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“Don’t You Bully Me ... Justice I Want If There Is Justice to Be Had”: The Rape of Mary Ann Burton, London, Ontario, 1907

Constance Backhouse

“Don’t you bully me,” was the defiant retort of Mary Ann Burton, her bold command issued from the witness box in the London police court on 15 July 1907; “I want to speak justice, and justice I want if there is justice to be had.” The stirring remark was kindled by a “searching and ruthless cross-examination,” as it was described by the *London Free Press*, at the hands of criminal lawyer, Edmund Allen Meredith, KC. Mary Ann Burton, who had launched a complaint of rape against Joseph Gray on 8 July 1907, had withstood Meredith’s merciless grilling with courage and dignity. As her words indicated, she was incensed with both the substance and the tone of the interrogation.¹

Women who made allegations of rape in early-twentieth-century Canada rarely spoke with such temerity and force.² It was one of the greatest myths consecrated in the canons of law that suggested otherwise. Seventeenth-century English jurist Sir Matthew Hale had proffered the astonishing observation that rape was “an accusation easily to be made” in his *Historia Placitorum Coronae* published in 1734.³ This whimsical notion had come to be enshrined in the texts and judicial dicta of criminal justice systems throughout the Anglo-American legal world.⁴ Despite the endless obeisance conferred upon Hale’s homily, it was common knowledge that most rape victims made no public outcry at all. Women weighed the shame and embarrassment of public disclosure against the trauma of dealing with coercive sexual assault in private, and voted overwhelmingly for perennial silence.⁵ The few women who did resort to the law for protection found themselves crushed in the process, typically tormented and abused on the witness stand by defence lawyers who stopped at nothing to besmirch the credibility of the “prosecutrix,” as the rape complainant was anachronistically characterized.⁶ What such women thought of their treatment is generally not recorded.

Mary Ann Burton is the exception, although few saw fit to recognize her for such exceptionality. The wife of a local tanner, Mrs. Burton was a poorly

educated, working-class, heavy-set woman of uncertain age. She lived in a dilapidated rental house in a rundown neighbourhood at the fork of the Thames River. Working-class areas stuck out like sore thumbs in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century London, the "Forest City" that prided itself on the wealth of its inhabitants, the elaborate brick and stone structures that housed many of the province's key financial businesses, and the ornate residential mansions that graced the park-like boulevards. The self-satisfaction of city burghers was pricked by pockets of unreclaimed poverty, such as the ramshackle rowhouse that was home to Mrs. Burton. Like many of her class, Mary Ann Burton cooked and cleaned for a few boarders who paid to live in the upstairs of her modest dwelling. Her two-story rowhouse at 12 Dundas Street West backed onto the dump. Alongside it stood Lancaster Boat Builders, several other shambling residences, and assorted industrial factories, including the Dennis Wire & Iron Works and the Electric Construction Company. The forbidding city jail loomed over everything, just down the block and across the street.⁷

Mary Ann Burton's rape trial would not become a landmark legal precedent, so far as lawyers and judges were concerned. The records suggest that her efforts to "speak justice" were betrayed by her husband, the police, the physician who examined her, the friends and neighbours who testified at her trial, the lawyers, the judge, and the press. There was little here that was noteworthy to those who parsed cases for legal rulings and precedent. The decision was not published in the law reports. It would not be cited to law students in criminal law classes taught by erudite lecturers. It was an ordinary, run-of-the-mill rape trial. The jury was never asked to deliberate on the evidence. The outcome was an acquittal on a directed verdict. The Crown offered no appeal. The spirited resistance of Mary Ann Burton, thrown up in the face of all odds, has been buried in the surviving transcripts of the criminal files of the Archives of Ontario for almost a century. Her impassioned words deserve our attention this many years later, out of respect for a woman whose voice signifies what so many others must have thought but dared not express.

The Events of 8 July 1907: Mrs. Burton's Narrative

What actually transpired on Monday, 8 July 1907, will never be completely recoverable from the surviving documentation. Mary Ann Burton's description of the events was filtered through police investigators, prosecuting Crown attorneys, and the tightly structured criminal trial process. Her narrative was the most detailed version to survive in the records, because it was she who was the main focus of the judicial proceeding. Her story, pieced together as fully as possible from the remaining records, follows.

It was a hot and sultry afternoon in southwestern Ontario, with an ominous threat of thundershowers. Mrs. Burton had been out window shopping

with a friend, arriving home at the height of the hazy midday heat. The rowhouse was quiet and empty, her husband and boarders long since departed for work. Mrs. Burton began the tiresome task of putting the house to order. She scrubbed the two upstairs rooms, made the boarders' beds, swept out the stairs and passageway, and had a bite of cold dinner left over from Sunday. At some point, a longtime friend named Harry Wilkinson, who rented a room just down the street at 18 Dundas West, dropped by. Mrs. Burton interrupted the visit because she had seen ten or twelve workers over by the dump unloading scrap wood earlier. She shouted to one of them, a man she did not know but would later learn was Joseph Gray, inquiring whether he would sell her a couple of loads of wooden blocks for fifty cents. Some of Mrs. Burton's neighbours had made previous arrangements with Gray to deliver scrap kindling that day.

Joseph Gray seemed affable enough. He was a young, reasonably well-to-do teamster who owned his own team and rig and worked under contract with the city, hauling discarded paving blocks to the dump.⁸ Gray called out to one of his hired hands for help, and the two men deposited the wood outside Mrs. Burton's door. When she offered to pay Gray, he declined. Instead, he jumped down off his cart, peered into her kitchen, and hailed Wilkinson like a long-lost buddy. "Hello Harry, how are you old man?" he said. Hauling wood was a dusty, thirst-inducing business, and Gray suggested to Wilkinson that they "give the boys a drink." He flipped Wilkinson a quarter and told him to run over "to Mahon's" to get some ale. Both Gray and Wilkinson must have been on a first-name basis with William Mahon, the proprietor of the Grand Central Hotel on the corner of King and Ridout Streets.⁹

Mrs. Burton claimed that although the men asked her to drink with them, she did not touch a drop, and that Wilkinson and Gray downed the ale in her back woodshed because she refused to allow them to drink in the house. Joseph Gray soon became quite rude and familiar with Mrs. Burton, announcing that "before he left that night," he would "have" her. "Get out of the house," retorted Mrs. Burton. "If you don't get out of the house, I will have you arrested." Wilkinson upbraided Gray for "carrying on," and Gray retorted: "You God damn son of a bitch, you dirty sucker, didn't I give you whisky when you said you were dying?" The party broke up shortly thereafter, and everyone took off, leaving Mrs. Burton alone in her house. Shortly after 5 P.M., Joseph Gray reappeared. He strode swiftly through the woodshed, past the summer kitchen, and into the house.

Gray seized Mrs. Burton by the shoulder, provoking her to wage a ferocious struggle. She remembered striking her assailant on the neck, "just by the scar at the back of his ear," and screaming, "Let me go, you dirty beast." She fought as fiercely as she could, struggling to reach the front door. Gray, who called her "a bastard," knocked her down and they both fell onto the

floor of the front hall. Gray took hold of her breast with one hand, clasped her waist with the other, and lifted her bodily into the front bedroom adjacent to the hall. He threw her sideways across the bed, undid his trousers, and sexually forced himself upon her. She remembered begging, "For God's sake, let me out." Gray removed a large, filthy handkerchief from his pocket, stuffed it down her mouth, and gagged her with a stout rope and string tied securely around her neck. Mrs. Burton fainted, and Joseph Gray must have fled.

When she came to, the gagged woman could barely breathe. Unable to crawl to the door at first, she smashed the window in the hall in a desperate effort to get some air. Some time later, she dragged herself through the passageway to the door, which she managed to open partially. Passersby came to the rescue; they ungagged her, poured some water over her to help the groaning woman regain consciousness, and then helped her outside to a nearby chair. Mrs. Burton was gasping for air and could scarcely speak. A crowd began to gather, gawking at the badly bruised woman, and someone called the police.

Constable James Highstead walked over to view the crime scene from the Carling Street police station, but his efforts to interrogate the distraught woman were unsuccessful. She was unable to answer any of his questions and could only sputter weakly that she "felt sick." There is little research to detail police protocol for rape investigations in the early twentieth century, but the male officers who dealt with Mary Ann Burton seem to have been particularly brusque and unsympathetic.¹⁰ The police apparently had more than a passing acquaintance with the residents of 12 Dundas Street, for the Burtons were frequently entangled in violent marital disputes.¹¹ This may have explained Constable Highstead's apparent indifference to Mrs. Burton's obvious injuries. Shrugging his shoulders, the officer simply advised her to "send for a doctor." One of the bystanders called the constable's attention to the handkerchief and rope, but he expressed no interest in the items and left the evidence strewn about the front steps.

Detective Thomas Nickle, who was called in next, was somewhat less cavalier. The handkerchief and rope were retrieved, and the detective managed to elicit a bit more information from Mrs. Burton. She was able to tell him that a man whose name she did not know had come to her house and raped her. Detective Nickle was known for his ability to track elusive suspects, but his policing technique may have been more attuned to ferreting out escaped murderers than to questioning rape victims, for his manner seems to have been almost as abrupt as Constable Highstead's.¹² Mrs. Burton found his questions so offensive that she put a halt to his inquiry.

Dr. Edwin Seaborn, a physician who ran a busy medical practice from his residence at 688 Dundas Street, arrived at the Burton rowhouse between 6 and 7 P.M. He examined Mrs. Burton in the front room, making notations of

the swelling and multiple bruises. He conducted no internal vaginal examination, although at the time these were routinely done on victims of sexual assault. Noticing that Mrs. Burton's clothes were badly stained with wet spots, he took out his scissors and cut away the stained portions. These he packed up in his bag and took back to his office.

The *London Free Press*, which covered the attack in an article headlined "Elderly Woman Falls Out of House With Gag in Mouth," chose to focus upon Mary Ann Burton's resistance to the police officer's mode of investigation. She "would say no more," noted the reporter, "giving the officer to understand that he was entering on other people's business." According to the press, the upshot of her lack of cooperation was that the police quite properly regarded the affair as "nothing but a brawl," and it was "not likely that any further steps [would] be taken in the matter."¹³ But matters did not rest there.

Mrs. Burton's husband, Robert, arrived home to discover considerable commotion still emanating from his house and clusters of curious neighbours gossiping from their porches and stoops. What transpired when Mrs. Burton described her ordeal to her husband is unknown, but initially at least, Robert seems to have been supportive of his spouse. The two went looking for her assailant early the next morning and managed to extract his name from people in the neighbourhood. Robert and Mary Ann Burton swore out a criminal complaint of rape against Joseph Gray that evening.¹⁴

Joseph Gray's Response

Joseph Gray's version of what transpired on 8 July 1907 can be pieced together from interviews he gave to the newspapers. The testimony he would eventually give at trial will be considered in more detail later. From the outset, the accused man seems to have been confident that he had no cause for alarm. Joseph Gray did not wait for the police to execute a warrant for his arrest but simply "walked into the police station" and gave himself up, declaring that he had "nothing to fear," and "demanding a full investigation" into the charges. The *London Advertiser* reported that Joseph Gray took his arrest "coolly" and maintained that he "never was near the Burton residence" on the afternoon when Mrs. Burton alleged that he assaulted her.¹⁵ Gray professed to have delivered his last load to the dump and left the vicinity at about 4:50 P.M., heading directly to the Britannia House at York and Wellington Streets, where he downed a drink or two, after which he went straight home. The coverage in the *London Free Press* was quite partial to the accused. Describing Joseph Gray as "a well-to-do young man," the paper indicated that he was "not averse to talking about the case," and that he told a "pretty straight story to the Free Press reporter." Gray's lengthy explanation of his innocence was published in full, under the caption "Declares Charge Case of Blackmail":

"It is a case of blackmail," he said, "pure and simple, for I was never inside the woman's house in my life. My men were drawing gravel down there, and I was superintending the work when Mrs. Burton came out and asked me for a load of the blocks we were drawing away. I told her that she could have the next load if she wanted it, and when the load came I had the men leave it there. When it was unloaded she asked me if I would come in and have a drink with her as she had some beer in the house. I went up to the back porch and had a drink and then I went back to my work, and that is all I know about it. She was out talking to me and the men the biggest part of the afternoon, and she told me that she knew who I was and that I owned a farm. She asked me several times to come into the house, but I told her I was too busy. I'll have all my men there Tuesday. They saw the whole thing from start to finish."¹⁶

Later coverage would indicate that Joseph Gray's story was perhaps a bit less "straight" than the reporter had surmised. Gray would admit that it was not Mrs. Burton who supplied the beer, but Harry Wilkinson, and that Gray had paid Wilkinson twenty-five cents to fetch the ale. He would also concede that he drank the ale in Mrs. Burton's woodshed, not standing outside on the porch, although he continued "stoutly" to deny ever having assaulted the complainant.¹⁷ These discrepancies did nothing to detract from the supportive commentary that appeared in the newspapers. The *London Advertiser* weighed in with a glowing assessment of Joseph Gray's position, describing him as a "respectable-looking young man" who bore "a good reputation."¹⁸ He had no trouble securing bail after signing a recognizance for \$2,000. Gray's father and uncle, Michael and Patrick Gray, both teamsters, each put up a \$1,000 surety on his behalf as well.¹⁹

"You Insult Me," Cried the Witness: The Cross-Examination of Mary Ann Burton

When the preliminary inquiry commenced on Monday, 15 July 1907, Francis Love was presiding as the police magistrate.²⁰ Middlesex County Crown Attorney James B. McKillop prosecuted.²¹ Edmund Allen Meredith, KC, appeared as defence counsel. It was Meredith who stole the show.

Like many elite lawyers of his day, Edmund Meredith had had the good fortune to be born into a remarkably powerful Anglo-Irish legal dynasty. His brother, William Ralph Meredith, served as the Tory leader of the opposition party at Queen's Park and went on to become chief justice of Ontario. Another brother, Richard Martin Meredith, also sat on the provincial Supreme Court. Edmund, practically as well known as his famous younger brothers, had served as the city mayor in London's boom years during the 1880s, and practised as a partner in the firm of Meredith, Judd & Meredith, at 365 Richmond Street. As the assistant provincial secretary and chair of

the Board of Prison Inspectors, Edmund Meredith developed a reputation as a proponent of prison reform. Meredith's particular field of expertise was criminal law, and he had amassed a reputation as one of London's pre-eminent criminal jury lawyers. His successful defence of the infamous Esther Arscott, a flamboyant madam who ran an east London brothel, had garnered him substantial notoriety some years back, and his stature at the bar only increased with the passage of time. Meredith's contemporaries accorded him high ranking within legal circles, recognizing his advantages of "family, personal appearance and influence."²²

Meredith's cross-examination of Mrs. Burton was a model for its time. Most defence lawyers mounted their attacks upon rape complainants personally, hoping to convince the court that such women were unworthy victims, not the sort who ought to merit putting a good man in jail. They tried to prove that the complainants were sexually promiscuous, rabble-rousing, foul-tongued, ill-mannered, or intemperate in drinking habits. They gave voice to multiple theories why such women might fabricate a rape complaint. Some were alleged to be suffering from delusional fantasies. Others were supposedly protecting their reputations and, caught in an act of consensual extra-marital sex, they "cried rape" to protect their honour and cast blame on the man. Some, it was suggested, had consented to the sex act initially – whether prompted by abundant sexual desire or swept away by clever masculine wiles – but later recanted and blamed their former paramours. Others were described as cloaked in venomous rage, seeking to wreak their revenge upon the hapless men who had scorned their feminine attentions. Some were accused of extortion, accusing innocent men of rape in order to extract vast sums of unearned money. Few defence counsel stopped at this point. Most also persistently chipped away at the complainants' testimony, seeking to illustrate inconsistencies in the evidence and using even the most minor factual discrepancies to cast doubt on the entirety of the women's narratives.²³

The consistency of such defence practices is noteworthy, as evidenced by scores of criminal trial transcripts across five decades of the early twentieth century from all regions of the country. Questions asked of rape complainants in coastal Halifax, urban Toronto, small towns in southwestern Ontario, and farming districts in rural Saskatchewan were puzzlingly parallel.²⁴ There were no published criminal law textbooks that purported to train lawyers about the substance of cross-examination, or about the nature of questions that should be put to a witness complaining of sexual assault. There was no standardized educational curriculum for law students, and the format of cross-examination does not appear to have been formally taught to lawyers. Instead it seems to have been more indirectly imbibed by legal practitioners, who absorbed and reflected the dominant cultural norms about contemporary patterns of sexuality. All defence counsel, whether criminal

law specialist or dabbler, senior or junior at the bar, seem to have defined it as their professional responsibility to make unsavoury assertions about the women and girls who brought charges of sexual assault. That so many of the questions were rooted in misogynistic ideology is striking. The malevolence and relentlessness of their insinuations turned cross-examination into a rarefied form of gendered character assassination. Crown prosecutors and judges generally stood by without objection, their silence a mute affirmation of these sexually discriminatory defence strategies.

The cross-examination of Mary Ann Burton formed the cornerstone of Edmund Meredith's defence strategy, and his technique illustrates many of the common themes so evident during this period. The first line of questions had nothing to do with the rape. "You had a little trouble on Saturday?" Meredith queried, referring to the weekend immediately prior to the preliminary inquiry. Mrs. Burton, characteristically, stood her ground. "The trouble had nothing to do with the case," she replied. "Don't you do all the talking, answer the questions and don't be bold about it," commanded Meredith. This was Meredith's initial signal, a rather heavy-handed one, that he was the party controlling the exchange. He was correct that Mrs. Burton had to "answer the questions," and that he was legally permitted wide range in the conduct of the cross-examination. The rules of evidence allowed him to explore multiple aspects of the rape complainant's "life and conduct" in his attack on her "credibility."²⁵ But his chastisement of Mrs. Burton for "doing all the talking" seems a bit odd, since she had uttered one short sentence so far. His depiction of her as "bold" was closer to the mark, and his remonstrance against such independence a clear beacon of things to come.

"You had a little trouble on Saturday?" he repeated. "Yes," she answered – briefly, to the point. "With your husband?" continued Meredith. "Yes," agreed Mrs. Burton, again answering the question without more. The examination continued:

Q. And his hands are all tied up now, what was that with?

A. Because my husband turned round and said, "That is through your allowing that man Gray here for people to laugh at me as I am passing on the street," and I said, "Don't bring that up in my face, I could not help that."

Q. What did you do after your husband said that?

A. I threw a shovel at him.

Q. What did the shovel do to him?

A. It grazed his hand.

Q. Cut his hand?

A. No, it is not.

Q. Aren't they tied up?

A. Yes, sure they are tied up.

Q. At all events, you threw the shovel at him. What kind of a shovel was it?

A. A small shovel.

Q. That hit him in the hand?

A. Yes.

Q. Both hands?

A. No, one hand.²⁶

It is not fully clear how to interpret this passage in the transcript, but it would seem that Meredith had learned about a domestic scuffle between Mrs. Burton and her husband on the weekend preceding the hearing. Robert had complained that his neighbours were making snide remarks to him about the rape. He was accusing his wife of having invited the accused man to her home, insinuating that she was in part responsible for the rape. Mrs. Burton had defended herself verbally, proclaiming her innocence, and then heaved a small shovel at her husband. Meredith was trying to prove that the bandages on Robert's hands were the result of his wife's violent behaviour. She denied this. Her testimony suggests that the bandages may have covered injuries incurred during altercations between Robert and the people ridiculing him on the street. Meredith must have been satisfied with the exchange, however. He had proven that in the opinion of some of her neighbours, Mrs. Burton was responsible for what had transpired between her and the men being prosecuted for rape. Relations were obviously strained between husband and wife. The whole neighbourhood was joking about the alleged rape, not just behind closed doors, but in public, right to Robert's face. Meredith had also demonstrated that Mrs. Burton was quite capable of dishing out physical abuse to her husband. He moved on.

The next line of inquiry attempted to demonstrate that the witness was inconsistent in her recollection of details. Meredith asked his witness where she had been on the morning of the alleged rape. She replied that she had accompanied "a lady friend" to the police court from eleven o'clock until noon. Asked whether she had been a witness in a case, Mrs. Burton replied not, indicating that it was her friend's husband who had been up on charges. Meredith quizzed her about the identity of the couple, but went no further on this point. He must have been unaware that Daniel Rodgers, the husband concerned, was on trial for his "drunk and disorderly" behaviour on a streetcar.²⁷ Had he known, Meredith most certainly would have scored another point. Instead, he asked Mrs. Burton to account for her time after she left the court. "I guess we strolled around about an hour and a half," explained Mrs. Burton, "and looked at the shops." "Went into any shops?" queried Meredith? "No, sir" she replied. "Any taverns?" pursued Meredith. "No, sir" came the swift response. The two then argued back and forth for a bit on the timing of Mrs. Burton's return home. She initially advised that she had arrived home "about three to four as far as I can remember." Meredith

compared that answer with the mere hour and a half Mrs. Burton had mentioned devoted to window shopping, and pounced:

Q. You told me you left here about eleven o'clock?

A. Twelve o'clock.

Q. Then you strolled around for an hour and a half?

A. It may be a little longer.

Q. I thought you did not get home till between three and four?

A. It may have been before that.

Q. You told me between three and four.

A. I cannot tell exactly.

Q. Why did you tell me between three and four?

A. Because I did not take that much notice of the time; I am not on my oath on the time.

Mary Ann Burton was incorrect about the oath, of course. All her testimony was under oath, and her jaunty suggestion that the matter of time was exempt from such stricture was not well calculated to impress the court. However, she was attempting to stand her ground against Meredith's onslaught. He was pursuing the customary defence tactic of tripping up the witness, getting her to profess inconsistent statements so that he could accuse her of deliberate falsehood or reckless indifference to detail. Meredith was well within his rights to pursue the question of timing, since his client would later maintain he was elsewhere around five o'clock, the time of the alleged attack. However, Mrs. Burton had qualified her initial testimony, careful to refrain from pinpointing the time she arrived home. She had testified that it was between three and four, possibly earlier, and stipulated that this was only as far as she could "remember." Mrs. Burton probably did not own a watch. She told time as often as not by the factory whistle from the nearby Dennis ironworks.²⁸ In light of this, Meredith's dogged cross-examination on time seems more than a little unfair. He had also, intentionally or unintentionally, misled Mrs. Burton by wrongly giving her time of departure from the courthouse as eleven o'clock. She had testified that it was noon when she left.

The skirmishing over time continued, with Meredith badgering the witness repeatedly over her inability to recollect exactly when certain events had occurred. Meredith was determined to pin down his witness as to the precise time Harry Wilkinson arrived in her kitchen, and that he and Gray had departed. Mrs. Burton refused to "exactly swear to the time," explaining that she "did not have a clock" to "look at every five minutes," and insisting that her ability to speak about the time must be, necessarily, less exact. However, in her examination in chief, Mrs. Burton had stated that Wilkinson came "about four or a little after." On cross-examination, she

gave a slightly different reply: "half past four or a quarter to five." At one point she had indicated that the five o'clock whistle blew when Wilkinson "was away." Later, she testified that Wilkinson and Gray left together, after the whistle. These would seem to be clear inconsistencies, without apparent explanation, something that must have delighted Meredith.

The finale to Meredith's protracted interrogation on time was his pointed assertion: "You are kind of mixed up." "No," replied Mrs. Burton, "I am not." This rather astonishing response exemplifies Mary Ann Burton's confidence and self-conviction. She had repeatedly, forcefully explained to the defence counsel that she did not carry a watch and so could not affix events to specific moments in time. In the end, the whistle had scuttled her. Here was a time tracker that even the working class could recognize, a marker she personally acknowledged, and her testimony placed Wilkinson at two different places when the whistle had sounded at five o'clock. This was not sufficient to shake Mrs. Burton's composure, however. She might have mixed up exactly when Wilkinson had left her place, but she was adamant that she was not mixed up about the rape itself.

Meredith next turned to the events immediately preceding the alleged rape. The presence of alcohol at a rape scene was always helpful to the defence, and Meredith played this card with aplomb. He asked Mary Ann Burton to describe the sequence of events that led to the purchase of the beer. Mrs. Burton reminded the court that she had refused to let Wilkinson and Gray drink their ale inside her house, but sent them instead to the woodshed. She also repeated that she had told them she didn't want any of their beer. Meredith asked: "Did you drink?" "No," replied Mrs. Burton, but "that gentleman there," pointing to Gray, "asked me to drink." "Were you pretty well drunk at the time?" queried Meredith. Apparently astonished at the question, Mrs. Burton asked Meredith to repeat himself, and then replied, "No, sir, I was not drunk at that time." "Did you drink any that day?" persisted Meredith. "No, sir, not a drink the whole of that day." "Do you drink?" was Meredith's next query. "Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Burton.

Meredith had skilfully manoeuvred his witness into admitting she was a drinker, a habit that would substantially diminish her credibility in an era dominated by temperance advocacy. The social response to Mrs. Burton's drinking habits in the early twentieth century was dramatically different from that which had greeted police commissioners and magistrates William Augustus Miles and James Farquharson Macleod in the nineteenth century, both of whom held on to powerful public positions for decades despite reputations for extreme drunkenness, as depicted by David Philips and Roderick Martin in their chapters in this volume. In part, the differing attitudes were explained by changing times and place, and in part, by distinctions of gender. Southwestern Ontario had served as one of the original