

Mr. Detter said—Mr. President, there seems to be a feeling of the deepest interest manifested here to-day. I rejoice at it, and I sincerely hope that love and unity may govern us in our actions. Why have we convened together? Because the law, relating to our testimony in the Courts of California, is but a shadow. It affords no protection to our families or property. I may see the assassin plunge his dagger to the vitals of my neighbor, yet, in the eyes of the law, I see it not. I may overhear the robber or incendiary plotting the injury or the utter ruin of my fellow citizen, and yet, in the judgment of the law, I hear it not. The robbery may follow, the conflagration may do its work, and the author of the evil may go unpunished, because only a colored man saw the act or heard the plot.

Under these circumstances who are really injured and losers by the law? It deprives colored men from testifying in cases where white persons are parties. Is it not evident that the white citizen is an equal sufferer with us? When will the people of this State learn that justice to the colored man is justice to themselves? Why, in the despotic lands of Europe the humblest servant may approach his sovereign, present the statement of his grievance, and rarely does he fail to obtain redress; but here, in this boasted land of liberty and equality, where the people are the sovereigns, the laws but express the *popular sense of right*; the judges interpret, and the courts enforce them. What redress have we from the legal tribunal? What protection from injustice have we? Even the ministers of the law are often compelled to stifle their convictions of right or wrong, and do violence to their sense of justice, under this enactment. Mr. President, I do not believe this state of things can last; the people of this State cannot be interested in upholding and continuing an act which never has been and never can be made compatible with the safety and security of the lives and property of those whom, by a gross sophism, it assumes to benefit and protect. It is an act alike disgraceful to the intelligence of this State, and a foul blot upon the pages of her Statute Book. Friends, let us feel assured that a brighter day is opening, the public mind is awakening, let us continue to hope and work for this change, and may heaven crown our efforts with success.

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