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From the Independent.

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

One, like a faint old man,
Bat down by the way-side weary.
"Firm his step as one who knows
He is free where'er he goes;
Yet, wistful, as light of spring
As the arrow from the string
His impassioned eye had got
Fire which the sun has not
Sift to feel and gold to see,
Fell his tresses full and free;
Or, like morning mists that glide
Soft down the mountain's side,
Most delicious 'twas to hear
When his voice was thrilling clear
Like a silver-hearted bell."
So, with song and roundelay
Came the New-Year down this way.

It was the last eve of December.
The bells were chiming the hour of
even as an old man, leaning on the
arm of a graceful youth, passed out of
the city into the open fields beyond.
Very venerable was he. His counte-
nance was sad, his step faltering. He
looked like one on whom care had
pressed heavily, and who was weary
of the trial. Beautiful as Apollo, fresh
and hopeful as morning, was the youth.
He stood erect with majestic ease, and
his long, fair hair, blown backward by
the wind, fell upon the gray locks of
his companion. They came to a rustic
rest by the way-side.

"Shall we rest here, father?" said
he to the old man; "time wanes, and
thou sayest thou hast much to tell me."
"No, child; let us go to the rock
in the shadow of yonder forest. Thou
art all impatient. I see, to commence
thy reign, but I have yet an hour al-
located me."

Silently they passed on through the
night till the rock was gained.
"Sit closer to me," said the old
man, "and take my hand in thine, for
the air is cold and my blood runs chill.
Twelve moons ago I was as warm and
vigorous as thou."

"How differently I now look upon
the world! Then I was full of dreams
and high expectations and unutterable
longings for its perfection to be at-
tained through me. I said to myself,
'All my myriad predecessors have left
it better than they found it, but its
progress has been so slow that it is still
full of guilt and wretchedness and pain,
and goes sighing and groaning amongst
the spheres as if it were devoid of joy.
I will work a mighty change. I will
seize upon its abuses with a powerful
arm and demolish them. The strong
shall no longer oppress the weak; cunning
and malice shall not prevail over
honesty and right; neither shall there
be war nor tumult any more. I will
instruct the ignorant; reclaim the
vicious; and so elevate the whole race
that it shall be but one happy brother-
hood under the eye of God. Then
every natural beauty will appear un-
dimmed. There will be nothing to
mar the sublimity of the mountain, the
loveliness of the valley, the grandeur
of the ocean; but the wide earth shall
send up ascriptions of praise that will
find sweet entrance at the gate of
heaven!"

"Hast thou not had such thoughts,
my son?"

"Nay, father; they were even now
in my mind. Dost thou tell me they
are vain?"

"Aye! vainer than a dream. What
if the sun and the rain should say of
us scorn, 'Herein lies hidden a stately

tree: It shall not have, like all other
oaks, a thousand years for its develop-
ment, but we will tend it with unceas-
ing care, and a single day shall suffice
to display its lofty proportions.' Think
you the germ would unfold more rapid-
ly for their schemes?"

"Experience has shown me that
the world's growth is like that of the
ocean. God's forces are revolutionary
only in long periods. In the material
world convulsions and upheavals are
the exception, not the rule. The coral
is forming silently for ages in the
deep. The desert sands encroach
almost insensibly upon the oasis. The
river, little by little, deposits its sedi-
ment at its mouth. But, in the lapse
of time, a rocky island rises from the
waves; the oasis disappears; and the
stream seeks a new outlet to the sea.

"It is so in the world of mind, with
nations and with individuals. Each
must develop himself and work out his
destiny according to the inherent laws
of his being; and you might sooner
think to produce the perfect oak in a
day, than by a single effort, to change
the constitution of things and bring
them up to the ideal standard. You
have a work to do that no previous
year ever had; that no future year
can accomplish. Be content to sow,
though another may reap and gather
into barns. Take up the line of duty
where it has been left, and, though
you cannot rear the full-grown tree,
you can add another circle to its trunk,
deck its boughs anew with foliage, and
give it greater power to wrestle with
wind and storm.

"Oh! I seem to see the years since
the creation of man—a glorious pro-
cession—one after another falling into
their appointed places—earnest, hope-
ful, utiring—content to work upon
the crude or the refined materials be-
fore them; nothing daunted though
the skies are dark; expecting no im-
mediate results from their toil; but
pressing steadily onward with a calm
trust, till their mission ended, they
return to the bosom of God!"

"My father! I almost fear to join
this princely company. I had looked
for so much of present benefit and re-
ward."

"Be strong, my son, and heaven
will sustain thee. No year ever wore
so regal a crown as thou wilt wear.
All that went before thee have been
laying the foundations of thy throne
wide and deep. They wrought for
this hour, as thou must for that which
will follow. There were never such
high duties, such enlarged spheres of
labor as are waiting for thee. Be not
a theorist in them. Be a true and
practical builder.

"My predecessors and I had one
error of belief into which I trust no
coming year will fall. We looked
around and saw the people suffering
under the tyranny of their rulers.
They were ignorant and degraded,
and oftentimes on the brink of starva-
tion; herding together like beasts
rather than men. And we said, 'We
will give them republicanism and in-
telligence and comfort; thus they shall
be uplifted.' Mighty agents are these,
and indispensable to moral progress,
but how utterly insufficient did we
find them to stem the tide of human
depravity and wrong. If a plant were
growing in poisonous earth, light and
warmth and moisture could not vitally
cure; they could only ameliorate its
condition; and so all these influences
of which I speak can assist man to
rise, but cannot radically alter the
corruption of his nature. Do you
seek to infuse a purer principle. Show
him that it is neither liberty nor learn-
ing nor luxury which will bring him
into communion with the Divine; but
love and meekness and charity, such
as dwell in the breast of Jesus. Teach
him that to be great is not to be widely
known; and that he is the hero, how-
ever humble his lot, who fulfills all
the duties that devolve upon him, and
puts his confidence in God."

"O my father! the burden is great.
Canst thou not linger a while to help
me?"

"Child, my moments are numbered.
Thou must bear it alone. It will not
all be grievous. A thousand joys are
scattered along thy way. Many good-
ly seeds sown long ago shall in thy
time bear precious fruit. There are
noble souls, that in the conflict for
truth and freedom have been over-
borne, and lie now on the battle-field,
wounded and bleeding, and faint unto
death. It shall be for thee to raise
them up and bid their brows with
bays, while the shouting multitude
shall decree to them the victory, and
write their names among the immortals.
And there are those high in power,
but full of selfishness and crime, whom
thou shalt overtake with swift justice
and fill with remorse and shame.
Verily, thou wilt have many compensa-
tions."

"Thou comfortest me, my father;
but thy voice grows feeble. Hast thou
no last request to make?"

"There is much, my child, which
in the rush and hurry of my affairs I
was compelled to leave undone. There
are captives in dungeons whom I
meant to have released. There are
friends long estranged, whom I hoped
to have reconciled to each other. There
are lovers separated by a cruel fate,
whom I would have united. There
are lonely hearts yearning for an
affection they have never known,
which I designed to give them. But
thou wilt do it; thou wilt do it!"

"Oh! my father! I can hardly hear
thy words. Bless me ere thou depart-
est."

"I do bless thee, my son. May the
Almighty light thy path, and make
thee more glorious than all who have
preceded thee. May he give thee
wisdom and knowledge and gladness,
and bring thee, when thy course is
run, into his presence with rejoicing!
"List! the winds wail. The mid-
night stars beckon. I go. Remember!
Farewell!"

DEAN.
BROOKLYN, Dec. 31, 1855.

A VIRGINIAN'S VIEW OF THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

DUTIES OF THE NORTH & OF THE SOUTH.

A SERMON

Preached in the Unitarian Church, Wash-
ington City, Jan. 26, 1856.

BY REV. M. D. CONWAY, PASTOR.

First Pure, then Peaceable.—James iii 17.

It is now eight weeks, and the Con-
gress of these States, called, as if in
bitter irony, *United*, is still unorgani-
zed. There is reason enough for the
grave apprehension now pressing upon
the mind of every patriot. Our young
Hercules, just as his labors have arisen
before him, and the nations looked on
to see him strangle the Hydra here,
and there unbar the flood of Reform
toward manifold Augean stables, sud-
denly becomes paralyzed. Oh, son
of Jove, last and strongest, what is
this! whither has thy noble promise
fled?

We meet here, my friends, on a
common ground. Varied perceptions
of the relations of that common ground
to human welfare, separate us into
different parties. We are also of di-
verse sections. I do not think the
pulpit should be used to assail any of
these, as such. I therefore shall not
permit myself a doubt, as I touch this
most sensitive subject, that you will
sympathize with me and with each
other. I do so only because, in these
troubled times, my heart burns to
point you to the ancient landmarks of
Right and Wrong, which, when seen,
none can fail to acknowledge; for, like
the objects of the ear and eye, they
are their own evidence. I shall not
make any partisan statement; for I
belong to no party; but there is one
phase of the present state of things
which enters my pulpit whether I will
or not. This arc of the circle—not
the arcs of the politician or economist
—the pulpit cannot be true to itself
without interpreting. And I am con-
strained to believe it a mathematical
certainty, that any arc of any circle,
moral or geometric, being given, the
others may be discovered and describ-
ed, and the radii traced to their cen-

ter.
I shall waste no words on the dogma
that such subjects are not proper to
the pulpit. Christ and Paul found
them appropriate to their ministry.
If moral questions should not enter
here, what should? And if questions
involving the happiness of millions,
and the good relations of section with
section, and man with man, through-
out the land, are not moral, what are?

It was the saddest day that ever
dawned on the country, when this was
made any other than a moral question.
In the day when it was made one of
national political issue, the wind was
sown; to-day we reap the whirlwind.
It is exclusively a moral question, as
are all questions affecting humanity. It
is not a question of North and South
—those very terms should be banished
as unhealthy here. How completely
do we find moral perceptions obscur-
ed, when here, in the noon of the
Nineteenth Century, on a question
involving more entirely than any other
the just relations of men toward each
other and toward God, a great nation
is geographically divided. Men with
divine souls must be lumped with the
clod whereon they tread, and certain
principles and ideas considered as ex-
clusively products of certain sections,
as coffee or cotton. Given a man's
longitude and latitude, and you may
predict his views on Slavery, and
nearly everything else; as when you
know which way the wind blows, you
may announce with certainty the po-
sition of the nearest weather-vanes.

But in the present state of things,
the political view hears its triumph of
Doom. The old party watch-fires are
but blackened earth and ashes; their
lines have fallen in unpleasant places.
A fearful disintegration has supervened
the political mass. Let us hope by
the working of a higher synthesis.
Hitherto we have had ancestral com-
pacts and the political representation of
negroes canvassed. Men have spoken
of what is "wise and expedient,"
rather than what is right. You need
not that any one should show you how
this political treatment has miserably
failed, even in objects higher than its
own. Each party has come forward
with its nostrum, declaring itself the
original of Dr. Jacob Townsend, whose
pills, and none others, were genuine;
each was to bring repose to the dis-
tracted patient, and soothe irritation
by profuse national unity. The in-
flammation has spread with every ad-
ministration until this; and with this
the very powers which enable inflama-
tion to spread, seem nearly death-
still. I doubt not it would be so with
the administration of any merely po-
litical party in the country. Let the
people know, then, that this is the
grand success of the political treat-
ment of the Slavery question—every
wound of the Government stilled!

In this state of things, it will not be
the popular heart, but they who live
by smothering that heart, who will
withstand those who now, when all
other methods fail, present the one
path opened up before the country in
the Christian Law, *First pure, then
peaceable*. Every man knows how
alone he gets peace. Priests may
mumble over the souls of the depart-
ed, or beneath them, *Requiescat in
pace*, but no soul ever rested in peace
until it had entered it by the path of
purity. And the greater is contained
in the less; each atom obeys the laws
of the sphere. Nations began with
individuals, and are now but collec-
tions of them, and must obey the laws
of individuals. With both, peace blossoms
only on the stem of purity.

This, then, will save us from any
national peril: *that Conscience shall
be enthroned everywhere Absolute Mon-
arch*. It must be allowed untrammelled
action wherever in any man it pro-
hibits slaveholding, and wherever in
any man it does not. Only let men
that feel living they are and voting at
unity with their best light of duty, and
they demand no more, but are at ease.
When agitation is abroad, it is certain

* See Pierce's last message.

that the lash of Conscience has been
loosened somewhere.

In order to secure this, we are cal-
led to mutual concession—to the con-
cession of each moral sense to the
other of all it claims—it being under-
stood that nothing can be claimed by
either for political advantage; but only
from such a sense of the moral neces-
sity of such a claim as shall never
shrink from any results whatever,
which are needed to secure it. If the
two portions of the country cannot
unite and feel at the same moment
ready to face the Eternal Judge, with
the full conviction that they are each
completely true to God and to every
man, white and black, bond and free,
on Earth, let them sink together be-
neath the waters under the Earth, but
never, never unite or remain united!

We are called the more to this con-
cession because the error has been
with both sides, and is now. The
men whose consciences were first
stirred on this subject have dwelt on
the inhumanity of slaveholders, with-
out remembering to ask whether they
were not slaveholders. For whatever
the Federal Government sanctions or
admits is of course by complicity of
all who are parties to that Federal
compact. As the people of Virginia
did not derive their power to hold
slaves from the Union, and do not now,
of course none of the rest of the States,
or of the individuals of the States, are
involved in it. They are, indeed, in
a high sense, concerned in all that con-
cerns their fellow-men; but not other-
wise are they morally involved, than
as they are in widow-burning in Hin-
dostan, or cannibalism in the Feejee
Islands. Do we, as Americans, take
upon our consciences the sins, as we
may think them, of Great Britain or
Japan, because we have treaties with
those nations? Do England and
France become responsible for one
another's policy, or assume each other's
National Church, because, for a dif-
ferent object, they have formed an
alliance? The United States are but
such an alliance. And as England and
France have only a common re-
sponsibility for what is done in the
war with Russia, so have the people
of the free States only a responsibility
for what is done by the Federal Union
as such. So we can only look upon
the position of the class of Anti-Slave-
ry men whose motto is "No union with
slaveholders," as a blunder, occasioned
by their not having union with their
real duty. Had they worked by the
Christian principle, "First cast the
beam out of thine own eye, and so see
clearly to cast the mote out of thy
brother's;" had they not wasted their
energies on Slavery in the South, but
concentrated them on Slavery in the
North, they would have put in a de-
mand which, so surely as God made
man alike in Maine and California,
would have received the approval of
every sincere soul from Maine to Cali-
fornia.

This blunder has had its antitheti-
cal one in the South. And here, I
may say, we must guard against our
prejudices. As a Virginian, with no
tie of relationship northward, of the
remotest kind, past or present, I feel
how easily I might slide into a justi-
fication of my dear mother, the South.
But the soul knows no prejudices or
sections, and must see all under the
pure light of reason and conscience.

The first error of the South has
been an impatience in the discussion
of this question, reminding calm men
of those unfortunate persons met with
in lunatic asylums, who speak rati-
onally on all topics until you touch that
on which they are deranged, when
their insanity bursts wildly forth.
This has caused them to put them-
selves in an attitude before the world
which has brought down its severest
censure; and, feeling that this was
not just what they deserved—since
they were at least sincere—it has led
them on to a still greater rage against
a judgment which, however unfair,
was the result of their own mistaken
heat. It has precluded freedom of
discussion even among themselves;

a policy which no human brain or
heart ever respected yet. The native
sons of the South have again and
again sought to discuss it in their own
vicinities, and have as often been
threatened and visited with angry
processes, though the privilege is se-
cured them in the Bill of Rights of
nearly every Southern State. The
South has thus lost the confidence of
many of her own children, who find
that a freedom exercised by their
lordly ancestors, Washington, Jeffers-
on, Henry, and by them transmitted,
as an eternal inheritance, is now de-
nied them by men who beside these
are lilliputian. Those who deny that
the full sunlight should play above and
beneath and around any subject, can-
never convince any disinterested per-
son that they are in the right. This
was true before Jesus said, "Whoso-
doeth right cometh to the light," and
it has been true ever since, and will
be true to all eternity. What would
men, including the South, say to
Christ's getting into a passion with an
antagonist, or Plato's refusing to hear
the other side in an argument!

Blunder is of a prickly-pear growth
—one leaf developed from another.
This impossibility of free speech in the
South has preserved a Code of Slave-
ry which is far beneath her moral
sense, but which cannot become a
dead letter so long as there are wick-
ed and selfish men in the world. As
an evidence of this, it is a familiar
fact that the wretched men termed
"Negro-drivers" are held, with their
families, in scorn by all classes of so-
ciety in the South; yet no business is
more entirely legal.

How is the Code to be reformed,
if it is a crime to broach the subject?
Take any Southern man, and ask him,
if he believes that these blacks should
be so completely in the possession of
the whites that there should be secu-
rity to the marital relation; that
one man should have the power, if he
wills, to separate the families he owes
to any extent? Ask him if he believe
that immortal beings should be reared
in brutal ignorance? (And these
who do otherwise break the laws.—
How sadly suggestive is the fact that
the only other people who forbid edu-
cation to any, are the Yezoddies of
Mesopotamia, who are the only race
of Devil-worshippers!) A Southern
man will reply, No.

And yet these laws remain there,
trained by Southern men who are
men, to bear the cruellest fruits; such
as have aroused the open indignation
of the world, and the secret indigna-
tion of thousands of Southern hearts,
and shall continue it, until hun-
dreds of millions of Northern hearts,
and no divine instincts of justice and
pity flow out from God's heart.

Thus both sides, by their own pre-
misses, need internal reform. But our
reference now is to the great moral
responsibility pressing on each, and
growing out of our being one people.
I would the pressure were heavier! In
this country, where, by the very
nature of the representative system,
all action and influence of the Central
Government—involving as they do
the happiness or misery, elevation or
degradation, of men, women, and
children, everywhere—are shared by
every tax-payer and voter, the moral
responsibility resting on each man is
tremendous. What object can it be
to say, *The North has nothing to do
with Slavery*. Nothing to do with it.
When the National flag cannot wave
over a slave in this District, nor in any
United States Territory, who is not a
slave by Northern as well as Southern
consent! Never was any duty plainer
than theirs to attend to this affair—
to see what it is which they, by their rep-
resentatives, have been perpetually
sanctioning and extending. There is
need that the voice of the ancient
prophet should be in every breath
crying to each man this day, "Arise,
for this matter belongeth unto thee!"

I alluded just now to those who
assailed the Southern institution