

THE LURE OF LUCKY NUMBERS

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THE numbers craze is again sweeping the nation. It is now a two-billion-dollar-a-year business, and growing each day.

It is the "Wall Street Stockmarket" to the masses, and daily, millions of dollars are poured into the coffers of this

gigantic hoodlum enterprise, whose octopus-like fangs stretch over the entire country, scarcely skipping any town of consequence from Maine to California.

Anyone who has fallen victim to the fever of this form of lottery—which is over 200 years old—is busily engaged, morning, noon and night, in the brain-nagging task of trying to mentally invent the right digits that will make a lucky strike on some number banker's "wheel."

The business of getting-rich-quick through "guess-work" has become extremely profitable to some people; especially the numbers bankers, who, it can be said, rather ironically, thrive most handsomely off the ill-fated and broken "dreams" of their customers. For the "dream world" plays an important role in the numbers racket.

How did we come about NUMBERS?

Man, alone, among the animals, is able to count. To be

sure, every circus boasts of its educated horses and dogs, which are able not only to count, but even to add, multiply, subtract, and tell time. But, beware of such feats! The counting actually goes on within a man's head—some-where.

There really is nothing mysterious about Numbers. They are no more than arbitrary, but fixed, words and sym-
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THE LURE OF LUCKY NUMBERS

Influence Of Numbers In Life's Daily Plan

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bold whereby we are able to express certain of our sensory discriminations.

Our early ancestors, no doubt, made generous use of their fingers and toes in working their problems; they came reckon in fives, tens, and twenties. For the origin of counting we need not attribute to man any peculiar "faculty," nor a "number sense," nor even an "intricate mental process." Least of all need we assume that some divine Prometheus bestowed the gift upon helpless man.

NUMBERS, moreover, are a very ancient addition to this curious mixture that we call civilization. Man could count, at least a little, long before he could build a house, make himself clothing, tame an animal, or plant a garden. Even the most primitive people known are not ignorant of Numbers. Some of them, however, do not distinguish themselves in arithmetic.

The poor little Semang are unable to go beyond (3), three, and the Tasmanians possessed no higher numeral than (5), five. The Witotos, of South America, can make it to (20), twenty; and the Polar Eskimos, although their numerals run only to (5), five, by shifting here and there, are also able to reach (20), twenty.

Some primitive people, on the other hand, do very well with their figures. The Anius count to 790. (Some authorities say 803). The Crow Indians stop with 990; some say a thousand, for as the Indians say, "honest people have no use for larger numbers." Then there are the Todas who are able to count into thousands, the Iroquois who keep on into the hundreds of thousands, and the African Ganda whose decimal system enables them to run on well into the millions.

Man, however, loves to becloud issues. He too often abhors simplicity. Man is not one to take so simple and secular a thing as numbers and let it go at that. He searches for the underlying MYSTERY—and finds it, too.

In the number (7) seven, especially has he found mystery. Also in (9) nine, and (13) thirteen. Mankind has never been able to fully agree on the value of the number seven. In East Africa, seven is a very bad and unlucky number, hence the natives rebel at the Christian doctrine of resting on the

seventh day. The Hindus think otherwise.

Europeans themselves have not been consistent in their beliefs about seven. Many have believed that in a serious illness it is the (7th) seventh, (14th) fourteenth, and (21st) twenty-first days that are critical; and (70) seventy, is the fatal year for old men.

Strong, also, has been the superstition that there is grave danger to life in the attainment of the (63rd) sixty-third year.

But good or bad, there is power in the number seven, and the human race has known it for centuries. As early as the third millennium B. C., we find that seven was playing a prominent part in the myth and magic of Babylon. Virtue and perfection were ascribed to it.

In the Babylonian epic of creation one reads of the seven winds, seven spirits of storm, seven evil diseases, seven divisions of the underworld closed by seven doors, seven zones of the upper world and sky. Small wonder, then, that

it was they who originated the injunction to "remember the seventh day to keep it holy."

Many festivals of the Greeks began on the (7th) seventh day, but they also had high regard for the numbers (3) three, and (9) nine. Every seventh year was thought to determine a change in the nature and temperament of man.

In Greek ritual (3) three and (9) nine were favorite periods of time. Offerings to the dead were made on the (3rd) third, (9th) ninth, and (30th) thirtieth day after death. Certain festivals were continued for nine days and every third year Bacchic revels were held. Thus 3-9-30 were Greek favorites.

Twelve (12), rather than (7) seven, was regarded by the Greeks as a symbol of completeness, and this feeling persists to the present day in our division of the day and night into twelve hours each, the division of the year into twelve months, and the commercial use of the dozen.

Four, (4), also has had many worshippers. The American Indians, for example, had no feeling whatsoever about the numbers (3) three, (12) twelve or (30) thirty. The sacred number of the New World was four.

It was found expression in crosses and swastika-like symbols, and most ceremonial acts were repeat-

ed in sets of four. The virtue of four has also been observed in the Old World.

The Jaggas of East Africa, when praying to the sun or moon, split four times; in their communion service the chalice is raised four times before drinking; and the fourth month of the year they hold to be particularly lucky.

But for loyalty to the number four no people has surpassed the Hebrew. Innumerable references to four, and multiples of four, occur in the Bible. Four winds, four rivers, and four quarters of heaven. Ezekiel, in vision, saw "four living creatures... and everyone had four faces, and everyone had four wings."

Daniel had several visions. Once he saw "four winds of heaven... and four great beasts." Yes, four is a wonderful number.

There are many supposedly "Sacred Numbers." The Bahai religious cult uses (9) nine; the Banner of King David Order is 520; and the Mt. Gilead Fishermen's cross bears the numerals, 365.

(To be continued, Next Week)