spies," a Vigilant announced.¹¹¹ When Thomas Ryan's former employer Michael Powe tried to attend a schoolhouse meeting, the Vigilants refused to admit him.¹¹²

The Donnelly family's Vigilant enemies grew stronger, their friends did not call, they were blamed for every misfortune, armed men trespassed on their land and hunted Thomas Donnelly in the woods. From the safety of his home in Thorold, Patrick Donnelly wrote to urge his father to sell the farms and leave; he would never have peace while he lived in Biddulph. Then Patrick came to visit at his Roman Line birthplace, to urge his parents again to move away. But James and Johannah Donnelly would not leave their homestead.¹¹³ James Donnelly made arrangements to sell other property which he owned in Michigan, land to which he could have gone for safety.¹¹⁴ William Donnelly asked his father to buy insurance on the buildings, but James Donnelly refused. He said that no-one would burn him out as long as he lived there. He would shoot them first, he said, and kept a rifle loaded, and a shotgun and two revolvers.¹¹⁵

On October 11 constable Carroll arrested John Donnelly, using the warrant provided by James Grant which charged John with helping his

brother to escape arrest.¹¹⁶ Crown Attorney Hutchinson told Grant that the charge against John was invalid, unless Thomas Donnelly were first proven guilty of the crime for which Carroll had been trying to arrest him.¹¹⁷ But at John Donnelly's trial on October 17, although that robbery of Edward Ryan was not mentioned, magistrate Grant sent John Donnelly in Carroll's custody to the London gaol, to be tried on the charge of aiding a felon to escape.¹¹⁸

In London John Donnelly was released on bail. His trial was scheduled for October 23 in Middlesex County Court.¹¹⁹ But there would be no trial, no point in a trial, until it could be proven that Thomas Donnelly had robbed Edward Ryan, and hence that John had in fact helped a felon and not an innocent fugitive. Lawyer John Blake tried to find witnesses to bolster the evidence of Edward Ryan who was hopelessly drunk on the night he lost his money.¹²⁰ But Hutchinson the prosecutor was not impressed. He told Blake that those witnesses need not bother coming to the trial of John Donnelly.¹²¹ On October 23, the scheduled day of trial, Hutchinson released John Donnelly again on bail, until the next Assizes or until Thomas Donnelly could first be tried.¹²²

John Blake knew by October 21 that John Donnelly would not be tried for helping Thomas Donnelly to escape from arrest. On October 22, Michael Blake his Vigilant brother, on behalf of the members of the Vigilant Society, went to magistrate William Stanley to file a different charge against John Donnelly. Michael Blake charged him with the crime of perjury,¹²³ citing John Donnelly's testimony on September 20, before magistrate John Peters in Lucan, when John Donnelly had denied that he gave the Vigilant permission to come onto Donnelly land. Peters' acquittal of the Vigilant defendants was a

ruling that the mob had in fact received permission. On October 30, magistrate William Stanley tried John Donnelly on that charge of perjury. The County Crown Attorney from London warned Stanley in advance about showing bias against the defendant.¹²⁴ Five Vigilants mustered to testify that John Donnelly as well as his father had given them permission to search on Donnelly land. But Stanley would give no verdict until he consulted the watching Crown Attorney.¹²⁵

Eleven days later, word arrived from London: the Crown Attorney told Stanley to acquit. To prove perjury, the Vigilant accusers needed the transcript of the trial before magistrate Peters, the only exact and legal record of what John Donnelly's testimony had been.¹²⁶ The word of five Vigilants was no substitute; the machinery of law had worked against them. Although William Stanley disliked Donnellys and any disturbers of his peace, unlike James Grant he was cautious of his own respectability and would not defy the County Crown Attorney. He dismissed the charge of perjury against John Donnelly. Father John Connolly was furious that the Lucan magistrates had not contained John Donnelly. He attacked them from his pulpit, calling them callous and indifferent to justice. And again from his pulpit he attacked the troublemaking Donnellys.¹²⁷

The Vigilants also regretted John's acquittal. They realized that they needed a more dependable magistrate. With approval of the priest and of the Society membership, James Carroll on November 20 went to magistrate Grant, charging John Donnelly again with perjury. Grant gave a warrant, Carroll arrested John, magistrate Grant scheduled another trial.¹²⁸ Crown Attorney Hutchinson told Grant that another trial on the same charge was probably illegal.¹²⁹ But on November 25

James Grant listened to the Vigilants who gathered in his courtroom to swear that John Donnelly had lied in his testimony at the trespassing trial in September. James Carroll testified, John Kennedy Jr., William Thompson, James Maher, and Michael Blake. Ignoring the County Crown Attorney's instructions, Grant ordered John Donnelly to post bail until another trial in London.¹³⁰

The Vigilants knew the value of a trustworthy magistrate. But unlike James Carroll their constable, Grant was a Protestant and not of their Society. They held a meeting to nominate two of their own members to be appointed as magistrates for Biddulph.¹³¹ William Casey was nominated, the same William Casey who in 1857 had organized the murder of Richard Brimmacombe, but who in 1879 was prospering on two hundred acres of sixth-concession farmland. Martin Darcy was another nominee; he had boarded James Carroll in his home and had trespassed with the Vigilant mob onto Donnelly land. Martin McLaughlin, Vigilant chairman, was nominated too. Darcy and McLaughlin did not want to serve, but William Casey was not reluctant. In December he qualified duly and was issued his volumes of Canada's Statutes, guide to the laws of the Dominion.¹³²

Seventy miles east of Biddulph, in Waterford, Ontario, on December 9 William Lewis murdered Michael Donnelly. William Lewis was twenty-two years old, an American, unmarried, a carpenter and navvy on the Canada Southern Railroad; he lived at a boarding-house in Waterford.¹³³ Michael Donnelly lived in the town of St. Thomas with his wife and his two small children, Catherine and James.¹³⁴ In the two years since the trains had ruined the stage-coach trade, Michael Donnelly had been a railroad brakeman. When working he boarded at

hotels in the towns, such as Waterford, along the Canada Southern line. Donnelly was popular with the railroad people. "I never knew anything against Donnelly," said another brakeman, "he was a good fighter but as a bully I never saw him have a row."¹³⁵ But William Lewis' ambition was to fight Michael Donnelly. One week before the murder he boasted that he would fix Michael Donnelly. Three days before the murder he borrowed a knife. He told the owner that he needed it to cut tobacco.

It rained on December 9 where the track crew worked near Waterford. The men left work early to take shelter in a Waterford barroom. Michael Donnelly joked in the bar with an old man who often loitered there. "I have a bulldog," Donnelly announced, "that can beat anything of its weight in Ontario." The old man answered in jest that although he had no dog, he could whip any dog himself--he offered to take his clothes off and start the fight at any time.

William Lewis interfered. "You better not hop on that man without a cause," he said to Michael Donnelly. "No one is touching him," Donnelly said, "and it's none of your business."

"You are always shooting off your mouth," Lewis said.

"Do you want anything of me?" said Donnelly, pulling off his coat.

Donnelly and Lewis grappled in the barroom. Donnelly seized Lewis by the wrist and pushed him against a wall. A brakeman friend of Michael Donnelly separated the fighters. Donnelly turned back to the bar where he stood in conversation with his friend.

From behind, William Lewis attacked him again. He struck Michael Donnelly on the back of the head. Donnelly turned around, seized Lewis again, and pushed him behind the bar. Donnelly was bigger and stronger, but William Lewis had his knife. Lewis held

Donnelly by the vest with one hand while his other hand reached in a pocket. Before Michael Donnelly had struck one blow Lewis stabbed him in the groin. "My God neighbour, I'm stabbed," said Donnelly to his friend. He unbuttoned his pants to see the wound. His friends helped him to the washroom where he bled to death on the floor.

The knife still in his hand, Lewis walked from the barroom. "I can lick Donnelly," he said. He went home to supper at his boarding house. "I had a row with Donnelly, and I have fixed him," he boasted, "that is the knife that did the business." Lewis was arrested the next morning. He was tried in May of 1880, in Simcoe at the Norfolk County Spring Assizes. For several days before the trial Patrick Donnelly was in Simcoe and Waterford, gathering evidence against his brother's killer.¹³⁶ Convicted of manslaughter, William Lewis spent five years in the Kingston penitentiary.

The body of Michael Donnelly was brought back home to Biddulph. During the wake it was laid on his father's bed in the Roman Line homestead. Father John Connolly conducted the funeral. Michael Donnelly was buried in St. Patrick's churchyard, beside his older brother James Jr.¹³⁷ On Christmas Eve, James and Johannah Donnelly went to confession at St. Patrick's church. Connolly did not refuse them confession as he had refused their son John. He spent two hours in his study with Johannah where she told him her story of her life in Biddulph. "I have been trying to get the boys to be good," she said, "I am going to get not only my boys but all the Biddulph boys to reform."¹³⁸

On January 10, 1880, Robert Donnelly was released from the Kingston penitentiary; his sentence for shooting at Samuel Everett had

expired. On the morning of January 11 he arrived in Biddulph, to visit his parents and his brothers.¹³⁹ Then Robert Donnelly and his wife went to Glencoe, where they had intended to move before his conviction.¹⁴⁰ Constable James Carroll started to search for another crime to blame on Robert Donnelly, to send him back to prison in Kingston again.¹⁴¹

On January 15, at four o'clock in the morning, Patrick Ryder Sr., whose farm bordered on the Donnelly seventh-concession property, awoke to hear someone crying "Fire."¹⁴² His barns were burning. He ran to the stable to help his sons save horses and cattle. But they could not save the buildings. The barn, the stable, the sheds and the granary burned, and all of his last fall's harvest--twelve hundred bushels of oats, four hundred bushels of wheat and barley, fifteen tons of hay. Everything but Patrick Ryder's house was gone.

On the night of the fire, Thomas and John and William Donnelly were at a wedding party for the son of Robert Keefe, at the Keefe farm on the sixth concession four farms north of the Donnelly homestead. With the death of their brother Michael so recent, they had not felt much like celebrating, but Donnellys and Keefes were friends. Their parents stayed home; James Donnelly was ill with a cold and a heavy cough. Michael O'Connor's daughter Bridget was at the Donnelly home, quilting a petticoat for Bridget Donnelly. Johannah Donnelly was knitting a stocking. At ten o'clock Bridget Donnelly made biscuits and tea. "They are having a good time at the wedding," Bridget O'Connor said.¹⁴³ "They are having a good time," Bridget Donnelly replied. Then all four went quietly to bed.

Because of the old man's coughing they did not sleep well. At

four o'clock a wagon passed and a dog barked. James Donnelly rose soon after to start a fire. Although it was long before dawn, light was coming in at the north window. He came to the bedroom where the women slept. "The schoolhouse is on fire," he said. They rose and went to the door to see. Bridget Donnelly agreed that it was the schoolhouse. But Bridget O'Connor said, "It is not the schoolhouse, I see the smoke coming over the schoolhouse." After daylight they knew that the fire was from Patrick Ryder's buildings.

But Patrick Ryder spoke with Vigilants that day and decided that he knew who had burned his buildings. In a wagon with four Vigilants he passed by the Donnellys at their homestead. "You burned my barns," he accused them, and drove on.¹⁴⁴ James Keefe Jr. passed Patrick Ryder's place that same day. "Don't that look hard," said Ryder pointing to his ruins.¹⁴⁵ "It does," said James Keefe. "I know the firebug," said Patrick Ryder, "and by God I'll fix him and put him in a way he will never burn another barn again." Patrick Ryder learned from his daughter that a neighbour woman said that Johannah Donnelly had told her, on the day that the Vigilants had trespassed on Donnelly property, that Patrick Ryder's son Patrick Jr., Grouch, would not be long riding in his buggy: and that buggy had been burned in the fire. Although Johannah Donnelly had made no such threat, by distorted word of mouth and by rumour Patrick Ryder Sr. was convinced.¹⁴⁶

Patrick Ryder and James Donnelly had been neighbours for thirty years without a quarrel between them,¹⁴⁷ without even a fence between their properties. But on the day after the burning Patrick Ryder went to the new Vigilant magistrate William Casey, to charge with arson James Donnelly, and his sons John and Thomas, and William, and Robert

too who was far away in Glencoe.¹⁴⁸ Prosecution of the sons seemed useless with so many witnesses at the Keefe wedding party. Therefore, on January 17, again before magistrate William Casey, Ryder charged Johannah Donnelly with helping her husband to burn the Ryder barns.¹⁴⁹

At the time of the burning, Father John Connolly was seven hundred miles away in his city of Quebec, attending celebrations on the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of an old Monsignor friend. In Quebec there were dinners and gifts and addresses, exchanges of news and renewing of old acquaintances.¹⁵⁰ But Connolly hurried back to St. Patrick's when he heard of Ryder's fire. He met in private with Ryder to hear his misfortunes and suspicions.¹⁵¹

The Vigilants met at the Cedar Swamp schoolhouse. Connolly called while the meeting was in progress, trying without success at this late time to learn about the Society which he had inspired. The name of Donnelly was whispered around the room; opinion was divided; one faction retired to the small inner room and would not let the others know what they were planning.¹⁵² Then there were more meetings in the days that followed, not at the schoolhouse but more privately, in the home of a Roman-Line Vigilant, at night, with bed quilts covering the windows.¹⁵³

Travelling on the Roman Line in late January, James Keefe Jr. and James Feeheley passed the house of John Cain, Feeheley's uncle and the Donnellys' next neighbour. Mrs. Sara Cain called her nephew in while James Keefe waited outside. When the two re-emerged they were crying. "My uncle told me that I am not to stay overnight at the Donnellys' any more, as something awful is going to be done to them," said Feeheley.¹⁵⁴ "What is going to be done?" said Keefe. But

Feeheley would not explain any more. Keefe told John Donnelly what he had heard. But John Donnelly only laughed.

At John Cain's house, Martin Darcy and James Carroll asked John Doherty, a farmer on the eighth concession, to join their Vigilant Society. Cain took a stick from the rack above his stove. "By God," he said, "I will bury that stick in Tom Donnelly's skull before a week."¹⁵⁵ "I will have nothing to do with putting a stick in anyone's brain," said Doherty, and refused to join.

Constable James Carroll borrowed two more pair of handcuffs, from constable William Hodgins and from a constable at Granton.¹⁵⁶ From magistrate William Casey he got warrants to arrest both James and Johannah Donnelly, on the charge of burning the buildings of Patrick Ryder. Johannah Donnelly was in St. Thomas, visiting the families of her daughter Jennie Currie and of her son Michael's widow. On January 18 Carroll travelled to St. Thomas. "The Donnellys are a hard lot," Carroll told the Chief of Police.¹⁵⁷ Carroll and the Chief of Police found old Johannah Donnelly at the home of Michael Donnelly's widow. They arrested her that evening at the home of Jennie Currie. Jennie insisted that she accompany Carroll and her mother to Biddulph, to guard against Carroll's harassment. Then Carroll demanded that another constable accompany them too. Thus he brought Johannah Donnelly back to Biddulph, where on January 19 magistrate William Casey made James and Johannah post bail to appear on January 22 for trial.¹⁵⁸

At the trial they faced magistrate Casey, and magistrate James Grant, and another magistrate named Philip Mowbray who farmed on Biddulph's northeastern boundary.¹⁵⁹ But prosecutors Patrick Ryder and James Carroll could offer no witnesses. Carroll asked for a four-

day adjournment.¹⁶⁰ On that same day Carroll met James Feeheley on the Roman Line where they talked of the Vigilant Society. "It was got up to put down bad work," Carroll said, "those that are doing it have to be stopped."¹⁶¹

Carroll knew of no witnesses to the burning of Ryder's barns. There were only the women who were present on the day of the Vigilant trespass in September, when Johannah Donnelly had said that she would go out to the road to meet young Patrick Grouch Ryder. Carroll acquired subpoenas to bring these women to court. Martin McLaughlin's sister-in-law, the wife of William McLaughlin, was one who had been present. But friendly to Donnellys and knowing that the prosecution was spiteful, Mrs. Mary McLaughlin stayed away. Patrick Whelan's wife Ann was another witness. But Patrick Whelan drove constable Carroll from his house with an axe.¹⁶²

On Sunday, January 25, Father John Connolly mentioned the Patrick Ryder burning from his pulpit. He offered a reward of five hundred dollars for discovery of the arsonists. He predicted that a ball of fire would fall from heaven on the arsonists' homes.¹⁶³ In September of 1879, the month of the trespass, lightning had smashed James Donnelly's buggy in his farmyard during a storm.¹⁶⁴ William Donnelly asked his mother to go to the priest and to ask his help in stopping the trial and persecution. Johannah Donnelly began to cry. "He knows the way they're using us, without me going to tell him," she said.¹⁶⁵

On January 27, the arson trial re-convened. Bridget O'Connor and Bridget Donnelly testified to prove that James and Johannah Donnelly had been home in bed on the night of Patrick Ryder's fire.

Magistrate Mowbray thought the charge was absurd and wanted to dismiss it immediately. But Casey and Grant adjourned one more time so that Carroll could try again to find witnesses.¹⁶⁶ "There is not the slightest cause for our arrest," said James Donnelly, "and it seems hard to see a man and woman over sixty years of age dragged around as laughing-stocks."¹⁶⁷ The trial was scheduled to continue on February 4.

But Vigilants knew that the charge would come to nothing, the burning go unpunished. Martin McLaughlin heard a rumour that the Donnellys would burn his buildings next.¹⁶⁸ Law courts were failing. At their meetings behind quilt-covered windows, Vigilants devised other plans.

On the night of February 1, 1880, John Whelan who lived across the Roman Line from the Donnelly home dreamed that he saw several Vigilant men whom he recognized by name.¹⁶⁹ They were prowling in the dark about the Donnelly farmhouse. News of his dream was whispered by frightened folk from home to home, along the concessions of St. Patrick's.

CHAPTER 6

KILLING AND BURNING

Patrick Ryder's barns burned; James Carroll brought Johannah Donnelly back to Biddulph from St. Thomas; but law courts failed to punish any Donnellys. Then after the priest's prophecy of fire from heaven, after the last assembly in the Cedar Swamp School, a smaller group of Vigilants met behind quilt-covered windows and planned the Donnellys' murders.¹

On Tuesday February 3 in the afternoon, at furtive brief meetings the last-minute details took form. Martin McLaughlin the chairman conferred with a Vigilant assistant in the hay-loft of his barn.² Vigilants were stationed outside the Donnelly homestead to watch, while daylight lasted, to learn who arrived and who left. Vigilants spoke to James Feeheley. They needed a person to spy inside, to learn who was home and what they were doing, alert or asleep, wary or casual. James Feeheley was a friend and frequent visitor; unsuspecting, the Donnellys would let him in. James Feeheley remembered his father's saying that Donnellys were bad company, he remembered John Cain his uncle, who had said something awful would happen, he remembered James Carroll who had said to shun Donnellys and who still held a warrant to arrest him if he chose. We will not hurt them, the Vigilants said, only hang them up until they tell what they know of Patrick Ryder's burning. Whether James Feeheley believed them, or

whether he only tried to believe them, he said he would do what the Vigilants demanded.³

In the afternoon the Donnelly family made arrangements for the arson trial, in Granton on Wednesday morning. Thomas and John would go too, to watch while their parents faced prosecutors and magistrates. Someone would have to be home to tend to the animals. While spies watched, Thomas Donnelly and his father drove in their sleigh to Lucan to bring in twelve-year-old John O'Connor, whose sister had quilted a petticoat for Bridget Donnelly on the night that Patrick Ryder's barns burned, and whose father had driven the Donnelly stage. There was nobody closer whom the Donnellys could ask. When John O'Connor came from the Lucan grain store where he worked, they drove back to the Donnelly homestead.

They parked the cutter by the kitchen door. It was cold outside. John and the old man went into the house to get warm. John Donnelly helped Thomas unharness the horses and put them into their stalls. Then they all sat talking in the kitchen. Bridget Donnelly brought them apples. Then they had supper.

Thomas and John and James and Johannah could not all drive to Granton in one sleigh. After supper, at dusk, John Donnelly saddled a pony. He threw a cutter harness loosely on the pony's neck, and rode away to Whalen's Corners to borrow William's cutter. He would come back in the morning early, to take them to Granton.

Thomas Donnelly and John O'Connor went to the barn when John left. They threw down hay and straw from the loft for the cattle and horses. They fed the pigs, using a whip to hold the hungry beasts back until their food was in place. It was cold in the barn; they covered Thomas Donnelly's horse with a blanket. When they finished

the chores they went back to the house. John O'Connor took off his wet outer pair of pants and laid them to dry by the stove. They sat eating apples and talking, John O'Connor and Thomas, Bridget and the old folks.

Then the old man prepared for bed. He said his prayers. "Take off your boots," he told John, "and come to bed along with me." Thomas wanted John to sleep with him instead, in his small bedroom in the north-east corner of the kitchen. But the old man said no, and he led John to his own room, in the south-east corner of the front part of the house. Rising eight feet to the ceiling and rafters, a partition divided the bedrooms from the front sitting room. It was one-inch-thick board, unplastered. The bed was against the outside wall, its head towards the east, towards the concession road. The bed was tall: the bottom of the frame was two feet from the floor and the four posts rose almost to the rafters. A rifle and a shotgun, loaded, leaned against the wall in the corner behind the bedroom door.

John took off his coat and his boots and he laid them on the floor. He crawled into bed against the wall. The old man took off his coat too and gave it to John to pillow his head. As they fell asleep James Feeheley arrived and stayed for half an hour in the kitchen, talking with Thomas and with Bridget and Johannah. When he left Thomas Donnelly accompanied him outside, to say goodbye at the corner of the house.

In the evening, in the dark, Vigilants gathered at Patrick Ryder's abandoned farmhouse where the Whelan boys had trespassed in June.⁴ A sideroad ran beside the house, from the Roman to the Cedar Swamp concessions; it was surveyed but undeveloped, seldom used.

Vigilants from the Cedar Swamp concessions tramped west along the unused sideroad to the unused farmhouse. They came in a body, together, at midnight, west along the sideroad. John Kennedy Jr. was one of them.

They were not quiet. John Doherty, who at John Cain's home had refused to join the Society, lived behind Ryder's farm on the corner of the sideroad and the Cedar Swamp line. Hearing voices and stamping feet he rose from his bed to look. He saw Vigilants, fifteen of them, tramping down the sideroad. They slipped behind his stable which stood close to the road. Afraid that they were after his horses to ride them by night, he ran from his house towards his stable. The men ran too, west towards the Roman Line, but he recognized seven by name.⁵

When all had assembled at the empty farm, from the Roman and the Cedar Swamp concessions, they marched north toward the Donnelly home. Some had their faces blackened for disguise; one was dressed in a woman's clothes. In the darkness James Feeheley told them who was inside. From his talk with the family he knew that John, whom he had not seen, was in bed with old James Donnelly; he did not know that it was not John Donnelly, but John O'Connor sleeping there. The Vigilants sent James Feeheley to William Donnelly's home at Whalen's Corners, to watch who entered or left.⁶ William Feeheley watched the Vigilants from inside John Whelan's fence. John Whelan watched, unnoticed, from his window.⁷

The Vigilants stood in the snow around the house. It was shortly after one o'clock. James Carroll went in first. James Feeheley could have entrance because he was a friend, James Carroll because he was a constable. Carroll entered, not by the front door facing east to the road, but by the back door, the kitchen door, in the south

corner and facing west. The door was not locked; it was never locked. Carroll stole directly, diagonally, across the kitchen to Thomas Donnelly's small bedroom in the opposite corner. Before Donnelly could wake or know what happened, Carroll's borrowed handcuffs were fastened on his wrists.

In the front part of the house, Johannah and Bridget slept in the bedroom beside the old man's bedroom. Because they were closer to the noise in the kitchen, they were first to awake. The old woman arose and lit a candle in a brass holder on the kitchen table. She asked Bridget to light the fire in the stove and gave her a knife to make shavings for kindling.

With the candle from the kitchen table to light his way, Carroll went through the door from the kitchen into the front sitting room. The stairs to the loft were against the wall on his left; on his right were the two bedrooms. He went to the farther, front room, the old man's room, and stood in the doorway. The old man awoke and got out of bed. "What have you got against me now?" he said.

"I have another charge against you," Carroll said.

"Hold the light while I get dressed," the old man said.

"Where's Jack?" Carroll asked.

"He's not in," the old man answered. Carroll asked him again. "Didn't I tell you, he isn't in."

The old man was dressed but could not find his coat. Carroll held the candle while he looked. He passed Carroll in the doorway and went into the kitchen to ask Johannah if she had seen his coat. She had not seen his coat. When he went back to the bedroom, John O'Connor found the coat under his head. He sat up and pulled it out.

"Here it is," John said, out of the darkness next the wall, and handed James Donnelly the coat. Holding the candle, and whistling, Carroll paced in the front room, near the bedroom door.

With Carroll following the old man went into the kitchen.

"Tom! Are you handcuffed?" he said.

"Yes," said Thomas Donnelly, "he thinks he's smart."

Thomas told Carroll to read his warrant. "There's lots of time for that," Carroll said.

And as he spoke the mob of Vigilants burst through the kitchen door. They were armed with clubs and with axes and spades. They attacked the four Donnellys in the kitchen, Thomas in handcuffs, the old man, the old woman, the girl. James Donnelly fell by the stove on the north wall of the kitchen. Johannah Donnelly fell at the door from the kitchen to the front room. In the bedroom John O'Connor jumped from the bed and crawled under it. Bridget ran from the kitchen, through the dark sitting room and up the stairs to the loft. By the light from the candle in the kitchen, John saw her through the open bedroom door. Rushing from under the bed he ran across the sitting room, past the door to the kitchen where men with raised clubs hammered three Donnellys. When he followed Bridget up the stairs she shut the door at the top behind her. He ran back downstairs, across the dark empty sitting room and under the bed again, where he crawled behind a willow laundry basket, four feet long and one foot high. He peeked out around the side.

Thomas Donnelly in his stockinged feet ran across the sitting room past the open bedroom door. He pulled open the unlocked front door and ran outside, screaming, while Vigilants ran following close

behind. He was only six feet from the door when the Vigilants caught him. They beat him to the ground in the snow. They carried him back inside and threw him on the floor, by the front door and by the door into the bedroom where John O'Connor hid.

A crowd gathered around where Thomas Donnelly lay groaning. "Bring the light here," one said. The handcuffs rattled as the Vigilants removed them. Thomas Donnelly sat up, opened his mouth and tried to speak. "Hit that some of a bitch a stroke with a spade and break his skull open," Carroll said.⁹ Four times a spade struck Thomas Donnelly's head. The Vigilant dropped the spade beside the body.

"Where's Bridget?" they said, "where's the girl?" "Look upstairs," one said. Vigilants rushed across the sitting room and upstairs into the loft. The scuffle was short. They killed Bridget Donnelly with their clubs, left her body there and came downstairs. A Vigilant asked about her. "She's all right," one said who had been in the loft.

In the kitchen a Vigilant took the Donnellys' coal oil lamp. He poured oil on Thomas Donnelly's bed and oil on the old man's bed. He put the lamp on the window sill. He set fire to the oil that was soaking into the blankets. "The coal oil will burn off the blankets and not set fire to the beds at all," one Vigilant predicted. Then they all left as they had come, through the kitchen door.

John O'Connor crawled from under the burning bed. He picked up his coat from the floor but did not take time to put on his shoes. He hit at the flames with his coat. When the bed still burned he ran from the room. Thomas Donnelly lay on the floor by the front door.

He still breathed, but he was dying. Turning back from the front door, John ran instead through the door to the kitchen, where he stepped on the body of Johannah who lay by the door. She too was still breathing. The kitchen was lit by the flames from Thomas Donnelly's burning bed. Showing from behind the stove was a mess of blood and hair, the old man's head. John pushed through the kitchen door where the Vigilants had gone.

He ran, south around the house, then east to the concession road. The Vigilants were marching north, past John Whelan's house where Whelan stood watching. John ran south instead, two hundred yards to the home of Patrick Whelan. Whelan saw them all, watching from his window¹⁰ --Vigilants walking north, and John O'Connor behind them running south and east towards his house. John ran towards Whelan's barn first. When Whelan's dog barked at him, he turned back to the house and rapped at the door.

"Who is it?" old Ann Whelan said.

"It's Mr. Connors' son," and he rapped again. He was crying and said that he was frozen. Blocked with snow, the door did not completely close. John pushed it open and was inside when Ann Whelan came to the door. "Call up the old man," he said. But old Whelan was already up.

Raking coals to the front of the stove, he put John's bare feet on the hearth to warm them. "What brought you out?" Whelan said, "where were you?" And John whispered of the crowd of men, killing Thomas and Johannah, chasing the other Donnellys, and burning the bedrooms.

"The house is on fire," he said, "call up the boys to go over and

quench it."

"If the Donnellys have escaped," Ann Whelan said, "they can come back and put out their own fire."

When Patrick Whelan looked out, he saw that the south-west window, the window of James Donnelly's bedroom, was lit as with a lamp.

"You must be foolish," he said, "there is no fire there."

"There is," John said, "call up the boys."

"You are foolish telling such a story as that. You are dreaming. Do you often get up nights this way?"

"I am not foolish," John said, "for Mrs. Donnelly is killed."

"How do you know?"

"I heard them moaning." Then looking out again they saw that the Donnelly kitchen was burning.

Ann Whelan gave John boots and stockings. Patrick Whelan dressed to go outside. "Do you know who it was?" said Ann Whelan.

"Carroll was there," John said. Ann Whelan lay down on her bed.

"You better be careful what you say. We could all be summoned up to court," she said, "and you might not be telling the truth. Maybe they were fighting among themselves. Did they have liquor?" Then John would tell no more of what he had seen.

Outside, Patrick Whelan walked north, to the house of his son, John, who stood watching. "Donnellys' house is all on fire," he called.

"I see it," John Whelan answered. Patrick Whelan crossed to the Donnelly home. He looked in the south front window, into the smoke that filled the bedroom. When the loaded guns in the bedroom exploded, the window blew outwards, panes and frames past his face. "Mother of God," Patrick Whelan said.

At the back kitchen door where the Vigilants had entered and left, he looked in at Johannah Donnelly's body by the door to the front room, and beyond to the body of Thomas Donnelly by the front door. The body was on its back, head to the north. When John O'Connor and young Joseph Whelan arrived they all stood in the snow, watching. Then they all went back to Patrick Whelan's house.

"Did John Donnelly come back home?" said Patrick Whelan.

"I could not tell you," John O'Connor said.

"Where did he go?"

"For a cutter to go to the law tomorrow." Patrick Whelan went out again, alone, past the burning house to the Donnelly stables. When he saw no cutter, he knew John Donnelly was not in the burning building.

When the flames broke through the roof of the house, all blazed up suddenly higher and brighter. Four miles away at Cladeboye men saw the glow in the sky. Men saw the glow from the Grand Trunk train, passing at the Lucan crossing. Soon the burning back kitchen collapsed. When the wall between the kitchen and the main part of the house fell, the tongue-and-groove flooring of the loft collapsed. It tilted and the body of Bridget Donnelly rolled among the falling timbers, to land beside the body of her uncle by the kitchen stove. The clothes burned off all the bodies; then the flesh burned. The flesh of the necks and the vertebrae burned, and the heads separated from the bodies. The skulls cracked from the heat. A west wind blew through the two open doors, a tunnel of wind through the house. The flames were stronger where the draft was; in the path of the draft Johannah Donnelly's body burned most completely.

It snowed most of the night. The moon was covered with clouds.

By dawn, the flames had died but smoke still blew thick across the ruins. The four bodies were charred black; only by their size could they be distinguished. Male could not be distinguished from female. Three of the bodies lay where they had died, and the fourth, Bridget's, lay where it had landed in falling from the loft, by her uncle's body, by the stove. The iron stove was still standing. The rib cage of James Donnelly was only partly intact and a hole gaped in his skull. There was a pocket knife beside the body, and an axe head, and the metal buttons of his coat, and spectacles, and some money: a quarter, a dime, and a penny.¹¹ There was nothing unburned by Bridget Donnelly's body.

Johannah Donnelly's body lay ten feet away from the bodies by the stove. There were spectacles beside her body, the glass melted to a lump from the heat. By a freak in the flow of the draft through the open doors, the ringlets of the old woman's hair were still apparent, the ash still holding the shape of the hair it had been.

The body of Thomas Donnelly had fallen through the burned floor, to land on a smoking pile of burned potatoes stored in the shallow cellar for the winter. Underground, partly sheltered, his body was less burned than the others. The skull was cracked; the spade that had split it lay with its blade beneath the body, the iron strap that held blade to handle protruding from beneath. The wooden handle was burned away. Buttons and the buckles of suspenders were on top of the body. Beside was a burned pocket watch on a chain.

Whatever else could not burn was scattered about in the charred blackness: broken window glass, kitchen implements, screws and nails, a tin dish,¹² a spout of a china teapot,¹³ the barrels of

old Donnelly's rifle and shotgun with their wooden stocks burned away, three revolvers, axe heads and a pick and hammer, all without their wooden handles, and the unlocked lock to the Donnellys' front door. Some of the weapons were Donnellys', some had been dropped by anxious Vigilants.

The outlines still showed where the house had been: in the front part on account of the cellar, in the kitchen part on account of the earth that was piled up tight against the outside of the walls for warmth. The milkhouse attached on the north side of the front part was gone. No signs showed where windows had been. The front door-sill still showed, a stone sunk in the earth.

The snow was melted to mud for several feet around the blackness, but not so far as the pool of blood on the snow where Thomas Donnelly had been felled. A bloody club lay in the snow near the blood, three feet long with a handle wittled at one end. Horses and cattle nosed in the strawstack, unfed. The pigs in the barn, the woodpile, the sleigh, and all the other buildings were untouched by Vigilants or by fire. In the snow near the board fence around the schoolyard was another dropped club, an elm stick of rough cordwood.

In the morning children arriving for school came to see the ruins. The school-teacher came to see the ruins, friends of the murdered family came, and neighbours, and passers-by, then reporters, and at four o'clock police from London. The Chief of Police picked up a skull; it crumbled in his hands. The next morning police removed what remained of the bodies. They put them all in one coffin, separated by newspapers. By then, all of the skulls had gone. So had almost everything else--guns and buckles, teeth, teapot spout--

anything that the curious could carry away.

On Tuesday February 3 in the afternoon, William Donnelly worked in James Keefe Jr.'s wood lot where he and Keefe chopped a felled tree into firewood. They came to William's house for supper. Near dark John Donnelly arrived on his pony, carrying the harness for the cutter which he would take in the morning. He stabled his pony in a shed attached to the back of the log stable, north of the house, where William kept his horses. John propped a stick tight against the door of the shed to hold it closed.

At nine o'clock Martin Hogan Sr. arrived to visit. He had finished his work for the day, threshing for John Morkin who farmed one half mile south on the eighth concession. Donnelly and Keefe were splitting wood in the woodshed off the back kitchen, in the south-east corner of the house. They offered Hogan tea but he had already taken tea. William's father-in-law John Kennedy Sr. called. He took evening tea, and went away.

While William and John Donnelly and James Keefe and Martin Hogan still sat talking in the kitchen, Nora Donnelly went to bed. She was tired. She was four months pregnant.¹⁴ She gave William a buffalo robe to cover the bed in the south room, beside hers, where John Donnelly would sleep. It was nine o'clock when she went to bed in her room in the north half of the front of the house. William went outside through the woodshed door, to the stable south-east of the house, where he kept his prize stallion and his buggy and cutter. He locked the stable door fast for the night.

James Feeheley came to wait, hiding outside in the cold and the dark to spy for the Vigilants. At eleven o'clock he saw

James Keefe leave for home through the kitchen door at the south end of the house.¹⁵ Inside, Martin Hogan rose to leave. As he pulled on his mittens John Donnelly urged him to stay until morning: "Morkin has a large family, they will all be in bed now." Hogan decided to stay.

The three men sat up late, talking of Vigilants. At twelve-thirty William showed them to their bedroom. They took the buffalo robe which Nora had brought, for there was no stove in the room, and it was cold. Plaster was loose on the ceiling. "Lots of fresh air in here," John said. Hogan climbed to the inside, next the wall. John and Martin Hogan talked in bed for a while. In William's room there was fire in a stove beside the bed. William slept on the inside, next the wall. They were all asleep by one o'clock.

When they left the burning Donnelly homestead, the Vigilants walked north and east, three miles to Whalen's Corners. Their tramp in the snow took forty minutes; they arrived about two-fifteen.

William Donnelly's house faced west towards the concession road. Neighbours were close: William Blackwell's house was eight yards from Donnelly's on the south side, John Walker's house was fifty-eight yards to the north with Blackwell's blacksmith shop between. Near the south end of the fence which marked the Donnelly yard from the roadway, a big gate led to the stable where the wagon and cutter were. A smaller gate was near the north end of the house. The two bedrooms were at the front of the house, with a window in the end of each but with no window facing west to the road. A door out of William's room faced toward the road; the top half of it was a glass window. Another room had been added to the centre of the front of the house, eleven by

twelve. It had a front door and a door into William and Nora's bedroom. The back of the house was the kitchen with a woodshed adjoining on the south end. A door facing south to Blackwell's led outside from the kitchen, between the woodshed and the projection of John's bedroom. The roof of the house covered the doorway to form a small protected porch. Another door led to the woodshed and then outside, on the path to the stallion's stable.

The Vigilants separated at the fence. One went to stand at the door of Blackwell's house, should anyone come out. Vigilants went to each stable, the one southeast of the house where the stallion and buggies were, and the one to the north where John's pony and the other horses were. For spite or for extra weapons, they took the iron bar from the door of the stallion's stable, and a pitchfork from the door of the other stable.

Martin McLaughlin and one other Vigilant went in through the front gate, over the covered well and past a bare tree at the south end of the house. They stood on the low wooden platform of the porch at the south end of the kitchen. McLaughlin had a rifle, the other had a shotgun. One slipped on the snow and wet wood; he caught his balance again before he fell or made noise. Raising their guns, they aimed at the door. Vigilants went to every door and window: to John's room, to William and Nora's, to the back kitchen window. None went to the kitchen window opposite the door where the guns pointed. James Carroll and Patrick Ryder's son James stood at the corner of the front projecting room. Others lined the fence at the road. The house, the yard, the stables were surrounded.

The two Vigilants kicked at the kitchen door. Martin

McLaughlin shouted--"Fire! Fire! Open the door Will!" John Donnelly woke first. As he climbed from the bed he awakened Martin Hogan. Hogan pulled on his pants and sat on the edge of the bed as John passed from his room through William's on his way to the kitchen. "I wonder who's hollering fire and rapping at the door," he said. William and Nora awoke and sat up in bed as he passed. "Who's there?" John called.

"Fire, fire!" James Ryder shouted. John turned to his right in the kitchen and opened the door. Both Vigilants fired. The shotgun blast hit John in the upper right chest. The rifle bullet passed through his groin and embedded below the window sill on the opposite kitchen wall. The house was filled with the smell of gunsmoke. Falling back from the force of the blasts John hit his head on the frame of the door to William's bedroom. The Vigilants ran from the porch, past the window of the room where Hogan sat frightened on the bed. "Martin get up, John's shot," William said.

"Hold your tongue," Hogan whispered, "it's you they want. Be still or we'll all be shot." The Vigilants waiting by the front gate fired revolvers in the air, seven shots. Hogan stayed where he was, seated on the side of the bed.

Nora was crying softly--"Oh Will, Will." William lifted a corner of the white cotton blind that covered the window on the door beside his bed. He looked through the corner pane of the nine panes of glass. He saw John Kennedy, and James Carroll, and James Ryder.

"What next?" said Carroll as the Vigilants talked and considered.

"Brother-in-law is easy at last," John Kennedy said.

"I'm going to get up," Nora said, "if I'm shot or not." While.

William still peered through the curtain she rose from the bed. She took a coal-oil lamp that lay on the floor in their bedroom. William dropped the curtain.

In the kitchen Nora lit the lamp. There was no-one on the porch. She closed the door. Holding the lamp she looked down at John. He was trembling. "Oh Will he's dying," she said. "Fetch him in," William whispered. She tried to drag him but John was heavy. Martin Hogan came, crawling, on hands and knees to help. They dragged him into William's bedroom, until his head was near the foot of the bed and his feet by the wall between the two bedrooms. There were shotgun pellets in his lungs and chest muscles. Blood came from his mouth; he was choking on blood. "He is dying," Nora said. "Yes," Hogan answered.

"Get a candle," William said. Nora went with the lamp to the room where John had slept. From her trunk she brought a piece of blessed candle. She made Hogan hold it tight in John's hand. Hogan crawled under the bed, where he reached out to hold John's hand until he died. In less than five minutes John was dead. Nora brought holy water to sprinkle on the body.

William lay awake in his bed all night. Hogan lay underneath with John dead beside him. "Come into the bed," William said; it was cold. "Be quiet, don't talk," Hogan whispered, "if they find out that it isn't you they've killed, they'll come back and kill you and us too." Whenever William would speak, Hogan said to keep silent. Nora wandered from room to room, crying. "Oh good God," said Hogan under the bed, "I always thought they would do this." Nora looked constantly, aimlessly, out of each window into the dark. It snowed most

of the night; the wind was from the west. Nora lifted the curtain and looked out the window where William had looked out. "Will who in the world could have done it," she said. "Hold your tongue," he answered, "I know some of the gang."

Towards dawn she brought Hogan his boots and his stockings and he put them on under the bed. She asked William to get up. "Let him be where he is," Hogan said, "he can't do any good." But finally a light appeared in the window of the house across the road. Then the two men rose. "This is the Society's doings," William said to Hogan. He asked if Hogan had seen anybody. But Hogan only said, "Don't talk to me about it at all. Whatever you saw keep it, and I'll do the same." The three of them went to the kitchen door and looked outside. William asked Nora to go behind the house and the blacksmith shop to Walker's. "Don't stir," Hogan said. But William took a lantern and went out. It was still dark. "What did you let him go out for?" Hogan said, "he can't do any good." When Nora went to call him back he was gone.

William walked the few steps to Blackwell's home. Blackwell had awakened at the noise of the shooting in the lane between the houses. Looking from the window of his bedroom upstairs he had seen the Vigilant killers.¹⁶ He had seen the glow in the sky to the south-west, the flames of the Donnelly homestead. He had stayed in his bedroom, awake and afraid, until William Donnelly rapped at his door.

"Isn't this a nice thing" William said.

"What?" Blackwell said.

"They've shot my brother Jack."

"Who done it?"

"They done it." Then William said, "We'll go look at the tracks."

Blackwell said they must wait until dawn. When it was light they went back to William's house. They saw the bar taken down from the door of the stallion's stable. "I bet they've killed the stallion," William said. But the animals were unharmed.

William went to John Walker's house. "Did you hear the noise?" he asked. "Yes I did," Walker said. William asked him to drive John's pony to his parents' home, to tell them that John was dead. When Walker came back he told what had happened there.

William wrote telegrams for his brothers and his sister. He rode to James Keefe's farm and sent Keefe to Lucan with the telegrams. He told him to notify the coroner. At his own home, William cut the bullet from the wall of his kitchen and saved it. He saved a bloody paperwad that had fallen from one of the Vigilant guns. Martin Hogan left for Morkin's where he was threshing. William and Nora stayed all day at the house. They covered John's body with a quilt. Neighbours called and mourned around the body.¹⁷

William and Nora began to gather their belongings and furniture. They would move from the Whalen's Corners cottage; it was unsafe to stay.¹⁸ At five o'clock the police from London came. They took John's body away in a shining rosewood coffin.¹⁹

Leaving Whalen's Corners the Vigilants walked north-east, towards the Blanshard home of James Keefe whom Feeheley had seen leaving William Donnelly's house. But Feeheley said, "Boys you will not do it. You have done enough tonight."²⁰ The Vigilants gradually dropped off and dispersed to their homes. One persisted on toward James Keefe's, alone. Then he too turned back.

CHAPTER 7

BIDDULPH, NORTH AMERICA

On Wednesday February 4, in the morning, John O'Connor borrowing a horse from the Donnelly stable rode back home into Lucan. He stabled the horse and went to his house. "Ma come see how Johnny's coming home," one of the other O'Connor children said.¹ John wore a coat and boots borrowed from the Whelans, and a borrowed big old hat of Mrs. Whelan's; his face was smudged black from ashes at the fire. His mother Mary laughed at him. "Where is your coat?" she said.

He did not answer her at first. Then she saw tears in his eyes.

"Ma, it is burnt in the fire."

"Good God, is the stable burned?"

"No, the house is burned, the old woman and Bridget is killed, and they are all dead and burned."

"How did you escape?"

"Oh Ma, I got under the bed."

"Did they see you under the bed?"

"If they did I'm sure I'd have been killed." John was shaking and he would not talk anymore.

John's father Michael walked him downtown in Lucan to tell the news to others. Many did not believe him, until James Keefe came, with telegrams for the Donnelly survivors and a message for the coroner. John O'Connor left the crowds gathering and walked back home.

When his mother asked him the names of the killers, at first he was frightened and would not answer. Then telling her that she must keep them secret, John told her names: James Carroll, Thomas Ryder old Patrick Ryder's brother, and John Purtell, James McGrath's farmhand. "I will tell," Mary O'Connor said, "it is too bad to let them go."

On February 4 in the morning James Carroll left William Thompson's, where for several days before the killings he and his young brother William had been boarding. He rode on horseback past the Donnelly ruins and east on a sideroad to Granton, to appear at ten o'clock in the morning in his lawsuit against Patrick Whelan, and at two o'clock that afternoon for the arson trial of James and Johannah Donnelly. In the barroom of Thomas Culbert's hotel in Granton he met in urgent discussion with John Kennedy. Before any news of the killings had come, men in the barroom noticed that something was wrong.²

In the morning Patrick Whelan rode to Granton to settle the lawsuit against him. James Carroll, looking for witnesses to appear in the Ryder arson trial, had come with a subpoena for Patrick Whelan's wife; and when Whelan had chased him away with an axe Carroll had filed a charge of assault on a constable. Men in the barroom who had seen fire in the direction of the Roman Line the night before asked Patrick Whelan what had happened. Then Whelan told them of the Donnelly deaths. In the barroom over whisky he settled his lawsuit with Carroll. At two o'clock in the afternoon, magistrates Casey and Grant and Mowbray permanently adjourned the arson case against the two old Donnellys. Patrick Ryder and James Carroll and the magistrates went home.³

In the afternoon reporters reached Biddulph, to feed a hungry public the Donnelly news. Newspapers themselves fed on the Donnelly

killings, advertising "full particulars of the tragedy which has thrilled the whole Dominion."⁴ "We are satisfied to know," one paper announced as people rushed to buy its latest Donnelly news, "that our advertisers will get the benefit of our increased circulation."⁵ Policemen arrived too from London in the afternoon, London Police Chief William T. Williams and his constables and detectives. The officers from the city began to track suspects on the Irish Catholic concessions.

The people of Ontario demanded justice. "Canadians have won the name of a law-abiding and law-respecting nation," they protested.⁶ "We have always been led to believe that the power of British law was sufficient to shield every community."⁷ "When people will deliberately commit so fiendish a crime, the law should be allowed to take its course."⁸ "The tragedy enacted in the township of Biddulph . . . casts a foul blot on our fair name as a law-abiding and God-fearing people."⁹ "The fair name of Canada has received a foul blot."¹⁰ The foul blot must be cleansed away, said the people, looking to the officers of law.

Late in the afternoon Lucan's coroner, Dr. Thomas Hossack, gathered a jury of twelve village men. At McLean's Hotel they listened to the stories of John and Patrick and Joseph Whelan. After viewing John Donnelly's body at the home of Michael O'Connor, they adjourned one week until post-mortem examinations.¹¹

At McLean's Hotel, the Police Chief heard William Donnelly's story. At Michael O'Connor's home, a city constable took John O'Connor on his knee and gently drew from him his story. He told the boy to answer no one else's questions.¹² When Police Chief Williams went to Michael O'Connor's home, Mary O'Connor would not let him enter,

and Michael O'Connor said that John would answer no questions.¹³ The Chief and his detectives returned late at night to the city.

Overnight the London Police Magistrate issued warrants. On February 5 in the morning the chief and his officers returned north to Biddulph. Two constables in a sleigh found James Carroll on the Roman Line, near the farm of his uncle James Maher. "The Chief wants you up at Lucan," they said, "we want you to help us work on this case, being as you are a constable."¹⁴

"This is an awful affair Jim," said one.

"It is," said James Carroll.

"You are just the man to work up the case."

They drove to Maher's where Carroll changed his clothes; he wanted to go to Lucan looking respectable. He whispered in private in the kitchen with his aunt. On the way into Lucan they drove past the black ruins of the Donnelly home. "Jim this is a pretty bad affair," said one constable, "I wonder who it could have been done it."

"It is a kind of mysterious affair to me," said Carroll. In Lucan at McLean's Hotel the city constables showed Carroll their warrant. They arrested him, searched him, handcuffed him, and put him in the village lockup.

Police called at John Kennedy's place. When Kennedy fled across the fields, his father John Kennedy Sr. showed the policemen his son's tracks in the snow. They followed the tracks and arrested him at the home of Anthony Heenan on the ninth concession.¹⁵ They arrested Martin McLaughlin, seizing the rifle that had shot John Donnelly.¹⁶ They arrested James Maher, and his son James Jr., and Patrick Ryder Sr., and his sons James and Patrick who were in the

Ryder bush chopping timber to rebuild their burned barns.

That day nine Biddulph men in all were arrested by police from the city. In the evening the nine handcuffed prisoners were taken to London by train and by sleigh, then through the crowds of London curious to the cells behind the turreted county courthouse.¹⁷

On February 6 in Biddulph the city detectives arrested John Purtell, whom John O'Connor had seen standing over Thomas Donnelly's body. They arrested Michael Heenan whose father Anthony had harboured John Kennedy. Heenan was quiet and firm but John Purtell sobbed. When Purtell saw the crowds of watchers in the city, he shrank back in fear and clung to the constables. In the gaol behind the courthouse still he was crying: "Lord have mercy on my soul for what I have done."¹⁸

On February 7 the officers from London arrested William Carroll, James Carroll's younger brother. They arrested Thomas Ryder, Patrick Ryder Sr.'s younger brother, seen by John O'Connor standing next to John Purtell and bending over Thomas Donnelly's body. "There won't be many tears dropped over the matter," Thomas Ryder said of the murders when arrested. The city police took these men to London, to cells¹⁹ in the Middlesex gaol. In four days, thirteen men had been arrested.

On February 4 in the evening, John Donnelly's body was brought to the home of Michael O'Connor. The inscription on the side of his coffin said: "John Donnelly, died February 4th 1880, aged 32 years and 11 months."²⁰ The charred fragments of the other four bodies were brought the next day, wrapped in newspapers. On the evenings of February 4 and 5 two wakes were held in the O'Connor home: one for John Donnelly and one for the other four dead.

The funeral was on February 6 in the morning. At 9 o'clock crowds were gathered outside the home of Michael O'Connor. Six pallbearers carried to the hearse John's body in the glass-topped rosewood coffin. The fragments of the other four Donnelly dead were placed on a rough sleigh behind, nailed in a wooden box without handles or ornament. The funeral procession of one hundred sleighs and cutters stretched for half a mile. In the lead were surviving Donnellys: William and Nora, Robert, Patrick, and Jennie Currie. Only William was stoic and calm. "No use crying over burnt bodies," he said. The procession moved slowly south to St. Patrick's Church, where Father John Connolly and six acolytes waited.

Bringing in the coffin and the nailed plain box, the pallbearers placed them in the centre aisle. Five hundred people followed. The priest read the Roman Catholic burial service and the choir sang the mass for repose of the souls. Then as Father Connolly turned from the altar and faced his congregation to deliver his funeral address, tears came and he turned away, sobbing on the altar. The congregation watched until the priest could speak again. "In coming to Biddulph I left a quiet place--a Christian place--and a place where the laws of God and man were observed and respected. I came to a district where neither the laws of God or man have been observed." He continued until he spoke of Johannah Donnelly, when he started to cry again and could not speak more.

Then Patrick Donnelly rose in his pew in the presence of the priest and the congregation of Biddulph, to ask Father Connolly to tell what had happened in the parish to bring about these deaths. The priest tried to assemble for himself and for his people and for the

Donnelly survivors the sequence of things that had happened. He spoke of the riding of James Kelly's horse, of William Donnelly's sharp letter in defence of Thomas Ryan, of the quarrel about the threshing of Edward Ryan's grain, of the Donnelly sons' bad reputation. "When people have a hard name, as a priest having the charge of souls I must set my face against their deeds." He spoke of trying to free Robert from prison, of kind conversations with Johannah, of John's loyalty to the Temperance Society. And then he spoke of the Vigilant Society, trying not to believe that its members were murderers. "I never thought they could make such a butchery as this," he said. He tried to answer Patrick Donnelly, but he really could not understand: "I thought that the whole thing would wear away." He came down from the altar to pronounce benediction over the coffins. After the funeral he met in his parsonage in private with Donnelly survivors, to try to explain more fully, and to try to be reconciled.

The Donnelly dead were buried in St. Patrick's cemetery. Thirteen Biddulph prisoners were secured in cells of the Middlesex gaol. Police from the city daily invaded the township searching for evidence. But the people in Lucan and on the Catholic concessions closed together against the London officers. Those who were dead had been wicked and dangerous, those who had killed them must be protected. "We did murder them," said Patrick Ryder Sr. to James Feeheley, "but can they prove it?"²¹ "A bad family," said a leading man of Lucan.²² "The murderers are respectable men who would not harm a fly," he said, "but they had to kill the Donnellys just as they would a mad dog." "Donnelly souls are roasting in hell now," said James McGrath.²³ "If the sun ever shone on a decent man, that man is Martin McLaughlin,"

said another.²⁴

"What on earth did they arrest Maher for? He wouldn't cut the ears off a cat," said another.²⁵

"They got their just dues," yet another said, "they burned and cut, and were cut and burned."²⁶

They formed a defence fund to pay for the prisoners' lawyers.²⁷

They sent threatening letters to Michael O'Connor: "You will be used the same as the Donnellys if you do not leave the place."²⁸ Three

letters in a single day came to O'Connor. Father Connolly wrote an open letter proclaiming the innocence of the thirteen prisoners.²⁹

Threatening letters came to Police Chief Williams: go back home, they said.³⁰ A Vigilant made rounds of the neighbourhood, house to house, telling the folk of the township to say nothing.³¹

Police seeking evidence called at the farmhouse of James Maher.

"Look around," Mrs. James Maher taunted, "go through the house. You won't find much, I'm thinking."³² They went to the house of Patrick

Ryder where they questioned Mrs. Ryder. "I'll tell you when I'm summoned," was her answer.³³ They found a loaded gun at another Roman

Line farmhouse. For shooting woodpeckers, the owner said, "and I was fond of hitting a squirrel now and then."³⁴

"I'm no tell-tale," said another Biddulpher, questioned while riding on the Roman Line.³⁵ Another old woman of Biddulph led police in

circles in her answers: "What I know about it is just the same as my old man knows, and if you were to see him and he would tell you what he knows about it, it would be just what I know."³⁶ Bland and courteous

invitations were offered to the city policemen, to search in other farm homes along the Roman Line. The people of Biddulph were leading

them on fruitless excursions, until the officers from the city were astray and perplexed in this hostile, inscrutable township.³⁷

Very soon, when the London policemen were familiar to all in Biddulph, their chances of discovering evidence vanished. "There is little or no prospect of admissions or confessions," Crown Attorney Hutchinson said. "I question whether there is another township in Canada to correspond with Biddulph."³⁸

In London, crowds of curious people gathered at the train depot, the police headquarters, the courthouse--wherever the murderers from Biddulph might be glimpsed. But the County Crown Attorney kept them fast in the gaol behind his courthouse office. "The persons who may be committed for trial should be detained in close custody," he said. "There is always the chance of one or more breaking down during a long imprisonment."³⁹ Locked in their cells and far from their allies, one among them might break and confess. James Carroll had slumped and turned pale when arrested, Purtell had sobbed in the officers' sleigh.

Also secured in the city was John O'Connor who had named three of the killers. He was not safe in Biddulph. "We are opposed to a desperate and unscrupulous party," County Attorney Hutchinson said.⁴⁰ Police Chief William smuggled John from Lucan, wrapped in a rug in the bottom of his sleigh, past the spies who watched the road south out of the township.⁴¹ The Crown Attorney lodged him in a boarding house near his courthouse office, where John's mother Mary came to stay with him.⁴² Marvelling crowds watched them when they walked on the city streets.⁴³ Michael O'Connor came in sometimes to visit; the other frightened O'Connor children still lived in the house in Lucan, the house which Vigilant letters were threatening to burn.

Also visiting in the city was William Donnelly, to confer with police and Crown officers in the courthouse. City crowds soon recognized him and stopped to gawk in amazement. He was slight and handsome, and keen of expression, with an elegant moustache and pointed chin beard, and curling hair in ringlets to his shoulders. His lame right foot gave him a strange and faintly villainous sliding gait.⁴⁴ Like his physical appearance, his language was fantastic, revealing a mind that had travelled, imaginatively, to exotic and spectacular places. He called the Lucan inquest a "circus"; he called his Vigilant enemies "Zulus"; he remembered that the murderer's newspaper gun had contained an article about the Empress Eugénie, widow of Napoleon III; he named his own stallion Lord Byron; he remarked that in London he himself was "as great an object of interest as the Prince of Wales."⁴⁵ A newsboy stopped him on a London street to cry--"Buy the paper, Sir, only a cent, all about the Donnelly murders, and a full history of the prisoners."⁴⁶ But a passerby explained to the small boy who the hoped-for customer was. "Don't bother him," the man said, "he has trouble enough." When he was not in London, William Donnelly lived in a rented house in Lucan next door to Michael O'Connor.⁴⁷ The man whom the Vigilants had most hoped to kill stayed to help the police and to guide them about his township, listening for evidence everywhere.

William Donnelly, John O'Connor, the city police and the Crown Attorney were all in Biddulph when the coroner's inquest re-adjourned on February 11. The prisoners' allies in Biddulph and Lucan did what they could to make it a failure. Although the Town Hall was Lucan's largest public building, the School Board led by Bernard Stanley

would not give the Coroner's inquest entrance.⁴⁸ "The Donnellys were the terrors of the township," William Stanley explained.⁴⁹ Instead the inquest convened in a small and primitive room above the lockup.

Although there was scarcely space for the inquest officials-- police and the coroner and jury and witnesses--when the door was opened, gathering crowds jammed in. Hundreds more milled on the Lucan street outside. John O'Connor came from the city under heavy guard of constables who shouldered him through the crowds to testify. When he had finished, sleighs sped from Lucan to the township concessions to carry the news of what he had said.⁵⁰ In his cell in the city James Carroll heard of his eye-witness accuser. "The boy goes pretty strong for me," Carroll said.⁵¹ But Vigilant partisans only sneered. John O'Connor was primed and coached in advance by William Donnelly, they said, and by James Keefe Jr., and by city police.⁵² "O'Connor would swear the head off a ghost," said Mrs. James Maher.⁵³ Three murderers had been identified; the inquest was clearly a threat and intrusion, and so the township fought the inquest in earnest. "This is a bad job Bill," said an inquest juror to William Donnelly. "I guess I will live through the circus," William said.⁵⁴

On February 18 when the inquest re-convened, the people of Biddulph did make a sort of circus. When police sleighs appeared from the south with the three men named by O'Connor--Carroll and Thomas Ryder and John Purtell--great cheers went up from the Lucan crowds. Purtell and Ryder laughed and joked. Ryder saw Michael O'Connor in the crowd and saluted him sarcastically. But there was no inquest; the Coroner was ill. The grumbling jury adjourned again. The prisoners after the harmless outing went back to their city cells, refreshed

and encouraged.⁵⁵ Patrick Donnelly was alone in the crowd which pressed around to say goodbye. "Don't go yet," he called out bitterly, "give the Vigilants a chance to shake hands with their friends."⁵⁶ "You need not be vexed about us," said Ryder to the crowd, "we are as happy as kings."⁵⁷

Even the roads north into the township frustrated the police invaders. Struggling north toward the inquest on February 11, the buggy of Police Chief Williams broke down on the rough Proof Line road. The Chief arrived, late, in his damaged buggy.⁵⁸ Crown Attorney Hutchins, coming instead by train, found no stage at the Clandeboye depot to take him into Lucan. He trudged three miles on foot on a muddy spring road.⁵⁹ On March 2 the roads ruined Chief Williams' sleigh. This time the damage was irreparable, and after long delay, he rode into Lucan on a borrowed farm wagon. Again crowds were massed to greet the prisoners. Martin McLaughlin waved his hat in the air. Well-wishers pressed forward to shake hands with the jubilant handcuffed prisoners.⁶⁰

March 2 was the last day of the inquest.⁶¹ There was chaos in the small room over the lockup. Jurymen and prisoners and friends mingled together, chatting continuously while witnesses testified. City constables could not keep them separate. One of the Lucan jurymen went home in the middle of proceedings. Friends brought apples and oranges which the prisoners passed around, munching in court. Harried Chief Williams threatened to go home.

Finally all of the witnesses had testified. The jurymen retired to Lucan's fire-engine room which was part of the lockup building. All night raucous singing came from their chambers. A

pailful of beer and plates of cheese and crackers were passed inside to the jurymen carousers. After the testimony of all of the witnesses-- John O'Connor, Patrick and John and Joseph Whelan, William Donnelly, William Blackwell Donnelly's neighbour, the constable who retrieved the bodies from the ruins, and the doctor who performed the autopsies-- after William Donnelly and John O'Connor had named some of the murderers--the jurymen returned a verdict that the Donnellys had been murdered by persons unknown. Only two jurors of fourteen wanted to commit for trial the men whom William Donnelly had sworn that he had seen. They were overruled.⁶² Happy men pushed forward to offer their money if the prisoners were set free on bail. Coroner Hossack said that these twelve men were the worst jury that ever he had dealt with. On the street outside, happy Biddulphers thanked and congratulated jurymen. "Oh, it's a Biddulph verdict," people agreed.⁶³ The prisoners rejoiced with their elated friends, before they were led back south to the city.

After the circus of the inquest in Biddulph, the courthouse in the centre of London seemed less strong. The police who had hoped for confessions, from one of their prisoners at least, were forced to let some of them go. Eventually, only six remained, the six men identified by Donnelly and O'Connor. Michael Heenan was set free early.⁶⁴ "Lynch law is wholesome and sometimes necessary," Heenan had said upon his arrest.⁶⁵ William Carroll, James Carroll's brother, was set free too.⁶⁶ "Have no fear for me," he had called to the Lucan crowd when arrested, "I will soon be back again."⁶⁷

Even in the courthouse and gaol there was little judicial sternness. Delectable food was brought to the prisoners at every

meal, not from the gaol kitchen but from the nearby City Hotel.⁶⁸

"They give us six meals a day," one of the Biddulph prisoners joked.⁶⁹

Friends from the township visited them daily without restriction.

Priests called from the palace of Bishop Walsh.⁷⁰ In their cells the Vigilants passed their time singing, laughing, reading of themselves in the city newspapers.⁷¹

Still the prosecutors hoped that some of the prisoners might waver. John Purtell for one was cowardly and frightened. Martin McLaughlin also took prison seriously. "Nobody in the world could bring anything against me," he protested.⁷² And James Carroll seemed to be slipping, in nerve and in physical condition.⁷³ Crown Attorney Hutchinson watched them from his courthouse office.

"Whether delay will help us may be doubtful," he admitted, "but there is always the chance."⁷⁴

On February 21, before the inquest in Lucan had finished, the Crown legal forces began a magistrates' preliminary hearing against the six men named by William Donnelly and O'Connor: James Carroll, Thomas Ryder, John Purtell, John Kennedy, James Ryder, and Martin McLaughlin. An inquest in Biddulph was a circus; a hearing in the Middlesex courthouse might yet prove that the law was firm. All that remained, said a lawyer for the Crown, was "the gradual closing of the links in the chains against the prisoners."⁷⁵ The prisoners were led handcuffed into court.⁷⁶ While the inquest had heard just ten witnesses, the hearing in the courthouse assembled twenty-seven. In charge of the prosecution now to reinforce Hutchinson was Aemilius Irving, a prominent Liberal Queen's Counsel from Hamilton.⁷⁷

The courthouse chambers in the city were far larger than the

room above the Lucan lockup; and so more people from Biddulph could crowd in to watch. Again they did their best to make a circus, while the people of the city came in turn to watch the Biddulphers. McLaughlin's wife brought apples which the prisoners ate in court.⁷⁸ When the Crown Attorney Hutchinson and the chief defence lawyer wrangled over questions of procedure, prisoners and audience hooted and hissed, cheered and clapped and cat-called.⁷⁹ Someone let dogs into the courtroom; they fought and entertained the crowd.⁸⁰ Even the questioning of witnesses became an entertainment. Charles Hutchinson asked Patrick Whelan what he had done at the one Vigilant meeting he admitted attending. Whelan said he had done nothing.

"Did you sit there like a Quaker?" Hutchinson demanded.⁸¹

"I don't know how Quakers sit."

"Quakers sit around without speaking until the spirit moves them. Did you do that?"

"Begorra, I did not see any spirits there."

The prisoners showed the legal defence they would erect. William and Mary Thompson swore that James and William Carroll had slept in their upstairs bedroom on the night of the killings. The floorboards and stairboards were creaky and the door stiff, they said; the Carrolls could not have left without their knowing. Again William Donnelly and John O'Connor, but nobody else, identified the killers.⁸² On March 13 when the hearings ended, the two magistrates committed the prisoners for trial at the Middlesex Spring Assizes in April. The prisoners went back to their cells; the people of Biddulph went back to their township.

Far away from Biddulph and from London, at the circumference of

the Donnelly world, was the Liberal Premier of Ontario, Oliver Mowat. Mowat was also Ontario's Attorney-General, the man who held ultimate responsibility for the Biddulph prosecutions. From 1872 to 1896 Oliver Mowat was Premier and Attorney-General. For twenty-four years he ruled, undefeated, with political caution, tact, and a genius for compromise.⁸³ When first he heard of the Donnelly murders, Attorney-General Mowat was eager for justice. "He desires," his Deputy John Scott announced, "that no stone should be left unturned to secure the punishment of the actors and conspirators in this horrible tragedy."⁸⁴ He suggested a bounty, he suggested moving the trials to a safer county.⁸⁵ Immediately after the killings, Mowat's Justice Department was helpful and encouraging.

From the beginning, Mowat watched the Donnelly proceedings cautiously. As Attorney-General he was accountable; it was Mowat, the public considered, who was really in charge of the cases. Mowat's own riding of North Oxford was directly adjacent to Middlesex North. On February 7, Crown Attorney Hutchinson after visiting Mowat in Toronto, had publicly announced Oliver Mowat's support and authorization to do everything necessary to bring the murderers to justice.⁸⁶ London expected daily that Mowat would send a team of government detectives from Toronto.⁸⁷ "Mr. Mowat, the Attorney-General, should take the matter in hand," a public spokesman said.⁸⁸ "We are sure the Attorney-General, with whom the power rests, will give the local authorities his utmost assistance."⁸⁹ "There is a pronounced feeling here in favour of Government assistance being given to the police officers in their investigation."⁹⁰

Everyone in the province knew of the Donnelly case. Every

paper, daily or weekly, had the news. "Every conceivable thing connecting with the Donnelly matter has been published," said Crown Attorney Hutchinson in dismay.⁹¹ And so every paper carried rumours, of varying inaccuracy, concerning the wicked past of the Donnelly deceased. "The newspapers," the prosecutors complained, "have been industriously circulating letters and paragraphs full of falsehood, to the detriment of this unhappy family."⁹²

"I presume you have seen the newspaper reports," said Hutchinson in a report to Attorney-General Mowat.⁹³ Mowat knew the direction of public opinion, said Hutchinson, "the prejudice against the Donnellys and the sympathy in favour of the accused."⁹⁴ "There can be no question," the prosecutor informed him, "that every device has been and will be resorted to, to inflame public opinion against the Donnellys."⁹⁵ ("No one regrets," said the St. Marys Argus, "that the community is rid of most of the family who have made themselves a terror").⁹⁶

Mowat knew too, as did everyone, that the prisoners involved were Irish and were Catholic--"Irish Roman Catholics," Hutchinson wrote, "not one whit changed or improved by forty years' residence in Canada and the present generation no better than their fathers."⁹⁷ Mowat knew that the Catholic priest and parish were publicly involved. "The Vigilant Committee is the offspring of the parish priest, Father Connolly," the prosecutor told him, "who has openly, in a published letter, declared his belief in the innocence of the accused, and has taken every opportunity of denouncing the Donnellys, and of inflaming public opinion against them."⁹⁸ And Oliver Mowat also knew that about one-fifth of Ontario's people were Catholic, and that two-fifths of the province's people were Irish.⁹⁹

The next provincial election was at least three years away, but that margin of time was no reason to be incautious. Ever since he took office as Premier and Liberal leader in 1872, Oliver Mowat had worked hard, with subtlety and tact, to earn the votes of the Irish Roman Catholics,¹⁰⁰ without alienating his Protestant power base. Yet the best-known Liberal newspaper in the province, the Globe of Toronto, was going out of its way to blame the entire Irish-Catholic community for these murders. The Globe suggested that Connolly the Catholic priest had personally sponsored the butchery.¹⁰¹ The Liberal Globe's headlines were incessant: "Callousness Of The Community Over The Great Crime," "Hundreds Of People Are Glad," "A General Feeling Of Satisfaction Over The Butchery."¹⁰² Spokesmen for the Irish-Catholic community already were complaining: "Sensational stories of the murder are dished up in the morning papers, garnished with statements that the parties to it are Catholics, are Irish, are Tipperary men."¹⁰³ Conservatives and Catholics alike discerned in the Globe's coverage "the trail of a political serpent." They blamed the Liberal party for the Globe's anti-Irish-Catholic stance. "Is it true," they demanded rhetorically, "that the Globe is in this case fighting a party battle?"¹⁰⁴

The Protestant Christian Guardian of Toronto also linked the Donnelly murders to Irish Roman Catholicism:

It is not a little remarkable that the murdered family, and all those who have been arrested, are Roman Catholics. The township is Catholic. It does not speak well for the enlightening and devoting influences of Romanism, when the perpetration of such a crime within its own borders is possible.¹⁰⁵

If such an attitude became widespread, if the Donnelly case fostered religious divisiveness, the effect could prove disastrous. Above all,

Mowat sought consensus. Always he sought the widest possible base for his support. A government whose policies appealed both to Protestants and to Catholics was not possible when their interests were antagonistic.

Mowat had no reason to pander to or encourage such exclusively Protestant sentiments by stressing his own role in the Biddulph prosecutions. Anyway, Protestant attitude which connected the murders with Irish Catholicism did not translate into a demand for vigorous pursuit of the murderers. For nobody felt inclined to stridently champion the Donnelly's, a family whose reputation was terrible and most of whose members now were dead. Everyone agreed that justice must be done; nobody except the Toronto Globe admitted, willingly, that attaining that pious end involved, not only espousal of the cause of a notorious family, but a determined legal assault on Catholic Biddulph.

Yet Mowat, as Ontario's Attorney-General, had charge of the judicial manoeuvres against what was essentially the Irish-Catholic population of an entire township. He knew that this case would need care. Before the murders were two weeks old, Mowat appointed to the team of Crown prosecutors a local London lawyer, James Magee, a faithful Liberal party man.¹⁰⁶ Magee had run in London in the last provincial election, losing to William Ralph Meredith, Leader of the Conservative Opposition.¹⁰⁷ Mowat's deputy explained smoothly to the Middlesex Crown Attorney that James Magee's appointment arose "from the importance of the case and the public interest taken therein."¹⁰⁸

"I have given no intimation to the government that I needed assistance," Hutchinson complained, "neither did the government

inquire that I needed assistance."¹⁰⁹ "After twenty-two years as County Attorney without any complaint," he said, he had forced upon him by Attorney-General Mowat an unwanted assistant, "a comparatively young practitioner of no particular experience as a criminal lawyer."¹¹⁰ But James Magee stayed with the prosecution team although he took little part in the actual prosecutions. His role was as government ambassador, party watchdog. Through James Magee, his emissary, Premier Oliver Mowat could know, from inside, the developments in this potentially uncomfortable affair.

Others too were sensitive like Mowat to self-interest in the Donnelly business. Detective Hugh McKinnon--Police Chief McKinnon of Belleville--was one who was hungry to profit from the killings. The first day after the Donnellys were dead he wrote to offer his aid to the London policemen.¹¹¹ In the public eye he boasted of his exploits fighting Donnellys in stage-coach days. He invented tales of his fearless and single-handed capture of Donnelly boys at their Roman Line lair. "Mr. McKinnon drove to the residence of the Donnellys, and began operations. Entering alone, he asked to see Michael Donnelly, who was lately killed at Waterford, and who was the most dangerous of the gang...."¹¹² McKinnon's moment of fanfare lasted only until others spoke up to prove that his adventures existed only in his own glory-hungry imagination.¹¹³

Likewise feeding on the Donnelly tragedy was George Walter Clay, alias George Washington Clay, a long-bearded, wild-eyed, loud-voiced Middlesex County detective.¹¹⁴ Clay was appointed detective in December of 1878,¹¹⁵ but charged with false pretences by the Fall Assizes of 1879.¹¹⁶ False pretences were also Clay's stratagem in Biddulph,

in February of 1880. Flamboyantly disguised as a pedlar he skulked from house to house, self-appointed, looking for evidence and fame. Unnoticed, he followed Patrick Donnelly and Police Chief Williams and London detectives, to James Maher's farm on February 6. While Clay peered from the road, Patrick Donnelly questioned Maher's hired man about James Carroll his employer's nephew. The hired man was shoveling straw and manure from a dirt-floored calf shed onto a pile in the farmyard. "I then went away to another house and waited until dark," Clay announced. "I went back and on turning over the straw and snow I found an old quilt all wet and an old shirt."¹¹⁷ The shirt was stained with blood, he told eager reporters. "The Clothing Of One Of The Assassins Found," their headlines proclaimed admiringly. Clay crowed about his published midnight exploits after bloodstained evidence: ". . . He turned round and immediately another bullet went whistling past him. 'Oh well', said Clay, drawing his revolver, 'if it is shooting you want you can have plenty of it'. . . ."¹¹⁸

Even the County Crown Attorney admired Clay. "He had succeeded very adroitly," Hutchinson believed, "in discovering certain articles which were used by the murderers."¹¹⁹ Police Chief Williams arrested Mrs. James Maher and the hired man.¹²⁰ But George Clay's moment of renown, like McKinnon's, was brief. Soon it was clear that the bloody garments in the manure pile, and the midnight gun-battle on Biddulph's Roman Line, were George W. Clay's own private fantasies. "A barbarous act," said Patrick Donnelly.¹²¹ "A senseless and wicked thing," said Crown Attorney Hutchinson.¹²² "Gross falsifications," said Aemilius Irving.¹²³ Ellen Maher and the hired man were set free.¹²⁴ Deflated, detective Clay disappeared from London and Middlesex County.

From Parkhill a village in the northwest of Middlesex came another feeder on Donnelly events, Mrs. Kate Johnson, alias Kate Warne.¹²⁵ In April of 1880 she came to Biddulph, a tourist, to meet William Donnelly in person. She went to the home in Lucan where William and Robert Donnelly and their families were staying, next door to the home of the Michael O'Connors. She knocked at the door; she asked if William Donnelly lived there. He was not at home, but she met Robert Donnelly. She stayed for the night and she had herself invited to a party at the home of the famous O'Connors.

While George Clays and Kate Warnes infested the township looking for sensation, there were Vigilants lurking too. Night after night in early April, they visited at Patrick Whelan's home, to ensure that Whelan testimony would continue to be harmless.¹²⁶ Biddulph was remote and strange for outsiders like Aemilius Irving from Hamilton. Assigned to the Donnelly prosecutions, he visited in the township conscientiously, trying to explore the place and its people and to understand;¹²⁷ but always he remained perplexed.¹²⁸ Pro-Vigilant outsiders understood no better. "That is Zululand out there," said Hugh MacMahon from London, one of the Vigilants' lawyers.¹²⁹

On April 15, as anonymous letters had threatened for weeks, Vigilant arsonists fired the home of Michael O'Connor.¹³⁰ John and his mother were guarded in London where Michael the father had gone to visit them. Left alone, Bridget O'Connor and her two young brothers, Thomas and Patrick, invited friends in for fellowship and protection. They stayed in the kitchen playing dominoes and cards, while Bridget did some baking at the stove. Robert Donnelly and his wife were there, and their overnight hanger-on Kate Warne, and others of the

O'Connors' Lucan friends. But by ten o'clock at night the friends²⁴⁴ were all gone home. The stove fire burned out; the children went upstairs to bed.

At midnight the arsonists came. Through a window or through the wooden floor they started a fire in the kitchen. They blocked the front door exit and they blocked the door of Robert Donnelly's house adjacent. When smoke and flames began to fill the house Patrick O'Connor awoke. He called to Thomas his brother--"The house is on fire. The smoke is smothering me." He called to his sister Bridget--"Get up. The house is on fire." Thomas jumped from the second-storey window as the arsonists hurried away down the street. Bridget and Patrick called after him--"There are two fellows going down the road. Keep back." But Thomas O'Connor ran to Robert Donnelly's and banged at the door yelling "Fire."

Patrick O'Connor ran downstairs and escaped through a ground-floor window. Bridget who could not find the stairs for smoke fell in the stairwell and tumbled down. Then she could not open the window nor the blocked front door.

Robert Donnelly's wife heard the calling first and awoke him. He lost two or three minutes opening his own door. Then, unable to open the O'Connor door, he smashed it down with a fence rail. Bridget ran out in her night-dress, unharmed. Robert tried to climb the outside of the house to save the bedding upstairs, but flames and smoke drove him back down. Bridget ran back into the house to drag out a bed and her sewing machine. Passers-by threw out some carpets. But the house and everything else inside was destroyed: feather beds and bedsteads and quilts, three cupboards, two tables, a stove, four

trunks, four chairs, a rocking chair, and pictures. In the morning nothing remained but ruined metal--saws and scales and kitchen utensils. Kate Warne from Parkhill had found enough Donnelly excitement: she left Lucan that morning on the Grand Trunk train. When Mary and Michael O'Connor came from London to see the damage, Mary O'Connor cried and fainted.

When Coroner Hossack held his inquest, the Crown Attorney came from London to help him. The Vigilants sent lawyer John Blake to watch. The jury was hostile to O'Connors from the start--"prejudiced beyond measure," said the shocked Crown Attorney. They questioned the children sharply, disbelieving all that they said. "You have bright eyes," a juror sneered when Patrick O'Connor told of seeing the two prowlers in the moonlight. Another suggested that the two supposed prowlers were there to visit loose women at the Donnelly house.

John Blake claimed that O'Connors had started the fire themselves; that they had moved their best furniture to safety beforehand; that some of the party-goers might have caused the fire; that O'Connors had liquor in the house. One of the jury took the witness stand himself, to set forth his personal opinion that the fire was not incendiary: "If they were setting the place on fire it would be the stable where William's horse was." The jurors leered and chuckled about the Donnelly's overnight guest Kate Warne. And they laughed at the angry Michael O'Connor. On the second day of hearings, the jurors told the coroner that they wished to hear no more witnesses. They formed a verdict that the fire was started from inside the building, "but we are not able to determine whether accidentally or willfully." "A more prejudiced jury I never met with," said the Crown Attorney, and

the coroner agreed.¹³¹

Biddulph was a tangle of uncaptured arsonists, bogus bloody clothing, self-important detectives, thrill-seekers, and killers. To those on the outside, Biddulph, they said, was "the midst of a savagery as tigerish as that of mid-Africa."¹³² "Such bloodthirstiness," they said, aghast, "has seldom been exhibited by the most savage tribes of Indians."¹³³ The province had been shocked--"a crime of this character within twenty miles of a large and populous city."¹³⁴ Londoners had thought their city unimpeachable: "This is the monetary, legal, commercial and social centre of the district."¹³⁵ Government and law must punish "tigerish" Biddulph: "We trust that the utmost efforts of the municipal and general governments will be exercised . . . to bring the perpetrators to justice."¹³⁶

The city of London did have in its gaol cells six of the Biddulph killers. In the prisoners' confinement the law revealed its strength: Carroll was weakening and nearer, perhaps, to confession. In early April he had a seizure, a fit, fainting on the floor of his cell. When he recovered the gaol physician attended him regularly. He grew pale and nervous and he slept only fitfully.¹³⁷ After two months in gaol the other five prisoners also were careworn and anxious. They did not joke and sing as before.¹³⁸

But Crown Attorney Hutchinson realized early that the city and the courthouse and the law were not a significant bulwark against Biddulph. "The connection of the township with the city is close and intimate," he said; there was no firm boundary defined between. The six Biddulph prisoners "have plenty of friends in the city who will leave no stone unturned to effect their release from their present

difficulties."¹³⁹

The prisoners could fight for themselves as well, and in the gaol they fought with all of their resources. In early April a prisoner in the cell beside James Ryder spoke out in praise of the Donnelly family. They were fine men, he said, whom he had known personally. Next morning when his cell was unlocked for exercise, James Ryder went to his neighbour's cell. "Take back what you said," he told the prisoner.¹⁴⁰ The man said he remembered saying nothing. "If you are as good a man as you were the night before, step out upon the floor," Ryder said. When the man said he was not a fighting man, James Ryder walked into the cell, knocked him to the floor with his fist and kicked him in the ribs and the stomach. The battered man was removed the next day, to the safety of a prison in Toronto. "He was twice as big as me," Ryder boasted. "He was a big fellow, and should have been able to lick two of me."

More serious than their own violent code of honour was the help that the prisoners received within the gaol. Middlesex sheriff William Glass, a friend to the Donnelly family since the stage-coach days, became nevertheless for a time an ally of the prisoners from Biddulph. The sheriff's position was delicate, ambivalent. The Biddulph men were, like the Donnellys, Irish, and so were the Glasses. David Glass the sheriff's brother was a London leader in all causes Irish, serving on the Central Committee of the city's Irish Benevolent Society, lecturing widely, and, although Protestant, raising charitable subscriptions for the relief of famine in Catholic Ireland.¹⁴¹ Glass family allegiance, allegiance to nationality, and the pressure of publicity favourable to the prisoners' cause--all combined, not to

destroy, but to obscure temporarily the sheriff's personal friendship to Donnellys. The prosecutors directed him to keep the prisoners separated and to guard closely who was allowed to visit them.¹⁴² But Sheriff Glass made excuses: his gaol had not, space, he said, to keep them apart. He urged the Department of the Attorney-General to permit the Biddulph men to exercise outside, breaking stones in the yard with the other county prisoners. "They are all outdoors men," he said plaintively, "and not used to inactivity."¹⁴³ He looked upon the Biddulph men as his own special family, to be cared for with special solicitude.¹⁴⁴ "The Sheriff's conduct is unsatisfactory," Aemilius Irving fumed.¹⁴⁵

The Middlesex gaoler, Joseph Lamb, collaborated with the prisoners from Biddulph to scuttle prosecution strategy. He gave the six prisoners unprecedented privilege. Their meals continued to come from a city hotel. He let them have tobacco. He found the space that sheriff Glass claimed the Middlesex gaol did not have, and turned it to a purpose counter to what the prosecutors intended: he rearranged the debtors' wing of the gaol so that the wives of the married Biddulphers occasionally could stay with their husbands overnight. Mrs. John Kennedy stayed, and Ellen Maher, and Ann McLaughlin.¹⁴⁶ "It seems," supporters of the prisoners said blandly, "that some of them were allowed to receive from their friends some little marks of attention."¹⁴⁷ Lamb explained that he believed that the six men were innocent, and therefore entitled to the privileges he had granted them.¹⁴⁸ The protests of Hutchinson and Irving proved futile. Hutchinson complained that when asked to control the gaol more closely the sheriff offered "nothing but promises which were not

fulfilled."¹⁴⁹

The prosecutors had, besides their six prisoners, their witness John O'Connor to try to keep safely. Hutchinson had fears from the first: "A strong effort will be made to get him out of the way."¹⁵⁰ Grim warning letters came to the prosecutors: "They intend to shoot him, not one of his family will be left to tell the tale."¹⁵¹ After the fire in Lucan the rest of the O'Connor family moved in from Bid-dulph. Police guarded their boarding house by day and by night; they never let John out of their sight. After the magistrates' preliminary hearings, a London police sergeant was designated John's custodian, under bond of \$2000 to produce him safely when called upon.¹⁵² When the sergeant took John away his mother Mary fainted in fear.¹⁵³ But after five days, on March 22, the sergeant broke his contract:¹⁵⁴ although constables still guarded constantly, the responsibility was simply too great. John returned to his family in the downtown boarding house.

Then Charles Hutchinson personally posted the \$2000 bond to secure John O'Connor.¹⁵⁵ He hired another constable whom he ordered to live with the family, sleeping in the same apartment with John and escorting him to school, to chapel and everywhere.¹⁵⁶ "If we let Johnny out of our hands," said Hutchinson, "the chances are in favour of our never seeing him again."¹⁵⁷

The O'Connors had to live with a stranger; by threats and then by burning they were driven from Lucan; they were victims of the hate and the publicity the Donnelly affair involved. Suffering only because they had let their John testify, Mary and Michael O'Connor grew bitter. "Without the boy we can do nothing," Crown Attorney

Hutchinson admitted,¹⁵⁸ and the O'Connors set out to make use of that dependence. They began to demand Crown compensation--a new house for them in London, new furniture; new clothing, replacements for all that was lost in the fire, and all of their expenses while living in London. They pressed the Crown Attorney for money continuously. "She is a troublesome woman," he complained, "and her husband is more troublesome still."¹⁵⁹ He tried to resist. "Nothing satisfies them, and no-one can keep on good terms with them."¹⁶⁰

The O'Connors, if unhappy with their treatment from the prosecutors, could easily arrange to have their son disappear. Hutchinson and Irving had to ponder their demands. John himself was aware of the conflict and the Crown's hesitation. Naturally he sided with his family, against the prosecutors who depended so heavily upon him. "We are not getting our money," he complained to his constable guard, "and Hutchinson is going back on us. I hope the prisoners will get off-- and they will get off too."¹⁶¹

By April 30, two weeks after the fire, the Crown prosecutors capitulated. Hutchinson rented the O'Connors a duplex in a west-end London suburb. But when the other tenant threatened to move if O'Connors moved in beside him, the landlord revoked the agreement,¹⁶² Hutchinson found them another place to live. He gave the O'Connors money to replace what had been burned--new clothing, furniture, a stove, a cow. He paid for a new summer kitchen on the house, for a piggery and other new buildings. He paid long-overdue debts that the O'Connors carried with a Lucan general store.¹⁶³ And he paid of course for the live-in constable's board. "They are bloodsuckers and I am helpless," Hutchinson mourned,¹⁶⁴ although he granted that the

family had some right to compensation.

Like spurious detective Clay, like Hugh McKinnon, like Kate Warne or the gawkers stealing souvenirs from the Donnelly ruins, the O'Connors turned the murder of the Donnellys to their advantage. Another person, more powerful than these, also fed on the Donnelly killings. William Ralph Meredith was a lawyer in London, one of a large and important legal family, London's member in the provincial legislature, and the leader of the provincial Conservative party which was the opposition to Mowat's Liberal government. By early March,¹⁶⁵ Meredith manoeuvred himself into prominence in the Donnelly battles: the leader of Ontario's Conservatives became chief defender of the six Biddulph accused. Henceforth he overshadowed their prior defender, the London lawyer Hugh MacMahon, a Catholic activist and a highly visible Liberal politician.¹⁶⁶ Although MacMahon and John Blake still handled much of the work on the defence, the leader was definitely Meredith the Conservative.

For eighteen years in Ontario politics, William R. Meredith led the opposition to Mowat's regime without once defeating him in elections. Searching always for new issues, he tried, when he could, to build a religious power base for his own Conservative party.¹⁶⁷ A defender of six Irish Catholics imprisoned by Liberal Attorney-General Oliver Mowat's officials, he was defender of the rights and reputation of Ontario's Irish Catholic population. Here was a way to the loyalty and votes of a huge minority in the province. The fate of the prisoners of Biddulph became openly, transparently, a political matter. Premier Mowat continued to be wary; the Donnelly prosecutions were becoming embarrassing.

Faced with the thicket of evasions and secrets in Biddulph, the prosecutors decided reluctantly to offer a reward. Reluctantly, because offering a reward was admitting the weakness of the Crown case so far.¹⁶⁸ Hutchinson, speaking for Irving and Magee, asked Attorney-General Mowat to supply \$5000. They drafted a reward advertisement that was worded with careful precision, its emphasis on attracting evidence against those murderers who were still at large, and not on bolstering evidence against the six prisoners in custody.¹⁶⁹

Mowat could see that some reward was plainly expected. But the Attorney-General was not enthusiastic. The reward would be understood as Mowat's reward;¹⁷⁰ and so proliferating posters offering a reward would announce in effect that the Liberal government offered a bounty on Irish Roman Catholics. They would broadcast the Premier's offer to collaborate with any betrayer who might apply. Therefore Mowat's department took measures, subtle and discreet, to make this reward as harmless as possible.

The amount was reduced to \$4000 from the \$5000 the prosecutors wanted. Severe and discouraging restrictions were placed on the circumstances under which the reward would be paid. And the Crown prosecutors' meticulous wording was re-drafted, with the effect of emphasizing the weakness of the evidence that the Crown already possessed. Mowat's devices made the reward an actual handicap to the Crown's case. The prosecutors were dismayed and discouraged.¹⁷¹

By mid-March,¹⁷² at the end of the inquest and magistrates' hearings, the prosecutors had another plan they considered essential. Because Middlesex juries and spectators had made circuses of all investigations, the site of any trial had to be changed if an unbiased

jury were ever to be found. In Osgoode Hall in Toronto, headquarters of the province's legal profession and site of the superior courts of law, the feeling among Ontario's legal elite was general:

... that you should obtain without delay a summons to change the venue from London to Toronto, Ottawa, or any other place you deem most suitable. The Biddulph inquests fully proved that no jury can be trusted, and no justice obtained, in Lucan, London, or any part of Middlesex. The further from these places that a jury is selected the better. There seems not a shadow of doubt that the parties arrested are guilty.¹⁷³

Indictments against the six prisoners were scheduled to be presented to a Grand Jury at the Middlesex Spring Assizes. Should that jury indict them, as seemed most certain, the prosecutors agreed that a change of venue would be asked for. Hutchinson, Irving, and James Magee unanimously agreed that Toronto was the best place, the site which presented the least opportunity to tamper with or influence a jury.¹⁷⁴

Hutchinson prepared change of venue arguments to present at the Middlesex Spring Assizes. He spoke of the crime that had plagued Biddulph, crime usually, and without proofs, blamed on the Donnellys. He spoke of the priest's anti-crime Society and its violence against Donnellys when Thompson's heifer had strayed. He spoke of the Biddulph juries' prejudice and their refusal to believe Crown witnesses. He spoke of bad feeling against Donnellys in the rest of the county and in the city too: "Others go so far to say that the Donnellys were so bad that it was a good riddance, and that they would not undertake to blame the Biddulphers for making a clean sweep of the whole family."¹⁷⁵

The prosecutors persuaded Police Chief Williams to prepare a statement on their behalf. Chief Williams described what he had seen

in Biddulph, the prejudice against the Crown and sympathy for the prisoners. He told of the circus that the investigations had become: "This sympathy was emphatically evidenced by the great number of persons who attended said inquest and examinations and who whenever an opportunity occurred gave unmistakable expression to their feelings in behalf of the said defendants."¹⁷⁶ He told of anti-Donnelly feeling: "Generally the opinion is voluntary that there is no probability of the prisoners being convicted, for that no one would believe the evidence for the prosecution. Often it has been said in my hearing that the Donnellys only got what they deserved." He predicted what might happen in Middlesex: "Jurors whosoever they may be may feel that if they give their verdict one way or the other they could not live in peace and security in the county."

But the Chief of Police left his statement as vague and as cautious as he could. Aemilius Irving fretted at this tepid assistance. "A prudent being," Irving fumed, "afraid of injuring his own popularity."¹⁷⁷ Chief Williams blurred most of his statements--"full of mights and mayes," Irving complained. He mentioned only Biddulph in his statement, not his own city of London. In the end, what he gave to the prosecutors was bland, diluted, and ineffectual. "It is an assertion," said Irving of the statement, "which could be very fairly made by anyone cognizant of one half what Williams knows."

Chief Williams was governed by discretion and expediency, unwilling to criticize the city in which he worked and lived. To say that London people were biased and unfair would not make his life there more comfortable. The Crown prosecutors looked elsewhere for help. Hutchinson asked Chief Williams to seek out other persons

willing to speak on the Crown's behalf. He asked the city detectives to inquire too. Hutchinson himself asked the two judges of Middlesex County Court, the London Police Magistrate, and the two magistrates who presided at the Donnelly preliminary hearings. All of these were men whose statements would be respected. Nervously, every one refused. "No one whose affidavit would be of any use, would make one,"¹⁷⁸

Hutchinson reported unhappily. These men agreed in private on the need for a change of venue, but none would speak out in public and in court. Nor did anyone want to be on a jury in a Donnelly case. "I would sacrifice a large sum of money rather than sit on the jury," a London township farmer said. "If a verdict were rendered against the prisoners, I know my barns would have to go."¹⁷⁹

Crown Attorney Hutchinson's affidavit and the vague generalities of Chief Williams were all that the Crown prosecutors could muster. "Mr. MacMahon knows well enough," Hutchinson said bitterly, "that the feeling that prevails is just as I have described."¹⁸⁰ But when MacMahon and William Meredith and John Blake sought statements in the prisoners' defence, prominent men of Middlesex assembled eagerly to be heard. Meredith the Conservative enlisted Josiah Blackburn, editor of the Conservative London Free Press, and John MacDougall, former MLA for North Middlesex. Hugh MacMahon the Liberal recruited Donald MacKenzie, who had run for the Liberals in the riding of East Middlesex in the last provincial election. (In the next election, MacKenzie won the riding.¹⁸¹) Also for the defence were London's Liquor Licence Commissioner, a former city alderman; the Reeve of Westminster township, a former County Warden; and the Reeve of Adelaide township, the current County Warden. All of these came forward, a phalanx of

probity, to praise the fairness of the citizens of Middlesex. Pointing to their long years of residence in Middlesex, of public service and of public contact, they stated that the people of Middlesex County were honest, impartial, and determined always to see justice done. Prosecutor Aemilius Irving protested: "People in the habit of obtaining public favour cannot speak as fairly as those occupying less prominent positions."¹⁸²

John J. Blake coached five of the prisoners in statements opposing a change of venue, statements that their friends and relations were almost all resident in Biddulph, and that their contact with the rest of Middlesex was small. "However this may be," said Hutchinson in rebuttal, "there can be no doubt that they have to come to London to supply many of their needs . . . Borrowers, litigants, buyers, sellers and pleasure-seekers, alike come to London. Biddulph men settle here to engage in business and are tavern-keepers, produce dealers, teamsters, gardeners, laborers and the like. We have Martins, O'Hearns, Hodgins, Blake and other significant names."¹⁸³

Martin McLaughlin prepared his version of the history of the Vigilant Committee: "The Association contained friends of the Donnelly's, and members of said Association were in hopes that the Donnelly's would join." Hugh MacMahon constructed a statement of his own: that the rowdy courtroom demonstrations were by close friends and relatives of the prisoners, who were understandably concerned for their misfortunes; that the juries of Lucan knew the Crown witnesses well and hence knew enough not to trust them; that moving the trial would deprive the Biddulphers of the home advantage of their good reputations. And MacMahon found readily the obvious weaknesses in the

affidavit of Police Chief Williams: "He has made very round assertions without stating any particulars with respect to this locality."¹⁸⁴

On April 9 in the Middlesex courthouse, the Assizes Grand Jury indicted the six Biddulph prisoners.¹⁸⁵ The prosecutors presented their arguments for a change of venue, their two affidavits against those of five prisoners, of Hugh MacMahon, and of six of the solidest of Middlesex men. Judge Adam Wilson understood clearly the Crown's disadvantage: "Those who testify for the Crown may to some extent be considered to be testifying against the accused, and no one is inclined voluntarily to do that, while those who testify for the prisoners are not by any means testifying against the Crown."¹⁸⁶ He understood why the Crown had only two public affidavits: "The very absence of these affidavits does to some extent show the adverse feeling entertained towards the prosecution."

But the judge heard the statements of the six Middlesex public figures--statements, he said, "of the most convincing nature." He believed what these civic leaders said: surely in the county of Middlesex twelve men of honesty and courage could be found to be a jury for the prisoners from Biddulph. The Assizes judge refused to move the trial.¹⁸⁷ The prisoners rejoiced. All through the Assizes hearing friends and onlookers had crowded merrily about the courthouse and gaol. "The gaol in assize week had been like a fair," Aemilius Irving complained.¹⁸⁸

The trial was scheduled to be held at the Middlesex Fall Assizes. But knowing the hopelessness of a trial in Middlesex, the prosecutors planned an appeal to the superior courts of justice in Osgoode Hall in Toronto. They wanted the trial to be in Toronto,

Ontario's largest and most important city, remotest from the influence of the people in the Biddulph concessions and woods. The three Crown prosecutors agreed that Toronto was best and they told Mowat so.¹⁸⁹

But the Premier and Attorney-General refused resolutely to consider Toronto. His own need was public invisibility in the Donnelly prosecutions. But nowhere else would publicity be greater than in Toronto, nowhere else would people be more aware of his presence than here at the seat of his government. The prosecutors realized that there was no use in speaking again to Mowat about Toronto. They knew, before they went to Toronto to present their change of venue appeal, that whether or not the trials were moved they would never be held in Toronto.¹⁹⁰ They settled instead for Guelph,¹⁹¹ much smaller and fifty miles closer to Biddulph. Still they were optimistic. "If we get a change of venue we will have accomplished a good deal," Irving said, "and will get convictions with the evidence we have."¹⁹²

Hutchinson still had no one else to give supporting statements. "There is no use," he said, "in attempting to get affidavits from other parties."¹⁹³ Irving wanted at least to improve the affidavit of Police Chief Williams, to make it, this time, concrete and convincing.¹⁹⁴ Hutchinson thought that the Chief could be persuaded.¹⁹⁵ But Williams made only the most minor changes.¹⁹⁶ Hutchinson's own affidavit, at least, could be changed. He added concrete illustrations of Middlesex fear and prejudice--the landlord who would not rent to O'Connors, the farmer, afraid for his barns if he sat on the jury. He noted how easily jurors might be swayed by the opinions of these Middlesex men who had filed affidavits on behalf of the defence, "the representations of influential persons."¹⁹⁷ He pointed out how readily Biddulph penetrated,

London, "the county town where the prisoners have always dealt and transacted business and have visited probably nearly every market day during their lives."

But against this, the Crown's only reinforcement, the defence found new support with ease. Momentum and public opinion were with them. The jurors at the O'Connor fire inquest contributed a statement: that Biddulph was not at all a danger, and that the fire at O'Connor's was surely started by the people in the house. They distorted their own actual verdict in which they had offered no opinion as to who had set the fire.¹⁹⁸ The foreman of that jury was Thomas Dight, partner of Bernard and William Stanley in the Stanley-Dight grain mill of Lucan; he contributed a statement that his grain mill and his village--not London--did most of the business with the farmers of Biddulph. He added that these prisoners were honourable men whom he had known for years. Patrick Ryder and Thomas Ryder and Kennedy and McLaughlin protested again that their contact and influence with Middlesex were small, and that anyway they had had no quarrel with the Donnellys.¹⁹⁹

The Crown prosecutors filed writs to transfer two of the indictments from the Middlesex Assize Court to Superior Courts in Toronto--the indictments for the murder of James Donnelly to the Court of Queen's Bench, and the indictment for the murder of Thomas to the Court of Common Pleas.²⁰⁰ In this way both courts, two teams of High Court Justices, could hear the Crown arguments and could reach independent decisions; the chances of one favourable ruling would be doubled. Then the prosecutors issued writs ordering the sheriff at the Middlesex gaol to bring the Biddulph men to Toronto for the

hearings.²⁰¹ The legal machinery was in motion; the outcome was in the control of Ontario's six Justices.

On May 17 the six prisoners left for Toronto on the Great Western Railway. Crowds of well-wishers, including Father John Connolly, gathered to see them off. Their mood had been festive since the ruling at the April Assizes which declined to move their trials away. This trip to Toronto was a harmless holiday; they were tourists, excited at the chance to see the city's bustle.²⁰²

In Toronto the prisoners were themselves the objects of eager attention. Within minutes, the people of the city gathered in tourist swarms to see the spectacle of the Biddulph killers. The Biddulph men laughed and joked with the crowds. They praised the scenic train ride from London and praised their pleasant lives in the Middlesex gaol. They lunched on a fruit cake baked on the Roman Line specially for their trip.²⁰³

At Osgoode Hall, where the hearings were to be, lawyers and court officials gathered to stare--"just as if we were wild beasts," John Kennedy said.²⁰⁴ "Tigerish" and "savage" Ontario had called the killers, but the prisoners laughed at the labels and turned them back upon the people of Toronto--"They thought it would be a good speculation if they were put into an iron cage and exhibited at 25 cents for adults."²⁰⁵

Toronto embraced them. A basket of tropical fruit arrived at the York County gaol--oranges and pineapples and bananas. Other well-wishers followed with other gifts and delicacies.²⁰⁶

To the people of Toronto, here was entertainment, by rural freaks who were heroes and wild animals both. But to Attorney-General Mowat at the Legislative buildings, these prisoners were a danger.

Political opponents of the Liberal premier blamed him for these efforts to move the Donnelly trials. Mowat was persecuting the six Biddulphers: "It is astonishing that Attorney-General Mowat should have insisted not only on asking for a change of venue, but when it was refused to drag the unhappy prisoners down to Toronto."²⁰⁷ Patrick Boyle, the editor of the Irish Canadian, Ontario's influential Irish newspaper, called at the York County gaol to see the prisoners.²⁰⁸ The Catholic Archbishop of Toronto, John Lynch, also called.²⁰⁹ In Toronto the case was, publicly, a racial and religious concern. With Mowat cast as leader of these anti-Irish-Catholic prosecutions, there was so very much for the Liberals to lose.

Mowat was nervous even before the prisoners reached Toronto. Even the Liberal defence lawyer Hugh MacMahon considered Mowat responsible, and wrote directly to his leader the Attorney-General about the change of venue application. Mowat's deputy, John Scott, steered him to Irving and Hutchinson and Magee. He assured him that Mowat was not involved in these cases. The worried deputy contacted the prosecutors immediately: "I need not enter into the reasons which in these cases render it particularly advisable that the Attorney-General should not for any slight cause interfere."²¹⁰ Mowat must be kept out of sight: "There is no reason why these cases should be, or should be supposed to be, specially directed by the Attorney-General."

On May 18, the Justices of Ontario's two Superior Courts heard the Crown arguments for change of venue; on May 25 they heard the rebuttals of MacMahon and Meredith. Irving cited precedents for a change of venue at Crown request--in Ireland in times of political tension. But William R. Meredith, provincial Conservative leader,

argued that politics were unimportant here, and that Irish precedents should not be applied. "The Irish cases cited in which changes of venue had been granted had all arisen out of great political excitement," he said. "These cases therefore should not be made a precedent for an ordinary case of murder."²¹¹ Everyone knew that politics were an issue: Meredith knew, and Mowat, and every Irish Catholic in Ontario, and everyone who lived in Biddulph's North Middlesex riding. "In a case such as this," the Justices said nevertheless, "religion or politics would not affect the decision to be given."²¹² The justices would not apply the Irish precedents; they sent the Biddulph trials back to Middlesex. "The judges would not listen to us," Hutchinson mourned.²¹³ He blamed their timid refusal to use law creatively, their "bigoted adherence to precedent and red-tapeism."²¹⁴

The York County gaoler treated the Biddulphs to a banquet at the Osgoode Hall restaurant. Then the contented prisoners and their lawyers returned to London, where a friendly crowd of three hundred greeted them.²¹⁵ "Rogues always have the odds in their favour," said Hutchinson.²¹⁶

The Crown prosecutors still had hope that gaol life might dishearten a prisoner to the point of confession. Carroll, especially, seemed to be weakening. "I am very much struck with Carroll's haggard appearance," Aemilius Irving noted.²¹⁷ "Our best chance is in delay," Hutchinson agreed.²¹⁸ They planned to keep the prisoners stringently separated. This time gaol regulations would be followed²¹⁹ --no more special favours, no tobacco or hotel meals, no more overnight conjugal visits. Strolls in the gaol yard or breaking stones for exercise were prohibited until trustworthy guards could be found.²²⁰

The prosecutors wanted surveillance of the prisoners, a new and firmer attempt to find evidence by spying. But they had to battle with the gaoler and the sheriff. "The gaol officials are not very reliable, but if properly warned of the consequences of treachery on their part they might promise to keep our counsel," Hutchinson said, adding realistically, "Whether that promise would be worth anything may be doubtful."²²¹ The plans for surveillance floundered because gaoler Joseph Lamb was a hopeless handicap. The Crown prosecutors were furious. "We might do something in the gaol to obtain evidence in the Donnelly case if we had any one we could rely upon," said Hutchinson, "but with him there as gaoler, it is useless to think of it."²²² Irving sadly agreed: "The gaol suggestion is wholly impracticable by reason of the unsatisfactory attitude of the officer connected therewith."²²³

Their patience with the gaol was exhausted. The centre of justice for Middlesex County had turned to a Haven for the Biddulph prisoners. In July Hutchinson sent to Toronto for the provincial Chief Inspector of Prisons and told him of the conduct of gaoler Joseph Lamb. The inspector, J.W. Langmuir, came to London to investigate; the Middlesex gaoler was dismissed.²²⁴

Immediately the prisoners' lawyer Hugh MacMahon campaigned to have gaoler Lamb re-hired. He used his considerable influence with the Liberal government. Fellow Liberal James Magee also interceded. As the loyal party representative that Mowat had selected him to be, Magee put party prospects above his role as prosecutor. Gaoler Lamb was a favourite with the people of Biddulph who had visited at the gaol with his connivance. Irish-Catholic favour might follow if these Liberals could overturn the ruling of the Chief Inspector. With

William R. Meredith the chief Biddulph defender luring votes to the Conservatives, here was a chance for MacMahon and Magee and the Liberals to profit too. Dismayed at Magee's duplicity, Hutchinson and Irving realized that his motives were political. Hutchinson had not wanted Magee in the first place, and Irving in April told Mowat's deputy how little active help Magee had been. But Scott did not take the hint. "I do not think," Irving said regretfully, "that Scott understands that Magee's services are at an end."²²⁵ Mowat's appointee stayed.

But the prosecutors could not tolerate Magee's and MacMahon's political interventions. Hutchinson warned Inspector Langmuir that Magee was against him: "He and MacMahon are, as no doubt you know, influential men on the Government side, and therefore their influence is relied upon to reverse your decision."²²⁶ Hutchinson confronted the Attorney-General's Department directly, with a flat and frank statement of the conflict between the Attorney-General's duty and the pressures of MacMahon's political manipulation: "I hear that he has enlisted Mr. Magee in behalf of Lamb. There is therefore considerable political influence on his side and it may be sufficient to overcome the effect of Mr. Langmuir's report. This will be so injurious to the public in a matter of much importance that I have thought it my duty to communicate with you on the subject."²²⁷

The Crown prosecutors won this skirmish. Reinstating Lamb for transparently political reasons was not the style of the discreet Attorney-General; Mowat did not interfere with the Inspector's ruling. But the grateful people of Biddulph invited ex-gaoler Lamb to Lucan, where he opened a store on Main Street. James Maher Sr. and Patrick

Ryder Sr. helped Lamb move his family and belongings.²²⁸

The township that welcomed Joseph Lamb had also driven out Michael O'Connor; in London, Biddulph animosity still followed him. On a May Saturday morning, in the city's Market Square by the courthouse, Patrick Ryder Sr. noticed Michael O'Connor inspecting a buggy for sale. "Mick, buy the buggy," he said in sarcasm, "the county will pay for it."²²⁹ Michael O'Connor had a ready answer--"I will leave the county to judge now who has put the county to the greatest expense; the Vigilants or myself." But forced to bear the burden of the Crown prosecutions;

forced to keep a constable guard in the privacy of their home,²³⁰ Mary and Michael O'Connor continued to seek just compensation from Crown Attorney Hutchinson. "I am half ruined and more than half distracted by the O'Connors," he said, "they worry me beyond measure."²³¹

The Crown still paid for their house and expenses, but the family had suffered much, and Mary O'Connor pressed other claims: money to pay John's board, money to make up wages John could have earned if working, money to make up for being forced from Lucan, money for the jobs they had lost there. Their power was considerable, Hutchinson realized--"They have unsparingly used the potent argument that they would remove Johnny."²³² Like the politicians, the O'Connors badgered and hampered the prosecutors. "In fact," the Crown Attorney admitted, "when she claims money, I have to give in. I battle with her as long as possible, but eventually she carries her point, and gets, at all events, part of what she wants."²³³

But Mary O'Connor wanted more. She boarded a train to Toronto where she stalked into the office of Attorney-General Mowat. Invisible and unavailable, he had Scott, his deputy, face her. In a fearsome

tirade she complained of the way she was treated. The harried Deputy Attorney-General immediately contacted London to authorize whatever was necessary to keep the O'Connors placid.²³⁴ Hutchinson was pleased: a dose of Mary O'Connor had shown the Toronto politicians what he faced daily-- "The old woman's cry is, money, money, all the time."²³⁵

Mary O'Connor's assault on Toronto threatened the Attorney-General in more than one way. Deputy John Scott thought her presence in his office a dangerous impropriety, and he told Charles Hutchinson so.²³⁶ Collusion with O'Connors might be considered a bribe by the Premier and Attorney-General to help build a case against the Irish-Catholic prisoners. If her visit became public it could prove embarrassing. In these prosecutions the political dangers seemed endless.

Hence Mowat's office continued to discourage the prosecutors. Money became a problem, for all of their funds had to come from Ontario's Treasurer after approval by the Attorney-General's office. Two weeks after the murders, Hutchinson made his first complaint about money: "I would be held to neglect my duty were I to remain inactive. Yet I am comparatively helpless, having no money at command to pay expenses."²³⁷

John Scott sent permission to spend what was necessary--but he sent no money.²³⁸ Constables' fees, board for the O'Connors, courtroom expenses accumulated, "I have written twice, at all events (I think, several times), to have my action and outlay on their account authorized, without receiving any reply," Hutchinson complained at the end of April.²³⁹

In May when the Donnelly focus was shifting to Toronto for

change of venue hearings, the Justice Department's policy changed from bureaucratic delay to overt harrassment. On May 4 and again on May 12,²⁴⁰ the demoralized prosecutor asked the Attorney-General's office for funds to pay the London policemen. "I have received no money to pay accounts and am damned daily," Hutchinson complained once more, on May 22; "especially by the constables who are out of pocket heavily for expenses."²⁴¹ Not until June were any bills paid by the Justice

Department.²⁴² The Department scrutinized minutely every prosecution account and expense. The costs of the magistrates at the preliminary hearings were refused. In mid-June Aemilius Irving's account was refused. He had to retrieve all his correspondence and records in the Donnelly matters, assemble and justify them all, again, for a Justice Department accountant.²⁴³ Hutchinson feared his own account would be next: "I am surprised to hear of your account having to be taxed. Mr. Scott forgets probably how much thought and anxiety you expend and endure without compensation. It is a bad omen for me. I don't think I'll attempt to make out a bill."²⁴⁴

When Hutchinson sent his next bill on July 15,²⁴⁵ Mowat's office sent it back with a list of parsimonious quibbles. The Department wanted more explanations of the deals with the O'Connors, they questioned expenses paid for William Donnelly's detective work, for Hutchinson's only assistant the Deputy Clerk of the Peace, and for a special private detective the prosecutors had hired briefly. The Department complained of the expense of a pistol for John O'Connor's guard, and complained of \$1.75 spent on a copybook for the court clerk at the magistrates' hearings.²⁴⁶ Hutchinson sent exhaustive explanation--why he needed a pistol, why a copybook and so on.²⁴⁷

The Department wrote back, accepting his answers--but sending no money.²⁴⁸ On August 11 Hutchinson asked again.²⁴⁹ "I am now over \$600 out of pocket for disbursements in the Donnelly account," he complained to Irving, "which is rather too much of a good thing. My accounts have been rendered and payment recommended but no money comes."²⁵⁰ Near the end of August the money came, finally, in two separate installments.²⁵¹ Systematic stalling and quibbling became constant policy for the Attorney-General's Office--a way to minimize this Donnelly affair, this hunting of Irish-Catholics.

In February, Hutchinson had asked Mowat's office to find him a preferably Irish-Catholic detective who could make himself at home in Biddulph to watch unnoticed for evidence.²⁵² In late March, John Scott replied that his request was still being considered, that a detective might or might not be hired, that Hutchinson might or might not be informed of the detective's activities.²⁵³ In mid-April when Aemilius Irving mentioned the detective again, Scott said the problem was to find a suitable man.²⁵⁴ In early May, Hutchinson asked Irving again if he could not get the Department to respond. He pointed out the uselessness of Scott's proposal to hire a man without telling them: "It is evident there is work for a good detective and I would like to have one or more employed in communication with me. I think this is advisable as otherwise I should be unable to make use of any information that may reach me."²⁵⁵ All that Irving could report was that the Department was still looking.²⁵⁶ Once more Hutchinson urged his plan against the Biddulphers: "They have agreed to employ no strangers, but they should chance to entertain a detective unawares."²⁵⁷ But the office of Attorney-General Mowat never did act on this urgent

proposition of the Crown prosecutors.

By June, it was clear to many Ontario Liberals that the Biddulph prosecutions were a harm to the party. The new awareness began, late in May, when the change of venue hearings moved to the provincial capital. Liberal editors had until then supported a change of venue,²⁵⁸ unaware that Mowat with more political foresight was already unenthusiastic. But shortly after, they began to understand. Early in June the Liberal Hamilton Times published an account of a farmer in Biddulph who claimed to have seen two men on the night of the murders, one of whom resembled James Carroll.²⁵⁹ Lawyers for the Vigilants were trying to imply a duplicate killer, to discredit eye-witnesses Donnelly and O'Connor. "A fable of course," said Hutchinson, "but it shows what the defendants will resort to."²⁶⁰ "The article in the Times was very ill-judged," said Irving in dismay, "and I cannot understand why it was 'got up' as the Times is very friendly to the Government, and the editor is quite cordial to me and might have asked."²⁶¹ Soon other Liberal papers abandoned the prosecution cause. Papers which before had wanted a change of venue, changed to the opposite and more popular view, which was also the view of Conservative supporters. They called for a trial without delay, although²⁶² the interests of the Crown prosecutors dictated that, as Hutchinson said, the "best chance is in delay."²⁶³ Hutchinson noticed the eroding effect of this new public and political momentum which the Hamilton Times had begun; "The next day there was an article in the Free Press condemning the delay in bringing on the trial."²⁶⁴ Liberals understood, as they had not before, that prosecution of the Biddulph Irish-Catholic murderers served only the Conservatives whose leader defended

them. Convicting them would serve nobody at all--not the Liberal government cast as villain, nor the Conservatives whose leader had in the end failed to protect them, however much credit he might claim for having tried.

The tale of a duplicate James Carroll was only one defence plan to refute the Crown eye-witnesses: the lawyers sought to prove that O'Connor was wrong as well in identifying John Purtell. James McGrath, a Vigilant and Purtell's employer, would testify that Purtell had not left the house on the night of the murders, and could not have done so without being heard. James McGrath's old father Matthew would say the same,²⁶⁵ and James McGrath's brother John. But John McGrath was dying of consumption, at Bothwell, in the county of Kent southwest of Middlesex. He would not live more than a few days, his doctors reported.²⁶⁶ On May 1, the defence lawyers Hugh MacMahon and John Blake travelled to Bothwell to record a deathbed statement. They notified the Crown prosecutors what they intended.²⁶⁷ In his last act, John McGrath swore that on the night of the ~~Deaths~~ killings he had not heard John Purtell leave the McGraths' Biddulph home.²⁶⁸

The Crown prosecutors in London paid close attention. An act pending before the Dominion Parliament in Ottawa would make admissible as evidence in court the statements of persons since deceased or too ill to testify in person.²⁶⁹ The bill received first reading on April 29, two days before John McGrath's statement. The bill received second and third readings and became law on May 3--two days after John McGrath's statement. The bill was too late to help in the Vigilants' defence, as the prosecutors noted with relief.

But such was the influence of William Ralph Meredith, chief

defence counsel and Ontario Conservative leader, that on May 3 in the Dominion Parliament, George Kirkpatrick, Conservative member for Kingston, rose to move an amendment: to make the new act retroactive and hence to make the dying John McGrath's statement admissible in court. Later, Kirkpatrick became Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and was knighted. In his amendment Kirkpatrick mentioned "a special case involving life. The evidence was being taken in anticipation of the passage of this Act, in one of the Courts in Ontario--a case in which the person might die before the trial, and before, in fact, the passing of this Act. . . . The prosecution would have notice to attend the examination, and, therefore, no wrong could be done."²⁷⁰

Like Meredith in Ontario, Sir John A. Macdonald and the Dominion Conservatives courted the Irish-Catholic vote. Three months earlier Macdonald had given important government posts to two Irish-Catholics. "We do not hesitate to mention our approval of it," an Irish-Catholic journal remarked.²⁷¹ And just after the Donnelly murders, the Dominion Conservative government had announced the appropriation of \$100,000 for relief of famine-stricken Catholics in Ireland. "Due, we learn with good authority, to Sir John Macdonald," the same Irish-Catholic spokesman commented approvingly; "What does Mr. Mowat intend to do in connection with the Irish famine?"²⁷² After such nudges, Mowat's Liberal government in Ontario gave \$20,000 to Irish relief, following the Dominion Conservatives' example.²⁷³

But the sponsor of the bill, the Conservative member for Picton, Nova Scotia, objected that retroactivity was a dangerous and improper precedent. He urged the House to refuse Kirkpatrick's amendment. Like provincial political intervention on behalf of gaoler Lamb, Parliamentary

action in the matter of John McGrath was obviously indiscreet. The House of Commons rejected Kirkpatrick's suggestion.²⁷⁴ The watching Crown prosecutors took note:²⁷⁵ this time, political plotting had not worked against them: John McGrath's last words could not be used in court.

By May 5, John McGrath was dead. His body came back home by train, for burial in St. Patrick's churchyard.²⁷⁶ From the time of the change of venue struggles in April and May, until James Carroll's trial in October, Biddulph continued a stronghold of silence and resistance. It was much too late for the detectives the prosecutors had wanted Mowat to hire. "The township is guarded everywhere," Hutchinson found, "no stranger can enter without being spotted."²⁷⁷ The prosecutors were shut out from contact with the township; even the Lucan post office could not be trusted.²⁷⁸ The city detectives gave up searching. "The local detectives are no longer of much if any use," said the frustrated prosecutor.²⁷⁹ "They admit being too well known to effect much good."²⁸⁰

The Vigilants still held assemblies, no longer in the Cedar Swamp Schoolhouse but at secret meeting-places around the concessions.²⁸¹ Together they constructed alibis for the prisoners and themselves. "There is no doubt," the prosecutors feared, "that every man has his plan of defence ready, well fortified by strong swearers who will prove whatever is necessary."²⁸² They coached James Feeheley in his future testimony.²⁸³ They gathered more money for their legal defence fund. "It will cost them a lot of money," said Robert Keefe Sr. "It is better to pay \$50 each than be living in dread the way we have for the last few years," Vigilant sympathizer Patrick Sullivan answered.²⁸⁴

In May the Vigilants sowed oats on James Carroll's rented twenty-five-acre farm. Sixty Vigilants gathered with six seed drills for the planting. Passing by, Father John Connolly watched approvingly.²⁸⁵ In June they gathered to cut thistles on the farm of John Kennedy Jr.²⁸⁶ In August they harvested and threshed the crops of all of the Vigilant prisoners. Forty Vigilants mustered with four reaping machines just for the harvest of James Carroll's grain.²⁸⁷

The pressure of Biddulph pulled even the Donnellys' family lawyer over to the Vigilant side. Edmund Meredith of London was also Biddulph township solicitor,²⁸⁸ brother of Conservative leader William R. Meredith, and an aspiring politician. All of his advantage lay with the stronger and popular side. In March when the magistrates' hearings had closed and William R. Meredith had joined the defence, Edmund Meredith stopped even a pretence of acting on the Donnellys' behalf. "He has pocketed a \$250 retainer on behalf of the Donnelly family," Hutchinson observed, "for which he has done next to nothing."²⁸⁹ In June he drove out from London with John J. Blake and, though an Anglican, attended St. Patrick's Sunday service. That afternoon he dined in the parsonage with John Blake and John Connolly. "What does this look like? Is Mr. Meredith giving us away?" said William Donnelly.²⁹⁰ "It looks bad in Meredith," Hutchinson agreed, "do not give him any information as to anything you think may turn out advantageous."²⁹¹

Biddulph embraced those who aided the Vigilant cause; Edmund Meredith and Joseph Lamb and the dying John McGrath. But the men of Biddulph did what they could to lead Crown officers away. At the end of April a bloodstained shirt and coat appeared, behind a log near the

home of the sons of Joseph Carswell.²⁹² The sons had left their father's embattled farm in Biddulph to live near Florence in the county of Lambton. Joseph Carswell himself still lived in Biddulph, renting the farm which he no longer owned and blaming Donnellys for his loss. His sons claimed that the Donnellys had burned them out of Biddulph. "We had to move on account of the Donnellys," Mrs. Carswell said.²⁹³ When the bloody clothes appeared, stories were spread that Joseph Carswell's four sons had hurried by train to Biddulph, three days before the Donnelly murders; returning a few days afterward they refused to say why they had gone, and refused to speak of the Donnellys.

In early May, Charles Hutchinson sent Police Chief Williams to Florence to investigate. Williams spoke to the constable there and to witnesses of the Carswell boys' furtive trip in February. "There seems to be something in it," Hutchinson said hopefully.²⁹⁴ Aemilius Irving agreed: A month after the bloody clothes first were discovered, Irving hired a detective named Thomas Armstrong to search further into the business of the clothing and the Carswells.²⁹⁵

William Donnelly suspected Vigilant deceit and prosecution error: "The clothes near Florence were probably planted by some Biddulpher so that we might arrest the Carswells and get the Protestant element down on us."²⁹⁶ He sensed that the Carswells could not have been involved. "The Vigilants would probably not treat the Carswells as they are Protestants, although they are bad enough to have done anything." Prowling in Biddulph, William Donnelly learned for certain that the Carswell boys were not in the township at the time of the killings. He noticed too that the Vigilants themselves were

spreading rumours of the Florence bloody clothing. He knew then for certain that the story was designed to lead the prosecutors astray.²⁹⁷ Although disappointed, Hutchinson believed him. "Cock and bull stories," he reported to Irving.²⁹⁸

But Aemilius Irving persisted all that summer in following the fraudulent trail. The prosecution could not afford to disregard even the most dubious clue. At the end of June he sent detective Armstrong to Florence. Then he sent him to London township, checking out more Carswell possibilities.²⁹⁹ In late July Irving's detective reappeared, demanding to be paid for all of his searching. "I am afraid he has not effected anything and that there is nothing to hope for from detective work," Hutchinson reported, not surprised.³⁰⁰ But Irving sent his detective out again and he did not abandon these fruitless wanderings until the middle of September.³⁰¹

That other erratic detective, George W. Clay, also conspired to lure the prosecutors far from the murderers' township. Spurned in Middlesex County in February for his phony bloody-clothing discoveries, Detective Clay had departed from Middlesex and Canada. In May he tried again to feed upon Donnelly publicity. From Detroit he wrote to the Middlesex Crown Attorney about a man who knew of the murders. "I will keep you posted," he promised.³⁰² Three days later he wrote again of this strange new witness. "Write me and I will do what I can," said Clay. "I don't expect favours from the Crown," he added in a tone of injury, "as I already know what I can expect from that quarter."³⁰³

Then Clay travelled from Detroit to Cleveland, where he told the police of another man--one who had been at the Donnelly murders, who used to drive for a rival stage, and who was shot at and beaten by

the Donnellys. An excited policeman in Cleveland wrote to the Crown prosecutors--the mystery murderer "may skip out at any moment."³⁰⁴ Crown Attorney Hutchinson consulted William Donnelly.³⁰⁵ There was no such stage driver, Donnelly informed him, no such man who was beaten by the Donnellys and had been at the murders. "Probably a plan of J. J. Blake's to put us off the track," he suspected.³⁰⁶

But again Irving believed that the lead was genuine.³⁰⁷ Hutchinson thought too that "there may be something in the story."³⁰⁸ They dispatched Hutchinson's assistant, Deputy Clerk of the Peace E.F. Johnson. He travelled by rail to Detroit, then by boat through the Detroit River and across Lake Erie to Cleveland. There he contacted Cleveland police, who took him to their informant, who the prosecutors only then discovered was George W. Clay. "The whole affair is I am afraid a myth," Johnson explained to the American police. "If we knew Clay was in the matter we would have let it drop."³⁰⁹ He took the next boat home.³¹⁰ "Clay is either a monomaniac or a rogue," Crown Attorney Hutchinson concluded, "--a little of both probably."³¹¹ "I can not make out Clay's activity," said Irving, bewildered.³¹²

Only in the Vigilants' own township haven might anything of value be learned. William Donnelly knew this and stayed. Rumour and opinion after the killings said that Donnelly survivors would surely move far away.³¹³ But Robert Donnelly built a new fence around the burned homestead.³¹⁴ He and his brothers leased the land to the Feeheley family.³¹⁵ Patrick Donnelly came to Biddulph in May, to settle the estate of his father--to pay all outstanding debts and make solid the Donnelly standing in Biddulph.³¹⁶ In June when a neighbour offered to buy the Donnelly farm,³¹⁷ the Donnelly survivors

said no. "The homestead will be kept in our hands as long as we live," William Donnelly proclaimed, "none of the Vigilants will ever get it."³¹⁸ The Donnellys announced a monument to be erected in the churchyard of St. Patrick's. Already it was under construction in Ingersoll: with five sides, one for each murdered Donnelly, and on top a statue of a young man in handcuffs. The statue would stand in the graveyard, a permanent accuser. The monument was erected finally in 1889; a statue was not included, but the stone, eleven feet two inches high, still towered over the graveyard of St. Patrick's.³¹⁹

The Crown prosecutors had no greater ally than William Donnelly. While his buggy was parked outside, during the funeral of his mother-in-law who died in March, Vigilants smashed it to pieces.³²⁰ But that attack did not scare him away, nor the burning of the O'Connor house next door to his own. He slept nowhere two nights in a row; he sent his pregnant wife to live with her father.³²¹ Although the prosecutors feared for his life if he stayed, they knew he was invaluable there. "I fancy he thinks of nothing but the murders," said Hutchinson.³²²

He had no job, and lame as he was the work he could do was limited. Debts built up. On June 25 his first child was born. He named her Johannah. In June he asked Hutchinson for help, "anything towards helping me to move around and find out things."³²³ The Crown paid all expenses involved in his detective work.³²⁴ "I wish something could be done for the poor fellow," said Hutchinson.³²⁵ Both he and Irving tried to find him a position in London or anywhere; nothing at all was available. They asked Mowat's office for help but got none.³²⁶ Still William Donnelly continued to work in the cause of the Crown prosecution.

It was he who first suspected the false leads in Cleveland and in Florence. He tracked and reconstructed the movements of the Vigilants on the day and the evening of the killings.³²⁷ He learned who the main founding Vigilants had been.³²⁸ He found out where they had met on the night they killed his family.³²⁹ He learned of Vigilant meetings still in progress.³³⁰ He learned what alibis each Vigilant planned, and set out to demolish each with evidence.³³¹ He tallied examples of Vigilant hostilities against the members of his family.³³²

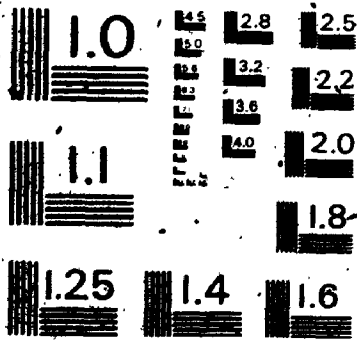
Dedicated though they were, even the Crown prosecutors were aghast at William Donnelly's implacable energy. He wanted to accompany the London detectives whenever they foraged in Biddulph, and the prosecutors could only with difficulty restrain him.³³³ He spoke with ease and finesse to the press, exposing to the rest of the country what his township was like.³³⁴ Aemilius Irving in contrast lived in fear of the papers, sneaking inconspicuously whenever he had to come to Middlesex.³³⁵ "I think it is a pity you talk so freely to the reporters. Can not you avoid it?" Hutchinson asked Donnelly.³³⁶

Lawyers and professionals, discreet and comparatively detached, Hutchinson and Irving watched him in amazement. Often they hid their plans from him, afraid of his bold interferences.³³⁷ He had a swarm of strategies. He wanted to arrest without warning all of the Vigilant men, and summon all other Biddulphers who he knew possessed secrets. He would put them on a witness stand, unprepared, before they could rehearse what to say and not to say. "Get their story before they are posted," he urged.³³⁸ He wanted to have the wife of one of the detectives write to Carroll, posing as a friend and admirer, to draw him into incautious correspondence. "Something might be learned," he

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said, "Carroll is very easily struck with ladies,"³³⁹ "I fear it would not do," was Hutchinson's prudent usual response.³⁴⁰ "Too apt to grasp at straws," Aemilius Irving sighed.³⁴¹ But William Donnelly knew best how to get results in Biddulph. "We must not attempt to handle these lambs with kid gloves," he said.³⁴²

Still it was William Donnelly on whom the Crown prosecutors depended. The London police were helpless in the tangle of Biddulph evasions.³⁴³ "If we find out anything new, it will come from William Donnelly who is constantly on the watch--or spontaneously, from some one influenced by the hope of participating in the reward."³⁴⁴ They relied on William Donnelly to find those possible witnesses, and they marvelled at the successes he had. "He is there moving about from place to place," said Hutchinson, "watching intently the movements of the enemy."³⁴⁵

He found Michael Powe to testify that the Vigilants had refused to let him join their Society.³⁴⁶ He found Robert Ross to testify that John Kennedy had threatened William Donnelly's life.³⁴⁷ He found many more who would not testify. John Whelan had watched from his house as the Vigilant mob left the Donnelly homestead; Donnelly tried in secret, without success, to persuade Whelan to talk to the prosecutors.³⁴⁸ He uncovered William Whelan, John's brother, who also was out that night watching.³⁴⁹ He found John Walker, his own next door neighbour, who looking out had seen the Vigilants too. He sent his friend James Keefe to try to draw out Walker, and sent Edward Sutherby, Walker's brother-in-law.³⁵⁰ On Donnelly's word, Hutchinson in mid-May sent a London detective in secret to Walker.³⁵¹ Aemilius Irving himself met with Walker, who was polite and evasive and told

him nothing.³⁵² Donnelly also found John Doherty who had seen the Vigilants pass on his sideroad.³⁵³ His work on Walker and Doherty was the prosecutors' main hope through the summer of 1880.³⁵⁴ Donnelly himself, until the first trial opened, continued to believe that he could make these men speak out.³⁵⁵ "If they did see the parties and will say so manfully," Hutchinson said urgently, "when the time comes they will deserve credit and receive their due reward."³⁵⁶ To anyone else on the Crown side, Biddulph was impregnable; only William Donnelly had a chance. "As shrewd a man as I know," said Hutchinson, watching him.³⁵⁷

But by August, still the only eye-witnesses to come forward were Donnelly and John O'Connor. In London the gaol officials sided with the prisoners; in Toronto the Justices had not listened; Mowat and his deputy resisted the prosecutors at every available opportunity; Liberal supporters shied away; William R. Meredith and his Conservatives stood firmly on the Vigilant side; Ontario Irish Catholics complained of a campaign against them; public opinion constantly slandered the Donnellys. The township of Biddulph still resisted in silence, holding fast to all of its secrets and luring the Crown away on stray tracks. Thus the Crown prosecutors turned, desperately, with distaste and reluctance, to Samuel L. Everett, ex-constable of Lucan.

Samuel Everett still lived in Lucan, unemployed and unemployable because nobody trusted him. The Vigilants disliked him;³⁵⁸ so did the Donnelly family. "I am glad the Donnellys are dead,"³⁵⁹ Everett had said after the killings. But like William Donnelly Everett knew the village and the township and the people; he might learn its secrets if he chose. In early August Hutchinson asked him for his

help. Like Detective Clay and Detective Hugh McKinnon, Everett's prime urge was for publicity. He said he would not help, he would wait until the trials were over and the murderers--as he expected--set free. Then and only then he would act to bring in spectacular new evidence and convict the killers after all. But Hutchinson told him it would then be too late. Then Everett bragged of what secrets he knew already: of Biddulph men who had been asked to help in the killings; of other actual killers, as yet unnamed; of others too who had evidence and might, if the right man approached them, come forth. "Put your shoulder to the wheel and do what you can for us," County Crown Attorney Hutchinson urged.³⁶⁰

Hutchinson was unsure of what Irving--and the Attorney-General--would think of this unsavory newest Crown employee. He gave Everett until September 8 to come up with something of use.³⁶¹ Because the Lucan mail and telegraph could still not be trusted, he contacted his new detective through William Donnelly or through coroner Thomas Hossack--the only two men whom he trusted in the township.³⁶² Hossack predicted that Everett would serve whoever was paying him, and that therefore he could probably be trusted.³⁶³ Later the coroner changed his mind: "He is a weakness to the Crown in this matter."³⁶⁴ William Donnelly was doubtful. "A rotten stick" he called Everett, but he tried to be optimistic--"Rotten sticks make good manure sometimes."³⁶⁵ Hutchinson kept his hopes up too. Everett could help, he said, "if so disposed."³⁶⁶

Samuel Everett boasted in Biddulph of his contacts with the Crown.³⁶⁷ He boasted to Hutchinson of his progress, his mysterious prowling in the township after suspects and evidence. "I must proceed

with caution in this locality," he said.³⁶⁸ "My engagement is not as important as serving the ends of justice," he told the County Crown Attorney piously.³⁶⁹

He prepared a list which announced the names of thirty-six Vigilant murders--a useless item without proof, and Everett offered none.³⁷⁰ Then he travelled at Crown expense sixty miles east to Berlin, Ontario, in search of a supposed fugitive eye-witness.³⁷¹ On this, yet another false track, he sent back a spurious letter as George W. Clay had done from Cleveland. To Irving from Berlin he wrote the letter, supposedly from the man he was chasing, a letter which told how close Samuel Everett was to his trail and to the truth of the murders.³⁷² When Irving recognized the writing, that was Samuel Everett's last assignment.³⁷³ Like Edmund Meredith a traitor to the Crown, Samuel Everett was trusted no more. He finished his employment on the day that James Carroll's trial opened in the Middlesex courthouse.

CHAPTER 8

TRIALS

The trials of the six accused killers were scheduled to start on September 28,¹ in the Middlesex County courthouse in London. With the motion for a change of venue refused, the jurors would all be Middlesex men.² All summer the Crown prosecutors worried. "Our one chance," they agreed, "is to get a jury from the outlying townships free from Biddulph influence."³

There were only ninety-six names on the list of eligible jurors for 1880. The frantic prosecutors searched for a statute permitting a larger jury list be drafted: "The number should be so large as to swamp the infected townships."⁴ They searched too for a legal way to have the county sheriff summon jurors only from townships farthest from Biddulph. Wistfully, they realized that it could not be done.⁵ When they asked the Assize judge about ordering more jurors,⁶ they learned that the judge, Justice John D. Armour, planned to order only sixty of the ninety-six jurors.⁷ The prosecutors doubted that twelve unafraid and unbiased jurors could be found in a group of sixty Middlesex men. But they had to accept what the Justice from Toronto decided. "I am not clear what can be done," said Irving gloomily, "unless the Assize judge takes the initiative."⁸ When Irving approached Justice Armour again, the Assize judge waved him aside. "The matter could rest until the Assize day," Armour said.⁹ The question of

jurors was settled: the twelve jurymen must come from those sixty.

The question of witnesses remained. By mid-August, the sheriff of Middlesex and his constables were busy with subpoenas for a list of sixty witnesses.¹⁰ On September 22, William Donnelly¹¹ and the prosecutors added fifty more names. They prepared another list of twenty-nine people, the ones whom they would not even bother to summon.¹² These were people whose evidence was reluctant, or unreliable, or unknown, or minor. Even of those who were actually summoned, many would refuse to give any useful testimony and were never called into the witness stand.

Some of them fled from subpoenas. "I don't want to go at all if I can help it,"¹³ Malcolm Cameron admitted. Cameron was the lawyer who when pressed by John Blake and Edward Ryan had let Thomas Donnelly be indicted for robbery in the fall of 1879. "I do not wish to have anything to say in this matter as I am always travelling very frequently late at night,"¹⁴ said Robert Ross, who was wanted to tell of John Kennedy Jr.'s threats against William Donnelly's life. "I hope I don't have to come in to court, it would be inconvenient,"¹⁵ said timid Lucan magistrate James McCosh, who had tried and acquitted Thomas Donnelly for robbing Edward Ryan. James Keefe Jr. had hurried to Nebraska, and Edward Sutherby to Michigan. William Donnelly had them both served with subpoenas¹⁶ and persuaded both to come back.¹⁷

William Donnelly helped prepare the lists of Crown witnesses.¹⁸ He served some of the subpoenas himself.¹⁹ He supervised and double-checked the sheriff and his constables.²⁰ He gathered his own character witnesses.²¹ He travelled east to Hamilton to consult with Aedilfus Irving.²² He helped prepare courtroom models of both

Donnelly homes.²³ He found a man in Biddulph whose bed matched the bed of old James Donnelly where O'Connor had hidden to watch the murders. He tried to have the bed impounded, "for fear of it being made away with."²⁴ When he wanted to exhibit the bed in court for comparison, the dignified Crown prosecutors said no.²⁵ But he drove in a buggy to Lucan to bring other courtroom exhibits: burned guns from the ruins, a burned tin dish, and burned human bones that the constables had overlooked.²⁶

John O'Connor still lived in London, guarded by constables.²⁷ Even in the city, Biddulph men harrassed the family. On September 1 on a city street, Patrick Ryder Sr. meeting Mary O'Connor passed her by with threats and insults. Mary O'Connor charged him with abusive language. At London Police Court on September 16, Vigilants came with alibis, swearing that on the day of the insults, Patrick Ryder was threshing in Biddulph for Michael Carroll. Ryder himself swore that he had not been to London since July when he had helped to move gaoler Joseph Lamb to Lucan. In Biddulph, William Donnelly tried to find proof that the Vigilants lied about the date of the threshing.²⁸ But he could not find out for sure. Hugh MacMahon for the defence and prosecutor Hutchinson quarrelled angrily in court throughout the trial. In the end, Patrick Ryder was acquitted.²⁹ Hutchinson added another constable to guard John O'Connor and his family. Two men guarded by day; one of them stayed awake each night.³⁰

John's parents became more clamorous, for when the trials were over their power would be gone. They would harvest what money they could, while they could, to compensate for the danger and the insults and the guards. They needed and deserved help, but Hutchinson's

patience and his funds were not inexhaustible. He gave them more and more. "I have managed to keep them comparatively quiet so far," he said, "but am convinced I can not do so to the end."³¹ He needed Mowat's promise of a final cash settlement to be paid after all of the trials were over, if and only if the O'Connors co-operated.³² Afraid of public charges of bribery and collusion, Mowat's department did not comply.³³ The prosecutors feared then that John O'Connor's parents might abandon the Crown cause at any time.

Finally September 28 came and the trials began.³⁴ The courthouse and nearby city streets were crowded with curious people. Because the courtroom was much too small for everyone, the sheriff prepared admission tickets and decreed that no one without a ticket could enter. The fashionable ladies and the elite of London had tickets, but the rest swarmed around outside; only the privileged could watch the Biddulph murder trials. While over a hundred subpoenaed witnesses waited in the courthouse to testify, throngs of folk from Biddulph visited at the cells of their six prisoner friends.

In the courtroom on September 28, the six indicted men were arraigned. All pleaded not guilty. The Crown placed James Carroll in the prisoner's dock, to try him for the murder of Johannah Donnelly. On October 4 the selection of jurymen began. Twelve men who had been subpoenaed did not answer; many who did come were reluctant, and relieved if Crown or defence rejected them. One jury candidate claimed that he was too deaf, "so deaf that I have had to have the front pew in church for years."³⁵ The court called forty-nine Middlesex names before twelve jurors were agreed upon.

Though others were frightened, James Carroll himself was

unconcerned. Paying little attention to courtroom proceedings, he lounged and read newspapers and chatted with friends. The prosecutors began with models and descriptions of Biddulph, trying to present that township to the twelve jurymen outsiders who must judge. Huge maps were hung on the courtroom wall--a map of the township, one of Whalen's Corners, and one of the Donnelly homestead. "A foreign country to me," Justice John Armour said of Biddulph.³⁶

Then the Crown called John O'Connor to tell his story. For three hours and a half he testified, straightforward and clear and unshaken by Hugh MacMahon's jabbing cross-questions. Then the people testified who had heard John's story first: all of the Whelan family, John O'Connor's parents, and two men whom John had met on his way home to Lucan on the morning after the murders. In all but the smallest particulars, John's courtroom story matched what he had told these people. Witnesses who had been at the ruins testified: they had seen the spade under Thomas Donnelly's body, and buttons and brace buckles by the body of the old man. Their evidence proved O'Connor's story that James Donnelly had dressed before he was killed, and that Thomas Donnelly had been murdered with a spade.

William Donnelly told about the killing of John Donnelly, told of seeing James Carroll at the window. Nora Donnelly supported his story; so did Martin Hogan Sr. who had slept with John Donnelly, and William Blackwell and John Walker his neighbours. Neither Blackwell nor Walker admitted seeing any of the killers. Thirteen character witnesses testified, to say that from their personal experience William Donnelly was honest, and that they would believe his testimony under oath. The London police constables, the detectives, and Police

Chief Williams all testified. They told of the arrests, and described the Donnelly ruins on the day after the killings. They told too of their difficulties trying to gather evidence in Biddulph.

The Crown called four men who were at Clandeboye on the night of the killings, to testify that the night was clear and that a person could be identified at a distance. A farmer from another township, several miles away, told of seeing the glow in the sky above the Roman Line. A Grand Trunk conductor told of seeing the red glow from his passing train. Few witnesses from Biddulph admitted seeing any glow at all; Michael Blake testified that he had thought it was the moon. Thomas and Robert Keefe told of seeing Patrick Ryder Jr. on the night of the murder on horseback and carrying a gun or a sword. Two more men admitted seeing a pick and a shovel at the ruins. Such minor and indirect evidence as this was what the prosecutors had in large part to rely upon.

The Crown put Vigilants on the witness stand, trying to make them tell of their Committee. John Cain, Martin Darcy, James Maher, Michael Blake and William Feeheley all were made to testify. They were vague and unwilling, evasive and forgetful about the things that the Vigilant Committee had done. But the Crown had witnesses who were not Vigilants, to prove the Committee's campaign against Donnellys. Four men told about the trespass in September of 1879. Magistrates James Grant and William Casey described the perjury trials that resulted, and the trials of James and Johannah for burning Patrick Ryder's barns. John Peters, London magistrate, told of all the cases he had tried: against Johannah Donnelly in the fall of 1878 for using abusive language to James Carroll, against Thomas Donnelly for the Edward Ryan

robbery, and against thirteen Vigilants for the trespass. Martin Hogan Jr. told of being shut out from the Cedar Swamp School when he went to join the Committee.

The Vigilants' lawyers presented their defence. They had alibis for all of the six accused men. James and Matthew McGrath testified that John Purtell could not have left their house on the night of the murders. (The Crown countered with the testimony of policemen who had experimented to show how easy it would have been for Purtell to leave without being detected.) Two men testified that John Kennedy was playing cards with them on the evening that the Donnellys were killed; another testified that he called on Kennedy at two o'clock in the morning, to borrow some medicine. (The Crown forced the man to admit that he had not mentioned this when questioned at the time of the inquests.) Three men told of playing euchre with Thomas Ryder at his house on that same night. (The Crown called policemen to testify that Ryder, when first questioned, had told them that he went to bed at seven o'clock that night.) William and Mary Thompson and William Carroll all said that James Carroll slept at the Thompson house that night, and would have been heard had he left. (Policemen testified that the Thompson stairs and floors and doors were creaky; that Mary Thompson had claimed that she had taken medicine and had slept soundly all that night; and that Mary Thompson several days after the murder had hung a thick curtain on the bedroom window, which she said would have kept constable Carroll from seeing the burning Donnelly home next door.) A daughter of Martin McLaughlin said that she had happened to awake at two o'clock in the morning and had seen her father asleep in bed. James Ryder's two brothers testified that they had

slept that night with James and he never left the room. (The Crown pointed out the bias of members of the family). The Crown also put Andrew Keefe on the witness stand to show how Vigilant alibis were constructed: James Maher had asked him to swear that they had been in Stratford together on the night of the killings.

The defence began another strategy, putting Vigilants on the witness stand to tell of all the crimes which Donnellys were blamed for. But Justice Armour stopped them short: no number of crimes, real or alleged, he said, could justify the Donnelly homicides.³⁷

The defence called William Stanley and John Fox, Lucan merchants, who related the story that John O'Connor had told them in Lucan on the morning after the murders. They pointed out willingly how that story differed in some small points from what John had told in court. Bernard Stanley, and Thomas Dight his partner in the grain mill, and William H. Ryan a Biddulph magistrate, and David McRoberts a juror at the O'Connor fire inquest, all came forth to testify to James Carroll's good reputation. They praised him as an honest and a peaceful citizen, and said that William Donnelly's reputation was bad, although none could say why from personal experience.

Timothy Coughlin, Member of Parliament for Middlesex North, appeared to testify for the Vigilants' defence. He repeated the opinion of the character witnesses before him, in favour of James Carroll and against William Donnelly. When his time came for re-election in 1882, Lucan and Biddulph voted for Coughlin by a five-to-one margin; even Vigilant Catholics who were usually Liberal voted Conservative.³⁸

Ex-constable Samuel Everett of Lucan appeared on the witness

stand too, with a tale that coroner Thomas Hossaek at the Donnelly inquests had wanted William Donnelly to coach John O'Connor. The Crown called the coroner to contradict the tale. Samuel Everett admitted later that he had lied, "to throw a stone in the way of the Crown for not having employed me on this case."³⁹

The trial of James Carroll lasted for six days. On the afternoon of the sixth day, William Meredith for the Vigilants and Aemilius Irving for the Crown delivered their final addresses. Meredith argued that the Vigilant Committee was legal and harmless: "There was nothing unjustifiable in what was done at the Cedar Swamp School House."⁴⁰ He stressed his Vigilant clients' alibis. He listed every small discrepancy on the several separate occasions when John O'Connor had told his story. He dismissed any evidence a policeman might present: "By reason of their occupation these witnesses were apt, even unconsciously, to turn every circumstance to the prejudice of the prisoners." He sneered at the claims of William Donnelly; incredible lies, he called them, from "the black heart of William Donnelly." And he noted that a verdict of guilty was a verdict against the entire community: convicting Carroll would mean hanging half the township.

Aemilius Irving answered for the Crown. He summarized proven Vigilant actions against Donnellys. He recalled how the Crown had disproved most of the alibis. Especially he stressed his main witness John O'Connor: at the Whelans' home, at the inquests, at home on a constable's knee, at the magistrates' hearings, at James Carroll's trial, through the pressures and tensions of the past eight months, John's story had stayed essentially unchanged.

When Justice Armour delivered his charge to the jurymen of

Middlesex, for the first time in his trial James Carroll looked concerned. Armour was impressed with the prosecution's case. He criticized the very existence of a Vigilant Committee: "Such committees were outside the law and mothers of all sorts of crimes."⁴¹ He observed that the prisoners' alibis depended upon family and friends, and that people accused of murder would hardly shy away from perjury. He summarized the evidence of Vigilant aggression against Donnelly's—the Thompson cow trespass ("If the cow case had been a charge of riot and not of trespass, it would have been sustained"),⁴² the Ryder arson prosecutions, the Vigilants' indifference on the morning after the killings and fire, the secret and closed schoolhouse meetings, the appointment of Vigilant constable and magistrates. "It was an extremely unfitting thing that a person should be appointed constable who was nominated at such a meeting, and that a magistrate nominated in the same way should receive appointment,"⁴³ Armour said. "If the Government had known the circumstances," he believed, "they would never have made the appointment." He asked who but the Vigilants could have been responsible. "Where did they come from, if they were not members of this committee?"⁴⁴ He read over John O'Connor's testimony, and then asked the jury, "Did they believe that the boy could invent the story he had just read to them, or that anyone in that part of the country could have invented it?"⁴⁵ He said that a child's evidence was more to be trusted, for children were more innocent, less self-interested, less skillful at hiding lies and evasions. Finally he emphasized the awesome importance of this trial: "The disgrace of such a deed rests not only upon this part of the country, but upon the country at large, and it is of the utmost importance that the perpetrators of it should be

brought to justice, otherwise this crime might stand as an example of what persons might do and go unpunished."⁴⁶ Then Justice Armour left the Middlesex jurymen to decide.

The jury returned after four and a half hours. Carroll was brought back to court to hear the jury's verdict. He walked weakly and reluctantly, dragged more than led by his constable guard. His feet shuffled and his face twitched. He bowed his head, raising it in quick brief jerks to look at the jury filing in. In a faint and nervous voice the foreman announced that they the jury could reach no verdict. Seven wanted to acquit, four to convict, and one was undecided; there was no chance of their coming to agreement. Judge Armour dismissed the jury and adjourned the court. James Carroll relaxed again as friends and jurymen pressed forward to shake his hand. The Crown prosecutors announced that they would not attempt another trial at the present time.

Carroll had sat bored through most of the trial. All of the Vigilants had been carefree, visiting their six friends at the gaol. Nobody close to the trials had expected a conviction. But the charge of Justice Armour had changed the mood completely, by arguing that the Crown case was legally solid and strong. Most important, he had stressed John O'Connor's credibility. Charles Hutchinson wrote his report to Attorney-General Mowat in Toronto. "I need not tell you that the case for the prosecution depends entirely upon Johnny's evidence," he said, "which since Mr. Justice Armour's charge to the jury has increased in value ten-fold in the public estimation."⁴⁷ Now, perhaps, there really was a chance to convict. The trial had settled nothing, and as people began to crave some resolution, they looked to Oliver

Mowat again: "Mr. Attorney-General Mowat bears the responsibility of action or inaction in the matter."⁴⁸

Pro-Vigilants complained of the prisoners' long wait in gaol. When Hugh MacMahon applied for bail and the Crown prosecutors refused to allow it, MacMahon issued writs of habeas corpus⁴⁹ which he sent to the Attorney-General's office. Mowat's deputy sent them promptly back, the same day, to Hutchinson;⁵⁰ he had told MacMahon before that Mowat did not intend to be involved.

Then a petition appeared in Middlesex, addressed to Attorney-General Mowat, demanding that the prisoners be immediately bailed and complaining of the hardship of imprisoning them until the next Assizes. Twenty copies of the petition circulated around the county. "Everybody in the region will sign," enthusiastic allies of the Vigilants predicted.⁵¹ Crown Attorney Hutchinson watched gloomily. "What think you of the petitions to admit them to bail?" he asked Irving, "rather significant of a pretty strong feeling in their favour."⁵² John Waters, who represented North Middlesex in the Provincial Legislature, noticed that strong feeling. He asked his party leader and Attorney-General to give his constituents bail.⁵³

Oliver Mowat refused. The charge was too serious. If even one of the six men should disappear, Mowat would look foolish. But with the growing complaints of delay and persecution, he dared not keep them much longer in gaol. Already there was public speculation about another application for a change of venue.⁵⁴ The Donnelly controversy was more troublesome than ever, and the longer until a trial, the more impatient the public would grow.

Oliver Mowat and his Liberals would be losers, no matter what

might happen in Carroll's next trial. If Carroll should be acquitted, the gratitude and votes of Irish-Catholics would flow to William R. Meredith the victorious defender, and to Meredith's Conservative party. But conviction would be much, much worse: for then the other five prisoners would have to be tried, and would probably be convicted. And most of the Biddulph community had guilty knowledge of the murders. One successful prosecution would make future ones not only easier but necessary. This prosecution of an Irish-Catholic township by a Liberal Attorney-General could stretch on indefinitely, with inevitable judicial and political carnage.

The only solution was to stop the Donnelly affair, to discourage the prosecutions firmly and for good. James Carroll must be acquitted and as soon as possible. Within four weeks of Carroll's first trial, Attorney-General acted. He would not wait until Spring Assizes as the Superior Court Justices wanted him to do.⁵⁵ He ordered a special commission from Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor to authorize a trial in January. Never before in Ontario had a criminal case been tried on a special commission.⁵⁶ Not one but two Justices were appointed to preside. Justice Matthew Crooks Cameron was one. Since 1871 Cameron had been Ontario's Conservative leader. When he left active politics and was appointed to the Superior Court bench in November of 1878, William Ralph Meredith was his successor. No other of Ontario's Justices would look so kindly on Meredith and the Vigilants' defence. On the day that the helpless prosecutors heard that Justice Cameron would preside, they heard a rumour that already Cameron had said that "the evidence is not sufficient to convict."⁵⁷ The other Justice was Featherstone Osler. Justice Osler was not interested in politics and

public issues. Throughout his judicial career Osler disliked controversy, disliked public notice and responsibility. His manner was private, reserved and formal. No other of Ontario's Justices would be less likely to challenge Justice Cameron in this most famous of trials. Osler recognized before the trial opened that Cameron alone would direct it.⁵⁸ Quiet and imperturbable behind the public clamour, Premier and Attorney-General Mowat had already guaranteed the outcome of James Carroll's second trial.

Even had those two Justices not been selected, the prosecutors were not optimistic. "I think still the chance of convicting here much less than it would be almost anywhere else,"⁵⁹ Hutchinson said. He grew more pessimistic as the trial approached: "I have no hope whatever of a conviction being got here under any circumstances."⁶⁰

Like gaoler Joseph Lamb before him, the new Middlesex gaoler favoured the Biddulph prisoners.⁶¹ The Middlesex sheriff also continued unco-operative.⁶² A leading London merchant said openly to Hutchinson that although he thought the Vigilants guilty, were he on the jury he would not convict them. This was the attitude of most of the city, "prejudice existing against the Donnelly family, and sympathy for those who (as they say) were driven to kill them for self protection."⁶³

The jurors at the first trial had been the best that the Crown could gather. They were typical of Middlesex and the city of London. One proclaimed to people in a city hotel that he would not have convicted even if he had seen the killings himself.⁶⁴ Another said that while he thought Carroll guilty, he did not like to convict on John O'Connor's word alone. Some jurors said that they had voted for

acquittal in protest against Justice Armour, whose charge they thought unfairly hostile to the Vigilants.⁶⁵ Still others said that they would not convict for fear that dozens of others would have to be hanged as well.⁶⁶

Erratic stray leads continued to plague the prosecutors. At the end of October a man from Palmerston, sixty miles to the north in Grey County, claimed that James Carroll had been with him on the night of the killings.⁶⁷ The prosecutors knew by now to ignore most pranksters and hangers-on. But the lies of Samuel L. Everett continued to be convincing. Until the middle of November, Crown Attorney Hutchinson chased the spurious leads concocted by Everett in his letter on October 6 from Berlin. On October 12, just after Carroll's first trial finished, Patrick Donnelly followed Everett's trail to Berlin where he tried to track the man whom Everett had been sent to chase. He searched at Berlin and then at Elmira, among the exhibits at the Elmira Fall Fair.⁶⁸ He called on the Police Chief of Berlin for assistance although Everett tried to lure him away from the police, by informing Hutchinson that the Chief was a German who spoke no English and could not help.⁶⁹ Even William Donnelly was drawn in by Everett's trickery. He tried to determine who in Biddulph could have written that letter which Everett had written. Hutchinson sent descriptions of Donnelly's two suspects to the Chief of Police at Berlin.⁷⁰

The Police Chief at Guelph arrested a vagrant from the United States who seemed to resemble one of Donnelly's descriptions. He sent the prisoner's description to the Chief of Police at London,⁷¹ who passed it on to Hutchinson, who saw that it did not match. But William Donnelly was already on his way to Guelph,⁷² where he looked

at the bewildered American, a strayed highway robber from Indiana, and came back promptly to Middlesex.⁷³ Hutchinson told the Guelph police to keep looking: "I fear there is not much chance of his being in their neighbourhood, but it is just possible he may turn up again."⁷⁴ Samuel Everett had succeeded with his mischief and roundabouts. "I don't like to think him a traitor," said Hutchinson, "and yet can hardly help it."⁷⁵ He gave up the hunt for the chimerical Vigilant.

Then Everett had one more last scheme with which to confound Donnellys, and prosecutors, and his old Lucan enemy William Porte as well. "I'd like to see him in the dunghill picking with the hens,"⁷⁶ Everett said of Porte. He claimed loudly that he had a stack of letters, six inches high, sent by Porte to Patrick Donnelly. The letters told of crimes in Lucan and Biddulph and incited Donnelly to return home to punish evildoers. He presented the public with special excerpts: "If you have a particle of the Irish blood in you which has been transmitted to you by your parents, you will come on or send somebody to shoot so-and-so." "The fire-bug must visit them to learn them something," another of these lurid letters read.⁷⁷ But when Patrick Donnelly denied Everett's claims, Everett could not produce letters in proof; Samuel Everett was disgraced and exposed as a spiteful conniver.⁷⁸

Mary and Michael O'Connor were possible traitors too, whose loyalty was much more important. They continued to cry for funds and attention. After Carroll's first trial, they refused to allow a constable to live with them any longer. The constable himself was glad to leave the family, but John O'Connor must be guarded somehow.⁷⁹ Michael O'Connor demanded to be hired as personal guard to his son.

He quit his job in a London factory to stay home with John and draw a constable's salary.⁸⁰ In less than a week, he took his son John on a jaunt to Biddulph, got drunk and assaulted a man in a store.⁸¹

Hutchinson gave him an angry lecture: "You cannot expect to receive payment for taking care of Johnny if you act in this way."⁸² Clearly John was not safe in his father's care. Hutchinson determined to move the family into the city from the suburbs. He found a house in a busy London neighbourhood, where city police could conveniently watch them. But the O'Connors did not like the home, and refused to move⁸³ until he found them a better one, at three times the rent.⁸⁴ Finally they agreed to come to London where Police Chief Williams ordered men to guard them.⁸⁵

Deciding that she wanted to open a small general store, Mary O'Connor pressed the Crown Attorney for capital to get her started. When he paid her she went away smiling again,⁸⁶ but then she decided that she had not got enough. She paid another visit to Toronto in mid-December where, in the office of Attorney-General Mowat, she complained that she and her family were destitute. With winter coming on they had no clothes or bedding, and all of their money was garnished for debts. Deputy Attorney-General Scott, who fielded her for Mowat, said that all money must come from Hutchinson in London. She asked then for her train fare home; Scott was glad enough to pay her for that.⁸⁷ But a sharp-eyed Toronto reporter saw Mary O'Connor entering the Attorney-General's Office. Scott evaded the press, but Mary O'Connor's visit was reported in Toronto newspapers.⁸⁸

Mary O'Connor went back to London where she told the Crown

Attorney that the Deputy Attorney-General had agreed that she should have more money.⁸⁹ She warned him that friends of the Vigilants had offered her \$4000--the amount of the Government reward--to deliver her son John into their hands for safekeeping. Her blackmailing succeeded: Hutchinson gave her more money. "It is quite in the cards," he said frantically, "that if incensed she will try to make terms with the prisoners' friends, and put Johnny out of the way."⁹⁰ Hutchinson had little choice: "The question seems to be, what is her good will worth; but I fear it is one we can not answer. So far as this case is concerned, Johnny's value is priceless."⁹¹ Finally Oliver Mowat promised her a last cash settlement from the Government, payable once all of the Donnelly trials were over.⁹² When she came, still, again and again for money, the Crown Attorney warned her that what he gave her must be deducted at the end: "You can not eat your cake, and have it."⁹³

But despite the O'Connors, and traitorous Samuel Everett, and Justices Cameron and Osler, and Oliver Mowat, and all the anti-Donnelly bias of Middlesex, the Crown prosecutors kept trying. If only the right jurymen could be found the case might yet be saved. "If we are to submit to the forlorn hope of a fair trial in this county," said Hutchinson, "it certainly ought to be under the most favourable circumstances possible."⁹⁴ They pressured the Attorney General's Office to delay the jury summons until the new list for 1881 was prepared.⁹⁵ The prosecutors wanted the freshest jury possible, drawn from a brand-new list and not from the remnants of 1880. Then when the list appeared on January 1, they hired men to investigate each name secretly.⁹⁶ "Why should we not find out all we can about these

jurors," said Hutchinson in defence of their spying, "and why should we not adopt the best mode for attaining our object, so long as we do nothing underhand?"⁹⁷ The team of investigators prowled through Middlesex, listening quietly, taking notes, overhearing conversations and opinions, filing their impressions. They tried to find which prospective jurors had preconceived ideas, which were affected by prejudice or fear. William Donnelly helped too, for his knowledge of northern Middlesex was sensitive and far-reaching. He noted which men on the lists were reliable and which he believed were not. When the time came to choose the actual twelve jurymen, the Crown prosecutors were able to ensure that ten of these were favourable to the Crown cause. The eleventh man they were not sure of; the twelfth was definitely afraid and anxious not to serve.⁹⁸ They had the best jury that the list could offer.

Still the prosecutors' predictions were dismal: "The verdict will amount to 'served them right' whatever evidence we have, and we are not likely to have more than we had last time."⁹⁹ They did try to find new evidence. There was still John Doherty who had seen seven Vigilants pass on his sideroad, slipping behind his stable on their way to the Donnelly home; William Donnelly had not given up his efforts to get Doherty to tell.¹⁰⁰ And Andrew Keefe had told of James Maher's attempt at alibi, but he knew much more of the murders than he had mentioned at the trial. "I think we will get it out of him," said the optimistic Crown Attorney.¹⁰¹ But Keefe, like Doherty, held fast to his secrets. William Donnelly found a constable in Biddulph, Samuel Hodgins, who had lent his handcuffs to Carroll a week before the murders. When Donnelly lured him in secret to London to meet the

prosecutors,¹⁰² Hodgins agreed to testify, but he denied having known what the cuffs would be for.¹⁰³

William Donnelly tracked down witnesses who knew how John Kennedy Jr. had disposed of a guilty revolver. They had moved far away to Grey County lumber camps;¹⁰⁴ he had them both subpoenaed back,¹⁰⁵ but they did not testify. Ann Whelan and Martin Hogan Jr. had wandered to the States; Donnelly made sure they would be back for the trial.¹⁰⁶ Other Biddulph suspects had drifted into Michigan lumber camps--William Whelan, William Feeheley, Michael Maher.¹⁰⁷ Learning Whelan's and Feeheley's addresses William Donnelly wrote them letters ostensibly from a romantic and admiring young lady in St. Thomas. Then he travelled to St. Thomas to gather their chatty answers, hoping that something of value might slip out.¹⁰⁸ Patrick Donnelly followed them to Michigan to spy, serving Edward Sutherby his subpoena on the way.¹⁰⁹

In Biddulph, Patrick Donnelly sought out James Feeheley in the barroom of the Queen's Hotel. Donnelly probed to see what might be learned. He accused James Feeheley of being at the murders. "I have heard before that you have accused me," Feeheley said.¹¹⁰ "How have you heard it?" said Patrick Donnelly. "Through Father Connolly," Feeheley answered. But he denied having anything to do with the murders. "What made you go away from the house?" asked Donnelly. "The way the Vigilants were acting, I did not want to be seen going away in the morning," Feeheley answered. He would say no more. "My brother William believes that you were not there," Patrick Donnelly said to keep Feeheley at ease. But he planned to keep watch on James Feeheley.

William Donnelly found another detective to help track Vigilants in Biddulph. He was Francis Morrison West, who wandered into Lucan late in 1880 from the United States. West was a Wisconsin meat market manager and deep in debt when he came to Canada to start again. When he crossed the border at Sarnia he heard of Canada's Donnellys. Curious like Kate Warne of Parkhill, he travelled to Biddulph to sight-see for himself, to tour the Roman Line and the burned-out homestead. Then in Lucan's Queen's Hotel he met William Donnelly in person.¹¹¹

After their betrayal by Samuel Everett, the Donnelly survivors wanted an accomplice who was not distrusted by the folk of Biddulph. Adventurer and schemer, Francis M. West fell in easily with Donnelly plans. Disguised as a music teacher and living in a Lucan hotel, West was sociable with townsfolk and Vigilants alike.¹¹² William Donnelly introduced his new ally to the County Crown Attorney. Like others before him--Hugh McKinnon, George Clay, Samuel Everett--Francis West boasted of his talents: he would find out everything to do with the murders. Donnelly was enthusiastic; Hutchinson was not impressed.¹¹³ "A little too much of a confidence game," he said of West's hopeful proposals.¹¹⁴

The Middlesex sheriff and his constables began to issue subpoenas for Carroll's second trial. Both William and Patrick Donnelly helped serve subpoenas. Also helping was a county constable in Biddulph, Thomas Shoebottom, who had the courage to work openly for the Crown.¹¹⁵ Some of the hoped-for new witnesses slipped away when subpoenas came towards them.¹¹⁶ Robert Donnelly was up all of one night, trailing a witness to get him into court.¹¹⁷ Patrick tracked

another witness, Robert Cutt, to Detroit. On the night that the trial opened, Patrick Donnelly drove fifty miles in a sleigh to Grand Bend on Lake Huron to bring in Robert Cutt who had just returned again to Canada.¹¹⁸ On the night of the Donnelly murders Cutt had called at Thomas Ryder's home on business, and had waited for hours when Ryder was not there. He could ruin Ryder's alibi that he had played cards at home all that evening.¹¹⁹

The Crown approached even John Purtell for evidence. After almost a year in jail, he was frightened, his nerves were jarred, and he had quarrelled with James Carroll. In Biddulph on December 26, 1880, Purtell's employer James McGrath was riding in a sleigh towards Clendoyne, with Mrs. McGrath and their infant daughter, and Ann McGrath his sister, and Ellen Blake sister of Michael the Vigilant and John Blake the London lawyer. Their horses panicked at the Grand Trunk railway crossing, dashing onto the tracks into the path of a train. Only Ann McGrath jumped clear before the train smashed into the sleigh and threw the passengers forty feet through the air. Only Ann McGrath and the baby survived. There were twenty-four pallbearers at the funeral at St. Patrick's; the procession of mourners stretched for one mile. John Purtell's alibi was destroyed with the sleigh. Only James McGrath's ancient father Matthew still survived to swear that Purtell had been in the McGrath house on the night of the Donnelly killings.¹²⁰ At the gaol Hutchinson tried to strike a deal, now that Purtell was nervous and vulnerable. But Purtell refused to co-operate.¹²¹ He could not testify against Carroll whom he hated, without harming the other defendants as well. And the prosecutor would not have come to him with deals unless the Crown case were shaky; better to wait and assume that

all six of them would soon be set free.

Three months and ten days after Carroll's first trial ended, after the long series of unwilling witnesses, traitorous allies, false clues, clamorous O'Connors, plotting politicians, and prejudice spreading from Biddulph, the second trial began in the Middlesex courthouse on January 24, 1881.¹²² The trains and the stages into London were crowded. The roads were busy with buggies and sleighs, especially the Proof Line road south from Biddulph. The hotels in the city were full. The sheriff had to distribute courtroom tickets as before. The Biddulphers who were not witnesses and who had no tickets crowded in courthouse halls and in the streets outside. They were noisy and rough and unruly. Amazed ladies and merchants of London stared.

Court opened with a reading of the Special Commission issued by Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor. One hundred potential jurors had been summoned; the selection of twelve jurors occupied half of the first day. The prosecutors with their private reports on those one hundred men selected the best jury possible.

The trial was much as before. Witnesses from Biddulph were forgetful and hostile. Aemilius Irving asked Joseph Whelan if he had heard John O'Connor's conversation with his sister, Theresa Whelan, on the morning after the murders. Joseph Whelan said no.

"Did you hear him speak to anyone?" Irving pursued.

Whelan said no.

"Did you hear anyone speak to John?"

"No."

"When did you get your breakfast?"

"After I got up."

"When did Johnny get his breakfast?"

"In the morning."¹²³

John O'Connor told his story as before, clearly and with confidence. He wore a new grey suit, a turn-down white collar, a black tie, gold shirt studs and a gold watch chain; he had a brown fur cap which he twirled in his fingers as he spoke. Again he stood his ground firmly when harrassed by Hugh MacMahon:

"What is your name?"

"John."

"You were christened Jeremiah, were you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do they call you John?"

"How do they call anyone John?"¹²⁴ John O'Connor rebutted.

When John told of following Bridget Donnelly across the dark front room, MacMahon interrupted:

"How did you know it was Bridget ran across the floor?"

"I saw her back," said John.

"Had she on a dress?"

"Yes."

"Had she on an apron?"

"No."

"How could you tell she had on no apron when you saw only her back?"

"What would she have an apron on for?" John said indignantly.

Then John told of Thomas Donnelly's flight across the front room and out the front door:

"I could tell Tom Donnelly's voice. I could also tell Tom by his stocking feet."

"How could you be sure that it was Tom Donnelly by his feet?" MacMahon demanded.

"What would the other men want to be out in their stocking feet for?" John O'Connor asked in return.¹²⁵

Changes from the first trial were slight. The Crown did not bother to show that Carroll had been present at the killing of John Donnelly, deciding that that evidence was irrelevant because Carroll was on trial only for the killing of Johannah Donnelly. And Samuel Everett with his tall tales was not invited, this time, to testify. The Crown had only one new witness of importance, the man who was rushed from Grand Bend by Patrick Donnelly to testify that Thomas Ryder had not been home on the night of the killings. The Vigilant defence was almost identical. Although James McGrath was absent, killed in his sleigh by a train, his evidence at the first trial was read into the courtroom record.

Defendant James Carroll showed the strain of another trial and of a whole year in gaol. He dressed formally in fashion with a black suit, a gold-studded white shirt, and a grey scarf pinned about his neck. But he looked sick and haggard, rubbing nervous fingers compulsively on the railing of the prisoner's dock. During John O'Connor's testimony he fainted and was carried from court, reappearing the next day wrapped with red flannel and a quilt. He sipped on lemonade from a pitcher beside him. A constable brought a bucket in case he should vomit. His aunt Ellen Maher and his sister sat beside the dock to nurse him.

Although Carroll fretted he had no need to, for presiding was Justice Matthew C. Cameron, former Ontario Conservative leader.

Cameron hampered the Crown with his every ruling and boosted the cause of William Meredith, chief defence lawyer and his political successor. The Crown had witnesses to show that what John O'Connor had told to them matched what he had told in court: the Whelans could show this, and the London police who had interviewed John, and James Hobbins whom John had met on his ride from the Donnelly home to Lucan. But when the defence objected that this evidence was hearsay, Cameron ruled it out of order. Then when the defence brought Lucan merchants John Fox and William Stanley to report small discrepancies in the story John had told to them, Cameron let them testify unhindered. Aemilius Irving protested: "I do not think it fair that my learned friends should allow such evidence to be put in for a part of their case, and then object when it suits their purpose,"¹²⁶ Cameron cut him short, gloating: "If you have permitted them to outgeneral you in this matter, it is clearly nobody's fault but your own."¹²⁷ At another time Cameron flashed out in irritation against the entire prosecution: "If I were listening to the case on the first hearing, I would strongly protest against the manner in which the Crown presents the case."¹²⁸

Cameron ruled other Crown evidence inadmissible--evidence that one Vigilant had a wounded eye on the morning after the murders, and other evidence related to an anonymous letter sent to William Donnelly. On both occasions Cameron was sustaining defence objections. He permitted Vigilants Michael Blake and Martin Darcy to present lists of crimes in order to justify the need for an anti-crime, anti-Donnelly Committee. Justice Armour at the first trial had called such former depredations irrelevant, saying that no number of crimes could justify what had happened to the Donnellys. And Cameron let Vigilant Martin

Darcy expound his own Biddulph biases: "If I give you my opinion," said Darcy, "I would say that the Donnellys were to blame for nearly all."¹²⁹

Throughout the trial, through all of Cameron's rulings, Justice Featherstone Osler, predictably, sat passive and silent on the bench beside him.

Justice Cameron was in jovial humour. He joked with the Grand Jury about their light work load: because Carroll had been indicted at the last spring Assizes, their only duty was to inspect the gaol. He joked with William Ralph Meredith. When the jurymen asked for something to read during recesses, and Meredith suggested that they could use the courthouse law library, the courtroom audience laughed. "I am of opinion," Cameron replied, "that that description of literature would not prove very palatable;"¹³⁰ the audience laughed harder.

A political undercurrent ran throughout Carroll's trial. During one recess, Conservative William Meredith and Liberal Aemilius Irving tangled over a major issue of the day, the building of the costly Canadian Pacific Railroad. In court the defence raised the matter of Mary O'Connor's last visit to Toronto; they questioned her sharply about deals with Liberal Attorney-General Mowat. And when Michael Blake, testifying for the Vigilants, mentioned political opinions within the Committee, defence lawyers and the whole courtroom audience tittered nervously. North Middlesex Conservative Member of Parliament Timothy Coughlin did not appear this time on Carroll's behalf, but his brother Daniel testified in his stead.

It was Justice Cameron's final charge to the jury that did most to ruin the prosecution. Most people who had watched the trial thought

that Carroll was in trouble. At the first trial, with the same evidence, Justice Armour had thought the Crown case strong. But Cameron favoured Carroll overwhelmingly. He listed each small discrepancy and unlikelihood in John O'Connor's testimony. He told the jurors that they could not convict on John O'Connor's evidence alone. He said that all Crown witnesses were suspect because Patrick and William Donnelly had helped to find them. He said that the Crown had not proven that the Committee was formed to destroy the Donnellys. He said that Carroll's membership in the Committee was no indication that he might be guilty. And he said that if the jurors had any reasonable doubt, the prisoner James Carroll should be acquitted. Then the twelve Middlesex jurors retired, ten of whom as the prosecutors knew had been originally disposed to convict. When they returned to the courtroom, their verdict was--not guilty. Justice Osler was dismayed.¹³¹ But he said nothing.

The audience cheered, and pressed forward a second time to congratulate Carroll. All of the defendants were released on bail. The crowd rushed out to celebrate. The six former prisoners and some of their friends returned to Lucan that evening on the train, where seven sleigh-loads of well-wishers and a standing crowd of two hundred welcomed them home at the Lucan railway station. They hired a dance band from the city for their victory celebration at the Central Hotel. Five hundred revellers attended.

A small group gathered in the courthouse with the Crown prosecutors--Patrick and William Donnelly and their sister Jennie Currie.¹³² "The only honest friends we have," Aemilius Irving said. At the cheers of the crowd when the verdict was announced, Jennie Currie fainted on the floor. Her two brothers bent over her, crying.

The Donnellys recovered. Jennie Currie and Robert Donnelly returned to Glencoe; but the day after Carroll's acquittal Patrick and William Donnelly drove out to Lucan where they announced plans to rebuild the Donnelly homestead.¹³³ That same spring it was constructed, larger and solidier than the home that the Vigilants had burned.¹³⁴ In London, at a hotel where triumphant Vigilants had gathered, Robert Donnelly stood at the bar and taunted--"Now I want all you murderers to come up and have something with me." None of the celebrants would come forward to confront him.¹³⁵

Charles Hutchinson watched the Donnellys, especially William, in amazement: "He takes his trouble like a man, no vain threatenings and vaporings."¹³⁶ In anger Hutchinson watched Carroll go free: "No one doubts his guilt, and yet he is quite a hero."¹³⁷ Aemilius Irving said that he never wanted to work in a Middlesex court again.¹³⁸ Both of them blamed Justice Cameron. "No one can blame the jury after reading the judge's charge,"¹³⁹ Hutchinson wrote in accusing anger to Mowat's office in Toronto.

There has been a sad miscarriage of justice here. No one doubts Carroll's guilt, not even I am sure the jury who acquitted him. The result confirms the correctness of our contention in favor of a change of venue. . . . The judge's charge, tho' theoretically perfect, practically gave the jury the opportunity they sought of acquitting the prisoner on the grounds of an imaginary doubt in his favor. It is a most unfortunate business and can not fail to work certain evil and very probably further bloodshed.¹⁴⁰

In Toronto, the other four Superior Court Justices and the province's top lawyers at Osgoode Hall were appalled at the result of Carroll's trial. Leaving Middlesex, Aemilius Irving went to Toronto where he learned their professional opinions: "I find both in Toronto and Hamilton a feeling of very considerable indignation--and

an expression that a failure of justice so serious should not be allowed to pass over for ever--and suggestions are made that even now, the government should make renewed efforts to bring the guilt home."¹⁴¹ All believed that the prosecution case had been proved beyond reasonable doubt: "The general expression is--I had no idea such a strong case could be presented--It was carefully worked out--Your case was well thought out &c."¹⁴²

But Attorney-General Mowat had no intention of re-opening the Donnelly case. He wanted it forgotten. When Hutchinson sent in his last Donnelly account for payment,¹⁴³ Mowat's deputy laid it aside and forgot about it completely.¹⁴⁴ Hutchinson had to write again in April to remind him.¹⁴⁵

There remained still to settle with Mary and Michael O'Connor. Ex-prosecutors Hutchinson and Irving hoped that some day John would be needed again--"It can not be that these murderers will escape altogether."¹⁴⁶ They wanted John to be cared for and educated at government expense and with government supervision.¹⁴⁷ They wanted the O'Connors to be moved; if the family consented, they could be re-established, in a larger city such as Hamilton or Toronto, where police could watch for their safety.¹⁴⁸ "I feel so deeply on the subject," said Irving, "that I am quite inclined to snap all the red tape in all the government offices."¹⁴⁹ But the government ignored these proposals. The Attorney-General's office decided simply on a single and final cash payment. The Middlesex Crown Attorney listed the O'Connor family's grievances: expulsion from Lucan, separation from friends and jobs, loss of home and belongings, boycott in the city; and all of the notorious publicity that young John O'Connor had

brought them. Since February of 1880, the Crown Attorney had spent \$1074.20--for board in the city before they moved to a house; rent for the house; board for John and the constable guards; Michael O'Connor's wages as a guard; six months' pasture for O'Connor's cow; and various cash advances to Mary O'Connor. The O'Connors had none of that money left. Hutchinson suggested a \$500 final settlement in compensation for all they had suffered.¹⁵⁰

Attorney-General Mowat accepted the suggestion, ordering the Crown Attorney to present his proposal formally, in a letter to the Attorney-General. Mowat wanted a letter so that he could show that the payment was the idea of the prosecutors and not his own. "Do not suggest the payment is so as not to estrange them from our side," he directed, "as this could easily be misrepresented."¹⁵¹ He explained that he feared the case being raised in the Legislature. Mowat took no chances: he did not pay the O'Connors until the Legislature rose from its spring sitting.¹⁵²

But William Donnelly had formed new schemes. John Purtell was quarrelsome and nervous, drinking hard in the bars of London and boasting how easily he could earn the \$4000 reward.¹⁵³ William Donnelly wanted the Attorney-General's office to hire Francis West to follow Purtell. Hutchinson doubted that Mowat would be interested. He thought it a dubious plan himself: "We have been so often deceived."¹⁵⁴ When at Donnelly's insistence he asked Mowat's office for funds,¹⁵⁵ he was turned down flatly.¹⁵⁶ The Donnelly prosecutions would not be renewed without unavoidable new evidence. A Liberal and an admirer of Premier Mowat, William Donnelly felt betrayed and bewildered. "It seems strange," he wondered, "that the Attorney-General,

will not adopt some means of finding out all about the murder as I am confident he could if he chose."¹⁵⁷ He threatened to go after Mowat in his own way: "We will send a petition down signed by the leading Reformers of the county asking Mr. Mowat to do it--and if he will then refuse we will borrow money ourselves and hire him."¹⁵⁸ Donnelly planned to get new evidence, force new trials, apply again for a change of venue.¹⁵⁹

But the Vigilant killers felt safe and content. After the trial, their lawyer Hugh MacMahon demanded the weapons that the London police still held as evidence. He wanted Martin McLaughlin's rifle, Patrick Ryder's revolver, and a revolver found in James Carroll's trunk. MacMahon and his clients were confident that all prosecutions were over for ever. For a month MacMahon pestered Irving and Hutchinson to get these pieces of evidence back. His manner was smug and peremptory.¹⁶⁰ Irving called his requests "preposterous;"¹⁶¹ the guns might still be needed in future. "It is surprising," said Irving as MacMahon persisted, "that considering MacMahon's position at the bar and the very frequent occasions in which he has been employed by the Crown (quite one of the inner circle) if I might use such an expression--that he does not use more tact."¹⁶² The London police kept the guns.

In Biddulph, Vigilants called a mass meeting on March 7, in the Cedar Swamp School House. They and their supporters from Biddulph and surrounding townships gathered to organize a fund-raising campaign to pay the legal costs of the trials. They discussed the sad financial plight of the six defendants and praised them as brave local heroes: "These are not the class of men to make nocturnal visits.

They would sooner burn at the stake than touch a cent's worth of property that was not their own."¹⁶³ The chairman urged his audience to be generous: "It behooves us as men, brethren and citizens not to stand by and see them go to the wall." The Cedar Swamp crowd applauded. Another speaker rose to congratulate the killers: "I deem it prudent and right for a committee to take a stand against lawless oppression and midnight rapine." He too asked for compassion: "We will not, I say, stand idly by and allow them to be sold out, and they and their little ones turned adrift on the wide world." Committees were formed to canvass each separate community--Exeter and Lucan and Granton and London, Usborne and Blanshard and London and McGillivray townships, and all of the concessions of Biddulph.

Patrick Ryder Sr. was in charge of the city of London. Straight-faced, he called on Crown Attorney Hutchinson at his office in the county courthouse where he asked him to subscribe to the Biddulph Defence Fund. Hutchinson kept his temper, then unburdened himself to Irving afterwards: "I told him I would not like to say what I thought about it, and so he gave it up at last, apparently much surprised that I would not help the poor boys, who had suffered so much and had been put to so much expense."¹⁶⁴

Martin McLaughlin called in person too, to ask for the return of his rifle; but again Hutchinson refused to release it.¹⁶⁵ James Carroll also called. On February 5 the Middlesex County Court had fired him from his constable's job, for "disinclination to aid in the discovery of crime."¹⁶⁶ But he demanded nevertheless to be paid for arresting Johannah Donnelly in St. Thomas, when he had brought her back to Biddulph to be murdered. Hutchinson had to admit that he

probably would be paid.¹⁶⁷

While Carroll and McLaughlin and Patrick Ryder and all of the other Vigilants were safe at home again, the Donnelly survivors and the Crown prosecutors continued to hope that some day they would be punished. Then, in April of 1881, Biddulph's invincible secrecy cracked; the whole Donnelly case seemed suddenly re-opened.

On February 9, 1881; within a week of Carroll's acquittal, Michael Feeheley died at his farm on the Roman Line. Improvident father of William the Vigilant and of James the Donnellys' betrayer, he left his widow and his children with only his farm and his debts. The Feeheley family could not afford the rent for the Donnelly farm which they had farmed since the spring after the murders. The Donnelly survivors sued in chancery for the one year's arrears.¹⁶⁸ But the Feeheleys could not afford even to keep their own farm: on February 21 it was sold at auction for funds to pay some of their creditors. Vigilant Michael Carroll purchased the farm for \$5005, promising to pay to the widow and her family another \$500, as a gesture of good will. But when other Vigilants who were Feeheley creditors demanded to be paid from that promised \$500, Michael Carroll changed his mind; he would not pay if that money would not go to Feeheleys.¹⁶⁹ After the family had waited for a month, James and William Feeheley grew belligerent.

James Feeheley met pseudo-detective Francis West in Lucan. He said he was going to fight, no matter who seemed to be against them. "I know I will die a hard death," he said, "but I will not give in to Christ himself."¹⁷⁰ Francis West asked him what he meant.

"Both parties are against me," Feeheley answered, "the Donnellys and

the Vigilants." He swore that he would be revenged on them all.

Francis West and Patrick and William Donnelly were still in Biddulph, waiting for just such an opportunity.¹⁷¹ Patrick Donnelly and West had hidden in the Cedar Swamp School one night, to watch for a Vigilant meeting.¹⁷² And, especially, they had watched and waited for the Feeheleys. In mid-April, James Carroll quarrelled with the two Feeheley brothers. Like Carroll's prison quarrel with John Purtell, perhaps this could be turned to Donnelly advantage. The Feeheleys called James Carroll a killer. "Biddulph would be well rid of Feeheleys,"¹⁷³ said Carroll, charging them both with abusive language. On April 11, constable Thomas Shoebottom arrested the two brothers at the homestead which their family no longer owned. Their trial was scheduled for April 16, in Lucan.

On the day of the trial, constable Shoebottom drove James Feeheley into Lucan. In the buggy on the Roman Line, Feeheley began to talk about Carroll his enemy. "Carroll ought to be smarter than to have anything to do with the murders, but he was not," James Feeheley said, "for he was there at the murders as sure as I am riding in this buggy."¹⁷⁴

In the Lucan courtroom Carroll saw the folly of fighting with these two men who had been witnesses to the Donnelly killings. Withdrawing his charge Carroll paid all the court costs. But William Feeheley rushed up to the magistrate, to charge James Carroll with threatening. Then Feeheley reconsidered. "Never mind," he said, "I can get a better warrant out than that for him." Outside on the Lucan street, William Feeheley tore off his coat and challenged James Carroll to fight. He called Carroll a murderer and said he could

prove it. When Carroll would not fight he challenged another Vigilant bystander, who also cowered and would not fight. "If they don't let us alone," said Feeheley, "we will squeal and hang the whole of them."¹⁷⁵ Francis West, who stood on the street watching, hurried to tell Patrick Donnelly.

Despite his chancery lawsuit against the Feeheleys, Patrick Donnelly started to be friendly with James and William. He had always suspected them of being involved in the murders. A week after William's outburst in Lucan, Patrick Donnelly rode out with James Feeheley to visit at the old Feeheley homestead. They passed William Feeheley on his way into Lucan to try to get the money that Michael Carroll still owed. "If we do not get the money we will hang every one of them,"¹⁷⁶ James Feeheley said. Patrick Donnelly accused him again at being at the murders. "I was there," Feeheley said in remorse, "there is not any person in the world that I would sooner see or liked than your brother Tom."

Donnelly and James Feeheley rode on to the Feeheley home for supper. Later that evening they met William again, at a bonfire by the Roman Line roadside. Donnelly asked how he had fared in Lucan. They had come to no settlement, William Feeheley said, and he threatened again to hang them all.

"You could do that if you liked," Patrick Donnelly said, "because you know all about the murders."

"I saw the whole thing," said William Feeheley, "I was inside Whalen's fence. Jack Whalen seen it also."

"Bill I always thought you knew something about it."

"Pat for God's sake forgive me," he said, "as I was drawn into it by

others."

"I will," said Patrick Donnelly, "if you will tell the whole thing."

Then William Feeheley promised that he would.

Donnelly and James Feeheley left the fire and went back to the Feeheley homestead. That night in bed they talked again of the murders. "Paddy I am about to leave Biddulph now," said James Feeheley, "there was only one thing I ever done I was sorry for. That was selling Tom to the Vigilant sons of bitches." Patrick Donnelly asked how he had sold him. Then James Feeheley told of going to the Donnelly house to visit and to spy. "I did not think they would murder them," he said, "if I did I would not have done it."

"I did not think you would do that to poor Tom," said Donnelly, "why did you not tell them at the trial?"

"I would have told," Feeheley said, "only the way they talked to me of being an informer."

And the next morning they talked some more.

"If I could give one oath and then leave the country I would hang every one of them," James Feeheley said. Patrick Donnelly asked him to do it.

"I would," said Feeheley, "only I do not want to be kept here over fall."

Then James Feeheley talked to others. He told a Lucan banker the names of nineteen killers whom he had seen at the Donnelly home. Father John Connolly came to Mrs. Feeheley, paying her \$350 himself, to make peace and to keep her sons quiet. When the priest's action finally prodded the Vigilants to pay the \$500 which Michael Carroll had promised, Mrs. Feeheley gave the priest back his money.¹⁷⁸ But

the \$500 went to the widow and not to James or to William.

On April 26, the Feeheleys were to take the Grand Trunk train for Michigan, leaving Biddulph forever. On the last day, Patrick Donnelly met William Feeheley again on the Roman Line. He asked about the \$500. "It does not seem as though we are going to get it," Feeheley said.

"If the Feeheleys were murdered and I to know about it I would get up and tell," said Patrick Donnelly.

"I have a notion," Feeheley replied, "to go and have fifty of them arrested." Then he told the names of all of the Vigilants he had seen-- "About every man in the Cedar Swamp Line was mostly at the murders."

He told who had carried Thomas Donnelly back into the house, and who had split his head with the spade. He told about the Vigilance Committee--its bylaws, its oath, and the schoolhouse inner room. Patrick Donnelly asked him again to take out a warrant. "I would, but it would not be safe while my folks are in the country," Feeheley said, "if my folks were out of the country I would hang them all."

"If you will not have those men arrested and you know all about it, I look upon you as big a murderer as any one of the party," Patrick Donnelly told him.

But the Feeheleys were packing to leave for Michigan. Robert Keefe Sr. helped to bring some of their belongings into Lucan with his wagon and team. James Feeheley on the way told Keefe of the killers whom he had seen. ¹⁷⁹ John McConnell, a merchant of Lucan, was helping to ship the Feeheleys' furniture. McConnell, who was also agent for a sewing machine company, threatened to re-possess their machine. He left for the Feeheley homestead to seize it. He took constable Thomas

Shoebottom along. "Jim might act a little contrary," he said.¹⁸⁰ Borrowing a horse in Lucan and racing by a different route to his home, Feeheley arrived before McConnell and Shoebottom. He stood at the gate and would not let them enter, until Robert Keefe Sr. arrived to settle the dispute by signing a guarantee that the machine would be shipped to Michigan, when Mrs. Feeheley sent the rest of the money.

Then James Feeheley looked around at the Feeheley homestead. "The murderers of Biddulph have put us off our place," he said; "they want to get us out of the country for fear we will fall on them. We have taken people's word before but we do not feel like taking people's word now, as now we are left without a home. It is hard to leave a home where a man is born."

"It is hard," John McConnell said.

"Michael Carroll beat us out of \$500, but I could make more than that out of it. I will make them give a better farm than this one they took from us."

"Jim," said McConnell, "I guess you have got it pretty well in your own hands."

"Yes," said Feeheley, bitter and boastful, "we went to London to save their necks and look now how they have used us. The sons of bitches, I could hang the whole of them."

"Jim you must know a good deal about this affair."

"Look here Mac I have got them in my own hands." Feeheley told Shoebottom and McConnell of spying at the Donnelly homestead for the Vigilants, and of spying at Whalen's Corners outside William Donnelly's home. He told them the names of the killers.

That same evening at the railroad station as the Feeheleys were

leaving, James Feeheley called McConnell aside behind the depot building. They settled the account for the moving of the furniture.

"Mac you have always used me white," said Feeheley.

"I always try to use every man white," John McConnell replied.

"You are as square a man as ever I met. Those other sons of bitches, I could hang them if I had protection."

McConnell turned to constable Thomas Shoebottom who waited close by. "Tom do you hear what Jim says?" Shoebottom came over to them. "Jim says if he had protection he would hang the whole lot of them," McConnell said.

"I would protect you," Shoebottom promised.

"If you will come over to Saginaw I will tell you all about the murders," said Feeheley. Then James and William boarded the train, leaving Biddulph and Canada.

But Patrick Donnelly went to London where he told Charles Hutchinson all he had heard.¹⁸¹ Donnelly went to Thomas Shoebottom and persuaded him to tell too.¹⁸² Robert Keefe Sr. also told. And John McConnell went down to London to the Crown Attorney's office.

"How are things in Biddulph?" Hutchinson's deputy asked him. "They are pretty wild again," McConnell replied.¹⁸³ He repeated the things that Feeheley had told him.

Hutchinson took the train to Toronto, to the office of the Attorney-General.¹⁸⁴ Oliver Mowat was absent from the capital; Adam Crooks, the Minister of Education, was Acting Attorney-General. On May 16, two days after the meeting in Toronto, Crooks came in haste to London to consult with the Middlesex Crown Attorney again. They met at the palace of the Catholic Bishop of London,¹⁸⁵ for Father

John Connolly, a priest of that diocese, was involved in the covering of the Feeheley's evidence. Hutchinson was excited at the new possibilities. "James Feeheley's evidence in the event of another trial would carry sufficient weight to turn the score in favour of a conviction," he said confidently. "From what I have heard I don't think Carroll's nerve would stand another trial," he told Crooks.¹⁸⁶

In the absence of Oliver Mowat, Acting Attorney-General Crooks authorized Hutchinson to proceed against the Feeheleys.¹⁸⁷ By the end of the same week, the Feeheleys' disclosures were public. "Murder Will Out," the London Free Press proclaimed, "The Donnelly Tragedy Opened Up Afresh--James Feeheley Tells What He Saw On That Dark Night."¹⁸⁸ People on the streets talked of the Feeheleys. To the horror of the government in Toronto, the Donnelly story was current again. And Patrick Donnelly announced that this time for certain the Vigilants would be brought to justice.¹⁸⁹ Acting Attorney-General Crooks was aghast at the publicity--"so imprudent and reckless a publication," he complained.¹⁹⁰

But the Feeheley prosecutions were already set in progress. Two days after the meeting with the Bishop and the Acting Attorney-General, Patrick Donnelly laid an information in London which charged James and William Feeheley with murder.¹⁹¹ A United States marshall arrested them both in East Saginaw, Michigan, where they had jobs in a blacksmith shop and foundry.¹⁹² Charles Hutchinson with Patrick Donnelly and a constable travelled to Michigan to parley. Americans who had heard of the Donnellys of Canada gawked excitedly at Patrick Donnelly, surprised that he was only human.

"That's him!"

"Who? The little fellow?"

"Yes, the small one."

"My eye! I thought these Donnellys were giants."¹⁹³

But the Feeheleys hired a lawyer and refused to come back to Canada, although Hutchinson guaranteed that he would not prosecute if the brothers would help convict the killers. While the London constable stayed in Saginaw to guard the Feeheleys at the gaol, Hutchinson and Donnelly travelled to Detroit to arrange extradition hearings. On May 26, Hutchinson and Donnelly, and John O'Connor with his mother to watch him, travelled back to Detroit from London for the hearing. Two days later, Hutchinson went to Detroit again, bringing Shoebottom and McConnell to tell their stories.¹⁹⁴ The extradition commissioner ruled that the Feeheleys must leave the United States.

The Attorney-General's Department in Ontario prepared a formal extradition request which was sent to Ottawa and then forwarded to Washington. When Washington officials had approved the request, they notified Detroit where the Feeheleys were in gaol. An Ontario provincial government detective came from Toronto to bring them back to London.¹⁹⁵

On July 10 and 12, the Feeheleys appeared for preliminary examination, stubborn and sullen in the prisoners' dock. Despite the vehemence of their lawyer Hugh MacMahon, the magistrate committed them for trial.¹⁹⁶ The Middlesex Crown Attorney was enthusiastic. Telling the Attorney-General of the progress, he mentioned the chance of confessions, a possible change of venue, and new trials for a host of Vigilant suspects.¹⁹⁷

He put the Feeheleys in separate cells in the Middlesex gaol.

"Our best chance now," he said, "is that the Feeheleys will eventually tell all they know, which is undoubtedly everything."¹⁹⁸ But like the six Vigilants in those cells before them, the Feeheleys refused to help at all.

The Crown prosecutor prepared to put them on trial, charged with abetting in the murder of Thomas Donnelly. In September at the Middlesex Fall Assizes a Grand Jury indicted them.¹⁹⁹ Subpoenas were issued to witnesses for their trial.²⁰⁰ Hugh MacMahon filed writs demanding bail if his clients were not tried at that same Assizes.²⁰¹

But the prosecutor knew from experience that a trial in Middlesex would be useless. "A trial here would be the merest farce, and should not be attempted," Hutchinson told the Attorney-General's office.²⁰² His plan was to delay in the hope that eventually the Feeheleys would co-operate. Robert Keefe Sr. and James Keefe Sr. came in to the gaol from Biddulph to help. They urged the two Feeheleys to help the Crown, to save themselves and punish the killers. James said that he would wait to see if they could be bailed; if they had to stay in gaol, then he would speak.²⁰³

But Attorney-General Oliver Mowat intervened. The Middlesex Crown Attorney had told him that a trial in Middlesex would be pointless. He had told him that the Feeheleys would confess if they could not be bailed. And he had told him that if they did co-operate, a whole new group of Vigilants could be brought to trial. Then the Donnelly-Irish-Catholic political plague would be upon Mowat and his Liberals again. Mowat acted at once: without even consulting the Crown prosecutors, he ordered that both of the Feeheleys be set free on bail.

Crown Attorney Hutchinson wrote angrily to Mowat in Toronto.²⁰⁴

He told him--what Mowat already knew--that the prosecutions were utterly ruined. He shared his rage and disappointment with Irving:

"Queen's Counsel and County Attorneys propose and the Attorney-General disposes. I have a letter from Scott that the Feeheleys are to be bailed. So ends the great farce of the Donnelly murder trials," he said.²⁰⁵

"This bail matter has given me more annoyance than I can give you an idea of. I would like to know whether Mr. Mowat consulted you before consenting. I can hardly think that he did, and yet it would seem such a want of courtesy, apart from every other consideration, to consent without speaking to us, that if it is so, I can only suppose that he was so tired of the Donnelly case as to seize the first opportunity of getting rid of it for ever. . . Now of course there is an end of all this. We have thrown away our trump cards, and may as well throw down our hands and give up."²⁰⁶

On October 7, 1881, on Oliver Mowat's order, Ontario's Superior Court in Toronto issued the Feeheleys' bail.²⁰⁷ On October 24, Vigilants posted the \$4000 bond required for each brother.²⁰⁸ Hutchinson made one fast and fruitless complaint: Vigilants, suspected killers, were hardly appropriate bondsmen.²⁰⁹ Mowat's deputy John Scott replied, tartly, that being a Vigilant did not make one an unfit bondsman.²¹⁰ The Feeheleys walked away free. "I have very little doubt," said the Crown Attorney, "that when the time comes, principals and bailsmen will all be missing."²¹¹ He did not care anymore: "I shall be glad if the Feeheleys fail to appear, as I don't see much use in going on."²¹²

In the next provincial election two years later, William Ralph Meredith and the Conservatives campaigned as the friends and defenders of Ontario's Irish Catholics. The party issued a political pamphlet which spread about the province--"Facts For the Irish Electors" it

was called.²¹³ And in all of the twenty-four years that Oliver Mowat ruled in Ontario, the Conservative Opposition never came closer to beating him than they did in 1883. In the riding of London itself, William Ralph Meredith won by acclamation; no Liberal even bothered to try to run against him. Edmund Meredith was elected mayor of London in 1882; in the 1883 provincial election he ran in North Middlesex for the Conservatives and outpolled John Waters by three votes to one.²¹⁴ Mowat's Liberal majority in the Legislature was substantially reduced. The Catholic vote went against him in ridings all over the province.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, Mowat and his party were back in power again. With quiet, tactical foresight, Mowat had out-manoeuvred Meredith and the Conservatives.

Even before Mowat aborted the Feeheley trials, Patrick Donnelly left Biddulph and returned to his trade of carriage-making.²¹⁶ William Donnelly and his family lived in the house in Lucan, beside the O'Connors' burned-out vacant lot. Robert Donnelly, a teamster in Glencoe, visited in Lucan often. The O'Connors were gone. Vigilants and Lucan merchants like the Stanleys wished that the Donnellys were gone, too. Francis West, who also was still in Lucan, suspected by the time of the preliminary hearing that the Feeheley prosecutions would fail. By informing Patrick Donnelly of William Feeheley's disclosures, West had allied himself with the losing side; the Donnellys after all were not going to make his fortune.

Francis West reconsidered. The Donnellys had given him a bad reputation: he was suspected of an arson,²¹⁷ of stealing a cow and a chicken,²¹⁸ of stealing rifles from the Lucan Armoury.²¹⁹ His money was running out; he had already pawned his watch. He was drinking

too much in Lucan hotels. Francis West decided to change sides. Instead of chasing their killers who were all going free, he would make his name by trapping Donnellys instead. Francis West would be hailed as the man who finally drove the Donnellys away.

After dark on October 9, 1881, Francis West set out to burn down the Stanley-Dight grain mill. His helper was Simon Howe, a Lucan loiterer, who had stolen from bed in the Howe house dressed only in socks and underwear. With a brace and bit Francis West drilled three holes in the wall of the mill. The first hole went into the engine room where a fire could not spread; the second hit a studding; but the third went into the grain warehouse itself. Simon Howe poured coal oil through Francis West's third hole. When he lit matches, the wind blew them out. Suddenly guards burst from the inside of the mill. Simon Howe ran off in his underwear; Francis West ran away too.

Francis West had informed the Stanleys of a plot to burn their mill that night, claiming that the Donnellys had planned it. On the evening of the arson attempt, Francis West laid a charge before magistrate and mill-owner William Stanley which accused the Donnellys of arson.²²⁰ He named William Donnelly, Robert Donnelly, Simon Howe, and Cornelius Carty, another friend of the Donnelly brothers. The next day William Stanley issued warrants to arrest William and Robert Donnelly.²²¹ The Donnellys were thrown into Lucan's lockup, where strayed geese and livestock and Lucan drunks and tramps and the Vigilant murderers had all stayed before them. There they had to wait until October 13, when three Lucan magistrates held a hearing.

Francis West on the witness stand told his tale of the Donnelly plot to burn the mill. William Donnelly came to him at the

time of fall threshing to ask his help in the arson. They met late at night with lanterns in the Donnelly stable. Robert Donnelly swore that he wanted to see all of Lucan in ashes. William Donnelly developed the plan: on the night that Howe and Kent would do the burning, he William Donnelly (unknown to his wife) would craftily feed his baby brandy instead of milk. When the baby was drunk and sick, Robert Donnelly would leave the house on the pretext of fetching a nurse. He would sneak downtown where he would pretend to help put out the Stanley-Dight fire; thus Donnellys and their friends would never be suspected. On the day after this plotting, Francis West had to go into Lucan again to see the doctor about pains in his wisdom teeth. He told William Stanley's son in Lucan about the plot and promised to keep him informed. Robert Donnelly collected the arsonist equipment: coal oil, bottles, rags, brace and bit, coveralls, dark inconspicuous night-time hats, and two potatoes to plug up the holes which they drilled in the warehouse wall. Francis West identified the very same potatoes in court.²²²

West finished his long tall story. Although no Donnellys were found anywhere near the fire, the three Lucan magistrates sent William and Robert to gaol in London, to be tried in Middlesex County Court. Their friend Cornelius Carty was set free on bail; it was only Donnellys they were after.²²³ An insurance company threatened to cancel every fire policy in Lucan if the Donnelly brothers were bailed.²²⁴

Then Francis West had another story, that Patrick Donnelly too had been shrewdly trapped by West into criminal acts. Patrick Donnelly, although forty miles away making carriages in Aylmer, had helped West to rob the Lucan Armouries. They planned to fire the stolen rifles through William Donnelly's windows, to gain sympathy

for the Donnellys and their cause. West volunteered to testify against Patrick Donnelly if he himself were not prosecuted.²²⁵

The Lucan merchants hired a lawyer to help prepare the case against the Donnellys. The lawyer helped to gather twelve Lucan witnesses who would help to convict the Donnellys of arson.²²⁶ "All the law-abiding and respectable people at Lucan and in the vicinity are in favor of West's evidence being received and are anti-Donnelly,"²²⁷ the lawyer assured Crown Attorney Hutchinson who was supposed to conduct the prosecutions. The lawyer asked Attorney-General Mowat for permission to grant Francis West immunity in return for helping to prosecute Patrick Donnelly.²²⁸

But Hutchinson and the judge of Middlesex County Court realized that this was all vindictive folly. William and Robert Donnelly were brought into County Court on the same day that they arrived from Lucan. On the next day, October 15, despite the howls of the merchants and insurance men of Lucan, both were set free on minimal bail.²²⁹ Their trial was scheduled for November 8. The prosecutor did not even try to have Patrick Donnelly arrested.

Hutchinson knew that prosecution was absurd, a plot by the Stanleys and their faction to get rid of Donnellys. He told the Attorney-General so. He urged him not to make deals with West who was only plotting to earn a local reputation. It was West himself who had burgled the Armoury and who had almost burned down the mill. There was only the word of Francis West that the Donnellys had been involved at all.²³⁰ But from experience Hutchinson expected Mowat to rule against the Donnellys.²³¹ Mowat did grant Francis West immunity²³² if he could help to convict and discredit Donnellys. Mowat

wanted Donnellys out of the newspapers and out of his way. When Middlesex Crown Attorney Hutchinson would have nothing to do with these prosecutions, Mowat assigned the cases to the Perth County Crown Attorney.²³³

The arson case was tried in the Middlesex courthouse, in County Criminal Court, on November 8 and 9. Robert and William Donnelly were speedily acquitted.²³⁴ William returned to Lucan, Robert to Glencoe.²³⁵ Charged himself with chicken and cow thefts in Lucan, Francis West quietly disappeared,²³⁶ one more of the traitors and fakes trying to profit from the Donnelly murders.

But there really was no place for Donnellys in Biddulph. Patrick was a wagon-maker; Robert was a teamster; both were established in communities far from Biddulph and had no wish to return. William Donnelly with his crippled foot and restless temperament could not and would not operate the family farm himself. The Donnelly survivors rented their newly built home and their farmlands to a longtime Biddulph friend, John Kent.²³⁷ Kent had to resist his Vigilant neighbours. Kent fought with William Thompson about the costs of draining ditches along the north boundary of the sixth-concession property.²³⁸ Patrick Ryder quarrelled with the Donnellys and their tenant over drainage on the boundary of the other Donnelly farm which bordered Ryder's land on the seventh concession.²³⁹ In October of 1882, John Kent and Robert Keefe fought a battle on the Roman Line with a gang of young Vigilants. Stones were thrown and one man was shot before the warfare was over.²⁴⁰ "I see the Vigilants still keep up warfare," William Donnelly said to Hutchinson, "but I suppose they cannot help it, and will continue so till the rope shuts off some of

their breath."²⁴¹

After more than a year without paid employment while he helped the Crown prosecutors for only his expenses, William Donnelly was in debt. A promoter offered to pay him well to travel about the country on exhibit. A showman had made John O'Connor such an offer--\$20 a night to go on tour; John's parents had turned it down.²⁴² Hutchinson advised William Donnelly against the theatre tour, although an eager public would guarantee profit: "If you could go about like Peter the hermit preaching the wrongs of your family without money and without price, then I would say God speed you, as indeed I will say at any rate."²⁴³ Through the long months of working together as prosecutors, Hutchinson and Donnelly had built a lasting mutual respect. "I can never repay you," he told the Crown Attorney,²⁴⁴ and accepted Charles Hutchinson's advice: "It would be my meanest turn to do anything contrary to your wishes, being as you were a father to the remaining members of the family for the last year."²⁴⁵

But he needed work somewhere until his debts were paid. He made plans to open a boarding house at Clarence and Horton Streets in London.²⁴⁶ Then he reconsidered. He had letters of reference from important men of the county who respected and admired him--Charles Hutchinson the County Attorney, William Glass the sometimes-ambivalent Middlesex Sheriff, John Campbell who was London's mayor, James Magee the Liberal lawyer who had (occasionally) helped in the prosecutions.²⁴⁷ Ever since the trials, Hutchinson had urged him to leave Biddulph. "I think Lucan air bad," he said.²⁴⁸ In the spring of 1882 William Donnelly did leave finally,²⁴⁹ to work as weighmaster for a coal company in the small mining town of Rendville, Ohio.²⁵⁰ His wife and

child joined him two months later when he was settled and established.²⁵¹

But he still kept track of Biddulph. Before he left, he tried one last time to have at least one Vigilant punished by justice—not for murder, but for illegal distilling. William and Patrick Donnelly had watched the man steadily for the two years since the murders; he was one of the main contributors to the Vigilant Defence Fund. They saw him unloading vinegar casks full of homemade whisky at a Lucan hotel.²⁵² They informed Revenue Officers, who found distillery equipment hidden in his barn. But he was not punished. Reeve William Stanley and others appeared for the defence and persuaded the Revenue officer working on the case that the man had been framed.²⁵³ William Donnelly had left for Ohio by the time of the trial in April of 1882. But he wrote back angrily to tell Hutchinson what he thought: "If this ends in a fizzle I will send a letter to the London Free Press proving it is not a put-up job as your clever officer says."²⁵⁴

But fizzle it was, like the murder trials. The last of the Donnelly murder case died away gradually. Martin McLaughlin was given back his rifle, the murder weapon, in January of 1882,²⁵⁵ and Patrick Ryder got his revolver in March of 1883.²⁵⁶ In June of 1882, Oliver Mowat relieved the bondsmen of the six Vigilant defendants, leaving them on their own recognizance to appear when called, if ever.²⁵⁷

The fizzle was over.

CHAPTER 9

GLENCOE

William Donnelly returned from the coal mines of Ohio in April of 1883; he had been one year away from Canada. His brother Patrick still worked as a carriage-maker, quiet and successful in Thorold, Ontario. His brother Robert was living in Glencoe, in the southwest of Middlesex County. So was Jennie Currie who had moved there from St. Thomas. At the end of April William Donnelly visited old friends in Lucan and Biddulph. That same spring James Carroll left Biddulph for British Columbia, alone, forever.¹ William visited the Donnellys and Curries in Glencoe, deciding to settle there in that community where most of the remaining Donnellys lived.²

When Robert Donnelly had been sent to prison for the putative shooting at constable Samuel Everett, Robert had already been staying in Glencoe and intending to move there from Biddulph. When his penitentiary sentence expired in December of 1879, Robert Donnelly had returned to Glencoe. He moved only temporarily back into Lucan, to help in the prosecution of the killers of his family. After the first of James Carroll's trials, Robert Donnelly moved his furniture and belongings and family to Glencoe, to stay.³

He established a cartage and hauling business in the village. His business thrived; he owned the finest team of draft-horses in the Glencoe vicinity, famous and unexcelled in their feats of pulling-strength.⁴ He was popular and prominent, a leader in Glencoe commerce. He had cartage contracts with the Glencoe municipal council;⁵ he

worked for the council at road maintenance and construction;⁶ he operated the village animal pound.⁷ He transported the materials and arranged for the construction of a Glencoe community skating rink,⁸ in the centre of the village beside the Town Hall. In winter, the rink that Robert Donnelly had built was the site of village sport and entertainment--skating races, a masquerade carnival, and regular and popular public skating.⁹ Robert Donnelly was a village landlord¹⁰ too and an investor in promising real estate.¹¹ When a large local factory burned to the ground and all of its workers were left unemployed, it was Robert Donnelly who restored Glencoe's shocked economy, offering to haul the bricks for reconstruction free of charge, if the owner would begin at once to rebuild. Glencoe spokesmen responded with grateful praise for this offer from a generous citizen--"a very liberal offer from one who started in our village six years ago without a dollar."¹² Robert Donnelly was a success, a man whom the people of Glencoe might emulate. "Since coming to Glencoe^o about six years ago or shortly after the Biddulph tragedy," a village booster eulogized in 1886, "Mr. Donnelly has been very successful, having cleared over \$3000 at his occupation of teamster, and considers Glencoe a good money-making place for those who are willing to knuckle down to hard work."¹³

Such was the Donnelly reputation when William arrived in Glencoe. His brother-in-law James Currie was a constable in Glencoe, and had been a constable for two years past.¹⁴ William Donnelly decided on a constable's career. He was practised in the weapons and strategies of law: he had faced charges of stealing sheep fleeces, stealing a pistol, attempted abduction, arson, perjury, resisting arrest, and several counts of assault, including assault on a constable. He had

fought many times in courtrooms to establish his innocence. He had convictions for assault and for shooting. He had been in gaols several times, waiting for trials. He had served brief sentences for debt and for shooting at a constable. He had also fought in the law courts as a prosecutor, fending off Vigilant prosecutions of his family. For more than a year he had worked, indispensably, for the Crown prosecutors of his family's murderers.

After years of legal attack and defence, William Donnelly proposed to become a constable himself. Vigilants in Biddulph were apprehensive. "They thought I was coming back to play the James Carroll game on a lot of them," said Donnelly, sardonically.¹⁵ But he reassured them all. "I do not want the appointment to take advantage of Biddulph enemies," he said, "all I want is something to enable me to make an honest living. I am not Jim Carroll nor don't want to go to Biddulph to commit murder."¹⁶

In Glencoe where his brother was a thriving businessman and his brother-in-law was a constable, fifty-three civic leaders signed the petition for William Donnelly's appointment. They affirmed his "sobriety and intelligence and experience."¹⁷ The postmaster, the Baptist minister, the Presbyterian minister, the newspaper publisher, the magistrate, and the merchants of Glencoe signed. The reeve of Glencoe endorsed the appointment.¹⁸ The class who in Lucan despised Donnellys were in Glencoe avid Donnelly supporters. On October 1, 1883, William Donnelly was appointed a Middlesex county constable. He swore his constable's oath before Malcolm Leitch, Glencoe's magistrate--the oath that James Carroll had sworn in September of 1879, to "truly, faithfully and impartially perform the duties appertaining

to the said office, according to the best of my skill and ability. So help me God."¹⁹

In the two Glencoe years that followed, William Donnelly was a busy and conscientious constable. He battled thieves and gangs of rowdy tramps.²⁰ He swept drunks and vagrants from the village streets.²¹ He helped investigate a robbery and murder in Middlemiss, a smaller village east of Glencoe.²² He helped convict the hostess of a brothel in London East, tracking down her clients to have them testify.²³ At London's Western Fair he watched for illicit liquor sales at midway concessions.²⁴ He helped convict a fellow constable in Glencoe who was freeing prisoners in return for whisky bribes.²⁵ He kept order in Glencoe at the 1883 provincial election.²⁶ He was polling clerk at municipal elections.²⁷ With industry and with competence, he kept order in his village, his new home.

His brother Robert was himself one of the unruliest of residents. In late November of 1883, a clever thief was decimating Robert Donnelly's treasured flock of geese. Staying awake one night to guard, at four in the morning Robert heard the intruder, absconding with a plump goose under his arm. He beat the unfortunate burglar until his head was covered with cuts, and both of his eyes were black. The man turned out to be a derelict constable. Robert was charged with assault, his opponent with larceny. The fellow's face and Donnelly's bandaged fist were evidence enough of assault; but there was only Robert's word of goose-stealing. Robert was convicted; the thief was discharged.²⁸

In July of 1884, Robert interfered to make peace in a Glencoe barroom brawl. He bumped against one of the barroom crowd, a traveller

passing through the village. Later that evening on the street outside, the offended stranger attacked Robert Donnelly. Robert hit back only once. The man fell on the street. Constable Donnelly was sent for at once. Taking Robert into his custody, he telegraphed the Crown Attorney that the incident was under control. No charges were laid when all witnesses agreed that the injured man had been the aggressor. Robert nursed the man in his own home until he was well enough to travel. He paid for the doctors who had saved the man's life, paid the hotel bills, and paid him compensation for time lost convalescing in Glencoe.²⁹

At the Glencoe Fall Fair in 1885, Robert was involved in yet another brawl where his opponent was seriously injured. But his rowdy temper did not disturb his secure and respectable position in Glencoe.³⁰ The merchants and leaders of the community continued to hold him in high esteem and to smile at his violent peccadilloes. William Donnelly continued to police his brother Robert and everyone in his Glencoe jurisdiction. Then, in that summer of 1884, the Salvation Army invaded Glencoe.

General William Booth founded the Salvation Army in England in the 1850s. In February of 1880, the month of the Donnelly murders, the first Army contingent reached North America. The first service in Canada was in London's Victoria Park, in May of 1882.³¹ By September a troupe reached Toronto.³² In the streets and saloons of every community, Salvation Army Soldiers sought those most in need of their Salvation--the unemployed, slum-dwellers, prostitutes, drunkards. With drums and cymbals and tambourines, and hymns, they witnessed daily in public parades.³³ They generated enemies as well as enthusiasts. To

enemies they were unruly fanatics who disturbed the peace, scared horses, and tangled traffic on sidewalks and roads. Soldiers were sneered at, insulted, arrested. In London the Army drummer and thirty of her followers were imprisoned under a city bylaw against excessive noise. A Superior Court Justice in Toronto set them free, ruling the London bylaw illegal.³⁴ But other communities enacted their own anti-noise, anti-Army legislation. In Toronto the National Commissioner exhorted his Army. "Every true soldier," he said, "knows full well what he may expect."

He is quite confident if he lifts up a bold standard against sin, the devil will attack him, but with confidence in his God on he goes, tramp, tramp through the streets, lanes, alleys and slums crying out the glad tidings of Salvation night after night, braving the storms of abuse and criticism.³⁵

The Army marched closer to Glencoe--Seaforth, Brantford, St. Thomas--and closer--Strathroy, Bothwell, Wardsville.³⁶ The first Army scout arrived in Glencoe in September of 1883, exploring for a building to be temple and barracks.³⁷ An Army squad came, finally, in June of 1884--a leader and a half a dozen rank-and-file Soldiers. They scattered dismay as they marched through the Glencoe streets. Their hymns were martial, strident, defiant:

Hark! I hear the warriors shouting,
Now the hosts of hell we're routing;
Courage! onward! never doubting.
We shall win the day.
See the foe before us falling,
Sinners on the Saviour calling,
Throwing off the bondage galling
Join our glad array.³⁸

They held three inaugural assemblies in front of the Town Hall, announcing their message to the iniquitous of Glencoe.³⁹ A kind old rich and respected ex-minister who was converted to the Army faith

rented them a building for a barracks.⁴⁰

That summer and fall of 1884, Glencoe blustered with opinions for and against the Army. Some praised their good work of healing souls in worthy and innovative ways. The Soldiers reached a class of persons immune to conventional churches and Glencoe "should put up with a little noise if they are effective."⁴¹ "Do unto others," a charitable few suggested, "and support the Salvation Army kindly."⁴² But the greater number of villagers thought them freaks and obnoxious fanatics. To such folk, the Army attracted only "those whose whole life had been a mistake, by their own confession."⁴³ Their methods bred "sceptics and fanatics;"⁴⁴ their form of worship was religion by riot, "profane novelties,"⁴⁵ "vulgar variety-show tactics,"⁴⁶ enunciating the ridiculous heresy "that a howling rowdy may be a decent Christian."⁴⁷ Others worried about the "effect of their fanatical practices on the minds of children."⁴⁸ They resented "a falling off in attendance at the various churches in town since the advent of the Salvation Army."⁴⁹ They noted with relish examples of apparent Army destructiveness: a young married man who succumbed to religious insanity at an Army prayer meeting in Brantford,⁵⁰ a man at Guelph who reputedly drowned himself in a similar frenzy,⁵¹ a travelling salesman at Bothwell who was set upon ostensibly by an Army platoon, who used his head for a drum and left him bruised.⁵² Enemies wondered who had the greater claim to martyrdom--the Soldiers persecuted for the sake of their religion, or the rest of the populace who had to listen to them.⁵³

In the anti-Army vanguard in Glencoe were the loitering toughs of the community, the gangs of drunks and disorderly loungers who for two years had occupied constable Donnelly's attention. They infested

the village streets daily--at the billiard hall, the hotel, the store-front steps of exasperated merchants. They leaned on the post office window-sills until the postmaster erected a barbed-wire barrier.⁵⁴ But with the Army's invasion, the community questioned whether Salvationists or bored delinquents were the greater affront. It was constable Donnelly who had to answer, charged as he was with controlling all disturbance.

In July of 1885, after a year of relatively inconspicuous Army campaigns, a citizen formally complained about noisy Army manoeuvres. Constable Donnelly was armed with a warrant to arrest a supposedly disorderly Army captain. With at least his accustomed alacrity, Donnelly marched to the Army's Wardsville barracks where he handcuffed his quarry. He took the offending captain to the Glencoe lockup. Several gentler persons complained that their constable's zeal was excessive.⁵⁵ But William Donnelly denied that he had been unkind. He denied that handcuffs had been uncalled-for, even though the captain was passive and unresisting. Donnelly explained that he had no urge to go limping after an escapee: "I am a little tender in the front feet, and to prevent any chance of giving an exhibition of speed across the country in pursuit of a prisoner, I will in most all cases use the handcuffs." But one of Donnelly's critics was especially persistent, long-winded, and vacuous.⁵⁶ Recalling the empty testimony of many witnesses at James Carroll's trials, Donnelly offered a derisive parody of his critic's chatter:

To me it appears something like a controversy that once took place between a Chief Justice and an Irishman who was giving evidence in a murder trial. -His Honor- "Now Pat, on your oath, what did pass between you and the prisoner." Pat- "Och, thin, plase your Lordship, sure I sees Phelim atop the wall. 'Paddy,' says he; 'What?' says I; 'Whist,' says he; 'Hush,' says I. And that's all plase your Lordship."⁵⁷

He made it plain that he would continue to keep his village in order, firm in his duty against any disturbers, including the Salvation Army:

I wish the Army to distinctly understand that I will put a stop to their can-can and war dances on Main Street, Glencoe, with which they endanger the lives of ladies who drive along the street, attending to their business.

And so the familiar rhythms of quarrelling arrived to govern Donnelly lives again. In September of 1885, the Glencoe Army contingent received a new commander. Her name was Miss Emma Rees, she was twenty years old, and held the rank of Army Lieutenant. She was burly and huge and aggressive. Her previous command was in Lucan, whence her worried superiors had transferred her after brawls and pitched battles with the post-Donnelly gangs of that still-violent village.⁵⁸

The collision of Lucan memories and noisy Army parades was too much for the restless temper of Robert Donnelly: he organized a war on Emma Rees and her Soldiers. He gathered about him a cluster of the young village loungers, eager delinquents in need of a leader and example. Robert Donnelly had earned the esteem of the village's establishment, and he had too the notoriety that the quarrels in Biddulph and his Glencoe mischiefs had endowed him with forever. The combination was irresistible: he appealed to every Glencoeite, respectable or criminal. When Robert Donnelly decided to make war, most of the village were allies and patrons.

On Saturday night, October 1, 1885, Emma Rees led her Soldiers forth on parade. They passed near the Donnelly house where Mrs. Annie Donnelly and her child stood gaping. Robert Donnelly stood by with four of his protégés. The two parties collided on the sidewalk and Annie Donnelly was forced into the street. Scuffle and confusion.

ensued, blame and counter-blame, and dispute about public right-of-way.⁵⁹ Later that night anonymous marauders burglarized the Glencoe barracks and made off with both of the Army bass drums.⁶⁰ The drums were central to Army iconography, and essential to keep the beat in marches.

On October 14, Robert Donnelly charged Emma Rees with assault, alleging that she had struck Annie Donnelly on the shoulder with her tambourine and knocked her and her child off the sidewalk. Malcolm Leitch, Glencoe's only magistrate, convicted the Army Lieutenant and fined her one dollar plus costs.⁶¹ The experience persuaded Emma Rees that her notion of justice could not be fulfilled in Glencoe. She marched instead to London, where she charged Robert Donnelly and three of his companions with unlawfully disturbing religious worship. The day after Emma Rees' own conviction, the London magistrate convicted the four Glencoe men and fined them each five dollars.⁶² Emma Rees proceeded to the courthouse office of County Crown Attorney Hutchinson to inform him of her treatment in Glencoe. He advised her to appeal her own conviction, at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions in London in December.⁶³

On the day of his trial in London, Robert Donnelly followed her all around the city. "I will tear your heart out," he threatened theatrically.⁶⁴ He watched her enter the Crown Attorney's office. When she came back out he was there again. Leaning drunkenly upon his arm was a recent convert to her Glencoe Army, now led by the wiles of Robert Donnelly in apostate debauchery. Donnelly followed her to the train station and crowded around her in the waiting room. On the train to Glencoe he continued to harrass her, while a timid conductor

declined to interfere. "I will send you to the cooler," he assured her. "God only knows what a fiend that man is," said Emma Rees in Christian dismay.

But Charles Hutchinson took her under his firm judicial wing. He used the fines paid by Donnelly and his co-defendants to finance Emma Rees' own costs.⁶⁵ He tried his best to be soothing. "Your mission necessarily brings you in contact with bad men, in the hope of doing good," he reminded her, "and you must expect to arouse their hatred and opposition. It is one of the crosses that you have to carry."⁶⁶ He told her what to do in future: "Never in the least degree take the law into your own hands. Apply to me and I'll do what I can for you."⁶⁷ He offered advice too to his friend William Donnelly, whom he counted upon to keep peace between Glencoe and the Army: "Whatever you may think of their methods, they are endeavouring to do good, and have accomplished much good here and elsewhere. At any rate in a free country they are entitled to protection and must have it fully accorded to them. Robert is apparently pursuing a similar course to that which led to such fearful consequences in Biddulph."⁶⁸

But Hutchinson's well-meaning interventions went unheeded. In the week that followed, Glencoe Army parades were stoned, twice, by Glencoe juveniles who fled before they could be identified.⁶⁹ As December approached with its Quarter Sessions and Emma Rees' appeal, the war against the Army escalated. One of Donnelly's veterans, Colin McKellar, disrupted Army services every Sunday in November. On Sunday, November 29, McKellar sat down in the Salvation Army barracks as evening worship began. When the Soldiers began to sing he intermingled his own boisterous hymnal parodies. Three times Lieutenant Rees ordered him to leave. Then she tried to pull him out by force. When

Colin McKellar held fast to his seat, Emma Rees' Christian charity vanished: she slapped him on-the face.

Colin McKellar summoned the Lieutenant for assault. Since Glencoe's magistrate Malcolm Leitch had died in October, McKellar approached William Simpson, magistrate of Newbury five miles to the southwest. Simpson would serve the anti-Army cause equally well; he scheduled a trial for December 3. But Emma Rees fled to the Crown Attorney, asking time to gather her own witnesses who could contradict what McKellar's were certain to say.⁷⁰ Hutchinson told the Newbury magistrate to postpone his hearing, and promised to handle personally a counter-charge against McKellar.⁷¹ On the day of the scheduled trial he sent, in care of the magistrate, a telegram to Lieutenant Rees which informed her what he had ordered Simpson to do.⁷² But when the telegram arrived at the Newbury courtroom, Simpson opened it himself; he did not pass it on, and did not adjourn his hearing. Although Emma Rees had come, without witnesses, he listened to the four who testified for McKellar. He convicted Emma Rees and fined her one dollar plus costs. He warned her to be quieter in future assemblies.⁷³

Again Emma Rees trooped to London for redress. Again Charles Hutchinson rallied to her defence. He fired a stern rebuke to delinquent magistrate Simpson:

What surprises me is, that respectable people in a Christian land do not see their way to leave the Salvation people alone. They have as much right as other religious bodies to full and complete protection.⁷⁴

Then he turned his judicial artillery on Colin McKellar. On December 11 he sent a London detective to Glencoe, to arrest McKellar on four separate charges of disturbing Army worship on four Sundays in

November.⁷⁵ The Crown Attorney withdrew the charges and let his ~~frightened~~ prisoner go only when McKellar compensated Emma Rees for the fine and the costs of the Newbury court.⁷⁶ Then he wished Miss Rees a happy Christmas⁷⁷ and she went back, grateful, to Glencoe.

The Crown Attorney himself also directed her Quarter Sessions appeal of her conviction for the tambourine assault on Annie Donnelly. When neither Robert nor Annie Donnelly had the temerity to show up to argue against the Crown Attorney, the Sessions judge reversed the conviction.⁷⁸ Then Hutchinson applied to the estate of the late magistrate who had imposed and collected her fines, arranging with the administrators to have her reimbursed.⁷⁹

Unchastened, the Glencoe faction struck back in their own fashion. At two o'clock in the morning on December 29, the Army barracks caught fire and burned to the ground.⁸⁰ Everyone agreed that it must have been arson. The local rowdies dropped knowing, sly remarks--"Yes, I guess Bob Donnelly burned it all right."⁸¹ The homeless Soldiers asked the Glencoe council to rent them the Town Hall since a village bylaw assigned the building to religious groups on Sundays. The councillors refused. The Army moved to temporary barracks in the Soldiers' own homes.⁸² They worshipped outside on the streets; in a cold December rain, forty of the faithful came to sing and pray. "Praise God the devil can't keep souls from getting saved if he does burn our barracks," Emma Rees proclaimed.⁸³

She addressed herself again to the sympathetic Crown Attorney. Hutchinson lobbied with the Justice Department in Toronto for a government detective to investigate the Glencoe war.⁸⁴ The detective came to Glencoe but went away no wiser; the arsonists remained

undiscovered.⁸⁵

The burning of their barracks drove the Soldiers into the streets where more than ever they provoked the Army-baiters. On January 19 of 1880, the Army corps, half-a-dozen strong, assembled for a march into the village centre.⁸⁶ Lieutenant Emma Rees stood at the head of the formation to direct the route of march. Behind her was her deputy, slapping the tambourine and leading hymns. Then came the bass drummer who kept the beat, and lastly the brief ranks of ordinary Soldiers. As the small platoon began their musical march, Robert Donnelly pounced upon them. He skipped alongside, calling to passers-by to join him. By the time the Army marchers reached the centre of the village, a crowd of a hundred curious folk had gathered. With their drummer in the centre the Soldiers formed a circle for song and public witness. They determined with their Salvation Army music to prove their faith against Glencoe:

Though in affliction's furnace tried,
Unhurt on snares and death I'll tread;
Though sin assail, and hell thrown wide
Pour all its flames upon my head,
Like Moses' bush I'll mount the higher,
And flourish, unconsumed, in fire.⁸⁷

According to custom, Lieutenant Rees began with a personal testimonial of her own Salvation. Robert Donnelly shoved into the centre of the circle where he waved his hat and sang and danced. "The army of Captain Rees versus the army of Captain Donnelly," an anti-Salvationist sneered. "The army of the Lord versus the army of the Devil," Emma Rees replied.⁸⁸ Robert Donnelly led his crowd in shouts and jeers, exhorting even louder interruptions--"That isn't a half try. You can do better than that!" Then his young minion Colin

McKellar, shouldered into the Army circle too and blew cigar smoke in the face of the Lieutenant. Buried in the noisy crowd, Lieutenant Rees and her army retired from the field.

But the next night, January 20, the Soldiers attacked again, seven strong, armed with their drum and tambourines. Again they marched off, singing defiantly:

Ye soldiers of the cross, arise and put your armour on,
 March to the city of the New Jerusalem,
 Jesus gives the order, and leads His people on
 Till victory is won.⁸⁹

Again in the village centre, beside Robert Donnelly's skating rink, they formed their worshipping circle. Donnelly marshalled his anti-Salvationist troops who jostled their way in between the Soldiers to form a part of the Army circumference. One advanced into the circle, knocked over the drummer, and kicked his drum away. The Army tried to pray. "Look at the cranks," someone shouted from the crowd. Again profane and raucous anti-music routed the Army from the streets. "Never saw a worse circus," one bystander commented.⁹⁰

On the next night, January 21, when the Soldiers mustered for another assault, one of Donnelly's allies barred the Army way. When they turned aside to go around he moved too, staying directly in their path. Donnelly and others jostled Army ranks. To the entertainment of the Glencoe crowds, they paraded around the outside of the Army circle. Emma Rees left the beleaguered ring to appeal to the village reeve who stood on the sidewalk, watching. "For God's sake do something about the mob," she said. But the reeve did not move. "Make your complaint in due form in the morning," he answered, "and I will deal with the parties according to the law." Emma Rees and her

Salvation Army retired.

On Sunday, January 24, the Soldiers attempted another open-air service. Their enemies formed a counter-march which tried to nudge the Army aside. Again they marched around the Army ring, singing their exuberant parodies. When the Soldiers marched off once more the Glencoftees followed them all the way, to their makeshift barracks in a Soldier's private home.

Finally Emma Rees appealed to Charles Hutchinson, County Attorney and champion of the Army. On January 27 his constables invaded Glencoe armed with warrants for Robert Donnelly and his assistants. Two escaped, but Donnelly and the rest were arrested and escorted to London by train.⁹¹ They were bailed until trial for disturbing religious worship.

But that same evening, January 27, the furious anti-Salvationists interrupted the Soldiers, who had sallied forth expecting to be unmolested. On January 30, the constables from the city arrived again with yet more warrants, against Robert Donnelly and two of his helpers, for disturbing the January 27 service. An officer arrived by seven o'clock in the morning at Donnelly's home--not early enough to catch Robert Donnelly who already was on his way to work, chopping and hauling ice for the homes of the village. The constable sat down in the kitchen to wait. Robert returned shortly, his ice-cutting axe in hand. Opening the door he saw the constable. "We are here again," the officer said, "I want you."⁹² "You can't get me this morning," Donnelly answered. He slammed the door shut, dropped the axe, ran around the corner of his house, past his neighbour's front door and into the street. The constable ran after, accompanied by a pack of excited neighbourhood

dogs. When they all reached the street Donnelly was already fifty feet ahead. The officer ordered him to halt--"One-two-three-Stand!" he shouted, and then fired his revolver at the fleeing Donnelly form. He returned to the city empty-handed. Robert returned to his interrupted enterprise, supplying his villagers with ice for their kitchens.

But the volley of warrants from London began to tell. Within the day, Robert Donnelly and some of his co-offenders came to the makeshift Army barracks, in chastened voices suing for peace. When Emma Rees refused to bargain, they stalked away, enraged.⁹³ Then successively on February 3, 4, and 6, three of the Glencoe gang capitulated: they travelled to London to enter pleas of guilty. Each was fined five dollars and returned home contritely.⁹⁴

Prosecutor Hutchinson offered the remaining offenders a choice: plead guilty to one charge of disturbing worship, or be charged separately for each day of disturbance--January 19, 20, 21, 24, and--for some of them--January 27. But they claimed innocence and bravely demanded trials.⁹⁵

On February 3 before a London magistrate, Crown Attorney Hutchinson presented his case. Emma Rees with three of her Soldiers trooped to the courtroom to tell about Robert Donnelly and his devils. The Glencoes' lawyer was named Emanuel Essery, who eight years later in 1894 led the fervent religious paranoids of the Protestant Protective Association--an Ontario political spasm whose aim was defence of the province against the encroachment of all anti-Christis, and, especially, of Roman Catholics. At the zenith of his influence, Emanuel Essery was twice elected the mayor of London, and injected into the 1894 provincial

election all of his tumultuous bigotries.⁹⁶ In February of 1886, the Protestant Protective Association was still unborn, but Essery's biases were already matured and indiscriminate: he would willingly battle the Salvation Army. At the trials in London on February 3, Essery saw the evidence turn steadily against his clients, and in favour of the upstart Soldiers. He called the presiding magistrate a tool of the County Attorney; he called the County Attorney Hutchinson a coward, a bloodsucker, a high-toned duck, and a disgrace to the provincial government. Before his tantrum was at all exhausted, constables ejected Emanuel Essery from the courtroom. When the Glencoe defendants refused to proceed as long as they were unrepresented by counsel, the magistrate adjourned his court.⁹⁷

The trials resumed on February 11 when Essery was calmer and compliant. He had mustered the reeve of Glencoe and three of the village's councillors, who flaunted a copy of a village bylaw outlawing chivarees and musical instruments. They listed their constituents' complaints against the Army: disturbing folk who were asleep or sick in bed, scaring horses, bumping passersby, and jarring nearby houses with their tramping footsteps on the board sidewalks of the village. Other defence witnesses told their own various versions of the five January nights of Army disturbances--the Glencoe boys were molesting no-one; the Army drummer in the circle had been bumped accidentally; someone in the crowd had pushed the hapless defendants into the ring; the Army had deliberately formed its ring around the defendants who were harmlessly standing on the public street. They claimed that Lieutenant Emma Rees had slapped and choked one of the innocent bystanding defendants. They mocked prosecutor Emma Rees--

"A voice like a cracked pot," one witness sneered.⁹⁸ They jeered at the Soldiers who followed her on parade and accused them of casting love-struck sheep's-eyes at their fat and formidable commander. "I had no sheep's-eyes to cast," a Soldier protested. The patient magistrate listened to them all. Then he adjourned until February 16 when the opposing counsels could deliver summations.

Robert Donnelly was still at large in Glencoe, unmolested. But on February 15 he repaired to the temporary Army barracks to seek some settlement with Emma Rees. She refused to withdraw her charges against him. Three times that day Robert came to conciliate; the fourth time he brought his constable brother whom a sympathetic Soldier had asked to intervene. "Come to London with us," the Donnellys offered, "and we will pay all the costs."⁹⁹ "It is all up to Mr. Hutchinson," said Emma Rees. "I would sign a \$500 bond to leave the Army alone," Robert Donnelly promised. "A great deal of soft soap," Lieutenant Rees decided, refusing steadfastly to parley further. The angry Donnellys stormed away. "You can go ahead and do your worst," William Donnelly challenged.

The next day, in London, when Essery and Hutchinson offered their final arguments,¹⁰⁰ Robert Donnelly was still at liberty. The Crown Attorney was confident of convictions. With constable William Donnelly as intermediary, he offered again to deal: if the boys would plead guilty to one charge each and promise to keep the peace for one year, the Crown would withdraw all of the other charges.¹⁰¹ William Donnelly canvassed the defendants; all of them refused. "I have washed my hands of both parties," said Donnelly impatiently.¹⁰² "I am sorry the young men are so stiff-necked," Charles Hutchinson

replied.¹⁰³

On February 20, the magistrate announced his decision: four of Donnelly's followers were convicted on four charges; one was convicted on three charges. They were ordered to pay fines and costs for each separate offence.¹⁰⁴ Furious, Essery promised to appeal.¹⁰⁵

But Robert Donnelly was still untouched by the arms of London law. Crown Attorney Hutchinson knew only one safe way to capture him. He sent the warrants to William Donnelly, ordering him to perform his sworn duty and arrest his own delinquent brother. Against William's loyalty to the laws of the Dominion was the loyalty of Donnellys to each other, a bond that had endured with fierce and inviolate persistence through forty years of setbacks and strife. "I am sorry to be driven to this," said Hutchinson, "but there seems no alternative. Your brother has brought it on himself and on you."¹⁰⁶

William Donnelly's choice was prompt: that same evening he arrested his brother. Then he went to Lieutenant Emma Rees, asking her to intercede with Hutchinson for leniency. Emma Rees reluctantly complied. "All I want of Bob is good behaviour in future," she told the Crown Attorney, "and I pray that God will give you wisdom to know how to deal with him and thus promote the kingdom of God."¹⁰⁷ The next day constable Donnelly escorted his brother to London where Robert pleaded guilty to one charge of disturbing religious worship. In accordance with the offer of the County Crown Attorney, he paid one fine and costs and posted a one-year bond to leave the Army alone; the other charges were discontinued.¹⁰⁸ With the Crown Attorney to champion their cause, the Soldiers had routed their Glencoe foes. The threats of those unenforced fines made open harrassment of the

Army suicidal.

But the Glencoites found other ways, other weapons. On February 23, the day that William Donnelly arrested his brother, he also arrested Emma Rees for allegedly assaulting a Glencoe boy during one of those January uproars. Magistrate Simpson scheduled the trial for that same day. Only indignantly and with great reluctance did he agree to postponement so that Emma Rees could have time to prepare a defence.¹⁰⁹ The vigilant Crown Attorney dispatched his own deputy to guard Lieutenant Rees' legal rights at the re-scheduled hearing on February 27.¹¹⁰ But with Nathaniel Currie the reeve of Glencoe co-presiding, magistrate Simpson convicted Emma Rees of assault.¹¹¹ "Muscular Christianity," the prosecutor sneered.¹¹² Half-expecting the verdict, Hutchinson had instructed her to announce an appeal, and to offer bondsmen for her bail until the appeal could be tried.¹¹³ But the magistrates refused to grant her bail, and when she in turn refused to pay her fine, they sentenced her to fifteen days in gaol. Constable Donnelly took her to London, where more generous magistrates set her free at once.¹¹⁴ Hutchinson helped her prepare a suit against Currie and Simpson for illegal imprisonment.¹¹⁵ After trials in Middlesex Assize Court and in the Court of Queen's Bench in Toronto, Emma Rees won her suit, finally, at a cost to magistrates Currie and Simpson of approximately \$700.¹¹⁶ "I will trust your judgment to put an end to this 'reign-of-terror'," Emma Rees told Hutchinson.¹¹⁷ Always she looked beyond Glencoe, to the time and place where all would be well. "Bye and bye," she told Hutchinson with confident serenity, "we will be at Home where there will be nothing to mar our peace and happiness."¹¹⁸

The day after they had convicted Emma Rees, magistrates Curry and Simpson rallied again to the anti-Army cause. They committed for trial in London the constable who, on January 30, had fired his revolver at the fleeing Robert Donnelly. And likewise that same day, the Glencoe councillors, with reeve Nathaniel Currie presiding, devised a new anti-noise bylaw to update their ammunition in their war against the Army.¹¹⁹ In early April when the Soldiers petitioned again for permission to use the Town Hall, council refused, arguing that their insurance might be cancelled.¹²⁰ "Just what one might expect from Currie and his party," said Crown Attorney Hutchinson.¹²¹

Emanuel Essery and his colleagues in London came forth with a volley of appeals--of all of the convictions, of all of the Glencoe boys, for all of the January disturbances.¹²² Hutchinson offered again to rescind all fines but one if the defendants would abandon their appeals.¹²³ They all refused. Their appeals proceeded.

But to Glencoe discomfiture, the London judiciary worked steadily in the Salvation Army's favour. The constable who had shot at Robert Donnelly was acquitted, with a warning to be more careful with his gun in future.¹²⁴ "Rather disappointed our friends Currie and Simpson," Hutchinson commented.¹²⁵ And the judge at the June Sessions in London overturned Emma Rees' conviction for assaulting the Glencoe rowdy.¹²⁶ As those Sessions came closer, the Glencoiters bluster about their own appeals began to fade. Constable William Donnelly helped in mediations, relaying messages back and forth between the Crown Attorney and his friends in Glencoe.¹²⁷ Gradually, grudgingly, each defendant conceded, paying his single fine and costs.¹²⁸ The streets of Glencoe became safe for the Army.

But the Army was still without permanent barracks. One recent proselyte was a Glencoe milliner who rented a shop on Main Street. When she had begun publicly to witness for the Army, Glencoe thugs had tormented her unmercifully. They broke her shop windows with stones, stole her shop sign, pinned a vile note conspicuously on the back of her dress, and hammered at her door in the middle of the night. The frightened milliner closed down her business and moved to Alvinston, twelve miles away. But before she left, she transferred her lease to the Salvation Army.¹²⁹ Finally the Soldiers had a temple, a home. They went to work joyfully, cleaning and renovating.

But the upstairs tenant had no wish to live above Army barracks. His name was Dr. Edward Blackwell, a veterinarian and one of Glencoe's most philanthropic, active, and popular citizens. He owned the winning horses at the Glencoe Dominion Day races, and donated the prizes in the Dominion Day foot races; he was winner of the village Christmas turkey shoot, judge of skating contests at Robert Donnelly's rink, and gallant saviour of a village cat, who had tried to swallow an owl. He and Robert Donnelly were inseparable cronies and between them the bulwark of the Glencoe anti-Army.¹³⁰

On May 29, 1886, as the Army prepared for triumphant occupation of their downtown storefront temple, enemies struck from the vantage of Blackwell's upstairs apartment. A stove-pipe hole passed through the Army's ceiling into the premises of Dr. Edward Blackwell; from aloft, marauders dumped bombs of human excrement gleaned from the dung-piles of Glencoe.¹³¹ Others of the enemy attacking from the street smashed through the barred barracks window. They stole one of the Soldiers' trunks and put it on the railway track in the path of a

train.¹³²

In the hot June Glencoe weather, the Army barracks soon were put-rescent. Proclaiming an unsanitary hazard to Main Street the village Board of Health ordered a clean-up. Before complying the Soldiers retained a neutral observer to verify the damage and the stove-pipe route-of-entry.¹³³ But a few days later the vandals bombarded the barracks again with the same ammunition. The first attack had covered the entire temple floor; the second heaped missiles to such a depth that the walls were soiled as well.¹³⁴ The Army's tolerant landlord cleaned up the mess. The windows and doors were left ajar by day to disperse the odours to the Glencoe open air. At the height of her martyrdom, the Salvation Army organization promoted Emma Rees from Lieutenant to Captain.¹³⁵

Captain Emma Rees appealed to her defender Charles Hutchinson. "An abominable and most disgusting outrage,"¹³⁶ he agreed, "damage of a kind not pleasant to particularize."¹³⁷ He prosecuted Edward Blackwell on two charges of malicious damage to property. Blackwell and his lawyer claimed that the Army had messed their barracks themselves, in a plot to have him evicted.¹³⁸ Although Robert Donnelly appeared for the defence, a London magistrate convicted Dr. Blackwell. He fined him, made him pay court costs, and made him pay for the damage to the Army's intended barracks.¹³⁹ Blackwell blustered that he would appeal to the Sessions.¹⁴⁰ But when the time arrived he was prudently absent. His threats faded gradually away.¹⁴¹

The enemies of the Army launched yet another malodorous assault on the Army barracks. This time they were more careful: they did not use the stove-pipe hole and Blackwell's complicity could not be proven.

No-one was charged.¹⁴² Crown Attorney Hutchinson decided that it was time the Attorney-General's office heard about Glencoe:

I enclose a letter from Miss Emma Rees Captn of the S.A. at Glencoe. It refers to the last of a series of outrages more or less abominable, which have been committed by a party of roughs headed by the notorious Bob Donnelly, who one might almost properly say 'unhappily' escaped the massacre of the family in Biddulph some few years ago... Unfortunately for Glencoe, Bob & his brother William, who also escaped, finding Biddulph too hot for them, settled in that hitherto quiet village & for some time lived there quietly without attracting too much attention. But the S.A. invaded the locality, & this proved too much for the restless spirit of Bob Donnelly. Why he should have felt constrained to molest these poor innocent people I can not say, but the fact is that he organized & led a gang of young roughs to disturb the S.A. religious services & to give the members of the Army every possible annoyance. They could obtain no protection in Glencoe. It was just as it used to be in Lucan. Well disposed people were afraid to interfere & the roughs had it all their own way.¹⁴³ There was no alternative therefore but to ask for help here....

Hutchinson asked for a government detective to investigate Glencoe again: "I have no detective worth anything, or that I can really recommend as reliable."¹⁴⁴

The Crown Attorney's loyalty to Donnellys temporarily dwindled in the unpleasant sequence of street riots, burnings and dung-pile assaults. "Bob's conduct lately has put me once more (much against my will) in antagonism to the Donnelly cause," he told his friend William Donnelly sadly, "I can not I am sorry to say support the cause of a Donnelly at present."¹⁴⁵

With funds and approval from the Attorney-General's office, Hutchinson found a detective who, he hoped, could help in Glencoe. The man left on his assignment on July 8, equipped with a small coal-oil stove which he carried on a door-to-door canvass of Glencoe, ostensibly a pedlar with a sample of his wares. He expected by questions and contacts to explore the village's criminal underside.¹⁴⁶

But the aspiring detective returned to London, five days later, empty-handed. He had learned nothing new about the Glencoe harrassers.¹⁴⁷

Not seriously threatened by the door-to-door spy, nevertheless the barracks desecrators retired. But they claimed one substantial casualty: after her months at the Glencoe Army outpost, after all the warfare and persecutions, Emma Rees had a nervous collapse. In early July¹⁴⁸ while the detective was still busy conducting his fruitless canvass, Emma Rees relinquished her Glencoe command. She travelled to Toronto to report to the national Salvation Army Commissioner, describing the details of her Glencoe martyrdom. Then she retreated to an Army convalescent centre at Manchester, northeast of Toronto and two hundred miles from Glencoe. There she submitted to a rehabilitative program of dieting and electrical therapy and earnest prayers for healing.¹⁴⁹

Without their stalwart and brawny commander, the Glencoe outpost was again insecure. Citizens' complaints grew bolder, albeit non-violent and merely verbal. "Bass drum and baser vocalists," a local wit sneered.¹⁵⁰ Then an Army manoeuvre on September 3 seemed, to many residents, especially noisome and exuberant. "So loud was their shouting," constable Donnelly reported, "that everyone ran from their place of business to see what was up, and two sick children of Mr. George Parrott were nearly driven into fits."¹⁵¹ Enthusiastically assisted by his non-constable brother, William Donnelly seized two of the leading paraders. They were summoned to appear on September 25 before an eager Glencoe magistrate. But the Crown Attorney watched over them to ensure that they escaped from Glencoe law unscathed.¹⁵² With his ample assistance, the two offended Soldiers counter-charged

William Donnelly with one count of assault, and Robert Donnelly with two counts.

Their trials were scheduled for County Court in December. On December 14, 1886, four Army witnesses told their story: William and Robert had grasped the two Army marchers with unwonted violence and rudeness. But twelve defence witnesses offered their version: the Soldiers were monopolizing the sidewalk, pushing people aside, disrupting other legitimate commerce and otherwise disturbing the Glencoe public peace, for which offences they were lawfully arrested by constable Donnelly and his ad hoc deputy. The presiding judge inclined to the Army side; but twelve London jurymen acquitted both Donnellys. The second assault charge, against Robert only, was adjourned until the next Sessions in June of 1887.¹⁵³ On that occasion, the jury disagreed. Robert was never re-tried.¹⁵⁴

The Glencoe Army for its part had already abandoned its ill-fated quarters below Dr. Blackwell's apartment. In November of 1886 they began construction of their own Army temple, on their own Glencoe land. The contractor who supplied the bricks was hanged in effigy on the village Main Street, but the building was erected without interference.¹⁵⁵ The jubilant Army held its inaugural service on December 18 and entered their new quarters in time for Christmas.¹⁵⁶ Henceforth no attacks by fire or otherwise came to disturb their temple. "We thank God," said the national commissioner, reflecting on his Army's march in 1886, "that another year's refining fires having passed through our ranks, find our people purified in life and desire and more than ever determined to force the fighting to the glorious end."¹⁵⁷

And also in December of 1886, after a protracted and unsure convalescence, Emma Rees was completely restored to health. She abjured any personal animosity against Glencoe and the Donnellys: "They had spite not against me only but against the Lord's work." She was posted to command of the outpost in Napanee, Ontario, where the Army Corps was seventy strong, the barracks was a beautiful and spacious private home; and the Town Hall was theirs for the asking. On her first Sunday in command she led four services and three open-air marches through the streets. "In the morning I prayed for strength and managed to hold up," she reported gratefully. She resumed her Army's arduous pilgrimage, with parades and hymns affirming her forward-looking faith: ¹⁵⁸

Woe to the men on earth who dwell,
Nor dread th'Almighty's frown,
When God doth all His wrath reveal,
And shower His judgments down!

Sinners, expect those heaviest showers;
To meet your God prepare!
For lo! the seventh angel pours
His vial in the air. ¹⁵⁹

William Donnelly's career as a constable was henceforth uneventful. He resigned his appointment in March of 1888 when a rival accused him of selling whisky to Indians. ¹⁶⁰ He had moved to Bothwell by then, and thence to Appin where he was owner and proprietor of the St. Nicholas Hotel. "He is one of the best known Hotel men in Ontario," one of his many friends noted in 1892, "and the travelling public all agree in saying that his hotel was a home full of comfort, mirth and sociability for all who called there." ¹⁶¹ He was reconciled with his old friend Charles Hutchinson in London. ¹⁶²

He continued to raise his prize horses, travelling with

stallions through southwestern Ontario each spring--Lord Byron, Old Clear Grit, St. Nicholas. "As a sire of pacers perhaps no stallion in the WORLD can compete with St. Nicholas," William boasted. "That Clear Grit was the greatest of ALL Canadian bred sires no one can deny." ¹⁶³ Twenty years before too in Biddulph township, Donnelly and his champion stallions had rankled Vigilant enemies.

William Donnelly visited often with his friends in Biddulph, driving a fine span of horses north from Appin. ¹⁶⁴ Always he remembered his enemies there. He and his brother Robert kept track grimly as one by one the Vigilants died--first James McGrath in his sleigh at the Clandeboye crossing, then Michael Feeheley father of James and William, James Kelly who had blamed Thomas Ryan for stealing his horse, Patrick Whelan who had taken in John O'Connor but who did not admit having seen any murderers, Michael Carroll, James Maher Jr., Martin Darcy, and venomous detectives Francis West and Samuel Everett. William Donnelly did not stop hoping that some of them would hang. "I want only what the law will give. Let the law take its course--let it take its time. Never fear it will all come out. I'll see those men hung yet." ¹⁶⁵

Biddulph remembered him too: on the fifth anniversary of the Donnelly murders, his house at Whalen's Corners burned to the ground. ¹⁶⁶

Father John Connolly stayed in the service of St. Patrick's parish until January of 1895. He left with the gifts and grateful effusions of the Protestant merchant establishment of Lucan. "During your incumbency of St. Patrick's," a Lucan deputation proclaimed, for a period of sixteen years we have ever and always found you ready and willing to lend a hand in procuring any desired favours, and we can, for our part, testify, that our success invariably depended on your exertion in our behalf. ¹⁶⁷

His diocesan superiors transferred him to the parish of the Sacred Heart in Ingersoll, where he served until he died, at the age of eighty, in September of 1909. "He was respected by all classes of people in Ingersoll," a Sacred Heart spokesman reminisced at his death, "and his tenure of office here made him a wide circle of very sincere friends, who felt a distinct and very painful loss in his death."¹⁶⁸ At his burial service in Sacred Heart church, there were many who attended from St. Patrick's in Biddulph. "Let us hope," his funeral eulogist concluded,

that he has entered into the lot of the saints in light. But lest any imperfection still remain, lest the last farthing of the debt of sin be not yet paid, let us unite our prayers with those of the Church for the repose of his soul. May he rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon him.¹⁶⁹

Long after the death of Father John Connolly and of most of his Vigilant parishioners, the Donnelly lands on the Roman Line remained in Donnelly possession, the north half of lot eighteen in the sixth concession, and the north half of the south half of lot seventeen in the seventh concession. William and Nora Donnelly relinquished ownership in 1888, Jane and James Currie quit their claim in 1898, Patrick Donnelly and his wife in 1900, Michael Donnelly's widow in 1908.¹⁷⁰ Robert Donnelly still held the homestead, which annually yielded a bountiful return to its tenants and to its Donnelly owner.¹⁷¹

William Donnelly died in Appin on March 7, 1897. He was buried in St. Patrick's churchyard, Biddulph.¹⁷² Robert Donnelly lived in Glencoe until the end of the 1890s, visiting often in Lucan and Biddulph.¹⁷³ Then he moved back home again, to Lucan. He owned and operated his own hotel, the West End Hotel. In December of 1904, he

bought from John Cain for \$2500 the south of half of lot eighteen, concession six, Biddulph.¹⁷⁴ The Donnelly farm severed in 1856 was finally made whole again. "The deed jumped up and kissed me,"¹⁷⁵ said Donnelly, and he kept the land until he died in Lucan in June of 1911.¹⁷⁶

Patrick Donnelly visited often with family friends in Lucan and Biddulph.¹⁷⁷ "I dearly love the land of my birth," he said in 1911 after Robert's funeral, "with all its faults I love it still."¹⁷⁸ Permanently saddened by the crimes and killings which he had left home at an early age to evade, Patrick Donnelly died at his home in Thorold in May of 1914.¹⁷⁹

After the death of Robert Donnelly the Donnelly properties passed to James Donnelly III, son of Michael Donnelly.¹⁸⁰ In 1919 he sold the twenty-five acres on the seventh concession,¹⁸¹ but he held the original homestead and farm until his death in 1938. He died unmarried and without issue, the last of the Donnelly owners of lot eighteen, concession six. In 1939 his married sister who inherited the land sold it out of the family entirely.¹⁸²

THE DONNELLYS:
HISTORY, LEGEND, LITERATURE

by

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Truth may perhaps come to the price of a
pearl, that sheweth best by day, but it will
not rise to the price of a diamond or car-
buncle, that sheweth best in varied lights.

--Bacon, "Of Truth"

VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER 1

THE PORTRAIT OF A DONNELLY IN PRIVATE LORE

Several incidents described in Volume I of this thesis have for their sources the testimonies of witnesses during criminal trials. Individual testimony offered in a courtroom adversary situation is used only after careful internal study and as full an investigation as possible of the witness's own history and background--what reasons he might have for being pro- or anti-Donnelly, for telling the truth or lying. In cases of doubt the story has been presented from the point of view of the character himself, the reader being left to decide the truth if he can.

Sometimes it seems more likely that the teller is lying (Rhody Kennedy's charge that James Donnelly Jr. tried to enlist his help in burning Flanagan's stable is an example, Kennedy's animosity toward Donnellys being well documented, and Donnellys being capable of burning a stable without help from one of their worst enemies), or mistaken (James Currie's charge that Thomas Donnelly robbed him, when several other apparently neutral witnesses relate that Donnelly was in a barroom at the time of the robbery on a Lucan street). Sometimes it is much more difficult to decide truth beyond reasonable doubt. An example here is Edward Ryan's tale of being robbed by Thomas Donnelly in March of 1878; it seems improbable that Ryan would persist in prosecution if the charge was without foundation, but on the other hand

courts consistently acquit Donnelly, and evidence shows that Ryan was insensibly drunk at the time and was influenced in his decision to prosecute by inflammatory acquaintances like James Carroll. But cases where the historian is entirely baffled are rare; usually a modicum of information can be gathered about these Biddulph witnesses contemporary with Donnellys, enough at least to indicate with reasonable persuasiveness either their credibility or their lack of it.)

Personal accounts of Donnellys do not cease with the last criminal trial involving Donnellys. Interviews have been conducted recently with several persons old enough either to have observed Donnellys first hand, or to have known people who had. Memory may have distorted events, or reports of events, which occurred perhaps seventy-five years before. A speaker may exaggerate deliberately or inadvertently in the telling. But these contemporary tales have certain immense advantages over transcripts of nineteenth-century courtroom evidence, which are simply a now-anonymous clerk's hurried personal rendition of the gist of what a witness said. In personal confrontation a researcher can direct questioning and seek clarifications. He can assess the speaker's demeanour, history, biases, preconceptions, and so judge more accurately to what degree the story may be truth.

Other accounts have been gathered by researchers through correspondence. Even when an account seems improbable in its details, and the informant cannot be queried in person, nevertheless there often exists in it a germ of truth recognizable to one familiar with the history itself, a germ of historical fact which the tale, despite its likelihoods, at once reflects and illuminates. Thus, an anecdote

can simultaneously shed light on an aspect of Donnelly history and show how early re-tellings begin to deviate from history toward something more organized. Examined in this chapter is a body of oral lore collected from the different points of view of different persons. In life or in literature, a single point of view is of limited accuracy; several points of view provide a fuller composite picture of Donnellys, as of anything else. The same object will appear quite different from those different viewpoints. Distortions are to be expected and allowed for, and by assembling these glimpses of Donnellys from many points of view we may end up with a fuller, sharper picture of the Donnelly reality than the documentary historical research alone can allow us. That composite picture represents the fuller and more truthful reality, however contradictory it may at first seem to an individual observer with a single viewpoint.

Unsubstantiated in full by formal documentary evidence, these anecdotal glimpses of Donnellys have not been accorded a place in the preceding historical volume of this thesis. But for each there is at least an original germ which is plausible if not provable. These personal tales represent, therefore, an intermediate stage between actual historical events and the many Donnelly histories which have been recorded since. They explain and elaborate upon the history, and they suggest reasons why those later histories have developed in what we shall see are so many different directions.

Its violent history has given the Lucan-Biddulph area a notoriety unpleasant to many contemporary residents. One Biddulph native who emigrated to Alberta tells of people's reactions:

When I went away and told people I was from Lucan or Biddulph, they looked at me with such mistrust that I had to tell them from then on that I came from London.¹

Another recalls similar experiences:

I remember going home from Toronto where I was at school, by train, to Lucan, around 1918-22 and my ticket always brought a comment from the conductor about--"Well how are the Donnellys behaving"--as if I had been alive in their heyday.²

Curious people have come (as they did on the days shortly after February 4, 1880) to cart away Donnelly souvenirs from the St.

Patrick's churchyard; the harassed diocese replaced the tall gravestone, but still tourists invade Lucan-Biddulph.³

Hence many residents have tried to stifle interest in the Donnellys. "The older generation in Lucan tried to forget all the unpleasantness," a Lucanite recalls.⁴ "I decry the publication of more about those black-hearted Donnellys," a London township woman complains; "I would that you and all others would let their wicked old bones rest (or rot) in peace."⁵ Researchers in the Lucan-Biddulph area meet resistance:

Because of the angered feeling of both the direct descendants of the people concerned and of the people of the Lucan area, we have 'shelved' all intentions of doing a television show on this subject.⁶

But efforts to stop talk about Donnellys only drive the story underground. Instead of being a matter of public knowledge and assent, Donnelly stories are transmitted privately, from one person to another person. In this process raw facts are refined upon, the most interesting elements being retained while less important or confusing details are excised. During this cumulative simplifying and sharpening, moral boundaries become clearly black and white, and recognizably conventional characterizations, situations, and narrative patterns

emerge. But because they are recognizable the distortions can be allowed for in interpretation, and the originating germ of truth guessed at with reasonable certainty.

To begin at the beginning, there are stories of James and Johannah Donnelly in Ireland:

It seemed Jas Donnelly (Sr) was a "broth of a boy!" and was quite good looking. He fell in love with the daughter of local J.P. or magistrate & she with him. Papa frowned on the affair and locked her in 2d storey of house. Young Jas got a ladder one night, down she climbed & away they went & got married.⁷

Elopement plots are common in Irish folklore,⁸ but the attribution to James Donnelly Sr. still seems plausible, in the light of his son William's actual romances in 1874 with Margret Thompson (attempted abduction) and in 1875 with N6ra Kennedy (elopement), and of an apparent marriage of John Donnelly which began in elopement and ended shortly in separation.⁹ This Irish tale suggests at least as its germ a well-documented Donnelly insouciance or spite which in even these most private of relationships breeds controversy. The same story of James and Johannah continues:

Then Papa's wrath hit Jas. He was jailed, broke out & came to Canada alone. Several years later, Jas was in a Proof Line Tavern... when she & small boy (Jas ? Jr) came in enquiring for him. He said-"and how the hell did you get here?"-She answered-"Where the hell did you get to?"-He said-"Well, come along,"-and off they went to his farm....

This seems more unlikely: for there are few more thoroughly illustrated Donnelly qualities than their tenacious loyalty to one another (so many brothers helping on the eleventh-concessioner Canada Company land and in the stage-coach enterprise, William and John helping Thomas to escape from constables Carroll and Hodgins in October of 1879). The anecdote has the flavour of the stage-Irish, and the

exchange of dialogue is too consciously comic and contrived. But if false in its details, it may express a historically genuine roguish Donnelly theatricality.

In the history the Farrell murder soon follows, and accounts of it are important because it is a keynote event, establishing the moral tone for stories of the family's later career in Biddulph. The accounts vary, and augur diverging versions of later Donnelly history. Farrell died "after a drunken fight in which Donnelly dealt him a vicious blow on the head with an iron bar;"¹⁰ or Farrell jumped on Donnelly's back and put his arms about his neck in fun, Donnelly in an involuntary backward movement striking Farrell with a wooden handspike in his hand.¹¹

That earlier, tone of mischievous escapades continues in stories of Donnelly's fugitive period after the killing. He becomes a daring and artful dodger whose sharp wits and humour frustrate officers of law. A story persists that Donnelly worked in his own fields disguised in woman's clothing,¹² and a story that Johannah craftily warned her husband of danger by signalling with three lighted candles in her kitchen window.¹³ Donnelly's neighbours and collaborators are credited with the same clever style. Mrs. Mitchell Haskett hid Donnelly under the covers in a bedroom and told a searching constable that the body was her children sleeping; Mitchell Haskett told a constable who discovered a hole in the Haskett's haymow, Donnelly's sleeping-place, that that was where the family goose slept.¹⁴ Here again, there lurks the stage-Irish rogue, and too the typically crafty comic hero outwitting pursuers. But once these are allowed for, nevertheless, Haskett's friendship with Donnelly is a fact, and there

must have been some such /devious devices for Donnelly to have eluded the law for so long.

One tale relates that finally Donnelly was betrayed by one of his Catholic neighbours and on his release from prison swore a vendetta against the whole Catholic community.¹⁵ Historically, it seems likely that he surrendered of his own accord, and there is no evidence of such a campaign of revenge. This tale exists because it serves a logical structural purpose by connecting James Donnelly the murderer to the troubles which characterized Biddulph after Donnelly's return (albeit several years after).

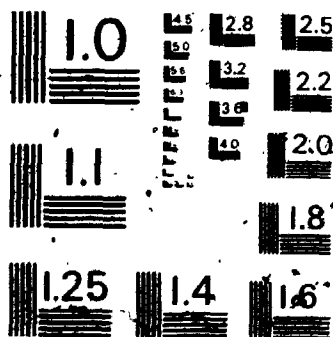
The prison years feature Johannah Donnelly reigning on the Donnelly farm; historically they are difficult years--mortgages and lawsuits. A woman whose mother lived in Biddulph until 1880 recalls her grandmother (a contemporary of Johannah Donnelly) saying tearfully that Johannah did her noble best in the difficult job of raising eight children alone.¹⁶ But despite this mother's sympathetic view of another mother's tribulations, for others a Donnelly reputation for violence grows during the prison years, and Johannah naturally receives the blame. The mother started it all, a Lucan township native claims, and describes her as "a large vengeful ill-educated Irishwoman."¹⁷ A Lucan woman tells of her mother seeing Johannah in person:

A woman came down the street in her bare feet and an axe over her shoulder. She was very tall, over six feet. She walked in the middle of the road--dust about one foot thick. She stopped at the corner, danced a sailor's hornpipe swearing at the top of her voice in language lurid to put it mildly, and she called on High Heaven and the Almighty to witness that she had seven sons and she hoped every one of them would kill a man. Mother was terrified and called Harriet who looked out the window, snorted "Oh that's Johannah Donnelly," and

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OF / DE



A COPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NBS BUREAU OF STANDARDS - 1963 - A

shut the shutters. Mother asked questions as to who why and when, and Harriet told her that Johannah was a vicious old woman whose husband had been sentenced to seven years for manslaughter and that was a vow she had taken that seven must die to atone for the sentence.¹⁸

The historical Johannah who wanted to go out to the road to meet young Patrick Ryder after the September 1879 trespass; who stood with her son William yelling taunts at the same mob later the same day; who called James Carroll a blackguard, at least, in October of 1878; who was charged with receiving stolen property in 1865, and who (so John Cain on flimsy grounds suspected) threatened a man who wanted to buy the Cain property, the south half of the Donnelly farm, is the Johannah who corresponds most closely to this picture. But the picture still seems widely exaggerated, understandable primarily as an attempt to be consistent with the view that her husband was a vicious murderer and her sons marauders in his absence.

Hence perhaps the Donnelly reputation that in one story plagues even peaceful Patrick Donnelly when he marries a few years after his father's return. "The priest refused to marry them," an ex-Lucanite states, and explains that this was because "Pat was a Donnelly of that ilk and 'non persona grata' with the priest on account of the family's reputation."¹⁹ It is fact that Patrick was married in an Anglican church; this tale makes sense of the anomaly by linking it to a Donnelly notoriety, which, historically, was developing but certainly not full-blown at the time of that marriage in 1873.

Tales of the stagecoach period in the early and mid-1870s are common--and disparate:

My great grandfather, like so many others of his time, boarded the Donnelly stage coach on many occasions from Exeter to London. It was often remarked that the Donnellys provided a far better service than

their opposition, and you could always count on reaching your destination on time.²⁰

In the same vein a Birr (London township) resident recalls "one lady who was alive when the Donnellys were competing for the stage coach trade," who "told me they were a pretty respectable bunch, except they sometimes would grab some of the competition's customers if the Donnellys arrived in town first."²¹ As they were courteous and fair to customers, so in other business dealings they made model customers themselves. One man recalls that his grandfather always allowed Donnellys credit at his Lucan store, "and it was always paid 'on the dot'."²² The same scrupulous honesty survives after the murders in another account from the same source:

James Donnelly Sr owed grandfather around \$175.00, more or less. Some time after the murders, one of the sons, possibly William Donnelly, came in to grandfather's store and asked for his father's indebtedness. Grandfather looked up his books and told Donnelly the amount, adding, "If you wish I'll be glad to give you an itemized account." Donnelly pulled the due amount from a large roll of bills saying, "John, if my father trusted you I am sure I can."²³

Historically, Patrick Donnelly did travel to Biddulph to pay his father's debts and settle the estate. And the Donnelly stage did own a reputation for good service; accounts of the stagecoach depredations always overlook the point that the competition would not have been so fierce had each line not been pleasing to its customers and so a threat to the others.

But other tales from the same period describe different Donnellys. In one account James Donnelly Jr. is discovered setting fire to the stables of the Dublin House in Lucan, and threatens the witnesses so badly that they do not tell for years afterwards.²⁴ There is no record of a fire at the Dublin House; but James Churchill's account of Thomas

Donnelly's first attempt to burn the Flanagan stables has this same tone (whether we believe Churchill or not). There is a tale about Thomas Donnelly fathering an illegitimate child, by a girl from Ekfrid township who has gone to Biddulph to work (a dark Donnelly fate overtakes this unfortunate offspring who is raised for a while by his unmarried mother, soon is left an orphan when she dies, and dies himself in his teenage years after being kicked in the abdomen by a horse).²⁵ There is also a story of a Stephen township girl being indecently assaulted by John Donnelly in 1874, at the time that John was driving stage.²⁶ Considered in concert with the Donnelly elopements (putative and actual) and of the general acknowledgment that the Donnelly sons were remarkably handsome, these two tales, whatever their actual truth, suggest Donnellys with a physical presence so intense as to be uncontrollable--both irresistibly appealing and inevitably threatening.

In some accounts, Donnelly aggressiveness becomes proverbial--not only their violent acts are told, but the violence which they might have done if provoked in the slightest. A woman tells of a hotel near Elginfield where an acquaintance often went, and where ...the way to keep the kitchen quiet was to say that the Donnelly's [sic] were in the dining room. She knew if she made a noise to disturb them, they would rise, pull the tablecloth with all the dishes smashing in every direction and leave--nobly detached.²⁷

Another woman recalls being told that Donnellys cut the teats from cows, slit horses' tongues, chopped up whiffle-trees--and ranged far from Biddulph to commit such depredations on the property of people

whom they did not even know.²⁸ We have seen historical instances of this suspicion when, for example, cows straying from Blanshard township are generally believed to have been stolen by Donnellys. When Donnellys will be blamed even if an atrocity happened far away, or did not happen at all, historical fact is rendered entirely irrelevant, and so stories can proceed in their development with no restraining influence whatever being exercised by fact. The existence of such stories today makes it easier to understand how in the late 1870s the people of Biddulph could come to believe Donnellys responsible for all ill.

But yet another shift in point of view brings us to tales which explicitly deny unmotivated attacks by Donnellys on strangers. Donnellys were friendly unless bothered, an ex-Biddulpher states; they always offered their water trough to passing riders and were the first to help a neighbour who became sick.²⁹ Others agree that they were kind to travellers:

On another occasion their son George [of Hibbert township] made a horseback trip to Lucan for reaper repairs; when overtaken by night he dropped in at a farm home where he and his horse were fed and sheltered, and, as an added service, his horse in the morning was brought to the door ready for his journey. His host--the Black Donnellys of Biddulph.³⁰

These stories clearly reflect the historical Donnellys who, for example, on the night of February 3-4, 1880, treated kindly as guests in their homes John O'Connor, James Feeheley, John Kennedy Sr., and Martin Hogan. More generally, a former Biddulph resident insists that "although the Donnellys might have had some bad habits," nevertheless "a kinder lot of boys you wouldn't want to meet."³¹ Another describes John Donnelly, whom he met personally: "I found him a decent and

respectable working man."³²

Moving on to stories of the period shortly after the murders, we find, naturally enough, the Donnellys considered more as victims than as villains. Logically their killers are the villains, and there are stories which reflect this moral judgment. One about Father Connolly will suffice as an example:

It was the local priest who secured some compliant and obedient fanatics to commit various acts of lawlessness and lay the blame on the Donnellys....The priest planned the whole affair, coached them in his own home...gave them communion beforehand, and led in person the gangsters in action, in the understanding that they were not committing any wrong, since they were God's chosen vessels to avenge the enemies of God's church.³³

The historical starting point for this obviously much-exaggerated and anti-clerical piece of lore is of course Connolly's indignant denunciation of Donnellys and his role in forming the Committee, some of whose members eventually did kill the Donnellys. A priest and by definition supposedly virtuous, Connolly is automatically sensational when his name is linked with murder (a point which we have seen the Protestant press of 1880 quick to exploit). Of all those responsible for the Donnelly deaths, the priest is the one most likely to be remembered in later lore.

Tales of the Donnelly survivors in the period long after the murders are very common because still (1976) within living memory of some people. One man recalls Robert Donnelly in Glencoe, accurately enough in some respects, as an "old cuss" harrassing the Salvation Army soldiers.³⁴ A man whose grandfather lived in Exeter believes that Robert died insane.³⁵ But another remembers him in Lucan as "kindly," "a harmless elderly man;" Robert and his nephew James Donnelly III

"were ordinary pleasant citizens of the village and everyone spoke to them."³⁶ Historically, in the Lucan days preceding and following his period of residence in Glencoe, Robert Donnelly is one of the more inconspicuous Donnellys. The only disturbance which can with any certainty be attributed to him is his helping John Donnelly intimidate rival stage driver Peter McKellar by holding the reins of McKellar's horses to keep him from escaping. The Glencoe disturbances seem to be an aberration, one which we shall be able to understand better later in this chapter.

The portrait of the later William Donnelly is also mixed. At his Appin hotel he is remembered wearing his hair long "like a hippie. No one else wore it that way."³⁷ He is pictured in another story irascibly chasing a freeloading Negro from his barroom by firing a pistol at his heels.³⁸ Another tale credits him with a special cane which had a knife built into its base, for prodding troublemaking patrons.³⁹ Other examples of his trickery are more harmless--practical jokes such as putting a block of ice in the bottom of a sleigh of a man who would not stay the night at the Donnelly hotel despite the bitter winter cold.⁴⁰ These stories show the persistent appeal of the historical William Donnelly who, for instance, writes letters to Vigilant prisoners supposedly from lady admirers, and who is accused (perhaps falsely, perhaps not) by Hugh McKinnon of earning a medical discharge from the Central Prison in 1876 by swallowing soap. Countervailing tales note Donnelly's kindness to several poor widows of Glencoe and Appin whom he helped to support financially.⁴¹ A former resident of Glencoe recalls that William tried sincerely and successfully to be a contributing member of his

community;⁴² another also tells how fine a citizen he was, and how he asked her father, a friend, "to hold a candle in his hand when he was dying."⁴³ Again, there seems little doubt of William Donnelly's active involvement and his respectability in both Glencoe and Appin. The several Williams which these anecdotes suggest all have historical analogues.

What do we make of the manifold variety which these stories as a group express? Ambiguity is rampant--unstinted kindness so often in Donnellys, and yet such depravity too. Part of the answer lies in the historical facts.--Whatever acts of evil Donnellys may have committed, all but the hysterical fringe of anti-Donnelly extremists believe, sensibly, that the family could not have been guilty of everything with which they are charged, and that in any event their killers committed a great atrocity:

Out of this fighting gradually grew up the Donnelly gang who turned nearly everyone against them by their lawless actions. However, they were blamed for a great many things that they did not do. e.g. If "A" had a spite against "B", he would burn "B's" barn and the Donnellys were blamed for it.⁴⁴

Qualifications and ambiguities creep into the briefest and most one-sided versions of the Donnelly story. Here, the pivot-word is "purportedly":

James Donnelly, an immigrant from Tipperary, Ireland, egged on by his "she-devil" wife, Johanna, led his seven sons through a reign of terror in the small Ontario community for over thirty years, before the enraged citizens finally wreaked a vengeance that was worse than anything purportedly done by the victims.⁴⁵

The history encourages the survival and growth of stories in which Donnellys are noble, are vicious, or somehow both at once.

There do seem to be qualities within the Donnellys themselves

which generate such disparate accounts about them. Again, the same woman who tells of Johannah Donnelly barefooted in the dust and shouldering an axe also says that "James Donnelly carried her down the Lucan Main Street when she was 3 or 4 years old and she thought he was wonderful."⁴⁶

Trying to show a summary of what these varying stories reveal, we find a crucial comment from a man who knew Curries and Donnellys in Glencoe. He reports that they were excellent friends but if antagonized made terrible enemies.⁴⁷ That is, how Donnellys act depends on whom they are facing. This is more significant than the rather obvious comment on point-of-view which it appears on the surface to be. It implies that Donnellys are very conscious of the people with whom they are confronted and of their attitudes. Donnellys act with a conscious mind for that audience. Of course this is not unique to Donnellys. The complete identity of any individual involves the sum of what he is to all those separate others with whom he comes in contact. For Donnellys, this is simply an abnormally large proportion of their complete identity, and one which they strive with correspondingly greater insistence to experience. Each Donnelly act draws a preternatural vigour from the social context in which it takes place. In so many of these anecdotes, everything a Donnelly does is extravagant, accentuated, seemingly larger-than-life. This is due only in part to exaggeration and distortion in the re-telling; the historical Donnelly who, for instance, challenges a barroom full of Vigilant revellers after James Carroll's acquittal suggests that this interpretation of the stories bears much truth. The primary unifying

impression of all of these stories is of Donnellys acting with a robust, habitual flair for spectacle, acting as if they were on stage, as if those with whom and before whom they act were like a theatre audience. It is not that Donnellys adopt roles artificially to impress other people favourably or otherwise; all seems spontaneous, natural, unstudied. A Donnelly magnetic exuberance rouses and impresses those watchers around them. Donnellys seem to need that added intensity of living which the consciousness of an influenced circle of persons around them provides. The historical William Donnelly who gathers a gang about him ("me and my adventurers") is understandable in this light--a Donnelly deliberately generating an audience, a sphere of influence, which enlarges his own experience of life. The stage enterprise in which all male Donnellys living in Biddulph participate, with its horses and coaches and customers and competitors and Proof Line string of different villages, is clearly in part motivated by this craving for an existential intensity which human numbers can provide.

Moreover: that intensity which makes the Donnelly response to every social situation spontaneously immoderate and grandiose is therefore always a little aggressive. Even their response to friends is so active that it translates as a willful challenge against all others who at that moment are not friends. A man who knew Robert

Donnelly tells of his father's first introduction to Patrick Donnelly:

Well, Bob Donnelly was making Dad acquainted with his brother, Pat, from Hamilton, St. Catharines, or somewhere down there and when Dad met the Donnelly, he stuck out his hand and said, "Aw, you're my friend before ever I saw you and if you ever get in trouble, off comes my coat the very first thing." And that's exactly as Dad told it to us....⁴⁸

Another account also shows how Donnelly friendship is inevitably assertive:

James Donnelly Sr. told two of my great-uncles that their father or grandfather had helped his father out of a scrape in Ireland and he'd allow no one to touch these young lads, who had aroused the ire of some of the men at a 'bee' in Biddulph.⁴⁹

A man who knew the children of Jennie Currie in Glencoe recalls a Donnelly quality about them also:

One time my brother Jim got in a fuss with another fellow--I won't name him--at Glencoe over politics and they got into a fight and it didn't amount to anything, the scrap didn't. But Jim Currie heard about it and he hunted that fella all over town to get a crack at him and the fella got into the buggy and beat it just as hard as he could hit for Mosa and that was the end of that and he didn't come back to town for two weeks. He was afraid of Jim Currie and Jim Currie was just itching to get at that fella to clean him and he hadn't a thing to do with it--not a thing.⁵⁰

This flamboyant nature leads into wild pranks at the expense of acquaintances as easily as it leads into such boisterous gestures on their behalf. The same informant recalls a sample of Donnelly fun with a neighbour's fence:

Anyway Saturday night when they'd be going home--going back to Currie's--they'd walk down this field, in front of his place, and upset his fence. It seemed so funny. Just a log fence and logs about twenty feet long and set up like a crooked snake rail fence you know...Well, they'd just get behind, under this, and heave it over and there goes ol' Warby's fence...and then the beauty of it is they'd come back Monday morning and put the fence all back up. The same Donnellys that upset it would come back and set it up again.⁵¹

This is not an act of malice but of sheer exuberant pleasure in the scene thus created, pleasure in the scene for its own sake. Another anecdote recalls a Donnelly at a social gathering, again among friends:

It was at one of these gatherings that Jack Donnelly prevailed upon my grandfather to play "The Protestant Boys," a contemporary song with anti-Roman Catholic implications. When Hodgins...refused, Jack Donnelly drew his pistol and discharged it until his wish was complied with.⁵²

These last several illustrations of a Donnelly lust for a scene form a sequence which shades gradually from aggressive friendship, to friendly aggression, to a more violent aggression that begins as rambunctious mischief but becomes more threatening. To repeat, the intense dramatic urge characterizing each incident seems somehow belligerent, regardless of the original Donnelly intention. Infected by that wild Donnelly drive for dominance and audience, the line between 'black' and 'white' Donnelly disappears. It is easy to understand how readily conflicting Donnelly mythologies could evolve, each with origin in the same set of facts.

'Creating a scene' means colloquially to cause an unpleasant public spectacle, and continuing along this spectrum of theatrical Donnelly behaviour we find Donnellys creating a scene in both the literal and figurative senses. Here is an example of a Donnelly expressing outright enmity with a definite dramatic flourish:

When I went into the hotel the proprietor was talking to Donnelly and seated all around the room was a large number of young fellows from Biddulph whose fathers had been arrested for the murders. I went and asked my cousin if my brother was in and he said no and he then turned to Bob Donnelly and said, "Do you know this boy, he comes from Biddulph?" I think I can still see and feel the look of hatred which came into his eyes when he looked at me. My cousin said, "Now hold on, this boy is alright, he is the son of Mike Collisson." Donnelly shouted at the top of his voice and held out his hand to me, "Shake my boy, we don't have to go out in every rain storm to wash the blood off our hands." I knew all the people sitting around and had gone to school with some of them and you can imagine how I felt and how quick I got out.⁵³

This last story implies a Donnelly urge for vengeance on their murderous enemies. The theme is historically supported by, say, the relatively innocuous efforts of William and Patrick to convict a Vigilant bootlegger. An unshakeable Donnelly memory of, and affection

for, their murdered kin lies behind the survival of this anecdote:

A travelling photographer came by and there were several... [daguerrotype] pictures taken... one each of John and Mike Donnelly. Years later... my father and I took the picture [of Mike Donnelly] in to [James Donnelly III, Mike's son]. I well remember how he looked at it a few minutes and his eyes filled with tears and... he reached out and gave us each a handshake that I haven't forgotten yet.

Years later about 1928 or 29 we met him again... and as we were leaving my father said to him "Have you still got that picture Jimmie?" He replied, "Eli, that's the most precious thing I own. It sits on my dresser and it's the last thing I look at before I go to bed and the first thing I look at when I get up."⁵⁴

William Donnelly's daughter continues to fix the tally of Vigilant deaths: "My father, Bill Donnelly, died a natural death, in his bed, not with his boots on, as many of the murderers did, and I know them all."⁵⁵ She also fosters the logical idea of guilty Vigilant consciences:

The ill widow of a Donnelly murderer tried to have a meeting with her [Jennie Donnelly]. When of no avail the crying, and almost dying, woman was taken to the Church on the Roman Line on Sunday morning, hoping to see Jennie whom she knew well. My aunt [Jennie] was afraid to go to her home... My mother said, "You should have gone Jennie, she no doubt wanted to tell you who killed your family and as far as conscience played a part, die in peace with her God."⁵⁶

Another woman tells of her uncle, boarding in the home of a priest in West Missouri township, seeing the restless, blackrobed, guilt-haunted ghost of Father John Connolly, one Sunday morning when the rest of the household had gone to church;⁵⁷ the universal appeal of Gothic conventions appears even in the humblest non-literary places.

The same conviction of a perpetual Donnelly pursuit or vigil appears in the story that in all contracts for the lease of the Donnelly land to tenants after 1880 a clause stipulated that four large stones marking the corners of the original home site were not under any circumstances to be disturbed.⁵⁸ The same spdt has been

cursed, says another predictable story which picks up the conventional wasteland imagery and asserts that nothing will grow on the spot where the ruined home stood.⁵⁹ Another story tells how the Donnelly survivors put a curse on the Vigilant killers.⁶⁰ The 1880 train crash which killed the McGrath family is probably the historical stimulus for these tales of Donnelly curses; in one piece of folklore, Donnelly ghosts drive the terrified McGrath horses onward into the path of the train.⁶¹ In 1898 a London constable named Michael Toohey is murdered in London by a tramp named 'Peg-Leg' Brown;⁶² because one alleged killer of the Donnellys is surnamed Toohey, a tale persists that this murdered London man was a Vigilant and his death a working-out of a Donnelly curse.⁶³ The same story evolves further until the Donnellys themselves are said to have killed a policeman in London⁶⁴ -- a perfect example of the progressive shaping of fact to align it with already-accepted beliefs. Still another informant recalls his grandfather's claim that it was (and still is) impossible to lead or ride a horse past the former Donnelly homestead after dark, so active are the vengeful Donnelly spirits.⁶⁵

Things about which there is unanimity rarely encourage storytelling; ambiguous things do. Everyone knows that in life Adolf Hitler was a villain, and legends about him are rare; but the slenderest doubt about when, where, how, and even if he died has for thirty years been breeding rumour and legend of the Police Gazette variety, to the effect that he still survives in any of a number of obscure South American hideaways. It is clear that this dramatic Donnelly essence has fostered the growth of the divergent stories examined in this chapter. For those ambiguous responses, which Donnellys cannot help

provoking, stimulate the metamorphosis of original facts into simplified anecdotes. We now proceed to examine the metamorphosis of the Donnelly history in selected examples of more extended, printed forms.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND LITERATURE

Volume One of this thesis was a Donnelly history; the first chapter of Volume Two examined the intermediate area of variously factual or apocryphal Donnelly tales; and now we begin the study of samples from the succession of longer Donnelly narratives. At this point in a thesis concerned with Donnelly actuality and Donnelly legend, it is well first to ponder the general theoretical relationship between historical fact and narrative fictions. The preceding chapter revealed how those obsessively theatrical Donnellys by their very nature attenuate the boundary between fact and legend, and so precision becomes the more essential.

It is a fundamental and elementary observation that literature is imaginative: it need not describe persons and things which actually exist or existed. Instead, as Aristotle says, the poet describes the kinds of things, not that happened, but that happen or might happen. The poet never affirmeth, as Sidney puts it. "Historical literature" sounds then like a self-contradiction. But in fact the two terms are not completely exclusive of one another. There is no "historical" narrative from which a "literary" aspect is entirely absent; there is no "literary" narrative from which a "historical" aspect is entirely absent.

A historian would say that Donald Creighton's two-volume

biography of John A. Macdonald relates the history of Macdonald's role in the making of Confederation and, after 1867, in maintaining a national unity. A literary critic would say that the book expresses a comic myth of the integration of Canadian society. Creighton has said that he writes history the way Galsworthy wrote novels, and so it would not be surprising to find literary structures and techniques conspicuous in his work. "Railways into Huron, Grey and Bruce" is an article by John F. Due sketching briefly the history of the construction of the several railroads in nineteenth-century Ontario.¹ No one would be likely to suppose that John Due has in his article any conscious literary aims. Nevertheless, behind this essay in a way not at all peripheral is that same Canadian comic myth of integration which concerns Creighton, and awareness of that myth enriches the reading. It is hardly possible for a narrative to be completely without literary structure, any more than it is possible to erect a building completely without architectural structure. One scholar of history writing has postulated that every historian, whether consciously or not, first chooses the conventional narrative strategy which he will use to present his data: that is, his work will be comic, tragic, romantic, or ironic in its employment.² Without necessarily adopting this notion, still we will be able to show inductively how in several Donnelly histories a literary aspect does exist and is important.

Similarly with literature: any work of fiction must involve an "historical" aspect. Frederick Grove's Over Prairie Trails is a work from the "historical" end of the spectrum of literature, just as Creighton's volumes on Macdonald are from the literary end of the spectrum of historical works. It is a large part of Grove's purpose to

get down just what it was like to be travelling on certain days in the several seasons on that specific road between the town and his wife's cabin. But the book is still primarily literature because its prime intent is to describe, as Aristotle has it, not the particular but the universal--the experience of a human being coming to know, describe, and despite its frequent harshness to love the natural environment in which he must live. Any literary work set in an actual time and place has an important historical aspect in this sense. But it is also true that even a work whose world has no objective counterpart whatever has an historical aspect in a very real and fundamental sense. Tolkien describes hobbits and orcs and a dragon called Smaug. No reader has ever seen a dragon, and Tolkien is able to communicate the nature of Smaug only by mentioning such things as scales and wings and fire issuing from the mouth. It is only because all readers have seen scales and wings and fire and mouths that they can visualize Tolkien's dragon or the dragon in any other work. Purely grammatical words excepted, English words are agreed-upon representations of phenomena, concrete or abstract, which are or can be manifest in some form in each speaker's and listener's actual experience; it is for that reason that they can function as instruments of communication. Every meaningful structure of words, then, is historical in a sense not at all strained or trivial. There are practical results of this fact that all words have a real-life referent: anthropologists for instance can learn much about the daily history of a people simply by studying the vocabulary and the structure of their language.

Literature and history, then, always interpenetrate. Each exhibits an inward pull, into the structure of the narrative itself, and

an outward pull, into the objective world. The study of various works of historical literature must be the study of the relative strengths and changing inter-relations between these two tendencies. Henceforth in this thesis, it seems justifiable, for convenience at least, to refer to both Donnelly histories and Donnelly fictions as historical literature.

The aspiring writer of a work of historical literature studies his primary and secondary source materials. As he researches, the actual characters, objects, settings, and events, provide him with suggestions of the conventional literary forms which are his basic building blocks. The correspondences between actual phenomena and literary constructs are incomplete, because life is not organized the way art is, if life is organized at all. But in life there are prior hints and fragments of literary constructs, and the artist may alter the historical data, not to falsify, but to show more clearly meanings which he already perceives latent and incomplete in the history. The question is moot whether literary forms come originally from life, or from a collective unconsciousness, or from prior literature, or from God, or in some complex manner from all of these--or from somewhere else entirely. But in the context of this thesis, the sense in which literature might reflect history is at least as important as the sense in which it alters history. Deliberately to take an example as fantastic as our example of Tolkien's dragon: there are mythical thunder gods-- Zeus, Thor, Jehovah--and our response to them in a fiction depends in part on recognizing that man's real-life experience of thunder, with the awe and terror and sense of majesty which it inspires, is not irrelevant to our experience of that corresponding deity in fiction. If there were no thunder in real life, there would be no thunder god in

myth and other fictions. This of course does not mean that art's structures only reflect life, but it does mean that artist's and audience's experience of them in nascent, blurred or fragmentary form in life, is part of the experience of art's meanings. As symbols of the creative process, the mirror and the lamp represent two extreme poles, but the distinction between them is a theoretical convenience, and in the processes of any artist both occur in some proportion. This interplay of polarities in an artist's creative processes is equivalent to the interplay which we have discussed of historical and literary polarities in the artist's resultant fiction.

The artist selects from history, and adapts, and shapes to produce his literary fiction. We notice, however, that in the finished work the relationships between history and literature vary with the artist's intentions. Blake in "The French Revolution" uses the France of the 1790s to help articulate aspects of his own mythology; Dickens in A Tale of Two Cities uses the same time and place as colourful background and setting for a story; Carlyle in The French Revolution is more interested in the history itself, but also makes of it a pageant which teaches his own views about powerful social leaders and about political oppression. We conclude that, unless a writer wants to claim exhaustiveness and/or authenticity, there is a priori no set method or quantity of research which he must adhere to: each follows his own conscience and imaginative needs.

Two Canadian examples can illustrate further. Pratt's Brebeuf and His Brethren shows a writer immersed in the details of the Jesuit Relations; the poem has a concrete historical reality. Kirby's The Golden Dog has no such intimate, immediate sense of life as it was

really lived and felt in Quebec before the Conquest. But it would not be quite fair to say that Pratt's is therefore the better work; if Pratt's is better, it is not for that reason. They are different works with differing aims--one a documentary narrative poem, the other historical romance. Literary success in a chosen genre is its own defence, and cancels all arguments from history. But the writer with the fuller experience of historical material has the greater opportunity to discover literary possibilities, and to find matter with which to fill his fictional forms. Depth and breadth of research may also help free him from the limitations of his own point of view, fixed within his own mind and age: perhaps The Golden Dog does betray at times a Tory Loyalist writer with no very high opinion of French Canada, and this may be a flaw. But brevity of research need not necessarily hamper; for all it shows in King John, Shakespeare may never have heard of the Magna Carta.

But if the author is under no obligation to know his history thoroughly, his reader is. He needs the history to know when, how and to what extent his author is using it, and when and why he is deviating from it. Volume One of this thesis is there just so that in studying any Donnelly narrative we can recognize immediately and without further comment what is fiction and what is not. A reader educated in history and in the methods of literary criticism has a rich and multiple experience of a work of historical literature. Such an educated reader responds to the work as literature, that is in terms of structure, characterization, imagery and so on. Secondly, he responds to it as history. Any description of the past always implies comparison with the present. Knowing actual history when he sees it, a reader

encountering a representation of a segment of the past can better interpret that present time which is the result of the past. Especially (but not only) if the work concerns the history of his own country or race, that reader strengthens his own sense of identity, his sense of the special uniqueness of himself and his fellows. Knowing the history from the literary structurings, our reader experiences also a sense of gratification that his history is rich enough to have given such material to artists. Finally, our educated reader responds not to the two separate historical and literary aspects but to their imaginative fusion. Historical literature is not only the past re-presented but the past contained and internalized imaginatively. A separated segment of vanished time is freed from the irreversible linear flow and united to the world of every individual reader. It becomes the present property of each reader's imagination--not particular anymore but universal, to return to Aristotle with a fuller understanding.

These rich and several responses are available to our educated reader most readily in works with substantial historical and literary elements--in Brebeuf and His Brethren as against The Golden Dog. In a work where the historical and literary thrusts are not fairly equal, the relative strengths of our reader's several responses will vary accordingly. To summon more examples: in Shakespeare's King John, themes of social and political order outweigh a sense of the actual king and his age; in Harold Innis' The Fur Trade in Canada the minute historical detail at times outweighs theme. Further to each extreme are The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, which makes virtually no claim to show us history, but only Michael Ondaatje's own imaginative universe; and many examples of Ontario local history (such as Ila Logan's Through

the Years in West Nissouri),³ which consist of names and dates and addresses and anecdotes compiled by an author with few pretensions to literary form. These latter works are not failures; but it is not very useful to call them historical literature, for a reader responds to them almost exclusively as literature and as history respectively. Usually in works that are unsatisfactory as historical literature, the historical aspect shoulders aside the literary, or vice versa, and the aspect left to dominate is itself empty of significance. Browning's Strafford fails because the historical minutiae which bury literary interests are themselves pointless and do nothing for his drama; most of Gilbert Parker's stories in Northern Lights fail because the melodramatic scenes and figures which overshadow any sense of historical and geographical authenticity are themselves only pointless clichés. We shall encounter Donnelly narratives, history and fiction, which are unsatisfactory for these reasons; and we shall find some which succeed in their own specific individual aims.

Before we turn from Donnelly history per se to examine Donnelly historical literature, we should ponder some of the possibilities which the historical material offers to a literary artist. A Donnelly writer must first take some moral stance, and there seem to be four mutually exclusive choices. He may be pro-Donnelly; he may be anti-Donnelly; or he may decide that there are two sides, with certain identifiable wrongs and rights in the actions of both Donnellys and their antagonists. The fourth possibility is to decide not to decide—to perceive that any moral decisions are impossible.

An unreservedly pro-Donnelly stance would lead to a melodrama portraying the destruction of innocent Donnelly victims by a vicious

Biddulph society. Such a work faces the problem of motivation: if the Donnellys are totally innocent, why should their neighbours want to kill them? It must involve much special pleading, and selective use of history; or it must offer only the melodramatic tautologies-- the Biddulphs kill the Donnellys because they are villains and that is the sort of thing which villains do. An unreservedly anti-Donnelly stance would also produce melodrama but would face no such motivational problem: Donnellys die because they are monstrous and deserve to die. We shall encounter actual examples of both melodramatic forms.

The fourth moral position--that no moral decision is possible-- may lead to a facile work which escapes from the responsibility of attempting historical knowledge; or, in the hands of a serious artist, it may lead to a fictional Biddulph world whose reality is so inescapably provisional and subjective that the plays of Pirandello might provide the closest models. It is that third stance, where the artist avoids blacks and whites but does make moral choices, which seems to offer the richest fictional possibilities. One critic has already suggested that the varying points of view in the historical material might best be accommodated artistically within a form such as Browning's The Ring and the Book, where successive monologues offer several perspectives on a central reality.⁴ Another model here might be Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, where, as in the Donnelly story, a death is the central initiating event. Such hypothetical fictions as these would involve no escape from a purely ironic reality.

But the Donnelly history need not be cast entirely into that ironic mode. "The Biddulph Tragedy" is a stock newspaper headline in February of 1880, and however loosely the popular journalists use the

term, this story whose climax is the death of the Donnelly family might well afford the substance of a tragedy in a stricter critical sense of the word. Or the sheer mass of historical matter, spread across the span of some three-quarters of a century, might be absorbed more inclusively into some parodic romance-structure, widespread in space and time, episodic in plot, and unified primarily by imagery and by an informing quest theme. Either of these fictional forms transcends the ironic, and we shall study each more fully in turn.

Whether in a modern ironic age it is possible to produce tragedy at all is a question which interested critics have been debating for years, and will probably continue to debate until the ironic age ends.⁵ The answer to it depends on how each defines tragedy. Fortunately, for our purposes we need not construct a definition of tragedy in general, but only define tragedy as it could apply to the Donnelly story at least.

If in tragedy a central character struggles greatly to impose his own meanings upon life, tries to shape and change life to fit his own needs, but fails, then the Donnelly history offers potentially tragic material. The tragic character will fail--because of his own innate and irremovable faults, or because of the resistance of the world outside him, or (more usually) through a combination of both. Other characters might try to accommodate themselves to the world's own terms and are willing to settle for what kinds of things the world seems capable of giving them; Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths and Miller's Willy Loman are examples. But such characters are not tragic.

In the physical and temporal world of human beings, there is always some desirable change which is beyond the capacity of a given individual to effect. Desire may be infinite, but the world is finite;

it limits and resists. Therefore any human life is potentially tragic. It is only the character who aspires, not below the level of what his talents and environment permit, not exactly to that level, but beyond it, who, in the suffering which accompanies his necessary failure, has the fullest possible experience of his humanity. As Blake's proverb has it, it is those who follow the road of excess who reach the palace of wisdom. The knowledge gained may be the character's own, as Othello for instance achieves some substantial degree of self-knowledge; or, as in the case of Brecht's Mother Courage, it is rather the audience who learns from the experience. There is in the Donnelly history little suggestion that Donnellys really come to understand themselves, no identifiable moment of anagnorisis; and so a Donnelly tragedy most faithful to history would be a tragedy of the latter kind.

In most of us, the expedient desire to be safe and comfortable dominates the opposite desire to surpass ourselves and our world. Therefore we admire the tragic character for affirming in his life the sorts of desires we all sometimes feel but prudently evade. We pity his failure because it is universal; that is, because for each of us in our own circumstances failure would follow should we aim high enough. And we also fear the inner and outer worlds which defeat him--again because we ourselves have in our own individual ways recognized the awesome authority of those two worlds, and have acquiesced. We admire him, pity him, fear for him--but the tragic response can be richer even than this. There is also a part in us which censures the character. This is because, as Nietzsche saw in The Birth of Tragedy, the tragic character is always in some sense a transgressor. He defies the rules which govern human life, the enduring inevitabilities in the inner and

outer world. A prudent part of ourselves sides with the containing forces: because they always win, a part of ourselves reasons that it must be right that they should win. Thus the audience, each member in his own world, has a context in which to measure the tragic character. The character in his loss is reborn in the spectator's world. As each spectator identifies with that tragic career he feels admiration, pity, and fear. And as he notices in himself even the slightest censure of that career, he accepts some of the blame for the character's defeat.

History regularly offers to art suggestions of tragic patterns. Much of history can be understood as a record of human challenges of an existent status quo. Because history happens in time and in physical space, the success of such challenges is always only finite and ironic. Orc-like rebellions only partially or temporarily alter the Urizenic status quo: in the end, Orc-force is either crushed by, or transformed into, its conservative antagonist, thus creating the need for yet another movement of rebellion. With a general sense of the fictional tragic world before us, we can see how exactly the Biddulph history offers potential tragic meaning.

From the time of the Donnellys' 1842 arrival in Canada, there is an awesome inevitability about their eventual fate. The Donnelly lives and deaths are fated like the heroic life and death of Hector in the Iliad; other Biddulphers live and die fortuitously, more like Elpenor in the Odyssey who stumbles off Circe's roof and breaks his neck. The ways of the Biddulph world which combine to destroy Donnellys are readily enumerated. There is a dominating Irish Protestant merchant core, of which the Stanleys are representative. There is a close-knit and conservative Irish Catholic community. There is already

in progress a widespread and often officially-sanctioned struggle for control of limited resources--on the level of the individual farm or on the level of a national railroad. There is a threatening wilderness environment which strengthens the drive for conformity in the Biddulph garrison community. There are reckless Donnelly friends who help to doom the family as surely as do their enemies. There are other Donnelly friends who turn out to be traitors, the traitor figure focussing the tragic sense by showing how illusory in that world are things like support and solidarity. There is the ominous precedent of unpunished crime against others who were in conflict with ascendant Biddulph values--the original native peoples, the Wilberforce Negroes, Richard Brimmacombe. There is other less socially purposeful crime like the multitude of Biddulph robberies and assaults, also going unpunished. There is a judicial system hampered by geographical distance, ill-qualified officers, public animosity, administrative ineptitude, and self-serving political intervention. To describe this world at greater length would be to recapitulate the first volume of this thesis. Together these factors circumscribe the Donnelly family: their lives are tragically fated. It is important that it is a family bound by these circumstances; as Aristotle notes in the Poetics (Chapter 14), when family relationships are involved the tragic suffering is the more intense and ironic. In Aristotle's era the House of Thebes and the House of Atreus are the prime examples; in our era the closest parallels to the Donnelly tragedy as a family affair are in the doomed dynasties of Faulkner--the Sutpens, the Compsons, the Sartorises.

To show fictional Donnellys determined exclusively by these identifiable historical forces would be naturalism, not tragedy. While

it is perhaps not entirely necessary for a tragic character to contribute actively to his own downfall, he usually does, and that 'flaw' can enrich the tragic significance. The historical Donnellys are clearly flawed persons, whose destruction is as much a result of their own willful flamboyance as of a resistant world. Donnellys are quick to anger; they are vengeful; they make enemies readily; they make friends also readily, but unwisely, and stick to them with ill-advised loyalty. If as the Christian humanists said all sins are sins of pride, then these qualities are also specimens of pride. In many ventures, of which the entrepreneurial stagecoach business is only the most spectacular, Donnellys are proud in the way that Marlowe's Tamburlaine, for instance, is proud with an ambitious lust for conquest.

These qualities all do contribute to the Donnelly downfall, but do not distinguish them except in degree from many of their Biddulph antagonists. They do not cause them to stand high and single as tragic characters, and do not explain entirely the terrible fate which meets them. The ultimate tragic flaw of which all these others are symptoms is that which we noticed in our chapter on folklore. There is that in the Donnellys which makes them unable to fulfill their natures exclusively within themselves. They make everything and everyone around them their province, and so earn the enmity of all those unwilling to be stage-props and bit-part actors in the Donnellys' personal extravaganza. In Fools of Time, Frye notices that many of Shakespeare's royal characters exist almost exclusively in terms of their external social relationships with their courtiers and other subjects;⁶ the same could be said of Donnellys. Unamuno writes that the tragic man, unwilling to be single and finite in the universe, "merely one

objective phenomenon the more," tries to extend his own spirit through-
 out the infinite universe. "He wishes to save his vital and passion-
 al subjectivity by attributing life, personality, spirit to the whole
 Universe."⁷ His effort is glorious, but his failure is inevitable and
 tragic. Donnelly's similarly want to transcend their own egos, but of
 course in no such metaphysical sense as that of which Unamuno is
 speaking. They apply their "life, personality, spirit", their huge
 flamboyant egoism, to everything they can reach. In this they show
 both an heroic energy and a serious flaw: in their gigantic, exuberant
 capacity for life is the source at once of their doom and their
 greatness. It is this irony which gives to their story the rich and
 paradoxical significance of true tragedy.

The tragic theme is there, then, in the history. When we look
 at the structural details of a potential Donnelly tragedy, the cor-
 respondences turn out to be frequent and precise. In that history, the
 first conspicuous mark of a Donnelly fall within their world is the
 quarrel with Patrick Farrell, ending in Farrell's death. The quarrel
 occurs chronologically soon after Donnelly's quarrel with John Grace
 who tries to sell the farm to Michael Maher, and it is plausible that
 there is a connection between the two quarrels (although there is no
 conclusive documentary proof). Thus the events associated with the
 murder and with the loss of the fifty acres tend to form a single inter-
 related cluster. Although Farrell is in no sense a ruler in Biddulph,
 his death can be understood to represent a Biddulph fall into disorder,
 the way the death of Hamlet's father affects Denmark. And the Don-
 nellys' loss of their land marks the start of disorder in another way,
 the best Shakespearean analogue here being Lear's abandonment of his

lands to his daughters. In fiction, the hero's displacement from his home and the death of a figure who embodies protective order often coincide; the early chapters of David Copperfield are typical of this pattern. Donnelly's lose their land, the father goes to gaol, the family suffers financially, and without paternal centre the family starts to separate. The Donnellys are both the cause and the prime sufferers of this initial disorder. Most of Biddulph sides with Donnelly after Farrell's death, but the related quarrel over lot eighteen, concession six, persists until the 1880 murders. John Cain who owns the land the Donnellys lost is one of their killers.

The second potentially tragic movement of the story involves William's romance with Margret Thompson. Like Shakespeare's Romeo or Antony, or Dickens' Pip, William Donnelly desires one whom it is forbidden to desire. Margret belongs to a society from which he is excluded. The attempted bride abduction is the central episode; its ultimate archetype is Prometheus stealing fire, a crime which draws upon him the ire and vengeance of the tyrannical night-world. Margret is the fateful bride--Juliet or Cleopatra or Estella. Here are two Biddulph worlds: the creative one of lovers with their courtly letters and vows of fidelity, the demonic one of the glowering, oppressive Thompsons Sr. and Jr. If the quarrel over land manifests itself in 1880 through killer John Cain, the romance-tragedy is echoed in killer William Thompson Jr.

The third potentially tragic movement involves the Donnelly stagecoach firm. Here again Donnellys are transgressors against the practitioners of order in Biddulph. They disrupt a commercial status quo which consists of a Lucan merchant establishment, plus just enough

stage-lines for the kind of orderly competition which is supposed to improve the product. In the stage business as always, Donnellys as tragic heroes have about them followers who are fascinated by the apparent glory which they themselves are incapable of fully sharing; William Atkinson (or John Kent, or Daniel Reeve) is like Shakespeare's Horatio or Gloucester. But they are the minority. Like Abe Spalding's rigid rule of his farm and district in Fruits of the Earth, the Donnellys' wild drive to run a Proof-Line stage conflicts with the order by which most others around them live. Donnellys and Spaldings persist, because that drive is what defines them. They are progressively isolated, until finally they face a society in almost unanimous rebellion against them. There is no historical killer who is the nemesis figure in this third tragic movement, but many involved in the coach war--the Stanley brothers, the Kennedys, Hugh McKinnon, Patrick Flanagan--have their share in creating the murderous climate in 1880. At the climax of this third movement are the deaths themselves. Here is what Frye would call sixth-phase tragedy, the darkest, most shocking and ironic: Frye notes the incidence of mutilation in such works; examples could be Jude the Obscure and Waiting for Godot. Here in the Donnelly tragedy are Thomas' severed head, the forty shotgun wounds in John's body, the charred fragments wrapped in newspaper--and, apart from the murders, butchered horses and Rhody Kennedy's amputated arm. But dismembered tragic gods like Osiris achieve resurrection, actual or symbolic, and so in their way do the Donnelly dead. In tragedy they are reborn into the audience where each spectator identifies with their aspirations and, paradoxically, with the forces of security which defeat them.

The fourth and final tragic movement in the Donnelly history

concerns the period after February 4, 1880. Unlike Timon of Athens, William Donnelly and his brothers do not retreat to mutter misanthropic imprecations of revenge against society. They fight heroically for that just revenge. Here the structure is much like that of Hamlet. William himself is the nemesis-figure whose task it is, like Hamlet's, to stalk a killer and ruler; the Claudius figure of the murderous ruler is collectively the Biddulph accused. Against a judicial system, a government, in general a society, bent toward setting the Biddulph killers free, it is the Donnellys' perseverance in rebellion which keeps them from being merely victims. In this fourth movement, all Donnelly sins of the past have been more than atoned for in the February 4 Roman Line fire, and right is on the Donnelly side more unambiguously than at any time in their tragic career. But this does not quite become a tragedy like the Duchess of Malfi in which a sick society besets a heroic and guiltless central character: for always there in the background is the haunting knowledge that these same Donnellys who now work for justice have in earlier times contributed so much to their own ruin. Ironically, the society which felt it had to arm itself against Donnellys now proves to be more destructive than Donnellys ever were, in ways which are worse because covert and unacknowledged.

The fact that there are four separate tragic movements in the Donnelly history draws attention to the size of the historical material, spanning half a century and scores of important characters. Alternatively, the literary structures of romance rather than of tragedy might more inclusively accommodate that history. The boundaries of a tragedy are the boundaries of its hero's life; romance need be bounded only by the attention span and mental energies of artist and audience. As in The

Winter's Tale, characters pass from birth to maturity within the confines of the Donnelly story. As Aristotle says of the Odyssey (Poetics, Chapter 17), the structure of a single quest can hold together a long time-span and a variety of character and episode. Romance is a form suitable for historical fiction because it can expand to reflect so much of the plenitude, diversity, and unpredictability of real life. But romance does more than simply hold a mirror to huge swatches of detailed history: it reveals their essential unity and imaginative significance.

As we found to be the case with tragedy, there is an astonishing range of historical material which can fit nicely into a Donnelly fiction when it is romance which controls the form and meaning. Like most narratives, romance begins with an anti-comic opening. The initiating conflict is that of our Donnelly tragedy, the splitting in half of the Donnelly family farm and the following year's murder of Patrick Farrell. In a Donnelly tragedy the emphasis is on the Donnelly hero's crime, of which the disorder and disruption of the family are a consequence. In a romance, the disorder itself is of prior importance and the murder rather a symptom of it. That is, the disintegration of the Donnelly home would reflect as much as cause an initial descent from equilibrium. Similarly for the jealousy of Leontes in The Winter's Tale, or the sudden return of Chillingworth in The Scarlet Letter. The basis of the entire Donnelly romance is the quest to recover that damaged unity. Historically, there can be no doubt that those Donnellys who so compulsively expand the sphere of themselves do so at least in part in restless memory of those lost fifty acres and the seven-year absence of their father. The split Donnelly farm shows metaphorically a severed Donnelly identity. Jung might say that the unified farm has the

significance of a maternal protecting consciousness, and hence the ready association with that farm home of the strong mother figure, Johannah. In a Donnelly romance, the Donnelly farm made a hundred-acre whole is a symbol of re-integration which has the structural force of the stolen-and-recovered hoard of gold in The Hobbit, or the lost and searched-for Pearl in the fourteenth-century poem of that title.

Romance can easily absorb the several wanderings of separate Donnellys after the breakup of the family. Material here are the journeys of William Donnelly (to the States in the late 1860s, to London, to the Roman Line again, to Lucan, Exeter, the homes on the eighth-concession and at Whalen's Corners, to Ohio coal fields, to Glencoe, and to Appih); the Michigan lumber camp sojourns of Thomas and of James Jr.; the squatting of several brothers on vacant eleventh-concession land; the railroad years of Michael; and James Sr.'s inspection and purchase of land in Michigan as a kind of Lake Isle of Innisfree, a pastoral retreat from the Biddulph underworld and a copy of their Biddulph farm as originally it was, virginal and whole. The Grimm brothers have a tale of a princess whose golden ball rolls down a dark well; she needs a frog prince to go after it. But the Donnellys follow their own wayward paths themselves, paths made wayward primarily because their land, and thus their hold on life, has started to dis-integrate.

7 In that disordered Biddulph world are many features of the night-world of romance. Early Biddulph especially duplicates the conventional wild forest of romance, complete with swamps, animal predators, and lurking human killers. Biddulph also reflects that confusion of identity characteristic of the lower world of romance. Spenser for instance has

a true and a false Florimel. Similarly, amid rumour, suspicion, prejudice, guilt-by-association and paranoia, the Donnellys find their own nature a matter of furious and bewildering disagreement among the people with whom they must share the township. As romance heroes, typically too they are separated from their friends and exposed to the calumny of their several enemies.

Like Sidney's Arcadian princess they face formal legal trials, in which all the false perceptions and values of the night-world are institutionalized and brought to bear against them. The rulers of romance's disordered world are sometimes proud and peremptory, like Gawain's Green Knight antagonist; the Stanley brothers or Father John Connolly are Biddulph analogues. Others, like Morgan LeFay in Malory's Arthurian series, use their influence more mysteriously and intermittently, from a distance; the shrewdly inconspicuous Oliver Mowat is the prime historical example. On a less powerful scale, John Purtell the foolish farmhand reflects such romance figures as Cloten in Cymbeline, combining evil with brute stupidity. Sometimes in romance there is a Doppelgänger character who represents ominously the hero's own terrible capacity for error and evil, the way Dolge Orlick is a lesser and more sinister reflection of a part of Pip; almost any of those thuggish companions who congregate about Donnellys fit this role, but perhaps that unruly young protégé Thomas Ryan most clearly draws out those qualities which are the Donnellys' undoing. The prophet figures who announce dangerous or at least mysterious things to come--like the soothsayer in Pericles or Jagers in Great Expectations--have a Biddulph exemplar in John Connolly when his pulpit imprecations both predict and hasten the Donnelly fate of February 4, 1880.

Maidens in romance regularly are separated from their true loves and propelled in various ways, by people like brutal parents or brigands, towards mates not of their choosing: Spenser's Pastorella among the cannibals, Shakespeare's Marina in the brothel, Sidney's Pamela and Philoclea in Cecropia's castle. Many female characters do not escape unscathed from these urges of unseemly sexual relationships. They may fall through moral weakness (Hetty in Adam Bede); they may be only partly to blame (Dickens' Li'l Em'ly); or they may be entirely virtuous, succumbing only because there is no-one around to defend them, like the unfortunate Fraelissa in the first book of the Faerie Queene, turned into a tree by Duessa. Whatever the reason, and although they may be allowed to repent, women thus blemished are in romance usually of no further interest as objects of a marital quest; they die or disappear from the story. The interest of reader and of hero then usually shifts to another female, who is stronger in virtue or luckier, and who in the end marries the hero. Emily Bronte works wonderfully with this often clichéd pattern in the figure of the foolish Isabella, seduced into elopement with Heathcliff and of course dying in childbirth: she dims to utter insignificance beside the enormous strength and love of Catherine. The Biddulph story has Margret Thompson, whose relationship with William Donnelly adapts as well to romance as to tragedy. Margret is sent away by her father, presumably to marry another although the history gives us no firm clues. However unwillingly, she is "fallen", and henceforth quite unavailable for marriage; she disappears from the Donnelly story as surely as if she had died. Instead, William marries Nora Kennedy, a new character in the story. Structurally, she is a resurrection of that feminine creative principle represented

originally in Margret.

Especially in that oral and truncated species of romance called the folktale, the hero often possesses a handicap which stresses his exposure to the forces of evil--the Grimms' girl with the amputated hands or the youngest son left with a swan's wing in place of an arm. In a Donnelly romance, this is the significance of William Donnelly's congenital limp. But Donnelly's magic skill with his violin reminds us that, handicapped or not, the romance or folk-tale hero often is provided with a talisman that grants him special powers--Arthur's Excalibur or the tinderbox of Andersen's soldier. These are signs of their possessors' own distinction from the evil of the world they must pass through. Often there is a paternal Cheiron figure, a wise and benevolent old helper like Guyon's palmer or John Jarndyce the guardian of Dickens' Esther Summerson, who intermittently guides and advises a receptive hero on his dangerous path. The Charles Hutchinson whom William Donnelly calls "a father to the remaining members of the family"⁹ fits this archetype exactly. And finally, the hero may find that quick wits and trickery help him in the scramble for survival in, and escape from, the disordered romance world. Odysseus is the archetype here, and historical Donnellys show his style on many occasions--Michael Donnelly handcuffing his sleeping guard to escape from his Lucan hotel prison, William reputedly swallowing soap to escape from gaol, and later sending to Vigilant prisoners romantic entrapping letters from young lady "admirers".

At the bottom of romance's night-world is a time and place of death, destruction, and dismemberment which may be symbolic or, for minor characters, actual. The heroes of completed romance quests re-emerge,

like Jonah from the whale's belly, but several Donnellys do not. For James Sr., Johannah, Bridget, Thomas and John--fragments in two coffins--the archetype is Actaeon torn to pieces by hounds in the forest of Diana. For William Donnelly who does survive, the archetype is Orpheus, rent by drunken maenads but magically surviving, though mutilated, to sing and to prophesy. Structurally and emotionally, William Donnelly's survival has the force of a resurrection, a victory over death, the way those three Biblical heroes walk intact from Nebuchadnezzar's fire. Hence the fascination which he has for the public (in 1880 as today), a fascination which in the 1880 press he so shrewdly exploits and develops. Other Donnellys (Jennie, Robert, Patrick) are left alive, but only by being far from the Biddulph world; only William has suffered and survived that descent whose nadir is reached on February 4, 1880.

After the murders, William Donnelly's position is that of Prospero in The Tempest. Each has been grossly wronged in the past, and has now some opportunity to take revenge on enemies and remake his world. In his years on the underworld island, Prospero has acquired his staff and his magic lore; what William Donnelly brings from the Biddulph underworld is no staff but a wide range of insights which (as we shall see in the following chapter) he is able to turn to satirical account against his enemies. In some romances, the hero's achievement is only partial and ironic--in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, for example. The Donnelly romance has real life for its material; any achievement must be limited and the form as a whole an ironic parody of genuine romance. Donnelly is not master of his world as is Prospero. Like the Blatant Beast at the end of the Faerie Queene, the killers are

set free again to infest the world. But by telling the truth about Biddulph and putting an accurate model before the world's eyes, Donnelly in a very real way does in fact re-create Biddulph, imaginatively although not in actuality. This is how the Donnellys triumph. At least this is part of it: the survivors do finally buy the south fifty acres and restore that original homestead whose loss initiated so much strife. The end of the Donnelly romance echoes its beginning, and the final tone, however ironic, may also be one of affirmation.

There are other features of romance which are there in the historical material ready to be made use of. We return to the problem in later chapters in discussing actual works of Donnelly literature in the romance mode. Besides the melodrama, the tragedy and the romance, there are other possible fictional structures worth a brief preliminary mention. The overall grimness of the Donnelly history makes the idea of a Donnelly comedy inauspicious, if not obscene. Nevertheless the story from the point of view of the Vigilants would indeed be comic, and we shall find a work comic both in tone and resolution. But there is scope for comic interlude (as distinct from overall comic structure) in works as savage as Twain's Connecticut Yankee or as melancholy as Chekhov's Three Sisters, and there is historical material enough to make for comic interludes within a Donnelly fiction not overall sympathetic to the murderers. The characteristic comic hero is Odyssean, using quick wits as often as physical force to defeat his enemies. As we noted in our discussion of romance, Donnellys often are more sly than brutal; an additional example is James Donnelly Sr., quick-witted enough to keep ahead of constables for one whole year, 1857-1858. In doing so he reflects another structural pattern common

in comedy from the beast epics to the Marx Brothers' cinema--that of the chase.

Usually obstructing characters in comedy are, like the heroes, impostors; their disguises are signs not of strength but of weakness and malice. Sometimes within a comic work such characters inflict great suffering--Willoughby in The Egoist or the Beadle in Oliver Twist. In the Donnelly story, the suffering is so intense that neither the killers nor the Herod-figures who rule that world can be treated comically. But there are characters who have the vices of pretenders, without their power to do hurt: Hugh McKinnon, Samuel Everett, George W. Clay and F.M. West are examples. These characters aspire to great exploits ridiculously beyond their power. All boast at pompous length, and all in the end are exposed as frauds before they can cause serious trouble. They combine the figures of the miles gloriosus and the con man, and are after all about as clever and original in their efforts as, say, Diccon in Gammer Gurton's Needle. Another comic type is the buffoon--not an obstruction, not a pretender, but a clownish entertainer whose prime importance is that he makes us laugh. The Donnelly history gives us this figure in Simon Young, who flees in socks and underwear from the site of the farcical Stanley mill arson attempt.

Melodrama, irony, tragedy, romance, comic counterpoint: these are some of the diverse artistic possibilities inherent in the mass of Donnelly historical material. In the following chapters we pass from a general and theoretical study of possible forms, to a study of actual works. Some are fiction, some intended to be non-fiction; we study both types as history and as literature because, as the discussion at the beginning

of this chapter led us to recognize, even the works of history have
always an important literary aspect.

The mechanism at work in this tirade is a common one: to list crimes and outrages, and then mention the Donnellys, so that both speaker and audience are persuaded (although the claim is never explicitly made) that all of the crimes were therefore the work of Donnellys. William Stanley (Globe, Feb. 7, 1880) follows the same shadowy logic, stating that "two years ago the Donnellys were the terror of the township", mentioning the large number of unsolved crimes, and then stating that the Donnellys could not be convicted because people were afraid to testify. Implicit is the huge corollary that the Donnellys were in fact guilty of all. Often it requires close attention to detect the logical fallacies in what seems on its surface a smooth and sensible view of the Donnelly family.

But it is newspaper practice only to publish interviewees' statements, not to analyze them. The press absorbs such statements uncritically. George W. Clay's own version of his exploits in Biddulph are published verbatim ("Constable Clay Carries Off the Honours as a Detective"--Advertiser, Feb. 14, 1880). A Globe reporter (Feb. 20, 1880) discovers and encourages a man who claims to have been burned out by Donnellys ("The very summer that I was burnt out the Donnellys cut and gutted twenty-eight houses"), and who exculpates their killers (the Donnellys "brought it on themselves and deserved their end, and I'm not afraid to say so"). Witnesses to disasters are regularly sought out by interviewers. Their appeal is manifest: such figures have experienced hellish descents such as few of us have known--have seen the Gorgon, say, and have survived to tell a breathless public about it.

The Donnellys themselves are ready to use the press in their own defence. William Donnelly especially is practised at the art of

The new 'historical' man came to the theatre with a newspaper in his pocket. In it might be facts more desperate and sentiments more provocative than many a dramatist would care to present...How was the playwright to rival the drama of actual news? Only by crying louder havoc, by writing melodrama.²

In this chapter we see the sequel--newspapers in turn trying to outdo the theatre by imitating its devices. Melodrama encourages audiences to respond sentimentally, that is, as they would to like situations in real life. As they hiss the villain and cry for the suffering heroine, audiences are asking themselves, "What if that really happened?"--or, more precisely, "What if that really happened to me?" (As Blake knew, pity is usually selfish self-pity.) There are many accounts which show how nineteenth century audiences conditioned by melodrama became so emotionally moved that they mistook the artifice for reality. A

Baltimore man objects to an assault on Coriolanus because "'three on one' was not a fair fight";³ a New Orleans man shouts at an actor playing Othello grieving over the loss of the handkerchief, "Why don't you blow your nose with your fingers and let the play go on?"⁴ In Canada, says Murray Edwards, audiences felt the same way:

It must be remembered that to a farmer or small town dweller in Canada at the turn of the century, melodrama was, in a sense, realism. It dealt with life as he understood it, and the problems that he feared, such as an erring daughter.... Life was like that.⁵

Many North American spectators went to the theatre to watch other spectators: "The prospectus of a disturbance, or, as some call it, fun, is the most attractive bill that can be made out".⁶ In newspapers which ostensibly report fact, but habitually use melodrama, this blurring of fiction with real life is at its most confused extreme. As McLuhan puts it:

At various times in the history of the theatre, the audience has been included in the show to a considerable degree. In the newspaper it is decidedly the audience that is the show. (198)

While melodrama shares the stylizations of romance, it does not rouse us to the romance-quest to contemplate and then create from a disordered world a higher, potentially existent one. Rather, it urges us to a self-indulgent emotional fixation on a completely non-existent world which, it would let us believe, is the presently existing one.

Unlike genuine art, melodrama helps us escape the demands and complexities of real life. It offers easy, therapeutic, morally intelligible answers. Melodrama encourages us, not to be individuals, but to conform; for all of us want to think that we are on the side of what any particular melodrama defines as the morally right. Thus responses to melodrama are always habitual responses and its appeal is to those who shrink from mental fight with real issues.

The irony about melodrama is that a form so simplistic, so un-life-like, is applied most eagerly to complex and difficult real-life situations. Propagandistic temperance melodramas like Ten Nights in a Bar-Room are a case in point, melodramas addressing themselves to actual social problems. This irony is nowhere deeper than it is when melodrama appears in newspapers, whose readers virtually by definition expect to find factual truth. In 1880, the Donnelly story is grim; it is complex; and it reveals a Canadian society with certain fundamental and disastrous flaws. In the papers it is ordered and packaged melodramatically: art forms are used as instruments of repression. Audiences in 1880 readily absorbed the Donnelly story as melodrama because--in theatre, in fiction, and in the newspapers--the sentimental confusing of fictional forms with real life was a daily habit.

In the Ontario press circa 1880, journalists in print are outrageously conscious of literary precedents. There are regular references to the Bible (a reporter characterizes the Donnelly's as "Ishmaelites"--Listowel Banner, Feb. 15, 1880; a huge Roman-Line inhabitant is compared to Sampson--Advertiser, Jan. 31, 1881; Aemilius Irving refers to John O'Connor's "still small voice"--Globe, Oct. 11, 1880; James Carroll calls a hostile Free Press reporter a "double dyed-in-the-wool Judas Iscariot"--Advertiser, Oct. 25, 1881); to classical literature (during a lull in Biddulph hostilities a reporter notes that "the temple of Janus is closed for the first time since the settlement of the municipality"--Free Press, Nov. 20, 1880); to Shakespeare (the Exeter Times for Apr. 17, 1879, has a satirical Shakespearean burlesque ridiculing Samuel Everett, the speech beginning "To be, or not to be, that is the question, / Whether it is easier for a town constable / To light lamps and repair sidewalks / Or to take up arms against the council..."); to Byron (a popular name for race horses--Advertiser, Apr. 19, 1880; and Free Press, May 27, 1879); to Dickens (of a squabble among the Lucan school trustees a reporter comments that "Jarndyce v. Jarndyce is only child's play to it"--Free Press, Nov. 20, 1879); and to popular mediaevalism (a reporter's advice to a Biddulph informer: "He would do well to provide himself with a coat of mail and greaves of brass on his thighs..."--Free Press, July 12, 1879).

The mock-Shakespearean soliloquy above is written by a reporter eager to find familiar literary situations in life. Other examples abound. When the London Advertiser is unable to substantiate the headlined claims of Samuel Everett that postmaster William Porte has

been urging Patrick Donnelly to take revenge on certain Lucan criminals, the London Free Press taunts its embarrassed rival by means of a playlet which burlesques MacBeth. The scandal-hunting Advertiser reporter is Lady Macbeth, with lines such as "Come thick night and pall me in the dunnest smoke of hell that my good pen see not the wound it makes..." He urges the co-operation of his milder and reluctant accomplice, the "Culan village" constable, Everett-MacBeth. The reporter-villain in his guilty musings echoes MacBeth also--"Is this an item that I see before me,--raising loud talk and strong sensations...?" The pair knock on William Donnelly's door, seeking an interview and hoping for more scandal, but Donnelly turns them away with a parody of the porter: "Here's a knocking indeed. What, ho! Knock! knock! knock! Who is there, i' the name of Beelzebub? I'll not hear ye, villains...."

On nineteenth-century playbills, often a brief farcical burlesque followed the full-length main attraction. An American scholar discovers another MacBeth Travestie and quotes lines like "Or is that dagger but Daguer's type?"⁷: again, newspapers imitate the practice of the theatre. The object of these theatrical lampoons could be any popular play or any serious contemporary social issue. When nothing is taken seriously, everything becomes serious: the afterpieces probably served to anaesthetize audiences both to the banality and to the strict moral polarizings of the melodrama itself.

An Advertiser reporter (Jan. 24, 1878) describes an incident at Elginfield in which three Biddulph rowdiés ("Donnelly Keefe and Feely") vandalize a tavern while Matthew Glass the landlord resists unsuccessfully:

The table and punch was upsot,
 An' the row it commenced in a minit shure.
 Niver a taste of a sthick had he got,
 So he picked up a piece of the furniture.
 Probably it was a bad job for him he did so, as
 they soon made splinters of all and sundry the bar
 furniture, and Glass fled in all directions, esp-
 ecially to Lucan....

The reporter is less concerned with facts than with using doggerel and stage-Irish accents to concoct an entertaining piece of buffoonery. The Irish newspaper in London, the Catholic Record, finds this sort of treatment rife in the Protestant press, and complains often in its editorials--"Our neighbour [in this case, the Free Press] has a habit of introducing shillelaghs and broken heads whenever it takes up the discussion of Irish affairs..." (July 11, 1879).

But protests are few; journalists continue to manipulate and package news in response to popular literary models. Consider the Advertiser's Feb. 9, 1874, report of the abduction of Margret Thompson: It seems that so far from the young girl Thompson disliking her lover, she was quite willing--even anxious--to be abducted, but the cruel parents, after the orthodox model, interposed, and the maiden was bidden to tear from her heart the image of her loved one, than to do which she declared rather an intention of dying in the spring, when the early flowers should have begun to bloom; and to heap coals of fire upon the heads of those who opposed her choice by breathing her last in a spirit of resignation, with the sweet words of forgiveness upon her ruby lips....

The reporter openly admits an "orthodox model" in Victorian melodrama--the pathetic heroine-on-a-deathbed, the senex iratus, and the rejected suitor. Happily, self-indulgently, he applies to actual events structures and images which appeal to popular taste, knowing that his audience will be entertained by the coincidence of real life and literature.

"Spicy Revelations" is the Free Press headline (Aug. 17, 1878)

over a letter from Samuel Everett alleging misbehaviour among the Lucan magistrates. The papers breezily admit an eagerness to entertain as well as to inform. They can even parody their own need to excite:

'Working Up the Feeling'

During the days when the excitement in the tragedy was at a discount... specials were dispatched... somewhat after the following style:

10:15 AM - The Chief is expected to arrive [ie. the London Chief of Police].

10:16 AM - The Chief has not arrived.

10:18 AM - A form is seen in the distance. It is supposed to be that of the Chief.

10:19 AM - It is the Chief.

Later - Some doubts as to the personality of the form.

Still later - It is not the Chief.

Very latest, 10:22 AM - The reports of a form in the distance were unfounded. Intense quietness along the Roman Line.

(Free Press, Feb. 26, 1880)

Like the theatres' burlesque afterpieces, such whimsical frankness keeps a reader's guard down, and releases him from a sense of responsibility to discover truth among conflicting Donnelly images; he is freed to absorb them all with equal avidity.

Reporters find in the Donnelly murders ample material to satisfy another cultural fashion--the taste for the Gothic. Here in the 1880 press are notes toward another possible fiction--the Donnelly story as Gothic novel. The scene at the Donnelly homestead on February 4 becomes an excellent Gothic spectacle of morbid ruin:

...The interior of the building, or what was the interior, was also strewn with the wrecks of stoves, pots, pans, &c, and at six o'clock this evening many of the timbers of the old log cabin were smouldering away. Ever and anon, the fire, fanned by the heavy wind blowing, flickered into a slight blaze for the moment, to die away again as the gust subsided. A more desolate soul-striking scene could not well be imagined.... (Mail, Feb. 5, 1880)

According to the Telegram (Feb. 5, 1880), the Donnelly homestead was the ruin of a once-powerful family's estate. James Donnelly Sr. is cast into the Gothic tradition of the aristocratic but dissipated

baron whose property and lineage have declined until, with the remnants of his family, he lives in the shell of his doomed castle:

The Donnellys years ago were very important people in this township, owning about six hundred acres of land....Lack of restraint on their aggressive proclivities led in the long run to a considerable reduction of the family estate, which finally dwindled to a fifty-acre potato patch.....

Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent explores this theme in detail, in an Irish setting; other popular contemporary novels such as The Mysteries of Udolpho, Jane Eyre, and Bleak House reflect it also, with variations.

Barely recognizable are the historical Donnellys who start with one hundred acres (not six hundred) in 1856, do decline to fifty (still much more than a potato patch), but increase their holdings to seventy-five acres with the 1873 purchase of twenty-five seventh-concession acres.

The timing of the Donnelly murders is fortunately conventional ("midnight assassins", "midnight marauders" -- Advertiser, Feb. 4 and 5, 1880, respectively). So is the setting inside the dark Donnelly home with the "fitful candlelight" (Advertiser, Feb. 13, 1880) to illuminate the deed. "The candlelight at the back of the kitchen threw a weird light across the ghastly scene" (Globe, Jan. 26, 1881). That tiny Donnelly cabin is provided with the traditional Gothic castle's secret room, in the Free Press' (Apr. 16, 1880) story of an old Biddulpher "thoroughly acquainted with...the several premises", who affirms that "...there was a compartment used by the members of the family to hide in, in order to escape service of legal papers....The apartment was a very small one, and was partitioned off from the rest of the loft.... Bridget Donnelly, the informant speculates (incorrectly), hid in that compartment from her pursuers and was smothered by smoke.

Reconstructed accounts of the murders place a properly Gothic

emphasis on the excited emotions of both victims and killers, and linger over those feelings repeatedly, at length, and for their own sake.

Typical is the Free Press' (May 21, 1881) account of the death of Bridget.

Donnelly:

...her screams at this moment were heard sounding shrill and loud on the midnight air....A number of the assassins rushed up the little stairway to the garret, and the prompt stilling of the cries for help soon told the story of her death: What a scene! An agonizing appeal for assistance by an unoffending girl, and no response but by the cruel slayers of the dead ones down stairs....

Also Gothic are the frequent lingering descriptions of physical horror,

as in the Mail's (Feb. 5, 1880) precise account of the body of John

Donnelly,

...laid out in a coffin in the half nude condition he was in at the time of his cruel taking off. It presented a shocking sight, and one which will remain impressed vividly upon the memory. Over the right eye there was a wound from which the blood had flowed freely, matting the hair and soiling the features...About four inches above the right nipple there was [sic] nearly forty distinct shot wounds, which from their size, indicated that the gun from which they were fired had been loaded with slugs. These wounds alone were sufficient to have caused death. In the base of the abdomen on the right side about three inches above the groin there was a bullet wound. The missile having taken an upward course, passed clear through his body....

When James Carroll is arrested and gaoled without confession, he matches quite well the guilt-haunted Gothic figure driven towards insanity by dread and secret crimes in his past. His physical condition deteriorates appropriately throughout his imprisonment. The Free Press (Apr. 10, 1880) notes his "shattered nervous system, broken and incoherent sleep" and adds excitedly,

The police authorities are of the opinion that he cannot stand the severe mental strain much longer, and that, but for the admonitions of his counsel, he would 'give away' the bloody work of the night of the fourth of February in the township of Biddulph.

By the time of his second trial his condition is indeed precarious and he swoons during O'Connor's incriminating testimony. A Mail reporter

(Jan. 27, 1881) interviews him in his cell afterwards:

He was deathly pale and exceedingly nervous and weak. He said that he had only once before experienced a similar sensation, and that was when he awoke from a dream in which he thought he was dying.

There is even a Gothic fearful and prophetic dream provided by Jack Whelan a few nights before the murder, which emerges before the public in James Hogan's testimony at the Feeheleys' preliminary hearing. The Advertiser (July 13, 1881) headlines its report of testimony, "Jack Whelan's Dream", and describes the terrified and reluctant witness "peering over the edge of the box in fear and evasiveness". The reporter is able to exploit a convenient windstorm which interrupts Hogan's testimony; the breezy tone is reminiscent of treatments of the stage-Irish theme:

Here a terrible storm swept over the city and made the skylight and windows of the Court House rattle...The windows rattled with fury, and the nimble caretaker sprang aloft and reefed in the top-gallant windows fore and aft, which did not, however, prevent pieces of glass from being blown here and there, also a large piece of plaster detached itself from one of the outside windows and was hurled below. Everything was grand and terrific for the time being, and a short truce was granted to Biddulph and all its woes....

Gothic diction finds its way into the smallest, most casual remarks: a Globe reporter (Feb. 7, 1880) describes mourners at the Donnelly funeral who "shook like branches in a gale". Even after all of the persecutions are over and the murderers have gone free, Gothic convention decrees that they should nevertheless be tortured by conscience and by perpetual fears of disclosure. "It requires no wide stretch of the imagination", the Free Press reporter muses darkly (Oct. 11, 1880) to form some idea of the inmost secret dread that must come to the homes of those people in the dark hours of the night. If weird dreams have ever waked them who knows but that the shadows of the room have not been the phantom of the avenging William [Donnelly]? that the creaking of some swinging gate has stirred them to the deepest alarm...?

A reporter for the Hamilton Spectator also writes in the most desperately conventional Gothic fashion (his piece reprinted in Free Press, Feb. 16, 1880):

The imploring look of the victims, the agonized appeal for mercy, must be present perpetually to the mental vision of the criminals, and make terrible music in the mental ear. The witchery of dreamland will weave the awful scene into protean forms of horror, which the waking imagination is incapable of conceiving, and the troubled sleeper will start...into wakefulness with drops of cold sweat upon his brow....

Innumerable examples can be found. The 1880 journalists and their audience appear to be obsessed with Gothic style and matter. The grim facts of the Donnelly case are quite enough to set their Gothic pens in motion.

It is not just reporters' eager copying of Monk Lewis, Dickens and Boucicault which makes the 1880 press less an objective mirror of fact than a highly stylized fiction. The newspapers encourage the use of their pages as a forum for anyone with a strong and therefore interesting opinion. In interviews and letters, individuals are given space to expound their own pro- or anti-Donnelly positions. Private citizens' versions are polarized, extreme, simply structured--and therefore popular. Some of the most persistent and powerful Donnelly images enter the public mind through this channel. The newspaper polemicists drive Donnelly accounts to the outermost boundaries of black and white.

Most of the contributors are to the black end of the spectrum of Donnelly tales. Hugh McKinnon concocts an entertaining amalgam of popular conventions which is widely-circulated in the press (Free Press, Feb. 12; Mail, Feb. 9; Globe, Mar. 4, 1880). In his own account he uses clever disguises to outwit his Donnelly rivals ("He chose to begin

operations under the guise of a sporting character"--Mail, Feb. 9, 1880). He is able to win his way--alone--into the Donnellys' confidence and their home, that mysterious Roman Line lair in the Biddulph woods where, he informs us, "the Donnellys were scuffling and wrestling among themselves" (Ibid.), as if in epic games. Hero McKinnon receives his ritual testing and initiation in a traditional combat of warriors which has all the implied high seriousness of the spectacular arena duel in The Knight's Tale:

...McKinnon saw that their real object was to draw him into the combat in order to form an idea of his abilities at 'rough and tumble'. He was ready for them, and when one of the best men in the gang closed with him the trained athlete put forth the most vigorous effort and, it is needless to add, threw his antagonist with a promptness that thoroughly surprised the whole gang.... (Globe, Mar. 4, 1880)

This of course does not surprise the reader, who has known from the first of McKinnon's fame and mettle--"a well known and fearless detective" (Mail, Feb. 9, 1880), "well versed in sporting matters" (Globe, Mar. 4, 1880). Then McKinnon singlehandedly arrests the surprised gang members, procures thirteen true bills at the 1876 Spring Assizes, and personally sends three Donnellys off to prison. Historically, of course, McKinnon's success was not at all what he pretends in 1880; he is soon exposed (Globe, Apr. 17, 1880) and so falls unwillingly into that other literary convention which we already found him fit for--the comic impostor.

But his version endures.. McKinnon's 'first-hand' image of the Donnelly boys at home reinforces published rumours that, like Coneril and Regan, "when they could not fight the neighbours, [they] fought against themselves for diversion" (Telegram, Feb. 5, 1880). This image still survives despite the strength of the opposing account "of a family who were noted for their love and kindness to each other

through all their troubles" (Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880). Perhaps McKinnon's most notable contribution to legend is his account of Johannah:

Their mother was a woman of masculine will. She once told the Chief [McKinnon] that not until each of her sons had murdered his man could she die in peace. (Mail, Feb. 9, 1880).

He later recounts: Johannah did not tell him that personally, she only told neighbours (Globe, Mar. 4, 1880). But he recalls that she was "on the war path for several days after the arrest of her boys, looking for McKinnon and vowing vengeance at first sight" (Mail, Feb. 9, 1880).

A Mail reporter (Feb. 9, 1880) seeks out Patrick Flanagan at his Clandeboye hotel and harvests his story of the stage-coach troubles.

The article opens with mention of the high repute of Flanagan's father, the founder of Clandeboye. It describes Patrick as "of good address, and of quiet and retiring demeanour", and notes how modest and reticent he is. Such an introduction is standard: it establishes the interviewee's credibility. Flanagan soon warms to the topic: he recalls the burning of his stables, the shaving of his horses' tails (unreported by witnesses or press in 1875-76), the clubbing in the alley by the Queen's hotel. He mentions James Churchill's dubious claim to have witnessed Thomas Donnelly's first attempt to burn Flanagan's stable. "The Donnelly boys were blamed", says Flanagan, "but we could prove nothing, as they covered up their tracks very successfully". Through the newspaper's auspices, Flanagan generates a much-simplified picture of the Donnellys as the sole aggressors.

Joseph Carswell also is eager to catch a reporter's ear:

...When your reporter met him this afternoon he seemed very desirous of telling his tale of trouble.

'You have had a great deal of trouble with the Donnellys, you say?' asked the reporter.

"Yes, I have indeed", was the reply, "but if you want to hear it I may as well tell you from the very beginning...." (Free Press, Feb. 12; 1880)

Even the reporter is soon sated and begins to condense his Carswell copy ("...here followed a lengthy story about a supposed attempt on the part of Bob Donnelly to take his life in broad daylight..."). Carswell's story is confused (the Donnellys are always friendly toward him, but he is not deceived: they are out to destroy him), and paranoid (no-one in Lucan will lend him a weapon, no storekeeper will sell him one). His suspicion and fear of Donnellys are obsessive ("I saw tracks and knew they were theirs", he says, and again, "the tracks [on a different occasion] past my house pointed towards Lucan on the railway track. I believed then, and believe now, that the Donnellys did it"). Even the reporter is skeptical and wonders, "Do his statements bear sifting?", but he does not hesitate to publish the account. The Donnellys show black and vividly through the filter of Carswell's apparently unbalanced mind, and his images survive all doubt of their authenticity. Carswell's story of squatter James Donnelly Jr., for instance, becomes confused with the erroneous tradition that James Donnelly Sr. squatted on the land of Patrick Farrell, and so reinforces the notion that the Donnellys were originally squatters (Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 6, 1880, for example).

Other notable anti-Donnelly material enters the press and the public mind through polemical interview. The Advertiser interviews a Lucanite (Feb. 5, 1880):

Our houses were burnt, our horses' tongues cut out, our cattle disembowelled, and no one was safe who ever said a word against the Donnellys... When did anybody ever get the best of the Donnellys in law? Why, we never saw them up and get their just deserts... They were a bad family, and the only difference between them and a dog was in shape....

The mechanism at work in this tirade is a common one: to list crimes and outrages, and then mention the Donnellys, so that both speaker and audience are persuaded (although the claim is never explicitly made) that all of the crimes were therefore the work of Donnellys. William Stanley (Globe, Feb. 7, 1880) follows the same shadowy logic, stating that "two years ago the Donnellys were the terror of the township", mentioning the large number of unsolved crimes, and then stating that the Donnellys could not be convicted because people were afraid to testify. Implicit is the huge corollary that the Donnellys were in fact guilty of all. Often it requires close attention to detect the logical fallacies in what seems on its surface a smooth and sensible view of the Donnelly family.

But it is newspaper practice only to publish interviewees' statements, not to analyze them. The press absorbs such statements uncritically. George W. Clay's own version of his exploits in Biddulph are published verbatim ("Constable Clay Carries Off the Honours as a Detective"--Advertiser, Feb. 14, 1880). A Globe reporter (Feb. 20, 1880) discovers and encourages a man who claims to have been burned out by Donnellys ("The very summer that I was burnt out the Donnellys cut and gutted twenty-eight horses"), and who exculpates their killers (the Donnellys "brought it on themselves and deserved their end, and I'm not afraid to say so"). Witnesses to disasters are regularly sought out by interviewers. Their appeal is manifest: such figures have experienced hellish descents such as few of us have known--have seen the Gorgon, say, and have survived to tell a breathless public about it.

The Donnellys themselves are ready to use the press in their own defence. William Donnelly especially is practised at the art of

newspaper polemics. Michael Donnelly during the stage-coach troubles writes the Advertiser (Mar. 2, 1876) to protest that "there are always two sides to a story". He complains that enemies "have done our business much harm without just cause . . . in order to run us off the road". He writes his letter, he says, "in order that the minds of the public may not be altogether prejudiced against the 'Donnelly Tribe' as one of your local papers chose to name us". Patrick Donnelly also writes the Free Press (June 30, 1880) to protest jealous accusations against the family:

It seems to me that when a Donnelly has a little money, no matter how trifling a sum it may be, people of the locality [Biddulph] are always ready to say he must have got it by some dishonest means.

The Donnellys do have some defenders in the papers. The fullest accounts are in the Ottawa Free Press and in the Globe (both Feb. 6, 1880). These articles illustrate how the fixed point of view of an opinionated observer tends to simplify and to crystallize clusters of images. Both versions are rebuttals of anti-Donnelly copy of February 5. Both describe the Donnellys as remarkably handsome ("none finer in Biddulph" says the Globe; "none finer in the province" says the Free Press). This notion is central in the tradition that the Donnellys had a much-resented ~~air~~ air of nobility which marked them as superior to the rest of Biddulph. Both accounts characterize the Farrell murder accurately as an "unlucky blow" given while in liquor, and both emphasize that public sympathy was on Donnelly's side. This too is crucial to disproving the erroneous story that the Donnellys were anti-social out-casts from the beginning. The Globe is the first printed source of the tradition, also visible in the private lore, that Donnelly Sr. "worked on his farm disguised in female garments", a

popular image that gives him a mischievous charm, drawing on the same comic disguise motif that helps to make McKinnon so attractive to readers. Passing on to the stage-coach period, the Free Press account notes that the brothers "were extremely affable and obliging in their demeanour" towards anyone who had not offended them. This again is a persistent notion: the Dagg family, neighbours of the Donnellys, on the fifth concession, offer the same opinion when interviewed--"very decent neighbours and not in the least quarrelsome if left alone" (Advertiser, Feb. 11, 1880). Both of these claims, as we have seen, are supported by the history as well as by private contemporary anecdotes.

In short, these two first-hand pro-Donnelly accounts single out the same basic events in the Donnelly story: the Farrell quarrel and killing, the seven years in Kingston, the family growing up fatherless, the stage-coach troubles, the conviction of Robert Donnelly for the Everett shooting, and Everett's later retraction. The Globe account then proceeds to mention Connolly's opposition to the family, the appointment of constable Carroll, and the burning of Ryder's barn. As we noted in the chapter on private lore, a single narrator in the re-telling tends to organize and rationalize a story, to ignore details that seem unimportant, and to emphasize whatever incidents seem to explain things most satisfactorily. In general, as he recalls the material he creates a more coherent and easily-grasped whole, quite apart from questions of its historical accuracy. Especially once it reaches a wide audience through publication, such an account is susceptible to later re-tellings in a largely unaltered form. The events which he has selectively related are later seized and absorbed, time after time, until they become touchstones in Donnelly lore.

If one narrator can produce in this way a clear and readily remembered series of images, then the passage of one story through several consecutive minds extends the same process and further refines the structures that emerge. This is in fact the mechanism of rumour. In 1880 tales spread orally through Biddulph and into the ears of reporters; some of them perhaps are early versions of the tales included in the chapter on private lore. "Rumours of all kinds blow thick and fast around the village", says the Advertiser reporter (Feb. 6, 1880). The Mail (Feb. 23, 1880) notes that "groups of persons may be overheard eagerly discussing the matter at various street corners". The Telegram reporter by February 13 has had enough of rumours: "Everyone has a volume of romance to pour into the reporter's ear", he complains. Often the press reports rumour with a caveat: "We give it for what it may be worth" (Free Press, Feb. 16, 1880). Another common prefatory qualification is "Rightly or wrongly..." (Mail, Feb. 13 and Apr. 9, Globe, Feb. 5, Sarnia Observer, Feb. 6, 1880). But the papers still publish the rumours. The preliminary deprecation absolves the paper of the responsibility to report only fact; and deprecation, as we noted earlier, tends to lower, not raise, a reader's guard:

Rumour as it travels is progressively shaped: ambiguous or uninteresting items are levelled, familiar and vivid ones are retained. The kernel of fact is assimilated according to the tellers' and hearers' prejudices, expectations, fears, hates, wishes, into a form which the mind can most easily control. Harold Innis has described the oral transmission of material,

...the constant sifting, refining and modifying of what did not fit into the tradition... Fact shifted into legend, legend into myth. Facts worked loose and became detached from their roots in space and time. The story was moulded and remoulded....⁸

That is, rumour-building is a proto-literary process; its transmitters are corporate authors who develop from confusing fact the same kinds of organized structures that exist in works of literature. Rumour's "volumes of romance" are one of the most fruitful sources of Donnelly lore. Rumour becomes canonized in time. "It is even said", the Globe reports (Feb. 6, 1880) "that he worked on his farm disguised in female garments", and by the later twentieth century that rumour has passed into folklore.

Rumour helps in the papers to sharpen ambiguous conflicts--for example, between the Donnellys and the priest. The Advertiser (Feb. 6, 1880) reports a rumour that Connolly has refused to bury the Donnelly bodies in St. Patrick's cemetery, and a subsequent rumour that he has ordered the Donnelly remains already there to be disinterred. There is rumour that he has refused to perform the funeral service, and that the Donnelly remains will be buried on the family farm (Mail, Feb. 7, 1880). On the other side is the rumour that William Donnelly is agitating to have Connolly arrested (denied by Donnelly, in Mail, Feb. 7, 1880). With such tales abounding, a Biddulph resident soon assures a reporter (Globe, Feb. 13, 1880) that Connolly even had foreknowledge of the killings: "The priest knew what was going to take place". By means of rumours, none of which, as we know, have any factual basis, Connolly becomes a figure quite as evil as any of the clerical villains in, say, the Victorian anti-Catholic invective of Father Chiniquy.⁹ The conflict between Donnelly and Connolly is rendered as clear-cut and unambiguous as any pattern of conflict in melodrama.

Matrimony is another matter always ripe for rumour. Marriage, as we have noted, is the basis of a large proportion of fictional

plots and a gauge for measuring a fictional (or real life) character's career and personality. Hence the interest in the Globe's piece (Feb. 16, 1880) on "Donnellys' Matrimonial Life". It informs us that Robert had been married, then deserted his pregnant wife, became engaged to another, and was bribed by a horrified prospective brother-in-law to forego the bigamous marriage; that John similarly was married, then abandoned his bride when he could not extract any money from her family; and that Thomas extracted \$200 from the family of a girl by threatening to marry her. The story of Thomas' illegitimate son is of the same ilk. There is no evidence for any of these tales, but they do form a particularly satisfying matrix for anti-Donnelly sentiment. "Rumours of Donnelly monstrosity perhaps reach their zenith when strangers remark that "the Donnellys must be nine or ten feet high and weigh four or five hundred pounds" (Free Press, Sept. 8, 1880). Like Wacousta's, the Donnellys' physical stature seems to grow apace with their notoriety.

With editors eager to print the exaggerations of fact supplied by rumour and by opinionated observers, with reporters ruthlessly exploiting popular literary taste, it is no wonder that the newspaper image of Biddulph is an artificial one. The Free Press (Feb. 13, 1880) prints a long summation of "The Social Conditions of the People" and of "The Settlement of the Township", a social and historical guided tour of Biddulph as if Biddulph were a strange and distant country, or as if describing the exotic and exhaustively-detailed set of a Victorian drama:

Viewing the residences along the sixth concession, eighth line, and all through the immediate scene of the murder, the spectator cannot resist being struck by their primitive appearance and general lack of ornament. More than 75 per cent are built with logs, and, with the exception of a small potato patch, not a garden has been seen for miles

round...This may be accounted for by the love which is always entertained towards the old log house, and the recollections it serves to revive of old associations and years gone by...The aesthetic tastes of the inmates are indicated by a few pictures of the Crucifixion, the Sacred Heart, Crown of Thorns, and a few others having purely religious subjects...A conversation would adduce many quaint ideas and relics of Hibernian superstitions....

The theme is laboured at length that Biddulph is a curiosity remote from the lives of newspaper readers. William Donnelly writes to the Free Press (Sept. 9, 1880) to "give the outer world an idea" of conditions in Biddulph. The Globe (Oct. 8, 1880) reports of course Judge Armour's remarks at the first trial that Biddulph "is a foreign country to me". In literature, the Victorian taste for exotic and picturesque surroundings is reflected not only in all the melodramas set in places like the Orient or the American Deep South, but in works as un-melodramatic as Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat.

If Biddulph is an exotic stage setting, reporters are eager to delight their audience with specimens of Biddulphers' dialogue. It is Irish--stage Irish. The report of Daniel Whelan's testimony (Advertiser, Feb. 1, 1881) is typical:

Johnny O'Connor told me about the fire first, he said to me, 'Did ye hear of the fire?' I sed 'What foire?' 'The Donnelly foire,' ses he, 'the Donnellys were killed. They were driven into the woods,' ses he, 'they brought thim back agin and shot thim, and Jack Donnelly was shot too!'...I took a heart-bate and a fright and did not stir out for a whole week (Laughter)....

Other dialogue does not depend for its effect on being Irish. A sharp-eared Free Press reporter (Feb. 13, 1880) turns to good dramatic account an incident involving James Donnelly Sr. in a Lucan store on the day of his murder. Asked by the merchant if he will pay cash or add the charges to his account he replies, with a foreboding and dramatic irony most appealing to the 1880 audience, "Charge this to the Queen;

perhaps I'll never return to pay you again". Another alert reporter hears and prints Biddulph residents' comments after the inquest verdict: "The jury that would hang them [the murderers] ought to be hung themselves" and "Oh, but they [the murderers] ought to have a first-class seat in heaven" (Globe, Mar. 8, 1880).

The press stresses how primitive Biddulphers are. An urbanite Advertiser reporter notices witness Robert Keefe's ignorance:

Mr Meredith- Now, where is your farm on the map?
Witness- I know nothing about maps. (Witness here described where he lived without a map.) (Advertiser, Jan. 29, 1881)

A Globe reporter notes the Vigilant Committee's lack of procedural rules and structures of delegated authority. "Had you a president or chairman?" he asks a Vigilant informant, and quotes the reply: "Do you suppose that men raised in the bush knew what that meant? They didn't bother themselves about such things" (Globe, Feb. 15, 1880). A watchful Mail reporter can also provide readers with broad humour at Biddulphers' expense:

"Do you sleep on the ground floor?" asked Mr Irving.
"Shure no, we have a bedstead", the woman [Ann Whelan] replied.
(Mail, Oct. 5, 1880)

The Vigilant prisoners do not even preserve criminal decorum: the press notes regularly, with relish and condescension, that they "sang and danced in their cells" (Globe, Mar. 3, 1880) like Comus' rout. The same lurid and cacophonous celebration is attributed also to the Donnelly's: "They also went to Devizes, in the south-east corner of the township, and were frequently seen there drinking and carousing" (Telegram, Feb. 10, 1880). (The historical Donnelly's found in bars at the time of the wedding riot or the Berryhill stoning perhaps support this notion in general; there is no evidence of Donnelly's being found at

Devizes--which is in West Missouri, not in Biddulph.)

The papers push the theme of unlettered barbarity much farther when they consider the actual murders. The Globe (Feb. 10, 1880) compares the murder to "massacres by savages in the Far West". "Such bloodthirstiness has seldom been exhibited by the most savage tribes of Indians", says the Montreal Star (Feb. 7, 1880). The Ottawa Free Press (Feb. 5, 1880) expounds a kind of fashionable moral Darwinism: "It would be impossible to find twenty men capable of a crime like this were they not...unevolved from a primitive state of conscience".

Regularly the press gives its readers accounts of the fantastic life of the nineteenth century's more primitive people such as the American

Indians:

...reports have been discovered that [the Cheyennes] before their outbreak had agreed upon a plan to massacre all the whites at the fort [Fort Robinson, Nebraska]... (Advertiser, Jan. 24, 1879),

and the Zulus:

Many years ago the Zulus used only javelins. The King one day armed a regiment with short wooden stabbing swords and pitted them in a sham fight against the javelins, and established the superiority of the stabbing weapon. Instead of throwing the sword the stabbers close in upon the enemy and use their weapon with deadly effectiveness. This arm is like the old Roman sword, used with a shield, and in close quarters is a terrible weapon.... (Free Press, Feb. 17, 1879)

But these savages are to be found in far-off worlds; journalists and their readers find a horrible fascination in the thought of such people and such a place not only within Canada but "within twenty miles of a large and populous city" (Mail, Feb. 5, 1880). The stance of newspaper writers and readers is clear: they themselves are morally evolved, civilized, correct, and condemn the Biddulph slaughter. To emphasize the Biddulphers' uniqueness, their Irishness, illiteracy, primitiveness, and bizarre social customs, is to distance themselves

from any sense of involvement with the crime. The Mail's article on "Unruly Biddulphers" (Feb. 3, 1881) is a very special and necessary kind of comic relief, of distancing:

When the court opened all the Biddulphers were on hand--men who had had their noses bitten out by the roots, men who had left some of their ears in the mouth of antagonists, men who bore the scars and scratches of many a faction fight, clustered in the corridors and damned the constables because they were not admitted....

Most of the newspaper coverage of the Donnelly story is comprised of various strategies of repression. Journalists apply conventions familiar and entertaining to what is in its bare facts a proof that Canadian civilization can fail disastrously. The journalists make it easy for the audience to consume this story; they make it just another consumer product.

There is no recognition of this in the papers. Despite some resistance to press coverage (e.g., Advertiser, Feb. 12, 1880), the papers' image of Biddulph is accepted even by the Biddulphers. They read the papers, absorb and then reflect the image of themselves that they find there. The Lucan correspondent for the Advertiser feeds that paper's readers self-consciously quaint items about his neighbourhood, its pastimes and its indigenous vocabulary: "The boys indulge again in the familiar games 'tip-chase', 'odd and even', 'knuckle-down'" (Advertiser, Dec. 9, 1879). A juror at the Donnelly inquest writes to the Free Press (Mar. 6, 1880), ostensibly to complain of poor publicity, but deliberately flaunting his community's peculiarities. He is rather pathetically eager to provide the entertainment which the audience expects of Lucan:

When you are in Rome, you must do as the Romans do, and here in Rome, I mean Lucan, we are a most social set. What could possibly be a prettier picture to anyone but Chief Williams than the sight of the wolf lying down with the lamb, the communion without any bitter feeling of prisoners, constables, jurymen, prisoners' friends, and hoary-headed city fathers, all having a good time together?

The newspapers' image of Biddulph becomes self-fulfilling. Here is a pure Narcissus-world where self and image, reality and art are indistinguishable--the press reporting, tautologically, not an objective reality but the image which the press itself has cast. Even the accused murderers are pleased when the Toronto crowds perceive them as spectacular curios. They joke that "it would be a good speculation if they were put into an iron cage and exhibited at 25 cents for adults" (Free Press, May 27, 1880). Papers copy theatre: often the travelling dramatic companies included freak shows and animal spectacles with their farce-and-melodrama fare.

If the newspapers are predominantly the expression of the Donnelly story as melodrama, it is clear, as we noticed in the last chapter, that there are two directly opposite versions: Donnellys as innocent and good, and Donnellys as evil and deserving of their fate. However firmly the public might believe in their fundamental wickedness, the bare unavoidable fact that five Donnellys have been brutally murdered makes the former version inevitable.¹⁰ By cultivating a sense of loss, reporters give their readers the fullest opportunity to contemplate the poignant suddenness of the victims' taking-off and the cruelty and brevity of life in general. The whole family of Donnelly dead are shown in a tableau of victimized domestic innocence:

The family consisted of an aged pair unable to defend themselves, a poor young woman twenty-four years of age just come to seek a shelter from that land of sore distress where famine is raging, and one young man who, after his day's labours, had gone to rest. All were sleeping peacefully when lo! at the dead hour of night.... (Free Press, Feb. 27,

1880)

The elegiac tone appears too in meditations upon the homestead which sheltered four of the Donnelly victims. This is the same building which, from another point of view, contained a secret Gothic compartment, a criminals' refuge. "Since the bloody scene which is known to have taken place within its log walls, it has been immortalized", says the Free Press (Feb. 20, 1880); beneath a sketched reconstruction of the cabin. The Globe prints a picture of the home on Mar. 15, 1880. The Free Press article continues:

It was the home of seven young men...and to them it was the dearest spot on earth. Only three of them now live, but with them the memory of their mother's toiling, when they were unable to assist themselves, is as fresh as ever, and the illustration cannot fail to bring back the recollection of those days...Built by the peaceful and industrious settler, it fell by the torch of the incendiary and murderer.

The violation of this domestic sanctuary is as vile a transgression, the papers imply, as the murders themselves. The climax of this motif is Robert Donnelly's re-fencing of the yard of the Donnelly home (Advertiser, Apr. 7, 1880), followed by the rebuilding of the home itself (Globe, Feb. 4, 1881). Here there is all the triumph that usually attaches in literature to creative reconstruction--from the tidied cabin and weeded garden in Surfacing on up to Blake's New Jerusalem. William Donnelly issues a victory proclamation: "The homestead will be kept in our hands as long as we live...None of the Vigilants will ever get it" (Free Press, June 24, 1880).

The warm domestic scene of hearth-glow and lamp-light that the Vigilants have desecrated appears in the reports of William Donnelly's inquest testimony: he "...would not have got up until daybreak had not his wife seen a lamp light in Morley's kitchen opposite, and he

then considered it would be safe..." (Advertiser, Mar. 3, 1880). This comforting lamp-light is the same light that Bridget and Johannah Donnelly start, in the kitchen stove and the candle on the kitchen table on the night of February 3-4. But Carroll takes the candle, and his Vigilants ignite the opposite, demonic fire (Advertiser, Feb. 21, 1880).

All that remained of the house was a black pile of ashes, which bore a striking contrast to the pure white snow that covered the ground.... (Globe, Feb. 9, 1880)

The black blot of the former Donnelly family home against the winter whiteness is an emblem of the entire Biddulph feud, its causes and consequences. "The fair name of Canada has received a foul blot" (Advertiser, Feb. 14, 1880). The blackness represents not the Black Donnellys but the evil of what was done to them by Vigilants "with faces blackened" (Free Press, Feb. 27, 1880). Here the story of the Donnelly homestead is squarely in the line of nineteenth-century melodrama where villains threaten families with foreclosures and evictions and the audience's pity and fear are guaranteed.

The papers do not by any means overlook that non-Donnelly victim of February 4, John O'Connor. The brutalizing of helpless and innocent children--at the hands of drunken father or heartless guardian or landlord or employer--is of course a staple in the literature popular at the time--from Shakespeare (Richard III and King John) to Dickens (Great Expectations, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist, The Old Curiosity Shop) and Mrs. Gaskell (North and South). The press often is moved to contemplate the contrast between the child's innate goodness and the brutality of a world of experience. John O'Connor is

...made an unwilling witness of such blood-curdling horrors as might well have turned an older brain than his...[a story] so sickening in detail that many a stout-hearted man shuddered as he heard it fall from the baby lips of the only one of that ill-fated household who saw the light of the next morning.... (Globe, Jan. 27, 1881)

John is of course not a "baby". His youth makes all the more heart-warming for his audience the pluck which he shows as the killers' chief accuser:

...a bright-faced boy of twelve, neatly dressed, walked briskly across the aisle, and stepped up into the witness box with the air of one for whom the box had no terrors.... (Ibid.)

In melodrama's perfectly intelligible world, villainy must be punished. That is, in the pro-Donnelly melodrama, their killers are discovered and punished. We have already noticed briefly how this theme looks from the point of view of Carroll. The cry for justice is unanimous in the press--for a time: "Nothing that can be done to expose the perpetrators of this inhuman massacre should be left undone ..." (Mail, Feb. 6, 1880). Much more vivid, more personal and dramatic than judicial machinery, is the melodramatic notion of grim surviving Donnellys in pursuit of their family's destroyers. The theme is pervasive and persistent, but ironically does not reinforce the short-lived urge for an actual retributive justice. Here is a definitive measure of how thoroughly the fictional conventions blunt the disquieting knowledge that the Donnelly story is a hard reality. Audiences take melodrama for real life, but only when it is easy and comforting to do so. Correspondingly, they take real life for melodrama ("only imagination") when that is the way of least resistance. "These murders cry aloud to heaven for vengeance", says a letter-writer to the Free Press (Feb. 27, 1880). "The day will come on them [the killers]", says Nellie Kennedy (Free Press, Mar. 6, 1880), "when with

their bloodstained hands they will have to appear before a just God".

What the Donnelly survivors are after is a just and divinely-sanctioned nemesis. Their retributive labours in Biddulph are not just exciting, but right and admirable. Revenge is a doubly-satisfying business. The revenger is savage and implacable, but his quarry is by definition worse, and so the hero's cruel wrath is perfectly justified. "The perpetrators of the dastardly crime", says the Globe (Feb. 1, 1881) in a typically ambiguous tone of grim piety, "will find that they have bloodhounds upon their track and that sooner or later they are sure to be found out". "Where the end will be, no man can tell", the Free Press announces breathlessly on Oct. 12, 1881, but, if the Donnelly drive for vengeance is in time fulfilled, all will be terrible and well. Melodrama is unswerving in its moral assumptions: "Sooner or later the avenging arm of justice would fall on the bloodstained murderers" (Mail, Jan. 31, 1881). On that just day, evil will be punished, virtue rewarded, and the audience's blood lust satisfied--neatly, and all at once.

And yet--the diametrically opposite Donnelly images co-exist quite comfortably in the press: the factual story serves only as a pretext for conventions, not as an arbiter among them. In the other version, Donnellys are melodrama's villains. They are devils. Satan is real and vivid to the nineteenth-century Canadian mind. If not an object of unanimous literal belief, he is nonetheless a proverbial part of daily vocabulary. A Lucan Conservative complains that Samuel Everett in the 1878 election showed "the 'cloven hoof' of 'Grittism'" (Free Press, Oct. 8, 1878). Satan appears in an exchange between Biddulph school teacher Thomas Marshall and lawyer Hugh McMahon, as Marshall describes

his encounter with a Vigilant mob:

Mr MacMahon: And you said it was time to bid the devil good morning when they met him?

'Yes', replied the witness.

'And', said Mr MacMahon, 'Did not one of them say to you, "Good morning, Sir?"', bowing slightly to the witness.

The wily old Irishman laughed heartily as he replied, 'No, Sir, they did not, Sir. I have not the cloven hoof yet, Sir'. (Globe, Jan. 30, 1881)

And a writer describes the murderers, "with blacker than devils' hearts" (Free Press, Feb. 27, 1880). Hence the force of Connolly's constant cursing of the family from his pulpit ("Johannah Donnelly will die in a ditch", Globe, Mar. 3, 1880), and of his prediction that a cleansing ball of fire from heaven will strike the home of the arsonists of the Ryder barn (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880). The Free Press (Feb. 12, 1880) also stresses Biddulph superstition, and Connolly would have been unlikely to make a prophecy that no one would take seriously.

Thereafter a letter-writer speaks of William Donnelly's "unholy doctrine instilled into him in his youth" (Free Press, Sept. 13, 1880); and the Toronto Telegram (Feb. 5, 1880) uses the conventional demonic imagery: "a Vigilant Committee was formed to 'extirpate the vipers'". It is this generally diabolical image which exploiters like McKinnon, Carswell and their like expand with lurid detail.

Another reporter muses on the theme:

It appears that they [the Donnellys] had been denounced from the Altar as outlaws, not only as civil but divine outlaws. The regulators of society in Biddulph may have thought that they had an ancient mission to perform, namely, the extermination of not only their enemies and the enemies of the community, but the enemies of God. (Advertiser, Feb. 14, 1880)

In a lengthy editorial (Mar. 19, 1880) the Advertiser enumerates how widespread is superstition in Ontario in 1880, "cropping up almost everywhere": "marvellous lights seen flitting from place to place",

"more marvellous and frightful noises", and

...buried treasure which is supposed to be jealously guarded by his Satanic Majesty, and which, it is thought, can only be obtained by inducing some unwary clergy to exorcise the demon.

"There are scores of settlements which have . . . each its own apparition", the writer informs us, and illustrates lingering beliefs in the existence of demonic creatures:

A belief in witches is quite prevalent in many places. . . . Some old woman . . . whose only crime is that she is poor, old and ugly, and, perhaps ill-tempered.

As we shall see, notions such as these hover behind newspaper images of Johannah Donnelly. The same editorial notes the prevalent practice of using fire to exorcise demonic agents:

Sometimes the cows are bewitched so that they will not 'give down their milk', sometimes it is in the cream in the churns, and then the butter will not come. In this case the cows must be exorcised by someone. . . . The evil spirit is driven out of the cream by plunging a heated plough coulter into it. . . .

The red-hot plough blade and the Vigilants' coal oil seem to be instruments in a similar enterprise. With these themes of scapegoat and exorcism, the 1880 journalist stumbles onto something which transcends melodrama and perhaps gets at what melodrama is all about. But the newspaper's business is with the clichés of melodrama, not with the archetype, and no journalist follows up the insights.

In the newspaper treatment of individual Donnellys--as distinct from the family as a homogeneous unit--again the two opposite versions of Donnelly melodrama co-exist with no sense of unsettling contradiction. Widely-circulated (Mail, Feb. 5; Tillsonburg Observer, Feb. 15, Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880) is the tale that Johannah "the strong-minded mother used to taunt her boys with their inferiority to their father who had killed his man". The charge is almost certainly false: no

Donnelly son ever even attempts murder. But for the press, Donnelly boys under Johannah's tutelage consider murder an initiation into manhood. She is vicious and vengeful: "Why," says a Lucanite (Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880), "it is said that she prayed on her knees that the souls of her sons might forever frizzle in hell if they ever forgave an enemy or failed to take revenge". Even the pro-Donnelly historian in the Globe (Feb. 6, 1880) suggests that the Donnelly sons, ridiculed with the cry that their father was a killer, "were goaded on by their mother to resent the insults". Enscenced in that Roman-Line homestead, Johannah is made the lurking cause of all Donnelly depredation.

Tales of her sharp tongue are rife in the press. James Carroll charges her with abusive language (Advertiser, Oct. 22, 1878). John Cair believes that she threatened the man who would buy his farm (Free Press, Oct. 5, 1880). Patrick Ryder hears rumours that she has threatened to destroy his son's buggy (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880), the result of which is the Globe's comment (Feb. 12, 1880) that at the time of her death Johannah stood charged with arson. William Donnelly himself recalls his mother's joining him at the door of his home, furious at the Vigilant trespassers: "She wondered at Martin D'Arcy being with such a gang, as his father was the decentest man in Biddulph" (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880).

Her imposing size ("She was a tall powerful woman"--Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880) and aggressiveness are turned in another account to suggest not vindictiveness but an Amazon image. In her death scene according to the Free Press (May 21, 1881) she has all the militant valour of Hera in the Iliad charging into battle in a lost cause:

Instinctively the wife and mother had thrown herself into the struggle and fought like a wounded tiger. Overcome by numbers, however, and bleeding from many a wound, the old lady was soon laid beside her husband in the little back kitchen....

The tone mixes pathos not, as is usual, with feminine weakness, but with aggression.

The fact that Johannah is a mother makes her harpy image the more horrifying, defying as it does all the salutary conventions of fictional motherhood, like Caliban's reputedly horrid dam Sycorax. The usual melodramatic associations of mothers are pathetic--mothers sheltering cowering children from rapacious rent-collectors--and the press is equally willing to cast Johannah in this role. The Free Press (Feb. 16, 1880) acknowledges the literary model: "'A woman in the case' sounds sensational, but 'a mother in the case' has a touch of sadness". The press takes due note of Ellen Maher, improperly stoic and grim when James Maher Sr. and Jr. are arrested:

Under ordinary circumstances one would look for some display of feeling from a mother who sees her husband and son being taken to prison.... (Free Press, Feb. 16, 1880)

The reporter adds a hopeful speculation that she may yet conform:

Could the secrecy of these homes [Ellen Maher's and those of other similarly bereft Vigilant wives] be peered into, however, tearful eyes would surely be found.

But unlike Ellen Maher, Johannah Dornelly is pictured battling with heroic love to guard her young brood while her husband is in prison:

During this period of servitude the unfortunate partner of his joys and sorrows struggled on upon the small homestead with her seven infant boys and only daughter, the youngest of all. By the severest struggle she maintained the family in honesty and decency until the return of their paternal protector.... (Ottawa Free Press, Feb. 6, 1880)

This image reappears in Father John Connolly's portrayal of her in his funeral address, where he calls her "a sensible sort of woman" and adds

tearfully, "The last words I had with the old woman she said, 'Father Connolly, I have been trying to get the boys to be good'" (Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1880). Aemilius Irving in a cunning piece of rhetoric (Mail, Oct. 5, 1880) applies this image of feminine protectress to Nora Donnelly, picturing her trying to drag the dying John Donnelly into her bedroom and then holding a scrap of blessed candle in his hand while he dies: "Throughout the whole of this terrible tragedy, he said, there is one woman, Nora Donnelly, whose conduct will appear to us to have been almost evangelic".

This kind of image is inevitable, then, in newspaper scenes such as the following:

Mrs Donnelly fell upon her knees at the foot of the ringleader and implored, with mingled tears and blood pouring down her fading cheeks, for one minute to pray for the salvation of her soul. With a savage laugh and a bloodcurdling curse the fiend replied, "Pray, you ___? You have prayed too long already", and with a heavy instrument the poor woman was felled senseless at his feet.... (Telegram, Feb. 8, 1880)

The suppliant figure, in Northrop Frye's description,

...represents a picture of unmitigated helplessness and destitution. Such a figure is pathetic, and pathos, though it seems a gentler and more relaxed mood than tragedy, is even more terrifying. Its basis is the exclusion of an individual from a group, hence it attacks the deepest fear in ourselves that we possess...¹¹

Thus the power of the image of Johannah kneeling alone, surrounded by assassins. Frye notes also that "pathos is increased by the inarticulateness of the victim";¹² Johannah is made to die without expressing the prayer which she begs a moment to compose.

Johannah is not alone in her role of low-mimetic distressed heroine. Her daughter Jennie, "the idol of the family", (Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880), is made to fit the same pattern, twice: when she arrives in Biddulph for the funeral--

Jennie Donnelly is the observed of all observers. Her screams are wafted out on the night air, and yet she knows nothing of the incidents connected with the tragedy. She knows or sees only one object before her, the charred remains of those most near and dear to her. (Montreal Star, Feb. 6, 1880)

and again during her swoon after James Carroll's acquittal--

When the verdict was announced, and the vulgar cheers of the crowd fell upon the ears of the little party [Jennie, William and Patrick Donnelly, and Charles Hutchinson], the young woman fainted away, and as the reporter saw them the boys were bent over her form with tears running down their cheeks. (Mail, Feb. 3, 1881)

Bridget Donnelly dies and thus, like her aunt, achieves the status of a full-fledged female sacrificial figure. She is "comely" (Advertiser, Oct. 4, 1880), "innocent" (Mail, Apr. 7, 1880); and rather "simple-minded" (Globe, Feb. 10, 1880)--a quality which intensifies a victim's inarticulateness and hence the pathos of her death. Here is the death accorded her in the Free Press (Feb. 27, 1880):

...Nor can youth, beauty, and innocence avail to disarm the inhuman monsters. 'Where's the girl?' cry the fiends. In her fear she had fled upstairs to hide herself. Quickly the bloodhounds pursue her. Who can tell that poor girl's agony when, almost naked, and surrounded by the hideous monsters...on her bended knees she protests her innocence, and cries for mercy; but her cries that would have stopped the heart of a savage, were all lost on the devilish hearts of the assassins. After abusing her in every way possible, they dispatch her to eternity without a time for preparation, and having finished their bloody deed they descend the stairs saying, 'It is all right!!!'

Even more inarticulate, animals make naturally pathetic victims.

Regularly it is charged against the Donnellys that they kill and mutilate livestock (Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 6, 1880) and, specifically, cut the tongues out of horses (Free Press, Feb. 12, and Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880). Although there is no reliable evidence to support it, this notion proves to be extremely enduring, a prime touchstone of all anti-Donnelly sentiment. The Bambi syndrome which gives such emotional force to this severed-tongue motif shows clearly in the description

of Carswell's horses, butchered reputedly (Globe, Feb. 11, 1880) by

Donnellys:

One, a mare, had been cut across the abdomen, evidently with a scythe... A suckling foal, but a few months of age, was lying beside its dead mother, apparently wondering why she should be so quiet.... (Advertiser, Aug. 2, 1875)

James Donnelly's pet terrier, burned in the Donnelly massacre, contributes a similar sentiment on the pro-Donnelly side ("The body of the little dog was found near what is called the remains of the unfortunate young woman Bridget Donnelly"--Mail; Feb. 5, 1880), the more so when Jennie Donnelly asks after the fate of her father's favourite, in a published letter (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). William Donnelly's stallion, frightened by the Vigilants on February 4, completes the list of animals in this tradition: "...the horses were trembling so much that one of them could scarcely stand. They were dreadfully scared, and jumped about madly" (Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880). Here we are far from the romance-world where these creatures are a questing hero's stalwart companions.

To return then to Johannah: behind the sensational horror and pathos of her corresponding death scene there are a number of quiet images of a lovable and humanly vulnerable woman. William Donnelly notes that at their last meeting on February 3 she wears homely red flannels and a small morning shawl; when he teases her gently she begins to cry (Mail, Feb. 14, 1880). "Her eyes are failing; she wears spectacles" (Advertiser, Jan. 31, 1881). Her kindness extends not only to her family but to neighbours and even enemies: "My mother came to the door and told them [the Vigilants] that she had often taken the hunger off a great many of them" (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880). This kindness is the

subject of an anecdote in which Johannah worries about the school teacher's wet feet on a cold and rainy Roman Line morning:

..Mrs Donnelly then passed into the house, and calling one of the passing scholars she gave her a pair of dry stockings to carry to the teacher. 'Tell the teacher to change her feet' was the quaint, but good-natured, direction of the murdered woman. (Advertiser, Feb. 6, 1880)

The Free Press (Feb. 12, 1880) pictures her peaceful, diligent, domestic:

"Mrs. Julia Donnelly...during the unselfish life of a farmer's wife was free from the taint of the unfortunate lawsuits...." "Black and white Johannahs persist in the press simultaneously. Never, of course, does Johannah or any other Donnelly really emerge as an individual from the welter of sentimental type-casting. Any image will serve, as long as it is recognizably conventional. "She was kind-hearted and did little acts of kindness", a Lucanite admits, and then adds with determined and typical inconsistency, "but she had a wicked mind" (Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880).

The Globe (Feb. 5, 1880) offers one picture of James Donnelly, Johannah's husband:

William Donnelly [sic], the father, was a rollicking, drinking, quarrelsome Irishman, always ready to engage in any dispute that might give him scope for his fighting powers, and never scrupling to raise a disturbance in his own behalf when no one else would.

This image, pure stage-Irish, depends solely upon the fact of the early Farrell murder, which the same Globe account presents (inaccurately) as a premeditated, professional, cold-blooded act:

"Many years ago...in the township of Stephen [sic]...by a series of well-directed blows on the head of his antagonist he killed him". He is also persistently called a squatter as well as a murderer, an unwanted interloper in Biddulph from the time of his arrival ("...he being only

a squatter upon the land which he located upon..." [Globe, Feb. 28, 1880]; "...it appears that he had settled on his farm as a squatter" [Globe, Feb. 6, 1880]; and see also Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 6, and Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). Common to most of these accounts is the historically false notion that the quarrel with Farrell was over that same disputed land. There is some attempt to make James, and not Johannah, the family's evil genius:

As the family grew up they gave unmistakable proofs that they participated in their father's idea of life, and the boys have been engaged in many a brawl. (Globe, Feb. 5, 1880)

The father's pugnacity is said to have persisted all his life (a view for which, as we have noted, historical support, is absent: "He yet retained a considerable muscle, and held himself a match for any man of his years in a fracas" (Advertiser, Feb. 4, 1880). But there is simply not the element of surprise in a male's pugilism that there is in the case of Johannah.

Nor can a man, when compared to a woman or a child, be quite the figure of pathos and vulnerability. Reporters try: he is characterized as old, of "wrinkled face and grizzled head" (Advertiser, Feb. 4, 1880), in poor health (Globe, Feb. 9, 1880), "quiet" and "personally not given to quarrel" (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). His illness on the night of the Ryder arson lends this picture some credibility. But such efforts to build a sympathetic image are few, and his death-scenes remain perfunctory:

In less time than it takes to write it, the grey-headed old father had been silenced by a few blows that broke his skull, and he fell to rise no more. (Free Press, May 21, 1880)

James Sr. does not really offer the stuff of legend in the way that his wife is able to. The idea that "his large family of boys grew up and

went beyond his control" (Globe, Feb. 28, 1880) does not generate, as it does for his female counterpart, the image of a careworn, dutiful, tearful parent. Helplessness proves only a sign of his obscurity.

Thomas is a third Donnelly occasionally labelled as the chief troublemaker, a wild-minded Hotspur figure,

...the central figure in all the charges, although, by universal consent, he was regarded as the worst-abused member of the family. He possessed a retaliatory nature, and through his general bravery ran into many a disturbance, and brought down trouble upon his head. (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880)

Historical evidence does show that, in the stage-coach period, Thomas exceeds any of his brothers in alleged criminal activity--the Flanagan arson and attempted arson, the Esdale larceny, Curry robbery, and shortly afterwards, the Ryan robbery; but he is never convicted, and in all but the Esdale case the evidence is suspect. In any event the press shows little interest in enumerating his misdoings in life; what proves much more suggestive is the manner of his death. There is sympathy and admiration for this victim who, although handcuffed, struggles heroically, escapes outside, but is dragged back in and beheaded. He is "a stalwart and active young man" (Advertiser, Oct. 4, 1880), and handsome (Globe, Feb. 12, 1880); he is cut-down-in-the-prime-of-youth as are the subjects of so many other elegies:

His appearance is anything but that of a desperado, and even if his record were worse than it is alleged, the circumstances attending his untimely death--brutal almost beyond belief--make it impossible to judge him harshly. (Globe, Feb. 12, 1880)

Thomas Donnelly's grisly death far overshadows his life. He is remembered, not as a living person, but as a bloody dead body or even, more reductively, as just a severed head:

This scene, Feeheley said to a friend, would never fade from his view while life should last, and often in the darkness of his chamber he saw the bleeding head of Tom rise slowly up, and his lips part, as they did on the fearful night of the murder. (Free Press, May 21, 1881)

John Donnelly, like Thomas, is important to the journalists primarily for the manner of his death--shot accidentally when mistaken for his brother William. The sense of tragic irony here is powerful. "John, as is well-known, was murdered by mistake", says the Advertiser (Feb. 9, 1880). The tragic irony of this random and arbitrary death is exploited by portraying John Donnelly as sympathetically as possible.

The Advertiser (Feb. 9, 1880), publishing his portrait, comments:

He was a man not at all ill-featured, and in the countenance he somewhat resembled his mother. He was tolerably well educated, and of genial disposition.

"Quietest of the whole family", says the Mail (Feb. 5, 1880), in an article headlined "The Wrong Man". Conveniently, John Donnelly's body survives; a bathetic pile of black ashes and bones provides small scope for plangent apostrophe ("No use crying over burnt bodies", William Donnelly remarks acutely--Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). An Advertiser reporter can meditate upon the corpse:

He was a fine built fellow, his physical development being complete. In death he wore the same smile that usually played about his face in life. He was, for some time, a strict temperance man. The medical gentleman who made the post mortem said that he had never seen a man with so large a heart. (Feb. 7, 1880)

The double sense of large-heartedness is clearly intentional. The Free Press (Feb. 12, 1880) makes John, incredibly, almost Christ-like:

"In fact, it is said that he would take a blow without resenting it, in order to avoid a disturbance". Father Connolly's final judgment of John conforms: "With regard to John, who died with a prayer upon his lips, he is now before God, and his sins are forgiven" (Advertiser,

Feb. 7, 1880). Even McKinnon in a later interview relents: "Old Donnelly remarked to him that he had one favour to ask of him, and that was that he would leave his son John" (Globe, Mar. 4, 1880).

The Donnelly reputation for lawlessness is substantial enough in the papers to eliminate the need to specify very many proven crimes or individual Donnelly culprits. Amid the general faith in their notoriety, it is instead dramatically satisfying to notice Donnellys who are exceptions to the violent family pattern. This explains the predominantly favourable image of John. But a non-conforming Donnelly is also interesting alive, as a source of exciting domestic conflict in his efforts to resist his erring relatives. It is Patrick Donnelly who historically comes closest to this role, leaving home in 1867 to find a more peaceful life. Patrick shares many of his brother John's reputed qualities, with that key exception that he is still alive. The press is fascinated with the thought that Patrick

...universally escaped the stigma and reproach which clung to the rest of them. It has been generally stated and believed that to his absence from the paternal roof at an early age may be attributed in a great measure all the evil doings with which the rest of the family stand accused. (Advertiser, Feb. 9, 1880)

The story is published that Biddulph farmers have offered to help rebuild the Donnelly homestead if Patrick will return to live there (Ibid.). Father Connolly praises Patrick in his funeral address (Mail, Feb. 7, 1880). Letters of condolence are published, addressed to Patrick from the citizens and town councillors of Thorold, his home (Globe, Feb. 12 and 13, 1880). Patrick can be clever: riding on the same sleigh with Thomas Ryder to prison, he is able to draw Ryder into a revealing conversation because Ryder is unaware that he is talking to a Donnelly (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). He makes a midnight, mid-

winter dash in a sleigh to deliver mystery witness Robert Cutt in time to testify at James Carroll's second trial (Globe, Feb. 1, and Mail, Feb. 1, 1881).

All these qualities give force to the scene (e.g., Globe, Feb. 7, 1880), more important in the papers than in actual history, in which Patrick pleads with his parents to sell the farm and leave Biddulph before it is too late. In that prophetic but futile resistance of the movement toward catastrophe, Patrick is a figure noticed in tragedy by Frye. A chorus character --Horatio in Hamlet, Kent in King Lear, Abdiel in Paradise Lost--"usually represents the society from which the hero is gradually isolated. Hence what it expresses is a social norm against which the hero's hybris may be measured".¹³

From this point of view the entire Donnelly family is a collective tragic hero, and Patrick--prosperous and respectable as he is--is a measure for the public of how far the rest of his family has fallen. True to convention, his clairvoyant protestations are ignored. An additional role for Patrick is that of the conventional refuser of festivity. Like Jaques or Malvolio, he challenges the Vigilants' corrupt festivities, flaring forth from the hearty crowds who wish the Vigilant prisoners well on the Lucan street after the inquest:

While this interesting ceremony was taking place, a ripple of excitement was caused by Mr Patrick Donnelly calling out, "Don't go yet, give the Vigilants a chance to shake hands with their friends. That's right, congratulate them, &c". (Free Press, Feb. 19, 1880)

The other surviving brother, Robert, emerges in the papers as a minor, coarser version of his brother William. Like William he stays in Biddulph, helping in a small way to gather evidence. He finds a bloody elm club in the snow, important support for John O'Connor's

statement, that the killers whom he saw were armed with cordwood clubs (Free Press, Feb. 23, 1880). Robert testifies that "Afterwards I took the stick to Lucan and gave it to my brother William to hand to the Chief of Police" (Free Press, Feb. 28, 1880). Living in the same house with William after the murders, he absorbs some of his brother's notoriety: "various rumours" in Lucan suggest that Robert himself started the O'Connor fire in April of 1880, to win sympathy, to collect the insurance, or to prove the need for a change of venue (Advertiser, Apr. 15, 1880). Like William, he enjoys contriving public scenes with himself at stage centre. With his circle of underlings mocking the Salvation Army, he recalls William Donnelly who gathers a gang to abduct Margret Thompson: "Bob Donnelly came into the ring and danced and sang... The crowd was acting under Donnelly's direction" (Glencoe Transcript, Feb. 11, 1886). Here he epitomizes the Donnelly dramatic gusto which we have seen so often. But Robert's forte is really buffoonery. He lands himself in a classic farce situation when he invites Kate Warne to stay overnight with himself and his wife, three in a bed (Free Press, Apr. 16, 1880). His taunts of his enemies are inarticulate in comparison with those of his brother William. Typically, he shoulders against James Carroll in a Lucan sidewalk, and remarks later in Carroll's hearing that "You can tell by that man's shoulder that he is a murderer" (Advertiser, May 23, 1881).

Especially when Robert appears with William, his Doppelgänger role is clear. During an interview in which William is enumerating those Vigilants who have died since the murder, Robert arrives to kibitz, to share the attention, and, once, to act as prompter:

"Who was next Bob?" he went on, turning to his brother, who had come up in time to hear the greater part of the conversation.

"Jim Quigley", answered Bob.

"Oh yes", resumed Bill, "Jim Quigley..." (Globe, Dec. 24, 1883)

When a reporter chafes with William who is sharing a London gaol cell with Robert, William mentions a sly Vigilant who called at the gaol offering mock condolences:

"Sure, didn't we have young Ryder come to us half an hour after we were in the cells and say, 'Boys, I'm sorry for you!'"

"Yes, he's got very kind all of a sudden", said Bob, who was pacing up and down the cell during the interview. (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1881)

Later in the same entertaining interview, the reporter notices Robert again: "These bantering remarks were highly relished by Robert, who occasionally put in a remark by way of variety". But on one occasion at least, Robert does attain that blend of dignity and sensationalism so characteristic of Donnellys. Like Patrick, he becomes the refuser of festivity, in a London bar among victorious Vigilants after Carroll's acquittal:

A sensation was caused at the Western Hotel on Wednesday evening by the appearance of Bob Donnelly in the barroom. He turned round to the crowd and cried, "I want all of you murderers to come and have something". No one accepted, and Bob retired soon after. (Advertiser, Feb. 4, 1881)

The solitary protester forces a questioning tension into what, from the Vigilant point of view, is a comic conclusion with its traditional show of reunion and celebration.

The Vigilants by definition are united in their common hatred of Donnellys; they are a group, and in general they are only slightly differentiated in the press. Unfortunately for readers fond of sensation, bloody descriptions of the Vigilant ghouls and what they did to whom on the night of February 3-4 fade when reporters look at the actual persons who are suspects. Then the common theme is that most

of them are entirely average and domestic Biddulph farmers. The Free Press' survey (Feb. 12, 1880) is typical:

...[The Ryders] have always heretofore deservedly borne the name of being quiet, inoffensive, honest, industrious people...The prisoner Martin McLaughlin and his family have been also in the township for several years...Reports very generally give the man the very best of character...The boy, Maher Jr, is scarcely old enough to come under notice....

And so on. There is little to say. In twentieth-century treatments of the Donnelly story, this featureless normality becomes very important: it implies that anyone could, under certain circumstances, become a killer. But this theme is absent in 1880 because journalists and their readers do not identify in the slightest with the primitive Biddulph settlers; rather, they do their best to make them distant and unreal.

Reporters show some interest in John Purtell. He is "weak-minded" (Advertiser, Feb. 13, 1880), "half-witted" (Free Press, Feb. 16, 1880); and when arrested is a foolish coward, first "sobbing like a child" and then beginning to sing erratically (Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1880). He is also the only accused killer with a criminal past. "A Chapter in Purtell's History/Showing What He Has Done/And Where He Has Been Before" is the Free Press' headline (Feb. 14, 1880) to an article proclaiming that Purtell beat and stabbed a party of German immigrants in an Ellice township Huckleberry swamp in 1877, a crime for which he spent several months in the Perth county gaol:¹⁴

Purtell's record while residing in this section was remarkable for ruffianism and cowardly conduct in several rows in which he was mixed up....

The Free Press is pleased to find a Vigilant who conforms to conventional criminal behaviour. Purtell is one of that innumerable and

often anonymous company of stupid, brutal thugs who form a dumb bloc behind the central villain in many works of literature. Shakespeare has Cloten and Caliban; Dickens has Bill Sykes. The mute and/or misshapen laboratory assistants in the Gothic cinema of Boris Karloff et al. are twentieth-century figures in the tradition. In 1880 some journalists argue that Purcell seems to be almost too stupid: the careful plotters of the Donnelly murders would not have trusted him (Mail, Feb. 13, and Globe, Feb. 24, 1880).

Carroll of course is acknowledged as the Vigilant leader. Probably aping William Donnelly, he is the only Vigilant to court publicity, with three argumentative letters-to-the-editor, all characterized by a laboured, runaway, bombastic prose style:

Now, among the reporters of that paper [the Free Press] may be classed Lucan's gushing reporter, who, in the privacy of a Lucan sanctum, and whilst clinging to the last rays of a dying hope, and whilst basking in the sunshine of his own false imaginations, has been a party to the concoction of those false, lying and unprincipled falsehoods; and which, coming home contradicted to the unprincipled and uncredited, double-dyed-in-the-wool Judas Iscariot should arouse to the cheek of the same the hue of shame. (Advertiser, Oct. 25, 1881)

Northrop Frye labels this sort of writing "tantrum prose".¹⁵ Anyway, whatever Carroll may say, the papers have him typed. His apparent chronic disease (Globe, Apr. 9, 1880) which makes him so pale and weak aids in his adaptation to the type of Gothic villain who, like Victor in Shelley's Frankenstein, is waiting in agony for his own evil past to catch up with him. The Globe notices that Carroll's eyes are also tell-tale: they are haunted, "small, dark, and restless, and very seldom look a man straight in the face" (Feb. 23, 1880). The only other quality particularly noted about Carroll is that he is a constable, "who used that position to harass his Donnelly enemies" (Free Press,

Feb. 13, 1880). Journalists ascribe his enmity to a casual, fortuitous quarrel ("...about two years ago when he fell afoul of the Donnellys. One quarrel led to another..."--Globe, Feb. 23, 1880). There is none of the late-twentieth-century investigative reporting which might have exposed his real character and motives--the broken family, the quarrel over land, his leadership qualities developed as a railroad foreman, the influence of his Biddulph relatives, and so on. There is also no sign of the more typically twentieth-century theme that Carroll's position of legal authority makes him a hypocritical exemplar of a corrupt and inefficient system of justice. Similarly, Martin McLaughlin is noticed to be both a Justice of the Peace and a Vigilant ringleader (Free Press, Feb. 13, and Mail, Feb. 10, 1880), but the conflict between the two images receives only vague notice. Social criticism is as rare as in-depth investigation in journalistic coverage of the Donnelly affair.

Somewhere ambiguously near the Vigilant circle is Father John Connolly of St. Patrick's parish. The Ontario press is of course overwhelmingly Protestant. In London in 1878, the Catholic Record is inaugurated expressly to fight for Catholic minority interests "in a Protestant country like this" (Record, Oct. 4, 1878). The Awful Disclosures of Montreal's Maria Monk are still being read. The Canadian ex-priest Father Chiniquy is lecturing throughout Ontario and working on his autobiographical anti-Catholic expose, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome; the London Free Press has published a 22-page Chiniquy pamphlet;¹⁷ and Chiniquy visits Biddulph in July of 1878 (Advertiser, July 12, 1878). No Canadian newspaper tries openly to link John Connolly to that Catholic world which people like Monk and Chiniquy imagine, a world of

libidinous tyrant-priests; mad-pregnant nuns and sadistic Mother Superiors. But openly anti-Catholic are the Globe's interview with the Lucanite who believes that Connolly intended the murders (Feb. 13, 1880), and the Christian Guardian's editorial blaming the murders on Catholicism (Feb. 11, 1880). And both the Globe and the Advertiser rather slyly publish Connolly's picture alongside James Carroll's (Globe, Feb. 23, and Advertiser, Feb. 26, 1880). Such pieces no doubt trigger in the minds of many readers that whole Monk-Chiniquy complex of images. The Catholic Record protests Connolly's treatment by the press (Feb. 27, 1880) and so does the Irish Canadian (Mar. 10, 1880). Doubtless they prefer the much-publicized scene (eg. Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1880) where Connolly spends two hours in his study on Christmas Eve, 1879, with Johannah Donnelly, listening with tender benevolence to her tale of her troubled life in Biddulph. Here Connolly appears as old-wise-mentor Cheiron figure; a clerical analogue would be the kindly friar Jerome in The Castle of Otranto. Connolly reveals this episode in his funeral sermon, the sermon where he ~~has~~ stop, sobbing on the altar. The funeral makes sensational press copy, and the major Ontario papers report it almost verbatim.

By far the most significant figure in the 1880 press coverage of the Donnelly story is William Donnelly, whom we have left to the last because his role is clearly understood only in the context of journalists' and public's taste for melodrama. After February 4, 1880, the principal fact about William Donnelly is that he has survived. He has experienced the Biddulph heart of darkness and has re-emerged, miraculously intact, as if resurrected. Re-ascending heroes may be exalted as possessors of brave new knowledge and powers, like Spenser's

Redcrosse or Keats' Endymion. Or they may return haunted and tainted, themselves partially creatures of the hell they have suffered. That is, they have not completely returned at all, for they carry with them a piece of hell stuck to their souls. Byron's tragic heroes are the prototypical examples here. In either case, these figures are objects of awe and fascination. Paradoxically, William Donnelly fulfills both roles. Melodrama can also accommodate both, and in the case of William Donnelly it does; but so expressive are the works and the public personality of Donnelly that we start to notice emerging from the dominant newspaper melodrama hints of other, richer fictional forms.

From the February 4 beginning, William is labelled the strongest Donnelly:

His forte seems to have been in plotting and planning...he made the balls, and got his brothers to fire them. He is a very shrewd man in business matters, and the rest of the family give him the sobriquet of 'lawyer'. He has been known to shoot off revolvers on sundry occasions.... (Mail, Feb. 5, 1880)

He is as sharp as a steel trap, and possessed of an iron will, being cool, determined, and far-seeing. He thinks twice before he speaks, and always acts on his determination. (Telegram, Feb. 10, 1880)

The steel trap image suggests both Donnelly's strength and his danger; descriptions of him are always ambivalent. Other heroic terms are "undaunted courage", "cool carelessness" (Globe, Feb. 10, 1880), "remarkable stoicism" (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880).

In melodrama, a hero apparently suffers as much to exercise the audience's sense of pity as to reach any insight. The contemplation of Donnelly suffering leads, as it did for every other Donnelly, to a William Donnelly who projects both heroism and pathos. "While passing [the Donnelly ruins]", a Globe reporter reveals (Feb. 9, 1880), "Bill Donnelly was very much affected, and his frame shook with sobs". The

Advertiser (Feb. 7, 1880) describes Donnelly at the autopsy:

The only time upon which he showed any signs of weakness was when his father's heart was exposed to view, during the post mortem examination, he exclaimed, in agonizing accents, "'Tis more than flesh and blood can endure; My only and sincere wish now is that I was lying there along with him." The spectators led him away from the ghastly scene, and in a few minutes he regained his usual composure.

But such is the ambiguity of Donnelly's image--both survivor and creature of hell--that sympathetic scenes veer spontaneously toward the horrible, as in this anecdote of William the necrophilic vampire:

A remarkable story is told about him when he first viewed the charred bodies of the victims. After gazing intently at them for some time, he picked up the burnt heart of his father and kissed it tenderly.¹⁸ He then performed the same act on the liver of his brother Thomas.
(Globe, Feb. 19, 1880)

His notoriety is measured by the threatening letters addressed to him: he is a monster to be expelled ("If you do not be forewarned and leave the county, America will hear of such deeds as were never known before"--Advertiser, Mar. 1, 1880). Some readers believe that he has written these letters to himself to exaggerate his own monstrosity (Tillsonburg Observer, Feb. 27, 1880). The belief is widely held in Oxford County (Globe, Mar. 15, 1880) that he murdered his own family and then invented fictional "Vigilant" killers.

Donnelly cultivates this image. It is with his permission that threat letters are published. He relishes controversy with any foe, clearly craving the expanded image of himself which vigorous interaction with others stimulates. "My father always taught me to say to a man's face what I would say behind his back", William says defiantly (Free Press, Sept. 8, 1880). Typically quick to the attack are letters to William Thompson (Advertiser, Feb. 10, 1874), to John Connolly (Ibid., Feb. 7, 1880), to Bishop John Walsh (Ibid., Mar. 2, 1880), to two Glencoe antagonists (Transcript, July 2, 9, 16, 23, 1885), and even

to his good friend Charles Hutchinson (Free Press, Dec. 6, 1886).

He loves public attention, loves to perform in the papers even when he has no particular quarrel in mind. One typical letter (Free Press, Oct. 20, 1881) is more narrative than polemical. The tone is breezy, chatty, casual, designed to be entertaining both to himself and to readers. He ends like this:

Now, Mr Editor, I have come to the conclusion that there is not anything important in this letter, but as nothing more important has occurred, I trust you will give it to the readers of your papers.

Like Byron, or like Oscar Wilde (who visits southwestern Ontario while the Biddulph story is still current--Globe, May 25-6, 1882), Donnelly seems satisfied only when he has an audience. He needs the experience of people observing, and applauding--or hissing. His life is theatrical--almost literally so, for he considers the offer of an entrepreneur to travel about the province narrating his story on-stage before a paying audience (Advertiser, Apr. 14, 1880). But he decides to turn the offer down. Unlike Wilde, he can after all distinguish art from life and has no wish to live out in real life his own public artificial images.

Donnelly's career in the newspapers begins early, at the time of the pistol-stealing trial ("...managed the case with an air of confidence..."--Free Press, Apr. 23, 1869) and then at the time of the attempted rescue of Margret Thompson. The abduction is a plucky, romantic, but futile gesture, reminiscent of Robert Emmet, Irish hero of the gallant lost cause and much admired by Donnelly (Glencoe Transcript, July 23, 1885). "The Middle Ages Revived/A Love-Lorn Youth Attempts to Carry Off a Ladie Faire" is the Advertiser's exuberant headline to an article which we have discussed previously in another context (Advertiser, 8.

Feb. 2, 1874).

Equally theatrical is his congenital limp, his "peculiar gait", which, says the Mail (Feb. 7, 1880), "detracts from his appearance, giving him a look somewhat akin to that of the 'Black Crook' known to all theatre-goers". The Black Crook with its sly, sliding melodramatic title character was a play well-known in its day; it played in London in 1874 (Free Press, June 8, 1874). The character whose outer deformity mirrors inner evil is common in literature, from the scurrilous Thersites of the Iliad, to Shakespeare's Richard III, to such Dickensian grotesques as Rosa Dartle. Popular Victorian theatre regularly exploits such figures. Richard III was one of the most popular plays of the nineteenth century, the misshapen central character played of course with melodramatic villainous gusto.²⁰ Boucicault's Colleen Bawn (advertised at London's Grand Theatre--Advertiser, Dec. 23, 1879) has an evil hunchbacked servant who pushes Eily, the heroine of the title, from a rocky precipice into a lake during a thunderstorm. Frazer notes that the belief that deformed people are morally suspect has existed in Ireland for centuries,²¹ and Irish Biddulph readily applies the image to Donnelly. "The priest called me a devil and a cripple", Donnelly testifies (Globe, Mar. 1, 1880), exploiting the image even while complaining of it.

Even that part of his physical appearance which he can control is deliberately provocative. Of average height and slender build, he wears a moustache and goatee, "while his head is profusely ornamented with wavy ringlets which fall nearly to his shoulders" (Mail, Feb. 7, 1880). No-one else in Biddulph looks like that--certainly none in the Globe's series of portraits of Biddulphers (Feb. 10-Mar. 2, 1880).

Elegant, distinguished, he has "much the appearance of the faces seen in old cavalier pictures" (Mail, Jan. 31, 1881). Another reporter (Mail, Oct. 7, 1880) compares his appearance to that of Cardinal Richelieu, conjuring for 1880 readers visions of old-world elegance, aristocratic bravado and dark palace-conspiracies. Only one of a great number of successful cape-and-sword melodramas, Bulwer Lytton's Richelieu with its Byronic hero, haunted by his political crimes and beset by plotting enemies, was one of the most-staged plays of the nineteenth century.²²

Elegance and lameness suggest Byron. As if to encourage the comparison, Donnelly owns a stallion named Lord Byron (Glencoe Transcript, Sept. 17, 1885). Byronic tragic heroes have certain well-recognized features in common. They are proud and aloof; they have hypnotic powers of leadership; they challenge the constraints of the society of ordinary men, seeking in transgression a sustaining life-rhythm; they are conscious of having been singled out by fate for destruction but are nonetheless carelessly defiant of it. William Donnelly has something of these tragic qualities--and also, as we shall see, much of the mordant, ironic and lively energy of the humorous narrator of Don Juan. Byron is still in the public memory in Ontario in 1880: the Free Press (Aug. 4, 1879) carries an article on a recently-discovered letter from Lady Byron to Augusta Leigh, analyzing what the letter reveals about Byron's dreadful marriage and the rumours of incest.

William's flair for music is another quality helping to set him apart from the Biddulph mainstream. He not only plays the violin himself (Free Press, Mar. 1, 1880) but he has a spontaneous relish for other's music. "He can rattle the piano, I can tell, at a lively rate", he says admiringly of Francis West who has just betrayed him (Advertiser,

Oct. 14, 1881). Similarly with the spectacular, stagecoach venture and, after that, William's horse-breeding interests, which earn him a considerable local reputation (Exeter Times, Oct. 3, 1878, and Glencoe Transcript, Sept. 17, 1885). Horse trading of course is a standard occupation in rural Ontario, but Donnelly's provocatively-named stallions (Lord Byron, Old Clear Grit) suggest something rather more--the virile, the aristocratic, the defiant. The same kind of Irish equestrian élan held an abiding interest for Yeats, in poems from the elegy on Robert Gregory ("Soldier, scholar, horseman, he") to the last line of his own epitaph--"Horseman, pass by". Vigilant sympathizers hate Donnelly's horsemanship. A juror at the O'Connor fire inquest remarks to Robert Donnelly that if the anti-Donnelly arsonists "set any place on fire, it would be the stable where your brother William keeps his horse" (Advertiser, Apr. 16, 1880). Paradoxically, such willfully distinctive qualities at once draw upon William the ire of many Biddulphers, and give him the strength and originality to transcend their conservative world.

Whatever else he is, a re-emergent character is regularly supposed to try to reconstitute the disordered world whose nadir he has passed through. In the terms of melodrama, the task for William Donnelly is the punishment of his family's killers. Since, as we have noted, vengeance is ambiguous--at once just and bloodthirsty--it fits perfectly with Donnelly's own double image. Donnelly's every comment on the subject is quoted avidly. "I'll show them there's some backbone in me yet, that Bill Donnelly did not die with the other," he says (Globe, Mar. 11, 1880). "I will live to see this whole thing through, and make this country hot for them" (Ottawa Citizen, Feb. 7, 1880). A year

later, reporters evoke the memory of William's grim quest. "Since the murders William has followed up the case like a sleuth hound", says the Mail (Jan. 31, 1881). "The perpetrators of the dastardly crime", says the Globe (Feb. 1, 1881), "...will find that they have bloodhounds upon their track". Ten months later at the Stanley mill arson investigation, the press still is contemplating breathlessly "the phantasm of the avenging William" (Free Press, Oct. 12, 1881). Donnelly does what he can to keep the vengeance theme boiling in the newspaper pot. At the time of the Feeheley investigations he answers properly an Advertiser reporter's expectant leading question:

"I suppose you have no doubt but the murderers will yet be brought to justice?"

"Not the slightest doubt in the world, and sooner than some of them think." (May 23, 1881)

Two and a half years later he presides over the Vigilants' retributive downfall. "I can afford to wait", he tells a fascinated Globe interviewer (Dec. 24, 1883), "I've waited four years now, and I can wait twenty more". He relates the deaths in the four years since February 4, 1880, of twenty-one Biddulphers connected directly or indirectly with the murders. "Strange Fatality Among Biddulphers" is the headline.

The reporter comments at the conclusion of the recitation that Donnelly ...appeared to regard the disasters among them with a superstitious feeling as omens of the final triumph of justice and the discovery of the murderers of the Donnelly family.

It is William himself who is primarily responsible for the public's own "superstitious feeling".

So far, the William Donnelly images and themes which we have discussed all fit nicely within the world of melodrama. Melodrama's conventions can exist only when there is no reality to control and

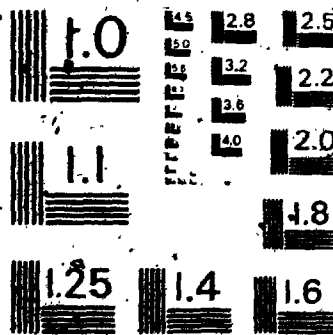
qualify them. The real world where William and his audience and antagonists actually live is a world heavily qualified and ironic. In the preceding chapter we discussed the possibility of a Donnelly tragedy, and certainly in any such tragedy William would be the central figure; but in Donnelly's story as he himself helps to construct it in the papers, the chosen form is not tragedy but satire. Most people who live in, or write about Biddulph's world of diverging viewpoints and never-ending ironies prefer the false but comfortable ordering of melodrama, but the genuinely heroic stance is not to evade but at least to expose the falseness and illusion. We have suggested that after February 4, 1880, William Donnelly re-emerges with harsh individual insight into the Biddulph world, and with the talismanic weapon of satire to express it. The world where the artist's stance is satirical is the night-world, and in it not Donnelly nor anyone can win melodrama's unambiguous victories. But his accomplishment is a very real one. He takes on the role of satirical historian of the Biddulph community. Like Pope and Dryden, Donnelly does his best work when inspired by personal controversy. Irreverently, persistently, he creates a McLuhanistic anti-environment which makes visible the suppressed history and social mythology of the actual Biddulph environment. Through Donnelly we can find in the newspapers a whole new world emerging from the boundaries of melodrama.

The anthologists of The Blasted Pine argue in their preface that the effectiveness of satire is measured by its "intensity, bitterness, and passion...a kind of rough strength and personal tang--the body odour of indignation".²³ They illustrate their claim with many works "that derive their strength from being nothing more than they frankly

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proclaim themselves to be--comic, grotesque, or simply casual". In the same way, William Donnelly as satirist deserves to be studied quite apart from questions of literary merit. Donnelly qualifies as a satirist because he uses wit and humour to illuminate what is false in a specific society. When Donnelly's target is only a specific individual (as it sometimes is) his attack remains at the level of personal invective, interesting only to William and his victim. An example is his charge that a rival correspondent is guilty of adultery (Glencoe Transcript, July 23, 1885). But when his focus is not on individuals per se but on the values which they embody, then with that broader moral purpose Donnelly finds the proper range of satire.

To attack provincialism, hypocrisy, ignorance, pretension, false respectability, and misuse of public office, Donnelly in the newspapers uses a wide variety of techniques. He shows overall something of the kind of eclectic satiric gusto of, for instance, Byron's Don Juan which McLuhan also calls a "newspaper epic".²⁴ To begin with, Donnelly is factual. No satirist, however enthusiastic and articulate, can succeed if he is not after truth. Donnelly's several histories of events in Biddulph (Mail, Feb. 6, 1880; Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880; Free Press, Sept. 9, 1880, and others) have been authenticated fully; Donnelly's errors are very few and all minor--a misremembered date, for example. Donnelly is precise: he gives names and full particulars, in contrast to other Biddulph letter-writers who depend on innuendo. "The names of such parties shall be published in due time", 'Veritas' promises after describing certain Biddulph outrages (Free Press, Feb. 16, 1880); of course, they never are. "I have no big words to give you", says Donnelly, "but will use my own name, and defy contradiction" (Free Press,

Sept. 9, 1880).

Bathos is a device typically satiric and a favourite of Donnelly. Recalling for newspaper readers the sensational attempt to assassinate constable Samuel Everett, and the orchestrated parade of prosecution witnesses at Robert Donnelly's trial, William notes in conclusion that, after all, "the evidence for the Crown was manufactured out of whole cloth in a livery stable in Lucan" (Free Press, Oct. 6, 1886). He tells of the wrathful pulpit-performance in which Connolly darkly predicts the death, within a month, of the thief of James Kelly's horse, and then comments that "Ryan whom he blamed is still alive, and no one died during the month except old Mrs. Ryan and the well-known pauper Phil Flannery" (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880).

He is fond of the mock-heroic. He calls Lucan "Village of Saints" and its one-room animal pound/lockup the "Lucan Boarding House" (Free Press, Oct. 13, 1881). He creates inflated dialogue for his London gaoler making morning rounds: "Arise, ye sons of Hibernia, and seek revenge" (Ibid., Oct. 20, 1881). When the Brimmacombe murderers finally stand trial they "of course got clear, the Key of Heaven having been chewed to pieces by the Roman Liners" (Globe, Sept. 10, 1880). When the Vigilant mob marches on his home William labels them "The Black Militia" and plays "Bony Over the Alps" on his fiddle, to imply a mocking comparison between this surly, hesitant trespass and the Napoleonic invasion of Italy (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880).

Donnelly tries his hand at a piece of incongruous and whimsical doggerel, while poking fun at Lucan's furor after the inept plot to frame Donnellys for the Stanley-Dight arson. He pictures Lucan's fire engine parked in the lockup/pound/firehall in readiness at any moment

for the eager Volunteer Brigade:

If any thoughts run through its venerable head, and a phrenologist capable of reading them, they would be something as follows:

Steady boys, be steady-
Let all of you be ready,
Light champion-weight and heavy,
To run for Stanley's mill. (Free Press, Oct. 13,
1881)

This is small stuff of course, but effective enough at its own level, and it does remind us how well doggerel can serve as a satiric instrument in works such as Don Juan and Hudibras, and in some examples in The Blasted Pine.

Another favourite trick is to imitate Irish speech, partly to entertain and partly to suggest the primitive nature of most Biddulphers. Typical is his description of a fight between Robert Keefe and Patrick Ryder, where Keefe cries at his enemy, "I know you, you old thafe of the wurruld! You murdered the Donnellys and another man before that! It's hanged ye ought to be!" (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1880). He uses broadly comic farce in another version of the same fight:

A great noise of glass being broke was heard, and we again repaired to the barroom. On entering we saw Bob Keefe holding old Ryder's head through the window, and noticed an old tuft of grey hair floating in the air. It looked to me as if Keefe was playing circus and trying to get the wild beast into its cage. Just then I heard, "Oh merciful Heaven, I am going to be scalped".... (Free Press, Oct. 15, 1881)

In a similar vein is his account of a night in the infamous Lucan lockup:

Of all the pig sties you ever saw, that den is the foulest. The air would almost smother you. In one corner is a slop bucket, and one is supposed to sleep within a few feet of this all night--when you can sleep. However, two of the constables were kept in with us, and we had the satisfaction of knowing they were as bad off as ourselves. (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1881)

Often the precise descriptive detail that characterizes these last two quotations is allowed to speak for itself. Genially, he

recounts the changes in the Middlesex gaol in the years between 1876 (the date of his last visit) and 1881; his intent is to suggest that London's famous building has been a less-than-ideal model of modern institutional efficiency and decorum:

But alas! things had changed. We had Fysh in place of Lamb. The old force-pump in the front yard was done away with; the prize fowls had moved to Lucan; the rat terrier dog no longer yowled around the wood-piles, and the trotting horses, Forest Maid and Old Hornet, had forever retired from the scene. I then said to myself,—"How time passes; it is a kind of a way time has!" (Free Press, Oct. 20, 1881)

The punning ("Fysh in place of Lamb") is another characteristic Donnellyism also found in the work of many satirists.

He likes to invent jokes, for fun but always with a rhetorical purpose. In this example he is deflating a rival while commenting on the stupid self-righteousness of many of his opponents:

Before closing, I wish to say to my Wardsville friend that I know him well, and were I to lay all his handiwork before the public and place him standing in the middle of it, I feel confident he would hardly recognize himself. He would be something like Pat with the toad. Pat went out shooting and fired at what he thought was a bird in a tree. He then looked on the ground for his game and found a toad. "Begorrah", he exclaimed, "I'd scarcely have recognized ye, but ye must have been a moighty foine burd 'fore I shot the feathers off ye". (Glencoe Transcript, July 9, 1885)

He uses allusion to contemporary literature and to music, with the aims of sharpening the focus and strengthening the satiric force of his accounts of certain incidents. There are apt illusions to other satirists of the 'low norm' like Josh Billings (Glencoe Transcript, July 23, 1886) and Artemus Ward (Free Press, Mar. 1, 1886). Simon Howe, F.M. West's hapless partner in the arson conspiracy who fled to the woods in his underwear, is compared to a character in a colourful contemporary ballad:

...the clothes were claimed by the village constable as Simon Howe's, who had done what Denny Burns, the piper, sang in his song, "Gave them leg bail for his mission". (Free Press, Oct. 13, 1881)

Although his historical exposés can be ruthlessly organized and methodical, other letters are deliberately digressive. Like satirists Byron, Sterne, and Samuel Butler, Donnelly moves impishly and unpredictably from one satirical object to another as his exuberant sense of the ridiculous moves him. One letter (Free Press, Oct. 20, 1881) narrates various incidents during the course of his picaresque journey from Lucan where he is arrested for arson conspiracy, to London and gaol, whence back to Lucan when released on bail; he offers anecdotal asides on various people he encountered in his travels; he discusses a controversial Globe editorial on the arson case, the London detectives' recent search for Mr. West, and the Lucan magistrates' general ignorance of legal statutes. There is no attempt at logical connections. In such cases Donnelly wears another of his masks, one quite different from that of the threatening and tragic Byronic hero-villain. Here he is a kind of picaresque--smart, personable, if morally a trifle unruly. Reporters find this Donnelly mask appealing; the Free Press headlines one Donnelly epistle "Chatty Letter From Bill Donnelly" (Oct. 13, 1881), another "A Breeze From Biddulph" (Sept. 8, 1880), and prefaces one interview thus:

"Bill" must be pretty well known to the majority of our readers by this time, at least by reputation...Bill had a good deal to say yesterday about one thing and another.... (June 24, 1880)

Like many satirists he often refuses to take even himself seriously, indulging in disarming self-parody which at once forestalls his opponents, lowers a reader's resistance to his arguments, and keeps from his own writing the rigid and self-righteous qualities which he mocks in his enemies:

At last we reached Lucan...Mr McIlhargy, JP, was on his knees (not praying) but laying stone. He looked at me. Yes, he did; and I know he was saying to himself, "He is like a bad shilling; sure to come back."...[I] reached home, and was handed a bucksaw and told to cut some wood while I was resting myself. (Free Press, Oct. 20, 1881)

But at another extreme William's humour can be black and mordant. What keeps him strong and able to resist all is his ability to mock at everything. Robert Donnelly sobs when he sees the ashes of his parents, but William grotesquely perverts the proverb about spilt milk to admonish his brother, "No use crying over burnt bodies" (Free Press, Feb. 12, 1880). That kind of dark caustic humour which protects himself can slam an enemy with deadly effect. Thomas Ryder at Carroll's trial helps to discredit John O'Connor by concocting the alibi that he himself was playing cards at the time when O'Connor claimed to have seen him at the killings. William Donnelly relates a meeting with Ryder after William's arrest for the attempted arson:

In about an hour and a half after our arrest Tom Ryder (whom John O'Connor saw at the murder of our family) came into the lockup with Barney Stanley and told us he was sorry for our troubles. It seems strange to me that he was not at home playing cards. (Free Press, Oct. 13, 1881)

He notes the enthusiastic turnout of some hundred Vigilants to help rebuild Patrick Ryder's burned barns:

I do not wonder..., there being nearly this number in the Vigilance Committee, none of whom are particular whether they work a few hours in the night or not. (Free Press, Sept. 8, 1880)

Northrop Frye has described rather fully the kind of satire which William Donnelly has created, "the satire of the low norm":²⁵

The situation has for its archetype an individual counterpart of the romance theme of giant-killing. For society to exist at all there must be a delegation of prestige and influence to organized groups such as the church, the army, the professions, the government,

(which are respectively in Biddulph the priest of St. Patrick's, the

Vigilants with their constable, the Lucan mercantile establishment, and the ineffectual administrators of justice)

all of which consist of individuals given more than individual power by the institutions to which they belong.

The satirist attacks the misuse of these institutions, which aid and abet in their own misuse. He "assumes that society will, if given any chance, behave more or less like Caliban's Setebos in Browning's poem, and conducts himself accordingly". Frye cites as examples of this first-phase satire the folk humour of Sam Slick, and of Artemus Ward, whom William Donnelly often imitates. Such a satirist must be continually guarded and deprecatory; his task is to expose his world, but it will remain nevertheless "permanent and undisplaceable", and he himself must live in it. Therefore in such satire, says Frye, "we have, in spite of the humour, a sense of nightmare, and a close proximity to something demonic".

Donnelly is able to rise from melodrama into the more articulate mode of satire in part because he has so unerring a grasp of the public's taste. The images of himself which we have already surveyed--images based on mediaeval chivalry, the Black Crook, Richelieu, Byron, and the Irish equestrian aristocracy--are as much Donnelly's doing as the reporters': he makes it easy for them. A Globe reporter (Dec. 24, 1883) describes Donnelly's unique facial appearance and adds, with singular insight, "It is not simply a face, it is a mobile mask, which expresses just what the-wearer desires to have known and, no more." In his shrewd, deft control of the norms of both the sentimental and the satiric, Donnelly, creates a quite sophisticated work whose closest parallel, perhaps, is Thackeray's Vanity Fair--where the tones and

forms of the sentimental and the satiric are centred in Amelia and Becky respectively.

Thus, for example, this vignette of his mother on her last day of life has an exquisitely calculated sentimental value:

I told her to cease crying. She replied, "When you and the rest of the boys were children I often took the light at midnight to look at you taking a happy sleep, full of the hope that I might live to see you all men and be happy myself, but that hope has left me, and my mind often tells me that Carroll will some day get his ends of us." (Mail, Feb. 14, 1880)

Donnelly has managed to concentrate here a host of "sure-fire" conventions: fond motherhood, defenceless old age, innocent childhood, the hearth-like domestic glow of a candle, wistful longing for what is not to be, foreboding, violation of home's sanctity--and even the name of the chief Vigilant destroyer fitted in as well. The speech could be verbatim from any of a number of Victorian domestic melodramas.

He works the stage-Irish stereotype with telling satirical effect, in his imitations of Irish dialect and in his jokes about Pat. He exploits the popular Gothic genre by (to note only some of his devices) nurturing the fame of his deformity, encouraging the vengeance theme, conjuring pictures of physical horror, and fitting into his narratives the convention of the direful prophecy. When a hapless Biddulpher has been tortured by Biddulph enemies and lies apparently on his deathbed,

...and when the priest turned him in the bed, the flesh actually fell off his bones. The good priest, horrified at the sight, looked to heaven and said he was afraid the hand of God would fall on Biddulph. (Free Press, Sept. 9, 1880)

He has a keen ear for memorable speech--his brother John's last words ("My God Bill, I am murdered, God have mercy on my soul" (Mail, Feb. 6, 1880), and Martin Hogan's under William's bed that same night

("Oh good God, I always thought that they would do this"--Advertiser, Mar. 3, 1880). He has the flair not only for remembering but for creating the dramatic scene--the rout of the Vigilant mob with a fiddle and his mother's cross-country flight to warn him. A sense for the "scene" can even pre-empt personal animosity. A Protestant enemy, one of the Stanleys, sarcastically invites him up to the Queen's Hotel bar to drink, after William has just been released on bail, charged with trying to burn the Stanley mill. William has the slyness and the self-control to accept, to the discomfiture of some Catholic Vigilants who are accompanying Stanley:

...In walks Red Bill Stanley, followed by Bob Keefe, Jim Ryder, old Pat Ryder, and Jim Maher. They were all feeling pretty good, and wanted to raise a row if possible. Stanley called to Bob and I to come and have a drink. To their great surprise we walked up to the bar and named our poison. We drank their good healths.... (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1881)

The single most frequent image throughout the entire press coverage of the Donnelly affair is probably that of the circus. James Carroll compares his public image to that of "some great monster, or some wild man who had just escaped from some of the passing menageries" (Advertiser, Oct. 15, 1881). After the excitement of the Stanley mill arson plot, hangers-on flock to the scene

...to take a hasty peep through the outside grating with as much curiosity as they would through a rent in the canvass covering of a side show or a travelling menagerie. (Advertiser, Oct. 11, 1881)

Other examples abound. The image is a favourite of William Donnelly, and we remember that fellow-countryman Yeats also was fond of the circus image for describing his art. "Barnum would have you at any price", Donnelly teases his red-flannel-garbed mother (Mail, Feb. 14, 1880); "I guess I will live through the circus", he tells a sympathetic inquest

juror (Mail, Feb. 5, 1880); "the liveliest circus I've seen for some time" is his description of one barroom brawl (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1881). The image is a key to what Donnelly is doing. Consummate showman, he assembles Biddulph and its inhabitants to entertain a newspaper audience which is fascinated by the freakish and exotic and is already conditioned to see Biddulph as a theatre stage. William Donnelly is impresario; the performing Biddulphers career in his ring. Meeting public taste for circus spectacle he offers Vigilant Martin McLaughlin at the cow trespass, strutting about "like a Zulu" and brandishing a stick (Globe, Mar. 1, 1880). John Kennedy, nicknamed the Bull on account of his physique, becomes "Sitting Bull" in Donnelly's neat depiction (Globe, Mar. 2, 1880). The ceremonies of the Salvation Army are "can-can and war dances" (Glencoe Transcript, July 9, 1885). Aptly, Francis West is Donnelly's freak or clown: "Well, he has the queerest looking head you ever saw. He would do to travel in a circus" (Advertiser, Oct. 14, 1881).

So successfully does Donnelly use the circus image that it suggests itself as yet another way in which other artists of the present might order the Donnelly history. A host of scenes and characters and incidents might be displayed as in three sawdust rings--a rich, spectacular, discontinuous form freed from the confines of linear narrative. An artist could take over Donnelly's own tone of gaiety and ferocity. Or he might want to stress primarily that, in the end, the world which Donnelly transforms imaginatively does survive, intact and triumphant. In that perspective, Donnelly is tragic. In Donnelly's history of a dangerous community and of his family's growing estrangement from it ("A great many people called before the Society was got up

but none after..."--Advertiser, Mar. 1, 1880), what is really being described is the tragic theme. The journalists do not notice it. This is because for them their Victorian world is rational, civilized, progressive; and, as Nietzsche said in The Birth of Tragedy, only eight years before the Donnelly murders, in a world controlled by scientific optimism tragedy can have no place.

The journalists of 1880 do realize that the shapes and images of the Donnelly story will survive, that they possess a power in some sense universal. Already in 1880 the story has overflowed the newspapers. An aspiring historian in the Advertiser (Mar. 16, 1880) peddles his books ("a full and complete history of the Donnelly tragedy") jealously downgrading another rival book apparently also forthcoming. The Free Press also publishes a history, "not clipped from newspaper reports, but an original and corrected narrative" (Mar. 28, 1880).

The Donnelly homesite is "immortalized" (Free Press, Feb. 20, 1880); the Cedar Swamp school is "now celebrated and historical" (Advertiser, Mar. 7, 1881); the whole story is "now known the world over" (Advertiser, May 19, 1880). A reporter predicts accurately that in St. Patrick's cemetery the Donnelly grave "will be pointed out for generations to come as the last resting place of the victims of a misguided and brutal outrage" (Advertiser, Feb. 16, 1880). The word Biddulph itself has become proverbial and part of everyday vocabulary. An unruly French-Canadian parish is called "a Quebec Biddulph" (Advertiser, Aug. 2, 1880); a report of an Ottawa faction fight is headlined "Biddulph Tactics" (Advertiser, Oct. 27, 1880); brawls in any municipality "are classed as 'Biddulphery' which may be regarded as the latest coined word" (Free Press, Nov. 20, 1880).

An Advertiser reporter (July 31, 1881) ponders with mock-weariness

...the perpetual everlasting supply of all and sundry about Whalen's Corners, the Homestead, the Sixth Line, the Cedar Swamp, and the question has occurred to him more than once, "Could it be possible for this to go on for five or ten years?"

As the following chapters will show, the answer to the reporter's rhetorical question is yes--a hundred years. We began this chapter with McLuhan, and return to him in conclusion. He argues in From Cliché to Archetype that "the flat cliché is enormously richer and deeper than anything that can be achieved by pictorial realism or the most delicate shades of chiaroscuro" (89). "Cliché is charged with the accumulation of corporate energy and perception" (204), and an artist by a shift of focus or perspective can turn cliché into visible archetype. This is in part what William Donnelly does with the clichés of melodrama. The press is a kind of nineteenth-century masque, articulating deferentially the values already held by its initiated audience. Frye links the masque to the earliest forms of drama, "myth-plays", which, he says, were intended "to present a powerful sensational focus for a community" and to "present to the audience a myth already familiar to, and significant for that audience".²⁶ William Donnelly aside, the 1880 newspapers offer the Donnelly story in melodrama's clichéd terms of reference. But behind those clichés are the half-formed but genuine imaginings of an entire Ontario generation, waiting to be given "powerful sensational focus". In the following chapters we examine later Donnelly writings, to learn how they either succumbed to these clichés, or (less frequently) explored, enriched and transcended them.

CHAPTER 4

THE NEWSPAPERS' LEGACY

The first literary account of the Donnelly story is a ballad entitled "The Biddulph Murder", composed by one R. Sellars of Blyth and published on March 15, 1880, by the Advertiser Printing and Publishing Company.¹ It consists of fifty four-line stanzas of iambic doggerel, rhyming abcb, with alternating four- and three-stress lines-- in short, common ballad metre. "My object", says author Sellars in his Preface, "is just to beautify this sad tale of woe by bringing the greater part of the subject into poetical lines". That is, he hopes by poetic rhythm and by narrative structure to control the story's factual horror and make it humanly meaningful.

Sellars acknowledges his single source: "This poem is composed just from the statements of the public mind as expressed by each one through the mouth of the press." He absorbs from the press both pro- and anti-Donnelly images, and like his journalist mentors uses both with no apparent sense of tension or inconsistency. Donnellys are "the township's dread" and reaped what they sowed: "For by the way the Donnellys worked/They had not long to live". But their enemies work their "evils" with "hands of cruelty". The murders are a scene of hellish darkness, "at the midnight hour", with the assassins "all in disguise/And with their nigger's face". The presence of John O'Connor is providential, "the only ray of light/On this dark scene to shine".

Sellars also absorbs indiscriminately two of the biased anti-Donnelly points of view which were propagated in the form of newspaper interviews. For ten stanzas he quotes from and paraphrases an Advertiser interview (Feb. 5, 1880) with a sensationally anti-Donnelly Lucanite. Donnellys maimed livestock, burned barns and so on: "No tongue their crimes can tell". "If her sons a foe forgave", Johanna Donnelly "Often prayed that they all might/Forever burn in hell". Three stanzas mention that all this is from the Lucanite source; but in the rest of the stanzas, and overall, there is no effort to separate authorial voice from Lucanite shrill slander. There is also a paraphrase of Father Connolly's version of Biddulph history during his year of tenure (Advertiser, Feb. 6, 1880). Connolly has stated as fact that Donnellys burned Edward Ryan's barn "shortly after" the dispute over the threshing, and in revenge for being accused of the Ryan robbery; although Connolly's chronology is, as we know, far off the mark, it makes a neat and unequivocal anti-Donnelly narrative structure. Connolly and the anonymous Lucanite are used because their versions are so simple and clear-cut--but so is the notion of demonic midnight assassins, and thus Sellars concludes with a remark about the guilty consciences of the Biddulph killers. Sellars has it both ways at once, with never a word of caution as to limited points of view. His poem shows how seductive are the journalists' melodramatic clichés when they go unopposed by any curiosity about facts.

Sellars wanders at will from one viewpoint to another; the first literary expression of a single point of view is offered to the public less than a month later, on April 10, 1880. The author is purportedly James Carroll himself, from his prison cell, but turns out to be

actually another impressionable and opportunistic prisoner lodged temporarily in a nearby cell.² The poem is vigorous doggerel and rather beyond the literary capabilities of Carroll, whose style, as we have seen, runs more to tantrum prose.

This untitled poem is a thirty-line ballad, in the same popular metre as the Sellars poem except that Sellars' alternating four- and three-stress lines are written as a single seven-beat roughly iambic line--fourteeners: "Come all ye lovers of liberty and listen to this true tale". Among poets in English only Blake ("The Book of Thel" and most of the later prophetic books) has had much success at giving beauty and dignity to this usually clumsy metre. (The case is different, of course, when it is written as the much more flexible ballad metre.) Still the fourteener can't help being vigorous for short stretches, and is well enough suited to expressing the tough defiance of these prisoners, who wave their hats at Lucan inquest crowds, fight in London gaol cells, joke with Toronto crowds, and munch apples in courtrooms. The galloping, unstoppable metre is like the metre of a cheer-leading chant--the quasi-literary sub-genre to which this poem in one of its aspects belongs. Crudely galloping metres can after all serve literary ends--as Wordsworth's "The Idiot Boy" shows (although it is not in fourteeners). Like formulaic cheers, this poem celebrates a social community, a sense of kinship among like-minded people. Patriotic poems such as those rampant in late nineteenth century anthologies of Canadian verse are also generically similar; there is no literary reason (although there may be moral ones) why membership in a criminal band cannot be celebrated as enthusiastically as membership in a nation. However, beyond its crude vigour, the Carroll poem shares with most

patriotic poetry flatness and predictability.

The Vigilant heroes face a cruel system of justice, a slanderous press. ("The Free Press has used us shamefully through its reporter Payne"), and lying witnesses like William Donnelly ("It's already a well-established fact that the truth he never told"). There is no mention whatever of the murders--because, as we have discovered, the slightest mention cannot help leaving some residue of sympathy for the Donnelly victims and of outrage against the brutal manner of their death. The poem excludes, by denying or ignoring, anything that could tell against the prisoners. In the end, so the breezy prediction runs, these brave men will be vindicated and set free to join family and friends: "It's homeward we will be bound". The Vigilants who from another viewpoint desecrate the Donnelly family home have here the same appeal to family working to their advantage:

And when they do their verdict give the world the truth
will know,
And the Vigilant boys, like heroes, from the prison dock
will go.
It's then they will join their many friends whose hearts
will jump with glee
When they hear the verdict and the Vigilant boys are free.

There is, in fact, just such a scene after Carroll's acquittal on February 3, 1881. In the vision of this poem it is a scene of camaraderie. From the Donnelly point of view that same celebration is a cruel demonic parody, and exposed as such by Robert Donnelly in his role as refuser of festivity. The meaning of celebration depends on who is doing the celebrating, and why.

Opening with the traditional "come all ye" formula and with an appeal to freedom, this poem is in the tradition of the oral, topical prison ballad-plaint. Dozens were composed about Irish criminals

(especially political criminals imprisoned by the English), and about Canadian criminals too.³ Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol is the best-known literary example of the type. These Vigilant prisoners are victims, persecuted unjustly:

Now all ye boys who sleep at home on your feather beds
of ease,
It is little ye think on the thoughts of those whose guard
is the lock and key.

The speaker in the poem looks in two directions--inward at his Vigilant membership (in which he exults), and outward at a society excluded from that group and persecuting it. The two themes often go together, reinforcing one another: a sense of inclusion implies suspicion of outsiders, and that feeling of being threatened fosters comforting kinships. In its other aspect, then, the Carroll poem is a poem of protest or exile, a genre of which "Un canadien errant" and Leonard Cohen's "Patriot's Song" are other Canadian examples.

On February 4, 1881, the first anniversary of the murders, another poem appears--"William Donnelly the Biddulph Companion, Lines Addressed to Himself".⁴ Thematically opposite to the Carroll poem, this poem foresees William's eventual triumph over his murderous foes--a triumph which will also be God's:

Fret not thyself, for God still lives,
And justice to us all He gives.

That triumph will conclude in a Donnelly apotheosis:

And may God bless you, Will, while here
And take you to a happy sphere,
When a long life in this you've spent,
Midst affluence and sweet content.

Much is made of the brutal murders and arson ("The ashes of home and of friends"); William's antagonists are evoked in vivid and conventional

• Gothic imagery of darkness and grave--

But thou, alone and forsaken,
And the grave now yawning for thee,
No darkness or danger canst see,

of blood and bleak wind--"The blood of thy brother will cry, /And the winds of Biddulph will sigh". Earlier comparisons of William Donnelly have been to the Prince of Wales and to Cardinal Richelieu; this anonymous poet mentions Napoleon and Wellington, and then declares that

Neither was equal to you.
No! Neither fought battles alone
When all friends and armies were gone.

Poems of panegyric to individual persons, like the topical work of English poets laureate, are generally inflated, platitudinous, one-dimensional; and this poem is no exception. But it does suggest that another possible form for a Donnelly artist might be that represented by Marvell's elusive ode on Cromwell, where the subject character is perceived as both nobly heroic and tragically flawed. Quite as richly as any longer narrative form, a tragic panegyric might articulate that complex and difficult moral mixture which characterizes the historical Donnellys.

The anonymous poet predicts the emergence of other pro-Donnelly apologiae: the Donnelly ashes "will/Tell tales in the future, dear Bill!". There is a hiatus between the time when the Donnelly story is news, and the time when it qualifies as history. Donnelly tales largely disappear from print in the early 1880s, but re-emerge a generation later, in the 1920s. The first twentieth-century Donnelly account is in a volume by Albert R. Hassard called Famous Canadian Trials, published in Toronto in 1924.⁶ Hassard's diction is the diction of the 1880 press, the more noticeably so because it is written with one

quarter of the twentieth century past:

Needless to say the boy's story in the witness box was heard with the deepest interest, as detail after detail of the blood-curdling tragedy came forth with unstudied simplicity from its youthful narrator's lips. (95)

In the Victorian myth of progress which we have noticed explicit in the Canadian press of 1880, Canadians are evolving upward to maturity within a system (British) which embodies the best values of civilization. So for Hassard the Victorian optimist it

...chills the blood and fills the mind with horror that such an unspeakable butchery could wind its way into a civilized age and into a civilized community. (82)

To the extent that Hassard is typical, the Canada of the 1920s has still a Victorian cast of mind.

His book is a collection of legal histories, and Hassard is not much concerned with the Biddulph troubles which preceded the murder trials. This is unfortunate, because, unlike the Victorian journalists whom he otherwise resembles, Hassard eschews melodrama and stresses the doubts and complexities. "The origin of the strife", he says honestly, is "lost in legend and communicated by tradition". Crime was general in the township, with no one party obviously and exclusively to blame:

Then followed the circulation of malicious stories, later commercial rivalries, and towards the end, rough practical jokes carried to dangerous extremes... At length this section of the township became the theatre of a constant succession of undiscovered crimes... (83)

His brief summary manages to suggest neatly the way in which boisterous, spectacular rowdyism in an atmosphere of fear and rumour shaded darkly and inexorably into greater violence and then into murder.

But the trials are Hassard's interest. For Hassard history, and especially legal history, is dignified rhetoric and colourful pageantry from the past. By 1924, 1880 is ready to become history, and

Hassard is eager to find rectitude in that history. His account is studded with encomia. Hugh MacMahon displays "quiet and unostentatious gravity, great impressiveness, and silvery eloquence" (102); Irving's summation at the first trial is "a brilliant masterpiece... and easily held the palm..." (99); the judges at the second trial are "men of sterling integrity and illustrious renown" (102); and so on. The objects of Hassard's panegyric are not solitary individuals like The Biddulph Champion, but social leaders, the men who embody all that is noble in the society whose institutions they vivify. Hassard gazes at them as English Renaissance writers gazed at Elizabeth I.

In the other cases which Hassard describes there are elements of mystery, and the proper verdict is moot, but in no other is the actual verdict certainly wrong. This poses a problem for Hassard. He states piously that "the desire was universal that stern justice should be meted out" (85). As we have noticed, this was the desire for only a very brief period of time after the murders, before the practical and political problems of prosecution became apparent. Hassard must rationalize the undeniable absence of that "stern justice" in the Biddulph case, and so turns on poor John O'Connor:

A youth of thirteen years, who had admitted constant untruths and mistakes, however unintentional they may have been, was not a safe witness to be the means of consigning a host of people to the gallows. (104-5)

This of course is misleading: it is impossible to read transcripts of John O'Connor's testimonies objectively and disbelieve him. Hassard proceeds, by a shadowy piece of logic and diction, to credit that judicial system which he has tried to vindicate for the peace which supposedly follows the acquittals:

Whatever the reasons, certain it is that no one ever was punished by human law for the greatest crime Canadian annals record. Equally sure is it that after the patient and careful judicial investigation presided over by Justices Armour and Osler, ended the long reign of terror in Biddulph. A happier lot than that which befell the slaughtered people belongs to those who now live near the scene of the crime, and feel no dread of the midnight destroyer assaulting their homes. (105)

But the moral tension shows stubbornly through Hassard's unctious as it does through the welter of contradictory melodramatic clichés in the 1880 press.

Within two years of the publication of Hassard's book, the Donnelly tale is back in the newspapers where it began. In "Looking Over Western Ontario", a weekly London Free Press column devoted to the history of southwestern Ontario, an account of the Donnelly murders is published on January 16, 1926. Its author is Lambert Payne who in 1880 was the Free Press reporter covering the Donnelly case. Five years later Payne publishes his story again, substantially the same, in MacLean's magazine of November, 1931.⁷

In recalling Donnelly days, Payne works the first-person "I was there and saw it myself" approach, in a tradition of autobiographical exposés probably more popular in Canada than fiction (as works from the early-nineteenth-century travel books to the Paris-in-the-1920s memoirs of Callaghan and John Glassco go to prove). He describes his journalistic sorties into Biddulph, letting his readers know that he faced grave danger in that strange land: "Nor have I forgotten the glowering looks that were cast upon me as I sought information along the Roman Line" (44).

For Payne as for Hassard, the Biddulph trouble begins with harmless high-spirited rowdiness, the Donnellys' own infectious ebullience being the most extreme in the township but not at all unique. "Petty rivalries"

and "rural shindies" (14) lead uncontrollably into darker phases, "a series of agrarian outrages" (LFP), culminating in the Ryder arson of January 1880 which Payne makes the turning-point of his narrative structure. (Payne is careful enough to say that, although there was definitely "a faction of which they [the Donnellys] were the militant leaders" [14], and although they were suspected, there was never proof of their guilt.)

The theory of the Crown from the outset was that the Vigilant Committee, having acted hastily in arresting the Donnellys for the alleged firing of the Ryder barn, and realizing that failure would bring retribution on themselves, had resolved to make reprisals impossible by wiping out their enemies at a single stroke. (44)

This is in fact Payne's own theory, not that of the Crown in 1880. In the Poetics (Chapter 6), Aristotle points out that the plot of a tragic drama is built upon reversals and recognitions, turning points after which things can never be the same again. Payne in his fashion is moving towards an awareness that here in the Ryder arson is, in terms of literary structure, one of those reversals of fortune upon which the Donnelly plot may hinge.

If plot is the most important element in tragedy (and perhaps, by extension of all narrative literature), character, says Aristotle is second. Unlike Hassard who minimizes John O'Connor's importance, Payne presents much of his story as-told-by-Johnny. He strengthens the theme of R. Sellars and the 1880 journalists, of an innocent child's superior perceptions of a corrupt world around him. A work such as Henry James' What Maisie Knew suggests the richness possible in an interpretation of the Donnelly story from this point of view. However, Payne distorts and expands. His intent is not ironic but sensational (and we note, as the 1880 journalists would have done better to have noted, that Aristotle

calls spectacle the least important element).

According to John O'Connor's story, the men seemed to be surprised on learning that she [Bridget Donnelly] was there. They talked about it for a long time, and at last decided that she could not be allowed to live. Lots were drawn as to who should do the killing. Then there was the sound of ascending footsteps, a single shriek from above, and all was silent. (LFP)

Like his equally erroneous report that Bridget, "the innocent young immigrant girl" (44), had arrived from Ireland only "three weeks before" (LFP), the sense of arbitrariness in this random casting of lots exaggerates the pathos of Bridget's death.

William Donnelly is Payne's central character, at once sly and heroic. Payne's William starts to show how ambiguity can be more interesting than definitively unambiguous melodrama:

Bill Donnelly was a remarkable man. He was the lawyer of the family--shrewd, cool, and crafty. His wit had got his brothers out of many a tight corner, and his cunning had planned many a bloody fight. He was...the kind of man who would have fitted well into the wild days of the American West. Had he been educated, he would have made his mark, for he was remarkably clever. (LFP)

(Apparently for Payne in the 1920s it is a measure of charisma to say that Donnelly would have been at home on the American frontier. In the Canadian newspapers of 1880 the Wild West was something unseemly and regarded with unadulterated condescension: it was, like Zululand, much inferior to Canadian orderliness.)

While some perceptions have changed, Payne shares with Hassard and with the Victorian press a shocked surprise "that such a thing should happen in a highly civilized community" (LFP). He offers the 1880 newspapers' comforting and distancing explanation that "for the most part they were from Tipperary, and the older people continued to speak the Celtic tongue" (14). In his final paragraph, he retreats from disagreeable historical fact to a conventional, artificial tableau that

would have pleased and distracted an 1880 audience too:

I have still a vivid recollection of attending a wake on the Roman Line in those faraway days. It was in a log cabin, where candles took the place of lamps, and in the dim light of a smoke-laden room, with pipes and potheen in abundance, swaying men and women wailed "Agrah! Agrah!" as they apostrophized the lamented "mavourneen" in the casket. (44)

Stereotypical as the scene is, it does serve to remind us of another non-narrative literary form eminently appropriate to the Donnelly historical material--that of the elegy. Payne and the 1880 journalists with their pathos and picturesqueness need not have the final say, like "Adonais" or "Lament for the Dorsets", a Donnelly elegy could expand into ever-widening circles of significance.

The next substantial account of the Donnelly murders is in William Stewart Wallace's 1931 Murders and Mysteries: A Canadian Series,⁸ a book about several unsolved or contentious Canadian crimes. In 1931 during the first shocks of the Depression, readers probably are not interested in Albert Hassard's style of florid panegyric on behalf of a system which they know from experience to be seriously flawed. Wallace's book seems not at all dated, although it follows Hassard by only seven years. The difference perhaps suggests a Canada finally, under the influence of Depression, abandoning the social mythology of the nineteenth century.

Wallace is a professional historian and compiler of, among other works, a valuable Dictionary of Canadian Biography.⁹ A dictionary implies eclecticism, an interest in shared, agreed-upon meanings rather than in subjective or emotional ones. Typically, Wallace sifts and probes each case until he arrives at his own best, if often tentative, conclusions. Although newspapers are his exclusive source, Wallace is far enough away in time and temperament to recognize and eschew the

papers' rhetorical conventions. For him the story is of a "vendetta" (194); the term suggests a private feud with neither side completely right or wrong.

In terms of narrative structure, the initiating event in Wallace's account is Donnelly's loss of half of his land and the subsequent quarrel with Patrick Farrell (who had purchased the Donnelly farm, says Wallace, erroneously following the newspapers). He calls Donnelly a squatter, but also acknowledges the point of view of Donnelly himself, a hard-working man who "it may be imagined...did not take kindly this invasion of what he no doubt regarded as his 'squatter's rights'" (195). He notes that the killing is the unintended result of drink, and that "strong representations were made on his behalf by his neighbours" (196-7). That is, Wallace steers his narrative line between (without excluding either one) the "tragic" interpretation of this episode which suggests some Donnelly culpability, and what we have called the "romance" view--that their fall from order reflected primarily a wider disruption of their external environment. Wallace's apprehension and yoking-together of disparate notions of Donnellys might be compared to the practice of the English Metaphysical poets; certainly his method has nothing in common with that of the journalists, whose use of opposing Donnelly images shows only a glib inconsistency.

Wallace's Donnellys are potentially heroic,

...as fine a looking lot of boys as were to be found in that part of the country, well set up, with handsome faces and curly hair, and liberally endowed with intelligence. (197)

Their "petty aggressions" during these years he ascribes to the most humanly plausible and prototypically tragic motives--"their pride", and their neighbours' "rude remarks with regard to the cause of their

father's absence" (197). (Historically, these "petty aggressions" would be the 1857 assault on Ann Robinson, and the 1864 fleece-stealing charge; dependent on the newspapers, Wallace apparently knew no particulars and cites none.) Throughout, Wallace lays no blame, merely mentioning that "all these crimes, whether rightly or wrongly, were attributed to the Donnellys" (199). His "rightly or wrongly" expresses an unresolved ironic tension. In contrast, the 1880 journalists' use of the same term functioned as a licence for attributing to Donnellys any and every actual or rumoured depredation.

The Donnelly historical material is so massive that it fairly demands to be divided meaningfully into parts (for instance, the way in which we noticed, in Chapter 2, four distinct tragic movements). From the welter of events as reported in his newspaper sources, Wallace stresses the stage-coach quarrel. By identifying Flanagan as the Donnellys' prime antagonist he makes that quarrel more immediately personal and dramatic. Here is the first hint that the stage-coach competitions may form for the literary artist a unit in themselves. We notice that the stage-coach part of the story has a wonderful structural simplicity: it is a race.

Then, within each part into which the history as a whole may be divided, a literary artist further organizing his plot would seek turning points, Aristotelian reversals. Wallace notices the wedding brawl of February, 1876, and William Donnelly's subsequent arrest and conviction. Simplifying history, he makes it a climactic upheaval, after which the frantic racing and competing die away and the Donnellys start to decline. Wallace is looking for historical order and meaning, not literary structure.

but the two start to come into focus together. We recall how often in narrative literature the goal of marriage is what keeps the plot going, so that as a turning point a disrupted marriage has quite as much structural (and emotional) force as a successful marriage at story's end: the interrupted marriage in Jane Eyre is illustrative.

In the part of his history from the stagecoach wars to the murders, Wallace singles out the Thompson cow trespass as no earlier writer had done. Here the theme of the violation of the homeland echoes the 1856 eviction which in Wallace's account signifies the initiating descent into disorder. This thematic echoing helps to tighten structure, both for Wallace, and, potentially, for any literary artist who might wish to draw upon his suggestions. More specifically, as Lambert Payne did with the Ryder arson, Wallace makes of this first confrontation of Vigilants with Donnellys one of those all-important turning points. Wallace says, explicitly, that this incident "led to the final tragedy": "After this episode the township became a powder-magazine which a spark would ignite" (199-200).

After quoting from John O'Connor to describe the murders, Wallace gives sketches of the Vigilant accused, noting the anomaly that Martin McLaughlin "had just been made, a month or two before, a Justice of the Peace" (204). We have seen that the 1880 newspapers, completely lacking in social criticism except of the partisan political kind, noted nothing at all incongruous in McLaughlin's position--or in Constable James Carroll's either: Wallace's observation foreshadows later modern treatments of the Donnelly story in which the hypocritical magistrate-turned-murderer becomes central as a corrupt and tyrannous Herod-figure.

Like R. Sellars the 1880 balladeer, Wallace quotes from the Advertiser's February 5 interview with an anti-Donnelly Lucanite, but he

offers it as what it is--a partisan account which "put bluntly the case for the murders" (204). Picking his way like a pilgrim among extreme and therefore temptingly clear opinions, he lets both sides speak but refuses to let either side speak for himself. He seeks neutral truth and avoids all obfuscating rhetoric. But finally Wallace must face the fact of Carroll's acquittal and the abandonment of prosecution:

The fact is that probably half the township of Biddulph...was an accessory either before or after the murders; and, if James Carroll was found guilty, no one could tell where the prosecutions would end. (217)

Wallace does not seem indignant. His last sentence is a vindication which conforms to Albert Hassard's apologist opinion:

But the prosecutions had this result at least, that no attempt to introduce the Italian vendetta into Canada has been made since that time. (217)

In his careful, judicious way Wallace discovers the moral ambiguities concerning that long feud within the Biddulph subculture, and this in itself is an advance over preceding Donnelly writers; but he backs away from admitting moral ambiguities and questionable practices on a broader scale, among the government and judiciary of Canadian civilization circa 1880.

As if aware that Wallace's precise and detached methods led towards truths so unpleasant, the next author to deal at length with the Donnellys argues more vehemently than ever before that all was well in the end and that the Donnellys got what they deserved. Volume Eight of Famous Canadian Trials, an unpublished typescript prepared in 1944 by Edwin C. Guillet,¹⁰ is the prototypical anti-Donnelly version. Guillet's source material is in the newspapers only (although he has read and occasionally paraphrases Wallace).¹¹ Like balladeer R. Sellars,

Guillett manoeuvres facts, and contexts and points of view at will. He shows how not just artists, not just popular journalists, but also historians whose province is factual truth abhor clutter and ambiguity and seek clear-cut patterns.

Guillett's structure is in large part that of a parody of a symposium. In separate chapters he presents, sometimes in their own words and sometimes at one further remove in his own summaries, the views of John O'Connor, William Donnelly, John Connolly, Joseph Carswell, Hugh McKinnon, the anti-Donnelly Lucanite of the February 5, 1880, Advertiser, the witnesses at Carroll's murder trials, William Meredith, Aemilius Irving, and Justice Armour. Guillett himself functions as a sort of referee--rather like Nature in the Parlement of Foules. The fact that much of the Donnelly source material is courtroom testimony suggests a debate of dialogue of adversaries could be in fact an especially appropriate structural plan for a Donnelly history, with a central arbiter doing his best to find his way toward a solid Donnelly truth. Given the ambiguity of the Donnelly material, arbiter and audience might well be left, as in the Parlement, with any final judgment suspended. But Guillett's work is a parody of such a form, because, rather than offering us separate and partial judgments of a central truth, he visibly manipulates and packages everything to Donnelly disadvantage. His "verdict", the one he impresses on his readers, is clear from the beginning--just as in the Platonic dialogues, say, we always know that Plato is going to be sure that Socrates wins in the end over his befuddled straw-man opponents.

His treatment of Detective Hugh McKinnon is illustrative. So infectious does he find McKinnon's stories that he is moved to yet

further attributions. According to Guillelt (but not according to fact), McKinnon says that the Donnellys actually admitted all the crimes charged against them: "Their reign of terror was admitted, and they had nothing but contempt for the victims of their outrages" (21).

It was reported to him [McKinnon] that she [Johannah Donnelly] had said that she would never be satisfied until each of her sons had killed his man as their father had done. (22-23)

Guillelt says that McKinnon says that the Donnellys said that...

Guillelt says that McKinnon says that some unidentified party said that

Johannah Donnelly said that...: this word-of-mouth cumulative distortion is exactly the process of rumour-building which we noticed the 1880

newspapers exploiting and encouraging. But it is the sensational

brutality of Johannah that a reader will remember, not the fact that the remarks are attributed third- or fourth-hand--especially when Guillelt

himself treats it as fact. "The 'old woman', Judith", Guillelt concludes confidently, "was essentially evil" (56). Time and again,

Guillelt marshals anti-Donnelly voices and allows us to assume the truth of what they say. He gives the names of all fifty-six signers of the

petition for constable Carroll's appointment, like an epic cataloguer striving to impress us with sheer magnitude of numbers. He fails to

note that these men are by definition the Donnellys' worst enemies, and that they represent only a minority of the adult male population of

St. Patrick's parish. If he is not literary critic enough to recognize the ironic limitations of a point of view, neither does he recognize a

stage-Irish stereotype, quoting as fact the anti-Donnelly resume (Globe, Feb. 5, 1880) according to which Donnelly Sr. is

...a rollicking, drinking, quarrelsome Irishman, always ready to engage in any dispute that might give him scope for his fighting powers. (4)

Guillett illustrates how a simplistic historical thesis can act rather as the literary equivalent of a magnetic field, with particles of facts (or lies) lining up automatically along the lines of force. Thus, for instance, he repeats (unattributed, in his own voice) the faulty chronology offered the newspapers by Father Connolly (Advertiser, Feb. 6, 1880), according to which Edward Ryan's barns burned immediately after the robbery persecution and the argument over threshing. Other events then coalesce around that self-consistent structure of causally-connected incidents, for "a threshing machine on the Ryan farm was burned at night", says Guillett (5). Here there is no evidence--not an accusation of Ryan's, not a newspaper rumour--that such a thing ever happened. Then, after Connolly's intervention, the priest "received a most impertinent letter from one of the [Donnelly] sons" (5). The "impertinent" is Connolly's own description which Guillett adopts without attribution; and anyway, the letter he refers to is that written by William Donnelly in June of 1879. It is months before the Ryan threshing incident, is almost a year after Ryan's burning, concerns Thomas Ryan, accused of stealing James Kelly's horse, and has nothing whatever to do with Edward Ryan.

In contrast, when Guillett presents Donnelly versions of affairs--as if objectively to offer both sides, as an author of genuine symposium must--he packages it all prejudicially. Summarising William Donnelly's version as told to a Globe reporter (Mar. 2-3, 1880), Guillett uses liberally such prefatory demurrers as Donnelly "claimed that" or "considered" or "alleged". Later he is not so indirect: he simply labels Donnelly a "first-class liar" (35)--because Donnelly's accounts differ from those of Donnelly enemies. By distorting context,

Guillett is even able to present Patrick Donnelly as a witness against his own family. At the end of his chapter on William, Guillett tells of Patrick visiting the Donnelly home to warn of the danger of "the continual quarrels in which the family was engaged" (17). "He denounced their activities in the strongest terms", (17), Guillett informs us, as if in this scene of which the 1880 press was so fond, in which Patrick acts as a kind of benevolent chorus character, Patrick's is a gesture of condemnation and repudiation of his own family rather than a gesture of deep-rooted love.

And yet, after fifty-four pages of this kind of parody of symposium, Guillett ends with Robert Donnelly's famous challenge of the Vigilants celebrating in a London barroom. "The Donnellys still had the guts", says Guillett (with a touch of the diction, not of stately symposium but of pulp fiction), "but the good old days were obviously a thing of the past" (54). All of Guillett's bias does not obscure a kind of Donnelly élan. Scattered throughout Guillett's pages are a few small signs that all is not so morally clear-cut as he suggests. Guillett himself admits that the sons are "intelligent" (1). He gives a glimpse of that Donnelly dramatic exuberance ("...one of Flanagan's stages was playfully sawn up into sections..." [3]). And he notes in grudging, left-handed fashion the Donnelly survivors'

...great fortitude in the fearless way in which they continued to go about their business after the tragedy and aid in the assembling of evidence. No-one, of course, ever questioned that the Donnellys were brave in that desperate way which leads men to seek a quarrel and take on all comers. (15)

Here, however vestigially, is the theme of tragic greatness, of proud over-reaching and subsequent isolation. It is a measure of Donnelly heroic stature that such qualities still show through the fog of

Guillett's massive misappropriation of his sources.

The next important Donnelly account is a 22-page unpublished paper called "The Donnelly Murders", delivered to the London and Middlesex Historical Society in November of 1946, by Alice MacFarlane of London, Ontario.¹² A native of London township where her ancestors settled in 1819, MacFarlane grew up, she explains, on the story of the Donnelly killings. She was exposed to the sort of oral lore which is the subject of the first chapter of this volume. She has also read and uses Wallace; but, most important, she is the first researcher to use manuscript sources, having at her disposal the William Porte diary and a small collection of material in the library of the University of Western Ontario.¹³ Thus armed with personal reminiscence and with MSS, MacFarlane is able to withstand, as predecessors could not, the melodramatic practices of the 1880 journalists.

Among MacFarlane's oral tales is that in which James and Johannah elope from the home of her father, a socially prominent magistrate who disapproved of their romance. She cites as provenance of the tale "a late resident of Lucan, who knew the family intimately" (2). She cites "residents of Lucan" who recall that "of the couple, Johannah was the dominating one" (4).

Indeed, by one account told to me in Lucan, his wife saved his neck. The governor-general at the time, Sir Edmund Walker Head, was touring these parts. While he was at Coderich Mrs. Donnelly journeyed up to present the case of her unfortunate husband. This she did so successfully that she won the sympathetic ear of his excellency.... (4)

In terms both of size and of frequency of appearance in the source materials, Johannah does seem historically to have been the dominant parent. For MacKinnon, Guillett et al she is dominant in a demonic sense, some cross between Spenser's Radigund and Lady MacBeth; for

MacFarlane also, she is dominating--but heroically so, rather like those nineteenth-century heroines of melodrama who, in their own debased versions of the Cupid and Psyche myth, endure all hardships and plead so eloquently in the course of their rescues of their relatively inert lovers. Indeed, in MacFarlane's sources, James Sr. "is described as an offensive little man who was quite mild and harmless until he had a few drinks" (4), the type of overpowered male partner popular in western tradition from the first three hapless husbands of the Wife of Bath to Dagwood of the Blondie comic strip. We can see how readily conventional figures emerge when even so careful a historian as MacFarlane makes use of oral lore. Nevertheless, the very fact that she does identify her sources (by description, although not by name) makes her far superior as historian to someone like Guillett who glibly ignores the point-of-view problem when it suits his purposes: MacFarlane's readers do have the opportunity to make their own decisions to believe or disbelieve.

Her handling of the reports of so interested a party as John Connolly is typical. First she offers in her own voice a history of the formation of the Committee and of Connolly's initiating role. Then, and only then, does she quote from Connolly's version of things:

That story of a Vigilant Committee is all bosh. I never formed a society in my life outside a Temperance Society either here or anywhere else. What I did do was to ask my people to sign a pledge....
(10)

The contrast with Guillett's practice is immense: while Connolly's opinions blend indiscriminately with Guillett's own, MacFarlane provides an objective context in which the elements of prevarication and self-pleading in Connolly's story show up starkly.

A single example can illustrate the value of MS sources. When she comes to discuss the quarrels with Edward Ryan, MacFarlane has at her disposal the March 1878 information in which Ryan charges Thomas Donnelly and James Feeheley with robbery. This is the document at the root of that quarrel which is the single most important issue in the two years prior to the murders, the quarrel with which poet Sellars and historian Guillet play such revisionist havoc. But a simple firm fact proven by a surviving artifact has an anchor-like power to resist: it will not be bandied about or bent to fit any sort of distorted patterns.

After her account of the murders and the legal aftermath, MacFarlane offers her own verdict, which is exactly that of the scrupulously neutral Wallace. John O'Connor undoubtedly told the truth, but, she explains, "if James Carroll had been found guilty no one could tell where the prosecutions would end" (20). Like Wallace, she apparently finds it unnecessary to raise any legal or ethical objections. Rather, she launches abruptly into anecdotal aftermath:

For years, on the anniversary of the tragedy, the original members of the Vigilance Committee and their descendants would receive a card with the date of the murder on it, the equivalent of "Where were you on the night of February 3?" (21)

And she tells a story of Patrick Donnelly showing up at every Vigilant funeral "to shovel in the dirt as fast as he could with the remark 'There goes another of the _____ murderers to hell'" (21). Probably apocryphal, the stories give a tone of Gothic revenge to the conclusion of MacFarlane's history. Their presence shows how alluring even for the serious-minded historian fictional conventions may be. More important, the return to entertaining fictional and conventional anecdote seems a

kind of repressive abandonment of the uncomfortable truths implicit in the end to which her unflinching research has led her.

This inference becomes clearer as she continues. MacFarlane switches key to quote a humorous verse inscribed by William Donnelly in the autograph book of one of William Porte's daughters. She closes her paper thus:

You may now return to the peaceful reality of London 1946. There are no fires, no neighbourhood feuds, and no Vigilance Committee hanging over your heads. All you have to worry about is the atomic bomb. (22)

Here is the historical equivalent of the cinematic technique in which the camera withdraws abruptly from close-up to a shot from far away. Apparently MacFarlane intends to stress the remoteness, the dissimilarity, of Biddulph from the mid-twentieth-century present. The need where Donnellys are concerned to sever historical continuity, the evasive refusal to use the nineteenth century as a probe of the twentieth, is exactly analogous to the practice of the 1880 newspapers who so insisted on distancing their audience from the unpleasant Biddulph actuality.

As it turns out, MacFarlane's careful objectivity throughout and her attempts to defuse it all at paper's end are not enough to prevent an explosion of hostilities. "I found out", MacFarlane recalls, "that even all those years later I had stirred up so much controversy I was sorry I ever prepared the paper".¹⁴ "Tempers Rise as Murders Recalled", a Toronto newspaper report is headlined.¹⁵ One man stalks from the meeting in protest of stories of Donnelly atrocities; another asserts just as bitterly that "...the Donnellys cut the tongues out of horses and were guilty of many other crimes".

As if attracted and inspired by the publicity and uproar, the next piece on the Donnelly story abjures scholarship and objectivity

altogether and returns to uninhibited popularizations. "The Vigilante Massacre" is the title of an article in the June 1950 issue of MacLean's,¹⁶ the magazine where, in 1931, Lambert Payne had been the first to popularize the Donnelly story for the twentieth century.

The blackest crime ever committed in Canada was what they called it. And in 70 violent years there's been no match for what the masked marauders did to the troublesome Donnellys. (18)

Here in the breathless sub-heading are masked marauders and the blackest crime ever, but also victims who are troublesome and get what they deserve. The author, Toronto author and jurist S. Tupper Bigelow, clearly on holiday from a career governed by judicial decorum, does not take sides--not because he wants to be objective but because he does not want to lose half of his power to titillate by admitting that one side is not purely and spectacularly evil.

Tom Donnelly's death scene is typical of Bigelow's opening account of the massacre. Again, spectacle is the keynote--the 1880 journalists' keynote too, but for Aristotle the least important. Tom is struck with a spade and then attacked by another Vigilant "who buried a pickaxe in Thomas' skull. A third beheaded him with the sharp edge of his shovel" (18), after which the body and severed head are thrown back in the flames. But after this lurid introduction in which Donnellys are victims, Bigelow offers his own history of Donnelly depredations. It is not really a history--not organized, not factual--but only a catalogue of the more shocking crimes attributed to Donnellys. He mentions among many others the so-called squatting, the Farrell murder, Robert's attempted assassination of Constable Everett, the burning of Edward Ryan's barns, and of course that ubiquitous tongue-cutting business already mentioned by Guillet, Wallace and MacFarlane. In no

case does he provide a context for these incidents, or mention that many of them were simply alleged to be Donnelly work, or that in many cases the Donnelly defendant was acquitted.

After all, Bigelow has no interest in history. Although he occasionally offers as proof the rather vague source, "the Press of the day" (e.g., 19), he does not really care if his "facts" are taken seriously, so long as they amuse. The following is typical of his style and method:

If you offended a Donnelly in any way it was a good bet you would find your barn burned down by morning. There were more barns burned in Biddulph Township from 1875 to 1880 than there were barns; as fast as they could be built the Donnellys would burn them down. (27-28)

Bigelow's piece is stage-Irish pulp fiction. Through the slap-stick treatment his Donnellys come off less as plundering monsters than as scapegrace rogues--there is less of Attila the Hun than of Ginger Coffey.

Like Guillet, Bigelow includes that enormously popular story from the 1880 press in which a Donnelly (Bigelow says William, not Robert) challenges the Vigilants' barroom festivities. In Bigelow's version William is drunk, and ignored by the crowd. But in the accompanying illustration is a thoroughly elegant William, the epitome of the villain of late-nineteenth-century English melodrama in trim waistcoat, tie, top hat, white cuffs, and neatly trimmed and curving moustache. He poses against a bar, glaring down at two frightened-looking and coarse-featured drinkers. Earlier in the article Bigelow quotes from the pro-Donnelly dispatch of the February 6, 1880, Globe:

...It was admitted on all sides that a finer-looking family did not live in Biddulph. They were all well-built muscular men with curly hair and well-cut features. (27)

In its context this is not an attempt to win our sympathy for Donnellys; like the illustration of an elegant William, it sets up a seemingly unintended tension in Bigelow's article. "Heroic Donnellys intrude irresistibly into Bigelow's knock-about Irish farce as easily as they did into Guillet's flagrant parody of the methods of symposium dialogue.

Throughout its entire length, Bigelow's article takes the comic, distancing tone of the last page of MacFarlane's paper. Like the 1880 journalists, he evades uncompromising historical fact by replacing it with outrageously empty conventions, sure-fire stuff for readers' consumption. Although his work exceeds them all in degree, it is not different in kind from certain elements in the work of the 1880 journalists, Sellars the balladeer, the Carroll poet, Lambert Payne, Hassard, Wallace, Guillet, and MacFarlane. All of them, at some point, decide to use the techniques of fiction, not to explore but to evade the truths of the history.

CHAPTER 5

MILLER VERSUS KELLEY

In 1954, Thomas P. Kelley published The Black Donnellys, the first book-length account of the Donnellys.¹ The immediate analogues of this pulp-fiction account are the Bigelow article, and the American Western paperback romance-fictions that used to fill the racks of North American newsstands. Harlequin Press was the original publisher and, in the Harlequin tradition, the work is deliberately popular in format, having now (December, 1976) gone through some two dozen printings; Joyce might have called a work such as this "pulpular" fiction. Its commercial success and attendant influence upon popular images of Donnellys make it worth some attention, quite apart from any questions of literary merit--quite apart, that is, from its erratic grammar ("Even the Quigley sisters, wishing to get into the swing of things, was preparing to appear against the Donnellys" [101]), uncertain construction ("He found the fire made of fence rails surrounding his reaping machine, that destroyed it" [72]), (misspellings "journied" [16], "holacaust" [86]), insouciant punctuation ("The decision; Farrell was given fifty of the hundred acres farm, and Donnelly lost half..." [26]); slangy, anachronistic dialogue ("The first one who lays a hand on me gets the same medicine," he warned to the semicircle of grim faces" [29]), and mixed metaphors (Madill's Hotel is "a sea of flames that burned to the ground" [46-27]; Lucan is a volcano wallowing in blood [138]; and the

theft of Thompson's cow is the straw that broke the camel's back [123]).

"The true story of Canada's most barbaric feud" is the subtitle; one of Kelley's aims is authenticity, or rather the appearance of it. The book is not legitimate history, but it has been a successful fake. Like all prosperous forgers, Kelley has had to show not only cleverness and a grasp of the ways of public credulity, but some modicum of familiarity with what he is imitating. Therefore he lists his "sources" promptly in the introduction (9) and proceeds to flaunt these authorities throughout. Although he does not mention it by title, Kelley takes from Goodspeed's 1889 History of Middlesex several facts relating to Lucan and Biddulph, and sprinkles them liberally throughout his early chapters to give a flavour of authenticity (e.g. 18, 19, 45, 48, 64). He mentions the 1945 Alice MacFarlane lecture, (87) and quotes (or mis-quotes) liberally from certain 1880 newspapers--for example the inevitable anti-Donnelly Lucanite article of the Advertiser, Feb. 5, 1880 (109-110). He also takes care to note on several occasions his own years of tireless investigation ("Seemingly endless hours of research were and did become necessary..." [138]). Like Guilett, he eagerly exploits anti-Donnellys Joseph Carswell (55, 69-73), John Connolly (155), and Hugh McKinnon (45, 55-60, 70-71); also like Guilett, of course he treats their tales as facts. Appealing to readers' tourist instincts (you-can-go-there-and-see-for-yourself), he uses geographically precise descriptions of the actual Biddulph locale today:

Donnelly settled on privately owned land, a hundred acres some four miles from Lucan--lot 18 on the 6th concession of Biddulph Township. Biddulph, bounded on the west and north by Huron County, on the east by Perth County, was and is a flat, fertile district, ideal for farming,...

Of course, Kelley shows his "sources" not the slightest reverence, cheerfully embellishing virtually every account until his own fancy is satisfied. Nevertheless, the narrative embellishments are built around the key events, the touchstones that emerge in the newspaper tellings and re-tellings of the Donnelly story. The squatting on Farrell land, the killing of Farrell, the fugitive years, the death sentence and commuting, the seven prison years, the homecoming, the stagecoach competition, the wedding riot, the problems with Joseph Carswell and Edward Ryan and Samuel Everett, the illness and death of James Donnelly Jr., the arrival of James Carroll and his appointment as constable, the trespass in search of Thompson's heifer, Johannah's flight to warn William, his rout of the mob with his fiddle, the murder of Michael Donnelly, the burning of Patrick Ryder's buildings, the Donnelly deaths and the legal aftermath--much of Kelley's outline does have roots in actual fact.

If Kelley tries, sporadically, to appear to be writing history, his book really is, in one of its aspects, in the tradition of the local-colour reminiscence. Sherwood Fox's The Bruce Beckons and the Lizars sisters' In the Days of the Canada Company are other Souwasto examples of the genre, although both of course are immeasurably less coarse, more dignified and literate. Often he presents his own book as a compilation of local rumours and mysterious stories:

Today, though more than three score and ten years have passed since that final night of murder, strange stories are still told out on the Roman Line... (8)

Kelley's own voice is in the language of a colourful rural raconteur, not incidentally exploiting the popularized slapstick stage-Irish traditions with ruthless regularity:

John Farrell was a big, unkempt Irishman, with a neck the size of a stovepipe and just as dirty, who would fight at the drop of a hat, drink at the pop of a cork, and had a reputation for both in his own district. (24)

He writes as a reminiscent participant in a still-vital and continuing local argument.

There are those who will tell you that the continuous persecutions of their enemies--"hangdogs"--as well as the law, were responsible for the transgressions of Biddulph's bad boys. (88)

In another of its aspects, The Black Donnellys is a Gothic romance; as a critic has already noticed.² Kelley's introduction sets this tone: Lucan's

...night skies glared with the flames from burning structures and masked riders, thundered down lonely sideroads with shouts of triumph... (8)

Also Gothic are the wild gusts and baying hound on a Biddulph night when Donnelly Sr. hides from the constables (35), Thomas Donnelly's weird sense of foreboding one week before his murder (135), the Biddulph fortune-teller Granny Bell who sees "blood on the moon" and prophesies Donnelly dooms (130-131), Johannah the ugly crone urging her sons each to kill a man ("at least" one man, says Kelley, always the embellisher [15]), the birth of the monstrous, crippled William in the midst of a blizzard and howling winds (17), the violence and mad loud laughter of the Vigilant killers (149), their oath on a Bible never to reveal the true story of the murders (152), and Patrick Donnelly's wild-eyed appearance at every Vigilant funeral to scream in vengeful triumph that "There goes another of the bastards to hell" (158).

Structurally, The Black Donnellys is as simple and conventional as the folktale which, in a way, it is. A dragon is ravaging a countryside; local leaders are powerless; a hero (James Carroll) arrives, rouses the populace, and slays the dragon to great acclaim. The first

eleven chapters primarily catalogue Donnelly deprecations. There is no need for exposition and motivation, any more than there is need for such in the case of a dragon: Donnellys plunge right in destroying simply because they are evil. Typically conventional is a showdown on the Lucan Main Street between Donnellys and a group of irate citizens led by Patrick Flannigan--standard fare in American Western pulp-fiction and cinema, and clearly descended from the chivalric tournaments of earlier romance. Typical too is William Donnelly's wedding, a demonic festive orgy of drunken song and vandalism, like romance's satyr-dance or witches' sabbath. And Kelley's James Garroll is "a man of mighty frame" (112), come from out-of-township (Exeter), as rescuing romance-heroes usually do. His appearance marks Kelley's turning point, the start of the Donnellys' decline. The acquittal of their destroyers is the occasion for the festive conclusion--an episode no less a romance archetype for being in part historically accurate. The six accused ... returned to Lucan in triumph and were greeted in the manner of homecoming heroes. The town band met them and blared sour notes, while the mayor gave a speech of welcome and the populace struggled to shake their hands. A reception was held in their honor at the Central Hotel, and later that night a dance was given. Joy and festivities hitherto unknown, reigned in Lucan. The six were acclaimed as being: "The redeemers of the community!" (156)

Thus the structure of the book is clear. We can visualize it in two frames. In the first a large black mass--the Black Donnellys--looms over a group of smaller white ones--the innocent average people of Biddulph. In frame two the white fragments have assembled into one large white body (slightly tinged with grey--murderous enough to titillate Kelley's readers), and the black body has been crushed to a fragment under its edge.

Despite its obvious fictional pattern, time and again, Kelley's

book is taken for fact. "It's all absolutely true," a typical reader concludes. "They had to kill the Donnellys, there was no other way to get rid of them."⁴ There is an edition of the book authorized for use in the educational system of Ontario, complete with questions for students' instruction—questions such as "What assessment does Hugh McKinnon make regarding the Donnelly temperament? How does he make use of this correct assessment to gain the confidence of the Donnellys?"⁵ Subsequent serious historians have exposed more truth about the family, but have yet to lay Kelley's durable fiction to rest.

In 1962, with The Black Donnellys in its seventh printing and enjoying wide credibility, the first rival book is published--The Donnellys Must Die, by Orlo Miller.⁶ Miller's purpose is revisionist: to right what he considers the injustice done by Kelley to the Donnelly reputation. Miller is frankly antagonistic to Kelley, who haunts the book throughout, from the subtitle ("The True Story of...", which echoes Kelley's own subtitle)⁷ to the last page where again Miller mentions Kelley's 1954 effort--"more inaccurate and infinitely more biased," he charges, than any preceding account (248).

Miller purposefully draws attention to his own iconoclastic role. He admits to "a few outbursts of personal anger which I trust will be considered justified" (x). His pose is that of a wrathful accuser, challenger of dogma, speaker of unpopular truths. He mentions resistance from espousers of the status quo, "the open and covert threats I have been subjected to" (242). "Your admitted bias in favour of the Donnellys sometimes gets in the way of the story," Miller's editor observes.⁸

Once he has shown that he is declaring war against the Kelley orthodoxy, Miller chooses to fight Kelley with Kelley's own kind of

weapons. Like Kelley, he sets out to be popular. Like Kelley, he uses the short journalistic paragraph unit whose prime virtue is readability. Like Kelley, he favours breezy conversational idioms--"What happened around midnight that night, the 18th of March, was no laughing matter" (123); "Carroll had lost interest in the Ryder case and was looking for other fish to fry" (164). Like Kelley, he capitalizes on stereotyped notions of the Irish and the attendant broad humour ("the joyful sound of Irish club meeting, Irish pate..." [31]). Like Kelley, he stresses the currency of Donnelly legend, and garnishes his history with folklore:

Johnny did not see the blow fall. Local legend says the spade decapitated its victim, and that until the end of his days one of the Vigilants was known by the nickname "Spadey". (178)

His entire final chapter is a pastiche of anecdotes, reminiscences, and hearsay. Like Kelley, he embellishes scenes for which historical documentation does exist: there is no evidence that the Vigilants beat William's stallion on the night of February 3-4, (179), that they vandalized the Donnelly home on the occasion of the cow trespass (153-154), that James Feeheley left his overcoat behind on the night of February 3-4 as a pretext for asking the Donnellys to leave their door unlocked (225). Miller even follows Kelley into several small erroneous details: James Donnelly Sr. was a fugitive for one year, not two (Miller, 47, cf. Kelley, 35-37), and William Donnelly was born not in Ireland but in Canada (Miller, 34, cf. Kelley, 17). Like Kelley, Miller comments with gusto, and in his own voice, directing his reader's response:

The rest of the letter [one of Margret Thompson's to William Donnelly] is sheer tragedy--the desperate cry of a woman abused and loveless, held actual prisoner by her own family. (76)

Like Kelley attempting realism, he appeals to his readers' tourist instinct with descriptions of the Biddulph present-day locale (148). Like Kelley, he begins each chapter with an epigraph--not from an "Old Song" as does Kelley, but from a variety of English literature, as if to underline superior knowledge. And like Kelley, he enhances the sense of authenticity by direct reference to and extensive quotation from newspaper accounts of the period--in some cases items also used by Kelley, like the Lucanite interview (196) and a threatening letter to William Donnelly (197; from the Advertiser of February 18, 1880).

If Miller's techniques are exactly those of Kelley, Miller's real advantage over Kelley lies in the reputation of his book for historical accuracy.⁹ His sources, in the possession of the University of Western Ontario's Regional Collection, include newspaper transcripts (among others items from the London Free Press and the Advertiser, the Toronto Mail and Globe, the Huron Signal, St. Marys Argus, and Parkhill Gazette); miscellaneous legal documents concerning Biddulph criminal cases of the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s; transcripts of the Donnelly inquiries and the preliminary hearings; correspondence among the Crown prosecutors; selected transcripts from the diaries of William Porte; and a collection of reminiscences communicated to Miller by persons claiming to be personally familiar with the Donnelly feud.¹⁰ His quotation from these sources is voluminous--as much as a page or more at a time (140-41, 121-22, 213-17). An advantage of this practice is that his book has much of the flavour of the era. Thus readers are given, for instance, a first-hand experience of the 1880 press: The following item from the London Free Press is given in its entirety, including the three-decker Victorian headline:

The Northern Ku-Klux
 Diabolical Outrages Near Lucan
 Narrow Escape of an Express Train-
 A Stage Coach Sawn in Pieces.... (91)

It might be in fact argued that, in his eagerness to demonstrate conclusively that he writes palpable history and not Kelley-like fiction, Miller offers so massive a collection of source materials that his book is buried by them. The book seems to be less an organized history than a preliminary survey of source materials:

For some unknown reason the diarist [William Porte] made no reference to the two attempts to fire the Queen's Hotel in June, although both incidents were played up in the Free Press. (113)

A large part of Miller's purpose is to demonstrate that the Donnellys were in fact no less violent than many of their Biddulph neighbours, but once this aim is granted it provides the rationale for including in the narrative any Biddulph criminal activity whatever, regardless of its direct relevance to the Donnelly story. The murder of John Regan (Chapter XIX), the quarrel of Edward Ryan with Patrick Sullivan (135), and the murder of James Howe by Charles Kent (Chapter XVII) are examples of episodes included, so it would seem, simply because they happen to be mentioned in Miller's sources.

The narrator himself appears as a character in the book--as polemicist and personal lecturer on Biddulph history, and also as a sleuth, diligent but fallible. Readers follow on searches and researches through this winding, uncompleted maze of source material. They share the heroic author-protagonist's triumphant breakthrough discoveries ("Some years ago I discovered certification of the legend in a place remote from the Biddulph scene..."[237]), and his dead-end disappointments:

A diligent search of the remaining newspapers of the period has failed to reveal a single other statement with respect to this killing, the fourth Biddulph killing in four years. (52)

For subsequent makers of Donnelly fictions, probably Miller's most important achievement is the rediscovery of the romance of William Donnelly with Margret Thompson. Here in the archetypal triangle of demure maiden, rash young lover, and irate resistant father, Miller has found for the Donnelly story that most essential of ingredients, the romantic heroine; the 1880 press had plenty of sacrificial female victims in the Donnelly story, but none of them of any romantic interest.

In opposing Kelley's notion that the Donnellys were the sole cause of their own troubles, Miller must explain why, then, if they were not in fact wicked, their neighbours came to kill them. His answer involves several theses. These are that the Biddulph troubles were a feud which began in Ireland in 1766 with the execution of a Catholic priest; that members of two Roman Catholic secret societies who took opposing sides in the case emigrated to Biddulph where they continued their animosity; that their feud was also between Catholics who hated Protestants, and Catholics who did not; and that the other issue in their feud was political--Conservative Catholics versus those who voted Reform. Because of the wide credence enjoyed by The Donnellys Must Die, it is worthwhile to examine these theses rather closely.

For Miller, the single event most responsible for the Biddulph feud is the execution of Father Nicholas Sheehy in 1766. Because Sheehy allegedly discouraged anti-Anglo-Irish and anti-English sentiments, his execution caused dissension between moderates and the violent Catholic Whiteboy agitators. The Sheehy case is fairly well-known to

writers on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish history.¹¹ What makes unconvincing Miller's argument for a Sheehy influence is not so much implausibility as lack of evidence. The sole item of direct evidence is a sentence from the London Free Press of March 28, 1879, which refers to "the 18th instant, commonly known as Sheelah's Day in Tipperary" (142). Miller is forced to acknowledge that both the date and the name are wrong, and cannot explain satisfactorily why the Biddulph correspondent for the Free Press would be unfamiliar with what is allegedly a day of definitive importance in Biddulph. As indirect evidence in support of the Sheehy connection, Miller tries to show that "in later years of the Canadian feud, disorders tended to reach annual climaxes in mid-March on the anniversary of Father Sheehy's execution" (24). However, he is reduced to noting events which occur, not on the famous Sheehy's Day, but during Sheehy's month. Even this involves considerable straining:

In March, the month of Father Sheehy's execution, there were two more violent deaths among the Tipperary families, one by design, one by accident. A young man named Shea was accidentally killed by his uncle when the latter's axe flew off its shaft and buried itself in the victim's heart. A Tipperary man named Gleason was murdered near the village of Garranbrook in another township. (43)

Miller's other tactics in defence of Sheehy are gratuitous repetition--

By the anniversary of Sheehy's Day in 1881 the carefully-forged chain [of Vigilant solidarity] had snapped and the Committee had to deal with the defection of two members (226)--

enthusiastic overstatement--

We are permitted two tantalizingly brief glimpses of evidence that incontrovertibly tie the 'Biddulph Horror' to the 'Tipperary Terror' (202)--

and the circular argument that the very lack of evidence is proof in itself of a deliberate attempt by Biddulphers to obscure public

knowledge of the origin of their feud (203). Overall, Miller's thesis does not convince.

His second historical argument is that two of the Irish-Catholic secret societies active in Sheehy's Tipperary were transported to Biddulph. The Vigilants of Biddulph he labels "Whiteboys", and links them to the well-known Whiteboy movement in Ireland which was, says Miller, "quite simply, anti-Protestant, and anti-landlord" (25). However, the author of a recent book about Irish faction fighters, Patrick O'Donnell, finds that the Whiteboys were "opposed to eviction, low wages, and tithes";¹² he does not find that their motivations were specifically religious. In any case, Miller admits that there is no mention of the "Whiteboys" anywhere in his Canadian sources. He does find a Free Press reporter's interview (June 24, 1880), in which William Donnelly mentions on the wall of an anti-Donnelly Biddulpher a sign proclaiming "No More Water for Blackfeet..." Miller assumes from the colour contrast that the reference was to a pro-Protestant secret society active in Biddulph and opposed to an anti-Protestant Biddulph Whiteboy society. In fact, there was a Tipperary faction known as the Blackfeet; but they were not pro-Protestant. Their targets, says O'Donnell, were exactly those of the Whiteboys--eviction, low wages, and tithes.

Miller conveniently omits what follows immediately in that interview with William Donnelly. "What is meant by the Blackfeets, Bill?" the reporter asks, and Donnelly replies, "I don't know, unless it is to distinguish those who belong to the Vigilant Committee from those who don't." A subsequent letter-writer to the Free Press (June 29, 1880) charges that Donnelly Sr. was in fact a member in Tipperary of a

Blackfeet faction who opposed a Whitefeet faction, and that William must surely have known that. Miller's argument would be that William, like all other Biddulphers, was denying knowledge in order to obscure the feud's true origins; but if that were the case, William would of course not have mentioned that tell-tale sign at all, and neither would another Biddulpher have written to publicize that "secret" origin. In the 1880 press, the notion that the Irish continued in Canada specific old-world battles is treated as a jocular cliché of indeterminate truth, and this is perhaps the proper spirit in which to regard it, in terms of the Biddulph story at any rate:

A gentleman in Toronto asked us when the row first commenced [a row over the firing of Samuel Everett, not the Donnelly feud]. We could not inform him of the precise day, but we thought that it first originated in Tipperary about two hundred years ago at a fair, and that whiskey and blighted love made the commencement. (Free Press, May 10, 1879)

Miller's third historical thesis is that the Donnellys and their minority faction were Protestant sympathizers, the Vigilants violently anti-Protestant (26-27). Although Miller offers no documentation, it is true historically that the Donnellys are friendly with many Protestants--William Porte, Mitchell Haskett, John Kent, William Pratt; Jennie and Patrick marry Protestants. But that in itself is not unusual for Biddulph. John Connolly, their implacable enemy, is also on the best of terms with Protestants. While Robert McCormack is killed by Thomas Harlton and his Protestant friends, the motive is obscure; there is nothing to indicate that it is or is not religious in nature. The attack on Andrew Keefe's tavern in 1857 is an attack by Conservatives upon Reformers at a time when religious and political boundaries coincided rather closely, as they do not in later Biddulph history.

There are very occasionally religiously-slanted insults offered in the heat of argument: a witness to a row in September of 1882 reports, "I heard [Hugh] Toomey dragging John Kent and saying, 'You Orange son of _____, I will kick the _____ out of you'".¹³ But that is certainly not to say that a large body of Catholic Biddulphers would have so resented Protestant-leaning Donnellys that they would have killed for that reason.

Miller's fourth thesis is that the feud was nurtured by political as well as religious animosities. He argues that the Donnellys voted consistently for the Reform party and so angered the majority of Biddulph Catholics who voted Conservative (114, for example). The relationship between religion and political allegiance in nineteenth-century Canada and Ontario is a broad and complicated subject, especially after the 1854 political re-alignment. Fortunately, we can confine ourselves here to the politics of Biddulph township. In the post-Confederation period, the period most pertinent to the Donnelly murders, election returns for both Dominion and provincial elections, as reported in Sessional Papers,¹⁴ reveal that the Irish Protestants of Lucan and of the concessions always vote Conservative by a wide margin. But--from Confederation until the Donnelly murders, the Catholic vote is predominantly Liberal.

In the 1878 Dominion election, according to Miller, the Vigilants spread the sinister warning, "Vote Coughlin or your barns burn" (134); the Donnellys heroically defy them, and "for this reason, and for no other" (134) the Vigilants decide upon their extermination. Miller's emphatic diction draws attention to the fact that here is what might (loosely speaking) be called the Aristotelian turning point of Miller's

plot. But the returns reveal that in the Catholic ward in that election the vote is 79-40 for the Liberals--this although the Conservative candidate, Timothy Coughlin, is himself a Catholic and is married to a Biddulph Catholic woman.¹⁵ Even within the Vigilant Committee there is no unanimity: William Casey, the Vigilants' nominee for magistrate, votes consistently Liberal.¹⁶ The boundaries are not at all clear-cut; the Donnellys' friend Andrew Keefe, for instance, campaigns for the Conservatives.¹⁷ Furthermore, the secret ballot came into effect in both Dominion and Ontario provincial elections, in 1875,¹⁸ and this would have made the Vigilant program of intimidation suggested by Miller less effective although not impossible.

Occasionally in the heat of political meetings, disagreements lead to physical hassles, as in 1871 at the Cedar Swamp School where rival candidates for the Legislature address the assembled: "After some pulling of hair and naughty words, order once more reigned in Warsaw...Probably neither side gained or lost a vote" (St. Marys Argus, Mar. 10, 1871). But the usual tone of political life in later-nineteenth-century Biddulph is not murderous. The 1857 riot at Keefe's tavern is very early, and seems not to have been repeated in degree. A few days before that 1878 Dominion election, both Coughlin and his Reform opponent appear at a St. Patrick's church social where there is a friendly mini-election; picnicking voters paying ten cents each to charity to vote for their candidate, with the winner receiving a ring as a prize (Advertiser, Sept. 18, 1879). During Fall Fair days before the September 1879 provincial election, there is a tug-of-war contest--ten Grits against ten Tories. At a Lucan skating and costume party in December of 1880, two young ladies turn up dressed in initialled costumes, LFP (London

Free Press) and NP (the National Policy of Sir John A. Macdonald).

These are the kinds of events that typify Biddulph politics. For Biddulphers, politics is a serious matter, a matter of daily life; but it is not a matter of life and death.¹⁹

Whatever the historical validity of Miller's arguments, their effect on the thematic structure of his work is absolute. The title tells it all. The Donnellys Must Die: the Donnellys are naturalistically determined victims, not heroes. They are surrounded by a vast network of historical circumstance which determines their lives entirely. The Donnelly images typical of Miller's treatment are those of ironic victims. Johannah is a "care worn old woman" (155); James Sr. is "a rheumatic old man" (155), on the last day of his life doing ordinary things like writing a letter, shopping, picking up John O'Connor, eating his supper, saying his prayers. Even in his prime, at the time of the Farrell quarrel, Miller makes him simply a victim. He is evicted by law from the land he had cleared, and taunted by a leering and vengeful Farrell whom he finally kills, by accident, while drunk and provoked. Kelley's Donnellys victimize Biddulph; Miller's Donnellys are victimized. Only in the latter third of his book devoted to the prosecutions of the Vigilant killers, do Miller's Donnellys--William and Patrick--show genuine stature and energy.

When the Donnellys diminish to the status of sociologically determined bodies, their enemies in that enclosing circle around them become correspondingly prominent. The characters who stand out most vividly in Miller's book are their bad companions like the reckless Keefes and traitorous Feeheleys; Father Connolly; Samuel Everett; and the sinister, hypocritical magistrates Martin McLaughlin and William

Casey.

Those writers of Donnelly history who precede Miller--Albert Hassard, Wallace, and Alice MacFarlane--all came close to recognizing, and then retreated from, the truth that the Donnelly case showed a Canadian society whose judicial system was readily deflected from its course by public and political expediency. Each of these writers ended his own interpretation with a resolution essentially comic, with some version of "it all was for the best in the end". In contrast, Miller is squarely in the ironic mode which those earlier writers avoided. But in the Donnelly world seen as ironic, the Donnellys are totally contained and defeated. "Standing back" from Miller's book, we see a white body, the Donnellys (or rather a slightly off-white body: "It would be naive categorically to deny some measure of Donnelly complicity in the other fires during the period..."[116]), and this body is squashed between two larger and very black ones--on one side the violent and inescapable Irish past, and on the other the Canadian system of justice stifled and compromised by political power blocs ("I consider their [the Donnellys'] unavenged deaths an unexpunged blot on the Canadian judicial system" [x]). Miller's book is of that extra-literary genre, the polemical apologia, represented in Canada in the criminal sphere by Isabel Lebourdais' The Trial of Steven Truscott, and in the political sphere by journalistic encomia like Douglas Stuebing's Trudeau: A Man For Tomorrow. In the end, his interpretation is quite as unjust to the Donnellys as is Kelley's. Preoccupied with rebellious social criticism and with personally demolishing antagonist Kelley, Miller loses sight of those tragic, heroic Donnellys whose huge and theatrical vitality, transcending their world and their fate, is at once

the cause of their glory and the cause of their doom.

In 1962, ironically the year of the appearance of The Donnellys Must Die, following up on the success of The Black Donnellys Thomas P. Kelley published Vengeance of the Black Donnellys.²⁰ Again Harlequin was his original publisher, and again he produced a popular success which has gone through several printings and several publishers. "Canada's most feared family strikes back from the grave," the subtitle reads. The book's premise is that many of the killers of the Donnellys died unnatural deaths. The most substantial available evidence for this legend is the Christmas 1880 sleigh-train crash which kills James McGrath, and the December 24, 1883, interview of William Donnelly in the Globe in which he enumerates the list of unusual deaths of Vigilants and their relatives in the years since the murders. Kelley is aware of no documentary evidence. Although he quotes from Guillett, and from the Telegram of February 5, 1880, and from a "scoop" interview with a Vigilant's son, Kelley himself admits that his second Donnelly novel is just that--a novel.

Even more faithfully than its predecessor, this book is a Gothic romance. Here are a ghost haunting the scene of crimes against his living person (William Donnelly appearing to twentieth-century tourists in St. Patrick's graveyard), animal supernaturalism (on William's shoulder is a menacing black crow, his ghost-pet), lurid curses of the dying (Johannah Donnelly shrieks and prays that her killers will all die violently), sensational events on the stroke of midnight (hence the name of the heroine, The Midnight Lady, who every Saturday night at twelve o'clock leads a Donnelly assault against one selected murderer), portents and prophecies of future ill (flaming torches at the front

gates and scarlet letters--DK, for Donnelly killer--painted on the doors of murderers singled out for Donnelly vengeance), a high-born heroine of hidden identity and parentage (the beautiful, masked, black-cloaked Midnight Lady, descendant of a Biddulph black--Granny Bell the fortune-teller--and heiress to a Montana mining fortune and to the estates of one of Mexico's wealthiest families), a rich, powerful, lurking and plotting villain who manipulates a gang of brutal minions (Mr. Cyrus Robbins, Biddulph's wealthiest man who out of obscure hatred of the Donnellys arranges their murders without himself taking part), mysterious plot-ends left to thrill the reader until astounding revelations at novel's end (the villain hates the Donnellys because when he proposed to Jennie Donnelly she refused; the Midnight Lady helps the Donnellys because she was once in love with John Donnelly and had planned to elope with him on the morning of February 4, 1880), Gothic weather ("A heavy rain had fallen earlier in the day, a stiff wind was blowing, while black clouds that hid both moon and stars only helped to increase the darkness of the night. A gloomy old night at best"[94]), a servant-confidant figure (a wizened little employee of Cyrus Robbins, who, inconspicuously eavesdropping on his boss, learns of his plots and passes word on to the Donnellys), an eerily prophetic Donnelly heraldic emblem ("...a very large crow, carrying a violin in one claw and a bow in the other"[192]), villains driven mad by guilt or pursued to hideous deaths in faraway places (most of the Vigilants are instances here), a formal challenge and duel of adversaries (a horse race between The Midnight Lady and Cyrus Robbins' lieutenant), and a colourful, exotic, itinerant gypsy band.

To describe Kelley's book is to present a catalogue of Gothic

conventions. In a novel as formulaic as Kelley's, we are able to understand just why it is that the Gothic has been since the days of Monk Lewis so popular a genre, and why the journalists of 1880 trying to package the grim Donnelly history found Gothicism so very needful. Gothic devices are readily recognized, the reader knows instantly when he is supposed to be frightened or amazed. Gothic stuff is at once scary, and reassuringly conventional. Terrors and mysteries are packaged in a form which is itself not the least bit mysterious.

Among the pulp-fiction gore and sadism of Kelley's novel, there is one point of importance. The Vigilants and their leader are clearly the villains of this book--which makes the Donnellys the heroes by default. Kelley stresses that there is not a single act of Donnelly violence (178) as the surviving brothers carry out their campaign of revenge. The two Donnellys treated sympathetically in the 1880 press and always thereafter are significantly prominent in Vengeance of The Black Donnellys. Jennie Donnelly is the beautiful, blue-eyed "outstanding belle of this district" (22), whom the villain of the novel falls in love with. John Donnelly with his reputation for a genial and placid manner, has a rich heiress fall in love with him. It is in memory of her lover, murdered on the night of their planned elopement, that the Mexican heiress orchestrates the Donnellys' vengeance. "I only wish Fate had decreed that the three of you had become my brothers-in-law. I could have wished for no greater honour," says the heroine to the three surviving Donnelly sons (183). Kelley's theme is vengeance, and we have noticed how the revenge ethic is always ambiguous. Kelley's revenge-structure ensures that the Donnellys become sympathetic, in spite of Kelley's own precepts against them.

Standing back from Kelley's Vengeance, we see no white body. The squashed fragments that represent the murderers are very, very black, but the body which stands huge and victorious above them, the vengeful Donnellys and their lady leader, is a murky and ambiguous shade of grey--much the same shade of grey that colours the Vigilant killers in a diagram of Kelley's first novel. The heroine who leads the Donnellys wears a black cloak and mask and is named for the night, but her methods are virtuous and her motives pure. Kelley even offers a revision of that old claim about the Donnellys and horses' tongues:

It is said that on several occasions a group of men--beasts and devils, all of them--met at that old house to plan the awful atrocity which resulted in the mutilations and cutting out of the tongues of John Flannigan's stagecoach horses.... (156)

Kelley's Black Donnellys in this sequel are, after all, not nearly so black as their enemies. Kelley's reversal is not atypical in the canon of Donnelly lore. Unwittingly, Kelley in his two Donnelly books demonstrates that the actual Donnelly character has far more energy and complexity than any single and simple black and white fictional image of them can suggest.

Like Thomas Kelley, Orlo Miller was moved to write a second Donnelly book, Death to the Donnellys, published in 1975.²¹ Kelley was cheerfully willing to reverse himself and write a story from the Donnelly side. But Miller in his own sequel is still haunted and outraged by Kelley. "When I see a story as damn pat as that [Kelley's], I want to find out, as a newspaperman," journalist-historian Miller tells a reviewer.²² He holds fast to his role as iconoclastic defender of the maligned Donnelly underdogs, and proudly admits that in this book he is more polemical than ever: "Here for once, doing a novel, I can

let my bias show unashamed". That is, he transplants intact that ironic interpretation in which the Donnellys are victims, swallowed by a cruel society governed by self-interests. As in The Donnellys Must Die, the moralizing crusader-author shows through the narrative. "No animal but the human one would have done to its own kind what they did to Bridget that night", Miller lectures ([85]--the Vigilant killers have just raped her).

Miller reproduces from The Donnellys Must Die the journalistic short-paragraph style, the breezy modern language ("The music had stopped for a brief intermission while the fiddler and caller wet their whistles at the bar" 92), the popularized Irishisms such as Johannah Donnelly's "keening" speech on the death of Michael (35-36), the Kelley-like inevitable gore of the murder scene (84). He even uses near-identical diction, lifting passages from his first to his second book, only slightly disguised (cf. The Donnellys Must Die, 172, and Death to the Donnellys, 53).

By his own account, Miller's main purpose is to re-argue the historical authenticity of his first Donnelly book. The logical way to do so would be by doing further supportive research rather than by writing fiction. But Miller's solution is to put into his novel frequently and obtrusively a large portion of the source material he had gathered for The Donnellys Must Die. That is, the main technique by which Death to the Donnellys has been constructed is to build a scene explaining the genesis and significance of given historical artifacts. Thus in one example of dozens, we are given a scene (31) in which William Porte writes in his diary an entry which Miller had quoted in The Donnellys Must Die. The effect is curious, and the reverse of what

historical fiction usually is. Here is not an imaginative structure with certain source materials as a starting point, but a book about the provenance of those materials. Miller with the aim of "historical accuracy" has deliberately renounced his novelist's prerogative to transcend his sources.

What compounds the difficulty is that Miller is from the beginning defending an over-simplified, black-white interpretation of the Donnellys which must--in almost any historical research, and certainly in the case of the Donnellys--fail to do justice to the untidy and complex facts of real life. Thus, while his novel tends in one direction towards historical authenticity above all else, he wants it also to have all the moral certainty of melodrama. This means, of course, that the characterization must not deviate from well-recognized stereotypes; once characters begin to acquire individuality and interior complexity, absolute moral polarities crumble instantly.

Thus Miller's Father John Connolly is the stereotype of the degenerate cleric found in Western literature from the Canterbury Tales to Night of the Iguana. His shadowy parsonage is dominated by a grotesque and tyrannical domestic whose ascendancy marks the decline of the nominal master, in the manner of which Uriah Heep is the ultimate practitioner. Martin McLaughlin, Justice of the Peace, becomes the central Vigilant, pressuring Connolly into supporting the Committee, disciplining unruly members as if they were children, then outwardly sorrowful and sententious upon hearing of the murders he has engineered and taken part in. In that version of romance set in the American West, in cinema or fiction, invariably this figure is a rich rancher or saloon keeper or corrupt sheriff, who rules the town and district

surrounded by his leering underlings, until a hero rides in to depose him. John Purtell represents the crueller and stupider of those Vigilant underlings, a dirty, smelly "lumbering creature of the bush" (19). Perhaps the most important character among the Donnelly enemies is James Feeheley who betrays the Donnelly family. The traitor sums up in his nature Miller's version of the 1880 ironic world, where all is illusion, cruel and smooth deceit, where Donnellys heroes can count on nothing and on no-one.

Into the midst of these types of villainy Miller sets his Donnellys, with scenes of warm and friendly banter, and of tearfulness as the family contemplate their persecution. Much in the fashion of the 1880 journalists, Miller erects for purposes of pathos and sympathy tableaux of harmless, domestic, humanly average victims:

It was all so homely. There were tears in the eyes of more than just the Donnelly survivors as the boy O'Connor painted a simple picture of an ordinary farm family preparing for a night of well-earned rest (147).

Survivor Patrick Donnelly works for the Crown prosecution, with phlegmatic dignity and diligence, the type of the Hero's Good Friend in melodrama, a younger version of the Wise Old Man. Miller's treatment of William Donnelly is by far the most reductive characterization. He is duped throughout by Feeheley, and completely prostrated at the revelation of Feeheley's duplicity. Miller gives him no demonic intensity, no savage satiric gusto, no shrewd mastery of sentimental convention, no grace, no implacable energy, in short none of those qualities which make the historical William so distinctive a subject for fiction. Miller's method illustrates clearly enough what is irrevocably lost in terms of heroic stature when the Donnelly story is allowed to be

entirely bounded by the world of irony.

In sum, then, Death to the Donnellys is immensely instructive in terms of the relationship between history and literature which we explored in an earlier chapter. One aspect of the book is Donnelly actuality, massively detailed and documented, represented in Miller's novel by the lavish and fragmented display of small scenes built around an actual bit of source material. The other aspect is the Donnellys and their contemporaries as characters of the artistic imagination, appearing in Miller's novel as conventional caricatures and, apparently, deliberately so. The first is historical material uninformed by imagination, the second the product of the imagination when it has no material from reality to resist and give it substance. It is the task of the writer of historical literature to make a creative fusion of the two.

CHAPTER 6

FOUR PLAYS AND SOME SONGS

The first publicly performed Donnelly drama since the Parkhill creation of 1884 went on stage in Toronto and in several smaller centres throughout southwestern Ontario in the fall of 1973, and again, with some revisions, in the fall of 1974. Them Donnellys was a collective creation by Theatre Passe-Muraille of Toronto. It followed immediately a Passe-Muraille play called The Farm Show, produced in the summer of 1973, whose subject was contemporary life in rural southwestern Ontario. For The Farm Show, director Paul Thompson and his troupe went from Toronto to the area around Clinton, where they went about the community talking to people, helping with their work, observing, "finding out how people were there, catching their rhythms and building off that".² They wanted a play "filled with things that we observed and that they would like to say about themselves".³ The play was a popular success,⁴ partly because it was filled with a verifiable concrete reality.

Paul Thompson recognizes the problem in applying the methods of collective creation to historical, as opposed to contemporary, subjects: "You want to feed off characters but you don't have any real characters because they're all dead".⁵ Passe-Muraille had to acquire a sense of the daily life of Biddulph Irish Catholic settlers as they had done for the residents of Huron County in 1973. They examined photographs and

artifacts, and made a field trip to Biddulph. In rehearsals one actor, for example, improvised a scene in which he was a Roman Line farmer, his house and barn burned in the night, trying to rebuild and to guard his farm without knowing when the arsonists might strike again. Their own term for this rehearsal method was "texturing":

More texturing: we've given everyone a minor character to do from the time...Some scenes may come out of it, but more important is the thickness--to pour into and onto whatever and whoever we end up using. We have to build the reality of the ordinary people of the time. They are the core of our past we have to get through.⁶

I keep talking to the actors about texture work because one of the things that is missing in Canadian theatre in general is an identifiable base for the characters.⁷

No doubt this texturing procedure is a step in the right direction toward re-establishing a century-old historical reality. But that reality can not be recovered as substantially as that of the living world of The Farm Show which is still there for the players to experience. The Passe-Muraille improvisational method, each player contributing bits from his own experience, illustrates definitively a phenomenon which we have noticed time and again in our survey of Donnelly art-forms: in proportion as firm historical facts are unavailable, the unchecked imagination supplies instead familiar fictional conventions. Instead of using the actual historical characters as models, the players tended to act the characters according to how they themselves would have felt in the circumstances of a given scene. In the absence of models, says Thompson, "the actor has to come to terms with the idea and with his own experience".⁸

Thus most of the scenes of Them Donnellys involved situations indistinguishable from situations in the 1970s--Donnelly Sr. in prison and wishing he were home, the Donnelly sons loitering in Lucan and

committing a series of juvenile pranks, and so on. The wedding of Thomas Ryder included a toast to the bride which consisted of, first, an off-colour joke, and second, a shamelessly sentimental and nostalgic praise of the bride and of her married life to come--because, so Paul Thompson explained in rehearsals, both are standard fare at rural Ontario weddings today. There was a fiddler accompanist in the cast, Jimmy Adams, who (when not in a *Passe-Muraille* play) could be found almost any weekend playing the same kind of music in a Huron County hotel. There was a foot-stomping, hand-clapping step-dance number, a comic "talking blues" number, and at least one song contemporary in content as well as in style, in which the stagecoach competition provides the opportunity for a lightly satiric comment on capitalism which, while not without relevance to the historical feud, has rather more to do with modern economic preoccupations:

Well, here comes the story of the stage coach war
Appearin' before your eyes.

You'll see Donnelly and Flannagan set fire to Lucan
With the torch of Free Enterprise.

Now I'll have you understand that it used to be a man
Never travelled any quicker than he hasta.

But you generally find when there's money on the mind
A man'll go faster and faster.⁹

The music in this play was used not, as Brecht argued that it could be, to detach the play from the audience and thereby force their objective critical judgment. As in Brecht poorly directed, the music in this play made instead for palatable entertainment, easily absorbed and digested by an audience with a minimum of mental effort.

All of the cast members had read The Black Donnellys, and took from Kelley several scenes--Donnellys cutting tongues from horses, Donnelly enemies threatening a Donnelly friend by burning a playing-card

effigy of his house--so that players referred occasionally to their play, half in jest, as "the Kelley play". From Miller's The Donnellys Must Die, they took relatively more scenes--the attempted abduction of Margret Thompson, the shivaree of Thompson Jr., the hotel wedding brawl, James Donnelly Jr. biting the nose off a constable, Donnelly and Flanagan coaches colliding, the hanging of William Atkinson. All of these were scenes readily acted because the conflicts were mostly physical. Other scenes--Jennie Donnelly (instead of Patrick) urging her parents to move from Biddulph, or jealous John Kennedy Jr. complaining to his father about his brother-in-law William Donnelly--were equally simple because the conflicts were straightforward and the moods fixed and single. Collective creation, where each player seeks out roles in which he or she feels comfortable, can make room for many different characters, each usually a readily actable and recognizable type rather than a rounded character. Thus there was one scene each for Connolly as a wrathful priest, Purtell the village-idiot figure, embarrassed bridegroom-on-the-wedding-night William Thompson Jr., and Thomas Hawkshaw as an aged and timed senex.

"A play for people who have a hard time going to plays", Paul Thompson called Them Donnellys.¹⁰ How easily audiences could respond to the play in terms of things they personally knew: "The story of the Donnellys is like a shivaree gone wrong".¹¹ Although Thompson has spoken of the need not to evade historical truth, not "to gloss history...ie., try to turn it into a consumer product",¹² nevertheless it could be argued that in Them Donnellys Thompson and Passeur-Muraille came close to doing just that. There is popular art that offers the empty cliches of the day--the work of the 1880 journalists--and there

is popular art that takes those same clichés and turns them into archetype--the work of Shakespeare or of Dickens, who turn up so frequently by allusion in the writing of those journalists. As we argued in our chapter on the relationship between history and literature, the substance to fill those clichés comes from an intimate knowledge of the particular history, and from a sustained and articulate imaginative vision: the proportion of the two aspects may vary from work to work, but the maker of historical art can hardly fare well in the complete absence of one or the other. The method of collective creation, dependent upon the separate contributions of players, professionally adept at acting but not necessarily at imaginative writing or at historical research, runs into trouble with historical drama. Without historical expertise and without the fully-informed vision of a playwright's script, the players are left gazing Narcissus-like at the images of their own minds.

While the makers of Them Donnellys had no firm and inclusive grasp on either the historical or the imaginative aspects of the material, audiences were led to be similarly muddled. One review argued that the play offered a dramatization of "Canada's history" and of "one of this country's authentic myths";¹³ another that it was "that peculiar overwhelming of fact by fiction that comprises legend" and that it was an "honest portrayal of the infamous Black Donnellys";¹⁴ another that it was "solidly based on history" and was "pure entertainment".¹⁵ Informed criticism of Them Donnellys or of any work of historical art must distinguish between the two, and it is perhaps unfair to expect unguided, unspecialized audiences to do so. The play encouraged them not to. What the play really was, was a dramatization

of the Donnelly story as legend. Passe-Muraille advertised Them Donnellys as "A Big Wild Folk Play".¹⁶ Properly considered from this point of view, the collective creation method is seen to be perfectly appropriate. What better way to get popular Donnelly folklore than to gather a group of people who know a lot about histrionics and to ask them to perform what seems to them most vivid and exciting in the Donnelly story as they have heard and read it?

Thus the most fruitful way to discuss Them Donnellys is as an index to the substance of the Donnelly legend as it survives in the 1970s. It is not surprising then that William Donnelly becomes the play's dominant character. In an early scene with Margret Thompson, Will pretends to be Henry Morgan, pirate, climbing and swinging on props that are suddenly a galleon's rigging, as Biddulph becomes to his exotic imagination a tropical ocean rolling with storm waves. About to attempt Margret's abduction, Will jumps and prances in the sleigh in a frenzy of chivalric ardour. In the shivaree scene his manic fiddle music from somewhere in the dark outside terrorizes the newlywed Thompson couple more than the merely physical destructiveness of Will's followers. In the wedding riot scene he jumps down onto the stage unexpectedly, crouching and stalking cat-like and wild-eyed about the shuffling cowed constables. In short, Passe-Muraille's Will is a partaker of obscure Satanic powers, cultured challenger of rural ignorance and conformity, and romantic cavalier in the midst of rustic drabness. Audiences really were given some flavour of the actual William Donnelly. Unfortunately, in another scene Will appears at home in a washtub, bathing—a sort of comic Roman Line sex object; an actor's ego and his sense of a fashionable "scene" have gotten in the way of history.

We realize then that much of what appears as authentic Donnelly theatricality is only inadvertently authentic. William Donnelly happened to be very much a performer; so, by definition, is an actor; and hence what similarity there was in Them Donnellys. The method of collective creation exploits players' need to act: they create scenes, aroused by the existence of an audience, just as that deepest and theatrical core of Donnellys' being expressed itself most fully because of, and only in the presence of, an audience of others.

In the same way, collective creation also happens to work fairly well in the portrayal of Father Connolly. His main scene in Them Donnellys is a sermon exhorting his frightened parishioners to rise up and organize against the cause of their hatred and terror--the Donnellys. His black-gowned, righteously retributive presence resonates through the rest of the play. An actor given a free hand can do rather well in such a scene--first because righteous wrath can be a straightforward and one-dimensional emotion to portray, and second, because a sermon is itself a kind of theatre complete with rhetoric, gesture, and audience. Thus the Connolly figure in the play is strong, but not at all complex, and an audience gets none of the nuance and ambiguity of the actual historical priest of St. Patrick's.

A theatricality yet more extravagant shows in the treatment of James Carroll. In the opening scene of Act 3 a white-faced, black-robed Death Spectre wielding an executioner's axe appears silently at the edge of the stage during a pleasantly domestic Donnelly family scene. The Spectre reappears in the next few scenes, wordlessly, to the accompaniment of a Death Song ("Death came down the road today and he fixed me with his grin").¹⁷ Then the actor playing Death wipes off his

deathly-white face paint and becomes--James Carroll, leader of the Vigilant killers. Again, audiences get no sense of the actual Carroll--dispossessed in his own home township, accustomed to leading and dictating to men, determined to make his mark in his new township of Biddulph, fed tales of strong and successful but hateful Donnellys by his anti-Donnelly relatives--but the *Passe-Muraille* production does fix Carroll as the most legendary of the legendary Vigilants, as strongly defined and as one-dimensional as an ogre, or the Devil himself, in a folk tale.

The treatment of all of these characters is much the same: on all sides is a sense of stark and unambiguous malevolence. *Passe-Muraille* improvisation does not find it difficult to make destructiveness dramatically exciting for a scene at a time. We have already enumerated examples of scenes consisting primarily of physical violence. This suggests that one illuminating way of describing Them Donnellys is as a sort of satyr-play where both Donnellys and anti-Donnellys carouse and destroy with progressively less and less restraint. Paul Thompson recognizes that in historical drama the players "have to come to terms with facts and events";¹⁸ but in practice, he admits, the historical play "is more thematic than historical. You pick up a theme or an idea, and that becomes the focal point for what's happening".¹⁹ Audiences had little trouble spotting and relating to the one "theme or idea" behind Them Donnellys. It was patently simple: "There is little mystery here: the Donnellys are spoiling for trouble and somebody is going to give it to them".²⁰

Thus, early scenes are more prankish than overtly violent--Donnellys tie together the tails of a neighbour's cows or stand a

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neighbour's sleigh on end against the door of his cabin: In the shivaree at the end of Act 1 and in the stage-coach battles of Act 2 Biddulph's essential destructiveness is more apparent. Act 3 culminates in the murders themselves. In one sense this does reflect how the historical Donnellys were in fact so violently demonstrative that their every act, however jestingly intended, probably made others uncomfortable and resentful, and hence they retaliated, act and retaliation sliding uncontrollably toward murder. But Them Donnellys is really less concerned with the Donnellys themselves than with dramatizing and incidentally exploring the general human fascination with and capacity for violence and destruction. They dramatize two opposing forces--the Donnellys motivated primarily by love of spectacular hellery, their enemies motivated primarily by resentment; but the simple and controlling essence of each is that they are destructive.

While the structural diagram of the play therefore is simply two black bodies confronting one another, the structure of each Act is similarly elementally simple. Act 1 is a love triangle: William Donnelly tries to marry Maggie Thompson with the assistance of his brothers and friends, and her father the blocking character opposes. Act 3 is a hunt: enemies led by Carroll and Connolly stalk Donnellys, surround and destroy them. Act 2, which concerns the stagecoach competition, is a race, between Donnellys and their rival Flanagan. Each line is out to beat the other; the issues could scarcely be easier to understand, or the actions more simple and spectacular. ~~This~~ spectacular element explains why the stage-coach war was so appealing to the Passe-Muraille actors seeking something to stage (and incidentally why the historical Donnellys were so drawn to that world of coaches and racing, prancing

horses, and an audience of customers and competitors).

While the accomplishment of this play was to present the Donnelly history as a progressively more violent display of satyr-like rowdiness, the Passe-Muraille troupe worked in rehearsals to make one single scene an identifiable pivot upon which the structure of their play turned. This scene was the wedding riot, the conclusion to the scenes of stage-coach quarrelling. Here, perhaps unknowingly, they pick up that insight of W.S. Wallace who also saw in the wedding riot, a point of no return. The Passe-Muraille scene began with the happy sociability of wedding guests, proceeded through the constables' intervention and their brawl with Donnellys, and ended with the guests--the representative people of Biddulph--breaking up their party and blaming Them Donnellys for the trouble. In effect a series of sub-scenes, each a single mood, in its own progression this scene both summarized in miniature the movement of the plot as a whole, and provided a turning-point. The reversal of Donnelly fortunes from here on was unmistakable: the scene gave structure to what was essentially a dramatization of a series of escalating physical conflicts.

The controlling imagery of Them Donnellys is as elemental as the narrative structure: the imagery of fire. In Act 2 William Donnelly and Flanagan confront each other, twirling flaming staves in two burning circles which are the racing wheels of rival coaches and, simultaneously, weapons of destruction. In Act 3 when Patrick Ryder's barn is burned, Ryder holds aloft a flaming timber to represent "the whole of my Goddamn barn, the roof and the walls just burning like a torch in the night sky".²¹ The opposite and benevolent aspect of fire occurs in one of those scenes of Donnelly domestic life which Passe-Muraille used

occasionally to counterpoint their much more frequent scenes of violence, and which in rehearsals they found relatively easy to work up because everyone is to some extent personally familiar with family loves and quarrels. While the Donnelly sons on one side of the stage argue over a neglected harness, on the other side of the stage their father, imprisoned in Kingston, appears under a strong spotlight. He sings a plaintive and wistful song ("Seven long years behind these cell walls/ With only one candle to light me till morning").²² He thinks of candles lit in the warm Roman Line cabin and ponders--"I wonder how many will light my way home". In their evocation of arsonists' torches and of the welcoming candles of a family kitchen (candles which represent the family warmth and security which, ironically, the flames of destruction are intended to protect), the *Passe-Muraille* production presents in concentrated form one of the most basic conflicts of the play.

Seen in large and from a distance, then, a collective creation such as *Them Donnellys* is as clear and firm in its structure as a folk tale. Similarly, each individual scene is fairly simple, controlled by readily recognizable popular conventions, unambiguous in emotional tone, elementary in dialogue. *Them Donnellys* was deliberately popular in its moods and structures, but largely empty of the actual history which could help to give those wonderfully simple structures imaginatively satisfying substance.

In April, 1974, Theatre London in London, Ontario, premiered a play^o called *The Donnellys*, from a script by Peter Colley of the Theatre London company.²³ Whether designedly so or not, this play is one form which in an earlier chapter we have already discussed as a possibility for a Donnelly literature, that of the romance-spectacle. *The Donnellys*

typifies the romance form in a large number of special features which are readily enumerated.

There are many songs, most delivered by a chorus. The songs work to create narrative continuity across the long stretches of historical time and space. Sometimes the music seems to express the regular flow of time moving smoothly through the wild and various human events:

Months are going
Going by,
Wheat is growing
Growing high,
But someone soon
Is going to die,
Way down in Lucan town. (14)

The songs are also designed to be decorative and entertaining pieces in their own right, the way the Eclogues are in Sidney's Arcadia. Also decoratively stylized are several early scenes which are primarily processional--Irish immigrants parading off the boat with their luggage, trekking north to Biddulph, choosing farm plots and one by one dividing off from the main group in a deliberately overt set-piece of choreography.

There is a wide spectrum of moods--bar-room conviviality, terrifying scenes of torture by Irish Whiteboys and later by Vigilants, tender scenes among Donnelly family members, broad farcical humour, demonic gibbering and gloating laughter from Vigilants, nostalgia as characters recall a happier past, variously tart or merry scenes of Biddulph women gossips, theatrical harangues from leaders such as Father John Connolly and an unnamed Vigilant chairman. There is a large cast of characters--Donnellys, Vigilants, Whiteboys, immigrants, lawyers, jurymen, constables, Biddulphers, drunks and gossips. There is a huge

span of time--the Donnellys grow from children to adults, as children have time to do in Pericles, say, or The Winter's Tale. The time-scheme is much larger than that of a generation, for the play which ends with the Carroll trial begins in Tipperary in the days before Biddulph was even settled. "Follow us, 300 years/Will take you back to Lucan town" an early song goes,²⁴ stressing origins across the Atlantic and back in time to Cromwell's period. It is a virtue of the romance form that it can accommodate so large and various a display of mood, story, and character.

The play displays the romance-theme of the voyage. The Tipperary immigrants travel across the ocean, articulating the Aeneid theme of leaving a ruined civilization to construct a new and vital one--the theme in Canadian literature of Goldsmith and Howe and, more ironically, McLachlan. The play opens with a film clip of William Donnelly walking slowly toward the camera and audience across a wide and deep and barren landscape; at the play's conclusion he is shown retreating until he vanishes from sight across that same landscape. Here is a sense of romance's long distances to be travelled, and also a reflection of the tendency in a romance structure to return at its conclusion, on a new level of understanding, to the environment of its opening. Thus at the end of The Tempest, for instance, Prospero is about to return, ruler again, to the kingdom from which he was displaced; or--an example rather closer in tone to the ironic Donnelly story--Dickens' Pip returns in the last chapter of Great Expectations to find Joe Gargery and Biddy, and another child named Pip, and Estella.

Much of The Donnellys chronicles in the Donnelly lives the descent pattern of romance--without the subsequent reascent; for this author and

company find scope in the Donnelly material only for an ironic parody of romance. The initiating disruption of the idyllic consciousness of the opening occurs when Donnelly Sr., who has left Ireland to escape the brutal factional fights, is confronted by new Biddulph neighbours voicing those same Irish hatreds. After the Farrell murder there follow disorienting chase scenes, Donnelly pursued by constables across Biddulph woods which are an obscure romance night-world. On the father's return more and yet more offences are charged against the family by rumour and slander. In traditional romance, name changes--as of Sidney's two princes--symbolize ambiguous and unstable personal identities, and the same situation prevails in this play's version of a Biddulph characterized by mystery, misinformation, confusion:

Jim: Johannah, our eldest son is dead.

Johannah: How did he die?

Man 1: James Donnelly was shot while trying to fire the McLean's Hotel.

M 2: A bullet in the groin.

Woman 1: Lead poisoning.

W 2: Gunshot wounds

M 3: He was knifed in a fight.

W 3: Shot by a fire-watcher.

M 1: A pistol ball in the stomach.

Jim D: The doctor said it was appendicitis. (40-41)

The descent continues until the end of Act 1 where James Carroll appears suddenly and ominously on-stage--come from somewhere mysteriously beyond Biddulph as romance figures often do--as an ironic saviour of the terrified Biddulphers. The profusion of music and the processional nature of the scenes of this play make for a kind of continuity in which--as in opera--tightly controlled structure of the plot is not a matter of primary concern. Nevertheless there is still in Colley's play

a structural turning-point here. If the first Act dramatizes public nervous confusion about the Donnellys, and the second Act the organization of their killers, then Carroll's appearance at the end of Act 1 is the pivot for the plot of The Donnellys. It is Carroll who makes possible the Donnelly deaths; Carroll whose appearance marks the irrevocable reversal of Donnelly fortunes:

MARTIN McLAUGHLIN: We need a leader. Someone who does not fear the Donnellys. I believe we have a man....

JAMES CARROLL ENTERS FROM UPSTAGE....

CHORUS:...We found a fierce leader

Who all would come to hear.

They called him

JAMES CARROLL: (EXTENDING HIS HAND TO CONNOLLY) James Carroll.

I'll drive them out of Lucan...or see them buried here.

(BLACKOUT)

(42)

In Act Two Carroll by rhetoric and intimidation steadily wins over the citizens from the sway of moderates like Connolly and magistrate McLaughlin, until, like Archimago, he controls all of the drama's regressive action. The murders themselves are the hideous bottom of the Donnelly descent, scenes of dismemberment staged in gory Grand Guignol fashion, and followed by a demonic anti-masque celebration in which Vigilants gloat and guffaw over lurid newspaper descriptions of their crimes. William Donnelly emerges intact from that monstrous night-world, but in only a faint, ironic echo of a traditional romance ascent. He tries but fails to bring the killers to justice--the trial scenes exemplifying the unjust trial scene typical in much romance--and, as we have noted, trails off into the distance of historical time and space:

Will is walking away from the camera...Will is far away on the skyline. The sound of an icy winter takes over...as the movie fades out leaving only darkness and a wind blowing away into eternity. (70-71)

Romancers tend to stress their own artifice, and there are several features of this play which work to expand the sense of its theatricality. Some of these are related to romance, others are not. Certainly the frequent use of musical interludes has this effect. Periodically, the action of The Donnelly's is presented to the audience as the tale of a reminiscing narrator, Tim Mulligan. Mulligan is a stage-Irish drunkard but his importance in the present context is that he makes the action seem something long-past, colourful, archaic-- rather as if in the form of a ballad, that form so beloved of other romancers such as Morris and Keats and Scott.

(Tim Mulligan sits on the side of the stage and casually addresses the audience.)

T.M.: Well that's how it all began, near as I can say.... (12)

Narrator Mulligan reappears often enough, at least in the first Act, that everything on stage retains some of the flavour of a tale being told by this picturesque raconteur. In Pericles, the figure of Gower works similarly to stress that the story of the play is an ancient fairy tale or legend. Like the succession of musical interludes, the reappearance of the narrator draws an audience away from a sense of historical action directly dramatized, and calls attention to the fact that this is artifice.

The script calls for a large number of still slides and movie clips, projected on a screen at the back of the stage. As Brecht discovered so enthusiastically, the screen is an alienating device which, by providing the audience with another point of view commenting on the on-stage events, reminds the audience by its technological presence that they are watching theatre. Similarly distancing in effect (in the

London productions at least) was the on-stage presence throughout the play of the orchestra.

Yet another dramaturgical device acting to distance any sense of historical reality directly presented was the extensive use of a Chorus. Chorus members appear as a group, and appear individually as immigrants, pioneers, barroom patrons and dancers, jurymen, farmers. Beyond the episode involving Patrick Farrell (the quarrel, murder, James Donnelly's flight, capture, trial, imprisonment and return), the audience sees the Donnellys actually doing very little on stage. Instead, the audience is given reports, comments, opinions, about the reactions to the Donnellys from the Chorus. The subject of the play is less the Donnellys than the changing perceptions of Donnellys by those around them. As Nietzsche insisted in The Birth of Tragedy, in Greek tragedy the Chorus provides a foundation upon which is erected another higher and remoter reality, the reality in which the tragic hero himself lives. Much of the audience's experience of the hero comes through the Chorus which elevates, expands and sanctifies the action. In The Donnellys, the Chorus intervenes not to expand, but to obliterate, the audience's experience of the heroes. All we know of the Donnellys is what the Chorus tells us, and that Chorus is confused and doubtful and easily persuaded. There is no dramatized Donnelly reality against which an audience can measure the validity of the Chorus's perceptions: There is only conflicting report--by Chorus members who are variously constables, stage-coach rivals, Aemilius Irving, William Meredith, John O'Connor, and so on. In our chapter about private stories told about Donnellys by many people, we found that it was possible, by relating those glimpses to documented history of the family, to isolate a germ of

truth and so expand our understanding of the Donnellys. The concluding song of this play argues that

The facts are soon forgotten
 As you watch a legend grow.
 And the truth of all that happened
 I guess we'll never know. (69)

The Chorus and the host of narrators, obtruding between audience and any sense of actually dramatized Donnellys, ensure that the audience will "never know" any dramatized historical truth.

A successful romance, however extended in plot and setting, is unified by a quest-structure: the action moves through a succession of marvellously various tones and scenes towards a resolution which may be successful or to some extent ironic, but which is from the beginning implied and anticipated by the fact of the quest. The Donnellys ends with William Donnelly shuffling away into the distance, and a Chorus informing the audience that historical truth about the Donnellys and their world is unknowable. There is no strong central questing character, no informing principle to unify the whole. The widely various succession of moods and scenes is not resolved. Each is a separate piece of spectacle, each acting insistently and kinetically on the audience, each inviting the audience to appreciate its single mood and its stagecraft. The scene of the murders is typical:

This can be a dummy made to resemble the actor playing Tom so that he can be decapitated.
 Tom is dragged in by several men. He is beaten and bloody... The spade comes down on Tom's head with a thump, and decapitates him... The movie projection becomes blood running down a white background... (61)

In Cymbeline, Shakespeare has a character enter carrying on a pole the head of Cloten who has been killed by one of the woodsman-princes. The head is not a gory piece of stage machinery, but a symbol of the

regressive world which the action of the play is beginning to leave behind. There is no such effort in the scenes of The Donnelly's to expand a moment of staged spectacle or strong emotion into something significant in terms of the entire play or of the Donnelly history.

The historical Donnelly story has a great deal to tell late-twentieth-century Canada about the social, economic, judicial, political, cultural world from which this present one grew; it also tells about a remarkable, tragic family. Instead of expanding the minds of an audience to new imaginative and historical horizons, the makers of The Donnelly's were interested in the use of the devices of the romance form to concoct a pleasing entertainment arguing no difficult truths. There is little sign in the play of original historical research, little that is not instantly recognizable as derived from Kelley or from Orlo Miller: indeed, the song at the play's conclusion argues that historical research would never show us anyway what really did happen in our violent nineteenth-century-Biddulph past. Standing back from this play, we see a large circle (the Biddulph community) enclosing at its centre a body of some indiscriminate colour (the Donnelly's) whose outline shades gradually into that surrounding circle: there is no perceivable Donnelly identity. The Donnelly history becomes merely the occasion for a staged romance which, like the lesser works of Gilbert Parker for instance, packages snippets of history for the consumption of an audience conditioned by the tastes of their own present. Here, in the absence of history, is another "consumer product", to recall Paul Thompson's phrase, with all the conventions of its chosen genre unmistakably present, but unavoidably empty of significance.

In February of 1974, also the year of the Theatre London

production, a play about the Donnelllys called Boys, You Have Done Enough Tonight was produced at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.²⁵ Quoting the historical James Feecheley on the night of February 3-4, 1880, the title offers a hint of author Hugh Graham's intentions. He has explained that his motive in writing the play was historical fidelity to "not only the events, but also the speech, mood and mannerisms of the time."²⁶ For Graham, those events are simply "the facts as given in Orlo Miller's book The Donnelllys Must Die."²⁷ Many of Graham's scenes are taken intact, almost word-for-word, from Miller--the abduction attempt, the murders, the attempt of neighbour John Cain to prevent a neighbourhood tax collector from accepting an invitation from the Donnelly family to stay overnight at their home on February 3-4, 1880.

Graham calls his dramatic method "naturalistic",²⁸ declaring that he is "as much interested in the over-all picture of rural pioneer life as in the actual Donnelly saga."²⁹ Graham wants no obtrusive patterns, nothing which would call attention to its own artifice and distract from historical verisimilitude. His method might more precisely be called journalistic--although not journalistic in the sense of the 1880 press which, supposedly dedicated to reporting fact, revelled instead in such forms as Gothic spectacle, domestic melodrama, stage-Irish farce, revenge tragedy and circus.

Even in the Miller version which is Graham's sole source, the Donnelly history is so busy that only a few events can actually be dramatized in a single evening's theatre. Of the dramatists studied in this chapter, only Graham decides not to begin his play at the historical arrival of the Donnelllys in Biddulph and the subsequent Farrell murder.

This is a promising choice, an acknowledgment that the huge bulk of the history might best be treated by a dramatist in parts, rather than in a single evening's theatre. Graham chooses in Act 1 only the abduction, attempt and the wedding riot; in Act 2 the burning of Flanagan's stables; in Act 3 the flight of Vigilant trespassers from William Donnelly's fiddle, Michael Donnelly's murder, and the arrest of Johannah Donnelly by James Carroll; in Act 4 the events of the night of February 3-4, 1880. But Graham is nevertheless determined to get into his play as big a slice of Biddulph life as possible. He decides to narrate, not to dramatize, the rest of the Miller history. Thus we have characters reminiscing often and at length--Patrick Ryder about the Brimmacombe murder, James Donnelly Sr. about the Farrell murder, Martin McLaughlin about the Everett shooting, John Kennedy Jr. about William Donnelly brawling in a barroom, Tom and Jim Keefe about William Donnelly at a schoolhouse dance, and so on. Much of the play's length is comprised of historical minutiae purely documentary in intent. To select from among these events might make an organized plot structure easier to discover, but in Graham's aesthetic would be unfaithful to the plenitude of history.

The cast of characters is as crowded as the chronology. Every Donnelly is included except Patrick and Jennie (who are historically absent from Biddulph during the time which the play covers). So are most of their friends--James Feeheley, Patrick Ryder, and several Keefes, especially James who, deliberately antagonistic as in Miller's model, helps to draw community ire against Donnellys as well as to himself. Most leading Vigilants appear--Carroll, McLaughlin, Kennedy Jr., Thompson--but not Purtell, perhaps because he is too readily a

conventional figure, the dumb thug. John Connolly has two scenes.

There are many other characters who have lines in only a single scene-- John Cain and the tax collector, Tom Keefe, William Lewis the killer of Michael Donnelly, Bridget Donnelly, Martin Hogan, some of the Thompson family--who appear primarily because they appear in Miller.

Any of these characters could be made dramatically interesting and important; but Graham has included so many that he cannot spare time to develop a character and use him thematically or structurally. He cannot make any single character significant or distinctive because he considers that all Biddulphers were equally coarsened by the harsh environment:

I don't believe that any family involved in the strife of the Roman Line was free from not only pioneer rowdiness but also from some form of survival baseness.³⁰

The Biddulph environment, he argues,

...bred a violent code of behaviour that was sufficiently pervasive to preclude any clear delineation of its residents into 'good guys' and 'bad guys'.³¹

Here the deterministic notions of the naturalistic writers such as Zola, Dreiser, Norris, are carried to an extreme--all of the characters lived in Biddulph; therefore, all are indistinguishable from one another. This of course ignores any differences in personality; and it overlooks the fact that, after all, no two Biddulphers did live in exactly the same world.

This aesthetic theory makes it impossible for an audience to make any discriminations whatever among Graham's characters. Thus there is a scene where James Carroll and Johannah Donnelly his prisoner quarrel on the coach ride back from St. Thomas in January, 1880. Each is caustic and spiteful; each resents the other with good reason, for

they are two of a kind. Even in the scene where William routs the Vigilants with his fiddle, Graham's version makes it impossible to tell whether the Vigilants are trying to brutalize a single outnumbered Donnelly and Will's triumph with his fiddle is an act of heroic genius, or whether Will is a scurrilous rogue foully insulting neighbours who are attempting a legitimate search for missing property. Graham will not let his audience take sides; he will not even let them perceive distinctions. In the world of Graham's play (as in the world of some other naturalistic works--An American Tragedy, for example), where all characters are equally and only products of an environment, and no one need bear guilt, there is no possibility of spiritual growth through error to insight and hence no possibility of human grandeur.

Graham's characters are not totally brutalized; that would likewise be unrealistic. Among their blackness they show glimpses of white. James Donnelly Sr. is an unregenerate cold-blooded killer ("I killed Bill Farrell. So what?...I don't regret it a bit" [5]) and his wife Johannah fearsome indeed ("Do you want a box? Do you want to go outside and box with me?" she says angrily to obstreperous son Michael [19]); but in the same scene they are gentle, nostalgic lovers:

Johannah: I remember when we was courtin' in Clonmel...Why I remember Jim, when you took me down to your home in Mullinahone. There was a deep and gentle mist on an evenin' when the west was rosy.... (20-21)

Likewise with Vigilants. Patrick Ryder is about to murder Donnelly's but in the last Act, shortly before those murders, Ryder is given a lengthy, nostalgic speech in memory of his own father's life and death:

Pa had not been in all day. The clouds had come in the afternoon and the land turned dark under a heavy grey sky. I was just a little fella, and ma was huskin' the last of the corn on the side porch...Pat Kennedy himself got off the waggon real careful like and he put his hand real gentle on Ma, and he says real quiet like, "Your man is murdered. God rest his soul." (41-42)

Neither these nor any other characters are prominent in the play; the audience does not see enough of them to be able to have an anchoring context for such shifts in character and mood. Nor is there a strong narrative structure, which might also have provided some context in which such sudden shifts might portray a realistic human complexity instead of mere confusion.

It is significant that the play's most successful moments occur when Graham, abandoning his own aesthetic theory, focuses on a single character and tries to explore his uniqueness. For instance, James Donnelly Jr., historically perhaps the most dangerous Donnelly (brass-knuckle robbery of fruit pedlar Gibbs, stoning of Joseph Berryhill, and so on): Graham's stage direction in one scene calls for

...one of the first real glimpses of his face. It is a hungry, dangerous, unstable face. The eyes have a vacant stare. The effect must be mysterious. (20)

"There's something not right in him", James Sr. muses (21), but Graham will not take the space in his play to explore what it may be. And of course William Donnelly has moments of uniqueness even in Graham's deliberately monochromatic drama. He is given, for instance, articulate speeches much like those of his satirical newspaper pieces:

We didn't get to wear white shirts at night and have a merry time tearin' around the country wallin' and settin' fire to people's houses just 'cause they hadn't thrown up their breakfast when a Protestant passed by in the mornin'. (15)

But such moments are rare in Boys, You Have Done Enough Tonight.

There are so many events and characters, so little difference among them. There is no structure, no focus. This play would be rather difficult to diagram: it is simply a grey mass--the naturalistic Biddulph world--with several smaller bodies of the same grey--the

Donnellys and their friends and enemies--embedded in it. While Theatre Passe-Muraille and Theatre London produced dramas controlled by highly visible popular conventions but relatively empty of historical substance, Graham has taken the opposite direction. He offers historical authenticity only, refusing to permit the artistic imagination to give shape and significance to that material.

When Theatre Passe-Muraille produced Them Donnellys, the troupe had working with them a playwright, not to write a script but in general to offer one more voice in rehearsals.³² Collective creation must frustrate a dramatist's urge toward a whole and single vision, and it is not surprising that the writer, Frank McEnaney, proceeded after Them Donnellys to write his own Donnelly play, called Cripple. The pre-production script was finished in June of 1975.³³ Cripple has not as yet been performed. Of the works which we have studied in the second volume of this thesis, Cripple seems to strike the closest balance between art, with its concern for meaning and structure, and the massive, obstreperously complex body of facts which are the actual Donnelly history. The play shows signs of historical research beyond a glance at Kelley and Miller and the newspapers of February, 1880. The writer has noticed, for instance, the childlessness of Mary and William Thompson and then has proceeded to make such a detail meaningful; that fact becomes the basis for a sterility theme of much structural significance throughout the play.

The imaginative principle which is used to order the facts of the Donnelly story in this play is a version of the Narcissus myth. In our earlier chapter on oral tales, we noticed Donnellys acting dramatically--that is, using the people around them as an audience through whom

they could experience an expanded sense of themselves. The image these spectators have of Donnelly's is reflected back to Donnelly's as if by a mirror. Cripple explores the implications of falling, Narcissus-like, under the sway of a self-projection: because it is outside yourself, you cannot control it, and because it is a part of yourself you cannot escape it. When inner self and external world are so entangled there is no possibility of that reciprocal interaction between them which is the process through which each individual human identity is established. Cripple shows how this predicament is tragic. The Donnelly's theatrical exuberance gives them an heroic energy unique in the Biddulph world; it also causes destructive forces in that world to turn upon them, and so they are partly to blame for their own ruin. The Donnelly creative powers are "crippled"; as the title suggests; they draw their life from the evil they oppose. They absorb the destructive principle and are destroyed by that which, because they have fed on it, has become a growing part of them.

Thus in this play the Donnelly stage line is not only legitimate commerce but, probably more important, a way of "defyin' the lot of 'em...with that name [the Vigilants] thought; to rid the country of... printed up in big gold letters on the side" (6). The Donnelly farm is not only an act of authentic creation ("land I cleared, made grow, raised my 7 sons and daughter on" [7]), but also a way of provoking Biddulph reaction ("Stay where you are Casey," Donnelly Sr. also says, "it's good fertile land and I'll not be having the touch of your foot wither it" [15]). And again--William Donnelly does love Maggie Thompson, but is also just as much interested in using his romance to put the Donnelly stamp on an enemy family: "Thompson steals our land," says

William, "I steal his daughter--Ha!" (4).) (McEnaney here has made Thompson, the Donnelly neighbour to the north, owner of the lost fifty acres which historically belonged to John Cain, neighbour on the south.)

There is a Prologue to the three Acts of the play, in which James Donnelly Sr. injects discord into the friendly banter of a logging bee, and starts a fight in which Patrick Farrell is killed. Like Lear's surrender of his kingdom, like the murder of Hamlet's father, this event is what drops the Biddulph world initially into that state of tragic disorder. It is Donnelly whose violence draws the conspiratorial comment of watching Vigilants William Thompson and William Casey, "Time to start organizing the Faction" (iv).

The main narrative line of Act 1 concerns the love between William Donnelly and Maggie Thompson; the pattern is the traditional one of stern parent, trapped maiden, and youthful aspiring hero. The Thompsons Jr. and Sr., for whom Maggie is household drudge, are literally espousers of sterility: "No Blackfoot pizzle 'll warm itself in Thompson's flesh," they warn Maggie (15). Pathetic suppliant Maggie is the focus of the regressive forces of Act 1. The climactic final scene of Act 1 conflates the historical abduction attempt and the Thompson shivaree. Donnellys Will, Mike, and Tom burst into the Thompson home on the Thompson wedding night to rescue Maggie. Accompanying are William Atkinson and James Feeheley, the admiring comitatus often accompany tragic heroes when their power is ascendant. The Donnelly gang is in time to thwart consummation of the marriage. By bursting in when they do, the Donnellys have frustrated the Thompson passion for generation, but the Thompsons by disposing of Maggie have repaid Donnelly exactly in kind. The episode begins with clowning at

the expense of the hapless newlyweds, but the mood turns blacker when it turns out that Maggie has been sent away to a convent. As Mary Thompson tells Will gloatingly, "not even you can get her now" (26); Maggie has been sacrificed, an Andromeda figure whose Perseus is unable to save her.

Mary Thompson has called Will Donnelly "strange and evil" (10); she hates and fears him. Now Will proceeds to exploit their superstitious fear (much as we have seen the historical William Donnelly do occasionally in the newspapers):

Oh yes, Mary, a devil I am, yes, oh yes. See that boot--(INDICATING HIS CLUB FOOT). The boot--that covers that foot--covers no ordinary foot, oh, no--that boot covers the very mark of Satan himself. And my fiddle--no ordinary fiddle, this--oh, no! But a fiddle come from hell!...You, Bill and Mary Thompson...you who have prevented my marriage, here on your wedding night--I curse yours. With my fiddle I curse it! Your womb, Mary Thompson, I render it dry, barren and sterile.... (26)

Donnelly acts out the malevolent image which his enemies have of him. Like the historical William he lives most intensely before an audience. His fiddle is used not to create but to destroy:

Will commences to play a furious reel--the gang goes wild, dancing, whooping, smashing things to pieces. The lights lower slowly and the scene ends. End of Act One. (26)

Act 2 primarily involves the Donnelly stagecoach enterprise. As we have noted, the Donnellys use the stage line to enlarge their sphere, to make the world as far as they can reach a receptacle for their selves. Donnelly's cut Flanagan's coach to firewood, they race and collide with his coach. Then Tom Donnelly, a hot-headed musclemán in this play, rather like Hotspur or Hercules, conspires with his crony James Feeheley to burn the Flanagan stables. But there is much more here than the mutual tit-for-tat destructiveness of Donnelly and Flanagan in the *Passe-Muraille* satyr-play. John Donnelly is a chorus

character who warns his family, trying to resist catastrophe:

JOHN: ...Cut Flanagan's stage up--he's no Hawkshaw--cut his stage up, he'll react--.

WILL: Let him--!

JOHN: And then you'll react--and then the Faction'll have more stories to tell--.

JUDITH: Lies!

JOHN: More lies to tell--about the Donnellys. The Black Donnellys.
(30)

This play is structured about a recognition scene (II-7) in which Will Donnelly realizes finally the tragic meaning of the Donnelly lives. Will is engaged again, to Nora Kennedy. (McEnaney makes structural use of the device of a doubled heroine, for Nora the replacement functions like a resurrected Maggie). The marriage and fertility theme is continued as Jennie Donnelly, now married and living in Glencoe, returns home to announce the news that she is pregnant with a Donnelly grandchild. Troubled by the Biddulph feuding, she urges her parents to leave Biddulph--a scene which, with Patrick the pleader, caught the attention of the 1880 journalists. The old parents ponder; escape to the freedom and fertility which Jennie espouses and embodies remains a possibility. Then four Donnelly sons enter, joking about their suspicious enemies pursuing them now at the height of the stage-coach troubles. They act out an exuberant parody:

WILL GOES INTO A SHERLOCK HOLMES ACT:

WILL: Supersleuth McKinnon--on the trail of the Donnellys--

MIKE: The notorious Black Donnellys--!

WILL: Terrors of the Township--!

MIKE: The Lucan Ku Klux Klan--!

WILL: Never you fear, Mr. Flanagan, Sir. Supersleuth McKinnon'll get 'em yet. Mad dog Donnellys--I'll put 'em in jail....

MIKE: I seen 'em--Wicked Will and that brute Tom--I seen 'em cut a locomotive in half--. (42)

Here is more than boisterous comedy, for again the Donnellys are absorbing and reflecting back the images and diction of their enemies.

As the scene continues, James Feeheley enters with the horrifying news that the tongues have been cut from Flanagan's horses. William Casey the Vigilant leader has planned and carried out the atrocity, anticipating correctly that the public will blame Donnellys. Casey is able to exploit the fact that the township has formed the Donnelly image it believes in. Violent Donnellys themselves have collaborated to make that image, and now cannot change it. Will begins to understand. Here is the moment of tragic recognition probably absent in the actual Donnelly history, but whose inclusion in the drama makes its tragic significance the more satisfying:

Yeah; us--the Black Donnellys. Somehow--(don't you see?)--slowly--slowly--without our even bein' aware of it--that's what we've started to become--the Faction's foul lie--. (45)

At the same moment, the pregnant Jennie in a kind of trance has a terrible prophetic vision of the Donnelly murders--little Johnny O'Connor visiting, James Feeheley's complicity, Tom handcuffed, the Vigilant mob, the butchery and burning.

JENNY: (SOFTER NOW) Men:--hundreds of them--. Axes. Clubs. Shovels. Coal oil--fire: flames. fire... SHE BLANKS OUT (47)

That the killings occur first within a Donnelly mind symbolically reinforces the tragic theme that the cause of the Donnelly doom is largely in themselves. By the end of this scene Will realizes that it is too late to leave the hall of mirrors that is Biddulph. The Donnelly image which Biddulph offers them is fixed and is part of them, and cannot be abandoned by a merely geographical move.

The rest of the play is the working-out of the fate which the audience now knows must come, the tragic pattern of the progressive separation of the protagonist from his world. We meet Detective

McKinnon, John Kennedy Jr., and, most important, Father Connolly. It is from William Casey, Vigilant leader and prime maker of the Donnelly image, that Connolly learns of the Donnellys. The Donnellys have tried to extend their living space and their identity beyond what Biddulph will tolerate. This is pride, the prime tragic sin and also the prime Christian sin, as Connolly is only too well qualified to remark: "If only that proud family would submit" (50). Casey, the Vigilant chief and Connolly the priest are the rulers of the established order; William Donnelly is a rebellious usurper.

The first scene of Act 3 is the trespass scene, the culmination of the land theme which has run through the play since the prologue. The Donnelly identity has been built into the land. The boundary between Donnelly identity and their enemies' image of them has been blurring throughout the play; now it breaks down entirely, like the boundary of the farm itself. A huge Vigilant mob crosses the Donnelly fence; "The magic line is broken" (57). The Vigilants' destruction mirrors the Donnellys' own destruction at the shivaree: "Throughout the rest of the scene off stage is heard the sound of smashing, whooping, etc." (57).

Donnelly control of their identity, their image and their fate continues to erode in a sermon of Father Connolly. He curses Donnelly as a Devil and Cripple--the very images Donnelly himself has cultivated. Donnelly cannot control the image he has helped to create, because it has always resided in and depended on an external audience, of enemies. Connolly can take that image and fit it into the moral context provided by his Church. "The Donnellys must die", says Carroll in the following scene; "God will punish them through us", says Casey (63). The moral

codes are inverted completely: the agents of destruction now invoke God.

In Connolly's last sermon he curses the arsonists of Patrick Ryder's barn--the Donnellys, of course. The arson charge of course is groundless, but Donnelly guilt is none the less real in the Biddulph world for that: the Donnelly image is also the Donnelly identity to the extent that the Donnellys have absorbed and lived out that image.

In the last scene, of the murders themselves, the irony is complete. Donnellys invoke God as sincerely as do the Vigilants, for James Donnelly Sr. kneels and prays devoutly before he sleeps. The loving and good Donnellys of the opening scenes have never really ceased to be so in one of their aspects. Nevertheless they must die because of the opposite image which they have been assigned, have assented to and cultivated. Betrayer James Feeheley arrives to visit, pretending to be still a friend: he acts an assigned role before his Donnelly audience just as Donnellys throughout the play have acted a role assigned them by enemies. John Donnelly at Whalen's Corners is killed when mistaken for Will, in yet one more example in this play of disparate perceptions. His last words are a prayer to God, and again emphasize how good and evil, creation and destruction are confused in the image-building minds of Biddulph people. The audience hears of the other Donnelly deaths through courtroom testimony of John O'Connor; removing the deaths from stage makes an audience focus on the significance of the deaths rather than, as in the *Passe-Muraille* and Theatre London productions, on the merely physical horror. John O'Connor concludes:

I ran out and across the road to Mr. Whalen's...I whispered in his ear that the Donnellys' house was on fire; I shoved the door open; Mr. Whalen got up and told me I was dreaming. (75)

Donnelly lives throughout the play have been a composite of images dreamed, diffused and distorted by themselves and by their enemies.

Only two lines remain in the play:

JENNY: Come away, Will. Leave Biddulph.

WILL: No, Jenny. I'll never leave Biddulph. (75)

The central Donnelly, the play's supreme role-player, will never leave. He knows that he can never leave. Even if he does leave Biddulph physically, he will have with him the identity which Donnellys and Biddulph Others have created. While Theatre London and Theatre Passe-Muraille conclude with a William Donnelly glowering impotently like Timon of Athens, playwright McEnaney shows him possessed of tragic knowledge, spiritually richer despite, and because of, calamity.

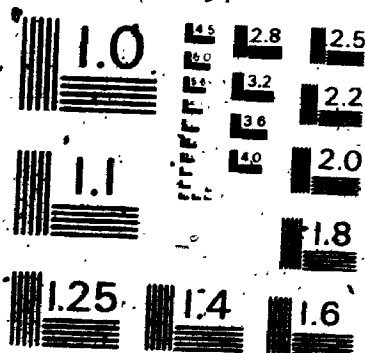
The imagery of this play underlines this tragic theme. In our chapter on the newspapers and in our discussion of Theatre Passe-Muraille we noted the terrifying duality of the fire image in the Donnelly story--the warm beckoning candlelight of a family home, the demonic fire of arsonists on February 4, 1880. In Cripple we have first the shining "big gold letters" (6) on the side of the Donnelly stage, an image of potentially destructive pride like the richly shining coach of Lucifera in the first book of the Faerie Queene. It gives way to a Donnelly arsonist's torch as Tom and his friend James Feecheley burn the rival Flanagan coach. Donnelly fire and Faction fire are of a kind, as Judith Donnelly implies when she recalls a Faction atrocity in Ireland:

The whole family they burned, they murdered... Even the baby. Mrs. Shea, they say she pleaded, she begged; then when the flames leapt--frantic, poor woman, she took her baby--her little darlin' baby--and threw it from the window... They caught it on a pitchfork; they roasted it. (32)

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In Act 3 Connolly is able to invert the fire image entirely, making Donnellys creatures of hell-fire: they are like "Lucifer, a son of morning--a radiant and mighty seraph" (61) turned to sin. In the final irony, he makes the Vigilant flames that destroy them an image of God and the good: "May a ball of fire descend upon them" (68).

In Chapter Two of this volume we noted Northrop Frye's comment in Fools of Time that Shakespeare's tragic heroes tend to define themselves by their public relations with courtiers and subjects. They habitually regard themselves as if from the outside, as others see them. The Donnellys of our first volume, of our chapters on folklore and on the newspapers, and of Cripple, seem in their own way to fit this description. Dependent upon the image in that external mirror, they are in the end victimized by it. In Cripple that external image which they have created is a monster which, like Victor Frankenstein's creature, and like Wacousta who stalks Colonel deHaldimar in John Richardson's novel, is in a very real way an embodiment of their flawed selves. And like those other monsters, it turns to pursue and destroy them. The Donnellys treat Biddulph as a theatre in and through which to express the fullness of their own selves--much as the entire universe is sometimes thought of as the product of God's desire to express His own Self. Their exuberant, creative strength is the source of their stature, and of their downfall. Cripple shows that from this point of view the Donnellys are tragic.

All of the writers discussed in this chapter have set themselves the same problem: how to shape the Donnelly history into a single, stageable play. McEnaney is the only one of these playwrights to create a recognition scene as structural device. Colley and the Passé-Muraille

people use a point of reversal--in Colley the mere appearance of James Carroll, in Passe-Muraille the wedding brawl. Of other non-dramatic writers, W.S. Wallace finds two--the wedding brawl, and then the Thompson cow trespass. Kelley uses the arrival of Carroll, Miller the 1878 Dominion election, Lambert Payne the Ryder arson. Aristotle also tells us (although he is speaking only of dramatic tragedy) that a well-made plot has, besides recognitions and reversals, a beginning, middle and end. Hugh Graham and Orlo Miller in Death to the Donnellys, are the only writers who do not begin either with pre-Biddulph Ireland or with the Donnellys' arrival in Canada. Some writers end with the discharge of the Vigilant killers; several like Kelley and Miller and Alice MacFarlane continue to recount further aftermaths, spanning varying lengths of time down even to the present. McEnaney sees the possibility of another entire play as aftermath to his Cripple, involving Donnellys in Glencoe.³⁵ The profusion of beginnings, of turning-points and ends suggests that no one artistic choice of literary structure can do full justice to the massive Donnelly history. With the exceptions possibly of McEnaney and W.S. Wallace, none of the writers considered here recognizes that there can be more than one beginning, middle and end.

Each turning-point in the history, each point of no return, can be seen as both an end and a beginning. We noted in our second chapter that from the point of view of tragedy the Donnelly history has perhaps four separate but inter-related movements. For example, the plot involving William Donnelly's aborted romance with Margret Thompson is followed chronologically by the stagecoach enterprise. Someone seeking in the history a principle of literary structure might justifiably

perceive in Donnelly's disappointment a suggestion for one turning-point: mere months after his loss of Margret, as if in compensation, he extends the Donnelly stage line to London and the period of fiercest rivalries begins. The material lends itself to such divisions. McEaney and Passe-Muraille have given an Act to the stagecoach quarrels; but the period could support an entire play, with the wedding brawl a possible point of reversal.

The 1878 conviction of Robert Donnelly for the Everett shooting is another such point: it is that successful prosecution which seems to have inspired the Vigilants' litigious hounding of Donnellys' from 1878 to 1880. The arrival of Father Connolly also permanently alters Biddulph. That last year before the murders could support an entire play or novel--or more than one perhaps, the cow trespass and the Ryder arson forming two structural points of no return. Aristotle said that plot was most important, but he put character second, and an artist focussing on that final year or so could explore in depth the twisted, frustrated, terrifyingly powerful figure of James Carroll; Martin McLaughlin the previously untarnished citizen and magistrate somehow caught up in his neighbours' blood-lust; Father John Connolly with his fatal capacity for self-righteousness and self-delusion. Miller in Death to the Donnellys has made an effort at focussing on James Feeheley. Cantankerous, ignominious Samuel Everett is marvellous material that might go unheeded unless an artist perceived the possibilities of narrower boundaries and in-depth concentration. In the plot that is the life of Michael Donnelly, Michael's point of reversal is the 1877 burning of his Lucan home: very soon he abandons the stage for the railroad, and his life thereafter is a journey down

tracks that lead to his murder in that Norfolk County railroad town. James Donnelly Sr.'s own reversal comes much earlier, with the killing of Farrell. Choosing to focus on that one life, one shard off the whole Biddulph history, some artist in fiction might explore the implications of that one fatal impulse on a life subsequently quiet and free of crime. And so on. There is the material of a Canadian saga here, like the accumulated tales around Robin Hood or King Arthur. The limits of what this material affords seem nowhere in sight.

One artist who has after a fashion attempted this sort of treatment in parts is Earl Heywood, who has recorded and published a cycle of fourteen songs collectively called Tales of the Donnelly Feud.³⁶ He sees in the Donnelly story a folk-saga. "I remember my great grand-dad told me stories when I was a lad, / Told me things in life that I had never known"³⁷ is how his first song opens. He has separate songs on, for instance, the love affair of William and Margret Thompson, on the Thompson cow trespass, James Carroll, John Donnelly's murder. Although his songs are brief and offer no new historical insights, the virtue of his approach is that, when individual characters and episodes are isolated for separate contemplation, we are reminded of what could be gained by narrowing of focus. For instance; his song that zooms in on "Two Big Brothers":

Brother Jim and Michael were working on their own,
 Brother Jim took very ill and soon he came on home,
 Jim came home and went to bed and on his death-bed lie,
 Kinfolk called the doctor in but Jim came home to die.

After meditation upon the ways in which literary artists with a fine structural sense might exploit the rich Donnelly history by deliberately choosing to limit their boundaries, it seems appropriate in

conclusion to examine an art form which can be used to put the entire Biddulph story in a nutshell. Because it possesses already in its music a means of structural continuity, the song as an art form allows for great flexibility in its narrative element. The narrative can deal with the whole story in remarkably concentrated form. Orlo Miller's first book inspired in 1963 a song by Jay Boyle which echoes Miller's title in its refrain--"The Donnelly clan must die".³⁸ Boyle's lyrics evoke a Beowulf-like setting of "cold winter's night" and "pale grey sky". Within that grey cold he evokes the demonic heat and light of Vigilant torches:

They fired up the house for to hide their cruel deed,
Then they left for the home of Will...
They pounded on the door, hollered "Will your
house is burnin'".

Like Orlo Miller and the 1880 journalists in those moments when it pleases them to evoke sympathy for the Donnelly victims, Boyle tells the spectacular horror of the massacre--and then adds a line of savage irony reminiscent of William Donnelly in some of his moods in the 1880 papers:

They handcuffed Tom as he lay in his bed,
They called for the old man too,
They brought out the women and they beat with club and stave
As the valour of the order showed through.

We have remarked before how reductive is the Milleresque approach which, denying the Donnellys their frightening flamboyance, makes them only feeble helpless victims. Nevertheless, the inconclusiveness of the Donnelly history--the acquittals of the killers--causes Boyle to end on a note of unresolved tension, of unexpiated guilt in the souls of Biddulphers:

categorical moral judgment permanently inadequate. Even Thomas Kelley writes a novel in which readers, however astonished and unwilling, must perforce sympathize with those same Donnellys.

Shay Duffin has a Kelley-inspired song, in which James Donnelly Sr. is a squatter and killer, while his wife urges each of her sons to kill his man as their father has done. But his song ends with the slaughtered Donnellys still abroad: "Close your doors and your windows and lock them up tight/For those crazy Black Donnellys are riding tonight".⁴⁰ And similarly the final chorus of Stompin' Tom Connors' "Massacre of the Black Donnellys": "The Black Donnellys ride; Their killers by their side;/Down the Roman Line till the end of time".⁴¹ Duffin and Connors tell of Black Donnellys, and yet in the end is that persistent ambiguity, with Donnellys yet in search of a retributive conclusion the justice of which no one would entirely deny. The Donnellys have an unmistakable vitality which transcends melodramatic categories of right and wrong, and nowhere is this transcendence more apparent than in those songs which tell the Donnelly story in its most concentrated form.

CHAPTER 7

THE DONNELLYS IN THE MOVIES

Among the continually-expanding list of Donnelly projects are several efforts at treating the Donnelly story in the medium of film fiction. One example is a very loose adaptation of Miller's The Donnellys Must Die, written by Allan Scott and Chris Bryant in London, England. It is their second draft, and is one of at least five tries at a screenplay.¹ This script in many ways marks a fitting end-point for a thesis studying the interplay between history, archetype and cliché.

Casting about in The Donnellys Must Die for ideas, these two writers notice that Miller's book has a pair of lovers and a conventional blocking character, the tyrannical father. They structure their screenplay about the love affair between William Donnelly and Margret Thompson. A vague passing reference from Miller² gives them the notion (for which there is no apparent historical evidence) that William may once have studied for the priesthood, and on this basis they make their hero the embodiment of Christian piety, kindness and courage. They also notice that he has a limp, and they make it not (as the historical Donnelly did) an image of the quasi-Satanic, but, reductively, an image of pathos. Perhaps they notice Miller's Patrick Donnelly, resister of catastrophe who tries to turn his family from their evil ways, for they apply this convention too to their hero William. He must deal with a family who, while not evil, are rowdy, and their own worst enemies.

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They turn the community against themselves and, finally, against peace-loving William.

Thus after a suitably spectacular collision between his coach and Flanagan's ("a Ben-Hur type stagecoach race," a publicist for the movie project announces³), Will tries to stop a fist fight between the rival drivers. He is nobly conciliatory toward his rival ("You take the morning run and I'll take the afternoon" [21]). He tries to persuade his family to move to Michigan. When his father, an unpredictable drunken sot, tears down the fence of neighbour John Kennedy's farm, Will tries to make peace by re-building the fence himself, despite the threats of Kennedy who would rather have it left unmended because it feeds his hatred of Donnellys. When a brawl threatens at a community dance between Donnellys and Thompsons who do not want Maggie consorting with a Donnelly, William intervenes with the suggestion that each family pick one champion and the two of them settle the issue with fists. The Thompsons pick a huge, cruel and leering family member; then before anyone can stop him, crippled and peace-loving William steps forward into the ring. He refuses to defend himself and of course is knocked senseless. But passive resistance triumphs. He offers his hand to his opponent and "Mick Thompson is obliged to shake. He is baffled by the feeling that he has been cheated of a victory" (46). And again, when his brothers get into a fearsome brawl with eight Vigilants in a Lucan barroom, Will who has been making tender love to Maggie behind the Donnelly Stagecoach rushes toward the bar to intervene. But hero-martyr-victim Will is set upon in the hotel alley by the eight enemies and beaten again.

The love of Will and Maggie is pure and sweet amid the Biddulph

nastiness around them. Walking together in the summer fields they come upon a quail's nest with eggs. Amid such pastoral symbols of fertility they worry a lot about the Biddulph quarrelling and say to each other such lines as, "Maybe we can bury this madness in our marriage bed" (25). Gentle William has a brood mare which he tends daily in her stall (a point of contact with the actual history); when she gives birth he fondles the foal with tender solicitude. In response to some relatively harmless pranks perpetrated by his rowdy brothers (they paint a neighbour's pigs green), enemies come by night and slaughter the little animal.

In the midst of such images of fertility it is perhaps inevitable in the late-twentieth-century popular cinema that Will gets Maggie pregnant. This is probably the result of a love scene in the back room of a Lucan funeral parlour. The parlour is owned by friendly undertaker James Feeheley who has given them a key. (In their first draft of the script, another re-arrangement of the Lucan commercial world is a Main Street brothel. True to convention, the madam has a heart of gold. She is friendly to Donnellys and even attends a bee for the erection of a new Donnelly barn, the old one having been destroyed by nocturnal Vigilant arsonists. "Erections are my business," she explains to James Donnelly solicitously [75]. The madam has been weeded out from the final draft.) The Thompson parents who have opposed this love affair from the beginning enlist the help of the Vigilants and of the repressive and peremptory Father Connolly, in arranging a forced marriage of Maggie to a Vigilant Committee member.

To decoy the Donnelly family while the ceremony takes place, Vigilants invite the Donnelly brothers to join their baseball team

which has a game upcoming with the London Tecumsehs. The Donnellys are suspicious but Will persuades them to accept, hopeful that this gesture of good will is the start of more peaceful relations in Biddulph. Just as the game has finished, old James Donnelly arrives and draws Will aside to break the news to him that Maggie has been married.

Still in his baseball uniform, Will rushes back to Lucan and into the room where the reception is being held. With a shotgun he blasts the wedding cake to pieces and beats Thompson Sr. with the gun butt. He makes a tearful speech to the cowed wedding guests:

...Don't fight, don't argue, don't retaliate has been my whole life here. And it's got me pain and humiliation and hunger and it lost me the only human being I would have given that miserable life for. MAGGIE IS SILENT. THERE IS NO MORE TO BE SAID. TEARS COURSE DOWN HER CHEEKS. (89)

Broken by a community which has no place for one so humane, Will wanders away from the wedding party, dejected, forlorn, dressed only in his baseball uniform despite the cold, "a small, diminishing figure against the swirling blanket of snow" (99). (We are not told by these writers in London, England what season it is in London, Ontario when the Tecumsehs are able to play baseball on the day of a blizzard.) Kindly old Mrs. Feeheley takes him in from the storm and home to his mother. But William has lost the will to live. He refuses to leave Biddulph with his family who have finally decided to accept his advice that they move away to Michigan where there is peace.

WILL: I'm not leaving.

JOHANNAH: They'll kill you Will.

WILL: They've done that already. (93)

Now there remain only the murders. A Vigilant mob marches on Will's home. Outside in the yard they beat a pig to death. John

Donnelly has been almost absent from the screenplay; now, taught by the example of his brother's self-effacing piety, he is accorded an emotional death scene. John realizes that it is William whom the mob is after. He stands in the darkened doorway and walks back and forth deliberately imitating his brother's limp. He is shot of course.

In the doorway Will cradles his brother, trying to nurse life into the dying face. Will is weeping and shaking his head as he mumbles.

WILL: John...John...?

Will bends down to hear if life still ebbs through his brother's body.

...

JOHN: Will...pray for me....

Will closes his eyes against the inevitable. John Donnelly dies. (99)

Meanwhile the mob has moved on to the Donnelly homestead where they begin the slaughter. Will realizes suddenly where the mob has gone and runs limping through the snow, following their tracks. Scenes of his tearstained face and clumsy gait and panting breath ("Will looks up towards the horizon. He runs onward with a kind of desperation.

WILL: "Oh Jesus stop them" [103]) are interspersed with shots of

chaos ("Bridget totters from her room, clutching the vestiges of her night clothes which conceal some dreadful wounds..." [104]). If he can arrive in time Will is prepared to offer himself in atonement if the Vigilants will spare his family.

But he stops short as he reaches the homestead and sees the flames. He is too late. John O'Connor rushes toward him and throws himself into Will's enfolding arms.

The fire is almost extinct now. The house is a charred wreck. Will stands in the ruins. He still carries the now silent Johnny in his arms. His feet transmit no pain to his brain as he walks on burning embers...His head keeps shaking, "No, no, no" like a litany that might breathe life back into the bodies around him. (108)

There is a brief courtroom scene in which a jury brings in a Not Guilty verdict. The camera captures a close-up of Will's face. "His eyes are

closed against the world. Hold a moment. Then cut instantly to black"

(109) The movie ends.

It may be noticed that there appears to be no motive assigned to the killers, no credible reason offered why they would want to kill these Donnellys who are only rambunctious, and certainly no reason for killing the totally inoffensive Will. The script offers no motivation. It depends on the tautological argument of melodrama: the Vigilant villains kill because they are villainous and live in a destructive world. The script opens with the camera moving slowly over a scene of Gothic, wintry desolation:

Primitive ploughs buried in ice, windows blocked with animal skin, stiff and hoar frosted; a child's toy half buried in a drift, an abandoned shack in which a few hens huddle. (1)

Then we see a man (who turns out to be John Purtell, the brutal idiot who at movie's end strangles Bridget Donnelly) who is sharpening a scythe. Demonic sparks fly from the grindstone and the blade flashes evilly. With this hideous weapon he slashes at a club-footed effigy. He slices off its turnip head, bites out a piece and spits it on the frozen ground.

The time of this scene is the night of February 3, 1880. Throughout the movie there are flashes forward to that time. Scenes show the gathering of the mob and their march through the snow toward the Donnelly home. The two time-sequences of the movie meet at the stage in the plot when Will wanders alone in the swirling snow after the wedding-cake scene. Caught by the building tension and horror of these intervening scenes, the audience is overwhelmed by the impression of Vigilant evil and does not question why they are gathering to commit murder.

Once summarized, this screenplay needs little comment. Obviously these writers are copying such commercially successful sentimental epherema of the 1970s American cinema as Billy Jack and Walking Tall, films in which gentle heroes are victimized by a sick society until finally moved, against their wills, to spectacular retaliation. Only tiny fragments of the actual Donnelly history are even remotely recognizable. This would be an almost tolerable loss if the script offered instead something besides a host of popular clichés uninformed by imagination--pastoral lovers, stern father, tyrannical priest, unheeded resister of catastrophe, wise-old-man animus (the kindly aged undertaker James Feeheley), meek martyr, pathetic dumb animal, victimized child, stupid ogre (Purtell), and so on. Cliché afflicts this script to a disastrous degree, but so did it afflict (to various lesser extents) the work of almost every Donnelly writer we have studied, with the prime exceptions of Wallace, Graham and McEnaney.

Although the actual historical Donnellys were killed physically, in a sense they have refused to die, for they survive in a body of literature inspired by memories of their huge, flawed, flamboyant vitality. But that overwhelming of history by cliché which constitutes the achievement of writers like Scott and Bryant is what may kill the Donnellys a second time. Against the practitioners of cliché must be the practitioners of archetype, artists who will study the Donnelly history and then apply to historical erudition a sense of artistic structure, characterization, theme, verbal expressiveness--in short, creative imagination. In a body of work created by genuine artists, a body still expanding and evolving, the Donnellys can continue to live.

NOTES

List of Abbreviations

Armitage-Stanley, Spencer, Papers re Genealogical Researches: ASP

Donnelly Family Papers: DFP

Glencoe Transcript: GT

Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Coroner's Inquests: HCI

Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Criminal Justice Accounts: HCJA

Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Criminal Records: HCR

Hutchinson, Charles, Letters and Papers: CPC (Clerk of the Peace Correspondence)

Letterbooks from the Office of the Clerk of the Peace, Middlesex County: CPL (Clerk of the Peace Letterbooks)

Library of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Judges' Note Books, Common Pleas, Book IV, 1881, Middlesex Special Commission, Biddulph Murders: Osler (trial notes of Justice Featherstone Osler)

London Advertiser: LA

London Free Press: LFP

Middlesex County, Clerk of the Peace, Criminal Records: MCR

Middlesex Registry Office, London: MRO

Papers Relating to Queen v. James Carroll et al: CP (Carroll Papers)

Public Archives of Canada: PAC

Public Archives of Ontario: PAO

Public Archives of Ontario, Irving Papers, 25, No. 12: Irving

All MS sources unless otherwise indicated are located in the Regional History Collection of the D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.

NOTES

Prologue

¹Canada National Topographic Map, Scale 1:25,000, Lucan 40 P3e, and Granton 40 P3f; also scale 1:250,000, Kitchener 40 P. Also L.J. Chapman and D.F. Putnam, The Physiography of Southern Ontario, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 15-23, 174-5, 198-203, 210-14.

²R.H. Dott and R.L. Batten, Evolution of the Earth (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1971); traces the geological and biological history of the North American continent, in language accessible to the non-specialist, but without being simplistic.

³Ausable Valley Conservation Report (Toronto: Department of Planning and Development, 1949), Part II, p. 3.

⁴Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Surveys and Field Notes, Field Book 59, Biddulph, Mar. 16, 1836; also Ausable Report, Part III, p. 2.

⁵Ausable Report, Part V, p. 3; also W.J. Wintemberg, Lawson Prehistoric Village Site, Middlesex County, Ontario, National Museum of Canada Bulletin No. 94 (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, printer, 1939), pp. 8-9.

⁶Wintemberg, p. 2; also Diamond Jenness, editor, The American Aborigines, Their Origin and Antiquity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1933), p. 130.

⁷For archaeological evidence of the culture of the Neutrals see Wintemberg, Lawson Prehistoric Village Site.

⁸Bruce G. Trigger, The Huron, Farmers of the North (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), p. 2; also J.L. Morris, Indians of Ontario (Toronto: Department of Lands and Forests, 1943), p. 13.

⁹Morris, pp. 11 and 13; also Ausable Report, Part I, p. 17.

¹⁰Morris, pp. 26-7.

¹¹ Clarence Karr, The Canada Land Company: The Early Years, Ontario Historical Society Research Publication No. 3 (Ottawa: Love Printing Service Ltd., 1974); a reprint of M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1966. P. 13; all other information concerning the early history of the Canada Land Company is drawn from this source, unless otherwise noted.

¹² As totalled in Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls; for instance, 1848.

Chapter 10

¹ Karr, p. 71.

² Ausable Report, Part I, p. 23.

³ Ibid., Part I, p. 33.

⁴ Karr, p. 71; Ausable Report, Part I, p. 34 says 1834; but Karr is taken to be authoritative.

⁵ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 30; also F.A. Landon, "The History of the Wilberforce Refugee Colony in Middlesex County", Transactions of the London and Middlesex Historical Society, Part IX, 1918, p. 30.

⁶ Austin Steward, Twenty-Two Years a Slave, Forty Years a Freeman (Rochester: William Alling, 1856); reprinted by Negro Universities Press, New York, 1968, p. 270.

⁷ Ibid., p. 180.

⁸ Patrick Shirreff, A Tour Through North America (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1833), p. 178.

⁹ Shirreff, p. 178; also Steward, p. 265; and William Proudfoot, "The Proudfoot Papers, Part II", London and Middlesex Historical Society, Part VIII, 1917, p. 21.

¹⁰ Karr, p. 81; also see Steward, p. 190.

¹¹ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 31; also Steward, p. 191.

¹² Steward describes this policy extensively; see for example p. 191 and pp. 275-6.

¹³ Again, described extensively by Steward; see for example p. 232, p. 251.

¹⁴ Proudfoot, p. 23.

¹⁵ Karr, p. 26.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁷ J. Raycraft-Lewis, Sure An' This Is Biddulph (Biddulph Township Council, 1964), p. 22.

¹⁸ A Report of the Trials at the Clonmel Summer Assizes of MDCCCXXIX (Dublin: Richard Milliken and Son, Grafton Street, 1850), pp. 219-304. The account of the incident is drawn from this source.

¹⁹ Lewis, p. 21.

²⁰ A Report of the Trials... p. 225.

²¹ Ibid., p. 234.

²² Ibid., p. 245.

²³ Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Surveys and Field Notes, Field Book 59, Biddulph.

²⁴ Census of Canada, 1851.

²⁵ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 26.

²⁶ Statutes of Canada, 1 Vic. Chap. 26.

²⁷ Ausable Report, p. 34.

²⁸ H.J. Johnston, "Immigration to the Five Eastern Townships of the Huron Tract", Ontario History, Vol. LIV, No. 3 (Sept. 1962), pp. 206-24; also Karr, pp. 106-7.

²⁹ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 41.

³⁰ Lewis, p. 22.

³¹ Statutes of Canada, 4 and 5 Vic. Chap. 10; and Biddulph Township, Municipal Records, Council Minutes, 1842-50.

³² Crown Land Sale Lists, Schedule of Sales in the Huron Tract.

³³ See diary of J. Eedy, privately owned, which recounts Eedy victories in produce exhibits at fall fairs in Granton, St. John's, and London, Sept. 21, 23, and 25, and Oct. 1, 1875; also p. 29 of The Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex (Toronto: H.R. Page, 1878)--the pictures of Samuel Langford's farmhouse and prize sheep--and p. 45--the prosperous farmhouses of George and Charles Foreman.

³⁴ Lewis, p. 28.

³⁵ Johnston, p. 217.

³⁶ Kenneth Duncan, "Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West", Can. Rev. Soc. Anth., Vol. 2 (Feb., 1965), pp. 19-40.

³⁷ Ausable Report, Part III, p. 5.

³⁸ LA, Mar. 7, 1881; reminiscences contained in an interview with James Harrigan of Biddulph.

³⁹ Accounts of husbandry in early Biddulph may be found in the following sources: the Eedy diary mentioned in note 33, and depositions in these Middlesex County Court of Chancery cases: Cain v. Cain, 1872; Cary v. Cary, 1873; and Carroll v. Delehay, 1883.

⁴⁰ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 34, and Karr, p. 109.

⁴¹ HCJA, 1842, James Scott to Dr. Hamilton, coroner, Oct. 17, 1842, and account of Morgan Hamilton, coroner, Oct. 20, 1842.

⁴² HCI, statement of coroner George McLeod, May 6, 1847.

⁴³ HCJA, account of George McLeod, Coroner, Apr. 1, 1847; also Huron Inquests, Inquisition on body of Michael McCormick, Apr. 1, 1847.

⁴⁴ HCI, Inquisition on body of Richard Courcey, June 10, 1847; also CP, Return of Inquests for 1847 in district of Huron by George McLeod, coroner.

⁴⁵ ibid.

⁴⁶HCI, Inquisition on body of James Atkinson, Sept. 19, 1849.

⁴⁷CP, Inquisition on body of Edward Kennedy, Apr. 1, 1855.

⁴⁸HCI, Inquisition on body of Thomas Shea, Feb. 28, 1857.

⁴⁹LA, Feb. 2, 1881: testimony of Robert Cutt. Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1880, lists the Cutt family as living on lot 26, concession VI.

⁵⁰HCR, Nov. 13, 1849:

⁵¹HCR, May 12, 1853.

⁵²HCR, Apr. 27, 1860.

⁵³HCR, Oct. 31, 1849.

⁵⁴HCR, Aug. 29, 1850.

⁵⁵HCR, May 18, 1850.

⁵⁶HCR, June 9, 1853.

⁵⁷CP, Jan. 22, 1851.

⁵⁸HCR, Feb. 2, 1860.

⁵⁹HCR, Aug. 22, 1848.

⁶⁰HCR, Dec. 15, 1849.

⁶¹HCR, June 28, 1851.

⁶²For an illustration of the practice, see depositions in Middlesex Court of Chancery, Michael Cain v. James Cain, May 1-2, 1872.

⁶³Lewis, p. 28.

⁶⁴HCR, Nov. 24, 1850, O'Flynn v. Dennis Toohy et al.

⁶⁵CP, Mar. 2 and 12, 1853.

66 CP, Apr. 4, 1856.

67 HCR, Dec. 17, 1850.

68 The account of this incident is drawn from the following in HCR: Information of Michael Ryan, Dec. 26, 1857; Deposition of Patrick McIlhargy, Dec. 26, 1857; Information of Andrew Keefe, Dec. 30, 1857; and Deposition of John Atkinson, Dec. 30, 1857.

69 HCJA, account of Joseph Lynch, Mar. 3, 1858.

70 HCR, recognizance, Jan. 16, 1858.

71 HCJA, March Sessions, 1858, accounts of William Howard, Henry Sutton, Jeffery Harbourn.

72 HCR, March Sessions, 1858, Indictment, with notations.

73 HCJA, March Sessions, 1858, Account of costs of Quarter Sessions Court.

74 HCJA, April Sessions, 1848, account of Andrew Brown; in other documents "Harlton" is variously spelled "Harleton" and "Harlington".

75 London Times, Jan. 2, 1846.

76 HCJA, April Sessions, 1846, account of Andrew Brown.

77 HCJA, July Sessions, 1846, account of sheriff Huron District.

78 HCJA, April Sessions, 1847, account of Andrew Brown with certification of George Fraser, coroner.

79 HCJA, November Sessions, 1846, account of coroner George Fraser, and account of sheriff Huron District; also London Times, Oct. 2, 1846.

80 Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1872-1878, 1880.

81 Register of the Gaol at London, May 28, 1877; also, London Police Magistrate's Minute Book, May 28, 1877.

82 The account of this incident is drawn from HCR, Inquisition on body of Richard Brimmacombe, Feb. 9-11, 1857; and HCR Depositions of witnesses examined in Usborne and Biddulph by John Longworth

and Isaac Carling JPs assisted by John Hyndman MD, under direction of Daniel G. Miller esq., counsel for Crown at Huron Spring Assizes, March, 1857, re Q v. William Casey, suspected of accessory to murder of Richard Brimmacombe, Mar. 21-27, and April 9, 1857.

- ⁸³ Ausable Report, p. 34.
- ⁸⁴ Huron County, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Huron County Court Attorney, 1859-75, John Hyndman to Ira Lewis, Mar. 12, 1860.
- ⁸⁵ HCR, Inquisition on body of Richard Brimmacombe.
- ⁸⁶ HCR, deposition of Patrick Flanagan at Longworth-Carling investigation, Mar. 27, 1857.
- ⁸⁷ Huron County, Sheriff, Records, 1841-60, anonymous letter to John Hyndman, Feb. 20, 1857.
- ⁸⁸ PAC, Records of the Provincial Secretary's Office, R.G. 5, C1, Vol. 544, No. 369, Daniel G. Miller to Provincial Secretary's Office, Aug. 29, 1859.
- ⁸⁹ HCJA, April Sessions, 1857, account of George F. Lyster.
- ⁹⁰ HCR, April Sessions, 1857, Indictment, with notations.
- ⁹¹ HCR, recognizances of Joseph Case, James Brownlee, May 30, 1857; also recognizances July 8, 1857.
- ⁹² PAC, Department of Justice, Attorney-General's Office, Record, Canada West, Correspondence 1857-59, R.G. 13, C1, Vol. 7, information of James Hodgins before R. Cooper, Mar. 18, 1859.
- ⁹³ PAC, Ibid., Cooper to Macdonald, Mar. 29, 1859.
- ⁹⁴ HCJA, December Sessions, 1859, account of James Brownlee.
- ⁹⁵ HCR, Cooper to Lewis, July 21, 1859.
- ⁹⁶ Register of the Gaol at Goderich, July 21, 1859; with notation of date of discharge.
- ⁹⁷ Letters and Papers of Ira Lewis, Letterbooks, Lewis to Macdonald, Dec. 22, 1859.

⁹⁸Huron County, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Huron County Crown Attorney, 1859-75, Hyndman to Lewis, Mar. 12, 1860.

⁹⁹HCJA, September Sessions, 1860, account of William Howard.

¹⁰⁰HCR, Indictment, November 1862; also Huron Signal, Nov. 14, 1862, which carries a report of the trial.

¹⁰¹Middlesex County, Coroner's Inquests, Inquisition on body of Patrick Ryder, Sept. 13, 1865--the same Patrick Ryder (see Regional Collections Armitage-Stanley Genealogical Papers: the Patrick who died in 1865 had a daughter, Rachel, the name of William Casey's wife according to the Census of Canada, 1871).

¹⁰²Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1869, 1870, 1876, 1877, 1880.

¹⁰³See a subsequent chapter of this thesis, "January 1879 to January 1880".

¹⁰⁴The account of this incident is drawn from Michael Helm, Civil Disorders in Biddulph Township 1850-1880, A Case Study of the Donnelly Murders, M.A. Thesis, Sir George Williams University, 1970. The manuscript sources for the murder are cited by Helm as being in the Regional Collection; but they have vanished--whether misplaced or stolen--since Helm's own research. The following details of the account are not drawn from Helm: Cain's widower status, drawn from Goderich Gaol Register, Apr. 12, 1861; and James Cain's age, drawn from Census of Canada, 1851.

¹⁰⁵Huron County, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of the Huron County Crown Attorney, 1859-75, Hyndman to Cooper, Dec. 29, 1859.

¹⁰⁶HCJA, March Sessions, 1860, account of Adam Hodgins.

¹⁰⁷Huron County, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of the Huron County Crown Attorney, 1859-75, Hyndman to Cooper, Dec. 29, 1859; also HCJA, September Sessions, 1860, account of William Howard.

¹⁰⁸HCJA, Ibid.

¹⁰⁹HCJA, March Sessions, 1860, account of Adam Hodgins.

¹¹⁰HCJA, September Sessions, 1860, account of William Howard.

¹¹¹Huron County, Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of the Huron County Crown Attorney, Hyndman to Cooper, Dec. 29, 1859.

112 HCJA, March Sessions, 1860, account of Dr. Hyndman; also HCR, recognizance of Judith, Margaret, and Thomas Cahalan to testify, Jan. 5, 1860.

113 Letters and Papers of Ira Lewis, Letterbooks, Lewis to MacDonald, Jan. 3, 1860, and his account in Queen v. James and Michael Cain, undated, p. 36 of same volume.

114 HCJA, March Sessions, 1860, account of Adam Hodgins, and September Sessions, 1860, account of William Howard.

115 Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Correspondence, William Howard to Clerk of Quarter Sessions, Sept. 8, 1860.

116 Letters and Papers of Ira Lewis, Letterbooks, Lewis to Macdonald, Jan. 24, 1860.

117 Ibid., Lewis to Macdonald, Mar. 4, 1861.

118 Ibid., Lewis to Macdonald, Apr. 24, 1861.

119 Register of the Gaol at Goderich, Apr. 12, 1861, with notation of date of discharge--July 1, 1861.

120 Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1862-66.

121 See the following chapter of this thesis.

122 For one of many examples of enthusiastic public attitude, see LFP, Nov. 21, 1859, at the time of completion of the Grand Trunk through to Sarnia: "The fact is a great one, while the influence for good which so magnificent an enterprise must have upon the material prosperity of Canada cannot fail to be very signal."

123 G.R. Stevens, Canadian National Railways, Volume I, Sixty Years of Trial and Error (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1960), p. 249. The more scholarly and definitive account, A.W. Currie's The Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957) has also been consulted; Stevens' book contains more information than does Currie's concerning the Grand Trunk's relationship to Biddulph specifically.

124 HCR, Information of Ephraim Taylor, Oct. 21, 1848, and depositions of witnesses, Oct. 25; also London Times Dec. 1, 1848, includes an account of this incident.

¹²⁵HCR, depositions of witness, Oct. 25, 1848, recounts this and the following threatening statements.

¹²⁶London Times, Apr. 27, 1849.

¹²⁷HCR, information of Mary Ann Thompson, Mar. 15, 1849, and deposition of witnesses Mar. 16, are the sources for the account of this incident.

¹²⁸HCJA, July Sessions, 1849, accounts of William Robertson, John Stoveman, and Henry Reid.

¹²⁹Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1880, lists only Butler and Turner of names that are recognizably Negro families. Page's Illustrated Historical Atlas notes a third family, Taylor, which also seems to be Negro. The late Spencer Armitage-Stanley recalled a few other families.

¹³⁰Stevens, p. 265.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 272; also Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, 18 Vic. 1854-5, pp. 941, 963, 967-75, 1001, 1029-32, 1041, 1096, 1156; also Statutes, 18 Vic. Chap. 174.

¹³²Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, 1856, pp. 620-2, 659-63, 678-80, 687, 694-702, 739; also Statutes of the Province of Canada, 19-20 Vic. Chap. CXI.

¹³³Description of the lands intended to be passed over and taken for the purposes of the St. Mary's and Sarnia Extension of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada in the Township of Biddulph in the County of Huron; a document in the Regional Collection.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵HCR, information of Patrick Hogan, Aug. 23, 1858; also St. Mary's Argus, July 29, 1858, which also contains an account of this incident which reinforces the statement of Hogan. More background is provided by a letter from William Donnelly in Globe, Sept. 10, 1880.

¹³⁶HCJA, March Sessions, 1859, account of Barber Regan.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

- 139 Register of the Gaol at Goderich, Sept. 4, 1858, with notations of dates of discharge, Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, 1858.
- 140 HCJA, December Sessions, 1859, account of Court Crier.
- 141 Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1880: James Ryder, east half VI-25, 26, and 27; and Patrick Quigley, south half VII-19 and northeast quarter VI-25.
- 142 LFP, Nov. 21, 1859.
- 143 W.A. and C.L. Goodspeed, History of the County of Middlesex, Canada (Toronto and London, 1889), p. 462.
- 144 Ibid., pp. 462-3.
- 145 London City and Middlesex County Directory 1880-81 (London: R.L. Poik and Co., 1880), p. 440.
- 146 See, for examples, LFP, Sept. 26, 1879 (Stanley Brothers ship eight hundred bushels of grain to the Maritimes), LFP, Apr. 20, 1880; and LFP, May 25, 1880. For notice of Lucan's comfortable commercial growth, see "Trade and Commerce of Lucan Station for the year 1863", in the William Porte Scrapbook (an undated clipping from an unidentified journal; a photocopy of the article is in Donnelly Family Papers) -- an example of progress only four years after the village's establishment.

Chapter 2

- ¹The inscription on the Donnelly gravestone, St. Patrick's cemetery, Biddulph Township, gives James Donnelly Jr.'s date of death as May 15, 1877, and his age at that time as 35: he was born in 1842.
- ²Register of the Gaol of Goderich, May 7, 1858, noting the imprisonment of James Donnelly Sr., gives the number of his years of residence in Canada as sixteen.
- ³As noted on the Donnelly gravestone, St. Patrick's cemetery, erected by the Donnelly family survivors and hence presumably accurate.
- ⁴As described in Goderich Gaol Register, May 7, 1858; the entry in the Daybook of the Kingston Penitentiary (PAC, R.G. 13, B12, Vol. 53, p. 11) gives his height as five feet four inches. For his age, as for that of his wife Johannah, the tombstone dates of May 7, 1816, and

Sept. 22, 1823, are taken as authoritative; the Goderich gaol register and Kingston penitentiary Daybook disagree with this figure and with each other, listing his age in August of 1858 as 42 and 45 respectively.

⁵ See descriptions of the physical appearance of Johannah Donnelly in LA, Feb. 5, 1880--"a tall powerful woman" and Oct. 6, 1880 in a report of the testimony (in the trial Queen v. James Carroll) of constable S.G. Moore who "thought that the other body was old Mrs. Donnelly's, judging by the length of her bones." And Patrick Whelan in the second trial, Queen v. James Carroll, describes her as "a big woman," as reported in Osler, p. 10.

⁶ That the Donnellys lived in London for those three years is presumptive, based on the information (see note 7) that they were there in 1845 and on the assumption that they came to Canada attracted by Huron Tract land opportunities and hence would not have strayed far while waiting to acquire land there. Toronto Globe, Feb. 28, 1880, says that Donnelly arriving in 1844 [sic] stayed for a time in London, then in London Township, before moving to Biddulph in 1847.

⁷ MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, arson, Schedule of Criminal Statistics of October, 1881, which gives William Donnelly's age as 35 and his place of birth as London city; the St. Patrick's cemetery tombstone gives his age as 52 at the time of his death on Mar. 7, 1897. 1861 Census of Canada also lists William's birthplace as Upper Canada.

⁸ For an example of the many notices of William Donnelly's lameness see Toronto Telegram, Feb. 7, 1880--"his peculiar gait detracts from his appearance...."

⁹ Schedule of land in the township of Biddulph in the District of Huron not inserted in the assessment roll of said township for the year 1844 to be returned to the Clerk of the Peace by the Assessor; includes lot 18 concession 6--ie., it is unoccupied.

¹⁰ The Biddulph Assessment List dated Mar. 31, 1845, mentions James Donnelly on the lot in question. That he built some form of shelter is presumptive: he would have had to have accomplished some sign of residence to have been included on the assessment list, and that same list notes that none of the hundred acres has been cleared.

¹¹ Crown Land Sales Lists, Schedule of Sales in the Huron Tract July 1, 1843, to June 30, 1844: mentions lot 18 concession 6 on November 17, 1843.

¹² There is no mention of Donnellys on the Biddulph Township population returns for that year; the list of Biddulph absentees for 1845 lists James Donnelly.

¹³ PAO, Canada Company Papers, Series B3, vol. 1, Register of Lands, Huron Tract, No. 3, 1828-1852, p. 426.

¹⁴ Biddulph Assessment List for 1847, dated Apr. 2, notes James Donnelly on this lot; the 1848 assessment list has John Grace there. Donnelly is on the 1847 Biddulph population returns.

¹⁵ HCI, Inquisition on the body of Michael McCormick, Apr. 1, 1847.

¹⁶ Inscription on the Donnelly gravestone, St. Patrick's cemetery: "John Donnelly, born Sept. 16, 1847..."

¹⁷ Biddulph Township Assessment List for 1848, dated Apr. 3. "Rent" is conjectural: John Grace would hardly have allowed the Donnelly family to squat on his land, to use it without compensation of some kind, until 1855 when (see note 29) he sold the lot.

¹⁸ Clerk of the Peace, Census Returns, Huron District, Return of the Inhabitants of Biddulph, May 3, 1848.

¹⁹ Biddulph Township, Municipal Records, Minutes of the Annual Meeting, Jan. 3, 1848.

²⁰ Biddulph Township Absentee List, 1848, lists the value of the north half of the farm, where the Donnelly home and, presumably, the first fields were located, at \$360; cf. the value listed for the south half, \$250.

²¹ List of Treasury Orders Signed by Warden Jan. 1, 1849, to Dec. 14, 1849: lists a payment of 3 pounds, 15 shillings, 4 pence to James Donnelly--almost certainly for road work.

²² Clerk of the Peace, Census Returns, Huron District, Return of the Inhabitants of Biddulph, Apr. 19, 1850.

²³ Papers and Correspondence of Orin Miller contain an undated letter from Mrs. A.G. Newman of St. Catharines, to A.S. Garrett, stating that Patrick Donnelly died May 18, 1914, at age 65; Mrs. Newman was Patrick Donnelly's daughter (born Margaret Ann Donnelly); see the Spencer Armitage-Stanley Geneological Papers. For information concerning Patrick the uncle, see note 57.

²⁴ A.W. Currie, The Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), pp. 37-8.

²⁵ Ausable Report, Part I, p. 42.

²⁶ Globe, Feb. 6, 1880: a "Fair History of the Murdered Family", as "told by a gentleman who knew them for the last thirty years": Donnelly "worked pretty hard, and by 1855 had his farm pretty well cleared".

²⁷ For Michael and Thomas, see St. Patrick's cemetery tombstone; for Robert see Daybook of the Penitentiary at Kingston (PAC, RG 13, B12, vol. 53, p. 121), Apr. 3, 1878, which lists his age as 25.

²⁸ PAO, Canada Company Papers, Series B3, vol. 26, Register of Contracts, Huron Tract 1829-1868, no. 2543.

²⁹ MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph, to 1866, p. 64, Instrument 376, Dec. 10, 1855.

³⁰ For the 13-shilling price see Ausable Report, Part I, p. 41.

³¹ Middlesex Court of Chancery, George Leslie v. Flannery et al., Feb. 8 to Mar. 3, 1868: Sara Flannery's (formerly Sara Farrell; see note 32) co-defendant children are listed: Joseph, Daniel, Mary, William, Margaret.

³² Middlesex Court of Chancery, Patrick Ryder v. Michael Feehley, July 30, 1870, to Feb. 23, 1871: a suit over lot 16 of the seventh concession. The history of the transactions concerning this lot is contained in plaintiff's Bill of Complaint (Aug. 30, 1870), defendant's Answer (Oct. 16, 1870), and defendant's chancery deposition (Nov. 5, 1870). Farrell had to mortgage the property on Jan. 17, 1857.

³³ DFP, Return of papers delivered to the Counsel for the Crown at the Spring Assizes March 1856 for Huron and Bruce in Queen by Patrick Farrell v. James Donnelly.

³⁴ Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Correspondence, Shoff to Lizars, Dec. 20, 1855.

³⁵ Presumptive; no constable's account for arresting Donnelly exists in HCJA, in any of the Quarter Sessions accountings around the time of the incident. However, it is possible that such an account existed, and has been lost.

³⁶ Huron County, Clerk of the Peace, Return of Convictions, Dec. 29, 1855.

³⁷ HCJA, April Sessions, 1856, Account of Henry Reid Court Crier; for Donnelly's sentence, see the Michael Helm thesis cited in note 104 of the immediately preceding chapter; the documentation Helm

himself cites has, like other documentation mentioned in that same note, since disappeared.

³⁸ LFP, Mar. 10, 1856.

³⁹ Biddulph Township, Huron County, Treasurer, Taxes due on lots in Biddulph 1856-1859.

⁴⁰ DFP, Huron Court of Common Pleas, Writs of summons in ejectment, May 26, 1856--two similar documents against Donnelly, one from each of Grace and Maher.

⁴¹ Huron Court of Common Pleas, Judgment Docket, Aug. 20, 1856.

⁴² Huron County, Sheriff, Letterbooks, Macdonald to Wilson, Aug. 21, 1856.

⁴³ MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph to 1866, f. 64, Instrument 414, Sept. 2, 1856.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Instrument 612, Nov. 22, 1864.

⁴⁵ Biddulph Township Assessment Roll for 1865 lists Michael Cairn on south half of VI-18.

⁴⁶ MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph to 1866, f. 64, Instrument 777, Dec. 13, 1865.

⁴⁷ All information, including all quotations, in the following account of the Patrick Farrell murder is drawn from the copy of the witnesses' depositions at the inquest June 28 and July 1, 1857 (PAC, Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.C. 5, C1, Vol. 529, no. 1653).

⁴⁸ HCJA, July Sessions, 1857, account of John Hyndman, coroner--summoning 12 witnesses, examining 9.

⁴⁹ The accounts of pursuit of Donnelly are drawn from the following in HCJA, December Sessions, 1857--account of John Hodgins, March Sessions, 1858--accounts of Henry Sutton, Barber Regan, William Howard, Jeffrey Harbourn; June Sessions, 1858--accounts of Sutton, Regan, Howard, Harbourn, plus those of Adam Hodgins and Jeremiah Lewis.

⁵⁰ HCR, September Sessions, 1857, motion by Daniel Clark, J.P.

⁵¹ PAC, Provincial Secretary's Office, R.C. 5, C1, Vol. 528, No. 857, Holmes, Warden of Huron, to Administrator of the Government in

Canada, Oct. 16, 1857, enclosing a copy of the reward notice as appearing in the Huron Signal, Oct. 6, 1857.

52 DFP, Order to stay estreat of recognizances upon entering into new recognizances, for William Maloney and others, Sept. 28, 1857.

53 MCR, Inventory of papers returned to counsel for the Crown at the Huron Fall Assizes, Sept., 1857.

54 See the accounts mentioned in note 49.

55 PAC, Canada West Provincial Secretary's Letterbook, R.C. 5, C2, Vol. 38, No. 35.

56 The Curry family tombstone (Jennie Donnelly's married name) in the North American Martyrs Cemetery, Wardsville, Ontario, lists the year of her birth as 1858; the register of the Bothwell, Ontario, Methodist (now United) Church, noting her Feb. 9, 1874, marriage, lists her age as 17 - her birthday must have come before that date. The family name is spelled variously: "Curry" on the tombstone, but Jennie's husband signs "James Currie" (see, for example, Applications, Correspondence and oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, oath of James Currie, June 22, 1881).

57 LFP, Jan. 15, 1913.

58 The Register of the Gaol at Goderich lists prisoner James Donnelly as of May 7, 1858. The Donnelly history published in Globe, Feb. 6, 1880, states that Donnelly "gave himself up to justice", and no constable's account for his arrest appears in HCJA. Mitchell Haskett applied for the reward for arresting Donnelly (Huron District and Huron County Council Minutes, Sept. 28, and June 21, 1858), but for evidence that Haskett was almost certainly a Donnelly friend who would not have helped convey him to justice without Donnelly's consent (see 1) Globe and LA of Jan. 29, 1881, reporting testimony of William Simpson and John Keit in Queen v. James Carroll; Thomas Donnelly in the fall of 1879 is helping Mitchell Haskett thresh; and 2) MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, robbery: an Oct. 20 notice of bail records Haskett and James Donnelly Sr. as Thomas' bondsmen. For Haskett's 4th-concession address see Map of the County of Huron, Canada West, published by R.W. Hermon, R. Martin, and L. Bolton (Mayne, P.O., Wallace Township, 1862); for Haskett's religion, see Census of Canada, 1861.

59 HCJA, September Sessions, 1858, account of constable James Gordon.

60 Criminal Proceedings, Assizes, Huron and Bruce Spring Assizes, 1858, an uncatalogued volume in the Goderich Courthouse vault, a copy of which exists in DFP; see entries for May 12 and May 14, 1858.

61 PAC, Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.G. 5, C1, vol. 912, No. 1457.

62 Ibid., No. 1531.

63 PAC, Executive Council Record, R.G. 1, E1, Vol. 82, pp. 38-9.

64 PAC, Canada West Provincial Secretary's Letterbook, R.G. 5, C2, Vol. 38, p. 396, July 28, 1858.

65 For the date of Donnelly's removal from Goderich, see Register of the Gaol at Goderich; for his itinerary to Kingston, see DFP, account of Sheriff MacDonald, September Sessions, 1858.

66 See note 57.

67 LFP, June 28, 1859.

68 See note 39.

69 MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph to 1866, p. 64, Instrument 289, Memorial of Mortgage, June 11, 1859.

70 Raycraft-Lewis, Sure An' This Is Biddulph, p. 129.

71 PAC, Canada West Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.G. 5, C1, Vol. 914, no. 977.

72 Ibid.

73 PAC, Provincial Secretary's Letterbook, R.G. 5, C2, Vol. 40, No. 977, Aug. 2, 1859, to P.F. Crinlan, Biddulph.

74 LFP, July 6, 1860--Weekly Market Report notes of fall wheat that "the deliveries are small"; prices, depending upon quality, are in the 90c to \$1.20 range. LFP, July 5, 1861, notes that the fall wheat failed in the two previous years.

75 Middlesex Court of Chancery, Frupp v. Donnelly; July 23, 1860. The file contains only Frupp's petition to be paid or to be permitted to foreclose; i.e., the Donnellys paid him in time to stop the suit.

76 PAC, Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.G. 5, C1, Vol. 914, No. 977.

77 Ibid.

78 PAC, Provincial Secretary's Letterbook, R.G. 5, C2, Vol. 40; Aug. 2, 1859.

79 See note 32 for an explanation of the sources for this and the following transactions concerning the Farrell property.

80 MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph to 1866, p. 64, Instrument 128, June 8, 1861.

81 Canada Census Returns, 1861.

82 PAC, Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.G. 5, C1, Vol. 920, No. 805.

83 There appears to be no specific letter of refusal; under the entry cited in note 82 it is indicated that the petition of Johannah Donnelly was acknowledged, then referred to the Attorney-General; obviously her request was refused since (see note 86) James Donnelly was not released until the expiry of his full seven-year sentence.

84 MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph to 1866, p. 64, Instrument 226, June 30, 1862, and Instrument 395, July 25, 1862.

85 Ibid., Instrument 673, Feb. 20, 1865, and Instrument 674, Feb. 24, 1865.

86 Register of the Penitentiary at Kingston (see note 4) lists his discharge date as July 28, 1865.

87 Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1867.

88 LFP, Oct. 13, 1865, for a Weekly Market Report example.

89 Ibid., Apr. 27, 1866, for example.

90 Ibid., July 13, 1866, and Sept. 28, 1866, for examples.

91 Ibid., May 10, 1867.

92 Ibid., Sept. 4, 1869.

⁹³ Ibid., Oct. 6, 1880: testimony of builder Robert Thompson in Queen v. James Carroll. (Globe, Mar. 15, 1880, dates the re-building at 1867; but the account of the builder himself is taken as authoritative.)° For the fire, see St. Marys Argus, Dec. 9, 1870.

⁹⁴ LFP, Oct. 6, 1880.

⁹⁵ MRO, Abstract Book A, Biddulph, p. 107.

⁹⁶ The sources of the account of this incident and of its legal outcome are in HCR, 1857: The notice of conviction records that Atkinson's fine is double the fine of either Donnelly, hence the conclusion that he was the leader, the more serious aggressor.

⁹⁷ Atkinson being a very common Biddulph name, precise identification of this one is difficult. Of the 6 James Atkinsons listed on the 1861 Census of Canada for Biddulph, the three most likely possibilities are aged 18, 17, and 13 in 1857; the others are two 3-year-olds and a 33-year-old farmer, all of whom would have been unlikely accomplices for the two Donnelly juveniles.

⁹⁸ The Census of Canada, 1861, lists only one Patrick Ryan in Biddulph; City of London and County of Middlesex General Directory for 1868-9, Joseph Sutherland, editor (Toronto: C.E. Anderson and Co., 1868), lists Ryan's address as lot 22 of the seventh concession.

⁹⁹ Census of Canada, 1861, provides Sullivan's age; for his address (lot 10 of the sixth concession) see the 1868 directory cited in note 98.

¹⁰⁰ Statutes of the Province of Canada, 25 Vic. Chap. 28.

¹⁰¹ Sources for the account of the disposition of this case are Middlesex Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions Minute Book, Sept. 15 and 17, 1864; and Middlesex County Crown Attorney Docket, 1863-1876--Quarter Sessions, Sept., 1864, and Fall Assizes, 1864.

¹⁰² LFP, Nov. 3, 1865, report of Fall Assizes trial of Queen v. Patrick Hogan; testimony of John Kennedy: "[1] had to be taken home by a man who has left the country, named Danley [sic]"; Middlesex County Crown Attorney Docket, Fall Assizes, 1865, lists William Donnelly as witness in this case--the "Danley" referred to. That he went to the States on leaving the country is most likely, but not certain.

¹⁰³ Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1867

¹⁰⁴ Globe, Feb. 7, 1880.

- 105 As described in LFP report of Donnelly's larceny trial, Nov. 1, 1869.
- 106 Municipal Council Proceedings for Biddulph Township, Sept. 7, 1868.
- 107 Middlesex, Clerk of the Peace, Quarter Sessions Minute Book, June 11, 1869: Donnelly is described as a "student at school"; the school is unidentified.
- 108 LFP, Nov. 1, 1869.
- 109 LFP, Apr. 23, 1869.
- 110 MCR, 1869, General Sessions, June, 1869, Indictment in Queen v. William Donnelly, Larceny.
- 111 Middlesex Quarter Sessions Minute Book, June 11, 1869.
- 112 Census of Canada, 1871; Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1869.
- 113 Middlesex Quarterly Return of Convictions, July 22, 1869; under the heading, "Remarks", is the entry, "Dismissed".
- 114 LFP, Aug. 19, 1869.
- 115 Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1870, 1871, and 1872.
- 116 CP, William Donnelly to Charles Hutchinson, June 16, 1880-- Donnelly writes that it is ten years since he began driving stage; the Keefe-McPhee stage begins July 17, 1872 (see St. Marys Argus, July 25, 1872). It is not clear whether Donnelly drove earlier for someone else. For McPhee's Lucan-and-Exeter stage route see diary of William Porte, May 23, 1873, a partial transcription of which can be found in CP; also LFP Weekly, Feb. 11, 1880. For McPhee's hotelkeeping trade see, for example, St. Marys Argus, Feb. 2, 1872.
- 117 LA, Mar. 2, 1876: Michael Donnelly states he has driven stage for six years. Again, it is not clear for whom he drove before the existence of the Keefe-McPhee line.
- 118 Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1868 and following.
- 119 Census of Canada, 1871, for McGillivray township; McGillivray Township Assessment Roll, 1862 and following.

120. LFP, Feb. 10, 1874.

121. Toronto Mail, Jan. 31, 1881.

122. Characteristics inferred from the following letters, excerpts from which are quoted.

123. PAC, M.G. 29, B55, Thompson to Donnelly, Apr. 22, 1873.

124. Ibid., Thompson to Donnelly, Apr. 30, 1873..

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., Thompson to Donnelly, Dec. 24, 1873.

128. LFP, Feb. 10, 1874.

129. PAC, M.G. 29, B55, Thompson to Donnelly, Dec. 24, 1873.

130. For the ages and marital status of Keefe and Atkinson see Census of Canada, 1871; for addresses, see Assessment Rolls for Lucan and for Biddulph, 1873.

131. Attributed to Thompson, and rebutted, in PAC, M.G. 29, B55, Donnelly to Thompson, Jan. 12, 1874.

132. This and following dialogue and account of the incident are drawn from LFP, Feb. 10, 1874, report of trial.

133. The quotations in this paragraph are from the letter referred to in note 131.

134. PAC, M.G. 29, B55, "P Mc" to William Thompson, Jan. 12, 1874. The handwriting appears to be William Porte's (cf. any passage in his diary); apparently Porte is intervening pseudonymously in an effort to make peace.

135. Census of Canada, 1871, for Biddulph; Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1874.

136. LFP, Feb. 3, 1874.

- 137 Irving, p. 6, testimony of Mary Thompson.
- 138 MCR, June Sessions, 1874, Indictment, Queen v. William Donnelly et al.
- 139 Middlesex County Court of General Quarter Sessions, Minute Book, June 11, June 16, and June 17, 1874.
- 140 For the date of the marriage and the fact of elopement, see Stratford Herald, Feb. 11, 1880.
- 141 Irving, p. 13, testimony of William Donnelly. Also see the interview with the Kennedys in LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880, and see Globe, Feb. 20, 1880. For Kennedy's position as eldest son see Census of Canada, 1861.
- 142 McAlpine's London City and County of Middlesex Directory (London: McAlpine, Everett and Co., 1875): William Donnelly, stage proprietor, boards Revere House, Lucan.
- 143 Register of St. James Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Lucan; see Donnelly genealogical information in the Armitage-Stanley papers.
- 144 Register of Bothwell Methodist (now United) Church, Bothwell, Ontario, Feb. 9, 1874.
- 145 St. Marys Argus, Feb. 10 and Apr. 21, 1876; Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1871; and Census of Canada, 1871.
- 146 MRO, Abstract Book, Biddulph Book A, p. 274, Instrument 2709, Mar. 31, 1874.
- 147 Municipal Council Proceedings for Biddulph Township, Apr. 1, 1872, May 10, 1873, and Apr. 6, 1874.
- 148 Ibid., Oct. 2, 1876.
- 149 PAO, Canada Company Papers, Series B3, Vol. 2, Register of Lands, Huron Tract, No. 3, 1828-1852, p. 431; also B3, Vol. 29, Register of Leases, Huron Tract, 1842-1868, no. 927; also B3, Vol. 32, Register of Leases for Ten Years, Huron Tract, 1852-1867, no. 7059; Hermon's 1862 Map (see note 57) notes a Jno. Carroll on X1-26; there is no PAO evidence that his occupancy was legal—hence, a squatter.
- 150 See note 133 of the preceding chapter; also Page's Atlas, p. 59.
- 151 Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1867-1872. See Ottawa Free Press, Feb. 6, 1880 and Osler, p. 58, for suggestions that James

Donnelly Jr. had formally assumed the previous tenant's lease. He may have made some such agreement with his predecessor, but Canada Company Papers in PAO record no formal leasing agreement between Donnelly and the Company. Therefore, he was technically a squatter, although he may have had some moral basis for believing that he had some right to be there.

¹⁵² Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1872, records a 3-person decline in the size of the Donnelly family at lot 18 of concession 6-- to 3 from the 6 recorded on the 1871 roll.

¹⁵³ Globe and Telegram, both Feb. 11, 1880: in an interview Joseph Carswell mentions James Donnelly's departure from Biddulph; his dating of the departure in 1869 at the time of the Granton post office robbery is contradicted by the more authoritative assessment roll evidence (see note 151)--after 1872 lot 26 concession 11 is listed as Robert Donnelly's.

¹⁵⁴ Census of Canada, 1871, for Carswell's religion and for his family; Biddulph Assessment Roll, 1873, for his prior address:

¹⁵⁵ Middlesex County Queen's Bench and Common Pleas, Docket Book, 1869-1881, p. 98.

¹⁵⁶ Middlesex County Sheriff's Day-Book, Dec. 27, 1873.

¹⁵⁷ Middlesex Queen's Bench and Common Pleas Appearance and Pleading Book, 1874-75, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Middlesex Sheriff's Day-Book, Mar. 13, 1874.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Mar. 17, 1874.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., Feb. 27, Sept. 22, and Oct. 29, 1873, for examples of William serving subpoenas; Sept. 25, Oct. 17, and Dec. 7, 1874, for examples of Michael.

¹⁶² As related by Carswell in Globe and Telegram, Feb. 11, 1880, and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

¹⁶³ Middlesex County, Coroner's Inquests, Inquest into the death of Daniel Clark, Lucan, Mar. 18, 1875--James Donnelly is a witness and is called "gentleman, Lucan".

¹⁶⁴ Telegram, Feb. 11, 1880.

¹⁶⁵ Exeter Times, Jan. 20, 1875.

¹⁶⁶ For this incident and its legal disposition, see Register of the Gaol at London, Sept. 1, 1871; and LFP, Sept. 2 and Sept. 16, 1871.

¹⁶⁷ For this incident and its disposition, see LA, Feb. 21 and Feb. 23, 1874.

¹⁶⁸ MCR, 1876, Queen v. James Donnelly, Larceny; this file contains the documents concerning this crime and its legal disposition.

¹⁶⁹ LA, Aug. 2, 1875.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Aug. 7, 1875.

¹⁷¹ See the PAO information the source of which is cited in note 13 of this chapter.

¹⁷² Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1880 and 1881: Carswell is a tenant in 1880, and does not appear in 1881.

¹⁷³ For all of the above Carswell suspicions see the interview in Globe and Telegram, Feb. 11, 1880, and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880. The reporters who interview him are skeptical: "Do his statements bear sifting?" (LFP), and "The grounds for fear could not be clearly learned" (Telegram).

Chapter 3

¹ Austin Steward, Twenty-Two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman, pp. 219-222, 291.

² See the immediately preceding chapter, note 116.

³ See stage-coach advertisements in LFP, for instance Dec. 20, 1871. Throughout this chapter a central source of information concerning the existence of stage lines, their proprietors, and their schedules, are the advertisements which appear frequently, although not always daily, in the two London newspapers, the LFP and the LA, during the 1870s.

⁴ See for example LFP, July 22, 1872, noting change in Mail Stage schedule as of Apr. 7, 1872.

⁵ St. Marys Argus, Mar. 29, 1872.

⁶ W.B. Hobson, "Old Stage Coach Days in Oxford County", Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. XVII (1919), pp. 33-36.

⁷ Argus, Oct. 17, 1872.

⁸ Ibid., May 21, 1873.

⁹ LA, Sept. 10, 1873.

¹⁰ Argus, Nov. 3, 1871, and June 9, 1871 respectively.

¹¹ Hobson, "Old Stage Coach Days in Oxford County", p. 34.

¹² Porte Diary, Mar. 12, 1873.

¹³ Ibid., May 23, 1873, and May 24, 1873.

¹⁴ CP, Hutchinson to Sheriff of Perth County, Sept. 24, 1880, sending a subpoena for Hugh McPhee to appear to testify in Queen v. James Carroll et al., Murder, refers to McPhee as a hotel-keeper near Stratford.

¹⁵ Porte Diary, July 28, Aug. 1, and Aug. 4, 1873.

¹⁶ LFP, Mar. 11, Mar. 13, and May 4, 1874; LA, Mar. 16, 1874.

¹⁷ Exeter Times, Apr. 30, 1874.

¹⁸ LFP, Dec. 21, 1874.

¹⁹ Porte Diary, Apr. 15, 1874.

²⁰ Exeter Times, Dec. 10, 1874--the first mention of a Donnelly stage to London.

²¹ LFP, Jan. 26, 1875--the first Donnelly stage advertisement.

²² Ibid., Dec. 22, 1874.

²³ Ibid., Dec. 21, 1874; LA, Dec. 19, 1874.

- ²⁴ LA, Feb. 25, 1876.
- ²⁵ Ibid., Feb. 4, 1880.
- ²⁶ Ibid., Dec. 19, 1874 to Mar. 7, 1875--Hawkshaw stage advertisements.
- ²⁷ LFP, Dec. 30, 1874. For notice of the continually rough condition of the road see, for example, LFP, Apr. 19, 1880.
- ²⁸ See the stage advertisements in both London newspapers until Feb. 22, 1878, when they disappear.
- ²⁹ CPC, Ferguson to Hutchinson, May 13, 1876.
- ³⁰ For a brief account of the history of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway see G.R. Stevens, Canadian National Railways: Sixty Years of Trial and Error (Toronto: Clarke Irwin and Co., 1960), pp. 458-460.
- ³¹ See for example Exeter Times, Jan. 6, 1875; LH&B advertisements appear daily throughout 1875 in the Times and in the LFP.
- ³² Exeter Times, Jan. 20, 1875--the first mention of the Crawley and Flanagan stage. But see note 34: their stage was in operation at least as early as January 7.
- ³³ For an account of the Flanagan family see Raycraft-Lewis, pp. 37-39 and p. 83; see Goodspeed pp. 523-524; and see the interview with Patrick Flanagan in Toronto Mail, Feb. 9, 1880.
- ³⁴ Middlesex County, Quarterly Returns of Convictions, Jan. 8, 1875; also LA, Jan. 8, 1875.
- ³⁵ Exeter Times, Jan. 20, 1875.
- ³⁶ LFP, Jan. 26, 1875--the first Donnelly advertisement.
- ³⁷ LA, Feb. 16, 1880.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid., Feb. 4, 1875.

⁴⁰ Middlesex County, Coroner's Inquests, Inquisition on the body of William Brooks, July 2, 1875; see accounts of the incident in Exeter Times, July 8, 1875, and LFP, July 3.

⁴¹ Census of Canada, 1871, for Usborne Township.

⁴² LA, Aug. 3, 1875--the earliest visible appearance of the Crawley-and-Flanagan Exeter and Crediton Stage advertisement; the column containing the stage advertisements is mutilated for all issues in July; a clearly legible example of the advertisement occurs in the Sept. 15, 1875, issue.

⁴³ See LA, Sept. 15, 1875--again, the earliest completely legible advertisement of the "Donnelly's Exeter and London Stage".

⁴⁴ See the document cited in note 50, where their address is listed as Exeter.

⁴⁵ The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, December Sessions, 1875, Robert McLeod appellant v. William and Michael Donnelly respondents, testimony of witnesses before Henry Ferguson, JP, Sept. 3, 1875.

⁴⁶ In the same packet, Donnelly's Sept. 1 information.

⁴⁷ P.L. to Ferguson, Sept. 7, 1875.

⁴⁸ In the MCR packet cited in note 45, Ferguson's Notice of Conviction, Sept. 9, 1875.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Notice of Appeal, Sept. 11, 1875.

⁵⁰ DFP, Summons to William and Michael Donnelly to appear in 10 days in Middlesex County Court, regarding the suit of Martha Lindsay; identical summons regarding the suit of Louisa Lindsay; Judgment roll, Sept. 25, 1875, Louisa Lindsay v. William and Michael Donnelly; identical Judgment roll, same date, Martha Lindsay v. the same two defendants.

⁵¹ DFP, Lindsay v. Donnelly, Record.

⁵² Ibid., Record; also Statement of Costs, Jan. 26, 1876.

⁵³ Register of the Gaol at London, Jan. 26, 1876; the sentence is for debt of \$23.65; the total costs assessed were \$96.28.

54 Middlesex County, Sheriff, Executions Against Goods, 1875-1878, p. 42 and p. 100.

55 MCR, 1875, McLeod v. Donnellys, Affidavits of Disbursements, Feb. 22, 1876; also Middlesex County, Court of General Quarter Sessions, Minute Book, 1866-1876, pp. 473, 508-509.

56 For Michael and William's addresses, see McAlpine's London City and County of Middlesex Directory, 1875 (London: McAlpine, Everett and Co., 1875); for James Jr.'s address, see note 163 of the immediately preceding chapter.

57 The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. James and Thomas Donnelly, testimony before Lawrence Lawrason, Mar. 10, 1876.

58 In the same packet, Berryhill's information, Sept. 20, 1875.

59 LFP, Nov. 24, 1875.

60 Ibid, Dec. 1, 1875.

61 Ibid., Dec. 14 and 15, 1876.

62 The account of the incident of the Curry robbery is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. James and Thomas Donnelly, Robbery, testimony before Lawrence Lawrason, Dec. 14, 1875.

63 In the same packet, Curry's information, Sept. 20, 1875.

64 LFP, Nov. 24, 1875.

65 See the depositions cited in note 62; also LFP, Dec. 15, 1875; and CPC, Lawrason to Hutchinson, Mar. 25, 1876.

66 The account of this incident of arson is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas, James, and John Donnelly, Arson, testimony before Lawrence Lawrason, Mar. 11, 1876.

67 LFP, Dec. 4, 1875.

68 Exeter Times, Dec. 30, 1875.

69 LFP, Nov. 3, 1865, report of Fall Assizes trial of Queen v. Patrick Hogan, testimony of John Kennedy who is Rhody Kennedy's father (Census of Canada, 1871, Biddulph Township): "went up to get my son who had been hurt with a threshing machine"--presumably his son Rhody who according to LFP, Jan. 31, 1876, has only one arm.

70 Register of the Gaol at London, Dec. 4, 1875; CPL, to Henry Ferguson, Dec. 29, 1875.

71 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Rhody Kennedy, Perjury, Kennedy's information before Ferguson, JP, against James Donnelly, Dec. 3, 1875, contains an account of the following conversation.

72 CPL, to Lawson, Dec. 29, 1875; also MCR, 1876, Warrant to Apprehend Thomas and Robert Donnelly, Dec. 29, 1875, with a note inscribed on the back indicating the defendants' bail until Jan. 13, 1876.

73 CPL, to Ferguson, Dec. 31, 1875; the date of Ferguson's hearing is derived from the document cited in note 75.

74 Stevens, Canadian National Railways, p. 460; the London, Huron and Bruce advertisements all through 1875 announce a Dec. 31, 1875, opening.

75 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Rhody Kennedy, Perjury, Information of William Donnelly, Jan. 11, 1876, with an inscribed note indicating the date of scheduled trial.

76 See a further notation inscribed on the document cited in note 71.

77 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Rhody Kennedy, Perjury, testimony before Ferguson, Jan. 13, 1876.

78 In the same packet, Ferguson's Notice of Conviction, Jan. 13, 1876, which notes not precisely a conviction, but rather a committal to gaol until further trial.

79 Register of the Gaol at London, Jan. 13, 1876.

80 LFP, Jan. 24, 1876.

81 Ibid.

82 Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

83. The exact date of Flanagan's withdrawal is unclear. LA, Apr. 20, 1876, notes that it was Brien's [sic] stage which was hacked to pieces: he must have taken over from Flanagan by Jan. 16. Peter McKellar, in the document cited first in note 88 below, mentions driving stage for Bryan [sic] and Crawley on Jan. 24, 1876. In McAlpine's Directory, 1875, Bryand [sic] is listed as simply a laborer.

84. Lucan Assessment Roll, 1875.

85. LFP, Feb. 14, 1876, mentions a witness' deposition on Feb. 12, that his occupation is stage guard; the occasion is the trial of William Donnelly for perjury (see the documentation cited in note 87). That the guard is Kennedy is presumptive: he does testify in that Feb. 12 trial, and he does appear as a guard, on the Bryant and Crawley stage (see note 87).

86. LA, Apr. 20 and Aug. 10, 1876; Porte Diary, July 31, 1876.

87. The account of the incident on the morning of Jan. 24 is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. John Donnelly, Assault; testimony before Lawrason, Mar. 18, 1876.

88. The account of the incidents on the evening of Jan. 24 is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. William Donnelly, Perjury, testimony before Lawrason, Feb. 12, 1876; also from the information of William Donnelly, Jan. 25, 1876, which occasioned the perjury charge and which is also contained in the same packet.

89. LA, Jan. 26 and 27, 1876, also London Police Court Returns of Convictions, Jan. 26, 1876.

90. See note 53.

91. The information and testimonies cited in note 88.

92. CPC, Ferguson to Hutchinson, Jan. 28, 1876.

93. The warrant is not extant. Kennedy identifies the warrant, in his testimony as contained in MCR, Queen v. James Donnelly, Assault, testimony before Lawrason, Mar. 18, 1876.

94. Kennedy's constable's oath and certificate of appointment are not now extant in the files containing comparable documents concerning other county constables (see note 120). But apparently Kennedy was in fact appointed: the LFP, Jan. 31, 1876, so describes him, and he would hardly have attempted an arrest without a constable's legal authority.

⁹⁵ The account of this incident is drawn from LFP, Jan. 31, 1876, and MCR, 1876, Queen v. James Donnelly, Assault, testimony before Lawrason, Mar. 18, 1876.

⁹⁶ London Police Magistrate's Minute Book, June 9, 1877; MCR, 1877, Recognizance issued by Lawrason for appearance of Robert Donnelly at next General Sessions, dated June 9, 1877; LFP, June 11, 1877; and LA, June 9, 1877. There is no subsequent mention of any prosecutions of Robert Donnelly arising from any of the incidents of 1876.

⁹⁷ CPL, to Ferguson, Jan. 31, 1876.

⁹⁸ MCR, 1876, Queen v. William Donnelly, Perjury: the packet contains McKellar's Feb. 2 Information.

⁹⁹ Notations inscribed on the document cited in note 98.

¹⁰⁰ The testimonies are contained in the same packet, also the recognizances of defendant and prosecutor and witnesses, dated Feb. 12, 1876, to appear at the next Assizes to participate in the perjury trial.

¹⁰¹ Kennedy's information is not apparently extant; his charge and the date of the scheduled trial are described in LA, Feb. 12 and 17, 1876.

¹⁰² Donnelly's information and the testimonies before Ferguson are apparently not extant, nor is Ferguson's letter of inquiry; but see CPL, to Ferguson, Feb. 14, 1876--Hutchinson's reply, from which the charge and the trial can be inferred with certainty.

¹⁰³ CPL, to Charles Ferguson, Feb. 18 and 22, 1876; to Henry Ferguson, Feb. 18, 1876; and to Rhody Kennedy, Feb. 22, 1876; and CPC, Ferguson to Hutchinson, Feb. 24, 1876.

¹⁰⁴ See note 101.

¹⁰⁵ LA, Feb. 17, 1876.

¹⁰⁶ See the same LA item for Kennedy's non-appearance, and LFP, Feb. 18, 1876, for Donnelly's non-appearance.

¹⁰⁷ CPL, to McKinnon, Feb. 25, 1876, and to Patrick McIlhargey, JP, Feb. 26, 1876. From these letters it is clear that McIlhargey, a Lucan magistrate, committed Kennedy to gaol; but since Kennedy was set free in London later that same day (see note 108), it is also clear that McIlhargey must have first released Kennedy on bail until a trial which must have taken place sometime before Feb. 25. The London gaol register pages for that period are missing.

¹⁰⁸MCR, 1876, Recognizance of William Donnelly to appear Feb. 25, 1876, to answer charge of using insulting language; the recognizance is dated Feb. 17, 1876.

¹⁰⁹See the letters cited in note 103.

¹¹⁰MCR, 1876, Queen v. James Donnelly, Assault, Information of Roady Kennedy Feb. 17, 1876. ("Roady" is an occasional variant spelling of his surname in the source materials.)

¹¹¹For Hutchinson's response, see the letters cited in note 103; for the Police Court response, see the warrants in the MCR packet cited in note 110; for McIlhargey's sentence, see the documents cited in note 109.

¹¹²CPC, McKinnon to Hutchinson, Feb. 22, 1876 and Feb. 26, 1876: he identifies his employers only as "authorities and citizens of Lucan" (Feb. 26), but it is clear from these letters that his closest and most frequent dealings are with Patrick Flanagan.

¹¹³See descriptions in Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 28, 1865, and Mail, Feb. 9, 1880, and the portrait and description in Nick and Helma Mika's Belleville--Friendly City (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1973), p. 228.

¹¹⁴The account of this incident is drawn from Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 28, 1865, and from Hamilton Times, Nov. 28, 29, 30, Dec. 6, 7, 9, 21, and 22, 1865.

¹¹⁵Mail, Feb. 9, 1880--McKinnon's own version.

¹¹⁶Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

¹¹⁷CPC, McKinnon to Hutchinson, Feb. 26, 1876.

¹¹⁸MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas, James, and John Donnelly, Arson, five pages of undated and unsigned notes in McKinnon's handwriting, which mention and discuss all of these people and incidents, with the exception of the witness willing to testify against Thomas Donnelly concerning the attempted arson; for which see the documents cited in note 150.

¹¹⁹CPC, McKinnon to Hutchinson, Feb. 22 and 26, 1876.

¹²⁰Applications, Correspondence and Oaths and Office of County Constable, Middlesex, the following documents: John Hodgins to Chairman of Quarter Sessions asking appointments of Bawden and Coursey,

Jan. 26, 1876; B. Stanley to Chairman of Quarter Sessions asking appointment of Reid; Constable's oath of John Bawden, Feb. 9, 1876; oath of Coursey, Feb. 9, 1876; oath of Reid, Feb. 21, 1876; also Quarter Sessions Minute Book, 1866-1876, pp. 506-507.

¹²¹ Applications, Correspondence and Oaths and Office of County Constable, Middlesex, Thomas Dight to County Clerk, Jan. 27, 1876.

¹²² For description of the warrants used, see MCR, Queen v. William Donnelly, Shooting with intent to murder, testimony of John Bawden and of John Reid before Lawrason, Mar. 10, 1876. The warrant to arrest John Donnelly is in the same packet, issued by Lawrence Lawrason, Feb. 17, 1876. For McKinnon's role in acquiring these warrants, see Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

¹²³ MCR, 1876, Recognizance of John Donnelly to appear on Feb. 17, 1876, dated Feb. 15, 1876; for identification of Bawden as the constable who arrested him, see the testimony of Bawden cited in note 122.

¹²⁴ MCR, 1876, Recognizances estreated at the June Sessions, 1876, mentions the Feb. 17 default by John Donnelly; see also LFP, Feb. 18, 1876. For the reason for John Donnelly's non-appearance, see the account of the incidents documented in notes 105-107.

¹²⁵ Warrant to Apprehend, issued by Lawrence Lawrason, dated Feb. 17, 1876, and contained in the packet cited in note 122.

¹²⁶ As charged by Michael Donnelly, in a letter to LA, Mar. 2, 1876; in fact a whole week lapses between the issue of the warrants, Feb. 17 (see notes 122 and 125), and the attempted arrests.

¹²⁷ Globe, Feb. 25, 1880.

¹²⁸ MCR, 1880, Queen v. James and Johannah Donnelly, Arson, testimony of Patrick Ryder before William Casey, JP, Jan. 27, 1880.

¹²⁹ Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

¹³⁰ The account of the incidents in both Lucan hotels on Feb. 24 is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. William Donnelly, Shooting with intent, testimonies before Lawrason, Mar. 10 and Mar. 17, 1876.

¹³¹ LFP, Feb. 25 and 26, 1876.

¹³² MCR, 1877, Queen v. James Keefe, Assault on constable, Indictment, December Sessions, 1877; also Middlesex Court of Quarter Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, pp. 103, 109-110.

¹³³ LA, Mar. 17, 1876.

¹³⁴ See note 107.

¹³⁵ LFP, Feb. 28, 1876.

¹³⁶ London Police Court Return of Convictions, Feb. 26, 1876.

¹³⁷ MCR, 1876, Queen v. James and John Donnelly, Arson, Information of Patrick Flanagan, Feb. 26, 1876; also CPI, to McKinnon, Feb. 25, and to Flanagan, Feb. 25, 1876.

¹³⁸ MCR, 1876, Information of John Bawden, Mar. 2, 1876, contained in the packet cited in note 137.

¹³⁹ LFP, Mar. 11, 1876; also MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny, testimony before Lawrason, Mar. 17, 1876; for Esdale's occupation see his Mar. 17 testimony and McAlpine's Directory; for his habits of drunkenness see Middlesex Quarterly Returns of Convictions, Oct. 12, 1872, and Sept. 24, 1873.

¹⁴⁰ MCR, 1876, Queen v. Alex Levitt, Robbery, Information of John Barry, Feb. 29, and testimony before William and Bernard Stanley and William Ryan, JPs, Mar. 1, and Recognizance to testify of John and Mary Barry, Mar. 1, and Notice of Committal of Alex Levitt, Mar. 2, 1876.

¹⁴¹ LA, Mar. 2, 1876, and LFP, Mar. 3, 1876; also Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 2, 1876.

¹⁴² LA, Mar. 2, 1876.

¹⁴³ Ibid., also LA, Mar. 8, 1876, and St. Thomas Reporter, Feb. 27, 1880.

¹⁴⁴ See note 133: the Donnelly stage did stop, but it did not stop for long enough for its advertisements in LA to be discontinued (see LA issues throughout March and April, 1876); see also Middlesex County Sheriff's Daybook, Apr. 15, 1876, where it is recorded that Michael Donnelly serves a subpoena, on his stage. Hence the stage is running by that date at the latest.

¹⁴⁵ The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. Hugh McKinnon et al., testimonies before James Owrey, JP, Oct. 26, 1876; for the date of Atkinson's departure from Lucan see MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Arson, Affidavit of John Bawden, June 21, 1876. Other witnesses corroborate Atkinson's testimony of his

abduction and injury; so also does a member of the 1876 Vigilant Committee (Mail, Feb. 9, 1880).

146 LFP, Mar. 4, 1876.

147 MCR, 1876, Queen v. James Donnelly, Assault, testimonies and recognizances dated Mar. 10, 1876.

148 MCR, 1876, Queen v. William Donnelly, Shooting with intent, testimonies and recognizances and Sheriff's Notice to Judge, Mar. 10, 1876.

149 LA, Mar. 10, 1876.

150 MCR, 1876, Queen v. James and John and Thomas Donnelly, Arson, testimonies before Lawrason, Mar. 11, 1876.

151 CPL, to J.G. Scott, Apr. 20, 1876.

152 LA, Mar. 15, 1876; Porte Diary, Mar. 15, 1876; London Police Court Return of Convictions, Mar. 15, 1876; Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 15, 1876.

153 MCR, 1876, Queen v. William Donnelly, Shooting with intent, testimony and recognizances and information, Mar. 17, 1876; also London Police Court Return of Convictions, Mar. 17, 1876.

154 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Assault and Robbery, testimony and recognizances, Mar. 17, 1876.

155 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny, testimony and recognizances, Mar. 17, 1876.

156 MCR, 1876, Queen v. John Donnelly, Assault, testimony, Mar. 18, 1876.

157 MCR, 1876, Queen v. James Donnelly, Assault, testimony and recognizances, Mar. 18, 1876.

158 LFP, Mar. 18, 1876.

159 See the incident documented in note 106; also MCR, 1876, Notice of default of bail recognizance, by William Donnelly, Feb. 25, 1876.

¹⁶⁰ All of these cases are contained in packets in MCR, 1876; all have been mentioned in preceding footnotes; see too the documents cited in notes 164 and 165.

¹⁶¹ LFP, Mar. 25, 1876.

¹⁶² Chester Glass, Compiler, Hon. David Glass--Some of His Writings and Speeches (New York: Trow Press, 1909), pp. 1-5.

¹⁶³ See note 54. For a brief biography of Sheriff William Glass, see Goodspeed, pp. 832-833.

¹⁶⁴ LFP, Mar. 31, 1876; CPL, to Scott, Apr. 20, 1876.

¹⁶⁵ MCR, 1876, Memo of cases laid over from last Assizes Spring 1876, an unsigned document in the handwriting of Charles Hutchinson, County Crown Attorney, which records the dispositions of several cases involving the Donnellys.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.; also the Hutchinson letter to Scott cited in note 164.

¹⁶⁷ Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 15, 1876; also LFP, Mar. 31, 1876.

¹⁶⁸ The Hutchinson memo cited in note 165.

¹⁶⁹ Beyond the preliminary testimonies already cited, there is no mention of these cases in newspaper reports of the Spring Assizes, nor in the correspondence and letterbooks of the Crown Attorney.

¹⁷⁰ Hutchinson to Scott, as cited in note 164.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ LA, Apr. 12, 1876; William Donnelly is omitted from this account, although clearly (see note 179) he is sent to the Central Prison too.

¹⁷⁴ LFP, Mar. 30, 1876.

¹⁷⁵ Middlesex County Court of Queen's Bench and Common Pleas, Procedure Book, 1876-1881, p. 20; see also note 215.

- 176 CPL, to Lawrason, Apr. 20, 1876.
- 177 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Apr. 15, 24, 26, 27, and May 22, 1876.
- 178 CPC, Patrick McIlhargey to Hutchinson, Sept. 28, 1876; CPL, to McIlhargey, Oct. 21, 1876; Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, p. 29.
- 179 LFP, Apr. 17, 1876; Exeter Times, Apr. 20, 1876; LA, May 1, 1876; Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 15, 1876.
- 180 CPL, to Mowat, May 15, 1876, enclosing McKinnon's letter.
- 181 Ibid.
- 182 Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, pp. 8-9.
- 183 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Oct. 14, 1876.
- 184 CPL, to M. Cameron, Apr. 4, 1877, returning the papers in this still-undisposed-of case; there are no further mentions.
- 185 CPL, to McKinnon, Apr. 20, 1876, directing him to write to the Attorney-General's department; that McKinnon did so is an assumption based on the tenacity with which he prosecutes Donnelly's throughout 1876.
- 186 Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 11, 1876.
- 187 CPL, to Scott, Apr. 20, 1876; and to Sheriff of Huron, June 12, 1876.
- 188 Ibid., to Scott, Apr. 12, 1876.
- 189 CPL, to John MacBeth, June 2, 1876, and to McKinnon, June 2, 1876, reporting his difficulties with MacBeth.
- 190 Ibid., Hutchinson to David Glass, June 5, 1876; see LA, July 15, 1876, for an account of Kennedy's involvement in the May 24, 1876, brawl in which James Howe is killed in London by Charles Kent.
- 191 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Arson, receipt for witness fees, signed by Rhody Kennedy, June 17, 1876.

¹⁹² CPL, to the Sheriff, Perth County, June 12, 1876, sending subpoena for a witness in the Esdale larceny case; also CPC, Sheriff of Perth to Hutchinson, June 14, 1876, saying that he can not find the requested witness.

¹⁹³ See the following series of correspondence: CPL, to Glass, June 2, 1876, and two letters June 14, 1876; and CPC, Glass to Hutchinson, June 14 and 15, 1876.

¹⁹⁴ MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Arson, Affidavit of David Glass, June 27, 1876.

¹⁹⁵ In the packet cited in note 191, Affidavit of Thomas Donnelly, June 20, 1876; CPC, Glass to Hutchinson, June 14, 1876.

¹⁹⁶ William Atkinson to William Donnelly, May 11, 1876, and W. Phillips to Rebecca Atkinson, June 13, 1876--letters accompanying the Thomas Donnelly Affidavit cited in note 195; also Affidavit of Rebecca Atkinson, June 26, 1876, in the same packet.

¹⁹⁷ In the same packet, Affidavits of John Bawden, two dated June 21, 1876, and Affidavit of Hugh McKinnon, June 22, 1876.

¹⁹⁸ CPC, McKinnon to Hutchinson, June 21, 1876.

¹⁹⁹ CPL, to MacBeth, June 2, 1876, mentioning McKinnon's complaints and urgings.

²⁰⁰ CPL, to Glass, June 14, 1876.

²⁰¹ Ibid., to Glass, June 15, 1876.

²⁰² Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, pp. 6-7.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 15; also see p. 18 where the juror, Thomas Creighton of lot 37 of Biddulph's sixth concession, supplies bail for Thomas Donnelly, and p. 20, where he supplies bail for John Donnelly. For Creighton's continued friendship with the Donnelly family see, for example, CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Dec. 13, 1884: "Creighton is a decent [sic] man..."

²⁰⁴ Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, p. 16.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

206 See the Hutchinson memo cited in note 165.

207 MRO, Abstract Book A, Biddulph, p. 107, Instrument 3649, Mar. 30, 1878, and Instrument 3784, Dec. 7, 1878.

208 Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 3, 1876.

209 Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, p. 20.

210 ibid., p. 41.

211 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Hugh McKinnon et al., information, Oct. 18, testimony and recognizances, Oct. 26, 1876; for William Donnelly's participation see Mail, Feb. 9, 1876.

212 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Dec. 12, 1876.

213 CPC, McKinnon to Hutchinson, Nov. 15, 1876.

214 LA, Nov. 10, 1876.

215 Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, p. 36; LFP, Dec. 16, 1876; see also accounts of the abortive trial in LFP, Apr. 1, 1878, and Mail, Feb. 9, 1880.

216 Middlesex County Assizes Term and Cause Book, 1873-1877, p. 112; also LA, Oct. 13, 1876. The case was withdrawn part way through the Assizes court hearing.

217 Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 3, 1876.

218 The last mention of this case is in the Hutchinson memo cited in note 165.

219 See CPL, to J.G. Scott, Apr. 20, 1876: "Queen v. James Donnelly, arson:..The evidence is even weaker than against Thomas..."; there are no subsequent references in correspondence from or to Hutchinson, nor in the MCR.

220 CPL, to Lawrason, Jan. 1, 1877; also MCR, 1877, Recognizance of James Donnelly Jr. to appear at next Assizes, dated Jan. 1, 1877; also CPL, to Cameron, Apr. 4, 1877, sending to Cameron (who is assisting in Spring Assizes prosecutions) the papers in Queen v. James Donnelly. But this is the last mention of the case. For Hutchinson's awareness of its weakness see CPL, to Lawrason, Mar. 14, 1876.

221 See note 83.

222 See note 86.

223 Porte Diary, July 10, 1876; for Walker's occupation see McAlpine's Directory, 1875.

224 The date of Crawley's departure is uncertain; the Porte Diary entry cited in note 223 and the LA, Apr. 20, 1876, mention the "Bryant stage" only. See note 42 for the beginning of the Crawley and Flanagan Exeter-and-Crediton stage; its advertisements in the LA continue until Feb. 22, 1878, when all stage advertisements cease to be published probably because the stages themselves have ceased.

225 See note 6.

226 The date of Watson's first association with the stage is unclear; the first mention is in LA, Dec. 10, 1876.

227 See LA, Apr. 20, 1876, for an instance of this process of erosion: the LH&B will take over the Bryant stage's mail deliveries.

228 LA, Dec. 10, 1876.

229 Ibid., Dec. 21, 1876.

230 See the continuous stage advertisements in LA from June 2, 1875, until Feb. 22, 1878.

231 For the troubles with the hotel stages and the effect on the village of Lucan see LA, Oct. 19, 1876.

232 Exeter Times, Jan. 18, 1877.

233 Ibid.

234 Porte Diary, Mar. 13, 1877; for Maloney's friendship with stage-men see Porte Diary, July 5, 1877, where a hotel and stable operated by Maloney is burned containing (see William Donnelly's reminiscence in Globe, Sept. 10, 1880) a stage belonging to Donnelly and Watson.

235 Porte Diary, Mar. 17, 1877; LA, Mar. 22, 1877. It seems clear that the arsonists were associated with neither stage proprietor, both of whom suffered losses in the blaze. The arsonists, then, were men willing to attack both Lucan stage lines.

²⁵¹ Middlesex Quarterly Returns of Convictions, June 21, 1877; also LA, June 28, 1877. In the Quarterly Returns entry, they are listed as co-defendants, the plaintiff being Frederick Allen. It seems likely that they were not fighting each other: in the Quarterly Returns such cases are presented as two separate entries, the plaintiff in the first entry being the defendant in the second, and vice versa. Thus, the Donnelly-Walker-Watson Stage alliance seems to be still intact.

²⁵² LA, June 28, 1877.

²⁵³ Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

²⁵⁴ See note 234.

²⁵⁵ LA, July 12, 1877.

²⁵⁶ Porte Diary, July 9, 1877; LA, July 12, 1877. For Michael Donnelly's family, see Spencer Armitage-Stanley genealogical papers, in the Regional Collection.

²⁵⁷ Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook: the last entry indicating delivery of a subpoena on the Donnelly stage is Dec. 12, 1877.

²⁵⁸ LA, Feb. 22, 1878: the last advertisement of the Exeter and London stage, i.e. the Donnelly stage.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.: the last Hawkshaw advertisement.

²⁶⁰ For further examples of acknowledgments that the railroad was largely responsible for the demise of the stagecoaches see LFP, Jan. 24, 1876, and Globe, Apr. 17, 1880.

²⁶¹ Porte Diary, Mar. 25 and 28, 1879.

²⁶² LA, Feb. 9, 1880.

²⁶³ Ibid., Dec. 10, 1879.

²⁶⁴ Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1877; for further instances of Donnelly friendship with the Ryan family, see the following chapter. William Donnelly is on the eighth concession at least as early as December, 1876; see CPC, Atkinson to Hutchinson, Dec. 7, 1876.

²⁶⁵ LFP, Apr. 16, 1877: Thomas Donnelly in a letter names himself as the owner of the Donnelly stage. William Donnelly in Globe, Sept. 10, 1880, recalls it as his brother's stage. In any case,

- 236 Porte Diary, Apr. 10, 1877.
- 237 LFP, Apr. 13, 1877; Globe, Sept. 10, 1880.
- 238 Exeter Times, May 10, 1877.
- 239 Ibid.
- 240 Porte Diary, May 11, 1877.
- 241 Ibid., May 22, 1877; LA, May 28, 1877.
- 242 See his tombstone in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Biddulph; also Porte Diary, May 15, 1877. For the cause of death see LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880, the statement of Dr. Sutton, of Clandeboye; LA, May 24, 1877; and LFP, Mar. 1, 1880.
- 243 Respectively Porte Diary, Mar. 9, 1877; Apr. 25, 1877; May 12, 1877; May 24, 1877; and June 8, 1877; see also LFP, May 12 and 14, 1877.
- 244 For these measures see LA, June 21, 1877.
- 245 Everett's first mention on the Middlesex Quarterly Returns of Convictions is June 20, 1877, as plaintiff in a suit heard by Lucan magistrate and reeve W. Hutchins; for first mention of his appointment see Applications, Correspondence, and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, Hutchins to Elliott, Aug. 29, 1877; Everett has been "recently appointed".
- 246 For these measures see Porte Diary, June 6, 1877, and Aug. 31, 1877, respectively.
- 247 LA, May 24, 1877; also LFP, May 18 and 19, 1877.
- 248 Exeter Times, May 25, 1876.
- 249 Ibid., June 7, 1877.
- 250 The account of the burning of the Queen's Hotel is drawn from Middlesex County, Clerk of the Peace, Coroner's Inquests, Inquisition into the fire at the Queen's Hotel, June 14 and June 28, 1877. Robert McFalls relinquishes the hotel lease to Alex McFalls (presumably a relative) by March of 1878 at the latest; see MCR, 1879, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Robbery, testimony, Apr. 9, 1879.

William Donnelly's eighth-concession address in itself indicates his inactivity in the stage line.

²⁶⁶ CPC, David Glass to R.M. Bucke, undated but inscribed "rec'd Dec. 13, 1877".

²⁶⁷ His home at the time of the murders in February, 1880, and as early as February 28, 1879 (see Exeter Times, Mar. 6, 1879, where he is described as a farmer of Usborne).

²⁶⁸ DFP, Chattel Mortgage, William Donnelly to James Donnelly, mortgagee, Nov. 9, 1877; the document lists and describes five horses being mortgaged. For other reference to Donnelly's breeding of horses see Stratford Weekly Herald, Feb. 11, 1880: he has two stables full.

²⁶⁹ See for example GT, Mar. 22, 1883.

²⁷⁰ Where both are living at the time of their murders (see the third chapter following) and in October of 1878 (see MCR, John Donnelly v. James Carroll, Assault, testimony Oct. 16, 1878).

Chapter 4

¹ PAC, M.C. 29, B55, Donnelly to Thompson, Jan. 12, 1874.

² For examples see respectively IA, Oct. 9, 1880, testimony of Michael Blake, and LFP, Feb. 10, 1874.

³ Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1870-1874: Daniel Keefe lives at lot 29, sixth concession, tenant of Matthew Keefe who is his father (Canada Census Returns, 1871).

⁴ LFP, Sept. 15, 1871; also Register of the Gadl at London, June 17, 1871.

⁵ LFP, Feb. 10, 1874.

⁶ The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, 1874, Keefe v. Toohy, Assault, testimony before Henry Ferguson, Feb. 23, 1874.

⁷ In the same packet, Ferguson's Notice of Conviction, Feb. 23, 1874; also Quarterly Returns of Convictions, Feb. 23, 1874.

⁸ Quarterly Returns of Convictions, Feb. 22, 1874.

⁹ Middlesex General Sessions, Minute Book, 1866-1876, pp. 436 and 438.

¹⁰ CP, testi-

mony of Patrick Donnelly, July 10, 1881, in Queen v. James and William Feeheley, Abetting in murder. Donnelly is reporting the revelations of William Feeheley, an eye-witness. See also CPL, 1880-81 volume, p. 501, Hutchinson to Irving (undated); also CP, undated, Aemilius Irving notes on witnesses--these last two sources noting witness Luke Nangle's evidence against James Toohey.

¹¹ LFP, Feb. 26, 1876.

¹² Ibid., Nov. 19 and 20, 1875; also Register of the Gaol at London, June 10, 1875.

¹³ LFP, Feb. 10, 1874; see the incidents documented in notes 130 and 132 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

¹⁴ See the incident documented in note 150 of the immediately preceding chapter.

¹⁵ See the incident documented in notes 211 and 215 of the immediately preceding chapter.

¹⁶ See the incident documented in note 250 of the immediately preceding chapter.

¹⁷ Lucan Assessment Rolls, 1880 and 1881.

¹⁸ Respectively Strathroy Dispatch, Nov. 16, 1881, and Upper Canada Census Returns, 1851.

¹⁹ See the incident documented in note 51 of the immediately preceding chapter.

²⁰ See the incident documented in notes 130 and 132 of the immediately preceding chapter.

²¹ LFP, Dec. 19, 1877; also Irving, p. 15, testimony of William Donnelly.

²² Returns of Convictions, Aug. 31, 1877.

²³ LA, Dec. 13, 1877; also Returns of Convictions, Dec. 6, 1877.

²⁴ LA, Jan. 24, 1878, and LFP, Jan. 24, 1878.

²⁵ The account of this incident is drawn from Exeter Times, May 30 and Aug. 15, 1878, and from LFP, Aug. 5 and Aug. 17, 1878.

²⁶ Returns of Convictions, Aug. 2, 1878.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The futile prosecution can be traced in CPL, to Everett, July 31, 1878; to Crumman, Aug. 3, 1878; to Everett, Nov. 19, 1878; and to Everett, Mar. 27, 1879.

²⁹ LA, Jan. 21, 1881, testimony of Michael Blake.

³⁰ Census of Canada, 1871.

³¹ Globe, Oct. 9, 1880, testimony of Michael Blake.

³² CP, testimony of William Donnelly, July 12, 1881, in Queen v. James and William Feeheley, Abetting in murder.

³³ Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1869 ff.

³⁴ The account of the Feeheley family strife is drawn from Middlesex Court of Chancery, 1874, Feeheley v. Feeheley.

³⁵ Middlesex Court of Chancery, 1881, Donnelly v. Feeheley.

³⁶ LA, Dec. 13, 1877.

³⁷ See note 24.

³⁸ Mail, July 28, 1880.

³⁹ See the incident involving Feeheley as described in the chapter entitled "Trials".

⁴⁰ Upper Canada Census Returns, 1851, for the Ryan family's early residence in Biddulph and for Thomas Ryan's age.

⁴¹ PAC, Provincial Secretary's Correspondence, R.G. 5, Vol. 529, no. 1653; see the incident documented in note 47 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

⁴²The account of this incident and its legal disposition is drawn from MCR, 1876, Queen v. Carroll, Assault, testimony before James Owrey, July 19, 1876, and from Queen v. Ryan, Shooting with intent, testimony before W. Stanley, July 10, 1876.

⁴³For documentation of Michael Carroll's involvement with the murderers, see for example LA, Oct. 6, 1880, testimony of James Keefe Sr.; CP, petition of the inhabitants of Biddulph for appointment of James Carroll as constable (undated but with inscribed note of the appointment on Sept. 20, 1879); and MCR, 1879, Queen v. Michael Blake et al., Trespass, testimony before W. Stanley, Oct. 30, 1879.

⁴⁴Biddulph Township Assessment Rolls, 1877 and 1878: 1877 is the last year for which these Ryans appear.

⁴⁵The account of this incident is drawn from LA, Jan. 5 and 10, 1878.

⁴⁶See the incidents concerning Thomas Ryan as narrated and documented in the immediately following chapter.

⁴⁷For the addresses of all of the persons named here, see Biddulph and Lucan Assessment Rolls, 1878; for their religion, see Canada Census Returns, 1871. For Pratt's friendship with Donnelly, see Globe, Feb. 21, 1880; for his occupation see McAlpine's Directory, 1875.

⁴⁸For O'Connor's occupation see McAlpine's Directory; for his friendship with Donnellys, see incidents narrated and documented in the chapter entitled "Biddulph, North America".

⁴⁹Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁵⁰Globe, Sept. 10, 1880.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 18, 1880; also Globe, Oct. 11, 1880, testimony of McCormick.

⁵³CP, Williams to Hutchinson, Mar. 16, 1880, also Globe, Oct. 5, 1880, testimony of Thompson.

⁵⁴Globe, Oct. 11, 1880, testimony of Simpson.

⁵⁵Osler, p. 33, testimony of Kent.

⁵⁶ MCR, 1879, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny, notice of bail, Oct. 20, 1879--signed by Haskett; see also note 58 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

⁵⁷ LA, Feb. 11, 1880.

⁵⁸ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁵⁹ CP, undated letter, Donnelly to Hutchinson: Maloney's wake was held at the Donnelly homestead, mid-December, 1879; see also the incident documented in note 146 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

⁶⁰ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.)

⁶¹ Globe, Oct. 11, 1880, testimony of Patton.

⁶² CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880.

⁶³ Globe, Oct. 11, 1880, testimony of Ryder.

⁶⁴ Ibid., testimony of Grace.

⁶⁵ Irving, pp. 29-30 and 32-33, testimonies of Martin Hogan Jr. and Sr.

⁶⁶ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁶⁷ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

⁶⁸ Upper Canada Census Returns, 1851 and 1861; Canada Census Returns, 1871.

⁶⁹ The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, 1879, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny, testimony before Atkinson, McCosh and McIlhargey, Apr. 7, 1879; also, in the same packet, an undated statement of Edward Ryan.

⁷⁰ Irving, p. 10, testimony of Hodgins.

⁷¹ Porte Diary, Sept. 26, 1878, and LFP, Oct. 3, 1878.

⁷² See the undated statement cited in note 69.

⁷³ LA, Apr. 8, 1879; and Osler, p. 17, testimony of James Feeheley.

⁷⁴ See the critique of the administration of justice in Ontario in CPL, to Scott, Jan. 1882 (the exact date unspecified; 1881-2 volume, p. 432).

⁷⁵ See any example of the standard Constable's Oath of Qualification form, in Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable.

⁷⁶ For Everett's hiring, firing, departure from Lucan, and death, see respectively note 245 of the immediately preceding chapter; LFP, Apr. 18, 1879; Porte Diary, Apr. 2, 1881; and Toronto Morning News, Jan. 1, 1884.

⁷⁷ Exeter Times, Oct. 23, 1878.

⁷⁸ Porte Diary, Nov. 21, 1877.

⁷⁹ CPL, to Peters, Feb. 17, 1878.

⁸⁰ Exeter Times, Aug. 29, 1878.

⁸¹ Respectively Exeter Times, Feb. 20, 1879; Exeter Times, Mar. 13, 1879, and Porte Diary, undated entry, 1877; and CPL, to Everett, May 9, 1879.

⁸² Porte Diary, Nov. 12, 1877.

⁸³ LFP, Oct. 1, 1878; also Returns of Convictions, Sept. 20, 1878.

⁸⁴ Returns of Convictions, Mar. 9, 1878; LFP, Nov. 25, 1880; and LA, Nov. 24, 1880.

⁸⁵ LFP, Mar. 20, 1878.

⁸⁶ LFP, Nov. 24-26, 1880; LA, Nov. 23-30, 1880.

⁸⁷ Exeter Times, Mar. 20, 1879.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Sept. 4, 1879; also LFP, Sept. 2, 1879.

⁸⁹ LA, Apr. 8, 1879; LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880, says that Donnelly had been in Brooke Township (Lambton county).

⁹⁰ MCR, 1879, Queen v. Donnelly, Larceny, Certificate of dismissal, Apr. 8, 1879.

⁹¹ The account of the Hodgins-Everett altercations of Apr. 3 and Apr. 7 is drawn from MCR, 1879, Queen v. Hodgins, Assault, testimony before Peter, Apr. 28, 1879, and from Queen v. Everett, Assault, testimony before Atkinson, McCosh, and McIlhargy, Apr. 15, 1879. The dialogue recorded in this account is as reported in these sources.

⁹² LFP, Apr. 6; Exeter Times, Apr. 10; Catholic Record, Apr. 11; and LA, Apr. 9, 1879.

⁹³ MCR, 1879, Queen v. Everett, Assault, Notice of conviction, Apr. 21, 1879; also CPC, McCosh to Hutchinson, Apr. 16, 1879.

⁹⁴ MCR, 1879, Queen v. Hodgins, Assault, Information of Everett, Apr. 23, 1879.

⁹⁵ In the MCR packet cited in note 93, a Notice of Appeal, Apr. 24, 1879.

⁹⁶ Middlesex General Sessions, Minute Book, 1876-1885, pp. 215, 216, and 224.

⁹⁷ LFP, Apr. 18, 1879.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Oct. 18, 1879.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Mar. 23, 1878; for the incident of the Everett shooting; also see the incident documented in note 45; and see Exeter Times, Mar. 21, 1878.

¹⁰⁰ LA, Mar. 28, 1878.

¹⁰¹ Porte Diary, Mar. 28, 1878; LFP, Mar. 30, 1878.

¹⁰² Returns of Convictions, Apr. 5, 1878, and Apr. 8, 1878.

¹⁰³ MCR, 1878, Queen v. Donnelly, Shooting with intent, undated testimony before W. Stanley, and Notice of committal, Mar. 27, 1878.

¹⁰⁴ LA, June 13, 1878; see also Toronto Morning News, Jan. 1, 1884, where William Donnelly mentions the help given Samuel Everett by unspecified influential Lucan men.

¹⁰⁵CPC, McDiarmid to Hutchinson, May 19, 1879; see also CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881.

¹⁰⁶LA, Mar. 29-Apr. 1, 1879; and PAC, R.G. 13, B12, Vol. 53, p. 121--the Register of the Kingston Penitentiary.

¹⁰⁷LA, Dec. 23, 1878.

¹⁰⁸CPC, Wilson to Hutchinson, Apr. 28, 1879.

¹⁰⁹CPL, to McCosh, May 9; to Everett, May 9; and to Matthewson, May 14, 1879.

¹¹⁰The Penitentiary Register as cited in note 106; for the good-behaviour reduction see LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

¹¹¹The date of Donnelly's marriage is unclear; the Penitentiary Register notes that he is married--the earliest reference to that fact. For Donnelly's wife's name see the documents cited in note 60 of the chapter entitled "Epilogue: Glencoe".

¹¹²CPC, Ferguson to Hutchinson, Jan. 28, 1879.

¹¹³Ibid., Atkinson to Hutchinson, Sept. 8, 1877.

¹¹⁴Ibid., Gunn to Hutchinson, Sept. 8, 1877.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Catholic Record, Feb. 21, 1879.

¹¹⁷LFP, Apr. 16, 1879.

¹¹⁸LA, Feb. 11, 1880.

¹¹⁹For the names and dates of appointment of these magistrates see Middlesex, Clerk of the Peace and Crown Attorney, List of Officers and Justices of the Peace, etc., 1858-1891. For Collisson's address see McAlpine's Directory, 1875. A search of the Quarterly Returns of Convictions does not yield his name once.

¹²⁰Lovell's Business and Professional Directory of the Province of Ontario for 1882 (Montreal: John Lovell and Son, 1882) for McCosh's

address and occupation. See CPL, to McCosh, Apr. 22, 1877, and to Provincial Secretary, June 4, 1877.

¹²¹ For example see CPC, McCosh to Hutchinson, Apr. 16, 1879; see also LA, Apr. 23, 1879.

¹²² CP, McCosh to Hutchinson, Sept. 24, 1880.

¹²³ LFP, Oct. 8, 1880.

¹²⁴ Goodspeed, pp. 462, 464-6, 468; also City of London and County of Middlesex Directory for 1881-82, compiled by J. Harrison White (London: London Publishing Company, 1881).

¹²⁵ CPL, to O'Neil, Jan. 25, 1876.

¹²⁶ See for illustrations Exeter Times, Dec. 3, 1874, and LFP, Apr. 22, 1880.

¹²⁷ LA, Feb. 11, 1880.

¹²⁸ Goodspeed, pp. 455 and 457; also City of London and County of Middlesex General Directory for 1868-69, edited and compiled by James Sutherland (Toronto: C.E. Anderson and Company, 1868).

¹²⁹ LFP, Oct. 8, 1880.

¹³⁰ CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881; also MCR, 1881, Queen v. Robert and William Donnelly, Attempt at arson, testimony and record of commitment, Oct. 13, 1881.

¹³¹ See the incident documented in notes 112-114 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

¹³² CP, petition for the appointment of James Carroll, undated.

¹³³ LFP, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of William Donnelly.

¹³⁴ See the incidents documented in notes 124-126 of the chapter entitled "A Township Getting Started".

¹³⁵ CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881.

¹³⁶ Goodspeed, pp. 462 and 467.

137 The account of this incident is drawn from LFP, Sept. 17, Sept. 26, and Oct. 14, 1879, and Feb. 3, 1880; from Exeter Times, June 5, 1879; from Porte Diary, Oct. 6 and 8, 1879; and from Mail, Feb. 5, 1880.

138 Goodspeed, p. 463.

139 LFP, June 19, 1880.

140 Goodspeed, pp. 457, 465, 467 respectively.

141 LFP, Aug. 20, 1878; for a description of the travel habits of others in Biddulph, see the affidavits in Queen v. James Carroll, as published in, for example, LFP, Apr. 13, 1880.

142 See the incident documented in notes 68-70 of the chapter entitled "A Township Getting Started". For Lucan's regularly Conservative voting habits, see Province of Ontario Sessional Papers, 1871-2, No. 39; 1875-6, No. 59; 1880, No. 19; and 1884, No. 1; also Dominion of Canada Sessional Papers, 1873, No. 60; 1875, No. 41; 1879, No. 88; and 1883, No. 177.

143 Exeter Times, May 29, 1879.

144 For examples, LFP, Sept. 24 and Nov. 19, 1878, and May 7 and May 28, 1879.

145 Ibid., Sept. 11, 1878, and Sept. 26, 1879.

146 Ibid., Nov. 20, 1880: the argument is implicit that what is good for the Stanley-Dight mill is good for the whole economy, and that the Conservative party deserves the credit.

147 Ibid., Sept. 15, 1875.

148 Ibid., Feb. 16, 1880.

149 See note 243 of the chapter entitled "Stages".

150 See the incident documented in notes 98-101 of the chapter entitled "The Donnelly Family".

151 See the incident documented in note 140 of the chapter entitled "Stages".

152 See the incident documented in note 42 of this chapter.

- 153 CPL, to Irving, Oct. 13, 1881.
- 154 See respectively Lovell's Directory, 1882; Goodspeed, p. 463; and (for example) LFP, Sept. 24, 1878.
- 155 Exeter Times, Apr. 24, 1879; see note 92.
- 156 LA, Dec. 5, 1879.
- 157 See respectively Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 2, 1876 (see incidents documented in notes 140-141 of "Stages"); Returns of Convictions, June 21, 1877 (see incident cited in note 251 of "Stages"); Returns of Convictions, Dec. 6, 1877 (see note 27); Returns, Apr. 8, 1878 (see note 102); Returns, Aug. 2, 1878 (see note 29).
- 158 Globe, Feb. 7, 1880.
- 159 MCR, 1876, Queen v. Thomas, James, and John Donnelly, Arson; 5 pages of unsigned and undated notes in the handwriting of Hugh McKinnon (see note 118 of "Stages").
- 160 Porte Diary, many entries, the latest being Apr. 10, 1898, only months before Porte's death.
- 161 No mention of Porte in the Quarterly Returns of Convictions in MCR; Blake v. Donnelly, Perjury, testimonies before Stanley, Oct. 30, 1879, are in Porte's handwriting and he sends to Crown Attorney Hutchinson the transcripts, asking advice on behalf of Stanley (see CPC, Porte to Hutchinson, Oct. 31, 1879)--the only record of Porte involvement in a legal dispute.
- 162 CP, Donnelly to Magee, Sept. 18, 1880, for Crunican's friendship.
- 163 Canada Census Returns, 1871.
- 164 CPL, to Crunican, Aug. 3, 1878.
- 165 LFP, Aug. 17, 1878.
- 166 CPL, to McIlhargey, Oct. 21, 1876.
- 167 Ibid., to McIlhargey, Feb. 19, 1879. See also LA, Apr. 23, 1879; and McIlhargey's reply in LFP, Apr. 29, 1879.

168 CPC; McIlhargey to Hutchinson, Sept. 28, 1876; Middlesex General Sessions, Minute Book, 1876-1885, p. 29; CPL, to McIlhargey, Oct. 21, 1876; see note 76 of "Stages".

169 See note 175 of this chapter.

170 Census of Canada, 1871, for his age; for a description and portrait, see LA, Feb. 26, 1880. For the following account, involving the Carroll property see Middlesex Court of Chancery, 1882, Carroll et al. v. Delehay et al.; also see Middlesex County Surrogate Court, Non-Contentious Business Book, 1859-1886, entry no. 1059; Rodger Carroll's will, in the Huron County Registry Office, is dated Feb. 16, 1873.

171 Census of Canada, 1871.

172 LFP, Feb. 13, 1880.

173 MCR; 1879, Queen v. Michael Blake et al., Trespass, testimony before Peters, Sept. 20, 1879--John Donnelly reporting James Maher's accusations. These sources involve testimony from both sides--James Carroll, and the several Donnellys. These testimonies agree on many points: Where they do not, this account follows the Donnelly version, Carroll's testimony being at these points transparently self-serving and self-righteous, as in the following: "He [John Donnelly] saw me and called saying he wanted to talk to me. I paid no attention to him. He kept calling after me. I told him I did not want to talk to him. I had too much respect for myself... He told me he wanted to fight me, I told him I did not want to fight..." In comparison of the rival testimonies, the Donnelly version seems undeniably more balanced and credible. (The above quotation is from Carroll's Oct. 16 testimony.)

174 Exeter Times, Oct. 3, 1878.

175 The account of this incident is drawn from MCR, 1878, Donnelly v. Carroll, Pointing a pistol; testimony Oct. 19, 1878, and Carroll v. Donnelly, Assault, testimony Oct. 16, 1878, and Queen v. Carroll, Assault, testimony Oct. 26, 1878.

176 Respectively DFP, Information of Carroll before Peters, JP, Oct. 14, 1878; DFP, photocopy of Carroll's Information, Oct. 14; Returns of Convictions, Oct. 14, 1878; and DFP, Information of John Donnelly before McCosh, JP, Oct. 14, 1878.

177 Returns of Convictions, Oct. 15, 1878--with the notation "dismissed"; the testimony cited first in note 175 indicates that the deciding issue was whether or not the gun could be proven to have been loaded.

- 178 Notation on the testimony document cited second in note 175.
- 179 LFP, Oct. 22, 1878.
- 180 DFP, photocopy of Donnelly's Information, before Peters, Oct. 21, 1878; notation inscribed on the testimony document cited third in note 175.
- 181 DFP, Notice of appeal, Oct. 23, 1878; Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, pp. 193 and 209.
- 182 Sessions Minute Book, pp. 194, 202, and 225; see also CPC, Bill of appellant's costs in *Donnelly v. Carroll*, Appeal, December Sessions, 1878, undated.
- 183 See Catholic Record, Oct. 24, 1879, for the size of the parish; see LA, Feb. 26, 1880, for Walsh's action and motive.
- 184 Catholic Record, Jan. 16, 1880.
- 185 A biography of Connolly appears as part of his funeral oration in Catholic Record, Oct. 19, 1909.
- 186 Thomas Walsh, History of the Irish Hierarchy (New York: D. and J. Reilly and Company, 1856), p. 488.
- 187 Sir Francis B. Head, Fortnight in Ireland (New York: G.P. Putnam and Company, 1853), p. 75.
- 188 Respectively, Globe, Feb. 16, 1880, and Mar. 1, 1880.
- 189 MCR, 1879, *Queen v. Blake et al.*, Trespass, testimony of John Connolly, Sept. 27, 1879.
- 190 Exeter Times, June 18, 1874; Catholic Record, Nov. 22, 1878, and LFP, June 9, 1880, for remarks concerning the St. Patrick's Church and parsonage.
- 191 LFP, Apr. 15, 1879.
- 192 Irving, p. 3, testimony of John O'Connor: "I don't think I ever saw any of them [i.e. the men he saw at the Donnelly murders] at church; if they had been in the habit of going to that church I would have known them".

Chapter 5.

¹ For an account of these pastoral visits see Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880--an interview given by William Donnelly to a Globe reporter, and published in two installments on two consecutive days, in which he traces Biddulph history between the arrival of John Connolly and the murders. Many incidents in this chapter are drawn from this source exclusively; any subsequent citations of "Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880" refer to this interview. These are personal and local incidents, not reported in area newspapers and not involving criminal and civil legal suits; hence there is no other source material except the Donnelly interview. There are several reasons why William Donnelly can be considered an accurate and reliable source of information:

Whenever a statement of Donnelly's can be checked against an independent source, Donnelly has been corroborated; it is only very rarely and in minor matters (such as an exact date) that Donnelly is contradicted. Partisan attempts to discredit Donnelly's published assertions are not successful; his accusers never identify themselves by name (see for example the exchange in LFP, June 24, June 29, June 30, Sept. 8, Sept. 9, and Sept. 10, 1880). Reports of Donnelly's testimony in the trials Queen v. James Carroll regularly stress his credibility: for example, Globe, Oct. 7, 1880: "He gave his evidence rapidly and without hesitation...". In contrast are the testimonies of many other witnesses, characterized by reticence and hesitation (Mail, Jan. 29, 1881: "In fact, all Biddulphers seem to 'disremember'..."). Although one defence strategy in Queen v. Carroll is to present witnesses to testify that they would not believe Donnelly under oath, the Crown questioners are able to expose the reasons for their biases, and to present an equal number of witnesses who testify to Donnelly's honesty. Donnelly's accounts are uniformly precise, full, and internally consistent. It is instructive to compare Donnelly's accounts (published or unpublished, in court or in private letters) with other accounts which, uncorroborated by other sources, have been rejected in the writing of this history because they seem madly one-sided and self-serving (for example, the testimony of Thomas Ryder in Mail, Oct. 9, 1880). Donnelly's reliability is assumed by the Crown prosecutors, Hutchinson and Irving, who may be considered knowledgeable and objective; again, it is instructive to contrast the witnesses in, for example, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny of William Esdale, who are doubted by that same prosecutor Hutchinson (see notes 155 and 188 of the chapter entitled "Stages"). Finally, it should be noted that there is a broad consensus in the press that Donnelly's attitude toward Connolly (who is the main subject of the Mar. 2-3 interview) is fair and dispassionate, not bitter or vindictive; he praises the priest's motives throughout and dissociates him from the inner group of Vigilant murderers. See LFP Weekly, Feb. 12; LA, Feb. 9; Globe, Feb. 9; and Mail, Feb. 7, 1880.

² Globe, Feb. 7, 1880.

³ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See, for example, Mail, Feb. 7, 1880.

⁶ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See the incidents described in the preceding chapter, and documented in notes 89 and 91.

⁹ MCR, 1879, Queen v. Thomas Doanally, Larceny, Certificate of Dismissal, Apr. 18, 1879; also CP, undated and unsigned notes in the handwriting of Aemilius Irving, concerning various witnesses in Queen v. Carroll.

¹⁰ The account of the Keefe-Carroll fight, their arrest and subsequent discharge, and the simultaneous problems of Samuel Everett and the Lucan council are drawn from Exeter Times, Apr. 10, 1879; LA, Apr. 11, 1879; Catholic Record, Apr. 11, 1879; and LFP, Apr. 6, 11, and 14, 1879.

¹¹ LFP, Apr. 15, 1879.

¹² Ostler, pp. 43 and 67, testimony of Charles Pope.

¹³ Catholic Record, Oct. 17, 1879; also LA, Feb. 7, 1880.

¹⁴ LFP, May 13, 1879.

¹⁵ The account of the horse theft and Connolly's subsequent actions against Ryan are drawn from Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

¹⁶ Mail, Feb. 7, 1880.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

¹⁹ See the incidents described in the preceding chapter and documented in notes 108-109; for Connolly's involvement see LA, Feb. 7, 1880, and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

²⁰ For the source of these events concerning the Carroll inheritance, see the Court of Chancery depositions cited in note 170 of the preceding chapter.

- ²¹ LFP, June 24, 1879.
- ²² LA, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ²³ Mail, Feb. 7, 1880.
- ²⁴ A photocopy of the oath and the appended signatures is in CP.
- ²⁵ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.
- ²⁶ MCR, 1879, Donnelly v. Maher et al., Trespass, testimony of Connolly, Sept. 27, 1879.
- ²⁷ Irving, p. 13, testimony of William Donnelly.
- ²⁸ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.
- ²⁹ For example, Irving, p. 9, testimony of Thomas Keefe; also Globe, Feb. 28, 1880.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 8 and p. 15, testimonies of William Thompson and Henry Phair.
- ³¹ LA, Feb. 6, 1880.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ For records of Connolly's parish activities, see for example Catholic Record, July 11, 1879, and LFP, Aug. 27, 1879.
- ³⁴ CP, Patrick Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 12, 1880, reporting remarks of Connolly.
- ³⁵ For accounts of Donnelly's prohibition and Connolly's intervention, see for example LA, Feb. 6, 1880, and Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880-- William Donnelly's and John Connolly's accounts.
- ³⁶ Irving, pp. 32-33, testimony of Martin Hogan.
- ³⁷ For a description of the schoolhouse see LA, Mar. 7, 1881.
- ³⁸ Mail, Mar. 1, 1880.

³⁹ For accounts of the Society's practice see Osler, p. 51, testimony of William Casey, and p. 56, testimony of Michael Blake; LA, Jan. 29, 1881, testimony of Dennis Magee; CP, testimony of Patrick Donnelly in *Queen v. James and William Feechelev*, July 10, 1881; and LA, Feb. 6, 1880. For the decision concerning Ryan's thresher, see LFP Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of John Cain.

⁴⁰ See note 36.

⁴¹ MCR, 1879, *Donnelly v. Maher et al.*, Trespass, testimony of Mary Thompson, Sept. 27, 1879.

⁴² Irving, p. 28, testimony of William Casey; also LFP, Mar. 10, 1880, testimony of Casey.

⁴³ Osler, p. 82, testimony of James Toohey.

⁴⁴ For these events during and after the meeting, see Osler p. 45, testimony of William Hodgins; Irving, p. 7, testimony of William Thompson; LA, Oct. 6, 1880, testimony of John Cain, and LFP, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of William Stanley.

⁴⁵ Osler, p. 60, testimony of James Keete.

⁴⁶ *Globe*, Mar. 2-3, 1880, and *Mail*, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of John Cain, for account of the events at Powe's.

⁴⁷ CP, *Donnelly to Hutchinson*, Sept. 18, 1880.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, *Donnelly to Hutchinson*, Feb. 28, 1882; also *Globe*, Mar. 3, 1880.

⁴⁹ MCR, 1880, *Queen v. James and Johannah Donnelly, Arson*, in testimony Jan. 27, 1880, Bridget Donnelly says that she has been in Biddulph "over a year steady"; William Donnelly in *Globe*, Mar. 2-3, 1880, says that when Conolly was making his first pastoral visits, Bridget Donnelly's arrival in Biddulph was "recent"--probably in that same month of January.

⁵⁰ The account of the trespass--including all dialogue--is drawn from MCR, 1879, *Queen v. James Maher et al.*, Trespass, testimony before Peters, Sept. 20 and 27, 1879; and from *Blake v. Donnelly, Perjury*, testimony before Stanley, Oct. 30, and before Grant, Nov. 25, 1879; also Osler, p. 61, testimony of Thomas Hines.

⁵¹ *Globe*, Mar. 2-3, 1880, for Kennedy's remark and his leadership.

⁵² Osler, p. 60, and Mail, Oct. 7, 1880--testimony of Thomas Marshall.

⁵³ LA, Oct. 6, 1880, testimony of James Keefe.

⁵⁴ Ibid., testimony of John Cain.

⁵⁵ Osler, p. 61, and LA, Oct. 6, 1880--testimony of Edward Sutherby.

⁵⁶ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880; LA, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of William Donnelly; and CP, testimony of William Donnelly, Feb. 28, 1880, in Queen v. James Carroll et al.

⁵⁷ MCR, 1880, Queen v. James and Johannah Donnelly, Arson; testimony of Mary Carroll, Jan. 27, 1880; also Globe, Feb. 9, 1880.

⁵⁸ For events concerning the threshing, see Globe, Oct. 7, 1880, LFP, Oct. 7, and LA, Oct. 6, 1880--testimony of John Cain; also Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁵⁹ Returns of Convictions, Sept. 6, 1879; Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880, for Kennedy's involvement.

⁶⁰ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ DFP, Information of John Donnelly before Peters, Sept. 10, 1879; UPL, to Peters, Sept. 10, 1879.

⁶⁴ CP contain the (undated) petition; for an account of the meeting to appoint a constable and to plan a defence against the charge of trespass, see LA, Oct. 6, testimony of John Cain; for Blake's involvement in the petition see Osler, p. 56, and Globe, Oct. 9, 1880--testimony of Michael Blake; John Blake acts on the Vigilants' behalf in trials cited in note 50.

⁶⁵ A note inscribed by County Judge Elliott on the Vigilants' petition dates Carroll's appointment; see also LA, Sept. 20, 1879. Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, p. 228, records his appointment Oct. 4--presumably a formalization of earlier appointment.

⁶⁶ Carroll's own oath document is not extant; the oath would be the same as any constable's oath (see Applications, Correspondence and

Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex).

⁶⁷Osler, p. 44, and Irving, p. 5, testimony of Charles Pope.

⁶⁸For events concerning the Carroll Stephen Township properties, again see Middlesex, Court of Chancery, 1882, Carroll v. Delohay et al.

⁶⁹Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1881; Globe, Aug. 24, 1880.

⁷⁰MCR, 1879, Donnelly v. Maher et al., Trespass, testimony of Connolly, Sept. 27, 1879.

⁷¹Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880; also LA, Oct. 6, 1880, testimony of John Cain.

⁷²MCR, 1879, Queen v. Thomas Donnelly, Larceny, statement of Edward Ryan, Sept. 27, 1879, with inscribed notes of proceedings.

⁷³Osler, pp. 44-45, testimony of William Hodgins.

⁷⁴See the incidents documented in note 73 of the preceding chapter; also Osler, pp. 15-17, testimony of James Feeheley.

⁷⁵Irving, p. 33, testimony of William Maher.

⁷⁶The account of the arrest is drawn from Osler, pp. 58-59, testimony of William Simpson and of John Kent; and from Globe and LA, Jan. 29, 1881, testimony of Simpson and Kent.

⁷⁷LFP, Sept. 26, 1879; also notations cited in note 72.

⁷⁸See the proceedings cited first in note 50.

⁷⁹DFP, notations inscribed on Information of Edward Ryan before Peters, Sept. 20, 1879.

⁸⁰The dismissal is recorded in notations cited in note 72; for Carroll's involvement and remark see Osler, p. 52, and Globe, Jan. 29, 1881--testimony of William McDiarmid.

⁸¹CPC, Cameron to Hutchinson, Oct. 20, 1879.

⁸²Ibid.; for Cameron's role see also CP, Cameron to Hutchinson, Sept. 29, 1880.

⁸³ CP contain the indictment document.

⁸⁴ For Carroll's and Hodgins' attempted arrest of Thomas Donnelly, the notations cited in note 72; also the Irving notes cited in note 9; also MCR, 1879, Queen v. John Donnelly, Aiding a felon to escape, testimony before Grant, Oct. 17, 1879.

⁸⁵ LA, Oct. 8, 1880, testimony of James Ryder.

⁸⁶ Osler, p. 19, testimony of Thomas Keefe.

⁸⁷ Irving, p. 14, testimony of William Donnelly.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Osler, p. 61, testimony of Edward Sutherby.

⁹⁰ DEP contain a photocopy of Carroll's information.

⁹¹ For Grant's background see White's Directory, 1881, and Lewis, Sure An' This Is Biddulph, p. 68; for the cause of his anti-Donnelly attitude, see Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁹² CPL, to McCosh, Oct. 15, 1879.

⁹³ LA, Feb. 6, 1880.

⁹⁴ Catholic Record, Oct. 17, 1879.

⁹⁵ Irving, p. 14, testimony of William Donnelly.

⁹⁶ LA, Oct. 15, 1880, testimony of James Feeheley.

⁹⁷ CP, undated notes in Irving's handwriting regarding witnesses in Queen v. Carroll--filed with, but only partially duplicating, notes cited in note 9.

⁹⁸ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

⁹⁹ LA, Feb. 10, 1880.

¹⁰⁰ LFP, Mar. 3, 1880.

¹⁰¹ Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

¹⁰²For example, Osler, p. 56, testimony of Michael Blake.

¹⁰³See respectively note 66 of "Stages"; Globe, Sept. 10, 1880; note 240 of "Stages"; LFP, Mar. 20, and Exeter Times, Mar. 21, 1878; note 71 of "The People of Biddulph"; note 241 of "Stages". For Darcy's opinion see his testimony in LA, Jan. 29, 1881.

¹⁰⁴LA, Feb. 11, 1880; Porte Diary, Sept. 13, 1877.

¹⁰⁵See notes 25-27 of "The People of Biddulph"; for Vigilant remembrance see LA, Jan. 29, 1881, testimony of Michael Blake.

¹⁰⁶LA, Jan. 29, 1881; Blake's testimony again.

¹⁰⁷LFP, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of John Cain.

¹⁰⁸Mail, Oct. 8, 1880, testimony of James McGrath.

¹⁰⁹Irving, p. 15, testimony of Robert Ross.

¹¹⁰Osler, p. 10, testimony of Patrick Whelan.

¹¹¹Osler, p. 57, testimony of Michael Blake.

¹¹²CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880; also LA, Jan. 29, 1881, testimony of Michael Power.

¹¹³Globe, Feb. 7, 1880.

¹¹⁴Porte Diary, July 2, 1877, Aug. 28, 1877, Apr. 8, 1878, June 24, 1879, and Oct. 4, 1879.

¹¹⁵Irving, p. 25, testimony of William Donnelly; also Mail, Mar. 10, 1880.

¹¹⁶MCR, 1879, Queen v. John Donnelly, Aiding a felon to escape from arrest, testimony before James Grant, Oct. 17, 1879; see also CPC, Grant to Hutchinson, Oct. 13, 1879.

¹¹⁷CPL, to Grant, Oct. 14, 1879.

¹¹⁸In the MCR packet cited in note 116, the Sheriff's Notice of committal, Oct. 17, 1879.

119 In the same packet, the Oct. 17 Bail recognizance; for scheduled date of trial see CPL, to Blake, Oct. 18, 1879.

120 The letter to Blake cited in note 119; also CPL, to Meredith, Oct. 20, 1879.

121 The same two letters as cited in 120.

122 Middlesex, Criminal Courts, Case Registers, Vol. 3, p. 137.

123 CP, Information of Blake, before Stanley, Oct. 22, 1879.

124 CPL, to Stanley, Oct. 29, 1879.

125 MCR, 1879, Queen v. John Donnelly, Perjury, testimony before Stanley, Oct. 30, 1879; CPC, Porte to Hutchinson, Oct. 31, 1879.

126 CPL, to Stanley, Nov. 6, 1879.

127 LFP, Nov. 20, 1879, and Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

128 DFP, Information of Carroll before Grant, Nov. 20, 1879; also Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880, for Connolly's approval.

129 CPL, to Grant, Nov. 25, 1879; also to Grant, Dec. 26 and Dec. 31, 1879 on the same topic; and CPC, Grant to Hutchinson, Nov. 24, 1879.

130 MCR, 1879, Queen v. Donnelly, Perjury, testimony before Grant, Nov. 25, 1879; also Recognizances of prosecutors to testify, Notice of committal of John Donnelly, and Bail recognizance of John Donnelly, all Nov. 26, 1879, in the same packet.

131 For an account of the meeting to nominate magistrates see Osler, p. 56, testimony of Michael Blake, and LA, Jan. 29, 1881, testimony of William Casey and of Martin Darcy.

132 See CPL, Hutchinson to Casey, Nov. 26, 1879, Johnson to Casey, Dec. 11, and to Darcy, Dec. 1879; that there are no such letters to McLaughlin concerning his appointment indicates that he declined to serve. CPL, Johnson to Casey, Dec. 30, 1879, records the issue of Statutes; see List of Officers and Justices of the Peace, etc., 1858-1891, for date of Casey's appointment.

133 PAO, Norfolk County, Gaol Register (1876-1925), Dec. 10, 1879.

134 See Armitage-Stanley papers, Donnelly genealogy file, for Michael Donnelly's family.

135 The account of the murder is drawn from Globe, May 15, and Mail, May 15, 1880, testimony in Queen v. William Lewis.

136 Mail, May 15, 1880.

137 As noted in the Norfolk-Caol entry cited in note 133.

138 LA, Feb. 7, 1880.

139 PAC, R.C. 13, B12, Vol. 53, p. 121 (the Register of the Kingston Penitentiary); also Porte Diary, Jan. 11, 1880.

140 LFP, Apr. 1, 1878: James Donnelly Sr. testifying in Queen v. Robert Donnelly, Shooting with intent, mentions that Robert has been spending considerable time in Glencoe.

141 CP, Carroll to Fewings, Jan. 30, 1880.

142 MCR, Queen v. James and Johannah Donnelly, Arson, testimony, Jan. 22, 1880; also LA, Jan. 20, 1880.

143 In the same MCR packet, testimony, Jan. 27, 1880.

144 See Ryder's testimony in the packet cited in note 142.

145 CP, Donnelly to Irving, Apr. 3, 1880.

146 See note 57; also Ryder's testimony as cited in note 144.

147 Again, Ryder's testimony as in note 144.

148 DFP, Information of Ryder, before Casey, Jan. 15, 1880.

149 DFP, Information of Ryder, before Casey, Jan. 17, 1880.

150 Catholic Record, Jan. 16, 1880

151 Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

152 CPL, to Irving, undated (probably Jan. 15, 1881), p. 501 of the 1880-1881 volume.

153 ibid.

154 CP, unsigned memo in the handwriting of Charles Hutchinson, recording statement made Sept. 23, 1881, presumably by Keefe.

155 The Hutchinson letter cited in note 152.

156 For Hodgins' involvement see Osler, p. 44, Hodgins' testimony; for the other constable's (Samuel Hodgins') involvement, see Irving as cited in note 9.

157 For this remark and the arrest of Johannah Donnelly, see Mail, Oct. 7, and LA, Oct. 7, 1880--testimony of James Fewings.

158 In the packet cited in note 142, Bail recognizance, Jan. 19, 1880.

159 For Mowbray's address see Biddulph Township Assessment Roll, 1875 ff.

160 Notation inscribed on the record of testimony Jan. 22, 1880, in the packet cited in note 142.

161 Osler, pp. 16-17, testimony of James Feeheley.

162 For the action of Mary McLaughlin, see LFP, Oct. 7, 1880, testimony of William Casey; for the action of the Whelans see LFP, Oct. 6, 1880, testimony of Patrick Whelan, and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

163 Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

164 LA, Sept. 29, 1879;

165 Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880.

166 The record of proceedings in the Arson packet (note 142) does not mention an adjournment to Feb. 4; but see LA, Feb. 4, 1880, the letter from James Donnelly Sr. to Edmund Meredith.

167 ibid.

168 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880.

169 CP, testimony of James Hogan, July 12, 1881, in preliminary hearing of Queen v, James and William Feeheley, Abetting murder.

Chapter 6

¹ Except where indicated otherwise in a footnote, all information in this chapter concerning the murders of the five Donnellys, the arson of the Donnelly homestead, the activities of the Donnellys and the murderers, is drawn (every detail) from public testimony of witnesses at the two inquests, the magistrates' preliminary hearings, and the two murder trials of James Carroll. Reports of these proceedings which have been drawn upon are those in LFP, LA, Globe, and Mail. Also used were Irving and Osler.

² CPC, William Donnelly to Charles Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1880.

³ For Feeheley's actions see CP, statements of Patrick Donnelly and James Hogan and John H. McConnell, re disclosures made by William and James Feeheley, April, 1881.

⁴ CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880; CPL, to Irving, June 24, 1880.

⁵ CPL, to Irving, undated, p. 500-501 of the 1880-1881 volume.

⁶ CP, Statement of John McConnell re disclosures by James Feeheley, May 7, 1881.

⁷ Ibid.; also the statement of James Hogan (undated). Also CPL, to Irving, Aug. 25, 1880.

⁸ LA, Apr. 7, 1880.

⁹ Statement of James Hogan re Feeheley disclosures, as cited in note 7.

¹⁰ CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 2, 1881.

¹¹ Globe, Mar. 11, 1880.

¹² CP, William Donnelly to E.F. Johnson, Feb. 18, 1881.

¹³ LFP, Feb. 18, 1880.

¹⁴ Spencer Armitage-Stanley Papers, Donnelly Genealogical file: Jo-Anna Donnelly, daughter of William and Nora, born on June 25, 1880.

¹⁵ CP, Statement of John McConnell re Feeheley disclosures,

May 7, 1881.

¹⁶ CPL, to Irving, Sept. 13, 1880.

¹⁷ Mail, Feb. 5, 1880.

¹⁸ Mail, Feb. 9, 1880; Stratford Weekly Herald, Feb. 11, 1880.

¹⁹ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880, for description of the coffin.

²⁰ CP, Statement of John McConnell re Feeheley disclosures,
May 7, 1881.

Chapter 7

¹ The account of John O'Connor's homecoming is drawn from testimony of Mary O'Connor as reported in LA, Feb. 21, 1880, LFP, Feb. 23, 1880, and Irving, p. 3. Also her testimony at James Carroll's second trial, as recorded in Osler, pp. 34-35.

² CP, William Donnelly to Charles Hutchinson, Dec. 14, 1880.

³ The account of the incidents in Cranton is drawn from Irving, pp. 28-29, testimony of William Casey, and of Patrick Whelan, pp. 30-32.

⁴ Stratford Weekly Herald, Feb. 11, 1880.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ LA, Feb. 13, 1880; reprinted from Norwich Gazette.

⁷ Ibid., Feb. 14, 1880; reprinted from St. Marys Journal.

⁸ Ibid.; reprinted from Collingwood Bulletin.

⁹ Ibid., Feb. 13, 1880; reprinted from Petrolia Topic.

¹⁰ Ibid., Feb. 14, 1880; reprinted from Lucknow Sentinel.

¹¹ Original transcript of the inquests, including record of adjournments, is in CP.

- 12 Irving, pp. 21-22, testimony of William Hodge.
- 13 Irving, p. 17, testimony of William T.T. Williams.
- 14 Irving, pp. 4-5. The account of Carroll's arrest is from testimony of Charles Pope, and of William Hodge, pp. 21-24.
- 15 For John Kennedy Sr.'s actions see Globe, Feb. 3, 1881.
- 16 Irving, pp. 24-25, testimony of George W. Pitt, a jeweller and gun expert. See also the undated statement of P. Marsden, Toronto gunmaker, in the CP. Both agree that McLaughlin's rifle had been recently fired and imperfectly cleaned. Marsden was able to match the bullet retrieved at the William Donnelly residence, to the gun he examined.
- 17 LA, Feb. 6, 1880.
- 18 LA, Feb. 7, 1880; Globe, Feb. 9, 1880; also General Register of the Gaol at London, Feb. 7, 1880.
- 19 LA, Feb. 9, 1880; General Register of the Gaol at London; Feb. 7 and 8, 1880.
- 20 See accounts of the wakes and funeral in Globe, Feb. 7, 1880; LA, Feb. 7, 1880; and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- 21 CP, Statement of Patrick Donnelly, Apr. 23, 1881.
- 22 LA, Feb. 5, 1880.
- 23 Ibid., Feb. 6, 1880.
- 24 Globe, Feb. 20, 1880.
- 25 LFP, Feb. 15, 1880.
- 26 Globe, Feb. 20, 1880.
- 27 Ibid., Feb. 10, 1880.
- 28 Middlesex, Coroner's Inquests, 1880, testimony of Michael O'Connor inquest into burning at O'Connor residence, Apr. 15, 1880.
- 29 Globe, Mar. 1, 1880.

- ³⁰ LA., Feb. 6, 1880.
- ³¹ LFP, Feb. 16, 1880.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Globe, Feb. 9, 1880.
- ³⁴ Mail, Feb. 10, 1880.
- ³⁵ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ³⁶ LFP, Feb. 16, 1880.
- ³⁷ Mail, Feb. 11, 1880.
- ³⁸ CPL., to Scott, Feb. 14, 1880.
- ³⁹ CPL., to Scott, Feb. 24, 1880.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., to Mowat, Mar. 9, 1880.
- ⁴¹ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ⁴² CPL., to Mowat, Mar. 6, 1880, and to Scott, Mar. 29, 1880.
- ⁴³ Globe, Feb. 14, 1880.
- ⁴⁴ Mail, Feb. 6, 1880; LA., Feb. 10, 1880.
- ⁴⁵ See respectively note 54; Globe, Mar. 1, 1880 and LFP, Sept. 8 and 9, 1880; Globe, Oct. 8, 1880; GT, Sept. 17, 1885; and Globe, Feb. 14, 1880.
- ⁴⁶ Mail, Feb. 14, 1880.
- ⁴⁷ See the testimony cited in note 125.
- ⁴⁸ LA., Feb. 1, 1880.
- ⁴⁹ Globe, Feb. 9, 1880.
- ⁵⁰ The description of the inquest is drawn from Mail, Feb. 12, 1880.

- ⁵¹ Ibid., Feb. 13, 1880.
- ⁵² LA, Feb. 12, 1880; CPL, to William Donnelly, Mar. 5, 1880.
- ⁵³ LFP, Feb. 23, 1880.
- ⁵⁴ Mail, Feb. 5, 1880.
- ⁵⁵ See LFP, Feb. 18, 1880, for description of this inquest hearing.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., Feb. 18, 1880.
- ⁵⁷ Globe, Feb. 19, 1880.
- ⁵⁸ LA, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ⁵⁹ Mail, Feb. 19, 1880.
- ⁶⁰ LA, Mar. 2, 1880.
- ⁶¹ Globe, Mar. 3; Mail, Mar. 3 and Mar. 4; LFP, Mar. 6; LA, Mar. 3, 1880, for the description of this inquest hearing.
- ⁶² For the jury disagreement see Stratford Times, Mar. 10, 1880.
- ⁶³ Globe, Mar. 3, 1880.
- ⁶⁴ Register of the Gaol at London, Feb. 7, 1880.
- ⁶⁵ Mail, Feb. 13, 1880.
- ⁶⁶ Register of the Gaol at London, Feb. 8, 1880.
- ⁶⁷ Mail, Feb. 9, 1880.
- ⁶⁸ LA, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ⁶⁹ LA, Feb. 18, 1880.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., Apr. 21, 1880.
- ⁷¹ Mail, Feb. 11, 1880.

⁷² Globe, Feb. 21, 1880.

⁷³ Ibid., Feb. 21, 1880.

⁷⁴ CPL., to Nowat, Mar. 6, 1880.

⁷⁵ CPC, Magee to Hutchinson, Feb. 21, 1880.

⁷⁶ LA, Feb. 21, 1880.

⁷⁷ CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1880--the earliest extant communication of Irving concerning the Biddulph prosecutions. This is after six days of the preliminary hearings.

⁷⁸ LFP, Feb. 22, 1880.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Feb. 27, 1880.

⁸⁰ LA, Feb. 23, 1880.

⁸¹ Mail, Mar. 13, 1880.

⁸² All testimonies at the preliminary investigations are in Irving.

⁸³ See A. Margaret Evans, Oliver Mowat and Ontario, 1872-1896. A Study in Political Success, an unpublished Ph.D. thesis at University of Toronto, 1967. And see Donald Swainson, editor, Oliver Mowat's Ontario (Toronto: MacMillan, 1972). The consensus concerning Mowat's political career, in these most recent of Mowat studies, is of "a broad, integrative and pragmatic creed" (Swainson's introduction, p. 4), a view profusely borne out in these same two volumes.

⁸⁴ CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Feb. 6, 1880.

⁸⁵ CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Mar. 9, 1880.

⁸⁶ LA, Feb. 7, 1880.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Feb. 5, 1880.

⁸⁹ Mail, Feb. 6, 1880.

- ⁹⁰ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- ⁹¹ CPL, to Magee, Feb. 19, 1880.
- ⁹² Ibid., to Scott, Feb. 24, 1880.
- ⁹³ Ibid., to Mowat, Mar. 6, 1880.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., to Scott, Feb. 27, 1880.
- ⁹⁶ St. Marys Argus, Feb. 6, 1880. Reprinted in LA, Feb. 7, 1880.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., to Scott, Feb. 14, 1880.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., to Mowat, Mar. 6, 1880.
- ⁹⁹ Census of Canada, 1880-81, Vol. 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ See Evans' thesis, Chapter 4 especially.
- ¹⁰¹ Globe, Feb. 13, 1880.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., Feb. 10, and Feb. 11, 1880.
- ¹⁰³ Irish-Canadian, Feb. 11, 1880.
- ¹⁰⁴ LFP, Mar. 19, 1880; Catholic Record, Mar. 26, 1880. Reprinted from Hamilton Spectator.
- ¹⁰⁵ Christian Guardian, Feb. 11, 1880.
- ¹⁰⁶ CP, Mowat to Magee, Feb. 16, 1880.
- ¹⁰⁷ Province of Ontario Sessional Papers, 1875-6, No. 59.
- ¹⁰⁸ CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Feb. 16, 1880.
- ¹⁰⁹ CPL, to Magee, Feb. 19, 1880.
- ¹¹⁰ CPC, rough notes of Hutchinson's on verso of letter from Scott to Hutchinson, Feb. 16, 1880.

- 111 CPL, to McKinnon, Feb. 6, 1880.
- 112 Mail, Feb. 9, 1880.
- 113 Globe, Apr. 17, 1880; LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- 114 LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.
- 115 Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, Document of appointment of George Walter Clay, Dec. 16, 1878; LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880, refers to him as George Washington Clay--obviously the same person.
- 116 CPL, to Cameron, Sept. 17, 1879.
- 117 CP, Clay to Hutchinson, Feb. 12, 1880. See also *Ibid.*, Patrick Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 26, 1880.
- 118 LA, Feb. 14, 1880; Mail, Feb. 16, 1880.
- 119 CPL, to Scott, Feb. 14, 1880.
- 120 General Register of the Gaol at London, Feb. 15, 1880.
- 121 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 26, 1880.
- 122 CPL, to Patrick Donnelly, Mar. 24, 1880.
- 123 CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Mar. 26, 1880.
- 124 See note 120.
- 125 The account of Kate Warne is from Middlesex, Coroner's Inquests, 1880, testimony of witnesses at inquest into O'Connor fire, Apr. 15, 1880.
- 126 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 18, 1880.
- 127 CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Mar. 6 and Mar. 12, 1880, describing plans for familiarising himself with the area.
- 128 CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 8, 1881, more than a year later and after all of the prosecutions of Vigilants are finished: Irving "does not know Baddulph yet as well as I do."

On this occasion Irving had refused a Donnelly plan for gathering more evidence in Biddulph.)

¹²⁹ Globe, Mar. 1, 1880.

¹³⁰ The account of the fire and inquest is drawn from the testimony cited in note 125; also from LFP, Apr. 15, and Apr. 16, 1880, and LA, Apr. 17, 1880.

¹³¹ CPL., to Scott, July 23, 1880.

¹³² LA, Feb. 6, and LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880. Reprints from Detroit News.

¹³³ LA, Feb. 10, 1880. Reprinted from Montreal Star.

¹³⁴ Mail, Feb. 6, 1880.

¹³⁵ CPL., to Irving, May 21, 1880.

¹³⁶ Strathroy Age, Feb. 5, 1880.

¹³⁷ Globe, Apr. 9, 1880; LFP, Apr. 10, 1880.

¹³⁸ Globe, Apr. 13, 1880.

¹³⁹ CPL., to Irving, May 21, 1880.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., to Irving, Apr. 20, 1880; also Mail, Apr. 20; and LA, Apr. 20, 1880.

¹⁴¹ For Glass's friendship see the chapter entitled "Stages"; also see CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 2, 1882--Glass writes a letter of commendation for Donnelly. For his ancestry see Goodspeed, p. 832. For David Glass's Irish activities see, for example, LA, Feb. 4, 1880, and Hon. David Glass--some of His Speeches and Writings, p. 6.

¹⁴² CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Apr. 7, 1880, and to Glass, May 3, 1880.

¹⁴³ Ibid., Glass to Scott, May 7, 1880.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.; Irving to Hutchinson, May 17, 1880, refers with irony and irritation to the Biddulph prisoners as Sheriff Glass's "family".

- 145 ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, May 6, 1880.
- 146 CPL, to Irving, May 5, 1880; LFP, May 28, 1880.
- 147 LA, June 4, 1880, attacking supporters of the prisoners whom it quotes.
- 148 LFP, July 13, 1880.
- 149 CPL, to Irving, May 5, 1880.
- 150 ibid., to Mowat, Mar. 6, 1880.
- 151 CPC, to Hutchinson, Feb. 23, 1880; signature indecipherable.
- 152 DFP contain the document which is Sgt. Crawford's bond acknowledgment, Mar. 17, 1880.
- 153 Globe, Mar. 19, 1880.
- 154 ibid., Mar. 22, 1880.
- 155 CPL, to Scott, July 10, 1880.
- 156 ibid., to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 157 ibid., to Scott, Apr. 19, 1880.
- 158 ibid., to Scott, July 10, 1880.
- 159 ibid., to Scott, Apr. 19, 1880.
- 160 ibid.
- 161 ibid., to Irving, Apr. 21, 1880.
- 162 CP, Charles Murray to Hutchinson, Apr. 26, 1880.
- 163 ibid.; John Fox to Hutchinson, June 24, 1880; and CPL, to Fox, June 25, 1880.

¹⁶⁴ CPL, account submitted to Ontario Government, Apr. 27, and letter to Scott May 3, 1880. For his simultaneous sympathy with the O'Connor cause, see for example, CPL, to Scott, Mar. 9, 1881.

¹⁶⁵ Mail, Mar. 6, 1880, contains the first public reference to Meredith's involvement with the defence. LFP, Mar. 12, 1880, reports his first public appearance with defence counsel.

¹⁶⁶ See for example LA, Aug. 3, 1872, and Aug. 6, 1872, praising MacMahon's showing against John Carling in the riding of London in the federal election: MacMahon has captured most of the Catholic vote although losing overall to Carling--on account of Carling's brewery, the LA claims. And see Irish-Canadian, May 15, 1878, urging Catholics to vote for MacMahon, candidate in Kent in the coming federal election. And Mar. 4, 1880, LA: MacMahon is invited to a testimonial dinner in Parkhill for North Middlesex MPP John Waters, a Liberal.

¹⁶⁷ Evans Ph.D. thesis, p. 16. See also C.R.W. Biggar, Sir Oliver Mowat--A Biographical Sketch (Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutter Ltd., 1905), pp. 719-720. Both make similar summary comments on Meredith's efforts.

¹⁶⁸ CPL, to Mowat, Mar. 6, 1880.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., to Mowat, Mar. 18, 1880.

¹⁷⁰ And is so understood in, for example, LFP, Mar. 23, 1880.

¹⁷¹ CPL, to Scott, Mar. 29, 1880. LFP, Mar. 23, 1880, interprets the reward as 'tacit admission' of the weakness of the case so far--confirmation of the prosecutors' fears.

¹⁷² CEL, to Mowat, Mar. 18, 1880.

¹⁷³ CPC, W. Cameron to Hutchinson, Mar. 12, 1880.

¹⁷⁴ CPL, to Mowat, Mar. 18, and to Irving, May 5, 1880. For the legislation concerning changes of venue, see Statutes of Canada, 32-33 Vic. Chap. 29, sec. 11.

¹⁷⁵ Mail, Apr. 13, 1880.

¹⁷⁶ DFP contain a handwritten copy of William's deposition.

¹⁷⁷ For Irving's comments see CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 6, 1880.

- 178 CPL, to Irving, May 15, 1880.
- 179 ibid., to Irving, May 7, 1880; LA, May 18, 1880. DFP contain original draft of Hutchinson's revised affidavit which mentions this incident.
- 180 CPL, to Irving, May 15, 1880.
- 181 Province of Ontario Sessional Papers, 1880, No. 19, and 1884, No. 1.
- 182 Mail, Apr. 13, 1880.
- 183 CPL, to Irving, May 21, 1880.
- 184 Mail, Apr. 13, 1880.
- 185 CPL, to MacMahon, Apr. 9, 1880.
- 186 Mail, Apr. 14, 1880.
- 187 DFP contain original of Judge Wilson's decision.
- 188 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Apr. 18, 1880.
- 189 CPL, to Mowat, Mar. 18, 1880. See also Hutchinson to William Donnelly, Mar. 29, and to Patrick Donnelly, Mar. 30, 1880, expressing prosecution hopes of a trial in Toronto.
- 190 Ibid., to Irving, May 5, 1880.
- 191 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 3, 1880.
- 192 Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, May 17, 1880.
- 193 CPL, to Irving, May 5, 1880.
- 194 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 6, 1880.
- 195 CPL, to Irving, May 7, 1880.
- 196 Compare the original version of Williams' affidavit in DFP, to revised version in LA, May 17, 1880. In CPL, to Irving, May 24, 1880, Hutchinson describes the changes.

¹⁹⁷ Quotations are from DFP, original of Hutchinson's undated rough draft. See also LA, May 18, 1880.

¹⁹⁸ Compare the actual inquest finding (in the file cited in note 28), with the jurors' affidavit in LA, May 25, 1880. In CPL, to Irving, May 21, 1880, Hutchinson comments accurately: "With reference to the affidavit sworn to by the jurors of the O'Connor inquest, you will observe that they do not give their own finding correctly; they misrepresent it."

¹⁹⁹ LA, May 25, 1880; Globe, May 26, 1880.

²⁰⁰ CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 3, 1880.

²⁰¹ Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, May 10, 1880, sending the writs which are apparently not themselves now extant.

²⁰² Globe, May 14; LA, May 13, 1880.

²⁰³ Globe, May 18; LFP, May 20, 1880.

²⁰⁴ LFP, May 27, 1880.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., May 26, 1880.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., May 28, 1880.

²⁰⁸ According to James Carroll in a letter in LFP, May 26, 1880.

²⁰⁹ CT, May 27, 1880.

²¹⁰ For Scott's comments see CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Apr. 27, 1880, enclosing Scott's letter to MacMahon.

²¹¹ Globe, May 26, 1880.

²¹² Globe, May 27, 1880.

²¹³ CPL, to William Donnelly, May 28, 1880.

²¹⁴ Ibid., to Irving, Feb. 21, 1881.

- ~~215~~ LFP, May 27, 1880; GT, June 3, 1880.
- 216 CPL, to Judge Elliott, July 1, 1880.
- 217 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 17, 1880. LFP, May 20, 1880, concurs.
- 218 CPL, to Irving, June 24, 1880.
- 219 LFP, May 28, 1880.
- 220 LA, June 3, 1880.
- 221 CPL, to Irving, June 29, 1880.
- 222 Ibid., to Magee, July 15, 1880.
- 223 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 30, 1880.
- 224 CPL, to Scott, July 15, 1880.
- 225 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Apr. 18, 1880.
- 226 CPL, to J.W. Langmuir, July 15, 1880.
- 227 Ibid., to Scott, July 15, 1880.
- 228 Globe, Aug. 19, 1880.
- 229 According to Michael O'Connor in letter to LA, May 19, 1880. (O'Connor has dictated the letter to another, apparently, for in his testimony at the O'Connor fire inquest he discloses that he cannot read, and he signs his deposition with an X mark.)
- 230 Globe, May 27, 1880; CPL, to Scott, July 10, 1880.
- 231 CPL, to Irving, June 29, 1880.
- 232 Ibid., to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 233 Ibid., to Scott, July 10, 1880.
- 234 CP, Scott to Hutchinson, July 9, 1880.

- 235) CPL, to Irving, June 21, 1880.
- 236) CP, Scott to Hutchinson, July 9, 1880.
- 237) CPL, to Scott, Feb. 19, 1880.
- 238) CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Feb. 21, 1880.
- 239) CPL, to Irving, Apr. 23, 1880.
- 240) Ibid., to Scott, May 4 and May 12, 1880.
- 241) Ibid., to Scott, May 22, 1880.
- 242) Ibid., E.F. Johnson to Treasurer of Ontario, June 10, 1880.
- 243) CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 20, 1880.
- 244) CPL, to Irving, June 21, 1880.
- 245) Ibid., to Scott, July 15, 1880.
- 246) CP, Scott to Hutchinson, July 22, 1880.
- 247) CPL, to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 248) CP, Scott to Hutchinson, July 30, 1880.
- 249) CPL, to Scott, July 28, 1880.
- 250) Ibid., to Irving, Aug. 13, 1880.
- 251) Ibid., receipts, Johnson to Government of Ontario, Aug. 20 and Aug. 26, 1880.
- 252) Ibid., to Scott, Feb. 24, 1880.
- 253) CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Mar. 22, 1880.
- 254) Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, Apr. 28, 1880.
- 255) CPL, to Irving, May 5, 1880. Emphasis is Hutchinson's own.

- 256 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 10, 1880.
- 257 CPL, to Irving, May 11, 1880.
- 258 For example, LA, May 7, and Globe, Mar. 11, and Apr. 7, 1880.
- 259 Reprinted in LA, June 15, 1880, from a Hamilton Times issue not now extant.
- 260 CPL, to Irving, June 18, 1880. When the defence nevertheless puts this farmer, John Herbert, on the witness stand the presiding justice cuts them short impatiently: "There was nothing whatever to connect them with the murder" (Globe, Oct. 9, 1880).
- 261 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 20, 1880.
- 262 LA, June 15, 1880.
- 263 CPL, to Irving, June 24, 1880.
- 264 Ibid. to Irving, June 18, 1880.
- 265 The testimony of the two McGraths is reported in Globe, Oct. 8, 1880.
- 266 CP, unsigned note to Hutchinson relating the doctor's opinions, May 1, 1880.
- 267 Ibid., MacMahon to Hutchinson, May 1, 1880.
- 268 Original copies of the McGrath deposition are in DFP.
- 269 Statutes of Canada, 43 Vic. 1880, Chap. 35.
- 270 Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, Second Sessions, Fourth Parliament. Vol. 2, pp. 1842 and 1940.
- 271 Catholic Record, Jan. 16, 1880: John O'Connor, member for Russell, had just been appointed Postmaster-General, and John J. McGee, brother of D'Arcy McGee, assistant clerk of the Privy Council,
- 272 Catholic Record, Feb. 27, 1880.
- 273 Ibid., Mar. 5, 1880.

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- 274 Debates of the House of Commons, op. cit., p. 1940.
- 275 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 6, 1880.
- 276 LFP, May 8, 1880.
- 277 CPL, to Irving, June 29, 1880.
- 278 Ibid., to William Donnelly, June 15 and Aug. 15, and to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 279 Ibid., to Irving, May 5, 1880.
- 280 Ibid., to Irving, May 7, 1880.
- 281 Ibid., to Irving, May 11, 1880.
- 282 Ibid., to Irving, June 24, 1880.
- 283 CP, statement of Patrick Donnelly, Apr. 26, 1881.
- 284 CP, as reported by William Donnelly, to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880.
- 285 Mail, May 7, 1880.
- 286 Globe, June 25, 1880.
- 287 Ibid., Aug. 24, 1880.
- 288 W.D. Stanley, Historical Sketch of the Township of Biddulph, n.d., p. 22. Copies are in the Regional Collection.
- 289 CPL, to Irving, June 29, 1880.
- 290 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880.
- 291 CPC, to Donnelly, June 30, 1880.
- 292 GT, May 13, 1880, identifies the location: "the farm of T. Elliott" which (see Assessment Roll, Euphemia Township, 1880, in Regional Collection) is north-half of lot 19, concession I, on the north edge of the village of Florence.

- 293 Chief Williams' 3-page undated report is in DFP.
- 294 CPL, to Irving, May 7, 1880; see May 5, to Irving, as well.
- 295 Ibid., to Irving, June 28 and 29, and to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 296 For Donnelly's suspicions see CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 2, 1880.
- 297 Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson; June-9, 1880.
- 298 CPL, to Irving, June 28, 1880.
- 299 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 30, 1880.
- 300 CPL, to Irving, July 23, 1880.
- 301 CP, Armstrong to Irving, Sept. 6, and Irving to Hutchinson, Sept. 11, 1880.
- 302 Ibid., Clay to Hutchinson, May 10, 1880.
- 303 Ibid., Clay to Hutchinson, May 13, 1880.
- 304 Ibid., Thomas Thompson to Hutchinson, June 5, 1880.
- 305 CPL, to Donnelly, June 9, 1880.
- 306 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 2, 1880.
- 307 Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, June 10, 1880.
- 308 CPL, to Irving, June 9, 1880.
- 309 CPL, Johnson to Thompson, June 23, 1880.
- 310 CP, Johnson to Hutchinson, June 14, 1880. See also CPC, Johnson to Hutchinson, June 11, 1880.
- 311 Ibid., to Irving, June 18, 1880.
- 312 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 20, 1880.

- 313 CT, Apr. 22, 1880.
- 314 LA, Apr. 7, 1880.
- 315 Ibid.
- 316 Globe, May 31, 1880; see Middlesex Surrogate Court, Grant Book, 1859-1886, grant of administration dated Mar. 1, 1880.
- 317 Globe, June 25, 1880.
- 318 Letter from Donnelly, in LEP, June 24, 1880.
- 319 CT, June 3, 1880, and Petrolia Advertiser, July 12, 1889.
- 320 Globe, Mar. 30, and Mail, Mar. 30, 1880. A dispatch in Globe, Apr. 3, 1880 says the story is an invention of William Donnelly to gain sympathy; but William Donnelly denies this in Globe, Apr. 13, 1880.
- 321 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880.
- 322 CPL, to Irving, May 7, 1880.
- 323 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880.
- 324 CPL, to Donnelly, June 30, and to Scott, July 23, 1880.
- 325 Ibid., to Irving, May 7, 1880.
- 326 Ibid., to Irving, May 5, 1880; CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 8, 1880.
- 327 For example, CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1880.
- 328 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 3, 1880.
- 329 Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880.
- 330 CPL, to Irving, May 11, 1880.
- 331 For examples, CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1880 re Michael Heenan; CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880, re John

Purtell; and CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Aug. 14, 1880 re James Maher.

332 For examples, see CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 3, 1880 re Patrick Ryder; June 9, re Martin McLaughlin; Aug. 14, re James McGrath.

333 CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Apr. 1, 1880.

334 See, for example, Globe, Mar. 2-3, 1880; and LFP, June 24, 1880.

335 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Aug. 26, 1880.

336 CPL, to Donnelly, June 28, 1880.

337 Ibid., to Irving, July 2, 1880.

338 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880.

339 Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Aug. 14, 1880.

340 CPL, to Donnelly, May 7, 1880; see also Hutchinson to Irving, May 7, re "a wild suggestion" of Donnelly's and to Irving, July 2, worrying that Donnelly is "not by any means discreet."

341 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 8, 1880.

342 Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 16, 1880.

343 CPL, to Mowat, Mar. 16, 1880.

344 Ibid., to Irving, June 29, 1880.

345 Ibid., to Irving, July 2, 1880.

346 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880; see Powe's testimony as reported in Globe, Jan. 31, 1881.

347 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1880; see Ross's testimony in Irving, p. 15.

348 CPL, to John Whelan, Aug. 23, 1880, through William Donnell and to Irving, Aug. 25, 1880.

³⁴⁹ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29, 1880; and Hutchinson (in CPL, to Irving, Sept. 13, 1880) still suspects Whelan of hiding evidence.

³⁵⁰ CP, account of Henry Phair, undated, with explanatory notes and dates added by Hutchinson.

³⁵¹ Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9 and Sept. 17, 1880; also CPL, to Irving, May 11, 1880.

³⁵² CP, Irving to Hutchinson, May 12, 1880.

³⁵³ Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 9, 1880.

³⁵⁴ CPL, to Irving, June 24, 1880.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., to Irving, June 24, 1880; also CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 17, 1880.

³⁵⁶ CPL, to Donnelly, June 30, 1880.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., to Scott, Oct. 13, 1881.

³⁵⁸ CP, Thomas Hossack to Hutchinson, Aug. 30, 1880.

³⁵⁹ LFP Weekly, Feb. 12, 1880.

³⁶⁰ CPL, to Everett, Aug. 23, 1880; see also to Irving, Aug. 25, 1880.

³⁶¹ Ibid., to Everett, Aug. 29, 1880.

³⁶² Ibid., to Everett, Aug. 29, 1880, with a covering letter to Hossack; see also Hutchinson to Everett, Aug. 23, 1880--"This will be handed to you by William Donnelly. . . ."

³⁶³ CP, Hossack to Hutchinson, Aug. 30, 1880.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., Hossack to Hutchinson, Oct. 15, 1880.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Aug. 14, 1880.

³⁶⁶ CPL, to Irving, Aug. 25, 1880.

- 367 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Aug. 14, 1880.
- 368 Ibid., Everett to Hutchinson, Sept. 11, 1880.
- 369 Ibid., Everett to Hutchinson, Sept. 12, 1880.
- 370 Ibid., undated and unsigned list in Everett's handwriting, with notations beside some of the names.
- 371 Ibid., account of S.L. Everett for services to the Crown Aug. 28 to Sept. 28, 1880, dated Oct. 11, 1880; also Oct. 12 account for services to the Crown Oct. 3 and 4, 1880. See certification of Everett's accounts by Scott in CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Nov. 8, 1880. Berlin is now Kitchener.
- 372 CP, letter to "Mr. ervin" [sic.--ie. Irving], signed "Mike", Oct. 6, 1880.
- 373 Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, Oct. 12, 1880. The writing is clearly Everett's although Hutchinson expresses some doubts in CPL; to Irving, Oct. 14, 1880.

Chapter 8

¹MCR, 1880, Notice of Trial in Queen v. James Carroll et al., Sept. 1, 1880.

²According to statute (Statutes of Ontario, 42 Vic. Chap. 14, 1879--An Act to Amend the Jurors' Act, and RSO 1877, Chap. 48--An Act Respecting Jurors and Juries), the jury would come from the jury list for 1880, a list prepared at the beginning of January of each year by the County Selectors. These were a committee of three of certain county officials such as the sheriff, the treasurer, the warden, and a county judge. The Justice to preside at the Assizes Court would issue to the sheriff a precept, telling him the number from the list to be summoned by subpoena for that Assize. Then from that assembled body, lawyers for Crown and defence could each order a limited number to stand aside, by challenging either peremptorily or for cause. This would continue until twelve men were agreed upon to compose the actual jury.

³CPL, to Scott, Aug. 14, 1880.

⁴Ibid., to Irving, Aug. 26, 1880. See also to Irving, June 29, and to Scott, Aug. 13, 1880.

- ⁵ Ibid., to Scott, Aug. 13, 1880; also CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Aug. 22, 1880.
- ⁶ CP, Irving to Hutchinson, June 25, 1880.
- ⁷ CPL, to Scott, Aug. 13, 1880.
- ⁸ CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Aug. 20, 1880.
- ⁹ Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, Aug. 17, 1880.
- ¹⁰ Middlesex County Sheriff's Daybook records all of the subpoenas issued and served, 1880-85 volume, pp. 19-21.
- ¹¹ CPL, to William Donnelly, Sept. 20, 1880.
- ¹² CP, undated list of witnesses with notes on each in the handwriting of Aemilius Irving.
- ¹³ Ibid., Cameron to Hutchinson, Sept. 25, 1880.
- ¹⁴ CPC, Ross to Hutchinson, Sept. 28, 1880.
- ¹⁵ CP, McCosh to Hutchinson, Sept. 24, 1880.
- ¹⁶ CPL, to James Keefe, Sept. 13, and to Edward Sutherby, Sept. 17, 1880, sending subpoenas.
- ¹⁷ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 6, 1880 re James Keefe; Sutherby to Donnelly, Sept. 12, and Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 17, 1880.
- ¹⁸ CPL, to Donnelly, Sept. 8, 1880.
- ¹⁹ Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook notes service by William Donnelly on the Whelans, Jane Currie, and James Whelahan; 1880-85 volume, pp. 19 and 20.
- ²⁰ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 25, 1880, noting mistakes in services by constables.
- ²¹ Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 18, 1880.
- ²² CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Sept. 19 and Sept. 20, 1880; CPL, to William Donnelly, Sept. 20, and undated, Hutchinson account to Ontario government (in CPL for 1880-81, pp. 365-6), for expenses July 26 to Oct. 4, 1880.

- ²³ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, June 29 and Sept. 18, 1880.
- ²⁴ Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 25, 1880.
- ²⁵ CPL, to Donnelly, Sept. 25, 1880.
- ²⁶ CP, Donnelly to E.F. Johnson, Feb. 18, 1881, explaining items in earlier account.
- ²⁷ CPL, 1880-81 volume, pp. 365-6.
- ²⁸ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 18 and Sept. 25, 1880; CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Sept. 15, 1880.
- ²⁹ LA, Sept. 16, 1880.
- ³⁰ CPL, to Pope and to Jones, Sept. 24, 1880; account to Ontario government, 1880-81 volume, pp. 365-66, listing constables' fees.
- ³¹ CPL, to Irving, Aug. 14, 1880.
- ³² Ibid.: he tells Irving that this must be done as soon as possible; there is no record of government action.
- ³³ Ibid., to Scott, Oct. 25, 1880: Hutchinson has to ask again.
- ³⁴ The following description of the trial is drawn in its various details from Globe, Mail, LFP, and LA reports during the trial's duration.
- ³⁵ Globe, Oct. 6, 1880.
- ³⁶ Ibid., Oct. 8, 1880.
- ³⁷ Mail, Oct. 7, 1880.
- ³⁸ Dominion of Canada Sessional Papers, 1883, No. 77. All of Biddulph, as usual, votes Conservative; even Ward 3, the Catholics, vote 62-14 for Coughlin. Cf. 40-79 against him in the previous election, 1878 (Sessional Papers, 1879, No. 88.)
- ³⁹ CP, Hossack to Hutchinson, Oct. 15, 1880.
- ⁴⁰ The quotations from Meredith's speeches are from Globe, Oct. 11, 1880.

⁴¹ Mail, Oct. 11, 1880.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Globe, Oct. 11, 1880.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ CPL, to Mowat, Oct. 25, 1880.

⁴⁸ Mail, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁴⁹ CP contain the copies of the writs.

⁵⁰ A notation on certain copies of the writs gives the information that they were issued to Scott on Nov. 24, 1880; see CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Nov. 24, 1880, sending the writs.

⁵¹ Globe, Oct. 22, 1880; see also GT, Oct. 11, 1880. A copy of the petition (without signatures) is in the scrapbook of William Porte which is now privately owned; a photocopy is in DFP, dated Oct. 11, 1880.

⁵² CPL, to Irving, Oct. 22, 1880.

⁵³ Catholic Record, Oct. 29, 1880.

⁵⁴ Globe, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁵⁵ CP, Irving to Hutchinson; Nov. 6, 1880: reports the Justices' preference to wait until the Spring Assizes six weeks later.

⁵⁶ LFP, Nov. 18, 1880. See also PAO, Osler Family Papers, Box 3, Featherstone Osler Diary, Nov. 11, 1880.

⁵⁷ CPC, Everett to Hutchinson, Nov. 18, 1880.

⁵⁸ See the characterization of Osler in chapter 12 of Lions in the Way (Toronto: MacMillan, 1956), Anne Wilkinson's study of the Osler family. For his re-trial deference to Justice Cameron see his diary in PAO, for Jan. 22, 1881.

⁵⁹CPL, to Irving, Oct. 18, 1880.

⁶⁰Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 30, 1880.

⁶¹Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 22, 1880.

⁶²Ibid., to Irving, Jan. 15, 1882, complaining that the sheriff promised to separate prisoner Purtell from the rest, then did not do so.

⁶³Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 26, 1880.

⁶⁴CP, William Donnelly report to Hutchinson, Nov. 9, 1880.

⁶⁵LA, Oct. 11, 1880.

⁶⁶Mail, Feb. 1, 1881.

⁶⁷CPC, Merryfield to Meredith, Oct. 31, 1880--apparently passed on to Hutchinson by Meredith.

⁶⁸Ibid., Patrick Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 12, 1880.

⁶⁹CPL, to Klippert, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁷⁰Ibid., to Klippert, Oct. 14 and 18, 1880; CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁷¹CP, McMillan to Chief of Police, London, Nov. 1, 1880, with attached undated description.

⁷²CPL, to McMillan, Nov. 4, 1880.

⁷³CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Nov. 5, 1880.

⁷⁴CPL, to Chief of Police, Guelph, Nov. 16, 1880.

⁷⁵Ibid., to Hossack, Oct. 19, 1880.

⁷⁶LFP, Nov. 25, 1880.

⁷⁷LA, Nov. 25, 1880.

⁷⁸ LA, Nov. 23-30, and LFP, Nov. 24-29, 1880 contain the accounts of the episode. And see PAC, Registrar-General's Records, R.G. 68, vol. 412 and 413 for the commission as issued by the Governor-General --a duplicate of the Ontario Lieutenant-Governor's commission, requested by Mowat "to prevent the possibility of any question being raised as to the validity of the proceedings under a commission issued by either government alone" (PAO, RG. 8, Provincial Secretary's General Correspondence, 1880, No. 1761).

⁷⁹ CPL, to Irving, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁸⁰ Ibid., to Mowat, Oct. 25, 1880; also CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Oct. 18, 1880.

⁸¹ CPL, to Irving, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁸² Ibid., to O'Connor, Oct. 14, 1880.

⁸³ Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 26, 1880.

⁸⁴ Ibid., account to Ontario government, Jan. 5, 1881. The monthly rent on the house is \$15; cf. the prior rent of \$10, on a house which was a duplex, the half not occupied by the O'Connors being rented out to reduce their rent to \$5 (Hutchinson to Scott, May 3, 1880).

⁸⁵ Ibid., to Williams, Nov. 8, 1880.

⁸⁶ Ibid., to Scott, Dec. 9, 1880.

⁸⁷ CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Dec. 9 and Dec. 15, 1880.

⁸⁸ Globe, Dec. 13, 1880.

⁸⁹ CPL, to Scott, Dec. 9, 1880.

⁹⁰ Ibid., to Scott, Dec. 16, 1880.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Nov. 2, 1880, reporting Mowat's authorization.

⁹³ CPL, to Scott, Dec. 17, 1880.

⁹⁴ Ibid., to Irving, Nov. 8, 1880.

⁹⁵ CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Oct. 29, Nov. 6, and Nov. 12, 1880--worried letters all upon this subject; also CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Dec. 21, 1880.

⁹⁶ CPL, to Beverley and to Miller, Dec. 29, 1880, and Feb. 3, 1881; and to Beverley, Miller and Palmer, Jan. 15, 1881.

⁹⁷ Ibid., to Irving, Nov. 17, 1880.

⁹⁸ DFP contain the four undated lists of witnesses with notations. Notes on the jurors at the trial are as follows: William Hooper, "recommended by Donnelly"; Dougal Graham, "thinks the men guilty, a good man, recommended"; John Carruthers, "thinks men guilty, good man, recommended"; G.M. Francis, "thinks men guilty, good man, recommended"; Hooper Ward, "thought favourable, but would not say much, a good man"; James Dores, "not interviewed, being absent, has good reputation"; James F. Elliott, "not interviewed, absent, Presbyterian, a good man by repute, an assessor and collector"; B. Kilbourne, "could not see any chance to convict on evidence now given, not recommended; Burtch recommends Kilbourne"; Horace Hyatt, "believed they should be punished, believed them to be a hard lot, and punishment was what they want, and what they would get in his belief--good man, recommended"; Asa Luce, "said if it was not for the stubbornness of the jurors, the trials might have been decided at the other court. He did not want to have anything to do with it. He thought it might make some disturbance yet; recommended"; James Watterworth, "said if he could get out of serving he would, as he thought his property would be in danger; not recommended"; John Lamont, "said he thought they should be punished, believed them to be guilty; a good man, recommended".

⁹⁹ CPL, to Irving, Oct. 30, 1880.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., to Irving, undated (in 1880-81 volume, pp. 500-1; probably ca. Jan. 15, 1881).

¹⁰¹ Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 18, 1880.

¹⁰² Ibid., to Samuel Hodgins, Dec. 1, 1880; CP, William Donnelly to Hodgins, Dec. 8, 1880.

¹⁰³ Globe, Jan. 29, 1880, reports Hodgins' testimony.

¹⁰⁴ CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Dec. 14, 1880.

¹⁰⁵ CPL, to Sheriff, Grey County, Jan. 14, 1881.

- 106 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Dec. 14, 1880.
- 107 Ibid., William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Nov. 9, 1880, and Irving to Hutchinson, Nov. 26, 1880; CPC, Bay City Marshall to Hutchinson, Jan. 14, 1881.
- 108 CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Nov. 9, 1880.
- 109 CPL, to Irving, undated (pp. 500-1 in 1880-81 volume); also CPC, cancelled cheques to Patrick Donnelly from Hutchinson, Jan. 15 and Jan. 26, 1881, marked "trip to Michigan re Whalen" and "for Sutherby Michigan" respectively.
- 110 CP, testimony of Patrick Donnelly at preliminary investigation of James and William Feehley, July 10 and 12, 1881.
- 111 For West's background see MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, Arson, statement of Francis M. West, Oct. 13, 1881.
- 112 CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 8, 1881.
- 113 CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881.
- 114 Ibid., to Donnelly, Feb. 12, 1881.
- 115 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Jan. 15, 22, and 25, 1881.
- 116 For example CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Jan. 19, 1881, re Pat Sullivan Jr.
- 117 CPL, to Donnelly, Feb. 15, 1881.
- 118 CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Feb. 1, and Patrick Donnelly to Hutchinson, Jan. 27, 1881.
- 119 Globe, Feb. 2, 1881; reports Catt's testimony.
- 120 EFP, Dec. 27 and 31, 1880.
- 121 Globe, Jan. 31, 1881 reports Hutchinson's testimony concerning the incident; see also CPL, to Irving, undated (1880-81 volume pp. 500-1).
- 122 Description of the trial in its various details is drawn from reports in the Globe, Mail, and LA; also from the trial notes of Justice Osler.

- 123 LA, Jan. 28, 1881.
- 124 Ibid., Jan. 31, 1881.
- 125 Ibid., Jan. 27, 1881.
- 126 Globe, Jan. 28, 1881.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Mail, Feb. 3, 1881.
- 129 LA, Jan. 29, 1881.
- 130 Ibid., Jan. 27, 1881.
- 131 PAO, Osler Family Papers, Diary of Featherstone Osler, Feb. 2, 1881.
- 132 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 10, 1881; the scene is as reported in Mail, Feb. 3, 1881.
- 133 Globe, Feb. 4, 1881; also CPL, to Irving, Feb. 7, 1881, and GT, Feb. 10, 1881.
- 134 Compare artist's drawing of the original Donnelly home in, for example, LFP, Feb. 20, 1880, with photograph of the rebuilt home, in DFP.
- 135 LA, Feb. 4, 1881; Globe, Feb. 4, 1881.
- 136 CPL, to Irving, Feb. 3, 1881.
- 137 Ibid., to Irving, Feb. 8, 1881.
- 138 CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Mar. 6, 1881.
- 139 CPL, to Irving, Feb. 11, 1881; Irving agrees in CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 10, 1881.
- 140 CPL, to Scott, Feb. 7, 1881.
- 141 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 10, 1881.
- 142 Ibid., Irving to Hutchinson, undated (probably early February, 1881).

¹⁴³Ibid., Johnson to Scott, Feb. 18, 1881, enclosing the account, which is itself on p. 561 of the 1880-81 volume and is undated. It covers expenses from Jan. 4 to Feb. 12, 1881.

¹⁴⁴CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Apr. 6, 1881.

¹⁴⁵CPL, to Scott, Apr. 2, 1881.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., to Irving, undated (ca. Feb. 9, 1881), 1880-81 volume, p. 543.

¹⁴⁷CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 4 and Feb. 10, 1881; also CPL, to Irving, Feb. 7, 1881.

¹⁴⁸CPL, to Scott, Feb. 11, 1881.

¹⁴⁹CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 10, 1881.

¹⁵⁰CPL, to Irving, Feb. 7, 1881; to Scott, Feb. 11 and Feb. 21, 1881.

¹⁵¹CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Mar. 11, 1881.

¹⁵²CPL, receipt composed for Mary O'Connor's X mark, Apr. 8, 1881. The Legislature rose in early March (see CPL, Hutchinson to Scott, Mar. 9, 1881).

¹⁵³Ibid., to Irving, Mar. 4, 1881; also CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Feb. 21, 1881.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., to Donnelly, Feb. 21, 1881.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., to Scott, Feb. 12, 1881.

¹⁵⁶CP, Scott to Hutchinson, Feb. 15, 1881.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 8, 1881.

¹⁵⁸CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 9, 1881.

¹⁵⁹CP, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Feb. 21, 1881.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., MacMahon to Irving, Feb. 9, and to Hutchinson, Feb. 11 and Mar. 5, 1881; also CPC, MacMahon to Hutchinson, Mar. 1, 1881.

161 CP, Irving to Hutchinson, Feb. 10, 1881.

162 CPC, Irving to Hutchinson, Mar. 8, 1881.

163 The description of the meeting, including all quotations is from LA, Mar. 7, 1881.

164 CPL, to Irving, Mar. 7, 1881.

165 Ibid., to Irving, Mar. 4, 1881.

166 Middlesex County General Sessions of the Peace, Sessions Book 1876-86, Feb. 5, 1881.

167 CPL, to Irving, Mar. 4, 1881.

168 Middlesex, Court of Chancery, Patrick Donnelly et al. v. Bridget Feeheley et al. The various documents are dated from Mar. 15 to June 25, 1881.

169 LA, May 23, 1881, contains the fullest and most lucid explanation of the complicated transactions and disagreements concerning Michael Carroll and the Feeheleys.

170 Undated statement of F.M. West in MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, Arson.

171 For examples of their activities see MCR, 1881, Queen v. W. and R. Donnelly, Arson: William Donnelly to West, Apr. 8, 1881, and also undated note to West in Patrick Donnelly's writing (unsigned). Also CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 8, 1881, reporting their work on the Feeheleys.

172 MCR, 1881, the Donnelly arson packet contains an undated, unsigned Patrick Donnelly note to West asking him to come down to the schoolhouse; see also explanation by Hutchinson in CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881.

173 CP, William Donnelly to Hutchinson (probably), undated (probably April 1881)--an explanation of the Feeheley disagreement over the land.

174 For the account of this trial, including quotations, see CP, testimony of Thomas Shoebottom at Feeheleys' preliminary examination, July 10, 1881; also his signed statement, May 8, 1881.

175 MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, Arson, undated statement of F.M. West.

176 All episodes concerning the Feeheleys and Patrick Donnelly (including quotations) are described in Patrick Donnelly's testimony at the Feeheleys' preliminary examination, July 10, 1881, in CP; also in three Patrick Donnelly statements in the CP, Apr. 23, Apr. 26, and the third one undated but probably the same month.

177 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, May 9, 1881.

178 CP, testimony of McConnell at Feeheleys' preliminary examination, July 10, 1881.

179 CP, statement of Robert Keefe, May 8, 1881.

180 For these conversations see CP, testimonies of McConnell and Shoebottom at preliminary examination of Feeheleys, July 10, 1881.

181 Testimony of Patrick Donnelly at Feeheleys' examination, July 10, 1881.

182 CP, Shoebottom to Hutchinson, May 8, 1881.

183 CP, McConnell to Hutchinson, May 7, 1881; also his testimony at the examination of the Feeheleys, July 10, 1881.

184 CPL, his account to government re Feeheley case, July 30, 1881.

185 CP, undated notes of Hutchinson re various of his actions in the Feeheley prosecutions.

186 CPL, to Crooks, May 13, 1881.

187 CP, Crooks to Hutchinson, May 17, 1881, confirming his instructions at the London meeting.

188 LFR, May 21, 1881.

189 LA, May 23, 1881.

190 CP, Crooks to Hutchinson, May 23, 1881.

191 Seemingly not now extant; Patrick Donnelly in his July 10, 1881, testimony at the Feeheleys' hearing dates his information.

- 192 CP, S.S. Matthews to Hutchinson, May 23, 1881.
- 193 LA, May 24, 1881.
- 194 CPL, account to government re Feeheley prosecutions, July 30, 1881.
- 195 CP, Scott to Hutchinson, June 13 and June 23, 1881.
- 196 CPL, to Irving, July 27, 1881.
- 197 Ibid., to Scott, July 15, 1881.
- 198 Ibid.
- 199 CP contain the indictment returned as a true bill.
- 200 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Sept. 7, 1881.
- 201 The writs are in CP, Sept. 26, 1881.
- 202 CPL, to Scott, July 15, 1881.
- 203 Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 2, 1881.
- 204 Ibid., to Scott, Sept. 29, 1881.
- 205 Ibid., to Irving, Sept. 29, 1881.
- 206 Ibid., to Irving, Oct. 2, 1881.
- 207 CP, order of Justice F. Osler in Court of Common Pleas--one order for James Feeheley, one for William Feeheley, each dated Oct. 7, 1881.
- 208 DFP contain the bail notices, dated Oct. 24, 1881.
- 209 CPL, to Scott, Oct. 2, 1881.
- 210 CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Oct. 3, 1881.
- 211 CPL, to Scott, Oct. 25, 1881.
- 212 Ibid., to Irving, Dec. 5, 1881.

213 This undated, unsigned campaign tract is available in D.B. Weldon Library, U.W.O., bound in a volume entitled Ontario Political Pamphlets 1878-1900. Liberals reprinted it in the next provincial election with the claim that W.R. Meredith had read, and suggested improvements in, the 1883 pamphlet. (See their reprint in the same volume.)

214 Province of Ontario Sessional Papers, 1884, No. 1. In Lucan and Biddulph Meredith gets 563 votes and John Waters 197; in Ward 3 which contains most of the Catholics (who usually in the past have voted Reform by a substantial margin) Meredith out-polls Waters 66-24.

215 See C.W. Biggar, Sir Oliver Mowat--A Biographical Sketch (Toronto: Warwick Bros. and Rutter Ltd., 1905), p. 354. Biggar attributes Mowat's losses to a loss of the Catholic vote. A. Margaret Evans, in Oliver Mowat and Ontario 1872-96--A Study In Political Success (an unpublished Ph.D. thesis at University of Toronto, 1967), p. 161, notes likewise the Conservative appeal to the Catholic vote-- "The election of 1883 was the first in Mowat's era in which sectarianism was a real issue."

216 CPL, to Sheriff of Elgin County, Sept. 15, 1881, enclosing subpoena for Patrick Donnelly, carriage-maker, Aylmer.

217 MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, Arson, F.M. West's deposition, Oct. 13, 1881. The arson is of a farm in Lucan owned by the Porte family and rented by one Hall of Lobo Township (LA, Nov. 5, 1881). The account of the Stanley-Dight mill arson is drawn from the same source, and from Porte Diary, Oct. 8, 1881.

218 CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Nov. 28, 1881.

219 CPL, to Becher, Oct. 14, 1881.

220 MCR, 1881, Queen v. Robert and William Donnelly, Arson, information of F.M. West, Oct. 9, 1881.

221 Ibid., Stanley's warrant, Oct. 10, 1881.

222 Ibid., deposition of F.M. West, Oct. 13, 1881. A long editorial in the Globe, Oct. 17, 1881 lists some of the absurdities in West's testimony.

223 Ibid., court record of proceedings at Lucan magistrates' hearing, Oct. 10, 1881.

- 224 Ibid., Becher to Hutchinson, Oct. 13, 1881.
- 225 CPL, to Scott, Oct. 22, 1881.
- 226 Middlesex Sheriff's Daybook, Nov. 3 and Nov. 4, 1881.
- 227 MCR, 1881, Queen v. William and Robert Donnelly, Arson, Becher to Hutchinson, Oct. 29, 1881.
- 228 CPL, to Becher, Oct. 17, 1881, notifying him that he will forward Becher's letter of request to Attorney-General.
- 229 Middlesex County Court, Dockets and Case Registers, Vol. 3, Oct. 15, 1881.
- 230 CPL, to Scott, Oct. 13, Oct. 17, and Oct. 22, 1881.
- 231 Ibid., to Becher, Oct. 22, 1881.
- 232 CPC, Scott to Hutchinson, Nov. 3, 1881, reporting Mowat's decision.
- 233 CPL, to Idlington, Nov. 3, 1881.
- 234 County Court, Dockets and Case Registers, Vol. 3, Nov. 8-9, 1881.
- 235 LFP, Oct. 20, 1881; also Porte Diary, Oct. 8, 1881.
- 236 LFP, Oct. 19 and Oct. 20, 1881; also Middlesex General Sessions Minute Book, 1876-1885, Dec. 6, 1881.
- 237 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 2, 1881.
- 238 Township of Biddulph Fence-Viewers' Awards, 1867-1894, Nov. 24, 1881.
- 239 DFP, Fence-viewing award, Aug. 31, 1882.
- 240 Regarding this brawl see for example Porte Diary, Sept. 3, Sept. 7, and Oct. 9, 1881; LFP, Sept. 4, 1881; and CPL, to William Stanley, Oct. 20, and to County Auditors, Oct. 12, 1881.
- 241 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 2, 1882.

- 242 CPL, to Scott, Mar. 9, 1881.
- 243 Ibid., to Donnelly, Mar. 4, 1881.
- 244 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 9, 1881.
- 245 Ibid., Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 8, 1881.
- 246 LA, May 24, 1881.
- 247 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 2, 1882.
- 248 CPL, to Donnelly, Feb. 18, 1881; also to Donnelly, Feb. 12, 1881.
- 249 Ibid., to William Donnelly, Apr. 15, 1882--addressed to Rendville P.O., Perry County, Ohio--the earliest letter addressed to that location.
- 250 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 2, 1882.
- 251 CPL, to Nora Donnelly, June 17, 1882.
- 252 Ibid., to W.J. Gerald, Apr. 6, 1882, reporting Patrick Donnelly's statement; also CPC, William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 16, 1882.
- 253 CPL, to Donnelly, Apr. 15, 1882, and to Lawrason, Apr. 20, 1882.
- 254 CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Apr. 14, 1882.
- 255 CP contain the receipt from McLaughlin, Oct. 28, 1882.
- 256 CP contain the receipt from Ryder, Mar. 10, 1883.
- 257 CPC, Order-in-Council approved by the Lieutenant-Governor, June 22, 1882, on order of Attorney-General Mowat.

Chapter 9

¹Porte Diary, May 26, 1883.

²GT, Apr. 26, 1883.

³GT, Oct. 20, 1880.

⁴GT, Mar. 22, 1883.

⁵GT, June 21, 1883.

⁶GT, July 7, 1881.

⁷GT, Apr. 5, 1883.

⁸GT, Oct. 4 and Nov. 8, 1883.

⁹GT, Jan. 17, Jan. 24, and Mar. 13, 1884.

¹⁰GT, Oct. 21, 1886: William Donnelly lives in a Robert Donnelly home.

¹¹GT, Aug. 5 and Oct. 28, 1886.

¹²GT, Nov. 25, 1886.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, Malcolm Leitch to W. Elliott, June 13, 1881, regarding James Currie a new constable; also Currie's oath document, June 22, 1881.

¹⁵Globe, Dec. 24, 1883.

¹⁶Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, William Donnelly to McKillop (acting County Attorney), Sept. 26, 1883.

¹⁷The petition is appended to the Donnelly-to-McKillop letter cited above in note 16.

¹⁸As noted by Donnelly in the same letter.

¹⁹Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex, Donnelly's oath, Oct. 1, 1883.

²⁰ GT, July 23, 1884.

²¹ GT, Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, 1885.

²² CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Jan. 10, 1884, and Apr. 28, 1884; CPL, to Donnelly, July 28, 1884.

²³ Ibid., Hutchinson to Donnelly, Oct. 9, 1884; CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Oct. 16, 1884; Miscellaneous Papers of Middlesex County Courts, 1884, receipt from William Donnelly, inscribed 'special services in Queen v. Arscott', Dec. 5, 1884.

²⁴ CPL, to Donnelly, Oct. 4, 8, and 16, 1885.

²⁵ Ibid., to Donnelly, Aug. 6, 1884, and to McKay, Jan. 17, 1885; also CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Aug. 4, 1884.

²⁶ GT, Mar. 6, 1884.

²⁷ GT, Feb. 25, 1886.

²⁸ GT, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 1883; also Middlesex Quarterly Return of Convictions, by John Peters, Nov. 28, 1883.

²⁹ GT, July 23, 1885 and July 10, 1884; also CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, July 3, 1884, and Leitch to Hutchinson, July 4, 1884; also CPL, to Leitch, July 3 and 4, 1884.

³⁰ GT, Nov. 12, 1885.

³¹ Robert Sandall, The History of the Salvation Army, Volume II, 1878-86 (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1950), chapter 45 which concerns Canada. See also an earlier letter from a Salvation Army exponent in the LFP, Mar. 29, 1882.

³² GT, Sept. 17, 1885, reports Salvation Army third anniversary observances in Toronto.

³³ A representative account of contemporary Army meetings and practices is "The Salvation Army", by M.A. Lewis in MacMillan's Magazine, Sept. 1882, pp. 403-416.

³⁴ GT, July 17 and 31, 1884; also Globe, July 25, 1884.

³⁵ Thomas Coombs, The Canadian Advance: Being a Record of the Progress of Work of the Salvation Army in the Dominion of Canada During

the Year 1886 (Toronto: Commissioners' Headquarters, Salvation Temple, n.d.), p. 5. Coombs is the Army's Canadian commissioner.

³⁶ See respectively GT, May 8, 1884; May 3, 1883; July 31, 1884; Mar. 20, 1884; and Apr. 3, 1884.

³⁷ GT, Sept. 13, 1883.

³⁸ Salvation Army Music (London: Headquarters of the Salvation Army, n.d.), compiled by William Booth. Although the volume is undated, an inscription in the copy in the possession of the University of Western Ontario's Weldon Library reads "L.N. Tucker, London 1882", providing an approximate date of publication. The hymn quoted here is "The Christian Mission War-Song," p. 5, the third stanza.

³⁹ GT, June 12, 1884.

⁴⁰ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Apr. 1, 1886.

⁴¹ GT, Dec. 11, 1884; see also GT, May 28, 1885.

⁴² GT, Nov. 13, 1884.

⁴³ GT, Sept. 25, 1884.

⁴⁴ GT, Oct. 9, 1884.

⁴⁵ GT, Oct. 16, 1884.

⁴⁶ GT, May 14, 1885.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ GT, Jan. 29, 1885.

⁴⁹ GT, July 3, 1884.

⁵⁰ GT, June 26, 1884.

⁵¹ GT, June 26, 1884.

⁵² GT, July 31, 1884.

⁵³ GT, July 3, 1884.

⁵⁴For the barbed-wire incident see GT, Sept. 6, 1883; see also Dec. 8, 1881, and Apr. 3, 1884.

⁵⁵For example, in GT, July 2, 1885; also CPL, to Donnelly, June 29, 1885.

⁵⁶GT, July 61, 1885; letter from A. Riddell.

⁵⁷GT, July 9, 1885; for this and the following quotations see also a Donnelly rebuttal in GT, July 23, 1885.

⁵⁸GT, Sept. 10, 1885; also Porte Diary, Dec. 10, 1883, and Nov. 27, 1884. In an exchange reported in LFP, Feb. 3, 1886, Emma Rees admits involvement in the Lucan troubles. For her age see Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 14, 1886.

⁵⁹MCR, 1885, Appeal, Rees v. Donnelly, testimonies before M. Leitch, Oct. 15, 1885.

⁶⁰GT, Oct. 15, 1885.

⁶¹GT, Oct. 15, 1885; also MCR, 1885, contain Donnelly's Oct. 14 information and Leitch's Oct. 15 notice of conviction.

⁶²Return of Convictions, Oct. 16, 1885, by Hannah.

⁶³GT, Oct. 22, 1885; CPL, to Leitch, Oct. 16, 1885.

⁶⁴See CPL, Rees to Hutchinson, Oct. 19, 1885 for the account of this incident, including quotations.

⁶⁵CPL, to Rees, Oct. 16 and Oct. 20, 1885.

⁶⁶Ibid., to Rees, Oct. 21, 1885.

⁶⁷Ibid., to Rees, Oct. 20, 1885.

⁶⁸Ibid., to Donnelly, Oct. 17, 1885.

⁶⁹CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Oct. 31, 1885.

⁷⁰CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Dec. 3, 1885.

⁷¹CPL, to Simpson, Dec. 4, 1885.

- ⁷² Ibid., to Rees, Dec. 4, 1885.
- ⁷³ Ibid., to Rees, Dec. 15, 1885; GT, Dec. 10, 1885.
- ⁷⁴ CPL, to Simpson, Dec. 15, 1885.
- ⁷⁵ GT, Dec. 17, 1885.
- ⁷⁶ CPL, to Simpson, Dec. 15, 1885.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., to Rees, Dec. 22, 1885.
- ⁷⁸ GT, Dec. 17, 1885; Middlesex General Sessions of the Peace, Record Book 1876-1885, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14, 1885.
- ⁷⁹ CPL, to Stuart, Dec. 20, and to Rees, Dec. 22, 1885.
- ⁸⁰ GT, Dec. 31, 1885.
- ⁸¹ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Jan. 4, 1886.
- ⁸² GT, Feb. 18, 1886.
- ⁸³ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Jan. 4, 1886.
- ⁸⁴ CPL, to Rees, Jan. 2, 1886.
- ⁸⁵ CPC, Johnston to Hutchinson, Jan. 4, 1886.
- ⁸⁶ Except for details whose sources are otherwise noted, all descriptions of all the January disturbances (including quotations) are drawn from GT, Feb. 11 and Feb. 18, 1886, and LFP, Feb. 3, 4, 11, and 12, 1886.
- ⁸⁷ Salvation Army Music, p. 89, "Euphony," stanza 4.
- ⁸⁸ An exchange at the trials in London, as reported in LFP, Feb. 3, 1886.
- ⁸⁹ Salvation Army Music, p. 47, "Ye Soldiers of the Cross," stanza 1.
- ⁹⁰ Remark of an Army witness at the trial in London, GT, Feb. 18, 1886, whence the description of the disturbances is drawn.

⁹¹GT, Jan. 28, 1886.

⁹²GT, Feb. 4, and Mar. 4, 1-86.

⁹³CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Feb. 1, 1886.

⁹⁴Return of Convictions, Feb. 3, 4, 6, 1886, of Finlison, Thody, Ryan, respectively; in CPL are receipts for Thody and Ryan, Feb. 3 and 6, respectively.

⁹⁵CPL, to William Donnelly, Feb. 18, 1886, recalling the earlier ~~Crown offer~~.

⁹⁶For an account of the P.P.A. at the height of its (and Essery's) influence, see James T. Watt, "Anti-Catholicism in Ontario Politics: The Role of the Protestant Protective Association in the 1894 Election," Ontario History, Vol. LIX, No. 1 (March 1967), 57-67. The article is about the P.P.A. in general and does not discuss Essery himself.

⁹⁷See GT, Feb. 11, 1886; LFP, Feb. 4, 1886 for an account of this trial session.

⁹⁸See GT, Feb. 18, and LFP, Feb. 11 and 12, 1886 for account of this trial session.

⁹⁹The account of this incident (including all quotations) is in CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Feb. 17, and William Donnelly to Hutchinson, Feb. 18, 1886.

¹⁰⁰GT, Feb. 18, 1886; CPL, to Rees, Feb. 16, 1886.

¹⁰¹Ibid.; to Donnelly, Feb. 18, 1886.

¹⁰²CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Feb. 18, 1886.

¹⁰³CPL, to Donnelly, Feb. 19, 1886.

¹⁰⁴Return of Convictions, Feb. 20, 1886, by Hannah.

¹⁰⁵LFP, Feb. 22, 1886.

¹⁰⁶CPL, to Donnelly, Feb. 22, 1886.

¹⁰⁷CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Feb. 22, 1886.

¹⁰⁸ CPL, to Rees, Feb. 23, and receipt for Robert Donnelly, Feb. 23, 1886; also Return of Convictions, Feb. 23, by Hannah; GT, Feb. 25, 1886.

¹⁰⁹ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Feb. 23, 1886.

¹¹⁰ CPL, to Rees, Feb. 26, 1886.

¹¹¹ Return of Convictions, Mar. 1, 1886, by Curry and Simpson.

¹¹² GT, Mar. 4, 1886.

¹¹³ CPL, to Rees, Feb. 28, 1886.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., to Simpson, Mar. 2, 1886; also Register of the Gaol at London, Mar. 14, 1886.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., to Rees, Mar. 8, 1886.

¹¹⁶ Goodspeed, p. 556.

¹¹⁷ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Mar. 9, 1886.

¹¹⁸ CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Feb. 17, 1886.

¹¹⁹ GT, Mar. 4, 1886.

¹²⁰ GT, Apr. 8, 1886; CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Apr. 1, 1886.

¹²¹ CPL, to Rees, Apr. 5, 1886.

¹²² Ibid., to Rees, Mar. 1, 1886.

¹²³ Ibid., to Meredith and Meredith, Mar. 1, 1886.

¹²⁴ GT, Mar. 11, 1886.

¹²⁵ CPL, to Rees, Mar. 8, 1886.

¹²⁶ Sessions Record Book, June 7 and 12, 1886; CPL, McKillop to Rees, June 12, 1886.

¹²⁷ CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, May 3, 1886.

- 128 See the busy series of letters and receipts in CPL, June 1 to 7, 1886.
- 129 CPC, Schoff to Hutchinson, June 14, 1886; and unsigned letter to Hutchinson (in Emma Rees' handwriting), May 13, 1886.
- 130 See respectively GT, July 8, 1880; July 7, 1881; Dec. 22, 1881; Mar. 13, 1884; and Feb. 2, 1882; and CPC, Skill to Hutchinson, June 9, 1886.
- 131 CPL, to Johnston, June 20, 1886.
- 132 GT, June 3, 1886.
- 133 CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, June 11, 1886; and CRL, to Rees, June 12, 1886.
- 134 CPL, to Johnston, June 26, 1886.
- 135 CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, June 26, 1886--the first of her letters signed Captain Emma Rees.
- 136 CPL, to Mowat, June 21, 1886.
- 137 Ibid., to Johnston, June 26, 1886.
- 138 Ibid., to Rees, June 12, 1886.
- 139 GT, June 17 and 24, 1886; and Return of Convictions, June 18, 1886, by Hannah.
- 140 GT, June 24 and Dec. 2, 1886.
- 141 Sessions Record Book, Dec. 6, 1886: appeal postponed at request of appellant; Sept. 10, 1886: put off to next Sessions; Dec. 9, 1886: a complete blank opposite the entry, Skill v. Blackwell; no further references follow.
- 142 CPL, to Johnston, June 26, 1886.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 Ibid., to Rees, June 26, 1886.
- 145 Ibid., to Donnelly, July 8, 1886.

- 146 Ibid., to Rees, July 8, 1886.
- 147 Ibid., to Johnston, July 13, 1886.
- 148 Ibid., to Skill, July 9, 1886.
- 149 CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Nov. 15, 1886.
- 150 GT, Aug. 19, 1886.
- 151 LFP, Dec. 6, 1886.
- 152 Ibid., William Donnelly's summary of the episodes.
- 153 GT, Dec. 16 and 23, 1886; Sessions Record Book, Dec. 6 and 14, 1886.
- 154 Sessions Record Book, June 10, 1887: prisoner bailed to next Sessions; Dec. 6, 1887: prisoner bailed to appear when called upon; no subsequent references to the case.
- 155 GT, Nov. 11, 1886.
- 156 GT, Dec. 23, 1886.
- 157 Coombs, The Canadian Advance, p. 29.
- 158 CPC, Rees to Hutchinson, Dec. 1886.
- 159 Salvation Army Music, p. 25, "Martyrdom," stanzas 1 and 2.
- 160 Applications, Correspondence and Oaths re Office of County Constable, Middlesex; Donnelly to Elliott, Mar. 7, 1888; Sessions Record Book, Mar. 17, 1888.
- 161 Strathroy Age, Sept. 1, 1892.
- 162 See, for example, CPL, to Donnelly, Jan. 28, 1890.
- 163 William Donnelly's advertising pamphlet, "The Clear Crit Stallion St. Nicholas", undated and with no printer noted, which describes the schedule for standing at stud for the season of 1891, and describes the pedigree and accomplishments of St. Nicholas, and the schedule of fees for service. A photocopy is in CP. See also notice of Donnelly's fine breeding stock in a clipping in the Porte scrapbook (undated, though apparently Dec., 1883), from

an unidentified journal. A photocopy is in DFP.

164. Porte Diary, Feb. 5, 1885; Sept. 4, 1890; Dec. 6, 1890; Nov. 27, 1892; Sept. 6, 1893; and Sept. 11, 1894.

165. Globe, Dec. 24, 1883; an interview in which the two Donnelly brothers mention some of their enemies who have died recently, and the circumstances under which they died; the majority of these Donnelly assertions have been verified from other sources.

166. GT, Feb. 4, 1885.

167. Ingersoll Chronicle and Canadian Dairyman, Jan. 31, 1895.

168. Unpublished typescript memorandum, unsigned and undated, in the possession of the rector, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, Ingersoll. The essay describes early history of the parish and its various rectors.

169. Catholic Record, Oct. 9, 1909.

170. MRO, Abstract Book A, Biddulph; p. 107, Instruments 6001, 7322, 7587, and p. 395, Instrument 8821 respectively.

171. Sarnia Observer, Sept. 8, 1899, reprinting an earlier item from GT. Donnelly is described as still living in Gleneoe.

172. Porte Diary, Mar. 8, 1897.

173. Porte Diary, Apr. 10, 1898, for example.

174. MRO, Abstract Book A, Biddulph, p. 107.

175. DFP,
A.S. Garrett to Miller, Nov. 18, 1959.

176. LFP, June 14, 1911.

177. Porte Diary, May 8, 1884; Sept. 20, 1893; Mar. 4-10, 1897; and Aug. 1, 1897.

178. Lucan Sun, June 29, 1911.

179. DFP,
Mrs. Anna Newman, Patrick Donnelly's daughter, to A.S. Garrett, undated.

180 Armitage-Stanley Genealogical file.

181 MRO, Abstract. Book A, Biddulph, p. 325, Instrument 10465,
Dec. 1, 1919.

182 Ibid., p. 395, Instrument 12199, July 6, 1939.

VOLUME TWO

NOTES

Chapter 1

¹DFP, James T. Collisson to M. Turner, Sept. 2, 1952..

²ASP, Armitage-Stanley to R. Fazakas, Jan. 22, 1969:

³Toronto Star, June 18, 1966, for example.

⁴ASP, Armitage-Stanley to J. Reaney, Jan. 5, 1969.

⁵DFP, Mary James To William Butt, Mar. 27, 1973.

⁶DFP, Nigel May, CKSQ TV, Sudbury, to Miller, Oct. 24, 1963.

⁷ASP, Armitage-Stanley to Alice MacFarlane, July 30, 1946, and to R. Fazakas, Aug. 28, 1968.

⁸See, for example, the rather lengthy entry, 'Elovements' in T.P. Cross, Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, n.d.).

⁹St. Marys Argus, Feb. 10 and Apr. 21, 1971; also ASP, Fazakas to Stanley, Feb. 16, 1970.

¹⁰Weekend Magazine, Nov. 8, 1969.

¹¹DFP, A.D. Campbell to Miller, Apr. 23, 1960.

¹²DFP, The Donnellys of Biddulph Township, unpublished undergraduate essay by J. Dempsey.

¹³Interview conducted by W. Butt with Earl Heywood of Wingham, June, 1972.

¹⁴ Interview conducted by J. Reaney with S. Armitage-Stanley, Jan. 4, 1972.

¹⁵ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to A. MacFarlane, July 30, 1946.

¹⁶ Interview conducted by W. Butt with Florence Fraser of East Zorra Township, January, 1973.

¹⁷ Interview conducted by W. Butt with Mary James of Lunenburg, N.S., in Woodstock, Ont., September, 1972.

¹⁸ ASP, M. Armstrong to Armitage-Stanley, Jan. 10, 1963.

¹⁹ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to J. Reaney, Jan. 5, 1969.

²⁰ Earl Heywood, Tales of the Donnelly Feud (Toronto: Waterless Melon Music, 1971), p. 2.

²¹ LFP, Aug. 30, 1973.

²² ASP, Armitage-Stanley to A. MacFarlane, July 30, 1946.

²³ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to R. Fazakas, Nov. 3, 1968.

²⁴ Armitage Stanley, as in note 1.

²⁵ DFP, C.A. MacFie to Miller, Apr. 8, 1954.

²⁶ LA, Dec. 19, 1874, and LFP, Dec. 21 and 26, 1874.

²⁷ Marion Woodman to Colleen Reaney, Mar. 15, 1974. A copy in DFP.

²⁸ James, as in note 17.

²⁹ Interview conducted by J. Reaney with G. Trevethick of St. Thomas, Mar. 9, 1972.

³⁰ DFP, Stafford Johnson to Miller, July 4, 1966.

³¹ DFP, A.S. Garrett to Miller, Dec. 10, 1955, enclosing a partial transcript of an undated St. Marys Journal-Argus interview with Leonard D. Stanley of Biddulph.

³² Montreal Standard, Dec. 21, 1946.

³³ DFP, undated and unaddressed statement of M.A. Bannon.

³⁴ Interview conducted by J. Reaney with D. McAlpine, June 21, 1973; see also DFP, C.A. MacFie to Miller, Apr. 8, 1954.

³⁵ Heywood, as in note 13.

³⁶ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to J. Reaney, Jan. 5, 1969.

³⁷ McAlpine, as in note 34.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Heywood, as in note 13.

⁴⁰ McAlpine, as in note 34.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² DFP, MacFie to Miller, Apr. 8, 1954.

⁴³ DFP, R.B. Hiltz to Miller, Feb. 10, 1948.

⁴⁴ DFP, Collisson to Turner, Sept. 2, 1952.

⁴⁵ Canadian Antique News, Feb. 28, 1976.

⁴⁶ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to Fazakas, Aug. 28, 1965.

⁴⁷ McAlpine, as in note 34.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. McCracken, Mar. 14, 1971. A partial transcript is in DFP.

⁴⁹ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to Fazakas, Aug. 26, 1968.

⁵⁰ McCracken, as in note 48.

⁵¹ Ibid.

- ⁵² Dempsey, as in note 12, and cf. Heywood, as in note 13.
- ⁵³ DFP, Collisson to Turner, Sept. 2, 1952.
- ⁵⁴ DFP, Arnold Hodgins to Miller, Feb. 1, 1965.
- ⁵⁵ DFP, Nora Lord to Miller, June 21, 1954.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Interview conducted by W. Butt with Mrs. J. Palmer, June, 1972.
- ⁵⁸ ASP, Armitage-Stanley to MacFarlane, July 30, 1946, and to R. Fazakas, Feb. 5, 1969.
- ⁵⁹ James Anderson to James Reaney, Apr. 24, 1969. A copy is in DFP.
- ⁶⁰ DFP, E. Polley to Miller, Apr. 15, 1954.
- ⁶¹ DFP, Lester Hodgins to J. Reaney, Jan. 19, 1969.
- ⁶² Porte Diary, June 24, 1898; also LA and LFP, June 24, 1898 ff.
- ⁶³ DFP, Polley to Miller, Apr. 15, 1954. For the alleged involvement of James Toohey in the 1880 killings, see for example CP, statement of Patrick Donnelly, Apr. 26, 1881.
- ⁶⁴ James, as in note 17.
- ⁶⁵ Heywood, as in note 13.

Chapter 2

¹ John F. Due, "Railways into Huron, Grey and Bruce", Western Ontario Nuggets, No. 23 (1955).

² Hayden White, Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

³ Ila Logan, Through the Years in West Missouri, John Eedy, publisher, 1967.

⁴ Richard M. Stingle, "The Donnellys: Ritual Victims", Alphabet, No. 6 (June, 1963), 11-16.

⁵ See for example George Steiner, The Death of Tragedy (London: Faber & Faber, 1961); and, in Robert W. Corrigan, editor, Tragedy: Vision and Form (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), the essays of Joseph W. Krutch, 271-283, and John Gassner, 405-417.

⁶ Northrop Frye, Fools of Time, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 29-30.

⁷ Miguel de Unamuno, The Tragic Sense of Life, translated by J.E. Crawford Fitch, (New York: Dover Publications, 1954), 146.

⁸ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum Press, 1965), 222-223.

⁹ CPC, Donnelly to Hutchinson, Mar. 18, 1881.

Chapter 3

¹ Marshall McLuhan, with Wilfred Watson, From Cliché to Archetype (New York: Viking Press, 1970). Republished by Simon and Schuster (New York, 1971). The present quotation is from p. 40 of the latter edition. All subsequent quotations from From Cliché to Archetype are followed immediately by the page number in brackets, and are from the 1971 edition.

² George Steiner, The Death of Tragedy, 17.

³ David Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); 60.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Murray Edwards, A Stage In Our Past (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 44.

⁶ Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled, 67.

⁷Ibid., 239.

⁸Harold Innis, The Bias of Communication (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 102. Empirical studies of rumour yield similar conclusions; see for example H. Proshansky and B. Seidenberg, editors, Basic Studies in Social Psychology (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 32-39 and 47-58. If we prefer to study the process in literature, we can turn to School For Scandal or to the Prologue to Henry IV, Part 2.

⁹C.P.T. Chiniquy, The Priest, the Woman, and the Confessional (Montreal: F.E. Grafton, 1875).

¹⁰The existence of many sympathetic Donnelly images in the papers does not contradict the central premise in some earlier chapters of this thesis that publicity and public sentiment were overwhelmingly against the family and the prosecutions of their murderers. All papers do take for granted Donnelly notoriety and assume that Donnellys were guilty of many crimes. But it is also agreed that they were not guilty of everything charged against them in Biddulph. The argument of the Mail (Feb. 5, 1880) is representative; after cataloguing a multitude of Donnelly misdeeds the writer says that they "were made scapegoats for every depredation perpetrated. It is only fair to say that while they no doubt richly deserved much of the odium heaped upon them, they were often blamed for the misdeeds of others". The general attitude therefore is that yes, the Donnellys were evil, but no, they did not entirely deserve what happened to them, for murder is evil too. When the emphasis is on the murders, this attitude opens the way for a sympathetic rhetorical treatment of the Donnellys as victims which nevertheless does not at all call into question their well-established notoriety.

¹¹Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, 217.

¹²Ibid., 38.

¹³Ibid., 218.

¹⁴The Free Press account is in the main historically accurate. See in the Carroll Papers a Certificate of Conviction, signed by J. Idington, Clerk of the Peace, Stratford: Purtell received two months for assault with a knife, and three more for malicious wounding.

¹⁵Frye, Anatomy, 328.

¹⁶Maria Monk, Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk (New York: Howe and Bates, 1836). See the diary of J. Eedy (Vol. 1, Chap. 1, note 33), the entry for Sept. 14, 1875.

¹⁷ See the Eedy diary, May 7, 1875, for account of a Chiniquy lecture in Toronto. His autobiography, Fifty Years in the Church of Rome (Chicago: Craig and Barlow, 1885) is distributed in Toronto by S.L. Briggs and Co.--or so it would seem, for their 1885 catalogue is bound with the autobiography in the copy in the possession of the D.B. Weldon Library. See also C.P.T. Chiniquy, The Church of Rome (London, Ont.: Free Press Steam Printing Establishment, 1870). A Chiniquy lecture in London is reported in the Free Press, Nov. 11, 1869; Vicar-General Bruyère's letter of protest is in the Free Press, Nov. 12, 1869; and Chiniquy's rebuttal (the bulk of this pamphlet) is dated Dec. 21, 1869.

¹⁸ Like the immediately preceding account, this is probably apocryphal: the coroner who performs the autopsies on the Donnelly bodies reports that "most of the internal organs were so charred that I could not distinguish them" (Advertiser, Feb. 11, 1880) and hence there was probably nothing identifiable left for Donnelly to kiss or contemplate.

¹⁹ Frank Rahill, The World of Melodrama (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 178.

²⁰ Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled, 94, 252-6.

²¹ James Frazer, The Golden Bough, abridged edition (Toronto: MacMillan, 1957). Observations on such notions in Ireland are to be found on pp. 74, 228, 360.

²² Frank Rahill, The World of Melodrama, 118.

²³ F.R. Scott and A.J.M. Smith, compilers, The Blasted Pine (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), xiv.

²⁴ From Cliché to Archetype, 38. McLuhan does not explain his use of the term, but Byron in his poem exploits all the fields of topical interest that show in the daily papers--foreign wars, exotic customs in distant lands, Gothic conventions, physical horror, high society, newspaper doggerel. And the public co-authors Byron's epic much the same as they co-author the papers: Byron adds later installments in the light of, and under the influence of, public reception of sections already published.

²⁵ For Frye's discussion of this form of satire, see Anatomy, 226-9.

²⁶ Frye, Anatomy, 282 and 288.

Chapter 4

¹Several copies of this leaflet are in private hands. There is a photocopy in DFP.

²LA, Apr. 10, 1880; for discussion of its authorship see LFP, Apr. 10, and Globe, Apr. 12 and 13, 1880.

³For Irish examples see G.D. Zimmermann, Songs of Irish Rebellion (Dublin: A. Figgis, 1967). For Canadian examples, see LA, June 21, 1872, and "John R. Birchall", in Edith Fowke, editor, Traditional Singers and Songs of Ontario (Don Mills: Burns and MacEachern, 1965).

⁴LA, Feb. 4, 1881.

⁵See LFP, Mar. 21, 1884: an original play about the Donnellys is produced in Parkhill. Unfortunately, no copy seems to have survived.

⁶Albert R. Hassard, Famous Canadian Trials (Toronto: Carswell, 1924). Quotations from this book are followed by the page number in parentheses.

⁷J. Lambert Payne, "The Donnelly Case", MacLean's Magazine, Nov. 1, 1931, pp. 14, 44. In the discussion of Payne's two articles, quotations are from MacLean's article unless followed by "LFP" in parentheses.

⁸W.S. Wallace, Murders and Mysteries: A Canadian Series (Toronto: MacMillan, 1931). Quotations from this book are followed by the page number in parentheses.

⁹W.S. Wallace, The Dictionary of Canadian Biography, third edition (Toronto: MacMillan, 1963).

¹⁰E.C. Guillet, Famous Canadian Trials, Volume Eight, "The End of the Donnellys, or Mass Murder in Biddulph Township." There is a copy of this unpublished typescript in DFP. Quotations from this MS are followed by the page number in parentheses.

¹¹For example, cf. Wallace, pp. 196-7 and Guillet, pp. 2-3.

¹²Alice MacFarlane, "The Donnelly Murders". There is a copy of this unpublished typescript essay in DFP. Quotations from this paper are followed by the page number in parentheses.

¹³For MacFarlane's own account of her sources see MacFarlane to Reaney, Nov. 25, 1968. See also S. Armitage-Stanley to J. Reaney, Dec. 6, 1968. Copies of these are in DFP.

¹⁴DFP, MacFarlane to Reaney, Nov. 25, 1968.

¹⁵Toronto Globe and Mail, Nov. 20, 1946.

¹⁶S. Tupper Bigelow, "The Vigilante Massacre," Maclean's Magazine, June 1, 1950, pp. 18, 19, 27, 28.

Chapter 6

¹Thomas P. Kelley, The Black Donnellys (Winnipeg: Harlequin, 1954); republished in 1969 by Greywood Publishing Ltd., Winnipeg, and republished in 1975 by Pagurian Press, Toronto. All page references to The Black Donnellys are from the Greywood edition and are placed in parentheses immediately following the quotations.

²Richard M. Stingle, "The Donnellys: Ritual Victims".

³See accounts clearly drawn straight from Kelley in, for example, Stratford Beacon-Herald, Nov. 19, 1960, and in Hamilton Spectator, Nov. 1, 1969.

⁴Globe and Mail, Dec. 7, 1971.

⁵Thomas P. Kelley, The Black Donnellys, Encounter Series Edition, (Don Mills: Learning Concepts Ltd., 1971), 162.

⁶Orlo Miller, The Donnellys Must Die (Toronto: MacMillan, 1962); published in paperback in the Laurentian Library, 1967. All page references to The Donnellys Must Die are from the paperback edition and immediately follow the quotations.

⁷As first noticed by Stingle, p. 11.

⁸DFP, a typewritten history of the manuscript of The Donnellys Must Die, editor to Miller, August, 1961.

⁹See, for example, reviews in Calgary Herald, Apr. 20, 1963; Montreal Star, Dec. 29, 1962; and Winnipeg Free Press, Feb. 23, 1963.

¹⁰ These are all in the Regional Collection, and are in the process of being catalogued. The primary source materials are referred to in these notes (and will be when catalogued) as Papers Relating to Queen v. James Carroll (CP). The contemporary personal letters are referred to in these notes (and will be when catalogued) as in DFP.

¹¹ See for example the following: Giovanni Costigan, A History of Modern Ireland (New York: Pegasus, 1969); J.H. Froude, The English in Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, Volume II (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1874); W.E.H. Lecky, A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, Volume II (London: Longman, Green, 1892).

¹² Patrick O'Donnell, The Irish Faction Fighters of the Nineteenth Century (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1975), p. 31.

¹³ LFP, Sept. 8, 1882.

¹⁴ See Province of Ontario Sessional Papers, 1871-2, No. 39; 1875-6, No. 59; 1880, No. 19; and 1884, No. 1; and Dominion of Canada Sessional Papers, 1873, No. 60; 1875, No. 41; 1879, No. 88; and 1883, No. 77.

¹⁵ C.H. MacKintosh, ed., The Canadian Parliamentary Companion and Annual Register, 1879 (Ottawa: Citizen Printing and Publishing Co., 1879), 157-158.

¹⁶ LFP, Sept. 15, 1875; and LA, Jan. 29, 1881.

¹⁷ LFP, Sept. 15, 1875.

¹⁸ Statutes of Canada, 37 Vic. Chap. 9, and RSO, 37 Vic. Chap. 5.

¹⁹ If there is a sinister undercurrent in Biddulph politics, it is one which is not directly related to the Donnelly murders per se. Bernard Stanley is passionately active in politics from the time of the 1857 Keefe's tavern riot, where he is a ringleader, to the last campaigns before the Donnelly murders (LFP, Sept. 24, 1878). In the campaigning of the 1875 provincial election we see him in his sleigh canvassing for the Conservative candidate door-to-door along the Roman Line, working up the Catholic vote (LFP, Sept. 16, 1875). His actions against Donnellys (as magistrate and as a witness for character at Carroll's murder trial) are documented in Volume 1 of this thesis. It is questionable whether his dislike of Donnellys is primarily politically inspired by their well-known Reform sympathies, or whether it is based on their generally disruptive influence on the social and commercial life of his township and village. Certainly there is no evidence that in 1880 the Stanleys took politics seriously enough to kill over. Anyway, as a Lucan Protestant, he has nothing directly to do with the Vigilant killings, however gladdened we may suppose him to have been by the Donnelly deaths.

²⁰ Thomas P. Kelley, Vengeance of the Black Donnellys (Winnipeg: Marlequin, 1962); republished 1969 by Greenwood Publishing Ltd. and republished 1975 by Pagurian Press, Toronto. All page references are to the Greywood edition, and are placed in parentheses immediately following the quotations.

²¹ Orlo Miller, Death to the Donnellys (Toronto: MacMillan, 1975). Page references are placed in parentheses immediately following the quotations.

²² Godfrey P. Jordan, "Feud for thought", review of Death to the Donnellys in Books in Canada, Vol. 5, No. 1 (March, 1976), 13-16; the quotation is from p. 14.

Chapter 6

¹ Them Donnellys is without written script. There is a one-hour version taped in December 1973 for CBC Radio and now in their Toronto archives. All that the actors had by way of a script was a list of the scenes in order, prepared by the writer for the project, Frank McEnaney, and posted on the dressing room door prior to each performance. A list of the scenes for each of the 1973 and 1974 versions is in the DFP. The discussion in this chapter is of the later version, unless otherwise noted.

² Ted Johns, "An Interview with Paul Thompson", Performing Arts in Canada, Winter, 1973, pp. 30-32.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See reviewers' observations in LFP, Nov. 17, 1973, and Toronto Globe and Mail, Dec. 5, 1973; also Michael Ondaatje's film The Clinton Special which shows the receptive responses of audiences to actors.

⁵ Johns, "An Interview with Paul Thompson".

⁶ Rick Salutin, "1837--Diary of a Canadian Play", This Magazine, May-June, 1973, pp. 11-15.

⁷ Johns, "An Interview with Paul Thompson".

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Philip Schreiber, "Stage Coach Song," © 1974 by Philip Schreiber. Complete lyrics for "Stage Coach Song" and for some of the other songs from the play are in DFP.

¹⁰ Stratford Beacon-Herald, Nov. 27, 1973.

¹¹ Ibid.

12 Johns, "An Interview with Paul Thompson".

13 LFP, Nov. 20, 1973.

14 McMaster University Silhouette, Nov. 22, 1974.

15 LFP, Nov. 5, 1974.

16 See the advertising leaflet in DFP, and such newspaper advertisements as that in Woodstock Sentinel-Review, Nov. 5, 1974.

17 "Death Song", © 1974 by Philip Schreibman. See the complete lyrics in DFP.

18 Johns, "An Interview with Paul Thompson".

19 Ibid.

20 Toronto Globe and Mail, Dec. 5, 1973.

21 A copy of the complete script of this speech, written and acted by Eric Peterson, is in DFP.

22 "Seven Long Years", © Philip Schreibman, 1974.

23 A mimeographed copy of the script for The Donnellys is in DFP. A one-act version of the play has been published in Herman Voaden, editor, Look Both Ways: Theatre Experiences (Toronto: MacMillan, 1975), 154-176. The discussion in this chapter is of the two-act version, to which the page numbers in parentheses following quotations refer.

24 The mimeographed script reads "Fourteen miles, three hundred years...", the distance from London, Ont., to Lucan. The change was made in subsequent performances not in London. The play was revived in April of 1976 in London and then played in May at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa (see Ottawa Citizen, May 1, 1976).

25 There is a typescript of this play in DFP. Quotations from the play are followed by page numbers in parentheses which refer to this typescript.

26 DFP, Hugh Graham to William Butt, Jan. 4, 1975.

27 LFP, Feb. 25, 1974, quoting Graham's program notes prepared for the Peterborough production of the play.

28 DFP, Graham to Butt, Jan. 4, 1975.

²⁹ LEP, Nov. 17, 1973.

³⁰ Hugh Graham, "The Biddulph Feud", Canadian Theatre Review, Vol. 8 (Fall, 1975), pp. 88-89.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Toronto Globe and Mail, Nov. 1, 1973.

³³ DFP, McEnaney to Butt, Apr. 22, 1975.

³⁴ All quotations from Cripple are followed by page numbers in parentheses which refer to the copy of the pre-production script in DFP.

³⁵ DFP, McEnaney to Butt, Apr. 22, 1975.

³⁶ Earl Heywood, Tales of the Donnelly Feud (Toronto: Waterless Melon Music, 1971). Recorded on Dominion LPS 21013.

³⁷ Heywood, Tales, "The Donnelly Circle".

³⁸ Jay Boyle, "The Black Donnellys", (Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd, 1963). Recorded by Group One on Spartan Records. And another "folk version", recorded in 1974 by Woody Lambe of West Zorra Township, which differs in some details. For instance, "They laid a fiendish plot for their Blackfeet countrymen" becomes "They laid a fiendish plot for their black feared countrymen"; the Blackfeet terminology being obscure for Ontario listeners, it has under cultural pressure been 'normalized'.

³⁹ Norwick Webster, "Black Donnellys", (Toronto: BMI Canada Ltd, 1964). A copy is in DFP.

⁴⁰ Shay Duffin, "The Legend of the Black Donnellys", recorded on Duffin and Hennessey and the Dublin Rogues, The Legend of the Black Donnellys, RCA Camden CAS 2463.

⁴¹ Stompin' Tom Connors, "Massacre of the Black Donnellys", in Stompin' Tom Connors Folio No. 1 (Toronto: Canadian Music Sales Corp. Ltd., 1971). Recorded on Connors' On Tragedy Trail, on Dominion label LPS 21008.

Chapter 7

¹ These scripts--two by William Marshall, two by Scott and Bryant, one by Jonah Royston--are all in the possession of Mr. John F. Bassett of Toronto, who purchased film rights to Miller's The Donnellys Must Die, and who kindly permitted me to examine them in his office in December of 1975. For the inauspicious setting of London, England, see London Free Press, Mar. 20, 1973.

² Miller, The Donnellys Must Die, p. 65.

³ The Gazette, University of Western Ontario, Jan. 7, 1972.

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