

## STONE FROM ROME.

In this year an act occurred at the Monument which created much indignation and excitement in the District, and was the subject of much public discussion throughout the country.

The facts furnished to the press by the Society, after an investigation by it, were reported thus in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on March 8, 1854:

A deed of barbarism was enacted on Monday morning last, between 1 and 2 o'clock, by several persons (number not known, but supposed to be from four to ten), which will be considered as belonging rather to some of the centuries considerably in our rear than to the better half of the boasted nineteenth century. We refer to the forcible seizure from its place of deposit, in a shed at the Washington Monument, of a block of marble sent hither from Rome, a tribute to the memory of Washington by the Pontiff, and intended to become a part of the edifice now erecting to signalize his name and glory. It originally stood in the Temple of Concord at Rome, was of beautiful texture, and had for its dimensions a length of 3 feet, height of 18 inches, and thickness of 10 inches. The account we hear of the matter is this: That at about the time above mentioned several men suddenly surrounded the watch box of the night watchman, and passed a cord, such as is used for clothes lines, around the box, and piled stones against the door, calling to the man within that if he kept quiet he would not be injured. At the same time they pasted pieces of newspapers on the two or three window openings that commanded the particular shed containing the fated block, so as to prevent the watchman from seeing their operations. They then removed one of the strips in front of the place where the block stood, and passing in and out by the opening carried it off by placing it on a handcart used about the premises. There is no doubt they took the block to the river side, not less than a quarter of a mile off, and pitched it over the steep bank upon the river beach, where they enjoyed a favorable opportunity of breaking it up undiscovered or boating it off into the river, which they probably did after defacing it. All this went on, it seems, without effective remonstrance from the watchman, although he had with him a double-barrel shotgun loaded with buckshot, and the operations at the shed were within easy shot. As for the pasting on the windows, there was nothing in that, for they slid up and down like the sashes of an omnibus. These proceedings, the watchman says, took place about half past 1; but he gave no notice of it to the family residing at the Monument until 4. For these and other similar reasons he has been suspended.

A meeting of the Society was held on the 7th of March in reference to this vandalism, and it was resolved to offer a reward to discover the perpetrators. Accordingly, the following

advertisement appeared in the Daily National Intelligencer on March 8:

**\$100 REWARD.**—The Board of Managers of the Washington National Monument Society will pay the above reward of \$100 for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who, on the night of the 5th instant, stole and destroyed a block of marble contributed to said Monument.

This advertisement availed nothing as to the discovery of the guilty persons. It was understood to have been the work of persons belonging to the party styled "Know-Nothings," their professions being opposition to the Roman Catholic Church and to any political preference of its members. It was not thought the persons were generally depraved characters, but, on the contrary, were supposed to be identified with the respectable part of the community. From the time of the reception of this stone from Rome by the Society until its destruction, there had been frequent expressions in a portion of the daily press in opposition to its being placed in the Monument, and the Society had received many protesting letters and, in some instances, long petitions, from various parts of the country, numerously signed, urging that the stone be not used by the Society, as it was representative of the Roman Church, etc.

Many petitions from New Jersey recited:

We, the undersigned, citizens of ———, in the State of New Jersey, believing the proffer of a block of marble recently made by the Pope of Rome to this country for the Washington Monument to be totally inconsistent with the known principles of that despotic system of government of which he is the head; that the inscription, "Rome to America," engraved upon it bears a significance beyond its natural meaning; that the construction is an artful stratagem, calculated to divert the attention of the American people for the present from his animosity to republican institutions by an outward profession of regard; that the gift of a despot, if placed within those walls, can never be looked upon by true Americans but with feelings of mortification and disgust; and believing that the original design of the structure was to perpetuate the memory of Washington as the champion of American liberty, its national character should be preserved, do therefore most earnestly protest against the placing of said stone within the Monument, or any other stone from any other than a republican government.