

Superstition

Superstition is defined as: "belief in the supernatural." Are you superstitious? Are you afraid on Friday, the thirteenth; when a black cat scurries across your path; or when you drop a pinch of salt? This is a characteristic that many people possess. It is silly and yet justifiable.

Some people refuse to walk under a ladder, even crossing the street to avoid doing so. I am not afraid of walking under a ladder, even on Friday, the thirteenth, except when a painter is situated at the top, not because of fear, but because of respect for my clothes (such as they are).

Nearly all of the various superstitions have some definite beginning. I know people who will not be the third person to have their cigarette lit with the same match. Two theories have been advanced to account for this practice. In the World war, one—two, but never three cigarettes were lit with the same match because this would allow the enemy time to shoot. Another theory dates back in history to a Russian practice of lighting the three funeral candles with the same taper. The Russians believed that to light three other objects with one match would be to invite evil in some form or other. To me the first theory seems the most logical.

Everyone has a touch of this queer disease, superstition. Many refuse to admit it, but nevertheless it is rife even in this scientific era. Perhaps the most superstitious of mortals is the

negro. They fear black cats, rain in an open grave, and the "bone-yard," which is the negro's graveyard. No doubt the negro's superior imagination partially accounts for this fact.

Some things that are generally regarded as superstitions are facts. To illustrate: no dream can last more than three minutes. Some one may wake you by a touch on the shoulder. You dream you are fighting with a lion for hours and finally the lion gouges your shoulder and you awake to find that it is a hand rather than hungry jaws that is touching you. As a matter of fact your dream is the action of a confused minor brain which receives the message from the nerves. The dream started at the same instant that the hand was laid on your shoulder.

Popular belief has started some of the styles that are prevalent today. In the Egyptian Age people believed that a nerve ran directly from the fourth finger on your left hand, to the heart. Then in the middle ages "medical" men investigated and announced that it was a vein, namely, "vena amoris," or love's vein, and not a nerve at all. Foolish as this may seem, it accounts for the wedding and engagement rings being worn on the fourth finger of the left hand today.

So we see, that, although these beliefs are silly and rather foolish, they were at one time justifiable.

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