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The Origins and Development of the Gentlemanly Ideal in the South: 1607-1865.

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THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENTLEMANLY IDEAL IN THE SOUTH: 1607-1865

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THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE GENTLEMANLY IDEAL IN THE SOUTH:
1607-1865

A Dissertation

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in

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by

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The purpose of this study is to examine the origins and development of the gentleman in the South. It begins with an examination of Castiglione's *The Courtier*. Castiglione provided a discussion of the ideal man of Renaissance Italy. His ideal man, the courtier, possessed cultivation, character, and class. Together, these attributes made up the complete, or universal man. The Renaissance idea of the complete man profoundly influenced all later thought concerning the nature of the gentleman.

The English embraced Castiglione's idea of a complete man, but they immediately adapted it to suit their own needs. The English placed much greater emphasis upon the gentleman's duty to his nation and to his fellow man. In addition, the English stressed Christian morality, expecting the gentleman to be both charitable and humble, and they also stressed the importance of the bourgeois virtues of frugality and industry.

The influence of the English ideal on the colonial South is clearly identifiable. Colonists read the English advice literature which recommended the development of gentlemanly attributes, and they recommended that others follow the English ideal. Although southerners embraced the basic elements of the ideal of the English gentleman, they
also adapted it to suit colonial conditions. Colonists believed that the gentleman had to possess a natural simplicity which reflected their rural life. They celebrated simplicity as one of the required virtues.

Ante-bellum southerners were indebted to Castiglione, the English, and their own colonial forebears for their gentlemanly ideal. According to their letters, diaries, commencement addresses, and novels, southerners believed that the gentleman ought to be a complete man, possessing the requisite elements of class, character, and cultivation. He should possess a noble obligation to serve his nation and his fellow man; he should possess the Christian virtues of humility and charity; he should possess the bourgeois virtues of industry and frugality; and he should possess a rural simplicity. The ideal of the gentleman in the South evolved out of the European tradition, but it also began to develop distinctive characteristics during the ante-bellum period. Morality and honor, which had always played a role in the gentlemanly ideal, became the two most distinctive characteristics of the gentleman of the South. Those two attributes were eventually to become the most striking features of the southern gentleman.
CHAPTER I

The Italian Origins of the Ideal Man

The nucleus of the gentlemanly ideal of the Old South originated in Europe. Debates regarding the nature of the ideal man occurred prior to the European Renaissance. The ideal man fashioned by those debates was a warrior, or an orator, or even a scholar. In each case, he was a man of a single, highly valued skill. However, out of the Renaissance debates came a unique formulation of the ideal which influenced all later discussions in both Europe and America. The Renaissance formulation of the ideal man called for him to be accomplished in a wide range of skills including those of the warrior, orator, and scholar. Thus the ideal man became a complete or universal man. Baldesar Castiglione, a sixteenth century Italian nobleman, is generally credited with the first full discussion of the universal man. His only book, The Book of the Courtier, or more simply The Courtier has proved a landmark work for the study of the ideal man, and it is with his book that this study begins.

1For the seminal work on ideal types see, Ruth Kelso, "The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century." University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 14 (February-May 1929), 1-288.
Throughout his life, Castiglione fondly recalled his few short years at the Court of Urbino. His warm regard for Guidobaldo, the deceased Duke of Urbino, and his recollection of the brilliance of Guidobaldo's court led him to prepare a memoir of life at Urbino. "I feel myself in honour bound," wrote Castiglione, "to the best of my ability and with every art in my power, sedulously to redeem from oblivion their bright memory and to perpetuate it in the minds of posterity."  

Francesco Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua, his powerful cousin and the Lord whom he served, first introduced Castiglione to the Duke of Urbino. Castiglione, a "tall upstanding" young man "with the firm features and blue eyes," yet "very green and over scrupulous," as remembered by Pope Julius, anxiously awaited military action in Naples.  

The Marquis, apparently doubting his own military leadership, and fearing defeat by the Spanish, left Garigliano and conveniently missed the rout of his French forces. Required to follow the man he served, Castiglione regretted having missed a pitched battle, and he began to seek service with a commander more willing to fight. When he requested to be relieved from his cousin's service in order to join the Duke of Urbino, the Marquis granted

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3Ibid., 218.
permission in a "studiously contemptuous" letter.  

His early years had been spent in preparation for court life. He was born at Castico in 1478, and his family sent him, at an early age, to the renowned Court of Lodovico Sforza in Milan. Before long he displayed all of the markings of a genuine courtier with an "aptitude for everything . . . and proficiency in nothing." Impressed with his abilities, the Bishop of Mantua sent a letter to the boy's father praising him as a "young man well-favoured in person, learned, elegant, discreet, of the utmost integrity, and so gifted by nature and fortune that if he continues as he has begun he will have no equal."  

Upon arrival at Urbino he proved the Bishop right on every count. 

The true greatness of the Court of Urbino is attributed to Federigo, the first Duke. During his forty year reign he "built the palace, collected therein a priceless library, bestowed his patronage freely on artists and men of letters, and spent his considerable revenues largely on the furtherance of scholarship and education." 


6Ibid., 215, 220. 

It would be a mistake though, to dismiss the contributions of the second Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo, and his wife Elisabetta Gonzaga. The style and grandeur of the Court, at the time of Castiglione's arrival, must be attributed to the delicate health of the Duke and Duchess. Invalids, both lived sedentary lives but insisted that their condition not intrude upon court life. Melancholy and depression were banished from Court, and all activities aimed at lifting the spirit were praised. Elisabetta faithfully followed the advice advanced by her sister-in-law to avoid everything depressing and to live and thrive on such things as bring health and substance, to force yourself to take exercise, either on foot or on horseback, and to enjoy pleasant conversations, driving away melancholy and care, which come of the indisposition of the body or mind; and to attend to nothing but, first, the health of your mind and then, the comfort and respect of your person.

Gaiety and mirth in many ways characterized life at Urbino. "What do we do here?" queried Petro Bembo. "There is little to tell: we laugh, we jest, we play games, we invent new tricks and practical jokes, we study and sup, and now and then write verses." Castiglione agreed on the appropriateness of cheerful and pleasant conversation

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9Roeder, The Man of the Renaissance, 222.

at court; however, he never portrayed the courtier as an idle jester as did his friend Bembo. In fact, he stoutly condemned lightness, vanity, foppery and dissipation in the fourth book of *The Courtier*.

There was mirth at Urbino, but the soldiers, scholars, prelates and artists who flocked there sought to develop talents beyond idle pleasures.\(^{11}\) At court, Castiglione learned the skills of the diplomat--skills which provided him with a profession in later life. The idealistic Castiglione never accepted duplicity as an integral tool of the ambassador. His strict honesty, which he learned at Urbino, proved no match for Pope Leo's cunning, and hence he failed in his efforts to prevent Leo from capturing Urbino for the Medici empire. Castiglione was crushed to see Urbino fall into the hands of the corrupt Lorenzo de' Medici, the man to whom Machiavelli dedicated his masterful work, *The Prince*.\(^{12}\)

The fall of the Montefeltro family and the rise of the Medici proved the chief impetus to the writing of *The Courtier*. Convinced that Urbino under Guidobaldo's family outshone every other court in Italy, Castiglione decided to chronicle its radiance.\(^{13}\) As Castiglione explained,

\(^{11}\)Roeder, *The Man of the Renaissance*, 220.


\(^{13}\)Roeder, *The Man of the Renaissance*, 344, 346, 369-70.
When signor Guidobaldo of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, departed this life, I, together with several other gentlemen who had served him, remained in the service of Duke Francesco Maria della Fovere, his heir and successor in the state. And, as the savor of Duke Guido's virtues was fresh in my mind, and the delight that in those years I had felt in the loving company of such excellent persons as then frequented the Court of Urbino, I was moved by the memory thereof to write these books of the Courtier . . . .14

When Francois, the king of France, heard that the Italian had begun a book which would illustrate the merits and accomplishments of the courtier, he urged Castiglione to press forward and complete the work "for the benefit of future generations."15

Castiglione quickly wrote his memorial to Urbino, but he hesitated publishing it. Instead, he seemed to prefer changing and reshaping it innumerable times. On occasions, he loaned the manuscript to friends seeking suggestions for improvement. On discovering that one friend had had copies of his work made and had begun distributing them, and fearing that publication of an edition based on inaccurate copies was imminent, he concluded that the time had arrived for publication. Had not his hand been forced, it is possible the book may never have been published.16

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The few short years Castiglione served at the Court of Urbino made a most profound impression upon him. Yet his early life had prepared him for the life found at court. His education shaped his perception of the world and molded him into a courtier. Trained as a universal man, he possessed a catholic education, refined manners, unsullied morals, and considerable physical abilities. The perfect dilettante, he had an aptitude for letters, music, art; and athletics, but his knowledge lacked real depth. He also possessed the gift of pleasing. Life at Urbino convinced the young man of the logic of his training, and provided an example of what life could be like when surrounded by men of similar persuasion.

Castiglione immediately recognized that any discussion of an ideal man would be open to criticism as straying too far from reality. He defended his efforts in the volume's introduction with the following statement:

Others say that since it is so difficult, and wellnigh impossible, to find a man as perfect as I wish the Courtier to be, it was wasted effort to write of him, because it is useless to try to teach what cannot be learned. To such as these I answer (without wishing to get into any dispute about the Intelligible World or the Ideas) that I am content to have erred with Plato, Xenophon, and Marcus Tullius; and just as, according to these authors, there is the Idea of the perfect Republic, the perfect King, and the perfect Orator, so likewise there is that of the perfect Courtier.18

Castiglione clearly recognized the impossibility of man's perfectibility. Yet, as the publication of the book suggests, he felt man ought to struggle to achieve some semblance of the ideal. The concept discussed at the Court of Urbino represented the highest aspirations of and the most important characteristics valued by the Italians.\footnote{19} 

Castiglione's book takes the form of a series of four evening discussions between members of the Court of Urbino. The discussions were directed by the Duchess of Urbino, Elisabetta Gonzaga, but the broad outlines of the ideal courtier were provided by Count Ludovico da Canossa. The other participants in the nightly discussions included the brothers Ottaviano and Federico Fregoso, Cesare Gonzaga, the Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo, Magnifico Giuliano de' Medici, Pope Leo's brother, Bernardo Bibbiena, Gaspar Pallavicino, Ludovico Pio, and Emilia Pia.\footnote{20} 

As the discussions unfolded, the participants quickly agreed that completeness proved the feature which most distinguished the courtier from ideal types of previous eras. They rejected the notion of specialization which had dominated the thought of earlier ages. The courtier had to do all things moderately well. Following

\footnote{19}{Raleigh, "Introduction," \textit{The Courtier}, trans. Hoby, xxv.}

\footnote{20}{Castiglione, \textit{The Courtier}, trans. Singleton, 15-17.}
his death, Cesare Gonzaga was idealized as the complete man thusly:

His worth . . . shone forth not only in noble birth, but in the adornment of letters and arms as well, and in every kind of praiseworthy behavior; so that, owing to his goodness, his talents, courage and knowledge, nothing too great could have been expected of him.21

The courtier was living art, equal to any sculpture or painting. Careful attention to every accomplishment and attribute assured perfect balance and symmetry. The courtier, then, was aesthetic in nature. Personal perfection could only be attained through the assiduous cultivation of every aspect of man's nature. Castiglione denied the Italian origins of symmetry. Instead he pointed to the Greeks as the originators of the notion of the well-rounded man. At one point in the dialogue Gaspar Pallavicino explained, "I certainly did not expect our Courtier to be honored so; but since Aristotle and Plato are his companions, I think no one henceforth ought to despise the name. Still, I am not quite sure that I believe that Aristotle and Plato ever danced or made music in their lives, or performed any acts of chivalry."22 Immediately Ottaviano Fregoso responded, "We are hardly permitted to think that these two divine spirits did not know everything, and hence we can believe that they

21Ibid., 286.

practiced what belongs to Courtiership, for they write of it on occasion in such a way that the very masters of the subjects of which they write acknowledge that they understood these to the marrow and deepest roots."

Cesare Gonzaga was characterized as a complete man—as a man of noble birth, adornment in letters and arms, and great virtue or goodness. These attributes fall into three general divisions which may be labeled class, cultivation, and character. In the case of Gonzaga, his noble birth made him a man of the proper class; learned accomplishments from letters to arms demonstrated his cultivation; and his goodness and courage proved the depth of his character. These three categories of attributes retain importance from the origin of the Italian ideal through the development of an ideal type in the American South. Therefore, Castiglione's views will be discussed in terms of them.

In the early stages of the discussion of the characteristics of the ideal man Count Ludovico da Canossa broached the question of the significance of birth to the perfect courtier. First, by way of apology, the Count explained that to a great extent perfection must be in the

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23 Ibid. For a more forceful translation of this passage see the Hoby translation which reads: "Almost it is not lawful to think that these two divine wittes were not skillful in every thing . . . ." Castiglione, The Courtier, trans. Hoby, 340.
eyes of the beholder. Some might value the man of quick and witty speech, or of genuine modesty; others would value a man of action, or one both quiet and respectful. With this in mind, he suggested that any single man's perception of those elements necessary to make an ideal courtier would be disputed. Introduction complete, the Count then embarked upon his discourse on the importance of noble birth. Turning to nature, the Count explained that "as we see not only in breeds of horses and other animals, but in trees as well, the shoots . . . nearly always resemble the trunk . . . ."24 As with all of nature the level of birth determined the quality of life which man might achieve. A man of gentle birth had greater opportunity to become a perfect courtier than the man of common heritage. In the event of failure, "fault lies with the husbandman" and not with the trunk. "For noble birth is like a bright lamp that makes manifest and visible deeds both good and bad," argued the Count, "kindling and spurring on to virtue as much for fear of dishonor as for hope of praise."25

Noble birth placed constant pressure on a man. Examples of past heroism and greatness served as matters of inspiration; yet he also warned that failure to succeed could lead to a fall much greater than any commoner could experience. These pressures forced the nobleman to struggle more

25 Ibid.
ardently to achieve excellence.  

Occasionally a man might be born with "such graces that they seem not to have been born, but to have been fashioned by the hands of some god, and adorned with every excellence of mind and body . . . ." Others might be born "inept and uncouth." The Count recognized variety as a hallmark of nature. Regardless of a man's birth, he acknowledged both the need to work to maintain a good name and the ever present danger of failure. Birth never guaranteed success, but it made it considerably easier to attain.

Not birth, but fortune best determined a man's suitability as a perfect courtier, countered Gaspar. "I say that to me this nobility of birth does not seem so essential." Gaspar thought it ludicrous to condemn the courtier of ability simply because his parents were of humble origins. With all of the energy of an idealistic young man supporting a new cause, he threw himself into the battle supporting merit and talent over noble birth as forming the basis of the ideal courtier. Continuing, he stated that "talent, beauty of countenance, comeliness of person, and that grace which will make him at first sight lovable to all" shall suffice to elevate the courtier to

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26Roeder, The Man of the Renaissance, 347.
28Ibid., 30.
perfection. Excellent ability in men of common birth, agreed Ludovico, must never be ignored. However, in fashioning the most noble courtier, the estimation of all men must be considered. As an illustration, the Count explained that when two men are met in a house, and neither displays his abilities,

when the one is known to be of gentle birth and the other not, the one who is lowborn will be held in far less esteem than the one who is of noble birth, and will need much time and effort in order to give to others that good impression of himself which the other will give in an instant and merely by being a gentleman. And everyone knows the importance of these impressions.

Ludovico would not deny the excellence of Gaspar's argument and agreed that he had met men of noble birth who were "dull-witted and maladroit," yet enjoyed outstanding reputations. At the same time he told of having known men of low birth who "in the end, achieved a great success."

Nevertheless, since the estimation of other men must be considered, and because the courtier must be respected in the eyes of all men, the Count declared noble birth an attribute of first rank for the ideal courtier.

Along with gentle birth, the Count wished his courtier to have a noble profession. Only one profession was truly suitable for the ideal man. The Count declared:

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31 Ibid., 31-32.
I hold that the principal and true profession of the courtier must be that of arms; which, I wish him to exercise with vigor; and let him be known among the others as bold, energetic, and faithful to whomever he serves. And the repute of these good qualities will be earned by exercising them in every time and place, inasmuch as one may not ever fail therein without great blame. And, just as among women the name of purity, once stained, is never restored, so the reputation of a gentleman whose profession is arms, if ever in the least way he sullies himself through cowardice or other disgrace, always remains defiled before the world and covered with ignominy.32

No other profession could match arms for its nobility and beauty. However, arms was but a profession; the courtier's purpose in life was service to a prince.

Throughout the first three books of his work Castiglione suggested that the courtier's duty was service to his prince. The final book, however, further explained the duty of the ideal man. Under all circumstances Castiglione expected the courtier to be truthful to his prince, even while risking disfavor. By means of honesty the courtier could advise and guide his prince along the paths of goodness. In a sense the courtier served as the prince's conscience.33 Ottaviano fully expected the courtier to succeed in this difficult challenge, acknowledging that

the Courtier will in every instance be able adroitly to show the prince how much honor and profit will come to him and his from justice,

\[32\text{Ibid.}, \, 32.\]

\[33\text{Ibid.}, \, 289.\]
liberality, magnanimity, gentleness, and the other virtues that befit a good prince; and, on the other hand, how much infamy and harm result from the vices opposed to these virtues.34

Success at guiding his prince would demand all the resourcefulness of even the most perfect courtier. The success of the courtier, in every undertaking, depended on his character and cultivation. These two categories of the attributes of the ideal man proved of such importance to Castiglione that he devoted much of the volume to their discussion.

The term character is a bit vague. Aristotle, whose works profoundly influenced Castiglione and the Italian Renaissance in general, used the term when discussing virtue. He distinguished between intellectual virtue, or learned virtue, and moral virtue, or virtue acquired through constant repetition or habit.35 Although Castiglione never made this distinction, the division clearly exists in his work. For the sake of future argument these two divisions have been labeled cultivation, for learned virtue, and character for moral virtue.

Moral virtue was essential to the ideal courtier.

34Ibid., 290.

His virtue, however, was of pagan origin rather than Christian. Goodness made up the extent of the courtier’s moral quality, with such traditional Christian moral qualities as charity wholly lacking.

Some debate erupted at Urbino over the origin of moral virtue—whether it be natural or learned. In suggesting that the courtier could lead his prince to virtue, Ottaviano implied that virtue could be learned. Agitated by what he deemed a foolish statement, Gasparo entered the discussion. "This goodness of mind and this continence and the other virtues . . . can be learned," he insisted, "but I think that to those who have them they have been given by nature and by God."36 In good spirits Ottaviano continued the debate suggesting that man by nature is neither good nor evil, and then adding

Therefore I hold that the moral virtues are not in us entirely by nature, for nothing can ever become accustomed to that which is naturally contrary to it; as we see in a stone, which, even though it were thrown upward ten thousand times, would never become accustomed to move so by itself; and if virtues were as natural to us as weight is to a stone, we should never become accustomed to vice. Nor, on the other hand, are the vices natural in sense, else we should never be able to be virtuous; and it would be too wrong and foolish to punish men for those defects that proceed from nature on our part . . . .37

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37 Ibid., 296-97. Castiglione's indebtedness to and agreement with Aristotle is strikingly apparent when this quotation is compared with the following one by Aristotle: "For instance the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries
Accepting the Renaissance belief in the primacy of education, Ottaviano contended that once ignorance was banished virtue would reign supreme. "True pleasure," he reflected, "is always good and true suffering always evil . . . . Therefore the art that teaches how to distinguish the true from the false can indeed be learned; and the virtue by which we choose what is truly good and not what falsely appears so can be called true knowledge, more profitable to human life than any other, because it removes ignorance, from which, as I have said, all evils spring."38 By nature man was neither good nor evil. Once educated to distinguish the difference between good and evil, the Courtier would undoubtedly choose the good.

Knowledge of virtue allowed the courtier to exercise control over passion, continued Ottaviano. He willingly agreed with Magnifico Giuliano and Cesare Gonzaga that passion ought never to be completely exorcised, but it must at all times be held under control.39

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38 Castiglione, The Courtier, trans. Singleton, 298. For still another example of Castiglione's debt to Aristotle see Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1153a26-1154b4, In Introduction to Aristotle, 504-505.

The ability to constrain passion tested the courtier's character to its limits. Specific virtues, including prudence, temperance, and continence were intended to moderate the behavior of the ideal man. These virtues not only exercised sway over other virtues, but they also controlled every aspect of the life of the courtier. Once again, Ottaviano took the lead in the discussion, saying that in all things,

one must know and govern one's self with that prudence which is the necessary companion to all the virtues; which, being at the midpoint, are equally distant from the two extremes, which are vices; and thus an undiscerning man easily incurs them. For just as with a circle it is difficult to find the point of the center, which is the mean, so it is difficult to find the point of virtue set midway between the two extremes (the one vicious because of excess, the other because of want); and to these we are inclined, now to one, and now to the other. 40

Time and again the author returned to emphasize the great necessity of moderation. In every area of life Castiglione expected the courtier to exercise self-control. "In our manner of life and in our conversation, the safest thing is to govern ourselves according to a certain decorous mean," explained Federico to his listeners. 41

40Ibid., 323-4.

41Ibid., 139. See also, 43, 67, 29, 323-4. Comments of this stripe again illustrate the author's indebtedness to Aristotle. Throughout his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle voiced the need to do all things in moderation. Examples of his view are numerous. Two typical statements follow: virtues must be situated "equidistant from each of the extremes," and virtue is "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean . . . ." He noted that
Moderation proved to be the virtue which established the parameters within which the courtier operated. It prevented other virtues from turning into vices due either to want or excess. In addition, moderating every aspect of life produced the symmetry required of the courtier—-it produced the balanced, complete man. Included as virtues necessary to the well-rounded man were the following: courage, modesty, humanity, fraternal love, reverence for women, liberality, gentleness, affability, justice, and manliness. These virtues, moderately practiced, formed the character of the courtier.

Regardless of the importance of character, the courtier could ill-afford to neglect cultivation if he desired personal perfection. Castiglione never used the term cultivation, but once again, his familiarity with Aristotle suggests an understanding of the concept. Aristotle's intellectual virtues, those which could be taught, correspond to cultivation. Castiglione expected the courtier to be cultivated in three broad and disparate areas:

"virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and being praised and being successful are both characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since, as we have seen, it aims at what is intermediate." Castiglione's emphasis on the mean is obviously derived from Aristotle, and, like Aristotle, the Italian writer expected the notion of the mean to influence every area of the courtier's existence. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1106a30, 1106b37-8, in Introduction to Aristotle, 337-8.
groups of accomplishments. He had to develop physical, mental, and social accomplishments. Once the man of noble birth and sound character developed refined accomplishments, he became a perfect courtier.

The courtier, a living work of art, had to struggle constantly for self-perfection. Yet the struggle left the courtier faced with a dilemma. Compelled to work for perfection, if the struggle or work ever showed itself, the courtier was charged with affectation. As the Count warned, "we may call that art true art which does not seem to be art..."42 The courtier had to struggle for perfection, but at all times appear natural. Perhaps realizing the difficulty of the goal set for the courtier, the Count explained that character and cultivation became vicious when they failed to appear natural:

I have found quite a universal rule which in this matter seems to me valid above all others, and in human affairs whether in word or deed: and that is to avoid affectation in every way possible as though it were some very rough and dangerous reef; and (to pronounce a new word perhaps) to practice in all things a certain sprezzatura [nonchalance], so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said to appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it. And I believe much grace comes of this: because everyone knows the difficulty of things that are rare and well done...43

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A difficult task had been assigned the courtier. He had to strive for perfection, and yet at all times exhibit a facade of amateurism. All actions had to be carried out with a certain nonchalance or recklessness which might belie constant practice. The courtier had to be moderate even in perfection.

The paradox is most intriguing. The Italian expected his courtier to be both trained and natural. The Count's shrewd observation states the problem most succinctly. He suggested, to paraphrase an earlier quotation, that true art is that which seems not to be art. The paradox confronted the courtier with two problems. First, whatever the degree of excellence attained in any area, the accomplishment had to be concealed by a veneer of spontaneity. It would not be a mistake to accuse the courtier of artificiality. Chess, for example, was suspect because skill at the game revealed much practice.\(^{44}\) The revelation of long hours of practice, not the practice itself, was unacceptable. The second problem stemmed from confusion caused by the word perfection. Castiglione warned of the relativity of the idea. To the inquirers at Urbino the dilettante exhibited perfection, while the expert illustrated the vice of excess. Perfection, according to the author, avoided extremes and rested at the mean.

All agreed that the courtier must be accomplished but that he must avoid any untoward display. Almost inevitably the discussion fell into disagreement over an important subtlety. The participants found it difficult to determine the line which separated affectation and the natural display of accomplishments. The debate was not restricted to the Court of Urbino and Castiglione's book. Other Italians joined in the debate as illustrated by a contemporary Italian work, The Civile Conversation. Its author, Stefano Guazzo, urged the courtier to "never deny learning, confesse it, professe it, imbrace it, honor it . . . ." The Urbino courtiers summarily dismissed the idea of any reckless display of accomplishments. But it was far more difficult to determine when natural display of accomplishments became excessive display.

Ludovico, during an appeal to avoid affectation, offered himself as an example. Knowledge of languages, both ancient and modern, ought to be an accomplishment of the courtier. Unfortunately, on learning a new language many men misuse it in an effort to improve their own estimation in the eyes of others. "All of which stems from an excessive desire to appear very accomplished, and so they put effort and diligence into acquiring a most odious fault." Continuing, the Count added, "certainly it would

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require no little effort on my part if in these discussions I attempted to use those antique Tuscan words which the Tuscan of today have already dropped from use . . . . " Moderation ruled not only the virtues, but all the accomplishments as well. When Federico tried to offer the use of Tuscan words as a sign of erudition in writing, the Count retorted that the written word merely represented an extension of speech. The Duchess brought the debate to a close, concluding that whatever the language, the courtier must "speak and write well . . . ."  

Continuing his comments on the cultivation of the courtier, the Count turned to education.

I would have him more than passably learned in letters, at least in those studies which we call the humanities. Let him be conversant not only with the Latin language, but with Greek as well, because of the abundance and variety of things that are so divinely written therein. Let him be versed in the poets, as well as in the orators and historians, and let him be practiced also in writing verse and prose, especially in our own vernacular . . . ."  

While it is true that the Count wanted the courtier to avoid all needless display of learning, his ideal man had to possess an extensive and complete education.

Cultivation of the mind could only a scholar make. The courtier had to be agile in both mind and body. Although exercises like vaulting on the ground and rope-
walking were viewed as activities of questionable merit, the Count concluded that "we must always give variety to our lives by changing our activities." Even some ungainly exercises might be approved under the right circumstances. More fitting exercises like riding, bull-fighting, and casting spears or darts seemed ideal for the courtier as a method to prepare for the profession of arms. Swimming, jumping, wrestling, running, throwing stones, and tennis, prepared him not only for war, but also improved his agility and enhanced his grace. Of all forms of exercise suitable for the courtier, dancing best blended his physical and social accomplishments and prepared him for his social obligations.

In addition to dancing, the Count expected his ideal man to be accomplished at both art and music. Upon introducing the subject of music he proclaimed:

I am not satisfied with our Courtier unless he be also a musician, and unless, besides understanding and being able to read music, he can play various instruments. For, if we rightly consider, no rest from toil and no medicine for ailing spirits can be found more decorous or praiseworthy in time of leisure than this; and especially in courts where, besides the release from vexations which music gives to all . . . .

Immediately Gasparo objected, saying that music suited women certainly, but not real men. It would not do to turn

48Ibid., 39.
49Ibid., 38-39, 100-102, 14.
50Ibid., 74.
the courtier into a musician. His objection, though, could not stand the onslaught of criticisms raised not only by the Count, but also by Gaspar, Federico, and the others. Music, they finally all concluded, was a most suitable skill for the courtier.\textsuperscript{51}

Everyone thought a knowledge of and skill in art essential accomplishments for the courtier. Giancristoforo agreed that the courtier ought to develop artistic skills, though he rejected the Count's notion that the nobility of painting surpassed that of sculpting. The argument grew tedious as the Count cited works of the ancient masters, until at last Cesare Gonzaga halted the discourse with a polite and correctly gallant jest. Gonzaga proclaimed that not one of the artists mentioned enjoyed looking at women more than he, even though he lacked the ability to either paint or sculpt.\textsuperscript{52}

After this interruption the courtiers adopted Gonzaga's carefully veiled suggestion that they turn their attention to women. One by one, each member of the Urbino court detailed the methods by which the courtier might win and preserve the love of a lady. In the opinion of the Magnifico Giuliano,

the method that the Courtier ought to follow in making his love known to the Lady would be to

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 75.

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., 77-78, 82.
reveal it to her by actions rather than words, for it is certainly true that more of love's affection is sometimes revealed by a sigh, by a reverence, by timidity, than by a thousand words; next, by making his eyes be faithful messengers in bearing the embassies of his heart, since they often reveal the passion within more effectively than the tongue itself, or letters, or messengers; and they not only reveal thoughts but they often kindle love in the beloved's heart.53

Winning a lady's heart proved a great feat. Unico Aretino thought the favor of a woman could be gained by serving and pleasing her, tasks most certainly as difficult then as today.54 These ends called for the courtier to exercise his many talents. The discussion stirred much interest precisely because the courtier's relationship with a woman required him to display his every skill.

The courtier served as the ideal man to Castiglione and his companions. Throughout the book members of the court professed their own inability to lay claim to perfection, or even near perfection. Furthermore, the author recognized that the ideal could only be approximated, never achieved.55 Nevertheless, the author felt compelled to create an ideal courtier, perfect in every way.

Although all recognized that ability could supersede birth, the ideal man, they concluded, ought to be of gentle ancestry. His profession might be that of arms, but his

53Ibid., 27.
54Ibid., 267.
55Ibid., 34, 41, 42, 140, 27.
greatest duty was to serve a prince. However, while he did advise his prince on how to do good, undoubtedly the courtier viewed self-perfection as his most pressing concern, and he occupied most of his time preparing to be a more perfect ornament of court.

Pagan virtues occupied the courtier's interest to the exclusion of Christian virtues. The ideal man of the Italian Renaissance embodied the virtues of magnanimity, courage, and continence, among others. The single most important virtue proved to be the Aristotelian virtue of moderation. Every accomplishment, whether physical, intellectual, or social, and every virtue was ruled by moderation.

The Courtier proved phenomenally popular in Italy and across the European continent. First published in 1528, it quickly ran through numerous Italian editions. Translated into Spanish, French, and English, it influenced writers all across Europe. Of particular impact in England, The Courtier became the grandfather of advice-literature, a genre whose ranks are legion. But before examining English advice-literature, we must turn to the young scholar responsible for translating Castiglione's book into English.

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57 Kelso, "The Doctrine of the English Gentleman."
CHAPTER II

The Development of the English Gentleman

English writers spent much time discussing the concept of the ideal man. Especially during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, they published a large number of books aimed at guiding men to perfection. English writers initially followed the outline provided by Castiglione and the ancient philosophers. However, before the close of the sixteenth century the concept began to take on peculiarly English characteristics. As a result, the concept of the ideal man that the English settlers carried to the New World was truly English. Bearing this in mind, our discussion of the English concept of the ideal man begins with the first man to translate Castiglione's The Courtier into English.

Thomas Hoby translated and published the first English edition of The Courtier. Hoby, born in 1530, at Leominster, and educated at St. John's College, left his college studies to travel across Europe. His journey introduced him to the most elegant court life on the Continent. It also introduced him to Castiglione's book. On a second trip to Europe, in 1552, he settled down in Paris and followed the wishes of the Lady Marquess,
Elizabeth Brooke, by translating The Courtier.¹ Hoby completed the translation in 1554. However, the need to expurgate controversial passages of the book, especially those which satirized the Roman Catholic Church, held up publication until 1561. The book quickly ran through four editions during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. But just four months after being knighted and appointed ambassador to the French Court, Hoby died and was thus denied the opportunity to witness the great popularity of his work.²

Before being translated by Hoby, Castiglione's book had already influenced English humanists. Its influence can be dated at least as far back as 1531. In that year, Thomas Elyot published The Book Named The Governour. Unlike most young men of the ruling class, Elyot had studied at home, until leaving for the Middle Temple, in 1516. After completion of his education he served as clerk to the King's Council. When his patron, Cardinal Wolsey, lost the King's favor, in 1530, Elyot lost his clerkship.³ During the following year Elyot wrote The Governour.


Searching for political favor, the author dedicated the book to Henry VIII. The work found ready acceptance at Henry's Court, and earned Elyot an appointment as ambassador to the French Court. Elyot's fame, however, rests on his literary achievements rather than his political intrigues.\(^4\)

The pages of *The Governour* reveal Castiglione's influence. Elyot agreed with Castiglione that the ideal man must be well-rounded. Elyot's ideas on the value of art and music are obviously indebted to Castiglione. In addition, historians have determined that before Elyot wrote *The Governour*, Oliver Cromwell had introduced him to *The Courtier*.\(^5\) Yet while the Italian influence is unmistakable, the ideal man fashioned by Elyot and other English writers was peculiarly English.

In general, Englishmen who discussed the ideal man, unlike Italians, emphasized virtue over grace, and they disagreed with the Italian notion that grace could be obtained through practice. Instead, they contended that


grace reflected inner goodness; grace flowed from the virtue within each man. The differences between the ideal man of each country went even deeper. Both the Italian ideal and the English ideal valued virtue as an indispensable element of the ideal, but Italian virtue was aesthetic, while English virtue was moral. The English moral code placed greater stress on Stoic and Christian teachings. As a result, English writers pictured the gentleman as compassionate toward his fellowman, regardless of class, a view alien to the Italian ideal. The courtier lived for himself and his prince, while the gentleman lived for his countrymen and country. The different views on what constituted the ideal man originated from fundamental differences between the English and Italian national experiences. Unlike Italy, England was united under a king. Men owed their loyalty and service to king and country, rather than to a favored prince. The obligations required of the gentleman reflected the nation's political situation. The title of Elyot's book is telling. The ideal man, in England, served his countrymen as a governor.


8Kelso, "Doctrine of the English Gentleman," 50.
The concept underwent considerable change from the publication of Elyot's work in the early sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century. Yet, throughout the period the central elements of the gentlemanly ideal remained constant. A statement by Edmund Burke, in 1791, summarizes those elements as well for the sixteenth century as for the century in which it was written. Burke stated that without a natural aristocracy based on class, character, and cultivation, "there is no nation." It is to those broad elements of the ideal type, which Burke thought essential, that we now turn.

During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, there raged a debate over the gentleman's social standing. English writers agreed that the gentleman had to be a member of the gentry, but few agreed as to whether it was birth, wealth, or occupation that entitled a man to that status. When contemporaries discussed the question, they usually turned their attention first to birth. Sixteenth century English writers agreed with Aristotle and Castiglione that men of better stock inherited the ability to do good. In The Governour, Elyot explained that

where virtue joined with great possessions or dignity hath long continued in the blood or house of a gentleman, as it were an inheritance, there nobility is most shown, and these noble men be most to be honoured; for as much as

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9 Kelso, "Doctrine of the English Gentleman," 163-64.
continuance in all thing that is good hath ever
preeminence in praise and comparison.  

Books stressing birth as the single most important qualification for gentility were numerous. Sir Thomas Smith, the scholar, author of De Republica Anglorum (1583), and statesman of the late-sixteenth century, who had himself struggled up from humble origins, stated that "Gentlemen be those whom their bloud and race doth make noble and known." He added, though, that the fame and wealth of ancestors could cover a man's vices only as gold gilds copper.  

Henry Peacham, author of The Compleat Gentleman (1622), agreed with Smith. Peacham insisted that nobility "is the honour of blood in Rase or Lineage." He went on to explain that nobility could be conferred by a prince, laws or customs of the land, but that once granted, nobility followed the family name. The emphasis upon high birth as a prerequisite for gentility continued into the eighteenth century. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele embraced the traditional attitude toward the importance of high birth.

In the second number of The Spectator, their greatest

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10 Elyot, The Governour, 104.
12 Henry Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman: Fashioning Him Absolute in the Most Necessary and Commendable Qualities, Concerning Mind, or Body, that may be Required in a Person of Honor (London: E. Tyler for Richard Thraley, 1661), 2.
cooperative enterprise, Steele introduced the members of the Spectator Club. He introduced each member, save one, as a "Gentleman." The sole exception was described thusly: "The Person of next Consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a Merchant of great Eminence ... ." Freeport lacked the "honour of blood" required to be a gentleman. In the eyes of the character "Mr. Spectator," only men of high birth were deemed gentlemen.

Thus many Englishmen considered high birth a necessary element of the gentleman. But there were other Englishmen who dissented, and their dissent paved the way for change in the concept of the gentleman. Just two decades after the publication of The Governour, an unknown author voiced his disagreement with Elyot in a work entitled The Institucion of a Gentleman (1555). He stated that "giftes of fortune enriche a Gentleman slenderly, but the giftes of virtue are thyngs whych bring every man to honor ... ." The author continued:

To come of greate bloude, to have greate ryches, and such lyke, although they be counted in this earthe very blisfull thynges, yet they are in one man no more commendable then in an other, but gentelnes and

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nobilite of Spirit, over and besydes they bee thinges of all men prayed, they doe also heape up and make greater the praise of that may whyche is noble.\footnote{S:\textit{Institucion of a Gentleman} (London: Charles Whittingham, 1839; reprint ed., London: Thomas Marshe, 1968), 22; Elbert N. S. Thompson, \textit{Literary Bypaths of the Renaissance} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1924), 130.}

The author expressed a new attitude toward birth, one that placed greater emphasis on virtue. An even clearer statement of the new attitude is found in the work \textit{Description of England}, by the historian William Harrison. In the 1577 first edition of the book, the author stated that "Gentlemen be those whom their race and blood do make noble and known." Ten years later, in the revised edition, the sentence read, "Gentlemen be those whom their race and blood (or at least their virtues) do make noble and known."\footnote{F. Edwin Gay, "The Rise of an English Country Family, Peter and John Temple, to 1603," \textit{The Huntington Library Quarterly} 1 (July, 1938), 367; William Harrison, \textit{The Description of England} (New York: Cornell University Press for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1968), 113; \textit{Dictionary of National Biography}, IX, 46.} The change in definition is most profound. Harrison recognized the growing importance of virtue in determining gentility.

By the middle of the eighteenth century many Englishmen had rejected the notion that gentility depended on noble birth. Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, represented the new view. While serving as ambassador to the Hague, Chesterfield fathered an illegitimate son. Regardless of the circumstances of the boy's birth,
Chesterfield believed the child could become a perfect gentleman. To this end Chesterfield worked, sending the boy a series of didactic letters. In one letter to the child, he wrote, "Are you better born, as silly people call it than the servant who wipes your shoes? Not in the least . . . ." Chesterfield believed it possible to overcome all obstacles, and not only become genteel, but also to be accepted by polite society as a gentleman. Chesterfield's attitude towards birth as a factor determining gentility reflected changes sweeping England. Because of increased social mobility, the gentlemanly ideal changed.

There is a story in English history, which is often retold, regarding the limits of social mobility. According to the tale, the nurse of King James I asked the king to make her son a gentleman. He replied that "A gentleman, I could never make him, though I could make him a lord." The story suggests that ancient lineage, not the king's wealth or power, determined gentility. The story, however, ignored the considerable social mobility which existed in


England, even as early as the reign of the first King James. A more accurate description of English society stated that gentlemen were "made cheap." William Harrison went on to explain that,

> Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, whoso abideth in the university giving his mind to his book, or professeth physic and the liberal sciences, or, beside his service in the room of a captain in the wars or good counsel given at home, whereby his commonwealth is benefited, can live without manual labor, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall for money have a coat and arms bestowed upon him by hearlds . . . and shall be called master, which is the title that men give to esquires and gentlemen . . .

According to this explanation, any man with sufficient money, or the proper occupation, could justifiably claim gentility. Harrison's attitude reflected the change taking place in England. The upward social mobility of the English middle class brought about a change in one element of the concept of the ideal man.

The change was limited, however. That members of the middle class became gentlemen is not in dispute. They did so by means of increased educational opportunities, by marrying into the families of "decayed" gentlemen, through

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success in commerce, through acquisition of large land holdings, and, occasionally, through demonstration of literary talent. The influx of the middle class into the ranks of the gentry forced men to accept wealth as a determinant of gentility. The change reduced the emphasis on high birth. Nevertheless, once men of humble origins joined the gentry, they sought to legitimize their position and win social acceptance by purchasing, from the College of Heralds, coats of arms, the badge of ancient lineage. Sir Nicholas Bacon, a professional judge, serves as an example. Without evidence, he claimed to be a descendant of a medieval knight named Bacon. To make such a claim, he had to forget that his own father died but a sheep-reeve of the Bury St. Edmund's monastery—a good position for a yeoman. Members of the middle class sought to join the gentry, not destroy it.

Bacon's efforts were not untypical. An obsession with genealogy existed among the gentry during the last half

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of the sixteenth, and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The obsession became so serious that Richard Allestree, author of The Gentleman's Calling (1660) and Royalist divine from ancient stock, pleaded with men to make themselves gentlemen without the help of the College of Heralds.

Not all men accepted the possession of armorial bearings as a mark of gentility, just as not all men accepted the rise of new families into the gentry. Henry Peacham, for one, objected to identifying possession of arms as a mark of gentility. He explained that "Coats sometimes are by stealth purchased, shuffled into Records and Monuments, by Painters, Glasiers, Carvers, and such . . . ." He found the men who engaged in this activity both unethical and incompetent. He noted that occasionally on the coat of arms of a new gentleman, the painters, glasiers, and carvers included representations of a beaver, a symbol reserved for the King and the Prince of Wales.

The old gentry resented the intrusion of the nouveaux riches into what they considered their private domain. Both Robert Greene, in A Quip for an Upstart

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Courtier (1592), and Thomas Decker, in The Guls Horne-Booke (1609), satirized and ridiculed the social-climbing middle class. Other Englishmen sought different methods to halt the upward movement of the middle class. The growth of pomp and magnificence reflected the effort of some gentlemen to widen the gap between themselves and the newly rich, an effort which met with little success. Still other gentlemen, recognizing the limits of their own modest incomes, shunned luxury and all other pretensions of wealth in favor of aristocratic simplicity. One gentleman, when visited by Lord Berkeley and several other notables, explained that "as 'a plain country squire,' he would make them welcome and afford them 'the best reception . . . I am able,' but 'without ceremony'."

Families of ancient lineage struggled to distinguish themselves from those of new wealth, precisely because wealth made entry into the gentry possible. Wealth was essential for the gentleman. Both Peacham and Allestree recognized the necessity of wealth, and they warned the gentry against the all too common extravagance which robbed

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29 Wright, Middle-Class Culture, 458-59.
31 Mingay, English Landed Society, 216.
men of their inheritance, and hence social position. The gentleman had to protect his wealth and simultaneously maintain a lordly indifference towards it. Without wealth, the gentleman lacked the ability to keep idle servants or practice liberality, both important signs of gentility. Wealth determined a man's social position, but the true gentleman, unlike the upstart, never attended to his money too carefully.

Especially during the seventeenth century, writers agreed that a gentleman should never show undue attention to matters of wealth. Richard Brathwait, the seventeenth century author, gentleman, and Royalist, pointed an accusing finger at those who eagerly sought wealth. "See how servile and ignoble their Condition is," he wrote, "whose affections, slaved to private profit, embrace any course how indirect soever, for selfe-love, or selfe-gain!" Echoing Brathwait, Peacham stated that honor never belonged to those "who by

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32 Peachment, The Compleat Gentleman, 7-10; Allestree, The Gentleman's Calling, 16-17, 54.


Mechanick and base means, have raked up a masse of wealth." Allestree added his voice to the chorus explaining that "the perceptual follicitious pursuit after more wealth, is certainly a culpable inordinacie, as being inconsistent with that contentment and acquiescenc[e] which is the duty of every man for whom God hath thus liberally provided . . . .

New wealth required three generations to become free of taint, according to English tradition.

The attitude towards wealth did slowly change. Daniel Defoe, an eighteenth-century English manufacturer and retailer turned writer, who in early life altered his name from the less aristocratic Foe, forecast the new attitude towards wealth in his book, The Complete English Gentleman. Defoe, unlike most earlier writers, recognized that the new aristocracy would be based on education and wealth rather than birth.

Prior to the changes predicted by Defoe many English writers were in agreement that the gentleman's occupation mattered more than his wealth. Writers from Elyot to Chesterfield, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth

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35 Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman, 3.

36 Allestree, The Gentleman's Calling, 58.


38 Wright, Middle-Class Culture, 658-59.
centuries, agreed that the gentleman's occupation ought to center on service to the state. In *The English Gentleman* (1630), Brathwait explained that the gentleman could be employed in affairs of state "either at home or abroad: at home, either in advising or acting: abroad as by way of embassage, or personall exploits in the field." His comment summed up the general attitude about the gentleman's duty to his country. He recognized, however, that in the absence of war and with only a limited number of positions available in "embassage" and "advising," the gentleman had to have other employments.

Most writers who addressed the question of the gentleman's occupation agreed with Sir Thomas Smith's statement that a gentleman could "live idly and without manuall labour." But writers distinguished between the ability to live idly and actually living an idle life. Writers persistently railed against gentlemen who seemed to waste their lives in worthless pursuits. Allestree, during the seventeenth century, explained that the best sports and other pastimes popular among gentlemen were so "neere to Idleness, and worst of them to Vice," that they ought to be avoided. The frequency with which writers condemned

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40Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, 39-40
41Allestree, *Gentleman's Calling*, 97.
idleness in gentlemen suggests that many gentlemen did lead idle lives; so does the economic collapse of numerous old families.  

It would be a mistake, though, to conclude that all gentlemen lived idle lives. The popularity of advice literature which condemned idleness, the influx of middle-class ideas, many of which extolled the virtue of work, and examples of gentlemen like Henry Purefoy, who lived an uneventful life diligently managing an inherited estate, and Lord Chesterfield, who implored his son to shun idleness—all suggest that the ideal gentleman avoided idleness and employed himself in private affairs and affairs of state.

Just as elevation into the gentry became increasingly possible from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, so too did the acquisition of proper cultivation. Increased

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Chesterfield to Philip Stanhope, 8 May 1750, in Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son, II, 49-52.
opportunities for higher education heightened the possibility of social mobility. Concurrently, the introduction of education into the middle-orders of society insured acceptance of aristocratic ideas about the perfect man. The dominant system of values remained aristocratic because members of the middle class eagerly embraced the ideals of the class to which they aspired.\textsuperscript{45}

Education made up the central component of the ideal man's cultivation. Elyot devoted many pages of The Governour to detailing the gentleman's education. But before outlining the gentleman's proper course of study, he attempted to justify book-learning. During the Middle Ages, some men had opposed education as a hindrance to the man of action.\textsuperscript{46} Elyot recognized that some men continued to consider it "a notable reproach to be well learned and to be called a great clerk . . . ."\textsuperscript{47} He thought this attitude foolish, and urged his readers to look to the great leaders of the past to see "how much excellent learning commendeth, and not dispraiseth, nobility . . . ."\textsuperscript{48} Along with Castiglione, Elyot helped popularize the notion that education

\textsuperscript{45}Stone, "Social Mobility in England," 44-45; Stone, Crisis of the Aristocracy, 39, 50; Mingay, English Landed Society, 106.

\textsuperscript{46}Kelso, "Doctrine of the Gentleman," 111, 115.

\textsuperscript{47}Elyot, The Governour, 40-41.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., 42.
constituted a fundamental part of the ideal man's cultivation, and that the perfect man had to be both scholarly and active.⁴⁹

Writers fully expected the gentleman to be educated. Allestree stated that "Men[']s mindes are naturally of the same Clay. Education is the Potters hand and wheel that forms them into Vessels of honor or dishonor ... ."⁵⁰ Peacham, in a more forceful statement, acknowledged that a man might be born a gentleman, but he insisted that he must also be educated one.⁵¹ A century later Lord Chesterfield explained, in one of the many letters to his son, that a gentleman must acquaint himself with the education fitting his station.⁵² Writers from Elyot to Chesterfield agreed that gentility depended on education. Not only did education prepare the gentleman for honor, but it also prepared him to counsel the nation, manage his estate, and

⁴⁹Kelso, "Doctrine of the Gentleman," 110. It should be mentioned that even in the late eighteenth century, Osborn continued in the tradition critical of book-learning. Osborn condemned study which was not "accompanied with Profit." He approved of any learning which could lead to an improvement of one's estate. Osborn, Advice to a Son, 6-7.


serve as a model for others to follow the quintessential goals of the gentleman.53

Ideally, the gentleman's education was broad rather than deep. The men who sought to fashion the perfect man agreed that his "knowledge ought to be general . . . . 54 Young men were expected to learn not only the classics, but also to acquire a knowledge of warfare and other topics.55 The breadth of the gentleman's knowledge is suggested by his activities. Gentlemen frequently drew up the designs for their homes and then supervised the construction.56 Gentlemen farmers not only read the classics, but they also wrote poetry and political pamphlets.57 Like Castiglione's courtier, the English gentleman was supposed to possess a little knowledge about all things. Nevertheless academic subjects formed the foundation of the gentleman's education.


56Mingay, English Landed Society, 209.

Elyot expected the ideal gentleman to study a great number of subjects. At an early age, he should begin the study of Greek and Latin, after which he would progress to the more difficult subjects.58 Following the conquest of the ancient languages, the young man should turn to logic, rhetoric, natural and moral philosophy, religion, civil law, and poetry.59 History, modern foreign languages, and cosmography, that is the study of astronomy and geography, would complete the young man's study. A tour of the Continent then capped his formal education.60 Education, though, continued beyond the close of formal studies. Peacham expected the gentleman to develop a good library and to make frequent use of its books.61 The letters of Henry Purefoy suggest that some gentlemen followed Peacham's dictates. References to his readings, which ranged in topics from medicine to history, are scattered throughout Purefoy's letters.62

60Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman, 44-45, 55-65, 71; Chesterfield to Philip Stanhope, 9 July 1750, in Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son, II, 65-70; Chesterfield to Philip Stanhope, 30 October 1747, in Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son, I, 184-86; James I, Basilike Duron, 65-70; Kelso, "Doctrine of the Gentleman", 141.
61Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman, 54.
Undoubtedly, many gentlemen, like Purefoy, met the demands placed upon them by Peacham, Brathwait, and the others. However, there were gentlemen who only pretended to possess the requisite knowledge. An incident in The Spectator about Sir Roger de Coverly suggests that while many gentlemen lacked education, they felt compelled to give the illusion of being educated. When Sir Roger stood to address an audience seated before the county court at which he presided, Mr. Spectator, narrator and witness of the episode, felt a pang of grief, convinced that his friend, lacking knowledge of the law, would embarrass himself. But to Mr. Spectator's relief, Sir Roger "acquitted himself of two or three Sentences," and thereby impressed those gathered at Court. He added, however, that Sir Roger's speech "was so little to the Purpose, that I shall not trouble my Readers with an Account of it . . . ."63 Although he had not studied the law Sir Roger tried to convince his audience that he had. This incident suggests that while gentlemen did not always fulfill the demands of the advice literature by acquiring education, they at least paid public homage to those demands.

The ideal man cultivated both his mind and his body. The subject of physical cultivation intrigued English writers, and most of them provided lengthy discussions of

physical exercise. The most accepted forms of exercise developed war-related skills. Both The Governour and The Courtier urged the gentleman to develop physical skills which would prepare him for war. But exercise did more than prepare the gentleman for war. More importantly, Braithwait reminded gentlemen, it "shall be healthful to your selves . . . ." Riding, wrestling, running, hunting, leaping, and hawking were among the favored forms of exercise. The only restriction on exercise limited its arduousness. Thus although several writers approved of tennis as an exercise becoming the gentleman, Elyot found it wanting in an important respect. "Tennis," he explained, "is a good exercise for young men, but it is more violent than shooting . . . ." Tennis demanded excessive effort, while ideally, exercise never required more than moderate effort.

Of the three components of education, that is, intellectual, physical, and social development, English writers had least to say about social development. In part, this was because the English viewed highly polished manners as a form of hypocrisy. But of equal importance, and in contrast to the Italian view, English writers thought that


65Elyot, The Governour, 92.
pleasing manners resulted naturally from inward virtue. As a result, they warranted but slight attention. 66

When authors addressed the subject of manners, they suggested that the gentleman needed polished manners in order to reveal his inner worth. Poor manners, warned King James I, would certainly "breede contempt." 67 In addition to proving a man's inward value, proper manners provided a guide to be followed by the less fortunate. 68 On the other hand, polished manners demonstrated inner virtue. Perhaps the paradox resulted from the different attitudes towards manners in England. Traditionally, elegant manners were found at Court, while many of the writers were of country origin and were naturally suspicious of both court and city life. As a result, most seventeenth century writers advocated simple and honest manners and criticized elegant manners. Addison noted that by the second decade of the eighteenth century a revolution had occurred in English manners. He explained that


67 James I, Basilike Duron, 77-78.

an unconstrained Carriage, and a certain Openness of Behaviour are the height of Good Breeding. The Fashionable World is grown free and easie; our Manners, sit more loose upon: Nothing is so modish as an agreeable Negligence. In a word, Good Breeding shows it self most, where to an ordinary Eye it appears least.  

The breeding which English writers advocated won general acceptance by the early eighteenth century. Manners and grace had to rest easy upon the gentleman. Not only were manners and grace to be pleasing, but they were also to reveal something else about the gentleman's character and cultivation.

Chesterfield agreed on the need for good breeding. According to his idea, good manners served as the key to social acceptance. Nevertheless, Chesterfield refused to accept the idea that manners alone could lead to gentility. Instead, he explained that while "mere learning without good breeding is pedantry, good breeding without learning is but frivolous . . . ." Manners, then, had to reflect something more substantial within the gentleman, whether it be superior education or superior character.

Character constituted the most important element of the English gentleman. Brathwait, in the opening lines of his book on the English gentleman, named "vertue the greatest

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69 Addison, The Spectator, in Sir Roger de Coverly, 82.

70 Chesterfield to Philip Stanhope, 4 November 1741, in Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son, I, 102-103.
Signall and Symbol of Gentry." Few English authors would have disagreed.

The English ideal initially followed that of the Italian's, with its emphasis on pagan virtues. But gradually, due to England's different national experience and the growing influence of middle-class ideas on the gentry, Christian virtues gained importance. Before the turn of the sixteenth century, English authors had begun to join Christian and pagan virtues in discussions about the perfect man.

Beginning with Elyot and continuing unabated to Chesterfield, the pagan virtues, those of Aristotle and the Stoics, became essential to the English ideal. English writers accepted the virtues which added distinction, the Aristotelian virtues celebrated in The Courtier, with little relish. The English embraced with greater enthusiasm the virtues of the Stoics, virtues which inspired silent heroism. The Stoic philosophy, which urged men to be "unmoved by whatever occurs," was ideally suited to the spiritual isolation left in the wake of the English break with the Roman Catholic Church and to the emotional tone of Calvinism. During the seventeenth century, Stoic virtues

71Brathwait, The English Gentleman, 2.
merged to help create another peculiarly English element of the concept of the ideal man.

The changes which helped alter the English concept of the perfect gentleman took place gradually. Elyot's sixteenth century ideas were quite different from Brathwait's seventeenth century ideas. Elyot embraced the virtues of Castiglione more firmly than did Brathwait, while Brathwait embraced the virtues of hard work and frugality which Elyot ignored. Yet the two writers clearly belonged to the same tradition. Both men thought Christianity essential to the gentleman. Brathwait's gentleman was first a good Christian and then a complete man, while Elyot's was first a complete man and then a Christian. Additionally, both men embraced the ancient virtues, though with different degrees of enthusiasm and different approaches.

Elyot's approach, like that of Castiglione's, was humanistic. Like Castiglione, he leaned more heavily on Aristotle than on the Christian prophets. The virtues which he advocated were fortitude, temperance, prudence, justice, liberality, and majesty, with little emphasis on religious faith. The virtues and their several auxiliaries, which he discussed, played a central role in the character of the English gentleman, even in Brathwait's work. Unfortunately

73 Ibid., 147-58. Ustic emphasizes the differences between Elyot and Brathwait more than their similarities.

74 Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 9; Elyot, The Governour, 159, 130, 99.
for the historian, he only vaguely defined those virtues, and as a result the following definitions are imprecise. He called fortitude "a mediocrity or mean between [the] two extremities" of audacity and "timorosity" that prevented foolhardy bravery, and undue fear. Temperance he defined as a "mediocrity in pleasure of the body, specially in taste and touching." He added that it allowed a gentleman to "covet nothing which may be repented . . . ." The knowledge of things which ought to be desired and followed, and also of them which ought to be fled from or eschewed," was the virtue prudence. Justice he defined as the most perfect virtue, providing "a will perpetual and constant, which giveth to every man his right ." Liberality, according to the author, "is a measure, as well in giving as in taking of money and goods." He added that a truly liberal man carefully preserved his estate, for if his wealth should be squandered, he would lose his ability to use money for good purposes. Finally, majesty, that "beauty or comeliness in . . . countenance, language and

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75 Elyot, The Governour, 183
76 Ibid., 209.
77 Ibid., 79.
78 Ibid., 159.
79 Ibid., 130.
gesture apt to . . . dignity, and accommodate[d] to time, place, and company," completed the list of major virtues.

Different writers emphasized the virtues they personally thought most suited to the gentleman, but the basic virtues were always those proposed by Aristotle and discussed by Elyot. In his epic poem, *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), Edmund Spenser sought to "Fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." The central character in the poem, the future King Arthur, possessed "the twelue priuate morall vertues, as Aristotle hath deuised . . . ." Authors from King James I to Chesterfield admonished gentlemen to cultivate these virtues, virtues essential to the perfect man. That notwithstanding, Christian virtues such as charity and humility eventually played a role equal to the pagan virtues. Although Elyot had required the ideal man to demonstrate a faith in Christ, he never proposed that the gentleman adopt

80Ibid., 99.


peculiarly Christian virtues. Unlike Elyot, James I urged his readers to live genuinely Christian lives, and he added humility to Elyot's list of required virtues.

Humility became a virtue much valued by men writing after James I. Brathwait thought the gentleman ought to be humble. He explained that "Meeknesse admits Humility to keepe her company; in whose sweet familiarity she so much glories, as she cannot enjoy her sefe without here. And in very deede, there is no Ornament which may adde more beauty or true lustre to a Gentleman, than to be humbly minded; being as low in conceit, as he is high in Place." Elyot would never have made a similar statement.

Charity was another virtue joined to the concept of the ideal man during the seventeenth century. Charity is distinguished from liberality by its intent to aid the less fortunate, whereas a gentleman's liberality benefited only his equals or superiors. According to Allestree, God created both rich and poor intentionally. The existence of the needy allowed the wealthy to be charitable. The rich man, then, served as "God's Steward." In that capacity, he

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84James I, Basilike Duron, 1-16, 71-72.
85Brathwait, The English Gentleman, 61. See also, Allestree, Gentleman's Calling, 139-40; Osborn, Advice to a Son, 17. Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman, 52; Chesterfield to Philip Stanhope, 17 May 1750, in The Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son, II, 52-54.
had to distribute "his store, to supply the indigencies of wanting persons . . . ."\textsuperscript{86} Henry Purefoy and Addison and Steele expected the gentleman to be charitable in his dealings with the indigent. Purefoy praised an ancestor's great virtue for having "fed the neighbouring poor in [a] plentifull manner."\textsuperscript{87} Addison and Steele expected nothing less of the gentleman than regular charity to the poor.\textsuperscript{88}

The virtues prescribed for the gentleman were expanded by the introduction of the Calvinist middle-class belief in frugality. Until the publication of Brathwait's \textit{English Gentleman} and Peacham's \textit{Compleat Gentleman}, no writers had suggested that frugality was a gentlemanly virtue. Brathwait and Peacham, both members of the gentry, urged the gentleman to be frugal with both his money and his time.\textsuperscript{89} Francis Osborn agreed with both men about the value of frugality. He urged gentlemen to "never buy but with ready Mony; and be drawn rather to fix where you find

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86}Allestree, \textit{Gentleman's Calling}, 61, 62, 58-59. See also, Kelso, "Doctrine of the Gentleman," 89.
\item \textsuperscript{87}Henry Purefoy to Browne Willis, 2 February 1750, in \textit{Purefoy Letters}, II, 397. See also, Henry Purefoy to Conquest Jones, 8 June 1740, in \textit{Purefoy Letters}, I, 34.
\item \textsuperscript{88}Steele, \textit{The Spectator}, in \textit{Sir Roger de Coverly}, 102.
\item \textsuperscript{89}It should be noted that Brathwait meant a moderate frugality, not miserliness, thus demonstrating the continuing importance of pagan virtues and their influence upon the Christian virtues. Brathwait, \textit{The English Gentleman}, 334-35, 338-39, 53. See also, Peacham, \textit{The Compleat Gentleman}, 268.
\end{itemize}
things Cheap and Good, than for Friendship or Acquaintance, who are apt to take it unkindly, if you will not be cheated." He later added that the gentleman ought to "live so Frugally, if possible, as to reserve something.... [to] enable you to grapple with any future contingency." The extent to which the gentry embraced frugality is nowhere better illustrated than in a letter penned by Henry Purefoy:

Wee want a Church Bible, in your travells if you should meet with a second hand one that is cheap and good let mee know the price of it, or ye price of a new one; I am to give it to the Church.

Purefoy had learned the new virtues well. His religious faith and his charity were equaled only by his frugality. Character, combined with class and cultivation constituted the essential elements of the ideal man in England. Something more, though, distinguished the gentleman from his inferiors. Writers also expected the gentleman to possess honor. Honor is difficult to define. It amounted to a combination of integrity and reputation. Integrity approximates the gentleman's inner, or natural honor, while reputation roughly corresponds to his outer, or perfectible honor. An historian has concluded that the idea of honor developed as a rationalization of dueling. Together, honor and dueling provided one of the few remaining distinctions,

90Osborn, Advice to a Son, 14, 19, 96-97.
91Henry Purefoy to Peter Moulson, 4 October 1747, in Purefoy Letters, I, 23.
during the seventeenth century, between the true gentleman and his imitators.  

Little disagreement over the need for honor existed among the authors who discussed the subject. But the authors who discussed dueling universally condemned it as a barbaric practice. Osborn labeled dueling as "but a late invention of the Devils . . . ." An even stronger condemnation of dueling came from Allestree, who wrote,

A man of Honor is now understood onely to be one that can start and maintain a Quarrel, that for even the triflingest injury expects like Lamech, Gen. 4.24; to be avenged seventy and seven fold; that despises the Christian precepts of Meekness long suffering, and Forgiveness, as rudiments of cowarize and unmanly pusillanimity, and has no other measure of courage and gallantry, but by an utter opposition to all those; and whilst reputation is thus hung onely at the point of the sword, 'tis a very fit instrument to destroy bodies, but sure not to save Soules.

He added that while a gentleman ought to defer his anger, this new notion of Honor proclaims the quiet contrary; he passes for a Phlegmatic foole, whose blood boyles not at the first glimpse of an Affront; and 'tis Gallantry to offer many Injuries, but Ignominious Tameness to bear one.

Contrary to the advice of writers who sought to model a perfect gentleman, actual gentlemen seemed anxious

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93 Osborn, Advice to a Son, 16-17.

94 Allestree, Gentleman's Calling, 139-41.
to practice a code of honor which demanded a disregard for
civil law as well as the virtues of justice, moderation,
and humility. Nothing better illustrates the limits of the
English gentry's commitment to the concept of ideal
gentlemen.

An extensive treatment of the degree to which the
English gentleman followed the ideal is outside of the
scope of this dissertation. Generalizations based on avail­
able evidence are possible, though inconclusive. Even in
the face of social mobility, men, including the upwardly
mobile, believed that the gentleman ought to be well born.
English writers agreed on the need for education. Yet, as
Addison and Steele suggested, while many gentlemen
presented themselves as educated, some only pretended to be
educated. Of the three elements constituting the gentlemanly
ideal, the Englishman's adherence to virtue is the most
difficult to assess. The popularity of dueling seems to
suggest that Englishmen had decided that honor meant more
than the Christian-pagan virtues advocated by writers.

Englishmen undoubtedly did not live up to all the
demands of those who fashioned ideal men. Castiglione had
warned, however, that man could hope to do no more than
approximate perfection, and the English writers never
expected any more of their countrymen than did Castiglione
of his. That Englishmen did attempt to follow the ideas
articulated in the advice literature, no matter how limited
or unsuccessful the attempt, is crucial. For the ideas they held in England made up part of the cultural baggage they carried to the New World. The English ideal man, once carried to America, became the basis of the southern gentleman.
CHAPTER III

The Emergence of Two
Ideal Types in the South

When southern colonists spoke of the gentleman they, like all other Englishmen, drew their ideas from the writers discussed in chapter two. Englishmen embraced the concept of the ideal man as strongly in the New World as they did in the Old. The requirements for gentility were the same on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Unlike their counterparts back home, however, the colonists did not write treatises about the nature of the gentleman. Nor did they need to, because they had a wealth of English didactic literature in their libraries. This, nevertheless, did not inhibit them from speculating about the nature of perfection. Colonial letters and diaries provide rich sources of information and reveal the colonial notion of the proper path to preferment.

In addition to letters and diaries, epitaphs provide remarkable insights into the colonial ideal. The most interesting eighteenth century epitaph, for the purpose of this dissertation, follows:

Here lieth the Honourable WILLIAM BYRD Esq. being born to one of the ampest Fortunes, in this Country. He was sent early to England for his Education; where under the care and direction of
Sir Robert Southwell, and even favoured with his particular Instructions, he made a happy Proficiency in polite and various Learning. by the means of the same noble Friend, he was introduced to acquaintance of many of the first Persons of that Age. for Knowledge, Wit, Virtue, Birth, or high Station; and particularly contracted a most intimate and bosom Friendship with the learned and illustrious Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery. he was called to the Bar in the Middle Temple, Studied for some time in the Low-Countries, Visited the Court of France, and was chosen Fellow of the Royal Society.

Thus eminently fitted for the Service and Ornament of his Country, he made Receiver-General of his Majesty's Revenues here, was thrice appointed publick agent to the Court and Ministry of England. and being thirty seven Years a Member, at last became President of the Council of this Colony. to all this were added a great Elegancy of Taste and Life, the well-bred Gentleman and polite-Companion, the splendid Oeconomy and prudent Father of a Family, with the constant Enemy of all exorbitant Power, and Hearty Friend to the liberties of his Country.1

The epitaph illustrates the colonial indebtedness to the English ideal. Each of the elements of the ideal man--class, cultivation, and character--is included.

Historians have advanced a number of different theories about the origins of southern society. The debate centers on the social origins of the early colonists. Did they come from the English business families of the landed gentry?2 The previous chapter showed that the English

1From the burial marker of William Byrd, II, at Westover Plantation, Virginia. See also the epitaph of Richard Lee, in Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 213.

2The great bulk of historical research suggests that the English gentry did not migrate to the New World. The Virginia gentry, then, originated from younger sons of English businessmen. This conclusion is most
middle class and the gentry shared common values and that their concept of the ideal man was identical. Likewise, the English colonists who settled in the South embraced the same ideal, and tried to live by it regardless of their social origins.

Colonial historians have concluded that the colonists adopted the English concept of the gentleman. Louis Wright, in his work on the first gentlemen of Virginia, stated that the members of the colonial aristocracy "both consciously and unconsciously followed the models provided by English tradition." Wallace Notestein persuasively argued by Bernard Bailyn, in "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in Seventeenth-Century America, James Morton Smith, ed. (Chapel Hill: for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 90-115, 280. Bailyn's conclusion closely follows the earlier findings of Philip Alexander Bruce, Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1907), II, 131; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia: By the Author, 1910), v; and Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 4. Conspicuously absent from Bailyn's article is reference to Laslett's "The Gentry of Kent in 1640". In this brilliant article Laslett argues that younger sons migrating to Virginia were often the sons of country gentlemen. "The younger gentleman who set off for Virginia in early Stuart times was no penniless seeker after a fresh start in a freer world. He went complete with capital to stock his plantation and introductions to the important people in the colony, many of whom were his relatives and had been his father's neighbors." Laslett goes on to conclude that the "most surprising [thing the gentry of Kent produced] was the society of the Old South in the United States." Laslett, "The Gentry of Kent in 1640," 162-3. It must be concluded that the progenitors of the southern gentry were both younger sons of businessmen and country gentlemen who shared common beliefs, aspirations, and ideals.
agreed, explaining that the Virginia settlers "tried to live . . . like country gentlemen" of the English pattern.\(^3\) These conclusions come as no surprise. That the colonials embraced the English ideal is especially revealed in the literary exercises of the second William Byrd. Byrd, educated in England, wrote of an English friend,

He is a man of honour in the best sense, and is more tender of injuring others than of being injur'd himself. He possesses all the noble qualities requisite to Friendship, and has the penetration to distinguish those that best deserve it. He has such a fund of Good nature, that he is never more happy, than when he is taking pains to make others so. He never says a foolish thing to reflect upon another; but there's a smile and a gentleness imprinted on his whole behaviour. His Temper is compounded of all the tender Passions; He has love for the Ladys, pity for the distresst, forgiveness for his Enimys, and Charity for every Creature living. His Generosity has no other bounds than his Fortune, neither would it stop there, but for fear of intrenching upon Justice.\(^4\)


The tradition exhibited in Byrd's writing was neither limited to the first colonists, nor to those colonists educated in England. Over a half-century after Byrd's death, in 1744, William Wirt wrote a letter to a young friend, Francis W. Gilmer. He explained to Gilmer that

the space which your father occupied was filled not merely by his eminence as a physician, (although he was certainly among the most eminent); he was, moreover, a good linguist, a master of botany, and the chemistry of his day, had a store of very correct general science, was a man of superior taste in the fine arts, and, to crown the whole, had an elevated and noble spirit. In his manners and conversation he was a most accomplished gentleman; easy and graceful in his movements, eloquent in speech; in temper, gay and animated, and inspiring every company with his own tone; with wit pure, sparkling, and perennial; and when the occasion called for it, uttering sentiments of the highest dignity, and utmost force.5

Men from William Byrd to William Wirt were profoundly indebted to English writers. The indebtedness to the English ideal will become yet clearer as the three elements of the concept are discussed. The English ideal, however, was introduced into a foreign environment, an environment which itself gave rise to a new, if not wholly novel, ideal. The eventual effort to reconcile the old and the new proved unsatisfactory and the resulting paradox caused an ambivalence towards the concept of the gentleman. Before

the paradox is discussed, though, the elements of the
gentlemanly ideal must be discussed.

This chapter focuses upon the colony of Virginia
primarily because of the availability and richness of
source materials. By the time of the death of William
Byrd II, Virginia had been an established colony for over
one hundred years, while Georgia was yet a recent settle­
ment. In addition, Virginia manuscripts and libraries
seem to have survived the Civil War far better than those
of South Carolina. Virginia has also held the attention
of historians and antiquarians to a greater degree than the
other southern colonies, and as a result many more original
source materials have been published. Finally, Virginians
were typical of the other southern colonists in their
English origins and their British values and aspirations.
This notwithstanding, references to several other colonies
may be found in the footnotes.

Class was as essential an element of the gentle­
manly ideal in the colonies as it was in England. Of the
different components of the element class, wealth played
the largest role. Money assured entrance into polite
society. Too much so according to one writer. James Reid,
an indentured servant and tutor in King William County,
Virginia, around 1769, assailed the acquisitive nature of
the local gentlemen. He noted that "If a King Williamite
has Money, Negroes and Land enough he is a compleat Gentle-
man." Continuing, he stated that the gentleman's money
gilds over all his stupidities, and although an
Ass covered over with gold is still an Ass, yet
in King William County a fool covered over with
the same metal, changes his nature, and commences
a GENTLEMAN.6

Reid's charges are a bit severe, but they illustrate a
fundamental aspect of the ideal man in the southern
colonies. He had money, and money opened doors to polite
society. The letters of a young Virginia gentleman studying
medicine in Europe during the 1760's help in understanding
the relationship between money and social acceptance.

Walter Jones explained to his brother that society at
medical school was divided into three orders. The first
was made up of men of great wealth but little inclination
to study medicine. Because of their great wealth and
their attitude toward work they were known as Fine-
Gentlemen. The second, called Gentlemen or Students of
Medicine, had not the wealth of the first group, but they
were dedicated to their profession. The third consisted of
vulgar and impolite Scotsmen. Walter expressed his desire
to associate with the second order, but to do so he needed
additional money. He explained that

6James Reid, The Religion of the Bible and Religion
of K[ing] W[illiam] County Compared, ed. with intro. by
Richard Beale Davis, in Transactions of the American Philos-
osophical Society, New Series, 57 (March, 1967), 48: For an
expression of the same sentiment in South Carolina see,
"Essay on Pride," The South Carolina Gazette, 8 July 1732, 1.
their Expenses are nearly confined between 100 and 120 for less [than] 100 per [annum?] will not maintain a Gentlemen [sic] in Edinburgh. Wm. Blair our countryman who has spent his Time here with the greatest diligence, Temperance and economy assures me that he has never been able to live a year for less than 100. I should be sorry to increase my expences only for the sake of keeping polite company; but it is not all, I seriously declare that I never derived more advantage from the Professors.7

There are differences between the comments made by Reid and Jones. According to Reid, gentility in Virginia rested solely on wealth. Jones, though, recognized that money only advanced a man into polite company after which he had to prove his diligence, temperance and worth. But both men agreed that wealth was fundamental to the Virginia gentleman.

Wealth allowed the gentleman to practice his virtues and accomplishments unimpeded and to acquire the trappings of gentility. The fine Goergian mansions which to this day dot the Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina countrysides provide ample evidence of the effort to use wealth to establish gentility. Fashion, at times, outweighed practicality as demonstrated by William Fitzhugh. Although usually a sensible person, Fitzhugh purchased an expensive English carriage for his daily use. The carriage emblazoned with a coat of arms was a typical symbol of English

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7W[alter] Jones to [Thomas Jones], 15 August 1766, Jones Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
gentility, but it was hardly suited for use in Virginia. Gentlemen who could afford the extravagance rode in a carriage with a slave at postilion. Landon Carter, who hated conspicuous display of wealth, grieved that his son had adopted this fashion in an effort "to play the fine gentleman . . . ."9

William Byrd's epitaph noted his "being born to one of the amplest Fortunes, in this Country." Yet it ignored his efforts to continue and enhance his fortune. James Reid, in his commentary on King William gentlemen, assured his readers that gentlemen never forgot to enlarge their holdings. In his leisure hours the gentleman "impregnates his own Negroe wenches, as a very easy way of augmenting his wealth," remarked the bitter satirist.10 The gentleman could not even leave his thirst for money outside the doors at the parish church. Gentlemen attended worship, Reid wrote, "only to make bargains, hear and rehearse news, fix horse races and cock matches, and learn if there are any barbecued Hogs to be offered in sacrifice Gratis . . . ."

Although more moderate in his views, Philip V. Fithian, the


10Reid, Religion of King William County, 49.
tutor for the Robert Carter family in 1773-1774, also pictured Sunday as a popular day for discussing business. He noted in his journal that "it is a general custom on Sundays here, with Gentlemen . . . to consult about, and determine their common business, either before or after Service . . . ."¹¹

The gentleman did carry his business with him into church, but it was not out of disdain for religion, as suggested by Reid. Instead, he was a businessman who used every social gathering as an opportunity to further his economic concerns. Colonial gentlemen lived busy lives and rarely limited their economic interests to their plantation lands. They embarked on numerous other business ventures including land speculation, law practice, and mercantile pursuits. William Byrd, one of the shrewdest colonial businessmen, sent his son and namesake to London "to imploy you about business . . . ."¹²

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experience Byrd understood that success in Virginia required more than careful attention to a plantation. A planter could afford to live ostentatiously only by cultivating other economic ventures. Neighbors of a Maryland planter named Samuel Galloway, addressed letters to him as "Samuel Galloway, Esquire, Tulip Hill." London businessmen, though, addressed their correspondence to this great trader as "Samuel Galloway, merchant, West River." Even plantation management was a time-consuming business enterprise. William Fitzhugh, Landon Carter, and the William Byrds spent long hours carefully supervising their vast farm lands. These planters, and others like them, were working gentry. Louis Wright, in The First Gentlemen of Virginia, accurately depicted gentlemen as men who

made the plans, selected seeds and livestock, saw that proper fields were laid out, ordered the clearing of new ground, acted as their own veterinarians and doctors . . . wrote innumerable

business letters to merchants in London, kept a close watch on expenditures and sales of farm products—in short, led the life of hard working business men. This does not imply that the colonial concept of the ideal man was the businessman. Gentlemen trained their sons to maintain and expand the family holdings in order to pass them on to future generations. But the training was only one aspect of the young man's upbringing. Business never became the primary purpose of the gentleman's existence.

In every aspect of the ideal gentleman, moderation was the key. The gentleman engaged in business with moderation. He worked hard at his calling, but he never became driven by the desire to make ever larger profits. Nearing the end of his long career, William Wirt exclaimed to a friend that he thanked Heaven that he was a beast of burden, "both that I have a burden to carry, and that I am able to bear it." Wirt, like the first William Byrd, never ignored his occupation or his duties to his family.


The gentleman had to serve both his own interests and the interests of his nation. The obligation to serve the nation could be filled in a number of ways, as suggested by St. George Tucker. He explained to his sons that

every man is respectable in society in proportion to the Talents he possesses to serve it. A Blacksmith, a Cobler, a Wheelwright, if honest men are respectable Characters in their proper Spheres--but a man of Science, a Philosopher, or a Legislator, as they have talents to be more eminently and extensively useful, so are they more eminently and generally respected. The world is a circle about every man, exactly of such a size as his abilities make it.--It is a very well known fact five miles about Petersburg that Mr. Booker is a good Chair-maker--That Alexander Taylor is a very tollerable Cabinet-maker.--It is known for a circle of an hundred miles that Doctor Thachas is a good Physician--It is known throughout Virginia & perhaps through America that Mr. Baker & the present Governor are eminent pleaders at the Bar--but it is known all over the civilised [sic] world that General Washington is a great General--that Doctor Franklin is a great philosopher & politician and that Mr. Rittenhouse is a great mathematical Genius.16

Tucker urged his sons to study hard in order that their spheres might be large and their service to the nation great. The ideal man could not turn his back on his own economic affairs or on his obligation to the country. Noblesse oblige occupied an important position in the concept of the ideal man.

The gentleman had many public obligations. In time of war he served in the militia and army. In peacetime he

served in the legislature or as a justice of the peace. Public service went beyond these formal actions. An incident reported in William Byrd's secret diary is a case in point. One of his steers had on several occasions broken into his neighbor's cornfield. Byrd tried yoking the animal, but to no avail. He finally resolved "to kill him rather than keep anything injurious to my neighbor."^17

The gentleman also served as a model for the less fortunate to follow and as a guide directing the energies of his inferiors toward the public good. William Byrd II offered the following plan to help increase the population of the colony:

[Whosoever shall] live unmarryd to the age of five and twenty, he shall be whipt every Monday morning as long as he continues single, by 2 of the oldest virgins in the neighbourhood. Those only shou'd be excused from this punishment, who in their parish church between the prayers and sermon, shall confess they have some natural impediment which shall afterwards be inquired into by a jury of matrons . . . . Then to encourage procreation, which is ever for the publick good, all those who have had ten children born and christened, shoud

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be exempt from taxes of every kind, after the manner of Spain; but those who are fumblers and have no children should like non jurors pay double taxes. . . .18

The gentleman served his country, whether it was as an official of the government, advising his fellow citizens, or protecting his neighbor's property. Social obligations, like financial affairs, could never be overlooked by the man of wealth--the gentleman.

Gentility, of course, rested on cultivation as much as it did on class. Edmund Randolph, United States Attorney General and Virginia patriot, said of one gentleman that "He panted after the fine arts and discovered a taste in them not easily satisfied with such scanty means as existed" in Virginia.19 "He" could have referred to any complete gentleman in the South. In fact, it referred to Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's well-known love of knowledge was typical of men of his social position. From William Byrd to William Wirt the gentleman sought cultivation, whether it be intellectual, social, or physical.

Education provided the means for the gentleman to live up to his social responsibilities and public duties, as well as to live a dignified life. The gentleman of the

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18William Byrd II to Mrs. Anne Taylor Otway, [ca. June 1729], Byrd Correspondence, I, 401.

colonial and early national periods embraced the Renaissance idea of classical education. Topics of study included Latin, Greek, philosophy, mathematics, divinity, Oriental tongues, ethics, and modern languages.

Planters were troubled that their sons could not receive adequate education in the colonies. Fitzhugh complained that "Good Education is almost impossible, & better be never born than ill bred . . . ." "I must confess," agreed William Byrd I, that a young son "could learn nothing good here, in a great family of Negroes." Both men recognized the distinct disadvantage of life in the New World, at least so far as the shaping of a gentleman was concerned. Nevertheless, their children did not want for education. Planters did provide the basic elements of education for their sons. In a letter introducing his son to a friend in England, William Fitzhugh warned that

to tell you he is eleven years & a half old & can hardly read or write a word of English might make you believe that either he was a dull boy, or that I was a very careless & neglectfull Parent. Indeed its neither carelessness in me nor dullness in him, for although he cannot read or write English, yet he can both read, write & speak french, & has run over the Rudiments of Latin Grammar according to the French method . . . .

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20 William Fitzhugh to Henry Fitzhugh, 30 January 1686/87, Fitzhugh and His World, 203; William Byrd I to Warham Horsmaden, 31 March 1684/85, Byrd Correspondence, I, 33-34.

21 William Fitzhugh to George Mason, 21 July 1698, Fitzhugh and His World, 361-62; Henry Laurens to Matthew Robinson, 19 October 1768, in Papers of Henry Laurens, VI,
The ubiquitous tutor provided planters' sons throughout the South with the rudiments of education. Fitzhugh referred to his son's tutor as "a most ingenious French Gentleman." The families of William Daingerfield and Robert Carter had John Harrower and Philip Fithian, respectively, as their children's tutors. James Reid, like Harrower, was an indentured servant of Scottish nativity and a tutor at a Virginia plantation. These tutors, and many others like them, not only taught the children of their employers and masters, but they also frequently went to neighboring plantations to instruct the children of other gentlemen. However, not even the best tutors could match

139. See also, "A Carolinian," The South-Carolina Gazette [sic], 21 December 1769, 1; John Drayton, A View of South Carolina, as Respects Her Natural and Civil Concerns (Charleston: W. P. Young, 1802), 220.

22William Fitzhugh to George Mason, 21 July 1698, in Fitzhugh and His World, 361-2.

European schools in quality. As a result, once a tutor had provided a young gentleman with the fundamentals, fathers who could afford the expense sent their sons to Europe to complete their education.

Although many gentlemen did not conquer the mysteries of all the required subjects, the thirst for knowledge continued beyond the years of formal study. Science frequently captured the gentleman's interest after he completed his education. But regardless of his specific interests the gentleman practically always turned to books to satisfy his curiosity. English authors from Elyot to Brathwait had praised the merit of books and urged their readers to build substantial libraries and to use them. Virginia planters eagerly embraced the recommendation. Typical in their thirst for books, but unusual in the great size of their libraries, were William Fitzhugh and William Byrd. Both men sent frequent orders to England for the purchase of books. In one request, Fitzhugh asked Edward Hayward to send:

All the Statutes made since the twenty second of King Charles the second to this year. The 2nd. Part of Tushworth's collection in 2 Volumes. The third part of Rushworth's Collection in 2 volumes. Doctr. Thos. Burnet's Theory of the earth in English. All the works of the Author of the whole Duty of man in one volume. The Lord Bacon's Remains. Cotton's exact Abridgement of the Records of the Tower Buchanan's de jure Regn apud Scotos if to be had in English. Mr. Boyle's letter to a friend concerning specifick Physick. A large fair printed bible in quarto. A large common prayer book in folio. The secret History of King Chas the 2nd. & King James the 2nd. A
Continuation of the secret History of Whitehall to Abdicacon & An Historicaall account of the memorable actions of King William the third. These are the books I desire you without fail to send me.¹⁴

Without fail the gentleman collected books. The books he collected and read fall into six general categories: Philosophy and Law; Science and Practical Arts; Classics and Languages; History, Biography and Travel; Religion; and English Literature.²⁵ Included in the list of books purchased by gentlemen were those discussed in the first two chapters of the dissertation. Smith's De Republica Anglorum, Hoby's translation of The Courtier, Peacham's Compleat Gentleman, Brathwait's English Gentleman, and Osborn's Advice to a Son represent a sampling of the works of advice found in the libraries of Virginia's first families.²⁶ The books planters purchased were not mere

²⁴William Fitzhugh to Edward Hayward, 21 July 1698, Fitzhugh and His World, 363-4. See also William Byrd to John Claton, 25 May 1686, Byrd Correspondence, I, 61.


status symbols for decoration. Shipping costs, especially after the passage of the Navigation Acts, were too great to allow the purchase of unused items. Education was essential to the gentleman. The planters of the colonial South never thought otherwise. Early nineteenth-century writers continued to praise the merits of education and encouraged gentlemen to cultivate their intellects.

However, the gentleman needed to cultivate more than his mind. Social and physical cultivation, too, were essential to gentility. Louis Wright has persuasively argued that the "perpetuation of a cultivated way of life, of the civilized manners and customs of the English gentry" marked the gentry of Virginia. Colonists tried to replicate English culture. Horse races provided gentlemen the opportunity to cultivate manners as well as friendships. Although William Byrd II regretted the absence of much polite company, he found the rural entertainments of the gentry pleasant. He explained that "A library, a garden, a grove and a purling stream are the innocent scenes that divert out leisure." His comment could have come from a gentleman in England.

27Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 117-19.
28Wirt, Old Bachelor, 37.
29Virginia Gazette, quoted in Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen," 251; Drayton, A View of South-Carolina, 221.
30William Byrd II to Mrs. Armiger, 25 June 1729, Byrd Correspondence, I, 413.
Byrd's amusements were not always so innocent. To a lady correspondent in England, one whose affection he sought to win, he spun a tale about a gentleman who had been invited into the home of an exceedingly handsome woman. After much wine and sprightly conversation the gentleman yawned and showed "other signs of being sleepy." The woman immediately reproached him for his ill-bred behavior. The gentleman responded that the yawn was a polite way to put her "in mind of going to bed." He then begged that "she would compleat her generosity by suffering him to stay with her all night." To avoid the charge of telling inappropriate and bawdy stories to a lady he concluded the tale with a novel twist. After wrestling throughout the night, the would-be lothario left, satisfied with his adventure. Noticing that his pockets had been rifled, he concluded that anything the woman had taken was reasonable payment for her services. But as he reached deeper into his pocket he discovered that she had given him money in payment for her satisfaction. Byrd had been trained as a complete gentleman who knew how to tell a story without violating propriety, and how to be gallant in the process.

Spinning yarns represented only a minor one of the many social accomplishments of the gentleman. He also maintained regular correspondence with other gentlemen,

William Byrd II to Lady Cromwell, 18 September 1703, Byrd Correspondence, I, 241-44.
friends, and family members, and developed a taste for music. A number of gentlemen regularly practiced their musical skills. Most notably, and perhaps an exception for the variety of instruments which he played, was Robert Carter. Philip Fithian noted in his journal that

Mr. Carter is practising this evening on the Guittar He begins with the Trumpet Minuet. He has a good Ear for Music; a vastly delicate Taste; and keeps good Instruments, he has here at Home a Harpsicord, Forte-Piano, Harmonica, Guittar & German Flutes, & at Williamsburg, has a good Organ, he himself also is indefatigable in Practice.32

The gentleman could play various musical instruments and dance fine minuets. Indeed, his social accomplishments were many and varied, but they were not always done in perfect moderation and hence were not always genteel. Gaming, or gambling, was both embraced and rejected by gentlemen. Most gentlemen saw nothing wrong with gaming. The colonial gentleman gambled no more frequently than did his English counterpart. The third William Byrd provides an especially good example. His elevation to the leadership of a powerful family did nothing to curb his appetite for betting. He made a profound impression on a French traveler who visited Williamsburg. The visitor wrote of the men he met at a lodge, "they are all professed gamesters, Expecially Colonel

Burd [sic], who is never happy but when he has the box and the Dices in hand."\(^{33}\) Had the Frenchman journeyed to America a half-century earlier he would have drawn the same conclusion about Byrd's father. William Byrd II found his own obsession with gaming lamentable. In 1711 he wrote,

> This day I made a solemn resolution never at once to lose more than 50 shillings and to spend less time in gaming, and I beg the God Almighty to give me grace to keep so good a resolution if it be His holy will.\(^{34}\)

Apparently it was not "His holy will," for less than six months later Byrd again confided in his diary that

> I took leave and went to the coffeehouse, where I played at cards and won 40 shillings but afterwards I played at dice and lost almost L 10. This gave me a resolution to play no more at dice . . . .\(^{35}\)

His objection to gaming centered on losing money immoderately, not on the practice itself. Landon Carter, a man little satisfied with the behavior of his fellow Virginians in general and his family in particular, condemned the intemperant gambling rife in the colony.\(^{36}\) As long as men kept their passions in check they could gamble. But George Washington, like Castiglione before him, recognized the


\(^{35}\)Ibid., 17 April 1712, 516.

frailties of man when he commented that "great characters are seldom without a blot." Great gentlemen, too, were seldom without a blot, and with that conclusion he ordered the officers of his army to cease gambling.

The gentleman cultivated his physical, as well as his social and mental capabilities. Not only did the gentleman develop his body in preparation for war, but he also exercised to make himself more graceful and to protect his health. The list of acceptable forms of exercise is lengthy, stretching from riding and hunting, the most prominent, to the more unusual boxing and cudgeling. Few Virginians, from the second William Byrd to Thomas Jefferson and William Wirt, failed to recommend that the gentleman develop his physique.38


Physical, social, and intellectual accomplishments merged to give a man the grace suitable to a gentleman. Nowhere is the importance of grace better illustrated than in a letter from William Wirt to Francis Gilmer. Wirt admonished Gilmer to

> Endeavour to cultivate that superior grace of manners which distinguishes the gentleman from the crowd around him. In your conversation, avoid a rapid and indistinct utterance, and speak deliberately and articulately. Your father was remarkable for his clear and distinct enunciation, and the judgment with which he placed his emphasis. Blend with the natural hilarity of your temper, that dignity of sentiment and demeanour, which alone can prevent the wit and humourist from sinking into a trifler, and can give him an effective attitude in society.

> Get a habit, a passion for reading, not flying from book to book . . . . Read systematically, closely, thoughtfully; analyzing every subject as you go along, and laying it up carefully and safely in your memory.\(^{39}\)

The gentleman, whether he be of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or early nineteenth centuries, had to be a man of cultivation—a man with a well-trained mind and refined social and physical accomplishments.

Character, the third element of the concept of the gentleman, is more difficult to define than cultivation or class. Landon Carter said of one of his daughter's suitors, "There is something in that Gentleman that I admire . . . ." Unfortunately, Carter did nothing more than

allude to a few gallons of spirit the man had generously
given him. To Carter, character seemed to be equivalent to
virtue. The second William Byrd, however, suggested some­
thing broader and more amorphous. Character, to him,
appeared as the essential goodness of man and that part of
man which qualified him for success. Byrd was genuinely
baffled that a neighbor, a man of "bad character," had
become wealthy. It seemed inexplicable to him. A still
different idea was presented by William Wirt, who on several
occasions referred to character as a certain inner strength
which led to resolution and firmness in action. Undoubtedly,
each man had a similar idea of the origins of character even
if he disagreed on its manifestations. It was based on a
man's inner virtues, and thus we must examine the virtues
recommended for the gentleman in order to understand the
nature of his character.40

The virtues embraced by men from Byrd to Wirt were
largely those which had been articulated by seventeenth-
century English writers. The traditional virtues of
fortitude, prudence, temperance, justice, liberality, and

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40Landon Carter, 19 July 1776, Diary of Landon Carter, II, 1059-60; William Byrd II, 14 November 1709, Secret Diary
of Byrd, 106; William Wirt, Sketches of the Life and
Character of Patrick Henry, ninth ed. (Philadelphia:
Thomas, Cowpethwait & Co., 1839), 32; William Wirt, An
Address Delivered Before the Peithessophian and Philoclean
Societies of Rutgers College (New-Brunswick, N.J.: Terhune
and Letson, Printers, 1830), 14, 17-18; William Wirt, Old
Bachelor, 44; Ra[lph] Izard to William Read, 30 July 1795,
Izard Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
courtesy were included. But so too were the bourgeois virtues of industry and frugality, and the Christian virtue of charity. Honor, with greater attention to honesty and integrity, remained a prominent part of the gentleman's character. In a work submitted to William Wirt for inclusion in the Old Bachelor essays, St. George Tucker tried to state briefly the basic ingredients of character.

The patriot, he wrote, possessed

That pure, and pre-eminent virtue, that spotless integrity, that immaculate Fidelity, that noble disinterestedness, that genuine self-denying preference of the best interests of his Country to his own; that Devotion, Zeal, Courage, Fortitude, patience, perseverance and Heroism; and those splendid and exalted Talents, Wisdom, Discernment, [illegible, perhaps penetration], Caution, and Foresight, which composing the fundamentals of his character, are inherent in his nature, and incorporate with his every existence. 41

He added, in a letter to his two sons, that "moral virtues are nearly allied to each other--they must all be cherished, or they will all be impaired." 42 The virtues of the ideal man supported one another.

Gentlemen cherished the virtues. Frequent reference to prudence, benevolence, humility, courage, charity, hospitality, temperance, and magnanimity were made. It

41 [St. George Tucker], "For the Old Bachelor, On Patriotism," Tucker-Coleman Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

42 S[t. G]eorge Tucker to Theodorick and John Randolph, 12 June 1787, Tucker-Coleman Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.
would not be off the mark to argue that when men spoke of virtue they meant those virtues discussed by English writers and the ancients. The word virtue had been defined and needed no additional elaboration, although writers did sometimes list the specific virtues.43

Of the virtues they listed, moderation was the single most important for the gentleman. It controlled the gentleman's other virtues and his behavior. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in an allegory written by St. George Tucker. In it Tucker told a story about two men, Oconomy and Generosity. Oconomy, a merchant, was excessively frugal. Generosity, presumably a planter, was too generous. Each fell in love and married. Oconomy married Liberality, while Generosity married Prudence. Both men discovered happiness because their natural tendencies were moderated by other virtues. The golden mean had been reached. Unfortunately for both men, moderation proved short lived when their wives died. After brief periods of mourning, Generosity married Extravagance, and Oconomy wed Parsimony. Extravagance helped Generosity spend all of his money and

43Maxims of George Washington, 313; Randolph, History of Virginia, 173-8, 187, 215; Wirt, British Spy, 233; Wirt, Old Bachelor, 172; [St. George Tucker], "For the Old Bachelor: The History of Contentment. An Allegory," Tucker-Coleman Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary; Wirt, Patrick Henry, 253; [William]m Wirt to Judge [Dabney] Carr, 20 August 1815, Memoirs of Wirt, I, 347; Milligen-Johnson, A Short Description of South-Carolina, 134; Archdale, A New Description of Carolina, 17, 26, 31.
plunged him inexorably into debt. Only death saved Generosity from the humiliation of debtor's prison. A short while later friends discovered the bodies of Oconomy and Parsimony in their home. They had refused to spend money, even on food, and had thus starved to death.44 Once moderation had been removed both men were doomed. Had William Fitzhugh lived to read Tucker's allegory he would no doubt have agreed with its moral. He had once praised God that he lived neither in "poverty nor pomp." In addition he had avoided "hard drinking" and "feasting." He believed that the gentleman's life followed the mean.45

Modesty, a virtue closely allied to moderation, proved an important element of a gentleman's character. William Byrd II complained bitterly of having a book dedicated to him. He feared people would question his modesty, or humility. Landon Carter thought Richard Henry Lee a most virtuous man whose chief flaw was vanity. Edmund Randolph feared that slavery, by making masters proud, had undermined modesty. And William Wirt replied to an artist that he would rather sink into the depths of historical

44St. George Tucker [Lycidas], "For the Old Bachelor: Generosity & Economy. An Allegory," Tucker-Coleman Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

45William Fitzhugh to Mrs. Mary Fitzhugh, 22 April 1686, Fitzhugh and His World, 173; William Fitzhugh to Henry Hartwell, 21 July 1698, Fitzhugh and His World, 366; Richard Beale Davis has stated that the idea of the golden mean was of importance throughout the southern colonies. See, Intellectual Life in the Colonial South, III, 1344, 1373, II, 729, I, 96.
obscurity than to be so immodest as to pay to have a portrait painted to be hung in the National Gallery.\textsuperscript{46} Gentlemen even refrained from publishing books to avoid so immodest an action as openly placing their names before the public eye. Those gentlemen who insisted on publishing their literary works usually adopted pseudonyms to avoid immodesty.

Liberality, like moderation and modesty, was highly valued by the gentleman of the South. Hospitality served as the chief means of proving one's liberality. Robert Beverly, the eighteenth century historian of Virginia, noted that "if there happen to be a churl that either out of covetousness or illnature won't comply with this generous custom, he has the mark of infamy set upon him, and is abhorred by all."\textsuperscript{47} A visiting Frenchman found that "the Inhabitants [of Virginia] are very Courteous and hospitable. Strangers are always welcome and genteelly treated by them . . . ."\textsuperscript{48} Even men with limited wealth agreed on the esentiality of liberality. Wirt, admitting

\textsuperscript{46}William Byrd II to John Fox, 18 November 1718, ca., Byrd Correspondence, I, 316; Landon Carter, 27 April 1777, Diary of Landon Carter, II, 1102; W[illia]m Wirt to Joseph Delaplaine, 5 November 1818, Memoirs of Wirt, II, 77.

\textsuperscript{47}Robert Beverly, The History of the Present State of Virginia, quoted in Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 78.

\textsuperscript{48}"Journal of a French Traveller," AHR, 743.
that he could not afford to be too generous added that "I cannot, to save a penny, shut my door against hospitality . . . ." Hospitality could never be neglected.

In the South, as in England, the Christian virtue of charity became allied with liberality. Whereas a man's liberality benefited only his equals, charity helped less fortunate individuals. "Charity directs us to help those in want & distress," wrote William Fitzhugh to his brother. But George Washington took a more forceful position on the subject. He directed Lund Washington, the overseer of Mount Vernon, to

Let the Hospitality of the House, with respect to the poor, be kept up; Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of People should be in want of Corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my Money in Charity to the Amount of forty or fifty Pounds a Year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire it should be done.

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49 Wirt, Old Bachelor, 6; See also, Drayton, A View of South-Carolina, 221.

50 William Fitzhugh to Henry Fitzhugh, 22 April 1686, Fitzhugh and His World, 171.

A gentleman provided for both his equals and inferiors. Otherwise he was something less than a gentleman.

Southerners also embraced industry as a virtue befitting the gentleman. This may seem a strange conclusion, considering the frequent pronouncements about the indolence or laziness of southerners. The conclusion is a matter of interpretation. If a planter condemned his son as lazy, it can be argued both that his son was lazy and that the planter believed that all men ought to be industrious. Landon Carter's severe criticism of his son's indolence resulted from his belief that man was placed on earth to work. Southerners did believe man ought to be industrious. A large part of the second William Byrd's condemnation of slavery rested on the idea that the presence of slaves destroyed the planter's industry. Thomas Jefferson heartily agreed, noting that "no man will labour for himself who can make another labour for him." For all of his admiration of Patrick Henry, William Wirt

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52 Landon Carter, 10 April 1776, Diary of Landon Carter, II, 1015. See also, Henry Laurens to Lachlan McIntosh, 10 May 1789, in Papers of Henry Laurens, VI, 444; Drayton, A View of South-Carolina, 225; David Ramsay to Benjamin Rush, 18 August 1787, in "David Ramsay, 1749-1815," 114.


criticized the Virginia firebrand for his one great defect--indolence. Without his wealth the gentleman could not practice the virtues of the ancients. Liberality, in particular, required money. Only industry, though, could preserve the gentleman's wealth. The ancient virtues had come to rest on industry.

The gentleman also embraced the bourgeois virtue of frugality. Philip Fithian reported to a minister at Princeton that the "spring which induces the People of fortune . . . to be frugal" had at last arrived.\(^5\)
Similarly, the first William Byrd, when furnishing "Westophers," requested his English agent send "all manner furniture . . . to be handsome & neat, but cheap."\(^6\)
Without adherence to the virtue of frugality, as to industry, the gentleman had little hope of maintaining the virtues of benevolence, liberality, and magnanimity. And he had little hope of passing his estate on to his heirs. An argument might be made that frugality was an auxiliary of the more ancient virtues of temperance and moderation. Industry could be viewed as an element of class with its emphasis

\(^5\)Philip V. Fithian to Rev. Enoch Green, 1 December 1773, Fithian Journal and Letters, 280.

\(^6\)William Byrd to Perry & Lane, 8 August 1690, Byrd Correspondence, I, 135, my underline. See also Walter Jones to [Thomas Jones], 12 August 1769, Jones Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Landon Carter, 29 August 1770, Diary of Landon Carter, I, 477; Landon Carter, 5 September 1772, Diary of Landon Carter, I, 722.
upon duty and occupation. The relationship between each cannot, or at least should not, be denied. At the same time it must be recalled that Calvinism and the middle class had greatly influenced the concept of the gentleman in England. As a result, the virtues of the middle class and of Calvinism had emphasized the need for and increased the importance of charity, industry, and frugality.

The additional virtues of honesty and integrity became increasingly important to southerners. These virtues, coupled with the virtues previously discussed and the other components of the ideal man, merged. In his History of Virginia, Edmund Randolph told of Thomas Nelson's statement concerning a possible invasion of the colony by British troops. He announced that should the Redcoats land within his country he would, whether or not he received the command, call the militia and defend the land. To do less, he announced, "was to be dishonored." The tale illustrates a number of elements of the gentlemanly ideal. He had a public duty from which he could not shrink. He had to defend his country regardless of the risks involved. His honesty allowed him to do nothing less. Refusal to act

57 See especially Maxims of George Washington, 308-9; Wright, First Gentlemen of Virginia, 178; Landon Carter, 10 September 1775, Diary of Landon Carter, II, 940; William Byrd to Thomas Gower, 8 December 1685, Byrd Correspondence, I, 44.

58 Randolph, History of Virginia, 213.
would bring both public and personal dishonor. Nelson had
to fulfill the code of the gentleman or else lose his honor.

A gentleman had to maintain his honor through his own actions, first, by following the standards of the gentleman, and second, by defending his honor from attack. George Washington wrote to the Marquis de Lafayette, in the year 1778, urging his French friend to refrain from becoming involved in a duel. "The generous Spirit of Chivalry," commented Washington, "exploded by the rest of the World, finds a refuge, My dear friend, in the sensibility of your Nation only."59 To an extent Washington was right. William Fitzhugh, whose honor had been questioned by a Mr. Martin Scarlet, demanded that a petition attesting to his honor be publicly read. Fitzhugh made no mention of a duel.60 Many years later, when an officer under the command of William Byrd III was accused of misbehavior leading to a defeat, Byrd demanded an investigation and public exoneration of his friend. Again, no challenge was issued.61 Evidence, however, suggests that dueling must have been


60 "Petition to County Court", 10 June 1691, Fitzhugh and His World, 294-95.

61 William Byrd III to Printers of the Virginia Gazette, 26 October 1759, Byrd Correspondence, II, 680-81.
widespread, at least during the 1770's. The severity of the Virginia laws regarding dueling can only be attributed to the general practice of dueling. The Virginia law banning the duel, which was revised during the Revolution, follows:

Whosoever committeth murder by way of duel, shall suffer death by hanging; and if he were the challenger his body, after death, shall be gibbeted. 62

So serious did Virginians think the crime that no exceptions were to be allowed. Jefferson, who had helped revise the law, and Washington, in his letter to Lafayette, argued that gentlemen should not duel. But others, most of whom left no explanation of their beliefs, disregarded criticism and law and fought duels in defense of their honor.

Generally, the components of the code of the gentleman closely followed the pattern set on the other side of the Atlantic. Differences did arise, however. Largely as a result of their closeness to nature and the spartan conditions of their environment, the colonists began to view the simplicity enforced by nature as beneficial. Two other reasons for the celebration of the simplicity imposed by nature come to mind. First, it was a defense mechanism. Englishmen believed the men who migrated to America to be inferior, and they scoffed at colonial pretensions to

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gentility. In reaction, the colonists began to argue that colonial simplicity was superior to English decadence. A student supporting education at the College of William and Mary warned that a man learned nothing but luxury while studying in England. Nothing could be learned in England beneficial to colonial life. Second, the pastoral ideal had great appeal in England and all of Europe. It cannot be doubted that colonists educated in England returned home with Virgilian fantasies about the virtues of the garden.

Whatever the influence or influences, they altered the southern idea of the gentleman. "We live in all the innocence of the patriarchs," wrote the eloquent William Byrd, "under our vines and our fig-trees surrounded with our flocks and our herds." A year earlier Byrd had discussed the same theme in greater detail. He stated

Indeed I cannot say that our men are so well employed as they are with you. We do not exercise our wits, and our fingers in the slights and mysteries of gaming to build our fortunes on the ruins of our friends,


65 William Byrd II to John Boyle, Baron Boyle of Broghill, 15 June 1731, Byrd Correspondence, I, 444.
and acquaintance. We do not improve ourselves in politiques at coffee-houses, so as to be able to decide the pretensions and interests of all the princes of Europe. We know not how to hold the Ballance of power, and weigh to a grain the strength and riches of all our neighbouring nations. We study not the gentle art of love, nor can flatter the women into a good opinion of their undoers. We have no court where we might improve in our honesty and sincerity, no senate to teach us publick spirit, and the love of our country. These my Lord are huge disadvantages, which I must be content to lye under in this solitary part of the world.

The advantage of Europe paled next to the innocence of the patriarchs. Jefferson could not have agreed more. In explaining to a young friend the advantages of a Virginia education over an English one, Jefferson said that in England the student learned only "drinking, horse-racing and boxing." Continuing, he stated that the student going to England for an education acquired

A fondness of European luxury and dissipation and a contempt for the simplicity of his own country; he is fascinated with the privileges of European aristocrats, and sees with abhorrence the lovely equality which the poor enjoys with the rich in his own country: he contracts a partiality for aristocracy or monarchy . . .

In short, his mind was poisoned and his virtues and simplicity destroyed.

66 William Byrd II to John Boyle, Baron Boyle of Broghill, 28 July 1730, Byrd Correspondence, I, 432-33; See also, Drayton, A View of South-Carolina, 13.

67 Thomas Jefferson to John Banister, Jr., 15 October 1785, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, VIII, 635-37. See also St. George Tucker [Moses Do-Little], "For the Old Bachellor," Tucker-Coleman Papers, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.
Two traditions influenced the development of the concept of the ideal man in America. The first, the English concept of the ideal man, emphasized the value of refined European civilization. The second, the notion of natural simplicity, emphasized the virtue of nature and the way it freed man from the degenerative influence of European civilization. Edmund Randolph, Virginia historian and Attorney General under George Washington, had thought the two traditions impossible to unite. During the Convention of Virginia in 1775, Richard Henry Lee, "elegance personified," had used "Artifical oratory" in addressing the convention. But triumph belonged to a man of the new order. Patrick Henry "trampled upon the rules of oratory and yet triumphed." The natural man far surpassed the English gentleman, even in the halls of government. Randolph suggested that the two traditions were antithetical. William Wirt, however, thought otherwise, and he tried to fuse the concept of the gentleman and pastoralism.

William Wirt was a transitional figure in the history of the development of the gentlemanly ideal. Born just prior to the American Revolution, and living until 1834, Wirt worked harder than any other American at perpetuating the gentlemanly ideal. His early essays were typical

Randolph, History of Virginia, 213.
Addisonian works with their hortatory messages. As Americans abandoned the essay and began to rely on "Chesterfieldian" letters to advise young men on the ideal, Wirt was in the vanguard of the movement. Wirt capped his career with a commencement address at Rutgers University, thereby recognizing the importance of such addresses in perpetuating the ideal. Beginning with the Addisonian essay made popular during the colonial period, and concluding with the commencement address which was the major innovation of the antebellum period, Wirt was indeed a transitional figure.

Wirt's earliest work was in the Addisonian tradition. The Letters of the British Spy (1803) was an effort to comment on the social conditions of Virginia and to praise those aspects of society which approached the ideal. The most important literary work of his career, though, was Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry. In Patrick Henry, Wirt tried to create a character possessing the attributes of both the cultivated and the natural man. The following passage describing Henry illustrates the tenuous relationship he portrayed between the natural man and the gentleman:

His manners, indeed, were still unostentatious, frank, and simple; but they had all the natural ease and unaffected gracefulness, which distinguished the circles of the polite and wellbred. On occasions, too, where state and ceremony were expected, there was no man who could act better his part. I have had a description of Mr. Henry, entering, in the full dress which I have mentioned, the hall of delegates, at whose bar he was about to appear as an advocate, and
saluting the house all around, with a dignity and even majesty, that would have done honour to the most polished courtier in Europe. This, however, was only on extraordinary occasions, when such a deportment was expected, and was properly in its place. In general, his manners were those of the plain Virginian gentleman—kind—open—candid—and conciliating—warm without insincerity, and polite without pomp—neither chilling by his reserve, nor fatiguing by his loquacity—but adapting himself, without an effort, to the character of his company.69

The natural aristocrat could adapt himself to the most courtly company, but he never became trapped by the "hypocritical ceremonies" of European civilization.70 Wirt believed that the ideal man was the natural aristocrat with the best traits of both the natural man and the cultivated gentleman. Understandably, he ended up with a man both natural and highly cultivated. The Henry biography is marked throughout by paradox. The paradox was due to Wirt's effort to create a man both excessively cultivated and excessively natural. Henry's genius was "left at large," argued Wirt, "to reveal in all the wilderness and boldness of Nature . . . ." Yet his genius never strayed too far from English tradition, for the Henry of Wirt's biography studied geography and read all the classic historical works, Livy being his favorite. He read Livy yearly during his youth, according to Wirt.71 Jefferson warned Wirt that


70 Wirt first discussed the virtue of primitive simplicity in British Spy. See especially, 133-34.

71 Wirt, Patrick Henry, 31.
"that Mr. Henry read Livy through once a year is a known impossibility with those who knew him." He also objected to Wirt's statement that Henry had studied geography. Nevertheless, Wirt refused to alter his characterization of Henry. Wirt's aim was to inspire young men to struggle for the ideal, not to report historical fact.

Wirt tried to reconcile the two contradictory traditions which had captured the imagination of southerners. He viewed the gentleman as a man of simplicity. His origins were humble, yet he was a natural aristocrat. His grace, manners, and intellectual education equaled those of the English gentleman, yet they remained hidden from view until called forth by urgent circumstances. At that time the

exuviae of the clown . . . shed themselves spontaneously . . . . The spirit of his genius awakened all his features. His countenance shone with a nobleness and grandeur . . . . His action became graceful, bold, and commanding . . . .

He became, in a phrase, an accomplished English gentleman.

Colonial southerners had embraced the English concept of the ideal man, but environmental conditions in the New World forced them to adapt the concept to its new setting. The evolution did not end with the American

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72Thomas Jefferson to William Wirt, 4 September 1816, Memoirs of Wirt, I, 362.

73William Wirt to Francis W. Gilmer, 26 January 1817, Memoirs of Wirt, II, 15.

74Wirt, Patrick Henry, 43.
Revolution. As Wirt's biography of Patrick Henry suggests, southerners would continue to try to reshape the gentlemanly ideal to better reflect the social values of the society. The concept of the gentleman continued to evolve in the South throughout the antebellum period, as will become evident in the next three chapters.
CHAPTER IV
Advice Literature in the Old South

Southerners, recognizing their debt to England, frequently alluded to the English origins of their society. "The best society in the States is moulded upon English customs, usages and notions of etiquette," reported one writer in the Southern Quarterly Review, who thought the debt incalculable. He explained, however, that "as our own individuality develops itself more and more, our direct and conscious imitation grows less and less . . . ." He lamented that departures from English custom occasionally lacked good taste, but he believed it essential that America develop its individuality.¹ To prevent extreme departures and perhaps even the complete disintegration of refined behavior, southerners read and recommended that their young men read English advice literature. The works of Lord Chesterfield and Joseph Addison were great favorites. "Try to get a Copy of Addison's Evidences & write me of them . . . ." advised one correspondent of

William B. Randolph. Over three decades later, the young James Johnston Pettigrew of North Carolina received a letter from a friend who excitedly reported the publication of a new edition of Chesterfield's letters to his son. The works of Addison and Chesterfield were widely respected in the South and were accepted as important guides to perfection.

English advice literature influenced the southern concept of the gentleman. The parallels between the English and the southern concepts are unmistakable. Southerners, however, never totally adopted English values and standards because they believed many of their own values and standards to be superior. They were superior because southerners had cast off the pretensions of aristocracy and loyalty to

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3 E. Burke Haywood to James Johnston Pettigrew, 19 October 1846, Pettigrew Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh. See also, John Pool, Address Delivered Before the Two Societies of the University of North Carolina, June 6, 1860 (Chapel Hill: John B. Neathery for the Philanthropic Society, 1860), 10; Alva Woods, Baccalaureate Address Delivered August 10, 1835, at the Fourth Annual Commencement of the University of the State of Alabama (Tuscaloosa: Meek & M'Guire, 1835), 10; Bartholomew F. Moore, An Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina (Raleigh: Recorder Office, 1846), 19. See also, Cady, The Gentleman in America, 87.

4 The gentlemanly ideal in America was never the conscious imitation of the English ideal as suggested in Cady, The Gentleman in America, 85.
an oppressive monarch. One orator noted that the novels of Great Britain, especially those of Sir Walter Scott, tried to "convince us that nothing could be added to her forms of society of excellence or beauty." The speaker found the notion that a true gentleman could ever fight in behalf of aristocracy and tyranny, and against the "bold and generous resistance to oppression," completely incomprehensible. Southerners were cognizant of their debt to the English, but they recognized the need to reshape the concept of the ideal man to better reflect their own experience. Colonial pastoralism, the American Revolution, and the rise of democracy affected the world view of southerners to such an extent that it forced adaptation of the English ideal.

Southerners wrote no books comparable to Elyot's The Governor, Peacham's English Gentleman, or the myriad volumes of similar theme produced in England, although they aspired no less than Englishmen to perfection. Augustus Summerfield wrote in his diary that all men ought to "endeavor to approach 'the virtues of an ideal man to as great extent, as near as possible.'" Castiglione would have

5William J. Grayson, An Oration, Delivered in the College Chapel, Before the Clariosophic Society Incorporated, and the Inhabitants of Columbia, on the 3d December, 1827 (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1828), 9-10.

6Augustus Summerfield Diary, 8 August 1853, Augustus Summerfield Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
certainly applauded those words. The great Renaissance man of South Carolina, James Henry Hammond, recognized that his excited age had a "beau ideal," although in one of his many moments of melancholy he feared it might be the "Practical Man" rather than the literary man. Both Summerfield and Hammond believed that their society had an ideal to which men ought to aspire. The idea was a common one, although southerners expressed it in a variety of ways.

Southerners more often provided specific examples of men who ought to be emulated as models than they offered theoretical discourses on the concept of the ideal man. St. George Tucker once explained that he esteemed several of his acquaintances as "models of human perfection and excellence." In an address delivered before the students of Randolph-Macon College, the future president of the nation, John Tyler, commented that the two men whose names the college bore provided "A model of almost absolute perfection, if properly blended and successfully imitated ..." A plethora of such illustrations exists


8 St. George Tucker to W[illiam] Wirt, 4 April 1813, in Memoirs of Wirt, I, 316.

in southern writings. One orator offered an example of a model for "the gentleman, the scholar, the statesman, the patriot and the noble and disinterested man," while another orator offered a "finished model of a North Carolina gentleman," and still another provided a model of a "Southern planter, and a noble Carolina gentleman." Upon the death of General James Johnston Pettigrew, a correspondent remembered that "At the bar,--as a student,--as a statesman,--and in all that charms in social life, he had ever been foremost--he had failed in nothing,--and now at last, as a Soldier he was a model." He provided a model for others to follow.

The use of the terms ideal and model clearly illustrate the southern familiarity with and acceptance of


11 George Davis, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North-Carolina (Raleigh: Holden & Wilson, "Standard" Office, 1855), 29.


the concept of an ideal man. It is not necessary, though, to rely only on statements which include the use of those two words. Southerners expressed the same concept when they referred to "true manhood," "high toned and true gentleman," "accomplished gentleman," or more simply, "gentleman." Regardless of the term, the meaning was essentially the same. One could argue that no formal appellation was required when a writer discussed those values and aspirations which he held dear. This is especially evidenced in a letter from Alfred Huger of South Carolina. In writing about the head of his family, Huger said that "I have known individuals with Equal & with greater intellectual Power--I have known them with more information and reading--&c &c &c &c--but this my long life I have never known the same combination of Extraordinary properties in one human being!" Huger refrained from

14 Edward S. Joynes, Address Before the Phoenix Literary Society of the College of William and Mary, In Dedication of Their New Hall, on the 8th of December, 1859 (Richmond: Macfarland & Fergusson, 1860), 29; Alfred [English Doby] to Mrs. Alfred E. Doby, 20 April 1863, typescript, Means-English-Doby Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Stephen Elliott, Annual Address Before the Clariosophic and Euphradian Societies of the South Carolina College (Charleston: Steam Power Press of Walker, Evans & C., 1860), 6, 4. On occasion writers referred to perfect men without the use of such identifying terms. The type can be described without attachment of such appellations.

15 Alfred Huger to J. B. Huger, 2 September 1854, Alfred Huger Letterpress Book, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.
using the words ideal, model, or gentleman, but his intent is no less clear than Richard Brathwait's in presenting a complete man.

In southern letters, one or two elements of the ideal man often captured greater interest than the entire concept. Writers often emphasized just character, cultivation, class, or the various components of the three elements. A correspondent might write a letter urging a young man to develop flawless virtue, cultivate a well-rounded intellect, or work mightily at amassing great wealth. Taken by itself, the letter reveals only the values of a single person. When the statements found in the letter are replicated in numerous other letters written by other correspondents, they reveal the values of the society. This is the case for the Old South. Writers continually discussed character, class, and cultivation. The historian need only draw together the discussions, or in the words of John Tyler, "properly blend them," in order to present a composite ideal man. When the composite is coupled with specific discussions of the ideal or models, then an accurate description of the society's ideal type is presented—even in the absence of works like those of Castiglione.

Southerners recognized, just as numerous writers during the European Renaissance had, the impossibility of achieving perfection. But ante-bellum southern novelist
John Pendleton Kennedy insisted that the assertion of excellent qualities "is proof of an appreciation" of those qualities. He believed that the initial southern assertion of virtue proved "the tendency of their aspirations, which is one good step towards success in accomplishing them."\(^{16}\) However, he understood that while they appreciated virtue, while they embraced the ideal of the gentleman, southerners could never attain perfection. Although they never expected to reach the ideal, southerners did expect men to struggle to approximate it.

Private letters reflected southern values and aspirations just as Chesterfield's letters to his son reflected those of the English. Indeed, letters of advice must be regarded as the principal form of advice literature of the Old South. The letters men wrote to their sons, who were often attending distant schools, are of especially great value for the study of the ideal of the gentleman. Writing to a son studying medicine in Charleston, South Carolina, John Gage explained that although "you are of full age, . . . and from under the immediate direction of the parent, still I feel bound to counsel with you of those

subjects, as respect your fair & Honourable stand in Society both of the Religious & then otherwise . . . ."17
The son was no longer under the direct supervision of his father, but Gage was determined that he understand and live according to the standards of their society. The elder Gage expressed a widely felt concern in that he wanted to see his son set out on the right path of life, the proper path to preferment as it was known in an earlier age. To insure that his son would know all that was expected of him, Gage sent him a number of didactic letters. In a similar letter, Samuel Willard Tillinghast mentioned to his son that "You will find all I have said mere common place, a reiteration of what is to be found in every book on moral conduct."18 Should his son follow his advice, Tillinghast believed the young man would approach the ideal type. For over five years Adolphus Williamson Mangum received letters of advice from his father. Ellison Mangum constantly "exhorted" his son to follow the advice contained in his letters. He furthermore expected his son to follow his counsel faithfully so that he might in the future be

17 John Gage to James M. Gage, 14 January 1837, James M. Gage Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

18 Samuel Willard Tillinghast to John H. Tillinghast, 6 June 1853. Tillinghast Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.
able to "give thanks to heaven for blessing me with such a son."19

By the late 1820's, William Wirt had abandoned his career as a writer. He had originally begun writing in an effort to influence young readers and guide them toward gentility. Seeing Patrick Henry as a suitable subject for a "discourse on rhetoric, patriotism and morals," he thought that a biography "might be made useful to young men who are just coming forward into life . . . ."20 But even before he completed the Henry project, he began to question the good didactic literature could accomplish. Brooding over the apparent failure of his Addisonian essays entitled "The Old Bachelor," he morosely complained that

I wrote in hope of doing good, but my essays dropped into the world like stones pitched into a mill-pond; a little report from the first plunge; a ring or two rolling fore, and no visible change in the waters to mark that such things had ever been.21

Despite his waning belief in the usefulness of didactic essays and books, Wirt completed the biography of Henry, but afterwards he set his literary career aside. Still,


abandoning one form of advice literature did not signify the complete abandonment of his goal. If he could not shape the young men of the nation into gentlemen, he could at least shape his own son thusly. During the 1820's, Wirt returned to a familiar medium in order to direct the development of his own son. Having written a number of lengthly didactic letters during the 1810's to the young Francis W. Gilmer, Wirt concluded that he should do the same for his own boy. He had written to Gilmer on one occasion to explain that he wished to "use the privilege of ... age and experience to give you a few hints." The letters he wrote to his son followed much the same pattern. In one letter, he recommended that the boy read The Fool of Quality to see how a gentleman ought to behave. Wirt continued his counsel, writing that "Father wants you to be a high-minded gentleman and a fine scholar: and he hopes to live to see you both--and so you will be if you are industrious and always act and speak like a gentleman's son." Abandoning all thought of teaching the young men

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22 William Wirt to Francis W. Gilmer, 29 August 1815, in Memoirs of William Wirt, I, 349. See also, the various letters from Wirt to Gilmer quoted in Chapter III.  
of the nation how to become gentlemen, he nevertheless
continued his effort to direct his son and a few close
friends toward the same goal. Southern letters are replete
with similar hortative letters. Advice on every aspect of
life appeared. John C. Calhoun, the political philosopher,
heaped advice upon his several sons. To one son he wrote
you must not forget your books. You have a good
opportunity for reading & improving your mind, &
I hope you will not neglect it. To make sure work
in the proper use of your time, your best way
would be to divide the day into fixed portions,
and allot a part to reading & improving your mind,
another to exercise, & another to attending to
business.24

To a second son Calhoun wrote the following:

You must not think you have finished your education;
but on the contrary, that you have not more than
begun. We ought to consider life itself, but as a
school, and that our education terminates only with
our life.25

Calhoun determinedly worked to direct his sons towards his
view of the ideal, and with that end in mind, he constantly
offered guidance to them—even long into their adulthood.
Ebenezer Pettigrew, one of the wealthiest men in ante-bellum
North Carolina, importuned his three sons "to make your
conduct such that your poor father may have it in his power


25 John C. Calhoun to Cadet Patrick Calhoun, 9 June 1841, John C. Calhoun Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
to say it is well that I have lived." More detailed instructions to a son came from David Campbell, of Tennessee. Campbell explained to his son, who was studying law with St. George Tucker in Virginia, that

as you are poore, and opportunity limited, you will not be the object of envy, and by a high minded honourable & friendly deportment to all men, both rich and poore, all will be your friends. Pride and pomposity is out of the question for any reasonable man to possess. Wealth and education, will not justify it in a country so free as ours, and reason condemns it with the strongest powers of demonstration, wisdom is humble before all men, of all its great acquirements. 

Another father directing the course of his son was John Tyler. Tyler sent specific instructions to his boy, along with ten dollars. He told the lad to "keep a dollar or two by you--and this can only be done by never spending a cent uselessly." He continued, in the same letter, explaining that "recreation at your age is necessary--but I am sure you will not carry it too far. Your lectures first--and

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then you are ready for genteel society."28 Tyler displayed no small desire to see his son follow the course which would make him a gentleman, and he intended to guide the boy along that path.

Parental advice did not necessarily lead to dutiful compliance on the part of young men. Charles Ruffin, the son of the Virginia firebrand and great gentleman, Edmund Ruffin, incurred his father's wrath by refusing to heed his father's many admonitions. The elder Ruffin, frustrated by his son's disobedience, concluded that he had to take drastic action. He explained the cause of his frustration and mapped out his course of action thusly:

Wrote a letter to my son Charles, announcing my reason & determination, for restricting his income, & restraining his means for indulgence. Before my recent settlement was completed, by which I had first designed to make him an equal sharer with my older children, & in full property, I learned such indications of his former extravagances & heedlessness, as to induce me to retain the legal right to the larger part of the new capital. Since, his waste of

Charles Ruffin failed to live according to the dictates of his father, he refused to live according to the ideal, and as a result, he found himself penalized most severely. It goes without saying that Charles Ruffin was not the only young southerner to ignore fatherly advice, and undoubtedly he was not the only young southerner to be punished for his neglect.

The threat of punishment often sufficed in maintaining obedience. In writing to her son, Alice Izard, of South Carolina, informed the young man that

> While you conduct yourself with propriety [as] you have hither to done, & while you enjoy the good will of the respectable society you are with in, & near Washington, you can never wish for money but to make a good use of it, & both your Father & I should be sorry that you should feel the want of it.

The implication of the letter is clear. Izard could freely draw money from his parents, providing he obeyed their instructions and conducted himself as a gentleman. In the event that he failed to do so, he would suffer the same

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30 Alice Izard to Ralph Izard, 5 January 1803, Izard Family Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
punishment which befell Charles Ruffin—he would be cut off from his patrimony.

Some young men appreciated and even demanded paternal advice. Adolphus Williamson Mangum, in response to one of his father's frequent didactic letters, replied,

> While I was reading your advice to be prudent & persevering &c.—I was reading nothing more than I might have expected from a solicitous father, but when that heaven born exhortation met my view, to decorate & honor the path of virtue, to supremely regard my holy profession, what a thrill of joy darted through my bosom! How unexpected that counsel, & yet how dear, how deeply heartfelt!  

Much less literary in style but making the point every bit as clear was an entry made by George A. Mercer in his diary. "I received a letter tonight from my dear Father," wrote Mercer, "which, like all from him, was filled with good advice . . . ." It would be a mistake to conclude that all young southerners expected or even wanted paternal advice, just as it would be a mistake to assume that all southern parents offered advice. But when advice was offered, its aim was to guide its readers towards the ideal. The value of letters of advice rests upon the richness of the source. Southern letters teem with exhortations aimed

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31 Adolphus Williamson Mangum to Ellison Goodloe Mangum, 2 September 1851, Mangum Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

32 George A. Mercer, 12 April 1855, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
at prodding young men to ever greater heights of excellence. They are a source of information of considerable value.

Letters served as the principal form of advice literature in the South, but they were by no means the only form. Other important forms included novels and biographies, which will be discussed in chapter six, and public addresses. College commencement addresses proved a most appropriate time for speakers to comment on social ideals. The young men attending college commencements were often seated before the speaker for the final time during their college careers; hence the speech provided the last opportunity for the orator to explain the ideal to which he hoped the young men would aspire. Speeches of this type were often considered sufficiently important to warrant publication. The valuable advice could then be disseminated to far greater numbers of young men than those few attending graduation. Francis Lieber, professor of political philosophy and economy at South Carolina College, delivered a commencement address to the graduating class at Miami University of Ohio. Lieber cogently explained the purpose of his presenting the speech by stating the following:

What is the true character of the gentleman, and what rules of action do we derive from the results of this inquiry, might be made useful and instructive to young men who, in receiving a liberal education, are preparing themselves for
Lieber's discussion of the requirements of the true gentleman was applauded in his home state, and efforts such as his were duplicated throughout the South. The speeches of Lieber and other southerners provided a major contribution to the composite southern ideal. Combining paternal hortatory letters and didactic lectures, along with various other extant materials, enables us to delineate a reasonable representation of the gentlemanly ideal of the Old South.

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CHAPTER V

The Gentleman in the Old South

Ante-bellum southerners envisioned an ideal man based on the European and colonial patterns. They agreed that class, cultivation, and character were the requisite elements of gentility, but they never fully accepted the European configuration of the three elements. The southern environment altered the gentlemanly ideal just as the colonial, English, and Italian environments had shaped it during the preceding three centuries. The influence of the American Revolution and the rise of democracy ultimately combined with colonial pastoralism to elevate the simple, natural man above the cultivated, hereditary aristocrat. Additionally, the abolitionist assault on southern virtue caused southerners to lift morality and honor to a new level of importance in the gentlemanly ideal. Thus, in the South, the concept of the gentleman combined European and colonial traditions with new values which originated largely out of southerners' attempts to defend themselves against hostile critics. The gentlemanly ideal of the Old South was, indeed, evolutionary, and a mixture of the old and the new.

Of the three elements of the gentlemanly ideal in the Old South, class stirred the greatest debate. Southerners
were convinced that the gentleman represented the region's most elevated class—he was an aristocrat—but they were undecided as to what formed the basis of that exalted social position. Southerners recognized the existence of social distinction, but they were uncertain whether social distinction rested upon birth, wealth, or occupation. Many southerners believed the gentleman of the South to be of noble origin. "He comes usually of aristocratic parentage," wrote Daniel R. Hundley in *Social Relations in Our Southern States*. Continuing, Hundley explained that the gentleman in Virginia traced his origins back to the English cavaliers, French Huguenots, and Scotch Jacobites. Those in Maryland traced their ancestry to the Irish Catholics, and in South Carolina the gentleman was descended from the Huguenots—"at least the better class of them." The gentleman in the various other southern states was the scion of either Spanish Dons or French Catholics.¹ Birth, then, served as the first determinant of gentility, and it assured the gentleman of superiority over others. Hundley was not alone in his belief. Edmund Ruffin, the scion of a noble old Virginia family, also thought birth helped determine gentility, and he was of the opinion that persons of "gentle blood" were more capable of dealing with adversity than

persons of "lower origins."

This is especially evident in one entry in the Ruffin diary in which he told of a young man of noble lineage but fallen economic position. He had been robbed of his inheritance by his father's mismanagement, and yet the young man refused to acquiesce in his deprived condition. Through hard work, first in acquiring an education at the University of Virginia and then in opening a "classical and mathematical school," he managed to restore his family to an extensive estate. He owed his rapid success, at least according to Ruffin, to the aristocratic character he had inherited at birth. The gentleman was a naturally superior man.

Hundley and Ruffin shared their respect for the aristocracy of birth with Nathaniel Beverley Tucker. Tucker wrote to his half brother that "you have always thought me a little inclined to be an aristocrat, and tho sometimes rebuked for family pride, I could never feel it a reproach." Tucker and Ruffin both felt proud of their family heritage. and all three men undoubtedly would have agreed with the assessment appearing in the Southern Literary Messenger that "The planter [was] . . . an F[irst] F[amily of] V[irginia]

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2Edmund Ruffin, 1 March 1857, Diary of Ruffin, I, 42.

3Ibid., 19 September 1859, I, 341-42.

by virtue of a pedigree which went back—through a long succession of titled progenitors—to the roll of Battle Abbey."\(^5\) The idea that they originated from nobility was not limited to the proud planters of Virginia and South Carolina, and Daniel Hundley. On the "Hill" at the University of North Carolina one orator outlined the origins of the first settlers of the state. He explained that

There were no needy adventures, driven by necessity—no unlettered boors, ill at ease in the haunts of civilization, and seeking proper sphere amidst the barbarism of savages. They were gentlemen of birth and education, bred in the refinements of polished society, bringing with them ample fortunes, gentle manners, and cultivated minds.\(^6\)

The men who first settled North Carolina, according to the orator, were gentlemen by birth, and the descendants of those first gentlemen-colonists considered themselves the same. Gentility rested upon the foundation of birth—it was inherited. The ideal man, therefore, ought to be of gentle origins.

The idea that the emphasis upon heredity originated out of the romanticism which swept the nation has been explored by Rollin G. Osterweis. According to his argument, the vision southerners had of themselves was colored by the


\(^6\)George Davis, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North-Carolina, June 6, 1855 (Raleigh: Holden & Wilson, "Standard" Office, 1855).
romantic movement to the extent that they accepted the legend of noble ancestry and then sought to prove its validity. Hundley, Ruffin, and Tucker may well have been caught up on the chivalric ideal, as was Langdon Cheves who believed that southerners were "all of gentle descent." 7 A second possible explanation can be extrapolated from the thesis David Donald presented in his presidential address before the Southern Historical Association. Donald attributed the volume of southern literature in defence of the institution of slavery to status anxieties. Men of old established families, whom one historian has referred to as classic Mugwump types, were exceedingly disgruntled at their inability to assume roles of leadership in either society or politics. "Most looked back with longing to an earlier day of the Republic when men like themselves--their own ancestors--had been leaders in the South," argued Donald. 8 Just as they created elaborate defences of slavery in an effort to establish themselves as leaders, they may have insisted that gentle birth serve as a requisite for


the ideal man as a means of advancing their own claim to southern leadership. It seems within reason to suggest that southerners who defended gentle birth as a requirement for the ideal man were attempting to establish themselves as the natural leaders of the South, and that their reasoning was influenced by a romantic vision of the importance of ancestry. It is one argument which helps explain why only some southerners embraced birth as a requisite of gentility, but it is an argument which could benefit from further study of the aristocratic ideas of Tucker, Ruffin, Cheves, and other similar southerners.

Greatly overshadowing the argument that the gentleman came from noble ancestors was the contention that America was free of unnatural social forms—especially status based upon birth. A contributor to the *Southern Quarterly Review* suggested that America's greatest advantage over Great Britain was the absence of all "artificial distinctions" based on family name.9 His sentiments were echoed throughout the halls of southern universities. At the University of Alabama, Henry W. Hilliard voiced the sentiments of other southern orators when he explained to his audience that the government of the nation

forgets the artificial distinctions of birth, and passing by the unworthy descendant of patrician

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blood, seeks the humblest and poorest of its enterprising sons, who has divorced himself from the obscurity of his origins by the might and grandeur of his intellect. 10

A few years later Alva Woods, president of the University of Alabama, announced to the graduating class that Americans "acknowledge none to be of noble blood, but nature's noblemen." 11 Still another orator concluded that "mind, not body, places one man above another." 12 Similar sentiments were expressed throughout the South. The nation would remain in the hands of the people as long as all forms of "invidious distinctions" could be held in check. 13


11 Alva Woods, Baccalaureate Address Delivered December 17, 1836. At the Fifth Annual Commencement of the University of the State of Alabama (n.p.: n.p. for the Trustees, 1836), 5.


13 See, William Hooper, A Valedictory Address, Delivered to the Students of the University of North Carolina, January 21, 1838 (Raleigh: Office of the Raleigh Register, 1838), 18; Drinkard, An Oration on the Life and Character of Patrick Henry, 9; Pool, Address Delivered Before the Two Societies of the University of North Carolina, 6-7; Aaron V. Brown, Address Delivered to the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, May 31, 1854 (Raleigh: William C. Daub, 1854), 26; Grayson, Oration Delivered in the College Chapel, 15; Moore, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 23-24; Lincoln L. Ley to J. J[ohnston] Pettigrew, 8 September 1853, Pettigrew Papers, North Carolina
Two explanations come to mind as to why many southerners rejected birth as a determinant of gentility, one based on the widespread republican sentiment existing in the South, and the other based on the social mobility of the ante-bellum period. "You are citizens of a prosperous and powerful Republic, where no invidious distinctions of Patrician and Plebian give weakness the ascendancy over strength, and follow the control over wisdom," pronounced the University of North Carolina valedictorian of 1838.  

The young William Hooper believed that the American system of government insured that no man could dominate his fellow citizens merely because of his pedigree. Two years previous to Hooper's speech, Alva Woods informed his graduating class that "the great doctrine of equal rights" had allowed the government to "discard those civil distinctions which are made without talent and maintained without merit." The idea that the republican form of government had freed the nation from the clutches of an aristocracy

Department of Archives and History, Raleigh. Two examples which illustrate a rejection of aristocracy by criticizing the European aristocracy are, Diary of European Trip of Oswell E. Charmichael, 24 June 1839, Carmichael Family Books, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; J[osiah] C. Nott to James M. Gage, 19 September 1835, James McKibbin Gage Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

14Hooper, Valedictory Address of North Carolina, 1838, 18.

15Woods, Baccalaureate Address, 1836, 5. See also Hilliard, Erosophic Society Address, 6.
of birth received additional support from Aaron V. Brown, who concluded that according to both theory and practice every political office—even the government's highest offices—"may be filled by the most humble and obscure individual."\(^ {16}\) Political offices were opened to even the humblest individual providing he proved himself deserving, for, during an age of progress, explained William Gaston, "every man is the architect of his own fortune, the author of his own greatness or insignificance, happiness or misery."\(^ {17}\) Gaston recognized that through hard work a man could overcome his common origins, and rise above them. In the republic, talent counted rather than birth.

Social mobility also undermined the notion that birth was a determinant of gentility. The ante-bellum South was a fluid society, and men who struggled often climbed the social ladder. One of Ferdinand L. Steel's great ambitions was to rise in the world, an ambition which he eventually achieved.\(^ {18}\) James H. Hammond also succeeded in climbing the social ladder, and although he tried to

\(^ {16}\)Aaron V. Brown, Address to Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 1854, 26.

\(^ {17}\)William Gaston, Address Delivered Before the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, at Chapel Hill, N. C., June 20, 1832, 5th ed. (Chapel Hill: James M. Henderson, 1838), 6.

hide his humble origins, his efforts were in vain. The list of southern leaders who were of common origin, a list which included George McDuffie, Langdon Cheves, Alexander Stephens, and Jefferson Davis, to name just a few, was so extensive that none could deny the existence of social mobility. And as the ranks of southern leadership were filled by men of lowly birth, few men demanded that gentle birth be a requirement for the gentleman. To do so would amount to an announcement that the South lacked the leadership of gentlemen. The great majority of southerners recognized the fluidity of southern society and therefore believed the gentleman could come from any class.

The other elements of class were regarded as far more important than that of birth. Wealth, another important element of the European ideal, was thought to be of slight importance to a number of southerners. The young John C. Calhoun wrote to his future mother-in-law in 1809 to explain that he intended to practice law only until he could "make a decent independence." He would then abandon the practice because "I am not ambitious of great wealth."
Some southerners even believed great wealth to be dangerous to the gentleman. The Philomatheon Society at the University of North Carolina held a debate on the question "Has a fortune been a blessing or a curse to the greatest number of young men in this country?" The society concluded that wealth had, indeed, proven a great curse.  

In a speech before the graduating class at the University of Alabama, Alva Woods stated that "I do not regard any young gentleman as having taken the first step in the road to an honorable eminence, who has not ceased to rely upon his friends and his wealth . . . ." Man must prove his own worth, independent of money, because wealth tended to make men complacent and lethargic, and it could lead to indolence and ostentation. The young gentleman's greatest advantage was poverty, reasoned a contributor to The Southern Planter. Many southerners were indignant about the race for wealth.

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21 Philomatheon Society Proceedings, 11 January 1850, Philomatheon Society Book, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, Ann [B] Pettigrew to Charles & William Pettigrew, 6 January 1830, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

22 Alva Woods, Address to the Students of the University of Alabama, Delivered December 19, 1832 (Tuscaloosa: W. W. & F. W. M'Guire, Printers by Special Request, 1833), 18.

23 Eaton, Mind of the Old South, 47.

24 Timothy Titcomb, "Poverty Not So Great A Curse," The Southern Planter 20 (July 1860), 399.
People across the land had become "absorbed in a love of gain," complained John C. Calhoun.\textsuperscript{25} Another writer lamented that accumulation had become the moving principle throughout the land.\textsuperscript{26} Southerners regretted that men refused to set aside the spirit of accumulation even during the Civil War. A correspondent asked rhetorically, "Why don't the people burn up their corn & every thing?" He answered that it was "Because they love their property more than their country."\textsuperscript{27} A Confederate army captain replied to his wife that

\begin{quote}
You are perfectly just in your criticisms, & I wish every woman in the Southern country would express her unqualified contempt & censure at such despicable & pusilanimous [sic] conduct. It is lamentable to witness throughout our whole country the miserable & craven spirit that corrupts & incites to extortation & speculation the hearts of some of our people, & makes them live & thirst alone for money, perfectly regardless
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25}J[ohn] C[alhoun] to James Hampson, 9 May 1838, John C. Calhoun Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.


\textsuperscript{27}[?] to "Brother," 13 February 1862, John DeBerniere Hooper Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
& unconscious of the death struggle we are in, & its results.28

The ante-bellum Virginia writer and humorist, George M. Bagby, poked fun at those who exhibited such a cavalier attitude towards their economic affairs. In a tongue-in-cheek article he wrote for the New Orleans Delta, Bagby explained that he had made the mistake of trying to organize his economic affairs and pay off all of his debts. "I spent a whole winter at this business, and will give you the benefit of the experience acquired." he wrote. He recommended that the gentleman "Never attempt to settle up as long as you live." Clearly ridiculing the men who pretended that money was of no interest to the gentleman, Bagby stated, "Go gentlemen fully down to your grave, with your affairs hotch-potch; don't worry yourself prematurely to death in the vain effort to get things straight."29 He understood that southerners rarely became great planters, or stayed in that position for long, by ignoring their business interests. Without profit, even the richest planter would decline, just as hundreds of reckless planters had already fallen upon hard times. Planters worked tirelessly

28 Alfred [English Doby] to Mrs. Alfred E. Doby, 15 August 1863, typed copy in Means-English-Doby Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

to increase the size of their land and slave holdings—at least the successful ones did—and they succeeded only by minimizing costs and maximizing profits. We saw earlier Edmund Ruffin's comment on a friend who, though deprived of his patrimony by his father's mismanagement of the family plantation, had struggled until he had acquired substantial wealth. Ruffin believed few men deserved more esteem or admiration. He respected the man for his ability to manage his own affairs, an attribute highly valued by other southerners. Daniel Hundley suggested that the true gentleman of the South had learned that survival required attention to his economic affairs. William Page recognized that the gentleman had to be able to manage his accounts. With that in mind, he directed his young ward, Benjamin F. Carter, to learn bookkeeping. The Reverend

Francis Nash Boney made a particularly trenchant comment when he stated that "The really impressive thing about the historical Southern aristocracy is the way it has always appeared to be unique while actually swimming swiftly in the mainstream of acquisitive capitalistic American life." Boney, "The Southern Aristocrat," Mid-west Quarterly 15 (Autumn 1974), 229, 226-27. See also, Edward Pessen's article, "How Different from Each Other were the Antebellum North and South?" The American Historical Review 85 (December 1981), especially 1122-27.

Edmund Ruffin, 19 September 1859, Diary of Ruffin, I, 341-42.

Hundley, Social Relations, 30.

William Page to Benjamin F. Carter, 25 August 1811, William Page Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also the response
Charles C. Jones of Georgia concurred with Page. Jones impressed upon his children the need to carefully manage all financial matters. Nowhere is his success better illustrated than in a letter from his son in which the younger Charles C. Jones explained to his father the details of a fortunate investment he had made and which had brought substantial returns. He noted that

The Central Railroad, in addition to their semi-annual dividend of ten percent, have declared a stock dividend of twelve and a half percent. Thus every owner of eight shares will now have nine. Twenty-seven and a half percent in one year is uncommon. Would I that we all owned a hundred thousand dollars' worth of stock, and that a like dividend could be realized every year.34

The Jones family's meticulous concern for the details of their expenses and profits illustrates the southern interest in money. The elevated status of the gentleman depended upon wealth, in any of its varied forms, and southerners believed the gentleman was obligated to maintain and increase his holdings.

Edmund Ruffin thought men who opposed or criticized the accumulation of capital to be singularly mistaken. Commenting on George Fitzhugh's analysis of capitalism, he stated that Fitzhugh's "opposition to interest of capital, which is in fact opposition to the accumulation of capital (as what inducement would there be to accumulate, if it could yield no profit?) is foolish." According to Ruffin, men worked for only three reasons. First, some were physically forced to labor. Second, some were compelled to labor in order to survive. Third, some labored in order to accumulate wealth. The gentleman fell into the third category. And so it was with Alfred Doby, the Confederate captain from Camden, South Carolina. Doby went to the heart of the matter in a letter to his wife. He explained that unless he received a commission and a regular salary, "or any money," he would leave the army and return home. Doby's loyalty to the Confederacy was unquestionable, but he was determined that the war not interfere with his economic progress. Doby was not alone in this respect. Edmund Ruffin, once again, did not want two of his sons in

35Edmund Ruffin, 26 October 1858, Diary of Ruffin, I, 240-41

36Ibid., 23 February 1859, I, 287-89.

the Confederate army. He found a number of excuses to justify their absence from service, but one of the major excuses was that their economic interests would suffer without their daily superintendence. Money mattered a great deal to the gentleman.

Ruffin advocated capitalism just as strongly as Fitzhugh condemned it. Which was the proper path to preferment in the South? On the one hand, southerners condemned those who singlemindedly sought to accumulate great wealth, and on the other hand, southerners pursued wealth with relish. An article in the Southern Quarterly Review suggests a resolution of the seeming contradiction. It stated that

the spirit of the age is two-fold. On the one hand an intense thirst for knowledge prevails; on the other an absorbing spirit of accumulation. The problem is to cause these two elements of civilization to harmonize.

In the view of many southerners the two spirits of the age were not incompatible. The gentleman could seek both wealth and cultivation. He should be both wealthy and cultivated. He could seek wealth without becoming "so great a lover of the almighty dollar as his Northern kinsman," according to

38Edmund Ruffin, 11 March 1862, Diary of Ruffin, II, 253-54; Edmund Ruffin, 3 May 1862, Diary of Ruffin, II, 292-93.

39"Art. VII.—Instruction in Schools and Colleges," Southern Quarterly Review, n.s. 6 (October 1852), 460.
James H. Hammond, in examining the spirit of the age, lamented that "the accumulation of wealth, it is thought, is unquestionable progress . . . ." But, he argued, it ought never be an end in itself. He continued by stating that

Wealth as an instrument in the grasp of genius, and learning, and enterprise, may be made the means of accomplishing wonders. It may give vast power, and become a most effective agent in promoting the welfare and improvement of mankind.  

Both of the above quotations suggest that the competing spirits of the age could be harmonized. The gentleman had to strike a balance in all things which he did, and he sought wealth just as he did everything else—with moderation. He never allowed the accumulation of money to become an obsession, for the gentleman never became obsessive about anything. He acquired wealth because it was important for what it allowed him to accomplish—it allowed him to become a complete man, to acquire the requisite cultivation and practice the required virtues. It was an "instrument" in his hands. He never pursued wealth out of a preoccupation with money. Southerners could, therefore, criticize the pursuit of money even as they themselves pursued it. They criticized the blind pursuit of wealth because it illustrated the worst form of imbalance in man. They sought wealth

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40 Hundley, *Social Relations*, 30

because no man could become a complete gentleman without it, at least according to the ideal.

The ideal man of the South was a useful member of society. He might possess great wealth, but that did not free him from the duty to engage in an occupation. A wide range of occupations was respected by southerners. Orators warned young men to waste no time agonizing over which professor might be most suitable to their particular "genius," but to quickly choose one and throw the entire force of their energy into it. "Whatever one devotes himself to earnestly," proclaimed one speaker, "he will come to love, and whatever he loves, he will succeed in." \(^{42}\) Hard work ultimately insured reward, because the gentleman was the "architect of his own fortune." \(^{43}\) The variety of occupations available to the gentleman was suggested by one man, who apparently had a difficult time settling upon a single career. He listed three "projects of life" in his diary as follows:

First farming--the most healthy & happy.--To have perfect order & system in everything. To have a good team, the latest improvement of all suitable tools, & sufficiency of them.

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\(^{42}\)James C. Bruce, An Address Delivered Before the Alumni and Graduating Class of the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill (Raleigh: North Carolina Standard, 1841), 22.

\(^{43}\)Bedford Brown, An Address Delivered to the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina in Gerald Hall, June 1839 (Raleigh: T. Loring at the Office of the North Carolina Standard, 1839), 26.
The second project of life is the keeping of a commission produce store. -- The strictest integrity should mark every transaction, not alone for the selfish motive of having a good opinion of men, but also for the higher and pure longing for a clean record in the Book of life.

The third project of life is the practice of medicine[,] the least agreeable & the most difficult of the three projects.44

Three broad occupational categories are suggested by Everard Green Baker's comments: agriculture, business, and the professions. It was fitting that he listed farming as his first project of life, because planting was the ne plus ultra occupation of the Old South.45 In one of his several important works on the South, Clement Eaton stated that the "plantation has come to stand for the characteristic element in the civilization of the Old South," and that it "set the tone of Southern society," even though only a small minority of southerners could ever be classified as planters.46

Southerners considered planting the perfect occupation. It was, according to the Southern Quarterly Review, "the noblest of human avocations," and John Hartwell Cocke of

44Everard Green Baker Diary, 29 June 1864, Everard Green Baker Diary and Plantation Notes, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

45Taylor, Ante-Bellum South Carolina, 42.

Bremo regarded it as the ideal occupation. Alfred Doby pledged to his wife that "I shall confine myself strictly to agricultural pursuits, which is the occupation nature intended almost especially for the Southern gentleman." Doby's sentiments were widely shared and often repeated. "If God has a chosen people on earth, it is the cultivators of the soil," declared Francis W. Pickens to the Clariosophic Society of South Carolina College. Pickens insisted that the farmer's closeness to nature and his relationship to the soil gave him "higher and stronger virtues."

Expanding on this theme, he added that farmers

act alone from the honest impulse of nature--they find music in the murmur of the book, and delight in the echo of their native hills, as the Swiss does in the notes of his rural song, and if there be a true patriotism to be found, it is where the soil yields up its produce to a laboring community.

The farmer had a special relationship with nature, a relationship which resulted in native simplicity and pure virtue.

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49 Francis W. Pickens, The Anniversary Oration of the Clariosophic Society, Delivered in the Chapel of the South Carolina College, on the 2nd of February, 1827 (Columbia: Sweeny & Sims for the Society, 1827), 7. See also, Aaron V. Brown, Address to the Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 15, 20.
Although southerners generally believed farming to be the most virtuous of occupations, some feared that the occupation had come under attack. A subscriber to *The Southern Planter* asked the editor why agriculture, "the most noble, the most universal, and the most important [of all the arts and sciences], has attracted so little the attention of scientific man?" He lamented that young men flooded into the learned professions, turning their backs on agriculture.  

A contributor to the same periodical complained that "Instead of educating a portion of our youth, and making them intelligent and independent agriculturists, all are doomed to be lawyers, politicians or doctors, to say nothing of the military classes." It seemed to many southerners as if a large number of youths were abandoning agriculture in favor of the learned professions. On the other hand, a number of men, John C. Calhoun among them, used one of the learned professions to catapult them into planting. Once they had made money in a profession, they were able to purchase a farm and "retire" to planting.

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50 Arator, "To the Editor of the Southern Planter," *The Southern Planter* 1 (January 1841), 5. See also, Hundley, *Social Relations*, 55, 57.

51 Andrew Stevenson, "Agricultural Address," *The Southern Planter* 8 (January 1848), 3. See also, "Who would Not be a Farmer," from the Louisville Courier, in *The Southern Planter* 18 (October 1858), 599.

52 John C. Calhoun to Mrs. Floride Calhoun [sic], 6 April 1809, in *Papers of John C. Calhoun*, I, 41.
Agriculturalists condemned the professions because they saw their sons lured away from their farms. Yet in his list of projects of life, Everard Green Baker included one of the learned professions, even though he regarded medicine as distasteful.\textsuperscript{53} The professions which southerners considered acceptable occupations for a gentleman included medicine, law, editing, the military, and the ministry. One orator also included teaching, engineering, and even business in his list of permissible pursuits.\textsuperscript{54} The most prestigious of the learned professions, without question, was law.\textsuperscript{55} Law attracted some men because it placed them upon "the highway to political distinction."\textsuperscript{56} Others selected law as a career because they regarded it a noble calling. One younger southerner ventured into law because it was the

\textsuperscript{53}Everard Green Baker Diary, 29 June 1864, Everard Green Baker Diary and Plantation Notes, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{54}Alva Woods, Baccalaureate Address, Delivered August 11, 1834, at the Third Annual Commencement of the University of the State of Alabama (n.p.: n.p. for the Trustees, 1834), 5-10, See also, McCardell, The Idea of a Southern Nation, 181; Lieber, The Character of the Gentleman, 51-72; Hundley, Social Relations, 49-50.

\textsuperscript{55}Aaron V. Brown, Address to the Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 21. See also, Taylor, Ante-Bellum South Carolina, 42-43.

\textsuperscript{56}A. O. P. Nicholson, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, June 1, 1853 (Raleigh: Standard Office, 1853), 14.
profession of his ancestors. As John Steele Henderson explained his decision,

More by circumstances than inclination I am driven to the study of law; but that shall not hinder me from devoting my whole time and energy to such a noble calling—It was the pride and glory of my ancestors and I am ambitious enough to aspire to tread in their footsteps—Very few men have such noble incentives to action—The memory of illustrious ancestors are continually goading their descendants to greater exertions—My Grandfather was a great lawyer—perhaps the greatest in the legal annals of North Carolina. Is it unnatural that I should desire to equal him? I trust not—Strong motives actuate all men with a virtuous ambition—Some wish to carve for themselves a name—others wish not to disgrace the name which they inherited. Each kind of ambition is laudable.57

The profession a young man selected mattered far less than the energy with which he pursued his career. A gentleman brought distinction to whichever occupation he entered. William Eaton told his audience at the University of North Carolina that regardless of their choice of occupations, they must "never rest satisfied with a dull mediocrity, but press forward with zeal and energy to distinction and eminence."58 The goal of struggling for eminence and

57John Steele Henderson, 23 July 1864, John Steele Henderson Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Henderson's sentiments replicate those of the English discussed in Chapter II. See also, John C. Calhoun to Mrs. Floride Colhoun, 12 August 1805, in Papers of John C. Calhoun, I, 16-17.

58William Eaton, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, May 31, 1848 (Fayetteville, N. C.: Edward J. Hale, 1848), 22. See also, David Campbell to Major William B. Campbell, 19 January 1832, Campbell Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.
shunning mediocrity in one's profession is especially well-illustrated in the following quotation:

If you choose law, then be a lawyer—one deserving of that honorable title. If you choose medicine, then be a physician—one capable of holding in your hands the question of life and death. If you choose divinity, then be a scribe, well instructed in all things pertaining to the relations of man and of God. If you turn to agriculture, then be a planter—one worthy to rule, direct, and control.59

Success mattered far more than the particular occupation the gentleman settled upon, and success depended upon hard work.

The third of Everard Green Baker's projects of life—listed second in his order of discussion—was business. Francis W. Pickens, in his 1827 oration, characterized business as artificial and corrupting.60 Yet one historian has suggested that the much discussed "Hostility to trade seems to have been more pronounced in the first three decades of the nineteenth century than in the 'forties and 'fifties."61 Southern hostility towards trade may have diminished during the final two decades of the ante-bellum period, and some southerners who engaged in trade were welcomed into the ranks of the genteel. But business was

59Elliott, Annual Address Before the Clariosophic and Euphradian Societies of the South Carolina College, 20.

60Pickens, Anniversary Oration of the Clariosophic Society of South Carolina College, 7-8.

61Taylor, Ante-Bellum South Carolina, 43.
never regarded as the occupation of a gentleman; it never attained the status of an ideal pursuit of life.

The occupations most fitting for the gentleman of the South were agriculture first, followed by any one of the learned professions. Although a gentleman might engage in mercantile pursuits, his profits were supposed to be used to buy a plantation. Southerners were also undecided whether or not the gentleman ought to pursue politics or writing. John Esten Cooke, the Virginia novelist, asked the editor of the New York Literary World to withhold his name as author of Leatherstocking and Silk. He explained that "Being identified as the writer of such a book would materially injure me I fear in my profession."62 Judging from the widespread use of pseudonyms, Cooke's fear was shared throughout the southland. William Wirt and John Pendleton Kennedy, among others, adopted pen names for some of their literary endeavors. Writing, to most southerners, was at best an avocation. William Gilmore Simms agreed, suggesting that southern writers were "devoted to other professions," and hence could only write during "moments of leisure."63 Other duties demanded the gentleman's attention,


and thus he wrote only during his spare time. An article in the *Southern Quarterly Review* addressed itself to this characteristic of the South thusly:

> Justly speaking, there is no such thing as a professional literature in the South. Our literature is mostly in the hands of amateurs,—is indulged in as a recreation, as an aside from other duties,—as an agreeable relief from toils which take away other aspect--and *per se* asserts really no existence. It is tributary to our politics or our amusements,—is brief always, in its performance, and spasmodic in its exhibitions. It is rare that you find an individual, addressing himself to it as an occupation--the essential object of his care--the essential necessity of his genius.64

The gentleman might write to find relief from his more mundane pursuits, or else he might turn to writing after he retired, as did Edmund Ruffin.65 In either case, writing was an accepted pursuit, as long as it never interfered with the gentleman's many obligations.

> Just as southerners were uncertain whether writing was a proper pursuit for the gentleman, they questioned whether he ought to participate in politics. As early as 1809, men began to look askance at politics, and during the

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64"Art. III.--Popular Discourses and Orations," *Southern Quarterly Review*, n.s. 4 (July 1851), 319.

65Edmund Ruffin, 5 January 1859, *Diary of Ruffin*, I, 262.
1820's many Americans concluded that politics was a demeaning profession. "If my prayers for him may be heard," wrote St. George Tucker of a friend's newborn son, "[he] will never descend from the happy dignity of a private station." Three decades later Robert F. Charles expressed much the same sentiments. Charles apologized for having written about political intrigue in a letter to Peter S. Bacot in South Carolina. Charles then added that "it is a rather contemptible pursuit in which no independent gentleman should engage." He finally concluded that "A private station is the post of honor." Much of the opposition to politics is attributable to the belief that political intrigue corrupted the character of the young man. Hence, after a man's character was fully developed he might risk the dangers endemic to politics. "Be not hasty . . . . to embark in political pursuits," importuned William Eaton. He further recommended that the


68Robert F. Charles to Peter S. Bacot, Esq., 12 January 1841, Peter S. Bacot Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
wait until his character has been formed, his habits of virtue, morality and industry firmly fixed, his intellect sufficiently cultivated, strengthened and adorned, and his knowledge enlarged. Let him check his desire for preferment until he has become thoroughly acquainted with the history, the institutions, and the varied interests of his country.

Let him wait until he reached maturity. Let him embark upon political pursuits only after he had approximated the complete gentleman. Only then could he serve the nation without succumbing to the temptations which corrupted and destroyed lesser men. Only then could he recognize and avoid the dangers associated with politics, or so thought Eaton.

Thomas Miles Garrett, a North Carolina diarist, concluded that politics was not a proper vocation or avocation for the gentleman. He explained in his diary that "few men have ever been advantaged by endeavoring the prosecute two professions, while a swap especially for politics is infinitely worse." 70

69 William Eaton, Address Before the Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 21-22. See also, Hugh McQueen, An Address Delivered Before the Alumni and Graduating Class of the University of North Carolina, on the Afternoon Preceeding Commencement Day, in Gerald Hall, June 26, 1839 (Raleigh: Raleigh Register, 1839), 34-39; Maunsell White [Sr.] to Maunsell White [Jr.], 17 October 1850, Maunsell White Papers, microfilm at the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Daniel Hundley, on the other hand, stated that the gentleman was enamored with politics. His brief discussion of the subject reported what actual gentlemen did, rather than what the ideal gentleman ought to do. Social Relations, 49-50.

70 Thomas Miles Garrett, 10 July 1849, Thomas Miles
The gentleman should shun politics, yet if he felt compelled to enter politics he should wait until after the complete development of his character and the conclusion of his formal education. A look at the final component of class--duty--helps clarify the southern attitude towards politics. Castiglione had demanded that the courtier serve his prince, English writers had urged the gentleman to serve the nation, and southerners followed the European tradition in emphasizing the noble obligation of the gentleman. Avery Craven, in his biography of Edmund Ruffin, noted that "duty to man found largest expression in politics."71 Urging his brother-in-law to enter politics, John C. Calhoun explained that "I . . . deem it the duty of any man of education and leisure, to bring himself forward, in public business."72 Calhoun so frequently returned to the theme of duty that his young grandson and namesake, John C. Calhoun Clemson,

Garrett Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, entry for 29 June 1849.


72 J[ohn] C. Calhoun to John E[wing] Colhoun, 23 October 1820, Papers of John C. Calhoun, V, 408. See also, J[ohn] C. Calhoun to John E[wing] Colhoun, 1 July 1822, Papers of John C. Calhoun, VII, 196. Ebenezer Pettigrew, on the other hand, found politics so distasteful after one term in Congress that he vowed to leave office regardless of his duty, even if offered "ten thousand dollars to remain." Ebenezer Pettigrew to William S. Pettigrew, 17 February 1837, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
adopted a motto in honor of his grandfather. He decided to live according to the motto that "the duties of life are greater . . . than life itself." On occasion, Calhoun expressed the desire to retire from politics and return to the solitude of his beloved Fort Hill in the South Carolina up-country. Yet he felt obligated to remain in public life. Calhoun's insistence that he had entered politics for the good of the nation rather than out of personal ambition, whether true or not, provided an acceptable motive for entering public life—acceptable to both Calhoun and southerners in general. The gentleman entered politics to serve the country rather than to win the praise and adulation of the people, and those men who refused to do their duty were subject to censure. In May of 1860, Edmund Ruffin


75 Edmund Ruffin condemned several men whom he thought entered politics to win adulation rather than out of a sense
noted in his diary the death of Littleton W. Tazewell. Ruffin believed Tazewell possessed "one of the greatest minds that any resident of Va. ever had," but he regretted that Tazewell's intellectual powers "were put to but little use for his country." He thought that Tazewell had irresponsibly wasted his great talents. Ruffin wrote in his diary that Tazewell's life

in all this time, has been of no benefit to mankind, of gratification to his friends, nor, as I would suppose, of pleasure to himself. If it were my own case, I would rather have died, than to live even one year as he had done for 25, without employment, amusement, or any object of life.76

The gentleman ought never enter politics for his own glory, but at the same time he ought never avoid politics when his services were needed by the nation. He was even obligated to sacrifice his life when called upon.

In times of war the gentleman was obligated to defend his nation. It was his duty to fight for his country, a duty which merged with the southern interest in military bearing.77

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76Edmund Ruffin, 12 May 1860, Diary of Ruffin, I, 419.

77Jno D. Kennedy to Mrs. A[lfred] E[nglish] Doby, 9 January 1862, Means-English-Doby Papers, typed copy in South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. See also, Sarah Lois Wadley, 25 January 1865, and 16 November 1863, Sarah Lois Wadley Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
Gentlemen recognized their duty and obeyed, even though they might have other preferences. Alfred Doby confided to his young wife that "I almost wish I could get sick just on your account, My Darling, then I would get a furlough; but I will not write thus, for it looks weak, & unmanly, nevertheless I would give most anything to see you again." Doby desperately wanted to be with his wife, but he recognized his duty as a gentleman and he ultimately gave up his life performing that duty. James Johnston Pettigrew also sacrificed his life for the southern cause. Pettigrew, a man of some brilliance and considerable military acumen, was wounded while fighting rear-guard action for the Army of Northern Virginia during its retreat from Pennsylvania. Robert E. Lee rushed to Pettigrew's side upon hearing word of the wounded general's desperate condition, and, seated beside the dying man, Lee expressed his sorrow. Pettigrew, always the gentleman, consoled Lee, explaining that he had done nothing more than a gentleman's duty. As he lay dying, he explained that "I would freely at any time give up my life for my country." Pettigrew had urged others to do their whole duty for their country, and he died faithfully.

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78 Alfred English Doby to Mrs. A.E. Doby, 9 January 1862, Means-English-Doby Papers, typed copy in South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

79 G. P. Collins to William Shepard Pettigrew, [1863], Pettigrew Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.
following his own advice. Whether the gentleman served his country on the battlefield or in the political arena mattered little, as long as he did his duty as a gentleman.

Duty, then, along with wealth and occupation, constituted the major components of class. The ideal man was by wealth, and to a few southerners by birth, a member of the gentry. His wealth allowed him the good fortune to become a planter or professional, or a combination of both, and he might eventually retire to a life of study or politics. Finally, the gentleman accepted the duties of his station, even when they endangered his life. The ideal gentleman of the South was a man of the upper class who accepted both its rewards and its obligations.

Cultivation, the second major element of the ideal man in the South, can best be discussed when divided into its three component parts of intellectual, social, and physical development. Intellectual development was a concern of great magnitude to southerners. Early in the year 1830, one of James Johnston Pettigrew's older brothers wrote to his father to complain that he had tired of school and wanted to return home. His father, greatly agitated by the boy's request, responded quickly. He stated that

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80 James Johnston Pettigrew to James P. Carson, 11 December 1862, Pettigrew Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh; 

81---------------, 15 July 1863 Pettigrew Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.
were I not to give you an opportunity of getting an education, when you were grown and began to see your deficiency [sic] of education when compared [sic] with others you would charge me your Father with the greatest neglect towards you, and let me assure you that if I give you the opportunity of an education & you do not improve it you will regret it the last day you have to live.81

If he wanted to do well in his life's work, it was essential that the boy acquire a good education. Southerners viewed education as the essential ingredient for progress and success. It prepared man for the duties of life, and was thus a requisite component of the ideal man.82


Southerners considered classical education the most ideally suited for the gentleman. St. George Tucker determined that Landy Campbell, his young ward, should have "the best Education in my power," and that it should be a classical one. With the same intent, William Wirt explained to his son that he desired the boy to acquire a classical education, largely because it is "the education of a gentleman of the present age." A contributor to the Southern Quarterly Review insisted that regardless of a man's profession he ought to have a sound background in classical studies. They were essential not only for the gentleman of leisure, but also for the practitioners of all the professions.

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85William Wirt to William [Cambell] Wirt, 26 January 1832, Wirt Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

The youth who mastered the classics was assured of praise and respect. In recommending one of his charges for an appointment to West Point, the principal of the Alexandria Academy in Virginia noted that the young man had "read all the minor classics in addition to Homer & Longinus, Tacitus & Cicero. He is well versed in arithmetic, Algebra & Euclid." When Secretary of War John C. Calhoun read the recommendation he must have been impressed with the accomplishments of the young Robert E. Lee, as surely as he was impressed when he read an account of the college curriculum his youngest son had selected. James Edward Calhoun explained that upon arrival at school he introduced himself to Judge Henry St. George Tucker and asked the Judge for assistance in selecting his tickets or courses for the upcoming term. Calhoun stated that

finding his selection to agree precisely with the ones selected by myself, viz. The mathematical[,] philosophical and classical tickets[,] the latter [sic] comprising both the Greek and Latin languages; in mathematics[,] philosophy and Greek I have taken the Junior classes not being prepared to enter the highest class and prefer[r]ing it to the intermediate, while in Latin I have entered the Senior thinking either of offering for graduation upon it at the close of the session in July next or drop[p]ing it altogether and taking in its place some other ticket.


Calhoun coupled the language, philosophy, and literature of the ancients with mathematics, but his list did not present the complete curriculum of the gentleman. Rounding out that curriculum were the natural sciences, including geography and chemistry, history, political economy, and the modern languages.\textsuperscript{89} The purpose of the broad curriculum, of course, was to educate the well-rounded man, and to discipline his mind carefully. A contributor of the \textit{Southern Quarterly Review} borrowed a passage from the internationally reknowned Edinburgh Review to make a point. Quoting the Scottish review, he wrote "Assuredly, that education by which the whole man is formed and perfected is more urgent, and a more elevated duty than that by which skill in any one art or profession is to be acquired."\textsuperscript{90}

The gentleman's intellectual interests continued even after the completion of his formal education, and those interests were of great breadth if not depth. Following the death of John C. Calhoun, The \textit{Southern Literary}


Messenger confessed that he had not been a "learned man because he lacked the leisure to engage in scholarly pursuits." Nevertheless, the Messenger continued, scholars of both literature and science recognized his familiarity with and understanding of their respective fields. Although he might lack the necessary time to be a scholar, the gentleman remained abreast of the most recent scholarship. The gentleman did not limit his intellectual curiosity to his own profession. William Wirt earnestly cultivated his knowledge of the law, but he nearly as assiduously cultivated general scholarship. He recognized scholarship as an integral part of gentility.

Few men surpassed Edmund Ruffin in breadth of curiosity. He constantly mentioned his latest studies in his diary. He regularly read the Edinburgh Review, as well as the other English reviews, and he included in his list of reading the Diary of Samuel Pepys, Walter Scott's historical romances, John Stuart Mill's Political Economy, and Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, to name but a few. Among his favorite authors he included Thackeray, Dickens, and Byron. Ruffin made a habit of reading in his room

92Kennedy, Memoirs of Wirt, I, 43.
every night, and he expected other gentlemen to follow suit, or at least to engage in intelligent conversation during the evening. He had no patience for those men who preferred drinking, dancing, or card playing to scholarly activity. His love of books and the pleasures they brought received a singular blow during the Civil War. In anguish, he confided to his diary that neither he nor his son had taken appropriate precautions with their libraries. As George B. McClellan advanced up river with the Union army during the Peninsula Campaign, Ruffin's plantation was seized, and the old gentleman concluded that his own and his son's "thousands of volumes & valuable pamphlets" had been lost. Several years earlier, Charles C. Jones, Jr. had suffered a similar disaster. A fire had swept through his Savannah law office and destroyed both his law and literary libraries. Recognizing the gentleman's need for literary diversion, Charles's brother volunteered to send books of "a literary character from his own library, in order to lessen the blow. Jones quickly rebuilt his ruined library and within a few years he once again began loaning his family copies of his favorite works.

94 Edmund Ruffin, 11 July 1860, Diary of Ruffin, I, 441.
95 Ibid., 17 August 1862, II, 418.
96 Mrs. Mary Jones to Mr. Charles C. Jones, Jr., 18 December 1855, in Children of Pride, 177.
97 Interestingly, he sent his slaveowning father a
The reading interests of Ruffin and Jones suggest a literary bent, but we should bear in mind that the gentleman's interests were broad. Thus such is the case is suggested by Ruffin's scientific interests and especially by the wide range of topics which appeared in southern periodicals. Articles ranged in topic from education to the influence of national literatures, and from scientific theories on the creation of the universe to the teachings of Mesmer and Swedenborg. Clement Eaton has suggested that scientific interest in the South, even outside of the colleges and universities, was considerable.\(^{98}\) The gentleman, then, possessed a classical education and an ongoing intellectual curiosity throughout his life.

Besides cultivating the mind, the gentleman cultivated the social graces. Historians have characterized

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southern manners as refined and aristocratic, and southerners would have been pleased with such characterizations.  

Considerable store was placed on manners, as suggested by ante-bellum letters of introduction and recommendation. "His manners . . . are not only conciliatory but exemplary, correct," he is "gentle in his manners," he possesses the "manners, character and deportment of a gentleman," read a sampling of such letters received by John C. Calhoun. The gentleman, according to these quotations, had little in common with the plain and simple natural man. William Wirt, once again one of the proponents of the natural man, was himself described as a type of American courtier. John P. Kennedy characterized his manners as "gentle, courteous and winning." Continuing, he explained that Wirt's voice was clear and sweet, and variously modulated by an ear of the finest musical perception. His laugh, never boisterous, was sly, short, and full of the gaiety of his temper.


His conversation was exceedingly attractive. It seldom fell into discourse, but played with all kinds of amusing topics. It was suggestive, provoking thought in others, and fortifying them with opportunity to contribute somewhat to the purpose, from their own reflection or memory.  

Wirt was similarly described in the introduction of the 1832 reprinted edition of his _Letters of a British Spy_. The author wrote that Wirt's manners took the tone of his heart; they were frank, open and cordial; and his conversation, to which his reading and early pursuits had given a classic tinge, was very polished, gay and witty.

The gentleman in the Old South possessed cultivated and refined manners. It would seem, then, that the Wirt dichotomy of the natural-cultivated man had vanished. Or so it appears until one notes the adjectives which were regularly used to describe men—words such as "plain," "honest," "unpretending," and "unstudied." Each suggested that the gentleman ought to be natural. After a

101 Kennedy, _Memoirs of Wirt_, II, 374.


visit with Judge Ruffin, Edmund Ruffin mightily praised the man, writing that "in his manners he is as plain, as unpretending, & as simple, as any ordinary farmer . . . ."104 Ruffin placed great store in simple manners. In a second journal entry, he expressed his regret that John Tyler had entered politics, because politics had corrupted him and made him vain. Nevertheless, he concluded that Tyler "is less to be condemned for the vanity he exhibits, than to be admired for his plainness, & general absence of all pretension."105 With the same intent, Daniel Hundley explained that "in manners the Southern Gentleman is remarkably easy and natural . . . ."106 Plainness and simplicity were valued in the South. Writing for the Southern Literary Messenger, one contributor concluded that the decline of a hereditary aristocracy had brought the disappearance of ease, grace, repose, and finish of manner, attributes which could not survive in "the open air of a republic."107 Republi

cs fostered simple and natural manners, in both antiquity and modern times. Upon the death of John C.

104Edmund Ruffin, 8 April 1857, Diary of Ruffin, I, 53-54.

105Ibid., 14 November 1857, I, 131-32. See also, Ibid., 22 January 1862, II, 219.

106Hundley, Social Relations, 71.

Calhoun, the following appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*:

His taste in this regard was closely connected with the entire absence of any love for show in his character. No worthy of the elder Republic of Rome could have been more simple-hearted than Calhoun. Nothing in him was meant for the eye of the world; his personal tastes and habits even his dress in his chamber, were remarkable for their plain neatness.108

Calhoun's simplicity was no mere affection for the benefit of onlookers; he was a genuinely plain and simple man according to the *Messenger*. The American simplicity was particularly striking when contrasted with "decadent" European society. During a visit to England, the second Wade Hampton found himself seated at dinner between two women, both members of the titled nobility. He tried to use the proper form of address, but found the use of titles both confusing and discomforting. Finally, he proudly reported to his sister, he "for got [sic] their titles & called them 'madam['], in my republican simplicity."109

Southerners believed that the "primitive views and manners of . . . [their] Forefathers," were vastly superior to those of other nations.110

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109 Wade Hampton to Harriet [Hampton], 4 August 1846, Wade Hampton Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

110 George A. Mercer, 4 October 1855, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
From the above remarks it would appear that the gentleman had to be either highly cultivated or plain and simple in his manners. But in fact most southerners believed that the gentleman ought to be both refined and natural. Hundley, who thought the gentleman's manners to be "easy and natural," also thought he frequently possessed "as much of Chesterfieldian polish as most others . . . ."

William Wirt had once tried to provide a model gentleman possessing both natural and refined manners, a man of both the forest and the court. The dichotomy he created established such an extreme contrast between the two parts that few adopted it as a viable pattern. Southerners could not ignore the English tradition which they had inherited, or the rural environment to which Hundley attributed the "simplicity of southern life." But it was difficult to explain how a backwoodsman could possess all of the refinements of a courtier, as suggested by Wirt. The difference, though, between the ante-bellum southern ideal and Wirt's model was one of degree rather than kind. Southerners celebrated rural simplicity instead of the roughness of the wilderness. Their refined cultivation never approached the affectatious behavior of the court. Southerners believed in moderation in all things. The gentleman had to maintain

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111 Hundley, Social Relations, 71, 22.

112 Ibid., 55-57.
the golden mean at all times; he must err neither in excess nor want. Southerners reserved their greatest indignation for breaches of the mean. In an address before the students at the University of North Carolina, Hugh McQueen ridiculed the tendency toward a "pompous and swelling style" in daily writing or conversation.113 Robert Hubard agreed, and expressed some regret that an otherwise respectable young man had "rendered himself unpopular by using so many pompous words . . . ."114 The harshest criticism was reserved for the dandy whose actions and appearance, both stemming from extravagance, proved to a Southern Literary Messenger contributor that a vacuum indeed existed in nature.115 At the other extreme, southerners condemned any form of fierce or loose manners. The gentleman was expected to maintain a degree of refinement wherever he might be. During a court proceeding at which he was present, Augustus Summerfield was shocked by the coarse behavior exhibited by both the judge and lawyers. In the midst of a trial, the judge interrupted a lawyer and requested a chew of tobacco, and the lawyer happily obliged. Summerfield believed such

113McQueen, Address Before the Alumni and Graduating Class of the University of North Carolina, 31.

114Robert Hubard to Edward W. Hubard, 11 October 1828, Hubard Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

115Oliver Oldschool, "Dandyism," Southern Literary Messenger 1 (January 1835), 251.
actions all too common and he complained that while judges and lawyers were cultivated and accomplished gentlemen, they allowed themselves "to fall into this loose way of doing by inattention."\textsuperscript{116}

Moderate and graceful, though never pompous, manners were a mark of the gentleman. He possessed informal and comfortable manners which set those around him at ease, and he never slighted anyone through discourtesy. To help polish the gentleman's manners, southerners, like Englishmen and Italians, turned primarily to dancing. Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson reported in a letter to her father that her brothers were being sent off to dancing school to learn grace. The youngest of the boys, she reported, believed that his was a hopeless case and that he could never learn grace, but he agreed to see the village dancing master nonetheless.\textsuperscript{117} William Elliott, in his popular work on southern sports, called dancing the "handmaid of modesty and

\textsuperscript{116}Augustus Summerfield, 8 October 1853, Augustus Summerfield Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, David Alexander Barnes Diary, 13 February 1840, David Alexander Barnes Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Robert Henry, The Cultivation of the Fine Arts, Favorable to the Perfection of Private Character and the Development of Public Prosperity. An Address, Delivered by Request Before the Clariosophic and Euphradian Societies, of the South Carolina College (Columbia, S. C.: n.p., 1840), 12.

\textsuperscript{117}Anna (Maria Calhoun Clemson) to John C. Calhoun, 21 December 1840, John C. Calhoun Papers, Clemson University Library, Clemson, S. C. See also, Benjamin F. Carter to William Page Esquire, 25 March 1811, William Page Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
grace," but learning to dance not only taught young men grace, according to a *Southern Literary Messenger* correspondent, it also "accustoms them in early life to the society of women."118 Dancing provided a means for the young man to learn how to conduct himself with women.

Dancing was not the sole social amusement of the gentleman. He could also attend horse races and play cards, although some southerners frowned upon such recreation if wagers were made. The theater and art were also popular genteel amusements of the gentleman, especially in Charleston.119 Each of these amusements helped develop the social graces.

Physical development was required to complete the proper cultivation of the gentleman. The "Southern Gentleman is usually possessed of an equally faultless physical development," wrote Daniel Hundley. Hundley believed that the gentleman in the South paid far greater attention to


physical development than did the citizens of the North. Bennett Taylor received a letter from his mother warning him not to confine himself too closely "under the idea that you do not have time to take exercise." She deemed exercise an essential part of the boy's development.

Expressing the same concern about his son, David Campbell warned the young man not to weaken his "constitution for want of active bodily exercise, [for] a good constitution is just as necessary to produce a man of talents as rich ground is to ... produce good corn." Without regular exercise the gentleman could not develop his intellectual abilities

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120Hundley, Social Relations, 40.


fully, and would thus fall short of the ideal. John Tillinghast complained of insufficient opportunity for exercise at the University of North Carolina, and he explained to his father that "In European institutions two or 3 hours exercise daily is deemed essential to health & scholarship . . . ." Southerners saw a relationship between mental and physical cultivation, and they believed the former to be doomed to failure without the latter. Additionally, without physical cultivation, the gentleman was not suited for any type of employment. As a contributor to the Southern Literary Messenger stated,

The white young men of Virginia, in great numbers, have since been educated in like manner "at Northern Colleges," or nearer home: and when restored to their parents and guardians have been found, for the most part, like the sons of the red men, "to be 'absolutely good for nothing'" . . . . ignorant of mechanical and agricultural employments . . . . too high minded and too indolent to labor . . . .


The young gentleman needed the habit of exercise as a youth to protect his health and insure full development of his mental capabilities, and he needed the habit of exercise in order to prepare for the rigors of employment.

The single most popular form of exercise in the South was hunting. Southerners eagerly took to the field to kill a wide variety of animals. Although gentlemen occasionally organized hunting clubs for deer and for fox hunting, they rarely limited their expeditions to those two species of game. Included in their search were bear, dove, quail, squirrel, duck, and turkey.\textsuperscript{125} The game was much less important than the hunt itself. George A. Mercer noted that

\begin{quote}
I am a hunter by nature, and have always been passionately fond of rambling in the woods. Nor can I think it a waste of time so to do. It is a promoter of good spirits and furnishes that excitement which every enthusiastic man craves, and which if not obtained from a healthy and natural source, is apt to be sought from one not so.\textsuperscript{126}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{125} Art. V.--North American Foxes," Southern Quarterly Review 13 (April 1848), 403-26; Wade Hampton II to Mary Fisher, 22 April 1855, in Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons, 1782-1901, ed. by Charles E. Cauthen (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953), 39; George A. Mercer, [December 1850], p. 49, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Hundley, Social Relations, 33-37; Elliott, Carolina Sports by Land and Water, 281; Taylor, Ante-Bellum South Carolina, 56; Eaton, Southern Civilization, 15; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 196-211.

\textsuperscript{126} George A. Mercer, January 1856, p. 124, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
A sport second in popularity only to hunting was fishing. These two sports provided the gentleman with the most widely practiced outlet for exercise as well as socializing.

Cultivation was an essential element of the gentlemanly ideal of the South. Southerners expected the gentleman to possess a classical education and to be familiar with the sciences. Without proper intellectual development, the gentleman could perform few of the duties of his profession of his social position. The development of social grace was also required of the gentleman. Grace was most frequently cultivated through dancing, an accomplishment which also prepared the gentleman for the company of women—whose influence on morality and in the family was indispensable. Finally, physical cultivation was required of the gentleman. This requirement was achieved with the least effort, according to Hundley, for rural life naturally lent itself to physical development. Southerners expected the ideal man, their vision of perfection, to be a man of physical, social, and intellectual cultivation.

Regardless of the young man's class or cultivation, his success or failure ultimately rested upon the strength of his character. Character, the third element of the concept of the gentleman, was the capstone of the southern ideal man. Mary Jones, wife of the Georgia minister Charles C. Jones, wrote to one of her sons announcing that "Character
is everything to a young man."127 Southern educators agreed. Presenting the first of his several commencement addresses at the University of Alabama, Alva Woods entreated the students to value character above all else. He informed his listeners that they could master the languages and sciences without having taken the "first step in the road to true fame."128 The gentleman was incomplete without the highest moral character.

The aspiring gentleman acquired character through his own industry and self-denial. This notion follows closely the southern belief in free will. Temptation permeated society. The young man had to recognize the evils of temptation and then shun them. "His mind must furnish the armor and the weapons for the conflict. His steel must be tempered in the furnace of self-denial, and burnished by the dreary toil of many a midnight watching."129 Without preparation for the combat, the young man risked the sacrifice of his character, "simply to gratify his

127Mrs. Mary Jones to Mr. Charles C. Jones, Jr., 22 December 1856, in Children of Pride, 277.


129Pool, Address Delivered Before the Two Societies of the University of North Carolina, 22. See also, Bedford Brown, Address Delivered to the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 22-23.
wild and unprofitable propensities.130 Success or failure rested with the individual. Dreary toil would eventually insure success, and without the successful development of virtuous character dissipation was inevitable. Drinking, cockfighting, and gambling seemed rampant among young men in the South.131 "Folly, vanity and vice, low pursuits and vulgar associations, indolence, intemperance, and debauchery" awaited the young man who failed to be ever vigilant.132 Even the young William Wirt nearly fell victim to dissipation. During one period of his life, reported John Pendleton Kennedy, Wirt cultivated the pleasures of "good fellowship" rather than his profession. Recognizing his error, however, he returned to a life of industry, and launched himself upon the "ship of fame."133 Wirt's experience was not unique. There are numerous accounts of

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130 Address to [Ellison Goodloe Mangum], 11 March 1853, Mangum Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

131 Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821 (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 27; Freehling, Prelude to Civil War, 35; David Campbell to William B. Campbell, 4 February 1829, Campbell Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.; Hugh Swinton Legare to his sister, 4 August 1833, Hugh Swinton Legare Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

132 Gaston, Address Delivered Before the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, 12.

133 Kennedy, Memoirs of Wirt, I, 61.
young men abandoning caution and becoming dissipated, especially while at college and away from the immediate supervision of parents. Wirt proved that a period of dissipation did not preclude reform. Wirt and other young men eventually outgrew their restlessness and settled down to lives of industry. Rawleigh Colston wrote in his Bible that "After pursuing . . . an idle dissipated life for 12 or 18 months I became perfectly disgusted with an idle life, & determined to apply myself." Feeling much the same in his regret for having wasted a part of his youth in reckless dissipation, George A. Mercer reported that "I often reflect upon my conduct with bitter tears--." Although many young men were lured from the path of virtue by temptation, southerners were insistent that the ideal man must possess a firmness of character which would lift him above the allures of the world.

134George A, Mercer, 31 March 1855, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, E. Merton Coulter, College Life in the Old South; George A. Mercer, 7 April 1855, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

135Copied out of the Bible of Rawleigh Colston by Mary W. Leigh, in 5 September 1894, typed copy in Taylor Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

136George A. Mercer, 10 March 1855, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
The proper path to the development of character was thought to be the nurturing of virtue. Great value was placed upon virtue by southerners. Stephen Elliott explained to his audience of students at South Carolina College that "You must fix your hearts upon the highest excellence, not for the gratification of a paltry vanity, not from a craving after place or power, but that you may set forward truth and virtue in the land . . . ." Earlier in the decade a student at South Carolina College had announced to his fellow members of the Clariosophic Society that "Giants of the mind" readily acknowledged the "Supremacy of Virtue." In an address published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the sentiments favoring virtue were again repeated. "The wisest lawgivers who have attempted to improve the social condition of man, have commenced their systems by laying the foundations for a high order of virtue," stated the orator. Virtue served as the basis of the gentleman's character. The "wisest lawgivers," the "Giants of the mind," and the young man about to embark upon a career, recognized the urgency of fostering virtue.

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137 Elliott, Annual Address Before the Clariosophic and Euphradian Societies, 19.

138 John Izard Middleton, Jr., "The Man of Power," Anniversary Oration, 1 April 1853, Vice President of Student Affairs, University of South Carolina Clariosophic Society Inaugural Addresses, University Archives, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

139 Thomas W. Gilmer, "An Address," *Southern Literary Messenger* 3 (February 1837), 100.
The virtues which southerners attributed to the ideal man fall into three broad categories--ancient, Christian, and bourgeois. Southerners clearly embraced the virtues of the ancient philosophers, Christianity, and the English middle class. Writers continuously sprinkled their letters, diaries, magazine articles and speeches with references to the virtues they most respected. The general tone of those references is particularly important, because ante-bellum southerners were much more concerned with the question of morality than past generations. Not that they were more moral than past generations, but they felt a great need to picture themselves as moral men. According to John H. Cocke, the "moral character can be best & most effectually laid in the first four years of a child's life . . . ." Heartily agreeing, Hugh Swinton Legare exclaimed that the "child has his moral principles formed and fixed" during the "first ten or twelve years of life," and he concluded that the moral development represented "much more than half his education." Ebenezer Pettigrew agreed with Cocke's and Legare's assessments when he wrote to the youngest of his sons that "your learning will avail

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140 John H. Cocke to Robert T. Hubard, Esq., 28 May 1837, Hubard Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

141 Hugh Swinton Legare to Mrs. Armstrong, 9 June 1843, Hugh Swinton Legare Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
nothing unless you pay strict regard to your moral conduct . . . " The ultimate goal, in this respect, was the development of pure morals, morals which would hold fast against all temptation. Identical advice was given in college addresses. Henry W. Hilliard announced that the age in which nations would be judged by their physical strength had passed. Senates and empires would be judged, henceforth, "not according to their physical, but their moral strength." Not only did educators pronounce moral strength superior to physical strength, but they also deemed moral education superior to intellectual education. A man's "moral powers" were judged equal to or superior to his intelligence. The emphasis upon morality and the urgency of

142 Ebenezer Pettigrew to James [Johnston Pettigrew], January 1832, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.


144 Hilliard, Address Delivered Before the Erosophic Society, 4.

145 Alva Woods, Baccalaureate Address Delivered August 12, 1833 at the Second Annual Commencement of the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa: W. W. & F. W. McGuire, Printers, 1833), 6.

146 Robert Tyler, A Valedictory Address Delivered Before the Franklin Literary Society of William and Mary College at the Request of Said Society, on the 4th of July, 1838 (Richmond: Bailie & Gallaher, Printers, for the Society, 1838), 8-9; Anniversary Oration by R. W. McMaster, March 5.
cultivating superior moral powers logically culminated in a feeling of moral superiority in the South. Convinced of the righteousness of the southern cause during the Civil War, Edmund Ruffin wrote that "our superiority to our enemy is in the much higher moral & intellectual grade of the Southern people ... ."147 Southerners concluded that their morals were second to none.

"You will allow me to say, gentlemen, that the best inspirer of such morality, indeed its only inspirer, is the Christian religion," explained Tiberius Graccus Jones in 1856.148 Liberal religious views had once flourished in the South, but during the ante-bellum period men either accepted evangelical Christianity or else they kept their independent views to themselves.149 Religion influenced not only the gentleman's character, but also his cultivation. Basil Manly instructed his young listeners at the University of Alabama that "No system of education can be relied on which affects independence of the principles and sanctions of the

147 Edmund Ruffin, 9 April 1862, Diary of Ruffin, II, 278-89.
149 See Craven, Edmund Ruffin, 27-35.
Christianity was the very basis of the American civilization, thought James H. Hammond. He believed that Christianity accounted for every difference between "the ancient and the modern minds and manners." The Christian religion was therefore essential to the gentleman. Christianity assured the gentleman of moral virtue, and such virtue would eventually assure the gentleman of success in every walk of life. During the second year of the Civil War, Charles C. Jones, Jr. explained that the "pious leaders" of the Confederacy had been "specially blessed in all of their enterprises." Expanding upon that observation, he added that

Stonewall Jackson, Lee, Stuart: pious men all--another illustration of the fact that the truly pious man is the best man for every walk and every emergency in life, and for the simple reason that he carries with him the favor of Him from whom alone all success and all strength can come.152

Over four decades earlier, John Randolph of Roanoke had advised two of his nephews to "regularly & habitually"

150 Basil Manly, "The Address of the President," in Installation and Inaugural Addresses. Address of his Excellency Governor Bagby. When Inducting Into Office the President of the University of Alabama: Together with The Address of the President, Rev. Basil Manly, D. D. Delivered in the Rotunda, on Commencement Day, December 6, 1837 (Tuscaloosa: Ferguson & Eaton, 1838), 7.

151 Hammond, Oration Before the Two Societies of the South-Carolina College, 20.

practice religious worship. He further instructed them to "put your whole trust in him & then you may put forth your whole strength in any laudable pursuit." Religious devotion would promote success and moral virtue. The gentleman of the South had to be religious, and his virtues had a distinctively moral cast to them.

The southern emphasis upon morality can be attributed to several causes. The Romantic movement which manifested itself in the South in the form of chivalry tended to emphasize the importance of morality. Also, during the ante-bellum period, Scotch-Irish Calvinists from the backcountry were upwardly mobile, as were the Huguenots, and both groups brought with them "a sobering Puritanism that . . . disciplined them in strict morality," according to Vernon L. Parrington. The abolitionist attack on slaveholders also caused southerners to emphasize their own morality. The abolitionists charged the slaveholders with the grossest immorality, and in response the slaveholders defended themselves and their "peculiar institution" by emphasizing the intrinsic morality of both. Finally, one night speculate that southern guilt over slavery, if and where it existed, may have led southerners

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153 John Randolph of Roanoke to [John Randolph Bryan and T. J. Bryan], 20 November 1819, typed copy in Grinnan Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

154 Parrington, Main Currents, II, 109-110.
to proclaim their morality all the more earnestly.\textsuperscript{155} They may have emphasized their morality as a means of convincing themselves they were indeed moral. Each of the above influences led southerners to place heightened emphasis on the importance of morality.

Among the gentlemanly virtues, moderation was as important to southerners as it had been for Italians and Englishmen. It was the controlling virtue. In an 1827 anniversary oration, Francis W. Pickens warned his listeners that "There is danger in excess."\textsuperscript{156} Nearly two decades later, Bartholomew F. Moore ventured the same assessment and concluded that man needed moderation in all affairs.\textsuperscript{157} The advice Samuel Tillinghast offered his son was founded upon the idea that man must strike a careful balance between the extremes. He wrote,

\begin{quote}
Do not affect too much rigors [sic] in your notions, do not get the character of over [illegible] over
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{155}For works which suggest that southerners were guilt ridden because of the existence of slavery see, Charles G. Sellers, "The Travail of Slavery," in Sellers, ed., \textit{The Southerner as American} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 40-71; Ralph E. Morrow, "The Proslavery Argument Revisited," \textit{Mississippi Valley Historical Review} 47 (June 1961), 79-94; Freehling, \textit{Prelude to Civil War}. David Donald dismisses the idea of southern guilt over slavery in, "The Proslavery Argument Reconsidered," 7-9.

\textsuperscript{156}Pickens, \textit{Anniversary Oration of the Clariosophic Society}, 16.

\textsuperscript{157}Moore, \textit{Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina}, 7-8.
righteousness, or over piety by severe strictions of the conduct of others. Treat all your companions courteously and kindly; moderately avoid every exhibition of yourself which smaks of vanity. The gentleman ought to assume the middle ground between the extremes. He ought not to indulge in excessive vanity or excessive modesty. Francis Lieber, in his address on the character of the gentleman, warned of the possibility that praiseworthy virtues could become vicious if not guarded by moderation. Liberality might become extravagance, and courage might become brutality. Moderation prevented the corruption of the other required virtues, and assured that the gentleman would avoid excess in his every activity.

Two other virtues worked in conjunction with moderation to hold excess in check and to maintain the gentleman at the golden mean. Prudence and temperance served to moderate and control the gentleman's actions and behavior. Everard Green Baker urged that "Temperance in all things, should be the constant undeviating rule of conduct." In


159Lieber, Character of the Gentleman, 37.

160Everard Green Baker, 11 September 1860, Everard Green Baker Diary and Plantation Notes, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, Green's entry for 7 September 1860; Thomas Miles Garrett, 21 August 1849, Thomas Miles Garrett Diary, typed copy, p. 98, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
his volume of memoirs of William Wirt, John Pendleton
Kennedy thought it important to include a lengthy quotation
of Wirt's defence of District Judge James H. Peck at the
judge's impeachment trial in 1830. Wirt argued that human
society followed the same laws which governed the universe,
and one of the most important of those laws was that of
restraint. Without restraint the planets would be thrown
free of the sun's moderating influence and flounder in
confusion and ruin. Furthermore, he asked, "What hinders
the product of . . . [the] vine from becoming a universal
curse, but the restraint of temperance?"161 Addressing the
students of the University of North Carolina, William Eaton
recommended that they "Practice the virtues of temperance,
moderation, and strict self-control."162 Calhoun noted,
while in Havre de Grace, Maryland, that "It is laid down as
a maxim of prudence by many philosophers, that we ought
always to make our pleasure act in subordination to our
duties and obligations."163 James Barbour, a student at

161Kennedy, Memoirs of Wirt, II, 274-75.
162Eaton, Address Before the Two Literary Societies
of the University of North Carolina, 23.
163John C. Calhoun to Andrew Pickens [Jr.], 25 June
1805, Papers of John C. Calhoun, I, 13. For additional
references to prudence and the southern recognition of its
ancient origins see, William Wirt, An Address, Delivered
Before the Peithessophian and Philoclean Societies of Rutgers
College (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers Press, 1830), 23;
"Art. I.--Athens and the Athenians," Southern Quarterly
Review 11 (April 1847), 303.
Harvard College, received a letter from his father in Virginia, which queried, "What has become of your prudence in which I so much confided . . . ."164 When his own son ventured off to college Ellison Mangum had much less to worry about. A disturbance disrupted the school, and in an effort to allay his father's fear that he might be seriously involved the younger Mangum wrote,

As a member of the Franklin Society I was to a degree implicated but my prudence and discretion preserved me and by exercising caution & my best judgement I am inclined to think that my activities rather enhanced than otherwise the regard and esteem of the Faculty for me.165

In both school and matters of the heart, prudence guided the gentleman towards the proper behavior. The Reverend Jones warned his son to be "careful how you visit young ladies" in Augusta, Georgia. He concluded that "I trust you have the bump of prudence well developed."166 Whether prudence resulted from the development of particular cranial bumps

164James Barbour to James Barbour, Jr., 25 July 1834, Barbour Family Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.


or from a knowledge of social ideals mattered little, as long as the gentleman possessed it.

Fortitude, courage, and humility served with the virtues of moderation, temperance, and prudence to guide the gentleman along the path of noble conduct. Fortitude and courage gave the gentleman the determination to persevere even in the face of hardship and danger, while humility or modesty prevented the gentleman from becoming vain about his many accomplishments and abilities. When discussing fortitude and courage, southerners used mental and moral courage and fortitude interchangably. Alva Woods advised his University of Alabama graduating class to "arm yourselves with moral courage." He then added that "You will need this virtue, not only to prompt you to action, but to sustain you in suffering."\textsuperscript{167} Ellison Mangum found that the struggle with dishonest men demanded extreme perseverance. He wrote his son that "I am struggling hard with the dishonest ones of the world, but must try & bear it with all the fortitude I can command..."\textsuperscript{168} David Campbell, one-time governor of Virginia, while explaining to one nephew the need for courage, wrote,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167}Woods, \textit{Baccalaureate Address Delivered August 12, 1833}, 12, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{168}[Ellison Goodloe Mangum] to A[dolphus] W[illiamson] Mangum, 12 November 1851, Mangum Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
\end{itemize}
What is courage? It is a confidence in ourselves, that by perseverance we can effect our object whatever it may be. It is the same bold & manly principle which supports us in the day of battle when dangers hang around us;--and which encourages us to persevere in any pursuit which requires bodily or mental exertion.169

Courage was equated with both physical bravery and fortitude, or a determination to persevere.

Just as courage and fortitude protected the gentleman and gave him strength when in danger, humility kept that determination and self-confidence bridled. The gentleman ought never to shrink from opposition, but without humility or modesty, courage could become oppressive. Writing for the Southern Literary Messenger, M. M. Noah stated that "Modesty, diffidence, and proper humility, are jewels in the cap of merit . . . ."170 Several years later an article appeared in the Southern Quarterly Review which praised John C. Calhoun for his "beautiful modesty."171 Without the influence of modesty and humility man risked becoming oppressive, or even worse, vain. "Vanity," wrote James Johnston Pettigrew to his father, "is destructive to application," and he feared vanity to be rampant at the University

169David Campbell to John H. Campbell, 7 November 1828, Campbell Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.


of North Carolina. Thomas Miles Garrett, a student and diarist at Chapel Hill, reported an incident where two students appeared at a church service immodestly dressed in a style approaching that of the dandy. They wore magnificent collars standing above their cravats which they had purposely got alike pressing up their heads so as to cause them to assume what they thought might seem dignity, their hands covered with white-kid gloves which they seemed careful to extend that they might be seen, but what was still worse they had painted their faces, extending on their upper lip what they vainly thought might be taken for a fine mustach. The figures Garrett described seem so absurd as to suggest the two students were playing a practical joke, or else Garrett was guilty of exaggeration. Whatever the case, Garrett's conclusion about the episode is striking and important. He stated that

Every man is bound to observe those rules of decency and propriety of conduct which Society establishes, and whoever transgresses them should be cast off the pale of gentlemen, they should meet the scorn and indignation and contempt of the whole circle in which he lives. Garrett expected gentlemen to be always modest or face the censure of society. Alfred English Doby reacted to praise in a manner Garrett would have surely approved. Upon hearing

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172 James Johnston Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, 7 May 1848, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

173 Thomas Miles Garrett, 4 November 1849, Thomas Miles Garrett Diary, typed copy, 203-204, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also, entry for 13 October 1849, p. 166.
a report that his commander had named him the "bravest man . . . [I] ever saw," Doby replied "I appreciate the compliment in due measure . . . [but] compliments can never make me vain or proud, for I scarcely ever place any confidence in them . . . ." Similarly, James Johnston Pettigrew displayed the same modesty when he sent an example of his schoolwork to his father. He informed the elder Pettigrew that "I send it to you not from vanity," and he requested that his father "burn it," for some might label his action vanity.

The next group of virtues were those which insured that the gentleman would be considerate of other people. The group included justice, magnanimity, liberality, charity, and compassion. Whereas the previous virtues benefited the individual, these virtues benefited the people around the gentleman. Justice assured that the gentleman would treat all men with fairness. Magnanimity, liberality, and hospitality ruled his conduct towards friend and foe alike. And compassion, benevolence, and charity allowed the gentleman to be of assistance to the poor and unfortunate of the

174 Alfred English Doby to Mrs. Alfred E. Doby, 8 January 1863, Means-English-Doby Papers, typed copy, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

175 James Johnston Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, 3 June 1848, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
world. Following the Civil War, Zebulon B. Vance, the wartime governor of North Carolina, assured an audience that "Magnanimity, the greatest of national as of private virtues, will once more reign, and will soon shame the Northern manhood from assailing a brave people who no longer resist." He hoped the North would regain its virtue of magnanimity and behave justly toward the defeated section of the nation. He probably expected the North to behave in the same manner that gentlemen conducted their affairs. Reporting on the life and character of Robert Y. Hayne, the *Southern Quarterly Review* stated that

He never took an unfair advantage of an adversary, by the misstatement of his propositions, or the perversion of his arguments. Manly and ingenuous, he always presented the points at issue with perfect candor, sustaining his own, and combatting the positions of his opponent, with scrupulosity of fairness . . .

Southern magnanimity was not always so pure or refined as that which Hayne reportedly possessed, or Vance expected of his northern brethren. But, as suggested by a series of letters from Alfred E. Doby to his wife, it did play an active role in southern life. Following the sack of Manassas by Confederate troops, Doby gleefully wrote his wife

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177 P., "Art. IX.--Life, Character and Speeches of the Late Robert Y. Hayne," *Southern Quarterly Review* 8 (October 1845), 509.
that "I, too, joined in the sacking with as much gusto as any other soldier & reaped quite a rich harvest of plunder." He was obviously pleased with the booty he had captured, yet there is an undercurrent of doubt in the letter suggested by his search for justification of his actions and those of the army. Before six months had passed, he again addressed the subject when praising Robert E. Lee for "pursuing a very magnanimous course in his conquests . . . ." Furthermore, Lee "issued that most stringent orders against molesting private property, of either friend or foe." Doby felt certain that such a display of magnanimity would have a beneficial effect on the people as the Confederate army marched into Maryland. Doby's determination to maintain virtue even in time of war seemed shaken the following year. Marching into Pennsylvania, Doby wistfully commented that "I trust that Gen. Lee will not be quite so delicate in his rule among his enemies as he was last summer." Doby wanted to pillage the North just as the Yankees had pillaged his homeland. He had begun chafing under Lee's strict orders.

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178 Alfred E. Doby to Mrs. Alfred E. Doby, 12 March 1862, typed copy in Means-English-Doby Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

179 Alfred [English Doby] to Mrs. A. E. Doby, 9 September 1862, typed copy in Means-English-Doby Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

180 Alfred [English] Doby to Mrs. Alfred E. Doby, 20 June 1863, typed copy in Means-English-Doby Papers,
within a matter of days, he abandoned the fleeting notion of sacking Pennsylvania and he wrote that although the South had been wronged, "Humanity & policy" forbade the Confederate soldiers from retaliating, and he added that "our soldiers will behave themselves with propriety & dignity while in the enemy's country . . . ."181 Doby hated what the Yankees had done to the South and he felt a desire for revenge, yet at the same time, he believed that gentlemen ought to be magnanimous in war. He recognized the values of his region, and magnanimity was one of them. Even when he thought that his land had been wronged, he felt a moral obligation to refrain from retaliating.

Towards his enemies the gentleman was magnanimous, towards his friends he showed his liberality by being hospitable. These two virtues were intended to benefit friends and social equals rather than lesser folk. Clement Eaton has noted that John Berkeley Grimball never had any money when requests for charity arrived, yet when it came to entertaining friends he spent money lavishly.182 Hospitality was never intended as a charity for the poor—it was granted only to social equals. Dabney Cosby noted,
"I cannot intrude my self upon the hospitality of any one if I am a poor man." Cosby recognized the fundamental characteristic of liberality and hospitality—they governed the gentleman's actions towards other members of the gentry only.

The virtues which guided the gentleman in his dealings with the less fortunate were compassion and benevolence. Compassion for the needy stimulated benevolent activities. Robert Mills, the South Carolina architect, reported that sixteen strictly benevolent associations existed in Charleston in 1826; and the St. Andrew's Society had been active in the city since 1729. Advising a group of young men on the development of the necessary virtues, William Eaton urged them to "Cultivate Feelings of generous benevolence towards your fellow man of every color and every condition." When a person needed help the gentleman was supposed to respond—at least according to the ideal. As the actions of John B. Grimball suggest, the ideal and reality were not always identical.

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183 D [abney] Cosby [Jr.] to Dabney Cosby, 8 July 1856, Dabney Cosby Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

184 Taylor, Ante-Bellum South Carolina, 48.

185 Eaton, Address Delivered Before the Two Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina, 23.
The virtues of the ancients were adopted by southerners as an integral part of their concept of the gentleman. In addition, the virtues of the English gentleman, especially those which were of bourgeois origin, also became part of the ideal in the South. "The great families of the Chesapeake region succeeded, whatever their origins, in screening the unleisuredly life of a tobacco planter behind a convincing provincial version of English aristocracy," Rowland Berthoff has written. Berthoff's comments are applicable to the entire east coast. The gentleman sought to develop a refined and cultivated life, but he recognized the urgency of perpetuating his wealth, and the surest way of accomplishing that goal was through industry and frugality. Gentlemen in the South had once been extravagant and idle, thought Daniel Hundley, but they had finally recognized that they must "struggle to maintain their position." As a result, Hundley continued, "the Southern Gentleman of to-day is less an idler and dreamer than he was in the old days, is more practical, and, although not so great a lover of the almighty dollar as his Northern kinsman, still is far from being as great a spendthrift as his fathers were before him." Beginning his law practice in Tennessee, William B. Campbell wrote to


187Hundley, Social Relations, 30.
his uncle and confidant that "Economy and Industry--is my motto."\textsuperscript{188} Expressing much the same sentiment, the editor of The Southern Planter praised a group of recent Virginia immigrants for their success in cultivating the soil. He attributed their success where others had failed to their tireless industry and unswerving frugality.\textsuperscript{189}

Fearing idleness to be the order of the day in South Carolina, Margaret I. Manigault believed man must be industrious or else risk unhappiness.\textsuperscript{190} In an essay he entitled "A Letter on Industry," John Menan Patrick wrote that no virtue deserved greater attention than that of industry.\textsuperscript{191} Adding his voice in support of industry as a required virtue, William Wirt explained to his son that the gentleman must continuously strive hard to improve; whether his goals were "goodness and politeness," proper speech and behavior, living as a "good christian," or struggling to become a scholar, industry was essential.\textsuperscript{192} Expressing the

\textsuperscript{188}William Bowen Campbell to Col. David Campbell, 14 January 1830, Campbell Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

\textsuperscript{189}"Emigration to Virginia," The Southern Planter 5 (January 1845), 12.

\textsuperscript{190}Margaret I. Manigault to [Gabriel] Henry Manigault, 6 December 1808, Louis Manigault Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.


\textsuperscript{192}William Wirt to William Cabell Wirt, 25 November
same view much more adamantly, Alva Woods announced to his senior class that "uselessness is a crime which will be visited with the indignation of heaven."193 The demand that the gentleman be industrious was more than a societal value; it was a heavenly command.

Idleness was universally condemned throughout the South, just as industry was praised. Writing to his father about a roommate who had gone astray, Charles Pettigrew explained that the boy had been most diligent in his studies for the first two months of school. Unexpectedly, his habits changed after purchasing a fiddle, and he "got around fiddlers." He increasingly absented himself from his studies in order to associate with other fiddlers--characters Pettigrew thought to be "idle and worthless fellows." Pettigrew concluded that his former roommate would "not do much good in this world . . ." because he had abandoned industry in favor or a life of worthless idleness.194 Only five years earlier John C. Calhoun expressed a concern that one of his sons might be so unfortunate as to be assigned a roommate at Yale like the one Pettigrew encountered at the University of North Carolina. He feared that idleness was

1825, Wirt Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

193Woods, Baccalaureate Address Delivered 1835, 3.

194Charles L. Pettigrew to E[benezer] Pettigrew, 12 January 1834, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
contagious, and believing Andrew to be a boy with "habits of industry and correct moral deportment," he stated that "I would deem an idle and immoral roommate a great misfortune."\(^9\)

Judging from the content of a letter from Bryan Grimes to his son and namesake, he believed that his son had embarked on the road to idleness, but was making an attempt to reestablish his old habits of industry. He explained to his son that "Labor is a blessing and is decreed by Providence as the only means by which we can live . . . ."\(^1\)

Providence demanded that the gentleman be industrious, and hence idleness was viewed as the devil's handiwork. In a remarkable letter from a family slave to John Tillinghast, the slave lectured the young man on proper behavior. She urged "Mas' Johnny" to be ever industrious, explaining that "If we could know how busy . . . [the devil] is, we could not be idle."\(^7\)

Equally fervent, John Tyler ordered his son to "Avoid the idle as you would the pestilence."\(^8\)

\(^9\)[John C. Calhoun] to [Jeremiah Day, James L. Kingsley, or Benjamin Sillman], 12 October 1829, Papers of John C. Calhoun, XI, 81.

\(^1\)Bryan Grimes [Sr.] to Bryan Grimes [Jr.], 16 May 1843, Bryan Grimes Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

\(^7\)"Your affectionate old Mama" to Johnny [Tillinghast], 26 January 1854, Tillinghast Family Papers, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

\(^8\)John Tyler to Robert Tyler, 26 January 1834, Tyler Family Papers, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.
The man who could avoid idleness and work diligently at his many duties became the object of praise in the South. In an article in the *Southern Quarterly Review*, Hugh Swinton Legare was characterized as a man "devoted either to study, or to the discharge of those practical duties to which he was called by the requirements of his profession, or the demands of his country." throughout his life. There was "no intermission, no relaxation of his labors," the article continued, "except that which health, the refaction of his body, or the claims of his friends demanded." Legare received the highest praise for his "untiring industry" and his "energetic zeal." Though characterized as a man of unceasing labor, Legare wrote to his mother from his ministry in Brussels that "the mischief is that I am in the very midst of every thing, just as I was in Charleston, and I am obliged to do my part in the society I belong to." The difference between the legend and reality is unmistakable. Upon his death, the *Southern Quarterly Review* elevated Legare from a living man to a representation of the ideal, placing particular emphasis upon industry.

Joseph Leconte, in an essay on the principles of education,


200 Hugh Swinton Legare to his mother, 26 July 1833, typed copy in Hugh Swinton Legare Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
wrote that within narrow limits, labor is "more or less deforming and contracting; yet labor is a necessity imposed upon us by nature." He continued by stating that "true men" would inevitably "manfully meet it." To do otherwise would leave the man a mere "drone."201 Once labor--"determined, unflinching labor"--became a habit, it would become "a positive pleasure."202 Without developing the habit of labor success was impossible, for, according to John Izard Middleton, Jr., "No sluggard ever was morally or mentally great."203

The second of the two bourgeois virtues which southerners embraced was frugality or economy. Although it was not discussed with the same great frequency as industry, southerners did value the virtue. Recognizing his father's concern about mounting college expenses, Charles Pettigrew wrote, "You may expect us to exercise as rigid economy as


202Pool, Address Delivered Before the Two Societies of the University of North Carolina, 6-7; Robert Saunders, "Baccalaureate Address," Southern Literary Messenger 12 (September 1846), 541.

203John Izard Middleton, Jr., "The 'Man of Power' Anniversary Oration," 1 April 1853, Vice President of Student Affairs, University of South Carolina Clariosophic Society Inaugural Addresses, University Archives, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
circumstances will permit." Ebenezer Pettigrew kept his sons on a tight rein and frequently urged them "to be prudent & e[c]onomical, in the use of money" and to "pass an eye to economy." Frugality and economy were two important virtues which John Randolph of Roanoke admired. In a letter to a nephew, one of which was later published for the benefit of others, Randolph provided the young man with a guide to direct his future behavior. Randolph labeled economy a "gift of God" which regrettably he had not been granted. He went on to discuss frugality, suggesting that

It is in the power of every honest man, who means to retain his honesty, to refrain from indulging in expenses which he cannot afford. A disregard of this maxim, the result of their indolent ignorance of their own affairs, has ruined all my name and race; they did not know what they could afford, and some, I fear did not care.

Randolph recognized that many southerners lost their estates through reckless extravagance, and hence, in the guide which he provided his nephew he recommended economy. He undoubtedly would have agreed with John C. Calhoun's assessment

204 Charles Pettigrew to E[benezer] Pettigrew, 9 August 1835, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

205 Ebenezer Pettigrew, 9 August 1835, Pettigrew Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

206 John Randolph of Roanoke to John Randolph Bryan, 28 December 1830, typed copy in Grinnan Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.
that "Economy is one of the virtues."\textsuperscript{207} Fathers cautioned their sons against extravagance in any form, and occasionally they sent their sons specific instruction on how to guard against extravagance and how to improve frugality. Writing to a son, Benjamin White explained that "a fair coat or hat or watch guard or fine watch never did make a man of sense or a gentleman . . . ."\textsuperscript{208} Samuel Tillinghast agreed, answering his son's request for a watch stating that "I never bought a bauble in my life," and concluding that "I think you can find more usefull [sic] ways to spend your money."\textsuperscript{209} In a letter to his father requesting money, Frederick R. Bryan asked, "I wish dear Father you would send me 9 or 10 dollars," and he then added that "I will be very economical with it and try to make it last as long as I can."\textsuperscript{210} John Tyler enclosed instruction with the money he sent to his son. He stated that "Enclos'd you will recieve [sic] ten dollars--half of which I wish you

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\textbf{208} [Benjamin White, Jr.] to Nathan White, 26 December 1833, Nathan Smith White Correspondence, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.


\textbf{210} [Frederick R. Bryan to [John H. Bryan], 12 April 1861, John H. Bryan Collection, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.}
to give your sister—the other half is for yourself—make yours go as far as you can. You should always so manage as to keep a dollar or two by you—this can only be done by never spending a cent uselessly.\textsuperscript{211} The gentleman had to be both frugal and industrious, but as with every virtue, he must be moderately so. No correspondent or orator recommended industry to the exclusion of all other affairs, or an economy which might be regarded as mean. The gentleman needed to be industrious and frugal in order to possess the wealth necessary for him to practice the other virtues of the gentleman, which included liberality, hospitality, and benevolence.

The virtues of honesty and integrity were also highly revered in the South, and hence were required of the gentleman. Presenting an address at the University of North Carolina in 1832, William Gaston explained that "Honesty, in the long run is . . . the surer policy." Furthermore, he added, that "It is impossible to thrive without the reputation of it, and it is far easier to be honest indeed, than to cheat the world into the belief of integrity where it is not." Without honesty, the man could not win the respect of his fellowman, and the surest way to develop honesty was through the development of integrity, or a "clean heart and an honest purpose." Gaston named

\textsuperscript{211}J[ohn] Tyler to Robert Tyler, 26 January 1834, Tyler Family Papers, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.
integrity "the crowning virtue," a virtue which ought to control every "impulse, desire and action." Integrity, he insisted, "is that quality, which of all others, raises man to the highest dignity of his nature, and fits him to adorn and bless the sphere in which his is appointed to move." Without integrity, regardless of one's intellectual capacity or human exertions, no "great objects of human existence" could be accomplished. Honesty and integrity were especially important to the gentleman in a democracy. The gentleman was assigned the task of serving as the nation's conscience. Daniel M. Barringer urged his listeners to guide public opinion, and not "fawn as a courtier." Barringer's recommendation that the gentleman be frank and honest and tell the monarch of his "foibles--his errors--his micaevious propensities," closely followed that action recommended by Castiglione to the courtier. Presenting the same idea in his work on the social relations of the South, Hundley exclaimed that the gentleman was never the "SLAVE OF PUBLIC OPINION." Honesty and integrity insured

212Gaston, Address Delivered Before the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, 13-14

213Barringer, Address Delivered Before the Alumni and Graduating Class of the University of South Carolina, 23; Wirt, Address Before the Peithessophian and Philoclean Societies, 21; Pool, Address Delivered Before the Two Societies of the University of North Carolina, 15.

214Hundley, Social Relations, 63.
that the gentleman would act steadfastly and honorably, even in the face of public opposition.

The several recommended virtues, when joined with the proper cultivation and class, created the complete man or the gentleman in the South. The man possessing these attributes also possessed honor—both internal, as a recognition of his virtue and his accomplishments, and external, as the reputation for virtue and accomplishments. Southerners made frequent professions of honor and the code of honor most clearly manifested itself in the duel.

It is difficult to determine whether or not southerners believed the gentleman ought to engage in duels, because the South was not of one mind regarding the practice. Nowhere is the difference of opinion more clearly illustrated than in two letters between William B. Campbell of Tennessee and his uncle and mentor, David Campbell of Virginia. The two men exchanged letters in March of 1838 expressing their opinions about a recently fought duel between two Congressmen. William Campbell defended the duel as a practice necessary for maintaining respectful behavior, although he had serious reservations about the course the duel had taken between William Jordan Graves and Jonathan Cilley. He believed gentlemen ought to rise above trifling differences, but when points of contention proved too serious, he considered the duel the only "honorable way" to settle the dispute. When two men stepped upon the field
of honor they were to do more than exchange fire and then walk off the field with "hatred in their hearts" but smiles on their faces. This is child's play," he concluded.\textsuperscript{215} Although his purpose was different than Campbell's, J. B. Mallard thought that when men fought duels only one should leave the field. He wanted to "stigmatize a duel in which both parties have come off with their lives."\textsuperscript{216} Both men agreed that dueling was a serious business.

Dueling had its share of practitioners and supporters in the South. After calling J. G. Baird "a damned liar," Zebulon B. Vance received a challenge in 1855.\textsuperscript{217} As late as 1845, members of the United States Congress were fighting duels over statements made in the heat of debate, and one North Carolina debate society saw fit to establish a rule forbidding any critical comment during the course of a debate--undoubtedly to avoid the possibility of a challenge


\textsuperscript{216}Mallard's sentiment is clearing anti-dueling. Rev. R. Q. Mallard to Mrs. Mary S. Mallard, 25 October 1858, Children of Pride, 457. See also, George A. Mercer, 18 October 1859, George A. Mercer Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{217}J G. Baird to Zebulon Baird Vance, 9 July 1855, Zebulon Baird Vance Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.
emanating from their proceedings. The pervasiveness of the duel is further suggested in a letter from Paul Hamilton Hayne, as well as one from Alfred Huger. Hayne, writing to a northern friend, explained that "the old appeal to Duel is much more common at the South than it is with you . . . ." Hayne leaves the reader with the impression that he opposed dueling, but he added that "it is well neigh impossible for a gentleman if publicly affronted to avoid the ordeal." Fortunately, for Hayne, he had walked away from the duel he had fought just prior to writing his letter. Quite the contrary to Hayne's view of dueling was that embraced by Alfred Huger. Huger believed the duel to be the only way to preserve one's honor, and on at least two occasions he sent letters to congratulate successful duelists or their families. In 1855 he wrote

I have just heard of the affair between your son and a Wm. Kirk & it wd be an injustice to my own feelings, if I did not offer my congratulations to his mother & yourself, upon the safety and more than 'safety'--upon the conduct, & bearing of my young friend!

He added further that he would have proudly served as the boy's second. The duel had much support in the Old South.

218 Thomas Brevard Diary and Manuscripts, 6 April [1827?], Thomas Brevard Diary and Manuscripts, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

219 Paul Hamilton Hayne to Richard Henry Stoddard, 24 August 1855, Paul Hamilton Hayne Correspondence, William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

220 Alfred Huger to Genl. Hamilton, 3 October 1855,
When David Campbell responded to his nephew's letter concerning the Graves-Cilley duel he expressed an attitude toward the practice significantly different from that of his nephew's. Who approves of dueling, he asked. "No one else approves," he believed, save those who engaged in the practice. He further concluded that while men in high offices might approve of dueling, "the balance of the nation not only disapprove, but view such cases with horror," and he condemned dueling as "the Most blood thirsty custom that was ever known." Also condemning the practice was John Menan Patrick, who considered it a sin against God and a waste of life. Yet, it is important to note that even in his opposition to the duel Patrick admitted that if challenged he would accept and shoot to kill. Opposition to dueling existed in the South. Anti-dueling societies


sprang up throughout the region, but it is not possible to gauge the impact such societies had on regional attitudes, and it is difficult to come to any conclusion as to what southerners thought the ideal man ought to do in regard to dueling. One might reasonably conjecture, based on the gentlemanly virtues, that if he were honest in every situation the gentleman might be challenged, and if challenged his courage and fortitude would see him through the combat, but it is likely that the greatest respect went to the duelist who never issued a challenge and who fired into the air, refusing to draw blood. All others risked the condemnation of such men as Edmund Ruffin, who believed the son of Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia to be like his father, a "professional duelist, & bravo, bully, & designed murder upon system, & calculation."  

As the above discussion illustrates, the three components of the European ideal continued to be important in the South. Class, the first component of the gentleman, was made up of wealth, occupation, duty, and to some extent, birth. The second element, character, included most of the virtues of the ancients which had been celebrated by the

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224 Edmund Ruffin, 16 August 1859, Diary of Ruffin, I, 329-30.
Italians and the English. It also included the English bourgeois virtues. These virtues, however, had a definite moral cast to them, more so than those of any previous society examined in this study. Southerners seemed almost obsessed with morality. Finally, the component of cultivation remained an important part of the gentleman in the Old South. Southerners believed that the gentleman must develop his intellectual, physical, and social abilities to be complete. Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the southern gentleman was his completeness. Like the Italian courtier and the English gentleman, the gentleman of the South was a complete man. In this regard, the southern debt to Europe is demonstrable. At the same time, the shift away from the requirement of noble birth and the continuing emphasis upon simplicity suggest that the idea of the gentleman had been altered by the American environment. Finally, the moral cast, and the great emphasis upon honor, different from the earlier ideal in degree but not kind, suggest that the gentlemanly ideal was developing peculiarly southern characteristics during the ante-bellum period.
CHAPTER VI
Ante-Bellum Novelists and the Ideal Man

Just as southerners used speeches and letters to guide young men along the proper path towards the ideal, southern authors used the novel as a device for social criticism and direction. Indeed, according to William Gilmore Simms, the novel served a useful purpose only if it ministered "to morals, to mankind, and to society." Simms viewed the novel as a tool by which the writer could direct his readers toward the proper behavior and values. Thus the novel, in the hands of Simms, John Pendleton Kennedy, and William Alexander Caruthers, falls into the category of advice literature.

As a form of advice literature, the novel had advantages over both letters and speeches. It allowed the author more latitude in illustrating popular values, and it kept the attention of its readers through the use of exciting and dramatic tales. Francis Butler Simkins has warned against "overemphasizing literary materials in measuring the outlook of a people as nonliterary as those of the South," and he added that southerners ignored "realistic" works in favor of the "self flattery of


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historical romance."² But the novels which are often considered full of "self-flattery," and hence unrealistic, actually confirm the values presented in speeches and letters of the day. Southern novels reflect the social values of their day, and hence they constitute a valuable source of evidence in the examination of the ideal man of the South.

Many of the historical romances of the Old South, which might be criticized for their "self-flattery," have been examined by William R. Taylor in his intriguing *Cavalier and Yankee*. Taylor suggested that as Americans searched for their national identity, they concluded that theirs was a land of two distinguishable peoples—the northern Yankees of Saxon origin, and the southern Cavaliers of Norman antecedents. The two types of Americans possessed distinctive characters and values. The decisive and industrious Yankees had a tendency to be materialistic and parsimonious, while the compassionate, courageous, and hospitable Cavaliers tended to be self-destructive because of their recklessness and because they failed to recognize the virtues of thrift and industry. Taylor noted that in a number of southern novels, the genteel, Cavalier-type heroes were accompanied by southerners who more aptly fit the description of Yankees. These "transcendent Yankees,"

as Taylor called them, played major roles in a number of novels. The survival of Cavaliers, according to Taylor, required the presence of transcendent Yankees. Taylor saw in the juxtaposition of these two types of characters a southern recognition of the essentiality of Yankee attributes and a recognition that southerners were severely wanting in those attributes.³

The question should be raised as to whether or not southerners saw the division between Yankee attributes and Cavalier attributes as suggested by Taylor. Does Taylor's interpretation of ante-bellum literature accurately reflect the prevailing attitude of the South? It can be argued, based on the evidence examined in the preceding chapter, that southern novels did, indeed, reflect the popular values of the day, and hence, southerners probably saw the attributes of Taylor's Cavalier and transcendent Yankee as complementary. The values represented by each type of man were the values which southerners embraced; they were the values embodied in the pastoral and gentlemanly traditions. Writers found it far easier to incorporate the diverse values represented by the Cavalier, the Yankee, and the natural man, into different figures than to create a single complete character.

Southern authors grappled with the same problem

which William Wirt had sought to solve. Wirt, it will be remembered, had created in Patrick Henry a natural man who, upon the proper occasion, became magically transformed into the perfect, accomplished English gentleman. The numerous republications of Wirt's *Patrick Henry*, as well as the popularity of John Pendleton Kennedy's *Memoirs of William Wirt*, suggest a general familiarity with Wirt's work.\textsuperscript{4} But southern authors failed to follow Wirt's lead. The complete man in southern novels is rare, and William Gilmore Simms, the most prolific of southern authors, used such a figure only in one of his earliest romances.\textsuperscript{5} Rather than following Wirt's lead southern writers adopted a literary device first used by St. George Tucker in an Addisonian essay which he had submitted to Wirt for inclusion in Wirt's *The Old Bachelor* series. In the essay, which he entitled "Generosity & Oconomy. An Allegory," Tucker had two characters named Oconomy and Liberality wed, and two other characters named Generosity and Prudence follow suit. Liberality and Oconomy complemented and moderated each other, while Generosity and Prudence did the same. Separate they were incomplete and hence doomed;

\textsuperscript{4}Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 179-80.

together they helped illustrate the ideal. Tucker's essay was never published, and had no influence upon later literary developments, but he did anticipate later developments. Writers frequently juxtaposed two characters who possessed highly prized attributes. Country gentlemen were paired with either a frontiersman or an industrious yeoman to form a complete man. Separate, the characters were incomplete and destined to fail. Together, they complemented each other's strengths and moderated each other's weaknesses, and thus were assured success. Judging from the frequent use of this technique, writers found it far easier to incorporate diverse values into two different figures than to create a single complete character made up of the complex set of attributes celebrated by southerners. By dividing the various attributes between different characters, however, writers paved the way for the destruction of the traditional gentlemanly ideal. Above all else, it should be remembered, the gentleman was a complete man, exemplifying all of the values and aspirations of a society. Readers eventually concluded that the country gentleman of ante-bellum novels represented the ideal man of the South, but those wooden characters never reflected the complex set of values shared by southerners.

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6 St. George Tucker [Lycidas], "For the Old Bachellor: Generosity & Oconomy. An Allegory," Tucker-Coleman Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.
The work generally regarded as the first of the romantic plantation novels was *Swallow Barn*, by John Pendleton Kennedy. Kennedy's work, according to William R. Taylor, displayed a familiarity with English letters, especially Joseph Addison's and Richard Steele's *Spectator*. *Swallow Barn* also bears a marked resemblance to William Wirt's *The Letters of the British Spy*, a work also in the Addisonian tradition. *Swallow Barn*, it may be noted, was dedicated to the author of *The Letters of the British Spy*, and Kennedy believed *The British Spy* had become a national classic. Kennedy, like Wirt, was born in Maryland but had a strong attachment to Virginia. Every summer his mother, a Pendleton from the renowned family of Virginia, led her family out of the sweltering heat of Baltimore to the cooler climate of the Virginia hills. In Virginia, John learned many of the accomplishments of the gentleman, including hunting, fishing, and riding, and back in Baltimore he continued his effort to cultivate gentlemanly accomplishments. He studied Greek and Roman literature, read Locke, Hume, and Robertson, struggled to learn chemistry, geometry, and the "higher mathematics," attempted to sketch, paint, and to learn the modern languages. He imposed upon himself a strenuous regimen in order to become

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7Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 188-90.

a cultivated and complete gentleman. He was, therefore, well acquainted with the requirements of the Virginia ideal.

The accomplishments which Kennedy sought to develop are identifiable in Frank Meriwether, the Virginia gentleman in *Swallow Barn*. Meriwether was benevolent, gracious, and hospitable. He owned a large library, which he frequently consulted and which suggests a broad and classical education. He was an accomplished gentleman. Cultivation was essential to the gentleman, but it was also important that the gentleman never become overmuch cultivated, for fear that he might become vitiated.

Meriwether received a visit from one such gentleman, named Singleton Oglethorpe Swansdown, who epitomized the overly cultivated gentleman. Kennedy described Swansdown thusly:

> Mr. Swansdown has a tall figure, and an effeminate and sallow complexion, somewhat impaired perhaps by ill health, a head of dark hair, partially bald, a soft black eye, a gentle movement, a musical low-toned voice, and a highly finished style of dress.

Swansdown was "A Man of Pretensions," out of touch with the republican spirit of his nation and lacking the natural simplicity required of the true gentleman. Rather than living a life of rural simplicity, Swansdown had chosen to become "Conversant . . . with the principal cities of the Union," and to travel throughout Europe. Meriwether, on

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9Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 190.

the other hand, was by far a simpler and more natural man than Swansdown, even though he lacked none of the cultivation of his visitor. Unlike the pretentious gentleman, Meriwether possessed a "plain and cordial manner natural to him." He had a natural simplicity necessary for the true gentleman in the South. Kennedy created in Meriwether an accomplished gentleman who was both natural and cultivated, and yet as will be shown later in this chapter, he was still incomplete.

The comparison of the cultivated man and the natural man, only briefly touched upon in *Swallow Barn*, is fully developed in *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, Kennedy's second and most successful novel. In *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, Kennedy illustrates the natural man and the cultivated man and shows their importance to his readers through the use of two distinct types of characters—the cultivated aristocrat and the simple natural man. The story takes place in South Carolina during the Tory ascendancy of the American Revolution. As the book opens, Major Arthur Butler, the genteel-hero of the book, is traveling to South Carolina in order to organize Patriot resistance to the British and to overthrow Tory dominance of the state. Kennedy fashioned Major Butler into a refined and accomplished gentleman. "His whole bearing, visage and figure, seemed to speak of one familiar with enterprise and fond of danger;--they

11Ibid.
denoted gentle breeding predominating over a life of toil and privation."\(^{12}\) His knowledge of the ancient historians Polybius and Xenophon suggested that he possessed a classical education required of the gentleman, and he was a man of considerable virtue, being courageous, compassionate, and moderate. Since he possessed all of the attributes required of the traditional gentleman, one would expect Butler to be the focus of the novel. After all, he was a traditionally styled hero. Butler, however, spends the greater part of the novel in British captivity waiting for his trusted sergeant, Galbraith "Horse-Shoe" Robinson, to save him from execution. As great as Butler's attributes were, they were not sufficient to meet the exigencies of the New World--they were not great enough to enable him to stand alone. He was not a complete man.

Accompanying Butler on his mission and expected to guide him safely through the dangers of both the wilderness and enemy enclaves, was Horse-Shoe Robinson. Kennedy portrayed Robinson as a "man of altogether rougher mold" than his commander. "Nature had carved out, in his person," wrote Kennedy, "an athlete whom the sculptors might have studied to improve the Herculese."\(^{13}\) In addition, Kennedy added that "there was a radiant, broad, good nature upon

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\(^{13}\)Ibid., 17.
his face; and the glance of a large, clear, blue eye told of arch thoughts, and of shrewd, homely wisdom." Robinson was a plain but proud backwoodsman of great moral virtue, untutored but possessing a quick and facile wit which revealed a strong natural intelligence. He was also a man of firm character and great strength, feared by both the British and Loyalist forces in South Carolina. Also known as the night rider Jack O'Lantern, when questioned by a British dragoon about his identity, he defiantly announced that "My name is Brimstone, I am first cousin to Belzebub." After he and Butler were captured by the Loyalist forces, Robinson managed to escape. One Loyalist, in an effort to recapture the escaped prisoner, discovered that Robinson had "a broadside like a man-of war!" Horse-Shoe Robinson, as the title of the novel indicates, was the central character of the story. Feared by his foes and depended upon by his friends, he nevertheless was dependent on others for purpose. He had no independent existence. When he first traveled to South Carolina, he journeyed under the command of the young Major Butler to fight for the Patriot cause. Following Butler's capture he began his efforts to win the Major's freedom by seeking the help of Butler's aristocratic wife. Robinson needed the

14Ibid., 18.
15Ibid., 74.
16Ibid., 211.
moderating influence of the cultivated aristocrat. Early in the tale, Butler inquired where the sergeant had come upon the bountiful fare which they were enjoying. Robinson replied that he had appropriated the food "under the denomination of pillage." The Major quickly lectured Robinson, "Pillage, Galbraith! You forget you are not in an enemy's country. I directed you scrupulously to pay for everything you got upon the road." When Robinson replied that he had told an "old Jezebel to charge it all to the Continental Congress," Butler demanded, "Would you bring us into discredit with our best friends, by your villainous habits of free quarters?" The sergeant's enthusiasm and freewheeling ways had to be tempered and directed by the moderate and cultivated Butler. Without the influence and benefit of cultivation, the natural man might run wild. Kennedy created a natural man in Robinson, but he never considered the natural man a complete man. The natural man needed the guidance and moderating influence of the accomplished man. Without a Butler, Robinson was incomplete. His attributes were essential to the South, but they were dangerous if uncontrolled.

Butler's attributes were necessary to keep Robinson from running wild. Yet at the same time, Robinson's attributes were essential to Butler. The Major, a man of

17Ibid., 21.
18Ibid.
gentle birth and great character and cultivation, was not a complete man. He was not able to function properly in the New World without Horse-Shoe Robinson by his side. Butler remained in the hands of his enemies throughout the greatest portion of the novel, first with the Loyalists and then with the British. Unlike Robinson, he was incapable of effecting his own release, and he depended on Robinson to insure his rescue. The cultivated man and the natural man were dependent upon each other. Without the attributes of the natural man, without a natural man by his side, the cultivated gentleman would fail in his every endeavor. As such, the characters of Horse-Shoe Robinson and Major Arthur Butler were complementary.

The idea that the two types of characters were mutually dependent is further suggested by two other groups of characters in Horse-Shoe Robinson. The cultivated man was represented by both Philip Lindsay and Captain St. Jermyn, a British officer and Butler's chief antagonist. Each man lacked the aid of a Robinson-type of figure and hence was doomed to failure and death. Lindsay was, in most respects, the perfect English gentleman.

His father emigrated from England, and was established in Virginia about the year 1735, as secretary governor of the province. He was a gentleman of good name and fortune. Philip was born within a year after this emigration. As America was then comparatively a wilderness, and afforded but few facilities for education of youth, the son of the secretary was sent at an early age to England, where he remained, with the exception of an occasional visit to
his parents, under the guardianship of a near relative, until he had completed, not only his college courses, but also his studies in the Temple—an almost indispensable requirement of that day for young gentlemen of condition. 19

Lindsay, Major Butler's father-in-law, lacked the attributes of the man of nature, and in many ways he represented the overly cultivated man. During the Revolution he wanted nothing more than to be left alone in the solitude of his study, free from the turmoil of the war. Slowly, he became drawn into the conflict. Though he tried to shirk his duty and remain aloof from the conflict, the war engulfed him. His son and daughter rushed off to help the Patriots, and a mysterious English gentleman lured him off to aid the Loyalist cause. Unable to make a commitment to either side, and lacking the decisiveness or understanding of a natural man, he also lacked a companion similar to Robinson to offset his weaknesses. Without the attributes of the natural man, he was a doomed aristocrat. He died understanding that a new order had replaced his own, and that it was no longer sufficient to be simply an English gentleman in the New World.

At the other extreme from Lindsay were the Loyalists who first captured Butler and Robinson. Kennedy described this group of men as brutish creatures, little different from animals and possessing few worthy attributes. They represent the natural man out of control. Lacking

19Ibid., 31.
accomplished companions to soften and refine their natures and to offset their weaknesses, they too were doomed to failure. Separate, either type of man was incomplete and destined to failure. Together, their attributes insured success. The attributes of the accomplished gentleman and the natural man were those which southerners embraced. Those attributes are clearly illustrated in *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, and Kennedy left no doubt in the reader's mind that the gentleman could never succeed unless he also possessed some of the attributes of the natural man.

The same point is made in *The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe*, a novel by William Alexander Caruthers. Caruthers, like Kennedy, was of Scotch-Irish descent and tried to make himself a gentleman. His effort to live the life of a gentleman led to financial ruin. He built a great house, with his wife's dowry, reminiscent of those built by the Tidewater aristocracy of Virginia, and he entertained lavishly. But when the dowry money ran out, he was forced to file an oath of insolvency and flee the state. Having failed as a gentleman, Caruthers began to write about gentlemen. William R. Taylor has noted that each of Caruthers' three novels presented two counterpoised characters, and that neither type of character possessed all of the attributes of the ideal. Caruthers used a character of Scotch-Presbyterian background as a "counter-
image" of the Cavalier gentleman.\textsuperscript{20} The essential qualities of the two types of characters, the Cavalier and the natural man, are nowhere better illustrated than in Caruthers' final novel. \textit{The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe} was first published serially in \textit{The Magnolia} in 1841, and five years later it was released in book form.\textsuperscript{21}

Early in the novel, Caruthers sought to explain the meaning of the term "gentleman," and in doing so he touched upon one of the debates in the ante-bellum South over the meaning of the word. Caruthers suggested that a gentleman exuded a particular air which was identifiable regardless of dress. Essex, the house servant at the home of Alexander Spotswood, an eighteenth-century governor of Virginia, had the ability to detect the difference between a gentleman and a "gentlemanly dressed man" in just one glance.\textsuperscript{22} Spotswood, himself described as a gentleman and "one of the ablest men within the boundaries of the Old Dominion--of vigorous intellect--learned and subtle in the use of scholastic weapons" and possessing a great "power of eloquence," also could distinguish the true gentleman from

\textsuperscript{20}Taylor, \textit{Cavalier and Yankee}, 208.


\textsuperscript{22}Caruthers, \textit{Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe}, 14-15.
the counterfeit. When a new tutor arrived at his home, Spotswood prepared for a public examination of the scholar. The tutor was described as "dressed in black, rather the worse for the wear, but still scrupulously neat and clean." Caruthers added that "The deep impress of long familiarity with persons of high breeding was in his every step and movement." When Spotswood first set eyes upon Mr. Hall, his new tutor, he remarked, "Egad, he's a gentleman at all events," and the Governor felt chagrined at having proposed a public test of such a man.24

Spotswood accepted Hall as a gentleman at first sight, without questioning his birth. Hall seemed to exude the cultivation and character of a gentleman. But other young gentlemen in the colony were far less liberal in their view of the requisites for gentility. Henry Lee, described as a young gentleman who believed himself "the grand centre" of the solar system, insisted that a man prove that he was of gentle birth before he could be recognized as a gentleman. Hall demonstrated his swords-manship, a broad knowledge of the classics, a mastery of the military arts and music, and yet Lee continued to deny that the tutor was a gentleman. After a clash of arms with Hall, Lee sent the tutor a curt note which explained his idea of the essential element of gentility. The note

23Ibid., 39.
24Ibid., 25.
read, "The first moment . . . after you have established your pretended claims to gentle birth and breeding, you shall hear from me." If Hall failed to establish his membership in the gentry class, Lee proposed to chastise him on sight—a punishment reserved for a gentleman's inferiors.  

Lee and his friends sought to dismiss Hall's many accomplishments and his firm and virtuous character as tricks of any "French dancing-master," the knowledge of "some broken down pedagogue," or knowledge derived from service as a "drummer or fifer to some marching regiment." The governor, however, defended the tutor, arguing that

if Hall is a hypocrite and impostor, he is one of the most accomplished swindlers that I have met with. It is a rare thing in my experience of human nature—and it has not been confined in its range—to see a man descending in villainy, and elevating himself at the same time in all the elegant courtesies of life. Neither is it common to see men of that stamp cultivating their minds highly.

The gentleman was identified by his attributes, according to Spotswood, who placed little emphasis upon birth. The Governor's son further dismissed Lee's insistence on the essentiality of birth when he stated "'Oh, damn the barriers of the social order. If I had my way, I would cement the whole of them with the hot fumes of wine into one great

25Ibid., 93.
26Ibid., 107.
27Ibid.
Caruthers allowed the argument presented by the Spotswoods to hold the day. Talent, not birth, determined a man's social standing.

The debate over Hall's gentility was finally resolved. It turned out that he was actually Frank Lee, the brother of Henry Lee, his principal antagonist. Although Caruthers insisted that the gentleman need not be of gentle origin, he made his hero a gentleman of birth as well as of cultivation. But even possessing the attributes of Frank Lee or Governor Spotswood, the gentleman could not stand alone in the New World. The cultured gentleman was too much a part of the Old World to conquer the frontier unassisted. To guide an expedition into transmontane Virginia and help open the west for settlement, the gentleman needed the help of the natural man.

Spotswood, then, sent for an old frontiersman and natural man named Joe "Red" Jarvis. Jarvis was described as a large man, clad in buckskin and homespun. He carried the various utensils of the frontiersman, including a rifle and a knife which "in a single-handed encounter, would be a most deadly weapon." He displayed an "excessive self-confidence" which contrasted most decidedly with his weather-beaten form. The large red whiskers which extended from under his throat were the reason for his sobriquet of "Red" Jarvis. When he first joined Spotswood's explorers he

28Ibid., 68.
rode into the midst of the large gentry, who awaited so impatiently his arrival, followed by a large dog, which was just about as much used to such company as his master. There was this great difference between them, however, the dog slunk about the horses legs, quite confounded and abashed; while Joe rode into their midst, one eye cocked, with as quiet a leer as if he had rode to the front of his father's cabin.29

In describing Jarvis, Caruthers compared the frontiersman with his animals and contrasted him with the gentlemen of the expedition. He was much like his pony and dog, plain and rugged, and appearing out of place amongst the fine gentry. Upon their first meeting, Governor Spotswood asked Jarvis if he planned on carrying his pony on their long journey. Jarvis replied caustically that "Horses is like men, Governor--it is not always the smoothest coats has the bravest hearts inside of em . . . ."30 He added, furthermore, that the gentlemen of the expedition might look fine in their lace ruffles and flowing collars, but such garb would never withstand the wilds of the frontier. One is left to conclude that Caruthers also meant that the cultivation of the gentleman, though appropriate and necessary in a society, would never survive the frontier. The cultivation of the European-type gentleman had little use in the wilderness, and it might, 

29 Ibid., 175-6.

30 Ibid., 176. It might be recalled that upon Spotswood's first introduction to Frank Lee, at the time in the disguise of Mr. Hall, he looked beyond the outer dress of the man and remarked, "He's a gentleman." Jarvis only repeated the sentiments first expressed by Spotswood.
like lace ruffles and flowing collars, prove burdensome. At the very least, Caruthers was warning that the frontier would present the gentleman with great challenges, and that he would be forced to adapt to the new environment. As for Jarvis, he saw no use for the inner or outer attributes of the accomplished gentlemen from the Virginia tidewater.

The two types of characters which exist in The Knights of the Golden Horse-Shoe each possess attributes valued by southerners, and the two types were mutually dependent upon each other. Initially, the gentry had as little respect for Jarvis as Jarvis had for them. To them, he was a comic figure—a country bumpkin with no cultivation. But they discovered that their sojourn in the Virginia wilderness would have ended in disaster had it not been for the frontiersman's assistance. Early in the trip the unshod horses of the gentry went lame. Quickly, the gentlemen were forced to adapt to the frontier. Jarvis taught all of the fine gentlemen, including Governor Spotswood, how to shoe horses, and then each man was required to shoe his own horse. Without Jarvis' knowledge and skill, without the aid of the natural man, the expedition would have come to a premature halt. The gentlemen who had first laughed at Jarvis again discovered his importance as they prepared to launch a surprise attack against a band of hostile Indians. Failure was averted
when Jarvis showed the gentry how an Indian could hide in the branches of a tree. As the Indian descended from his hideout, the Virginians realized that without the frontiersman their raid would have been disastrous. During the raid itself, Jarvis managed to single out the leader of the hostiles and capture him, and following the battle he singlehandedly attacked an Indian encampment and rescued a young maiden there. Jarvis is not a comic figure as suggested by William R. Taylor. He is a heroic figure with qualities greatly admired by southerners. At the same time, though, he is not the hero of the work, for he is not a complete or an ideal man. His shortcomings were too obvious and too many for him to be an ideal type. Rough and uneducated, he spoke in heavy dialect. He lacked benevolence and compassion and felt contemptuous of all those who displayed any compassion for Indians, whom he considered "varmints."

Finally, he could not live under the restraints of civilization. The natural man needed the freedom of the forest. Governor Spotswood saw the great valley of Virginia as a vast garden waiting to be opened and civilized by man. Jarvis, though, saw the great valley as a place where he could escape the encroachments of civilization. The frontiersman is an admirable figure, but he is flawed. His purpose in the novel is not to provide a model, but instead to provide those attributes

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31Ibid., 219.
that the heroes lacked. In combination with the gentry, he helps to illustrate the values of the South.

The tidewater aristocrats, principally Frank Lee and Governor Spotswood, are also admirable figures, although they could not survive in the wilderness without the frontiersman. The knowledge of how to survive in the wilderness rested with Jarvis, but leadership clearly fell to the gentleman. When the time had come to map out a plan of battle for the raid against the Indians, the duty fell to a gentleman, and the attack itself was led by a gentleman. Additionally, the gentlemen displayed a marked ability to learn the lessons of the frontiersman. Early in the expedition the gentry had to learn how to shoe their horses, and Frank Lee learned the lessons of the wilderness so quickly that Jarvis thought he could make an excellent scout. The gentleman needed the assistance of the natural man, but as Caruthers seems to suggest, given inclination and opportunity, the gentleman could develop the attributes of the natural man. Nevertheless, the two types of figures in The Knights of The Golden Horse-Shoe were interdependent. The accomplished gentleman planned and led the expedition and the attack, while the frontiersmen insured the success of both. Together, the cultivated man and the natural man possessed qualities which southerners believed essential to the ideal man. Separate

\[32\] Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, 221.
they were incomplete, but together they formed the basis of the southern ideal.

Upon closer examination, yet another component of the ideal man can be found in both Horse-Shoe Robinson and Red Jarvis. Both men knew blacksmithing, and Robinson was a blacksmith by trade. The occupation was one requiring great industry, and success in the trade required frugality. Industry and frugality were of two of the important attributes the English contributed to the concept of the gentleman. According to the English ideal, man increased or at least perpetuated the wealth he inherited, and this English notion continued to be an important component of the gentleman throughout the ante-bellum period, as seen in Chapter V. Frank Meriwether, the genteel aristocrat of Kennedy's Swallow Barn, lacked industry. One New England reviewer of Swallow Barn complained that the gentry of the story made up the "most ordinary, trifling, useless generation the world ever saw."  

Kennedy, though, recognized that the gentleman could not practice the required virtues unless he were industrious. Without industry, the gentleman would not be complete. Kennedy thus created a second character to strengthen Meriwether's weakness. Lucretia, Meriwether's wife, is described as "a pattern of industry." It is Lucretia who insures the smooth

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33 New England Magazine 3 (July 1832), 77, quoted in Ridgely, John Pendleton Kennedy, 43.
functioning of the plantation. Without her industry, Meriwether and his plantation would be doomed. Without all of the required virtues, the gentleman would collapse. Meriwether needed Lucretia, just as "Genorosity" needed "Oconomy," in order to be balanced and complete.

The requirement of industry and its companion virtue of frugality is especially well illustrated in William Gilmore Simms' novel, Woodcraft, or Hawkes about the Dovecote. Simms developed his most delightful and corpulent character, the Falstaff-like Captain Porgy, in this novel. Porgy actually appeared in seven of the historical romances written by Simms, first in The Partisan (1835), and receiving fullest development in Woodcraft (1852), the next to last of the sagas of the Revolution. 34 William P. Trent, in his biography of Simms, described Porgy as the "typical southerner" in many respects. He was "brave, high talking, careless in money matters and as generous as careless, fond of good living, and last but not least, too frequently inclined to take his own commonplaces as the utterances of inspired wisdom." 35 Porgy was an aristocrat, to the manor born. He possessed the classical


education of a gentleman. He was also virtuous, being especially compassionate, charitable, and hospitable. When criticized for paying a needy young child a guinea for making stockings, Porgy proclaimed,

In truth, I did not give the guinea for the stockings. I gave it for the child to buy her own stockings, if need be, or whatever else she needs. I gave it from my heart . . . and not from my pocket.36

The gentleman, in Simms' view, was a man of class, cultivation, and character. Nevertheless Simms pictured Porgy as an incomplete man, a man incapable of surviving on his own.

As a planter and businessman, Porgy had proven a failure. At the beginning of the novel, he declares, "I am a ruined man! I go back to the ancient homestead of my fathers, to find it desolate."37 His plantation, Glen-Eberly, lay in ruins in the South Carolina low-country. He had always planted at the wrong time, and he lacked the patience to allow nature to take its slow course. He complained that "I was always one of that large class of planters who reap thistles from their planting. I sowed wheat only to reap tares."38 On one occasion he had just


37Cavalier of the Old South, 259.

38Simms, Woodcraft, 190.
finished planting his rice fields when some friends arrived for a visit. To feed his friends, he drained the fields and caught the perch left behind. He destroyed a field of rice to catch a few fish. Yet even when an associate recounted the story to him, he expressed no remorse, only happy memories of the high quality of the fish. "You never saw such perch in your life," he exclaimed. The Revolution had further contributed to the despoilation of his lands, and years of mismanagement of his affairs had left Porgy in debt. On the verge of economic destruction, he lacked the knowledge or temperament to save his ancestral lands. He was, in a manner of speaking, a doomed aristocrat, doomed because he was not a complete man, doomed because he had failed to cultivate the virtues of industry and frugality.

Porgy's salvation rested with one Sergeant Millhouse. Millhouse had served with Porgy in Francis Marion's army during the Revolution. Following the war, the Sergeant decided to follow Porgy to Glen-Eberly and to help him rebuild the plantation. Millhouse, like Porgy, is not a complete man, and in fact he is far less admirable than Porgy. He is rude and materialistic. When discussing his taste in music, he explained that he liked the "music of my mills in Edisto; they keeps a grinding and sawing night and day, and all the time they seems to be a singing in my

39Ibid., 291.
ears--'Dollar! dollar! dollar, oh! dollar! dollar, oh!'
That's the music for me . . . and sure enough, that was
what I call useful, business, mercantile music.
Simms had little use for the crass materialism which he feared
was sweeping the nation, but he recognized the essentiality
of industry and frugality. On arrival at Glen-Eberly,
Millhouse announced his plan to rejuvenate the farm. "I
kin make corn, and rice, I reckon, jest as good as any man;
and you mus'n't meddle, cappin, except to do jest them
thins that I tell you," insisted the sergeant.
Millhouse was determined to save Porgy's plantation through hard
work and by eliminating extravagance. Without Millhouse,
Porgy was doomed to failure, and although Millhouse was
capable of heroics and possessed many fine qualities, he
is not an heroic figure. His function in Woodcraft is
to help offset Porgy's weaknesses, and to help illustrate
the attributes necessary for an ideal man. The strengths
of the two characters are complementary, and they moderate
each other's weaknesses. Porgy could not long remain a
gentleman practicing the required virtues of liberality,
hospitality, and charity, unless he became both frugal and
industrious. He was incomplete without those virtues, and
hence he was incomplete without Millhouse.

40 John Rushing Welsh, The Mind of William Gilmore

41 Simms, Woodcraft, 189.
Simms' novels followed the same pattern employed by William Alexander Caruthers and John Pendleton Kennedy. Each of the novelists coupled two distinct types of characters in order to illustrate the ideal type of man. The gentleman, whether he be Arthur Butler, Francis Meriwether, Frank Lee, or Captain Porgy, was a man of great accomplishment and firm virtue. Yet each gentleman was cursed with a flaw which threatened his existence. Either he lacked the "Yankee" virtues, as Taylor has labeled them, or else the attributes of the natural man. Ultimately, each hero survived because a second character, possessing the exact virtues which the hero lacked, was introduced into the tale. Caruthers suggested that the attributes of the complementing character mattered more than the character himself. Given the opportunity, a Frank Lee could adapt to the frontier. He could learn to exist in the wilderness providing he had a Red Jarvis to teach him how. The gentleman could become a complete man, and if he wished to survive, he would have to do so.

The novels examined in this chapter demonstrate that in broad outlines the Renaissance idea of a complete man continued to exist throughout the ante-bellum period. Over the course of time, as we have seen, the Italian ideal had been modified to better suit the society which adopted it. The ideal had undergone bourgeoisification in England and it had been adapted to the frontier and rural
environment in America. The most notable alteration that occurred in the Old South was the increased emphasis upon morality which probably led to an increased emphasis upon the importance of honor. Although the ideal was no longer as frequently or as formally discussed as in past generations--there were no southern works comparable to Brathwait's *The English Gentleman*, or Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman*--the belief that the ideal man ought to be a complete man continued to be a part of the system of values in the Old South.
EPILOGUE

Throughout the ante-bellum period southerners continued to embrace a gentlemanly ideal based upon European and colonial antecedents. Southerners valued, just as their predecessors had valued, the elements of class, cultivation, and character. Their values, then, were the traditional values of European culture. Financial success attained through hard work was an aspiration typical of both the English and ante-bellum southerners. Although they might fume about the acquisitive spirit sweeping America, John C. Calhoun and William Gilmore Simms both sought wealth and expected the model man to do the same. The ideal man of the South was a man of substantial wealth, and, more often than not, a planter. Indeed, he was a man of the proper class. There were occasional rebukes of "book-learning" in the South, but southerners continued to believe that the gentleman was a man of complete education, a man possessing a classical education. It was not sufficient, though, to merely cultivate the intellect. The gentleman also possessed refined social graces and manly physical development. John Tillinghast had warned his father that an education would come to naught if the body were left undeveloped, and John Calhoun had issued much the same warning to his sons. Along with class and cultivation, the gentleman in the
South had to possess a firm character. He had to be a man of refined virtue practicing the ancient virtues which included magnanimity and prudence, as well as the English virtues of industry and frugality. The ideal man of the South, then, was in the mainstream of European tradition. Southern values remained remarkably constant throughout the ante-bellum period.

The salient features of the European-based gentlemanly ideal remained intact throughout the ante-bellum period. Yet, simultaneously, gradual changes had begun to take place. The ideal of the gentleman had always undergone changes which reflected specific social values or needs, and it was no different in the South. An obsession with morality, stemming from a variety of causes including the abolitionist assault on the morality of southerners, the rise of Scotch-Irish Calvinists into the ranks of the upper-class, and a concomitant emphasis upon the gentleman's honor, distinguished the gentleman of the South from his predecessors. Southern advice literature is filled with pronouncements attesting to the morality of the gentleman. Without doubt, southerners expected the gentleman to be a moral man, possessing both the ancient and Christian virtues. He was generous and hospitable to his friends, and compassionate and charitable to the poor and unfortunate. Southerners envisioned the ideal man as being especially kind to his slaves. Convinced of his morality, southerners
also believed the gentleman possessed unblemished honor. Debate raged over whether or not the gentleman ought to fight duels in defence of his honor, but southerners never questioned the necessity of honor. Southerners emphasized the importance of honor and morality far more than did the English or Italians. The change which took place was one of degree rather than kind.

The gentlemanly ideal of the South, throughout the ante-bellum period, was in the mainstream of Western culture. Southerners continued to hold on to the values and aspirations of the European ideal. Changes in the ideal did occur, but those changes never outweighed the similarities. Most important of those similarities was the idea of the complete man. The gentleman of the South, as suggested in William Alexander Caruthers' character Frank Lee, was a complete man, a man of cultivation, character, and class.
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