

WERE WOMEN GAMBLE.

PLACES IN LONDON WHERE MONEY IS LOST AND WON.

Some Swell Houses Where Gambling is Extensively Indulged In—Stakes for Which They Play—Incidents of Various Evening's Games.

Remembering the proverb that all women are born gamblers, the writer of this article applied to a lady whom he considered likely to be well informed, to know whether there were any ways short of Monte Carlo by which ladies might regularly gratify a passion for playing high.

"Oh, yes," she said; there are regular houses and regular sets in London where high play is carried on. In one set that I know you can play poker every day of the week—yes, including Sundays—afternoon and evening at different houses, and meet very much the same people at all. As a rule, there are two tables, one for high and one for low play. I never play at the high table, but I always take from forty to fifty pounds with me in case of accidents.

"On one occasion I lost the whole at a sitting, and ran into debt another forty as well. But that's nothing to the high table. Lady Mary M—told me that on one day she lost five hundred pounds in a very short time; then won it all back, and was a thousand to the good; lost all that and some hundreds as well, and finally swept the entire board, and rose twelve hundred to the good. That was an exciting evening if you like.

"Then I know several ladies who have weekly 'at homes' at which you can play roulette. The play takes place in the dining room. There is a regular wheel, two, or even three, tables; the hostess takes the bank, certain of the male guests are asked to act as croupiers, and the gamblers are provided with rakes to push their stakes about with. It is Monte Carlo on a small scale. There may be a low limit to the stakes, or there may be a high one. Practically it depends in most cases on the number of the players and the wealth of the hostess.

"I have been in a room where the lowest stake was a sovereign and the limit fifty pounds—that is, it was not permissible to stake more than fifty pounds on one number or other chance, though the player could take as many chances as he liked at fifty pounds each on one turn of the wheel. If he staked fifty pounds on a number and it turned up, he received thirty-three times his stakes that is, £1,650.

"But, as a matter of fact, most players only arrived at the maximum by doubling—that is, began with a sovereign, or five sovereigns, lost that; doubled the next stake, lost that; doubled again and so went on, until they stood to win £1,650 or to lose fifty pounds in addition to their other losses. Of course, it seems a lot for the bank to pay, but then you must remember that there were some forty or fifty people playing, and perhaps the bank might rake in all the big stakes and only pay on a single sovereign.

"At other houses loo, banco, trente et quarante, baccarat, and Newmarket are the games, and where there is a bank it is often taken not by the hostess but by the person who will buy it by auction—that is, will put most in the pool for the privilege. You will observe that these afternoons are simply for gambling. There is no convivial excitement beforehand or during play. The ladies take afternoon tea. The men usually can get a whisky and soda in the back dining-room if they want one; but it is no case of drinking deep to drown losses, and gambling hard through intoxication. The guests come in from the light of day. There are just three hours for play. They go away to dress for dinner. In the evening, of course, there is more of the element of excitement, and the gambling may go on till three or four in the morning.

"So businesslike is the thing that I could tell you of a woman who owes her rise in society simply to her poker evenings. She gave excellent dinners beforehand, and afterwards card-tables were laid out for whist and poker. People of rank at first went to her house just as to a gambling hell. She was tactful, hospitable, impervious to snubs, took care not to win much, and lost with good temper. Well, now she is intimate with all the poker set, and though they laugh at her occasionally, and call her house 'the Casino,' her position is firmly established.

"Is there much plucking of pigeons going on?" I said.

"Well, there is no decoying, such as you read of—women deliberately luring young men to gamble, or men drugging them; but if a young man wishes to gamble, he will be invited all round, and no one will care if he is stripped of his last sixpence. If he can't afford it, he has no business to play. And I could mention several men—the merest nobodies

with money—who have got on and make a large acquaintance by getting known as poker players. These were very keen on the game, usually lost, and did not at all mind losing."

"You will excuse the question, but is there ever any suspicion of cheating?"

"Oh, dear, yes. Certain ladies are known to cheat when they get the chance. I don't mean to say that they keep cards up their sleeve, but they pay short, or don't stake when they ought to, or increase or diminish their stake, when it is possible after the chances have been called. I have seen very odd things, I can assure you. On one occasion a lady leant across the table and boxed the ears of another so violently that her hair was knocked all on one side. The first said that the second was cheating, and there was a great fuss. The queerest part was that the first was a notorious cheat herself; but evidently she considered herself entitled to a monopoly. Both these ladies were of high rank.

"On another occasion one lady accused another of looking over her hand, saying that she could never have played as she did unless she knew what was in the hand. The other was furious, flung her cards on the table, and abused her accuser in unmeasured terms. Finally she turned on the unfortunate hostess, and abused her for knowing 'such a woman' as the first. When I add that the two belligerents were sisters-in-law, you will understand the lengths to which the gambling mania drives its votaries."

REST IN MANILA.

Every Year Has 129 Holidays—Only Two Hours for Luncheon.

Outside of the Spanish colony in Manila there is little care for the fashions as they change from season to season in Europe and America. The same mantel and coat does in summer and in winter—or, more accurately, in the wet season and in the dry. There is never any frost and never occasion for furnaces or open fires. Except for cooking there is plenty of heat in the atmosphere the year around.

Men wear white duck suits, with thin flannel or silk underwear, no linen shirt or collar, white pith helmets, and white canvas shoes the year round. The Spaniards and the Spanish half-castes go in for style a little more. The Spaniards are haughty and fond of displaying their uniforms of blue and white and their gold trimmings. The half-castes, Mestiza, are equally fond of display, but their attire is something of a compromise between European and Chinese modes.

Besides the one year out of seven that all foreign employees of the great mercantile houses represented in Manila have given to them as "home leave," there is a month's vacation each year, a regular holiday each month, and all the saints' days and Spanish, French, English, German and American holidays. Not to observe a saint's day in Manila is sinful, and every one holds such sinfulness in special detestation. Figuring on all the saints' days, Sundays, and general holidays, there are 129 days in each year when these people do not work.

Clerks earn from \$2,500 to \$5,000 a year, besides having lodgings found, a mess allowance, medical attendance, and travelling expenses. In many cases their rooms are over the offices. They work from daylight till noon, rest for two or three hours, and then till five o'clock, but they have much freedom in choosing their hours and are hurried only on mail days.

There are many excellent bands in Manila, and open-air concerts are given every evening in fair weather. Theatrical companies, both native and foreign, play through the season. The Mestiza chorus girl is alluring. In the cathedral and the churches the music is always good though it is startling to the newcomer to hear, as he will in some services, a Gloria from Trovatore, the credo with music from "Barbiere," and the Elevation from "Traviata."

Pets of a Learned Man.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, the great authority on Persian inscriptions, wrote his "Memoir" in a summer house overhanging the Tigris, where the outside heat of 120° was reduced to 90° by the action of a water wheel which poured a continuous stream of water over the roof.

For recreation while writing his book, Rawlinson indulged in petting wild animals. He had a tame leopard named Fahad which he brought to England and presented to the Zoological Gardens at Clifton near Bristol. Whenever Rawlinson was in England he would visit Fahad. As soon as the beast heard his cry, "Fahad! Fahad!" it would rise from the floor of its cage, approach the bars, and then, rolling on the floor, extend its head to be scratched.

Once the keeper, who did not know Sir Henry, on seeing him patting the leopard, exclaimed:

"Take your hand out of the cage! The animal's very savage and will bite you."

"Do you think so?" said Sir Henry. "I don't think he'll bite me. Will you, Fahad?" and the beast answered by a purr, and would hardly let the hand be withdrawn.

He also had at Bagdad a pet lion, which had been found when a kitten on the bank of the Tigris—its mother having been shot—and brought to Sir Henry. He alone fed it, and the lion when grown would follow him about like a dog. One hot day the lion moped and rejected its food. It paced about the master's room, and he, being very busy, called two servants to take the lion away.

The lion would not go with them, but drew nearer its master, and at last sat down under his chair with its head between his knees.

"Oh," said he, "it he won't go let him bide."

The servants were out, and Sir Henry wrote on the lion sank from a sitting position into that of a "lion couchant." All was quiet for several hours save the scratching of a pen. When his work was over the master put down his hand to pat the pet. The lion was dead.

Serpent's Venom.

Prof T R. Fraser, of Edinburgh, who has made a study of serpent's venom, and suggested means of rendering it inert by "Antivenine," has recently called attention to the circumstance that serpent's venom when introduced into the stomach of an animal will produce no injurious effect although the amount of poison swallowed would be sufficient, if introduced beneath the skin to kill 1,000 animals of the same species and weight. He attributes this immunity from harm to the action of the bile.

He has further ascertained that the bile of serpents when mixed with venom will prevent it from producing death, even when it is present in very small quantity. The bile of some other animals also possesses this antidotal quality, but not to the same extent as the bile of snakes.

Modern Battleships.

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Old Regiments.

The oldest British regiments dates back to 1660. The oldest Austrian regiment is said to have been raised in 1618, the old Russian regiment in 1700. The old French Army boasted of regiments raised in 1556. These were disbanded at the time of the Revolution, but were again brought together by Napoleon, being finally dispersed on his downfall by the Bourbons.

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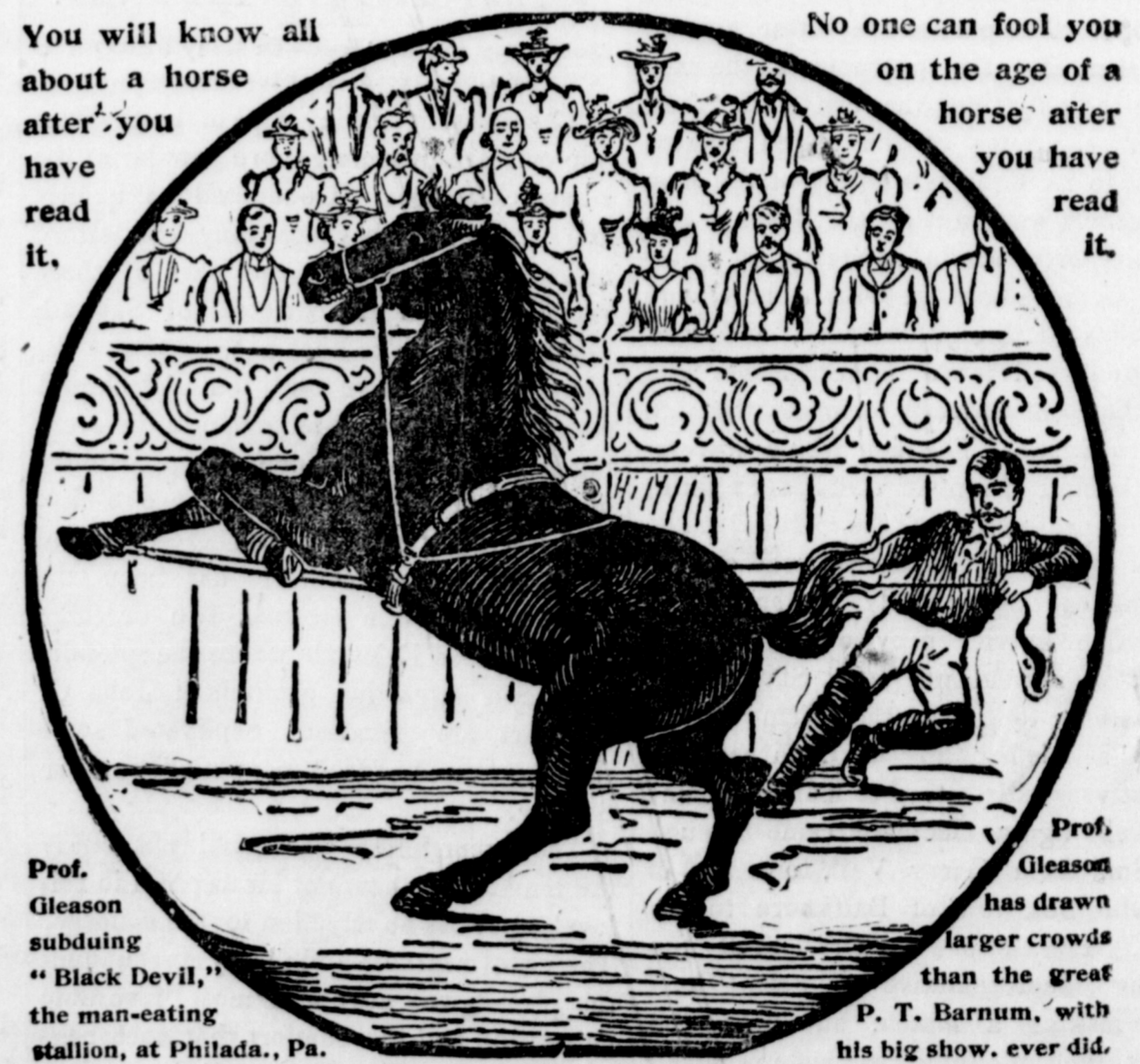
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