too hotly engaged for mutual consideration, much less strict justice to the cause of the fray.

"How do I know what she was, or is, for that matter? I have only her word for it. They make a great point of never having lived out when the most of them have never been so comfortable, or so cared for, in their lives before."

"'Them'—'they'! Who are 'they,' Mrs. Dansken?"

"Anybody who is n't us," said Mrs. Dansken.

A silence fell upon the room as the shutting of a drawer was heard, and the door leading from the dining-room into the kitchen closed quietly.

The combatants looked at each other rather sheepishly.

"You are safe, my dear boys. She could only have heard the voice of her natural enemy."

The voice of the "enemy" had the quality which carries.

(To be continued.) *Mary Hallock Foote.*

A FULL-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF THE UNITED STATES.

JAMES BRYCE'S "THE AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH."[1]

THERE have been hundreds upon hundreds of books written about the United States by foreigners, but in all this number there have been but two "real books," as Carlyle would say. One of these, De Tocqueville's "Democracy in America," appeared more than half a century ago; the other is Professor James Bryce's "The American Commonwealth," the pages of which are at this writing yet wet from the press.

Experiments are always interesting, and the colonization of America by Europeans was from the first a many-sided experiment. The life of civilized men was sure to take on novel forms in new conditions. Even in the seventeenth century people in Europe read with avidity the booklets that described society in the English colonies and discussed the aspects of nature and the agricultural experiments so rife in a new soil and in an untried climate. The colonies were fruitful themes for papers before the Royal Society, and an ever-increasing number of curious travelers in the latter part of the seventeenth and in the whole of the eighteenth century braved the discomforts of a long voyage in the poor little snows, ketches, and schooners of that time and the hardships of new-country travel, to see for themselves how this New World fared. After the manner of that time many of these travelers wrote journals or letters to be passed from hand to hand for the amusement of a circle of friends at home. One may see a goodly number of such manuscripts in the British Museum and in the National Library at Paris. So many have been saved by drifting into these safe harbors that we may consider the less fortunate ones, wrecked in dust-carts and paper-mills or stranded in family garrets, to have been very numerous.

But the most of these, as well as the greater part of the printed books of travel in America, were but the superficial observations of men who could not penetrate beyond the cuticle of the strange world in which they found themselves, and who were unable to divest themselves of the prejudices in which they had been cradled. Archdeacon Burnaby was as jauntily flippant in 1759 as the Abbé Robin was twenty years later. Anburey, an officer in Burgoyne's army, left a record of some value, considering the limited opportunity for observation of a prisoner of war. "Smyth the Tory," as he is called, wrote a book containing many things of importance to antiquaries, and one may find valuable facts in Chastellux, Tyrone Power, Brissot de Warville, Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Weld, Chateaubriand, and the little-known rubbish of John Davis, a talented poor devil from England who seems to have been a paid emissary of Aaron Burr. In the thirty years following the Revolution books of travel in the United States appear to have been in the greatest request in Europe. All sorts of stuff were printed; traveling English showmen and men with woolen goods to introduce felt it incumbent on them to publish their journals.

Three of the books about America printed in the last century rise above the common level in the carefulness of their observations, and it is notable that all these were written by botanists from the European continent, and in three different languages. The botanist was preëminently the typical man of science in the eighteenth century, and the superiority of these three travelers to others of the same period is a curious evidence of the advantage which habits of scientific observation give. About the middle of the century Kalm, the Swedish

[1] London and New York: Macmillan & Co.

botanist, a friend of Linnæus, published an account of his journeys here which was rendered into English and still remains an important authority on social conditions in this country at that time. During the Revolution a surgeon to the German mercenaries who was also a botanist, and who had been made a prisoner with Cornwallis, was suffered to travel for scientific purposes. This German physician, Schoepf by name, wrote a book of real value, some extracts from which have been recently translated for the "Pennsylvania Magazine of History." Castiglioni, an Italian botanist, traveled in this country just after the Revolution and published a book of travels perhaps superior to all that had gone before. But it remains in the original Italian, and is unknown to most of our antiquaries and historians.

The books of American travel that have appeared in later times are sufficiently familiar, but they are for the most part mere books of travel. From the Duke of Saxe-Weimar to Sir Lepel Griffin, they tell us of the travelers' likes and dislikes, comforts and discomforts, with now and then an observation which would be valuable if one could be sure that it was accurate. Something may be learned from Chevalier, from Dickens, from Harriet Martineau, from Marryat, from Mrs. Trollope, from Captain Hall, from Buckingham, and the rest. But we usually have to read much more about the personal adventures of the traveler and his prejudices than about American life. Out of this mass of entertaining egotism and tedious commonplace De Tocqueville's book rises solitary in its merit as at once a philosophical study and a work of literary art.

Professor Bryce's book, like De Tocqueville's, is not the ill-digested journal of a traveler. It is a careful and profound study of American institutions by a great constitutional lawyer, as well as a full and admirable account of the practical workings of these institutions by a statesman who has played a conspicuous part in the affairs of England. By his large acquaintance with institutional history in general, by his ample experience of public affairs, by his singular freedom from prejudices of nationality, and by a certain rare intellectual and even moral tolerance towards men of every sort, Professor Bryce is fitted beyond all other foreigners perhaps for forming broad and just judgments of our government in its theory and in its results. I think I need not say foreigner. For no American could ever separate himself from the partisanship of his time, or from predilections in favor of the government of his own land, so far as to describe in a purely scientific spirit the workings of our government, as Professor Bryce has done. The matter is too close to us. An American of the better sort, for example, could not treat of a political "boss" without some prejudice, or at least some show of repulsion. The boss is the familiar enemy, and we detest him. But in Professor Bryce's work he appears as one of a species with a naturalist's pin thrust through him. He is examined, his specific traits are carefully noted; the cause and results of his existence as a boss are calculated — and when Professor Bryce has finished with him we know more of one of the unrecognized powers of our government than we could ever have learned from an observer less disinterested.

The favor which the book has met in America is certainly not because it is flattering, for while the treatment our institutions get is appreciative, no writer has ever laid bare the defects of our system of government and the abuses of its practical workings so amply and so unflinchingly. No task is usually more ungrateful than that of criticising a foreign country, no undertaking is so superfluous as that of reforming a nation not your own. Professor Bryce is exceedingly diffident on this score. He perpetually reminds himself of the danger of error in a stranger's judgment; he withholds recommendations for betterment. He contents himself with a modest but thorough diagnosis. But nothing could be a better corrective of the prevalent American optimism than these kindly but fearless observations by a disinterested expert, while nothing could be a more wholesome antidote to the pessimism of reformers in this country than Professor Bryce's hopeful tone and generous perception of the advantages that inhere even in some of the evils that he notes. Like all foreigners, he sees more danger in the quadrennial convulsion of a presidential election than Americans apprehend, but he points out also the advantage of this periodical agitation of the depths of the political conscience. He sees the evil of the acephalous conduct of business in Congress, but, while evidently preferring the English system, he is not blind to certain compensations in the method of making laws in committee-rooms.

In many cases Professor Bryce has seen farther into the problems of our government than native writers. In one or two he is misled by the authorities we have supplied him with, particularly in matters of history, for we hardly deserve the compliment he pays us in saying that Americans know their own history better than Englishmen do that of their country. This may be true respecting the diffusion of historical knowledge in America, and it may be true of the work of students upon certain periods of our history, such as the crisis of the Revolution. But the action of cause and effect and the continuity of institutions and usages have been little understood, because some of our

most patient and learned historians have been men tolerably incapable of penetration into that history which underlies history. Professor Bryce does not fall into Mr. Gladstone's error of speaking of the Federal Constitution as "struck out at a blow." Our own writers have just now learned to trace many traits of that remarkable instrument to the constitutions previously adopted by the several States, and Professor Bryce recognizes this paternity, which was first pointed out, so far as I know, by Professor Alexander Johnston. But the fact is that the several State constitutions had rarely departed more than was necessary from the colonial charters or the tolerably fixed and oft-repeated "royal instructions" under which the several colonies were governed. In speaking of the "novelty of written constitutions" Professor Bryce cites the speeches of James Wilson in the Pennsylvania Convention. But William Penn's "Frame of Government" was as truly a written constitution as that under which Pennsylvania is now governed. The charter granted to the Virginia colony by the London Company in 1618 was the first of the many colonial charters which were lineal ancestors of our State and Federal constitutions. In nearly all such documents the three departments of government with the negative of the governor (who when elected *ad interim* was sometimes called president) and the predominantly executive functions of the upper House (so strikingly analyzed in Professor Bryce's pages) were also existent. The upper House, as established by the charter of 1618, was more like the Privy Council than the House of Lords, but its name, "Council of Estate," points to the influence of certain liberal governments on the European continent. Professor Bryce supposes that it was in the brief experiment of State governments, after 1776, that the Americans had "learnt to work systems determined by the hard and fast lines of a single document having the full force of law." For more than a century and a half before 1787 the American colonies had been mostly worked within such prescribed lines. The American constitutions, notwithstanding brand-new declarations of human rights borrowed from French philosophy, were in their practical details the ripe outgrowth of colonial experience. This connection between the colonial and the United States system, which has also been indicated by Professor Johnston, throws into strong light Professor Bryce's admirable proposition that "the American Constitution is no exception to the rule that everything which has power to win the obedience and respect of men must have its roots in the past, and the more slowly every institution has grown, so much the more enduring is it likely to prove."

Like most foreign observers, Professor Bryce has a higher opinion of the relative value of the Senate than is held by most Americans. He probably underestimates the amount of corruption in elections to the Senate, and he is surely wrong in supposing that the choice of a Senate is generally foreseen by the voters in electing a legislature, or even that it can generally be fixed by wire-pullers in advance. Something is done in this way in our Eastern States, but many long and bitter struggles after the legislatures assemble, with the rise and fall of the prospects of the various candidates from day to day, go to prove that the legislatures are still as free in the election of senators as their lower Houses are in choosing a speaker. There would probably be less corruption if more demagogism, and in the long run we should possibly have more eminent men in the Senate and fewer "lumber barons," "silver kings," and creatures of railroad corporations if senators were chosen by a popular vote. The House of Representatives makes a bad impression on one familiar with the House of Commons, as the mode of procedure in the Commons in turn seems antiquated and arbitrary to an American. But the amount of ability in the lower House is certainly greater than Professor Bryce thinks. The proportion of eminence is greater in the smaller Senate, but the number of eminent leaders of public opinion in the House to-day is doubtless greater than in the Senate. Certainly in the recent debates on the tariff question the notable speeches on both sides have been made in the lower House. The accession of merely rich men to the Senate, by means not always laudable, has lowered its tone.

Professor Bryce's remark on the low esteem in which congressmen are held is founded on observation in our Eastern cities. It is a different thing in Illinois, in Tennessee, in Georgia, for example. In the South especially politics are held in much higher esteem than in the East, and the congressman is of the best in his community.

Nor is it quite correct to say that the *salon* plays no sensible part in American public life. No one who has seen venerable candidates for the presidency dragging their tired limbs from one Washington "reception" to another will accept this statement without some qualification. Some important public measures have lately been materially promoted by ladies who entertain in Washington. Professor Bryce is also in error in saying that each House committee has but two hours in which to report and pass its bills in a whole congress. Inaccuracies such as these are surprisingly few. The book is undoubtedly destined to remain in all time to come the standard authority regarding the actual condition and working of our institu-

tions at this moment, and it is therefore incumbent on a reviewer not to allow any defective statement of importance to pass without challenge.

I can only mention the striking chapter on the growth and development of the Constitution, the elaborate analysis of State and municipal governments, the account of political parties and their workings, the description of "the machine," and the account of "the war against bossdom." But perhaps the crowning part of Professor Bryce's work is his chapter on "How Public Opinion Rules in America," and the chapters connected with it. His account of American national characteristics is much the most acute and discerning that has ever been made.

What then are the traits which this accomplished observer credits us with? He sets it down at the outset that the Americans are a good-natured people, and adds, "Nowhere is cruelty more abhorred." Of our humor he says felicitously that Americans "are as conspicuously purveyors of humor to the nineteenth century as the French were purveyors of wit to the eighteenth." Professor Bryce is impressed with American hopefulness, and with the unanimity of our faith in a democratic system of government and our notion that the majority must in the long run be right. He ranks us as one of the most educated peoples in the world, but holds that the education of the masses is of necessity superficial. He says that the ordinary American voter is "like a sailor who knows the spars and ropes, but is ignorant of geography and navigation." He pronounces the Americans "a moral and well-conducted people," and also "a religious people." Under the last head he notes our philanthropic and reformatory zeal, which he thinks commendable but often indiscreet. "Religion apart," he says, "they are an unreverential people." Ridicule he finds to be a terrible power in this country. "In the indulgence of it even this humane race can be unfeeling."

He notes that we are a busy people, but he does not find this wholly to our advantage. It results in an aversion to "steady and sustained thinking." We are a commercial people, shrewd, and hard to convince, and yet — he notes the paradox — an impressionable people on the side of imagination and the emotions, and "capable of an ideality surpassing that of Englishmen or Frenchmen." Professor Bryce almost overstates the fact that we are "an unsettled people." In many of our States the bulk of the population seems to him "almost nomadic." Notwithstanding our propensity to move, we are "an associative because a sympathetic people. Although the atoms are in constant motion they have a strong attraction for one another." To this he attributes "the immense strength of party" in America. He pronounces us a changeful people, not in opinions, but in moods. "They are liable to swift and vehement outbursts of feeling." "They seem all to take flame at once." And yet he finds us a conservative people, and he reconciles this apparent contradiction with great clearness and adds: "They are like a tree whose pendulous shoots quiver and rustle with the lightest breeze, while its roots enfold the rock with a grasp which storms cannot loosen."

Though Americans winced under the animadversions of the late Matthew Arnold, they will not hesitate to read with interest, and even with conviction, the severe strictures which are found in parts of Professor Bryce's book. This no doubt comes of a certain tact and intellectual good-breeding, if I may so speak, in Professor Bryce, which allays beforehand any exasperation of national vanity. This indeed is one of the most marked traits of his work. He is never more friendly and sympathetic than when propounding the most disagreeable truth.

Without forgetting many noble essays in this kind — Madame de Staël's Germany, Castelar's Italy, Taine's treatment of Italy and England, Emerson's English Traits, and others — I cannot forbear saying that I do not believe that the portrait of any nation was ever drawn at full length with so much fidelity and felicity as in these volumes.

Edward Eggleston.

RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THE question of the transaction of business in the House of Representatives has become one of serious import to the country. For the last dozen years there has been a steady determination on the part of powerful men to reduce the business of that body to a minimum. Several men who have occupied important positions, and who have at times received the applause of the injudicious under pretense that what has been called private business is but jobbery and knavery, have done all in their power to obstruct and block that kind of business. To such a pass has this obstructive policy come that all sensible men advise their constituents to do business with the United States with the same care that should be used with any individual whose