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The end of virtuous Albion

by [Theodore Dalrymple](#)

Britain Today: Part V

On some British virtues, once commonplace, that are today increasingly hard to find.

My wife, who is French, has lived in England for twenty-five years. When she arrived, she was both surprised and favorably struck by, among other things, the comparative uninterest, even of the rich, in material comfort and pleasures, and by the uprightness and straightforwardness of the public administration. Her subsequent career as a doctor was spent treating old people, and she developed a great respect for the British character as exhibited by her patients. Among their virtues, which visitors to our shores earlier in the century had also noted, were politeness, lack of self-importance, stoicism, fortitude, emotional self-control, and an ironic detachment from their own experience, especially when it was unpleasant. Irrespective of their social class, they had dignity, self-respect, and a fundamental integrity. Their virtues far outweighed their vices.

My medical experience of my older compatriots bears out this impression comple ...

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