sure of a kind reception. His maiden sister, Susanna, lived and died at his house; and many others among his relatives, under the pressure of necessity, found a home in the same hospitable dwelling. He was particularly fond of children and young people, and nothing seemed to afford him so much pleasure as to contribute to their enjoyment. He always kept fishing tackle and an armory of guns for the amusement of his youthful visitors; and he would often put himself to considerable personal trouble to make them happy and comfortable.

"Big uncle" as I used to call him, had a remarkable talent for narrative, and in humorous anecdote his comic powers were irresistible. As he had seen a great deal of the world, his conversation abounded in graphic descriptions of men and things, with accounts of scenes and events falling within the range of his experience, often ludicrous and always interesting. To hear him talk was a feast to any one; but to the young it was an inexhaustible source of amusement and instruction. . . . .To be at his house in Christmas times was esteemed by youngsters the greatest of privileges. It was then that he emphatically laid himself out to make his little guests happy. If there was snow he would make us traps to catch snow-birds, or furnish us guns and ammunition for fowling and hare-hunting; while, in the intervals of our out-door sports, he would engage in some innocent game or athletic exercise, or read some entertaining book, or listen to the inexhaustible tales of the old gentleman, who was always ready to draw forth stores of his capacious memory for our amusement. Those were blissful days to his young kinsmen, days never to be forgotten by any who have been so fortunate as to enjoy his society and conversation.

As he despised everything like effeminacy, he encouraged his young visitors in feats of strength and activity, to encounter hardships without shrinking, to prosecute their sports without regard to wind or weather. He had an utter contempt for timidity in any one; and it was his constant study to eradicate in his young companions those nervous apprehensions which, imbibed in the nursery, continue to haunt the imaginations of childred. . . . One mode of testing our courage which he resorted to, now occurs to my recollection. The upper story of his house was traversed by a long narrow passage between two ranges of small apartments, used as storerooms and tenanted by a numerous colony of rats. These mischievous animals frequently disturbed the silence of that desolate part of the mansion with mysterious noises. It was the very region which superstition would be prone to people with ghosts and hobgoblins. To add to its terrors, in the farthest room there was a human skull, left there by Doctor Charles Morris, his nephew, who, when he commenced the practice of medicine, had resided with Col. Dabney for a year or two. The old gentleman would often propose to his young friends to explore the dark passage above mentioned after nightfall, and bring down the skull as a proof of their faithful performance of the feat. Those who engaged in this enterprise without tremor or hesitation, and returned speedily with their ghostly prize were sure to be rewarded with his applause. . . .

It was by such means that he trained his youthful kinsmen, by whom his house was constantly frequented, to intrepidity or character, to physical energy, to a hardy and adventurous life. But he was still more solicitous to instill into their plastic minds sound moral and religious principles. His conversation was replete with wise maxims--with noble and generous sentiments. He took every occasion to inculcate a reverence for religion--an elevated standard of morals--a self-devoted and disinterested patriotism. Everything base or mean--every species of corruption, whether public or private he held up to scorn and detestation. His stories had always a tendency to purify the moral sense--to make us better men and better citziens. With a perception of the ludicrous remarkably acute, he did not, like most persons, indulge his talent for the humorous or satirical at the expense of virtue or decorum, or the feelings of his companions. Sometimes he would launch into a sportive and facetious vein apparently for the mere purpose of amusement; and then his contagious merriment infallibly set the company in a roar. But his anecdotes, whether serious or diverting, illustrated some useful principle or enforced