

May 18, '56

Dear Mr. Stewart:

My eye was better, so, last evening, I went to bring Melinda Wilson a red winter dress and a pink summer dress; and, from there, I went around the corner of the block wherein your parsonage is located, only at the diagonal corner; and several people signed the petition.

Across the street, Mr. and Mrs. Costantino were sitting on the porch; and they beckoned to me, and were glad to see me again, and we visited awhile; and he told me, sadly, of what had happened to the house two doors north.

"We were like brothers," he said, "his children were like my children. For twenty-five years, we lived as neighbors, and brothers. On holidays, I gave him a bottle of wine. His wife would never have done what he did. She was like a sister to my wife. But she died; and he sold the house to Negroes. Yes, they paid him six hundred dollars down; and he came to my house and said, "I will come to visit you." But he never came back. It was shame. It hurts my heart, here. A few more years, and wife and I die. But always it hurts. It was shame."

"Husband paid fifteen dollars for flowers for funeral," Mrs. Costantino added, "We are Catholics, and should not go to such funeral. But we loved one each other. And then he did that shame. It hurts heart, here."

Mr. Riley read this first page, and exclaimed: "Very sad letter! Very sad!" But, it is sad to that old couple; and it was a tragedy that has darkened their last years with pain. I know, for the pain struck my heart, also, yesterday, - a sickening pain; and I know how it will be if you go ahead with the plan, - day piled upon day with pain; and you do it in the name of religion, - you give us away in the name of religion. Just as our Savior was killed in the name of religion.

Of course, the negro leader would seize upon any pretext to break down Golden Hill, - They've been trying to do it for twenty-three years; and we held them off; and, now, you would be giving them the key. Thousands and thousands of white and away from home service people in this district, needing a mission service church; and here is the little Friends' Church, wanting to serve them. Or, you could serve them with such a church. But, you give them our district, which has never been, and never should be, negro; and you are enemy to us, and to the Friends' Church, also, for you break down their district, also. You put us to death. "It is shame." It is, a wicked shame.

Violet Beck