

About nine o'clock of an inclement night a servant brought in two cards to my uncle inscribed respectively with the names of Col. John Overton and another friend, Mr. George Banks. Unable to comprehend the meaning of these mysterious missives, my uncle inquired whence they came, and was told that they were sent in by two gentlemen who were sitting on horseback at the gate. Col. Dabney directed the servant to invite the strangers into the house, and on their entrance recognized his old friend. When asked what was the object of this strange manoeuvre, Col. Overton replied that he had just come from the metropolis where visiting cards were all the vogue, and having resolved to become a fashionable man, he had laid in an ample supply and had seized this first opportunity of applying them to their legitimate use. On another occasion, having stopped at my uncle's on his way from Richmond, he told his host that he had made a great bargain in the purchase of some valuable articles at auction, and he designed, as a token of their ancient friendship, to present Col. Dabney with a portion of his acquisition. Having expatiated for some time on the utility of his purchase and excited my uncle's curiosity to learn what was the nature of the gift, Col. Overton at length drew a gross of curling tongs from his saddlebags, gravely remarking that they were capital implements to light tobacco pipes with.

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I might cite numbers of anecdotes of the same kind; but these will suffice to show how strong must have been my uncle's friendship for the author of these jokes. . . .The recollection of common dangers and sufferings had inspired my uncle with a peculiar regard for all those who had shared in the war of independence, and it was with no ordinary emotion that he greeted any of his old military associates. I shall never forget the excitement with which he spoke of a visit from Col. Richard Clough Anderson, an officer whom he had not seen for twenty years. Col. Anderson had been bred in the same neighborhood with my uncle, had fought with him during the war, and had removed after the peace to Kentucky, and, having returned to his native state after the lapse of many years, came to see his old companion. Col. Dabney had no knowledge of his being in Virginia, when an old man, broken with years and infirmities, unexpectedly presented himself at the door of my uncle's chamber, and inquired whether he was recognized. Being answered in the negative, the venerable stranger announced himself as Richard Clough Anderson. Whenever one reverted to this unexpected meeting afterwards you could see the old gentlemen's face lighten with the fire of enthusiasm and glow with the remembrance of all that he had done and suffered with his late visitor.

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Col. Dabney was well acquainted with the Marquis LaFayette, having served under his command during the Revolutionary war. When that zealous and distinguished friend of human liberty revisited the United States, in the course of his triumphal progress through this country he tarried some days in Richmond, where he was met by many of the surviving revolutionary officers in Virginia. My uncle was then at too advanced an age to appear in this venerable assemblage--the relics of a past and heroic era. To have seen the Marquis privately would have afforded him unfeigned pleasure, but to a man so long retired from the world the idea of being jostled by and eager and tumultuous crowd was insufferable. . . .LaFayette made particular inquiries about him, expressed a great regard for him, and hearing that he was prevented from travelling by his infirmities, talked of paying him a special visit. . . .A message to that effect was delivered to my uncle from the Marquis, and you may well imagine with what tribulation he contemplated the irruption of the distinguished foreigner escorted by a numerous suite into his peaceful and secluded home. Had LaFayette come alone, he would have met him with a cordial reception, but the entertainment of his retinue would have been a formidable undertaking to a plain old bachelor, feeble from extreme age and unprepared for the exercise