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FOLK-LORE SCRAP-BOOK.

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE "CRACKERS" IN GEORGIA. — The Atlanta "Constitution," July 9, 1891, contributes the following superstitions as learned from these people.

"When it is ebb tide the slits in a cat's eyes are horizontal; when it is flood tide they are vertical. Kill a frog and it will rain hard for three days. If a cock walks in at the door, turns around and crows, he announces a death in the family. Potatoes will not thrive unless they are planted in the dark of the moon, and a child born at the full of the moon will be a boy.

"If you open an umbrella in a house the only person present will die, and the same thing will happen if you hang a coat or hat on a door-knob or a door-bell. It is not wise to set a hen during a certain part of August, because the life of the world is at its lowest then. If two persons going hand in hand meet an obstacle which divides them, the one on the left will go to hell and the one on the right to heaven.

"If you drop a pair of scissors and one point sticks in the floor, a visitor will come from the direction toward which the other leg is extended. A child that has never seen its father can cure whooping-cough by blowing down the patient's throat. To get rid of freckles, count them and put an equal number of pebbles into a paper. Whoever steps on the paper will get the freckles."

METHOD OF CHALLENGE AMONG CALIFORNIA INDIANS. — "Two tribes of Indians in the upper part of California had as boundary between their districts, a low ridge where the streams headed. If you should go to where one of these streams, Potter River, rises, you would see still standing a tall pile of stones beside a never-failing spring; on one side of this cairn was the territory of the Pomo Indians, and on the other the land of the Chumaia. These tribes were enemies, and were often at war. When the Chumaia wished to challenge the others to battle, they took three sticks, cut notches round their ends and in the middle, tied them at the ends into a fagot, and laid it on this cairn. If the Pomos accepted the challenge, they tied a string around the middle of the three sticks and left them in their place. Then agents of both tribes met on neutral ground and arranged the time and place of battle, which took place accordingly." — *From the Tribune, Waterloo, Iowa, March 3, 1891.*

THE LUCK OF THE NUMBER THREE. — "Mining Industry" remarks on miners' superstition that accidents always occur in triads: —

"We have seen miners who would 'go their bottom dollar,' to use a common expression, on a prospect where the rock was so soft that three drills would make a hole. We have seen others that would leave a mine when three shots had failed. With them it was 'three times and out,' and have seen others who would take a 'lay off' when an accident occurred to wait until the fatal third had happened. Once we asked a Cornish miner

why he considered three an unlucky number, and he answered that it had been cursed ever since a cock crowed thrice as a signal for the denial of the Saviour."

DIVINATION WITH THE SIFTER. — "Lippincott's Monthly Magazine," December, 1891, contains an interesting article on "Negro Superstitions," by Sara M. Handy, in which is given an account of this method of divination.

"Two chairs are placed back to back in such wise that the sifter rests between, edge on edge, so lightly that a breath will serve to disturb its equilibrium. The diviner, who is no Hoodoo, but preferably a man of standing in the church, takes his place away from chairs and sifter, and, with lifted hand, chants slowly: —

By Saint Peter, by Saint Paul,
By the Lord who made us all,
If John Doe did thus and so,
Turn, sifter, turn and fall.

"If the person named is innocent, the sifter remains motionless; if he is an accomplice, it shakes without falling: and if he is guilty, it turns and drops with a clang.

"The gift of sifter-turning is as rare as that of table-turning, to which it is probably akin. It must be remembered that no one is allowed to touch either chair or sifter, and that the only possible way open to cheating is to shake the chair with a quick motion of the foot. The negroes have great faith in the sifter ordeal, and have frequently been known to confess theft rather than submit to it.

"The writer remarks that this is an African survival, on the Guinea coast a shield being used instead of a sifter, and a negro chant corresponding to the Christianized song."

CROSSING THE BACK. — The same writer records the following childish superstition: —

"It is a common thing when a party of pickaninnies are playing together to see one of them give another a light cut across the back with a switch and exclaim triumphantly, 'Dar, now, you gwine git a whuppin' 'fore night,' while the recipient of the blow will beg as earnestly that the 'cross' may be taken off by a second stroke from the same hand in the same spot, as though he already felt the lash."

Other superstitions cited in the same article are by no means peculiar to the negroes.

"To lock the hands over the head is to pile up trouble. To throw salt on the fire provokes a quarrel with your nearest and dearest. In turning back in a path your superstitious negro makes a cross, thus, X, with his foot, and spits in it; otherwise, he believes, misfortune will surely overtake him the next time he passes that way. Rocking an empty cradle brings misfortune to the baby; and if a teething child is allowed to look at itself in