

more beautiful maiden could possibly be found. She was tall and perfectly formed, had light brown hair, blue eyes, shaded by long silken lashes—in short, Eunice Clark was as near a perfect beauty as human beings on this earth are allowed to be, and Eunice was as good as she was beautiful.

Near the saw mill spoken of was a small village, containing some half dozen houses, with forty or fifty inhabitants.

The village was called Millport.

There were no public buildings except one small store and a tavern where mean whisky was sold to very mean customers, to wit, a set of as worthless loafers and vagabonds as ever infested a similar institution.

Ben Russell, a large, rough and villainous looking fellow, was the proprietor of the Millport House, and generally kept around him a set of some dozen or more as wicked and depraved wretches as himself. This gang were seldom, if ever, known to do any useful labor, or in any manner endeavor to make an honest living, yet, these idlers spent large sums of money for mean whisky, and were well, and some of them even fashionably dressed. Some one or two of them had families residing in the village, the rest passed for single men, of whom Russell, the landlord, was one.

Russell had been for a year or more calling often to see Eunice Clark, and had more than once made proposals of marriage to her, but had always been promptly and flatly refused. His repeated refusals did not, however, seem to discourage him in the least, but in spite of her coldness and her oft repeated requests to let her alone, he continued to follow and annoy her with his hateful attentions.

His attentions to her were encouraged by Clark, her father, but simply suffered to pass without comment by her mother.

One day, some six months before our story commences, a young, genteel appearing man named Nash, had come to Millport, and by order of the proprietors in Philadelphia, had taken entire control and management of the mills.

Nash was not popular with the frequenters of the bar-room at the Millport House, because he never visited that place, and if one of his hands became drunken during working days, he immediately discharged him.

Nash had met Eunice Clark, and had learned to love her, and if the signs of that disease were true, Eunice loved him dearly in return.

The whole neighborhood was startled one day by the report that the old stone house had been sold, and that the owner was coming to live in it.

No one could hardly be made to believe the report true. No one, they said, would or could live in that old haunted place.

The gang of loafers around the Millport House seemed more excited about the report than any one else outside of their ring. Why, was not known or understood.

The report, however, proved to be true.

About a week after the story had commenced to circulate, there arrived at the old house some five or six men, with everything needed to repair the house and make it once more inhabitable.

New fences were built about the premises, vines, trees, brush and weeds were torn and cut down and burned. The doors were thrown open the first time for years. Rooms were cleaned, floors scrubbed and windows washed. Then the house was closed again and the workmen departed.

In a few days more the new proprietor of the old house came himself, bringing three or four wagon loads of furniture and books, and took possession of his new home.

Mr. Lane—for that was the name of the new comer—stopped twenty-four hours at the Millport House while his servants (a couple of negroes, Jerry and his wife, Rose) went on and arranged the house for his reception.

While stopping at the tavern, several of the persons who were lounging around that place, approached Mr. Lane, and warned him that he would find his new home a rather disagreeable place to live, as the house was certainly haunted.

Lane, however, paid no attention to the warnings, saying, merely, that he did not think the old master of the place ought to trouble him, for he had paid the heirs of the estate a fair price for the place.

Mr. Lane was a man about fifty years of age, but apparently very hearty and robust. It soon became rumored, from some source, that Mr. Lane was very rich and had a large amount of money with him at all times.

He dressed quite plain and wore no jewellery besides a Masonic breastpin and a fine gold watch.

Mr. Lane, on the second day after his arrival, removed to his own house. Everything passed off very quietly for a week or more—no ghost appearing to disturb the family at the old stone house.

One night, however, Mr. Lane was aroused from his sleep by something moving about in his room. On opening his eyes he beheld standing at the foot of his bed what was apparently a human being, either dead or alive, and which Mr. Lane could scarcely