

MY LITTLE DICKIE.

My little Dickie in his cage,
Doth oft my care and grief assuage;
I love to listen to his song,
He warbles on the whole day long.

I give him water, seed and sand,
And oftentimes a reprimand;
For when his little crop he fills,
He volleys out such lively trills.

With many little modulations,
And merry little variations,
He makes such noise, the little elf,
That I can hardly hear myself.

When I have any friends about
To make them hear—I have to shout
With all my might—and hardly then
Can hear one sentence out of ten.

I wish at times that he were dead,
I feel like pulling off his head;
But no—I know that pretty Dick
Is worthy of a better trick.

The little fellow knows no sorrow,
He worries not about to-morrow,
He dreads not want—he craves not riches,
And thus a noble lesson teaches.

So little Dickie in his cage,
Doth teach the simpleton and sage,
He teaches me—now does he not?
To be contented with my lot.

Chatham, Ont.

A. MACFIE.

"SEVEN."

Considered in the light of its peculiar mathematical properties the number nine has from time to time attracted much attention. Students of the curious have devoted both labor and leisure to demonstrating how persistently the highest single character of our numeration repeats itself in calculations into which it has once been allowed to enter. Its quality of self-reproduction, if one may be allowed the term, is simply astonishing, and as a potent factor in the first four rules of arithmetic it plays a very remarkable role. The number three has also peculiar mathematical properties, though in a lesser degree than its square. There is a number, however, which, while not so peculiar in processes of calculation, is possessed of a strange interest, because of the attributes with which time-honored institutions have invested it, and put in forms and dogmas which we are accustomed to consider sacred—to say nothing of its uncanny attributes. It would be impossible in the limited space of a newspaper article to give all that is curious concerning the number seven, but after gaining information from a variety of sources we put the eclectic faculty to work, and from an abundance of notes, select the following for presentation to the readers of the NEWS. Want of space too, precludes any investigation into the origin of the opinions and forms which may seem to be governed by this numeral; but what the writer presents in brief, the reader may find it a grateful study to pursue in extenso.

A SACRED NUMBER.

To begin with, the number seven was by the Jews of old looked upon as being in a measure a sacred number. The seventh day was the Sabbath, and that of course was venerated as the day of rest; but besides that there was the week or period of seven years, during the last of which the earth was unworked, left in a state of repose. Then, too, there was the time of seven weeks of seven years or forty-nine years, at the expiration of which came the great year of Jubilee. When visited by those wonderful visions which are incorporated in the Apocalypse, the exile of Patmos could not fail to have noticed, as we do now, the singular repetition of the number seven in the various phases of the Revelation. There were the seven churches to which messages were sent, the seven golden candlesticks with their seven branches, the seven ever-burning lamps, while in the figurative description of the last day, St. John is reported to have heard seven trumpets sounded, to have seen the seven vials of wrath poured out, the seven stars falling from heaven, to have watched the breaking of the seven seals, and to have flown in spirit with the seven executing angels. In the days when holocausts were looked upon as a pertinent form of religion, the number seven was not overlooked. Thus Job's friends offered a sacrifice of seven calves and seven heifers. David at the time of the translation of the ark of the covenant immolated the same number of victims; and Abraham offered a sacrifice of seven sheep when making an alliance with Prince Abimelech, and similar instances might be multiplied without end. By-the-by, the chief Israelitish feasts of Passover and Pentecost are separated by an interval of seven weeks.

SEVEN IN THE NEW LAW.

When the slaying of animals was no longer considered essential and a gentler doctrine was being preached, the number seven was not discarded. It will be remembered that St. Peter asked the Great Master if he must forgive an offence seven times committed, and the answer was that pardon should be extended seventy times seven. In the ceremonies that belong to the Christian religion the number seven still holds its place. The Roman Catholics and Greeks have seven sacraments—Baptism, eucharist, confirmation, penance, holy-orders, matrimony and extreme-unction. Again there are seven deadly sins—murder, lust, covetousness, gluttony, pride, envy and idleness. The devotional character of the number is still further increased by there being seven penitential

psalms and the seven dolours of the Virgin Mary, the first being the particular expression of David's contrition and the latter being a festival of the Roman Catholic church instituted by Pope Benedict XIII. in 1725 and celebrated on the Friday preceding Palm Sunday. The seven dolours are (1) the prediction of Simeon, Luke ii, 34; (2) the flight into Egypt; (3) the loss of Jesus in Jerusalem; (4) the spectacle of Jesus bearing the cross towards Calvary; (5) the sight of Jesus upon the cross; (6) the piercing of his side with a spear; (7) his burial. Before leaving the sacred character of the number it will be well to add that the first Greek copy of the Old Testament is said to be a translation from the Hebrew made by the order of Ptolemy by several interpreters about 270 B. C.; that the Sanhedrim, the great council of the Jews, consisted of seventy members; that the priests circled the walls of devoted Jericho seven times; that a seven-fold vengeance was threatened to the slayer of Cain; and that it was seven days before the flood when Noah filled his ark.

"With every beast, and bird and insect small,
In sevens and pairs."

THE REALM OF FANCY.

In the pages of fancy, seven occupies an important place. There were (and may still be) seven heavens through which Mahomet passed, while other romancers (including, strange as it may seem, Victorien Sardou among their number) have located a seventh heaven in Saturn. Who, too, has not heard of the Seven Champions of Christendom—St. George of England, St. Denis of France, St. James of Spain, St. Anthony of Italy, St. Andrew of Scotland, St. Patrick of Ireland, and St. David of Wales? "Noise enough to awaken the Seven Sleepers," is an expression often made use of in reference to a great tumult, but the remark is more common than a knowledge of its origin. Very briefly the story is this: It is a Christian legend originating in the Orient, brought to Europe by Gregory of Tours and often reproduced by the middle age writers. When Decius was king of Ephesus and persecuting the Christians, seven young men of that city, to escape the murderous king, took refuge in a cave, and being discovered, they were, by order of the tyrant, walled in and left to perish of hunger. Their names were Melchus, Maximian, Denys, John, Serapion, Constantine and Martiuan. Three hundred and seventy-two years afterwards, when the good Theodosius was emperor, an Ephesian started in to make a stable out of the cave, and to do this first tore down the wall. The noise of the workmen aroused the youths, who had been all this time miraculously kept asleep, and one of their number was sent into the city to purchase bread. He found the cross exhibited in public where but yesterday its private possession had meant death. He recognized no place nor person, and on presenting his coin, an *obolus* of a date obsolete for centuries, he was looked upon with suspicion, and finally taken before the authorities. They did not believe his story, but being conducted to the other six young men were found alive and freshly awakened from their long sleep. The details bear many points of resemblance to Washington Irving's story of "Rip Van Winkle."

THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

The Koran relates the story of the Seven Sleepers; the Persians annually celebrate their feast; the spot is still shown at Ephesus where the fabled miracle took place, and we believe the Roman Catholic church has consecrated a day to their memory. Scarcely less mythical, perhaps, are the Seven Sages, who figure in an old English metrical work under the title of the "Seven Wise Masters," and written of in Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German and Spanish. The story is probably of Indian, that is, of Hindoo origin, as it is founded on the truly Oriental idea of Seven Sages telling an emperor a new story every night in order to distract his attention from a contemplated execution of his son. These Seven Sages are not to be confounded with the Seven Wise Men of Greece, who lived about 548 B. C., and who devoted themselves to the cultivation of practical wisdom. They were Colon, Thales, Pittacus, Bias, Chilon, Cleobulus and Perlander of Corinth. They were the authors of the celebrated mottoes inscribed in the Delphian temple, which, as the crystallization of seven lives' experience, are worth repeating, if not remembering. The motto of Solon was, "Know thyself;" that of Thales, "Suretyship is the precursor of ruin;" that of Pittacus was "Know thy opportunity;" of Bias, "Most men are bad;" of Chilon, "Consider the end;" of Cleobulus, "Avoid excess;" and of Perlander, "Nothing is impossible to industry." Yet, another remarkable septet was that composed of the Seven Chiefs of War who, according to the Greek playwrights, lived in the thirteenth century before our era—and who were named Polynice, Adrasta, Tyde, Capaneus, Amphiarus, Hippomedon and Parthenone. Six of these owners of high-sounding names were Argian princes, who, under the leadership of Polynice, laid siege to the city of Thebes where one Etocles had taken refuge. Aeschylus wrote a tragedy on the famous siege, which he entitled "The Seven Chiefs Before Thebes," played in Athens 462 B. C., and which was extremely martial in style that at its conclusion the people rushed out of the theatre clamoring for war. In the more reliable annals of comparatively modern campaigns the number seven also takes its place. There was, for instance, the seven years' war, carried on in Germany from

1756 to 1763, in which the contending party were Prussia, with England as its ally, against Austria, Russia, France and Sweden. The war was a most disastrous one, devastated Germany, cost Europe blood and gold without end, and closed without yielding material advantages to any party except Prussia, which annexed Silesia and thenceforward took rank as one of the five great European powers. Even in the few blood-stained pages of American history a ruddy seven is seen. The time was short, but in those seven days' battles which were fought near the Chickahominy from June 25 to July 1, 1862, Joe Hooker and Stonewall Jackson forced the fighting, there fell no less than 20,000 Union soldiers.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD.

This collection of curious facts relating to seven would be looked upon as curiously incomplete without reference to the Seven Wonders of the World. These very remarkable objects, some of which still remain, have been variously enumerated, but the following classification is the one most generally received: (1) The Pyramids of Egypt, (2) The Pharos of Alexandria, (3) The walls and hanging gardens of Babylon, (4) The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, (5) The statue of the Olympian Jupiter, (6) The Mausoleum of Artemisia, (7) The Colossus at Rhodes. Geography furnishes its quota to this compilation, with Rome, the city of the Seven Hills, though several of the eminences have long disappeared; the Seven Capes of Algeria; the Seven Brothers, as many mountains in the north of Africa; the Seven Islands constituting the Ionic Republic; the other Seven Islands a small group in the English Channel; the Seven lakes, a remarkable plateau in the department of L'Isere, France; the Seven seas, the old name for the embouchure of the River Po; the Seven mountains, a strange basaltic group on the Rhine, which the tourist may see between Bonn and Remagen, whilst at home we have the Seven fountains of Virginia, the seven islands in Georgia, the seven leagues in Texas, the seven stars in Pennsylvania and the seven valleys of Tennessee. Nor should we forget the now almost forgotten tradition of the island of the seven cities, which was the subject of a popular tradition in the time of Columbus. The mysterious island lies somewhere in mid-ocean, abounds in gold and is crowned with seven magnificent cities, founded long since by seven Spanish bishops, driven from their sees to take the seas by the Paynim. The island has been visited at different times by chance navigators, none of whom have, however, been permitted to leave the shore, for the seven-cities island came to be part of that country from whose bourn no traveller returns. Apropos of Seven stars: There is a group that belongs to a less prosaic region than that of the Pennsylvania town. When the seven daughters of Atlas, pursued by Orion, were, in accordance with the maidens' prayer to Jupiter, changed into doves, the transformation did not end there. On their death they were changed into stars and fixed in the constellation of Taurus, where they twinkle each night as the Pleiades. To be sure, one of them is not visible to human eyes, but the lost Pleiad in furnishing a subject for artists and poets, has made the fable all the more poetic and tender. One of the best realizations of the mythical nymph errant is the statue in Mrs. Shillaber's possession which was exhibited in public a short time ago.

THE PLEIADES.

There are also two other Pleiades—the word meaning a group or reunion of seven celebrated persons—the pleiad of Alexandria instituted by Ptolemy Philadelphus and composed of the seven contemporary poets, Callimachus, Apollonius, Aratus, Homer the younger, Lycophron, Nicander and Theocritus; the second, the literary pleiad of Charlemagne, composed of Alguin, Augilbert, Adelard, Riculfe, Varnefrid, Charlemagne himself, and one other whose name has been forgotten. Other celebrated groups of seven are the seven electors or seven princes who formerly elected the emperor of Germany, and the Septemvir, a society of seven Romish priests charged with the ordering of the banquets to the gods or at the public festivals.

In literature the number seven has left its mark. There are, for example, Tasso's poem called "The Seven Days;" two plays produced on the French stage one after the other entitled "The Seven Castles of the Devil," and "The Seven Daughters of Satan," (the last, by the way, presented in California last Christmas under the title of "The Seven Sisters"); a well-known drama by Mallefille, called "The Seven Children of Lara," and Wordsworth's poem "We Are Seven."

STRAY FACTS ABOUT SEVEN.

As a last paragraph of odd information connected with this remarkable number, we will group together the stray facts which cannot be placed under any particular head. In South America there is what is known as the seven-day sickness, an epileptic disease which attacks children the seventh day after they are born. Among the religionists of North America are the Seventh-day Baptists, a sect of sabbatarians numbering about 7,000. One of the principal feasts of ancient Greece was the Septeria, given at Delphos every seven years. It was to the discovery of the accord of the seventh in the fourteenth century that we owe the fullness of modern harmony, and which marks the difference between ours and ancient music. The French have cause to remember the old-time Seventh month, for it was in September, 1792, that the

massacres of the first revolution took place, while by a sort of historical balance it was in September, 1870, that the French empire foundered. An event in Spanish history was the issuance by Alphonso the Wise in 1266 of Las Siete Partidas, a most curious compilation of instruction for judges. Juvenile readers will call to mind the Seven League Boots, although they may not so readily remember the Seven Sciences—grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Finally, our bodies are supposed to undergo a complete change of tissue every seven years and we have seventy years to live.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON ON SEVEN.

In a copy of the curious *Almanach Prophetique* for the year 1866, which has been placed in our hands, we find a paragraph which some patient Frenchman has constructed to show the truly remarkable influence which the number seven had upon the life of President Johnson. His name, says the writer in the *Almanach*, has seven letters; at fourteen years of age (or twice seven) he was apprenticed to a tailor, and worked with the needle for seven years, being twenty-one (three times seven) when he gave up his trade. In 1828 (four times seven) he was named alderman of the town of Greenville; in 1835 (five times seven) he was appointed a member of the legislative house of Tennessee; in 1842 (six times seven) and at the age of 35 (five times seven) he was sent to congress, entering the senate at the age of 49 (seven times seven). On the seventh of March, 1862, he was elected military governor of Tennessee, and in 1864, being then 56 (eight times seven) he was nominated President of the United States.

HEARTH AND HOME.

RIGHTEOUSNESS.—Plato had so great and true an idea of perfect righteousness, and was so thoroughly acquainted with the corruption of mankind, that he makes it appear that if a man, perfectly righteous, should come upon earth, he would find so much opposition in the world, that he would be imprisoned, reviled, scourged, and in fine crucified by such, who, though they were extremely wicked, would yet pass for righteous men.

DUTY.—Duty cannot be confined to certain times or certain places, and shut out from others. It is as present in our business as in our homes, as potent in our lightest amusements as in our gravest endeavours. Let us not cramp its power or limit its range, still less exclude it from any intellectual region, but rather strive to trace it through all that comes to us, and search for its lessons in everything we learn. Just as the sun reveals afresh to us each morning the work that is waiting for our hands, so the light of new truth will ever reveal to the faithful seeker the new responsibilities and duties with which he is charged.

FRIENDSHIP.—If friendship be delightful; if it be, above all, delightful to enjoy the continued friendship of those who are endeared to us by the intimacy of many years, who can discourse with us of the frolics of the school, of the adventures and studies of the college, of the years when we first ranked ourselves with men in the free society of the world; how delightful must be the friendship of those who, accompanying us through all this long period, with a closer union than any casual friend, can go still farther back, from the school to the very nursery which witnessed our common pastimes; who had an interest in every event that has related to us, and in every person that has excited our love or our hatred; who have honoured with us those to whom we have paid every filial honour in life, and wept with us over those whose death has been to us the most lasting sorrow of our heart! Such, in its wide, unbroken sympathy, is the friendship of brothers, considered even as friendship only; and how many circumstances of additional interest does this union receive from the common relationship to those whom we owe an acceptable service, in extending our affection to those whom they love! Every dissension of man with man excites in us a feeling of painful incongruity. But we feel a peculiar melancholy in the discord of those whom one roof has continued to shelter during life, and whose dust is afterwards to be mingled under a single stone.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

Solutions to Problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. W. S., Montreal.—Papers, &c., to hand. Many thanks.
Student, Montreal.—Solution received of Problem No. 279. Correct.
E. D. W., Sherbrooke, P. Q.—Solutions received of Problem No. 279. Correct.
E. H., Montreal.—The position is incorrect.

We have received the June number of the *Chessplayer's Chronicle*, and we find it, as usual, replete with chess news from all parts of the world where chess amateurs abound—London, Eng., Italy, Austria, Scandinavia, America, Australia, &c. The true lover of the checkered board will be gratified to find that the pursuit from which he derives so much gratification is spreading in every direction, and this will lead to the anticipation that ultimately it will become the favourite pastime of all classes of society. No one will deny that a great change in this respect has taken place within the last twenty-five years. The present number, also, contains a useful selection of games, among which are two from the match between Zukertort and Rosenthal, besides a goodly number of