GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE AS A CRITIC OF THE SOUTH

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GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE AS A CRITIC OF THE SOUTH

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE SOUTHERNER</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE CREOLE AND THE ACADIAN</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE NEGRO AND SLAVERY</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

George Washington Cable is known as a local color writer of the South, but in this thesis, I have attempted to reveal a deeper motive for his writing. In Cable's literary portrayals of Southern characters and scenes, he is a critic of the social conditions and social relations of Southern society. In his criticisms of the South, Cable portrayed three types of people: the Southerner, the Creole, and the Negro.

In the first chapter, I have attempted to show that Cable's criticisms were influenced by the particular time and place of his life. He could not have depicted the Southern people so truthfully if he had not been born among them, lived among them, fought in the Civil War, lived through the Reconstruction Era, and observed the whites' reactions toward the colored people. The biographical material was very limited. The only book giving facts about Cable's life was a series of letters written by Cable and supplied with explanations by his daughter, Lucy Leffingwell Cable Bkle.

The chapters concerning the Southerner, Creole, and the Negro were written after I read all of Cable's fiction and his articles pertaining to the Negro question of the South. I found other information concerning Cable and his writings in articles and reviews that had been published in various periodicals.
CHAPTER ONE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The first literary contributions of George Washington Cable were in the nineteenth century during the troubled time at the conclusion of the Civil War. The old antebellum mode of the South was disappearing, and there was a dire need for American literature characterized by regionalism and the journalized short story. After the Civil War, there was a curiosity concerning America. It is true that America was large, and the people and customs did vary in different sections of the country. The American public desired a literature that would describe these regions and their inhabitants. Walter Fuller Taylor gave the following description of this age:

The aim was to paint the scenery, dialect, manners, and characters peculiar to the more picturesque localities. In their attitude toward their material, the authors of local-color fiction remained on the whole romantic. In their search for the remote, the exotic, the picturesque, and the rarely flavored, they ministered to the romantic thirst for novelty.¹

George Washington Cable portrayed the South in the literary world. He had a very thorough knowledge of New Orleans and the surrounding areas. Tinker said the following about Cable:

He was the legitimate father of the literary movement which has produced such splendid fruit in the South. Among Southern writers who treated objectively and realistically the life they saw about him, Cable was the first to break the barrier against writing about the Negro. His courage freed the authors who followed him of necessity of the fulsome praise for all things sectional; he taught them their right and duty to analyze and portray truthfully, even if necessary to criticize, the social conditions under which they and those around them lived. All of this Cable accomplished at the cost of practical ostracism among his own people; so he may well be called the first martyr to the cause of literary freedom in the South.2

Cable's parents were not natives of Louisiana. George W. Cable, Sr., was born in Virginia, but his parents moved to Pennsylvania when he was very young. While living in Pennsylvania, his family freed its slaves. Next, the family moved to Indiana, where George, Sr., met and married Rebecca Broadman. The couple lived in Indiana for about three years; then because of business difficulties, they left that state and moved to New Orleans, where the Cables saw an opportunity for business advancement. In New Orleans, Louisiana, October 12, 1844, in a house standing on the corner of Race and Annunciation Square, George Washington Cable, the novelist and short story writer, was born.

The family was prosperous for awhile. It was during this time that the boy, Cable, received so many impressions and inspirations from the scenes of New Orleans and her Creole population, including the picturesque habitations. The market house, the people who were seen at the market, and the people

2Edward Larocque Tinker, "Cable and the Creoles," Saturday Review of Literature, V (January, 1934), 326.
who were encountered, seen, or heard on the way to and from market were what especially intrigued the boy, and they were given recognition in his later writings. The fishing industry, the boats, the cotton gins, and the Mississippi River were all observed. All of this leisure time ceased in 1859 when the boy's father died as a result of financial strain and worry.

George Washington Cable began to work to contribute to the upkeep of the family. His position was with a custom warehouse in which his father had worked. When the Civil War began, the warehouse was turned into a factory to make war materials; then Cable worked as a counting-room clerk for Violet and Black until the spring of 1862.

In 1862 the Civil War was raging in fury. Everyone was being made a colonel or major, or he was getting married. It was a time of confusion and excitement. New Orleans was invaded and taken. Those who did not take a Federal Oath of Allegiance were listed as enemy agents and were forced to leave. George Washington Cable and his two sisters fled together. Because of his smallness, Cable was permitted to pass through the lines as their little brother. When the Confederate lines were reached, Cable resumed his nineteen year status and joined the ranks of the Confederate Army. He was a member of the Cavalry and took part in several battles; one especially memorable was "Sherman's Meridian Raid." Cable was not an enthusiast of the Civil War. He made the statement "that he was fighting to establish a scheme of government that would work the destruction of the
people as surely as it was formed. He fought because he was a citizen of the government and a soldier by its laws sworn into service and ordered not to think but to fight.  

The war was concluded in 1865, and George W. Cable returned to New Orleans with the same problem that faces all young men at the conclusion of a war: the need of employment and the establishment of a routine of life. First, Cable and his brother each took a position with a group of surveyors in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Cable thought this position was a good one except it was not stationary. He sought employment in New Orleans, where he was finally employed by Mr. Coleman, a cotton manufacturer and an old friend of the family. This position was relinquished for a position with a State Surveying Expedition, which was sent to re-establish the lines and levees along the banks of the Atchafalaya River. The expedition was rather interesting, and Cable thought engineering would surely be his life work. The career was interrupted when the crew was attacked by yellow fever. Because of the dreadful disease, the expedition was disbanded. Again, Cable returned to the counting house to work.

On December 7, 1869, George W. Cable and Louise Stewart Bartlett were married in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was a New Orleans girl, and the two had many mutual friends although

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3 Mrs. Lucy Leffingwell Cable Bikle, G. W. Cable: His Life and Works, pp. 20-21.
they had never met until they were grown. Mrs. Cable was a devoted wife and the mother of his six children. According to one author, she was "quite the ideal American -- a gentle, elegant, creature, who lived in her husband's life, kept warm in him the literary enthusiasm, and was ready for this to give up even pecuniary advantages." At this time, Cable was described in the following manner:

He was a small man, in height barely five feet six, in weight, at best, one hundred and ten pounds; wearing oftenest, a gray suit, with crimson necktie and soft gray felt hat. Slight of build; wiry; nervous of movement; agile; taking the steps of a stairway preferably two at a time. His eyes were alert to catch any outward aspect of the scene about him, yet his thoughts were so incessantly busy that his absent-mindedness was almost a byword among those who knew him best, and often a matter of concern to himself. The oval of his face was emphasized by an unusual width and height of brow and by a trim, pointed beard.

Although Cable had been deprived of the opportunity to get a formal education, he was a well informed man. He "never lacked intellectual and spiritual aid in his development." The mother of this man was the one who urged her children to learn. At the age of nine years, he was memorizing the Declaration of Independence and portions of Scott's Lady of the Lake. When he was ten years old, he had read Hume's History of Great Britain. He could not recall when he became acquainted with American Revolutionary History. Cable's school days were concluded upon

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4Charlotte Adams, "My Acquaintance with Cable," The Critic, Vol. III (July 28, 1883), p. 317. (Condensed from an article by the same author in a Russian paper, Viestnik Evropy.)

5Bikle, op. cit., p. 1.

6Ibid., p. 7.
the death of his father, but his studying reached no conclusion. "The self-training and studying, which G. W. Cable did, equipped him with more knowledge than many university graduate students take into the world." His service as a Confederate soldier proved to be an important factor in his intellectual development. When he was in the army, he carried his books with him; and he studied higher branches of mathematics and Latin Grammar. Cable made a critical study of the Bible and became very much interested in debate. During the years that he was working at the accounting house, Cable was up at four in the morning poring over his books. He made himself master of French and began "to delve among the old records in the city archives because of his fascination for the strange true romance which he found in them." 

Cable was a man of strong religious convictions. The Cable children were reared in a strong Presbyterian manner. When they were children, their mother impressed upon their young consciences that "indolence was a vice, industry a duty, honesty a necessity, drink a curse, and that dancing and the theater were but the traps of the devil to catch men's souls." 

His religious convictions were revealed in all phases of his life, literary and otherwise. In describing the home life

\footnote{Ibid., p. 12.}

\footnote{Fred Lewis Pattee, "George Washington Cable," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Allan Johnson, III. 392.}

\footnote{Tinker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 314.}
of the author, H. H. Wetherill gave the following information concerning Cable's life in his home:

A cold meal was always served in his home on Sunday. The evenings were always a memorable occasion at the Cable home. There was a tea and a walk; then the family gathered in the living room. Sometimes, there were some friends present; but if there were not, a delightful evening was spent listening to the father play the guitar, tell a story, or sing some songs. There was a family prayer to conclude the evening; then the family retired at an early hour. Cable maintained that if the body were not properly treated, the mind would not function properly.\(^\text{10}\)

Cable's church duties were faithfully discharged. He was a member of the Prystania Street Presbyterian Church of New Orleans, and "in this organization, he held the position of deacon."\(^\text{11}\) Miss Gould, a writer for \textit{Critic Magazine}, attended one of Cable's classes. She said that "she had never heard any person who had anymore insight into the Bible and who could deliver a more beautiful prayer."\(^\text{12}\) Always, Cable was endeavoring to do something for the betterment of someone. At one time, "he superintended a Sunday School for Negroes under the general supervision of the church of which he was a member."\(^\text{13}\) There were religious remembrances toward his children. For example, in one letter,

\(^{10}\text{J. H. Wetherill, "Authors at Home,"} \textit{The Critic}, IX (October 9, 1886), 170.\)

\(^{11}\text{Mrs. John S. Kendall, Introduction to Selections from Cable's Fiction,} \textit{Library of Southern Literature}, edited by E. A. Alderman and Joel Chandler Harris, II, 620.\)

\(^{12}\text{Elizabeth Porter Gould, "Mr. Cable's Sunday School Work,"} \textit{The Critic}, IV (October 15, 1887), 191.\)

\(^{13}\text{Kendall, op. cit., p. 625.}\)
the remembrance was: "tell them to remember me, to think of
the Heavenly Father as just as real and personal as the parent,
whom they love, and to love him the same way, only far more."\textsuperscript{14}

Cable stated his religious philosophy in the words of
Charlotte Oliver, a heroine in one of his books, \textit{The Cavalier}.

\begin{quote}
I know that we can't have longings, strivings or
hopes without beliefs; beliefs are what they live on.
I believe in beauty and joy. I believe they are the
goal of all goodness and of all God's work and wish.
As to resurrection, punishment, and reward, I can't see
what my noblest choice has to do with them; they seem
to me to be God's part of the matter; mine is to love
perfect beauty and perfect joy. Above all, I believe
that no beauty and no joy can be perfect apart from a
love that loves the whole world's joy better than any
separate joy of any separate soul.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

It was after his marriage and while he was working at the
accounting house that Cable's literary career began. When asked
what motivated his becoming a writer, Cable said that "he made
up stories to tell his children, and the family physician urged
him to write and to publish them."\textsuperscript{16} The next step in his
literary career was that in 1872, Edward King, a young journalist
from the North, came to New Orleans in the course of his journey-
ing through the Southern States for material for his "Great South"
papers, which were to be written for \textit{Scribner's Monthly}. Cable
and he met. The two shared a mutual enthusiasm over old Spanish
and French archives of the city and of the relations of priests
and explorers of earlier days; also, "there was an interest in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] Bicle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 115.
\item[16] Adams, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 317.
\end{footnotes}
French novels by Hugo and Merimee, in English literature, and in American literature. Mr. King was so enthusiastic over Cable's stories that he sent them immediately to J. G. Holland, editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, and to Richard Watson Gilder, the associate editor. The result was the publication in *Scribner's Monthly* in October, 1873, of the short story, "Sieur George." During the following three years, five others were published; then in 1879, the volume of short stories, *Old Creole Days*, was published. The path to literary fame for Cable was recognized at once. Gilder said to him in a letter: "I feel moved to say that we hope you know that you have the makings of one of the best story-writers of the day."  

Cable's first success came at the time when the death of his employer and the dissolution of the firm threw him out of employment. He turned at once to authorship as a profession. In 1884, he published *The Grandissimes*, one of his most famous novels; then followed a series of novels. His last novel was *Lovers of Louisiana*, published in 1918.  

As one of the new literary figures, Cable became acquainted with some of his famous contemporaries: Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Joel Chandler Harris, and others. This new author was to take his place among the local color authors. The greatest number of Cable's stories were

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17 *Bikle, op. cit.*, p. 45.
written about the French Creole and Acadian. "Mr. Cable went for most of his material to that part of New Orleans known as the French Quarter -- or the Creole Quarter; it is separated from the modern part of the city by Canal Street."  

In June, 1882, Washington and Lee University conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters upon Cable; then in 1883 an honorary Master of Arts Degree was conferred upon him by Yale University. In 1882, Cable was asked to prepare a series of lectures on literature to be delivered in Baltimore the following year. The topic was: The Relations of Literature to Modern Society. The subject was to be divided into five lectures, namely, (1) The Necessities from Which Literature Springs, (2) Its Influences on Man's Public Life, (3) The Attitudes of Modern Society Toward Literature, (4) The Reciprocal Duties of Literature and Society, and (5) The Literary Art and Artist. A large audience was present for each performance, and Cable kept his family and friends notified concerning the progress and reception of each lecture. During this time, he met President Gilman of John Hopkins University and Joaquin Miller.

Cable conducted several reading tours on which he read selections from his books, using Creole dialect in appropriate places. In order to improve his speaking voice, Cable put himself under the direction of Franklin Sargent, a public speaking instructor, for a serious course in voice training. Next, Cable

and Twain made a tour together. The two read extracts from their own writings, and Cable sang plantation songs of the far South. These performances were extremely amusing and interesting to their audience.

Cable's portrayal of the Creole was a very frank and factual revelation, and the Creoles did not appreciate the author or his work. "He penetrated to the very marrow of Creole character; and in his painstaking investigation, he never let his imagination blind him to the actual - to the salient points of the period he had produced."\(^{20}\) The Creoles revealed their active dislike for Cable. A Creole woman was complaining of Cable's treatment of Creoles in his fiction, and James M. Barrie told her that "it seemed that the Creole people whom Cable drew were perfectly delightful people and that if their merits were underrated, they must be the very chosen of the world.\(^{21}\) Edward Larocque Tinker said that "the two most heartily hated people by the Creoles of Louisiana were bloody O'Reilly, who, when governor, executed five of their compatriots for conspiracy against Spanish rule, and George W. Cable, who had the temerity to write of their race."\(^{22}\)

D'Abzac, a French Consul, gave a reception for some prominent


\(^{22}\) Tinker, *op. cit.*, p. 313.
members of New Orleans society and Cable; then D'Abzac had an opportunity to observe the Creole Society and their treatment of Cable. The president or leading member of the original Creole Society refused to shake hands with Cable. The offense did not concern Cable.

In spite of their bitter opposition, the people were forced to admit that Cable gave a vivid picture of Louisiana and her inhabitants. One Creole gentleman attended George Washington Cable's reading from some of his novels and said that the picture was so vivid that one's sensual powers were aroused. His chief resentment was that Cable only represented the lower class Creole or "Cajon," as the higher classed Creole classified him. Finally, the critic made the following statement:

His reading Thursday evening left this impression on a good many of his hearers - that those higher types in intelligence, in education, in culture, in refinement, in taste, in tact, and in those delicate attainments and feelings that constitute the acme of enlightenment, still remain, if not the superiors, the equals of any in Louisiana.23

The rumor was that the Creole resentment drove Cable from New Orleans, but this was not enough to drive Cable from his home. There were stronger motives for his moving to Northampton, Massachusetts. The greatest motive was the fact that his publishers were in the North, and he needed to be near them. His greatest friends were living in the North. Some residents of Northampton were especially eager to have an author of distinction

23 "Mr. Cable and the Creole," The Critic, IV (June 21, 1884), 298.
to live in their community. Northampton was close to Boston and the home of Smith College, which greatly attracted Mr. Cable as the father of five daughters. The family moved from New Orleans to Northampton. The home in Massachusetts was very picturesque.

It was a red brick building of two stories and a half, with a vine-covered piazza, and the smooth-cut lawn sloped gently down to the street. The house was very comfortable. The scenes from the study were magnificent. From one window, the blue and hazy line of the Hampshire Hills could be seen; Mt. Holyoke and Mt. Lorn might be seen from the other window.\footnote{Wetherill, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 169.}

It was in Northampton that Cable released his reformative themes. He did some papers concerning the improvement of prisons in the South and wrote about the negro question of the South. He organized the Home Culture Clubs, which were "for the educational and social culture of working men and women, the improvement of their home life, and the establishment of friendly relations between widely separated elements of society."\footnote{Bikle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 187.} The clubs were to have a purpose of discussing anything in which the members were interested. The members did not have to discuss a definite topic but it was understood that some intellectual benefit would be obtained. The main idea was to give an opportunity for social discourse among people who were from lower class homes and had no opportunity for cultural development. Clubhouses were built to give the people a place to gather. Within the clubhouses, there were all types of entertainment,
including a reading room. In 1892 the activities had taken such a great growth that it was incorporated, and a Board of Directors was formed. The board was composed of men and women of the town. At first eight or ten able townsmen financed the clubs; then it became a more sensible channel of action to abandon the far off reading clubs and to concentrate upon the institute feature. Mr. and Mrs. Carnegie gave the ground for the construction of the People's Institute of Northampton. In the Institute there was a large hall for gymnastics, dramatics, and all indoor games. Cable held the presidency of the People's Institute as late as 1921.

The years in the North were very productive and intellectual and brought many changes in Cable's life. He lectured and traveled extensively. Two tours were made to England. The family moved from its first home to "Tarryawhile" on Dryads' Green. The name was to induce his guests to feel his hospitality, but it seemed also to imply that Cable was to stay awhile because he spent the rest of his life there.

After the death of his first wife, who was the mother of his children, Mr. Cable married Miss Eva C. Stevenson of Lexington, Kentucky. She was a woman of broad intellectual and literary interests, of unusual ability, and of wide traveling experiences. After the death of his second wife, Cable married Mrs. Alfred Church. The two spent the summers in Northampton and the winters in St. Petersburg, Florida, because the winters
of Northampton were too severe. George Washington Cable died in his sleep in St. Petersburg, Florida, on January 21, 1925.

Among Cable's many interests it may be said that he was a zealous advocate with pen and voice of changed election laws, of reform in prison administration, of abolition of the contract labor system, and of justice for the Negro. In addition to being a writer, he was a philanthropist, a reformer, a religious leader, and a Bible teacher. The varied titles of his books indicated his range of interests, but his fame lay in his early creations that so vividly depicted the South and its inhabitants. It was as a local color writer of the South that Cable obtained his recognition.

In his writing of the South, Cable presented three types of people. One of these types was the Southerner, who represented the native white population. Cable was critical of his strong caste system, pride, social conditions, and racial prejudices. Another type was the Negro, who was presented with the motive of revealing his unfair treatment by the white people. The third type was the Creole and Acadian. These two were classified as the French portion of the Southern population. Cable's accounts of Creole dialect and his vivid pictures of the social life of the Louisiana lowlands gave serious offense to some of the people. There was criticism of the Creole's fondness for a romantic past and of his pride in his family background. Each of the following chapters is devoted to one of these three types of people of the South, as depicted by Cable.
CHAPTER TWO

THE SOUTHERNER

"The South is a certain region, and everybody and every-thing within its borders is Southern."¹ These were the words of G. W. Cable, and the one sentence indicated the attitude of the author toward the white population of the South. One group of books by Cable was devoted entirely to a portrayal of Southern individuals who lived in the section call the South.

Dr. Sevier was published in 1885. The book revealed the social conditions of the city of New Orleans. The story was "a study of the development of a man's comprehension of life and society through the most harrowing experiences of poverty."² The sufferer was John Richling, who had been trained for the life of a gentleman; then because he married a girl who did not meet his family's approval, he was ostracized by them. The time of this story was a two year period before the Civil War and during the Civil War.

John March, Southerner was published in 1894. The story occurred during the period of Reconstruction and was concerned with the intersectional problems of the North and South. Cable

¹George Washington Cable, John March, Southerner, p. 326.

²Cornelia Atwood Pratt, "The Stories of G. W. Cable," The Critic, XXXIV (March, 1899), 252.
gave the following description of this era in the South:

The war was over, but its issues were still largely in suspense and were not questions of boundaries or dynasties; they underlay every Southern hearthstone; the possibilities of each tomorrow were the personal concern and distress of every true Southern man and of every true Southern woman.  

The countryside through which the returning soldiers passed was a scene of utter waste with the fences gone and the fields neglected. The animals and herds were driven away, and lone chimneys marked the spot where once homes had stood. John March had to help rehabilitate the South and to endeavor to obtain the aid of Northern money to industrialize the South.

*Strong Hearts*, published in 1899, was the story of three individuals. "The Solitary" was a man who found a way to outwit a world, which was too big and full of temptations for his strength. "The Taxidermist" was a man, who stuffed birds in an obscure little shop. He passed serenely through the experience of acquiring wealth without knowing that he was undergoing a test of character. His real character was proved by the manner in which he spent his money. "The Entomologist" was the story of two women, a wise one and a foolish one. "It was marvelous how Cable made an idyl of grace and sweetness out of such ugly material as disloyal and wandering affections."  

*The Cavalier*, published in 1901, was the story of Thorne-dyke Smith, a young confederate soldier, it gave the young

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3George Washington Cable, *John March, Southerner*, p. 27.
soldier's reaction to war and to the enemy. The woman, Charlotte Oliver, was an example of the strong love that Southern women had for their "Dixie."

*Gideon's Band* was published in 1914. It was written about the period preceding the Civil War when the Old South was in its fullest glory. There were discussions of plantation life and reasons for its failure as a social scheme. There was criticism of the social caste and family pride of Southern society.

*Kincaid's Battery* was published in 1908, and it was one of Cable's weakest novels. The scenes and themes of the story were comparable to those of *The Cavalier*. The events of the terrible Civil War were in subordination to the love-story.

*Lovers of Louisiana* was published in 1913. This book was one of the most critical of the South and its social and economic conditions.

In Cable's depiction of the Southerner, he was especially critical of his love for his state, family pride, strong caste system, plantation life, and complacency in religion. There was the suggestion that the Southerner lacked initiative for personal or social betterment. Although Cable did not speak favorably of the Southerner, he lingered with affection on the lovable traits of individuals.

It had been stated that "it was a brave man who dared lay his hand upon the caste system of society." Cable revealed no

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timidity in the discussion of the subject. There existed in the Southern section of the United States, as in no other place in the United States, a social caste system. "First in the scale came the aristocrats, who owned slaves; then came the merchants, who had money; then came the poor, who were the laborers." This caste system was strictly observed. For example, there was a description of the call to dinner on the boat of the Courtney family. "On the tap of the supper bell, each could snatch a seat near the upper end of the table and so collectively assume among the hundreds on the boat that separate and superior station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitled them."7

The class distinction brought forth an era that was comparable to the feudal system of Europe. The upper class, living in beautiful mansions surrounded by beautiful gardens and maintaining slaves to do their work, became the gentility of the nation. The entrance of any new persons or ideas was strongly opposed because it would interrupt the perfect life which the people had established for themselves. Mr. Hayle, a character of Gideon's Band remarked:

One thing to be stopped at all cost is this deluge of immigration. Every alien, who comes to New Orleans and who passes on up this river into the West, strengthens the North and weakens the South commercially, industrially, and politically, and corrupts the national type, the

6Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era, p. 27.
7George Washington Cable, Gideon's Band, p. 62.
national speech, the national religion, the national love of law and order, love of justice and liberty, and the national health. 8

The most frequently described southern city was New Orleans. New Orleans was the home of Dr. Sevier, Thorndyke Smith, Hugh Courtney, Philip Castleton, Gregory Smith, and many other fictional characters presented by Cable. New Orleans was also the setting of many historical events. It had been occupied by the French, the Spanish, and the Americans; then it had been a Confederate city until it had been recaptured by the Union Army.

The proud Southerner thought New Orleans was the greatest city in the United States. The residents were especially proud of the seaport. In most ports, the vast warehouses and roofed docks projected so far to meet the incoming water crafts that a boat which you wanted to see might be completely hidden. That was not the situation at the port of New Orleans. "You might come up out of any street along that mile-wide front, and if there were a hundred river steamers in port, a hundred you would behold with one sweep of the eye." 9 The Southerner considered New Orleans "the crossroad" of the United States. People from every part of the nation were among the populace of the city. There were people from the banks of the Missouri, the Ohio, and nearer and farther rivers. There were the Irishman, the German,

8Ibid., p. 62.
9Ibid., p. 3.
Cuban, Choctaw, Texan, and Sicilian. Other people were the Louisiana sugar-planter, the Mississippi cotton-planter, "goat-bearded" raftsmen from the swamps of Arkansas, and flat boatmen from the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky. Classified by occupations, there were horse-traders, slave-drivers, filibusters, Indian fighters, circus riders, and men bound for the gold-fields of California.

The Civil War did not destroy the pride of the New Orleans resident. He kept a steadfast hold on tradition, and in New Orleans, as in no other town, "gentility enjoyed a certain right to be treated gently." The following description was given of the traditional element of New Orleans:

Deeply implanted there remained a remoteness in the people's manners, customs, and temperament; an inner sort which in perceptible degree maintained the habit of mind of the atmosphere, of war's isolation half a century after the war's end. It was evident in such persistent outward symptoms as the latticed balconies, the high garden walls, the iron gates, some of them locked day and night, and the visitors' doorbell-knob on the gate post, a sort of outer sentry to the new electric button at the door.

The homes of the wealthy Southerners, both in city and country, were beautiful mansions. There was genuine splendor in the homes, and each home revealed the love of display which was characteristic of the owners. Dr. Sevier's garden was an example of the artistic arrangement of the gardens of the South.

11George Washington Cable, Lovers of Louisiana, p. 5.
Its white shell walks gleamed in many directions. A sweet breath came from its patterns of mingled hyacinths and jonquils that hid themselves every moment in black shadows of laurustines. Here, in severe order, a pair of palms, prim as medieval queens, stood against each other; and in the midst of the garden, rising high against the sky, appeared the pillared veranda and immense, four-sided roof of an old French Colonial villa, as it stands unchanged today.12

The most picturesque part of the Old South was the plantation, and "Cable painted the picture in words of the ante-bellum plantation life."13 Cable considered the plantation system a hindrance to mankind. The Hayle family was typical of the upper class. The mother inherited a beautiful plantation, and the father owned many Mississippi River boats. If you went up the Mississippi, you could see their beautiful plantation with the tilled fields, white homestead, and slave quarters. To the Southerner, this was the select country, and the Captain of the boat said:

I tell you, gentle-men, as sho' as man made the city and Gawd made the country, he made this yeh country last, when he'd got his hand in.14

The leisure of the plantation life encouraged the development of men without any stability. In speaking of the Hayle twins, Ramsey Hayle and Hugh Courtney had the following conversation:

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12G. W. Cable, Dr. Sevier, p. 78.


14George Washington Cable, Gideon's Band, p. 224.
"There's something else which makes your brothers wild," he said, "which they're not to blame for."
"What's that?"
"Our starving plantation life," said Hugh speaking low.
"Why, they call it the only life for a gentleman!"
"That's because they're so starved, so marooned!"
"It's so tasteless without high seasoning, Basile says," said Ramsey.  

Feuds were common among the families of the South. The Courtneys and Hayles were enemies because of a Courtney quadroon servant, who had been involved with Dan Hayle. She and Dan had been on a Courtney ship that burned, and his life had been lost. The family thought that no efforts were made to save their relative; therefore according to the Hayle twins, a Hayle's life had been taken. The two young men were determined to have revenge. Cable considered this a very weak basis for a feud, but he said that "some of the liveliest feuds along the river had been founded on less cause."  

The twins were very young and "were violent in excesses, giddy with the new wine of liberty and crude abundance, and open of speech."  

To strengthen their thread of revenge, the boys forbade their sister to see Hugh Courtney. The feud did not reach the point of combat, and time softened the temper of the Hayle twins.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Southern man was his being a "Southern gentleman" and having too much pride to vary from this status. John Richling was trained to be a master but never a servant. He was a native of Kentucky and "belonged to one of the proudest and most distinguished

15 Ibid., p. 255.  16 Ibid., p. 421.  17 Ibid., p. 6.
families in that state or in all the land." He had never known an ungratified wish until he married. His education was the type that gave results of knowing but not of doing. He had met and married Mary, and his family fulfilled its threat of disinheretance. The only reason for disliking her was that she was from the North. Being of the same type as his family, John matched pride with pride and decided to come to New Orleans, to change his name, and to make a new name for himself.

Richling was not able to find any type of employment in New Orleans. His pride was the cause of his failure. He had no letters of identification, and he would not ask for any because his family would gain information about him. No one in New Orleans would hire an alien on its sidewalks, and a person without letters of identification was considered an alien. The diligence, quick action, and good speech of this man added nothing to his chances of employment. He was quick tempered but very apologetic about it; therefore he never asserted himself. To John, New Orleans was a heartless city in which a man of honest intentions and of real desire to live and to be independent could not succeed because the town did not want his services.

John could not escape the fact that he was a "gentleman," and there were some types of labor that he could not do. There was employment for carpenters, wood cutters, and other types of laborers. When the employers saw John's hands, they refused to

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18G. W. Cable, Dr. Sevier, p. 448.
employ him. His hands revealed that he had never done any hard work. As John remarked, "he was the typical American gentleman, completely fitted for prosperity and totally unequipped for adversity."\textsuperscript{19}

Dr. Sevier, a physician in New Orleans, became acquainted with this couple when he was called to their home to see Mary. The doctor was a member of the upper class of society in the South. In physical appearance, he was tall, slender, and pale; these features added to the austere appearance of this man, who was so stern in judgment and untender in treatment of mankind except in the sick room. His motive in life had been to abolish evil, but with later life, he decided that to do good was better. When the doctor entered the Richling residence, he was concerned about Mary because she reminded him of his young wife whom he had lost as a bride. The doctor tried to help the couple, but they would not accept his aid.

When he was a young man, Dr. Sevier had not been sympathetic with the hardships and misfortunes of mankind. He had a great ardor for moral greatness in all mankind. A doctor had to harden his sentiments because he came into contact with so many pathetic situations, made so many acquaintances, and made so many departures that any susceptibility to sentiment would have been a torture. Dr. Sevier said that "a physician's way through life is paved with the broken bits of others' lives, of all colors and all degrees of beauty."\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 200.  \textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 29.
In giving a reason for John and Mary's failure in New Orleans, Dr. Sevier decided that the two had somehow been recr- reant to their social caste by retrograding into the condition and estate of the alien poor. The doctor knew nothing of their past, but he decided that Mary and John could not survive without aid from family or friends. The young couple perturbed him; then the doctor was angry with himself for his concern. Dr. Sevier had thought it would be easier for any true man to starve than to beg, but he had changed his mind.

Dr. Sevier wondered what John had done with his Southern notions of the yoke of menial service. He advised Mary and John to accept financial aid rather than to condescend to manual labor. The two were convinced that their constant deprivation was slow suicide and that they must accept help.

Mary went to stay with her mother until John was financially able to care for her. John was reluctant to the separation, but he decided that it was good discipline and that no two persons were right for marriage until they could bear separation if they must. Dr. Sevier was sympathetic and explained that separation made a person able to realize the values of life.

John Richling found employment and paid the doctor his loan. The doctor considered it foolish to pay him because the money was a gift. Richling would not accept it and maintained it was best to choose justice when he could and to accept mercy when he was forced. After enduring all the experiences of poverty,

\[\text{Ibid., p. 326.}\]
John understood the social system of the South. Dr. Sevier realized that it took rich and poor to make the world. It took the poor and unfortunate to keep the rich from turning to stone. The gentility of society lost its insight into humanity, and Dr. Sevier advised people "to keep a hold on the rich, comfortable, and happy, to remember that not only the poor need counsel and attention, and to endeavor to be a medium between the rich and poor." The lesson was valuable to both men, but the younger man paid heavily for the lesson. Richling died from the exposure and ill-treatment that he endured. He was buried in New Orleans, the scene of his battle.

John March was one of the most picturesque individuals of the fiction of Cable. March was too young to be a soldier in the Civil War, but he participated in the economic battle of the reconstruction. The best explanation of March was that he proclaimed no profession, and when he placed his name on the sign in front of his office, someone printed "gentleman" under his name. A friend told him "to let it alone because it was a good ad, and he qualified for the title." Cable indicated that "the southern people were not a business people and that was because of contentment." John March was the master of one hundred thousand and sixty acres,

\[22\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 462.\]
\[23\text{G. W. Cable, } \text{John March, Southerner}, \text{p.} \ 207.\]
\[24\text{Ibid.}, \text{p.} \ 207.\]
known as Widewood Tract. Although the Marches owned the tremendous amount of land, they were poor. Their land had been mortgaged; then it had been mortgaged again in order to pay the first mortgage. The poverty was caused by a determination to keep the entire tract and to fulfill a plan for colonization devised by an ancestor. Formerly, slave labor prevented any fulfillment of the plan, but the threat of slave labor was abolished. There was no excuse for not colonizing Widewood Tract.

Young March and several Southern friends, encouraged by Northern Capital and the Southern government, formed a land company to supervise the plan. John March trusted all members of the firm and conducted the business as his unscrupulous friends advised until one of his friends owned half of Widewood Tract, and the other half of Widewood was public lands. The former owner of thousands of acres was landless. March's fate proved that "many people die poor keeping property idle to make a dozen men rich."  

Cable gave more attention to the men of the South than he did to the women. The women were in subordination to the men. All actions of the men revealed that "flattery was the inalienable right of every man and that every Southern gentleman was to treat as irresistible any and every woman in her turn."  

The women were courted ardently, and they spurned the men's attentions until their time of acceptance. John March gave this

explanation of Southern women:

I don't know whether it's true or not, but you know how Dixie girls are. And yet, sir, when they marry, as they all do, where'll you find more devoted wives? This isn't the land of divo'ces, seh; this is the land of loose engagements and tight marriages. 27

Dr. Sevier was concerned with Mary Richling, who was so young and untouched by the world. He said the following about her:

The world was filled with unfaithfulness and this child was thrust all at once a thousand miles into it, with never an implement, a weapon, a sense of danger, or a refuge; well pleased with herself, lifted up into the bliss of self-obliterating wifehood, and resting in her husband with such an assurance of safety and happiness as a saint might pray for grace to show to Heaven itself. 28

Thorndyke Smith spoke of the modest Camille, his friend from New Orleans, as "gathering up all her misplaced trust in him, all her maiden ignorance of what was in man, and all her sweet daring, to murmur, 'good-bye'." 29

George Washington Cable thought that the women of the South had courage during the Civil War. The long married, the newly wed, the affianced, the suspected, the debutantes, the post-marriageables, and others agreed that it was a war "for the salvation of society." 30 These women were convinced that their cause was right. Their idea was: "why don't those poor Yankees give up the struggle? They must see that God is on our side." 31

27 Ibid., p. 197. 31 Ibid., p. 164.
28 G. W. Cable, Dr. Sevier, p. 27.
29 G. W. Cable, The Cavalier, p. 53.
30 G. W. Cable, Kincaid's Battery, p. 180.
The patriotic spirit of the Southern woman was incorporated in the character, Charlotte Oliver, in the novel, The Cavalier. Charlotte was a New Orleans girl, but she had married Oliver, who was a traitor to the South. She did everything that she could to compensate for her husband's actions. Thorndyke Smith described her in a flattering manner:

A woman whose heart beat only more strongly than the hearts of all the common run of us, with impulses both kind and high, although society, by the pure defects of its awkward machinery, had incurably mutilated her fate; a woman wrestling with a deep-founded love that, held by her at arm's length, yielded only humiliations and by its torments kept her half ripe for any sudden treason even against that love itself.  

Charlotte endured great dangers as an agent for the South. She penetrated the Yankee lines, sought an interview with the Chief-of-staff, and asked him to stop the activities of her husband. Her husband was disloyal to both sides, and he was conducting a private war against his wife. Her suggestions were: "to send him so far to the northern army's rear that he could not get back, to compel him to leave the country, or to compel him to go into the North where law and order reigned as they could not between the lines."  

Cable thought the Southern woman was a kind person. A Yankee Captain was captured in a battle and taken to a Southern home as a prisoner. Charlotte Oliver talked very consolingly to the dying soldier. He asked her to sing a song, and she sang

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32 George W. Cable, The Cavalier, p. 68.
33 Ibid., p. 207.
"A Soldier of the Cross"; then he requested "Star Spangled Banner." The request was a shock to those gathered around him. Charlotte sang the song, and there were defiant curses among the guards and orders to shoot. The guns were aimed, but there was no order to fire them. There were tears in the men's eyes as they were asking why someone didn't shoot. Just then Lieutenant Ferry, the commander of the troops, arrived. He permitted the singers to complete the song; then he told the sergeant to resume command. The Southern people gave a soldier's burial to this man although he was a Yankee and their enemy.

Cable was vehement in his criticism of the prisons, hospitals, and sanitation of New Orleans. He gave a challenge to the people:

To reduce the number of helpless orphans; reduce crime and vice! Reduce squalor! Reduce the poor man's death rate! Improve his tenements! Improve his hospitals! Carry sanitation into his workshops! Teach the trades! Prepare the poor for possible riches, and prepare the rich for possible poverty. 34

Cable thought there was need for a prison system less atrocious, less destructive of justice, and less promotive of crime. The following description was given of a Parish Prison.

The Parish Prison was only about twenty-five years old, but it had made haste to become offensive to every sense and sentiment of reasonable man. It had been built in the Spanish style -- a massive, dark, grim, huge, and four sided block with the fissure-like windows of its cells looking down into the four public streets which ran

34 G. W. Cable, Dr. Sevier, pp. 449-450.
immediately under its walls. Dilapidation had followed hard behind ill-building contractors. Down its frowning masonry ran grimy streaks of leakage over peeling stucco and mould covered brick. Weeds bloomed high aloft in the broken gutters under the scant and ragged eaves. Here and there the pale, debauched face of a prisoner peered shamelessly down through shattered glass on rusted grating; and everywhere in the still atmosphere floated the stifling smell of unseen loathsomeness within.35

Cable revealed his opinion of the courts through the arrest and court hearing of John Richling. Being thoroughly exhausted, Richling sat on some steps to rest and fell asleep. He was awakened by the blows of an officer's fist, and John struck him; then John was arrested and charged with vagrancy, assault upon an officer, and resistance to an officer. When he was taken to jail, he was placed in a cell with persons who had charges of drunkenness, disorderly action, petty larceny, embezzlement, and breach of trust. The next day, he was taken to court. The officers of the court did not investigate any case. They seemed to make an even distribution of the penalties of discharged, sentenced to fine, sentenced to imprisonment, and committed to the courts of the state. John Richling pleaded his case. He complained about the place in which he had spent the previous night.

I was thrown with thieves and drunkards! It was unbearable in that hole. We were right on the damp and slimy bricks. The smell was dreadful. A woman in the cell opposite screamed the whole night. One of the men in the cell tried to take my coat from me, and I beat him!36

The men began to cross-examine him. Richling became confused and answered some of the questions in a stupid manner;

35Ibid., pp. 175-176. 36Ibid., p. 211.
then the officers proclaimed him insane. He was angry, and his outburst of temper made the court officers angry; therefore they gave him a thirty day sentence in the Parish Prison.

The prisoners were ushered into the prison as a group. "They were all ages and sorts, both sexes, tried and untried, drunk and sober, new faces, old acquaintances, the passive, and the violent." The types of accommodations were explained in the following passage:

Fifty cents a day was the ticket to a department where one could have a bedstead with ragged bedding and dirty mosquito net, a cell whose window looked down into the front street, food in variety, and a seat at the table with the officers of the prison. If one lacked the money, he passed down one of the dark galleries; then there was a huge grated iron gate which opened with a great screech of bolts and hinges. There was a large flagged court, surrounded on three sides by two stories of cells with heavy, black, square doors all in a row and mostly open; there were about one hundred men sitting, lying, or lounging about in filthy rags.

Dr. Sevier obtained a release for John, but he had suffered humiliation beyond description. Cable thought the purpose of the erection of prisons was for society to protect itself, but society was failing in its purpose because "every man and woman who went out of prison went out a blacker devil, more cunning devil, and more dangerous devil than when he went in."

Cable was very critical of the Southern Convict Lease System. Communities needed to realize that this system did not improve public morals or public safety. The following explanation was given:

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38Ibid., p. 215.  
39Ibid., p. 322.
This system springs primarily from the idea that the possession of a convict's person is an opportunity for the State to make money; that the amount to be made is whatever can be wrung from him; that for the officers of the State to waive this opportunity is to impose upon the clemency of a tax-paying public; and that without regard to moral or mortal consequences, the penitentiary whose annual report shows the largest cash balance paid into the State's treasury is the best penitentiary."

The Charity Hospital was another deplorable social factor. The Charity Hospital "had a ward for poisonous fevers, for acute surgical cases, for simple ailments, and for women." The hospital received many cases that were results of poor sanitation in the city of New Orleans. The town had a poor drainage system and was a breeding place for malaria and yellow fever germs. The swamps in the rear of the town had become "the common dumping ground and cesspool of the city." There were hundreds of acres of land that were nothing but a morass filled with the foulest refuse of semi-tropical New Orleans. It was in this city that emigrant ships unloaded numbers of homeless and friendless strangers to fall prey to yellow fever or cholera. The Charity Hospital sheltered thousands of desolate and plague-stricken Irish and Germans. "At times the very floors were covered with the sick and dying, and sawing and hammering in the Coffin Shop across the inner court did not cease day or night." Cable thought the people's dislike of the North and its

\[4^0\] G. W. Cable, The Silent South, p. 124.
\[4^1\] G. W. Cable, Dr. Sevier, p. 100.
\[4^2\] Ibid., p. 100.
\[4^3\] Ibid., p. 321.
customs was one of the most dangerous traits of the Southerner because it hindered the development of the South. The Southerner regarded himself as a citizen of the South and did not consider the fact that he was a citizen of the United States, also. John March said that "this Dixie soil isn't something that I can shake off my shoes as someone else might. I've got to stay here."\textsuperscript{44} The Southerner thought "one man in his place was worth a thousand who couldn't fill it."\textsuperscript{45} The place of the Southerner was the South, and he received the Northerner as an alien. In speaking of New England, there was criticism of "the blueness of its laws, the decay of its religion, and the inevitable decline of its industries."\textsuperscript{46} The natural beauty in the North was nothing comparable to the beauty of the South. The speech of the northern person was contemptible to the ear of the Southerner. When Thorndyke Smith was being pursued by a Yankee soldier, he "shrewdly loaded his tongue with the hard Northern 'r', which he hated more than all unrighteousness."\textsuperscript{47}

The Southerner thought "the North was envious of Southern opulence and refinement,"\textsuperscript{48} and the superiority of the South was never doubted. The Southern people had no idea that they wouldn't win the Civil War. They just "trained for the holiday

\textsuperscript{44}G. W. Cable, \textit{John March, Southerner}, p. 482.
\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 483.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 137.
\textsuperscript{47}G. W. Cable, \textit{The Cavalier}, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{48}G. W. Cable, \textit{Kincaid's Battery}, p. 15.
task of scaring the dastard foe back to his frozen home."\(^{49}\)

The South wasn't a matter of boundaries, skies, or landscapes. The love for the South was analyzed as "a true feeling and a heart beat possessed by those people, who were Southerners."\(^{50}\) Cable, as a critic, endeavored to show that the Southern social and economic scheme was "being superseded and overwhelmed by an inexorable, economic revolution with our national unity and the world's unity behind it."\(^{51}\) The Southerner, including the Creole, had to realize that "Dixie" and old New Orleans had to go. The people had to assume a new social, political, and economic theory.

\(^{49}\) Cable, *John March, Southerner*, p. 326.

\(^{50}\) G. W. Cable, *John March, Southerner*, p. 88.

\(^{51}\) G. W. Cable, *Lovers of Louisiana*, p. 263.
CHAPTER THREE

THE CREOLE AND THE ACADIAN

The history of the Creoles was a very romantic story, and Cable did not want it to go to waste; therefore he began to write about them as a very unique group of people. Cable said that "it was impossible that a novel written by me should escape being a study of the fierce struggle going on around me, regarded in the light of that past history, -- which had so differentiated Louisiana civilization from the American scheme of public society."¹

"Creole" was the name applied to a person of French or Spanish descent born and reared in a Colonial region.² The home or realm of the Louisiana Creole was a region lying between the mouth of the Red River on the North and Gulf marshes on the South, east of the Teche and south of Lakes Borgne, Pontchartrain, and Maurepas and the Bayou Manchac.³

D'Iberville, a gentleman of Quebec, and a small fleet had been sent by the government of France to pre-empt the southern outlet of the Mississippi Valley. Two of his brothers, Sauvolle

¹Lucy L. Cable Bikle, George W. Cable: His Life and Letters, p. 55.
³Ibid., p. 12.
and Bienville came with him. Biloxi was founded and left in charge of Sauvolle, who died two years later. Bienville became, at a very early age, the governor of the province.

Bienville and his men began to adventure into new territory. Finally, a land site was chosen on the bank of the Mississippi River, and it was there "in 1718 that Bienville placed a detachment of twenty-five convicts and as many carpenters, who with voyagers from the Illinois River, made a clearing and erected a few scattered huts along the banks of the river as the beginning of a capitol of the civilization to which Bienville dedicated his life." This town was New Orleans.

These immigrants from France had children and grandchildren who lost their identity as French. Cable said that "New Orleans is not France, and the Creoles are not French." Cable gave several factors that could have influenced the development of the Creole temperament. There were rich soil and slavery; therefore he could remain an agricultural person without any thought to the industrialization of the South. The luxurious climate helped to make the Creole unambitious and sensual. The 'black code' added to the Creole's quick temper because he was able to give the slaves orders. Wilderness and vast swamps were prevalent in Louisiana; this influenced his fondness of the chase

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4 Ibid., p. 16.
5 Charlotte Adams, "My Acquaintance with Cable," The Critic, III (July 20, 1883), 317 (Condensed from an article written by the same author in a Russian paper, Viestnik Evropli).
as a sport. Also, the wilderness influenced his being good in woodcraft, which was his chief form of education. 6

As a result of these influencing factors, the Creole developed into the following type of personality:

The more pronounced faults of the men were generally those moral provincialisms which travellers recount with undue impatience. They are said to have been coarse, boastful, and vain; and they were, also, deficient in energy and application, and unskilful in handicraft -- doubtless through negligence only -- and totally wanting in that community feeling which begets the study of reciprocal rights and obligations, and reveals the individual's advantage in the promotion of the common interest. 7

The following description was given of their physical appearance:

Outwardly, the Creoles had become a graceful, well-knit race in full keeping with the freedom of their surroundings. Their complexion lacked ruddiness, but it was free from the sallowness of the Indies. Generally, their hair was of a chestnut, but little deeper tint, except that in the city a Spanish tincture now and then asserted itself in black hair and eyes.

The women were fair and symmetrical with pleasing features, expressive eyes, well-rounded throats and superb hair. They were vivacious and exceedingly tasteful in dress, adorning themselves with superior effort in draperies of muslin enriched with embroideries and much garniture of lace, but with a more moderate display of jewels, which indicated a community of limited wealth. They were superior to the men in quickness of wit and excelled them in amiability and other good qualities. 8

Cable, in his portrayal of the Creoles, gave New Orleans as the setting for his novels and stories. New Orleans was a

7Ibid., p. 139.
8Ibid., p. 140.
Creole city under the full influence of traditions that governed that high strung and chivalrous people. This city had witnessed many scenes of history. Within a period of ninety-one years, Louisiana changed governments six times.

From the direct authority of Louis XIV it was handed over in 1712 to the commercial dominion of Anthony Crozat. From Crozat it had passed in 1717 to the Compagnie de l'Occident; from the company in 1731, it passed to the undelegated authority of Louis XIV; from him in 1762 it passed to Spain; from Spain in 1801, it went back to France; and at length, in 1803, it went from France to the United States and was emancipated from the service and bargainings of European masters.

The Place d'Armes of New Orleans reflected like a mirror the events of this town. It had seen military executions and Civil hangings. It had seen human beings bought and sold, heard proclamations from the three Great Powers, looked on while gallants fought duels, and heard love whispered in many tongues.

New Orleans was picturesque because of its blended temperament, which was the chief factor in differentiating New Orleans from other Southern cities. This old town was the nearest approach to Paris of all our cities. There was an honest simplicity about its pastimes, but at the bottom of its society there was an abiding faith in old ideals that put to blush the

9Louis J. Meader, "Dueling in the Old Creole Days," Century Magazine, XIV (June, 1907), 248.

10G. W. Cable, Creoles of Louisiana, p. 134.


12Ibid., p. 931.
cold and hollow religious forms common to certain circles in the North. The following description was given of the Creoles' town.

The old facades of quaint buildings, stained, cracked, their stucco peeling off, seem to grin at you in the bright sunlight with their fantastic lines of strange old architecture. Bright little shops, where everything is sold, invite you, and there is a hospitable air with all the decrepitude. There is an Oriental confusion of buildings; pretentious and very humble structures stand side by side. You see a strange medley of odd designs, severely plain, fanciful French, and Creole composite with fantastic roof lines, angles, and curves that cross and join as the streets sweep away. Probably, no other American city has so many balconies and graceful wrought-iron designs, and there are occasional rich carvings of another age in doors, sills, lintels, and eaves. Lattices veil upper galleries; odd signs are inscribed in French.

New Orleans contained many palatial buildings, one of the most memorable of which was the St. Charles Hotel. Its rotunda was the unofficial meeting place of all the city's most active elements. Royal Street, with its irregular sky line, with its tangle of gables and twisted chimneys, of overhanging eaves, of wrought-iron balconies, and above all its wealth of color, was a favorite background of Mr. Cable's romances.

Cable's pictures of New Orleans were rich in a dreamy subtropical charm. The following description was given of the backgrounds of Cable's novels:

Against the picturesque background of languorous gardens and shaded lawns, of impenetrable swamps and

14 Ibid., p. 935.
15 Ibid., p. 907.
malarial marshes, of winding bayous, and of old world streets, Cable painted a throng of people as picturesque as the scene. The characters do not appear as in life, but they appear under a faint glamor of idealized reminiscence which softens all their outlines as moonlight softens a familiar scene, and which reminds us that we have been conveyed, by an art at once delicate and unique, into the romancer's world of dream.16

*Vieux Carre* lies north of Canal Street. It is called the 'downtown section' of the city. The literal meaning of *Vieux Carre* is "Old Square," but it has become known as the French Quarter. Because of the antipathy between the Creoles and Americans, the newcomers settled in the Faubourg Ste. Marie on the upstream side of the town which is now the business section of New Orleans. This became known as the 'uptown section.' The "Old Square" was described in the following passage:

The old Square is bordered on the south by Canal Street, the dividing line between the French and American sections of the city. The northern boundary is Esplanade Avenue, a magnificent tree-lined thoroughfare which was half a century ago, the most aristocratic neighborhood of the French City. The western boundary is North Rampart Street, and on the East lies the Mississippi River. At the four corners of the Vieux Carre, forts were later erected to protect the city at its most strategic points.17

According to the *New Orleans City Guide*, published in 1938, three of Cable's fictional houses remain today almost exactly as he described them: 'Sieur George's House, 640 Royal Street, Madame John's Legacy, 632 Dumaine Street, and 'Tite Poulette's


Dwelling, 710 Dumaine Street. His own house, which he built in the Garden District, 1313 Eighth Street, is occupied by the New Orleans writer, Flo Field. 18

This was the New Orleans of which the United States became the owner in 1803. One cannot be surprised that the Creoles wept as they stood on the Place d'Armes and saw the flag of its people lowered. "In New Orleans, American thought was foreign, unwelcome, and despised by the unaspiring, satirical Creole." 19 This situation was apologized for by the American, who found himself in a combination of social forces oftener in sympathy with European ideas than with the moral energies and the enthusiastic and venturesome enterprise of the New World. Cable explained the reasons for the Creole dislike of Americans in the following passage:

Claiborne came to set up a power whose whole strength lay in its excellence. His task was difficult mainly because it was to be done among a people distempered by the badness of earlier rule and diligently wrought upon by intriguing Frenchmen and Spanish officials. His wisest measures, equally with his broadest mistakes, were resented. His ignorance of the French language, his large official powers, a scarcity of money, the introduction of the English tongue, and of a just proportion of American appointees into the new courts and public offices, the use of bayonets to suppress disorder at public balls, a supposed partiality for Americans in Court, the personal character of officials, the formation of American militia companies, and their parades in the streets -- all alike fed the flames of the Creole's vehement indignation. 20

18 Ibid., p. 113. 20 Ibid., p. 142.
A last denunciation of America was given by one Creole as he was on his death bed. Agricola Grandissime was speaking to his relative, Honore Grandissime.

Your Yankee Government is a failure. It may live a year or two but not any longer. Truth will triumph. The old Louisiana will rise again. She will get back her trampled rights. 21

Cable presented another character who had a great faith in Louisiana's gaining freedom from the United States. Rowenfield, a character from The Grandissimes, advertised for an assistant druggist. There were forty people at the door the next morning, but only twenty were applicants; each of the applicants was accompanied by a friend who came to see him receive the position. None of them knew anything about the drug business, but all except one were willing to learn. The unwilling one said that "he could not qualify since he was expecting from France an important appointment as soon as their troubles were settled and Louisiana restored to her former condition." 22

Cable gave the following reasons why the enforcement of American law in Louisiana would be difficult:

The Creole of Louisiana, some in pure lawlessness, some through loss of office and some in a vague hope of preserving the old conditions of things, will not hold from all participations in your government, but he will make all sympathy with it, all advocacy of its principles, disreputable, and infamous. 23

In his criticism of the Creole, Cable gave much force to

22Ibid., p. 143.  
23Ibid., p. 119.
the Creole's dislike of America, but there were other dislikes. There were the Creole's speech, his pride, his love of tradition, his dislike of labor, and his gambling, which caused the loss of so many fortunes. In regard to the Creole's dislike of labor, Frowenfield, a character from "The Grandissimes, said the following in regard to the Creole community:

Nothing on earth can take the place of hard and patient labor. But that, in this community, is not esteemed; most parts of it are condemned; the humbler sorts are despised, and the higher are regarded with mingled patronage and commiseration. Most of those who come to my shop with their efforts at art, hasten to explain, that they are merely seeking pastime, or else they are driven to their course by want. Industry is not only despised, but has been degraded, disgraced, and handed over into the hands of African savages.24

Cable was very critical of the Creole's speech, and he thought that an American citizen should reveal a better knowledge of the language. Cable said that "the South's languid airs have induced in the Creole's speech great softness of utterance."25 He thought it was wonderful that the schoolmaster was abroad in Louisiana teaching English.26 Some people considered Cable's criticisms too harsh. The following comment appeared in The Nation Magazine:

The matter of dialect has been carried to the excess. It is possible that much of the grievance felt by the Creoles in regard to Mr. Cable's work is due to this one cause. Anyone with much experience of people has learned that very odd pronunciation is

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24 Ibid., p. 117.
26 Ibid., p. 320.
entirely compatible with a refined intonation. 27

Cable climaxed all criticism in the discussion of the
Creole's illiteracy. Two reasons for his illiteracy were the
comfortable climate and rich soil. He did not have to put forth
any effort to obtain a livelihood. Cable said the following:

The Creole people are slaves to a caste system, a
bondage which compels a community to walk behind the
rest of the intelligent world. This system is only kept
by a flourish of weapons. The class over which these
instruments of main force are held is chosen for its
servility, ignorance, and cowardice; hence indolence in
the ruling class. When a man's social or civil standing
is not dependent on his knowing how to read, he is not
likely to become a scholar. 28

One critic thought that Cable had studied the political
and social aspects of life at the time and place and that he
was interested in the result of his study rather than the person-
ality of his creations. 29 The presentation of the following
books and characters will give evidence to the preceding statement.

Each of Cable's books contained at least one Creole char-
acter, but several books were especially devoted to the Creole.
The Creoles of Louisiana was a history of the Creole. Old Creole
Days consisted of a group of short stories about the Creoles.
The titles of the stories were: "Café Des Exiles," "Belles
Demoiselles Plantation," "Posson Jone," "Jean-Ah Poquelin,"

27"Recent Novels," The Nation, V (Nov. 20, 1884), 441.
29Cornelia Atwood Pratt, "The Stories of G. W. Cable,"
The Critic, XXXIV (March, 1899), 250.
"Tite Poulette," "Sieur George," and "Madame Delicieuse."\textsuperscript{30} Madame Delphine, published in 1881, was a separate volume at first, but it was later a part of \textit{Old Creole Days}.\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Pere Raphael} was published in 1909 and revealed many of the social customs of the Creole. \textit{The Grandissimes} was the most outstanding of the Creole books.

\textit{The Grandissimes} was published in 1880, and its character portrayal was of the typical Creole of 1803. The following passage was a compliment for the literary contribution:

In \textit{The Grandissimes}, Cable's most ambitious work, we have an important contribution to representative literature. In the pleasant guise of his fascinating fiction, he has essayed the history of a civilization; and in many respects, the result is a good book. That such a book should obtain its highest merit in impractical truth when taken as a whole goes without saying.\textsuperscript{32}

This book painted a picture of Creole life, but it was dealing with graver elements of social existence than picturesqueness.\textsuperscript{33}

\textit{The Grandissimes} was written upon the request of \textit{Scribner's Monthly} to furnish a novel. The editors did not know that the work would have any political nature.\textsuperscript{34} The plot was not unusual; there was a presentation of a grand Creole family, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Bisle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 58.
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 303.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} Charles Dudley Warner, Introduction to Selections from Cable, \textit{Library of World's Best Literature}, edited by Charles Dudley Warner, V, 3019.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} W. C. Brownell, "The Grandissimes," \textit{The Nation}, XXXI (December, 1880), 415.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Bisle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.
\end{itemize}
Grandissimes, who were engaged in a feud with the De Grapions. From this situation, ensued a most descriptive romance that revealed all characteristics of the Creole woman. The daring Creole men, who spent their time with love, cards, and all pleasures of life, were portrayed in the character of Agricola Grandissime and Georges De Grapion.

Cable especially made an effort through his character portrayal to make his reader understand the family pride of the Creole. These people did not act as individuals but as a family unit. When a question arose, there was always a family caucus which decided the action of the entire family. Honore was the chief member of the Grandissime family, and it was to him that the family looked for decisions. "The quantities in the problem were the ancestral." Cable gave a description of this situation in the following statement from The Grandissimes:

Show me any Creole, or any number of Creoles, in any sort of contest, and right down at the foundation of all, I will find you this same preposterous, apathetic, fantastic, suicidal pride. It is as lethargic and ferocious as an alligator. That is why the Creole almost always is (or thinks he is) on the defensive.

There was always one family element that made peace and another family element that led the strife. There was a necessity for an individual to lead each force in the family. Agricola Grandissime led the striving force, and Honore Grandissime always


\[36\] Ibid., p. 40.
made the balance of human emotions and actions in the family
by tending toward peace. Cable emphasized that the Creole
lacked reason in his actions and was entirely too hot-headed.

The Creoles in The Grandissimes were pictured as being
very antagonistic toward the United States when it became the
owner of Louisiana. Much clamor ensued among the family, but
Honore Grandissime, acting as the peaceful one, accepted the
Americans gracefully and was in the good graces of the governor,
who asked for suggestions to help make the Creoles submissive
to the United States government. Honore suggested education
and religion as two great factors that might ultimately obtain
the result. There was a strong suggestion "to compel these
people to govern themselves." When this interview finally
drew to a close, the governor had made a memorandum of some
fifteen or twenty members of the Grandissimes, scattered through
different parts of Louisiana, who, their kinsman Honore thought,
would not decline appointments.

Other members of the family were claiming Honore to be a
traitor to the family cause; then, just at the right time,
Honore did the following:

He wrote each a letter saying that the governor was
about to send them appointments, and that it would be well,
if they wished to evade them, to write the governor at
once, surrendering their present appointments. Well!
Evade? They would evade nothing! Do you think they would
so belittle themselves as to write to the usurper? They
would submit to keep the positions first. 38

37Ibid., p. 121. 38Ibid., p. 208.
One would assume that by accepting the positions or appointments, the Creoles had accepted the Americans. Contrary to normal action, they were still just as persistent in their belief that Honecor was a traitor to the family cause. What did the Creole mean by an enemy? Cable gave the following definition in his novel with Agricola as the spokesman:

It implies affiliation with Americans in matters of business and of government! It implies the exchange of social amenities with a race of upstarts! It implies a craven consent to submit the sacredst prejudices of our fathers to the new-fangled measuring-rods of pert, imported theories upon moral and political progress! It implies a listening to, and reasoning with, the condemners of some of our most time-honored and respectable practices.39

"Belles Demoiselles Plantation" revealed the pride of the Creole people. The owner of the plantation was Colonel Jean Albert Henri Joseph De Charleu-Marot. His pride had kept him almost useless, and he despised the honors won by valor. His gambling had prevented his prosperity, and his lands were mortgaged as a result of his life of indolence. The Colonel had a hard heart that loved nothing but himself, his name, and his seven motherless daughters.

Old De Carlos, a half-breed Choctaw, was a distant relative. The De Charleu-Marot family had always regarded the interest of the De Carlos family. A Creole would not disown the ties of blood, and he was never ashamed of his or his father's sins.40

39 Ibid., p. 399.
The Colonel wanted to buy De Carlos's town house, but De Carlos did not want to sell. He wanted to trade homes. Although the Colonel owed his relative a vast amount of money, he would not trade. The Colonel had too much pride to trade with a half-breed. The Belles Demoiselles Plantation house was located on the banks of the Mississippi River. When the waters were violent, there was great danger of the collapsing of the banks. The danger was becoming greater, and the Colonel decided to trade with De Carlos. The Colonel went to New Orleans, and his offer was accepted. As the two were approaching the plantation, they saw the beautiful mansion with the seven daughters collapse into the muddy Mississippi River. The Colonel was seriously ill for one year, and De Carlos took care of him. The Colonel had forsaken his pride to let his half-breed relative care for him.

Cable's literary contributions revealed the Creoles' lack of judgment in the care of their estates. Jean-Ah Poquelin's family estate had diminished because of the following reasons:

It was between the roving character of the one brother and the bookishness of the other that the estate fell into decay. Jean Marie, generous gentleman, gambled the slaves away one by one, until none was left, man or woman, but one old African mute.\(^4\)

Jean-Ah Poquelin had been a slave trader, and his younger brother, Jacques, had been the studious one. Once when Jean was going on a long voyage, Jacques decided to go with him. Jean returned about a year later, but there was no information about Jacques.

From that day, no one was welcome at the Poquelin estate. The area around the estate grew into an unkept condition that was comparable to a wilderness. The house became known as the haunted house. Modern improvements began to come to New Orleans. Streets were being made, and marshes and swamps were being drained. The workmen were approaching Jean-Ah Poquelin's house. The old man went to see the governor, who sent him to see the city officials. Jean-Ah Poquelin was not successful in gaining a promise that no one would approach his property, and the people of the community decided to storm his house and to reveal his secret. The secret of the proud old man was revealed as the mob met the deaf mute leading a small brown bull, which was harnessed to a rude cart. On the flat body of the cart, under a black cloth, were seen the outlines of a long box, which contained the body of Jean-Ah Poquelin. Beside the box was walking little Jacques Poquelin, the long hidden brother, as white as snow with leprosy.

Another character, who foolishly lost his money was Sieur George. Sieur George lived in a boarding house in the heart of New Orleans. "Its rooms were rented to a class of persons occupying them simply for lack of activity to find better and cheaper quarters elsewhere."42 The owner of the house was Kookoo, an ancient Creole of doubtful purity of blood, who in his landlordly old age took all suggestions of repairs as

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personal insults. 43 Sieur George came to stay for a few days and stayed for 50 years. When he came there, he was a young man of fashion. About a year later, something happened that seemed to change the man entirely. He lived in a very secluded manner for several years, then he decided to go to the Mexican War. While Sieur George was gone, a young lady came to live in his rooms. A friend returned from the war with George. The friend and the young lady married, and a child was born to them. The mother died at the child's birth, and the father was drowned soon after. Sieur George cared for the child until she reached womanhood. He told her of the great misfortune that had be-fallen him. Sieur George had lost his fortune in gambling, and all he had to show for the fortune was a small hair trunk filled with Havana lottery tickets.

"Madame Delicieuse" revealed the Creole pride and hatred of Americans. The story was about an estrangement between an army general and his son, who was a doctor.

The staff of General Villivicencio was a faithful few who had not bowed the knee to any abomination of the Americans, nor sworn deceitfully to any species of compromise; their beloved city was presently to pass into the throes of election, and the land, heroically unconscious of their feebleness, putting their trust in reactions and like delusions, resolved to make one more stand for the traditions of their fathers. 47

The general and his son had not spoken in fifteen years. The father was angry because the son would not be a soldier. He had chosen medicine as a career, and he was living under an

assumed name. The reconciliation was suggested by Madame Delicieuse who said she would not marry the general until he and his son had spoken to each other. She wanted to tell the general that his son was a great man. She explained that "in Royal Street, in New Orleans, where the people knew nothing and care for nothing but meat, drink, and pleasure, he was only Dr. Mossey, who gave pills," but his greatness did not end with Royal Street. His name was known and honored in the scientific schools of Paris, London, and Germany. The son had just as much pride as his father and had acquired all of his fame under the name of Dr. Mossey. The son did not want to re-enter his father's affections in any manner except as his son. The doctor was brave enough to duel with the man who had written so unfairly about his father. He did not have to fight because Madame Delicieuse admitted that she wrote the article to arouse a feeling between the two that would re-unite them. She was successful. The father and the son were re-united, but Madame Delicieuse married the son instead of the father.

✓ Jules St. Ange, a character from "Posson Jone," was another example of the people of the gallant days of New Orleans. Jules St. Ange had been wasteful, and he acknowledged it to his faithful friend and confident, Baptiste, his yellow body-

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46 Ibid., p. 228.
servant. The father had become so exasperated that he turned the son from his home. When Jules paid his debts, he could return. Jules was wondering what he should do.

He was left only these few easily enumerated retorts: to go to work, to join a filibustering expedition or to try some games of confidence. At twenty-two, one must begin to do something.\(^7\)

Just as Jules was making his decision, he saw a hat blow from a man's head. When Jules gave the hat back to him, the man bowed; Jules saw the roll of bills that were on top of the man's head. The man was Posson Jone from West Florida, and the money belonged to his church. Posson Jone was accompanied by his Negro, Colossus. Jules asked the two to have breakfast with Baptiste and him. The four went to a gambling room, and Posson Jone became very intoxicated. Colossus stole the parson's money and ran away, and Posson Jone was put into jail because his loud talking was disturbing the peace. Jules felt responsible for the Posson's trouble; therefore he went to see Judge St. Ange, his father.

When Jules entered his father's parlor, his father and some friends were having a card game. The friends were: Pere Raphaël, a priest, and Davezac, a family friend. Jules was not surprised because card playing was a diversion of the male members of his family. Judge St. Ange's attitude toward gambling was explained in the following passage:

Let us not be intolerant. In the judge's house

\(^{47}\)G. W. Cable, *Posson Jone and Pere Raphaël*, p. 22.
there was lively card playing every evening, and few could surpass the brilliancy of his own betting. "What harm is that betting," asked the judge, "if the game is fair and is in one's own domicile, with friends?" 48

Jules told his father about Posson Jone's trouble and requested a release for him. The father gladly wrote a release and gave it to the son; then Jules was asked to join the game. Cable gave a description of the game:

From the first Pere Raphael had played with a nerve that challenged the judge's admiration, and now at once he began to lead the betting with a gentle intrepidity. Davezac followed with equal daring; the judge and his son laughed and kept their caution, and Jules dragged in the constant and startling losses of the reckless pair. 49

Jules wanted to give his money from the game to the Posson Jone, but the Posson would not accept it. The Posson boarded the schooner to return to West Florida. Colossus was there and returned the money to his master. Jules was very happy to see his friend's money restored; then Jules decided to use the winnings from the game to pay his own debts. Judge St. Ange and his son were re-united.

Captain Lemaitre was another Creole who was instilled with Creole pride. "He had been reared by his grandfather, whose unceasing endeavor had been to make his boy as savage and ferocious a holder of unimpeachable social rank as it became a pure-blooded French Creole to be who could trace his pedigree back to Mars." 50

48 Ibid., p. 106  
49 Ibid., p. 145.  
50 G. W. Cable, Madame Delphine, p. 13.
Cable thought the Creole was completely lacking in business ability. Aline, a character in The Flower of the Chandelaines, gave an explanation of her father and grandfather:

"Papa, you know, was like grandpere, a true connoisseur of all those things that belong to the arts of beautiful living. Like grandpere he had that perception by three ways -- occupation, education, talent. And he had it so abundantly because he had also the art -- of that beautiful life."

Zephire Duval was another Creole of a reckless gambling spirit. Zephire was a handsome bachelor of thirty-five, and he lived showily in bachelor's quarters in the French quarter of New Orleans. He was jolly to meet and was deadly to offend. Being the possessor of a famous gift for doing accounts, he could add five columns of figures at a single glance. He owned a costly motor car, sailed a fast pleasure boat, led a fast life, and was as bigoted in his vices as some of the people were in their virtues, yet of an unquestioned business integrity. Zephire didn't love Rosalie Duval, his fiancée, but he saw definite pecuniary advantages in marrying her. He was heavily in debt, and if he made the marriage, he could pay his debts. Zephire had not been honest and had been stealing from the bank for years. When his dishonesty was discovered, the family had to save its pride although it took the entire fortune. The family had to reduce its realities to cash. They saved nothing "except honor, loveliness, and poor relations."

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51 G. W. Cable, *The Flower of Chandelaines*, p. 244.
52 G. W. Cable, *The Lovers of Louisiana*, p. 182.
considered suicide as a method of escape. The clubs would have said that he was a brave fellow. He did not follow this course. Instead, he left New Orleans with the quadroon with whom he was in love.

The Creole women were very beautiful and gentle in nature. One of the fates of the Creole woman was to suffer poverty after the family fortune was gone; then she was reduced to labor such as teaching music, dancing, or embroidery. In The Grandissimes the two Creole women, who suffered from the loss of the family fortune, were Aurora De Grapion and her daughter. The husband and father had lost his fortune to Agricola Grandissimes in a game; then there had been a duel in which De Grapion lost his life. Aurora was very poor, and Doctor Keen, a character in Grandissimes, said that "it made him shiver to see such beautiful women in such a town as this without a male protector and even without adequate support." The mother's Creole pride was revealed in the following passage, spoken by Dr. Keen:

The mother says they are perfectly comfortable; she told the old couple so, who took her to the ball, and whose little girl is her embroidery scholar; you cannot believe a Creole on that subject, and I don't believe her.

Aline Chapdelaine, a character from The Flower of the Chapdelaines, was forced by financial circumstances to work as a bookkeeper. Aline had two maiden aunts, who were dependent upon her.

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53 Ibid., p. 197.
54 G. W. Cable, The Grandissimes, p. 41.
55 Ibid., p. 41.
A description of the Creole woman was given by one author in the following passage:

The Creole girl is by nature joyous, vivacious, and never by any chance rompish. She is nurtured in music, Beranger's lilting love songs, and lullabies; she sings as instinctively as a bird. She is fond of flowers, perfume, and the dance. She has been so guarded that she is by perforce pious and innocent, and when she has reached womanhood and "orange blossoms shine like stars in the midnight of her hair," you will not find in the whole world a wife more gentle, more affectionate, more domestic, more helpful, or more contented than she.\(^{56}\)

Cable gave an account of Creole beauties in the following passage:

It would be most pleasant to tarry once more in description of this gathering of mobility and beauty; to recount the points of Creole loveliness in midsummer dress; to tell in particular of one and another eye-kindling face, form, manner, wit, to define the subtle qualities of Creole air and sky and scene, or the yet more delicate graces that characterize the music of Creole voice and speech.\(^{57}\)

There was an active disapproval among the Creoles to a marriage with an American. Rosalie Duval had been engaged to Zéphire Duval by family arrangement, but his sudden disgrace and departure from New Orleans had released her from this promise. She and Philip Castleton, an American, wanted to marry, but Rosalie knew the marriage would not gain favor from her family. Rosalie's father considered spinisterhood a deformity like an eye knocked out or a twisted spine. Yet to give her to the like of Philip Castleton seemed worse than to

\(^{56}\) Sprague, op. cit., p. 938.

\(^{57}\) W. Cable, The Grandissimes, p. 402.
see her one-eyed, spine-twisted, and a spinster. In spite of his opposition, he would not keep the two apart because he believed in marrying for love. He would not withhold her for the differences "that commonly kept Creoles and Americans apart, and not for any matter of wealth, station, health, or character."  

As time passed, the average Creole and average American became more refined. The Creole began to feel more patriotism. When the Civil War came, the Creole entered. He was still different from the Southerner at large.

He was a little more impetuous, it may be, a little more gayly reckless, and a little more prone to reason from desire; he was gallant, brave, enduring, and faithful; he was the son, grandson, and great-grandson of good soldiers, and a better soldier every way and truer to himself than his courageous forefathers!

The Creole was represented at all places during the Civil War. He was at Pensacola, Charleston, Bull-Run, Shiloh, and Richmond. After the war, he went through the bitter days of Reconstruction. Some of the Creoles were depicted in the Civil War literature of Cable.

The portrayal of the Louisiana Creole would not be complete without mentioning the Acadian French. "The Bayou of Louisiana was the land of the Acadian, the romance land of Evangeline, whose grave any good natured Acadian, and they are all good

60 G. W. Cable, *The Creoles of Louisiana*, p. 262.
naturally, will show you." The Acadians were the children of those Nova Scotian exiles, who were banished from their homes in Canada by British Arms, in 1755. These people lived west of Bayou Teche. Their land was "a beautiful undulating prairie, some thirty-nine hundred square miles in extent, dotted with artificial homestead groves, with fields of sugar-cane, cotton, and corn, and with some herds of ponies and keen-horned cattle feeding on its short, nutritious turf."  

The Creole did not accept the Acadian as his equal in any way. To the Creole, the Acadian dialect was amusing, but in the city the Acadian dialect was hardly known.  

A picture of the Acadian was presented in Bonaventure, A Tale of Louisiana. Bonaventure was an Acadian of a serious mind; therefore the priest took him to his establishment to teach him to read and write. The boy was in love with a gay young maiden, who refused his love. For a time, Bonaventure was very unhappy, but he continued his education. The priest urged him to learn English because it was to his own interest and usefulness. He said that "in America we should be Americans; I wish that I could say it to all our Acadian people."  

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62 G. W. Cable, The Creoles of Louisiana, p. 3.
63 Ibid., p. 318.
64 G. W. Cable, Bonaventure, p. 44.
Bonaventure learned to read and to write in two languages, and he read the newspaper and his shelf of books. When he was ready to take a place in the educational field, he was sent to Grand Point, another Acadian village, to teach school. The people were very enthusiastic at first; then the priest frightened them with the following words:

Do you want your children stuffed full of American ideas? What is in those books they are studying? You don't know. Neither do I. I wouldn't look into one of them. You ought to know that to learn English is to learn free-thinking.65

Bonaventure had a wonderful life filled with service for his fellowman. The Acadians were such a backward people that his service in education was very worthy as he was able to convince the people that education was valuable.

Cable gave an explanation of the relationship of the Creole and the Acadian in the following passage:

They don't like to be reminded that they're Acadian. Well, that's natural; the Creoles used to lord it over them when the Creoles were slave-holding planters, and they were small farmers. That's about past now. The Acadians are descended from peasants, while some Creoles were from the French nobility.66

We can have a good feeling for the Creoles if we know that in later times, under the more gentle influences of a higher civilization, their old Spanish and French colonial ferocity was gradually absorbed by the growth of better traits.

65Ibid., p. 98.
66Ibid., p. 196.
Tinker thought that "the reason Cable had a deep-seeded spleen against the Creoles was because his every hope, habit, thought, and even his religion, were in direct conflict with the Creoles." W. S. Harwood, a writer for The Critic, gave some logical conclusions concerning Cable and the Creole. Not everyone in New Orleans liked Cable. "It does not take long to find that out if you mention his name where Creole tongues may take it up. There are some whose dislike runs almost to hatred. When you have sifted things out, you find that it is Mr. Cable, the writer, and not Mr. Cable, the man, whom they dislike." 68

In his depiction of Southern life and his criticism of the Southern Society, Cable directed the most severe criticism to the Creole. The severe opposition, which he encountered, is very understandable.

67 Tinker, op. cit., p. 313.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEGRO AND SLAVERY

When Cable said that "you can't write a Southern book and keep the Negro out,"¹ he indicated the place of the Negro in his literary portrayal of the South. "Without the Negro the texture of American life, especially the South, would have been different -- different in love, family, social organization, politics, and economy."² George Washington Cable recognized the Negro's situation in the South, and he applied many of his literary efforts to the Negro question. Cable stated his attitude to the Negro question in the following words:

I have never shaped my political writings to the needs of any political party. I dedicate my pen to that great question -- not of party exigency, but of political ethics -- on which I can speak and write, to which as a native Louisianian and ex-Confederate, I am in duty bound, and which is still the most serious and urgent question before the nation: a peaceable renaissance of the Southern States upon the political foundations laid by the nation's fathers, Northern and Southern, when they rose above the dictates of established order, the temptations of the moment's comfort, and the fear to take risks for the right, and gave to their children and the world the Declaration of Independence as an ultimate ideal to be daily and yearly striven toward with faith, diligence, and courage.³

²Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and the Citizen, p. 40.
³Lucy L. Cable Bikle, George W. Cable: His Life and Letters, pp. 164-165.
In tracing the germination of his convictions toward the Negro and slavery, Cable mentioned a series of incidents. His first doubt concerning slavery was at the age of nine when he was learning the Declaration of Independence. He said that he "was puzzled to know how men could declare such ideal truths and yet hold other men in slavery." At the time of the Civil War, he had not really begun to think for himself; therefore he accepted secession and fought for States' Rights, which included this right of secession. When the war was over, the Southern people began to say that the right of secession had been yielded. If people could part with a principle so easily, there was a question of its righteousness in the beginning. Cable read the Constitution carefully and was convinced that the Civil War had not been to confirm States' Rights but to maintain slaveholding.

Cable's first treatment of the Negro question was an article for "The New Orleans Bulletin," in which he supported the movement for the two races to attend the same school. He always kept the principle of revealing his criticism in the South and then in the North because he thought the Southerners would take the rebuke from a Southerner better than they would from a Northerner.

His next article was the "Convict Lease System in the

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United States," published in 1883. This paper was focused upon certain features in that system, which embodied some of the Negro's grossest wrongs; the main feature was his unequal chances in the courts of law. In 1884, he wrote "The Freedman's Case in Equity;" as a result of this article, Cable received "more than one hundred pages of adverse, and for the most part unparliamentary, criticism." The Silent South was written in 1885 as a reply to Mr. Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, who had openly criticized "The Freedman's Case in Equity." In the same year, he wrote the "Negro Question in the United States" for the London Contemporary Review. The solution offered was: "the South's return to and fulfillment of the original principles of government that our Northern and Southern fathers had together declared when they founded the nation." In 1886, he addressed the National League of Colored Men in Boston. The subject was: "What Shall the Negro Do?" A few days later, the essay was published in the Forum. In reply to an essay entitled "Race Antagonism in the South," by Senator Rustis of Louisiana, Cable reviewed the papers of four Southern writers eminent in politics. The result was an essay, "A Simpler Southern Question."

The previously mentioned political contributions of the author attacked the Negro question as a present problem, but there was another phase of Cable's writings that portrayed the

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6 Ibid., p. 162.
7 Ibid., p. 163.
position of the slave in the Old South. These writings did not receive so much rebuke because they were of the past. Among Cable's fictional contributions, there were denunciations of the theory of slavery, of the treatment of the slaves, and of the persecution of the "white Negroes."

Slavery was a dangerous institution. Few in the South today have any idea how often the slave plotted for his freedom. When the masters and their friends were in discussions concerning the equality of men, the slaves would listen.

The slaves were not supposed to understand such matters, but they listened to their masters' conversation as they served the table. Sometimes, they bent an ear from the drivers' seat as the gentlefolk whispered in their carriages. It was not long before the slaves were convinced that they were entitled to freedom, and they were being unjustly and sinfully held in bondage. 8

Some of the slaves were able to buy their freedom, and at the time that slavery was abolished, there were about half a million free men of color in the United States as compared to nearly four million slaves. Not all of them lived in the North. In New Orleans, Charleston, and other Southern cities there were large communities of free Negroes who became important elements in the population. 9 When a free Negro sought his education, he chose to go to Europe because he did not feel the social and political restrictions so much. Becoming a free man did not mean too much as long as the person was living in the United States.

8 Arna Bontemps, Story of the Negro, p. 109.
9 Ibid., pp. 116-117.
Although chance and good fortune conspired to endow the Negro with freedom, he still remained a Negro. According to the prevailing belief, he carried all the imputations of the slave inside him. The Negro was considered a slave by nature, and he could not escape his natural deficiency even if he managed to evade its legal consequences. "The distinction had been drawn in absolute terms, not merely between the slave and the free man, but between the Negro and the white man."^{10}

The freeing of the Negro slaves was dependent upon the master. Some owners were kind and interested in the welfare of their slaves. G. W. Cable portrayed the possibilities of Negroes gaining freedom in *The Flower of the Chapdelaines*. The slave family consisted of Silas, Hester, Sidney, and Mingo. The owners thought that "they would have bought their freedom if they had lived in town where there was a better chance to pick up small earnings."^{11} Silas was a carpenter, and he was permitted to work as a hired laborer when there was no work on the plantation for him. He gave so much of his earnings each week to the owner, and he was allowed to contribute the remainder to pay for his freedom.

Sidney belonged to Miss Maude, and the mistress taught the colored girl. Miss Maude was very sympathetic with the slaves, and she taught Sidney the use of a compass, which proved to be


of great value in her effort to find the North. The inducement to run away was the bankruptcy of the beloved master and mistress. The owners wished they had set the family free when they could have done it. The four ran away, and with the aid of the compass and a young abolitionist, all the slaves, except Mingo, successfully reached the free land. Mingo was caught and returned to the plantation. These four persons were very desirous of freedom, or they could not have endured the torture and danger. Cable expressed the determination of the Negroes in the following passage:

I could tell much about the sweet, droll piety of my three fellow runaways, and the humble generosity of their hearts. No ancient Israelite ever looked forward to the coming of a political Messiah with more pious confidence than those four, when their whole dark race should be free and enjoy every right that any race enjoys.13

The runaway slaves sought the aid of the underground railroad. "There was more than one underground railroad; there were several, running through Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and other gateways to the North."14 Each consisted of little more than a series of stopping points where the tired runaway could make contacts with friendly people, who could provide him with food and shelter before starting toward the next station. These friends and helpers were called conductors, and the fugitives who came to

12 Ibid., p. 38.
13 Ibid., p. 121.
14 Bontemps, op. cit., p. 140.
them had to be ready to give the right knock at the door or to say the proper word under a window. Secrecy was very important because slave catchers were always on the prowl. The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 required the free states to help capture and return escaped bondsmen. The friends of freedom were angered by the law, and the underground railroad began to operate as never before. First, it was used to help Negroes who had already settled on free soil to reach Canada before they could be returned to slavery. Next, it began to reach into the South, and thousands of others were rescued from slavery each year thereafter.

The free Negroes were in the minority, and it was to the slave that Cable devoted most of his writings. The Negroes in slavery were of various social classes just as the white people were. Some of the masters had slave boys to read to them. Other slaves did the work of secretaries, and some of them were associated with prominent Southern figures. A large number were used as butlers, major-domos, overseers, goldsmiths, and cabinet makers. The lowest in the social scale was the field worker. As slaves, they found none of the trades or skills closed to them. Skillful slave artisans did much of the wrought-iron work that was the pride of New Orleans. There and elsewhere in the South, they had a part in the building of many elegant houses. Some of the show places which still stand
were constructed entirely by slaves and free Negroes. The same can be said for much of the fine furniture, inlaid woodwork, and carving that ornamented the mansions of the old plantations.\(^\text{15}\)

Orvide Landry, a character in *The Lovers of Louisiana* and *The Flower of the Chapdelaines*, was an example of an accomplished Negro. During the days of slavery, Orvide had been a janitor at the Hotel St. Louis. He had been able to render a service to his race. The hotel was the favorite of the sugar planters, and its rotunda was one of the principal places for slave auctions. Orvide became friendly with the slave buyers. Mr. Chapdelaine, a slave trader and character in one of Cable's books, *The Flower of the Chapdelaine*, was sympathetic with the Negro. He would buy slaves whom he thought were worthy of being free. To be worthy of freedom, the Negro had to be willing to help others escape to the North. "On the auction block, he would often see a slave about to be sold much below value or whose value might easily be increased by training to some trade, such as black-smith, lady's maid, cook, hair-dresser, engine-driver, or butler."\(^\text{16}\) Orvide helped him to find the right type of Negro for the valuable work of aiding runaway slaves.

After the war, Orvide assumed another role. He had a wonderful education, and it paid a dividend during the Civil


\(^{16}\) G. W. Cable, *The Flower of the Chapdelaines*, p. 45.
War and Reconstruction. Later, he had entered a scramble for office, but he had not been successful and was kept in public services. During his time of service, he had been private secretary to various lieutenant governors. During the period of Reconstruction, the lieutenant-governorship was uniformly conceded to the Negro. In later years, Orvide had been called, at various times, into secretarial service because of his intimacy with the perplexing past. In the present scheme of society, Orvide was reduced to the status of a shopkeeper.

The Grandissimes, a book by Cable, was a denunciation of slavery. There was a conversation in progress among some Americans and Creoles, and there was a direct question as to what comprised a community. An old member of the Creole population answered that "we, the people, always meant the white people."17 The non-mention of color always implied pure white; and whatever was not pure white was to all intents and purposes pure black. When he said 'whole community,' he meant the whole white portion. The slave was given strict rules. When the guns were fired at 8 p.m., the Negro was required to be off the streets. If he disobeyed, it was nothing uncommon for the slave to receive a whipping. Witchcraft was supposedly an art of many Negroes. Palmyre, a quadroon, and her slave, Clemence, were accused of witchcraft, and poor Clemence was almost lynched. Instead of being lynched, Palmyre was shot while in a fierce run to escape

17George Washington Cable, The Grandissimes, p. 73.
the scene that was to have been her lynching. When the people revealed a fear of such a simple person as Clemence, they revealed a definite characteristic of tyranny toward the helpless. The superior attitude of the white was expressed in the following words:

The new moon, the old moon, the moon in the third quarter, but always the moon! Which part of it? Why the shining part - the white part, always and only! 18

✓ Racial mixture was serious and brought more actual grief to individuals than slavery. A person of mixed blood did not belong to either race. Cable's remonstrance was: "don't mix the great races we know apart by their color." 19 According to Cable, the quadroon received the greatest rebuke from society. The following passage from The Grandissimes stated Cable's idea concerning the status of the quadroon:

It seems that the free quadroons are the saddest slaves of all. The men, for a little property, and the women for a little amorous attention let themselves be shorn even of the virtue of discontent, and for a paltry bit of sham freedom have consented to endure a tyrannous contumely, which flattens them into the dirt like grass under the slab. It would be better to be a runaway in the swamps than to be content with such freedom. As the class stands before the world today -- free in form but slaves in spirit -- it is a warning to philanthropists. 20

✓ The quadroon was one-fourth Negro, and he or she was considered a Negro. The quadroon woman was denied the privilege

18 Ibid., p. 73.
19 G. W. Cable, Gideon's Band, p. 413.
of wearing a bonnet; instead, she had to wear a turban, which
designated her race. Her actions in front of white ladies were
described in another novel when Madame Delphine went to Doctor
Vanillat's house to see John Thompson, a lawyer. The quadroon
woman was faint and sat down. "The ladies rose up; somebody
had to stand; the two races could not both sit down at once --
at least not in that public manner." 21

There were many lovely quadroon women portrayed by Cable.
The three most memorable ones were: Palymre, Delphine, and
Phyllis. It was during the second and third decades of the
nineteenth century that the quadroon came forth in splendor.

Old travellers spare no terms to tell their praises, their
faultlessness of feature, their perfection of form, their varied styles of beauty, for there were even pure
Caucasian blondes among them -- their fascinating manners,
their sparkling vivacity, their chaste and pretty wit,
their grace in the dance; their modest propriety, and
their taste and elegance in dress. In the gentlest and
most poetic sense, they were indeed the sirens of this
land. 22

The quadroon balls were another feature that was depicted
by Cable.

The quadroon balls were elegant and deserve a place
in New Orleans, only to be taken by the present carnival.
The magnates of government -- municipal, state, federal, --
those of the army, of the learned professions, and of clubs,
in short, the white male aristocracy in everything except
the ecclesiastical desk, were there. Tickets were high-
priced to insure the exclusion of the vulgar. No distin-
guished stranger was allowed to miss them. They were
beautiful! The quadroons were clad in silken clothes from
the throat to the feet, and wore, withal, a pathos in

21G. W. Cable, Madame Delphine, p. 113.

22Ibid., p. 8.
their charm that gave them a family likeness to innocence. Madame Delphine was a retired quadroon woman of New Orleans, and she had a daughter, named Olive. The daughter's father was a white man, but Delphine held no malice toward the man. When Olive's father died, the child had gone to live with her white relatives. At the age of seventeen, Olive came to live with her mother because her grandmother and aunts had died. It was at this time that Delphine became so concerned about the status of the quadroon; she did not want her child to be unhappy. She warned her daughter not to let her heart go after someone whom she could never possess. Olive was not able to follow her mother's advice. She was in love with Captain Lemaitre, a white man; they were not permitted to marry because Olive had Negro blood in her veins. Delphine was very upset and sought advice from the priest. When she asked the priest why there was a law to prevent the marriage of a white and a person of mixed blood, he replied the reason was to keep the two races separate. Madame Delphine gave the following retort:

They do not want to keep us separated. But they do want to keep us despised! But, from which race do they want to keep my daughter separate? The law did not stop her from being white; and now, when she wants to be a white man's good and honest wife, shall the law stop her?

Delphine became so desperate for her daughter's happiness that she formulated a plan to prove her daughter was white. She

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23Ibid., pp. 9-10.
24Ibid., p. 72.
25Ibid., p. 72.
declared that Olive did not belong to her and that the father had brought the baby to her when its mother died. The father's parents did not know that he was married; therefore they were made to believe that Delphine was Olive's real mother. To prove her story, Delphine showed pictures of the parents to whom Olive showed a strong resemblance. The quadroon woman took an oath to this statement. Olive's happiness was saved by the sacrifice of her mother.

As soon as the evidence was accepted, Delphine went to church to confess the story was not true. The picture of the supposed mother was Olive's aunt. Delphine died while she was kneeling in prayer. Cable thought she was pardoned for her sin. She was a quadroon with all the rights of womanhood trampled in the mire. Sin was almost compulsory for her, and her mistakes should be charged to the account of society.  

The Grandissimes presented two quadroons, who were especially notable characters. An interesting association was made by Honore Grandissime, the principal character, having a partly colored brother. Although the colored brother was the older, the younger brother took the place of the older son of the family. In fact, the colored brother had received nothing except money. Money was his substitute for a family. The other quadroon character was Palmyre. To make the situation more pathetic, Palmyre loved the white Honore, and the colored

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26 Ibid., p. 42.
brother was hopelessly in love with Palmyre. This complication was furthered by Palmyre's intense hatred for Agricola Grandissime. Her hatred was caused by his making her marry a Negro slave. The marriage had not been enforced, but the experience had caused Palmyre to take a defensive stand in life. Finally, after a series of offenses and grievances, the colored Honore Grandissime killed Agricola in Palmyre's defense.

Phyllis was a quadroon presented in Gideon's Band. She was not a free quadroon, but her status was higher than that of the other slaves because of her color. The other slaves said that she was kind to her mistress so that she would not have to associate with the Negroes of pure breed. Phyllis belonged to the Hayle family, and she became involved with Dan Hayle, a bachelor of the family. A child was born to them; then phyllis was taken to live with another member of the Hayle family. Phyllis ran away and was caught in a storm, and her child was drowned. Phyllis was very miserable, and the Hayle family lent her to the Courtney family as a nurse for their children.

Phyllis hated the white race "to which she belonged by three-fourths of her blood but by not one word of human law." Her treatment of Hugh Courtney, as a little boy, revealed her hatred. One reason for her dislike of him was the fact that his age was the same as that of her lost son. Another reason

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27George W. Cable, Gideon's Band, p. 106.
28Ibid., p. 209.
was reflected in her telling him that "having herself once got the lash, she was only paying interest on it through him."\textsuperscript{29}

It had been many years since Phyllis had seen Dan. He came back to the river as a pilot. By chance, Phyllis was on the same boat as he. Hayle suspected that Phyllis was cruel to Hugh, and the boy admitted her cruelty. Hayle told the quadroon nurse that he would tell her mistress if she were ever cruel to the child again. Phyllis took Hugh to his room. The two had an argument, and in the following struggle, some fuses in the boy's pocket became lighted. The ship burned, and many lives were lost, including Dan Hayle's.

Everyone thought that Phyllis was drowned, too, but she was found many years later assuming the role of a white woman. There was a discussion concerning her freedom, and by a will, she was the property of Ramsey Hayle. Ramsey wanted to set her free, but she could not because a minor could neither sell a slave nor set a slave free.\textsuperscript{30} A man from Kentucky, who was going to California, wanted to buy and to marry Phyllis. He had sympathy for her and did not see how she could enter society as a black person after having been free for a number of years. Phyllis did not want to accept the proposal of marriage from him because she did not want to leave the Mississippi River, which she loved dearly. Phyllis stayed on the boat as a chamber maid.


\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 406.
Cable's dislike of slavery and all the situations that ensued as a result of slavery was very evident. Next, the author portrayed the Negro of the Reconstruction Era.

The Civil War ended in 1865, and the Negroes were free. The colored people were promised the privileges of freedom and the right to vote. The white people did not object to the Negro's freedom, but they did object to his having the same rights as they and to his being able to vote. To deal with this situation, Congress set up five military districts and sent the army to make sure the law was obeyed and eligible men allowed to register and vote. Conventions were called to draw up new constitutions in the region where slavery had been practiced.\textsuperscript{31}

The returning masters were sorrowful to find their plantations and entire economic theory in ruins, "but in the depths of their sorrow for a cause loved and lost, there was the one consolation that the unasked freedom so stupidly thrust upon the poor slaves was in certain aspects an emancipation to their masters."\textsuperscript{32} Major John Wesley Garnet, a character from John March, Southerner, was a returning soldier, who would have liked to accept the conclusion lightly, but he could not.

As he looked upon the red washouts in the forsaken fields, and the fried sloughs in and beside the highway, snaggy with broken fence-rails and their margins blackened by teamsters' night fires, he fell to brooding on

\textsuperscript{31}Bontemps, op. cit., p. 167.

\textsuperscript{32}George W. Cable, John March, Southerner, p. 15.
the impoverishment of eleven states, and on the hundreds of thousands of men and women sitting in the ashes of their desolated hopes and the lingering fear of unspeakable humiliations. 33

To make the scene more disheartening, "only that morning, this man has heard for the first time the proclamation of amnesty and pardon with which the president of the triumphant republic ushered into a second birth the States of the conquered banner." 34

Major Garnet formulated a new theory for slavery. The slaves should be redistributed under a new bondage of wages instead of the old bondage of pure force. In this distribution, the wisest and best servants would become the subjects of the wisest and kindest employers. 35

Major Garnet's former slaves were glad to see him and stated that they were still Garnet Negroes, in spite of being free. Everything would have been pleasant if Cornelius had not come to see his former master. The major had sent Cornelius home to stay until he came, but Cornelius had sought employment elsewhere without permission. Major Garnet stated his philosophy of slavery and the free Negro in the following passage:

Cornelius, you know that if ever one class of human beings owed a life long gratitude to another, you Negroes owe it to your old masters, don't you? Here you all are; never has one of you felt a pang of helpless hunger or lain one day with a neglected fever. Food, clothing, shelter, you've never suffered a day's doubt about them! No other laboring class ever was so free from the cares

33 Ibid., p. 16.
34 Ibid., p. 17.
of life. Your fellow-servants have shown some gratitude; they've stayed with their mistress until I got home to arrange with them under these new conditions.\footnote{Ibid., p. 32.}

Cornelius dodged and the major told him not to do that because he was not going to take him to the stable, and he thanked God that he was through whipping Negroes for the remainder of his life.\footnote{Ibid., p. 32.} Cornelius would not be quiet and began to talk about his master and his being on an equal basis. That was more than Garnet could take; he gave Cornelius a whipping. Cornelius screamed and moaned with exclamations of mercy and of threats as to what the Yankees would do. Garnet's anger was not abated. In fact, each statement of the Negro's was a new insult. Finally, the major emerged with a broken whip. Cornelius ran backward to the steps and rolled to the ground, and the whip was tossed after him. The frightened colored man picked up the whip and hurried into the darkness.

Major Garnet's outburst of temper and punishment of Cornelius caused the other Negroes to leave the place. As they were leaving, Garnet wanted to stop them; but, his wife said that "they were hers when property, and they were still hers, and she wanted them to go."\footnote{Ibid., p. 34.}

Cornelius Leggett had a fascinating and colorful career. He attended the Freedman Bureau School and was the agent for his people in Suez, Mississippi. The free people wanted farms;
therefore Cornelius approached a former plantation owner with the idea of selling some land to his people.

As a result of Cornelius's effort, the Negro farm village of Leggettstown grew up on the Holliday place. General Holliday had been a wise Southerner. At the conclusion of the Civil War, he realized that the plantation was ruined because cotton was the sole crop. There was no one to cultivate the cotton, now. The general sold his plantation to a Northerner, who thought he saw a vast future in the plantation. The future was not realized, and the place reverted to General Holliday by mortgage. The Southern man wanted to establish Leggettsville as "a village of small freeholding families." 39

Cornelius had a political career that was not surpassed by that of any white man in the community. He said that Napoleon was his model and that he, just like Napoleon, never stole just to be stealing; but when he found it essential to steal something to further his destiny, he stole it. 40 Cornelius and Major Garnet were bitter enemies, but Garnet avoided any conflict with him because Cornelius knew of some unfair business that Garnet had conducted toward John March.

The previously described ex-slave was unscrupulous and able to deal with the existing government, but there were some Negroes who did not find happiness in their new freedom. The South violently disagreed with the plan of the Union for

39 Ibid., p. 53.
40 Ibid., p. 94.
Reconstruction of the South. At first, it opposed the occupation by peaceful means and argued and voted against the measures it disliked. Later, the South resorted to violence by a kind of guerilla warfare carried on by night riders and secret orders of masked and hooded men. "The most widely known order was the Ku Klux Klan, an organization begun in Tennessee in 1866 for the amusement of a group of young men who soon discovered its more serious possibilities."\(^{41}\) Its members organized together to beat, torture, and murder Negroes and the whites who worked with them. By these deeds and by their burning crosses and flowing white costumes with frightful masks and hoods, they spread terror and confusion. Many Negroes fled from their homes and started toward other parts of the country, but that was not what the South intended to do. The Southerners wanted the Negro to stay in the South, but they wanted him to assume a place which they considered appropriate for an ex-slave. The Southerners did not accept him as a free man. Cable stated his philosophy of the freeman in the words of Major Garnet, a character from *John March, Southerner*.

Freemen are not made in a day! It was to a man who had bought his freedom that Paul boasted a sort that could not be bought! God's word for it; it takes at least two generations to make true freemen; fathers to buy the freedom and sons and daughters to be born into it.\(^{42}\)

No type of authority could force the Southerner to accept

\(^{41}\)Bontemps, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

\(^{42}\)G. W. Cable, *John March, Southerner*, p. 132.
the Negro as a completely equal man. Philip Castleton, a character from *Lovers of Louisiana*, remarked that "down South we call it a Southern question which we will take care of if the rest of the country will only let us alone."\(^4_3\) The solution was racial segregation.

Segregation laws were passed in all of the Southern States. These were the laws known as "Jim Crow" after a name used by a black face character in an old minstrel song and dance act. These laws required separate waiting rooms for Negroes and whites in railroad stations, separate coaches on trains, separate sections in theatres, separate schools, separate restaurants, separate playgrounds, separate parks, and separate everything. The laws specified separate but equal accommodations for each group, but no one took that seriously. The idea of offering equality was out of the question. What the Negroes were given was inferior. Often they were given nothing.\(^4_4\) Cable thought the problem could have been more easily solved if the Southerners had been more observant and willing to accept advice. Cable suggested that "we Southerners ought to study other sections of our country and our people -- if only to know the South and ourselves better."\(^4_5\)

\(^4_3\)George W. Cable, *The Lovers of Louisiana*, p. 27.
\(^4_5\)George W. Cable, *Lovers of Louisiana*, p. 19.
As a result of his study of various political and governmental documents, G. W. Cable was thoroughly convinced that the presence of the Negro in society was the greatest social problem that confronted America. The foundation of the trouble was the Southern belief that Negroes' Civil Rights were social claims. The two rights were distinctly different. All the relations of life that come by impersonal rights are civil relations. All that come by personal choice are social relations. Civil Rights belong to everyone because they are the rules of democratic society. For Civil Rights we make laws; for social rights, everyone follows his own desires. The South suppresses the question of Civil Rights by calling it social intermingling.\textsuperscript{46} Cable stated that "the 'Freedman's Case in Equity' pleaded for not one thing belonging to the domain of social equality, and it does not hint the faintest approval of any sort of admixture of the two bloods."\textsuperscript{47} Cable considered that "we have a country large enough for all the unsociality anybody may want, but not for incivility either by or without the warrant of law."\textsuperscript{48}

Cable stated that the colored people always accepted the common enjoyment of Civil Rights and never confused civil with social rights. There was an exception in the Methodist Church.

\textsuperscript{46}G. W. Cable, The Silent South, pp. 53-54.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 54.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 55.
An effort was made to abolish racial discrimination in the religious worship of the church in the South, composed of Northern whites and Southern blacks, and the effort was a failure. Finally, the church was separated into two separate conferences and into separate congregations wherever practicable. The argument for the separation was that neither race wanted to be with the other, but Cable maintained that "the existence of a race instinct can never be proved or disproved until all expulsive forces are withdrawn, and both races are left totally free to the influences of those entirely self-sufficient social forces." The segregation in the church was disapproved by Cable because he regarded the church as a great fraternity. He stated his opposition through the words of a minister, a character in John March, Southerner.

I don't think the churches are behaving themselves like Christians to the Negroes anywhere. I just know if my Lord and Master were here in Dixie, he'd not bless a single one of all these separations between churches, unless its the separation of the sexes, which I'm sorry that broke up. I'm for inviting those people, and I don't give a cent whether they sit up-stairs or down.

Cable summarized his attitude toward religious segregation in the following passage:

As to the churches, there is probably not a dozen in the land, if one, "colored" or "white," where a white person is not at least professedly welcome to its best accommodations, while the colored man, though he be seven-eights white, is shut up, on the ground that "his race"

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49Ibid., p. 76.

50George W. Cable, John March, Southerner, p. 209.
prefers it, to the poor and often unprofitable appointments of the "African" church, whether he like it best or not.51

The Negro is willing to accept the separate schools for his children, wherever the white man demands the separation. This is not a wise situation because both races of children are being consigned to illiteracy where they are too few and poor to form separate schools. In some mountainous parts of Kentucky, there is but one colored school district in a county.52

Cable gave some attention to the Negro's treatment in courts. First, Cable stated that many of the Southern States did not permit a colored man to sit on the jury. The court was one place where the old sentiments of the still dominant white men were aroused. The Convict Lease System added to the unfairness of the decisions concerning the Negro. There was no hesitation in the placing of a colored man in prison. The assumption was that if the culprit survived the term of sentence and its fierce discipline, it would teach him to behave himself. The proportion of blacks sentenced to the whole black population was one to every 1,488. The proportion of the whites sentenced to the white population was one to every 15,644.53

51 George W. Cable, The Silent South, p. 83.
52 Ibid., p. 31.
53 Ibid., p. 32.
As a result of the white's fear that the black people would gain any type of control, the South has become the "Solid South." This political solidarity is a national and local evil because the union is not founded on the merits of candidates and questions, but it is founded upon a common action against the Civil Rights of the black man.

Cable was a firm advocate of human rights, and he, evidently, felt that it was his responsibility to help remove the social injustices to the Negro. A last recommendation for a solution of the Negro question was:

We need to go back to the root of things and to study closely and analytically the origin, the present foundation, the rationality, and the rightness of those sentiments surviving in us, which prompt an attitude qualifying in any way peculiarly to the black man's liberty among us.\(^5\)

\(^{53}\)Ibid., p. 32.

\(^{54}\)G. W. Cable, *The Silent South*, p. 6.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine Cable's attitude toward the South, including its inhabitants and social conditions. In his fiction, Cable presented three types of people: the Southerner or native white, the Negro, and the Creole. It has been said that "for delicate insight and excellent workmanship there are few short stories in the English language that can approach the short stories of Cable."1 Cable detested half-knowledge, whether of facts, of events, or of people. He maintained that he would not be content to live on a street where he was not on intimate terms with all his neighbors. New Orleans, with its warm Southern temperament and the many months of outdoor life, fostered such an attitude. The fulfillment of this determination was indicated in the knowledge and understanding that Cable had of the people of New Orleans and the surrounding area.

1 In regard to the Southerner, Cable was critical of his pride, strong caste system, and racial prejudices. He thought the Southerner was so engrossed in himself that he forgot the welfare of other people. The insight which Cable possessed of

1Lucy L. Cable Bikle, George W. Cable: His Life and Letters, p. viii.
the Southern population indicated extended social relations with the people. "Life had early become for him a serious matter, and he was impatient of anyone who failed to perceive and appreciate its seriousness."2 Cable was acutely sensitive to the richness, beauty, and capabilities of life. He was never intolerant of any expression of opinion which a person honestly reached, but he could never endure laziness of mind or slovenliness of thought.3

Cable's philosophy of life was: "I believe in beauty and in joy,"4 and he wanted everyone to share this beauty and joy. As long as people were grouped into castes, this could not be accomplished.

Cable maintained that society at large was responsible for all errors of mankind. When a person became an outcast of society, his downfall was the responsibility of society. In regard to social outcasts, Cable incorporated his attitude in the words of a priest, a character in Madame Delphine. "Among other people, reared under wiser care and with better companions, how different a person might be."5 With these factors in mind, one knows that Cable considered the responsibility of the elimination of social castes and racial prejudices as a duty of everyone who lived in the South.

2Ibid., p. ix.  
3Ibid., p. xi.  
4Ibid., p. xii.  
5G. W. Cable, Madame Delphine, p. 22.
In the matter of moral laws, Cable extended the responsibility to each individual. Thorndyke Smith expressed the idea in Cable's book, *The Cavalier*. Smith thought that an individual should never avoid a problem. The individual's solution of a problem of moral conduct is of interest to all mankind. When an individual meets a problem and solves it faithfully and bravely, he has made it easier for another individual to meet the same problem. Instead of the Southerner professing to be religious, he should perform deeds to confirm his religious convictions. Cable thought that "the proof of religious reality was that, as if it were a lighthouse and we, its keeper; everybody else, or at any rate everybody out on the deep would see it plainer than the possessor."^6

The suggestion to the Southerner, the native white of the South, was to forget his pride in "Dixie," in family, and in himself and to be a citizen of the United States. As a citizen of the United States, he should strive to lose his identity as a Southerner with Southern interests and to become an American with the interests of all inhabitants of the United States.

In his portrayal of the Creole, Cable was especially critical of the Creole dialect, of his fondness of tradition, and of his family pride. The Creoles portrayed by Cable were the French of Louisiana, and their ancestors had settled in the area of present Louisiana during the seventeenth century.

These French Creoles had kept their French language and had developed a set of social customs that were characteristic of no other group of people. There was the handicap of their having been the property of France and Spain before becoming the property of the United States in 1803, but according to Cable, this factor was no excuse for the Creole's nonacceptance of the United States and her laws. Cable thought the Creole should be Americanized.

Cable advocated reform of social conditions as well as social and civil relations. The question of sanitation was presented in connection with New Orleans. As a result of the city's inadequate drainage system, it was in constant danger of an epidemic of yellow or malaria fever. When a person without money became ill, he was taken to a Charity Hospital, which afforded very poor medical care.

The prisons were another detriment to society. Cable thought that a man who served a term in prison developed into a worse character than he was when he entered. The prison conditions were so terrible that the inmates decided to take revenge on society for subjecting them to such conditions. Cable considered this an error of all society and not just of the prison officials. The prison should be a place in which to reform people and not to punish them.

In his presentation of the Negro, Cable was very sympathetic. Cable believed earnestly and sincerely that slavery
was wrong. He knew that the American Revolution was fought that men might be free, and he also knew that the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence had been completely disregarded in the enslavement of a portion of mankind. With these factors as a basis, Cable was very vehement in his disapproval of slavery.

With his reactions toward slavery, there was a discussion of the Civil War and the right of secession. When Cable fought in the Civil War, he had considered that he was fighting to maintain States' Rights. When he reached maturity and had made a study of governmental documents, he decided that he had participated in a war to uphold slaveholding for the proud Southerner.

There was a presentation of those people who were partly colored. The Quadroons were the group which Cable discussed the most. There were specific examples of the hardships and unhappiness endured by these people. Cable seemed apologetic to the world for the South's treatment of the people with Negro blood. Cable was farsighted in his writing about the Negro question, and he wanted the people of the South to accept him as a reformer and not as a traitor.

Slavery was abolished for the South, but there are two problems that still exist. The two problems are the social caste system and civil rights. The South has waited for civilization to improve the conditions, but this is not the correct
attitude because the people are the motivation of civilization. "The speed of civilization depends on the people's courage, integrity, and activity." 7

Cable gave the following philosophy concerning the South's meeting of civil and moral obligations:

It is an insult to a forebearing God and the civilized world for us to sit in full view of moral and civil wrongs manifestly bad and curable, saying we must express this or that, and that geologically considered, we are getting along quite rapidly. 8

The South's scantiness of capital, meagerness of population, and the underdeveloped condition of natural resources are largely due to its blind insistance that certain matters in its politics shall be let alone. The federal government interfered once because the South failed to meet the problem of the freedman, but the South can solve its problems without interference or force if it will attack the problem with determination.

Cable, the portrayer and critic of the South, left this challenge to its people.

The best men of the South are coming daily into convictions that condemn their own beliefs of yesterday as the antiquated artillery of an outgrown past; and to the present writer, as one who, himself, found this not easy, but hard, to do, it seems no improbability that our traditionist friends, even before the reply can reach them, may be found ranging themselves among that number, for the promotion of this revolution that everybody knows must come. 9

7George W. Cable, The Silent South, p. 102.
8Ibid., p. 102.
9Ibid., p. 110.
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95


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