

[For the Principia.

**THE POSITION AND DUTIES OF THE
COLORED PEOPLE;**

**Or the great lessons to be learned from
the late riotous attack upon them
in New York.**

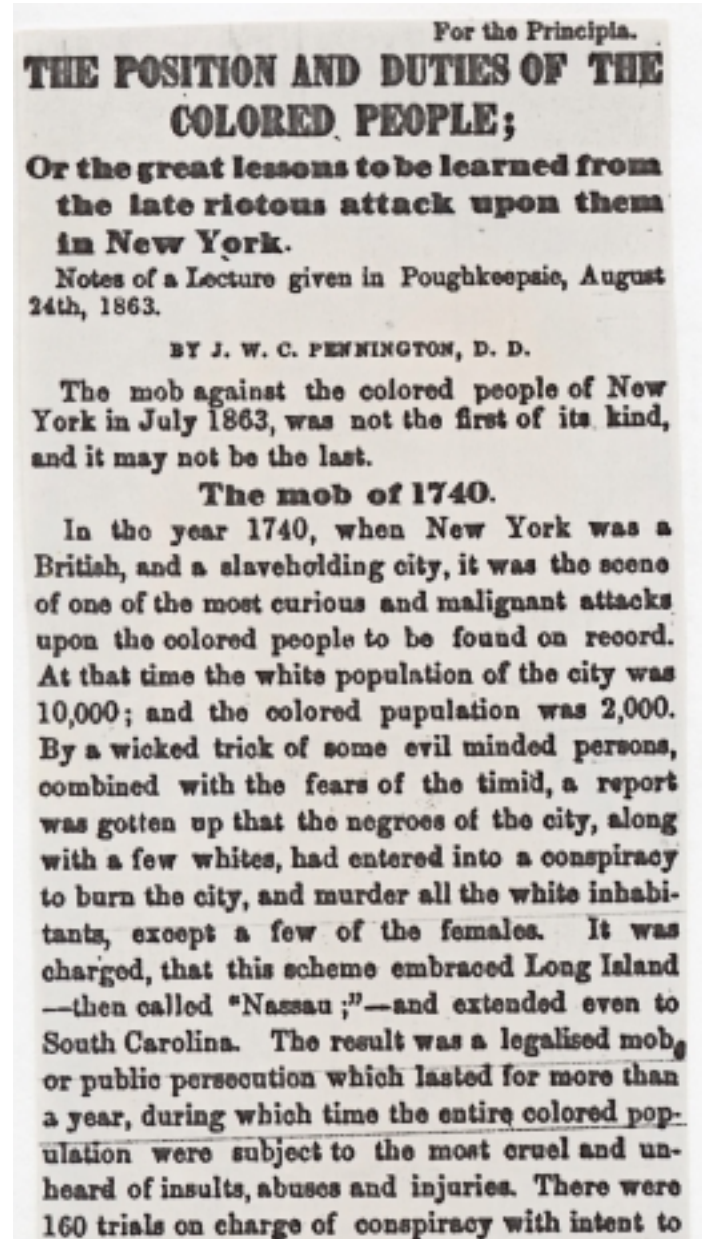
Notes of a Lecture given in Poughkeepsie, August
24th, 1863.

BY J. W. C. PENNINGTON, D. D.

The mob against the colored people of New
York in July 1863, was not the first of its kind,
and it may not be the last.]

The mob of 1740.

In the year 1740, when New York was a
British, and a slaveholding city, it was the scene
of one of the most curious and malignant attacks
upon the colored people to be found on record.
At that time the white population of the city was
10,000; and the colored population was 2,000.
By a wicked trick of some evil minded persons,
combined with the fears of the timid, a report
was gotten up that the negroes of the city, along
with a few whites, had entered into a conspiracy
to burn the city, and murder all the white inhabi-
tants, except a few of the females. It was
charged, that this scheme embraced Long Island
—then called “Nassau;”—and extended even to
South Carolina. The result was a legalised mob
or public persecution which lasted for more than
a year, during which time the entire colored pop-
ulation were subject to the most cruel and un-
heard of insults, abuses and injuries. There were
160 trials on charge of conspiracy with intent to



commit arson and murder. Seventy-one were condemned to banishment, or to be sold to the West Indies, 18 were hanged; and 13 were BURNED at the stake. The remaining 58 being the slaves of influential owners were acquitted. The volume containing the account of this affair covers nearly 400 pages. It was compiled by the Supreme Court where the trials were held, and is falsely styled,

"The Negro Plot."

Shame has blushed the book out of print. But the records of the old Provincial Supreme Court in the archives of the City Hall, contain all the facts, consisting of the indictment, * against Ceasar, Quack, Coffee, &c., &c. Proclamations of the Governor, charges to juries, addresses to the prisoners, when sentenced, altogether forming a cabinet of curiosities. Time corrected the tongue of slander. It fully transpired, that instead of its being a plot of the negroes against the lives and property of the whites, it was a plot of the whites against the lives and liberties of the negroes.

The mob of 1863.

And, now, after the lapse of more than a hundred and twenty years, we are called to witness a similar, but far more diabolical conspiracy and riotous outrage against the lives and liberties of the descendants of the same people, in the same city.

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What shall we call the mob of July 1863? Although I am not now assuming the responsible

task of giving it a full designation; yet, I may remark in passing, that intelligent colored men of studious minds, owe it to themselves to record this mob in history by its right name. We should let no mere considerations of present relief deter us from bringing out all the facts, that will fasten the weight of responsibility where it belongs.

If it is an Irish Catholic mob prompted by American Protestant demagogues and negro hatters, let it be hereafter known as such in history. If it was a desperate effort to resurrect the old rabid and hateful spirit of colonization, so let it be known to be. If it was an attempt of the southern rebels to plant the black flag of the slavery propagandist on the banks of the Hudson, let future generations so read it. Ye living historians, record the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Its antecedents.

The elements of this mob have been centering and gathering strength in New York, for more than two years. And, as soon as the rebellion broke out, prominent colored men in passing the streets, were often hailed as "Old Abe," or "Jeff. Davis," evidently to feel their loyal pulse, and as it became evident that our sympathies were with the Federal government, we became objects of more marked abuse and insult. From many of the grocery corners, stones, potatoes, and pieces of coal, would often be hurled, by idle young loafers, standing about, with the consent of the keepers of those places, and very often by per-

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sons in their employ. The language addressed to colored men, not seemly to record on paper, became the common language of the street, and even of some of the fashionable avenues. The streets were made to ring with words, and sayings, the most filthy, and yet no effort was made by magistrates, the press, or authorities, to suppress these ebullitions of barbarism. In no other country in the world would the streets of refined cities be allowed to be polluted, as those of New-York have been, with foul and indecent language, without a word of the rebuke from the press, the pulpit, or the authorities. Every loafer, from the little rebel, who could but just tussle over the curb stone, up to the lusty mutton fisted scamp who could throw a stone a half a pound's weight, across the street at a colored man's head, might anywhere about the city, on any day, and at any hour, salute colored persons with indecent language, using words surcharged with filth, malice, and brutal insult. And what has been the result? Why, just what we might have expected,—the engendering of a public feeling unfriendly toward colored people. This feeling, once created, might at any moment be intensified into an outbreak against its unoffending objects. We have, in this way, been made the victims of certain antagonisms.

Opposition to the Draft.

I. The opposition to the draft comes largely from that class of men of foreign birth who have declared their intention to become citizens, but

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I. The opposition to the draft comes largely from that class of men of foreign birth who have declared their intention to become citizens, but

who have not done so. They have been duly notified that they could leave the country within sixty days, or submit to the draft. As soon as the President's proclamation containing this notice was made public, men of foreign birth, of this class, began to speak openly against the draft. And for obvious cause. They do not wish to leave the country, and they do not wish to fight. They came to make money, and so far as the war interferes with their schemes, they oppose it.

Now, dishonest politicians aim to make these men believe that the war has been undertaken to abolish slavery; and so far as they believe so, their feelings are against colored people, of course.

From this class, there has been a very considerable mob element. Many of them are a little too shame-faced to be seen with a stone or brickbat in their hands in the streets; but they have, in large numbers encouraged the mobbing of the colored people. It is known that they have allowed loafers to congregate in their places of business and concoct their plans. Yes, not a few of these men are among your grocery-men, and others that you deal with, and are extremely malignant in their feelings. they are fair to your face, and will take your money, but behind your back, *it is "nigger."* These men know perfectly well, that in the countries from which they come, conscription laws, of a far more strict, and severe character exist, and they also know that they would not dare to resist

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those laws, if they were there; and hence their opposition to the draft is ungrateful and revolutionary. Many of this class of men are not so ignorant as to believe that the war is carried on by the President to abolish slavery. They have other objects in view. They fall in with the cry against the negro, only for effect.

Catholicism and Protestantism

II. The next point of antagonism which has developed itself in the recent attack upon us, is that between CATHOLICISM, and PROTESTANTISM.

Why have *Irish Catholics* lead the way in the late murderous attack upon the *colored protestants*? It is not known that a single colored catholic family or individual suffered during the late riots, at the hands of the Irish, except by mistake. If the colored people, as a body, were Roman Catholics, there would be no attacks made upon them by Irish Catholics. During the Sabbaths of the riots, while colored protestant churches were closed; and colored protestant ministers had to take shelter out of the city of New York, colored members of Catholic churches were quietly worshipping in Catholic churches without insult, or molestation.

As to the color of the skin. Everybody knows, that Catholics consist of all colors in the known world. In other countries, black priests, officials, and members, are as common as the sun that shines.

As to the labor question. If colored mechanics, and laborers; and all our women and youth who

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earn wages, were Catholics, we should hear no objection from the Irish Catholics about their employment, because the wages would be good Catholic money, and would go to extend that church.

The Irish objection to us is then, not as colored laborers; but as *colored protestant* laborers.

The American people may take a lesson from this, and judge what may come next.

The Labor Question.

Let us look at the labor question a little more closely, and see what must be the greed of those who would have us believe that there is not room and labor enough in this country for the citizen* of foreign birth, and the colored people of native growth. The legitimate territory of these United States, is about 3,306,863 acres. That is ten times larger than Great Britain and France together. Three times larger than Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, Spain, Portugal and Denmark; and only one-sixth less, in extent, than the fifty-nine, or sixty republics and empires of Europe put together. And yet there are those who would teach the British and other foreigners the selfish and greedy idea that there is not room enough in this country for them and the colored man. Such a notion is ridiculous.

Lessons of Duty.

The foregoing state of fact suggests some lessons of duty.

1st. We must study the use of arms, for *self-defense*. There is no principle of civil, or religious obligation, that requires us to live on, in hazard,

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1st. We must study the use of arms, for *self-defense*. There is no principle of civil, or religious obligation, that requires us to live on, in hazard,

and leave our person, property, and our wives and children at the mercy of barbarians. Self-defense is the first law of nature.

2nd. We must enter into a solemn free colored *protestant industrial or labor league*.

Let the greedy foreigner know that a part of this country BELONGS TO US; and that we assert the right to live and labor here: That in New York and other cities, we claim the right to buy, hire, occupy and use houses and tenements, for legal considerations; to pass and repass on the streets, lanes, avenues, and all public ways. Our fathers have fought for this country, and helped to free it from the British yoke. We are now fighting to help to free it from the combined conspiracy of Jeff. Davis and Co.; we are doing so with the distinct understanding, that WE ARE TO HAVE ALL OUR RIGHTS AS MEN AND AS CITIZENS, and, that there are to be no side issues, no RESERVATIONS, either political, civil, or religious. In this struggle we know nothing but God, Manhood, and American Nationality, full and unimpaired.

The right to labor, earn wages, and dispose of our earnings for the support of our families, the education of our children, and to support religious institutions of our free choice, is inherent. No party, or power, in politics, or religion, can alienate this right.

No part of our influence has been used to prevent foreigners from coming to this country and enjoying its benefits. We have done them no

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wrong. What we ask in return is, NON-INTERVENTION. LET US ALONE.

3rd. Let us place our daughters, and younger sons in industrial positions, however humble; and secure openings where they may be usefully employed. Every father, and every mother may be of service, not only to their own children, but also to those of others. You will have many applications for "colored help." Be useful to applicants. Prepare your sons and daughters for usefulness, in all the branches of domestic labor and service.

4th. Let our able bodied men go into the United States service. There is no better place for them. If I had a dozen sons, I would rather have them in the United States army and navy, than to have them among our loose population. The army of the United States must, hereafter, be the great bulwark of our life, as a nation. The rebellion has rendered it necessary that we should have a powerful standing army. Colored men should enter the army in force, for the sake of the strength it will give them, the education they will obtain, the pay they will get; and the good service they will do for God, this country, and the race.

There are some among us, who still doubt whether we are in duty bound to take up arms in support of the Government; and whether the Government has a right to draft colored men.

The answer is obvious. NATURE AND CIVIL LAW HAS INSTITUTED a relation between colored men

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and the United States Government, which is mutually binding. We are BOUND to support the Government, and the Government is BOUND to protect us. Neither party has a right to ignore this duty. The plain and safe course for colored men, is to *do service and claim their rights*.

(To be concluded.)

* The forms of these indictments is, "the King against Caesar" &c. The allegations embrace the charge of an intention to overthrow His Majesty's government, in the Province, and siege upon the whole country. At that early date, the colored men of New York had a society called the Geneva Club, which was supposed, by the whites, to be substantially a Masonic body. This gave offence to the white men of that fraternity; and the blacks were ordered to disband the society, and to abstain from meetings of any kind, either at night, on holiday, or Sundays. The magistrates throughout the city and province were strictly charged with the duty of breaking up all such gatherings. To add to the excitement, it was alleged that some colored enthusiast, had prophecied that Long Island, and York Island were to be sunk, about that time, so the people suffered, in part, for opinions' sake.

(Concluded.)

Colonization influences.—Education.

5th. We should reconstruct our Union against the insidious influences of colonization. It is a fact, that the time our present troubles began, colored men were very much divided, on the question of our continuance in the country. Hard-

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A. M. E. churches have done in they way of supplying ministers and teachers for the South, the colored churches North, are doing nothing. Some years ago it was found that eighty, or one hundred thousand of the southern slaves were held as Presbyterian property. Doubtless the great mass of those are now on the freedman's list; but what are the northern Presbyterians doing for their freed brethren? Is there a single colored Congregational or Presbyterian Church in New England, New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania, that has a young man in course of training for a teacher, or minister, with reference to the southern field? And echo answers, is there one? Thirty years hard and self-denying labors among the Congregational and Presbyterian churches of color, entitles me to speak, at least to them, upon this subject of religious and educational commissions to the South. Those two wealthy bodies have a few semi-mission churches scattered about, in the North—for really not one of them is self-sustaining—but they have no plan for supplying the race with a sufficient number of instructors in this country. Would not some of our influential colored men do well to use an influence with a view to advance this cause *or, will they continue to let the colonization influence neutralize their zeal for the advancement of home interests?* It is painful to notice, that among the most indifferent to the cause of education, are some, who in former years, have, themselves been the recipients of liberal aid,

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when they were seeking education; and who now, since they have got into position, seem to be actuated by a jealousy, lest they should encourage too much competition.

I have recently heard of the case of a young man who applied to a colored Presbyterian clergyman for counsel and aid to enable him to obtain an education for the ministry, and was advised to go and join a body where it would require less education to be a minister. The young man was a member of that minister's church, and that church is under the care of one of the wealthiest Presbyteries in the city of New York[.] Now, it is known that that colored minister is strongly under the influence of prominent men of the colonization school. Hence the tree is known by its fruit. It has been a part of the deep laid plan to divide the councils of colored men, and beset the government to unite colonization with emancipation. But God be thanked, that while emancipation is going on well, the unseemly colonization scheme which the President was induced to hitch on to his plan, has proved a failure. This fact should open the eyes of colored men who have been deluded by colonization emissaries.

About a year and a half ago, an official of the colonization society in New York remarked to me, with an appearance of satisfaction, that there was no doubt that the government would appropriate a large amount of money for colonization purposes. But as I said, thank God, it has failed. It is now evident that the country has no colored

when they were seeking education; and who now, since they have got into position, seem to be actuated by a jealousy, lest they should encourage too much competition.

I have recently heard of the case of a young man who applied to a colored Presbyterian clergyman for counsel and aid to enable him to obtain an education for the ministry, and was advised to go and join a body where it would require less education to be a minister. The young man was a member of that minister's church, and that church is under the care of one of the wealthiest Presbyteries in the city of New York. Now, it is known that that colored minister is strongly under the influence of prominent men of the colonization school. Hence the tree is known by its fruit. It has been a part of the deep laid plan to divide the councils of colored men, and beset the government to unite colonization with emancipation. But God be thanked, that while emancipation is going on well, the unseemly colonization scheme which the President was induced to hitch on to his plan, has proved a failure. This fact should open the eyes of colored men who have been deluded by colonization emissaries.

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men to spare to people foreign countries; and no money to spare for expatriating them. The old colonization scheme has been buried so deep, that a century will not give it a resurrection.

Spirit of patriotism.—Faith in God.

Lastly, We should remember that emancipation was reported to, as a purely military necessity imposed upon this Government in the Providence of an alwise God. The President has no alternative but to fall into the powerful current of events which God had put in motion.

This view of the subject is essential to the cultivation of a true and lofty spirit of patriotism. A true patriot must always feel that he owns and contends for property which God gave him, whether it be life, or liberty, or the pursuit of happiness. His greatest strength will be in the firm conviction that God is transacting his business, so to speak; even though he be called to pass through bitter waters of adversity, he feels that God has not undertaken for him in vain.

When the hand of God is with us, we are strong, and when he shows us his will, in regard to our duties, we should be in earnest to do it.

A terrible contingency.

An intelligent view of the history of God's providential dealings with slavery, leaves no room to doubt that its doom is sealed in this country; but let us not forget that there is yet a terrible contingency before us. We may have to face, in the field, an army of our own colored brethren of the South! Already it is known that the southern

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commanders have made use of slaves in battle. And already it is rumored that the Confederate Government thinks seriously of arming the slaves as a [retaliative] military necessity. It is admitted, that from 1,750,000 to 2,000,000 out of the 4,000,000 of the slaves are yet in the possession of the rebels; of this number they can spare for arms at least 300,000 able bodied men. These men armed and so used, certainly cannot be expected to exercise any more liberty of choice than the poor white union men. So that if those men remain beyond our reach, and are armed and commanded by the Confederates to fight us, they will be obliged to do so. If we take them prisoners, I suppose they will have to be exchanged as others. If they desert and come to us, the case will be different. It is presumed they will do so, when the opportunity presents itself—but, how much mischief they may be compelled to do, in the meantime, it is impossible to foresee.

In my opinion, nothing is more likely to take place, under French influence, than this arming of the slaves by the rebels with the promise of freedom. It would be but a reproduction of the French plan in St. Domingo in 1794, to be followed by the same treachery by the Confederates, should they use the slaves successfully.

I have no doubt that Louis Napoleon is advising Jeff. Davis to this plan. Every weeks' delay in crushing out this rebellion increases the danger that the slaves may be brought into the field against us. I confess I am not of the number of

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those who covet such an event, with the expectation that the slaves would come to us *en masse*. It is not to be expected that, in the event of the rebels arming the slaves they would neglect also to present them with every possible allurements to fight hard; and at the same time, to surround them with every imaginable obstacle to their desertion. On our side, the only wise and safe course is to press rapidly into the heart of the slave country, and work out the problem of the Proclamation of freedom. We must prove to the slaves that we have both the will and the power to give effect to the proclamation, and that it is not a mere sound, reaching their ears, upon the wings of the wind. Here is where our danger lies. The President is right. The proclamation is the word of God's holy Providence, so to speak; but the great North is slow to repent of slavery. There is yet a great deal of wicked, angry, and unrighteous feeling in the heart of the Northern people. It may be that God intends to use the sword as a lance to bleed the whole nation, until she begins to faint, for very loss of blood, and then to swathe up the opened vein, and apply restoratives.

Let us, then, not flatter ourselves that we shall escape. Let us not be deceived by those who would persuade us that there is any destiny for us, as an integral part of this American nation, separate from the nation, as a whole. If the slaves are brought into the field by the Confederates, it will be a sad and awful day for us.

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Conclusion.

We conclude, then, that those who, in the late riots undertook to expel by murder, fire, and persecution, the colored people for the accomplishment, either of sham democratic, or Roman Catholic progandism, have undertaken a heavy and dangerous task, a task in which all the plans and purposes of a just God are against them. And it now remains to be seen whether intelligent colored men among us who have suffered in the late riots will allow the history of that outrageous scheme to pass unrecorded. Shall a few thousand dollars of relief money, and a few words of good counsel, and consolation, be a sufficient inducement to neglect our own history? Remember, that one of the great tests of civilization, is that a people should be able to record their own annals, by the pens of their own historians.

How does the matter sum up? It sums up thus; for more than a year, the riot spirit had been culminating, before it burst forth. The police authorities were frequently applied to, by respectable colored persons, without being able to obtain any redress when assaulted and abused in the streets. We have sometimes pointed to the aggressors but no arrest has been made. We have appealed to them for protection and apprised them of the fact that we had good reason to believe that a general attack was about to be made upon us, under false pretenses. We have pointed to the street corners, and to the rowdies who stood at them, and in open day light assaulted

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colored persons, in passing. We have presented proof sufficient to indict houses where rioters assembled. We have named men who hired idle boys to throw stones at colored men, and offered to prove it. The hand of the ruffian has done its work, in sending to the bar of God, a number of swift witnesses against the perpetrators of the deeds of July, 1863. The better class of people of New York city would doubtless feel relief, could these departed spirits be called back to their earthly homes, and their testimony, now recorded on the book of God against the bloody city, be erased. But as now, no power can restore those valuable members of society, so the full history of the riot must stand in all its painful bearings.

The loss of life and property make only a small part of the damage. The breaking up of families; and business relations just beginning to prosper; the blasting of hopes just dawning; the loss of precious harvest time which will never again return; the feeling of insecurity engendered; the confidence destroyed; the reaction; and lastly, the gross insult offered to our character as a people, sum up a weight of injury which can only be realized by the most enlightened and sensitive minds among us.

The injury extends to our churches, schools, societies for mutual aid and improvement, as well as to the various branches of industry. And amidst the most honest, trustworthy, useful, laborious, pious, and respected, none have suffered more

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than the sisters of the laundry. These excellent women are the support of our churches, ministers, and the encouragement of our school teachers. In these worthy women, New York landlords have found their best tenants. Many of them are the only support of orphan children. Many of them, the wives of absent seamen, and some of coasting men, and others who are absent during the week, but spend their Sabbaths in the city. The nature of the business of these women is such, that they are entrusted by their customers with large quantities of valuable clothing, from Monday morning until Saturday evening, when they are expected to return them, to a piece, in perfect order. The attack made upon the houses of the colored people has had the effect to render it extra hazardous to have valuable articles in their houses in trust, as anything found in their houses by rioters would be looked upon as common plunder.

The pretense, therefore, that there was no intention, on the part of the rioters, to injure our women, is false. The severest blow was aimed at them.

There was not only an attempt to murder, *en masse*, their only male protectors, but it was the design of the rioters also to render their homes dangerous and insecure, both for life and business.

For all the purposes, therefore, of social, civil, and religious enjoyment, and right, we hold New York solemnly bound to insure us, as citizens, permanent security in our homes. Relief, and damage money, is well enough. But it cannot atone,

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fully, for evils done by riots. It cannot bring back our murdered dead. It cannot remove the insults we feel; and finally, it gives us no proof that the people have really changed their minds for the better, towards us.

During the late riots, my wife, and other lone females in the same tenement house, were repeatedly annoyed and threatened with mob law and violence. When there was not a man about the house, by night or by day, the rioters prowled about, watching for the return of absent marked victims. Failing to secure those, the defenceless women were repeatedly ordered, or mobishly advised to leave the house, and told that they "*must not be seen to carry a parcel away in their hands!*" Such was the treatment which our females received at the hands of the New York mobites, in the absence of their male protectors, which leaves no manner of doubt that a part of the hellish scheme was to mob and otherwise maltreat our women. Read this, and judge of its design:

"The mob will come to this house, soon. You nigger wenches must leave here, and you must not carry away a bundle, or anything, with you."

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