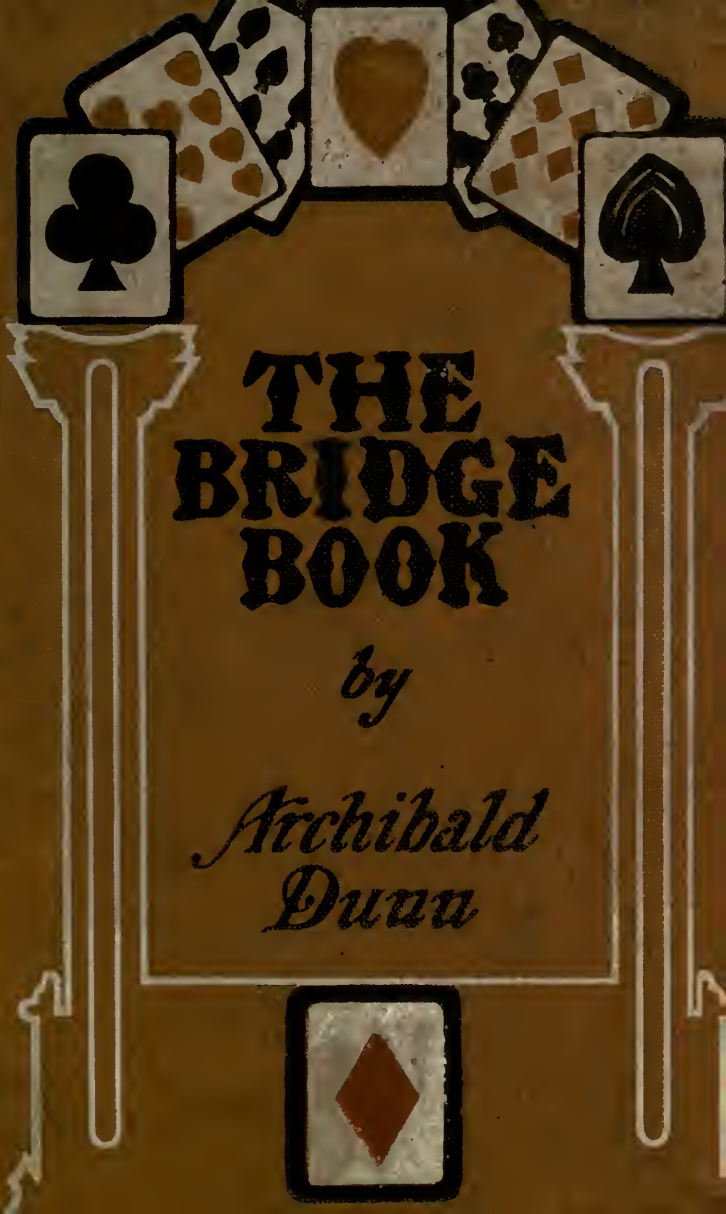
THE
BRIDGE
BOOK
by
Archibald
Dunn

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PRACTICAL TALKS ABOUT BRIDGE

BY

ARCHIBALD DUNN

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To my friend
Ralph Lambton
A Souvenir
of
Many pleasant Bridge-Evenings.

PREFACE

The game of Bridge has, like other things in the world, been marching with the times; the methods of yesterday are, in many respects, not quite the methods of to-day.

It is only a few short years since Bridge appeared as a stranger in England, and, though we opened our arms and welcomed the newcomer, it remained nevertheless a stranger for very, very long. We knew little of its science; we needed time for its evolution. Things, however, have begun to shape themselves at last; fallacies, which passed unchallenged before, have now been detected; the possibilities of the no-trump declaration and of the judicious use of the "double" are appreciated and understood; the advantages resulting from defensive play are admitted; the principle of opening a long suit in preference to a short one is accepted, and so on. In fact, we may now fairly say that the game is "in order."

My endeavour, then, will be to lay before the reader the system which, after these years of experience, has proved itself to be the best—that

is to say, the system which is most likely to conduce to his own success. In doing this, I have given the reasons for and against the different suggestions that are advanced, and no effort has been spared to make the treatise complete in every branch of the game.

Certain portions of this book have already appeared serially in "The King" (England) and in "The New York Commercial Advertiser" (America). These portions have been re-cast—indeed, almost re-written—with a view to adapting them to volume form, but nevertheless my thanks are due to the editors of those periodicals for their courteous permission to use the subject matter.

ARCHIBALD DUNN.

November, 1902.

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THE BRIDGE BOOK

HISTORICAL

There is little known about the history of the game. From all accounts, it originated in the East, found its way to France, then to America, and finally to England some eight or ten years ago.

It is usually spoken of as an "Offshoot of Whist." That may, or may not, be true; but certainly, in its present form, the description might be counted correct, for the whole tendency of Bridge development has been to bring it nearer and nearer to the older game. The great guiding principles of Whist, though somewhat altered to suit their new surroundings, have been to all intents and purposes adopted; for a system of signalling and for many conventions Bridge is indebted to Whist; and, with certain modifications, Bridge "leads" and Whist "leads" are identical.

Yet, though the resemblance is striking, the games are essentially different. The voluntary selection of a trump suit, the control that selec-

tion may have over the "play" of the cards, the judgment which must be exercised in doubling and re-doubling, and the new element introduced by a no-trump declaration are all things which belong to Bridge alone and which add to it a charm and fascination such as Whist can never hope to possess.

THE GAME OF BRIDGE

The game can be played by two, three, or four players. The last number is the most usual, and the method of play is as follows:—

The players "cut" for partners; the two highest play together against the two lowest (the partners facing each other at the table); the player who cuts the lowest card of all is the dealer, and he has the right to decide where he and his partner shall sit.

After the cards have been shuffled, they must be cut by the player on the dealer's right and then dealt by the dealer singly to each player. He must commence with the player on his left and continue in regular rotation round the table, commencing with the player on his left hand, until the pack is exhausted. No card is turned up.

On completion of the deal, the players look at their cards and the dealer has the option of declaring what the trump suit is to be, or if the hand is to be played without trumps. Should his hand be such that he cannot make a declaration with advantage,—that is to say, without a

prospect of scoring the majority of the thirteen tricks,—he leaves the office to his partner, who is then *bound* to make a decision of some sort —he must either choose a suit or declare no-trumps. After the decision is announced, the adversaries have the right to "double"—*i.e.* they may double the scoring value of the suit (including no-trumps) selected. Should this occur, the dealer or his partner may re-double; and this process may be carried on indefinitely, though it is usual to arrange beforehand that the value of any one trick shall not be raised above a hundred points.

When the declaration and doubling are finished, the player on the dealer's left leads a card; then the cards of the dealer's partner (generally called "Dummy") are laid face upwards on the table, and the game proceeds as at Dummy Whist.

For the benefit of readers who are unacquainted with Whist, it may be as well to indicate the routine. After the leader has opened the game, each of the other players *in strict order* (working from the leader's left) plays a card to the trick. (Where possible, it is compulsory to follow suit.) When all four cards are upon the table, someone will have won the trick. The winner of the trick then becomes the *leader* and the adversary

sitting immediately on his left hand becomes the *second* player; and so on with subsequent tricks. At Dummy Whist, the dealer manages both his own and his partner's cards, and the latter are exposed upon the table. The same arrangement is adopted at Bridge.

The player who is sitting in Dummy's chair may remind his partner which hand to lead from; he may also ask his partner whether he holds a card of a suit which he has renounced. Otherwise, "Dummy" must take no part whatever in the play of the hand. He may not draw attention to faults committed by the adversaries; he may not claim a penalty (should one be entailed) for those faults; nor may he leave his chair for the purpose of overlooking any of the other hands. Apart from the two concessions mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, he is a Dummy in every sense of the word.

SCORING

The rubber consists of the best of three games; the players who first succeed in winning two games win the rubber. The game is 30 points and only *tricks* count towards the game. The score by *honours* is written down on a separate part of the scoring-block and is not added up till the end of the rubber. At the end of the rubber

both sides add up their *total* scores (including the honours), the winners adding 100 points for the rubber. The smaller score is then deducted from the larger, and the difference gives the number of points won.

A. B.	C. D.
Honours	
	12
12	8
16	12
Tricks	
32	
	30
12	18
18	
90	80
100	
190	
80	
110	

It is thus possible for the winners of the rubber to have less points to their score than their adversaries, and to be pecuniarily losers, if the game is played for money. Here it may be added that the stakes must be arranged beforehand, according to the humour of the players, and are generally computed at so much a point, or so much *per* each 10 or 100 points.

A specimen of the scoring-block, with an example of a rubber, is given opposite. It will be seen that the block is divided into two parts, the score by tricks being marked on the lower portion and the score by honours on the upper. At the conclusion of each *game*, a line is drawn across below the "trick" score; this is merely for convenience to show at a glance how many games have been played.

It will be noticed that the honours are marked from below upwards; the reason being that it keeps the upper figures nearer to the under and so makes their subsequent addition easier.

The explanation of the rubber shown on the block is as follows:—A. B. play against C. D.

1st deal. A. B. make four by cards in hearts (32) and two by honours (16).[1] They write 32 under "tricks" and 16 under "honours." C. D. score nothing. A line is drawn under the trick score to show that a game (30 points *minimum*) has been won.

2nd deal. C. D. make five by cards in diamonds (30) and two by honours (12). They write 30 under "tricks" and 12 under "honours." A. B. score nothing. Again a line is drawn under the trick score, as another game has been won.

3rd deal. A. B. make three by cards in clubs (12), and C. D. make two by honours (8). A. B. write 12 under their "trick" score, and C. D write 8 under their "honours." No line is drawn under "tricks" because a game has not been completed.

4th deal. C. D. make three cards in diamonds (18) and two by honours (12). These scores are again placed respectively in C. D.'s "trick" and "honour" divisions.

5th deal. A. B. make three by cards in diamonds (18) and two by honours (12) which are

[1] The suits have different values. (See scoring table, page 14.)

dealt with as before. A. B. have won the game and the rubber.

Both sides now add up their full totals; A. B. making 90 and C. D. 80.

A. B. add 100 for the rubber, making their total into 190, from which C. D.'s score (80) is deducted. The balance (110) is the number of points won by A. B. (5/6 at 5/- per 100.)

THE THREE-HANDED GAME

The general system of playing this game is the same as in the case of four players. There are, however, a few alterations which are here given in detail.

1. Dummy always deals first, and the player of Dummy sits in the Dummy chair for the first hand. During the next three hands he sits in the opposite chair, but returns to Dummy's seat when Dummy has next to deal.

The hand dealt to the empty chair is, during that particular hand, called Dummy, and is always exposed.

2. When the declaration is "passed" by the dealer and left to Dummy, the selection of a trump-suit ceases to be optional; it is regulated by the following rules: —

> "Holding three aces, or four, Dummy *must* declare no-trumps; otherwise he must declare his *longest* suit; and two suits being

of equal length, he must select the one which counts most pips (the ace being reckoned as eleven and the other court cards as ten each); and, with two suits equal in every respect, he must choose that which is of the higher trick-value."

3. When Dummy or his partner deals, then the exposed hand must be shown before the adversaries play a card.

When Dummy's adversaries deal, the exposed hand is not shown until after the first card is led.

4. When Dummy's adversaries deal, there will be two exposed hands on the table, and the game is converted into double-Dummy.

5. When Dummy is the leader, the player of Dummy looks at Dummy's hand first, and he must not look at his own until after Dummy has led.

6. The rights of doubling are the same as in the ordinary game.

When the player of Dummy has left the declaration to his Dummy hand, the fact of his having seen twenty-six cards does not debar him from redoubling should the adversaries have already doubled.

CUT-THROAT BRIDGE

This is a capital variation of the three-handed game. It is played in the same manner subject to the following differences:—

1. Each player in turn plays with Dummy for *one hand* only.

2. The rotation is established by cutting, and the player of Dummy always deals.

3. Each player keeps his own score. Any *trick* won in partnership counts full value to each partner. Every honour is reckoned at its own individual value; thus, a player who holds three honours in hearts would add 24 to his score, another who held one honour only would add 8 to *his* score, and so on. (Of course, when four or five honours are found in *one* hand, their single value is doubled.) When no-trumps are declared, the honour value of a single ace is 10. No addition is made for the winning of the *rubber*, but whenever a player wins a *game* he adds 50 to his score.

4. Play continues until one of the players has won *two* games. Then the scores are added up and differences are paid. The highest score of all receives from both opponents, and the second-highest receives from the lowest. Thus, the lowest scorer comes badly out of the scramble.

It is an understood thing that a player must endeavour to, at all times, make the utmost capital out of the cards he may hold. Mention of this is necessary because, at Cut-throat Bridge,

it is not always to a player's interest to do his best. For instance:—

D. (who is playing the Dummy hand and whose score is at 0) has declared spades. A. and B. are against him; they have each won a game, and their respective scores in the present game are 16 and 28; and *it will be A.'s turn to deal next.*

A. is so situated that he can either win or lose the odd trick. If he wins it, he makes a present of the game (50 points) to B.; whilst, if he loses the trick, he stands a more than good chance (with the deal next time) of winning the game himself. The latter course would clearly be to his own advantage, but, by the unwritten laws of the game, he is not allowed to adopt it.

Many people prefer this method of playing the three-handed game as, in it, there is never more than one exposed hand.

ANOTHER WAY OF PLAYING CUT-THROAT BRIDGE

In this method everything is conducted on the lines given above with one exception—viz., the dealer's adversaries can make no addition to their *trick* score; should they win the odd trick, or more, the amount of points so won must be added to their *honour* score; consequently they are not in any way advanced towards winning

the game. It is therefore rarely advisable to double the declaration, as this might result in helping the dealer towards the winning-post, whilst under no circumstances whatever could it help his opponents to the same end.

This is really the better form of Cut-throat Bridge because the slight alteration in the rules does away with any temptation which a player may have to "go back upon" his partner.

THE TWO-HANDED GAME

1. When there are only two players, they must cut for deal.

2. The players keep their respective seats throughout the rubber, and the Dummy hands are always exposed, even when one of the Dummies is the dealer.

3. When one of the Dummies deals, his player must look at the Dummy hand *first*, and, unless the declaration is passed, he must not look at his own cards until after the first card has been played. When the declaration is passed, the dealer of course sees twenty-six cards, but he is not, for this reason, debarred from re-doubling should the opportunity present itself.

4. The leader must decide whether he will double or not before seeing the cards in his partner's hand.

5. The exposed hands are shown before the first card is led, but after the question of doubling is finally decided.

6. When the declaration is passed, the Dummy hand must make the declaration on the same hard-and-fast lines as those laid down for the three-handed game.

SCORING TABLE

The declaration being	NO TRUMPS.	HEARTS.	DIA-MONDS.	CLUBS.	SPADES.
TRICKS.					
The winner of six tricks counts for every additional trick won	12	8	6	4	2
HONOURS.					
Three aces count	30				
Four aces count	40				
Four aces in one hand count	100				
Three honours count		16	12	8	4
Four honours count		32	24	16	8
Five honours count		40	30	20	10
Four honours in one hand count.		64	48	32	16
Four honours in one hand and the fifth in partner's hand count.		72	54	36	18
Five honours in one hand count.		80	60	40	20
Chicane (*i.e.* holding no card of the trump suit) counts		16	12	8	4

The Grand Slam (*i e.* winning all the tricks) ..... counts 40
The Little Slam (*i.e.* winning all the tricks but one) „ 20

NOTE.—When hearts, diamonds, clubs or spades are trumps, the honours consist of Ace, King, Queen, Knave and 10 in the trump suit.

When the declaration is "no trumps," the honours consist of the aces only.

There is no "chicane" when playing "no trumps."

THE RULES OF BRIDGE

THE CARDS

1. The game is played with the ordinary pack of fifty-two cards.

It is usual to use two packs, one pack belonging to each pair of partners.

If any card is marked, or damaged, a fresh pack may be called for at the expense of the table.

At any time before the cards are cut a player may order new cards at his own expense, but he must provide two packs, of which his adversaries have the choice.

THE TABLE

2. The first four players in the room are entitled to play first. The next two players in the room are entitled to join the table, and, should they do so, the table is full, and nobody has a right to join it subsequently until a vacancy occurs.

If more than four persons wishing to play enter

the room simultaneously, they must cut to decide who is to play first. The four lowest play. The next two lowest (if there are more than six) are entitled to join the table, which is then full.

The four players cut from the same pack for partners. The two lowest play against the two highest. The player who cuts the lowest card deals, and also has choice of seats and cards, both of which he must retain until the end of the rubber.

The partners sit opposite each other.

In cutting for partners, the cards rank in value from the king down to the ace; the king being the highest, and the ace the lowest card.

The 10 is lower than the knave.

If two players cut cards of equal value, they must cut again, unless their cards are the two highest, or lowest, in which case they play together. When they are the lowest, they must cut again to decide who is to deal.

Should three players cut cards of the same value, they must cut again. If the fourth player cuts lower than the other three, he has won the deal, and is the partner of the player who cuts lowest on the second attempt. If his cut has been higher than the other three cards, he is the

partner of the player who cuts highest on the second attempt; and his adversaries deal, the dealer being the player who cuts lower of the two.

A player who exposes more than one card must cut again.

At the end of the rubber, if one or two candidates (not exceeding two) are waiting to play, the players who have just finished the rubber, provided they have all played an equal number of rubbers, cut to decide who is to make way for the new-comers. The player who cuts the highest card retires, or, if there are two candidates, the two players who cut the two highest cards both retire. But should any player, or players, have played a greater number of rubbers than the others, he, or they, retire without cutting.

In forming fresh tables, the prior right of entry rests with those who have not belonged to, or played at, any other table.

If a player belonging to one table plays at another, he loses his right of re-entry to his original table.

If a player breaks up a table, the remaining players have a right, prior to him, of entry into any other table.

SHUFFLING

3. Every player has a right to shuffle the cards, and the dealer is entitled to do this last; but should he fumble or expose any of the cards, he may be called upon by the adversaries to shuffle again.

The pack must not be shuffled—

(*a*) Under the table,

(*b*) During the play of a hand,

(*c*) By dealing into packets,

nor must the face of any card be seen during the process.

After the cards are shuffled, they must be cut into two packets (neither containing less than four cards) by the player on the dealer's right. What was originally the lower packet is then placed on the top of the other one, and the dealer proceeds to deal.

If there is any confusion or exposure of cards during the process of cutting, there must be a fresh cut.

If the dealer shuffles the cards after they have been cut, the pack must be cut again.

DEALING

4. The cards must be dealt singly to each player in regular rotation, the first to the player who sits immediately on the dealer's left, the second to the player opposite to him, the third to the player

on his right, and the fourth to himself, and so on thirteen times without exposing any card.

When a fault has been committed involving the penalty of a new deal, the dealer must always give reasonable time for the penalty to be claimed.

If a card is exposed during the deal, or seen by any of the players, the adversaries may call for a fresh deal, provided that they (the adversaries) have not touched the cards.

The same penalty may be enforced should the dealer have to move more than one card already dealt in an attempt to rectify an infringement of the law that the cards must be dealt in "regular rotation," etc.

A new deal may be claimed by the adversaries if the dealer looks at the last card before completing the deal.

There must be a new deal if one player holds more than thirteen and another less than thirteen cards, or should the last card not fall in regular order to the dealer.

If a player is dealing out of turn, he may be stopped, but if the last card has been dealt, then the deal stands good. Under no other circumstances can a player lose his right to deal.

NOTE.—A card is considered to be "dealt" when it has been quitted by the dealer, or, in the case of the *last* card, should the dealer place it amongst his own cards for the purpose of gathering them up.

The players deal in turn; the right to deal first is fixed by Rule 2, and the deal then passes to his left-hand neighbour in regular rotation round the table.

SELECTING THE TRUMP SUIT

5. When the deal is completed, the players look at their cards, and the dealer has the right to decide what the trump suit is to be, or whether he will play without any trumps, generally described as "no trumps." Should his hand not justify him in making the decision, he passes the right on to his partner,[1] who then *must* decide what is to be done.

When a player declares trumps out of his turn, either of the adversaries may claim a fresh deal, but they must not consult. Should they consult, they lose the right to enforce the penalty.

See rules as to exposed cards.

A declaration once made is final.

DOUBLING AND REDOUBLING

6. After the trump suit is announced, the adversaries may "double" the value of the suit selected. This option rests first with the leader,

[1] In leaving the declaration to his partner, the dealer should make use of some set phrase, such as "I leave it to you," or "Will you make trumps?"

and afterwards with his partner. Should the leader not "double," he says to his partner, "Shall I play?" His partner replies either "Yes," in which case the game proceeds, or "I double." In the latter event, the dealer and his partner may redouble, and, should this occur, the adversaries may redouble again, and so on *ad infinitum*.[1]

In the case of the first redouble the option lies first with the player who made trumps, and afterwards with his partner. If the adversaries redouble again, the first option lies with the player who originally doubled, and then with his partner. A decision not to redouble is announced by the player with the first option saying "Content," which is echoed by his partner.

See rules as to exposed cards.

A double or re-double once made is final.

There is no penalty for doubling out of turn.

There must be no consultation between the partners before doubling. If consultation takes place, the right to double is forfeited.

THE PLAY OF THE HAND

7. When the doubling is finished, the player on the dealer's left plays a card. The dealer's partner's hand is then exposed on the table, and the subsequent

[1] It is, however, customary to stop doubling after the value of the trick has been raised to one hundred points.

play is similar to that of Dummy Whist—*i.e.* the dealer plays both Dummy's cards and his own.

The dealer's partner becomes an absolute Dummy, except that he may—

(1) Tell the dealer which hand to lead from.
(2) Ask the dealer whether he has a card of a suit which he has renounced.

Except on these two points, the dealer's partner must take no part in the game.

He must not get up to go and look over his partner's hand, nor may he look over his adversaries' cards.

If he draws the dealer's attention to any mistake of the adversaries, which may carry a penalty, the dealer's right to enforce that penalty is lost.

If, by touching a card, or otherwise, he suggests the play of a card from Dummy, either of the adversaries may call upon the dealer to play, or not to play, that particular card.

There is no penalty whatever against the Dummy hand, except as mentioned above.

Should he revoke, the trick stands good, unless the error is discovered before the trick is turned and quitted, in which case the card played in error must be recalled.

During the play of the cards, the dealer can only be penalised for *revoking*, for *failing to play*

to a trick, or for *information improperly conveyed to him by Dummy.*

A card is not considered to be played by the dealer until actually quitted.

The cards rank in value from the ace down to the 2; the ace being the highest and the 2 the lowest, and any trump will win a plain-suit card.

PENALTIES

8. The non-dealers other than Dummy are penalised for—

(*a*) Revoking.
(*b*) Exposing a card or cards.
(*c*) Leading out of turn.
(*d*) Playing out of turn.

(*a*) *Revoking.*—It is a revoke if a player holding a card of the suit led renounces that suit and then before the mistake is discovered—

(1) He, or his partner, plays again; or,
(2) The trick is turned and quitted; provided that reasonable time has been allowed for his partner to ask, and for him to answer, the question whether he has one of the suit or not.

The penalties for revoking are three in number, *viz.*,

(1) The adversaries may add the value of three tricks to their score.

(2) The adversaries may deduct the value of three tricks from the revoker's score.

(3) The adversaries may take three of the revoker's tricks, and add them to their own tricks, after which the score is counted as though the tricks had been won in the ordinary way.

Only one of these penalties may be exacted for each revoke committed, and the players are entitled to consult as to which penalty they will claim.

A player who has revoked cannot in that hand score *game, grand slam*, or *little slam*. His score cannot exceed twenty-eight, however many he may have made during the hand.

A player may ask his partner whether he holds a card in the suit which he has renounced.

If both sides revoke, neither can win the game in that hand, and the same penalties apply to both; each party deciding in what form the penalty shall be exacted from the adversaries.

A revoke may be claimed at any time previous to the cards being cut for the next deal.

A player who suspects a revoke is entitled to look through all the tricks at the end of the hand.

If, after the claim is made, the accused player or his partner mixes the cards, the revoke is established.

When the fault is discovered before the revoke is established, the cards played to the trick, after the card wrongly played, may be withdrawn without penalty; but the player who made the mistake is liable to the penalty attached to exposing a card, or he may be called upon to play his highest or lowest card in the suit. This does not apply to the dealer or Dummy, should either of them be the delinquent.

(*b*) *Exposed Cards.*—The following are exposed cards:—

(1) Any card, or cards, dropped face upwards on the table. The cards are exposed whether the adversaries can name them or not.
(2) Any card, or cards, detached from the hand, provided that the adversaries can name them. Should the adversaries name a wrong card, they are liable to the penalty of having a suit called when it is next the turn of either of them to lead.
(3) Any card which a player announces he holds in his hand.

The dealer is not liable to any penalty for exposing his cards during the play of the hand.

Exposed cards must be left face upwards on the table, and may be called by the adversaries at any time, provided that playing the card does not involve a revoke. The adversaries may continue to call the card until it has been played.

If the dealer or his partner exposes a card before the trump declaration is made, either of the adversaries may call for a new deal; but they must not consult. Should they consult, the right to exact the penalty is lost.

After the deal is completed, and before the play of the hand is begun, if either of the dealer's adversaries exposes a card, they lose their right to double; and the leader may be called upon *not* to play a suit of which his partner has exposed a card, or the exposed card may be called in the ordinary way.

(*c*) *Leading out of Turn.*—When either of the dealer's adversaries leads out of turn, there are two penalties, either of which may be exacted.

The penalties are—

(1) The card erroneously led may be treated as an exposed card; or,

(2) A suit may be called from either of the adversaries when it is next their turn to lead.

(When a player holds none of the suit which he is required to lead, the penalty is paid.)

When a card has been led out of turn, the fault may be remedied, and the penalty claimed, unless all four players have played, in which case the trick is complete and must stand as correct.

If there are only three cards on the table when the error is discovered, the second and third players take back their cards, and the penalty may be enforced against the player who led erroneously.

If only the second player has played, he is entitled to take back his card.

There is no penalty against the dealer for leading out of turn.

(*d*) *Playing out of Turn.*—If the fourth player plays to a card before his partner has played, the second player may be called upon to win, or lose the trick.

This law only applies to the dealer's adversaries.

THE GAME AND THE RUBBER

9. The players who first make thirty points win the game.

The players who first win two games win the rubber.

The hand is always played out, although more than thirty points—necessary for game—may have been scored. Every point which a player can make is credited to his score.

THE SCORE

10. The first six tricks won by two partners count nothing, but every subsequent trick counts a certain number of points according to the suit which has been declared trumps.

When spades are trumps, the value of a trick is two.

„	clubs	„	„	four.
„	diamonds	„	„	six.
„	hearts	„	„	eight.
„	"no trumps"[1]	„	„	twelve.

Thus, if two partners have won nine tricks in spades, they have made three "by cards," and count six.

If the adversaries had doubled, the score would be twelve, and with a redouble twenty-four; and so on.

Only tricks count towards the "game" score.

[1] By "no trumps" is meant that the dealer or his partner has decided to play without any trumps.

The honours are dealt with separately, and, though put on the scoring sheet at the end of each hand, are not counted until the rubber is finished.

In a *suit* declaration, there are five honours: the ace, king, queen, knave, and 10 of the selected suit.

If any two players hold 3 honours, they score twice the value of a trick in the trump-suit.

" " 4 " they score four times the value of a trick in the trump-suit.

" " 5 " they score five times the value of a trick in the trump-suit.

If one player holds four honours, his side scores eight times the value of the trump-suit trick; and if his partner holds the fifth honour, they score nine times the value of the trump-suit trick.

If one player holds five honours, he scores ten times the value of the trump-suit trick.

From this it will be seen that the value of the

honours varies with the suit which has been made trumps; thus—

Three honours in spades count four.
" " " hearts " sixteen.

In "no trumps" the honours consist of the aces only.

If two partners hold three aces, they count thirty.
" " four " " forty.

If one player holds four aces, he and his partner count one hundred.

The value of "honours" remains constant, and is not affected by doubling.

If two partners win all the tricks, they make the "Grand Slam," and add forty to their "honour" score.

If two partners win all the tricks but one, they make the "Little Slam," and add twenty to their "honour" score.

If a player has no card of the trump suit, he adds to his "honour" score the equivalent of twice the value of the trump-suit trick. This condition of affairs is described by the word "Chicane."

There is no "chicane" when playing against "no trumps."

The winners of the rubber add one hundred points to their score.

At the conclusion of the rubber, each side adds up its total score, including honours. The lesser is taken from the greater, and the difference is the number of points won or lost.

11. An error in the marking of the score may be corrected at any time, unless it is not discovered until after the stakes have been paid.

Any mistake as to the number of tricks won by the respective partners must be corrected prior to the completion of the next deal, or, in the case of the last game of the rubber, before the score has been finally agreed.

12. It is the duty of the dealer's partner to "make" the cards for the adversaries' next deal. After shuffling them he should place them on the left of the player who is to deal next.

13. When a player has involved himself in the penalty of having his highest or lowest card of a suit called, should he fail to do this when requested he is liable to the penalty for a revoke.

14. If any player fails to play to a trick, and plays to the subsequent trick before the mistake is discovered, the adversaries may claim a fresh deal.

(This does not apply to Dummy.)

If the penalty is not enforced, the surplus card at the end of the hand counts for nothing.

15. If a player plays with only twelve cards (the other players all having the right number), he is assumed to have the missing card, and is liable for any revokes that would have been made had he held the card in his hand, unless the pack be proved to be imperfect.

16. A player when requested must say which card he has played to a trick on the table, provided the question is asked before the cards are touched for the purpose of gathering them.

17. If a pack is proved to be imperfect during the play of a hand, that hand is void, but all previous hands remain good.

18. If before a player has played to a trick his partner should in any way draw his attention to the fact of who has so far won the trick, the player who has not yet played may be called upon by the adversaries to win or lose the trick, or to play his highest or lowest card in the suit. This applies to the dealer if Dummy is the culprit.

19. A player is entitled to see the last eight cards which have been played, provided that the four cards played last have not been turned and quitted.

20. If an onlooker draws attention to an error in the score, he may be called upon by the players to pay the stakes and all bets.

21. The following are "unwritten laws," to the infringement of which no penalty is attached, but a scrupulous observance of them is expected from every player.

They are as follow:—

A player must not—

(1) Revoke on purpose; or,

(2) Ask to see the last trick, except it be for his own information; or,

(3) Having led a card, immediately prepare to lead again, and so inform his partner that the card already played is a winning one; or,

(4) Give any indication whatever as to the state of his hand; or,

(5) Call his partner's attention to the score after the completion of the deal. He may, of course, inquire what the score

is, but it should only be for his own information.

It is usual to refer a dispute as to facts to a bystander who has no interest in the game, and a player should not object to this course being taken.

INDEX TO RULES

THE DECLARATION[1]

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In dealing with the question of "declarations" it may be as well to say, once and for all, that they can never be put upon quite the same footing as an investment in Consols; there is, and necessarily must be, an element of risk attached to the one which, fortunately, is very far removed from the other. Perhaps the simile would be more apt were the word "gold-mine" substituted for that of "Consols." Given a gold-mine which is a gold-mine, then the comparison would be appropriate; for, as it is, no amount of mathematical calculation, no amount of scientific knowledge will ever succeed in making the "declaration" at Bridge or a gamble in a mine other than a venture—a venture in which the probabilities of success must be always discounted by the possibilities of failure; a venture in which, *with*

[1] The score is always supposed to be at love-all, unless anything to the contrary is mentioned.

proper management, the way to victory is made easy and, yet, never assured.

With this qualification, then, let us consider what exactly is meant by the term "proper management."

To begin with, I would suggest that this imposing phrase might be curtailed into the more concise expression "method"; and, further, that this method might be suitably sub-divided into and explained under two headings—(1) the declarer must have in view a fixed standard, and (2) he must credit his partner with an average hand—*i.e.* a hand which can win three tricks and, besides, has a reasonable chance of securing a fourth.

With regard to the first proposition, it might be said that the dealer's standard should be to "win the game." This, no doubt, would be the ideal standard. But, unfortunately, it is neither practical nor practicable, for, as a rule, the dealer does *not* win the game right out of hand. To win the game from love means that the dealer and his partner must hold an immense preponderance of good cards. If, then, the dealer is going to wait until Fortune becomes so *unusually* kind, he will most certainly in the meantime be missing many opportunities of making substantial additions to his score; and—worse even than this—by passing the declaration on a hand strong enough

to ensure a fair score, he will often enough force Dummy into giving a decision which may actually result in the *loss* of points! There is never much to be gained by striving after the "highly improbable"—most usually there is a good deal to be lost. The wiser course is to begin searching around for a likelier way of attaining the end in view.

This likelier way—so it seems to me—is to assume that (except in the event of an abnormally strong hand) the dealer will require at least *two* deals to enable him to win the game—*i.e.* his own deal and his partner's. It would then become the business of the dealer to advance his score to such a point that, on his partner's next deal, there would be a reasonable chance of "going out." But—where is this point to be fixed?

On the face of it, one would fix it at 15 (half the game)—then both partners would have been asked to produce an equal result from their deal. But 15 is an unknown quantity at Bridge. We must therefore turn our attention to 14 or 16.

Now the difference between the two scores *from a game-winning point of view* is infinitesimal; the chances of "getting out" from 16 are no better than the chances of getting out from 14 if we except the single instance of the *spade* suit; and, in that suit, it would require the "grand slam"

to win the game. In the case of every other declaration, 14 and 16 are equidistant from the winning-post. For all practical purposes, then, a score of 14 by the original dealer will fairly divide the task of reaching 30 between himself and his partner; and for this reason, and also for the reason that such a score is well within the compass of an ordinarily good hand, I fix upon 14 as the dealer's standard—that is to say, that *with the game at love-all, the dealer should declare any suit that promises to result in a score of 14 or more;* otherwise he should pass.

So much for the first proposition. Now for the second.

The second proposition was to the effect that we must always credit a partner with strength sufficient to secure three tricks and possibly a fourth—in other words, we expect him to hold an average hand. This hardly requires argument. There are thirteen tricks to be divided amongst four players—therefore each player (with ordinary luck) should win $3\frac{1}{4}$ tricks—*i.e.*, three tricks and possibly a fourth.

The next thing to consider is the application of these two propositions. It is of the simplest nature. The dealer begins by sizing-up the *outside* strength of his own hand and adding to it the probable value of Dummy's (three tricks cer-

tain and one probable); this accomplished, he has but to say whether the total gives him a reasonable chance of reaching 14. If the answer is in the affirmative, he makes the declaration; if in the negative, he passes.

Take an example. The dealer holds *ace, king, 5, 4 of hearts and the ace of clubs (but nothing else of value).* This may be counted as three certain tricks and one probable (hearts being trumps), and, with the help of Dummy's hand, holds out a reasonable chance of winning two by cards—*i.e.*, a score of 16. Obviously the dealer should declare hearts.

But change the hearts into diamonds. What then? Clearly the trick-taking powers of the hand remain the same, and consequently the dealer is only likely to reach a score of 12. Therefore, if we adhere to our principles, he should pass the declaration.

With this easy formula to act as a guide, nine hands out of ten can be disposed of almost at a glance; at least, they could be if it were not for another matter, which must now be mentioned.

So far we have been going upon the assumption that the trick-taking value of the hands is a "known quantity"; we have supposed that the dealer, after looking at his cards, has been able to say at once that he can win, or is likely to

win, a given number of tricks. In actual practice, however, it will be found that this is by no means the case; and—what is very much worse—there is little to be said which will help the Bridge-player to arrive at a correct diagnosis. For, of all the puzzles that go to make both the charm and the difficulty of the game, there is none greater than this.

Were the question entirely free from outside issues, it would still in itself be sufficiently complex; it would still remain a problem fitted to tax the ablest brain. But, as it happens, these outside issues do exist, and in such a form, too, as to render an exact estimate of the trick-taking powers of certain combinations a matter of impossibility. One player will form one opinion, and another quite the reverse. Yet, strange to say, both of them may be right!

The chief factor tending to bring about this result may be summed up in the one word—*skill;* that is to say, a clever player *by the exercise of skill* will make more out of a given combination of cards than would another player of inferior calibre; or, to put it differently, a card has not necessarily an arbitrary value, but rather a value depending to a large extent on management.

From this fact, then, we can deduce one thing

—we can see quite clearly that, before attempting to set a trick-taking value on cards of a doubtful character (such as knaves, tens etc.), a player must first have formed an accurate judgment as to how far he can, or cannot, manage those cards with skill. When once this judgment is satisfactorily arrived at, then the question of the correct declaration on (what I may call) "broken" hands is practically answered in this way—*the strong player must declare on the outside value of doubtful cards, whilst the weak player must do exactly the reverse.*

The first part of this advice is in strict accordance with a generally accepted principle of the game. To the latter, however, exception may be taken. It may be said that what is good for the one is good for the other, and that the weak player would not be giving himself the best chance of winning. But in reply, I should like to point out that a player's prospects of success are not likely to be advanced by his setting himself a task in which experience has already taught him he is sure to fail.

From all this, then, it becomes quite apparent that, in assessing the value of doubtful cards, a player is left very much to his own resources, to his own judgment, and most important of all, to the lessons he may have learnt from practice and

experience. But there is, at the same time, one consideration bearing on the point, which I must mention; it is of an entirely practical nature and, for that reason, may well and advisedly be kept always before the player's mind when he is dealing with the question of the declaration.

The point is this:—*A plain-suit card can be raised to a value quite outside its own intrinsic worth by the simple process of changing it into a trump.*

That is to say, a *small* card—in itself of little moment—can. by means of this easy transformation, become an important, perhaps an all-important, factor in the game; in other words, it acquires a certain spurious value (if I may so describe it) which, in ordinary circumstances, it would not possess.

To make my meaning clearer, take an example. Suppose the dealer to hold the *four best hearts*, *the five lowest spades*, *the two lowest clubs*, and the *two lowest diamonds*. With a "heart" declaration, he is only likely to make the four picture cards; but if he selects the spade suit as trumps, then he may fairly count upon the hand being worth *five* tricks. His policy, in fact, has resulted in giving an enhanced value to otherwise worthless cards and, by so doing, he has increased the trick-taking power of the hand.

It is possible to carry this practice a stage further and to add to the value of a card *without making it into a trump.* The following example will illustrate how this may come about.

The dealer holds:

Hearts	Qn., Kn., 3, 2.
Diamonds . . .	10, 9, 3, 2.
Clubs	Kg., 2.
Spades	Kg., 10, 2.

With this hand, it would of course be inadvisable to pass. The combination is too strong; yet at first sight, the correct declaration is not quite apparent. One might, for instance, be tempted into making "hearts." Such a declaration, however, would have the effect of putting one suit—the diamonds—out of action, and the remainder of the cards would then promise to yield little better than the odd trick. But why, it may be asked, are the diamonds to be counted out of action? Simply because, under the circumstances, they could only become of practical utility in the event of Dummy's being sufficiently strong in both trumps *and* diamonds to enable the dealer to exhaust the one and to establish the other. And this would be a greater stroke of good fortune than a player has any right to expect. Instead, he might with advantage re-examine the hand and see whether something better cannot be made of it.

As a matter of fact, something very much better *can* be made of it, for there is another alternative which has not yet been considered—the alternative of *no-trumps*. Three of the suits—hearts, clubs and spades—are strong enough for the purpose; only the diamonds may cause us to hesitate. And about them, there is in reality no doubt, for the 10 (supported by the 9 and two others) is sufficient, in all ordinary circumstances, to prevent the suit being established by the adversaries. Thus, then, we have a hand protected in all the suits and with a fair share of strength in them besides—in other words, an undoubted *no-trumper*. And this result has been brought about by the simple means of enhancing the value of *one* card—*i.e.* the 10 of diamonds, which before was almost worthless, has now become one of the keystones to the game.

There would be no difficulty in multiplying these examples indefinitely. but the two just given are sufficient to illustrate the point. And the conclusion to which they lead us amounts to this;—that, in considering the trick-taking powers of a hand, *a player's first duty is to see whether, by means of a judicious declaration, an apparently worthless card may not be turned into one of value.*

This accomplished, and having due regard to his personal skill, the dealer can turn back once

more to his standard of 14 and, guided by that, either make a declaration or pass the option to his partner.

By this system we can deal with the majority of hands, for the majority are of an average type, neither very weak nor very strong. And this leaves us with only these two latter conditions to consider—conditions of extreme weakness and of extreme strength.

THE DECLARATION ON A WEAK HAND

We have already seen that, unless the dealer has a reasonable chance of making 14, he should pass the declaration. But is he still to be guided by this principle when his hand is one of *extreme* weakness?

Let us take an example—it is the easiest way of explaining the subject.

The score is at love-all, and the dealer holds:—

Hearts . . . . . Ace, 5, 4, 3, 2.
Diamonds . . . . 4, 3, 2.
Clubs . . . . . 4, 3, 2.
Spades . . . . . 3, 2.

Should he "pass", or should he make a declaration? If the latter, what should that declaration be?

The example has been selected with an ulterior

motive—the motive of introducing the very vexed question of an original "spade" declaration (for, clearly, "hearts" are impossible).

It took some years to convince conservative Bridge-players that, at the beginning of the game, the dealer could ever be justified in making spades. Indeed, not a few of them remain unconvinced even to this day; it is still their *pons asinorum*, still a red rag to the bull. With that, however, we have nothing to do. For us it is sufficient to know that, with an abnormally weak hand, the consensus of opinion favours a spade declaration from the dealer, and—there is not a shadow of doubt about it—the consensus of opinion is right.

The only point to get at—if we *can* get at it—is the exact amount of weakness which will justify such policy.

Perhaps one can best discuss the matter by recalling for an instant the reasons that first suggested this backward form of play. The reasons, then, were purely defensive; the dealer endeavours to protect his partner from himself—*i.e.*, he takes it out of that player's power to make a declaration which (if we bear in mind the dealer's weakness) may easily result in a catastrophe. For, supposing the dealer to pass, what is likely to happen? The good cards which

he ought to but does not—hold, will be distributed amongst the other three players and, consequently, they should all have hands above the average. In such circumstances, Dummy (crediting the dealer with normal strength) will in all probability launch out into an expensive declaration and, having to take every trick himself, will stand a very fair chance of actually losing the game. Dummy cannot possibly foresee an unusual arrangement of the cards, nor will he anticipate having to fight the whole battle out of his own hand. Yet this is the trap laid for him by the dealer when he (the dealer) passes the declaration without a possible trick in his hand.

This is the line of argument which led to the adoption of a defensive spade declaration, but, although the theory is now accepted to be correct, nothing has as yet been arrived at to define exactly the state of weakness which will justify the practice. Of course, if the dealer holds such cards that he cannot reasonably hope to win a trick at all, then we are agreed that the spade declaration would be right.

But suppose we credit him with *one certain trick*—the example hand is a case in point—what then? Is he still to make spades, or is he to pass? For my own part, I think he should

"pass." A hand which can be sure of winning one trick is by no means unutterably weak. Not, understand me, on account of the value of the trick—that, in itself, would be insufficient; but rather on account of the fact that "winning a trick" implies two other things—the command of a suit and the power to regain the lead, possibly at a vital moment in the game.

The real worth of these two points cannot be written down in so many words, indeed it cannot be calculated at all; but in actual practice, as every Bridge-player knows, their power to make or mar can hardly be over-estimated. They exercise a control and influence over the game quite outside and beyond the simple value of the trick won; and, therefore, I say that the dealer, in such circumstances, is very far removed from being "unutterably weak." Instead, it is not impossible that he may develop into a tower of strength.

There are, of course, various forms in which the dealer may have a one-trick hand. Take, for instance, the following:—*King, 3, 2 of Hearts, King, 3, 2 of Diamonds, 4, 3, 2 of Clubs and 5, 4, 3, 2 of Spades.* In this case, it cannot be said that the combination of two kings is quite so certain of securing a trick as would be the single ace, although the odds in favour of their

doing so are considerable; but, on the other hand, they have a reasonable probability of winning *two* tricks, which, as we have already seen, entails the additional advantage of controlling *two* suits and of *twice* regaining the lead. And this would appear to show a good balance of strength in favour of the two kings; sufficient, at any rate, to justify us in crediting them with a one-trick value. Indeed we might safely add to the category the combination of a guarded king and a doubly guarded queen.

The other side of the question—where the dealer can by no means *ensure* a trick, but has yet a fair possibility of winning one—requires little comment. If we refer back to the example given at the commencement, and if we substitute the king of hearts for the ace, we can see precisely how the land lies. With this re-arrangement of the cards, the dealer is of course stronger than if he held a hand in which there was no possibility of taking a trick at all. But admitting this, what is his strength worth? The protected king may, or may not, be played successfully—the chances as a matter of fact, are slightly in his favour. But the reward or penalty, as the case may be, is not proportionate. In the event of success, the dealer will have afforded his partner the same assistance that he would have

done had he held an ace instead of the king, and a fair score is probable enough; in the event of failure, however, a regular *débâcle* is more than likely, for, as I have already explained, Dummy would be left to make *all* the tricks out of his own hand. The prospective reward is in no way commensurate with the prospective penalty, and I cannot think that a player will ever be well-advised to voluntarily accept such a position.

Looking at the problem, then, from both sides, the general trend of argument seems to point to one conclusion—the conclusion that, *with a weak hand and with the score at love-all*,

1. *The dealer should declare spades unless the probabilities are strongly in favour of his winning at least one trick, but,*
2. *In the event of that one trick being assured, he should pass the declaration.*

THE DECLARATION ON A STRONG HAND

The most important and the most interesting form of strong hand is that which justifies us in making no-trumps. It is most important because it has the effect of increasing the value of the trick to its maximum limit. It is most interesting because it comes (in comparison with the parent game of Whist) as something new;

because, whilst it presents us with new problems and new difficulties, it also opens out new possibilities; and lastly—or perhaps I should say first—because the evolution of Bridge has been all tending to the development of this one feature. The no-trump declaration of to-day would have staggered the players of five years ago; and, were they to be witnesses of the uniform success of the modern system, the staggering would be in no way diminished. Players have at last begun to realize that *winning the rubber* is the first consideration; they have grown to know that *forward* play is *winning* play; and they have grasped the fact that it is good to take a risk when the chances are in their own favour. Hence the startling increase in the number of no-trump declarations.

With regard to the three points just mentioned —the importance of *winning the rubber*, the advantages of *forward play*, and the necessity of taking a risk *when the chances are in the player's favour*—they are all fully discussed in another part of this book and there is, therefore, no need to go twice over the same ground. But, as concerns the last of the three propositions, I should like to remind the reader of this fact—*the dealer always plays his hand to advantage;* and, consequently, given an equal distribution of

cards amongst players of equal ability, the dealer will win.

With this preamble, we may turn to a consideration of the question in detail.

The first thing that strikes us in discussing no-trumps is the fact that the cards have not an arbitrary value. In a *trump-suit* declaration, we can say, for example, that the ace of trumps will win *one* trick, the ace-king *two*, and so on. No such thing, however, is practicable in dealing with *no-trumps;* certain cards may be *likely* to win tricks, but except on rare occasions, there will never be a *certainty* about it. For instance, the dealer holds *the ace and the ten next-best clubs, the ace of hearts and the ace of diamonds.* Here is an admittedly fine no-trumper; yet the hand would never win a trick at all if the leader happened to hold the *thirteen spades.*

This illustrates the impossibility of assessing the actual value of no-trump cards and, consequently, the immense difficulty which exists in attempting to lay down *definite laws.* Yet, though this must be admitted, there are nevertheless a number of points which bear directly on the subject, and, by a careful examination of them, we shall be able to arrive at certain *guiding*

principles which will be quite good enough for all practical purposes.

To begin with, we must notice how greatly the value of a *long-suit* is enhanced by a no-trump declaration. Once established, there is nothing that can possibly stop it—the suit continues until actually exhausted. Here, then, we have a starting-point. The player who can bring in his long suit and so convert worthless cards into trick-winners, is the player who is getting the utmost possible out of his hand.

But, in order to accomplish this, two things are necessary—the dealer *must hold a long-suit* (long enough and strong enough to be brought in and established) and *he must be in a position to lead it.* What is the inference? Simply that the dealer, if he makes no-trumps, must win the lead at an early stage of the hand—in fact, he should have commanding cards in every suit.

These two qualifications go to make up the ideal no-trumper. But in Bridge, as in everything else, it may take a lifetime—and longer—to attain an *ideal*, and, therefore, for practical purposes, we must be satisfied with something less. Yet, though we reject the ideal as being in a general way beyond our reach, we may never-

theless turn to it for a basis on which to found a theory of no-trump declarations.

Considered, then, from this point of view, it is evident that *a hand "protected" in every suit* fulfils the same conditions, only—in a modified form. Take, for example, the combination of *queen, knave, and 10 in all four suits;* here, we have all-round protection *and* a long suit—for, whatever the arrangement of the cards may be, every hand must contain at least a *four*-card suit. Again, a player who holds *the four kings doubly guarded* may be fairly said to protect all the suits, and, as in the previous case, he too must hold at least a four-card suit and therefore, technically, a long one.

From this we may deduce our first maxim—*the dealer should declare no-trumps when he has protection in all the suits.*

But is this to be his limit? Is he to refrain from making no-trumps except under conditions which will comply with the requirements just laid down? Obviously *not!* for, up to this moment, no mention has been made of the assistance likely to be rendered by Dummy.

In theory, Dummy will win 3¼ tricks. This is his share, whatever the declaration may be, but —when the declaration happens to be no-trumps—these 3¼ tricks are given an especial value, because

on three occasions (we will put the ¼ out of count) Dummy will be able to stop the adversaries and so afford the dealer a chance of playing his long suit. With a *suit* declaration, the advantage of winning the lead is not so marked, because the probability of bringing in a long suit is discounted by the possibility of the adversaries trumping it. In short, Dummy's three tricks are of greater assistance to the dealer's hand when playing no-trumps than when playing a *suit* declaration. Dummy, therefore, must be reckoned on as a powerful ally.

Relying on this support, and giving due weight to the advantage which the dealer holds in playing the hand, modern Bridge-players have come to the conclusion that a considerable amount of risk may be taken in declaring no-trumps. They still adhere to the theory that there must be both a *long suit* and *sound defence*, but they have begun to take a broader view of its application; they have begun to see that, *provided the dealer can guarantee one of the two necessities, he may not unreasonably rely on Dummy to supply the other.*

Let us look at both sides of the question.

Suppose the dealer to hold *ace, 3, 2 of hearts; ace, 3, 2 of diamonds; ace, 3, 2 of clubs, and ace, 4, 3, 2 of spades.* In this combination, we have complete defence and, in a technical sense, a long

suit also. But the long suit is clearly not of a nature to further the object we have in view—*i.e.* it is not likely to result in a "run" of tricks for the dealer—and therefore, though it complies with our conditions *theoretically*, it fails to do so *practically*. Yet no one would hesitate about making no-trumps on the hand. And why? Because he hopes to find a long suit in Dummy's hand, and, by means of his aces, he will first stop the adversaries and then establish the suit.

The same reasoning would apply if we substitute kings for aces. The hand is weakened, of course, and the score of 100 above the line for aces no longer appeals to the cupidity of the declarant; but the defence is still intact, and the same arguments hold good. And so we might continue through the whole gamut of possible combinations.

But, in order to cut a long story short, I will give here a list of the most obvious *defensive* hands on which the dealer should make no-trumps when the score is at love-all. The reader will see that they comply with the reasoning just set forth. The following is a list of the hands:—

1. Four aces.
2. Four guarded kings, and consequently

3. A mixture of aces and kings covering the four suits.
4. Queen, knave and one other in each of the four suits.
5. The above combination varied by a guarded king in one or more suits.
6. The above combination varied by knave and three others in one suit.

This, then, disposes of the dealer's position when he holds a well-defended hand. We have now to see how far the theory remains good when the dealer has no defence, but can yet produce *one good long suit.*

Suppose him to hold the *seven best spades and nothing else of value.* Such a suit is long enough and strong enough to satisfy our conditions. That being so, is the dealer to make no-trumps? According to our theory, he most undoubtedly *should.* Dummy, as we know, may be counted on to take three tricks and, therefore, to stop the adversaries' lead on three separate occasions. It is not unreasonable to expect that *one* at least of these three "occasions" will happen at a moderately early stage of the hand, and, consequently, it is not unreasonable to say that the dealer is tolerably sure of bringing in his long suit.

No doubt there is a risk—there is a risk about everything that is not a certainty—but it is a risk in which the chances favour the dealer and, for that reason, he should "harden his heart" and declare no-trumps.

It is, however, necessary to add one other stipulation—*when the dealer trusts to a single suit, it should consist of not less than six master-cards.*[1] As it has just been explained that some risk is necessarily involved, then clearly that risk should be compensated by the possibility of attaining a big success—in other words, the dealer should play to *win the game.* It requires nine tricks to do this in no-trumps when the score is at love-all; Dummy can only be expected to supply *three* of them; the dealer, therefore, must be able (when once he gets the lead) to find the other *six.*

If the six tricks are distributed over *two* suits, the dealer's defence is greater and his position is thereby materially strengthened. But is it sufficiently strengthened to justify him in declaring no-trumps if the *six* tricks were reduced to *five?* The risk has become less; but so, also, has the prospective reward The dealer can only ensure *five* tricks and his partner *three;* their score, therefore, is not likely to exceed twenty-four and, with

[1] By the term *master-card* is meant a card which is certain to win a trick in the hand of the leader.

bad luck, they may of course lose the game. Even making allowance for the admitted advantage which the dealer has in managing the cards, it would still seem that his prospect of *winning* the game is so doubtful that he would be incurring an unnecessary risk in taking the chance of *losing* it. Of course the decision must be a matter of opinion, but, in my own judgment, the balance of argument is in favour of the dealer passing. And this would become all the more pronounced if the dealer's five winning cards were in the *black* suits; there would then be more likelihood of Dummy declaring hearts or diamonds, in which case it would still be possible to win the game whilst no risk whatever would have been taken. [1]

Suppose, now, that we spread the five tricks over *three* suits—what then? The trick-taking power remains the same, but—the *defence* is immeasurably increased. There is now only *one* suit against the dealer, and in order that this may become a serious menace, it must be massed in the hand of *one* of his opponents, and even then, if this happens to be the leader's partner, the suit may not be opened; in point of fact, the risk has dwindled away to a mere nothing. On the

[1] If the dealer's five tricks are in hearts or diamonds, it is probable that they would be of a nature to justify him in declaring one of those suits.

other hand, the dealer is likely to score 24, and he has a chance of winning the game. Clearly, then, everything is on his side, and he should declare no-trumps.

The same conclusion, also, would appear to hold good if the dealer's strength were reduced from *five* winning tricks to *four winning and one likely to win* (covering three suits). With this combination, the dealer may safely expect the odd trick, he has a good prospect of making two by cards, and the possibility of winning the game is not beyond his reach; in addition to this, as we have just seen, he is practically safe from danger.

From what has been written, we can make out a list of hands which, though they do not contain a complete defence, would nevertheless justify the dealer in declaring no-trumps when the score is at love-all. The combinations are as follow:—

1. Any six master-cards.
2. Any five master-cards covering three suits.
3. Four master-cards and one card likely to win a trick, covering three suits.

The two lists of no-trump declarations, although comparatively exhaustive, must nevertheless not be taken as laws from which there can be no departing. They have been written down on the assump-

tion that the skill of all four players is alike and that the standard of their skill is high. When one or other of these conditions is not fulfilled, the dealer must "cut his coat according to his cloth." Reference to this subject has already been made in a previous part of the present chapter; but, in order to make the matter quite clear, I may give two illustrations of my meaning—(1) A really fine player can venture on no-trumps with a weaker hand than any so far mentioned, whilst (2) an inexperienced player would be ill advised to risk the declaration on (say) six master-cards in a *single* suit—his inability to properly manage the Dummy hand might result in missing opportunities of gaining the lead, and this would be followed by the frittering away of his long suit in useless discards.

Turning, now, to other kinds of strong hands, we shall find only one difficulty with which to contend—*i.e.*, the difficulty of deciding whether, with a given combination, it will be most advisable to make *no-trumps* or a *suit declaration*. An example will make this clear. Assume, for instance, that, with the score at love-all, the dealer holds *the seven best clubs, the ace and two small diamonds, and the ace and two small spades.* Then obviously he makes no-trumps.

But change the clubs into hearts. Is he still to make no-trumps? Hardly. With a "heart" declaration, one trick from Dummy—little enough to expect—will ensure the game; whereas, if the dealer makes no-trumps, he takes a chance, however improbable, of actually losing it. Is the small additional score which *might* result from a no-trumper sufficient to compensate for the risk? Surely not.

Treat the hand as a kaleidoscope and give another revolution to the wheel, then the cards might sort themselves like this:—*the seven best diamonds, the ace and two small clubs, and the ace and two small spades.* What is the proper declaration then? With diamonds as trumps the dealer is certain of nine tricks in his own hand—*i.e.* a score of 18. He therefore requires two tricks from his partner to win the game. Should he make diamonds or should he risk a no-trumper? In my own mind I have no manner of doubt as to the answer—the proper declaration is diamonds. A diamond declaration holds out a more than good prospect of winning the game; whilst no-trumps, though perhaps promising equally well, yet courts a danger which in the circumstances is unnecessary.

The inference to be drawn from these examples is clear. It may be summed up in the following

sentence—*Provided the winning of the game is in no way jeopardised the dealer should always make the declaration which involves the least possible risk.*

At first sight such teaching may appear to be opposed to the theory of "forward play." Forward play is, admittedly, a winning game; the Bridge-player who hopes for success must declare upon "the top of his cards"; if he errs at all, he must err on the side of speculation. But—and it is a very big *but*—he must of course temper speculation with judgment. That is no more than common sense, and surely no one would suggest that, in adding the qualification, I am advocating a timid policy. For is it not merely applying to cards the ordinary rules of caution which guide and control the more important events in life?

DECLARING TO THE SCORE

So far we have discussed the declaration on the assumption that the score was at love-all, and we have seen how the dealer may be helped to a right decision by the observance of certain guiding principles. But, when once the love-all stage is passed, we have to deal with altered conditions, and, therefore, the principles which until now have been allowed to control our actions, must be modified in such fashion as to fit in with

their new surroundings; the novel starting-point—for that is what it amounts to—must be taken into consideration and due weight must be given to the influence which it may have upon our policy.

It is a fact that this influence does exist, and the following examples will not only prove it, but they will, at the same time, lead us to certain practical conclusions which will show how the new difficulty can best be met.

Take this case:—

The dealer's score stands at 28 to 0 in the last game of the rubber. The odd trick, therefore, in any suit will get him out. In these circumstances, the correct declaration would be *any* suit promising to secure that odd trick. For instance, he holds the five best spades, and nothing else of value—he must declare spades; or, with the score at 26 to 0 and the spades changed into clubs—the declaration should be clubs In either event, the probabilities are strongly in favour of his winning the "trick" and the rubber; and this latter, as will presently appear, must be his first consideration.

But—it may be objected—this apparently backward policy will at times result in the sacrifice of a large score. Undoubtedly! But the problem for us to solve is—which method will come out best in the long run?

The answer is found by reflecting for a moment on the penalty which is paid by a player who, having had the rubber at his mercy, ends by throwing it away. This penalty amounts to 200 points—*i.e.*, the 100 which he could have won and the 100 which he actually loses. How can any "honour" score, even 100 for the four aces, compare with such figures as these? Even if we add the possible score made by the winning of tricks, the result (except in most abnormal circumstances) is still unlikely to come anywhere near so large a total. In point of fact, the reward for winning the rubber is, for all practical purposes, the largest individual reward offered at Bridge. And, for that reason alone, it would be safe to lay down the maxim that *a player should always adopt the means most likely to assist him to win the rubber.*

Taking this as our guide, it is easy to see that the declaration may vary in an almost startling manner under different conditions of the score. A couple of examples will be sufficient to demonstrate this. The first (*a*) is a case in which no-trumps should be declared on a comparatively weak combination, and the second (*b*) shows how the dealer should sometimes pass even though he holds a no-trump hand.

(*a*) The score is at 28 to 0 *against* the deal

in the last game of the rubber, and the dealer holds *knave and two small hearts, queen and two small diamonds, king and two small clubs, and knave and three small spades.*

Under ordinary circumstances, (*i.e.* with the score at love-all) there would be nothing in this hand to tempt the dealer into making a declaration; any selection on his part could only result in involving him in unnecessary risk. But—with the score at 28 to 0 against him—a sound argument may be advanced in favour of accepting the risk. The argument is this: that, *with the advantage of the deal next time, the opponents are almost certain to win the rubber.* Here, then, is a satisfactory reason for courting danger—the reward, in the event of success, will be considerably greater than will the penalty in the event of failure—and the dealer should therefore take his courage in both hands and unhesitatingly declare no-trumps.

(*b*) The dealer holds *king and three small hearts, king and two small diamonds, king and two small clubs, and king and two small spades.* With the dealer's score at 0, this is of course a no-trump hand. But, supposing that he is well advanced in the game—say at 28—is he still to make no-trumps?

The combination, strong though it is, is yet by

no means a certainty. There is about it an undoubted element of risk—a risk which, admittedly, might be taken when the circumstances demanded it. But, as the score stands, the circumstances do not demand it; the game can be won more surely, and without any risk at all, by simply *passing the declaration.*

Consider what the result of this is likely to be in practice. Dummy's hand is, of course, the key to the position; and, for all ordinary purposes, we may assume that he will hold either (1) nothing of value, (2) moderate strength, or (3) great strength. In the first event, he will declare spades and so avert a serious disaster; whilst, in the last, the game and a large score are both assured.

The second alternative alone gives cause for doubt. With moderate strength, it sometimes happens that the arrangement of the cards is of such a nature as to indicate no particular declaration—*i.e.* there is no suit in which the trick-taking power is sufficient to hold out a reasonable prospect of winning the odd trick. For example, Dummy might find himself with this combination: — *queen, 4, 3, 2 of hearts; knave, 10, 2 of diamonds; queen, 10, 3, 2 of clubs; and knave, 2 of spades.* This is moderate strength; two suits are fairly good, and there is a measure of support in the

others. Yet, the only reasonable declaration is spades. Of course, in such circumstances, it may still be quite possible for Dummy and the dealer to win the trick; but obviously they have selected the very worst suit for their purpose. This, then, is the risk which the dealer runs when he passes with four doubly guarded kings (or any other well protected hand); but, it must be remembered, the chances of this danger occurring are not very great. Most generally it will be found that the declaration is made from a four-card suit *at least*, and, in that event, Dummy and the dealer would hold the preponderance of trump strength and so find themselves in the best position for winning the game.

All things considered then, the balance of argument tends one way, and we may safely come to the conclusion that—with the score at 28 in his favour and a well-protected all-round hand, the dealer will be well advised to pass; in other words, it is preferable, and to the dealer's advantage, to leave the declaration to Dummy rather than risk a doubtful declaration himself.

Clearly, then, the state of the score is a force to be reckoned with, and the player should have this fact well before his mind when deciding upon the declaration.

THE EFFECT OF HONOURS ON THE DECLARATION

It has already been shown that *winning the rubber* must be made the first consideration, and, therefore, it is clear that honours cannot be allowed to interfere with this general principle. And this must be taken to hold good even when the honours count very high indeed. Consider both sides of the question in such a case as the following:—

The dealer holds *the four best hearts, the five smallest spades, the two smallest diamonds and the two smallest clubs;* and his score stands at 28 to 0 in the last game of the rubber.

If hearts are declared, the hand is worth four tricks and the chance of winning the game is far from a good one; if, on the other hand, the dealer makes spades, then his cards (as explained in another chapter) have acquired an additional trick-taking power to the extent of at least one trick, *i.e.* the hand is worth *five* tricks instead of *four*. In the first case, we have a large honour score (64) assured, a large *game*-score possible, and a remote probability of winning the rubber; in the second, a large score is impossible, but the winning of the rubber approximates to something very like a certainty.

Can there be a doubt about the correct decision?

Surely it must be spades! Knowing, as we do, the serious consequences entailed by losing a rubber which might have been won—a dead loss of 200 points—how can a paltry 64 for honours come as any adequate compensation? And even though we make every allowance for a possible big trick-score, the grand total is still likely (except in very unusual circumstances) to leave a heavy balance on the wrong side of the account.

From this it is clear that *a reasonable chance of winning the game must not be thrown away for the sake of a good score above the line.*

For all practical purposes, then, honours do not affect the declaration. But there are occasions—rare ones—on which they will carry weight. The following is an instance:—

The dealer holds:—*Ace, king, queen, knave of hearts; 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 of diamonds; 3, 2 of clubs, and 3, 2 of spades.* The choice lies between hearts and diamonds.

With hearts as trumps, the hand is certain of *four* tricks; but, with diamonds, the dealer may safely count on winning *five.* Under what circumstances, then, is the big "honour" score to be abandoned for the sake of taking advantage of the additional trick offered by the diamond declaration? A glance at the different possible positions of the dealer's score supplies the answer.

In order to make the matter clear, I give here (1st column) the dealer's score, (2nd column) the number of tricks necessary in hearts and diamonds respectively to win the game, and (3rd column) the declaration which, from the discussion which is to follow, appears to be correct. The opponent's score is supposed to be at love.

Dealer's Score.	Tricks Required: H'ts. D'ds.	Correct Declaration.
0	4 and 5	Hearts.
2	4 and 5	
4	4 and 5	
6	3 and 4	Hearts.
8	3 and 4	
10	3 and 4	
12	3 and 3	Hearts?
14	2 and 3	Hearts.
16	2 and 3	
18	2 and 2	Diamonds.
20	2 and 2	
22	1 and 2	Hearts.
24	1 and 1	Diamonds.

No less than nine of these possible positions may be put out of court at once, because, in each case, a diamond declaration requires a trick

more to reach the game than would be necessary in the heart suit—*e.g.*, with the score at 0, 2, or 4, the dealer wants four tricks in hearts and five in diamonds; at 6, 8 or 10, three and four tricks respectively are required; and so on with 14, 16 or 22. In no instance is anything to be gained by making diamonds—the additional strength given to the hand is discounted by the greater task it has to negotiate. The honours, then, will settle the question, and the dealer will declare hearts.

But we come face to face with a very different order of things when the score is at 12, 18, 20 or 24. Here we find that an *equal* number of tricks will win the game in either suit; and so (adhering to the principle that winning the game is the first consideration) a diamond declaration would appear to be obligatory. But a little further examination will show that the four numbers do not stand upon quite the same footing.

In the last three cases (*i.e.* with the score at 18, 20 or 24) the dealer has a more than good chance of "going out" in diamonds. This chance, however, would be considerably minimised by the selection of hearts, and, for this reason, it seems clear that the decision should be *diamonds*. But I cannot think that the same conclusion holds good when the dealer's score is at 12, because,

from that starting-point, he is unlikely to win the game in *either* suit—he is too far from the winning-post. Why, then, throw away a certain 64 points (the honours in hearts) for a problematical score which, under normal circumstances, the dealer has small chance of attaining? Here, then, it appears to be safe to conclude that the honours should carry the day, and that the declaration should be hearts.

Honours, then, will carry weight, but—*subject to their not interfering with the declaration which is most advisable from a game-winning point of view.*

THE DECLARATION BY DUMMY

Speaking generally, Dummy's policy in making the declaration will be controlled by the same considerations that guide the dealer. In either case, spades will result from exceptional weakness, and an expensive declaration from strength; whilst both players will, of course, regulate their game in accordance with the state of the score.

All this is self-evident enough, and, at first glance, one might almost be tempted to think that the two positions are so exactly identical that, when the last word has been said about one, it has been equally said about the other. But any such idea would be sadly mistaken; for not

only do differences exist, but, as it happens, they are differences of very serious import.

To begin with, *Dummy's hand is exposed.* The effect of this is to make any *doubtful* cards he may hold doubly doubtful—they will be played with less chance of success than would be the case if, instead of being exposed, they were concealed; his guarded kings, for instance, are certain (should the opportunity offer) to be led *through;* they are certain to be handled by the opponents in such fashion as to give them the least possible chance of making a trick. The same cards, if held by the dealer, would not be placed at the same disadvantage, because (during the earlier stages of the game at any rate) the position of those cards would be unknown. In point of fact, and to put it concisely, *Dummy's strength is discounted*—a given combination in his hand is worth less than it would be in the hand of the dealer. From which we may argue that if the dealer has cause for hesitation, if he find himself in two minds, then Dummy (with a similar combination) must lean to the side of caution. What would be risky for one would be rash in the other. In short, *Dummy must not play so forward a game as the dealer.*

This, then, is the first difference. The next is that, when the declaration is "passed", Dummy

must make trumps; however unpromising his hand may be, he must nevertheless give a decision of some sort. And this restriction, or rather obligation, suggests two things:—

(*a*) That Dummy cannot regulate his game by the same standard as that laid down for the dealer, and

(*b*) That Dummy will frequently enough have no alternative but to resort to a defensive declaration.

The first of these two propositions stands in need of no argument. For is it not apparent that the compulsory declaration places Dummy "with his back to the wall"? He is left to fight it out as best he can, but—this is where the awkwardness comes in—he *must* fight it out somehow or another. One of three courses, then, will be open to him; (1) if strong, he will make a strong declaration, (2) if moderately strong, he will declare trumps in any suit that promises a good chance of making a score, and (3) if weak, he will fall back on "spades."

The two first possibilities require no comment, whilst the last brings us to a consideration of the second proposition given above, which is that "Dummy will frequently enough have no alternative but to resort to a defensive declaration." About the truth of this, there can of course be

no doubt. But there can be, and there is, considerable doubt as to the best method to adopt in carrying out this defensive policy.

This difference of opinion centres chiefly around the vexed question whether, in certain circumstances, the declaration of spades or some other suit would result in the stronger defence.

Here is an example. The score is at love-all, the dealer "passes", and Dummy holds—*Hearts*, *4*, *3*, *2*; *Diamonds*, *4*, *3*, *2*; *Clubs*, *ace*, *5*, *4*, *3*, *2*; *and Spades*, *3*, *2*. Should Dummy declare spades or clubs? The point is clearly a debateable one. There is a good case to be made out for either side; it is for us to consider which of these cases is the better.

In support of the *club* declaration it is contended (a) that the hand is worth two tricks certain and one probable (as against one certain trick, if spades are trumps), and (b) that the length and strength of the club suit are sufficient to reduce the risk of a "double" by the adversaries to a high improbability. The first of these propositions is, of course, beyond dispute. But with the second we must take issue; for a hand such as the one given in the example is by no means secure from the danger of being doubled. And, that being so, we find that a club declaration increases Dummy's trick-taking power, *though not to a satisfactory*

extent, whilst at the same time it involves him in the risk of losing the game; whereas with *spades* as trumps, it is likely that the adversaries will make a score, but under no circumstances whatever can they win the game. Which, then, is it to be? Spades or clubs?

There appears to be no doubt whatever that the balance of argument favours a *spade* declaration. For how can the immediate gain of a trick or two in clubs be any adequate set-off against the danger—however remote that danger may be—of losing the game? Would a club declaration not be giving an opening to the adversaries which the luck of the cards had never intended them to have? Would it not be tantamount to delivering ourselves over, bound hand and foot, to the enemy? If the *winning* of the rubber is of first importance, then the *saving* of it can be no less; the former cannot be accomplished without the latter—the one implies the other.

Dummy, therefore, with a weak hand, should if possible avoid any declaration which would result in giving his opponents an opportunity of winning the game.

SOME OTHER CUSTOMS

Before quitting the subject of Bridge "declarations", some reference must be made to one or

two customs which obtain amongst certain sets of players. All of these customs are, unfortunately, of a more or less plausible nature, and one of them at least is wide-spread in its acceptance. Three examples will serve to refresh the reader's memory—for they are hardly likely to come to him as new ideas—and a very short discussion will suffice to show how far they can, or cannot, hold water.

First, then, there is the dealer who always "passes" with a *strong* hand!

"It gives such an advantage to Dummy," he explains. "Dummy knows exactly what to do—with moderate heart strength he declares hearts of course, whilst, with an average all-round hand, he can go no-trumps without hesitation."

No doubt it does give an advantage to Dummy, and so there might appear to be something in the argument. But, all things considered, is it not rather absurd? Is the advocate of such a theory not mistaking the substance for the shadow; for, holding a strong hand himself, why on earth does he not make a strong declaration and have done with it?

Again, what happens to him when his cards are a shade below the average—say, a hand containing three queens and a knave? This is too

good for an original spade declaration. yet, if he "passes," he announces himself possessed of a strength which, when the pinch comes, is found to be conspicuous by its absence.

Worse even than this would be the dealer's plight with such cards as the following:—*King, queen, knave, 10, 9, 8 of diamonds; ace, 4, 3, 2 of clubs, and 4, 3, 2 of spades.* Here is a certain score, and a good one, ready waiting to be made. But the "strong-hand passenger" (what else can I call him?) will have none of it; he leaves the declaration to Dummy. And Dummy, as in duty bound, girds up his loins and begins hunting around for no-trump or hearts. If the former is impossible, then he falls back on the latter—he *must* make one or the other; and, as there is no conceivable reason for supposing that he will be exceptionally strong in hearts (or, for the matter of that, in anything else), he will, as a rule, have to declare "light"—say, four moderate hearts with a stray king or two in the plain suits. Then, what is his position? Why, simply this:—he has accepted a considerable risk (the risk of being "doubled" and losing the game), whilst, against it, he can set no compensating advantage, for his prospect of making a good score is more than remote.

To adopt such policy as this would be deliber-

ately to discount himself and his own chances of success; yet, if he is to be faithful to his own creed, he has no alternative but to plunge headlong into the gulf.

The second system is still less to be defended. In this case the dealer wishes you to understand that, whenever he passes, he is strong in *hearts!* And he claims that, with this very definite knowledge, Dummy can hardly get wrong in the declaration.

Here, again, we have a theory with some show of plausibility about it—the way is made easy for Dummy. But, again. one is tempted to repeat the question asked above:—Why does the dealer not declare hearts himself, and what he is going to do with a hand which is weak in the heart suit and, otherwise, only moderately strong? Surely his position is then untenable. He must either abandon his theory and so stultify himself, or alternatively he must "with malice aforethought" lead his partner into a trap.

Neither of these two systems can claim more than a sprinkling of adherents, but the fact that they can find supporters at all make some mention of them necessary.

The third system, however, is of very much greater importance because, as I said before, it meets with wide-spread acceptance. The idea is

this:—Should the dealer pass the declaration when his score stands at 28 in the last game of the rubber, then he expects Dummy to make his *longest* suit.

To lay down a hard and fast law, a law which admits of no qualifications and of no exceptions, is at all times a dangerous experiment to try; and there could be no better example of the truism than the case we are now discussing. Of course, in the circumstances as given, Dummy will be right more often than not if he selects his longest suit—that much is admitted. But is that any reason why he should carry the policy through *ad absurdum?* When the conditions are such that loyalty to the longest-suit theory would amount to Bridge suicide, are we still to go in face of reason and are we to allow the dictum of a stock phrase to supplant the teachings of common-sense?

For instance, suppose that Dummy holds *the four smallest hearts, the three smallest diamonds, the three smallest clubs and the three smallest spades* —is he to declare hearts? Is he to be "true to his salt" and deliberately go out of his way to offer his opponents a chance of winning the game? Most certainly not. The correct declaration, whatever the position of the score may be, is obviously spades. The prospect of winning the game is as

good—or rather, in this case, as bad—in one suit as in another. Clearly, then, with the probabilities so much against him, a player's first consideration should be to reduce as far as possible the consequences of a disaster which, on the face of it, is imminent.

From this, then, it is evident that the *longest-suit* theory will not be applicable in every case; that a player must rather use his own discretion as to when to adopt and when to reject it; that, in fact, it can only be accepted as a *suggestion* and not as a *law*.

For the purposes of a beginner, however, the rule, as such, might prove useful—it would lead him right more often than wrong; besides it is easy to remember. But—and this is the point I wish to make—the more experienced player must not be tied down by such a convention. Let him bear it in mind by all manner of means—for, in the main, the advice is sound; but let him temper its use with judgment and, when circumstances dictate its rejection, let him unhesitatingly reject it.

DOUBLING

To lay down an exact estimate of the strength requisite to justify a player in doubling when the score stands at love-all is practically impossible. Unless we know—and of course we cannot know—the actual power of the forces arrayed against us, it is clearly beyond the scope of human skill to say what counter-forces will be necessary to circumvent them. All we can do is to investigate the subject with a view to seeing whether there may not be some guiding principle which will help us to go right oftener than wrong.

Such a guiding principle, as it happens, is suggested by the above paragraph. If, as we have just seen, the strength of the declaration is an unknown quantity, then the act of doubling must logically entail considerable risk. Now, no one but a fool voluntarily accepts a risk unless he foresees a reasonable chance of gaining a compensating advantage. And, from this, we may draw a very obvious inference and write it down as a maxim:—

A double should never be made except under cir-

cumstances where the reward of success promises to exceed in value the penalty entailed by failure.

In illustration of the point, take such a case as the following:—

The score is at love-all; the dealer makes hearts; and the leader holds—*Hearts, deuce; Diamonds, ace, king, queen, knave; Clubs, ace, king, queen, knave, and Spades, ace, king, queen, knave.*

Should the leader double? The whole question hangs on whether he, or his opponent, is likely to make the more capital out of the proceeding. And this question is very easily answered by considering the position of the two players. The dealer, having nothing of value except hearts, must be *very* strong in them to have justified his declaration, and, therefore, the leader has practically no chance whatever of winning the game; but, supposing the dealer to be *exceptionally* strong in the trump-suit (say that he holds the *seven* best), he re-doubles and then, only requiring the odd trick, *he* wins the game. But for the leader's indiscretion in originally doubling, no such catastrophe as this would be possible; for even such a preponderance of strength as that held by the dealer could not enable him to "go out" against the plain-suit court cards massed in one of the adversaries' hands.

But, perhaps, the danger of doubling may be

more forcibly exemplified in connection with a *spade* declaration. More games, I venture to assert, are pitched away by doubling spades than by any other reckless act committed at the Bridge-table. Of course—understand me—I am not suggesting that with *really strong cards* there is nothing to be gained by increasing the value of the spade suit. Such a suggestion would be absurd. All I wish to impress upon the reader's mind is the fact that, with the score at love-all, doubling spades amounts to something more than a meaningless act, that the reward can at best be trifling whilst the risk involved is necessarily great.

In the event of success, the doubler (with a win, say, of four by cards) scores 16 instead of 8; in the event of failure, however—assuming this time that the dealer has re-doubled and that it is *he* who wins the four by cards - then he (the dealer) wins the game! The thoughtless double has resulted in allowing the adversaries to do as well out of a *spade* hand as they could have done out of *strong hearts;* whilst, under the most favourable circumstances, the leader can gain (in comparison) but little advantage.

It may appear to be a strange statement to make, but there is, in one sense at any rate, more danger in doubling *spades* (when the score is at love-

all) than in doubling *hearts*. For, in the latter case, both sides have a chance of winning the game, and so, in that respect, they stand upon the same platform; whilst in the former, the dealer only can "get out," because it rests with him (or his partner) to decide whether there is, or is not, to be a re-double, and clearly they are not likely to pronounce in its favour unless absolutely secure against disaster.

Applying our maxim to a no-trump declaration, it is evident that, with the score at love-all, the leader should not double unless he holds *seven certain tricks*. In the circumstances, if he himself holds a powerful hand, he can no longer count on his partner—the strong cards must be divided between the leader himself and the declarer—and therefore he must rely on making all the tricks "off his own bat."

He should, however, double on such a hand as the following:—*Hearts*, *king*, *queen*, *knave*, *10*, *9*, *8*, *7*; *Diamonds*, *ace*, *2*; *Clubs*, *ace*, *2*, *and Spades*, *3*, *2*. The leader establishes the hearts on the first round and, as it is unlikely that there will be six commanding spades against him *in one hand*, he is practically certain of winning the trick.

But, if we take away one of the aces, a double would not be justified. It is 2 to 1 against the

leader's partner holding the ace of hearts, and therefore it is 2 to 1 that the adversaries win the lead on the first round. The leader would then stand to be shot at in two suits, neither of which he could make sure of protecting.

If, then, the leader is unable to make seven tricks straight-away, he should not double no-trumps (with the score at love-all) *unless he has protection in three suits and can ensure the odd trick the first time he regains the lead.*

To this it may be added that, provided the doubler is sitting on the left of the declarer, guarded kings might be accepted as substitutes for aces.

The leader's partner, strangely enough, should *in one instance* double on a weaker combination than should the *dealer*. The combination in question consists of *six top cards in a single suit*, when the score is at love-all. The reason why a double should be made in these circumstances is that, by this means, an invitation is given to the leader to open his shortest suit and, if this happens to be (and it is likely to be) the leader's partner's long suit, then six tricks are made straight-away and (unless the opponents have re-doubled) the game is saved. If there is no double, the leader will open his hand in the ordinary way; and as

it is improbable, under the above conditions, that he will hold a suit of any value, the lead will pass almost immediately into the control of the dealer, with the result, possibly, that some of the leader's partner's winning cards may have to be discarded on an adverse long suit.

This double is of a *defensive* nature. The leader's partner risks the possible loss of additional points, but he adopts the method which is most likely to *save the game.*

Doubling, then, *when the score is at love-all*, will be rarely justified. The game will only occasionally be "worth the candle." The examples given and the arguments advanced have both gone to prove this most conclusively.

But when one side or the other has moved a stage nearer game, *the state of the score* exercises as big a control in regulating a double as it does in regulating almost every other part of the mechanism of Bridge-playing. Not only will it sometimes make a double compulsory on a comparatively weak hand, but it can even go beyond this again and, under certain conditions, actually forbid a double which, on the face of it, would appear obligatory. A couple of examples will illustrate this.

(*a*) Suppose that Dummy has declared hearts and that the leader holds—*Hearts, king, knave, 10, 3, 2; Diamonds, ace, king, 3, 2, and Clubs, ace, king, 3, 2.*

In these circumstances, *and with the score at love-all,* it is beyond dispute that the leader should double; for it is hardly possible for him to lose the game whilst, by doubling, he would increase his chance—already a good one—of winning it outright; against the trifling risk in which he becomes involved, he is able to set off the advantage of a possible, indeed a probable, big success.

The same reasoning applies with even greater force should it be the last game of the rubber and should the dealer's score be 22 (or over) and his opponents' 20 (or under) because, in that event, a double will have the effect of advancing the leader one stage nearer the winning-post without in any way assisting the dealer towards the same end. The leader, in fact, benefits himself without extending any compensating advantage to his opponents.

If, however, the score is at 16 to 0 in favour of the dealer, it becomes a very fine point indeed as to whether a double should, or should not, be risked. If the decision be made in the affirmative, then the leader can win the game with two by

cards, but—and this is the drawback—the dealer can "get out" with *one* trick instead of *two*. It seems to me that to make things easy for the dealer in this fashion would be bad policy. It would be giving him a chance of winning the game which, against such a combination as that held by the leader, would be almost impossible without a double. This would be placing the dealer in an unnecessarily favourable position, and, having regard to this, it seems evident that doubling would amount to an indiscretion. Admittedly it is a fine point, but the reasons just given certainly lead to the conclusion that there should be *no* double.

Following out the same line of argument, but applying it from an opposite point of view, it appears perfectly clear that, when the positions are reversed (the leader at 22 or over, and the dealer at 20 or under), the leader should *not* double. He would be assisting his adversary, and not assisting himself, towards the winning of the game.

Should, however, the leader be sitting on the *left* of the declarant instead of on the *right*, he might then safely double under any condition of the score. With the increased advantage which will result from the altered relations of the two hands, nothing but *abnormal* weakness in the hand of the leader's partner could bring about

the loss of the odd trick. The danger exists, of course; but it is so very unlikely to arise that, for all practical purposes, it may be safely ignored.

This example has proved to us that the state of the score will (1) regulate the question of doubling and (2) that it may at times forbid a double on a very strong hand. The next case shows how a double may become compulsory even though the leader (or his partner) holds cards of no very great value.

(*b*) The games are one-all and the dealer's score is 28 to his opponents' 16. The dealer has made hearts, and the leader holds:—*Hearts, 7; Diamonds, ace, king, 3, 2; Clubs, ace, king, 3, 2; Spades, ace, king, 3, 2.*

Now consider the position. If the leader loses the odd trick, he also loses the rubber; on the other hand, if he wins the odd trick, he does *not* win the rubber, and he may lose it on the next deal. His chance of "getting out," as compared with that of the dealer, is a poor one.

Yet this disadvantage can be entirely obliterated by means of a double. By doubling, the leader will bring himself within *one* trick (instead of *two*) from the winning-post, and so, in this respect at least, will stand on an equal footing with his adversaries. Of course, in the event of

failure, he makes an additional loss; but this loss (as we already know) is not likely in any way to approximate to the loss resulting from the sacrifice of the rubber. Clearly, then, the leader should double. He immeasurably increases his own chance of reaching game without increasing that of his opponents; he gives away a trifling advantage (*i.e.* the opportunity of making an additional score) to them, but he opens out for himself the possibility of gaining a counter-advantage of much greater value.

The conclusions to which these example hands have led us are of a very definite character. They may be summed up as follows, and accepted as guiding principles:—

1. *With sufficient strength to promise a reasonable prospect of winning the odd trick, a double will always be justified when it increases the doubler's chance of winning the rubber without, at the same time, increasing that of his opponents, and*
2. *When the converse holds good, a double will hardly ever be justified.*

Two other points are worth bearing in mind.

1. It is safer to double when sitting on the left of the declarer. The doubler's strong hand

is then "over" the adverse strong hand, and the declarer's good cards will therefore be played at a disadvantage.

2. It is safer to double the declaration of a player who is known to be rash than to double that of a player known to be cautious. Most people have a tendency to one extreme or the other, and the declaration at Bridge will afford them a most excellent opportunity of exhibiting their idiosyncracy. The leader, therefore, and his partner should not only note this, but they should accept it as an additional aid in helping them to solve the very difficult question as to whether a double is, or is not, to be risked.

In this chapter, mention has only once been made of a double coming from the *leader's partner*. This happened to be an exceptional case and therefore called for special reference. Apart from this, there was no need to write distinctively of the two partners; for the guiding principles which control the one must equally control the other.

It should be noticed that one important drawback attaches to doubling—it enables the dealer to locate the preponderance of adverse strength and, acting on this knowledge, he will make "finesses" which, under other circumstances, would be impossible.

RE-DOUBLING

About re-doubling, there is not a great deal to be said. As a rule, it will be the outcome rather of a gambling spirit than of sound judgment. For, amongst players who double with ordinary discretion, there can be little scope for any other than a speculative re-double.

Nevertheless, there are times when the re-double will be just as much obligatory as, in certain instances, we found the double to be. And the compelling force in either case is the same—viz., *the state of the score.*

For example, suppose the dealer's score to be at 0, and his adversaries' at 16, in the last game of the rubber. The dealer passes; Dummy, holding *king, knave, 10, 9 of hearts; queen, 3, 2 of diamonds; ace, queen, 3, 2 of clubs, and 3, 2 of spades*, makes hearts; and the leader doubles.

Here we have a compulsory re-double. Why? Simply in order that Dummy and the dealer may place themselves on an equal footing (from a game-winning point of view) with their adversaries. If the leader's double is allowed to stand

unattacked, then he will only require the *odd trick* to enable him to win the game, whilst his opponents would need *two by cards*. Whereas, if Dummy re-doubles, then the odd trick wins the game and rubber for *either* side. Except for the loss of a few extra points, which would necessarily follow in the wake of failure, Dummy and the dealer forfeit nothing by the re-double; whilst the advantage which may possibly accrue to themselves is, in comparison, enormous.

The re-double, then, like the double, *will be justified when it advances the re-doubler's own chance of winning the game without, at the same time, advancing that of his adversaries.*

The converse of this holds equally good—viz., that *a re-double will rarely be justified when it advances the adversaries' chance of winning the game without, at the same time, advancing that of the re-doubler himself.*

This has been already fully explained in the chapter on "Doubling," but, for purposes of handy reference, an example is given here.

The dealer's score is at 22; his opponents are at 0. The dealer, holding *ace, king, queen, 10, 4, 3, 2 of hearts, but nothing else of value*, declares hearts; and the leader doubles.

It is quite clear that a re-double would benefit the dealer but little—with, or without, it he would

still remain *one* trick from game; whereas the assistance given to the leader would be beyond all dispute, for *he* too would then be brought to within *one* trick of the game. *Without* a re-double, the dealer's strength is such that he could hardly lose the game; but, *with* it, this contingency is by no means impossible. In point of fact, re-doubling, under such circumstances, will give the balance of advantage to the enemy and, for that reason, it should not be practised.

The state of the score, then, may be taken to be the principal factor influencing the decision as to a re-double.

Another important point is the relative position (at the table) of the respective players. And this leads to a consideration of the share that may be taken by the declarer's *partner* in re-doubling. This share is a much more important one than, at first sight, might be supposed. For it not infrequently happens that, when the declarer himself has no option but to hold back, his partner may step confidently into the breech. And for obvious reasons. The declarer's partner can count on a *certain* minimum support, whilst the declarer has nothing to trust to but probabilities—one is acting on knowledge, the other is playing in the

dark. In actual practice, indeed, it will be found that the re-double comes most generally from the declarer's partner. The following is an example:—

The score is at love-all; the dealer passes; and Dummy, holding *ace, queen, 10, 8 of Hearts; 4, 3, 2 of Diamonds; 4, 3, 2 of Clubs, and ace, 3, 2 of Spades*, makes hearts. The leader doubles, and Dummy cries "content."

It is now the dealer's turn. He holds—*3, 2 of Hearts; ace, 7, 6, 5 of Diamonds; ace, 6, 5 of Clubs, and 7, 6, 5, 4 of Spades.* The hand is below the average. Is there anything about it to justify a re-double?

Most certainly there is! For the leader, by doubling, has (if I may be allowed to express it in a colloquial phrase) "given the show away." He has carefully informed his opponents where they may look for the preponderance of adverse strength; he has told the dealer, as plainly as Bridge language can tell him, that such trump strength as Dummy may hold will be played to the *utmost advantage*, which of course places Dummy and the dealer in an unusually favourable position. But, before the most can be made of this "utmost advantage," two things are necessary in the dealer's hand—first, he must have trumps (however small) to lead *through* the adverse strength,

and secondly, in order to accomplish this, he must hold *cards of re-entry*. In the example given, both these conditions are fulfilled; the dealer can twice regain the lead with his aces, and therefore (holding two small trumps) he can *twice* lead through the strength.

This hand has been selected because it is an excellent instance of how the declaration, the double, and the re-double can, at times, be all thoroughly justified. And, to make this perfectly clear, I append a note of the cards held respectively by the leader and his partner.

Leader's cards. *Hearts, Kg., kn., 9, 7, 6, 5, 4; Diamonds, Kg., 8; Clubs, Kg., 8; Spades, Kg., 8.*

Partner's cards. *Diamonds, Qn., kn., 10, 9; Clubs, Qn., kn., 10, 9, 7; Spades, Qn., kn., 10, 9.*

Even against this exceptional strength the dealer, if he plays correctly, *must* win the odd trick; and this, with a re-double, means the game.

The re-doubling of a no-trump declaration is (except under circumstances where the player has doubled "to the score") practically out of the question. Should it be the leader who has doubled, the dealer is absolutely at his mercy and the loss of the odd trick ought to be assured. On

the other hand, should the double have come from the leader's partner, there is *some* hope. But it must be remembered that, even here, probabilities are against the dealer. According to the present method of play, the chances are in favour of the leader hitting upon his partner's suit, and, when this is done, the leader's partner is placed in as good a position as though he were himself the leader.

Amongst good players, then, *with the score at love-all*, the declarers of no-trumps could only redouble at their peril.

It may be as well to mention that in redoubling, as in doubling, more may be risked against a rash adversary then against a cautious one.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CARDS

Before discussing the management of the cards, it may be as well to say a few words about the general theory of Bridge-playing. Some knowledge of this subject is absolutely necessary before a player can reasonably expect to cope with the many and varied difficulties that will beset his path. With the aid of this knowledge, each fresh problem—and there are ever fresh ones—can be submitted to the test of logical analysis; without it, there will be nothing to rely on but memory—memory of a set of rules, of a table of general directions, and of a code of disjointed advice which, like an encyclopedia, will rarely be sufficiently elastic to embrace the question of the moment.

This is no sort of position for an intelligent player to take up. He wants, rather, to go a step beyond and to see for himself what the reasons may be which have given rise to the accepted customs and practices of the game.

Our first business, then, must be to start with the one grand principle which underlies the whole theory of card-management at Bridge. This

"one grand principle" may be summed up in the word—*combination*—*i.e.*, two players have become partners, have *combined* in fact, against two others similarly allied, and both sides are actuated by the one idea of defeating their opponents. With this object in view, they will clearly be anxious to use such strength as they may possess to the best advantage. How is this to be done?

When two men join partnership in a trading concern, instinct and experience teach them that mutual confidence will lead to the best results, that a thorough knowledge—each of the other's doing—is the first essential. Again, when two wings of an army jointly attack a defensive post held by the enemy, each is informed not only of the other's movements, but also of his strength, his intentions, and his resources. If the business-man were to work independently of his partner, and the military commander to manœuvre independently of his co-commander, no matter how great their individual ability might be the outcome of it all could only be chaos; in the moment of danger and difficulty, the assistance which both may expect and need will not be forthcoming—through *lack of knowledge.*

The same arguments apply with no less force to other combinations in life, and, amongst them, to Bridge. Here, also, we have two men working

in concert; both trying to attain the one end; each anxious to aid and assist the other. But this, obviously, is only possible of accomplishment—to any appreciable degree, at any rate—under conditions which admit of each of the partners having some knowledge of the other's hand. Carry the argument a stage further and then we may safely say that *the greater the knowledge, the more timely and effectual is the assistance likely to be, and, in consequence, the more powerful will the combination become.*

Here, then, is the explanation of the undoubted advantage which rests with the dealer in playing the cards—his partnership is *complete.* The strength or weakness of his fighting material lies before him in its entirety; no sooner is Dummy's hand exposed than he can total up the value of his resources, and then—except in very exceptional circumstances—he will have little difficulty in deciding upon the policy which is most likely to bring the best results to himself; whilst his adversaries are still in the breakers, he will be sailing in smooth water.

From this, it seems quite apparent that the first thing for the non-dealers to do is, so far as may be possible, to place themselves on a similar footing. And, in dealing with this difficulty, Bridge-science comes promptly to the rescue.

Bridge-science [1] has evolved a system of "signalling" which enables the dealer's opponents to communicate with each other; which enables them, in fact, to disclose the actual cards they hold and the objects they have in view. By means of this system they can "read" each other's hands; they can announce the quantity and quality of a given suit; they can tell a partner the number of cards they hold in *his* suit; they can issue orders and they can make it possible to receive commands; in short, they can give *information*.

Of course, it will never be feasible to so perfect this method as to put the leader and his partner on to quite equal terms with the dealer —in their case, there must always be *some* delay in conveying the information, there must always be some difficulty in making it sufficiently ample, and there must always be a further difficulty (Bridge-players will soon find this out if they don't already know it) in grasping the information when conveyed.

Yet, though we admit these drawbacks, the system carries us a very *very* long way. The actual distance depends chiefly on the player himself.

Objection is frequently taken to the *information* game on the ground that "information as between the non-dealers is information also to the dealer."

[1] Perhaps it would be more strictly correct to say *Whist*-science.

This assertion is only partially true, for it would be easy to give examples where knowledge could be conveyed from one partner to another without the possibility of the dealer being able to detect it. And, again, there is the fact—for it is an admitted fact—that information given to the *whole* table is less likely to be noticed by the dealer than by his opponents. The dealer has, in comparison with his adversaries, so very much more to attend to; *they* have thirteen cards only to manage, *he* has twenty-six; *they* work by rule of thumb during the earlier stages of the hand, whilst *he* is engaged in a problem from the very beginning; and, finally, *they* have chiefly to centre attention on the information coming from *one* hand (the dealer's information is never to be relied on implicitly), whilst *he* must watch with equal care the indications given by *both* his opponents. The dealer's task, then, is of an especially onerous nature, and, for this reason, I say that he will be more likely than his opponents to overlook information which has been given indiscriminately to them all.

There is yet another answer (perhaps a better one) to detractors of the *information* game. It is found by asking ourselves the question—what will be the outcome of entirely abandoning information? The outcome will be that the

partnership (in the strict sense of the word) ceases to exist; the power to join forces is at an end; the two players will each go their own gait blissfully unconscious of how they may aid or protect each other. Whilst, all the time, the dealer is enjoying the full advantage of combination.

Of course, occasions will crop up on which it would be inadvisable to give information; for instance, when a partner happens to be a hopelessly stupid player; or, when he holds so weak a hand that he cannot possibly win a trick or otherwise assist the partnership; or, again, when unexpected circumstances demand the abandonment of convention or the playing of a false card.

But, putting such considerations out of count, it must be quite clear that, as a general principle, (1) the leader and his partner will give themselves the best chance of winning by *combining*, and that (2), in order to do this effectually, they must inform each other as fully as possible of the nature of the cards they hold and of their own ideas with regard to the most advantageous way of managing them.

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to showing how this information may be given in a legitimate and scientific fashion.

THE OPENING LEAD

There is no need to insist upon the primary importance attaching to the card which "opens the battle"—the making or the marring of a hand may result from it. This much is obvious. It is also obvious that there will be a right and a wrong way of negotiating the difficulty, and that we are dependent upon Bridge-science to show us the *right* way.

To begin with, then, it would be safe to assert that the leader will play to his own best advantage if the system which he adopts promises to embrace—

(1) a strong method of attack,
(2) a sure method of defence, and
(3) a method which tends to give the most useful kind of information. (See the earlier part of this chapter.)

What system of play will fulfil these three conditions?

The question is practically answered by referring to another matter which can be explained in a very few sentences. It is this: *the thirteenth card (even though it be only the 2) of a plain-suit held by the leader is a winning card after trumps are exhausted.* And, similarly, the 2 and 3 would

mean *two* tricks, and so on. If, then, a player can manage to so increase the value of his small cards, he is *ipso facto* strengthening his hand above and beyond its real intrinsic worth and, in doing so, is clearly adopting a method of attack.

But how is this to be brought about? Simply by leading, and continuing to lead, a *numerically* strong suit—*i.e.* a suit containing more than the average number of cards to which an individual player is entitled. By persisting, the leader will (in normal circumstances) either exhaust the suit entirely from the hands of his opponents or, alternatively, he will be left with cards of sufficient strength to enable him to "draw" any of the suit that may be still left in against him. When once he finds himself in either of these two positions, the suit is said to be *established;* and to this we may add that the longer the suit held by the leader the greater is the certainty that one of these two conditions will be fulfilled, and the greater is the likelihood of its being fulfilled quickly. The *establishing*, then, of a suit *strengthens* the hand of the leader and, consequently, *menaces* that of the dealer; in short, it constitutes a strong method of *attack.*

But does it also comply with our second stipulation, which was that there must be a sound

method of *defence?* There can hardly be a doubt as to this. For, if the policy results (as we have already seen that it does) in strengthening the leader's hand, then such policy must, as a natural consequence, be of a defensive nature. And, in addition to this, we must remember that, if the probabilities are in favour of the leader establishing a suit for *himself*, the probabilities must necessarily be against the chance of his opponents establishing the same suit for *themselves*. In this alone, there is a strong measure of defence.

The third, and last, qualification had reference to the giving of information. We have to find a method of opening the game which "tends to give the most useful kind of information." Can we say that the original lead from a long suit answers the requirement?

Consider, for a moment, the quantity and quality of the information which *can* be given. The leader, at the very outset, announces his longest suit and, in so doing, points to a way in which his partner can (should circumstances admit of it) give valuable assistance; and in addition to this, by means of the American leads,[1] he indicates not only the *exact* number of cards held in that suit, but also, in many instances, their actual value. Here is informa-

[1] See page 137.

tion worth having. The combination principle is immediately set in motion; a certain policy—one containing the two essentials of attack and defence—is mapped out and, at the same time, a number of details are disclosed which will enable the leader's partner to decide whether he should support the leader's scheme or whether he should adopt an alternative one of his own.

From this it is evident that the system of opening from a long suit gives very useful information; but does it give the *most* useful?

In order to decide the question, a few words must be said about the only other practical way of making an original lead. This consists of opening a *short* suit instead of a *long* one. Many players support this method. Let us see whether it can, or cannot, comply with the tests given above.

As a method of attack, it fails. Why? Because the probability is that the leader will be helping his adversaries to establish *their* suit. The leader makes his first lead in the dark; there are twenty-six cards (the dealer's and Dummy's) *against* him and only thirteen (his partner's) *for* him; therefore, the preponderance of any suit (in which the leader is short) is more likely to lie with his opponents than with his partner.

As a method of defence, it fails also; and for

the very reasons just given. To play right into the enemy's game, to strengthen his hand and to make matters, so to speak, easy for him can hardly pass muster as a method of defence.

As a method of giving information, it fails twice over—it tells too little to a partner and too much to the dealer. It limits itself to a bare intimation that the leader has played the highest card of his shortest suit. It does not enlighten him as to the leader's intentions, nor does it help him to in any way back up such strength as the leader may hold, for clearly he remains in ignorance of the direction in which that strength may lie; and, again, as the information applies to a suit of not more than three cards (a *short* suit means a suit containing three cards or less), the knowledge conveyed must be necessarily less comprehensive than it would be if the signals covered a greater number of cards—say, a suit of four or more.

Without doubt, then, the *short* suit lead tells "too little to a partner." It also tells "too much to the dealer," because it amounts to an undeniable confession of weakness, and this again results in enabling the dealer to practically "place"—*i.e.* fix the position of—the entire suit after the first card has been played, and, with this knowledge, he can finesse in the suit with absolute certainty of success.

From all this it becomes quite apparent that an original lead from a short suit is found wanting in every particular, and that it would therefore be inadvisable to adopt it as a *general principle.* But—and it is important to bear this in mind—there are occasions on which it can be used to advantage, and these occasions are sufficiently numerous and of sufficient importance to necessitate a further and separate discussion. [1]

We may now come back to the *long-suit* opening. Its good points have been already demonstrated. Is there anything to be said on the other side? Well, there is something, but it does not amount to much. It is urged by opponents of the system that a plain suit will rarely be established in face of an adverse trump declaration, and that, therefore, it is useless to attempt it.

The conclusion is hardly logical. The prospect of establishing a long suit in face of a preponderance of adverse trump strength is, of course, always somewhat remote. But is this any reason why the attempt should be abandoned? We have just seen that the original lead from a *numerically* strong suit gives advantages greater than any other system of leading, and therefore, for this reason alone, it must be adopted. It may be

[1] See page 119.

successful, or it may not; but, at any rate, we have nothing better to put in its place. The conclusion, then, that we come to is that, *as a general principle, the leader should open the hand with one of the cards of his longest suit.* The correct card to play—that is, the card most calculated to win tricks and to give information—is given in the chapter entitled "Synopsis of Leads."

Against a no-trump declaration, the importance of the long-suit opening is intensified, because, in the altered circumstances, a suit once established can *not* be trumped, and consequently the chief danger menacing the system is non-existent.

The next thing to consider is whether the original lead is to remain the same *when the leader's partner has doubled.* Here we come across an entirely new set of conditions; the leader is no longer playing in the dark; he has some definite information to go upon, for the main strength of the combination is now announced to rest in the hand of the "doubler." Clearly, then, the leader must adopt such a method as will most tend to *strengthen and support his partner.* And clearly, also, this method must be dependent on (1) whether the dealer or Dummy made the declaration, and (2) whether that declaration was some particular suit or no-trumps.

Starting with a *suit* declaration, it would as a rule be safe to assume that the "doubler" has trump strength and that, therefore, the immediate lead of a trump would be of benefit to him. But this, obviously, would not be good policy when the declaration had been made by the *dealer;* in that event, the effect of an original trump lead would be to put the leader's partner completely at the mercy of the strong hand sitting *over* him; in fact, he would be placed in the very worst possible position. The idea, then, of opening with a trump must be abandoned.

The remaining alternative is the lead of a *plain* suit; but should this be made from strength or from weakness, from a long suit or from a short one? Here is the key to the answer—the possibilities of effectively establishing the leader's long suit have been immeasurably increased because his partner, by doubling, has announced his ability to play a strong game; there is no longer the fear of being over-weighted by adverse trump strength, and therefore the one objection to the long-suit opening has been done away with. On the other hand, the disadvantages of beginning with a short suit have not been appreciably minimised; the old faults—lack of attack, lack of defence, and lack of information—are still as much as ever in evidence.

All things considered, there seems only one reasonable conclusion to come to—*When the leader's partner has doubled a suit declaration made by the dealer, the leader should open his longest plain suit.* An exception to this rule may, however, be made when the leader happens to hold a *very* short suit. (See page 122.)

Suppose. now, that the declaration comes from *Dummy.* In this case, the advantage of the trump lead *through* strength is sufficiently obvious to make comment almost superfluous. Whether the leader's partner has doubled from trump strength or, alternatively, from a very good plain-suit hand (this latter, by the way, is always a dangerous experiment to try), the lead of a trump should be of equal assistance to him; in the first event, it will place him in the best position for hemming in and overpowering the adverse trumps, whilst, in the second, the sooner the trumps are exhausted the more certain will he be of making his master-cards in the plain suits.

As a general principle, then, we may say that *the leader should open his hand with a trump when his partner has doubled a suit declaration made by Dummy.*

When the leader's partner doubles *no-trumps*, the correct opening is *the highest card of the*

leader's shortest suit. This rule is based on the argument that a no-trump declaration will rarely be of such a nature as to admit of either of the adversaries holding a sufficiently strong *all-round* hand to justify them in doubling; but rather that, as the declarer often enough risks a single suit, he may, with a little bad luck, find that suit massed against him in one of the adverse hands. Hence probabilities are in favour of the assumption that the doubler is relying upon one suit in which he holds both length and strength. The soundness of this argument will be verified by a reference to the chapter on declarations. It only remains to show how the leader can best take advantage of this state of affairs.

In the first place, it is clear that the leader must, if possible, open his partner's long suit, but—how is this to be managed? There is one important fact which helps to solve the difficulty. It is this: *When the leader's partner holds a great preponderance of any one suit, there are fewer cards of that suit to be divided amongst the rest of the table, and therefore the leader will be most likely to open that suit if he plays his own shortest.*

Of course the stratagem may not "come off"—the best laid schemes will fail at times; but it is without doubt the most promising way of taking advantage of the information conveyed by the "double."

At one time it was the custom to play a *heart* when the leader's partner doubled no-trumps. This system ensured greater safety, but, also, it unfortunately cramped the game to an unmanageable extent; a "double" became impossible unless the doubler could stand an original lead of hearts, and consequently many opportunities of making a good score had to be passed over. The weak spot in the method was soon discovered and, in a very short time, it died a natural death.

Before quitting the subject of a long-suit lead, it is necessary to refer for a moment to the advantage which accrues from opening the hand with a *winning* card. This advantage is that, whilst the leader still retains the lead, he is able to see Dummy's cards before continuing with the second trick. The information thus gained may be of immense value and will, almost invariably, direct the leader in his subsequent play. Therefore, *against a suit declaration*, the leader, holding ace and king of a plain suit, should play out one of those cards regardless of the length of the suit itself; he can then, after seeing Dummy's hand, decide whether to revert to his own long suit or to adopt some other policy. Should he hold the ace *only*, then it would be unwise to play it; it would be parting with an important card of re-

entry which might be invaluable to him should his long suit ever become established. The immediate gain would be too much discounted by the possibility of future loss.

Against no-trumps, the same method cannot be adopted—the establishment of a long-suit is of first importance, and, in order to do this effectively, cards of re-entry must be jealously guarded. But *if the leader's partner doubles*, the entire situation is changed; the leader no longer plays for his own hand, his one aim and object is to support and strengthen his partner. Clearly, then, the lead of an ace would help him to this end; he would see Dummy's hand and, from the information it might afford, he would certainly have an improved chance of finding out his partner's strong point. Thus we come to the conclusion that, *against no-trumps doubled by the leader's partner*, the leader's first lead should, if possible, be a *winning* card. The chief objection to commencing the hand with a winning card (not being part of the leader's longest suit) is that such play is calculated to give misleading information. This is perfectly true, and it amounts to a very grave objection. But, on the other hand, the advantages resulting from it are great; and sufficiently great to over-rule the objection. Disputed points of this kind—and many of them

occur at Bridge—are outside the realm of exact logic. The virtues and the faults of either side can be set down and discussed, but, even then, no definite value can be put upon them; and so from argument alone no unassailable verdict can be arrived at. The ultimate judgment must come rather from experience; and, in this particular, experience has gone to show that the balance of advantage lies with *the leading of a winning card.*

THE SHORT-SUIT LEAD

Although, as we have already seen, the original lead of a short suit is not to be recommended as a general principle, there are, nevertheless, cases in which it may be played to advantage. These cases may be summed up as follows:—[1]

(1) When the leader holds certain given combinations of cards.

(2) Under certain conditions of the score and declaration.

(3) When the leader's partner has doubled a *suit* declaration.

Taking them in the order named:—

(1) It is easy to see that, when the leader holds a hand in which there are many tenaces (*i.e.* ace and queen of a suit, or king and knave, and so

[1] The short-suit lead against a no-trump declaration doubled by the leader's partner is dealt with on page 115.

on), he would be most likely to win with his big cards by waiting until those suits are played *up* to him. Here, then, is a reason in favour of opening a short weak suit. For example, suppose that, the declaration being "passed", Dummy makes Diamonds and that the leader's hand consists of *10, 2 of Hearts; Kg., kn., 2 of Diamonds; Kg., kn., 3, 2 of Clubs; Kg., kn., 3, 2 of Spades.*

The lead of the 10 of hearts will clearly result in placing the leader in the best possible position for making his tenaces in the other three suits, and therefore, in this respect, would strengthen his position. On the other hand, it may be urged that we are forsaking our theory as to the necessity of establishing a long suit. If this were so, it would undoubtedly be a grave objection; but, as a matter of fact, it is *not* so—the leader would still be attempting to establish a long suit, but it would be the long suit in his *partner's* hand.

But, it may be asked, why should we assume that the leader's partner has strength in hearts? Simply because neither of the opponents has ventured to declare them (in preference to a cheaper suit); and, from this, we conclude that the leader's partner will hold at any rate tolerably good strength in the suit. It is no certainty, of course, but it is a fair inference to draw.

With this knowledge, then, to help him, the

leader is no longer playing in the dark, for he now has good reason to suppose that, in leading his own weakest suit, he is opening his *partner's best.* Thus, in the circumstances given, the short-suit lead is doubly justified—it places the leader's hand in a more favourable position for winning tricks, whilst, at the same time, it follows out the admittedly sound principle of establishing a long suit.

(2) From what has just been said, it is evident that the declaration may have a distinct influence in directing the original lead. This influence becomes more marked under certain conditions of the score. Again we must turn to an example.

The dealer's score is at 24 and he passes the declaration; Dummy makes Clubs; and the leader holds *Kg., kn., 2 of Hearts; 10, 2 of Diamonds; 5, 4, 3, 2 of Clubs; Kg., kn., 3, 2 of Spades.* The 10 of Diamonds should be led, for the same reasons as those given under the previous heading. Only, in this case, those reasons are emphasized *by the state of the score;* for neither the dealer nor Dummy has risked a Diamond declaration, although no more than the *odd trick* in that suit is required to "get them out." The leader, therefore, (being weak in Diamonds himself) assumes that suit to be his partner's best and, in leading the 10, he endeavours to establish it for him.

(3) When the leader's partner has doubled a *suit* declaration, a peculiar advantage attaches to the opening of a short suit—viz., under the circumstances the dealer is unlikely to lead a trump at an early stage of the game, and therefore the original leader has a good chance of making off his trumps on his own short suit as soon as he himself is void of it. Under ordinary conditions (*i.e.* when there has been no double) the dealer, as a rule, extracts a round or two of trumps at the first opportunity, and consequently the lead of a short suit (with a view to trumping it) has small prospect of success. But when a partner doubles, he has announced a strength which will, most usually, induce the dealer to "stay his hand"—at any rate for a time; and, in the interval, the leader may succeed in snatching a cheap trick.

In order that this policy may have a reasonable chance of coming off, it is evident that the short suit should be *very* short—certainly not more than two, and preferably a singleton. If the suit consists of so many as three cards, it is not probable that the leader will be able to get rid of all of them before trumps are opened either by his own partner (for this danger exists) or by the dealer.

The chief objection to the lead from weakness

in this case is that it makes no attempt whatever to establish a long suit, and, in this sense, it is to be deprecated. But, against this, we have to set the fact that, in the first place, the weak hand may often steal a trick which could be won by no other process, and, secondly, that a "doubler" rarely relies to any very great extent upon his partner. It becomes a question of setting the advantages against the disadvantages. This has been done by putting both methods to the test of practical experience, and the outcome has been to satisfy most players that, *when the leader does not hold a good long suit*, then the original weak lead, under the above-named conditions, will produce the best results. Should he, however, hold a good long suit, he should open it in the usual manner.

Another drawback—which applies to every form of short-suit lead—is that (as has been already explained) it tends to deceive a partner. For this reason it is important, when possible, to select a suit in which the *first* card led makes its own confession of unmistakeable weakness. A reference to the chapters on "Leads" and on "Drawing Inferences" will make it clear that the cards most likely to give this information at once are those ranging from the 8 up to the King.

THE RETURN OF THE LEAD

When the first trick is won by the leader's partner, it is usual (should the suit be continued) to return *the highest of two remaining cards* or *the lowest of three* or more. This rule is based on very simple reasoning.

In the first case, the leader's partner endeavours (by getting rid of his own high cards) not only to force high cards from the adversaries and so help to establish the suit, but also to do away with any chance of "blocking" (*i.e.* being left with a commanding card which stops the progress of the suit) the leader.

In the second case, the arguments are somewhat different. As the leader's partner originally holds four cards (or more) in the suit, it is possible that he may have strength equal to, or better than, the leader's. In such circumstances, the suit may be fairly considered as joint property and, consequently, there would be no valid reason why the leader's partner should, by playing away his high cards adopt a method which could only result in discounting *his own* chance of making tricks. Another point in favour of returning the lowest card is that the danger of "blocking" is practically non-existent; for, on the third round of the suit, the leader's partner can always throw away his

highest remaining card should he find that it is likely to stand in the way of the leader's progress.

Over and above all this, the adoption of these conventions *gives information*. If, for instance, the leader's partner wins with the ace and returns the knave, he can at most hold one more card in the suit; or, again, if he wins with the ace and returns the 2, he is left with either at least *two more* or *no more*. The leader, therefore, is quickly made aware of the strength for and against him, and he can lay his plans with all the better chance of success.

There are certain exceptions to these rules, but they do not require any special explanation. It will be sufficient to mention them under the heading of "General Advice."

The next question is—Should the dealer's suit necessarily be returned at all? The answer to this depends, in a great measure, on whether we are dealing with a *suit* declaration or with *no-trumps*.

With regard to the former (a *suit* declaration) the solution is most generally to be looked for in Dummy's hand. If Dummy's hand happens to be of an entirely normal character, the leader's suit should be returned—nothing could be gained by abandoning the general principle of establishing a long suit. But if Dummy discloses any pro-

nounced weakness (other than trumps), that weakness should be attacked—*i.e.*, the suit in which Dummy is weak should be opened; the result of this will be a lead *through* such strength as the dealer may hold, and consequently that strength will be played to the utmost possible disadvantage. For instance, if the dealer holds king, knave, 9, and the original leader sitting over him holds ace, queen, 10—the dealer *loses all the tricks* if the suit is led by the original leader's partner; whereas, if the leader is compelled to open the suit, the dealer can *win two tricks* in it.

Should the leader's partner hold a very strong suit himself, it is, as a rule, advisable to play a round or two of this first—the fall of the cards may produce some valuable information. Or, again, if he holds a tenace over Dummy, he should, if possible, make this known to his partner. For example, if Dummy holds the Queen of Clubs doubly guarded, and the leader's partner holds ace, king and knave, the king should be led and then the suit should be changed. This will intimate to the original leader that, when he gets an opportunity, he must return that suit.

To some extent, these alternative methods amount to abandoning the long-suit theory. But it must be remembered that card principles are founded on the supposition that the arrangement

of the cards is normal. When once we have definite information (either from Dummy's hand or from some other source) that this state of affairs does not exist, then we must base our logic on different premises—we must deal with a *known* disposition of the cards instead of an *imaginary* one. Consequently, our guiding principles may have to be modified and, at times, even actually abandoned. The knack of selecting the right psychological moment for dispensing with routine is only one of the many attributes that go to make a good player.

About the return of the lead against a no-trump declaration, there can be no doubt—it is invariably right to return the original lead *unless* the leader's partner himself holds a *very* strong suit.

In explanation, it is only necessary to point to the high improbability of *both* partners holding a good long suit when the adversaries have made no-trumps. *One* of them, however, may hold such a suit, and it is the business of the partners to establish it. Should this suit not be in the hand of the leader's partner, then he must assume that it *is* in the hand of the leader and, therefore, he must help him to the best of his ability by returning the lead.

To open a new suit simply because Dummy is

weak in it would be worse than dangerous, for it is quite impossible to tell in what direction the declarer's strength may lie—it may be, easily enough, in Dummy's weakest suit. It is better, therefore, to stand by the original leader and to make as much as can be made out of his suit; the others will be duly developed by the dealer —and probably at an earlier stage of the hand than his adversaries could have wished for.

Of course, if the declaration is made by Dummy, his strength or weakness is apparent, and consequently the leader's partner will have little difficulty in deciding upon the right course to pursue.

UNBLOCKING (The plain-suit Echo)

It has just been explained that care must be taken not to block the leader's suit; and we have seen how the danger may be guarded against in the event of the leader's partner winning the first trick. The next thing is to show that something similar can be accomplished when the leader plays out winning cards and so retains the lead in his own hand.

In these circumstances the leader's partner may hold (1) *three cards or less* in the suit, (2) *four cards exactly*, or (3) *five cards or more.*

The second of these alternatives is the most

important because in it we find the greatest likelihood of the occurrence of "blocking." Bridge-science, however, supplies us with a system which entirely obviates the danger. This system may be summarised as follows:—

"When the leader opens with winning cards which may indicate a five-card suit, his partner should play his *lowest-but-one* to the first trick and his *remaining lowest-but-one* to the second."

If the suit is established on the third round he gets rid of his highest card and retains his lowest—thus the possibility of obstructing the original leader is to all intents and purposes non-existent. Nor is any risk involved; for, should unexpected circumstances demand it, the high card can always be retained and, instead, the smallest card played to the third round.

This system goes by the name of *the plain-suit echo*, because, if the leader is an observant player, he will notice the absence of the small card from the first two tricks; he will then draw the inference that it is being withheld by his partner and that, consequently, his partner originally held *exactly four cards in the suit.* This knowledge is of such manifest importance to the leader and of such general advantage to the partnership that an example is given here to show the exact working of the method.

The leader holds Spades—Ace, king, 6, 5, 3.
Dummy „ „ 9, 7.
Leader's partner „ Queen, knave, 10, 2.
Dealer „ „ 8, 4.

1st trick. The leader plays ace, and his partner plays 10.

2nd trick. The leader plays king and his partner plays knave.

The leader, noticing the absence of the 2, credits his partner with that card and consequently (as explained above) with the queen also. Of course, when the third round of the suit is played, the leader's partner gets rid of his queen and so (if we ignore the question of trumps) *five* tricks are secured in the suit instead of *four* which would have been the utmost possible had not use been made of *the plain-suit echo.*

When the leader's partner holds *three cards or less* in his partner's suit, unblocking (except in the case of a no-trump declaration) cannot be attempted on the *first* round. If a high card were thrown away at the start before the exact value of the leader's suit becomes known, the result might be to leave the command with the adversaries. This would be too dangerous an experiment to try, and therefore the leader's partner must continue following suit in routine

fashion (*i.e.* with his lowest cards) until some information is forthcoming to indicate a change of policy.

When the leader's partner holds *five cards or more* in his partner's suit, there is no need for him to unblock. In all probability he will be as strong as, or stronger than, the leader himself. It may consequently devolve upon him (the leader's partner) to carry on the suit after the leader has run dry in it. Of course, should subsequent events show that even a hand containing five cards in a suit is going to end in blocking the leader, the high cards must be thrown at once. The right time for doing this will be so readily apparent, that rules for the player's guidance would be superfluous; nor will resorting to this method of disposing of awkward high cards tend to confuse the leader, for. by that time, it will be quite clear that the entire suit lies between himself and his partner.

The foregoing remarks apply equally to a *suit-declaration* and to *no-trumps*. In the latter case, however, there are certain differences in the original lead, and therefore certain additional precautions become necessary in order to ensure a complete system of unblocking. These differences are catalogued

in another chapter ("Synopsis of Leads"), and an opportunity will be taken, in that place, of making any remarks on the subject that may be necessary.

THE CALL FOR TRUMPS

If a player wishes his partner to lead a trump, he should "call for trumps." This is effected by playing an unnecessarily high card and then following it with a lower card of the same suit. For instance, the leader's partner holds the 2 and 3 of a suit which is being played; if he wishes to "call for trumps," he must play the 3 to the *first* trick and the 2 to the *second*.

A further use of this signal can be made against a no-trump declaration, or, in the case of a suit-declaration, after trumps are exhausted. It is then to be taken as an invitation to the leader to *change his suit*. As a rule, the leader will have no difficulty in deciding upon the correct suit to open – the previous fall of the cards or Dummy's hand should yield sufficient information to put him on the right track.

A very great deal of capital can often be made out of a judicious use of this signal, more especially at the *beginning* of a no-trump hand and, in the case of a suit-declaration, towards the *end*.

It was once the custom to use this signal as an indication that the player held no more of the leader's suit. For example, the leader opens with ace and king of hearts on which his partner plays the 9 first and the 2 afterwards; this was taken to show that, after the 9 and 2 had been played, that particular hand was void of the suit. The convention, however, was soon abandoned; for it amounted to depriving a player of the means of "calling for trumps" or of "calling for a change of suit" —both much more important factors in the game.

THE TRUMP-SUIT ECHO

If one of two partners leads, or "calls" for, trumps, the other should, in the event of his holding four trumps or more, play the "trump-suit echo" at the first opportunity. In order to do this, he has only to "call for trumps" *himself*. This constitutes the echo, and conveys the necessary information to the player's partner. It may be as well to add that the "trump-suit echo," can be made in the trump-suit itself.

THE THREE-TRUMP ECHO

The "three-trump echo" is used by the partner of the player who leads or "calls" for trumps;

and its object is to indicate, *after the second round of trumps*, that he still holds *one* trump.

The method of using the signal is as follows:—

Should the leader's partner, holding *three* trumps, win the first round and return his highest, and should the suit be then discontinued, he must take the first opportunity of "echoing" in a plain suit; this will inform the leader that he has still *one* trump remaining.

The return of the high card on the second round will be an ample safeguard against the signal being mistaken for the "trump-suit echo" (which indicates *four* or more trumps originally).

THE DISCARD

When a player is void of the suit led he must either trump or, alternatively, he must *discard*—*i.e.*, get rid of a card from one of the other suits. Convention has turned the discard into a means of giving information, in this way:

(1) The first discard against *no-trumps* must be from the discarder's *weakest* suit, whilst

(2) Against a *suit-declaration*, the first discard must be from his *strongest* suit.

In the former case, the exceptional value attaching to *numerical* strength makes it inexpedient that this strength should be in any way

weakened; whilst, in the latter, it is improbable that a player will bring in the *whole* of his long suit against an adverse trump declaration, and, consequently, a card out of that suit can as a rule be most conveniently dispensed with.

At times, the player will find that the regulation discard may result in unguarding a suit, or, in some other way, placing him at a serious disadvantage. Should this occur, he has no alternative but to disregard the rule. He will mislead his partner of course, but, in the circumstances, that cannot be helped; out of two evils, his right course is to choose the lesser.

It is important to notice that the *first discard only* gives information. Subsequent discards are made in any fashion that may best suit the player's hand.

Should a player, at some earlier stage of the game, have already indicated his strong suit, his discard must not be taken to convey information —there is nothing more for him to show, and he is therefore free to throw away such cards as he can most conveniently dispense with.

FALSE CARDS

After what has been already said as to the primary importance of the *combination* game (which depends for its very existence on the correct

giving and taking of information), it is obvious that the systematic playing of false cards by the dealer's opponents must be reckoned a crime of the very worst description. It undermines the entire theory of scientific Bridge-playing; it depreciates the value of skill; and it reduces the whole business to the level of "pitch and toss."

Yet, just as there are exceptions to everything, so are we compelled to admit that occasions will crop up when false cards are not only permissible, but actually necessary. For instance, when a player has given evidence of such utter weakness as to hold out no reasonable hope of his being able to win a single trick, then it is clear that his partner can do no possible harm by resorting to false cards—he would be only helping to make things difficult for his opponent, the dealer. Again, when Dummy's hand or the fall of the cards show that conventional play would end in disaster, it would be too absurd to persist in routine.

Still, although this is all admitted, false cards are dangerous things to play with. If any error of judgment be committed, the consequent penalty is likely to be a heavy one.

The dealer, of course, should play false cards *always;* having no partner, any deception which he may practise can only tell against his adversaries.

SYNOPSIS OF LEADS

Holding	Lead	Follow with
Ace, King, Queen, Knave	King	Knave
Ace, King, Queen, Knave and others. . . .	Knave	Ace
Ace, King, Queen and one other.	King	Queen
Ace, King, Queen and two others	Queen	Ace
Ace, King, Queen and three others, or more.	Queen	King
Ace, King, and two others	King	Ace
Ace, [1] King and three others or more . . .	Ace	King
King, Queen, Knave and one other.	King	Knave
King, Queen, Knave and two others	Knave	King
King, Queen, Knave and three others or more	Knave	Queen
King, Queen and two others	King	
King, Queen and three others or more. . .	Queen	
Ace, Queen, Knave and one other	Ace	Queen
Ace, Queen, Knave and two others or more.	Ace	Knave
Ace and four others, or more.	Ace	
King, Knave, 10 and one other.	10	King
King, Knave, 10 and two others or more . .	10	Knave (if Queen has fallen)
Queen, Knave, 10 and one other.	Queen	Knave
Queen, Knave, 10 and two others or more .	Queen	10

[1] The author is of opinion that it is better in this case to begin with the king. At Bridge it is frequently necessary (owing to information gained from Dummy's hand) to abandon the original lead after the first round has been played. If, therefore, the suit

In all other cases, play the *fourth* best card.

The necessity of opening a long suit has been already explained, but nothing was then said as to *which* card of that long suit should be selected. This question, however, has been settled for us by writers on whist; and, so far, no adequate reason has been advanced to induce Bridge Players to run counter to their teaching.

Certain differences must necessarily be made in order to cope with the new element of no-trumps; but these are few in number, and will be dealt with separately. Apart from them, the above is a list of the recognised leads.

These leads have been arranged with two ideas in view: (1) to make the utmost possible number of tricks, combined with (2) the giving of information. The former requires no comment, but, with regard to the practical working of the latter, some assistance may be gained by looking at an example or two. Suppose, then, that the leader holds a suit headed by ace, king, and queen:—

With exactly four cards in the suit, king is led, followed by queen.

With exactly five cards in the suit, queen is led, followed by ace.

be opened with the ace, the position of the king would not be disclosed. On the other hand, if the king is led first, the quality at any rate of the leader's suit will be made known to his partner.

With exactly six (or more) cards in the suit, queen is led, followed by king.

Thus, direct information as to *quantity* and *quality* of the leader's suit is given to his partner, whilst the best method of winning tricks is in no way departed from.

The leads may appear at first glance to be somewhat complicated; but, in reality, they are not so because they follow on the lines of a properly regulated system. This system may be summed up thus;—*As the suit increases in length so the card led (of a sequence) gets lower.*

A reference to the table of leads will show that this applies throughout, and if the reader will only bear this fact in mind, he will have little difficulty in mastering the routine handling of the different combinations.

The lead of a king (it should be noticed) always implies a suit of not more than four cards.

One other lead—the lead of the *fourth best card*—calls for some discussion. It is capable (as will be shown in the chapter on "Drawing Inferences") of giving the most extensive information; and therefore any method which will enable a player to acquire this information in an easy and ready manner must necessarily be wel-

come. Such a method exists, and we are indebted for it, I believe, to Mr. Forster, an American writer on Whist. This method goes by the name of the "Eleven" rule and may be summarised as follows:—

"When a card other than an honour[1] is led, deduct the number of the card led from 11. The difference gives the number of cards, *higher than the card led*, held by the three players other than the leader."

For example, the 8 is led; 8 from 11 leaves 3. There are therefore only three better cards than the 8 in the hands of the players other than the leader.

Instances will be given in another chapter ("On Drawing Inferences") illustrating both the practical working of this system and the value of the knowledge which it can convey. It is enough here to point out that, in it, we have a simple way of making a calculation which, without some such assistance, could only be both laborious and slow.

When a short suit is opened originally, the highest card in it should be led.

Against a no-trump declaration, the leads re-

[1] The 10 ranks as an honour.

main the same, with one or two exceptions. These exceptions are given in the accompanying list, but it will be noticed that two of the leads correspond with those laid down as correct against a suit declaration; they have, however, been included with a view to making the sequence complete.

Against a no-trump declaration, the following combinations should be opened as shown in the list below:—

Holding	Lead
Ace, King and three others, or less	Small card
„ „ „ four „ „ more	King
King, Queen and three others, or less.	Small card
„ „ „ four „ „ more	Queen
Ace, Queen, Knave and two others, or less . . .	Small card
„ „ „ „ three „ „ more. . . .	Ace
„ and any number of small cards	Small card

It will be noticed that a small card is sometimes led from a combination which, *against a suit declaration*, would make the lead of an honour obligatory. The reasons for this are two-fold:—(1) the honours cannot be trumped, and therefore there is no risk in holding them back; and (2) a player who has only five cards or less in a suit cannot hope to establish it without assistance from his partner—consequently he gives his part-

ner an opportunity of winning the first trick and then, by retaining his own commanding cards, he (the leader) will be enabled to regain the lead.

On the other hand, with a *six-card suit headed by ace-king or king-queen*, the leader has a reasonable chance of establishing it at once by leading out an honour.

An examination of the above list shows that, should the first card led be an honour, very definite information is given; for instance:—

1. The lead of an honour *always* indicates at least a six-card suit.
2. The lead of the king implies the ace.
3. The lead of the queen implies the king.
4. The lead of the ace implies queen and knave.

Acting upon this knowledge, it now becomes an easy matter to arrange a system of unblocking, which will ensure the leader's suit being cleared by his partner.

The accompanying list shows how the leader's partner should play, *against a no-trump declaration*, when he holds cards threatening to block the leader's suit.

Card led	Leader's partner holding	Plays to 1st round	To 2nd round
King	Queen and two others	Second best	Queen
Queen	Knave and two others	Second best	Knave
Queen	Ace and one other	Ace	The other card
Ace	King and one other	King	The other card

Holding four cards in the leader's suit, the leader's partner must play the plain suit echo in the ordinary way.

This system of unblocking must of course be made subservient to Dummy's hand. If, for instance, the throwing away of a winning card would result in allowing Dummy to win (say) the third round in the suit, then clearly that winning card must not be thrown. But, apart from such actual evidence as this that unblocking would be disadvantageous, the system should be rigorously adhered to.

When the leader's partner doubles no trumps, the leader should play his shortest suit. But, if he holds an ace, he should lead this in *first;* he will then see Dummy's hand, and the information gained from it may be of assistance in helping him to find his partner's long suit.

When the leader's partner doubles a suit-declaration *made by the dealer*, the leader should play his *best plain suit.* But if the declaration

is *made by Dummy*, the leader should play a *trump*.

In both these cases, however, if the leader holds a *very* short suit (not more than two cards), he would be justified in opening this with a view to making off his small trumps.

GENERAL ADVICE

This chapter consists to some extent of a summary of the different points which have been discussed at greater length in other parts of the book, and, for that reason, a certain amount of repetition has been unavoidable. There is, however, included a considerable addition of new matter. As to this, comment is made when necessary; but, for the most part, it will be found that the innovations are of such a nature as to explain themselves.

THE DECLARATION

With the score at love-all, the dealer should declare no-trumps when he holds any of the following combinations:—

1. Four aces.
2. Four guarded kings.
3. A mixture of aces and guarded kings covering the four suits.
4. Queen, knave and one other in each of the four suits.

5. The above combination varied by a guarded king in one or more suits.
6 The above combination varied by knave and three others in one suit;

and, *in the hand of a competent player:—*

7. Any six master-cards.
8. Any five master-cards covering three suits.
9. Four master-cards and one card likely to win a trick, covering three suits.

Should the dealer not hold any of the above combinations, or should he not feel confident as to the manipulation of the three last-named combinations of cards, then, with the score at love-all, he should declare any suit which promises to result in a score of 14 or more. Failing this, he should pass the declaration to his partner.

In estimating the trick-taking powers of his own and Dummy's hand, he should credit Dummy with *three tricks certain and one probable;* and he should remember, with regard to his own hand, that the five smallest cards (for example) in any suit may be given a very distinct value by making trumps in that suit.

Unless the dealer is able to ensure the winning of at least *one* trick, he should declare spades. To leave the decision to Dummy, under such

circumstances as these, might result in an expensive declaration and the loss of the game.

When the love-all stage is passed—*i.e.* when either the dealer or his adversaries have already scored—the declaration must be influenced by the state of the score.

When the dealer has much the best of the score, he should avoid a doubtful declaration which might allow his opponents to "go out."

He should make any suit in which he is tolerably sure of winning the game. Thus, with the score at 28 to 0 in his favour, a strong spade suit should be chosen rather than a good, but uncertain, no-trumper.

Again, with the score as before, should the dealer hold a well-protected *all-round* hand, but with no suit of especial strength, he should pass. If Dummy is very weak, he will make spades, which, under the circumstances, will be as likely to result in success as any other suit; it will also act as a sure preventative against serious disaster. On the other hand, should Dummy hold a good suit, he will declare it and the game will then be assured.

When the dealer has much the worst of the score, he should accept any risk which promises him a reasonable chance of winning the game.

Thus, with the score at 28 to 0 against him, he could gain little by making spades or clubs—the probabilities are so much in favour of his adversaries winning the game on their next deal. He should, therefore, endeavour to declare either hearts or no-trumps—the latter for choice. If neither of these is possible, he should pass.

A much more difficult position than either of the above is that which arises when the dealer, having already scored whilst his opponents are still at love, finds himself with a hand which promises to result in a good score, but with which he is unlikely to win the game. Is he to make the declaration and rest satisfied with this probable "good score," or is he to leave the decision to Dummy on the off-chance of his being able to do something better?

It seems to me that the correct answer depends upon the exact number of points which the dealer can reasonably hope to make. If, for instance, his score stands at 6 and he can see a fair prospect of raising it to 18, then, in the event of success, he and his partner would be in a very favourable position for winning the game on their next deal—they would be able to "get out" with (*1*) *one trick in no-trumps*, (*2*) *two tricks in hearts or diamonds*, *or* (*3*) *three tricks in clubs.*

Again, supposing the dealer's score to be at 12 and that he can see his way to raising it to 24, then, on his partner's next deal, they would be able to win the game with (*1*) *one trick in no-trumps, hearts or diamonds*, (*2*) *two tricks in clubs*, *or* (*3*) *three tricks in spades.*

On the other hand, if the dealer passes, Dummy is unlikely to win the game in either case—in the first he would require 24 points, and in the second 18, and both these scores are above the average resulting from a deal. The prospect, then, of gaining an advantage from passing is remote, whilst the possibility is ever present of Dummy making a declaration on which points may be actually *lost.*

When the dealer's score is at 14 or more, it would appear advisable to pass unless the prospect of winning the game outright is a fair one. Only 16 points (if we take the score at 14 exactly) are required to win, and this is no more than should be the outcome of an ordinarily good hand—two tricks in no-trumps or hearts, and three tricks in diamonds will ensure it. It does not seem unreasonable to take the chance of finding a partner with some such strength as this.

As I said before, the question is a difficult one, for it is quite incapable of direct proof one way or another. We can but judge it by the test of

common-sense and experience. Relying on these, *and subject to what has been said elsewhere in this chapter*, it seems clear that:—

(1) *When the dealer's score is at 6 or less, he should make any declaration which promises to bring him up to 18 or more—failing this, he should pass.*

(2) *When the dealer's score is at 8, 10 or 12, he should make any declaration which promises to bring him up to 24 or more—failing this, he should pass.*

(3) *When the dealer's score is at 14 or more, he should pass the declaration unless he has a reasonable prospect of winning the game.*

Dummy should be guided by similar considerations subject to the following restrictions:—

(1) As Dummy's cards are exposed, he is placed at no small disadvantage (in comparison with the dealer whose cards are concealed) during the play of the hand. His doubtful tricks are less likely to make than they would be if held by the dealer. For this reason, Dummy should not play quite so forward a game as the dealer. He should rather lean—but very slightly—to the side of caution.

(2) Dummy cannot regulate his game by

aiming at any fixed point on the scoring-board. In his case, a declaration of some sort is compulsory, and he must therefore make the best of the cards as he finds them. If he has a strong hand, well and good; if not, he should make any suit in which he is likely to win the odd trick; and, failing both these possibilities, he must declare spades.

(3) The last of these alternatives is by way of being a *defensive* declaration. Spades are declared with a view to impeding the progress of the adversaries. It would therefore be inadvisable for Dummy to make a "light" club (when the score is at love-all) in preference to an extremely weak spade. In the first case, the adversaries might double and *win the game;* in the latter, this would be impossible. In short, under such conditions, Dummy should try to avoid making a declaration which will admit of the possibility of the adversaries winning the game.

Honours have little or no effect upon the declaration. A declaration which is right from a *game-winning* point of view must not be abandoned for the sake of some other alternative even though the change may result in a large score "above the line"; but, other things being equal, the highest honour score will decide the declaration.

The effect of skill upon the declaration must never be lost sight of. One man will manage the cards better than another—he will make more out of a given combination than would another of inferior powers. For this reason, the dealer's ability as a player is a force to be reckoned with. If he is inexperienced, or in any way "shaky", he should not declare "light"; on the other hand, if he is well versed in the intricacies of the game, he may safely risk an expensive declaration on weaker combinations than those laid down in this book, more particularly in the matter of no-trumps.

Dummy will also bear this in mind when the decision is left to him. He will as a rule have some knowledge of his partner's "form" and, if this is not all that it should be, then he must not set that partner a task in which he is almost certain to come to grief.

When either of two suits will equally well win the game for the dealer, he should choose that one which will least help the adversaries to the same end. For instance, with a hand equally strong in spades and clubs, if the dealer's score is at 28 to his opponents' 26, the proper declaration is spades.

Finally, and once again, *always declare to the score.*

DOUBLING

As a rule, a player should not double except under circumstances where *the reward of success promises to exceed in value the penalty entailed by failure.* For instance, with the score at love-all, it is often doubtful policy to double a spade declaration. If the doubler wins four by cards, he reaches 16; but if the adversaries re-double and win four by cards, *they* win the game! A player, therefore, should not double spades (with the score at love-all) unless he has a *very* good chance of winning the odd trick and, besides, an absolute certainty of saving the game in the event of a re-double.

From this it is clear that the state of the score will act as a controlling influence in deciding whether a double is, or is not, advisable. The practical effect of this influence may be summed up as follows:—

(1) *With a reasonable prospect of winning the odd trick, a player should double when he advances his own chance of winning the game without, at the same time, advancing that of his opponents.*

Example:—The dealer's score is at 22 to his opponents' 16, and the dealer makes hearts. If the leader, or his partner, holds a hand which

gives reasonable promise of winning the odd trick, the declaration should be doubled. The leader will then only require *one* trick to enable him to win the game and will therefore stand, in this respect, on an equal footing with the dealer.

(2) *The converse of the fore-going must also hold good—a double will rarely be justified when, in effect, it advances the adversaries' prospects of winning the game without, at the same time, advancing those of the doubler.*

Example:—The dealer's score is at 26 to his opponents' 28, and the dealer makes spades. Nothing, to all intents and purposes, could be gained by doubling in such circumstances as these The only practical result would be to make the winning of the game easier for the dealer.

Of course, if the doubler is so overpoweringly strong that the odd trick is assured, then, obviously, he takes no risk in doubling; but, apart from such a contingency, he should remain on the safe side.

The leader should double no-trumps when

(1) *he holds any seven winning cards, or*

(2) *he has protection in three suits and can ensure the odd trick the first time he regains the lead.*

The following hand is a case in point:—*Hearts, king, queen, knave, 10, 3, 2;*

Diamonds, ace, 3, 2; Clubs, ace, 3, 2; Spades, 2.

(3) *Ace, king, queen and four others in a suit.*

With the score at love-all, the *leader's partner* should double a no-trump declaration when he holds *six top cards or more, in a single suit.* This double is of a defensive nature—it is the best means of inducing the leader to open his partner's long suit and so (apart from a re-double) save the game.

Such a combination as *ace, king, queen and three others in a suit,* though not strictly coming within the above definition, is yet sufficiently near it to justify the leader's partner in doubling.

With the exception of this defensive double, the leader's partner will be guided by the same considerations as those affecting the leader. If, however, he doubles on "protection in three suits", he must hold cards which will ensure the odd trick *the first time he wins the lead.* This condition differs slightly from that laid down for the dealer.

Against a suit-declaration, it is always inadvisable (unless the score demands it) to double on *plain-suit strength alone.* In these circumstances, the declarer is almost certain to have a long trump suit, with the result that

some of the commanding cards held by the doubler are likely to be trumped.

A double can be made with less risk when the doubler is sitting on the *left* of the declarer than when the position of the players is reversed.

A player who is known to be rash may be much more freely doubled than one who is known to be cautious.

It is always well to remember that the fact of doubling tends to discount the value of the doubler's hand. The dealer knows at once where to look for the preponderance of adverse strength, and this will enable him to make finesses which, under other circumstances, would be impossible.

RE-DOUBLING

In deciding upon a re-double, the state of the score will be found to act as the chief controlling factor. Its practical application may be summed up as follows:—

(1) *A player should not re-double when the result would be to advance his opponents' chance of winning the game without, at the same time, advancing his own*, but

(2) *With a reasonable prospect of winning the odd trick, he should re-double when he can advance his own chance of winning the game without advancing that of his opponents.*

The re-double will most generally come from the declarer's *partner*. For these reasons: - the declarer's partner can count on a *certain minimum strength* in the declarer's hand, whilst the declarer has nothing to trust to but probabilities—one is acting on knowledge, the other is playing in the dark. Supposing, then, that the dealer makes "hearts" and the leader doubles; should Dummy be tolerably sure of winning three tricks, he should re-double. He knows that the dealer, in making the declaration, would only rely on him to the extent of three tricks; and this number he is able to supply. Provided that the declaration is sound, the dealer and Dummy are, to all intents and purposes, sure of the odd trick.

Under many varying conditions dependent on other combinations of the cards and the relative positions of declarer and doubler, and so on, the declarer's partner will find not infrequent opportunities of putting in a very useful re-double.

The re-doubling of a no-trump declaration is (except under circumstances where the player has

doubled "to the score") practically out of the question. Even though the double comes from the leader's partner, a re-double would still be foolish, because the probabilities are in favour of the doubler's long suit being opened by the leader.

In re-doubling, just as in doubling, more may be risked against a rash adversary than against a cautious one.

THE LEADER

As a rule, the leader should open his longest plain suit. The correct card to play from the different possible combinations is given under the heading of "Synopsis of Leads." It is important that these conventional leads should be strictly adhered to, because they are so arranged as to give the player the best chance of winning tricks, whilst, at the same time, they are the means of conveying valuable information from the leader to his partner.

There are, however, exceptions to this rule of beginning with the longest plain suit. They may be summarised as follows:—

(1) If the leader holds ace-king of any plain suit, he should open with one of these honours, irrespective of the length of the suit. He will then see

Dummy's hand, and from it he may gain information which will guide him in his subsequent policy.

This practice of leading out a winning card from a short suit should not be adopted against a no-trump declaration. In that case a card of re-entry is too valuable to throw away.

(2) If the leader holds tenaces in three suits (one of them being trumps) he should open the fourth suit whether it happens to be long or short.

(3) When the dealer passes the declaration with his score in such a state that one trick in hearts or diamonds would win him the game, it is practically certain that he is not *very* strong in either of those suits. In such circumstances, the leader may open a short "heart" or "diamond" provided it is not the trump suit, and provided that he does not hold a good long suit. The same argument would apply to clubs or spades under altered conditions of the score.

(4) When the leader's partner has doubled a suit-declaration *made by the dealer*, the leader is justified in opening a suit in which he holds not more than two cards (a singleton is preferable) in the hope that he may be able to eventually ruff the suit. If there is a choice between two short suits, he should select that one which is most likely to convey to his partner the information that the lead is from weakness. There will

then be little chance of the irregularity resulting in confusion.

Should the declaration have been made by *Dummy*, the lead of a short suit would still be permissible, but it is generally better to open with a trump. This is the best method of strengthening the doubler's hand.

(5) When the leader's partner doubles no-trumps, the leader should open his *shortest* suit. If he holds an ace, he should play this first, in order to see Dummy's hand, which may be of assistance in helping him to find out his partner's long suit. He should, then, not continue with any suit in which Dummy holds (a) ace, (b) king and queen, or (c) any combination which can obviously protect the suit. Should Dummy's hand give no definite information of this kind, the leader must fall back upon his own shortest suit.

When the leader has won the first trick, the exposed cards and those in Dummy's hand will influence him in deciding whether to continue the suit or to adopt other tactics. In this connexion, the following points are worth remembering:—

(1) If the leader has opened an ace-king-knave combination with king and then finds only small cards of the suit in Dummy's hand, he should not continue the suit. By waiting for it to be returned *up* to him, he will imprison the

queen if it happens to be in the dealer's hand.

(2) If the leader is weak in a suit (other than trumps) in which Dummy holds (a) ace, queen and small cards, (b) king, knave and small cards, or (c) king and small cards, he should try that suit. If his partner has any strength in it, this is giving him the best opportunity of using that strength to advantage—he (the leader's partner) would then be sitting over the strong adverse hand.

There is, however, nothing to be gained by leading through *great* strength. The result of this would only be to establish the suit for the adversaries. Nor would there be any advantage in playing knave through a queen-ten-nine combination. The suit would be established for Dummy at the end of two rounds at most.

(3) The original leader should avoid opening any suit in which both he and Dummy are weak. The good cards in that suit must be divided between the leader's partner and the dealer, and therefore the dealer would be playing to the utmost advantage if the suit were played *up* to him.

All this can be put concisely into one golden rule—*play through strength and up to weakness.*

After the hand has progressed a stage, *i.e.*, after a certain number of tricks have been played

—the leader will have acquired a considerable amount of information as to the position of the unseen cards Sometimes this information may be of a nature sufficiently comprehensive to enable him to play out the hand as though the cards lay exposed before him on the table. When this is so, his course is obviously a clear one—he has only to use his own common-sense in dealing with *known facts*. At other times, he may not be so fortunate—the position of some cards may be disclosed whilst the position of others (perhaps the most important) may be concealed. In these circumstances *he must turn to the score*—if there is a danger of losing the game or a chance of winning it, then he must make an *imaginary* disposition of the cards such as will enable him to attain success, and, having made this "imaginary disposition," he must play as though it existed in reality. If it does not exist, then he comes to grief, but he would have come to grief any way; if it does exist, then his assumed knowledge will have the effect of making him play his hand to the best possible advantage.

This is really the secret of first-class Bridge-playing. The score decides what is necessary and then the player, guided by the score, plays a double-dummy problem in which he either knows the exact position of the cards or, alternatively,

assumes them to be so placed as to enable him to achieve a victory or to avert a disaster.

The same idea must of course be applied in playing for the odd trick, for two tricks, three tricks, and so on; and also as a means of protection against an equal loss.

A player, then, should know exactly what it is necessary for him to accomplish, whether in the way of attack or defence. When once this point is decided, he will (in default of more precise knowledge) resort to the imaginary double-dummy work just described.

Examples showing how this can be utilized in actual practice are given in the chapter on "Bridge Stratagems."

THE LEADER'S PARTNER

When the leader opens with a losing card the leader's partner should win the trick, if he can, by playing his highest card of the suit led. But if he holds a sequence of cards (equal for trick-taking purposes), he should play the lowest of the sequence. When he does not try to win the trick, he should play his lowest card.

If the leader's partner holds ace and queen of the suit led, and the king is in Dummy's hand,

but is not played to the trick, the leader's partner should play the queen. This is generally described as *finessing*,[1] and endless and more intricate opportunities of playing the "coup" occur in actual practice. Of course a player must not finesse against his own partner; that is to say, if the leader's partner holds ace and queen in the leader's suit, and if the king is not in Dummy's hand, then the leader's partner must play ace to the first round.

Sometimes, however, a finesse against a partner is justified. For instance, the leader opens with a small card, Dummy holds *queen*, *10*, *9*, and the leader's partner holds *ace*, *knave*, *2*. Unless the queen is put up, the leader's partner must play knave—it is the only possible way of making three tricks in the suit.

A finesse should, when possible, be made on the *second* round of the suit. For instance—the dealer holds *ace*, *3*, *2* of a suit, and Dummy holds *king*, *knave*, *9*. The ace should be played to the first round and the finesse of the knave made on the second. The reason of this is that the dealer may gain some information from the cards played to the first trick which will guide him as to the

[1] The above case, although generally spoken of as a "finesse" is wrongly so described. The real finesse would be in playing the queen *when the position of the king is unknown*, as at whist when the second player's hand is not exposed.

position of the queen; or the queen may actually fall before it is necessary to finesse and so relieve him of any further difficulty.

Finessing may be practised much more freely in trumps than in the plain suits.

When the first trick is won by the leader's partner, he should return (if the suit be continued) *the higher of two remaining cards* or *the lowest of three or more.* If, however, he holds the *ace*, or *the second and third best* he must always return one of those cards first, unless he considers it advisable to "under play" (see "Bridge Stratagems").

If Dummy's hand is of an entirely normal character, the original leader's suit should, as a rule, be returned. But if Dummy has any pronounced weakness (other than trumps), that weakness should be attacked—*i.e.*, the suit in which Dummy is weak should be opened. In other words, the leader's partner should play *up to weakness.*

Should the leader's partner hold a very strong suit himself, it is generally advisable to play a round or two of this before either returning his partner's suit or opening up to Dummy's weakness. Some important information may be gained in the meantime, and no harm can be done.

Or, again, if the leader's partner holds a tenace

over Dummy (say *ace*, *king*, *knave* over *queen*, *10*, *9*), he should, if possible, make this known to his partner by leading the king and then changing the suit.

Against a no-trump declaration, it is almost invariably right to return the leader's suit. Of course, if the leader's partner happens to hold a suit of commanding cards himself, he should play these first.

Towards the end of the hand the leader's partner must, like the leader, resort to the imaginary double-dummy tactics which have been already explained. (See page 162,)

GENERAL

When the leader plays a commanding card from a suit of five (or a suit which, from the first lead, *may* consist of five), then his partner, *if he holds exactly four of the suit*, should play the *plain-suit echo—i.e.*, he should play his *second-lowest* card to the first trick and (provided that he has not to try and win the second round) his *next highest* afterwards. He will then be left with his *highest* and *lowest* and, consequently, stands in no danger of blocking the run of his

partner's suit. The third round will invariably tell him whether he should, or should not, retain his highest card.

Against a no-trump declaration, unblocking is of paramount importance. In this case, the *plain-suit echo* must be religiously practised, and, in addition, other means of freeing the leader's suit are in vogue; these are given in the chapter on "Synopsis of Leads."

When the leader's partner holds *three cards or less* or *five cards or more* in the leader's suit, he must play his lowest unless he is attempting to win the trick.

If a player wishes his partner to lead a trump, he plays an unnecessarily high card and follows it with a smaller card of the same suit. For instance, the dealer leads ace and king of hearts consecutively, and one of the adversaries plays 3 of hearts on the ace and 2 of hearts on the king —he has "called for trumps"—*i.e.*, he has asked his partner to play a trump at the first opportunity. In response to a call, a player should lead his lowest of four trumps or his highest of three; but, if he holds the ace, he should always play this first irrespective of number in the suit.

When a player leads, or "calls for," trumps, should his partner hold *four trumps or more*, he also should "call," *i.e.*, play an unnecessarily high card and follow it with a smaller one of the same suit. This is the "trump-suit echo."

The "call for trumps" can be used against a no-trump declaration. But, in this case, it is an invitation to a partner to *change his suit.* In practice it will be found that the leader will rarely have difficulty in deciding upon the correct suit to lead—the cards already played, Dummy's exposed hand, discards, and so on, will all help him to a right solution of the difficulty.

The same signal, with a similar meaning, is also used against a suit declaration *after the trumps are exhausted.*

The "three-trump echo" is used by the partner of the player who leads, or "calls for," trumps; and its object is to indicate, *after the second round of trumps*, that he still holds *one trump.*

The method of using the signal is as follows:

Should the leader's partner, *holding three trumps*, win the first round and return his highest, and should the suit be then discontinued, he must take the first opportunity of "echoing" in a

plain suit; this will inform the leader that he has still one trump remaining. There is practically no danger of this being mistaken for the "trump-suit echo," because the return of a high card on the second round will make it quite clear that the player was returning his best and, therefore, could not possibly have held more than three trumps originally.

The same signal can also be used when, in answer to a "call," a player leads ace of trumps and follows it with another high card. If the suit is then discontinued, the "plain-suit echo" can be played.

When a player is unable to follow suit, his *first* discard is accepted as a signal and must be regulated on the following lines:

(1) Against a *no-trump* declaration, he discards from his *weakest* suit.

(2) Against a *suit*-declaration, he discards from his *strongest* suit.

Only the first discard gives information. Subsequent discards are made in any fashion that may best suit the player's hand. Sometimes it will be found impossible to adhere to these rules without seriously depreciating the player's strength—as, for instance, when it would result in his unguarding an adverse long suit. In such

circumstances, he must choose the lesser of two evils —he must take the chance of deceiving his partner.

If, by leading, a player has already shown his strong suit, his discard ceases to give information in this respect.

False cards should only be played when they can do no harm; and these occasions may be summed up under the following headings:

(1) When a partner is too stupid to gain information from correct play.

(2) When a partner is too weak to be damaged—*i.e.*, when there is little or no chance of his ever winning the lead.

(3) When it is of more importance to mislead the dealer than to enlighten a partner.

The two first propositions require no comment. The third is dealt with, by way of an example, in another part of the book.

When Dummy is very short in two suits (other than trumps) the adversaries, if they hold winning cards in either of those suits, should play them at the earliest opportunity, so as to make tricks in the suit before Dummy has a chance of discarding.

Should Dummy lead a singleton in a plain suit, the second player, if he holds the ace, should play it.

It is always dangerous to advertise your own weakness. And, for this reason, it is often well, after trumps are out, to keep small cards (although they may be of no trick-taking value) in the adversaries' suit. If once the suit is renounced, the dealer or Dummy can finesse with certainty of success.

It is almost invariably right to "force" a partner. The dealer and Dummy will, as a rule, hold the preponderance of trump strength, and therefore the opponents should make their trumps in the best and quickest way they can—*i.e.*, before they are extracted by the dealer.

This would not apply in the case of a partner doubling. He has then announced his ability to play a strong game, and he should not be forced unless he deliberately asks for it.

Whenever possible, it is good to afford a partner the opportunity of discarding—he may give valuable information or he may get rid of a useless card.

Conversely, it is very bad indeed to play a card which will allow one opponent to discard and the other to trump. The weak hand will trump, and the strong hand will discard.

A finesse should rarely be made when, by putting up the winning card, a game may be won or saved.

These and other points of play are illustrated in the chapter on "Bridge Stratagems."

THE DEALER

The dealer should invariably play false cards—he has no partner to deceive.

If Dummy is weak in trumps and short of any particular suit, the dealer should exhaust that suit and so give Dummy a chance of ruffing with his small trumps.

But, as a rule, if the dealer is fairly strong and Dummy's hand is up to the average, his better policy will be to try to bring in a long suit, *i.e.*, he should first disarm the adversaries of their trumps and then go steadily on with the plain suit which he selects, until it is established. And, in doing this, he must be particularly careful to leave the lead in the right hand; *e.g.*, if he himself holds *four* cards in the suit and Dummy holds *five*, he must arrange matters so that Dummy is left with the commanding card on the *fourth* round; otherwise a trick will be lost. In point of fact, the dealer must take care that his suit (or Dummy's) does not get blocked; and, in his case, there is no difficulty whatever, because the

material with which he has to deal is not only exposed before him, but, in addition, it lies under his own absolute control. With him, there is no question of conventional un-blocking—it is simply a matter of common-sense.

If the dealer is afraid of an adverse trump lead, it will sometimes pay to lead one round from *Dummy's* hand. This will generally have the effect of stopping an opponent who may have contemplated attacking him in the trump suit.

When the leader opens with a small card and Dummy holds king singly guarded, (the dealer having no strength in the suit,) Dummy should play king to the first round. But should the dealer hold queen and others, Dummy should pass the small card, unless he wishes to win the lead.

The dealer, like his opponents, must also resort to the practice of the double-dummy problem (or imaginary "placing") which has been already described. And he, too, must be guided by the score.

BRIDGE STRATAGEMS

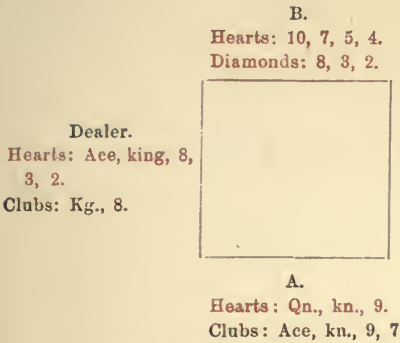
The following hands are intended to illustrate some of the devices and stratagems which can be utilized to a player's advantage in actual practice. For the most part they involve a complete abandonment of conventions; but, in this connexion, it is important to notice that the cases in point occur towards the *end* of a hand, when misleading information can do but little harm, and further that the circumstances are such as to make success dependent on *one* line of policy which is dictated by *facts* instead of by *theory*.

I

The dealer has declared "no-trumps," and it is his turn to lead. The position of the players, and the cards respectively held by them, is given in the illustration on page 175.

The dealer requires four tricks to win the game. How should he play?

Can A B stop him? and, if so, how?



NOTE.—At this point of the hand, neither hearts nor clubs had been opened, and the only knowledge that the dealer and A possessed about B's cards was that he held the last three diamonds, was void of spades and had, earlier in the game, discarded the 10 of clubs.

With this limited knowledge the dealer is set the task of winning four tricks out of the seven, and A B the greater task of preventing him.

I will first give the correct play of the first three tricks and then discuss the reasons why.

Dealer.	B.	Dummy.	A.
1st trick. Ace of hearts	4 of hearts	6 of hearts	Knave of hearts
2nd trick. King of hearts	5 of hearts	3 of clubs	Queen of hearts
3rd trick. 2 of hearts	10 of hearts	4 of clubs	9 of hearts

Starting with the dealer, his position is this;—he argues that he cannot possibly win four tricks if either the ace of clubs or the winning heart *on the third round* is in B's hand—if B gets the lead, he makes three diamonds. The dealer therefore, "places" both these cards with A and plays accordingly. With his 2 of hearts he hopes to leave the lead in A's hand and so compel him to open clubs; and, if this little scheme is successful, then Dummy must win a trick in clubs and so make the two winning spades.

As it happens, the dealer has diagnosed the case to a nicety, but A checkmates him by *getting rid of the commanding heart.*

And why should A have done this? For two reasons. In the first place, because to obtain the lead at this juncture of the game would be fatal to him, and, secondly, because (as the reader already knows) B has discarded the 10 of clubs; and this discard is just reeking with information. It tells, beyond all shadow of doubt, that B has no more clubs. He might—so far as A is concerned—hold the king (refer to hands of A and Dummy), but would he, under such circumstances, have unguarded it? Most certainly not! And A argues correctly when he assumes that B is void of the suit.

A, then, credits B with *four hearts* and trusts

to his winning the lead on the third round and so bringing in his diamonds.

But they are not out of the wood yet. B can apparently win the 2 of hearts with the 7 and so, to judge by the fall of the cards, make the rest of the tricks. But if he is tempted into this indiscretion—it certainly is tempting and, also, it would certainly be an indiscretion—then A is compelled to win with the 9 and thus forfeit the reward of his previous good play.

B must of course put up his 10 and then, by leading in the diamonds, save the game.

This example illustrates three points—(1) how a player should seize the first opportunity of saving the game, (2) how he should get rid of the lead when the holding of it would obviously be fatal, and (3) the absolute necessity of "placing" the cards.

Put into plain English it simply means that, in the absence of exact knowledge, the player must make *an imaginary disposition of the cards*—such a disposition as will either ensure success or avert failure, according to circumstance. Turn to the example and we find the dealer resorting to this method when he assumes that A holds the ace of clubs and the winning heart on the third round. Then A goes through the same mental process in placing the 10 of hearts in B's hand. And,

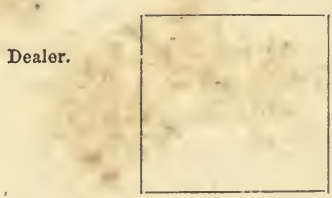
finally, B plays the master-stroke by grasping the fact that A is possibly unblocking and may still be left with a heart better than the 7.

All three players were playing in the dark; but all three realized that success depended on a given position of unknown cards. And this is the key to nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand difficult hands at Bridge.

II

This is another instance showing the necessity of "placing" the cards. It also illustrates the inconvenience which may arise from a super-abundance of trumps.

The position of the players at the table together with the cards held respectively by A and by Dummy are given below:—



Hearts are trumps and, with the exception of those shown in the hands of A and Dummy, are exhausted. B is marked with the winning spade, the winning diamond, and four clubs. Clubs have not yet been opened. Dummy leads the 6 of spades.

A B require *every* trick to save the game; what must A do?

A must begin, as we have already seen, by making an imaginary disposition of the club suit, such a disposition as will ensure success. One glance at Dummy's hand shows him how to do it—B *must* hold either the ace and queen, or ace and king, of clubs; otherwise the problem is impossible.

Working on these lines, then, A credits his partner with the following cards:—*the winning diamond and the winning spade* (which he knows him to hold) together with the *ace*, *queen*, *and two other clubs*. And now he has but to play a double-dummy problem in which the dealer's hand may be put out of action and in which he has only one danger to guard against—viz., he must never find himself in the position of having to play a trump up to Dummy; for that would mean the loss of a trick. In other words, A has got a superfluity of trumps and must get rid of them somehow.

The solution now becomes almost mechanical. When Dummy leads the 6 of spades, A trumps it (although his partner holds the winning spade) and leads a club. B wins the club trick and plays the winning diamond which A also trumps. A now leads his last club, and he and his partner win all the tricks.

In one respect this is a simple hand, for the correct "placing" of the unknown cards admits of no alternative. Such a state of things is of course somewhat unusual, as most cases of a similar nature present many possibilities any one of which would lead to the same result, but which leave the player in the unenviable position of having to decide upon the one most likely to "come off"—a task often enough by no means easy.

Here, however, we have no such problem to face—the possible combinations in B's hand requisite for success are limited to two, which are, for all practical purposes, identical. And so we escape one difficulty only to find ourselves involved in another—A has got too many trumps and his superabundance of wealth threatens him with disaster. But this, as we have already seen, ceases to be a serious matter *provided that* the danger signal (in this case, held out by Dummy's hand) is duly noted and acted upon.

There are two more points in this example worth mentioning.

The first is B's play to the third trick. He has a choice of two cards to lead—the winning club and the winning diamond. If he plays the former, then A will not be able to get rid of a trump, and Dummy *must* make the king of hearts. Such an error would be a natural one for a careless player to fall into. Both cards, he might argue, will equally well win the trick, and so what difference can it make? Clearly, it makes *all* the difference; and, in the circumstances, B has no possible excuse for going wrong. Even though he may not be able to count A's hand exactly, still the very fact of A trumping a trick which his partner can win should be enough to open his eyes to the state of affairs; and, then, his obvious duty would be to play such a card as would enable A either to repeat his previous performance or to discard—whichever might suit his hand best.

The other point to which I alluded is the original lead from Dummy's hand. If we assume Dummy to be aware of the exact position of the trump suit, then Dummy's correct lead would be a club; A would thus be unable to get rid of his clubs. But if Dummy has not this knowledge to help him, the 6 of spades is the right card

to play. By this means he hopes to put the lead into B's hand and so compel him to open clubs up to the dealer, who, in this case, holds the king guarded.

III

The following example goes to show the extreme importance (when playing against a no-trump declaration) of disarming an adversary who holds a long suit and only one card of re-entry. It is also an instance of how, sometimes, it may be advisable to refrain from returning a partner's original lead, and, further, how it may be necessary to disregard conventions in opening a new suit.

The dealer declares no-trumps. B opens with a small club which the dealer wins with the knave;

after which, he makes four tricks in the spade suit and, having exhausted it, leads in the queen of hearts, to which B plays the 2. The cards remaining in the hands of A and Dummy are shown in the illustration on page 182.

In these circumstances, how should A play his hand to the best advantage?

One thing is evident at the outset—Dummy must not be allowed to bring in his hearts. And how is this to be prevented? The answer is a simple one—Dummy's only card of re-entry (the ace of diamonds) must be forced out of his hand before the heart suit is established. A therefore wins the queen of hearts with the king and *leads a diamond.*

There is the bald explanation; but the real point of the example lies in the fact that A has abandoned the most cast-iron convention that exists at Bridge—he has not returned his partner's original lead against a no-trump declaration. And yet there is no alternative. For if the dealer can lead another round of hearts before Dummy's ace of diamonds is extracted, then Dummy must eventually make three heart tricks even though we credit B with holding the ace of that suit and other small ones.

Lest there should be any misunderstanding, let

me say at once that I am not opposing the custom which makes it obligatory for a player to return his partner's original lead against a no-trump declaration. On the contrary, I believe it to be, in nine hands out of ten, one of the soundest maxims of play. In the tenth, however, it would not only cease to be sound, but it would become actually suicidal; and to illustrate how this may occur, the present example has been given.

Here we have a case where an unexpected danger is disclosed by the cards lying open on the table. With such conditions, rules and theories must be cast to the winds; the facts must be accepted as they actually exist and dealt with in a practical manner. Dummy's hand is a standing menace and, as such, must be attacked.

Clearly, the only way of doing this is to lead a diamond. But here we have a new difficulty to negotiate—which is the right diamond to play? If we adhere to convention, the answer would of course be "the lowest." But a moment's consideration is enough to show that A and B can only win three (the utmost possible) tricks in diamonds on the supposition that B holds the queen. A therefore places that card in his partner's hand and then it at once becomes obvious that the 9 of diamonds is the right card to play.

In order to make the point quite clear, I give the dealer's full hand at the opening of the game. From this it will be apparent that the lead of the lowest diamond, instead of the 9, would result in the loss of a trick.

The dealer's hand:—

Hearts	Qn., 4.
Diamonds . . .	Kn., 8, 7.
Clubs	Ace, qn., kn., 3.
Spades	Ace, kg., qn., kn.

To sum up—the conditions have made it necessary for the leader's partner to *twice* sin against the laws of convention; he has not returned the original lead and he has opened his own suit in a fashion unknown to routine. And he has done all this with one particular object in view—the object of extracting a dangerous card of re-entry from one of the adversaries' hands; this accomplished, that adversary becomes no more than a lay figure for the remainder of the deal. The means may be drastic, but they are more than justified by the result.

IV

Another "coup," in some respects similar to the one which has just been discussed, occurs more

frequently—namely, "holding up" a winning card. In both cases the aim and object of the player is to prevent an opponent bringing in a long suit.

As an instance of "holding up," take the following:—

The dealer declares no-trumps, and Dummy is found with six spades (say, from the king downwards in sequence), but with no other possible winning card in his hand. One of the opponents holds the ace of spades and two or three small ones. The spade suit is opened by the dealer on the first opportunity. What is to be done by the player who holds the ace?

A reference to the arguments used in the previous case will supply the answer. It was there shown that a player who holds a long suit must not be allowed to retain commanding cards in his hand. Applying the same idea to the present example, it is evident that, so long as the ace of spades is "held up," Dummy has no commanding card and will therefore be unable to bring in his long suit. From this it is clear that the ace must on no account be parted with *until it is quite certain that the dealer is playing his last spade*—only then may the command of the suit be relinquished. Thus, if the dealer has two spades,

the first round must be passed and the ace played to the *second*. By this means Dummy can never make any capital out of his suit.

It may be argued that, sometimes, it is impossible to correctly count the dealer's hand, and that, if any error is made in this respect, a trick is lost unnecessarily. There is of course some force in the objection; but, as a matter of fact, the difficulty seldom arises. In the circumstances as I have given them, the fall of the cards to the first round almost invariably tells its own tale and reveals the true position of affairs. But when a doubt does exist, then the player will be well advised to "hold up." He will be risking the loss of *one* trick instead of the loss of *two* or *three;* and so, if he is erring at all, he is certainly erring on the right side.

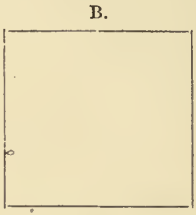
"Holding up" can equally well be practised with a protected king or queen; and also, of course, against a suit declaration as well as against no-trumps.

Before leaving the subject, it may be worth while adding that it is rarely advisable to "hold up" when a single trick will win or save the game. Of course, if a player is sure of his ground, well and good—he takes no risk; but, otherwise, the trick should be secured whilst the opportunity offers.

V

Mention has already been made about the necessity which frequently arises of abandoning the conventional method of leading. The subject is an important one, and therefore this and the following example will be devoted to further illustrating the point.

Clubs are trumps, and the cards remaining in the hands of A and Dummy are as shown below:—



Clubs: Ace, qn., kn., 5, 4.

Clubs have not yet been opened, and their position (with the exception of those in Dummy's hand) is unknown. A B require *every* trick to save the game. A is the leader. How should he play?

Perhaps the simplest way of discovering how he should play is to begin by eliminating the two

[1] Cards of no value.

ways in which he should *not* play. It is obvious, then, that he cannot lead the ace. It is equally obvious that he cannot lead a small card, because, in that event, the best he could hope for would be that his partner should win the trick; and that would result in placing Dummy in a more favourable position than ever for making a trump.

That being so, what is left? Only the queen and the knave. In point of fact, we are compelled to play what—for want of a better word—I must call a "trick-stroke." We must select the card most calculated to deceive the adversary and most likely to lead him into error.

In this instance, it matters little whether A plays the queen or the knave—both are equally misleading—though, personally, I prefer the queen, as it suggests a queen-knave-ten combination and, consequently, has a genuine look about it. Supposing, then, for the sake of argument, that A opens with the queen, what is the position of the dealer? Of course, if he happens to hold the 10 doubly guarded, or if, by any chance, he is able to accurately count the clubs in his opponents' hands, his difficulties are at an end.

But, putting aside both these assumptions, he is in a very serious dilemma. Only two courses are open to him—he must either assume that the leader holds the ace (in which case the king will

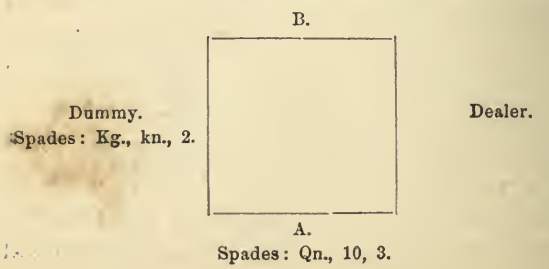
be put up) or, alternatively, he may trust to B's holding the ace *and only one other*, when of course the ace must fall to the second round and so allow Dummy's king to make.

As to what Dummy's proper play should be in the circumstances as given, it is quite impossible to express a definite opinion. If he has no previous information of any sort to guide him, then the right or the wrong thing to do might be determined by the spin of a coin—it becomes a mere matter of chance. And this is exactly the state of affairs which the leader aimed at bringing about when he played an irregular card.

VI

What should A play under the following circumstances?

A is the leader, and A B require every trick to save the game. Trumps are exhausted and spades have not yet been opened. B is marked



with the winning heart and two spades (value unknown) and the dealer holds three spades (value also unknown). The cards held respectively by A and Dummy are given in the illustration on p. 190.

This is only another instance of how it may sometimes be necessary to play an irregular card, a card, in fact, which will give the dealer the opportunity of going wrong. If the ordinary custom of leading the highest of a three-card suit is adhered to in this case, then Dummy is assured of a trick in spades. A must therefore abandon the idea of opening with the queen and must, instead, take his choice between the 10 and the 3.

The choice is not a difficult one to make. A of course assumes that his partner holds the ace—otherwise the problem is impossible. But he can hardly count on B also holding the 9; that would be expecting too much good luck. A therefore accepts the more unfavourable view of the situation and places the 9 in the dealer's hand. There can now be no question as to the correct card to lead—A must open with the 10.

The dealer is now between the devil and the deep sea. Is he to allow Dummy to pass the 10? If so, B also passes and the three tricks are secured. On the other hand, if the dealer decides to cover with the king or knave, which of these cards is he to select? The question is impossible

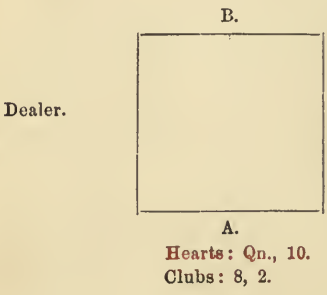
to answer. Without a knowledge of the position of the ace and queen, the correct play becomes purely a matter of chance, and the dealer will have nothing to thank but his own good fortune if he happens to save the situation.

VII

So far we have seen that it is easy to *give* an adversary the opportunity of going wrong; but the resources of Bridge-playing do not stop here. It is possible to go a step beyond this again and to practically *compel* an opponent to fall into error.

Here is a specimen of the sort of thing I mean:—

Trumps and spades are exhausted, and only two clubs (those held by A) remain. The cards held by A and Dummy are as shown:—



The dealer leads in the ace of hearts—What should A play?

Clearly, A must play the *queen* upon the ace. If he plays the 10, Dummy may or may not finesse; but the fall of the queen will almost certainly tempt him into risking the 9, in which case A wins the rest of the tricks.

VIII

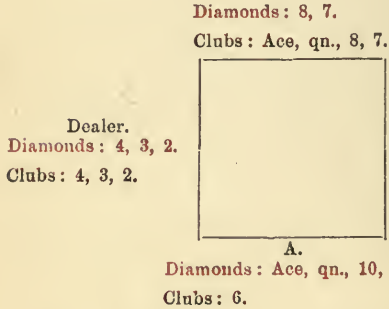
The discard, too, can be used with great effect in deceiving an adversary. The following is a case in point:—

The dealer has declared hearts and, after extracting the trumps and exhausting the spades, is left with three small diamonds and three small clubs, neither of which suits has as yet been touched. Dummy holds *Kg.*, *kn.*, *9 of diamonds*, *and Kg.*, *kn.*, *9 of clubs.* It now becomes a question which of these two suits the dealer should open—for the combinations are identically the same.

If, however, the player sitting on Dummy's left happens to be strong in either suit, he is afforded a most excellent chance of helping the dealer on to destruction. All he has to do (presuming that the opportunity has been offered to him earlier in the hand) is to make the *wrong discard.* Say, for example, that he originally held *ace*, *qn.*, *10 and other small diamonds* and two small clubs, then his first discard should have been a *club.*

The dealer will then be deceived into thinking that the strength in clubs is on his right and (having nothing else to go upon) will naturally open diamonds.

I give the hands in detail at the moment when the dealer is in difficulties, so that the reader may see for himself how the false discard results in giving A B *all* the tricks.



The opportunity of practising this "coup" occurs more often than might be supposed; but it may be as well to mention that there is always a certain element of risk attached to it. And the present example has been especially selected to demonstrate this fact. In a general way, when a player can get his strong suit played up to him, he will win the first trick and then be in a position to continue the suit; but *here* the suit must be abandoned after the first trick has been

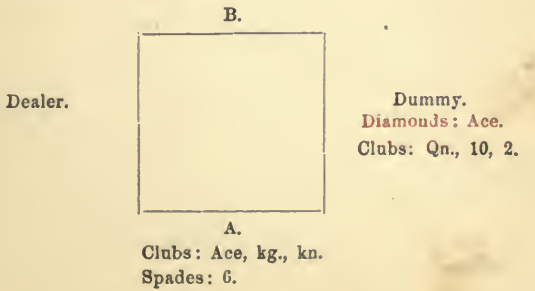
won—A must play a club so as to get the diamond led through Dummy's hand a *second* time—and this means that his partner must have "risen to the occasion."

Though I cannot think that any really good player would fail to grasp the situation (with Dummy's cards staring him in the face) yet the possibility of this failure occurring emphasizes what I said before—viz., that the playing of a false discard necessarily entails a certain risk. The stroke is, in itself, masterly; but it must be used with due discrimination.

IX

A not-uncommon way of putting the adversaries into a difficult position is that of forcing a discard from them *by leading the thirteenth trump.*

As an example, take the following arrangement of the cards:—



A is the leader and spades are trumps. All that the dealer knows about his opponents' cards is that, *between them*, they hold *six clubs*, *the thirteenth trump and the king of diamonds.*

In these circumstances, what is Dummy going to discard if A leads in the last trump? Is he to protect the club suit, or should he attempt to snatch a trick out of the fire with the ace of diamonds? The correct decision is clearly a matter of luck. Dummy may do right or he may do wrong; but, whichever he does, the result can be in no way attributable either to his skill or to his want of it.

In this instance, the lead of the last trump is of course obligatory—the leader can lose nothing whilst he may gain a very great deal.

The only difficulty connected with the playing of this "coup" is in deciding upon the right moment for putting it into practice. And this, it will be found, is not a difficulty of any serious import; for the "right moment" rarely arrives till very late in the hand, when there are few cards to be dealt with and, therefore, fewer things to confuse the player's mind.

X

In this example, the leader's play must be guided by the state of the score.

Hearts are trumps, and A (the leader) holds *6 of hearts, 6 of clubs, and 6 of spades.* Dummy (sitting on A's left) holds *the winning club and two small spades.* A's knowledge of the other hands is limited to the fact that B (his partner) holds *three spades* (value unknown) and that the dealer holds *the winning trump and two spades* (value unknown).

With this information to work upon, it is clear that A's play must be subject to the number of tricks he may require in order to win or save the game. If he wants *one* trick only, he must play the losing trump and so compel the dealer to open spades up to B—this would give B the best chance of making *one* trick in the suit; say, for instance, that he held *king, knave and one other.* If, however, A requires *two* tricks, he must lead a spade in the hope that his partner may hold the ace and that he (A) will thus be able to ruff with his losing trump on the return of the suit.

The accompanying illustration, showing the position of the players together with the cards which they respectively hold, will make the matter clear.

B.
Spades: Ace, kn., 10.

Dummy.
Clubs: 7.
Spades: 9, 3.

Dealer.
Hearts: 9.
Spades: Kg., qn.

A.
Hearts: 6.
Clubs: 6.
Spades: 6.

NOTE.—If A were to lead a spade and the ace-queen happened to be in the dealer's hand, then A B lose all the tricks.

XI

A very obvious *ruse* for giving the opponents a chance of making a mistake is that which goes by the name of *under-playing*.

The following position of the cards will illustrate

B.
Hearts: Qn., 2.

Dummy.
Hearts: Kg., kn.

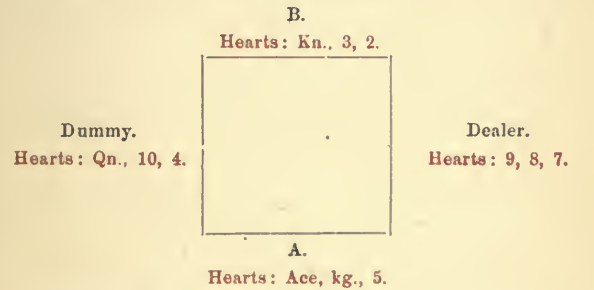
Dealer.
Hearts: 10, 9.

A.
Hearts: Ace, 3.

the idea; but the reader must understand that the dealer is in ignorance of the position of the ace and queen.

A is the leader. He must of course lead the 3 of hearts, and then Dummy will be uncertain whether to put up the king or the knave. If A plays the ace first, Dummy must make a trick.

A more effective example of the same thing would be to place three hearts in each hand and (with the dealer ignorant of the position of ace, king and knave) to make B open the suit. Thus:—



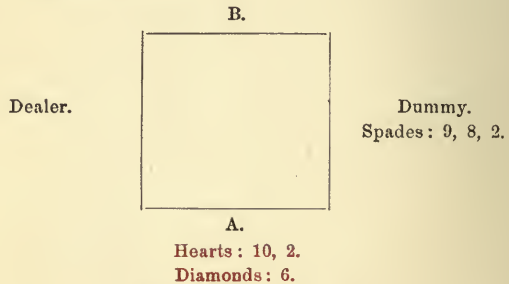
B leads the 2, as it would be useless to open with the knave against the exposed queen in Dummy's hand. A wins with the *ace* (a false card to make the dealer think that B holds the king) and returns the 5. Dummy will then be unlikely to play the queen, and so all three tricks will be won by A B.

Under-playing can be frequently played to advantage during the earlier stages of the hand, *but* the player must be satisfied that he is running no risk of having his winning cards trumped.

XII

The necessity for *assisting* a partner has been already explained. There is, however, a further necessity—that of *protecting* him; that is to say the necessity of guarding against his being placed in such a position as would result in compelling him to play his hand at a disadvantage.

As an example of this, suppose the relative situations of the players together with the cards held respectively by A and Dummy to be as given in the illustration:—



Hearts are trumps, and A B require all the tricks to save the game. B is marked with *three trumps* (value unknown); and the dealer is marked

with *two trumps* (value unknown) *and the winning diamond.*

Dummy leads the 9 of spades—what is A to do?

If A thinks for a moment he will see that, in order to ensure success, B must hold at least the *tenace* in trumps; A will also remember that a tenace ceases to be of value when the holder of the combination is forced to lead from it. Bearing these considerations in mind, A must of course put up the 10 of hearts; then B either overtrumps the dealer or (should the dealer decline to trump) gets rid of his small trump and, leaving the lead with A, retains the tenace over the strong adverse hand. In either event, he makes all three tricks. But if A makes the mistake of trumping with the 2 or, alternatively, of passing the trick, then the dealer passes also. Result—B is compelled to win the 9 of spades and consequently, by having to play up to the dealer, must allow him to win one trick.

To make the point quite clear, I give the cards held by the dealer and by B:—

Dealer's hand. . . Hearts: Kg., kn.
Diamonds: 8.

B's hand . . . . Hearts: Ace, qn., 3.

ON DRAWING INFERENCES

THROUGHOUT the course of this book, reference has been continually made to the subject of "drawing inferences" or—to put it in another way—to the subject of gathering information from the fall of the cards and so making a forward move towards completing the combination of the two hands. Both the "leads" and the conventional signals are designed with a view to furthering this end; and the object of the present chapter is to give some idea of the practical working of the system.

Many players seem to think that the ability to draw inferences is the result of a Heaven-born gift—something, in fact, akin to the peculiar talent with which Nature endows the Inventor—and, assuming that the gift has not been granted to them, they promptly proceed to "throw up the sponge." But, indeed, this is a very grave misconception. The ability to draw inferences correctly is a question purely of *mechanism*—mechanism which can be set going by *anyone* who will (1) thoroughly master the recognised

leads and conventions, (2) spend a reasonable amount of time in practice, and (3) exercise a close attention whilst playing the game.

Nothing more than this is needed; and the truth of the statement will be made self-evident by the examples which are to follow. They have been selected as specimens of the kind of thing that occurs every day, and, as the reader will see, the drawing of the different inferences from them is simplicity itself. Of course, these cases do not in any way exhaust the subject—that would be impossible—for an inference of some sort or other may be drawn from *every* card. But to attempt to probe so deeply would, from a practical point of view, be waste of energy; a player would tire himself to no purpose if he were to expend time and effort in discovering, and recollecting, the position of a card which cannot possibly have any influence on the game. What he really has to do is to devote his attention to matters which are most likely to affect and control the play—*e.g.*, the quantity and quality of his partner's suit, his partner's discard, his partner's "signals", the position of the commanding cards in the different suits, any sign of weakness in the dealer, and so on. In short, he must fix his mind upon the principal factors which will help him to achieve success or to avert failure.

It is important, too, to notice that inferences drawn from the *dealer's* play must be accepted with very great caution; he cannot of course invariably conceal his hand and his intentions, but, as he will play false cards whenever possible, it would be clearly unwise to rely to any extent on the information which he may give. It is better to trust almost entirely to one's own partner; for the information passing between the dealer's opponents *should* be correct—they *should* be true to each other. Of course, occasions must and do arise when the information given becomes misleading; but these occasions are the exception, not the rule.

The following remarks must be taken to apply to a *suit-declaration* unless otherwise mentioned; and the inferences drawn from the leads must be understood to refer to *original* leads. After Dummy's hand is exposed, the play is so much influenced by Dummy's cards that it frequently becomes necessary to abandon the conventional leads and adapt one's play to circumstances.

1. The lead of an ace indicates at least five cards in the suit, except in the one case of a suit consisting of ace, queen, knave and one other.

(*Against no-trumps*, the lead of an ace indicates ace, queen, knave and at least three others in the suit.)

2. The lead of the king indicates not more than four cards in the suit, and the leader will also hold either the ace or the queen. (*Against no-trumps*, the lead of the king indicates the ace and at least four other cards in the suit.)

3. The lead of the queen indicates the combination of queen, knave, 10, or king and queen. If the latter, then the leader will hold at least five cards in the suit. (*Against no-trumps*, the lead of the queen indicates the king and at least four other cards in the suit.)

4. The lead of the knave (unless from weakness) indicates king, queen, knave (and possibly ace) and at least two others in the suit.

5. The lead of the 10 (unless from weakness) indicates king, knave, 10 and others.

These five instances show at a glance how easy

it is to draw an inference and so acquire valuable information.

Take, for example, the second case and suppose that the leader, having opened with the king of clubs, then changes his suit; and suppose further that the leader's partner holds the queen and two others. Under these circumstances, the quantity and quality of the leader's suit is immediately made known to his partner—the leader is left with the ace and two others. Therefore, if Dummy holds exactly three clubs, then the dealer also must hold three, and consequently the suit will go round three times, leaving the thirteenth card in the leader's hand. And all this information has been disclosed by a single card!

Again, consider the lead of the knave. It indicates either a king, queen, knave combination, or weakness. If, therefore, the leader's partner or Dummy happens to hold the king or queen, the weakness is apparent on the first round; and, further, it is evident that any cards higher than the knave (which are not held by the leader's partner or by Dummy) *are marked in the dealer's hand.* In fact, nearly the whole of the suit can be "placed" by the leader's partner.

6. The lead of the 2 always indicates not more than four cards in the suit; also that

the leader does not hold in that suit any of the top combinations given in the list of conventional leads.

The lead of the 3, would give like indications, if the 2 were not in the leader's hand; similarly with the 4, if the 2 and 3 were not in the leader's hand; and so on.

7. When the leader opens with a small card, he will have played his fourth-best; and it is in these circumstances that the "Eleven" rule (explained in the chapter on "Leads") becomes of so much value. In order to illustrate the practical working of this rule, I will give two or three examples.

(a) The leader opens with the 8 of clubs; Dummy holds the *4, 3 and 2;* and the leader's partner holds *queen, 10, 5.*

The leader's partner now goes through the simple calculation of deducting 8 (the number of the card led) from 11. The result of this is to show him that only three cards better than the 8 are in the hands of the dealer and himself—for, of course, he sees that Dummy has none of them—and, as the leader's partner himself holds *two* of these cards (queen and 10), it is obvious that the

dealer holds only *one*. Suppose this card to be the king, and suppose the first trick to have fallen thus:—

Leader.	Dummy.	Leader's partner.	Dealer.
8.	2.	Queen.	King.

Then the leader's partner knows at once that the leader is left with *ace, knave and 9* (for nobody else can possibly have these cards); also that he holds no more, because, had he originally held five in the suit, he would have played the ace first. In short, by comparing what he *knows* of the leader's hand with what he *sees* of Dummy's and his own, he can locate *every* card in the suit after the first round has been completed.

(b) A resort to this rule will frequently show that a finesse can be made with certainty of success. Here is a case in point:—
The leader opens with the 8; Dummy holds *queen, 3, 2,* of the suit; and the leader's partner holds *king, 10, 4.*
A repetition of the previous calculation makes it clear that the leader is left with *ace, knave and 9.* Therefore, unless the 8 is covered by Dummy, the leader's partner must "pass" it.

(c) A further advantage of the "Eleven" rule is that it frequently discloses a weak lead at a glance and so prevents the leader's partner from supposing that the leader has opened from strength.

For example:—

The leader plays the 8; Dummy holds *10, 9, 3;* and the leader's partner holds *ace, queen, 2.*

Here the leader's partner sees *four* cards (outside the leader's hand) better than the 8 and, therefore, (deducting 8 from 11) it becomes immediately apparent that the 8 is *not* a fourth-best card at all—that, instead, it is the highest of a short suit, It also follows (if the reader will refer to the cards held by Dummy and the leader's partner) that the king and knave are marked in the dealer's hand.

8. The leader should be very much alive to any inference which it may be possible to draw from cards played by his own partner. There may be, for instance, a call for trumps, or an indication of shortness in the suit which would offer a chance of winning a cheap trick with a small trump. Or, again, the leader's partner may renounce the suit

in which case he will have the opportunity, by means of a discard, of calling attention to his own strong point.

Further than this, the leader's partner may be playing the plain-suit echo—he may be showing that he holds four cards exactly in the leader's suit. To detect this is not always an easy matter. But if a winning card is led and the *small* cards do not fall from the other hands, the possibility of a partner's making the echo is at once suggested.

Here is a case:—

The leader holds—*Clubs: Ace, 10, 9, 8, 7.*

Dummy „ „ *Knave, 6, 5.*

The leader plays ace, Dummy plays 5, the leader's partner plays 4, and the dealer plays 3. *The 2 has not dropped.* Under these circumstances it is quite certain that, if the dealer is not playing a false card, the leader's partner is either calling for trumps or unblocking. It may not be possible to decide the question definitely until after a second round has been played, but—and this is the point I wish to make—whenever a low card should, but does not, fall, then the leader must be especially watchful for the plain-suit echo.

Conversely, it follows that, when the leader's partner plays the 2 on the leader's ace, then the leader's partner cannot hold exactly four cards in the suit—he may hold more or he may hold less, but he cannot possibly hold *exactly four*. The same remarks would of course apply to the 3, if the 2 was known *not* to be in his hand; and so on with the 4 and other cards under similar conditions.

The lead from a five-card suit headed by king, queen, knave supplies another easy way of illustrating how the leader may count his partner's hand.

The suit is opened with the knave. If this wins the trick and the position of the ace is unknown, the leader may fairly assume that his partner is still left with the ace and *at least one other;* for, had he only held ace and one other to begin with, he would have unblocked by playing ace on knave. If, however, the leader's partner plays 2 (or, any card obviously his lowest) to the first trick, it is then certain that he is left with ace and *one*[1] other exactly, because, had he originally held four cards in the suit, he would have

[1] He might have five or more cards in the suit, in which case he would not unblock; but this, as a rule, will be immediately apparent.

commenced the plain-suit echo by playing his lowest-card-but-one.

There is, of course, the possibility that the ace may be in the dealer's hand, and, to guard against this contingency, the leader must *always* continue the suit with an honour. To follow the knave with a small card is simply silly; it would enable the dealer—should he hold ace and 10—to steal a trick with the 10 and still retain command of the suit.

For these reasons, too, a player should always be cautious about continuing a king-queen suit after winning the first trick with an honour. He should not necessarily jump to the conclusion that the ace is in his partner's hand—it may be held up against him by the dealer—and, therefore, if there is any other *good* lead open to him, he might avail himself of it and wait for his partner to return the original lead. He will thus avoid any danger of falling into the trap.

This idea of holding up winning cards with the object of establishing a tenace goes by the name of the "Bath Coup." It is usually played when the player holds the combination of ace, knave and others. At times, it can be used to great advantage, especially against indifferent players. But it is a risky game to try in the

plain-suits, for there is always a chance of an adversary falling short and trumping.

9. The knowledge resulting from showing number in a suit is not by any means restricted to that suit alone. It tells us, in a round-about fashion, much more than this. By inference, it helps us to "count" a player's hand—*i.e.*, it enables us to say that he must hold certain other cards about which he has given no specific information.

   Here is a very simple instance:—

   Diamonds are trumps. The original leader opens hearts with the queen and follows with the ace, thus showing five cards exactly in the suit. During the course of the hand, he renounces clubs and spades and does not again play a heart.

   Suppose, now, that he has five cards remaining, then these must consist of *three hearts* (*one being the king*) *and two trumps.* Suppose, further, that the leader had trumped a spade or club with the 10 (his lowest trump), then the two diamonds left in his hand must be *honours.*

   Had the leader played his heart suit incorrectly—had he, for example, shown *four* by starting with the king, or *six* by begin-

ning with the queen and following with the king—his partner must necessarily be misled as to the number of trumps remaining in the leader's hand. And this misunderstanding may result in missing many opportunities of winning or saving a game.

Working on similar lines, the leader can frequently count his partner's hand. In order to do this accurately he must fix his attention not only upon the nature of his partner's lead (should he have a chance of leading), but also on the various signals and, in particular, on the plain-suit echo. This is illustrated in the following example:

Spades are trumps. The leader opens hearts with the queen and wins the trick, the leader's partner playing the 3. The 2 (its position being unknown) does not fall. The leader continues with small heart; the leader's partner wins with the knave, and, again, the 2 does not fall. The leader may now be certain that his partner is playing the plain-suit echo, and, consequently, he credits him with still holding the *ace and 2 of hearts.*

The leader's partner continues the game by leading consecutively the queen and ace

of diamonds (showing five exactly in the suit). The dealer trumps the ace of diamonds, and leads ace of clubs on which the leader's partner plays the king. The remaining eight cards held by the leader's partner can now be counted; *Hearts, ace, 2; Diamonds, king and two others; three trumps, and no Clubs.*

Thus, with regard to three of the suits, the leader has very exact information whilst, in respect of the fourth (trumps) he at any rate knows their number.

10. When the original leader opens a short suit, it is generally safe to assume that he holds either *four trumps, or else ten-aces in the other three suits.* A reference to Dummy's hand will generally decide which of these inferences would be the correct one to draw.

11. When the original leader plays a winning trump and then changes the suit, the trump should be returned on the first opportunity. The leader has either led a single trump from a strong plain-suit hand, in which case he wants the trumps extracted, or he has led from strength and

is waiting for an opening to make a finesse when the trump is played back *through* the dealer.

12. Should the dealer's adversaries hold the only remaining trumps, and should one of them lead a losing trump, then the other should win it. The lead of the losing trump indicates that the player has no good card to play, and that he wishes to throw the lead into his partner's hand, so as to enable him either to make any winning cards he may hold, or to open a suit to better advantage than the leader could. If his partner declines to win the trick, then the leader should understand that, in the opinion of his partner, it is more advisable to leave the lead where it already is.

13. When Dummy opens a suit of which the position of the winning card is not marked, should the second player (being void) decline to trump, his partner should understand either that he has no trump at all, or else that his trump strength is tolerably good and that he does not wish to be "forced." Had he been weak in trumps, he would have "ruffed" the doubtful card.

14. When the leader's partner opens a suit, it does not necessarily follow that he is strong in it—he may be simply playing up to weakness in Dummy's hand. For this reason, his partner should carefully compare the card led with those held by himself and Dummy. By this means he will as a rule be able to detect the exact nature of the lead on the first round.

Also, a small card led by the leader's partner must not be taken to convey the same definite information which it would do if played by the original leader himself. For instance:—the leader's partner holds *ace, king,* 2 of a plain suit and Dummy holds the *5, 4 and 3.* If the leader's partner has to open this suit, he should play the 2—it is the best chance of making three tricks.

Many cases similar to this will occur in which conventions and the information game must give way before the greater prospective advantage of immediately winning tricks. Dummy's hand will most generally bring about this necessity; but, as the necessity arises very frequently in-

deed, the dealer's adversaries should be always on their guard against drawing inferences on too hard and fast a line.

15. When the leader opens with a small card and (Dummy holding nothing of importance) the leader's partner wins with the 10 and returns the king, then the queen and knave are also marked in his hand. He would not have finessed against his partner, and therefore the 10 must be the lowest card of the sequence *king*, *queen*, *knave*, *10*. The return of the high card is, in this case, the most direct method of showing the quantity and quality of the suit held by the player, and it is therefore accepted as conventional.

16. The information to be gathered from a partner's *first discard* has been already discussed, but, as the subject is one essentially connected with "drawing inferences," some reference to it, if only by way of reminder, is necessary.
The object a player must have in view in making his *first discard* is to direct attention to his own best suit—*i.e.*, the suit which he would wish his partner to lead to him.

> In order to convey this information, convention has laid it down that *against no-trumps the first discard must be from weakness*, but *against a suit-declaration the first discard must be from the suit which the discarder wishes his partner to open.*

The discard from weakness against a no-trump declaration would appear to result in concealing, to some extent, the exact quarter in which the discarder's strength may be looked for. But, in actual practice, this is not so. A discard, it must be remembered, does not as a rule occur at the very beginning of the game—more generally, one or more suits will have been opened beforehand. In these suits, the discarder's strength or weakness will have been already made manifest. With the help of this and the further help of Dummy's exposed hand, there will rarely be a difficulty in selecting the correct suit to lead.

INFERENCES TO BE DRAWN FROM THE DEALER'S PLAY.

Although the dealer will use every artifice to deceive his opponents and to conceal both the cards he holds and the intentions he has in mind, it is nevertheless only possible for him to achieve this result in a modified form. There are so many things that go to disclose the dealer's tactics and

to "give away" his false cards that an ordinarily observant player should seldom fall into the trap.

As an instance of how easily a false card may be detected, take the following case:—

The leader opens with the ace of spades and follows with the 9; the leader's partner and Dummy hold small cards in the suit; and the dealer wins the 9 with the king. *The dealer must hold the queen.*

The explanation is very simple. By means of the "Eleven" rule, we know for a certainty that the dealer holds *two* cards better than the 9, for they are not in the hand of Dummy or in that of the leader's partner. One of these cards is the king which he has just played; the other must be either the queen, knave or 10. But, clearly, it cannot be the knave or 10; for, if it were, then the dealer would be throwing away a trick by winning the 9 with the king when he could equally well have won it with a less valuable card.

Nor is it so very difficult to place other unknown cards in his hand.

For example:—

(a) If Dummy, being the leader, plays a small

card from *ace, king and others*, it is practically certain that the dealer holds the queen.

(b) If Dummy leads a small card from a *king-queen* suit, the ace or knave is marked in the dealer's hand.

(c) If Dummy leads an honour which is *weakly supported*, the dealer is almost sure to be strong in the suit.

(d) If Dummy *discards a winning card*, it may be taken for granted that the dealer has command of the suit and is making Dummy unblock.

And so on.

As to diagnosing the dealer's policy, here are some obvious points: —

(a) If the dealer has had the opportunity, and is afraid, to lead trumps either from his own hand or from Dummy's, it is generally safe to assume that a trump lead would tell to the dealer's disadvantage. His opponents, therefore, may safely play a trump *up to the weak hand*.

(b) When the dealer declines to trump an adverse winning card, it is probable that he is *short* in the trump suit and cannot afford to be forced. In these circum-

stances, the adversaries should persist in forcing him.

(c) When the dealer leads a small card of a suit in which Dummy is very weak, it is a clear indication that he is in difficulties, and the adversaries should at once play an aggressive game. It may be that he is only trying to place the lead in the hand of the fourth player, but (supposing the dealer to have made the declaration) this is unlikely, as it is rarely the policy of the strong hand to leave the lead on his right.

(d) Should the dealer lead a small card of a suit in which Dummy holds *not more than two small cards*, it is probable that the dealer has not much strength in the suit and that his object is to ultimately force Dummy. The adversaries, therefore, will generally be right in trying to disarm Dummy by a trump lead.

These, as I said before, are obvious methods of arriving at some idea of the dealer's policy. When it comes to actual play, the reader will discover many other means which will help him towards the same end.

INFERENCES TO BE DRAWN BY THE DEALER.

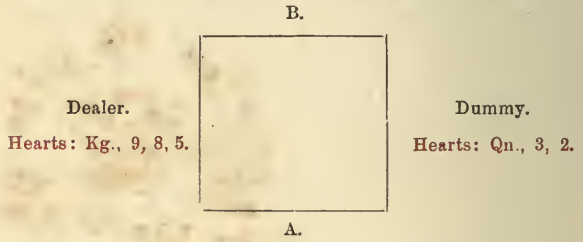
The dealer has, in one respect, the whole position at his mercy—the signals passing between his opponents are signals also made to *him*. The only difficulty is to detect them and, having detected, to remember them. This will be found a by no means easy matter.

Still the dealer can, and should, notice all the main points. He should notice the quantity and quality disclosed by the adversaries in opening their suits; he should remember the number and value of the cards of that suit remaining in either of their hands after so many rounds have been played; he should watch the number shown when a player returns his partner's suit; he should certainly not miss seeing a "call for trumps," and, having seen it, he should not fail to act upon it, in this way —he should place the preponderance of adverse trump strength in the hand of the player who "calls", and should then regulate the management of his own trumps in such fashion as to best combat this newly-disclosed state of affairs. And, lastly, he should be very much alive to the information which may be gained by constantly resorting to the "Eleven" rule and the other indications resulting from the conventional leads and signals.

The dealer should take the utmost possible advantage of these.

Here is a case illustrating the information given by the lead:—

B opens with the 10 of hearts, and the cards held by Dummy and the dealer are as shown:



The dealer knows *at once* that B has led the highest card of a suit containing not more than three cards. *Therefore A must hold ace, knave and at least one other.* Consequently Dummy should play the queen on the 10, and then Dummy and the dealer must (by leading through A when the opportunity offers) make three tricks in the suit, whatever A may play to the first round.

If Dummy does not cover with the queen, A can win two tricks by passing the 10 and waiting for the suit to be led again by one of the other players.

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