

## FROM THE DEDICATION

I dedicate these sketches to my children. They are intended for their instruction far more than for the mere gratification of their curiosity. I desire that each of them should have a copy and should retain it as the strongest mark of my paternal affection. This memorial of their ancestors has been composed in no spirit of pride or vain-glory. Its design is by presenting them with a faithful delineation of the moral character of their ancestors to rouse them to a noble emulation. Let them not hug the vain delusion that without personal merit they may arrogate preeminence over their fellows on the mere ground of an honorable descent. The pretensions of everyone in this enlightened age must be tested by their own personal merits without the slightest reference to the virtues of their ancestors. Let my children, therefore, ponder the moral lessons inculcated by these brief memorials of their forefathers, and, as they derive their origin from a virtuous stock, let them endeavor so to act their part in life as to avoid the foul reproach of degeneracy.

JOHN B. DABNEY

A.D. 1850