

**FULL TEXT OF COL. SKINNER'S LETTER.**

**Democratic Unity Must be Preserved**  
Special correspondence State Chronicle.

The time has come when I cannot permit those who have been my friends, associates and co-laborers, in the cause of Democracy, to be longer deceived by the misrepresentations of designing men. I have stood the fire as long as I can without making a plain statement relative to my advocacy of measures for financial relief, so that the people may see how unfairly I have been recently treated by the press, to whose good opinion I am entitled.

I commenced to give thought to the financial problem in 1873-74, while I was a student at Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky. I read the press of the day with interest and had the pleasure of hearing such Democratic lights as Senators James B. Beck, J. G. Carlisle and J. C. S. Blackburn, make campaign speeches on the line of financial reform and denouncing especially the demonetization of silver. These led me to investigate the subject further, and I have tried since to read all the current literature bearing upon the subject that I could find. My reading and study have brought me to the sincere and decided conclusion that the financial problem is of the first importance among the issues that must be settled by the American people. In this view I find myself coinciding with Alliance and non-Alliance Democrats in the State.

In January, 1887, I attended the Agricultural convention in Raleigh, presided over by Hon. Elias Carr, and introduced a resolution looking to financial relief. In March, the same year, I wrote an article entitled "Land Basis for our National Bank Issue," which appeared in the Greenville Reflector and News and Observer about the same time. After this I wrote an article dealing with the cotton problem, entitled, "The Hope of the South." This was first published in the Progressive Farmer, and afterwards in an abbreviated form in Frank Leslie's. Both of these articles were widely copied. I followed this with "Hope of the South No. 2." Subsequently I have now and then contributed to different papers on the line of financial reform, especially in advocacy of the sub-treasury plan. These questions naturally brought me to the notice of the Alliance, an organized body working for legislative reforms, and consequently I received many invitations from different parts of the State to address Alliance gatherings. Some few of these invitations I accepted. In mid-summer I received an invitation to join Col. Polk in a series of speeches throughout the State. Before consenting to do so I consulted many prominent Democrats, among them chairman E. C. Smith, Hon. T. R. Jernigan, then associate editor of the News and Observer, Hon. T. J. Jarvis, who has always shown himself a wise and conservative leader, and others. They advised me that it would do good for me to accept the invitations. Following the few speeches I made I was flooded with other invitations, and at a sacrifice, with only the good of the people at heart, have delivered speeches in twenty-five counties. I leave the character and tendency of my speeches to the people who heard them as well as the telegraphic reports of them in different Democratic journals, invariably reporting me as having done my party good, which could not have been otherwise, as I made the same class of speeches that I was wont to do in the campaigns from 1876 to 1890, and also the same kind of speeches spoken by Hon. Jesse J. Yeates, Hon. T. R. Jernigan, Hon. D. M. Carter, Hon. L. C. Latham and Hon. Thos. G. Skinner, in their respective canvasses of the First District, and the electors for the State-at-large, and as Senators Vance and Ransom have made throughout North Carolina for the past twenty years. They denounce the demonetization of silver, the resumption of specie payment and the credit strengthening act. They have held up the tyranny of a gold standard, promised the remonetization of silver and general financial relief through the Democratic party. So have I.

In the present hour we only differ as to the plan of relief. I believe in the sub-treasury plan. They do not. As Democrats each is entitled to his individual opinion. As long as freedom of speech is guaranteed in this country we all have our individual right to express our own views and I trust without having our Democracy impugned or ourselves personally or politically proscribed. Mr. Bland can favor free silver and be a Democrat; Mr. Harter can oppose free silver without having his Democracy questioned; Mr. Randall was a protectionist and yet a recognized leader of Democracy in Congress; Mr. Carlisle can reverse himself on silver, and all the while fight against the abolition of internal revenue, a permanent plank in our State platforms, and yet is to North Carolinians a great leader in Democracy.

But Mr. Skinner, it would seem, cannot advocate a measure which he sincerely believes would relieve the people of their great agricultural stagnation and arm the fields with the power to command higher prices for their products, without having his political heritage taken from him, his past services cancelled and his future proscribed. Hence I desire to say, as much as I may be maligned, sharp as the criticisms may be made, nothing can cause me to waver or falter in my political faith, for I expect to follow the flag when many who now judge me wrongly shall have deserted and joined with our common enemy.

My advocacy of the sub-treasury plan has always been in the pale of the party. I discuss it only in a general way, trying to impress two pivotal thoughts—that Democracy is the rule or strength of the people, and that a majority have the right to control; that Democracy means lodging all power with the people possible; that what we call money, whether in the shape of government credit or coin, is the most powerful controller of human action and the great distributor of the results of labor; that as governmental credit has to be invoked either in the form of treasury notes, certificates or guaranteed bank notes, to do the business of the country, that it is more Democratic to put this power in the hands of or near the people at first cost than to delegate it to corporations with the power to crush the people; and that the government can extend its credit under proper supervision upon land and staple crops as well as upon bonds, gold or silver, for the reason that these must redeem the bonds and furnish the power with which to purchase gold and silver.

Now while these are my individual views I have no desire to force them upon Democrats who cannot see through the same glasses as I do, and certainly would not want them incorporated in our State platform, recognizing as I do that there is that difference of opinion among Democrats that would hazard the harmony of Democratic councils and jeopardize our success at the polls, realizing further as I do that our white people must be held together within the organization of Democracy to preserve home rule, to prevent the common enemy from re-enacting the era of its misrule, to perpetuate white supremacy and to stand as a barrier against amalgamation and the evils that would flow therefrom. The people of North Carolina may be assured while I claim the right of my individual views, I stand ready to make any sacrifice to prevent the disruption of the Democratic party. And if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, without criticism, to Alliance and non-Alliance Democrats in the interest of harmony, it would be to carry out what I intended at the last meeting of the State executive committee, to recommend to the different county conventions, with as little variation as possible, the State platform of 1890, and relegate all of our differences of a national character to the different Congressional conventions, as this class of relief must come through the channel of Congress, and these are the political bodies that should be impressed with the importance of relief on the line indicated. In making this suggestion I am not retreating from the Democratic principles involved in the sub-treasury plan. I shall attend the Democratic convention of the First District and do as I did at our last district convention, use my power to have incorporated this plan in the platform, and work for the nomination of a man that will stand flat-footed upon such a platform. If I fail, it will not diminish my Democratic ardor, but I will follow the majority. As a financial reformer, I cannot see how engraving anything unusual in our State platform will advance our cause. I can see how it may divide our people and endanger our local institutions. I give the Alliance credit for too much wisdom and patriotism, even if in the absolute control of the State convention, to act either in naming the ticket or the platform, so as to bring defeat upon the work there committed to their charge. My opinion is, they will act wisely and conservatively, and on the day after will deserve the applause of patriots. Let non-Alliance Democrats stop their bickerings, mad criticisms, tone themselves down, be prepared to act conservatively, meet on a common ground, help enact a common platform that all can stand upon and name a satisfactory ticket that will inspire union and solidity in city, town, hamlet and country, and under one flag march to an assured victory.

To this end let us all meet as true Democrats prepared to make some sacrifices and concessions for the common good.

HARRY SKINNER.

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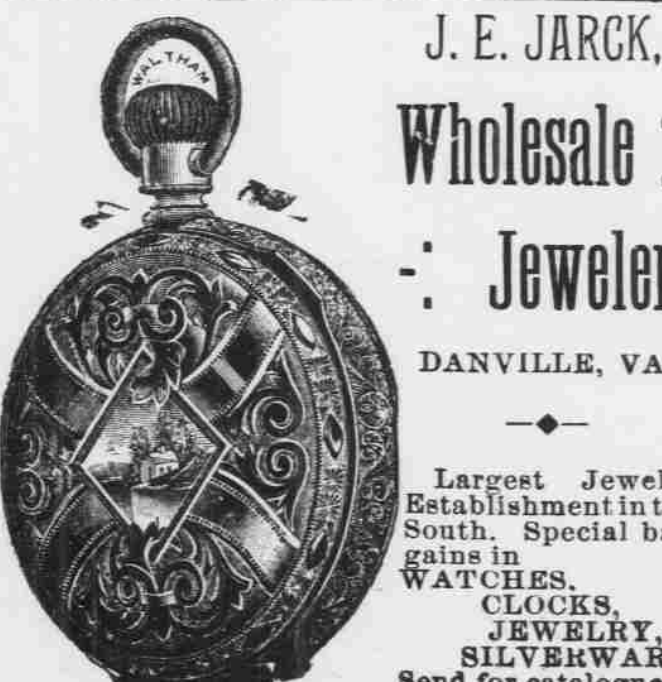
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[march 25-1m.]

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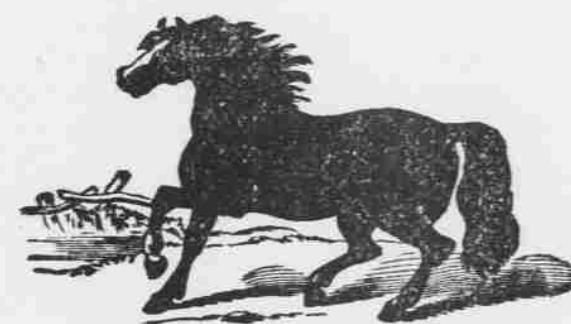
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[march 25-1m.]



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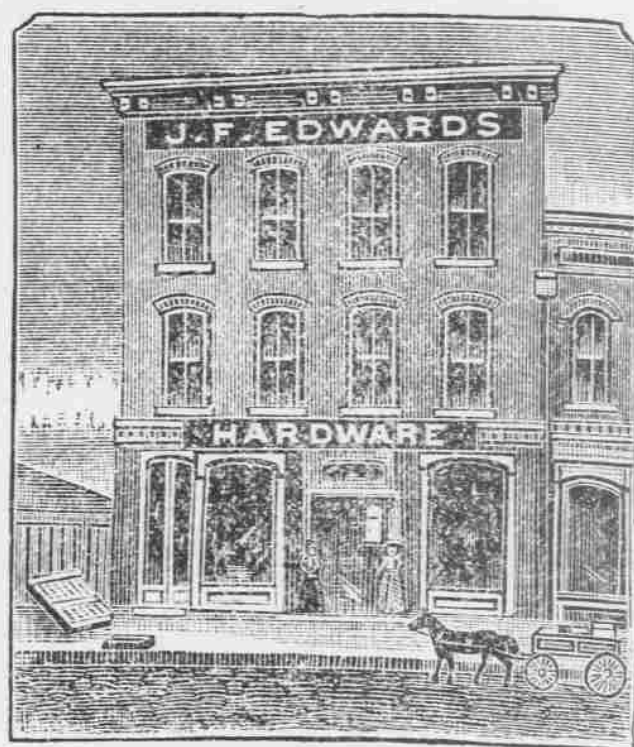
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