

Serendipity—according to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition—on page 1136—is “the faculty or phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for; also, an instance of this.”

That is exactly what occurred a few days ago when I was looking in a reference book for something entirely different. I came across this quote by 19th century British historian, John E.E. Dalberg, Lord Acton: “The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.”

People of color shot by law enforcement officers; young black men “profiled” by traffic policemen; immigrants demonized in abusive language by the President of the United States and by the very concept of Trump’s wall; people afraid of the consequences related to their sexual orientation; women—though technically probably not a minority—marginalized in many ways; and the poor, unfairly characterized as lazy or dumb.

There is, though, one minority in the United States that has enjoyed unlimited security. The “one per cent,” the extremely wealthy, have been in the catbird seat far too long. I don’t know if they are beginning to have twinges of unease, wondering at times, when they cannot fall asleep at night, if those Democrats and Democratic Socialists might actually persuade the American masses that health care is a fundamental human right, or that the viability of the global environment has been threatened—perhaps nearly to the point at which no amelioration is possible—by their greed and focus on “progress and growth”—that is, making themselves richer and richer.

Based on Dalberg’s measure of freedom in a country, where would our nation rank? Certainly, nowhere near the top of the list. With our advantages of education, space, isolation from multiple national borders, we should be a welcoming, kind, tolerant people. And we are—as long as those we welcome are the same color as we are, hold the same religious beliefs, aren’t poor, speak English with no accent, and don’t walk down a street holding hands with someone of the same sex.

The first step in changing the image—and the reality of what we are—is to throw out the Bigot in Chief. Whether by impeachment and conviction or by the 2020 election, a giant stride toward remaking our country into the nation we profess to be is to eliminate Donald Trump—and people like him—from any association with government and from any economic power.