

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA.

BY

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE.

TRANSLATED BY

HENRY REEVE, Esq.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

THE TRANSLATION REVISED AND IN GREAT PART REWRITTEN, AND THE ADDITIONS
MADE TO THE RECENT PARIS EDITIONS NOW FIRST TRANSLATED,

By FRANCIS BOWEN,

ALFORD PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

VOL. I.

CAMBRIDGE:
SEVER AND FRANCIS.
1862.

S
US
963
TOC/AE

TX
637
Engl. 18

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862, by
JOHN BARTLETT,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Dec. Oct. 13, 1905,

UNIVERSITY PRESS:
WELCH, BIGELOW, AND COMPANY,
CAMBRIDGE.

PREFACE

OF THE AMERICAN EDITOR.

THE present publication has been made to conform as nearly as possible to the twelfth edition of the original work, the latest which appeared at Paris under the direct supervision of the author. De Tocqueville appended to this edition, published in 1850, his essay, written three years before, for the Academy of the Moral and Political Sciences, on Democracy in Switzerland; a full report of his remarkable Speech in the Chamber of Deputies predicting the Revolution of 1848 just a month before its occurrence; and a feeling and eloquent Advertisement, addressed to his countrymen, pointing them to the example of the United States, and urging the study of American institutions as affording the most instructive lessons for the organization and conduct of the new French republic. These three additions are here for the first time translated, both because they have an intimate connection with the body of the work, and because they reflect much light upon the character and opinions of the writer towards the close of his life. The first of them is specially interesting to American readers, as it contains an able analysis and criticism of the republican institutions of Switzerland, illustrated by frequent

comparison with the constitutions and laws of the American republics.

The writer's confidence in the ultimate success and peaceful establishment of democracy, as the controlling principle in the government of all nations, seems to have been not only not impaired, but strengthened, in the latter part of his life, by the observations which he continued to make of the trial that it was undergoing in the United States, and of the progress and prosperity of this country in the years subsequent to the first publication of his great work. And if his life had been spared to witness the terrible ordeal to which the providence of God is now subjecting us, it may confidently be believed that this trust on his part would not have been shaken, even if he should have been compelled to admit, that the Federal tie which once bound our large family of democratic States together would probably never be reunited. He would clearly have seen, what most of the politicians of Europe seem at present incapable of perceiving, that it is not representative democracy, but the Federal principle, which is now on trial, and that the only question is, whether any bond is strong enough to hold together a confederacy so populous and extensive as to form in the aggregate the largest and most powerful empire that the world has ever known. He who would attempt to make up his own opinion on this great question can find no better guide than in the present work. De Tocqueville is the friend, but by no means the indiscriminate eulogist, of American institutions; and his criticisms, which are shrewd and searching, ought to be even more welcome than his commendations, for they are more instructive. He foresaw, if not the im-

minence, at least the probability, of the great convulsion which the country is now undergoing; and there can be no clearer indication of the causes which have at last induced it, than that which was made by this wise and impartial foreigner nearly thirty years ago.

The notes which I have made, though somewhat numerous, are generally very brief. They are notes, and not disquisitions, my object being only to elucidate or correct the text, and not to controvert or supplement it by foisting my own opinions upon the reader's notice. Most of them are only corrections of slight errors on points of detail, such as a stranger who made but a short stay in the country could not be expected to avoid, or notices that some statements now require to be limited or modified, in consequence of the changes that have taken place during the last quarter of a century. An outline sketch of De Tocqueville's life is designed only to satisfy curiosity as to the chief points in his career, without entering into any analysis of his character and labors. Those who seek further information can obtain it from the *Memoirs and Correspondence* that have recently been published by his life-long friend, M. de Beaumont.

In accepting an invitation to become the editor of this work, I supposed that it would only be necessary for me to translate the new matter that had been appended to the recent editions of the original, and to supply such brief annotations as a careful revision of the text might show to be necessary. It was intended to furnish an exact reprint of the English translation, which passed to a second edition in London, a year ago, under the respectable name of Mr. Henry Reeve. But a

comparison of it with the original was hardly begun, before I found to my dismay that this translation was utterly inadequate and untrustworthy. As a pretty thorough exposure of its demerits has recently been made in an English periodical, where there can be no suspicion of an unfavorable bias, I can have no scruple in speaking of it as it deserves. It is generally feeble, inelegant, and verbose, and too often obscure and incorrect. On comparing every line of it with the original, the alterations which were found to be necessary were so numerous and sweeping, that perhaps the present edition, of the first volume at least, might more fitly be called a new translation than an amended one. The second volume, I ought to say, is somewhat better done; as it was published several years after the appearance of the first, forming in fact a distinct work, the translator had found time to increase his familiarity with the French language, and even to make some progress in his knowledge of English.

This is plain speaking, and I feel bound to vindicate it, by offering some specimens of the translation, both in its primitive and its amended state. The following extracts are taken almost at random from the body of the book, and the original is prefixed to facilitate the labor of comparison. The citations are all from the first volume, and the references for Mr. Reeve's translation are to the second London edition, Longmans, 1862.

Des hommes sacrifient à une opinion religieuse leurs amis, leur famille et leur patrie; on peut les croire absorbés dans la poursuite de ce bien intellectuel qu'ils sont venus acheter à si haut prix. On les voit cependant rechercher d'une ardeur presque égale les richesses matérielles et les jouissances morales, le ciel dans l'autre monde, le bien-être et la liberté dans celui-ci. Sous leur main les principes politiques, les lois et les institutions humaines semblent choses malléables, qui peuvent se tourner et se combiner à volonté.

Devant eux s'abaissent les barrières qui emprisonnaient la société au sein de laquelle ils sont nés ; les vieilles opinions, qui depuis des siècles dirigeaient le monde, s'évanouissent ; une carrière presque sans bornes, un champ sans horizon se découvre : l'esprit humain s'y précipite ; il les parcourt en tous sens ; mais, arrivé aux limites du monde politique, il s'arrête de lui-même ; il dépose en tremblant l'usage de ses plus redoutables facultés ; il abjure le doute ; il renonce au besoin d'innover ; il s'abstient même de soulever le voile du sanctuaire ; il s'incline avec respect devant des vérités qu'il admet sans les discuter. — p. 52.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

It might be imagined that men who sacrificed their friends, their family, and their native land to a religious conviction, were absorbed in the pursuit of the intellectual advantages which they purchased at so dear a rate. The energy, however, with which they strove for the acquirement of wealth, moral enjoyment, and the comforts as well as liberties of the world, is scarcely inferior to that with which they devoted themselves to Heaven.

Political principles, and all human laws and institutions were moulded and altered at their pleasure ; the barriers of the society in which they were born were broken down before them ; the old principles which had governed the world for ages were no more ; a path without a term, and a field without an horizon were opened to the exploring and ardent curiosity of man : but at the limits of the political world he checks his researches, he discreetly lays aside the use of his most formidable faculties, he no longer consents to doubt or to innovate, but carefully abstaining from raising the curtain of the sanctuary, he yields with submissive respect to truths which he will not discuss. — p. 33.

REVISED TRANSLATION.

One would think that men who had sacrificed their friends, their family, and their native land to a religious conviction would be wholly absorbed in the pursuit of the treasure which they had just purchased at so high a price. And yet we find them seeking with nearly equal zeal for material wealth and moral good, — for well-being and freedom on earth, and salvation in heaven. They moulded and altered at pleasure all political principles, and all human laws and institutions ; they broke down the barriers of the society in which they were born ; they disregarded the old principles which had governed the world for ages ; a career without bounds, a field without a horizon, was opened before them : they precipitate themselves into it, and traverse it in every direction. But, having reached the limits of the political world, they stop of their own accord, and lay aside with awe the use of their most formidable faculties ; they no longer doubt or innovate ; they abstain from raising even the veil of the sanctuary, and bow with submissive respect before truths which they admit without discussion. — p. 54.

Chez les petites nations, l'œil de la société pénètre partout ; l'esprit d'amélioration descend jusque dans les moindres détails : l'ambition du peuple étant fort tempérée par sa faiblesse, ses efforts et ses ressources se tournent presque entièrement vers son bien-être intérieur, et ne sont point sujets à se dissiper en vaine fumée de gloire. De plus, les facultés de chacun y étant généralement bornées, les désirs le sont également. La médiocrité des fortunes y rend les conditions à peu près égales ; les mœurs y ont une allure simple et paisible. Ainsi, à tout prendre et en faisant état des divers degrés

de moralité et de lumière, on rencontre ordinairement chez les petites nations plus d'aisance, de population et de tranquillité que chez les grandes. — p. 190.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

In small nations the scrutiny of society penetrates into every part, and the spirit of improvement enters into the most trifling details; as the ambition of the people is necessarily checked by its weakness, all the efforts and resources of the citizens are turned to the internal benefit of the community, and are not likely to evaporate in the fleeting breath of glory. The desires of every individual are limited, because extraordinary faculties are rarely to be met with. The gifts of an equal fortune render the various conditions of life uniform; and the manners of the inhabitants are orderly and simple. Thus, if one estimate the gradations of popular morality and enlightenment, we shall generally find that in small nations there are more persons in easy circumstances, a more numerous population, and a more tranquil state of society, than in great empires. — p. 176.

REVISED TRANSLATION.

In small states, the watchfulness of society penetrates into every part, and the spirit of improvement enters into the smallest details; the ambition of the people being necessarily checked by its weakness, all the efforts and resources of the citizens are turned to the internal well-being of the community, and are not likely to evaporate in the fleeting breath of glory. The powers of every individual being generally limited, his desires are proportionally small. Mediocrity of fortune makes the various conditions of life nearly equal, and the manners of the inhabitants are orderly and simple. Thus, all things considered, and allowance being made for the various degrees of morality and enlightenment, we shall generally find in small nations more ease, population, and tranquillity than in large ones. — p. 202.

On ne rencontrera jamais, quoi qu'on fasse, de véritable puissance parmi les hommes, que dans le concours libre des volontés. Or, il n'y a au monde que le patriotisme, ou la religion, qui puisse faire marcher pendant longtemps vers un même but l'universalité des citoyens.

Il ne dépend pas des lois de ranimer des croyances qui s'éteignent; mais il dépend des lois d'intéresser les hommes aux destinées de leur pays. Il dépend des lois de réveiller et de diriger cet instinct vague de la patrie qui n'abandonne jamais le cœur de l'homme, et, en le liant aux pensées, aux passions, aux habitudes de chaque jour, d'en faire un sentiment réfléchi et durable. Et qu'on ne dise point qu'il est trop tard pour le tenter; les nations ne vieillissent point de la même manière que les hommes. Chaque génération qui naît dans leur sein est comme un peuple nouveau qui vient s'offrir à la main du législateur. — pp. 113, 114.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

Whatever exertions may be made, no true power can be founded among men which does not depend upon the free union of their inclinations; and patriotism or religion are the only two motives in the world which can

REVISED TRANSLATION.

Do what you may, there is no true power among men except in the free union of their will; and patriotism or religion are the only two motives in the world which can long urge all the people towards the same end.

permanently direct the whole of a body politic to one end.

Laws cannot succeed in rekindling the ardor of an extinguished faith; but men may be interested in the fate of their country by the laws. By this influence, the vague impulse of patriotism, which never abandons the human heart, may be directed and revived; and if it be connected with the thoughts, the passions, and the daily habits of life, it may be consolidated into a durable and rational sentiment. Let it not be said that the time for the experiment is already past; for the old age of nations is not like the old age of men, and every fresh generation is a new people ready for the care of the legislator. — p. 95.

Laws cannot rekindle an extinguished faith; but men may be interested by the laws in the fate of their country. It depends upon the laws to awaken and direct the vague impulse of patriotism, which never abandons the human heart; and if it be connected with the thoughts, the passions, and the daily habits of life, it may be consolidated into a durable and rational sentiment. Let it not be said that it is too late to make the experiment; for nations do not grow old as men do, and every fresh generation is a new people ready for the care of the legislator. — p. 118.

La commune, prise en masse et par rapport au gouvernement central, n'est qu'un individu comme un autre, auquel s'applique la théorie que je viens d'indiquer.

La liberté communale découle donc, aux États-Unis, du dogme même de la souveraineté du peuple; toutes les républiques américaines ont plus ou moins reconnu cette indépendance; mais chez les peuples de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, les circonstances en ont particulièrement favorisé le développement.

Dans cette partie de l'Union, la vie politique a pris naissance au sein même des communes; on pourrait presque dire qu'à son origine chacune d'elles était une nation indépendante. Lorsque ensuite les rois d'Angleterre réclamèrent leur part de la souveraineté, ils se bornèrent à prendre la puissance centrale. Ils laissèrent la commune dans l'état où ils la trouvèrent; maintenant les communes de la Nouvelle-Angleterre sont sujettes; mais dans le principe elles ne l'étaient point ou l'étaient à peine. Elles n'ont donc pas reçu leurs pouvoirs; ce sont elles au contraire qui semblent s'être dessaisies, en faveur de l'État, d'une portion de leur indépendance: distinction importante, et qui doit rester présente à l'esprit du lecteur.

Les communes ne sont en général soumises à l'État que quand il s'agit d'un intérêt que j'appellerai *social*, c'est-à-dire qu'elles partagent avec d'autres. Pour tout ce qui n'a rapport qu'à elles seules, les communes sont restées des corps indépendants; et parmi les habitants de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, il ne s'en rencontre aucun, je pense, qui reconnaisse au gouvernement de l'État le droit d'intervenir dans la direction des intérêts purement communaux.

On voit donc les communes de la Nouvelle-Angleterre vendre et acheter, attaquer et se défendre devant les tribunaux, charger leur budget ou le dégrever, sans qu'aucune autorité administrative quelconque songe à s'y opposer.

Quant aux devoirs sociaux, elles sont tenues d'y satisfaire. Ainsi, l'État a-t-il besoin d'argent, la commune n'est pas libre de lui accorder ou de lui refuser son concours. L'État veut-il ouvrir une route, la commune n'est pas maîtresse de lui fermer son territoire. Fait-il un règlement de police, la commune doit l'exécuter. Veut-il organiser l'instruction sur un plan uniforme dans toute l'étendue du pays, la commune est tenue de créer les écoles voulues par la loi. — pp. 77, 78.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

The township, taken as a whole, and in relation to the government of the country, may be looked upon as an individual to whom the theory I have just alluded to is applied. Municipal independence is therefore a natural consequence of the principle of the sovereignty of the people in the United States: all the American republics recognize it more or less; but circumstances have peculiarly favored its growth in New England.

In this part of the Union, the impulsion of political activity was given in the townships; and it may almost be said that each of them originally formed an independent nation. When the kings of England asserted their supremacy, they were contented to assume the central power of the State. The townships of New England remained as they were before; and although they are now subject to the State, they were at first scarcely dependent upon it. It is important to remember that they have not been invested with privileges, but that they have, on the contrary, forfeited a portion of their independence to the State. The townships are only subordinate to the State in those interests which I shall term *social*, as they are common to all the citizens. They are independent in all that concerns themselves; and amongst the inhabitants of New England I believe that not a man is to be found who would acknowledge that the State has any right to interfere in their local interests. The towns of New England buy and sell, prosecute or are indicted, augment or diminish their rates, without the slightest opposition on the part of the administrative authority of the State.

They are bound, however, to com-

REVISED TRANSLATION.

The township, taken as a whole, and in relation to the central government, is only an individual like any other to whom the theory I have just described is applicable. Municipal independence in the United States is, therefore, a natural consequence of this very principle of the sovereignty of the people. All the American republics recognize it more or less; but circumstances have peculiarly favored its growth in New England.

In this part of the Union, political life has its origin in the townships; and it may almost be said that each of them originally formed an independent nation. When the kings of England afterwards asserted their supremacy, they were content to assume the central power of the State. They left the townships where they were before; and although they are now subject to the State, they were not at first, or were hardly so. They did not receive their powers from the central authority, but, on the contrary, they gave up a portion of their independence to the State. This is an important distinction, and one which the reader must constantly recollect. The townships are generally subordinate to the State only in those interests which I shall term *social*, as they are common to all the others. They are independent in all that concerns themselves alone; and amongst the inhabitants of New England I believe that not a man is to be found who would acknowledge that the State has any right to interfere in their town affairs. The towns of New England buy and sell, prosecute or are indicted, augment or diminish their rates, and no administrative authority ever thinks of offering any opposition.

ply with the demands of the community. If the State is in need of money, a town can neither give nor withhold the supplies. If the State projects a road, the township cannot refuse to let it cross its territory; if a police regulation is made by the State, it must be enforced by the town. A uniform system of instruction is organized all over the country, and every town is bound to establish the schools which the law ordains. — pp. 60, 61.

There are certain social duties, however, which they are bound to fulfil. If the State is in need of money, a town cannot withhold the supplies; if the State projects a road, the township cannot refuse to let it cross its territory; if a police regulation is made by the State, it must be enforced by the town; if a uniform system of public instruction is enacted, every town is bound to establish the schools which the law ordains. — pp. 80, 81.

D'une autre part, je doute fort qu'un vêtement particulier porte les hommes publics à se respecter eux-mêmes, quand ils ne sont pas naturellement disposés à le faire; car je ne saurais croire qu'ils aient plus d'égard pour leur habit que pour leur personne.

Quand je vois, parmi nous, certains magistrats brusquer les parties ou leur adresser des bons mots, lever les épaules aux moyens de la défense et sourire avec complaisance à l'énumération des charges, je voudrais qu'on essayât de leur ôter leur robe, afin de découvrir si, se trouvant vêtus comme les simples citoyens, cela ne les rappellerait pas à la dignité naturelle de l'espèce humaine.

Aucun des fonctionnaires publics des États-Unis n'a de costume, mais tous reçoivent un salaire.

Ceci découle, plus naturellement encore que ce qui précède, des principes démocratiques. Une démocratie peut environner de pompe ses magistrats et les couvrir de soie et d'or sans attaquer directement le principe de son existence. De pareils privilèges sont passagers; ils tiennent à la place, et non à l'homme. Mais établir des fonctions gratuites, c'est créer une classe de fonctionnaires riches et indépendants, c'est former le noyau d'une aristocratie. Si le peuple conserve encore le droit du choix, l'exercice de ce droit a donc des bornes nécessaires.

Quand on voit une république démocratique rendre gratuites les fonctions rétribuées, je crois qu'on peut en conclure qu'elle marche vers la monarchie. Et quand une monarchie commence à rétribuer les fonctions gratuites, c'est la marque assurée qu'on s'avance vers un état despotique ou vers un état républicain. — pp. 245, 246.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

On the other hand, it is very doubtful whether a peculiar dress contributes to the respect which public characters ought to have for their own position, at least when they are not otherwise inclined to respect it. When a magistrate (and in France such instances are not rare) indulges his

REVISED TRANSLATION.

On the other hand, it is very doubtful whether a peculiar dress induces public men to respect themselves, when they are not otherwise inclined to do so. When a magistrate (and in France such instances are not rare) snubs the parties before him, or indulges his wit at their expense, or

trivial wit at the expense of the prisoner, or derides the predicament in which a culprit is placed, it would be well to deprive him of his robes of office, to see whether he would recall some portion of the natural dignity of mankind when he is reduced to the apparel of a private citizen.

A democracy may, however, allow a certain show of magisterial pomp, and clothe its officers in silks and gold, without seriously compromising its principles. Privileges of this kind are transitory; they belong to the place, and are distinct from the individual: but if public officers are not uniformly remunerated by the State, the public charges must be intrusted to men of opulence and independence, who constitute the basis of an aristocracy; and if the people still retains its right of election, that election can only be made from a certain class of citizens.

When a democratic republic renders offices which had formerly been remunerated, gratuitous, it may safely be believed that that state is advancing to monarchical institutions; and when a monarchy begins to remunerate such officers as had hitherto been unpaid, it is a sure sign that it is approaching towards a despotic or a republican form of government. — pp. 238, 239.

shrugs his shoulders at their pleas of defence, or smiles complacently as the charges are enumerated, I should like to deprive him of his robes of office, to see whether, when he is reduced to the garb of a private citizen, he would not recall some portion of the natural dignity of mankind.

No public officer in the United States has an official costume, but every one of them receives a salary. And this, also, still more naturally than what precedes, results from democratic principles. A democracy may allow some magisterial pomp, and clothe its officers in silks and gold, without seriously compromising its principles. Privileges of this kind are transitory; they belong to the place, and not to the man: but if public officers are unpaid, a class of rich and independent public functionaries will be created, who will constitute the basis of an aristocracy; and if the people still retain their right of election, the choice can be made only from a certain class of citizens.

When a democratic republic renders gratuitous offices which had formerly been remunerated, it may safely be inferred that the state is advancing towards monarchy. And when a monarchy begins to remunerate such officers as had hitherto been unpaid, it is a sure sign that it is approaching a despotic or a republican form of government. — pp. 263, 264.

Ce qu'ils apercevaient d'abord, c'est que le conseil d'Etat, en France, étant un grand tribunal fixé au centre du royaume, il y avait une sorte de tyrannie à renvoyer préliminairement devant lui tous les plaignants. — p. 126.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

They were at once led to conclude that the Conseil d'Etat in France was a great tribunal, established in the centre of the kingdom, which exercised a preliminary and somewhat tyrannical jurisdiction in all political causes. — p. 108.

REVISED TRANSLATION.

They at once perceived that, the Council of State in France being a great tribunal established in the centre of the kingdom, it was a sort of tyranny to send all complainants before it as a preliminary step. — p. 131.

Les peuples entre eux ne sont que des individus. C'est surtout pour paraître avec avantage vis-à-vis des étrangers qu'une nation a besoin d'un gouvernement unique. — pp. 137, 138.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

The external relations of a people may be compared to those of private individuals, and they cannot be advantageously maintained without the agency of the single head of a Government. — p. 121.

REVISED TRANSLATION.

The people in themselves are only individuals; and the special reason why they need to be united under one government is, that they may appear to advantage before foreigners. — p. 144.

Il y a des gens en France qui considèrent les institutions républicaines comme l'instrument passager de leur grandeur. Ils mesurent des yeux l'espace immense qui sépare leurs vices et leurs misères de la puissance et des richesses, et ils voudraient entasser des ruines dans cet abîme pour essayer de le combler. Ceux-là sont à la liberté ce que les compagnies franches du moyen âge étaient aux rois; ils font la guerre pour leur propre compte, alors même qu'ils portent ses couleurs: la république vivra toujours assez longtemps pour les tirer de leur bassesse présente. Ce n'est pas à eux que je parle. — p. 356.

REEVE'S TRANSLATION.

There are persons in France who look upon republican institutions as a temporary means of power, of wealth, and distinction; men who are the *condottieri* of liberty, and who fight for their own advantage, whatever be the colors they wear: it is not to these that I address myself. — p. 364.

REVISED TRANSLATION.

There are persons in France who look upon republican institutions only as a means of obtaining grandeur; they measure the immense space which separates their vices and misery from power and riches, and they aim to fill up this gulf with ruins, that they may pass over it. These men are the *condottieri* of liberty, and fight for their own advantage, whatever be the colors they wear. The republic will stand long enough, they think, to draw them up out of their present degradation. It is not to these that I address myself. — p. 393.

Perhaps it is not too much to say of a work which has hitherto been before the English and American public only in such a translation as this, that it still remains to be perused by them for the first time in a form in which it can be understood and appreciated. I have bestowed a good deal of labor upon it, in the hope of aiding the circulation of a book of which it has been justly said by the highest living authority on the science of general politics, Mr. John Stuart Mill, that it is

“such as Montesquieu might have written, if to his genius he had superadded good sense, and the lights which mankind have since gained from the experiences of a period in which they may be said to have lived centuries in fifty years.” Especially ought it to be generally studied here in the United States, where no thinking man who exercises the privileges of a voter can fail to derive from it profitable information respecting the nature of the institutions under which he lives, together with friendly warnings and wise counsels to aid him in the proper discharge of his political duties.

CAMBRIDGE, August 5, 1862.

AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE TWELFTH EDITION.*

HOWEVER sudden and momentous the events which we have just beheld so swiftly accomplished, the author of this book has a right to say that they have not taken him by surprise.† His work was written fifteen years ago, with a mind constantly occupied by a single thought, — that the advent of democracy as a governing power in the world's affairs, universal and irresistible, was at hand. Let it be read over again, and there will be found on every page a solemn warning, that society changes its forms, humanity its condition, and that new destinies are impending. It was stated in the very Introduction of the work, that "the gradual development of the principle of Equality is a providential fact. It has all the chief characteristics of such a fact; it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human

* The twelfth edition of this work appeared at Paris in 1850, and this Advertisement was prefixed to it by De Tocqueville in reference to the French Revolution of 1848. — AM. ED.

† The writer here alludes to a speech which he made in the Chamber of Deputies, on the 27th of January, 1848, just one month before the Revolution was accomplished. He annexed a report of this speech to the twelfth edition of his work, and a translation of it will be found at the end of the second volume. — AM. ED.

interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress. Would it be wise to imagine that a social movement, the causes of which lie so far back, can be checked by the efforts of one generation? Can it be believed that the democracy, which has overthrown the feudal system and vanquished kings, will retreat before tradesmen and capitalists? Will it stop now that it is grown so strong and its adversaries so weak?"

He who wrote these lines in the presence of a monarchy which had been rather confirmed than shaken by the Revolution of 1830, may now fearlessly ask again the attention of the public to his work. And he may be permitted to add, that the present state of affairs gives to his book an immediate interest and a practical utility which it had not when it was first published. Royalty was then in power; it has now been overthrown. The institutions of America, which were a subject only of curiosity to monarchical France, ought to be a subject of study for republican France. It is not force alone, but good laws, which give stability to a new government. After the combatant, comes the legislator; the one has pulled down, the other builds up; each has his office. Though it is no longer a question whether we shall have a monarchy or a republic in France, we are yet to learn whether we shall have a convulsed or a tranquil republic, — whether it shall be regular or irregular, pacific or warlike, liberal or oppressive, — a republic which menaces the sacred rights of property and family, or one which honors and

protects them both. It is a fearful problem, the solution of which concerns not France alone, but the whole civilized world. If we save ourselves, we save at the same time all the nations which surround us. If we perish, we shall cause all of them to perish with us. According as democratic liberty or democratic tyranny is established here, the destiny of the world will be different; and it may be said that this day it depends upon us, whether the republic shall be everywhere finally established, or everywhere finally overthrown.

Now this problem, which among us has but just been proposed for solution, was solved by America more than sixty years ago. The principle of the sovereignty of the people, which we enthroned in France but yesterday, has there held undivided sway for over sixty years. It is there reduced to practice in the most direct, the most unlimited, and the most absolute manner. For sixty years, the people who have made it the common source of all their laws have increased continually in population, in territory, and in opulence; and — consider it well — it is found to have been, during that period, not only the most prosperous, but the most stable, of all the nations of the earth. Whilst all the nations of Europe have been devastated by war or torn by civil discord, the American people alone in the civilized world have remained at peace. Almost all Europe was convulsed by revolutions; America has not had even a revolt.* The republic there has not been

* Thank God that this is history, though it is not the present fact. The

the assailant, but the guardian, of all vested rights; the property of individuals has had better guaranties there than in any other country of the world; anarchy has there been as unknown as despotism.

Where else could we find greater causes of hope, or more instructive lessons? Let us look to America, not in order to make a servile copy of the institutions which she has established, but to gain a clearer view of the polity which will be the best for us; let us look there less to find examples than instruction; let us borrow from her the principles, rather than the details, of her laws. The laws of the French republic may be, and ought to be, in many cases, different from those which govern the United States; but the principles on which the American constitutions rest, — those principles of order, of the balance of powers, of true liberty, of deep and sincere respect for right, — are indispensable to all republics; they ought to be common to all; and it may be said beforehand, that wherever they shall not be found, the republic will soon have ceased to exist.

1848.

record of what our country has been, and of what she accomplished during three quarters of a century, is beyond the power even of a gigantic rebellion to blot out. Let only the faint-hearted, on looking into the past, exclaim, with the great Italian,

"Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

Nobler spirits will say, though the memory of what has been be the only star which shines in the thick darkness that now surrounds us, it shall light us on to mightier efforts, and kindle in our hearts a surer hope of the reappearance of the day, — of a day whose sunshine shall not be broken even by the one dark cloud that dimmed our former prosperity. — AM. ED.

CHAPTER XVII.

PRINCIPAL CAUSES WHICH TEND TO MAINTAIN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN THE UNITED STATES.

A DEMOCRATIC republic exists in the United States; and the principal object of this book has been to explain the causes of its existence. Several of these causes have been involuntarily passed by, or only hinted at, as I was borne along by my subject. Others I have been unable to discuss at all; and those on which I have dwelt most are, as it were, buried in the details of this work.

I think, therefore, that, before I proceed to speak of the future, I ought to collect within a small compass the reasons which explain the present. In this retrospective chapter I shall be brief; for I shall take care to remind the reader only very summarily of what he already knows, and shall select only the most prominent of those facts which I have not yet pointed out.

All the causes which contribute to the maintenance of the democratic republic in the United States are reducible to three heads:—

I. The peculiar and accidental situation in which Providence has placed the Americans.

II. The laws.

III. The manners and customs of the people.

ACCIDENTAL OR PROVIDENTIAL CAUSES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO MAINTAIN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Union has no Neighbors. — No Metropolis. — The Americans have had the Chance of Birth in their Favor. — America an empty Country. — How this Circumstance contributes powerfully to maintain the Democratic Republic in America. — How the American Wilds are peopled. — Avidity of the Anglo-Americans in taking Possession of the Solitudes of the New World. — Influence of Physical Prosperity upon the Political Opinions of the Americans.

A THOUSAND circumstances, independent of the will of man, facilitate the maintenance of a democratic republic in the United States. Some of these are known, the others may easily be pointed out; but I shall confine myself to the principal ones.

The Americans have no neighbors, and consequently they have no great wars, or financial crises, or inroads, or conquest, to dread; they require neither great taxes, nor large armies, nor great generals; and they have nothing to fear from a scourge which is more formidable to republics than all these evils combined, namely, military glory. It is impossible to deny the inconceivable influence which military glory exercises upon the spirit of a nation. General Jackson, whom the Americans have twice elected to be the head of their government, is a man of violent temper and very moderate talents; nothing in his whole career ever proved him qualified to govern a free people; and indeed, the majority of the enlightened classes of the Union has always opposed him. But he was raised to the Presidency, and has been maintained there, solely by the recollection of a victory which he gained, twenty years ago, under the walls of New Orleans; a victory which was, however, a very ordinary achievement, and which could only be remembered in a country where battles are rare.

Now the people who are thus carried away by the illusions of glory are unquestionably the most cold and calculating, the most unmilitary, if I may so speak, and the most prosaic, of all the nations of the earth.

America has no great capital* city, whose direct or indirect influence is felt over the whole extent of the country; this I hold to be one of the first causes of the maintenance of republican institutions in the United States. In cities, men cannot be prevented from concerting together, and awakening a mutual excitement which prompts sudden and passionate resolutions. Cities may be looked upon as large assemblies, of which all the inhabitants are members; their populace exercise a prodigious influence upon the magistrates, and frequently execute their own wishes without the intervention of public officers.

* The United States have no metropolis; but they already contain several very large cities. Philadelphia reckoned 161,000 inhabitants, and New York 202,000, in the year 1830. The lower orders which inhabit these cities constitute a rabble even more formidable than the populace of European towns. They consist of freed blacks, in the first place, who are condemned by the laws and by public opinion to an hereditary state of misery and degradation. They also contain a multitude of Europeans, who have been driven to the shores of the New World by their misfortunes or their misconduct; and these men inoculate the United States with all our vices, without bringing with them any of those interests which counteract their baneful influence. As inhabitants of a country where they have no civil rights, they are ready to turn all the passions which agitate the community to their own advantage; thus, within the last few months, serious riots have broken out in Philadelphia and in New York. Disturbances of this kind are unknown in the rest of the country, which is nowise alarmed by them, because the population of the cities has hitherto exercised neither power nor influence over the rural districts.

Nevertheless, I look upon the size of certain American cities, and especially on the nature of their population, as a real danger which threatens the future security of the democratic republics of the New World; and I venture to predict that they will perish from this circumstance, unless the government succeeds in creating an armed force, which, while it remains under the control of the majority of the nation, will be independent of the town-population, and able to repress its excesses.

To subject the provinces to the metropolis is, therefore, to place the destiny of the empire in the hands, not only of a portion of the community, which is unjust, but in the hands of a populace carrying out its own impulses, which is very dangerous. The preponderance of capital cities is therefore a serious injury to the representative system; and it exposes modern republics to the same defect as the republics of antiquity, which all perished from not having known this system.

It would be easy for me to enumerate many secondary causes which have contributed to establish, and now concur to maintain, the democratic republic of the United States. But among these favorable circumstances I discern two principal ones, which I hasten to point out. I have already observed that the origin of the Americans, or what I have called their point of departure, may be looked upon as the first and most efficacious cause to which the present prosperity of the United States may be attributed. The Americans had the chances of birth in their favor; and their forefathers imported that equality of condition and of intellect into the country whence the democratic republic has very naturally taken its rise. Nor was this all: for besides this republican condition of society, the early settlers bequeathed to their descendants the customs, manners, and opinions which contribute most to the success of a republic. When I reflect upon the consequences of this primary fact, methinks I see the destiny of America embodied in the first Puritan who landed on those shores, just as the whole human race was represented by the first man.

The chief circumstance which has favored the establishment and the maintenance of a democratic republic in the United States, is the nature of the territory which the Americans inhabit. Their ancestors gave them the love of equality and of freedom; but God himself gave them the

means of remaining equal and free, by placing them upon a boundless continent. General prosperity is favorable to the stability of all governments, but more particularly of a democratic one, which depends upon the will of the majority, and especially upon the will of that portion of the community which is most exposed to want. When the people rule, they must be rendered happy, or they will overturn the state: and misery stimulates them to those excesses to which ambition rouses kings. The physical causes, independent of the laws, which promote general prosperity, are more numerous in America than they ever have been in any other country in the world, at any other period of history. In the United States, not only is legislation democratic, but Nature herself favors the cause of the people.

In what part of human history can be found anything similar to what is passing before our eyes in North America? The celebrated communities of antiquity were all founded in the midst of hostile nations, which they were obliged to subjugate, before they could flourish in their place. Even the moderns have found, in some parts of South America, vast regions inhabited by a people of inferior civilization, but who had already occupied and cultivated the soil. To found their new states, it was necessary to extirpate or subdue a numerous population, and they made civilization blush for its own success. But North America was inhabited only by wandering tribes, who had no thought of profiting by the natural riches of the soil; that vast country was still, properly speaking, an empty continent, a desert land awaiting its inhabitants.

Everything is extraordinary in America, the social condition of the inhabitants, as well as the laws; but the soil upon which these institutions are founded is more extraordinary than all the rest. When the earth was given to men by the Creator, the earth was inexhaustible; but men

were weak and ignorant; and when they had learned to take advantage of the treasures which it contained, they already covered its surface, and were soon obliged to earn by the sword an asylum for repose and freedom. Just then North America was discovered, as if it had been kept in reserve by the Deity, and had just risen from beneath the waters of the deluge.

That continent still presents, as it did in the primeval time, rivers which rise from never-failing sources, green and moist solitudes, and limitless fields which the ploughshare of the husbandman has never turned. In this state, it is offered to man, not barbarous, ignorant, and isolated, as he was in the early ages, but already in possession of the most important secrets of nature, united to his fellow-men, and instructed by the experience of fifty centuries. At this very time, thirteen [twenty-five] millions of civilized Europeans are peaceably spreading over those fertile plains, with whose resources and extent they are not yet themselves accurately acquainted. Three or four thousand soldiers drive before them the wandering races of the aborigines; these are followed by the pioneers, who pierce the woods, scare off the beasts of prey, explore the courses of the inland streams, and make ready the triumphal march of civilization across the desert.

Often, in the course of this work, I have alluded to the favorable influence of the material prosperity of America upon the institutions of that country. This reason had already been given by many others before me, and is the only one which, being palpable to the senses, as it were, is familiar to Europeans. I shall not, then, enlarge upon a subject so often handled and so well understood, beyond the addition of a few facts. An erroneous notion is generally entertained, that the deserts of America are peopled by European emigrants, who annually disembark upon the coasts of the New World, whilst the American population

increase and multiply upon the soil which their forefathers tilled. The European settler usually arrives in the United States without friends, and often without resources; in order to subsist, he is obliged to work for hire, and he rarely proceeds beyond that belt of industrious population which adjoins the ocean. The desert cannot be explored without capital or credit; and the body must be accustomed to the rigors of a new climate, before it can be exposed in the midst of the forest. It is the Americans themselves who daily quit the spots which gave them birth, to acquire extensive domains in a remote region. Thus the European leaves his cottage for the Transatlantic shores, and the American, who is born on that very coast, plunges in his turn into the wilds of central America. This double emigration is incessant; it begins in the middle of Europe, it crosses the Atlantic Ocean, and it advances over the solitudes of the New World. Millions of men are marching at once towards the same horizon: their language, their religion, their manners differ; their object is the same. Fortune has been promised to them somewhere in the West, and to the West they go to find it.

No event can be compared with this continuous removal of the human race, except perhaps those irruptions which caused the fall of the Roman Empire. Then, as well as now, crowds of men were impelled in the same direction, to meet and struggle on the same spot; but the designs of Providence were not the same. Then, every new-comer brought with him destruction and death; now, each one brings the elements of prosperity and life. The future still conceals from us the remote consequences of this migration of the Americans towards the West; but we can readily apprehend its immediate results. As a portion of the inhabitants annually leave the States in which they were born, the population of these States increases very slowly, although they have long been established. Thus,

in Connecticut, which yet contains only fifty-nine inhabitants to the square mile, the population has not been increased by more than one quarter in forty years, whilst that of England has been augmented by one third in the same period. The European emigrant always lands, therefore, in a country which is but half full, and where hands are in request: he becomes a workman in easy circumstances; his son goes to seek his fortune in unpeopled regions, and becomes a rich land-owner. The former amasses the capital which the latter invests; and the stranger as well as the native is unacquainted with want.

The laws of the United States are extremely favorable to the division of property; but a cause more powerful than the laws prevents property from being divided to excess.* This is very perceptible in the States which are at last beginning to be thickly peopled; Massachusetts is the most populous part of the Union; but it contains only eighty inhabitants to the square mile, which is much less than in France, where one hundred and sixty-two are reckoned to the same extent of country. But in Massachusetts, estates are very rarely divided; the eldest son generally takes the land, and the others go to seek their fortune in their desert. The law has abolished the right of primogeniture, but circumstances have concurred to re-establish it under a form of which none can complain, and by which no just rights are impaired.

A single fact will suffice to show the prodigious number of individuals who thus leave New England to settle in the wilds. We were assured in 1830, that thirty-six of the members of Congress were born in the little State of Connecticut. The population of Connecticut, which constitutes only one forty-third part of that of the United States, thus furnished one eighth of the whole body of representa-

* In New England, estates are very small, but they are rarely subjected to further division.

tives. The State of Connecticut of itself, however, sends only five delegates to Congress ; and the thirty-one others sit for the new Western States. If these thirty-one individuals had remained in Connecticut, it is probable that, instead of becoming rich land-owners, they would have remained humble laborers, that they would have lived in obscurity without being able to rise into public life, and that, far from becoming useful legislators, they might have been unruly citizens.

These reflections do not escape the observation of the Americans any more than of ourselves. "It cannot be doubted," says Chancellor Kent, in his Treatise on American Law, "that the division of landed estates must produce great evils, when it is carried to such excess as that each parcel of land is insufficient to support a family ; but these disadvantages have never been felt in the United States, and many generations must elapse before they can be felt. The extent of our inhabited territory, the abundance of adjacent land, and the continual stream of emigration flowing from the shores of the Atlantic towards the interior of the country, suffice as yet, and will long suffice, to prevent the parcelling out of estates."

It would be difficult to describe the avidity with which the American rushes forward to secure this immense booty which fortune offers. In the pursuit, he fearlessly braves the arrow of the Indian and the diseases of the forest ; he is unimpressed by the silence of the woods ; the approach of beasts of prey does not disturb him ; for he is goaded onwards by a passion stronger than the love of life. Before him lies a boundless continent, and he urges onward as if time pressed, and he was afraid of finding no room for his exertions. I have spoken of the emigration from the older States ; but how shall I describe that which takes place from the more recent ones ? Fifty years have scarcely elapsed since that of Ohio was founded ; the

greater part of its inhabitants were not born within its confines; its capital has been built only thirty years, and its territory is still covered by an immense extent of uncultivated fields; yet already the population of Ohio is proceeding westward, and most of the settlers who descend to the fertile prairies of Illinois are citizens of Ohio. These men left their first country to improve their condition; they quit their second, to ameliorate it still more; fortune awaits them everywhere, but not happiness. The desire of prosperity is become an ardent and restless passion in their minds, which grows by what it feeds on. They early broke the ties which bound them to their natal earth, and they have contracted no fresh ones on their way. Emigration was at first necessary to them; and it soon becomes a sort of game of chance, which they pursue for the emotions it excites, as much as for the gain it procures.

Sometimes the progress of man is so rapid that the desert reappears behind him. The woods stoop to give him a passage, and spring up again when he is past. It is not uncommon, in crossing the new States of the West, to meet with deserted dwellings in the midst of the wilds; the traveller frequently discovers the vestiges of a log-house in the most solitary retreat, which bear witness to the power, and no less to the inconstancy, of man. In these abandoned fields, and over these ruins of a day, the primeval forest soon scatters a fresh vegetation; the beasts resume the haunts which were once their own; and Nature comes smiling to cover the traces of man with green branches and flowers, which obliterate his ephemeral track.

I remember, that, in crossing one of the woodland districts which still cover the State of New York, I reached the shores of a lake which was embosomed in forests coeval with the world. A small island, covered with woods whose thick foliage concealed its banks, rose from the centre of the waters. Upon the shores of the lake, no

object attested the presence of man, except a column of smoke, which might be seen on the horizon rising from the tops of the trees to the clouds, and seeming to hang from heaven rather than to be mounting to it. An Indian canoe was hauled up on the sand, which tempted me to visit the islet that had first attracted my attention, and in a few minutes I set foot upon its banks. The whole island formed one of those delicious solitudes of the New World, which almost lead civilized man to regret the haunts of the savage. A luxuriant vegetation bore witness to the incomparable fruitfulness of the soil. The deep silence, which is common to the wilds of North America, was only broken by the monotonous cooing of the wood-pigeons, and the tapping of the woodpecker upon the bark of trees. I was far from supposing that this spot had ever been inhabited, so completely did Nature seem to be left to herself; but when I reached the centre of the isle, I thought that I discovered some traces of man. I then proceeded to examine the surrounding objects with care, and I soon perceived that a European had undoubtedly been led to seek a refuge in this place. Yet what changes had taken place in the scene of his labors! The logs which he had hastily hewn to build himself a shed had sprouted afresh; the very props were intertwined with living verdure, and his cabin was transformed into a bower. In the midst of these shrubs, a few stones were to be seen, blackened with fire and sprinkled with thin ashes; here the hearth had no doubt been, and the chimney in falling had covered it with rubbish. I stood for some time in silent admiration of the resources of Nature and the littleness of man; and when I was obliged to leave that enchanting solitude, I exclaimed with sadness, "Are ruins, then, already here?"

In Europe, we are wont to look upon a restless disposition, an unbounded desire of riches, and an excessive love of independence, as propensities very dangerous to society.

Yet these are the very elements which insure a long and peaceful future to the republics of America. Without these unquiet passions, the population would collect in certain spots, and would soon experience wants like those of the Old World, which it is difficult to satisfy; for such is the present good fortune of the New World, that the vices of its inhabitants are scarcely less favorable to society than their virtues. These circumstances exercise a great influence on the estimation in which human actions are held in the two hemispheres. What we should call cupidity, the Americans frequently term a laudable industry; and they blame as faint-heartedness what we consider to be the virtue of moderate desires.

In France, simple tastes, orderly manners, domestic affections, and the attachment which men feel to the place of their birth, are looked upon as great guaranties of the tranquillity and happiness of the state. But in America, nothing seems to be more prejudicial to society than such virtues. The French Canadians, who have faithfully preserved the traditions of their ancient manners, are already embarrassed for room upon their small territory; and this little community, which has so recently begun to exist, will shortly be a prey to the calamities incident to old nations. In Canada, the most enlightened, patriotic, and humane inhabitants make extraordinary efforts to render the people dissatisfied with those simple enjoyments which still content them. There the seductions of wealth are vaunted with as much zeal as the charms of a moderate competency in the Old World; and more exertions are made to excite the passions of the citizens there, than to calm them elsewhere. If we listen to their accounts, we shall hear that nothing is more praiseworthy than to exchange the pure and tranquil pleasures which even the poor man tastes in his own country, for the sterile delights of prosperity under a foreign sky; to leave the patrimonial hearth, and

the turf beneath which one's forefathers sleep, — in short, to abandon the living and the dead, in quest of fortune.

At the present time, America presents a field for human effort far more extensive than any sum of labor which can be applied to work it. In America, too much knowledge cannot be diffused ; for all knowledge, whilst it may serve him who possesses it, turns also to the advantage of those who are without it. New wants are not to be feared there, since they can be satisfied without difficulty ; the growth of human passions need not be dreaded, since all passions may find an easy and a legitimate object ; nor can men there be made too free, since they are scarcely ever tempted to misuse their liberties.

The American republics of the present day are like companies of adventurers, formed to explore in common the waste lands of the New World, and busied in a flourishing trade. The passions which agitate the Americans most deeply are not their political, but their commercial, passions ; or, rather, they introduce the habits of business into their political life. They love order, without which affairs do not prosper ; and they set an especial value upon regular conduct, which is the foundation of a solid business. They prefer the good sense which amasses large fortunes to that enterprising genius which frequently dissipates them ; general ideas alarm their minds, which are accustomed to positive calculations ; and they hold practice in more honor than theory.

It is in America that one learns to understand the influence which physical prosperity exercises over political actions, and even over opinions which ought to acknowledge no sway but that of reason ; and it is more especially among strangers that this truth is perceptible. Most of the European emigrants to the New World carry with them that wild love of independence and change which our calamities are so apt to produce. I sometimes met

with Europeans in the United States, who had been obliged to leave their country on account of their political opinions. They all astonished me by the language they held, but one of them surprised me more than all the rest. As I was crossing one of the most remote districts of Pennsylvania, I was benighted, and obliged to beg for hospitality at the gate of a wealthy planter, who was a Frenchman by birth. He bade me sit down beside his fire, and we began to talk with that freedom which befits persons who meet in the backwoods, two thousand leagues from their native country. I was aware that my host had been a great leveller and an ardent demagogue forty years ago, and that his name was in history. I was therefore not a little surprised to hear him discuss the rights of property as an economist or a land-owner might have done: he spoke of the necessary gradations which fortune establishes among men, of obedience to established laws, of the influence of good morals in commonwealths, and of the support which religious opinions give to order and to freedom; he even went so far as to quote the authority of our Saviour in support of one of his political opinions.

I listened, and marvelled at the feebleness of human reason. How can we discover whether a proposition is true or false, in the midst of the uncertainties of science and the conflicting lessons of experience? A new fact disperses all my doubts. I was poor, I have become rich; and I am not to expect that prosperity will act upon my conduct, and leave my judgment free. In truth, my opinions change with my fortune; and the happy circumstances which I turn to my advantage furnish me with that decisive argument which was before wanting.

The influence of prosperity acts still more freely upon Americans than upon strangers. The American has always seen public order and public prosperity intimately united, and proceeding side by side before his eyes; he

cannot even imagine that one can subsist without the other: he has therefore nothing to forget; nor has he, like so many Europeans, to unlearn the lessons of his early education.

INFLUENCE OF THE LAWS UPON THE MAINTENANCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN THE UNITED STATES.

Three principal Causes of the Maintenance of the Democratic Republic. —
Federal Union. — Township Institutions. — Judicial Power.

THE principal aim of this book has been to make known the laws of the United States; if this purpose has been accomplished, the reader is already enabled to judge for himself which are the laws that really tend to maintain the democratic republic, and which endanger its existence. If I have not succeeded in explaining this in the whole course of my work, I cannot hope to do so in a single chapter. It is not my intention to retrace the path I have already pursued; and a few lines will suffice to recapitulate what I have said.

Three circumstances seem to me to contribute more than all others to the maintenance of the democratic republic in the United States.

The first is that federal form of government which the Americans have adopted, and which enables the Union to combine the power of a great republic with the security of a small one;

The second consists in those township institutions which limit the despotism of the majority, and at the same time impart to the people a taste for freedom, and the art of being free;

The third is to be found in the constitution of the judicial power. I have shown how the courts of justice serve to repress the excesses of democracy, and how they check and direct the impulses of the majority without stopping its activity.

INFLUENCE OF MANNERS UPON THE MAINTENANCE OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN THE UNITED STATES.

I HAVE previously remarked that the manners of the people may be considered as one of the great general causes to which the maintenance of a democratic republic in the United States is attributable. I here use the word *manners* with the meaning which the ancients attached to the word *mores*; for I apply it not only to manners properly so called, — that is, to what might be termed *the habits of the heart*, — but to the various notions and opinions current among men, and to the mass of those ideas which constitute their character of mind. I comprise under this term, therefore, the whole moral and intellectual condition of a people. My intention is not to draw a picture of American manners, but simply to point out such features of them as are favorable to the maintenance of their political institutions.

RELIGION CONSIDERED AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION, WHICH
POWERFULLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AMONGST THE AMERICANS.

North America peopled by Men who professed a Democratic and Republican Christianity. — Arrival of the Catholics. — Why the Catholics now form the most Democratic and most Republican Class.

By the side of every religion is to be found a political opinion, which is connected with it by affinity. If the human mind be left to follow its own bent, it will regulate the temporal and spiritual institutions of society in a uniform manner; and man will endeavor, if I may so speak, to *harmonize* earth with heaven.

The greatest part of British America was peopled by men who, after having shaken off the authority of the

Pope, acknowledged no other religious supremacy: they brought with them into the New World a form of Christianity, which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion. This contributed powerfully to the establishment of a republic and a democracy in public affairs; and from the beginning, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved.

About fifty years ago, Ireland began to pour a Catholic population into the United States; and on their part, the Catholics of America made proselytes, so that, at the present moment, more than a million of Christians, professing the truths of the Church of Rome, are to be found in the Union. These Catholics are faithful to the observances of their religion; they are fervent and zealous in the belief of their doctrines. Yet they constitute the most republican and the most democratic class in the United States. This fact may surprise the observer at first, but the causes of it may easily be discovered upon reflection.

I think that the Catholic religion has erroneously been regarded as the natural enemy of democracy. Amongst the various sects of Christians, Catholicism seems to me, on the contrary, to be one of the most favorable to equality of condition among men. In the Catholic Church, the religious community is composed of only two elements; the priest and the people. The priest alone rises above the rank of his flock, and all below him are equal.

On doctrinal points, the Catholic faith places all human capacities upon the same level; it subjects the wise and ignorant, the man of genius and the vulgar crowd, to the details of the same creed; it imposes the same observances upon the rich and needy, it inflicts the same austerities upon the strong and the weak; it listens to no compromise with mortal man, but, reducing all the human race to the same standard, it confounds all the distinctions of society

at the foot of the same altar, even as they are confounded in the sight of God. If Catholicism predisposes the faithful to obedience, it certainly does not prepare them for inequality: but the contrary may be said of Protestantism, which generally tends to make men independent, more than to render them equal. Catholicism is like an absolute monarchy; if the sovereign be removed, all the other classes of society are more equal than in republics.

It has not unfrequently occurred that the Catholic priest has left the service of the altar to mix with the governing powers of society, and to take his place amongst the civil ranks of men. This religious influence has sometimes been used to secure the duration of that political state of things to which he belonged. Thus we have seen Catholics taking the side of aristocracy from a religious motive. But no sooner is the priesthood entirely separated from the government, as is the case in the United States, than it is found that no class of men are more naturally disposed than the Catholics to transfer the doctrine of the equality of condition into the political world.

If, then, the Catholic citizens of the United States are not forcibly led by the nature of their tenets to adopt democratic and republican principles, at least they are not necessarily opposed to them; and their social position, as well as their limited number, obliges them to adopt these opinions. Most of the Catholics are poor, and they have no chance of taking a part in the government unless it be open to all the citizens. They constitute a minority, and all rights must be respected in order to insure to them the free exercise of their own privileges. These two causes induce them, even unconsciously, to adopt political doctrines which they would perhaps support with less zeal if they were rich and preponderant.

The Catholic clergy of the United States have never attempted to oppose this political tendency; but they seek

rather to justify it. The Catholic priests in America have divided the intellectual world into two parts: in the one, they place the doctrines of revealed religion, which they assent to without discussion; in the other, they leave those political truths, which they believe the Deity has left open to free inquiry. Thus the Catholics of the United States are at the same time the most submissive believers and the most independent citizens.

It may be asserted, then, that in the United States no religious doctrine displays the slightest hostility to democratic and republican institutions. The clergy of all the different sects there hold the same language; their opinions are in agreement with the laws, and the human mind flows onwards, so to speak, in one undivided current.

I happened to be staying in one of the largest cities in the Union, when I was invited to attend a public meeting in favor of the Poles, and of sending them supplies of arms and money. I found two or three thousand persons collected in a vast hall, which had been prepared to receive them. In a short time, a priest, in his ecclesiastical robes, advanced to the front of the platform: the spectators rose, and stood uncovered in silence, whilst he spoke in the following terms:—

“Almighty God! the God of armies! Thou who didst strengthen the hearts and guide the arms of our fathers when they were fighting for the sacred rights of their national independence! Thou who didst make them triumph over a hateful oppression, and hast granted to our people the benefits of liberty and peace! turn, O Lord, a favorable eye upon the other hemisphere; pitifully look down upon an heroic nation which is even now struggling as we did in the former time, and for the same rights. Thou, who didst create man in the same image, let not tyranny mar thy work, and establish inequality upon the earth. Almighty God! do thou watch over the destiny

of the Poles, and make them worthy to be free. May thy wisdom direct their councils, may thy strength sustain their arms! Shed forth thy terror over their enemies; scatter the powers which take counsel against them; and permit not the injustice which the world has witnessed for fifty years to be consummated in our time. O Lord, who holdest alike the hearts of nations and of men in thy powerful hand, raise up allies to the sacred cause of right; arouse the French nation from the apathy in which its rulers retain it, that it may go forth again to fight for the liberties of the world.

“Lord, turn not thou thy face from us, and grant that we may always be the most religious, as well as the freest, people of the earth. Almighty God, hear our supplications this day. Save the Poles, we beseech thee, in the name of thy well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross for the salvation of all men. Amen.”

The whole meeting responded, “Amen!” with devotion.

INDIRECT INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS OPINIONS UPON POLITICAL SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES.

Christian Morality common to all Sects. — Influence of Religion upon the Manners of the Americans. — Respect for the Marriage Tie. — How Religion confines the Imagination of the Americans within certain Limits, and checks the Passion for Innovation. — Opinion of the Americans on the political Utility of Religion. — Their Exertions to extend and secure its Authority.

I HAVE just shown what the direct influence of religion upon politics is in the United States; but its indirect influence appears to me to be still more considerable, and it never instructs the Americans more fully in the art of being free than when it says nothing of freedom.

The sects which exist in the United States are innu-

merable. They all differ in respect to the worship which is due to the Creator ; but they all agree in respect to the duties which are due from man to man. Each sect adores the Deity in its own peculiar manner ; but all sects preach the same moral law in the name of God. If it be of the highest importance to man, as an individual, that his religion should be true, it is not so to society. Society has no future life to hope for or to fear ; and provided the citizens profess a religion, the peculiar tenets of that religion are of little importance to its interests. Moreover, all the sects of the United States are comprised within the great unity of Christianity, and Christian morality is everywhere the same.

It may fairly be believed, that a certain number of Americans pursue a peculiar form of worship from habit more than from conviction. In the United States, the sovereign authority is religious, and consequently hypocrisy must be common ; but there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America ; and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.

I have remarked that the American clergy in general, without even excepting those who do not admit religious liberty, are all in favor of civil freedom ; but they do not support any particular political system. They keep aloof from parties, and from public affairs. In the United States, religion exercises but little influence upon the laws, and upon the details of public opinion ; but it directs the manners of the community, and, by regulating domestic life, it regulates the state.

I do not question that the great austerity of manners which is observable in the United States arises, in the first instance, from religious faith. Religion is often unable to

restrain man from the numberless temptations which chance offers ; nor can it check that passion for gain which everything contributes to arouse : but its influence over the mind of woman is supreme, and women are the protectors of morals. There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is more respected than in America, or where conjugal happiness is more highly or worthily appreciated. In Europe, almost all the disturbances of society arise from the irregularities of domestic life. To despise the natural bonds and legitimate pleasures of home, is to contract a taste for excesses, a restlessness of heart, and fluctuating desires. Agitated by the tumultuous passions which frequently disturb his dwelling, the European is galled by the obedience which the legislative powers of the state exact. But when the American retires from the turmoil of public life to the bosom of his family, he finds in it the image of order and of peace. There his pleasures are simple and natural, his joys are innocent and calm ; and as he finds that an orderly life is the surest path to happiness, he accustoms himself easily to moderate his opinions as well as his tastes. Whilst the European endeavors to forget his domestic troubles by agitating society, the American derives from his own home that love of order which he afterwards carries with him into public affairs.

In the United States, the influence of religion is not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence, of the people. Amongst the Anglo-Americans, some profess the doctrines of Christianity from a sincere belief in them, and others do the same because they fear to be suspected of unbelief. Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent ; the consequence is, as I have before observed, that every principle of the moral world is fixed and determinate, although the political world is abandoned to the debates and the experiments of men.

Thus the human mind is never left to wander over a boundless field; and, whatever may be its pretensions, it is checked from time to time by barriers which it cannot surmount. Before it can innovate, certain primary principles are laid down, and the boldest conceptions are subjected to certain forms which retard and stop their completion.

The imagination of the Americans, even in its greatest flights, is circumspect and undecided; its impulses are checked, and its works unfinished. These habits of restraint recur in political society, and are singularly favorable both to the tranquillity of the people and the durability of the institutions they have established. Nature and circumstances have made the inhabitants of the United States bold, as is sufficiently attested by the enterprising spirit with which they seek for fortune. If the mind of the Americans were free from all trammels, they would shortly become the most daring innovators and the most persistent disputants in the world. But the revolutionists of America are obliged to profess an ostensible respect for Christian morality and equity, which does not permit them to violate wantonly the laws that oppose their designs; nor would they find it easy to surmount the scruples of their partisans, even if they were able to get over their own. Hitherto, no one in the United States has dared to advance the maxim that everything is permissible for the interests of society, — an impious adage, which seems to have been invented in an age of freedom to shelter all future tyrants. Thus, whilst the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.

Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in

this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all the Americans have a sincere faith in their religion, — for who can search the human heart? — but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens, or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation, and to every rank of society.

In the United States, if a politician attacks a sect, this may not prevent the partisans of that very sect from supporting him ; but if he attacks all the sects together, every one abandons him, and he remains alone.

Whilst I was in America, a witness, who happened to be called at the Sessions of the county of Chester (State of New York), declared that he did not believe in the existence of God, or in the immortality of the soul. The judge refused to admit his evidence, on the ground that the witness had destroyed beforehand all the confidence of the court in what he was about to say.* The newspapers related the fact without any further comment.

* The New York Spectator of August 23, 1831, relates the fact in the following terms : “ The Court of Common Pleas of Chester County (New York) a few days since rejected a witness who declared his disbelief in the existence of God. The presiding judge remarked, that he had not before been aware that there was a man living who did not believe in the existence of God ; that this belief constituted the sanction of all testimony in a court of justice ; and that he knew of no cause in a Christian country where a witness had been permitted to testify without such belief.”

[The exclusion of the testimony of atheists is not a peculiarity of American jurisprudence, but is a principle of the English Common Law, which is still enforced in England as well as in this country. It is not upheld as a mark of respect for the Christian religion, or because an atheist is unworthy of belief, but because no man is allowed to testify in a court of justice except he is under oath, and an oath has no meaning, because it has no sanction, in the mouth of one who does not believe in a just God and a future retribution. The atheist is excluded, therefore, not because he does not believe what others believe, but because he cannot be sworn. — AM. ED.]

The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other; and with them, this conviction does not spring from that barren, traditionary faith which seems to vegetate rather than to live in the soul.

I have known of societies formed by the Americans to send out ministers of the Gospel into the new Western States, to found schools and churches there, lest religion should be suffered to die away in those remote settlements, and the rising States be less fitted to enjoy free institutions than the people from whom they came. I met with wealthy New-Englanders who abandoned the country in which they were born, in order to lay the foundations of Christianity and of freedom on the banks of the Missouri, or in the prairies of Illinois. Thus religious zeal is perpetually warmed in the United States by the fires of patriotism. These men do not act exclusively from a consideration of a future life; eternity is only one motive of their devotion to the cause. If you converse with these missionaries of Christian civilization, you will be surprised to hear them speak so often of the goods of this world, and to meet a politician where you expected to find a priest. They will tell you, that "all the American republics are collectively involved with each other; if the republics of the West were to fall into anarchy, or to be mastered by a despot, the republican institutions which now flourish upon the shores of the Atlantic Ocean would be in great peril. It is therefore our interest that the new States should be religious, in order that they may permit us to remain free."

Such are the opinions of the Americans: and if any hold that the religious spirit which I admire is the very thing most amiss in America, and that the only element wanting to the freedom and happiness of the human race on the other side of the ocean is to believe with Spinoza in

the eternity of the world, or with Cabanis that thought is secreted by the brain, I can only reply, that those who hold this language have never been in America, and that they have never seen a religious or a free nation. When they return from a visit to that country, we shall hear what they have to say.

There are persons in France who look upon republican institutions only as a means of obtaining grandeur; they measure the immense space which separates their vices and misery from power and riches, and they aim to fill up this gulf with ruins, that they may pass over it. These men are the *condottieri* of liberty, and fight for their own advantage, whatever be the colors they wear. The republic will stand long enough, they think, to draw them up out of their present degradation. It is not to these that I address myself. But there are others who look forward to a republican form of government as a tranquil and lasting state, towards which modern society is daily impelled by the ideas and manners of the time, and who sincerely desire to prepare men to be free. When these men attack religious opinions, they obey the dictates of their passions, and not of their interests. Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot. Religion is much more necessary in the republic which they set forth in glowing colors, than in the monarchy which they attack; it is more needed in democratic republics than in any others. How is it possible that society should escape destruction, if the moral tie be not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed? and what can be done with a people who are their own masters, if they be not submissive to the Deity?

PRINCIPAL CAUSES WHICH RENDER RELIGION POWERFUL
IN AMERICA.

Care taken by the Americans to separate the Church from the State. — The Laws, Public Opinion, and even the Exertions of the Clergy, concur to promote this End. — Influence of Religion upon the Mind in the United States attributable to this Cause. — Reason of this. — What is the Natural State of Men with regard to Religion at the Present Time. — What are the Peculiar and Incidental Causes which prevent Men, in certain Countries, from arriving at this State.

THE philosophers of the eighteenth century explained in a very simple manner the gradual decay of religious faith. Religious zeal, said they, must necessarily fail the more generally liberty is established and knowledge diffused. Unfortunately, the facts by no means accord with their theory. There are certain populations in Europe whose unbelief is only equalled by their ignorance and debasement; whilst in America, one of the freest and most enlightened nations in the world fulfil with fervor all the outward duties of religion.

On my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things. In France, I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America, I found they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country. My desire to discover the causes of this phenomenon increased from day to day. In order to satisfy it, I questioned the members of all the different sects; I sought especially the society of the clergy, who are the depositaries of the different creeds, and are especially interested in their duration. As a member of the Roman Catholic Church, I was more particularly brought into

contact with several of its priests, with whom I became intimately acquainted. To each of these men I expressed my astonishment and explained my doubts: I found that they differed upon matters of detail alone, and that they all attributed the peaceful dominion of religion in their country mainly to the separation of church and state. I do not hesitate to affirm, that, during my stay in America, I did not meet a single individual, of the clergy or the laity, who was not of the same opinion upon this point.

This led me to examine more attentively than I had hitherto done the station which the American clergy occupy in political society. I learned with surprise that they filled no public appointments; * I did not see one of them in the administration, and they are not even represented in the legislative assemblies.† In several States,‡ the law excludes them from political life, public opinion in all. And when I came to inquire into the prevailing spirit of the clergy, I found that most of its members seemed to retire of their own accord from the exercise of power, and that they made it the pride of their profession to abstain from politics.

* Unless this term be applied to the functions which many of them fill in the schools. Almost all education is intrusted to the clergy. [This is too sweeping. Clergymen often serve upon school committees, or fill professorships in colleges, as they frequently do in Europe. But they are not so numerous as the laity in either of these offices. — AM. ED.]

† They are not represented *as such*. But they are often elected to represent their townships, or even their States in Congress. — AM. ED.

‡ See the "Constitution of New York," Art. VII. § 4:—

"And whereas the ministers of the Gospel are, by their profession, dedicated to the service of God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions; therefore no minister of the Gospel, or priest of any denomination whatsoever, shall at any time hereafter, under any pretence or description whatever, be eligible to, or capable of holding, any civil or military office or place within this State."

See also the Constitutions of North Carolina, Art. XXXI.; Virginia; South Carolina, Art. I. § 23; Kentucky, Art. II. § 26; Tennessee, Art. VIII. § 1; Louisiana, Art. II. § 22.

I heard them inveigh against ambition and deceit, under whatever political opinions these vices might chance to lurk ; but I learned from their discourses that men are not guilty in the eye of God for any opinions concerning political government which they may profess with sincerity, any more than they are for their mistakes in building a house, or in driving a furrow. I perceived that these ministers of the Gospel eschewed all parties, with the anxiety attendant upon personal interest. These facts convinced me that what I had been told was true ; and it then became my object to investigate their causes, and to inquire how it happened that the real authority of religion was increased by a state of things which diminished its apparent force : these causes did not long escape my researches.

The short space of threescore years can never content the imagination of man ; nor can the imperfect joys of this world satisfy his heart. Man alone, of all created beings, displays a natural contempt of existence, and yet a boundless desire to exist ; he scorns life, but he dreads annihilation. These different feelings incessantly urge his soul to the contemplation of a future state, and religion directs his musings thither. Religion, then, is simply another form of hope ; and it is no less natural to the human heart than hope itself. Men cannot abandon their religious faith without a kind of aberration of intellect, and a sort of violent distortion of their true nature ; they are invincibly brought back to more pious sentiments. Unbelief is an accident, and faith is the only permanent state of mankind. If we consider religious institutions merely in a human point of view, they may be said to derive an inexhaustible element of strength from man himself, since they belong to one of the constituent principles of human nature.

I am aware that, at certain times, religion may strengthen this influence, which originates in itself, by the artificial power of the laws, and by the support of those temporal

institutions which direct society. Religions intimately united with the governments of the earth have been known to exercise sovereign power founded on terror and faith ; but when a religion contracts an alliance of this nature, I do not hesitate to affirm that it commits the same error as a man who should sacrifice his future to his present welfare ; and in obtaining a power to which it has no claim, it risks that authority which is rightfully its own. When a religion founds its empire only upon the desire of immortality which lives in every human heart, it may aspire to universal dominion ; but when it connects itself with a government, it must adopt maxims which are applicable only to certain nations. Thus, in forming an alliance with a political power, religion augments its authority over a few, and forfeits the hope of reigning over all.

As long as a religion rests only upon those sentiments which are the consolation of all affliction, it may attract the affections of all mankind. But if it be mixed up with the bitter passions of the world, it may be constrained to defend allies whom its interests, and not the principle of love, have given to it ; or to repel as antagonists men who are still attached to it, however opposed they may be to the powers with which it is allied. The church cannot share the temporal power of the state, without being the object of a portion of that animosity which the latter excites.

The political powers which seem to be most firmly established have frequently no better guaranty for their duration than the opinions of a generation, the interests of the time, or the life of an individual. A law may modify the social condition which seems to be most fixed and determinate ; and with the social condition, everything else must change. The powers of society are more or less fugitive, like the years which we spend upon earth ; they succeed each other with rapidity, like the fleeting cares of life ; and no government has ever yet been founded upon an invariable

disposition of the human heart, or upon an imperishable interest.

As long as a religion is sustained by those feelings, propensities, and passions which are found to occur under the same forms at all periods of history, it may defy the efforts of time ; or, at least, it can be destroyed only by another religion. But when religion clings to the interests of the world, it becomes almost as fragile a thing as the powers of earth. It is the only one of them all which can hope for immortality ; but if it be connected with their ephemeral power, it shares their fortunes, and may fall with those transient passions which alone supported them. The alliance which religion contracts with political powers must needs be onerous to itself, since it does not require their assistance to live, and by giving them its assistance it may be exposed to decay.

The danger which I have just pointed out always exists, but it is not always equally visible. In some ages, governments seem to be imperishable ; in others, the existence of society appears to be more precarious than the life of man. Some constitutions plunge the citizens into a lethargic somnolence, and others rouse them to feverish excitement. When governments seem so strong, and laws so stable, men do not perceive the dangers which may accrue from a union of church and state. When governments appear weak, and laws inconstant, the danger is self-evident, but it is no longer possible to avoid it. We must therefore learn how to perceive it from afar.

In proportion as a nation assumes a democratic condition of society, and as communities display democratic propensities, it becomes more and more dangerous to connect religion with political institutions ; for the time is coming when authority will be bandied from hand to hand, when political theories will succeed each other, and when men, laws, and constitutions will disappear or be modified from

day to day, and this not for a season only, but unceasingly. Agitation and mutability are inherent in the nature of democratic republics, just as stagnation and sleepiness are the law of absolute monarchies.

If the Americans, who change the head of the government once in four years, who elect new legislators every two years, and renew the State officers every twelve-month, — if the Americans, who have given up the political world to the attempts of innovators, had not placed religion beyond their reach, where could it take firm hold in the ebb and flow of human opinions? where would be that respect which belongs to it, amidst the struggles of faction? and what would become of its immortality, in the midst of universal decay? The American clergy were the first to perceive this truth, and to act in conformity with it. They saw that they must renounce their religious influence, if they were to strive for political power; and they chose to give up the support of the state, rather than to share its vicissitudes.

In America, religion is perhaps less powerful than it has been at certain periods and among certain nations; but its influence is more lasting. It restricts itself to its own resources, but of these none can deprive it: its circle is limited, but it pervades it and holds it under undisputed control.

On every side in Europe, we hear voices complaining of the absence of religious faith, and inquiring the means of restoring to religion some remnant of its former authority. It seems to me that we must first attentively consider what ought to be *the natural state* of men, with regard to religion, at the present time; and when we know what we have to hope and to fear, we may discern the end to which our efforts ought to be directed.

The two great dangers which threaten the existence of religion are schism and indifference. In ages of fervent

devotion, men sometimes abandon their religion, but they only shake one off in order to adopt another. Their faith changes its objects, but suffers no decline. The old religion then excites enthusiastic attachment or bitter enmity in either party ; some leave it with anger, others cling to it with increased devotedness, and although persuasions differ, irreligion is unknown. Such, however, is not the case when a religious belief is secretly undermined by doctrines which may be termed negative, since they deny the truth of one religion without affirming that of any other. Prodigious revolutions then take place in the human mind, without the apparent co-operation of the passions of man, and almost without his knowledge. Men lose the objects of their fondest hopes, as if through forgetfulness. They are carried away by an imperceptible current, which they have not the courage to stem, but which they follow with regret, since it bears them away from a faith they love, to a scepticism that plunges them into despair.

In ages which answer to this description, men desert their religious opinions from lukewarmness rather than from dislike ; they are not rejected, but they fall away. But if the unbeliever does not admit religion to be true, he still considers it useful. Regarding religious institutions in a human point of view, he acknowledges their influence upon manners and legislation. He admits that they may serve to make men live in peace, and prepare them gently for the hour of death. He regrets the faith which he has lost ; and as he is deprived of a treasure of which he knows the value, he fears to take it away from those who still possess it.

On the other hand, those who continue to believe are not afraid openly to avow their faith. They look upon those who do not share their persuasion as more worthy of pity than of opposition ; and they are aware, that, to acquire the esteem of the unbelieving, they are not obliged

to follow their example. They are not hostile, then, to any one in the world; and as they do not consider the society in which they live as an arena in which religion is bound to face its thousand deadly foes, they love their contemporaries, whilst they condemn their weaknesses and lament their errors.

As those who do not believe conceal their incredulity, and as those who believe display their faith, public opinion pronounces itself in favor of religion: love, support, and honor are bestowed upon it, and it is only by searching the human soul that we can detect the wounds which it has received. The mass of mankind, who are never without the feeling of religion, do not perceive anything at variance with the established faith. The instinctive desire of a future life brings the crowd about the altar, and opens the hearts of men to the precepts and consolations of religion.

But this picture is not applicable to us; for there are men amongst us who have ceased to believe in Christianity, without adopting any other religion; others are in the perplexities of doubt, and already affect not to believe; and others, again, are afraid to avow that Christian faith which they still cherish in secret.

Amidst these lukewarm partisans and ardent antagonists, a small number of believers exists, who are ready to brave all obstacles, and to scorn all dangers, in defence of their faith. They have done violence to human weakness, in order to rise superior to public opinion. Excited by the effort they have made, they scarcely know where to stop; and as they know that the first use which the French made of independence was to attack religion, they look upon their contemporaries with dread, and recoil in alarm from the liberty which their fellow-citizens are seeking to obtain. As unbelief appears to them to be a novelty, they comprise all that is new in one indiscriminate animosity. They are at war with their age and country, and they look upon

every opinion which is put forth there as the necessary enemy of faith.

Such is not the natural state of men with regard to religion at the present day ; and some extraordinary or incidental cause must be at work in France, to prevent the human mind from following its natural inclination, and drive it beyond the limits at which it ought naturally to stop.

I am fully convinced that this extraordinary and incidental cause is the close connection of politics and religion. The unbelievers of Europe attack the Christians as their political opponents, rather than as their religious adversaries ; they hate the Christian religion as the opinion of a party, much more than as an error of belief ; and they reject the clergy less because they are the representatives of the Deity, than because they are the allies of government.

In Europe, Christianity has been intimately united to the powers of the earth. Those powers are now in decay, and it is, as it were, buried under their ruins. The living body of religion has been bound down to the dead corpse of superannuated polity ; cut but the bonds which restrain it, and it will rise once more. I know not what could restore the Christian Church of Europe to the energy of its earlier days ; that power belongs to God alone ; but it may be for human policy to leave to faith the full exercise of the strength which it still retains.

HOW THE EDUCATION, THE HABITS, AND THE PRACTICAL
EXPERIENCE OF THE AMERICANS PROMOTE THE SUCCESS
OF THEIR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

What is to be understood by the Education of the American People. — The Human Mind more superficially instructed in the United States than in Europe. — No one completely uninstructed. — Reason of this. — Rapidity with which Opinions are diffused even in the half-cultivated States of the West. — Practical Experience more serviceable to the Americans than Book-Learning.

I HAVE but little to add to what I have already said, concerning the influence which the instruction and the habits of the Americans exercise upon the maintenance of their political institutions.

America has hitherto produced very few writers of distinction; it possesses no great historians, and not a single eminent poet.* The inhabitants of that country look upon literature properly so called with a kind of disapprobation; and there are towns of second-rate importance in Europe, in which more literary works are annually published than in the twenty-four States of the Union put together.† The spirit of the Americans is averse to general ideas; it

* This statement was rather too sweeping even in 1833, when M. de Tocqueville wrote. But now, when the list of our historians contains the names of Prescott, Sparks, Bancroft, Motley, Palfrey, and Hildreth, and that of our poets includes those of Longfellow, Bryant, Dana, Sprague, Lowell, and a crowd of others, our author's remark is only curious as evincing the suddenness and rapidity with which literary talent has been developed in the United States. — AM. ED.

† It is not too much to say, that as many books are now annually printed and sold in the United States as in England. Certainly, what is now called "the reading public" is larger in America, in proportion to the population, than in any other country in the world. This is a consequence partly of the wide diffusion of education, which enables so many to read books, and partly of the general prosperity of the people, which enables still more to buy them. Literary pursuits are also held in high honor in society; a successful author is second to no one in estimation with the upper classes, or in favor with the common people. — AM. ED.

does not seek theoretical discoveries. Neither politics nor manufactures direct them to such speculations; and although new laws are perpetually enacted in the United States, no great writers there have hitherto inquired into the general principles of legislation. The Americans have lawyers and commentators, but no jurists; and they furnish examples rather than lessons to the world. The same observation applies to the mechanical arts. In America, the inventions of Europe are adopted with sagacity; they are perfected, and adapted with admirable skill to the wants of the country. Manufactures exist, but the science of manufacture is not cultivated; and they have good workmen, but very few inventors.* Fulton was obliged to proffer his services to foreign nations for a long time, before he was able to devote them to his own country.

The observer who is desirous of forming an opinion on the state of instruction amongst the Anglo-Americans must consider the same object from two different points of view. If he singles out only the learned, he will be astonished to find how few they are; but if he counts the ignorant, the American people will appear to be the most enlightened in the world. The whole population, as I observed in another place, is situated between these two extremes.

In New England, every citizen receives the elementary notions of human knowledge; he is taught, moreover, the doctrines and the evidences of his religion, the history of his country, and the leading features of its Constitution. In the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts, it is extremely rare to find a man imperfectly acquainted with all these things, and a person wholly ignorant of them is a sort of phenomenon.

* This assertion is the very reverse of the truth. In no country in the world, during the last fifty years, has inventive industry been so far developed or so successful as in America. Europe copies and adopts American inventions, but furnishes very few comparatively in return. — AM. ED.

When I compare the Greek and Roman republics with these American States ; the manuscript libraries of the former, and their rude population, with the innumerable journals and the enlightened people of the latter ; when I remember all the attempts which are made to judge the modern republics by the aid of those of antiquity, and to infer what will happen in our time from what took place two thousand years ago, — I am tempted to burn my books, in order to apply none but novel ideas to so novel a condition of society.

What I have said of New England must not, however, be applied indistinctly to the whole Union : as we advance towards the West or the South, the instruction of the people diminishes. In the States which border on the Gulf of Mexico, a certain number of individuals may be found, as in France, who are devoid even of the rudiments of instruction. But there is not a single district in the United States sunk in complete ignorance, and for a very simple reason. The nations of Europe started from the darkness of a barbarous condition, to advance towards the light of civilization : their progress has been unequal ; some of them have improved apace, whilst others have loitered in their course, and some have stopped, and are still sleeping upon the way.

Such has not been the case in the United States. The Anglo-Americans, already civilized, settled upon that territory which their descendants occupy ; they had not to begin to learn, and it was sufficient for them not to forget. Now the children of these same Americans are the persons who, year by year, transport their dwellings into the wilds, and, with their dwellings, their acquired information and their esteem for knowledge. Education has taught them the utility of instruction, and has enabled them to transmit that instruction to their posterity. In the United States, society has no infancy, but it is born in man's estate.

The Americans never use the word "peasant," because they have no idea of the class which that term denotes; the ignorance of more remote ages, the simplicity of rural life, and the rusticity of the villager, have not been preserved amongst them; and they are alike unacquainted with the virtues, the vices, the coarse habits, and the simple graces of an early stage of civilization. At the extreme borders of the Confederate States, upon the confines of society and the wilderness, a population of bold adventurers have taken up their abode, who pierce the solitudes of the American woods, and seek a country there, in order to escape the poverty which awaited them in their native home. As soon as the pioneer reaches the place which is to serve him for a retreat, he fells a few trees and builds a log-house. Nothing can offer a more miserable aspect than these isolated dwellings. The traveller who approaches one of them towards nightfall sees the flicker of the hearth-flame through the chinks in the walls; and at night, if the wind rises, he hears the roof of boughs shake to and fro in the midst of the great forest-trees. Who would not suppose that this poor hut is the asylum of rudeness and ignorance? Yet no sort of comparison can be drawn between the pioneer and the dwelling which shelters him. Everything about him is primitive and wild, but he is himself the result of the labor and experience of eighteen centuries. He wears the dress and speaks the language of cities; he is acquainted with the past, curious about the future, and ready for argument upon the present; he is, in short, a highly civilized being, who consents for a time to inhabit the backwoods, and who penetrates into the wilds of the New World with the Bible, an axe, and some newspapers. It is difficult to imagine the incredible rapidity with which thought circulates in the midst of these deserts.* I do not

* I travelled along a portion of the frontier of the United States in a sort of cart, which was termed the mail. We passed, day and night, with

think that so much intellectual activity exists in the most enlightened and populous districts of France.*

It cannot be doubted that, in the United States, the instruction of the people powerfully contributes to the support of the democratic republic; and such must always be the case, I believe, where the instruction which enlightens the understanding is not separated from the moral education which amends the heart. But I would not exaggerate this advantage, and I am still further from thinking, as so many people do think in Europe, that men can be instantaneously made citizens by teaching them to read and write. True information is mainly derived from experience; and if the Americans had not been gradually accustomed to govern themselves, their book-learning would not help them much at the present day.

I have lived much with the people in the United States, and I cannot express how much I admire their experience and their good sense. An American should never be led to speak of Europe; for he will then probably display

great rapidity, along the roads, which were scarcely marked out through immense forests. When the gloom of the woods became impenetrable, the driver lighted branches of pine, and we journeyed along by the light they cast. From time to time, we came to a hut in the midst of the forest; this was a post-office. The mail dropped an enormous bundle of letters at the door of this isolated dwelling, and we pursued our way at full gallop, leaving the inhabitants of the neighboring log-houses to send for their share of the treasure.

* In 1832, each inhabitant of Michigan paid 23 cents to the post-office revenue; and each inhabitant of the Floridas paid 20 cents. (See National Calendar, 1833, p. 244.) In the same year, each inhabitant of the *Département du Nord* paid not quite 20 cents to the revenue of the French post-office. (See the *Compte rendu de l'Administration des Finances*, 1833, p. 623.) Now the State of Michigan only contained at that time 7 inhabitants per square league, and Florida only 5. The instruction and the commercial activity of these districts are inferior to those of most of the States in the Union; whilst the *Département du Nord*, which contains 3,400 inhabitants per square league, is one of the most enlightened and manufacturing parts of France.

much presumption and very foolish pride. He will take up with those crude and vague notions which are so useful to the ignorant all over the world. But if you question him respecting his own country, the cloud which dimmed his intelligence will immediately disperse; his language will become as clear and precise as his thoughts. He will inform you what his rights are, and by what means he exercises them; he will be able to point out the customs which obtain in the political world. You will find that he is well acquainted with the rules of the administration, and that he is familiar with the mechanism of the laws. The citizen of the United States does not acquire his practical science and his positive notions from books; the instruction he has acquired may have prepared him for receiving those ideas, but it did not furnish them. The American learns to know the laws by participating in the act of legislation; and he takes a lesson in the forms of government from governing. The great work of society is ever going on before his eyes, and, as it were, under his hands.

In the United States, politics are the end and aim of education; in Europe, its principal object is to fit men for private life. The interference of the citizens in public affairs is too rare an occurrence to be provided for beforehand. Upon casting a glance over society in the two hemispheres, these differences are indicated even by their external aspect.

In Europe, we frequently introduce the ideas and habits of private life into public affairs; and as we pass at once from the domestic circle to the government of the state, we may frequently be heard to discuss the great interests of society in the same manner in which we converse with our friends. The Americans, on the other hand, transport the habits of public life into their manners in private; in their country, the jury is introduced into the games of schoolboys, and parliamentary forms are observed in the order of a feast.

THE LAWS CONTRIBUTE MORE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN THE UNITED STATES THAN THE PHYSICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COUNTRY, AND THE MANNERS MORE THAN THE LAWS.

All the Nations of America have a Democratic State of Society. — Yet Democratic Institutions are supported only among the Anglo-Americans. — The Spaniards of South America, as much favored by Physical Causes as the Anglo-Americans, unable to maintain a Democratic Republic. — Mexico, which has adopted the Constitution of the United States, in the same Predicament. — The Anglo-Americans of the West less able to maintain it than those of the East. — Reason of these Differences.

I HAVE remarked that the maintenance of democratic institutions in the United States is attributable to the circumstances, the laws, and the manners of that country.* Most Europeans are acquainted with only the first of these three causes, and they are apt to give it a preponderant importance which it does not really possess.

It is true that the Anglo-Americans settled in the New World in a state of social equality; the low-born and the noble were not to be found amongst them; and professional prejudices were always as unknown as the prejudices of birth. Thus, as the condition of society was democratic, the rule of democracy was established without difficulty. But this circumstance is not peculiar to the United States; almost all the American colonies were founded by men equal amongst themselves, or who became so by inhabiting them. In no one part of the New World have Europeans been able to create an aristocracy. Nevertheless, democratic institutions prosper nowhere but in the United States.

* I remind the reader of the general signification which I give to the word *manners*, — namely, the moral and intellectual characteristics of men in society.

The American Union has no enemies to contend with; it stands in the wilds like an island in the ocean. But the Spaniards of South America were no less isolated by nature; yet their position has not relieved them from the charge of standing armies. They make war upon each other when they have no foreign enemies to oppose; and the Anglo-American democracy is the only one which has hitherto been able to maintain itself in peace.

The territory of the Union presents a boundless field to human activity, and inexhaustible materials for labor. The passion for wealth takes the place of ambition, and the heat of faction is mitigated by a consciousness of prosperity. But in what portion of the globe shall we find more fertile plains, mightier rivers, or more unexplored and inexhaustible riches, than in South America? Yet South America has been unable to maintain democratic institutions. If the welfare of nations depended on their being placed in a remote position, with an unbounded space of habitable territory before them, the Spaniards of South America would have no reason to complain of their fate. And although they might enjoy less prosperity than the inhabitants of the United States, their lot might still be such as to excite the envy of some nations in Europe. There are, however, no nations upon the face of the earth more miserable than those of South America.

Thus, not only are physical causes inadequate to produce results analogous to those which occur in North America, but they cannot raise the population of South America above the level of European states, where they act in a contrary direction. Physical causes do not therefore affect the destiny of nations so much as has been supposed.

I have met with men in New England who were on the point of leaving a country where they might have remained in easy circumstances, to seek their fortune in the wilds. Not far from that region, I found a French popu-

lation in Canada, closely crowded on a narrow territory, although the same wilds were at hand; and whilst the emigrant from the United States purchased an extensive estate with the earnings of a short term of labor, the Canadian paid as much for land as he would have done in France. Thus Nature offers the solitudes of the New World to Europeans also; but they do not always know how to make use of her gifts. Other inhabitants of America have the same physical conditions of prosperity as the Anglo-Americans, but without their laws and their manners; and these people are miserable. The laws and manners of the Anglo-Americans are therefore that special and predominant cause of their greatness which is the object of my inquiry.

I am far from supposing that the American laws are pre-eminently good in themselves: I do not hold them to be applicable to all democratic nations; and several of them seem to me to be dangerous, even in the United States. But it cannot be denied that American legislation, taken as a whole, is extremely well adapted to the genius of the people and the nature of the country which it is intended to govern. The American laws are therefore good, and to them must be attributed a large portion of the success which attends the government of democracy in America: but I do not believe them to be the principal cause of that success; and if they seem to me to have more influence than the nature of the country upon the social happiness of the Americans, there is still reason to believe that their effect is inferior to that produced by the manners of the people.

The Federal laws undoubtedly constitute the most important part of the legislation of the United States. Mexico, which is not less fortunately situated than the Anglo-American Union, has adopted these same laws, but is unable to accustom itself to the government of democracy.

Some other cause is therefore at work, independently of physical circumstances and peculiar laws, which enables the democracy to rule in the United States.

Another still more striking proof may be adduced. Almost all the inhabitants of the territory of the Union are the descendants of a common stock ; they speak the same language, they worship God in the same manner, they are affected by the same physical causes, and they obey the same laws. Whence, then, do their characteristic differences arise ? Why, in the Eastern States of the Union, does the republican government display vigor and regularity, and proceed with mature deliberation ? Whence does it derive the wisdom and the durability which mark its acts, whilst in the Western States, on the contrary, society seems to be ruled by chance ? There, public business is conducted with an irregularity, and a passionate, almost feverish excitement, which do not announce a long or sure duration.

I am no longer comparing the Anglo-Americans with foreign nations ; but I am contrasting them with each other, and endeavoring to discover why they are so unlike. The arguments which are derived from the nature of the country and the difference of legislation are here all set aside. Recourse must be had to some other cause ; and what other cause can there be, except the manners of the people ?

It is in the Eastern States that the Anglo-Americans have been longest accustomed to the government of democracy, and have adopted the habits and conceived the opinions most favorable to its maintenance. Democracy has gradually penetrated into their customs, their opinions, and their forms of social intercourse ; it is to be found in all the details of daily life, as well as in the laws. In the Eastern States, the book instruction and practical education of the people have been most perfected, and religion has

been most thoroughly amalgamated with liberty. Now, these habits, opinions, customs, and convictions are precisely what I have denominated *manners*.

In the Western States, on the contrary, a portion of the same advantages are still wanting. Many of the Americans of the West were born in the woods, and they mix the ideas and customs of savage life with the civilization of their fathers. Their passions are more intense, their religious morality less authoritative, and their convictions less firm. The inhabitants exercise no sort of control over their fellows, for they are scarcely acquainted with each other. The nations of the West display, to a certain extent, the inexperience and the rude habits of a people in their infancy; for, although they are composed of old elements, their assemblage is of recent date.

The manners of the Americans of the United States are, then, the peculiar cause which renders that people the only one of the American nations that is able to support a democratic government, and it is the influence of manners which produces the different degrees of order and prosperity that may be distinguished in the several Anglo-American democracies. Thus the effect which the geographical position of a country may have upon the duration of democratic institutions is exaggerated in Europe. Too much importance is attributed to legislation, too little to manners. These three great causes serve, no doubt, to regulate and direct the American democracy; but if they were to be classed in their proper order, I should say that physical circumstances are less efficient than the laws, and the laws infinitely less so than the manners of the people. I am convinced that the most advantageous situation and the best possible laws cannot maintain a constitution in spite of the manners of a country; whilst the latter may turn to some advantage the most unfavorable positions and the worst laws. The importance of manners is a common

truth to which study and experience incessantly direct our attention. It may be regarded as a central point in the range of observation, and the common termination of all my inquiries. So seriously do I insist upon this head, that, if I have hitherto failed in making the reader feel the important influence of the practical experience, the habits, the opinions, in short, of the manners of the Americans, upon the maintenance of their institutions, I have failed in the principal object of my work.

WHETHER LAWS AND MANNERS ARE SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN OTHER COUNTRIES BESIDES AMERICA.

The Anglo-Americans, if transported into Europe, would be obliged to modify their Laws. — Distinction to be made between Democratic Institutions and American Institutions. — Democratic Laws may be conceived better than, or at least different from, those which the American Democracy has adopted. — The Example of America only proves that it is possible, by the Aid of Manners and Legislation, to regulate Democracy.

I HAVE asserted that the success of democratic institutions in the United States is more attributable to the laws themselves, and the manners of the people, than to the nature of the country. But does it follow that the same causes would of themselves produce the same results, if they were put in operation elsewhere; and if the country is no adequate substitute for laws and manners, can laws and manners in their turn take the place of a country? It will readily be understood that the elements of a reply to this question are wanting: other inhabitants are to be found in the New World besides the Anglo-Americans, and, as these are affected by the same physical circumstances as the latter, they may fairly be compared with them.

But there are no nations out of America which have adopted the same laws and manners, though destitute of the physical advantages peculiar to the Anglo-Americans. No standard of comparison therefore exists, and we can only hazard an opinion.

It appears to me, in the first place, that a careful distinction must be made between the institutions of the United States and democratic institutions in general. When I reflect upon the state of Europe, its mighty nations, its populous cities, its formidable armies, and the complex nature of its politics, I cannot suppose that even the Anglo-Americans, if they were transported to our hemisphere, with their ideas, their religion, and their manners, could exist without considerably altering their laws. But a democratic nation may be imagined, organized differently from the American people. Is it then impossible to conceive a government really established upon the will of the majority, but in which the majority, repressing its natural instinct of equality, should consent, with a view to the order and the stability of the state, to invest a family or an individual with all the attributes of executive power? Might not a democratic society be imagined, in which the forces of the nation would be more centralized than they are in the United States; where the people would exercise a less direct and less irresistible influence upon public affairs, and yet every citizen, invested with certain rights, would participate, within his sphere, in the conduct of the government. What I have seen amongst the Anglo-Americans induces me to believe that democratic institutions of this kind, prudently introduced into society, so as gradually to mix with the habits, and to be interfused with the opinions of the people, might exist in other countries besides America. If the laws of the United States were the only imaginable democratic laws, or the most perfect which it is possible to conceive, I should admit that their success

in America affords no proof of the success of democratic institutions in general, in a country less favored by nature. But as the laws of America appear to me to be defective in several respects, and as I can readily imagine others, the peculiar advantages of that country do not prove to me that democratic institutions cannot succeed in a nation less favored by circumstances, if ruled by better laws.

If human nature were different in America from what it is elsewhere, or if the social condition of the Americans created habits and opinions amongst them different from those which originate in the same social condition in the Old World, the American democracies would afford no means of predicting what may occur in other democracies. If the Americans displayed the same propensities as all other democratic nations, and if their legislators had relied upon the nature of the country and the favor of circumstances to restrain those propensities within due limits, the prosperity of the United States, being attributable to purely physical causes, would afford no encouragement to a people inclined to imitate their example, without sharing their natural advantages. But neither of these suppositions is borne out by facts.

In America, the same passions are to be met with as in Europe, — some originating in human nature, others in the democratic condition of society. Thus, in the United States, I found that restlessness of heart which is natural to men when all ranks are nearly equal, and the chances of elevation are the same to all. I found there the democratic feeling of envy expressed under a thousand different forms. I remarked that the people there frequently displayed, in the conduct of affairs, a mixture of ignorance and presumption; and I inferred that, in America, men are liable to the same failings and exposed to the same evils as amongst ourselves. But, upon examining the state

of society more attentively, I speedily discovered that the Americans had made great and successful efforts to counteract these imperfections of human nature, and to correct the natural defects of democracy. Their divers municipal laws appeared to me so many means of restraining the restless ambition of the citizens within a narrow sphere, and of turning those same passions which might have worked havoc in the state, to the good of the township or the parish. The American legislators seem to have succeeded to some extent in opposing the idea of right to the feelings of envy ; the permanence of religious morality to the continual shifting of politics ; the experience of the people to their theoretical ignorance ; and their practical knowledge of business to the impatience of their desires.

The Americans, then, have not relied upon the nature of their country to counterpoise those dangers which originate in their Constitution and their political laws. To evils which are common to all democratic nations, they have applied remedies which none but themselves had ever thought of ; and, although they were the first to make the experiment, they have succeeded in it. The manners and laws of the Americans are not the only ones which may suit a democratic people ; but the Americans have shown that it would be wrong to despair of regulating democracy by the aid of manners and laws. If other nations should borrow this general and pregnant idea from the Americans, without, however, intending to imitate them in the peculiar application which they have made of it ; if they should attempt to fit themselves for that social condition which it seems to be the will of Providence to impose upon the generations of this age, and so to escape from the despotism or the anarchy which threatens them, — what reason is there to suppose that their efforts would not be crowned with success ? The organization and the establishment of democracy in Christendom is the great

political problem of our times. The Americans, unquestionably, have not resolved this problem, but they furnish useful data to those who undertake to resolve it.

IMPORTANCE OF WHAT PRECEDES WITH RESPECT TO THE
STATE OF EUROPE.

It may readily be discovered with what intention I undertook the foregoing inquiries. The question here discussed is interesting not only to the United States, but to the whole world; it concerns, not a nation only, but all mankind. If those nations whose social condition is democratic could remain free only while they inhabit uncultivated regions, we must despair of the future destiny of the human race; for democracy is rapidly acquiring a more extended sway, and the wilds are gradually peopled with men. If it were true that laws and manners are insufficient to maintain democratic institutions, what refuge would remain open to the nations, except the despotism of one man? I am aware that there are many worthy persons at the present time who are not alarmed at this alternative, and who are so tired of liberty as to be glad of repose far from its storms. But these persons are ill acquainted with the haven towards which they are bound. Preoccupied by their remembrances, they judge of absolute power by what it has been, and not by what it might become in our times.

If absolute power were re-established amongst the democratic nations of Europe, I am persuaded that it would assume a new form, and appear under features unknown to our fathers. There was a time in Europe when the laws and the consent of the people had invested princes with almost unlimited authority, but they scarcely ever availed themselves of it. I do not speak of the prerogatives of the nobility, of the authority of high courts of justice, of

corporations and their chartered rights, or of provincial privileges, which served to break the blows of sovereign authority, and to keep up a spirit of resistance in the nation. Independently of these political institutions, — which, however opposed they might be to personal liberty, served to keep alive the love of freedom in the mind, and which may be esteemed useful in this respect, — the manners and opinions of the nation confined the royal authority within barriers which were not less powerful because less conspicuous. Religion, the affections of the people, the benevolence of the prince, the sense of honor, family pride, provincial prejudices, custom, and public opinion limited the power of kings, and restrained their authority within an invisible circle. The constitution of nations was despotic at that time, but their manners were free. Princes had the right, but they had neither the means nor the desire, of doing whatever they pleased.

But what now remains of those barriers which formerly arrested tyranny? Since religion has lost its empire over the souls of men, the most prominent boundary which divided good from evil is overthrown; everything seems doubtful and indeterminate in the moral world; kings and nations are guided by chance, and none can say where are the natural limits of despotism and the bounds of license. Long revolutions have forever destroyed the respect which surrounded the rulers of the state; and, since they have been relieved from the burden of public esteem, princes may henceforward surrender themselves without fear to the intoxication of arbitrary power.

When kings find that the hearts of their subjects are turned towards them, they are clement, because they are conscious of their strength; and they are chary of the affection of their people, because the affection of their people is the bulwark of the throne. A mutual interchange of good-will then takes place between the prince

and the people, which resembles the gracious intercourse of domestic life. The subjects may murmur at the sovereign's decree, but they are grieved to displease him; and the sovereign chastises his subjects with the light hand of parental affection.

But when once the spell of royalty is broken in the tumult of revolution, — when successive monarchs have crossed the throne, so as alternately to display to the people the weakness of their right, and the harshness of their power, — the sovereign is no longer regarded by any as the father of the state, and he is feared by all as its master. If he is weak, he is despised; if he is strong, he is detested. He is himself full of animosity and alarm; he finds that he is a stranger in his own country, and he treats his subjects like conquered enemies.

When the provinces and the towns formed so many different nations in the midst of their common country, each of them had a will of its own, which was opposed to the general spirit of subjection; but, now that all the parts of the same empire, after having lost their immunities, their customs, their prejudices, their traditions, and even their names, have become accustomed to obey the same laws, it is not more difficult to oppress them all together than it was formerly to oppress one of them separately.

Whilst the nobles enjoyed their power, and indeed long after that power was lost, the honor of aristocracy conferred an extraordinary degree of force upon their personal opposition. Men could then be found who, notwithstanding their weakness, still entertained a high opinion of their personal value, and dared to cope single-handed with the public authority. But at the present day, when all ranks are more and more confounded, — when the individual disappears in the throng, and is easily lost in the midst of a common obscurity, when the honor of monarchy has almost lost its power, without being succeeded by virtue,

and when nothing can enable man to rise above himself, — who shall say at what point the exigencies of power and the servility of weakness will stop ?

As long as family feeling was kept alive, the antagonist of oppression was never alone ; he looked about him, and found his clients, his hereditary friends, and his kinsfolk. If this support was wanting, he felt himself sustained by his ancestors, and animated by his posterity. But when patrimonial estates are divided, and when a few years suffice to confound the distinctions of race, where can family feeling be found ? What force can there be in the customs of a country which has changed, and is still perpetually changing, its aspect, — in which every act of tyranny already has a precedent, and every crime an example, — in which there is nothing so old that its antiquity can save it from destruction, and nothing so unparalleled that its novelty can prevent it from being done ? What resistance can be offered by manners of so pliant a make that they have already often yielded ? What strength can even public opinion have retained, when no twenty persons are connected by a common tie, — when not a man, nor a family, nor chartered corporation, nor class, nor free institution, has the power of representing or exerting that opinion, — and when every citizen, being equally weak, equally poor, and equally isolated, has only his personal impotence to oppose to the organized force of the government ?

The annals of France furnish nothing analogous to the condition in which that country might then be thrown. But it may more aptly be assimilated to the times of old, and to those hideous eras of Roman oppression, when the manners of the people were corrupted, their traditions obliterated, their habits destroyed, their opinions shaken, and freedom, expelled from the laws, could find no refuge in the land ; when nothing protected the citizens, and the citizens no longer protected themselves ; when human

nature was the sport of man, and princes wearied out the clemency of Heaven before they exhausted the patience of their subjects. Those who hope to revive the monarchy of Henry IV. or of Louis XIV. appear to me to be afflicted with mental blindness ; and when I consider the present condition of several European nations, — a condition to which all the others tend, — I am led to believe that they will soon be left with no other alternative than democratic liberty or the tyranny of the Cæsars.

Is not this deserving of consideration ? If men must really come to this point, that they are to be entirely emancipated or entirely enslaved, — all their rights to be made equal, or all to be taken away from them ; if the rulers of society were compelled either gradually to raise the crowd to their own level, or to allow all the citizens to fall below that of humanity, — would not the doubts of many be resolved, the consciences of many be confirmed, and the community prepared to make great sacrifices with little difficulty ? In that case, the gradual growth of democratic manners and institutions should be regarded, not as the best, but as the only means of preserving freedom ; and, without liking the government of democracy, it might be adopted as the most applicable, and the fairest remedy for the present ills of society.

It is difficult to make the people participate in the government ; but it is still more difficult to supply them with experience, and to inspire them with the feelings which they need in order to govern well. I grant that the wishes of the democracy are capricious, its instruments rude, its laws imperfect. But, if it were true that soon no just medium would exist between the rule of democracy and the dominion of a single man, should we not rather incline towards the former, than submit voluntarily to the latter ? And if complete equality be our fate, is it not better to be levelled by free institutions than by a despot ?

Those who, after having read this book, should imagine that my intention in writing it was to propose the laws and manners of the Anglo-Americans for the imitation of all democratic communities, would make a great mistake ; they must have paid more attention to the form than to the substance of my thought. My aim has been to show, by the example of America, that laws, and especially manners, may allow a democratic people to remain free. But I am very far from thinking that we ought to follow the example of the American democracy, and copy the means which it has employed to attain this end ; for I am well aware of the influence which the nature of a country and its political antecedents exercise upon its political constitution ; and I should regard it as a great misfortune for mankind if liberty were to exist all over the world under the same features.

But I am of opinion that, if we do not succeed in gradually introducing democratic institutions into France ; if we despair of imparting to all the citizens those ideas and sentiments which first prepare them for freedom, and afterwards allow them to enjoy it, — there will be no independence at all, either for the middling classes or the nobility, for the poor or for the rich, but an equal tyranny over all ; and I foresee that, if the peaceable dominion of the majority be not founded amongst us in time, we shall sooner or later fall under the unlimited authority of a single man.