

County, and a mighty big family it was. Some of 'em was good people, but one — old Mr. Watkins — was mean as gar-broth. He was mean and rich. You take notice, and 'most all the time you'll see the meanest folks have more money than anybody else. I don't know why it is, unless it's because they are just too mean to spend it. Well, this Mr. Watkins was so mean that he had all the chincapin-trees, and all the chestnut-trees, and all the muscadine vines, and all the plum-bushes on his place cut down to keep the children from getting them. Now, you know that wa'n't right, was it? I tell you, now, when anybody gets that mean, something will certainly happen to 'em.

“It seemed like everybody knew how mean this Mr. Watkins was, and they tried to shun him. When people went by his house going to church, or coming back from frolics, they'd stop talking and laughing. Some of 'em would say, ‘Hush! Mr. Watkins may be out on his front porch;’ and then they'd go by just like somebody was dead in the house. And my grandmother used to say that sometimes they'd hear noises like somebody was in great pain.