

To the Public.

The undersigned respectfully request the attention of the citizens of the city and county of Philadelphia, to the following statement of facts, having reference to the Temperance Hall, in Moyamensing, which was taken down on the 3d inst. by order of the Commissioners of that district, after having been presented by the Grand Jury as a nuisance.

About three years ago, the Grand Jury inquiring for the city and county of Philadelphia, directed special attention to the degraded condition of the lower class of the inhabitants of Moyamensing, among whom are many colored people, who had been reduced to a very abject state by the prevalence of intemperance and its kindred vices. This presentment induced a number of persons, who felt an interest in the improvement of the morals of the people of color, to commence delivering addresses in the neighborhood of Bedford and Eighth streets, to that class of our population, upon the subjects of temperance, morality, and religion. These addresses were delivered in the open air, either on vacant lots of ground, or in the courts and alleys of that vicinity. They produced a very sensible improvement in the character and conduct of a large number of those who listened to them. But owing to the want of suitable shelter, the course of instruction was interrupted in the winter season, and hence a relapse to their old habits was witnessed in some of those who had been partially reformed. Subsequently, a room in a private house in Bedford above Seventh street, was temporarily hired, and was occupied for the purpose of Sabbath School instruction during the winter 1840 and '41. This room, however, was quite too small to accommodate the temperance and religious meetings, and for their accommodation, as well as the Sabbath school, a society of people of color, called the Moral Reform Society, took upon ground rent, a small lot situated in Bedford below Eighth street, and with the aid of a few devoted and self-denying colored females, who not only contributed themselves, but made considerable collections for this object, erected upon it, less than one year ago, a small one story brick building, to which they gave the name of Temperance Hall.

At the time, the erection of the House was highly approved by the neighbors, without a single known exception; and many of them contributed towards the expense of its erection. The enterprise was also favored with the approbation of several active members of the Temperance Societies formed about that time, for the reformation of inebriates. At the laying of the corner stone, addresses were delivered by Messrs. Crist, Beck and McClugh, one of them at the time, Vice President of the Jefferson Society, and another at present, of a Total Abstinence Society in the Northern Liberties. The Hall was open at all times for the use of Lectures on Temperance, whether white or colored. A majority of those who have spoken in it were white persons belonging to the various Temperance Societies, but principally to the Howard Society. Meetings for public worship were held in it on every Sabbath, and also on two evenings during the week. At the close of a protracted meeting, recently held there, thirty-five persons came forward, and gave their names for membership to the neighboring churches. Sunday schools were also held in the Hall, in the morning and afternoon of every Sabbath, the roll of which contained the names of sixty children, at the time of the destruction of the building. They were for the most part collected from the street, and all of them, excepting one family, were said to be the children of intemperate parents, or of those who had been intemperate. Many of the scholars had made considerable progress in learning. The good results of their efforts had become very apparent. The teetotal pledge had been administered to upwards of one thousand adult persons. Many were reclaimed from habits of dissipation and vice, to a moral and industrious life. A number of children, as well as persons of mature age, were relieved from a state of extreme destitution, and were supplied from the Hall, or by those who attended it, with decent clothing as well as with suitable books, &c. Efficient aid in this department of our labors was received from members of a benevolent society, in connection with the Rev. Mr. Boardman's church.

It is confidently believed that the reform effected and the relief afforded, produced an annual saving of more than five hundred dollars in the county expenses for the support of the poor. The number of liquor selling shops in the neighborhood had been considerably reduced, and the sales of this article in those that remained, greatly diminished. It has been publicly asserted, and without contradiction, that there were, not long since, *fifty-two unlicensed dram shops* within the three squares which constitute the length of the street on which the hall was erected. After the development of these facts, a spirit of hostility to the Hall was for the first time manifested. Constable Whisner has informed one of the proprietors, that he received an intimation nine weeks ago, of the intention of some persons to burn it down on a certain night. It however escaped without material injury, through the riots of the 1st and 2d of August. On the 3d inst. one of the Commissioners of Moyamensing applied to the managers of the Hall, requesting that they would cause it to be taken down;—when this was declined, he desired that at least the doors and windows should be taken out.—The only reason which he gave for this request, was a determination which he alleged to exist on the part of some persons to destroy the Hall by fire. He was informed that means should be taken to have it watched without expense to the public. After this conversation, the owners received no further information or notice on the subject, until they heard that the building had been taken down by the Commissioners of the District, after the presentation of it as a nuisance by the Grand Jury. No opportunity was afforded them of proving before the Jury, as they could easily have done, the great utility of the Hall, and the practicability of preserving it by means to which it would have been incomparably more reasonable to resort to, than to permit its destruction upon such prettexts as were offered.

We have thus given a naked statement of facts, and without comment, leave to an enlightened community the decision, how far such proceedings are consistent with law, with justice, and with the public welfare.

[Signed] DANIEL A. PAYNE,
SAMUEL NICKLESS,
Managers of the Hall.

Philadelphia, August 8th, 1842.

The undersigned, having occasionally attended meetings or lectures at the Temperance Hall on Bedford-street, in the District of Moyamensing, declare that we believe it to have been devoted to highly useful purposes—that its destruction is a serious evil, and that we have confidence in the foregoing statement in reference to it, many of the facts therein contained being within our knowledge.

[Signed] JAMES MOTT,
LUCRETIA MOTT,
WILLIAM HARNED,
GEO. CATLIN,
WM. J. MULLIN,
DAVID W. WHITE.

Philadelphia, 8th mo. 8th, 1842.