

The Haunted Mill

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North American

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Among the settlers in the Adirondacks, forty or fifty years ago, was Henry Clymer, from Brooklyn, who went up to Little Black Creek and tried to make a farm out of the gnarly, stumpy land; but being a green hand at that sort of thing, he soon gave it up and put up the place near Northwood, that is locally referred to as the haunted mill. When the first slab was cut, a big party was on hand to cheer and eat pie in honor of the Clymers, for Mr. Clymer, who was a dark, hearty, handsome fellow, and his bright young wife had been liberal in their hospitality. The couple had made some talk, they were so loving before folks—too loving to last; and, besides, it was evident that Mrs. Clymer was used to a better station in life than her husband. It was while the crowd was laughing and chattering at the picnic-table of new boards from the mill that Mrs. Clymer stole away to her modest little house, and a neighbor who had followed her was an accidental witness to a singular episode. Mrs. Clymer was kneeling beside her bed, crying over the picture of a child, when Clymer entered unexpectedly and attempted to take the picture from her.

She faced him defiantly. “You kept that because it looked like him, I reckon,” he said. “You might run back to him. You know what he’d call you and where you’d stand with your aristocracy.”

The woman pointed to the door, and the man left without another word, and so did the listener. Next morning the body of Mrs. Clymer was found hanging to a beam in the mill. At the inquest the husband owned that he

had “had a few words” with her on the previous day, and thought that she must have suddenly become insane. The jury took this view. News of the suicide was printed in some of the city papers, and soon after that the gossips had another sensation, for a fair-haired man, also from Brooklyn, arrived at the place and asked where the woman was buried. When he found the grave he sat beside it for some time, his head resting on his hand; then he inquired for Clymer, but Clymer, deadly pale, had gone into the woods as soon as he heard that a stranger had arrived. The new-comer went to Trenton, where he ordered a gravestone bearing the single word “Estella” to be placed where the woman’s body had been interred. Clymer quickly sold out and disappeared. The mill never prospered, and has long been in a ruinous condition. People of the neighborhood think that the ghost of Mrs. Clymer—was that her name?—still troubles it, and they pass the place with quickened steps.

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