

HALLOW'EN October 1869

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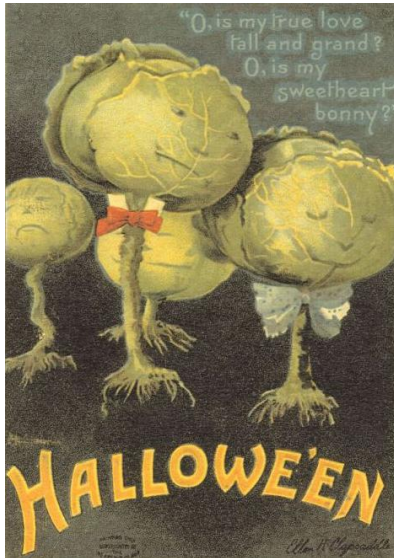
“The last evening in October is supposed to be the favorite time for Fairies, mischief-making beings, &c., to be about. That evening this year being Sabbath evening, the young folks in this vicinity decided it would be more proper for them to come Saturday, the 30th. Quite a number of leading spirits, still in the flesh, assembled at West Point to 'pull the rail,' 'burn the nuts,' and several other tricks said to be legitimate business on that night. We did not hear of their seeing any Fairies or other spirits, except when they looked in the glass.



West Point, mentioned here, was likely Charles Carpenter's house. Charles and Caroline had three daughters; Alida, Mary and Sarah. There is no telling if the traditions that they practiced worked, but a

year later in 1870, Alida, aged 21, married David Seton.

It is one of the frequent inconsistencies of nature that Halloween customs once prevailed largely among the cool, clear-headed Scots. One way of questioning the future was for the young people to go blindfolded to the kale (or cabbage) yard and pull up the kale stalks. According as the stalk seized is large or small, straight or crooked, so will be the future spouse. The quantity of earth clinging to the roots denoted the amount of property possessed by the unknown one, and the taste of the pith indicated the temper, whether sweet or sour.



Another custom was to go out after dark and sow a handful of hempseed and go through the motions of harrowing it with a stray branch or anything that came to hand, at the same time saying: 'Hempseed, I sow thee; he that is to be my true love, come after me and pull thee.' Then, on glancing over the left shoulder, the face of one's lover will be seen. It ought to go hard with a young man who, on a

dark night, could not make certain that his pretty sweetheart should catch a glimpse of the right face.



Nuts and apples are closely associated with Hallowe'en. Apple seeds were named and thrown into the fire where their movements indicated the future behavior of those whose names they bore. Apples entered into the more rollicking sports. A horizontal stick was hung from the ceiling by a string, having on one end a candle and on the other an apple. The stick was set revolving and the participants in the game, with hands tied behind the back, endeavored to bite the

apple as it turned. It will not need many trials to convince one that it is not an easy task.



Another game similar is bobbing for apples. Into a tub nearly filled with water were put as many apples as would float easily. Then each one with his hands tied behind him endeavored to seize an apple with his teeth. These are the social games and spells. There were others containing an element of the weird and mysterious, those that must be carried through in silence and solitude.



A maiden who combed her hair before a mirror at midnight, eating an apple the while, keeping her eyes steadily fixed upon the mirror, would see her future husband come and look over her shoulder.

Another weird and mysterious charm was to go at night to a burn or brook, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left sleeve in the running water. Then go home and go to bed, hanging the sleeve to dry before the fire.

At midnight your true love will come and turn the sleeve to dry the other side. The large rooms and immense fireplaces of old times, with blazing logs casting flickering lights over the walls and dense, swaying shadows into the corners, were very favorable to trying Hallowe'en charms."

From the book: Kelleys Island 1866-1871 – The Lodge, Suffrage & Baseball