

THE NECROMANCY OF NUMBERS AND LETTERS.

BY H. R. EVANS.

"Now this was the key in question: A hieroglyphic and numeral alphabet, expressing by characters and numbers a series of universal and absolute ideas; then a scale of ten numbers, multiplied by four symbols, and connected with twelve figures representing the twelve signs of the zodiac, plus the four genii of the cardinal points."—ELIPHAS LEVI: *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*.

I.

THERE is a philosophy of numbers and letters well worthy the lover of the bizarre and curious. The repository of this lore is the cabala. Read the works of Levi. But I do not propose to delve into this esoteric doctrine. I shall content myself with certain peculiar, fantastic and seemingly necromantic properties of numbers and letters. Scholars in all ages have pondered upon the magic of numbers. "Number," said Pythagoras, "is the essence of reality."

Certain numbers were regarded as sacred by the ancients. One, or the monad, is the symbol of *unity*—that "sublime center to which the chain of causes necessarily ascends." Hence One represents God, the creative principle, the Supreme Intelligence of the universe. Two, or the duad, is the symbol of antagonism; of good and evil; light and darkness. Three, or the triad, is the symbol of the Trinity of Deity, which in some form or other has figured in most of the religions. In that of Egypt we have Osiris, Isis and Horus; in India, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva; in that of Christianity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Seven was especially venerated. There were seven planets, presided over by seven archangels; seven colors in the rainbow; seven days in the week, etc. Ten includes all the other numbers. It is especially *seven* and *three*, and is called the number of perfection. Thirteen has always been regarded as

an unlucky number. This superstition probably arose from the fact that there were thirteen at the Last Supper of Christ.

Says a writer in the *Wizard*, London:

"Have you ever noticed that the number three possesses many peculiar properties worth looking into? It is no matter of surprise that the ancients came to look upon *three* with a sense of profound admiration.

"In a paper lately published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a few mysterious and unaccountable properties of the number are described. In themselves they are sufficient to surround the figure 3 with an atmosphere of superstition. To begin with, when any number is multiplied by three or any multiple of three, as six, nine, twelve, etc., the separate figures in the result, if added together, give a total of three, or a multiple of three, thus:

4 multiplied by 3 gives 12, and $1+2=3$
 5 multiplied by 3 gives 15, and $1+5=6$
 17 multiplied by 9 gives 153, and $1+5+3=9$
 22 multiplied by 12 gives 264, and $2+6+4=12$

"Peculiarities of this kind make three a remarkable digit. Even mathematicians admit so and it is not surprising that the number plays an important part in traditions everywhere, and more especially in Asiatic countries.

"It is a curious fact that the product of 9 invariably comes to 9, whatever the multiplier may be. Thus twice 9 is 18; add the digits together and 1 and 8 make 9. Three times 9 is 27, and 2 and 7 make 9. Four times 9 is 36; 3 and 6 make 9. Nine times 9 is 81, and 8 and 1 make 9. It is impossible to get away from this figure even if we take figures at random. Thus, 11 times 9 is 99; add 9 and 9, and we get 18, and 1 and 8 make 9. Nine times 339 is 3051; add the figures together and we get 9.

"Another curious power of 9 was discovered by an eminent mathematician, who hit on the extraordinary fact that if one takes any row of figures and reverses their order and subtracts the one from the other, the final result added together will always be 9.

Thus we take	2941
Reverse and subtract	1492
	1449

which, added together, makes 18, and 1 and 8 are 9.

“Here is another peculiarity. Write down any row of figures at hazard, subtract the sum of the digits and no matter what sum you start with, the product will always be 9.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Thus we take} \dots\dots\dots 7,549,132 \\
 \text{Subtract the sum} \dots\dots\dots 31 \\
 \hline
 7,549,101
 \end{array}$$

which added together, total 27, and 2 and 7 make 9.”

Very pretty and curious in its effect is this vagary of the nimble nine:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 0 \times 9 + 1 = I \\
 1 \times 9 + 2 = II \\
 12 \times 9 + 3 = III \\
 123 \times 9 + 4 = IIII \\
 1234 \times 9 + 5 = IIIII \\
 12345 \times 9 + 6 = IIIIII \\
 123456 \times 9 + 7 = IIIIIII \\
 1234567 \times 9 + 8 = IIIIIIII \\
 12345678 \times 9 + 9 = IIIIIIIII \\
 123456789 \times 9 + 10 = IIIIIIIIII
 \end{array}$$

The following is a curious puzzle: Take the number of your living brothers, double the amount, add to it three, multiply by five, add to it the number of your living sisters, multiply the result by ten, add the number of deaths of brothers and subtract 150 from the result. The right figure will be the number of deaths, the middle will be the number of living sisters, and the left will show the number of living brothers. Try this cabalistic puzzle, dear reader, and wonder at the Sphinx result.

Much wit, ingenuity, and patience have been expended upon occult combinations of numbers, especially in relation to historical events. In my scrap-book of newspaper clippings I find the following necromantic effusion, by a Dr. James P. Campbell, of New York City, printed in the *New York World* some twenty years ago, where it was offered as “Interesting, Curious and Astounding Calculations Concerning the Downfall of Louis Philippe, the Last King of the French, and Napoleon III, the Last French Emperor. The Really Wonderful Calculation Actually Verified by Time and Events which Have Occurred. Had this Royal King or Imperial Emperor only Married Older Women, the Downfall of Both Might Have Been Postponed Many Years, and Perhaps Averted Altogether.”

It reads thus:

Add to the date of either ascending the throne the date of his birth, or the date of his wife's birth, or the date of his marriage, the figures reached in either case, when grouped in the manner indicated below, predict the year of his downfall!

The House of Orleans Table is as follows:

Louis Philippe (last king of the French) was born in 1773
 Ascended the throne in 1830
 Married Marie Amelie in 1809
 Marie Amelie was born in 1782
 Louis Philippe fell (deposed, Revolution of '48) ... 1848

Taking 1830 (the year Louis Philippe ascended the throne of France) as the basis of the table, we find that by adding the date of the King's birth (the figures that comprise the year of birth being arranged one after the other, as in subjoined table), we arrive at the date of his fall, 1848.

Louis Philippe ascended the throne 1830

Date of Louis	}	1
Philippe's birth		7
		7
		3
		1848

The same result is also reached by adding the date of Marie Amelie's birth in the same manner:

Louis Philippe ascended the throne 1830

Date of Marie Amelie's	}	1
birth		7
		8
		2
		1848

Louis Philippe deposed .. 1848

And again by adding date of marriage the same fatal result is produced:

Louis Philippe ascended the throne 1830

Louis Philippe married	}	1
to Marie Amelie		8
		0
		9
		1848

Louis Philippe deposed .. 1848

Now for the Napoleonic Table:

Napoleon III was born in 1808
 Ascended the throne in 1853
 Married Eugénie in 1853
 Eugénie was born in 1826
 Napoleon fell (deposed after Sedan, Sept. 1, 1870) .. 1870

Take as basis of the Napoleonic Table:

Date of ascension of throne by Napoleon III 1853

Add date of	}	1
Emperor's birth		8
		0
		8

Fall of Napoleon III (deposed) 1870

The same result is also reached by adding the date of Eugénie's birth in the same manner:

Date of Napoleon's ascension to the throne 1853

Eugénie's	}	1
birth		8
		2
		6

Fall of Napoleon III ... 1870

And again by adding date of marriage the same fatal result is produced as in the case of Louis Philippe:

Date of ascension to throne 1853

Married	}	1
Eugénie		8
		5
		3

Fall of Napoleon III ... 1870

The following enigmatic passage in the Revelation (xiii. 18) has given birth to endless prophetic calculations: "Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six." Some have imagined that this mystical number refers to a king, some to a pope, and others to a kingdom. William Jones, in his *Credulities Past and Present* (London, 1880), says that "it is usual, in the attempts to unravel the mysterious meaning of the number of the beast, to suppose that every letter in the name of the beast was to be taken as a numeral, and that these numerals were to be added together, in order to make the amount to 666, the number required. . . . Among the many absurdities connected with the mystical numbers of 7 and 666, is that contained in a collection of broadsides in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, relating to Napoleon I. It is addressed to Mr. Urban: 'The following singular coincidences may furnish matter for reflection to the curious. It has been generally admitted that the French Empire, after passing under *seven* different forms of government (or *seven* heads), was divided into *ten* kingdoms in Europe (the *ten* horns of Daniel and John), and that, notwithstanding the various changes Europe has undergone, the number of kingdoms was generally about ten. It is

not a little surprising that the *Heads of the family of Napoleon*, who have effected such a change in the same empire *are exactly seven*, viz., Napoleon; Joseph, King of Italy; Louis, King of Holland; Jerome; Murat, Duke of Berg and Cleves; Cardinal Fesch; Beauharnais, the adopted son of Napoleon. And also, that the *members of the New Federation are just ten*, viz., Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Darmstadt, Nassau, Ysembourg, Hohenzollern, Aremberg, Solm, Leyerf.

"It is also remarkable that in the man's name, Napoleon Buona- parte, there are precisely three times six letters; Napole (6), on Buon (6), Aparte (6)—666. And in his name is contained the name given by John to the king of the locusts, who is called *Apoleon*, or the Destroyer."

Count Leo Tolstoy, in *War and Peace*, makes one of his characters interpret the prophecy as follows: "The letters of the French alphabet when disposed in accordance with the Hebrew enumeration, which gives the first nine letters the value of units, and the rest that of tens, have the following significance:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	k	l	m	n	o	p	q
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	30	40	50	60	70

r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150	160

"If the words *l'Empereur Napoleon* are written letter for letter, with this cypher, the result is that the sum of these letters amounts to six hundred and sixty-six, and that therefore Napoleon is the beast described in the Apocalypse. Moreover, if you apply to this same alphabetic cypher the words *Quarante-deux*, that is the time—forty-two months—during which authority was given to the beast to speak great things and blaspheme; the sum of these letters according to the same scheme will amount to six hundred and sixty-six—whence it results that Napoleon's power was to be allowed to last until the year 1812, when he would have reached the age of forty-two."

The Magic Opera Glass is an extraordinary illusion performed with cards, and based upon an arithmetical combination of great ingenuity. Combined with sleight-of-hand, it can be made still more effective, as I have frequently demonstrated in drawing-room entertainments. Begin by preparing a table of figures as follows:

1,131	10,132	19,133
2,231	11,232	20,233
3,331	12,332	21,333
4,121	13,122	22,123
5,221	14,222	23,223
6,321	15,322	24,323
7,111	16,112	25,113
8,211	17,212	26,213
9,311	18,312	27,313

This magical table you may fix in an opera-glass, or the crown of your hat, as occasion may serve. Take a pack of cards, consisting of twenty-seven only, and give them to a person; desire him to fix on any one, then shuffle and return the pack to you. Place the twenty-seven cards in three heaps, by laying down one alternately on each heap; but before you put each card down, show it to the person, without seeing it yourself. When the three equal heaps are completed, ask him at what number from twenty-seven he will have his card appear, and in which heap it then is. Now look at your table, and if the first of three numbers which stand against that number it is to appear at be one, put that heap *at top*; if the number be two, put it in the middle, and if three, put it at the bottom. Divide the cards into three heaps in the same manner a second and a third time, and his card will be at the number he chose. For the sake of making the elucidation clear, we give an example: Suppose it is desired that the card shall be the twentieth from the top, and the first time of making the heaps you are told it is in the third heap. Look through your opera-glass at the magic table, and see that the first figure against the number twenty is two. You therefore put that heap in the middle of the pack. The second and third times you in like manner put the heap in which you are told it is at the bottom, the succeeding numbers both being three. Now, laying the cards down one by one, the twentieth card will be that fixed on. You may, of course, in like manner show the person the card without asking at what number it shall appear, by fixing on any number yourself. By the same table a variety of tricks equally surprising can be performed, only requiring the exercise of a little ingenuity.

The adept after gathering up the cards after the last deal can give them a false shuffle, thereby deceiving the knowing spectator who may suspect some arithmetical combination. I seldom produce the card at a required number, but discover it in other ways, for

example, bringing it to light in some gentleman's pocket, or between locked slates, etc. I call it the Egyptian Trick, and excuse the three dealings of the cards on the ground that *three* is the mystical number, sacred to Osiris, Isis and Horus; therefore I deal *three* times as an offering to the gods. The idea of planetary influences might be used as effective patter, the cards being supposedly dealt three times in honor of the sun, moon, and Mars, etc.

It is really surprising what excellent effects can be secured through simple means. But after all it is the clever and convincing patter that makes a trick.

II.

The mathematical curios known as "Magic Squares" have exercised the minds of many learned men. Benjamin Franklin amused his leisure hours constructing them. Truly was he the many-sided Franklin. Magic squares is a term applied to square arrays of numbers possessing the property that the sums of the various columns and rows, and of the two diagonals are equal. A magic square is represented in Albert Dürer's copper plate, entitled *Melancholia*, engraved in 1514. These mathematical diagrams were known to the ancient Egyptians, from whose priests Pythagoras learned many things. The Arab astrologers claimed for them supernatural powers, and recommended them as amulets and talismans. Mr. Andrews, in his notable work on *Magic Squares*, has gone into the subject in a masterly manner. I shall but touch upon it here, as an introduction to the "word squares" and other combinations.

Among the Moors 78 is a mystic number. The following is a magic square to which this number is the key:

40	10	20	8
7	21	9	41
12	42	6	18
19	5	43	11

The number 78 can be arrived at in twenty-three different combinations—namely, ten rows, columns, or diagonals; four corner squares of four cells; one central square of four cells; the four corner cells; two sets of corresponding diagonal cells next to the

corners; and two sets of central cells on the top and bottom rows, and on the outside columns.

These are two curious magic squares found on an antique gong, at Caius College, Cambridge, England:

6	13	8
11	9	7
10	5	12

7	14	9
12	20	8
11	6	13

In the one nine numbers are so arranged that they count up to 27 in every direction; and in the other the outer rows total 30, while the central rows and diagonals make 40.

We have not only magic squares of numbers but words. Considerable skill has been displayed in the formation of the latter. The puzzle columns of magazines are full of word squares, some of great ingenuity. The *squarest* is said to be the following, of which there are four distinct readings of each word:

D E L F
E V I L
L I V E
F L E D

The mathematical problem of "squaring the circle" may be accomplished with great ease, as follows:

C I R C L E
I N U R E S
R U L E S T
C R E A S E
L E S S E E
E S T E E M

A masterpiece is this, consisting of words of seven letters:

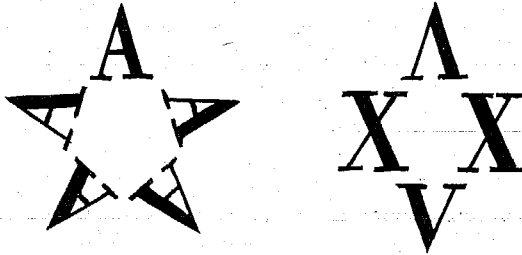
P A L A T E D
A N E M O N E
L E V A N T S
A M A S S E S
T O N S U R E
E N T E R E R
D E S S E R T

While on the subject of Palindromes, let me give a few other examples. A Latin one: "*Roma, ibi tibi sedes, ibi tibi amor,*" which may be translated, "At Rome you live, at Rome you love." And here we have fine English ones: "Egad, a base tone denotes a bad age"; "No, it is opposed, art sees trades opposition"; and "Repel evil as a live leper." All of these sentences read backwards as well as forwards.

Divination by *words or characters* is very ancient indeed. The Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks and Romans were greatly addicted to the practice. It descended to the Christians. The Jews had many superstitions regarding the name of Deity. The correct pronunciation of the Ineffable Name was said to make the earth tremble and the very angels of Heaven to quake with fear. In the Middle Ages the Jewish cabalists discovered "a world of mystery in the letters of the sacred text." Under their inspiration, the Bible became an esoteric work very different in character from the ordinary literal treatise of the masses. The Gnostics carried talismans engraved upon rings and gems. A famous amulet among them was the word "Abraxas." But all talismans pale into insignificance beside the mystical word "Abracadabra," which Baronius, in his *Annals* (An. 120), attributes to Serenus, a physician of the third century, a follower of the heretic Basilides. It hath charms to ward off demoniacal influences, to heal physical ailments, etc. Eliphas Levi discourses upon it as follows: "The magic triangle of pagan theosophists was the celebrated Abracadabra, to which they attributed extraordinary virtues, and represented as follows:

ABRACADABRA
 ABRACADABR
 ABRACADAB
 ABRACADA
 ABRACAD
 ABRACA
 ABRAC
 ABRA
 ABR
 AB
 A

"This combination of letters is a key of the pentagram. The initial A is repeated five and reproduced thirty times, thus giving the elements of the two following figures:



“The isolated A represents the unity of the first principle, otherwise, the intellectual or active, agent. A united to B represents the fertilization of the duad by the monad. R is the sign of the triad, because it represents the progeny which results from the union of the two principles. The number 11, which is that of the letters of the word, combines the unity of the initiate with the denary of Pythagoras, and the number 66, the added total of all the letters, cabalistically forms the number 12, which is the square of the circle. We may remark, in passing, that the author of the Apocalypse, that key of the Christian cabala, composed the number of the beast, that is to say, of idolatry, by adding a 6 to the double senary of ABRA-CADABRA, which gives 18 cabalistically, the number attributed in the Tasot to the hieroglyphic sign of night and of the profane—the moon, together with the towers, dog, wolf and crab—a mysterious and obscure number, the cabalistic key of which is 9, the number of initiation. On this subject the sacred Cabalist says expressly: ‘He that hath understanding (that is, the key of cabalistic numbers) let him count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and the number of him is 666.’ It is, in fact, the decade of Pythagoras multiplied by itself and added to the sum of the triangular pantacle of Abracadabra; it is thus the sum of all magic of the ancient world, the entire program of human genius of the Gospel sought to absorb or transplant.”

Levi holds, as do the great majority of occultists, that St. John was a cabalist and his Apocalypse a treatise on the esoteric doctrine of the cabala. I am inclined to the same opinion.

The mystical power attributed to letters and words opens up an interesting field of research to the student of superstitions.