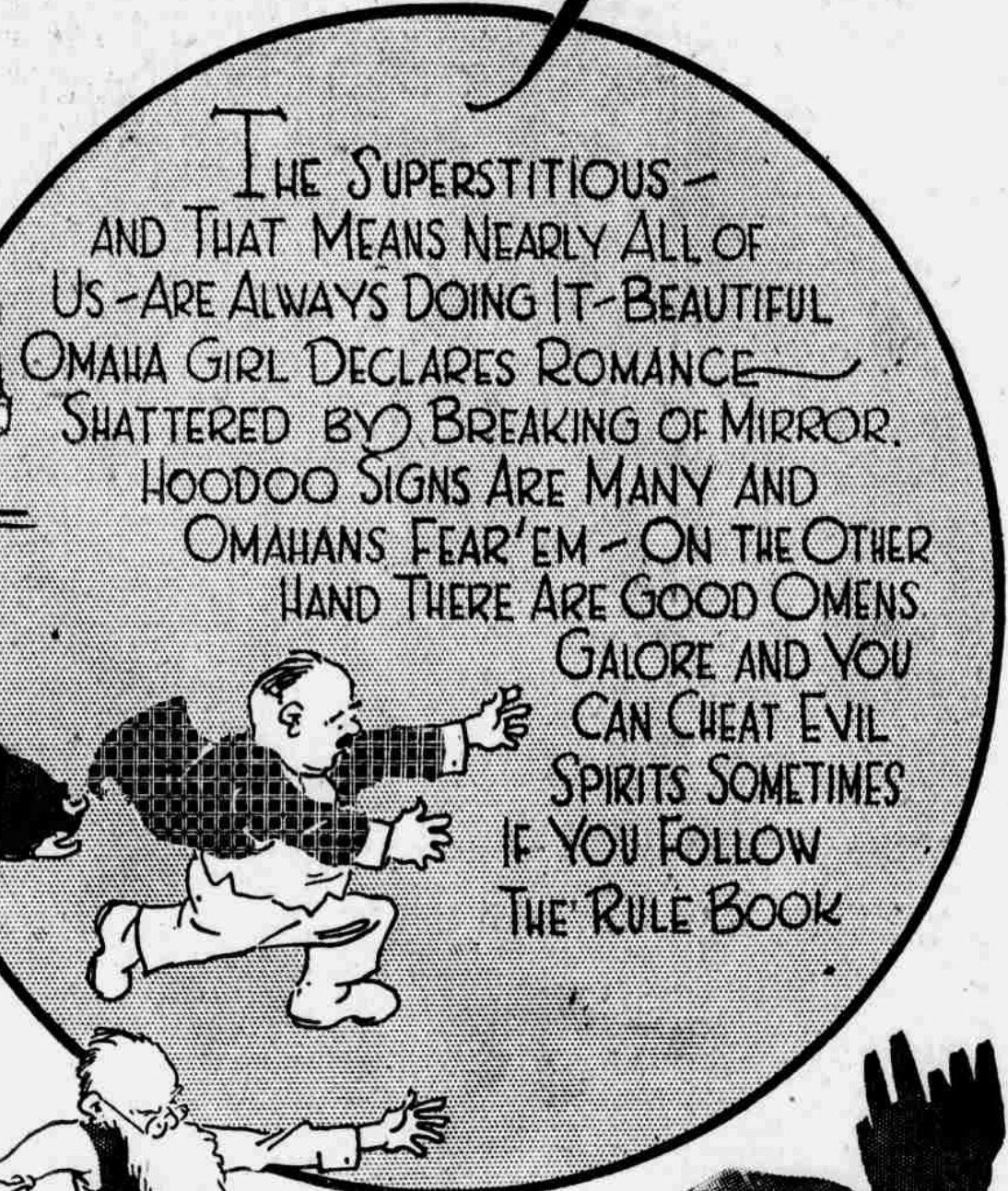


Dodging the Blight of the Deadly Jinx



JOSEPH BARKER STEERS CLEAR OF "FISH DAY" IN BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS



THE SUPERSTITIOUS— AND THAT MEANS NEARLY ALL OF US—ARE ALWAYS DOING IT—BEAUTIFUL OMAHA GIRL DECLARES ROMANCE— SHATTERED BY BREAKING OF MIRROR. HOODOO SIGNS ARE MANY AND OMAHANS FEAR 'EM—ON THE OTHER HAND THERE ARE GOOD OMENS GALORE AND YOU CAN CHEAT EVIL SPIRITS SOMETIMES IF YOU FOLLOW THE RULE BOOK



MRS. BLANCHE PATERSON— YOUNG OMAHA BEAUTY BLAMES MIRROR BROKEN ON HONEYMOON FOR DOMESTIC TRAGEDY



MRS. E. M. SYFERT— PRES OF DRAMA LEAGUE, BELIEVES THAT THE STARS DIRECT HUMAN DESTINIES.



GEORGE BRANDEIS— MERCHANT and FINANCIER REFUSES TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT DEAL ON FRIDAY

FRONT TO REAR— LOUISE SHUMATE, FLORENCE SHAMES, MILDRED OTTNER, RUTH ROBERTSON, ELEANOR DICKMAN, EDITH FINLAYSON— CITY HALL GIRLS WHO FIGURE THAT THEY ARE JINX BUSTERS—

By ELLA FLEISHMAN. SUPERSTITIOUS? Me? I should say not! Why, the very ideal! All kinds of disclaimers, ranging from the lofty to the indignant, greeted the question put to prominent Omahans: "Are you superstitious?" "You ought to know I'm too intelligent to be superstitious!" was the general attitude and yet— Nine out of every 10 men and women interviewed confessed that they would be: Walk under a ladder Postpone a wedding Open umbrella indoors Start anything on Friday Turn back on journey Wear peacock feathers Remove wedding ring Give knife to a friend, and so on, ad infinitum. "That would bring bad luck!" they chorused. But men those who avowed themselves free from any real superstition still admitted to a playful half-belief, not unmingled with a feeling that it is, on the whole, safer to conform to the dogma and rituals.

But the husband's business took him there and his wife went willingly. Dusk Comes. "The first day we arrived I set out to explore the little cabin which was to be my home for two years," relates the beautiful Mrs. Patterson. "There wasn't much to explore. There was scarcely anything pretty in the cabin but one piece of furniture, a lovely mahogany dresser, left there by a Chicago bride who preceded us. Dusk came, so I lighted an oil lamp and, being unfamiliar with the lamps and the heat they generate, set it unfortunately near the mirror. "That evening my husband and I were sitting in the adjoining room when we were startled by a loud crash. My heart contracted. It was the mirror of the beautiful mahogany dresser flung to a thousand bits! "A broken mirror—bad luck—flashed through my brain, though before that time I was not aware I held that superstition. I tried to dispel the thought and feeling of impending trouble, but I couldn't. I was keenly conscious that I wished it had not happened, especially on our first night there."

"That's the sign of a wedding" when four persons, in shaking hands, cross hands, or the exclamation: "Somebody's walking on your grave!" when a person complains of cold shivers, then indeed you may boast you are an unusual creature—not given to superstition at all! Or if you don't "knock on wood" to prevent reverse fortune. Mrs. Charles T. Kountze, social leader, will never seat 13 guests at her table, according to her friends. "But she used to defy the superstitions in a high way," her brother, Robert T. Burns, testifies. "There were 13 girls in her class at boarding school. They observed graduation ceremonies by breaking mirrors, dancing under ladders, defying black and white cats and deliberately walking into all sorts of superstitions. Mrs. Ward Burgess defies the opal superstition by wearing a most beautiful plaque set with opals. Believes in Omens. Mrs. Howard Baldrige, however, believes in omens, according to the war workers associated with her in the Red Cross warehouse. If something unpleasant happened in the morning, Mrs. Baldrige would exclaim: "This is going to be a bad day. We've started out wrong." Men are just as superstitious as women are. Witness George Brandeis, Omaha merchant, financier and promoter of many "Onward Omaha" movements. Friday is Mr. Brandeis' pet aversion. He will neither sign important papers, initiate new ventures or start on a long journey on Friday. Recently Mr. Brandeis was interested in a \$250,000 deal. The men involved were all assembled in his office, the details had been thoroughly discussed and Mr. Brandeis declared himself in favor of the movement. "But we'll close the papers tomorrow and sign the deal then. This is Friday and I never make important decisions on this day," he explained. Joseph Barker shares the same

dread for doing anything important on Friday. Harry B. Zimman, city commissioner, on the other hand declares himself to be absolutely immune from superstition in any way, shape or manner whatsoever. "I even registered to run for city office again on Friday—deliberately chose to do so on Friday in order to defy the superstition," he announced. Many men carry images of St. Anthony in their pocket to ward off harm. Sailors submit to tattooing to protect themselves from storm and gamblers and speculators invariably pin their faith to a lucky charm or mascot. Grain men, too, and others at the mercy of uncertain ventures are strong believers in luck and signs. Athletes have a whole category of superstitions, according to Ira Jones, city recreation director. New things are taboo, also washing the towels in the gymnasium, he confides. Sox Jinx on Game. "Once when I was playing foot ball the coach made me put on a pair of new socks before the game. We lost. I still believe the socks were the jinx," he related with a tear of reminiscence in his eye. The only time they wash towels in a gymnasium is after they've lost a game, according to Jones. "Then the towels are washed to get a change of luck." On the other hand, there are the superstitious optimists—like the fat lady who stoops hurriedly to gather four-leaved clovers, horseshoes and pins in the hope they "will bring good luck." Among old negroes in the south the belief is strong that a rabbit's foot brings protection from all evil. Many wear a rosary or other holy object of charm for the same purpose. It was common during the war. The familiar "charm" worn with one's watch is a survival of the old belief. Baby's rattle and drum, now his undisputed property, were once used

usually a reflex action, due to irritation of the nasal branches of the fifth pair of cranial nerves," he goes on to explain. But a far simpler explanation is that of the superstitious family, with members all over the world. Their explanation is that an evil spirit is leaving the sneezer's body, and making quite a demonstration of temper as he does so. Therefore the Germans utter the fervent "Gesundheit," and the Italians, as devoutly "Felicita!" Miss Rose Bernstein, teacher in the Cass school, ungraded room for foreigners, has a whole pack of sneeze superstitions, in fact, one for every day in the week, as follows: Sneeze on Monday, sneeze for danger. Sneeze on Tuesday, see a stranger. Sneeze on Wednesday, expect a letter. Sneeze on Thursday, something better. Sneeze on Friday, expect sorrow. Sneeze on Saturday, joy tomorrow. Sneeze on Sunday morning, fasting. Joy through the whole week lasting. Her Lucky Number. Thirteen is Miss Grace Sorenson's lucky number, she avers. "I was born on June 13, I always get seat 13 in the theater and many of the nicest things that ever happened to me are associated somehow with '13.' Notice that poems or stories I have written are accepted generally reach me on the 13th and frequently by manuscript is printed on page 13. I'm going to keep a record of my lucky thirteens." Miss Sorenson, who edits Every Child's magazine, also believes in dreams. "Many things have turned out just as I had dreamed they would," she states. Mrs. W. J. McCaffrey also believes in dreams. Muddy water appearing in dreams means the falsity of a friend or death in the family, she says. A whole world of superstition fol-

lows in the wake of picture taking. A camera appearing on a horse race track prior to the event is a deadly omen of ill luck and the camera man had better insure his life, or at least his camera, heavily before he makes his appearance on the turf. Blame Camera Man. The death of many an auto driver has been explained by the presence of a camera on the track in advance. North American Indians refuse to have their pictures taken on the belief that they are parting with a part of themselves. Mirrors are covered at a funeral from the belief that a spirit may attach itself to the image. Dwellers on the heights of the sixth floor city hall, where the Board of Education holds forth, declare themselves impervious to the infiltration of superstitious ideas. Miss Belle Ryan, assistant superintendent, passed a rapid fire telephonic examination involving superstitious beliefs 100 per cent impervious. "If you lose a hairpin, do you lose a friend?" she was asked. "No, my 'tempur," she returned serenely. Superintendent Beveridge hasn't any superstitions, she said, and she hasn't been able to discover any in Leon Smith and J. L. McCrory, she bore witness. This "high-brow" crowd constitutes living proof of the fact that superstition is eradicated by educational atmosphere. Says They Don't Work. Miss Clara Brewster, athletic director of the Y. W. C. A. and in charge of the girls' summer camp, also pursues the even tenor of her way undisturbed by superstition of any sort. She's tested 'em out and they don't work, she avers. "I've stubbed my toe, on purpose, a dozen times to discover if the first man I'd meet after that would be the man I was going to marry—and it didn't do a bit of good," she admits ruefully. "I find myself wearing my gym suit inside out half of the time without encountering bad luck. When the girls in camp get too obstreperous about black or white or green

cats crossing their paths I give 'em a good dose of castor oil," she states. "Dreams? Pooh! Too much lobster!" quoth she. Mrs. Franklin A. Shotwell stands alone in a free confession that she "is the most superstitious person in Omaha." "But mine is more a leaning to the occult," she explains. The mystic rites of India enthrall her, words and flowers are to her living things; they have as much effect on her temperament as living things. She believes in her lucky stars and lucky days. These are Tuesday and Saturday. Those Hunches. "I was married on one and the other is my birthday," she said. Opals, other people's bad luck omen, spell good luck for her. Mrs. Shotwell believes in "hunches" and no one dare cross her on a staircase. Her mother, Mrs. Lois Cochran, is quite the reverse in sheer practicality, she says. "I'd even make the 13th at a table if I was hungry enough," Mrs. Cochran laughed. Recognition of superstition and the part it dictates play in the regulation of life is found in the familiar fact that few hotels in this country boast a room or floor "13." In many cities the "unlucky numeral" is skipped in numbering streets. Twelve and one-half is substituted. Until recently no ships set sail on Friday—nobody would sail on "em-busness men notoriously avoid transactions on the 13th of the month and close up their offices on the double dose, Friday the 13th. Mystic Thirteen clubs, organized to defy the tradition, flourish in almost every city. Reading Horoscopes. Reading horoscopes is the most elaborate product of superstition the human mind has devised. In fact, a whole science of predicting the fortunes of persons by reference to the signs of the Zodiac has been built up. If you are born under the sign of the lion you are set down as courageous, no matter if you tremble in your shoes at the nibbling of a mouse. If you are born when Venus is in the ascendancy you will be

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