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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1920

EUROPE'S GREATEST GAMBLER A GREEK

Has Often Broken Bank at
Monte Carlo

Has Been Known to Lose
Twice and Then Only
Small Amounts—Winnings
Run Into Millions.

(Toronto Mail & Empire.)
To the world at large the best known of living Greeks is Venizelos, but to the sport and pleasure-loving Europeans he is as remote as is Xenophon. The real live Greek is a gambler named Vagliano, a sketch of whom has been written by Ibones, the Spanish novelist. Vagliano is the greatest gambler of his generation. To break the bank at Monte Carlo is for him a common occurrence. Last Summer he exploited at Deauville was chronicled in most of the papers of the world, for his winnings were prodigious, if not unparalleled. How much he won there, and how much he has won in the course of his gambling career nobody seems to know. Reckoned in francs the total is from fifty millions to two hundred millions. Whatever the amount, Vagliano is as paramount among European gamblers as was Ponce recently among get-rich-quick exploiters. He seems to have started with a shoe string and now to be in the possession of many millions, all gained at the table with the green cloth. Is it merely loaned to him as an advertisement?

Winning a Million.
Signor Ibones says that he saw Vagliano win a million francs at one sitting. On other occasions he has seen him touch the half-million mark, and although he wins in francs it is to be remembered that while here a franc has no great value, in Europe it is as important and desirable as ever it was. Only twice, says the novelist, has he seen the Greek lose, and then his losses were small. His favorite hunting ground is not the Casino at Monte Carlo, but the Sporting Club, which is almost next door, and where play runs higher than in the better known place. In the former the people play at roulette and at trente-et-quarante, but in the Sporting Club the popular game is bacarrat. It is a matter of some difficulty to get into the Sporting Club, and of even greater difficulty to emerge with the visitor's hide still clothing him. One has to be vouched for by two members, and there is quite an inclination as to one's general deportment, his willingness to "part" congenially and his ability to settle.

A Drawing Card.
Vagliano for some years has been as great a drawing card at the Sporting Club as Babe Ruth at a ball park, a fact which may have led the suspicious to believe that he is a mere stool pigeon. There was a period when he was absent for some weeks. In that time the Club was almost deserted. It was Hamlet without the principal. Then Vagliano came back and immediately there was life and excitement. The Greek was obliged to remain away because of a painful incident in which a South American woman, of vast wealth and piebald English ancestry, figured. This lady visits the club every year, taking

with her \$100,000. She wins three years out of four, and because of her large operations and her gambling luck she was considered a sort of queen of bacarrat, just as Vagliano was a king. Her daughter, the Spanish novelist, tells us, married an English peer, and last season the daughter, because of her beauty and her costly gowns, was one of the sensations of Monte Carlo.

A Greek Argument.
Mother and daughter were watching the table where Vagliano was playing. The king of gamblers became involved in an argument with a spectator, who had intimated that the Greek was also a "greek," a slang term which casts aspersions on a man's honor, and well understood among the gambling fraternity. The Greek responded with equally opprobrious epithets, and as the onlookers crowded closer play was suspended while the disputants told each other off. They gesticulated and shook their fists and cursed each other handsomely, but no blows were struck. The argument apparently was going against Vagliano, who was reduced to the expedient, for a final retort, of spitting at his adversary. The nimble witted enemy avoided the onslaught, or else the aim was bad, for the effect was to drench the titled daughter of the gambling queen.

There was tremendous excitement, for the lady faints. Vagliano was ap-

pleased by his violence, and said, "I am very sorry, but it is the fashion in our country." Immediately he was assailed by several other Greeks anxious of upholding the honor of their country, and Vagliano had to be hurried out. A movement to have him barred from the club was frustrated by his voluntary departure. But the club languished without him, and when he came back he was welcomed, suitable apologies having been offered and accepted. It is not known whether the Greek operates a system. It seems improbable for there is evidence that he began life as a smuggler and is almost illiterate. His luck, however, is amazing, and has survived the vicissitudes of many years—if indeed it is luck that distinguishes him. He goes surrounded by a retinue of servants, bullys and secretaries, and travels in a private fleet of automobiles. Ibones says that the greater part of his immense mail consists of proposals of marriage from ladies in various parts of the world. Most of these proposals are declined.

A party of Montreal men were in the city to arrange for the opening of a ribbon factory in St. John or vicinity. They are looking for suitable quarters and expect to employ about forty hands. Work will be started as soon as the machinery can be installed.

VISIT TO ROOMS OF THE RED CROSS

The Arrangements for the
Good Work Being Carried
on in Prince William Street.

The Red Cross rooms in Prince William street have taken on a new appearance in the last few days. The interior has been brightened and, though small, the rooms are of a good shape and every available inch of space is utilized. In one room are surgical supplies which are already packed in strong boxes and are ready at any moment to be raised to any point in the province in the event of need. In another room are the local supplies for use in the city only in cases of emergency and for the use of hospitals. These materials are in charge of Miss Frances Stetson. Another room contains the provincial supplies. The wool and socks department which has a room to itself is under the direction of Mrs. G. K. McLeod.

Besides these there are hospital beds which are higher than those in general use and are available for the use of doctors in performing operations in private houses. The main room has a desk for secretary, which is presided over by Miss Ethel Jarvis, the capable and energetic secretary. Posters adorn the walls, one among them very striking. It depicts a strong Red Cross nurse holding a crippled child in one arm and supporting an aged man with the other. Beneath it is the legend "Still the Greatest Mother in the World." The peace policy of the society is set forth in a poster as follows: "The promotion of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering." On the wall is a map of the province with the superscription "Where Red Cross supplies come from." Forty-seven blue flags denote the places visited this summer by Miss Roddick of the instructional and district nurses' committee. Included in this is the formation of three new senior branches and one junior branch.

Congratulations To
Hon. Mr. Mercereau
(Special to Times)

Fredericton, N. B., Dec. 10.—Hon. D. W. Mercereau, minister of agriculture was honored a congratulatory address by Agricultural Society No. 116, at Fredericton Junction at the annual meeting of the society on last Wednesday. The congratulations were extended unanimously to the minister as a member of the society, upon his elevation to cabinet rank. Hon. Mr. Mercereau replied suitably to the congratulations of his fellow members.

The society elected the following officers: President, P. Fride; Vice-President, H. Nason; Secretary, P. W. Nason; Treasurer, H. W. Atkinson; members of the executive, George Ball, Charles Ball, A. R. DeWitt.

Nearly Forget Him.
Prosecuting Attorney (to opponent)—You're the biggest boob in the city. Judge (rapping for order)—Gentlemen, you forget I am here.—Syracuse Herald.

The small grocery store of G. W. Brown's in City road was entered by a thief on Wednesday evening, between 5 and 6 o'clock, and a small sum

of money taken. The proprietor was in the building eating his supper when the money was taken. The thief must have entered the shop noise-

lessly and reached over the counter to the cash drawer and extracted the money. Mr. Brown says he has no suspicions as to who the culprits were.



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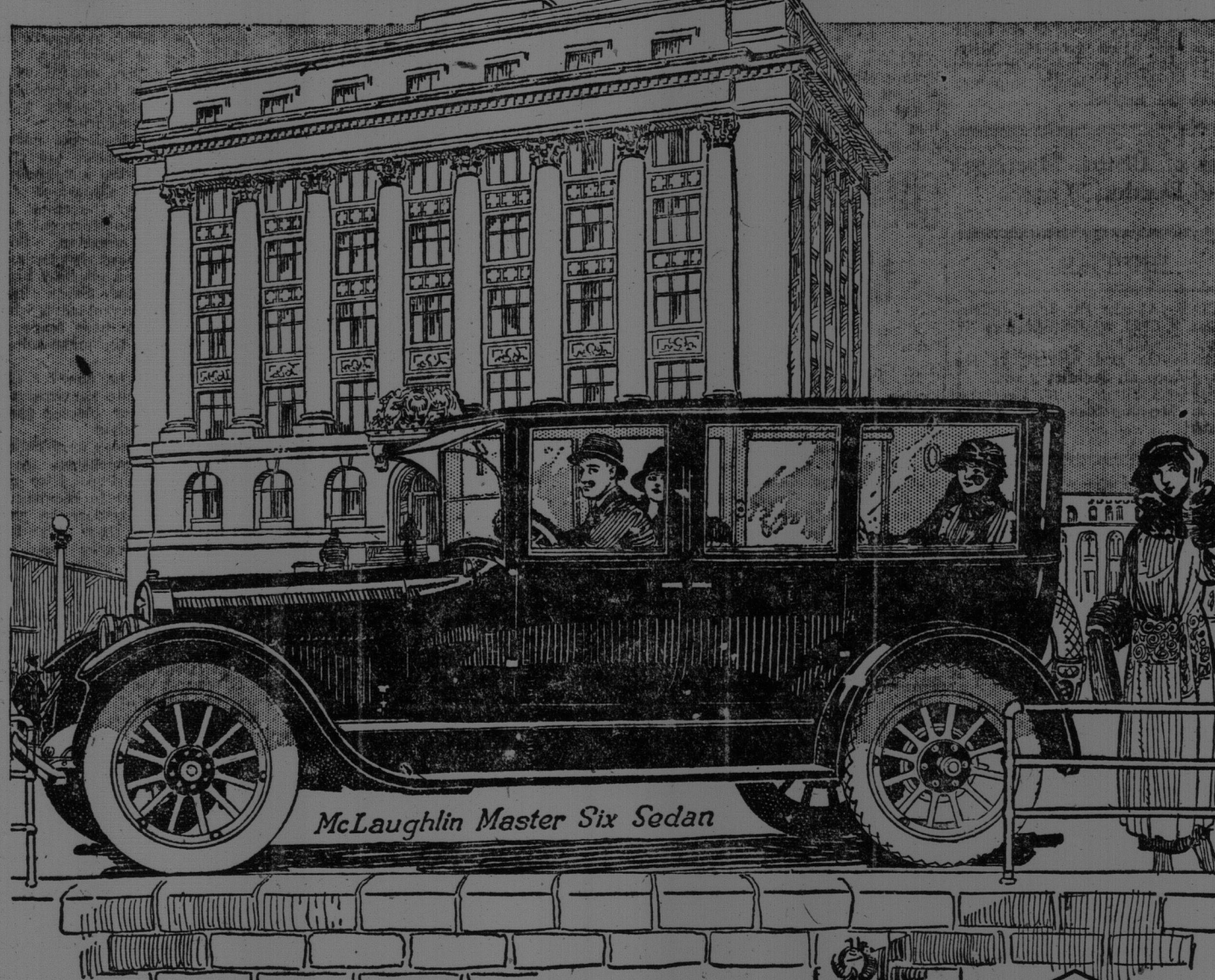
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