

**THE SOUTHERN  
QUESTION  
PAST AND PRESENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649232635

The Southern Question Past and Present by Richard P. Hallowell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**RICHARD P. HALLOWELL**

**THE SOUTHERN  
QUESTION  
PAST AND PRESENT**



# THE SOUTHERN QUESTION

PAST AND PRESENT.

*An Address.*

BY

RICHARD P. HALLOWELL.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HARVARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARVARD COLLEGE,  
IN BOYLSTON HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.,

MARCH 12, 1890.

---

BOSTON:  
PRESS OF SAMUEL USHER,  
171 DEVONSHIRE STREET.  
1890.

H 59  
H 193 pc  
1890

## THE SOUTHERN QUESTION PAST AND PRESENT.

---

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Historical Society,*—When our fathers gave slavery recognition in the United States Constitution they provided a curse for our inheritance. It retarded our national growth, it debauched public opinion, it developed prejudice against the negro that turned men into devils. It established and maintained an oligarchy in the South before which Northern statesmen crouched like whipped spaniels. When at last the suppression of abolitionists and the complete overthrow of freedom was presented to us as the only alternative to a disruption of the Union, even such men as Abraham Lincoln hastened to assure the haughty slavemasters of their willingness to bind their wretched victims with heavier manacles. The war for the preservation of the Union began in 1861. It was, in its deeper meaning, divine punishment for our national crime; divine

notice that the crime must cease and be atoned for. We were slow to comprehend, but, after years of bloody war, having failed to conquer the rebels, we succeeded in conquering our prejudice against the negro, called upon him to save us, and offered him his freedom. Two hundred thousand colored men responded to the call, fought our battles and saved the Union.

Abraham Lincoln's proclamation emancipated the slave, and his emancipation was ratified by the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution. By this act we pledged him indemnity for the past and security for the future. For a second and a third time we renewed our pledge through constitutional amendments, conferring upon him the rights of citizenship and the right of suffrage. As to how far we have redeemed our pledge I shall speak presently, but for the moment I ask your attention to the assertion, so often heard, that the enfranchisement of the negro was a grave mistake. On the contrary, I believe it was the wisest act of the American people recorded in the history of reconstruction. The evidence furnished by that history is conclusive. Let us examine it.

At the outset, these Northern men who catch their

inspiration from Southern leaders erroneously assume that at the close of the war the population of the South, aside from the colored people, was made up of intelligent and loyal whites, fully capable of self-government, and that the reestablishment of law and order might have been safely left in their hands with the confident expectation that they would promptly establish state governments, under which free institutions would be assured. So far from this, the whites of the South were the victims of their own pet institutions. Slavery had corrupted the moral sense of the North, while in the South there was not only moral corruption, but almost a complete obliteration of the sense of responsibility to law, without which republican institutions are impossible. Added to this, the sentiment of genuine loyalty to the government was almost unknown. When the Confederacy surrendered, the whites of the South were conquered, but not convinced, and their leaders were resolved if possible to get back into the Union without conditions. Their former political power having been restored, they proposed to recover by political *finesse* whatever they had lost by the bayonet. Slavery had been abolished, but by state legislation they could substitute a system of servile



subjection only one degree removed from slavery. To an ordinary observer of human nature it would seem as if a miracle alone could have at once transformed men, reared in the atmosphere of slavery and conquered on the field of battle, into loyal citizens quick to appreciate the blessings of liberty and to assume the duties and responsibilities of citizens of a free community.

The reconstruction period was opened by the establishment of provisional legislatures in the rebel States. These legislatures were composed of white men exclusively. As soon as they were convened, they enacted atrocious laws applicable especially to the colored race. These laws regulated the relations between master and servant. The legislature of Alabama was bold enough to use the term "former master," when providing for the cruel apprenticeship of minors. In Alabama, "stubborn and refractory servants" were declared to be "vagrants," to be taken before a justice of the peace, who could fine them \$50, and in default of payment they might be hired out on three days' public notice for six months. Laws were ingeniously framed to deprive the colored man of the right to contract for his own labor, or to receive the benefits of his daily toil. The South

Carolina legislature compelled colored men wishing to be mechanics to pay \$10 for a license, while for the privilege of being a shopkeeper an annual payment of \$100 was demanded. That the revival of slavery, so far as it could be revived, was the intention of the makers of these laws there is no room for doubt.

The condition of the South in the early days of the reconstruction period was fairly described by the Hon. Carl Schurz, who, in the summer of 1865, was sent into the Southern States by President Johnson that he might make an intelligent and unbiased report of the situation. Mr. Schurz reported that, in his judgment, it will "hardly be possible to secure the freedman against oppressive legislation and private persecution unless he be endowed with a certain measure of political power." He declared that "the emancipation of the slaves is submitted to only in so far as chattel slavery in the old form could not be kept up; and although the freedman is no longer considered the property of an individual master, he is considered the slave of society and all independent state legislation will share the tendency to make him such. The ordinances abolishing slavery passed by the conventions

under the pressure of circumstances will not be looked upon as barring the establishment of a new form of servitude." Regarding the loyalty of the white people, Mr. Schurz reported that there was "an entire absence of that national spirit which forms the basis of true loyalty and patriotism." White Southern loyalty, he said, "consisted in submission to necessity."

In later years Mr. Schurz championed the cause of the Southern Bourbon, but his defection does not invalidate his early statements. He has never asked leave to amend his report, nor has he retracted a single line. He spoke as an intelligent and impartial observer, and he told the truth.

The people of the North were in no mood for trifling, and were resolved that the blood shed and treasure wasted by the Civil War should be, at least in a measure, compensated for by a reestablishment of the Union that would preclude all possibility of another rebellion based upon the theory of State rights. They were resolved also that the overthrow of slavery should be complete and final. Congress, overriding the insane opposition of President Johnson, at once placed the Union men of the South, whether black or white, under the protection of the