

**DESPOTISM IN AMERICA; OR, AN
INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND
RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-
HOLDING
SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES**

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Despotism in America; or, An inquiry into the nature and results of the slave-holding system in the United States by Richard Hildreth

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RICHARD HILDRETH

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[Hildreth, ...]

DESPOTISM IN AMERICA;

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SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM

IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ARCHY MOORE."

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“ The impression which has gone abroad of the weakness of the South, as connected with the slave-question, exposes us to such constant attacks, has done us so much injury, and is calculated to produce such infinite mischiefs, that I embrace the occasion presented by the remarks of the gentleman from Massachusetts, to declare *that we are ready to meet the question promptly and fearlessly. It is one from which we are not disposed to shrink, IN WHATEVER FORM, OR UNDER WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCES IT MAY BE PRESSED UPON US. We are ready to make up the issue as to the influence of slavery on individual and national character—on the prosperity and greatness either of the United States, or particular States.* Sir, when arraigned at the bar of public opinion, on this charge of slavery, we can stand up with conscious rectitude, plead not guilty, and put ourselves upon God and our country.”—*Speech of ROBERT Y. HAYNE, of South Carolina, in reply to Mr. Webster, delivered in the Senate of the United States, Jan. 21, 1830.*

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INTRODUCTION.

It has been said, and is often repeated, that the United States of America are trying a great social experiment, upon the result of which hangs the future fate not of America only, but to a certain extent, of all mankind.

The consequences likely to flow from the success or failure of this experiment, are doubtless exaggerated; for those universal laws which regulate the feelings and the actions of men, will ultimately produce their necessary effects, in spite of narrow systems of policy and morals, founded upon the success or failure of any single experiment.

But whatever we may think of its probable consequences, however fancy may magnify, or reason may diminish them, the experiment itself, is a great one. It is in fact far more complicated and more critical, and therefore greater and more interesting, than it is commonly represented.

The American experiment is usually described, as purely an experiment of democracy; an attempt to establish a perfect equality of political rights; an essay towards the equal distribution among all the members of the community, of freedom, property, knowledge, social advantages, and those other good things which make up the mass of human happiness. And this experiment—as we are assured by every writer, native, or foreign, who has touched upon the subject, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the country, is carried on to the greatest possible advan-