THE HALLOW-EVE MYSTERY. A LEGEND OF THE BLACK HALL

CHAPTER I.

THE BERNERS OF THE BURNING REARTS. "Their love was like the lava flood, That burns in Etna's breast of flame." Near the end of a dark autumn-day, not many

years ago, a young couple, returning from their bridal tour, arrived by steamer at the old city of Norfolk; and, taking a hack, drove directly to the best inn.

The gentleman registered himself and his party as Mr. and Mrs. Lyon Berners, of Black Hall, Virginia, and two servants.

We shall need a private parlor and chamber communicating for our own use, and a couple of bedrooms for our servants," said Mr. Berners, as he handed his hat and cane to the bowing

"Cortainly, sir. What would you like for "Ob, anything you please, so that it is nice and neatly served," said Mr. Berners, with a slightly impatient wave of his hand, as if he

would have been rid of his obsequious host.
"Ab-ha! anything I please! It is easy to see what ails him. He lives upon love just now; but he'll care more about his bill of fare a fee weeks hence," chuckled the landlord, as he left the public parlor to execute his guest's orders. The bridegroom was no sooner left alone with his bride than he seated her in the easiest. arm-chair, and began with affectionate zeal to

untie her bonnet strings and unclasp her mautle. "You make my maid a useless appendage dear Lyon," said the little lady, smiling up in "You love me so much, dear ! You love me so much! Yet not too much either for oh! If you should ever cease to love me, or even if you were ever to love me less, I—I—dare not think what I should do!" she mattered

in a long, deep, shuddering tone.

"Why, Sybil, my wife—you beautiful mad creature! You are a true daughter of your house! A Berners of the burning heart! A Berners of the boiling blood! A Berners of whom it has been said, that it is almost as fatal to be loved as to be hated by -Suddenly, in the midst of their converse they

heard the sound of weeping-low, deep, heartbroken weeping. Both paused, looked at each other, and lis-

The sound seemed to come from a room on the opposite side of the passage to their own

What is that?" inquired Sybil, looking up to her husband's face. "It seems to be some woman in distress," answered Lyon. "Oh! see what it is, dear, will you?" entreated

Sybil. She was herself so happy, that it was really dreadful to be reminded just then that sorrow

should exist in this world at all. But if she could have foreseen the woe that was to come to herself, to her husband, and to the object of her sympathy, she would have held Lyon back, as with the grip of fate, from the

mission on which she now sent him. For the weeper was a beautiful woman—a deserted wife-named Rosa Blondelle, who, although but a few days landed from the vessel which had brought her-from Europe, had been robbed of her jewels and money by her husband,

and then left to her fate in that Norfolk hotel. Sybil was deeply moved by this lady's story, and insisted on taking Mrs. Blondelle home with her to Black Hall, and Mr. Berners gave his assent to her wishes.

But before they got ready to set out on their journey Sybil bitterly repented of the arrange-ment. Mrs. Blondelle was so enchantingly lovely that Mr. Berners at once began to yield to her charms; and Sybil, for the first time, saw him pay the homage of admiration to other beauty This kindled the fires of jealousy in her heart,

and by the time they reached Black Hall those fires had become fanned into an inextinguishable flame. And no Berners had ever been known to for-

give an object of jealousy.

Black Hall, the abode of Mr. and Mrs. Ber-

ners, was a palatial old Virginia mansion, situated in the heart of the Black Valley, a few miles from Blackville, the county town. It had been in Mrs. Berners' family for generations, and was renowned for the scenes of gayety and hospitality which had transpired beneath

Mrs. Berners, the last of her race, to give vent to the emotions of her restless, jealous heart, resolved to reinaugurate the festivities of the olden time, and for that purpose announced a mask ball for the ensuing Alf-Hallow Eye, and at once set about getting all things in readiness.

One day while she was absent at Blackville, making purchases. Lyon and Rosa became so absorbed in one another as to become oblivious of the entry of Mrs. Winterose, the old housekeeper, who found them sitting closely side by side, her hand clasped in his. On Sybil's return the old housekeeper described this scene to her with many exaggerations. The revelation seemed to freeze Sybil into ice.

"Oh, my heart! my heart!" she mouned, turning deathly pale. And then, after a long silence, she bitterly added, "Deceived! Betrayed! Scorned! Laughed at! Well, well!" she continued, nodding grimly; "well, well, since de-ceit is the fashion of the day, I too will be in the fashion; I too will wear a mask of smiles! But behind that mask, I will watch!-Oh, how I will watch! Not at my fancy ball alone will I play a part, but before it, and perhaps after it! None shall ever know how I watch, what I see, until descend with the fell swoop of the eagle. And henceforth let me remember that I am a daughter of the house of Berners, who never failed a friend or spared a foe. And oh, let the spirit of my fathers support me, for I must ENDURE until

And oh! could those triflers with sacred love those wanderers on the brink of a fearful abyss-have seen the look of her face then, they would have fled from each other forever, rather than to have dared the desperation of her roused

But they saw nothing, knew nothing, suspected nothing! And thus all the three drifted towards the awful brink of ruin.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST FATAL HALLOW EVE.

It was All-Hallow Eve, a night long anticipated with delight by the whole neighborhood, and much longer still remembered with horror by the whole country.

It was the occasion of Sybil Berners' mask

ball; and Black Hall, the Black Valley, and the town of Blackville were all in a state of unprecedented excitement; for this was the first entertainment of the kind that had ever been given in the locality, and the gentry of three contiguous countles had been invited to assist

The throng at Black Hall was great, and the characters assumed by the maskers were various and well sustained.

But far the most beautiful, far the most terrible figure in the pageantry of the evening was that of Sybil Berners. She had chosen for her character the unprecedented part of the impersonation of the Spirit of Fire. It suited well with her whole nature. Her costume was but the outward sign of the inward fervor.

Sybil had confided the secret of her costume to no one but her husband, who was himself attired as "Harold the Saxon," while Mrs. Blondelle assumed the character of "Edith the

Sybil had not been long in the room before the coquetting of her husband and Mrs. Blondelle drove her nearly to distraction. Observing that whenever she came near them they were on their guard, Sybil exchanged disguises with one of her guests and intimate friends, Beatrix Pendleton, and was thus enabled to watch her husband and his companion without the least

restraint.
Sybil observed that a masker, representin Death, whom nobody seemed to know, watched Mrs. Blondelle as closely as she did herself; and she subsequently had occasion to remember and

Seeing the watched couple seat themselves on | But the search proved fruitless. No trace of

to an ottoman near them, in time to hear Mrs. Blondelle say:

"No, Lyon, your wife is not my friend—she is my deadly enemy. She is fiercely jealous of your affection for me, though it is the only hap-piness of my unhappy life. And she will make you throw me off yet.

"Never! no one, not even my wife, shall ever do that. I swear it by all my hopes of —"

Sybil glided away. She could bear no more. Supper-time drawing near, when all the guests would have to unmask, Sybil and Beatrix re-exchanged costumes, and went down to the drawing-room together, just as the last quadrille was completed, and the company began to march to the supper-room.

As each couple passed into the supper room they took off their masks, and handed them to attendants, placed for that purpose to the right and left of the door. Thus, when the company filled the room, every face was shown, but 'Death" was nowhere to be seen.

At last the party broke up. Only a few of the guests remained all night. These were shown to their rooms, and the others having gone, as fate would have it, Mrs. Blondelle went into the little reception parlor to meet Mr. Berners, who assured her that thenceforth he could never extend to her more than a brother's affec-

Then give me a brother's kiss," she sighed. That is not much to ask, and I have no one to kiss me now. So give me a brother's kiss, and let me go," she pleaded, plaintively. He hesitated for a moment, and then bending over, her he said:-

'It is the first, and for your own sake it must be the last, Rosa!" and he pressed his lips to hers, It was the last as well as the first; for at the meeting of their lips they were stricken asunder as by the fall of a thunderbolt!

And Sybil, blazing with wrath, like a spirit from the Lake of Fire, stood between them! She looked not human—with her whole face and form heaving, palpitating, flashing forth the lightnings of anger 'Synth!!" exclaimed her husband, thunder-

struck, appalled. She waved her hand towards him, as if to implore or command silence.

"I have nothing to say to you," she muttered. in low and husky tones, as if ashes were in her throat. "But to you!" she said, and her voice ose clear and strong as she turned and stretched out her arm towards Rosa, who was leaning in affright against the wall -"TO YOU, traitress, who has come between the true husband and his wife in the morning you must leave the house you have desecrated; for if you do not, or if ever I find your false face here again, I will tread down and crush out your life with less remorse than ever I set heel upon a spider! I will, as I am a And now, begone, and never let me

see your form again!" Rosa Blondelle, who had stood spell-bound by the terrible gaze and overwhelming words of Sybil, the wronged wife, now suddenly threw up her hands, and with a low cry fled from the

And Sybil dropped her arm and her voice at the same instant, and stood dumb and motion-

And now, at length, Lyon Berners spoke again, "Sybil!" he said, "this house is yours! You nust do as you please. But this I tell you: that n the same hour which sees that poor and rlendless young creature driven from the shelter of this roof. I leave it too, and leave it for ever! If Lyon Berners really meant this, or thought to bring his fiery-hearted wife to terms by the

threat, he was mistaken in her character. "Oh, go!" she answered, bitterly-"go soon as you like, Lyon Berners. Good-night, and-good-by," she said, and with a wave of her hand she passed from the room.

He was mad to have spoken as he did; madder still to let her leave him so! how mad, he was Lyon Berners remained walking up and down the room some time longer. The lights were all

out, and the servants gone to bed. Yet still he continued to pace up and down the parlor floor, until suddenly piercing shricks smote his ear. In great terror he started forward and instinc-tively rushed toward: Rosa's room, when the door was suddenly thrown open by Rosa herself, pale, bleeding from a wound in her breast.
"Great Heaven! What is this?" he cried, as,

aghast with amazement and sorrow, he supported the ghastly and dying form, and laid it on the ofa, and then sunk on his knees beside it. "Who, who has done this?" he wildly de-

manded, as, almost paralyzed with horror, he knelt beside her, and tried to stanch the gushing wound from which her life-blood was fast

She opened her bloodless lips, now paling in death, and gasped forth the words:—
"She—Sybil—your wife. I told you she would do it, and she has done it. Sybil Berners has murdered me," she whispered. Then raising herself with a last dying effort, she cried aloud "Hear, all! Sybil Berners has murdered me." And with this charge upon her lips, she fell back

Even in that supreme moment Lyon Berners first thought, almost his only thought, was for He looked up to see who was therewho had heard this awful, this fatal charge,
All were there! guests and servants, men and

women, drawn there by the dreadful shricks. All had heard the horrible accusatiou. And all stood panie-stricken as they shrank way from one who stood in their midst.

It was she, Sybil, the accused, whose very aspect accused her more loudly than the dying oman had done; for she stood there, still in her fiery masquerade dress, her face pallid, her eyes blazing, her wild black hair loose and streaming, her crimsoned hand raised and grasping a bloodstained dagger.

"Oh, wretched woman! most wretched woman! What is this that you have What is this that you have done? groaned Lyon Berners in unutterable agonyagony not for the dead beauty before him, but for the living wife, whom he felt that he had driven to this deed of desperation.

"Lyon Berners, do rou believe me guilty? she asked. He looked up and their eyes met. If he had

really believed her guilty, he did not now. He answered, briefly and tirmly-"No, Sybil; heaven knows that I do not; but

explain this horrible business—if you can."
"The explanation is this," she said, emphatically; and her voice then arose clear, firm, and distinct as she continued:-

"I was in my chamber, which is immediately above that occupied by Mrs. Blondelle. My chamber is approached by two ways, first by the front passage and stairs, and secondly by a narrow staircase running up from Mrs. Blondelle's I do not know how long I had sat there, when I heard a piercing shrick from some one in the room below. Instinctively I rushed down the communicating stairs and into Mrs. Blondelle's room, and up to her bed, where I saw by the light of the taper she was lving. Her eyes were closed, and I thought at first that she had fainted from some fright, until, almost at the same instant, I saw this dagger-" here Sybil stooped and picked up the dagger that she had dropped a few minutes before-"driven to haft in her chest. I drew it out. Instantly the blood from the opened wound spirted up, covering my hand and sleeve with the accusing stains you see! With the flowing of the blood her eyes flow wildly open! She gazed affrightedly at me for an instant, and then, with the last effort of her life, for which terror lent her strength, she started up and fled shricking to this room. I, still holding the dagger that I had drawn from her bosom, followed her hers. And drawn from her bosom, followed her here. And
—you know the rest," said Sybil; and overcome
with excitement, she sank upon the nearest chair to rest.

Her story had evidently made a very great impression upon the company present. But Lyon Berners suddenly exclaimed: "Good Heavens! that lady's mistaken charge as put us all off the scent, and allowed the murderer to escape. But it may not yet be too late! Some clue may be left in her room by which we

may trace the criminal! Come, neighbors, and let us search the premises." And Lyon Berners, leaving the shuddering women of the party in the room with Sybil and the dead, and followed by all the men, went to

search the house and grounds for traces of the

a small sofs in one corner of the room, she glided | an intruder could be found, nor was there any evidence of robbery. Furthermore, all the windows were found fastened on the inside. There had been no way of entering the murdered wonan's room, except by the stairway leading from Subil's chamber

Captain Pendleton, an old lover of Sybil's, and a brother of Beatrix, saw that there was no safety except in instant flight. He whispered Lyon to take Sybil to her room, and then to meet him on the back piazza. This was done, and then the captain untolded his already matured plans. Lyon adopted them at once; and under the skilful management of Captain Pendleton and Beatrix, they got out of the house unseen, and were soon on their way towards a place of concealment, known as the Haunted where new and unexpected horrors awaited them.

CHAPTER III.

THE HAUNTED CHAPEL. The Haunted Chapel to which Mr. and Mrs.

Berners were going was in a dark and lonely gorge on the other side of the mountain. They arrived safely at the old ruin, where in the course of the day they were joined by Mrs. Berners' faithful servant Joe, whose affec-tion for his mistress had led him to play the and find out where she was going, and ecretly follow her with provisions and means for making her somewhat comfortable.

The fugitives felt so depressed that even the cheerful supper supplied by Joe could not relieve them of the overshadowing gloom which and settled on their hearts. A strange drowslness soon oppressed them, and they sank into a deep sleep, as though they had been drugged with some powerful narcotic. Mr. Berners was aroused before daylight by Joe, who instantly drew him outside the chapel in alarm.

Sybil, left alone in the Haunted Chapel, continued to sleep soundly. How long she had slept she never could tell, when she was suddenly and fearfully aroused.

She felt hands at work about her person. They were creeping under her shoulders, and under her limbs; they were lifting her from her mattress. Her eyes flared open in wild affright, and she saw two black shrouded forms, the one at her head, the other at her#feet.

She tried to cry out in her agony of terror; but her voice died away in her bosom, and all her powers seemed palsied. They raised her up, and ore her on-great heaven! whither? To the open door of the vault under the

chapel, from whose haunted depths a spectral light gleamed! They bore her down the dreadful steps, and laid her on the deadly floor! The iron door clanged loudly to, resounding

through the dismal arches. "We have her now!" muttered a hoarse voice. A hollow laugh responded. And Sybil swooned with horror!

When Sybil recovered from her death-like woon, she found herself in a spacious cavern of such exceeding beauty and splendor, that for an instant she lost sight of her terrors in her istonishment and admiration, and then her eyes ettled upon a figure who seemed the sole occupant of the place. This was a young girl who, with her red cloak

thrown mat-like on the moss, was seated upon it cross-legged in the Turkish fashion. Her clin face, her malign eyes, her wild, black hair and picturesque costume, were all so in keeping with the aspect of the place, that one might have deemed her the spirit of the cavern.

The two women looked at each other in

llence for perhaps half a minute; and then Sybil spoke: "What place is this? Who are you? Why am

I brought hither?" 'One question at a time," answered the girl. 'What place this is' concerns you little; I am a gipsy, and my name is Gentiliska; 'why you are brought here,' ah! that concerns you very It concerns your liberty, and perhaps much your life.

"I do not believe it! You have had me torn tway from my husband! Where is he now? haughtily demanded Mrs. Berners, "He is likely in the hands of the constables,

who are by this time in possession of the Haunted Chapel. But fear nothing! Him they will release again, for they have no right to de tain him; but you they would have kept, if they had caught you. The constables were coming there for us, but they would have found you had we not brought you away with us. That was my doing. I made your removal the condition of

But when will you communicate with my husband, to relieve his dreadful suspense?"
"As soon as it shall be safe to do so. Our first care must be our own safety, but our second will

Sybil said no more at the moment, but sat looking at the speaker, and thinking of all that had befallen her in the Haunted Chapel.

CHAPTER IV. THE ROBBER CHIEFTAIN. "He was the mildest mannered man

That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.' Sybil had passed the day in the robbers' den with her strange companion, who astonished her by stating that the captain of the band had been present at her masquerade. Late in the afternoon dinner was announced, at which several of the robbers appeared, with Moloch, a gigantic ruffian, at their head. Moloch was the lieutenant of the band, and in the absence of the captain ruled with brutal sway. Becoming inflamed with wine, he took a seat by the side of Sybil, threw his arm about her and attempted to imprint a kiss upon

Sybll struggled in terror, and the gipsy girl cried out:-"Men! why don't you interfere? He is rude to the lady!"

We never meddle between other men and their sweethearts. Do we, mates ?" called out

ne. "No, no, no!" answered the others. "Oh, if Satan were here!" cried the girl, in "SATAN IS HERE!" responded a voice close

And the robber captain stood among them as he had risen from the earth. Moloch dropped Sybil, and cowered in the

ost abject manner. Sybil looked up, and turned cold from head to foot; for in the handsome, stately, graceful form of the brigand chief, she recognized the finished gentleman who, in the character of "Death ad danced with her at her own mask ball, and the probable murderer of Rosa Blondelle. While the walls of the cavern seemed whirl-

ing around Sybil, the robber captain calmly came up to her, lifted his hat, and said: "Spirit of Fire, I am happy to welcome you to your own appropriate dwelling place;" and then, without expecting an answer, he turned to Moloch, and said in his smoothest tones:-

"Be so good as to give me this seat, sir."
But Sybil saw that the giant turned pale and
rembled like the fabled mountain in labor, as ie left the seat by her side, and slunk into an-

other at some distance. The wine passed freely at the robbers' table and the men grew merrier, wilder, more up-roarious. Sybil became very much alarmed; and not so much by the noisy orgies of these rude reveilers, as by the dreadful gaze of Moloch fixed upon her from the opposite end of the table where he sat, and the offensive language of Satan's eyes whenever they turned towards

At length, unable to bear the trial longer, she arose from her seat, and courtesying to these brigands as she would have done to any set of gentlemen of whom she was taking leave, Sybil left the cavern, followed by Gentiliska, the gipsy

girl. If must take you to another grotto. You cannot occupy mine to-night," said the girl, with evident reluctance. "But oh! why, why may I not stay with you! I am afraid to sleep alone in this terrible place!" Pleaded Sybil. "I have a reason, but I cannot tell it to you

now. Yes, I will, too! I will tell you at all risks! Then it is this:—My chamber is not safe for you! I myself am not strong enough to protect you! You might be carried off forcibly for you! You might be carried off forcibly from my side! I must hide you where no devil may find you to-night!" whispered the girl. Oh, do not leave me here alone!"

Sybil. "If I must stay, stay with me! I do not fear death; but oh! I fear these men! Do not

"I must, for your own safety. They must not miss me, or their suspicions will be aroused."

Then, pointing to a bed of moss, and recommending her guest to lie down and seek repose, the gipsy girl glided away through the labyrinth of caves and was lost to sight and

Sybil's first impulse was to start up and run after her hostess, but she restrained herself, and sank half fainting upon the heap of moss. There was but a faint sparkling of light in the cave, coming from a crevice in the roof through which the moonlight entered.

"Seek repose," had been the advice of Gentilieka Sybil dared not seek it if she could, and could

not have found it if she had. Hour after hour passed in trance-like stillness and silence, when at length she fancied she heard a creeping stealthy step approaching. Nearly frozen with terror, she listened and watched more intensely thpn ever. Alone, helpless, in darkness and solltude, what horrid fate must she meet? The erceping, cautious footstep drew nearer, nearer

Oh, heaven! it was no fancy! The entrance of the cavern was more deeply darkened for one moment, and then the huge form of Moloch stood within the cavern and nearly filled it up.

Paralyzed with horror, Sybil could neither move nor cry out-not even when the mouster approached her and put his profuse hand upon face. The above is all of this story that will be published in our columns. The continuation of it from where it leaves off here can be found only in the New York Ledger, which is for sale at all the bookstores and news depots. Ask for the number dated June 26, and in it you will flud the continuation of this beautiful tale. Ledger has the best stories of any paper in the world; and Henry Ward Beecher, James Parton, and Fanny Fern have articles in every

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1829. CHARTER PERPETUAL

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