

tion has advanced, any means to suppress crime, other than those of the recognized law, have justly been condemned. "Vigilance Committees" have no place beside the law. Nevertheless it is not denied that a "Vigilance Committee," consisting of many of the residents in the neighbourhood, was formed in the Township of Biddulph, for the purpose of suppressing the lawlessness which prevailed, and it was sought to be shewn that members of this "Committee" were implicated in the murders of the unfortunate Donnelly's. The facts of the murders may be briefly stated: On the morning of the 4th Feb., 1880, the dwelling-house of James Donnelly in which he then was, with his wife, Thomas his son, Bridget his niece, and a lad named John O'Connor, was entered, the inmates, with the exception of the boy John O'Connor, who escaped, murdered, and the house and bodies burned to ashes. On the same morning a party of men went to the house of William Donnelly, son of James Donnelly, situated some miles distant, in which was William, his wife, his brother John, and one Martin Hogan; that in some pretended alarm of fire they called upon William Donnelly to get up, and John Donnelly, hearing it, arose from bed, opened the door, and was immediately shot. He died a few minutes afterwards. The boy John O'Connor, as has been said, escaped, unknown to those who were at James Donnelly's house having hid himself until they had gone away. His story is one of the most wonderful in the annals of crime, and in consequence of the statements made by him, James Carroll, John Kennedy, Martin McLaughlin, Thomas Ryder, John Purtell and James Ryder were charged with the murder of James Donnelly, Judith Donnelly, Thomas Donnelly, Bridget Donnelly and John Donnelly before Mr. John Peters, J.P. and Mr. James Forbes, J.P., on the 21st Feb., 1880. Mr. Chas Hutchinson, County Crown Attorney, appeared for the Crown, and Mr. Hugh McMahon, Q.C., for the prisoners. The lad O'Connor was the first witness called, and deposed as follows: "My name is John O'Connor. I live in Lucan with my father and mother; my father's name is Michael O'Connor. I was acquainted with Mr. James Donnelly and his family; they lived in Biddulph; I went to Mr. Donnelly's house the evening before the murder; I went with Mr. Donnelly and Thomas Donnelly, they wanted me to feed the pigs, &c., while they went to Granton.

Old Mr. Donnelly and Thomas came to the house for me; I went with them. A little before dark I and the old man went to bed in the front room. Besides me and the old man and Tom there were in the house Bridget and the old woman. Bridget and the old woman stayed in the kitchen; the old man and I went to bed together. Bridget and the old woman were to sleep in the middle room, next to us. Tom slept in the kitchen. I was awakened up between 12 and 2 o'clock by the old man getting up, and I saw Thomas Carroll holding the candle at the room door for the old man to dress himself. He asked him what he was arresting him for, and he said he had another charge against him. The old man dressed himself, and was looking for his coat, and he came into the room to look for it: I said, 'here it is,' and he took it from under my head, and then went into the kitchen and asked Tom if he was handcuffed. Tom said, 'yes, he thinks he is smart.' Tom then asked him to read the warrant, and a whole crowd rushed in, and commenced hammering them with sticks. I was in bed when they came in. I got under the bed, and I saw Bridget run up stairs; I ran to go up stairs with her. I could see out into the front room from where I was lying under the bed,—the bed is opposite the front door, against the wall, and I could see out into the front room. Bridget ran from the kitchen through the front room, towards the stairs. I came out and told her the crowd were in the kitchen. There was no one in the front room when I ran through. I saw her when she got through. I told her to shut the door after her. I ran back to the bed-room and got behind the clothes basket under the bed: it was light in the front room. Thomas ran out of the kitchen, and got out of the front door. I heard him hammered with sticks. They carried him in and threw him down; I could hear the handcuffs rattle. One of them said, 'hit that fellow on the head and break his skull.' Upon this some one hit him three or four times, and one of them said 'fetch the candle here.' I peeped out and saw Thomas Rider and John Purtell whom I know well. I know Carroll well. I saw one in woman's clothes; some had their faces blackened, and one asked, 'where is the girl?' another answered, 'upstairs.' They went up stairs, but I heard no sound. They came down, got the lamp, threw coal oil on the bed. One of them said the coal oil would burn off, and would not set fire to the beds

at all. W under while I got from and my co I ran out old woma I stamped from the fr Thomas ly were breat state they across the about fifty at the door was; I tol whispered house was ing. Old M Whelan's. John went Whelan als the whole Whelan sai bodies insid a big patch I went over day when and Joe w father and I saw my tv laughed at black hat on to me; she coat, and I asked me h her that the Tom and Bri killed. My came back t around town father their when he was Fox's, that h was not wit name to Mr. asked me if not tell her t would tell ar then came in did not wish to get the fellows g as if they w house. I sa had, from u wood stick, chopped, at whittled."

The witness