
**A popular treatise on the
currency question written
from a southern point of
view**

Hughes Robert W

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A POPULAR TREATISE
ON
THE CURRENCY QUESTION

WRITTEN FROM A
SOUTHERN POINT OF VIEW

BY
ROBERT W. HUGHES
U. S. JUDGE OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE publishers are interested in presenting to the public this essay of Judge Hughes, which contains an able and forcible argument against the inflationists, who demand an unlimited issue by the government of an irredemable currency, and a clear and convincing statement of the service rendered to the country by the national banking system, in reply to those who would destroy this system, and would replace it by a return to the old method of irresponsible State banks, the unguaranteed notes of which would be, as before, uncurrent beyond the immediate neighborhood of their place of issue.

The present position of the author, and his record during the war as an editor of one of the ablest of the Confederate journals, the *Richmond*

Examiner, will cause his views to have special weight among the voters of the South, who should recognize that they have a very direct and essential interest in the currency of the country being based upon the world's standard of value.

We desire, however, to express our dissent from the positions taken by the author in his twelfth chapter, in reference to the demonetization and re-monetization of silver. It will be observed that he is a follower of Cernuschi and Leon Say, and not of Mr. Bland and Senator Jones. He advocates the use of a silver dollar, but it is one worth one hundred cents, and he condemns the legislation which made eighty-four cents' worth of silver a legal tender for a debt of one dollar. It is our opinion, however, that the use of two standards of value is practically as impossible to carry out as would be the use of two yard-sticks of different or fluctuating lengths; and it seems to us that the fact that in the course of five years' time the bullion value of the silver dollar of 412 grains has fluctuated from 3 per ct. above par to 16 per ct. below par, is conclusive against the use of silver as a legal tender, showing that it works injustice by turns to debtor and creditor. The great commercial nations of the world are recognizing the disadvantages of the use of silver as

a money of account, and have, one after the other, brought their currencies to a gold basis, (even France having now stopped the coinage of silver,) and the United States will therefore incur some special risks and disadvantages if it now rashly opens its mints to the discarded silver of Europe. This risk is recognized even by such earnest bimetalists as Cernuschi, who strongly advises the United States to repeal their recent silver legislation.

THE PUBLISHERS.

P R E F A C E .

THE contents of this volume first appeared in the form of anonymous essays in "*The State*" newspaper of Richmond, Virginia. These have been somewhat changed in form, substance and arrangement, and have also been condensed in some features and amplified in others, as now published. The work is, in origin, aim and spirit, a popular treatise, making no pretension to scientific method or completeness.

The writer lays no claim to special proficiency in the branch of political economy treated, or to originality in the matter presented. He merely hopes that the book will be found better to meet the needs of the public debater, and more conveniently to supply the wants of the hour, in the facts and views brought forward, and in the manner of doing so, than many of the numerous scientific treatises which have appeared on the fruitful subject of the currency.

His endeavor has been to combat the idea that the producing regions of the United States could be peculiarly benefited by a redundant paper currency; and he has naturally addressed his observations with more directness and solicitude to southern, than to any other class of readers.

The reader is requested to excuse the egotism apparently indicated by the use of the first-person-singular; and bear in mind that the contents of this volume originally appeared under an anonyme.

NORFOLK, VA., *December*, 1878.

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