changes in the state of property and of persons, and almost all these changes have been accompanied by a great deal of anarchy and license, because they were done by the least civilized portion of the nation against the portion that was most civilized.

From that have come the two opposite tendencies that I previously showed. As long as the democratic revolution was in its heat, the men occupied with destroying the ancient aristocratic powers that fought against it appeared animated by a great spirit of independence; and as the victory of equality became more complete, they abandoned themselves little by little to the natural instincts that arose from this same equality, and they reinforced and centralized the social power. They had wanted to be free in order to be able to make themselves equal; and as equality became more established with the help of liberty, it made liberty more difficult for them.

These two states have not always been successive. Our fathers have shown how a people could organize an immense tyranny within itself at the very moment when it escaped from the authority of the nobles and braved the power of all the kings, teaching the world at the same time the way to conquer its independence and to lose it.

The men of today notice that the old powers are collapsing on all sides; they see all the old influences dying, all the old barriers falling; that disturbs the judgment of the most able; they pay attention only to the prodigious revolution which is taking place before their eyes, and they believe that humanity is going to fall forever into anarchy. If they considered the final consequences of this revolution, they would perhaps imagine other fears.

As for me, I do not trust, I confess, the spirit of liberty which seems to animate my contemporaries; I see well that the nations of today are turbulent; but I do not find clearly that they are liberal, and I am afraid that at the end of these agitations, which make all thrones totter, sovereigns will find themselves stronger than they were [I am afraid finally that in this century of license, everything is being prepared for the enslavement of the generations to come].

CHAPTER 6
What Type of Despotism
Democratic Nations Have to Fear

I had noticed during my stay in the United States that a democratic social state similar to that of the Americans could offer singular opportunities for the establishment of despotism, and I had seen on my return to Europe how most of our princes had already made use of the ideas, sentiments and

a. What the character of military despotism would be if it came to be established among a democratic people.

Idea to treat either at military spirit or at administrative despotism. Probably at the first. To blend into a chapter rather than to treat separately.

1. The first is after what I said about the turbulent spirit of the army, about its habitual discontent, about the place that it occupies in society. I could show these sentiments leading the army to seize the government. I would then say in what spirit it would govern.

2. Here is the second place: after painting administrative despotism, I could ask myself if it would not be changed for the worse by its combination with military government (something possible). I would prove that things would hardly be worse. I would then pass to the combination of this same despotism with sovereignty of the people and I would prove that things would hardly be better.

3. Finally couldn’t I place this idea separately (illegible word)? (YTC, CV, 2, pp. 9–10).

b. "Despotism, tyrannical, arbitrary and absolute government of only one man (or of only one power must be added).

"The principle of despotic States is that only one man governs there entirely according to his will, having absolutely no other laws than that of his caprices. Encyclopédie. This was written before we had seen the despotism of an assembly under the Republic."

In another place in the Rubish: "This word despotism is unfortunate because its old meaning does not exactly correspond to the new meaning that I want to give it" (Rubish, 2).
needs that arose from that social state, in order to expand the circle of their power.

That led me to believe that Christian nations would end perhaps by suffering some oppression similar to that which weighed formerly on several of the peoples of antiquity.

A more detailed examination of the subject and five years of new meditations have not lessened my fears, but they have changed their object.

We have never in past centuries seen a sovereign so absolute and so powerful that he undertook to administer by himself, and without the help of secondary powers, all the parts of a great empire; there is none who attempted to subject all his subjects indiscriminately to the details of a uniform rule, or who descended to the side of each one of his subjects in order to rule over him and to lead him. The idea of such an undertaking had never occurred to the human mind, and if a man ever happened to imagine it, the insufficiency of enlightenment, the imperfection of administrative procedures, and above all the natural obstacles that inequality of conditions created would have soon stopped him in the execution of such a vast design.

We see that in the time of the greatest power of the Caesars, the different peoples who inhabited the Roman world had still kept diverse customs and mores. Although subjected to the same monarch, most of the provinces were administered separately; they were full of powerful and active municipalities, and although all the government of the empire was concentrated in the hands of the emperor alone, and although he remained always, as needed, the arbiter of all things, the details of social life and of individual existence ordinarily escaped his control.

The emperors possessed, it is true, an immense power without counterbalance, which allowed them to give themselves freely to their bizarre inclinations and to use the entire strength of the State to satisfy them; they often happened to abuse this power in order arbitrarily to take away a citizen’s property or his life. Their tyranny weighed prodigiously on a few; but it did not extend to a great number; it was tied to a few great principal matters and neglected the rest; it was violent and limited.

d. 7 March 1838.

I said in the first part of this book that the new societies could well finally arrive at something similar to what we saw at the fall of the Roman empire. There is no longer any middle ground. I said, between the government of all and the tyranny of the Caesars.

Four years of new meditations made me consider the same matter from another point of view and convinced me that if men are enslaved, they will be so in an entirely new fashion and will exhibit a spectacle for which the past has not prepared us.

There was something of the great, of the colossal in the Roman tyranny, of the aristocratic, the magnificent, of the master of slaves, of the barbaric, of the pagan. All things that cannot habitually be found in a civilized and democratic society.

New society, regular, peaceful, ruled with art and uniformity, mixture of college, seminary, regiment, asleep rather than chained in the arms of clerks and soldiers, bureaucratic tyranny, fond of red tape, very repressive of all impulse, destroying the will for great things in germ, but mild and regular, equal for all. A sort of paternity without the purpose of bringing the children to manhood.

That is the real and original picture. That of the first volume was declaratory, common, hackneyed and false (Rabish, 2).

To reflect.

If, instead of the disordered despotism of the army rabble, idea already known, it would not be better to introduce here the portrait of a regulated despotism in which everything happens with as much order, meticulousness, and tyranny as in a barracks.

If instead of that I adopt the ancient idea of military despotism, there is at least a new notion to show.

It is military despotism following revolution and democratic anarchy, becoming established in a time when everything has been overturned and when nothing has yet settled down in positions, habits, ideas, tastes, when everything is in question, when the limits of the just and the unjust are abolished, when even the limits of practice and custom no longer exist, when we are accustomed to everything, when we expect anything in advance, when nothing is absolutely unforeseen and everything possible.

[To the side] Perhaps the image of the barracks could be placed after that as the port, the definitive state (YTC, Cvd, pp. 15–16).

It seems that, if despotism came to be established among the democratic nations of today, it would have other characteristics; it would be more extensive and milder, and it would degrade men without tormenting them. I do not doubt that, in centuries of enlightenment and equality such as ours, sovereigns might have succeeded more easily in uniting all public powers in their hands alone, and in penetrating more habitually and more deeply into the circle of private interests, than any of those of antiquity were ever able to do. But this same equality, which facilitates despotism, tempers it; we have seen how, as men are more similar and more equal, public mores become more humane and milder; when no citizen has a great power or great wealth, tyranny lacks, in a way, opportunity and theater. Since all fortunes are mediocre, passions are naturally contained, imagination limited, pleasures simple. This universal moderation moderates the sovereign himself and stops within certain limits the disordered impulse of his desires.

Apart from these reasons drawn from the very nature of the social state, I could add many others that would take me beyond my subject; but I want to keep myself within the limits that I have set for myself. Democratic governments will be able to become violent and even cruel in certain moments of great agitation and great dangers; but these crises will be rare and passing.

When I think about the petty passions of the men of our times, about the softness of their mores, about the extent of their enlightenment, about the purity of their religion, about the mildness of their morality, about their painstaking and steady habits, about the restraint that they nearly all maintain in vice as in virtue, I am not afraid that they will find in their leaders tyrants, but rather tutors. So I think that the type of oppression by which democratic peoples are threatened will resemble nothing of what preceded it in the world; our contemporaries cannot find the image of it in their memories. I seek in vain myself for an expression that exactly reproduces the idea that I am forming of it and includes it; [the thing that I want to speak about is new, and men have not yet created the expression which must portray it.] the old words of despotism and of tyranny do not work. The thing is new, so I must try to define it, since I cannot name it.6

I want to imagine under what new features despotism could present itself to the world; I see an innumerable crowd of similar and equal men who spin around restlessly, in order to gain small and vulgar pleasures with which they fill their souls. Each one of them, withdrawn apart, is like a stranger to the destiny of all the others; his children and his particular friends form e. The despotism that I fear for the generations to come has no precedent in the world and lacks a name. I will call it administrative despotism1 for lack of anything better. I would call it paternal if it aimed at making men free and if it set a limit for itself like paternity.

[To the side: To be completely true, it is necessary to make it understood that equality can, it is true, lead as far as a violent and cruel oppression because of the weakness of individuals, but that is a rare and exceptional event. The ordinary course is one that I am pointing out.]

If you attentively examine all the tyrannies known in history, you see that they have all consisted of a more or less unlimited power entrusted to one or several men and which they used violently against a few. It was by its violence rather than by its generality that this tyranny made itself conspicuous.

[In the margin: It is in this portrait that all the originality and the depth of my idea resides. What I have at the end of my first work was hackneyed and superficial.]

(i) <Apply myself to finding a name for it. That is important> (Rubish, 2).

This difficulty in finding new words recalls Montesquieu who, in the foreword of L’Esprit des lois (Œuvres complètes, Paris: Pléiade, 1951, II, p. 227), writes: “I had new ideas; it was very necessary to find new words, or to give new meanings to old ones.”


f. Liberty in the very midst of these diversions is always serious. But there is nothing so joyful as despotism. The sight of human miseries, the unhappy are its natural enemies. It loves on the contrary to find the image of joy everywhere in its path, and it is pleased with games and spectacles. However timid it is by its nature, it does not fear the excesses of a licentious gaiety; and the foulest voluptuous pleasures do not frighten it. No one desires more than it does that peoples enjoy themselves, provided that they think only about enjoying themselves; and it willingly intoxicates them with pleasures so that they do more easily without happiness (YTC, CVD, p. 12).

In a similar fragment, on p. 13 of the same notebook, this sentence is found: “Only novice despots are enemies of joy. Free governments seek to give men happiness rather than pleasure” (YTC, CVD, p. 13). The rubish contains an identical passage.
for him the entire human species; as for the remainder of his fellow citizens, he is next to them, but he does not see them; he touches them without feeling them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone, and if he still has a family, you can say that at least he no longer has a country.

Above those men arises an immense and tutelary power that alone takes charge of assuring their enjoyment and of looking after their fate. It is absolute, detailed, regular, far-sighted and mild. It would resemble paternal power if, like it, it had as a goal to prepare men for manhood; but on the contrary it seeks only to fix them irrevocably in childhood; it likes the citizens to enjoy themselves, provided that they think only about enjoying themselves. It works willingly for their happiness; but it wants to be the

unique agent for it and the sole arbiter; it attends to their security, provides for their needs, facilitates their pleasures, conducts their principal affairs, directs their industry, settles their estates, divides their inheritances; how can it not remove entirely from them the trouble to think and the difficulty of living?

This is how it makes the use of free will less useful and rarer every day; how it encloses the action of the will within a smaller space and little by little steals from each citizen even the use of himself. Equality has prepared men for all these things; it has disposed men to bear them and often even to regard them as a benefit.

without rooted free institutions, you could go perpetually from anarchy to despotism and from despotism to anarchy without ever settling down? No, despotism would finish by taking root, growing and finally covering the whole country with its harmful shadow.

If that is true, it must be said. It would be an order of ideas that could be developed with advantage and with coloring.

You could believe that equality gives too much taste for independence for despotism to be lasting, and too few habits of independence and means of defending it for liberty to be lasting.

I believe, after all, that all the movement of my (illegible word), which is the tendency of democratic societies toward despotism, is true and must remain, but it must be amply inserted somewhere that this tendency does not exclude a great deal of anarchy before and during this gradual but not continuous march toward despotism.

Equality, without rooted free institutions, leading to anarchy almost as energetically as to despotism (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 48–49).

k. Toward the end of the manuscript of the chapter: "#The aristocracy of England is the only one that knows how to defend itself and that has offered liberty to men at the cost of equality; it will fall, but it will fall slowly, and with glory."

m. There are men who have no will to distinguish themselves from their fellows; there are others who have, on the contrary, a permanent and continual will to do so. There are others finally who make only small efforts in order to raise themselves above the earth and who immediately fall back. The latter are the unhappiest of all; for they have the troubles of ambition without having the dubious pleasures of it.

All of man is in the will. His entire future is hidden there as in a germ that the first ray of good fortune comes to make fruitful. There are women who put qualities of character before everything, because those qualities provide the tranquillity of every day, and for those women the idea of happiness does not go beyond the tranquillity and peacefulness of the household. Women of that kind recall to me those men who prefer the type of social paralysis given by despotism to the agitation and the great emotions of liberty. Both hold the same place in my estimation (YTC, CVv, p. 56).
After having thus taken each individual one by one into its powerful hands, and having molded him as it pleases, the sovereign power extends its arms over the entire society; it covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated, minute, and uniform rules, which the most original minds and the most vigorous souls cannot break through to go beyond the crowd; it does not break wills, but it softens them, bends them and directs them; [*in certain moments of great passions and great dangers, the sovereign power becomes suddenly violent and arbitrary. Habitually it is moderate, benevolent, regular and humane*] it rarely forces action, but it constantly opposes your acting; it does not destroy, it prevents birth; it does not tyrannize, it hinders, it represses, it enervates, it extinguishes, it stupifies, and finally it reduces each nation to being nothing more than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd.  

I have always believed that this sort of servitude, regulated, mild and peaceful, of which I have just done the portrait, could be combined better than we imagine with some of the external forms of liberty, and that it would not be impossible for it to be established in the very shadow of the sovereignty of the people.  

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n. On a loose sheet of the manuscript:

Centralization./

Show well that the administrative despotism that I am speaking about is independent of representative, liberal or revolutionary institutions, in a word, of political power; that whether the political world is led by an absolute king, by one or several assemblies, whether it is contested in the name of liberty or of order, whether it even falls into anarchy, whether it becomes weak and is divided, the action of the administrative power will be neither less continuous nor less strong, nor less overwhelming.

[To the side: The man or class that puts the administrative machine in motion can change without the machine changing. You can argue in order to know who will hold the instrument of tyranny, but the instrument remains the same.]

It is a true distinction and one very important to make in order to dispel the cloud that exists in the mind of the reader every time that you threaten with tyranny the men of today who live amid anarchy and who see political power vacillate or become weak./

[To the side: A great political anarchy and an overwhelming administrative despotism./

4 May 1838.]
[I suppose that a democratic nation, after destroying within it all the secondary powers, establishes in its midst a very inquisitorial, very extensive, very centralized, very powerful executive power, that it confers on this power the right to conduct all the details of public affairs and to lead a part of private affairs, that it put [sic] individuals in a strict and daily dependence on this power, but that it makes this executive power itself depend on an elected legislature which, without governing, traces the principal rules of the government.

I go still further and I suppose that the administration, instead of being make such good use, and removes from them the troubles and the worries of government in order to deliver them entirely to concerns about their private fortunes.

So the State is full of solicitude for the happiness of the citizens, but it wants to be the unique agent and the sole (illegible word) of it. It is the State that takes care of providing their security, facilitating their pleasures, directing the principal affairs; the State itself creates roads, digs canals, directs industries, divides inheritances. It may even be able to plow the earth and finally take away from each man even the difficulty of living!

Equality of conditions has prepared men for all these things; it has disposed them to bear them and often even to regard them as a good.

This is how, aiding itself sometimes with the vices of men, sometimes with their weaknesses, often with their inexperience, the central power little by little and without effort takes hold of the entire life of a democratic people. It does not tear their rights away from them; their rights are abandoned to it. It does not do violence to mores [v: sentiments]; it does not overturn ideas, but it gently directs both toward servitude.

Here it is, acknowledged arbiter of everything. Society does nothing for itself, and it does everything. Divided from his fellows, each citizen thinks only of himself. The source of public virtues has dried up.

[What will the first tyrant who is coming be called? I do not know, but he is approaching. What is still missing for this deceptive symbol of public order to disappear and for a profound and incurable disorder to be revealed?]

What more is needed for this sublime authority, for this visible providence that we have established among us to be able to trample underfoot the most holy laws, do violence as it pleases to our hearts and walk over our heads? War. Peace has prepared despotism, war establishes it.

[In the margin: Not only as a consequence of victory, but war alone is the need for power and for concentration that it creates.

A new aristocracy of soldiers is the only one that seems to me still practical.]] (YTC, CVd, pp. 3–4, 8–9, 9–10, 10–12).

There are several variants of these passages in the same pages. In another place, Tocqueville repeats: “When I said that there was no more aristocracy possible, I was mistaken; you can still have the aristocracy of men of war” (YTC, CVd, p. 26).

alongside the legislative chambers, is in the very legislature, as was seen in France at the time of the Convention, so that the same elected power makes the law and executes it even in its smallest details.

All that means, if I am not mistaken, that after allowing the sovereign power as a master to direct each citizen [v: particular wills] and to bend him every day as it pleases, the sovereign itself is subjected from time to time to the general will [volontés générales: (Translator)] of the nation.

Our contemporaries are incessantly tormented by two hostile passions: they feel the need to be led and the desire to remain free. Unable to destroy either the one or the other of these opposite instincts, they work hard to satisfy both at the same time. They imagine a unique, tutelary, omnipotent power, but elected by the citizens. They combine centralization and sovereignty of the people. That gives them some relief. They console themselves about being in tutelage by thinking that they have chosen their tutors themselves. Each individual endures being bound, because he sees that it is not a man or a class, but the people itself that holds the end of the chain.

In this system, the citizens emerge for a moment from dependency in order to indicate their master, and return to it.9

p. The French believe that centralization is French. They are wrong; it is democratic and I dare to predict that all peoples whose social state will be the same and who follow only the instincts that this social state suggests will arrive at the point where we are.10

Destroy classes, equalize ranks, make men similar, and you will see power become centralized as if by itself, whatever the country, the genius of the people or the state of enlightenment. Particular circumstances will be able to hasten the natural movement or slow it down, but not stop it or create an opposite one.

[To the side: Contained within certain limits, centralization is a necessary fact, and I add that it is a fact about which we must be glad.]

A strong and intelligent central power is one of the first political necessities in centuries of equality. Acknowledge it boldly) (Rushb, 2).

Already in 1828, in an already quoted letter to Gustave de Beaumont, Tocqueville said of Edward I: “He reestablished order and made good civil laws which, as you know, often make people forget about good political laws” (Correspondance avec Beaumont, OC, VIII, 1, p. 33).

q. “This is seen above all today in the nations of Europe, still half filled with liberal passions that arose from the struggle with aristocracy, working hard to find a form of
There are many men today who accommodate themselves very easily to this type of compromise between administrative despotism and sovereignty of the people, and who think they have guaranteed the liberty of individuals when it is to the national power that they deliver that liberty. That is not enough for me. The nature of the master is much less important to me than the obedience.

I will not deny, however, that such a constitution is infinitely preferable to one that, after concentrating all powers, would put them in the hands of an unaccountable man or body. Of all the different forms that democratic despotism could take, the latter would assuredly be the worst.

When the sovereign is elected or closely supervised by a legislature truly elected and independent, the oppression that it can make individuals suffer is sometimes greater; but the oppression is always less degrading because each citizen, when he is being hindered and when he is reduced to powerlessness, can still imagine that by obeying he is only submitting to himself, and that it is to one of his desires that he is sacrificing all the rest. 7

I understand equally that, when the sovereign represents the nation and depends on it, the strength and the rights that are taken from each citizen do not serve only the leader of the State, but profit the State itself, and that individuals gain some advantage from the sacrifice of their independence that they have made to the public.

[I understand also that when public opinion draws certain limits and can keep the sovereign power within them, tyranny properly speaking is little to be feared, or at least it can never become general. Thus it is not the tyranny of the social power that is the most to fear, but its regular use.] 8

To create a national representation in a very centralized country, is therefore to diminish the evil that extreme centralization can produce, but not to destroy it. 9

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7. In the margin: "<This is not relevant because I have already ruled out the idea of tyranny above.>"
8. Title on a jacket:
That the instinct of democratic peoples is to want one great assembly of its representatives rather than secondary assemblies. That a government that aims at tyranny among a democratic people can tolerate a great general representation [(it is often obliged to do so)], but must never allow secondary assemblies [(which is usually easy for it)].

[Within the jacket] Unique assembly.
If I were secretly a friend of absolute power and were, however, forced to grant my country the forms of liberty, I would seek first to untangle among free institutions those that a democratic people imagines the best, that it requires with the most authority, and that its leaders cannot refuse to it without danger; I would soon discover that what it asks above all, still less by reasoning than by instinct, is one general assembly of its representatives. All the rest seems doubtful or indifferent to it, but this first axiom of its politics seems principal and almost unique to it. So I would hasten to yield to this irresistible desire of an emerging democracy.

I would allow the free will of all the citizens to be represented in one assembly, but I would want it to express itself only there. I would grant independence for great affairs; I would keep despotism for small ones, so that if I were forced to tolerate liberty in the laws, I would at least prevent liberty from becoming established in habits.

[In the margin: So I would limit myself to making a magnificent exception to the general rule of servitude, following this principle of logic that the exception proves the rule and confirms it.]

So I would allow the deputies of the whole country to deliberate on peace and war, regulate the finances of the State, its prosperity, its industry, its life, but I would prevent at all cost the inhabitants [v: representatives] of a canton from having the liberty to settle things among themselves. 8

A great legislative body placed at the center of a democratic people manifests the present independence of this people, but it cannot ever guarantee its future independence.

Since it is at the very same time provided with a great material strength and an immense moral power, since it alone has the right to speak in the general silence, since it alone can act amid the universal weakness, it feels itself above all the laws; it is free
I see clearly that, in this way, individual intervention is kept in the most important affairs; but it is no less suppressed in the small ones and the particular ones. We forget that it is dangerous, above all, to enslave men from all the rules and sheltered from all points of resistance. So it bends wills as it wishes, abolishes rights, alters or changes mores. And if it comes finally to be destroyed or to destroy itself, the habits of servility that it created survive it.

[To the side: You bring to the national representation men who have received no preliminary and in a way primary education in the representative system; they appear ignorant, undisciplined, indecisive, confused; you then say that it is the representative system which is worth nothing and you distance yourself from it.

All that I see and hear since my arrival in Paris (April 1837) shows me that in a lively way.

To concentrate all the political life of a people in one assembly is to give to liberty only a single head and to expose it to perishing with one blow.

So as long as a free institution of this nature remains isolated, it always leaves fair hopes to despotism; it is an evil that carries its remedy with it (YTC, CVd, pp. 45–48).

There are other versions of this paragraph in CVd, pp. 48–52. Following the coup d'état of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, Tocqueville will abandon all political activity. In February 1832, he writes to a friend, with an entirely similar tone:

I have refused any type of candidacy for the next elections, not wanting to have the appearance of taking seriously the parody of a free government that is going to be played. You know that the new assembly is nothing because it has no publicity and can only reject the budget without being able to amend it, and you have learned undoubtedly that the candidates who would want to oppose those of the government cannot either speak to the voters, or write to them, or form committees, or travel across the country without risk of being arrested; that in a word the new power pursues its plan to govern with the aid of the peasants and the soldiers, borrowing from democracy only its worst principle, the brutal strength of numbers, the universal vote amid the silence and the darkness that despotism creates. You understand that it is better to write books than to get involved in such a mess (Letter of Tocqueville to Milnes, 9 February 1832. With the kind permission of Trinity College, Cambridge. Houghton papers, 25/209).

u. In the margin:

<Perhaps begin this page with this sentence:

I see citizens who gather together to constitute and regulate in common a sole and unique power that represents them all and to which each one of them delivers the care of his particular interests and which he charges with exercising all rights.

In this way, something of individual intervention is preserved in the most important and most general affairs, but it is suppressed entirely in the small ones and the particular ones. We forget...>
face, must be managed, they consider that the citizens are incapable of it; if it is a matter of the government of the whole State, they entrust these citizens with immense prerogatives; they make them alternately the playthings of the sovereign and its masters, more than kings and less than men. After having exhausted all the different systems of election, without finding one that suits them, they are surprised and still search; as if the evil that they notice were not due to the constitution of the country much more than to that of the electoral body.

It is, in fact, difficult to imagine how men who have entirely given up the habit of directing themselves, could succeed in choosing well those who should lead them; and it cannot be believed that a liberal, energetic and wise government can ever come out of the votes of a people of servants.

A constitution that would be republican at the head, and ultra-monarchical in all the other parts has always seemed to me an ephemeral monster. The vices of those who govern and the imbecility of the governed would not take long to lead them to ruin; and the people, tired of its representatives and of itself, would create freer institutions, or would soon return to stretching out at the feet of a single master.

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x. Unity, centralization.

We believe we are making a clever and sufficient concession by allowing these same men, almost entirely deprived of their free will in every day actions, to unite now and then to choose one of the three great powers. In other words, after refusing to them the right to direct their own affairs, we concede to them the privilege of governing the State.

[To the side: The idea opposite is good. If I want to strike minds by the picture of administrative despotism, I must move away as little as possible from what we see before our eyes. A tyranny of the Caesars was a bogeyman that cannot make anyone afraid, although at bottom that is not so unreasonable as we think. I must not aim to say the most complete truth, but the most easily grasped and the most useful.]

This is a very insufficient and very dangerous remedy.

A national assembly named by such voters cannot fail to be revolutionary or servile. It is a great foolishness to hope to make a strong, liberal, energetic and wise government emerge from a people of servants."

6 April 1838 (Rubish, 2).

On another page, Tocqueville adds: "I cannot prevent myself from considering this form of government as transitory. It leads necessarily to institutions truly [v: more] liberal or to the non-accountable despotism of one man" (Rubish, 2).

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y. "Those who believe they are able to stop for long at a government which is republican at its head and ultra-monarchical at its tail, chambers and a centralized administration, are great fools. But the thing can go for a while in this way. Portray it in the place where I do the portrait of democratic despotism.

"22 June" (Rubish, 2).
CHAPTER 7

Continuation of the Preceding Chapters

I believe that it is easier to establish an absolute and despotic government among a [democratic] people where conditions are equal than among another, and I think that, if such a government were once established among such a people, not only would it oppress men, but in the long run it would rob from each of them some of the principal attributes of humanity. b

So despotism seems to me particularly to be feared in democratic ages.

c. From now on the atmosphere that surrounds us will be democratic, you will be able to breathe only on condition of taking up your position there.
There show how the members of the aristocracy can without haste and without delay, without pride and without servility, draw closer to the people and, abandoning the memories of another time, take a place in the present time . . .
Then add.
As for those who will want to hold themselves aside, hoping to escape in this way the common destruction and to preserve for other times the elements of an aristocracy, they will soon discover that life is tiring and difficult for them. Surrounded by hostile prejudices, the butt of suspicions, forced to breathe on all sides the air of hatred, objects of pity and envy at the same time, more strangers in the country where they were born than the traveler who comes to find shelter under their roof, they will be like the Jews after the destruction of the temple; like [them (ed.)], they will constantly await a Messiah who must not come. But they will differ from the Jews on one point; they will not perpetuate themselves. An aristocracy in vain wants to outlive its grandeur and to preserve itself intact amid the ruin of the institutions that it established; it cannot succeed. And if its enemies are powerless to accomplish its ruin, it will soon take charge itself of accomplishing it. Careers that gain honors and glory are closed to its members, and they refuse to embrace professions that give or preserve wealth. So they are as if struck with immobility amid the universal movement; among a people in which all work, they are reduced to an idleness so complete that you have never seen any thing like it. Within the most aristocratic [democratic (ed.)] societies this immense and useless leisure overwhelms them. A restless boredom devours them. Since they cannot obtain the most noble pleasures of men, they seek the tumultuous and coarse enjoyments that tear them violently away from themselves, and they consol themselves with horses and dogs for not being able to govern the State. They have neither the courtesy nor the energy of their ancestors; they have only preserved their pride. And you are astonished by the unimaginable sterility of the races most fruitful in great men./

At every moment the law of inheritances comes to surprise a few among them amid these obscene and unworthy leisure activities and throws them into obscurity and poverty. The solitude then becomes more profound around those who remain, the isolation more frightening, the discouragement more complete every day; a name
is able to maintain free institutions if he does not take equality as first principle and as symbol. So all those among our contemporaries who want to create or to assure the independence and dignity of their fellows must appear as friends of equality; and the only means worthy of them of appearing so is to be so: the success of their holy enterprise depends on it.\textsuperscript{d}

Thus, it is not a matter of reconstructing an aristocratic society, but of making liberty emerge from within the democratic society in which God makes us live.

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is lost, a precious memory fades, the trace of several generations gone by disappears. New families come out of the void into which the first descend. Power, wealth and glory have forever passed into other hands.

I am profoundly convinced that it is no less impossible to establish a new aristocracy than to preserve the ruins of the former aristocracy. For my part, I cannot understand the fears that are inspired among the friends of democracy, openly or in secret, by those who intend to re-create to a certain measure ranks, privileges, hereditary rights, permanent influences. Such men are dangerous only to themselves. They only compromise the cause that they embrace and the conservative doctrines that they mix with it.

The current of the century is against them, and the day when finally they want seriously to raise the dike that is to contain it, they will immediately be swept away forever by it. So democracy has henceforth nothing to fear from its adversaries. It is from within that its corruptors and its masters will come. I do not see how its reign could be prevented from becoming established, but I easily discover what must be done to make it detestable.\textsuperscript{e}

\begin{itemize}
  \item What is the danger?
  \item To flatter the feelings of democratic hate and envy and to gain power in this way.
  \item To give equality lavishly, to take away liberty in return (YTC, CVc, pp. 55–58).
\end{itemize}

F. D. often repeats that an aristocracy is a command staff. That is a good definition. An aristocracy is not a body by itself all alone, but the head of a body. Reduced to itself it can still do brilliant things, but not great and lasting things.

This comparison of an aristocracy to a command staff was found with a rigorous exactitude in 1792. The officers being all gathered on the right of the Rhine, the soldiers remained on the left bank. This was the final demonstration of what I said above, the most striking image of the state of French society (YTC, CVa, pp. 52–53).

The same idea appears in YTC, CVc, p. 55.

\textsuperscript{d} In the margin of the copy of the chapter, in pencil: "I strongly persist in asking deletion."

\textsuperscript{e} "In democratic societies not only is the government stronger (illegible word) than the citizens, but also it alone has duration, foresight, extended plans, profound calculations. It surpasses the citizens as much in quality as in strength. At the next-to-last chapter, 1 September 1838" (YTC, CVk, 1, p. 23).

\textsuperscript{f} In the margin: "Men who live in centuries of equality are naturally isolated and powerless; it is only by the artificial and temporary combination of their efforts that they can attain great objectives."

\textsuperscript{g} Notes on a page at the end of the manuscript of the chapter:

Necessity of a strong government, because of the weakness or the destruction of all the other social bonds that could allow a society to march all alone and to contain disorder within certain limits./

Remove all political government from an aristocracy, annul entirely the national, central power, a certain order will still be maintained there, because exercising a certain influence on each other, individuals hold together, have the habit of immobility and keep in their place for a long time, without the political power getting involved.

[To the side] Another idea to recall here. Among democratic peoples only the government has stability, duration, extended plans, views of the future, can follow extended undertakings, all things necessary to the well-being of nations which have such a long life. Everything is unstable and fleeting among democratic peoples, outside of the government.
What contributed the most to assure the independence of individuals in aristocratic centuries is that the sovereign power did not take charge alone of governing and administering the citizens; it was obliged to leave a part of this concern to the members of the aristocracy; so that the social power, always divided, never weighed entirely and in the same way on every man.\textsuperscript{h}

Not only did the sovereign power not do everything by itself, but most of the officers who acted in its place, since they drew their power from the fact of their birth and not from it, were not constantly in its hand. It could not at any moment create them or destroy them, depending on its caprices, and bend them all uniformly to its least desires. That also guaranteed the independence of individuals.

I also understand that today you cannot resort to the same means, but I see democratic procedures that replace them.\textsuperscript{j}

The same idea is expressed in a rough draft:

I confess that the government among democratic peoples is easier and more convenient than in democracies (aristocracies (ed.)), but is it better? That is the question. Is the first merit of a government to work easily? If that was so, what better than despoticism and what worse than liberty? What more stable than the one? You establish it one day and it works for a thousand years. What more fragile than the other? What efforts to establish it, what (illegible word) work to (illegible word) it. See however the result of the one and the other. So the ideal of perfection must be sought elsewhere (YTC, CVk 2, p. 54).

\textsuperscript{h} You are astonished at first sight by the respect that is still witnessed today for dominal property and the little respect that is shown for industrial property.\textsuperscript{i} That comes from the fact that dominal property - [is (ed.)] - ancient property, the property of aristocratic centuries and that the principles that protected it in these centuries (principles deriving from the social state) have left profound traces in the mores. While for industrial property, modern and democratic property, you give yourself to the instincts natural to democracy, which are to substitute the State for the individual and constantly to break the latter under the feet of the mass.

\textsuperscript{i} Those two terms are not in natural opposition, but I do not have the time to clarify my thought (Rubish, 2).

Instead of giving to the sovereign alone all the administrative powers that were taken from the corporation or from the nobles, you can entrust a part of them to secondary bodies formed temporarily out of simple citizens; in this way, the liberty of individuals will be surer, without their equality being less.

The Americans, who are not as attached as we to words, have kept the name of county for the largest of their administrative districts; but they have in part replaced the county by a provincial assembly\textsuperscript{k} [chosen freely by the inhabitants themselves].\textsuperscript{m}

I will admit without difficulty that in a period of equality like ours, it would be unjust and unreasonable to institute hereditary officials; but nothing prevents substituting for them, to a certain measure, elected officials. Election is a democratic expedient that assures the independence of the official vis-à-vis the central power, as much as and more than heredity can do among aristocratic peoples.

Aristocratic countries are full of rich and influential individuals who know how to be self-sufficient and who are not easily or secretly oppressed; and the latter keep power within the general habits of moderation and restraint [-while in democratic countries each citizen taken in isolation cannot offer any resistance and does not ever succeed in

\textsuperscript{k} "Only provincial institutions can make the democratic instinct of liberty a habit" (YTC, CVd, p. 19).

\textsuperscript{m} This fragment is found in the copy of the chapter.
attracting the eyes of the public to the evils that tyranny makes him suffer.>]

I know well that democratic countries do not naturally present similar individuals; but there you can artificially create something analogous.

I believe firmly that you cannot establish an aristocracy—a again in the world; but I think that simple citizens by associating together can constitute very wealthy, very influential, very strong beings, in a word aristocratic persons.⁰

[<Thus, in whatever direction I look, I discover association as the most powerful remedy for the evils with which equality threatens us.>]

n. “As for me, all that I wish for my country is that those who aim for despotism there aim at the same time for aristocracy” (YTC, CVd, p. 25).

o. In a jacket with rough drafts of the chapter which bears the title IDEA OF ARISTOCRATIC PERSONS:

Possibility of creating within a democratic people aristocratic persons, means of uniting in part the advantages of the two systems.

What I mean by aristocratic persons are permanent and legal associations such as cities, cantons, departments, or voluntary and temporary associations such as, I suppose, in literature, the Norman association; in industry, the company of Messagers; in politics, the society “Aide-toi le ciel t’aidera.” These associations are cited as examples and not as models.

This would have one part of the advantages of aristocracy properly speaking without its disadvantages.

That would not establish permanent inequality and . . . the injustices that . . . . It would not elevate . . . certain men above . . . all the rest . . .

It would create powerful individuals capable of great efforts, of vast projects, of firm resistance; it would bind men together in another way, but as tightly as aristocracy. It would make the species greater and would elevate thought. . . . (Rubish, 2).


In this manner several of the greatest political advantages of aristocracy would be obtained, without its injustices or its dangers. A political, industrial, commercial, or even scientific and literary association is an enlightened and powerful citizen whom you cannot bend at will or oppress in the shadow, and who, by defending its particular rights against the demands of power, saves common liberties.

In times of aristocracy, each man is always bound in a very tight way to several of his fellow citizens, so that you cannot attack the former without the others running to his aid. In centuries of equality, each individual is naturally isolated; he has no hereditary friends whose help he can require, no class whose sympathies for him are assured; he is easily set apart, and he is trampled underfoot with impunity. P Today, a citizen who is oppressed has therefore only one means of defending himself; it is to address himself to the whole nation, and if it is deaf to him, to humanity; he has only one means to do it, it is the press. Thus liberty of the press is infinitely more precious among democratic nations than among all others; it alone cures most of the evils that equality can produce. Equality isolates and weakens men; but the press places beside each one of them a very powerful weapon, which the weakest and most isolated can use. Equality takes away from each individual the support of those close to him; but the press allows him to call to his aid all his fellow citizens and all those similar to him. Printing hastened the progress of equality, and it is one of its best correctives.

I think that men who live in aristocracies can, if necessary, do without liberty of the press; but those who inhabit democratic countries cannot do so. [<For the latter, between independence and servitude, I see hardly anything except the press.>] To guarantee the personal independence of the latter, I do not trust great political assemblies, parliamentary prerogatives, the proclamation of sovereignty of the people.

All these things, up to a certain point, fit with individual servitude; but

p. In the margin: “The entire style of this chapter is defective and to review, but the thoughts are so difficult that at this moment I can only concern myself with them.”
This servitude cannot be complete if the press is free. The press is, par excellence, the democratic instrument of liberty.

I will say something analogous about the judicial power.9

It is the essence of the judicial power to occupy itself with particular interests and to fix its eyes on the small matters that are exposed to its view; it is also the essence of this power not to come by itself to the help of those who are oppressed, but to be constantly at the disposal of the most humble man among them. The latter, however weak you suppose him to be, can always force the judge to listen to his complaint and to respond to it: that results from the very constitution of the judicial power.

So such a power is especially applicable to the needs of liberty, in a time when the eye and the hand of the sovereign are introduced constantly into the most minute details of human actions, and when individuals, too weak to protect themselves, are too isolated to be able to count on the help of those like them. The strength of the courts has been, in all times, the greatest guarantee that can be offered to individual independence, but that is true above all in democratic centuries; particular rights and interests are always in danger there, if the judicial power does not grow and expand as conditions become equal.

Equality suggests to men several tendencies very dangerous for liberty, and the legislator must always keep his eyes open to them. I will only recall the principal ones.

Men who live in democratic centuries do not easily understand the utility of forms; with an instinctive disdain for them. I spoke about the reasons for this elsewhere. Forms excite their scorn and often their hatred. Since they usually aspire only to easy and present enjoyments, they throw themselves impetuously toward the object of each one of their desires; the least delays lead them to despair. This temperament, which they bring to political life, sets them against forms which slow or stop them each day in some of their desires.

9. In the margin: "The weaker individuals are, the stronger the courts must be."

r. With the rough drafts of this chapter, you find a fragment on forms, poorly drafted, and which seems to be in the hand of Louis de Kergorlay. See note u of p. 1273 and note g of p. 750. A note in the Rubish mentions: "I had a good conversation with Louis about this entire subject; look at it again" (Rubish, 2).
rights of the society expand naturally and become stronger; that is to say
that men become less attached to particular rights, at the moment when it
would be most necessary to keep them and to defend the few of them that
remain.\footnote{4}

So it is above all in the democratic times in which we find ourselves that
the true friends of liberty and of human grandeur must, constantly, stand
up and be ready to prevent the social power from sacrificing lightly the
particular rights of some individuals to the general execution of its designs.
In those times no citizen is so obscure that it is not very dangerous to allow
him to be oppressed, or individual rights of so little importance that you
can surrender to arbitrariness with impunity. The reason for it is simple.
When you violate the particular right of an individual in a time when the
human mind is penetrated by the importance and the holiness of the rights
of this type, you do harm only to the one you rob. But to violate such a
right today is to corrupt the national mores profoundly and to put the entire
society at risk, because the very idea of these kinds of rights tends constantly
among us to deteriorate and become lost.

If I find as well and for entirely similar reasons that in democratic cen-
turies, above all, sovereigns must watch themselves with the greatest care
in order to repress the natural tendency which leads them to sacrifice a

\footnote{4}{[The beginning is missing (ed.)] that the confidence in the idea of the right of
reason that is spreading each day, do you not notice that each day the idea of fact and
of force replaces it, and what is the final and legitimate representative of force, if not
the soldier?

[To the side: Do you not see that with equality without liberty we are marching
toward a singular servitude and toward an inevitable barbarism? And if you see all
these things, what are you doing?]

Do you not see that opinions are dividing more quickly than patrimonies,
that each man is enclosing himself narrowly within his own mind, like the farm laborer
in his field?

[To the side: Do you not see that souls are falling lower and that the love of liberty,
this great and noble passion of man, is deserting him?]

That egoism is constantly taking on new strength without acquiring new light?
The idea of right which is being extinguished.

That sentiments become more individual each day, and that soon men will be more
separated by their beliefs than they have ever been by inequality of conditions? (YTC,
CVd, pp. 19–20).

particular right, however small it is, to the general execution to their
designs.\footnote{4]}

There are certain habits, certain ideas, certain vices that belong to the
state of revolution, and that a long revolution cannot fail to engender and
to generalize, whatever its character, its objective and its theater are.

When whatever nation has several times in a short expanse of time
changed leaders, opinions and laws, the men who compose it end by con-
tracting the taste for movement and by becoming accustomed to all move-
ments taking place rapidly and with the aid of force. They then naturally
conceive a contempt for forms, whose impotence they see every day, and
only with impatience do they bear the dominion of rules, which have been
evaded so many times before their eyes.

Since the ordinary notions of equity and morality no longer suffice to
explain and justify all the novelties to which the revolution gives birth
each day, you latch onto the principle of social utility, you create the
dogma of political necessity; and you become readily accustomed to sac-
crificing particular interests without scruples and to trampling individual
rights underfoot, in order to attain more promptly the general goal that
you propose.

These habits and these ideas, which I will call revolutionary,\footnote{u} because all
revolutions produce them, manifest themselves within aristocracies as well

\footnote{u}{Definition of revolutionary spirit:

taste for rapid changes,
use of violence to bring them about,
tyrannical spirit,
contempt for forms,
contempt for acquired rights,
indifference about the means in view of the end, doctrine of the useful,
satisfaction given to brutal appetites.}

The revolutionary spirit which everywhere is the greatest enemy of liberty and is
such above all among democratic peoples, because there is a natural and secret bond
between it and democracy. It takes its source in the natural faults of democracy and
scorns them.

A revolution can sometimes be just and necessary; it can establish liberty, but the
revolutionary spirit is always detestable and can never lead to anything except to tyr-
anny (Rabish, 2).}
as among democratic peoples; but among the first they are often less pow-
erful and always less durable, because there they encounter habits, ideas,
flaws and failings that are contrary to them. So they fade away by themselves
as soon as the revolution is finished, and the nation returns to its former
political ways. It is not always so in democratic countries, where it is always
to be feared that revolutionary instincts, becoming milder and more regular
without dying out, will gradually turn into governmental mores and ad-
ministrative habits.\textsuperscript{v}

So I do not know of a country in which revolutions are more dangerous
than democratic countries, because, apart from the accidental and passing
evils that revolutions can never fail to produce, they always risk creating
permanent and, so to speak, eternal ones.

I believe that there are honest acts of resistance and legitimate rebellions
[v. revolutions]. So I am not saying, in an absolute way, that men of dem-
ocraic times must never make revolutions; but I think that they are right
to hesitate more than all the others before undertaking them, and that it is
better for them to bear many of the inconveniences of the present state
than to resort to such a perilous remedy.

I will conclude with a general idea that includes within it not only all
the particular ideas that have been expressed in this present chapter, but
also most of those that this book has the purpose of putting forth.

[What was above all to be feared formerly is no longer to be feared and
new dangers have arisen that our fathers did not know.]\textsuperscript{w}

In the centuries of aristocracy that preceded ours, there were very pow-
erful individuals and a very feeble social authority. The very image of so-
ciety was obscure and was constantly lost amid all the different powers that
governed the citizens. The principal effort of the men of that time had to
be to proceed to make the social power greater and to fortify it, to increase
and to assure its prerogatives, and on the contrary, to restrict individual
independence within more narrow limits, and to subordinate particular
interest to the general interest.

\textsuperscript{v} In the margin of the copy: "Where the passing sentiments that revolution suggests
find themselves in sympathy with the permanent sentiments that equality gives."\textsuperscript{w}

In the margin of the copy: "Perhaps delete that?"

Other dangers and other concerns await the men of today.
Among most modern nations, the sovereign power, whatever its origin,
its constitution and its name, has become almost omnipotent, and individ-
uals fall more and more into the final degree of weakness and dependency.

Everything was different in the old societies. Unity and uniformity were
found nowhere. In our societies, everything threatens to become so similar,
that the particular figure of each individual will soon be lost entirely in the
common physiognomy. Our fathers were always ready to abuse this idea
that particular rights are worthy of respect, and we are naturally led to ex-
aggerate this other, that the interest of one individual must always yield
before the interest of several.

The political world is changing; from now on we must seek new remedies
for new evils.

To fix for the social power extensive, but visible and immobile limits; to
give to individuals certain rights and to guarantee to them the uncontested
enjoyment of these rights; to preserve for the individual the little of in-
dependence, of strength and of originality that remain to him; to raise him
up beside society and sustain him in the face of it: such seems to me to be
the first goal of the legislator in the age we are entering.\textsuperscript{x}

It could be said that the sovereigns of today only seek to create great
things with men. I would like them to think a bit more about creating
great men, to attach less value to the work and more to the worker,\textsuperscript{y}

\textsuperscript{x} "I would very much like you to tell me what makes the grandeur of man if it is
not man himself."

"Who the devil does it concern except each one of us?" (Rubish, 2).

\textsuperscript{y} They limit themselves to wanting society to be great; I, man; they are interested
in an ideal being, without a body; I, in God's creature, in my fellow man."

They attach more value to the work; I, to the worker."

To raise up and to make the individual greater, constant goal of great men in dem-
ocraic centuries."

This 29 January 1838 (Rubish, 2).

Another rough draft expresses the same thought:

How will we be able to understand each other? I seek to live with dignity and honor,
and you only seek to live.
to remember constantly that a nation cannot long remain strong when each man is individually weak, and that we have not yet found either social forms or political combinations that can create an energetic people by bringing together faint-hearted and soft citizens. I see among our contemporaries two opposite but equally fatal ideas. Some see in equality only the anarchical tendencies that it engenders. They fear their free will; they are afraid of themselves. The others, in smaller number, but better enlightened, have another view. Alongside the road that, starting at equality, leads to anarchy, they have finally found the path that seems to lead men invincibly toward servitude; they bend their soul in advance to this necessary servitude; and despairing of remaining free, they already adore at the bottom of their heart the master who must soon come.

The first abandon liberty because they consider it dangerous; the second because they judge it impossible.

If I had had this last belief, I would not have written the work that you have just read; I would have limited myself to bemoaning in secret the destiny of my fellow men.

I wanted to put forth in full light the risks that equality makes human independence run, because I believe firmly that these risks are the most formidable as well as the least foreseen of all those that the future holds. But I do not believe them insurmountable.

The men who live in the democratic centuries that we are entering naturally have the taste for independence. Naturally they bear rules with impatience: the permanence of even the state they prefer wearies them. They love power; but they are inclined to scorn and to hate the one who exercises it, and they easily escape from between his hands because of their smallness and their very mobility.

These instincts will always be found, because they emerge from the core of the social state which will not change. For a long time they will prevent any despotism from being able to become established, and they will provide new weapons to each new generation that wants to fight in favor of the liberty of men.

So let us have for the future this salutary fear that makes us vigilant and combative, and not this sort of soft and idle terror that weakens and enervates hearts.

What you fear most from the democratic social state are the political troubles that it brings forth, and me, that is what I fear least about it. You dread democratic liberty, and I democratic despotism.

These men who, similar to domestic animals, worry little about having a master provided that the master feeds them, and who seek in life only to live.

(In the margin: Many men consider democratic civil laws as an evil and democratic political laws as another and the greatest evil; but I say that the one is the sole remedy that you can apply to the other.

All the idea of my politics is in this remark) (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 53–54).

z. The manuscript and the copy of the chapter finish here. In the margin of the manuscript you find this note:

I can and perhaps I must stop here. I see vaguely, however, that there would be something more, and more striking to add, for finally I am still speaking in all that precedes only about the interest of society and not about that of the individual himself. Now, is not all the grandeur of man in the grandeur of the individual rather than in the grandeur of society, which is an ideal being produced from the mind of man? Society is made for the individual and not the individual for society. By what a strange reversal of things would you arrive at sacrificing the individual with the view of favoring society, and what singular detachment from himself would lead this last to acquiesce in such an attempt?

a. The great men of paganism have often willingly sacrificed to false gods [v: idols] in which they did not believe, because they knew that peoples could imagine only under this crude image the idea of the divinity, one and supreme, belief in which is necessary to humanity.

In the same way statesmen, who know that legality is not order [v: is only the external form of order and not order], must however honor it [v: bend their knees before it] as the only permanent image of order that can be grasped by the organs of the common people [vulgaris] (Rubish, 2).

b. Idea of the [blank (ed.)] to show that the taste for independence is natural to men in times of equality and why; but that it is a secondary taste almost always subordinate to the taste for power; that this natural tendency toward liberty is however our anchor of salvation; that it is by developing it and by making it practical and manly that you can hope to obtain all the good of equality without its evils (YTC, CVk, 2, p. 49).

c. "It is a matter above all of proving that it is with the help of liberty that you can hope to prevent license. Everything is there. Fear must be put on the side of liberty if you want to succeed" (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 52–53).
CHAPTER 8a

General View of the Subject b

a. In the first box of the Rubish (Rubish, 1), with the chapter on material enjoyments, in a jacket bearing the title how equality of ranks suggests to men the taste for liberty and for equality, you find this note: "Perhaps finish by a chapter entitled general view of the subject, in which I recall the fatal march of equality. Perhaps here I will show that it is only by democracy that you can attenuate the evils of democracy, the impossibility and the danger of the government of the middle classes, the necessity to aim firmly for the government of all by all." (Rubish, 1). In the second box of the Rubish, the rough drafts and notes of this chapter are accompanied by various papers contained in a jacket that has as a title the manner in which the American governments act vis-à-vis associations. Tocqueville noted to the side: "I propose to delete this chapter." The ideas of these pages are found in different places in the last chapters.

b. [On jacket: Last chapter. General view of the subject.]

General appraisal of the effects of equality.

I can [only ed.] approach this summary frankly and grandly, otherwise it would seem out of place and incomplete. I must show myself wanting to reduce the entire picture that I have just painted to a narrow frame, setting aside details, or closing my eyes to them, no longer occupying myself with America, which opened the path to me; and after thus preparing the reader for something very general and with very few details, to keep the piece: I look at my country . . .

To begin by recalling the march of the four volumes.

Capital and principal idea.

Influence of democracy on human morality.

Medium morality, perhaps in the view of God.

Interest which gains, men not virtuous, but steady.

Final chapter, I think. All of man is there.

Chapter too vast, too thorny. To refrain probably.

[On the following page] A final chapter.

Less individual independence, more national strength.

Less independence, more security.

Less independence of the sovereign, more independence of the subjects.

[On the following page] I do not believe in the definitive organization of the government of the middle classes, and if I believed it possible, I would oppose myself to it.

Before leaving forever the course that I have just covered, I would like to be able to encompass with a last look all the various features that mark the face of the new world, and finally to judge the general influence that equal-

Idea to put in the place where I show again the fatal march of equality.

[Here we omit several paragraphs (ed.).]

[On the following page] Finish the book by a great chapter that tries to summarize all the democratic subject and to draw from it oratorically the consequences for the world and in particular for Europe and us. Maxims of conciliation, of resignation, of union with the march of Providence, complete impartiality.

A simple and solemn movement, like the subject.

Capital idea.

That it is necessary to draw yourself out of particular points of view in order to place yourself, if possible, in general points of view that do not depend on either times or places. Penetrate as deeply as possible into the thought of God and judge from there.

[On the following page] Use democracy to moderate democracy. That is the sole path of salvation that is open to us. Discern the sentiments, the ideas, the laws that, without being hostile to the principles of democracy, without being naturally incompatible with democracy, can however correct its unfortunate tendencies and, while modifying it, become incorporated with it.

Beyond that everything is foolish and imprudent (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 50–52).

In Tocqueville's papers you find these other plans:

Presumed order of the last chapter.

1. Summary of the four volumes.

2. Why democracy, certain sides of which a (illegible word), can be the best state in the eyes of God.

3. From now on democracy has nothing to fear except itself.

4. Bad and good democracy and if it must be assured.

It is from its ranks that its masters and its destroyers will come. It has nothing to fear from its enemies, but from its children (YTC, CVc, pp. 59–60).

Last chapter.

I said when beginning that the march of equality was irresistible. I believe it more and more. Movement of the rest of Europe as democratic by kings, as ours by the people. There is only one aristocracy that knows how to defend itself; that of England. All the others form command staffs without armies.

General fact flowing from the development of equality . . .

More honesty, fewer virtues.

Each man smaller, more ignorant, weaker, humanity greater, stronger, more knowledgeable.

Smaller individual efforts, a greater general result.

Less tranquillity, more power (YTC, CVk, 1, p. 4).
ity must exercise on the fate of men; but the difficulty of such an enterprise stops me; in the presence of such a great matter, I feel my sight fail and my reason falter.⁶

This new society, which I have sought to portray and which I want to judge, has only just been born. Time has not yet set its form; the great revolution that created it is still going on, and in what is happening today, it is nearly impossible to discern what must pass away with the revolution itself, and what must remain after it.

The world that is rising is still half caught in the ruins of the world that is falling, and amid the immense confusion presented by human affairs, no one can say which old institutions and ancient mores will remain standing and which will finally disappear.

Although the revolution that is taking place in the social state, the laws, the ideas, the sentiments of men, is still very far from being finished, already you cannot compare its works with anything that has been seen previously in the world. I go back century by century to the most distant antiquity; I notice nothing that resembles what is before our eyes. Since the past no longer clarifies the future, the mind moves in shadows.

But amid this picture so vast, so new, so confused, I already glimpse a few principal features which are becoming apparent and I point them out.

I see that the good and the bad are distributed equally enough in the world. Great wealth disappears; the number of small fortunes increases; desires and enjoyments multiply; there is no more extraordinary prosperity or irreversible poverty. Ambition is a universal sentiment; there are few vast ambitions. Each individual is isolated and weak; society is agile, far-sighted and strong; individuals do small things and the State immense ones.

Souls are not energetic; but mores are mild and legislation humane. If little great devotion, few very high, very brilliant, and very pure virtues are found, habits are steady, violence is rare and cruelty almost unknown. The lives of men become longer and their property more secure. Life is not very ornate, but very comfortable and very peaceful. There are few very delicate and very coarse pleasures, little courtesy in manners and little brutality in tastes. You scarcely find very learned men or very ignorant populations. Genius becomes rarer and enlightenment more common. The human mind is developed by the small combined efforts of all men, and not by the powerful impulse of a few of them. There is less perfection, but more fecundity in works. All the bonds of race, class, country are loosening; the great bond of humanity is tightening.⁷

If among all these various features, I seek the one that seems to me the most general and the most striking, I come to see that what is noticeable in fortunes reappears again in a thousand other forms. Nearly all the extremes become softer and are blunted; nearly all the salient points are worn away to make way for something middling, which is at the very same time less high and less low, less brilliant and less obscure than what was seen in the world.⁸

I run my eyes over this innumerable crowd composed of similar beings, in which nothing either rises or falls. The spectacle of this universal uniformity [and of this mediocrity] saddens me and chills me, and I am tempted to regret the society that is no more.

d. In the margin: "This picture seems good enough to me, but it is incomplete. It perhaps contains some useless things, and there are some necessary ones to ... To complete it, it is necessary to have gone through the whole book.

e. It is necessary to find in some part of the work, in the foreword or the last chapter, the idea of the middle that has been so dishonored in our times. Show that there is a firm, clear, voluntary way to see and to grasp the truth between two extremes. To conceive and to say that the truth is not in an absolute system.

[In the margin: I do not like the middle to be taken between grandeur and baseness, between courage and fear, between vice and virtue. But I like the middle between two opposite excesses.]

Dare to say somewhere the idea of L[ouis (ed.)]., that a difference must be made between absolute affirmation [v: certitude] and Pyrrhonism, that the system of probabilities is the only true one, the only human one, provided that probability causes you to act as energetically as certitude.

All that is poorly said, but the germ is there (YTC, CVk, i, pp. 41–42).
When the world was filled with very great and very small, very rich and very poor, very learned and very ignorant, [very fortunate and very miserable] men, I turned my eyes away from the second to fix them only on the first, and the latter delighted my sight. But I understand that this pleasure arose from my weakness; it is because I cannot see all that surrounds me at the same time that I am allowed to choose in this way and to separate, among so many objects, those that it pleases me to consider. It is not the same for the all-powerful and eternal Being, whose eyes necessarily take in the whole of things, and who sees all of humanity and each man distinctly, though at the same time.

It is natural to believe that what most satisfies the sight of this creator and preserver of men, is not the singular prosperity of a few, but the greatest well-being of all; so what seems to me decline, is in his eyes progress; what hurts me, agrees with him. Equality is perhaps less elevated; but it is more just, and its justice makes its grandeur and its beauty.

I try hard to enter into this point of view of God, and from there I seek to consider and to judge human things. No one, on the earth, can yet assert in an absolute and general way that the new state of societies is superior to the old state; but it is already easy to see that it is different.

There are certain vices and certain virtues that were attached to the constitution of aristocratic nations and that are so contrary to the genius of the new peoples that you cannot introduce those vices and virtues among them. There are good tendencies and bad instincts that were foreign to the first that are natural to the second; ideas that occur by themselves to the imagination of the first and that the mind of the second rejects. They are like two distinct humanities, each of which has its particular advantages and disadvantages, its good and its evil which are its own.

So you must be very careful about judging the societies that are being born by the ideas that you have drawn from those that are no longer. That would be unjust, for these societies, differing prodigiously from each other, are not comparable.

It would be scarcely more reasonable to ask of the men [v. democratic peoples] of today the particular virtues that resulted from the social state of their ancestors, since this social state itself has fallen, and since in its fall it swept away in a confused way all the good and all the bad that it carried with it.

But these things are still poorly understood today.

I notice a great number of my contemporaries who undertake to make a choice among the institutions, the opinions, the ideas that arose from the aristocratic constitution of the former society; they would willingly abandon some, but they would still like to retain others and carry them with them into the new world.

I think that those men use up their time and their strength in an honest and sterile work.

It is no longer a matter of retaining the particular advantages that inequality of conditions gains for men, but of assuring the new advantages that equality can offer them. We must not aim to make ourselves similar to our fathers, but to work hard to attain the type of grandeur and happiness that is appropriate to us.

As for me, having reached the final end of my journey, I discern from afar, but all at once, all the various matters that I had contemplated sepa-

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f. "Who knows if, in the eyes of God, the beautiful is not the useful?" (YTC, CVa, p. 41).

g. "You must not aim to make democratic peoples as similar as possible to aristocratic nations, but to gain for them as much as possible the type of grandeur and prosperity that is appropriate to them" (Rubish, 2).
rately while going along, and I feel full of fears and full of hopes. I see great dangers that it is possible to avert, great evils that can be avoided or limited; and I become more and more confirmed in this belief that, to be honest and prosperous, it is still enough for democratic nations to want to be so.

I am not unaware that several of my contemporaries have thought that here below peoples are never masters of themselves, and that they obey necessarily I do not know what insurmountable and unintelligent force that arises from previous events, from race, from soil, or from climate.

j. I see two distinct roads that open at the same time before the men of today. They touch at first, but as they get farther from the common point of departure, they move away from each other and an immense space between them is found at the end. The one leads to liberty and the other leads to servitude. And as you march along one or along the other, liberty becomes greater and servitude heavier. Each day that the space separating them expands, it is more difficult to cross it to find the good road again. Peoples have not yet reached the place where they must choose between these two paths. But all are getting closer to it. An irresistible force is pushing them there. I already see the first advancing. The others follow the first at unequal distances.

Although I may be the last one in this holy league, if it is forming, I am content. Some push them toward chaos, the others drag them, little by little and without noticing, perhaps, toward the most stupefying of all servitudes. The nations hesitate, become disturbed and falter...

Oh! Who will open the way, who will carry the new banner, who will give his name to this glorious dawning. One man, whoever he may be, cannot do it, but an association of men could do so. Association of disinterested, honest or enterprising men (illegible word) sentiments... I will be distressed by them, but let me be allowed to say that I am not afraid of them.

As for my opinions on all the others, I do not defend myself; the public is the judge.

[On another page] I said at the beginning of this long work that peoples (vol. 1, p. 90) could draw two great political consequences from the democratic social state, that these consequences differed prodigiously from each other, but that they both emerged from the same fact. Here I am at the end of my course, and I feel myself more firm in this belief (YTC, CVD, pp. 20–22). Tocqueville is referring to the last paragraphs of chapter III of the first part of the first volume (p. 90).

k. Idea of necessity, of fatality. Explain how my system differs essentially from that of Chiquet (Mignet ed.) and company. Do a satirical portrait of the latter without naming individuals. Show that without claiming to be a genius who embraces the necessities of the political order, there is a great weakness of mind and a great desire for work. Explain how my system is perfectly compatible with human liberty.

Those are false and cowardly doctrines that can produce only weak men and pusillanimous nations. Providence has created humanity neither entirely independent nor completely slave. It traces around each man, it is true, a fatal circle out of which he cannot go; but within its vast limits, man is powerful and free; so are peoples.

The nations of today cannot make conditions among them not be equal; but it depends on them whether equality leads them to servitude or liberty, to enlightenment or barbarism, to prosperity or misery.

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Apply these general ideas to democracy.

That is a very beautiful piece to place at the head or the tail of the work.

[In the margin: You have not reproached me as I anticipated for seeming to fall into the mania of the century. But I reproach myself for it because I do not want to fall into it. You absolve me, and I accuse myself. I wake up every morning obeying a general and eternal law that I did not know the night before.

Unfortunately, there are some of those laws] (YTC, CVa, pp. 58–59).

And in the same line:

To be very careful in the preliminary or final chapter to make it clearly understood that I am not exclusive in my point of view. Many particular causes like climate, race, religion influence the ideas and the sentiments of men, independently of the social state.

[To the side: The progress of enlightenment (illegible word), principal idea that I have constantly found on my road and at which I have not wanted to stop.]

The particular purpose of this book is not to deny these influences, but to put into relief the particular influence of the social state.


m. "I am profoundly convinced that democracy can be regulated and organized; it is not something easy, but it is something that can be done, and I add that it is the only thing left to do" (YTC, CVd, p. 19).

n. "A man is never master of his destiny because death can come to seize him in the execution of his wisest plans, but a people, which does not perish, remains always master of itself" (Rubish, 2).