

A PARIS GAMBLING CRAZE.

Popularity of Betting on Games of Spanish Billiards.

Two years ago the game of billiards, which attained its apogee in Paris during the latter days of the Sponsons' Empire, was on the verge of disappearing...

These novel gambling dens have now become the popular rage of Paris. It is estimated that the amount of money staked on skilled players at these resorts during any given period of twenty-four hours exceeds \$50,000.

As one walks along the boulevards attention is attracted by a stream of youths diving down narrow stairways beneath signs and posters with the inscription, "Billiard Academy."

Another large sign states that "no one is permitted to bet on the game who is not familiar with billiards, and who also has not acquired experimental knowledge from the professors of billiards whose names are posted as taking part in the demonstrations of their science."

This quaint notice is made to elude the technicalities of the French laws against betting on games of pure chance. So far, this empty verbiage has been adequate to protect the establishments from being closed by the police.

I looked about at the spectators, numbering about sixty altogether, and who, without exception, put stakes on the coming game. A youth of twenty, who, judging from his appearance, might be a clerk in a shop in the Avenue de l'Opera, selected his professional player and backed him to the amount of four five-franc pieces, or \$4.

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varying from \$10 to \$20 a day. The pretty little hazel eyed seamstress, who had lost her bright shining five franc piece by betting on the handsome Marva, took her loss philosophically, and staked her last remaining dollar on Marva but on the swarthy Sanchez. The white haired trembling gambler ordered a glass of pale green absinthe, doubled his bet on Marva, and in ten minutes lost it. Newcomers arrived and pulled twenty franc pieces from their waistcoat pockets and made bets right and left. The game is a very captivating one, and brings betting down to a pure democratic level, enticing all the shopgirls and small clerks of the neighborhood to gamble to their hearts' content, and win or lose their hard earned five franc pieces in a few minutes, at the same time creating in them the true gambler's craving. Altogether these gambling dens where Spanish billiards thrive to an extent seldom before attained by any indoor game in Paris are the source of general corruption.

All the billiard academies throughout Paris have opened rooms for this lucrative gambling business. One of the best and most fashionably frequented is kept by Schaefer, the well known American billiard player. Schaefer's establishment is luxuriously got up and is a favorite resort. It is sometimes difficult to find a vacant seat there. A young American lad of seventeen, answering to the name of "Willie" Hoppe, is one of the foremost proficient in the sport of Spanish billiards of eight points, with the condition that three cushions must be taken in making each shot. Another variety of Spanish billiards is the game of ten points, a condition being that in every instance shots must be made off the red ball. Usually three players take part in the Spanish game of billiards, but being the favorite number with the Parisian public. The game is quick, sharp, decisive, and "you have a good run for your money," as the little hazel eyed shopgirl remarked when she lost her last five franc piece. Nearly all the professional players of this new gambling craze are Spaniards. The game was imported at the beginning of the present year from across the Pyrenees, and it is not an exaggerated statement to say that it has already become a national institution. Last month a syndicate was formed which is likely to grow into the proportions of a veritable "trust," with the object of transplanting Spanish billiard gambling dives to the provinces and colonies. This new industry is in a most thrifty condition, and affords for intending American visitors a fruitful study for psychology and human nature. "Haven't you had enough of this?" I remarked to my dramatic friend, as I counted up my losses, which amounted to 40 francs. "No," was the reply, "I must have another whack at this Spanish billiard business. It is so fascinating," and so saying, he changed a one-hundred-franc banknote into twenty silver five-franc pieces, and the game proceeded.

TO MARRY MISS STOKES.

Robert Hunter to Wed Daughter of Anson Phelps Stokes.

A pretty romance came to light yesterday when it became known that Robert Hunter, head worker of the University Settlement, at No. 154 Eldridge-st., is to marry Miss Caroline M. P. Stokes in June. Miss Stokes is the daughter of Anson Phelps Stokes, sr., during the last winter J. G. Phelps Stokes, her brother, has been living at the University Settlement, and sharing in the social work at this institution. Miss Stokes has also been conducting class work among the East Side children, and thus met Mr. Hunter. Ever since its founding the Stokes family has been

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THE TROY CONFERENCE.

Much Business Disposed of at Second Day's Session.

Saratoga, N. Y., April 16.—The Troy Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church dispatched a large volume of business on this, the second day of the seventy-first annual meeting. There was a large increase in the attendance, especially in the evening. Bishop McCabe read a dispatch from the Rev. Dr. John H. Coleman, president of Willamette University, Salem, Ore., a member of the Conference, expressing regret at being absent, owing to a telegram in his family. The conference ordered a message of congratulation was ordered sent to the Rev. Dr. Homer Eaton, of New-York City, who is travelling abroad, and who for forty-eight years attended every session of the Conference.

Reports of the Plattsburg, Saratoga and Troy districts were read by the presiding elders, the Rev. Drs. Joel W. Eaton, W. H. Hughes and D. W.

The Bishop appointed the Rev. Dr. Samuel McKean, of Troy, president of the Rensselaer County Bible Society. The Rev. Dr. Delos F. Brooks, of German, Ohio, was made an evangelist to labor in the West. The Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Griffin, of Troy, was appointed vice-president and custodian of the Troy Conference Historical Society. Dr. Griffin was requested to preach the semi-annual sermon in 1904.

The treasurer, David Klock, jr., of Troy, reported a balance on hand in cash and mortgages of \$65,617.82. The report of the Troy Conference Academy, of Albany, was presented by the Rev. Dr. Henry Graham, of Albany.

The conference was addressed by the Rev. Dr. William V. Kelley, Editor of "The Methodist Review"; the Rev. Dr. Mich. J. Talbot, of the New-England Southern Baptist Convention; the Rev. Dr. Hart of Chicago, of the Methodist Church Insurance Company; and the Rev. Dr. James D. Phelps, of Syracuse University.

The anniversary of the Sunday School Union and Tract Society was held this afternoon. It was followed by an historical address by the Rev. Dr. W. E. Vincent, of New-York City, on "A Hundred Years of Methodism Within the Bounds of Troy Conference."

The evening the anniversary of the Conference Education Society was held. Addresses were made by the Rev. Drs. H. H. Murdoch, of Gloversville, and Dr. H. H. Murdoch, of Gloversville. The Rev. Dr. M. H. Smith, of Ballston Spa, has been elected president of the Troy Conference Bible Society. The Rev. Dr. Herbert A. Durfee, secretary of the Anti-Slavery League.

The annual meeting of the Troy Conference, which is held at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., will be held at Saratoga Springs, N. Y., on the subject in his name, C. WAGNER.

Professor Heermann, who is closing his American engagement in the West, started for Kansas City day before yesterday. A few days ago he was charged with a mission by Mme. Costima Wagner, widow of the poet-composer, couched in the following terms, in a letter to Mrs. Heermann, who has been travelling with the eminent violinist:

I shall be glad if Mr. Heermann will spread the intelligence wherever he goes that the projected performance of "Parisfal" is in contravention of color and previous condition of servitude. The question now to be decided is, Does any State, by its corporate action, defy and ignore that declaration? If so, what is the remedy?

Let me quote from my communication published in The Tribune on March 6 last: The remedy which I have recommended and now repeat is, that the States, by their corporate action, with benefit to the whole country. Let Congress by its appropriate committee inquire into the conditions of the States, and if they find that they are in defiance of the Fifteenth Amendment, refuse to that State the seating of members and Senators elected under such conditions. If any State refuse to do this, let the States, by their corporate action, with benefit to the whole country, refuse to that State the seating of members and Senators elected under such conditions. If any State refuse to do this, let the States, by their corporate action, with benefit to the whole country, refuse to that State the seating of members and Senators elected under such conditions.

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FOR A NEW COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

A Legal View of the Need and Propriety of the Commission Bill.

To the Editor of The Tribune: Sir: In your editorial of this date relating to the bill recently passed by the legislature by which the Mayor is appointed a commission to select a site for a new courthouse for the Supreme Court and to erect a building upon the site so selected, you state that you "have already expressed the opinion that the municipal government was adequately equipped to take care of the matter without the intervention of a special commission."

The same view was at first suggested by certain of the municipal officers. But a careful examination of the question, undertaken by the members of the Bar Association committee, brought them to the unanimous conclusion that no authority to acquire land for that particular purpose, nor to issue bonds for the acquisition of the site and the erection of the new building, was vested in the city under the terms of its charter, and I think that I shall violate no confidence in adding that the same opinion is held by the committee of the Supreme Court Justices and the Commission of the Court of City and County. The question lies in the fact that the erection of a courthouse for the Supreme Court is not a "municipal purpose." Moreover, although certain of the city departments are vested with authority adequate to the erection of buildings for their own purposes, an examination of the charter discloses that none of them has authority to make suitable contracts for the erection of a county courthouse, or is equipped to supervise its erection when contracted for. So that, even if it were as an authority to acquire lands and issue bonds for county purposes, which would be a municipal purpose, the bill would be necessary to make suitable amendments, to create machinery to exercise the powers thus conferred, and that there be no question as to the authority of the legislature itself to appoint a commission to erect a county courthouse, which bill could be readily drawn in such a manner that it need not even be submitted for the approval of a Mayor. But the present bill leaves the matter in the entire control of the local authorities by providing that the commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor, and by requiring that their action in selecting a site, and in making contracts for the erection of the building, shall be approved by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. In view of these, and of still other provisions of the bill, it is not surprising that you should justly be said that the present bill is in any respect violative of the salutary principle of home rule, the only limitation imposed by the bill is that it shall be left to the Mayor to select a site, and to make contracts for the erection of a courthouse, which bill could be readily drawn in such a manner that it need not even be submitted for the approval of a Mayor. But the present bill leaves the matter in the entire control of the local authorities by providing that the commissioners shall be appointed by the Mayor, and by requiring that their action in selecting a site, and in making contracts for the erection of the building, shall be approved by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. In view of these, and of still other provisions of the bill, it is not surprising that you should justly be said that the present bill is in any respect violative of the salutary principle of home rule, the only limitation imposed by the bill is that it shall be left to the Mayor to select a site, and to make contracts for the erection of a courthouse, which bill could be readily drawn in such a manner that it need not even be submitted for the approval of a Mayor.

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