

**THE FIRST TRUE
GENTLEMAN**

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The First True Gentleman by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

**THE FIRST TRUE
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The first true
Gentleman

With a Foreword by
Edward Everett Hale, D. D.



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A FOREWORD

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THE dictionaries and the students of words have a great deal to say, — perhaps more than is worth while, — of the origin of the word Gentleman, — whether a gentleman in England and a *gentilhomme* in France mean the same thing, and so on. The really interesting thing is that in a republic where a man's a man, the gentleman is not created by dictionaries or by laws. You cannot make him by parchment.

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As matter of philology, the original gentleman was *gentilis*. That is, he belonged to a *gens* or clan or family, which was established in Roman history. He was somebody. If he had been nobody he would have had no name. Indeed, it is worth observing that this was the condition found among the islanders of the South Sea. Exactly as on a great farm the distinguished sheep, when they

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were sent to a cattle fair might have specific names, while for the great flock nobody pretends to name the individuals, so certain people, even in feudal times, were *gentilis*, or belonged to a *gens*, while the great body of men were dignified by no such privilege.

The word gentleman, however, has bravely won for itself, as Christian civilisation has gone on, a much nobler meaning.