

Hallowe'en

Old superstitious and supernatural ideas connected with the time of the year including the hours between Oct. 31st and Nov. 1st.

According to the ideas of the Druids, most anything could have happened, — and a lot did happen in those days.

This time had, it seems, a number of names, including Hallowe'en, or All Hallow Even, Nut Cracker's night, Snap-apple night, The Vigil of All Saints, and All Hallow Day for Nov. 1st. The spirits of the dead wandered about causing trouble and fright, — witches and devils and mischief-making elves stir about doing harm that at any other time of year would not be possible. Then there were the evil spirits of some of the live people that ran around giving advice, and warning of good or bad things to come.

Of course, we all know that at this time the crops were being laid in for the winter

— apples, pumpkins, nuts, corn and every-
thing imaginable, and because of this, a
jolly good time was had and enjoyed by all.
Laughter and tears mingled through the night,
far into the day of Nov. 1st. But bear in mind,
they not only wanted to be together because of joy,
but also because of fear. Evil spirits were
haunting over them and to be together was the
safest way for all concerned. There were many
too young and too aged to look after themselves.
"The Lord of Death" was among them and all was
not well. The Druids firmly believed this, such
was the supernatural influence prevailing at this
time. If a child was born at during these
hours it had control of evil spirits, could talk
with them, could often be of benefit to its
people.

Now until very recent times the English
believed all this, too, and they played the usual
games but one especially interested me. The
villagers gathered around a huge bonfire,

cracking nuts and eating apples, telling jokes and playing games. At the end of the evening they all selected a rock representing themselves and put it into the fire. Prayers were said by all, and then they went to bed. Next morning they all ran out and looked at their rocks. If one rock was missing, that person was believed to die. They were supposed to believe this.

Then there was the Pagan belief of the Irish. Their games included one nut game that stood out as rather unusual. Seems there was one girl that stood in front of the iron grate of the fireplace and each person playing the game gave her a nut representing themselves, which were placed spaced, lower being placed nearer each other's than the others, on the grate and watched closely. Imagine the suspense of waiting for the heat, for the decision of the spirits, either good or evil. Now, if a nut blew up, that person died.

If two nuts bumped together, these two would marry. If a nut happened to roll away from its present lover, and bump into another nut representing another girl of the group, then that was to prove the evil spirits had control of this young man and he was not fit to become a husband of his present sweetheart. And the girl whom he had bumped was very bad, too. — a flirt, and also unfit for society. Her lover became jealous, too, and from then on these two lovely people were under suspicion.

The Irish played another game called the apple and candle-stick trick, by placing a lighted candle on one end of a stick and an apple on the other end. This was suspended from the rafters and kept whirling. It caused a lot of laughter because while reaching for a bite without the use of their hands, they usually got bumped in the

face by both the apple and the candle.
Needless to say, some severe burns were
suffered, which was the main cause of
this game's becoming unpopular. But in
those days, they believed that if a boy
loved his lady well enough, he shouldn't
mind being burned. The Irish played other
games that we are familiar with today,
and also drank apple cider.

From,
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