

**JOHN ESTEN  
COOKE, VIRGINIAN**

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John Esten Cooke, *Virginian* by John O. Beaty

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**JOHN O. BEATY**

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COOKE, VIRGINIAN**



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BY  
JOHN O. BEATY

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## PREFACE

AMONG Virginia writers whose careers have come to a close, John Esten Cooke holds a conspicuous place. He is by far the most voluminous, and has exerted great influence on later novelists. He is thoroughly Virginian, and is perhaps second to Poe in the intrinsic importance of his work.

Since neither Cooke nor his literary background has been the subject of a definitive study, I have, in writing this critical biography, relied very slightly on printed sources but am in consequence largely indebted to a number of Virginians and others who have helped me gain access to first-hand material. Dr. Robert P. P. Cooke and Mrs. Charles Lee, children of the novelist, have kindly placed at my disposal eight manuscript volumes and hundreds of letters and other papers which belonged to their father. Cooke's nieces, Miss Mariah Pendleton Duval and Mrs. Carter H. Harrison, have likewise furnished me with manuscripts and have entertained and instructed me with reminiscences of their uncle. My research work has been facilitated by the courtesy of the officials of the Library of Congress, of the New York Public Library, and of the Library of Columbia University. I owe much, for assistance of one kind or another, to each of the following gentlemen: Mr. J. B. Fieclin, Jr., the Southern genealogist; General Thomas T. Munford, a boyhood and Civil War friend of Cooke; Reverend C. Braxton Bryan, Cooke's pastor in the eighties; Professor Killis Campbell; Mr. W. G. Stanard, Librarian of the Virginia Historical Society; Mr. H. R. Mell-

waine, Librarian of the State of Virginia; Dr. Oral S. Coad; Dr. R. F. Dibble; Professor Jay B. Hubbell, whose forthcoming *Virginia Life in Fiction* will serve as an excellent background to this biography; Dr. Carl Van Doren, Literary Editor of *The Nation*; Professor George Philip Krapp; and Professor William Peterfield Trent, the leading historian of American literature. My wife, Josephine Powell Beaty, has given me some very valuable criticism and has helped prepare the manuscript for the press. To Mrs. Beaty and to Messrs. Coad, Van Doren, Hubbell, and Trent my indebtedness is particularly great.

J. O. B.

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