

**DEMOCRACY AND
SOCIAL
GROWTH IN AMERICA:
FOUR LECTURES**

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Democracy and Social Growth in America: Four Lectures by Bernard Moses

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BERNARD MOSES

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FOUR LECTURES

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DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL GROWTH IN AMERICA.

LECTURE I.

A FUNDAMENTAL TENDENCY.

THE occupation of the American continent by Europeans has part of its significance in the fact that it provided conditions for an unprecedented extension of democracy. In the presence of the wilderness and uncultivated tribes, the conventionalities of an old and complex society were wanting, and a new social growth began, with few of the hampering influences of artificial restrictions and distinctions. Never before, within historic times, had there been offered to man such an ample field of escape from the conventional forms

of established society, by which individuals are kept bound in their places of inferiority and superiority. In the unsettled regions of America there was the widest freedom from the restraints of civilization. There was ample room for millions to take essentially similar places. Under these circumstances, men necessarily and inevitably drifted towards the enjoyment of common rights and privileges, and the law in the course of time recognized and confirmed the fact.

Through the discovery of America and its subsequent occupation by Europeans, large scope was given to a modified form of political practice; and the new phenomena of political life have given a new basis for scientific inductions. The idea of equality under the law, which we recognize as one of the results of the new social conditions, has entered as a conspicuous feature into recent political discussion. In fact, all the important inductions drawn from the phenomena of colonial life on this continent, constituting, as they do, a noteworthy addition to our general knowledge of politics,

must be set down among the consequences of westward migration. The discovery and settlement of America have, moreover, enabled us to study society in the actual process of formation. We have seen men build communities, and by slow degrees organize a body politic. First, in this process, came the creation of an agency or institution to do certain work which the society wished done; then the union of these several agencies or institutions into a system, and this system we have seen fit to call a state.

This point of view has been of vast importance in revealing the state as an organized part of the nation; or as an instrument of human creation designed to accomplish the common work of society. Seeing the state grow up, little by little, as one institution after another was organized to perform some part of the increasing social work, there has been derived the well-founded conclusion that the origin of the state and the source of political authority are not to be looked for in the inscrutable mind of Providence, but in the instincts