

SUPERSTITIOUS? NEVER!—THAT IS, HARDLY EVER

Your Operatic Star Doesn't Believe in the Magic of Signs; But Then, It's Always Better to Be on the Safe Side! Step Ladders, Shoes on the Shelf, the Whistler in the Dressing Room, the Charmed Ring and Other Bêtes Noires of Stagedom

By MAY STANLEY

HAVE you a little superstition in your home? Or, to be exact, in your dressing room, for it is in the latter spot that spells and magic abound. Here it is that ruthless spirits wait to cast malevolent charms on one's voice or cause one's memory to falter. Back of the opera stage lies the magic land of "never, never," where the fates may be propitiated by the eating of prunes and where bad luck is courted by whistling in one's dressing room.

Ask any singer you know what his or her pet superstition is.

"I haven't any superstitions," is the immediate answer, "but—"

"Yes, but?" prompts the inquirer hopefully.

And then some of the magic of "never, never" land is revealed. Perhaps one singer has found bad luck pursues her if some one whistles in her dressing room. This, by the way, is a belief which is shared by men and women of both the operatic and theatrical world and as a result of this conviction much useless noise back of the stage has been eliminated. And every one of us has learned how to help some one through a difficult part by holding the fists tightly clenched, thumbs in. Psychologists would tell us that it is the mental concentration for success that helps—but we know that the virtue lies in the tightly clenched fists.

Everyone is aware that fairies may not cross running water—but fairy tales may. So the greater number of current beliefs in good forces that must be propitiated and evil ones that may be routed come across water from the early days of Italian opera.

Every true Neapolitan will tell you that ingenuity and promptness are required to ward off the evil eye, for all manner of misfortunes may befall one who chances to have the gaze of a cross-eyed person rest upon them. There are several ways of warding this off. Holding up the first and fourth fingers with the others clasped in the palm will do the trick—Caruso can show you how. Or you might adopt Marguerita Sylva's plan. To counteract the influence of cross-eyed persons the Belgian prima donna hastily ties a knot into her handkerchief. Also she wears an opal as a luck bringer. Most persons consider Friday a bad day on which to begin ventures, but it is Mme. Sylva's lucky day—only she does not laugh on Friday, for, if one does, one is just as certain to weep on Sunday. In the picture she is seen consulting the calendar for a lucky date to begin her tour—for thirteen is a lucky, not a hoodoo number with this singer.

Not Afraid of a Ladder

Paul Althouse "has no superstitions." Certainly not. And to prove it he illustrated his indifference to the curse which is supposed to fall on the person who passes under a ladder. And after he had posed, the Metropolitan tenor stooped hastily to pick up a pin—for all the world knows that "to see a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck." Also Mr. Althouse allows no one to meddle with his wigs or make-up box. The latter, by the way, is supposed to be especially fatal to a new production. Evidently "Tosca" must have suffered from some such malign influence, for it is widely known as a "bad luck" opera. Geraldine Farrar once sprained her ankle when jumping from the ramparts, as the ill-fated "Tosca." On one occasion when Caruso was singing "Tosca" with Fremstad, some one inadvertently trode on the famous tenor's foot, so that he limped through the rest of the performance. One young tenor who was singing in "Tosca" with Mary Garden made a wrong entrance and nearly disrupted the scene. "Isolde" is another opera with a long chain of accidents and misfortune back of it.

Almost every one in the operatic world considers peacock feathers unlucky. But not so Geraldine Farrar. The great singer's favorite fan is a huge one of peacock feathers, which she carries to the consternation of those who still consider that the brilliantly-hued feathers are

harbingers of ill fortune. But then Miss Farrar's ancestry harks back to the land of good fairies, the land of nixies, pixies and leprechaun, so why should she fear the potency of peacock feathers?

Beware the Upper Shelf!

There are ever so many things that one may unwittingly do to court disaster. For example, Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch opened a closet door suddenly one day to find that her maid had, all unthinkingly, placed a pair of shoes on one

wears a gold chain, set with opals, an heirloom in the Gabrilowitsch family, which was given her in her honeymoon days. With this chain on, she feels immune from malign influences.

Lucien Muratore occasionally takes look at the future through the medium of the cards, and is careful to leave a building by the same door at which he entered it. This latter belief holds no terrors for Claudia Muzio, in fact, Miss Muzio feels that she is safeguarded from wicked magic when she

honored one. This belief happens to have very good physiological reasons, as the juices are just acid enough to clear the throat, but it is as a charm and not as a medicine that the prune is regarded with esteem in the operatic world. Frieda Hempel believes in the efficacy of prunes, but the charming soprano has a more powerful charm, for nothing can harm her so long as she fastens all her ornaments on the left side. So you will see Miss Hempel with her furs fastened on the left shoulder and her flowers worn on the left side, and when she is appearing in a new production or beginning a journey she invariably starts the journey toward the stage or railway station on her left foot.

Mabel Garrison has a lucky ring, a gift from her husband, without which she never appears on the stage. Also Miss Garrison knows that one leaves the door open to all sorts of unfortunate happenings if one does not put on the right stocking first, on arising in the morning.

No Brooches for Anna Case

Anna Case has no faith in the efficacy of donning an especial bit of apparel first, but she is firm in her determination not to accept a pin, knife or anything else sharp as a gift. It is bad luck, the lovely singer believes, and besides, it "cuts friendship." So, when any of her friends wish to present Miss Case with a bit of jewelry they have to avoid brooches. And you must not open an umbrella in Miss Case's home, nor lay a closed one on the bed; such procedure courts illness. On the other hand, she has no faith in the bad luck of peacock feathers, and to prove it is wearing a peacock gown this year that she says has brought all sorts of good luck with it—one might say, in its train.

But all other harbingers of good fortune pale into insignificance beside the good luck that follows touching a hunchback. Someone found a hunchback and took him back of the stage at the Metropolitan one evening when a new opera was being produced. No, I can't tell you the name of the opera for that would dispel the luck, but every singer who took part and who touched the hunchback has been going up and up the ladder ever since. If any hunchback wants attention bestowed on him that a king—or a carpenter or any other magnate—might envy let him frequent the stage door at the opera on the night of a new venture. Also, he may have the magic power that the librettist and the composer frequently lack.



Photo by Press Illustrating Service
Frieda Hempel Fastens Every Ornament on the Left Side as a Sure Spell Against Evil Fortune



Photo by Press Illustrating Service
Thirteen Is a Lucky Number for Mme. Marguerita Sylva

of the upper shelves. And nothing in the world is so unlucky as to have shoes placed higher than one's head. To court fortune always put them on the closet floor. Mme. Gabrilowitsch also believes that it's very bad luck to retrace your steps when you've forgotten something. As a talisman against all ill fortune she

wears her favorite flower, the daisy. In the picture she is shown with the daisy enchantment working in full force on the telephone. So you can readily see why it is that Miss Muzio never receives a disagreeable message.

The belief in the efficacy of prunes to ward off bad luck is an old and time-

INDEX TO FORCASTS OF CITIES

Albany, N. Y.	202	Fitchburg, Mass.	123, 124	Nashville, Tenn.	173	Seattle, Wash.	153, 155
Allentown, Pa.	182	Fort Dodge, Ia.	222	New Albany, Ind.	184	Selma, Ala.	180
Ann Arbor, Mich.	115	Fort Wayne, Ind.	128	Newark, N. J.	221	Sioux Falls, S. D.	203
Atlantic City, N. J.	204	Fort Worth, Texas	218	Newark, Ohio	122	Sioux City, Ia.	214
Austin, Texas	169, 170	Flint, Mich.	103	New Bedford, Mass.	195	Spartanburg, S. C.	144
Baltimore, Md.	171, 172	Grand Rapids, Mich.	158	New Haven, Conn.	133	Spokane, Wash.	204
Bangor, Me.	225	Harrisburg, Pa.	224	New Orleans, La.	226, 227	Springfield, Mass.	151
Bethlehem, Pa.	117	Hartford, Conn.	226	Oberlin, Ohio	174	Syracuse, N. Y.	183
Boise, Idaho	99	Houston, Texas	181, 182	Omaha, Neb.	119	St. Louis, Mo.	141, 142
Boston, Mass.	49, 53, 57, 63, 67	Indianapolis, Ind.	209	Ottawa, Can.	131	St. Paul, Minn.	179, 180
Brooklyn, N. Y.	43, 45	Jacksonville, Fla.	170	Philadelphia, Pa.	81, 85, 87	Tacoma, Wash.	139
Buffalo, N. Y.	89, 93	Kansas City, Mo.	232	Pittsburgh, Pa.	129, 131	Tampa, Fla.	173
Burlington, Vt.	111	Lancaster, Pa.	231	Portland, Me.	229	Terre Haute, Ind.	163
Canton, Ohio	223, 224	La Porte, Ind.	133	Portland, Ore.	159, 160	Toledo, Ohio	161
Charleston, S. C.	184	Lima, Ohio	101, 103	Providence, R. I.	175	Topeka, Kan.	188, 214
Charles City, Iowa	128	Lincoln, Neb.	191, 192	Radford, Va.	203	Toronto, Can.	214
Chattanooga, Tenn.	121	Little Rock, Ark.	223	Reading, Pa.	218	Troy, N. Y.	198
Chicago, Ill.	73, 75, 79	Lockport, N. Y.	160	Richmond, Va.	192	Tuscaloosa, Ala.	122
Cincinnati, Ohio	167	Los Angeles, Cal.	145, 146, 147, 148	Rochester, N. Y.	207	Utica, N. Y.	216
Cleveland, Ohio	97, 99	Louisville, Ky.	185, 188	Rockford, Ill.	135	Vancouver, B. C.	222
Colorado Springs, Colo.	202	Memphis, Tenn.	212	Saginaw, Mich.	155	Washington, D. C.	197, 198
Columbia, S. C.	128	Meriden, Conn.	167	Salina, Kan.	206	Waterbury, Conn.	227, 228
Columbus, Ohio	166, 167	Miami, Fla.	127	Salt Lake City, Utah	193, 195	Wichita, Kan.	200
Dallas, Texas	219	Milwaukee, Wis.	189, 191	San Antonio, Texas	143, 144	Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	229
Dayton, Ohio	168	Minneapolis, Minn.	215, 216	San Diego, Cal.	199	Winnipeg, Can.	205, 206
Denver, Colo.	109, 111	Montclair, N. J.	174	San Francisco, Cal.	149, 150, 151	Worcester, Mass.	203
Des Moines, Ia.	121	Montgomery, Ala.	220	San José, Cal.	213	Yonkers, N. Y.	220
Detroit, Mich.	105, 107			Savannah, Ga.	211	Youngstown, O.	222
Dubuque, Ia.	217			Schenectady, N. Y.	167	Zanesville, O.	217
Duluth, Minn.	137			Scranton, Pa.	210, 211, 229		
Erie, Pa.	122						
Evansville, Ind.	142						