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<th>[Copy of letter from] N.W. Beckwith, Geneva, [to] Alexis de Tocqueville, [185-?] Dec 18</th>
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My dear M. de Brocquière, I am delighted by the warmth of your language in regard to slavery. It was the custom of slave owners to admit their misfortunes, and ask with apparent cowardice, how they were to get rid of them. This seemed reasonable and made me considerate and patient, and tolerant. But now that they have abandoned that position, and confess that they were wrong in earnest, we are losing patience with them, so are you, and I am glad to see it. It is high time they were subjected to some public and free discussion, and condemned as we condemn sexual crimes and venereal disease, and the condescension and sympathy they show to the negroes, justifying them, and calling them virtuous. This is offensive, scandalous, and at worst, it is dangerous.

Being a man of increasing dignity and courage in slavery and the disgrace and danger it brings to free institutions, I cannot imagine any one remaining indifferent and tolerant of it, who has any hope of any faith in human progress or who believes in the attributes of deliberate wickedness. Like yourself, I am not an abolitionist in the correct sense, in which you give to that word.

The abolitionists are few in number, and without much power of good or evil. Gabriel Smith is their head and front. M. Abigael Tobin is the right wing and main body, and the rest of their armies are incomplete. It is a wise, easy, impracticable system, but of no good consequence, the worst thing it has done is to create a bad name, which is misapplied by slavesowners to another class of persons, very much more, very different, right-minded, well-pointed, deliberate, practical, and resolute, but with very different aims from those of the abolitionists, there are the only men whom the slave owners fear. We do not fear the abolitionists I confess because that I never could see any danger in immediate emancipation, to be generous and just is not the way to make people hate you and try to kill you. A good nature, laughing, thoughtless, happy-go-lucky race, which loose and forgets and does not rise against its master when afflicted with the greatest wrongs of this kind, is not likely to turn against them and act their threats when, from being oppressors, they become protectors and friends; all presence of danger from this source is vile, sham.
It must be a fool who believes it, as a coward's conscience, that fears it; but those who prefer to see in general, only negroes.

But as regards the negro himself, they, like the whole race, led by wrongs of slavery, are not fit for freedom; they require a period of at least 50 years in the wilderness to give time for the do and undo irresponsible to die off, and for the rising generation to be bred in habits of personal independence.

Nevertheless, if negroes are not to be treated like men, but if they are only to be used like chattels, why not kill them and cut them like other chattels; they would be better eating than a horse.

But I am content to turn over all these nice points to the metaphysics of slaveholders and to the sovereign states where they reside. I have no more right to meddle in the affairs than in the affairs of Aleppo or Greece or Turkey or Persia or Russia. But when we step out from the area of local sovereigns and meet in common ground, as in the general congress, and frame councils of the Union, where there is a limited scope for constitutional action, and especially

when we enter the territory which are the common property of all, where every man in the Union is a co-proprietor, the owner of a joint and undivided interest, here the ground it is the clear-right and duty of every one to speak out and act out what which is within their

This is the position of the slaveholder, of those who wish to see this common ground to remain free, who are opposed to the further spread of slavery and I am one of them! The slaveholder bears on us and far us, and they call us black republicans, "Negro-worshippers," abolitionists, and other names derivé from the common nature of plantations.

Abolitionist is particularly odious and false in its application, because it means a man of bad faith who disregards his obligation to his neighbor, one who acts on the principle of the slaveholder, that like the slave own, he would be a law to himself, and would enforce his will as law upon others, in their own sphere in their own dominion, in their own home and house. We claim nothing of the sort; we acknowledge that principle, in the abolitionist said, in the slaveholder alike. To us the principle.
which notes the slave subject to the will of his master. We commit it every- where in every form and forever.

We allow precisely the same freedom and scope, to the will and the action of every man in his own sphere, and of every body of men in their own plane, as we claim for ourselves. She leaves slavery and everything else, to those to whom it belongs, within their own dominions and there we are content to leave it, with the responsibility and the shame to them.

Well, with these views on which we intend to act in good faith, we leave the domain of local sovereignty and acts; on the new and common ground: we admit the equal right of the slavesholders to come there, on the principle and in the spirit that we came and theoretically are much entitled to carry out their views and add plant slavery as we are to carry out our views and pursue it; we thus stand free to face the presence of each other opposed to each other, both being in the exercise of our respect and equal rights, and we cannot agree, the case does not admit of compromise; the property cannot be

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given; we have tried that but it will not stay divided, because slavery is not less, when it has fallen into half, it repeats the compromise and breaks into the other half; this other half must now be slave or free; it cannot be both, one party or the other must yield, but neither will yield, now what are we to do? There are two ways of getting out of this difficulty; the first most fashionable way is to fight and sometimes it is not a bad way, but generally it is bad.

Second, there is peace by fighting; it often loses, if it wins it loses, because it introduces permanent bad feeling, military law, reaction, military despotism, and after liberty has won it finds itself lost.

The second way of relief, and the only one which we consider legitimate is, an appeal to the voice of the majority and we are willing to abide by this, this the union of peace and of freedom, and we do not wish to know any other, we agree both parties, to this appeal, and when the ballot boxes are prepared and open, in such faithless slavery, let by senators Atkinson and Stringfellow

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from the slave state of Missouri close by, with an armed mob of slave dealers, 
drew our people from the polls, filled the Bruce with spurious ballots, committed 
rates, destroy property, kill a number of men, inculc the women, and then 
proclaim that the Ballet has decided in favour of slavery. 
This is the old trick and habit of slavery, how many elections were carried in 
this manner, in the old Union of Rome, by noble senators backed by armed 
slaves? Slavery never acted nor ever will act in any other way, and it is 
this which makes it fertile to liberty, shall never abide by law, but will ever 
assert its force, because it is of the nature of force. 
And this is rather a narrow view of the subject, the real contest is political 
and the question political, and the place of action is, Washington, shall the sovereign 
powers continue in the hands of the majority, or shall it pass to the minority? 
Shall we give up government by the people and 

substitute the rule of an oligarchy of slaveholders? 
This is the only question, the real contest is on this, and the question of the ex- 
tension of slavery is subsidiary to it, no party is seeking for abolition and no 
party fears it, the existence of danger to the institution is a hindrance for political 
effort. 
The slaveholders are struggling to extend slavery, and the freeholders are struggling against it, because on its success or defeat depends in a great degree the 
other question, who is to rule, the minority or the majority? 
It is true, the slaveholders contend that limitation is abolition in disguise, that 
it will eventually destroy slavery, if it cannot exterminate it must die too. 
It is not very clear why this effect should follow, seeing the states even in their 
excess, and admitting it to be true, it is no reason for not limiting it, we 
doit not agree to sustain slavery by spreading it, we only agree not to abolish it 
when it exists, but seeing its growing evil, and illegal and faithless 

efforts to gain power and consequent danger to liberty, we have no choice left in 
self preservation but to limit it, and we have the right to do so. 
It is no objection to a right act that it may have remote and indeed consequent 
good also, although we might not have the right to aim directly at those remote
results, the opposite rule would be all reforms were prohibited in sight actions.
but the face of their example, should deter and desist and thus thwart the wishes
of those who are interested in perpetuating wrong. If the limiting of slavery should
deprive it of political power, which is the direct object, and suspending it by free
labor, should render it useless. (which is the natural result) so that, having lost
its moral and in value, abolishment would from internal and if of their own action,
gradually abandon it, that we receive a desirable and legitimate remedy and
without any breach of faith.
The said step violates no agreement, no faith, but is requisite for self-defense,
and if the other effects follow, so much the

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better, say we, to this extent and in this way we are abolitionists and in no
other way.
This is the nature and the shape of the contest, it was apparent to all arguing
from the fact that the principle of popular sovereignty exists on the
rule of the majority and the opposite principle of the rule of the minority
which is the principle of slavery, that two such opposite principles could not co-
exist in harmony, in presence of each other, that each would aim at
superiority, and that they would probably come into conflict.
Their rights were now to avoid this by limiting the sphere of action of the
majority principle to the subject of slavery and to the area of the free states.
But the future contest of principles was certain to be given to slavery polit-
ical power, making 5 slaves count as 3 free men, that is making a slave.
over 500 slaves of such weight as 300 individual free men, was
The most fatal mistake and the most vicious bargain in the whole american
system. Thisتحدث 33 slave numbered to

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Concessions from the slave states.
But the bargain was made and we don't ask to break it, we intend to keep
the agreement and seal them together.
Government was always carried on by parties, but they were formed upon
political theories, commercial theories & c. and slave owners were divided
upon them as much as the men of the free states.
But the free states were-money-making and they were left politics to the side. The plantation owners naturally plotted for power, and having no other means of gaining it, they went to work to secure it. At length the people of the free states began to comprehend what all this really meant, and their own danger, which they were very slow to believe.

But it was necessary that this conviction should become very strong, strong enough to break up all existing party ties, habits and organizations and to initiate all commercial and other political, and serious questions.

And for the free states, they demoralize and all sorts of frauds and murders to unite the entire majority of them on one party against the slave states.

And as they may later slavery, no regard for the major went ever being the free states to work all the feelings and unite on this one, nothing but a clear conviction of danger, to themselves has power to do this — and this is the element now at work — thus is the change now going on.

In the result of this, the people have on the presidential election.

The South is fully organized, compact, powerful and dignified. The North is yet in confusion and despondent, has thrown off its old leader, but has not yet into the drill under the new one.

The South openly the extreme division of defeated, forever the power of the and division: a man must know America to appreciate it — it goes to the heart, and Drill, the theme of every American, for they are proud of the Union and they love it, and as they are ready to make great sacrifices for it.

They are slow and fearful of doing any thing which may endanger it.

Under these circumstances, the well organized South has been able to carry with enough of the North, the members of the party, the whole influence of the Govt., patronage, etc., to turn the scale against freedom, and in favor of Buchanan.

But it was a small majority — my surprise is, that it was no larger, the Democrats in Tennessee, the Republicans in New Jersey, and the south part of Indiana settled by people from the slave states of Kentucky, turned the scale against us, even the Irish vote would have saved us, but they went.
in a body church and all for slavery.

One of those days that good-hearted people will open their eyes to their true interests, and then they will go with us. But as soon as we swept all New England, New York, Ohio, Michigan, all but carried the election at the first trial and meet all disadvantages, so panic was not disappointed or discouraged. I am full of confidence for the future.

But it is not Mr. Buchanan nor Mr. Frémont, nor any one man, who can settle this question. Who was in power, the control is of the people for the people, and can only be settled by the action of the whole people. Slavery is a great evil and a great power to overthrow, and there are great difficulties in the way and it requires time and patience.

The first successes are in favor of the ready and the desperate, but that will not last.

Some of the combinations which I rely on with so much confidence for final success are these:

1. The Dominion can so potent, will lose its power, because it can ill permit any man to stand in its way. It can easily carry their own people with them; they can too clearly that division will lead to certain speedy and total dissolution, preceded by civil insurrection. Slavery, by only exists by the good faith and forbearance of the North, but the free states once and a controlling vote for free soil and show themselves ready to back that vote and enforce the federal authority.

Now can a handful of slaveholders with four men and little money and a new slave race ready to rise, how can they defy the authority of the laws of the federal government? From that day, the word division will cease to be attended, but it takes time for the whole people to see this and feel its truth and know it and act on it in the face of grave preparations and threats. But they will come to the knowledge of this fact, and will act on it.

2. The laborer in the thing in issue, the free laborers are the whole physical force and the whole electoral majority, and control the ballot.
They are beginning to see that the extension of slavery hurts them. On the territories where it degrades and dishonors them all, which is true labor, that slavery is the most directly and largely and personally interested in, free labor will work better. It is true that it takes time to get this into their skull, and, but it is nothing, it does not require constant help, and those men will come right by and by — nothing can stop them.

The cause of slavery.

It has thrown off all disguise and comes forth in frightful ugliness, it avails itself to be right necessary, and just—approved by God and useful to men, it claims to be the true cause of white freedom, and to be entitled to political power. It demands the patronage of the God and the protection of the treasury, it is received in the free opening of the African slave-trade for the benefit of the Africans, the remembrance of the plantation, the conquest of Cuba to prevent speculations, the conquest of Central America, to spread in, the enslaving of poor white men to get rid of them, it requires to be spoken of with respect, and justified to the people in the senate and house in every form out of doors, to make itself if not respected, at least feared. It affects religion, purity and morality, it denies all the settled maxims of experience, wisdom and justice and boldly dares to believe the most self-evident truths, it manifests itself every day more factious, turbulent, impudent, obnoxious, repelling and dangerous, its rushing back to barbarism, degradation and crime.

All this as much more like it, is dressed up daily in the northern press, with sophistry, skill, and fine language, but no concurrence, openly and shamefully. It cannot stop in this case, it is the nature of it, and must go on.

To reject it, it is a great power this self-oposum, no genius could habit it so revoltingly as it exhibits itself.

This was the thing wanting, while it was weak and harmless and sympathetic men would not believe it as such. now it speaks in its own voice, and its own sentiments; men hear it and see it and are amazed.

We have everything to hope from the existence of slavery and it will not disappear.
us, this helping us as we cannot help ourselves. These things alone are enough to assure us of the future: time and patience and constancy will win the battle for freedom, and without much fighting.

Now as to Mr. Buchanan—he is in the hands of his party, he is a man of ability and experience and of good intentions. But he is undecided

and the Chief—to follow and not to lead; the exterminator was not his; it was Jeff Davis's and John C's and Taddei's; Buchanan was bottled into it; he has the faculty of assumption but from lack of enterprise and will he is not affirmatively dangerous—only negatively dangerous.

As to his foreign policy, civilization has not much to hope and not much to fear from him; whatever menacing appearances he show others may get up, I think they will end in smoke; the only danger in regard to Cuba is that his stupid and timid government will in some of its panic, commit acts which will drag us all into retaliation.

This is all that I am afraid of in that quarter. As to his internal policy, he will try to be discreet—he will come and listen and take advice and in trying to please all, will probably fail with all. As to any decided vigorous and manly policy— I think it impossible; but if he acts from caution and takes to a middle and

made-to-courage, he will be well sustained and I think he is most likely to do this. This election will bring the settlement of the slavery contest somewhat, but this is a matter not to be much hastened or retarded by any man.

We shall yet have many violent and threatening scenes of not worse than this. I think we may have serious local disturbance, and acts that will mortify and disgrace us. But as to the final result, let every one be of good cheer and recollect, that pretty story of Ariadne of the fairy, whose fate it was to descend into the central regions, assume the form of a loathsome reptile and crawl upon the earth, an object of repellence and disgust—shut up, shut up, shut up, painted and tied upon by the thoughtless, occasionally an individual had penetration enough to see through her disguise, and discovered her divine nature, and to compassionate, breathe and protest her the period of her torture.
In the past, she reassumed her celestial form, soaring to the heavens above, and became
the presiding genius of those who had defended her in her hour of disgrace, and never fail-
ed to protect and bless them.
So with Liberty, she is often deemed to sustain humiliation and disgrace, that is her
lot, but she never fails to warm the hearts and cheer the souls of those who know
her and defend her, and love her for her own sake.
I owe you an apology for a letter that I am sure will be tedious to you, but re-
collect that you gave me an occasion to speak, and on a subject that I am so fully
I never knew when to stop. You doubtless believe that the proposition to exempt
property on the high seas from seizure is making progress. Russia has formally ac-
ted to it, and the Secretary has spoken publicly in its favor, and no pair has yet objected
to it.
We are in good health and good spirits and do not find the weather disagreeable but
wet a good deal.
With a thousand good wishes for you and for Madame de Bourvillait from Mr.
Bennett and myself. I remain sincerely yours,
N. B. Bennett
N.B. I have a note from your stepmother informing me of the death of the
wife, a noble woman, which leaves him in great grief.