

From *The Truth Unveiled; or, A Calm and Impartial Exposition of the Origin and Immediate Cause of the Terrible Riots in Philadelphia, on May 6th, 7th and 8th, A.D. 1844.*

By A Protestant and Native Philadelphian.

It is inquired, what was the origin of these atrocities? The assertion is [6] boldly made, that it is to be placed wholly to the account of that *wild course of fanaticism and bigotry which was pursued by certain Protestants in our country against the Roman Catholic Church*. The writer is aware that the reason which he gives and which he is well conscious contains a grave accusation, will startle many of that body to which himself belongs, and with whome, God giving him grace, he will remain until death. But, sorrowful as it is to him to bear witness against a portion of his brethren, he cannot and he will not, -for he dares not,-disguise the truth...

After months of this inflammatory abuse by the papers and orators, [23] clerical and lay, above alluded to, and when the feelings of "Irish Papists" had been most cruelly outraged, a meeting of Native Americans was called in the very heart of their population, for the purpose of forming a ward association. It was in Kensington; a large majority of the residents in the Western section of which district, are Irish. These are divided into two religious factions, that cherish towards each the most vindictive prejudices; born with them, and sedulously kept alive in all their strength. The feud has been brought over to this land by them, and to its existence are to be referred the frequent outbreaks which have occurred in that division of Philadelphia. They indeed are generally attributed to strikes for prices among the Irish hand-loom weavers: but it is acknowledged by the more candid among them, that the principal cause is the religious dissensions among the Irish Protestants or Orangemen and the Irish Catholics. The former have manifested the greatest sympathy for Native Americanism, though foreigners by birth equally with the Irish Catholics. But the writer has seen numbers of these Orangemen taking part at the Bible meetings and gatherings of Native Americans: and whether members or not of the latter body, they seemed to have and to exercise all their privileges, with marked approbation. The agitation of the question of native claims was there hailed by these Irish Protestants as a proper occasion for making every hostile demonstration against their old enemies: and the course pursued by the Native American party in ringing the constant peals against the "Pope," &c. &c. will show that these Orangemen, foreigners as they are, and about as good and as bad as Irish Catholics, have won for themselves an immunity from proscription and abuse.

In proof of the existence of this bitter and unyielding hate among

these Irish foreigners, let the following few facts be briefly stated: At the time when the rioters were at the height of their maddened fury and when St. Michael's' Church was in flames,—when portions of the mob could be found in various parts of Kensington, a temporary frame chapel used by German Catholics, hardly four squares off from the Seminary, was never approached. The congregation was composed of "ignorant Papists," but they were not "Irish Papists." At the meeting of Native Americans in the Kensington market house, a yellow silk handkerchief, for want of an orange one, was attached to a stick, and raised on the roof, amid the cheers of hundreds, and with the taunting exclamation, "there's the flag that was never struck!!" And at the very time that St. Michael's was burning, "Boyne Water," the favorite tune of Irish Orangemen, and the cause of shedding oceans of blood in Ireland, was struck up on a drum! [24]

Such is the population in Kensington, among whom the meeting was held on Friday, 3d of May. Some disorder took place, but nothing more seriously than unfortunately occurs, more or less of late, at all public assemblages. It is pretended that in the confusion which arose, the national flag was trampled upon; but it is as positively, denied that any such indignity was offered; that on the contrary, the flag was thrown down without design by the rush which took place. The meeting thus dissolved, adjourned to the intersection of Germantown road and Second street, where it was re-organized, addressed by two PROTESTANT CLERGYMEN, and after quietly transacting their business, peaceably adjourned.

It is not attempted to justify this outrage upon a meeting of citizens. So far from it, the writer would, invoke the severest punishment upon the offenders. It is high time that public order be sustained at any and every sacrifice and that sacred rights be not taken away by mobs and rioters. But it is with sorrow, said that the subsequent course of the Native Americans was marked by censurable proceedings. The organs of the party employed the most exciting language; their most violent paper-of Monday, the 6th of May, headed the account of the affair of the preceding Friday, with the following caption—"The American flag trampled upon by Irish Papists;"—and this too served for the, lettering of the standard borne through the streets. Another meeting were at the same place, where the first disturbance occurred; and the chain of terrible events which followed is known to the public. They have covered our city with disgrace, have vitally injured the cause of religion, have caused a fearful loss of human life, and made widows and orphans send up their wailings to the Throne of "Him, who seeth!"