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rays of Conservative intellect were all  
converged! The concentrated <sup>abilities</sup> ~~wisdom~~ of the  
state, the pillars of conservative infalli-  
bility, the "pseudo pious counsellors of God"  
who claim to hold a copyright upon the  
world, the whole kenacle who gave  
tongue ~~in a stare stare~~ <sup>on the corruption</sup> during  
the campaign, from thorough-bred  
"Bull" to bastard "Jack" come now  
into this great tribunal and say "There was  
a fraud in this!" "You deceived the people!"  
Why did not you say so then? You  
were the men to instruct the people, to  
point out fraud and to show possible  
dangers. Why did you not let your  
light shine? "Oh! we did n't know  
that twice two meant four!" Pitiful  
confession! Contemptible plea! If there  
was a fraud perpetrated in this re-  
spect every leader in the conservative  
parade was a party to it, and they  
can take no advantage from their  
own wrong.

But I could not ac-  
cuse you of fraud in this respect for  
if there was any in the transaction I  
was not only particeps criminis but  
actually the instigator of it. My mouth

\* One churchman that he understood the Articles.

for I do not believe one was possible in the premises. It is one of those instances in which reason and common-sense as well as every principle of law forbid the possibility of fraud. As well might Swenson or Jay Cooke be admitted to deny that he understood the tenor and purport of a promissory note which he had signed. No court would admit such a plea and no reasonable man would credit such a statement. So it is with the claim of fraud in the Constitution. The very idea is too absurd to combat. You or I had a perfect right to desire the continuance of the present Legislature for four years and to put that wish into any form of words we chose and if the Convention adopted it and the people ratified it, where is the fraud? Not in me for proposing it, nor in the Convention for adopting it. All this is merely preliminary. The document was waste paper until ratified by the people. If there is any fraud the people committed it. The presumption of intelligence is on the part of the enacting power. Fraud in offering a constitution which the people could either accept or reject! A constitution which was the cynosure of all eyes and on which especially the <sup>united</sup> eyes

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And now as to the charge of "fraud upon the people." As I never intend to say more upon the subject, allow me a few words in relation to this charge. If any one is guilty of such fraud it is myself. ~~I was in favor of the~~ I was in favor of the Legislature holding until 1872. I accepted and favored, and if need be, would have supported ~~to any extent~~ <sup>by any means in my power</sup> the phraseology of Section 27, with the purpose of accomplishing that end. I admit the facts changed. I did it conscientiously, deliberately and intentionally. I deny however, most emphatically that even the taint of fraud <sup>is found in</sup> ~~attaches to~~ it. Neither legal nor moral turpitude attaches to it. I say further, that the man who makes this claim "wittingly himself down an ass," in the most unmistakable characters.

What are the circumstances? A constitution is framed by a convention, the proposing power, and submitted ~~to the people~~ <sup>to the people</sup>, in the plain vernacular, to the people, the enacting, the ordaining power. Their sanction gives it vitality. Without that it is blank paper, null and void. They are free to ratify or reject. <sup>The presumption of intelligence rests upon their acts</sup> They did ratify it, and ~~now~~ <sup>then</sup> it is claimed that there was "a fraud upon the people" because one section was not worded as some effete old grammar's

afterthought would have required it to be! It is <sup>argued</sup> claimed  
that the people didn't know whether it  
meant ~~was~~ "pepper" or "ginger" two years or more!  
This presumption is too violent to be en-  
tertained. But if they did not whose <sup>was it</sup> fault?  
Was it that of members of the Convention ~~or of~~  
~~Conventions~~ or does the "curse <sup>come</sup> ~~stay~~ home to  
roost" on that antecedent regime which  
gave ignorance a two-thirds majority in  
the state? But it is too absurd to argue.  
Would Jay Cooke or Luceperson, be admitted  
to deny that he knew the force and effect  
of a promissory note which he had exe-  
cuted? Would a <sup>bishop</sup> churchman be credited  
should he plead that he did not know  
the tenor of the "Apostle's Creed"? Would  
Herschel have been believed had he aver-  
red that he did not know that "the square  
of two" meant "four"?

But this charge comes with an ex-  
ceeding bad grace from a party, whose  
minority in the convention, did nothing  
absolutely nothing, ~~to~~ but attempt to  
slip into the Constitution by some deft-  
ness of verbiage, some of their <sup>own</sup> peculiar  
tenets. Had they succeeded would it  
have been "a fraud upon the people"? Not  
at all. It was their right, their privilege  
and their duty to do so. They were sent forth  
for the express purpose of using all their powers  
to secure that end - They did it, and I give them

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Credit for doing its <sup>tolerably</sup> well.

But the most brilliant absurdity of this charge is yet to be considered. While the Convention was in session the Republican members were denounced by the entire opposition as "niggers" "field-hands" "swung-outung" "mongrels" "black and tan"; in short the whole ~~entire~~ vocabulary of contemptuous abuse was exhausted in vain endeavors to show our ignorance, folly and incapacity. The Conservative members stood among us as beings of a superior race, "overscers", "gentlemen", "statesmen", "giants", "in shape and  ~~stature~~ <sup>gesture</sup> proudly eminent." Even the rustiest, scatter-brain, smooth bore of the party compared with the brightest Republican "as I to Hercules"! They played upon the same string in the canvass. All the wealth, all the education, all the intellect, all the experience, <sup>all the acyress</sup> ~~education~~ and <sup>all the</sup> ability of North Carolina was centered in the Conservative party! The Republican party had not a single man who knew enough to discharge the duties of dog-killer in a country village, and the whole party united had not brain enough to enable one dunc to matriculate <sup>fairly</sup> in the "College of Fools!"

— The constitution came forth and was the cynosure of all eyes for more than a

~~From~~ <sup>All the</sup> the transcendent rays of Conservatism in  
all the <sup>and Seniors</sup> Colliery, were converged upon it, scrutinizing  
every ~~line~~ word and letter, line and point  
from "we the people" to "Done in Convention".  
The whole kennel from thorough-bred "Duch"  
to bastard "Jack" gave tongue upon it by  
night and by day, without ceasing. And  
now, "these pseudo privacy-councillors of  
God," come before the great tribunal of hu-  
man reason, and ~~sneer~~ cry out "Oh!  
we were cheated!" "We didn't know what  
you this ancient!" "The 'Party of Intelligence'  
could n't read English!" "The 'black and  
tan' have deceived the people!" "The 'College  
of Tools' has defrauded all but infinite  
wisdom!" What a magnificent piece of  
treachery is this pitiable confusion! And  
how exceedingly credible! How it smells  
of hypocrisy and subtlety! Intelli-  
gence cheated, deceived and defrauded by  
Ignorance and Stupidity! As well might  
the skilled Hercules wrestling with an  
infant, complain of trickery on the part  
of the child. If there was any fraud  
in the matter it rests with them. They  
cannot plead ignorance. If there was  
ambiguity and uncertainty they must  
have known it, when the Constitution  
was before the people. Why did not these  
self-constituted shepherds of the people

undermine them and defeat the constitution, if the people willed it otherwise. No, sir, they knew that these sections ~~in the~~ within their context and surroundings, would sustain no other construction than the one I put upon ~~it~~ <sup>them</sup> when ~~it~~ was adopted. They knew that one of the best features of this constitution, and that which most embittered their hate and venom was its capacity for self perpetuation. They knew that those oppressed thousands who looked to it as their safeguard for the future, would flock to its support all the more eagerly if they knew that <sup>it</sup> contained that guarantee of permanence and certainty which ~~these~~ <sup>this</sup> provision gives. They cunningly kept that buck and served it as the ~~only~~ basis for that revolution which the lately published "Appeal to the People" was designed to inaugurate.

and before it had ~~passed~~ come up on the  
thing, there had been considerable.

1870  
1871  
1872

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cutting off all other possible hypotheses. If I had believed then as I do now, most firmly and sincerely, that an election next August would have resulted in more murders than there are members in the General Assembly to be elected, I would never have admitted the possibility of a doubt. I would have introduced my amendment and pushed it to the extent of my power. If the present session shall be held sufficient to authorize the Legislature to hold over until 1872, I believe that you will deserve more praise for its introduction and ~~passage~~ adoption than for any other act of your life. If not so construed I believe that the next summer will witness <sup>here</sup> ~~in this state~~ the most fearful ~~state of affairs~~ <sup>outrage</sup> that has ever disgraced civilization. The mask, the rod and the rope will be the arguments of the canvass, and assassination the ~~royal~~ witchwood of success. Either human nature must falsify every rule which the flesh has prescribed for its action, and the portents of today must belie themselves in every particular or every good citizen will have reason to thank God should we be spared the excitement of an election next summer.

Letter to Senator  
Dec. 23/89

Get some one <sup>one</sup> to solve ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> question  
for me, ~~and I will~~ <sup>and I will</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~forty~~ <sup>forty</sup> ~~hours~~ <sup>hours</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~women~~ <sup>women</sup>  
~~beaten~~ ~~whipped~~ ~~in~~ ~~four~~ ~~or~~ ~~five~~ ~~months~~ ~~in~~ ~~one~~ ~~country~~  
ousted by armed men in disguise  
and forty men and women beaten or  
otherwise outraged, in one country in  
four or five months, "in the piping times of  
peace", <sup>and</sup> what would be the amount of  
crime under the excitements of <sup>a general</sup> elec-  
tion?

Get if you find in men to ask  
to avoid this! If it was, I was guilty  
doubtly guilty of <sup>such</sup> this fraud and I  
pray God this night, in the still hour  
which comes between labor and slumber  
as I close this letter  
that this fraud may be successful, and the  
baptism of blood, <sup>and fire</sup> averted from the state  
of <sup>our</sup> adoption.

Greensboro N.C.  
Dec 22 1889

I am, sir, very respectfully  
Your obedient friend and  
C. W. Bourque