

# Alexis de Tocqueville

## Quotes

*Men, America, Country, People, Law, Government, Political, Democracy,  
Thinking, Passion, Believe, World, Liberty, Religious, Two, Equality, Heart,  
Giving, War, Ideas*

The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word, equality. But notice the difference: while democracy seeks equality in liberty, socialism seeks equality in restraint and servitude.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Despotism often presents itself as the repairer of all the ills suffered, the support of just rights, defender of the oppressed, and founder of order.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

It is easier for the world to accept a simple lie than a complex truth.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There are many men of principle in both parties in America, but there is no party of principle.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

A democratic government is the only one in which those who vote for a tax can escape the obligation to pay it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There is no country in the world in which everything can be provided for by the laws, or in which political institutions can prove a substitute for common sense and public morality.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In the United States, the majority undertakes to supply a multitude of

ready-made opinions for the use of individuals, who are thus relieved from the necessity of forming opinions of their own.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I do not know if the people of the United States would vote for superior men if they ran for office, but there can be no doubt that such men do not run.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The Americans combine the notions of religion and liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive of one without the other.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

A man's admiration of absolute government is proportionate to the contempt he feels for those around him.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

All those who seek to destroy the liberties of a democratic nation ought to know that war is the surest and shortest means to accomplish it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I have seen Americans making great and sincere sacrifices for the key common good and a hundred times I have noticed that, when needs be, they almost always gave each other faithful support

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Nothing is so dangerous as that of violence employed by well-meaning people for beneficial objects.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The surface of American society is covered with a layer of democratic paint, but from time to time one can see the old aristocratic colours breaking through.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Society is endangered not by the great profligacy of a few, but by the laxity of morals amongst all.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Life is to be entered upon with courage.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

When the past no longer illuminates the future, the spirit walks in darkness.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The man who asks of freedom anything other than itself is born to be a slave.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Every central government worships uniformity: uniformity relieves it from inquiry into an infinity of details.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Nothing is more wonderful than the art of being free, but nothing is harder to learn how to use than freedom.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

As for me, I am deeply a democrat; this is why I am in no way a socialist. Democracy and socialism cannot go together. You can't have it both ways. Socialism is a new form of slavery.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Nobody is going to occupy a place higher than I.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I should have loved freedom, I believe, at all times, but in the time in which we live I am ready to worship it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

We succeed in enterprises which demand the positive qualities we possess, but we excel in those which can also make use of our defects.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The tie of language is perhaps the strongest and the most durable that can unite mankind.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

When I refuse to obey an unjust law, I do not contest the right of the majority to command, but I simply appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of mankind.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Those which we call necessary institutions are simply no more than institutions to which we have become accustomed.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Any measure that establishes legal charity on a permanent basis and gives it an administrative form thereby creates an idle and lazy class, living at the expense of the industrial and working class.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The main business of religions is to purify, control, and restrain that excessive and exclusive taste for well-being which men acquire in times of equality.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In politics shared hatreds are almost always the basis of friendships.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

General ideas are no proof of the strength, but rather of the insufficiency of the human intellect.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

History is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

If an American was condemned to confine his activity to his own affairs, he would be robbed of one half of his existence.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Socialism is a new form of slavery.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

No protracted war can fail to endanger the freedom of a democratic country.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

everybody feels the evil, but no one has courage or energy enough to seek the cure

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The most dangerous moment for a bad government is when it begins to reform.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Righteous women in their circle of influence, beginning in the home, can turn the world around.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

America is a country where they have freedom of speech but everyone says the same thing.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Those that despise people will never get the best out of others and themselves.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Those who prize freedom only for the material benefits it offers have never kept it for long.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There is hardly a pioneer's hut which does not contain a few odd volumes of Shakespeare. I remember reading the feudal drama of Henry V for the first time in a log cabin.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Grant me thirty years of equal division of inheritances and a free press, and I will provide you with a republic.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

One of the happiest consequences of the absence of government...is the development of individual strength that inevitably follows.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I have only one passion, the love of liberty and human dignity.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Despotism can do without faith but freedom cannot.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

A long war almost always places nations in this sad alternative: that their defeat delivers them to destruction and their triumph to despotism.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The evil which one suffers patiently as inevitable seems insupportable as soon as he conceives the idea of escaping from it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts, the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

It is the dissimilarities and inequalities among men which give rise to the notion of honor; as such differences become less, it grows feeble; and when they disappear, it will vanish too.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Consider any individual at any period of his life, and you will always find him preoccupied with fresh plans to increase his comfort.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

If there ever are great revolutions there, they will be caused by the presence of the blacks upon American soil.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

To remain silent is the most useful service that a mediocre speaker can render to the public good.

~Alexis de Tocqueville



In politics a community of hatred is almost always the foundation of friendships.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The French want no-one to be their superior. The English want inferiors. The Frenchman constantly raises his eyes above him with anxiety. The Englishman lowers his beneath him with satisfaction.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

On close inspection, we shall find that religion, and not fear, has ever been the cause of the long-lived prosperity of an absolute government.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Chance does nothing that has not been prepared beforehand.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In a revolution, as in a novel, the most difficult part to invent is the end.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The best laws cannot make a constitution work in spite of morals; morals can turn the worst laws to advantage.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There are two things which a democratic people will always find very difficult - to begin a war and to end it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

It is an axiom of political science in the United States that the sole means of neutralizing the effects of newspapers is to multiply their number.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Comfort becomes a goal when distinctions of rank are abolished and privileges destroyed.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Men will not receive the truth from their enemies, and it is seldom offered to them by their friends.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The genius of democracies is seen not only in the great number of new words introduced but even more in the new ideas they express.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

If I were asked ... to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of Americans ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply: To the superiority of their women.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Equality is a slogan based on envy. It signifies in the heart of every republican: "Nobody is going to occupy a place higher than I."

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Slavery...dishonors labor. It introduces idleness into society, and with idleness, ignorance and pride, luxury and distress. It enervates the powers of the mind and benumbs the activity of man.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

America is great because she is good.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The Indian knew how to live without wants, to suffer without complaint, and to die singing.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Lawyers belong to the people by birth and interest, and to the aristocracy by habit and taste; they may be looked upon as the connecting link of the two great classes of society.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In countries where associations are free, secret societies are unknown. In America there are factions, but no conspiracies.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The position of the Americans is quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

When none but the wealthy had watches, they were almost all very good ones; few are now made which are worth much, but everybody has one in his pocket.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I studied the Koran a great deal. I came away from that study with the conviction there have been few religions in the world as deadly to men as that of Muhammad.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

When an American asks for the cooperation of his fellow citizens, it is

seldom refused; and I have often seen it afforded spontaneously and with great good will.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

In the principle of equality I very clearly discern two tendencies; one leading the mind of every man to untried thoughts, the other prohibiting him from thinking at all.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

There is hardly a political question in the United States which does not sooner or later turn into a judicial one.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

We can state with conviction, therefore, that a man's support for absolute government is in direct proportion to the contempt he feels for his country.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The taste which men have for liberty and that which they feel for equality are, in fact, two different things...among democratic nations they are two unequal things.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

You need not value it yourself if you do not wish to; but you ought to allow it to us who do value it.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

He [Napoleon] was as great as a man can be without morality.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The whole life of an American is passed like a game of chance, a revolutionary crisis, or a battle.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The principle of equality does not destroy the imagination, but lowers its flight to the level of the earth.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

I know of no other country where love of money has such a grip on men's hearts or where stronger scorn is expressed for the theory of permanent equality of property

~Alexis de Tocqueville

To get the inestimable good that freedom of the press assures one must know how to submit to the inevitable evil it gives rise to.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The power of the periodical press is second only to that of the people.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The more alike men are, the weaker each feels in the face of all.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

[Liberty] considers religion as the safeguard of morality, and morality as the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The happy and powerful do not go into exile, and there are no surer guarantees of equality among men than poverty and misfortune.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The will of the nation is one of those phrases most widely abused by schemers and tyrants of all ages.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

The French constitute the most brilliant and the most dangerous nation in Europe and the best qualified in turn to become an object of

admiration, hatred, pity or terror but never indifference.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

Remember that life is neither pain nor pleasure; it is serious business, to be entered upon with courage and in a spirit of self-sacrifice.

~Alexis de Tocqueville

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