That the Salient Point of the Social State of the Anglo-Americans Is to Be Essentially Democratic

First emigrants of New England.—Equal among themselves.—Aristocratic laws introduced in the South.—Period of the Revolution.—Change in the inheritance laws.—Effects produced by this change.—Equality pushed to its extreme limits in the new states of the West.—Intellectual equality.

Several important remarks about the social state of the Anglo-Americans could be made, but one dominates all the others.

The social state of the Americans is eminently democratic. It has had this character since the birth of the colonies; it has it even more today.

[As soon as you look at the civil and political society of the United States, you discover two great facts that dominate all the others and from

d. Causes of the social state and current government of America:
2. Their geographic position: no neighbors.
3. Their commercial and industrial activity. Everything, even their vices, is favorable to them now.
4. The material good fortune that they enjoy.
5. The religious spirit that reigns: republican and democratic religion.
6. The diffusion of useful knowledge.
7. Very pure morals.
8. The division into small States. They prove nothing for a large one.
9. The absence of a great capital where everything is concentrated. Care to avoid it.
10. Commercial and provincial activity that means that each person finds something to do at home (Alphabetic Notebook A, YTC, BIIa and Voyage, OC, V, 1, p. 207).

e. Hervé de Tocqueville:

This is too absolute. At least you should say nearly all the colonies, in order to be in agreement with page 128 (chap. 4), where you speak about the aristocratic influence long exercised to the south and west of the Hudson. This difficulty arises from chapter 2 where Alexis recognized only two political divisions of the territory, which forced him to generalize too much. Another division and a few sentences added, and everything will be fine (YTC, CIIIb, 2, p. 92). Page 128 of the copy read by Hervé and the other critics corresponds to pages 50–51 of this edition.
which the others are derived. Democracy constitutes the social state; the

dogma of the sovereignty of the people, the political law.

These two things are not analogous. Democracy is society's way of being.

Sovereignty of the people, a form of [v. the essence of] government. Nor

are they inseparable, because democracy's is even more compatible with despotism than with liberty.

But they are correlative. Sovereignty of the people is always more or less

a fiction wherever democracy is not established. [f]

I said in the preceding chapter that a very great equality reigned among

the emigrants who came to settle on the shores of New England. Not even

the germ of aristocracy was ever deposited in that part of the Union. No

influences except intellectual ones [a kind of intellectual patronage] could

ever be established there. The people got used to revering certain names,
as symbols of learning and virtue. The voice of certain citizens gained a

power over the people that perhaps could have been correctly called aris-

tocratic, if it could have been passed down invariably from father to son.

This happened [north] east of the Hudson; [south] southwest of this

river, and as far down as Florida, things were otherwise.

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f. With a reminder in the margin, in pencil: "Explain what is understood by dem-
ocracy."

Tocqueville never arrived at a satisfactory definition of democracy. He always used
the term in different senses. Harold Laski, in his introduction to Democracy in America
(OC, I, p. xxx), distinguishes four; James T. Schleifer, The Making of Tocqueville's "Dem-
ocracy in America" (pp. 263–74), identified as many as eight: inevitable development or
tendency, social condition, popular sovereignty, government of the people, mobility,
middle classes, equality of conditions, open society. Jean-François Sutter, in "Tocque-
ville et le problème de la démocratie" (Revue internationale de philosophie 49 (1959): 330–
40), examined the reason why Tocqueville did not manage to give one single definition
of democracy. Cf. the revealing letter of Louis de Kerqolay, dated January 6, 1838, a
letter that Tocqueville kept with the early drafts of the second part of his book (YTC,

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h. This word is added later. At first, the word was south.

[∗]. Note from Jefferson.

j. Hervé de Tocqueville:

Here again the drawback of only two divisions. Alexis finds himself forced to jump
abruptly from the Southwest to the South, without the connection of ideas being
clear, and the differences between this Southwest and the South remain unknown.

Does slavery also exist in the Southwest? Is this part entirely homogeneous with the
South? If it is, why speak successively of the West and the South? If it is not, why take
his example from the South alone? (YTC, CIII, 2, p. 93).

k. Hervé de Tocqueville:

I do not know what that means in a country where there was no people. Alexis un-
doubtedly meant to say an aristocracy whose habits resembled the democratic habits
of other parts of the Union. The expression does not seem right, nor do those that
follow: an aristocracy that embraces the passions and interests of the people cannot
remain indifferent to the people. Therefore, it is not right to say that it excited neither
love nor hate. You would have to say that it excited no jealousy at all in the other

classes. Proof that it was not indifferent is that two lines lower Alexis says that it

furnished all of the great men of the Revolution. But when the leaders are taken from

one class of citizens, you cannot say that it inspires neither love nor hate.
not very hardy. It was this class that, in the South, put itself at the head of the insurrection; the American Revolution owed its greatest men to it.

In this period, the entire society was shaken. The people, in whose name the struggle was waged, the people—now a power—conceived the desire to act by themselves; democratic instincts awoke. By breaking the yoke of the home country, the people acquired a taste for all kinds of independence. Little by little, individual influences ceased to make themselves felt; habits as well as laws began to march in unison toward the same end.

But it was the law of inheritance that pushed equality to its last stage.°

Édouard de Tocqueville: "I agree with my father only for the last paragraph, which must absolutely be revised. How can a weak and not very hardy class lead an insurrection?" (YTC, CIIIb, 2, pp. 93–94). The author paid no attention to these criticisms; the published version is identical to that in the manuscript.

m. Hervé de Tocqueville:

This still seems to me too absolute. Society in the South had certainly been shaken, but that of New England where democracy already existed did not need to be shaken. Perhaps you should put: the entire society received a new impulse. Next I wonder where these people were who became a power. I see the effect perfectly without seeing the cause as clearly as I would like. It would seem from what Alexis says, page 130, that democratic instincts had won everywhere, even among those whose position should have set them most apart. Perhaps the aristocratic and rich leaders of the insurrection thought that they should recompense those who had fought under their command by granting them political rights or by extending those they already had. Once down this path, as always happens, one is not able to stop.

Édouard de Tocqueville: "Apt observation. This first paragraph must be reworked a bit" (YTC, CIIIb, 2, p. 94).

n. In the margin: "It was the aristocracy, if this name can be given to what was then at the head of society in America, which had armed the people and led them on the fields of battle."

o. "Give me, for thirty years, a law for equal division of inheritance and liberty of the press and I will bring you a republic" (YTC, Cve, p. 63).

Tocqueville gives a privileged position to the structure of landed property in his theory. In his Mémoire sur le paysansme (Commentaire, XXIII, 1833, p. 633), he repeats that it is the concentration of land that provoked the concentration of power and the birth of the aristocracy. The same idea often appears in the notes taken during his journey in America (conversations with Livingston, Clay, Latrobe, Sparks in YTC, Blia, and Voyage, OC, V, 1, pp. 59, 87–88, 102, 109, 111–13), as well as during his journey in England.

I am astonished that ancient and modern political writers have not attributed a greater influence on the course of human affairs to the laws of landed inheritance. These laws belong, it is true, to the civil order; but they should be placed at the head of all political institutions, for they have an incredible influence on the social state of peoples, political laws being just the expression of the social state. In addition, the laws of inheritance have a sure and uniform way of operating on society; in a sense they lay hold of generations before their birth. Through them, man is armed with an almost divine power over the future of his fellows. The law-maker regulates the inheritance of citizens once, and he remains at rest for centuries: his work put in motion, he can keep his hands off; the machine acts on its own power, and moves as if self-directed toward an end set in advance.

Constituted in a certain way, the law of inheritance reunites, concentrates, gathers property and, soon after, power, around some head; in a way it makes aristocracy spring from the soil. Driven by other principles and set along another path, its action is even more rapid; it divides, shares, dis-

(Voyages en Angleterre, Irlande, Suisse et Allemagne, OC, V, 2, pp. 52, 28, 41–42). In a letter to Kergholay of June 29, 1831 (Correspondance avec Kergholay, OC, XIII, 1, pp. 231–33), he explains that it is one of the particulars of American society that most surprised him. Moreover, his interest in this question predates the journey to America. The division of the land is already mentioned in the notes of the journey in Sicily in 1827 (Voyage, OC, V, 1, pp. 43, 45). The same idea reappears in his article on the social and political state of France before and after the Revolution of 1789, and in L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.

We know that the social consequences of the inheritance laws have been considered by Aristotle in the Politics (1266b8). Montesquieu took up the question again in Del' esprit des lois (book V, chapters V and VIII). Afterward the question occupied a central place in the political considerations of the revolutionary era. The beginning of the nineteenth century still had in mind the posthumous speech of Mirabeau (Discours de M. de Mirabeau l'ainé sur l'égalité des partages dans les successions en ligne directe, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1791, 23 p.). Even the father of the author had treated it in one of his publications (De la charte provinciale, Paris: J. J. Blaise, 1829, 62p., pp. 12–13).

1. By the inheritance laws, I understand all the laws whose principal end is to regulate the disposition of property after the death of the owner.

The law of entail is among this number. It is true that it also has the result of preventing the owner from disposing of his property before his death; but it imposes the obligation on him of keeping it only with the view of having it go intact to his inheritor. So the principal end of the law of entail is to regulate the disposition of property after the death of the owner. All the rest is the means used.
seminates property and power. Sometimes people are then frightened by the rapidity of its march. Despairing of stopping its movement, they seek at least to create difficulties and obstacles before it; they want to counterbalance its action with opposing efforts; useless exertions! It crushes or sends flying into pieces all that gets in its way; it constantly rises and falls on the earth until nothing is left in sight but a shifting and intangible dust on which democracy takes its seat.

When the law of inheritance allows and, even more, requires the equal division of the father’s property among all the children, its effects are of two sorts; they should be carefully distinguished, even though they lead to the same end.

Due to the law of inheritance, the death of each owner leads to a revolution in property; not only do the holdings change masters, but so to speak, they change nature; they are constantly split into smaller portions. [The generations grow poorer as they succeed each other.]

That is the direct and, in a sense, the material effect of the law. So in countries where legislation establishes equal division, property and particularly territorial fortunes necessarily have a permanent tendency to grow smaller. Nonetheless, if the law were left to itself, the effects of this legislation would make themselves felt only over time. Because as long as the family includes not more than two children (and the average for families in a populated country like France, we are told, is only three), these children, sharing the wealth of their father and their mother, will be no less wealthy than each parent individually.

But the law of equal division exerts its influence not on the fate of property alone; it acts on the very soul of the proprietors, and calls their passions to its aid. These indirect effects rapidly destroy great fortunes and, above all, great estates.5

Among peoples for whom the inheritance law is based on the right of primogeniture, landed estates most often pass from generation to generation without being divided. That causes family spirit to be, in a way, embodied in the land. The family represents the land; the land represents the family; the land perpetuates its name, origin, glory, power and virtues.

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5. Law of inheritance.
Effect of the law of inheritance.

1. Divides fortunes naturally. But this not very rapid, average number of children, to divide two fortunes, that of the father and that of the mother.
2. Prevents the desire to keep them. Great effect. Destroys family spirit and substitutes individual egoism, leads to selling the land in order to have income, favors the taste for luxury, the land passes into the hands of the peasants and doesn’t come out again. Conversation with Rodat (YTC, CVh, 5, p. 9).

Law of inheritance. Its direct effects, its indirect effects (Rodat).
So greater equality not only among peoples of European races, but also among all peoples, in all times.
However manufacturing (YTC, CVh, 5, p. 8).

Tocqueville will devote a chapter in the second part of his book to the manufacturing aristocracy (chapter XX of volume II). On this point, this note and note d of p. 83 attest to an interest well before the voyage to England in 1835. Tocqueville had briefly visited England in 1833, but the notes of this first journey carry no trace of a particular attention to the problem of industry. It is generally agreed that his visit to Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham in 1835 is at the origin of this interest (Voyages en Angleterre, Irlande, Suisse et Algérie, OC, V1, pp. 67, 81).

During a conversation with Tocqueville in the United States, Robert Vaux had already referred to the effects of manufacturing on the population (non-alphabetic notebooks 2 and 3, YTC, BL0 and Voyage, OC, V1, p. 104). Beaumont, for his part, will not hesitate to affirm in the novel that he would publish in 1835: “In truth there exists in America something that resembles the feudal aristocracy. The factory is the manor; the manufacturer, the sovereign lord; the workers are the serfs” (Marie, I, pp. 241–42).
It is an undying witness to the past and a precious guarantee of life to come.¹

When the inheritance law establishes equal division, it destroys the intimate connection that existed between family spirit and keeping the land; the land ceases to represent the family, for the land, inescapably divided after one or two generations, clearly must shrink continually and disappear entirely in the end. The sons of a great landed proprietor, if they are few, or if fortune favors them, can maintain the hope of not being poorer than their progenitor, but not of owning the same lands as he; their wealth will necessarily consist of other elements than his.²

Now, from the moment you take away from landed proprietors any great interest—arising from sentiment, memory, pride, or ambition—in keeping the land, you can be sure that sooner or later they will sell it. They have a great pecuniary interest in selling, since movable assets produce more income than other assets and lend themselves much more easily to satisfying the passions of the moment.³

Once divided, great landed estates are never reassembled; for the small landholder gains proportionately more revenue from his field than the large landholder; so he sells it at a much higher price than the large landholder. Thus the economic calculations that brought a rich man to sell vast properties, will prevent him, with all the more reason, from buying small properties in order to reassemble large estates.⁴

What is called family spirit is often based on an illusion of individual egoism.⁵ A person seeks to perpetuate and, in a way, to immortalize himself in his great-nephews.⁶ Where family spirit ends, individual egoism reverts to its true inclinations. Since the family no longer enters the mind except as something vague, indeterminate, and uncertain, each man concentrates on present convenience; he considers the establishment of the generation immediately following, and nothing more.

So a person does not try to perpetuate his family, or at least he tries to perpetuate it by means other than landed property.

Thus, not only does the inheritance law make it difficult for families to keep the same estates intact, but also it removes the desire to try and leads families, in a way, to cooperate in their own ruin.

The law of equal division proceeds in two ways: by acting on the thing, it acts on the man; by acting on the man, it affects the thing.

In these two ways it succeeds in profoundly attacking landed property and in making families as well as fortunes rapidly disappear.⁷

Surely it is not up to us, the French of the nineteenth century, daily witnesses to the political and social changes that the inheritance law brings about, to question its power. Each day we see it constantly move back and forth over our soil, toppling in its path the walls of our dwellings and de-

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¹ “Ask Livingston if in the United States there is still the possibility of establishing entails [in English in the text (ed.)]” (YTC, CVb, p. 33).
² See the conversation with Mr. Latrobe (YTC, B1ia and Voyage, OC, V, 1, p. 109).
³ In L'Irlande, Beaumont will recommend the law of equal division as the way to divide property and socially weaken the English aristocracy of Ireland (see especially vol. II, pp. 191–200). Beaumont, like Tocqueville, had also observed in the United States the effects of the inheritance law (cf. in particular two letters, dated respectively July 4 and September 31, 1831, Lettres d'Amérique, pp. 80 and 147).
⁴ I do not mean that the small landholder cultivates better, but he cultivates with more enthusiasm and care, and gains by work what he lacks in skill.
⁵ In the margin: “#The inheritance law acts much more forcefully on the destruction of landed fortunes than of fortunes in general.”
⁶ X. Hervé de Tocqueville: “I do not believe that the word *egoism* is the right word here. Egoism is only concerned with the present and does not rush toward the future. The word *pride* would seem more suitable to me.”
⁷ Édouard de Tocqueville: “I find the word *egoism* good” (YTC, CIIIb, 2, p. 95).
⁸ Note in pencil in the manuscript that seems to speak about a first version that lacked the sentence to which this note refers: “#Think about this. A bad inference could be drawn from it, too generalized.”
⁹ Since land is the most secure property, there are, from time to time, wealthy men who are inclined to make great sacrifices to acquire it and who willingly lose a considerable portion of their income in order to assure the rest. But these are accidents. The love of landed property is no longer usually found except among the poor. The small landholder, who is less enlightened and who has less imagination and fewer passions than the large landholder, is generally preoccupied only with the desire to enlarge his domain; and it often happens that inheritance, marriage or turns of fortune in trade provide him the means little by little.

So alongside the tendency that brings men to divide the land, there exists another that brings them to consolidate it. This tendency, which is enough to prevent property from being infinitely divided, is not strong enough to create great territorial fortunes, nor above all to keep them in the same families.
stroying the hedges of our fields. But if the inheritance law has already accomplished much among us, much still remains for it to do. Our memories, opinions, and habits present it with powerful obstacles.2

In the United States, its work of destruction is nearly finished. That is where its principal results can be studied.

English legislation on the transmission of property was abolished in nearly all the states at the time of the Revolution.

The law of entail was modified so as to interfere only imperceptibly with the free circulation of property.3

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2. Hervé de Tocqueville:

What are these obstacles? I do not know them. In France there are scarcely 2,000 families who give a double portion to the eldest son, and each day that becomes rarer. Equality of affection toward the children predominates. The law of primogeniture revolted even those who benefited from it. It was one of the most active causes of the July Revolution. So you should say what these obstacles are, because the truth of the phrase is not apparent (YTC, CIIIb, 2, p. 96).

a. [Note] "# Here citation of Kent and analysis of Lippitt and then a remark on how the French laws on inheritance and entail are more democratic than the American laws. #" Cf. note G.

In 1834, Tocqueville felt the need to have help in the organization and reading of American books, brochures and codes. The following advertisement is found in one of the notebooks of the copyist Bonnel:

Looking for an American from the United States who has received a liberal education, who would like to do research in the political laws and the historical works of his country and who, for two months, could sacrifice two or three hours of his time each day for this work. Choice of hours would be left to him.

Apply to M. Alexis (ed.), de Tocqueville (ed.), rue de Verteuil (ed.), n. 49, before ten in the morning or in the afternoon between two and four.

Five copies (YTC, CIV, 2, p. 85).

This advertisement seems not to have been published. Francis Lippitt states that he was hired on the recommendation of the American delegation in Paris by Nathaniel Niles or Edward Livingston probably. In a letter to Daniel Gilman (reproduced in Daniel C. Gilman, "Alexis de Tocqueville and his book on America, sixty years after," The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine, 56, May–October 1898, pp. 703–13), Francis Lippitt asserts that his work consisted of reading and summarizing books, newspaper clippings and legal collections. Theodore Sedgwick, another American who had helped the author, unquestionably had a more important role. His conversations seem to have been useful to Tocqueville while drafting certain points of the book. (Also see, George W. Pierson, Tocqueville and Beaumont in America, pp. 731–34.)

b. [Note] "# The Livingstons and the Van Rensselaers. #"

c. At the time of his voyage, Tocqueville met Charles Carroll, signatory of the Declaration of Independence and one of the wealthiest Americans of the time. On November 8, 1831, Tocqueville, in a draft of a letter to an unidentified recipient, noted concerning him: "[Charles Carroll], a little old man of 95 years, straight as an arrow, ... saw all the great families disappear as a result of the new inheritance law. For sixty years he has seen their descendants grow poorer, the noble families disappear, and the democracy take hold of the power that the great landholders held in his time" (YTC, BL2).

d. In the margin: "# Put here, I think, the inequality arising from the accumulation of the personal wealth of manufacturing. #"

e. Democracy.

What is most important for democracy, is not that there are no great fortunes; it is that great fortunes do not rest in the same hands. In this way, there are the rich, but they do not form a class.

Commerce, industry perhaps create larger individual fortunes in America now than sixty years ago. However, the abolition of primogeniture and entail make de-
This picture, however colored you think it is, still gives only an incomplete idea of what is happening in the new states of the West and Southwest.\(^f\)

At the end of the last century, hardy adventurers began to penetrate the valleys of the Mississippi. This was like a new discovery of America: soon the bulk of emigration went there; you saw unknown societies suddenly emerge from the wilderness. States, whose names did not even exist a few years before, took a place within the American Union. [\#Hardly a year passed without the republic being forced to have some new star attached to its flag. \#>] In the West democracy can be observed carried to its extreme limit. In these states, in a way improvised by chance, the inhabitants arrived but yesterday on the soil they occupy. They scarcely know each other, and each one is unaware of the history of his closest neighbor. So in this part of the American continent, the population escapes not only from the influence of great names and great wealth, but also from the natural aristocracy that arises from enlightenment and virtue. There, no one exercises the power that men grant out of respect for an entire life spent in doing good before their eyes. The new states of the West already have inhabitants; society still does not exist.

mocracy, its passions, interests, maxims, tastes more powerful in our time than sixty years ago.

Furthermore, equality of political rights has introduced a powerful new element of democracy.

American societies had always been democratic by their nature; the Revolution made democratic principles pass into the laws (YTC, CVe, pp. 60–61).

\(f\). Hervé de Tocqueville:

This transition needs revision. The picture that precedes relates to the effect of the law of equal division and has no relation whatsoever to the new states of the West. I think that you should say: what we have said about the equality of fortunes and rank in the East and in the South gives only an incomplete idea of the way it is established in the new states, etc. Here I offer a thought: The author must not be afraid of sometimes saying a few words that recall what precedes. These are resting points for the imagination, which put it back on track, and ease the work of comparing ideas already expressed with those which are being presented (YTC, CIIB, 3, p. 97).

But not only fortunes are equal in America; to a certain degree, equality extends to minds themselves.

I do not think there is any country in the world where, in proportion to the population, there exist so small a number of ignorant and fewer learned men than in America.

There primary education is available to every one; higher education is hardly available to anyone.

This is easily understood and is, so to speak, the necessary result of what we advanced above.

Nearly all Americans live comfortably; so they can easily gain the primary elements of human knowledge.

In America, there are few rich [\#and the rich do not form a class apart. The consequences of this fact in relation to education are of several kinds. \#]; nearly all Americans need to have an occupation. Now, every occupation requires an apprenticeship. So Americans can devote only the first years of life to general cultivation of the mind; at age fifteen, they begin a career; most often, therefore, their education concludes when ours begins. If pursued further, it is directed only toward a specialized and lucrative field; they study a field of knowledge in the way they prepare for a trade; and they take only the applications recognized to have immediate utility.

In America, most of the rich began by being poor; nearly all the men of leisure were busy men in their youth. The result is that when they could have the taste for study, they do not have the time to devote themselves to it; and when they have gained the time, they no longer have the taste.

So in America no class exists that honors intellectual work and in which the penchant for intellectual pleasures is handed down with affluence and hereditary leisure.

Both the will and the power to devote oneself to this work are therefore missing.

In America a certain middling level of human knowledge is established. All minds have approached it; some by rising, others by falling.
So you meet a great multitude of individuals who have about the same number of notions in matters of religion, history, the sciences, political economy, legislation, and government.

Intellectual inequality comes directly from God, and man cannot prevent it from always reappearing.

But it follows, at least from what we have just said, that minds, while still remaining unequal as the Creator intended, find equal means at their disposal. Thus, today in America, the aristocratic element, always feeble since its birth, is, if not destroyed, at least weakened further; so it is difficult to assign it any influence whatsoever in the course of public affairs.

Time, events, and the laws have, on the contrary, made the democratic element not only preponderant but also, so to speak, unique. No family or group influence can be seen; often not even an individual influence, no matter how ephemeral, can be found.

[(Society there is (ed.)) profoundly and radically democratic in its religion, ideas, habits, and passions.]

*For a people that has reached such a social state, mixed governments are more or less impractical; hardly any choice exists for them other than absolute power or a republic [v: sovereignty of the people].

America found itself in circumstances fortunate for escaping despotism and favorable for adopting a republic.

So America presents, in its social state, the strangest phenomenon. There, men appear more equal in fortune and in mind or, in other words, more equal in strength than they are in any other country in the world and have been in any century that history remembers.

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g. In the margin, with a bracket uniting this paragraph with the two preceding ones:

"#To sacrifice, I think, because all of that implies something more than the social state. Ask G{luztave (ed.)}. and L{ois (ed.)}.

Political Consequences of the Social State of the Anglo-Americans

The political consequences of such a social state are easy to deduce.

It is impossible to think that, in the end, equality would not penetrate the political world as it does elsewhere. You cannot imagine men, equal in all other ways, forever unequal to each other on a single point; so in time they will become equal in all ways.

Now I know only two ways to have equality rule in the political world: rights must either be given to each citizen or given to no one [and apart from the government of the United States I see nothing more democratic than the empire of the great lord].

For peoples who have arrived at the same social state as the Anglo-Americans, it is therefore very difficult to see a middle course between the sovereignty of all [v: of the people] and the absolute power of one man [v: of a king].

[#So peoples who have a similar social state are faced with a frightening alternative; they must choose between the sovereignty of the people and the absolute power of a king.]

We must not hide from the fact that the social state I have just described lends itself almost as easily to the one as to the other of these two consequences.

There is in fact a manly and legitimate passion for equality that incites men to want to be strong and esteemed. This passion tends to elevate the small to the rank of the great. But in the human heart a depraved taste for equality is also found that leads the weak to want to bring the strong down to their level and that reduces men to preferring equality in servitude to inequality in liberty. Not that peoples whose social state is democratic naturally scorn liberty; on the contrary, they have an instinctive taste for it. But liberty is not the principal and constant object of their desire; what they love with undying love is equality; they rush toward liberty by rapid impulses and sudden efforts, and if they miss the goal, they resign them-
selves; but without equality nothing can satisfy them, and rather than lose it, they would agree to perish. h

On the other hand, when citizens are all more or less equal, it becomes difficult for them to defend their independence against the aggressions of power. Since none among them is then strong enough to struggle alone with any advantage, it is only the combination of the strength of all that can guarantee liberty. Now, such a combination is not always found. j

Peoples can therefore draw two great political consequences from the same social state; these consequences differ prodigiously, but they both arise from the same fact.

The first to be subjected to this fearful alternative that I have just described, the Anglo-Americans have been fortunate enough to escape absolute power. Circumstances, origin, enlightenment, and above all, mores have allowed them to establish k and to maintain the sovereignty of the people. m

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h. Hervé de Tocqueville:

All of this paragraph is extremely obscure. I do not know if I understood it, but it does not seem very correct to me. Men want to be equal not in order to be strong and respected, but out of human pride, out of a more or less well understood sentiment of human dignity. Nor is it because the weak want to draw or rather lower the strong to their level that servitude is established. Servitude is a state of degradation that is never the choice of any nation or any fragment of a nation. It results from the vices of the nation from which liberty is escaping because the nation did not know how to use liberty or is cowardly enough not to know how to rid itself of a tyrant. Fatigue or cowardice, degradation or disgust, such are the causes of servitude; it does not come about because men prefer equality in servitude to inequality in liberty. Among them, it is not preference, but objection (YTC, CIIIb, 2, pp. 98–99).

j. In the version put at the disposal of the family, the sentence continues as follows: "... such a combination is not always found. It happens that they resign themselves without difficulty to servitude" (YTC, CIIIb, 2, pp. 100–101).

k. In another version, in the margin: "... mores, this hidden will of God that is called chance", have allowed them ..."

m. Hervé de Tocqueville: "Erase the word establish. The sovereignty of the aggregation of all the individuals of a nation that is called the people is not established, for this sovereignty exists by itself and everywhere. Even in Turkey, it strangles the sultan; in Spain, the Cortes is needed to sanction a change in the inheritance of the throne" (YTC, CIIIb, 2, p. 99).

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CHAPTER 4

Of the Principle of the Sovereignty of the People in America

It dominates all of American society.—Application that the Americans already made of this principle before their Revolution.—Development that the Revolution gave to it.—Gradual and irresistible lowering of the property qualification.

When you want to talk about the political laws of the United States, you must always begin with the dogma of the sovereignty of the people. a

The principle of the sovereignty of the people, which is more or less always found at the base of nearly all human institutions, ordinarily remains there as if buried. It is obeyed without being recognized, or if sometimes it happens, for a moment, to be brought into the full light of day, people soon rush to push it back into the shadows of the sanctuary.

The national will is one of those terms abused most widely by schemers of all times and despots of all ages. Some have seen it expressed in votes bought from the brokers of power; others in the votes of an interested or fearful minority. There are even some who have discovered it fully formulated in the silence of the people and who have thought that from the fact of obedience came, for them, the right of command. b

In America, the principle of the sovereignty of the people is not hidden or sterile as it is in certain nations [a vain show and a false principle as among a. "Sovereignty of the people and democracy are two perfectly correlative words; the one represents the theoretical idea, the other its practical realization" (YTC, CVH, 1, p. 22).

b. In the margin, with a bracket enclosing the entire paragraph: "#This seems trite to me.#"

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