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The southern lady ideal in the life of Cynthia Beverly Tucker, 1840-1870

Doris C. Sturzenberger
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THE SOUTHERN LADY IDEAL
IN THE LIFE OF CYNTHIA BEVERLEY TUCKER,
1840-1870

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Doris C. Sturzenberger
1979
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Approved, May 1979

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It is with deepest gratitude that I acknowledge the support, advice, and editorial expertise cheerfully rendered throughout this project by Carol Sturzenberger. She has shared all of its frustrations and pleasures since the beginning.
ABSTRACT

Changes in social and economic structures in the United States during the post-Revolutionary and early national periods caused profound transformations in the manner of living and the attitudes of many Americans, including a small but growing number of women who reaped the benefits of material affluence. From their society they received a changing image of the female role that involved a refinement of the traditional feminine sphere—the home and the family--into a veritable cult of domesticity. Although the North developed its own version of the cult based upon middle-class concepts of the female's role in the home as a haven against the disruptive influences of industrialization in nineteenth-century life, the South elaborated and intensified a long-standing tradition dependent upon aristocratic ideals of womanhood and the white woman's place in a society intimately bound to slavery. In particular, southern perceptions of woman's role resulted in a myth that failed to recognize the true lifestyles of many women and their dissatisfaction with the "southern lady ideal." The momentous changes wrought by the Civil War and Reconstruction began to break apart the confines of the image as women encountered new situations and demands and thus enlarged their own roles and society's assessment of them.

This study is concerned with the life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker of Williamsburg, Virginia, during the period 1840-1870. The ideal of southern womanhood played an important role in her education, as expounded by her father. Although Nathaniel Beverley Tucker's ideology involved a confusion of both idealistic and realistic perceptions of the female role, Cynthia Tucker adapted certain elements, notably an emphasis upon domesticity and also a sense of self-determination and initiative, and applied them in the course of her life. While her father and first husband expected that she fulfill traditional female roles, their deaths, her second marriage, and her activities during the war and rebuilding years allowed her to expand her own vision of womanhood. Like many other women, she developed a strong, positive self-image by combining the pride and dignity of the southern lady ideal and the reliance upon independent action engendered by Civil War and Reconstruction experiences.
THE SOUTHERN LADY IDEAL IN THE LIFE OF

CYNTHIA BEVERLEY TUCKER, 1840-1870
INTRODUCTION

As greater attention is being given to women's roles in and contributions to American history, historians are increasingly concerned with "the complex relationships between popular ideology about women and the everyday reality of women's lives. . . . [They] hope to determine and explain women's self-image and group identity."1 During the nineteenth century, one of the most influential ideologies involving women--the "cult of domesticity"--was a powerful determinant of female behavior and role expectations that, at the same time, did not truly reflect the lives women were leading or the perceptions many held of themselves. This cult and its corollary images of "the lady" and "true womanhood" have received considerable examination and analysis in the last decade.

The present study was undertaken with a dual purpose. First, I wished to ascertain the reasons for the development of these images of womanhood in the northeast region of the country. Second, I hoped to examine specifically the southern version of the cult--how it was similar to and different from the northern version, what its roots were, and how it affected women's lives from antebellum years through the Civil War and Reconstruction. To accomplish both purposes required a synthesis of many separate sources dealing with nineteenth-century womanhood and then an application of the amalgam in an analysis of the life of one southern woman during the period 1840-1870. I sought to answer the questions of how this ideology shaped the patterns of a
woman's childhood and maturity, how it was affected by external influences and events during a momentous period of American history, and how one woman developed an image of herself while operating within the confines of a powerful stereotype.

I view woman's role in nineteenth-century America as multi-dimensional. Although the domestic sphere was undoubtedly predominant, women continued to play an active part in many areas of life, as they had done in colonial times and as they would do with even greater energy in the twentieth century. However, as society, North and South, attempted to deal with great changes occurring in many facets of American life in the nineteenth century, the contributions of women were narrowly defined and subordinated. The implications of modernization and the resulting threats to traditional values and expectations produced a need to define the female role with rigor and vehemence. Thus an examination of why this ideology of domesticity and true womanhood was so influential is vital to an understanding of what women were actually thinking and doing. This is particularly crucial with respect to southern women, as I hope to make clear. I have therefore kept in mind that, despite the tendency to accept unquestioningly those perceptions the nineteenth-century images of womanhood create in one's mind, women "were not passive victims, but always involved themselves actively in the world in their own way. The history of women is the history of their on-going functioning on their own terms in a male-defined world."2
CHAPTER I
DOMESTICITY AND TRUE WOMANHOOD: DEVELOPMENT OF THE "WOMAN'S SPHERE"

The role of the white, middle- and upper-class American woman and the image she projected in antebellum society diverged in numerous ways from those of her eighteenth-century predecessor. Changes in social and economic structures during the post-Revolutionary and early national periods caused profound transformations in the lives of many Americans, particularly those who profited from the attainment of wealth and affluence. During the first half of the nineteenth century a small but growing number of women in the Northeast reaped the benefits of material comfort. They were also the recipients from their own culture of a changing perception of the female role in society, a view they themselves adopted as appropriate and perpetuated as the most desirable expression of womanhood. It involved a refinement of the traditional feminine sphere--the home and family--which became a veritable cult of domesticity through the elevation of noble virtues into an ideal of "true womanhood."

In earlier years the agrarian character of colonial society gave most women a well-defined place in its structure with the family as a self-supporting economic unit. Although work was generally distributed with respect to gender, these distinctions could easily be overlooked as women often performed tasks considered primarily men's work. It was not unusual for widows to maintain their husbands' businesses or for wives to manage family farms and plantations, particularly during the Revolutionary War. While laws and customs did define women's place as
essentially subservient to and dependent on men's, there was opportunity in day-to-day life for women to participate in varied activities and to exercise a number of options. "For women, these conditions provided benefits, such as their gaining the respect given naturally to those contributing essential economic services, and their acquiring the sense of accomplishment and self-respect which comes to those skilled in a variety of functions."^1

Following the Revolutionary War, many women's lives remained generally the same as they had been during colonial days because of the persistence of the agriculturally oriented economy and society of the United States. As families moved west into frontier regions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women maintained their roles as integral parts of the familial economic organization, and they shared their husbands' tasks in providing for their existence. Their responsibilities to their families remained varied, and the importance of their contributions was rarely slighted in societal assessment.\(^2\) But in the eastern United States, particularly in New England, many changes that would affect the lives of women were underway.

The period between 1780 and 1830 was a time of wide- and deep-ranging transformation, including the beginning of rapid intensive economic growth, especially in foreign commerce, agricultural productivity, and the fiscal and banking system; the start of sustained urbanization; demographic transition toward modern fertility patterns; marked change toward social stratification by wealth and growing inequality in the distribution of wealth; rapid pragmatic adaptation in the law; shifts from unitary to pluralistic networks in personal association; unprecedented expansion in primary education; democratization in the political process; invention of a new language of political and social thought; and—not least—with respect to family life, the appearance of 'domesticity.'^3

The expanding opportunities that arose from these early nineteenth-century changes encouraged many men to move out of traditional occupational spheres, primarily those involving agriculture, and to seek new
ways of making a living. Economic stratification separated society into discrete levels that nevertheless permitted upward movement from the lower ranks. It became possible for more men to achieve material comfort and even affluence. Greater economic security and social status were also their rewards.

However, social and economic diversification taking place at this time produced great pressures upon the family and upon social relationships. Families that had been tightly-bound together to face the hardships of early American life now were threatened by the anxieties of the outside world that accompanied the benefits of comfort and wealth. In particular, the women who were among the beneficiaries of material abundance saw their roles in maintaining the family livelihood become narrow and limited. As more men began to work outside the home away from the family and as their work became the chief source of income, most women remained in the home and were increasingly identified solely with domestic functions. Work became strictly defined according to gender, and the economic and social roles of men and women thus split along those lines. While men could take advantage of a growing number of occupational opportunities, women whose functions had been based upon their domestic status but who had played integral roles in the family's economic life found themselves "separated from those activities most valued by a society which measured value in cash. Work in the home, not being paid for in cash, was obviously devalued. More importantly, as the focus of economic activity shifted from the home to the marketplace and the business world, [women], by [their] continuing association with and confinement to the 'domestic sphere,' became ... gradually devalued."⁴

As the home became strictly the female province, physically and
psychologically separated from men's world of work and business, efforts were accordingly made to reverse the negative implications of this loss of female status. Through the media of popular literature, scholarly studies, and pious sermons, a cult of domesticity developed during the first half of the nineteenth century in which the family and domestic life were endowed with the highest virtues and approbation to make female separation from the exclusive male world more acceptable to women. Thus, a wife and mother was accorded the honor and duty to provide in her home the stability that offset the insecurities and hazards encountered by a husband away from the domestic circle. Home was the refuge in which woman maintained order, decency, and Christianity as a buffer against the ruthlessness of American life; woman gained the supreme responsibility for man's morality. "The values of domesticity undercut opposition to exploitative pecuniary standards in the work world, by upholding a 'separate sphere' of comfort and compensation, instilling a morality that would encourage self-control, and fostering the idea that the preservation of home and family sentiment was an ultimate goal." Thus in the home, woman symbolized traditional values concerning work and family and was at the same time expected to uphold them.

Integrated with these concepts was the idea of "true womanhood," also an idealization of woman's role in the home. This cult fit very neatly into the larger scheme of domesticity since it emphasized the virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity itself as the necessary attributes of a woman in relation to her family. If the home was seen as the one true vocation for a woman, then her total devotion to it and to the service of her family would consequently elevate her above the grim realities of the outside world. Proper observance of these four ethics would insure a loving, dutiful wife and mother as
well as a peaceful, virtuous home life for husband and children. Thus a woman could be both angel of the home and a proper subordinate to her husband, the undeniable master of the family.

Popular opinion held that religion or piety was "the core of woman's virtue, the source of her strength." Woman was pious by nature, but lest any secret longings threaten her, religion was the best tranquilizer. Devotion to the church was seen as an excellent, nondisturbative activity for a woman's outside interests—one few men could possibly fear. An attachment to religion would keep the young girl innocent and chaste, for without purity "she was, in fact, no woman at all, but a member of some lower order. A 'fallen woman' was a 'fallen angel,' unworthy of the celestial company of her sex." Of course, the demands of marriage brought an end to purity, a realization most young women did not want to consider; however, the standard of purity could certainly be applied after marriage to the wife's remaining chaste with all other men.  

In the married state, submission and obedience were the most important virtues because they were necessary for the maintenance of family order. The husband was acknowledged to be the natural head of the family, and even though the operation of the household was woman's work, he governed all decisions and expected his wife's acquiescence. Ideally, he treated her kindly and considered her needs and wishes; if not, she must accept this or attempt to reform his heartless ways without defiance. By cultivating her domestic arts, she might make his life easier and thereby earn his affection. In any event, domesticity was an important component of true womanhood, for the home was the center of family life. Young girls were taught all the necessities of housekeeping and homemaking with the view that those who neglected their
lessons could eventually expect a miserable marriage because husbands naturally demanded an efficiently organized and supervised home for their comfort. Work was considered admirable for a woman when it was directed toward the care and love of others, not toward herself. The everyday tasks done by women were considered morally uplifting and gratifying because they promoted patience, thrift, and modesty. Nursing the sick was particularly ennobling, even more so when the woman herself was delicate. She could even cure immorality by making the home a cheerful and loving place so that the male members of the family would not go elsewhere for comfort.

Despite the restrictions imposed by the domestic sphere, the very nature of its confinement led many women to develop their own outlets for personal assertion and influence. One important means was the formation among women of close and intensely supportive relationships based upon mutual experiences and understanding. The rigid, gender-based differentiations that were a hallmark of the early nineteenth-century industrialization process drew women together and away from men. As women found themselves increasingly segregated from the outside world, they began to rely upon the encouragement and support of those sharing the same fate. Because so many events in a woman's life, notably marriage and childbirth, assumed a ritual-like character in which other women participated, there was, from birth, a solid foundation for sisterhood. Mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins, and friends formed throughout their lives tight-knit circles from which men were excluded because of the irrelevancy of their experiences.

[It was] a milieu in which women could develop a sense of inner security and self-esteem. . . . They valued each other. Women, who had little status or power in the larger world of male concerns, possessed status and power in the lives and worlds of other women.
The cult of domesticity and true womanhood attempted to define a place for the middle- and upper-class American woman who was excluded from the expanding opportunities opening to a growing number of men in the early nineteenth century. Since woman had been relegated to, and defined by, domestic duties for hundreds of years, it was not surprising that her role as wife, mother, daughter, and homemaker should be idealized and glorified at a time when her productive role was steadily narrowed. The theoretically egalitarian spirit of the time could make the goal of being a true lady in the home attainable to all women who strove to observe the four cardinal virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. And as Nancy F. Cott has pointed out, these ideals of domesticity had important influences upon women's lives and attitudes.

The doctrine of woman's sphere opened to women (reserved for them) the avenues of domestic influence, religious morality, and child nurture. It articulated a social power based on their special female qualities rather than on general human rights. For women who previously held no particular avenue of power of their own--no unique defense of their integrity and dignity--this represented an advance.13

The inconsistencies and contradictions of the cult lay in its conservative retreat from the dynamic and restless spirit of the time in which it flourished and from the emerging discontent expressed by a number of women who sought a less rigidly structured society and the opportunity to pursue wider interests. The idealization of true womanhood was a powerful ideology throughout the country during the years that saw many women's involvement in reform movements from abolition to temperance to women's rights. If it is difficult to understand the existence of these opposing efforts, perhaps they may be interpreted as alternate attempts by women and men to come to terms with a rapidly changing society. Both the cult of domesticity and the reform movements
desired to make women's lives more compatible with an increasingly complex society. While one ideology sought to give women status and importance in the area they traditionally knew best, the other willingly accepted the challenge of controversy and opposition by placing women in assertive positions vulnerable to attack. Both would greatly affect attitudes toward women and females' conceptions of themselves for decades to come.
CHAPTER II

THE IMAGE AND THE REALITY OF SOUTHERN WOMANHOOD

One region of the country in which the cult of domesticity and true womanhood influenced the entire structure and conduct of society was the South. Although the Northeast developed its own version of this cult based primarily upon middle-class concepts of the female's role in the home as a haven against the disruptive influences of industrialization and urbanization in nineteenth-century life, the South elaborated and intensified a long-standing tradition that involved aristocratic ideals of womanhood and the white woman's place in a society intimately bound to slavery.\(^1\) Anne F. Scott has explored the southern version of this ideology of domesticity in The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930. Through a detailed study of the diaries, journals, and letters of white, middle- and upper-class women who lived in towns and on plantations and farms, Scott finds that "in the South the image of the lady took deep root and had far-reaching social consequences. The social role of women was unusually confining there, and the sanctions used to enforce obedience peculiarly effective. One result was that Southern women became in time a distinct type among American women. Another was that their efforts to free themselves were more complex than those of women elsewhere." The ideals of womanhood were carried to their highest extent of elaboration and adulation in the South, resulting in what Scott sees as a myth that made these women, both its subjects and its victims.\(^2\)
The image of the antebellum southern lady encompassed the behavior, duties, and psychology of the female from childhood to maturity. It was based upon the same conceptions of woman's role as daughter, wife, and mother that were prevalent elsewhere, but in the South the image was more pervasive, rigid, and long-lasting. Much of its power lay in traditions that had been firmly established during the previous century. Ideals of gentility and refinement had long been a part of upper-class southern ideology, and the nineteenth century saw the full flowering of southern "aristocracy." William R. Taylor has described the southern preoccupation with those differences that set the region apart from the North, as well as the development of the Cavalier and Yankee ideologies in the early 1800s. Both the North and the South felt a need for an aristocratic model to offset the image of the acquisitive parvenu, and this ideal could best be fulfilled through the role of the southern planter. In addition, the strength of romanticism and concepts of chivalry in the South during the first half of the century intensified the sense of uniqueness and supported the idealization of plantation life.

The image of the white southern woman was enhanced accordingly to complement the planter in his new status. A traditional belief in both southern and feminine nobility and superiority formed the foundation of the image, setting it apart from the northern ideal that had grown out of the increasingly industrialized nature of that region. Thus the northern author Lydia Maria Child viewed her southern sisters from a considerable ideological distance when describing them as "delicately formed, with pale complexions, a languid gracefulness of manner, and a certain aristocratic bearing, acquired only by the early habit of commanding those who are deemed immeasurably inferior."
Perhaps the most articulate and glorified depiction of the southern woman's image came from the masculine literary sphere. The effusions of George Fitzhugh, a writer on the southern political economy, delineated the feminine character and duties in relation to man's and noted the differences produced by free and slave societies.

Let [woman] exhibit strength and hardihood and man, her master, will make her a beast of burden. So long as she is nervous, fickle, capricious, delicate, diffident, and dependent, man will worship and adore her. Her weakness is her strength, and her true art is to cultivate and improve that weakness. Woman naturally shrinks from public gaze, and from the struggle and competition of life. Free society has thrown her into the arena of industrial war, robbed her of the softness of her own sex, without conferring on her the strength of ours. In truth, woman, like children, has but one right, and that is the right to protection. The right to protection involves the obligation to obey. A husband, a lord and master, whom she should love, honor and obey, nature designed for every woman,—for the number of males and females is the same. If she be obedient, she is in little danger of mal-treatment; if she stands upon her rights, is coarse and masculine, man loathes and despises her, and ends by abusing her. Law, however well intended, can do little in her behalf. True womanly art will give her an empire and a sway far greater than she deserves.6

The slaveholding system provided an impetus as well as a justification for the perpetuation of the southern lady image. If the master could exercise complete control over slaves who were his property, he could dominate his wife by attaching noble virtues and responsibilities to her subservient role. As Fitzhugh observed, woman, like the child, possessed only one right—the right to be protected by the male. In return, she, like a slave, gave service to the master. It would have been inconsistent with the slaveholder's own image had he allowed his wife and daughters considerable freedom of judgment and assertion. The patriarch's power was indisputable and impregnable.7 To keep women confined to domestic activities and yet to glorify their roles elevated his own prestige and strengthened his security in a way of life decidedly to his advantage.8
Thus the image of the southern woman permitted her to be "the most important personage about the home . . . the master willingly and proudly yielding her entire management of all household matters and simply carrying out her directions." But all power remained in masculine hands. The southern "lady" fulfilled a specific role in her society, one which few men would consider altering. "Women, along with children and slaves, were expected to recognize their proper and subordinate place and to be obedient to the head of the family. Any tendency on the part of any of the members of the system to assert themselves against the master threatened the whole, and therefore slavery itself." Much of the stability of southern society relied upon the inculcation and preservation of this image among its citizens.

Instruction in the proper feminine characteristics and responsibilities that constituted the traditional antebellum image of the lady began at an early age. This education was accomplished by building upon the young girl's "aristocratic" heritage. As the postbellum author Thomas Nelson Page proclaimed, "She had not to learn to be a lady, because she was born one. Generations had given her that by heredity."

To strengthen and enhance these in-bred qualities, the female was trained by her parents to be submissive and obedient; these were obligations she would later owe to her husband. Early teaching by her mother and perhaps by a tutor stressed deportment and etiquette as well as reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and household management. As a young woman, she might be sent to a boarding school where her education was refined by drawing, music, and French lessons in addition to history, literature, geography, poetry, and other subjects. The young girl's year or two at school also helped her develop social graces as she made friends with girls of similar background and made the rounds of parties and visits.
In this manner she met eligible young men and put to good use the social charms she had acquired. An integral part of the image, the "belle" provided a model to many young women, who viewed the role as the apex of genteel, cultured southern womanhood and as the culmination of an arduous training. The later years of a girl's adolescence, between the ages of eighteen and twenty, were generally spent with her family, relatives, and friends until she married.¹²

Thus a woman's early years were structured around the ideals and dreams of perfecting herself for her future: marriage and motherhood. "Parents, boarding school, advice books, and friends tried to help her make up for any natural deficiencies by emphasizing the power of manner, charm, 'accomplishments,' and virtue. And since God had created women to be wives and mothers it was logical that he had also, as George Fitzhugh cheerfully asserted, designed a lord and master for every woman."¹³ In the event that love of its own accord did not produce her future husband, the young woman might overlook the lack of romance and marry out of practical consideration. Spinsters had little status in a society based upon marriage as the normal relationship between men and women, and few single women would have refused even a loveless union in favor of permanent dependence upon relatives for a home and financial support.

According to the image, marriage saw the full expression of a woman's capabilities through her role as mistress of the household.

She was the necessary and invariable functionary; the keystone of the domestic economy which bound all the rest of the structure and gave it its strength and beauty. From early morn till morn again the most important and delicate concerns of the plantation were her charge and care.¹⁴

Lest the master incline toward indolence, the mistress must "proclaim the dignity and worth of labor" for "nothing so surely degrades a man as idleness."¹⁵ Presumably, she could make herself an example to her husband
and children since she was "mistress, manager, doctor, nurse, counselor, seamstress, teacher, housekeeper, slave, all at once." 16

Once married, however, the young wife might find her life quite different from what the image had led her to expect. The carefree life of adolescence was almost immediately replaced by the innumerable duties of managing a home, which demanded much more arduous work than the idealization implied. Even those women who had a number of servants or slaves to do the bulk of the physical labor were often overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks they had to arrange and supervise. Whether they lived in town or country, very few women led lives of true leisure, and most filled their days with performing or supervising the routines of sewing, gardening, food preparation, care of the sick, entertainment of visitors, wardrobe maintenance, and general housekeeping. 17 Few girls realized how much work their mothers had done until they became wives themselves. Although they had participated in household duties as adolescents, they were frequently unprepared psychologically for the heavy and often dull responsibilities that were considered woman's duty to perform for the benefit of her family.

One of the most important and demanding of the wife's duties was the bearing and rearing of children. During her girlhood, she had usually cared for her own siblings or the children of relatives and friends when visiting. While she approached motherhood with some practical experience, nothing in her background prepared her for the difficulties of childbirth. Mothers seldom revealed to their daughters the physical and emotional stresses of pregnancy and birth. Not only was it considered woman's lot to suffer in this manner, but at the same time, motherhood was revered as the true fulfillment of a woman's life. "One of the persistent threads in the romanticization of woman was the glorification
of motherhood, with its great possibility for beneficent influence on
the coming generation. Nothing in the myth emphasized the darker side
of maternity... only in private could women give voice to the misery
of endless pregnancies, with attendant illness, and the dreadful fear
of childbirth." A woman might also fear the death of the newborn
child as well as her own demise. She would remain anxious over its
health for years to come, for fevers and other illnesses frequently
struck young children without warning, and death often occurred through-
out the antebellum period from measles, whooping cough, cholera, and
scarlet fever. Thus many women turned to religion to understand the
cruel nature of life at a time when death at young ages was common. A
fervent belief that death was an expression of God's will made the loss
easier to bear, and many women combined a stoic and reverent attitude
with a lifelong fear of death.19

Religion itself was a powerful force in the molding of the southern
lady image. In his study of the Evangelical Protestants in the pre-Civil
War South, Donald G. Mathews has described how the beliefs of these
subscribers fully supported a pious, subordinate, feminine ideal. Evan-
gelical women were extolled as "the ultimate model of Christian disci-
pleship," entrusted with the care of the home and nurturance of the
family. Women participated in great numbers in the Evangelical movement
and formed the majority of the membership; thus, the publicists and
preachers focused their efforts upon sanctifying the virtues of the
domestic life. Every tenet of the cult of true womanhood--especially
piety--was promoted for the ultimate benefit of Evangelicalism itself.

And yet, the tracts and exhortations succeeded in making woman's
sphere "a significant transitional concept which, whatever its conserva-
tive premises and intent, provided women with an important private and
public life." The conversion experience, a cornerstone of the Evangelical ideology, required independent action and assertion on the part of participating women, often setting them apart from male members and non-members alike and drawing them together with other women of the religious community. Although they rejected the worldly role of the belle, they were fully involved in the adult southern woman's everyday life with all of its attendant hardships and inequities. But as with the larger myth of ideal southern womanhood, the image of the Evangelical woman was more powerful than the reality, the contrast between the two revealing "a perpetual warfare between the world and Evangelicals." Religion was therefore an influential element in the perpetuation of the southern lady ideal as well as in the resulting conflict between a complex stereotype and the actual experiences undergone by many women.

The life of the middle- and upper-class southern woman was, to all purposes, a thoroughly domestic one. If the ideals of true womanhood aimed at defining woman's role in the home, southern women were even more indicative of its superficial success than were women in the North. The chiefly rural and agricultural nature of life in the antebellum South strengthened the family and home as the center of society. Attitudes based upon eighteenth-century beliefs in the aristocratic and patriarchal nature of genteel southern life reinforced this domestic focus. But at the same time, life for most women became insulated and provincial. Even though many men owned farms and plantations and therefore worked near the home, they often had business interests that necessitated travel to other areas and led to contacts with other men. Plantations and farms were in many cases miles apart, and a sense of isolation pervaded the towns as well. Thus visits and letters were the
primary means of contact among women who keenly felt their separation from the rest of society. They expressed great interest in the health and activities of their relatives and friends and especially lamented unfulfilled opportunities for visits with one another. Distant cousins often wrote to each other regularly, and young girls would spend months making the rounds of visits to their friends.\textsuperscript{23} Female correspondence frequently indicates the struggles of many women to deal with the loneliness and hardships of everyday life and yet to reconcile themselves to the gilded images of southern womanhood.

Anne F. Scott has described the discontent of numerous antebellum southern women concerning the conflict between the image and the reality of their lives. "Unhappiness centered on women's lack of control over many aspects of their own sexual lives and the sexual lives of their husbands, over the institution of slavery which they could not change, and over the inferior status which kept them so powerless."\textsuperscript{24} The general inability to control their fertility as well as the prevalence of miscegenation embittered many women. The sexual demands of men upon their wives and the resulting regularity of births were exacerbated by the male predilection for crossing the racial barrier. Mary Boykin Chesnut undoubtedly spoke for many when she wrote, "[Southern men] are probably no worse than men elsewhere, but the lower their mistresses, the more degraded they must be."\textsuperscript{25}

Despite their clear hostility to white male/black female relationships, most southern women responded ambiguously to the question of slavery.

Some accepted it without question. Others, complaining of the burden of slavery, nevertheless expected and sometimes got a degree of personal service which would have been inconceivable to women in the free states. It was also true that few were philanthropic enough to give up a large
investment for a principle. It is further clear that most southern women accepted, with a few nagging questions, the racial assumptions of their time and place.26

Many women formed close attachments to their slaves, regarding them as family members and slavery as a system beneficial to all. Ultimately, few could formulate any alternatives to longstanding institutional and social structures.

Thus women often turned their anger and frustration against men, whom they held responsible for their powerlessness. Notwithstanding the promises of the southern lady image, most women were well aware of its inconsistencies. They knew that real life "was more varied and more demanding than the fantasies of southern men would suggest."27 But they were rarely asked whether they were satisfied with their lives. Only in private ways could they examine the question, as did Mary Boykin Chesnut and her friends, and admit that the southern woman's image was no mirror of reality.

Someone asks: 'Why do we wail and whimper so in our soft Southern speech, we poor women?' 'Because,' said Mrs. Singleton, in her quick and emphatic way, 'you are always excusing yourselves. Men here are masters, and they find fault and bully you. You are afraid of them, and take a meek, timid, defensive style.' Dramatically I explain: 'Dogmatic man rarely speaks at home but to find fault or to ask "why?" Why did you go?--why, for God's sake, did you come? I told you never to do that! Or--I did think you might have done the other! My buttons are off again, and be d---d to them! The coffee is cold! The steak is tough as the Devil! Ham every day now for a week!'

What a blessed humbug domestic felicity is, eh? At every word, the infatuated fool of a woman recoils as if she had received a slap in the face; and she begins to excuse herself for what is no fault of hers, and explains the causes of failure, which he knows beforehand as well as she does. She seems to be expected to put right every wrong in the world.28

While such complaints concerning the male attitude perhaps reflected a general female consensus both North and South, there were subtle but
distinguishable differences between the origins and manifestations of
the cult of domesticity in the two regions. In the North, the widening
economic opportunities and the growing number of persons achieving
material comfort and affluence offset the predominantly rural orienta-
tion of life and produced out of necessity a socially desirable role
for those favored women. It was a role that had been theirs previously
but was now enhanced, appearing to be a goal worthy of a life's work
and devotion. The southern version--while also incorporating comfort
and affluence attained by an increasing number of property holders--was
intricately woven together by generations of pride and family honor as
well as an ideology imbued with the prejudices of slaveholding. For
their own reasons upper-class southerners, whether on plantations or in
towns, found it as necessary to embellish woman's role as did northern-
ers. Although the latter were adapting to a new way of life they saw
opening before them, the southerners were keeping a tight rein upon a
traditional and rigidly hierarchical society. The southern elaboration
and deification of the cult of true womanhood produced in itself a mys-
tique that prevailed in antebellum society for decades and only began
to be challenged by the chaos of the Civil War.

In accordance with their image, most southern women remained aloof
from the political battles taking place between North and South in the
years prior to the war. Nevertheless, they entered the secession argu-
ments with a spirit and sense of patriotism that burst forth with the
formation of the Confederacy. While feelings were mixed concerning the
legality and propriety of withdrawal from the Union, the belief of the
majority was unswerving in the justness and inevitable triumph of the
South. Although their "cherishing [of] the grievances of their
section" has usually been interpreted as having produced in these women an intransigent and idealistic view of the South's motives and actions in the war and a resulting preoccupation with the "Lost Cause," their belief in the war effort and their responses to the necessities demanded of them caused a profound change in the lives and self-perceptions of many southern women.

As Anne Scott states, "The challenge of war called women almost at once into new kinds and new degrees of activity." Feeding and clothing the army immediately demanded the establishment of soldiers' aid societies to organize assistance on a local level. With the outbreak of fighting, hospitals were needed in churches and private homes to supplement the already-existing establishments for medical care. And, of course, the welfare of each woman's family was a central concern, particularly with regard to food, clothing, shelter, and money.

Because "southern women were experiencing what was for many of them a new condition: life without a man around to make decisions," they were forced to become more assertive, more responsible, and more innovative to meet new needs. They managed plantations, ran hospitals, worked in government offices, ploughed fields and harvested crops, manufactured goods for sale, and produced many of the necessities of daily life. High prices and the scarcity of money and supplies led to ingenious attempts by women to find substitutes for unobtainable items. While the absence of their men left them anxious and despondent for their fate, many women quickly stepped into masculine places with the assurance that they could meet all demands in the fight for southern victory.

While defeat and post-war life did not improve conditions for southern women, conceptions about the female place in southern society were
gradually but perceptibly being altered. "In some ways the South in 1865 became again a frontier where there were few precedents to help people deal with their problems and few supporting structures for those who needed support." By having performed unfamiliar tasks and undertaken new responsibilities, women, perhaps to a greater extent than the men returning from battle, were prepared to deal with the harshness of life in the South after the war. "Functionally, the patriarchy was dead, though many ideas associated with it lived on for years. Personality styles of southern women were changing to meet the changed time; the new patterns would become increasingly apparent as the century wore on."

The thoroughgoing social change underway after the war led women to become much more active outside the home. The exigencies of life during Reconstruction forced many middle- and upper-class women to seek employment, particularly in the field of education. The abolition of slavery necessitated that they become even more intimately involved with housekeeping and childrearing duties. Many shared the management of farms and plantations with their husbands. And, of course, the large number of widows meant that many women were solely responsible for the care of their families. Overall, the combination of increased occupational opportunities and the need for female employment was a great stimulant to the southern woman's post-war progress.

Many conservatives still did not approve of women working outside the home; but while most women worked because of financial need, the ambitious had greater incentive to excel for their chances for advancement and recognition were more numerous. They no longer had to spend a lifetime dependent on others. They could strike out on their own and go to new communities with less risk of criticism than before, and those who did so were generally more realistic, broad-minded, and receptive to new ideas than their sheltered sisters.

In addition to a wider outlook, many women gained a new interest
in self-improvement and in the betterment of their communities. Beginning in the Reconstruction period, they formed voluntary associations based upon such diverse concerns as literature, missionary work, poverty, and alcoholism. By the 1890s women's clubs were in full flower throughout the South. The wartime activities that had depended upon cooperation and aid to others led numerous women to join together for personal and social progress following the devastating defeat of the South and as part of its rebuilding efforts. Ultimately, they themselves benefited both individually and collectively.

Some women who had joined organizations in the first instance to pursue social or personal development found that the competence gained through club experience opened new doors. For those with real ambition clubs and women's groups were one of the few available roads to anything approaching real power. There was nothing uniquely feminine about combining personal ambition with public service, but the opportunity for women to do so was a new thing in the postwar South.

The southern lady ideal remained influential as women moved outside the domestic sphere, for their progress was still couched in terms of gentility and refinement. With few exceptions, the postbellum woman still drew upon those conceptions as ideological models while she tentatively but steadily increased the scope of her interests. The demands of Reconstruction life evoked immediate responses that were not part of the stereotype, even though they were seen as part of woman's life of service to others. Following the 1870s, the southern woman became more confident in her widened roles but was still sensitive about what was considered "proper."

Although the idealization of the southern woman was difficult, if not impossible, to destroy completely, it now reflected the reality of women's lives less than ever before. As a vestige of the antebellum South the image was cherished by members of a society forced to change
its structures, lifestyles, and ideals. The southern lady was a reminder of a time that now seemed much simpler and happier than the present. But as the century progressed and new patterns and ideas became a part of southern life, the tenaciousness of the image would begin to loosen and thus allow many women to move forward more freely and with greater assurance both in their traditional domestic sphere and in the world outside the home.

For the woman who had the capacity, the health and energy and fortitude, to seize opportunity, the culture now provided not one pattern but many. Few might take advantage of the multiple options, but the options were there and would continue to multiply. Southern women had begun to shake loose from the tyranny of a single monolithic image of woman and were now free, for better or worse, to struggle to be themselves.39
CHAPTER III

TO REGULATE HER DESTINY: EDUCATION OF A LADY

The papers of Cynthia Beverley Tucker (1832-1908) of Williamsburg, Virginia, provide an extensive and detailed illustration of nineteenth-century attitudes toward white, middle- and upper-class women with particular insight into the life of a southern woman. An examination of the period 1840-1870 reveals the power of the southern lady ideal, the reality of life during antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction years, and the growth of one woman's perceptions of womanhood and her own self-image. Aristocratic and patriarchal ideas concerning the structure of society and the family and the role of men in shaping both the image and the manner in which women saw themselves are also integral parts of this study.

Although not among the first families of Virginia, the Tuckers could claim a distinguished ancestry and notable family connections. Early forebears were English, and a number of more immediate kin had settled in Bermuda. Cynthia's grandfather, St. George Tucker (1752-1827), left that island in his late adolescence for Virginia to study law at the College of William and Mary. The Revolutionary War interrupted his law practice, and he served with distinction as a colonel in the American forces. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries his judicial career flourished. He was professor of law at William and Mary, a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals in Virginia, and a federal judge in the Virginia district court. Tucker's legal writings were well-known, and
his annotated edition of Blackstone's Commentaries became a standard text. One of the most notable men of Williamsburg, St. George Tucker owned a substantial amount of land there, built a fine home still standing today, and owned a number of slaves. By the time his son Nathaniel Beverley (1784-1851) reached adulthood, Tucker had firmly established himself in Virginia's upper class. Nathaniel Beverley Tucker would be greatly influenced by his family's social position and background in the formation of his ideology.

After studying law under his father at William and Mary, young Tucker had difficulty establishing a law practice in Charlotte County. In 1809 he and his first wife moved to "Roanoke," the home of his half-brother, Congressman John Randolph. Tucker greatly admired Randolph's intellect, and his own social and political philosophies on such topics as the aristocratic nature of the southern upper class, the idealized slave-master relationship, and the supremacy of states rights were strengthened by the force of Randolph's opinions. Certain conflicts with Randolph, however, convinced Tucker to move his law practice elsewhere, and in 1815 he took his family to Missouri. His career progressed along with the developing territory, and he served as a circuit judge there until the 1830s. During this time, Tucker married a second and a third time, the last to Lucy Anne Smith, almost thirty years his junior.

In 1833 Tucker decided to return to Randolph in Virginia, but his half-brother's death changed his plans and he accepted the law professorship at William and Mary. From this position, his name became well-known and his influence was widely felt in southern political and literary circles as he carried on an extensive correspondence and wrote numerous treatises, speeches, articles, and three novels. From an early date, Tucker avidly promoted states rights and even secession, believing in
the governing of the people by the upper class and the superiority of the state to the federal government. His own prestige and affluent lifestyle in Williamsburg, combined with the social and psychological power of his family heritage, reinforced Tucker's conceptions of the manner in which American society should be structured.

Part of that structure in the South involved slavery, and Tucker firmly believed it to be a great benefit to all involved in the system. His genteel nature and paternal concern produced an affectionate regard for the slave, whom he saw as a dependent under the care and benevolence of the upper-class southern man. Tucker's attitudes toward slavery and his treatment of his own slaves are perceptively described in an unsigned reminiscence written several years after his death in 1851.

He sincerely believed that the slavery of the African was not only necessary but desirable, and contended that it was calculated to produce the highest degree of intellectual and social advancement. The Judge was a very kind master. He had some twenty slaves, as happy as dependents could possibly be. He was as courteous and polite to his servants as to his equals and took great care never to wound their feelings, thinking it especially mean to insult or abuse those who could not resent it. . . . He was the kind friend, the benevolent father, and his servants regarded him as such. They never spoke of him but with veneration, nor seemed for a moment to distrust either his wisdom or his goodness.

Tucker's views on womanhood also were shaped by the aristocratic and elitist forces that were evident in his political philosophies. Nobility of ancestry, combined with virtue and grace, set the true woman apart from all others. The patriarchal structure of society demanded that woman remain under man's control, but this she could do with humility and devotion. It was not that woman should be lofty or superior in her demeanor or attitudes and thus set herself apart from men and society. Rather, she should channel her social prestige and position into a nobility of spirit and service to her family, particularly
to her husband. This devotion was essential to the maintenance of stability and order in the home and in society.

Tucker's novel "Gertrude," published serially in the Southern Literary Messenger in 1844-1845, provides a clear expression of his perceptions of womanhood. Amid improbable twists of plot and stereotypical characters, Tucker includes dialogue and narrative asides that reflect his advocacy of domestic, passive femininity. Tucker's aim is to show how the pure and unsophisticated female can strengthen the moral fabric of society while she is constantly threatened by the greed and arrogance of those around her. In addition, he provides a stern moral lesson against loveless marriages, illustrating his conviction concerning the sanctity of the family.

His heroine, Gertrude Courtney, refuses to marry the men promoted by her ambitious mother, Mrs. Austin, who proclaims, "Let a girl marry prudently, I say, and she will soon learn to love her husband." Mr. Austin, Gertrude's stepfather, champions the young woman's side and states Tucker's own view when he replies, "Can . . . a woman look upon the man who has been forced on her by the tyranny of friends or the tyranny of circumstances, but as one who has profaned her person, rifled her charms, and degraded and dishonored her in her own eyes?" Gertrude's true choice is her stepbrother Henry, and suspecting this, Mrs. Austin sends the girl on a visit to Washington. Here she is quickly accepted by Capital society because her simple charm and manners win its approval. Tucker notes that "the beautiful and graceful need no . . . sophistication, and the cheerful, amiable, and intelligent, gifted by nature with acuteness and tact, are at home in every society."

Gertrude's hopes for herself and Henry are threatened by the machinations of both Mrs. Austin and Laura Bernard, a worldly young woman in
search of a husband, who block the pair's attempts to come together. Gertrude is helpless against these women as a result of her own trusting nature. Tucker does not advocate greater feminine strength and self-determination but merely points out the tragedy of such a situation when he declares, "Passive, yielding and accommodating [sic] from the necessity of her position, the very excellence of her nature makes [a woman] the victim of the artful or inconsiderate measures of those who thus regulate her destiny." The tragedy is usually the result of parental laxness and the evils of a sophisticated society, for "the parent chooses the daughter's company, has constant opportunities to observe the tendencies of her inclinations, and full power to withdraw her from pernicious influences."

Because of Mrs. Austin's greed for Gertrude's social and financial success, the girl's inherent goodness cannot triumph. Henry's attempts to unravel the misunderstandings produced by Mrs. Austin and Laura Bernard are in vain, and Gertrude marries Colonel Harlston, a wealthy southern planter and congressman. Had the girl taken control of her own affairs, she might have prevented the fate she had earlier sworn never to accept. But the very nature of her character will not allow her to act for her own happiness. The ambitions of those who control her fate effectively smother Gertrude's beneficent intentions.

Tucker expressed his views on woman and her role in the family unit and society at large in traditional, conservative terms that were representative of his time. The emphasis upon passivity, domesticity, and moral power that were the tenets of the cult of true womanhood were basic components of Tucker's idealistic vision. In it, "[woman] symbolized in [her] domesticity and moral continuity insurance against the intellectual and moral diversity, confusion of authority, looseness
of organization and ambiguity about change that marked mid-nineteenth century America."\(^8\) Womanhood, like slavery, was an integral part of a social system that Tucker and his countrymen attempted to protect and defend against the threat of a more open, and seemingly corrupt, society.\(^9\)

As he clearly indicated in "Gertrude," Tucker considered the role of a parent as crucial to the development and success of a child's life. Thus he took his own paternal responsibilities very seriously and was eager to impart his knowledge and opinions to his children. The offspring of his first two marriages had died at young ages. Therefore he was delighted with the seven children--six of whom survived him--who were born of his marriage to Lucy Anne Smith. He was perhaps closest and most devoted to his eldest, Cynthia Beverley, born at "Ardmore" in Saline County, Missouri, on January 18, 1832.

The Tuckers established their residency in Williamsburg when the child was still an infant, and there she spent almost all of her life. As a child, she made several trips to her mother's family in Missouri, and it was during a visit in 1839 that her father wrote, "You must not learn to romp and behave like a little prairie colt because you are in the Prairie. I know dear Grandmother will help mother to keep you in order and tell you when you are too wild."\(^10\) Tucker thus began to instruct his daughter from an early age in the image of true womanhood. He found precursors of ideal femininity in the angelic nature of childhood, with its innocence, purity, and an almost mystical quality. He described his young daughter as "so good--so sweet--so loving--so unfit for this bad world--so fit for heaven, that it seems . . . that God should choose to take her to himself."\(^11\)

The prevailing sentiments concerning feminine nature were also
expressed to Cynthia in the early 1840s by her family and friends in her autograph and verse book. "Cynthia, virtue only leads to true happiness," wrote one, and another penned this verse:

A little maiden with a gentle brow;
A cheek tinged lightly, and a dove-like eye;
And all hearts bless her as she passes by!
Fair creature, in this morning of her youth,
She is all love, she is all truth!
She doubteth none; she doth believe all true, for she cannot deceive
Cynthia! how fair, how dear thou art;
How fairer yet thy truth of heart;
That guileless innocence that clings
Unto all pure, all gentle things!
And oh! may time ne'er take from thee
Thy beautiful simplicity!

The subject of education was an important one in the Tucker family. Although little is revealed in the extant correspondence of Cynthia's early education, it may be assumed that as a child she learned reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic from her mother, undoubtedly with the encouragement of and some tutelage by her father. There are references to her having a teacher at home when she was eleven, and she also took piano lessons at that time. In addition to formal education, there were vital domestic skills and knowledge to be imparted. It was Lucy Anne Tucker's responsibility to acquaint her daughter with the duties required of a wife, mother, and mistress of several slaves. In testimony to her mother's skill in managing both house and housekeepers, Cynthia later wrote, "My mother's was a well-ordered establishmment and her servants--we never thought of them as 'slaves' or other than as humble friends--were miracles of neatness."

Cynthia's formal education was widened in 1847 when she was sent to Belmont, a boarding school of excellent reputation near Leesburg, Virginia. Here, a large number of subjects was offered for study, as well as a program of recreational and social activities, all to provide
the proper development of a young lady's intellect and demeanor. The
letters of Rachel Jackson, great-niece of Andrew Jackson and student
at Belmont during 1848-1850, reveal that the curriculum was extremely
broad: English, Spanish, Latin, and French grammar, composition, and
translation; history; music; drawing and painting; geography; chemistry;
botany; philosophy; mathematics; and ethics were among the offerings.
A typical day included prayers, Bible readings, outdoor play and cal-
isthenics, recitations, class meetings, and dancing. Concerts and par-
ties were also an important part of life at school.¹⁵

Neither the letters of Cynthia Tucker nor those of Rachel Jackson
describe how strictly subjects were taught or how diligently lessons
were pursued. However, during Rachel's term some courses were taught
only once a week,¹⁶ so it may be assumed that with the large number of
subjects, some, if not many, were given cursory treatment. Basic con-
cepts were apparently emphasized in the academic area, while other as-
pects of education received wider consideration. As a former Belmont
pupil remarked to Cynthia, "I think that at B[elmont] there is greater
attention paid to the moral conduct of the girls, and that they were
more apt to form those happy intimacies which last through life. I
consider Belmont a better school for those who have not been in regular
habits of study, for everything is so explained and simplified."¹⁷
Since the general purpose of boarding school was to prepare the young
woman for her future role, it was natural that emphasis should be given
to a smattering of knowledge on a variety of topics suitable for social
intercourse. While the family provided training in educational funda-
mentals and domestic management, it was the school's responsibility to
polish a female's social skills and graces.

Despite the anguish caused by the separation from her family,¹⁸
Cynthia quickly adjusted to the school routine. Her reports home were answered by advice and encouragement from her parents: her mother requested that she keep a journal of her activities and remain mindful of her deportment, and her father urged, "I do not want your old friends here to get the start of you in any thing, especially as I am sure if you will but do justice to the faculties that God has given you, you will have no need to fear comparison with any of them."  

Although Cynthia's schoolwork was satisfactory and her enjoyment of her instructors was such that she expressed to her parents a desire to become a teacher herself, it seems that a rumor that she had become engaged so upset and embarrassed the fifteen-year-old that she requested her parents to call her home four months after her arrival at Belmont. To this they agreed, and in hopes of continuing her education by some means, Tucker asked that she concentrate on her drawing lessons, as he could teach her any other subject at home.

In November 1848 Tucker decided to send Cynthia to "Eagle Point," the Gloucester County home of his niece, Elizabeth Tucker Bryan. She had been the protege of John Randolph of Roanoke, who had advised her on all aspects of her education and had encouraged her association with men of learning and refinement. Following her marriage to John Randolph Bryan, another of Randolph's favorites, Elizabeth Bryan established her home as a center of cultural interests for the benefit of her family, as well as that of her dear "Uncle Bev." Her devotion to Cynthia was especially strong. Therefore she gladly agreed to Tucker's request that his daughter be taught in the Bryan home. Tucker had apparently become disillusioned by the Belmont experience, for he wrote, "I don't care a straw for school-mistresses--but the society of a woman of sense and original mind is what I hope will awaken her faculties, and give
an impulse and direction that may fit her for something better than to suckle fools."\textsuperscript{25}

Elizabeth Bryan was aware of the southern lady image and abhorred its contemporary emphasis upon appearance and display. She, like her uncle, preferred the more dignified antecedent of antebellum womanhood—an aristocratic and thoroughly domestic orientation of the feminine role within the family and society itself. She particularly decried what had developed in the conduct of male/female relationships and in the education of young women.

We cultivate the vanity of our Daughters unconsciously. We love to see them look lovely, and instead of cultivating and refining their tasks and elevating and sobering their minds by useful and dignified pursuits, too much thought and time are lavished on that which is merely external. A false importance is given to fashion and appearance. Every whim, however expensive, must be gratified. Home and its quiet enjoyments are not the order of the Day. Young ladies no longer wait to be sought, but are exposed as candidates for admiration, in the winter in the Cities, and in the Summer at the watering places. What is the effect—a poor young man however worthy dares not court them; and they sell themselves to the highest bidder. I declare to you that [I] look with a degree of horror that I cannot express on all this.\textsuperscript{26}

Thus it was Mrs. Bryan's intention that Cynthia be exposed to a more sobering pattern of feminine behavior, and she relied upon her close relationship with the girl as a means of influence. Ties between the Tucker family and their many relatives were very strong, and the Bryans were among their closest kin, sending frequent letters across the York River and making extended visits to one another. Elizabeth Bryan wrote regularly to Beverley Tucker and to Lucy Anne Tucker, with whom she shared the trials of childbirth and childrearing and the sorrows of illness and death.\textsuperscript{27} She had a special regard for Cynthia within her circle of intimates, and she encouraged the girl to look upon all the Bryan females as her closest friends and confidantes.
Cynthia's relations with her own mother were warm and loving. Although her father supplied the most vocal expression of what constituted woman's role and duties, Cynthia relied upon her mother's quiet example and advice. Despite the innumerable duties involved in rearing seven children and managing her household, Lucy Anne Tucker devoted much of her time and interest to her eldest child.

Could I tell you how often I think of you? [N]o my child, my last thoughts at night, when kneeling by the bedside of my two little daughters and praying to God for his protection and guidance, are of my precious Cynthia[.]. Among my earliest morning thoughts she appears to me, at mid-day, and at noon, she is with me[.]. When is she absent from my mind? [N]ot often or long. God bless and preserve you my darling, my first born, be happy, be gay and bright.28

Mrs. Tucker realized the importance of life-long female friendships and the benefits of mutual encouragement and understanding. She maintained devoted relationships with her immediate family, kin, and friends in Virginia, but perhaps her closest and most intimate friendship had been formed during her Missouri girlhood. In a letter of 1848, she expressed with much emotion her love for Sara Bella Penn.

Oh! my dear Bella what a flood of recollection was opened by your letter[.]. Days of my childhood when you were as a sister, and as I advanced to womanhood, you were still the same, and then, the winter after my marriage, the many pleasant hours we passed together, with the merry and happy faces around us[.]. Now, no more[.]. Were we not then dear to each other? And then, when we met as Mothers, having suffered the same pains, and borne the same burdens, were we not then dear to each other? And now that we have the same cares, anxieties, and hopes, are we not dear to each other? How so far separated my own heart answers yes, and must ever be. There is no attachment, friendship, like that formed in youth. I feel sure, that I can judge for I have met with many kind, warm friends, such as I can never forget. Still there is a something, a sort of reserve, never felt in childhood. You are my oldest and dearest friend, and can you for a moment doubt my love?29

This concept of sisterhood was also evident in Cynthia's own life. Childhood and adolescence were important periods for the formation of
friendships vital to personal development and social success. She maintained an active correspondence with relatives and friends in Virginia and Missouri as well as with her schoolmates at Belmont, sharing thoughts and feelings each believed only the other could understand. Letters were assumed to be of a strictly confidential nature, often ending with the sentences, "Please don't show my letter to anyone" or "Burn this letter." Through these private exchanges women developed a reliance upon one another that consequently produced extreme anxiety over real or imaginary slights. A Williamsburg friend wrote, "I wish (Dear Cynthia) that I knew whether you nearly thought me deceitful or not; the first letter you wrote me has disturbed me more than you could think, for I could not keep from crying when I read those words from you." Tardy letters and visits were cause for genuine alarm and fears that the other's devotion had faltered. Lucy Anne Tucker's sister, only a few years older than Cynthia herself, scolded her niece, "I am sure if you only knew with what anxiety I have been expecting an answer to my letter, you would be sorry that you had not answered it. I am almost afraid that you do not love 'Sister' as much as you once did." But disagreements were rare, and Cynthia and her correspondents used their letters to strengthen each other's self-confidence through admiration and flattery. They were preparing themselves for the social demands of late adolescence: courtship and marriage.

Physical appearance and demeanor were considered the most important prerequisites for social success. Intelligence was necessary insofar as a young woman had to choose proper topics of discussion and exhibit appropriate knowledge of persons and events in order to attract the attention and approval of her peers. Cynthia's mother proudly described the sixteen-year-old as having "a good figure, very pretty neck and
shoulders, a fine skin and complexion, fine teeth set in a large mouth and I am sorry to say has been much more courted and admired than I think is good for any young lady. It could not be helped for she is very beautiful, and of most fascinating manners. She has a good mind and shows a disposition to improve it.\textsuperscript{32} It was this combination of beauty, manners, and accomplishments that charmed D. H. Strother, an artist and travel writer. During a tour of the Tidewater in 1849, Strother spent several days with the Tuckers and recorded in his notebook a flattering impression of their eldest daughter: "Cynthia Tucker was graceful, slender, and of a most refined and spirituelle type of beauty. Dark sparkling eyes and rich raven hair. Easy and confiding in her manners and sweetly accomplished in music. She was petted and idolized by her father without being spoiled."\textsuperscript{33} 

Visiting and social events, such as balls and weddings, were of great importance as occasions on which to practice the lessons in deportment and conversation learned at boarding school and to meet eligible young men. Following several months with the Bryans, Cynthia spent the winter of 1848-1849 with relatives in Winchester, Virginia, making side trips for visits to former schoolmates. She went to Richmond for a month or two where she had her portrait painted and attended parties. When she teased her father about the number of beaux she was attracting, Tucker advised his daughter to behave with dignity and discretion.

I do not care how many you have. But let me see you, on the one hand, eager to attract the notice of every fool that flutters by, or on the other, haughty and repulsive to some, and flattering in your notice of others, and I shall wish them all in Guinea. The difference between these extremes is not so great that the middle path is easy to hit. It can not be marked out on the map of life or pointed out by any instructor. Your guide must be your own heart. Charge that with proper sentiments--such as become a lady, and the daughter of a lady, and you will not go astray.\textsuperscript{34}
That finding the middle path was not simple is illustrated by the many letters dealing with the problems of male/female relationships. Young women seemed to control the progress of these courting rituals and yet, at the same time, they were bewildered about the obligations involved. A young cousin expressed to Cynthia just such confusion within a rather cavalier attitude toward affairs of the heart.

[Poor Jim!! deluded James!! I knew you couldn't love him--the symptoms were too strong to the contrary--why don't you undeceive the poor wretch? . . . You seem anxious to know what I intend to do with Wirt--I can only say now even--I am not engaged but I have not discarded him positively--ain't you knowing enough in such matters to understand something of the state of affairs--I have not by any means decided, but I am thinking! . . . Ain't it a bother to have to decide anything which may so materially affect my whole life?] 36

Cynthia appealed to Elizabeth Bryan for advice on the subject of men and how to deal with them. Drawing upon her own conception of womanhood, Mrs. Bryan replied that the modesty, common sense, genteel behavior, and candor that had denoted the true lady in the previous century were just as applicable to the present day. She did advise that "now you will be surrounded by Men not Boys" and that "Moustached Hero's [sic] are not to my taste at least not till Soup goes out of fashion." 37 Thus ideals based upon upper-class, aristocratic perceptions originating decades earlier were still influential as behavioral models for the southern female, although perhaps of greater appeal to the older generation than to the younger.

Cynthia's own image of her adolescence and of what was seen as the necessary preoccupation of a young woman with her social life and the intricacies of courting are revealed in an autobiographical story, "Williamsburg, Virginia in 1848." 38 Cynthia describes herself at age sixteen through the conversations of her devoted Mammy Patty with a
young bride whose husband, a William and Mary graduate, has brought her to the town for a visit. After pointing out Nathaniel Beverley Tucker's study filled with books and manuscripts, Mammy Patty comments, "Master is mighty anxious for my young mistus to be fond o' books and reading, but she don't care nuthin bout such things. All she cares bout is going long with the other young people, havin fun dancing and singing an playin on the piano." Evidently, Cynthia's father was striving to continue her academic education after her departure from school; Mammy Patty, however, encouraged her young mistress to follow more interesting pursuits: "Now if she was reading and studying all the time like Master wants her to be doing she'd lose her colour and look just like an old maid and she never will be that." But the problems of handling young men seem to have cast a shadow on Cynthia's gaiety for "when her beaux worry her too much she puts on her long sunbonnet an goes down [to the garden], when she comes back her bright eyes is mighty red. . . . It hurts me when I know she's worring bout her beaux--Lord I wish she would get married." Thus Cynthia expressed the conflicting emotions involved in playing the role of the belle with perhaps the recognition that marriage was a serious culmination to the game.

The most detailed portrayal of woman's proper role in society, especially her obligations in courtship and marriage, came to Cynthia from Nathaniel Beverley Tucker. Central to his image of womanhood was the belief in feminine pride and honor, as well as a strong suspicion of man's true character. Although his novel "Gertrude" emphasized the ambitious, greedy nature of two female characters as the instrument of tragedy, Tucker conveyed to his daughter the conviction that men were ultimately responsible for a woman's happiness or sorrow.
Because she was inherently passive and yielding, a woman must always be watchful for the influence of the men around her. Her own sense of dignity as a lady must triumph over the dormant baseness in man.

By the time she was seventeen, Cynthia was regularly making the rounds of parties and visits, and her father began to devote many of his letters to the subjects of men and matrimony. Upon discovering that one of his daughter's admirers had followed her to Richmond, Tucker wrote, "I beseech you let not the vanity of being followed by a handsome young man make you so false to yourself as to treat it otherwise. . . . Could you be brought to smile on him, he would wear you as a feather in his cap for a season and then jilt you, or marry and ill treat you, or perhaps desert you. . . . Impulse—imagination—and vanity produce some brilliant exhibitions. But principle there is none, and if impulse, imagination and vanity take the wrong direction, the result will show itself in dishonourable men and dishonoured women."41

Tucker's belief in honor and a noble heritage was further elaborated when Cynthia visited Washington in 1851. While hoping she would meet some of the great politicians of the era, Tucker warned that those not of his political persuasion should not be permitted to approach or speak to her. To him, the superiority of both southern women and southern politics were undeniable.

I hope you will make them feel the infinite distance between them and a Virginia lady. . . . Blood, good or bad, will show itself. A stainless ancestry deserves to be thought of with a better feeling than pride. It gives a noble sense of security and self-confidence. I can never fear that any child of mine will ever do a dishonourable act. You should not marry, with my consent, a son of Henry Clay or Daniel Webster. I would rather die childless than have a Son in the White House, one on the Supreme bench, one in each of the departments, and one in the penitentiary. It depended on fortune whether Henry Clay should be distinguished as a black-leg, a bandit or a Statesman, and his progeny are as like to be famous one of these ways as another."42
Because he was wary of man's nature, Tucker made certain to point out that marriage was not always happy for a woman. Undisciplined men were often at fault in taking advantage of a young woman's raptures and eagerness to marry. This, he believed, would inevitably result in despair. "Young as you are, how many have you known as gay lighthearted girls, in the enjoyment of every gratification and indulgence, who are already faded, care-worn, and perhaps wretched. . . . A plain good girl marries a man incapable of appreciating her, and the result is indifference and neglect on one side and a broken heart on the other." Tucker's greatest desire was to see his daughter the wife of an "honourable high-minded kind-hearted gentleman," and to this end he directed his advice and efforts. He hoped to form her tastes and character so that she might know the worthy from the unworthy. Those who knew her "only as a belle and something of a flirt" might suppose her inclined toward vain and pompous men. But Tucker was sure that "the blood that is in your veins, and the maxims inculcated by your noble mother and myself afford ample security that you can never give your hand without your heart. . . . May God bless my daughter and the upright honourable and generous man whom it will be the business of her life to make happy."

Tucker did not live to see his daughter fulfill his hopes. His sudden death on August 26, 1851, in Winchester, Virginia, forced Cynthia to undertake a more mature role almost immediately since her mother, brothers, and sisters were in Missouri and could not return for several weeks. As chief mourner, Cynthia made arrangements for her father's burial in Williamsburg and directed the activities of the Tucker household. She was also expected to subdue her own sorrow in order to support and console her mother and siblings. Her shock and grief at her father's sudden death, her ultimate understanding of his character,
and an overwhelming guilt for her carefree, adolescent lifestyle are evident in a fragmentary piece written years later.

Of all beings in this world I most loved and venerated my Father. In him every feeling of pride in my ambitious nature was fully gratified. I basked in the rays of his intellect and revelled in his genius. But such was the wicked perversity of my own evil heart that I not only never gave a hint of this to him . . . but on the contrary affected an indifference that must have mortified and pained his noble heart. Though an old man he was young and genial in his feelings and loved the society of my young friends. With a cruelty and want of consideration I cannot now understand I have checked the flowing mirth in his presence, hushed into a whisper my voice, and would thus drive from my side my Father.
CHAPTER IV

ACTS OF DEVOTION: MARRIAGE AND WIDOWHOOD

The death of the man who had played the central role and provided the primary influence in her life affected Cynthia Beverley Tucker deeply. By the age of nineteen, she had absorbed her society's ideals of womanhood as promulgated by her father and was now ready to begin the adult roles defined by those conceptions. Although Nathaniel Beverley Tucker's death theoretically left her in a position to explore and fulfill feminine images and ideals on her own terms, Cynthia, like most young women and in accordance with all expectations, continued to rely upon masculine interpretations through marriage. Her father had cautioned her to regard the choice of a husband as an extremely serious business, for her partner would ultimately determine her future course. Cynthia fulfilled this responsibility, as well as her own pride and ambition nurtured by Beverley Tucker, in her marriage to Henry Augustine Washington.

Born in 1820, Washington was a native Virginian whose mother was a great-niece of the first President. He had been educated at Princeton, trained in the law, and had practiced in Richmond. In 1849 Washington was chosen Professor of History and Political Economy at the College of William and Mary and thus became one of Tucker's colleagues. In the small town of Williamsburg, where the college provided the intellectual and social stimuli for the inhabitants, it was inevitable that the young professor and the judge's daughter should become
well-acquainted. They were apparently good friends during the last years of Tucker's life.¹

Like Tucker, Washington was absorbed in a number of intellectual pursuits in addition to his teaching. He wrote several essays on history, Virginia politics, and slavery, and a piece entitled "The Social System of Virginia" was published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1848. Washington was appointed editor of the Thomas Jefferson papers following a congressional appropriation in 1850 for their publication. This project occupied much of his time and efforts for the next three years while at the same time he completed a digest of the history lectures of Thomas R. Dew, former professor and president of William and Mary. Although Washington preferred to express himself moderately and with little of the aggressiveness and dogmatism that characterized Tucker's correspondence, treatises, and novels, he was establishing himself in Virginia circles as a learned and dignified teacher, author, and gentleman.²

Although he wrote no essays upon the subjects of womanhood and the feminine role in society, Washington gave considerable reflection to these topics in journals he kept from 1842 to 1845. Concerning the question of the female mind and whether it was naturally inferior to the masculine, he observed that "there exists between the sexes no mental disparity which may not, in my opinion, be attributed to a disparity in education." As long as male and female children received the same rudimentary schooling, no significant difference in mental ability was obvious. To Washington, the frivolous nature of boarding-school education was responsible for ultimately producing a shallow, ignorant adult woman.

As soon as the girl is taken from her school-mistress, and put in the hands of the music master and the dancing master,
then it is that the spring of the female mind is seen to give way and loosens [sic] that vigor without which it can never climb to those highths [sic] which the male mind reaches only by virtue of its superior discipline. 3

While the differences in educational systems could be held accountable for man's generally superior intellect, Washington did believe that there were innate characteristics of the sexes that resulted in a distinct separation between them. Each sex had its "peculiar virtues" and thus they could not be compared and one pronounced superior to the other. But woman's virtues were such as to place her unquestionably upon a pedestal.

Fortitude is her cardinal virtue. Nothing could be more grand and at the same time more lovely than some of the achievements of the fortitude of women. Let what will come, she has a heart for it. She is a true heroine in the strife of this world. They are not bold daring and brilliant action, which strike the imagination of men and are rewarded by their plaudits. This is the courage of men. Hers is a different and a higher courage, a passive and not an active fortitude, a fortitude which suffers and endures and yet never loosens [sic] heart. Its reward is the consciousness of having struggled nobly with our fate and of having come off victor in the struggle. The sense of strength and security which this consciousness inspires is the sublimest feeling which can enter the human mind. . . . She knows the highth [sic] and depth—length [sic] and breadth of care, and she stands an untiring sentinel at her post ready for combat come when it may. Cased in the impenetrable [sic] armour of a resigned spirit, she feels that strength [sic] which is the presentment of victor[s]. 4

Washington, like Tucker, viewed woman as the ultimate savior of a society struggling with change. Her passive nature inspired men with the moral courage they lacked to achieve victory over the forces of chaos. While Tucker believed that the feminine power might not always triumph over those persons and circumstances conspiring against good, as Gertrude had failed against the strength of Mrs. Austin and Laura Bernhard and as any woman might fall victim to the unscrupulous male, Washington's ideal was thoroughly optimistic, for it was precisely through woman's role as the "resigned spirit" that she inevitably triumphed.
It was perhaps this attitude of resignation to fate as well as the strength of inner courage that attracted Washington to Cynthia Tucker following the death of her father. This was a time at which she was extremely vulnerable, devastated by her loss and uncertain of her own future. There are no letters, either before Tucker's death or immediately afterward, that decisively indicate their growing attachment to each other. But in May 1852 Washington wrote Lucy Anne Tucker of the engagement existing between himself and Cynthia and requested her consent to their marriage. He expressed the hope that their union would be "full of happiness" and to this happiness "it will be my pride and pleasure to dedicate my life."*

Numerous letters written to Cynthia before the marriage ceremony on July 8, 1852, reveal the highly emotional nature of the impending event. A former suitor begged to see her in order to provide assurance of his own love, pleading, "Do not deny me this, perhaps my last request. I have a right to make it--to urge it; for I have loved you long, you supremely--you only." A cousin reassured Cynthia that her father would have fully approved of Washington as her choice of husband and added, "As the representative on the occasion, of my darling Uncle, I shall 'give you to him' without a doubt, that he will ever deserve the prize he has won."*

Female reactions to the marriage indicated that grave and momentous changes would occur in leaving adolescence for the duties of wife and mistress of the home. Because of this, the bonds of sisterhood between the young women would be in some manner altered by masculine intervention.

Can it be possible that I must this morning actually summon up my resolution to bid adieu and send my final congratulations to my precious darling Chick? . . . Ah Chick many a year have we loved, fondly, devotedly, loved each other and
I trust that we may together enjoy many more hours of happiness, but then the tie which has been strengthening with each year that has rolled away must now be loosened and my heart rather shrinks from the thought. . . . How I should delight to be with you at this important time to enjoy you as I never can again and to impart as much comfort as I am capable of. . . . [D]o write to me before you are married and tell me how you feel—just once more my darling—Goodbye to Cynthia Tucker!9

Within the sisterhood the maternal tie also seemed threatened, as the daughter was given into the custody of her husband. One of Cynthia's aunts remarked, "I only wish I could be with your dear Mother, to comfort and cheer her at this time—for altho' we may have every prospect of happiness for our children--yet it is a great trial to give a daughter up to any man, to feel you no longer [have] a right to direct and control her as formerly."10 The young woman thus passed from her parents' governance to that of her husband.

Aside from initial adjustments, the first years of marriage did not cause great outward changes in Cynthia's life. Because there was no adult male in the Tucker household, the Washingtons took up residence with Cynthia's family while the professor continued his teaching and writing duties. There is no indication that these arrangements produced friction, but rather there was pleasure on both sides that Washington and Lucy Anne Tucker shared the management of home and family, leaving Cynthia with secondary responsibilities.11 Their family circle was often widened through the visits of Washington's brothers and sisters, and the couple themselves made frequent journeys to the Washington family homes in Virginia's Northern Neck.

During this period Cynthia undertook her duties as wife with proper deference to her husband's wishes. She took very seriously her father's maxim that a woman must devote her life to making her husband happy, and therefore did not argue with her cousin Delia Bryan's observation
that "a good wife never makes her husband do anything, she only asks him in a very submissive manner." Washington had found in Cynthia a "delicate refinement which springs from intellectual culture and a generous sympathy" that he had many years earlier noted as a prerequisite for ideal womanhood. Such expectations held by Washington and by Cynthia herself constituted the image she hoped to fulfill.

Washington's opinions of what was proper for a lady not only influenced his wife's activities but his mother-in-law's as well. Concerning the election of the vestry at the Bruton Parish Church, he wrote to Cynthia during one of her visits to Richmond, "Your mother did not vote--I advising against it--for the reason that, although the right of ladies to vote is recognized, yet there has been but one instance of the exercise of that right [by Miss Barbara Page], and that was a lead which she was not ambitious to follow." Whether it was the act of voting that diminished Miss Page's reputation or her reputation that lessened the propriety of voting Washington did not reveal; nevertheless his belief that voting was a man's responsibility is clear.

His work on the Jefferson papers took Washington away from Williamsburg frequently in 1853 and 1854 as the project neared completion. Cynthia greatly regretted his absences, particularly in the summer of 1854 when she was awaiting the birth of their first child. While Washington was preparing an index to the papers at his parents' home in Westmoreland County, he continued to send advice concerning his wife's activities in the hope that she would see the seriousness of her condition and conduct herself accordingly.

There are two things, dear Cynt, upon which I am about, with your consent, to put a veto. The first is your remaining in the house while it is paint[ed], or returning to it, until it has perfectly dried. The moment Mother heard that the house was to be painted, she told me that
I must caution you on that matter—that it was very dangerous—particularly in your situation. . . . The second thing which must be vetoed is your riding behind those black horses, with Mr. Ewell to drive you. If he chooses to experiment with them himself, that is all well and good; but I am altogether opposed to his involving you in the experiment. There may be no risk; but I greatly prefer that you should not hazard it.16

Unknown to Washington, two events had occurred by the time he wrote his letter. On July 22 a daughter was born and named Lucy Beverley; Cynthia requested her husband not to regret "that a son was not given us, for we may find our little girl a greater blessing."17 The child's birth produced great joy and relief in Cynthia's friends, for while this most important of a wife's duties was undergone stoically, the fear of death was always present. Nannie Johns, one of Cynthia's most intimate friends, emotionally expressed her feelings at the news of the birth.

How thankful I do feel that you are safely over your trouble. . . . Cynthia if anything could ever make me love you more, or shown me how dearly you loved [me]—it would have been one little sentence in your dear mother's letter—which said you thought and spoke of me when you were suffering—those words are constantly in my thoughts—and indeed they are a great comfort to me.18

But fears for the child's health were confirmed by her death on July 29. Cynthia's anguish in facing the realities of motherhood was intensified because Washington had not returned from northern Virginia, having not yet received word of the child's birth. In her letter announcing their daughter's death, Cynthia expressed her dismay at her husband's absence. "I wish so much that you could have gotten here in time to see her. I could not help hoping that you might arrive yesterday in time to look upon her fading beauty before we laid [her] in her little lonely [coffin]."19

Cynthia sought to assuage her grief through an intense religious belief in God and the wisdom of His acts, a belief shared by almost all of her family and friends. Such losses must always be borne as
Christians should—with "not one murmur or rebellious thought." Sorrow must be quickly subdued to the responsibilities of the living for "the more we dwell on the lost joys, which once were ours, the more insipid and wearisome other duties, separate from them, become." Particularly in the death of children there was the conviction that God had spared the child from the hardships and sorrows of life. Cynthia begged Washington, "Henry dear you must love the Saviour who redeemed her, and has made her a blessed Angel in Heaven.... She is gone. I do not repine. It would be selfish to wish her back to suffer for all must suffer who live."

During the next year Cynthia was absorbed in family and community activities. Washington gave a number of public lectures in Richmond and Petersburg early in 1855 on the subject of race in southern society. Cynthia's assurances of his success were confirmed by the press, although Washington remained modest in his evaluation of his efforts. During his absence Cynthia stayed several weeks with the Bryans at "Eagle Point," where they spent evenings reading novels by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Cynthia took note of several works on chemistry and linguistics as well as "Mcaulay essays on Milton, Bacon, and Dryden," which she hoped to study. Visits were paid to the Washington family, and in Williamsburg Cynthia had her own table at the town fairs.

In March 1856 sorrow struck the Tucker family with the death of Elizabeth Tucker Bryan. Cynthia particularly was grieved for she had always been close to her elderly cousin. She had grown up under the woman's encouragement and advice, which had been given freely during visits and in letters. Mrs. Bryan had occupied one of the central positions in Cynthia's circle of female friends, and the loss was keenly felt by all of them. Their sadness was mitigated, however, by
the safe birth of Cynthia's second daughter, Sarah Augustine, on December 26, 1856, and Cynthia joyfully undertook the responsibilities of motherhood.26

At this time she also began to evince a greater interest in Washington's career. While his various intellectual pursuits pleased her, Cynthia evidently aspired for wider recognition and responsibilities on his behalf. Early in 1856 she wrote George M. Dallas, who was soon to be appointed Minister to Great Britain, and suggested that Washington be assigned to the American mission in London. Dallas was unable to comply, as President Franklin Pierce and Secretary of State William L. Marcy had chosen the son of the head of the delegation for the position in question.27

An additional reason for Cynthia's attempt to secure a new position for Washington was undoubtedly his failing health. In the early 1840s, he had first contracted chronic dysentery, which intermittently returned in painful attacks. Consultations with physicians in Baltimore and the District of Columbia proved generally ineffective,28 and by 1856 the effects of the disease were intense. Washington's duties at the College were delegated to another professor, although he continued to receive his salary, and thus Cynthia had hoped to produce a change of locale and climate through Washington's appointment to the London post.

By early 1857 Washington was seriously ill,29 and Cynthia was busy nursing her husband as well as caring for her infant. In June he resigned his professorship, and in the autumn the couple journeyed to Washington for a lengthy consultation and recuperation, leaving the baby Sarah with the Tuckers.30 They set up housekeeping in a private residence, Cynthia now being solely responsible for those duties.31 Washington spent much of his time studying the Bible, a pursuit that had increasingly
interested him during the most recent stage of his illness and had strengthened his spiritual and emotional acceptance of his suffering. This turning to religion had been largely the result of Cynthia's encouragement and direction, for such belief had always been the source of her own strength. Through her undivided attention to Washington's needs at this time, she drew closer to him in spirit. Her active role in her husband's care also fulfilled societal expectations of a wife's devotion. Four years earlier, Washington had witnessed the death of an acquaintance, and the tender ministrations of the man's wife had moved him to write that "trials like this best bring out the virtues of the female character. Nothing but a woman's devotion could have passed the ordeal."33

By February 1858, however, it appeared that the worst of the disease had passed, and the Washingtons made plans to return to Williamsburg. Although still weak, Washington had been able to leave his sickbed for walks to the Capitol and had continued his Bible studies. On the night of February 28, Cynthia and a few relatives had dinner together while Washington ate alone in his room. When a servant returned to remove the tray, he found Washington on the floor beside the window, shot through the eye. It was surmised that in leaning out the window, he accidentally discharged an air gun used to shoot pigeons on a neighboring roof. He died two hours later.34

Following Washington's burial at "Campbellton," his family's summer home, Cynthia remained with her in-laws in Westmoreland County. The shocking manner of her husband's death left her almost bereft of emotion, prompting her mother to write, "Let me beg you not to make such an effort to bear with calmness this terrible affliction but give way to your natural feelings, it is right to weep, God intended it."35
Letters from close friends and relatives urged her to seek solace through God, and to be assured that "[her] efforts to promote his comfort, to minister to his relief, to cheer, to cherish, to support him were, to the last, un falter ing--that [her] devotion was un ceasing." One of those present at the time of Washington's death pointed out that the nature of the accident ensured his inevitable demise; better that he had passed away quickly for "he might have lingered for some time . . . and his suffering would have been great."38

Among Cynthia's most immediate concerns were the rumors of suicide surrounding her husband's death.

At first, I forced myself to write a few letters to different parts of the State, for the reason that a distressing report was instantly circulated in Washington with regard to the manner of my dear Husband's death. I felt that it was due to the memory of one so truly good that I should place the particulars of this sad accident, which has desolated our homes and hearts, in the hands of my friends, in order that they, should they hear this terrible report, might state the truth.39

Not only had Washington's improving health raised his spirits and prompt ed his decision to return to Williamsburg, but in Cynthia's view, the scriptural studies undertaken during his illness reaffirmed his belief in God and everlasting life, "a hope to be in Christ in the most humble and contrite spirit,"40 that would not have supported the idea of suicide.

In addition to the emotional shock of sudden widowhood, Cynthia now had to deal with concrete problems, particularly her financial situation. Washington's will, dated February 8, 1857, named his wife executor and beneficiary of one-third of his estate, which included property in Virginia, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Chicago. The remaining two-thirds would go to their daughter Sarah, with Cynthia receiving this portion in the event of the child's death. Separate executors and trustees were named for each of the property locations. A codicil of
December 26, 1857, however, removed Cynthia as executor in favor of her father-in-law. And an additional codicil dated one month prior to Washington's death stipulated that Sarah's portion would be vested in trustees "to her own exclusive use and benefit, so as to be exempt from the marital rights of her husband, in the event of her marriage at any future time." This codicil effectively excluded Cynthia as well from use of the child's portion, an embarrassing situation because she had almost immediately to borrow money from her year-old daughter.

At the time of my Husband's death in Feb. 1858 I had $50, and perhaps, a few dollars more, but I do not remember how much. All of which ($50) was consumed in purchasing mourning for myself, and the articles mentioned on the other page. Leaving me in debt to my daughter ($31.70). I then borrowed from my mother $50, out of which I paid Sarah's travelling expenses to Williamsburg amounting to about $5.75. Purchased for her a pair of shoes for which I gave 75 cts. Bought for her servant Martha a dress and two aprons costing $1.50. Leaving me in her debt $23.70. The latter part of June received for our [illegible] use from Minnesota the sum of $100, $60 of which I deposited in the Norfolk savings institution and the other $40 I retained for current expenses.

Financial matters occupied much of Cynthia's attention and correspondence for the next year. In 1859 she received a share of the estate of a distant relative that amounted to $2283.25. This she decided to invest in state stock and accordingly directed an agent to purchase twenty-three shares at $97 each. She maintained contact with the trustees of Washington's out-of-state property, particularly Montagu Thompson, the Tucker family's legal adviser of many years, who was trustee for the "Water Lot" in Chicago. In 1859 that property brought in a six-months' rent of $118.78 after taxes were paid, with $39.60 as Cynthia's portion and $79.20 for Sarah's share. For the sake of economy, Cynthia and her daughter continued to reside in the Tucker home.

Not only did widowhood cause Cynthia to assume more control over
her own affairs, but it provided the opportunity for much reflection on the course of her life. Four months after Washington's death, her sorrow was still acute.

This is a very trying season to me--the close of the College Session--such a sad, sad time to me now. Everything that occurs recalling so vividly the past with all its brightness. Then too my wedding day is nearly here, and I live but in the past contrasting it with the present and the future. I find my sorrow hard to bear, harder now then it has ever been.\footnote{45}

A visit to relatives in Richmond, although a happy one, reinforced her sense of loss. She wrote, "The harmony and love of their family circle forced sadly upon me the thought of my own lonely life. I am content that my heart should be blighted, but it is hard to bear the thought that my child can never know her Father's love and tenderness."\footnote{46}

During 1858-1859 a number of Cynthia's closest female relatives married, prompting her to write at length on the subject of marriage. To one who hoped to be to her fiancé a "good Christian wife" as well as to make him a "professing Christian,"\footnote{47} Cynthia answered, "I am much pleased to find in what light you regard the step you propose taking. I think girls generally do not properly appreciate the importance of the marriage relation and enter into it often times lightly and unadvisedly."\footnote{48} Of another, whose choice of partner Cynthia did not approve, she nevertheless admitted, "I would not have her to be an 'old maid' for anything, for I confess to a little antipathy to that part of the human race." Single women were generally "peculiar" and "not always agreeable."\footnote{49} Decidedly, the married state was preferable.

The years 1858-1860 were quiet ones, with visits to relatives providing a major source of diversion. Books also occupied much of her time. She worked with Episcopal Bishop John Johns, a former president of William and Mary and close friend of the Tuckers, in the writing
and publication of a memoir of Washington in 1859.\textsuperscript{50} The previous year, she had donated more than thirty volumes from Washington's personal collection to the College library, which was accidentally destroyed along with most of the building in a fire in February 1859.\textsuperscript{51} Cynthia maintained a personal interest in reading, particularly works on history as well as lighter fare by Shakespeare and Scott.\textsuperscript{52} She also continued her religious duties through regular attendance at services, participation in church fairs, and assistance in the direction of the renovation and repair of the building.\textsuperscript{53} Widowhood was a fate she had not expected to experience so soon, and consequently, while she acquired greater self-reliance and of necessity the ability to manage her own affairs, Cynthia found life without masculine direction and companionship a trying experience.
Late in 1860 Cynthia's depression lifted through her attention to a most pleasant subject: Dr. Charles Washington Coleman. Although a number of casual references had earlier been made to the doctor in letters from Lucy Anne Tucker to Cynthia, there is no indication in the correspondence of the couple's mutual interest until a flurry of undated letters between them in 1860-1861. Coleman, born in Williamsburg in 1826, had obtained his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1847 and had established a general practice in his native town. Undoubtedly, the Tuckers and the Colemans knew one another, but it is unclear when the doctor became better acquainted with the young widow. His notes arranged meetings with her, accompanied boxes of candy for Sarah, and commented on Cynthia's many engagements and activities in town.

That he held more serious intentions is evident in the same brief letters. Cynthia, however, was uncertain of her feelings, and she vacillated in response to Coleman's expressions of intent. With considerable exasperation the doctor requested a decision from her, stating "I cannot understand the state of your affections. Today you are prepared to give me a favorable answer, tomorrow in doubt. Let me beg and entreat of you to have more fixedness of purpose." To solve the question of Cynthia's mercurial feelings, Coleman humorously suggested "flags suspended from your window. And as the different shades of
blue seems to be fashionable at present, suppose you select them as indices of your feelings." He also reminded her "that we are not as young as we were five years ago" and called her attention to "that gray lock." Coléman's declarations of love as well as his various attempts at persuasion must have produced the desired effect, for Cynthia noted at the bottom of his letter, "Jan. 3d 1861. 2½ o'clock. The last act of the drama."  

Although her decision had finally been made, Cynthia now faced opposition to the marriage from her mother. In a letter of January 22, she made clear the conflict between her desire to please her mother and the overriding conviction that she must satisfy herself first. The lonely years of widowhood, while forcing her to stand on her own and strengthening her self-awareness and self-assertion, had also convinced her that she was ready to seek a new life, one not necessarily like that of her childhood or her first marriage.

I have in vain endeavoured, my dear Mother, to speak to you on the subject of my engagement with Dr. Coleman. All that is left to me, therefore, is to write. I feel very keenly, not only your entire want of sympathy with me, but your positive objection to my marriage, and had I known, in the beginning, the pain that such a step would give you, I should never had the courage to take it, as it is, I am now bound by the most solemn promises, which I cannot break; still, I am deeply grieved not to have, at least, your consent, if not your approval. Ten years ago, perhaps, I might not have felt as I do now—your consent absolutely essential to my happiness. The joy of my whole life would be imbittered by the thought that it had been purchased by pain to my Mother. You are very dear to me, dearer than I myself knew, until I found myself acting contrary to your wishes. When I first mentioned the subject to you, you will remember, that though you told me candidly your opinions of the matter, you closed your remarks by saying that you thought when persons had reached a certain age such matters should be decided by themselves. I accordingly acted as I proposed to do at first. After our second conversation, however, I wrote to Dr. C. and told him of your feeling, and on that ground broke my engagement with him. Since that time, it has been renewed with a promise from me that it shall be consummated about the middle of February. Without your sympathy I feel, more
and more each day, that I cannot be happy, nor can I hope for God's blessing on a union that causes sorrow to a Parent. So loving and tender as you have been to me, my Mother, particularly in these lonely, weary years of widowhood. Still, all your love could not fill my heart; I had felt the need of something more, when Dr. C. offered me all that any man can give, his devoted affection, and I rejected it. I thought over the matter, long earnestly and prayerfully, and decided to accept him. The thought of having someone to love me particularly, more than all others, was so grateful to me, that I could not resist the thought of beginning life again, but little dreaming of the pain it would occasion you, or if I knew myself, I should have abandoned the idea at the outset. I feel that in Dr. C.'s character there is a great deal to fix esteem and affection and ensure happiness. It is true, he does not occupy a prominent position before the World, but what of that, would that fact add to my happiness? I think not, it would serve to feed my pride but nothing more. A few years ago, I should have thought differently about this matter. I have been taught, since then, by many and hard lessons that ambition and the pride of life in me have been frowned upon from on High. And now, though I still love distinction I would rather trust my happiness to an honest, constant heart in which the love of God reigns, than to seek it in the applause and admiration of the world.

Considerable changes had taken place in Cynthia's perceptions of her own life. True to her father's wishes, she desired to marry for love but now with a more assertive view of her character and her expectations. In response to Cynthia's plea for understanding, Lucy Anne Tucker yielded and gave her consent to the marriage.

Plans for their union were ultimately postponed by the political events taking place early in 1861. As the nation moved toward war, the Tucker-Coleman letters were concerned primarily with personal activities and life in Williamsburg, until the secession of Virginia on April 17. The excitement surrounding the convention and its vote drew Cynthia to Richmond. The day following the decision to secede, she jubilantly wrote her daughter, "You never saw anything like the number of secession flags, they are flying from the tops of houses and from the windows too. . . . Tell Mrs. Sully that she must not forget to illuminate my room to-morrow night, for Virginia has gone out, and is a secession
Concerning the reaction in Williamsburg, Coleman described the raising of a secession flag at the College and the rash of rumors amid the uproar at the news of war. Cannon were being moved to Yorktown, and many citizens seemed eager for the fight.

Coleman himself joined the James City Cavalry, and in July his company was encamped at Yorktown. Despite her earlier denials of ambition to her mother, Cynthia actively sought the doctor's commission as Assistant Surgeon, encouraging him to apply and requesting their friends to write on his behalf to the Surgeon General. She hoped a promotion would bring him back to Williamsburg to serve in a hospital there. Her own activities increased considerably with the onset of war. Aside from the very pleasant social duties of visiting and entertaining the influx of soldiers in the Williamsburg area, Cynthia and other ladies formed a "Working Society" to sew uniforms, tents, and other supplies. Patriotic zeal produced the energy required for lengthy sessions with the needle, and in describing one such effort Cynthia did not foresee such diligence on her own part once the crisis had passed.

On Sunday a notice was given out in Church that a large number of beds were wanted immediately and that, therefore, the Ladies were requested to go to work as soon ... as possible. In accordance with this demand upon us, the whole Sabbath afternoon was spent in diligent work by the Congregation. The next day we had fifty beds ready for the sick, and nearly as many pillows. At this time we are working on a large quantity of cloth ... to be made up in pantaloons and jackets. ... I expect to be very accomplished by the time the war is over. Your Mother suggests that I will form such industrious habits that it will be difficult to keep me employed, but I thought she need not flatter herself in that way for when the time comes that I can 'hold my hands,' I shall be sure to do it.

While she hoped Coleman would be assigned to a Williamsburg hospital, Cynthia herself spent considerable time with the sick. Declaring she did not "care a straw" for nursing, she preferred to minister
to the soldiers' spiritual needs; she believed that "a great deal of good might be done among the poor fellows, in reading to and praying with them." Although no battles had taken place in the area, minor skirmishes and particularly the feverish weather of the summer increased the number of sick and dying among the regiments encamped around Williamsburg.

In addition to her new responsibilities, Cynthia was concerned at this time with family affairs. Two of her brothers and numerous cousins joined the Confederate ranks, and her mother and sisters were also occupied with war work. Her daughter was almost five years old, and much time was devoted to Sarah's care and instruction. Cynthia remained careful of her financial matters with respect to the stipulations about Sarah's portion in Washington's will, and the subject now took on added dimensions because of the war. The receipt of an additional fourteen hundred dollars as her share of the John St. George Randolph estate prompted an outburst of bitter feeling concerning her late husband's will in a letter to Coleman.

I have an idea of giving a part of [the inheritance] to Sadie. I cannot help feeling sad when I look at the child and remember how bright were her prospects of fortune and wealth, and that now, in all probability, her property in the North West will pass into the hands of strangers, and only a few thousands, prudently left in Virginia, be secured to her. How hard it is to foresee what will happen. Her Father thought he had made every provision not only for the comfort of his child, but in time, for affluence. So great was his anxiety on her account that he almost forgot he had a wife. On that subject, I am sore, beyond endurance. It seems almost like retributive justice, that these lands he was so anxious to secure, first to his child, then to his Brothers, should pass from the hands of all, while the wife—but no matter, I am bitter on the subject, and but for my child would be glad for it to pass away.

Although her pride had been wounded by what she viewed as Washington's lack of concern for her future, Cynthia found considerable solace
in the growing Confederate appreciation of her late father and his work. The loan of a copy of Tucker's Nashville Convention speech for publication late in the spring of 1861 prompted the editor of the Charleston Mercury to offer Cynthia his "congratulations upon the fulfillment of the Judge's pledge in the present attitude of the Old Dominion, and the certainty of Southern Independence."17 At about the same time, the northern publishing company of Rudd and Carleton brought out a new edition of Tucker's work The Partisan Leader. This novel, first published in 1836, was set twenty years in the future and predicted the outbreak of armed conflict between the North and the South. The title of the 1861 edition was prefaced with the phrase "A Key to the Disunion Conspiracy," attempting to convince the reader that the South had intended as far back as 1836 to break the Union apart.18 Upon reading an announcement of the book's republication, James M. Mason wrote to Cynthia that despite the publisher's insinuations, "certainly no higher tribute could have been paid to the genius of its lamented author, than the remark 'it is difficult to believe that it is not a production of the present day.'"19

The Partisan Leader had been in Cynthia's own thoughts for some time, and by the fall of 1861 she decided to make arrangements through a Virginia poet, James Barron Hope, for its republication in support of the southern cause.

My object in publishing this book is that I may pay this tribute of filial affection to my Father, and alike serve that Country he held so dear and for which he laboured not in vain. The proceeds of the sale of the work I have ever proposed to devote to our Southern cause. The gallant Soldiers stricken by disease, or wounded in Battle demand my most heartfelt sympathy and assistance. To them, therefore, I shall devote the means which the republication may place at my disposal. I feel that in making this effort I am engaged in a holy work that in honouring the dead I am aiding the living.20
She requested Hope to contact a publisher by the name of Ghieslin for his views on the book's issuance and for his terms. Hope informed her that he had already spoken to Ghieslin several months earlier, and the publisher had advised the inclusion of a biographical sketch which Hope offered to prepare with Cynthia's assistance. Later in the year, Cynthia contacted Ghieslin, explaining that she had heard nothing lately from Hope and asking the publisher to write him in order to make final their plans before another publisher decided to issue the book. Her fears were realized when these negotiations collapsed, and the book was republished in 1862 by the firm of West and Johnson in Richmond. With an introduction by Reverend Thomas A. Ware, The Partisan Leader was issued "to vindicate the justice of our cause and to intensify Southern patriotism."

During the fall of 1861 Coleman resumed his attempts to arrange a definite wedding date. For Cynthia, this was again a decision she hesitated to make. While she continued to profess her love for the absent doctor, the unsettled nature of events augmented a basic anxiety over remarriage she found difficult to explain. In one discussion of their future life together, she wrote, "I believe that we will have implicit confidence in each other, that to the end we will be loving, trusting and happy." Yet, as she noted, "you must remember I have a temper, and you must not expect to see me always amiable." At another point, when one of Coleman's letters about their relationship angered her, she wrote vehemently, "[I]f you wish my 'devoted, undivided love' never be harsh to or doubtful of me. These things I resent, perhaps you will think that this is no way for me to write to you, were I your wife I should not presume to assume such a tone, but as it is I am your equal and have a right to assert my own rights." This assertion
forced her to conclude that "I shall never be ready [to marry] and the old feeling still comes over me in some degree." 26

Cynthia's heightened social activities also became a point of contention. She attempted to assure Coleman that "when I am thrown much with other gentlemen I like you more than ever, and I have seen a good many people recently." 27 She wrote that she had attended a matinee given by Zouave officers where she had waltzed with another lady, "remembering your objection to seeing any lady for whom you had regard waltzing with a gentleman." 28 Coleman immediately registered his disapproval, for her indulgence in dancing might have offended the sensibilities of some "professors of Christianity" also in attendance. "They may not have looked upon dancing in the same light. They may have thought that Christians should be examples to others." 29

Although his next letter attempted to clarify his position, stating that he objected only because he feared others would gossip about her, 30 Cynthia had already taken up her pen, revealing myriad feelings concerning women's rights, privileges, and obligations.

You may imagine my disappointment and my surprise, for but for you I should never have thought of taking such a step. My heart would never have been joyous enough for a dance had not your love dispelled the shadows that had so long darkened my life and shut out the sunlight of happiness from my heart. And in return for being happy you give me a scold. I never thought it wrong in a religious point of view to dance, and I hope my influence for good may be as great as formerly. . . . The gentlemen of the Zouaves of my acquaintance shall have any attention that it may be in my power to extend and, I think, when you know them you will see that association with them will not contaminate me, or render me any less worthy of your regard. I reckon I should have given up the pleasure of dancing had I known, or imagined that you could object. . . . I had promised myself a good deal of amusement in that line during your absence this winter, but I see, if you can you intend to shut me up and keep me all for yourself--selfish wretch. I wonder if I am to be managed. I tell you frankly I have so long acted upon my own judgement that it will be, in some degree, a trial to yield to the opinions of another, when I cannot see the force of the reasoning--and yet, my ideas of
a good wife will not allow me to rebel. A year ago I should have been frightened off. My happiness will be in your hands, you alone will be able to make or mar the joy of my whole life. Think of this when you feel disposed to censure my conduct or to deny me some gratification innocent in itself, which your tastes may not lead you to enjoy. I want to know one thing. Do you expect me to lead the life of a recluse this winter? Could you be at home, I should, as a general thing, desire nothing more than to be with you in our own quiet home. But while you are absent, quite a different state of things will exist. I will be dependent in some measure, at least, upon outside influences for my pleasures. I shall go out when I have an opportunity, or my fancy may direct it. I enjoy the society of gentlemen, and I do not intend to confine myself to that of ladies alone. You know that I am discrete, and I presume [you] are willing to leave my actions to my own judgement. If not you can say so. I expect you think for an engaged woman that I am pretty bold. It may be so, but it is best that you should know, before it is too late, what are my views and opinions upon such subjects. You will not marry me in the dark but with your eyes open on all the points of my character. Were I a child or a very young person I should expect to be controlled by my husband but this is not the case. I am in all respects your equal and while, I hope, as a dutiful wife, to be influenced in all things by your wishes, I shall expect, in most cases, the same from you.31

Coleman made no attempt to counter or argue with these decisions, which had come from much reflection on Cynthia's part during the years of her first marriage and her widowhood. Rather, his response was humorous and affectionate, noting that "I really enjoyed the racy, saucy style of your letter. It renewed my spirits wonderfully which were decidedly below par."32 He was willing to let her handle her own affairs, requesting only that they be married as soon as possible. Despite a sudden influx of sick and wounded into the Williamsburg hospitals requiring Cynthia's assistance, as well as her continued nervousness at the thought of the event,33 they were married on October 29. Two days later, Coleman returned to his regiment in Yorktown, and Cynthia moved into the home of the doctor's mother and sister.

Her change of residence and, more important, the absence of her husband, produced a deep sense of loneliness and depression. The
thought that Coleman was a relatively short distance away and yet unable to see her with any regularity was heightened by her feeling that this state of affairs might last indefinitely. Cynthia attempted to spend more time ministering to the sick, after first convincing Coleman that "if it was right for me to go at one time it certainly is now." The sudden illnesses of a number of family members, leaving her almost solely responsible for their care, caused her to write, "Where is all this to end? I really do not feel capable of much more nursing . . . [F]or weeks, not to say months, I have longed for rest, tranquility, to be allowed to be happy in my own way at my own home, wherever that might be."36

These added hardships soon passed, and life returned to a more normal pace. Coleman was able to make occasional visits, and Cynthia became more accustomed to his absence. Early in 1862 she accompanied her in-laws to their new residence, one of the buildings of the old Governor's Palace, where they maintained a quiet life amid the growing speculation of where the Federal troops would strike next. The landing of General George B. McClellan and his forces on the Peninsula in March and their advance up the York River seemed to guarantee a confrontation with the Confederates in the vicinity of Williamsburg. In a memoir written for her children, Cynthia described the departure of troops on May 5 from Williamsburg to meet the Federals just beyond Fort Magruder. "We the women they left behind them bade them adieu with grave hearts, they to do and suffer, we passively to endure."38

The battle resulted in the Confederates' retreat, and that night the men poured into town, seeking refuge from the advancing Federals as well as the unceasing rain. Cynthia's mother- and sister-in-law had fled a day earlier, and Cynthia had returned to the Tucker home, now filled
with soldiers. Providing food became a problem "for the servants had already begun to show their sense of freedom and prepared with reluctance anything for those they had come to regard no longer as friends but as their bitterest foes." By the next morning the Confederates evacuated the town, heading toward the defense of Richmond. Coleman left Cynthia at the Tucker house; although he wished her to leave Williamsburg, she decided to stay with her mother and youngest sister to take care of the home and the wounded soldiers remaining in town.

Soon afterwards, the Federals occupied Williamsburg, filling the greens with wagons, munitions, and horses and requisitioning abandoned houses for barracks. The Episcopal and Baptist churches, once used as Confederate hospitals, now sheltered the Union wounded as well. Sentinels were placed before occupied homes by McClellan's order, causing Cynthia to observe, "How thankful I felt that my dear Father was at rest and slept the sleep that even his hatred of the North and his love of States Rights could not break. Then I vowed that I would keep his home and above all his Study, where he was wont to write on all the great themes that filled men's minds, sacred from the intrusion of the foe." This vow almost resulted in her arrest when the following day three soldiers attempted to enter the house and she refused them admittance. Although they left with the threat that she would be arrested, this punishment was never carried out.

The majority of the Federal soldiers soon departed for Richmond, "leaving a guard to hold and protect the town and torment the inhabitants." Cynthia was particularly outraged by the Federals' management of the Baptist church hospital. She immediately wrote the commander of the occupation troops a formal letter of her concern.

Mrs. C[oleman] cannot believe that Col. C[ampbell] really intends to deny to the wounded Confederates now prisoners
of the U.S. in Hospital the commonest necessities of life, in other words food actually necessary for the support of life [sic]. Does he reflect upon the odium that such denial will bring not only upon his Government, but upon himself? As Prisoners they have a right to demand food. Mrs. C. however demands nothing, she simply begs that Col. C. will reflect before he determines finally to give up to starvation, or to the charity of the people of Williamsburg the prisoners who wounded and suffering are in his power.\(^{42}\)

After an exchange of letters and a meeting between them, it was stipulated that the citizens must provide supplies for the wounded. The hospital remained a source of grievance, with drunken surgeons, "flagrant wrongs" committed against the wounded, and an aborted attempt to blow up the hospital by a Union soldier.\(^{43}\)

At the end of July, Cynthia obtained a pass to visit Gloucester County in quest of information about her relatives and friends. The Bryan family had fled to their summer home in Fluvanna County, and the few Tucker acquaintances remaining in Gloucester were maintaining a precarious existence under Federal control. Cynthia drove on to Richmond, which had been saved from capture in the Battles of the Seven Days. Although she planned to return to Williamsburg shortly, skirmishes in that area made the journey hazardous and her proposed attempt to enter the town suspect.\(^{44}\) Therefore, she took up residence in Richmond and was reunited with her daughter, who had been sent out of Williamsburg months earlier, and with Coleman, who was now serving in a hospital there.

Through sporadic correspondence with her family and friends, Cynthia learned of the increasing hardships undergone under continuous Federal occupation. Her mother and sister were now alone in Williamsburg under the protection of friends who had also remained to safeguard their property. The Union troops maintained such tight control that the chance of a Confederate move against them did not encourage the populace, according to Lucy Anne Tucker.
Various rumours reach us of our troops coming down. I hope they will not think of it unless they can hold the place which I presume they cannot do, as they might be flanked by a superior force. If they come for a short time our situation will be worse than before and if we were to leave here our houses would soon be in possession of the Yankees or negroes who by the way are going off rapidly.45

The situation was equally grim in more rural areas. Cynthia's close friend Mattie Page described conditions on a farm in Gloucester County.

There is but little visiting here now. Persons do not like to leave their houses for fear the yankees may come in their absence and take their clothes and everything they have. A state of delightful uncertainty to be sure! Uncle Charles has sent his carriage horses to Richmon3 to be sold. Was afraid to keep them here lest the yankees should take them. . . . Uncle Charles says I must not ride about in these uncertain times so now I suppose I must keep close quarters. Heretofore I have been riding hither and thither in a wagon with only a small boy to drive me. . . . The accounts in the paper are not in the least exaggerated, in fact come far short of the real truth in some of the yankee performances here.46

The remaining months of 1862 were ones of both sorrow and happiness for the Coleman's. The doctor successfully completed his examination before the Army Medical Board and reported to the Surgeon General, presumably for his long-awaited commission.47 His continued presence in Richmond helped mitigate Cynthia's grief at the sudden death of young Sarah Washington from a fever on October 1. Additional solace was provided by the birth of the Coleman's first child, Charles Washington Coleman, Jr., on November 22.48

Early in 1863 Coleman left active duty with the Confederate army and moved to Warrenton, North Carolina, in an attempt to establish a private medical practice. Cynthia and their child joined him in April, for they hoped to make a more permanent residence there. A trip was made to Virginia during the summer for family visits while Coleman struggled to keep his practice going. By September the doctor had
returned to the army and was assigned to examine conscripts at a camp in Columbia, South Carolina. Cynthia and Charles, Jr., moved into a farmhouse occupied by Coleman's mother and sister in Clarksville, Mecklenburg County, near the Virginia-North Carolina border. 49

Cynthia now became responsible for the running of this small farm, the management of several servants, and the welfare of her child and her in-laws. She immediately stepped into the supervisory role with much confidence in her own abilities.

The absence of society in Clarksville is no objection to me, for I am by far too busy to have time for much company. I am up long before sunrise every morning to start my forces, and then until after dinner I have them constantly to superintend. . . . I take your place and have morning prayers and grace. I also occupy your seat at table. 50

Crops and their cultivation became a primary topic of concern. She wrote letter after letter detailing the planting of turnips, cabbages, kale, and corn. While displaying her zeal for the work, she was sure to preserve the proprieties of her position, writing, "In my gardening operations I have endeavoured to shade my face so much as my hat would allow, remembering your objection to a wife with a nut brown skin." 51

But in response to Coleman's fears that her tasks were in some manner beneath her, she assured him, "I have never for a moment regretted my decision with regard to keeping house. The wisdom of the course impresses me as before." 52

Despite her initial confidence, there were sufficient problems to cause worry. Although Coleman probably had not had much experience with farming because of his professional career, Cynthia wrote to him for advice on numerous occasions.

How often do I wish for you to direct the garden, for I am so ignorant about what ought to be done, and one person will tell me one thing and one another, from your opinion there would be no appeal. Please write me if you did not say that the cabbage
from the lower part of the garden must be brought up near the house? If so when must the move be made? Any other directions or suggestions you can make will be thankfully received. 53

Even though he attempted to advise her as much as possible, she continued to make her own decisions on the basis of her experience.

Little more than a month after she commenced housekeeping, Cynthia felt so keenly the pressure, loneliness, and frustrations of her tasks that in considerable despair she wrote her husband:

How truly do I wish you were here. I have been heart sick for you indeed, sometimes I have felt almost like writing to beg you to give up your position and come back to me, I feel sometimes that it is impossible for me to get along without you, my cares press so heavily upon my unprotected shoulders that often I think I shall sink under the burden, my patriotism fails me almost, and I weep and think that write for my husband I must... I conclude day by day that I won't take life so hard, but each day finds me toiling 'worrying' to try and accomplish certain ends, which at the end of each day are still unattained, my unaided efforts fall through, and weary and worn I go to my room, and pray for pardon for my sins, and strength to serve in a better spirit for the future, and it does help me, at least, for a little while. 54

All of her strength was necessary for the outbreak of diphtheria in her household in December. Beginning with one of the three young slaves, the disease was contracted in varying degrees by Cynthia, her child, two of her brothers visiting her in Clarksville, and her sister-in-law. Although no one was fatally stricken, the number of convalescents gave Cynthia no respite from nursing, in addition to her other duties. Coleman's assistance was sorely needed, but his hopes for a furlough, first in December and then in January, went unfulfilled as the army required his continued presence in South Carolina. He expressed his exasperation at his position in his Christmas Day letter to Cynthia.

I have wished frequently since diphtheria has been at home, that I never had thought of rejoining the army and now would willingly resign my commission did I think such a thing possible. I am now in harness without the shadow of a chance of being able to get out. 55
Although Cynthia would have gladly welcomed her husband home on a permanent leave from the army, she knew he would always remain "in the path of duty and patriotism." Thus, she once again began to encourage his every effort to seek promotion, now to the rank of full surgeon. Not only would this mean an increase in his pay, for which she was eager, but it would satisfy her own ambition for him. While pursuing one of her few leisure pastimes—reading—in the summer of 1864, she asked, "Do you study? I have such a desire to see you eminent in your profession that for my sake, if from no motive of personal ambition, I trust you will employ all of your leisure time in adding to your professional knowledge."

Coleman was equally interested in his advancement but was reluctant to press his superiors for their consideration. Knowing that Cynthia was acquainted with several persons having the proper connections in Richmond, he asked for her assistance. "In the event that you can think of any one who has influence with the Surg[eon] Gen[eral], I would be glad for you to ask them to see the Surg. Genl. and request an invitation for me to appear before the Med[ical] Board . . . for promotion." Coleman cautioned her that his success depended upon her choice of the right person to intercede in his behalf, for "all of these things are now granted as personal favors, merit I fear has little to do with it."

Cynthia was delighted with her husband's reliance upon her. She answered, "I will gladly attend to that matter for you rejoicing that you desire promotion, for I have always felt mortified that you had not full rank and the full pay will be very desirable just now. The matter I think I can manage in a manner satisfactory to you." With the aid of an old Williamsburg friend, she received the consent of the Assistant Surgeon General, Dr. Charles Smith, to advance Coleman's request for
promotion. She urged her husband to submit his application immediately while she attempted to obtain letters of recommendation for him. But by this time, it was January 1865, and with the chaotic condition of the Confederacy in the last months of the war, Coleman's petition was forgotten in his correspondence with his wife and, presumably, by the Surgeon General's department.

Except for a number of visits by her husband and advice given in his letters, Cynthia continued to manage her household alone. Although she received some assistance from her mother- and sister-in-law, she made all major decisions, supervised the servants in the home and garden, and conducted all financial transactions. The matter of the servants was a troublesome one, for she had been accustomed to the well-disciplined hierarchy of household slaves owned by her parents and now found difficult the management of three youthful ones, generally unskilled in the finer points of service. She complained in particular of her male servant Toby, whom she caught stealing food from the larder and selling cabbages from her garden. He was "a very valuable servant but require[d] something more than an iron will to cope with him." As for punishing him, Cynthia encountered resistance from her husband upon the subject.

I regret [she wrote] that we do not agree in the management of servants. I am sorry you think punishment inconsistent with perfect kindness and love on both sides. ... I think myself that a servant ought to fear as well as respect and love their [sic] rulers. Punishment judiciously administered is good for them not when they occasionally transgress but when they do it time after time and listen not to the voice of warning and instruction. ... I regard it as a painful necessity but still a necessity.

Hiring out recalcitrant servants or those who had little work to perform at home was an alternative to their care that the Coleman's undertook in 1864. The servants of the old Coleman household in Williamsburg
had been leased to the service of the Confederate government, and the Tucker family attorney, Montagu Thompson, was given the authority to collect those fees. By November 1864 the hires amounted to only $205 after payment of the previous year's expenses. Cynthia felt extremely anxious over their financial state and advised Coleman to sell any one of his servants "who is either bringing in nothing, or will run off at the first opportunity." She argued that it was proper as well as expedient to sell a female slave to the woman's husband for $3000 and admonished Coleman, "I think to give way to mauling [sic] sentiment about such questions now is wicked."67

Money and the staggering cost of living were among Cynthia's greatest trials. Coleman had deposited $1760 in the Bank of Richmond prior to his departure for South Carolina in September 1863, and had also sold his state stock.68 Cynthia was able to draw upon this money and its interest, as well as that collected by Thompson from the Negro hires. But the high prices of almost all articles that could be bought during the war kept increasing. Cynthia filled her letters with references to the latest cost of clothing, food, and household supplies. Although she attempted to keep her purchases as reasonable as possible, she could not imagine where more money could be obtained as the prices rose.69 In addition, many items needed for even a moderately comfortable existence could not be bought anywhere. Cynthia wrote, "I confess to much anxiety for the coming year for ourselves for the scarcity will bring high prices and our means do not increase with the demand."

The cycle of scarcity and high prices provided the impetus for the sharing of resources as well as "making do." To supplement her own crops and livestock, Cynthia received many goods through the generosity of her neighbors.
The people were very good to us, they seemed to think that the next best thing to taking care of the Soldiers was to look after their refugee families, as far as they could prevent it we did not suffer. One farmer I remember sent us five large farm bags of meal, flour, potatoes and black-eyed peas, saying as the son, husband, and brother was in the Army it was proper that his loved ones should be provided for by those who still enjoyed the comforts of home. 71

Boxes of much needed supplies were sent by relatives in Richmond and from the Tucker home in Williamsburg. Dresses, gloves, handkerchiefs, sewing notions, cloth, shoes, soap, coffee, and sugar were among the treasured items. But the greatest joy came from the inclusion of candles. In one package, sixty of them prompted Cynthia to write, "Oh me, what a treat that was, but it is necessary to be very stingy with them, for just before they came I had paid for six pounds of tallow $18. . . . [Candles] are very scarce here and when to be gotten are .75 cents and $1 for one and mean at that." 72 On another occasion she received a Confederate candle--"ten or more yards of candlewick covered with bees-wax fancifully arranged around a stick on a stand"--which was considered "a priceless treasure while it lasted." 73

Like many others, Cynthia attempted to produce substitutes for those items she could not obtain commercially and to make many of the needed goods herself. When paper became scarce, she wrote her letters to her husband on those received from relatives and friends. Her handwriting became minute as every space on the paper was filled, both horizontally and vertically. The poor quality of her ink led to her own experimentation in ink production. Using a recipe given by a friend, she made six gallons "for which I ought to get about $75. . . . The outlay is small, and the trouble not much, the result most satisfactory." 74 Another important activity was the making of accessories such as hats of braided straw, decorated with straw flowers, and goose-feather fans. 75 As for
food, substitution was mandatory with "blackberry leaves and such like for tea, dried sweet potatoes for coffee, sorghum the only 'sweetening.'"\textsuperscript{76}

In the summer of 1864 Cynthia sought relief from the responsibilities of life in Clarksville through a long visit with relatives. Taking her son with her, she journeyed first to Richmond and then to the Bryan family home in Fluvanna County. Life in these two places was evidently much more to her liking and their privations not as great. While in Richmond she sought out the company of as many people as possible, eager to dispel the loneliness of the past year. To Coleman she wrote, "I am afraid I shall become demoralized by Cousin L.'s late hours. I have fallen most gracefully into all their luxurious ways."\textsuperscript{77} Her visit to the Bryans' home, where she was reunited with many old friends, only increased her dissatisfaction with "refugee life." Again she wrote, "I am in no haste to go back to Clarksville to dry bread etc. Here I feast on butter and buttermilk, and should there be virtue in these things will soon grow fat."\textsuperscript{78}

Her travels, however, also made her aware of the extent of destruction, in terms of resources and morale, wreaked upon Virginia by the Union forces.

Where the Yankees have been not a rasher of bacon or a dust of meal have been left. Crops destroyed, and the few left standing there are no longer hands to work. When will these evil days be shortened? Government has made a call for the delivery of half the wheat crop of the State in fifteen days. What is to become of the people of Virginia?\textsuperscript{79}

Her earlier optimism that the end of the war was near, for "the Lord of Hosts had gone forth with our Armies, and has battled for us,"\textsuperscript{80} dissipated by the time she returned to Clarksville. The unrelenting drive of the Union armies and the myriad problems faced by the Confederate government—news of which she regularly read in the Richmond \textit{Examiner}—
foretold doom. In the fall of 1864 she wrote Coleman, "The dark cloud which seems to have settled upon our Country's cause cannot be without its influence, peace and its attendant blessing which had seemed so near are phantom like, retreating before us."81

News from Williamsburg was also distressing. Although Cynthia's mother had been made fairly comfortable through funds from her family in Missouri and the occupation soldiers had dealt reasonably with her at first by allowing her to remain in her own home,82 by the fall of 1864 Lucy Anne Tucker was threatened with eviction for not taking the Union oath. Cynthia had never been reconciled to her own departure from Williamsburg,83 and she longed to return both to her family and to the idyllic years she remembered.

I know in my own case, I have so often thought if, I could only get back to that sacred spot in which all the happiest years of my life have been spent, with my Mother there to welcome me, I could be perfectly satisfied, and with that home ever in my eye and mind I could never be contented elsewhere.84

Letters sent by family and friends informed Cynthia that those citizens not taking the oath had been banished from Williamsburg. Several made their way to Richmond while the Tucker women, protesting their removal to Suffolk, were taken back to the town.85 Some pieces of furniture and several personal items had been taken from the Tucker house, although a number of them were eventually returned. Lucy Anne Tucker, fearing repeated thefts, managed to send the family's most valuable possessions and also some badly needed supplies through the lines to Richmond, in the hope that Cynthia would receive them.86

As a result, Cynthia made the trip to Richmond in mid-December for the articles, and she attempted to find some means of conveyance to Williamsburg for a long-anticipated visit to her mother and sister.
She heard that a wagon had just come from the area and planned to return the following day. She secured a passport and joined the black driver and a white female passenger. As she wrote in her memoir, "I had two loaded pistols and was so anxious to see my poor Mother, I had no time to think how unsafe and improper my position before we were off." Except for a confrontation at the Chickahominy River with Confederate soldiers who immediately offered their aid upon hearing "the voice of a lady," the travellers encountered no resistance. On the third day, Cynthia arrived outside Williamsburg and established herself within a mile of town.

Her application to visit the Tucker home was refused, and therefore she was forced to meet her family at "The Lines," a barricade erected across the Jamestown and Richmond roads above the College. On designated days, "the country people were allowed to come and traffic with the people of the Town," availing themselves of the opportunity to smuggle letters and small items back and forth. Cynthia met her family and friends there as often as possible, and "each time some valuable article found its way to me." News of loved ones and information concerning the Confederacy were eagerly received by the Williamsburg occupants who, in turn, told Cynthia of "the destruction of property in the Town, the strict, oppressive rule, and the thousand annoyances which were inflicted on the helpless females of the place." They spent Christmas Day at "The Lines" in a roofless house by the road. "The snow was falling fast, but we put up our umbrellas, kindled a fire, sat on such logs as we could find, ate our cake and drank toasts to our Confederate heroes in the hearing of the Sentinel whose forebearance we rewarded by giving him a glass of wine." The laxness of the guards also allowed Cynthia to perform a service for the Confederates soon afterwards.
Our scouts had laid a plan to drive in or capture the Yankee Pickets on the different points above Williamsburg on a certain night. A traitor betrayed this fact to the enemy. . . . The guard was at once doubled and every arrangement made to repel or capture the Scouts. This fact I learned at the lines. Before the appointed time I was able to convey to them a warning of danger, and their proposed attack was not made.92

The great crowd of soldiers at the meeting place a few days later led Cynthia to believe that security measures were being tightened and her movements were suspect. After making her farewells, she traveled to a home thirteen miles from town where a number of her possessions had been stored for safekeeping before the occupation in 1862. There she also secured passage on a wagon with a Confederate soldier as escort and departed for Richmond. "The country through which we passed . . . was one of extreme desolation and lifelessness. The farms seemed never to have been cultivated, fences down and gone, houses deserted or filled with negroes, waving fields of grain supplanted by the brier and noxious weeds."93 After crossing the Cold Harbor battlefield--"a ghastly spectacle" of partially buried bodies--the party safely reached the Confederate capital.

With her cache of supplies and valuables, Cynthia made her way from Richmond to Clarksville. While her trip had met with Coleman's disapproval,94 she hoped he would be pleased with her acquisitions.95 At this time, however, his mind was occupied by war news and his increasing conviction that the Confederate government and particularly Jefferson Davis was leading the South to certain defeat.

I have been loath to admit it even to myself, that we have the wrong man at the head of our affairs. But now there is no such thing as disguising the fact. He lacks the breadth of mind to comprehend the enumerable difficulties which he has to contend against. And besides this, he has not magnanimity enough to see the good qualities of some of our best men, simply because he is not friendly toward them. He can see no good in an enemy, and no want of ability in a friend. If we fail in achieving our nationality, it will
not have been for the want of men and means, but for the want of forecast enough to see the danger, and provide against them.96

Cynthia herself was anxious over the future of the Confederacy. Having seen a copy of the oath to the Union, she termed it "a fearful thing" and declared she should not be bound by it in the event she must sign it. She was also uneasy at the rumors of an impending evacuation of Richmond. She wrote her husband, "I understand Genl. Lee says our cause is bright as ever but our people are too despondent. I don't know what possesses the country... When Richmond is evacuated the state will be, and then what will become of us. Are we to stand or run? I have had enough of running."97

Yet when evacuation finally occurred early in April, Cynthia wrote to Coleman, giving news of the Confederate departure and the burning of the city, and adding that the Tucker-Coleman families should consider moving to Texas or Mexico, if necessary.98 Her letter of April 21 described Lee's surrender to Grant, the rampant desertion of the soldiers, and Confederate plans to carry on the fight outside Virginia. She believed that the state's defeat had come from divisiveness within the ranks of the Confederacy and "if our people will be but true now, tho' we may never regain dear Virginia, we may still retain a place where we will be free from Yankee presence, not less hateful than Yankee tyranny."99 For her own safety she was unconcerned, adding "You must not feel uneasy about me, I have a strong brave heart which will enable me to bear up under great trials."100

Soldiers were now regularly passing through Clarksville, and Cynthia gave food and clothing to those who were on their way south to continue fighting. When a mob threatened the local commissary, all of its stores were distributed among the needy and the soldiers'
families. Cynthia was determined to give her share to the soldiers, noting with anger how many of the citizens were concerned with their own gain. "It has been a grand time for the lower classes who are rejoiced once more to get something for nothing. I have been disgusted by the number of men standing about the streets instead of going on as fast as possible to the army." 101 Again, she asked her husband whether they should move elsewhere, for "unless Virginia be restored to the Confederacy I can't remain within her borders. While there is a reasonable prospect of such an end being worked out I am willing to stay, but should we be finally abandoned, I must go too, anywhere from Lincoln tyranny." 102
CHAPTER VI
"THE FIRES OF ADVERSITY": RECONSTRUCTION AND GROWTH

With the final surrender of all Confederate forces and the collapse of all hopes for a continuation of the fight, the Coleman family did not flee the state. Cynthia maintained her residence in Clarksville but spent the summer and early autumn traveling through Virginia on visits to her relatives and friends. The doctor was meanwhile seeking a location to begin his medical practice again, believing that Williamsburg offered no opportunities for his services. By November Cynthia had returned to the Tucker family home, and Coleman was residing in Boydton, near Clarksville.\(^1\)

Life in Williamsburg in the years following the war was one of desolation and despair. The destruction of much land and property necessitated a rebuilding program that the citizens were unable to carry out quickly. With the pre-war dependence upon black servitude, the white population was now at a loss as to the utilization of both white and black labor. The unemployed of both races filled the town and neighboring countryside, threatening the security of law-abiding citizens. The Tucker family attorney, Montagu Thompson, wrote with considerable dismay about the situation in 1867.

I cannot but be affected by the condition of things here. It is deplorable in the extreme in every aspect. The people generally are bankrupt and but few of them seem to have that industry and energy requisite to retrieve their fortunes. The population must undergo an entire change before the country can recover. There are enough idle white young men in this Place, who if they would work, could make food for the whole population. The Negroes are even worse. We
have nothing to hope from them. They are daily growing more worthless and depraved. I do not know of a single farmer in this region who has paid the expenses of cultivation this year from his crops. That steady regular and constant labour which farming operations require is not to be had. Our People do not seem to comprehend the situation. They have nothing left but Land, and instead of trying to render that valuable, they are pursuing a course which tends to make it worthless, viz. renting it out in small parcels to negroes who not only destroy the land by injudicious cultivation, but forming, as they do, colonies of thieves drive away all reputable and industrious white population.2

This sense of bitterness toward the freedmen and their "defection" from their white masters was particularly acute in Cynthia's own mind. She had been distressed at the flight of the Tucker family servants from Williamsburg during the war, and although especially saddened when her mother's sole companion, Mammy Patty, finally departed as well, she had considered at the time that "her faithfulness in the past should make us look with kind eyes upon the step she has taken."3 Now, she saw the northern liberators as solely responsible for the blacks' disaffection with their former lives and for their hostility toward their former masters. Like her father, she had considered slavery a benefit to both races, and since she believed their servants had always been treated as humble members of the family, she reacted to their desertion and to black freedom in general with bewilderment and pain.

Bright, happy race—they loved us, and we trusted them. Those by whom these tender relations were broken have done them, not us, a great wrong; in their ignorance peaceful and contented; with the fruit of the tree of knowledge they have also eaten of the apple of Discord. Discontented and idle, no longer worthy of trust, they betray the hand that feeds them.4

Aside from the emotional impact of black freedom, the financial loss was also a cause for despair. Both the Coleman and Tucker families were affected in this regard. Coleman and his mother had had several thousand dollars worth of debts before the war that could not now be
paid, for a considerable portion of their property had been slaves.\(^5\)
Lucy Anne Tucker's losses in the war were also primarily slaves, and the
expenditures for her own household and for the support of her children
during the war had significantly diminished her remaining financial re-
resources.\(^6\) They all now faced a crucial change in their manner of living.\(^7\)

In the face of their immediate financial difficulties, which because
of Coleman's reticence came as an unexpected shock to Cynthia,\(^8\) she de-
cided to open a boarding and day school in Williamsburg in 1866. A
printed advertisement for the October 1866-July 1867 term of the "Female
Seminary" listed Cynthia as the principal and announced the academic
program of instruction "in all the branches usually taught in Female
schools of the highest grade." There were two departments--primary and
advanced--and among the course offerings were Latin, modern languages,
vocal and instrumental music, English, history, and Bible studies.
Through an arrangement with Benjamin S. Ewell, president of William and
Mary, students would participate in chemistry and natural philosophy
experiments. In view of her own academic interests, Cynthia was respon-
sible for teaching the history, religion, and instrumental music courses.\(^9\)
A later advertisement for the October 1867-July 1868 session listed
French as an additional course and revealed that the price of boarding
had been reduced from $130 to $115.\(^10\)

There is no indication of how successful Cynthia's venture was, al-
though Montagu Thompson commented in the summer of 1867 that her pros-
pects for the coming term were good since the only other girls' school
in Williamsburg was being discontinued.\(^11\) She did have difficulty, how-
ever, collecting the tuition fees from several of her students,\(^12\) and
the persistence with which she pursued the tardy payments is evidence
of her own financial distress.
In addition to conducting her own school, Cynthia was concerned with the rebuilding of the College of William and Mary and the future direction of its programs. Her ties to the college through her father and her first husband were strong, and she saw its reemergence as one of the foremost educational institutions in the country as a most worthy goal. In the campaign for monetary subscribers and influential patrons, Cynthia wrote to Robert E. Lee and received his promise of aid for the college's advancement. To her acquaintance Hugh Blair Grigsby, a Virginia historian with a great interest in William and Mary, she wrote, "Who can build the College up? Genl. Lee is in Lexington, and I understand that Mr. Davis will accept the situation offered him at Randolph Macon. In vain I look around for someone to take pity, and there is none." Despite the absence of a well-known leader, the efforts on behalf of William and Mary continued under the presidency of Benjamin S. Ewell, and Cynthia and her husband each made monetary contributions to the cause.

While her educational interests were augmented by many civic and religious activities, Cynthia found the years after the war to be extremely difficult ones, particularly because of the inevitable contrast to the happy years of her childhood and adolescence. The changes that had occurred in material circumstances and in people themselves were cause for much reflection and sadness. Of Cynthia herself, a close cousin wrote, "My darling I cannot tell you how my heart bled to think how my bright, lovely, charming, and idolized cousin had changed. Oh! Cynt times will better one of these days, I hope. You are passing through the fires of adversity." Montagu Thompson saw the Coleman and Tucker families regularly and witnessed the hardships they underwent in resuming some semblance of a normal life. He was particularly
grieved by the seemingly aimless lives of Cynthia's brothers in contrast to the unending labor of her days.

Cynthia is the only one remaining [in Williamsburg]. Her life is one of complete drudgery and I fear there is but small hope of ever her escaping from it. She is by far the superior of all the children and I cannot think of her fate, except with sadness.18

The death of Lucy Anne Tucker in February 1867 and the resulting division of her estate prompted a renewal of concern with financial matters. Coleman had since returned to Williamsburg and set up his practice, and another child, Elizabeth Beverley, had been born. There was some indecision among the Tucker children over who would now occupy the family home. Cynthia's invalid brother Thomas, who had been wounded at Fredericksburg, contemplated returning to Williamsburg, and Cynthia urged him to take up residence in the family home.19 The Colemans themselves considered moving to Cynthia's birthplace in Missouri but were strongly advised against this action by a relative familiar with the area, who believed, "Everything is so unsettled that I should think it best to wait. . . . The expenses of building are now enormous, and it would be like opening a new farm on the Prairie."20 Concerning lands Cynthia owned in Missouri, she was advised to lease the whole property "for 4 or 5 years to men who will fence it and build a house of some kind on it, at their own expense." She could not hope to receive a regular income from this land unless she put considerable money into its development; therefore rental was preferable.21 This she did in 1871, granting 213 acres in Saline County, her birthplace, for a period of eight years.22

There was also deliberation over the disposition of the property she had inherited from her first husband. With the death of their daughter in 1862, Cynthia received all of Washington's bequest. Despite her fears concerning the fate of the Midwest lands during the war, they all
remained intact and in the control of her trustees. In 1868 she corresponded with Washington's brothers, who were among the trustees, over the sale of her Chicago and Minnesota lands. Her letters reveal that she had full knowledge of the arguments for and against the sale, and she shrewdly pointed out what she believed her own best interests would be in the matter.

While I am also willing to modify my views to meet in some measure your own, I do not think I put too high an estimate upon my life interest in said property. A recent letter from my agent in Chicago estimating my life interest in the property there according to fixed and established rules would be quite startling to you. . . . I would really prefer giving up my life interest in the entire property wherever located if it can be done on terms that in justice to myself and children I could accept. From the first of next month the property will yield me an income of about eighteen hundred dollars subject, however, to agents commissions and taxes. The loss of this very comfortable sum for these times would be very seriously felt by me.23

By 1870 circumstances were still straitened but improving for the Coleman family. Two sons, Beverley Tucker and George Preston, had been born, and Cynthia was now immersed in the rearing of four small children. In 1869 she had purchased the "Tayloe House" down the street from the Tucker family residence,24 and the Colemans moved shortly afterwards. There, another daughter, Catherine Brooke, was born in 1871, and their last child, Giles Bland, was stillborn in 1874.25

Her family, church, and community were the focal points of the remaining forty years of Cynthia's life. She delighted in instructing her children and providing for them a solid educational and moral basis for their futures. She wrote stories utilizing her experiences for their amusement as well as for her own desire to preserve a personal record. Their terms in boarding schools gave her the opportunity to advise and encourage, as her parents had done for her. She and Coleman
attempted to provide a sense of continuity and stability for the family through their lifelong commitment to Williamsburg despite its desolate state following the war. Coleman remained a well-loved local doctor and civic leader there until his death in 1894, and Cynthia perpetuated the Tucker family's century-old ties to the town by resuming residence in the house her grandfather had built.

Cynthia's love of her heritage further manifested itself in her unceasing efforts on behalf of the Bruton Parish Church, which provided an outlet for the managerial skills she had developed during the war. Following the death of her youngest daughter in 1883, Cynthia organized the Sunday school classes into the Catherine Society, dedicated to the physical restoration and maintenance of the church and churchyard. From this project, she moved on to a wider interest, that of Virginia history. Convinced that the physical relics of the past must be preserved so that its heritage of ideals might remain strong, Cynthia and a number of like-minded women founded the Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities in 1889. Until her death in 1908, Cynthia worked tirelessly and with great enthusiasm to help the Society in its objective: "to restore and preserve the ancient historic buildings and tombs in the State of Virginia, and to acquire by purchase or gift, the sites of such buildings and tombs with a view to their perpetuation and preservation." It was an appropriate goal for a woman intimately bound to Virginia's past and determined to keep alive its legacy.
CONCLUSION

The southern lady ideal, a manifestation of a complex and indigenous tradition of female domesticity, had an undeniable power in shaping the lives and attitudes of white, middle- and upper-class women. Moreover, its most lasting influence was shown in the manner in which southern society as a whole defined those women and their roles during the nineteenth century. But within the structure of the ideal, women such as Cynthia Beverley Tucker were able to function creatively and, ultimately, to broaden and diversify those roles according to the demands of everyday life and the unusual circumstances imposed by war and its aftermath.

The image of womanhood envisioned by Nathaniel Beverley Tucker involved a simple, unsophisticated domestic life requiring decorous and dignified behavior on the part of the female. Thus he directed Cynthia to remember her noble antecedents and to avoid the heedless lifestyle of a typical adolescent. This caution was the reason for his agreement to her departure from boarding school, where he suspected she learned little of true value, and for her placement with Elizabeth Tucker Bryan, a woman whom Tucker felt personified the dignified, domestic southern woman.

Yet Tucker could not keep from his idealization a strong strain of ambition and desire for success. With a tradition of honor, pride, and achievement behind his family, he aspired through his varied career for widespread recognition. He communicated this sentiment to his eldest
daughter, who from childhood displayed an eagerness to learn from her father and to please him. While Tucker advised Cynthia to seek the approval of only her family and friends by fulfilling a modest example of young womanhood, he was nevertheless well pleased by her feminine accomplishments and by the public admiration she received from exemplifying the most explicit part of the southern image, the role of the belle.

In addition to the considerable disparity between his literary promotion of ideal womanhood and his actual encouragement of Cynthia's worldly conduct, Tucker further convoluted the image he expressed through his suspicions of the masculine character. On many occasions he warned his daughter that most men were innately greedy, untrustworthy, and dishonorable. Despite his platitudes in "Gertrude" that women were simply at the mercy of those around them, he urged Cynthia to be highly discriminating and even assertive concerning her associations with others, particularly in her selection of a husband. While it was expected that she devote her life to making her husband and family happy, she was nevertheless accorded considerable responsibility in making a wise choice. Far from simply being handed to the first eligible bachelor, Cynthia clearly could determine her own future. Thus, whether knowingly or not, Tucker realized that the southern lady ideal was not totally applicable to the realities of a woman's life—that she must use common sense and make certain decisions, if only in her own best interests and to protect herself.

Tucker's sudden death left Cynthia in a highly vulnerable position. From the tangled strands of her father's ideology concerning women, she extracted certain elements, notably the emphasis upon domesticity and the sense of pride and ambition, and combined them in her marriage to
Henry A. Washington. She found in him a paternal substitute who gratified both her domestic impulse and her desire for success. Twelve years her senior, Washington shared many of her late father's interests: the law, teaching, and writing. As a colleague of Tucker's, he was as close to her father as almost any man could have been. His family background as well as his achievements in Virginia circles undoubtedly enhanced his worth in her eyes and made him eminently acceptable as a partner. Therefore she chose a well-regarded man of high principles, one to whom she could dedicate her life and entrust her happiness without hesitation.

The first years of their marriage were placid, with little change in Cynthia's personal life as she continued to be surrounded by family and servants in the Tucker household. Since her mother and her husband managed affairs between them, Cynthia had little in the way of major responsibilities. Beginning in 1857, however, several important changes occurred. The birth of their second child demanded that Cynthia undertake maternal duties, and Washington's debilitating illness necessitated her constant attention and care. His need for solace evoked an interest in prayer and Bible study that Cynthia eagerly directed. While these ministrations fulfilled expectations of a dutiful wife's role, they also enhanced Cynthia's own position, her sense of self-reliance, and her personal power with respect to her weakening husband. In addition, their absences from Williamsburg in search of a cure removed Cynthia from the insular world of her family and forced her to assume greater domestic responsibilities.

Suddenly widowed at the age of twenty-six, Cynthia relied upon her new-found maturity in coping with life devoid of masculine direction and companionship. The restrictions imposed by Washington's will prompted her to expend much effort in handling her financial affairs
and providing for her future security. She began to share more equitably with her mother the management of the Tucker household and devoted much time to the rearing of her daughter. Yet in her years of reflection upon marriage, she was convinced that it was the most desirable state for a woman and that the many responsibilities that now were hers were a necessary response to unfortunate circumstances.

Thus her growing attachment for Charles Coleman was a welcome change from the years of loneliness she had endured. Despite her hesitations at the thought of remarriage, she now discovered that she no longer needed a substitute for her father. Her letter to her mother announcing her intention to marry displayed a mature conception of her role as dutiful daughter and her understanding of the rights and duties of adult womanhood. While she desired her mother's approval of Coleman, Cynthia asserted her need for the love of a man she considered her intellectual and emotional equal. Denying the importance of ambition to both Coleman and herself, she chose to seek a new life, one that was not necessarily that of the ideal lady as envisioned by Tucker and Washington.

The intrusion of war into this personal crisis increased Cynthia's sense of self-reliance while it subsequently intensified her doubts concerning remarriage. Evidently, it had been easier the first time she had made the choice of a husband because her conception of herself, as befit the ideal of true womanhood, had narrowed his qualifications to one who was high-minded and principled. Now, seeing herself as the equal of her potential partner, Cynthia discovered a much wider range of considerations as well as the need to be assured that the man fulfilled her own expectations. When Coleman proved amenable to her assertions and showed that he understood the importance of their mutual trust and individual rights, Cynthia's anxieties diminished.
The demands of wartime, and also Coleman's absence, drew forth Cynthia's dormant ability for direction and management as well as a great reserve of strength. While she did her duty with regard to soldiers' aid societies and the care of the sick and wounded, she also exhibited considerable imagination and spirit in her defense of home and family during the occupation of Williamsburg and particularly in her journey down the Peninsula in 1864. In tribute to her father and the southern cause, she attempted to have The Partisan Leader republished, and for her husband's advancement she eagerly directed a campaign on behalf of his promotion. And when the exigencies of war required her to live the life of a refugee, she undertook the care of her family, the management of a farm and servants, and the provision of necessities with diligence and courage. Although these responsibilities became a trial as the Confederacy neared defeat, Cynthia retained her love of the South and her determination to endure.

The devastated condition of life at the conclusion of the war greatly shocked Cynthia. Comparisons to antebellum life were inevitable, leaving her to wonder if anything had been gained. Yet her ties to Williamsburg were so strong that she could never consider going elsewhere. Although little remained of her former life, she believed that her husband and growing family were well worth the sacrifices and exertion demanded by the new. She devoted herself to their care and to the rehabilitation of her community. As life became more settled, she struck out in wider spheres by taking active part in women's groups, an important instrument of personal and societal growth in the post-war South.

In the life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker, the image of southern womanhood played an important role as it did for a majority of middle-
and upper-class women. Reared according to its principles of frivolous adolescence and yet schooled as well in its requirements of sober domesticity, Cynthia adapted these ideals to fit the structure of her own life. When certain aspects were found wanting or irrelevant, she formulated individual conceptions of what she desired, finding that with maturity and experience she did not need to remain locked into its precepts. From the war and its aftermath she learned to rely upon her own judgment, skills, and common sense to handle the situations these events engendered. Pride and dignity—hallmarks of the ideology Beverley Tucker so carefully sought to instill—had proven the motivating force in Cynthia Tucker's determination to fulfill the changing demands of her life.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER I


2 Ann Douglas points out that "feminine labor and its function in society were visible in [this] period, and this visibility assured a minimal recognition and a minimal degree of directness in the assessment of the feminine contribution." The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 55.


5 Nancy A. White believes the elaboration of the domestic sphere as a function of ideal womanhood was a direct result of "masculine identity building" and a need to control woman's role during this period of social, political, and economic change. "Women in Ante-Bellum America," Journal of Historical Studies, I (1976), 65-66. Ronald Holgeland also suggests that the conceptual development of the cult of domesticity was maledirected. In his opinion, this utilitarian, domestic role was "romantic womanhood," one of four lifestyles available to women between 1820 and 1860, the others being "ornamental," "evangelical," and "radical." "The Female Appendage": Feminine Life Styles in America, 1820-1860," Civil War History, XVII (1971), 101-114.
6. Cott, Root of Bitterness, 12.

7. Cott, Bonds of Womanhood, 69.


10. The manner in which young girls were trained in the virtues of domesticity and womanhood is described in Barbara Welter, "Coming of Age in America: The American Girl in the Nineteenth Century," Dimity Convictions, 3-20.


CHAPTER II

1. In analyzing the origins of the southern lady image with respect to those of the northern cult of domesticity, I agree with Nancy Cott's observations that the two ideals were "separate indigenous traditions with different origins. . . . [T]he New England concept initially was bourgeois, and prescribed a role of utility, not leisure, decoration, or helplessness for women. The Southern image . . . belonged more directly to the historical tradition immortalizing the aristocratic lady." The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 11n.


4 Rollin G. Osterweis has examined numerous reasons for and manifestations of the southern chivalric cult in Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949).


6 George Fitzhugh, Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 214-215. Analyses of the southern planter and southern lady images in antebellum literature may be found in Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, and in John Ruoff, "Frivolity to Consumption: Or, Southern Womanhood in Antebellum Literature," Civil War History, XVIII (1972), 213-229. Ruoff concludes that the southern lady ideal was not an integral part of the period's literature but was rather a product of the defeated South's obsession with the "Lost Cause" (229). Kathryn Seidel, however, argues that this image was actively expressed in antebellum novels depicting the southern belle. She concludes that "the Southerness of the belle provided authors with a perfect vehicle with which to portray the feminine ideal of their age. . . . [T]he Southern woman [was] the epitome of their refined and 'noble' civilization." "The Southern Belle as an Antebellum Ideal," Southern Quarterly, XV (1977), 401.

7 In describing her father-in-law, the Civil War diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut succinctly portrayed the southern patriarch: "His manners are unequalled still, but underneath this smooth exterior lies the grip of a tyrant whose will has never been crossed." A Diary From Dixie, ed. Ben Ames Williams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 534.


9 Thomas Nelson Page, Social Life in Old Virginia Before the War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897), 34.

10 Scott, Southern Lady, 17.

11 Page, Social Life, 52.


13 Scott, Southern Lady, 23-24.

14 Page, Social Life, 37.


16 Page, Social Life, 37-38. It is ironic that in view of the image's strenuous attempts to glorify the southern woman's role in the home, it was compatible with the ideal to term her a "slave."
17 Scott, Southern Lady, 23-33.
18 Ibid., 37.
19 Ibid., 13-14.
21 Ibid., 101-102.
22 Ibid., 123.
23 Scott, Southern Lady, 42-43.
25 Chesnut, Diary From Dixie, 21-22.
27 Scott, Southern Lady, 44.
28 Chesnut, Diary From Dixie, 263-264.
29 For a sampling of southern women's reactions to the events leading up to the war, see Isabel Quattlebaum, "Twelve Women in the First Days of the Confederacy," Civil War History, VII (1961), 370-385.
30 See, for example, the standard work on the role of southern women in the Civil War, Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton, The Women of the Confederacy (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1936), 12-34, 246-253. A more balanced portrayal is provided in Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), passim.
31 Scott, Southern Lady, 81.
32 Ibid., 90.
33 A detailed examination of "making do" and the problems of supply and demand during the war can be found in Mary Elizabeth Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952).
34 Scott, Southern Lady, 94.
35 Ibid., 102.
36 Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 340.
37 Scott, Southern Lady, 135-163.
38 Ibid., 162.
39 Ibid., 231.
CHAPTER III


3 Ibid. For an exhaustive study of Tucker's life, see Percy Winfield Turrentine, "Life and Works of Nathaniel Beverley Tucker" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1952), which also includes considerable material on St. George Tucker. Another valuable study of the younger Tucker is Robert J. Brugger, "A Secessionist Persuasion: The Mind and Heart of Beverley Tucker, Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1974).

4 Tucker-Coleman Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia [unless otherwise indicated, all MS materials cited hereafter are located in the Tucker-Coleman Papers]. Turrentine attributes the authorship of this piece to Silas Totten, a fellow professor at William and Mary. "Life and Works," III, 1499.

5 [Nathaniel Beverley Tucker], "Gertrude; an Original Novel," Southern Literary Messenger, X (1844), 514, 516.

6 Ibid., 643.

7 Ibid., 644-646.


9 For a discussion of the place occupied by Tucker's works in antebellum literature and in the wider scheme of southern thought, see William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee (London: W. H. Allen, 1963), 173-176. Tucker's literary portrayals of the ideal southern woman were identical in objective to those of many other antebellum authors. In "The Southern Belle as an Antebellum Ideal," Kathryn Siedel's conclusions show that the depiction of this archetype of young southern womanhood served the same purpose as the more modest and unassuming model promoted by Tucker: "[The belle] was to hold court from a domestic altar, a setting which would remove her from the corrupt world. She was to be educated, however, so that her seclusion in the home would not make her a naive victim of worldly men. And she was to be charming but virtuous, lovely but modest, for vanity could interfere with her first duty: to inspire men." Southern Quarterly, XV (1977), 401. These were all attributes Tucker firmly endorsed, both in his literary works and in the education of his daughter, Cynthia Beverley.

10 Nathaniel Beverley Tucker [hereafter cited as NBT] to Cynthia Beverley Tucker [hereafter cited as CBT], June 2, 1839.
[Notes to pages 32-39] 102

11. NBT to Lucy Anne Tucker [hereafter cited as LAT], June 26, 1843.

12. Unsigned and undated entries, "Flora's Album."

13. Cynthia W. Smith to CBT, Jan. 21, 1843.


16. Ibid., 164.

17. Molly Lewis to CBT, Dec. 6, 1847.


19. LAT and NBT to CBT, Oct. 19, Nov. 1, 1847.

20. NBT to CBT, Nov. 6, 1847.

21. LAT and NBT to CBT, Nov. 1, 1847.

22. The actual reasons for Cynthia's desire to leave Belmont are vague and are only implied in her parents' letters to her. See Crawford E. Smith to CBT, Dec. 16, 1847, and LAT and NBT to CBT, Jan. 14, 1848.

23. NBT and LAT to CBT, Jan. 14, 1848.


25. NBT to Elizabeth Tucker Bryan, Oct. 30, 1848.


27. See especially letters from Elizabeth Tucker Bryan to LAT, Nov. 26, 1840; July 6, Sept. 7, Dec. 2, 1843; and Mar. 5, 1845.

28. LAT to CBT, Aug. 18, 1850.

29. LAT to [Sara] Bella [Penn], Dec. 10, 1848.

30. Helen to CBT, Oct. 15, 1847.


32. LAT to [Sara] Bella [Penn], Dec. 10, 1848.

Among the most illuminating are those written by Lucy Anne Tucker's sister, Cynthia W. Smith. They reveal a strong sense of inferiority with respect to men and a fear of becoming an old maid. When she finally decided to marry the man who had courted her for several years, she humbly wrote to her niece, "I know how unlovable I am in every respect and am sometimes almost afraid somebody [i.e., her fiance] will regret that he did not find it out sooner—however he will persist in thinking I am very interesting and I will try to hide my imperfections and if possible cure some of them." Cynthia W. Smith to CBT, Oct. 20, 1851. See also her letters of July 24, 1847; Apr. 9, and Aug. 24, 1850.

Fanny B. T. Magill to CBT, Feb. 12, 1850. While one of Cynthia's friends had solemnly declared a few years earlier, "I never talk or write about beaux now, for those times have past, and I have seen the error of my ways, and hope to think less, and talk less about the gentlemen," the subject of men continued to be a favorite topic of correspondence, especially in the later years of adolescence. Jennie Waller to CBT, Dec. 27, 1847.

Elizabeth Tucker Bryan to CBT, Jan. 24, 1851.

I believe the handwriting indicates a post-Civil War date for the writing of this story. Cynthia was most likely thirty-five or older when she wrote this piece.

[Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman], "Williamsburg, Virginia in 1848," 31-32, 45-46.


NBT to CBT, Jan. 9, 1850.

NBT to CBT, Feb. 17, 1851.

NBT to CBT, [Dec. 1850?].

NBT to CBT, [1851].

Matilda W. Emory to CBT, [Sept. 1851]; Cynthia W. Smith to CBT, Oct. 20, 1851.

Page 5 of a writing by CBT, undated.
CHAPTER IV

1 Cynthia wrote to her father while on a visit to Martinsburg, Virginia, "Mr. Henry A. Washington has been here. I never was as glad to see anyone in my life as I was to see him. I had been with strangers so long that a home face was quite refreshing. He was here 'they say' on a visit to a Miss Smith. . . . If she will come [to Williamsburg] she will have a good opportunity to captivate Mr. Washington if she has not done so." CBT to NBT, Sept. 6, 1850.

2 For an account of Washington's life, see J. Johns, Memoir of Henry Augustine Washington (Baltimore: James Young, 1859), in the Henry A. Washington Papers, Folder 1, Swem Library, College of William and Mary. Additional information may be found in Carol H. Sturzenberger, The Diaries of Henry A. Washington, 1842-1845 (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1979), and in the Henry A. Washington Faculty-Alumni File, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

3 Journal entry for Oct. 29, 1844, Henry A. Washington Papers, Folder 10, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

4 Ibid.

5 That there were rumors of a Tucker-Washington romance is indicated by Cynthia's remark to Elizabeth Tucker Bryan, "They say, or I have heard that we (Mr. W. and I) are to married in a month, which is not true." Apr. 13, 1852.


7 Tho[mas] W. Upshur to CBT, May 29, 1852.


9 Puss to CBT, June 30, 1852, Tucker-Coleman-Washington Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary [hereafter cited as T-C-W Papers]. The sense of desolation at the loss of the carefree, independent young woman to the married state was also expressed after the ceremony. See Martha T. Page to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Washington [hereafter cited as CBTW], July 16, 1852, and "T" to CBTW, July 20, [1852].


11 Cynthia apparently enjoyed her position, telling Elizabeth Tucker Bryan, "I think I like the second year of married life better than the first; most of the time I am without a care, and as happy as a lark." Mar. 30, 1854.

12 Delia Bryan to CBTW, Oct. 27, 1852.


14 HAW to CBTW, Apr. 11, [1854].
15. "I felt so lonely and sad that the tears would force themselves into my eyes in spite of myself and of the thought that it might be very absurd to feel so lonely when you were only to be away one little week." CBTW to HAW, June 23, 1854.

16. HAW to CBTW, July 30, 1854.

17. CBTW to HAW, July 23, 1854.


19. CBTW to HAW, July 30, 1854.


22. CBTW to HAW, July 30, 1854. The same sentiments were expressed by Julia Johns: "I never could wish a little angel back again to sin and suffer, but I can feel and mourn for you in what you have suffered, in giving her back again." Julie to CBTW, Aug. 14, 1854.

23. See correspondence of CBTW and HAW, Jan. 1855; and CBTW to HAW, Jan. 15, 1855, T-C-W Papers.

24. CBTW to HAW, Jan. 24, 1855; notation by CBTW on letter from HAW, Jan. 17, 1855.

25. Cynthia found Mrs. Bryan's letters of special value. "[I]t is so refreshing to get a letter written by yourself. It reminds me so of old times when you used to write me such good, motherly, scolding letters and when you would always finish with something so kind and loving that I felt all the nearer to you for the scold." CBTW to Elizabeth Tucker Bryan, Mar. 30, 1854. See also CBTW's letter of Oct. 30, 1852.

26. One of the most important duties was inculcating religious sensibility in a young child. "[I]t is a great responsibility to have a young immortal to train up for Eternity, the idea that it devolves on us to impress upon their little hearts their first thoughts of a God and Saviour and all the glorious truths of the Gospel is indeed startling." Puss to CBTW, Jan. 10, 1857.

27. George M. Dallas to CBTW, Feb. 14, 1856.


29. "I am still very anxious and at times very unhappy about Mr. W.--his disease is so tantalizing, one day quite smart, the next suffering horribly, but I trust that it may please a merciful providence to spare him to us, and not send upon us so heavy an affliction, as his loss would be." LAT to Fanny Bland Coalter, Feb. 16, 1857.

30. Cynthia was deeply grieved by the separation from her child. On Sarah's first birthday, she wrote, "It is mighty hard, Sady, that everybody should hear your first words and see your first steps before Papa.
and Mama. It is a great comfort to me to be able to dream about you which I have done very often lately. . . . But you won't know me, Sady, when you see me, for I fear it will be several months more before we can go to Williamsburg and dear Papa is too sick to have his little daughter here, for fear he will love her too much if he sees her every-day. . . . Then, too, if you were here I should not be able to give all my time to him and as he is sick I ought to do it." Dec. 26, 1857.

31 LAT to CBTW, Nov. 13, 1857.
33 HAW to CBTW, July 19, 1854.
34 Accounts of Washington's death are given in Johns, Memoir, 28-32, and in an unidentified newspaper clipping in a letter from "Aunt Margaret" to CBTW, Apr. 3, 1858.
35 LAT to CBTW, Mar. 8, 1858.
36 Delia Bryan Page to CBTW, Mar. 4, 1858.
37 Benjamin S. Ewell to CBTW, Mar. 11, 1858, T-C-W Papers.
38 Aunt Margaret to CBTW, Apr. 3, 1858.
39 CBTW to Fanny Bland Coalter, Apr. 22, 1858.
40 Ibid.
41 Photocopy of authenticated copy of the will of Henry A. Washington located in his Faculty-Alumni File, Swem Library.
43 H. H. Marshall to CBTW, Apr. 27, 1859, and A. Goodwin to CBTW, May 16, 1859.
44 P. M. T[hompson] to CBTW, May 6, 1859.
45 CBTW to Fanny Bland Coalter, July 5, 1858.
46 CBTW to Fanny Bland Coalter, Apr. 29, 1859.
47 Fanny Bland Coalter to CBTW, June 30, 1858.
48 CBTW to Fanny Bland Coalter, July 5, 1858.
49 CBTW to Fanny Bland Coalter, Apr. 29, 1859.
50 Johns, Memoir.
51 College of William and Mary Faculty Minutes, June 15, [1858], Swem Library; CBTW to Lawrence Washington, Feb. 9, 1859, College Papers, Swem Library.
LAT to Georgia Grinnan, Sept. 6, 1859. For a list of books in the Tucker household, which Cynthia inventoried both in 1859 and in 1869, see her "French notebook," T-C-W Papers. The largest category is history, followed by fiction.

Correspondence of CBTW for 1860, passim.

CHAPTER V

LAT to CBTW, correspondence of 1859, passim.

Correspondence of CBTW for 1860, passim.

Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XV (1907), 102-103.


CWC to CBTW, Jan. 3, 1861.

Ibid.

Ibid.

CBTW to LAT, Jan. 22, 1861.

Ibid.

Ibid.

CBTW to [Sarah Washington], Apr. 18, 1861.

CWC to CBTW, Apr. 18, 24, 1861.

Undated note by Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman.

The issue of Coleman's promotion is covered in numerous letters in 1861, especially July 6, 10, 20, and those of September and October. Although Cynthia states in her letter of July 20 that Coleman's commission as Assistant Surgeon had arrived in Williamsburg and that he must apply immediately for a hospital position there, pursuit of the subject in further correspondence indicates he did not receive the promotion at that time.

CBTW to CWC, July 16, 10, 1861. Of her heightened social life, Cynthia joked, "If you were not at the war, I should have a fine time with all these pleasant people and as it is I intend to put the best face for the matter that circumstances will allow, and enjoy myself in some small degree." July 10, 1861.

CBTW to CWC, July 10, 1861.

CBTW to CWC, July 14, 1861.

CBTW to CWC, Sept. 7, 1861.
17[Editor of the Charleston Mercury] to CBTW, June 3, 1861.


19J. M. Mason to CBTW, May 25, 1861. Mason was later the Confederate diplomatic commissioner to Great Britain who, with John Slidell, was seized on the British ship Trent on November 8, 1861 by the U.S. Navy, precipitating the Trent Affair.

20CBTW to James Barron Hope, draft of letter, [Sept. 27?, 1861], Coleman-Washington Papers, microfilm, reel 1, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Department, Williamsburg, Va.


22CBTW to Ghieslin, draft of letter, [1861?], Coleman-Washington Papers.

23Quoted in Goodwin, "Published Works," 143-144.

24CBTW to CWC, Sept. 23, 1861.

25CBTW to CWC, Oct. 15, 1861.

26Ibid.

27CBTW to CWC, Oct. 8, 1861.

28CBTW to CWC, Oct. 11, 1861.

29CWC to CBTW, Oct. 14, 1861.

30CWC to CBTW, Oct. 16, 1861.

31CBTW to CWC, Oct. 17, 1861.

32CWC to CBTW, Oct. 19, 1861.

33Correspondence of CBTW and CWC, Oct. 20, 21, 27, 1861. ✓

34Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman [hereafter cited as CBTC] to CWC, Nov. 7, 1861.

35Ibid.

36CBTC to CWC, Nov. 18, 1861.

37CBTC to [Hugh Blair Grigsby], Mar. 25, 1862.

38Unpublished memoir by CBTC, 3. This memoir covers the occupation of Williamsburg by Federal troops as well as Cynthia's journey down the Peninsula to visit her mother in 1864. For another account of the first two months of the occupation, see "Diary of Miss Harriette
Cary, Kept by Her from May 6, 1862 to July 24, 1862, Williamsburg, "Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, IX (1928), 104-115, XII (1931), 160-173. In the T-C-W Papers, there are two manuscripts ("May 5, 1862" and "Williamsburg during the Occupancy of the Federal Troops") by CBTC that purport to be eye-witness accounts, but actually incorporate her own experiences during this time with those of several citizens who remained in Williamsburg throughout the war. The above cited memoir is the most accurate depiction of CBTC's activities during 1862, particularly as there are very few letters from the period.

39 CBTC memoir, 4.
40 Ibid., 6.
41 Ibid., 11.
42 CBTC to Col. Campbell, draft of letter, [June, 1862?].
43 CBTC memoir, 12.
44 Ibid., 15.
45 LAT to CBTC, Oct. 29, 1862.
47 Surgeon General to CWC, Oct. 31, 1862.
48 Birth and death dates have been taken from Cynthia's Bible, Tucker-Coleman Collection, Rare Book Department, Swem Library.

49 Correspondence for this period does not clearly reveal the motivations for Coleman's return to, first, private practice, and then active duty. There is the indication that he was suffering from ill-health early in the year and that he hoped the change of location and activity might improve it. Correspondence of CWC and CBTC, 1863, passim.

50 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 11, 1863.
51 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 22, 1863.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid. The physical difficulties of managing a farming household with very little assistance was one of Cynthia's greatest hardships. At one point, she wrote, "I find it so hard to manage, for instance I had all the enclosures put in good order, now they are constantly requiring a nail here and another there, then the neighbour's hogs and pigs come in the garden and root up what has been planted. Then the neighbours themselves come in and help the hogs. Then the gates are left open by everybody, the chickens get out and never return." CBTC to CWC, Dec. 12, 1863.

54 CBTC to CWC, Oct. 13, 1863.
55 CBTC to CWC, Dec. 25, 1863.
56 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 11, 1863.
57 CBTC to CWC, Oct. 2, 1863.
58 CBTC to CWC, July 9, 1864.
59 CWC to CBTC, July 17, 1864.
60 CBTC to CWC, [July 19, 1864].
61 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 19, 1864.
62 CBTC to CWC, Jan. 11, 1865.
63 CBTC to CWC, Nov. 29, 1863.
64 CBTC to CWC, Oct. 1, 1864.
65 CBTC to CWC, Nov. 1, 1863.
66 Correspondence of Apr. 1864, among CBTC, CWC, and P. Montagu Thompson.
67 CBTC to CWC, Nov. 10, 1864.
68 CWC to CBTC, Sept. 8, 1863.
69 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 19, 1864.
70 CBTC to CWC, July 29, 1864.
71 CBTC memoir, 16.
72 CBTC to CWC, Nov. 29, 1863.
73 CBTC memoir, 17.
74 CBTC to CWC, Oct. 1, 1864.
75 CBTC memoir, 17.
76 Ibid., 16.
77 CBTC to CWC, June 11, 1864.
78 CBTC to CWC, June 28, 1864.
79 Ibid.
80 CBTC to CWC, May 24, 1864.
81 CBTC to CWC, Sept. 25, 1864.
CHAPTER VI

1 Correspondence of CBTC and CWC, May-Nov. 1865, passim. It is not clear how long Cynthia and Coleman remained separated. In Jan. 1866 he had still not returned to Williamsburg, having abandoned the idea of opening a drug store there in favor of continuing his medical practice elsewhere in the state. CWC to CBTC, Jan. 15, 1866.
Fifteen years earlier, Montagu Thompson had observed with foreboding, "I would venture a good deal in such a case to prevent [financial] misfortunes from falling upon the family. It would be a dreadful thing for such to happen to this family who have never known a want and have not the faintest idea of the struggles, the strict economy, and the systematic management which a change in their circumstances would make necessary." P. Montagu Thompson to William N. Berkeley, copy of letter, July 31, 1851, Thompson Faculty-Alumni File (original in Berkeley Papers, University of Virginia Library).

Printed advertisement for "Female Seminary in the City of Williamsburg, Va." [1866].

Printed advertisement for "Female Seminary in the City of Williamsburg, Virginia" [1867].

P. Montagu Thompson to William N. Berkeley, copy of letter, Aug. 12, 1867, Thompson Faculty-Alumni File (original in Berkeley Papers, University of Virginia Library).

Jennie L. Eagle to CBTC, July 18, 1867; J. R. Coupland to CBTC, July 31, 1867.

R. E. Lee to CBTC, Jan. 21, 1867.

CBTC to [Hugh Blair Grigsby], copy of letter, June 24, 1868.

The History of the College of William and Mary from its Foundation, 1660, to 1874 (Richmond: J. W. Randolph and English, 1874), 69-72n.

Writing of the Tucker children's hardships in the post-war years, Cynthia observed, "Our once ample fortunes are very much crippled, and having been nurtured in the lap of luxury we find it very hard to come down to circumstances." CBTC to [Robert Washington], Feb. 10, 1868.

May 14, 1867, Thompson Faculty-Alumni File (original in Berkeley Papers, University of Virginia Library). In another letter Thompson commented, "Poor Cynthia is working for [her] very life, she looks fagged and care-worn, but I don't like even to think of her sad career." *Ibid.*, Apr. 3, 1867.

He in turn wrote her, "I know of no one who has a better right to occupy it or who would take better care of it than yourself." [Thomas] S. B. Tucker to CBTC, Apr. 1, 1867.

William N. Berkeley to CBTC, June 6, 1867.

Crawford E. Smith to CBTC, Sept. 12, 1869.

Lease between CBTC and David and Austen Dennis, Jan. 12, 1871.

CBTC to [Robert Washington], Apr. 8, 1868. See also her letter to him, Feb. 10, 1868. Cynthia was determined to keep her share of Washington's furniture, silver, books, and other household property as well. CBTC to [Lawrence Washington], Sept. 4, 1868.


Of this sad event, Cynthia wrote, "As I have grown stronger I have had more regret about my own baby having been stillborn, although I cannot help a feeling of thankfulness that there is not another little one to be provided for. There would not be much of anything but love for any more." CBTC to Georgia Grinnan, Nov. 12, 1874.

Printed copy of *First Constitution and By-Laws of the Society for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1889*, T-C Papers. Cynthia held the office of second vice-president during the founding year.
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