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CONFEDERATE CAVALIERS: THE MYTH
IN WAR AND DEFEAT

by

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Late one night in 1962, at a convivial gathering of Professor Frank E. Vandiver's seminar on Confederate History, it was suggested that I do a study in Confederate intellectual history, using Southern literature as source material. I agreed, having little idea what such a study would entail. But the project grew more fascinating as it grew more difficult, and I shall always be grateful to Dr. Vandiver for his optimism in launching me on this study and for his suggestions, encouragement, and criticism in guiding the work to completion.

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PROLOGUE

On May 23, 1861, Kate Stone, a twenty-year-old girl who lived on a large cotton plantation in northeastern Louisiana, took out the journal she had begun a few days earlier. All around her, talk of "War, War" swept all other subjects aside. She tried to put into words what seemed to be happening:

Throughout the length and breadth of the land the trumpet of war is sounding, and from every hamlet and village, from city and country, men are hurrying by thousands, eager to be led to battle against Lincoln's hordes. Bravely, cheerily they go, willing to meet death in defense of the South, the land we love so well, the fairest land and the most gallant men the sun shines on. May God prosper us. Never again can we join hands with the North, the people who hate us so.1

When Kate Stone composed this high-flown little passage championing the Southern call to arms, she drew her terms and concepts from existing myth. Ideas she already took for granted—that Southerners had in common qualities that distinguished them from Northern inferiors—colored her views of the coming conflict and gave meaning to the barely-organized Confederate States. From the beginning, the idea of the Confederacy bore a special relationship to that older Southern conception—the myth of the cavalier.

Since about the 1830's the sense of a "divided culture" had awakened and intensified in the American mind. In their "search for a national character," writes William R. Taylor in Cavalier and Yankee, Americans began to associate certain traits with certain regions. The North acquired the image of a "leveling, go-getting
utilitarian society" symbolized by the Yankee, "the acquisitive
man"; the South acquired an "aristocratic, agrarian" image symbolized
by a gentleman planter, the cavalier. "More and more," Taylor says,
the cavalier "came to be looked upon as the characteristic expression
of life in the South."²

The cavalier of prewar myth represented a stable and serene
society in a setting that was rural, uncontaminated by urban evils.
An aristocrat, he was proud of his "blood," tenacious of his honor,
deferential toward all women, dedicated to public service, and
indifferent to matters of money. While critics found him "weak,
vacillating and self-indulgent, or wild, vindictive and self-
destructive," Southerners increasingly, through the 1840's and
1850's, rallied to support the cavalier as their vision of perfection,
their picture of themselves painted in ideal tones.³

Through the story of secession, the creation of a Southern
Confederacy, years of glorious and agonizing war, and, finally,
bitter defeat, the Southern cavalier threads his way--at times a
commanding figure who dominates the stage and casts all others into
obscurity; at other times a more shadowy figure who lurks in the
wings but whose presence can never be ignored. The cavalier and
the story are bound to each other in a relationship sometimes
serene, sometimes strained, but their bonds are too strong, too
interwoven ever to be broken. The cavalier personifies that
intangible "differentness" about the South; his mythical presence
serves to distinguish South from North, Confederacy from Union, Rebel from Yankee. The Confederacy in myth bears the stamp of this cavalier of myth; when the images merge, the chivalrous South becomes (in the words of one popular song) the "Chivalrous C.S.A."
NOTES


4/Lizzie Cary Daniel/, Confederate Scrap-Book (Richmond, 1893), 251-252.
CHAPTER I

CAVALIERS IN SECESSION

How and why did war begin? This question the Southerner continually asked himself. It was hardly a simple question, but he had to find an answer, for in his answer here was to be found the key to his whole ideological defense. Certainly he was different from a Northerner; his special heritage, he believed, set him apart, gave him certain qualities, certain traditions which were peculiarly his own. Robert M. Toombs, the Senator from Georgia, is reported to have said in 1860, "We [of the South] are a race of gentlemen."¹ when an ex-Confederate private soldier from Tennessee, Samuel Watkins, tried to account for differences between the sections, he said very simply, "They [Northerners] are the descendants of the good old Puritan Plymouth Rock stock, and we of the South from the proud and aristocratic stock of Cavaliers."² But the Southerner still had to explain why war resulted from differences between North and South. He had to decide how secession happened, who led the movement, and why. The mythical cavalier as Southern hero gave form and color and reason to the account which he wove together; this cavalier could justify Southern action or at least, perhaps, help to explain it.

As it dealt with Southern ideas and actions during that winter and spring of 1860-61, the cavalier myth proved somewhat elastic.
It could justify quite different reactions during the secession crisis. Primarily, the cavalier assumed two roles at that time: he could appear as the fiery, passionate man so eager for war that he helped to provoke it, or he could appear as the noble and wise man who, dreading war, ultimately sacrificed himself to his state's decision. Whichever character he played, the Southern hero acted as he did because he was a cavalier.

Authors who had been secessionists themselves naturally tried to create heroes with like sentiments. But they faced a problem which grew in time to become almost insurmountable. After 1865, was it possible to look back upon the fiery cavaliers, the ardent secessionists of 1861, with real sympathy and understanding, to present them entirely in a favorable light? After all, time and war had proved them wrong. The confidence, the predictions, and the hopes of secessionists now lay in ruins with the shattered Confederacy. Could authors build heroes out of men many Southerners, in retrospect, thought most intemperate? Or were those men shortsighted romantics, at best, and at worst, political fanatics or opportunists?

Even while secession was still an issue and a topic of lively debate, this unfavorable tradition began to form. Secessionists were described by their opponents, at the time, in terms that were colorful but hardly flattering. When a North Carolina editor heard that citizens of Charleston cheered Lincoln's election because it
meant they could now secede, he angrily wrote that

such conduct displays an utter inability to appreciate -
the importance of the step contemplated by the parties
concerned, and partakes more of the character of the
sports of a set of liberated school children, than
that more serious spirit which is supposed to govern
men who are about to undertake a great, and terrible
responsibility . . . .4

Besides being childish, in the words of their opponents, immediate
secessionists were rash, they were impulsive and blind, they were
fanatics—"firebrands." Worse still, they were conspirators--
scheming and selfish politicians who would destroy the Union to gain
political power. Another North Carolina editor concluded sweepingly,
"The disunionist per se is either a mad man or a bad man."5

South Carolina and South Carolinians came to typify the
spirit of immediate secession. Already, more than other Southerners
they had come to represent the reckless temper of the South, the
violence thinly veiled by aristocratic formalities.6 And at least
one wellborn South Carolinian, Mary Boykin Chesnut, while favoring
secession herself agreed, in 1861, that South Carolinians were a
little "mad":

South Carolina had been rampant for years. She was
the torment of herself and everybody else. Nobody
could live in this state unless he were a fire-eater.
Came what would, I wanted them to fight and stop
talking. South Carolinians had exasperated and heated
themselves into a fever that only blood-letting could
ever cure. It was the inevitable remedy. So I was
a seceder.7

The image of South Carolina as reckless and radical did not
disappear in the Confederate South. With Southern reverses and
hardships came the realization that the Confederacy was hardly the
utopia orators had pictured. War-weared people sought a scapegoat
and found it naturally in South Carolina. Mrs. Chesnut quoted one
Virginian, Captain Smith Lee, as having declared in 1863:

South Carolina be hanged! She brought us into this
snarl. How I did want to stay in the old Navy.
But Virginia comes first with us all, you know,
so I am here."

And the indictment of South Carolina in particular often meant an
indictment in general of all those who in 1860-61 had cried for
immediate secession.

When the young novelist from Mobile, Alabama, Augusta Jane Evans,
began to write in 1862 her novel of secession and war, Macaria (1864),
she had to face this problem. Already there existed an image of
secessionists as radical, impractical, and selfish politicians.
But since Miss Evans two years earlier had been an ardent and outspoken
advocate of immediate secession, obviously she could not concede
any truth to this image. In January 1861 she had proudly declared,
"I am an earnest and uncompromising Secessionist . . . . Prompt
and separate state action I believe to be the only door of escape
from the worse than Egyptian bondage of Black Republicanism."
The problem posed a challenge which Miss Evans accepted. She undertook
the task of resurrecting the secessionists' image, of presenting
them in a light so favorable that none could possibly find fault
with their actions. After all, it would be most awkward and more
than a little painful to admit that her Southern heroes were fools.
So she declares most emphatically in *Macaria* that secession, far from being a radical, shortsighted move, was a conservative move brought about by conservative people; it was a proper step worked for by responsible, alert, and enlightened individuals. In short, she tried to give a conservative cast to secessionist characters and present them as heroes—as Southern cavaliers.

Miss Evans carefully stresses that her hero Russell Aubrey and her heroine Irene Huntingdon, far from being radicals, loathe and fear current political practices which encourage agitators to stir up the volatile masses. Universal suffrage, party spirit, and frequent elections, they feel, result only in "demagogism," the "hydra-headed foe of democracy." The kind of democratic republic they believe in and work for would limit direct mass participation, provide for rule by the wise (the upper classes), and weed out evils of party politics so that, among other things, in Irene's words, "our Presidents . . . will be selected and supported solely for their intrinsic ability and nobility of soul, instead of for the places they will confer on their party . . . ."

These conservative political beliefs of Russell and Irene cause them to call for action long before others in the community are aroused. Denouncing the evils of "demagogism" is for them the same as denouncing the evils of politics in North and West. As Russell explains to a friend, "Cleon was the prototype of a numerous
class; the school is flourishing vigorously at the North and no longer a stranger here. The people must root it out speedily, or the days of our national existence are numbered." And he concludes,

The day is not far distant, I fear, when European paupers, utterly ignorant of our institutions, will determine who shall sit in the presidential chair, and how far the constitution shall be observed. . . . It requires no extraordinary prescience to predict that the great fundamental principles of this government will soon become a simple question of arithmetic—will lie at the mercy of an unscrupulous majority. The surging waves of Northern faction and fanaticism already break ominously against our time-honored constitutional dykes, and if the South would strengthen her bulwarks there is no time to be slept or wrangled away. 11

Macaria's hero, then, feels secession becomes necessary, indeed inevitable, for Southern states as demagogues triumph in North and West. With secession in mind, Russell enters politics. 12 In his speech as candidate for the state legislature about 1856 Russell "proclaimed that the people slept upon the thin heaving crust of a volcano, which would inevitably soon burst forth; and the period was rapidly approaching when the Southern states, unless united and on the alert, would lie bound at the feet of an insolent and rapacious Northern faction." He urges that states of the South demand guarantees—present an ultimatum to Congress. If Congress denies these guarantees, Southerners must resort to "extreme measures." Russell is a master orator, for we are told that his "marvelous magnetism" sways the crowd and stirs it to "prolonged and vociferous applause." Now at this point the reader might logically conclude that Russell, crusading against demagogues, is acting precisely like a demagogue himself,
and Miss Evans appears to sense this inconsistency, for she quickly adds:

The entire absence of stereotyped rhodomontade rendered his words peculiarly impressive, as he gave them utterance with no visible token of enthusiasm. He did not lash the passions of the populace into a passing phrensy, but effectually stirred the great deep of sober feeling and sound sense. With his elegant, graceful delivery, and polished, sparkling diction, he stood, as it were, on some lofty cool pedestal, and pointed unerringly to coming events, whose shadows had not yet reached them, of which they had not dreamed before, and it was not wonderful that the handsome young speaker became an idol to be worshiped afar off.]

While the secessionist Russell appears as the sober, wise, farseeing one, the man who cautions his state to move slowly appears in a very different and definitely unfavorable light. It is the villainous Mr. Huntington, Russell's political opponent, who is, in Miss Evans' scheme of values, the hotheaded, sometimes "dirty," and definitely shortsighted politician. In campaigning against Russell for the state legislature, he prefers to slur Russell's character rather than to challenge him on issues. He freely bribes the voters, so that Russell Aubrey's "partisans felt that they must, from necessity, follow the disgraceful precedent." Russell wins election this time, but Mr. Huntington continues in future contests to be his bitter political enemy, and "there were no bounds to the maledictions heaped upon the young and imperturbable legislator by his virulent antagonist." Still Mr. Huntington ignores the grave problems facing the South. Only very late, when delegates are being elected to the state convention to consider secession, and
he can no longer avoid the urgent sectional issue, does Mr. Huntingdon take a stand. He chooses "co-operation" (asking that Southern states delay secession until all can act together). In the author's view this means simply that he fails to comprehend clearly the real issues at stake; he fails to see the real magnitude of the Northern threat. Hero and villain meet and clash in the state convention as Mr. Huntingdon there leads the forces for co-operation. But after a mighty struggle the hero wins; Russell and his allies for immediate secession overcome the "siren song of co-operation."

Thus in Macaria, secession is a wise, conservative move. Hero and heroine work for secession because they are conservatives; they want to protect the South, to insulate it against the evil effects of Northern "demagogism." Since by 1864, when Macaria was first published, the Confederacy's future was hardly bright, Miss Evans inserts her belief that secessionists had been right, regardless of the war's outcome. Her heroine declares:

Even when I believed the friendly professions of thousands at the North—when I believed in the existence of a powerful constitutional and conservative party—I was, from the beginning, a secessionist; and now that the mask of political cant is stripped from them, I am more than ever convinced of the correctness of my views, and the absolute necessity of the step we took. The ultimate result can never effect [sic] the question of the right and propriety of Secession, though it may demonstrate the deplorable consequences of our procrastination.

The goal of secession had been to establish a conservative republic. The "statesmen" who called for secession as the necessary step toward
that goal were farsighted persons who alerted the people to dangers from Northern factions, yet they were ever sober and levelheaded persons. Remaining above political or party duplicity, they worked toward a safe conservative end.

The efforts of Augusta Evans to make synonymous an original secessionist and a respectable conservative, to create in this way a suitable Southern hero, were challenged from several quarters. Aided by the vision of hindsight, other authors still managed to create cavalier heroes who worked eagerly for secession, but they endowed them with qualities quite different from those of Macaria's Russell Aubrey. They were young; they were immature; they were romantic; they cherished visions of fighting a glorious war for a noble cause. In hoping for secession they ignored the counsels of older and wiser Southerners who knew that war would bring disaster. They were lighthearted and they were eager. And the reason? They were blind.

Such a character is Charlie Holmes, hero of two war novels by Flora McDonald Williams. At a Christmas gathering Holmes, a young Virginian, is restless, for he wants to be off to war: "I am waiting very impatiently for . . . Virginia's decision. . . . That convention of ours is taking a long time to find out what is best to be done. If it don't decide now very soon I think I shall go to Carolina and offer my services . . . ." Similarly, in Clarence
Collins' novel Tom and Joe (1890), the boy Joe is wildly enthusiastic over secession and war. He counters his father's wise and well-reasoned arguments for the Union by repeating secessionist arguments he has read, of which he has only a surface understanding. Of Joe and young men like him Collins comments, "they were wild with enthusiasm, and called it patriotism."18

Another such character—a secessionist cavalier hero—is Hugh Fitzhugh in Charles W. Russell's novel Roebuck (1866). A young Virginian who already had inherited a large plantation, Fitzhugh had spent his time "with books or hunting or fishing, or any idle sport that fell in his way," neglecting his estate, so that "his name in the county began to wear the stain of thriftless indolence; for it was thought that his inheritance imposed active duties."
But the prospect of secession and war "roused his latent energy"; and as a result he saves himself from sloth and sustains the family honor.19 When arguing with timider men than he, Fitzhugh is hotheaded. Obviously, secession is the South's only course. He cannot understand how the South could ever fail: "How can such a people, fighting for independence, be conquered? They would be exterminated first. See how their patriotic zeal already burns with martial fire. Many men pant for war with the North." In response to an analysis of Southern weakness he concludes, "Shall we, then, submit to oppression through fear? . . . Whatever may be the possible event, it is better in such a cause to invoke the justice of the
God of Battles, than tamely to await our inevitable doom in the Union." (By the time Fitzhugh had delivered this last pronouncement, readers are no doubt happy to be informed, he "had risen, and while he spoke his eyes beamed with enthusiasm, and his rich, mellow voice, swelled into a tone rather too oratorical for private conversation." 20) Fitzhugh, as shaped by his author, becomes an honorable character and a satisfactory hero. But his championing of secession appears good mainly because it ends his indolence. Presumably, any other such cause would have served just as well. And his martial fire, in the end, is in vain, for his cause fails and his friends who argued against secession prove to have been right. Russell's effort to paint Fitzhugh favorably because of his secessionist views is, at best, rather strained.

A later generation of writers, not themselves involved in secession, began to deal more effectively with the tragic potential here—creating a character wholly good and noble who champions secession because of deeply held beliefs, who in the end is overwhelmed by those who believe differently but no less sincerely. One such character is Richard Tremaine in Molly Elliott Seawell's The Victory (1906). Tremaine, a young man who set forth a "masterly presentation of the case of the South," voted eagerly for secession in the Virginia convention. He "frankly admitted" that the South must "some day abolish slavery, but never under the pressure of threats and fanaticism from the North and from Great Britain."
Tremaine "could not grasp" the idea of possible defeat in battle; he believed "that the first successes of the South would be so brilliant as to stagger the North and incline it for peace." The author never questions the sincerity of Richard Tremaine's beliefs, nor does she allow these beliefs to detract from his stature as a hero. She does, however, show that his ideas were mistaken (through the comments of an English tutor who is spokesman for the future), and she shows that others who acted differently could be equally sincere in their reasoning. 21

But many Southerners of the war generation found it easier, in retrospect, to make their heroes moderates, not secessionists. Though secessionists may appear in their works, they are not the heroes; their presence merely adds luster to the image of others, the moderate men. Sometimes these secessionists may be cavaliers, but certain traits of character prevent their being heroes. Constance Cary Harrison, a Virginian and loyal Confederate, introduced one such character, Peyton Willis, into Flower de Hundred (1899). Willis is "a then rare type in the better class of Virginia society, an 'extreme measures' man . . . ." Though Willis, a planter and a lawyer, is of good family, he cannot qualify as a hero. He is brilliant but moody and temperamental; he is an alcoholic; he neglects his plantation. Worse still (for the benefit of feminine readers), he mistreats his wife. It is this character whom Mrs. Harrison selects to argue the issue of secession with her old cavalier hero Colonel Throckmorton. Of course, the Colonel's views (he remains
staunchly unionist until Virginia secedes) appear to advantage.22 Views quite similar to Mrs. Harrison's appear in the work of another Southerner who, though sympathizing with Virginia's plight, did not support her in the Confederate cause. Mary Virginia Terhune, known to readers as "Marion Harland," had moved from her native Virginia in 1856 when she married a Congregational minister from New Jersey.23 In 1866 she published Sunnybank, a novel about Virginians in the war, that is remarkably free from bitterness or partisanship. In her story the question of secession divides a family group. Those of the family who initially are eager for Virginia to secede are a young girl Agatha, an orphan of inferior background who has been reared by the Lacy family (she becomes the story's villainess), and a rather eccentric and highly opinionated elderly maiden aunt. Chief spokesman for secession is a young aristocrat, Rolf Kingston, a friend of the family (who later becomes the story's villain). In speaking for his cause, he is intemperate; he is illogical; he is too blindly confident in Southern success even to pause to count the cost. When someone points out that Rolf's choice for President is as much a sectional candidate as Lincoln, he hotly replies, "It is not in the nature of Southerners to submit to impertinent dictation, to interference with their property and opinions, especially from their inferiors . . . ."24 In Mrs. Terhune's story, just as in Mrs. Harrison's story, opinions of the moderates appear to advantage as they contrast with the
opinions (and the character traits) of secessionists.25

In the same way the South Carolinian (typifying an extreme
secessionist) sometimes appears in fiction merely as a foil for
contrast to another type of Southern cavalier, the Virginia
gentleman. Greater dignity, calmness, and foresight supposedly
categorized the Virginian, who was often as distressed by actions
of Carolinians as by actions of Northerners.26 In his novel
Yankee Doodle Dixie; or, Love the Light of Life (1890) a Virginia
author, J. V. Ryals, sketches a scene in which some Virginia
aristocrats receive a letter late in 1860 from a South Carolina
friend. It is an impassioned letter reciting the innumerable wrongs
suffered by the South and urging immediate secession as the only
remedy. The Virginians' reaction is this:

When Charles ceased reading, the silence that
followed was almost painful. Mr. Reed had paid the
closest attention from the beginning to the end of the
letter. He fully understood the feeling and motive of
the writer, and while he could not condemn the burning
indignation which seemed to light up in every word, he
could not approve the hot haste with which things seemed
about to be precipitated. The accord in the indignation
and the discord in the judgment clashed in his own
breast, and became painful.

Charles had always admired the genius of his
classmate for oratory, and oratory is ever pleasing.
But this letter, eloquent as it was, had given him
more pain than pleasure, while Dr. Hall sat silent with
the look of amazement on his face, like one who has
unexpectedly received a blow which may or may not be
intended as an insult.27

In this instance, the intemperance of the South Carolinian serves
to elevate the image of the more composed Virginians.
But the contrast between South Carolina gentlemen and Virginia gentlemen had not always favored the latter. Virginia had been reluctant to leave the Union; her convention had voted to secede on April 17, 1861, only after Lincoln had proclaimed a state of insurrection and had called for troops. During these four long months following South Carolina's action Virginians had debated. Did they act nobly or basely? Some said they sought to avert a holocaust, and this was noble; others said they had pointlessly delayed the inevitable and acted out of harmony with true Southern feeling. During the earlier part of the war, at least, Virginia's slowness to move hardly appeared heroic, especially to those of the Lower South. Much criticism was vented against "eleventh-hour men" by those who had acted earlier. Idle rumors even circulated early in the war among some Southerners that the Virginian Robert E. Lee, not a secessionist, at heart opposed the Confederate cause. Secessionists were quick to conclude that Virginia for some reason had abandoned the principles of her noble ancestors. She seemed to be yielding her once unquestioned position as spokesman for and personification of all that was good in the South. A Virginia writer who had strongly favored secession, John Esten Cooke, expressed this idea in flowery terms in his biography of Stonewall Jackson, written in 1863:

Up to the 17th April the galaxy of the Confederate States wanted one of its brightest luminaries. The Southern cross was yet without the central light which was to complete its glories. Virginia, the soul of revolution
in the past—the proud, defiant, chivalric sovereignty which had been hitherto the first to throw down the gauntlet of resistance to oppression—Virginia, the mother of warriors and statesmen, remained inactive, lagging in the rear. Some day the causes of this phenomenon will be investigated, the actors in that drama delineated, and "every one shall have his own." Certain it is that the Beautiful Virgin of the Virginia Shield hesitated long to lift the spear in defense of her chastity, and it was not until a brutal and insolent foe came in direct contact with her pure person that she woke to the danger, and raised her arm. 30

But the keepers and makers of myth in the Old Dominion could not long allow tradition to say that her gentlemen had acted unworthily during the secession crisis. With some effort they managed to reverse the tradition. Aided perhaps by Confederate setbacks and ultimate defeat they turned Virginia's early hesitancy into heroism. Virginians, then as now, were not at all reluctant to attribute to themselves superior gifts of wisdom and foresight somehow denied to ordinary mortals. So they readily concluded that Virginians hesitated in 1861 because they were nobler and wiser than other Southerners. Virginians could see tragedy ahead; they tried to avert it but, failing, they dedicated all to help their Southern brethren in a cause they knew would fail.

Other Southerners were blindly optimistic in the beginning, it was said; Virginians knew that war would be terrible and they stopped to count the cost. In his polemical novel Roebuck Charles Russell wrote at some length of Virginians and the secession movement. (His secessionist character Hugh Fitzhugh has been considered earlier.) One of the books's heroic characters, Dr. Fairfax, who unhesitatingly
describes Yankees as "the meanest, the most arrogant, the most hypocritical, the most meddlesome and the most corrupt branch of the human family—if I must acknowledge them as men and brothers," is equally vehement in opposing secession. Secession, he says, "will be fatal to the Southern States. The North will subjugate them, and then where will be your remedy?" He points out that "the South is not fanatical, or malignant, or corrupt like the North, but, what is worse in view of such a conflict, it is weak." Dr. Fairfax acts the role of prophet as he speaks to fellow Virginians in April 1861:

If we remain in the Union we may reasonably hope to terminate this war with an honorable peace .... If we secede, we can never return to the Union without a surrender of the main point of the contest—that is, without acknowledging ourselves conquered. .... By staking all upon a desperate venture, we shall lose all. .... The fighting population of the North is as three to one of our own at the beginning, and with every hour of war this disparity will be widened. .... War is in a large measure a work of money and machines. The North has both. We have neither. .... Commerce will continue to enrich our enemies. We shall be cut off from all the world beyond our own shores. .... With a population thinly scattered over an immense area, we have no adequate means of concentrating our wealth, our men or our policy. .... We must not rely upon dissensions in the North. .... Expect no aid from Europe. Imagine not that cotton is king, or that the necessities of commerce will bring England or France or any other power to intervene for our benefit. .... I will not attempt to appal you by depicting the horrors of war. It is not to cowardice that I would appeal, but to wisdom. .... The Federal government, treating us as rebels, will deny to us the rights of war and the rights of humanity. .... A war of prodigious extent, waged by a superior power in a savage spirit, will finally exhaust the endurance of the South.
Obviously, this character can predict so accurately what will happen only because the author knew quite well, in 1866, what did happen. This is unimportant. The important thing is that authors such as Russell, looking back on secession from the perspective of persons in a defeated South, found new regard for those who had refused at first to be swept into the turmoil of secession, and who had been called "submissionists" and cowards at the time. These persons had tried to stem the tide. In retrospect they appeared to have been very wise, and mythmakers endowed them with gifts of near omniscience. The reluctant ones in time became the heroes, overshadowing those who led Southern states into secession.33

Though the Virginian as fictional hero shows prudence and shrewd judgment as he considers what will be the outcome of a move for secession and a war fought because of this move, still he cannot, in the end, let these factors sway him as he determines his own course of action. The idea of expediency would taint such a decision. An honorable decision must be made upon principle, with no thought of personal advantage or disadvantage. This distinction between motives is made clear in a Southern novel published shortly after the war, *Cameron Hall* (1867), by Mary Ann Cruse.

In one scene she portrays two elderly Virginia cavaliers, Uncle John and Mr. Cameron, talking in the spring of 1861 of secession and possible war, while their state convention has not yet voted to secede. Both are central characters and both are clearly of heroic
cast. Mr. Cameron is a wealthy planter whose views at this time are ever temperate and conservative. Uncle John is given no definite name or ancestry or occupation in the community (quite a novelty in status-conscious Southern novels), but he is secure in community opinion; he is esteemed by all. It seems clear that the author uses the character Uncle John as a means for presenting her own views and comments. He is an all-wise being. At the time of their conversation, Uncle John has become sadly convinced that Virginia must secede and that "civil war, the most terrible calamity that can overtake a nation," must follow. Mr. Cameron, who still has faint hopes for a peaceful solution, will not endorse secession until Virginia decides to leave the Union. As he explains to Uncle John, "Never rash, always conservative, always weighing consequences before she takes a step, I know that I can rely upon her judgment, and am willing to pledge myself beforehand to indorse her decision." He continues, "It becomes her to be slow in taking such a step, Uncle John. She is a frontier State; her territory will be the battle-ground; her heritage will be the first to be laid waste. Indeed, indeed, sir, it behooves her to weigh well her decision." At this point, though, Uncle John indicates the fatal flaw in such reasoning: it smacks of expediency:

She ought to think calmly and deeply; not, however, so much of the consequences, as of the right. If it be right for her to separate herself from the Federal Union at all, she ought to do so under any and all penalties. If it were merely a question of expediency,
it would not only be proper, but it would be her duty
to count the cost; but in a question of moral right and
wrong, she has nothing to do with consequences.35

This clearly, in the author's view, is the only sort of reasoning
which can be worthy of a cavalier of Virginia. A short time later

Mr. Cameron adopts the same idea:

Mr. Cameron had promised to himself to keep his private
decision in abeyance until the State had spoken; but
while Virginia still hesitated, he, among many other of
her sons, became daily stronger in his conviction of
what she ought to do, and trembled lest the fear of
suffering should warp her judgment and determine her
action.36

To many Southerners looking back on secession from the vantage
point of a defeated South, Virginians appeared at their noblest in
efforts to play the role of peacemaker between the sections. Virginia
had called for the Peace Convention which met in Washington; she
had recommended constitutional compromises to patch up the difficulties;
and, as a final try, she had sent a committee to confer with Lincoln.
These efforts came to naught, but at least Virginians could
congratulate themselves for having tried them, and in retrospect
they acquired an olympian hue.

The author who, perhaps, did more than any other to establish
this theme exalting Virginia in Confederate mythology was the
"adopted" Virginian George Cary Eggleston. Though born and reared
in Indiana, he returned, in the fullest sense of the word, to the
ancestral plantation in Virginia when he was seventeen. The manner
and spirit of life in rural Virginia in the 1850's was unlike what
he had known in Indiana; it seemed to embody the sort of world he
had sought but not before found. He studied the Virginians and
identified with them. And in much of the literature he later wrote,
he tried to describe them and to explain them.37 In his novels of
the Civil War, in his war reminiscences, and in his autobiography,
he considered the tragic dilemma of Virginians confronting secession
and trying in vain to avert war. Eggleston, who himself had voted
against secession, explained the attitude of Virginians in 1861 in
this way:

The Virginians believed firmly in the constitutional
right of any state to withdraw from the Union, but the
majority among them saw in Mr. Lincoln's election no
proper occasion for the exercise of that right. They
regarded the course of the cotton states in withdrawing
from the Union as one strictly within their right, but
as utterly unwise and unnecessary. On the other hand
they firmly denied the right of the National government
to coerce the seceding states or in any manner to make
war upon them.38

The hero of his novel Dorothy South (1902), which deals with
ante bellum Virginia and the events which led to war, is a young
man Arthur Brent, like Eggleston an "adopted" Virginian who was
reared in the Midwest but returned to his ancestral plantation
home in Virginia. Arthur regards the political situation in 1860
with foreboding, knowing that Lincoln's certain victory would soon
plunge the South into chaos. When the cotton states should leave
the Union, as he was sure they would, he vowed he would "do every-
thing I can do to help other sober minded Virginians to keep Virginia
out of this movement, and if Virginia can be kept out of it, the other border states will accept her action as controlling, and they too will stay out of the revolutionary enterprise." In that case, states farther south would listen to reason. If the North and the Washington government would behave with discretion, Virginia and Kentucky might act successfully as mediators. Arthur is pessimistic, however, about the outcome: "I tell you frankly, I do not expect success in the program to which I intend to devote all my labors and all I have of influence." 39

When delegates are being elected to the Virginia convention, Arthur Brent is put forth as candidate by the conservatives in his district. His opponents are secessionists, but, as Eggleston explains, "neither of these candidates was a person of conspicuous influence in the community. Neither was a man of large ability or ripe experience or commanding social position—the last counting for much in Virginia in those days when there was no such thing as a ballot in that state, and when every man must go to the polls and openly proclaim his vote." Pictured as the candidate representing "all men who sincerely desired wise and prudent counsels to prevail in a matter which involved Virginia's entire future," Arthur wins election. Most convention members hope, like Arthur, for a compromise; they "wrought with all their might for the maintenance of peace and the preservation of the Union." While denying to the cotton states the sanction of the "mother state" for their movement of secession,
they "counseled concession and sweet reasonableness, on both sides." They seek a peaceful way to preserve "that Union which Virginia had done so much to bring about ...." But when Lincoln calls for troops and asks Virginia to supply her quota, Virginia has to choose. "She must either furnish a large force of volunteers with which the Federal government might in effect coerce the seceding states into submission, or she must herself secede and cast her lot with the cotton states. To the Virginian mind there was only one course possible." Coercion of a seceded state would be criminal. "They could have nothing to do with such an attempt without dishonor of the basest kind."

The men who had, so long and so earnestly, and in face of such contumely, labored to keep Virginia in the Union and to use all that state's commanding influence in behalf of peace, felt themselves obliged to yield to the inevitable, and to consent to a sectional war for which they saw no necessity and recognized no occasion. They had wasted their time in a futile endeavor to bring about a reconciliation where the conflict had been all the while hopelessly "irrepressible." There was nothing for it now but war, and Virginia, deeply deprecating war, set herself at work in earnest to prepare for the conflict. 40

To Eggleston, Virginians in secession were tragic heroes swept up by fate. They had worked for peace; they had failed. And their failure could be blamed as much upon secessionists of the Lower South as upon Lincoln. 41

Eggleston, of course, was only one of many (Virginians mostly) who helped create a myth from this theme—the praise of Virginians
as would-be peacemakers in sharp contrast to everybody else, North
and South, who hadn't sense enough to follow Virginia's advice.
Another example of this type of mythmaker is J. V. Ryals, a Virginia
lawyer and ex-Confederate, who attempted to write a novel and
succeeded in producing a rhetorical melodrama. In his Yankee Doodle
Dixie; or, Love the Light of Life (1890) Ryals dwelt long upon the
lofty image of Virginians who worked for peace. The following
flowery passage is (unfortunately) typical:

> All eyes were turned to Virginia, and the grand old Commonwealth—the mother of States and of statesmen, the land of chivalry and the land of song, the land of oratory and the home of poesy—arose in all the majesty of her power, crowned with the full splendors of her pristine glory, and gave to the cause of peace the influence of her patriotic example, the splendors of her dauntless courage, and the weight of her exalted name. She stood before the world the grandest picture in recorded time—a suppliant and a queen; a royal mother pleasing to assuage the kindling wrath between her embittered children. In her strong right hand she held and waved aloft the glorious flag of the Federal Union—that ensign beneath whose folds her Washington had led the sons of freedom on to the goal of victory, and there established the principles of constitutional liberty; while in her left she waved the olive branch of peace.12

The old cavalier in Ryals' novel, Dabney Reed, described as a
"high-toned, high-minded" Virginia gentleman, loves the Union but
believes in the principle of state sovereignty. He can understand
the burning fury roused in Southerners against Northern wrongs, but
he deplores the hasty action of the Lower South. Sponsored by his
Virginia friends, he goes as a messenger of peace to the North,
pleading for a just and reasonable compromise. But after Lincoln
proclaims that a state of insurrection exists, he returns to Virginia and prepares to fight; compromise is no longer possible and, as he says, secession and defeat are far better than dishonor.\(^4^3\)

Mary Virginia Terhune emphasized the role of Virginia as would-be peacemaker in like manner. In *Sunnybank* she describes her old cavalier hero making a unionist speech:

Virginian in heart and soul he had ever been, but he seemed more proud than ever of his birth-state as he pictured the part he believed she was destined to play in the present emergency; the noble stand she would take in resisting the aggressive wave of treason. He saw in her, he said, "the Great Pacificator, who, strong in the right, and determined to maintain it at all hazards, should yet speak, in calm majesty, to the fierce sea of national faction, and it should be still; the Mother of States, who, unrolling the record of her illustrious sons,—the statesmen and warriors whom, in their lifetime, their brethren had delighted to honor,—should command, in their name, the cessation of the unnatural strife; and, bearing the olive-branch of compromise,—saying to the North, 'Give up!' and to the South, 'Keep not back!'—should win for the nation length of days, and peace that should endure forever and ever, and for her own head a crown of unfading glory.\(^4^4\)

Because Virginians had tried to be peacemakers and had left the Union only after Lincoln's call for troops, they could and did claim that their act of secession had more of pure nobility and honor in it than the secession of other Southern states. They saw themselves, in terms of chivalry, as exalted knights coming to the aid of weaker brethren to uphold a matter of principle. This idea they projected from the beginning. Mrs. Chesnut, in her diary,
recorded in 1861 the comments of some Virginians: "They say Virginia has no grievance; she comes out on a point of honor. Could she stand by and see her sovereign sister states invaded?" The same author quotes another Virginian as saying virtually the same: "Virginia has no grievance. She raises her strong arm to catch the blow aimed at her weaker sisters." Understandably enough, Virginians continued to emphasize that their secession as a "point of honor" was the purest type of Southern patriotism. As one Virginia gentleman says to another in Eggleston's The Master of Warlock (1903), "Her Virginia's homes are going to be desolated, her fields laid waste, her substance utterly exhausted, and her people reduced to poverty in a cause that is not her own, and in behalf of which she unselfishly risks all for the sake of an abstraction, and in defence of a right on the part of other States which Virginia herself had seen no occasion to assert in her own defence." Truly Virginians, in their own eyes at any rate, were noble cavaliers.

Differences between Southern cavaliers as they face secession, however, should not be unduly magnified, for in the end they matter not at all. Even while cavaliers argue over secession, their differences concern only means, not ends. All cavaliers love the South, and all seek the best means to defend the South from an outside enemy. All act with noble motives, as befits true cavaliers. And at some point, early or late, eagerly or reluctantly, all
cavaliers decide to accept secession and commit themselves totally to the Confederate cause.

Each cavalier makes this decision individually at the time when his sense of personal honor will allow him no other choice. As Charles Russell explains in *Roebuck*, the cavalier is "forced to choose between the risk of death and the loss of something held dearer than life."\(^{147}\) At times, this "something held dearer than life" is the loyalty a cavalier owes to his state. In Constance Cary Harrison's *Flower de Hundred*, for example, old Colonel Throckmorton has a special love for the Union, having fought under its flag against Britain and Mexico. "'Why sir,,'" he exclaims to a secessionist friend, "'confound you, d'ye think a man who's fought under that, can wish to fight against it?' . . . stopping short, and pointing to the flag that hung above his midshipman's sword upon the wall." But the Colonel would violate his honor should he let his love for the Union supercede his love for his state. The Colonel is asked what he would do should Virginia secede. "'Virginia!' he exclaimed, in reverent accents; 'I should feel as if my mother called me to come to her in need.'" The Colonel's friend observes, "You make me think of that epitaph over the Throckmorton who was the last of the Burgesses to hold out for King George . . . :'Loyal to his King, As he was Born, he Died—-a True Virginian.'" The Colonel gently answers, "You may write 'ditto' over my old bones, when it's time to lay me at his feet . . . ."\(^{48}\) In like manner the old Judge
in Clarence Collins' *Tom and Joe*, who thinks secession "not only inexpedient, but wrong," regretfully resigns himself to Louisiana's decision: "The State can do no wrong, and I must go with my State."49 This veneration of Southern gentlemen for their state was something more than mere patriotism. In Phoebe Seabrook's *A Daughter of the Confederacy* (1906), an old gentleman's feelings are described thus: he "is a nobleman of the old school; he sides with his State just as the old cavaliers sided with their king—it's hereditary principle with him."50 One who would even consider deserting his state at this crucial time would automatically disprove his nobility.

Additional reasons bolstered the cavalier's conviction that he had no choice but to fight. "Northern aggressions" upon "Southern rights" denied him an alternative course. The cavalier is above all else a proud being, one who must ever defend his home, his "rights," and his honor against real or fancied insult. Submission would bring disgrace. George Cary Eggleston explained that for most Virginians in 1861, the turning point came when Lincoln's government proposed to "coerce a seceding state into submission. . . . They could have nothing to do with such an attempt without dishonor of the basest kind." The "pro-Union" Virginia convention then quickly "adopted an ordinance of secession, and the Civil War was on."51 Mary Ann Cruse, in *Cameron Hall*, explained
the reasoning of heroic Virginians in similar terms:

Reluctant to sunder the ties which had been cemented by the blood of the best and noblest of her sons; loth to pull down with her hand one single stone of that fabric whose foundation her own Washington had laid; yet equally unwilling to surrender a single one of those rights which he himself had taught her to value more than life, the Old Dominion determined to make one more effort, and the last, to secure her rights as a Southern State in the Union. The delegation to Washington was a failure, for fanaticism ruled in the halls of justice, and despotism had usurped the throne of liberty. Then Virginia spoke out nobly and indignantly, and without a regret severed the ties that bound her to a government which had proved recreant to its trust and duty.52

Whatever the turning point for individual cavaliers, the usual explanation was that offered by Sarah Whittlesey in Bertha the Beauty: "They had been pushed into rebellion by Northern aggression upon Southern rights, and lost their property and rights by attempting to vindicate their honor."53 Likewise, the explanation of Flora McDonald Williams in The Blue Cockade (1905): Virginia's "guaranteed rights were threatened, and all the knighthood and chivalry of the State promptly buckled on its armor for her defense."54

Once the cavalier has made his personal decision to support his state, and through his state, the Confederacy, he is guided by his emotions and sentiments of loyalty to his homeland. It is not, perhaps, too great an exaggeration to say that the cavalier no longer is thinking or acting in a rational manner, for if he pauses to calculate the South's odds he is thinking in terms of expediency, and this is wrong.55 The cavalier may once have been
a secessionist, one of those Southerners who had thrown down
the gauntlet and dared Northerners to accept the challenge (in the
terms used by Augusta Jane Evans to liken the war to a gentlemen's
duel). He may once have been a unionist, one like Eggleston's
Arthur Brent who did all in his power to prevent secession. But
now ranks are closed and there is unity, the myth says. Argument
ends and war begins. "Better death and defeat than dishonor," is
the universal cry.
NOTES ON CHAPTER I


"Secessionist" and "unionist" in this chapter indicate a person's sentiments up to the time his state secedes. As used here, the term "secessionist" indicates one who actively favored and worked for secession. It does not include one whose decision for secession was made very late or very reluctantly. An "immediate secessionist" wanted his state to secede without delay and without reference to actions of other states. A "co-operationist" wanted Southern states to secede and to act in unison. A "unionist" opposed secession. The terms here refer to positions up to the time of actual secession, not to later sentiments.


5 Raleigh North Carolina Standard, February 5, 1861, quoted in Dumond, Southern Editorials on Secession, 447.

6 For examples of such sentiment, see editorials quoted ibid., 375-376, 389, 391.

7 Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, Ben Ames Williams, ed. (Boston, 1961), 3.

8 Ibid., 315.

9 Miss Evans' sentiments (partially quoted in the text) are made clear in a heated reply she wrote in January 1861 to a request from the novelist Mrs. L. Virginia French that she sign a memorial which would be used to try to forestall the secession of Georgia: "You have warmly espoused the 'Union' cause, while I am an earnest and uncompromising Secessionist .... Prompt and separate state action I believe to be the only door of escape from the worse than Egyptian bondage of Black Republicanism. For fifteen years, we of the South have endured insult and aggression; have ironed down our just indignation, and suffered numberless encroachments, because of our

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devotion to the 'Union'; because we shuddered and shrank from laying hands on the magnificent Temple which our forefathers reared in proud triumph ... . Presuming upon their devotion, Northern fanaticism has grown on Southern endurance, and not all the diplomacy, the consummate statesmanship of patriotic men of both sections has weighed one iota against the waves of Abolitionism, which have rolled rapidly on till they threaten to vitiate the sacred precincts of the White House... . It is because I most earnestly deprecate as suicidal an effort to delay the dissolution of the Union, that I must decline to add my own signature . . . .”


10 Augusta J. Evans, Macaria (New York, 1866), 244, 415.

11 Ibid., 245-246.

12 Miss Evans does not specify the state in which her story takes place. Internal evidence eliminates South Carolina and Virginia. The setting is probably Alabama, her home since 1849.

13 Evans, Macaria, 256-257.

14 Ibid., 255, 257, 271, 337-338.

15 Ibid., 412.

16 Ibid., 245, 246, 413, 415.

17 The fact that the work of the Virginia convention, which did not meet until February 1861, could hardly be a topic for conversation in December 1860 did not disturb Mrs. Flora McDonald Williams. Facts rarely disturbed such novelists. Flora McDonald Williams, Who's the Patriot? A Story of the Southern Confederacy (Louisville, 1886), 13.

18 Clarence B. Collins, Tom and Joe: Two Farmer Boys in War and Peace and Love; a Louisiana Memory (Richmond, 1890), 35-39, 42.

19 Charles Wells Russell, Roebuck, a Novel (Baltimore, 1866), 109.

20 Ibid., 415.

21 Molly Elliott Seawell, The Victory (New York, 1906), 34, 72.
22 Constance Cary (Mrs. Burton N.) Harrison, Flower de Hundred: the Story of a Virginia Plantation (New York, 1899), 184, 185-189. Mrs. Harrison after the war described the feelings of her family and friends during the secession crisis: "As the war came on the talk grew more solemn. They none of them wanted secession, and were waiting to see what Colonel Robert Lee would do." Recollections Grave and Gay (New York, 1911), 25. Her experiences during the Confederacy are described ibid., 44-220.

23 Edwin Anderson Alderman and others (eds.), Library of Southern Literature (15 vols., Atlanta, 1910), XV, 429. See also the preface to Mary Virginia Terhune, Sunnybank (New York, 1866); Fidler, Augusta Evans Wilson, 87-88.

24 Terhune, Sunnybank, 62.

25 Mary Ann Cruse held a similar opinion: "Southern politicians urged dismemberment, and declared that it could be accomplished without bloodshed; and Northern fanaticism urged the election of a sectional President on the ground that the South was too weak and cowardly to attempt resistance; but the thoughtful and far-seeing of both sections looked on with trembling anxiety and apprehension, and their hearts were failing them for fear of the terrible vortex of civil war into which they believed that the nation was about to plunge." Cruse, Cameron Hall: a Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1867), 76.

26 Consider, for example, remarks made in a Virginia newspaper in January 1861: "Even as the matter stands, we entertain towards South Carolina the most bitter resentment. We feel that she has not only precipitately thrown down the bulwarks of the Union, and inaugurated on her own responsibility revolution and anarchy; but she has done so with the full knowledge--aye, the intention--to hold Virginia and the border States between her and the Storm, and to carry out her caprices, regardless of these border States, while relying on them. But--however it has been done--an issue has been made. The subjection of South Carolina or any seceding State, in consequence of their determination not to submit to the policy of the Republicans, is a blow at the entire South--subjection to all. We are, thenceforth, humiliated. We are conquered. We could not hold up our heads in the Union any more. We would meet a Northern man as the Saxon met the Norman." Charlottesville (Va.) Review, January 4, 1861, quoted in Dumond, Southern Editorials on Secession, 389.
27J. V. Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie; or, Love the Light of Life; an Historical Romance, Illustrative of Life and Love in an Old Virginia Country Home, and Also an Explanatory Account of the Passions, Prejudices and Opinions Which Culminated in the Civil War (Richmond, 1890), 153-154.

28An example of an unfavorable view of the Virginia convention is that of Flora McDonald Williams: "The news of Virginia's final step had created the wildest joy and delight, as her people were well-nigh worn out at the inaction of her convention. Had it not been for Mr. Lincoln's call for troops to invade the Southern States, which fell like a thunderbolt among that extremely-deliberate and well-ordered body of gentlemen, the ordinance of secession would, most likely, never have been passed at all by that organization." Williams, Who's the Patriot?, 37.

29Mrs. Chesnut quotes a remark made by the secessionist Mrs. Charlotte Wigfall in March 1861 to the effect that "the eleventh-hour men are rewarded, but I say the half-hearted are traitors in this row." In June 1861 Mrs. Chesnut commented: "Our people, Southerners, I mean, continue to drop in from the outside world; and what a contempt those who have seceded a few days sooner feel for those who have just come." Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 32, 58. Bitterness against those who took up the Confederate cause very late is expressed throughout John Beauchamp Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital, Harold Swiggett, ed. (2 vols., New York, 1935).

30John Esten Cooke, The Life of Stonewall Jackson (New York, 1863), 18-19. According to Cooke's biographer, "It [the 1860 election] made of Cooke an ardent secessionist, and he chafed greatly, as he recounts in his renewed diary, at Virginia's delay in following South Carolina along what he considered to be the path of right and honor." John O. Beatty, John Esten Cooke, Virginian (New York, 1922), 72.

31Russell, Roebuck, 35, 38, 39.

32Ibid., 75-78.

33In George Cary Eggleston's Dorothy South, the Virginia hero Arthur Brent predicts in 1860: "While I think there is no real occasion for a disruption of the Union, I gravely fear that it is coming. . . . I foresee that Mr. Lincoln will be elected in November. I anticipate an almost immediate attempt on the part of the cotton states to dissolve the Union by secession. . . . I look for war
on a scale far more stupendous than any this country has ever seen. ...
Some of the results of the war I think I do see very clearly.
Virginia will be the battle-ground, and Virginia will be desolated
as few lands have ever been in the history of the world. ...
If this war comes, as I fear it will, it will make an end of African
slavery in this country." George Cary Eggleston, Dorothy South:
a Love Story of Virginia Just Before the War (New York, 1902), 371-
372. Other wise Virginians who predict very precisely the dreadful
results of civil war are found in Cruse, Cameron Hall, 76-82,
172-173; G. C. Eggleston, The Master of Warlock: a Virginia War
Story (New York, 1903), 111-117; Joseph William Eggleston,
Tuckahoe: an Old-Fashioned Story of an Old-Fashioned People
(New York, 1903), 164-147.

34 Of Uncle John the author says: "He talked, as he always did,
calmly, dispassionately, and reasonably; and Mr. Cameron was impressed,
as he had often been, with the justness, the freedom from prejudice,
the candor and good sense with which he viewed things. His serenity
and evenness of temper were among his most engaging characteristics,
and as the heat of passion never obscured the clearness of his
mental perceptions, his judgment was generally good and reliable." 
Ibid., Cameron Hall, 172.

35 Ibid., 77, 78, 79.

36 Ibid., 140.

37 G. C. Eggleston, Recollections of a Varied Life (New York,
1910), 145ff. See also the introduction by David Donald to G. C.
Eggleston, A Rebel's Recollections (Bloomington, Indiana, 1951),
10-12.

38 G. C. Eggleston, Dorothy South, 378-379.

39 Ibid., 371-372.

40 Ibid., 379-380, 382, 385, 386.

41 This same point of view is echoed in an historical work,
Beverley B. Munford, Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and

42 Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie, 202-203.

43 Ibid., 135, 202ff.
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44 Terhune, Sunnybank, 47-48. See also Cruse, Cameron Hall, 140.

45 Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 47-48, 67.


47 Russell, Roebuck, 67.

48 Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 187.

49 Collins, Tom and Joe, 36, 40.


51 G. C. Eggleston, Dorothy South, 385-386.

52 Cruse, Cameron Hall, 140.


54 Williams, The Blue Cockade: a Story of the Confederacy (New York, 1905), 52.

55 Richard Taylor, who became a Confederate officer, commented on this unthinking outlook of Southerners as they decided for secession, an outlook with which he had no sympathy: "The Convention, by an immense majority of votes, adopted an ordinance declaring that Louisiana ceased to be a State within the Union. Indeed, similar action having already been taken by her neighbors, Louisiana of necessity followed. At the time and since, I marveled at the joyous and careless temper in which men, much my superiors in sagacity and experience, consummated these acts. There appeared the same general gaite de coeur that M. Ollivier claimed for the Imperial Ministry when war was declared against Prussia. The attachment of northern and western people to the Union; their superiority in numbers, in wealth, and especially in mechanical resources; the command of the sea; the lust of rule and territory always felt by democracies, and nowhere to a greater degree than in the South—all these facts were laughed to scorn, or their mention was ascribed to timidity and treachery." Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War (New York, 1879), 13.

56 Evans, Macaria, 337.
CHAPTER II

THE OUTSIDE ENEMY

Enter, the villain. He is a lowbred character, ignorant and rude. The clink of gold may be heard as he strides onto the scene, for the lust for gain permeates his being. He proclaims with mock solemnity his humanitarian views, then laughs in secret at those he has fooled. Sentiment doesn't pay, he scoffs. Patriotism is all well and good, of course—just so long as it's profitable. Mobility? This he cannot comprehend, and so he must destroy it. A composite personality, he stands for everything the Southern hero opposes; he is the antithesis of the cavalier. He bears the name "Yankee."

Now this Yankee—an imaginary personality compounded from many characters in the writings of many Southerners—is a wily sort of villain. A master of the art of subterfuge, he can don the lofty mantle of his Puritan fathers and appear to the world a saint—all pure and unblemished. But his is a grim sort of piety, harsh and unyielding, when seen through Southern eyes. The Puritan Yankee in a Southerner's novel is dour, long-faced, strait-laced—a sharp contrast to spirited Southerners. See, for example, the delectably vicious description of Mrs. Palmer, a Bostonian, in Charles W. Russell's Roebuck (1866):
She was a tall, slender woman, with many angles and no curves. She wore her hair, her eyes, her lips, her limbs and her gown with formal precision. She sat erect in a square, high-backed chair. She placed her hands on her lap smoothly along, palm to palm. She set her feet flat on the floor, near together, and making with each other the very angle which, according to her notion, was proper. When she moved from one seat to another, she elongated her figure in rising with the jointed, hinged and oiled exactness of a mathematical instrument, gliding away on a straight line, with mechanical regularity of step, and let herself down like a jointed instrument again.

Not only does Mrs. Palmer look like a Puritan; she acts like one, too. Russell adds to his description:

The sentiments she uttered were always frigid, but never wrong, according to the standard of right which she had studied. The warmer and nobler emotions were represented in her discourse by eulogies of them. She deprecated their opposites with little hitches in her utterances that were hints of horror. She passed for a saint in her family and in her conscience too.

The Yankee in Puritan guise seemed quite natural to Southerners. Puritanism, they said, was the Yankee's heritage just as cavalier traditions were theirs. This peculiar Puritan ancestry set the Yankee sharply apart from Southerners; it distinguished him, but hardly in a favorable way. Sam Watkins, writing in 1882, remembered a minister who had stressed this gulf when he spoke to some Confederate troops in Tennessee:

... after he got warmed up a little, he began to pitch in on the Yankee nation, and gave them particular fits as to their genealogy [sic]. He said that we of the South had descended from the royal and aristocratic blood of the Huguenots of France, and of the cavaliers of
England, etc.; but that the Yankees were the descendants of the crop-eared Puritans and witch burners, who came over in the Mayflower, and settled at Plymouth Rock. Differences in heritage, North and South, seemed quite adequate to account for hatred, North and South. In his novel Bethany (1904), Tom Watson sketched the fiery orator, Robert Toombs, thundering to a Southern crowd late in the 1850's that Yankees hate the South: "hating her as they have always done--hating her as the narrow, bigoted, close-fisted Puritan has always hated the genial, tolerant, liberal Cavalier."3

One trait of the Puritan Yankee transformed him from merely a disagreeable northern neighbor into a real villain: his conscience. That pestilent spur goaded him to try to reform not his people alone but all mankind (including Southerners, to their regret). Southern mythology said the Puritan strain in Yankees made them meddlers and gave them a mission--"a mission to keep other people's consciences," as Virginius Dabney put it.4 Dogmatic and inflexible, like self-righteous, self-appointed detectives, they sought everywhere for evidence of evil and rejoiced to uncover it. Once found, they could denounce it, harass it, and demolish it.5 The Yankees' Puritan streak, according to some Southerners, brought on the Civil War. Mr. Cameron, the Southern cavalier in Cameron Hall (1867), says bitterly, "This war can all be traced to that bigotry and fanaticism which would bind the galling chains of its own notions and prejudices upon the hearts and consciences of the whole world."6
Now this sort of Yankee, the Puritan-turned-abolitionist, would have made superb material for a villain even if Southerners had conceded that he really believed the things he said—that he was honest, or honestly mistaken. But many Southerners who had lived through the turbulent '50's, who had formed their ideas amid the war of words over slavery and Kansas and John Brown, could make no such concession. They found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe a Yankee capable of being sincere about anything, save possibly his inordinate desire to attain riches, by fair means or foul. An abolitionist whose ideas and actions sprang from genuine humanitarian impulse? Impossible! They found other motives, unlovely ones, and duly ascribed these to the would-be Yankee reformer.?

Yankees raged about the horrible evils of slavery, Southerners charged, but they blindly ignored evils just as horrible at home. Had their motives been those of the humanitarian, they would hardly have acted this way. In Dorothy South (1902), George Cary Eggleston sends his young Virginia belle, for whom the novel is named, on a visit to New York City in the 1850's. Dorothy dislikes slavery; she admits this readily. But when a Yankee condemns her and other Southerners for holding slaves, she bristles and hotly retorts that there are "immeasurably worse slaves here." In Virginia, she says,

I always visit every sick person on the plantation every day. . . . We take care of the old and decrepit, and of all the children. From birth to death they know that
they will be abundantly provided for. What poor family
around the Five Points has any such assurance? ... Who
assures them, in childhood and in old age, of as abundant
a supply of food and clothing, and as good a roof, as
we give to the negroes?

The Yankee replies, indifferently, to Dorothy's charge, "Oh, that
is all cared for by the charitable organizations ... and by the
city missionaries." Dorothy denies that such is true. It seems
that in her few weeks in New York she has been going around doing
good deeds, in addition to mingling in high society, for she
testifies, "I have emptied my purse a dozen times in an effort to
get a doctor for a very ill person here, and to buy the medicine
he prescribed, and to provide food for starving ones." She concludes,
vehemently, "I tell you these poor people are immeasurably worse
off than any negro slave at the South is, or ever was."9

In Puritan garb, chanting Puritan phrases, Yankees might try
to appear saintly and to convince the world they were sincere. They
might declaim forever, making loud and meaningless assertions of
their humanitarian interest in the Negro slave. Some people they
might fool; Southerners, never. Characters such as Richard Fairfax,
an old Virginia gentleman in Russell's Roebuck, know better:

Their Yankee religion is fox-fire, a superficial light
from rottenness—their morals a science of fraud.
Their credo is a long face on Sunday and a long purse
on week days. Their water of baptism is water of
petrifaction, turning their hearts to stone.

Why the crusade over slavery? Yankee money, he declares, "subsidizes
the pulpit" for political ends: "already most of the religious
societies there are political clubs." The abolitionist may act the philanthropist's role, but he does so only to obscure his real material and political motives.

For Mary Ann Cruse, who wrote Cameron Hall, proof of Puritan Yankee hypocrisy came in the war itself. As Mr. Cameron, Virginia cavalier, points out, rather than "imitate their Divine Lord, and temper their pretended zeal for His cause with that gentleness which Himself enjoined . . . and propagate their opinions as He did his religion, by argument and entreaty," Yankees chose to compel Southerners "by fire and sword" to conform to their "Puritan notions." Yankees may have talked of their sympathy for the slaves, but how did they treat those they freed and made soldiers? Yankees cared nothing for them, as shown by

the position assigned the negro brigades before Vicksburg, and elsewhere, where they have been made literally breast-works, behind which their loving white brethren intrenched themselves and protected their own more valuable lives.

Mr. Cameron concludes, bitterly,

Whatever fictitious and specious titles may have been given to it [the war] to insure its sanction in the eyes of the world, the facts have at last developed it to be nothing more nor less than a crusade against the slaveowner. To liberate the slave from a cruel bondage is now its avowed purpose; to despoil and impoverish his master is its real object; and to effect this, the slave himself is unhesitatingly sacrificed. 11

The author of Dolores: a Tale of Disappointment and Distress (1868), Benjamin Robinson, seemed concerned lest someone miss this
point—that abolitionists were shrewd villains, hardly the
humanitarians they occasionally pretended to be. Like many other
Southern authors, he let his noble Confederate characters damn
Yankee reformers in general, but he didn't stop with this. He
created a Yankee character, "humanitarian" Dr. Sangster of New
York, confronted him with another Yankee, "abolitionist" Joseph
Carson of Vermont, and then described the argument that ensued.
Though he thinks slavery "is full of injustice to the Negro, and
should be restricted, as far as practicable," the "humanitarian"
Sangster firmly opposes plans for interfering with it in Southern
states: interference would lead to war. The "abolitionist" Carson
finds these ideas amusing and most naive. With a "self complacent
smile" he replies that "the Abolition of Slavery is demanded as
a political necessity, not as a humane step. The North must control
the government; and, before this can be consummated, the South must
be destroyed." He adds, "with a slight sneer," that

motives of policy ... govern that /abolition/ party;
and not a despicable poetical sentimental sympathy
for the Negro. The South is getting to be too
prosperous and too influential; and, unless the
North takes immediate steps to ruin its great rival,
it will have to abandon all its schemes for aggrandizement.

Carson's cold, calculating attitude shocks Sangster, the "humanitarian."

"Waxing very hot," he cries,

You yield all that I claimed; you do not deny that the
organization is a purely sectional one, nor that it
is governed entirely by sordid motives, nor that the
sympathy professed for the slave is a bare cheat, intended to inveigle weak sentimentalists into the support of party aims. Sir, I can have no community of interest or feeling with any party which is founded on a lie, and which acknowledges no higher controlling principle than self and sectional aggrandizement. I do not believe that such a party can ever triumph in this country! I HAVE TOO MUCH CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY OF THE PEOPLE!

Sangster's outburst bothers Carson, the cool villain, not at all. He knows that Yankees soon will flock to the abolition cause:

"You expect men to do what is theoretically right, when to do so is to ruin themselves! You are not stepping apace with the age—this is a practical era!" The abolitionist's own words unmask him. He is a greedy scoundrel, nothing more.

But, after all, a Yankee who acted solely with a view to profit was just being true to his character, according to Southern myth. Yankee efforts to whitewash the abolition campaign, to make it look sincere and selfless, seemed absurd. Russell's Puritan Yankee in the South, Mrs. Palmer (in Roebuck, described earlier), proves to be a hypocrite. She claims to believe in abolition—"traffic in human flesh cannot be blessed with the approval of heaven"—but she quickly sheds this belief when money is at stake. She endorses her husband's plan, at the outbreak of war, to secure their money by selling all their slaves. A Virginia character in J. V. Ryals' Yankee Doodle Dixie (1890) observes, a bit sarcastically:
The people of the North seem to think that the question of African slavery at the South is nothing more nor less than the question of dollars and cents; and they are most anxious to have us believe that the doctrine of abolitionism is the conception of virtue, wedded to a high standard of moral rectitude and nurtured in the atmosphere of purifying, unselfish humanity. This may be true, but if so, it does seem to me most remarkable that throughout the entire christianized world wherever the wings of civilization have wafted the leaves of American literature, the word Yankee is a synonym for close dealing and sharp practice, while the word Southerner carries with it the idea of a warm-hearted, open-handed, liberal-minded people, full of courage, jealous of their honor, and possessed of unfained, whole-souled, genuine hospitality.\(^{15}\)

The Yankee of Southern myth has a bent for practicality, a knack for turning things to his advantage and making them pay. This practical outlook precludes any chance that idealism might sway him, even momentarily. The villain of Francis Fontaine's *Etowah: a Romance of the Confederacy* (1887), Wellington Napoleon Potts, is a Yankee who now resides in the South. His father, though a "native of New England," is "a very extensive slave-owner."

The Southern heroine, Clara Leslie, asks why, since Potts is a New Englander, he does not emancipate his slaves. "Yawning, with well-simulated indifference," Potts replies that

hypocrites pretend to be animated by patriotism, allegiance to the State, and all that sort of thing. A New Englander is superior to sentimental notions. We are a practical people. "Nothing succeeds like success," is our motto. . . . In a short time all those men whom you call "noble patriots" /Confederate soldiers/ will be forgotten, while we, who stay at home and make money will buy them out--lock, stock and barrel--after the war, and hire them to boot! We
intend to sell our negroes as fast as possible—are doing it now. Father sold a splendid hand, the likeliest young man we owned, yesterday at auction. I don't intend to have a lot of negroes to support after the war has freed them! I am going to feather my nest while I can. If I can't free them, and get paid for it, I will sell them.\textsuperscript{16}

This candid, callous admission stuns the Southern girl. Fontaine implies that had Potts espoused abolition and freed his slaves, his Southern neighbors would have excused him, for he came from New England. At least they would have recognized that he acted according to an ideal, regardless of what they thought about that ideal.

Fictional Yankees who move South and take up planting do everything wrong, by Southern (ideal) standards. Money is their objective; all else is secondary. They treat their slaves so harshly that they become outcasts in their communities. In Phoebe Seabrook's \textit{A Daughter of the Confederacy} (1906), Minnie Painter, a sour, miserly woman from Quincy, Massachusetts, becomes mistress of a Southern plantation. Economy is her watchword; "order and precision reigned supreme." She hoards supplies, nearly starves her slaves, and carps at them continually for wasting little things. This woman "whose heart and soul were bent on gain, to whom the negro was simply a beast of burden," is everything a Southern plantation mistress should not be.\textsuperscript{17} A similar character is Fred Deaderick in N. J. Floyd's \textit{Thorns in the Flesh} (1884).

As a young man he had come to the South from Connecticut with his
father. After inheriting the "considerable wealth" his father had made by fraud, Deaderick, "being enterprising and ambitious," determined "to become one of the largest planters in the country . . . .

In pursuance of this determination, he was aided by his inherited shrewdness. Plantations were bought, agents were sent to Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia, to purchase slaves, the most energetic overseers were employed, and the only demand made of them was to excel all planters in their respective neighborhoods, in the number of bales of cotton produced per capita.

In Floyd's words, the "Puritan slaveholder" turned, quite naturally, into a "thrifty 'nigger-driver."

"Being cruel to one's slaves" could be rather broadly construed.

In G. C. Eggleston's Dorothy South, the community of Virginia planters ostracize one planter, Robert Copeland, because "he makes too many hogsheads of tobacco to the hand . . . ." Copeland never drives his slaves and never beats them.

But he has invented a system of money rewards and the like, by which he keeps them perpetually racing with each other in their work. They badly overtax themselves, and the community regards the matter with marked disfavor.

That Copeland overworks his Negroes "in ways that are ingenious and not brutal doesn't alter the fact," says one of his planter neighbors. This is "Yankee farming," so Copeland is "shut out of society."

"Yankee farming" meant things other than just overburdening one's slaves. Fictional Southern planters never admit that planting
is a business like any other. One planter in *Dorothy South* explains that it is "a business, yes, but not like any other. It has a certain dignity to maintain." Fictional Yankees in the South, with their practical, materialistic ways, fail to understand this "certain dignity" attached to planting—fail to understand why the Southern planter lives lavishly, overlooks waste, and blithely refuses to be troubled by his debts. When Arthur Brent (in *Dorothy South*), just come to Virginia from the Midwest, decides to pay off debts on his plantation by selling "undignified crops"—apples, sweet potatoes, bacon, watermelon—a neighboring planter warns him, "It isn't safe to make planting too profitable. It is apt to lead to unkindly remark." Preoccupation with money, an eye for profit, smacks of "Yankee farming." Minnie Painter, the Massachusetts miser on a Southern plantation in *A Daughter of the Confederacy*, described above, acts true to Yankee form. She sells butter, eggs, and turkeys. Colonel Marmion, a Southern gentleman shocked by her practical ways, scolds her:

> You are not aware of the dignity of your position, my dear . . . . You would be a blessing to some poor clerk behind a counter or to a person with three or four hundred a year, but as the wife of a Southern planter you owe it to yourself to live generously and to take good care of the slaves depending on you.

The selfish, grasping materialism of fictional Yankees always appears in directly stated or implied contrast to a Southern society supposedly free from this evil. An extreme example of this contrast
appears in Russell's Roebuck. In after-dinner conversation among Virginia friends, Mr. Ambler launches into eulogy of conditions in the Old Dominion. In his opening statement, typifying the degree of modesty which is to follow, he says, "I believe . . . there is not a happier or better community." He elaborates:

There is wealth enough for leisure to cultivate the higher faculties, and yet even the rich among us are incited to lead active lives under the open sky. Property is so diffused that the scale is gradual from the richest to the poorest. Even the poorest seldom turn beggars or thieves, for poverty here is neither extreme nor hopeless. Contentment is almost universal.

. . . Morals are generally simple and pure. Truth, honesty and mutual good-will—the main elements of morality—are generally enforced by usage and opinion. . . . Most of the evils which exist appear to be common to mankind, while many of our blessings are peculiar to Virginia.

At this point another Virginian, Dr. Fairfax, explodes: "And yet . . . the Yankees are eager to subvert our social system and foist upon us their superior civilization!" The reason for his sarcasm becomes readily apparent as he describes conditions in the land of the Yankee:

A sordid civilization /sic/, glittering with a thin surface of gold-leaf—having circulating gold for its life-blood, a golden calf for its God, and a material New Jerusalem with pavements literally golden for the heaven of its hope. A civilization /sic/ in which men, with fierce and grasping competition, grovel and jostle each other as men do in the gold-diggings. Every man in the North is let loose against his neighbor to become victor or victim in a struggle for life. Of course, all society becomes mercenary, and honors, laws, verdicts, religion, everything is on sale in the vast
auction-mart. But because the general scramble of sordid selfishness assists the teeming fertility of a new continent to produce cities and palaces, they vaunt their vicious civilization as the final product of consummate wisdom.\textsuperscript{23}

Materialism he sees as something Yankees might try to force on the South, but which the South would never succumb to from within.

Since Yankees were thought to be materialists, Southerners could explain very simply why and how such persons fought against the South: for profit. To begin with, Yankees attacked slavery only after it had proved unrewarding in the North and after Yankee slavers had wrung all possible profits out of the trade. In her diary in September 1861, Mary Chesnut observed about Yankees:

They say our crowning misdemeanour is to hold in slavery still those Africans they brought over here from Africa, or sold to us when they found to own them did not pay. They gradually slid them off down here, giving themselves years to get rid of them in a remunerative way.\textsuperscript{24}

Supposedly, Yankees looked on the war as a business venture—a speculation promising lucrative returns and nominal risks. Mrs. Chesnut noted, in July 1862, that Yankees "expect to make the war pay. Yankees do not undertake anything that does not pay."\textsuperscript{25} And Southerners often said, early in the war, that Yankees would keep up the fight so long as they reaped their profits. Another diary note of Mrs. Chesnut while in Richmond in July 1861:

There are gentlemen here who know their Yankees well, and they say if the thing begins to pay—Government contracts and all that—we will never hear the end of it until they get their profit in some way out of us. They will not lose money by us, of that we may be sure. Trust Yankee shrewdness and greed for that.\textsuperscript{26}
John B. Jones commented in his diary in February 1863 that "as long as the Yankees can make money by it, and escape killing, the war will continue." The belief of some Southerners that Yankees did in fact find the war materially rewarding followed as a matter of course. Christopher Hampton, just back in South Carolina from New York in June 1865, reported (and Mrs. Chesnut recorded) that "in some inscrutable way everybody in the North has contrived to amass fabulous wealth by this War." When contrasted with Confederate suffering, Yankee moneymaking during the war drew special reproach. In Flora McDonald Williams' *Who's the Patriot?* (1886) a "good" Yankee in 1862 leaves his Confederate friends, who by now are in desperate straits, and returns to his Philadelphia home. Accustomed to Confederate poverty, he is shocked by the Philadelphia scene:

> On all sides he saw evidence of prosperity and growing wealth. The war was scarcely talked of, and only through the papers now and then did he hear of a battle. Many of his old friends were in their accustomed places, and the business of commerce and trade was in pretty much the same condition as before the war, only a little brisker, while many had grown fat on Government contracts. It seemed so dreadful, somehow, that Yankees were eagerly reaping material profits from the business of defeating the South; obviously they were desecrating all notions of a "noble war."

Union soldiers, seen through partisan Southern eyes, often became mercenaries, bent on plunder. In James Dabney McCabe's
Aid-de-Camp (1863) they are "Northern hirelings"\textsuperscript{30}; in Augusta
Jane Evans' Macaria (1864), "hireling hordes \textit{sic}/ of oppression"\textsuperscript{31};
in George P. Rumbough's From Dust to Ashes (1895), "the ruthless
hireling foe"\textsuperscript{32}; in Fannie E. Selph's Texas (1905), "the foreign
hordes hired with the American gold."\textsuperscript{33} The view of patriotism
found in such soldiers is that of a "burly, red-whiskered ruffian"
in charge of Yankee raiders at a Louisiana plantation in Collins'
Tom and Joe (1890): "Yes, patriotism is a good thing when it pays."
With this comment he proceeds to direct his men in "indiscriminate
plunder and unmitigated deviltry worthy of the middle ages."\textsuperscript{34}

Choosing between patriotism and money is no problem for the
fictional Yankee soldier. He quickly, almost instinctively,
chooses money. Jacob Wilder, a Southern hero in Flora Williams'
Who's the Patriot?, seeks a way to return during the war from
Washington, where he has been taken involuntarily, to his home in
Winchester, Virginia. He meets a Federal soldier and soon discovers
that

no deep, inflexible principle of self-immolation had
operated to make him don "the blue," but that a bonus
of $200 had been accepted as fitting compensation for
the perilous position, from one even less imbued than
himself with patriotic ardor.

This Yankee's "patriotism, though well enough for holiday purposes,
was not proof against propositions, when backed by substantial
considerations." Wilder offers money; the Yankee accepts, and he
speedily arranges for Wilder to get back to Winchester. In Jane T. H. Cross' Duncan Adair (1864) a gruff Yankee sentinel stops a suspicious-looking character (the disguised Confederate hero, Duncan Adair, just escaped from Federal prison). But when "Duncan slipped a piece of money into his hand, and passed him, saying: 'I cannot stay here parleying,'" the sentinel, no longer gruff, replies quite amiably, "I guess it's all right." Duncan had known how the Yankee would act: "'Of course,' said Duncan in a low voice to himself, 'it's all right when you have the money.'"

In Edward Edgeville's Castine (1865), as Confederate prisoners plan their escape, Castine reasons, "you know a Yankee will sell his conscience and his country both for gold . . . ." With no trouble at all they find a Yankee guard willing to help them escape—in return for $50. These three authors—Flora Williams, Jane Cross, and Edward Edgeville—use scenes of Yankees taking bribes merely to show how corruptible Yankees are. They cast no reflection on their Confederate heroes who offer the bribes, for they are engaged in worthy enterprises—like escaping from Federal prison.

The Yankee of Southern war fiction has other shabby traits to add to his materialism and his hypocritical brand of Puritanism. Generally he is of a lower social class. A wide gulf separates him from Southerners; compared with them he is ill-bred, definitely
not "quality." This social gulf thought to exist between Yankees and Southerners can be illustrated best, perhaps, by the work of a North Carolina novelist whose central Southern characters are just ordinary folk, not aristocrats. Bertha Belmont, heroine of Sarah J. C. Whittlesey's *Bertha the Beauty: a Story of the Southern Revolution* (1872), has been reared amid poverty (her father lacks ambition). Though she is hardly used to genteel surroundings, Bertha still is shocked when she meets her husband's Massachusetts relatives. They are rude country folk whose speech betrays lack of education. (The author writes their conversations in rough dialect. Only her Yankee characters speak in dialect; her Southern characters use correct English.) On hearing their talk—"of washing clothes, haying, selling butter and cheese, and the sin of slavery, and Southern chivalry"—Bertha "bit her lip with suppressed amusement, and veiled her eyes from the honest, humble, and toil-hardened natives. Then she signed more deeply for her own dear refined Southern land." How does Bertha compare these Yankees with Southerners? "The mode of living of those whose acquaintance she had formed in the old Bay State, was rather beneath that of the lowest class of Carolina backwoodsmen." The head of the family is a "'well-to-do farmer,' but the poorest Southerner she had ever known was his superior in gentility, both in person and domicil [sic]." Even the home of a rich uncle lacks any resemblance to "Southern style and refinement." The author, Sarah Whittlesey, concludes
quite seriously that Yankees are socially inferior—even to Southern poor whites. 38

Authors who chose to illustrate merely the inferiority of Yankees to Southern aristocrats had an easier task. Many Southern writers made little attempt to persuade their readers that a social gulf separated these two mythical types. Persuasion seemed unnecessary. They just assumed that the gulf existed and assumed that their readers would agree. Three Southern novelists, for example—Charles Russell, Benjamin Robinson, and N. J. Floyd—treat very similarly Yankee characters who dare try to improve their social standing or to ignore their seemingly obvious inferiority to the Southern elite. Israel Palmer, in Russell's Roebuck, has come to Virginia from New England and has prospered as a merchant. This, in itself, is not seen as bad—it is what one would expect of a Yankee. But now Palmer's sights have risen: he wants social rank as well as money. Trying to get this,

he purchased land in the county with a hope of crowning a life of successful business with the respectable enjoyments of a wealthy planter. He now coveted, as he had once envied, the social rank which he regarded as aristocracy. He was hospitably received in the county, but, by degrees, a difference of manners and tastes rendered the intercourse between him and his neighbors more constrained and less frequent. Being jealous and suspicious, he imagined offence where none was intended. Estrangement and then dislike ensued. Stung by fancied insult, he meditated retaliation. He was not a man to yield to a real or imaginary conspiracy to exclude him from the society of the "aristocracy." 39
So Palmer turns into a real villain, secretly aiding Yankee troops during the war and plotting to gain the property of his planter neighbors. A modern writer probably would be inclined to place some blame on the Southern characters: by failing to accept Palmer fully into their society, they helped to create a villain in their midst. But Russell, the author, does no such thing. Taking his readers' agreement for granted, he blames only Palmer. Palmer is an upstart. He deserves the exclusion he gets.

The Reverend Jacob Adams, a Methodist minister in Robinson's Dolores, has found himself in a predicament similar to Palmer's. But he lacks even wealth to recommend him. A "native of Massachusetts," he has been a "resident of C--town [in North Carolina] for a quarter of a century." There the better families have failed to "recognize" him:

When he came to Carolina, among a few of the citizens who neglected to cultivate his acquaintance, were the Vernons, Leigs, Woodruffs, and others of the Cavalier stock, who had been educated to be Episcopalians, externally at least. They were not pleased with his manners, and took very little trouble to disguise their indifference. The Reverend Jacob Adams was offended at this, and he never forgot the half suppressed contempt of these "slaveocrats," as he indignantly stigmatized these families; on the contrary, he treasured it up against them, longing for an opportunity to retaliate . . . .

The cavalier heroes bar the "plebian-mannered [sic]" Yankee from their ranks, and the author heartily approves. If Adams grows resentful, we are to understand, it is his own fault. He has
brought on his troubles by trying to ignore his social inferiority to Southern aristocrats. Certainly he should never have been so presumptuous.

Similarly, Fred Deaderick, Yankee villain of Floyd's Thorns in the Flesh, has tried to "crash" into exclusive Southern society. Resentful that Southern planters showed "condescending civility" toward his "shrewd, money-making Yankee father," Deaderick has determined to become a planter himself—to display the trappings, at least, of an aristocrat. He surrounds himself with luxury—Turkish rugs, "heavy curtains of Spanish hemp and silk," and furniture "made in the antique style, but ... evidently of very recent manufacture"—in a "strained effort" at "effect and display."

But even the Negro slaves know he is not "quality." As one slave on a neighboring plantation observes:

Es for richness, dat don't make quality. It's famblly, nigger; an' I wouldn't give de young marster's little finger nail for dat whole Deaderick an' his whole seed, breed an' generation, whatever dey is.41

No amount of plantations and slaves can ever begin to overcome that social gulf separating Deaderick from the Southern aristocracy.

Spurred by flaming partisanship, many authors during and shortly after the war seized and magnified the idea that Yankees were lowborn, inferior to Southerners. Around this idea they built an image of the "typical" Union soldier. The war these authors portrayed was a war of classes, pitting gentlemen Confederates
against plebeian Yankees. In his novel of 1863, *Aid-de-Camp*, James Dabney McCabe writes bluntly that "the scum of the North and West was mustered into the Federal regiments." Early Federal volunteers who marched through Baltimore on route to Washington he calls "half armed and miserable specimens of humanity from Pennsylvania, calling themselves United States soldiers ... ." Sally Rochester Ford, in *Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men* (1864), vividly describes the Civil War in terms of class warfare. When her Confederate heroes have been captured by Union troops, she writes,

Subjected to every insult, treated as if they had been brutes, rather than men, these noble patriots [Confederates], who had won for themselves imperishable fame, were hurried by their vengeful captors to their various places of imprisonment. . . . And yet such was the brutality and heartlessness—such the entire destitution of every emotion of humanity in the hearts of these vulgar, sunken wretches [Yankees], that they jeered and scoffed, and with low and cruel mockery taunted their helpless prisoners. But helpless as they were in the hands of a base and inhuman foe, in garb looking worse by far than their slaves at home on their plantations, they nevertheless remembered they were born freemen, and on every occasion they hurled back with defiant scorn the ruthless jests of their coarse and ill-bred assailants. Never, perhaps, did the superior nobility of the Southern character speak out in more striking contrast to the natural coarseness and heartlessness of their vulgar foe, than on this memorable occasion.  

Federal troops were not "pure Anglo-Saxon," as Confederates supposedly were. Many were "foreigners" (by definition, of course, indicating a lower class status). This idea seemed to arouse special fury in Southern partisans; they repeated it incessantly.
According to Augusta Evans, in *Macaria*, "European paupers, utterly ignorant of our institutions," started the whole trouble: their votes elected Lincoln.\(^45\) In October 1861 Mrs. Chesnut signed in her diary, "An appalling list of foreigners in the Yankee army, just as I feared . . . ."\(^46\) And John Esten Cooke, in his 1863 edition of the *Life of Stonewall Jackson*, quotes at length "a gentleman of Culpepper" who describes the Union soldiers who descended upon his town:

Some companies seemed to be of a decent agricultural or mechanical complexion; but by far the greater part were the most unsavory-looking wretches I ever beheld. The Irish were the next best; then came the genuine Dutch, about as cleanly and intellectual as the overgrown sows of "der Vaterland." . . . Next came the selected assassins and thieves, who were probably received upon certificates of their actual convictions and service in the penitentiaries. And last, and worst of all, the Puritans and psalm-singers of pious New England . . . .

Cooke characterizes them, in summary, as a "band of brigands--this motley crew of jail-birds, malefactors, released convicts, and Dutch-Yankee vermin, from the cellars and rockeries of Europe and the North."\(^47\)

It seemed almost an affront, sometimes, that Southern gentlemen should be called upon to fight such vulgar, baseborn characters. Consider the situation described in *Randolph Honor* (1868), by Marian Calhoun Legare Reeves (from Charleston). Late one night in 1861, Yankee troops have come to a Maryland plantation to arrest Lloyd Randolph because he sympathizes with the South. They
break into the mansion and, led by "a lank, slouching specimen of the genuine 'Down-Easter,'" they start to mount the stairs. Randolph comes forward haughtily and demands to know their mission. One Yankee growls, "We want Lloyd Randolph the traitor, that's what we want." Randolph maintains his aristocratic dignity: "I am Lloyd Randolph," he replied, folding his arms and awaiting further explanation." Their "fiercely moustached" officer steps forward and announces, in foreign dialect, "Den you be my prisoner, sere." Now in the true manner of Southern chivalry, Randolph thinks first to protect the "defenseless women" in the house. So, still dignified, he replies, "So be it, upon one condition . . . : That to avoid disturbance in the house, you withdraw your men to the lawn. Then, and not until then, I surrender." The Yankee officer is unimpressed. Not understanding the Southern gentleman's code of honor, he has the gall to doubt Randolph's pledge. "Smiling sarcastically," he replies, "Bon--ver' good . . . ; dat is enough well--give you fine chance for to save yourself." At this, of course, Randolph explodes: "'How, sir! when I have given my word!' thundered Mr. Randolph, in a towering passion." He seizes the hapless Yankee officer, shakes him soundly until he receives an apology, and then, still every inch a proud Southern aristocrat, departs with his uncouth captors.\footnote{\[48\]}

Similar contrasts occur in many Southerners' writings, as
plebeian Yankees confront and clash with aristocratic Southerners. Low Yankees ridicule and seek to wreck what they are utterly unable to comprehend or to appreciate: the true worth and the lofty values of Southern gentility. These clashes come most often in domestic scenes of the Confederacy, when those Southerners still at home endure Yankee raids. In Molly Elliott Seawell's *The Victory* (1906), old Colonel Tremaine feels that the search Yankees are making of his house is an indignity and he tells them so. One impertinent Yankee says to him, "Go on, old cock; I like to hear you talk—just as if you had two hundred niggers to jump when you spoke." Enraged at the use of the term "niggers," Tremaine delivers a stern lecture to the Yankee soldier that "Negro is the name of the black race, and any diminutive of it is a term of contempt of which I strongly disapprove." The word "niggers," he says, is "not admissible in polite society." But the Yankee laughs at Tremaine's rebuke: "'By Jiminy!' said the soldier, perfectly delighted. 'Give us some instructions in manners, my old Roman gent, and if you would throw in a few dancing lessons we would be a thousand times obliged.'" The Yankee, unable to appreciate the gentleman's ways, can only mock them.

Frequently the fictional Yankee is driven by jealousy, by hatred for those better—or better off—than he (namely, Southern aristocrats). Resentful that he cannot join them, he feels he must
destroy them. This feeling governs him during the war. In Flora
McDonald Williams' *Who's the Patriot?* there is a "poor white man,"
Jonathan Wilder, who has moved to the Valley of Virginia "from a
barren part of Pennsylvania many years before, in the hope of
improving . . . [his] fortunes . . . ." But riches have eluded
him. His dream of owning one day a plantation and slaves has
crumbled. Now he is bitter toward those Southern planters he
once had hoped to join. In 1860 Wilder turns to the Republican
party and to Lincoln. He tries to sway his son, Jacob:

> These [Southern] people don't think as much of you as
> of the nigger that drives their horses and belongs to
> 'em. Just stand back, I say, and wait awhile, and
> you'll see if Abraham Lincoln don't do the right
> thing. He'll pull down some of these high and mighty
> aristocrats. He'll give us all a fair chance. What
> chance, I say, has the poor white man got here now,
> when the nigger works for nothing. I always repented
> the day I landed here, anyhow . . . .

But Jacob remains unmoved. "With more than ordinary intelligence,"
the author explains, Jacob

> Had fashioned his ideas of justice and right quite
> independently of his father's prejudices, and had
> unconsciously absorbed the sentiments and opinions
> of those with whom he came in daily contact, and
> whose warm, sympathetic natures he found more congenial
> than those of his parents.

Jacob is a "good" character. Far from resenting Southern planters,
he adopts their ideas. He explains that "the South has the right
to her property in whatever shape it may be, and fight for your
rights is my motto." Rejecting his Yankee heritage, he joins the
Confederates and eventually becomes a Confederate spy. His parents,
who "had not outlived their affection" for their native Pennsylvania, become villains. Hating Southern planters, they support the Union cause. 50

It seemed to some of the South that Yankees in uniform had but one real goal: to humiliate Southerners. Yankees, they thought, derived a sort of fiendish glee from trying to tear down Southern "pretentions" to aristocracy. After Sherman's troops had swept through Columbia, South Carolina, in February 1865, a young girl of that town, Emma LeConte, wrote in her diary:

> From what I can hear, their chief aim, while taunting helpless women, has been to "humble their pride"—"Southern pride." "Where now" they would say, "is all your pride—see what we have brought you to! This is what you get for setting yourselves up as better than other folks!" The women acted with quiet dignity and refused to lower themselves by any retort. 51

Villainous Union soldiers who, as lower class persons, bear a special grudge against Southern aristocrats, appear often in early Southern fiction of the war. When soldiers of occupation, having Southerners at their mercy, they take the attitude of the Yankee Captain Purdy in Mary Tucker Magill's *Women; or, Chronicles of the Late War* (1871). Having secured an order to banish immediately one of the Southern heroines from Winchester, he appears at her home, "swaggering in with his hat on his head, his hands in his pockets, with the self-importance of a 'monarch of all he surveyed.'" It was, the author explains, "the first time in his
life that he had ever commanded, or even perhaps glanced into the circles of ladies and gentlemen, and he made the best of his opportunities. In Virginius Dabney's *Story of Don Miff* (1886), a cunning little "war" goes on between a Federal colonel and a pert young Virginia girl, Mary Rolfe. Mary "always contrived, in the subtlest way, and without saying so, to make him feel that she did not look upon him as a gentleman." Enraged, he says to her one day, "I don't believe . . . that you F.F.V.'s think there is one gentleman in the whole North. This arrogance on your part is really one main cause of the war." Mary quietly protests that she knows "a number of Northern gentlemen," names some of these acquaintances from the colonel's home city, and blandly inquires if he knows them.

The colonel knew, and he saw plainly that she knew, that he could no more enter one of those houses than he could fly. He could not answer her. All that was left him was to hate her, and this he did with his whole heart; and all aristocrats, living and dead.

The Yankee colonel's anger explodes into action when Mary taunts him as he runs from Confederate bullets. He knocks her down, yelling, "Take that, d--n you!" (Fortunately, for the sake of a happy plot, the Confederate hero miraculously appears and, with one blow of his sword, kills the Yankee colonel for his ungentlemanly act.)

But this interpretation of the war--ranging all the gentlemen, or cavaliers, on one side against a rather motley crew of plebeians on the other side--presented some serious problems. No true cavalier
would stoop to fight an unworthy, inferior opponent. According to the "code" of chivalry, he might whip or cane such a person, but he would meet in honorable combat only his social equals. 54

Many Southern writers, busy glorifying their noble Southern cavaliers and discrediting their opponents, ignored this rather basic contradiction. A few perceived it. When a Louisiana girl, Sarah Morgan, discovered, somewhat to her surprise, that the Union soldiers in Baton Rouge were "evidently gentlemen, not the Billy Wilson's crew we were threatened with," she declared that she had formerly allowed herself "to be influenced by bigoted, narrow-minded people, in believing them [Yankees] to be unworthy of respect or regard . . . ." After thinking over the matter, she indicated in her diary in May 1862 that she really preferred to regard Yankees as gentlemen, as honorable foes:

Shall I acknowledge that the people we so recently called our brothers are unworthy of consideration, and are liars, cowards, dogs? Not I! If they conquer us, I acknowledge them as a superior race; I will not say that we were conquered by cowards, for where would that place us? It will take a brave people to gain us, and that the Northerners undoubtedly are. I would scorn to fight an inferior foe; I fight only my equals. These women may acknowledge that cowards have won battles in which their brothers were engaged, but I, I will ever say mine fought against brave men, and won the day. Which is most honorable? 55

Yankees pictured by John Esten Cooke in his Life of Stonewall Jackson, published in 1863, fit mainly into his "band of brigands" stereotype (described earlier). Opposing forces at the first battle
of Manassas he paints in vivid contrast:

On the one side, the demoniac lust of spoil and rapine—a mad and infamous invasion of a great people's homes and firesides, with "Booty and Beauty" for the watchword: subjugation the result aimed at by their legions. On the other, a great race fighting in defence of their soil, their families . . . for freedom and home and sacred honor. They were led by Johnston, Beauregard, Jackson—those noble types of the mighty Anglo-Saxon race . . . .

Victory comes to Confederates because of "the cause in which the men of the South fought—and the character of those forces, from the highest officer to the humblest private." By 1868, however, when he published Hilt to Hilt, Cooke had modified his views. In this novel Cooke does have a villain, Captain Ratcliffe, who is a Yankee. And in addition to doing deeds typical of most villains in such stories—interfering with the romance of the Southern hero and heroine, for example—Ratcliffe demonstrates beyond all doubt that he is no gentleman. He lacks the courage to meet St. Leger Landon, the Confederate hero, in a duel. But when Ratcliffe and his Union soldiers have captured and bound the Confederate Landon, and Ratcliffe is debating whether to hang him or to shoot him, Landon appeals to the other soldiers:

"I find . . . /it/ strange, gentlemen," said Landon, with his defiant smile, "and realize with difficulty that you tolerate such people /as Ratcliffe/. For, do not think, messieurs, that in the Southern army we rate you as 'mud-sills' and low people. I have always scorned to make out our enemies mere ruffians and cowards;—cowards! where were the merit of whipping you were you such? But such men as this friend of
ours—and he indicated Ratcliffe with the same disdainful movement of the head—"are apt to produce the impression that your militaires are not exactly what General Hooker calls them, "immensely superior, intellectually and physically," to the Southerners."

Cooke thus cautions the reader not to think Ratcliffe, the low villain, a typical Union soldier. And he puts a "good" Yankee on the scene. Lieutenant Ralph Arden, image of nobility in the Union blue—a brave soldier, a gentleman with "something superb in his bearing," and a brother of one Confederate hero—steps forward and saves Landon from the villain's clutches.57

Other authors, too, introduced into their stories a few Yankee characters of a higher sort—worthy foes. They were gentlemen who understood and appreciated the ideas and the values of Southern cavaliers. On leaving a Mississippi mansion which he has saved from destruction by Federal raiders, the Yankee Hudson LeRoy in Fannie Selph's Texas; or, the Broken Link in the Chain of Family Honors says:

I shall always be grateful for the kindness which I have received at your beautiful Southern home, and I am glad of the favor to become the beneficiary of such evidences of "Southern chivalry." I can well attest that it is a grand, breathing reality.58

And there is a memorable little scene on the battlefield in Joseph W. Eggleston's Tuckahoe (1903) as the Confederate hero, Robert Cary, falls injured and is taken prisoner. A Union captain, "smilingly" informing Cary that he is "in the hands of a gentleman," lets Cary keep his pistol. He explains: "When you
get back to our army the provost guard will probably go through you and rob you of all you have, but we are soldiers." "Greatly impressed with his captor’s bearing," Cary replies, "I had already learned by rough experience that you were gallant soldiers, but did not know that you were chivalrous knights." Then, with elaborate courtesy reminiscent more of the drawing room than of the battlefield, the two gentlemen exchange cards (which, presumably, they always carry with them, even into battle). 59

It was hard, though, to apply this sort of interpretation to the war in general. In "honorable warfare," with "chivalrous knights" peopling both sides of the field, all must abide by the chivalric code. Both sides must fight like gentlemen—a stilted, formalized sort of fighting governed by rules which all observe. Few Southerners were prepared to concede that Yankees fought this way. Southerners, yes; they fought like the cavaliers they (supposedly) were; but Yankees? Theirs was "uncivilized warfare."

Yankees "broke the rules." Their war spread to Southern civilians and to Southern property. Hence they became "brigands," 60 "raiders," 61 "vandals," "fiends incarnate" 62—anything but gentlemen and honorable foes. The day after flames destroyed much of Columbia, South Carolina, Emma LeConte penned a bitter note in her diary:

We do not know the extent of the destruction, but we are told that the greater portion of the town is in ashes—perhaps the loveliest town in all our Southern country.
This is civilized warfare. This is the way in which the "cultured" Yankee nation wars upon women and children! Failing with our men in the field, this is the way they must conquer! I suppose there was scarcely an able bodied man, except the hospital physicians, in the whole twenty thousand people. It is so easy to burn the homes over the heads of helpless women and children, and turn them with insults and sneers into the streets. One expects these people to lie and steal, but it does seem such an outrage even upon degraded humanity that those who practise such wanton and useless cruelty should call themselves men. It seems to us even a contamination to look at these devils. Think of the degradation of being conquered and ruled by such a people!\(^{63}\)

And so it seemed to some Southerners hardly a fair fight. Their Confederates supposedly fought (or at least wanted to fight) like gentlemen, confining their campaigns to the field of battle and respecting property rights of civilians. But when their opponents felt bound by no such code, the notion of the Civil War as an "honorable war" crumbled. "Looking gloomily at the ruin" of a Southern mansion burned by Yankee soldiers, St. Leger Landon, Confederate hero of Cooke's Hilt to Hilt, remarks:

> Look, ... this is the way they make war on us in the Valley. We are wild beasts to be hunted down, and smoked out of our dens. The torch is to accomplish what the sword cannot; they cannot whip our soldiers; they burn out and starve our women and children, and if we murmur we are told that we are--rebels!\(^{64}\)

The Virginia hero of McCabe's play, The Guerrillas (1863), Arthur Douglas, decides he must fight Yankees on their terms. After Federal soldiers have destroyed his home and killed his family, he swears that "had our enemies sought to meet us in the open field, I would have fought them fairly. But they have taught me how to war against
them." So he becomes a guerrilla.65

The Yankee soldier in early Southern fiction of the war appears more often as a plunderer than as a fighter. Emphasis on this image stemmed in part from deliberate effort by some Southerners to discredit Union war aims. A Louisiana woman, Eliza McHatton-Ripley, recalled in her memoirs that "the darkies had been carefully taught that the whole war was a thieving expedition to steal our homes and property . . . "66 More often, though, it was probably a natural reaction to the war experience. Southerners who did not fight knew only this side of the Yankee. Looting and burning became, for them, "the war." At any rate, there comes, sooner or later, to virtually every Southern mansion in virtually every Southern story the Yankee raiding party. Yankee raiders are anything but gentlemen. Authors seem unable sometimes to find words adequate to describe such low, contemptible creatures. As insolent Yankee soldiers loot her home, an aristocratic Southern woman in William Henry Peck's The McDonalnds; or, the Ashes of Southern Homes (1867) says, with a stately air, "My daughter, ... let us retire. These are so far from being entitled to the name of gentlemen, that it is a disgrace to humanity to call them men."67 Even Mary Terhune, a Virginian who supported the Union cause, painted a black picture of the Yankee spoilers. One Southern girl in Sunnybank (1866) says of them,
I was immediately struck by the villainous appearance of those who were near enough for us to discern their faces. They were mainly foreigners of the lowest class, with unkept beards, wild shocks of sunburnt hair, and their tanned visages were rendered yet more repulsive by their dress. . . .

The Yankees are rude, insolent, often brutal toward Southerners. Sacking the mansion turns into a sort of frenzy ritual, as Yankees steal small valuables and destroy what they cannot carry away. In *Flower de Hendred* (1899), Constance Harrison depicts, in bitter detail, "an orgy . . . in which all semblance of restraint was thrown aside." Sometimes their motives are material ones: a "burly, red-whiskered ruffian" snarls to old Judge Mabry in Collins' *Tom and Joe*, "We are going to make you help pay the expenses of this war; we cannot afford to tramp over this country and fight rebels unless we are well paid for it." At other times, their acts are "mere deviltry," to insult and humiliate the Southerners.

Obviously, Yankee raiders could hardly rank as "honorable foes." And this disturbed Sarah Morgan, the Louisiana girl who, as earlier described, wanted to view them as gentlemen. As she said then, in May 1862, "I fight only my equals." In August of that year, while she and her family were refugees from Baton Rouge staying at a friend's plantation, they heard tales of Yankees pillaging the town. She wrote in her diary, "I could not record all the stories of wanton destruction that reached us. I would
rather not believe that the Federal Government could be so
disgraced by its own soldiers." Three days later, in Baton Rouge,
Sarah saw her own home in utter ruin. She was stunned by the sight:

I stood in the parlor in silent amazement . . . . It
was so hard to realize. As I looked for each well-known
article, I could hardly believe that Abraham Lincoln's
officers had really come so low down as to steal in
such a wholesale manner.

Several days later, she wondered,

would it not be curious, if one of these days while
traveling in the North (if I ever travel again), I
should find some well-loved object figuring in a
strange house as a "trophy of the battle of Baton
Rouge"? I should have to seek for them in some
very low house, perhaps; respectable people had very
little to do with such disgraceful work, I fancy. 72

The conclusion that Sarah Morgan reached--that no gentleman
would do such things--carried over into Southern literature of
the war. If a gentleman is among the raiding party he tries to
protect the Southerners' property. If this fails, he apologizes,
like one in Mary Ann Cruse's Cameron Hall:

I regret this extremely, sir, and would most gladly
keep away from all such employment. I entered the
army to fight against rebels, and not to insult and
injure innocent men and helpless women and children.
I have not assisted in this work, and if I could, I
would have immediately withdrawn from those who were
engaged in it. 73

Features Southerners felt typical and despicable in the
Yankee character--commonness, materialism, fanaticism, and sheer
devilry--were blended into the image of the government at
Washington which directed such a "barbarous war." James Dabney McCabe, in his novel of 1863, _Aid-de-Camp_, puts his Southern hero, Edward Marshall, into a secret chamber in a White House chimney to spy upon a meeting of Lincoln with his cabinet in April 1861. Marshall sees in these men the Yankee in his several roles. Chase is the materialist: "Chase was a fair specimen of a keen, shrewd Yankee sharper. The quick, piercing eye, the restless and uneasy air, the mocking and sinister mouth, all told of trickery and deceit." Seward is the fanatic, with calm, cold face, in which not a particle of color was visible; the keen, grey eye, which seemed to be reading one's very soul, and the firm, grave mouth, with its expression of energy and power. There was something fascinating in his appearance, but it was the fascination of the serpent, that made the gazer shudder as he looked upon him. One felt that he was a man utterly destitute of principle and integrity, that ambition was his God, and that he feared nothing, scrupled at nothing, in his efforts to gratify his absorbing passion.

Blair and Cameron are just ordinary villains. "Blair was dark and gloomy. A bitter and malignant expression constantly hovered upon his countenance." About Cameron "there was an air of defiant boldness and accomplished knavery which at once convinced the gazer that the man was a great villain." Lincoln is the commoner:

Seated in one of these chairs, with his feet thrown carelessly upon the table, with a cigar thrust between his lips, was a tall, dark-complexioned man, with heavy black whiskers. He was dressed in a plain suit of black, which but imperfectly hid the natural ungainliness of his form. His whole appearance was expressive of great
awkwardness, and there was about him an air of restraint, which impressed the gazer painfully. There was a dejected and careworn look upon his countenance, and an eager, uneasy gleam in his dark eyes. . . . [Marshall] could hardly believe that the awkward and ungainly man before him, whose appearance was at once suggestive of fraud and ignorance, could indeed be the Ruler of the American Republic. He searched his features closely, but nowhere could he discover the evidences of the genius, intellect or wisdom necessary to enable him to conduct the Ship of State safely through the dark waves which were swelling and surging around her.

Lincoln's manner was "so strikingly ludicrous that Marshall could scarcely restrain his laughter." 74

Other Southerners during the war sometimes pictured Lincoln in different Yankee roles. To Mary Chesnut, he was the shrewd Yankee: in March 1861, she wrote that "he is of the cleverest Yankee type." 75 In Augusta Evans' Macaria, Lincoln sometimes personifies the hated abolitionist. When he is elected, "abolitionism, so long adroitly cloaked, was triumphantly clad in robes of state—shameless now, and hideous . . . ." 76 In Charles Russell's Roebuck, Lincoln is the fiend who wages war on the South in "the most atrocious spirit. " "The Federal government, treating us as rebels, . . . [denies] to us the rights of war and the rights of humanity." 77 To many, Lincoln symbolized a tyrant, a despot who smothered all civil liberties in his desperate attempt to crush the South. This is his usual character in Macaria:

In view of the iniquitous and impossible task which it had insanely set itself to accomplish, the government at Washington had swept aside all constitutional forms,
in order to free its hands for the work of blood—had
ultimated in complete despotism. The press was
thoroughly muzzled—freedom of speech was erased from
the list of American privileges; the crowded cells of
Bastile [sic] Lafayette, McHenry, and Warren wailed
out to the civilized world that habeas corpus was no
more; and, terror-stricken at the hideous figure of
Absolutism carved by the cunning fingers of Lincoln
and Seward, and set up for worship at Washington,
Liberty fled from her polluted fane, and sought shelter
and shrine on the banner of the Confederacy, in the
dauntless, devoted hearts of its unconquerable patriots.

The "political bondage" which Lincoln, as head of the "depraved,
unscrupulous, and Godless" Yankees, would force upon the South
would mean destruction, Miss Evans thought, of all that was
honorable in political life. Her heroine of Macaria explains that
"national, like individual life, which is not noble, is not worth
the living. A people who can survive their liberty are beneath
contempt . . ." 78 Obviously Northerners, in bowing to the
"despotic government at Washington," had surrendered their political
honor. Should the South be conquered, then, it would mean more
than defeat. As J. B. Jones wrote in May 1862 of the "despised
government of the North": "Northern domination is dishonor." 79
NOTES ON CHAPTER II

1Charles Wells Russell, Roebuck, a Novel (Baltimore, 1866), 56.


3Thomas Edward Watson, Bethany: a Story of the Old South (New York, 1904), 69. According to Thomas Cooper DeLeon, the "racial" difference between Northerners and Southerners made the Civil War inevitable: "The Virginian was the cavalier class as compared with the colder Covenanter types of the Puritan and the Knickerbocker. There can be no question that the supposititious line of Mason and Dixon separated two people as dissimilar in thought and feeling, in habit and in need, as were the Saxons and the knights of the descent of Rollo the Norman. Sift the innumerable theories of the cause of the war between the states and the whole residuum is the one of race. . . . Absolute diversity of character and of habits of life, inborn sentiments and sectional prejudices growing more bitter each decade, simply from want of mutual comprehension, must have resulted in separation." Thomas Cooper DeLeon, Belles, Beaux and Brains of the 60's (New York, 1909), 10, 17.

4Virginius Dabney, The Story of Don Miff, as Told by His Friend John Bouche Whacker; a Symphony of Life (Philadelphia, 1866), 183. One of the characters of Mary Ann Cruse explains why the war came about: "It is simply because a Yankee can never be contented to let well enough alone, and there is nothing in heaven, on earth, or under the earth, with which he can be entirely satisfied unless he has had a finger in the arrangement." Mary Ann Cruse, Cameron Hall: a Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1867), 201.

5Mrs. Welch, a character in Thomas Nelson Page's Red Rock, is this sort of person. A Massachusetts Yankee, she had come to Virginia just after the war like a missionary to unenlightened natives of the South. "Mrs. Welch had no time to spend in the sort of hospitality practised by her neighbors. . . . She had 'work to do,' and she 'meant to do it.' . . . She wrote to her Society back at home, that as she looked around her spirit groaned within her. The harvest was ripe—already too ripe, and the over-ripened wheat was falling, day by day, to the earth and being
trampled in the ground. She wrote also her impressions of her new neighbors. . . . They were all densely prejudiced; but that she did not in the least mind; they were also universally shiftless, but she had hope. They must be enlightened and aided (Mrs. Welch was conscious of a feeling of virtuous charitableness when she penned this. It was going farther than she had ever deemed it possible she could go)." She appealed for aid to her Massachusetts society. "Having despatched her appeal, Mrs. Welch did not waste time waiting for a response, but was as good as her word and, like an energetic soul, without waiting a day, sickle in hand, she entered the field alone. . . . Her first visit on this tour of inspection was to the Bend. She selected this as the primary object of her visitation, because she understood it was the worst place in the community, and she proposed to go at once to the very bottom. . . . Well, if it were a festering sore it ought to be treated; if it were a den it ought to be opened to the light, she declared. She found it worse than she had expected; but this did not deter her. She forthwith set to work to build a school-house near the Bend, and sent for a woman to come down and take charge of it." Thomas Nelson Page, Red Rock: A Chronicle of Reconstruction (New York, 1899), 331-332, 336.

6 Cruse, Cameron Hall, 513.

7 A later generation of Southern writers, those more acquainted with the Yankee as "carpetbagger" than as abolitionist, sketched the Yankee reformer as sincere, though perhaps misguided. Mrs. Welch, Page's character in Red Rock, described above, is one such character. Constance Fenimore Woolson injected a note of pathos into "King David," her story of a would-be Yankee reformer in the postwar South. Utterly sincere, utterly dedicated, still he fails in his work with the freedmen, for he cannot understand the forces governing Southern society and thought. Constance Fenimore Woolson, Rodman the Keeper: Southern Sketches (New York, 1886), 254-275. Joel Chandler Harris conceded that the Yankee reformer might really believe the ideas he expounded, but he painted one such character, Mr. Hotchkiss, in Gabriel Tulliver, in a wholly unfavorable light. "He belonged to that large and pestiferous tribe of reformers, who go through the world without fixed principles. He had been an abolitionist, but he was not of the Garrison type. On the contrary, he thought that Garrison was a time-server and a laggard who needed to be spurred and driven. . . . He mistook his opinions for first principles, and went on the theory that what he thought right could not by any possibility be
wrong. He belonged to the Peace Society, and yet nothing would have pleased him better than an uprising of the blacks, followed by the shedding of innocent blood. In short, there were never two sides to any question that interested Hotchkiss. He held the Southern people responsible for American slavery, and would have refused to listen to any statement of facts calculated to upset his belief. He was narrow-minded, bigoted, and intensely in earnest." Joel Chandler Harris, Gabriel Tolliver; a Story of Reconstruction (New York, 1902), 290-292.

8This charge, of course, was hardly new; it was a favorite theme of prewar propaganda. As example, see George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters (Richmond, 1857).


10Russell, Roebuck, 35-37.

11Cruse, Cameron Hall, 514, 513.

12Benjamin Robinson, Dolores: a Tale of Disappointment and Distress; Compiled, Arranged, and Edited from the Journal, Letters, and Other MSS. of Roland Vernon, Esq., and Contributions by and Conversations With the Vernon Family, of Rushbrook, in Carolina (New York, 1868), 21.

13In her Civil War diary on August 10, 1863, Kate Stone, a Louisiana girl "refugeeing" in Texas, sarcastically summarized the personality of Mrs. White, a "Yankee": "Mrs. White is an educated woman, lives in a nice house, and is well to do, but a regular skinflint. She is living from day to day on the verge of the grave, suffering from some incurable complaint, and is still very eager to make money, extorting the last cent. . . . She is a Yankee. That explains all." John Q. Anderson (ed.), Brokenburn: the Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868 (Baton Rouge, 1955), 233-234.

14Russell, Roebuck, 59.

15J. V. Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie; or, Love the Light of Life; an Historical Romance, Illustrative of Life and Love in an Old Virginia Country Home, and Also an Explanatory Account of the Passions, Prejudices and Opinions Which Culminated in the Civil War (Richmond, 1890), 149.

16Francis Fontaine, Etowah: a Romance of the Confederacy (Atlanta, 1887), 228-229.

18 Nicholas Jackson Floyd, *Thorns in the Flesh; a Romance of the War and Ku-Klux Periods; a Voice of Vindication from the South in Answer to "A Fool's Errand" and Other Slanders* (New York, 1884), 134-135. Another such Yankee in the South, one who is "excluded from society by the gentlemen of the county on account of his cruel treatment of his slaves," is Eckles, in Russell's Roebuck. Hearing that some of Eckles' Southern neighbors have punished him for maltreating a slave, one Virginian dryly comments, "No doubt... he will return to the North, turn abolitionist and deliver lectures on the horrors of slavery—admittance twenty-five cents a head." Russell, *Roebuck*, 51-52.


24 Mary Boykin Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie*, Ben Ames Williams, ed. (Boston, 1961), 138. Arthur Brent, Southern hero of Dorothy South, observes, in 1860, "It ought to be possible, if that /secession/ must come, to arrange it on a basis of peaceable agreement to disagree—the Southern States assuming all responsibility for slavery till they can rid themselves of it with safety to society, and the Northern people washing their hands once for all of an iniquity from which they have derived the major part of the profit. This they did, particularly during those years after 1808, in which the African slave trade was prohibited by law, but was carried on by New England ship masters and New England merchants with so great a profit that Justice Joseph Story of the United States supreme court, though himself a New Engander, was denounced by the New England press and even threatened with a violent ejection from the bench, because he sought to prevent and punish it, in obedience to the national statute." G. C. Eggleston, *Dorothy South*, 370. Similar ideas are expressed in Floyd, *Thorns in the Flesh*, 23-24.

25 Chesnut, *Diary from Dixie*, 265.

27 John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*, Howard Swiggett, ed. (2 vols., New York, 1935), I, 257. On September 6, 1861, Jones wrote: "Occasionally a letter reaches the war department from Nashville, offering arms at a high price, for gold. These are Yankees... Is not this a fair specimen of Yankee cupidity and character? The New England manufacturers are furnishing us, with whom they are at war, with arms to fight with, provided we agree to pay them a higher price than is offered by their own Government! The philosophical conclusion is, that this war will end when it ceases to be a pecuniary speculation." *Ibid.*, I, 78.

28 Chesnut, *Diary from Dixie*, 941.

29 Flora McDonald Williams, *Who's the Patriot? a Story of the Southern Confederacy* (Louisville, 1866), 184.

30 James Dabney McCabe, *The Aid-de-Camp; a Romance of the War* (Richmond, 1863), 45.


32 George P. C. Rumbough, *From Dust to Ashes: a Romance of the Confederacy* (Little Rock, 1895), 121.

33 Fannie Eoline Atkinson Selph, *Texas; or, the Broken Link in the Chain of Family Honors; a Romance of the Civil War* (Nashville, 1905), 91.

34 Clarence B. Collins, *Tom and Joe: Two Farmer Boys in War and Peace and Love; a Louisiana Memory* (Richmond, 1890), 144, 145.

35 Williams, *Who's the Patriot?*, 84.

36 Jane Tandy Hardin Cross, Duncan Adair; or, Captured in Escaping; a Story of One of Morgan's Men (Macon, Ga., 1864), 32-33.

37 Edward L. Edgeville, *Castine* (Raleigh, 1865), 12.


Floyd, Thorns in the Flesh, 135, 133, 137.
McCabe, Aid-de-Camp, 40, 42.
Sally Rochester Ford, Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men (New York, 1866), 74-75.

John B. Jones commented in his diary in May 1863: "The nation's agony," as it is termed in a Washington paper, in an appeal for 500,000 more men now demands a prompt response from the people. But what do they mean by the 'nation'? They have nothing resembling a homogeneous race in the North, and nearly a moiety of the people are Germans and Irish. How ridiculous it would have been even for a Galba to call his people the Roman nation! An idiot may produce a conflagration, but he can never rise to the dignity of a high-minded man. Yet that word 'Nation' may raise a million Yankee troops. It is a 'new thing.'" Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, I, 322-323.

Evans, Macaria, 246.
Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 145.

John Esten Cooke, The Life of Stonewall Jackson (New York, 1863), 142-143, 146. In Surry of Eagle's-Nest, Cooke's Confederate hero, Colonel Surry, captures "two stolid young Dutchmen, evidently raw recruits, and they spoke in the genuine gutteral of the Fatherland." Cooke explains that "there was no more difficulty in capturing those men after once securing their arms, than in letting them finish their nap. They were conscripts, riding Government horses, and averse to fighting, much preferring prison-life and regular rations." Cooke, Surry of Eagle's-Nest; or, the Memoirs of a Staff-Officer Serving in Virginia; Edited, from the Mss. of Colonel Surry (New York, 1894), 328, 329-330.

Marian Calhoun Legare Reeves, Randolph Honor (New York, 1868), 22-25.

Holly Elliott Seawell, The Victory (New York, 1906), 305.

Williams, Who's the Patriot?, 35-36.

Mary Tucker Magill, *Women; or, Chronicles of the Late War* (Baltimore, 1871), 218-219. In Roebuck, there is a villainous "German" officer of some Union troops, Colonel Wesel, who "had been a butcher in a Northern city." He looked upon "rebels" as atrocious criminals, out of the pale of humanity, and upon their property as lawful prey." Wesel denounced Colonel Fairfax, a Virginia cavalier, "not only as a 'secesh,' a rebel and an aristocrat, but as a 'bushwhacker.' . . ." Russell, *Roebuck*, 212-213, 241.


Dr. C. DeLeon explains: "Your ante-bellum Virginian was a rare old exclusive. His home was his altar and his family his fetich [sic]. He scarcely would have challenged the country postmaster, who refused him credit for a postage stamp, the latter not being his social equal, but he doubtless would have chastised him." DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux and Brains of the 60's*, 9.


Cooke, *Hilt to Hilt; or, Days and Nights on the Banks of the Shenandoah in the Autumn of 1864; From the MSS. of Colonel Surry of Eagle's Nest* (New York, 1871), 249, 93, 250.

Selph, *Texas*, 185.


Rumbough, *From Dust to Ashes*, 196.

Miers (ed.), *When the World Ended*, 4.

Ibid., 49-50.


66 Eliza McHatton-Ripley, From Flag to Flag: a Woman's Adventures and Experiences in the South During the War, in Mexico, and in Cuba (New York, 1889), 22.

67 William Henry Peck, The McDonalds; or, the Ashes of Southern Homes: a Tale of Sherman's March (New York, 1867), 71.

68 Mary Virginia Hawes Terhune, Sunnybank (New York, 1866), 384.


70 Collins, Tom and Joe, 144.

71 Dawson, A Confederate Girl's Diary, 175. For other examples of Yankee raids on Southern homes, see Cruse, Cameron Hall, 311-321, 506-507; Reeves, Randolph Honor, 304-307; Seawell, Victory, 305-307; Seabrook, Daughter of the Confederacy, 101-107; Fontaine, Etowah, 254-258; Whittlesey, Bartha the Beauty, 332-340; Peck, McDonalds, 64-73, 77ff.; Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes, 106-107, 173-176.

72 Dawson, A Confederate Girl's Diary, 185, 199, 208.

73 Cruse, Cameron Hall, 507. Another such character, a chaplain in Sunnybank, is the "solitary gentleman of the party" of Yankees who have descended upon the Southern home of the Lacy's. He apologizes to Mr. Lacy for the conduct of the others and tries to prevent some of the plundering—"but what could one man do, let his character or position be what it might, among a gang of ruffianly soldiery, the principle of whose Colonel was, that it was not only lawful, but praiseworthy, to do the enemy's territory all the mischief practicable?" Terhune, Sunnybank, 215-218.

74 McCabe, Aid-de-Camp, 20-22.

75 Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 19.

76 Evans, Macaria, 337.

77 Russell, Roebuck, 78.

78 Evans, Macaria, 347, 412. See also Dawson, Confederate Girl's Diary, 92-93, 112; Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, I, 267, 281.

79 Ibid., I, 126-127. See also Anderson (ed.), Brokenburn, 340.
CHAPTER III

CAVALIERS IN CONFEDERATE GRAY

From the ranks and the leaders of men fighting for the Confederate cause, people of the South drew their heroes. And as tales and legends spun a web of myth about these men, they came to personify, in individual ways, the Southern Confederacy—what it was and what it (had) hoped to become. These heroes were shaped in a special manner, in a manner peculiarly Southern, for there existed already in 1861 a mythical ideal—the cavalier—thought to symbolize what was different about the South. Four years of bitter war and the agonies of defeat posed a challenge to this cavalier ideal. In part, the ideal changed; it was redefined to suit a changing South. A few Southerners, finding the ideal inadequate, laughed at it or rejected it. But the cavalier proved a staunch hero; he was strong and he endured. And after it was all over, in 1865, John Esten Cooke could still write of his Confederate hero J. E. B. Stuart as the "Flower of Cavaliers":

He passed before you like an incarnate spring, all mirth and sunshine; but behind was the lightning. In those eyes as fresh and blue as the May morning, lurked the storm and the thunderbolt. Beneath the flowers was the hard steel battle-axe. With that weapon he struck like Coeur de Lion, and few adversaries stood before it. The joy, romance, and splendour of
the early years of chivalry flamed in his regard, and his brave blood drove him on to combat. In the lists at Camelot, he would have charged "before the eyes of ladies and of kings," like Arthur; on the arena of the war in Virginia he followed his instincts. Bright eyes were ever upon the daring cavalier there, and his floating plume was like Henry of Navarre's to many stout horsemen who looked to him as their chosen leader...

A cavalier was, by definition, a romantic hero; his a romantic war. The very term "cavalier" brings a certain image to mind, an image of a mounted man superb in bearing, fearless in fighting, gallant and glamorous—the kind of man to personify "Southern chivalry." The cavalier of romance would think, would act, would fight for peculiarly personal reasons—loyalty to his king (or his government), or hatred of an enemy, or love for a woman. But behind all these forces would be a motive more basic: his overweening sense of personal honor. If war should occur, he would volunteer to fight—but why? Certainly not because someone else forced him to fight. He would volunteer because his own honor would compel him to do so; he could make no other choice and still maintain his self-respect, his integrity, and his "nobility." And, just as the cavalier would decide to fight as an individual commitment, he would participate in that fighting as an individual, never as part of a conglomerate mass. Could this sort of hero be the Confederate hero? Could mythology merge the image of romantic cavalier with that of a Confederate soldier? For Confederate
mythmakers, this was by no means an easy task. The war, as it happened, bore little resemblance to what romantic-minded Southerners expected.  

At the outset, in 1861, fanciful notions of a chivalric war pervaded the Southern scene. Newspapers lauded the "gallantry, chivalry, and heroism of this distinguished son of the South" when Louis Wigfall, commanding a rowboat and waving a cambric handkerchief from the tip of his sword, made his way under fire to Fort Sumter to tell Major Anderson that he really ought to surrender.  

Beauregard, the prototype of a "dashing and brilliant officer," was the "hero of the hour." Then, war seemed exciting and adventurous, a sort of game made glorious by all the rhetoric Southern orators could command. Lighthearted young men left for the war as for a brief outing, showered with gifts and hand-sewn flags and smiles of girls in whose eyes they already were heroes. There seemed little reason to think the cavalier interpretation would be challenged or changed.

George Cary Eggleston later characterized that Southern army of 1861 as "simply a vast mob of rather ill-armed young gentlemen from the country." By 1874, when he was writing his Rebel's Recollections, memories of those first few stirring months seemed a little preposterous and more than a little naive. "Our ideas
of the life and business of a soldier," he says, "were drawn chiefly from the adventures of Ivanhoe and Charles O'Malley, two worthies with whose personal history almost every man in the army was familiar." To the camps of instruction where volunteers supposedly learned to drill,

every man brought a servant or two with him, of course. How else were his boots and his accouterments to be kept clean, his horse to be groomed, and his meals cooked? Most of the ladies came, too, in their carriages every morning, returning to their homes only as night came on; and so the camps were very picturesque and very delightful places to be in. All the men wore epaulets of a gorgeousness rarely equaled except in portraits of field-marshals, and every man was a hero in immediate prospect. 5

As volunteers soon discovered, real army life bore little resemblance to such idyllic scenes. 6 Drudgery, discomfort, weariness, boredom, illness--these became the lot of most Confederate soldiers. Harsh realities, intruding upon rosy anticipations, posed a problem for those who would view the Confederate as romantic cavalier. One had to be quite imaginative or rather remote from the scene to envision as Ivanhoe an ordinary Confederate wrapped in ragged butternut and slogging wearily through endless seas of mud. And the military discipline needed to convert untrained Southerners into soldiers posed still more of a threat to the cavalier ideal of romance. The mythical cavalier, as an individual hero, would fight and die for personal reasons--preserving his honor, protecting his homeland--but never because
someone commanded him to fight and perhaps to die. Discipline would subordinate the cavalier, his ideas, and his aims to a larger force; it would curb his freedom to move and to act as a single entity—to become a distinguishable hero. In Destruction and Reconstruction (1879), Richard Taylor, a former Confederate officer who believed strongly that troops in war must be firmly disciplined, wrote:

Popular imagination, especially the female, is much in error as to these matters [the nature of warfare]. Graceful young cavaliers, with flowing locks, leaping cannon to saber countless foes, make a captivating picture. In the language of Bosquet, "'Tis beautiful, but 'tis not war"; and grave mishaps have been occasioned by this misconception. Valor is as necessary now as ever in war, but disciplined, subordinated valor, admitted the courage and energies of all to be welded and directed to a common end.

This conflict between romantic ideas and necessary realities in army life disturbed Taylor only because it hindered the creation of a smoothly running war machine. But his mind was quite uncluttered by notions that common soldiers were, or ought to be, cavaliers. For many others, the discipline and drudgery of a soldier's life brought disillusionment. They had expected something far different. Sam Watkins, a Tennessee private, recorded in Co. Aytch (1882) his feeling of disenchantment as he discovered that "a private soldier is but an automaton, a machine that works by the command of a good, bad, or indifferent engineer ... ." And the "glory of war," he soon decided, "was
at home among the ladies and not upon the field of blood and carnage of death..." By 1862, "all our pride and valor had gone, and we were sick of war and the Southern Confederacy."9 John Esten Cooke, Confederate veteran, found much of war's reality disturbing. Some years after the war's end he confided to his friend George Cary Eggleston that

There is nothing intellectual about fighting. It is the fit work of brutes and brutish men. And in modern war, where men are organized in masses and converted into insensate machines, there is really nothing heroic or romantic or in any way calculated to appeal to the imagination. As an old soldier, you know how small a part personal gallantry plays in the machine work of war nowadays.10

But Cooke, the romantic, could never fully accept the implications of this view. To identify with that war which had played so large a part in his life, he had to remember it differently. He needed a war of heroes, of cavaliers, a war fought by the sort of men his imagination could mold into chivalric knights. And he found such men—fit subjects for his creative pen—in one branch of the army, in the Confederate cavalry. Why the cavalry?

In *Wearing of the Gray* (1867), Cooke explains:

The foot-soldier is confined to his camp for the greater portion of the time, and sameness rather than variety, common-place rather than incident, marks his days. In the cavalry this does not exist. As there is no rest for the cavalry-man, so there is no dull routine—no "every day the same." His life is full of movement, variety, incident, and adventure; he is ever in the saddle, and fighting,
either as a unit of the long drawn column, advancing
or retiring with the army, or in scouts and skirmishes—
the theatre of his work shifts quietly as do the
scenes of a drama on the stage. All that makes the
hard and brutal trade of war endurable seems to gather
around him, wreathing with brilliant flowers the keen
edge of the sabre.

So long as Cooke's memories and writings of the war centered on
the cavalry, he could picture a war that was noble and glorious,
the sort of war he could recall with pride:

The writer of this eulogy has carried a musket,
albeit he never did hard work with it; has served
in the artillery, and loves it ... . It is
simply not possible that he could utter a word against
those heroes of the infantry and artillery whom he is
proud to call his comrades; but he remembers with
most interest and pleasure the gay days when he
"followed the feather" of Stuart, that fleur des
chevaliers. In the saddle, near that good knight
of the nineteenth century, war became a splendid
drama, rather than mere bloody work; a great stage,
whereon the scenes were ever shifting, and the
"exits" were all made to the sound of the bugle!
That sound was stirring; and recalling now his various
experiences, the writer of this page hears the ring
of the bugle, not the roll of the drum; remembers the
life of cavalry rather than that of the infantry or
the artillery. 11

So, with Cooke's aid, the cavalier myth took a new bent.
Finding as an obstacle the unromantic nature of most army life,
Cooke paused, then redefined in a more specialized way just who
could personify his interpretation of Confederate life. Using
interchangeably the terms "cavalryman" and "cavalier," he blended
the two images into one. In doing so he made the Confederates'
fight appear not as one of "brutish men" engaged in "the machine
work of war" but as one of honorable heroes engaged in a romantic war.

One man dominates the scene in Cooke's Confederacy—the great cavalryman from Virginia, J.E.B. Stuart. When not center of the stage, Stuart still is never absent, for he is the archetype from whom other characters are drawn. To Stuart, Cooke says, warfare was "a splendid and exciting game;" he "accepted its most perilous scenes and cruellest hardships with the careless abandon of a young knight-errant seeking adventures." In his vignette of Stuart (1867), Cooke likens his hero to the English cavalier, Prince Rupert (both of them, he says, "were descended from the same stock"): 

Both were utterly devoted to a principle which was their life-blood—in Rupert it was the love of royalty, in Stuart the love of Virginia. Both were men of the most impetuous temper, chafing at opposition, and ready at any instant to match themselves against their adversaries, and conquer or die. Both were devoted to the "love of ladies," gallant to the echo; of a proud and splendid loyalty to their word; of unshrinking courage; kind and compassionate in temper, gay and smiling in address; fonder of fighting than of looking to the commissariat; adored by their men, who approached them without fear of a repulse; cavalry-men in every drop of their blood; fond of brilliant colours, splendid pageants, the notes of the bugle, the glitter of arms: Rupert with his snowy plume, Stuart with his black one;—both throwing over their shoulders capes of dazzling scarlet, . . . both proud, gay, unswerving, indomitable, disdainful of low things, passionately devoted to glory . . . .

Colonel Surry, the fictional character who wends his way through Cooke's romances of the war, meets every day men cast from this mold.
Surry, modeled after Cooke, is an aide on Stuart's staff; his life, the life of the Confederate cavalry. The scene shifts often, as cavaliers ever "gay" and "gallant" dash from one thrilling episode to the next, pausing only to sing, around numerous campfires, endless verses of their song:

If you want to have a good time,
Join the cavalry!
Bully boys, hey!  

Their is a world filled with excitement, suspense, sudden danger, hairbreadth escapes from overwhelming odds. It is war, but a splendid sort of war.  

In *Surry of Eagle's Nest* (1866) and *Mohn* (1869), Cooke's blanket elevation of cavalrmy into cavalier heroes caused him few qualms. His search for the adventurous led him further, though, and into some difficulty. *Hilt to Hilt* (1869) tells of life in "Mosby's Confederacy" in 1864, in that border area that was the "Debatable Land." "It is almost impossible, indeed," Cooke says, "to exaggerate the wild romance of that Partisan life of 1864." Figures on the scene are mounted men, but they are rangers, scouts, not regular cavalrmy. As the narrator, Colonel Surry, rides into that land and that life he reflects:

I had heard, of this land, a hundred bloody histories,—the strangest tales of private feuds and secret vengeances. Here, on the war-harried Virginia border, men had appeared mysteriously, coming, none knew whence; had joined the Partisans under names which were clearly assumed; had fought with deadly rancour;
fallen unnoted, and disappeared as the autumn leaf flits away on the wind, swallowed up with their mystery in oblivion. Men hated each other bitterly everywhere, in 1864; but north of the Rappahannock, and along the banks of the Shenandoah, there seemed to be something terrible and bloody in the very atmosphere, which inflamed the heart, and drove to mad excesses all who breathed it.  

Cooke tried to work on the assumption that these partisans, being cavalrmen, were, of course, cavaliers. But to do so, he had to strain the term and the concept almost beyond recognition. He had to try to make partisans into gentlemen, so they could qualify in his mind as heroes. Surrounding a partisan with the dark and mysterious past needed to explain his presence there meant that Cooke had to abandon his usual emphasis on the noble origins of a cavalier. St. Leger Landon, central figure in this "wild and picturesque group," definitely looks, to Colonel Surry, like a gentleman: "In the penetrating eyes, and the lips, half covered with a shaggy moustache, could be read something cool, resolute, and 'thorough-bred.'" And Landon, meeting Surry, makes to him "the bow of a nobleman." Unfortunately, though, these "gentlemen" led by Landon hold some rather ungentlemanly attitudes, particularly as to the proper method of disposing of Yankees. Surry notes that Landon is "the perfect horseman, the thorough cavalier, who would stop at nothing." When the partisans come across a church that Federal troops have laid waste, Captain Blount, Landon's cohort,
mutters in a "mild and courteous voice" that "these are Scythians, indeed! . . . there is nothing to do but to hunt down and kill every man [sic] of them."16

Incidents, such as Landon's putting to death three Union prisoners to retaliate against a Union officer who hanged three of Landon's men, begin to repel Colonel Surry.17 And when Landon, in a fit of fury against Federal soldiers who have burned a Southern mansion, cries to his men, "No quarter! . . . Follow me!—and no quarter to-day!" and the partisans relentlessly carry out his command, Surry is upset:

> What followed seems to-day, as I go back in memory, like some terrible phantasmagoria,—some nightmare of blood and death rather than an actual occurrence. On that morning of September, I saw Partisan warfare, in its darkest and most frightful phase.18

At this point, Cooke's effort to idealize partisans as gentlemen and proper heroes begins to break down. Try as he may, Cooke's spokesman, Colonel Surry, cannot persuade himself to accept fully such attitudes and actions. The best he can do is to explain, rather lamely, that these are gentlemen whose views have been warped by terrible incidents in their past lives. When Cooke's search for the sensational, trying to make the war a romantic war, led too far from an ideal of nobility, he hesitated and then retreated. That path he could not follow.
For this conflict of romantic ideas and unromantic realities, other authors found other solutions. Some, mostly women, simply ignored the realities. Their views of army life had been undisturbed by anything like first-hand experience. Others found refuge in writing only of stirring scenes of battle. Their heroes are always fighting, never marching; they specialize in daring deeds and picturesque deaths, clutching the colors which they have carried in a magnificent charge. Still other authors, quite unlike John Esten Cooke, found it possible to relinquish romantic notions. Their heroes are cavaliers, but they are stripped of some of the fancy trimmings. Characters in Mary Ann Cruse's *Cameron Hall* (1867) reject, from the outset, ideas that the war will be romantic. A young Virginia girl protests, amid sad and foreboding talk of coming war that "it has its bright side too, especially for us young people. Think of the splendid officers and gay uniforms, the glittering swords and waving plumes, the prancing horses and bands of music!" Her father replies "compassionately" that "the plumes, the swords, and the uniforms may all be very beautiful and attractive; but under their glittering exterior are concealed desolation and ruin and bloodshed, outrage, oppression, and murder, insult and brutality!" And as this family sends its son off to war they beg him "to realize in the beginning that it ... is not pastime and
adventure, lest when the novelty should wear off and privation begin, his spirit should fail and his energies relax . . . ."20

George Cary Eggleston solved the problem in a similar way, dissociating his cavaliers from romantic ideas. Arthur Brent, his Virginia hero of Dorothy South (1902), talks to friends early in 1861 "of the seriousness of the war, of the certainty in his mind, that it would last for years, taxing the resources of the South to the point of exhaustion." His lighthearted friends scoff at Brent, the "pessimist," and applaud "young" Jeff Peyton who predicts a brief and glorious war of "perhaps one battle" after which a victorious South will "dictate terms of peace in Washington." Those who "expect to see the fun," he says, must enter the army without delay. The hero Brent answers "quietly":

I do not expect to see the fun . . . . I do not see the humorous side of slaughter. But in my judgment you, sir, will have ample time in which to wear out many uniforms as gorgeous as the one you now have on, before peace is concluded at Washington or anywhere else . . . . War was never yet a pastime for any but the most brutish men. It is altogether horrible; it is utterly hellish, if the ladies will pardon the term, and only fools can welcome it as a holiday pursuit.21

As later events confirm Brent’s ideas, his stature rises. The man of sober mind was a prophet; his friends, romantic simpletons.

While authors were working out, in their minds and their stories, a relationship between romance and their heroes, from
other quarters there came more serious challenges to the cavalier as Confederate hero. The cavalier as defined in the prewar South was an aristocratic ideal; he reflected only an elite. Not all in the Old South accepted this ideal, of course. And even among those writers who had shaped the cavalier image were those, such as William Gilmore Simms, who had some misgivings about it as an ideal. The experience of civil war further provoked these Southern qualms. Men of all classes made this their war; they fought and died in it. But if it were thought to be a "cavalier" war, where could the others fit in? Was it, as some Confederates charged, "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight?" Geography posed another problem. The cavalier of Southern myth was traditionally associated with Virginia and South Carolina, though he could represent, to a limited extent, planters of the Lower South. How could the cavalier personify the whole Confederate South, including Texas and Tennessee and North Carolina? What of those other Southern types far different from the cavalier image--Scotch-Irish, backwoodsmen, for example? They too became Confederates. As writers struggled to answer these questions, to decide who could be a Southern hero, they were trying in their individual ways to define the Confederate cause.

At one extreme stand the "Virginians"--Constance Cary Harrison, Thomas Nelson Page, George and Joseph Eggleston,
Virginius Dabney. Their Confederates are cavaliers; they are aristocrats of the Old Dominion. Even to rate an introduction into the pages of Mrs. Harrison's novels, a character (with few exceptions) had to: 1) be a Virginian; 2) possess great wealth (before the war); 3) live on a plantation owned by the family at least since the unfortunate demise of Charles I; 4) be able to claim with pride at least one ancestor who fought the hated Cromwell, one who rode with Governor Spottswood among the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, and one who served on Washington's staff in the Revolutionary War. Characters of this sort--the Throckmortons in *Flower de Hundred* (1890), the Carlyles in *The Carlyles* (1905)--who have unimpeachable claim to nobility, in the Virginia sense, live and move in the fictional world of Mrs. Harrison's Confederacy. Her brief glimpses of the battlefront show, not the war in large view, but her special heroes fighting, sometimes dying, as noble Virginians. They personified, to Mrs. Harrison, what the war was all about. She felt no need to write of other Confederates or to expand her view of the cavalier. This was her ideal, and she was satisfied.

For Page, the Eggleston brothers, and Virginius Dabney, the war meant the end of "Ole Virginia," as Page called it. All that was good and noble in that little world of Virginia aristocracy is written into the characters of their Confederates--Page's
"Marse Chan" and Marse Phil in "Meh Lady;" Joseph Eggleston's Robert Cary in *Tuckahoe*; George Eggleston's Arthur Brent in Dorothy South, Raillie Pegram in *The Master of Warlock* (1903), Marshall Pollard in *Evelyn Byrd* (1904); Dabney's Dory Poythress and Charley Frobisher in *Don Miff* (1886). Like Mrs. Harrison, these writers generally found only aristocrats, only Virginians, adequate to portray their Confederate heroes.

Could the cavalier myth be more versatile? John S. Wise, a Virginian, thought not. Characteristic manners and values that made up that cavalier ideal were wholly foreign, he saw, even to some Virginians. In *The End of an Era* (1899), recalling when first he crossed the Blue Ridge and encountered the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of Lexington, he "curiously scrutinized [them] as a type of humanity wholly new to me." Descended from folk who had "avoided the light society of the Cavaliers in Tidewater and Piedmont," they were

men of earnest, thoughtful, and religious natures; simple in their lives to the point of severity, ... intense in their religious fervor, ... loving and possessing education, yet often narrow-minded, ... almost ascetics in their wants, not bountifully hospitable, ... regarding revelry and dissipation of body or mind as worthy of supreme contempt. ... 

War came, and Wise's later thoughts of that war were full of praise for Jackson and "his brave men of Scotch-Irish ancestry recruited here." But these men, as Confederates, brought to his
mind no hint of the cavalier. Jackson and his men, Wise felt, revived "by his grim prowess and their unshaken valor, the memory of Old Ironsides and his Presbyterians." They could be, to him, Confederate heroes, but heroes of a different stamp. 23

One real barrier to the spread of the cavalier symbol across the entire South was the "backwoods" connotation clinging to certain areas--North Carolina, East Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas. How could it be possible for a cavalier, refined and dignified, to spring suddenly upon the scene from the piney woods? To many Southerners, of course, this was unthinkable. The aristocratic Louisianan Sarah Morgan, for example, noted with some disdain in her diary that "these Arkansas troops have acquired a reputation for roughness and ignorance which they seem to cultivate as assiduously as most people would their virtues." 24 That such characters should participate in a Southern cause drawn in genteel terms seemed, at the least, a bit ironic. In Confederate myth they were treated, consequently, with a certain patronizing humor. 25 Southerners relished, for its contrast to their ideal, the story of the western (or Texan) captain's words of command to his cavalry: "Git ready to git! Git!" 26

In literature, even when an author tries to paint sympathetically Confederates from these areas, the characters
tend to emerge more as pathetic clowns than as heroes. They are so far from the cavalier ideal that their attempts to imitate it seem ridiculous. In *Randolph Honor* (1868), the Charleston author Marian Reeves sends her aristocratic Maryland heroine, Fadette Randolph, as a refugee to a relative's plantation in Arkansas. At a neighbor's party, typical of "backwoods festivities," Fadette meets Lieutenant Solomon Goodfellow, C.S.A., the Arkansas version of gentility:

A tall, broad-shouldered, loose-jointed figure, on which the Confederate coat looked much as if it had dropped, reversing Elijah's mantle, from a lesser to a greater... A large, good-natured, vacillating mouth, and fine teeth. Eyes of a peculiar dark wood-color, with perchance a slight reflection of the foliage tints—yet more peculiar in their power of darting forward with his head and shoulders, whenever speech became emphatic. A most empresse manner, a low confidential tone, now and then hurried and jerky. A perfect mane of dark hair, from time to time shaken back with a spirited toss of the head, surmounted all.

As she tried to dance—an Arkansas "wild 'sasshe!'"—with this Confederate she thought "a compromise between a war-horse and a sand-crab," Fadette "had much ado to keep her amusement within bounds of the smile polite, while she returned her partner's profound salaam, and endeavored to keep pace with his *pas de charge.*"²⁷

Some Southern authors from the "backwoods" states resisted this unfortunate stereotype cast upon their people. They sought a way to demonstrate beyond all doubt that their Tennessee or
Mississippi or North Carolina Confederates were indeed aristocrats. Once their characters were securely identified as "Southern nobility," obviously they could qualify as Southern heroes. The solution these authors found? Giving their characters impressively sounding names and explaining that they originally came from Virginia. Thus John Ashton in Capers Dickson's *John Ashton* (1896) resides in Georgia but he is "a native of Virginia and had graduated with distinction at the University of that State in 1860." One need have no further doubts about his social status. Judge Claybrook, in William Yopp's *A Dual Role* (1902), lives in Tennessee. He came there, however, in the 1840's as "a young and enterprising Virginian, . . . tempted by the virgin soil and plentiful pure water" and "determined to make for himself a home in the new country after the manner of the paternal roof that had sheltered him so long and so bounteously in the grand old commonwealth of Virginia." Members of the family of Philip Randolph, hero of George P. Rumbough's *From Dust to Ashes* (1895), are so unfortunate as to live in East Tennessee. But they are absolved from all blame for this regrettable situation when the author carefully explains that the Randolphs, originally from Virginia, moved west only after losing their wealth (one assumes through over-generous hospitality, plantation debts, guaranteeing notes of defaulting friends—the only proper ways for Virginians to go
Charles Stewart, hero of N. J. Floyd's *Thorns in the Flesh* (1884), lives in North Alabama, an area of doubtful aristocratic features. But Stewart can truly rank as "chivalrous," for he is "son of a wealthy and prominent family in Virginia" who, upon graduation from the University of Virginia, "was given by his father the best plantation that could be purchased in the distant land of North Alabama . . . ."31

In Texas; or, the Broken Link in the Chain of Family Honors (1905), Fannie E. Selph creates for her characters (named Randolph), in the middle of Mississippi, a mansion filled to the brim with family relics—"swords and spears" from "ancestors of the English cavalier," swords and "flintlock guns of the Revolution," a cap of Martha Washington, a slipper worn by Dolly Madison at the reception of Lafayette, a "shot-ridden garment worn by one who fell on the gallant old Bonhomme Richard," the "family seal from the illustrious master of Mt. Vernon." Obviously they are aristocrats—despite their locale,32 Cavaliers, it would seem, could appear even in the benighted state of North Carolina. With a great deal of conscious effort, Benjamin Robinson, in *Dolores: a Tale of Disappointment and Distress* (1868), explains that his hero, Roland Vernon, is a North Carolinian but he is also a "gentleman" and a "cavalier" for he "came from Norman stock."

This Confederate—"the brave descendant of a brave race"—fights
with "the sword that had gleamed so brightly at Preston Pans--the
sword of Louis Vernon--the sword handed down from generation to
generation." Thus the cavalier came to the "backwoods," but he
did so at some cost. Authors who forced these Confederates into
a pre-set cavalier mold had to purge them of regional ties. They
are aristocrats and cavaliers, to be sure, but they are displaced
Virginians more than they are Mississippians or Tennesseans.

Why did these writers struggle so valiantly to elevate
their Confederates to cavalier status? They seem to be saying,
in effect, that only the magic link with gentility can make them
true participants in the Southern war. With their aid, the
cavalier cropped up in new regions, but he lost none of his
genteel features. Their efforts were one part of a larger move
to define the Southern cause in terms wholly aristocratic.

As it emerged from the pens of some Southerners, the Civil
War took the shape of a mighty struggle between two classes:
the well-born and everybody else. Confederates, of course, were
the well-born. It was a slaveholders' war, defined so narrowly
that it could have no meaning for lesser characters. In opening
scenes of William Yopp's A Dual Role, for example, a Tennessee
planter who gives "to the Confederate Cause all the assistance
that wealth and influence could give" is murdered by a band of
"envious and jealous" poor whites. They are Tennesseans, but war
means to them only an opportunity, long awaited, to strike down their prosperous neighbors. Yopp's characters choose sides in the war according to their means: planters (heroes) become Confederates; poor whites (villains) become Unionists, or "Tories." Yopp's image of the cavalier was a rigid ideal; he could not expand it to make the cause of the South anything more than the cause of wealthy Southerners.

When a writer found meaning for the Confederate war only in its image of aristocracy, he could cast lower-class Southerners in very limited roles. They made excellent villains. As Yopp's example illustrates, it was easy to picture them as the evil counterpart to cavalier heroes. Or they could play comic parts—adding spice to dull passages and enhancing, by way of contrast, the image of cavalier characters. In Rumbough's From Dust to Ashes, a Confederate Irishman from East Tennessee explains to the hero how he got involved in this war. Staying home posed no problem at first: "Sometimes the Yankees would overrun us, thin we were all Union; thin the Confederates would swarm upon us, in that avint we were all Confederates . . . ." But "worse was to come": his wife "gits converted" and "up she goes and enlists in the Baptist Church, for the war, I suppose." When others of his family began to spend all spare moments arguing fine points of theology, he first resorted to
the whiskey hid in the straw . . . . But it was
no use; the battle over the infants, the water howly
and unholy, got worse and more of it, till me ould
friend, Dennis McKelsey, came along going to the war,
and mounting my horse, I jined him for Master Bob
and the army.36

The significance of the Southern struggle—an affair of honor, in
the author's view—completely escapes this Confederate Irishman.
He could fight in the war, but only a cavalier could give that
war meaning.

While this strain of Southern thought moved toward
aristocracy as ideal, another strain moved differently, in a
direction mildly democratic. Impetus for this trend came partly,
perchance, from a certain veneration shown to any and all Confederates.
Even the stately South Carolinian Mary Boykin Chesnut once gushed
in her diary that "at the bottom of our hearts we believe every
Confederate soldier to be a hero, sans peur et sans reproche."37
Partly, too, it came from conscious effort to assert that this
was not a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight": there was
room and need for all Confederates in a common cause. And those
who long had questioned the cavalier as an adequate Southern
symbol were joined by others who questioned his adequacy in light
of wartime pressures.

How could these thoughts find expression in literature? The
path was difficult, particularly since form prescribed that heroes
of romances be aristocrats. Several authors found, as one solution,
that they could introduce into their stories subsidiary characters of a lower class and mold them into good and useful Confederates. Mingling among Page's aristocratic Virginians in *Red Rock* (1899) is one such character, Andy Stamper, a cheerful "little countryman" who speaks in dialect. On a horse presented by a wealthy neighbor, Stamper rides away to war, where he fights like a "game little bantam," and saves the life of the novel's hero. In Clarence Collins' *Tom and Joe* (1890) appears Caleb Knight, from North Carolina, with a face "honest and kindly, strong and determined, yet lacking the polish of the higher social and intellectual life, and his dress was not after any style that was ever seen in the drawing-room." Knight becomes a Confederate scout, "and so careful was his investigation, so sound his conclusions, that General Lee often sent the brave fellow to bring him certain news of the movements of some column of the enemy." To add to his merit, Knight acts the role of faithful watchdog, caring for his Confederate friend whose higher social status wins him a place more central in the novel.

There was but one "catch." To qualify as a good, though subordinate character, a lower-class Confederate had to accept, with no qualms, the ideal and ideas of the Southern gentleman. In Flora McDonald Williams' *Who's the Patriot?* (1886) and *The Blue Cockade* (1905), Jacob Wilder has a "boyish admiration" for
Colonel Mitchell, whose "broad acres" adjoin his father's "modest farm." Having "unconsciously absorbed the sentiments and opinions" of his planter neighbor, Jacob believes in state rights, denounces all abolitionists, and argues that Southerners must secede to protect their slave property (even though he, of course, owns no slaves). After one such discourse, Colonel Mitchell pays to Jacob the supreme Southern compliment: he remarks to his friend, Squire Miller, that "Jacob has all the instincts of a gentleman." Jacob's ideas—those of the Southern planter—win him esteem, despite his lower-class origins, and make him truly part of the Southern Confederacy.

A similar character is Mark Marlin in Charles W. Russell's Roebuck (1866). Son of an illiterate cooper, Marlin has one ambition in life (the proper one, of course): to become a gentleman. Keeping ever before him the example of his planter neighbor, "Colonel Fred" Fairfax, Marlin studies, aims for "one of those professions which people look up to as carrying the idea of social rank," and believes, hopefully, that "a poor man, and the son of a poor man, in a free country, can rise to a gentleman's place if he behaves like a gentleman." When "patriotic war" breaks out he enters the ranks to "fight his way up to a commission, as that would entitle him to the position of a gentleman . . . ."

A brave soldier, Marlin earns his commission. Whether or not
he thus becomes a gentleman is left unclear. At any rate, he demonstrates, through his conduct, that this is as surely his war as it is that of Southern aristocrats.\footnote{11}

Hints of this Southern effort to broaden the Confederate ideal show up, too, in other ways. Some few Southerners, looking boldly upon the cavalier, saw his blemishes as well as his virtues. Traditional weaknesses were very much a part of his myth. His pride could become vanity or snobbery; his habits could grow lazy or "dissolute"; his dash, his "red-hot Southern martial spirit," could preclude that "patience and persistence" needed to win the war.\footnote{12} To qualify as heroic, in the minds of some Southern authors, cavaliers first had to "prove themselves," overcome their defects, and win positions of leadership in the Southern cause on their own merits--regardless of family or wealth.

Augusta Jane Evans seemed to have real difficulty drawing a proper Confederate hero for *Macaria* (1864). Not herself a part of the aristocracy (until she married "Colonel" Lorenzo Wilson in 1868 and acquired a suitable Southern estate), she found that elite strangely attractive and yet repelling. Consequently, her hero, Russell Aubrey, illustrates neither "aristocracy" nor "democracy"; he is an inconclusive blend of both. In one sense, Aubrey is the great American success story (Augusta Evans and
Horatio Alger had much in common! His ambition and resolve, his pride, honesty, and hard work enable Aubrey to rise from obscure poverty and disgrace to community esteem. But Miss Evans injects another, rather typically Southern, note into the story: Aubrey has some claim to gentility. His mother was an aristocrat, disinherited when she married a "poor, but honest" man. And as the Southern gentry begin to recognize Aubrey, the "talented young lawyer," they recall that "after all, Mrs. Aubrey belonged to one of the wealthiest and first families in the state." Rather than impose upon Aubrey the entire task of creating his social status, Miss Evans thoughtfully provides him with an ancestral key to that exclusive Southern circle. It is a "rags to riches" story of one who is (more or less) an aristocrat all along. Aubrey is different, though, from other aristocrats Miss Evans would consider more typical: Mr. Huntington is "proud, obstinate, and thoroughly selfish"; Hugh Seymour, a man of "selfish nature," spends his days in "a giddy round of pleasure and dissipation." Aubrey's character, molded amid harsh poverty, guards him against these snares that would trap the typical rich. Through these rather torturous means, Augusta Evans manages to create, in Russell Aubrey, a "good" aristocrat, one worthy to become her ideal Confederate soldier.
Russell's Roebuck, nominally a novel extolling the aristocracy of Virginia as it met defeat in civil war, contains several of these "democratic" ingredients—besides the good, lower-class Confederate (described above). Hugh Fitzhugh, young Virginia gentleman, is known, before the war, for his "thriftless indolence." Neglecting his plantation, Fitzhugh "amused himself with books or hunting or fishing, or any idle sport that fell in his way." War, however, "roused his latent energy"; as Confederate he proves a hero—saved from "ignoble sloth." A minor aristocratic character, Baxter, finds similar redemption on the field of battle. "Son of a gentleman of high character," Baxter "led an idle, reckless, dissolute life, studying the chemistry of juleps in barrooms, the mystery of horse-flesh at races, or natural history at faro-banks . . . ." But when Baxter as Confederate soldier saves the fair heroine from the Yankee villain, he earns a place of merit in the book. Only when war spurs these aristocrats to reform themselves, to remedy their traditional flaws, can they truly rank as heroes of the Southern cause.

S. J. Shields, in A Chevalier of Dixie (1907), carries this idea one step further. Like the aristocrats of Roebuck, Maxwell Daventry wears an air of "polished indolence"; he is "a sort of a dreamy, lazy Chevalier Bayard." War ends this; it "quickened the sluggish blood in his veins, finally transforming him into
a hero." But war provides, for Daventry, more than just an
opportunity to live up to his blue-blood "pedigree that reached
back to the Jacobites of the English Border": it gives him his
first real chance to overcome his background of aristocracy. He
can prove his worth alone, unaided by name or wealth or family
influence. Daventry spurns efforts of his father ("who was a
personal friend of the President of the Confederate Government,
and had influential connections with the War Department") to
secure him a commission and a position on "the staff of one of
the brigadier-generals." When his father disinherits him because
he decides to marry a girl of lesser status, Daventry's friend
counsels him:

I believe it will be an advantage to you. You have
been afflicted with the paralysis of wealth, and want
of incentive has been your bane. Now the one is gone,
and you have the other. In these troubled times the
road of honor is an open one. There is no need to rest
under the shadow of a great genealogical tree, but to
make our own names. We will to the wars, my boy, and
win our spurs.

Soon after Daventry enlists in the ranks, he is "elected to a
lieutenancy in his company." In battle, at Murfreesboro, he

behaved with such gallantry that he was recommended
for promotion, which shortly followed, and he was
assigned to duty on the staff of his brigadier-general.
Thus he won, at the point of his sword, a distinction
his father hoped to gain for him through other
influences."
Maxwell Daventry, Southern aristocrat who enlists originally as a private soldier and wins a commission on the field of battle is far from being unique. In fact, he is typical of most well-born characters in most Southern novels of the war. Fictional aristocrats spend a great deal of time, early in 1861, refusing to accept commissions then offered them. In Joseph Eggleston's Tuckahoe, for example, Robert Cary turns down the opportunity to become an adjutant with this touching little speech: "I thank you most heartily, ... but I want to remain in the ranks unless I can, after I learn to be a soldier, earn a commission." And Baillie Pegram, in George Eggleston's Master of Warlock, knowing that he "can have a captain's commission for the asking," decides to "volunteer in the ranks." He feels that "there are altogether too many men in like predicament—too many men whose position and influence entitle them to expect commissions while, like me, they know nothing whatever of the military art. ... If I am ever fit to command," he adds, "it will be time enough then for me to ask for a commission." Obviously this was a sensitive point, else authors would hardly have made it an issue. Confederates complained that those of high social rank gained often a military rank that was undeserved. Mary Chesnut noted in her diary in 1861:
Johnny [Her nephew] has gone as a private in Gregg's regiment. He could not stand it at home any longer. Mr. Chesnut was willing for him to go, because those sandhill men said: "This is a rich man's war," and that the rich men could be officers and have an easy time, and the poor ones be privates. So he said: "Let the gentlemen set the example; let them go in the ranks." So John Chesnut is a gentleman private. He took his servant with him, all the same.48

Aristocrats in literature make the same noble gesture, refusing to take undue advantage of their social position. They all get promoted, of course, for gallantry in battle, but at least they have proved their merit.49

War, in many ways, undermined the cavalier. Values shifted. The man thought worthy was the man who could win; his pedigree seemed less important than before. In November 1861, Mary Chesnut commented rather caustically of Robert E. Lee: "Faux chevalier, booted and bridled and gallant rode he, but so far his bonnie face has only brought us ill luck."50 A cavalier who failed to win battles seemed rather useless and quite dispensable. An occasional author of the Confederate war caught this change in values. In a passage in Evelyn Byrd, George Eggleston voices the idea through one character:

... we are living in new times, under different conditions from those that existed before the war. It used to be said that in Texas it was taking an unfair advantage of any man to inquire into his life before his migration to that State. If he had conducted himself well since his arrival there, he was entitled to all his reserves with regard to his previous course of life in some other part of the country. Now a like
sentiment has grown strong in the South since this war broke out. I don't mean to suggest that we have lowered our standards of honourable conduct in the least, for we have not done so. But we have revised our judgments as to what constitutes worth. The old class distinctions of birth and heritage have given place to new tests of present conduct. There are companies by the score in this army whose officers, elected by their men, were before the war persons of much lower social position than that of a majority of their own men. In any peacetime organization these officers could never have hoped for election to office of any kind; but they are fighters and men of capacity; they know how to do the work of war well, and, under our new and sounder standards of fitness, the men in the ranks have put aside old social distinctions and elected to command them the men fittest to command. The same principle prevails higher up. One distinguished major-general in the Confederate service was a nobody before the war; another was far worse; he was a negro trader who before the war would not have been admitted, even as a merely tolerated guest, into the houses of the gentlemen who are to-day glad to serve as officers and enlisted men under his command. Still another was an ignorant Irish labourer who did work for days' wages in the employ of some of the men to whom he now gives orders, and from whom he expects and receives willing obedience. I tell you, Kilgariff, a revolution has been wrought in this Southern land of ours, and the results of that revolution will permanently ensue, whatever the military or political outcome of the war may be. 51

Should the cavalier fail to meet these "new tests of present conduct," a few daring Southerners stood ready to reject him as an ideal. Among them was the famous author from Middle Georgia, Joel Chandler Harris. In "The Kidnapping of President Lincoln" (1900), Harris sends on an expedition to abduct the Union President two Southerners of different mold. Young Francis Bethune,
aristocrat, has found himself suddenly free for this adventure (and relieved of his captain's commission) after he, "at cross purposes with no less a person than his Colonel, ... immediately proceeded to inform that officer what he thought of him in general and in particular." Bethune selects as companion his grandfather's overseer, Mr. Billy Sanders, "a very commonplace-looking man at best." His "bland and innocuous smile" gives him the look of a "helpless countryman."

But in fact, Mr. Sanders was a man of far different mould and mettle. He was old enough to be a good judge of human nature, and the fact that he was born and bred in the country, and had little or no book education, had not interfered a particle with the growth and development of those elemental qualities which are the basis and not the result of book education.

Mr. Sanders' "shrewd common sense" comes to light as they draw their plans:

Every suggestion he made was marked by that strange intuition which some men possess in moments of great excitement or peril, and which is the everyday equipment of a few minds. On a large and important field of action and endeavor it is called genius; in ordinary affairs it goes by the name of shrewdness, or common sense, or foresight.

In misadventures encountered on their trip to Washington, Mr. Sanders proves more able than young Bethune. His "all but infallible" judgment of men, his sound advice and ready wit lead them safely through snares where Bethune alone would have faltered. Billy Sanders, the capable man, is the real hero of Harris's story.
Unlike Joel Chandler Harris, most Southern authors found the cavalier too tantalizing to reject. But as they spread his symbol across the Confederate South and drew him more in harmony with democratic ideas, they changed, even blurred his identity. Consequently, a Confederate hero could be recognized more readily by his character, ideals, and actions than by his name or wealth or status. Whether he is a "backwoodsman" carefully drawn as aristocratic or an aristocrat carefully drawn as democratic, he thinks and acts in a characteristic way—the "cavalier" way. Together these Confederate heroes are "Southern chivalry"—the "flower of Southern manhood" pitted against an ignominious foe.

The cavalier's war days are full: time not spent in thinking noble thoughts he devotes to doing noble deeds. He rationalizes the Confederates' war and his participation in that war on the high plane of idealism. His honor seems at stake, and he holds that honor far more sacred than his life. To his state he owes allegiance and for his state he fights—just as a knight of old, he thinks, would defend to the death his king. His aims in war? Liberty, independence, "Southern rights," and freedom from the hated Yankee. As Augusta Evans said, these were "chivalric, high-souled, heroic men, who had never learned that Americans could live and not be free." Knowing that "tame submission to oppression and wrong is cowardice," the cavalier (in Cameron Hall) feels it
"more right and manly to fail in the defense of our rights, than quietly and tamely to surrender them."\textsuperscript{56} He protects his home, his native soil, from the "legions of the North," from the infamous army of the "invader."\textsuperscript{57} Preferably, like Maxwell Daventry in \textit{A Chevalier of Dixie}, he has a "lady-love," to whom he can "devote... [his] sword."\textsuperscript{58} In lieu of "lady-love," a mother image would suffice. Dick Throckmorton, in \textit{Flower de Hundred}, departs for war with "a look of exaltation on his face" after his great-grandmother has "given him her benediction" and has "girded on his sword that must never be drawn unworthily of her."\textsuperscript{59}

In battle he is ever a gentleman, courageous and daring yet courteous, always generous to a fallen foe. The war he envisions is a duel wrought large—honorable combat bound by rigid rules. He who would be a worthy knight can never stray from the high conduct demanded by the chivalric code. Lee, the patrician, symbol of all that was good in Virginia's aristocracy, embodied this gentleman ideal. He was the stately, dignified leader whose words and acts lifted him so naturally onto a Southern pedestal.

The lofty image looked splendid; no doubt it was inspiring. But in the sort of war that was the Civil War it brought problems in its train. The gentleman's code placed limits on the Southern cavalier; it circumscribed his action. Forbidden to him were
questionable means to achieve a worthy goal. Often the fictional cavalier had to be rescued from difficult situations by those less bound by his high standards. Robert Cary, cavalier hero of Joseph Eggleston's Tuckahoe, escapes death at the hands of the Yankee villain less by his own efforts than by those of his faithful slave Niah. The slave pretends to like Yankees, mingles among them to learn their plans, and then leads Cary, his master, to freedom. In George Eggleston's The Master of Warlock, the captured Virginia cavalier Baillie Pegram remains inert in a Federal hospital until others devise a plan for his escape. The heroine, Agatha Ronald, and the loyal, shrewd slave, Sam, employ various disguises, bribery, and even a few well-directed threats as they extricate Pegram, their hero. Cary and Pegram, the cavaliers, act very noble throughout, but those able to employ more devious means (slaves and women) can act somewhat more effectively.

When Southerners agreed they were cavaliers and superior to base-born Yankees, they imposed on themselves an obligation: always to act better than Yankees. As Mary Chesnut wrote,

> The high and disinterested conduct our enemies seem to expect of us is involuntary and unconscious praise. They pay us the compliment to look for from us—and execrate us for the want of it—a degree of virtue they were never able to practice themselves.

In war, this obligation proved difficult to perform and still more
difficult, at times, to countenance. In his diary in the summer of 1863, John B. Jones first wrote confidently that because of the Southern "public demand of retaliation for the cruelties and destruction of private property perpetrated by the enemy," Lee's troops, in their Northern invasion, would "probably apply the torch to the towns and cities of the Yankees, destroying their crops, farming utensils, etc., as the invaders have done in Virginia and elsewhere." He felt, though, that "our men are incapable of retaliating, to the full extent ...." But when Lee's broken army retreated once more to the South, Jones could feel some pride in Lee's firm attitude and his orders (which Jones copied in full in his diary) against "unnecessary or wanton injury to private property":

It must be remembered [counseled Lee] that we make war only upon armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemy, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, and without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.63

Conflicting emotions about Lee's policy, similar to those of Jones, appear occasionally in literature of the war. In Flora McDonald Williams' The Blue Cockade, Senator Rhett heartily endorses plans for invading the North, but adds, "General Lee scarcely dares enough. He is too high-toned for the stuff he has
to deal with." His friend, Mr. Barksdale, agrees: "It certainly won't do to handle these fellows with gloved hands any longer, ... the present policy should be a strict application of \textit{lex talionis} ... ." Two Confederate soldiers in this book also talk of the coming invasion. "I am afraid, though," Charlie says, "that Lee will not conduct the war on the right principle ... ; we should carry the black flag, and fight the enemy with his own weapons." John hastily injects: "Oh, no, General Lee won't let us do anything not strictly in accordance with the most approved principles of civilized warfare, ... and I don't know but what he is right." Charlie answers "bitterly": "If 'Mas' Bob' would spend a few months in Camp Chase he would modify some of his scruples, I think."\textsuperscript{61} The question remains unanswered: was it better to act like gentlemen, and lose, or to descend to the Yankees' level, and perhaps win?

Somehow the cavalier ideal, inspiring as it was, acquired a tone too noble, too far above the plane of ordinary humanity. At that point it began to inspire parody as well as the usual praise. A few months after Appomattox a Georgia Confederate, Kittrell J. Warren, published a humorous tale, the \textit{Life and Public Services of an Army Straggler} (1865).

\begin{quote}
I do wish I could introduce my hero in a fashionable manner /Warren begins/ --Yea, verily, I would like to present him sumptuously appareled, reclining gracefully
upon a magnificent ottoman,—just resting from the delicious employment of reading (that trans-anthropean specimen of splurgery) Macaria. I would have him a grand looking character. Intellect should beam from his lustrous eye, and nobleness peep forth from every lineament of his features. Nature should be in a glorious good humor, smiling graciously upon his first appearance.

Warren continues, "in a word, fair reader, my hero should come before you, in a style calculated to produce a favorable impression at first sight, if I could exercise my own option in the matter. But Truth forbids the pursuance of this course." Warren then describes his hero, as he "struts forward on his career of glory" as a Confederate deserter: "With a rather well favored, though remarkably black face, and a stout, robust frame, wrapped in comfortable looking jeans wallowed the immortal William Fishback." As a child, Fishback enjoyed "a long and beautifying spell of the mange," which added greatly to his "stature and comeliness." He "can point proudly to his ancestry and exclaim with a swelling soul:

'My ancient and ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.'"65

Fishback wanders in and out of the army at will, taking special care, when in uniform, to avoid all work, hardship, and danger. This prankster, superb liar, and consummate rascal, who is in all ways opposite to the cavalier, appears especially comic since
Warren draws him in ways that mimic the Confederate cavalier. He makes the cavalier seem pompous and absurd.

A more dangerous reaction than parody was the feeling of disillusion that crept over the Confederacy. Southerners saw many in their midst fail to measure up to their cavalier ideal. How could Confederates desert, abandon the noble cause? On hearing that her brother's army assignment included "hunting up deserters," Kate Stone exclaimed, indignantly, in her diary:

"The idea of men deserting from the Southern Army!" John S. Wise was part of a company ordered, in November 1864, to break up bands of Confederate deserters in southwest Virginia who there "held sway, defied the law, invited other runaways to join them, and resisted all control of Confederate authority." The situation puzzled and saddened this young and enthusiastic Confederate:

When this state of affairs, extending over a wide stretch of country, became known to me in the autumn of 1864, it caused my first misgivings concerning our ultimate success; it was so widespread, and so strangely in contrast with the loyalty of the mountaineers in the Revolution, when Washington proclaimed that to them he looked as his last reliance in extremity.57

Others thought that the Southern war as a cavaliers' war ended earlier, when the ranks of volunteers grew thin and conscription became a reality. Sam Watkins remembered that "the glory of the war, the glory of the South, the glory and the pride of our
volunteers had no charms for the conscript." Southern fighting, he said,

might as well have ended then and there. The boys were "hacked," maimed, whipped. They were shorn of the locks of their glory. They had but one ambition now, and that was to get out of the army in some way or other. They wanted to join the cavalry or artillery or home guards or pioneer corps or to be "yaller dogs" or staff officers, or anything.68

Transformation into a conscript violated the feeling of personal commitment treasured by the volunteer and the mythical cavalier. When he no longer had a choice, his patriotism grew dim.

Several renegade types—as villains, of course—made their way into Southern literature of the war. In George Eggleston's Evelyn Byrd appears the incompetent Captain Harback, whose "personal and political influence" have secured him a commission as army engineer, though he is ignorant even of basic principles of engineering. When a powder magazine he has constructed collapses, killing one man, the Confederate hero vows to press charges: "If I can do anything to purge the service of such incaptables—men whose fathers' or friends' influence has secured commissions for them to assume duties which they are utterly incapable of discharging properly or even with tolerable safety to the lives of other men—it will be a greatly good achievement."69 A more common villain was the "carpet knight," the cowardly soldier who secured a soft and safe position far from the battlefront. Adorned with
"gold lace and shiny brass buttons," the ignoble "dandy" sought only to become a "drawing-room hero." Such a man is Captain John Barton, in *Tom and Joe*, who signs mournfully that "we soldiers have a hard time indeed, and our country ought to be very grateful. Only the other day, with all that snow on the ground," Barton complains, he had to ride from Richmond to Petersburg "in an open top-buggy" to deliver a message to General Lee. Barton and those like him are despised as "skulkers" by the Confederate heroes who are "in the trenches fighting and starving."70

To those swept up by the cavalier myth, defection from that noble ideal signaled partial or complete failure of the Southern cause. And since Southerners were only human (despite some efforts to assert otherwise), they were not all brave and dedicated, willing or even able to act like gentlemen on a glorious field of honor. Thus the Confederacy seemed to falter from within, for reasons quite apart from the enemy in blue. When nobility somehow appeared to wane, the "glorious cause" drew near its close. Who then were Southern heroes? Those few who stood firm amid desertion on all sides, fighting for General Lee and their lost hopes and ideals until Appomattox and the bitter end. In *Evelyn Byrd*, George Eggleston summed up this thought:

> It is natural enough that men should be brave when the lure of hope and the confident expectation of victory beckon them to the battle front, but only
men of most heroic mould may be expected to fight
with still greater desperation after all doors of hope
are closed to them.

From that hour when Grant moved from the Wilderness
to Spotsylvania till the end came, nearly a year
later, these men of the South did, and dared, and endured
for love of honour alone, with no hope to inspire them,
no remotest chance of ultimate success as the reward
of their valour. Theirs was a pure heroism, untouched,
untainted, unalloyed.71
NOTES ON CHAPTER III


2 In May 1862, Mary Chesnut commented in her diary: "Read Beverly Tucker's 'Partisan.' Just such a rosewater revolution he imagines as we fancied we were to have, and now the reality is hideous agony." Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, Ben Ames Williams, ed. (Boston, 1961), 221.


5 George Cary Eggleston, A Rebel's Recollections, David Donald, ed. (Bloomington, Ind., 1959), 69, 70, 85.

6 Sally Rochester Ford describes Charley, her Confederate hero, as he leaves for war expecting "fame, honor, and enjoyment. All the wild and brilliant excitement of a soldier's life was before him, and his young heart bounded with rapturous exultation as in imagination he dashed on through victorious conflict towards the goal of his hopes. Alas! poor, inexperienced boy! He was revelling amid the rainbow tints of fancy. He saw not the labored march, the tentless bivouac, the gore of the battle-field, the loathsome prison-house." Sally Rochester Ford, Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men (New York, 1866), 21.

7 In June 1862, Mary Chesnut quotes the comments of Wade Hampton: "If we mean to play at war as we play a game of chess, West Point tactics prevailing, we are sure to lose the game. They have every advantage. They can lose pawns to the end of time, and never feel it. We will be throwing away all that we had hoped so much from, Southern, hot-headed, reckless gallantry. The spirit of adventure. The readiness to lead forlorn hopes!" Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 255.

8 Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War (New York, 1879), 72.
Samuel R. Watkins, 1861 vs. 1882: "Co. Aytch," Maury Grays, First Tennessee Regiment; or, a Side Show of the Big Show (Nashville, 1882), 14, 13, 33. See also Shewst, Diary from Dixie, 235; Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, II, 88.


Cooke, Wearing of the Gray, 160-161, 163. See also Ford, Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men, 102.


For example, see Cooke, Hilt to Hilt; or, Days and Nights on the Banks of the Shenandoah in the Autumn of 1864; From the MSS. of Colonel Surry of Eagle's Nest (New York, 1871), 45.

In Wearing of the Gray, Cooke wrote: "To the cavalry-man belongs the fresh life of the forest—the wandering existence which brings back the days of old romance. Do you wish to form some conception of the life of that model cavalry-man and gentleman, Don Quixote? To do so, you have only to join the cavalry. Like the Don, your cavalry-man goes through the land in search of adventures, and finds many. He penetrates retired localities—odd, unknown nooks—meeting with curious characters and out-of-the-way experiences, which would make the fortune of a romance writer." Cooke, Wearing of the Gray, 162.

Cooke, Hilt to Hilt, 9, 13-14.

Ibid., 21, 22, 24, 33, 32.

Ibid., 34-37. Later in the story, Landon, having captured his bitter personal enemy, immediately paroles him and challenges him to a duel. This, of course, indicates that Landon is a true gentleman. But the only alternative to a duel that Landon gives the villain is to be shot immediately, for Landon has no mercy for "house-burners," and this dreadful Yankee had burned a Southern home. Ibid., 126-130, 165-167.
18Ibid., 226.

19Multitudes of these magnificent, romantic Confederates can be found in these novels: Jane Tandy Hardin Cross, Duncan Adair; or, Captured in Escaping: a Story of One of Morgan's Men (Macon, Ga., 1864); Constance Cary (Mrs. Burton N.) Harrison, Flower de Hundred: the Story of a Virginia Plantation (New York, 1899); James Dabney McCabe, Jr., The Aid-de-Camp; a Romance of the War (Richmond, 1863); Mary Tucker Magill, Women; or, Chronicles of the Late War (Baltimore, 1871); William Henry Peck, The McDonalds; or, the Ashes of Southern Homes: a Tale of Sherman's March (New York, 1867); Marian Calhoun Legare Reeves, Randolph Honor (New York, 1868); Benjamin Robinson, Dolores: a Tale of Disappointment and Distress (New York, 1866); George P. C. Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes: a Romance of the Confederacy (Little Rock, 1895); S. J. Shields, A Chevalier of Dixie (New York, 1907); Flora McDonald Williams, The Blue Cockade: a Story of the Confederacy (New York, 1905) and Who's the Patriot? a Story of the Southern Confederacy (Louisville, 1886); Augusta Jane Evans (Wilson), Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice (New York, 1866).

20Mary Ann Cruse, Cameron Hall: a Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1867), 79, 111.


22For example, see Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 2-9.


25For example, see ibid., 362-365.

26Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 419; Reeves, Randolph Honor, 224. See also Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 54, 126.

27Reeves, Randolph Honor, 123, 140-141.

28Capers Dickson, John Ashton: a Story of the War Between the States (Atlanta, 1896), 5.
29William Isaac Yopp, A Dual Role: A Romance of the Civil War (Dallas, 1902), 7-8.

30Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes, 19-20.

31Nicholas Jackson Floyd, Thorns in the Flesh: A Romance of the War and Ku-Klux Periods; A Voice of Vindication From the South in Answer to "A Fool's Errand" and Other Slanders (New York, 1881), 25.

32Fannie Eoline Selph, Texas; or, the Broken Link in the Chain of Family Honors: A Romance of the Civil War (West Nashville, 1905), 122-125. The ancestry and precious possessions of S. J. Shields' Daventry of Mississippi are equally impressive. Shields, A Chevalier of Dixie, 10-12, 16-17.

33Robinson, Dolores, 34, 59.

34Yopp, A Dual Role, 10-21, 41-49.

35See, for example, G. C. Eggleston, Evelyn Byrd (Boston, 1904), 179-182; Magill, Women, 254; Peck, McDonalds, 18.


36Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes, 58-59, 16-17.

37Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 96.


39Clarence B. Collins, Tom and Joe; Two Farmer Boys in War and Peace and Love: A Louisiana Memory (Richmond, 1890), 59, 87.

40Williams, Who's the Patriot?, 37; Blue Cockade, 13, 15.

41Charles Wells Russell, Roebeck; A Novel (Baltimore, 1866),

42For example, see comments of Mary Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 50, 56, 84, 102, 113, 119.
43 Evans, Macaria, 9, 250, 25, 43, 184.

44 Russell, Roebuck, 109, 84, 251-259, 273-275.

45 Shields, A Chevalier of Dixie, 11, 12, 17, 16, 89, 95, 112.

46 Joseph William Eggleston, Tuckahoe: an Old-Fashioned Story of an Old-Fashioned People (New York, 1903), 162-163.


48 Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 54. See also Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, II, 286.

49 After his "heroic stand" at First Manassas, Private Cary in Tuckahoe becomes, overnight, Major Cary. J. Eggleston, Tuckahoe, 172-175. Other gentlemen who enlist in the ranks and get promoted for their gallantry are found in McCabe, Aid-de-Camp, 75; Cruse, Cameron Hall, 111, 192; Harrison, The Carlyles: a Story of the Fall of the Confederacy (New York, 1905), 17-18, 61; Dickson, John Ashton, 30-31; Floyd, Thorns in the Flesh, 234; Collins, Tom and Joe, 78; 107; G. C. Eggleston, Dorothy South, 386-389.

50 Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 158.

51 G. C. Eggleston, Evelyn Byrd, 66-68.

52 Joel Chandler Harris, "The Kidnapping of President Lincoln," On the Wing of Occasions; Being the Authorized Version of Certain Curious Episodes of the Late Civil War, Including the Hitherto Suppressed Narrative of the Kidnapping of President Lincoln (New York, 1900), 124, 138-139, 173.

53 As example, see Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 187.

54 See, for example, Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 218; Evans, Macaria, 111-112.

55 Ibid., 348.

56 Cruse, Cameron Hall, 78.
Collins, Tom and Joe, 99; Peck, McDonalds, 8.

Shields, A Chevalier of Dixie, 95.

Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 200. See also J. Eggleston, Tuckahoe, 153; Cruse, Cameron Hall, 267-268.


G. C. Eggleston, Master of Warlock, 290ff. Another slave whose shrewdness enables his master to escape is Uncle Ephraim in Mary Noailles Murfree, The Storm Centre; a Novel (New York, 1905).

Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 138.

Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, I, 342, 353, 372-373.

Williams, Blue Cockade, 147, 231; Williams, Who's the Patriot?, 175. See also McCabe, The Guerrillas: an Original Domestic Drama, in Three Acts (Richmond, 1863), 18-19.


Wise, The End of an Era, 385.


G. C. Eggleston, Evelyn Byrd, 253-257.

Collins, Tom and Joe, 103-105, 118.

G. C. Eggleston, Evelyn Byrd, 94-95. See also Collins, Tom and Joe, 88; Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes, 135-136; Williams, Blue Cockade, 360-361; Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 232-233; 282-287; Harrison, Carlyles, 17-18.
CHAPTER IV

THE HOME FRONT OF THE CONFEDERACY

While real Southern heroes—the "flower of Southern manhood"—were at the battlefront, desperately striving to defend their honor and their infant Confederacy, other Southerners remained behind. They were the women and children, of course, the old men and men not so old who, for myriad reasons, spent their war years apart from the Confederate army. Actions of those at home, like those on the field of battle, were measured in reference to an ideal of nobility. Those on the home front could be heroic as they preserved and personified the values of Southern cavalier society.

The elderly cavalier, one too old to fight, stands prominent on the scene of Southern myth. The venerable patriarch is a grand and imposing figure—at least until vicissitudes of wartime close in. It is he, more than any other character, who embodies the life and the spirit of the Southern "race of gentlemen." The Confederacy, by all rights, should be his; its aims should be his aims. But can he cope with that war, give it tone and direction? Is he prepared? And is he capable? Has his character, molded in prewar times, equipped him to survive and to prevail or
has it destined him to defeat—inevitably? He has lived his peacetime life as a gentleman and a planter, a leader in his little social world. As lord of the manor, the old cavalier proudly rules his domain as a worthy son of noble sires. In her diary, Mary Chesnut speaks of her father-in-law, Colonel James Chesnut, an "old man of ninety years [who] was born when it was not the fashion for a gentleman to be a saint, and being lord of all he surveyed for so many years, he lived irresponsibly in the center of his huge domain." Old Colonel Chesnut, she says,

is kind, and amiable when not crossed, given to hospitality on a grand scale, jovial, genial, friendly, courtly in his politeness. But he is as absolute a tyrant as the Czar of Russia, the Khan of Tartary, or the Sultan of Turkey. ¹

But the bluster, the imperious tone, sometimes is but the outward show of a nature in reality far different. In Flower de Hundred (1890), Constance Harrison describes an old Virginia gentleman, Tom Hazleton, "fierce in politics, unsparing in the denunciation of opponents who chanced to differ with him, and fancying himself a domestic tyrant, [who] was, with his wife, under the thumb of old Vashti, a mulatto woman who acted as deputy to Mrs. Hazleton."²

The old cavalier's opinions have long since become his principles—sacred, unchanging, and inviolable. In Surry of Eagle's-Nest (1866), John Esten Cooke describes Colonel Beverley,
a "stern old doctrinaire" with "passions so fiery, invective so
withering, and a combativeness so fierce and implacable." Since
1832, when Colonel Beverley endorsed the cause of South Carolina
against President Jackson, "passionately espoused the views of
Mr. Calhoun, and proved himself a fire-brand of agitation and
revolution," he has urged Southerners to resist incursions of
"presumptuous and greedy" Yankees. In 1861 he speaks the same
"truths" in a tone undiminished by time:

But the South was ready to meet them [Yankees]—she
would resist with the bayonet! She might be overwhelmed
by numbers, but she would fight to the last. With the
denial of the doctrine of State-rights everything went;
old John C. Calhoun saw the working of the venom of
Federalism and warned the North of the consequences;
but they scoffed at him. War was now at hand, and
the only hope for the country was in the triumph of
the South. If she failed, all was over; mobocracy
would rule, and all go to ruin. Against this the South
was the only breakwater. She must spread the old
State-rights banner to the winds—meet the enemy
breast to breast—and if she fell, let her fall with
the old State-rights flag around her—glorious even
in her death!

Surrounded by family relics and steeped in stories of his
glorious ancestors, the old cavalier is guided, even bound, by
traditions from ages past. In *The Victory* (1906), Molly Seawell
describes Colonel Tremaine, who proudly "claimed to be the last
gentleman in Virginia who wore a ruffled shirt":

He adhered rigidly to the fashions of forty years
before, when he had been in the zenith of his beauty. . . .
Colonel Tremaine . . . held tenaciously to a high
collar with a black silk stock, and his shirt front was a delicate mass of thread cambric ruffles, hemstitched by Mrs. Tremaine's own hands. His manners were as affected as his dress and he was given to genuflexions, gyrations, and courtly wavings of his hands in addressing persons from Mrs. Tremaine down to the smallest black child on the estate. But under his air of an elderly Lovelace lay sense, courage, honor, and the tenderest heart in the world.\(^4\)

The old gentleman in fiction holds his property as a sacred trust to be preserved in its time-worn ways and passed on to succeeding generations.\(^5\) His house--often called the "mansion" or "manor" or "hall"--is the symbol of family greatness; whatever is old about his house bears an air of sanctity. The Throckmortons, for example, in Constance Harrison's *Flower de Hundred*, "who have been in every generation conservative folk, tenacious of keeping things as their fathers left them, and disinclined to idle changes, would as soon think of selling the silver chalice presented by Queen Anne to their parish church, as of attempting to improve on the quaint name of their ancient home.\(^6\) In the preface to *Tuckahoe* (1903), Joseph Eggleston talks of Virginians before the war who lived in the past they had carefully preserved:

An American people who in the middle of the Nineteenth Century opposed all ideas of progress were of necessity an old-fashioned people. They were fifty years behind their times and proud of it. Whatever of customs and ideas had the sanction of the two preceding generations was to them sacred and not to be questioned. Railroads were deplored. They were modern and democratic, hence very objectionable.\(^7\)
So noble is the character of the fictional old cavalier that he often seems to move in ethereal realms. In J. V. Ryals' *Yankee Doodle Dixie* (1890), Colonel Moore is a "high-toned, high-minded, honorable" man whose heart "would have withered at the thought of being guilty of a low, or mean act":

Beverly Moore was indeed the Virginia gentleman in the full meaning of all that those words imply. He was affectionate as a child, liberal as a prince, true as a knight, and noble as a Roman. There was no guile in his heart, no selfishness in his nature, no meanness in his soul, no suspicion in his breast. Fair, open, and candid to all the world, he expected the same of all the world towards himself.9

The cavalier thinks and talks in terms of principles and rights, disdaining ever to let expediency guide his course of action.

When war comes, the cavalier's sense of honor, his loyalty to his state, and his utter disregard of "practical" considerations (often he realizes that the South is doomed to fail), lead him to endorse the Confederate cause. He bestows parental blessings on his sons who go to war, and remains at home, looking patriarchal and symbolizing the society and the values that Confederates supposedly are trying to defend.9

He plays his noble role in many ways. As a patriot, he buys Confederate bonds early in the war; as a hero, he continues to buy them when he knows that the Cause will fail.10 No thought of self or material welfare hinders his devotion to the Confederacy. He
helps those who are poor. When he himself becomes poor, he bears privation without complaint. His wife and daughters, whose thoughts and duties before the war revolved within plantation boundaries, now find a wider sense of purpose: to aid the Confederacy they give up luxuries, they sew, they work in hospitals. One of the major duties of such fictional characters is to face Yankee raiders with a brave and august air. Although the Yankees try to humiliate them and break their composure, the cavaliers, like Richard Throckmorton in *Flower de Hundred*, confront the situation "with quiet dignity."

But some qualities of the cavalier, fine enough for peacetime purposes, could be real handicaps in time of war. One like Beverley Moore, in *Yankee Doodle Dixie*, who is "candid and open," who "dealt honestly with the world" and "never entertained a suspicion" is necessarily naive in times that are hard and brutal. In George P. Rumbough's *From Dust to Ashes* (1895), the Yankee spy, Van Horton, moves easily about in the South and discovers vital military secrets because he can rely "upon his knowledge of the generous and unsuspicious hospitality of the Southern people."

The "old-fashioned" aura of the cavalier could aid the Confederacy in some ways. The old cavalier, as symbol of worthy
elements in the Southern past, could bring the guidelines of that noble era into the turbulence of Confederate days. But his presence, too, could become a blessing fraught with deadly overtones. He could symbolize one who must demand that time stand still. In the latter role, he turns his back on "progress," on the modern world and modern thought, and withdraws, for his mind has ceased to move. Surrounded by his last bastion, the Confederacy, he is trying to stave off the inevitable. A Confederacy drawn in his image has no possible chance for success; it can do nothing else but fail. In her diary, Mary Chesnut sighed, "If our people had read less of Mr. Calhoun's works and only read the signs of the times a little more; if they had known more of what was going on around them in the world." In George Cary Eggleston's *The Master of Warlock* (1903), a wise young Virginian, Marshall Pollard, sees the futility in linking the Confederacy too closely with an image of the past. In 1861, Pollard speaks in the prophet's role:

> Whatever else happens in this war, all that is characteristic in Virginian life, all that is peculiar to it, all that lends loveliness to it, must be sacrificed on the altar of duty.
> I don't at all know how the change is to come about, or what new things are destined to replace the old; but I see clearly that the old must give way to something new. Perhaps, after all, that is best. Ours has been a beautiful life, and a peculiarly picturesque one, but
it is not in tune with this modern industrial world. It has its roots in the past, and the past cannot endure. We have thus far been able to go on living in an ideal world, but the real world has been more and more asserting itself, and even if no war were coming on to upset things, things must be upset.

Pollard continues,

Mind you, ... I am not arguing for or against the claims of modern thought. I am only pointing out the fact that it is resistless, and will have its way. All history teaches that. Even chivalry, armed as it was from head to heel, and limitlessly courageous as it was, could not hold its own against commercialism, when commercialism became dominant as the thought that represented the aspirations of men. Not even prejudice or sentiment can prevail against progress.

And he concludes,

My thesis is that no man and no people can for long stand in the way of what the Germans call the \textit{zeitgeist}—the spirit of the age. Neither, I think, can any people stand apart from that spirit and let it pass them by. That is what we Virginians have been trying to do. The time has come when we are going out to fight the \textit{zeitgeist}, and the \textit{zeitgeist} is going to conquer us.

When his friend asks, "You expect the South to fail in the war, then?" Pollard replies:

I don't know. We may fail or we may win. But in either case the old regime in the Old Dominion will be at an end when the war is over. Virginia will become a modern State, whatever else happens, and the old life in which you and I were brought up will become a thing of the past, a matter of history, the memory of which the novelists may love to recall, but the conditions of which can never again be established.
Marshall Pollard saw that war itself, quite apart from victory or defeat, would bring changes on the Southern scene. He was young; he could face such change with equanimity, if without enthusiasm. For the cavalier who could not, there were pitfalls ahead. If even war's financial reverses could not force him to think in new terms, he became a pitiful, outmoded figure. In Constance Harrison's The Carlyles (1905), a young Southerner, in April 1865, tells his elderly cousin that he plans to cultivate a small farm, since he doesn't "know what on earth to do with" his "barren acres" and "that big barrack of the Hall" on his plantation. With a quavering voice the old gentleman replies: "Good Lord! man, don't talk of small farms; it's /sic/ your duty to keep up the Hall as your father would have kept it. You'll be the only one of us Carlyles, since Harry's gone. It mustn't go out of our line." 17 Because he clings firmly to his old concepts and refuses to face new realities, this old cavalier cannot cope with the postwar world. The same attitude earlier had plagued the Confederacy. The Southern gentleman who remained "set in his ways," preoccupied with his property, his liberty, his freedom from government (hailed as state rights), would, if logically inclined, come in time to suspect and to mistrust his own Confederate government. 18 (Real Confederates, of course, were notorious for doing just that.)
And the question asked of and by the gentleman of the South was more than "Could he adjust to wartime change?" It enlarged into a more provocative query: "Should he adjust to wartime change?"

Southerners, after all, supposedly had seceded in 1861 to protect their rights and their liberties, to establish a new political frame wherein old American ideals might be safe from the predatory Yankee. Beverley Moore and Debsney Reed, old Virginia gentlemen in Ryals' *Yankee Doodle Dixie*, reluctantly decide that secession is the South's only solution because Lincoln's government rides roughshod over "Constitutionalism":

They believed in the principles of Jeffersonian Democracy /more specifically, in the ideas expressed in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, in strict construction of the Constitution, in the compact theory, and in state sovereignty/, which had been taught them by their fathers, and with them a principle was fixed and immutable. Men may change, ideas may change, circumstances may change, and policy may change; but principles never change, they are as fixed as the shining stars. Policy is one thing, principle another. Principle once settled, is settled for all time, and to violate a principle is to degrade the soul.19

The idea expressed by Augusta Evans, that Southerners now were the "only free people left upon the American continent," confers upon the Confederacy a solemn responsibility to preserve and protect that freedom. In *Macaria* (1864), she proclaims that the Confederate
flag in 1861 was "the new-born ensign of freedom--around which clustered the hopes of a people who felt that upon them, and them only, now devolved the sacred duty of proving to the world the capacity of a nation for self government." When Lincoln's government "ultimated in complete despotism" by crushing freedom of speech and press, and suspending the writ of habeas corpus, "Liberty fled from her polluted fane, and sought shelter and shrine on the banner of the Confederacy, in the dauntless, devoted hearts of its unconquerable patriots. Proudly and fondly was the divinity guarded." When "the Union" became everywhere the synonyme [sic] of political duplicity, despotism, and the utter abrogation of all that had once constituted American freedom," Southerners rightly rose and acted. Without such patriots who became Confederates, "Democratic Republican Liberty would be devoured, swept away, with the debris of other dead systems."20 Beneath all this bombast, surprisingly perhaps, were ideas many Southerners really believed. Obviously, proponents of a noble experiment defined in this way would have difficulty endorsing some actions of the Confederate government--conscription (on a national, not a state basis), impressment of private goods and property, suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Could they accept such a turn of events?
Though Davis's government pleaded that necessities of wartime demanded such actions, many felt they were unwarranted and wrong: they signalled retreat from an ideal rather than progress toward an ideal. So Southerners of this bent resisted, and they resisted mightily. Jefferson Davis became a "tyrant"; his ideas and his actions, "fatal to our liberties as a people." Outraged cries of "state rights," "civil liberties," "sacred property rights" greeted each new wartime measure. As Alexander Stephens said, "We [of the South] are the only ones who can hold on to constitutional liberty, and we must not part with it for one day." But such resistance to change, even temporary change, was devastating in its effect: it dealt sometimes a crippling blow to the war effort of Confederates.

Worse still, perhaps, it encouraged an attitude of defeatism. In March 1863, John B. Jones notes in his diary the "ominous conclusion" of an article in the Richmond Examiner:

Inveighing against the despotism of the North, the editor takes occasion likewise to denounce the measure of impressment here. He says if our Congress should follow the example of the Northern Congress, and invest our President with dictatorial powers, a reconstruction of the Union might be a practicable thing . . . .

And in October 1864, Jones observes:

The despotic order [enforcement of conscription], arresting every man in the streets, and hurrying them to "the front," without delay, and regardless of the
condition of their families—some were taken off when getting medicine for their sick wives—is still the theme of execration, even among men who have been the most ultra and uncompromising secessionists. The terror caused many to hide themselves, and doubtless turned them against the government. They say now such a despotism is quite as bad as a Stanton despotism, and there is not a toss-up between the rule of the United States and the Confederate States.22

In Thomas Watson’s *Bethany* (1904), Colonel Nat Crawley dispassionately views the political scene, late in 1862, and concludes that Southerners should make peace and return to the Union; their cause is lost already. "The fight had to come between Jefferson’s doctrines and those of Hamilton," he explains. "It has come, and the sooner it is over the better. Jefferson’s republic is as dead as Nicodemus!" Victory or defeat is immaterial; "... no matter which side gets whipped, the Hamilton doctrine of centralism, imperialism, and class-rule will be on top." When a friend protests that "if we establish our independence, the Southern Confederacy will be a Jeffersonian republic," Colonel Crawley replies:

> Not by any means ... Jeff Davis has already overstepped the Constitution of the Confederate States; and the tendency of his government toward arbitrary rule is very evident. He is putting the Constitution under foot, just as Mr. Lincoln is doing; and the advantages gained by centralism during the war will never be given up by either government.23

If amid the turmoil of war, the cavalier's cause disappears, what further need is there to fight?
The Southern novelist thus faced a dilemma. Which was more important—trying to preserve traditional ideals of the Southern gentleman, perhaps at the cost of winning the war, or trying to win the war, perhaps at some cost to those traditional ideals? The usual solution in fiction was quite simple: avoiding the issue whenever possible. Indeed, the question had to be avoided or at least evaded; admitting its existence would make the cavalier a certain loser in the Confederate war. And his defeat would come not from outside sources, outside enemies, but from himself. Should he accept the wartime changes, he would surrender vital portions of his identity—his liberty, his principles, his traditions. Should he resist the wartime changes, he would appear to oppose the Confederacy, to admit to the world that he had lost—Confederates were not fighting his war at all; somehow they had left him behind.

So Southern authors valiantly tried to pretend that no problem existed—at least no problem that could be traced to the cavalier. Their efforts are intriguing, if not always convincing. On the eve of secession their cavaliers are outspoken, opinionated, tenacious of their "principles," eager to debate public issues and public policies, expert at "splitting hairs" to sustain their political maxims. After secession, a remarkable transformation occurs. Cavaliers cease talking and arguing; most appear even to
cease thinking. No longer have they an opinion on (and a solution for) every public question; such questions rarely are mentioned. Overnight, it would seem, they lose all interest in politics; henceforth they expend all their energies just in being devoted patriots of the Confederate cause. They are carefully drawn to be the sort of characters who will never find Confederate laws oppressive. They cheerfully donate all their goods to the Confederate army; impressment would be superfluous. Of their advanced age, they try to join the army, and they bemoan their fate when they are rejected. Conscription, obviously, can bear them no threat. Thus their cavaliers never have to take a stand or to express an opinion on "revolutionary" wartime measures. If they ever argue, it is on a safe topic—like "are Yankees really fiends, or do they just appear to be?" Since their cavaliers stop expressing their political opinions at the time of secession—at which time they are earnestly endorsing Constitutionalism, state sovereignty, liberty, freedom from government oppression, and other such worthy ideas—novelists can imply that the Confederacy of course represents these views. But they also can avoid actually saying so. And their cavaliers can escape both snares—endorsing Davis and giving up their ideals, or endorsing Stephens and giving up their Confederacy.
Nevertheless, the impression remains that in the Confederates' war, the cause of the cavalier is overwhelmed and defeated—at home just as surely as in battle. Whose fault is this? Evasion tactics, described above, ended in seeing the blame shifted from the cavalier himself to others who served as scapegoats. A host of enemies spring up on the Southern scene—enemies without scruples or ideals who erode the "noble cause," turning its lofty principles into its weaknesses. Like birds of prey, they surround and devour the cavalier of Southern myth.

Prominent among these Southern villains are a host of men known only as "politicians." The term is one of derision, of contempt, suggesting qualities ranging from incompetence to sheer treachery. These nameless politicians threaten the cavalier by usurping positions of leadership he feels are rightly his. Ideally (according to myth), public officials should be gentlemen—by definition, wise and capable leaders. After the war, George W. Bagby recalled that the "Old Virginia Gentleman" of times past had a "Roman sense of civic obligation . . . . Often the presiding magistrate of his county; often, too, its representative in the legislature or in congress, he continued to direct its politics long after he ceased to take active part in them."\(^{27}\) But Bagby's rosy recollection is disputed by fact as well as myth.\(^{28}\) Somehow,
with rising democracy, politics was moving out of the "gentleman's" control and into the hands of "lesser men." Mary Chesnut wrote of Colonel John Preston as a "splendid specimen of humanity," an aristocrat with "brains, blood, wealth," yet painted him, too, "a bitter, a disappointed man. The popular breath cares for none of these things, and he is ambitious for what the popular vote alone can give; political distinction." Such men were surpassed at the hustings by others more "active minded" and more alert to the times, perhaps less scrupulous and less dignified—men who could court the vote of the "meanest citizen."29 Politics, losing its tie with the cavalier, lost its luster as well; it became the work of "demagogues" skilled in swaying the "mob."

Events leading to secession were thought to be largely out of the gentleman's hands; politicians were at the helm. Depending upon the sympathies of the author, politicians could be blamed for 1) defeating the cause of the cavalier by delaying too long and moving too late; or 2) defeating the cause of the cavalier by provoking secession and involving him in a fatal war. Either way, of course, the cavalier would be finally crushed, but at least he could retain the comforting thought that someone else had been responsible.
In *Macaria*, Augusta Evans charges that politicians before the war—characteristically "nerveless imbeciles or worthless, desperate political gamesters"—crippled the Southern cause by failing to act sooner and more decisively. Blind to the dangers of "Northern faction and fanaticism," these politicians subverted the "grave truths" about the South's dangerous situation into "mere catch-words for party purposes, . . . which served only to induce a new scramble for office." In a brief note of pessimism (quite justifiable in 1864, when *Macaria* was published) the heroine declares that the "ultimate result . . . may demonstrate the deplorable consequences of our procrastination."30

In the postwar period it was more common to abuse politicians because they had started a war that obviously (by then it was quite obvious) was to bring defeat to the Southern cause. Virginius Dabney writes that "in the South, at the breaking out of the war, there was not to be found one solitary statesman . . . ." Men like Wigfall and Toombs and Yancey—"Polyphemus of politicians"—by their fierce rhetoric and pompous boasting swept Southerners into the chaos of a war they could not win.31 In *Cameron Hall* (1867), Mary Ann Cruse's Virginia gentleman, early in 1861, explains, rather sadly, that the "machinations of politicians" have made war inevitable:
Politicians and fanatics sometimes set machinery in motion whose tremendous power defies their feeble attempts to stop it, and for that reason they ought to be very sure that the energies which they seek to arouse will work for good and not for evil.\textsuperscript{32}

A common figure in diaries, in reminiscences, and in fiction is the fiery orator who urges war but avoids the fighting. He ignites the flames that will destroy the South, then leaps clear, escaping the holocaust. In G. C. Eggleston's \textit{The Master of Warlock}, three orators in a small Virginia county were, in April 1861, "the eager advocates of war, instant and terrible." They "ordered a muster of the militia\ldots" in order that they might have an audience to harangue," and "they spouted like geysers throughout that day." But when war began, what became of these three? One, "early in the campaign, developed a severe case of nervous prostration, and retired"; another "retired during his first and only skirmish"; the third "discovered in himself a divine call to the ministry of the gospel, and stayed at home to answer it."\textsuperscript{33}

If Southern politicians during the process of secession were thought to be bad, Confederate politicians after secession were thought to be worse. They appear as villains and enemies of the Southern cause not because they support or oppose any particular policy but simply because they are politicians and they continue to act like politicians while the war is in progress. First of all, they are obviously cowards. Otherwise, they would be in the
army. While "skulking in bomb-proofs" they support the cause with grandiose words but nothing more. John S. Wise recalls the winter of 1864-65:

The Confederate Congress passed resolutions of hope, and sent orators to the trenches and camps to tell the soldiers that "the darkest hour was just before day." One of these blatant fellows I recall particularly. He had been a fire-eater, a nullifier, a secessionist, a blood-and-thunder orator, foremost in urging that we "fight for our rights in the Territories." He was a young man, an able-bodied man, and a man of decided ability. But never for one moment was his precious carcass exposed to danger. There was something inexpressibly repulsive to me, and irritating beyond expression, when I saw men like this, from their safe places, in a lull of hostilities, ride down to the Confederate lines during that awful winter, and counsel our poor soldiers to fight on. Even if it was right to fight on, they had no right to advise it. 34

Entrenched in "safe" places, fictional politicians use their influence to place friends as ignoble as themselves in positions far from all dangers. In Benjamin Robinson's Dolores (1868), the politician is Mr. Norrisson--illegitimate, a drunkard, and a villain who schemes to swindle a fortune from the hero. This worthy is "elected to Congress in the fall of 1863." (Obviously the author must have had a rather low opinion of the caliber of Confederate congressmen.) When Paul Adams, the other villain of the story, grows "tired of the field," he obtains "a transfer to the General Staff of the Army" through the "influence" of Congressman Norrisson. 35 The values that such politicians personify
and endorse are anything but noble and patriotic.

Moreover, politicians always seem selfish; they place themselves and their ambitions before the Cause. In *Macaria*, Augusta Evans's heroine, Irene Huntingdon, reflects during the war on public affairs:

Entire self-abnegation I certainly expected, hoped for, on the part of our people; and I still feel assured that the great masses are capable of patriotism as sublime as the world ever witnessed, and that our noble armies have had no equal in the history of our race. Nevertheless, it is apparent to those who ponder the aspect of public affairs that demagogism crawls along its customary sinuous path, with serpent-eyes fastened on self-aggrandizement. The pure ore of our country will be found in the ranks of our armies; and the few scheming politicians, plotting for position, for offices of emolument in civil or military departments, will prove the dross in the revolutionary crucible. I have no apprehension for our future as long as demagogism and nepotism can be kept down; for out of these grow innumerable evils—not the least of which is the intrusting of important posts to the hands of men who have none of the requisites, save their relationship to, or possession of, the favor of those in authority. If the nation will but mark the unworthy sons whose grasping, selfish, ambition will not even be restrained in hours of direst peril to the cause, and brand them with Mene, Mene, we shall yet teach the world that self-government is feasible.36

Politicians were not the only Southern enemies who disgraced and defeated the cavalier's cause. Among those left at home another evil burst forth—the spirit of greed and materialism. In a letter written from his army camp in April 1863, Alexander Cheves Haskell
It is a shame that money is allowed to exempt a man from his share in a war like ours. And still harder is it to believe that money is to rule the world and that when we come home we will take off our hats to these fellows.

More and more I dread the evil spirit and treason which prevail among a miserable class at home. . . . It would shock and astonish you to hear the humblest private, on his return from what should have been a joyous furlough to his home, speak in terms of unmitigated contempt and disgust of the spirit of selfishness and speculation which he has found amongst those whom he had hoped to find engaged in the peaceful struggle for our salvation, as he is upon the battlefield.37

How could this happen?—and in the Confederacy, of all places!

It was a terrible blow, shattering happy illusions Southerners had of themselves and their superiority to the genus Yankee. After all, it was supposed to be Yankees—enemies from beyond their borders—who were the greedy, grasping materialists whose thirst for gain motivated their lives.38 And Southerners? They were supposed to be different, quite above that sort of thing. George Cary Eggleston remembered that when he came from Indiana, "where the mart was the center about which all life's activities circled," into the world of Virginia planters, he was "peculiarly impressed" by the fact that money was a very infrequent subject of consideration in their lives and conversations.

Economically it would have been better for them if things had been otherwise, but socially, the utter
absence of pecuniary flavor from their intercourse, lent a peculiar charm to it, especially in the eyes and mind of a youth brought up as I had been in an atmosphere positively grimy with the soot of monetary considerations. 39

In *Gabriel Tolliver* (1902), Joel Chandler Harris talks of this non-mercerary spirit of Southerners:

The social structure of the Southern people, and the habits and traditions based thereon, were of such a character that a great majority could not be brought to believe that it was possible for parsimony to exist side by side with any of the finer feelings. All the conditions and circumstances, the ability to command leisure, the very climate itself, promoted hospitality, generosity, open-handedness, and that fine spirit of lavishness that seeks at any cost to give pleasure to others. Popular opinion, therefore, looked with a cold and suspicious eye on all manifestations of selfishness. 40

But civil war seemed to foster chaos at home. Society appeared to disintegrate, to give way before the pushing and striving of new elements alien to the cavalier. In *Mohun* (1869), John Esten Cooke talks of the "gloomy and tragic" appearance of Richmond in 1864:

Forestallers crowded the markets. Bread was doled out by the ounce. Confederate money by the bushel. Gold was hoarded and buried. Cowards shrunk and began to whisper—"the flesh pots! the flesh pots! they were better!" Society was uprooted from its foundations. Strange characters were thrown up. The scum had come to the top, and bore itself bravely in the sunshine. The whole social fabric seemed warped and wrenched from its base; and in the midst of this chaos of starving women,
feverish men, spies, extortioners, blockade-runners,—
over the "doomed city," day and night, rolled the
thunder of the cannon, telling that Grant and Lee
were still holding their high debate at Petersburg.
Such was Richmond at the end of summer in 1864.
Society was approaching one of those epochs, when
all things appear unreal, monstrous, gliding toward
some great catastrophe. All rascality was rampant.
The night-birds had come forth. Vice stalked, and
flaunted its feathers in the light of day. Chaos
seemed coming, and with it all the powers of darkness.

These enemies, known variously as "speculators," "extortioners,
"forestallers," "Jews," "blockade-runners," and "Southern Yankees,
appear as harbingers of the materialistic world, a world of
lowered standards and twisted values. In fact—and this seems
a real blow—these Southerners act just like Yankees.

Where did they come from—these Southerners so hostile to
the ideals of the cavalier? Many authors who created characters
of this sort could not bring themselves to admit that they were
men of the South. To avoid the damaging admission that a Southerner—
any Southerner—could stoop so low, these authors explain that
their money-minded characters are really Yankees who have migrated
to the South. In Francis Fontaine's _Etowah_ (1887), Wellington
Napoleon Potts, the villain, proudly proclaims that he is "superior
to sentimental notions" of patriotism; he and those like him "who
stay at home and make money will buy them Confederate soldiers;
out—lock, stock, and barrel—after the war, and hire them, to boot!"
Potts's father came south from New England many years before, and Potts himself admits that he is a Southerner only "by birth and rearing, but in everything else I am a New Englander."[42] In William Henry Peck's *The MacDonalds* (1867), Seth Cashmore is the evil "speculator" famous for "his many deeds of grinding oppression upon the wives and children of Confederate soldiers":

Seth Cashmore, one of those base and vampire spirits which flitted through the night of the Civil War, and batten upon the wants of the impoverished South, a speculator in the necessaries of life, one who thought more of a sack of salt than a nationality, and who trampled upon every noble principle in his devilish greed for money, had grown rich at the South long before the sword was put to Southern throats by Northern fanaticism.

But Cashmore is no Southerner; he "hailed from the very shadow of the Rock of Plymouth" and the features of his "repulsive countenance partook largely both of the Hebrew and Yankee caste—that lower Hebrew style which speaks only of the mercenary and sensual; that common Yankee type, which tells of cunning, cruelty, and unscrupulous trickery."[43]

The father of Paul Adams, villain in Robinson's *Dolores*, is "a native of Massachusetts" residing in the South. During the Civil War young Adams's true character, that of a Yankee, comes to light:
Demoralized by the depraving influences of that social disorganization evoked by the War, and surrendering to the instigations of the insatiable avarice which now possessed his soul, the better nature of this man, if he ever had any redeeming traits of character, was vitiated; and he plunged recklessly into the vortex of that anarchical life, which in the latter months of the War eviscerated so many much nobler spirits of their virtue, honor, manliness, and regard for duty. Naturally inclined to selfishness, constrained as he was by the inherited and unconquerable vices which descended from his progenitors, brutal and treacherous in his instincts, he became a cunningly disguised Ishmaelite—making his neighbors and acquaintances the readier victims of his subtle arts, by striking deadly but covert blows, while scheming most assiduously to retain their confidence. If the materialist is a Southerner, he is a man of the lower class. As Cooke observed in Mohun, the "burglars, gamblers, adventurers, blockade-runners" in Richmond "dressed in excellent clothes, and smiled and bowed when you met them," but they usually "issued from the shambles or the gutter." In "Mr. Williamson Slippey and his Salt," Richard Malcolm Johnston tells a tale in grim satire of a man, once a "poor, little, insignificant fellow" from a family that always "did poorly," who rises to his "highest greatness" in the "unusually excited state of society" in Atlanta during the war—he becomes a speculator in salt.

Whatever their origins, these materialists appear and prosper in the wartime South. And they succeed at the expense of the cavalier. Mary Chesnut commented in March 1862: "We, poor fools, who are patriotically ruining ourselves, will see our children in
the gutter while treacherous dogs of millionaires go rolling by in their coaches—caches that were acquired by taking advantage of our necessities. In Mohun, Cooke compares two men in 1864, Mr. Blocque and Judge Conway. Mr. Blocque, a "peddling blockade-runner" who was "a prominent personage at that time," "ate canvass-backs, drank champagne, wore 'fine linen,' and, dodging the conscript officers, revelled in luxury and plenty." Not far from the "splendid residence" of Mr. Blocque, was the "poverty-stricken apartment" of Judge Conway, a "great statesman and a high-bred gentleman." As Colonel Surry (Cooke's spokesman) views the condition of Judge Conway and contrasts it to the "champagne, rich viands, wax-lights, gold and silver, and profuse luxury" surrounding the blockade-runner, a "sentiment of profound bitterness" overcomes him:

And now before me was a gentleman of ancient lineage, whose ancestors had been famous, who had himself played a great part in the history of the commonwealth,—and this gentleman was poor, lived in lodgings, had scarce a penny; he had been wealthy, and was still the owner of great possessions; but the bare land was all that was left him for support. He had been surrounded with luxury, but had sacrificed all to the cause.

All was "turmoil, confusion," and "despair"—but the "vultures of troubled times flapped their wings and croaked joyfully." Any reluctant to sacrifice all his wealth to the Cause could be defined as an enemy of the cavalier. He who thought of
material goods or an expedient course of action was failing to act always according to principle. In Mary Ann Cruse’s Cameron Hall, Federal troops of occupation have decided to send into exile and confiscate the property of all citizens who refuse to take an Oath of Allegiance to the United States government. Two Virginia gentlemen, being heroic characters, do not for a moment even think of taking such an oath. They argue their position with Mr. Smithson, a neighbor sorely tempted to take the oath, because "his heart clings to those acres of his." Mr. Smithson reasons that since Confederate success appears "exceedingly problematical," it is "decidedly the part of wisdom to weigh well all the contingencies and possibilities." If the Confederacy were defeated, he would eventually have to take the oath anyway, and "I would rather do it in time to avail me something." After all, Mr. Smithson says, "expediency must always be taken into the account in worldly matters." One gentleman replies that expediency has "its proper place, but I object either to confounding it with principle or substituting it for principle." He would never "allow apprehensions of the possible future to deter me from the performance of present duty." Pointing out that the real issue is "the moral right of the act, and not its expediency or agreeableness," the gentleman delivers to Mr. Smithson a short sermon:
It is so hard for men to separate these two things, and to look at them independently of each other. And yet, if amid the tortuous and perplexing paths of life we would find the right one, we must needs do it; we must put on, as it were, a blind bridle, that shuts out everything except what is right before us, and look at the morality of the act as it stands alone, in its stern, naked ruggedness; for when once we begin to look at results, then self-love, ease, convenience, and profit all loom up in such vast and undue proportions, that they effectually throw into shadow the question that we originally proposed to consider.

But Mr. Smithson leaves their house unconvinced and unwilling to part with his property that "had been the gradual accumulation of a lifetime." For the man who "proposed to live on, and to live here, too, and take care of his property," the two gentlemen "could not help feeling contempt." Smithson "had not the moral courage and the manliness to do right"; he cannot ascend to the lofty heights of the cavaliers. One gentleman concludes: "Poor Smithson! I pity him!" The gentlemen, of course, lose everything they own, but they go forth to poverty with light hearts and clear consciences, for they have never strayed from the path of principle.49

When the cavalier's course of action was defined in terms so exalted, it is little wonder that ordinary human beings appeared to fall short of that ideal. Those authors who wrote in a more realistic vein saw many Southerners on the home front give way to sentiments and actions hardly noble or patriotic or inspired by
cavalier principles. In his humorous letters of "Bill Arp," Charles H. Smith observed that "this prolonged war" has encouraged one aspect of "human nature": a disposition for "dodging around."

In addition to Confederates who are "dodging" taxes, there is that numerous class who are dodging conscription. They've kept out so long, and worked so hard to stay out still longer, and sweat so much in dodging around, and they've read so much of big battles, and of so much flesh and blood, and such horrible carnage, that the bare sight of an enrolling officer gives 'sm a heart palpitation. . . . How rapidly some folks grow old in these trying times--what a prolific year for boy children it was in the year 1817! Such is the rapid progress of human events in these fighting times, that a man who was only forty last year, can be forty-six this. Even old Father Time has put on his spurs, and now he goes dodging around.

There's the mail must be carried, the telegraph attended to, steamboats and cars must travel, shoes must be made, potash be burnt, and all mechanics must go ahead; and then there's the numerous holes and hiding-places around a depot, or hospital, or the Quartermaster's department, or the passport office, etc., but the bulk of the dodging is done in the chronic line. Before this developing war, it was not thought possible for so much rheumatics and chronics, so many sore legs and weak backs, to exist in a limestone country.50

Two of Bill Arp's well known essays are conversations between two Southern characters--"Reduced" and "Potash." Both seek to stay as far from the war as possible: Potash has a contract with the Nitre Bureau to make powder for the army; Reduced has had a "fat and slick" staff position, safe enough until Governor Joe Brown
decided to conscript "the whole concern himself, all at once, in a pile, and reduced 'em all to the ranks." Reduced, of course, is outraged: "Blame the militia. Dad burn old Brown. What security has a man got for his liberty?" Later, in a burst of "patriotism" to shame Potash, who isn't even in the militia, Reduced declares:

We will have a race of people' after a while that ain't worth a curse. The good ones are getting killed up, but these skulkers and shirkers and dodgers don't die. There ain't one died since the war broke out. Confound 'em, dod rot 'em; I begin to believe our old devil is dead; if he ain't he's no account or he'd have had some of these fellows before now. Wonder if Brown would let me go and fight awhile under the Confederacy? But then I would be in for the war, and I don't like that.51

Under ordinary circumstances, giving way to "human nature" would not have been so bad. But since Southerners had defined themselves and their cause on an idealistic plane, such evidences of "human nature" were a concession of the cavalier's defeat. The cavalier might act very noble, but he was powerless if other Southerners failed to follow his lead.

So the home front cavalier fights a losing battle in the Civil War. The Confederacy is supposed to be his; it is supposed to personify his ideals and defend his values. If at times it seems to veer from that course, and he resists, he appears unpatriotic, an anachronism in changing times who will concede military defeat long before he will abandon his "principles." Only with difficulty can such a man be persuaded by arguments of
expediency—that wartime necessities demand that he forego his rights temporarily. Above all, the cavalier seems oppressed by a sense of inertia—a cataleptic in a world that moves rapidly into the future. He cannot change; he cannot prepare for change. While others, his enemies, rise around him and prey upon him, he can only lose, with nobility in defeat his bitter consolation. Though she had been an ardent secessionist, Mary Chesnut summed up this thought in July 1862, when she wrote:

Recalling all the ties it dissolves, all the blood it commands to flow, all the healthy industry it arrests, all the mad men it arms, all the victims it creates, I question whether one man really honest, pure, and humane who has gone through such an ordeal could ever hazard it again unless he is assured victory is secure; yes, and that the object for which he fights will not be wrested from his hands amidst the uproar of the elements that the battle has released. 52
NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

1Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, Ben Ames Williams, ed. (Boston, 1961), 136, 172. See also Napier Bartlett, Clarimonde: a Tale of New Orleans Life, and of the Present War (Richmond, 1863), 18-23.


3John Esten Cooke, Surry of Eagle's Nest; or, the Memoirs of a Staff-Officer Serving in Virginia. Edited, from the MSS. of Colonel Surry (New York, 1894), 45-47. See also Cooke, Hilt to Hilt; or, Days and Nights on the Banks of the Shenandoah in the Autumn of 1864. From the MSS. of Colonel Surry of Eagle's Nest (New York, 1871), 67-68.


5For example, see Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 144; Harrison, The Carlyles: a Story of the Fall of the Confederacy (New York, 1905), 8-9; George P. C. Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes: a Romance of the Confederacy (Little Rock, 1895), 94-95; George Cary Eggleston, Dorothy South: a Love Story of Virginia Just Before the War (New York, 1902), 317-321, 355-366.

6Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 2. See also Seawell, The Victory, 31; Mary Ann Cruse, Cameron Hall: a Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1867), 7; Charles Wells Russell, Roebuck: a Novel (Baltimore, 1866), 106-107.

7Joseph William Eggleston, Tuckahoe: an Old-Fashioned Story of an Old-Fashioned People (New York, 1903), vii. See also G. C. Eggleston, Dorothy South, 29-32; Seawell, The Victory, 33; Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 61.

8J. V. Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie; or, Love the Light of Life: an Historical Romance, Illustrative of Life and Love in an Old Virginia Country Home, and also an Explanatory Account of the Passions, Prejudices and Opinions which Culminated in the Civil War (Richmond, 1890), 135, 101.
9 For example, see Cruse, Cameron Hall, 80-81; Russell, Roebuck, 38-42, 75-80; Clarence B. Collins, Tom and Joe: Two Farmer Boys in War and Peace and Love: a Louisiana Memory (Richmond, 1890), 36-40; Augusta Jane Evans, Macaria (New York, 1866), 371-372.

10 See Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 140; Harrison, Carlyles, 55; Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 251; Capers Dickson, John Ashton: a Story of the War Between the States (Atlanta, 1896), 258; Louise Wigfall (Mrs. D. Giraud) Wright, A Southern Girl in '61 (New York, 1905), 221-222.

11 See Russell, Roebuck, 102-105; Evans, Macaria, 348; Benjamin Robinson, Dolores: a Tale of Disappointment and Distress; Compiled, Arranged, and Edited from the Journal, Letters, and Other MSS. of Roland Vernon, Esq., and Contributions by and Conversations with the Vernon Family, of Rushbrooke, in Carolina (New York, 1866), 60-61; Rhoebie Hamilton Seabrook, A Daughter of the Confederacy: a Story of the Old South and the New (New York, 1906), 67-72.


13 Harrison, Flower de Hundred, 246. See also Seabrook, Daughter of the Confederacy, 101-107; Seawell, The Victory, 285-287, 305-307; Collins, Tom and Joe, 143-145; Reeves, Randolph Honor, 304-306; Cruse, Cameron Hall, 311-321; Flora McDonald Williams, Who's the Patriot? a Story of the Southern Confederacy (Louisville, 1886), 212-214.

14 Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie, 138; Rumbough, From Dust to Ashes, 156.

15 Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 145.

16 G. C. Eggleston, Master of Warlock, 112-117. See also Seawell, The Victory, 270.
Mary Chesnut records that when her husband proposed that his father's "twenty thousand acres of unoccupied land might be cut up into small farms and make us a more prosperous country," old Colonel Chesnut found the idea "fearfully distasteful": "His idea of the whole duty of man is that he should keep his estate intact as he received it from his father, and go on buying out the neighbors and enlarging his borders. Chesnut, *Diary from Dixie*, 144.

For example, see G. C. Eggleston, *Master of Warlock*, 291-292.

_Ryals, Yankee Doodle Dixie*, 135.


Thomas Edward Watson, *Bethany: a Story of the Old South* (New York, 1904), 291. See also *ibid.*, 190.

For example, see *Russell, Roebuck*, 100-105.

For example, see *Seawell, The Victory*, 81-86.

See, for example, Cruse, *Cameron Hall*, 512-516.


Fletcher M. Green, "Democracy in the Old South," *Journal of Southern History*, XII (February, 1946), 3-23.


32 Cruse, *Cameron Hall*, 138. See also Francis Fontaine, *Etowah: a Romance of the Confederacy* (Atlanta, 1887), 132.


35 Robinson, *Dolores*, 86.


37 Daly, Alexander Cheves Haskell, 97. See also Wise, *End of an Era*, 216ff.

38 For example, see Russell, *Roebuck*, 46.


Fontaine, Etowah, 228-229.

William Henry Feck, The McDonalds; or, the Ashes of Southern Homes: a Tale of Sherman's March (New York, 1867), 21, 18, 19, 11-12.

Robinson, Dolores, 15, 86. See also Russell, Roebuck, 62.

Cooke, Mohun, 405-406.

Johnston, "Mr. Williamson Slippey and his Salt," Dukesborough Tales (Baltimore, 1871), 170, 161, 160.

Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 197-198.

Cooke, Mohun, 242-245, 222, 323-324.

Cruse, Cameron Hall, 523-530. See also Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 490; Seabrook, Daughter of the Confederacy, I23-I24.

Charles H. Smith, Bill Arp, So Called: a Side Show of the Southern Side of the War (New York, 1866), 75, 73, 77-78.

Ibid., 41, 42, 48-49.

Chesnut, Diary from Dixie, 273.
EPILOGUE

In following the figure of the cavalier as he threads his way through the Southern war from secession to surrender, one can glimpse more than merely a hackneyed character acting a well-worn role. He is this, to be sure. But at the same time he is more, much more. The cavalier is the Southern hero of that war. Defined as an ideal in ante bellum times, he was readily available, when the Confederacy was born, to become the Confederate ideal. Through the image of the cavalier, Southerners could explain to themselves and to the world why they became Confederates, why and how they fought that glorious and tragic war.

When Southerners turned to the cavalier as their Confederate hero, they imposed a certain tone and form on their explanations of the war. The mythical Southern cavalier is a gentleman, a patrician different from and superior to his countrymen in northern climes. He is gallant and courtly, a kindred spirit to the medieval knight of romance. Proud, individualistic, bound by honor and loyalty to defend his Southland from an outside foe, the cavalier transforms the short-lived Confederacy into a "golden age" that would live on in Southern memories. The cavalier in gray makes "that great struggle immortal," while the cavalier
at home shows "patient and cheerful endurance." His devotion to the Confederacy is nothing short of sublime. While the world watches, he proves that he is sprung from a noble race and a worthy civilization, "more glorious" than that which eventually prevails because of greater numbers and greater wealth.¹ All this the cavalier could give to Confederate ideology—certainly an image of a noble cause.

Beyond a certain point, however, the cavalier here described proved insufficient as Confederate hero. The symbol of the ante bellum cavalier—aristocratic, romantic, individualistic, tradition-minded—had to be changed, enlarged, and redefined to become a symbol adequate for a Southern society trying to create and to sustain a nation in time of war. Some Southerners of the war generation saw these needs and moved to square their ideology with their situation. The cavalier was wrested from the possessive hands of Virginia and South Carolina; other states of the South began to claim him, too. A satisfactory Confederate hero certainly had to represent all of the Confederacy. And the aristocratic cavalier had to be tempered with a democratic touch. How else could one include in "the cause" lower-class Southerners who were loyal Confederates? And when the test of heroism became more a matter of ideal actions and ideal thoughts
and less a matter of social position, Southerners were moving beyond a limited definition of their cavalier hero.

But these modifications did not solve all the problems. Contradictions remained—contradictions and complexities which some sensed but few solved. How, for example, could one cope with Southerners who failed to live up to the roseate ideal? One could ignore them, of course, or simply write them off as subversive types who somehow had slipped onto the Southern scene. Diversifying the definition of ideal thought and action was another possible answer. Was the ideal perhaps too far above human expectations? Would not more devious and less "noble" action sometimes be more effective? These questions appeared hesitantly, reluctantly, often as mere hints of ideas too hazardous to explore, for modifying the ideal meant also blurring the distinction between Confederate and Yankee, between the hero and his foe.

In a larger sense, perhaps the major threat to the cavalier as Confederate hero was simply the force of social change. Confederates learned, often to their dismay, that war itself fosters changes in society and revisions in values. The troubled reflections of Southerners on these changes appear as
they depict their cavalier, for he represents the "old," the
traditional in times of awful transition. Dr. Cary, for example,
a Virginia gentleman in Thomas Nelson Page's *Red Rock* (1899),
counsels fellow Virginians not to rush blindly into secession,
for "War is the most terrible of all disasters, except Dishonor":
"I speak merely of the change that War inevitably brings. War is
the destruction of everything that exists. You may fail or you
may win, but what exists passes, and something different takes
its place."

There are indications that some cavaliers can accept such
changes, can learn to live with them and with the modern world.
They are viable characters created by Southern authors able to
see beyond the traditional. George Cary Eggleston, for example,
in *Evelyn Byrd* (1904), could let one Virginia Confederate observe
and approve that during the war "a revolution has been wrought
in this Southern land of ours": "The old class distinctions of
birth and heritage have given place to new tests of present
conduct." And in April of 1861 one of Eggleston's cavalier
heroes in *The Master of Warlock* (1903) observes that

the old life of Virginia is completely gone, the old
conditions have been utterly swept away. We can never
re-create them. We can never bring the old life back,
and perhaps it is better so. We Virginians had for
generations lived in the past. Our manner of life and all our conceptions of living were those of a century ago. We had not kept step with progress. We have been rudely shaken out of the lethargic ease that was so delightful and perhaps so bad for us. We are free now to create a new life in tune with that of the modern world.

And we shall do that right manfully. We shall develop the resources of the region, and the South will grow more prosperous than it ever was before. Better still, our children will be educated in the gospel of work, and learn the lesson that was never taught to you and me till war came to teach us, that it is in strenuous endeavour, and not in paralysing ease, that a man finds the greatest happiness in life.  

One can concede, of course, that Eggleston perhaps is trying too hard, too consciously to give his approval to a new life not so beautiful as that of prewar Virginia. But at least Eggleston and Southerners like him were creating a more flexible ideal, one which did not necessarily die during the agonies of civil war.

An easier solution for the builders of Southern myth was to recognize and to reject the changes brought by war. Such changes are seen as evil and deplorable; they are forces different from and antagonistic to the older ideal of the cavalier. A cavalier molded in this more limited, less pliable way clings fast to the traditional while the forces of change swirl around him and, at last, defeat him. Real enemies of the cavalier are not Yankees at all; they are fellow Southerners who think and act in new
and "alien" ways. This interpretation, on a larger scale, shows the Confederacy to be both an "epic" age and the "end of an era," for the cavalier heroes stand forth nobly and true while war itself kills the Old South utopia. The Confederacy, in short, is seen as a terminus, not as a positive beginning of something new.

Ideas and attitudes that made up the Southern cavalier myth had to meet the test of total war. The myth emerged from that ordeal slightly scathed and somewhat altered but still recognizable and still resembling to a considerable degree the myth of prewar times. In their trial by fire, Southerners looked to the cavalier; he gave noble meaning and purpose to their Confederacy. When the narrowly-defined, tradition-bound image of the cavalier proved too rigid an ideal for Confederates, the image simply was modified as much as possible. Unable to keep the cavalier entirely unchanged, Southerners still were unwilling to abandon him for any other ideal.
NOTES

1 Clarence B. Collins, Tom and Joe: Two Farmer Boys in War and Peace and Love: a Louisiana Memory (Richmond, 1890), iii; Basil L. Gildersleeve, "The Creed of the Old South," Atlantic Monthly, LIX (January, 1892), 75; Mary Ann Cruse, Cameron Hall: a Story of the Civil War (Philadelphia, 1867), 82.


3 George Cary Eggleston, Evelyn Byrd (Boston, 1904), 67.


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