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Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

The Democratic principle

"The true greatness of Kingdoms and states, and the means thereof" says Lord Bacon "is an argument-worthy of great and mighty princes to have in their hands, to the end that by neither overestimating their forces they lose themselves in vain enterprises, nor on the other hand by underestimating they descend to feigns and pusillanimous counsels. - Again he says: "the greatness of an estate in bulk and territory doth fall under measure, and the greatness of finances and revenue doth fall under computation. The population may appear by musters and the number and greatness of cities and towns by cards and maps, but yet there is not any thing amongst civil affairs more subject to error, than the right valuation and true judgment concerning the power and forces of an estate. There are states large in territory and yet not apt to enlarge or command, and some that have but small dimension of them and yet apt to be the foundations of great monarchies. - Of the principle of government which Bacon adopted as his own ideal, we shall say nothing; it is enough to observe that he selected one by which he always judged of the worth and durability of the institutions of his time.

To the consideration of such a principle we invite you to day - a principle which seems to be the great moving power of mankind, and which in its rapid advances regards neither geographical boundaries, nor

the thrones and armies of Kings, but which is spreading with irresistible force, and seems about to become dominant for the better or the worse, throughout the earth.

Whoever studies the working of the Democratic principle in human affairs, cannot entertain a doubt that with whatever evils it may be followed when it acquires the mastery of the other interest of society, it is at least attended with this important effect - that it produces a degree of energy in all classes, while it subsists in vigor and is duly corrected, to which there is nothing comparable under other forms of government; and that it infuses the stimulus of strength and vitality in the social system to such a degree, as to prolong to a period much beyond that assigned to it; the life of nations.

But it is not only in its effects upon the social system within the state, that Democracy is one of the most important elements which works out the progress of the moral world and general government of providence; consequences equally important and still more lasting in their effect flow from its tendency to produce the dispersion of mankind. It is, in truth, the great expansive power of nations. Under various forms it has produced the chief migrations and settlements which have occurred in the history of the species. The Cimbric, the Celt, and the Gothic, who at successive periods, commencing with the first dawn of authentic profane history, spread from Central Asia to the farthest extremities of Europe, were impelled from their native seats by this insatiable passion. Scythia appeared even in the days of Tacitus, in the woods of Germany, and the

1
The spirit of our ancestors has produced the whole peculiar
features and glories of modern society. In Southern Europe
it has appeared in a different, but not less important character.
Spreading them ^{not} from the energy of the ~~former~~ desert, but the
turbulence of the forum, it diffused the republican colonies
of Greece, Rome, and Carthage over the whole shores of the
Mediterranean. Rome itself sprang, in its infancy, from
migrations; enterprise was nourished in its maturity by col-
onial wealth, and its extension around the shores of that
inland-sea, clearly demonstrates from what element
the strength of the Empire had been derived. In modern
times, the marvels of this expansive power have been no less conspic-
uous. From the republics of Genoa and Venice, the Democratic spirit
again penetrated, with their mercantile establishment, as far as
the waters of the Mediterranean extended, from the shores of Hol-
land it drove an industrious brood into the eastern Archi-
pelago, with the fervor of the Puritans it implanted the Anglo-Sax-
on race in a new hemisphere. Amid the wilds of America it
unceasingly impels the hardy wood-man into the solitudes of
the great West. England itself is now in a similar state of par-
tition, amid the mingled wealth and misery, glory and
shame, hope and disappointment of the last twenty years,
nearly a hundred thousand active citizens have annu-
ally migrated from the British Isles to the Western of South-
ern hemisphere, attempted political regeneration, producing terror
in some classes, disappointment in others, restlessness in all, has
greatly strengthened this inherent tendency, and the augmented
vehemence of the Democratic action in the heart of the Empire
has uniformly appeared in an enlarged stream of ardent ^{anti-}imperial

4
which it has sent forth to people the distant places of the earth.
Great Britain may well be in travail, for a new world is spring-
ing from her loins in the east. The manner in which the
Democratic Spirit brings about this transplantation of
the human race is very opposite. It is the combination of visions
of respectability with realities of degradation which affect the
object. The mind elated by boundless anticipations of elevation
and improvement to be effected by social or political improvement
feels insupportable disappointment at the failure of its long
cherished project, and the increasing intelligence and profligacy
of the great body of mankind, amid all the efforts made for
their elevation. The disgust numbers leave the abode of ancient
corruption, and seek the realization of their visions amid the
supposed innocence and the real advantages of plentiful em-
ployment. A general passion for change seizes all classes
and such anticipations are formed, and often realized, of the
advantage to be obtained from a change of situation, as effectually
extinguishes in great numbers, the love of home, in other
circumstances one of the strongest affections of the human
heart. It is this principle which in every age has prompt-
ed civilized man to forgo ^{all} the pleasures of home or kindred, to
sever all the bonds of filial or patriotic love, and seek in
distant lands those means of elevation which the contracted
sphere of their native seats will not afford. The love of power,
the desire of distinction, & the passion for wealth, envy of superior
jealousy of equals, contempt for inferiors, combine in these
circumstances to raise such a tempest in the human
breast as roots man up from his native seat, debilitates
his older recollections, extinguishes his strongest attachments,

5-
9

and sends forth the burning enthusiast, ardent for the
equality of rights and regeneration of society in distant
lands - where his expectations are too often blasted by the
stern realities of his new situation, but from whence action
is impossible - where he implants his seed in the soil
and leaves behind him in the wilderness the ^{orig} foundation
of an extended and prosperous society -

Leah's.

The democratic principle
Concurrent with

1852

J. J. Canby

Commencement Oration of James Taylor Carlile, Class of 1852
Transcribed by Tristan Deveney, May 2008
Edited by Sarah-Hazel Jennings, June 2008

The Democratic Principle

“The true greatness of kingdoms and estates and means thereof says Lord Bacon is an argument worthy of great or mighty princes to have in their hands to the end that by neither overestimating their forces they lose themselves in vain enterprises, nor on the other hand by underestimating they descend to fearful and pusillanimous counsels – Again he says – “the greatness of an estate in bulk and territory doth fall under measure and the greatness of finances and revenue doth fall under computation. The population may appear by musters and the number and greatness of cities and town by cards and maps but yet then is not any thing amongst civil affairs more subject to error than the right-valuation and true judgment concerning the power and forces of an estate. There are states large in territory and yet not apt to enlarge or command, and some that have but small dimension of stem and yet apt to be the foundations of great monarchies. – of the principle of government which Bacon adopted and his bean deal we shall say nothing; it is enough to observe that he selected one by which he always judged of the worth and durability of the institutions of his time.

To the consideration of such a principle we invite you to day – a principle which seems to be the great moving power of mankind, and which in its rapid advances regards neither geographical boundaries nor

the thrones and armies of Kings, but which is spreading with irresistible force and seems about to become dormant for the better or the worse. Throughout the earth, whoever studies the working of the “Democratic principle” in human affairs, cannot entertain a doubt that with whatever evils it may be followed when it acquires the mastery of the other interest of Society – it is at least attended with this important affect – that it produces a degree of energy in all classes, while it subsides in vigor and is duly earned, to which there is nothing comparable under other forms of government; and that it infuses the solemnity of strength and vitallity in the social system to such a degree as to prolong to a period much beyond that assigned to it; the life of nations.

But it is not only in its affects upon the social system ~~in~~ within the state that Democracy is one of the most important elements which works out the progress of the moral world and general government of providence. consequences equally important and state more lasting in their affect flow from its tendency to produce the dispention of mankind. It is in truth, the great expantive power of nature Under various germs it has produced the chief migrations and [attainment?] which have occurred in the lustery of the Species, the Cimbri, the Celts, and the Goth who at successive periods commencing with the first dawn of authentic profane history spread from central Asia to the farthest extremities of Europe were impelled from their native siol by their insatiable passions. [one word illegible] appeared even in the days of Gaectus, in the woods of Germany and the

fair spirit of our ancestors has produced the whole peculiar features and glories of modern Society. In Southern Europe it has appeared in a different but no less important character. Spreading them not from the energy of the desert but the turbulence of the forum, it diffused the republican Greece, [Lyme?], and Carthage over the shores of the Mediterranean. Rome itself sprang in its infancy from emigrants; enterprise was nourished in its maturity – by colonial wealth, and its extension around the shores of that inland sea clearly demonstrates from what element the strength of the empire had been derived. In modern times the marvel of this expansive power have been no less conspicuous. From the republics of Genoa and Venice the Democratic spirit again penetrated with their mercantile establishment as far as the waters of the Mediterranean extended, from the shores of Holland it drove an industrious brood into the eastern archipelago, with the fervour of the Puritans it implanted the Anglo-Saxon race in a new hemisphere. Amid the wilds of America it increasingly impels the hardy woods-man into the solitudes of [two words illegible] England itself is now in a similar state of partition, amid the mingled wealth and misery, glory and Shame, hope and disappointment of the last twenty years, nearly a hundred thousand active citizens have annually migrated from the British Isles to the western or southern hemisphere; attempted political regeneration, producing tenor in some classes, disappointment in others, restlessness in all, heed greatly strengthened this inherent tendency, and the augmented vehemence of the Democratic action in the heart of the sanguine has uniformly appeared in an enlarged stream of ardent emigrants

which it had sent forth to people the distant places of the Earth. Great Britain may well be in travail, for a new world is spreading from her loins in the east. The manner in which the Democratic spirit brings about this transplantation of the human race is very apparent. It is the combinations of visions of perfectability – with realities of degradation which affect the object. The mind elated by boundless anticipations of elevation and improvement to be affected by social or political improvement feel insupportable disappointment at the failure of its long-cherished progress: and the increasing intelligence and profligacy of the great body of mankind around all the effort made for their elevation. In disgust numbers leave the abode of an evil corruption and seek the realization of their visions amid the supposed innocence and the real advantages of plentiful employment. A general passion for change seizes all classes and such anticipations are formed and often realized if the advantages to be obtained from a change of situation, as effectually extinguishes in great numbers the love of home, in other circumstances are of the strongest affections of the human heart. It is this principle which in every age has prompted civilized man to forgot all the pleasures of home or kindred, to sever all the bonds of filial or patriotic love, and seek in distant lands those means of elevation which the contracted sphere of their native seat will not afford. The love of power, the decline of distinction, the passion for wealth, envy of superiors, jealousy of equals, contempt for inferiors, combine in these circumstances to raise such a tempest in the human breast as raised man up from his native seat, obliterates his oldest recollections, extinguishes his strongest attachments,

and sends forth the burning enthusiast, ardent for the equality of right and regeneration of society in distant lands – whom his expectations are too often blasted by the stern realities of his new situation, but from whence return is impossible – where he implants his seed in the soil and leave behind him in the wilderness the foundations of an extended and prosperous society.