

SYRIANS RIOT IN STREET, AND MANY ARE HURT

Reserves of Three Precincts End Knife-Pistol Battle.

THE STRIFE BEGAN IN COURT

Magistrate Wahle Invited Najeh Maloof
to Go Home with Him—Mrs.
Wahle Not Enthusiastic.

Wild-eyed Syrians battled fiercely for a quarter of an hour in the lower west side last night. Frenzied yells rent the air. The dim light from barroom and café windows showed the glint of steel in 200 swarthy hands. Reserves from three police precincts were rushed to the battle ground, but there was plenty of time for a fight before they got there. Many Syrians with stab wounds turned up at the Church Street Police Station, many more are nursing their wounds in private and awaiting the chance for a return thrust.

When the police appeared the fighters melted away as if into the air. A moment before full of men brandishing daggers and revolvers, the streets assumed the quiet serenity of a Philadelphia alley. For hours the bluecoats moved up and down Washington Street, and the long nightsticks twirled menacingly, but the trouble was not renewed. Only five men were locked up for stabbing—the others who might have been arrested disappeared.

The disputes and quarrels which led up to the climax last night might make a long story. A difference in religious views is at the beginning of it. The three principal figures in the story are Syrian Bishop Hawaweeny, Editor Najeeb Diab of The Mirror of the West, and Najeeb Maloof, a merchant of 17 Broadway. The Bishop and the editor are on the same side. Maloof is their opponent. The Bishop's followers declare Maloof is a secret spy and is a very dangerous man.

Even if he talked as fast as a Syrian one could not tell the details of the long series of squabbles in four hours. Anyway, yesterday's developments began with the arraignment before Magistrate Wahle in the Tombs Court of Najeeb Maloof, charged with assaulting Najeeb Diab. Every Syrian who could crowd in was there to hear the case argued. Hundreds of others swarmed through the corridors of the court and showed their teeth at policemen.

Magistrate Wahle formerly was counsel for Syrians. He knows all about their quarrels and the hopelessness of trying to settle them in court. So he made a speech:

"These quarrels among the Syrians," he said, "have come to be a public scandal. The first man who gets to the police station makes a complaint regardless of any justice. I declare this case adjourned for ten days. You must get together and patch this thing up. If you don't I'll send a good many of you to jail."

Then Maloof leaped forward and said he was afraid for his life, and that the Bishop had put a price of \$5,000 on his head.

"You come to my house," said the Magistrate. "I'll let you have the best room I've got."

That about ended the court episode. The Syrians went back to their homes in Washington Street. At 6:25 o'clock Hafez Abdunulmack, who works in the office of Editor Diab, was walking through Liberty Street, escorted by Detective Oscar J. Finn of the Amity Street Station, Brooklyn. Finn was protecting Abdunulmack on the way to the Syrian's Brooklyn home. When they got nearly to the corner of Church Street, Moussa Abalan ran across the street and grabbed Abdunulmack's arm.

"This man is carrying weapons," Abalan shrieked at Patrolman Moran, not knowing Finn was an officer. I charge it! I charge him! Make him arrest!"

Moran arrested Abdunulmack. The yells of the two Syrians had brought an immense crowd to the street. They followed the prisoner to the Church Street Station. Abalan said the accused was carrying a whip. Sergt. Daly discharged the prisoner in disgust.

Then the fight began. When the men appeared on the street it was a signal for nearly every Syrian between Church Street and the river to get out his dirk or revolver and yell. None of them missed the opportunity. Before he knew it Sergt. Daly found a howling, fighting mob almost outside the police station door. The few policemen on hand were helpless in the riot. If one of them grabbed the collar of a Syrian he was swept aside and the knifing went on.

Toni Saba, a grocer of 87 Washington Street, was the first one arrested. He was charged by Moussa Abalan with stabbing him in the neck and trying to shoot him. If the pistol hadn't missed fire Abalan probably would be dead now. Dr. Hale came from Hudson Street Hospital and patched up Abalan. Saba was locked up.

Michael Shieb of 45½ Washington Street was next arrested for flourishing two revolvers. Nicola Dibs was arrested on a charge of stabbing George Boutriss and John Boutriss, both of Brooklyn. George Sheheri was another prisoner—they were all taken in on the same charge.

The babel of voices almost drove Sergeant Daly frantic. Syrians, men and women, crowded into the station. Lawyers appeared in twos and threes, interpreters were summoned, and it was the busiest night the Church Street Station has seen for a long time. The reserves patrolled the streets until midnight.

Bishop Hawaweeny was appointed by the Czar to be head of the Orthodox Syrian-Greek Church in this country. No sooner had he reached here than a strong opposition sprung up. It has kept up ever since. The Bishop is now under bail charged with assaulting an editor in Brooklyn. Each backed by some twenty followers, they had a free-for-all fight in Bergen Street a month ago. The last time the Bishop appeared in court he had to be escorted home by the police.

James W. Osborne, candidate for District Attorney, is counsel for the Bishop. Charles Le Barbier represents the opponents. They say that the Bishop has incited his followers to exterminate them. The Bishop says he needs police protection, and without it is likely to be assaulted any time.

When a reporter called up Magistrate Wahle's house on the telephone last night Mrs. Wahle answered.

"Did Magistrate Wahle bring Najeh Maloof home with him?" the reporter asked, mentioning the invitation in court.

"No, he didn't," answered Mrs. Wahle, "and before he brings people like that here I want him to make arrangements with me."

The reserves of the Amity Street and Butler Street Police Stations in Brooklyn were kept ready for instant action, on the report that the rioters would invade that borough, but there was no trouble of any kind.