

flourishes or languishes under other skies and in another soil will likewise flourish or languish in our own. Many an American institution would bear a different fruit if transplanted to England, as there is hardly an English institution which has not undergone, like the plants and animals of the Old World, some change in America. The examination and appraisal of the institutions of the United States is no doubt full of instruction for Europe, full of encouragement, full of warning; but its chief value lies in what may be called the laws of political biology which it reveals, in the new illustrations and enforcements it supplies of general truths in social and political science, truths some of which were perceived long ago by Plato and Aristotle, but might have been forgotten had not America poured a stream of new light upon them. Now and then we may directly claim transatlantic experience as accrediting or discrediting some specific constitutional device or the policy of some enactment. But even in these cases he who desires to rely on the results shown in America must first satisfy himself that there is such a parity of conditions and surroundings in respect to the particular matter as justifies him in reasoning directly from ascertained results there to probable results in his own country.

It is possible that these pages, or at least those of them which describe the party system, may produce on European readers an impression which the author neither intends nor desires. They may set before him a picture with fewer lights and deeper shadows than I have wished it to contain. Sixteen years ago I travelled in Iceland with two friends. We crossed the great Desert by a seldom trodden track, encountering, during two months of late autumn, rains, tempests, snow-storms, and other hardships too numerous to recount. But the scenery was so grand and solemn, the life so novel, the character of the people so attractive, the historic and poetic traditions so inspiring, that we returned full of delight with the marvellous isle. When we expressed this enchantment to our English friends, we were questioned about the conditions of travel, and forced to admit that we had been frozen and starved, that we had sought sleep in swamps or on rocks, that the Icelanders lived in huts scattered through a wilderness, with none of the luxuries and few even of the comforts of life. Our friends passed over the record of impressions to dwell on the record of physical experiences, and conceived a notion of the island totally different from that which