Alexis de Tocqueville

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

Historical-Critical Edition of
De la démocratie en Amérique

Edited by Eduardo Nolla

Translated from the French by James T. Schleifer

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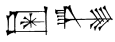

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CHAPTER 1[a]

Why Democratic Peoples Show a More Ardent and More Enduring Love for Equality Than for Liberty[b]

a. This chapter, one of the best known of *Democracy,* is not found in the manuscript, where you pass directly from the previous chapter (number 19) to the one on individualism (number 20). Nor does it appear in notebook CVf.

A first version of it exists in pages 1 to 14 of notebook CVk, 2. The inclusion in the final version is due to the insistence of Louis de Kergorlay, as is witnessed by this note on the jacket that contains it:

> L[ouis (ed.)]. thinks that this piece must *absolutely* appear in the work, either in the current form or by transporting the ideas elsewhere. I believe in fact that he is right. I see that it could be introduced in this way into the present chapter, which would then be divided into three principal ideas:
>
> 1. How equality gives the idea and the taste for political liberty.
> 2. How in the centuries of equality men are much less attached to being free than to remaining equal.
> 3. How equality suggests ideas and tastes to them that can make them lose liberty and lead them to servitude.
>
> In this way the piece would remain more or less as it is. It would only have to be concluded differently and in such a way as to fit into the general idea of the chapter, more or less like this:
>
> "Thus, love of liberty cannot be the principal passion of men during democratic centuries and it occupies in their heart only the space left for it by another passion."
>
> Before including this section, to see clearly whether all that I say there is not a useless repetition of what I already said in the following sections. I am afraid it is (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 1–2). See note a for p. 1200.

b. The *rubish* of chapter 10 of this part contains a jacket cover on which you can read: "How equality of ranks suggests to men the taste for liberty [v: equality] and why democratic peoples love equality better than liberty./

"Piece that I will probably make the second section of the chapter and that must be

The first and most intense of the passions given birth by equality of conditions, I do not need to say, is the love of this very equality. So no one will be surprised that I talk about it before all the others.

Everyone has noted that in our time, and especially in France, this passion for equality has a greater place in the human heart every day. It has been said a hundred times that our contemporaries have a much more ardent and much more tenacious love for equality than for liberty; but I do not find that we have yet adequately gone back to the causes of this fact. I am going to try.[c]

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reexamined with care while reviewing this chapter. 4 September 1838" (*Rubish,* 1). The notes that are found in this jacket belong in large part to the final chapter of the book. In a partial copy from the *Rubish,* they are found precisely with the rough drafts of the fourth part (YTC, CVg, 2, p. 16 and following). Among these notes you find this one:

> Some ideas on the sentiment of equality (2 February 1836)./
>
> What must be understood by the sentiment of equality among democratic peoples./
>
> The taste for equality among most men is not: that no one be lower than I, but: that no one be higher than I, which, in practice, can come to the same thing, but which is far from meaning the same thing./
>
> So does a real and true taste for equality exist in this world? Among some elite souls. But you must not base your reasoning on them./
>
> What produced aristocracies? The desire among a few to raise themselves. What leads to democracy? The desire of all to raise themselves. The sentiment is the same; there is only a difference in the number of those who feel it. Each man aims as high as possible, and a level comes about naturally, without anyone wanting to be leveled.
>
> When everyone wants to rise at once, the rule of equality is quite naturally found to be what is most suitable for each man. A thousand runners all have the same goal. Each one burns with the desire of coming in first. For that, it would be good to precede the others in the course. But if I do that, who will assure me that the others will not do so? If there were only five or six who had to run with me, I could perhaps attempt it, but racing with a thousand, you cannot succeed in doing so. What to do? The only means is to prevent anyone from having any privilege and to leave each one to his natural resources. [v: All, however, agree to depart at the same time from the same place.] It is not that they truly love equality, but they are all obliged to resort to it./
>
> To reflect again about all of that (*Rubish,* 1). See note d for p. 1203.

c. First draft of this opening of the chapter:

> When conditions are more or less equal among men, each one, feeling independent of his fellows, contracts the habit and the need to follow only his will in his particular

You can imagine an extreme point where liberty and equality meet and merge.

Suppose that all citizens participate in the government and that each one has an equal right to take part in it.

Since no one then differs from his fellows, no one will be able to exercise a tyrannical power; men will be perfectly free, because they will all be entirely equal; and they will all be perfectly equal, because they will be entirely free. Democratic peoples tend toward this ideal.

That is the most complete form that equality can take on earth; but there are a thousand other forms that, without being as perfect, are scarcely less dear to these peoples.

Equality can become established in civil society and not reign in the political world. Everyone can have the right to pursue the same pleasures, to enter the same professions, to meet in the same places; in a word, to live in the same way and to pursue wealth by the same means, without all taking the same part in government.

A kind of equality can even become established in the political world, even if political liberty does not exist. Everyone is equal to all his fellows,

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actions. This naturally leads the human mind to the idea of political liberty and suggests the taste for it.

Take one man at random from within a democratic people [v: in a country where equality reigns], put him if possible outside of his prejudices, of his interests of the moment, of his memories, so that he gives himself only to the sole interests that the social state suggests to him, and you will discover that among all governments the one that he most easily imagines first and that he loves best is government based on sovereignty of the people.

<So, as the social state of a people becomes democratic, you see the spirit of liberty born within it. These two things generally go together so closely that one makes me consider the other. The attempts that a nation makes to establish liberty within it only teach me that the principle of equality is developing there, and the equality that I see reigning among a people makes me suppose the approach of revolutions.>

So equality of conditions cannot be established among a people without the spirit of liberty being revealed there, and it is never entirely extinguished as long as equality of conditions remains.

Love of political liberty, however, is not the principal passion of these democratic peoples.

You can imagine an extreme point . . . (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 2–4).

except one, who is, without distinction, the master of all, and who takes the agents of his power equally from among all.

It would be easy to form several other hypotheses according to which a very great equality could easily be combined with institutions more or less free, or even with institutions that would not be free at all.

So although men cannot become absolutely equal without being entirely free, and consequently equality at its most extreme level merges with liberty, you are justified in distinguishing the one from the other.[d]

The taste that men have for liberty and the one that they feel for equality are, in fact, two distinct things, and I am not afraid to add that, among democratic peoples, they are two unequal things.

If you want to pay attention, you will see that in each century, a singular and dominant fact is found to which the other facts are related; this fact almost always gives birth to a generative thought, or to a principal passion that then ends by drawing to itself and carrying along in its course all sentiments and all ideas. It is like the great river toward which all of the surrounding streams seem to flow.

Liberty has shown itself to men in different times and in different forms; it has not been linked exclusively to one social state, and you find it elsewhere than in democracies. So it cannot form the distinctive characteristic of democratic centuries.

The particular and dominant fact that singles out these centuries is equality of conditions; the principal passion that agitates men in those times is love of this equality.

Do not ask what singular charm the men of democratic ages find in living equal; or the particular reasons that they can have to be so stubbornly attached to equality rather than to the other advantages that society presents to them. Equality forms the distinctive characteristic of the period in which they live; that alone is enough to explain why they prefer it to everything else.

d. "<Equality of conditions does not lead to liberty in an irresistible way, but it leads to it; this is our plank of salvation>" (YTC, CVk, 2, p. 6).

But, apart from this reason, there are several others that, in all times, will habitually lead men to prefer equality to liberty.

If a people could ever succeed in destroying by itself or only in decreasing the equality that reigns within it, it would do so only by long and difficult efforts. It would have to modify its social state, abolish its laws, replace its ideas, change its habits, alter its mores. But, to lose political liberty, it is enough not to hold on to it, and liberty escapes.

So men do not hold on to equality only because it is dear to them; they are also attached to it because they believe it must last forever.

You do not find men so limited and so superficial that they do not discover that political liberty may, by its excesses, compromise tranquillity, patrimony, and the life of individuals. But only attentive and clear-sighted men see the dangers with which equality threatens us, and ordinarily they avoid pointing these dangers out. They know that the miseries that they fear are remote, and they imagine that those miseries affect only the generations to come, about whom the present generation scarcely worries. The evils that liberty sometimes brings are immediate; they are visible to all, and more or less everyone feels them. The evils that extreme equality can produce appear only little by little; they gradually insinuate themselves into the social body; they are seen only now and then, and, at the moment when they become most violent, habit has already made it so that they are no longer felt.

The good things that liberty brings show themselves only over time, and it is always easy to fail to recognize the cause that gives them birth.

The advantages of equality make themselves felt immediately, and every day you see them flow from their source.

Political liberty, from time to time, gives sublime pleasures to a certain number of citizens.

Equality provides a multitude of small enjoyments to each man every day. The charms of equality are felt at every moment, and they are within reach of all; the most noble hearts are not insensitive to them, and they are the delight of the most common souls. So the passion to which equality gives birth has to be at the very same time forceful and general.

Men cannot enjoy political liberty without purchasing it at the cost of some sacrifices, and they never secure it except by a great deal of effort. But the pleasures provided by equality are there for the taking. Each one of the small incidents of private life seems to give birth to them, and to enjoy them, you only have to be alive.

Democratic peoples love equality at all times, but there are certain periods when they push the passion that they feel for it to the point of delirium. This happens at the moment when the old social hierarchy, threatened for a long time, is finally destroyed, after a final internal struggle, when the barriers that separated citizens are at last overturned. Men then rush toward equality as toward a conquest, and they cling to it as to a precious good that someone wants to take away from them. The passion for equality penetrates the human heart from all directions, it spreads and fills it entirely. Do not tell men that by giving themselves so blindly to one exclusive passion, they compromise their dearest interests; they are deaf. Do not show them that liberty is escaping from their hands while they are looking elsewhere; they are blind, or rather they see in the whole universe only one single good worthy of desire.

What precedes applies to all democratic nations. What follows concerns only ourselves.

Among most modern nations, and in particular among all the peoples of the continent of Europe, the taste and the idea of liberty only began to arise and to develop at the moment when conditions began to become equal, and as a consequence of this very equality. It was absolute kings who worked hardest to level ranks among their subjects. Among these peoples, equality preceded liberty; so equality was an ancient fact, when liberty was still something new; the one had already created opinions, customs, laws that were its own, when the other appeared alone, and for the first time, in full view. Thus, the second was still only in ideas and in tastes, while the first had already penetrated habits, had taken hold of mores, and had given a particular turn to the least actions of life. Why be surprised if men today prefer the one to the other?[e]

e. Not only are these two things different, but I can easily prove that they are some-

I think that democratic peoples have a natural taste for liberty; left to themselves, they seek it, they love it, and it is only with pain that they see themselves separated from it. But they have an ardent, insatiable, eternal, invincible passion for equality; they want equality in liberty, and if they cannot obtain that, they still want equality in slavery. They will suffer poverty, enslavement, barbarism, but they will not suffer aristocracy.

This is true in all times, and above all in our own. All men and all powers that would like to fight against this irresistible power will be overturned and destroyed by it.[f] In our day, liberty cannot be established without its support, and despotism itself cannot reign without it.

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times opposed. It is clear for example that men must exercise political rights only to the extent that they are capable of doing so. Without that you would arrive at anarchy, which is only a particular form of tyranny. Now, it is certain that the sentiment of equality is less offended by the subjugation of all to one master, than by the submission of a great number to the government of a few. So the sentiment of equality leads here either to giving (illegible word) rights to everyone, which leads to anarchy, or to giving them to no one, which establishes despotism.

[To the side: "The despot is a distant enemy, the noble is an enemy who touches you."]

You can satisfy the taste of men for equality, without giving them liberty. Often they must even sacrifice a part of the second in order fully to enjoy the first.

So these two things are easily separable.

The very fact that they are not intimately united and that the one is infinitely more precious than the other would make it very easy and natural to neglect the second in order to run after the first./

So let us hold onto liberty with a desperate attachment, let us hold on to it as a good to which all other good things are attached.

[To the side] If, on the one hand, among a democratic people, men are more generally enlightened about their rights, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that they are less able to defend them, because individually they are very weak and the art of acting in common is difficult and demands institutions that are not provided and an apprenticeship that is not allowed to be undertaken (YTC, CVd, pp. 24–25).

f. [On the jacket of a draft] Equality is not suitable for barbaric peoples; it prevents them from becoming enlightened and civilized./

Idea to introduce perhaps in the chapters on literature or the sciences.

CHAPTER 6

What Type of Despotism Democratic Nations Have to Fear[a]

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,[b] 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.

I see two places for this.

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, CVj, 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.[c]

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

c. To the side: "<Perhaps place this here:

"Those, I said, who think to rediscover the monarchy of H[enri (ed.)]. IV or L[ouis (ed.)]. XIV seem very blind to me. As for me, when I consider the state which several European nations have already reached and toward which all the others are tending, I feel myself led to believe that among them there will soon no longer be a place except for democratic liberty or for the tyranny of the Caesars.>" Tocqueville cites here p. 511 of the second volume.

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]

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 declamatory, common, hackneyed and false (*Rubish,* 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).

On the different types of despotism in the work of Tocqueville, see James T. Schleifer, *The Making of Tocqueville's "Democracy in America,"* pp. 147–56, 179–85. Roger Boesche, "The Prison, Tocqueville's Model for Despotism," *Western Political Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1980): 550–63, established some points of similarity between the despotism of Tocqueville and his idea of the prison.

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.[e]

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.[f] 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 despotism[1] 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.]

(1) <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."

On the origins of paternal despotism, see Rousseau, chapter IV, book I, of the *Contrat social* and his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (*Œuvres complètes,* Paris: Pléiade, 1964, III, p. 182).

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 gaity; 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;[g] 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.[h]

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.[j] It works willingly for their happiness; but it wants to be the

g. In the margin: "<Perhaps narrow this tableau. See the effect that it produces when reading.>"

h. In the margin: "<See if this is not found *word for word* at individualism; that the idea was there would not be important.

"Very useful here, try to leave it.>"

j. Note in the manuscript:

> Idea that revolutions and anarchy could be combined with this sort of administrative despotism. Days of anarchy in years of despotism. Revolutions always short and not very profound, but perhaps frequent. Palace revolutions that I can easily distinguish from great revolutions, the near impossibility of which I depicted above. These are not revolutions truly speaking. Idea to introduce somewhere in this chapter. Because our contemporaries fear disorder much more than servitude, they must be struck from that side.

A draft comments:

> To fight despotism I am obliged to prove that it leads to anarchy. If it led only to itself, it would perhaps be followed willingly.
>
> [In the margin: Continuation of note (B. B.).
>
> Perhaps at the type of despotism which threatens us./
>
> If you could believe in a tranquil and stable despotism, that is to say, in the worst of all, my cause would be lost./
>
> A singular state, ours, in which we have had at the same time too little liberty and license, too little authority and tyranny!/
>
> For a people who has come to the state that I suppose, anarchy, license are possible accidents, even probable ones, but despotism is the normal condition.]
>
> Anarchy is not a lasting state, despotism is. Apathy where we find ourselves leads it is true to anarchy and to despotism. But I can say nonetheless that it leads to despotism because despotism is the final state. Can't this be disputed? And is it not permissible to believe that, in a country in which you would have equality of conditions

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;[k] 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.[m] Equality has prepared men for all these things; it has disposed men to bear them and often even to regard them as a benefit.

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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 peace 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, CVa, 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.[n]

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

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.]

would not be impossible for it to be established in the very shadow of the sovereignty of the people.o

o. So you can say that for democratic peoples centralization is an innate idea. Not only will this monstrous concentration of all the social [v: political] powers in the same hands not shock the natural ideas of democratic peoples as regards government, but it will favor several of the secret instincts and the most lively tastes that equality [v: their social state] suggests.

Equality of conditions suggests naturally to men an intense and constant taste for material well-being. I said so elsewhere. I have also shown in another place how, as equality became greater, each man, finding himself more independent and more separated from his fellows, felt more disposed to *consider* himself (this word implies a contradiction with what precedes on the innate idea of centralization) separately and to live in isolation.

Those are powerful instruments of tyranny for whoever knows how to use them.

Far from combating these natural tendencies of a democratic social state, a government which aims for absolute power will work with all its power to make them irresistible, and it will inflame the passions that liberty should moderate or extinguish. There exist in the south of Europe petty princes whose tyranny is so touchy and so irksome that the life of the most inoffensive citizens [v: the most servile and the most peaceful souls are] was saddened and made uncomfortable by it. Those princes are, if I am not mistaken, clumsy despots. They bring to the execution of their designs more zeal than light, and they do not know that in the centuries in which we are living men are more disposed to bear that you violate their rights than their comforts.

[To the side: Two consequences of the taste for material well-being for a despot to look after: 1. Softening of souls which causes you no longer to have a taste for the highest pleasures that liberty provides; 2. Effort of the whole human spirit toward the acquisition of well-being, which causes you no longer to have the time to give yourself to those pleasures.]

The clever man who seeks to establish absolute power among a democratic nation will demand only one thing from the citizens: that they do not get involved in the government and contract none of the habits that can in the long run lead men to get involved in it. But he will also work hard to make civil life as independent, as prosperous, as easy as it can be without political liberty. He will facilitate material well-being with all his power; he will honor it, he will glorify it each day in the eyes of the crowd, and pushing with all his power the souls that are naturally inclined toward solely the enjoyments of the senses, he will turn them away from the most beautiful works and the most noble pleasures of man.

Among democratic peoples men have little leisure; they are all naturally very occupied with their private affairs and only impatiently do they bear being turned away from them. The concern for common interests distracts and fatigues them; the sovereign power appears and unburdens them. Do not believe that it intends to oppress them in this way; it is relieving them. It carefully organizes the time of which they

[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

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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 by 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[p] 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.[q]

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./

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] (*Rubish,* 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. 55).

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.[r]

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

government that at the same time satisfies the love that they still have for independence and the new instincts that make them tend toward servitude>" (Note in the drafts that could also refer to another part of the chapter, *Rubish,* 2).

r. In the margin: "<I do not know if, everything considered, this is still not the best course that you can reasonably hope from equality and the only type of liberty that it is capable of allowing to men.>"

And a little further along: "<All the end of the chapter starting from here seems to me to come to an end too abruptly. All the more because that is the most vulnerable side and the most interesting side of the entire book.>"

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.][s]

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.[t]

s. In the margin: "<This is not relevant because I have already ruled out the idea of tyranny above.>"

t. 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.≠

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.[u] We forget that it is dangerous, above all, to enslave men

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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 1852, 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 1852. 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 . . .>

in the detail. I would, for my part, be led to believe liberty less necessary in the great things than in the least, if I thought that the one could ever be assured without possessing the other.

Subjection in small affairs manifests itself every day and makes itself felt indiscriminately by all citizens. It does not drive them to despair; but it thwarts them constantly and leads them to relinquish the use of their will [and finally to give up on themselves]. It thus extinguishes their spirit little by little, and enervates their souls; while the obedience that is due only in a small number of very grave, but very rare circumstances, displays servitude only now and then, and makes it weigh only on certain men. In vain will you charge these same citizens, whom you have made so dependent on the central power, with choosing from time to time the representatives of this power; this use so important, but so short and so rare, of their free will, will not prevent them from losing little by little the ability to think, to feel and to act by themselves, and from thus falling gradually below the level of humanity.[v]

I add that they will soon become incapable of [properly] exercising the great and sole privilege remaining to them. Democratic peoples who have introduced liberty in the political sphere, at the same time that they increased despotism in the administrative sphere, have been led to very strange peculiarities.[w] If small affairs, in which simple good sense can suf-

v. The Americans have avoided these first dangers of democratic infancy. Although they have granted immense rights to society, they have not sacrificed the individual to it. They have left to the latter, outside of the political world, a great *security* and a great *independence.* They have not given the government the same *civil privileges,* and they have not put it beyond the reach and the control of the judicial power by requiring in a stupid manner as we the necessity of the division of powers (UNITY, CENTRALIZATION, ADMINISTRATIVE DESPOTISM, *Rubish,* 2).

w. Note at the end of the manuscript of the chapter:

Their pet hobby is to want to combine the greatest political independence with the greatest administrative dependence.

I would do well, I believe, to hit this prejudice straight on, to say something analogous to the above sentence, to say that that comes from tugging in opposite directions. We tend toward liberty and toward servitude at the same time; we want to combine them, although they cannot be combined. Not able to be free, we want at least to be oppressed in the name of the people.

fice, 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.[x]

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

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).

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.[y]

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[a]

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.

a. The jacket that contains the manuscript of the chapter also contains Tocqueville's working manuscript and a copy of the entire chapter written in his hand. You can read on the jacket: "Continuation of the preceding chapter./

"[In pencil] I bet that M. de C[hateaubriand? (ed.)]. did not understand this chapter.

"20 minutes."

In the plan for the fourth part included in *Rubish,* 1 (contained in a jacket that is found with the drafts of the chapter on material enjoyments and that bears the title HOW EQUALITY OF RANKS SUGGESTS TO MEN THE TASTE FOR LIBERTY AND FOR EQUALITY), the chapter on the type of despotism is followed by another with the title WHAT MUST BE DONE TO TURN ASIDE THIS DANGER. Tocqueville notes to the side of the title: "This title contains the idea, but not the expression that this idea must have. The title drafted in this way would be too ambitious. It would promise more than I can keep."

The same idea is found on the jacket that contains the manuscript: "This title means nothing at all, but all those that I want to put in its place mean too much. The only real title would be: What must be done to avoid the evils that I point out in the preceding chapters. But such a title would announce much more than the chapter can hold; in such a case, it is better to be useless than ambitious."

b. "The social state separates men, the political state must draw them closer./

"The social state gives them the taste for well-being [v: inclines them toward the earth], the political state must raise them up by giving them great ideas and great emotions" (*Rubish,* 2).

I would, I think, have loved liberty in all times; but I feel myself inclined to adore it in the times in which we live.

I am persuaded, on the other hand, that in the centuries which we are entering, all those who try to base liberty on privilege and on aristocracy will fail. All those who want to attract and keep authority within a single class will fail. There is today no sovereign power clever enough and strong enough to establish despotism by reestablishing permanent distinctions among its subjects;[c] nor is there any legislator so wise and so powerful who

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 console 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.[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 corrupters 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./

What is the danger?

To flatter the feelings of democratic hate and envy and to gain power in this way.

To give equality lavishly, to take away liberty in return (YTC, CVc, pp. 55–58).

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.

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

These two first truths seem to me simple, clear and fertile, and they lead me naturally to consider what type of free government can be established among a people in which conditions are equal.

It results from the very constitution of democratic nations and from their needs that, among them, the power of the sovereign must be more uniform, more centralized, more extensive, more penetrating, more powerful than elsewhere.[e] Society there is naturally more active and stronger; the individual, more subordinate and weaker. The one does more; the other less; that is inevitable.[f]

So in democratic countries you must not expect the circle of individual independence ever to be as wide as in countries of aristocracy. But that is not to be desired; for among aristocratic nations, society is often sacrificed to the individual, and the prosperity of the greatest number to the grandeur of a few.

It is at the very same time necessary and desirable that the central power that directs a democratic people be active and powerful. It is not a matter of making it weak or indolent, but only of preventing it from abusing its agility and strength.[g]

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).

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."

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.[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.[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 despotism 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).

h. You are astonished at first sight by the respect that is still witnessed today for *domanial property* and the little respect that is shown for *industrial property.*[1] That comes from the fact that domanial 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.

1. Those two terms are not in natural opposition, but I do not have the time to clarify my thought (*Rubish,* 2).

j. Remedies to democracy indicated in the course of the book, to gather together perhaps in the first or final chapter.

[In the margin: Try to arrive at the same conclusion by another path than in political society.]

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[k] [chosen freely by the inhabitants themselves].[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

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Necessity of not giving omnipotence to the majority in order not to lose the liberty to act which results naturally from a democratic social state.

Necessity of introducing liberty among a democratic people in order to give it the necessary movement toward things of the mind.

Pour out enlightenment lavishly in democratic nations in order to elevate the tendencies of the human mind. Democracy without enlightenment and liberty would lead the human species back to barbarism.

Necessity of beliefs in order to immaterialize the lives of democratic peoples. Democratic peoples can be grasped only by them. Religion is an almost non-material interest which gives celestial thoughts./

Do not adopt one social principle *alone* however good it seems.

Do not use one form of government *alone.* Stay away from acridity [unity? (ed.)] (YTC, CVk, 2, pp. 54–55).

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

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[n] 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.[o]

[<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:

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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 *Messageries;* 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).

On the question of associations for Tocqueville, see: Renato Cavallaro, "Dall'individualismo al controllo democratico: aspetti del pensiero di Alexis de Tocqueville sull'associazionismo volontario," *Critica Sociologica,* 28, 1973–1974, pp. 99–125; William H. George, "Montesquieu and De Tocqueville and Corporative Individualism," *American Political Science Review* 16, no. 1 (1922): 10–21; Georges Gojat, "Les corps intermédiaires et la décentralisation dans l'oeuvre de Tocqueville," in *Libéralisme, traditionalisme, décentralisation* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1952), pp. 1–43; and José María Sauca Cano, *La ciencia de la asociación de Tocqueville* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1995).

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.[q]

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;[r] they feel 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.

q. 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).

This disadvantage that men of democracies find in forms is, however, what makes the latter so useful to liberty, their principal merit being to serve as a barrier between the strong and the weak, those who govern and the governed, to slow the first and to give to the second the time for them to figure things out. Forms are more necessary as the sovereign power is more active and more powerful and as individuals become more indolent and more feeble. Thus democratic peoples naturally need forms more than other peoples, and naturally they respect them less.[s] That merits very serious attention.

There is nothing more miserable than the superb disdain of most of our contemporaries for questions of forms; for today the smallest questions of forms have acquired an importance that they had not had until now. Several of the greatest interests of humanity are connected with it.

I think that, if the statesmen who lived in aristocratic centuries could sometimes scorn forms with impunity and often rise above them, those who lead peoples today must consider the least form with respect and neglect it only when an imperious necessity forces them to do so. In aristocracies, you had superstition for forms; we must have an enlightened and thoughtful cult of them.

Another instinct very natural to democratic peoples, and very dangerous, is that which leads them to scorn individual rights and to take them into little account.

Men are in general attached to a right and show it respect by reason of its importance or of the long use that they have made of it. Individual rights which are found among democratic peoples are ordinarily of little importance, very recent and very unstable; that means that they are often easily sacrificed and violated almost always without regrets.

Now it happens that, in this same time and among these same nations in which men conceive a natural scorn for the rights of individuals, the

s. "All peoples who have done great things for liberty have had the taste [v: the faith] and I could almost say superstition for forms./

"Forms are not liberty, but they are its body" (*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.[t]

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.

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

t. [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.>]

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 contracting the taste for movement and by becoming accustomed to all movements 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 sacrificing 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,[u] because all revolutions produce them, manifest themselves within aristocracies as well

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 tyranny (*Rubish,* 2).

as among democratic peoples; but among the first they are often less powerful 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 administrative habits.[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 democratic 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.][w]

In the centuries of aristocracy that preceded ours, there were very powerful individuals and a very feeble social authority. The very image of society 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.

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.>"

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 individuals 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 exaggerate 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 independence, 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.[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,[y] and

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).

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 democratic 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.[z]

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

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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?

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.[a] 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.[b] 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.[c]

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 [*vulgarius*] (*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 8[a]

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 OF 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 a 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-

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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.[c]

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

c. In the margin: "<I cast my eyes over my country and I see there a universal transformation. I widen my view, I carry it by degrees to the extreme limits of the vast space occupied on the globe by the European race; everywhere I am struck by an analogous spectacle. Among all peoples, ancient institutions and ancient mores have disappeared or are disappearing in order to give place to something different. Everything that exists today [interrupted text (ed.)].>"

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.[d]

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.[e]

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, 1, 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.[f]

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.[g]

So you must be very careful about judging the societies that are being

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).

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.[h] 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-

h. Equality of conditions, the absence of classes . . . are evils you say. It belittles human nature, establishes the mediocre in everything. Perhaps you are right.

Do you know a means to cure the evil by the opposites, that is to say by the reestablishment or even the maintaining of inequality, the permanent classification of men? No. At the very bottom of your heart you do not believe in the possibility of all these things.

But admitting that equality of conditions is an invincible fact, you contest its consequences in the political world; and you attack liberty and call despotism to your aid, and seek to assure present security at the expense of future races.

And it is here that you are clearly wrong. For there is only democracy (by this word I mean self-government) that can diminish and make bearable the inevitable evils of a democratic social state.

5 September 1837 (YTC, CVk, 2, p. 53).

rately while going along, and I feel full of fears and full of hopes.[j] 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.[k]

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 (ed.)] genius who embraces the necessities of the political order, there is a great weakness of mind and a great distaste 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.[m]

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.[n]

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.

January 1838 (YTC, CVk, 1, pp. 47–48).

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).