

**CORRESPONDENCE &  
CONVERSATIONS OF ALEXIS DE  
TOCQUEVILLE WITH NASSAU  
WILLIAM SENIOR FROM 1834 TO  
1859. IN TWO VOLUMES-VOLUME I**

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WITH

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR

FROM 1834 TO 1859

EDITED BY

M. C. M. SIMPSON

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*IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME I.*

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1872

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## PREFACE.

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ONE DAY in the year 1833 a knock was heard at the door of the Chambers in which Mr. Senior was sitting at work, and a young man entered who announced himself in these terms: 'Je suis Alexis de Tocqueville, et je viens faire votre connaissance.' He had no other introduction.

Alexis de Tocqueville was at that time unknown to fame. His great work on America had not yet appeared.

Mr. Senior, however, perceived at once the extraordinary qualities of his new acquaintance. M. de Tocqueville became a frequent visitor in Mr. Senior's house, and the intimacy thus begun was continued by letter or conversation without interruption (indeed every year drew it closer) until the premature death of Tocqueville in 1859.

Soon after that event Mr. Senior collected and arranged his letters and conversations with a view to



their publication at some future time : some extracts from them appeared in the 'Memoir of Tocqueville' published in 1861.

I have thought it would add to the interest of the correspondence to print Mr. Senior's letters, which were sent to me by M. de Beaumont after my father's death. I wish that I could have reproduced the French as well as the English originals, as I cannot hope in a translation to give an idea of the force or the grace of M. de Tocqueville's style.

Mrs. Grote has kindly permitted me to insert in these volumes her notes of conversations in 1849 and 1854.

I have included Mr. Senior's journal of a visit which we paid to Madame de Tocqueville after the death of the great philosopher. She had collected round her three or four of his most intimate friends, and he seemed to be still amongst us, for we talked of him continually and he was never absent from our thoughts. How much we wished that we could once more hear his voice, which, sweet, low, and varied in its tones, added so much to the charm of his conversation.

In person he was small and delicate. He had very thick and rather long black hair, soft yet brilliant dark eyes, and a finely marked brow. The upper lip was long and the mouth wide, but sensitive and expressive. His manner was full of kindness and playfulness, and his fellow-countrymen used to say of him that he was

a perfect specimen of the 'gentilhomme de l'ancien régime.'

Although he had a keen sense of humour, his countenance was sad in repose. Indeed the 'fond' of his character was sad, partly from sensitiveness, partly from ill-health. The period in which his lot was cast was not calculated to raise his spirits; he foresaw, only too clearly, the troubled future in store for France.

The convulsions of the last two years, while they would have deeply pained, would not have surprised him; and though France could ill afford to lose such a man, his friends may find some consolation in the reflection that he is at rest.

M. C. M. SIMPSON.

KENSINGTON: *May 7, 1872.*

MR. SENIOR'S INTRODUCTORY NOTE  
TO THE CONVERSATIONS,

*Written in 1859.*

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I WAS honoured by the friendship of Alexis de Tocqueville for twenty-six years—from 1833 to 1859—but I did not attempt to preserve his conversations until 1848.

In the May of that year I visited Paris, and I was so much struck by the strange things which I saw and heard, that I took notes of them, which swelled into a regular Journal.

The practice once begun, I continued during my subsequent travels, and these volumes contain perhaps the most valuable part of my Journals—that which was contributed to them by M. de Tocqueville.

Of course his conversation loses enormously by translation. Its elegance and finesse could not be retained, but its knowledge and wisdom were less volatile, and I have reason to hope that they have been, to a certain extent, preserved.