LOTTERIES OF EUROPE

The Way French and Italian State Drawings Are Handled.

PRIZES PICKED IN PUBLIC.

Officials Who Preside at the Selection of the Lucky Numbers—The Difference Between the French Bond Scheme and the Italian Lotto.

A year or two ago a Manchester publican, although he heard that a city of Paris bond which he possessed had won £2,000, was so skeptical of the genuineness of French government lotteries that he refused to believe he could receive the money, even when a check for the amount came to hand. At last he was persuaded to cash the check. Accompanied by a few friends, who were going to get the money "or know why," he set out for Paris. They invaded the Hotel de Ville and came away gaping with astonishment because the check was cashed the moment he handed it in.

The French state lotteries are worked on a system which, while putting fortunes into the pockets of lucky individuals, enables the country to raise loans when required. Each stock or bond, besides earning a small rate of interest, entitles the holder to participate in a series of drawings for prizes, ranging in value from a sovereign to several thousand pounds. The bonds range from 16 shillings to £60 and, being made payable to bearer, can be turned into ready money very easily.

The drawings for prizes must, according to law, take place in public, and no one, whether a bondholder or not, can be refused admittance to the Credit Foncier, where the drawing takes place. At every drawing the governor of the bank and other high officers are present, whose duty it is to superintend the whole proceedings. At the commencement one of them reads out a list of big prizes to be drawn for, and also states the number of bonds which are to be redeemed at par.

Each number is drawn by a boy from a revolving wheel or drum, varying in height from four to eight feet, according to the number of persons participating in the lottery. This boy is usually obtained from a neighboring orphanage or similar institution, and the sum of 10 francs is placed to his credit in his savings bank book as payment for his services. Before inserting his hand in the aperture the boy faces the audience with his hand in the air, fingers outspread, and his arm bare to the elbow, to show that he is concealing nothing before making the draw.

As he draws each little scroll from the wheel of fortune the presiding officer takes off the copper covering and reads out the lucky number, afterward passing it round to members of the press for verification. And so the drawing goes on until the whole of the prize winning numbers have been drawn. After this the drawing of those bonds which are to be repaid at par takes place, the boy drawing them from the wheel in handfuls and emptying them into a crystal bowl. From the latter they are taken, sorted out, counted and entered by clerks.

The Italian state lottery, or lotto, as it is called, is conducted on somewhat different lines. Each week, at eight of the principal cities in Italy, five numbers are publicly drawn from the numbers one to ninety. People have in the meantime been busy taking tickets for the lotto, on which are specified the numbers on which they are playing. If any two numbers selected by a player appear among the five drawn, he receives fifty-two and a half times his stake; if three numbers appear, 4,250 times his stake, and if four numbers, 60,000 times his stake. The lowest stake is 12 centesimi, equal to about 1 penny of our coinage.

Seeing, however, that there are 4,005 combinations of two in ninety numbers, 117,480 combinations of three and no fewer than 2,555,190 combinations of four, it is obvious that the odds are very heavy against winning. In spite of this, however, the lottery is very popular, as may be judged from the fact that on an average the Italian government draws £2,500,000 every year from this source.

In their selection of numbers the Italian gamblers are guided to a very great extent by dreams and events, for no people are more superstitious. Dream books are largely published and bought, while any untoward event is looked upon as furnishing a clew to lucky numbers.

Some time ago, for instance, a serious accident occurred at Genoa. Two horses bolted, fell headlong from an elevated piazza into a street below and were killed, a lamp post being upset in their fall. Immediately those who witnessed the tragedy decided to play the following numbers: Two (number of the horses), five (equivalent of horse), ninety (meaning accident) and sixteen and forty (the number painted on the lamp post which was upset). By a curious fluke every one of the numbers came out, and over 6,000,000 lira—£252,000—was won.

In Austria and Germany, too, government lotteries are flourishing institutions. What is known as the Royal Prussian lottery has monthly drawings, and the number of tickets disposed of for each event is close on 250,000. Owing to their high price, however, these are seldom held in their integrity, and tickets for small fractions of each are issued. Never during a whole century has the holder of an undivided ticket won the great stake, though thousands have won fortunes by being possessors of shares of winning numbers.—London Tit-Bits.

AN OPTICAL DELUSION.

The Story of a Martinet Colonel, a Captain and a Sword.

The colonel, a rigid martinet, is sitting at the window of his room when, looking out, he sees a captain crossing the barrack yard toward the gate. Looking at him closely, he is shocked to observe that, the rules and regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, the captain does not carry a sword.

"Captain!" he calls from the window. "Hi, captain, step up to my room for a moment, will you?"

The captain obeys promptly, borrows a sword of the officer of the guard, the guardroom being at the foot of the stairs, and presents himself to the colonel in irreproachable dress.

The colonel is somewhat surprised to see the sword in its place and, having to invent some pretext for calling his subordinate back, says, with some confusion: "Beg your pardon, captain, but really I've forgotten what it was I wanted to speak to you about. However, it can't have been very important. It'll keep. Good morning."

The captain salutes, departs, returns the sword to its owner and is making off across the barrack yard, where he again comes within range of the colonel's vision.

The colonel rubs his eyes, stares, says softly to himself: "How in thunder is this? He hasn't a sword to his waist!" then calls aloud: "Captain! Ho, captain! One moment, please!"

The captain returns, borrows the sword again, mounts the stairs and enters the colonel's presence. His commanding officer stares at him intently. He has a sword; he sees it; he hears it clank.

"Captain," he stammers, growing very hot, "it's ridiculous, you know, but—ha! ha!—I'd just remembered what I wanted to say to you, and now—ha! ha!—it's gone out of my head again! Funny, isn't it? Ha, ha, ha! Losing my memory. Never mind. I'll think of it and write you. Good morning."

The captain salutes, departs, returns the sword to its owner and makes for the gate. As he crosses the barrack yard the colonel calls his wife to his side and says, "See that officer out there?"

"Yes."

"Has he got a sword on?"

The colonel's wife adjusts her eyeglass upon him, scans him keenly and says, "He hasn't a taste of a sword."

The colonel: "That's just where you fool yourself. Yes, he has."—London Graphic.

THE PICTURE CRITIC.

If He Doesn't "Quite Like the Face," That Settles It.

Some liberal minded people will admit to you that a slight preliminary training is required before a serious attempt is made to criticise music, but almost anybody with eyes is willing to embark buoyantly on the job of tearing a picture to pieces. This seems to be because the picture will stand without hitching. Moreover, it will patiently submit to all the verbal harpoons you find time and strength to throw, and the average friendly critic will find sufficient of both to make even a reasonably good painting look like a cross between a fourteenth century St. Sebastian and a hedgehog.

Music, on the contrary, is both prolonged and evanescent, and by the time the composition is finished and the applause has quieted down the critic has forgotten most of the good things he intended to say to its detriment.

But the picture stays, irritating you by its mere passive endurance to the point where after awhile you feel that if you don't say something to destroy its smug self complacency it will go on thinking that it's all right.

So then you begin to work over it, and you say: "Yes, I see now. It looked pretty good at first, but that arm is hopelessly bad, and I don't quite like the face." There's nothing to be done if you don't "quite like the face;" there's no answer to that proposition. It's a clincher. Rembrandt himself would have wilted and would probably have given up trying to be an "old master."—Everybody's.

The Word "Ale."

What could be more English than the word ale? It carries us back to the banquets of our dead ancestors in Walhalla, and some of its compounds open up vistas into that old England which is fast disappearing, becoming a tale that is told, obsolete itself. Such are alebush, a tavern sign; ale conner, "an officer appointed in every court leet and sworn to look to the assize and goodness of bread, ale and beer." Alecost, the name of a kind of tansy used to flavor the rustic's home brewed, has a good old English look. Yet it bears witness to the mongrel nature of the speech of this mongrel nation, cost being from the Greek kostos, a savory herb of species unidentified. Alegar is eager or sour ale, used as vinegar.—Cornhill Magazine.

Wellington and Waterloo.

Heine, in speaking of Wellington's good luck at Waterloo, says: "This man has the bad fortune to meet with good fortune when the greatest man of the world is unfortunate. We see in him the victory of stupidity over genius—Arthur Wellington triumphant when Napoleon Bonaparte was overwhelmed. Wellington and Napoleon! It is a wonderful phenomenon that the human mind can at the same time think of both these names."

No Chance.

"Do you think his interest in art will ever amount to anything?"

"No," answered Miss Cayenne. "He is too well off to become an artist himself and not rich enough to become a connoisseur."—Washington Star.

CARD GAMES.

The Earliest Played In England Were Imported From Spain.

Spain is generally believed to have sent us our first card games. "El hombre," or "the man," corrupted by us into "ombre," was probably our earliest card game in England, and that must have come from Spain. Also the oldest packs of cards found in England show Spanish symbols, such as cupus, maces and swords. Another popular English card game in the sixteenth century was trump, clearly a form of the Spanish game triumfo.

Cards could be bought in 1545 for twopence a pack. These were very wretched specimens and most inferior to those produced by the Cardmakers' company of London, in which Charles I. created a monopoly, with the financial genius of his race, by buying them up cheap and selling them at a high price. In this he was a more open rogue perhaps than his father, who forbade card playing in Scotland and indulged in it himself at every opportunity.

Cards have always been a royal game. Queen Elizabeth played cards and lost her temper over them frequently. She was no Anne of Austria, to play "like a queen without passion of greed or gain." In her reign was commanded to be played "at Wyndsore a Comedie or Morral devised on a game of the cardes," which resulted in the performance by the children of her majesty's chapel of "Alexander and Campaspe," in which the pretty lines occur:

Cupid and Campaspe played
At cards for kisses. Cupid paid.

—London Chronicle.

LEARNING TO SHOOT.

A Simple Rifle Target and the Way to Practice.

The first moving target that I would recommend is one that is simplicity itself and yet, with the assistance of a gentle sloping hill and a friend to take turns with you, will be of great value and benefit. One of the most successful deer hunters I know trained this way, and you will readily see the good points of this practice on trial of it. Secure half a dozen barrel heads for your partner. Have him take a position at the top of the hill and roll these heads down the slope diagonally. At first it will be best to select a fairly smooth slope and have the targets rolled down at a medium rate. At fifty to seventy-five yards take your position, according to your gun and ammunition. If it is a 22, a somewhat smaller target might be used at a little shorter distance. At your signal one of these targets is started on its journeys. As it starts bring the gun to the shoulder, taking aim and swinging with the moving object. Always aim to hit the center of the object. You will find that the eye naturally seeks the center, just as it is nature for one to see the front sight through the center of the peep. Do not attempt to hold your gun at a point the target will pass and try to pull the trigger while it passes, but pull when the aim has been secured, just as when firing at a stationary object.—Outer's Book.

Where the "Brave" Excelled.

Bloodthirsty, vindictive, treacherous, crafty, scornful of suffering, brave unto death when at bay, more cunning than the fox and of infinite patience on the trail, the Indian has proved more than a match for the whites in the jungle. It is certain that more whites than savages have perished in forest fighting. But in a set battle the red man is without steadfastness and perseverance. The least reverse disheartens him. After the first mad rush his purpose wanes, and the slightest check is apt to dispirit his capricious mind.—Lynn Tew Sprague in Outing Magazine.

His Ancestors.

An Irish gentleman was recently attended by an eminent London physician, who, pausing and looking at him with an inquiring glance, said:

"I should like to know, sir, if your family have been long lived?"

"Long lived, is it?" responded the patient thoughtfully. "Well, doctor, I'll just tell you how it is. Our family is a west of Ireland family, and the age of my ancestors depended entirely on the judge and jury who tried them."—Strand Magazine.

Embarrassing.

Bobson—You look all broken up, old man. What's the matter?

Craik—I called on Miss Pruyn last night, and no sooner had I entered the parlor than her mother appeared and demanded to know my intentions.

"That must have been rather embarrassing."

"Yes, but that was not the worst. Just as the old lady finished speaking Miss Pruyn shouted down the stairs, 'Mamma, mamma, he isn't the one!'"—London Tit-Bits.

Significant Silence.

"What has become of your son, the young inventor, who used to advance such startling theories?" asked a friendly man of an old negro known to the Washington Star. "I never hear of him any more."

"No, sah," replied the shrewd father, "he's re'lly inventing something now."

One Better.

First Child—Our baby can say "Papa." Second Child (with lofty superiority)—Our parrot can say "papa" and papa's swear words too.—Los Angeles Herald.

Executive Ability.

Little James—Father, what is executive ability? His father—The faculty of earning your bread by the sweat of other people's brows, my son.