

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE AND HIS BOOK ON AMERICA.—SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

BY DANIEL C. GILMAN,
President of Johns Hopkins University.

THE recent publication, in French and English, of the "Reminiscences of Alexis de Tocqueville" has brought his name afresh before the public; but the readers who turned to this volume looking for light upon the author's visit to the United States, or for a key to the preparation which he made for his famous study of American politics, were certainly disappointed. The "Souvenirs" relate exclusively to that brief period when this eminent writer held the portfolio of foreign affairs, just before the Second Republic went over into the Second Empire. The earlier, the American, chapter of his life can be read only in letters and notes from his own pen and from that of his friend De Beaumont. Such data are fragmentary, for the family have not consented to their complete publication; yet there is much that is accessible in French which has not been given to the English reader. Of such information this article will be made up. For the entire life of Tocqueville there is no better manual than the recent memoir by Eugène d'Eichthal (Paris, 1897), which was published after this paper was prepared. The original memoir by Beaumont and the conversations of Nassau W. Senior will never be superseded.

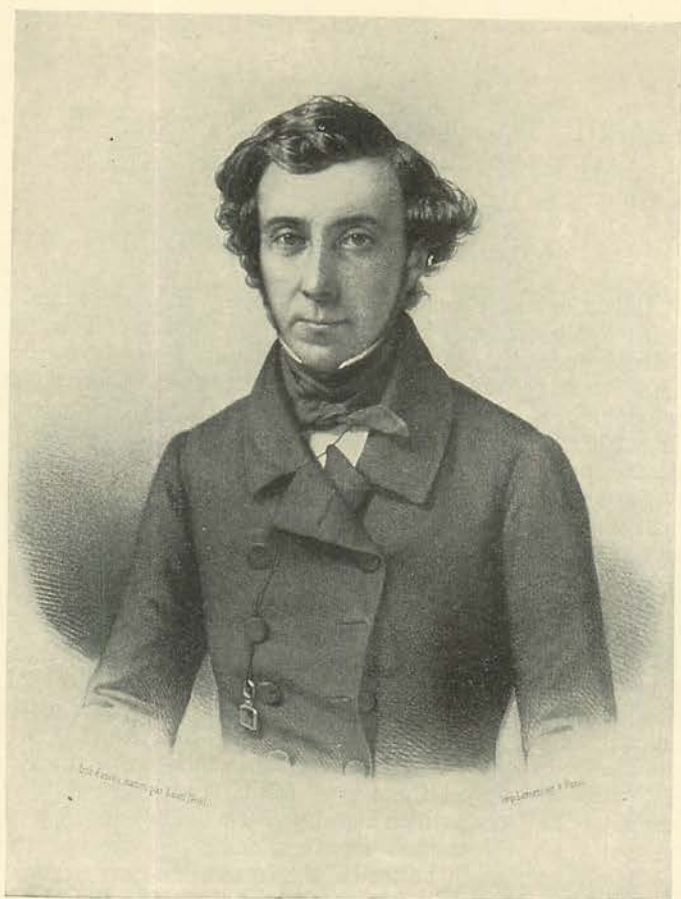
Americans of the present day are deriving instruction from a survey of the institutions of the United States by a foreign observer, clear-sighted, well trained in history and politics, fair-minded and painstaking. By repeated visits, wide travels, much study, many interviews, James Bryce has acquired an acquaintance with this country which is a marvel of accuracy, not so much in the little things which vary in different districts and at short intervals (although of these he is a good observer), as in those national characteristics, manners, usages, and customs, too deeply rooted to be easily changed, too widely distributed to be regarded as sectional or local.

Sixty years before Mr. Bryce, another European observer, equally sagacious and discerning, more strongly interested in the philosophy of politics, made his study of

Democracy in America; and for two generations this treatise of Tocqueville has held its own as a discriminating criticism of republican institutions. During this long period it has been frequently quoted in Europe and the United States by the highest political authorities; it has been read as a text-book in schools and universities; and it is quite sure to be found on the book-shelves of editors, lawyers, and statesmen. Though it contains no sailing directions, it has been a sort of chart by which the pilot of the ship of state might be informed of rocks and shoals, lighthouses and harbors of refuge. It remains the best philosophical discussion of Democracy, illustrated by the experience of the United States up to the time when it was written, which can be found in any language.

Let us see what can be discovered respecting Tocqueville's journey, prolific in reflections and suggestions which sometimes took the form of encouragement, and sometimes that of warning. Let us look also at the antecedents of the traveler—antecedents which insured not only his distinction, but also his acceptance in every circle where he moved.

One May day in 1831, two young Frenchmen of the old noblesse, who had been tossing about the south shore of Long Island for several days in the packet-boat *Havre*, were landed in Newport. Thence they were carried by the Providence steamboat to New York, where they found lodgings in a boarding-house on Broadway. The Astor House had not yet been opened. The strangers were not much pleased with the looks of the city. One of them writes that there is "no dome, nor bell tower, nor large building. The houses are of bricks and are quite monotonous, no cornices, nor balustrades, nor *porte-cochères*. The streets are unpaved; but there *are* sidewalks." Then the language was a great plague to them. "We thought we knew English in Paris," says the same correspondent, "as boys think they know everything when they leave college; but we have quickly discovered our error. Nobody here speaks French, so we are forced to use English. It is a pity to hear us, but we make



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ourselves understood, and we understand everything." They found the usages of society rather queer. People breakfasted together at eight o'clock, dined at three, and at seven drank tea, with which they ate a little *jambon*. Afterward they took supper, and sometimes they had luncheon. Ladies came to the breakfast-table dressed for the day. It was proper to make a social call as early as nine o'clock in the morning.

These visitors were Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont, young men of talent and education, and of agreeable manners. They bore a commission from the French government to study the prison systems of the United States, and this announcement was duly made in the news-

papers. Everybody was ready to receive and help them. Every door was thrown open. The mayor and aldermen—some five-and-twenty in number—took them ceremoniously to visit the prisons and charitable institutions of the city, after which there was a dinner which the travelers called "immense." Sometimes they laughed, they say, *dans la barbe*, to think what insignificant men they were at home and what great men they were abroad; but they carried themselves with dignity and courtesy, and established good relations with the best citizens. After a few days they visited Sing Sing, in order to become acquainted with the penitentiary, and afterward Auburn, Wethersfield, and Philadelphia, where there were noteworthy

prisons. In due time their report upon this subject was made up and printed and given to the world. It attracted attention in France, and was translated into English by Dr. Francis Lieber, and into German by Dr. Julius of Hamburg. Nevertheless, this work sinks into temporary and subordinate importance when compared with that other memoir which was the fruit of this journey. "You may think," writes Alexis to his father, "that the penitentiary system is the only thing which occupies us. Not at all. There are a thousand things. We have really had but one idea—to understand the country where we are traveling. Knowing what we wish to ask, the slightest interviews are instructive, and we can truly say that there is no one of any rank who cannot teach us something." In the course of the first month, continues Tocqueville, "I am at present full of two ideas: first, that this people is one of the happiest in the world; second, that its immense prosperity is due not so much to peculiar virtues or to its form of government, as to the peculiar conditions in which it is placed." "They have here the most colorless enjoyment that can be imagined,"¹ is one of his phrases, quoted by Longfellow, long afterward, with apparent amusement. The letters of Tocqueville are appreciative, philosophical, critical, not by any means rose-colored.

After having a very good time in the social circles of New York and its neighborhood for a period of five or six weeks, the two friends went to the west by the way of Albany and the Mohawk valley. Utica, Syracuse, Auburn, and Canandaigua were the principal places that they visited before arriving at Buffalo. They made a detour to Seneca Lake, in order to verify a romantic story in respect to an exiled Frenchman. From Buffalo they were carried by steamer to Detroit. An excursion into the wilderness—"the desert," as they called it—beyond Detroit and Pontiac, gave the travelers a glimpse of the frontier—the settlements of the pioneers and the wigwams of the Indians. Then they made a tour of the lakes by steamboat, going as far as Green Bay, and returning to Detroit and Buffalo. Of course they visited Niagara Falls. The survivals of French institutions were examined in Montreal and Quebec. Then the young Frenchmen went to Boston by way of Lake Champlain and Albany. The Boston and Worcester Railroad was not

¹ "On jouit ici du plus pâle bonheur qu'on puisse imaginer."—*Corr. Inédite*, p. 70.

finished until 1835. Hartford, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore successively welcomed the travelers. After crossing the Alleghanies, at the beginning of a severe winter, they proceeded by way of Wheeling to Cincinnati. The river was full of ice. The steamer came into great perils. A landing was made at Westport, Kentucky; and the travelers, finding no equipage, walked to Louisville, whence they took stage for Nashville. They had a miserable time in going hence to Memphis, Tocqueville being taken seriously ill at Sandy Bridge. He recovered in a few days sufficiently to continue his journey; but in later life it was suspected that the disease which finally took him off began at this period its insidious approaches. It took a week to go from Memphis to New Orleans by steamboat. After a few days in Louisiana, the young men returned to the Atlantic seaboard by way of Montgomery, Norfolk, and Washington.

Tocqueville's journey to the southern parts of the country was full of hardships, ice in the Ohio River leading to shipwreck, exposures as he crossed the State of Tennessee inducing fever, food that he did not like,—*toujours du maïs et du cochon* (corn and bacon),—beds that were hard, severe changes in climate; all these are specified, yet in despite of discomforts he grew strong on the journey. For five or six years, he says, he had not been so well as during this route of hardships. The great thing, he adds jocosely, is not to think—to be like an oyster. Seriously, in another letter, he makes it clear that this period of enforced lonesomeness, from New Orleans to Norfolk, was a period of intellectual repose, such as many a traveler requires to digest and arrange his previous observations. Thus Stanley paused at Cairo, in the spring of 1890, to prepare his book before returning to the distractions of England. "During the last six weeks," Tocqueville writes to his father from Washington, January 24, 1832, "when my body has been more weary and my mind more tranquil than it has been for a long while, I have carefully considered what I could write on America. It would be absolutely impracticable for one who has passed but a year in this great country to draw a complete picture of the Union. Besides, such a work would be as wearisome as it would be informative. On the other hand, it is possible, by selecting the material, to present those subjects which are more or less closely related to the social and political condition

of France. Such a work might have, at the same time, permanent and immediate interest. There is the scheme. *Voilà le cadre!* But have I the time and the talent for its execution? That is the question. One other consideration is always before me. I shall write nothing, or I shall write what I think; and all that is true it is not well to tell."

This is clearly the quickening moment in his projected memoir. He is to select from his observations those which may be of use in France, and to present these selections in a form which will be readable and permanent.

Washington was a favorable place for the verification of his facts and the clarification of his ideas. Congress was in session, and many prominent men were at the capital. He tells us that it was no longer necessary to ask ideas on subjects with which he was unacquainted; but it was most serviceable to go over, in conversation with men from every part of the country, that which he had lately learned. Doubtful points were thus settled. It was a sort of cross-questioning—"very serviceable," says Tocqueville. "We are constantly treated," he adds, "with great respect. Yesterday the French minister presented us to the President, General Jackson, whom we called 'Mr.' quite at our ease. He extended his hand as to equals. He does exactly so to everybody." Jefferson was dead, or we may be sure that the two philosophers would have put their heads together. Monroe was in his last days when Tocqueville arrived in New York. Madison lived till 1836, and one cannot help wondering whether the traveler had the opportunity of consulting this great exponent of the Constitution. Webster, Calhoun, and Clay were in their vigor, but their names do not appear in the printed notes and letters. An acquaintance with John Quincy Adams—the only President who has entered Congress after leaving the chief magistrate's chair—had been already formed in Boston at the dinner-table of Mr. Edward Everett, and was doubtless renewed at the national capital.

Among the men whom Tocqueville met on his long journey, these are to be noted: Dr. William Ellery Channing, the great preacher, Jared Sparks, the historian, and Francis C. Gray, of Boston; in New York, Albert Gallatin and Nathanael Prime, a prominent banker. Nicholas Biddle and J. R. Poinsett were consulted in Philadelphia. In Baltimore, he speaks of John H. B. Latrobe, Dr. Richard Steuart, and Charles Carroll, last survivor of the signers of the Dec-

laration of Independence, then more than ninety years old. In New Orleans, he mentions M. Mazureau, a lawyer, and M. Guillemin, the French consul, who supplemented the information that he had received in Philadelphia from Mr. James Brown, a Louisiana planter, who had been minister to France for some years prior to 1829. Judge Henry Johnson and the great Edward Livingston are also mentioned.

But it is probable, if not certain, that he was most indebted to John C. Spencer, a publicist of New York, whom he visited at his home in Canandaigua. This gentleman had been prominent in State politics, as he was afterward in national. The first American edition of the "Democracy" was edited by Spencer. Next to him, and possibly in advance of him, should be named Jared Sparks of Cambridge, from whom voluminous and suggestive information was derived in respect to New England townships.

Most of these personalities are derived from Tocqueville's letters, printed by his widow; but they are rigidly excluded from "Democracy in America." The remarkable reserve of the author is obvious to every reader. John Stuart Mill dwells upon the abstraction of the treatise as one of its best characteristics; and Bryce gives this peculiarity as one of the reasons which led him, writing on the American Commonwealth, to fill his volumes with examples and illustrations rather than philosophy. Tocqueville shows the qualities of a scientific reasoner. As the naturalist who has collected many flowers or birds or insects classifies and generalizes his knowledge, so the political philosopher notices many social phenomena, and then seeks their lessons; but he does not take the trouble, or does not think it desirable, to indicate the concrete illustrations on which his conclusions have been based.

The preparation of their report on prisons engaged the attention of the travelers as soon as they had returned to Paris. It was an important document because it made known in Europe the essential modifications of prison discipline which had been introduced in America; but to inquire into its distinctive merits would involve discussions not pertinent to this paper. As soon as the prisons were off his mind, Tocqueville began his principal task. An American gentleman, now a resident of Washington, General Francis J. Lippitt, who rendered some important services to Tocqueville in the preparation of his book, remembers distinctly the appearance of the author and his methods

of work. In reply to the inquiries of a friend, he has written out his reminiscences. It should be premised that Mr. Lippitt was a good French scholar, and that he had been an attaché of the American Legation in Paris before he made the acquaintance of Tocqueville. This is his letter, which is given in its entirety because it is such an interesting link between the present renown of the author and the beginning of his fame:

TIVERTON, R. I., July 24, 1897.

I now comply with your request for particulars relating to the assistance I had the honor to render to M. de Tocqueville prior to the publication of his work on "Democracy in America."

I can tell you very little about M. de Tocqueville himself; our intercourse being confined to our joint labors—if I may call them so—in his study. I shall first state certain particulars which are not wholly *mal-à-propos*. (1) My knowledge of French began in my early childhood; and when I first met M. de Tocqueville I spoke it fluently, and wrote it with tolerable correctness. (2) In my senior year in college, we had Rawle on the Constitution, for six months. (3) Before the arrival of Mr. Livingston, our new minister, with his secretaries and attachés, I had been attaché for several months to our Legation in Paris.

Some time in 1834 I was called on by a stranger who informed me that he was desirous to have the assistance of an American gentleman of "education," and that I had been recommended to him by the American Legation. I accepted at once the terms he offered me, and I was to commence at once in his study at his father's hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain. His physique was not at all striking. He was slightly built, and his height did not exceed five feet six inches. His age was apparently somewhere between twenty-five and thirty. There was certainly nothing about the contour of his head or the expression of his face that indicated him to be a man of more than ordinary intelligence. His manner was quiet and dignified, but somewhat cold. I afterwards learned that he had lately returned from the United States, whither he had been sent by the French Government in conjunction with Gustave de Beaumont, on a mission to examine and report on our penitentiary systems; and that he was a son of the Comte de Tocqueville, of the old noblesse. My connection with him lasted some three or four months. His treatment of me was always very kind and appreciative. My daily attendance in his study was from 9 A. M. to about 5 P. M.

A few words will describe the nature of my duties. Many shelves in his study were filled with books and pamphlets he had brought with him from America. What he desired of me was to write out summary statements of our political organizations, both State and Federal; and those books were chiefly statutes of the different States and of the United States.

The statutes of some of the new western States were still unbound. And when even these were

wanting there were newspaper slips containing sheriffs' and other official notices, so that the materials furnished me were amply sufficient to enable me to write out for him all the particulars he desired. He usually came in about 3 P. M. to read over the *mémoire* I had been preparing for him, and to get my oral explanation on certain points that interested him. Our interviews throughout were simply of questions on his part and answers on mine. You will easily believe that his questions indicated a most penetrating intellect.

He was the most reticent man I ever met. Only twice, so far as I can remember, did he ever volunteer a remark: once when he corrected a certain idiomatic blunder in my *mémoire*, and clearly explained the rule to me; and at another time, when we had been talking about town meetings, he exclaimed with a kindling eye (usually quite expressionless), "*Mais, c'est la commune!*"

I think it was then that I received the impression that he deemed such meetings to have been the root of our Anglo-Saxon liberties and capacity for self-government. But it is possible that this impression did not come to me until after reading his book. From the *ensemble* of our conversations I certainly did carry away with me an impression that his political views and sympathies were not favorable to democracy. I knew nothing of his intention to write a book until after my return to America in 1835, when "*La Démocratie aux États-Unis*" had already appeared. I lost no time in obtaining a copy of it; and on reading it I realized that its author was the great political philosopher of the century. Whether or not he was acquainted with our language I am unable to say. I never heard him speak except in French. I never had occasion to receive a letter from him, and have nothing of his handwriting but an unimportant note or two now on storage in Washington, which I will send you on my return there in October, unless it should be then too late.

I have never before written out any of these particulars; and there are very few persons aware of the fact that I once assisted M. de Tocqueville in preparing materials for his celebrated work.

Sincerely yours, FRANCIS J. LIPPITT.

Beneath the influences to which reference has been made, potent as they were,—the early environment of a cultivated family, the paternal counsels of his dear abbé, the style of Pascal and the philosophy of Montesquieu,—Tocqueville himself is always to be discerned. Neither heredity nor education can explain the appearance of such a man. He cannot be accounted for. "Born so" is all that can be said. Without unusual training, without the advantages of university education, without the preparation which a great library might afford, without the stimulus of poverty, the spur of ambition, or the obligations of office, and even without instructions as to the methods of inquiry

which he should initiate and follow, Tocqueville, at an age when most young men are about to begin, under the protection of their seniors, a professional life, conceived and matured by himself a plan for studying upon a vast area, in a foreign land the language of which was unfamiliar to him, the processes and results of democratic government, that he might bring home to his native land the lessons of political prosperity. The success which attended this youthful endeavor, the instantaneous renown which came to the author, the permanent appreciation bestowed upon his memoir, are the proofs that he was a man of rare gifts, whose qualities were peculiarly adapted to the tasks that his sagacity projected.

After Tocqueville's death, Lacordaire delivered a eulogy which contains this remarkable passage:

Such was the legacy of M. de Tocqueville [*"La Révolution et l'ancien Régime"*], the supreme expression of his thought. After that he did nought but die. Too serious a workman not to be consumed in the light of which he had been the organ, he advanced, step by step, without being aware, toward a death which was to be the third recompense of his life. Glory had been the first; he had found the second in a domestic happiness of twenty-five years; his premature death was to bring him the last, and put the seal of God's justice upon him. He had always been as sincere with God as with man. A just sense, an understanding, first, by rectitude and then by reflection and experience, had revealed to him without difficulty a God, active, living, personal, who regulated all things: and from this height, so simple yet so sublime, he had descended without effort to the God who breathes in the Gospel and through love has become the Savior of the world. But his faith was rather of the head than of the heart. He saw the truth of Christianity, he served it without shame, he recognized its efficacy even for the temporal safety of man; but he had not reached the point where religion leaves us nothing which is not formed and kindled by it. It was death which gave to him the gift of love. He received God as an old friend who came to visit him, and was touched by his presence even to the shedding of tears; free at last from this world, he forgot that which he had been, his name, his services, his regrets, his desires; and even before he had bid us farewell, there remained no longer in that soul aught save those virtues he had acquired in this world while passing through it.

John Stuart Mill, the peer of Tocqueville in political acumen, was among the first of those who perceived the significance of the "Democracy in America." His well-known criticism, which appeared in 1840, is full of praise. "He has applied to the greatest

question in the art and science of government those principles and methods to which mankind are indebted for all the advances made by modern times in the other branches of the study of nature." Mill does not confine himself to an indication of Tocqueville's views. He looks upon the condition and institutions of England with a search-light placed in his hand by the French inventor. One of his most noteworthy remarks is this: "The passion for equality, of which M. de Tocqueville speaks almost as if it were the great moral lever of modern times, is hardly known in this country even by name. On the contrary, all ranks seem to have a passion for inequality." But Mill's essay, as a whole, is an independent study of Democracy as developed in the United States. One error into which Tocqueville falls more than once consists in attributing to Democracy certain moral and social influences, which are shown by Mill to be in full operation in aristocratic England. "The defects which Tocqueville points out in the American, and which we see in the modern English mind, are the ordinary ones of a commercial class." It is needless to enlarge upon Mill's essay further than to say that it is not less valuable and suggestive now than when it was written. It should be read by every student of Tocqueville.

Sir Henry Sumner Maine attributes to Tocqueville's work the wide-spread view that Democracy is irresistible. He would by no means accept as correct the favorable impressions received by the French authority from his transatlantic studies. Whatever its advantages, "of all the forms of government, Democracy is by far the most difficult."

There are two recent works with which "Democracy in America" may be compared, and by which its conclusions may often be tested. One of these has already been mentioned—the "American Commonwealth," by James Bryce; the other is an elaborate discussion, "Democracy and Liberty," by the historian Lecky. Bryce gathers facts, arranges them under appropriate heads, takes care to verify, by repeated visits to this country, and by searching interviews with its public men, the impressions derived in the most diverse societies of the country. Lecky's purpose is different. His scope is wider. He deals with the progress of civilization. While he studies society in every clime, Great Britain and her dependencies are constantly in his mind, and America affords him innumerable illustrations of the conditions favorable and unfavorable to

human progress. He relies quite naturally upon Bryce much more than upon Tocqueville.

Bryce distinctly indicates the difference between his own undertaking and that of his French predecessor. "I have striven," he says, "to avoid the temptations of the didactic method, and to present simply the facts of the case, arranging and connecting them as best I can, but letting them speak for themselves, rather than pressing upon the reader my own conclusions."

The perusal of the "Democracy in America" should not be undertaken in these days without an abiding recognition of the changes that have occurred in the United States since the book was written—a period, it will be remembered, of more than sixty-five years. Some of the most noteworthy changes will therefore be brought to mind.

The vast territory beyond the Mississippi is no longer an unknown wilderness, but is covered by organized States and Territories. Alaska has been purchased. The inhabitants of the country have increased from thirteen millions in 1830 to nearly sixty-three millions in 1890. More than one fourth of the people now live in cities. The center of population has moved westward on the line of the thirty-ninth parallel, like a star, till it approaches the meridian of Indianapolis. Ohio takes rank with Virginia as the mother of Presidents—Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Harrison, McKinley, being Ohioans, as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Tyler, were Virginians. The Atlantic is much nearer to the Pacific than it was to the Mississippi sixty-five years ago; continental railroads were not then thought of. Great cities have arisen, with their numberless intricacies of administration and government.

The problems arising from diversity of race have wholly changed. The Indians have dwindled till they scarcely number a quarter of a million, and slavery has gone. As to the red men, the question is now one of education and civilization. As to the blacks, the question is their adaptation to the political freedom conferred upon them. Large numbers of Jews have taken up their residence here—not a few of them involuntary exiles. The number of undesirable immigrants has increased to such an extent that restrictions have been thought necessary, especially upon the incoming of the Chinese and of European paupers. Relations with oriental Asia have become most important. The Hawaiian Islands have been annexed as an outpost in the Pacific. We are at war with Spain, and the

country rings with discussions as to our permanent occupancy of the Spanish possessions in the West Indies and the Philippines.

It is easy to imagine the eagerness with which Tocqueville, if he could revisit this country, would turn to these race questions. For example, in two recent magazines he might find a negro and an Indian considering the future of their races.¹ The Indian is the last chief of the Pottowatomie Pokagon band, whose father, in 1833, about the time of Tocqueville's visit, conveyed Chicago, embracing the Fair grounds and surrounding country, to the United States, for about three cents per acre. As to the future of the red man, he says, it seems almost certain that in time he will lose identity by amalgamation with the dominant race. Here is this quaint forecast of Simon Pokagon:

I do not wish it to be understood that I advocate or desire the amalgamation of our people with the white race. But I speak of it as an event that is almost certain; and we had much better rock with the boat that oars us on than fight against the inevitable. I am frequently asked: "Pokagon, do you believe that the white man and the red man were originally of one blood?" My reply has been: "I do not know; but from the present outlook, they surely will be."

The index-finger of the past and present is pointing to the future, showing most conclusively that by the middle of the next century all Indian reservations and tribal relations will have passed away. Then our people will begin to scatter; and the result will be a general mixing up of the races. Through intermarriage the blood of our people, like the waters that flow into the great ocean, will be forever lost in the dominant race; and generations yet unborn will read in history of the red men of the forest, and inquire, "Where are they?" In other words, extinction is the doom of the Indian race—extinction by amalgamation.

The outlook of the negro is very different. Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, a graduate of Harvard University, and a very good writer, has simultaneously published an article on the strivings of his race. "How does it feel to be a problem?" is the supposed inquiry which he proceeds to answer. His outlook is just the reverse of Pokagon's:

The negro [he says] does not wish to bleach his negro blood in a flood of white Americanism; for he believes, foolishly, perhaps, but fervently, that negro blood has yet a message for the world. The freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land. The shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon him. The suffrage was not a

¹ In "The Atlantic Monthly" and "The Forum" for August, 1897, respectively.

panacea, nor was book-learning. There is a sickening despair among the best of the Afro-Americans which would discourage any nation save that black host to whom discouragement is an unwritten word. But now the dawn of hope appears—the ideal of fostering the traits and talents of the negro, so that two world-races, the white and the black, may give each to each those characteristics which both so sadly lack.

Next to the changes in the question of races, it is important to notice that the equality in material possessions which prevailed sixty years ago has disappeared on the one hand in immense fortunes; on the other extreme, in the slums. Gigantic corporations influence and often control legislation in Congress and in the legislatures of the States. "Trusts" are among the latest developments of financial power.

The rise of universities, scientific schools, public libraries, and museums of natural science and the fine arts, is one of the most hopeful characteristics of the period under review.

Its worst development is that of political machinery—the evolution of bosses who control by the most subtle agencies the political action of the people.

Intelligent philanthropy, careful inquiry into the conditions of the unfortunate, deficient, and vicious, has been supplemented by generous contributions for their improvement or reformation, by private individuals as well as by States and cities, and in these reformatory movements women have borne the noblest part.

It is now time to turn from the origin and reception of the "Democracy in America" to a consideration of its contents, most of which will be found to have permanent value; a part, only temporary significance. The reader must again be reminded that the first volume appeared several years earlier than the second. Each of these divisions has a distinct purpose, which will be apparent as this analysis proceeds.

The first sentence of Tocqueville's introduction gives the key-note to the volume. That note is Equality. Nothing in the United States struck the author more forcibly than "the general equality of condition among the people." He perceived that "this equality of condition is the fundamental fact from which all others seem to be derived, and the central point at which all his observations constantly terminated." He then turned to Europe and "observed that equality of condition, though it has not there reached the extreme limit which it

seems to have attained in the United States, is constantly approaching it; and that the democracy which governs the American communities appears to be rapidly rising into power in Europe." He regarded the gradual development of the principle of Equality as "a providential fact," universal, durable, and elusive of human interference. All events and all men contribute to its progress. It appeared to him that sooner or later the French would arrive, like the Americans, at an almost complete equality of condition, though their form of government might remain different. He confessed that in America he saw more than America. He sought there the image of Democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what the French have to fear or to hope from its progress.

In view of these utterances, and of many more of like tenor, it is fair to say that Tocqueville's book is a study of Political Equality, based upon phenomena visible in the United States after half a century of constitutional government. It is philosophy, not descriptions nor statistics, which gives permanence to the treatise, and makes it attractive to each succeeding generation.

In consequence of the circumstances in which American society was organized, and especially because of the fundamental changes introduced in the laws of inheritance, there is "a greater equality in point of fortune and intellect; or, in other words, men are more equal in their strength than in any other country of the world, or in any age of which history has preserved the remembrance." This is our traveler's opinion.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, which lies at the basis of American politics, in Tocqueville's opinion, came out of the townships, especially of New England, and took possession of the state. The value of local self-government or of provincial institutions was, therefore, distinctly brought out by the writer. It was not the administrative but the political effects of this decentralization that he most admired. By constant participation in the duties of the citizen, Americans became aware of their rights and their responsibilities. Although they may be slow in their acceptance of improvements, and may often make great blunders, yet in his opinion they are firm in opposing every approach toward monarchical or despotic authority, and fully appreciate the value of decentralized administration.

It is here important for us to remember

that since Tocqueville's time, throughout the vast territory of the United States, more and more responsibility has been thrown upon the Federal government. The war intensified this tendency. For the protection of the country from internal or external enemies, and also for the promotion of inter-commerce between the States, it has been discovered that the national authority must be invoked. This reliance, however, is controlled and regulated by the deep-seated consciousness of the people that the rights of the separate States are not to be superseded by the acts of the central government, and that the rights of towns, counties, and districts are to be protected against the arbitrary interference of legislatures. The tendency to yield to the State the control of many departments of city government is also apparent. It proceeds simultaneously with the union of large cities with their vicinities into great and greater municipalities. It is associated with the difficulties involved in providing for the complex requirements of modern cities, which call for the experience and judgment of trained experts, rather than the common sense of elected officers, chosen without experience from the ranks of the people.

After a study of the Federal constitution, and especially of the judiciary, Tocqueville proceeded to inquire how true might be the assertion that the people govern in the United States. This introduces the subject of parties and their two chief weapons—newspapers and public associations. Even then the number of periodical publications in this country was "incredibly large," and the influence of the press "immense." The American freedom of association also attracted his attention; and he spoke of this freedom as a protection against every form of tyranny.

Perhaps the most interesting chapters of Tocqueville's first volume are those in which he discusses universal suffrage and the election laws. Here, as elsewhere, his opinions are well balanced. To his surprise, he found in the United States much talent among the citizens, but little in the government. He wrote of the statesmen of 1831-32 as men in recent years have talked of their chosen representatives. Asserting that the race of American statesmen had evidently dwindled most remarkably in the course of the fifty years previous to 1830, Tocqueville argued that universal suffrage is by no means a guaranty of the wisdom of the popular choice—a question that nobody discusses in

1898. He found the Senate far superior to the House, and attributed its superiority to the fact that the Senate is elected by elected people, the House by the people directly. The absence of official costumes and badges attracted his attention; and the absence of unpaid offices he regarded as one of the most prominent signs of the absolute dominion which democracy exercises. The substitution of paid for unpaid functionaries was, in his opinion, "sufficient to constitute a real revolution." Nevertheless, he thinks that a democratic state tends to be parsimonious toward its principal agents. In America, he says, the secondary officers are much better paid and the higher functionaries much worse than elsewhere. On the whole, he concluded that the democratic government of the Americans "is not a cheap government." If this was so sixty years ago, we may well inquire, What is it now?

Then comes a judicial consideration, extending over thirty pages, of the limitations and advantages of a democracy. He cannot foretell what degree of effort a democratic government might make in an international crisis. He doubts its power of sustained effort. He does not foresee the marvelous determination which was to be put forth, a generation later, for the preservation of the Union, the stores of wealth, the precious lives, the years of anxiety which would be consecrated on the altar of patriotism. He does not suspect the strength of the tie which binds the United States together, nor foresee the sacrifices which would be made when the national existence was threatened with disruption. Nor has he the least prevision of the strength with which all parts of the country would unite in the face of a foreign foe.

In trivial things, he says, a democracy finds it difficult to conquer the passions and desires of the moment. For example, fraudulent bankruptcies, lynch law, and unrestrained drunkenness are cited; but the defects inherent in democratic institutions are most apparent in the conduct of foreign affairs. Foreign politics require the perfect use of almost all those qualities in which a democracy is deficient.

On the whole, the defects and weaknesses of democratic government are obvious; its advantages require long observation. A majority of the citizens may be subject to error, but they cannot have an interest opposed to their own welfare. Bad laws may be passed, but they are not in the interest of classes. Bad officers may be chosen, but

their interests are identified with those of a majority of their fellow-citizens. "The general and constant influence of the government is beneficial, although the individuals who conduct it are frequently unskilful, and sometimes contemptible."

The enthusiasm of Americans for their country strikes Tocqueville as remarkable. How happens it, he asks, that immigrants, arrived but yesterday, take such an interest in its politics? And he replies, "Because every one in his sphere takes an active part in the government of society." This patriotism is often irritating and embarrassing. The words with which Tocqueville expounds the respect for rights which is shown by Americans, and the affection they entertain for law, are chosen with sagacity. The political activity of Americans is even more remarkable than their liberty and equality.

Probably the portion of Tocqueville's work which is most frequently read is that section of one hundred pages which constitutes the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters. Here he introduces that significant phrase, "the tyranny of the majority," which has so often been employed in political discussions. The excessive liberty which reigns in the United States does not alarm the observer so much as the inadequate securities against tyranny.

What sort of tyranny does our author apprehend? He first mentions the arbitrary authority of public officers who dare do things at which even a European, accustomed to arbitrary power, is astonished. Then he complains that there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion. "Freedom of opinion does not exist in America" is one of his dicta. He attributes to the ever-increasing despotism of the majority the small number of distinguished men in political life. "It seems at first sight as if all the minds of the Americans were formed upon one model, so accurately do they follow the same route." "I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America."

In the perusal of such passages as these, it must be remembered that at the period of Tocqueville's visit this country was in a state of political quiet. The great antislavery contest had not begun. If Tocqueville's visit had been twenty or thirty years later, he would not have lamented "the absence of manly candor and masculine independence." Nor would he think so now. But he might apprehend in these days, as he did in those, that

the day may come when the omnipotence of the majority may urge the minority to desperation, and oblige them to have recourse to physical force. The writings of Madison and Jefferson, the latter "the most powerful advocate democracy has ever had," supported his apprehensions.

Nevertheless, he indicates important counterpoises. One of these is our decentralization. The governments of towns, counties, and States are "concealed breakwaters" which check or part the tide of popular determinations. The profession of the law is another security against the excesses of democracy. Without an "admixture of lawyer-like sobriety with the democratic principle," he questions whether democratic institutions could long be maintained. Trial by jury contributes, as he believes, to the practical intelligence and good sense of the Americans. "The jury, which is the most energetic means of making the people rule, is also the most efficacious means of teaching it to rule well."

The author next discusses three causes which tend to maintain the democratic republic in the United States, the first of which is the peculiar situation of the country, remote from powerful neighbors and without a metropolis, and with an empty country to be brought under political control. Historical antecedents are still potent. He fully appreciates the English origin of the early settlers, who bequeathed to their descendants the customs, manners, and opinions most essential to the success of a republic. "Methinks I see the destiny of America embodied in the first Puritan who landed on these shores, just as the whole human race was represented by the first man." The second cause which contributes to the stability of the American republic is found in the laws, especially in the federal form of government, the township institutions, and the constitution of the judicial power. Upon a third cause the author dwells longest. For this he uses the word *mœurs*, equivalent to "manners," although both in French and in English it is necessary to expound the significance of the term. By *mœurs*, or manners, the author means "the various notions and opinions current among men," or, as he says elsewhere, "the moral and intellectual characteristics of men in society." Among these religion must be seriously discussed: for although it takes no direct part in the government, it must be regarded as the first of political institutions; it marches hand in hand with freedom. In

America the clergy but rarely occupy any political station. In his opinion, Catholics as well as Protestants rejoice in the separation of church and state. Education is likewise potent because of its universality. Moreover, in the Eastern States at least, democracy has penetrated into customs, opinions, and forms of social intercourse. On the whole, he concludes that in regulating and directing American society physical circumstances are less efficient than the laws, and the laws much less efficient than the "manners" and customs of the people,—religion, education, and a democratic instinct.

The remainder of this part of the "Democracy" is devoted to a study of the Indian and negro races, and to the probability that the Union will be preserved. All this part of the work has now little more than historical interest; for, as every one knows, the Indians are nearly gone, slavery is quite gone, and the possible dissolution of the Union has been settled by the arbitrament of war. The doctrine of nullification is almost forgotten. The government of the United States has entered upon new problems unforeseen by Tocqueville. It has anxieties and alarms not thought of sixty years ago. It has dangers, tendencies, difficulties that call for wisdom, patience, education, patriotism. But, in spite of them all, it appears as certain at the end of the nineteenth century as it did fifty years after the Constitution was adopted, that the time will come, as Tocqueville remarked at the conclusion of his first volume,

... when one hundred and fifty millions of men will be living in North America, equal in condition, all belonging to one family, owing their origin to the same cause, and preserving the same civilization, the same language, the same religion, the same habits, the same manners, and imbued with the same opinions, propagated under the same forms. The rest is uncertain; but this is certain, and it is a fact new to the world—a fact which the imagination strives in vain to grasp.

The key-note to the second part of the "Democracy in America" is given in the author's advertisement. Many feelings and opinions which were unknown in aristocratic societies of the Old World have been created in the New. To a considerable extent these are due to "the principle of Equality." He proceeds to discuss the influence of this principle upon intellectual life, feelings, "manners," and the development of political society.

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To many readers this part of the treatise is the most interesting and suggestive, possibly because of the quality which Mr. Bryce has termed "edificatory." The author continually appears as one who would like to influence the healthy development of democratic government. He is not merely a pathologist pointing out the nature of political diseases: he is a physician whose diagnosis suggests treatment. In the opinion of Tocqueville, the Americans have but little interest in political philosophy. They have more receptivity for general ideas than the English, but they have less than the French. In the maintenance of their religion the Americans care comparatively little for forms. This is as true of the Roman Catholics as of all other Christians. The clergy keep aloof from political entanglements. Roman Catholicism on the one hand and Pantheism on the other make advances.

The next theme that is discussed may bring a smile to the face of the Americans of to-day. "The example of the Americans does not prove that a democratic people can have no aptitude and no taste for science, literature, or art." Yet "it is to practical rather than to theoretical science that the Americans naturally turn." In the arts they seek not so much for the highest excellence as for wide acceptability. "They raise some insignificant monuments and others that are very grand." Properly speaking, says Tocqueville, the United States "have at present no literature." "The only authors whom I acknowledge as American are journalists." He urges all who aspire to literary excellence in democratic nations "to refresh themselves frequently at the springs of ancient literature." He believes that the English language has been modified by the Americans, and that they have yielded to the democratic tendency to make use of abstract words. He adduces his own use of the word Equality as an illustration. A writer of the age of Louis XIV would never have thought of using the word Equality without applying it to some particular thing. Tocqueville even ventures to speculate upon the themes that democratic poets will select. Legends and traditions, supernatural beings, and personifications—all these will fail him, "but man remains, and the poet needs no more." Inflation is the snare to which poets and orators are alike exposed. The tendency of the drama is not elevating. Even historical writings will be modified by democratic environment.

When the author proceeds to a study of the influence of democracy on the feelings of Americans, he affirms that the first and

most intense passion which is produced by equality of conditions is the love of that equality. Individualism often appears on an exaggerated scale, but its evils are opposed by free institutions which tend to secure the attention of rich and poor alike to public affairs. Associations of every kind are formed. "Wherever at the head of some new undertaking you see the government in France, or a man of rank in England, in the United States you will be sure to find an association." Newspapers are the natural outgrowth of associations, and the power of the press must increase as the social conditions of men become more equal. America is the "one country on the face of the earth where the citizens enjoy unlimited freedom of association for political purposes." The principle of interest, rightly understood, is applied to the restraint of individualism and also to the promotion of religion. Several chapters are devoted to the love of enjoyment. The traveler is apparently surprised by what seems most natural, the wide-spread desire for physical comfort, which often (as it appears to him) amounts to a passion. Although the desire of acquiring the good things of this world is the prevailing passion of the Americans, now and then there are outbursts of fanaticism. The Americans are serious and sad even in their pleasures. There are few idle men. Religion exercises a dominant force. Almost all Americans follow industrial callings, and they carry their businesslike qualities even into agriculture. From the building up of manufactures, there is danger that an aristocracy may be established. "If ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrate into the world, this is the gate by which they will enter."

The third book of the second part is devoted to the "manners properly so called" of the Americans. It is almost impossible to give a summary of this part of the work, because it is so full of special observations upon minor points, such as the easy intercourse of Americans with one another, their sensitiveness to criticism, and their national vanity, the relations of masters and servants, rents, wages, and education. The aspect of society he finds at once excited and monotonous. The author discovers an innumerable multitude who seek to emerge from their original condition, but hardly any appear to entertain hopes of great magnitude or to pursue very lofty aims. This surprises him. From these remarks upon American habits, Tocqueville passes on to the consideration of revolutions

and wars. In this section he appears to be governed by the lessons of philosophy and the experience of history rather than by his scrutiny of American affairs. France, not America, is before his eyes.

The same remark applies to book fourth, which is a summary of the author's political philosophy, derived from observation, reflection, comparison, and from the teachings of other ages. The one general idea underlying this section is this: that whereas in the ages of aristocracy there were private persons of great power and a social authority of great weakness, unity and uniformity nowhere to be met with, now in modern society individuality is disappearing. "The government has become almost omnipotent, and private persons are falling more and more into the lowest stages of weakness and dependence." He wishes that the legislators of the day "would try a little more to make great men," and that they would never forget "that a nation cannot long remain strong when every man belonging to it is individually weak, and that no form or combination of social polity can make an energetic people out of a community of pusillanimous and enfeebled citizens." The closing words of the "Democracy in America" are in a minor key. The sight of such universal uniformity as he foresees "saddens and chills" the prophetic observer. He is full of "apprehensions and hopes." He perceives mighty dangers in democracy, but he believes that they may be avoided or alleviated, if the nations but will it. "They cannot prevent the conditions of men from becoming equal; but it depends upon themselves whether the principle of equality is to lead them to servitude or freedom; to knowledge or barbarism; to prosperity or wretchedness."

After thus reviewing the memoir of Tocqueville, the writer is led to these conclusions:

The present condition of democracy in America, when compared with that of sixty years ago, is encouraging. The battle is still waging, and there is a good deal of confusing noise and smoke. Yet all the main positions of democracy have been held. There is no tendency to abandon the fundamental principles of republican government. The voice of the people is still the law of the land. Equality before the law and equality of political rights are firmly established. Slavery has gone. No entangling alliances have been made with foreign powers. Popular education is universal. Religious freedom is secure. Therefore, in the face of certain

discouraging events, in the face of bad municipal administration and of erroneous views respecting national finance, and in spite of a superficial readiness to be offensive and threatening to other nations, the memory of battles fought and won gives strength to every patriot. Nobody is really despondent; not many think they are discouraged. Everybody knows that human nature is receptive of instruction, and that

it takes a great deal longer to educate seventy millions of people than it does to educate the few who are at leisure for study and reflection. Already we rest secure in freedom from caste and class, in the diffusion of knowledge, in the wide-spread enjoyment of physical comfort, and in abiding respect for law and order. On foundations like these the future development of democracy in this country most certainly depends.

SPAIN AND HER AMERICAN COLONIES.

BY THEODORE S. WOOLSEY,

Professor of International Law at Yale University.

THE year 1763 was one of mighty import to the North American continent. The treaty of Paris sealed what the gallantry of Wolfe had won, and at last the English-American colonies were free from the cloud of Indian incursion stirred up by France, which for so long had checked their growth. The continent, north and south, was now mainly shared by two countries instead of three—Great Britain and Spain. But how different the origin, how different the development, of their colonies had been!—those of Spain founded upon the romantic exploits of the Conquistadores, those of Britain seeking, in a simpler and humbler way, a new home, new industries, wider liberties. In one the priest followed the warrior, converted and enslaved the natives who escaped the sword, and put the infant settlements under the bondage of ecclesiasticism. In the other also there was sometimes ecclesiasticism, but it tried to grasp the consciences of the emigrants, not the bodies of the natives. There was monkery as against Puritanism; the thirst for gold as against the desire for civil and religious liberty; native labor under the foreign taskmaster as against English husbandmen painfully conquering a niggardly soil.

The Devon fishermen on the Newfoundland Banks were enriching and upbuilding an empire more surely than the Spanish adventurers with their slave-gangs, their mines of gold, and the kingdoms at their feet.

But while it yet lasted, what picture can compare with the Spanish conquest of a new

world in the restless sixteenth century? Valiant soldier, cruel inquisitor, helpless chief, and suffering native, in history as in romance, pass in ceaseless stream before our eyes, and now we see the end of it all. Even while we are watching, the last of Spain's mighty conquests are wrenched from her by a people undreamed of when she won them. A brilliant picture; a striking contrast. Is there meaning in it? Is it the result of great causes which we can trace, and in doing so say, That way lies disaster?

The colony which had sprung from this sixteenth-century seed was an ideal monopoly. It was administered, built up, defended, for the sake of the mother country. No foreign ships could trade with it, no foreign houses establish themselves in it. Manufacturing was discouraged, sometimes forbidden, as well as the purchase of supplies from or the sale of staples to a foreign market. This protected market for home manufactures, this exclusive trade, was the return which the mother country got for the protection and aid which she afforded. This was the "colonial system," an outgrowth of the mercantile system. It completely dominated both politics and commerce until the close of the last century. The "open door" is a modern idea; and it is not every nation, even now, that hangs the latch-string out. Besides its commercial value, the colonial system was advocated as building up a marine which, like a reservoir, could be drawn upon for ships and for seamen in naval war. This exclusiveness was a weakness as well as a