

THE HERITAGE

Alexis Charles Henri Clérel, Viscount de Tocqueville *

"A man has come into the world; his early years are spent without notice in the pleasures and activities of childhood. As he grows up, the world receives him when his manhood begins, and he enters into contact with his fellows. He is then studied for the first time, and it is imagined that the germ of the vices and the virtues of his maturer years is then formed".

"This, if I am not mistaken, is a great error. We must begin higher up; we must watch the infant in his mother's arms; we must see the first images which the external world casts upon the dark mirror of his mind, the first occurrences that he witnesses; we must hear the first words which awaken the sleeping powers of thought, and stand by his earliest efforts if we would understand the prejudices, the habits, and the passions which will rule his life. The entire man is, so to speak, to be seen in the cradle of the child".

"The growth of nations presents something analogous to this: They all bear some marks of their origin. The circumstances that accompanied their birth and contributed to their development affected the whole term of their being".

* Alexis Charles Henri Clérel, Viscount de Tocqueville (29 July 1805 – 16 April 1859), A French diplomat, political scientist and historian.