The Fine Points of Auction Bridge

Revised Edition

Florence Irwin

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The Development of Auction Bridge under the New Count

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PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

WHAT was once the "New Count" in Auction, is now the only count. The advantages of the present scoring-system are too numerous and too apparent to admit of any possible return to the old suit-values.

This being the case, it has seemed proper to issue a revised edition of *The Fine Points of Auction Bridge*. On its first appearance it discussed both the old count and the new; in its new form it deals with the latter only.

Even so, it does not cover the same ground as does my second book, *The Development of Auction Bridge under the New Count*. Each book is a complement of the other; the second would not make sense unless you knew all that the first tells you; on the other hand, it carries you much farther along the road on which you have already started,—the Road to Perfection.

I think I might liken *The Fine Points of Auction Bridge* to the sign-post that points you to some museum and the ticket that admits

you within its door; while *The Development of Auction Bridge* is like the catalogue that describes in detail all the treasures that lie spread before your eyes.

F. I.

Hastings-on-Hudson,
February, 1913.

PREFACE

ALTHOUGH it may seem, to the casual reader, that there are already enough Bridge books and Auction books on the market, the real Auction devotee knows that no two books are ever alike, and that the last word on the subject is never said.

Moreover, the game has undergone such wonderful developments in the past year that it was necessary that some record of them should be made.

After the publication of certain portions of this little volume in serial form, the demand for them in book form was so great that I feel justified in adding one more to the list of Auction books, without further apology.

I have made it my chief aim to put before my readers all the various schools of bid and play, with their strong points and their flaws. It is not enough to know only one point of view—even though you may consider it the best. Any book will tell you what the author himself thinks on the subject. I have tried to present

the opinions and theories of the various contending authorities.

And, last but not least, I have the good fortune to be just in time to explain the *New Count.* This latest development of the game has sprung into immediate and universal popularity, and is sweeping the country like wildfire. It has given to Auction its one lacking touch—a perfect balance between red suits and black,—and has made it as nearly perfect a bidding-game as it is possible to conceive.

F. I.

Hastings-on-Hudson,
March, 1912.

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The Fine Points of Auction Bridge

THERE are many persons who have some knowledge of Auction Bridge, but who are perfectly conscious that their game needs improving. It is for their use that this book is intended. Its object is to show the practical workings of the game; to give a few terse rules to cover the situations that are constantly arising; to answer the questions that seem still to be asked, after the reading of other books on the same subject; to describe the various "schools" of play adopted by contending authorities (thus making it necessary to read one book only, instead of six or eight); and, in short, to bridge the chasm that yawns between *fair* Auction and *excellent* Auction.

In the first place, let no one frighten you into believing that Auction is a very difficult game. It is not. To the Bridge player of average skill

and intelligence, it should present no great obstacles. But it is *subtle* to the last degree; subtle to a point that the ordinary player does not suspect.

Take, for instance, a situation that often arises: your side and the other side have one game each on the rubber, but they are far ahead of you in penalties. You open your hand and find a perfectly good no-trumper, and you get the bid at "two no-trumps," realizing that you can easily make three tricks and go game and rubber.

But the adversaries are so far ahead (in penalties) that you do not dare to take rubber unless you can do it on a grand slam, which would put your total a little ahead of theirs. In other words, you may take eight tricks or you may take thirteen, but nothing in between —not nine, nor ten, nor eleven, nor twelve.

It becomes necessary to do all your finessing in the very beginning, to locate the high cards which you fail to hold, and to decide definitely which you will take, your eight tricks or your thirteen.

Could any situation be more delicate or call for more dexterous handling? Plain Bridge could offer nothing to match it.

In the second place, never forget that Auction is an *of*fensive, not a *de*fensive game. By this

I do not mean that you should always try to capture the bid and play the hand. That is the most rudimentary of errors, and players of that description resemble nothing so much as a quartette of silly children quarrelling for the possession of a ball. But I *do* mean that the timid and hesitating player, the one who is afraid to take long chances at a critical moment, is the one who is left far behind the procession. It is necessary to fight every minute of the time.

The Deal

The deal in Auction goes around the table regularly, just as in plain Bridge, but the *play* of the hand may be anywhere, *i. e.*, the hand may be played by the dealer, his partner, or either of his adversaries; whoever makes the final bid plays the hand. This sometimes makes confusion in the next deal; every one can remember who *played* the last hand, but not who *dealt* it.

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

When the dealer is dealing, his partner should "make" the still pack and put it down *at his own right hand*. It would be bad form to reach across the adversary who is to deal next and

place it at his right hand. So it is placed on the right hand of the maker, and when it becomes time for a new deal, the player who finds the still pack at his left hand is the new dealer. He should pick up the pack, pass it to the previous dealer—*i. e.* the player on his right—to cut, and should then proceed to deal, while his partner "makes" the other pack and lays it at his own right hand.

The still pack should never be trifled with, never touched except for the business of the game. Strict attention to this detail will obviate all trouble as to the deal, and will do away with stupid questions, such as, "Whose deal is it?" "You dealt last, did n't you?" and so forth. The game will progress smoothly, and one of the marks which distinguish good Auction from "ragged" Auction will be obliterated.

The Score

No one can score below the line except the side that plays the hand. The opposition can score above the line only, in penalties and honors.

There is no score below the line unless the player who gets the bid makes all that he bid,

or more. If he fails to do this, the adversaries score above the line, fifty for every trick which the player bid but failed to make. If there has been doubling, this fifty is raised to a hundred; if redoubling, to two hundred.

If you underbid your hand, you can score all that you make over your bid; if you overbid it, you can score nothing, not even what you take.

The adversaries take fifty above the line for every trick that you bid and fail to take. For instance, if you get the bid at "three hearts," it means that you have contracted to take the book and three odd in hearts—nine tricks in all. If you take four odd, or five, or a grand slam, you can count them all, at their ordinary value of eight a trick. But there is no "bonus," no reward of any kind for keeping your contract, or for exceeding it (except the value of the extra tricks themselves), *unless* the bid has been doubled.

If you announce your ability to take "three hearts," and every one thinks you probably can, there is no credit to you in taking them and taking more. But if the adversary thinks you cannot, and announces this by doubling, and if, on top of this, you prove that you can, *then* you get your tricks at a doubled value (sixteen apiece), and you also get a "bonus" of fifty

above the line as a reward for keeping your contract *in spite of his double.* And if you make any tricks over your contract, each one is worth its doubled value below the line, *and an extra fifty above.*

For instance, you bid "three hearts"; you are doubled and yet succeed in taking five hearts (*i. e.*, eleven tricks in all). They are worth 16 apiece below the line (80), you get a bonus of 50 above the line for the mere keeping of your contract in spite of a double, and you also get 50 above the line for each of the two tricks you took in excess of your contract,—making a total of 80 points below the line and 150 above, plus your honors. If you redouble, your tricks are raised to 32 apiece, your bonus to 100, and the value of each extra trick to 100.

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

If, on the other hand, you overbid your hand, you can score nothing,—not even the tricks that you take. If you bid "three hearts" and take two hearts (*i. e.*, eight tricks), you have failed in your contract and can score nothing; and the opposition scores 50 for the trick that you bid and failed to take. If they have doubled you,

they get 100; if you have redoubled, they get 200. Fifty, or 100, or 200, for each trick for which you contracted and failed to take, *but all above the line.* And you can score nothing except for any honors you may chance to hold.

Bear in mind the fact that, while there is "rank" below the line, there is none above. By "rank" I mean that the suits differ in value, —hearts are worth 8, no-trump 10, diamonds 7, and so forth. *But every trick that you lose gives your adversary 50, regardless of suit.* He gets just as much if you lose a spade as if you lose a no-trump. That is why "a spade" is the most expensive declaration there is. You make so little if you win, and lose just as much if you lose.

Play for the Grand Total—*i. e.*, the sum of the points above and below the line.

When Auction first appeared, every one's advice was to play conservatively for the game below the line, just as we had always done in Bridge. Now we have changed all that, for players have come to realize that it is the penalties that count, the penalties (doubled or undoubled) that distinguish the score from that of ordinary Bridge, and that bring home the winnings.

I do not mean to belittle the rubber; but the fact remains that its value of 250 is but two and a half times the value of the Bridge rubber, while

there is no estimating what one may win, at Auction, in penalties above the line.

If I could impress permanently on my readers the value of these points above the line, I should be well on my way towards grounding them in one of the first essentials of good Auction. If you "set" the adversary for one trick (undoubled), it seems very slight to you for "it is only fifty above the line!"

Only Fifty! Do you realize that fifty is as much as five no-trump tricks are worth? And who is there who does not feel some slight elation in bringing home five tricks in no-trump? And, if the trick you steal from the adversary has been doubled, your winnings of 100 points are as great as the value of ten tricks in no-trump,—greater than the trick and honor values of a no-trump small slam (unless you hold more than half of the aces)!

I beg you to digest this point and never to fail to appreciate your fifty, or your hundred, simply because it is above the line. Take all the penalties you can get, "set" the adversaries for tricks, doubled or undoubled, whenever the chance comes your way, and you can often afford to look with pitying eyes, and from the height of a superior score, on the winners of the rubbers.

As a rule, don't be too anxious to play the hands in the beginning of a rubber. Of course, if you have a *very* good declaration, make it and play the hand—particularly if you can go game, or keep the adversary from going game. But when you are not dealer and are not forced to bid, use your good hands to *defeat* the make, in the beginning of a rubber. If you can pile up 300 or 400 in penalties, the ultimate result of the rubber need have no terrors for you; if you win it, well and good, for it will be a big one; if you lose it, your points above the line will offset the 250 and leave you even with the game. To sum up, then, *generally try to "set" the adversary in the beginning of a rubber, and to play the hands toward the end of it.*

Encouragement and Discouragement

ENCOURAGEMENT and discouragement signals are exactly the same in Auction as in plain Bridge; but, unfortunately, they are far too little understood and practised. *Every seven, or card higher than seven, should mean encouragement on the first round of a suit; every card under seven should mean discouragement.* In a trump make, if your partner leads an ace and you hold the king of that suit, you should play a seven or higher on his ace; that will say to him: "I have the king; come on!" To play under seven, signifies that you do not hold the king. In no-trump, if your partner should lead a king, it would mean that he held a seven-card suit or a three-honor suit; now if you should hold the queen of that suit and two or three small, your duty would be to throw your queen on to his king, in order to unblock. But if you hold five or more cards headed by the queen, your suit may be longer than his and you may want your queen for re-entry; then you must give him an "encouragement-card" (seven or higher)

on his king, to show that the queen is in your hand.

This division of the cards, from seven up and down, makes also the most faultless discard. Whether you discard from weakness or from strength, there are times when it is awkward; the weak discard is often too vague; the strength discard will occasionally lose you a trick. But if you adopt a system by which seven or higher means strength in that suit, and anything under seven means weakness, your troubles will be at an end. For if the strong discard will cripple your suit, you can throw a low card from a weak suit; if it should be necessary to show strength with one discard, a seven or higher will do it. This may seem a little complicated at first, but a few trials will accustom you to it and convince you of its excellence.

Another signal that is too little understood is the one-card echo at no-trump. If the make be no-trump and your partner leads a small card, and if Dummy plays a card that you cannot cover, *you should play your next-to-highest card*, so that your partner may read his suit. For instance, your partner leads a six of hearts from a combination headed by the ace, the king, or both; Dummy plays the queen and you hold jack-ten and two small. You must play your *ten*, not one of your small cards. Then

your partner will know that you have one card higher than the ten; he will see the queen on the board, and the ace-king in his own hand, and he will immediately credit you with the jack and be able to place all the high cards in his suit. This one-card echo in no-trump is invaluable; but it is so rarely found, even among good players, that when you come across a partner who uses it, you feel you have struck a veritable gold-mine.

The Book

The book is always six tricks for the player, and he must take as many over it as his bid calls for —one, two, three, or whatever he may have bid. *The book for the opposition* (the adversaries) *is always the difference between the bid and seven.* If the player bids "three hearts," the adversaries' book closes at four tricks (three from seven leaves four), and every trick that they may take over that counts them fifty undoubled or a hundred doubled—above the line, of course. If the bid is five, the adversaries' book is two; if the bid is one, the adversaries' book is six, the same as the player's. In other words, the adversaries' book is all that the player *dares let them take.* If he bids two on anything, he contracts for eight tricks—the book (6), and two more. Eight from thirteen leaves five, so five is all that he dares let the adversary take;

it is therefore their book, and anything over five will count fifty for them and keep the player from scoring at all. If the player bids one, the adversaries' book is six; if two, their book is five; if three, their book is four, and so on. *The adversaries should always close their book when it is complete* (whether it be two, three, four, or five tricks) *and keep the counting tricks outside it.*

The Phraseology

To take tricks that the player has bid is to "set" him. You "set" him for two, three, or four tricks, as the case may be.

To change your partner's bid to a bid in another suit (when the intervening adversary has not bid) is to "overcall."

A "backward" bid or a "warning" bid is to overcall your adversary in a lower suit, with no bid from the intervening adversary.

In making a bid, never use an unnecessary word. Clip your bid of all excrescences till it stands as light and as clean as a race-horse. The one drawback to Auction is that it is necessarily some little time before the bidding is over and you settle down to the business of the play. Make that time as short as possible by the promptness and the brevity of your bid. Say "a spade" or "one spade," "two clubs," "a

no-trump," "two diamonds,"—but never, "Well, I think I will try a diamond." And never, "one *in* diamonds," or "one *on* diamonds"; never use a preposition at all, simply name the number of tricks in your bid and the suit in which you bid them. Make your bid clearly and distinctly. Any one who fails to understand the bid may ask to have it repeated *at the time, but never after it is once covered.* And when the final bid is allowed to stand, and three players have passed in succession, *no one may ask information as to any previous bid.* The final bid, however, may be asked at any stage of the game.

As the bid goes round, each player follows this rule of bidding in as few words as possible, unless he does not wish to bid, in which case he says "No," "By," or—if he wishes to use the term "pass"—he repeats the previous bid, as: "Pass two diamonds." The word "pass" is often mistaken for "hearts" and should therefore never be used alone; if the bid preceding yours is "a diamond," and you do not wish to bid, you say "By," "No," or "Pass a diamond." And remember that every bid must be made audibly. Some players have a habit of striking the table with their fingers to show that they pass. This is contrary to rule, and gives too much chance for a system of rap-signalling.

The Opening Bid

THE dealer is forced to open the bidding. Any one else may pass, but he may not. His is the "forced bid," all others are the "free bids." Remember that the bidding on the first round is rarely final. It is merely a "show-up" of high cards. Get away from the old Bridge idea that your first chance is your last. You may come to change your bid entirely, on later rounds; it frequently happens that you do. But *to bid on a suit on the first round should show that you hold the ace, the king, or possibly the queen of that suit*,—never that your suit is headed by anything lower than a queen. Subsequent rounds may bring different bids, but to make a suit bid on the first round should mean that, and that alone. To open the bidding with "a diamond" does not necessarily mean that you are determined to play the hand at diamonds; but it *does* mean that you positively hold the ace, the king, or the queen of diamonds and can command the suit either immediately or after

the first or second round. You *may* have a perfectly wonderful diamond make; if you have, it will come out in the later bidding. But your opening bid does not necessarily mean that; it is not the *make*, but the *bid* for the make—the "show-up,"—and it tells your partner that you have a playable suit headed by one of the three high cards and can stop it at no-trump.

Never bid on a jack-suit or a ten-suit on the first round. It is too misleading to your partner. While six or seven hearts headed by the jack or ten was a perfectly good heart *make* in plain Bridge, it is not a good heart *bid* in Auction. Grasp at once the difference between the bid and the make. Even in Auction it will sometimes happen that you will make hearts on seven to the jack, but it will always be on a later round and in the light of information received on the first round of bids. Also, it will not mislead your partner on a later round, as it certainly would on the opening one. You have a better club bid holding the ace and five little spots, than you have holding ten clubs with the jack at their head, and lacking the ace, king, and queen. Remember that Auction is a game of high cards,—a game of strength rather than length.

If you, being dealer, pick up your cards and find you have a no-trump hand, my advice to you is to bid "a no-trump." Of course, there are many excellent players who bid "a spade" on every no-trump hand, and of them I shall speak later. Of course, too, they have excellent arguments in favor of their system, all of which it will be my business to explain to you and to refute with arguments which I consider still better. For, of course, (in the third place), it is the business of every Auction player to master all the various systems and to understand them when he sees them in his adversaries, even though they are diametrically opposed to the one that he chooses to play. *The best Auction player is the one who best understands the various schools of bidding, but sticks to his own for play.* There are those who insist that you must vary the meaning of your bid, in order to mystify the adversary. What about your partner? Are you to leave him floundering? And that is what will happen unless you are permitted to establish a system of kicks under the table. For if you attempt to bewilder the adversary by any set system of bids, he will understand it as well as your partner; and if you attempt it by sudden wild flights into the unexpected, your partner will be as much at

sea as he. While nothing is worse than a "wooden" player, with a stiff set of rules that can never be broken, *I still hold that it is far more necessary to give information to your partner* than to withhold it from the adversary.

You, then, being dealer, look first for no-trump when you pick up your hand. There are many reasons for the opening no-trump declaration: in the first place, no-trump is the only suit in which it is possible to go game with only three-odd tricks. Then, there will often be, on the same deal, two hands either of which could bid "one no-trump," but neither of which could bid "two no-trump." *If you get it first, it stands to reason that the other man can't.* Again, a declaration of "one no-trump" will force your adversary to a two-bid, and will sometimes prevent his naming his suit to his partner. This will shut out information between your adversaries and will often hamper them seriously.

A no-trump may be bid on a much lighter hand in Auction than in Bridge. You frequently bid it without an ace, because a hundred aces held against you are not the terrifying possibility in Auction that they were in Bridge; there are so many ways in Auction to get a hundred points. But to bid no-trump without

an ace, you should hold considerable general strength, for this reason: whatever you lead, the adversary can stop your progress with the ace and begin on his own suit. *Bid no-trump if you have it; but, I beg of you, don't bid it if you have n't, unless to save a critical situation.*

I have seen dealers pick up a hand and, finding a combination similar to this,

♡ K Q 8
♣ A K Q 9 5
♢ A Q
♠ K Q 9

insist on bidding "a club" (instead of a no-trump), saying they will bid the no-trump "when it comes round again." And it never comes round! For, while it is true that you *generally* have more than one chance to bid, it sometimes happens that you have not. With so many good cards in the dealer's hand, his partner might have a Yarborough, and the adversaries (holding the remaining high cards between them) might refuse to take the dealer out of a club bid which would give him so little even if he made it. So he is forced to play the hand as clubs, when he wanted no-trump, and to take 6 a trick, instead of 10.

Failing to find no-trump, search your hand

for a suit declaration,—one that holds the ace, king, or queen. Holding two suits of equal strength, bid the higher one. In the infancy of Auction, players used to bid their lower suit first, so that, if they were raised or doubled, they could go to the higher one without increase of contract. But this was found to be a poor system; it would often happen that no one would bid against the original declaration, and the Declarant was left to play a low suit when he was perfectly able to play a high one. Always bid on the highest suit that your hand permits.

I differ utterly with the authorities who advise you never to bid, "a diamond" unless you can go game on it. The mere fact of knowing that you protect diamonds will often enable your partner to bid no-trump, and take game, when he would have been totally unable to bid it without your diamond information. Suppose he holds a hand like this:

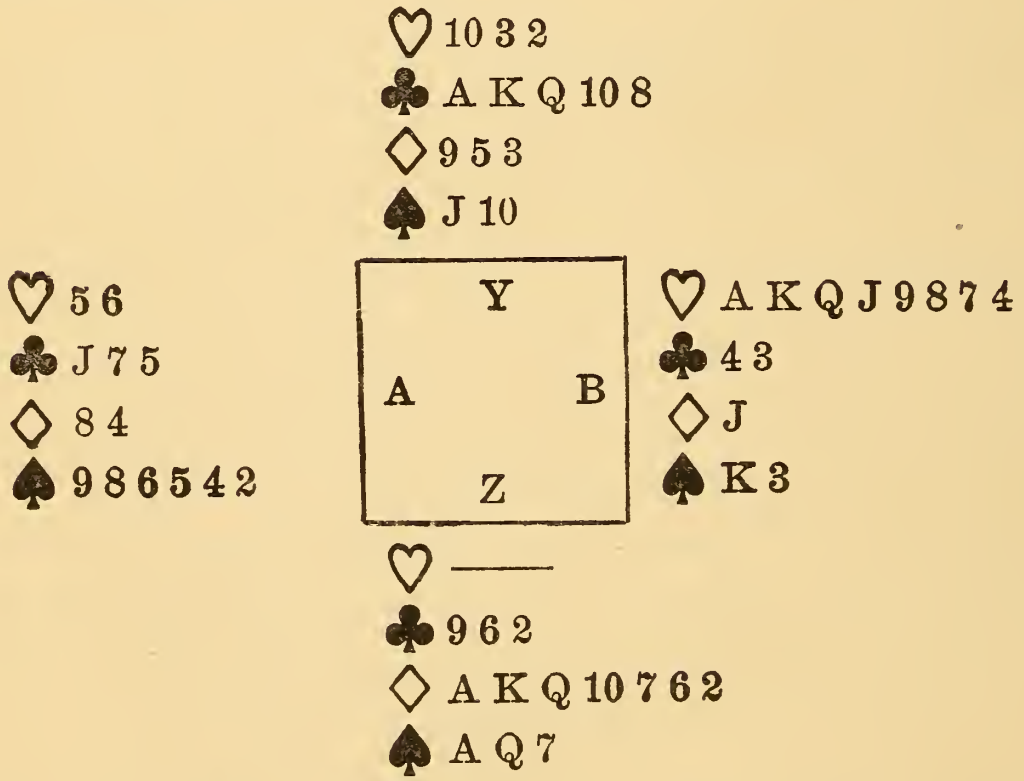
♡ A K Q
♣ J 10 5
◇ 8 6 5
♠ A K 8 6

He certainly could not bid no-trump alone,

with two unprotected suits. But with the comforting assurance that you command diamonds, or will command them after the first round or two, his no-trump declaration is a perfectly possible thing. And it takes two tricks less to go game in no-trump than in diamonds. Why throw away such an opportunity for concerted action?

I am often asked whether it is better to bid the total value of your hand, or simply one trick in its good suit. As a rule, one trick. There are occasions when you wish to make a "shut-out" bid, and keep the adversary from bidding at all, and then you will make a higher bid. For instance, if you have been fighting hard for the rubber and lack but 6 or 8 points of it, and if you open your hand and find wonderful clubs, a side ace, and a suit either lacking or short, I should bid two, or even three, clubs! The short suit would make no-trump risky, the clubs are all that you need to go rubber, and your bid will force the adversaries to keep silent, or to bid more than one, thus giving them a harder contract. But, generally, content yourself with a bid of one trick, to open. You may need information from partner or adversary, and if you bid too high you won't get it.

The following situation arose in actual play; and, in passing, let me say that all the hands here quoted were actual hands. It is as easy to arrange a "trick" hand to prove a certain point, as it is to quote Scripture to any end whatever. But to take hands *as they run*, and dissect them, is to get at the practical workings of the game. The score on the game in question was love-all on the rubber-game, and the cards lay as follows:



Z (the dealer) bids "one diamond" only, because, with a higher suit (hearts) against him, it is essential for him to know the position of the clubs; lacking this knowledge, it is im-

possible for him to judge how high he dares bid his diamonds against the hearts—should they be bid. Y gives the desired club information by bidding "two clubs," which he could not have done if Z had opened with a higher bid. And, assured of the position of the high clubs, Z can afford to bid his hand up to "six diamonds" (a small slam), if necessary. For he will not lose a single trump round; he will ruff hearts from the beginning; he will not lose a club round (judging from his partner's bid); and, with the king of spades in either Y's hand or B's he will make both his ace and his queen of spades. I will repeat this hand later and give the subsequent bidding and the play. At present, our business is with the opening bid only.

The best general rule for the opening bid is to use the process of elimination. Look first for the highest suit (no-trump), and bid it if you have it. Failing no-trump, look for the next best bid (royals); and failing that, keep on down the line in regular order, making the very best bid that your hand warrants, and leaving spades in reserve for a poor hand *or a waiting hand.*

A no-trump is bid on a much lighter hand in Auction than it was in Bridge, for two reasons: First, you no longer dread your adversary

holding one hundred aces against you; those hundred aces used to be as great as the rubber-value, while now, the rubber has greatly increased in value, and there are many ways of gleaning a hundred points at a blow. And the second reason is that nine times out of ten, some one bids against your no-trump and you don't have to play it. In Bridge, to say no-trump was to play no-trump.

A suit-bid, on the contrary, should be a safe make, for the reason that your partner is apt to raise it. This is especially true of the too high suits (royals and hearts); this will be made clear to you, later, when I explain why your partner will never change your royal-bid, or heart-bid, to a no-trump,—when there has been no bid from the intervening adversary. A diamond-bid, or a club, he may be only too glad to change to a no-trump, secure in the knowledge that you hold the ace or king of that suit. But a heart-bid, or a royal-bid, he will let stand; so you must be able to play it when you make it.

There is a very important protective law (Law 48) that provides that "the loss at a one-spade make is limited to one hundred." That means that if you bid "one spade" and every one else passes, the adversaries cannot score more than

one hundred against you (and that above the line), even if they make a grand slam. This law was formed with the idea of tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, and is so important that it caused the great English authority, Dalton, to rewrite his previous book. It is an extremely fair thing that the penalty should not be too heavy when all the poor cards lie on the side that is forced to bid; and if the dealer and his partner both hold weak hands, they will be wise to take refuge under this law and leave the bid at "one spade" rather than risk disaster by a weak bid in another suit where they can lose fifty (or a hundred) for every trick that goes against them. It also does away with the necessity for taking your partner out of a one-spade bid, by bidding *something*—whether you have it or not. If he is weak, and you are weak, be very glad to let his "one spade" stand, and to limit your loss to one hundred.

Remember, though, that this shelter is provided for you in a bid of "*one spade*" only. If you have bid "two spades," or "three spades," you can lose as much at them as in any other suit.

To sum up, then, for the original bid:

Look first for no-trump and if you have it bid it.

Failing to find no-trumps, look for royals, and remember that a suit-bid should be a make.

Follow this process with hearts, diamonds, and clubs, in proper order.

And:

Failing to find any of these, bid "one spade," to show a poor hand or a waiting hand.

Subsequent Bids

EVERY player, after the dealer, may pass, raise the bid, or double; the bid continues to go round *until three successive players have passed.* Raising the bid is either bringing it to a higher numerical value than the previous bid, or bringing it to the same numerical value with more tricks in it. For instance, "four clubs" would be a higher bid than "three hearts" and would outrank the latter although they are both worth 24. But it is harder to take four tricks than three.

When you double, you undertake to keep the player from taking as many tricks as he has bid; not to take that many yourself. Thus, if a player bids "three diamonds" (9 tricks), and you think you can hold him down to 8, or to anything under 9, you double him. If he wins his 9 tricks, he gets them at a doubled value and gets, besides, a bonus of 50 points above the line for keeping his contract in spite of a double. If you succeed in defeating him, you take 100

above the line for every trick that you steal from his contract.

Doubling is not bidding, but it keeps the bidding open. If Z bids, A doubles, and the two other players pass, Z still plays the hand, and A simply tries to take enough tricks to defeat the contract. If, on the other hand, Z bids and A "raises the bid" (*i. e.*, makes a higher bid in the same, or any other suit), and the two other players pass, then A plays the hand, having succeeded in taking the bid away from Z. There is sometimes confusion between the terms "raising the bid," and "doubling the bid." "Raising" is making a new bid that outranks the last, and taking the play for yourself; but it leaves the trick-values normal. "Doubling" is leaving the last player to play his own bid, but undertaking to defeat him in so doing; and it doubles the trick-values. Doubling can take place between adversaries only. No one can double his partner.

Z having opened the bidding, it passes to the second player, A. Let A remember that "the cleverest thing you can do is to say nothing when you have nothing to say." In other words, let him pass unless he has a real reason for bidding. It is too common an error to feel that one must *always* bid, and I have been simply

astounded to see the hands on which some players feel that they "must give information." The only thing that saves such a player from reaping the fruits of his poor judgment is that the others at the table may be equally foolish; but put two such players against two real Auction players and see how sorry will be their plight! Z's bid is "forced,"—he *must* bid; A's bid is "free,"—for Heaven's sake let him enjoy the privilege of that freedom. *At no Auction would you bid on a thing unless you wanted it and had the wherewithal to pay for it!* And I can assert most positively that the longer you play, and the nearer your game approaches perfection, the less you will bid. Then Auction becomes a real game instead of a silly squabble. And you will come to dread the deal for yourself or your partner (when you are forced to make a declaration), and to welcome those between times of freedom when you can employ your discretion whether to use a good hand for bidding, or for defeating the bid; and when a poor one need no longer be a terror to you.

But, to return to A's bid:

If A holds a poor hand he should pass.

If he holds a no-trumper and Z has bid "a spade," he should pass. *Rarely take the adversary out of a spade bid when you hold a no-*

trumper (unless to go game); *he has a poor hand, you have a good one; use it to defeat him, and take fifty a trick instead of ten.* If the bidding goes around again, you can still declare your no-trump.

If A holds a suit with very high honors, he should declare it. Those honors may be as much, or more, than he could make by the spade-penalty.

If Z has made a bid in a high suit, and A holds sufficient strength, he should outbid Z, or make what is known as a "forcing-bid." A "forcing-bid" is made, not with the idea of getting the play, but of pushing the other side higher. For *it is always a pity to let the other side get the standing bid at one odd in any high suit.* It is so easy to make one, that they can afford to take all sorts of risks and finesses and probably go game. They should be given a harder job, if possible; if you can push them to two, they will have to buckle down to the business of taking those two, and will be afraid to do much finessing—so you may save game. Thus, if Z has bid "a heart," A will sometimes want to bid "two clubs" or "two diamonds," simply to push Z up. But A must remember that a "forcing-bid does n't always force"; instead of going up, the other side may let him play his

"two clubs," or "two diamonds," and may even double him; so that, unless he has some foundation for his bid, he will be in a sorry plight. And here follows one of the most important of Auction rules, one that I wish I could carve on the brain of every player:

Never make a risky bid unless to go game or to save game!

Another point for every Auction player to remember is this:

Never bid no-trump unless you stop the adversary's suit!

This is the one iron rule, the one that cannot be tampered with. In Bridge, you bid no-trump with a weak suit, because you hope your partner has help for you there. But when a suit has been declared against you, you *must* hold a stopper in it, in order to bid no-trump. If Z bids "a heart" and A bids "a no-trump," A says plainly to his partner, "I can stop hearts." That means, he holds the ace, the king with one, the queen with two, the jack with three, or so on. He can keep the adversary from galloping down the line in hearts. A's partner (B), secure in this knowledge, can afford to bid on up to two or three in no-trump, if it becomes necessary and he has good assistance, because he knows his partner will stop the hearts. Never

forget this rule and never, I beg of you, break it: Never bid no-trump unless you stop the adversary's suit.

This is particularly binding on the first round of bids which is really a declaration of your cards. Subsequent rounds are different, but the first round demands a strict adherence to the rules. And the man who first bids no-trump, after a suit-bid by the adversary, declares that he holds a stopper in that suit.

It sometimes happens that Z opens with "a no-trump" and A finds himself with a hand on which he also would like to bid "a no-trump." Shall he pass, shall he double, or shall he bid "two no-trumps"?

Rarely double a bid of one. It is too easy for the adversary to take one. And if you double, and he takes it, you make him a present of his trick at a doubled value and fifty more for a "bonus." Try to force him to "two no-trumps" by making a bid of "two hearts" or "two diamonds," if you have the material. If he takes the force and goes to "two no-trumps," then double him, if you like. If you are unable to make this suit-bid, pass, or bid "two no-trumps" (for it often happens that two adversaries will bid on the same suit). If you pass, yet defeat them, well and good; you get your 50 a trick. But

if 10 will put them game, or getting the play will put you game, bid "two no-trumps" yourself. For there is a saying that "the play is as good as a trick." This means that you can usually take one or even two more tricks by playing the hand yourself and being the engineer of its fate. The adversary who first bid "a no-trump" will probably double you if you bid "two no-trumps." For he will argue that if he could take seven tricks in that suit he can stop your taking eight. But this is not always so; if you play the hand, he will be forced to discard on your good suits, thus unguarding honors and weakening himself materially. Were I forced to make a general rule as to when to pass a "one no-trump" bid, and when to change it to "two no-trumps," I should say:

If the value of a trick will not mean game to either side, and if "one no-trump" has been bid against you and you have no good suit-bid, generally "pass" on a hand of general strength; but rarely expect to defeat a one-bid. If you hold a suit in which it is possible to bid "two," bid it in order to "force" the no-trump. If the odd trick will mean rubber to the adversary, and you hold simply a general hand with no one suit that warrants a two-bid, bid two "no-trumps," yourself.

To sum up, then:

First.—Don't double any one-bids; force them higher, first.

Second.—If you cannot make a forcing bid, pass, if the points are not vital (that is, if they will not make game or save game).

Third.—If the points *are* vital, and you cannot take the bid away by changing the suit, take it by bidding "two" in the same suit in which the adversary has bid "one."

Rarely bid two in any suit unless you hold ace or king. It is too misleading to your partner. He has a perfect right to place you with the ace or the king of any suit in which you have bid two—and to go on bidding accordingly. This rule applies to the first round of bidding; on a later round you might say "two hearts" on six or seven to the queen or queen-jack (and on information received); but do not say it on the preliminary round.

The bid comes now to the third player, Y. If Z and A have both bid, Y has two sources of information on which to base his bid or his silence. If Z, only, has bid and A has passed, Y's position is different. If Z has bid "a no-trump," and A has passed, Y should pass—no matter what help he has, for what better than a no-trump can he want? It would be senseless to say "two no-trumps," for it would only

increase the difficulty of Z's contract, and if they make two, they count them anyhow. If Y has wonderful hearts, or wonderful diamonds, he is, of course, at liberty to declare "two hearts," or "two diamonds" over Z's "one no-trump"; but let him remember how much less are the trick-values. If Z has bid "a no-trump," and A has covered with "two diamonds" (or "two hearts"), *then* Y can go to "two no-trumps" if he stops the diamonds (or the hearts), but not otherwise.

If Z has bid "a heart" or "a royal," and A has passed, Y should also pass, even with a no-trump hand. *A good heart-make, or royal-make, is good enough for any one, and it takes only one more trick to go game in hearts, or royals, than in no-trump.* If Y has a no-trump hand, he will give his partner that trick and more. But if Y has help in every other suit, and would be a dead weight in hearts, or royals (*i. e.*, if he is chicane, or holds only a little spot), then he may go to no-trump as a signal to his partner that his hearts (or royals) are weak, but he has the other suits. If his partner is strong enough still to want to play it at hearts (or royals), in spite of this information, or if he has big honors that he wants to score, he will bid two in his suit, on the second round, realizing that

he must take care of it alone. If he does this, Y should never cap it with "two no-trumps" unless he has a hundred aces.

Remember, then: *never change your partner's heart-bid, or royal-bid, to a no-trump, unless you you are phenomenally weak in his suit (and stop every other), or unless you have a hundred aces.*

If Z has bid "a heart" and A has passed, Y should, of course, never bid "two hearts," but he may bid "two diamonds" or "two clubs" if his hand demands it. *Never overbid your partner in his own suit when there has been no intervening bid, but change the suit at will.*

Remember, though:

To change your partner's bid to a bid in a suit of lower value (when there has been no intervening bid) should mean either that you hold excellent honors in that lower suit, or that you are unable to help your partner if the hand is played at his suit. Otherwise (i. e., if you have help for him, in trumps, ruffs, or side-suits) it would be much more sensible to let his bid stand, and to make more on each trick taken.

On the other hand, you may always be glad to change your partner's bid to a bid in a *higher* suit, on even a fairly good hand; except in the case of hearts and no-trump which I have already explained. If Z has bid "a club," Y may declare "a diamond" or "a heart" on any fair

hand,—provided it holds the ace, king, or queen and is a playable suit. If Z has bid "a heart" and A has covered with "two diamonds," Y's position is changed. If he can stop diamonds and holds a good black suit and a fair stopper (not necessarily a sure one) in the other black suit, he can bid no-trump, for his partner can take care of the hearts. (This situation shows why Z's heart-bid *must* mean one of the three high cards.) If Y cannot bid no-trump, he should see if he cannot raise his partner's heart-bid. Many players do this on hearts alone, which is a sad error. Do we not all know what it is to be left in a hole with nothing but trumps, while the adversaries hold everything else? Remember:

Never raise your partner's suit-bid on trumps alone! You should have some side-suit, a short suit, or a ruff.

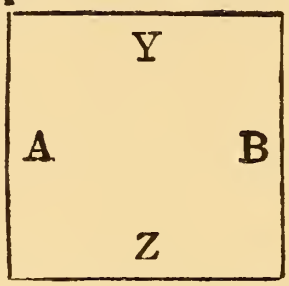
Suppose Z has bid "a heart" on the following hand:

♡ K Q 10 9 6 2
♣ 7 5 3
◇ 7 4
♠ Q 10

and A goes to "a no-trump." In which of the two following hands would Z find the greater help?—in the first, which offers suit protection and a singleton ace:

♡ 8 7
♣ A
◇ K J 10
♠ K J 6 5 4 3 2

♡ A 4 3
♣ K Q J 10 9
◇ A Q 5
♠ A 9



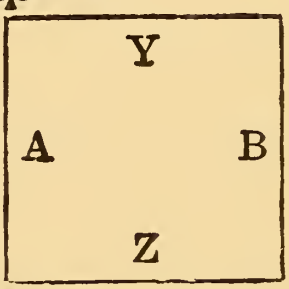
♡ J 5
♣ 8 6 4 2
◇ 9 8 6 3 2
♠ 8 7

♡ K Q 10 9 6 2
♣ 7 5 3
◇ 7 4
♠ Q 10

or in this hand, which offers trump help, and nothing else:

♡ J 8 7 5 4 3
♣ 6 4
◇ 8 3
♠ 6 5 4

♡ A
♣ A K Q J 10 9
◇ K Q 5
♠ A K 9



♡ —
♣ 8 2
◇ A J 10 9 6 2
♠ J 8 7 3 2

♡ K Q 10 9 6 2
♣ 7 5 3
◇ 7 2
♠ Q 10

Play the two hands, if there is the slightest doubt in your mind. In the first instance, Z–Y can easily make their contract. In the second (with trump strength, alone, in Dummy), they lose seven tricks, and are thus "set" for 100,—or 200 if A should happen to double on his side-suits.

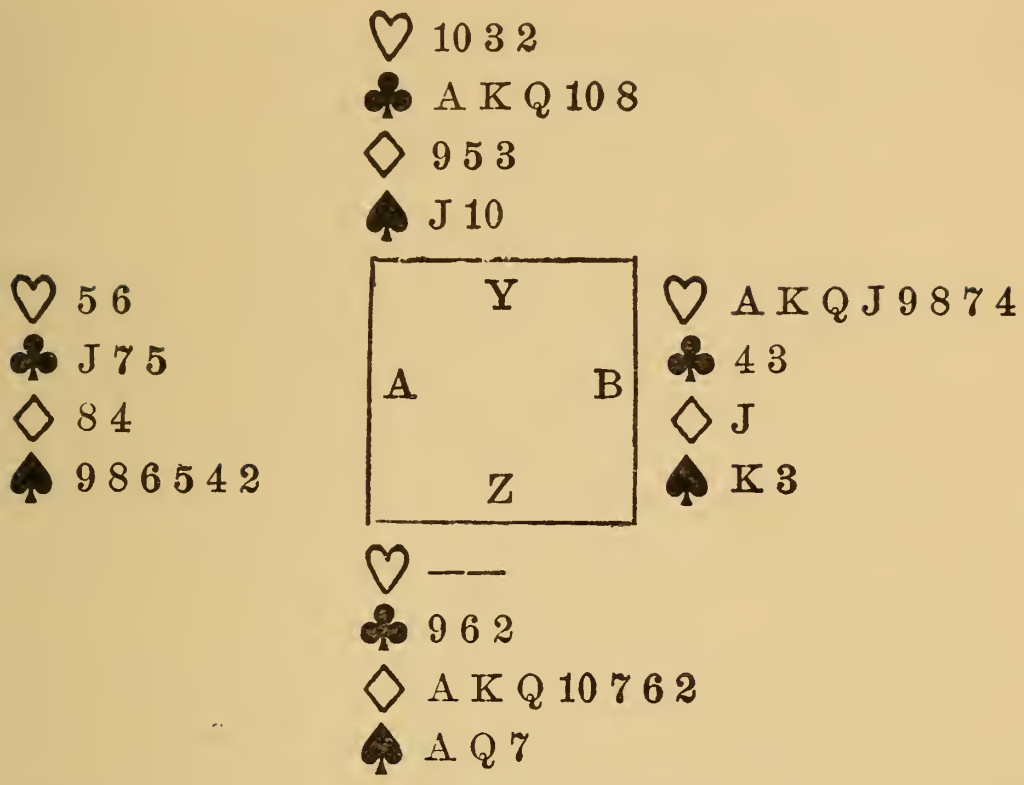
We come now to the last player, B, who must be guided by all the information given by the previous bids and by the rules already quoted. Let me make one suggestion to him: if the score is low, and the other side has the bid at "one spade" let B be very wary of taking them out of it by bidding "no-trump," even on a beautiful no-trump hand. For, by their own declaration, they are weak while he is strong. Then, why not use his good hand to defeat their bid, and take fifty or a hundred, instead of ten or twenty? If B feels sure of going game (three-odd) on his hand, let him declare his no-trump; otherwise, I should certainly advise him to permit the adversaries to make him a present of 50, or 100 points.

Make the other side work for you whenever you can! There is one situation about which I am questioned more frequently than about any other. Suppose you have bid "a no-trump,"

and the other says "two hearts"; you have the hearts nicely stopped and can easily go to "two no-trumps." Shall you do that, or shall you double the adversary on his "two hearts"? To this I invariably answer: "*Would you rather work like a slave for twenty cents, or have some one make you a present of a dollar?*" For that is what it amounts to. If you take the bid at "two no-trumps," *yours* is the work and the responsibility; you must take 8 tricks and, if you take them, they are worth but 20. If, on the other hand, you double the adversary's two hearts, *he* will have the work and the anxiety, and if you take *6* tricks (not 8), you make a hundred; if 7, two hundred; and if 8, *three hundred instead of twenty!* Which would you choose?

Of course, if those two no-trump tricks will give you the rubber with its attendant 250, you are at liberty to make your bid and take them; but otherwise, double the adversary's bid in preference to bidding.

Having looked into the opening bid for all of the four players, I will return to the test hand that was put before you, a little while back, and discuss its subsequent bidding. You remember the score was love-all and the cards lay as follows:



Z opens with "a diamond" only, because with a higher suit (hearts) against him, he must know the position of the clubs. A passes and Y bids "two clubs." The moment Z hears that bid of "two clubs," he has reason to hope that at least two, and probably all three of his little clubs will be taken care of by his partner. Now, indeed, he feels strong! For he knows that, with diamonds as trumps, he will not lose one trump round; he will not lose one round in hearts, for he will ruff them from the beginning; his partner's hand may take care of the three club rounds, after trumps are exhausted; his ace of spades is good and the chances are two to one that his queen will be (the king lying

with A is the only thing that could hurt her).

After Y's bid of "two clubs," B bids "two hearts." B's heart hand looks stupendous and a novice would probably risk bidding it very high; its 64 honors and its long line of trumps would seem invincible. But, as a matter of fact, *B should never bid more than three on it, and he cannot take more than two!* For (and here follows the pith of the whole matter, as well as the most important rule that I have yet given you):

When you want to MAKE a high bid, count what you dare lose (not what you can take); and when you want to DOUBLE a high bid, count what you can take!

I wish that you would say this rule over and over till you cannot possibly forget it! I wish I could put a calcium light in front of it, and a sign-post on each side! It is the groundwork of all good bidding and doubling—the foundation of the entire edifice,—and its observance is one of the greatest marks of good Auction. Now behold what follows:

Z, reckoning his hand, realizes that if his partner holds the high clubs, he, himself, holds but two losing cards—the queen and the seven of spades,—and that there are two chances to one that his queen will take, leaving but one losing

card, with a chance to discard even that on one of his partner's clubs. He can therefore afford to bid it up to a small slam, if necessary; and, as luck is with him, and the king of spades lies under his fourchette, he can make a grand slam in diamonds, against the best possible defence. B, on the other hand, finds that he has two losing clubs (and he knows from the bidding that Y will take them), one losing diamond (which will, of course, be captured by Z), and a very small chance of making his king of spades,—as there is no more pitiful object than a king with one bare guard, lying under a strong hand on the left. He therefore has probably *five* losing cards in his hand, leaving only 8 tricks that he can take,—a bid of "two hearts." However, relying on his wonderful hearts, his diamond singleton, and his hope of the ace of spades lying with his partner, he caps Z's bid of "three diamonds" with "three hearts." Z promptly answers with "four diamonds." Now, if B is sufficiently foolish to bid "four hearts" (32), Z can bid "five diamonds," in which case, he will make a grand slam and score 145 (49 points, 40 for slam, and 56 for honors.) Or, he can double B's "four hearts" and make a hundred, *and that without a heart in his hand.* But "when you want to *double* a high bid, you count what

you can take"; with a bid of "four hearts" from B, Z's book would be three; his own two aces and his partner's ace of clubs would make that book (if they don't get ruffed), and Z–Y hold, in addition, two kings and three queens, one of which should take. So if B holds two diamonds, two clubs, or two spades, Z–Y will set him for one trick. And B must hold *something* besides hearts with those thirteen cards in his hand.

While we are still on the subject of the bid, I must warn you of the penalties that lie in wait for a player who makes a bid that fails to cover the previous one. Suppose some one says "two diamonds" and the next bidder declares "a no-trump"; his bid does not cover the previous one, for two diamonds outrank a no-trump. The faulty bidder is *forced to make a bid in the suit he has named, that will cover the previous bid;* in other words, he is forced to bid "two no-trumps," whether he wants to or not. He cannot say "two hearts," or anything other than "two no-trumps." Thus: Z opens with "a heart"; A goes "two diamonds"; Y has the diamonds nicely stopped and has a good black suit, so he says "a no-trump," which is not enough. Now if B should bid, pass, or double, before Y's error is discovered, Y cannot be

punished; his bid stands as a correct bid at "one no-trump," and either he or his partner can do anything further that may suit them. *But*, if when Y declares "a no-trump," either adversary should say, "That is not enough," *then* Y is forced to bid "two no-trumps." And, in addition to this, if B should pass, Y's partner, Z, *cannot* bid and take him out of his predicament. Y has fallen into a hole and is further penalized by being forced to lie in it, unless the adversary is kind enough to help him out, by bidding or doubling.

If a player has made a bid and has been doubled, it is necessary to cover the original bid only (not the double), in order to raise the bid. Thus: Z bids "two diamonds" (14), and A doubles; the two diamonds are now worth 28 to Z, if he makes them, but they count for 14 only, as far as bidding is concerned. They may be covered by "two hearts," "three clubs," or anything that exceeds fourteen. *You raise the bid, not the double.*

There is a school of bidding which is diametrically opposed to the one we have just been studying; while I do not adopt it, no one can be a good Auction player unless he understands it. You may even choose to follow it; it has excellent points in its favor, but, to my mind, some flaws.

This school bids "a spade" on every good hand, and "a no-trump" on every poor one; but don't cry "How absurd!" until you hear their reasons. They hold, in the first place, that Auction is the exact opposite of Bridge, and that a different system should govern it. This reason I consider rather poor and childish. But their second claim, namely, that it is important to get information as to the position of the high cards is certainly a good one. It is true that if you open with a no-trump bid your partner will not be apt to bid and show you what high cards he holds; but then, if you are lucky enough to hold the no-trump in the beginning, you don't greatly need information from him. And your bid will keep the adversaries from showing each other what they hold (which is a point to consider), or it will force them to a bid of two or more, and give them more trouble. Again, if you have bid "a no-trump," they will hate to let you get your contract at one, in a high suit, and will either try to make a forcing-bid, or to declare any very good red suit they may hold; so that, while you may block information from your partner, you will be more apt to get it from the adversaries, —which will give you two sources instead of one. Had you bid "a spade," the adversaries

would almost certainly have refrained from bidding,—so where would your information be?

This other school claims, further, that you should use strong hands to "boost and defeat the bid," instead of bidding; suppose every one at the table uses this system,—who is going to bid, except the dealer, who is forced to? And, when you have used your hand to "boost," why may they not refuse to be boosted, and leave you with your boost, as a bid?

However, according to this school, if Z (the dealer) picks up his hand and finds a perfectly good no-trumper, he bids "a spade." The adversary on his left passes, for it is one of their rules (and a *most excellent* one) never to take the adversary out of a black bid. So A passes and Y is forced to bid, *merely to keep the bidding open.* His partner has shown a no-trump hand by his bid, and he certainly does n't want it to close at "a spade"; and, if Y should pass, the second adversary, B, would be only too glad to do likewise and leave Z to play spades with a no-trump hand, and thus save 10 points a trick. So Y *must* bid. If he holds a sure trick in any suit, he must name that suit; he would say "a club," or "a diamond," holding only a queen and two little spots, or a singleton ace. If he has not a trick in his hand, he must

say "two spades" (merely to keep the bidding open); or, if his only sure trick is in spades, he must say "three spades." Then B passes (all this is cut and dried), and Z sits up and does what he might as well have done in the first place, bids his no-trump. If you ask him why he did n't do it at once, his only answer will be: "Because I don't belong to that school." His one advantage is that *he has discovered whether or not his partner holds a sure trick and, if so, in which suit it lies.*

Now, having adopted "one spade" as a signal for a good hand, they cannot use it for a poor one; and, *if Z picks up a hand in which there is nothing higher than a nine-spot, he is forced to bid "a no-trump."* This is the drawback to the system; but its devotees claim that no-trump gives your partner four chances to help you, instead of one; and that, *on a nine-spot hand, you are going to lose anyhow, and it costs no more to lose in no-trump than in spades.* But this is not quite true; if you held that poor hand and had to play it as "one spade," Law 50 would protect you and limit your losses to 100 above the line, even with a grand slam against you. Whereas, with this grand slam against you on a no-trump declaration, the adversaries score 7 tricks at 50 apiece—350, in-

stead of 100,—the difference of the value of a rubber. Moreover, if you declare "a spade" on a poor hand, your partner can pull you out with any low declaration, "a club," "a diamond," "a heart," or "a no-trump"; whereas, if you declare "a no-trump," he would have to take a contract of at least two tricks, in order to help you out, and he is forbidden (by this school) to make any bid whatever when you have declared "a no-trump." Your declaration means that he is to let you alone.

If Z has neither "a spade" bid, nor "a no-trump" bid, he makes a suit-bid,—"one" for a short strong suit (such as ace-king-small), "two" for a long weak suit (such as seven to a queen).

To epitomize this school of bidding:

Any very good hand is "a spade" (partner *must* bid).

Any very poor hand is "a no-trump" (partner must *not* bid).

Anything between the two is a suit bid; "one" for a short strong suit, "two" for a long weak one.

To my mind, the disadvantages of this school outnumber its good points. To go to the root of the matter, *why* make a high bid (which is hard to cover) when you are weak? And why make a low one when you want to play the

hand? Is it not better to make your low bid when you are in distress, and thus give your partner a chance to pull you out with anything he happens to hold,—no matter how low its suit-value?

Its good points are two: first, never to take the adversary out of a low black bid (with this I heartily agree. I have already begged you not to declare "a no-trump" over your adversary's bid of "one spade"). And second, to remember that strong hands should often be used to *defeat* the bid, rather than to capture it. And this, too, I have begged you to remember, *but only when the deal is against you.* That is your happy interval, when you are free to decide whether to use a good hand for bidding or for defeating the bid. When you deal and are forced to bid, make as good a bid as your hand warrants.

In passing, it may be interesting to know that, in order to decide the relative value of the two schools of bidding, three friends and I played twelve successive hands. We were fairly equal in skill and experience; two of us were exponents of one school, two of the other. We each chose two adversaries and made up two complete tables,—passing the hands from one table to the other, as in duplicate whist. In every one

of the twelve hands, our school obtained better results, *when the deal was with us* (that dread time!). Between deals, the results were approximately the same; probably because it is on the opening bid that the two schools split. But in that test, at least, the school I have been teaching you, certainly triumphed.

However, some excellent players are enrolled under the banner of the opposite system; and, whether or not you play it, you must understand it and be able to detect it in partner or adversary. For, I repeat, *the best Auction player is not always the one with the best system of play; but the one who can best recognize and understand every system.* If you meet an adversary who bids "a spade" and then produces every ace and king in the pack, you will know him to be of the opposite school. Then remember these two things: if he bids "a spade," bid against him if you have a good suit declaration; for he has a no-trump hand and you don' t want him to get the bid too easily; and again: if he bids "a no-trump," don't bid against him, for he is so weak you can probably defeat his no-trump.

To blend the good points of both schools seems to me the sensible thing to do. Do not misunderstand me and think I am advising you to play sometimes one and sometimes the

other. That would be horrible; concerted action between partners is of the first importance, and it would take a wizard to decide whether your no-trump bid meant a good hand or a poor one, if you were so uncertain as that. Choose your school and stick to it, but let it embrace the strong points of the other. I should cover the ground in this way: rarely take the adversary out of a spade, let his partner do that, then do your own bidding later; often use good hands to defeat the make, when you are not forced to bid; do not make bids that pre-empt the bidding, if you need certain information; but, if you as dealer are forced to bid, and if you have a good hand and feel able to play it and score, why waste time on a stereotyped round of bidding? Declare your no-trump at once. As to the "getting of information," you are just as apt to get it in one school as the other; if not from partner, then from adversary.

Above all, never make the mistake of scorning and condemning any school simply because it is not your own. That is the greatest of errors. Study every school, see its good points, and put yourself in the position where no system of bidding can nonplus you.

The Double

DOUBLING is the essence of Auction. If it be true (as it undoubtedly is) that the penalties are what bring in the winnings at Auction, it stands to reason that, when they are doubled, your winnings are increased one hundred per cent. On the other hand, poor doubling increases your losses in even greater proportion (on account of the "bonus").

Beginners in Auction are generally timorous about doubling, not realizing at first how few tricks they need often take in order to make the double stand good. Once convinced of this, they are apt to rush to the other extreme and to double far too frequently. One state is as bad as the other. I shall try to make it clear to you when to double and when to refrain. The subject is tremendously interesting, and it is fortunately possible to give a great many terse rules that are easily committed to memory and that will serve as a guide until long habit has conquered the difficulties that surround the double.

First, get clearly into your head the difference between the double in Auction and in Bridge. In Bridge, you never double unless you expect to take at least the odd—*i.e.*, seven tricks. You rarely undertake such a contract in Auction, for you rarely double a bid of one. But when the other side has been beguiled into making a bid of more than one, *you double if you think you can keep them from taking what they bid—not if you can take that many yourself.* If they have bid three in anything, your book is four; and if you and your partner have a fair chance between you of taking five tricks (or more than five), you double. The higher you can force the adversaries to bid, the easier it will be to double them. Some authorities advise you to double every bid of three or four, just on general principles, but I take exception to this. Too many three and four bids go through perfectly; even a bid of a small slam will often win out. *Double when, by actual count of the tricks in your hand, you really stand a fair chance of defeating the bid. But don't get the doubling fever!*

Double in preference to bidding, unless the bid will put you game or rubber. If you have bid "a no-trump" and the adversary says "two hearts," you may find yourself in the position where you can either double the two

hearts or go to "two no-trumps." If the latter will give you rubber, bid it. Otherwise, double the two hearts; for then the adversary will have to do the work and take eight tricks while you need only hold him back; and if you succeed you get 100 a trick instead of 10. *Would you rather work like a slave for 20 cents, or have some one make you a present of a dollar?*

Do your doubling early in the rubber (so as to pile up "velvet" for yourself), and make a dash for game-points (below the line) towards the end.

Remember that quick sure rubbers (where you secure all the bids and play all the hands) are always low rubbers. If you want the score to run high, use some of your good hands to defeat the bid instead of to secure it.

Now let us see when *not* to double.

Never forget that a poor double is disastrous in its effects. Suppose the other side has secured the bid at "two diamonds"; if they get them, the tricks are worth but seven apiece, if you get them they are worth fifty—that is, seven times as much as theirs; the odds are seven to one against the player. Now, if you make a weak double, you raise their trick-value to fourteen apiece (if they make them), and you give them, in addition, a little present of fifty (the bonus)

for so doing. And you also give them the chance of redoubling and raising their tricks to twenty-eight apiece and their bonus to one hundred. All this is a gift from you, on the strength of your weak double.

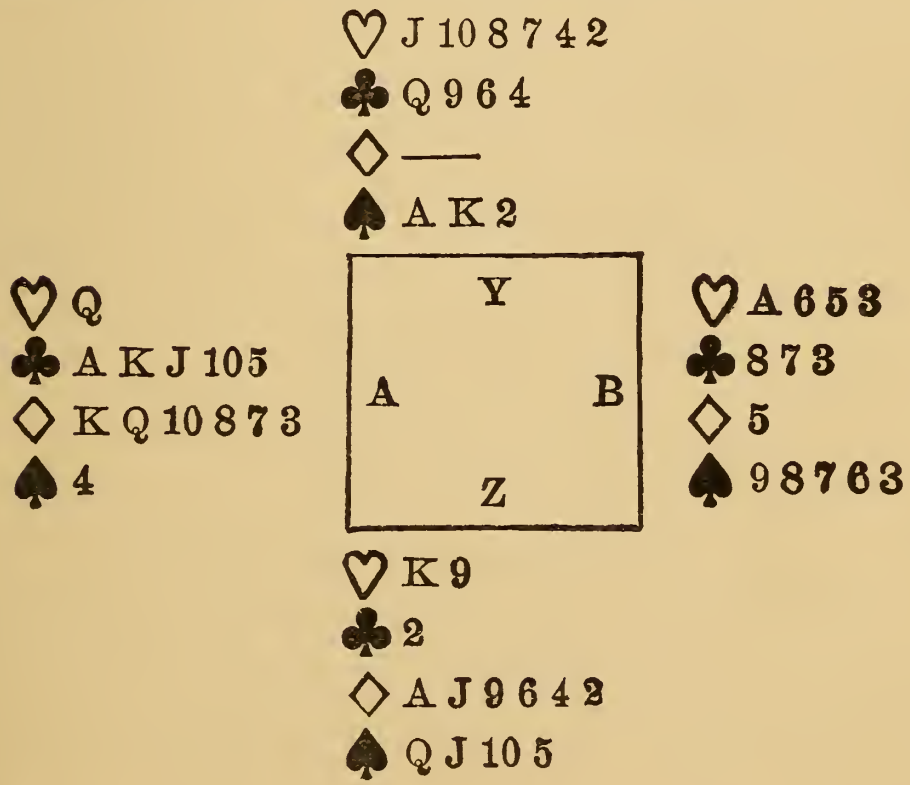
A bad double is worse than a bad bid. No matter how poor your bid is, the adversaries cannot go game or rubber on it, for they can score above the line only; but if you make a bad *double*, you will often put them game or rubber.

Don't double a bid of one. It is too easy to make, in the first place, and too easy to get out of, in the second. If a player is doubled on a bid of "one heart," he or his partner can often shift to a bid of "one no-trump," "two diamonds," or "two clubs," and play it with ease. Try to force him to a higher bid than one, and then double him when you have him in a tight place. If you were chasing a burglar, would n't you rather get him into a fourth-story room with an open window, than in a ground-floor room with an open window? When you get him so high, the window is as great a peril as you are. *He can't get out!*

Don't double unless you are prepared to double again, no matter where the adversary shifts. At first, you won't like this rule and you will think that it curtails your chances of doubling. But you will come to see that no better rule was

ever made. Suppose the adversary bids "two diamonds" and you have a fair chance of defeating him; if you pass, he will never know of the pit yawning before him; he will play it at diamonds, and if you defeat him you will get fifty a trick. If you double him, he or his partner may shift to another suit; you may not be able to do anything in that suit, and they will score instead of you. In reaching for a hundred you have lost your fifty. Remember that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. A fair example of such a hand would be the following:

The make is against you, and you are A. Z deals and the cards are distributed thus (the score being 24 to 18 in favor of Z–Y):

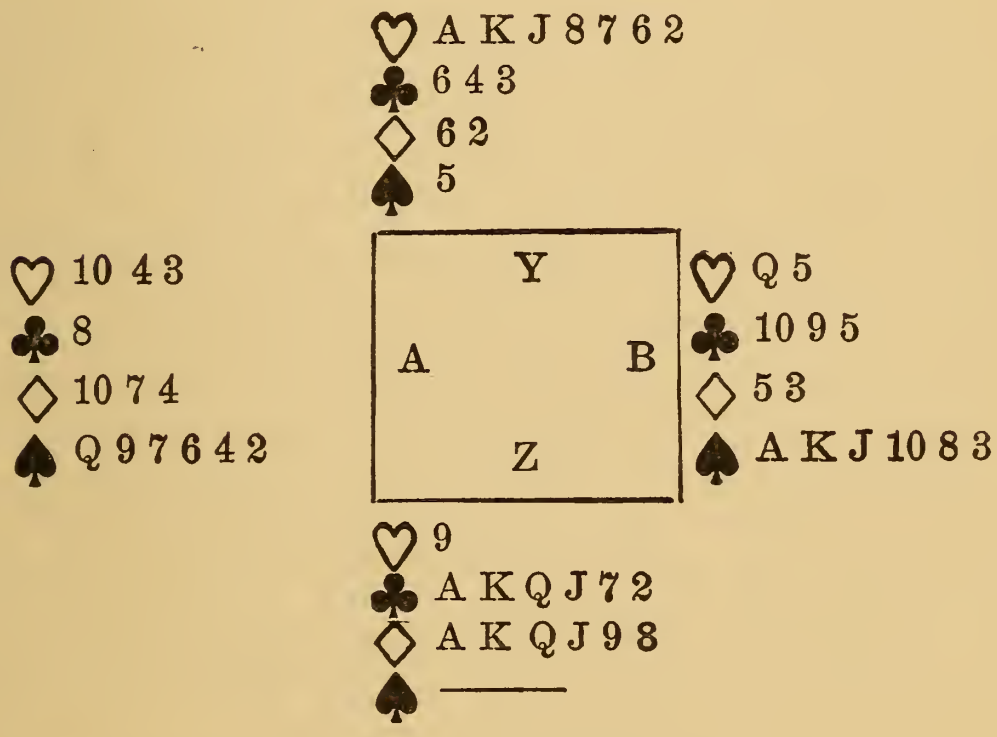


Z *might* declare "a no-trump" on this hand,

but a much better declaration, to the score, would be "a diamond." This just suits A, but he must n't double a one-bid, for fear the adversary will either make it, or shift to another suit; so he "boosts" the bid by saying "two clubs." Y and B pass, and Z bids "two diamonds" on the strength of his singleton club and two spade honors, and his blissful ignorance of the good diamond hand that is "over" him. This is what A hoped for, but he must n't double; for if the adversary should go to hearts, where would he be? And this is just what Y would do; he would n't bid hearts on a jack-suit on the opening round; and he would be very chary of bidding two on any suit that held neither ace nor king. But, with the odds announced as against his partner, and the tricks worth a hundred apiece against them, he would risk "two hearts" on a long weak suit with two honors (6 hearts are half the hearts in the pack), on his missing diamond suit of which his partner has indicated the ace, and on his own ace-king of spades and queen of clubs. And on the strength, too, of the fact that he is not assuming any heavier contract; his partner's bid was for eight tricks—and his is for eight,—no more. His partner's was doubled and they stand to lose a hundred a trick; his may not be doubled

and they may lose but fifty, if they lose at all. Thus, if A should double the "two diamonds" bid, he would frighten the adversary to hearts and lose everything. If he passes, they play it at "two diamonds," and A scores fifty a trick. *A should not double unless he could double again, no matter where they jumped.*

It is often possible to double a bid *without a trump in your hand.* The following hand will prove this:



The score is 20 to 18 on the rubber game, in favor of Z–Y. Both sides want to play the hand and score rubber, or to keep the adversaries from playing the hand and scoring rubber.

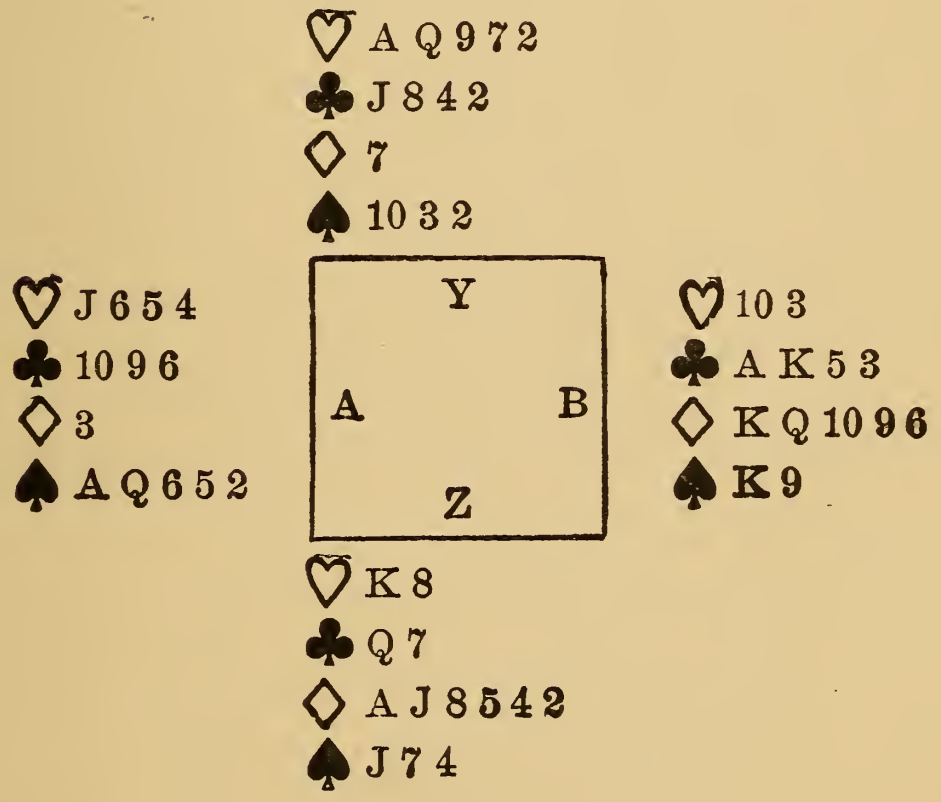
Z bids "a diamond," A passes, Y bids "a heart," and B "a royal." Z says "two diamonds," A "two royals," and Y and B pass. (Y might say "three hearts," in which case B would say "three royals," but we will imagine that they both pass.) Z goes to "three diamonds." If his partner holds the ace of hearts, he has not a losing card in his hand; he could bid a diamond grand slam if necessary. A and Y pass, and B bids "three royals"; he wants that bid even at a certain loss, for he holds 72 honors, and if Z plays a diamond hand successfully, he takes rubber.

Z says "four diamonds," and B says "four royals"; now "five diamonds" would be 35 and would not beat "four royals" (36), so Z is forced to bid a small slam in diamonds. B responds with "five royals." Z bids his grand slam (he, too, has some honors to harvest), and B answers with "six royals," which Z cannot possibly cover. *So he doubles royals without a trump in his hand!* His book is one trick, and he and his partner, between them, hold three out of four suits. B holds thirteen cards and must have something other than spades.

Z–Y make 400 on suit-leads before B ever gets in to lead trumps. From this loss, B deducts 81 honors, making his total loss on the hand 389. If he had allowed Z to play the diamond

hand Z would have scored: seven tricks (49), grand slam (40), honors (56), and rubber (250)—a total of 395. In addition to this the rubber would have been closed. Whereas by bidding, B kept the rubber open and has now an equal chance with Z–Y of taking it eventually. So every one is happy.

Doubling is sometimes resorted to as a bluff, in order to frighten the adversary out of one suit and into another; but this is rather risky business. The following hand will illustrate:



Z deals and bids "a diamond,"—to B's secret delight. A passes (possibly) and Y bids

"a heart," because he has five to two honors, and is terribly weak in diamonds. This does not suit B at all; he wants to play it as diamonds, so he promptly doubles Y's heart-bid, hoping to frighten Z back into diamonds. The ruse succeeds and Z makes the desired bid of "two diamonds." A passes, and Y (thinking B holds all the hearts that he lacks) passes also. Then B passes because he has succeeded in coaxing Z into a trap. This sort of bluff-doubling should seldom be resorted to, and *never unless the person you want to deceive bids immediately after you.* If you double a good heart-bid, on a bluff, and the man you double speaks next, he will redouble and call your bluff before the bid can get around to his partner whom you want to deceive. You must be so placed as to bid immediately *after* the man who makes the undesirable bid, and *before* his partner whom you wish to frighten back to his original suit. Even then, it is a poor plan, for all good players realize that no one makes a legitimate double of a one-bid; also, that if a person doubles one suit he stands ready to double all others. No first-grade player could be bluffed by such a double.

Having settled the double and non-double, let us put the verb into the passive voice and say a word to the player who *gets* doubled.

Don't get panic-stricken when doubled, and

rush blindly into another bid that will give you more work to do. Probably more is lost in Auction in this way than in any other—by jumping into a heavier contract than the one you are already carrying,—and with less material to carry it with. If you are doubled, and can get out by going to a higher suit and making a bid *with fewer tricks in it*, do so by all means; but never add to your burden. If you are coaxed up to a bid of "six hearts" and doubled, it is often well to shift to "five no-trump," if you have the slightest material, for it is one trick less to work for. But if you are doubled at "two no-trump," think a long while before you jump to "three hearts," or "four clubs," which will give you just that much more to carry. And don't get frightened at the double; play even a losing hand calmly, and lose as little on it as possible.

When you are doubled and are hesitating between shifting to a trump-make or a no-trump-make, remember this: *on a shaky hand, the chances in any declared trump are slightly in favor of the maker.* That is because he can often use low trumps in one hand to ruff losing cards in the other, and can sometimes even establish that most valuable of aids—a cross-ruff. But *in a shaky no-trump the chances are against the maker*, because he has no way of coming in on

the adversary's long suit. On a shaky hand, then, stick to a trump-make rather than jump to no-trump.

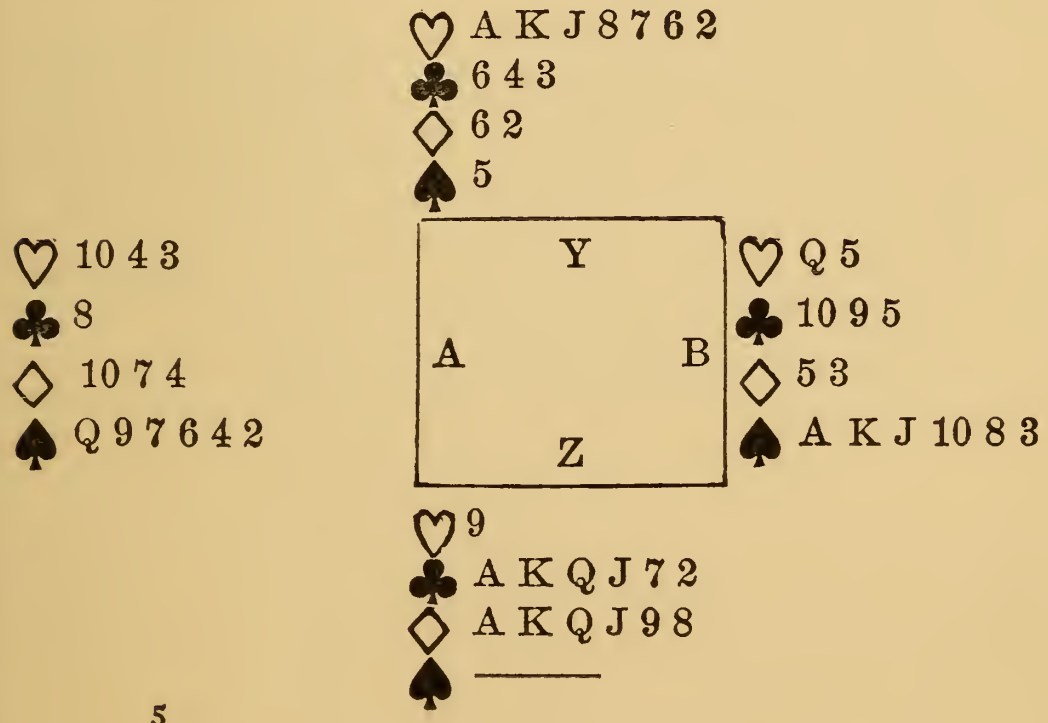
Don't feel that because your partner has been doubled, you are forced to pull him out with some wild, inexcusable bid. Often he is extremely satisfied with his position and wants nothing but to be left alone. All Auction players know the unpleasantness of being pulled out of a double when they want to stay in. Sometimes, of course, when your partner has been doubled, he is in a bad way. If you can make a *reasonable* bid and come to his rescue, do so by all means.

By a "reasonable" bid, I mean one that you would not hesitate to make even if you did not feel you were in a hole. But for Heaven's sake don't try to rescue him by bids that have no possible excuses or foundation!

When the adversary has made a bid that will put him game (if he makes it), and you cannot bid against him, but have a fair chance of defeating his bid,—then double him. It is what is known as a "free double." He is going game anyhow, if he goes anything, and you might as well try to pull out as much as possible, if you "set" him.

If your partner has been doubled and has refrained from redoubling, it is impossible for you to know whether he has refrained from fear

(and is therefore in a bad way), or whether he is extremely pleased at being doubled and does not redouble simply because he does not want the bid changed. In the one case, he would be very glad to be rescued; in the other, nothing could be more provoking. Don't forget that there is this *chance* (that he likes his position), and ask yourself always, whether his refraining from redoubling is "from fright, or delight." As a rule, if you can pull him out with a "reasonable" bid, you should do so. But never rush into the breach with a forlorn hope. He knows what he is about when he bids; give him the credit for that. Let me illustrate this by repeating the hand already given a few paragraphs back. The score is 20 to 18 on the rubber game, in favor of Z–Y:



In this hand, as we played it before, Z bid "seven diamonds" and B covered with "six royals," to save rubber. He lost 389 points (which was a saving of 6 points), and he kept the rubber open. Now suppose, instead of bidding, B had doubled the "seven diamonds," Z would be entranced. He knows he can make it and it will be worth 486 points, 250 for rubber, 98 for tricks, 48 for honors, 80 for slam, and 50 for contract. *But Z must not redouble for fear of frightening B back to royals!* So he passes, and Y sees his partner with a seven-trick contract, *doubled, and refraining from redoubling.* Is it from fright, or delight? Shall he let him alone, or shall he "rescue" him by jumping to hearts?—Y has distinctly *not* a seven-heart bid; he should certainly pass and trust to his partner's good sense and judgment.

To sum up for the double or non-double, then: A good double increases your winnings one hundred per cent. But a poor double is far more disastrous in its effects than a poor make. The adversaries may go game on your double; they can never go game on your make.

Keeping the Flag Flying

WHEN you make a consciously losing bid with the sole object of keeping the other side from going rubber and of thus staying in the game yourself, it is called "keeping the flag flying." It is beloved of amateurs, and can be greatly overdone.

You can afford to lose 450 above the line (no more), to save rubber,—*if* you go rubber yourself later. If the other side goes rubber eventually, you lose that and your 450 to boot. But the rubber makes a difference of 500—that is, it is 250 plus for one side, and 250 minus for the other. Therefore, anything under 500 is a profitable loss in order to save rubber. Suppose your grand total is 600 (in points and honors), and the adversaries' grand total is 200. The play will put either side game and rubber, and you get a losing hand. If you allow the other side to go rubber, they are 200 plus 250, or 450 to your 600,—a difference of 150. Suppose you make a losing bid in order to save rubber,

and they score 450 above the line; they are then 650 to your 600. The next hand you go rubber; 250 plus your 600 is 850; and subtracting their 650, you are 200 points to the good, instead of 150 points. *You have made 50 points by losing 450. But you had to take rubber eventually to do it!*

I have been in a situation of this kind, where I bid a club small slam on 8 clubs to the queen-jack-ten, and very little side-suit,—a certain losing bid. I was doubled and lost 500 above the line. The very next hand, I got all the aces and kings in the pack, and went rubber with flying colors, on a no-trump grand slam with a hundred aces. But do not, I beg of you, feel it necessary to "keep the flag flying" to the tune of 700 or 800, and never do it to save *game*, only to save *rubber*. Save *game* by your *play*, and *rubber* by your *bid!!*

The Play

We will now suppose that the bidding is over; three successive players have passed and it is time to settle down to the play of the hand. Do you play just as you would in plain Bridge, or do you not?

To this, I answer "Yes and no." The rules of Bridge obtain, except where the bids of your partner and your adversaries show you that it is wise to disregard them; in other words, you are enabled, by the bids, to place the suits, to lead your partner's suit (instead of your own), and to lead *through* the adversaries' strength and not *up to* it.

Be sure to remember which adversary is to play the hand and whether it is your partner's lead or your own. Be careful not to lead out of turn, for, if you do, the adversary who plays the hand may call a suit for your partner to lead, and this is often very disastrous.

Remember that if both your adversaries have been bidding on the same suit, the hand is

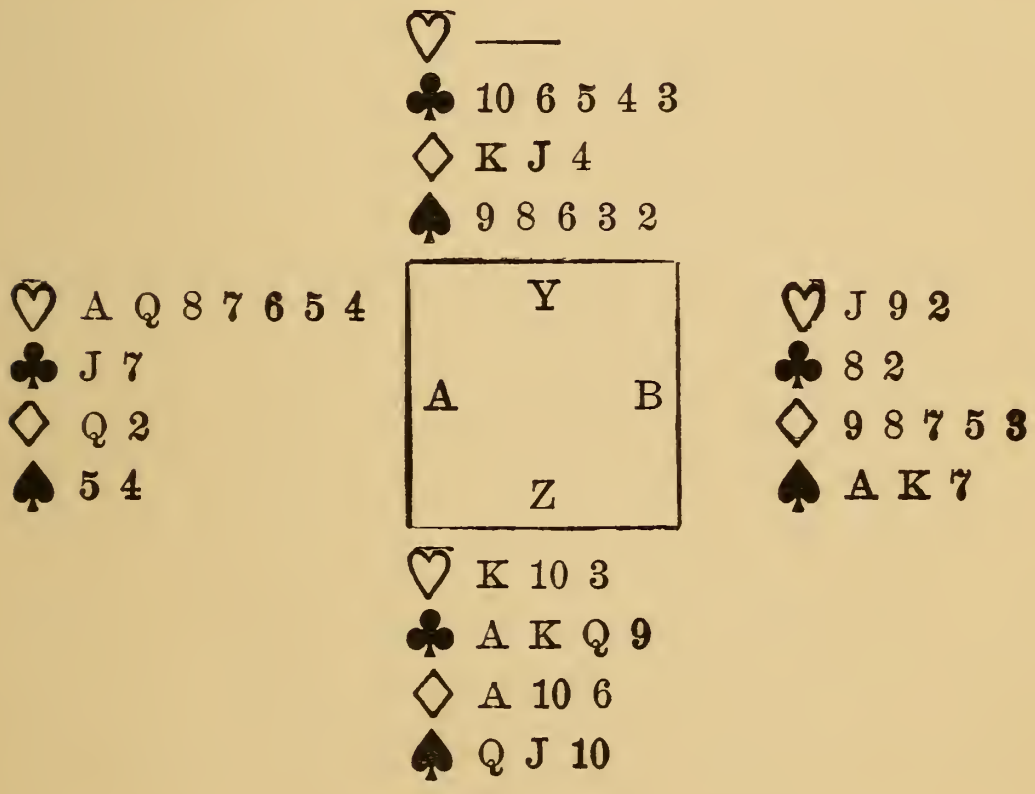
played by the one who *first* named the suit. *Between two partners, the one who first named the final suit plays the hand. Between two adversaries, the one who last named the final suit captures the bid and plays the hand.*

For instance: Z bids "a heart"; A bids "a no-trump"; Y bids "two hearts," and every one passes. The hand is played at "two hearts" by Z, because he first (of the two partners) named the suit. But if Z bids "a heart," and A bids "two hearts," and every one else passes, then A takes the bid away from his adversary Z, and plays the hand at "two hearts," himself.

Be sure, then, to remember which adversary plays the hand, and whether it is your lead or your partner's. If it is yours, lead as you would in Bridge, if you lead your own suit; but if you lead to your partner's bid (as you certainly should do, unless you have an excellent suit of your own), *lead him the highest card you hold of his suit.* Some authorities say that, holding five of your partner's suit headed by an honor, you should lead your fourth-best. But, as a rule, if it is your partner's suit he can take care of it; and you will help him to read it, and to clear it, by leading him your highest. If your partner has bid on diamonds, and you hold the queen of diamonds with two small, your lead

is queen, not small. Holding those cards and also the ace-king of a side-suit (say spades), you are at perfect liberty to lead your king of spades (to show ace), and *then* your queen of diamonds.

When the suits have been placed, try always to lead *through* strength, not up to it. A king and one, or a queen and two, will always prove a perfectly good stopper, if led up to, but it can often be killed entirely by being led through. Suppose the cards are as follows:



Z says "a no-trump"; A says "two hearts," and Y and B pass. Z has the hearts nicely

stopped, so he bids "two no-trumps" on what looks like a perfectly invincible hand. A refuses to go any higher with such poor side-suits (he could bid two odd in hearts, but not three), so Z gets the bid at "two no-trumps," *having shown by his bid that he held a heart stopper.* Now A realizes that this stopper is probably the king; and he realizes, too, that it lies *under* his ace-queen, that he holds the "fourchette" over it and can kill it, if it is led through. But it is his own lead. If he should lead his suit (hearts), it would be up to declared strength in Z's hand, and it would make his king good. Z would take either the first or the second round of hearts and go game (nine tricks) before A and B ever saw light again. So A tries to throw his partner in the lead, that he may give him a heart *through* Z's stopper. To this end, A leads the highest card of his own weakest suit (the five of spades), hoping to throw B in. B comes in with the king of spades, and leads his highest card of his partner's suit—the jack of hearts. This makes Z's king absolutely valueless, and A–B take nine tricks (seven in hearts and two in spades)—thus "setting" the adversary for three tricks (150 points). See what a difference the lead makes. In one case, Z goes game; in the other, he loses 150 points. It is merely a

question of leading *up to* a stopper, or leading *through* it. Had Y held the heart-stopper, instead of Z, then A would have known that the stopper was bound to be good because it lay over his bid, not under it. In that case he should have led his hearts out at once and tried to clear them. But the hand could not possibly have scored.

If a stopper lies over the bid, it is bound to make and may as well do it first as last. But if it lies under the bid, it should always be led through, never up to. If the stopper happens to be the ace, it has to take no matter where it lies, and you need not bother to try to lead through it.

Conversely, it will be seen that an honor needs to be much better guarded (to prove a sure stopper), when that suit has been bid on the left of it. In rating your hand, you can always count the king of hearts and one small card good for one trick, if hearts have been bid on your right. If they have been bid on your left, your king with one small card is probably valueless.

An ace is always a stopper, on either side, and a sequence of honors is also safe. With king-queen of hearts (and no more), you are bound to take one trick in hearts, no matter whence the lead comes, or where the ace lies. Queen-jack-ten is another invincible stopper.

But all stoppers that are not aces or sequence-stoppers must be regarded as more or less safe according to whether they lie under the bid or over it.

If your partner has been bidding on any suit (say diamonds), and the other side makes a no-trump bid which he doubles, of course he is doubling on those diamonds, and you must lead him your highest, if you have the lead. But suppose he doubles a no-trump bid without ever having named a suit, what are you to lead him?

He must, of course, be doubling on some suit that is too low in value to be bid successfully against no-trump,—and the only such suit is clubs. If he held good spades he would bid them as royals; and he can't be doubling on a wonderful red suit; for, if he held that, he would certainly bid it once, at least. He must be doubling on an established suit of clubs (in which case he wants you to lead your highest, that he may come in at once and make his whole suit); or he is doubling on general strength, in which case your lead can't hurt him, as he is bound to get the lead soon no matter what is played. Therefore:

If your partner doubles no-trumps without ever naming a suit, lead him your highest club!

There is another very important point to

remember; namely, that there are times when you cannot afford to go rubber. This could never happen in Bridge; there, you always take rubber if you can. But the penalty column in Auction is so important a factor that it alters everything. If the adversaries are hundreds ahead of you in penalties,—farther ahead than the rubber-value of 250 would offset,—and the Fates are good enough to offer you the choice between defeating some bid of theirs, or of taking rubber on a bid of your own,—you should always choose to defeat the bid. Then you still have your chance of the rubber, and it is a gain instead of a loss. Why close it at a loss when you are not forced to? What good is it going to do you to go about saying that you have "won the rubber," if you have lost ten good dollars on it? "The rubber" is merely a form of words; it is the side that pulls out the highest number of points that really wins, whether they go rubber or not.

If you are on the other side of the fence and are well ahead, in penalties, never jeopardize your advantage by a risky bid. Your adversaries *cannot* recover their losses unless you let them. Make any *safe* bid that comes your way, but absolutely no unsafe one. Don't try to force, don't try to capture the bid (at a risk),

don't do anything but sit tight on the "velvet" you have been lucky enough to accumulate. If the adversaries get all the good cards, *let* them go rubber; they will do so at a loss. It is exactly the same thing to win a rubber at a loss of any number of points as it is to lose it by the same number of points.

With these exceptions, the lead and the play are just what they would be in good Bridge. Only, the naming of the suits (in the bidding) enables you to place them; and, to this end, you must remember not only the final bid, but all previous bids. This done, make it your rule to lead *through* strength—not up to it—and you will not go far astray.

Hints

DON'T try to play all the hands; often use a strong hand to *defeat* the bid.

Try to score penalties on the adversary in the beginning of a rubber, and to secure the play of the hands at the end.

Try not to let the adversary get the bid at one, in any high suit; *but*:

Remember that a "forcing bid" does n't always force; you may be left with it on your hands.

Remember that a "short sure rubber" (where there are no penalties) is always a low rubber.

Never make a risky bid, unless to go game or to save game.

Rarely take the adversary out of a "one spade" bid.

Don't double one-bids; you will let your burglar out of the first-floor window.

To double a person gives him a chance to change his bid; therefore:

Never double unless you are prepared to double again, no matter where the adversary jumps.

When you want to *make* a high bid, count what you dare lose; when you want to *double* a high bid, count what you can take.

Double in preference to bidding; let the other side work for you.

A bad double is worse than a bad bid. The adversary cannot go game or rubber on your bid, no matter how poor it is. He can go game on your double.

Unless the bid would put you game, be content to yield it to the adversary, unless the bid will put *him* game; in that case, take it away even at a risk. If it would put him rubber, take it away even at a certain loss.

You can afford to lose 450 above the line, in order to "keep the flag flying," *if* you go rubber eventually. Any loss that greatly exceeds 450 is unprofitable.

A good double increases your winnings one hundred per cent.

If your partner doubles no-trump without ever having named a suit, lead him your highest club.

It is worth at least one or two tricks to have the play of the hand. If you have a no-trump hand and the adversary bids "a no-trump," force him to two if possible (by a bid in a side-suit). If you cannot do this, it is better to take

the bid yourself at "two no-trumps" than to double his one. Of course, if you have the lead and hold an established suit of seven or more cards, it is better to double him.

A shaky hand is safer as a declared trump than as a no-trump.

The player's first care is to make what he bid; the adversaries' first care is to defeat the bid. Do your finessing after this is accomplished.

Keep a keen eye on the score (both points and penalties), and don't go rubber unless you can afford to.

Be a reliable partner and don't give false information. That is better than mystifying the adversary.

Understand every "school" of play.

Be careful about bidding two in any suit unless you hold ace or king.

Never bid on a jack-suit, or a ten-suit, on the first round. Auction is a game of strength rather than length—a game of aces and kings.

Never raise your partner's bid on trumps alone; you should have some side protection, a short suit, or a ruff.

Never overbid your partner in his own suit, when there has been no intervening bid, but change the suit at will.

To change your partner's bid to a bid in a lower

suit (with no bid from the intervening adversary) should be a sign that you cannot help your partner in his suit. Because if you held any help at all for him, it would surely be much wiser to take his higher suit for trumps and your lower suit for the side-suit,—rather than to make trumps of the lower suit and side-suit of the higher one.

Be very glad to change your partner's bid to a bid in a higher suit, except in the case of hearts or royals. Do not change either of these suits to no-trumps except as a "signal" that you are very weak (or chicane) in that suit, but can protect every other,—or unless you hold a hundred aces. A good heart, or a good royal, is good enough for any one.

If you hold a poor hand, one that *must* lose, lose on your adversary's declaration rather than on your own; it is much less expensive, *unless* his declaration would put him rubber. In that case, declare on your own hand.

Almost any rule can be broken in a critical situation, if you know you are breaking it and if the occasion demands it. If there be one iron rule, it is:

Never bid no-trump unless you stop the adversary's suit.

Remember that you should save *game* by your *play*, and *rubber* by your *bid*.

Pay strict attention to all bids, in order to place the suits. Then make it an invariable rule to lead through strength, not up to it, and you won't go far astray.

A Warning against Overbidding

THERE is no fault as common in Auction as overbidding; it is the rock which wrecks nine-tenths of the lost hands. It is constant and it is inexcusable. Players seem to feel that they are not playing real Auction unless they rise to the occasion and make some kind of a bid every time it comes around to them. Even holding hands upon which they would hate to be forced to bid in plain Bridge, they insist upon bidding them in Auction, when they are *not* forced to it.

Let me see if I cannot cover the situation in a few words, and help you to cure yourself of this fault, if you have it.

The dealer is *forced* to bid, but no one else is. And no one else should, unless he has a real reason for so doing.

The first round is a declaration of high cards, not a make. If you have a "free" bid, (*i. e.*, if you are not dealer), never make a first bid on a suit unless you hold one or two of the three highest cards of that suit, and some-

thing else besides. Pass rather. And even as dealer, remember that any bid (other than "one spade") must show high cards. You bid from strength, not length.

On later rounds, the information you glean from partner and adversary may enable you to do something with a longer weaker suit; but even then don't keep going up, and up, on slight material.

Never break any of these rules, except with the specific object of saving rubber. Nothing else will excuse you.

You need not dread letting the adversary get the bid at "two diamonds," or "two royals," *on a clean score*. It takes a good many tricks to go game in clubs, diamonds, hearts, or royals; with nothing on the game, it is the exceptional hand that will go game in the hand. And if your adversary holds that exceptional hand, he will get the bid in spite of you,—unless you give him a chance to do even better by doubling some silly weak bid of yours, and of thus piling up hundreds in penalties. Big penalties are the biggest possible thing in Auction; and if the adversary gets them, they are *always* a present from you. Do try to remember this! *He cannot make a big score unless you let him!* He may get all the cards; he may go game in one hand, and

rubber in two,—but it will be a very slight rubber. It will not please him nearly so well as one where you give him 700 or 800 in penalties, by overbidding your poor hands.

Do digest this point. Auction was made to keep good hands from going to waste, not to encourage ridiculous bids on poor ones. You bid on *good* hands; and two good hands held against each other will often run the bidding very high. But you should rarely bid much on mediocre hands; and never on poor ones, except to avert a catastrophe. The reason is so obvious that it seems odd to have to reiterate the advice. The only possible explanation of the poor bidding that is constantly seen, is the gambling-spirit that is said to lie somewhere in each of us. Remember, though, you cannot bluff in Auction as you can in poker, because all of the hands are played. How much bluffing would you attempt in poker, if you had the absolute certainty of being called every time? I smile whenever I hear any one insisting that "Auction is all bluff." And I think I have had several thousand such smiles. It is a very common error, but an error just the same.

Raising Your Partner's Bid

HAVING attempted to guide your choice of bid in your own suit, I will try to show you how you should, or should not, go up in your partner's suit.

When your partner bids his hand, he counts on one or two tricks that you are to take. Statistics show that nine-tenths of the hands dealt have at least one trick in them. Your partner will therefore allow one trick, *at least*, to your hand. It follows that you must never go higher, in his suit, unless you can give him *more* than the one trick on which he has already counted. For that trick cannot take twice.

Suppose your partner has opened with "one heart" and the following adversary says "two diamonds"; don't go to "two hearts" simply because you have the ace of trumps! That is only one trick, and your partner has counted upon one. You must hold something more, if you want to raise him.

And just a word as to "raisers." In a de-

clared trump they are aces, kings, singletons, missing suits, and guarded trump-honors,—nothing else. No guarded queens nor guarded jacks in side-suits, may be counted as raisers; by the time a suit goes round the third time, or the fourth, one of the adversaries may be trumping it. Singletons are raisers, but doubletons are not; you may easily lose both rounds of a suit in which you hold two poor cards. A singleton ace may be counted as two raisers, because you take with it on the first round and get a ruff on the second. A missing suit may be counted as two raisers, provided, of course, that you hold two trumps with which to ruff that suit when it is led. *But none of these may be reckoned as a raiser until you have subtracted from your hand the one trick upon which your partner counted and which is the toll you must pay him.*

Suppose your partner bids "a heart," and this is your hand:

♡ Q 4 3
♣ 10 5 3
♢ Q 5 4 2
♠ K 7 5

Now the adversary following your partner bids "two clubs"; you can raise your partner *once*,

but not *twice;* that is, you can go to "two hearts" but not to "three hearts." For you have one raiser, and one only, in your hand. Your guarded trump honor is the trick you owe your partner; and your king of spades is a raiser, unless royals should be bid on your left. In that case he would be useless, and you could not count him as a raiser.

Now I will show you why that queen of diamonds is not a raiser. In almost all cases, you can count on two rounds of a side-suit going through; that means that a side ace, or a side king, is a fairly sure trick. But the third round of a suit is a rather forlorn hope and should not be reckoned on. How many tricks are there in a hand? Thirteen. How many aces and kings? Eight. That leaves but five tricks to be divided amongst four queens, four jacks, and all the lower cards in the pack. You will easily see how slight a chance one of those eight queens and jacks might have at one of those five tricks. Your queen might happen to be one of the lucky ones—or it might not!

A missing suit or a singleton ace, however, will put your hand out of the commonplace class and into the unusual. Either of them is worth all the side-queens and side-jacks put together.

At no-trump, it is exactly reversed. A missing suit is the most serious of drawbacks, and a singleton ace is only a little better. A well-guarded queen may always be counted as a trick, if her suit has not been bid on your left. If it has, she is good only if she is a sequence-stopper. Queen-jack-ten will always be a stopper, no matter where the ace and king of the suit may lie.

Remember, then, in no-trump any guarded honor is "a trick," and any other guarded honor is "a raiser." But in declared trumps, three things are "tricks,"—guarded trump-honors, side aces, and side kings; and raisers are these three and two additional things,—singletons and missing suits. And a trick and a raiser must always lie in different suits.

Losing Rubbers

I WISH I could impress on my readers the necessity for keeping their eyes on the penalty column and of avoiding "losing" rubbers. Any one who plays for high stakes is not apt voluntarily to take many such rubbers after a few bitter experiences. But those who play for the love of the game seem to feel that they have won *something*, even when they go rubber with a loss of 400 or 500 points. "At any rate, we won the rubber," they will tell you, with pride.

What satisfaction can there be in such a victory as that? The "rubber" is simply a term; the players who win the most points on their grand total are the winners, whether they have or have not added to their score the 250 for the rubber; and their adversaries are the losers.

When the adversaries are far ahead of you (on the grand total), you simply cannot afford to go rubber, unless you are forced to. Any one who voluntarily takes a losing rubber definitely ends his own chances for that time.

As long as you keep the game going, you have a chance of getting even with the other side by some turn of luck, of "setting" them in their bid, and of wiping out the difference between their score and yours.

Try, from the beginning, to keep the adversaries from piling up big penalties against you. Should they happen to get such penalties, set yourself immediately to work to offset these penalties by winning some for yourself; in other words, begin at once to use your good hands for *defeating* the bid instead of for *securing* it. Don't wait until the game is far along and you can be put in the position of either taking a losing rubber or of being further penalized; go to work at once.

For instance, suppose you have allowed the adversaries to pile up some 700 against you in penalties; you have each won a game, and the rubber-game stands at 24–26. If they are wise, they will force that rubber upon you, and you are powerless to resist the attack. If it is their deal and they open the bidding, you are afraid to let them have it because it will give them a big rubber against you; you are obliged to bid against them, whether safely or unsafely. Then if they are real Auction players they will drop at once, allowing you to play the hand. And

you are forced to win your bid and take a losing rubber, or to lose your bid and give them a still higher penalty column. And if it is your opening bid, they will use the same system and will refuse to bid against you no matter what they hold.

Don't let matters come to this pass. The moment you are heavily penalized turn all your efforts toward penalizing the adversary in return; don't try to play the hands—try to set him. Bid against him just enough to force him, then sit still and defeat him. If you can't do this on the first hand, try to do it on the next. And keep on trying till it is accomplished! Never lose sight of that big penalty against you.

When you are on the other side of the fence, and have just *won* big penalties, be very careful to give the adversaries no chance to offset them. If you have a perfectly sure bid, make it; but play an absolutely safe game. Never be tempted to a shaky bid, even for forcing purposes (you might get left with it). If necessary, *let* the adversaries play all the hands; *let* them go game, and even rubber! You will still take the winnings and that, I imagine, is your object.

If you follow this scheme, they will never be able to penalize you except on some chance hand when it is your deal and both you and your

partner hold hopeless hands; you (being forced to bid) say "a spade," and your partner can say nothing. That is the adversaries' chance, and (by refraining from bidding) they may get back a hundred of their lost points; but, under Law 48, they cannot get more. And such desperate hands do not occur often.

If you are playing in absolutely hard luck, it is often better to take the rubber quickly and get the 250 as an offset to the penalties. If it is to be a sure loss, make it as slight a one as possible by ending the rubber while it is young. But in the ordinary run of games, use the system I have recommended; avoid taking losing rubbers yourself and try to force them upon the adversary. Make him go rubber while it costs him money; if you allow the game to go on, luck may turn against you, the adversary may be able to penalize you for several hands running, to wipe off his losses and to pull out well ahead of you in the end.

Brilliancy versus Solidity

When I recommend solidity of play, rather than brilliancy, let no one misconstrue my meaning and think that "solidity" means "woodenness." An automaton is not an Auction player:

you must know all your rules, and you must occasionally break them when the occasion demands it. Scope must always be given to individual judgment and to the exigencies of the situation. But, I beg of you, do not make erratic brilliancy your lode-star. The thing that may seem incredibly subtle and clever to you may leave your partner gasping and uncertain. Be reliable! Don't go against the established standards of the game unless you have a real reason! Don't bid on jack-suits and ten-suits (on the first round) simply because you want the fun of playing the hand, and then say that the situation demanded an unusual handling.

Take my word for it, all the really great players are solid, reliable, rock-bottom partners. There are few brilliant "coups," few wild flights into the unexpected, no erratic arguments. The first time you play with them you will probably be disappointed at the calmness of their game; but it won't take you long to realize what absolute rocks of safety they are.

There is a brilliancy so exaggerated that it amounts to unsoundness. A hectic game may dazzle at first, but you will not find it attractive as a constant companion.

A Condensed List of Bridge Leads

INCREDIBLE though it may seem, many persons are attempting to play Auction without a thorough knowledge of their Bridge-leads. I therefore append a condensed list of these leads.

In Any Declared Trump

(Hearts, diamonds, clubs, or spades):

Your best lead is always from two honors that touch (ace-king, king-queen, queen-jack, or jack-ten), and the higher the honors the better the lead. The lead of king, from ace-king, is the best in the pack, as it usually takes the trick, leaves you in command of the suit, and gives your partner a chance to "echo."

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

Holding any three honors your lead is always one of those honors. There is no exception to this rule in a declared trump; some authorities consider ace-king-ten a bad combination, and

think it unsafe to lead from it; but I can see no objection to the lead of the king.

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

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

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

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

Never lead fourth best from two honors, or three honors; simply from a single honor that is not an ace.

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

THE LEAD OF AN ACE denies the king, unless it is immediately followed by the king, when it means "no more of that suit." Always lead ace from every combination that holds it, unless you have king as well.

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

THE LEAD OF A QUEEN means jack and others, and denies the king.

THE LEAD OF A JACK means the top of a sequence, or the top of nothing.

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

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

In No-Trump

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

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

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

The Advantages of the New Suit-Values

When Auction first appeared it was played with the same suit-values that had been used in Bridge; spades were worth 2 a trick, clubs, 4, diamonds, 6, hearts, 8, and no-trumps, 12. Of course in the old game of Bridge there was no bidding, so the wide discrepancy in the suit-values was no drawback. Then Auction came, and we were all so fascinated by the new game that it took us some little time to recognize its flaws. But the longer we played it the more we realized the unfair advantage given to red cards, the impossibility of gambling on black hands, and the necessity for pushing the suit-values closer together.

The New Count was formed to obviate these difficulties. It sprang into immediate and universal popularity and swept the country like wildfire. Even the players who refused it recognition, at first, have fallen into line and are using it.

The new count is not so much a *change* in the game as it is a *perfecting* of the game. It is the perfected result of two years' intelligent "trying out" of the game that has come to be

the most popular card-game of two continents.

The advantages of the new count are manifold. Let me show you some of them:

It makes a better-balanced game; and, that being the case, the bidding becomes sharper and keener. The old game was like a see-saw with the red end so heavy it was always on the ground, and the black end so light it could never weigh at all; and the new game is like the same see-saw with a perfect equilibrium established between the two ends. The rubbers are apt to be longer under the new count, for the same reason that a well-balanced see-saw will "teeter" longer than one which is too heavy at one end and too light at the other. They are longer, but they are better.

Then the suit-values are but one point apart, and that is more vital than you might imagine. *A bid of two in anything will beat a bid of one in anything.* Do you see what a difference that is going to make? After you have made a bid of two, no one can beat it with a bid of one. Formerly, a bid of "one no-trump" would knock over a bid of "two clubs"; and one is so easy to make that it seems rather unfair to allow it to outrank two.

But the most important feature of the new count is the way it equalizes the black suits and the red. Formerly if your hand held only

clubs or spades it might almost as well have held nothing, except for an occasional forcing bid. The player with the red cards had simply a walk-over, and you were pushed to the wall. And as exactly half of a pack of cards *are* clubs and spades, it follows that exactly half the bidding opportunities were lost. With a black hand you took a back seat. Now there is no back seat for either black hands or red ones. The advantage is absolutely poised between them.

Again, the new count equalizes the chances of going game in a certain number of tricks. Formerly you could go game at no-trump with three odd tricks; there was but one suit (and that a red one) in which you could go game in four odd; but one suit (and that also a red one) in which you could go game in five odd; *and no black suit in which you could possibly go game in the hand, even if you made a grand slam.*

Does that strike you as a particularly well-balanced arrangement? With the revised count, no-trump is reserved for the only declaration in which you can go game in three odd—and you may hold a good no-trumper when the preponderance of your hand is red, or when it is black, so that the suits are equalized even there. Then there are two suits (one red and one black)

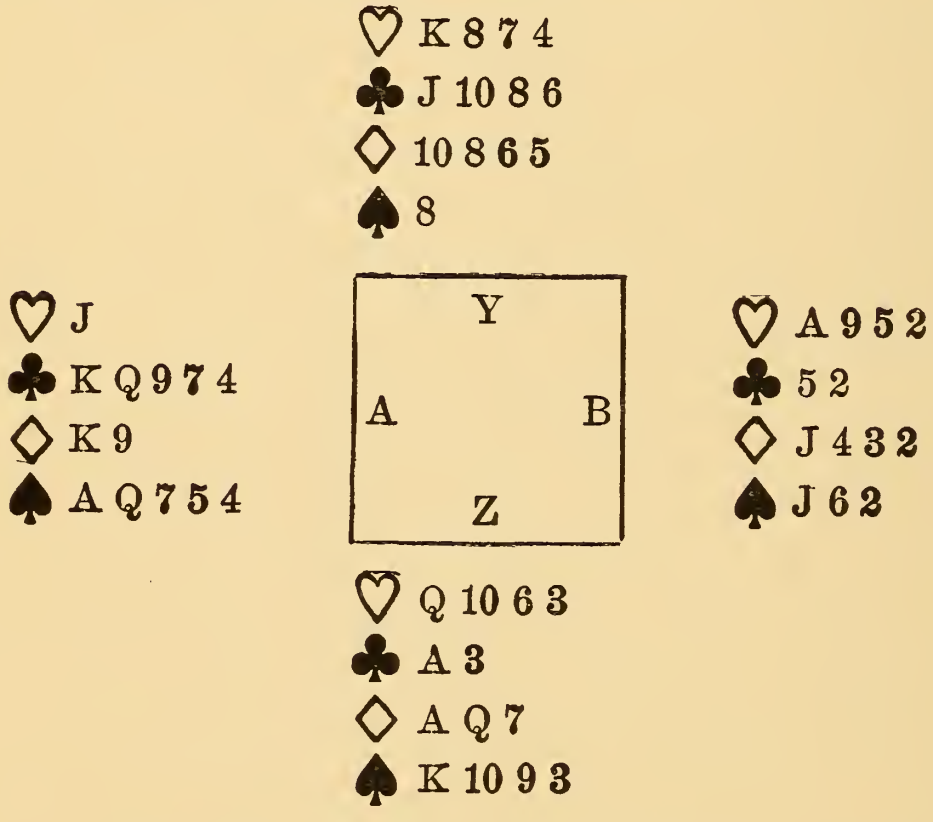
in both of which you can go game in four odd; and of these two the black is one point higher. And there are two suits (one red and one black) in which you can go game in five odd; and of these two the red is one point higher. It is the quintessence of balance.

Suppose the rubber game stands at 20–24, and the play is of the utmost importance to both sides. You get wonderful spades and your adversary gets wonderful hearts; your cards are as good as his, but under the old count, they were the wrong color; he could knock you in the head with a bludgeon and walk off with your corpse; by the revised count, you both settle down to a keen and fair battle of bidding for the play; the advantage is neither for him nor for you. In other words, any suit can stand on its own feet against any other.

And lastly, by the new count, no-trump is relegated to its proper place; it is the *highest* suit, but by no means the *only* suit. And, by the old count, it was so overwhelming that three-fourths of the hands played were no-trump hands, and it was rarely possible to make a successful suit-bid in any suit, save hearts, against a no-trumper. Now, nothing is prettier than a well-played suit-hand; and one of the beauties of the new game is that your chances

are equal for playing with a trump or without one. No-trump hands are good as all other things are good—in the proper place and in the proper proportion.

In three hands, dealt at random and without any rearrangement of cards, the increased bidding possibilities of the new count show up very remarkably. I will give you the hands; Z, of course, is the dealer:

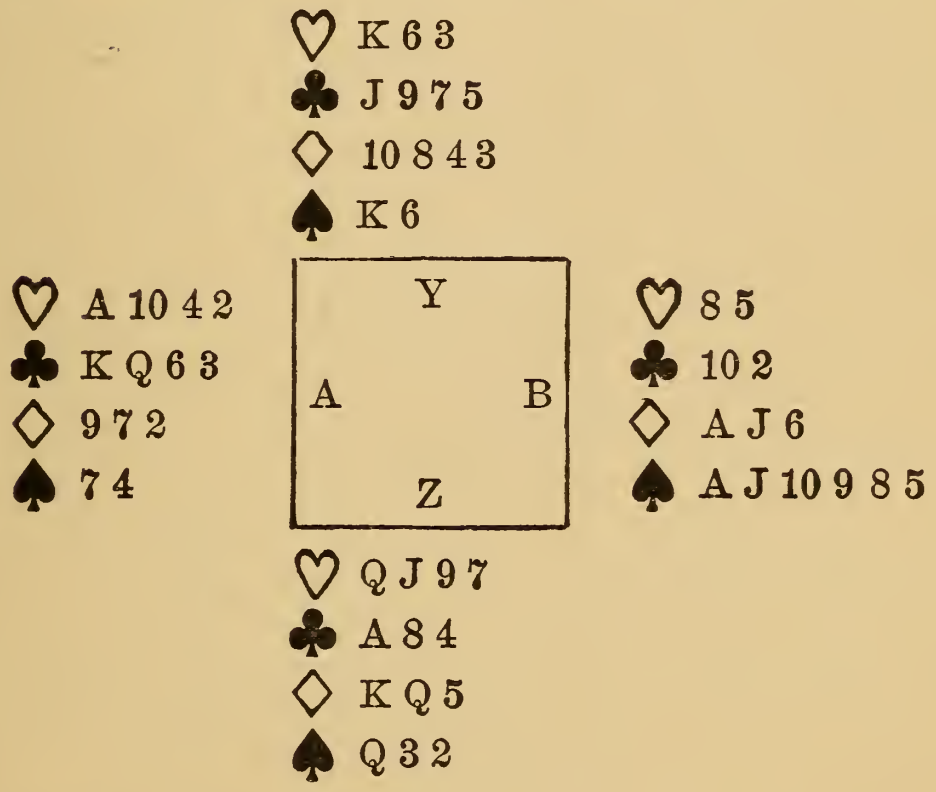


Z, naturally, bids "a no-trump"; and, by the old count, no one can make a reasonable bid against him. "Three clubs" would be an absurd bid from A, even with his heart singleton and his side ace; nothing could warrant it but

an effort to save the rubber. So Z gets it, with no contest, at "one no-trump." It is the old story of the knock-down blow; there is no subtlety, no contest, no anything.

Behold how different under the new count: A can cap Z's bid with "two clubs" or "two lilies," just as he sees fit, and if Z wants that bid he must work for it. There are infinitely greater possibilities of bidding, of forcing, of doubling, and of "setting."

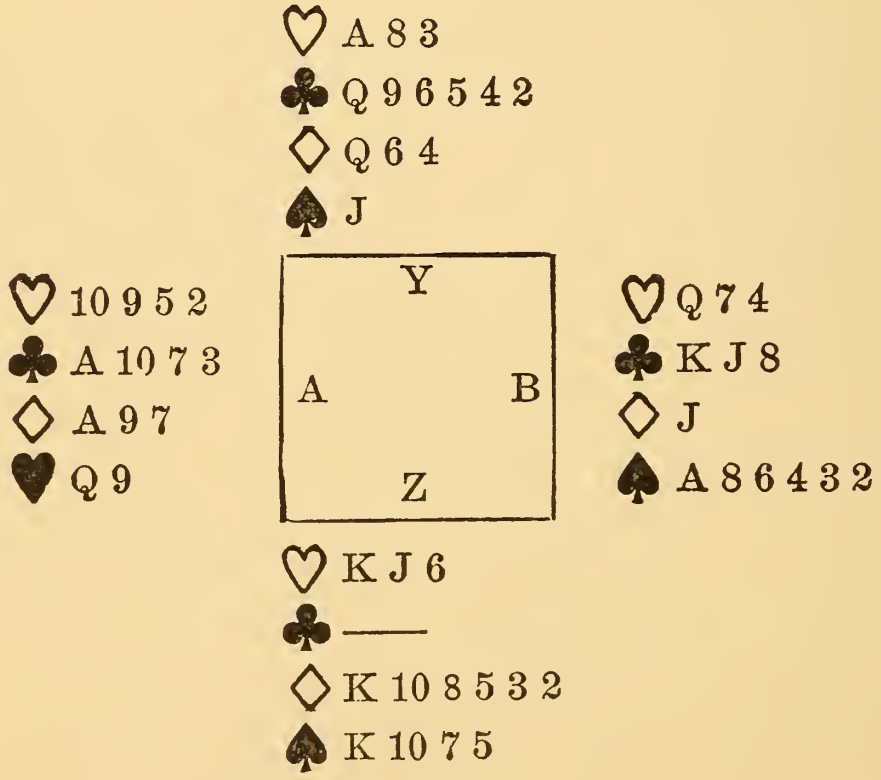
The second hand fell as follows:



Z says a "no-trump."
A and Y go by.
B is able to bid "two lilies."

Z, having the lilies stopped, is able to go to "two no-trumps," if he wants to. Should he elect to do so, A might double on his partner's lilies and his own hearts and clubs; or he might fear the diamonds and pass; or he might go to "three lilies" on his side suits. And Y would also have several courses open to him from the information he had gleaned. The bidding on the second round would differ according to the judgment and temperament of the players, but the point is that there would be sure to be "something doing." The new count would make the game active.

This was the third hand:



Z would probably bid "a diamond" because he lacks clubs.

A and Y would go by.

B would bid "a lily" on his diamond singleton and side-suit honors.

Then, can you not see the infinite possibilities of the hand? Z would bid "two diamonds," hoping to defeat B if he went to "two lilies." Following the "two diamonds" bid, A might bid "two lilies" on a trump-honor and two side aces, or he might venture on "two no-trumps," fortified by the fact that no one had bid hearts (so they were probably not banked in one hand), and that he held four of them, to the ten, himself. Then, there is a possibility of Y going to "three diamonds," on his trump honor, his side ace, his side queen, and his spade singleton. The point is, that "three diamonds" (21) will beat "two no-trumps" (20), which it would never do before.

Just lay this hand out, imagining yourself to be any one of the four players, and see where your skill in bidding would have the greater scope, in the old count or the new!

The three hands just given are simply the first three hands that fell at random, but they happen to be excellent examples of what I am trying to point out. Of course, there will be

many hands where the bidding will not vary between the two counts; but there will be many more where it will vary exceedingly.

One thing is certain: now that we have become accustomed to the new count, the old would seem as flat and stale as would a game of plain Bridge to an Auction-lover. The old suit-values are banished forever!

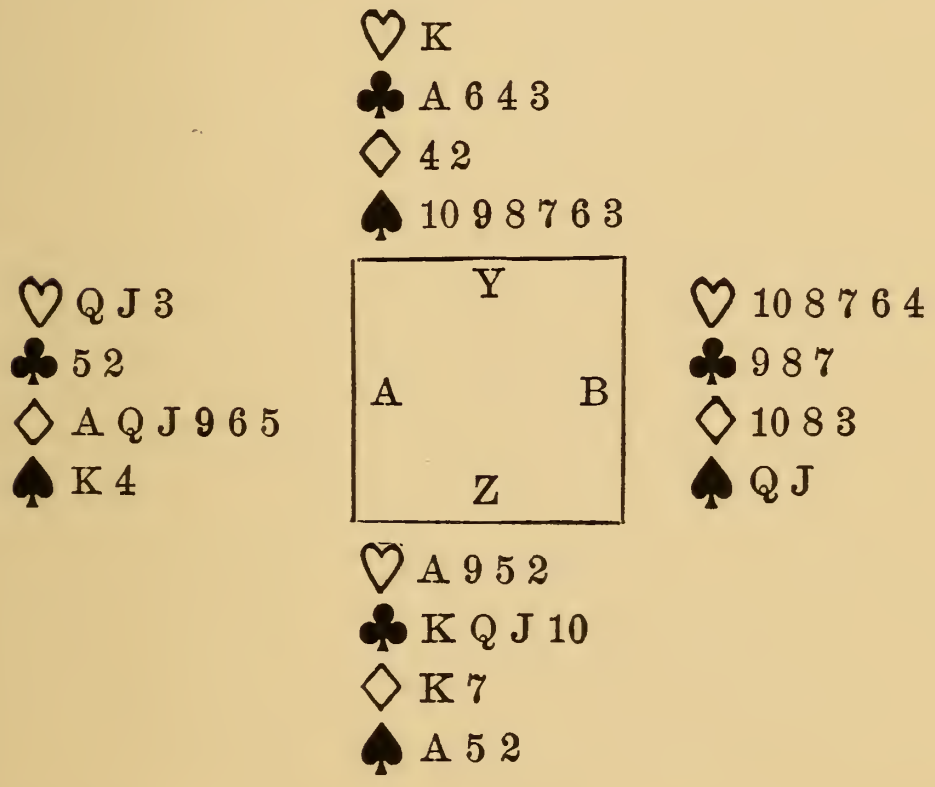
A Table of the Trick- and Honor-Values under the New Count.

	Spades	*Clubs*	*Diamonds*	*Hearts*	*Royals*	*No-trump*
Each trick over six.....	2	6	7	8	9	10
3 honors (simple).....	4	12	14	16	18	30
4 honors, divided.....	8	24	28	32	36	40
5 honors, divided.....	10	30	35	40	45	—
4 honors, one hand.....	16	48	56	64	72	100
4 honors in one hand, 5th in partner's.....	18	54	63	72	81	—
5 honors, one hand.....	20	60	70	80	90	—
Small slam.....	20	20	20	20	20	20
Big slam.....	40	40	40	40	40	40
Chicane.....	4	12	14	16	18	—

Test Hands

Test Hand No. 1

(Discarding to unblock; and allowing a suit to come to you through a declared stopper.)



This is one of the subtlest of hands—especially for A.

Z bids "a no-trump"; A "two diamonds"; Y and B pass. Z's diamond stopper is very

light, lying, as it does, *under* the diamond bid; on the other side, it would be perfectly safe. However, he says "two no-trumps," as I think nearly any one would do in his place. And every one else passes.

Now it lies entirely with A whether or not this bid shall go through. As the hand was played, A insisted on leading his diamonds (against expert advice). He led his Ace, then his queen, to clear the suit, insisting that he had re-entry in both spades and hearts, and would make his diamonds later. And he did; but it was so much later, that Z had made what he bid.

For the hand hinges entirely on Z's taking, or not taking, with the king of diamonds. He has exactly eight tricks in the two hands, allowing one for the diamond king,—four club tricks, two heart tricks, the ace of spades, and the king of diamonds. Failing one of those tricks, the bid will not go through.

Always remember that "if a stopper lies *under* the bid, and is not the ace, it should be led through—never up to." Z's bid of "two no-trumps" declares a diamond stopper; from A's hand, that stopper is shown to be the king—and the king in a very perilous position. It should be A's sole care to throw B in, that he

may lead the diamonds through Z; and it should be Z's sole care to keep B from taking a single trick. He does not care how many tricks A takes, for A will have to lead up to him; but he simply *cannot* afford to let B in, to lead the diamonds through his king.

A should lead "the highest of his own weakest suit"—the five of clubs. Z takes this with Dummy's ace, so that he may lead his long suit (spades) through B. If he should lead spades from his own hand up to Dummy's ten, B might come in with the jack, the queen, or the king (if he held them), and lead diamonds through Z—and then the fat would be in the fire.

So the first club round goes to Y's ace. Y leads the 6 of spades, B plays the jack, and Z the ace; and (here comes the crux), *A must throw his king on that ace!* For had Z held the queen of spades, he would, certainly have finessed it, not being afraid to let A in. As Z does n't hold it, B must; therefore A must throw away his king, in order to unblock and give B a spade re-entry. If A comes in on hearts, he must lead his four of spades; B will take with the queen and lead his ten of diamonds, and their object will be accomplished.

Should Z elect to open hearts instead of spades, A must follow the same principle—he must

keep a small one to try to throw his partner in. A has two objects—to get out of B's way in every suit but diamonds, and never to take a trick until the diamonds are led to him from one of the other three hands. It would be very unusual for Z to make his hearts before he took a try at his long spades. But suppose he should! He can still be defeated.

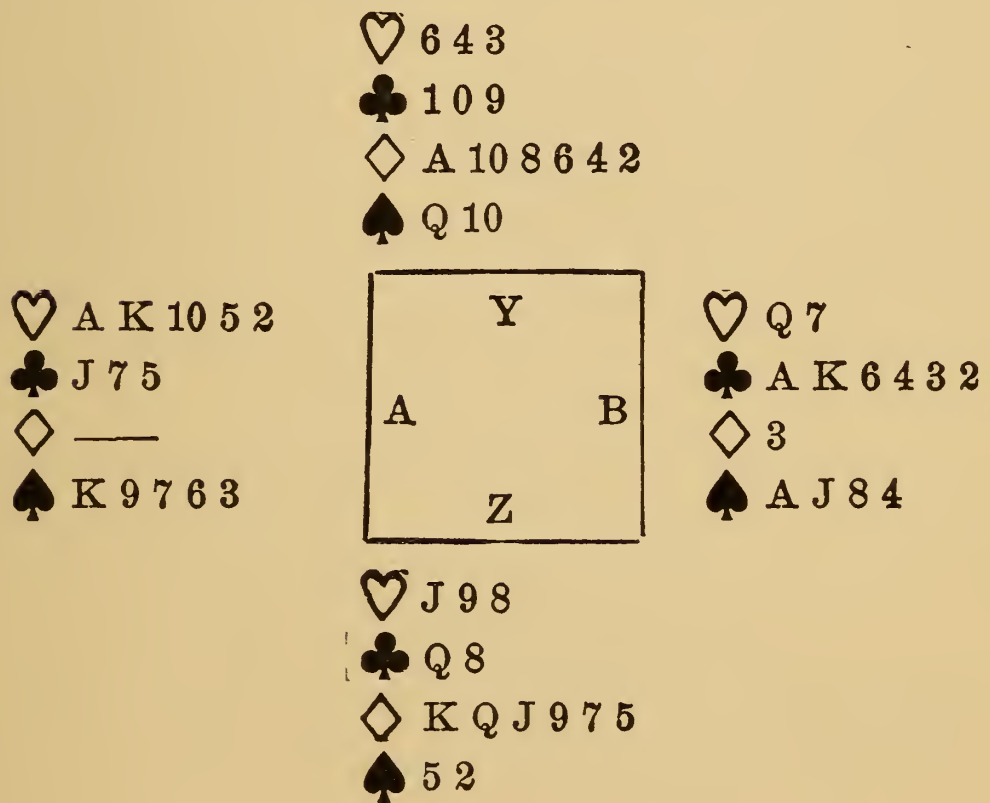
When Z takes the first club round with Dummy's ace, he may lead his king of hearts. Then A must throw his jack. Z will then get into his own hand with the clubs and make all the clubs he holds. If he next leads the ace of hearts, *let A be sure to throw his queen* to try to unblock hearts for B's re-entry. He knows that B must hold *some* suit with more than three cards in it. It has been shown that B's length is not in clubs; A's hand will prove that B's suit is not diamonds; Dummy's long line of spades will make it improbable that B holds many of them,—and hearts are thus marked as a long weak suit in B's hand.

Thus, if A opens the diamonds, Z wins out. If he allows the diamonds to come to him, Z is defeated. Never forget that if a stopper lies under the bid, and is not the ace, you should never lead up to it, but always through it.

Of course in many hands the situation would not be so ideal for A; Z's king of diamonds, for instance, might be better guarded; or B might not have so many diamonds with which to lead through the stopper. But even so, A loses nothing by letting the diamonds come up to him. I have seen hundreds of hands played and *I have never seen one where a point was lost by waiting to have a stopper led through; and in an overwhelming majority of cases, much has been gained by the method!*

Test Hand No. 2

(A thoroughly bad raise.)



Z bid "a diamond" on this hand, which was an obviously correct bid. A covered with "a heart," and Y made an incorrect raise to "two diamonds." *Y has not a raiser in his hand!* To raise your partner, you must have two tricks (a "trick" and a "raiser") and they must lie in different suits. Y has a "trick" (his ace of trumps) and his ten of trumps would be a "raiser," except that it lies in the same suit. There is not an outside trick in Y's hand,—not an ace, a king, a singleton, or a missing-suit, and *he cannot raise his partner on trumps alone!* His trumps and his partner's trumps will all fall together. The adversaries will lead, and *they will not lead trumps.* Y will lose seven suit-tricks before he can ever come in.

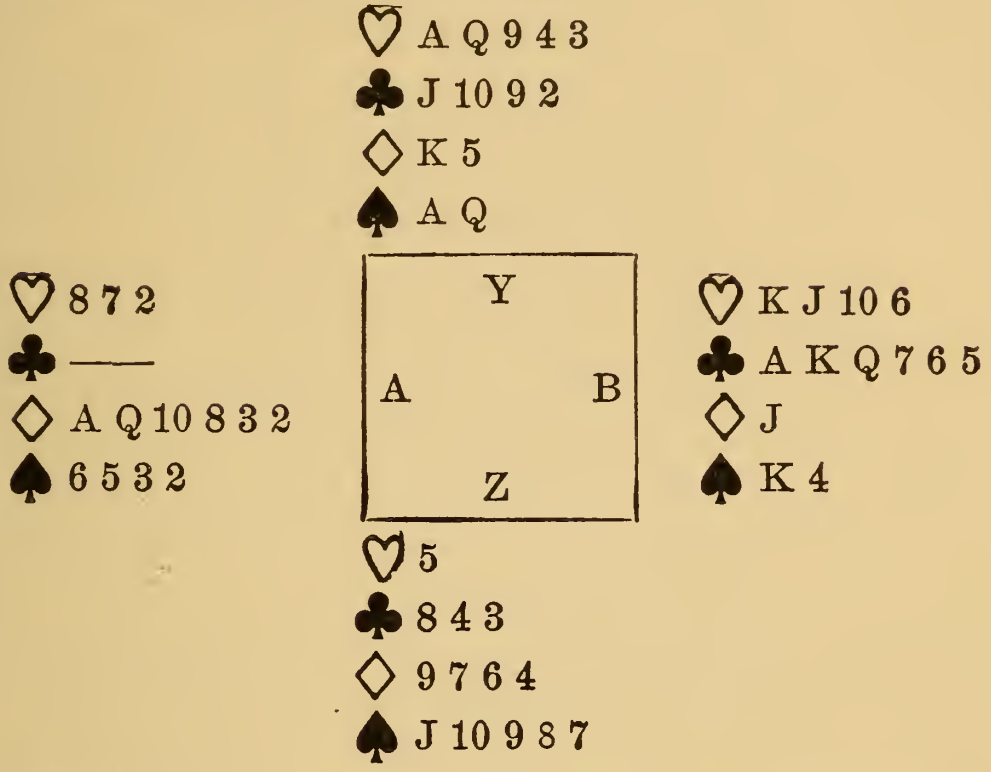
Players in Y's position will often argue that they can trump in with those long trumps. On what suit could Y trump? Not hearts, not clubs, and not spades,—because he has some of each suit.

Z–Y hold twelve out of thirteen diamonds, yet they cannot possibly take the odd trick. Y's raise, on trumps alone, was extremely bad!

Test Hand No. 3

(If the adversary makes a bid that suits you, try to force him to two in the same suit by mak-

ing a side-bid. If you can't do this, sit still. Don't double a bid of one.)



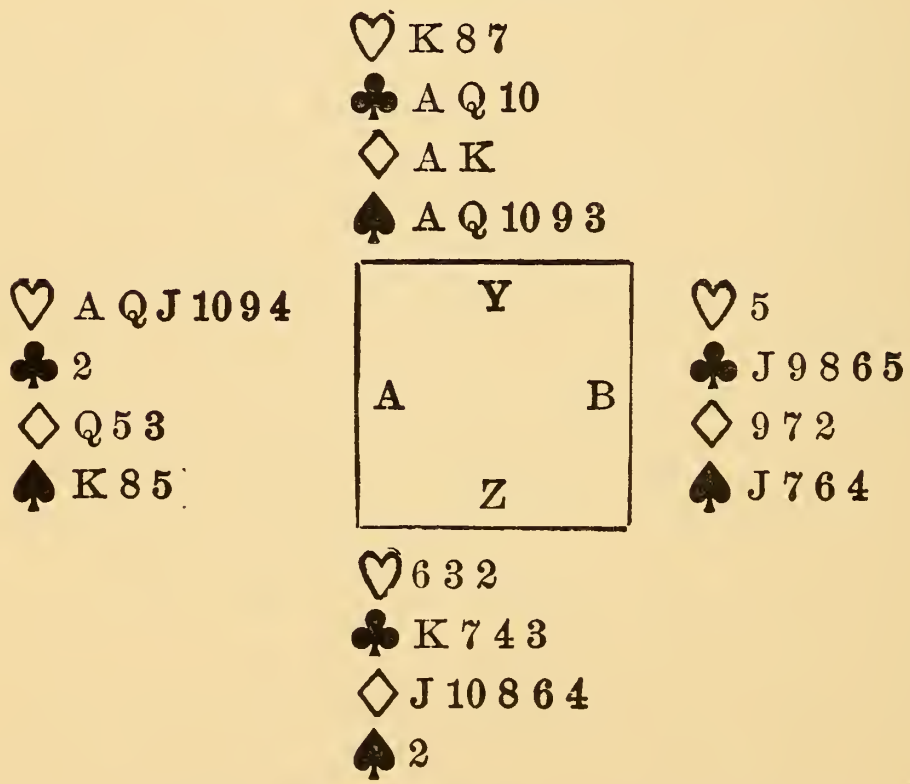
Z bids "a spade." A may or may not bid his diamonds; the rest of his hand is trash, and it is a good thing to leave the adversary in a "one spade" hole. However, A has six diamonds to three honors and a missing suit, and most players would prefer to bid. Whether he bids or not, Y will. He may bid "a heart," or a "no-trump"; his short suits would make the heart look better, besides which, it takes a better hand than usual to bid no-trump when your partner has said "a spade."

If Y says "a heart," the bid will just suit B, who must "boost" the heart bid. Most players

would do this with "two clubs"; I should do it with "two diamonds"; B has an honor in his partner's suit (even though it is a singleton), a splendid side-suit of clubs, and two guarded kings, one of which is shown to be safe by Y's heart bid. If Y goes to "two hearts," B can beat him badly; but B must n't double for fear he will frighten the adversary to a bid that is less desirable. Where would he be if Z should jump to "two royals," on his five trumps to two honors, and his singleton in his partner's suit?

Test Hand No. 4

(Double, rather than bid, in the beginning of a rubber.)



Score: Love-all on a new rubber.

Z bids "a spade"; A "a heart"; Y "a royal"; and B passes. Z passes. A bids "two hearts" and Y doubles him and makes 200. He counts one trick for his trump king (lying on the safe side of the heart bid); 2 tricks in diamonds and a possible diamond ruff (for he leads ace, then king, to show no more); and one trick for each of his black aces. His book being five, that will give him the odd. Instead of a diamond ruff, he may get a spade ruff in Z's hand. For after two diamond leads, Y, wishing to throw Z in (so as to get a diamond ruff), leads the ten of clubs through Dummy's greatest strength. Z takes with his king, and instead of leading a diamond he may choose to lead his spade singleton. The result is the same, whichever way it is played.

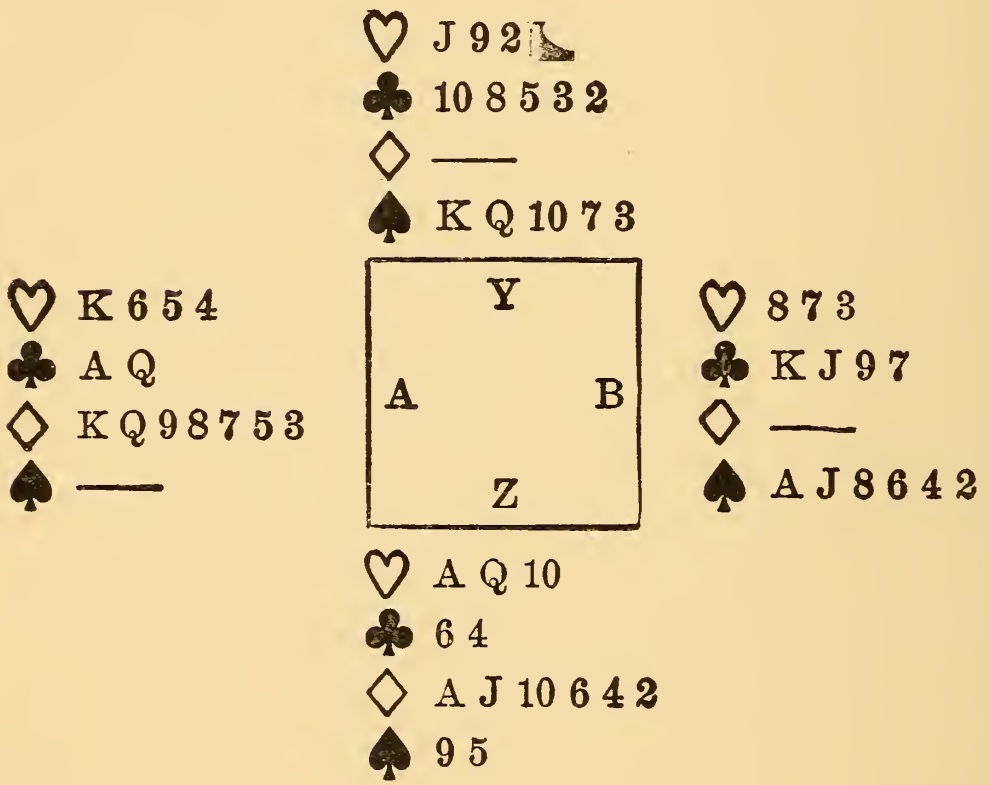
If Y had bid "two royals" he would have scored 27 points and 18 honors, against the best defence,—a total of 35 points. By doubling the hearts, he scores 200, with less work.

Would you rather work like a slave for thirty-five cents, or have some one make you a present of two dollars?

If Z–Y had been three or more *on the rubber-game*, Y would have preferred to bid and take the rubber.

Test Hand No. 5

(The most remarkable hand I have ever seen dealt.)



This is one of the most remarkable hands I have ever known. After seeing it occur in actual play, I was so struck with it that I went home and spent a couple of hours playing it in every conceivable way. Then, wanting the opinion of more minds than one, I collected three of the best players I have ever known, and we four spent another hour over it.

Of course, it is necessary to allow scope for

individual judgment in the bid, *after certain fixed laws have been observed!* But there were two points in this hand that we all agreed in branding as incorrect. The first was any possible doubling of bids of one, and the second was any thought of no-trump bids. No-trumps are very bad with lacking suits. The only player who could possibly consider no-trump is Z, after he has discovered his partner's spades; and Z is never in the position where he will be tempted to it.

Z opens with "a diamond." There could be no two opinions about that.

A should pass unless "two diamonds" would put him rubber, in which case he should bid them. Unless he is at least 16 on the rubber game, he should pass and let Z play it. If A can take two odd in diamonds, they will be worth 14 under his own bid, and 100 if he lets Z play it.

A should positively *not* double a one-bid. He runs the risk of frightening the adversary to royals, which would not suit him at all. "When the bid suits you, say nothing,—unless you are prepared to double again, no matter where the adversary jumps."

If Z is left with the "one diamond" bid, Y must positively say "one royal," because he

lacks his partner's suit, and has a very good one of his own.

B should keep silent after Y's bid, on exactly the same principle that A should keep silent after Z's.

Z passing, A would probably bid "two diamonds." He sits on the safe side of the adversary who bid them, and he can ruff the other adversary's suit.

Up to this point, I do not see room for any question as to bid or pass. But I do consider it open to discussion whether or not Y shall bid "two royals" (provided he has heard no bid from B).

If he does, B will double. And then arises the only possible no-trump question: shall Z bid "two no-trumps" when he sees his partner doubled?

I think it unwarranted; his diamonds are not in sequence, and he knows a strong diamond hand lies over him; he knows nothing of clubs, his spades are wretched, and his hearts should be led to.

A no-trump bid from A should never be considered. He lacks his partner's suit, so that B's spades would be useless; he doesn't want to lead diamonds up to Z; his clubs are terribly short (length is strength in no-trump),

and no one could call his hearts good. Short suits and missing suits are terrible at no-trump, and A has both.

As far as results go, if Z plays "one diamond," A–B score 100 (2 tricks undoubled)—provided A leads his short suit instead of a heart. With a heart-lead, Z will make three heart rounds. But if A leads ace of clubs and follows with the queen, and if, whenever he comes in, he leads a trump from his sequence, he defeats Z to the tune of 100. If A plays it at diamonds, he makes 2 odd (14) against the best possible defence. If A doubles diamonds and frightens Y to royals, and if B is wise enough to sit still and let him play it, A–B make 100. And this is more luck than A had any right to expect. If B says "two royals," he cannot make it against the best defence.

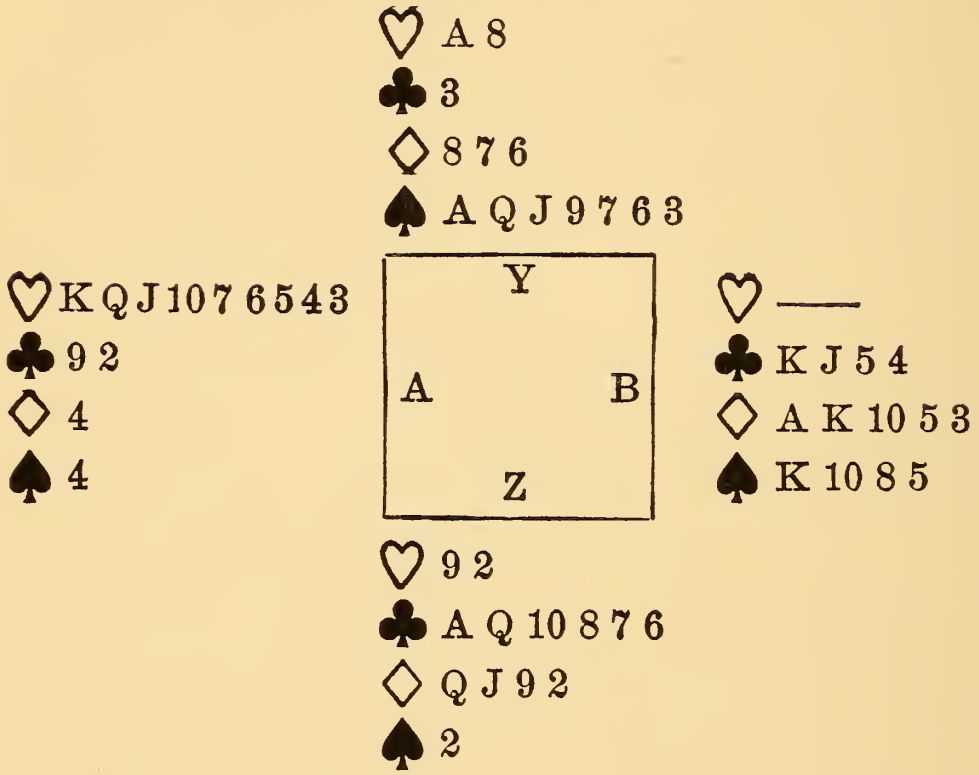
If B doubles a "royal," and Z tries no-trump, he can take six tricks, and reduce his loss from 100 to 50.

And if A plays "one no-trump," he can take the odd,—10 points.

This all shows that A–B hold the winning combination, no matter how the hand is played (except at "two royals"). It lies with them whether they will take 10 points, 14 points, 50 points, or 100 points. Which would you choose?

Test Hand No. 6

(An example of poor bidding.)



Z opened with "a club," A said "a heart," Y "a royal," and B made the terrible mistake of saying "a no-trump." He insisted that his partner had the hearts and he had "everything else." (This is the commonest of errors.)

Suppose A had the hearts,—how was B going to use them? What assistance would they be to him, if he could n't use them? And how many tricks could he take without those hearts?

It was a comfort to B, doubtless, to know that the hearts were not established against him.

But that was not enough. B's own hand promised about four tricks and was distinctly a hand that should have been led to; he held an extremely unsafe combination of clubs, lying on the wrong side of the bid; there was every reason to suppose that the queen of diamonds might be guarded against him; and while his spades lay on the safe side of the bid, he could take but two tricks in them if they were led to him twice, and but one if he had to lead them himself,—up to declared strength.

The moment the first lead was out, and Dummy was exposed, the adversaries would refuse to lead hearts. They would n't lead them, and B could n't.

In order to make A's hearts available, A would have to hold side re-entry. And what re-entry had B a right to expect from A? The bidding had shown that the high clubs were divided between Z and B, and the high spades between Y and B; B, himself, held three high diamonds. B's no-trump presupposed absolutely that the queen of diamonds must lie with A, and that A's hearts must be entirely established and must clear in one round.

B should certainly have passed, or have bid "two hearts" on his side-suits. If A had the trumps, and B the side-suits, it would make an

ideal combination; and every time A led trumps, he would pull two for one.

Again, why bid no-trumps when hearts are "good enough for any one"? It takes but one more trick to go game in hearts, and B's hand should certainly supply that extra trick.

B, however, insisted on his no-trump. Z passed, and A properly overcalled with "two hearts"; that should have warned B to let him alone.

Y said "two royals" and B should have passed. He had a chance of defeating the bid, and the absolute certainty (from his own hand) that Y could not hold any wonderful honors, and could not "go game in the hand." (It was the first hand of the rubber, so Y would need four-odd for game.)

This B, however, loved his no-trump and bid "two."

Z passed and A began to see what he had ahead of him; nevertheless, he went bravely back to his "three hearts."

By this time, Y also had realized B's weakness, so he said "three royals" and was rewarded by hearing B's answering "three no-trumps."

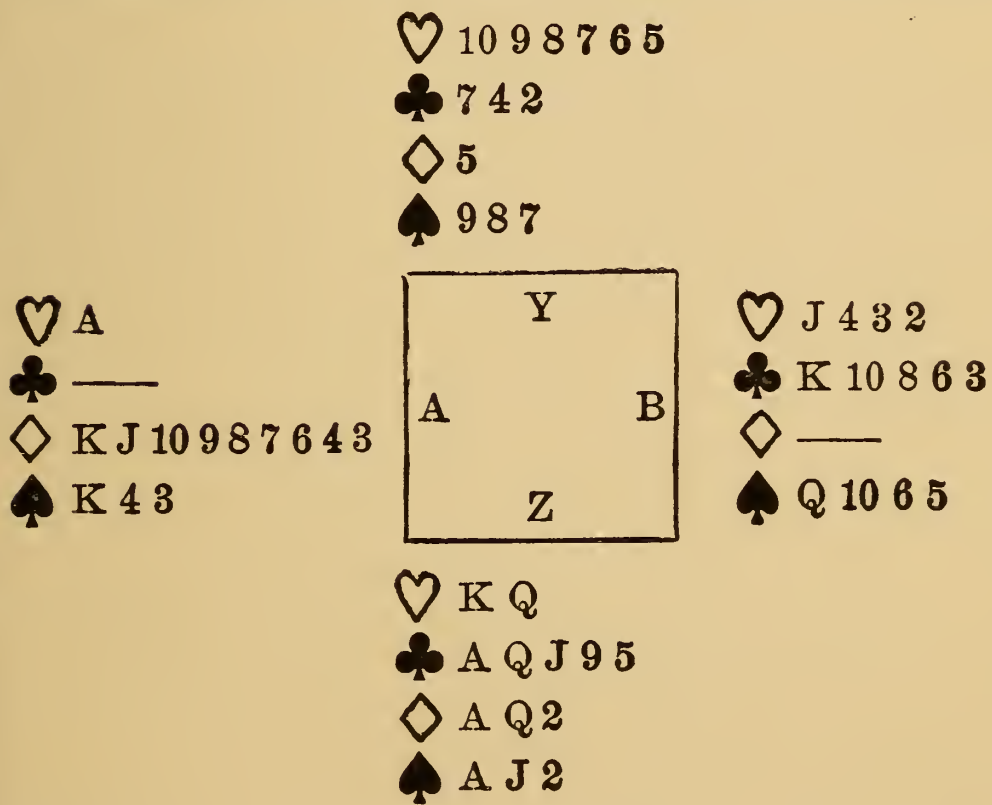
A determined to make one more effort, on account of his 64 honors,—though he saw defeat staring him in the face. He said "four hearts,"

Y continued to force with "four royals," and B never even looked to see if he could defeat the bid! He was one of those players who can see no points except those below the line. He "played for game," always and exclusively,—and his idea of game was a no-trump bid. He had decided by this time that A had all the hearts and that he himself held tricks and stoppers in all the other suits,—and that he would "get into A's hand *somehow*"! He bid his "four no-trumps" and every one gasped and passed.

Did you ever meet a man like B?

Test Hand No. 7

(Two good hands, bidding against each other.)



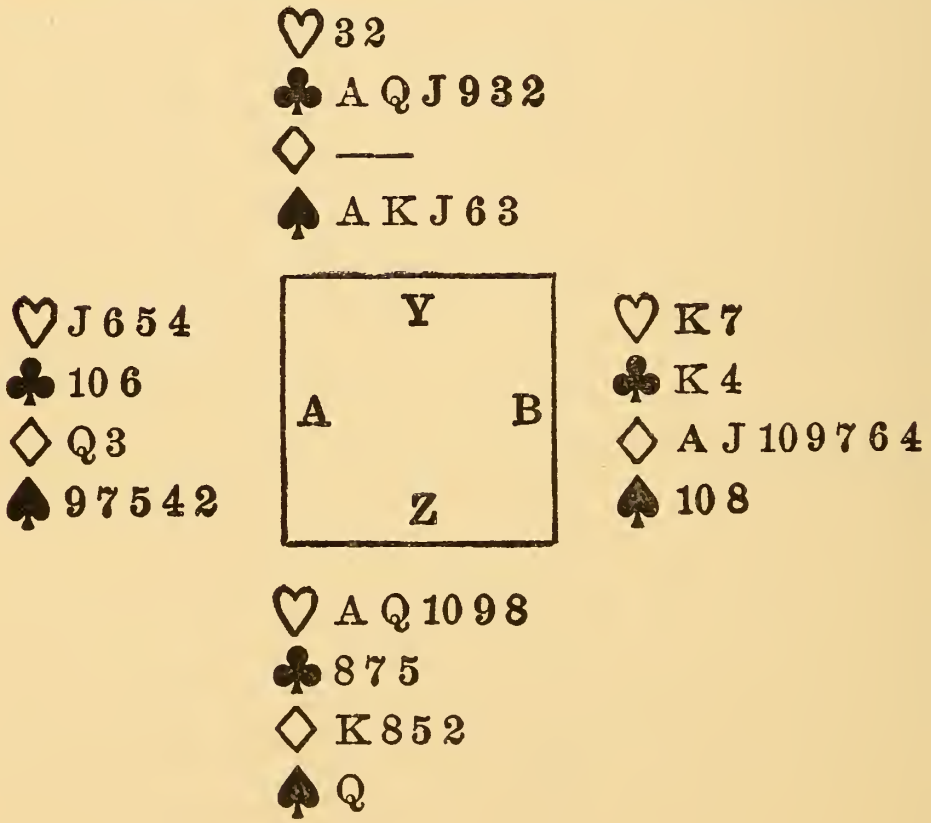
A bids diamonds against Z's no-trumps. A can afford to bid "three diamonds" and make them against Z's possible double. If Z bids up high in no-trumps, A can double and defeat him.

"Position" is against Z; he has a good no-trumper, but his diamonds lie under A's, and it is impossible to get into Dummy to make the hearts or to lead clubs through B.

A hand like Dummy's (Y's) would seriously hamper the best of no-trumpers.

Test Hand No. 8

(It is better to raise your partner's heart-bid on side-suit, or a ruff, than on trumps alone.)



Z, "a heart."
A, "By."
Y, "By."
B, "two diamonds."
Z, "two hearts."
A, "By."
Y, "By."
B, "three diamonds."

Now Z will not go to "three hearts," even with his singleton spade, for he has no knowledge of the whereabouts of the good black cards. The diamond bid is not displeasing to him, but he will not double because of his ignorance of the black suits and his fear of frightening B to no-trump. So he passes, A passes, *and Y says three hearts, with only the deuce and trey in his hand.*

To an amateur, this would seem preposterous. But, as a matter of fact, Y has raised his partner's bid only one trick, and there is no reason in the world why both these little trumps should not take tricks—by ruffing diamonds. Y holds a very strong hand to assist a heart make; much stronger, in fact, than if he held a long line of trumps and no side-suit or ruff.

His lack of diamonds is his best point, and his spades and clubs are splendid.

A is in the lead and naturally leads to his partner's bid — the queen of diamonds. Z

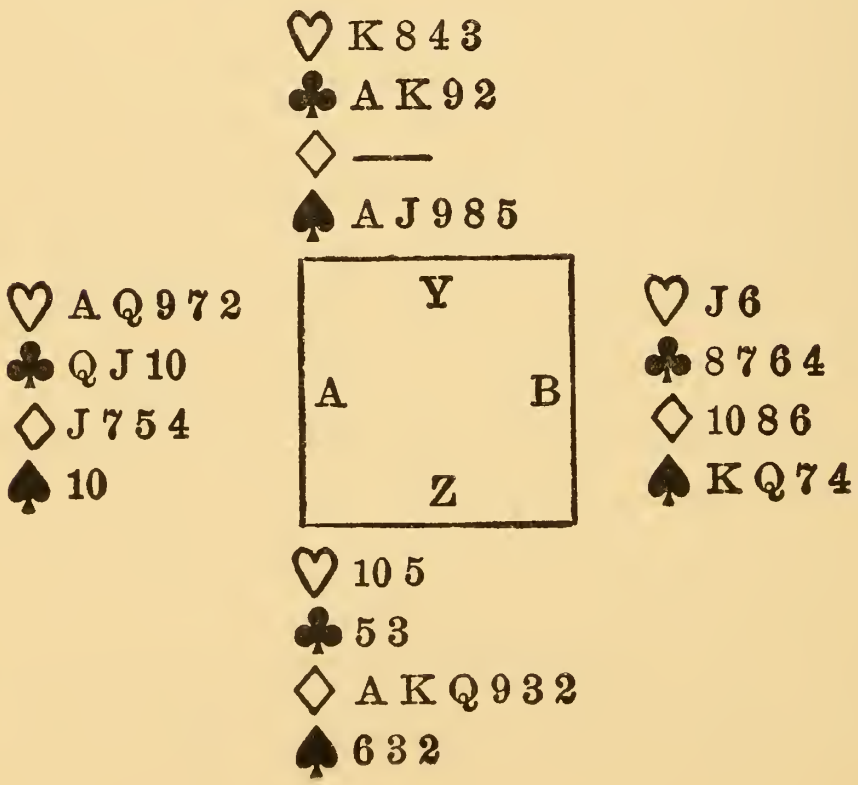
trumps in Dummy and gets into his own hand by leading a small spade up to the queen. He leads a small diamond and trumps in Dummy. Then the ace and king of spades. If B trumps spades, Z will over-trump him. He will then lead a small club up to Dummy's ace (avoiding the finesse), and lead spades again through B.

If B refuses to trump the spades, Z will continue to lead them, and will discard his own losing clubs on them.

"It is better to raise your partner's heart-bid on side-suit, a short suit, or a ruff, than on hearts alone."

Test Hand No. 9

(The importance of holding re-entry in your partner's suit.)



Z, "a diamond"
A, "a heart"

Now Y stops hearts, and has some excellent black cards and may easily consider that he has a no-trumper. Let him remember that his lack of re-entry in his partner's suit is a serious obstacle. With a stronger hand, he would not need his partner's diamond tricks; it would be sufficient for him to know that diamonds were not established against him.

But Y's hand is far from strong; there is no long, established suit in it. He will certainly need his partner's diamond tricks, and he cannot get them unless Z holds side re-entry. It is improbable that he would hold heart re-entry, with a heart-bid from A, and four hearts to the king in Y's own hand. And with four black face cards in Y's hand it may easily happen that Z would not hold re-entry in either of the black suits.

If Y should bid "a no-trump" and B should pass, Z should certainly go back to "two diamonds," because his diamonds are good enough to warrant it, and his side-suits are wretched.

If Z, however, had made a *weak* diamond bid (if he had held, for instance, ace-jack and two little spots), there would be no reason for him

to go back to "two diamonds," and thus make an unsound bid. For aught he knows, his partner's no-trump bid is perfectly safe, and it has not been capped. Why, then, should Z take a contract of two because he fears he is too weak to make one? If it cost any less to be defeated in diamonds than in no-trump, the bid would be excusable; but it costs just the same—fifty a trick. Moreover, a bid of two is far more apt to be doubled than a bid of one.

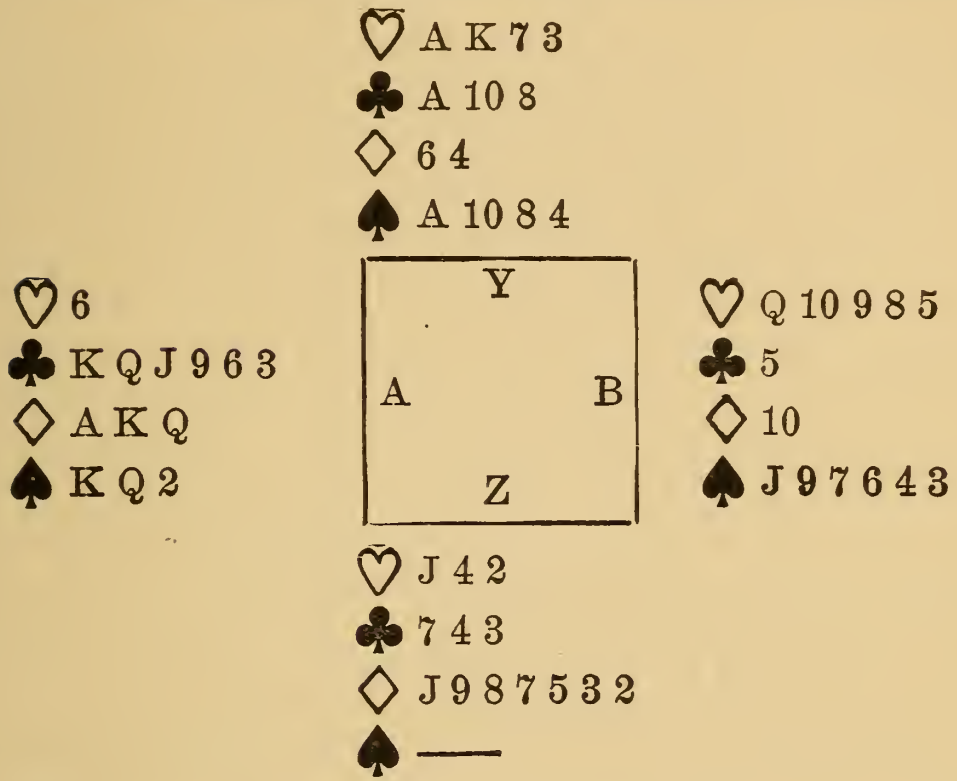
Had Z made a weak bid, therefore, he should *not* go back to "two diamonds." But in the present hand, his diamonds are excellent and he should certainly cover his partner's possible "one no-trump" with "two diamonds."

If A should cover this bid with a bid of "two hearts" (tempted by his spade singleton), Y would be much wiser to double than to bid "two no-trumps." He has four sure tricks in his hand and his lack of his partner's suit is an advantage; he may get a ruff.

Should Y double the "two hearts," he would make 300. Should he bid "two no-trumps," he would lose 100 (provided he had been doubled)—a total difference of 400 points!

Test Hand No. 10

(An unsound bid and its consequences.)



The score was 10–0 on the rubber-game in favor of A-B and each side was very anxious to get the bid in a suit that would put them rubber.

Z made a prohibited bid of "a diamond," on a jack-suit. He did n't want to say "a spade," without a spade in his hand.

"A spade" was Z's proper bid. It would not show good spades; holding those, he would bid "a royal." "A spade" would mean that Z had a poor hand,—*and that was the exact truth.* When he bid "a diamond," he announced "a playable suit headed by the ace, the king, or (at

a pinch) the queen." And that, he did not hold.

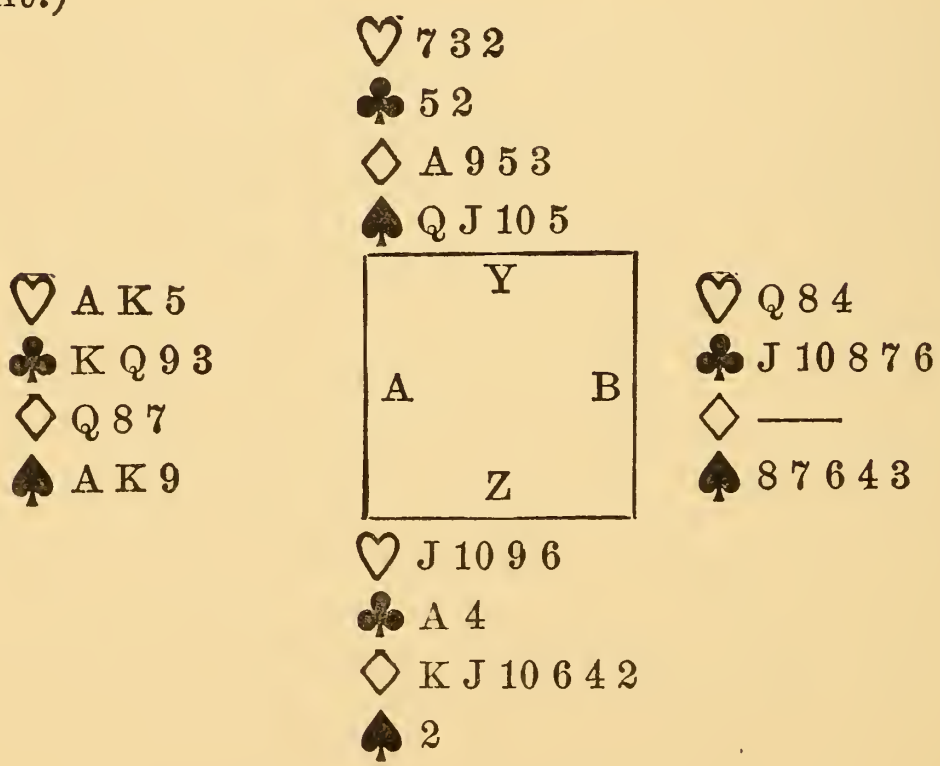
A bid "two clubs."

Y should have raised his partner's diamonds on side-suit. But he thought there was a better chance of going rubber in no-trumps than in diamonds. He held the ace of the adversary's suit, two other aces, and a king; his partner had announced a diamond-suit, and he himself held two diamonds to lead. So he said "two no-trumps."

This spelled ruin, of course. And if Z went back to "three diamonds," he could not make it. *He could have made it, had his suit been headed by the ace, the king, or the queen.*

Test Hand No. 11

(When *not* to lead the highest of your partner's suit.)



Z, "a diamond."

A, "a no-trump."

Y, "by" (he has no raiser).

B should now bid "two clubs" to warn his partner away from a fatal no-trump.

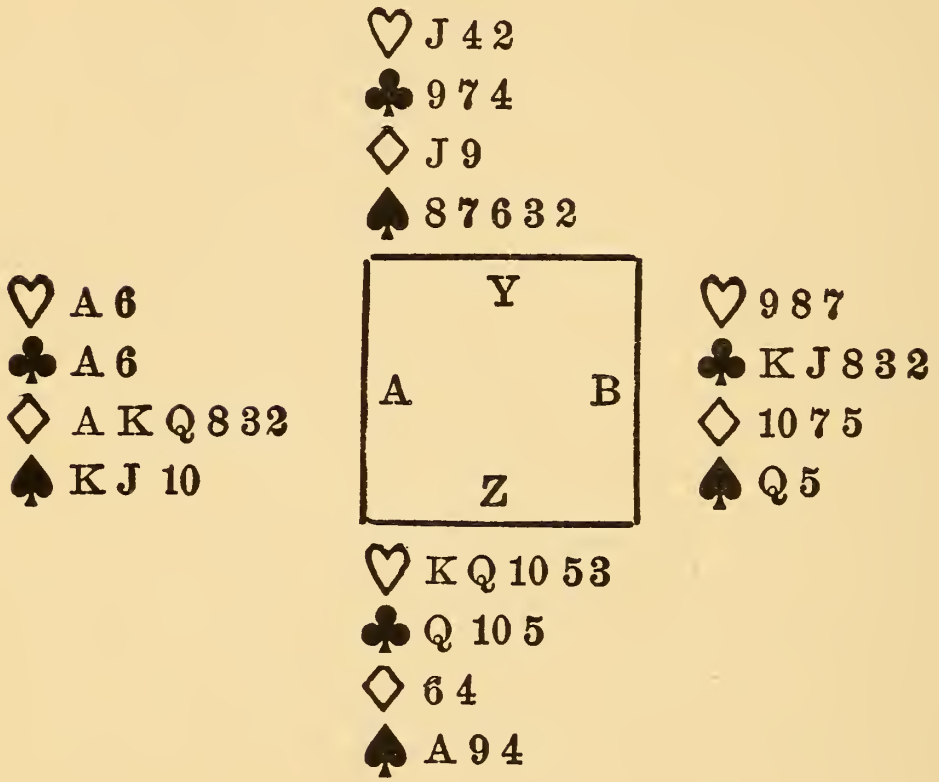
If Z should say "two diamonds" (as I am sure he should), and if A should say "two no-trumps" (as I am sure he *should n't*, after B's warning-note), Y will be in the lead.

This is one of the positions where Y should *not* lead the highest of his partner's suit. A is marked with a diamond stopper; it may be queen or king. Z's bid of "two diamonds" would make it probable that A's stopper was the queen. And Y wants that queen with his ace, so he must not lead up to it.

He leads the highest of his weakest black suit and Z comes in with the ace. Y's refusal to lead diamonds up to the stopper marks him with the ace; so Z promptly leads his ten *through* the stopper, and A is badly set.

Test Hand No. 12

(Better to double than to bid.)



A, "two diamonds."

Y and B "pass."

Z has not a two-heart hand, lacking a raise from his partner. The general run of players would neglect to count the seven losing cards and would see only five hearts to three honors, a side ace and a side queen. On this they would bid "two hearts."

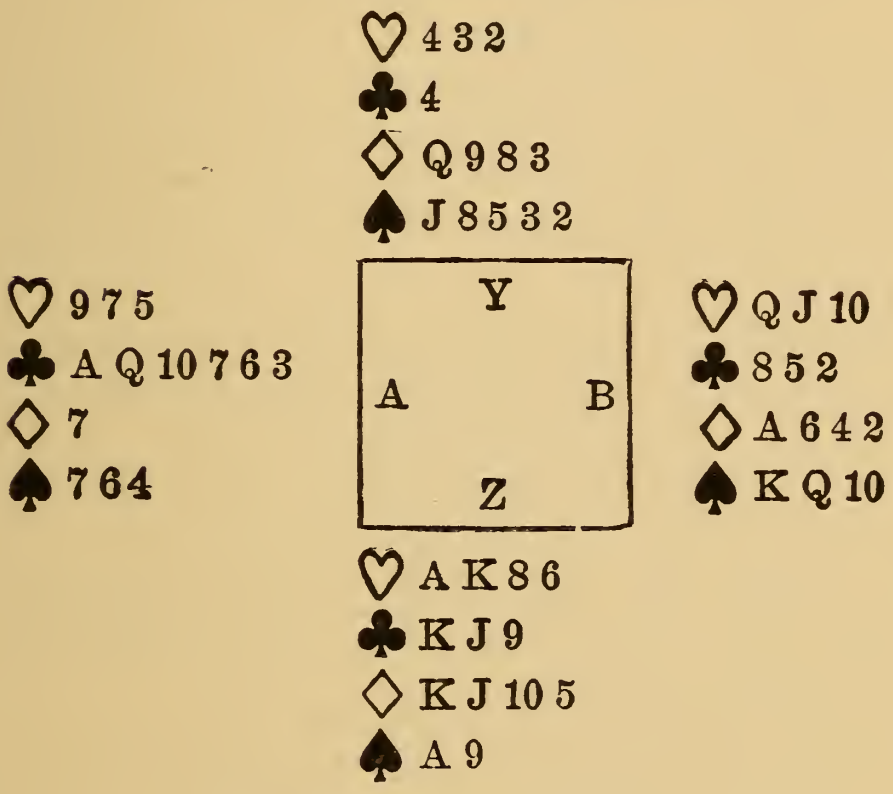
Now, unless the play of the hand would put him rubber, A should double the "two hearts" rather than bid against it. He has five *almost* sure tricks in his hand, and a possible sixth.

One trick from his partner is all that he asks.

If A doubles the hearts, he and his partner make 200. *It would take 20 odd tricks in no-trump to give them 200.*

Test Hand No. 13

(How much less safe a stopper is, when it is not a "sequence stopper.")



Z, "a no-trump."
A, "two clubs."
Y and B, "By."
Z (feeling he has the clubs stopped), "two no-trumps."
And every one passes.

A leads the highest of his weakest suit, the seven of diamonds. B comes in with the ace, because he knows his partner wants the clubs *through* the stopper. He leads his highest club; Z covers and A takes. A tries to throw his partner in by leading spades through Dummy's strength. Z takes that round, but is eventually "set" in his bid.

Had Z held a sequence-stopper, such as:

♣ J 10 9 4

it would not have *looked* as strong, but it would have been a sure stopper, whether led up to or through, and regardless of the position of the other clubs.

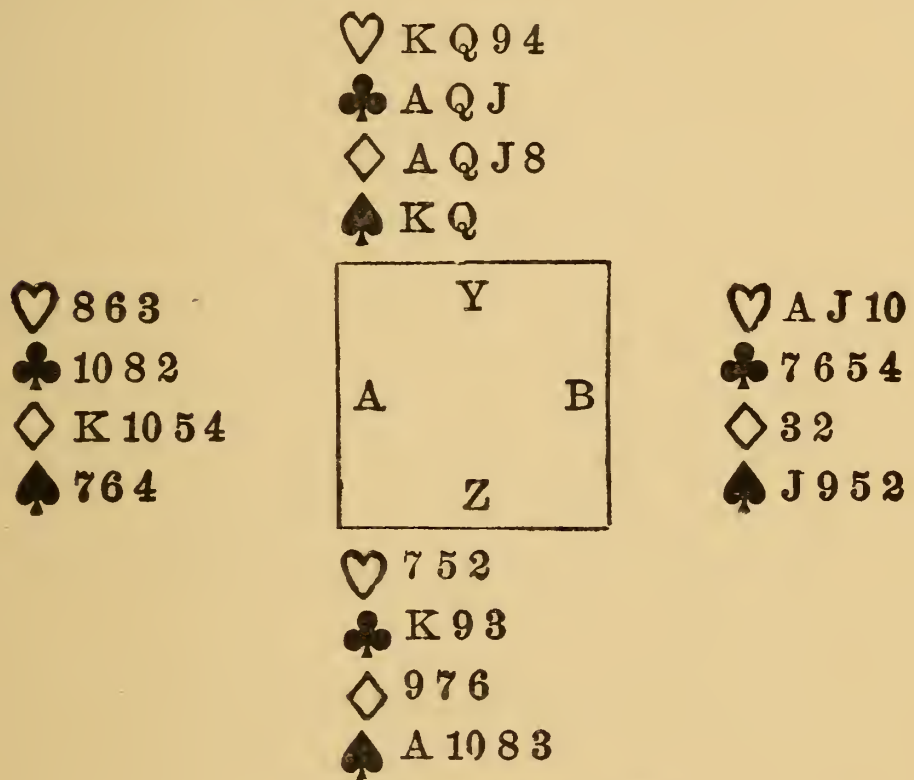
This hand is another proof of the wisdom of not leading up to a declared stopper (other than the ace) that lies *under* the bid. I lay constant stress upon this point, because it is one on which I differ from one or two of the recognized authorities who insist that you should lead your suit, no matter where its stopper lies.

I have seen hundreds of Auction-hands played, and I have yet to see one where a trick was lost by allowing a suit to come up to you *through* a declared stopper (other than the ace). And I have seen scores where many tricks were won and bids defeated by following this method.

In this hand, had A led clubs, Z would have taken two club rounds and made his bid.

Test Hand No. 14

(Second hand should not bid unless he has a real reason for so doing.)



Z, "a spade."

A belonged to that unfortunate class who consider that they must always "give some information" to their partner. So he bid "a diamond" to show an honor. Y could hardly believe his ears; he would n't double for two reasons: first, because a bid of one is easy to make—for aught he knew, A might hold nine

diamonds and ruff his suits, and second, for fear B should jump to "a lily." (B could n't bid "a lily," but Y did n't know that.) Y did n't "boost" for fear A might refuse to be boosted. He simply sat still and congratulated himself. So every one passed.

Y led his king of spades and followed with his queen. Then, reading the ace in his partner's hand and also wanting trumps to come to him, he tried to throw Z in with the club (hearts would not do with the ace on the board and the king-queen in Y's own hand).

Y led ace of clubs and Z played nine—an encouragement card. Y led the queen and Z took with his king, made his ace of spades, and led trumps up to Dummy's weakness.

Z–Y made 400 points—much more than a rubber is worth.

If A had passed, Y would have bid no-trump and made four-odd—40 points instead of 400.

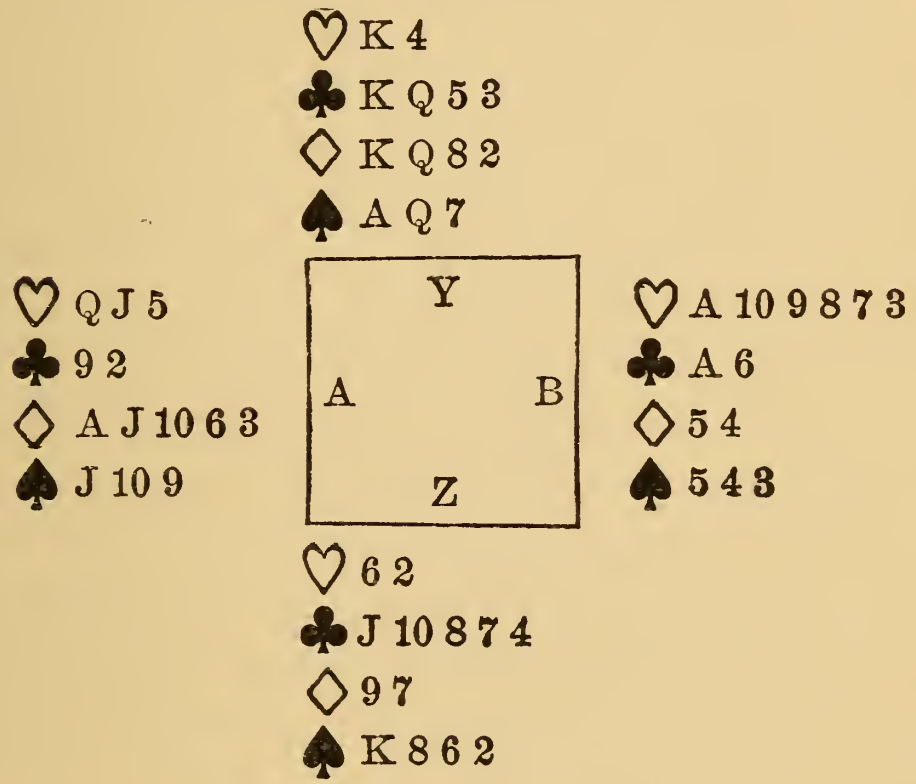
The point is this: A–B stood to lose on such a hand as that, but they could not possibly lose as much by letting the adversary play it as by playing it themselves. Never forget that, if you *must* lose, it is much less expensive to lose on the adversary's declaration than on your own. And:

There is no excuse for a bid from second hand, unless he has a real reason for bidding. The

beauty of the motto, "speech is silver, but silence is golden," is nowhere made more apparent than at an Auction-table, after the opening bid has been made!

Test Hand No. 15

(Too much information is often given in the exaction of penalties.)



As this hand was played, Z bid "a spade," and A "a diamond," because he and his partner had 24 on the game and he wanted to go out. With a clean score, he might possibly not have taken Z out of a "one spade" bid.

Y bid "a no-trump."

B, "two diamonds," to the score and on his two aces. His hearts are rather scattered for a "two heart" bid.

Y, "two no-trumps," and every one else passed.

A carelessly led. It was his partner's lead, not his, and Y immediately called suit, demanding that B lead a heart. B led a small heart, A played jack, and Y took with the king. Both adversaries knew immediately, from their own hands, that he held king with one small in hearts and was afraid of being led through, and from this information they were able to defeat him. Y (not *daring* to try any finesses with the hearts established against him) made his spades; they were obvious, but short. Then he was forced to lead clubs and B put up his ace on the first round. Failing Y's heart-call, B's natural lead would have been a diamond to A's bid; his own hearts are rather a poor suit to lead from, and not knowing his partner's hand he would have led the diamond and have let the hearts come to him. But Y's foolish suit-call had exposed his weakness; B led ace of hearts and A threw his queen to unblock. They took five heart-rounds, the ace of clubs, and the ace of diamonds, thus setting Y badly.

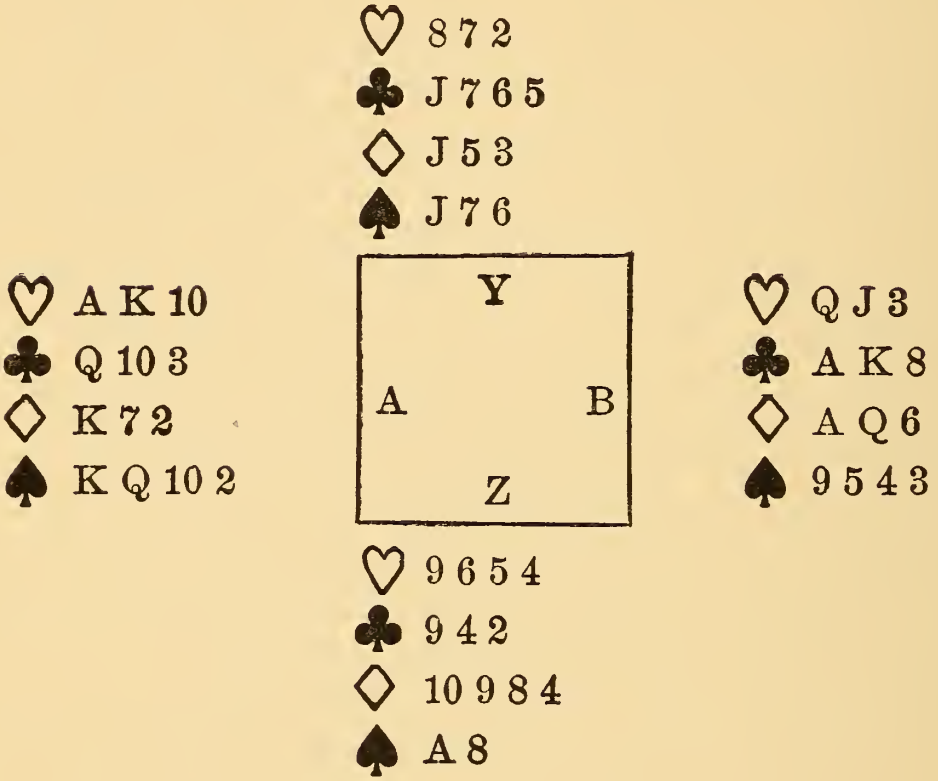
Y should have called a spade, taken with his

queen, and started on his clubs at once. When B came in with the ace, he would have led a diamond to his partner's bid. If A failed to take the first round, Y would have gone game at once. If A took the first round and led diamonds again, Y would have gone game with equal ease. The only way he could have been defeated would have been by A's taking the first diamond round and leading his queen of hearts; and that would have been a most improbable thing for him to do, not knowing how the hearts were distributed. It is a possibility hardly worth considering; but, even had it occurred, Y would have lost but one more trick than he did by calling suit; and he ran a chance of going game in place of being set.

Don't call a lead up to a king and one small, unless you are willing that every one shall know what you hold. It was eminently right and fair that Y should call a suit; A had exposed one of his cards to his partner which he should not have done. Y was right to equalize this by calling a lead; but he should not have shown his own weakness.

Test Hand No. 16

(When to bid and when to pass.)



The bidding of this hand caused a great deal of discussion.

It was the first hand of a new rubber, and everything hinges on that fact. Z bid "a spade," and A was determined to declare his no-trump. Had it been toward the close of a rubber, or had either side been one game in, the no-trump declaration would have been right beyond question. But *in the beginning of a rubber* you should strive to score penalties on

the adversary, not to play the hands yourself. "Don't declare a no-trump against a one-spade bid, in the beginning of a rubber."

If A held a wonderful red suit, he would certainly declare it, for it would n't defeat "a spade." But such an assortment of aces, kings, and queens as A holds cannot fail to defeat "a spade" to the tune of 100 points. One hundred points are as much as ten no-trump tricks are worth—more than a no-trump grand slam. Z has declared his weakness, and A should certainly pass, in the hope of defeating him. If Y should make any declaration (he *might* hold the remaining good cards), A has another chance to cap Y's bid. If Y passes, showing two poor hands in partnership, B should certainly pass (unless he held a phenomenal red suit, or a hundred aces). Z and Y are in a hole; they would much rather lose on the adversary's declaration than on their own; but it is the place of A–B to see that they lose on their own.

It is true that "the loss at a one-spade bid is limited to 100 points." But is n't 100 enough? You would feel very happy to score 100 in playing a hand yourself; why, then, despise it because it is a present from the adversary? Be thankful, and take it as often as you can get it.

Another point of objection from amateurs is that you "lose the fun of playing your no-trump hand." If you think the fun is worth a dollar, play it by all means.

I am very sure that any practised Auction veteran will agree with me on this point. Lay up all the nest eggs you can, in the shape of penalties, while the rubber is young. Then get the play of the hands towards its end, and you will have a nice "fat" rubber! Or, if you cannot get the play of the hands at the end, your penalties will wipe off all the adversaries' winnings.

It is, of course, perfectly obvious that, in this particular hand, A–B could make a small slam by declaring no-trumps, and could thus score ten more points than by passing the "one spade." But that would presuppose that they could see each other's hands, which they could not. If one could play results, one could always win out. As a matter of fact, A has but six no-trump tricks in his hand, and he has an absolute certainty of defeating the "one spade." To defeat that by one trick is worth 50; by two, 100. That would be equal to five odd, or ten odd, in no-trump; and A has no reason to expect such results from his hand. And when it comes to B, he has but five tricks in his hand, yet he too has a fair chance of defeating the spade

because he knows that both of his adversaries are weak.

Although, in this instance, A–B lost ten points by passing, *in nine cases out of ten they would make by passing.* And rules are formed to cover the majority of situations. I am sure I need not tell you that faulty theories will sometimes bring in bigger results than sound theories—*sometimes* but not *generally.*

I do not fail to recognize that 30 points below the line are an advantage. But I insist that short, tight, sure rubbers, where there are no penalties, are always low rubbers. Your great chance, in Auction, is penalizing the adversary; and when you are playing against the best players you must grasp these chances when they come. Good players give you very few chances to double unsound bids and to pile up the hundreds by fours and fives. The average indifference toward seizing small penalties, and also toward losing small penalties, is one of the weak points of the average game.

Compass Auction, Team Auction, and Tournament Auction

So many inquiries about Auction tournaments have come to me that I have decided to devote a chapter to this fascinating subject. I will begin with Compass Auction, which is the groundwork of the entire structure.

Compass Auction is played with duplicate-boards, by eight players at two tables. During each hand, the board lies in the centre of each table with its star to the North, and its index pointing to the *Dealer*—not to the *Leader* as it used to do in duplicate Whist.

Each person plays his cards in front of him instead of onto the centre of the table, which, of course, is occupied by the board. Thus, at the close of each hand, the cards lie in four distinct piles in front of their owners, and are ready to be placed in their respective pockets.

The players are known as North, South, East, and West; North plays with South, and East

with West, and it is necessary to have the tables so placed that the players actually sit in their relative positions. Thus confusion is avoided.

No hands are arranged before the game begins. The first time that a board appears, it may hold the cards, for convenience. But those cards are taken out, shuffled, cut, and dealt. After the hand has been played, the cards of each player are placed in the pocket that faces him; and when that board appears at the next table, the hands are taken out separately, and played without further mixing or shuffling.

The hands pass from table to table and are never played twice by the same persons, even in a different position. This is an enormous improvement over the old game of duplicate Whist where each hand appeared a second time before the same players. It is impossible not to remember unusual hands, and difficult not to take unconscious advantage of one's memory.

In Compass Auction, each person is really playing against the person who occupies the same relative position at the other table. North, at each table, is actually playing with South, against the defence of East and West. But what he is trying to do is to defeat North at the other table; they are going to play exactly the same hands; the thing is, to see which of

them can score the most, or lose the least, on those hands.

Thus, if you hold a poor hand, you do not play it against the good hand at your own table. Or rather, you do so play it; but you are trying to lose less on it than will your adversary (at the other table) when he comes to hold that same poor hand and to play it against that same good one.

On each round, each person holds out in front of him the card he intends to play, clearly exposing its face. When the four cards have been so shown, they are laid (face down) in front of their respective owners; the two cards of the partners who have won the trick, are laid *lengthwise* to their owners; and the two cards of the partners who have lost the trick, are laid *sidewise* to their owners.

The Player instructs Dummy which card to lift and hold, on each round. Dummy may never play a card until instructed by his partner, —the Player. For instance, North gets the bid and plays the hand; East leads—a king of spades, which he holds out and shows. Dummy (South) lays down his hand which contains two spades—the six and the three. North says to him "three of spades," and Dummy lifts and shows the card, until the round is finished.

He then lays it in front of him, reversed and crosswise (as it lost the trick), and this is repeated on every round.

It is impossible to play for rubbers, because a difference of judgment as to bid (or double) on the first round might totally change the bid on the second. For instance, suppose you (being North) get the first declaration at "a heart," and your adversary (the other North) declares "a no-trump" on the same hand when he plays it somewhat later. And suppose you each take three odd; then you have 24 and he has game. You would naturally be satisfied with a club declaration on the next hand, as it would put you game. He, on the contrary, would be beginning a new game and would want a higher suit, that he might go rubber in the hand. So it is quite impossible to play for the rubber; the gross score on a certain number of hands is the best that you can do. But the game gives no scope for the foolish bids that one used to see in progressive Bridge (that awful game!), when players declared on their honors alone, because it would pay them to lose the odd trick if they scored simple honors. In this game, where every lost trick is fifty honor-points to the adversary, the bidding is forced to be sane.

Every hand is bid exactly as it would be on a clean score in plain Auction; and, as the object in the latter is always to "go game in the hand," a reward is offered in Compass for accomplishing the same feat. Whenever a player makes 30 or more points on a hand, he is given 100 honor-points.

As nearly as possible, the element of luck is eliminated—at least, as far as the cards are concerned. But it can never be eliminated as to one's partner and adversaries. If you have adversaries who make foolish bids and doubles, you are in luck. And your score will run much higher than it would if you should play those same hands against a stronger defence. Nor do the results always testify in favor of sound judgment; a risky bidder may make thoroughly unsound bids which, through luck, will go through and show a higher score than that achieved by more conservative and sane bids. In the long run, of course, the sound bidder would win out; but luck might easily favor the plunger for two hours or more.

Now, as to the score! If you are simply playing casually, you can use an ordinary score-card; and instead of "We" and "They," you can write "N. and S." at the head of one column, and "E. and W." at the head of the other. But this will give you no record of the bids.

To enjoy the game in its perfect form, you must keep a record of every bid made. Special score-pads are printed, and copyrighted, for this purpose. At present, they are not on the market,—but are privately printed for me. If the demand warrants it, they will be offered for sale in the shops; in the meantime, I can supply you with the printer's address, or you can make your own cards—which is rather a nuisance. This is how you should go about it:

Get a small tablet of unlined paper and rule the sheets into eight vertical columns. The first four of these columns should be headed by the names of the points of the compass; the next two are the point-column and honor-column for North and South, and the last two are the point-column and honor-column for East and West. But in the sixteen sheets that will make a complete record for sixteen boards, there will be four in which North's name will head the first column (followed in proper order by the other compass-points); four in which South's name comes first; and, of course, four with East's name, and four with West's. That is because in sixteen hands each of the four players deals and opens the bidding four times. Just sit with your back to the North, and you will see what I mean. If you open the bidding, the player at your left will have his back to the

East, and will be the second hand; South will come third, and West fourth. The board that is marked No. 1 will have the star at the North and the index to the East. That means that East will deal and open the bidding on the first board; and he will do likewise on the fifth board, the ninth board, and the thirteenth; South will deal on the second, the sixth, the tenth, and the fourteenth; and so on.

Four of your leaves will thus read as follows:

Table 1; board 1 (or 5, or 9, or 13).

East	South	West	North	N. & S.		E. & W.	
				points	*honors*	*points*	*honors*

Four more will be like this:

Table 1; board 2 (or 6, or 10, or 14).

South	West	North	East	N. & S.		E. & W.	
				points	*honors*	*points*	*honors*

The next four will read thus:

Table 1; board 3 (or 7, or 11, or 15).

West	North	East	South	N. & S.		E. & W.	
				points	*honors*	*points*	*honors*

And the remaining four thus:

Table 1; board 4 (or 8, or 12, or 16).

North	East	South	West	N. & S.		E. & W.	
				points	*honors*	*points*	*honors*

You will then make an exact duplicate of these sixteen sheets, only writing "table two" in place of "table one." In stringing them together, the "table one" sheets should have "board one" on top, followed in regular order by boards two, three, four, etc. The "table

two" sheets should be in the following order: nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. Because, while one table is playing the first eight hands, the other table will be playing the last eight, and *vice versa*.

The scorer will record each bid by a figure and a *small* letter that is the initial of the suit that is bid; thus, "1 h." means "one heart," "2 d." means "two diamonds," etc. A dash (—) means "pass"; a capital D. means double, and a capital R. means "redouble." The second round of bids will be written immediately under the first round, and all following rounds accordingly; and the results for the hand in the columns for points and honors. Here is a sample (East deals):

Table 1; board 1

East	South	West	North	N. & S.		E. & W.	
1 h.	—	—	2 d.	*points*	*honors*	*points*	*honors*
—	—	2 h.	—				
—	3 d.	—	—				200
D.	—	—	—				

After the play of each hand, the cards are placed in the board. At the end of eight hands, the boards are exchanged; and at the end of sixteen hands, the tables are drawn together, the hands laid out (one at a time), and the bids and results compared.

The partners who make the highest *percentage* against their adversaries at the same table, and the other partners who lose the lowest percentage to their adversaries at the same table, are the winners. It is necessary to take the percentage rather than the gross score because sometimes the entire record runs higher at one table—in accordance with the bidding. For instance the gross score at the first table on the first comparison might be: North and South 1050, against East and West 750. And at the second table it might be: North and South 750, against East and West 300. Now the entire first table is higher; but North and South there are the losers, because their percentage against East and West is $1\frac{2}{5}$, while the percentage of the other North and South is $2\frac{1}{2}$. Therefore, North and South at the second table, and East and West at the first table, are the four winners.

It is a more fascinating game than you can possibly imagine until you have tried it. It bears the same relation to plain Auction that a

pipe organ does to a grand piano. The grand piano is perfect of its kind (as is Auction), and is all that one wants for every-day life and in the home. The pipe organ (like Compass Auction) has a wider range and special properties, and is delightful on big occasions.

Team Auction is played in precisely the same way, by rival teams. North and South of team one play against East and West of team two, at their own table; and also against North and South of team two, at the other table.

Tournament Auction is conducted on the same principle, all the tables in the room being arranged in pairs of two rival tables. After the first comparison of results (at the end of any desired number of hands), the four losers at each two tables drop out. Thus eight tables resolve themselves into four, four into two, and two into one. And the four players at that last table are the winners of the tournament.

It is much less complicated than it sounds, and is entirely practicable. I have tried it and know. During the past winter, I planned and conducted a small Auction tournament which I believe to be the first on record. It ran as though on greased wheels and nothing else was discussed for days afterward. The hands were left in the boards, the records of bids were

filed, and any one who wished might look over both.

In arranging a big tournament, as at a Country Club, the necessary number of decks of cards would be so great that you would be forced to ask each eight persons to provide one set of duplicate boards and twelve decks of cards. And each four players that dropped out should carry with them eight boards and eight decks. In this way confusion would be avoided.

The Laws of Auction Bridge

THE dealer is forced to bid. Any one else may pass, but he may not.

Following the opening bid by the dealer, any one is free to pass, to cover the previous bid, or to double.

Doubling is not bidding, but it keeps the bidding open. That is, after a double the bidding is open to any player to bid again in the same or any other suit.

If a bid has been doubled, it counts twice as much as far as *scoring* is concerned, but remains at its normal value as regards subsequent bids. A bid of "two diamonds," doubled, means 28 for scoring, but only 14 as far as bidding is concerned, and may be covered by "two hearts," or any bid that exceeds 14. You raise the *bid*, not the double.

Doubling can take place between adversaries only; no one may double his partner. And it stops at one double and one redouble; no one may double further than that.

"Raising the bid" is making a bid whose numerical value exceeds the previous bid, or bringing it to the *same* numerical value but with more tricks in it. Thus "three hearts" are 24 and "four clubs" are 24, but the club-bid is higher because there are more tricks in it. On the other hand, "four clubs" (24) would not be as high as "three royals" (27), because, though there are more tricks in it, the total value is lower.

The bid is open until three successive players have passed.

When the bidding is closed, the hand is played by the person who has made the highest bid, *unless* the suit which stands as final was first named by his partner. Between two partners, the one who *first* named the final suit plays the hand; between two adversaries, the one who *last* named the final suit plays the hand.

The leader is the person who sits on the player's left. Should the wrong adversary lead, the player may demand that he take back his card and may call a suit from the proper leader.

Should any one bid or double out of turn, either adversary may call for a new deal.

The deal passes around the table regularly, from each player to the adversary on his left, irrespective of the play.

The "still pack" should be made by the partner of the dealer, and placed at *his own right hand.* The player finding it at his own left hand is the next dealer. He must pick up the pack, have it cut on his right, and proceed to deal to his left.

The loss at a "one spade" bid is limited to 100.

If a player underbids his hand, he may score everything over his bid that he takes. If he overbids his hand, he may score nothing; the adversaries score 50 above the line for every trick that he bid and failed to take.

The adversaries can never score below the line. They score above the line, fifty for every trick that the player has bid and failed to take—regardless of suit.

No one can score below the line except the player; and he only if he takes all that he bid, or more.

The game is 30 points below the line.

The rubber-value is 250 points above the line.

Either side may score the honors they hold.

If a bid has been doubled and is defeated, the adversaries score 100 above the line for every trick for which the player has contracted and failed to take; if the bid has been redoubled, they score 200 above the line for each similar trick.

If a player succeeds in keeping his contract in spite of a double he gets his tricks at a doubled value, and a bonus of 50 points (above the line) for keeping his contract; and if he takes any tricks *over* his contract, they are worth their doubled value below the line, and 50 apiece above. If there has been redoubling, all tricks are raised to four times their normal value, the bonus to 100, and each extra trick to 100.

If the player revoke, the adversaries take 150 above the line. If either adversary revoke, the player may take either 150 points above the line, or the value of three tricks below the line. The side that revokes can score nothing on the hand, except what honors they may chance to hold. A revoke should not be claimed until the hand is finished. A slam can never be scored on the revoke penalty.

A touched card in Dummy may be called by either adversary; unless, immediately before touching it, the player has said "I arrange."

An exposed card may be called by either adversary (except Dummy) who can name its face. No one, however, can be forced to revoke with an exposed card.

If the player throw down his remaining cards claiming the balance of the tricks, and if there

be doubt as to his taking them, he can be forced to pick up his cards and play out the hand, *but none of the cards so exposed may be called by the adversary*, as the player has no partner who can be advantaged by their exposure. If either adversary, however, thus expose his cards and claim the balance of the tricks, the player may force him to pick up his hand, and *may call any of the exposed cards that he can name.*

If any player make a bid insufficient to cover the preceding bid, and if the error be discovered before the next player has passed, doubled, or bid, the faulty bidder is forced to bid (in the suit he has named) enough to cover the previous bid; and, further, if the following adversary should *pass*, the partner of the faulty bidder is debarred from bidding. If, however, the adversary should *bid* or *double*, the partner of the faulty bidder is free to make any bid or double that he may wish.

Attention to a faulty bid may be called by either adversary.

If a faulty bid be not discovered until after the following adversary has passed, doubled, or bid, it stands as good.

The final bid may be asked at any point of the game; but no player may ask information concerning any previous bid.

The Revoke

THE penalty for a revoke, in Auction, is very severe. Should the player revoke, the adversaries take 150 points above the line (for they are unable, of course, to score below when they have not the bid). Should either adversary revoke, the player may take 150 points above, or the value of three tricks below. (If he is playing a club hand, then three tricks below would be but 18 points and he would naturally choose the 150, *unless* he is already 12 on the game and the 18 points would put him game or rubber.) But (and this is where the severity of the punishment is shown) *the revoking party can score nothing on the hand except the honors he may chance to hold.* Suppose he has bid "two no-trump" and takes five odd, but revokes; after paying three tricks he would still be able to keep his contract. This, however is denied him. He can score nothing but honors.

There is a story told of one of the great players

who revoked purposely, in plain Bridge, because he saw it would still benefit him after paying the penalty. No such situation could arise in Auction—the revoke penalty is too extreme for that.

Other Penalties

If the wrong adversary should lead, the player may call a suit. Suppose the bid has gone round several times and you finally secure the make, every one else having passed after your last bid. No matter who dealt, if you are to play the hand, the adversary on your left should lead. There must be no conversation as to whose lead it is, the adversaries should *know*. And if the wrong one (the one on your right) should make a lead, you can immediately ask him to take back his card and can call a *suit* from the proper leader,—forcing him to lead up to your ten-ace suits, your strength, your trumps, or whatever you may prefer. This gives you a tremendous advantage, and after the penalty has been exacted a few times, players are much more careful about leading out of turn.

Should any one bid or double out of turn, either adversary may call for a new deal.

Other penalties are the same as in plain Bridge. An exposed card may always be called by any

one (other than Dummy) who can call it by name (except to force its holder to revoke with it); and a touched card in Dummy should always be a played card.

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