

## THE SOURCE OF ILL OMENS.

Their Origin is Very Simple—People Today as Superstitious as Were Their Ancestors.

"It is a hoodoo knife," said one "man and brother" to another. "You can never make it sharp." Such was the explanation tendered in behalf of one of those contrived pieces of pocket cutlery on which it seems impossible to bestow a cutting quality. Spend hours in whetting such a specimen, blaster your fingers in the effort, apply it to scythes, stone, whetstone, oilstone, razorstone, anything commonly used for the purpose of imparting an edge to cutting utensils, and, after all your efforts, it remains or soon becomes as dull as ever. You seek expert advice. Your expert tests and solemnly pronounces the metal of excellent quality. "No better made," he says, and yet the knife will not cut. If there ever is a hoodoo, it is certainly found attached to such a knife, and no wonder that superstitious persons attribute to the unlucky blade a malign influence which forbids its usefulness.

And yet the explanation of the inefficiency of the unlucky knife is perfectly simple. The blade is too thick. The angle formed by the steel at the cutting edge is too obtuse, and the result, of course, is that the edge is blunt, and cannot be made to cut properly. A razor blade is always thin, so is a scythe blade, or any other blade in which a smooth cutting quality of edge is desired. A thick blade, no matter what pains may be taken with it, can never be given a keen edge, and however well whetted, the blade quickly returns to its former condition of exasperating dullness. Even the intelligent owner, not familiar with the principles of blade making, will often be mystified at his own inability to keep his knife in good condition, while the superstitious finds in the dull blade an explanation of a phenomenon he cannot otherwise explain.

### BUT ONE OF MANY.

The hoodoo knife is but one of the myriad superstitions which haunt our steps by day and disturb our rest at night. None of us are free from them. We may deem ourselves to have reached a point of education and culture which raises us quite above the vulgar herd. We compliment ourselves on the fact that education is dissipating the superstitions of past ages, and we look back on the dread old days when men believed in signs and wonders, in omens and prodigies, with a feeling of self-satisfaction at the fact that at least we have escaped all that; we have outgrown the superstitious follies of our ancestors; we have abandoned their superstitions, with their plum colored coats, and have no more use nor taste for the one that for the other. We have risen to a point where reason reigns triumphant, where we are no longer subject to the fanciful delusions that annoyed our ancestors. We know that the laws of science are immutable, unchangeable, that all nature, animate and inanimate, is governed by law, and knowing this, we are quite free from the hobgoblins of superstitious belief, which once frightened the world into frames of unreasoning terror.

Thus do we compliment ourselves with the belief that we are at an immeasurable distance in this particular from those who have gone before. Our satisfaction, however agreeable to us, is, nevertheless, far from justified by the facts. We pride ourselves on our superiority to the men of past ages, when, in fact, we are just as superstitious as they are. We do not believe, as Luther did, that Satan in person can come unbidden and take a stand on the other side of the table. We laugh at Wesley's notion, that if belief in witches were given up, faith in the Bible would be shaken; we smile at his story of "Old Jerney," the family ghost; we pity the ignorance of those benighted persons a century or two ago who invoked the aid of the black art in their undertakings; who made compacts with the Evil One, and were finally carried off bodily to his place of abode. These notions, we say, were entertained only in dark and ignorant ages; such follies are beneath the notice of the educated present.

### MEN SUPERSTITIOUS AS EVER.

It is not well, however, to be too sure of our ground and we ought to be certain are congratulating ourselves that we have really passed the milestone that we think we see far in the rear. As long as men cherish the belief in the supernatural at all, odd manifestations will now and then appear, and these hoodoos, as they always have been, are numerous enough to justify the belief that the world is about as superstitious as it ever was, and that even what may be called the grosser forms of superstitions are still very generally entertained. We do not repudiate the belief in Satan's horns and hoofs, yet shiver at the idea of a personal devil; they disclaim a belief in ghosts and yet walk a mile round rather than go through a grave yard after such follies do not believe in charms and amulets. Oh, no, of course not. But still charms and amulets are advertised for sale in the papers, and many a man who has no faith in them actually explains why he carries a photo or a lucky charm in his pocket. We do not believe in the significance of dreams, yet every bookstore carries a choice selection of dream interpretation literature. We do not believe that any human being has the power to peer into the future, yet every city has its fortune tellers. Of course, we do not believe in the superstitions of the days, when men were frightened at their own shadows, but still there are some things quite inscrutable, you might say, and there may be something in those old notions after all.

There are so many things we see in nature, we do not understand, that it is not remarkable we should occasionally fall happen, in our experiences, on one or two quite mysterious cases. As a matter of fact, the world changes its superstitions as it changes its fashions, but it always wears clothes and always has superstitions. The influence of heredity is as strong among men as among animals, and is as powerful in mental as in physical attributes. Sons and daughters quite as often inherit the mental as the physical traits of their parents, and what is lamentably true, weaknesses of mind and body are more frequently transmitted than qualities tending to strength. Superstition may be an evidence of weakness. Some think it is, but it is certainly a curious fact that great minds, not more than small, are free from what we call superstition. An explanation may possibly be found in the fact that the superstitious is as far past the comprehension of the wise man as of the simple. Between things natural and things above nature there is a great gap, and the mightiest intellect cannot bridge the chasm. The wisest and the most intelligent, where neither draw his own conclusions, hence that which is common to all men. Not being able to understand the supernatural, we can not say in what direction appear at all. We are completely in the dark, hence each of us cherishes his own little superstition and often makes merry at that of his neighbor. Whose pet superstition, being different

from his own, is, of course, quite absurd, often ridiculous.

### THE SALT SUPERSTITION.

As already seen we are not altogether responsible for our superstitions. Not a few of them come to us through the habits, good and bad, mostly the latter, of our ancestors. There, for example, is the salt superstition. Every man and woman in town knows of the habit of salt on the table cloth, whether accidental or of design, is unlucky, but not one in a thousand can tell why. The superstition is perfectly plain to any one who knows enough of the habits of our Teutonic ancestors. Away back in the days when feudal barons held sway in castles built on hilltops, a common table was set in the great hall, whereat the knight and his retainers all sat together. About midway the table stood a vase containing from one to three quarts of salt; the salt bowl was passed hand to hand, each feaster, with knife or fingers helping himself to what he needed, and after the ponderous vase had gone round the table it was replaced in the center. Eating, however, was but a minor part of the ceremonies at knightly banquets. The drinking was the main feature. Drinking was frequently followed or accompanied by fighting, and an idea of the times may be gained from the fact that when one member of such a party rose to drink a toast, another, his chosen friend, rose at his side and stood with drawn sword as a pledge of security that the drinker would not be stabbed while both hands were raised holding the ponderous, double handled tankard. That, however, is another story. During the feasting the salt bowl was frequently overturned by the bellicose guests, who in their eagerness to get at each other, climbed on or scrambled across the table. Hence the overturning of the salt at the baron's board was quoted as an indication of unusually lively scenes. The incident was always unlucky for the household, for, when the Teutonic, English, Irish, French, Danish, Norwegian, Italian and Spanish ancestors undertook to settle their little differences, they did the business thoroughly, and the fact that a member of the party carried from the banquet for Christian burial was an incident taken as a matter of course, which gave no particular concern to any one. The upsetting of the salt, however, came to be regarded as foreboding some unlucky incident, and, although we now eat our dinners in peace, we still cherish the belief that the act of spilling salt is of itself prognostic of evil to come.

### UNLUCKY NUMBERS.

The idea of lucky and unlucky numbers is also an inheritance. One of those gossip old historians who knew everything that was going on in his time says that the Roman sports had come from Egypt. Egypt, played with a board divided into squares, each bearing a number; a stone ball about the size of a marble was tipped with the finger against one side of the board, and the ball rolled from side to side until it finally came to rest on a square. Professional gamblers used boards specially prepared in such a way that the ball would roll into desired squares. These were lucky for the gambler, unlucky for everyone else, and thus certain numbers acquired a bad reputation among the sporting fraternity. The superstition that the number thirteen is unlucky, for one or another reason, been regarded as mystic numbers by many nationalities, and the whole Christian world holds thirteen in abhorrence, because that was the number of those who sat down at the table during the last meeting of Christ and his disciples, before the crucifixion. The superstition, however, connected with the last days of Christ is numerous enough to form a class of themselves, the Friday superstition being perhaps the best known. It is quite probable, however, that most of the number superstitions may be traced to the astrologers and soothsayers, who juggled with numbers as their stock in trade, and are also probably chargeable with the right and left hand ideas of some persons who attach no little importance.

### DREAMS, CATS AND TOADS.

Belief in dreams has always been common, and, indeed, superstition seems to have more foundation in reason than any other class. So many instances have occurred of prophetic dreams, verified by the facts at a later date, that almost any one regards himself as having a reason for the belief in dreams, and, indeed, students of mental science confess themselves puzzled at many of the disclosures made by scientific investigation and seem to be agreed that the dream superstition is probably the most excusable of the whole list. Animal superstitions have in large measure their origin in the nature, habits, appearance or characteristics of the animals themselves. The toad, for instance, has always been in ill favor. He is far from good looking, his habits are bad; he is in the popular mind, closely associated with the serpent family, for whom all mankind, from the Garden of Eden to the present day, has had universal detestation. In describing Satan tempting Eve, Milton could find no more appropriate figure than to liken him to a toad squatting at the ear of the mother. The ancient Egyptians actually suggested to our innocent mind. The astrologers, however, are, in part, responsible for the unpopularity of the toad. Toads and frogs dressed in green and red velvet were the favorites of the mediums in his imitations. In usefulness, they rivaled the black cat, the inseparable companion of the witch. The sneaking treachery of the cat has always made it a favorite animal. Black is an unlucky color, so is yellow, and the black coat of the cat, combined with its yellow eyes, treacherous habits and unsparing cruelty, always made it a detestable animal. The superstition makers and those who followed their lead, in India the place of the cat in folklore has been taken partly by the tiger and partly by the monkey. In high latitudes the fox bears the burden of iniquity which among the people of the temperate climes has been loaded on the cat.

### SOME LUCKY ONES.

The horse and the dog are lucky, so also is the cow. Their usefulness has made them fortunate and even the shoe of the horse, being usually associated with an animal of good omen, shares the reputation of the horse. The origin of the plant superstitions may often be traced to the uses made of the plant, its foliage or flowers. Among the Greeks the bodies of the dead were crowned with parsley. "He will be in need of parsley," was a euphemism signifying a belief in the approaching death of the person indicated. A Greek army marching to attack an enemy was almost stampeded by meeting two mules loaded with parsley. We have no parsley superstition; its uses as a vegetable has caused its employment as a funeral plant to be abandoned.

### DESIRE TO SEE FUTURE.

Behind all superstition, however, of whatever character, lurks the grim suspicion that, in some way unknown to us, nature sees it to notify her children of good or evil to come. The desire to lift the veil and ascertain what the future has in store amounts almost to a passion. We know nothing of what is to come, it is not probable that in

this respect we shall ever be wiser, and yet, although assailed by reason that foreknowledge is always beyond our power, we cannot resist the temptation to avail ourselves of any means which gives even a remote hope of enabling us to look into the darkness which closes our vision. This universal desire is the source of all superstition. In every mind there is a half-unconscious, half-expressed belief, that could we only read the signs vouchsafed by nature, the book of our future life would be as easily legible as the pages of our past. As Shakespeare says:

There is a history in all men's lives, Figuring the nature of the times deceased.

The which observed, a man may prophesy. With a near aim, of the main chance of things.

As yet not come to life; which in their seeds And weak beginnings lie entreated.

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### ADVANTAGES OF FALL FLOWING.

Next spring, when teams are soft, men have the spring fever and work is pressing, ploughing seems slow and is very hard work. If pushed too hard the teams get sore, and if not the work soon pushes the farmer. A good lot of ploughing now this fall will relieve the situation wonderfully.

There are many reasons why this can be done profitably. Help can be hired cheaper, as many boys are through their summer work and want work. The teams are toughened by their season's work and can stand all a man can, and the farmer can spare them at this time. The weather is cool and invigorating, so the team does not become exhausted, and the hired man will not take any comfort sitting on the plough, but keeps going to keep warm. The fall crops are all secured, and nothing is being wasted or neglected if the ploughing is done in November. After the fall rains have permeated the soil it turns up easily and the plough does good work, holding easily for the ploughman.

In fall ploughing, says G. E. Chap, the furrows should not be turned over flat, but left on a slant, so that the frost will penetrate to the bottom of the furrow, and the fall fining effect of the freezing be obtained. This mechanical effect is much more effective, cheaper and thorough than the work of the harrow. Frost of most kinds, grubs and beetles make preparation for winter at the approach of cold weather by incasing themselves in a well closed coated cell, made round so as to resist the pressure of the frost. If the soil is turned over and the cells are broken just before cold weather most of them will be killed, as they do not have time to construct a new home. It is pressure, not cold, that kills them, or they would all be dead. Clay, which breaks up in lumps, will be so affected that one harrowing at the proper time will leave a mellow surface.

Manure draws and spread during winter will be leached and soaked into the soil, insuring a more complete mixing, and it harrows in well. Fall ploughing and manure to decay, and will break up and mix with the soil, acting as humus, making the land darker in color, cooler and more moist. After strong barnyard manure has laid all winter and been harrowed in, cross ploughing brings in the soil, which all goes to pieces. The decaying soil is converted into plant food, and no better preparation can be made for potatoes. Soil ploughed in spring will not decay in time to aid materially the season's crop. On weedy farms the harrowing can be begun earlier in the spring, and one more sprouting of weed seed can be killed before time to sow and plant.

For some reason it is generally conceded that many of our crops must be sown earlier than formerly to secure a good yield. Oats, especially, yield according to the time they are sown. Potatoes used to do well planted in June, later in May, and now seem to do best planted in April. Diseases, blight and germs attack the crops and destroy their vigor. These various forms of disease have their season of growth the same as oats and potatoes, and at certain seasons of the year growth before it is time for the "troubles" to put in their work.

Where the bulk of the ploughing is done in the fall the ground can be worked earlier and the time can be spent in sowing and planting instead of ploughing. Spring work always crowds, and some of the minor details and fence repairs will be left until late. A farmer must work for future results, and not for today.—N. Y. Tribune Farmer.

### FEED AND CARE OF MILK COWS.

One of the most important items in securing the best profit from the cows is to have an even flow of milk which is maintained throughout the season, says the Republic. On many farms there are cows that for a short season after they come in fresh yield a good supply of milk, but this soon begins to fail, especially if care is not taken in the feeding and management, and at the end of seven or eight months the quantity they give is so small that they are allowed to go dry. Many cows are kept that if charged a fair price for the food they eat would not pay for their keep.

The first important item is to have good cows. These they must be well fed, even in summer. While during growing season the pastures can be largely relied upon, it will pay to give also a light feed of bran and corn meal, to make sure of a good supply of cheap food. It will also be a good plan to plant some crop like sweet corn, fodder corn, millet, sorghum, or something of this kind that can be used at any time when needed. There should be a change of feed occasionally, so as to keep the cow with a good appetite, as the more good food the good dairy cow consumes the more good milk she will give. It will also be a good plan to divide the pastures so that she can be changed from one to the other at least every 10 days. The cows will do much better then if they are compelled to depend upon one pasture. Besides, by changing there will be less waste of feed. With all animals there is a natural inclination to eat the tender, sweeter growth, and in doing this, when kept in one pasture, there will be more or less than will grow up and mature seed. By dividing up the pastures and changing from one to the other, grass will all be eaten down more evenly. There should always be sweet, nutritious grasses in the pastures so that the cows can get enough to satisfy their appetites without tramping too long or too far. The quieter and more comfortable the cows can be kept, the better the results. Feed to keep them in a good, thrifty condition. It is not possible to make a good dairy cow fat, but good treatment will keep her in good condition. Her food will be converted into milk rather than flesh.

### What is Life?

In the last analysis nobody knows, but we do know that it is under strict law. Abuse that law even slightly, pain results. Irregular living means derangement of the organs, resulting in Constipation, Headache or Liver trouble. Dr. King's New Life Pills quickly readjusts this. It's gentle, yet thorough. Only 25c at Z. C. M. I. Drug Store.

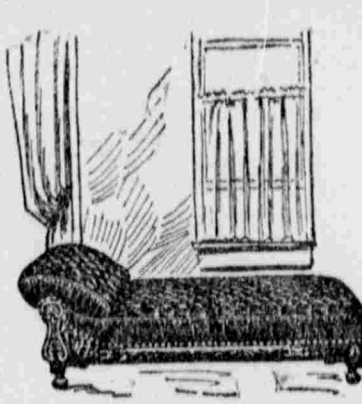


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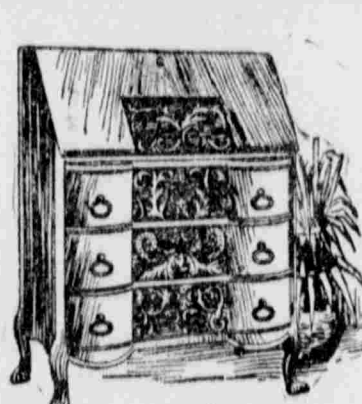
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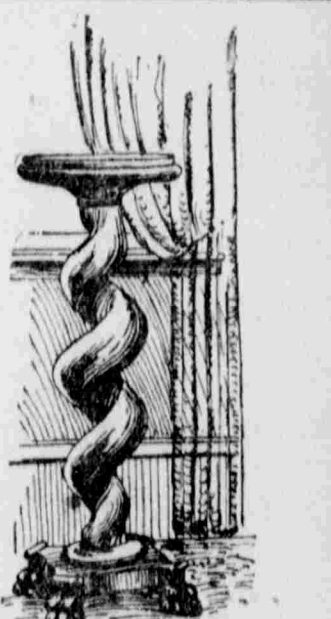


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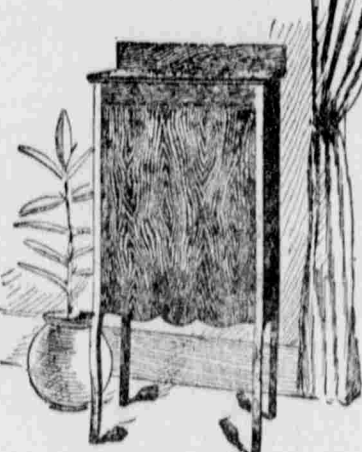
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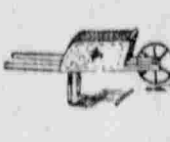
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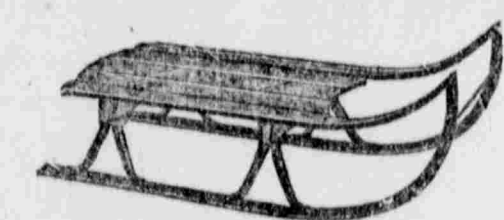
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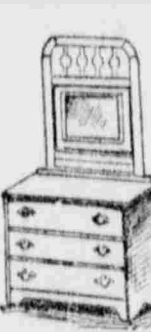
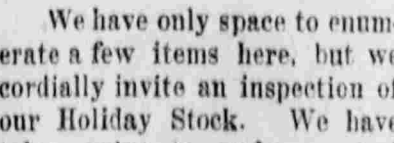
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