

# Solemn Rites and Picturesque Scenes On All Saints' and All Souls' Days

Mexico is preparing to celebrate two of her most important fiestas: All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

The former occurs on November 1, which is the day set aside by the Roman Catholic church to honor all the saints to whom a special feast in the calendar has not been assigned.

November 2 is All Souls' day, or "Dia de Muertos" (The day of the dead). On this day it is customary to visit the cemeteries and to adorn the graves of relatives and friends with flowers and tapers and even to kneel by the side of the sepulchres to say a prayer for the sake of the departed ones.

The cemeteries are visited by hundreds, not to say thousands, of people, but the most characteristic scene is that which can be witnessed in the Dolores cemetery. It is here that the poor and middle classes are buried, though there are the vaults of some of the wealthy families, and of the most prominent men that Mexico has had, although the latter will soon be removed to the National Pantheon, now in course of construction in the old San Fernando cemetery.

On the day in question both Dolores and its surroundings suggest a fair rather than a gathering of mourners assembled to pray for the dead. The street cars run at short intervals, crowded to their utmost capacity, but thousands of people who cannot find accommodations in the cars go either on foot or in wagons.

The scene is a most picturesque one. All women carry crowns of flowers known by the Indian name of Zempazuchil, while the men carry enormous baskets with the day's dinner for the whole family.

After depositing a crown on the grave of a departed loved one and saying a short prayer, people retire from the vicinity, and sitting upon tombstones not occupied by others, they have their midday lunch. Others go out of the cemetery and have their lunch in the surrounding grounds.

On more than one occasion the use of a tombstone for dinner table has given cause for bitter quarrels and fights that have ended with the death of one of the fighters.

The police authorities have a strong force of gendarmes all through the cemetery and its surroundings to preserve order, and all those who are found to have a weapon of any kind upon them are placed under arrest. In this way fights and crimes are reduced to a minimum.

In the grounds surrounding the cemetery many booths are erected for the sale of flowers, candies and refreshments, such as tortillas, enchiladas, carnitas, atole, tamales de chile, pambazos and many other Mexican delicacies.

Besides Dolores, there are other cemeteries in the environs of the city, viz., the French, the Spanish, the English, the American and Tepeyac. Though the Spanish, French, Eng-

lish and American cemeteries are primarily for the interment of persons belonging to those nationalities, they are open to all races. Thus many very prominent Mexican families have vaults in the French and Spanish cemeteries.

As previously stated, all cemeteries are visited on All Souls' day, but the scene is absolutely different from that observed in Dolores, the latter being a genuinely Mexican resting place and visitors belonging to the poorer classes of society.

In the French cemetery there are vaults of the most prominent Mexican families, such as the Romero Rubio, the Ramon Guzman, the Limantours, the Landa y Escandons, the Rivas, the

Haro, and many others. Hon Manuel Romero Rubio, father-in-law of President Diaz, lies there.

The Tepeyac cemetery is situated on the hillside of Guadalupe. There rest the remains of General Santa Anna, who was president of Mexico, and the first wife of President Diaz, as well as many other prominent people.

The United States cemetery is the property of the United States government and is visited chiefly on Decoration Day. Here there is a monument to American soldiers who perished during the Mexican American war in 1847, while the newer American cemetery is on the Popotla road. The British cemetery, which adjoins the United States cemetery, was the

first piece of land owned by foreigners in Mexico.

In the City.

If animation is great in the cemeteries, as above stated, it is almost as great in the city. All along the Mercaderes arcades and in the Zocalo numerous booths are erected for the sale of the queerest articles, skulls, skeletons, coffins, tombstones, crosses, and, in fact, everything that has any relation with death and burial of people.

It is customary, on All Souls' day, to give "calaveras" (skulls) to all servants, mozos, cargadores, etc. Of course these "calaveras" consist of a sum of money or some other present. People of all classes are on this day

seen wearing diminutive skeletons and skulls pinned to their clothes or cravats, and it is not rare to receive a present consisting of a coffin from which, upon pressing a button, appears a corpse ceremoniously inviting you to leave this world.

Don Juan Tenorio.

From now on and for a week or so, the famous play of Zorilla, Don Juan Tenorio, will be presented in all the theaters of the city.

All Souls' day without the representation of Don Juan would be unknown in Mexico.

The play is given many times every year in all theaters, yet people who have seen it hundreds of times never fail to attend.

As is well known, Don Juan was a great love maker.

Don Juan and Don Luis Mejia had exchanged a wager that the one would outdo the other in profligacy. They were at a tavern in Seville, Spain. The bet had been made a year before, and the two men began to recount the record of their dissoluteness. Don Juan won. In one year he had killed 22 men, nine more than Don Luis, and his successes with the fair sex totaled 72 against 56 for Don Luis.

Don Juan feels proud and exclaims:

From a royal princess  
To the daughter of a fisherman,  
My love has parcoured  
The whole social scale.

He adds that he only needs one day to fall in love, another to win the lady's heart, a third one to abandon her, and a fourth to find another love and forget all about the preceding one. Don Diego, father of Don Juan, and Don Gonzalo, father of Doña Ines, with whom Don Juan has fallen in love, hear this conversation. Don Gonzalo abruptly appears before Don Juan and tells him that he will never have his daughter.

Don Juan finally scales the wall of the convent where Doña Ines is and elopes with her. Afterwards he kills both Don Gonzalo and Don Luis, and Doña Ines dies of grief and sorrow.

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Later on Don Juan is seen in the cemetery where there are buried the remains of all those whom he killed, and he says:

"No complaint can you make against me:  
If good was the life I took from you,  
Good is the grave given you by me."

The cemetery scene ends with a ballet. The sepulchres fly open and disclose a number of dancers who get out and perform very graceful piroettes.

Don Juan finally dies and ascends to join Doña Ines in Heaven, where the celestial court accords him a hearty welcome.

Unusual attractions will be seen tonight at the Mezquita Vaudeville Salon, corner Zuleta and San Juan de Letran streets. Do not fail to go if you want to spend a pleasant evening.

## No Hallowe'en Pranks in Mexico

What a relief to householders and property owners to live in Mexico, for next Thursday evening is all Hallowe'en. No gates are carried off, no sidewalks are torn up or no fences taken from their native haunts and strung across the streets, for the Mexican youth knows not that glad-

some night when he may do about as he pleases and keep the police on the run all night. No parties with masks nor sore and blistered fingers the next day from the hot taffy you pulled the night before. In fact its pleasures and worries are all missed in Mexico.

The youth of Mexico, however, has a night that corresponds to Hallowe'en and that is Liberty Night or the Fifteenth of September. And on that night he acts very much the same as the American youngster. Horns are plentiful and grotesque costumes are numerous. Merchants board up their windows and take all the other precautions that are taken in the United States on the licentious night of October 31. Of course, no wagons are carried off and hung on telegraph poles, nor are the street car tracks greased with lard, purloined from some careless butcher, but with general aspect of the city is that of the downtown of the big American city on that night.

All Hallowe'en is a relic of the days of old England, but the custom of the night, very much like the name, has been greatly changed. In the olden days, it was the Hallowed evening, on which all dead souls were supposed to wander the streets and do deeds of good. The good deeds were done by masked persons, who verily believed in not letting their right hand know what their left was doing. They would take baskets of good things to eat to the poor of the country, knock on the door and then fade away into the night. Like the name, the deeds have undergone a great change. They

are no longer deeds of the saints but deeds of devilry.

Have you ever gotten up in the morning and seen your much cherished garden gate hanging on the cross arm of a telegraph pole, or your favorite cow, that was brindle when you went to bed, sporting herself in a beautiful new dress of emerald green or Alice blue? Or have you ever come home from the masquerade dance with your head in the air and your thoughts miles away, to be tripped by the wire stretchers across the sidewalk and you do a little cussing under your breath while you hear smothered giggles on the other side of the fence? If you have not then the boys in your neighborhood must have been what Mr. T. Roosevelt would call mollycoddles.

And as a boy, have you ever blackened your face on All Hallowe'en and had a dirty face for a week, just because the burnt cork would not wash off, and have you ever stolen the taffy off the window sill, that your older sister had put out to cool while she listened to sweet things your future brother-in-law was saying?

Have you ever taken a rope and tied it to Smith's doorknob and the telephone pole; then rung the bell and retired to the safe distance of the other side of the street, where you lay hidden in the shadows of the Brown house and watched the unsuccessful efforts at opening the door. And have you ever run the fat policeman for a couple of squares and dropped into the shadows and heard him go puffing by. If you have, then you can sympathize for the Mexican boy who misses all these unalloyed joys of youth.

Later in life, you probably donned some grotesque dress. Perhaps you put on a clown suit or became the very devil himself for the evening and went to meet "with kings, the powerful of the earth, fair forms and hoary seers of ages past" in some

ball room, where you spent the evening dancing with shepherdesses, dominees, ballet girls, colonial dames, Marys, Queen of Scots, Spanish señoritas and Japanese dolls. Or, perhaps, you went to a taffy party where you pulled taffy and ducked for apples until you thought you were a diver. And then if you were a girl you may have taken a candle and a mirror and walked backwards downstairs looking for your future husband in the mirror.

In some of the larger cities, the police and municipal authorities are now working a new scheme to prevent the carrying off of wagons, blocking streets with rubbish and other such outrageous pranks by turning the night into a gigantic night of jollity and frivolity. The downtown streets are roped off and grotesque and burlesque parades are held by the merry-makers. Masking and other features are permitted from 7 o'clock in the evening until midnight and during those hours King Fun reigns supreme.

In Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, this idea has been in vogue for several years and at midnight, each thirtieth of October, a King Folly is elected for the succeeding carnival. The downtown streets of the city are roped off and a parade of enormous size passes over this district. Handsome, gaily-decorated carriages with prancing horses can be seen, with outriders mounted upon wags, upon whose hips and shoulders hats and coats are hung. Men from every quarter of the globe are there. Confetti is hurled by the barrel and everything and everybody is good natured. Thousands join in these celebrations. Floats of gigantic pumpkins, men with pumpkin heads and every conceivable monstrosity is represented.

It is a night for the safety valve for repressed spirits to let loose and it is second only to the night of the presidential election.

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