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**By Florence Irwin**

**The Fine Points of Auction Bridge**

**The Development of Auction Bridge under  
the New Count**

**Auction High-Lights with a Full Exposition  
of the Nullo Count**

**Nullo Auction**

**The Complete Auction Player**

The  
Complete Auction  
Player

By

Florence Irwin

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## PREFACE

AT last, the great game of Auction seems to have "settled" and the time for a Complete Auction handbook has come. After years of experiment, of insistence on personal opinions, and of consequent chaotic confusion, a standard game has been reached.

With one regrettable exception the present laws are international. The American laws of 1915, being modelled on the composite English laws of one year earlier, followed them in nearly every respect. The consensus of expert opinion is that the exception is a blot on the American laws. However, in the interest of a uniform national game, it has been accepted even by those who regret it.

The Auction field is a large one. I have endeavoured, in this book, to teach as concisely as possible all the essentials of a high-grade game, as well as to prepare a path for the feet of beginners.

F. I.





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# The Complete Auction Player

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## CHAPTER I

*(Specially recommended to beginners)*

### THE ROUTINE OF THE GAME

Two packs of cards are necessary, though only one of them is used in each hand.

The four players cut for partners. Those cutting the lowest two cards play together. Those cutting the highest two cards are partners against them.

Ace is low in cutting, and the suit-values are reversed. In playing, spades are the highest suit; in cutting, they are the lowest. If two cards of the same denomination be cut, the spade would be the lowest, the heart next, the diamond next, and the club the highest.

The partners who cut low have the choice

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of cards and seats. The lowest card cut marks the first dealer.

Partners are always retained throughout a rubber. A rubber is two games won by the same partners. The games may be consecutive, or otherwise.

In a sitting of more than one rubber there are three ways of determining subsequent partners. These are:

*1st.* Playing the same.

*2nd.* Pivoting.

*3rd.* Cutting in.

“Playing the same” is retaining the same partners throughout an entire sitting.

“Pivoting” is changing partners after every rubber and according to fixed routine. The player who sits on the left of the last dealer of the just-completed game, is the first dealer for the new game. That player sits still. The others change so that all four players are re-paired in regular order; each player plays *with* each other player, and *against* each two other players, an equal number of times and in the same rotation. This form of pairing is in particular favour at card parties where prizes are given.

“Cutting in” is repeating, after each rubber, the original process for pairing.

Former partners may cut with, or against, each other. The deal may be lost, or retained, by that player who would be the next dealer in order. Choice of cards and seats is again given to the players cutting the low cards. This form of pairing is by far the "sportiest."

Every pack of cards, before being dealt, must be "made" (*i. e.*, shuffled) by the adversary on the left and cut by the adversary on the right.

"Cut to the right, deal to the left."

To "deal" is to take the pack of cards and give them out, one at a time, beginning with the card on the top of the pack and the player on the dealer's left. The last card should come to the dealer and each player should have thirteen cards. Every player should assure himself that he has his proper number before the business of the hand begins.

The cards should never be touched by any player other than the dealer, until the deal is completed.

The *dealer* of a hand is not necessarily its *player*.

### The Deal

The deal in Auction goes around the table regularly, but the *play* of the hand may be

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anywhere, *i. e.*; the hand may be played by the dealer, his partner, or either of his adversaries; whoever makes the winning bid plays the hand. This sometimes makes confusion in the next deal; every one can remember who *played* the last hand, but not who *dealt* it.

This trouble should be obviated by the position of the "still" pack (the pack of cards not in use).

When the dealer is dealing, his partner should "make" the still pack and put it down *at his own right hand*. It would be bad form to reach across the adversary who is to deal next and place it at his right hand. So it is placed on the right hand of the maker, and when it becomes time for a new deal, the player who finds the still pack at his left hand is the new dealer. He should pick up the pack, pass it to the previous dealer—*i. e.*, the player on his right—to cut, and should then proceed to deal, while his partner "makes" the other pack and lays it at his own right hand.

The still pack should never be trifled with, never touched except for the business of the game. Strict attention to this detail will obviate all trouble as to the deal, and will do



away with stupid questions, such as, "Whose deal is it?" "You dealt last, didn't-you?" and so forth. The game will progress smoothly, and one of the marks which distinguish good Auction from "ragged" Auction will be obliterated.

### **The Suit-Values and the Honours**

The suits in Auction rank and count thus:

Clubs.....	6
Diamonds.....	7
Hearts.....	8
Spades.....	9
No-trumps.....	10

In any declared trump (that is, anything other than no-trumps), the honours are the ace, the king, the queen, the jack, and the ten of that suit. Honours in suits other than the trump-suit, do not count. Honours in the trump-suit are scored as *held*, not as *gathered*. If certain honours are dealt you, they score for you, even though your adversary may gather them into his pile of tricks.

"*Simple honours*" are any three out of the five honours,—the larger half of five. They count just the same whether held all

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in one hand, or divided between the hands of two partners. And their value is always twice the value of a trick. Simple honours in clubs would be worth twice six,—or twelve,—because clubs are worth six a trick. Simple honours in hearts are worth sixteen. And so on.

It is merely the *balance* of the honours that is valuable. The smaller portion counts for nothing. If one pair of partners holds three honours, and the other pair holds two, only the first pair is entitled to an honour-score.

*Four honours*, divided between two partners count four times the value of a trick. Held all in one hand, they are just twice as valuable. *Four honours in one hand* are worth eight times the value of a trick.

*Five honours* divided between two partners are worth five times the value of a trick. *Five honours in one hand* are twice as valuable, thus being worth ten times the value of a trick.

*Four honours in one hand with the fifth in partner's* are worth nine times the value of a trick,—just halfway between eight and ten.

*In no-trumps*, the honours are the aces. *Three aces* are worth *thirty*, whether held all in

one hand or divided between partners. *Four aces, divided, count forty. Four aces in one hand count a hundred.* They are spoken of as "a hundred aces." When the aces are evenly divided, they are called "easy aces" and do not count at all. Another way of describing easy aces is to say "aces are off."

### The Score

The score, in Auction, is divided into "points" and "penalties." There is a cross-line on most Auction score-pads, and the common way of designating the score is "below the line" and "above the line."

"Below the line" are placed all the points scored on the tricks taken by the person who is playing the hand. *No one can score below the line except the person who is playing the hand and his partner (the dummy); and they, only if they make all that they bid, or more.* The partners who are playing against the make are known as "the adversaries" or the "opposition." *They can score above the line only, if at all.*

The points below the line go towards making game, and two games make a rubber. *Games are won below the line, exclusively.*

This makes it valuable to play the hand and to score below the line. Nevertheless, players must remember that it is often more expensive to play a hand than to yield it. You can win the first two games and lose money on them, at that; because your adversaries, though behind you in the score below the line, have piled up so much above the line as to exceed your winnings. The rubber is over when one side has won two games. But the real winners of the rubber are not necessarily the partners who win those two games. They are the partners *whose total score is the higher when the rubber is over*. By the laws of 1915, it is specially provided that these partners shall be known as the winners of the rubber.

The game is thirty or more trick points, below the line.

When two games have been won, in addition to the trick points a bonus of 250 points is given, *above the line*, for the mere winning of the rubber. It is this bonus that makes the rubber valuable, and that gives all players the desire to play the hands and win the games.

*Above the line* are kept the *honour-score*, the *rubber-value*, the record of all *penalties*,

of all *bonuses*, and of all *defeats*. It is a huge field, and a singularly neglected one.

The *honour-score* and the *rubber-value* have already been defined.

*Penalties* are punishments meted to players for certain faults. They always take the form of a lump-sum added to the adverse score, above the line. Because of them, the entire above-the-line score has come to be known as the "penalty-column."

A *bonus* is a reward for a certain achievement. It is always scored above the line, and can be gained only by the person who is playing the hand.

*Defeats* are scored when the person playing the hand fails to keep his contract, or to make as many tricks as he has bid. They are always scored above the line, always by the adversaries, and always at *fifty a trick regardless of suit*.

This explains the meaning of the saying, "There is rank below the line, but not above it." When you play the hand, you play it at some chosen suit which is worth from six to ten a trick. When you defeat the hand, you score *fifty a trick* for every trick you steal from the contract, *and regardless of suit*.



It is worth just as much to beat clubs as to beat no-trumps.

Therefore do I say that the craze for playing the hand is too great, and the penalty-field is too neglected. By playing the best suit there is, you can make but ten a trick, and you have all the work and the worry. By defeating the hand, you make fifty a trick, regardless of suit, and the other man has all the work and the worry.

*Would you rather work like a slave for ten cents, or have some one make you a present of half-a-dollar?*

Still, it must be remembered that rubbers can never be won by defeaters,—only by those who play the hand. But the rubber-value, enticing as it is, may be entirely discounted by adverse penalties. No one ever needs urging to remember the advantages of *playing* the hand. I have yet to see a person who didn't need urging to remember the advantages of *defeating* the hand.

### **Scoring when Playing for Stakes**

When playing for stakes, a "plus-and-minus" score is kept. At the end of each rubber, the entire gross score is added for each pair of partners separately; all their

points, honours, and penalties are added and to this score is affixed the rubber-value (for that pair that has won it). The dividing cross-line on the score-card no longer makes any difference. For each pair, the points "above the line" and "below" it are all added together.

The smaller of these totals is then deducted from the larger, and the difference is entered as "plus" for the winners and as "minus" for the losers. At the end, each individual player's plus-scores are added, as well as his minus-scores. The result will show how many points he has lost or won.

Stakes vary according to the players. The smallest stake I have ever known was a tenth-of-a-cent a point. That, though small, is really a very common stake. It would be impossible to mark the other limit. An eighth, a quarter, a cent, two cents, five, ten, twenty-five, fifty, a dollar, and two dollars, are all well-known stakes. I have heard of twenty-five dollars a point, but have never seen it played.

### Scoring when Playing without Stakes

When playing without stakes, an individual gross score is kept. There is no deducting,

and no minus-score. There are simply various plus-scores and the largest of these is the winning score.

At parties where prizes are given there is sometimes a prize for every table. In such a case, the highest score at each table wins a prize. There may be higher scores in the room that do not take prizes, however.

When there is not a prize for each table, the highest scores in the room win. There are as many winners as prizes.

Also, at such parties, it is usual to set a "time-limit." All players stop playing at a certain time, even though a rubber, or a game, be not finished. Simply the hand in progress is completed, provided the actual play of it has begun. The gross score is then added for each side and an additional 125 is given to the winners of every completed game.

### **The Book**

The first six tricks that the player takes do not score and do not count towards his bid. They simply form his "book." Over and above them, he must take at least as many tricks as he has bid, or else be defeated.

If he takes *more* tricks than he bid, he can



score all that he takes, even over his bid. If, for instance, he gets the bid at "two," and takes four (his book and four more tricks,—ten tricks in all), he scores all those four tricks. He makes 24, if he is playing clubs (four tricks at six each), 28 if the trump be diamonds, 32 in hearts, 36 in spades, or 40 in no-trumps.

If, on the other hand, he takes less than he bid, he may score nothing,—not even for those tricks that he takes. If he bids "four" and takes two, he cannot score those two. He does not score at all, and his adversaries score 50 for each of the two tricks of his failure.

*If you under-bid your hand, you may score everything that you take in excess of your bid. If you over-bid your hand, you may not even score that which you take. The adversary scores, not you.*

*It follows that it is the part of wisdom, generally speaking, to get every contract as cheaply as possible. This is not a new idea; it is as useful in life at large as at the Auction-table.*

By the word "*Player*," or "*Declarant*," I shall henceforth designate that person who has secured the play of the hand. His

partner is always the "*Dummy*." And the two persons who, in partnership, are playing against them, are the "*Adversaries*."

Now, as I have shown, the "book" for the declarant is always six tricks, and he is obliged to take, in addition, at least as many tricks as he has bid, or to be defeated.

But the "book" for the adversaries is not always six tricks. It is not always any set number of tricks. It varies. It is the number of tricks that the declarant can safely lose,—that is, that he can lose without defeat. It is all that he *dares* let them take.

*The book for the adversaries is always the difference between the bid and seven.* Let the adversaries deduct the number of tricks bid, from seven. The remainder is the number of tricks in their book. Let them close their book when it is complete. If they gather any further trick or tricks, their value will be 50 apiece, *and the declarant positively cannot score on that hand.* He is defeated.

### **The Double**

If either adversary thinks he can beat the declarant and can take more tricks than his book, he doubles. That means: "Go on and

play your hand at your own suit. I'll play against your bid and *I bet I can beat it.*"

Then, if the adversaries *do* defeat the bid, their tricks (over their book) are worth 100 apiece instead of 50.

But if they have miscalculated and if the declarant makes his bid, *his tricks* are doubled in value, each trick (over the book) being worth 12 apiece if clubs are trumps, 14 if diamonds are trumps, 16 if hearts are trumps, 18 if spades are trumps, and 20 if the hand is played at no-trumps. In addition to this, a bonus of 50 above the line, is given the declarant *for keeping his contract in spite of a double*. And, again in addition, if he makes any tricks over his contract, each over-trick is worth twice its value below the line *and an additional 50 above*.

It will easily be seen that loose doubling is the most expensive of pastimes.

Remember, there is no bonus for keeping a contract *unless* there has been doubling. If you announce your ability to take "three hearts," and every one thinks you probably can, there is no credit to you in taking them and taking more. But if the adversary thinks you cannot, and announces this by doubling, and if, on top of this, you prove

that you can, *then* you get your tricks at a doubled value (sixteen apiece), and you also get a "bonus" of fifty above the line as a reward for keeping your contract *in spite of his double*. And if you make any tricks over your contract, each one is worth its doubled value below the line, *and an extra fifty above*.

For instance, you bid "three hearts"; you are doubled and yet succeed in taking five hearts (*i. e.*, eleven tricks in all). They are worth 16 apiece below the line (80), you get a bonus of 50 above the line for the mere keeping of your contract in spite of a double, and you also get 50 above the line for each of the two tricks you took in excess of your contract,—making a total of 80 points below the line and 150 above, plus your honours.

Doubling can take place between adversaries only. No one may double his partner.

### **Redoubling**

The first double is always made by the adversaries. Now the declarant (or dummy, his partner) is at liberty to double that double, or to *re-double*.

Then, if the declarant makes his bid, his tricks are worth *four* times their normal value,

his bonus is raised to 100, and each trick over the bid is worth four times its normal value below the line and an extra 100 above the line.

If, however, the declarant is defeated on his redouble, the adversaries score 200 for each trick that they steal from his contract.

Doubling stops at redoubling—that is, each side is allowed one double and no more. *And there can be no bonus when there has been no doubling.*

Honours are not affected by doubling.

The *principles* of bidding will be described in a later chapter. They are too complex and important for a cursory mention. But the *routine* of bidding is here given. Let it be understood that when a player bids, he means that, with his partner's help, he hopes to be able to take as many tricks as he mentions, over and above the first six tricks that go to make his book.

### The Routine of the Bid

Any player is privileged to bid or to pass.

Three *successive* passes close the bidding, *after each player has once had a chance to bid.* On the first round, if the first three players

pass, the fourth has still a first-round right to his bid. Should he pass, the bidding is closed, the hand abandoned, and *there is a new deal by the next dealer*. But with this sole exception of giving fourth hand his first-round chance, *three successive passes close the bidding*. Should the dealer bid and the three other players pass, the bid is closed.

Doubling is not passing. A double re-opens the bidding as much as does a bid.

The number of rounds of bidding is unlimited. Until three successive passes have been voiced, the bidding continues to go round.

Any player may pass on the first round and enter the bidding on a later round.

Any player may change the suit in which he is bidding, as often as he chooses, as long as the bidding is open. He may bid in a suit, drop it, hear it bid by the adversary, and finally return to it, if he so choose. To bid a suit is not necessarily to stick to it. To leave it is not necessarily permanent.

To make a higher bid in a suit that one's *partner* has already named, is to *raise* the bid.

To make a higher bid in a suit that one's *adversary* has already bid, is to out-bid him.



Any player is privileged to bid the suit that has already been bid by his adversary.

*Between two partners*, the hand is played by the one who *first* named the suit that stands as final. *Between two adversaries*, the hand is played by the one who *last* named the suit that stands as final.

The only bidding stipulation is that each successive bid shall contain a *higher number of tricks* than the preceding bid; or that, containing the same number, its total shall exceed the previous bid. Thus "two hearts" (16) will beat "two clubs" (12), but will give place to "two no-trumps" (20).<sup>1</sup>

Any player who makes an "insufficient" bid is bound to raise it to sufficiency, and in the suit named, provided the error be mentioned by either adversary before the insufficient bid is "covered" by the next player's bid, double, or pass. For instance, a player says "three spades." Another player unthinkingly "covers" with "three hearts,"—which is not enough. He is

<sup>1</sup> In America alone does this bidding principle hold. In all other countries, the *highest total* takes precedence. "Four no-trumps" (40) beats "five clubs" (30), as it should. What does 40 mean, if not that it is higher than 30?

bound (if detected in time) to say "four hearts,"—he *may not change the suit*. Moreover, if the following adversary passes, the partner of the faulty bidder is deprived of the privilege of bidding. But should the adversary do anything other than pass, the partner of the faulty bidder is no longer penalized. He is free to bid, double, or pass.

### **The Declarant, the Leader, the Dummy**

When the bidding has been closed by three successive "passes," the declarant (*i. e.* the Player of that hand) has been determined. *He is that player who has made the highest bid, unless he has made it in a suit that was originally named by his partner.* In that case, the highest bidder is merely the raiser, and the partner who first named the winning suit is the declarant.

The partner of the declarant is always the dummy.

The adversary on the left of the declarant is the leader.

*No one should tell, and no one should ask, "whose lead it is."* If anyone at that table knows, everyone should know. All have had the same chance to know. Everyone



should sit still till *someone* leads a card. If it is the proper leader, well and good. If it is not, the declarant is privileged to take a penalty from the adversaries for an improper lead. To rob him of this privilege, by asking or giving information, is to play a dishonest game. It is the commonest of all Auction errors; it is practically universal; but it is, nevertheless, an offence against the decency of the game.

After the first lead is out, the partner of the declarant lays his hand on the board and becomes the dummy. Dummy should be a silent witness of the hand except for those privileges accorded him under Law 60 (see end of volume).

The declarant plays his own hand and dummy's in conjunction and in proper turn. Whenever he wins a trick, he must lead from that hand in which the trick was won.

### Etiquette

Certain faults are provided with penalties which enable the suffering adversary to "get back at" you. Other faults are merely forbidden, but no penalties are laid on their committal. To fall into them, is to be guilty of an offence against etiquette. If you must

do your adversary a bad turn, do it in that direction that provides him with an offset.

Every bid should be made distinctly. Anyone who fails to understand the bid may ask to have it repeated *at the time, but never after it is once covered*. And when the final bid is allowed to stand, and three players have passed in succession, *no one may ask information as to any previous bid*. The final bid, however, may be asked at any stage of the game.

Every one should bid in as few words as possible. If he does not wish to bid he says, "No," "Pass," or "By." And remember that every bid must be made audibly. Some players have a habit of striking the table with their fingers to show that they pass. This is contrary to rule, and gives too much chance for a system of rap-signalling.

Before passing to the discussion of the principles, rules, and laws of the game, I will append a short glossary of terms which must make sense to the reader who wishes to understand my pages.

#### GLOSSARY

*Adversaries*: the partners who play against the make.

*Blind lead:* the original lead, before dummy goes down.

*Call-off:* to bid against one's partner, in another suit, when the intervening adversary has passed.

*Carry:* to pay a player's losses, or pocket his winnings.

*Chicane:* not holding a single trump amongst your thirteen cards. This is no longer worth anything; formerly there was a score allowed for it.

*Command:* to hold the highest unplayed card of a suit.

*Cross-ruff:* to trump one suit in one hand and another in the other.

*Declarant:* the person who plays the hand.

*Dummy:* the partner of the declarant.

*False-card:* to play a purposely misleading card. Only the declarant can afford to do this, for he, alone, has no partner to deceive.

*Finesse:* to take a chance on a lower card winning the suit when you also hold the higher one.

*Force:* to make a person bid, or play, higher. To push him up.

*Fourchette:* a combination formed by holding the card next higher, and that next lower, than the one held by your right-hand adversary. To hold a fourchette over him, is to have his card between the two prongs of your fork.

*Game-all*: each side having won a game.

*Game-in*: one side having won a game.

*Game-in-the-hand*: to make 30 or more trick-points on one hand, from a clean score.

*Gather*: to take in the tricks. This is usually done by that adversary whose partner's card has won the first trick. The declarant gathers his own tricks; dummy should never touch them.

*Go game*: to win the game.

*Guarded suit*: a suit that holds a stopper (see *Stopper*).

*Long trumps*: the trumps that remain in any one hand after all the other hands are exhausted.

*Major-suits*: hearts, spades, and no-trumps.

*Master-card*: the highest unplayed card of a suit.

*Minor-suits*: diamonds and clubs.

*“Over”* and *“under”*: If you sit on a player's left, you play after him and are *“over”* him. It is a desirable position. If you sit on his right, you play before him and are *“under”* him.

*Over-call*: a call-off.

*Player*: when spelled with a capital, this means the declarant.

*Preëmptive bid*: an unnecessarily high bid. These used to be called *“shut-out bids”* until I coined the term *“preëmptive”* which is now used exclusively and universally.

*Revoke*: to refuse to follow suit when holding

a card of the suit led. I beg my readers never to use the slang term of "renig." It is hideous.

*Ruff*: to trump in.

*Side-suit*: any suit other than trumps.

*Slam*: to take all, or all but one, of the tricks is to make a slam. The former is called a grand slam, and is worth 100 above the line. The latter is called a small slam, and is worth 50.

*Still pack*: the pack of cards not in use; the one that is to be used for the next hand.

*Stopper*: a sure trick in a suit. An ace is always a stopper. A king, to be a stopper, needs at least one small card to "guard" it (that is, to fall on the ace and make the king high); a queen needs two; a jack three; and so on.

*Tenace*: the best and third-best of a suit form a major tenace. The second-best and fourth-best form a minor tenace.

"*Through*" and "*up to*": A trick goes "through" the players who play second and third to it, and "up to" that player who plays last on it.

*Yarborough*: a hand that does not hold an ace nor a face-card. Contrary to prevalent superstition, there is no compensation for the holding of such a hand.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BID

It is necessary to make a sharp distinction between *first-round* bids and *later-round* bids. Also between suit-bids and no-trump bids. Suit-bids must always be standard; no-trump bids may be the biggest gamble imaginable.

When you first pick up your hand, look for the highest suit there is,—that is, a no-trump. If you find you have the material for it, bid it. Look no further.<sup>1</sup>

If your hand says “no” to no-trumps, look next for spades. If you have a spade-bid, make it.

Failing that, look next for hearts, and so on down the line. *Use the process of elimination in your bid. Always make the best bid that your hand warrants.* If it says “no” to all tests, pass.

<sup>1</sup> I will explain later those cases where a spade-bid, or a heart-bid, should be given the preference over a no-trump bid.



Although the no-trump bid is the first to seek, I am going to leave its discussion to the last, and teach you first about suit-bids. All suit-bids are governed by the same rules; therefore, in learning one, you learn all four.

### First-round Suit-bids.

*The primary object of the first round of bidding is to combine the hands of partners. It is informatory, purely and simply.*

It may often happen that, though a player holds a perfectly good suit and bids it, he will later choose to abandon it in favor of his partner's suit, or both partners may abandon their original suits in favor of a no-trumper.

The lower the number of tricks in the bid, the easier will be the process of switching suits. Therefore:

*No matter how strong, nor how weak, the material for the bid may be, I distinctly disapprove of an opening bid that is higher than one.*

When you make your initial bid, you are like a blindfolded man groping in the dark to meet a friendly, or a warning, touch. You must not overreach yourself, nor hurry, nor swagger. You must step carefully. After

your partner's guiding touch has met yours, after you have heard informatory voices from the adversaries, the bandage is whisked from your eyes, and you are no longer blind. You can run, jump, leap, rush, as much and as far as wisdom permits. *But your first steps should be careful ones!*

In spite of the obvious good sense of this reasoning, there are many players who open with bids of more than one,—sometimes to show one thing, sometimes another. Their methods will all be fully explained in the chapter on “Preëmptive Bids.” When you play with such players, you must know what to do; you may even choose to join their ranks. But in the meantime let me assure you that I consider it a very poor method, both in theory and practice. And let us continue this chapter with the understanding that no player will open with more than a one-bid.

Now, although first-round bids are informatory, they must always be playable. You must be willing to be left with any bid you make, and must be able to play it if left with it. *Every bid must be a make.*

Some players still wrongfully adhere to the old-fashioned methods of bidding simply to



show high cards, even if they have nothing else in the suit. This is distinctly wrong in latter-day Auction. *To-day, in order to bid a suit, you must have, not only one of the highest two cards in that suit, but you must have enough other cards in the suit to form a support,—preferably five or more, in all.*

Roughly speaking, a first-round suit-bid demands

*1st.* Ace or king at the top.

*2nd.* Five or more cards in the suit.

*3rd.* A quick outside trick in the hand.

Let us consider these three requisites separately, and mention their exceptions,—if there be any.

*1st. Ace or king at the top.*

This is an almost inviolable law. When you make a first-round suit-bid, you tell your partner positively that you hold the ace or king of that suit. He will believe you, and will reckon his hand accordingly. *See that you do not lie to him.*

*Queen-bids on the first-round* are always illegitimate and are never possible except in about one case in ten thousand. *The beginner must let them alone entirely.* When he is an expert, he will want to let them alone except in that tremendously exceptional case

already mentioned, *which he alone, of all players, will be able to recognize.*

*Jack-bids on the first-round do not exist, nor do bids on any card lower than a jack. No matter how long your suit, it must be deferred to a later round than the first, if there be nothing higher than a jack to head it.*

*2nd. Five or more cards in the suit.*

*There are no three-card bids.*

*There are no good four-card bids, except in a major-suit with all four of the cards honours. Even then, the fact that there may be nine trumps against you makes your bid a dangerous one. A two-bid on a four-card suit is almost prohibited.*

Five trumps are about the smallest possible allowance. And with but five, two at least must be honours. The general rule is that *a suit must total seven points at least, counting two for each honour and one for each plain card.* Five cards with two honours would total seven; so would six cards with one honour. Everything over the seven points is an added advantage.

It is obvious that a seven-card suit that did not hold a single honour would count seven points. It, however, is barred by the first rule, which demands ace or king at the top.

Also, a four-card suit that held three honours would total seven. And many players will bid such a suit. The best players, however, rather dread a four-card trump suit. Experience has taught them its pitfalls. They bid four-card suits only when they are hearts or spades and when all four cards are honours. And even then, the bidding is perverted by the 64, or 72, honours, and is not good in itself. Were honours counted out, there would be no four-card bids.

*However, if a four-card suit is ever to be bid, it must be on the first round. Strength is the prime requisite of a first-round bid; length, of a later-round bid.*

*3rd. A quick outside trick in the hand.*

This means the ace or the guarded king of some suit other than trumps. A "quick" trick must be the first round or the second. The third round of a side-suit is too uncertain in declared trumps. One of the adversaries may ruff it, or it may never materialize.

A sound first-round bid should protect two suits, trumps and one other. This rule is inviolable in a five-trump hand. Its neglect is the sign of a poor or inexperienced player.

The "outside" trick should be an ace

(which is sure), or a well-guarded king (which is not entirely sure). Queens don't count.

The most conservative players urge that your outside trick must be an ace or a king-queen. King-queen, being a sequence-stopper, is as safe as the ace. While I am conservative, I do not demand this outside combination. It is safe, and I love to hold it, but *too many perfectly sound makes are sacrificed in waiting for it.*

Failing an ace, or a king-queen, these same ultra-conservatives demand *two* guarded side-kings. Then even if one loses, the chances are that both will not. Again I voice approval of the safeness, but dissent from the necessity. Again I say too many good makes will be lost. Guarded trumps and two other guarded suits would make *three* guarded suits. Three guarded suits are the requisite for a no-trumper; two, for a suit-bid.

Nevertheless, an outside trick is almost as valuable as a trump-suit. It is almost as necessary for your partner to know that you hold it. *With but five trumps, you must hold an outside trick.*

With *six* trumps, many players waver and will bid without an outside trick—even

many first-grade players. But I still want my outside trick.

With *seven* trumps, I think most players will bid, even without an outside trick. And with *eight* trumps, only the ultra-conservatives will hesitate. *They* say that, even with eight trumps and the ace-king-queen at the top, they will not bid on the first round without an outside trick; and that if there is never a second round, they will not mind losing the hand. I think they are wrong, and there is no possible doubt that the consensus of expert opinion is against them. Such a hand would be this:

♥ A K Q 9 8 6 4 3  
 ♣ 10 4  
 ♦ J  
 ♠ 7 2

The player who would not bid that hand on the first round would certainly be the exception—even among experts. Of course, any beginner would bid it without a second thought. But even that fact does not mark it as necessarily wrong.

These points, then, cover the requisites for a sound first-round suit-bid. Ace or king at the top, preferably five or more cards in

suit (though there are such things as four-card bids), and a sure outside trick in the hand. This last requisite may possibly be waived in the case of seven or eight trumps with good, high, touching honours. But that is a discussed point and differently regarded by various authorities.

### **Later-round Suit-bids**

Suit-bids on all rounds save the first, require length pre-eminently. They may be headed by lower cards than the king. Or they may be made on long trumps alone, with no outside tricks. Partners will make due allowance for second-round bids and will not credit them with the strength and reliability of first-round bids. Second-round bids are *long* and *weak*.

### **First-round No-trumpers.**

The first, and only, requisite to an *opening* no-trumper is that *three-suits shall be stopped*. Granting that, it may be bid on as much, or as little, else as the player desires. Only the degree of skill possessed by a player can determine the lightness of his no-trump bids.



If a no-trump is bid *after* an adverse suit-bid (*i. e.* a suit-bid by either adversary), there is another requisite: it positively *must* possess a stopper in that adverse suit. *You cannot bid no-trumps unless you stop the adversary's suit.* This is the one rule that cannot be broken.

But an opening no-trumper can have no concern with this rule, and has therefore but one bar to its existence,—the lack of three suits stopped. *You positively must not bid no-trump with two unguarded suits.*

The opening no-trumper may be very light. It is allowable, but not advisable, to bid equally light no-trumpers in second, third, or fourth hand. Only, however, in the opening hand are they desirable.

Speaking generally, “one no-trump” is the most valuable opening declaration. There are many reasons for this. First, it gives your partner four chances to help you, instead of only one. Again, it is the only suit in which it is possible to go game with only three-odd tricks. Then, there will often be, on the same deal, two hands either of which could bid “one no-trump,” but neither of which could bid “two no-trumps.” *If you get it first, it stands to reason that the other man*

*can't*. Again, a declaration of "one no-trump" will force your adversary to a two-bid, and will sometimes prevent his naming his suit to his partner. This will shut out information between your adversaries and will often hamper them seriously.

A split-hand is always a no-trumper. By a "split" hand I mean one where the strength is evenly divided and the suits lie in groups of three or four.

Hands holding singletons are dangerous no-trumpers. In declared trumps, you can ruff short suits. In no-trumps, there is no ruffing. Even if your singleton be an ace, it is more valuable in declared trumps than in no-trumps. In declared trumps, you will lose no round of the suit. You will take the first round, and ruff all subsequent rounds. But in no-trumps, as far as your own hand can show, you will lose every round save one.

I should never dream of bidding no-trump on a hand with a blank suit. The adversaries may hold thirteen cards of one suit against you!

"Length is strength," in no-trumps. A long suit and side reentry is an ideal no-trumper. In fact, this type and the "split-hand" type are the only two types of



no-trumper that there are. The former is played by establishing the long suit and then proceeding to slide down it; the latter, by skimming off the high cards in the various suits and taking tricks with them. This is the most primitive type of no-trumper and takes no skill whatever to play. The other type requires more skill; but not all the skill in the world will save it if it goes wrong.

Although aces are the most desirable things in no-trumps, it is possible to bid no-trump without an ace—almost an unheard-of thing in the old days! Singletons and missing suits are much greater deterrents than a lack of aces! *Even a singleton in the suit which your partner has announced, is very bad.* Suppose his suit doesn't clear in one round, and he has no side reëntry,—then where are you? His hand is absolutely useless to you. If you don't need his hand, and simply want to know that that particular suit is not established against you, then your singleton need not worry you. But if you need his suit in order to make your bid, don't think that your one lead will necessarily be enough to clear it.

Singletons weaken a no-trump hand, but do not prevent a no-trump bid. If you wait for everything, you will rarely get a no-

trumper. If you hold a singleton in a suit, that suit probably will be bid against your no-trumper. If it is, you can drop your bid; if it is not, it is safe to assume that your partner holds at least a stopper.

A "standard" no-trumper, and one that can never be criticised is this:

*1st.* Three stopped suits (obligatory).

*2nd.* Average strength. And "average" strength means this (or its equivalent):

One ace, one king, one queen, one jack, one ten, one nine, and so on down the line. Two kings and two queens could be considered the equivalent of one ace, one king, and one queen; the four cards without an ace, and the three cards with an ace, make approximately the same strength.

When it comes to hands that are under the standard, it is impossible, as I said before, to give any hard-and-fast law as to how light the bid may be. It all depends on the skill of the player. No-trump is the one suit in which you can take a long chance,—provided always that three of the four suits are guarded. An ace in one suit, a protected king in another, and a protected queen in a third, will always elicit a no-trump bid from me—particularly if there be a jack or ten thrown

in somewhere. Two guarded kings and two guarded queens, scattered through three different suits, is another no-trump combination.

*There are no obligatory bids.* There seems to be a prevalent superstition in some quarters that three aces "call for a no-trumper." This is not true. No one need bid no-trumps unless he wants to. An empty hand that holds nothing but three aces is a possible no-trumper, and a good player usually so bids it. But it is a very difficult hand to play, and no one need bid it unless he chooses.

*Don't get the no-trump fever.* It is a mark of the beginner to disregard every suit save no-trumps.

No-trump bids on later rounds follow exactly the same rules as first-round no-trumpers. There are no distinctive rules for them, as there are for suit-bids.

A dealer may, and should, bid a very light no-trumper. He does it to force others and his chances of being left with it are very small.

Any player, after the dealer, is equally privileged to bid light no-trumpers; but it is not advisable. The circumstances are different. Second-, third-, and fourth-hand no-

trumpers should be bid only on standard hands that have a fair chance of scoring game.

*Second-hand*, with a poor (though possible) no-trumper, would be wise to pass if the dealer has already passed. Because, second-hand may get a better hand on the next deal if this one is abandoned. And after two passes, it is well on its way to abandonment.

The same is true of *third-hand*, and no one but an idiot would bid a poor no-trumper as *fourth-hand*. *His* is the privilege of definitely closing an undesirable hand. By a weak bid he may give his adversaries another chance, and they may make an otherwise impossible second-round bid that will eventually win.

While there is a certain fascination about a no-trump hand, I think it is usually conceded to be the easiest hand to play. And certainly it is the hardest hand to save when things go wrong. Give me a suit-bid, if I am to play a shaky hand.

One of the greatest of French poets was asked if it were not very difficult to write a poem, and he replied: "Difficult? Not in the least! It is either easy or impossible!"

I think I never heard a better epigram, and it comes into my mind whenever I watch, or play, a no-trump hand. A no-trump is

always "easy or impossible," and there is nothing quite so sad in life as a no-trump hand gone wrong.

### The Relation between the Score and the Bid

The state of the score should always be a factor in the choice of the suit that is bid.

On a clean score, it is always preferable to play a major-suit, as it looks more like game-in-the-hand.

*Game-in-the-hand should be the goal of every player.* Partial games are too uncertain and may be stolen from under your nose. You may climb by painful steps to 28 and then see your adversaries gain game with one strong rush.

Nevertheless, if game-in-the-hand is impossible, *I should always prefer a partial game to nothing at all. I should rather go game in two hands than to abandon both those hands because neither one would score game alone.*

This being so, I voice an emphatic dissent to those writers who insist that it is the sign of a weak game to hear clubs or diamonds bid on a clean score.

In the first place, to *bid* clubs or diamonds is not necessarily to *play* them. It may be to help your partner to a no-trumper. Suppose he holds this hand:

♥ A K Q  
 ♣ 7 6 3  
 ♦ 10 9 8  
 ♠ A K 4 3

There is a hand without a possible bid in it, albeit with five sure tricks for no-trumps. Yet it is not a no-trumper, because it holds two unguarded suits. It is equally impossible as any suit-bid.

But suppose you open with "a club" or "a diamond"! Instantly your partner's no-trumper is established. He sees you with one suit and an outside trick. You must have either a club-suit with the ace or king of diamonds, or a diamond suit with the ace or king of clubs, because he has both the other aces and kings. As soon as he hears your weak-suit bid, his no-trumper is a stone-wall against anyone.

Again, even if you are left with a club or a diamond, you might go game on it. Five-odd is not an impossibility. Even slams are frequently made.



And lastly, suppose you are left with the lowest suit ("a club") and make the least possible on it—six. That six will enable you to go game on three-odd hearts or spades where formerly it needed four, or on four-odd diamonds or clubs instead of five.

Still, don't *play* diamonds or clubs on a clean score any oftener than you need. *Bid* them but don't *play* them, by choice. Don't let your partner play them; take his information to change his minor-suit to a major-suit if possible. And as adversary, don't mind letting your enemy play a minor-suit on a clean score. Don't strain any muscles or make any weak bids to take it away from him. He *may* go game, but the chances are long, against it.

Play major-suits on a clean score whenever you can. But when it is a choice between a good minor-suit or nothing, take the former.

With something on the score, the case is different. When the score stands at eighteen, for instance, *the suits lose all rank*. It takes two of *anything*, to put you game. Clubs are as good as no-trumps.

*And always, and at any score, choose a good heart or a good spade in preference to a no-trumper, unless you hold a hundred aces.*

This is absolutely demanded now in the best Auction though it is hard to grasp by old-fashioned no-trump devotees. But it is positively required of the up-to-date player. And it is the sole exception to using the process of elimination in your choice of bid.

Even when holding those wonderful things, a hundred aces, there are hands on which it is wisdom to disregard them and to bid "a spade" or "a heart" in preference. Here is such a hand:

♥ A  
 ♣ A 7 4  
 ♦ A 2  
 ♠ A K Q 10 7 5 3

That is a much better spade-hand than no-trumper. The short-suits and the singleton make the no-trumper dangerous, and the 72 spade-honours stand up very well against the voluntarily abandoned hundred aces.

### **Bids from the Various Players.**

The *Dealer* should make any good bid that he holds. The higher the better. He should not shirk responsibilities.

If the dealer passes, *second-hand* should



never make a weak bid. If the dealer bids, second-hand should make any possible legitimate bid, in order to prevent the dealer from getting a one-bid contract. He should *not*, however, make poor bids for the mere purpose of forcing.

These same principles apply to *third-hand* in all those cases where the dealer has passed and second-hand has bid. When the dealer has bid and second-hand has passed, third-hand should pass, unless he himself holds a better bid than his partner,—one which will go game in fewer tricks or which holds *exceedingly* high honours. With such holdings he should bid against his partner. This he should also do when he can give *no possible* help to his partner but holds a perfectly good suit of his own, albeit a lower one than that which his partner holds. Such bids are called “warning” bids, or “backward” bids. No sane player would voluntarily go backwards unless with a specific object. In Auction it is always a danger signal. Don’t feel called upon to “show” a lower suit than your partner’s; “show” it only as a danger signal.

If the dealer’s bid does not suit third-hand and he has no bid of his own, he can do noth-

ing but pass,—whether second-hand has bid or not. When second-hand has bid, a third-hand pass is sufficient warning to the dealer that his partner cannot help him. When second-hand has passed, third-hand (with no help and no suit of his own) can do nothing but pass. His pass does not necessarily mean concurrence in the dealer's suit. It may mean either that, or no help and no means of warning. In the latter case, it is better to play the dealer's *good* suit, even without help, than to play third-hand's *poor* suit,—possibly equally without help.

And finally, when the dealer has bid, and his bid *suits* third-hand, third-hand should raise his partner's bid in the event of second-hand bidding. When second-hand passes, third-hand may either also pass (from pleasure), or give an unnecessary raise. Such a raise is called a "preëmptive raise" and will be described in a later chapter. It is made in the hope of silencing fourth-hand, or of forcing him.

And last of all we come to *fourth-hand*. He should combine his hand with second-hand's, exactly as third-hand combines *his* with the dealer's. With this sole exception:

*when all three of the other players have passed, fourth-hand should never make a weak bid. He should never bid except with a more than fair chance of going game, or of scoring high honours. Why, otherwise, should he give his adversaries the chance of a second-round bid which may be just what they are longing for? No partial game is worth it!*

### When there are Several Rounds of Bidding.

In order to determine how high to bid your suit (whether it be trumps or no-trumps), *count your losers, not your takers.* In Auction, as in life at large, it is the things that are against you with which you should concern yourself. Take, for example, the big heart-hand which I gave a short time back:

♥ A K Q 9 8 6 4 3  
 ♣ 10 4  
 ♦ J  
 ♠ 7 2

When you want to determine its value, don't put your finger on those hearts and say: "I have this—and this—and this," etc. *Look at your losers and look at them hard!* Even allowing every trump in the

hand to be a taker (with eight in your hand, it is improbable that the jack is guarded against you), even allowing that, *you hold five sure losers*. Don't say: "But the jack of diamonds is a singleton." What if he is? He has to lose, doesn't he? Do you expect to take a trick with a singleton jack?

You hold five losers. That is a two-bid, no more. If your partner has help for you, he will raise you (I will treat of the raise in the next chapter). But that is his business, not yours. Weak players always say: "but I must expect *something* from my partner, mustn't I?"

*Expect nothing from him except one possible trick, unless he tells you definitely that he has more.* Your partner has a tongue and the power to use it. You don't have to handle his hand on supposition and faith.

If he does nothing but pass, credit him with one lone trick, no more. Deduct that from your five losers and it leaves four. *In spite of your eight hearts, if you bid your hand higher than three you bid to a loss.*

And in any hand where you lack the ace, king, or queen of your suit, count one of your trumps as losers. *All trumps are not necessarily takers.*

The principles laid down in this chapter cover the entire ground of the bid for each individual player. In the next two chapters on The Raise, and The Call-off, I will show you how to combine your hand with your partner's to the best end.

## CHAPTER III

*(Specially recommended to all players, even excellent ones.)*

### THE RAISE

WHEN your partner bids in a suit that fits your hand, when you have help for him, and when you hold no better game-going bid yourself, you raise your partner's bid if it becomes necessary,—and sometimes even if it doesn't. This unnecessary (or "preëmptive") raise will be described in a later chapter. In this, we will confine ourselves to the *standard raise*.

To raise your partner's bid *in any declared trump*, you must hold two things:

1st. A "trick."

2nd. A "raiser."

"Tricks" consist of three things, and "raisers" of five,—those same three and two additional ones. In other words, there are three sorts of "tricks" and five sorts of "raisers."

Tricks are:



- 1st. Guarded trump-honours. *Or,*
- 2nd. Side-aces. *Or,*
- 3rd. Side-kings, guarded.

One of these three things must be found in your hand and deducted from it before you look for your raiser.

And raisers are:

- 1st. Guarded trump-honours. *Or,*
- 2nd. Side-aces. *Or,*
- 3rd. Side-kings, guarded. *Or,*
- 4th. Side-singletons. *Or,*
- 5th. Blank suits.

A plain singleton is one raiser. A singleton ace is two raisers, because you will lose no round of that suit. You will take the first round with your ace, and will ruff every subsequent round. A blank suit is also two raisers. It is, of course, necessary in both these cases that you have some trumps with which to take ruffs; otherwise, your singleton, or your blank suit will be valueless.

And, in addition, *your trick and your first raiser must lie in different suits.* In other words, *you never may raise on one suit alone; not even if it be trumps.*

Nothing lower than a side-king ever counts, either as a trick or a raiser. Queens don't count, no matter how well-guarded they may

be. Guarded trump-honours, side-aces, and guarded side-kings count equally as tricks or raisers. Two such holdings, lying in different suits, may be reckoned as a trick and a raiser. But singletons and blank suits are raisers only—never tricks. They are powerless until you have first deducted your trick from your hand. Holding two of them (and no other asset), you cannot raise; because, though you have two “raisers,” you have no “trick,” and that is the first requisite.

Thus it will be seen that to say, “you must have a trick and a raiser in order to raise,” is not the same as to say, “you must have two sure tricks in order to raise.” No one could call a singleton deuce in a side-suit “a sure trick,” and yet it *is* a “raiser”—provided always that you first have your “trick.”

If your singleton or your blank suit should be trumps, it is obvious that it would be rendered valueless.

Let us take a few concrete examples:

Your partner bids “a heart”; second-hand says “a spade”; and you hold this:

♥	J 7 5 4
♣	10 9 3
♦	A J 10
♠	10 6 2



Your hand is worth one raise. You have a trick and a raiser. The guarded jack of hearts is either a trick or a raiser, and the side-ace of diamonds is equally a trick or a raiser. You can say "two hearts" (you *must* say it), but you can never say more.

Again, and under the same circumstances, you hold this:

♥ 7 5 4  
 ♣ A J 10 7 6  
 ♦ K Q 4 3  
 ♠ 2

You have a trick (ace of clubs), and two raisers (king of diamonds and singleton spade). You can raise hearts to "three," even without another word from your partner.

Another example, under the same circumstances:

♥ A J 9 8 7 4  
 ♣ Q J  
 ♦ Q 3 2  
 ♠ Q 2

In spite of your six trumps, ace-high, *you cannot raise once. You may never raise on any one suit. You may never raise on trumps alone. And side-queens are not raisers.*

*Neither are short-suits if they hold more than one card.*

Let me show you why side-queens are not raisers.

The object of the declarant is to get in, as soon as possible, and to "boss" the hand. The other side, not his side, will lead. *The adversaries will lead and they won't lead trumps.* In the hand just given, supposing a heart-raise to have been made and the hand to be exposed as dummy, the adversaries might make six tricks before the declarant ever saw light. They might take the ace and king of spades, the ace and king of diamonds, and the ace and king of clubs, before they ever stopped. The bid would be defeated before the declarant ever got a chance, because, *though holding numbers of trumps, he had not a quick side-trick in either hand. He could not command either the first or second round of any side-suit, because he held no side-aces nor kings. And his queens did him no good, because their turn came too late.*

Side-queens don't count because the third round of a suit generally comes too late to save a hand. Also, because a third-round is frequently ruffed by one or the other of the adversaries.

In every hand there are thirteen rounds. And in every hand there are eight aces and kings. That means that, in the normal hand, *eight out of every thirteen rounds are captured by aces and kings*. That leaves five rounds only, to be scrambled for by all the queens and jacks and low trumps in the pack. The chances of a side-queen aren't strong enough. If she makes, well and good; but she is not sure enough to be counted upon. It is only rarely that a side-ace or king gets ruffed by the adversary.

Another example:

Your partner bids a "heart"; second-hand says "a spade," and you hold this:

♥ 9 7 6 3  
 ♣ Q J 7 6 5 3 2  
 ♦ 2  
 ♠ 2

In spite of your two singletons you *cannot raise*. You have two raisers, but no trick.

Here is a hand, on the contrary, on which you could raise your partner's hearts many times:

♥ J 9 7 5  
 ♣ A K 5 4  
 ♦ K Q 4 3  
 ♠ A

Your guarded trump-honour is a trick; your ace of clubs one raiser; your king of clubs another (two raisers); your king of diamonds another (three raisers); and your singleton ace of spades two more (five raisers). *You can, and should raise your partner's "one heart" to "six hearts," if necessary, even without another word from him.*

For look! Your partner has bid on good hearts and one outside trick (ace or king). His outside trick must be the ace of diamonds because you have the ace and king of clubs, the king of diamonds, and the ace of spades. The adversaries must have the king of spades, to be bidding the suit.

Put good hearts and the ace of diamonds in your partner's hand, and see how safe he would be with your hand and his. No matter what is led, he comes in immediately; he commands, he exhausts the adversary, he "bosses" the hand at every turn.

Even if he has bid without the outside trick he cannot lose much with such an assisting hand as yours.

Now, it will be perfectly apparent that a bad bid will kill a perfectly good raise. If your partner bids on a jack-suit, and you raise him on two side-aces, there will be trouble.

The ace, king, and queen of trumps will all be against you. Your raise is all right, but his bid isn't.

*This shows the necessity for a standard bid. When you trifle with the rules for the bid, you kill the rules for the raise. A bad bid is like a house with a shaky foundation; it may stand as long as it is but one story high, but you can't build on it.*

The man who bids "one" on a long jack-suit, may be perfectly able to pull off his odd, or more. *But his partner can have no idea whether or not to raise him, and can put no reliance in him.* Since permanent good teamwork is infinitely more profitable than an occasional stray trick or two, it follows that jack-bids are barred.

Even with several perfectly sound tricks and raisers in your hand, *I would not have you raise with a singleton trump, unless it were the ace, the king, or the queen.* Any one of those top three cards will either take a trick or clear your partner's suit. But a small trump singleton is valueless either in taking or in clearing. And the balance of the trumps may easily be with the adversaries. If your partner has bid on five trumps (as he has a perfect right to do), and if you raise him on one (even

with good side assistance), seven trumps out of thirteen will lie against you.

*You don't need many trumps to raise, you don't need real trump-help. Side-help is even more valuable. But you must have at least two trumps in your hand to raise, no matter how small those trumps are. This is in order to give you the balance of the trumps. The only cases when you may raise with a singleton trump, are those cases when your singleton is the ace, the king, or the queen.*

Don't raise your partner's hearts on this hand,—even though it holds a trick and a raiser:

♥	9
♣	A 8 6 5 2
♦	A Q 4 3
♠	10 9 4

But change that nine of hearts to the queen and you may raise.

No one but an idiot would raise a suit-bid, being chicane. There could, of course, happen a hand on which it could be done correctly; but such cases would be so rare as to make unusual exceptions. They would be so striking as to be recognized at a glance, should they occur. Such a hand would be this:



♥ —  
 ♣ A K Q 8  
 ♦ A K 9 3  
 ♠ A 7 4 3 2

You would be allowed to raise hearts (even being *chicane*), on that hand with five sure tricks in it. But you wouldn't have to; nobody would be bidding against you and your partner except in about one case in a thousand.

*If your partner passes on the first round and bids on the second*, you need an extra trick to raise him. You need a trick and *two* raisers, because you are raising a weak bid instead of a strong one. Your partner lacks either the top two cards of his suit, or he lacks the requisite outside trick. For that reason he has not bid on the first round. If you hold his ace or king, you may raise him with one trick and *one* raiser; otherwise, you need one trick and *two* raisers to raise a second-round bid.

To raise your partner once, you must hold one trick and one "raiser." To raise him twice, you must hold one trick and two "raisers"; to raise him three times, you must hold one trick and three "raisers,"—and so on. *And it is your absolute duty to announce every "raiser" you hold!*



It is the same thing whether you raise your partner from one to two, or from two to three. Suppose the dealer is your adversary and opens with "a spade." Your partner sits next and bids "two hearts." Your hand holds a trick and two raisers for hearts. The second adversary says "two spades." You say "three hearts" (thus announcing one of your raisers). The dealer says "three spades." Your partner, himself, says "four hearts." The next adversary says "four spades." You must announce your second raiser by bidding "five hearts." *To fail to do so, would be to shirk responsibility.*

A legitimate raise must never be deferred. It must be made the moment it is needed. To pass it would be to deny it, and to deceive your partner. He could not reckon his hand.

The sole excuse for failing to give a correct raise, is the expectation of defeating the adverse bid. "Playing against the bid" will be described in a later chapter, and defeating the adversary is always an excuse for forfeiting either the bid or the raise. But no one should harbour many hopes of defeating one-bids, or two-bids.

On the contrary, *no illegitimate raise should ever be given,—not even to the score, not even*

*to save game or rubber.* Let the *bidder* be the one to do the plunging to the score. He sees the bidding hand; he knows how much to risk; he can do what bluffing is to be done, because his hand will never be exposed and he alone can judge how far to push it. But he must be able to depend on every raise he gets, as absolutely reliable.

Some players excuse a bad raise, by saying, "I didn't make that till the second round." That is reasoning for a *bid*, not for a *raise*. Weak bids are deferred till the second round, weak raises are not. *If possible at all, they must be made at once. If not possible, they must never be made.*

Let me emphasize by a few more examples before leaving this subject:

If your partner bids "a diamond" and the next hand says "a heart," you can *not* say "two diamonds" on this hand:

♥	9 6
♣	Q 8 4
♦	A 10 7 5 3 2
♠	10 5

The only tricks you have are trumps, and "you must not raise on trumps alone." The adversaries will be leading and *they will not*

*lead trumps.* You may lose six, or even seven, tricks before you ever get in. Don't you know that old cry of "I can't get in!" Of course you can't get in with three suits against you and only one with you.

On this hand, on the contrary, you can easily say "two diamonds."

♥ 6  
 ♣ Q 10 9 7  
 ♦ 8 5 4 2  
 ♠ A 7 6 3

You hold a singleton and can ruff the adversary's suit on the second round; you have several little trumps, for ruffing; and you can stop spades as soon as they are led; you can "get in," and run the hand to suit yourself.

On this hand you can say "two diamonds," and later, "three diamonds," and "four diamonds":

♥ A 4 3 2  
 ♣ A  
 ♦ 9 6 4 3  
 ♠ K 9 8 5

Your ace of hearts is "a trick," your king of spades is one "raiser," and your singleton ace of clubs is "two raisers." You will never lose a round of clubs.

## Raisers in No-Trumps

In no-trumps, any guarded honour is a trick, and any other guarded honour is a raiser. Queens and jacks, if guarded, count both as tricks and raisers; because, in no-trumps, the third and fourth round of a suit cannot be ruffed. Singletons and blank suits, on the other hand, are valueless in no-trumps and are never raisers. "Length is strength in no-trump."

The first person to bid no-trump against an adversary's suit-bid must, of course, hold a stopper in that suit. Granting this, any guarded honour is a trick and any other guarded honour is a raiser. The no-trump raising rules are much more primitive than those for declared trumps,—just as no-trump itself is more primitive than a declared trump. In the infancy of cards, undoubtedly every hand was played on no-trump principles. No ace could be taken with a lower card. Nothing but an ace could beat a king; and so on. As players grew more sophisticated, *trumps* were invented, one suit was given an advantage over all others; the deuce of that suit would beat the ace of any other suit; the game became more complicated,

more subtle, and more fascinating, in consequence. But throughout Auction you will find a primitiveness and childishness about no-trumps that is lacking in the suits. In the lead, the raise, the method of play, the no-trump suit is startlingly simple and bald.

Granting that you have now mastered the principles of the bid and the raise, you will have no difficulty in combining your hand with your partner's and in knowing how high to go, whether as bidder or raiser.

Let the bidder bid legitimately and then count his losers—*not* his takers. The assisting hand need not trouble to count losing cards; he must simply announce all his legitimate "raisers."

*Let the making-hand count all losing cards; let the assisting-hand announce all "raisers"; then let the making-hand deduct his partner's announced takers from his own losers, and he will know how high to bid.*

Don't you see what sense it makes? Don't you understand that the original bidder kills all chances of thus combining the two hands, if he insists on unwarranted makes, or on opening-bids of more than one?

*I have never seen heavy penalties lost under this system of combined effort!*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OVER-CALL

(Also known as the "call-off" or "take-out.")

To bid against your partner, *when no one else has bid*, is to use the over-call. If the intervening adversary has bid, there is no question of an over-call. You can bid against the adversary, you can raise your partner, or you can pass. But to "over-call" is to take the bid away from your partner. You cannot take it away from him unless he has it.

When the over-call is made in a *better* suit than the original bid (*i. e.*, one that can go game in fewer tricks), it does not necessarily mean no help for the first suit; it simply means a correct desire to use the most valuable suit in the combined hands for the trump and the less valuable suit as a side-suit. This is such obvious common-sense as to need no comment.

When the over-call is made in a poorer suit



than the original bid, it is always a warning of danger, and of lack of help. No sane player would walk backwards, except with a reason.

*This warning of danger is much more necessary in no-trump than in declared trumps.*

In declared trumps, it is made *only* when there is absolutely no help for the original suit, and when there is also a *perfectly good suit with which to over-call*. Never make a weak over-call to your partner's suit-bid. He has a good suit, or he wouldn't have bid it. It is better to play his *good* suit, even without help, than your *poor* suit,—possibly equally without help.

I will give you an example of a poor over-call in declared trumps;





It was a clean score (love-all), and Z dealt. He bid "one heart" on excellent material. A passed, of course, and Y over-called incorrectly with "two diamonds."

This said to Z that his partner had absolutely no help for him. Hearts are a good suit to play on a clean score,—a major-suit. It takes but four-odd for game-in-the-hand. In diamonds—a minor-suit,—it takes five-odd. Therefore Y must have had some good reason for walking backward. He must be sounding a danger signal.

Z was right so to reason. But the information given by Y was entirely incorrect. He *had* help for hearts,—he could even have raised them once. Two well-guarded side-kings and two trump-honours make no despicable help. Z-Y would have had 40 heart-honours.

B bid "two spades." Z, feeling himself debarred from hearts, switched to his partner's suit and raised the diamonds (he had a trick and four raisers). A raised spades once, and Y eventually played "four diamonds." He made them, but just missed game,—losing a spade-round and two diamond-rounds. In hearts, Z would have made game, with 40 honours to boot.

When asked why he bid as he did, Y made this classic remark (so familiar as to deserve a high rank in the list of "bromides"): "Why, I thought I must show my diamonds once. Then if my partner wanted to go back to hearts, he could, and I could help him in it."

A row of exclamation points would be the only possible comment on such sheer idiocy. Y had walked backwards, had over-called a desirable thing with an undesirable thing, had warned, had denied assistance, and then had expected his partner to understand this: "It is all right if you want to play your hearts. I can help you."

Does that make sense? It doesn't to me!

*Don't go backward in declared trumps unless you have absolutely no help to offer, and hold a good bid, to boot.*

### **The Over-Call from No-Trumps**

It is in no-trumps that the over-call is particularly necessary. If a no-trump hand goes wrong, nothing can save it. It is safer to take it back to suit. *It is so much safer that it is done even on a very poor suit.*

If your partner bids "a no-trump," the

next hand passes, and you have an absolutely blank hand, should you, or should you not, change your partner's no-trump to two in a suit? In other words, should you warn him of your inability to help in no-trump?

Most decidedly you should warn him if you are able. But to do so on insufficient material would be to increase your danger instead of to lessen it.

When your partner bids no-trump, his suit is aces and kings. If you have no aces and kings, you are blank in his suit. How shall you tell him so?

Tell him so by bidding two on any six-card suit, or any five-card suit that runs to a ten spot (or any card higher than a ten spot); but on no four-card suit, and on no five-card suit that is headed by a card that is lower than a ten.

To change a no-trump to two in any suit (with no bid from the intervening adversary), is a distinct backward bid; a backward bid is always a signal of weakness. Therefore, if your partner says "a no-trump," the next hand passes, and you say "two clubs," you are not telling your partner that you hold wonderful clubs; you are telling him that your hand is a wretched one, that it is void of aces

and kings, but that you have six little clubs, or five little clubs headed by the ten spot or higher, or, possibly, a *good suit of clubs, but nothing else.*

After this warning bid, if he chooses to go back to his no-trumps, knowing that he must take care of them alone, and that there is probably not a single taking card in your hand, then let him alone. You have warned him once and you have done your duty; there is no necessity for any further responsibility on your part.

To a novice, it would seem absurd to bid two clubs on six little clubs to a seven-spot—especially when the bid was not a forced one. But a shaky hand is always safer as a declared trump than as a no-trump. Nothing is so hopeless as a no-trump that goes wrong; there is no possible way to save it, no way to “get in.”

In a trump make, you can ruff suits—get a cross-ruff—use little trumps separately in the two hands; if your partner has a no-trump hand and you have half of the clubs in the pack (six or seven) you are fairly safe to make two-odd in clubs; even with all five honours against you, even with five clubs to an honour (and your partner's no-trump hand), your

bid is not a preposterous one. But when you hold but four trumps, you are too short to do any ruffing; and as your object in changing the bid was simply that you might be able to do some ruffing with your weak hand, it follows that you must not change it on any four-card suit.

It is because of these excellent rules that we are enabled to bid the light no-trumpers that we bid to-day. You cannot bid a no-trump on *nothing*, of course. You must have three suits stopped, at least. But you can bid it on next to nothing,—and on hands that used to be considered helping hands only. The adversaries will probably take you out of your no-trumper; if they don't, it is almost a safe gamble that your partner has help for you; and if he has no help, he may at least hold material enough for a warning bid.

It is never necessary to warn twice. "A word to the wise is sufficient." If you warn your partner away from his suit and he returns to it, *let him alone*.

Here is the most striking example of the wisdom of these rules that I have seen recently:

	♥ —										
	♣ 7 6 5 4 3 2										
	♦ 8 7 5										
	♠ 10 9 8 2										
♥ Q J 9 8 6 2 ♣ 10 ♦ 6 4 3 ♠ 7 6 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Y</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">A</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">B</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">Z</td><td></td></tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 10 7 4 3 ♣ A Q J ♦ K Q 10 ♠ K J 5
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A K 5										
	♣ K 9 8										
	♦ A J 9 2										
	♠ A Q 4										

Z bid "a no-trump," A went by, and Y made the warning over-call of "two clubs," on "any six-card suit." Every one passed, and Y made four-odd against extremely clever defence; against ordinary defence he would have made game without any trouble.

Z could not have made even his book at no-trump. He was clever enough not to go back to his suit after Y's warning-bid, for he realized that both his diamonds and spades must positively be led up to—and that his side hand would be a wonderful help in clubs. In spite of the fact that four of the club honours lay against them, Y's great length in clubs precluded the probability of any other



player holding very many of that suit. It was a wonderfully correct bid.

But you can see, can you not, how aghast the ordinary player would be to hear "a two-club" bid on Y's hand? "Two clubs" on that hand! And you call yourself a conservative player!" You know the line of arguments such a bid would elicit. Then, convinced of having discovered something brilliant and desirous of impressing less well-informed acquaintances, he would proceed to over-call "no-trumps" on hands like this:

♥	9 8 5
♣	Q 4 3 2
♦	10 8 7
♠	7 6 3

There is no six-card suit in that hand; there is no "five-card suit that runs to a ten or higher"; there is no short suit nor missing suit; and there is no sense in the bid.

These over-calls in suits, and against a partner's no-trumper, are familiarly spoken of as "the no-trump take-outs." *In the minor suits* (clubs and diamonds), *they are made from weakness only.* *In the major suits* (spades and hearts), *they are made both from weakness and from strength.*



In other words, all good players prefer to play no-trumps to a minor suit. But they prefer a heart-hand, or a spade-hand, to a no-trumper unless the no-trumper holds a hundred aces.

Even with a perfectly good no-trump assist, change your partner's no-trumper to spades or hearts. If he goes back to his no-trumper, let him alone. *Never play no-trumps when you could play hearts or spades!*

*But the no-trump bidder should not return to his no-trumper, after a call-off in hearts or spades unless he holds a hundred aces.* Let him rather offer his no-trump hand as an assist for his partner's hearts or spades.

Here is a hand on which a partner's no-trumper should be over-called with "two spades,"—from strength:

♥ K 10 4  
 ♣ A 9 2  
 ♦ K 3  
 ♠ A K 10 7 5

There is help for a no-trumper in every suit, yet a two-spade over-call is the proper bid. Change those spades to clubs, and the hand should never be used for an over-call.

It should make a no-trump assist, and a no-trump raise, if necessary.

Here is another example of a two-spade over-call; the first was from strength, this from weakness:

♥ A  
 ♣ 9 8 4  
 ♦ 10 2  
 ♠ J 10 8 5 4 3 2

To sum up the no-trump "take-outs":

Take-outs in the minor-suits are made from weakness only. They may be made on an excellent diamond-suit or club-suit, and nothing else; or they may be made on a long weak club- or diamond-suit: *five cards to an honour, or six to anything.*

*In the major suits,* the take-outs are made from either weakness or strength. They may mean a perfectly good suit of hearts or spades and nothing else; or five spades (or hearts) to an honour, or six to anything, and nothing else; or five or six spades (or hearts), and a strong side-hand; or an entirely good general hand with a good suit of spades (or hearts)

There is a certain school of players who will not use the minor-suit take-outs at all. This

is wrong. All take-outs are danger warnings. Danger warnings prevent disasters in Auction as well as in life at large, where they are as necessary when carried to us by the humblest black man that walks the earth, as by a prince or a millionaire.

I am as fond of playing major-suits as anyone. But I contend that the craze is carried too far, and the game rendered entirely unsound, when the attempt is made to bar the minor-suit take-outs. And what is the sense in making such a distinction between major- and minor-suits, when the suits are but a point apart?

No-trumpers would be no longer safe with the minor-suit take-outs deleted. And why be so horribly afraid of clubs and diamonds? They often spell game, with a no-trump hand as an assist.

But the point is, that no-trumpers would receive a deadly blow by dropping half the take-outs. Let me repeat the hand given a few pages back:

	♥ —										
	♣ 7 6 5 4 3 2										
	♦ 8 7 5										
	♠ 10 9 8 2										
♥ Q J 9 8 6 2 ♣ 10 ♦ 6 4 3 ♠ 7 6 3	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 10 7 4 3 ♣ A Q J ♦ K Q 10 ♠ K J 5
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A K 5										
	♣ K 9 8										
	♦ A J 9 2										
	♠ A Q 4										

Z has a perfectly sound no-trumper: every suit well-guarded; three aces; two kings; a queen; a jack,—really a beautiful hand! *Yet he cannot possibly make the book in no-trumps.*

His hand needs to be led to. Playing no-trumps, he can never get into dummy to lead. He has to lead from his own hand straight up to B. He loses every club he holds. His major ten-ace in spades goes right up to B's minor ten-ace. He cannot ruff. He is hampered at every turn. He is lost.

Let Y play the hand at clubs and he has what is commonly known as a cinch.

*Wasn't that over-call as necessary in a minor-*

*suit as it could possibly have been in a major-suit? Why be defeated in no-trumps rather than score handsomely in clubs?*

That is idiocy!

I once bid "a no-trump" on this hand, which is certainly a no-trumper, or nothing:

♥ K J 9  
 ♣ A Q 10 4  
 ♦ A Q  
 ♠ A 7 3 2

Every one went by, and no power on earth could have made the hand go. My partner held this:

♥ 7 6  
 ♣ 9 5 3  
 ♦ J 10 9 7 6 5 2  
 ♠ 4

She was an excellent player but she did not make a "two-diamond" over-call, because a recent teacher had told her not to use the minor take-outs.

In no-trumps there was not a trick in her hand; the diamonds blocked between us, and her seven good diamonds had to be wasted.

In diamonds, she had many tricks. We

would never have lost a spade-round; never a diamond-round,—because the king of diamonds was on my right and only once-guarded. The king of clubs was also on that side; leading through him (an easy task in diamonds), he would never have made.

We asked the logic that permitted take-outs in major-suits but not in minor.

Well, “It was playing two on a weak hand instead of one on a strong one.”

“If your diamonds had been spades,” we said, “wouldn’t you have over-called?”

“Oh yes, of course.”

“Wouldn’t that have been equally two on the weak hand instead of one on the strong?”

You see there was absolutely *no* logic in it. And facts talk. That hand means an easy game in diamonds. In no-trumps, it means a heavy defeat.

Don’t listen to false prophets. Learn your take-outs *in both major- and minor-suits, and use them in both!*

## CHAPTER V

### THE DOUBLE, AND THE REDOUBLE

DOUBLES may be briefly divided into two classes:

- I. Business doubles.
- II. Informatory doubles.

To my mind, the first class alone is worthy of existence and of consideration, and it is of it that this chapter will treat. I use no informatory doubles and I advise none. But as there are certain players who do use them, it will be necessary for my readers to understand them. I will discuss them in a later chapter.

You will remember that I told you to *count your losers when you wanted to make a high bid. I now tell you to count your takers when you want to double a high bid.* By "takers," I mean, of course, winning cards. If you have one taker in excess of your book, you can count on defeating the bid,—but you do not necessarily double it.



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*Count your takers to bid, and your losers to double!*

You double an adversary when you expect to defeat him and want your consequent score to be multiplied by two.

You do *not* double him, even if you can defeat him, if there is any other suit to which he can easily shift and which you cannot defeat in its turn. To do so would be foolish. Why let your adversary out from the only suit you can defeat? Why warn him of his danger and invite him to move on to safety? Better to play against the suit you want and to take fifty a trick by defeating it, than to shoo your quarry into a haven where you cannot touch him and thus to lose everything. "A trick in the hand is worth two in the bush."

When, however, you get the adversary to a point where you could defeat *any bid to which he might jump*, you have a safe double.

It follows, therefore, that:

*You must never double the only suit you can defeat.*

*You must never double on one suit alone.*

*You must never double on trumps alone.*

*You must never double any low bid (it is too easy to change).*

*You double on a general hand. And:*

*You must never double when to do so would be to allow your quarry to escape. In other words:*

*Never double anything unless you can double everything.*

The good sense of this last rule is so apparent that I can never see the necessity for explaining it further. Yet experience has taught me that its first appearance is always hailed with a gasp of dismay. Hundreds of letters have I received asking if it were really possible that I ever said such a thing. Of course I did. How could anyone ever say anything else?

Amateurs never like this rule. They think it curtails their chances of doubling. And so it does; *it cuts out all poor doubles and leaves the good ones.* Rather good pruning!

*Don't double unless you are prepared to double again, no matter where the adversary shifts.* Let him play the one suit you can defeat; don't warn your enemy of the pit yawning in front of him. Let him play his bid. Take your fifty a trick by defeating him. Fifty a trick is not despicable. Five-odd tricks in no-trumps are worth but fifty. Five fifties will equalize the rubber.

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While few things are as profitable as a good double, *a bad double is the worst thing there is.* It is far worse than a bad bid. No matter how poor your bid is, the adversaries cannot go game or rubber on it, for they can score above the line only; but if you make a bad *double*, you will often put them game or rubber.

*Be very wary of doubling any bid which would not give your adversary a game, undoubled, but which would give him a game, if doubled.* "Three hearts" or "three spades" on a clean score, is not a bid to be lightly doubled. Twenty-four is not game. Neither is twenty-seven. But forty-eight and fifty-four are game. *And it sometimes happens that your adversary pulls off his bid, even when you feel sure of defeating him.* If he has ten on the score, think a long while before you double his "three clubs."

*It takes a stronger hand to double when sitting on the bidder's right than when sitting on his left. In the former position, he plays after you. In the latter position, you play after him. The difference is immense. It would be a very exceptional hand (played against a very high bid) on which I should advise a double on the bidder's right.*

*It is better to be too conservative about your double than not conservative enough. I should rather lose three chances on possible doubles that might win, than make one poor double and lose it.*

It has been said that if you never lose a double it shows that you don't double often enough. I say, as well to contend that if a man never falls down on a ballroom floor it is a sign that he doesn't dance often enough. It isn't. It is a sign that he dances too *well* not too *seldom*. And so with doubling!

Again, it is urged that if you are known as a quick doubler, your reputation will keep your adversaries from making risky bids. Exactly! And why should you *want* to keep them from making risky bids? Such bids are your great chance of profits. It is not for you to protect your adversary.

On the other hand, I do not want to steer you away entirely from doubles. Nothing is better than a good double; nothing is so profitable as heavily defeating the adversary. And you must remember that when you double a man *you merely undertake to keep him from making what he has bid; you do not contract to take that many tricks yourself.*

The higher the adverse bid, the lower your

## The Double, and the Redouble 85

book against it. If you double a four-bid, your book is three. And *you have but to take one trick in excess of your book in order to make your double good*. It follows, therefore, that the higher the adverse bid, the safer the double.

Also, it is hard for the adversaries to get out of a high bid. Under a system where the suit values are but a point apart, nearly any low bid can be changed, either by the bidder or by his partner. But with a high bid, this is not true.

Suppose your adversary bids "two hearts" on this hand:

♥ K J 10 7 4  
♣ 4  
♦ K Q 4 2  
♠ A 7 3

And suppose you sit *over* him (*i. e.*, on his left) with these cards:

♥ A Q 9 8 3 2  
♣ Q J  
♦ A 8 3  
♠ 8 6

You can certainly beat his hearts, if you let him play them. His partner sits next with these cards:

♥ 6 5  
 ♣ A K 10 8  
 ♦ 5  
 ♠ Q J 10 9 5 4

If you pass, that partner will also pass. He knows of no danger, and he thinks he helps hearts. He has two little trumps, a side singleton, and a side ace-king. He would not care to bid his queen-suit of spades *unless he knew his partner was in danger*. But the moment you told him that (by doubling), he would go to spades and *go game in the hand*. You couldn't do a thing. By your foolish double you would throw away all your own profits and would give the adversaries a nice score. It would be the old story of the dog, the bone, and the shadow. In reaching for more, you would lose everything.

Here is an excellent double: the adversary on your *right* has gone to "two spades," on this hand:

♥ J  
 ♣ A 6  
 ♦ K 10 4  
 ♠ A Q 10 7 6 5 4

You are bidding no-trumps on this:



♥ A K Q

♣ K Q 5

♦ A Q 6

♠ K J 9 8

If he goes to "three spades" you can certainly double him, for he cannot possibly make it. Your book is four; your king and jack of spades will both take, being guarded and being on the proper side of the bid. That makes half your book; three tricks more will enable you to defeat him. You can be almost sure that he is short, or lacking, in at least one suit; for with the high side-cards in your hand he must have a long line of spades to go to three, and with so many of them, he is short somewhere else. But even so, you can certainly squeeze three tricks out of your three master-hearts, your major ten-ace in diamonds, and your guarded king and queen of clubs. And that is without counting on a single trick from your partner.

But the real reason you double him is because you have him, no matter where he jumps. It is like trying to defeat an enemy in battle; you first cut off every possible means of escape, and then you pounce on him and demolish him. If in this case your

adversary tries to get out by changing his bid to "three no-trumps," "four hearts," "four diamonds," or "five clubs," you are perfectly sure he cannot make it, and you can double him again.

*It is not necessary to hold many trumps, in order to double. It is necessary only to hold one more trick than your book and to be equally able to double any other make. I have seen a hand on which "three spades" was correctly and successfully doubled when the doubler held a singleton deuce of trumps. He had a hand of such general strength that he knew that he could take more than four tricks no matter at what suit the hand was played. And that is the essence of doubling-logic.*

Now, let us put the verb into the passive mood, and say a word to the player who *gets* doubled.

*Don't get panic-stricken. Play even a losing hand calmly. (And a doubled hand is by no means always a losing hand.) And don't jump to a poorer suit in order to get out of a double. That suit may be doubled in turn, and you will have to play a poor hand doubled, instead of a good hand doubled.*

*Never, either as bidder or as bidder's partner, make a bid after a double that you would not*

## The Double, and the Redouble 89

*have made, failing that double.* If you keep this rule, your partners will rise up and call you blessed.

If your partner has been doubled, don't feel that you must rescue him. Why should you assume that he is terror-stricken? *He may be perfectly delighted.* That double may have been music to his ears. Probably he wants nothing more than to be let alone. He knew what he was about when he bid that hand.

And anyhow, assuming that he is to be beaten, *he will lose less on his good hand than would you on your poor one.* You stand to be doubled in your turn, and then where will you be?

I have seen a player go to three hearts on this hand:

♥ A Q J 8 6 2  
♣ K 10 3  
♦ K 9 4  
♠ A

and I have seen the bid doubled.

Then I have seen the partner of the first bidder go to "three spades" on the queen-jack-ten, six, and four, *and not another trick in the hand!*

Now, I ask you, would any sane person bid

“three spades” on five to the queen-jack-ten, and not an outside trick, if there had been no double? Most certainly not; therefore it is not a bid with which to rescue a partner who has been doubled, for the simple reason that it is certainly far worse than the hand on which he voluntarily went to “three hearts”; you throw away the good hand and play the poor one, simply because you permit yourself to be terrorized by a double. If you realize that you are bound to be doubled on the hand no matter what you do, you will soon see how much better it is to be doubled on his hand, which he bid with his eyes open and in cool judgment, than on your hand, to which you fly as a desperate hope.

I have a favourite way of illustrating this to my pupils. Suppose you had a friend who was out in a swift current in a nice, taut little boat. An onlooker might say: “I bet that man can’t stem that tide. He is going to drown.” Overhearing this, would you jump on an old water-logged plank and paddle out to your friend and cry: “They say you will drown in that boat. Pray come on to this plank with me.” *The current is the same; the danger is the same. Where is he safer? In his boat, or on your plank?*

## The Double, and the Redouble 91

It is, of course, impossible to know whether your partner is pleased or displeased at being doubled. If I could make a rule, or establish a convention, that would clear away this difficulty, I should be the most popular person in the Auction world to-day. But such a rule, or such a convention, is an utter impossibility. Nevertheless, one thing is certain, whether or not he likes his position, *you probably can not help him out*. And that fact should keep you from essaying such a thing on a hand which is probably far weaker than the one on which he bid and was doubled.

There is just one situation where it *is* wise to take your partner out of a double. Let me explain it to you: suppose your partner deals and declares a diamond, and second-hand passes; you hold very good spades, but do not declare them against your partner's bid, because the score makes his diamonds as good as your spades. Fourth-hand bids hearts, and your partner allows himself to be forced up in his diamonds till he is *doubled by the second player* (*i. e.*, the one on his left). Now declare your spades if they are good enough; you will have no heavier contract than your partner's, and though you know you will be doubled if he was doubled, you



have this advantage—the *doubling-hand sits “under” you and can be led through; whereas he sits “over” your partner, and has him at a disadvantage.* This position, and one where you hold excellent honours in a high suit (and can thus deduct their value from your losses), are the only ones where I should advise you to try to pull your partner out of a double.

One of the weakest points of Auction has always been these so-called “rescue-bids.” *And with the adoption of my rule of never doubling anything unless you can double everything, this weak spot will disappear.* Your partner, realizing that he is bound to be doubled in his turn, will not essay the terrible “rescue,” that is really no rescue at all.

There are those who say they “always double every high bid on principle.” That is absurd. It is equivalent to saying that no high bid was ever successful. Don’t fall into this error. *Double only when, by actual count of the tricks in your hand, you see that you can probably defeat not only the standing bid, but any other possible one.*

### **When your Partner has Doubled.**

When you partner has doubled, *let him alone.* Don’t let even an entire absence of

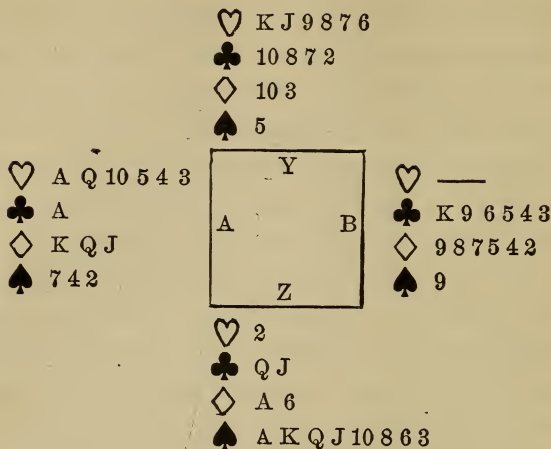


## The Double, and the Redouble 93

trumps in your own hand frighten you into taking him out of his double. *The fewer you have, the more he has.* They are probably all banked in his hand, against the maker.

When your partner doubles, he expects to take 100 a trick for every trick over two, or three, or four (whatever his book may be). No one ever doubles a low bid; therefore your partner's tricks begin to count the moment he has laid away the few tricks that form his book (varying according to the size of the bid). *There could be no excuse for your interfering with him and hauling him back to a suit that would be worth but ten (at the most) and that does not begin to count until after six tricks have been gathered.*

I was playing, one day, with a partner who held a wonderful hand. He was "Z," and I was "Y," in the accompanying diagram:



It was a clean score, on the first game.

My partner opened with "two spades"—being a preëmptive bidder. The following adversary answered with "three hearts"; I passed,—from pleasure. B also passed, and my partner said "three spades." A answered with "four hearts," and I doubled, both to keep my partner from making a spade-bid that could not possibly be as valuable as my double, and because I did not believe any one could make five diamonds or six clubs.

My partner was so impressed with his ninety honours, that he overcalled my double with "four spades."

*One of my doubled tricks would have beaten*

*his 90 honours; three of my doubled tricks would have been greater than the rubber-value, or would have beaten a spade grand slam with 90 honours. My tricks began to score by hundreds, as soon as we had taken in three; his tricks began to score in nines, only after we had taken in six!*

Now he had no possible chance of rubber, as it was the first game. If he made a grand slam, he would score 63 for tricks, 100 for slam, and 90 for honours; a total of 253 for thirteen tricks. And I could score 300 for six tricks. Of course, however, he would be game-in, on his grand slam,—*if* he made it!

As a matter of fact he could make but 27 points and 90 honours, a total of 117 points, on the hand; and *not* a game! He lost one heart-round, two clubs, and a diamond.

I should have made 600 on that hand, and he chose to make 117. Do you call that good Auction? Why could he not have trusted my judgment? Certainly the “fun of playing the hand” was not worth 483 points.

Again, his 90 honours (with which he was so impressed) were “above the line,” just as much as were my doubled tricks. Give me six hundred points on one hand, and I will give you the rubber on the next two hands,

and will be extremely happy to call it square! The more I play Auction, the more I watch others play it, the more firmly am I convinced of this: that, while good playing is not infrequent, good bidding is extremely rare; good doubling is almost never found (in the average run of players), and good passing is an art that has yet to be acquired.

There are just three things that can excuse changing your partner's double back to a bid,—and only one of those three is a really good reason. They are:

I. The fact that you have bid illegitimately and given him false information about your hand.

II. The certainty of scoring a winning rubber.

III. The ability to score very high honours in a major-suit.

The first is imperative; the second is allowable; the third is negligible.

If you have bid without the ace or king of your suit, you have lied to your partner. He is trusting you for a quick trick in that suit; his double may be based on that hope. You must go back to your suit, in order to show him that you have spoken falsely; you make a "backward" bid as a danger-signal.

## The Double, and the Redouble 97

If you can go rubber, I suppose you are right to do it. As I have already said, my personal taste prefers 600 to 250. But then, all doubles are not worth 600. In most cases, the rubber would be preferable.

High honours I consider no reason at all. No possible honours could be worth more than 100, and that is only what *each* doubled trick is worth.

And finally, when you have been lucky enough to catch the adversaries in a bad bid, and have laid up good penalties against them, *never make a risky bid*. The only way they can get back their loss is by penalizing you. If you never bid unsoundly, they can never recoup themselves.

Remember then:

After harvesting big penalties, risk nothing. Rather yield the bids to the adversaries.

Never double low bids.

Never double the only bid you can beat.

Never double anything when you cannot double everything.

Never try to "rescue" with an illegitimate bid a partner who has been doubled.

Never make a bid, because of a double, that you would not have dreamed of making, failing that double.

Don't forget that your partner may be extremely pleased at being doubled.

Don't interfere with your partner when he has made a double. *Let him alone!*

Frequent doubles are the sign of a poor game. Show me an inveterate doubler, and I will show you a weak player!

### **The Redouble.**

Be very wary about redoubling.

If you have been doubled and expect to be beaten, of course you won't redouble.

If you have been doubled and know you can win, you don't want to risk sending your adversary back to his suit (by redoubling), *unless you know you can beat him if he does go back.* Your redouble gives him a loophole through which to escape from his unfortunate double, and an opportunity to change it to a bid of his own.

*The only hand on which you should redouble is one on which you are not only practically sure of making your contract, but one where you are prepared to defeat the adversary if he attempts to get out with any bid whatever.* The following hand will illustrate:



	♥ 8										
	♣ 7 6 4										
	♦ J 10 8 5 3										
	♠ Q 9 6 5										
♥ 10 7 4 3 2 ♣ A K Q J 5 3 ♦ 9 ♠ K	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A	B			Z		♥ 5 ♣ 10 9 8 2 ♦ Q 4 2 ♠ J 10 8 4 2
	Y										
A	B										
	Z										
	♥ A K Q J 9 6										
	♣ —————										
	♦ A K 7 6										
	♠ A 7 3										

The score on this hand was 18—all, on the second game; but A-B had lost rather heavily in penalties and were anxious to get them back. Z bid “one heart.”

A said “two clubs.”

Y and B passed, and Z bid “two hearts.”

A bid “three clubs” on his honours, his two singletons, and to push Z up. And when Z went to “three hearts” A doubled. I think most players would; he held five trumps to the ten (thus making his ten good if trumps were drawn), and a wonderful club-suit. With this he expected first to force Z and, later, to take a few rounds when trumps were

exhausted. There was also a bare possibility of taking a trick with his king of spades.

Z was delighted at the double, for he knew he could make his bid; but he proved his right to the title of expert by refraining from redoubling. Why should he risk frightening A back to clubs? And A, or B, would certainly have gone to four clubs had Z redoubled,—and they could have made them. Z, of course, could have said “four hearts,” but if no one doubled him, his tricks would have been worth 8 apiece, instead of 16, and he would have lost his bonus.

The bidding closed at “three hearts” doubled, and Z made a small slam. He scored:

6 tricks at 16 each.....	96	points
4 honours in one hand.....	64	“
Small slam.....	50	“
Bonus.....	50	“
Three extra tricks (50 each).....	150	“
	<hr/>	
Total.....	410	points

Now suppose he had redoubled, and frightened A back to clubs; Z would then have said “four hearts” and no one would have doubled him. The hand would then have been worth:

## The Double, and the Redouble 101

6 tricks at 8 each.....	48 points
4 honours in one hand.....	64 “
Small slam.....	50 “
	—
Total.....	162 points

A foolish redouble would have cost Z just 248 points!

Here, on the contrary, is a hand on which A would have every reason to redouble:

	♥ J 5 4 3 ♣ 7 5 ♦ 10 7 5 3 ♠ 6 5 3										
♥ A Q ♣ K Q J ♦ A Q 9 4 ♠ K Q 10 9	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A	B			Z		♥ 8 7 2 ♣ 6 4 3 2 ♦ 6 2 ♠ 8 7 4 2
	Y										
A	B										
	Z										
	♥ K 10 9 6 ♣ A 10 9 8 ♦ K J 8 ♠ A J										

It is the rubber-game and the score is 18-10, in favour of Z-Y. Z deals and bids “one no-trump.”

A can pass and make 100; or he can bid “two no-trumps.”

If he chooses the latter, Z might possibly double. He has what is known as a "free" double. If A makes his bid, he will go rubber anyhow, doubled or undoubled. Therefore Z might as well get 100 a trick (instead of 50), if he defeats him. He holds five possible tricks.

If Z doubles, A must redouble because:

He is practically sure of making his bid.

He could defeat "three spades" (should Z attempt them). He can also defeat "three hearts," "four diamonds," or "four clubs." He has, therefore, a sound redouble.

Always think twice, then, before redoubling. And remember that you must not do it unless you can make your own bid, and can also defeat any bid that the adversary may make.

There is a bluff redouble that sometimes works very well,—though I, personally, never use it. If a player is doubled and expects to be defeated, he redoubles, just to frighten the adversary off the double and back to his own suit. The reason that I don't use it is because it doesn't always work, and when it doesn't, it is horribly expensive. I haven't much faith in the efficacy of Auction bluffs.

## CHAPTER VI

### PREËMPTIVE BIDS

*(Specially recommended to those who like them.)*

A PREËMPTIVE bid is an unnecessarily high one. It is made with the object of silencing the adversaries and of keeping them from giving each other information.

The duty of the partner of the preëmptive bidder is very explicit. It is simply utter passivity.

*If your partner makes a preëmptive bid, let him alone. That is what he wants and what he is asking of you.* He has shown an entire ability and willingness to run the hand alone; he wants nothing from you,—neither warnings nor information.

A preëmptive bid is made on a hand that is strong in the suit named, but that is weak in another suit. It is in order to shut out adverse bids in this suit, that the preëmptive bid is essayed.

On a hand of universal strength, no one need worry about information between adversaries; whatever they bid can easily be overbid, or defeated, by the holder of the very strong hand. It is merely when there is a flaw in his hand that he bids preëmptively.

*A preëmptive bid is therefore a confession of weakness, communicated to two adversaries and to but one partner. That partner, in addition, is commanded not to interfere.*

There are also a certain few players who still adhere to the very old-fashioned method of opening with two bids in order to show "a lack of top cards." The bids that should properly be deferred till second-rounds (queen-bids and jack-bids), they use as two-bids for openers. This method is entirely *passé* and should be obsolete. We all tried it years ago, found it poor, and dropped it. It is not even necessary to discuss here. We will confine ourselves to the form of preëmptive bid which I first described. I will show you why I dislike it.

As far as my experience has shown, *it is never both necessary and effective.* When it is necessary (or seems so to be), it isn't effective. When it is effective, it is not necessary.

If a player was going to get the bid any-



how, if the adversaries had no intention of bidding, he gets it on his preëmptive bid. He would have gotten it on a one-bid. His preëmptive bid was not necessary. He is like a man who tries to outshriek a babel, and who suddenly finds that no one else has spoken, or intended to speak.

When the adversaries were going to bid, they bid anyhow. An opening two-bid is covered by another two-bid, or by a three-bid (by one or the other of the adversaries),—just as blithely as if it had been a one-bid. I smile whenever I see it happen,—and that is always, if the adversaries have bidding-hands. They are not silenced, they are not “shut out,” they are not even inconvenienced.

*I have never seen a preëmptive bid that was both necessary and effective.*

There are several other objections to the preëmptive bid.

I. It often inconveniences your partner rather than your adversary. He will be a weight in your suit, and he has a perfectly good over-call for a one-bid. But after a preëmptive opening, he is bound and gagged.

II. The hands cannot be properly combined. Instead of reaching out for information, you block it.

III. In keeping the adversaries from communicating with each other, you equally keep them from telling you things that would be useful to you. Those players who open their ears and listen are wiser than those who close their ears and bellow. It is the old story of "I talk so loud and so much that I have no time to listen" *vs.* "There are so many instructive things to which I want to listen that I talk only as much as is really necessary to my business."

IV. Preëmptive bidders are so in love with bidding that they entirely forget the penalty-field. If you never let the adversaries bid, you can never defeat them. To defeat the hand is worth 50 a trick regardless of suit. To play it is worth ten, at the most. The great art of coaxing the adversary along till you have him where you can defeat him to the tune of a hundred, or two, or three, is entirely lost on the preëmptive bidder. He merely plays bid-Bridge; he knows nothing of the opportunities offered by penalties. The privilege of playing the hand is something, but it is not everything! The rubber is worth 250—no more! Does it make sense to run so hard for 250 that you will not stop to pick up 300 or 400 on the way?

V. The preëmptive method is heavy, primitive, and clumsy. In the infancy of Auction, everyone bid that way,—I with the others. Now I have learned better. The preëmptive bid is like a bludgeon or a sand-bag, intended to silence the adversary with one fell blow. The other method is like rapier-play, subtle, skilful, graceful, beautiful.

VI. The preëmptive bid often makes the adversary wake up, and look at his hand to see what it is you fear. He will make a bid that he would not otherwise have made, *and will pull it off successfully*, thanks to the preëmptive warning.

It is not only theoretically that preëmptive bids prove full of flaws. Practically they are equally disappointing. They are futile. *They do not preëmpt*. Under a system where the suit-values are only one point apart, how are you going to silence your adversary? If he has a better hand than you, he will get the bid anyhow; if he has a poorer hand than you, you might as well get your bid as cheaply as possible. The only opening-bid that could surely deprive the adversary of his bidding-privileges, is “seven no-trumps.”

Of course, there are hands where informa-

tion established between adversaries will help them to a successful declaration which neither could have made alone; but, on the other hand, it will often tempt them to an *unsuccessful* declaration that neither one, alone, would have ventured, and the accruing penalties will be your reward for permitting them to communicate. And when it comes to a matter of the *play*, the adversaries can always discover each other's suits: the leads, the discards, the "come-on" cards, are just as reliable sources of information as are the bids.

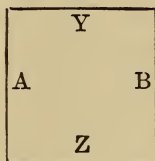
As long as you have to play against adversaries, you can not bind and gag them. If they have anything to say, they will say it. And if they haven't, why burden yourself with a heavier load than is necessary? Get everything as cheaply as you can.

But, as I have said before, "facts talk." I will give you a few actual hands as examples of preëmptive bidding. The first was played in Nassau, Bahamas, and I was "B."

The score was 8-0 on the rubber-game, in favour of Z-Y:

♥ Q 3  
 ♣ Q 10 6 3  
 ♦ Q 6 5 2  
 ♠ J 3 2

♥ A K  
 ♣ K 9 8 7 4  
 ♦ 10 9 8 7 3  
 ♠ 10



♥ J 10 9 7 6 5 4  
 ♣ A J 5  
 ♦ A K J  
 ♠ —

♥ 8 2  
 ♣ 2  
 ♦ 4  
 ♠ A K Q 9 8 7 6 5 4

Z opened with "two spades," *in order to shut out hearts.*

A and Y passed, and, failing that preëmptive bid, I should have passed also. My only suit was jack-high, and I am not a jack-bidder. I should simply have closed the bidding, hoping that A and I, together, could save game.

Had Z opened with "one spade," no one would have bid against him. My partner couldn't, his partner didn't have to, and I would have been barred by my jack-suit. Z would have made three-odd and rubber.

But the moment he made his preëmptive opening, Z announced: "I am afraid of

something,—please don't bid it. If you two adversaries only knew what I know, I should be done for." We sat up and began to take notice; my partner's hand solved no mysteries, and he passed. My hand screamed the secret from the housetops, and I promptly answered with "three hearts."

It is true that I lacked my ace, king, and queen. But Z didn't hold them—he had practically said so. It was an even toss between Y and my partner; if Y held them, we had no chance of rubber from the beginning of things. If my partner held them, there might be some fun. There was.

Z could make three-odd in spades—no more, no less. I could make a grand slam in hearts, and I should never have known it, never have tried, never have bid, never have established the slightest communication with my partner, except for the particular form of Z's opening-bid.

My partner held the ace-king of my suit, a side-singleton, and a side-king. He could have raised twice, or thrice, but he didn't have to. One raise from him was enough for me. I should have bid my hand to almost any point. The "preemptive" bid didn't preempt, you see.



Remember this, then, if a man opens with a preëmptive bid, he fears something. If your hand gives no indication of what he fears, pass; your partner's hand may be more illuminating. But if you have reason to think you know his weakness, *bid*; bid even two or three tricks in excess of what your hand warrants. Don't be "shut out." Then no one but the dealer's partner can possibly be inconvenienced by the bid.

This comes from a preëmptive bidder (it is approximate; I haven't the exact quotation with me): "It is laughable to see the strong hands on which we are supposed to open with two-bids. Granted a strong major-suit and strong side-support, we always open with a one-bid. But if we hold one major-suit, and are very weak in the other, we open with a two-bid to prevent communication between our adversaries and the ultimate establishing of the suit we fear."

How can anyone be fooled with such sophistries? How could such a system work more than once? The moment a man opens with a two-bid, you say to yourself: "He is afraid of some suit; which is it?" You look at your hand and decide, and you bid that suit. You bid it if you break every rule in

the list; you bid it at the expense of two or three tricks, because he has virtually told you that you must. And if your hand doesn't warrant it, your partner's probably does. One of you is apt to hold a preponderance of the suit which the dealer fears; and the one who holds such length must bid it.

Then there is the remaining chance that the long adverse suit is held by the dealer's own partner, that there was no necessity for the shut-out bid, that the two hands don't "fit," or that you and your partner were out of the race from the beginning.

The man who bids unnecessarily high is afraid of something; he talks loud to cover the fact,—like a bully who swaggers to hide his fear. Here is a Boston hand:

	♥ J 8 7 6 ♣ K Q J 9 8 7 6 ♦ — ♠ J 10										
♥ A 5 2 ♣ 10 4 ♦ — ♠ A Q 7 6 5 4 3 2	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ Q 4 3 ♣ 3 ♦ K 9 8 7 6 5 ♠ K 9 8
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ K 10 9 ♣ A 5 2 ♦ A Q J 10 4 3 2 ♠ —										

Z opened with "four diamonds," *to shut out any adverse spade-bid.*

A was perfectly able to make this spade-bid and to keep it. But he didn't bid. He realized that Z had probably bid his hand to the top-notch, and that four diamonds wouldn't put him game (he had nothing on the score). He passed, and left Z with a ten-trick contract.

Y didn't care to say "five clubs" with six losing cards and lacking the ace of his suit. Besides, his partner's bid had said: "Get out of my way, I don't need you." He passed, and of course B passed,—tickled to death.

The success of preëmptive bids pre-

supposes the inability of the adversaries to pass,—or to make their bid, *if* they bid. A could have bid, and made, “four spades”; then the shut-out bid would have been futile, because it didn’t shut out.

Of course, Z was defeated. Properly bid, the hand would have been played at clubs,—because Y would have made one warning over-call and Z would have switched. Z-Y could have made a small slam in clubs, or could have defeated an adverse “five spades.” The partner, and not the adversary, was inconvenienced by the preëmptive opening bid.

*It is much more important that your bid should be convenient to your partner than that it should be inconvenient to the adversaries!*

If it were not that truth is stranger than fiction, I would not ask any one to believe that I once actually dealt myself this hand:

♥	A K Q 10 8 6 5 4 3 2
♣	A K Q
◇	—
♠	—

I confess that my first impulse was to bid “seven hearts,” just to experience the sensation, and because I could not fail to make it.

But sober second-thought forbade. If I bid a grand slam right off the bat, how could I hope to be doubled? I know that if I heard any one else make such a bid I should feel sure he held the material for it, and I should never dream of doubling him (unless I knew him for an idiot).

Suppose, even, that I had the luck to be doubled. I could make my contract, but I could by no possibility get "a trick over the contract," because there are but seven-odd in a hand. I listened to the whispers of reason and bid "one heart."

A said "one spade" on this combination:

♥ J 7  
 ♣ 2  
 ♦ A 7 5 4  
 ♠ A K 10 9 7 3

My partner, Y, went by on this hand:

♥ —  
 ♣ J 9 8 5 3  
 ♦ K Q 10 3  
 ♠ J 8 6 4

Fourth hand, B, passed; he, of course, held these cards:

♥ 9  
 ♣ 10 7 6 4  
 ♦ J 9 8 6 2  
 ♠ Q 5 2

I went to "two hearts," and from then on hearts and spades were bid against each other. B gave his partner one raise; it was a light one and just within the limits of legitimacy. His guarded trump-honour was "a trick," and his singleton heart was "a raiser." However, it served to raise A's hopes, and to send him up to "four spades," with six losing cards in his hand. When I went to "five hearts," he doubled me, and my prayers were answered. He had two aces in his hand; if they took, they would make his book. If his king of spades took, if he got a ruff on the clubs, or if his partner captured one trick, the double would win.

Don't gasp when I tell you that I *did not redouble*. I passed and closed the bidding. Suppose I redoubled and he went back to spades—how could I tell that he couldn't make it? Even though I covered his bid by saying "six hearts," what assurance had I that he would double me again? And, even if he did (and it would be more luck than I



deserved), I could not possibly get more than one "extra trick" on a six-bid, and I was sure of two of them on a five-bid.

My profits were: Seven tricks worth 16 apiece; 50 for contract; 50 each for two extra tricks; 64 for honours; 100 for slam—a total of 426. Quite enough for one hand!

Could any preëmptive bidding have been as satisfactory as that?

Here is a bid, the results of which pleased me greatly:

Z dealt himself these cards:

♥	K 2
♣	3
♦	A K Q 10 4 2
♠	K Q 8 7

He was a preëmptive bidder, and opened with "two diamonds," to show high honours, and that he wanted to be let alone with his suit. The score being twenty-four to nothing in his favour, the diamond-bid was better than a no-trump, because of the club singleton and the short hearts.

I was playing A, and nearly fainted when I heard Z's bid, for this was my hand:

♥ A J 8 7 5  
 ♣ 10  
 ♦ J 9 8 7 6 5 3  
 ♠ —

Ordinarily, I should never have dreamed of hoping to force an adversary very high in diamonds, when I held seven to the jack myself, but as Z had been kind enough to announce that he held four honours and wanted to play the hand, I knew I could get him up. I bid "two hearts."

Y, relieved of the necessity of a warning-bid, wisely passed on this hand:

♥ 9 4 3  
 ♣ K Q J 9 4 2  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ A 4 3 2

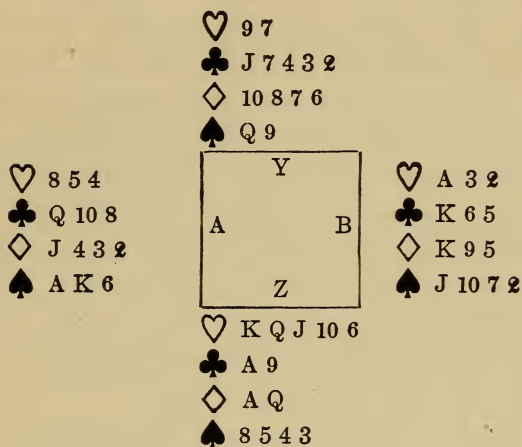
He would have been willing to try "two clubs," but not three. He could have been defeated at three.

B (my partner) passed, with these cards:

♥ Q 10 6  
 ♣ A 8 7 6 5  
 ♦ —  
 ♠ J 10 9 6 5

Then Z went to his doom with "three diamonds," which was exactly what I wanted. I doubled in order to stop B from raising the hearts, and Z's defeat was accomplished.

Here is one more hand:



Z was another preëmptive bidder. He opened the bidding with "two hearts" to show strength, high honours, and that he wanted to be let alone. And it looks like a very good two-heart hand; yet, if A-B play correctly, Z cannot possibly make two-odd. By the cleverest of playing he can take just the odd, and it would be an unusually good player who would take even one-odd on a

closed hand,—pre-supposing, always, that A-B played right. Not even brilliance is demanded of them; just an ordinarily good game.

By insisting on playing the hand, by trying to block an adverse spade-bid (that would never have been made, anyhow), Z overreached himself and scored his own defeat. Even if the adversaries had wanted to bid spades, Z would have been far wiser to let them do it and thus to give his own poverty-stricken partner a chance to impart the information that he hadn't a raiser in his hand. Then Z (holding seven losers) would have realized that it wouldn't pay him to play the hand, and would have dropped the bid. He would thus have avoided defeat.

I could multiply instances indefinitely, but they would but reiterate what I have already said. No lesson could be more emphatic than that taught by these few hands. If my pen were sufficiently persuasive to induce players to give up preemptive bids, to remember that playing the hand is not *everything*, and to pay due attention to the penalty-field, I should rest content. Here is one drop of essence:

When you bid, don't *bray*.

## CHAPTER VII

### PREËMPTIVE RAISES

PREËMPTIVE raises are unnecessary raises. Under the right conditions, they are as good as preëmptive bids are bad.

When your hand fits your partner's, it is often well to raise him even if you don't have to. This is a very different thing from making a high bid *when you don't know whether or not your hand and your partner's hand fit*.

If your partner has a good bid and you have an excellent raise, it is clearly one of those cases where your combined hands should be used for *playing rather than defeating the bid*. Therefore, it is not so necessary to listen to information from the adversaries. Their leads and plays will be sufficient information as to their holdings.

Of course, a preëmptive raise reopens the bidding and thus may give a second-round chance to an adversary who has already passed. That chance may be just what he

wants. This is the sole objection to the pre-emptive raise, and it is outweighed by its frequent advantages.

It is against pre-emptive bids from *those players who have yet to hear from their partners*, that I wage my special war. When your partner has bid, when your hand fits his as a glove fits the hand it covers, raise him whenever you please,—whether you need or not.

Four tricks (a trick and three raisers) are usually demanded for a pre-emptive raise. With fewer than four, you are supposed to give only necessary raises. But I quite often give a pre-emptive raise on three tricks and considerable general strength.

One instance of a pre-emptive raise will suffice:



	♥ —										
	♣ A K Q 9 4 2										
	♦ K Q 6 2										
	♠ 8 7 5										
♥ 10 9 7 4 ♣ 10 8 7 ♦ 5 3 ♠ J 10 9 6	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 33%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A K J 8 6 2 ♣ J 5 3 ♦ 8 ♠ 4 3 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ Q 5 3										
	♣ 6										
	♦ A J 10 9 7 4										
	♠ A K Q										

Z opened with "a no-trump," thus showing that he held but one unguarded suit. A passed, and it came to Y. Y feared a heart-bid from B, which would determine A's lead. He knew that, in all probability, his partner (Z) held a heart-stopper,—as his "unprotected suit" was almost certainly clubs. Y, therefore, cleverly bid "two no-trumps," to shut out a heart-bid from B, or to push that bid to three. B passed, and A, unaware of his partner's suit, led the jack of spades,—thus enabling Z to make a grand slam. With a heart-lead, he could have made but five-odd.

Of course, A-B couldn't have made three

hearts,—they couldn't have made two. But B could have invited a heart-lead by a "two-heart" bid,—while he hesitated to bid three against two no-trump adversaries.

Y's bid was a very clever *coup!*

## CHAPTER VIII

### INFORMATORY DOUBLES

INFORMATORY doubles are doubles of one-bids, made to give information to one's partner and not intended for business. The player who doubles a one-bid doesn't want to play it; he always wants to be taken out. It follows that, if you are his adversary you must never take him out (because that would be to help him); and if you are his partner, you must never leave him in.

Anyone who doubles a "one no-trump" is saying to his partner: "I, too, have a no-trump hand. Bid two in your best suit, no matter what it is, for I will give you general support." The partner thus commanded, is frequently forced to bid "two clubs" on four to a seven-spot (or some similar bid), and is often heavily defeated. All the good cards have been divided between the two no-trump hands; the club-bid hits strength in the adverse no-trumper, instead of in

the friendly no-trumper, and the bid goes to smash. I have had my partner double a "one no-trump," and put it up to me to bid two in my best suit. I have bid "two hearts" on the ace-king-jack-small, and been defeated by two tricks.

A far better way of getting around the same situation is to use your own no-trumper to play against the adverse no-trumper and to hold it down; or else, to bid "two no-trumps" against the adverse "one no-trump," if you are very strong, or if the adverse bidder could take rubber on his bid. It is worth a trick or two to play the hand; you can force the adversary to discard on *your* suits, in place of his forcing you to discard on *his* suits.

The player who doubles a one-bid in any suit says to his partner: "I have a no-trumper except for the fact that I don't stop that suit. Do you?"

If his partner *does*, all will go well; but if he doesn't, Heaven help him! *He must bid.* But I don't know what to tell him to bid, and I have never seen anyone else who could supply such information.

There are a certain few players who double a one-bid in any suit, in order to show a

stopper if the partner wants to go to no-trumps. But the generally accepted meaning of such a double is "a no-trumper except for lack of a stopper in the suit named."

I object to informatory doubles, because:

I. They are unethical. They don't mean what they say, and they give information by false (*i. e.*, illegitimate) bids.

II. They are tremendously apt to be inconvenient to one's partner.

III. The day of forced bids is over. It should never be resurrected.

IV. There is always a better way of getting round the same situation.

However, there is a certain school of players who love false bids and "calls." The moment they are obliged to drop one set, they rake up another. They seem unable to grasp, or appreciate, the straightforward game.

I have found the consensus of intelligent and expert opinion heavily against informatory doubles. I have seen men start out with the idea that this game of informatory doubles was "the only game." And I have seen them find it so expensive in actual play that they have dropped it in disgust.

If you play this game, or if you meet it,

you must know what to do. The advice is easily given:

*As partner, never pass an informatory double; as adversary, never bid against it.*

And one more bit of advice I will offer to my readers:

Let informatory doubles alone!



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SHIFT

WHEN you hold two equally long, and equally well-established suits, always bid the higher one first. This is in accordance with the "process of elimination," and is obviously good sense. If no one else bids, you play your hand at its best value; and if there are several rounds of bidding and you name your lower suit last, your partner can go back to your higher one, without increase of contract, if it happens to suit him better than your lower one. This is known as the "shift"; it is like walking *down*-stairs, one step at a time, instead of *up*-stairs; and it is a very useful form of bidding.

Suppose you hold the following hand:

♥ K J 9 5 4 3  
♣ 3  
♦ —  
♠ K Q J 5 3 2

Your correct opening bid is "one spade." On a later round (if there be one), you say "two hearts." This gives your partner his choice. If he prefers your second-suit to your first, he can raise it, if necessary. If he likes spades better, he can change your "two hearts" to "two spades" without increase of contract.

If you reversed the process, it might happen this way:

You open with "a heart"; second hand passes, and your partner passes. Fourth hand says, "two diamonds," and you say "two spades." This strikes your partner badly. He liked your hearts and he doesn't like your spades. In order to tell you so, he will have to take on a heavier contract by changing your "two spades" to "three hearts."

The principle of bidding your highest suit first and of then naming your lower ones in the order of their value, is known as the "shift." It is exceedingly useful. Don't forget it when your hand offers you the choice of two or more bids.

## CHAPTER X

### TEAM-WORK

THERE is no part of Auction that has made greater strides than team-work. The combining of the two hands, by means of legitimate bidding and overcalling, has reached the height of perfection.

In tennis, it is a well-known fact that the man who holds the championship for singles is rarely a wonderful player in doubles. Occasionally, a man appears whose gifts are equally great in both lines, and then he is a star of the first magnitude. But, as a rule, the man whose work in singles is perfection, is the one whose *team-work* leaves something to be desired.

And so in Auction! I have seen scores of persons whose art was perfection when it was a question of playing their own hands combined with dummy's; their accuracy was flawless; they never dropped a trick. And their team-work in *playing* was excellent,

even when the adversaries had captured the bid; *but their team-work in bidding was atrocious!*

While I admire the faultless player intensely, I should choose the faultless bidder for my partner. Give me the man who never offers me false information; who never declares the king when his highest card is the jack; who never makes a double that will give the adversaries a chance for a safe shift; who knows how to stop bidding his own suit and leave me my better one; who can practise self-effacement when the cards demand it; who will give me a warning over-call when my bid strikes a bad combination in his hand; *who will give me the opportunity to tell him that his bid is unwelcome to me; and above all, who thrusts no undesirable responsibilities upon me, in the shape of conventional bids to which I am forced to respond, whether I like it or not!*

I do not consider conventional doubles good team-work. Sometimes they suit the partner's hand, and sometimes not. When they do not, they are execrable team-work. When they do, they are unnecessary team-work. Legitimate information, given by bids, with which the bidder is willing and able to be left, show much more consideration

to his partner and, at the same time, tell all that a player should be permitted to tell.

*There are no longer any "rescue" bids!* I wish all players could grasp this fact. "I *must* take my partner out of a double," is a sentiment that is responsible for many Auction fiascoes.

It is seldom wise to attempt to "rescue" your partner from a double. Good players do not double one suit unless they can double all suits. This means that you will be doubled, in your turn, and that you have made your bid because you were frightened, while your partner made his because he wanted to and because he considered his hand was worth it. His hand is almost certainly stronger than yours on which you are attempting to "rescue" him. It is better that he should play the strong hand than that you should play the weak one. He may even *like* the double!

If your partner is the one who makes a double, *let him alone!* Don't change his double to a bid, unless that bid will put you rubber. His double is worth a hundred a trick; your bid cannot possibly be so valuable; his tricks begin to count after you have taken three, or four, or five,—yours not till after you

have laid up your book of six tricks. If he doubles the adversary's hearts, for instance, don't get frightened because you, yourself, hold no hearts. *The very fact that you have none, shows that they are all banked in your partner's hand!*

If you play with persons who use informatory doubles of one-bids, *as adversary, never take them out; as partner, never leave them in.*

Confine your own doubles to "business doubles," and remember that you have the consensus of important opinion on your side.

One of the foundations of good team-work is the following rule:

*If your partner makes a bid in hearts or spades, never interfere with him, unless as a warning that your hand will be an absolutely hopeless one in his suit, or unless you hold four or five honours in a high suit. If he bids the other major suit (no-trumps), play either hearts or spades in preference, even with strong help. Play no minor suit in preference, except as a danger signal.*

*A good heart is good enough for anyone.*

*A good spade is good enough for anyone.*

*A good no-trump is good enough for anyone, unless he can play hearts or spades.*

If your partner bids hearts, never change it



to *anything*, unless you are "chicane" in hearts (or have only one little spot), or unless you have four or five honours in spades, or a hundred aces for no-trump. If you have a singleton heart that is the ace, the king, or the queen, let his suit alone. Your honour will help him clear it; it may even take a trick. If you have two little hearts, let his suit alone; your two trumps added to the five which he must probably hold will give him the bigger half of all the trumps in the pack. Don't change to "two clubs" on a wonderful club-suit; use that as a side-suit for his hearts. Wouldn't you rather have trumps worth eight and side-suit worth six, than trumps worth six and side-suit worth eight?

Again, don't change his hearts to no-trumps unless you have a hundred aces. If you have not, let him play his hearts, and give him your no-trump hand in support. It takes four of his suit, and three of yours, to go game. Your no-trump hand should certainly supply that extra trick. *Your hand helps his heart hand, by supplying good side-suit; his hand may not work well with your no-trump.* It is not necessarily a long established suit on which he bids "a heart."

Still again, don't change his hearts to spades, unless you hold seventy-two honours, or eighty honours, or cannot help *at all*, to play hearts. True, spades are higher than hearts; but they are no better for game. It takes four of either to go game; give him, then, your spades as side support.

If your partner bids "a heart" second hand passes, and you hold this:

♥ 9 4 2  
 ♣ A K Q 10 8 6  
 ♦ Q 4 3  
 ♠ 8

pass also, on a clean score. It takes five clubs and only four hearts to go game. You have three trumps, a side-singleton, and a wonderful side-suit. *Don't be dazzled by those club-honours*, unless you have enough on the score to go game in clubs with two- or three-odd. In that case, you might as well bid them and get your honours. But on a clean score, play "hearts" rather than clubs. Your partner's hearts might make a wretched side-suit; they might be long and scattered; one adversary might stop them and the other might ruff them. Your clubs cannot fail to be a wonderful side-suit after trumps are

gone; they would also make forcers, if the adversary held the long trump.

Pass your partner's "heart"-bid, on the following hands:

♥ 8 5  
 ♣ Q 9  
 ♦ 8 6 5 3  
 ♠ A K Q 6 2

(unless your score is *just* twelve; in that case, over-call with "a spade"; eighteen would put you game and sixteen would not).

♥ Q  
 ♣ K 8 4 2  
 ♦ A K 7 2  
 ♠ 9 8 5 3

♥ J 7 3  
 ♣ A K 8 5  
 ♦ K Q 4  
 ♠ A 3 2

Over-call on the following hands:

♥ 9 7 5  
 ♣ K 10  
 ♦ 5 3  
 ♠ A K Q 10 8 2

("A spade" is your proper bid, because of the honours.)

♥ —  
 ♣ A K Q 9 8 5 3  
 ♦ Q 7 4  
 ♠ 9 8 6

(Over-call with "two-clubs," as a warning.)

♥ 9  
 ♣ A K 5 4 2  
 ♦ K Q 8 6  
 ♠ K J 4

(Over-call with "two clubs," or "a no-trump." The latter bid is a signal that you cannot help hearts, *but have every other suit well stopped*. If your partner goes back to "two hearts," let him alone. Don't warn twice! It might be a disastrous no-trumper. If your partner's suit didn't clear in one round and if he held no side reëntry, you could not use his hearts. If the ace-queen of spades and the ace of diamonds lay on the wrong side of you, you would have but three tricks in your hand.)

This is the acme of good team-work. Formerly, if your partner opened with "a heart," and second-hand passed, you would say "two clubs" on this hand:

♥ K 9 5  
 ♣ A K Q 9 8 7 6 2  
 ♦ A  
 ♠ 8

Some people bid that way yet, but it is poor team-work. Just look what your partner can do with his own hearts and your hand for support!

Now take every rule that I have just given you for hearts, and apply it to spades. Don't over-call a heart-bid or a spade-bid except for the reasons just specified. And that brings us to no-trumps.

Over-call no-trumps with good hearts or good spades, even with a perfectly good no-trump assist. *Over-call no-trumps from strength in either of the other major suits.*

Over-call no-trumps with hearts or spades, on a good trump-suit but nothing else.

Over-call no-trumps with hearts or spades on a thoroughly weak hand that is poor in every suit (even trumps), but which holds "five trumps to an honour, or six to anything."

Over-call no-trumps with diamonds or clubs, on a good trump-suit but nothing else.

Over-call no-trumps with diamonds or

clubs, with a thoroughly poor hand, but with "five trumps to an honour, or six to anything."

Even with a wretchedly poor hand, don't over-call unless you have the requisite material. *Never over-call on any four-card suit.*

A mistaken idea has arisen that a warning bid must necessarily be "backward,"—*i. e.*, must be in a suit that is lower than your partner's. This is not true. If, on a clean score, your partner bids "a heart," the next adversary passes, and you say "a spade," that is a warning bid. Spades are higher than hearts, but they are no better for game, on a clean score. If you had any heart-help, you would pass and use your spades as a side-suit, *unless they held four or five honours.* Your over-call therefore shows that you lack heart-help, or hold high honours in a better suit! It is a warning to get away from hearts. If your partner goes back to his hearts, *let him alone, unless you hold five spade-honours!* His return to his suit, after your warning over-call, may show that he has five heart-honours and is chicane in spades. Your suit may fit him no better than his fits you. If you *do* happen to hold five spade-honours, go



back again to your spades, and then *he* should let *you* alone. You have positively announced high honours in a better suit than his. Your first over-call may simply have been a declaration of heart-weakness and a fair spade-suit. Your second over-call announces positively that your hand is more valuable than his can possibly be. It is very bad team-work when two partners continue to bid each other up, while the adversaries sit still and smile at the thought of the penalties which grow more probable every moment.

Remember, then, *when you warn, do it on the first round, do it only if you have the material, and do it only once,—unless your suit is better than your partner's can possibly be.*

Good team-work presupposes a certain amount of self-effacement and the consideration of one's partner as well as of one's self.

All that I have just said, presupposes that the adversary passes your partner's bid. If he bids, in place of passing, it is a different question. You need worry no longer over danger-signals and warnings; you have your choice of four things: passing, raising your partner's bid, naming a suit of your own, and doubling the adversary.

Never pass, when you should raise. Never

pass when you should bid. Never pass when you should double. And never do any of these three things when you should pass.

The raising-rules have been already explained. The combination of bid and raise lies in this one system:

*Let the making hand count all losing cards; let the assisting hand announce all "raisers"; then let the making hand deduct his partner's announced takers from his own losers, and he will know how high to bid.*

Allow one probable trick to your partner. Ninety per cent. of the hands dealt contain at least one trick. But *unless your partner tells you that he has more, don't expect them of him. And give him a chance to speak. Let him affirm, or deny, assistance.*

*Don't try to play all the hands; for you can not do it. And over-bidding is the most expensive of pastimes and the commonest of faults.*

*Unless your bid would put you game, be content to yield it to the adversary, unless his bid would put him game.*

*Don't be entranced with partial games.*

*Don't risk much to save game. Risk quite a bit to save rubber.*

*Save game by your play, and rubber by your bid.*

*Remember that there are two objects in playing a hand: one is to take tricks, and the other is to command suits.*

*And, finally, don't open with preëmptive bids. They are atrocious team-work.*

What would you think of a tennis-player who was playing a set of doubles and who would say to his partner: "Get out of my way. I'm going to dispense with you entirely. I'm going to play net, and I'm going to play back. Stand over there on the side-line, and don't let me see you move a finger."

*He may be strong enough to do it, but that is not the way to play doubles!*

Learn to think of your partner as well as of yourself. Watch the score every minute. Use your brain. Give your partner a chance to use his. Don't forget that "two heads are better than one." Let your partner alone; don't interfere with him unless there is a reason. And a reason can be but one of two things: that your hand is more valuable than his, at the given score; or, that it is so poor that it would hurt him, and that it contains the requisite material with which to warn.

## CHAPTER XI

### PLAYING AGAINST THE BID

WITH a poor hand, it is nearly always less expensive to play against the make. *Nothing is so expensive as allowing the adversary to defeat you heavily.*

*Even with a good hand, it is often more profitable to play against the make. Not all good hands should be used for taking the make away from the adversaries. Often they should be used for defeating purposes.*

The desirable thing is not to play the most hands. It is to make the highest possible score on your cards.

*Choose always the higher of two possible profits, and the lower of two necessary losses.*

We have now covered entirely the bidding-field. Anyone who knows all that this book contains, up to this point, knows enough to be a bidder above criticism.

It is fortunate that the rules of good bidding are easily acquired; everyone concedes that

it is more important to be a perfect bidder than a perfect player. More can be lost by poor bidding than by poor playing.

Bidding can be entirely learned from books. It can be entirely learned from *this* book.

*Playing* needs practice—and long practice—before it nears perfection. But much can be learned from printed precepts, and without them, practice would certainly be less helpful.

The remainder of this volume will be devoted to the *play* of the hand, beginning with a condensed list of the initial (or opening) leads. These are sometimes known as the “blind” leads, and every player should know them as thoroughly as he knows his alphabet. Until he does, he cannot hope to rank as a player of any skill.

The entire list of leads can easily be learned in half-an-hour by any person of average intelligence.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LEADS

WHEN you lead to your partner's bid, you *always lead your highest card*. That is, suppose your partner has been bidding hearts, but has been outbid by the other side, and it is your original lead. *If you lead a heart, you must lead the highest one you hold*. This enables him to read the suit and to place the cards that he lacks.

And you should always lead to your partner's bid, unless you have a very good lead of your own—sometimes even when you *have* a good lead of your own.

In those cases where he has not bid (and occasionally even when he has), you lead according to your own hand. *Your lead must give your partner reliable information of what you hold. Every lead means something.*

The declarant has the inestimable advantage of seeing twenty-six cards, all of which belong to him, and of combining them



to his best advantage. The adversaries, groping for such combination, must communicate with each by the play of their cards. *Information should always be given by play of cards, never by word of mouth. Given by cards, it takes skill to impart, skill to read, and there is always the sporting chance that a player lacks the requisite cards and is forced to circumvent that lack by his wits.*

Information conveyed by word of mouth takes no skill to give, none to read, and there is no sporting chance. Nothing but sudden paralysis of the tongue could inconvenience its giver.

The following rules apply to the original opening-leads. Subsequent leads ("interior leads") follow the same rules except when obviously modified by the cards exposed in dummy, or by information received during the play.

### **Against Any Declared Trump**

(Hearts, diamonds, clubs, or spades):

Your best lead is always from two honours that touch (ace-king, king-queen, queen-jack, or jack-ten), and the higher the honours the better the lead. The lead of king, from ace-king, is the best in the pack, as it usually

takes the trick, leaves you in command of the suit, and gives your partner a chance to "echo."

Holding two honours that do *not* touch, try to let the suit come up to you.

*Holding any three honours your lead is always one of those honours.* There is no exception to this rule in a declared trump; some authorities consider ace-king-ten a bad combination, and think it unsafe to lead from it; but I can see no objection to the lead of the king.

Holding no two- or three-honour suit, lead fourth-best from a single honour (that is not an ace), or lead "short."

A "short" lead is a singleton or a doubleton.

Rarely lead short when you hold good trumps; keep them to defeat the make instead of ruffing with them. And, of course, never lead short when you are chicane; there would be no object.

In leading from a two-card suit, always lead the higher card first. This constitutes an "echo."

Never lead fourth-best from two honours, or three honours; simply from a single honour that is not an ace.

If you lead from an ace-suit, lead the ace itself, unless you hold king as well. *Never lead low from a suit that is headed by the ace.*

THE LEAD OF AN ACE denies the king, unless it is immediately followed by the king, when it means "no more of that suit." Always lead ace from an ace-suit, unless you have king as well, or unless your next card is the queen and you lack a third honour.

THE LEAD OF A KING means the ace, the queen, or both.

THE LEAD OF A QUEEN means jack and others, and denies all higher cards.

THE LEAD OF A JACK means the top of a sequence, or the top of nothing. It denies all higher cards.

"THE LEAD OF THE TEN means the two gentlemen" (king-jack-ten). Some players lead the jack from this combination, but the ten is more conservative. The ten may also be led from the top of a sequence, or the top of nothing.

HOLDING ALL THREE HIGH HONOURS (ace, king, queen), lead first king and then queen. To follow the king with the ace is to deny the queen.

All other leads are either fourth-best from a single honour, or short.

**Against No-trump.**

Your lead is always the fourth-best card of your longest suit, unless you hold a seven-card suit, or a three-honour suit, in which case you may lead high. The single exception to leading an honour from a three-honour hand is when those honours are ace-jack-ten, or ace-queen-ten, *and you have no side reëntry*. Then your lead is fourth-best; but with reëntry, it is ace.

Holding no decent suit, lead a nine-spot as a signal of distress. The nine is always a marked card: in a declared trump, it is always a singleton or a doubleton; and in no-trump, it means "don't touch that suit." It *couldn't* be fourth-best, for, if it were, the three higher cards would all be honours, and your lead would be one of those honours—not the nine-spot.

Holding no good suit and no nine-spot, lead the *next-to-top* card of a long weak suit. The rule of eleven will probably show your partner how poor your suit is, and keep him from returning it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE DISCARD

WHEN you can not follow suit, and do not trump in, you must discard. *Your first discard should always give your partner information.*

Different players discard differently, and it is always necessary to ask a new partner how he discards. If he says, "from weakness," he means that his first discard is made from a suit that he *doesn't* want led to him. If he says, "from strength," he means that it is made from the suit that he *does* want led to him.

It is perfectly proper to use the discard from strength, the discard from weakness, or the odd-and-even discard (odd for strength, even for weakness),—if you like them. But the best and most up-to-date discard is that made by "encouragement," and "discouragement" cards. If you play a seven, or higher, on the first round of a suit, you want that

suit led to you. If you play under seven, you *don't* want it.

All other discards can be used as *discards only*; encouragement and discouragement cards, on the contrary, *can be used equally in following suit and in discarding.*

Suppose you are playing against a heart-declaration, and your partner leads the ace of clubs. He hasn't the king, for he would lead it if he had. It is within your power to tell him whether or not you hold that king; and he will know, accordingly, whether to lead the suit again, in place of merely chancing it. If you play seven, or higher, on his ace, you say: "I have the king; come on." If you play under seven, you deny the king, and he tries another suit.

It sometimes happens, of course, that you lack the proper card for encouragement or discouragement. No system is absolutely perfect; this I think comes nearer to perfection than any other, because it gives you a longer list of possible cards any of which will say what you mean; because it can be used in following as well as in discard; *and because it permits you degrees of insistence.* The higher the card you discard, the more you want the suit. But it is rarely advisable



to discard an honour as a first-round discard.

In discarding, it sometimes happens that it is very hard to protect your hand. *Don't try to protect everything.* Suppose you have two barely-guarded queens,—that is, two queens with two small cards to guard each one of them. Don't throw away first a low card in one of the suits and then a low card in the other. In that way, you unguard both your queens, and lay them both open to the enemy. Discard in one of the suits only, and keep the other guarded. Discard right up to the one queen that you decide to throw to the dogs. Discard even that queen, herself, if you must. Unguarded, she is no good, anyhow. But keep *one* of your suits well guarded, even if it is impossible to do more.

While your discard must inform your adversary, as well as your partner, that doesn't matter. *It is more important to talk to your partner than to mystify your adversary.*

But there are cases when you can, and should, avoid telling the adversary something he particularly wants to know. Suppose an ace-queen suit lies exposed on the board, and the declarant (your adversary)

is anxious to place the king. *Don't discard from that suit, either encouragement or discouragement.* To do so would be to give your enemy the exact information he wants.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ECHO. THE RULE OF ELEVEN. THE BATH COUP

To play a higher card to a first round and a lower one to a second round is to echo. It is an unnatural process, and must therefore mean something. It means that you have but two cards of the suit. (It is also called "playing down and out.")

This information is given to your *partner*, on his leads,—not to the *adversary*, on *his* leads. It is also given to your partner by your own leads. *When you lead from a two-card suit, always lead the higher.*

On your own king-lead you should particularly watch for an echo from your partner. If he plays a higher card on your king than on the second round of your suit, he holds but two cards in that suit. He is echoing.

When your partner leads a king, look to see if *you* should echo. Holding but two cards in suit, play the higher one first.

*Don't, however, echo with an honour.* It would mislead your partner and make him think it was a singleton. Suppose he leads the king (from ace-king) in a suit of which you hold the queen and one. Don't play your queen on his king. He would think it was a singleton and would next lead a low card for you to trump, so that he might still hold up the command of the suit by retaining his ace.

Play your low card on your partner's king. Then play your queen on his ace. Immediately he will know that you have no more.

*Except* in cases of the honours, always play "down and out," holding but two cards of the suit which your partner leads. *Even* in cases of the honours, always play "down and out" in suits which you, yourself, lead.

The foregoing rules apply to declared trumps.

Another signal that is too little understood is the one-card echo at no-trump. If the make be no-trump and your partner leads a small card, and if dummy plays a card that you cannot cover, *you should play your next-to-highest card*, so that your partner may read his suit. For instance, your partner leads a six of hearts from a combination headed by

the ace, the king, or both; dummy plays the queen and you hold jack-ten and two small. You must play your *ten*, not one of your small cards. Then your partner will know that you have one card higher than the ten; he will see the queen on the board, and the ace-king in his own hand, and he will immediately credit you with the jack and be able to place all the high cards in his suit. This one-card echo in no-trump is invaluable; but it is so rarely found, even among good players, that when you come across a partner who uses it, you feel you have struck a veritable gold mine.

### **The Rule of Eleven.**

When a spot-card is led, *always deduct its face-value from eleven. The remainder will show how many cards of the same suit, higher than the one led, are held against the leader.* This rule is the inevitable concomitant of the fourth-best lead. Let me illustrate:

A player leads a six-spot of hearts. Immediately the declarant and the partner of the leader say to themselves: "six from eleven leaves five. There are five hearts, *higher than a six-spot, held against that leader.*"

They both look at dummy and count how many hearts, (*higher than a six-spot*) are exposed there. Then each of them looks into his own hand and counts how many hearts, (*higher than a six-spot*) it holds. And then each of them knows how many the other holds; sometimes one of them knows that the other holds none at all. Should there be two on the board and three in his own hand, he would know that the other closed hand *hadn't a heart higher than a six-spot*.

This rule is expressly for the declarant and the partner of the leader. The leader himself doesn't use it. He knows from the beginning how many cards are against him. Dummy doesn't use it. He couldn't. He can see but one hand, and he isn't playing, anyhow. But the other two players will find it very useful, and should never dispense with it.

It is in no-trumps that it is preëminently valuable. There, the stock lead is always fourth-best.

In declared trumps, public favour is wandering farther and farther away from a lead which is fourth-best from a single honour. Any other possible lead is preferred. But, quite frequently, the hand denies any



other lead, and the fourth-best lead is necessary. Then the Rule of Eleven immediately comes into play. And it will, moreover, *always detect a short lead*. If you see, in your own hand and on the board, *a greater number of higher cards than the rule allows*, you will know that a short lead, and *not* a fourth-best lead, has been made.

*If a player leads to his partner's bid*, the rule cannot be applied. Then he is leading his highest, and *not* his fourth-best.

But it is a good thing always to subtract from eleven the face-value of any spot-card that forms an opening lead,—unless it be led to the partner's bid. "Get the habit."

### **The Bath Coup.**

Holding ace-jack and others of the suit led, and playing fourth to the trick, *hold up both ace and jack, particularly if the king or queen be on the trick; also, particularly if the next lead will again come up to you.*

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FINESSE

To finesse is to take a chance. It is to risk the play of a lower card that *may* take the trick (though not certainly), when you also hold the high card which would certainly take it. It is an attempt to get a trick cheaply and still to hold up the command of the suit.

The best-known finesse is that where the player holds ace-queen of a suit in one hand—either his own or dummy,—and where the king lies against him. He doesn't know where it is—whether *under* or *over* his ace-queen. If it be under, it can be killed; if over, it is bound to make.

The player must never lead *away* from his ace-queen. He must get into the other hand and lead *towards* it. In this way the ace-queen lies in the third hand.

If second hand plays the king, third hand

can kill it with the ace and still command the suit with the queen.

If second hand holds the king, but doesn't play it, third hand must "finesse" his queen, anyhow.

If fourth hand holds the king, he will then kill the queen with it. But his king (if guarded) was bound to take anyhow, lying, as it did, on the safe side of the ace. Better let it make at once, and get it out of the way.

Generally speaking, it is better to lose the first round of a suit than the second; it is better to lose the second than the third. It is less expensive and less dangerous to lose *early* than to lose late.

This is not always true. There are cases where it is necessary to take all you can and then to "throw" the balance of the tricks. This is called "running to shelter."

Particularly is this true when the adversary's suit is established against you. Then it is too late to finesse.

"Never finesse with game in sight." Land game first and then take your chances.

Never finesse when the loss of the finesse would mean defeat in your bid and when (failing the finesse) the bid would be safe.

Never finesse when playing your top card would definitely defeat an adverse bid.

If you, as declarant, hold, between your two hands, the ace, the jack, and the queen (but lack the king), always get into the hand that doesn't hold the ace and finesse *towards* that ace. To lead away from it would be to establish the king wherever it lay.

If you hold ace in one hand, king in the other, and jack in one or the other, your finesse (to catch the queen) may be taken either way: from the ace-hand to the king-hand or from the king-hand to the ace-hand. A good way, when possible, is to let the suit alone till you can force some adverse discards on another suit. The player who holds the queen you are after, will never discard from that suit.

*Never take a finesse on the first round that could be taken on the second; never take one on the second that could be taken on the third. Defer every finesse as late as possible.* For instance:

You hold ace-king in one hand and jack in the other, and you want to catch the queen. Don't lead the jack towards the ace-king, on the first round. First lead your ace or king,—leaving the other. Then, with a side-

lead, get into your jack-hand. On the *second* round, finesse your jack towards your ace (or king). In this way you may sometimes catch a singleton or doubleton; also, by noticing the size of the spots which fall on the two rounds, you will get indications of position. The fall of high spots means there are no lower ones in the hand.

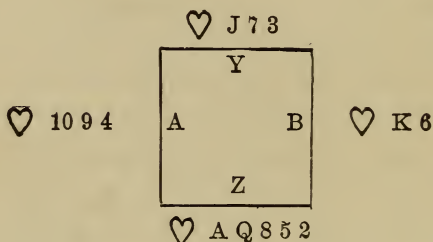
A point that is often lost is this:

The original leader leads a king from ace-king-jack. That is right, because he leads from two touching honours. But, on the second round, his remaining honours *don't* touch; they form a minor ten-ace. By leading out his ace, he may establish the queen against him. By letting the suit come up to him, *from any other player*, he may be able to catch the queen by a jack-finesse.

Nines and tens are the indicators as to the proper method of taking a finesse. Holding (in the two hands) the ace, the jack, and *either* the king or queen (but lacking the other of them), your object is to catch that missing honour by a fortunate finesse. Everyone knows enough to finesse from the low hand to the high. Not everyone knows the proper way to do it.

Let us suppose that the jack lies in the

dummy and the ace-queen in your own hand. Of course, you must never lead up to the jack; that would make the king a taker, no matter where he lay. You must get into the jack-hand by a side-lead, and lead up to your ace-queen.  *Holding, in either hand, the nine, the ten, or both, lead your jack towards your ace-queen. Holding neither the nine nor the ten, lead a low card towards your ace-queen. A concrete example will make this plain:*



The lead is with Y. It does not look as though A's ten should ever take, with but two cards to guard it. Yet if Y's jack is led, A's ten *will* take. Y plays jack, B king, Z ace, and A four. Z has then to lead the ace; and, on the third round, A's ten is good. Did A hold one more small card, *both* his nine and ten would take.

Let a small card be led from Y. B plays king, Z ace, and A the four. Z leads back to



the jack, and then to his own queen,—and Y's ten never takes.

Did Z hold the ten, nine, or both, in either of his hands, it would be impossible that they should take against him. He would then lead his jack towards his ace-queen. Remember, then:

*Holding the nine, the ten, or both, finesse the jack towards the ace-queen. Holding neither nine nor ten, finesse a low card towards the ace-queen.*

The same rule holds when the queen lies in one hand and the ace-jack in the other.

The nine and ten should also be guides towards the advisability of covering an honour with an honour. Seeing neither nine nor ten in your own hand nor on the board, cover an honour with an honour; you may establish the nine or the ten for your partner.

Don't jeopardize your bid by a risky finesse; land your bid first.

It is too late to finesse when a suit is established against you.

Don't finesse in a nine-card suit *when you want to catch the queen*. There are but four cards against you; three of them, including the queen, must lie together in order to protect her. The chances are that she is

unguarded. *Do*, however, finesse in a nine-card suit when you want the king; it takes but one card to guard him.

Take every finesse as late as possible.

*It is too late to finesse when the adversaries' suit is established against you.*

*When once you have lost control of the adversaries' suit, land your bid first and do your finessing afterward.*

*Finally, never finesse with game in sight.*

## CHAPTER XVI

### UNBLOCKING

“UNBLOCKING” is making the short hand get out of the way of its partner’s long one. It is “clearing the track.”

Suppose the declarant holds a long suit between the two hands; dummy has four of the suit with the ace at the top; his own hand holds five of the suit with the king at the top. He should first lead up to dummy’s ace, then back to his own king. This leaves him last, in the long hand—just where he wants to be.

The general rule for unblocking is to *play the high cards in the short hand*.

When playing *against* a no-trump make, it is very necessary not to block your partner, if he has a good suit.

You remember that the lead in no-trumps is always the fourth-best card in your longest suit, unless (notice the exception) you hold a three-honour suit or a seven-card suit,

in either of which cases you may lead high. With three honours you *must* lead high. With seven cards you *may* lead high, because you have a fair chance (with so many cards in your own hand), of catching an unguarded honour with one of your adversaries. It therefore follows that:

If your partner leads high in no-trumps it is a sign of great strength or great length. In either case, your sole business is to get out of his way—not to take tricks. He can take the tricks; all he wants from you is information as to the cards you hold and decent unblocking—that is, throwing your high cards on his high cards. Then he will know where they are, and he can keep the lead.

There is an exception to this. If you hold five cards of his suit, you may be longer than he is and may want to come in last. In that case, you play a middle card, reserving cards at both ends of your suit, so that you can either take the lead or get out of the way, as later developments may advise.

Also, if dummy holds a guarded honour in your partner's suit (such as a jack), and you hold a guarded honour that would kill it (such as a queen), you naturally wouldn't throw your queen on your partner's king-

lead, but would keep it to kill that jack. But, without that jack on the board, your undoubted business is to throw your queen on your partner's king, unless you have five or more in his suit.

If your partner leads a king, at no-trumps, he has either seven cards or three honours. From ace-king and four small, his lead is fourth-best. From ace-king and five small, his lead is king. Because, with so many cards, he may catch an unguarded honour from one of his opponents.

Also, from ace-king-queen and one small, his lead will be king, although he has but four cards in suit. But he has three honours. The lead is from strength, not length.

It follows, therefore, that when your partner leads a king against no-trumps, it may be from this:

♣ A K J 2

or from this:

♣ A K 8 7 5 4 2

and you don't know which it is.

If you hold the queen and one small, or queen and two small, you must throw your queen on his king. He will be greatly relieved to see it because it makes plain sailing for

him. Holding queen and three small, I still advise throwing the queen; but it is permissible to play your next to top card, especially if it be an "encouragement" card; your queen, however, must go on the third round.

Holding queen and four small, you may be longer than your partner. You must *play your next-to-top card and then play down*. And if you hold five, and the top one is not a face-card, you must *play your next-to-lowest card and then play up*.

Your partner leads the king of clubs, and you hold these:

♣ Q 8 7 4 2

Your proper play is the eight; to the second round you play the seven, and so on. If you find your partner is leading from a short three-honour suit (ace-king-jack-small), you must come into the lead on the fourth round in order to make your fifth card. If you find he is leading from a seven-card suit (you can tell this by the discards of the adversaries), you must unblock and leave him in the lead.

Again, your partner leads the king of clubs and you hold this:

♣ 10 8 7 4 2



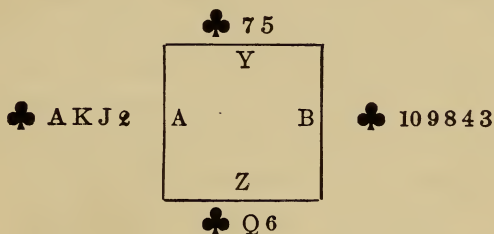
Your proper play is the four-spot on the first round, the seven on the second, and so on.

With five to a face-card, play your next-to-top and then down. With five to a plain card, play your next-to-bottom and then up. This is for information to your partner.

Let me make this clear with an illustration:

A player led the king of clubs against a no-trump declaration. He held ace-king-jack-deuce, and he is "A" in the following diagram:

The trick fell thus:



King (from leader), five-spot (from dummy), four-spot (from partner of leader), six-spot (from declarant). And the leader said to himself. "The trey of clubs is not on that trick. The deuce I hold myself; but the trey is the lowest card of some one else. If the declarant had it, he would naturally throw it on a trick that was already won.

Dummy hasn't it. My partner must have it. Why did he play a four when he held the trey? Because he has five cards not headed by a face-card. That is nine between us. Dummy had two. The declarant's queen must fall on this second-round, and on the fourth round I'll put my partner in."

He was able to read the entire suit, and to unblock it, because of that one correct play of his partner.

## CHAPTER XVII

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

MAKE it an invariable rule to lead "through strength and up to weakness." The bids will help you place the strength that you cannot see.

Lead through strength, but *not through a sequence*. There is no object in it. The declarant can take with one of his sequence, and still command with his other.

When you don't know whether or not to take a trick, ask yourself if you want the lead. If not, stay out; if so, come in.

"Throwing the lead" is often the wisest thing you can do. It is the exceptional hand in which you can take *all* the tricks.

Unless the cards in the two hands form a sequence, every suit should be led *from the weak hand to the strong*.

As declarant, in a trump-make, don't let the adversaries make their little trumps. Exhaust them at once if you are able. With

seven or more trumps in the two hands, you have the big half of thirteen. Exhaust your adversaries except in those cases where you can play your hands with a cross-ruff, or where you have a single-ruff *in the weak hand*. Don't be in a hurry to take a ruff in the *strong* (or *long*) hand. There is always time enough for that after the adverse trumps are gone.

Conversely, as adversary, avoid giving the weak hand ruffs and the strong hand discards.

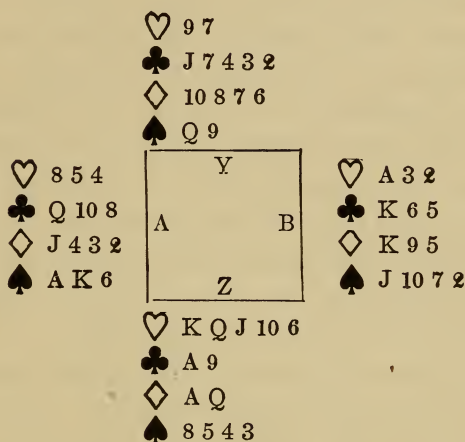
Don't *establish* ruffs for the weak hand.

Don't fail to lead trumps up to weakness. Many adversaries seem to think that no one but the declarant can lead trumps. This is a terrible error. If the declarant hesitates to lead trumps, let either adversary lead them at the first possible moment,—even that adversary who leads up to strength. If the declarant has a cross-ruff or a weak-hand ruff, let them follow the same plan—let them come in at any cost and lead trumps. And, in all cases, let that adversary lead trumps who leads up to weakness in dummy. If you are leading up to dummy and trumps are the weakest things in his hand, *lead trumps*.

But in no case except ruffs, cross-ruffs, or

trump-hesitation on the part of the declarant, should an adversary *return* his partner's trump-lead. The first adversary leads trumps to weakness; his partner would be leading them to strength.

I will give you an example of establishing a ruff for the weak hand:



Z was a preëmptive bidder and opened with "two hearts" to show high honours and a desire to be let alone.

A and B do not appear to have extremely strong hands, yet it rests with them whether, or not, Z shall make his bid. If they give the weak hand a ruff, Z has no trouble in making three-odd. If they kill the weak-hand ruff,

Z cannot possibly make two-odd; he cannot make one-odd unless he plays with extreme brilliancy.

The actual A led, correctly, the king of spades. Then, seeing the queen lying alone on the board, he remarked: "I think I'll just pick up that lady," and led his ace. Not even then, did he lead trumps to kill dummy's ruff, because he "didn't want to lead them up to strength." Whether he led clubs, diamonds, or spades, Z's three-odd were safe. He would ruff his own two losing spades with dummy's weak trumps (thus giving two tricks to an otherwise trickless hand); he could finesse his diamonds properly from dummy to his own ace-queen; and he could have a lovely time generally.

After A led his king of spades, he should have set about killing a possible weak-hand spade-ruff. *He should have led trumps, even up to strength.* B should have taken with the ace and returned the lead, because its object was so palpable.

Played thus, Z cannot possibly take more than the odd. He cannot take that unless, on the first trump-round, he throws his ten (instead of his six) onto B's ace. If he does this, he can get into dummy with the nine-



spot on the second trump-lead, and can finesse his diamonds properly instead of leading away from them. But in no way can he save his preëmptive bid of two-odd.

“Beating the board” is another useful lesson. To do it, you lead, or play, something that dummy cannot possibly take.

In playing against the bid, avoid giving information to the adversary by your discard. If a ten-ace suit lies on the board, remember that he will watch discards in order to place the missing honour. Don't tell him what he wants to know.

If an ace-queen suit lies exposed on your left, and you hold the king, he is in a bad position. If you hesitate to lead the suit, the declarant will spot your king and will lead through him. Whenever you have cards enough of the suit, lead through the ten-ace, to fool the declarant. You cannot fool your partner; he *knows* he hasn't the king.

Don't lead “thirteeners” except at no-trumps. To do so in declared trumps, is to give the adversary a wonderful chance; he can ruff in one hand and discard a loser in the other.

Don't lead up to a king-and-one; you establish him firmly for the first round or thesecond.

Lead *through* a king-and-one, whenever you have a chance.

Lead through a ten-ace, but never up to one. To lead up to ace-queen, or king-jack, is to allow the declarant to get his trick as cheaply as possible. It is better to lead up to ace-king than ace-queen.

“King ever, queen never.” If the king-and-one are on the board and are led through, put up the king. If the queen-and-two be led through, keep your queen.

In no-trumps, don't lead your suit up to a declared stopper that is not the ace.

Avoid a deuce-lead against no-trumps. It tells too much. It shows at once that your suit is but four cards long. Holding two four-card suits, one running from king to deuce and the other from king to trey,—always choose the latter for a blind lead.

If your partner leads in no-trump and you hold but two cards of his suit, and if the Rule of Eleven shows that the adversary on your left (the declarant) holds *but one card* higher than the one led, *always play the higher card of your two to the first trick*. This, to unblock.

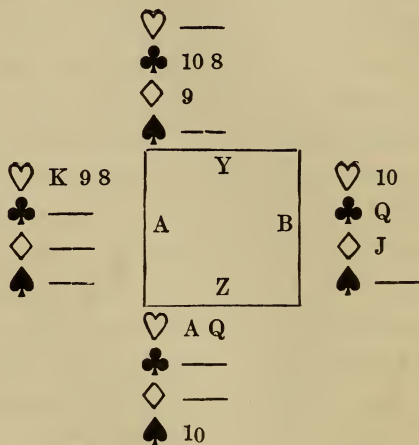
When each side has been bidding a suit very high, *it is probable that each is bidding on a shortage of the other's suit*. Remember this

when you lead. Make some eccentric lead rather than lead your long suit. It will often enable you to defeat the bid before the declarant gets in. He is counting on an immediate ruff of your suit.

Remember the difference between making the adversary "come to you" on the last two rounds, or of "going to him," on those same rounds. Suppose you hold ace-jack and he holds queen-ten. If he leads, you make both rounds; if you lead, you lose one. In other words, *in order to take the twelfth and thirteenth tricks, it is often necessary to throw the lead to the adversary on the eleventh trick.* The tenth is too soon,—he will throw it back to you on the eleventh, and you will "go to him," on the twelfth and thirteenth. Anything after the eleventh is too late. This fact is so important that a great English authority has called the eleventh trick the "pivot" trick. Don't "throw the lead" senselessly. Wait and throw it, with a purpose, *on the eleventh trick.* Hold up your *coup* until then. *Throw the lead when there are exactly three cards in your hand!*

Some time ago I was playing a big heart hand. It offered opportunities for a tremendous cross-ruff and, naturally, I seized

them. Trumps had never been drawn at all; I had been ruffing diamonds in my own hand and spades in dummy. I had originally held five trumps, headed by the ace, queen, and jack, and dummy had held four little ones, all of which had taken tricks by ruffing the losing spades. At the opening of the eleventh round the cards lay thus:



The ten of spades was high in my hand, as I had "ruffed out" the suit. The lead was in my own hand.

I had no idea of the position of the four adverse trumps. As it happened A had more trumps left than I. He also held a perfectly

protected king of trumps on the safe side of my ace-queen. And that king never took—thanks to a misplay of B's.

I led my ten of spades, A trumped perforce, and dummy and B both trashed. A, being in the lead (on the twelfth round), was forced to come up to me, and I caught his king.

As soon as the hand was over, I said to B: "Oh, you should have overtaken your partner's trick; you should have played your ten of trumps over his eight." And he said: "No, that would have done no good; I had no more trumps to lead through you."

Then we showed him that it mattered not *what* he led through me, just *so* he led through me. If his partner played after me, on that next trick, he made his king; if I played after him, he lost it.

Then B said: "How was I to know all this?" And I said: "By the mere fact that I voluntarily threw the lead on the eleventh trick. Had I held established trumps I should have led them out. The fact that I threw the lead on the pivot trick showed plainly that I wanted to play last on the next trick; that is, that I wanted the twelfth round to come up to me. It was your business

to see that it didn't, and to put it through me."

From this principle it follows that as a hand nears its end, it is safest to take the even rounds and to lose the odd ones. Lose the eleventh, take the twelfth. Carrying it a trick farther back, it means: Lose the ninth, take the tenth. If you go too far back it is useless; but as a hand nears its end, if you don't know when to come in and when to stay out, count the cards in your hand. Come in when you hold an even number. Stay out (or throw the lead) when you hold an uneven number.

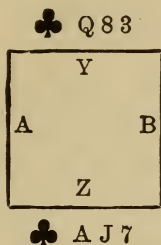
Suppose you hold just one trump, the thirteenth, and the adversaries are in the lead and are forcing you with a suit of which they hold all the commanding cards. You don't know when to come in or when to give them their tricks. All other things being even, no other signs being forthcoming, come in when you are holding an *even* number of cards.

The "pivot" tricks are generally the *fifth* and the *eleventh*. The fifth to take, the eleventh to throw.

Again, suppose while the hand is young, you (as declarant) find yourself with a six-card suit,—three to the jack in one hand, and



three to the ace-queen in the other,—or reversing the positions of the jack and queen, thus:



To lead that queen towards the ace-jack would be to invite a certain third-round loss. Lead a low card from Y, and finesse your jack. If the finesse goes, the king is marked with B. *Drop that suit entirely, play your other suits, and retain a sure loser till the eleventh round, a loser that you know will throw the lead to B. Throw him in on the eleventh round.* He will then be holding the king and one small club while you hold queen-small in one hand and ace-small in the other. He must lead and, whatever he leads, you take both rounds.

Did you make the twelfth lead, his king would take, inevitably.

The rule "cover an honour with an honour" is a good one generally. Its observance will often establish a jack or a ten-spot for your partner. *But it has its exceptions.* When

that jack or ten lies on the board in plain sight, when you are palpably establishing it for the declarant's ease of mind, *don't* "cover an honour with an honour." To do so would be too obliging.

Similarly when you hold a more-than-adequately-guarded honour, when it is obvious that it cannot be led through often enough to capture it, *don't* put it on the honour that is led through it. *Don't* cover.

When I remember how glad I am to get those adverse honours out of the way by tempting my adversaries to "cover an honour with an honour," I am sure that it cannot *always* be a good thing for my adversary to do it. What *I* want should certainly not be what *he* ought to do.

*When you want high cards to fall, lead high cards.* A good way to get an adverse ace out of the way, is to lead a king or queen. They will often prove irresistible.

Conversely, *don't give up control of the adversary's suit until you have to.* Hold it up as long as possible.

Try to think of penalties as well as of points. Try to stop bidding when you have a chance to defeat. As soon as the bid gets to two, in anything, look to see whether you can

beat it, before you over-bid it. If the other side bids in the only suit that you can defeat, —*pass!* Don't double and give them a chance to shift; don't over-call and give them a chance to beat you. Just pass. If they make a bid that you are sure of defeating, and if the bid is so high, or your hand has such general strength, that you can defeat any other bid they make, then double. That is your great chance.

Let the declarant remember to false-card constantly. Let him mix immaterial low cards habitually. This will puzzle and hamper the adversary. But let no one attempt to false-card when playing *against* the bid; such false-carding would deceive the partner of the player who attempted it. *The declarant, having no partner to deceive, is the only player who can afford to false-card.*

*The play of any card in third hand denies the card immediately under it.* To play an ace is to deny the king; to play the jack is to deny the ten. Your partner will immediately believe that you do not hold that king, or that ten, and will credit the declarant with them.

*Never waste a point. Take every trick as cheaply as possible.*

But, as declarant, try to misinform your

adversaries. Holding both ace and king, take with your ace in order to make each adversary think that his partner may have the king.

*Always take with the lowest of a sequence and lead the highest.* The only exception is from ace-king and others. Your lead then is king, not ace.

*When your partner makes the original lead against no-trumps and you take the trick, always return immediately your highest card of the suit he led.* Don't be deterred by the fact that the ace of the suit lies on the board. That ace has to take, and it is your duty to help your partner clear his suit. There are only a few cases where you break this rule of return lead. One is when dummy shows such appalling strength in the suit that your partner's lead is marked as forced, or poor, or illegitimate. Another is when dummy holds the ace-queen and your partner's lead is marked as being fourth best from the king; a return lead would kill his king. Another is any other similar fourchette in dummy over a single honour held by your partner. And still another is the case where your partner has not led the suit in which he has bid, but has led a side-suit with the obvious desire to

put you in, if possible, so that you may give him his suit *through* the declarant's stopper. In this last case, *never fail to lead your highest card of your partner's suit.*

When your partner leads against a declared trump, and you take the trick, *do not* return the suit immediately, *unless* you have no more of the suit and can ruff the third round; *or unless* you have so many that he must have led short. Show your own suit first, except in these two cases. If you have no suit, lead up to dummy's weakness. *When you come in later*, return your partner's suit and return your highest.

An original lead of a nine-spot is always marked. Against declared trumps it is invariably short (singleton or top of two). Against no-trump, it is a signal of distress. It says: "Don't touch this suit unless for purposes of your own. I haven't a lead in my hand."

An eight-spot is invariably a short lead against declared trumps, but may be fourth-best against no-trumps.

Many excellent players will never lead short when holding *fewer than four* small trumps.

When leading through dummy, seize every

opportunity to "lead through a guarded honour," or through a "hole" (that is, two honours that do not touch). Your partner may have the honour that fills this "hole."



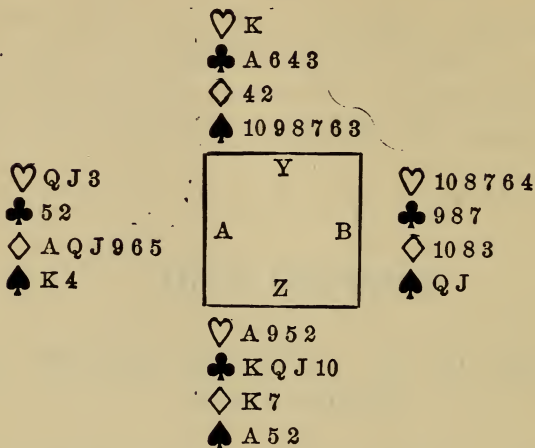
## CHAPTER XVIII

### LEADING UP TO A DECLARED STOPPER. A MOOTED POINT

WHEN playing against a no-trump declaration, I do *not* believe in leading up to a declared stopper that is not the ace. It is, however, a case where authorities differ.

*If a stopper lies over the bid, it is bound to make and may as well do it first as last. But if it lies under the bid, it should always be led through, never up to.* If the stopper happens to be the ace, it has to take no matter where it lies, and you need not bother to try to lead through it. The sooner you clear your suit the better. Let me give you one illustration of leading *through* a declared stopper, instead of up to it:

*(Discarding to unblock; and allowing a suit to come to you through a declared stopper:)*



This is one of the subtlest of hands—especially for A.

Z bids “a no-trump”; A “two diamonds”; Y and B pass. Z’s diamond stopper is very light, lying, as it does, *under* the diamond bid; on the other side, it would be perfectly safe. However, he says “two no-trumps.” And every one else passes.

Now it lies entirely with A, whether or not this bid shall go through. As the hand was played, A insisted on leading his diamonds (against expert advice). He led his ace, then his queen, to clear the suit, insisting that he had reëntry in both spades and hearts, and would make his diamonds later. And he did;

but it was so much later, that Z had made what he bid.

For the hand hinges entirely on Z's taking, or not taking, with the king of diamonds. He has exactly eight tricks in the two hands, allowing one for the diamond king,—four club tricks, two heart tricks, the ace of spades, and the king of diamonds. Failing one of those tricks, the bid will not go through.

Always remember that "if a stopper lies *under* the bid, and is not the ace, it should be led through—never up to." Z's bid of "two no-trumps" declares a diamond stopper; from A's hand, that stopper is shown to be the king—and the king in a very perilous position. It should be A's sole care to throw B in, that he may lead the diamonds through Z; and it should be Z's sole care to keep B from taking a single trick. He does not care how many tricks A takes, for A will have to lead up to him; but he simply *cannot* afford to let B in, to lead the diamonds through his king.

A should lead "the highest of his own weakest suit"—the five of clubs. Z takes this with dummy's ace, so that he may lead his long suit (spades) through B. If he should lead spades from his own hand up to dummy's ten, B might come in with the jack, the queen,

or the king (if he held them), and lead diamonds through Z—and then the fat would be in the fire.

So the first club round goes to Y's ace. Y leads the 6 of spades, B plays the jack, and Z the ace; and (here comes the crux) *A must throw his king on that ace!* For had Z held the queen of spades, he would certainly have finessed it, not being afraid to let A in. As Z doesn't hold it, B must; therefore A must throw away his king, in order to unblock and give B a spade-reëntree. If A comes in on hearts, he must lead his four of spades; B will take with the queen and lead his ten of diamonds, and their object will be accomplished.

Should Z elect to open hearts instead of spades, A must follow the same principle—he must keep a small one to try to throw his partner in. A has two objects—to get out of B's way in every suit but diamonds, and never to take a trick until the diamonds are led to him from one of the other three hands. It would be very unusual for Z to make his hearts before he took a try at his long spades. But suppose he should! He can still be defeated.

When Z takes the first club-round with

dummy's ace, he may lead his king of hearts. Then A must throw his jack. Z will then get into his own hand with the clubs and make all the clubs he holds. If he next leads the ace of hearts, *let A be sure to throw his queen* to try to unblock hearts for B's reëntry. He knows that B must hold *some* suit with more than three cards in it. It has been shown that B's length is not in clubs; A's hand will prove that B's suit is not diamonds; dummy's long line of spades will make it improbable that B holds many of them,—and hearts are thus marked as a long weak suit in B's hand.

Thus, if A opens the diamonds, Z wins out. If he allows the diamonds to come to him, Z is defeated. Never forget that if a stopper lies under the bid, and is not the ace, you should never lead up to it, but always through it.

Of course, in many hands the situation would not be so ideal for A; Z's king of diamonds, for instance, might be better guarded; or B might not have so many diamonds with which to lead through the stopper. But even so, A loses nothing by letting the diamonds come up to him. I have seen hundreds of hands played and *I have*

*never seen one where a point was lost by waiting to have a stopper led through; and in an overwhelming majority of cases much has been gained by the method!*



## CHAPTER XIX

### HINTS

DON'T try to play all the hands; often use a strong hand to *defeat* the bid.

Try to score penalties on the adversary in the beginning of a rubber, and to secure the play of the hands at the end.

Try not to let the adversary get the bid at one, in any high suit; *but*:

Remember that a "forcing bid" doesn't always force; you may be left with it on your hands.

Remember that a "short sure rubber" (where there are no penalties) is always a low rubber.

Never make a risky bid, unless to go game or to save game.

To double a person gives him a chance to change his bid; therefore:

Never double unless you are prepared to double again, no matter where the adversary jumps.

When you want to *make* a high bid, count what you dare lose; when you want to *double* a high bid, count what you can take.

Double in preference to bidding; let the other side work for you.

A bad double is worse than a bad bid. The adversary cannot go game or rubber on your bid, no matter how poor it is. He *can* go game on your double.

Unless the bid would put you game, be content to yield it to the adversary, unless the bid will put *him* game; in that case, take it away even at a risk. If it would put him rubber, take it away even at a certain loss.

It is worth at least one or two tricks to have the play of the hand. If you have a no-trump hand and the adversary bids "a no-trump," force him to two if possible (by a bid in a side-suit). If you cannot do this, it is better to take the bid yourself at "two no-trumps" than to double his one. Of course, if you have the lead and hold an established suit of seven or more cards, it is better to double him.

A shaky hand is safer as a declared trump than as a no-trump.

The player's first care is to make what he bid; the adversaries' first care is to defeat

the bid. Do your finessing after this is accomplished.

Keep a keen eye on the score.

Be a reliable partner and don't give false information. That is better than mystifying the adversary.

Understand every "school" of play

Be careful not to bid any suit unless you hold ace or king.

Never bid on a jack-suit, or a ten-suit, on the first round. Auction is a game of strength rather than length—a game of aces and kings.

Never raise your partner's bid on trumps alone; you should have some side protection, a short suit, or a ruff.

If you hold a poor hand, one that *must* lose, lose on your adversary's declaration rather than on your own; it is much less expensive, *unless* his declaration would put him rubber. In that case, declare on your own hand.

Almost any rule can be broken in a critical situation, if you know you are breaking it and if the occasion demands it. If there be one iron rule, it is:

Never bid no-trumps unless you stop the adversary's suit.

Remember that you should save *game* by your *play*, and *rubber* by your *bid*.

Pay strict attention to all bids.

It is said that "no one but a fool bids three in any suit when sitting between two no-trumpers."

It is also said that "ten thousand children are going barefoot in the streets of London because women are afraid to lead trumps."

"Three hearts," "three spades," "four diamonds," and "four clubs" are not bids to be lightly doubled on a clean score.

Rarely bid on trumps alone.

Never raise on trumps alone.

Never double on trumps alone.

A frequent doubler is invariably a weak player.

There are no "rescue bids." Forget them! To do so will go far toward completing your Auction education.

Don't tell whose lead it is. You have no right to do so.

Be quick to penalize yourself and slow to penalize the other man. Be a sport!

There is always something to learn in Auction. Let no one think he "knows it all." The most self-satisfied player I know always makes the mistake of leading away from an ace.

To sit and ponder over your opening-lead

is to invite curses. If you don't know your leads, learn them or stop playing.

If the other fellow wants to beat himself, never interfere with his plans.

When you get the bid, you score in bunches of six, seven, eight, nine, or ten. When you beat the bid, you score in bunches of 50 or 100. Would you rather work like a slave for ten cents, or have some one hand you a dollar?

It is never very profitable to "save game" at a cost of 200 points, or to "save rubber" at a cost of 600.

When you want to *bid* high, you count what you *haven't*; when you want to *double*, you count what you *have*.

To double a high bid, it is not necessary to hold many trumps. It is necessary only that you and your partner, together, shall hold one more trick than your book.

Singletons and missing-suits are dread things in no-trump, but tremendous assets in a declared trump.

If you hold but four trumps in the strong hand, singletons and missing-suits lose their value. You are too short to take ruffs.

If the adversaries show any signs of trying to establish a ruff, or a cross-ruff, get in at any cost and lead trumps, even up to strength.

The lower the suit on which you bid, the more expensive your declaration.

If the bid suits you, it is wise to say nothing.

Courtesy and calmness are necessary adjuncts of a really great game. Unmasked criticism is intensely poor form.



## CHAPTER XX

### DON'TS

DON'T overbid.

Don't double bids of one.

Don't double anything unless you can double everything.

Don't talk while the bidding is in progress.

Don't be too explanatory at the close of a hand.

Don't open with bids of two.

Don't bid no-trump unless you stop the adversary's suit.

Don't establish ruffs for the weak hand.

Don't lead thirteeners, except at no-trump. You will give the player a chance to trump in his weak hand and to discard a losing card from his strong one.

Don't forget that there are eighteen "points" in every suit.

Don't make any bid that is in excess of what is absolutely necessary.

If you have played badly don't lay it to the

light, the heat, the conversation, etc. Every one has been at the same disadvantage, and every one has "off" days.

Don't ask back bids, or face quitted tricks.

Don't give the weak hand ruffs or the strong hand discards.

Don't forget that game-in-the-hand is very valuable.

Don't despise points that are "above the line." Don't overestimate the importance of that cross line on the score-card. One hundred is ten times as much as ten, no matter where you write it.

Don't be a disgruntled loser nor an elated winner.

Don't congratulate yourself too heartily on having kept the adversary from playing the hand when it has cost you 600 points to do it.

Don't excuse your poor game by saying: "Well, I think I win as often as any of them." That is not the point; the point is to use your cards to their utmost possible advantage.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE REVOKE

IN the first place, let me urge my readers never to claim a revoke until the close of a hand. The failure to wait till the proper time to claim a revoke is almost the commonest fault in Auction. The hand is interrupted, discussion ensues, there is conversation as to what must be done, thought-chains are broken, and everything is in confusion.

Wait till the close of the hand; then, before the score is entered, claim any revoke or revokes that may have been made. If the claim be denied, the tricks may be taken up one-by-one and searched until the claim is proved or disproved.

If the declarant revoke, the adversaries may take 100 points above the line for the first revoke, and an additional 100 points above the line for each subsequent revoke. The adversaries, of course, can never score anywhere except above the line.

Dummy cannot revoke. It is every one's business to watch him.

If either adversary revoke, the declarant may choose between 100 points above the line or three tricks taken from the adversaries and added to his own. These tricks may assist him to make good his declaration and to score game or rubber. They cannot entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained, nor to any bonus.

In the case of doubling or redoubling, the tricks taken on a revoke-penalty are worth precisely the same as all other tricks in the hand; that is, they are worth twice or four times their normal value below the line.

If the adversaries revoke more than once during a hand, each revoke after the first is worth 100 points above the line to the declarant and his partner.

Dummy is permitted to call attention to a revoke, provided he has not looked voluntarily into any hand other than his own. Either he or the declarant may choose the penalty, but not both of them, and there shall positively be no consultation between them on the subject.

A revoke is established when a trick is turned and "quitted" (that is, when the

fingers are off it), or when either the revoking party or his partner leads or plays to the following trick, whether in turn or otherwise. For instance, when a trick is turned and quitted, a revoke is established and may not be rectified. Also, even if the trick be left lying ungathered on the table and the revoking player or his partner throw down a card to the following trick, the revoke is again established by that act. Prior to the establishment of a revoke, it may be corrected without penalty.

The revoking side may score nothing on the hand, except for any honours they may chance to hold. No matter how many tricks they may have taken, they can score nothing if they have revoked.

A revoke may often be prevented by the partner of that player who is on the edge of making it. The first time any player refuses a suit he should say "no hearts" or "no clubs"—or no whatever the suit may be—as he makes his discard to the trick. If he neglects to do this, his partner should immediately ask "No hearts, partner?" or "No clubs?" or no what-not? This is to call attention to the fact that suit is not being followed and to prevent a careless revoke by

a player whose wits may be wool-gathering. If this question be asked before the trick is turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish the revoke unless in the meantime the player questioned has definitely answered in the negative, or unless he or his partner has led or played to the following trick.

Law 87 reads: "At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mixes the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries."

Law 88: "A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal."

Law 89: "Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honours. In such case, if one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side."



## CHAPTER XXII

### PENALTIES

FROM time to time the question of penalties or non-penalties raises itself and stares us in the face. Players are very much divided on this head; even excellent players are not always entirely sportsmanlike on the subject.

Whatever game a person goes in for, his first aim should be to take it up in the true sporting spirit. The object of a game is to reward skill and punish or penalize want of skill, and carelessness; add to this the element of chance in a greater or less degree, the rules and implements of the particular game in question, and your game stands made.

No one questions most of these facts; no one tries to play a game without the proper implements, and without a certain knowledge of its rules. No one plays a game without failing to take advantage of any skill he may possess. Why, then, should anyone wish to evade the only remaining condition? Why

should he object to taking his punishment for ignorance or carelessness?

What would you think of a golf player who wanted to be allowed to lift his ball out of every difficult "lie," or a tennis player who wanted to "take it over again" every time he missed a ball, or any player of any game who turned sulky over consequences that he had brought on his own head?

Auction should be approached in precisely the same sporting spirit which one shows at other games. Penalize yourself promptly and cheerfully—don't wait to be dragged to it by the adversary; if you expose a card from your hand, or drop one on the table, lay that card immediately—face up—on the table, subject to call. Never dream of grabbing it up and returning it to your hand, and of wrangling over the adversary's right to call it. And when you have placed it on the table and the adversary has called it to his own advantage, play it cheerfully and graciously. Don't be ill-tempered over it, and *please* don't say, "I was just going to play that, anyhow—so it doesn't hurt me any!" Oh, if you *knew* the difference that all these things make in a game, you would never have to be twice urged to be sportsmanlike!

You were clumsy when you dropped that card; take the penalty for your clumsiness as naturally as you would if you were running a race or skating on ice; there, if you are clumsy, you fall. Here, too, you fall—by having your card made subject to your adversary's pleasure.

When I play for the first time with new acquaintances it doesn't take me three minutes to rate their game. There are good players, indifferent players, and poor players—but there are infinitely more classes than that. There are good players whom I never want to see again; they are grumpy, over-eager to exact penalties from others, and exceedingly loath to pay up their own. And there are indifferent, and even poor, players with whom I am willing and glad to have other games. They are eager to improve, intelligent and quick at taking hints, gracious in giving penalties, and very slow in exacting them.

And there is another odd point: The player who is quickest about penalizing himself is usually slowest about exacting penalties from unwilling adversaries. And the player who watches, lynx-eyed, for chances to penalize his adversary is nearly

always excessively ill-tempered when the tables are turned on him.

I am going to run over the principal penalties of the game, in order that you may be, not only willing to "pay up" when your time comes, but intelligently posted as to whether it *has* come.

The first and greatest is, of course, the penalty for the revoke. No one, I think, questions this or seeks to evade it. It has already been described in the chapter on the revoke.

The lead from the wrong hand by the declarant is no longer generally penalized, though many of us think it should be, in order to prevent both carelessness and wilful cheating. However, *if the declarant lead from the wrong hand, he is not at liberty to correct his error unless directed to do so by one of the adversaries.*

The lead out of turn, by either adversary, is always punishable. If it be the opening lead, the declarant has *his choice of two penalties*. He may treat the card led in error as an exposed card (laid on the table and subject to his call), or he may call any suit he pleases from the proper leader. When he does this, the card led in error is not an

exposed card. It may be returned to the hand of its owner.

When a suit is called by the declarant and the adversary has none of that suit, the penalty is paid. The information is as valuable as the lead.

I wish this penalty for an erroneous opening lead were always enforced. If it were, the game would soon be greatly improved. No good 'players' would be caught many times in this trap, and the result would be very gratifying. Nothing is so amateurish as a game in which, at the close of the bidding of every hand, some one asks, or some one tells, whose lead it is. *If any one at a table knows whose lead it is, everyone should know!* No one should ask where the lead is, and no one should tell. "It is your lead," should be a proscribed phrase in Auction. At the close of the bidding, all the players should sit silent until some one leads; if it is the proper leader, well and good. If not, the Player should call any suit he wants, from the real leader. It will not take many such experiences to cure players of this tiresome fault.

If any player bid or double out of turn, either adversary may call for a new deal.

If a player make a bid, insufficient to cover



the previous bid, he is forced to bid enough to cover it, by bidding in the suit he has named. And if the following adversary pass, the partner of the faulty bidder is debarred from bidding. If, however, the adversary bid or double, the partner of the faulty bidder is free to do as he likes.

If, near the close of a hand, one player shall be found to be short one or more cards, while all the other hands are correct, the short hand shall be responsible for revokes in not following to the suits led.

If one hand be too short, and another too long, it is an obvious misdeal. There is no penalty and no score on the hand. No matter who has won, *the hand is counted out and there is a new deal by the same dealer.*

Exposed cards are subject to penalties and will be treated separately in the next chapter.

In cutting, if two or more cards be cut, the highest must be taken.

In dealing, if a card be exposed, the dealer must deal again. This must also happen if he make a misdeal.

If any player look at a card during the deal the adversaries may take 25 points.

If any dealer deal with uncut cards, with



the adversaries' pack, or out of turn, it may be corrected before the last card is dealt by either adversary who has not looked at his cards.

If any card be exposed during the bidding, the partner of its holder cannot bid, cannot lead that suit, and the card can be called.

An "inadvertent" declaration must stand unless altered before the next player acts. The ruling *should* be that it must *always* stand. Too much information can be given by seemingly "inadvertent" declarations, and too much liberty is allowed to changes of mind.

The player who turns and examines a quitted trick can be penalized 25 points by the adversaries.

The penalty for leading before the bid is completed is exceptionally severe.

If a player lead before the bidding is complete:

First. His partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration.

Second. The card led is an exposed card and is subject to call, if either adversary becomes the final declarant.

Third. When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the declarant

may prohibit an initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

The first penalty is fair and necessary. A tricky player might make a lead before the close of the bidding in order to influence his partner. He might pretend to think the bidding was closed and might expose an ace or king. That would make a material difference in his partner's subsequent feeling about the hand.

But it seems to me the ground would be sufficiently covered by debarring the partner from any further bidding or doubling during the hand. That is proper and that, I think, is sufficient. The adversaries have also had the benefit of seeing the card led in error and of bidding or passing accordingly. And there seems to be no reason for inflicting *three* penalties for *one* fault. In other cases, there is often a choice of penalties. A fault may be punished so, *or* so, but *not* so, *and* so.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### EXPOSED CARDS

A CARD is "exposed" when its face is shown *on*, or *above*, the level of the table. But not all four players at a table suffer similarly for exposing a card. The declarant, for instance, is absolutely immune from punishment, for the reason that he has no partner to be advantaged by seeing his cards; and dummy, of course, is always exposed. It is the two persons who are playing against the deal who must be abnormally careful about showing cards.

If the declarant shows a card it is supposed to give information to two adversaries and to no partner—for the reason that the declarant's partner is dummy ("le mort," or "the dead man," as the French call him); therefore the declarant suffers no further punishment than the fact that he has been foolish enough to let both his adversaries see his card, and to put them in the position where they can play

accordingly. No card that the declarant exposes can be "called"; the only card that he can be forced to play from his own hand is one which he has voluntarily "quitted" (that is, from which he has voluntarily removed his fingers). He can throw his entire hand, face-up, on the table and play it from that position—if he is fool enough to want to do so.

And, what is more, no one of those exposed cards can be called by either adversary. The declarant is not at liberty to pick up a hand that he has thus thrown down, but he can play it from that position at his own discretion and with no other penalty than the fact that the adversaries can take advantage of it. For that reason the declarant alone is the one who can safely "claim the balance of the tricks" toward the close of a hand, and show down his remaining cards in support of his claim. Either adversary who does this, runs the risk of being forced to leave his cards on the table and being made to play them as the declarant dictates; they can all be "called" (at the declarant's pleasure) and must be played as called, as, in this case, the declarant can claim that the other adversary has been helped by seeing his partner's hand.

While it is true that the declarant has this tremendous license as far as the cards that he holds in his own hand are concerned—and that he can shove them out and push them back as much as he likes—it is not true concerning the cards that he plays from dummy. *A touched card in dummy should always be a played card and can always be called by the adversaries.*

This rule is tremendously disregarded; players will insist “I didn’t take my fingers off”; where that idea originated is a puzzle to me. It doesn’t matter one iota whether or not you “take your fingers off”; the point is that you have put your fingers on. Having once done that in dummy, the card is played; and having once relinquished a card from your own hand (if you are the declarant) you must never take it back.

The declarant is at liberty to readjust dummy’s cards if he preface the act with the words, “I arrange,” or words to that effect; otherwise he must keep his fingers off them unless he means to play them. It is an easy thing to acquire the habit of keeping one’s hand poised above the cards while making a difficult decision, rather than of allowing it to rest on any one card.



Cards exposed by either adversary are entirely at the mercy of the declarant and can be called by him. If either adversary show a card on or above the level of the table, so that his partner might have seen it (even though that partner vows that he didn't) that card is "exposed" and must be laid face-up on the table. The declarant can call it and force its play, except to make its owner revoke with it. For instance, one adversary may "expose" the ace of clubs; he must then lay it on the table, face-up. His partner may lead the king of hearts, and the declarant will "call" the club ace; its owner will reply, "No, I have a heart," and will play his heart. Then the partner may lead the ace of hearts, and again the declarant will call the ace of clubs, which must be played unless its owner holds another heart. And the calling of this exposed card can be repeated until it is played. On the other hand, *its owner is always at liberty to play it without waiting to have it called*; and about this point there seems to be misunderstanding. You *must* play an exposed card when the declarant calls it (except to revoke with it), but you *may* play it without waiting to have it called. In the case just given, where one adversary has exposed the



ace of clubs, if the other adversary is wise enough to lead a low club the owner of the ace is at liberty to play it, even though it is exposed, and is not called by the declarant.

In other words, the declarant can force his adversary to *play* an exposed card, but not to *retain* it.

Be very careful, in playing against the declaration, never to expose a card and never to claim "the balance of the tricks." And be very careful, if you are the declarant, not to touch one of dummy's cards and fail to play it, and not to turn over tricks that have been quitted.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### TWENTY TEST-HANDS

MANY hands have been sent me from all over this country,—and from other countries. All that I give here are actual hands, and all teach some useful lesson.

### Test-Hand No. 1.

*(From New York City)*

	♥ 74	
	♣ 975	
	♦ Q7632	
	♠ 854	
♥ Q1063 ♣ 63 ♦ AK54 ♠ K62	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Y</p> <p style="margin: 0;">A <span style="float: right;">B</span></p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Z</p> </div>	♥ 9852 ♣ K1082 ♦ 8 ♠ J973
	♥ AKJ	
	♣ AQJ4	
	♦ J109	
	♠ AQ10	

Rubber-game, love-all.

Original bids ran as follows:

Z, "one no-trump."

A, "by."

Y "two diamonds." (Correct; an over-call of danger, on five cards to an honour, and an otherwise blank hand.)

B, "by."

Z, "two no-trumps."

A, "double." (That is the first mistake; it was done for the purpose of frightening Y back to diamonds, and Y refused to go. Bluffs will not often work with the best players.)

Y and B, "by."

Z, "redouble." (You see the result of the bluff double. Z was not afraid of any jump that A might make. Nevertheless, as Z, I should have passed and closed the bidding. Two no-trumps doubled and scored would have been rubber; and Z was practically sure of making it. By allowing A to bid again, Z might be able to defeat him, *but he positively could not take rubber on A's bid.* He should have closed the bidding where it meant a sure rubber for him.)

A, "three hearts." (That is an awful bid; yet it is A's one chance of saving rubber. It is

a bid he would never have made unless he had been frightened into it. He had no reason to expect *four* trumps in his partner's hand. Still, A's bluff double had imperilled the rubber, and he had to do what he could.)

Y and B, "by."

Z, "double." Closed.

On the play, A lost 200 points. That was bad, but it was better than losing rubber. Had Z closed the bidding on the "two no-trumps" doubled (instead of redoubling), he would have scored 250 for rubber, 30 for aces, and either 40 or 60 for tricks (according to play). And he would have *closed the rubber*. By redoubling, he gave A the bid, kept the rubber open, and allowed A-B another chance to recoup their losses.

If A had passed the "two no-trumps" there is scarcely a chance that Z would have taken game, because he would have been constantly inconvenienced by leading away from his strong hand. If the first lead were a low diamond, it is highly improbable that (on a closed hand) Z would put up dummy's queen. If he *did* so play, he could take game, because he could finesse the clubs properly—from the weak hand to the strong. But Z would have no reason to think that the queen

would take the trick. He could not possibly tell that *both* the ace and the king lay with A. The Rule of Eleven would show him that B held *one* diamond higher than the four-spot; it might easily be the ace or the king.

Test-Hand No. 2.

This hand came from the Military Club, London; it is the rubber-game, and the score is 8-6 in favour of A-B.

	♥ 9864	
	♣ 10543	
	♦ 7	
	♠ 9853	
♥ 532	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">Y</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">A</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">B</div> <div>Z</div> </div>	♥ A
♣ A		♣ J876
♦ KQ10852		♦ 9643
♠ A42		♠ QJ106
	♥ KQJ107	
	♣ KQ92	
	♦ AJ	
	♠ K7	

Actual bidding ran: Z, "a heart"; A, "two diamonds"; Y, "two hearts"; B, "three diamonds"; Z, "three hearts"; A, "four dia-

monds"; Z, "double"; A, "redouble," and took rubber.

Y's raise was certainly light; still, he holds a side-singleton and four small trumps. To save rubber I should have made the raise; otherwise, I should let Z do his own raising. And, as Z, I should never have doubled four diamonds. Nor, as Y, would I have redoubled, for fear Z would have returned to hearts; without the redouble it meant rubber anyhow, and that was enough.

### Test-Hand No. 3.

This hand came from West Newton. Score love-all on the first game:

	♥ K Q J 10 8 ♣ 10 9 5 ♦ K 6 ♠ J 3 2										
♥ A 9 7 6 5 ♣ A 3 2 ♦ J 5 ♠ K 6 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: auto;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ 4 ♣ Q 7 6 4 ♦ 8 7 2 ♠ A 10 9 8 7
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ 3 2 ♣ K J 8 ♦ A Q 10 9 4 3 ♠ Q 4										



The actual bidding ran as follows: Z, "one diamond"; A, "one heart" (very poor, indeed); Y, "no"; B, "one spade"; Z, "two diamonds"; A, "two spades"; Y and B, "no"; Z, "three diamonds"; A, "no"; Y, "three hearts." Closed.

I should bid the hand thus:

Z, "one diamond."

A, "no."

Y, "one heart." (A major-suit is better than a minor one on a clean score, and Y has 64 honours.)

B, "a spade" (possibly for forcing purposes).

Z, "two hearts."

A, "two spades."

Z, "three diamonds." Closed.

## Test-Hand No. 4.

This remarkable hand was sent me by a reader, together with three distinct biddings which it elicited from three different sets of players:

♥ —	Y	♥ K Q J 10 8 4 2
♣ Q J 10 9 8 3 2	A                      B	♣ —
♦ 9 7 5 2	Z	♦ 6
♠ 6 4		♠ Q J 10 9 8
	♥ A 9 6	
	♣ A 5 4	
	♦ A	
	♠ A K 8 7 5 2	

I should bid that hand thus:

Z, "a spade,"; neglecting his hundred aces because of the singleton, and the awful drop, in hearts and clubs.

A, "by."

Y, "two diamonds," a warning-bid of weakness in partner's suit.

B, "two hearts."

Z, "two no-trumps"—his partner has the

suit he lacks. Then it is up to the individuals how high the bidding shall run between the heart hand and the no-trump hand.

The *actual* hand was played thus:

At table one, Z played "four no-trumps" and made a grand slam, with a total of 270; 70 for tricks, 100 for aces, 100 for grand slam.

At table two, B bid "four hearts," Z doubled and B redoubled. Z-Y took *eight* tricks before B could get in (they should have taken only seven). These tricks were worth 200 a piece. One thousand is rather a neat score for one hand, isn't it? The value of four rubbers!

At table three, Z played "three spades" and lost three-odd.

So that, on the same hand, Z-Y's score was variously plus 270, plus 1000, and minus 168 (three tricks and simple honours).

## Test-Hand No. 5.

This came from Ithaca. It was the first hand on the second game, and Z-Y were a game in.

	♥ J 10 9 8 4 2	
	♣ —	
	♦ A J 5	
	♠ Q 7 4 2	
♥ 5	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span>Y</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <span>A</span> <span>B</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <span>Z</span> </div>	♥ A K Q 7 6 3
♣ A Q J 10 9 7 6 3		♣ —
♦ 10 7		♦ K 8 6 3
♠ A 6		♠ K J 8
	♥ —	
	♣ K 8 5 4 2	
	♦ Q 9 4 2	
	♠ 10 9 5 3	

This is the original bidding as sent to me: Z, who should have passed, bid "one club." A said "two clubs."

Y made the highly incorrect bid of "two hearts."

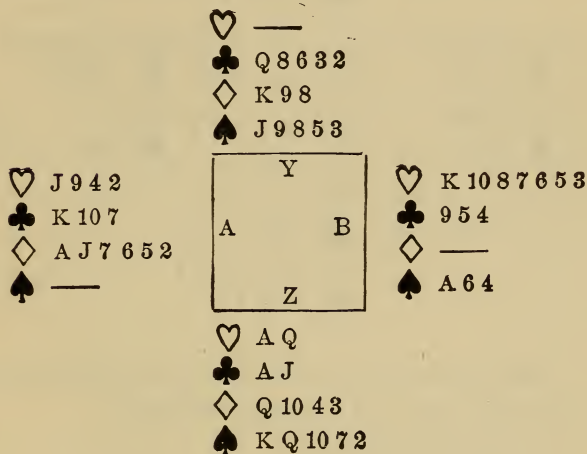
B doubled. He should have passed.

Z, "by"; A, "three clubs" (I wonder why he preferred 6 a trick to 100 a trick); Y, "pass"; B, "two no-trumps"; closed. A-B were defeated by 100 points. A would much

better have let the double stand, and B was foolish to play no-trumps with a blank suit and only one established suit.

Test-Hand No. 6.

This interesting hand came from Pittsfield. It was a clean score.



Z bid "a spade"; A "two diamonds"; Y "two spades"; and B "two hearts."

Z doubled, which I do not like.

"A weak double is worse than a weak make." If B bids three, lacking his own ace and queen, he is going to do some ruffing.

## Test-Hand No. 7.

This hand was played at West Point, and occasioned much discussion:

	♥ 32	
	♣ 1096	
	♦ 952	
	♠ J9864	
♥ KQ97 ♣ 7543 ♦ J106 ♠ Q10	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 20px;">A</span> <span style="margin-right: 20px;">Y</span> <span>B</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <span></span> <span>Z</span> <span></span> </div>	♥ AJ10865 ♣ AQ82 ♦ 3 ♠ 52
	♥ 4	
	♣ KJ	
	♦ AKQ874	
	♠ AK73	

The score was love-all on the rubber game, and this was the original bidding:

Z, "a diamond."

A and Y, "pass."

B, "one heart."

Z, "two diamonds."

A, "two hearts." (Wrong. "You can not raise on trumps alone.")

Y and B, "pass."

Z, "three diamonds."



A "three hearts" (awful).

Y and B, "pass."

Z, "four diamonds."

A and Y, "pass."

B, "four hearts."

Z, "five diamonds."

A "double." (I think it was the most astounding double I ever heard. On what was it made?)

Z says that if he had the hand to play again he should certainly redouble; being in so deep, he might as well go deeper. He counted "four diamond tricks in his own hand, four spade tricks" (rather optimistic), "and a club trick." He made his bid, going game and rubber.

## Test-Hand No. 8.

*(From Rancagua, Chile.)*

It is the beginning of the rubber-game; A-B are 300 to the good, on the honour-score; and these are the cards:

	♥ 7 6 5 3	
	♣ A 10 8 7 6 4	
	♦ 6	
	♠ J 10	
♥ A	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 20px;">A</span> <span>Y</span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">B</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <span>Z</span> </div>	♥ K 9 8
♣ 5		♣ K Q 9 3 2
♦ K J 5 3		♦ Q 10 7 4
♠ A K 9 8 7 6 4		♠ 5
	♥ Q J 10 4 2	
	♣ J	
	♦ A 9 8 2	
	♠ Q 3 2	

Actual bidding ran thus: Z, "pass"; A, "a spade"; Y, "two clubs"; B and Z, "no"; A, "two spades"; Y, "three clubs"; A, "three spades"; closed."

Y led the six of diamonds, dummy played the four, Z the ace, and A the trey. The point in discussion was Z's proper return lead.

Of course, Y wanted a diamond, but I cannot see why Z need be expected to give it. The Rule of Eleven showed that there would be *five* diamonds higher than the six-spot held against Y,—provided he had led fourth-best. With *six* diamonds higher than the six-spot shown on the table and in his own hand, Z knew the lead could not be fourth-best. It must be short, but not necessarily a singleton.

It might be the higher of two. With the four played from dummy, the trey from A, and the deuce in Z's own hand, there was still the five-spot to account for. It might lie with Y as easily as with A.

Again, it might be that Y's clubs on which he had bid were in a combination which must be led to. They might be headed by the ace-queen, and he might have led from a weak suit, hoping to throw his partner in, so as to get a club-lead through the declarant's hand.

The fact that the king of clubs was shown in dummy's hand would nullify the advantage of Z's return club-lead, even provided Y held ace-queen. Nevertheless, I think Z had a right to his singleton lead, in the hope of a ruff. He could not know that A would over-ruff, and his (Z's) queen of trumps was

in a bad position and might never take legitimately.

Either the club or the diamond was a correct return lead from Z. Neither could be fairly criticised. They evidently know good Auction in Rancagua!

### Test-Hand No. 9.

*(From Nassau, Bahamas.)*

	♥ 87										
	♣ A9										
	♦ 105										
	♠ A K Q 7 6 5 3										
♥ K Q J 10 ♣ 10 6 3 ♦ A 7 6 3 2 ♠ 8	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A 9 6 5 4 3 2 ♣ Q 8 4 ♦ K 9 ♠ 2
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ —										
	♣ K J 7 5 2										
	♦ Q J 8 4										
	♠ J 10 9 4										

The original bidding ran as follows:

Z, "a club" (weak, but possibly permissible with the heart-ruff); A, "a heart," on his 64 honours; Y, "a spade"; B, "two hearts"; Z,

“two spades”; A, “three hearts”; Y, “three spades”; B, “four hearts”; Z, “four spades”; A, “five hearts”; Y, “five spades”; B, “six hearts”; Z and A, “by”; Y, “six spades,” *on the almost certainty (mark this) that hearts would be led and the hope that dummy had none.*

And hearts were, most incorrectly, led, giving Y a grand slam. B, who had already overbid his hand, and announced more “raisers” than he had, now made the terrible mistake of leading his ace of hearts.

Granting that B could not see the hands, and that we can, there was still but one possible lead for him—the king of diamonds.

B held seven hearts and his partner could not possibly have bid on less than four, making at least eleven between them. One of the adversaries was, in all probability, blank in hearts, and there was the chance that it was the weak hand. If so, the ace lead was a gift to the weak-hand ruff.

A must hold something besides hearts; spades were announced strongly against A-B. That left clubs and diamonds, and Z had already bid clubs. Therefore, *the only possible chance of defeating the bid was that A's “outside hand” consisted of the ace of diamonds.* That, too, might give B a third-round ruff.

Had B chosen the diamond-lead, Y would have been defeated by five points (50 minus 45 honours); as it was, he scored 63 points, plus 100 for slam, plus 45 honours—a total of 208 and game-in, and a difference of 213 points on the result of the hand. And all through a badly-chosen lead.

### Test-Hand No. 10.

The following hand was played at the Anthracite Bridge Club, Carbondale, Pa. All four players were known for their game, and "B" was an especially strong player. Though Y, in this instance, bid high on a queen-suit, he was not in the habit of so doing. Z-Y were game-in and 600 to the good on the honour-score (that sounds like some plunging, to me):



	♡ J 9 7 3 ♣ — ♦ 8 ♠ Q 9 8 7 6 5 4 3										
♡ A 10 8 6 ♣ K Q J 8 5 ♦ J 9 4 3 ♠ —	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A	B	B		Z		♡ K Q 5 4 2 ♣ 10 4 3 ♦ K Q ♠ A K J
	Y										
A	B	B									
	Z										
	♡ — ♣ A 9 7 6 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 5 2 ♠ 10 2										

Actual bidding: Z, "a diamond"; A, "two clubs"; Y, "two spades"; B, "three hearts," and I have been puzzling my head to decide why B said "three hearts" instead of "two no-trumps," after he knew about his partner's club-suit. On a clean score I should certainly have chosen the declaration that meant game in three-odd. Perhaps he feared his short diamonds, with diamonds bid by Z. Perhaps, again, B wanted to force Y's spades. By declaring no-trump he would show general strength and a spade-stopper, and Y might not go up. Whereas, by declaring hearts, B showed but one suit, and might tempt Y to his ruin. However—to continue

the bidding: B, "three hearts"; Z and A, "pass"; Y, "three spades"; B, "double"; closed. "And," my correspondent wrote, "of course Y made it."

B's double was poor, because three spades would not put Z-Y game, and three spades *doubled* would put them game, if they made it. Again, the trouble was with a faulty lead.

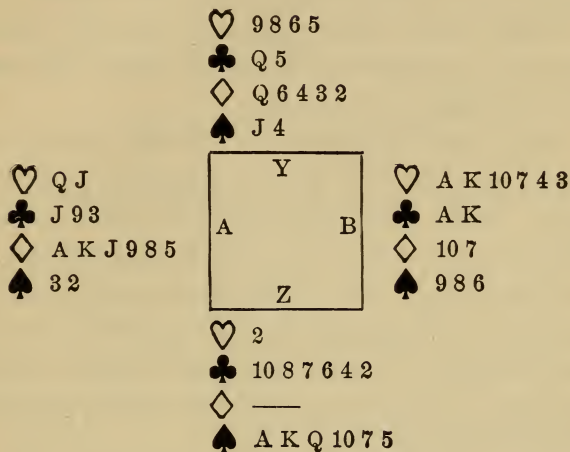
Let B lead his king of trumps. He will know from the bid that the queen lies with Y; by leading the king of spades, B gets a look at dummy and still retains a *fourchette* over Y's queen (ace-jack lying over the queen). The moment Z sees dummy's blank suit, he will lead his ace of spades—to stop a weak-hand ruff—and will then lead his hearts. Y cannot possibly take three-odd.

The real B led his hearts first, thus making Y a present of an immediate cross-ruff. The opening-lead of the spade-king could lose nothing and would permit B to choose his next lead intelligently.

### Test-Hand No. 11.

The reader who sent me this hand, wrote: "There is no score on the rubber game; a heavy honour-score in favour of Z-Y, Z

*therefore being willing to incur a penalty to save rubber."*



Actual bidding: Z, "a spade"; A, "two diamonds"; Y and B, "pass"; Z, "two spades"; A and Y, "pass"; B, "three hearts"; Z, "three spades"; A and Y, "pass"; B, "three no-trumps"; Z, "four spades"; B, "double"; closed.

A led diamond-king, Z trumped and led club-six; B took with the king and led king of hearts, following with ace of hearts. Z trumped the second heart and led deuce of clubs; B took with the ace and led ten of hearts, which Z trumped. He next led a

small club, trumping with dummy's jack; then a small trump back into his own hand, making his remaining trumps and clubs.

That was clever playing from Z, but I cannot approve of B's bid or play. The rest of the bidding was good.

My first objection is to the statement that, as Z-Y were heavily ahead in penalties, they could risk something to save rubber. When I am "heavily ahead in penalties" I risk nothing. My risks are the only possible means of restoring those penalties to the adversaries. I sit tight; bid solidly; *forfeit rubber, if necessary; but keep the big penalties which are better than rubber.*

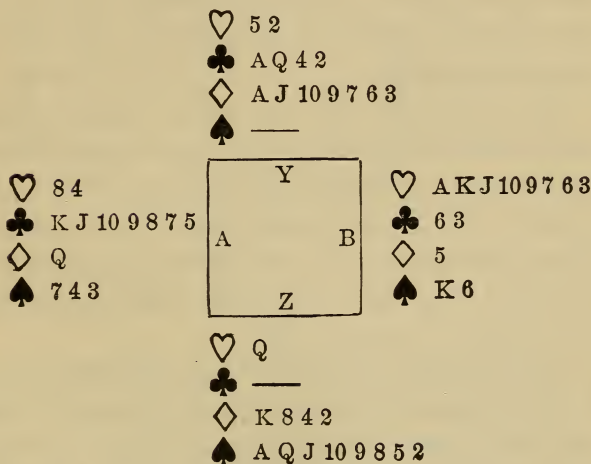
My next criticism is B's bid of "three no-trumps" without a stopper in Z's suit. Suppose he played it; Z would lead and would take six tricks without stopping, forcing three discards from B. That was an awful bid!

Had I been Z, I should have left B in with his three no-trumps, in spite of my honours. I suppose he feared a guarded jack of spades. And, had I been B, I should have led trumps, "up to weakness," every time I was in. *When the declarant refrains from trump-leads, he has a reason. The adversaries should always force him to play trumps, particularly that*

*adversary who can lead them up to weakness.* B could easily have defeated the four spades. He was in an ideal position to lead trumps, and it was only too apparent why Z himself was refraining from trump-leads.

Test-Hand No. 12.

(A bad double and a poor lead.)



Z is playing five spades, doubled by B and redoubled by himself. B has been bidding hearts strenuously, A has bid clubs once, and Y has bid diamonds frequently. Finally, B has doubled Z's bid of "five spades,"—a very

poor double, by the way; better to play it undoubled and to risk nothing; then, to defeat the bid would be to make 50 a trick and to see Z win would only be to let him take a score that was nearly wiped out by B's own "velvet." B's long hearts would certainly be ruffed soon, his barely-guarded trump-honour was in a poor position, and his singleton was useless, in that he hadn't trumps enough to use a ruff. Also, his double gave Z the chance of a redouble, and of an enormous profit.

The first lead was the ten of clubs, which permitted Z to discard his heart-queen, and made him a present of an extra trick. He made a small slam and scored 216 points, plus 50 for slam, plus 72 honours, plus 100 for contract, plus 100 for extra trick, plus 250 for rubber, a total of 788.

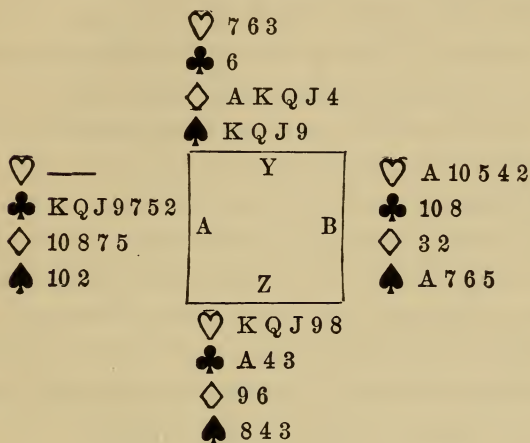
B should have refrained from doubling, and A should have led a heart to his partner's bid. *He did not hold enough hearts to make this lead dangerous*, and he had no good lead of his own, and no card which would permit him to hold the lead until after he had seen dummy. That lead was a gift!



Test-Hand No. 13.

(A mistaken double, and some other mistakes.)

I will give you this hand as it was originally played, in order to sound some warning notes.



It was only the third hand dealt and A-B had had phenomenal luck; the first hand, A had held a no-trumper with a hundred aces. He held all the cards, no one could make a bid against him, and he made 40 below the line and 100 above. The next hand, B had held 72 honours in spades and had scored 27 below the line. Thus, when the deal came to Z, his opponents were game in and 27-0 on the

rubber game, with 172 points above the line, while Z and his partner had an absolutely blank score. Z was anxious to do something handsome, and to lose no time about it. At first his hand did not look wonderfully promising. He opened with "a heart."

This was good news to B. Imagine sitting in his place, holding that rather discouraging hand, and hearing your adversary bid on the very suit in which you held five cards to two honours, including the ace.

A followed with "two clubs."

Y should have said "two hearts" on his club-singleton and his two wonderful side-suits. Instead, he said "two diamonds," because of his 56 honours; they would reduce those hundred aces held by A two hands back to less than half their original value.

B passed.

Z realized that his hand was not of much use, except in hearts; he realized, too, that his hearts were excellent, lying, as they did, in such close sequence. That is my first point—the strength that lies in a sequence. It is the holes in a suit that weaken it. Z remembered also the difficulty in going game in diamonds; it meant that the other side must take but two tricks, whereas in hearts he could give

them three tricks and still go game. And it was his great object to go game in the hand and wipe off that discouraging 27-0. With the score at game-all, things would look much brighter. He determined to use his partner's diamonds as a strong side-suit, and to go back to his own higher suit. Accordingly he bid "two hearts."

A saw no danger of Z going game on that bid; he lacked the ace of his own suit, and held six wretched side-cards. He passed. Y passed, and B made the terrible mistake of doubling "two hearts." Many players would do this in B's place.

It was fundamentally wrong, because you should "never double anything unless you can double everything." If B wanted to play that hand at hearts, why should he risk frightening Y back to diamonds? B could not double diamonds, and he could not double no-trumps; the only thing he wanted was hearts, therefore he should *not warn* the adversaries of what he took to be their danger.

Again, he sat "under" the heart-bid and could be led through, and, as his cards were far from being in sequence, such a process would hurt him greatly.

And, lastly, "two hearts" would not put Z

game, if he made it, and two hearts doubled would do just that.

Z was delighted with the double. He was absolutely sure of making it, with his trumps in sequence, and his partner holding good diamonds. Had he been playing with experts, he would never have dreamed of redoubling, because he liked his position too well to want it changed. Moreover, no expert would have doubled his hearts unless he could have doubled Y's diamonds as well. And with a better player sitting on the other side of him, Z would have been afraid of a return to "three clubs." This bid Z was almost sure of defeating; he held the ace of clubs and two small; his partner held the diamonds, and he himself might get a ruff on the third round, and the good hearts were his after the ace was gone. He might defeat "three clubs," but it would be far less profitable than making two hearts doubled.

Z was conscious that he played very poor Auction when he redoubled that bid. These were his reasons:

1. He had taken the gauge of his adversaries.
2. The score made him anxious to pull off something tremendous.

3. He feared Y would go back to the diamonds, if he saw his partner doubled and afraid to redouble.

4. He had no suit to fear but spades, and he reasoned thus: If A had good spades, he would have bid them instead of clubs. And if B had good spades, he would have covered Y's first diamond-bid instead of passing. Also B's hand must be rather full of hearts.

Z redoubled "two hearts," and prayed that A would not go back to clubs; his prayers were answered. A should certainly have said "three clubs" on his missing heart-suit and Z's redouble. He feared to do so because he lacked the ace and held six losing suit-cards.

Every one passed, and Z made a small slam on a bid of "two hearts" doubled and redoubled. B took nothing but his ace of trumps; he should have made his ace of spades, but by a faulty play he lost it and allowed Z to make a slam. Z scored 192 points, 16 honours, 50 for slam, 100 for bonus, and 400 for extra tricks,—a total of 758 points on the hand.

A led the king of clubs, which Z took with the ace. He saved dummy's club-ruff for



later, and got into dummy with a diamond in order to lead trumps through B. B put up his ten on the first round of trumps, and Z took with the jack. As soon as he found A was chicane, he gave up pulling two trumps for one and began to lead dummy's diamonds. B hated to trump, knowing that Z would over-trump; he therefore continued to discard on all the diamonds, and allowed Z to do likewise. In this way, Z got rid of all his spades, and trumped B's ace. By trumping the diamonds and forcing Z to over-trump, B would have saved his ace of spades and 182 points, 50 for slam, 32 for the trick, and 100 for its extra value above the line.

The mistakes in this hand were:

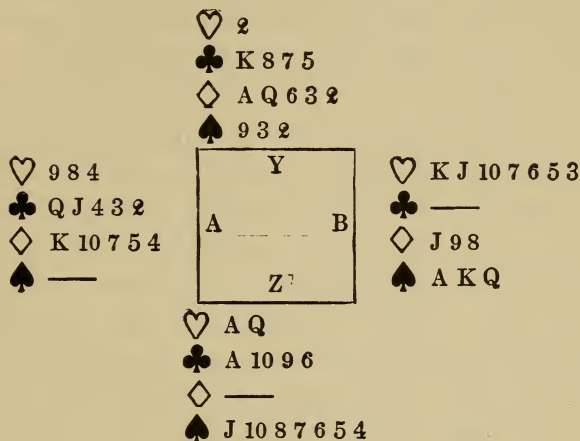
1. B's double, sitting where he did, and with his hearts not in sequence; also with the score as it was.
2. Z's redouble. He risked frightening the adversary away to another suit.
3. A's failure to bid "three clubs."
4. B's failure to trump the diamonds when they were led through him. He made Z a present of all those spade discards.



Test-Hand No. 14.

(A Hand from Texas)

This was sent me with the question, "What should Z have done?"



What Z should have done was to pass. There is no question about this; no ground for doubt. What he did was to bid "a spade."

Z should pass, because:

His hand, though guarded in three suits answers "No" to no-trumps, because of the blank diamonds, the woeful drop in clubs, and the fact that the long suit is jack-high. Z

would have to come in three times to clear it, and before his third reëntry the suit of the adversaries would probably be established and they would be sailing down the line, particularly if their suit were diamonds. That ends no-trumps for Z.

Going to the next best suit, spades, Z cannot bid because he is jack-high, and a first-round bid may never be made on a jack-suit.

It is obvious also that Z cannot bid hearts, diamonds, or clubs, and that ends it.

And there is still another reason to bid him pass. Not only would he be in great luck if he made game on that hand (to take four-odd would presuppose that all the balance of the cards were just where Z wants them), but Z has every reason to hope that neither adversary will go game. They might, of course, but in order to do it they will have to bid. And the moment either adversary bids, the bidding is open for a second round and Z can perfectly well bid his own spades. This bid, being made on the second round, will be correct; will not mislead his partner; will not give ground for raises that might fit beautifully with an original top-card bid, but which would prove murderous to a low-

card bid; and will permit perfectly good team-work. A first-round jack-bid is death to team-work.

If Z passes, A will certainly pass. So will Y, if he knows his business. A diamond-bid from Y would be very poor. A third-hand weak bid in a minor-suit, on a clean score, and on a hand that holds no other asset but a side-singleton and a side-king, is always wretched. Y holds but five trumps with two honours. Do you think it looks like five-odd in diamonds? I don't. In any case, B will bid his hearts, and then Z is at liberty to bid his spades correctly.

Now a word as to the principle that forbids a first-round spade-bid from Z.

The first round of bidding is made purely and simply in the interests of team-work. It is made with a view to communication and combination.

I don't say that Z couldn't probably take the odd at spades. The chances are long in his favour. But what is the odd? What are even two or three odd in comparison to the fact that your partner can depend on you? Rest assured that if you get the habit of jack-bidding, not only will you be constantly tempted, but your partner will

always be at sea. He will never know what you mean.

Under such a system, Auction would be as higglety-pigglety as it was when we all first started playing, years ago. Team-work hadn't been invented. We all just bid what we thought we could make. Instead of knowing anything about our partner's assistance we "wondered" or "hoped." The game had a wishbone instead of a backbone. But now we have inserted a nice firm spinal column, and it is able to sit up and take notice.

Remember this: If you tamper with the laws for the make, you will certainly and definitely kill the laws for the raise. Your partner, trusting you, will raise a bid that he supposes to be legitimate. He will raise it as many times as his hand permits. And there will come the crash of a falling edifice. A house with an insecure foundation may stand erect for one story, but it becomes more and more unsafe as it rises in height; and just so does a bid court disaster if it is built on a shaky underpinning.

A first-round bid announces positively the ace or the king. About once in a thousand times there will arise a possible first-round

queen-bid; and even on those rare instances it carries subsequent necessary warnings in its train. But a first-round jack-bid does not exist.

If you tell your partner you have the ace or the king of your suit he will believe you, and he will act as if he did. And if he finds eventually that your information cannot be relied upon he will soon cease to care to play with you.

There is a story told of a game at a club where one of the players made a first-round bid on a jack-suit. His partner, trusting him for ace or king, bid and raised accordingly. The result was disaster, and the show-down proved that it was attributable to the unsoundness of the opening-bid. Then the partner of the jack-bidder said: "Partner, if you were reading the evening paper to me you wouldn't change a word of the most unimportant item, yet you lie like a trooper about a thing as vital as the make-up of your hands." A common method of expressing contempt of any one's bidding, by the way, is to say, "He is the sort of player who would bid on a jack."

## Test-Hand No. 15.

This is a hand in which I was one of the players. There was a large "gallery" watching.

	♥ 10										
	♣ A K Q J 7 5										
	♦ J 3										
	♠ 8 7 4 3										
♥ 9 8 6 3 ♣ 10 2 ♦ K Q 9 7 5 ♠ J 10	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ A Q J 5 4 2 ♣ 9 4 3 ♦ 10 6 2 ♠ 6
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ K 7										
	♣ 8 6										
	♦ A 8 4										
	♠ A K Q 9 5 2										

Z was the dealer, my partner, and an excellent and reliable player. It was a clean score on a new rubber; Z and I had been holding miserable cards.

Z picked up the first good hand he had held and bid "one spade." A passed and I said "two spades"; it was on the tip of my tongue to say "three" instead of "two," and I rather wish I had; the results would have been the same—but I consider "three" the better bid.



B passed. He would probably have said "two hearts," and he could just have made them. But he feared a three-bid. He held nothing but a good heart-suit—six cards to three honours—and a side-singleton. There were seven losing cards in his hand, even if he never lost to the king of trumps, which, as it happened, he would have been forced to do. His partner had passed, and given no indication of his hand. Thus, B feared "three hearts."

Had he bid them he would have failed in his contract by one trick; but we would never have let him have them; we would certainly have outbid any heart-bid with our spades. But (this is the point) A's bid would have shown his partner what suit to lead. It would, in this case, have saved a grand slam. That is why I think he should have bid; that, also, is why I think I should have said "three spades," in place of "two." I should have been surer of silencing A, or defeating him.

A, unaware of his partner's holdings, led, correctly, his king of diamonds. And, of course, Z made a slam. He took the first diamond-round with his ace, exhausted the adverse trumps, then led clubs, discarding

his losing diamonds and hearts on dummy's long clubs.

With a heart-bid from B, A would have led his highest heart, and B would have taken with his ace because of dummy's singleton. Z would have made small slam instead of grand slam—a difference of 50 points.

When the hand was over there was a babel. "Why did you raise your partner's bid when you didn't have to?" "I thought you didn't believe in preëmptive bids!" "What was the sense in your raise?" And so on. I raised my partner's bid because I knew our hands fitted, and I therefore announced my raisers without waiting to see whether it was necessary. I don't believe in preëmptive bids from the dealer, or from the first person who bids on either side. Those players are putting out feelers; they are trying out the hands; they are endeavouring to find whether their hands and their partners' hands fit; at what suit the hand can most profitably be played; who should play it to the best advantage; whether it is a playing-hand, a defeating-hand, or merely a dead hand. Persons who want to know all these things should be careful to leave a chance for some one else to speak.

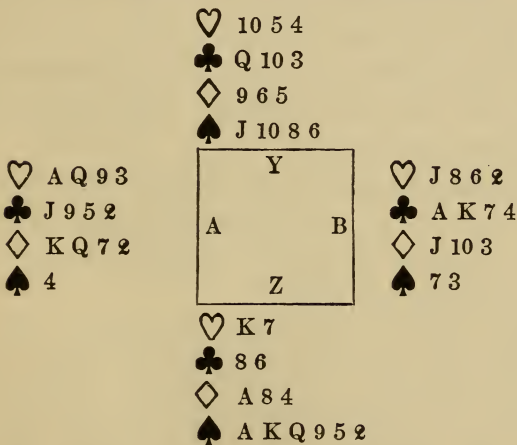
But the second partner to bid knows these things. The man who first tries the ice should step carefully; the man who knows it to be safe may jump with all his weight.

The "sense" of the bid was shown by the result. We made an otherwise impossible grand slam.

The next question was: "Wouldn't it have been just the same if Z had opened with 'two spades'?"

In this case it would, unless B, warned by the preëmptive bid, had named his hearts anyhow,—as he should.

But suppose the cards had lain thus:



Z's hand, you see, is precisely the same.

Neither adversary has a good hand and neither one has a possible bid. Z's opener of "two spades" would have stood, and the bidding would have closed. And he couldn't possibly have made it; one-odd is all he could take.

It is unusual to find your partner without a single trick, but it is possible. I have held such hands thousands of times.

Therefore, it depended on my hand whether Z could, or could not, make two spades. When he bid, he knew nothing of my cards. I might just as easily have held the second of the two given hands as the first one. As mine was the decisive hand, mine should be the bid. In other words, bid your own hand—not your partner's. Let him be the one to do his own bidding. He knows his hand and you do not.

Then came one last objection: "But didn't your bid shut out information you might have obtained from B? Didn't it keep you from hearing his bid?"

What did I care what B held? All I wanted was to keep him from telling his partner. I knew positively that my hand fitted my partner's as a well-chosen glove fits the hand. I knew that if he held good

spades, my four small spades, my wonderful clubs, my heart singleton and diamond doubleton would give us a marvellous combination. I knew spades should be our suit, that my partner was marked as the Player and I as the dummy. And that was all I wanted to know. Moreover, it was all I wanted the adversaries to know. A bid from B would have helped his partner much and me not at all.

Remember, the first partner to bid should not block information, because he knows nothing of his partner's hand. He wants to leave room for overcalls and warnings. The second partner to bid has heard all he needs to hear. He may bid preëmptively, unnecessarily, as he chooses, provided only that he bids sensibly. The clearness of this point, the difference of the two positions, are so obvious to me that I cannot see how they can be obscure to anyone.

## Test-Hand No. 16.

	♥ — ♣ A Q 6 4 ♦ 9 6 5 ♠ Q 8 7 6 5 4	
♥ A K Q 10 5 ♣ 7 5 3 ♦ 8 2 ♠ A 9 2	Y A                      B Z	♥ — ♣ K 9 8 2 ♦ K Q J 10 7 3 ♠ K J 10
	♥ J 9 8 7 6 4 3 2 ♣ J 10 ♦ A 4 ♠ 3	

There is no possible question what Z should have done. He should have passed. No jack-suits are biddable on the first-round.

This Z didn't play that way. He believes that his own head is better than all the rules ever made. Those rules, by the way, were formed by numerous heads after wide and exhaustive experiments. But Z's head suits him, and if it tells him he has a bid, he makes that bid.

Z still insists that with any eight trumps an immediate bid is obligatory, "especially,"



says Z, "when the hand holds a side-ace and a side-singleton."

I was playing A. Z's opening bid of "two hearts"—to show he "lacked the tops"—caused me to rub my eyes and wonder if I were dreaming.

I passed, of course. "When the bid suits you, say nothing." Certainly Z's bid suited me.

Y, in spite of the preëmptive bidding (which said "let me alone"), wavered, and finally overcalled with "two spades."

B said, "three diamonds." He would have done just the same if Y had passed.

Z responded blithely with "three hearts." His singleton in the suit his partner had named, his ace of the adversary's suit, and his eight trumps, all seemed to him ample excuse.

And now I was confronted with a problem. To double or not to double? that was the question. I was virtually sure of defeating anything. I held hearts, my partner held diamonds, and I held the ace of spades. No one could jump to no-trumps, and the chances were that no one could go to "four clubs."

But it was almost certain that my double

would send Y back to spades. I would lose my 64 honours in hearts. While I might beat Y's spades, I could almost certainly not beat them as heavily as I could beat Z's hearts. I was on the right side of Z and the wrong side of Y. Should I take several fifties, plus 64 and a good position—or one (possibly two) hundreds, without my 64, and with bad position? Of course, at that time I knew nothing whatever of my partners' king of clubs, simple honours in spades, and blank hearts. I simply knew that if Y played spades he would probably ruff my hearts from the beginning (he had made a warning overcall and Z must have extreme heart-length to go to "three" without a raise, and on a combination that was jack-high). For aught I knew Y might have five or six spades to the king-queen. He might then take a spade-round and a diamond-round or two. Adding even a possible club-round or two, it didn't look good enough. I decided to keep to hearts and my 64 honours. I passed.

This showed the wisdom of Y's original spade overcall. It kept me from doubling and increasing my points considerably. Y passed. He was discouraged; also, he had decided that his partner probably held eight

or nine hearts to the queen-jack-ten, and not a single spade. Also, that we others were possibly laying a spade-trap for him.

Z played "three hearts." We took seven tricks—our book being four. Three tricks at 50 apiece, plus 64 honours, gave us 214 on the hand.

Had I doubled Y would have gone to "three spades"—probably. Again, we should have taken seven tricks, our book being four. These three over-tricks would have been worth 100 apiece (B would have doubled if I hadn't). We should have scored 300 plus 36 honours—336 points.

But then, it would have been B's hand that did that, not mine. His 18 spade-honours, his king-jack-ten of trumps, lying right over the queen, his king of clubs on the proper side of the club-tenace, his solid diamonds without a single break in them, and his over-ruffing the hearts after Y had ruffed them, would have been the things that brought a big victory against spades. I couldn't possibly know about them.

I am quite willing to admit that this was a very unusual hand, but it happened. "What man has done, man can do." The practical counterpart of that hand might happen again.

Why were the rules made to bar first-round jack-bids? Why were they given such immediate and universal support? Not, I assure you, because any one person, or any few or several persons, felt prejudice against jack-bids. But because exhaustive experience proved the unwisdom of such bids.

Test-Hand No. 17.

*(From Tokio, Japan.)*

Z-Y had ten on the rubber-game, each side having one game and A-B not having scored on the third game:

♥ J 9 5 3	♥ 10 6	♥ Q
♣ J	♣ A Q 10	♣ K 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2
♦ J 10 9 4	♦ Q 8 6 5	♦ A
♠ A 7 6 3	♠ K Q 9 4	♠ J 2
	Y A                      B Z	
	♥ A K 8 7 4 2	
	♣ —	
	♦ K 7 3 2	
	♠ 10 8 5	

Z was playing "three hearts," and instead of making it and scoring rubber (as he should), he permitted himself to be defeated by one trick. His score on the hand was thus minus 34 (50 minus simple honours). It should have been 290 plus, a difference of 324 points. In addition, A-B took rubber on the next hand.

There are various ways of murdering Z's hand. I will show you the particular way he chose, after giving you the bidding.

Z, "a heart"; A and Y, "no"; B "two clubs"; Z, "two hearts"; A and Y, "no"; B "three clubs"; Z and A, "no"; Y, "three hearts"; closed.

A led jack of clubs, to his partner's bid. Z should have played dummy's queen, drawn B's king and trumped it. He would then have commanded two club-rounds and have obtained two valuable discards.

Instead, he plumped dummy's ace on the jack, knowing that B would then hold up the king and that the suit would not be cleared; (we are so particular about "clearing suits" in no-trumps, why don't we try it a little oftener in declared trumps?)

Z's next idiocy was leading a club from dummy, ruffing it with his deuce, and getting

over-ruffed by A. Of course, as Z said, "how was he to know that B had nine clubs?" That is true. But he *did* know that B had bid alone to three, without the ace, the queen, the jack, or the ten; he knew that A had never raised him; he knew that somewhere between A and B lay two side-aces; had A held an ace and many trumps, he would have given a raise.

But leaving all that, what Z should have known—what everyone should know—is this: there is never any hurry about taking a ruff in the long trump hand unless you have a cross-ruff. The long trump hand can always get its ruffs when the adverse trumps are exhausted. It should not work for early ruffs, except in the case of cross-ruffs. When the weak hand, the short trump hand, can get a ruff before his trumps are pulled (dummy's hand I mean), then let him take it. But let the declarant save his ruffing till later.

A over-ruffed the club and led a small spade. Z came in with dummy's queen and committed the unpardonable fault of leading dummy's last club. He seemed to think that by ruffing with the seven or eight (dummy holding the six and ten) he would either cut



A out or force an honour. A over-ruffed the seven with the nine and led a diamond. B took and led a club on the mere chance of A being able to beat dummy's ten. A did beat it with the jack. A thus took tricks with three of his four trumps and with his ace of spades and B took with his ace of diamonds. Z was defeated by one trick. He played like a fool, but was, of course, entirely satisfied that there "was nothing more in the hand," and that "no one would have suspected B of holding nine clubs."

Test-Hand No. 18.

(Played at the Seaview Golf Club, Atlantic City. I was Y):

The score was game-in for A-B, and 18-0, on the second game for Z-Y.

	♥ 10										
	♣ Q 7 5 3										
	◇ A 3										
	♠ A Q 10 4 3 2										
♥ K Q ♣ — ◇ K 10 9 4 2 ♠ K J 9 8 6 5	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ J 9 8 5 4 3 2 ♣ 9 ◇ Q J 6 5 ♠ 7
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ A 7 6										
	♣ A K J 10 8 6 4 2										
	◇ 8 7										
	♠ —										

Z, "a club"; A, "pass," (I don't see why); Y, "two clubs"; B and Z, "pass"; A, "two spades."

The moment I heard this bid from A, and saw myself holding six of his suit, I knew my partner could have few, if any. That meant that if spades were played (by A or by me) they could not be led through him and up to me. I would have to keep taking

tricks and leading up to A's trumps. My own three low trumps would inevitably be lost (unless they were used in ruffing), my ten was in jeopardy, even my queen was threatened. Position of holding was against A; position of lead would eventually be against me.

When B found his partner holding the bid at "two spades," on the second round, he might, of course, have overcalled in hearts. But B had a right to his own judgment. Though he held but two black cards in his hand, both singletons, it is still true that he held not one solitary ace nor king, not a queen except one in a side-suit, not a blank suit, and that he was jack-high in trumps, held but a single honour, and that both his side-singletons were sure losers. So he had some right to hesitate over an apparently unnecessary three-bid. If his partner helped as little in hearts as he himself helped in spades, where would he land?

We scored grand slam in clubs, my partner's losing diamonds falling on my ace of diamonds and ace of spades; my hand, of course, trumped his losing hearts. Grand slam (100), plus 9 times honours (54), plus seven tricks at six each, plus game.

Had I played spades, I could have taken but the odd, incredible as it may seem.

Had A played "two spades" he would have gone down two tricks.

Had I doubled A's spades and had B jumped to hearts he could have made four-odd (game).

Four-odd would have meant rubber for them, so we would have bid "five clubs"; then suppose A-B, having once realized their heart-strength, would prefer a small loss to letting us go game; suppose they said "five hearts,"—which would cost them but 34 points (50 minus 16), or 84 points if doubled (100 minus 16), do you suppose we should have dared the small-slam bid? I think, considering the score, we should; but, even so, we would have been no better off than we were anyhow, and my decision not to double saved us all a lot of strain.

I realize perfectly that this is a startlingly theatrical hand—but it happened. Could anything more perfectly justify our theories of combining the two hands, of bidding to the score, and of "never doubling anything unless you can double everything"?

Test-Hand No. 19.

Here is a hand I held nearly four years ago—one of the best hands I ever held. I have never forgotten it, nor the lesson it taught me. It was the first deal on a new rubber; in fact, it was the first hand of the evening:

	♥ J 9 8 5	
	♣ A 8 6 2	
	♦ 2	
	♠ 8 7 6 5	
♥ Q 7 6 4	Y A                      B Z	♥ 10 2
♣ 10 9 3		♣ 7 4
♦ 6		♦ K Q 8 7 5 4 3
♠ J 9 4 3 2		♠ Q 10
	♥ A K 3	
	♣ K Q J 5	
	♦ A J 10 9	
	♠ A K	

I opened with “a no-trump.”

A and Y passed, and B said “two diamonds.” I doubled. I could not only defeat diamonds, but I could defeat any other bid. I was bound to take two diamond-rounds. My ace would kill the king, the queen would draw my nine, and then I held

the highest two trumps. Also, I held simple honours in diamonds.

A and Y passed, and B, being a very excellent player, did a clever thing. He redoubled, in order to frighten me back to no-trumps; he knew his losses would be slighter if I played the hand than if he played it.

He nearly succeeded. I suddenly imagined him with all the good cards I didn't hold myself. I thought: "Suppose he has all the rest of the diamonds and the ace of clubs, and a blank-suit in hearts or spades." In that case he could have made his two diamonds. Two of the tricks on which I was counting (the hearts or the spades) would be ruffed and lost. B's hand would have looked like this:

♥ Q 10 9  
 ♣ A  
 ♦ K Q 8 7 6 5 4 3 2  
 ♠ —

He would have lost three rounds of diamonds and two of hearts; the rest would have been his. That meant he would make his bid, redoubled, and score a bonus of 100 for doing it, a total of 128. I was on the verge of going to "two no-trumps" where



I knew I was safe; in fact, I opened my mouth to make the bid, but suddenly decided to say "pass" instead.

That is the worst of Auction bluffing: it isn't like poker—because every hand is played to a finish. B's bluff would have been brilliant if it had worked. But it didn't.

I made 814 on that one hand. It put me on "Easy Street" for the evening. I could afford to be ultra-conservative. I needn't even worry about rubbers, for that one hand was worth as much as two or three rubbers. Therefore, being so well-fixed, I ended the evening a heavy winner.

In showing that hand recently, I said that I was convinced that most players would have bid "two no-trumps" in place of doubling two diamonds. A man to whom I was talking asked "Why not?"

The answer to that is, because it isn't using your cards to their best advantage. Any one could win on a hand like mine; the thing was to win the utmost possible. And the only way always to accomplish that end is to get the habit of thinking of all the opportunities the game offers you and of choosing the most profitable. Don't limit yourself

to the bidding possibilities and forget all about the profitable art of defeating.

### Test-Hand No. 20.

*(Spurious Brilliancy.)*

My text in Auction has been: Always look to see if you can defeat the adverse bid before you cover it with a bid of your own!

A close observance of this rule would not only make for safety and for the harvesting of big penalties, but it would absolutely kill a certain order of miserable bids. These bids are always considered "brilliant" by their admirers (usually very mediocre players not daring enough to attempt such "brilliancy" themselves, and too shallow to see its utter futility when matched against real brilliancy).

They have a certain sort of meretricious, showy dash, utterly undeserving of admiration.

From well-known winter resorts, women have brought home tales of "the most wonderful bid you ever heard, by one of the best players in the world." Before they attempt to describe it, I know what it is going to be.

Then, in New York City some one says: "Did you hear about that marvelous bid of Mr. So-and-So's the other night?" And I always want to say: "No, but I know just what it was. You needn't bother to tell me. It is as old as the hills."

It is as old as the hills, and it is absolutely incapable of success, if players only remember: Always to look to see if they can defeat the standing adverse bid before they cover it with a bid of their own!

I will give you an example of the sort of "brilliant" bid I refer to. It is simply a form that will cover various situations. The cards may be different, but the idea will always be the same:

It is a clean score (or it may be any score). Each side has a game (or it may be the first game of the rubber), or one side may have a game-in. The point-score is immaterial; the game-score is equally so.

Z deals himself these cards:

♥ A K Q  
 ♣ J 3  
 ♦ K Q 3 2  
 ♠ A Q J 2

He bids an excellent no-trumper on but one unprotected suit.

A passes, Y passes (holding a miserable hand, but lacking even the material for a call-off), and B (fourth-hand) sits with these cards:

♥ 5 4 3 2  
 ♣ A K Q 10 9 5  
 ♦ A  
 ♠ 9 5

He knows that Z's unprotected suit must be clubs. He knows, therefore, that if he bids his clubs it will kill the no-trumper and leave him to play a very low suit himself. He prefers to force the no-trumper, perhaps to double it, and certainly to play against it. Not having the lead he wishes to show his partner how to put him in, and to do it without naming the suit which he wishes to keep a mystery—in other words, without baring his pitfall. He bids "two diamonds."

He is enabled to do this, because he plays invariably with players who bid whenever they can, who never look first to see if they can defeat. Z, having bid "a no-trump," can have but one unprotected suit. That suit is almost certainly clubs, therefore it cannot be diamonds; therefore, Z stops diamonds and will be sure to raise his own no-trumps. Z, being that sort of a player,

does just what is expected of him. He bids "two no-trumps." B doubles (being the type of player who doubles one thing even though he can double no other). In this case, the double works. The bidding closes; A leads his highest diamond, to his partner's bid; B comes in with his singleton ace, and makes seven tricks right off the reel.

Behold the entire hand:

	♥ 9 7 6	
	♣ 8 6 2	
	♦ J 9 4	
	♠ K 8 7 3	
♥ J 10 8	Y A                      B Z	♥ 5 4 3 2
♣ 7 4		♣ A K Q 10 9 5
♦ 10 8 7 6 5		♦ A
♠ 10 6 4		♠ 9 5
	♥ A K Q	
	♣ J 3	
	♦ K Q 3 2	
	♠ A Q J 2	

After Z's no-trump, A, of course, has no bid. Nor has Y. B's we have already discussed.

After B's "two diamonds," suppose Z had said to himself: "Can he make two diamonds? No, I don't think he can. I'll let

him play them." Suppose Z had acquired that Auction habit, instead of the prevailing one of saying: "Can I bid? Yes, I can. Hoop-la, I'm off! Nothing can stop me!"

Doesn't Z know that B cannot probably make two diamonds? There is, of course, the chance that he can; but two diamonds are not very terrible, even when scored against one. Z has no way of knowing that B's bid is an absolute bluff. As far as Z can tell, B may hold this:

♥ 5 4  
 ♣ A K Q  
 ♦ A J 10 8 7 5  
 ♠ K 9

Even then, on a perfectly solid bid, Z can defeat B by taking two diamonds, two hearts, and two spades.

Z knows that, whatever happens, he will take two diamond-rounds. The ace must lie with B, or he couldn't bid; no one may bid jack-high, and Z himself holds the king and the queen.

Again, Z's own hand is so normal in distribution that it is improbable that B has a very phenomenal number of singletons or of blank suits.



Let Z leave B in with his two diamonds. A cannot bid; diamonds suit him better than anything else, anyhow. Y cannot bid, he has a wretched hand, and his failure to stop the diamonds makes it impossible for him to raise the no-trumper. B is left to play his two diamonds! With a singleton ace of trumps! There is no help for it—he can do absolutely nothing to extricate himself.

Z takes three heart tricks right off. He follows with the ace of spades, which wins; finding the king lies with his partner (Y plays an “encouragement” card, the eight spot, on Z’s ace; that says, “I have the king, come on”); finding this, Z leads a low spade, which Y takes. Y will lead either clubs “up to weakness,” or trumps, equally to weakness. We will imagine the club. B takes. If he leads a trump, Z-Y will take three trump-rounds and another spade—nine tricks in all, and their book is five; if B leads clubs, he will make a second-round, Z will trump the third with his queen and lead a small trump, and the result is the same.

Try this method a few times and see how these “brilliant” bids work. If their makers aren’t cured of the habit in a very few sittings, I miss my guess. A woman was describing

them to me the other day; she was lost in admiration of them and she said, "Oh, I shall never in the world be clever enough to make such bids!" And I wanted to say to her, "Thank your lucky stars for that!"

Don't lose your head over spuriousness. And don't bid, *don't ever bid*, without first looking to see whether you can defeat. You will soon kill bluffs.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THREE PARTIAL-HAND PROBLEMS, AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

It has been said that when eight rounds of an Auction-hand have been played, every player at the table should be able to place the remaining twenty cards absolutely and accurately. In other words, the last five rounds of every hand should be exactly the same as an "open" hand.

I do not agree with this in the least. There are plenty of hands where it can be done, of course; but there are certainly plenty more where it cannot. And I should greatly like to see it put up to the players who make the claim.

The big cards can nearly always be placed, of course—the aces and faces—and even cards considerably lower than those. But all the rules in the world (including the rule of eleven), all the acumen, the memory, the inference, and the observation, will not enable

anyone always to place unerringly the final twenty cards of a hand.

Again, it has been said that all vital plays—the plays that land game or lose it—are made during the last five rounds. And again, I disagree. Plenty of games are lost on the very first round. A game may be lost wherever a mistake may occur, and mistakes may occur anywhere. And yet, there is a very large grain of truth in both of these statements.

At the close of the eighth round we should all know approximately the distribution of the remaining cards. Sometimes we should even know it accurately. Also, the play is likely to become more concentrated on the last five rounds; with so many cards accounted for, more scope is given for brilliant and unusual play.

Therefore it is, that the problems of open hands, and partial hands, are useful. On those occasions when we are able to place the remaining cards, we can reason out the solutions just as though the hand was open. The only difference is that we cannot actually play the cards until after our decision is made—we must imagine them played.

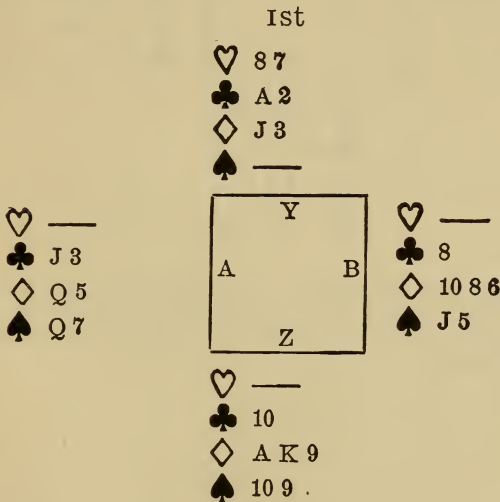
It has been argued that partial-hand problems are “all tricks.” If they covered situations that could be handled in the usual

### Three Partial-Hand Problems 283

way, they would be no problems at all. But we all know that while rules must be obeyed in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the hundredth situation does sometimes arise and the rules must then be broken.

These problems help one to recognize the "hundredth situation." And nearly every trick-problem covers some great principle that can be profitably marked for future use.

Here are three of the cleverest problems I have ever seen, together with their solutions.



Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want all of the six remaining tricks. How can they take them against *any* defence?

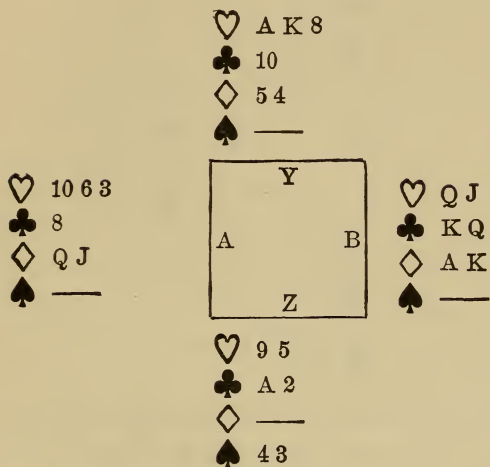
2nd

	♡ Q 8 6 5 ♣ A Q J 10 ♦ — ♠ K 10										
♡ A K J ♣ 9 8 6 3 2 ♦ K Q ♠ —	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A	B			Z		♡ 9 ♣ 7 5 4 ♦ 10 9 5 4 ♠ Q 7
	Y										
A	B										
	Z										
	♡ 10 7 4 3 2 ♣ K ♦ J 8 6 3 ♠ —										

Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want eight of the ten remaining tricks, against any defence.



3rd



Spades are trumps. Y leads. And Z-Y must take all six tricks against any defence.

## SOLUTIONS

Ist

♥ —	Y A                      B Z	♥ —
♣ J 3		♣ 8
♦ Q 5		♦ 10 8 6
♠ Q 7		♠ J 5
♥ — ♣ 10 ♦ A K 9 ♠ 10 9		

Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want all of the six remaining tricks. The hand was sent me with the word that it had puzzled clubs both here and abroad, and the query as to whether it was "sound."

Z leads his king of diamonds, throwing dummy's jack. He must do this in order to unblock for his own nine-spot later in the hand, when he wants to finesse the diamonds from dummy and through B. If dummy retained the jack, Z couldn't get into his own hand with the nine-spot.

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Z's next lead is the nine of spades. It doesn't matter whether A covers or not; Z trumps in dummy.

He then leads the eight of hearts, in order to force discards. Z himself will not be hurt by a discard; he has a perfectly useless card to throw—his ten of clubs. He can make his club-ace anyhow, because the lead is already in dummy. Therefore the club-ten is superfluous. But A will be seriously hurt by the discard; he must do one of three things: discard a club and establish Y's deuce; discard a diamond and make Z's later diamond-finesse good; or discard the leading spade.

Z has forced him to this position by the first two leads; he wants A to discard from one of the two *vital* suits (diamonds or spades) before he himself discards from either of those suits. Position is against him, and unless he retained that useless ten of clubs for a first discard he would be forced to make a vital discard before A did so. As I have said, it is necessary to his purpose and his future play that this first vital discard should be thrust upon A. Z will then model his later play on this discard.

A's best discard is the spade-queen, because B holds the jack of spades; it matters not, however, what A discards—Z makes his six

rounds. B's discard on the trump-lead should be the eight of clubs.

Z next leads the ace of clubs. If A has already thrown the queen of spades and B now throws the jack, Z's ten is good. If A has played spade-queen and B plays a diamond, both of Z's diamonds will be good. If A has thrown the diamond-queen, whether B now plays the spade or the diamond, Z's diamonds are good; he can finesse dummy's trey through B's ten-eight up to his own ace-nine. He therefore throws his spade. And if A's first discard was a club, dummy's deuce is established and Z has no trouble at all.

The point is that A must be forced to discard one spade, one club, or one diamond before Z discards anything vital. Z's second discard depends on A's first one.

If Z chooses a spade for his first lead he fails to prepare the diamond situation. A still has two diamonds; if he discards the low one and retains the queen (on Z's third-round trump-lead) he can force Z into his own hand and make him lead diamonds to B; Z will then lose the sixth round, thus:

First round—Z, nine of spades; A, seven of spades; Y, seven of hearts; B, five of spades.

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Second round—Y, eight of hearts; B, eight of clubs; Z, ten of clubs; A, five of diamonds. Z must now lead the ace of clubs, or he will never get back to do it.

Third round—Y, ace of clubs; B, jack of spades; Z, ten of spades or nine of diamonds. And A's play depends on Z's; if Z throws his spade, A throw his; if Z throws a diamond, so does A. The advantage of position is A's and not Z's.

If they both throw diamonds, it is obvious that A takes the spade in the end. If they both throw spades, Y's next lead is the jack of diamonds, which he is forced to take with the king, in order to keep A's queen from winning. And he will then have to lead from his own hand up to B's, and B's ten of diamonds will be good.

And finally the only other lead in Z's hand, and apparently the most obvious one, is the ten of clubs. This deprives him of a superfluous card for his first discard; and, provided the adversaries play properly, he cannot take more than five out of the six rounds. The lessons in this hand are, first: the throw of an unnecessarily high card, in order to unblock; and second, *forcing the adversary to discard ahead of you.*

2d



Hearts are trumps, Z is to lead, and Z-Y want eight of the ten remaining tricks. That means that A will take with his ace and king of trumps (as he must, of necessity), but that he will take no other trick. His jack must never take, and B must take no tricks at all.

The first noticeable thing is that Z holds more trumps than he needs. He won't mind wasting a few.

The second thing is that his jack of diamonds will be high on the third round.

The third is that his highest trump is, most conveniently, just one spot higher than B's.



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If B trumps the fourth round of clubs, Z can over-trump. And there is no other suit which B can trump.

The next is that, by leading diamonds up to the long diamond-hand (B), and clubs up to the long club-hand (A), Z can establish a very pretty cross-ruff that cannot be over-ruffed.

All this for Z. Considering Y's hand, Z realizes that Y must never lead either trumps or spades up to A. If he led trumps he would establish A's jack; and if he led spades A would overtrump Z. Therefore, the only thing Y can lead is clubs; if he continues to hold the lead with those clubs, the time will come when they will be gone. Then he will have to do one of two forbidden things—lead spades or trumps.

*The only way to obviate this difficulty is for Z to trump his partner's good clubs with some of his own superfluous hearts.* Did he not do this, he would have to discard diamonds on them. And he needs those diamonds in his business; he needs them to lead.

If Z didn't have diamonds to lead, he would have to lead trumps. That looks at first glance like a good thing to do; dummy's queen sits nicely over A's jack. And if A were obliging enough to play his jack, just

to get it killed, it would all work very nicely. But A won't; his hopes are centred on that jack. Why should he sacrifice it? A will come in with the king of trumps. Y's five will fall, and A will force Y with a diamond. That cuts Y's trumps to two; one more diamond force and his trump-queen is all alone and a prey to A's ace.

Three things become apparent from this: first, that Z must never lead trumps, but must allow Y's trumps to make separately from his own; second, that if he does not retain all his diamonds, he will not only unguard his jack but will have nothing to lead save trumps; and, third, that A must not be allowed to get in during the early rounds, or he will take matters into his own hands and use the diamond force. And the only way to keep him out is to avoid trump-leads.

But two leads remain to Z—diamond or club. It appears later that the diamond lands the lead in the wrong place as the hand progresses.

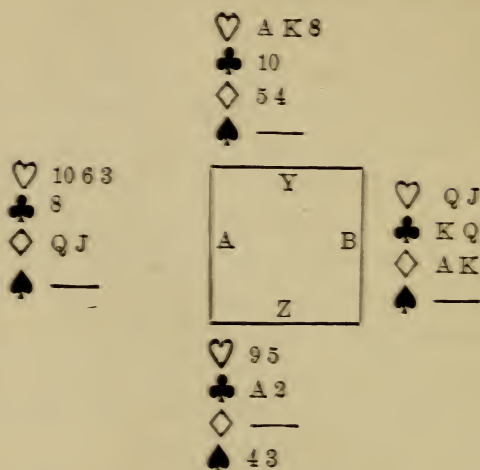
Z leads club-king, taking with dummy's ace. Leads club-ten and trumps. Leads small diamond and trumps in dummy. Leads jack of clubs and trumps it. Leads

### Three Partial-Hand Problems 293

diamond-six and trumps in dummy. Leads club-queen and trumps (using his ten, if B trumps). And then leads the jack of diamonds, which is now high. A holds but the nine of clubs (which is high) and his three trumps. If he discards the club, Z discards dummy's small spade and leads another diamond ( you see now why he needed all his diamonds). If A trumps with the jack, Y overtrumps and leads king of spades. And if A trumps high, Y discards and holds a protected queen of trumps. A's next lead of the club is trumped by Z, who leads the diamond through A, up to Y's two trumps.

Of course it is a "trick" to trump all one's own taking cards; but look at the subtlety of the situation. Z needs his trumps less than his diamonds. And I need hardly warn players not to make it a general rule to trump their own tricks.

3d



Spades are trumps. Y leads. And Z-Y must take all six tricks against any defence.

Y leads the king of hearts and Z throws his nine. The entire solution depends on this play of Z's, as it prepares the way for a later heart-finesse from Z's hand, through A's ten-spot, and up to Y's king-eight. Did Z not unblock hearts on this first round he could never enter Y's hand with the eight-spot.

Y's next lead is a diamond, which Z trumps. He then leads his remaining trump to force discards. Y discards club-ten. If B discards a diamond he makes Y's little diamond good;

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if he discards a club, he makes both Z's clubs good, and if he discards his heart he permits Z to finesse hearts through A's ten-six, and up to Y's ace-eight.

## CHAPTER XXVI

DUPLICATE AUCTION; COMPASS AUCTION;  
TEAM AUCTION; TOURNAMENT  
AUCTION

DUPLICATE Auction is played in duplicate trays, or boards. During each hand, the board lies in the centre of each table with its star to the North, and its index pointing to the *Dealer*.

Each person plays his cards in front of him instead of onto the centre of the table, which, of course, is occupied by the board. Thus, at the close of each hand, the cards lie in four distinct piles in front of their owners, and are ready to be placed in their respective pockets.

No hands are arranged before the game begins. The first time that a board appears, it may hold the cards, for convenience. But those cards are taken out, shuffled, cut, and dealt. After the hand has been played, the cards of each player are placed in the pocket that faces him; and on the re-play, the hands



are taken out separately, and played without further mixing or shuffling.

On the re-play, the star of each board is moved one point to the left, so that every hand is held by a player who played against it on the original play.

The bidding puts such a point on the hands and makes them so impossible to forget, that it is necessary to allow a long time to elapse between the play, and the re-play, of the boards.

On each round, each person holds out in front of him the card he intends to play, clearly exposing its face. When the four cards have been so shown, they are laid (face down) in front of their respective owners; the two cards of the partners who have won the trick, are laid *lengthwise* to their owners; and the two cards of the partners who have lost the trick, are laid *sidewise* to their owners.

The Player instructs dummy which card to lift and hold, on each round. Dummy may never play a card until instructed by his partner.

It is impossible to play games or rubbers. The fact of the bids being different on the play and on the re-play, would alter the

state of the score on the appearance of a certain board. And, were game the object, the score would again alter the bid.

A gross score is kept, points below the line, honours and penalties above. Every hand is played from a clean score and the effort is always to "go game on the hand" (that is, to take 30 or more trick points on one hand). The reward for so doing is a bonus of 125 honour-points. Thus, the rubber-value is approximated and the bidding is kept sane; it is made for *points* instead of *honours*.

After the re-play, a plus-and-minus score is taken on each deal. The score of the pair who made the *least* on each hand is deducted from that of the pair who made the *most*, and the difference is entered on the final results as "minus" for the losers and as "plus" for the winners.

There are excellent special score-pads printed by a certain firm in California. These permit the recording of each final bid and the name of its player. But, failing them, an ordinary very long score-sheet will do perfectly.

### **Compass Auction**

Compass Auction is better than duplicate in that the re-play can be made at the same

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sitting and that the same hands are never again seen by the same players. It has but one drawback—it requires exactly eight players.

The players sit at two tables and are known as “North,” “South,” “East,” and “West” of Table I; and as “North,” “South,” “East,” and “West” of Table II. The players sit with their backs to the compass-points whose names they bear.

A certain number of boards is played at each table; this number *must* be a multiple of four. Table I can be playing boards one-to-eight (or one-to-twelve), while Table II plays nine-to-sixteen (or thirteen-to-twenty-four). The boards are then exchanged for the re-play.

The hands pass from table to table and are never played twice by the same persons, even in a different position. This is an enormous improvement over the old game of Duplicate Whist where each hand appeared a second time before the same players. It is impossible not to remember unusual hands, and difficult not to take unconscious advantage of one's memory.

In Compass Auction, each person is really playing against the person who occupies the

same relative position at the other table. North, at each table, is actually playing with South, against the defence of East and West. But what he is trying to do is to defeat North at the other table; they are going to play exactly the same hands; the thing is, to see which of them can score the most, or lose the least, on those hands.

Thus, if you hold a poor hand, you do not play it against the good hand at your own table. Or rather, you do so play it; but you are trying to lose less on it than will your adversary (at the other table) when he comes to hold that same poor hand and to play it against that same good one.

As nearly as possible, the element of luck is eliminated—at least, as far as the cards are concerned. But it can never be eliminated as to one's partner and adversaries. If you have adversaries who make foolish bids and doubles, you are in luck. And your score will run much higher than it would if you should play those same hands against a stronger defence. Nor do the results always testify in favour of sound judgment; a risky bidder may make thoroughly unsound bids which, through luck, will go through and show a higher score than that achieved by more

conservative and sane bids. In the long run, of course, the sound bidder would win out; but luck might easily favour the plunger for two hours or more.

The score is kept in Compass just as in Duplicate, a plus-and-minus score on each hand.

### **Team Auction**

Team Auction is just like Compass. Pair one, of a given team, play North-and-South at one table; pair two, of the same team, play East-and-West at the other table.

### **Tournament Auction**

A proper tournament is one where losers drop out after each event. It should be conducted like Team Auction, in an infinite number of pairs of tables. All the tables should be arranged in pairs; duplicate play should be *between companion-tables only, and not against the room*. Four boards (or eight) should lie on each table. After their play, and re-play, an "event" is closed. Results are compared, losers drop out, and the tables re-form. The number of tables is thus being constantly reduced till but two are left. The



four winners, out of those eight players, are the winners of the tournament.

Players should preferably enter in pairs,—even in tables. “Byes” should be drawn (if necessary) exactly as in a tennis tournament. A pair of Auction-players will correspond to an individual tennis-player; a table at Auction will correspond to a tennis-pair. The opponents are at the companion-table.

What is generally spoken of as an Auction “tournament” is really a Round Robin. All the players stay in up to the end. There is but one board, and one pack of cards, on each table, and but one original shuffling of each pack of cards. After each hand, every North-and-South pair of players sits still; every East-and-West pair moves in one direction; and every board is moved in the other.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### PROGRESSIVE AUCTION

PROGRESSIVE Auction is rightly regarded as a terrible game by all real Auction lovers. However, it is sometimes necessary in the interests of sociability.

There are no games nor rubbers. There are four (or eight) deals at each table. After these, those players at each table who have made the *highest score below the line* take a bonus of 50 (or 100) points added to their total score (points and honours), "progress," and change partners.

A better game is for every table to try to play a rubber. The first table to finish one, announces the fact in some way—as by striking a bell. At the signal every one stops. Any hand that is actually in progress may be finished and scored. Any hand that has not been begun *in play* (bidding doesn't count) must be thrown out. Total scores are reckoned at each table, an extra 125 being

allowed for each individual *game*. Winners progress.

Still another way is for everyone to play rubbers till the *last* table has finished one. Then the quicker players count as many *rubbers* as they have finished, as well as 125 for each *game* in an unfinished rubber, and the same on each *hand* of an unfinished game.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THREE-HANDED AUCTION; "MISS" AUCTION; TWO-HANDED AUCTION

IN three-handed Auction, there are no permanent partners. An individual three-column score is kept.

The cards are dealt in four packets, dummy's cards being seen by no one till after the final declaration.

The player who gets the bid, takes dummy for his partner and plays alone against the other two players.

*Every honour is scored by its individual holder, at the value of a trick, but above the line.*

The score, as provided for in the laws, is such a cut-throat affair that many players refuse, rightly, to sit in a three-handed game.

A gross score is kept for each player. At the conclusion, the lowest score and the next-to-lowest score are both deducted from the highest. Both these players (the one with the lowest score, and the one with the next-

to-lowest) then pay the top man the difference between his score and theirs. In addition, the lowest score is again deducted from the next-to-lowest, and the difference is again paid by the lowest man to the second-best.

This is murderous. It makes *three winners* and *three losers* (*six* players) in a three-handed game. Take A for the player with the high score, B for the second, and C for the third. A wins from B; he wins from C; B wins from C. That makes three winners. C loses to A; he loses to B; B loses to A. Three losers!

There is a much fairer way of counting. It is frequently used but not adopted officially.

### **“ Miss ” Auction**

A much better game for three players is the English one of “Miss” Auction. It is played with an exposed dummy.

Each player receives twelve cards. Twelve are dealt, face-up, to dummy. The remaining four cards, face-down, form the “Miss” (like a “widow”).

There is but *one round* of bidding—each player combining his hand with the open

dummy, and bidding immediately all that he dares, or chooses.

The successful bidder plays with dummy against the other two. He takes up the "Miss" and, from it, gives one card to himself one to dummy, and one to each adversary. He distributes these cards at will.

### Two-Handed Auction

A very fascinating game for two players is two-handed Auction.

It is played with a full pack of cards. The dealer deals his adversary and himself each thirteen cards, alternately. Two cards are dealt, face-down, to form a "widow," and the remaining twenty-four cards lie in a pack, face-down, with the exception of the top one, which is turned face-up. Each player looks at his hand and decides what suit (or suits) he had better keep and draw to; also whether he wants the card that is faced on the top of the pack. Suppose your original thirteen cards are these:

♥ 6 3  
♣ 10 8 4  
♦ J 5  
♠ A J 9 8 7 2

You see at a glance that you have the foundation of an excellent spade-hand. Suppose the card faced on top of the pack is the queen of spades, and it is your lead (*i. e.* that the other player dealt). The only way for you to get that queen is to take the first trick, and the only taking card in your hand is the ace of spades, for at this point of the game there are no trumps, the players have either to follow suit or to discard. You, therefore, lead your ace of spades. Your adversary must follow suit if he can. If not, he discards, and in either case you take the trick. But you do not lay it in front of you. The two played cards are thrown to one side, face-down, in the discard pile. You take the queen of spades from the pack and your adversary takes the next card. He knows your card, but you do not know his—it may be good or bad. *But you both know that the ace of spades is in the discard pile, and can never appear later in the hand*—in other words, the king of spades is now the highest spade. Another card is turned up on the pack—say the four of hearts. It is your lead, as you took the last trick. You don't want the four of hearts, so you lead to lose it, the three of hearts. Your adversary may be forced to



take this, or he may hold the two and play under your three, thus forcing the four on you, or he may be filling his hand to hearts and may want even a small one. In any case the two cards just played are thrown into the discard pile, another card is turned, and the player who took the last trick leads. *It is always a mistake to force, or allow, your adversary to take too many cards of the same suit even if they are small ones, particularly if they are in a high suit.* And it is very essential to remember what cards have been played and thrown aside.

When the last two cards have been taken from the pack, there are twenty-four cards in the discard pile, two in the "widow," and thirteen in the hand of each player. Then you start in to play Auction. The player who took the last trick is forced to open the bidding; his adversary covers, passes, or doubles, and the bidding goes from player to player till one of them passes. This closes the bidding.

The successful declarant may take the "widow," or leave it. If he takes it, *he is forced to keep both cards that he has picked up*, and to discard two other cards from his hand. And he may not discard any ace nor any trump.

It would give him too much of an advantage to know that a certain ace, or a certain trump, was out of the way, while his adversary was still awaiting its appearance. If his hand should not hold two cards that are eligible to discard, and if he is *forced* to discard an ace or a trump, he must do it face-up.

If the successful declarant refuses the widow, his adversary may take it, or leave it, with the same conditions.

The adversary of the successful declarant makes the opening lead, and the remainder of the game is played under the same laws as four-handed Auction.

It is an excellent memory-test to keep track of all the cards in the discard pile, and the "widow" lends the element of chance to the game.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### ON RULES

IF I should begin this chapter by saying "all rules save one, were made to break," you would probably be tempted to wonder why, under those circumstances, I have been so insistent regarding them. The facts are these: No one can afford to take the slightest liberty with any rule until he is an expert; when he is an expert he will probably know the rules thoroughly; and when he knows them, he will not want to break them except in one case out of a hundred.

The rules were made to cover ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, and they do. Occasionally the hundredth case arrives, but it takes an expert to recognize it. And anyone else who tries it will come to grief and drag his partner with him.

The idea of playing "from your own head" would be all right if you had no partner, or if all heads were exactly alike and took precisely

the same view of every situation. As neither of these premises is correct the practice stands condemned.

There is a huge difference between the player who breaks a rule upon rare occasions—but who does so intelligently, opportunely, and with a purpose—and the one who ignorantly breaks a rule every time he plays a card. One is like a person who speaks perfect English, but who occasionally descends to slang, or bad English, in order to put a point on a story; and the other is like a person who murders the King's English every time he opens his mouth—and doesn't even know he is doing it.

Stick religiously to the rules until you become expert (not in your own eyes, but in the eyes of all who play with you), and then continue to stick to them, unless the situation is very unusual and demands special handling. Then handle it accordingly. There is just one rule that I should never trifle with under any circumstances, and that is "*never bid no-trump unless you stop the adversary's suit.*" The man who breaks that rule walks on very dangerous ground.

Please don't forget all that I have said about the "ninety-nine cases" and remember

only the hundredth, and please don't think that the latter has arrived every time you are tempted to do something unusual. Play the game just as conservatively and just as well as you possibly can; but if an occasion arises where, after having looked carefully at every side of the case, an irregular course seems to be the best,—then take that course. In other words, *break a rule when the issue is more important than the rule!* But don't break any rule lightly, carelessly, ignorantly, nor selfishly. They are good old rules—better friends than outsiders even guess—and I hate to see them set aside, if only for a moment.

A wooden player is never a brilliant one; but there are many brilliant players who are thoroughly unsafe. Where their "brilliancy" pays once, it will miscarry three times.

Just notice one thing and see if I am not right. The man who constantly takes unwarranted liberties himself, is the man who demands the most unswerving conservatism from his partners. He is a spoiled child, nothing more. And it takes all the conservatism that those partners can possibly exercise to make a good average with his "brilliancy."

I know, of course, hundreds of players who

break rules ignorantly or selfishly. I know numbers of players who never break a rule. Having learned their rules thoroughly, it never occurs to them that an occasion might arise which would admit of original handling. Such players are wonderful disciples and followers; they could never be leaders. They make absolutely satisfactory partners in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. When that hundredth time comes, you are apt to fume inwardly at their limited vision and their want of spirit. But remember this, perfection is hard to find, in a partner as in anything else; and there is no question which is better,—the partner who *never* breaks a rule, or the partner who *generally* breaks one. Take the former whenever you can get him, and be thankful for your luck!



## CHAPTER XXX

### “CARD-SENSE”

WE hear a great deal about “card-sense”; it is an expression in constant use. Such and such a person has “no card-sense” and can never learn to play; another has wonderful “card-sense.” I contend that there is no separate gift that should bear that name. It is true that certain persons acquire quickly any card game that is presented to them, and achieve a high grade of skill in it; and it is equally true that certain other persons seem incapable of grasping such things. Yet no one could lay this to stupidity; the non-card-player may be as brilliantly clever a person as any that you will ever meet. So, for want of a truer definition, we have coined the term of card-sense.

Card-sense is the possession (natural or acquired) of a number of gifts—all of which are of the greatest use, not only at cards, but in the entire course of one’s life. The first and

greatest of these gifts is concentration. Brilliancy and concentration do not always go hand in hand; but concentration and skill at cards are inseparable. When you are playing a hand, that hand should be the only thing in the world, as far as you are concerned. No fascinating thoughts of new toilets, no engaging bits of gossip at the next table, no dream of love, even, should share your consciousness. The woman who looks up with vague eyes in the middle of an enthralling hand and wonders whether she will rent her house this summer, is the woman who should either give up Auction, or buckle down to it. You simply cannot get the most out of a difficult hand unless you are thinking of that hand *exclusively* at the moment you are playing it. To some persons this gift of concentration is natural; others acquire it with difficulty. But *it can be acquired*. And who will gainsay me when I maintain that it is one of the most useful of mental attributes?

After concentration, I should place memory. It does not take a phenomenal memory to keep track of thirteen cards in each of four different suits. Almost any trained intelligence can remember fifty-two objects. But Auction memory does not end there. You

must remember the rules, the leads, the bids, and, above all, *the similar situations under which you have seen existing conditions approximated*, and what were the results of those situations. And this will help you toward the acquiring of the third requisite—judgment.

Your judgment of an existing condition and of the best way of handling it may be naturally quick and sound. If it is not, it can positively be made so by seeing that situation arise again and again, in a more or less modified form, and by having forced upon your consciousness the results of various forms of handling it. Memory will help you with past experiences, and practice with present ones.

Practice, or habit, is the fourth great ingredient in this recipe. Play, play, play—provided always that you play intelligently. There is nothing else that will so help your game.

There are two more elements that make toward success at cards, and those two I will grant are more apt to be inborn than acquired; but they are not so absolutely essential as those I have already mentioned. The first of these two is quickness, and the second is harder to define. It is the gift of foreseeing

hypothetical situations and their results, should they arise; it is the gift of the chess player. He does not pick up the pieces and move them around to see what will be the result of a certain play; he looks at the board, and (without touching a piece) he says to himself: "If I move thus, or thus, my adversary will be able to do this or that; then I can go on to such and such a move," etc. He is able to look ahead and foresee the outcomes of different modes of procedure without losing himself in a labyrinth. Personally I find this the hardest gift to acquire, and that is probably the reason that I am willing to consider it inborn.

Take, then, this prescription for the acquiring of card-sense: Three parts of concentration, two parts each of memory, judgment, and practice; one part of foresight, and one-half part of quickness. Dose: from three to six times a week for six months. The result is guaranteed.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE GAME

THE human side of the game has two aspects: first as regards one's self; and second, as regards the other three players at a table.

Every player should make it his aim to be thoroughly unselfish and thoughtful of the comfort of the others. He should rid himself of all annoying mannerisms. I know faultless players who render every game a burden. Some hum tunes under their breath; some keep up an incessant tattoo with their fingers, on the table; some close their cards in a tight little pack after each play, and have to run them all over every time they want a card; the cards should always be kept in a close fan-shape in the hands of the players. Some hold their cards too far away, and have constantly to be asked to hold them up. Some "snap" every card they play; this is as hard on the cards as it is on the nerves of the



other players; cards should always be played as noiselessly as possible. Some cover the cards with their hands, as they play them,—thus rendering it impossible to see them; all cards should be tossed or dropped. Some (these are women of course) always load the card-table with a mass of gold-bags, handkerchiefs, chains, vanity-cases, etc.,—which constantly jingle, and which take up room intended for other things. Some players are always trifling with the “still” pack of cards, so that there is no way of marking the deal. And many, many players are execrable winners and execrable losers.

Excessive slowness is maddening and unnecessary. You have to decide *sometime*; learn to do it with a fair degree of celerity. Any undue emphasis given to the play of a card, whether by manner, gesture, or speech, is an outrage against etiquette.

Constant explanation and discussion are wearying and unnecessary. Nobody is dying to know just *why* you did a certain thing,—and your explanations will rarely convince them of its correctness.

Not everyone can play a faultless game; but everyone is certainly capable of the highest degree of etiquette and courtesy,—



and these two things go far towards making up for any lack of skill.

After attending to yourself, learn to study all the persons with whom you play. Practise character-analysis. Auction is a combination of Whist and Poker,—that is what gives it its fascination; and it has been justly claimed that Poker, more than any other card-game, requires insight into human nature! In one respect, there is a wide difference between the two games: “bluff” will not go, in Auction, because every hand is played to the finish, and because you have a partner.

But you must study your partner and your adversaries. If you know a man is determined to play every hand, you can “force” the bid much more successfully than if you are playing against a man who is wise enough to “drop,” and to leave you to play your forcing-bid. If you see a player is an inveterate bluffer, call his bluffs. If you realize that, although he knows his rules, he is given to breaking them, “just for this once,” draw your own conclusions accordingly, and don’t trust him as implicitly as you would a more conservative player; if your partner is ultra-conservative, take an occasional risk yourself—just to make a good average; if he is risky,

stick to rock-bottom solidity in your own play. If luck is with you, gamble on it; if it is against you, never try to force it—limit your losses. Be reliable, be conservative, but don't be wooden.

But, after all, written instructions on this head are useless. Insight into human nature and the ability to cope with a given situation are inborn, acquired, or lacking. If acquired, actual experience is the only teacher. Printed matter will help you in your game, your rules, your choice of method. But it can never give you insight.

# The Laws of Auction

As Adopted by  
The Whist Club

Together with the  
Etiquette of the Game

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1916

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## PREFACE

At a meeting of the Board of Managers of the Whist Club the following laws applicable to Auction were approved and adopted.

THE WHIST CLUB.

NEW YORK, *June*, 1915.



# The Laws of Auction

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## THE RUBBER

1. A rubber continues until one side wins two games. When the first two games decide the rubber, a third is not played.

## SCORING

2. Each side has a trick score and a score for all other counts, generally known as the honour score. In the trick score the only entries made are points for tricks won (see Law 3), which count both toward the game and in the total of the rubber.

All other points, including honours, penalties, slam, little slam, and undertricks, are recorded in the honour score, which counts only in the total of the rubber.

3. When the declarer wins the number of tricks bid or more, each above six counts on the trick score: six points when clubs are trumps, seven when diamonds are trumps, eight when hearts are trumps, nine when spades are trumps, and ten when the declaration is no trump.

4. A game consists of thirty points made by tricks alone. Every deal is played out, whether or not during it the game be concluded, and any points made (even if in excess of thirty) are counted.

5. The ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of the trump suit are the honours; when no trump is declared, the aces are the honours.

6. Honours are credited to the original holders; they are valued as follows:

WHEN A TRUMP IS DECLARED							
3 <sup>1</sup>	honours held between partners	equal value of	2	tricks.			
4	"	"	"	"	"	4	"
5	"	"	"	"	"	5	"
4	"	in 1 hand			"	8	"
4	"	"	1	"	{ 5th in partner's hand }	"	9
5	"	"	1	"	"	"	10

WHEN NO TRUMP IS DECLARED							
3	aces held between partners	count	30				
4	"	"	"	"	"	40	
4	"	"	in one hand		"	100	

7. Slam is made when partners take thirteen tricks.<sup>2</sup> It counts 100 points in the honour score.

8. Little slam is made when partners take

<sup>1</sup> Frequently called "simple honours."

<sup>2</sup> Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a slam not otherwise obtained.

twelve tricks.<sup>1</sup> It counts 50 points in the honour score.

9. The value of honours, slam, or little slam, is not affected by doubling or redoubling.

10. At the end of a rubber the side that has won two games scores a bonus of 250 points.

The trick, honour, and bonus scores of each side are then added and the size of the rubber is the difference between the respective totals.

The side having the higher score wins the rubber.

11. When a rubber is started with the agreement that the play shall terminate (*i.e.*, no new deal shall commence) at a specified time, and the rubber is unfinished at that hour, the score is made up as it stands, 125 being added to the score of the winners of a game. A deal if started must be finished.

12. A proved error in the honour score may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed upon.

13. A proved error in the trick score may be corrected at any time before a declaration has been made in the following game, or, if it occur

<sup>1</sup> Law 84 prohibits a revoking side from scoring little slam, and provides that tricks received by the declarer as penalty for a revoke shall not entitle him to a little slam not otherwise obtained. When a declarer bids 7 and takes twelve tricks he counts 50 for little slam, although his declaration fails.

in the final game of the rubber, before the score has been made up and agreed upon.

#### CUTTING

14. In cutting the ace is the lowest card; between cards of otherwise equal value the spade is the lowest, the heart next, the diamond next, and the club the highest.

15. Every player must cut from the same pack.

16. Should a player expose more than one card, the highest is his cut.

#### FORMING TABLES

17. Those first in the room have the prior right to play. Candidates of equal standing decide their order by cutting; those who cut lowest play first.

18. Six players constitute a complete table.

19. After the table has been formed, the players cut to decide upon partners; the two lower play against the two higher. The lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having made his selection, must abide by it.<sup>1</sup>

20. The right to succeed players as they retire is acquired by announcing the desire to do so, and such announcements, in the order made, entitle candidates to fill vacancies as they occur.

<sup>1</sup> He may consult his partner before making his decision.



### CUTTING OUT

21. If, at the end of a rubber, admission be claimed by one or two candidates, the player or players who have played the greatest number of consecutive rubbers withdraw; when all have played the same number, they cut to decide upon the outgoers; the highest are out.<sup>1</sup>

### RIGHT OF ENTRY

22. At the end of a rubber a candidate is not entitled to enter a table unless he declare his intention before any player cut, either for partners, for a new rubber, or for cutting out.

23. In the formation of new tables candidates who have not played at an existing table have the prior right of entry. Others decide their right to admission by cutting.

24. When one or more players belonging to an existing table aid in making up a new one, which cannot be formed without him or them, he or they shall be the last to cut out.

25. A player belonging to one table who enters another, or announces a desire to do so, forfeits his rights at his original table, unless the new table cannot be formed without him, in which case he may retain his position at his original table by announcing his intention to return as soon as his place at the new table can be filled.

<sup>1</sup> See Law 14 as to value of cards in cutting.

26. Should a player leave a table during the progress of a rubber, he may, with the consent of the three others, appoint a substitute to play during his absence; but such appointment becomes void upon the conclusion of the rubber, and does not in any way affect the rights of the substitute.

27. If a player break up a table, the others have a prior right of entry elsewhere.

### SHUFFLING

28. The pack must not be shuffled below the table nor so the face of any card be seen.

29. The dealer's partner must collect the cards from the preceding deal and has the right to shuffle first. Each player has the right to shuffle subsequently. The dealer has the right to shuffle last, but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling or while giving the pack to be cut, he must reshuffle.

30. After shuffling, the cards, properly collected, must be placed face downward to the left of the next dealer, where they must remain untouched until the end of the current deal.

### THE DEAL

31. Players deal in turn; the order of dealing is to the left.

32. Immediately before the deal, the player

on the dealer's right cuts, so that each packet contains at least four cards. If, in or after cutting, and prior to the beginning of the deal, a card be exposed, or if any doubt exist as to the place of the cut, the dealer must reshuffle and the same player must cut again.

33. After the pack has been properly cut, it should not be reshuffled or recut except as provided in Law 32.

34. Should the dealer shuffle after the cut, his adversaries may also shuffle and the pack must be cut again.

35. The fifty-two cards must be dealt face downward. The deal is completed when the last card is dealt.

36. In the event of a misdeal, the same pack must be dealt again by the same player.

### A NEW DEAL

37. There *must* be a new deal:

- (a) If the cards be not dealt, beginning at the dealer's left, into four packets one at a time and in regular rotation.
- (b) If, during a deal, or during the play, the pack be proved incorrect.
- (c) If, during a deal, any card be faced in the pack or exposed, on, above, or below the table.
- (d) If more than thirteen cards be dealt to any player.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This error, whenever discovered, renders a new deal necessary.

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- (e) If the last card do not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- (f) If the dealer omit having the pack cut, deal out of turn or with the adversaries' cards, and either adversary call attention to the fact before the end of the deal and before looking at any of his cards.

38. Should a correction of any offence mentioned in 37 *f* not be made in time, or should an adversary who has looked at any of his cards be the first to call attention to the error, the deal stands, and the game proceeds as if the deal had been correct, the player to the left dealing the next. When the deal has been with the wrong cards, the next dealer may take whichever pack he prefers.

39. If, prior to the cut for the following deal, a pack be proved incorrect, the deal is void, but all prior scores stand.<sup>1</sup>

The pack is not incorrect when a missing card or cards are found in the other pack, among the quitted tricks, below the table, or in any other place which makes it possible that such card or cards were part of the pack during the deal.

40. Should three players have their proper number of cards, the fourth, less, the missing card or cards, if found, belong to him, and he, unless dummy, is answerable for any established

<sup>1</sup> A correct pack contains exactly fifty-two cards, one of each denomination.

revoke or revokes he may have made just as if the missing card or cards had been continuously in his hand. When a card is missing, any player may search the other pack, the quitted tricks, or elsewhere for it.<sup>1</sup>

If before, during, or at the conclusion of play, one player hold more than the proper number of cards, and another less, the deal is void.

41. A player may not cut, shuffle, or deal for his partner if either adversary object.

41a. A player may not lift from the table and look at any of his cards until the end of the deal. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honour score for each card so examined.

### THE DECLARATION

42. The dealer, having examined his hand, must either pass or declare to win at least one odd trick,<sup>2</sup> either with a specified suit, or at no trump.

43. The dealer having declared or passed, each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, must pass, make a higher declaration, double

<sup>1</sup> The fact that a deal is concluded without any claim of irregularity shall be deemed as conclusive that such card was part of the pack during the deal.

<sup>2</sup> One trick more than six.

the last declaration made by an opponent, or redouble an opponent's double, subject to the provisions of Law 54.

44. When all four players pass their first opportunity to declare, the deal passes to the next player.

45. The order in value of declarations from the lowest up is clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades, no trump.

To overcall a declaration, a player must bid, either

- (a) An equal number of tricks of a more valuable declaration or
- (b) A greater number of tricks.

*E. g.*, 3 spades over 3 diamonds; 5 clubs over 4 hearts; 4 diamonds over 3 no trump.

46. A player in his turn may overbid the previous adverse declaration any number of times, and may also overbid his partner, but he cannot overbid his own declaration which has been passed by the three others.

47. The player who makes the final declaration<sup>1</sup> must play the combined hands, his partner becoming dummy, unless the suit or no trump finally declared was bid by the partner before it was called by the final declarer, in which case

<sup>1</sup> A declaration becomes final when it has been passed by three players.



the partner, no matter what bids have intervened, must play the combined hands.

48. When the player of the two hands (hereinafter termed "the declarer") wins at least as many tricks as he declared, he scores the full value of the tricks won (see Law 3).<sup>1</sup>

48a. When the declarer fails to win as many tricks as he declares, neither he nor his adversaries score anything toward the game, but his adversaries score in their honour column 50 points for each undertrick (*i.e.*, each trick short of the number declared). If the declaration be doubled, the adversaries score 100 points; if redoubled, 200 points for each undertrick.

49. If a player make a declaration (other than passing) out of turn, either adversary may demand a new deal, may treat such declaration as void, or may allow such declaration to stand. In the latter case the bidding shall continue as if the declarations had been in turn. A pass out of turn, or a bid declared void does not affect the order of bidding, *i. e.*, it is still the turn of the player to the left of the previous declarer. The player who has bid out of turn may reënter the bidding in his proper turn without penalty, but if he has passed out of his turn, he may only do so in case the declaration he has passed be overbid or doubled.

<sup>1</sup> For amount scored by declarer, if doubled, see Laws 53 and 56.

If a declaration out of turn be made and the proper declarer then bid, such bid shall be construed as an election that the declaration out of turn is to be treated as void.

50. If a player make an insufficient declaration, either adversary may demand that it be made sufficient in the declaration named, in which case the partner of the declarer may not further declare unless an adversary subsequently bid or double.

50a. If a player who has been debarred from bidding under Laws 50 or 65, during the period of such prohibition, make any declaration (other than passing), either adversary may decide whether such declaration stand, and neither the offending player nor his partner may further participate in the bidding even if the adversaries double or declare.

50b. A penalty for a declaration out of turn (see Law 49), an insufficient declaration (see Law 50), or a bid when prohibited (see Law 50a) may not be enforced if either adversary pass, double, or declare before the penalty be demanded.<sup>1</sup>

50c. Laws which give to either adversary the right to enforce a penalty, do not permit unlimited consultation. Either adversary may

<sup>1</sup> When the penalty for an insufficient declaration is not demanded, the bid over which it was made may be repeated unless some higher bid has intervened.

call attention to the offence and select the penalty, or may say, "Partner, you determine the penalty," or words to that effect. Any other consultation is prohibited,<sup>1</sup> and if it take place the right to demand any penalty is lost. The first decision made by either adversary is final and cannot be altered.

51. At any time during the declaration, a question asked by a player concerning any previous bid must be answered, but, after the final declaration has been accepted, if an adversary of the declarer inform his partner regarding any previous declaration, the declarer may call a lead from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy give such information to the declarer, either adversary of the declarer may call a lead when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand. A player, however, at any time may ask what declaration is being played and the question must be answered.

52. A pass or double once made may not be altered.

No declaration may be altered after the next player acts.

Before action by the next player a no trump or suit declaration may be changed

<sup>1</sup> The question, "Partner, will you select the penalty, or shall I?" is a form of consultation which is not permitted.

- (a) To correct the amount of an insufficient bid.
- (b) To correct the denomination but not the size of a bid in which, due to a *lapsus linguae*, a suit or no trump has been called which the declarer did not intend to name.

No other alteration may be made.

### DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

53. Doubling and redoubling doubles and quadruples the value of each trick over six, but it does not alter the value of a declaration; *e. g.*, a declaration of "three clubs" is higher than "two spades" doubled or redoubled.

54. Any declaration may be doubled and redoubled once, but not more; a player may not double his partner's declaration, nor redouble his partner's double, but he may redouble a declaration of his partner which has been doubled by an adversary.

The penalty for redoubling more than once is 100 points in the adverse honour score or a new deal; for doubling a partner's declaration, or redoubling a partner's double it is 50 points in the adverse honour score. Either adversary may demand any penalty enforceable under this law.

55. Doubling or redoubling reopens the bidding. When a declaration has been doubled or redoubled, any one of the three succeeding players, including the player whose declaration

has been doubled, may, in his proper turn, make a further declaration of higher value.

56. When a player whose declaration has been doubled wins the declared number of tricks, he scores a bonus of 50 points in his honour score, and a further 50 points for each additional trick. When he or his partner has redoubled, he scores 100 points for making the contract and an additional 100 for each extra trick.

57. A double or redouble is a declaration, and a player who doubles or redoubles out of turn is subject to the penalty provided by Law 49.

58. After the final declaration has been accepted, the play begins; the player on the left of the declarer leads.

#### DUMMY<sup>1</sup>

59. As soon as the player on the left of the declarer leads, the declarer's partner places his cards face upward on the table, and the declarer plays the cards from that hand.

60. The partner of the declarer has all the rights of a player (including the right to call attention to a lead from the wrong hand), until his cards are placed face upward on the table.<sup>2</sup> He then becomes the dummy, and takes no part whatever in the play, except that he has the right:

<sup>1</sup> For additional laws affecting dummy see 51 and 93.

<sup>2</sup> The penalty is determined by the declarer (see Law 66).

- (a) To call the declarer's attention to the fact that too many or too few cards have been played to a trick;
- (b) to correct an improper claim of either adversary;
- (c) to call attention to a trick erroneously taken by either side;
- (d) to participate in the discussion of any disputed question of fact after it has arisen between the declarer and either adversary;
- (e) to correct an erroneous score;
- (f) to consult with and advise the declarer as to which penalty to exact for a revoke;
- (g) to ask the declarer whether he have any of a suit he has renounced.

The dummy, if he have not intentionally looked at any card in the hand of a player, has also the following additional rights:

- (h) To call the attention of the declarer to an established adverse revoke;
- (i) to call the attention of the declarer to a card exposed by an adversary or to an adverse lead out of turn.

61. Should the dummy call attention to any other incident in the play in consequence of which any penalty might have been exacted, the declarer may not exact such penalty. Should the dummy avail himself of rights (h) or (i), after intentionally looking at a card in the hand of a player, the declarer may not exact any penalty for the offence in question.

62. If the dummy, by touching a card or



otherwise, suggest the play of one of his cards, either adversary may require the declarer to play or not to play such card.

62a. If the dummy call to the attention of the declarer that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, either adversary may require that the lead be made from that hand.

63. Dummy is not subject to the revoke penalty; if he revoke and the error be not discovered until the trick be turned and quitted, whether by the rightful winners or not, the revoke may not be corrected.

64. A card from the declarer's hand is not played until actually quitted, but should he name or touch a card in the dummy, such card is played unless he say, "I arrange," or words to that effect. If he simultaneously touch two or more such cards, he may elect which to play.

#### CARDS EXPOSED BEFORE PLAY

65. After the deal and before the declaration has been finally determined, if any player lead or expose a card, his partner may not thereafter bid or double during that declaration,<sup>1</sup> and the card, if it belong to an adversary of the eventual declarer, is subject to call.<sup>2</sup> When the partner of the offending player is the original leader, the

<sup>1</sup> See Law 50a.

<sup>2</sup> If more than one card be exposed, all may be called.

declarer may also prohibit the initial lead of the suit of the exposed card.

66. After the final declaration has been accepted and before the lead, if the partner of the proper leader expose or lead a card, the declarer may treat it as exposed or may call a suit from the proper leader. A card exposed by the leader, after the final declaration and before the lead, is subject to call.

### **CARDS EXPOSED DURING PLAY**

67. After the original lead, all cards exposed by the declarer's adversaries are liable to be called and must be left face upward on the table.

68. The following are exposed cards:

- (1) Two or more cards played simultaneously;
- (2) a card dropped face upward on the table, even though snatched up so quickly that it cannot be named;
- (3) a card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face;
- (4) a card mentioned by either adversary as being held in his or his partner's hand.

69. A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table, or so held that it is seen by an adversary but not by the partner, is not an exposed card.

70. Two or more cards played simultaneously

by either of the declarer's adversaries give the declarer the right to call any one of such cards to the current trick and to treat the other card or cards as exposed.

70a. Should an adversary of the declarer expose his last card before his partner play to the twelfth trick, the two cards in his partner's hand become exposed, must be laid face upward on the table, and are subject to call.

71. If, without waiting for his partner to play, either of the declarer's adversaries play or lead a winning card, as against the declarer and dummy, and continue (without waiting for his partner to play) to lead several such cards, the declarer may demand that the partner of the player in fault win, if he can, the first or any other of these tricks. The other cards thus improperly played are exposed.

72. If either or both of the declarer's adversaries throw his or their cards face upward on the table, such cards are exposed and liable to be called; but if either adversary retain his hand, he cannot be forced to abandon it. Cards exposed by the declarer are not liable to be called. If the declarer say, "I have the rest," or any words indicating the remaining tricks or any number thereof are his, he may be required to place his cards face upward on the table. He is not then allowed to call any cards his adversaries may have exposed, nor to take any finesse not

previously proven a winner unless he announce it when making his claim.

73. If a player who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called (Laws 80, 86, and 92) fail to play as directed, or if, when called on to lead one suit, he lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of the suit demanded (Laws 66, 76, and 93), or if, when called upon to win or lose a trick, he fail to do so when he can (Laws 71, 80, and 92), or if, when called upon not to play a suit, he fail to play as directed (Laws 65 and 66), he is liable to the penalty for revoke (Law 84) unless such play be corrected before the trick be turned and quitted.

74. A player cannot be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

75. The call of an exposed card may be repeated until it be played.

#### **LEADS OUT OF TURN**

76. If either adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, the declarer may either treat the card so led as exposed or may call a suit as soon as it is the turn of either adversary to lead. Should they lead simultaneously, the lead from the proper hand stands, and the other card is exposed.

77. If the declarer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or dummy, he incurs no

penalty, but he may not rectify the error unless directed to do so by an adversary.<sup>1</sup> If the second hand play, the lead is accepted.

78. If an adversary of the declarer lead out of turn, and the declarer follow either from his own hand or dummy, the trick stands. If the declarer before playing refuse to accept the lead, the leader may be penalized as provided in Law 76.

79. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

#### CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR

80. Should the fourth hand, not being dummy or declarer, play before the second, the latter may be required to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick. In such case, if the second hand be void of the suit led, the declarer in lieu of any other penalty may call upon the second hand to play the highest card of any designated suit. If he name a suit of which the second hand is void, the penalty is paid.<sup>2</sup>

81. If any one, except dummy, omit playing

<sup>1</sup> The rule in Law 50c as to consultations governs the right of adversaries to consult as to whether such direction be given.

<sup>2</sup> Should the declarer play third hand before the second hand, the fourth hand may without penalty play before his partner.



to a trick, and such error be not corrected until he has played to the next, the adversaries or either of them may claim a new deal; should either decide that the deal stand, the surplus card (at the end of the hand) is considered played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.<sup>1</sup>

82. When any one, except dummy, plays two or more cards to the same trick and the mistake is not corrected, he is answerable for any consequent revokes he may make. When the error is detected during the play, the tricks may be counted face downward, to see if any contain more than four cards; should this be the case, the trick which contains a surplus card or cards may be examined and such card or cards restored to the original holder.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE REVOKE<sup>3</sup>**

83. A revoke occurs when a player, other than dummy, holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit. It becomes an established revoke when the trick in which it occurs is turned and quitted by the rightful winners (*i.e.*, the hand removed from the trick

<sup>1</sup> As to the right of adversaries to consult, see Law 50c.

<sup>2</sup> Either adversary may decide which card shall be considered played to the trick which contains more than four cards.

<sup>3</sup> See Law 73.



after it has been turned face downward on the table), or when either the revoking player or his partner, whether in turn or otherwise, leads or plays to the following trick.

84. The penalty for each established revoke is:

- (a) When the declarer revokes, he cannot score for tricks and his adversaries add 100 points to their score in the honour column, in addition to any penalty which he may have incurred for not making good his declaration.
- (b) When either of the adversaries revokes, the declarer may either add 100 points to his score in the honour column or take three tricks from his opponents and add them to his own.<sup>1</sup> Such tricks may assist the declarer to make good his declaration, but shall not entitle him to score any bonus in the honour column in case the declaration has been doubled or redoubled, nor to a slam or little slam not otherwise obtained.<sup>2</sup>
- (c) When, during the play of a deal, more than one revoke is made by the same side, the penalty for each revoke after the first is 100 points.

The value of their honours is the only score that can be made by a revoking side.

85. A player may ask his partner if he have a card of the suit which he has renounced; should

<sup>1</sup> The dummy may advise the declarer which penalty to exact.

<sup>2</sup> The value of the three tricks, doubled or redoubled, as the case may be, is counted in the trick score.

the question be asked before the trick be turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish a revoke, and the error may be corrected unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

85*a*. Should the dummy leave the table during the play, he may ask his adversaries to protect him from revokes during his absence; such protection is generally called "the courtesies of the table" or "the courtesies due an absentee."

If he make such request the penalty may not be enforced or a revoke made by the declarer during the dummy's absence unless in due season an adversary have asked the declarer whether he have a card of the suit he has renounced.

86. If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have followed him may withdraw his or their cards and substitute others, and the cards so withdrawn are not exposed. If the player in fault be one of the declarer's adversaries, the card played in error is exposed, and the declarer may call it whenever he pleases, or he may require the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the trick.

86*a*. If the player in fault be the declarer, either adversary may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the suit in which he has

renounced, provided both his adversaries have played to the current trick; but this penalty may not be exacted from the declarer when he is fourth in hand, nor can it be enforced at all from the dummy.

87. At the end of the play the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the claim is established if, after it is made, the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries.

88. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

89. Should both sides revoke, the only score permitted is for honours. In such case, if one side revoke more than once, the penalty of 100 points for each extra revoke is scored by the other side.

### GENERAL LAWS

90. A trick turned and quitted may not be looked at (except under Law 82) until the end of the play. The penalty for the violation of this law is 25 points in the adverse honour score.

91. Any player during the play of a trick or after the four cards are played, and before the trick is turned and quitted, may demand that

the cards be placed before their respective players.

92. When an adversary of the declarer, before his partner plays, calls attention to the trick, either by saying it is his, or, without being requested to do so, by naming his card or drawing it toward him, the declarer may require such partner to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or to win or lose the trick.

93. An adversary of the declarer may call his partner's attention to the fact that he is about to play or lead out of turn; but if, during the play, he make any unauthorized reference to any incident of the play, the declarer may call a suit from the adversary whose next turn it is to lead. If the dummy similarly offend, either adversary may call a lead when it is the next turn of the declarer to lead from either hand.

94. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

#### **NEW CARDS**

95. Unless a pack be imperfect, no player has the right to call for one new pack. When fresh cards are demanded, two packs must be furnished. When they are produced during a rubber, the adversaries of the player demanding them have the choice of the new cards. If it be the beginning of a new rubber, the dealer,

whether he or one of his adversaries call for the new cards, has the choice. New cards cannot be substituted after the pack has been cut for a new deal.

96. A card or cards torn or marked must be replaced by agreement or new cards furnished.

## BYSTANDERS

97. While a bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question, he should not say anything unless appealed to; and if he make any remark which calls attention to an oversight affecting the score, or to the exaction of a penalty, he is liable to be called upon by the players to pay the stakes (not extras) lost.

## ETIQUETTE OF AUCTION

In the game of Auction slight intimations convey much information. The code succinctly states laws which fix penalties for an offence. To offend against etiquette is far more serious than to offend against a law; for in the latter case the offender is subject to the prescribed penalties; in the former his adversaries are without redress.

1. Declarations should be made in a simple manner, thus: "one heart," "one no trump," "pass," "double"; they should be made orally and not by gesture.



2. Aside from his legitimate declaration, a player should not show by word or gesture the nature of his hand, or his pleasure or displeasure at a play, bid, or double.

3. If a player demand that the cards be placed, he should do so for his own information and not to call his partner's attention to any card or play.

4. An opponent of the declarer should not lead until the preceding trick has been turned and quitted; nor, after having led a winning card, should he draw another from his hand before his partner has played to the current trick.

5. A card should not be played with such emphasis as to draw attention to it, nor should a player detach one card from his hand and subsequently play another.

6. A player should not purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke to conceal a first.

7. Conversation during the play should be avoided, as it may annoy players at the table or at other tables in the room.

8. The dummy should not leave his seat to watch his partner play. He should not call attention to the score nor to any card or cards that he or the other players hold.

9. If a player say, "I have the rest," or any



words indicating that the remaining tricks, or any number thereof, are his, and one or both of the other players expose his or their cards, or request him to play out the hand, he should not allow any information so obtained to influence his play.

10. If a player concede, in error, one or more tricks, the concession should stand.

11. A player having been cut out of one table should not seek admission in another unless willing to cut for the privilege of entry.



## APPENDIX

### NULLOS

NULLOS are, at the time of this writing, generally abandoned; it may be temporarily, it may be permanently. Many players are still using them; thousands are mourning for them; the game needs them; but official recognition is withheld.

Even nullo-lovers never asked that nullos should be an *inseparable* part of the game. They merely wanted them *elective*,—to be voted in, or out, at each sitting.

Nullos were admitted, even by their detractors, to be one of the most scientific adjuncts Auction had ever received. Also, they are fascinating; and the most wonderful balance is given the game by their use. Their *fairness* is their great point.

Since they have been developed into a science by those who loved them, and since their reappearance is by no means uncertain, it is fitting that a record of them be kept.

These are the things which brought about the disuse of nullos:

*1st.* They could not be acquired without hard study, even by the best of players. Very few skilful players were willing to go back and *study* a new thing.

*2nd.* Their difficulty. Even though you could play them yourself, your partner was too apt to let you in for heavy losses.

*3rd.* Gamblers don't want luck killed.

*4th.* There are politics in cards, as in everything else. If they bade the slaughter of nullos, nullos would have to be slaughtered.

But it was amusing to hear the sudden solicitude for the "weak players who couldn't handle nullos." Those who had heretofore looked upon weak players as nothing but bores or "easy-marks," suddenly became concerned about them exclusively.

No one ever wanted the weak players to be forced to swallow nullos. They couldn't, and it was not necessary. But, the fact remains that the game *still* holds many dangerous tools from which no one ever dreams of protecting the weak.

I will condense, as much as possible the greatest of the nullo-principles. And I shall write of nullos at eight a trick,—“eight

under hearts." That proved to be their only perfect value and there is no use in opening again the discussion of nullos-at-eight, or nullos-at-ten.

Nullos are negative no-trumpers; the object of every player is to take as few tricks as possible; they are worth eight a trick for every trick named in the contract, and an extra eight for every trick *under* the contract. The adversaries score fifty for every trick *over* the contract that they can force upon the declarant. The honours are the aces, and score inversely. Though nullos and hearts count the same, the hearts outrank in bidding.

The player who gets the bid at "one nullo" is safe if he takes but six tricks; he scores eight for the odd that he fails to take, and an extra eight for every trick under six. If he bids "two nullos" he may take but five tricks; by so doing, he scores sixteen, and an extra eight for every trick under five. If he bids "three nullos," he may take but four tricks; by so doing, he scores twenty-four, and an extra eight for every trick under four.

It is the exact opposite of no-trump. When you bid "one no-trump," you are safe if you take *seven tricks, or more*: when you bid "one

nullo," you are safe if you take *six tricks, or less.*

*The two hands must fit. When they are found to be a misfit, nullos must be dropped.*

*A positive hand may easily be strong enough to stand alone. No negative hand can ever stand alone.* It might, if the partner's hand were to be thrown out; but it can never do so when that hand is to be played.

If you have a very good heart-hand ( or a spade-hand, or a no-trumper), it doesn't matter one atom what your partner holds; your cards will take the tricks, no matter what he plays.

But if you have even an ideally perfect nullo-hand, it matters tremendously what your partner holds; *your cards cannot lose tricks unless his cards lose them over again.* Unless every trick is twice-lost, it is not lost at all; it is won.

And there you have the difficulty of nullos, in a nutshell. A trick is won with one card; it must be lost with two. *It won't do you a particle of good to lose every trick in your own hand, if you have to take every trick in dummy.*

**Therefore:**

**Never insist on nullos with an obviously unwilling partner.**



Give that partner a chance to tell you whether he is willing or unwilling.

Remember that "pass" from his lips, doesn't always mean: "I am pleased with your bid." It may well mean: "Your bid is most unwelcome to me, but I have no way to tell you so."

For nullo purposes, the pack of cards is divided into three groups,—high, intermediate, and low.

The high cards are the aces and faces; the intermediate cards are the tens, nines, eights, sevens, and sixes, and are the most dangerous cards in the pack; and the low cards are the fives, fours, treys, and deuces. Therefore, there are but sixteen low cards.

The ideal nullo-hand is not made up exclusively of low cards; it is a mixed hand,—high cards well guarded with low ones, and (preferably) holding the deuce of any long suit.

The best nullo-hand looks like a first cousin to a no-trumper; with the difference, however, that singletons and blank suits are the greatest asset in nullos.

When I speak of a "guarded suit," I mean a suit that holds *at least one card lower than the six.*

The original nullo-bidder may bid nullos with *one* unguarded suit; just as you cannot bid no-trumps with two unguarded suits, so you cannot bid nullos. This rule may, however, be broken in the case of a singleton. *An original nullo-bid may be made with one unguarded suit, or with two, provided the second one is a singleton.*

If you hold a good nullo-hand except for one poor suit, it is better for you to have that suit held on your *right*, than on your *left*. You are safer to play *after* it than *before* it.

*The original nullo-bidder may bid two nullos unaided, but never three.*

One nullo is extremely easy to make, even with a bad dummy. Therefore, the partner of the one-nullo bidder need not be concerned about making an over-call unless he possesses a perfectly good suit with which to do it. Neither need he regard his partner's nullo-call as a necessary denial of help to a good hand.

The nullo-raiser must have no unguarded suit, unless it be a singleton.

### **The Deuce in Nullos**

What the ace is to no-trumps, the deuce is to nullos. The ace is the one sure taker; the

deuce is the one sure loser. In no-trumps, if you hold the ace of a suit (whether as declarant or as adversary),—you “command” the suit,—and nothing would induce you to give up that command too quickly; in nullos, if you hold the deuce of a suit (whether as declarant or adversary), you equally “command” the suit. *Again, you must be careful not to give up your command too early in the game.*

The deuce is of incalculable value to either side, at any point of the game; *but it grows constantly more valuable as the game progresses.* Particularly should a prospective nulldummy be concerned regarding the deuce *of any long suit he may chance to hold!*

In the hand of the declarant, a very long suit is valuable, even if its lowest card is the trey,—or even the four; *this is because the adversaries cannot see his hand.* But the hand of the dummy is exposed and at their mercy. Any long suit should run to the deuce, to be safe.

*A long suit, exposed on the board, should hold its deuce. Lacking its deuce, but holding its ace, there should be one strong side-card in the hand. Lacking both deuce and ace of a long exposed suit, the hand should hold two strong side-cards.*

*These cards should be guarded once, at least, by a sure loser.*

“Get-outry” is as necessary to nullos as “re-entry” to no-trumps. “Exit-cards” are the most desirable things in the world; and the surest exit-card is the deuce,—unless it happens to be a thirteener. Then, of course, it is as much a taker as is an ace.

Of the various opening nullo-leads, the singleton is the best. *Any singleton* (save the deuce and the trey) *is better than any other possible lead*; but a high or intermediate singleton makes a better opening lead than a low singleton because, while the declarant may be enabled to get rid of two dangerous cards on your lead, you, yourself, will not wish you had it back, later in the hand.

A doubleton, with the second card a *sure* loser, is a good lead.

If you have no proper singleton or doubleton lead, an excellent opening lead is *an intermediate card* of a long mixed suit. It should be your third lowest (the third card beginning at the bottom and counting upwards).

### **To Play Nullos**

The declarant's first business, when dummy goes down, is to count the sequences,

or near-sequences, between the two hands,—*beginning with the deuce and counting upwards. Let him note the cards he lacks.*

*If the declarant is afraid of any one card, he should get it.* He should lead that suit till that card falls. This is particularly true of an adverse deuce that is provokingly held up.

*Play touching cards from the two hands.* If you play a ten from dummy, and a nine from your own hand, no one can get in between them. The adversaries have either to take the trick or to use up two good duckers. If, on the contrary, you play a jack from one hand and a nine from the other, one adversary can play a “between-card” (the ten), and the other can duck. Only one ducker drawn instead of two,—and the throw of a very embarrassing card,—all because your cards didn't touch.

Sequence-holding, sequence-count, and sequence-play are the great nullo secrets.

Don't be in too great a hurry to take adverse intermediate cards.

*Senseless taking is as bad as senseless ducking. Have a reason for everything you do.*

Never forget a card; never speak while playing a nullo-hand; you simply cannot afford to. Never forget to notice just what cards are



held against you and to calculate what can happen if they are together—or separated.

A good nullo-plan for both declarant and adversary is “middle play.” When you don’t know what to do, play a “middle” card (one that leaves you with both higher and lower cards) and you will be apt to be right.

The declarant should keep all of dummy’s suits guarded as long as possible; he should always be glad to “duck” a dangerous card like the nine or the jack—when played by the adversary—particularly if he can get rid of a card like the eight or the ten and still keep a guard in the suit.

The declarant should *generally* do most of his necessary taking early in the hand, but he should not regard all aces and kings as necessary takers. If they are sufficiently well guarded they will never take.

If the declarant should find himself “up against it” with an impossible nullo-hand,—a hand that admits of no skill or finesse,—he should simply duck as often as possible. Every duck saves him fifty, or a hundred.

The discard in nullos calls for great acumen. You should always discard your *most dangerous* card,—but that isn’t necessarily your



*highest.* It is often necessary to hold on to an ace and to discard an eight or a seven.

A cross-discard is as valuable in nullos as is a cross-ruff in any declared trump, but you cannot work it quite as successfully because you would have to continue to take tricks in order to lead a suit from one hand, discard on it from the other, and then reverse the process. Simply, your cross-discard hampers the adversary horribly in his play (there are two suits he doesn't want to lead), and gives you wonderful chances to get rid of embarrassing cards.

When the adversaries are the ones to hold a cross-discard, the declarant is the one to be hampered. *No one wants to give his adversary valuable discards, if he can avoid it.*

It is not always policy to throw a high card and to keep a low one. Particularly in those cases where one of the declarant's hands is dangerous and the other is harmless, it is nearly always desirable *to keep a high card in the harmless hand.* In proof of this, let me show you a wonderful eight-card nullo-problem sent me by a reader who signed himself "A. F."

	♥ J 7										
	♣ —										
	♦ A J 6 5										
	♠ Q 4										
♥ 10 8 6 5 ♣ — ♦ 10 7 ♠ 8 5	<table style="width: 100%; height: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> <td style="width: 40%; text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">A</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">B</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Z</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Y		A		B		Z		♥ — ♣ 8 7 6 5 ♦ K Q 2 ♠ 9
	Y										
A		B									
	Z										
	♥ 2										
	♣ 4 2										
	♦ 9 4 3										
	♠ 6 2										

Z is playing "five nullos," on almost impossible five-nullo material. He was the victim of his partner's bidding, that partner having raised the bid to "three," to "four," to "five." Thanks to extremely clever playing, "A. F." made his bid. He has lost the first four rounds, and has just taken the fifth in his own hand. He must therefore lead, and may take but one more trick.

Permit me to point out that if "A. F." had played nullos as half the world plays them he would never have made five. He would have gone on the principle that "as high cards must take anyhow, they may as well do it first as last." He would have taken with the

queen of spades, probably with the jack of hearts; he might have led his ace of diamonds, throwing his nine, and permitting B to throw king and A the ten. He would have taken another diamond-round later.

Just look, I pray you, at all the high cards that lay exposed in that dummy, and that never took tricks—thanks to the skill of the man who played Z.

Z leads a club, discarding dummy's jack of hearts, and forcing the trick on B. B's best lead is another club, even though it gives dummy another discard. It will exhaust Z's clubs, and prevent his throwing B in, later in the hand. On this second club-lead dummy must discard the heart-seven, in order to unblock hearts for Z's deuce, and prepare the way for a spade discard when hearts are led. (The queen of spades is a much higher card than the seven of hearts, but it would make a fatal discard.)

B still holds the lead. He leads his singleton spade, Z ducking in both hands. B's next aim is to unblock diamonds, so as to throw dummy in, at the end of the hand. To that end, he leads his king. Any nullo amateur, in Z's place, would throw the nine, because it is his highest card. This Z doesn't.

*He holds up his nine, because when he gets caught on the third diamond-round he would rather be caught in his own hand than in dummy. If he lets dummy take the last diamond-round, dummy will also take every remaining trick, five in all—a defeat of three tricks (300 points) for Z.*

Z holds up his nine of diamonds, throwing his own four and dummy's jack onto B's king. B takes the round. B leads the queen of diamonds, Z throwing his own trey and dummy's six. B takes the round.

B leads the deuce of diamonds. Z takes with his own nine, throwing dummy's five. He then leads the deuce of hearts. A is forced to take, because Z has already discarded dummy's seven. Z throws dummy's queen of spades on the heart-round, and never takes another trick.

I pray you to remember this lesson: *With a dangerous dummy, unblock the suits, so as to take the final round in the low hand.* Retain a taking card in the hand that holds "exit" cards rather than in the hand that does not.

### **For the Adversary**

The adversary's play against a nullo should be guided by dummy, by his partner's

signals and discards, and by his own hand. *He should rarely lose an opportunity to give his partner a discard for which he has asked.*

If an adversary holds a bad suit, with but one ducker, it is generally better to save that ducker for the last. Holding ace-king-four of any suit, and seeing that suit led by partner or declarant, it is the best plan to save the low card, nine cases out of ten.

The adversaries should avoid giving dummy a discard or establishing a discard for dummy by leading up to a singleton.

The adversaries should notice what suit the declarant fears, and should lead that suit to him. Signs of fear are discard and avoidance. In the former case (discard), either adversary may lead the suit; in the latter case (avoidance), the suit is preferably led by the adversary who can lead through the declarant. *The declarant should not be permitted to play last, on a suit which he is palpably avoiding.*

A good easy point for adversaries to remember is that *so many ducks will defeat the bid.* If the declarant is playing four nullos, he can afford to take but three tricks. *If both adversaries can duck four rounds, they can defeat him.* And so on with other bids.



This is a primitive sort of rule, but a very useful one.

### **Condensed Nullo Hints**

Don't think every poor hand is a nullo-hand.

Even suit-distribution is a drawback. Very long suits and very short (or blank) suits are advantages.

A long exposed suit should hold its deuce. Lacking its deuce and holding its ace, the hand is safe with *one* strong side-card. Lacking both ace and deuce, two strong side-cards are necessary to safety.

Don't be too much afraid of aces and too little afraid of sevens and eights. All middle cards must be guarded as carefully as must aces and kings; they are equally dangerous.

The line between a nullo and a no-trump is often very vague.

If the dealer passes, his partner should not bid nullos. A passing hand is a bad nullo-assist. Also, it holds no bid with which to warn from nullos.

Nullos may be bid against any one-bid from partner. Never, however, against a legitimate two-bid.



It takes a better nullo hand to raise nullos than to *bid* them. Dummy shows.

A player who has once been called off from nullos by his partner should never return to them. He should also *regard his partner's "pass" as a danger signal*; a "pass" and a "call-off" should both be a warning to drop nullos.

Don't forget that nullos are played with *twenty-six* cards, not with thirteen; therefore don't bid them too high on your own hand alone, or your partner may prove your ruin. Don't forget that nullos are defeated by twenty-six cards, and not by thirteen; therefore, be wary of doubling them. While your hand may be a defeating hand, your partner may take every trick.

Every player should seek discards for himself, and try to prevent his adversary from getting them.

The secret of nullos is "middle-play" for both declarant and adversary. When you don't know what to do, play a "middle" card (one that leaves you with both higher and lower cards in the same suit), and you will be apt to be right.

In no-trumps, it is a mistake to play out all your aces and kings in the beginning, though

all novices do it. In nullos, it is an equal mistake to play out all your deuces and treys in the beginning, though all novices certainly do it. The nearer a hand approaches its end, the more useful does a deuce become, to both declarant and adversary. Keep all suits well guarded by low cards, and keep plenty of "get-out" cards, especially in dummy.

In no-trumps, if you hold the ace of an adversary's suit, you command that suit,—don't give up that command too soon in the hand. In nullos, if you hold the deuce of an adversary's suit you equally command that suit,—again, don't give up that command too soon.

If the declarant can be harmed by any particular card, he should lead that suit till he draws that card. If you are afraid of a card, *get it!*

The declarant should count his sequences between the two hands in every suit. Sequences are plate-armour; every break in the sequence is a joint in the plate.

The declarant should keep all of dummy's suits guarded as long as possible. He should always be glad to "duck" as dangerous a card as the jack, or the nine (when led by the adversary), particularly if he can get rid of a

card like the ten, or the eight, and still keep a guard in the suit.

The declarant should do most of his *necessary* taking, early in the hand; but he should not regard all high cards as necessary takers. If sufficiently well-guarded, they need never take.

The adversaries should avoid giving dummy a discard, or establishing a discard for dummy by leading up to a singleton. If dummy holds a singleton king, and no blank suit on which to discard it, don't be in too much of a hurry to lead up to that king. It can always be made to take. Hammer dummy's other vulnerable point first.

If the declarant gets a discard, the adversaries should come in immediately *and lead the suit from which he is discarding*. It is certainly the suit of which he is most afraid.

The best opening-lead against nullos is a singleton. After that comes a certain type of doubleton. A doubleton lead is desirable only when the second of the two cards is a *sure* loser. By leading an ace and then a six (a "high" card followed by an "intermediate" card), you give the declarant a chance to get rid of two dangerous high cards on your first lead, and to "duck" your second

lead in both hands. You take both rounds and leave him better off than he was before.

The next-best lead is an intermediate card from a long mixed suit. Your partner may be short where you are long; also, you retain low cards in the suit for later deadly work.

A low card from a series of low cards is a good lead. The leader, however, should *always retain a card* (or cards), *lower than the one led*.

It is occasionally advantageous to lead out the only dangerous suit in your hand, if it is short (not more than three cards, and preferably less). This, however, is generally a great mental relief to the declarant.

If the declarant *discards* from a suit, *either* adversary should lead that suit. If the declarant *avoids* a suit (and dummy gives no reason for his avoidance), that suit should preferably be led by the adversary on the *right* of the declarant.

A singleton *deuce* or *trey* is rarely a good lead, unless from a "stone-wall" hand that has no other lead and is crying for discard. A deuce or a trey may often throw the declarant in, later in the hand. Any card higher than a trey however, is not apt to be useful; *a four can be ducked in both hands*.

High cards are frequently led during the progress of a hand, when it is to the adversaries' obvious advantage to hold the lead and pull dummy's "exit" cards before throwing him in. But high cards make very poor opening-leads; they often enable the declarant to get rid of the only cards that could possibly hurt him. Intermediate cards are excellent opening-leads; the declarant is unable to "throw" any dangerous high cards on them, and he is often forced to choose between taking the trick, and unguarding the suit.

When it is to the advantage of either declarant or adversary to hold the lead, he should lead, and play, high cards. When he merely wants to coax the play of a dangerous, adverse, low card, he should lead, or play, low cards.

In positive suits, you lead up to weakness. *In nullos, you lead up to strength.*

If an adverse ace does not fall on the first two rounds, and if both adversaries follow to both those rounds, the chances are largely that the ace will fall on the third round. It is generally as safe to lead (or play) a king up to it, as to lead a deuce.

Don't think you understand nullos because you have tried them a few times.



Don't think the failures which were the results of those few trials can be laid at the door of nullos. Use of nullos, and abuse of nullos, are two very different things.

Don't forget the wonderful value of singletons and blank suits; they are as valuable in nullos as they are dangerous in no-trumps. In the former suit they mean opportunities for discards.

Don't fail to remember the play of every card; the difference between a deuce and a trey will often turn the day.

"Ducking" is valuable, but it can be done once too often, as well as once too seldom. The player who tries to do nothing but "duck" from the beginning of the hand is usually left to do considerable taking as the hand progresses.

Learn to distinguish between "low" cards, and "intermediate" cards; the former are your friends, the latter are your foes.

While nullos are not necessarily for *expert* use, alone, they are certainly for *experienced* use, alone. Practice is the best possible nullo-teacher!

The hands should *not* be exchanged in nullos. The practice of exchanging them, and of making the original nullo-bidder the



dummy, was a localism which never received any sanction from experts or professionals. It is bad because it is *unnecessary*, and is therefore an *unwarranted interference with the established routine of the game*. The object of nullos is to lose tricks, instead of taking them, *all other things being the same!*

THE END



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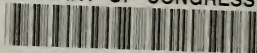








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