HARRIET MARTINEAU

SOCIETY IN AMERICA

Harriet Martineau

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INTRODUCTION.

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"To seize a character, even that of one man, in its life and secret mechanism, requires a philosopher; to delineate it with truth and impressiveness is work for a poet. How then shall one or two sleek clerical tutors, with here and there a tedium-stricken esquire, or speculative half-pay captain, give us views on such a subject? How shall a man, to whom all characters of individual men are like sealed books, of which he sees only the title and the covers, decipher from his four-wheeled vehicle, and depict to us, the character of a nation? He courageously depicts his own optical delusions; notes this to be incomprehensible, that other to be insignificant; much to be good, much to be bad, and most of all indifferent; and so, with a few flowing strokes, completes a picture, which, though it may not resemble any possible object, his countrymen are to take for a national portrait. Nor is the fraud so readily detected: for the character of a people has such a complexity of aspect, that even the honest observer knows not always, not perhaps after long inspection, what to determine regarding it. From his, only accidental, point of view, the figure stands before him like the tracings on veined marble—a mass of mere random lines, and tints, and entangled strokes, out of which a lively fancy may shape almost *any* image. But the image he brings with him is always the readiest; this is tried; it answers as well as another; and a second voucher now

testifies its correctness. Thus each, in confident tones, though it be with a secret misgiving, repeats his precursor; the hundred-times-repeated comes in the end to be believed; the foreign nation is now once for all understood, decided on, and registered accordingly; and dunce the thousandth writes of it like dunce the first."—*Edinburgh Review, No.* xlvi. p. 309.

This passage cannot but strike upon the heart of any traveller who meditates giving to the world an account of the foreign country he has visited. It is the mirror held up before his face; and he inevitably feels himself, for the moment, "dunce the thousandth." For my own part, I felt the truth contained in this picture so strongly, before I was acquainted with the passage itself, that I had again and again put away the idea of saying one word in print on the condition of society in the United States. Whenever I encountered half-a-dozen irreconcilable, but respectable opinions on a single point of political doctrine; whenever half-a-dozen fair-seeming versions of a single fact were offered to me; whenever the glow of pleasure at obtaining, by some trivial accident, a piece of important knowledge passed into a throb of pain at the thought of how much must remain concealed where a casual glimpse disclosed so much; whenever I felt how I, with my pittance of knowledge and amidst my glimmerings of conviction, was at the mercy of unmanageable circumstances, wafted now here and now there, by the currents of opinion, like one surveying a continent from a balloon, with only starlight above him—I was tempted to decline the task of generalising at all from what I saw and heard. In the intervals, however, I felt that

this would be wrong. Men will never arrive at a knowledge of each other, if those who have the opportunity of foreign observation refuse to relate what they think they have learned; or even to lay before others the materials from which they themselves hesitate to construct a theory, or draw large conclusions.

In seeking for methods by which I might communicate what I have observed in my travels, without offering any pretension to teach the English, or judge the Americans, two expedients occurred to me; both of which I have adopted. One is, to compare the existing state of society in America with the principles on which it is professedly founded; thus testing Institutions, Morals, and Manners by an indisputable, instead of an arbitrary standard, and securing to myself the same point of view with my readers of both nations.

In working according to this method, my principal dangers are two. I am in danger of not fully apprehending the principles on which society in the United States is founded; and of erring in the application to these of the facts which came under my notice. In the last respect, I am utterly hopeless of my own accuracy. It is in the highest degree improbable that my scanty gleanings in the wide field of American society should present a precisely fair sample of the whole. I can only explain that I have spared no pains to discover the truth, in both divisions of my task; and invite correction, in all errors of fact. This I earnestly do; holding myself, of course, an equal judge with others on matters of opinion.

My readers, on their part, will bear in mind that, in showing discrepancies between an actual condition and a

pure and noble theory of society, I am not finding fault with the Americans, as for falling behind the English, or the French, or any other nation. I decline the office of censor altogether. I dare not undertake it. Nor will my readers, I trust, regard the subject otherwise than as a compound of philosophy and fact. If we can all, for once, allay our personal feelings, dismiss our too great regard to mutual opinion, and put praise and blame as nearly as possible out of the question, more that is advantageous to us may perhaps be learned than by any invidious comparisons and proud judgments that were ever instituted and pronounced.

The other method by which I propose to lessen my own responsibility, is to enable my readers to judge for themselves, better than I can for them, what my testimony is worth. For this purpose, I offer a brief account of my travels, with dates in full; and a report of the principal means I enjoyed of obtaining a knowledge of the country.

At the close of a long work which I completed in 1834, it was thought desirable that I should travel for two years. I determined to go to the United States, chiefly because I felt a strong curiosity to witness the actual working of republican institutions; and partly because the circumstance of the language being the same as my own is very important to one who, like myself, is too deaf to enjoy anything like an average opportunity of obtaining correct knowledge, where intercourse is carried on in a foreign language. I went with a mind, I believe, as nearly as possible unprejudiced about America, with a strong disposition to admire democratic institutions, but an entire ignorance how far the people of the United States lived up

to, or fell below, their own theory. I had read whatever I could lay hold of that had been written about them; but was unable to satisfy myself that, after all, I understood anything whatever of their condition. As to knowledge of them, my mind was nearly a blank: as to opinion of their state, I did not carry the germ of one.

I landed at New York on the 19th of September, 1834: paid a short visit the next week to Paterson, in New Jersey, to see the cotton factories there, and the falls of the Passaic; and passed through New York again on my way to stay with some friends on the banks of the Hudson, and at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. On the 6th of October, I joined some companions at Albany, with whom I travelled through the State of New York, seeing Trenton Falls, Auburn, and Buffalo, to the Falls of Niagara. Here I remained nearly a week; then, after spending a few days at Buffalo, I embarked on Lake Erie, landing in the back of Pennsylvania, and travelling down through Meadville to Pittsburgh, spending a few days at each place. Then, over the Alleghanies to Northumberland, on the fork of the Susquehanna, the abode of Priestley after his exile, and his burial place. I arrived at Northumberland on the 11th of October, and left it, after visiting some villages in the neighbourhood, on the 17th, for Philadelphia, where I remained nearly six weeks, having very extensive intercourses with its various society. My stay at Baltimore was three weeks, and at Washington five. Congress was at that time in session, and I enjoyed peculiar opportunities of witnessing the proceedings of the Supreme Court and both houses of Congress. I was acquainted with almost every

eminent senator and representative, both on the administration and opposition sides; and was on friendly and intimate terms with some of the judges of the Supreme Court. I enjoyed the hospitality of the President, and of several of the heads of departments: and was, like everybody else, in society from morning till night of every day; as the custom is at Washington. One day was devoted to a visit to Mount Vernon, the abode and burial-place of Washington.

On the 18th of February I arrived at Montpelier, the seat of Mr. and Mrs. Madison, with whom I spent two days, which were wholly occupied with rapid conversation; Mr. Madison's share of which, various and beautiful to a remarkable degree, will never be forgotten by me. His clear reports of the principles and history of the Constitution of the United States, his insight into the condition, his speculations on the prospects of nations, his wise playfulness, his placid contemplation of present affairs, his abundant household anecdotes of Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson, were incalculably valuable and exceedingly delightful to me.

The intercourse which I had with Chief Justice Marshall was of the same character, though not nearly so copious. Nothing in either delighted me more than their hearty admiration of each other, notwithstanding some wide differences in their political views. They are both gone; and I now deeply feel what a privilege it is to have known them.

From Mr. Madison's I proceeded to Charlottesville, and passed two days amidst the hospitalities of the Professors of Jefferson's University, and their families. I was astonished to learn that this institution had never before been visited by a

British traveller. I can only be sorry for British travellers who have missed the pleasure. A few days more were given to Richmond, where the Virginia legislature was in session; and then ensued a long wintry journey though North and South Carolina to Charleston, occupying from the 2nd to the 11th of March. The hospitalities of Charleston are renowned; and I enjoyed them in their perfection for a fortnight; and then a renewal of the same kind of pleasures at Columbia, South Carolina, for ten days. I traversed the southern States, staying three days at Augusta, Georgia, and nearly a fortnight in and near Montgomery, Alabama; descending next the Alabama river to Mobile. After a short stay there, and a residence of ten days at New Orleans, I went up the Mississippi and Ohio to the mouth of the Cumberland river, which I ascended to Nashville, Tennessee. I visited the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and spent three weeks at Lexington. I descended the Ohio to Cincinnati; and after staying there ten days, ascended the river again, landing in Virginia, visiting the Hawk's Nest, Sulphur Springs, Natural Bridge, and Weyer's Cave, arriving at New York again on the 14th of July, 1835. The autumn was spent among the villages and smaller towns of Massachusetts, in a visit to Dr. Channing in Rhode Island, and in an excursion to the mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont. The winter was passed in Boston, with the exception of a trip to Plymouth, for "Forefather's Day." In the Spring I spent seven weeks in New York; and a month in a farmhouse at Stockbridge, Massachusetts; making an excursion, meanwhile, to Saratoga and Lake George. My last journey was with a party of friends, far into the west, visiting Niagara again,

proceeding by Lake Erie to Detroit, and across the territory of Michigan. We swept round the southern extremity of Lake Michigan to Chicago: went a long day's journey down into the prairies, back to Chicago, and by the Lakes Michigan, Huron, and St. Clair to Detroit, visiting Mackinaw by the way. We landed from Lake Erie at Cleveland, Ohio, on the 13th of July; and travelled through the interior of Ohio till we joined the river at Beaver. We visited Rapp's Settlement at Economy, on the Ohio, and returned to New York from Pittsburgh, by the canal route through Pennsylvania, and the rail-road over the Alleghanies. I sailed from New York for England on the 1st of August, 1836, having then been absent just two years.

In the course of this tour, I visited almost every kind of institution. The prisons of Auburn, Philadelphia, and Nashville: the insane and other hospitals of almost every considerable place: the literary and scientific institutions; the factories of the north; the plantations of the south; the farms of the west. I lived in houses which might be called palaces, in log-houses, and in a farm-house. I travelled much in wagons, as well as stages; also on horseback, and in some of the best and worst of steam-boats. I saw weddings, and christenings; the gatherings of the richer at watering places, and of the humbler at country festivals. I was present at orations, at land sales, and in the slave market. I was in frequent attendance on the Supreme Court and the Senate; and witnessed some of the proceedings of state legislatures. Above all, I was received into the bosom of many families, not as a stranger, but as a daughter or a sister. I am qualified, if any one is, to testify to the virtues

and the peace of the homes of the United States; and let it not be thought a breach of confidence, if I should be found occasionally to have spoken of these out of the fulness of my heart.

It would be nearly impossible to relate whom I knew, during my travels. Nearly every eminent man in politics, science and literature, and almost every distinguished woman, would grace my list. I have respected and beloved friends of each political party; and of nearly every religious denomination; among slave-holders, colonizationists, and abolitionists; among farmers, lawyers, merchants, professors, and clergy. I travelled among several tribes of Indians; and spent months in the southern States, with negroes ever at my heels.

Such were my means of information. With regard to my power of making use of them, I have but a few words to say.

It has been frequently mentioned to me that my being a woman was one disadvantage; and my being previously heard of, another. In this I do not agree.

I am sure, I have seen much more of domestic life than could possibly have been exhibited to any gentleman travelling through the country. The nursery, the boudoir, the kitchen, are all excellent schools in which to learn the morals and manners of a people: and, as for public and professional affairs—those may always gain full information upon such matters, who really feel an interest in them—be they men or women. No people in the world can be more frank, confiding and affectionate, or more skilful and liberal in communicating information, than I have ever found the Americans to be. I never asked in vain; and I seldom had to

ask at all; so carefully were my inquiries anticipated, and my aims so completely understood. I doubt whether a single fact that I wished to learn, or any doctrine that I desired to comprehend, was ever kept from me because I was a woman.

As for the other objection, I can only state my belief, that my friends and I found personal acquaintance so much pleasanter than any previous knowledge by hearsay, that we always forgot that we had heard of each other before. It would be preposterous to suppose that, received as I was into intimate confidence, any false appearances could be kept up on account of any preconceptions that could have been entertained of me.

I laboured under only one peculiar disadvantage, that I am aware of; but that one is incalculable. I mean my deafness. This does not endanger the accuracy of my information, I believe, as far as it goes; because I carry a trumpet of remarkable fidelity; an instrument, moreover, which seems to exert some winning power, by which I gain more in *tête-à-têtes* than is given to people who hear general conversation. Probably its charm consists in the new feeling which it imparts of ease and privacy in conversing with a deaf person. However this may be, I can hardly imagine fuller revelations to be made in household intercourse than my trumpet brought to me. But I am aware that there is no estimating the loss, in a foreign country, from not hearing the casual conversation of all kinds of people, in the streets, stages, hotels, &c. I am aware that the lights which are thus gathered up by the traveller for himself are often far more valuable than the most elaborate

accounts of things offered to him with an express design. This was my peculiar disadvantage. It could not be helped; and it cannot be explained away. I mention it, that the value of my testimony may be lowered according to the supposed worth of this circumstance.

Much is often said about the delicacy to be observed, in the act of revealing the history of one's travels, towards the hosts and other friends of the traveller who have reposed confidence in him. The rule seems to me a very plain one, which reconciles truth, honour and utility. My rule is to speak of the public acts of public persons, precisely as if I had known them only in their public character. This may be sometimes difficult, and sometimes painful, to the writer; but it leaves no just cause of complaint to any one else. Moreover, I hold it allowable and necessary to make use of opinions and facts offered in fire-side confidence, as long as no clue is offered by which they may be traced back to any particular fire-side. If any of my American friends should find in this book traces of old conversations and incidents, let them keep their own counsel, and be assured that the conversation and facts remain private between them and me. Thus far, all is safe; and further than this, no honourable person would wish to go.

This is not the place in which to speak of my obligations or of my friendships. Those who know best what I have in my heart to say meet me here under a new relation. In these pages, we meet as writer and readers. I would only entreat them to bear this distinction in mind, and not to measure my attachment to themselves by anything this book may contain about their country and their nation. The

bond which unites us bears no relation to clime, birth-place, or institutions. In as far as our friendship is faithful, we are fellow-citizens of another and a better country than theirs or mine.

PART I. POLITICS.

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> "... Those unalterable relations which Providence has ordained that everything should bear to every other. These relations, which are truth itself, the foundation of virtue, and consequently, the only measures of happiness, should be likewise the only measures by which we should direct our reasoning. To these we should conform in good earnest, and not think to force nature, and the whole order of her system, by a compliance with our pride and folly, to conform to our artificial regulations. It is by a conformity to this method we owe the discovery of the few truths we know, and the little liberty and rational happiness we enjoy." *Burke.*

Mr. Madison remarked to me, that the United States had been "useful in proving things before held impossible." Of such proofs, he adduced several. Others, which he did not mention, have since occurred to me; and, among them, the pursuit of the *à priori* method in forming a constitution:—the *à priori* method, as it is styled by its enemies, though its advocates, with more reason, call it the inductive method. Till the formation of the government of the United States, it had been generally supposed, and it is so still by the majority of the old world, that a sound theory of government can be constructed only out of the experience of man in governments; the experience mankind has had of despotisms, oligarchies, and the mixtures of these with

small portions of democracy. But the essential condition of the fidelity of the inductive method is, that all the elements of experience should be included. If, in this particular problem, of the true theory of government, we take all experience of government, and leave out all experience of man, except in his hitherto governing or governed state, we shall never reach a philosophical conclusion. The true application of the inductive method here is to test a theory of government deduced from the principles of human nature, by the results of all governments of which mankind has had experience. No narrower basis will serve for such an induction. Such a method of finding a good theory of government was considered impossible, till the United States "proved" it.

This proof can never be invalidated by anything that can now happen in the United States. It is common to say "Wait; these are early days. The experiment will fail yet." The experiment of the particular constitution of the United States may fail; but the great principle which, whether successfully or not, it strives to embody—the capacity of mankind for self-government—is established for ever. It has, as Mr. Madison said, proved a thing previously held impossible. If a revolution were to take place to-morrow in the United States, it remains an historical fact that, for half a century, a people has been self-governed; and, till it can be proved that the self-government is the cause of the instability, no revolution, or series of revolutions, can tarnish the lustre, any more than they can impair the soundness of the principle that mankind are capable of self-government. The United States have indeed been useful in proving these

two things, before held impossible; the finding a true theory of government, by reasoning from the principles of human nature, as well as from the experience of governments; and the capacity of mankind for self-government.

It seems strange that while politics are unquestionably a branch of moral science, bearing no other relation than to the duty and happiness of man, the great principles of his nature should have been neglected by politicians—with the exception of his love of power and desire of gain—till a set of men assembled in the State House at Philadelphia, in the eighteenth century, and there throned a legitimate political philosophy in the place of a deposed king. The *rationale* of all preceding governments had been, "men love power, therefore there must be punishments for rulers who, having already much, would seize more. Men desire gain; therefore there must be punishments for those, rulers or ruled, who would appropriate the gains of others." The *rationale* of the new and "impossible" government is "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable lights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure those rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."[1] This last recognizes, over and above what the former admits, the great principles of indefeasible rights; human equality in relation to these; and the obligation of universal justice.

These, then, are the principles which the statesmen in the State House at Philadelphia announced as the soul of their embryo institutions; and the rule through which they were to work was no less than that golden one which seems

to have been, by some unhappy chance, omitted in the bibles of other statesmen—"Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Perhaps it may be reserved for their country to prove yet one more impossible thing—that men can live by the rule which their Maker has given them to live by. Meanwhile, every true citizen of that country must necessarily be content to have his self-government tried by the test of these principles, to which, by his citizenship, he has become a subscriber. He will scorn all comparisons, instituted as a test of merit, between his own government and those of other countries, which he must necessarily consider as of narrower scope and lower aim. Whether such comparisons be instituted abroad in a spirit of contempt, or at home in a spirit of complacency, he will regard them equally as irrelevant, and proving nothing to the best purposes of true citizens. He will disdain every test but that furnished by the great principles propounded in the State House at Philadelphia; and he will quarrel with no results fairly brought out by such a test, whether they inspire him with shame, or with complacency. In either case, he will be animated by them.

If the politics of a country be really derived from fundamental principles of human nature and morals, the economy, manners, and religion of that country must be designed to harmonise with these principles. The same test must be applicable to all. The inalienable right of all the human race to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, must control the economical, as well as the political arrangements of a people; and the law of universal justice

must regulate all social intercourse, and direct all administration of religion.

Politics are morals, all the world over; that is, politics universally implicate the duty and happiness of man. Every branch of morals is, and ought to be considered, a universal concern. Under despotic governments, there is a pretension, more or less sincere, on the part of the rulers, to moral regards; but from these the bulk of the people are, by common consent, cut off. If the bulk of the people saw the truth, that the principles of politics affect them—are the message of their Maker as principles are to them, as well as to their rulers, they would become moral agents in regard to politics, and despotism would be at an end. As it is, they pay their taxes, and go out to war when they are bid, are thankful when they are left unmolested by their government, and sorry or angry when they feel themselves oppressed; and there they end. It is owing to their ignorance of politics being morals—*i.e.* matters of equal concern to all—that this truth is not made manifest in action in every country on the globe that has any government at all.

The same is the case of the unrepresented under governments which are not called despotic. According to the principles professed by the United States, there is there a rectification of this mighty error—a correction of this grand oversight. In that self-governing nation, all are held to have an equal interest in the principles of its institutions, and to be bound in equal duty to watch their workings. Politics there are universal duty. None are exempted from obligation but the unrepresented; and they, in theory, are none. However various may be the tribes of inhabitants in those

States, whatever part of the world may have been their birth-place, or that of their fathers, however broken may be their language, however noble or servile their employments, however exalted or despised their state, all are declared to be bound together by equal political obligation, as firmly as under any other law of personal or social duty. The president, the senator, the governor, may take upon himself some additional responsibility, as the physician and lawyer do in other departments of office; but they are under precisely the same political obligation as the German settler, whose axe echoes through the lonely forest; and the Southern planter, who is occupied with his hospitalities; and the New England merchant, whose thoughts are on the sea; and the Irishman, in his shanty on the canal-bank; and the negro, hoeing cotton in the hot field, or basking away his sabbath on the shore of the Mississippi. Genius, knowledge, wealth, may in other affairs set a man above his fellows; but not in this. Weakness, ignorance, poverty may exempt a man from other obligations; but not from this. The theory of the government of the United States has grasped and embodied the mighty principle, that politics are morals;—that is, a matter of universal and equal concern. We shall have to see whether this principle is fully acted out.

Implicated with this is the theory, that the majority will be in the right, both as to the choice of principles which are to govern particular cases, and the agents who are to work them. This theory, obviously just as it appears, as long as it is applied to matters of universal and equal concern, cannot be set aside without overthrowing all with which it is

involved. We shall have to see, also, whether this principle is effectually carried out.

Implicated with this, again, is the principle that a mutable, or rather elastic form, must be given to every institution. "The majority are in the right." Such is the theory. Few individuals of this majority can act for longer than two-score years and ten; few for so long. No one can suppose that his successor will think or feel as he does, however strict may be the regard of each to the fundamental principles which are to regulate his citizenship. It is absolutely necessary, to secure permanence to the recognition of those principles, that there should be liberty to change the form which contains them. Else, in the endless variety of human views and interests, there is danger lest men, being prohibited from producing a correspondence between the principles they recognise, and the forms they desire, should, because interdicted from outward change, gradually alter the spirit of their government. In such a case, men would be some time in discovering that the fair body of their constitution has become possessed, while they had supposed her inspired: and, to pass over the mischiefs which might happen during the period of her possession, the work of exorcism would be difficult and perilous.

FOOTNOTE:

[1] Declaration of Independence.

CHAPTER I. PARTIES.

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> "For these are the men that, when they have played their parts, and had their exits, must step out, and give the moral of their scenes, and deliver unto posterity an inventory of their virtues and vices."
>
> Sir Thomas Browne.

The first gentleman who greeted me on my arrival in the United States, a few minutes after I had landed, informed me without delay, that I had arrived at an unhappy crisis; that the institutions of the country would be in ruins before my return to England; that the levelling spirit was desolating society; and that the United States were on the verge of a military despotism. This was so very like what I had been accustomed to hear at home, from time to time, since my childhood, that I was not quite so much alarmed as I might have been without such prior experience. It was amusing too to find America so veritably the daughter of England.

I looked around me carefully, in all my travels, till I reached Washington, but could see no signs of despotism; even less of military. Except the officers and cadets at West Point, and some militia on a training day at Saugerties, higher up on the Hudson, I saw nothing that could be called military; and officers, cadets, and militia, appeared all perfectly innocent of any design to seize upon the government. At Washington, I ventured to ask an

explanation from one of the most honoured statesmen now living; who told me, with a smile, that the country had been in "a crisis" for fifty years past; and would be for fifty years to come.

This information was my comfort, from day to day, till I became sufficiently acquainted with the country to need such support no longer. Mournful predictions, like that I have quoted, were made so often, that it was easy to learn how they originated.

In the United States, as elsewhere, there are, and have always been, two parties in politics, whom it is difficult to distinguish on paper, by a statement of their principles, but whose course of action may, in any given case, be pretty confidently anticipated. It is remarkable how nearly their positive statements of political doctrine agree, while they differ in almost every possible application of their common principles. Close and continued observation of their agreements and differences is necessary before the British traveller can fully comprehend their mutual relation. In England, the differences of parties are so broad—between those who would have the people governed for the convenience of their rulers; those who would have the many governed, for their good, by the will of the few; and those who would have the people govern themselves;—that it is, for some time, difficult to comprehend how there should be party differences as wide in a country where the first principle of government is that the people are to govern themselves. The case, however, becomes clear in time: and, amidst a half century of "crises," the same order and

sequence become discernible which run through the whole course of human affairs.

As long as men continue as differently organized as they now are, there will be two parties under every government. Even if their outward fortunes could be absolutely equalised, there would be, from individual constitution alone, an aristocracy and a democracy in every land. The fearful by nature would compose an aristocracy, the hopeful by nature a democracy, were all other causes of divergence done away. When to these constitutional differences are added all those outward circumstances which go to increase the fear and the hope, the mutual misunderstandings of parties are no longer to be wondered at. Men who have gained wealth, whose hope is fulfilled, and who fear loss by change, are naturally of the aristocratic class. So are men of learning, who, unconsciously identifying learning and wisdom, fear the elevation of the ignorant to a station like their own. So are men of talent, who, having gained the power which is the fit recompense of achievement, dread the having to yield it to numbers instead of desert. So are many more who feel the almost universal fear of having to part with educational prejudices, with doctrines with which honoured teachers nourished the pride of youth, and prepossessions inwoven with all that has been to them most pure, lofty, and graceful. Out of these a large aristocratic class must everywhere be formed.

Out of the hopeful—the rising, not the risen—the aspiring, not the satisfied—must a still larger class be everywhere formed. It will include all who have most to gain and least to lose; and most of those who, in the present

state of education, have gained their knowledge from actual life, rather than, or as well as, from books. It will include the adventurers of society, and also the philanthropists. It will include, moreover—an accession small in number, but inestimable in power,—the men of genius. It is characteristic of genius to be hopeful and aspiring. It is characteristic of genius to break up the artificial arrangements of conventionalism, and to view mankind in true perspective, in their gradations of inherent rather than of adventitious worth. Genius is therefore essentially democratic, and has always been so, whatever titles its gifted ones may have worn, or on whatever subjects they may have exercised their gifts. To whatever extent men of genius have been aristocratic, they have been so in spite of their genius, not in consistency with it. The instances are so few, and their deviations from the democratic principle so small, that men of genius must be considered as included in the democratic class.

Genius being rare, and its claims but tardily allowed by those who have attained greatness by other means, it seems as if the weight of influence possessed by the aristocratic party—by that party which, generally speaking, includes the wealth, learning, and talents of the country—must overpower all opposition. If this is found not to be the case, if it be found that the democratic party has achieved everything that has been achieved since the United States' constitution began to work, it is no wonder that there is panic in many hearts, and that I heard from so many tongues of the desolations of the "levelling spirit," and the approaching ruin of political institutions.

These classes may be distinguished in another way. The description which Jefferson gave of the federal and republican parties of 1799 applies to the federal and democratic parties of this day, and to the aristocratic and democratic parties of every time and country. "One," says Jefferson, "fears most the ignorance of the people; the other, the selfishness of rulers independent of them."

There is much reason in both these fears. The unreasonableness of party lies in entertaining the one fear, and not the other. No argument is needed to prove that rulers are prone to selfishness and narrowness of views: and no one can have witnessed the injuries that the poor suffer in old countries—the education of hardship and insult that furnishes them with their only knowledge of the highest classes, without being convinced that their ignorance is to be feared;—their ignorance, not so much of books as of liberty and law. In old countries, the question remains open whether the many should, on account of their ignorance, be kept still in a state of political servitude, as some declare; or whether they should be gradually prepared for political freedom, as others think, by an amelioration of their condition, and by being educated in schools; or whether, as yet others maintain, the exercise of political rights and duties be not the only possible political education. In the New World, no such question remains to be debated. It has no large, degraded, injured, dangerous (white) class who can afford the slightest pretence for a panic-cry about agrarianism. Throughout the prodigious expanse of that country, I saw no poor *men*, except a few intemperate ones. I saw some very poor *women*; but God and man know that

the time has not come for women to make their injuries even heard of. I saw no beggars but two professional ones, who are making their fortunes in the streets of Washington. I saw no table spread, in the lowest order of houses, that had not meat and bread on it. Every factory child carries its umbrella; and pig-drivers wear spectacles. With the exception of the foreign paupers on the seaboard, and those who are steeped in sensual vice, neither of which classes can be politically dangerous, there are none who have not the same interest in the security of property as the richest merchant of Salem, or planter of Louisiana. Whether the less wealthy class will not be the first to draw out from reason and experience the true philosophy of property, is another question. All we have to do with now is their equal interest with their richer neighbours in the security of property, in the present state of society. Law and order are as important to the man who holds land for the subsistence of his family, or who earns wages that he may have land of his own to die upon, as to any member of the president's cabinet.

Nor is there much more to fear from the ignorance of the bulk of the people in the United States, than from their poverty. It is too true that there is much ignorance; so much as to be an ever-present peril. Though, as a whole, the nation is, probably, better informed than any other entire nation, it cannot be denied that their knowledge is far inferior to what their safety and their virtue require. But *whose* ignorance is it? And ignorance of *what*? If the professors of colleges have book-knowledge, which the owner of a log-house has not; the owner of a log-house has very often, as I can testify, a knowledge of natural law,