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1850), noting that the atomic weights of various elements were almost exactly integer multiples of the atomic weight of hydrogen, inferred that atoms of various elements consisted of common constituents. He correctly recognized that the relationship, although not exactly true, pointed toward a basic scientific law. At the other extreme, all four presidents of the United States who have been assassinated in office have been elected in years ending in zero. In spite of the low a priori probability of this occurring, no one would seriously suggest that this points to a physical or sociological law.

Since 1971, two more World Series have lasted seven games. The probability of a single series of evenly matched teams lasting seven games is

\[
p = \binom{7}{3} = \frac{5}{16}
\]

where \(C\) is the binomial coefficient.

The probability of two successive series lasting seven games is therefore 25/256, or approximately 0.1. While not quite as improbable as the reputed loss of two vital magnetic tapes, this is nevertheless somewhat surprising.

Now that 17 of the 29 World Series played since the end of World War II have lasted seven games, one finds that the probability of this occurring as a random event (between evenly matched teams) would be

\[
\sum_{n=1}^{29} C_n^0 \cdot 0.0021 = 0.0021
\]

And, of the 21 World Series that have gone to the sixth game since the end of World War II, the team that was ahead, going into the sixth game, has still won only four times. If the teams are evenly matched, the probability of winning less than five times is now

\[
\sum_{n=1}^{21} C_n^0 \cdot \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^n = 0.0036
\]

This "back-to-the-wall" effect, which tends to favor the trailing team in the sixth game, has occurred only since the end of World War II. Once again, one is forced to ask whether this unusual occurrence of seven-game World Series is a statistical freak or whether, like Prout's hypothesis, it suggests the existence of some hitherto undetected phenomenon.

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