

Democracy in America – Volume I  
Alexander de Tocqueville

This is a classic which every educated American has to have read

It is almost two centuries since the first glowing reviews of this book appeared. What can one add? It is the classic, something every educated American has to have read.

An advantage of older texts is that the authors had no premonitions about political correctness. They told it as they saw it. Tocqueville's views on Black slavery reflect what he heard and observed. He may not have been right, but he is worth reading if only because his opinions would not find a publisher today. You can find the most telling, and longest, chapter by Googling "THE PRESENT AND PROBABLE FUTURE CONDITION OF THE THREE RACES THAT INHABIT THE TERRITORY OF THE UNITED STATES." He foresaw that the problems among the races could not be resolved, and predicted the kinds of conflicts that would arise.

His prognostications about the fragility of American democracy, and the forces that might undo it, are also quite on target.

As a companion read about Russia of this period, I recommend the Marquis de Custine's [[ASIN:B00HO11CMS Letters from Russia]]. The differences among Europe, America and Russia that one witnesses today were acutely observed two centuries ago by these two remarkable Frenchmen.