

Gay Lights and Dark Shades Of Old Halloween.

HERE ARE SOME ANCIENT CUSTOMS THAT YOU WILL FIND MOST INTERESTING TO EXPERIMENT WITH.

On Tuesday October 31, is Halloween. Look Out for Your Future Spouse

THE very mention of Halloween calls up visions of ghosts and witches and all kinds of uncanny things. It is the one night in the year when even the uninitiated, if they are brave enough, may converse with spooks and hobgoblins, and may also, if they try hard enough, send the immaterial part of their being prancing through space on all kinds of errands. It is safe to surmise that the latter privilege is not often taken advantage of. It is hard enough to keep soul and body together without hunting up excuses to separate them. But the grand object of all the mystic rites peculiar to Halloween is to find out who one's future spouse will be—that being a very important question with those who have never had one.

The most infallible of the many infallible ways by which a girl may get a glimpse of her future husband is to retire in silence. That alone is hard enough, but that is not all. She must lie there, speechless and in the dark, until just before the stroke of 12, when she must rise and, standing before the mirror, set an apple while combing her hair. If she doesn't see her "future" peeping over her shoulder it's because she is destined to be an old maid, or she was too scared to look.

Another way that does not require so much courage is to write the alphabet on twenty-six little slips of paper, one letter on each slip, and then turn them face down in a basin of water. This done, she lies back and in silence. Silence seems to be the main requirement in all these endeavors to coax one's affinity to make himself, or herself, known. Next morning some of the letters in the basin will be found face up and the name thus revealed will give the desired information.

A more comfortable custom is to wet the sleeves of a shirt and hang it before the fire to dry. Then lie in bed and wait it until midnight, when the apparition of the future husband or wife will appear again in the dream.

If a girl has two lovers and cannot decide which one to choose, she may let fate settle the matter in the following manner. Eat an apple and then, naming two of the seeds, stick one on each cheek and say:

Pippin, pippin, I stick thee there,
That which is true thou mayst declare.

The one that stays the longest is the most faithful lover, and therefore the most desirable.

There is a custom in Wales on Halloween of building a huge bonfire, and when the fire is almost out each member of the party gathered about it throws in a white stone, marked for future identification. In the morning a search is made in the embers and if one stone is missing it indicates that the person who threw it will not live to repeat the performance the next All Saints' eve.

Robert Burns are now obsolete, but one still in vogue is that of pulling kail or cabbage stalk. A young couple are blindfolded and then, making each other by the hand, they go into the garden and each pulls a stalk at random and they return to the fire, where their prizes cause a great deal of merriment. As the stalk is long or short, straight or crooked, so shall the future husband or wife be. The quantity of earth sticking to the root indicates the amount of wealth and the taste of the pulp the kind of temper one must expect. Finally the stalks are placed over the door, and the christian names of the next two entering will be the names of the future husband and wife.

A custom that is quite common in this country also is to take three saucers and fill one with clean and another with dirty water. The third remains empty. The party wishing to know his destiny is blindfolded and led to the hearth, where the saucers had been arranged. If he dips his finger in the clean when he will marry a maid, but if in the dirty watered widow will lead him to the altar. The empty dish signifies that a life of single

blessedness is in store for him. Apples and nuts play a very important part in the mystic rites of Halloween. One way to find out if one's sweetheart is true is to place three nuts upon the bar of the grate or on the hearth, naming the nuts for the loved one. If a nut cracks or jumps, look for another sweetheart right away, for the one you have will surely be unfaithful. If a nut burns that is a sign that your affections are reciprocated, but if two of the nuts burn together the young lady making the trial may as well begin preparing her trousseau, for there will surely be an early wedding.

Halloween parties must always be made as weird and uncanny as possible, and any one with original ideas may give them full scope on these occasions. One very quaint affair that I recall may serve as a model.

In the first place the invitations were most unique. Witches and goblins ran riot over the card and the utmost secrecy in regard to the approaching event was exacted. Silence, too, was enjoined, and every one was veiled and it certainly was a very ghostly crowd that gathered promptly at the appointed time in the dimly lighted hallway. Suddenly the sound of a bell was heard, soft and muffled, as if it were high up in an old church tower, and as it struck the doors were thrown open and the young people were ushered into a veritable witches' den.

Death heads, made from pumpkins, with a small lighted candle inside, grimaced from the mantel, the cornices and the most unexpected places. Huge cobwebs, in which were monstrous spiders, were stretched across the corners and over the mirrors. Immense bats with outspread wings were apparently flying through the air and great owls glared from every possible resting place. In the fireplace, the grate had been removed and in its stead a large caldron was simmering over a pale green blaze. The hostess and her assistants were witches, gowned in flowing black robes and crowns, with tall pointed hats. Invisible music of a weird character added to the uncanniness of the scene. The gentlemen were all in an adjacent room and the hostess, taking a lady by the hand, would advance with her and knock three times on the door with the small broom she carried. In answer to her knock a gentleman would appear, and offering the lady his arm retire to a distant part of the room. When, in this manner, the couples had all been paired off, the witch's waved their arms and crooned in the most approved witch manner and the screaming of the violins became truly blood-curdling. Suddenly, with a crash and a bang, the noise ceased and the room was filled with light. When the light revealed the partners that

fate had given each for the evening there was a good deal of merriment. At a signal from the First Witch a couple went into the outer darkness to pull "kail" stalks. Of course they had been prepared beforehand and there was not a straight one in the whole lot. After this ordeal had been gone through by every one a decrepit old hag, with a real, live owl perched on her shoulder, entered the room. On her arm hung a basket full of nuts. Passing through the crowd she gave each a nut and then, standing by the fireplace, she mumbled some unintelligible jargon and the room suddenly became darkened again. Stepping over the caldron she muttered an incantation and red fire immediately blazed from its depths. She then tottered out of the room, which again was illuminated as she disappeared. The nuts, when cracked, were found to contain a fortune, written on a slip of paper. For example, "You will have many trials until the age of 30, when good luck will come to you." The nuts for the gentlemen were tied with red ribbons and those for the ladies with blue.

During the evening all sorts of games, peculiar to Halloween, were added to the programme. A stick was suspended horizontally from the ceiling and on one end was a short piece of lighted candle, while the apple was stuck on the other, and the whole thing set whirling. A small basket was then passed around in which were a number of pieces of paper. The unfortunate who drew the paper with a skull and cross-bones on it had to furnish amusement for the rest by trying to get a bite from the apple on the whirling stick. Luckily for the girls, a man drew the fatal slip, but before he had burned his mustache off the First Witch took pity on him and clapped her hands. Over the door leading into the dining-room a dark, heavy portiere hung and at the signal an apple rolled under the curtain and went spinning over the door. It was followed by another and then another, until everybody had one. Knives were then passed around and a merry half-hour was spent in peeling the apples and throwing the unbroken skin over the shoulder in such a manner as to form the initial of the future husband or wife. In one of the apples a needle was imbedded in the core, indicating that the finder would enjoy a domestic or wedded life. Another contained a pen, foretelling a literary career, and in still another a tiny pencil was buried, signifying a life devoted to art. In a fourth a small piece of wood was hidden on which the word "music" had been written.

A few moments before midnight the merry-makers were all taken out the kitchen door and separated into two groups, the girls on one side and the gentlemen on the other. At the first stroke of twelve both groups started and ran, one going one way and the other in the opposite direction. The first couple to meet at the goal would be the first to marry—not each other, necessarily, and the last to arrive were doomed to a lonely existence.

When the race was over, the breathless, laughing crowd was summoned to supper, and there another surprise awaited them. The decorations in the dining-room were red, even the tablecloth being of the same brilliant hue. Over the center of the round table a huge owl, with outspread wings, was suspended from the ceiling. In its claws it held the ends of four long red ribbons, the other ends of which were held in the corners of the room, near the ceiling, by bats, lizards and spiders. The shade on the lamp was red crepe paper,

on which had been applied owls and bats of some black material. The punch was red, so was the frosting on the cake—which, by the way, was crescent-shaped and surmounted by a tiny doll, dressed all in red, as a witch. The souvenirs were also small witch-dolls for the ladies and owls for the men, both of which, on investigation, proved to be bonbon boxes. In Ireland, the observance of Halloween assumes, in many respects, a religious character. It is a custom in many districts to bake what are called "soul cakes" on that day, which are given to the poor, who so from door to door begging. The gift of a cake is always accompanied with a request to pray for the souls of the dead. The recipient of these "soul cakes" is generally very profuse in his promises to pray and call down the blessings of heaven on everything he or she can think of. Another custom is to burn a lighted candle in every window in the house, which gives a very picturesque effect along the country roads.

There is a custom among the poorer classes in England, also, of begging on Halloween, for what is known there as "dole bread." In several districts a fantastic arrangement, called "Old Hob," is carried about from house to house, accompanied by a crowd of young people, singing doggerel begging rhymes. Old Hob consists of a skeleton of a horse's head, mounted on a broomstick, and with a sheet wrapped about and concealing the person who is carrying it.

Shaw, in his history of the Province of Moray, considers the festivities of Halloween as a sort of harvest-home rejoicing—a thanksgiving for the safe ingathering of the produce of the fields. Whatever may have been the original motive for this "gathering together of the clans" on the eve of All Saints, the young people

who make merry nowadays have only one object in view—to discover, if possible, or she for whom we are all of us continually seeking. Sometimes these "affinities" are a little careless and don't pay off just right, so the boys and girls who try their fate on this night of Halloween must not neglect the warnings and prophecies which that next of mystery will surely bring.

But I know no peace here. My heart is full of dread misgiving. Twice have we conquered these rooneks, but the memory of Rocke's Drift and Majuba Hill rankles. They fight to win this time, with the right of might.

I pray God that it may not be so, but I fear that we are doomed to defeat.

back in the Transvaal that I might help defend our land. Our cunning with the gun has been handed down to us through the generations. When trekking on the veldt it fell to the women to keep the prowling lions away from the wagons. And in time of war our women stand behind the barricades and load the guns for their husbands, sons and fathers.

San Francisco will always recall three things to my mind—fog, hills and pretty girls. But I know no peace here. My heart is full of dread misgiving. Twice have we conquered these rooneks, but the memory of Rocke's Drift and Majuba Hill rankles. They fight to win this time, with the right of might.

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• CARPET TACKS SAVED THE SHIP. •

BUT CAPTAIN JOSHUA SLOCUM HAD A CLOSE CALL.

Captain Joshua Slocum, in his solitary voyage around the world in the sloop *Fragate*, found a new and exciting use for carpet tacks. He thus describes an encounter with the natives of Tierra del Fuego:

Canoes manned by savages from Fortescue now came in pursuit. The wind falling, they gained on me rapidly till within thirty yards when they ceased paddling, and a bow-aged savage stood up and called to me. "Yammerschooner! yammerschooner!" which is their begging term. I said "No." Now, I was not for letting them know that I was alone, and so I stepped into the cabin, and, passing through the hold, came out at the fore-scuttle, changing my slashes as I went along. That made two men. Then the piece of bowsprit which I had sawed off

• THE BOERS AS THEY REALLY ARE. •

By MISS SANNIE KRUGER, NIECE OF OOM PAUL KRUGER.

Continued from Page Twenty-one.

The wedding customs. The suttor takes the girl of his choice to some lachergoot (confectionery). If she refuses the gift offered so much.

But the rising generation of Boers are all well educated. Both English and Dutch are taught in the schools. Oom Paul understands English as well as I do myself. Many times when playing or limt on the length of his visit. She marks the wax candle with a needle, meaning that the visit must only last until the candle burns to the mark.

I could tell you of many more quaint customs, but it was not for that I undertook this task. Rather to convince you that a Boer girl is not a semi-savage.

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