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THE SOUTHWARK RIOTS
Philadelphia

Before our citizens had recovered from the shock of this unprovoked and [13]
appalling massacre, a fearful repetition by the same class of foreigners was
attempted in Southwark. What the motive could have been for this second
astounding outrage we will not undertake to say; but will furnish such
evidence as will enable Americans to draw their own conclusions. We point
to the drilling of soldiers in the church, the unlawful organization of a com-
pany of foreigners by a brother of the priest, himself an unnaturalized for-
eigner; the warlike array discovered on searching the church, the placing
of the Irish Greens in the church with an Irish Catholic commander, the
prevarication and falsehood manifested by the priest before his own altar;
the important testimony of the Episcopal Clergyman the Rev. M. Coleman, [14]
and above all the childish, frivolous excuse assigned by the priest of the
High Sheriff for turning his church into an armed fortress in the midst of
a quiet and peaceful community. When we look at the total absence of
all cause or provocation for this murderous array; at the deadly loss being
all on the American side, but one foreigner having been killed, while so
many of our countrymen were massacred, we are at a loss to conceive
whether these massacres were intended to show how far foreigners al-
ready dare to trample on Americans with impunity, or whether to create
a cry of persecution in order to enlist sympathy and collect funds and
other aid from the papists of Europe as they are now so largely doing,
or whether it is a part of some other Jesuit scheme against the people
and institutions of this country, some fatal conspiracy yet undeveloped,
we shall not surmise, but leave the reader to draw his own conclusions
from the following testimony.

MOST IMPORTANT

Testimony of the Rev. Mr. Coleman, Pastor of Trinity (Episcopal) Church, [15]
Southwark; and Editor of the Banner of the Cross

“The Southwark Riots. The U.S. Catholic Magazine complained at
the time that we were altogether silent, in reference to the dreadful outrages
of May last, in a northern district of Philadelphia; and we had at first deter-
mined to leave also to the secular papers any notice of the awful scenes of
last Sunday in Southwark, (our own parish and residence) of which we were
compelled to be an eye witness. The accounts which have appeared in them
have no doubt already acquainted all our readers with the shocking particu-

lars; but those at a distance may not be so well informed of what we deem it a duty to make known; and that is, that the late disturbances were WHOLLY PROVOKED BY ROMANISTS. Whatever doubts may have existed as to the remote cause or immediate occasion of the Kensington riots, there can be none in the present case. During the whole of the great excitement consequent upon the former, Southwark remained quiet and peaceful; the same tranquility and good order continued afterwards to reign; and the deportment of its citizens, of all classes, was most pacific and exemplary. It is perfectly absurd to pretend that the least danger to the Romish Church (St. Philip de Neri) could really have been apprehended. Yet, under all these circumstances or order and peace, this church is armed in open daylight, and the most formidable preparation for a deadly conflict made, with muskets, pistols, gunpowder, slugs, balls, &c. Twenty four hours before this became generally known, one of the most respectable gentlemen of the district, predicted, in conversation with us, what the result would be; and it could not but have been foreseen by any one of ordinary sagacity. Was it designed to exasperate the population, and to bring about the subsequent scenes of violence and bloodshed? Such is, so far as we have heard expressed, the universal opinion of this community; and the least that can be said is, that there is just ground for suspicion. We must not omit to add, that, throughout all the tumult and desolation, NOT A SINGLE ROMANIST sustained the slightest injury, in person or property. Yet their periodicals are ringing with ridiculous charges or 'persecution' and 'anti-catholic riots.'"

"We write under no other feelings than those of deep pain and sorrow, and were enabled to maintain the same calmness throughout the whole of the late melancholy occurrences, which may be believed, when we state that several articles in our present number were written amidst the roar of artillery, in the square adjoining our dwelling, the frequent whistling of bullets, as they passed the window of our study, and the clash and din of arms on every hand! Nor do we wish to produce excitement in others. But it is impossible to close our eyes to the fact that we have reached an ominous and most important juncture. We can no longer doubt that a severe and searching struggle is fast approaching. Recent events should break in a voice of thunder upon the ear of every American Protestant.

JUDGE JONES, in his charge to the Grand Jury, on the 15th of July, 1844, said ****the disturbance in Southwark, arose from the fact of a large number of arms having been put into the Church, in Queen street, and it becomes necessary therefore, &c.****When persons apprehend danger to their churches, or property of any kind they must solicit the protection of the law. What right as any sect to arm its churches; to make a FORTIFICATION IN THE HEART OF THE CITY, when the LAW IS SUFFICIENT for the protection of ALL, &c.

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THE SOUTHWARK RIOT OF JULY

At the stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Southwark, held on Thursday evening, the following report was read and adopted and ordered to be published:-

The Committee appointed on the 24th of July 1844, to inquire into the origin of the tragic events which transpired in this district on the 7th of July, 1844.

REPORT

These witnesses all concur in representing that the first alarm which was created in the district was occasioned by the taking into the church of St. Philip, in Queen Street, in open daylight a quantity of fire-arms; that the reports which were rapidly circulated throughout the city and districts, of the arming of the church had drawn great crowds of people into Queen street; that on Friday evening the Sheriff arrived on the ground, having been notified by several citizens of the prospect of a tumult; that the church was searched on that evening by the Sheriff and a committee of twenty, appointed by himself as deputies, who found and removed quantities of muskets, powder, balls, and slugs: that when the Sheriff first arrived he found the church under the guard of a civil posse, summoned together by the Aldermen, and also the watchmen and police of the district; a military company arrived on Friday night, and was stationed in the church.***

Peace and quietness had now been restored by the peaceable exertions of this civic guard, and as the witnesses nearly all concur whilst the guard and peaceable citizens were congratulating themselves upon the restoration of peace and order, and the success of their labors in preventing the building from being injured or fired, their attention was arrested by the sudden and unexpected arrival of a military force under the command of Gen. Cadwalader.

The witnesses describe the military array as marching down Queen Street towards the church with music playing and attended by a large crowd, who had followed them from the city, through the district, into Queen street. On reaching the front of the church, the officer commanding halted his troops; and after congratulating the civic guard for their exertions in successfully resisting the mob, and in preserving the building, he desired the guard should leave the church, and surrender it up to him for protection; this was complied with, and before the guard had all reached Second street, on their passage from the Church down Queen, distance of not more than two hundred feet, the soldiers had fired upon the citizens, at the corner of Queen and Second street in which fire several citizens, one of them a respectable quiet inhabitant of the district, Mr. William Crozier, in Plumb street, aged thirty six years, who was one of the civic guard who had charge of the church, and Isaac Freed, of Green street, Spring Garden, aged sixty one years, and a man named Ellis Lewis, aged about twenty

years, a stranger, were shot dead besides several wounded. One of the witnesses represents himself to have been in Queen street, going towards Front; on hearing the report of guns he wheeled around and saw a number of persons lying in the street, some appeared to be dead, and some appeared to be undergoing great agony.

A number of these witnesses were standing in the immediate vicinity of Queen and Second streets at the time of the fire, who represents that the confusion, terror, and horror of the multitude at that awful moment was intense and wild. They all concur in the opinion that the fire was cruel, unnecessary, and as they represent it, a wanton sacrifice of human life. They all represent that at, and immediately before the arrival [16] of the soldiers, order, peace and quiet had been perfectly restored-that there existed no necessity whatever for their assistance-and that the dreadful scenes which were enacted in this district on that memorable Sunday evening, all resulted in some unaccountable, inexplicable and trifling dispute with an officer and a citizen standing at the corner of Queen and Second. The firing of the soldiers must have been precipitated by some sudden explosion of anger on the part of the officer in question, as all the witnesses concur in saying that from the first arrival of the soldiers in front of the church until the fire, not more than ten minutes could have elapsed.

The Committee now submit the following:

Resolved, That this report be entered upon the Minutes of this Board, and that the narratives* furnished by the persons who were witness of the whole events be filed among the papers of this district, as forming an authentic record of the dreadful scenes and events of the 7th of July, 1844, and that the same be subject to the inspection of any citizen of the district who may desire to see and read the same.

J Feinour L. Payton
D.H Bowen T.D. Grover
Isaac Dutton

The recent decision of Judge Rogers and all the excuses which a venal press has seized upon to excite prejudice against our Native born citizens relate entirely to events which grew out of these foreign massacres. With the excitement occasioned by these astounding outrages; with the scenes that followed; the burning of armed fortresses; too hasty sacrifice of human life by military leaders in quelling excitement which themselves had created; with the attempt to avenge the blood massacred citizens, the striking back of those who had been fatally struck, with these, the natural result of unprovoked, merciless outrage upon unoffending Americans we have nothing to do here. We are confined to the single question upon which the whole matter rests, the single object of exposing the foreign origin and cause of all those appalling scenes, and this we have thoroughly accomplished. We have presented the law, the testimony, and the facts, which place the deep guilt where it belongs, showing how thoroughly and entirely it all rests upon the foreign serfs controlled and organized by their

Jesuit leaders.