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Good or Bad Luck

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Mrs. Nestor Noel

MRS. Jones was leaving her flat in Edmonton, so I called on her to say "good-bye."
"Are you going to your nice farm to-morrow?" I asked.
"O dear no," she cried. "I couldn't dream of moving on a Friday. We'd never have any luck again."

I was astonished to hear this remark from Mrs. Jones; because I had always regarded her as a person full of common sense.

"I suppose you will take your pretty Maltese cat with you when you go," I said, stroking pussy's soft, grey fur.

"It's very unlucky to move a cat," she replied. "I'm so glad you came, as I wanted to give her to you before leaving."

Of course, I carried away the lovely gift in my arms, and I could not help expressing my surprise to my husband, when I told him later of Mrs. Jones, and her ideas of luck.

But, on thinking the matter over, it seems to me there are so many people with pet superstitions, that it will be hard to find one person out of ten, who is not superstitious.

Nor is it only women who believe like this; for many men are just as bad. We all know, for instance, that sailors, as a class, are very superstitious, and they never like to start a voyage on a Friday.

Friday is supposed to be an unlucky day, because Christ died on a Friday. Then why are people so inconsistent as to call the day on which He died, Good Friday? And if this special Friday be Good Friday, why are all other Fridays, bad or unlucky?

But one can never ask or answer a question reasonably with superstitious people; because they are, of all others, the most unreasonable.

They have marked all the unlucky things which ever happened to them on the 13th; but have they remembered the lucky ones?

Women often become perfect slaves to their superstitions, and they can't do this or that—always for some idiotic reason which is no reason at all!

I knew a woman in England who used to teach her own children, instead of sending them to school. Many times I saw them having a holiday, and I'd remark on the fact. The eldest girl, Adeline, invariably, gave me the same answer: "O we're not having any lessons to-day; because it is an unlucky day!"

The mother was an invalid and gave the lessons from her bedroom; but she generally told Adeline to consult the almanac first, and see if there had been a death of a great man, like Gladstone, recorded; or the sinking or shipwreck of a famous ship. Now everyone who consults an almanac, with the important dates of years gone by, will see for themselves that those children's holidays far outnumbered their study days. Adeline is now a married woman, and I sometimes recall that period.

"How were you educated in the end?" I asked her.

"O I was never 'brought up,' she used to say. "I was dragged up!"

It was well for Adeline that she had more common sense than her mother, for she is now a very practical person, and when I asked her if she were superstitious, she laughed and said: "I have no time for such nonsense!"

If I were to write out a list of all the superstitions I have heard, I think I should fill a book!

There are surely enough misfortunes in this world without our making ourselves and our children unhappy over imaginary ones. It is certain that a child is not born superstitious. It may be born with a temper, or some physical defect, but it cannot know of such things as good or bad luck, unless it first hears of them from its elders.

And considering how much a child has to learn, and what marvellous things there are in this wonderful world of ours, surely we do not want to waste its precious time teaching nonsense.

I have found that there are certain studies which do away with superstitions more than any others. These are hygiene, natural history and botany.

Everything is so real in these studies. A child who learns hygiene will not think it caught scarlet fever because it was the 13th of the month. It will know it must have caught it through infection. Nor would any sane mother hang the emblem

of a black cat round a sick child's neck, and expect the child to recover. A mother may be stupid enough to believe that a black cat is lucky; but, in spite of that insane belief, she'll do her best to help her child recover, by good nursing.

The truth of the matter is that most of our so-called "good or bad luck" we bring upon ourselves. Of course, there are certain accidents which no one can foresee. For instance, on a farm, there is frost. But it is of no use for a farmer to sit down and wail because his wheat is frozen. Two farmers may have their grain frozen at the same time, and one will say: "I never have any luck," and he'll waste a lot more time. The fault with him is laziness—not bad luck. The other farmer works all the harder when his grain is frozen, because he wants to make up the difference. And then his neighbor will point to his good luck—which in other words merely means the result of hard work.

There is no such thing as good or bad luck—outside ourselves. It is we who make our own luck. People who are easily discouraged put most things down to luck. But they would do well to study the story of Bruce and the Spider.

I have often heard the remark: "Isn't So-and-So lucky? She earns prizes at every fair."

Now I consider that a person who does this, owes it a great deal to hard work. A woman who wins prizes for the best butter or preserves surely deserves all she has won, and we might be generous and accord her a little applause for the success she has earned; and not merely class it as "luck."

So it is all through life. The prize is not to the lucky one; but to the hard worker. We will do well to teach this lesson to our little ones, early in life; before they mix with other people, who will fill their minds with nonsense. It is essentially in the home and from the mother that a child must learn to take a practical, common-sense view of things. We should all try to develop in our children:

"Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And though no science, fairly worth the seven."

Where Was Papa

A handsomely dressed lady rescued her fluffy pet with some difficulty from the attack of a street cur, and began to soothe and sympathize in this manner:

"You dear little thing, your mamma drove that ugly, big dog away, didn't she? Next time you will eat that big, naughty dog up, won't you. Tootsy-wootsey? Mamma wants you to just tear that mean old thing to pieces next time he bothers you."

Three-year-old Irene, who had witnessed the whole affair, listened with interest to this gushing monologue. When the lady paused for breath, Irene gravely addressed the diminutive dog:

"Little doggy, where does your poppa work?" she said.

A Just Complaint

The feelings of the coal heaver of the following story, as given in Tit-Bits, had sufficient cause to be ruffled:

"Liza," he expostulated, "don't I always tell you I won't 'ave the kids bringin' in the coals from the shed in my best 'at'?"

"Oh, just 'ave sense," replied his wife.

"You've spoiled the shape of that 'at' already, and what can a little hextra coal dust do to 'arm yer 'at'?"

"You don't see the point," protested the husband, with dignity. "I only wears that 'at in the hevenin's; and if, while I'm hout, I takes it orf my 'ead, it leaves a bloomin' black band round my forehead. Wot's the consequence? Why I gets accused of washin' my face with my 'at on, and it ain't nice, Liza! It ain't nice!"

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