

Lellan, Alexander Gordon and Donald Johnston swore that Mr. Gammill executed the will in their presence, 21st April, 1879, some three months before he died. The second will was in the handwriting of McLellan; the former will was in that of Mr. Gammill. At the enquiry McLellan's character was impugned, and it was shown that after Mr. Gammill's death he asked one or two persons to assist him in manufacturing a forged will. The second will had also inherent indications of fraud on its face viz. :—the Christian names and surnames of some of Mr. Gammill's relations being incorrectly stated, and it was proven he knew them perfectly; making a bequest to St. Andrew's Church, a name by which Mr. Archibald swore it was not known (being named by himself) at the time of the date of the alleged will; the circumstances under which it came to light over a twelve-month after Mr. Gammill's death in McLellan's possession; his offering to produce the will to the devisees of which there were several, one his father-in-law, and his taking bonds from them for several thousand dollars before he would produce or prove it, etc. Besides this, the seeming injustice and cruelty of the proceeding, altogether at variance with Mr. Gammill's character, leaving his wife residuary legatee of an estate which would all be eaten up by the bequests, and the perpetrating a fraud and deception on her by leading her to believe up to the hour of his death that he had left her everything in his first will, withholding that by his second he had left her penniless amongst strangers. Mr. Archibald, Rev. Mr. Wilson, Rev. Hugh McLeod and others, testified that it was inconceivable that he could do so, and they had known him over a quarter of a century. The wedded life of Mr. and Mrs. Gammill also was shown to have been one of mutual love and affection, and there were many other circumstances which threw grave doubts upon the authenticity of the second will. Since the appeal to the Supreme Court all the three witnesses have been indicted for perjury and forgery, but with what result remains to be decided, as the trial takes place only in the spring of 1882.

#### II. The Biddulph Tragedy.

The "Biddulph tragedy," as the murder of the Donnellys has been called, proved to be one of the most exciting cases in the criminal annals of the Dominion. The circumstances attending the murders and arson

were so appalling, the story told by Johnny O'Connor so incredible, the social condition which the crimes disclosed so lawless and unprecedented, that people did not know what to believe, or whose statements to credit. Great excitement was produced by the events not only at the scene of the dreadful tragedy but throughout the Dominion, and the trial of James Carroll as one of the participators in the murders was watched by all with eager interest, and every detail of the proceedings closely scrutinized.

Before proceeding to relate the facts attending this celebrated case, it may not be uninteresting to note the social condition of the people in the part of the Province of Ontario, where the murder occurred, viz., the Township of Biddulph, in the County of Middlesex. The residences for the most part are substantially built, and present an appearance of rural wealth and comfort; fine barns, well cultivated fields and improved implements of agriculture being everywhere observable. The founders of the settlement were Irish immigrants, who coming to Canada many years ago, made homes for themselves and their children in this Western country. Their children have, as a rule, been born and brought up in Biddulph. The evidence adduced in the case, discloses a bad state of affairs in Biddulph many of the residents were quarrelsome in the extreme,—“the slightest insinuation” says a newspaper report, “being resented vindictively. Difference of creed is treated as a ground for hatred and dislike.” The troubles, from which the murders about to be related were the outcome, began with a quarrel between two families. The whole country side became involved. Petty depredations enlarged into startling crimes, and after eight years of incendiarisms, revolting inflictions on dumb brutes, quarrels and attempted assassinations, which, rightly or wrongly, were laid at the door of a family named Donnelly, the world was startled by one of the most inhuman murders on record. The character of the Donnellys, as it has been represented, was not an enviable one. They were lawless and revengeful; they had fired at and assaulted various persons; they defied the neighbourhood; magistrates were afraid to issue warrants against them; constables making an arrest did so at the peril of their lives; the family had become a terror to that section of the country. As civiliza-