Colonel Chiswell, who with many noble qualities was excessively proud, and haughty, had in a moment of sudden passion killed a man at Powhatan Courthouse. The victim of this unhappy act of violence was of an inferior rank in life, and being intoxicated, had intruded himself into a private apartment where the Colonel was preparing with hospitable liberality to entertain a party of his friends, and, being commanded to withdraw in somewhat imperiuos language, assailed the haughty aristocrat with the most vulgar and insolent abuse. Fired by such a gross insult from an interior, the Colonel, in the first impulse of his rage, seized on a sword which unhappily hung by the wall, and thrust it through the body of the offender. The wound proved fatal; and being instantly arrested, the proud perpetrator of this sanguinary deed was compelled to submit to the ignominy of imprisonment and await in the gloom of a dungeon the tardy process of a legal investigation. Great excitement was produced by this homicide among the lower classes, who loudly demanded that rich men should not be permitted thus to shed the blood of the humble with impunity. The clamour was such that the Colonial authorities, it was believed, would be constained to sacrifice the Colonel to allay the popular ferment, despite his high standing and the influence of his connections. Apprehensive of such a result, and shrinking from the idea of a disgraceful death, the haughty culprit committed suicide by taking laudanum a short time before the time appointed for his trial. His remains were brought up for interment to Scotchtown, his seat in the county of Hanover. A report got abroad that the alleged suicide was a mere strategem to facilitate the escape of the murderer from the just punishment of his crime. An immense crowd assembled on the occasion; and the multitude insisted that the coffin should be opened, believing that it was either empty, or occupied by some substitute for the body of the supposed self-destroyer. Prepossessed with this idea, the spectators could not be persuaded that in the blackened and distorted features of the corpse before them they beheld the genuine relics fo that proud man whose execution they had so lately demanded as an expiation due to the offended majesty of justice. . . . . The controversy ran so high that the ceremonies of interment were suspended, and the people declared they would not permit the body to be buried until it was identified by Col. William Dabney. It was known that he was a relative of the deceased and on terms of intimate acquaintance with him; yet there was not one in that exasperated assemblage who had not the firmest reliance on his truth and candour, and who was not ready to abide by his testimony in a matter where their natural credulity had been so much augmented by the bewildering effect of passion and prejudice. After inspecting the corpse at the request of the bystanders, he pronounced it the body of Col. Chiswell, and the tempest of popular commotion was instantly quieted.....

Whether Col. William Dabney had any brothers, I never remember to have heard*, but I know that he had a sister (Sarah) who inter-married with Mr. William Winston. She was the mother of Edmund Winston, afterwards a judge of the General Court, and of two daughters, Mrs. Fontaine and Mrs. Walker- all of whom were endowed with excellent capacities, and were very worthy people. My mother was well acquainted with Mrs. Winston for some years before that lady's death. Seh resided at that time with her son, Judge Winston, in the vicinity of Lynchburg...

The wife of Col. William Dabney was a Miss Barrett. Of her family my information is scanty, for I had no personal acquaintance with any of them; nor do I remember to have heard much said about them among my relations. She had, I have understood, two brothers - one an Episcopal clergyman respected for his piety and amiable character, the other the father of a numerous family, two of whom were gallant officers in the Revolutionary army and sealed their patriotism with many bloody wounds. . . . A son of Parson Barrett married Miss Camilla Warrington of Williamsburg. Another son married Miss Jane Price, a sister of my grandmother Dabney, and moved to Georgia many years ago. Since their migration they have been lost sight of by their relatives in Virginia. . . . .

Col. William Dabney and his wife both died before the Revolution. The offspring of their union were six children, namely: George, my grandfather, Charles, Samuel, Robert, Elizabeth, who married my grandfather Morris, and Susanna, who died single.

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* He had a brother George. C.W.D.