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(A Seasonal Catechism for the Study of Western and American Civilization)

“No Taxation Without Representation” --- (Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 323-332)

This American slogan, at the time of the Revolution in the 1770’s, amounted in fact to a denial of Parliament’s right to tax the colonies? Such a denial was based chiefly on custom in the Thirteen Colonies, each of which had its own legislative assembly with power over the public purse for internal administration. Besides, the colonists had no practical representation across the sea in Commons, no peers to send to the House of Lords, and they made no effort ever to acquire such.

Virginia’s Gentleman-planter --- (Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 312-323)

This prototype American leader, from colonial days till at least the Civil War, was exemplified by Southerners like Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe? Their dwellings, writes Kirk, “were like the country houses of English squires or Scottish lairds, though the servants and the agricultural laborers of the plantations were black slaves, not freeborn Englishmen or Scots.” Invariably, they were great landholders, men of piety and intellect, lovers not of equality but liberty, and loyal patriots.

James Fenimore Cooper’s “Gentleman” --- (Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 312-323)

This humane ideal, said James Fenimore Cooper, signifies “one elevated above the mass of society by his birth, manners, attainments, character and social condition”? Writing in *The American Democrat* (1838), Cooper observed that there were indeed in the fledgling republic upper and lower classes, though less rigid and exclusive than the hereditary castes of Europe. Moreover, some form of hierarchy with men of recognized virtue at the top was essential to civilization everywhere, no less in the New World.

New England’s “Peculiar Aristocracy” --- (Kirk; *Roots*, pp.312-323)

This heading fits the original New England Yankee elite, fathers whose Puritanism with its democratic bent nonetheless embraced the Old World idea of a gentleman? Names like Winthrop, Mather, and Saltonstall stood above the rest in Boston, a city where the titles “Master” or “Mr.” eclipsed “Goodman” and ranked higher than “Honorable” does today. Perhaps even more than their Southern counterparts, they were men of faith and learning; more tied to commerce, manufactures, and banking; less agrarian.

Power to the Representative Assemblies --- (Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 323-332)

This phrase describes aptly the political reality in the Anglo-American colonies, where rivalry between legislatures and governors favored the former? Governors, often appointed by the Crown yet far removed from London, usually deferred to legislatures dominated by men of wealth and reputation, the peculiar gentries of the various Northern and Southern republics. For essential funding and even for the use of militias, governors were usually beholden to the lawmakers.