

Sunday morning, the 25th of October, he had occasion to pass McKenzie's, and on arriving at the spot he was astounded to find that of the dwelling houses nothing was left but a blackened pile of ashes, from which the fire had so long burned out, that there was scarcely a smouldering left. O'Hara at first thought the family must have been out, or had escaped,—it never entered his mind that they were murdered or burned,—and he went on his way without making any particular examination of the premises, just looking casually over them and determining to get further information at the next house. This house was one mile nearer the city, and is occupied by a man named Robertson. Robertson was as ignorant of the matter as O'Hara had been—he had not seen the flames nor had he heard of McKenzie having been away, or having moved after the fire. He was, in short, perfectly ignorant of the event. O'Hara and Robertson determined at once to go for assistance, to relate the matters to a magistrate, and immediately to commence the first steps of an inquiry into what seemed to them an unfathomable mystery. They went to examine the ruins on their way to the nearest magistrate.

It may here be necessary to explain the position of the premises. The house occupied by McKenzie is on the south side of the road; that which Breen was to occupy was a little nearer the city, on the north side of the road. Immediately opposite McKenzie's house was a barn, and in the rear was another barn. Both these barns were uninjured, while both houses were burned to the ground. It was clear, therefore, that one house had not caught fire from the other, or the barn in front of McKenzie's would have been burned. O'Hara and Robertson entered the ruins of McKenzie's house, and there they found his money-chest unlocked, empty, and the key in it. It was clear that he had been robbed, or rather that seemed probable. They then went on to the residence of the nearest magistrate, William Hawks, Esq., of Black River, and finding him at home, they returned together to McKenzie's. Now they instituted a more particular search among the ruins of McKenzie's dwelling house, and they found on the spot where the kitchen had been, near the fire-place, the charred remains of bones, which they supposed were those of McKenzie's wife and children, but the quantity of these remains was so small that it was difficult to determine whether they were male or female bones, or whether they were those of grown persons or children. They now passed over to the other house, and on searching this they found part of a body, which, from the buttons and a brace-buckle found near, was supposed to be that of McKenzie. Nothing was left but the blackened remains of the trunk and part of the thighs. It was headless, had no arms, and from its appearance might easily, in other circumstances, causing less minute inspection, have been taken for a log of charred wood.

At the time this examination was concluded, it was after four o'clock. The examiners were, in all probability, bewildered with horror, excited by the awful visitation which had fallen on McKenzie and his family. It was difficult to tell whether all might not be the result of accident rather than crime. The circumstances of the crime were entirely novel to the simple country people of the district, and prompt action under the appalling circumstances was hardly to be expected from them, though for the furtherance of the ends of justice it was desirable, and might have been necessary.

All parties returned to their homes, and it was not till next day, (Monday,) that the magistrate and those who had interested themselves in the matter, came to St. John and communicated the details of the horrid affair to the authorities here.

The proceedings subsequent to this stage have been chiefly of a judicial nature.

On Tuesday, the Coroner, with a jury, assembled on the premises at Mispeck, to view the remains, to examine the spot where the murders were perpetrated, and to examine witnesses. Throughout these proceedings, however, the press was not permitted to take notes of the evidence, or of any particulars which came before the Coroner. By the public all this precaution was, of course, deemed excessively absurd, the more so because the Coroner permitted any one to hear the evidence, and to carry away details to suspected parties, and in short, he sat in open court. The daily press animadverted on this subject at the time, but, for what reason we know not, with much less than its wonted severity in a matter so obviously detrimental to the ends of public justice.

The evidence which was taken on Tuesday was repeated in all its essential peculiarities on Wednesday and the two following days, and in substance it was pretty much as follows:

Mrs. SLAVEN, the wife of one of the parties, since accused of the murder, was captured on Monday evening by Captain Schoular, Chief of the City Police, in consequence of a suspicion he entertained that her family were connected with the matter, owing to all the male members of it having withdrawn from the neighborhood, and their whereabouts not being known. Mrs. Slaven is a tall, thin woman, not in any wise of remarkable personal appearance. She is an Irish woman. At the inquest she spoke leisurely, and as if carefully weighing the consequence of every word; and it was with much difficulty she was got to answer the questions of the Coroner.