of such extensive hospitality. Fortunately the nation was in such a transport of gratitude and hurried its guest through such a rapid succession of fetes and processions that he had no leisure for the threatened excursion. This was a relief to my uncle. . . . . .

As a master Col. Dabney was humane and indulgent to a fault. He supplied his servants liberally with the necessaries of life and was anxious in every way to contribute to their comfort. To avoid the unpleasant necessity of inflicting corporal punishment on his slaves, he adopted an expedient which he fondly hoped would prove an effectual substitute, but which in practice was found wholly inadequate to the enforcement of discipline. At the beginning of the year he credited each of his servants with a certain amount of wages and, during the succeeding twelve months, charged them respectively for their offences or omissions of duty with such sums as he thought just. These accounts were always settled by him in the Christmas holidays and whatever balances appeared due were punctually paid over. . . .I believe he would have emancipated them by his will, could he have devised any feasible plan of settling them comfortably, but he saw insuperable difficulties in the way of conferring freedom on creatures so little qualified to enjoy it, and of providing them after their liberation with a suitable place of residence. Perplexed by these considerations, he at length hit on the inconvenient scheme of bequeathing them to his nephew, Charles Dabney,[1] with an injunction to hire them out and pay them one third of their annual hires. Such arrangement was a mill-stone around the neck of his legatee and, indeed, converted his slaves into a perpetual nuisance to the whole community. The plan was certainly injudicious, but it was adopted, nevertheless, from human and benevolent motives.

You will probably think, my children, that in this scanty history of Col. Dabney I have drawn on my fancy for the outline of a perfect character--that warped by a natural partiality and misled by the delusive reminiscences of childhood, I have printed his portrait in too flattering colors. But I appeal to all who knew him, especially among his kindred, to say whether there is anything of exaggeration in his meagre sketch--whether the whole tenor of his life does not fully warrant the strongest terms of eulogy which I have employed. I can safely say that I have never heard any person speak of him, whether connected with him by blood or not, who did not concur in my view of his character. He was justly an object of reverence and attachment to all his relatives, nor do I believe that there was one in the wide circle of his kindred who had not imbibed those sentiments. I need hardly say that I felt them deeply. Some of the happiest days of my life were spent at his house. In his intercourse with me he was uniformly kind and affectionate, and I still recur with melancholy pleasure to his venerable image. . . . . Never shall I forget those golden days of my youth, nor him, whose chief pleasure was to make all around him happy. I glory in claiming kindred with such a man. . . . . .

Death had no terrors for such a man as Col. Dabney. That event so appalling to weak human nature, was met by him with the calm fortitude of a soldier and the pious resignation of a Christian. . . .He died, I think, about the year 1830 at the advanced age of eighty-five, at his house in the county of Hanover (Aldingham), in which his father had lived and died before him.[2]

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1 The grandfather of C. W. Dabney and master of the Aldingham and Cub Creek estates.

2 Tradition says that he was buried in the garden at Aldingham but no stone remains today to mark the place.