

States, and the splendour of the part reserved for them in the development of civilization. But such men, unless they have themselves crossed the Atlantic, have seldom either exact or correct ideas regarding the phenomena of the New World. The social and political experiments of America constantly cited in Europe both as patterns and as warnings are hardly ever cited with due knowledge of the facts, much less with comprehension of what they teach; and where premises are misunderstood inferences must be unsound.

It is such a feeling as this, a sense of the immense curiosity of Europe regarding the social and political life of America, and of the incomparable significance of American experience, that has led and will lead so many travellers to record their impressions of the Land of the Future. Yet the very abundance of descriptions in existence seems to require the author of another to justify himself for adding it to the list.

I might plead that America changes so fast that every few years a new crop of books is needed to describe the new face which things have put on, the new problems that have appeared, the new ideas germinating among her people, the new and unexpected developments for evil as well as for good of which her established institutions have been found capable. I might observe that a new generation grows up every few years in Europe, which does not read the older books, because they are old, but may desire to read a new one. And if a further reason is asked for, let it be found in this, that during the last fifty years no author has proposed to himself the aim of portraying the whole political system of the country in its practice as well as its theory, of explaining not only the National Government but the State Governments, not only the Constitution but the party system, not only the party system but the ideas, temper, habits of the sovereign people. Much that is valuable has been written on particular parts or aspects of the subject, but no one seems to have tried to deal with it as a whole; not to add that some of the ablest writers have been either advocates, often professed advocates, or detractors of democracy.

To present such a general view of the United States both as a Government and as a Nation is the aim of the present book. But in seeking to be comprehensive it does not attempt to be exhaustive. The effort to cover the whole ground with equal minuteness, which a penetrating critic—the late Karl Hillebrand