There have been literally hundreds of European interpreters of American democracy. A critical bibliography of European travellers and publicists writing on the United States would fill many volumes. Every decade produced a new group of works. Some are thoughtful and more or less objective, based on a reasonable familiarity with American life gained through study and travel; others, more ephemeral, the product of a six-weeks sojourn in America and the lure of publishers' royalties. Most of the latter have been entirely forgotten. Some of the former survive, and are still read with interest and profit. Others like Du Ponceau's remarkable diaries, letters, and commentaries, are still in manuscript form, awaiting editing and publication, or, like Brissot de Warville's account, lie buried in the general works of the authors.  

1 The Bibliography of American Travel, begun by Solon J. Buck and being brought to completion by a committee of the American Historical Association under the chairmanship of Frank Monaghan, has listed upward of 10,000 titles in this field for the period from 1750 to 1860. To this others are being constantly added.  

2 For works on America by French writers before 1800 see Bernard Fay, Bibliographie critique des ouvrages français relatifs aux États-Unis (1770-1800); the careful bibliography of Frank Monaghan on French Travellers in the United States (1765-1934), a bibliography (1933); R. H. Heindel, "Some Letters of Peter Stephen Du Ponceau," Pennsylvania History, III. 195-200; Hildyard Meyer, Nord-Amerika im Urteil des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts-Untersuchung über Kurnberger's Amerika-Müden (1927). The last has an extensive bibliography of works on American democracy in German
The earliest work of outstanding importance by Europeans on American democracy, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, came from the hand of Alexis de Tocqueville, the first two volumes appearing in 1835, and the last two in 1839 and 1840. In 1888, at the close of the second half century of our constitutional history, Viscount Bryce published his *American Commonwealth*, the second classic on this subject. Will the turn of the half century just ending produce the third masterpiece? Certainly, as the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the Constitution approaches, an intense interest in American democracy has developed both at home and abroad. In Europe, scholars and statesmen, troubled by revolutions and the political problems of post-war reconstruction, and by ideologies of government radically different from our own, have been giving much study to our political and economic institutions. Works on American democracy are rapidly increasing in number. All the writers are baffled by the system of checks and balances, and the constitutional inhibitions that seem to make the task of meeting the demands of the new economic order so difficult. Entirely alien to the theory of the totalitarian state—Fascist or Communist—our guarantees of individual and state rights appear rigid and inflexible even to the British, accustomed as they are to the complete supremacy of the Parliament.

During the first half century following the adoption of the Constitution most European writers on America, following the general trend of the age, occupied themselves less with the problems of government than with the natural history of the new continent,—its geography, soil, plant and animal life, and the physical environment of the great experiment in democracy. It was a period during which the French Revolution and its aftermath engrossed the attention of Europe and more or less eclipsed the interest which the new republic across the Atlantic had at first aroused. True, papers like Du Ponceau's *Dissertation on the Nature and Extent of the Jurisdiction of the Courts of the United States* show that the interest in the political phases of the American experiment was not dead, though the ablest observers were more attracted by other aspects in the life of the new Republic.

written before 1850. It is supplemented and extended in a general way for the later years by Otto Vossler's *Die amerikanische Revolutionsideale in ihren Verhältnis zu den europäischen Untersucht an Thomas Jefferson* (1929).
Foremost among the works of this character was that of André Michaud whose remarkable *Botanical Journal in North America* reflected the interest in the natural history and resources of the country, and constitutes an early approach to the great problem of conservation. Similarly Alexander von Humboldt’s account of his travels and his *American Letters* are almost entirely descriptive and geographical rather than political in character. Chevalier, the well known French traveller and engineer, was so impressed by the struggle of the early settlers with their physical environment and the conquest of the wilderness, that the sense of it dominates most of his work. “Education, politics, art, the laws of family life and of the state,” he wrote, “all are made to serve this solitary enterprise.” On the question of unemployment, he says: “The American cannot imagine himself without a job. . . . On the other hand, he is not wedded to his job. A colonizer par excellence, . . . he is driven by the necessity of locomotion—he must go and come. . . . If his feet are not in motion he has to move his fingers and whittle with his ubiquitous knife. . . . If movement and the rapid succession of ideas and sensations constitute life, in America you live an hundred-fold. . . . Everything is circulation, mobility, and a terrifying agitation. Experiences crowd on experiences, undertakings on undertakings. Wealth and poverty are on each other’s trail and pass each other in turn. . . .”

To many Europeans of Chevalier’s day, the American experiment was not attractive. Like Mrs. Trollope, they found most things in America “extremely uncongenial . . . the necessary outcome of Democracy.” Or to quote another observer, “almost every English liberal accustomed to the social habits of the upper classes in this country, who has recently travelled in the United States, appears to come back a convert to the old-fashioned doctrines of Toryism.” The rugged individualism and democracy of the pioneers did not appeal to them. Even fifty years later (1881) Oscar Wilde admitted that

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1 The manuscript of Michaud’s *Journal* comprises nine volumes and is found in the archives of the American Philosophical Society. For portions in print, see R. G. Thwaites, *Early Travels West of the Alleghanies made in 1793–96 by André Michaud* (1904).

he had failed to convert the sprawling, starving, ugly United States to the cult of beauty!"

The work of a Liberal of the first half of the nineteenth century, *De la démocratie en Amérique* reflects the political and social philosophy of the author and the age. Nevertheless, it is regarded by some even today as the greatest work in the field. Alexis de Tocqueville, a grandson of Malesherbes, and an intellectual scion of the noblesse de robe, came to America in 1831. Officially, Tocqueville and his friend Beaumont were sent to observe and report on the prison system of the States. For Tocqueville, however, American democracy was, from the beginning of his visit, the one object of interest and concern. He left France on April 2, 1831, and returned in March, 1832. This left him less than ten months in the States, twenty days, from August 20 to September 10, being spent in Canada. He was twenty-six years old, young and enthusiastic, but aside from a little travel in Italy, had known only France.

His qualifications for the task of making an analysis of American democracy seemed therefore, apart from his unusual intellectual powers, fine personality, urbanity, and courtesy of manner, not exceptional. On the other hand, he was steeped in the writings of the eighteenth century philosophers, notably of Montesquieu. He understood the effective use Montesquieu and Voltaire had made of their visits to England by writing about the government and institutions of that country. Could not a similar study of American democracy be turned to equally good account? As a Liberal of the Restoration, he was intensely interested in the great American experiment in democracy not only for its own sake, but quite as much for its possible influence upon a safe development of democratic institutions in France and Europe. Having made a careful study of the Constitution, he set out with the definite purpose of observing it in actual operation.

From the first, he decided to defer writing till his return to France, devoting the time and opportunities of his travel to the gathering of materials and impressions. Through personal observation, informal conversations, formal conferences and interviews, and a rigorous

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6 Cf. Oscar Wilde Discovers America by Lloyd Davis and Henry Justin Smith (1936).

regime of travel he made most effective use of his opportunities. Speaking of his plans in a letter written from Philadelphia on October 24, 1831, to his mother, the Countess de Tocqueville, he said: “Everything that I have written or rather scrawled will certainly be submitted to you. But you will see that it amounts to very little. If I ever write anything on America it will be in France with the documents I bring back and which I will try to interpret.” “The most interesting things that I bring back are two little note books in which I have written down word for word the conversations I have had with the leading men of this country.”

The account of his journey and of his method in the collection of his material appear in considerable detail in his letters. “Whenever it was a question of opinions, of political customs, or of the study of manners,” he writes, “I have endeavored to consult the best informed persons.” Indeed, this method of getting his information was very much the best he could have adopted. It suited the temper of the times. Americans were still intensely interested in theories of government as well as in practical politics; both were subjects of constant discussion and debate. Intellectuals and men of affairs took pleasure in discussing the problems of American democracy with this energetic and interested young man. In his Diary, Tocqueville tells of the many persons he met and interviewed. Among them, ex-President John Quincy Adams, Senator Gray, Jared Sparks and William C. Channing of Massachusetts, Governor Throop of New York, Albert Gallatin, John C. Spencer, who later translated “Democracy in America” into English, Justice McClain of the Supreme Court, Nicholas Biddle of Pennsylvania, Charles Carroll of Baltimore, Joel Poinsett, Ambassador to Mexico, and President Jackson, who received him at the White House.

In addition to the ideas and facts gleaned in conversations and interviews, he got a great deal of information through correspondence with his American friends, notably Jared Sparks, whom he had met in Paris in 1828. Sparks was deeply interested in Tocqueville and his plan to write a work on American democracy, which both agreed would tend to support the step toward democracy taken in France by the establish-

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7 Cf. Nouvelle Correspondance d’Alexis de Tocqueville, p. 85.
8 The exchange of letters is found in the Johns Hopkins University Studies on Historical and Political Science, XVI (1898).
ment of the July Monarchy. From the exchange of letters, it appears that Sparks not only answered many of his queries, but wrote and sent him a carefully reasoned statement on local government in New England entitled *Observations on the Government of Towns in Massachusetts*. A comparison with Tocqueville’s treatment of the subject brings out clearly that the memoir was the basis for that aspect of American democracy in Tocqueville’s treatise.

Not a little of Tocqueville’s penetrating insight into American institutions and democracy must be ascribed to his able use of materials and opinions that came to him in this manner. Writing to Sparks on December 2, 1831, he reminds him of his promise to send an account of the town government in Massachusetts, and complains of the difficulties he has in understanding the little volume on the subject which “M. Quincy, le President de L’Université de Cambridge” had brought to his attention. From the literary and philosophical point of view the work had very little value, he said. From the standpoint of its practical service to him it presented real difficulties, for it required a knowledge of customs and laws which he did not possess and without which, the work was extremely difficult to understand. The great number of town officers bewildered him. Listing a number of them, like the town “fence viewer; field-driver; . . . hog Reeve . . . tything-men etc.,” he asks, a little querulously, whether these officials really existed “en fait ou seulement dans la loi?” Particularly intriguing and inexplicable to the young Liberal were the constable and the tythingmen, whose duties, according to the text, were to watch over the observance of Sunday, to pursue blasphemers and gamblers, to inquire into the motives of persons travelling on this particular day, and to intercept the continuance of their journey if the reasons seemed to them insufficient. Another regulation of which he says, “J’avoue que je ne puis rien comprendre,” was entitled *Parish and Parish Officers*. It provided, so he writes, that each town must maintain a protestant minister, failure to do so involving a fine in the common pleas court of the county. The system, he argued, was tantamount to setting up a state religion, something he thought Americans had tried scrupulously to avoid. The answers to his many queries and the *Memoir* were sent him by Sparks on February 2, 1832, with a letter which begins: “In the enclosed memoir I have endeavored to give a general and condensed view of the system of town government in Massachusetts, embracing at the same time your queries.”
Some of the memoranda and letters sent to Tocqueville were long and carefully prepared, and he has been criticized for not citing his authorities in such cases. Anticipating this, he wrote in his Introduction: "All these confidential communications were recorded by me as I received them. They will never go beyond my portfolio. I prefer to weaken the effect of my statement, rather than to add my name to the list of travellers who repay by mortification and embarrassment the generous hospitality they have received." For the student, however, the question involves much more than the amenities of hospitality. It involves the key to many of Tocqueville's ideas and commentaries on American democracy; possibly also of some of his misconceptions. At any rate, when the portfolio is opened, and the notebooks studied, the source of many of his views on the status and future of democracy in America should come to light.

After his return to France, he devoted his whole time and thought to the analysis and study of his notes, leaving to Beaumont the task of making the report on American prisons. He worked at it daily for over two years, from the spring of 1832 to June of 1834, when the manuscript for the first two volumes was completed. The reproductions (infra, p. 8–9) of two of Tocqueville's manuscript pages are of special interest, not only because they are in his own hand, but because of the evidence they bear of the thorough and scholarly method he pursued in his study of American democracy. The entire sentence, of which only the last part appears in the illustration, reads:

J'ai consulté les trois commentaires les plus estimés, c'est le Fédéraliste, ouvrage publié par trois des principaux redacteurs de la Constitution fédérale, les commentaires du Chancelier Kent et ceux du juge Story.9

The problem of getting a publisher troubled Tocqueville considerably. With much misgiving, Gosselin, a well-known Paris publisher, finally undertook an edition of 500. Its reception was so favorable and enthusiastic that it fairly staggered both author and publisher. With a little touch of sarcasm, Tocqueville later tells of Gosselin's excitement, of his rubbing his hands in anticipation of large returns, and of his congratulating the young man on having produced a "master-piece." Royer Collard told him he had written the most remarkable

9 In H. S. P. The five manuscript pages of Tocqueville found in this collection are apparently work sheets for Democracy in America, and are accompanied by an undated note from Tocqueville to Sumner postmarked, Paris, May 19, 1856, inviting him to breakfast with him and Madame de Tocqueville on the following Sunday.
MANUSCRIPT PAGES BY TOCQUEVILLE RELATING TO THE WRITING OF HIS Democracy in America.
FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
Proposition de traité. Il s'agit ensuite de promouvoir un Accord qui soit approuvé par tous les États, ou les modifications ultérieures.

En effet, un accord international peut être un préalable nécessaire pour la signature d'un traité. Il assure que les États concernés se donnent un engagement légal.

La Chambre des Représentants déclarée en 1796 que quand l'Accord est rédigé et que le traité est également rédigé, le traité requiert la ratification. Dans le cas contraire, il est déclaré que le traité n'est pas valable.

Proposer, à mon avis, de modifier le traité lui-même. Malgré la tentative de maintien du principe par des changements, la menace est toujours présente. Il est nécessaire de réviser le traité en profondeur pour que les États signataires de l'Accord soient en mesure de devenir des acteurs de ce processus.

De même, la Chambre des Représentants en 1816 est saisie d'une occasion d'occasion de recevoir des propositions. Inclure la participation de tous les États jusqu'à son.
political work in thirty years. It was soon translated into nearly all modern languages and passed through no less than fourteen French printings by 1864. In reviewing the reception accorded the work, Bigelow in his preface to the 1904 edition of Reeve’s translation says:

It was translated into English by Henry Reeve, late editor of the “Edinburgh Review,” and by John C. Spencer, of New York, and has passed through several editions in the United States. M. Ampère addressed to Tocqueville a laudatory epistle in verse, which appeared in the “Revue de Paris.” John Stuart Mill reviewed the work at length both in the “Edinburgh Review” and in the “London and Westminster Review.” Edward Everett devoted two articles to it in the “North American Review.” All the leading periodicals and newspapers in England, France, Germany and the United States at one time or another gave it space. The better ones published extended reviews or special articles on it. Even Blackwood’s magazine, whose editor hated democracy and all its works, wrote: “M. De Tocqueville is one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest of political writers of the present day. . . . A Burke without his imagination, a Machiavelli without his crime.”

The third and fourth volumes appeared in 1839-40. Completed nine years after his visit to America, these volumes are much less objective than the earlier ones. The tendency, already slightly apparent at the beginning, to make use of the facts to establish preconceived opinions, became more and more evident. Like Taine, though to a lesser extent, he now went to his sources to prove his theories. “He is apt to theorize,” commented Sparks in 1841.

The work was at once crowned and awarded a special prize by the French Academy. In 1838 the author was made a member of the Institute, and in 1841 he was elected to the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences. In 1847 he was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society. In America, Tocqueville’s influence was particularly strong with the intellectuals—with teachers, editors, and publicists.

Striking evidence of the importance attached to Tocqueville’s work by the generation that immediately followed him is afforded by a critic, writing in 1866. “Many of us are old enough,” he said, “to remember the visit of Messrs. de Tocqueville and de Beaumont, and the sensation produced throughout Christendom by the appearance of _De la démocratie en Amérique_ from the pen of the former of these

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10 It was not promptly translated and published in the States, because, as Sparks writes him in 1837, it appeared at the time of the unfortunate “Indemnity Controversy” which was followed by Jackson’s militant attitude and the hostile feeling it aroused against France. A little later came the economic crash which delayed publication still further.
Indeed, for several decades after, his remarkable work was the accepted manual alike for the political theorist and the practical statesman. As late as 1899, John Bigelow wrote, Tocqueville's work was "the nearest approach to a philosophical exposition of the fundamental principles of popular government that has ever been written."

From the point of view of nineteenth century Liberalism, Tocqueville's interpretation of the Constitution is in the main sound. He has a clear appreciation and respect for the division of powers, revealing in this the disciple of Montesquieu. Being above all an apostle of liberty, he also approves the safeguards of individual liberty and constitutional rights provided in the establishment of the Supreme Court. On the other hand, he failed to see the trend toward the merging of executive and legislative functions, and the steady encroachment of the former upon the latter. He misjudged the vitality of the federal government in its relation to the state governments: "Le gouvernement fédéral... n'est qu'une exception; le gouvernement des États est la règle commune"; and again, "the federal government makes the laws, but the state and local governments both make and execute their laws." He stresses the fact that all powers not specified are left in the hands of the states, and is much impressed with the weakness of the central government because of its restricted authority. "If a contest should arise today between the states and the Union, it is easy to perceive," he says, "that the latter must succumb... Whenever an obstinate resistance shall be made to the Federal government, it will give in."

Tocqueville's view is, of course, in accord with the then prevailing doctrine of State Rights as interpreted by Calhoun. Jackson he regarded as a man "d'un caractère violent," a true representative of the demos which Tocqueville distrusted and disliked. Hence the fact that Jefferson was a stanch believer in State Rights, and saw therein the protection of the rights and liberties of the individual, caused Tocqueville to regard him as the greatest democrat of them all. Tocqueville's views on State Rights and his observations on the relative strength of the state and Federal governments makes comprehensible the ready acceptance in England and France of the validity of the Southern case at the beginning of the Civil War. Indeed, it has been suggested,

"North American Review, April, 1866."
with some likelihood of its being correct, that Tocqueville’s interpretation of American democracy and the Constitution may have had a good deal to do with the marked sympathy for the South among the ruling classes in both France and England.

In England, Tocqueville was feted and lionized as one of the foremost writers of the day. On his return from that country to France a few months before his death, orders were sent from London to have a government ship take him across the Channel and land him at Cherbourg not far from his home. His Democracy in America became the recognized authority on America among England’s intellectual and ruling classes; “his views of the American government and people have so passed into the texture of our thoughts,” said Bryce, “that we cannot shake off his influence. . . .”

Tocqueville’s illuminating comments on other fundamental features of American democracy cannot be developed here. I content myself with again pointing out his fear of the “tyranny of the majority.” “A sort of despotism which democratic nations have to fear.” “I think, then,” he says, “that the species of oppression by which democratic nations are menaced is unlike anything which ever existed before in the world. . . . Above this race of men stands an immense power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident, and mild. . . . It covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided . . . till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid industrial animals of which the government is the shepherd.”

Prophetic words when viewed in the light of the appearance of the post-war totalitarian states in Europe, not to mention the drift in that direction in other states. Equally pertinent, in the light of present tendencies, is his comment that democracies are apt to be very expensive. The reasons for Tocqueville’s sympathy with the restrictions imposed upon the popular will in the powers conferred upon the Supreme Court are therefore evident.

Even though the course of events has proved some of his predictions to have been wrong, Democracy in America continues to be not

— Democracy in America, II. 391-92 (1863 ed.).
only a remarkable historical picture of the political life of America a century ago, but a profound philosophical analysis of the principles which underlie our democracy. As such, it will always assure to its author a foremost place among our historians and political theorists.

Tocqueville's study of American democracy recalled to the thoughtful people of Europe that democracy was no longer merely an ideal and a system of government fraught with the dangers and extravagances of the French Revolution, but a practical reality operating soberly and efficiently in a great republic across the Atlantic. His work stimulated interest among other writers. The Germans, who had from the beginning shown a deep interest in the constitutional aspects of American democracy responded directly. In 1836 Friederich Bissing wrote *The Constitution of the United States, according to James Kent*. Two years later, J. G. Buss published a volume on *The Constitution of the United States after Story's Commentaries*. In the same year one Gottfried Duden wrote a book on *American Democracy and the work of Tocqueville*. Another German writer on American institutions in this period who deserves especial notice was Professor Frederick List, the economist. Exiled in 1820, he came to America, edited a newspaper, became an admirer of Mathew Carey, and interested himself deeply in Henry Clay's "American System," and John Quincy Adams' program for national development. After his return to Germany, he made constant use of his American experience in his economic writings. In the United States, he urged, they were really developing a national economy—"the economy of a people." Through List, *Nationalökonomie* was introduced as a separate study in German universities, American economic ideas manifestly serving as an inspiration for the establishment of this very important subject in the curricula of the universities and higher schools of Germany.

With the growth of liberal and democratic ideas in Europe in the decade that followed, especially with the coming of the Revolutions of 1848, interest in the American experiment increased steadily. Liberals everywhere, not unreasonably, turned to American democracy for examples and support. Thus, T. Brounne published a study on

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13 Compare the three volumes by K. H. L. Poelitz on *Die Staatsysteme Europas und Amerikas seit dem Jahre 1783* (1826); Studies by R. von Mohl (1824); C. N. Roding (1824); K. F. Philippi (1827), and others.
comparative government in which he compared the Constitution of the United States with those of Pennsylvania, Texas, Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, and England, in order to find the answer to the question "Whether a Republic or Constitutional Monarchy was preferable for Germany." A similar study with special reference to Switzerland was published in 1848, under the title, "The Constitution of the United States of North America as a Model for the Reform of the Swiss Confederation."14

The failure of the mid-century attempts at revolution in Europe increased rather than diminished the interest in America. A large number of works made their appearance in the fifties. Ferdinand Kurnberger, in a clever but satirical revival of Lenau's Impressions of America took a decidedly critical attitude. He called his book "Der Amerikamüde" (one bored by America), giving a somewhat exaggerated and crude picture of American culture in which the utilitarian and practical is unfavorably contrasted with the spirit of Germany. Our Civil War added a further impetus to the interest in America, and books and pamphlets continued to increase in number. Among these the Constitutional History of the United States by Von Holst15 in eight volumes attracted much attention for a time, some of the author's admirers ranking it among the best. But whatever the opinion of contemporaries may have been, none of the works of this period won for themselves a first place in the literature of the period till the publication of the great work by Viscount Bryce.

The American Commonwealth appeared in 1888. It met with immediate and enthusiastic acclaim in two hemispheres, and during the half-century that followed, remained the classic work in the field. Its author was a man of fifty. He was much better acquainted with America than was Tocqueville or, for that matter, any other European writer before or since. He first visited the States in 1870 and repeatedly later, and was appointed Ambassador for Great Britain at Washington in 1907. No other foreigner, indeed no American writer on American democracy, enjoyed so great a prestige, or wielded so great an influence in the United States as did Lord Bryce. Our language and

14 J. P. v. Tröxler, Die Verfassung der Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerikas als Musterbild der Schweizerischen Bundes Reform (1848).
history were also his, and he brought to his task a thorough knowledge of the English background in which, despite the “Frontier Theory,” so many of the ideals and institutions of America are rooted. Besides, he was a keen student of comparative government and politics, had been trained in the best European universities and had already written his well known book on the Holy Roman Empire. In America, he made many friends, especially in intellectual and official circles.

A Liberal like Tocqueville, Bryce’s political philosophy was not very different from that of the French scholar. Both looked on American democracy from the same philosophical standpoint. But the work of Bryce was not motivated by a desire to establish the cause of Liberalism in his own country or in Europe. On the contrary, he endeavored to present an objective picture of the American government at work. Unlike Tocqueville, Bryce rarely made use of ideas or observations without having himself tested their correctness, not only by first-hand observations, where that was possible, but also by his own unrivaled knowledge of the workings of democracy in general. “While Tocqueville’s Democracy in America had been above all a treatise on democracy with illustrations from America,” says Gooch, “the American Commonwealth, according to the author’s own statement, ‘was an attempt to present the facts of the case, arranging and connecting them as best I can but letting them speak for themselves rather than pressing upon the reader my own considerations....’ The Frenchman was above all a political thinker, the Englishman was above all a political observer.”

The result is a much more realistic picture of American Democracy. The American Commonwealth is more than a treatise on our constitutional government; it is also an account of American democracy at work, a picture enlivened by flashes of light on social and economic life as well. It takes full measure not only of its merits, but also of its draw-backs and its weaknesses. Bryce did not dislike the demos as did Tocqueville, but he had no illusions about it. The selfishness, greed and graft of politicians, the evils of our Boss-ridden municipal government and the cumbersome, ineffective procedure of legislative assemblies are all depicted with scrupulous respect for the truth. He

16 The Holy Roman Empire appeared in 1864, and won for the author the respect and plaudits of German scholars (Rev. ed., 1904).
17 J. P. Gooch, Contemporary Review, CXXI. 304 f.
often differs radically from his illustrious predecessor. Kindly and courteous, however, he palliates his criticisms by pointing out the great changes that had come into American life since Tocqueville wrote,

the effect of which the French writer could not, of course, have foreseen. The Mexican War, the annexation of Texas, the building of three great transcontinental railroads, the rapid growth of cities, and the amassing of enormous fortunes accompanied by wild speculation
had all occurred, he points out, in the half century since Tocqueville wrote.\(^18\)

On the basis of these later developments, and his much closer contact with the actual workings of American democracy, as well as his own practical experience in public affairs, Bryce's picture of American democracy was much more nearly in accord with America's own ideas about itself. Although "originally written with a view to European rather than American readers," the work was widely read by the general public in the States, and studied by thousands of students in American colleges and universities, where the abridged edition became a standard textbook in classes on civics and comparative government.

Hence Bryce interpreted American democracy not only to Europeans but to Americans themselves, contributing much toward shaping and formulating their philosophy and thought about their own government. The *American Commonwealth* passed through numerous editions, those of 1899 and 1910 representing thorough revisions in the light of new conditions. Altogether more than 166,000 copies of the work were sold in the United States.\(^19\) In England 2,135 copies of the rather expensive first edition in three volumes and 8,522 copies of the two volume revised edition of 1910 were taken. Considered in the light of the small reading public of the time, and the serious character of the work, these figures are remarkable. From the very nature of the work it would appeal to a limited audience only. On the other hand, it was an audience whose power and influence were relatively very great.

In his penetrating analysis of the party system and the manner in which it functioned in state and municipal life, Bryce made a start-

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\(^18\) When Tocqueville wrote, there were only two cities with a population of over 100,000. By 1888 when Bryce wrote, there were 20 cities with a population of over 200,000. But even Bryce in 1888 saw this movement only in its infancy. By 1934 there were 41 cities with populations of over 200,000 while the aggregate population of the four largest, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit, was over 13,000,000.

\(^19\) I am indebted to the MacMillan Company of New York and London for the following statement of the sales of successive editions: By the English house, 2,135 copies of the 3 volume edition (1888); 8,522 copies of the 2 volume edition (1888) and 213 copies of the one volume or student edition. The New York house sold about 15,000 copies of the regular edition and 26,000 of the cheaper edition between 1888 and 1892 importing them from England. In 1893 they issued the first American edition which was printed 17 times and sold about 35,000 copies. The revisions of 1910 and 1914 have been reprinted fourteen times with an approximate sale of 30,000. The abridged (student) edition of 1896, second edition 1906, has been reprinted 27 times with a total sale of approximately 60,000.
ling contribution to American politics. His exposé of the highly organized party machine with the political Boss at the top—ruthless, all powerful and often corrupt—was a revelation even to those who were fairly familiar with our political life. To many thoughtful Americans it was a challenge which did not go unheeded, and it is safe to say that America owes a great deal to Viscount Bryce for the steady improvement in municipal government during the last quarter of a century.  

Like Tocqueville, he could not always foresee the significance of certain trends as for example, the appearance of the influence of the Departments, or the Executive, in preparing bills and guiding programs through Congress. Tocqueville commented on the complete separation of powers in this respect, a condition Bryce seemed to think continued. The practice which has grown steadily in recent years by which the President as head of the majority-party, not only shapes legislative policies, but in many cases submits bills to Congress as administrative measures, in a manner tantamount to a mandate, is very different from the practice noted by Tocqueville and Bryce in the first hundred years of our constitutional history.

Like Tocqueville, Bryce pointed to the extravagance of American democracy. Although he gave a good account of the “Lobby,” the influence of pressure groups upon financial legislation escaped him as it did his predecessor. Neither saw the opportunity for the lobbyist in the American practice of budget-making by a committee of Congress, instead of by the prime minister and the cabinet, as in European democracies. As later writers point out, committee members are much more likely to yield to the pressure of powerful groups than are members of the cabinet. It is also a far cry from the condition, described by Bryce, of the loyalty of Congressmen to the party, to the emphasis upon loyalty to the President under the present administration. “His allegiance,” says Bryce, “is to the party, and his constituents do not expect him to support any given person, however eminent.” Bryce discussed the question of the “tyranny of the majority” at some length but overlooked the “tyranny of the minority.” Neither he nor

Despite the progress in this direction, however, in the half century since Bryce penned his indictment, twentieth century European interpreters of American democracy still find much room for improvement. D. W. Brogan devotes more than a fourth of his volume on The American Political System to the “Spoils System,” the “Pensions System” and the “Machine.”

The American Commonwealth (1888), I. 217.

Ibid., III. 133–44.
his contemporaries foresaw the tremendous power organized minorities were some day to exercise over legislatures and policies. The growth of popular discontent and the growth of the political consciousness of Labor also remained for contemporary observers to point out.

On the other hand, Bryce saw with keen appreciation the intellectual and cultural progress in this country. He rejected the theory, all too general in Europe, that democracies are inevitably backward and not interested in letters and arts, and that America was no exception. He pointed to the deep interest in literature, to the remarkable growth of colleges and universities, and to the generous provision for popular education in the public schools of the different states. To most European readers the chapters on "The Universities," "The Influence of Democracy on Thought" and "Creative Intellectual Power" revealed a new America.

Thoroughly convinced of the merits of the democratic form of government, Bryce was equally aware of its faults and dangers. These he exposed with a courage and an objectivity that aroused a great deal of enmity against him in this country. As time passed, this too disappeared, and the author of the *American Commonwealth* has become recognized as the ablest European interpreter of American institutions. Broad, thorough and superbly organized, with a keen appreciation of the dynamic forces behind the institutional framework of our government, the *American Commonwealth* presents a remarkable picture of American democracy.

Just as Bryce was impressed by the effect produced upon our democracy by the changes in American life in the fifty years intervening between the appearance of Tocqueville's work and his own, so contemporary European writers make much of the influence of the changes that have occurred in the fifty years since Bryce himself published his work in 1888. The mere titles of the works of this group suggest an entirely new approach to the study of our democracy, an approach from the economic and social standpoint, rather than from the political and constitutional.

Even before the depression we had such works as Lambert's *Rule of the Judges and the Struggle against Social Legislation in the*

*Cf. Propaganda and Promotional activities. An annotated bibliography by Harold D. Lasswell, Alfred D. Casey, and Bruce Larmes Smith (1935).*
United States and Siegfried's *America Comes of Age*. Since 1929 the tendency which becomes at times almost alarmist, appears steadily more marked, as for example Brogan's *American Constitutional Crisis*, Sir Arthur Steel Maitland's *The New America*, and *The American Experiment* by Hugh-Jones and Radice. Like our own political scientists and historians, the authors are impressed with the revolutionary character of the forces at work in the modification of our constitutional system. Especially do they stress the new economic conditions which have come to dominate American life, and to which American democracy must sooner or later adapt itself. These changes, they argue, are of such a character that they will necessarily affect American democracy in many of its fundamental features. Already the measuring rods employed even by Bryce are inadequate. Made to apply to the political democracy of the nineteenth century, to the philosophy of the late eighteenth century which dominated nineteenth century Liberalism and the treatises of Tocqueville and Bryce, they apply only indifferently to the new economic and social democracy of the twentieth.


25 In this they are in complete accord with our own commentators whose titles are even more suggestive of the revolt against the purely political conception of American democracy and the too literal interpretation of the Constitution. Thus, two books by W. K. Wallace, an important member of the President's cabinet, carry the titles *Our Obsolete Constitution* (1932) and *Whose Constitution?* (1936) respectively. Others similarly suggestive of the same refrain in their titles are Howard L. McBain, *The Living Constitutions* (1927); R. K. Morton, *God in the Constitution* (1934); Walter Lippman, *A New Social Order* (1933); A. B. Adams, *Our Economic Revolution* (1933); C. A. Beard, *The Economic Interpretation of our Constitution* (1935); W. Y. Elliott, *The Need for Constitutional Reform* (1935); Herman Finer, *The Theory and Practice of Modern Government* (1934); E. S. Corwin, *The Twilight of the Supreme Court*; Lewis Corey, *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (1933); Felix Frankfurter and J. M. Landis, *The Business of the Supreme Court* (1929); F. Rodell, *Fifty-five Men* (1936); H. L. West, *Federal Power: Its Growth and Necessity* (1938). The *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* for May, 1936, has a series of short articles on various phases of the subject with a bibliography of recent works.
Following the lead of Max Weber, a number of twentieth century European interpreters of American democracy have given special attention to the biographical side of its history, especially as it is reflected in some of the Founders. As is well known to students of economic theory, Weber saw the origins and motivation of modern capitalism in the doctrine and practice of Calvinistic protestantism. The Calvinistic philosophy, or Weltanschauung, brought to America through Puritan, Huguenot, Dutch and other channels, became the dominant faith of American democracy, and had in Franklin its most zealous and successful disciple. His maxims, so Weber claims, furnished “the spirit of bourgeois capitalism, which, rather than the grandiose schemes of mercantilist statesmen, was to dominate the future, its naivest and most lurid expression.”

He found in Franklin’s well-ordered mind, in his zeal for organization and technical knowledge, in his high regard for reasonableness, and in his respect for the dignity of labor and forethought for the future, the essential characteristics of that petty bourgeois capitalism so predominant in American democracy. Or to state it in another form, Weber, and those who accept his views, find the psychological basis of an important aspect of our democracy in the widespread acceptance of the maxims of Poor Richard. In his volume entitled Franklin: The Apostle of Modern Times, the well-known French historian and scholar, Bernard Fay, extends the thesis further, making of Franklin “The Apostle of Modern Times” in general. Baumgarten’s recent work presenting Franklin as the teacher of revolution is therefore quite wide of the mark. In the light of Weber’s analysis, Franklin’s habits of life and thought, and his philosophy of life, were far from revolutionary. On the other hand, it should be noted that the Weber dissection, in its thoroughgoing German fashion, of Poor Richard gives a badly denatured Franklin, a Franklin utterly bereft of the shrewd kindly humor which made him so congenial to Americans. Taken out of their setting and put into German, the Maxims became harsh, sordid and petty bourgeois. Nevertheless, Weber’s interpretation of American democracy

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28 Edouard Baumgarten, Benjamin Franklin, Lehrmeister der Amerikanischen Revolution (1936).
in his discussion of modern capitalism as a whole, represents a very worthwhile approach to the problem from the economic and psychological standpoint. As such it is, of course, a radical departure from that of Tocqueville, Bryce and the Liberals in general, as it is at variance with Gilbert Chinard's masterly *Thomas Jefferson, The Apostle of Americanism* (1929).

Among contemporary European interpreters of our democracy who approach the subject more nearly from the standpoint of the nineteenth century Liberalism, is André Siegfried. Of the recent developments in America, he sees the change in the attitude toward European immigration as one of the most significant. Following 1890, the tremendous flood of immigration from southern and eastern Europe, created, he claims, problems much more serious than its effects upon Labor, of which Bryce spoke in the first edition of his *American Commonwealth*. It has brought about, so the author believes, a radical transformation, not only in the ethnic character of the American people, but also in its attitude towards political and social questions.

Not only have the numbers of immigrants been so enormous, but they represent mainly new racial stocks and other cultures. Southern and eastern Europeans—Latins and Slavs—constituted the bulk of the vast movement of population into the states after 1890. As the new racial stocks poured into the melting pot of American democracy, they brought with them not only their language and religion, but customs and an outlook on life radically different from those until then dominant in America. Furthermore, the potential influence of this new group of emigrants is relatively much greater than their actual num-

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29 Speaking of the new swarms of European immigrants from East and Central Europe and mainly of Slavonic race, Bryce drew attention to the low standard of living among them and the opposition of American labor to their entry. “Already,” he said, “the United States which twenty years ago rejoiced in the increase in immigration, begins to regard it with disquiet, and laws are passed to prevent not only the entrance of labourers brought under contract, but of criminals and of persons who seem likely to become a burden upon the community.” “Such laws,” he adds in a note, “are of course difficult of enforcement because when the immigrants arrive it is seldom possible to say which ought to be refused ingress as paupers and criminals. . . . Only about 500 are annually sent back to Europe out of an average of 500,000 annually” (III. 675). In the revision of 1910, he says: “Thus the reflection is forced on us, what changes in the character and habits of the American people will this influx of new elements make—elements wholly diverse not only in origin, but in ideas and traditions, and scarcely less diverse from the Irish and Teutonic immigrants of previous years than from the men predominantly of English stock, who inhabited the country before the Irish or the Continental Teuton arrived.”
bers, because of their reproductive capacity. Representing groups lower in the social scale, they are also more prolific than the American-born. "In certain classes of Americans, reproduction seems almost to have ceased. Intellectuals and university graduates marry late and have practically no descendants. Sixty per cent of the women with university degrees do not marry at all. Of those who do, 36% have no children or in other words $\frac{3}{5}$ of the most cultured women do not leave descendants. The old Anglo-Saxon element is diminishing not only absolutely, but also relatively. "On the basis of the present ratio, according to Dr. Davenport, 1000 Harvard graduates will have only 50 descendants at the end of 2 centuries, while 1000 Rumanians in Boston will have 100,000." In his Essay on American democracy, written in 1921, Bryce pointed out that "Franklin considered six children to constitute the normal American family. The average is now slightly above two children." But since the birth-rate among immigrants is much higher than among Anglo-Saxon stock, it is evident that even two children is too high for the native American family.

Aroused to the danger of unrestricted immigration in this direction—if it is a danger—Congress passed the immigration laws in the twenties, restricting immigration to quotas based on the number of nationals of any particular country in the United States at a given time. First 1910 was taken as the base, but when this failed to exclude a sufficient number of Latins and Slavs, 1890 was chosen. This departure of American democracy from its democratic tradition of offering an asylum for all who came to its shores, Siegfried attributes to a belated recognition by the Anglo-American stock of the danger of being submerged; or, interpreted in a more general way, as a phase of the defense mechanism to preserve the north European and essentially English character of American civilization. Neither Bryce nor Tocqueville saw a need for this. Indeed Bryce in his day interpreted the immigration problem in quite a different light. Speaking of the agencies that may in the future change the character of the American population he says: One of these is "immigration from Europe whereof I will only say that there is as yet little sign that it will substantially alter any section of the people, so strong is the assimulative power which the existing population exerts upon the new-comers, and that it may probably, within the next few decades, begin to decline." In 1910, how-

\[\text{Ibid., p. 481.}\]
ever, he was less confident and seemed to sense the seriousness of the problem even though he still adhered to his earlier thesis. According to Brogan, "the ending of immigration is producing a fairly homogeneous laboring class. . . ." 

Another of the revolutionary changes in the life of America in recent years is the passing of the frontier. Although neither Tocqueville nor Bryce saw the real significance of the frontier in American history, the latter at least was not oblivious to the possible effect of its disappearance. The passing of the frontier is especially emphasized by the joint authors of An American Experiment published a year ago. As Professor Turner and his school have interpreted it, says James Truslow Adams in his Epic of America, "A frontier was not only a stake claim to a farm, but a state of mind and a golden opportunity."

To the Turner group, the frontier environment was the most powerful influence in shaping American democracy, more so than the inheritance from Europe or that from our Eastern seaboard; environment rather than heredity, they claim, was the dynamic force in shaping American ideals and institutions.

Without going into the merits or demerits of the frontier thesis as against that of background and heredity, as the major influence in the evolution of our democracy, it is clear that toward the close of the last century the frontier had disappeared, the free lands were occupied; the westward movement had come to an end. "The escape of the ambitious poor to a more generous livelihood on wide free land was cut off; the safety valve for the restlessness and discontent was closed; the most obvious field for speculative enterprise had disappeared. . . .

Up to this time man's history—any man's history—had not seemed determined for him. Its universal subjunctive had been that it might be begun any day if he decided to move west. Or as President Roosevelt states it: "There is no safety-valve in the form of a western prairie to which those thrown out of work by the eastern economic machines can go for a new start. We are not able to invite the immigration from Europe to share our endless plenty. We are now preparing a drab living for our people."

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83 Dixon Ryan Fox, The Background of Culture in America (1935), Introduction.
84 Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Looking Forward (1933).
This was the more significant because, as two very recent English interpreters of American democracy, following the suggestions of Professor Paxson, point out, the industrial frontier was rapidly disappearing also. The days of opportunity when a workman looked forward to ownership of the shop or the shop owner to expanding it into a factory and becoming himself an independent industrial proprietor were also passing away. The industrial frontier, which had offered a basis for economic opportunity nearer home, was becoming more and more restricted with the capitalization of industry and the introduction of mass production. American workers were gradually forced into a realization of their permanent dependence.

Hence when American democracy was confronted with the necessity of adjusting itself to the tremendous economic and social problems of the post-war years, two of the safety valves of former decades were shut off. Despite our vast natural wealth and size, we were obliged to meet our problems on a new basis, and along more restricted lines, paralleling more nearly those of western Europe. The process was of course tremendously accelerated by the economic and financial collapse in 1929, which is slowly compelling a re-orientation of our democracy.

The difficulty of bringing the legislation necessary to a new economic order into accord with the Constitution seems to trouble contemporary European interpreters more than it did Bryce or Tocqueville. Writing in 1921, when his optimism in regard to democracy had been somewhat dampened, Lord Bryce, in pointing to certain dangers that might prove its undoing, did not include the problem of constitutional adjustment. He saw the menace in more dangerous enemies—war, civil strife, and the abandonment of the government to bureaucracy. The experience of the democracies in post-war Europe afford poignant evidence on this score. Deeply impressed with this, contemporary European observers of American democracy are unanimous in their endorsement of Theodore Roosevelt's conviction that “Our task as Americans is to strive for social and industrial justice achieved through the genuine rule of the people.”

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James Bryce, Modern Democracies (1921), II. 602.