

WHERE WOMEN WOO THE GODS OF CHANCE

Frenzied Gambling by the Fair Sex Increasing at Monte Carlo.



Early Morning Promenade Before the Games Open.



Madame Chauvan Who Won \$21,000 in Fifteen Minutes.



High Play by Women in the Gambling Halls.



Madame Viard Wins \$50,000 because the Wheel is out of Order.



Entrance to Monte Carlo Casino

Within the last few years the increase of gambling among women has been appalling. The daring success of a few have been cabled to all parts of the world, the tragedies of the thousands who have not been told.

Spread of the gambling fever among women has alarmed the management of Monte Carlo. What can be done? Each year sees greater numbers of the fair sex wooing the fickle gods; each year there are an increased number of suicides each year adds to the number of adventuresses.

As a general thing, take defeat bravely and desert. "Woman," says a gambler who has been to Monte Carlo, "learn to stop—never. They will play if they have to steal the money."

Nearly every one who has been to Monte Carlo has heard of "Mamma" Viard, a little, bent old French woman, a widow, who has played for years.

"Mamma" Viard played roulette from morning until night. Her beady eyes, twitching nervously, saw nothing but the ivory ball as it fell into the cell. As they watched her staggering from the gaming tables late at night people pitied her.

Her whole soul, her life, seemed absorbed in the awful desire of winning. The old woman at times lost heavily—for her, then she regained her losses. For a long time she was enabled to live and continue her feverish pursuit of the game.

One night the old woman lost nearly all her stores. As she passed from the table, despair in her eyes, her attention was attracted by another wheel. She stopped and bent over the table. Again and again the wheel spun around and stopped. The gambler's eyes sparkled. A flush suffused her pallid cheeks.

As she left the room she clasped her hands, and her heart a thrill, mackintosh—started the gamblers as an ominous, uneasy.

"Better watch the old woman!" one of the officials looked at a detective. He followed "Mamma" Viard to her hotel. He listened outside of her door. There was no alarming sound. In a short while she extinguished her lights, and evidently had retired.

The following evening she reappeared in the gaming hall. Her eyes still sparkled, her cheeks were still flushed. With her usual approach to the tables, they were several notorious gamblers.

"Mamma" Viard began to play.

She won. The gamblers, who had loaned her money, watched. She played a second time—and won—and a third time—and won. The gamblers looked on amazed, and saw the old woman raking in thousands of francs.

During the evening the old woman sat by the table, playing steadily. Her winnings doubled, tripled, quadrupled, and piled up about her.

The management became alarmed. A consultation was held. Special detectives were sent to watch her. Scores had gathered about the table, looking on breathlessly at her wonderful run of "luck." The detectives reported to the management that "Mamma" Viard was playing a certain combination of numbers that invariably won.

One of the doctors brought the old woman to assist playing; the bank would be broken, he declared. She smiled and continued to play.

The director offered her \$50,000 to cease playing. He doubled the figure if she would tell him the secret of her success. He implored her to take \$200,000, \$250,000, only cease waging her successful battle for gold.

Quick Eye Won A Fortune.

Really he offered her \$300,000. Accepting this, "Mamma" Viard, gathering her fortune, told him very quietly that in passing the table she might before her quick eye had detected that the ball of this particular wheel stopped at a certain place at regular intervals. The managers examined the

wheel, found that it was out of order, and congratulated themselves upon having compromised with the old woman.

Among the habits of Monte Carlo are many old women—women whose one interest in life is to pursue the elusive gods of chance. There are widows, grandmothers, women who have never married, actresses of the past, whose only pleasure in old age is to pursue still the uncertain race for gain.

For years an old woman played roulette at the Casino—a little, shrewd old woman known as "the woman in black." She played steadily, calmly, never betting more than \$10. Finally she had no \$10 to bet, for the first time in years she was left utterly penniless.

The officials at Monte Carlo are discreet. They take all precautions to avoid scandal. There is a fund known as "vaticum." When a person is "down and out" he can apply to the directors, and is usually given transportation from the place.

The old woman, utterly friendless, applied for her "travelling money." She was asked the usual questions—how much she had lost, how long she had been playing, where she wanted to go. She said she was the grandmother of a Hungarian magnate; she would go home, she said, to her grandchild. They gave her the money. She signed an agreement to depart, and left the office.

At the door of the Casino she paused. She felt the old tingling desire burning in her blood—the old fever to play. Then she rushed to the roulette table, threw down her "travelling money"—and won.

"Madame," said the croupier, "you cannot play. That is your travelling money."

She cast the amount of money given her by the officials to him.

"Take it back!" she cried. "I suppose I can keep my winnings!"

The croupier refused to let her play. The onlookers cheered the old woman, and the inspector permitted her to play. Again and again she won. Her earnings amounted to \$50,000 francs.

Go back to Hungary? No, indeed! "She will probably stay until she loses all again," said one of the habitués to a visitor. "She will apply for travelling money again, be refused, she will go hungry, and—the revolver or poison!"

They look upon suicide in a matter-of-fact way at Monte Carlo. If the victim is a woman, perhaps there is a faint feeling of pity; usually she is buried by the officials, and no more is heard of the matter.

Monte Carlo is said to be the Mecca of beautiful women. One sees women of the highest social position sitting at the tables beside women whose lives are the gossip of two hemispheres; innocent girls from England, or America, who play timidly while they are watched by mothers, who also gamble. Any one who visits Monte Carlo is certain to meet some very beautiful women—adventuresses—who live by their wits.

"The increase of women gamblers is appalling," declared a tourist recently. "Women of all ages and of all grades of social position play desperately. Why, even the maids of ladies have begun gambling, frequenting the tables, and losing their earnings of a lifetime."

It has become the custom of wealthy women, unaccompanied by their husbands or male escorts, to take their maids with them to the Casino as companions and purse-bearers. It has been said that no one can enter the Casino and escape the contagion of gambling. This has proven true of the maids.

A number have become inveterate gamblers on a small scale, and while their mistresses go on afternoon drives they follow to the gambling tables, where they risk their five-franc pieces. A maid recently lost \$600 at the tables, the savings of her lifetime.

The French maid of a wealthy English woman is said to have won \$1,000. Among the women gamblers are many well-known singers and actresses. A well-known French music hall singer is said to be fond of playing roulette. With her one often sees King Leopold, of Belgium. Some years ago a noted French actress started people by her gambling. More recently an American singer caught the fever, and, it is said, lost thousands of dollars.

Innumerable are the tricks of the adventuresses thronging Monte Carlo. A common experience is related by a German baron:

"I was stamming by a table watching the players when a beautiful young woman touched my coat sleeve. She whispered excitedly in my ear: 'My father is coming—I have twenty louis on the red—he will be very angry if he finds me gambling—please take of the money and hand it to me under the table.'

"Of course, my sympathies were aroused, and unhesitatingly I reached over, raked in the money and passed it to the young woman, who immediately slipped away.

"The croupier announced that black had won—as he did this I heard a man exclaim: 'Why, where are my twenty louis? Has the croupier raked them in already?' I realized that the twenty louis had not belonged to the young woman, that I had stolen them for her. Of course, if red had won, honor would have compelled me to reach into my pocket and pay him his money and winnings. As it was, I said nothing; I did not wish to embarrass the woman whose story I found."

Many of the players stand around the roulette tables—some, indeed, believe that they have bad luck if they sit down. This affords a chance for another trick of the adventuress; they ask me standing behind to permit them to place the man's money on the colors, and in doing so steal coins by means of wax on their fingers.

"I was playing one evening," a traveller relates, "and a charming French woman who sat by the table before me asked me in the politest way whether she could not place the money for me. I had a great deal of trouble leaning over the table to place the money, which the woman was so lovely that I felt honored by her gracious offer."

An Adventuress With Nerve.

"I was playing in stakes of six gold louis. I continued to win. She handed me my winnings; I placed them into my pockets without counting them. I played thus for fifteen minutes. At last I counted my winnings, and found that, instead of twelve louis, which I should have received, there were only eleven.

"Well, I gave her six louis. She

fixed them into a pile and placed them back into many into my hands. 'Some of the best women lose all contingencies of the value of money,' said a player. 'They even do not hesitate' at schemes which, at home, they would denounce; there seems no such thing as honesty among many of them. Even some of the most estimable, respectable and honest of women tourists fall victims to the buncoers, making themselves parties to would-be dishonest schemes."

One of the most common "games" of adventuresses is to make the acquaintance of strangers, tell them he "stands in" with the croupier, and make an offer of gambling together, declaring that the croupier, for a consideration will turn the wheel in such a manner that the ball will drop into the cell upon which the bet is made.

An English woman some time ago was approached by a young Italian, who told her that he had been employed by a manufacturing optician at Strausburg, who made the roulette wheels. He said that in the manufacture of a certain wheel he had so arranged the cells that a set of numbers would win oftener than others. He had marked the wheel so he could recognize it, resigned his position and waited for its appearance in the gambling halls. The wheel, he declared, was now in use.

The Italian asked the young matron to go in partnership with him, putting up the money and giving him scheme which would beat the bank, your money. The chance was ten to one that he would lose his chance. He won, took his share of the money and was glad to get away.

"The tables in the gambling halls are changed every day, and it is next to impossible to work any games. Many persons pretend they know combinations or can influence the croupiers. They find many willing victims, especially among women."

Beside roulette, a game known as trente et quarante is played. Women usually choose roulette, however, as it is swifter and filled with greater excitement. It has been said that the stakes put up each day at Monte Carlo would amount to eighty-eight hundred weight of gold sovereigns. Money changes hands at the rate of \$60 for every tick of the clock night and day.

on red. I purposely reached over moved the pile to black, knocking the pile over. As I had suspected, there were only five louis in the pile. Every time I played she had taken one of the coins, which amounted to \$4.

"I did not wish to raise a scene—no one does at Monte Carlo. 'Madame,' I said, quite politely, 'I will play myself.' She arose and bowed most graciously. 'Will monsieur take my chair?' she asked sweetly. No, she did not run away; she stayed right there and looked on serenely. The adventuresses of Monte Carlo have all the nerve in the world."

Women players, it is stated, are easily victimized. The feminine desire to take part in a plot to beat the

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