



DALTON'S



COMPLETE



BRIDGE





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DALTON'S COMPLETE BRIDGE





# Dalton's Complete Bridge

By W. Dalton

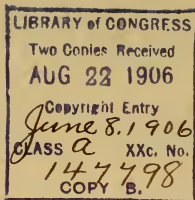
*Author of*

“Bridge Abridged, or Practical Bridge,”

“Bridge at a Glance”

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# CONTENTS

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	PAGE
THE LAWS OF BRIDGE . . . . .	1
CHAP. I. THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE . . . . .	35
II. THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS . . . . .	52
III. ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS . . . . .	76
IV. DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS BY THE DEALER . . . . .	91
V. THE DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND . . . . .	101
VI. THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE . . . . .	110
VII. DOUBLING . . . . .	122
VIII. THE ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP DECLARATION . . . . .	141
IX. THE OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT DECLARA- TION . . . . .	163
X. THE PLAY OF THE THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME . . . . .	181
XI. THE PLAY OF THE THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT DECLARATION . . . . .	215
XII. THE DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND . . . . .	235
XIII. THE DISCARD . . . . .	240
XIV. THE PLAY OF THE DEALER . . . . .	256
XV. PRACTICE VERSUS THEORY . . . . .	302



# THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

WHICH CAME INTO FORCE JANUARY 1, 1905

AS REVISED BY A JOINT COMMITTEE OF  
THE PORTLAND AND TURF CLUBS<sup>1</sup>

## THE RUBBER

1. The Rubber is the best of three games. If the first two games be won by the same players, the third game is not played.

## SCORING

2. A game consists of thirty points obtained by tricks alone, exclusive of any points counted for Honours, Chicane, or Slam.

3. Every hand is played out, and any points in excess of the thirty points necessary for the game are counted.

4. Each trick above six counts two points when spades are trumps, four points when clubs are trumps, six points when diamonds are trumps,

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## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

eight points when hearts are trumps, and twelve points when there are no trumps.

5. Honours consist of ace, king, queen, knave, and ten of the trump suit. When there are no trumps they consist of the four aces.

6. Honours in trumps are thus reckoned: —  
If a player and his partner conjointly hold —

- I. The five honours of the trump suit, they score for honours five times the value of the trump suit trick.
- II. Any four honours of the trump suit, they score for honours four times the value of the trump suit trick.
- III. Any three honours of the trump suit, they score for honours twice the value of the trump suit trick.

If a player in his own hand holds —

- I. The five honours of the trump suit, he and his partner score for honours ten times the value of the trump suit trick.
- II. Any four honours of the trump suit, they score for honours eight times the value of the trump suit trick. In this last case, if the player's partner holds the fifth honour, they also score for honours the single value of the trump suit trick.

The value of the trump suit trick referred to in this law is its original value — *e. g.*, two points in

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

spades and six points in diamonds; and the value of honours is in no way affected by any doubling or re-doubling that may take place under Laws 53-60.

7. HONOURS, when there are no trumps, are thus reckoned: —

If a player and his partner conjointly hold —

- I. The four aces, they score for honours forty points.
- II. Any three aces, they score for honours thirty points.

If a player in his own hand holds —

The four aces, he and his partner score for honours one hundred points.

8. CHICANE is thus reckoned: —

If a player holds no trump, he and his partner score for Chicane twice the value of the trump suit trick. The value of Chicane is in no way affected by any doubling or re-doubling that may take place under Laws 53-60.

9. SLAM is thus reckonéd: —

If a player and his partner make, independently of any tricks taken for the revoke penalty —

- I. All thirteen tricks, they score for Grand Slam forty points.
- II. Twelve tricks, they score for Little Slam twenty points.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

10. Honours, Chicane, and Slam are reckoned in the score at the end of the rubber.

11. At the end of the rubber, the total scores for tricks, Honours, Chicane, and Slam obtained by each player and his partner are added up, one hundred points are added to the score of the winners of the rubber, and the difference between the two scores is the number of points won, or lost, by the winners of the rubber.

12. If an erroneous score affecting tricks be proved, such mistake may be corrected prior to the conclusion of the game in which it occurred, and such game is not concluded until the last card of the following deal has been dealt, or, in the case of the last game of the rubber, until the score has been made up and agreed.

13. If an erroneous score affecting Honours, Chicane, or Slam be proved, such mistake may be corrected at any time before the score of the rubber has been made up and agreed.

### CUTTING

14. The ace is the lowest card.

15. In all cases, every player must cut from the same pack.



## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

16. Should a player expose more than one card, he must cut again.

### FORMATION OF TABLE

17. If there are more than four candidates, the players are selected by cutting, those first in the room having the preference. The four who cut the lowest cards play first, and again cut to decide on partners; the two lowest play against the two highest; the lowest is the dealer, who has choice of cards and seats, and, having once made his selection, must abide by it.

18. When there are more than six candidates, those who cut the two next lowest cards belong to the table, which is complete with six players; on the retirement of one of those six players, the candidate who cut the next lowest card has a prior right to any after-comer to enter the table.

19. Two players cutting cards of equal value, unless such cards are the two highest, cut again; should they be the two lowest, a fresh cut is necessary to decide which of those two deals.

20. Three players cutting cards of equal value cut again; should the fourth (or remaining) card

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

be the highest, the two lowest of the new cut are partners, the lower of those two the dealer; should the fourth card be the lowest, the two highest are partners, the original lowest the dealer.

### CUTTING OUT

21. At the end of a rubber, should admission be claimed by any one, or by two candidates, he who has, or they who have, played a greater number of consecutive rubbers than the others is, or are, out; but when all have played the same number, they must cut to decide upon the out-goers; the highest are out.

### ENTRY AND RE-ENTRY

22. A candidate, whether he has played or not, can join a table which is not complete by declaring in at any time prior to any of the players having cut a card, either for the purpose of commencing a fresh rubber or of cutting out.

23. In the formation of fresh tables, those candidates who have neither belonged to nor played at any other table have the prior right of entry; the others decide their right of admission by cutting.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

24. Any one quitting a table prior to the conclusion of a rubber, may, with consent of the other three players, appoint a substitute in his absence during that rubber.

25. A player joining one table, whilst belonging to another, loses his right of re-entry into the latter, and takes his chance of cutting in, as if he were a fresh candidate.

26. If any one break up a table, the remaining players have the prior right to him of entry into any other; and should there not be sufficient vacancies at such other table to admit all those candidates, they settle their precedence by cutting.

### SHUFFLING

27. The pack must neither be shuffled below the table nor so that the face of any card be seen.

28. The pack must not be shuffled during the play of the hand.

29. A pack, having been played with, must neither be shuffled by dealing it into packets, nor across the table.

30. Each player has a right to shuffle once only (except as provided by Law 33) prior to a

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

deal, after a false cut, or when a new deal has occurred.

31. The dealer's partner must collect the cards for the ensuing deal, and has the first right to shuffle that pack.

32. Each player, after shuffling, must place the cards, properly collected and face downwards, to the left of the player about to deal.

33. The dealer has always the right to shuffle last; but should a card or cards be seen during his shuffling, or whilst giving the pack to be cut, he may be compelled to re-shuffle.

### THE DEAL

34. Each player deals in his turn; the order of dealing goes to the left.

35. The player on the dealer's right cuts the pack, and, in dividing it, must not leave fewer than four cards in either packet; if in cutting, or in replacing one of the two packets on the other, a card be exposed, or if there be any confusion of the cards, or a doubt as to the exact place in which the pack was divided, there must be a fresh cut.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

36. When a player, whose duty it is to cut, has once separated the pack, he cannot alter his intention; he can neither re-shuffle nor re-cut the cards.

37. When the pack is cut, should the dealer shuffle the cards, the pack must be cut again.

38. The fifty-two cards shall be dealt face downwards. The deal is not completed until the last card has been dealt face downwards. There is no misdeal.

### A NEW DEAL

39. There must be a new deal —

- I. If, during a deal, or during the play of a hand, the pack be proved to be incorrect or imperfect.
- II. If any card be faced in the pack.
- III. Unless the cards are dealt into four packets, one at a time and in regular rotation, beginning at the player to the dealer's left.
- IV. Should the last card not come in its regular order to the dealer.
- V. Should a player have more than thirteen cards, and any one or more of the others less than thirteen cards.
- VI. Should the dealer deal two cards at once, or two cards to the same hand, and then deal a third; but if, prior to dealing that card, the dealer can, by altering the position of one card only, rectify such error, he may do so.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

VII. Should the dealer omit to have the pack cut to him, and the adversaries discover the error prior to the last card being dealt, and before looking at their cards; but not after having done so.

40. If, whilst dealing, a card be exposed by either of the dealer's adversaries, the dealer or his partner may claim a new deal. A card similarly exposed by the dealer or his partner gives the same claim to each adversary. The claim may not be made by a player who has looked at any of his cards. If a new deal does not take place, the exposed card cannot be called.

41. If, in dealing, one of the last cards be exposed, and the dealer completes the deal before there is reasonable time to decide as to a fresh deal, the privilege is not thereby lost.

42. If the dealer, before he has dealt fifty-one cards, look at any card, his adversaries have a right to see it, and may exact a new deal.

43. Should three players have their right number of cards — the fourth have less than thirteen, and not discover such deficiency until he has played any of his cards, the deal stands good; should he have played, he is answerable for any revoke he may have made as if the missing card,

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

or cards, had been in his hand; he may search the other pack for it, or them.

44. If a pack, during or after a rubber, be proved incorrect or imperfect, such proof does not alter any past score, game, or rubber; that hand in which the imperfection was detected is null and void; the dealer deals again.

45. Any one dealing out of turn, or with the adversary's cards, may be stopped before the last card is dealt, otherwise the deal stands good, and the game must proceed as if no mistake had been made.

46. A player can neither shuffle, cut, nor deal for his partner without the permission of his opponents.

### DECLARING TRUMPS

47. The dealer, having examined his hand, has the option of declaring what suit shall be trumps, or whether the hand shall be played without trumps. If he exercise that option, he shall do so by naming the suit, or by saying "No trumps."

48. If the dealer does not wish to exercise his option, he may pass it to his partner by saying, "I

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

leave it to you, Partner," and his partner must thereupon make the necessary declaration, in the manner provided in the preceding law.

49. If the dealer's partner make the trump declaration without receiving permission from the dealer, the eldest hand may demand —

- I. That the declaration so made shall stand.
- II. That there shall be a new deal.

But if any declaration as to doubling or not doubling shall have been made, or if a new deal is not claimed, the declaration wrongly made shall stand. The eldest hand is the player on the left of the dealer.

50. If the dealer's partner pass the declaration to the dealer, the eldest hand may demand —

- I. That there shall be a new deal.
- II. That the dealer's partner shall himself make the declaration.

51. If either of the dealer's adversaries make the declaration, the dealer may, after looking at his hand, either claim a fresh deal or proceed as if no such declaration had been made.

52. A declaration once made cannot be altered, save as provided above.



## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

### DOUBLING AND RE-DOUBLING

53. The effect of doubling and re-doubling, and so on, is that the value of each trick above six is doubled, quadrupled, and so on.

54. After the trump declaration has been made by the dealer or his partner, their adversaries have the right to double. The eldest hand has the first right. If he does not wish to double, he shall say to his partner, "May I lead?" His partner shall answer "Yes," or "I double."

55. If either of their adversaries elect to double, the dealer and his partner have the right to re-double. The player who has declared the trump shall have the first right. He may say "I re-double," or "Satisfied." Should he say the latter, his partner may re-double.

56. If the dealer or his partner elect to re-double, their adversaries shall have the right to again double. The original doubler has the first right.

57. If the right-hand adversary of the dealer double before his partner has asked "May I lead?" the declarer of the trump shall have the

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

right to say whether or not the double shall stand. If he decide that the double shall stand, the process of re-doubling may continue as described in Laws 55, 56, 58.

58. The process of re-doubling may be continued until the limit of 100 points is reached — the first right to continue the re-doubling on behalf of a partnership belonging to that player who has last re-doubled. Should he, however, express himself satisfied, the right to continue the re-doubling passes to his partner. Should any player re-double out of turn, the adversary who last doubled shall decide whether or not such double shall stand. If it is decided that the re-double shall stand, the process of re-doubling may continue as described in this and foregoing laws (55 and 56). If any double or re-double out of turn be not accepted there shall be no further doubling in that hand. Any consultation between partners as to doubling or re-doubling will entitle the maker of the trump or the eldest hand, without consultation, to a new deal.

59. If the eldest hand lead before the doubling be completed, his partner may re-double only with

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

the consent of the adversary who last doubled; but such lead shall not affect the right of either adversary to double.

60. When the question, "May I lead?" has been answered in the affirmative, or when the player who has the last right to continue the doubling expresses himself satisfied, the play shall begin.

61. A declaration once made cannot be altered.

### DUMMY

62. As soon as a card is led, whether in or out of turn, the dealer's partner shall place his cards face upwards on the table, and the duty of playing the cards from that hand, which is called Dummy, and of claiming and enforcing any penalties arising during the hand, shall devolve upon the dealer, unassisted by his partner.

63. After exposing Dummy, the dealer's partner has no part whatever in the game, except that he has the right to ask the dealer if he has none of the suit in which he may have renounced. If he call attention to any other incident in the play of the hand, in respect of which any penalty might

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

be exacted, the fact that he has done so shall deprive the dealer of the right of exacting such penalty against his adversaries.

64. If the dealer's partner, by touching a card, or otherwise, suggest the play of a card from Dummy, either of the adversaries may, but without consulting with his partner, call upon the dealer to play or not to play the card suggested.

65. When the dealer draws a card, either from his own hand or from Dummy, such card is not considered as played until actually quitted.

66. A card once played, or named by the dealer as to be played from his own hand or from Dummy, cannot be taken back, except to save a revoke.

67. The dealer's partner may not look over his adversaries' hands, nor leave his seat for the purpose of watching his partner's play.

68. Dummy is not liable to any penalty for a revoke, as his adversaries see his cards. Should he revoke, and the error not be discovered until the trick is turned and quitted, the trick stands good.

69. Dummy being blind and deaf, his partner is not liable to any penalty for an error whence he

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

can gain no advantage. Thus, he may expose some, or all of his cards, without incurring any penalty.

### EXPOSED CARDS

70. If after the deal has been completed, and before the trump declaration has been made, either the dealer or his partner expose a card from his hand, the eldest hand may claim a new deal.

71. If after the deal has been completed, and before a card is led, any player shall expose a card, his partner shall forfeit any right to double or re-double which he would otherwise have been entitled to exercise; and in the case of a card being so exposed by the leader's partner, the dealer may, instead of calling the card, require the leader not to lead the suit of the exposed card.

### CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED

72. All cards exposed by the dealer's adversaries are liable to be called, and must be left face upwards on the table; but a card is not an exposed card when dropped on the floor, or elsewhere below the table.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

73. The following are exposed cards:—

- I. Two or more cards played at once.
- II. Any card dropped with its face upwards, or in any way exposed on or above the table, even though snatched up so quickly that no one can name it.

74. If either of the dealer's adversaries play to an imperfect trick the best card on the table, or lead one which is a winning card as against the dealer and his partner, and then lead again, without waiting for his partner to play, or play several such winning cards, one after the other, without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may be called on to win, if he can, the first or any other of those tricks, and the other cards thus improperly played are exposed cards.

75. Should the dealer indicate that all or any of the remaining tricks are his, he may be required to place his cards face upwards on the table; but they are not liable to be called.

76. If either of the dealer's adversaries throw his cards on the table face upwards, such cards are exposed, and liable to be called by the dealer.

77. If all the players throw their cards on the table face upwards, the hands are abandoned, and

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

the score must be left as claimed and admitted. The hands may be examined for the purpose of establishing a revoke, but for no other purpose.

78. A card detached from the rest of the hand of either of the dealer's adversaries, so as to be named, is liable to be called; but should the dealer name a wrong card, he is liable to have a suit called when first he or his partner have the lead.

79. If a player, who has rendered himself liable to have the highest or lowest of a suit called, or to win or not to win a trick, fail to play as desired, though able to do so, or if when called on to lead one suit, lead another, having in his hand one or more cards of that suit demanded, he incurs the penalty of a revoke.

80. If either of the dealer's adversaries lead out of turn, the dealer may call a suit from him or his partner when it is next the turn of either of them to lead, or may call the card erroneously led.

81. If the dealer lead out of turn, either from his own hand or from Dummy, he incurs no penalty; but he may not rectify the error after the second hand has played.

82. If any player lead out of turn, and the other

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

three have followed him, the trick is complete, and the error cannot be rectified; but if only the second, or the second and third, have played to the false lead, their cards, on discovery of the mistake, are taken back; and there is no penalty against any one, excepting the original offender, and then only when he is one of the dealer's adversaries.

83. In no case can a player be compelled to play a card which would oblige him to revoke.

84. The call of a card may be repeated until such card has been played.

85. If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it, the penalty is paid.

### CARDS PLAYED IN ERROR, OR NOT PLAYED TO A TRICK

86. Should the third hand not have played, and the fourth play before his partner, the latter (not being Dummy or his partner) may be called on to win, or not to win, the trick.

87. If any one (not being Dummy) omit playing to a former trick, and such error be not discovered until he has played to the next, the adversaries may claim a new deal; should they



## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

decide that the deal stand good, or should Dummy have omitted to play to a former trick, and such error be not discovered till he shall have played to the next, the surplus card at the end of the hand is considered to have been played to the imperfect trick, but does not constitute a revoke therein.

88. If any one play two cards to the same trick, or mix a card with a trick to which it does not properly belong, and the mistake be not discovered until the hand is played out, he (not being Dummy) is answerable for all consequent revokes he may have made. If, during the play of the hand, the error be detected, the tricks may be counted face downwards, in order to ascertain whether there be among them a card too many: should this be the case they may be searched, and the card restored; the player (not being Dummy) is, however, liable for all revokes which he may have meanwhile made.

### THE REVOKE

89. Is when a player (other than Dummy), holding one or more cards of the suit led, plays a card of a different suit.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

### 90. The penalty for a revoke —

- I. Is at the option of the adversaries, who, at the end of the hand, may, after consultation, either take three tricks from the revoking player and add them to their own — or deduct the value of three tricks from his existing score — or add the value of three tricks to their own score;
- II. Can be claimed for as many revokes as occur during the hand;
- III. Is applicable only to the score of the game in which it occurs;
- IV. Cannot be divided — *i. e.*, a player cannot add the value of one or two tricks to his own score and deduct the value of one or two from the revoking player.
- V. In whatever way the penalty may be enforced, under no circumstances can the side revoking score Game, Grand Slam, or Little Slam, that hand. Whatever their previous score may be, the side revoking cannot attain a higher score towards the game than twenty-eight.

91. A revoke is established, if the trick in which it occur be turned and quitted — *i. e.*, the hand removed from that trick after it has been turned face downwards on the table — or if either the revoking player or his partner, whether in his right turn or otherwise, lead or play to the following trick.

92. A player may ask his partner whether he has not a card of the suit which he has renounced;

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

should the question be asked before the trick is turned and quitted, subsequent turning and quitting does not establish the revoke, and the error may be corrected, unless the question be answered in the negative, or unless the revoking player or his partner have led or played to the following trick.

93. At the end of the hand, the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks.

94. If a player discover his mistake in time to save a revoke, any player or players who have played after him may withdraw their cards and substitute others, and their cards withdrawn are not liable to be called. If the player in fault be one of the dealer's adversaries, the dealer may call the card thus played in error, or may require him to play his highest or lowest card to that trick in which he has renounced.

95. If the player in fault be the dealer, the eldest hand may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the suit in which he has renounced, provided both of the dealer's adversaries have played to the current trick; but this penalty cannot be exacted from the dealer when he is fourth in hand, nor can it be enforced at all from Dummy.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

96. If a revoke be claimed, and the accused player or his partner mix the cards before they have been sufficiently examined by the adversaries, the revoke is established. The mixing of the cards only renders the proof of a revoke difficult, but does not prevent the claim, and possible establishment, of the penalty.

97. A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

98. If a revoke occur, be claimed and proved, bets on the odd trick, or on amount of score, must be decided by the actual state of the score after the penalty is paid.

99. Should the players on both sides subject themselves to the penalty of one or more revokes, neither can win the game by that hand; each is punished at the discretion of his adversary.

### CALLING FOR NEW CARDS

100. Any player (on paying for them) before, but not after, the pack be cut for the deal, may call for fresh cards. He must call for two new packs, of which the dealer takes his choice.

# THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

## GENERAL RULES

101. Any one during the play of a trick, or after the four cards are played, and before, but not after, they are touched for the purpose of gathering them together, may demand that the cards be placed before their respective players.

102. If either of the dealer's adversaries, prior to his partner playing, should call attention to the trick — either by saying that it is his, or by naming his card, or, without being required so to do, by drawing it towards him — the dealer may require that opponent's partner to play his highest or lowest of the suit then led, or to win or lose the trick.

103. Should the partner of the player solely entitled to exact a penalty, suggest or demand the enforcement of it, no penalty can be enforced.

104. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries.

105. If a bystander make any remark which calls the attention of a player or players to an

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

oversight affecting the score, he is liable to be called on, by the players only, to pay the stakes and all bets on that game or rubber.

106. A bystander, by agreement among the players, may decide any question.

107. A card or cards torn or marked must be either replaced by agreement, or new cards called at the expense of the table.

108. Once a trick is complete, turned, and quitted, it must not be looked at (except under Law 88) until the end of the hand.

## DUMMY BRIDGE

Is played by three players.

The player who cuts the lowest card deals first, and has the Dummy throughout the first rubber; the player who cuts the next lowest card has the Dummy for the second rubber.

The dealer can make any of the ordinary Bridge declarations on his own hand, or he can leave it to the Dummy, in which case he must look at the Dummy, without exposing it, and must make the declaration as follows:—

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

- I. If Dummy holds three or four aces, he must declare "no trumps."
- II. If Dummy has not three aces, he must declare his numerically longest suit.
- III. If Dummy has two or three suits of equal length, he must declare the strongest, reckoned by addition of the pips, an ace counting eleven, and each of the other honours ten.
- IV. If Dummy's equal suits are also of equal strength, reckoned as above, then the most valuable of them must be declared.

The adversaries can double as at ordinary Bridge, and the dealer has the right of re-doubling, although he has seen two hands; but he may not look at his own hand again before deciding whether to re-double. The hand is then played as at ordinary Bridge.

When either of his opponents deals, the player of Dummy must look first at the hand which has to lead, and must double or lead to the first trick before looking at his other hand.

The game can be played in either of the two following ways:—

- I. As soon as the first card is led, Dummy's hand is exposed on the table, and the game proceeds as at ordinary Bridge.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

- II. As soon as the first card is led, both the Dummy's hand and the dealer's partner's hand are exposed on the table, and the hand is played Double Dummy.

When it is Dummy's deal, his partner looks at his own hand first, and makes the declaration or passes it precisely as in the case of his own deal, the only difference in the play being that the first lead is by the player on his right, and is consequently through his hand instead of up to it.

In all other cases the Laws of Bridge apply.

### DOUBLE DUMMY

The rules are the same as in Dummy Bridge, with the following exceptions:—

The dealer deals for himself each time, never for his Dummy; and the hand on his left always leads first, and has the first right of doubling.

Neither player may look at more than one of his two hands before the first card is led, excepting in the case of the dealer when the call is passed to Dummy.

Either player is liable to the penalty of a revoke in his own hand, but not in his Dummy.



## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

### THREE-HANDED BRIDGE

Is played by three players, all against all.

The player who cuts the lowest card has the first deal, and plays the Dummy for that hand. The player cutting the next lowest card sits on the dealer's left, and the remaining player on the dealer's right.

When the first hand is finished, the player on the right moves into Dummy's place, and the player on the left (*i. e.*, he who had cut the second lowest card) deals and plays the Dummy for that hand, and so on, until the completion of the rubber; the player on the dealer's right always moving into the vacant seat.

The rules for declaring, leading, and doubling are the same as at Dummy Bridge.

When the dealer wins the odd trick or more, the value of such trick or tricks is scored by him precisely as at ordinary Bridge; but when he loses one or more tricks, the value of it or them is scored to each of his opponents *above* the line, instead of below it.

Under no circumstances do the dealer's oppo-

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

nents score anything below the line. Honours are scored as at ordinary Bridge; and when they are against the dealer they are scored to each opponent equally, however they are held.

The game is 30 scored below the line, as at ordinary Bridge, and the player who first wins two games wins the rubber and adds 100 to his score; but the fact of one player winning his first game does not affect the scores of the other two — they still retain anything that they have scored below the line to count towards the next game.

The rubber consists of four games; but when two games have been won by the same player, the other or others are not played.

At the conclusion of the rubber, the total scores for tricks, Honours, Chicane, and Slam obtained by each player are added up, one hundred points are added to the score of the winner, and the difference between his score and that of each of his opponents is the number of points won from, or lost to, each of them separately by the winner of the rubber. The difference between the scores of the two losers is also paid by the third player to the second.

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

### ETIQUETTE OF BRIDGE

The following rules belong to the established Etiquette of Bridge. They are not called laws, as it is difficult — in some cases impossible — to apply any penalty to their infraction, and the only remedy is to cease to play with players who habitually disregard them.

It is to be borne in mind that, from the nature of the conditions under which the game is played, acts may be so done, and words so spoken, as to convey a very distinct intimation to a partner. To do so is to offend against the most important of the proprieties of the game.

Declarations ought to be made in a simple manner — *e. g.*, by saying, “I make hearts trumps”; “There are no trumps”; or, “I leave it to you.” There ought to be neither intimation of doubt in, or reason for, making this declaration. Nothing ought to be done or said by the declarant which may afford an indication or intimation of the hand which he holds, or draws attention to the state of the score.

A player should avoid any unnecessary hesita-

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

tion in passing the trump declaration to his partner, or giving any well-marked indication of doubt or perplexity.

Similarly, a player who has the first right of doubling or re-doubling on behalf of a partnership ought not to decline to exercise that right, and so pass it to his partner, after any unnecessary hesitation, or after giving any well-marked indication of doubt or perplexity.

Any one, having the lead and one or more winning cards to play, should not draw a second card out of his hand until his partner has played to the first trick, such act being a distinct intimation that the former has played a winning card.

A player who has looked at his cards ought not to give any indication by word or gesture as to the nature of his hand, or call the attention of his partner to the score of the game.

A player who desires the cards to be placed, should do it for his own information only, and not in order to invite the attention of his partner.

No player should object to refer to a bystander, who professes himself uninterested in the game and able to decide, a disputed question of facts;

## THE LAWS OF BRIDGE

as to who played any particular card — whether honours were claimed though not scored, or *vice versa* — etc., etc.

It is unfair to revoke purposely; having made a revoke, a player is not justified in making a second in order to conceal the first.



## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

THE real origin of Bridge is somewhat shrouded in mystery. The game is said to have originated in Russia, but there is no satisfactory proof of this statement. It was first known under the title of "Biritch, or Russian Whist," and this, no doubt, gave rise to the idea that it was of Russian origin, although, as a matter of fact, the word "Biritch" is not to be found in any Russian dictionary. Many years ago the Russians played a game called "ieralash," or "ieralache," which closely resembled the game of short whist without a trump suit. From this foundation, arose the more scientific games of "Siberia" and "Preference," both of which had certain points in common with our game of Bridge, but there the connection ceases.

There is no record whatever of the transformation of any of these Russian games into anything

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

approaching modern Bridge. The game, as we play it, is far more likely to have been of Levantine origin. It was certainly played, very much in its present form, some forty years ago, in Eastern Europe, notably in Constantinople and in Greece, and, if there were any necessity to assign to it a definite nationality, we should not hesitate to award that honour to Greece.

The prevalent idea that Bridge was unknown in England up to the time of its introduction at the Portland Club in 1894 is an entirely mistaken one. It was quite unknown in Clubland, but there is indisputable evidence of its having been known and regularly played in private circles for many years prior to that date (1894).

It is stated in the supplement to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that the game was first introduced into England in the year 1880, but no information is given as to who furnished this statement, or as to what authority if any, there is for it.

We have received a letter — for which we are greatly indebted — from an English gentleman of Greek extraction, now resident in London, in



## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

which we are assured that the writer can remember the game of Bridge, very much in its present form, being regularly played among a colony of Greeks, settled in Manchester, of whom his own father was one, as far back as the seventies of the last century. The only important point of difference between the game as it was then played and as it is played now was, that the value of No Trumps was 10 points per trick instead of 12, and that the four aces in one hand counted 80 above the line instead of 100 as at present. Also, the lead of a heart, in answer to a double of No Trumps by the leader's partner, which is commonly supposed to have originated in America, was the general custom. There was no agreed-upon convention on the subject, but, when there was any possible doubt in the leader's mind as to which suit his partner wanted led, it was the invariable custom to lead a heart. The short-suit convention had not then been heard of. That was probably a purely English convention of a later date.

It seems evident that the Greeks cannot be a proselytising nation, for, just as the game of Bridge took upwards of twenty years to spread

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

from Greece to Western Europe, so these Greeks, who played the game so many years ago in England, do not appear to have been anxious to gain converts in this country, but were content to go on playing it among themselves, and it seems to have been confined exclusively to these small coteries.

In the year 1886, a small pamphlet was printed in London, entitled *Biritch, or Russian Whist*. There is said to be only one copy of this pamphlet in existence, and that is in the library of the British Museum (press mark 7913 aa 51). It gives a very attenuated description of the game, with the method of scoring and a few laws as to declaring, passing the declaration, etc., but again we are without available information as to who framed these laws, or by whose authority they were published.

The most valuable declaration, corresponding to our present call of "No Trumps," was "Biritch," or playing without trumps, and the value of this call was again 10 points per trick instead of 12, and also four aces in one hand counted 80 not 100. The winners of the rubber added 40 points to their

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

score, instead of 100 points as in our present game, and this extra score was called "Consolation."

There can be no doubt that the score for No Trumps ought to be 10 points per trick and not 12, as that is following the regular upward sequence of the suit declarations, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10; and also, if the value of the tricks at No Trumps is to be 12 points, why should the honour score for aces not be also 12 points instead of 10? When, or why, or how, or by whom the change was made is quite unknown. When the game was first introduced at the Portland Club we were certainly told that the value of No Trumps was 12 points per trick, and the error, if error it was, must somehow have crept in accidentally.

There is quite another version of the origin of the title of "Bridge." The story goes that, some twenty years ago, long before Bridge was known in London clubs, two families who played the game under the name of "Russian Whist" were living in neighbouring houses, at or near Great Dalby in Leicestershire. They were in the habit of visiting each other's houses on alternate evenings to play this fascinating game, and the only

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

road of communication between the two houses lay over a broken-down and somewhat dangerous bridge, which was very awkward to cross in the dark. It was a frequent occurrence for the departing guests to say to their hosts, "Thank goodness, it is your 'Bridge' to-morrow," meaning that the other party would have to cross the dangerous bridge the next night. Hence is said to have arisen the title of "Bridge." We give this story for what it is worth, but in our own mind we have little doubt that the modern name of "Bridge" is merely a very easy corruption of the old title of "Biritch." The two words "Biritch" and "Bridge" have absolutely the same sound when spoken quickly, so that it is easy to imagine how the change of spelling came to pass.

Mr. Jean Boussac, in his *Encyclopedie des Jeux de Cartes*, quotes an extract from the *Figaro* of November 26, 1893, to prove that the game of Bridge was played in Paris as early as 1893, but it must have been played there for several years before that date, as it was directly from Paris that the game was taken to America.

In April, 1892, Mr. Henry Barbey returned to

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

New York, after spending the winter in Paris, very full of the new and delightful card game which he had learnt in that city. Shortly after his return he gave a dinner-party at his own house, with the special object of introducing the new game to his friends, but the experiment was not much of a success. His guests did not appear to be at all enraptured with the novelty, saying that the scoring was too difficult and the game altogether too complicated, and one or two of them left early and broke up the party.

Mr. Barbey, in no way disheartened, consulted with Mr. H. de Forrest Weekes, whom he had converted to his own way of thinking, as to what was to be done next. They agreed that the wrong sort of men had been present at the first trial, and a second dinner was given to a carefully selected few, who were all enthusiastic card players, and this time the result was very different.

In the meantime Mr. Barbey had drawn up on a sheet of paper a short *précis* of the method of scoring, and of the principal points of the game. He adopted the somewhat novel method of cutting out pips from a pack of ordinary playing-cards and

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

pasting them on to the aforesaid sheet of paper, to indicate the different suits. This original document is now framed, and hanging in the card-room of the Whist Club of New York. After the second dinner-party Mr. Weekes had copies of this document printed, and sent them round to all the leading clubs in New York. From this time the game took on like wild-fire, and it has never looked back since; still, it did not have quite the same meteoric success in New York that it had in London, and Whist did not die the same sudden and unexpected death in America that it did in England. The game of Whist is still very much alive in America, and in this present year of grace, 1906, a new magazine, entitled *Whist*, has been started in New York.

It is not necessary to repeat the oft-told tale of how Lord Brougham introduced Bridge into the Portland Club in London in the autumn of 1894. The game was quite unknown there up to that date, although it was not quite unheard of. Echoes of its existence had penetrated even into that sanctum, hitherto sacred to the cult of Whist. Friends staying in Cairo had written home glowing ac-

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

counts of the new card-game being played there, and certain members of the New York Clubs, who are always welcome at the Portland, had given a full description of Bridge to members of that club in 1893, but nobody seemed inclined to give it a trial. Again, when the Americans came over in the spring of 1894, they expressed unbounded surprise to find us still playing Whist, and many members will remember Mr. Winthrop Gray saying: "What, have n't you learnt Bridge yet? You are quite behind the times, but you are bound to come to it before long." When he returned in 1895, he found that his words had been carried out to the letter, and that a very different state of affairs prevailed.

When once Lord Brougham had explained the mysteries and charms of Bridge to a few members of the Club, and when once it was given a fair trial, the game of Whist was routed root and branch, and Bridge immediately took its place as the standard card game. Nobody who once played Bridge ever cared to go back to Whist. The triumph of the new game was sudden, complete, and overwhelming.

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

From the Portland it soon found its way to the Turf Club, which had many members in common with the Portland, and there it has been received with even a warmer welcome. For a short time, a very short time, it was confined to these two clubs, but it soon began to spread to others, and wherever it was once introduced there it stayed, so that, in an incredibly short space of time the game of Whist came to be numbered with other relics of the past.

The necessity then arose for a recognised and authorised code of laws for the new game, and a committee of three members of the Portland was appointed in December, 1895, to draft the required code. The task was a difficult one, as their knowledge of the game was at that early stage a very elementary one, but the work was so skilfully and successfully done that the code of laws then drawn up lasted, practically unaltered, for a period of ten years, and stood the test of covering all the debatable points of the game. These laws were issued early in 1895, and in July of the same year they were submitted to a joint committee of the Portland and Turf Clubs, and, being passed



## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

with a few unimportant alterations, they became the standard laws of English Bridge, and remained so until another joint committee of the same clubs issued the "Revised Laws of Bridge," at the end of 1904.

In February, 1895, Messrs. T. De La Rue & Co., published "The Laws of Bridge, with a guide to the game," by "Boaz." This was the first Bridge book, with the exception of the small pamphlet already mentioned, ever published in England, or, as far as we know, in any other country. A second edition of it appeared later in the same year, giving the authorised code of laws after they had been passed by the joint committee, and this was followed by two subsequent editions in 1896 and 1897. In March, 1898, a fifth edition was published, together with a short treatise entitled "How to play Bridge," by "Badsworth." "Badsworth" was the *nom-de-plume* of a well known member of the Portland Club, one of the ablest exponents of the game, and this little brochure remained the standard book on the subject for some three years.

In 1899 a book on Bridge was published in

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

India by "John Doe," and an English edition of the same work was published in London in 1900. Also in 1899 appeared "Bridge, and how to play it," by Archibald Dunn, Junior; but by far the most important book on the game published in that year, although it is now very little known, was the "Pons Asinorum, or Bridge for Beginners," by A. G. Hulme-Beaman. Mr. Hulme-Beaman, author of "Twenty Years in the Near East," started as a student dragoman in the Levant, and he wrote of the game of Bridge from many years' personal experience of it as played in Eastern Europe. Here again we find the value of the No Trump call given as 10 points per trick instead of 12, and Mr. Beaman writes of the methods of "the well-known veteran bridge player, M. Mavrogordato," which goes to prove that the game of Bridge was no novelty in those climes, but an institution of many years' standing.

It was not until 1901 that any real standard work on the subject made its appearance. In that year Messrs. T. De La Rue & Co., who have ever been the pioneers of card literature, pub-

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

lished, almost simultaneously, "Bridge Abridged, or Practical Bridge," by the present writer, and "Hellespont on Bridge," "Hellespont" being the pseudonym of a gentleman, residing in India, who is said to have had great experience of the game as it is played in the East. These two books have both had a large sale, and both have run through several editions, and they still hold their place as the two standard works on the game. About the same time, or possibly a little earlier, an excellent elementary book for beginners was written by Mrs. J. R. Tennant, entitled, "The A B C of Bridge." This little book also had, as it well deserved, a large sale, and many were the players whom it initiated into the mysteries of the game.

After these came a perfect flood of Bridge literature, good, bad, and indifferent; going over the same old ground, again and again, and adding little of interest to what had been already written on the subject. There were a few notable exceptions such as "Badsworth's" larger book, published in 1903, Mr. J. B. Elwell's two excellent books, published in New York, and Mr. Foster's

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

many books, published both in New York and in London; but most of the subsequent books were little more than a repetition, more or less paraphrased, of what had been written in the earlier text books.

For a considerable period after the introduction of the game into London in 1894, Bridge remained almost exclusively a club game.

Men who played it at London clubs, also played it in their own country houses, or wherever they could get up a rubber, but it was by no means the popular social game that it has since become. It was not until the beginning of the present century, 1900 or 1901, that the ladies discovered what a delightful field of amusement and mild speculation was open to them.

The game of Whist had never appealed strongly to ladies. The scientific conventions of the game, its solemnity, and, above all, the enforced silence from which "Whist" probably derived its name, were not at all to their liking, but here was a very different matter. Here was a game at which it was not considered wicked to smile, or to make a harmless irrelevant remark. Here was a game at

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

which they could meet men on even terms and hold their own with them, a game at which their naturally quick sense of intuition was of the greatest service, a game which offered that greatest of all charms to the female mind — infinite variety.

When once the ladies discovered the fascination of the game, they adopted it as their own, and became even more enthusiastic about it than the men. There are at the present time many very fine women Bridge players, and their number is increasing every day. The general standard of Bridge has improved enormously in the last three or four years. Whereas it was at one time the exception to meet a really first-class player, they are to be met with now in every club and in every walk of life. The latest innovation is mixed Bridge clubs for men and ladies, and very popular they seem to be, and the standard of play at some of them is quite as good as that of many men's clubs.

Bridge has to a certain extent revolutionised society. It has shortened the long, weary, and unwholesome dinners of ten years ago. It has

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

altered entirely the dreadful tedious hour in the drawing-room after dinner, when one used to count the minutes until one could decently take one's departure. It has done away with the monotony of that awful wet day in a country house, which we used to know so well, and it has given an added interest in life to many people. In short, like the Pickwick pen, it has "come as a boon and a blessing to men," and still more so to ladies.

We are sometimes asked, "Is the popularity of Bridge on the wane?" We unhesitatingly answer "No." There is a strong tendency, everywhere, to play for lower points. The twos and tens (2s. points, with £10 on the rubber) of the days of "The Boozers," are no longer heard of. The highest game played in London at the present time is 1s. points, or £5 per 100, and the tendency to reduce this is so strongly marked, that it seems probable that threepenny points will become the standard game at the leading London clubs in the near future.

Possibly Bridge may not be growing in popularity in London — there was hardly any room for

## THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGE

it to do so — but in the country, at the seaside, wherever people most do congregate, there the game is growing and flourishing like a green bay tree.

Long may it continue to do so.

NOTE. — *For much of the information in this chapter I am indebted to the courtesy of Mr. Frederick Jessel, who not only furnished me with many interesting facts, but also gave me free access to his unique library of card literature.—W. D.*

## CHAPTER II

### THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

THE declaration at Bridge affords an opportunity for the exercise of certain qualities which were never called into use in the game of whist. Precisely the same technical skill is required for the management and play of the cards in both games, but in whist the trump suit is arbitrarily settled by the turn-up card, whereas in Bridge the right of choosing the trump suit, and so fixing the value of the game, devolves upon the dealer or his partner, and the result of the game will frequently depend upon the judicious exercise of that right. If the dealer had only to consider the cards in his own hand his task would be quite simple, but he has to consider, not only the value of his own cards and how many tricks they are likely to win, but also the value of them combined with the unknown cards in his partner's hand. This demands sound judgment, a good knowledge of probabilities, and care-



## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

ful attention to the state of the score. The cards in his partner's hand being entirely unknown, the dealer can only be guided by the doctrine of average. The average hand at Bridge consists of one ace, one king, one queen, one knave and so on down to one two; there may be greater strength or there may be less, but he is fairly entitled to credit his partner with an average hand, and on this assumption all his calculations should be based. A golden general rule for the guidance of the declarer, whether he be the dealer or the dummy, is that when he has a good hand, that is, a hand considerably above the average, he should make the game as expensive as possible, and conversely, when he has a bad hand, or a hand below the average, he should make the game as cheap as possible.

The most expensive declaration in Bridge being No Trumps, when the value of each trick is twelve points, or more than a third of the whole game, the first consideration of the dealer should always be whether his hand is strong enough for this call. He should always declare No Trumps at the score of love, when he can see a probability of winning

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

the odd trick and a possibility of winning the game, with the assistance of an average hand from his partner — that is the point to be always remembered, that an average hand from his partner is a contingency on which he is entitled to speculate. If his partner has a bad hand, the result will possibly be temporary disaster, but he who never risks disaster will never court success, and waiting for a certainty is a very tedious business. The advantage of the No Trump game to the dealer lies, not only in the increased value of each trick, but also in the greater facilities that it gives him for the successful combination of the two hands under his charge. Directly the first card is led and the dummy exposed he can see at a glance what forces are at his disposal, he can note exactly where his strength or his weakness lies, and he can utilise every element of strength in either hand to the greatest advantage, while his opponents are still in the dark, and know only that the leader has certain strength in the suit originally opened.

It is very difficult to lay down any hard and fast rules as to what does or does not constitute a No Trump hand. Some hands have no great

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

strength in themselves, but being protected in every suit, they become very useful indeed when played in combination with another useful hand, although combined with an indifferent hand they become of very little use. Aces are a great element of strength in declaring No Trumps, and any hand containing three aces is considered a *jeu de règle* No Trump, even when there is not another court card in it. True, the three aces can only win three tricks, but they command their three respective suits, and they enable the dealer to get the lead three times so as to play for any useful suit that his partner may have. Another valuable element of strength is a long suit with one or two high cards at its head, such a suit as king, knave, ten, and two others. Although this has not a single certain trick in it, it has great possibilities, because, if either the ace or queen is found in the partner's hand, four tricks in that suit become a certainty at once.

By no means an uncommon type of No Trump declaration is a well-protected hand, with no great trick-making power in itself, but with a guard in every suit, and, consequently, with a certainty of

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

stopping the opponents' opening lead, whatever suit may be selected. Such a hand as —

Hearts — Ace, 8, 4.

Clubs — Ace, 10, 3.

Diamonds — King, 9, 5.

Spades — Queen, 9, 5, 2.

This is an undoubted No Trump call for the dealer, although in itself it will not win many tricks, but, paradoxical as it may appear, the declaration is made on the strength of the unknown cards in the dummy hand. If the dummy is found with any one good strong suit, whatever it may be, that suit is certain to be easy to establish, and there is at once the nucleus of a fine No Trumper. The great strength and advantage of the No Trump call lies, not in holding a certain number of winning cards in one hand or the other, but in the combination of the two hands, and in the opportunity afforded to the dealer of being able to see at once where his two hands will combine to the greatest advantage, so that he can attack in the most vulnerable spot without any loss of time.

When there is a question in the dealer's mind between a doubtful red suit declaration, and a rather light No Trump call, he should always go for the No Trump, so as to give himself the best

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

chance of utilising every element of strength in his partner's hand, without being tied to one particular suit.

A well-known writer on Bridge, in his latest book, published in 1903, gives two instances of hands on which he tells his readers that he himself would not hesitate to declare hearts. The two hands are: —

### No. 1.

Hearts — King, queen, 10, 7.

Diamonds — Ace, 8, 6.

Clubs — Ace, 5.

Spades — 10, 9, 4, 2.

### No. 2.

Hearts — Queen, knave, 9, 8.

Diamonds — Ace, 10, 3.

Clubs — Queen, knave, 8.

Spades — King, queen, 9.

The greater part of the book in question is thoroughly sound and instructive, but what can be said of such teaching as this, laid down for the instruction of beginners by a recognised authority? To our way of thinking it is almost heretical. Neither of these hands is even a doubtful one. They are both good sound No Trump calls, with a fine chance of winning the game, and why in the world any player should tie his partner down to one particular suit, when he has such all-round strength in his own hand, is entirely beyond our

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

comprehension. Even at the score of 22 or 24, when one odd trick in either hearts or No Trumps would win the game, we should still declare No Trumps on either of these two hands, as being the best chance of winning the odd trick. The so-called border-line No Trump call, provided that it does not touch the border line, is always justifiable in the early stages of the game, and it will be found to succeed far more often than it will fail, but both of the hands quoted above are sound No Trumpers, not even approaching the border line.

A necessary qualification for a justifiable No Trump hand is that it should be guarded in three of the four suits. The dealer should never be deterred from declaring No Trumps because he is very weak in, or even entirely devoid of, one suit, provided that his other three suits are strong. The fourth suit can be left for the dummy to protect, and it will be unlucky if he has not some sort of protection in it. Chancing two suits is quite a different matter, and should only be resorted to as a very extreme measure, except in the case of what is known as a one suit No Trumper, which will be dealt with later on.

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

There can be no doubt that the game of Bridge owes a great part of its charm to the No Trump declaration. If the No Trump call were to be eliminated altogether, and the game confined to suit declarations, the popularity of Bridge would very quickly disappear, and it would soon be numbered with whist, solo, boston, and other games of the past. But the No Trump call remains, and will always remain, as long as Bridge lasts, as the life and soul of the game, and a player's first consideration, when he is dealer, should always be whether he has the requisite strength to declare No Trumps — not being unduly rash, nor taking any desperate risks, but, on the other hand, never throwing away a chance of a good score at No Trumps, because he is afraid of finding a bad hand in his dummy. The dealer is quite entitled to assume that his dummy will be capable of winning three tricks, not on its own merits alone, and not by any means certain tricks, but that the combination of the two hands will enable dummy to win three tricks. When the dealer has five such probable tricks in his own hand, assuming average assistance from his dummy, he has an undoubted

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

No Trump call, provided that he is guarded in three suits, and that one, at least, of those three is headed by the ace.

We will now consider the actual requirements for a No Trump declaration.

With four aces in one hand, No Trumps should always be declared, but it is possible to imagine an exception even to this rule.

With such a hand as —

Hearts — Ace, knave, 10, 9, 8, 5, 3, 2.	Clubs — Ace, 3.
Diamonds — Ace, 5.	Spades — Ace.

the right declaration at the score of love would be hearts and not No Trumps. The winning of the game would be practically a certainty with hearts as trumps, whereas, if No Trumps were declared, there would be a great danger of one of the other suits being brought in by the adversaries, and four or five tricks being lost in it, before the heart suit could be established. There would be a very substantial and appreciable loss in the honour score by declaring hearts on this hand, but winning the game is the primary consideration, and the winning or losing of the rubber involves a difference of over 200 points; therefore, in such a case, it



## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

would be right to accept the loss of 68 or 84 points above the line for the certainty of winning the game, especially if it were the last game of the rubber.

There are many players, with the gambling instinct strongly developed, who will not accept this theory, but who would unhesitatingly declare No Trumps on such a hand, for the sake of scoring 100 above the line. The principle, however, is not sound. The best and soundest advice which can be given is, always to take the most likely chance of winning the game, quite regardless of extra points, either above or below the line, which might result from a bolder policy, if the cards happened to lie favourably.

Holding three aces in his own hand, the dealer should never pass the call in the early stages of the game. A bare three-ace hand is not a strong No Trump call; in fact, it is a very weak one, but it has possibilities. The three aces are only good for three tricks, but they enable the dealer to stop each of the three suits which they command, and they give him a fine chance of establishing and bringing in any long suit which he

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

may be fortunate enough to find in his dummy. Here again, the dealer makes the No Trump declaration, not on his three aces, not on the strength of his own hand, but on the assistance which his own hand will give to the strength which he hopes to find in the dummy. If the dummy has a bad hand there is certain to be disaster, but a three-ace hand always presents possibilities, and on those possibilities the forward declaration should be made.

Any hand containing three aces is a *jeu de règle* No Trump call, but do not run away with the idea that the dealer is bound to declare No Trumps whenever he has three aces in his own hand. He must not pass the call with three aces, he is bound to make some declaration himself, but that declaration need not necessarily be No Trumps. That is, the danger of laying down a hard and fast rule, such as that a three-ace hand is a *jeu de règle* No Trump. Beginners are apt to think that they are not playing the game if they do not declare No Trumps with three aces, whatever the rest of their hand may be. Take the following two hands, for instance:—

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

### No. 1.

Hearts — Ace, queen, 10, 9, 2.

Diamonds — Ace, 7, 4.

Clubs — 9, 7, 3.

Spades — Ace, 10.

### No. 2.

Hearts — 7, 3.

Diamonds — Ace, king, knave,  
10, 4, 2.

Clubs — Ace, 8, 5.

Spades — Ace, 9.

Both of these hands contain the requisite three aces, yet no experienced Bridge player would declare No Trumps on either of them at the score of love all. He would declare hearts on No. 1, and diamonds on No. 2. A light No Trump, however anæmic it may be, is always preferable to a light red suit declaration, but a strong red suit declaration, such as either of the above, is far better than an average No Trump call. There is a certainty of making a good score, and a good possibility of winning the game, without taking any risks at all. If the dummy puts down a good hand, with protection in the dealer's unguarded suit, the game would be won at No Trumps, but in that case it would probably be won also on the suit declaration, although the winning score would not be so great. On the other hand, if the dummy has a very bad hand, every trick in the dealer's weak suit may be made

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

against him, and it may be all that he can do to save the game.

We are particularly anxious to disabuse the beginner's mind of the idea that he is bound to declare No Trumps whenever he holds three aces. He certainly should make a declaration on his own hand, and, if he has not got a good red suit, he must declare No Trumps, but if he has a good suit of either hearts or diamonds, and one other suit entirely unguarded, he will often find that he has sacrificed the substance for the shadow if he is so fed up with the knowledge of his three aces that he considers himself bound to declare No Trumps, in preference to going for a safer game and a certain score.

It has been already said that a three-ace hand is a *jeu de règle* No Trump, and it is the only *jeu de règle* in the game of Bridge, but there are many good No Trump hands which contain two aces, or only one, or even no ace at all. Aces are a good solid foundation for a No Trump hand, but they are not everything, and it is quite possible to attach too much importance to the possession of them. Certainly, a No Trump declaration with-

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

out an ace at all is an extreme measure, but there are occasions when extreme measures must be resorted to. The dealer may quite well have a hand, without an ace, which is too strong and well guarded to pass the declaration with, but on which he cannot declare a red suit. In this case, he has no alternative but to declare No Trumps. It should be remembered that, when the dealer has no ace in his own hand, the odds are, approximately, 9 to 2 on his partner holding one or more, and only 6 to 4 against his partner holding two or more. Two aces in his partner's hand will turn such a hand as we are supposing the dealer to hold into a very fine No Trumper, and one ace will fortify it immensely; so that it is not a case of running an enormous risk for the dealer to declare No Trumps without an ace, provided that his hand is sufficiently good to warrant it. Four kings are a necessity, or at least three kings, with queen, knave, and others in the fourth suit, and two at least of the kings, or better still three of them, should have the queen or knave behind them. The following are two hands taken from Captain Beasley's "London Bridge," on which the author

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

says that he should always declare No Trumps at the score of love all: —

### No. 1.

Hearts — King, knave, 10.

Diamonds — King, 2.

Clubs — King, knave, 9.

Spades — King, queen, knave,

10, 3.

### No. 2.

Hearts — King, 10.

Diamonds — Queen, 8, 7.

Clubs — King, queen, 10, 3, 2.

Spades — King, queen, 8.

In No. 2 we should prefer to have the knave of diamonds as well, but here you have the opinion of a first-class player as to what he would do himself. Of course, there is always the danger of finding 100 aces against you in one hand, but the odds against this are  $56\frac{1}{2}$  to 1, and such extreme odds need hardly be taken into consideration.

A good general formula for a No Trump hand is that it should be at least the value of one queen above the average, and that three of the suits should be properly guarded, and we should add to this that it must have at least one ace.

A very difficult hand on which to declare is, when the dealer holds considerable strength in both the red suits, but not strength enough to make a good red suit declaration.

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

Say that he has

Hearts — Ace, king, 9, 8.

Diamonds — Ace, queen, knave, 5.

Clubs — 10, 7, 4.

Spades — 9, 6.

What is he to do with this hand? It is a bad No Trump declaration, because he is chancing two entire suits, and neither red suit is quite strong enough for an attacking declaration. The hand, containing five honours in the red suits, is one of distinct value, and yet, if the dealer passes the declaration, it is practically certain that his partner will be obliged to declare a black suit, in which case all the attacking value of the hand is gone. With such a hand as this, the dealer must harden his heart, take a little extra risk, and boldly declare No Trumps. If the hand goes very wrong, he is certain to be told by his irate partner that it was an unjustifiable call, but such ignorant criticism by results is one of the penalties that one has to pay for playing an intelligent game, and for taking risks that are well worth taking.

The hand is far too good a one to pass for an almost certain black suit declaration, and it is better to take the wider chance of declaring No

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

Trumps than to tie one's partner to one particular suit. If either red suit is declared, and the dummy happens to be very weak in the declared suit, no material good can possibly result, however good the rest of the dummy's cards may be. If the suits were reversed, and the dealer's two strong suits were the black ones, he should not hesitate to pass the declaration, hoping for a strong red suit declaration from his partner, in which case his own winning black cards would be very useful; but, when he has strength in both the red suits, there is little hope of a left No Trump call, and he is almost certain to get a black suit declaration. The declaration of the dealer must be governed a great deal by the consideration of what his partner is likely to declare if he leaves it.

Take such a hand as —

Hearts — 8, 3.

Clubs — Queen, knave, 10, 6.

Diamonds — Ace, queen, 9, 4. Spades — King, 8, 5.

This is a weak No Trump declaration, but if the dealer passes with this hand, what can he expect? Hearts, probably, in which he is very weak himself. If his partner has strength in hearts, it at



## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

once becomes a good No Trumper, therefore he had better speculate on his partner being strong in that suit, rather than risk an expensive declaration being made in a suit in which his own hand can give no material assistance.

As a summary, we cannot do better than quote "Hellespont's" "Analysis of No Trump Declarations." He says:—

The dealer should always declare No Trumps at the score of love all, when his hand contains:

(a) Four aces, whatever the other cards may be;

(b) Three aces, unless six or more hearts are held;

(c) At least one queen in excess of a hand of average strength, and three suits securely guarded;

(d) Six or more certain tricks in spades or clubs, and one other ace;

(e) Generally when he holds both the red aces and kings, accompanied by one or two small ones in each suit, and nothing in the black suits.

Unless, in (b), (c), and (a), five honours or four honours in hearts or diamonds are held, when the suit should be declared in preference.

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

Without an ace, No Trumps should not be declared at the score of love all, except with four kings and four queens, and an evenly divided hand; and not even then, if four honours in hearts or diamonds are held.

We do not quite agree with clause (b). Five hearts, or six diamonds, with honours at the head of them, and two other aces, is a far better and sounder suit declaration than a No Trump; and again, when the dealer holds four kings and no ace, it is not necessary to hold the four queens in addition. When three of the kings, or even two, have the queen or knave behind them, a No Trump call is quite justifiable at the score of love all.

There is a system, known as the Robertsonian or Robertson Rule, which came to us from India, and which professes to establish a standard for a justifiable No Trump call by assigning a figure value to the court cards. This will sometimes be found of great use to a beginner, by helping him to determine whether a doubtful hand has the requisite strength for a No Trump call, but it is by no means to be regarded as final.

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

It is quite impossible to lay down any general rule or formula which will cover all the variations of No Trump declarations. The practised Bridge player learns by experience what constitutes a justifiable No Trump call and what is a very risky declaration, but the player of less experience will do well to commit this formula to memory and to be guided a great deal by it, when he finds himself with such a hand that he is in doubt whether to declare No Trumps himself or to pass the declaration to his partner.

The Robertsonian system is the following:—

Each Ace counts 7.	Each Queen counts 3.
„ King „ 5.	„ Knave „ 1.

When the collective value of the court cards in the hand amounts to 21 or more it is supposed to be a justifiable No Trump, provided that the counting cards are spread over at least three of the suits, and that they are all properly guarded, that is to say, that a king has at least one guard, a queen at least two, and a knave three. This system is obviously based on the bare three-ace No Trump, as the value of three aces amounts to exactly 21. It is of more value negatively than positively,

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

by which is meant that no hand which does not count 21 is a justifiable No Trump, but it does not quite follow that any hand which does count up to 21 will succeed at No Trumps. For instance, the four kings and one knave would count 21, but it would be a desperately risky declaration, and again the bare three-ace call, spoken of above, is a declaration which requires considerable assistance from your partner to carry it through with success. The following are two very light calls, which reach the required standard: —

### No. 1.

Hearts — Ace, 8, 6.  
Diamonds — Queen, 9, 7, 2.  
Clubs — King, knave, 3.  
Spades — King, 8, 5.

### No. 2.

Hearts — Ace, knave, 3.  
Diamonds — King, 9, 6.  
Clubs — King, queen, 7, 2.  
Spades — 9, 8, 4.

The figure value of both these hands amounts to exactly 21, and they are both very near the border line, but experience has abundantly proved that border-line No Trumps succeed far more often than they fail, and No Trumps should be declared on either hand at the score of love all. No. 1 is slightly better than No. 2 because it is guarded in all the four suits. The weakest point

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

in the Robertsonian Rule is that it does not take into consideration the backbone given to a hand by a long suit. Take such a hand as —

Hearts — King, 4.                      Clubs — King, knave, 10, 9, 7, 5.  
Diamonds — Queen, 8, 3.      Spades — Ace, 7.

This hand counts only 21, but it is a hand with great possibilities, and no Bridge player of any experience would hesitate to declare No Trumps on it.

One other variety of the No Trump call must be mentioned. When you hold six or more cards of a black suit, thoroughly established, and one other card of entry, No Trumps should always be declared at the score of love. You will, of course, be running a considerable risk with two entire suits against you, but you may trust your partner to hold something of value in one or both of them, and the probable gain is well worth the risk. Directly either you or your partner can get in, the odd trick at least, and very probably the game, is a certainty, but your suit must be thoroughly established — the ace, king, queen at the head of it is a necessity.

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

Take such a hand as —

Hearts — Ace, 7.                      Clubs — Ace, king, queen, 9, 7, 5, 4.  
Diamonds — 8, 5, 3.                  Spades — 10.

This is an undeniable No Trump. It is somewhat of a gamble, as you may find an equally powerful suit of diamonds or spades in the leader's hand, in which case you will be doubled and probably lose the game, but the chance is well worth risking, and you will find that you will win the game on it in four cases out of five.

In the early days of Bridge No Trump calls were far less frequent than they are at the present day. Players had not fully recognised the possibilities of the call, and the very great advantage which it gives to the player of the two hands. They were rather shy of declaring No Trumps without some protection in every suit, and were often surprised to find what chances they had missed by refusing to take a little extra risk. In these latter days a certain section of players are inclined to run to the opposite extreme, and to declare No Trumps on the most shadowy pretext. Such a one will say to you at the beginning of a rubber, "I hope you do not mind light No

## THE DECLARATION — NO TRUMPS

Trumps, partner, I am a very forward player.” This is the most dangerous type of partner, and you will be lucky if you get out of it without disaster. Bridge is a game in which, if you are holding fairly good cards, it will pay you to declare to their full value, but directly you try to force the game, and declare beyond the legitimate value of the cards in your hand, disaster is certain to follow. There is no player more easy to beat in the long run than the one who tries to import into the game the bluff element peculiar to poker, by declaring above the value of his hand. The old hackneyed proverb, *medio tutissimus ibis*, applies strongly to the game of Bridge, and especially to the making of No Trumps.

## CHAPTER III

### ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

**FAILING** No Trumps, the next consideration of the dealer should be whether he is strong enough to make an attacking red suit declaration.

#### HEARTS

There are certain hands which admit of no doubt as to the suit to be declared; these need not be discussed. It is nearly always right to declare hearts when holding four honours, as the honour score of 64 is too valuable an asset to be lightly given up; also hearts should be declared in preference to diamonds when holding cards of nearly equal value in the two suits. A good heart is a very sound call, but there is no greater pitfall in Bridge than a doubtful or light heart hand.

Many players seem utterly unable to realise this, and no amount of experience teaches them. A genuine heart hand should contain five probable



## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

tricks, and a good rule to remember is that four probable tricks is the very lowest strength on which hearts should ever be declared. By five probable tricks is meant such a hand as —

Hearts—Ace, queen, 9, 8, 3. Clubs—10, 3.

Diamonds—King, 7, 4. Spades—Queen, knave, 4.

With this hand the dealer might reckon on three tricks in hearts, one in diamonds, and one in spades. The five tricks are by no means certain, but he would be justified in expecting to win five tricks with an ordinary placing of the cards.

Ace, king, queen, and the two other hearts also represent five probable tricks, and hearts should always be declared on that strength, even with no other card higher than a 9, the dealer's partner being certainly to be trusted to win two or three other tricks in the other suits.

Some players are very fond of making what they are pleased to call a “defensive” red suit declaration. They will declare hearts on such a hand as —

Hearts—King, 9, 8, 6, 2.

Clubs—10, 8, 4.

Diamonds—Knaves, 7, 5.

Spades—7, 6.

their argument being that the hand is worth nothing unless hearts are trumps. Never was

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

there a more fallacious argument. Certainly the hand is worth next to nothing unless hearts are trumps, but it is worth very little even when hearts are trumps, and yet such a player will voluntarily fix the value of the trump suit at its highest point, besides depriving his unhappy partner of the opportunity of declaring a good suit if he has one. The very utmost value of the above hand is three tricks, consequently, in order to win the odd trick, the dealer's partner is expected to do more than the dealer himself, without the option of making a declaration. Again, six hearts headed by the 9 or 10, and no other elements of strength in the hand, is worth, at the very outside, three tricks, yet this is a declaration that one sees made every day. If the long suit in either of the above-mentioned hands was spades instead of hearts, there might be some sense in the dealer snatching at the declaration, so as to make the value of the game as cheap as possible, but there can be no sense in his voluntarily fixing the trick value at its highest point, when he knows that one of the two hands which he has to play is a bad one. Somehow, five hearts, whatever the value of them, seem

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

to have a subtle fascination for some players, and they cannot bear to pass the declaration in such a case.

As it has become a recognised fact that fairly light No Trump declarations pay in the long run, so it has become clearly established among knowledgeable players that to declare hearts without reasonable justification is the high road to Bridge perdition.

The following table will be found to cover all genuine heart declarations at the score of love all. The dealer should declare hearts when he holds —

- (1) *a.* Any four honours.
  - b.* Five, with three honours, including the ace or king.
  - c.* Six, with one honour higher than the 10, however bad the rest of his hand may be.
- (2) *d.* Five headed by the ace.
  - e.* Five headed by king, queen, or king, knave.
  - f.* Five headed by queen, knave, or queen, with two probable tricks in other suits.
- (3) *g.* Five headed by king or queen.

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

- h.* Four, with three honours, including ace or king, with three probable tricks in other suits.

With less strength than any of the above, the dealer should not declare hearts at the score of love all, under ordinary circumstances. It should be remembered that, when the dealer declares hearts, he is at once assuming the offensive, and making the game as expensive as possible, short of a No Trump declaration. If he elects, on his own responsibility, to make the game expensive, surely the chances of success ought to be strongly in his favour. The No Trump declaration has possibilities which the heart declaration does not possess. When the dealer declares a light heart, he ties his partner down to have some assistance in the heart suit. His partner may have useful cards in other suits, but, if he has no assistance in the trump suit, the usefulness of those cards is very seriously impaired. For this reason alone, apart from other considerations, a light heart declaration is a very dangerous call.

Here again, as with regard to the No Trump

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

call, the dealer must be greatly influenced by the consideration of what his partner is likely to declare if he passes the declaration.

Suppose the dealer to hold —

Hearts — King, queen, 10, 6.      Clubs — 7, 2.  
Diamonds — King, queen, 5.      Spades — Queen, 10, 8, 3.

This is not strong enough for a No Trump call, but yet it is a good hand, too good to pass the declaration, for an almost certain black suit. True, there is a chance of a three-ace No Trump declaration by the dummy, but that is a 9 to 1 against chance, and a defensive black suit declaration is much more likely. With this hand the dealer should declare hearts, having a probability of four or possibly five tricks in his own hand, against a very faint possibility of a more valuable declaration by passing.

Again, suppose the dealer's hand to consist of —

Hearts — Ace, 9, 8, 6, 4.      Clubs — 10, 5.  
Diamonds — Ace, knave, 8, 3.      Spades — 8, 3.

This is a bad heart hand. It cannot be reckoned as being good for more than four tricks; but what is the dealer to expect if he passes the declaration?

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

A No Trump call is very unlikely, as he himself holds the two red aces, and dummy will probably declare either clubs or spades, in both of which suits his own hand is very weak. The hand has a distinct value with a red suit as trumps, but very little value with a black suit. Therefore, seeing that there is only a faint prospect of anything but a black suit declaration if he passes, the dealer should choose the lesser of two evils, and declare hearts himself, being influenced solely by the consideration of what his partner would be likely to do if he left it.

Let us again repeat that a good heart call is better than an average No Trump. The following hands are all better heart than No Trump calls: —

No. 1.	No. 2.
Hearts — Ace, 10, 8, 7, 6, 2.	Hearts — Ace, queen, 10, 5, 4.
Diamonds — Ace, 9.	Diamonds — Ace, knave, 6.
Clubs — 10, 3.	Clubs — King, queen, 9, 2.
Spades — Ace, knave, 5.	Spades — 4.
No. 3.	No. 4.
Hearts — Ace, king, knave, 6, 2.	Hearts — Ace, queen, knave, 9, 5.
Diamonds — 7, 3.	Diamonds — 7.
Clubs — Ace.	Clubs — Queen, knave, 10, 4.
Spades — King, knave, 10, 8, 4.	Spades — Ace, king.

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

Each of these four hands fulfils the requirements for a No Trump call, but the question is whether the dealer is not quite as likely, or more likely, to win four by cards with hearts as trumps, than to win three by cards at No Trumps. Also there is no risk with the heart declaration. All these hands have one unguarded suit, with the consequent probability of being attacked in that suit. It must not be forgotten that the opponents have an unpleasant habit of attacking in the declarer's weakest suit. They do not usually attack in a suit of which he holds two or three honours. It happens so sometimes, but much more often they find the weak spot at the first attempt, and then what becomes of the fine No Trumper, unless the dummy happens to be guarded in that suit. We said in the last article that the dealer should not be afraid of chancing one suit at No Trumps, when he is strong in the other three, and we adhere to that statement; but, when he is really strong in hearts, it is a safer and sounder policy to declare that suit, rather than to run the risk of finding his partner also weak in his own unguarded spot.

It is a very excellent general rule that the

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

dealer should declare hearts when he can see a probability of five tricks in his own hand, with average assistance from his dummy. If his hand is worth less than that, he will do better, in the long run, to pass the declaration.

The five-heart craze appears to be so strongly ingrained in the minds of many Bridge players that they are incapable of realising the fact that four good hearts are stronger than five moderate ones. Surely ace, king, queen, 2 of hearts must be stronger than king, knave, 9, 7, 5. The ace, king, queen hand is good for three tricks at least, and will be able to extract most, if not all, of the opponents' trumps, but not so the other. If the high trumps happen to lie over this hand, it is good for very few tricks, and, as regards extracting the opponents' trumps, it is practically useless, yet there are many players who would cheerfully declare hearts on the latter hand, but who would be very chary of doing so on the former, because they had only four of the suit. The four-trump heart declaration is not one to be strongly recommended, because, if it has the requisite strength behind it, it must be getting near to a No Trump



## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

call, which would be generally preferable. But if the hand is not strong enough for No Trumps, and the dealer can see that there is little or no chance of a good declaration by dummy, the fact that he has only four trumps should not deter him from declaring hearts, provided that he can see a fair chance of winning the odd trick or more.

The one fact which we desire to impress upon our readers is that there is no more useless and dangerous call at Bridge, nor one which leads to more trouble, and loses more games day by day, and week by week, than a light heart declaration by the dealer without proper backing-up strength behind it.

### DIAMONDS

The declaration of diamonds by the dealer is a subject on which there is considerable difference of opinion. The best American players, who are very sound judges of the game, never make an original diamond declaration at the score of love, unless they are overwhelmingly strong in the suit. They would always leave it to their partner with ace, king, and three other diamonds, and two

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

other probable tricks in their hand, in fact, they hardly recognise the diamond call as an original offensive declaration. Some of our English players go to the other extreme and declare diamonds as dealer with the same strength on which they declare hearts. The American system is undoubtedly the sounder of the two, but it is sometimes carried a little too far. When the dealer makes an original diamond declaration, he is giving up the chance of two more valuable declarations by his partner, namely, hearts and No Trumps, and it must be taken as a Bridge axiom that when the cards are above the average strength the highest declaration possible to either of the hands should be aimed at.

All experienced Bridge players will acknowledge that the diamond call is a proverbially unlucky one, and one that rarely does any material good, either because the hands would have worked out much better with a heart or a No Trump call by the dummy, or because the dummy is very weak and able to give little or no assistance. Occasionally the original diamond declaration succeeds well, and either wins the game or makes a good

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

score, but in the long run the player who is very shy of declaring an original diamond will profit by his shyness. The worst of all reasons, yet one of the most common, for the dealer declaring diamonds is that he is very weak in hearts. This should be the very reason for passing the declaration. When he is very weak in hearts, there is a greatly increased probability of his partner being very strong in that suit and a good heart call is far preferable to a strong diamond. The time to declare diamonds is when the dealer has also such strength in the heart suit that a declaration of hearts by his partner is extremely improbable. Suppose that he holds ace, king, and three small diamonds, and ace, knave, and two small hearts. In this case it is almost a certainty that his partner must declare a black suit, as he is very unlikely to be able to declare hearts, nor is he likely to declare No Trumps without either of the red aces, therefore the dealer should declare diamonds as the means of giving the hand its highest available value. If the ace, knave, and two others were in clubs or spades the declaration should be passed, in the hope of a heart declaration by the dummy.

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

A few months ago there was considerable discussion and a substantial wager as to the correct declaration on the following hand:—

Hearts—King, queen, 10, 6. Clubs—9.  
Diamonds—King, queen, 10, 6. Spades—King, queen, 10, 6.

It was agreed to submit the hand to four of the best known authorities on the game, with the request that they would state what they would declare on it at the score of love all, if the declaration were passed to them. This was done, but it was a case of “Who shall decide when doctors disagree?” Of the four experts, one said “spades,” one said “No trumps,” and two said “hearts.” It is a very doubtful hand, but the spade declaration would be an exceedingly backward and timid one and is not worth considering. The hand is distinctly above the average, and therefore either the dealer or the dummy with such a hand ought to give it a scoring value. The No Trump declaration on the other hand, is forward to rashness. True, the hand fully answers the requirements of a No Trump under the Robertsonian Rule, as the figure value of it amounts to 24, and three suits are well guarded, but the Robertsonian Rule can hardly be

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

applied to such a hand as this. To declare No Trumps, on a passed hand, without an ace and with one suit entirely unguarded, would be rather asking for trouble, especially as there is a strong probability of 30, and a possibility of 100, against you in the honour score. This leaves the choice between hearts and diamonds, and as the hand is above the average, it would seem right to declare hearts at the score of love, or at any point in the score when less tricks would be required to win the game in hearts than in diamonds. Still it cannot be called a good heart, and with the dealer's score at 12, 18, 20, 24, or 26, it would be sounder to declare diamonds, as the same amount of tricks would then win the game in hearts and diamonds and a lesser liability would be incurred if the hand went wrong. With the score at 28 it would be an undoubted spade declaration.

In the early days of Bridge many players used to declare their best suit, irrespective of trick value, when they could see a practical certainty of the odd trick or more; thus they would declare clubs or even spades as dealer, when they were very strong in that suit, so as to be sure of

## ATTACKING SUIT DECLARATIONS

scoring something. This has been entirely altered by experience, and it is not now considered right to make any declaration as an aggressive measure on which there is no possibility of winning the game.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS BY THE DEALER

IT should be understood that these present articles deal only with the declaration at the score of love all; that is to say, the deal in question is the first one of the rubber. The question of declarations to the score is dealt with later, at page 110.

Let us take this opportunity of saying that the dealer, when he elects to pass the declaration, should do so in the simplest possible manner, without hesitation and without undue haste, always using the same formula, and not interlarding it with unnecessary and inconsequential remarks. Any of the expressions "I pass," or "I leave it to you, partner," or "Will you make the trump, please," meet the case admirably, and one of these, or some similar expression, should always be employed, without any embroidery whatever.

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

### RED SUIT DECLARATIONS

We have already alluded to the so-called "defensive heart" declaration, but the very term itself is a misnomer. Where does the defense come in when the dealer makes the game expensive because he has a very moderate hand? Where is the defence in engaging in a fight before half one's forces have been brought into action? A similar case would be two allied armies opposed to a common enemy, and the one general, having arrived first upon the scene of action, taking upon himself the responsibility of engaging the enemy, with a very inadequate force, because he was afraid of the allied general imperilling the position by some grave error of tactics, if he were waited for and allowed to take a part in the proceedings.

The player who makes a "defensive" red suit declaration as dealer is in the position — to use a somewhat vulgar colloquialism — of "standing a licking to nothing." He has very little chance of doing any good unless his partner has a hand on which some useful declaration could have been made, and, if his partner has a bad hand, there is



## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

a certainty of heavy loss, and a great possibility of being doubled and losing the game. Can it be sound play to make the game expensive on such a prospect as this?

When the dealer picks up a hand on which he cannot make a good attacking suit declaration, he should pass the call to his partner, or, if he is of that way of thinking, declares spades, so as to get out as cheaply as possible. He can never be justified in making an expensive declaration; on the ground that his own hand is of no use with any other suit as trumps, unless he can see a fair chance of winning at least the odd trick, assuming average strength, not more, in his partner's hand.

### CLUBS

An original club declaration by the dealer, when he has a very strong suit of clubs, and nothing else in his hand, has something to be said for it. When the dealer holds six clubs, with three or four honours, he has the option of taking a certain score, although a small one, both above and below the line, or of leaving it to his partner and possibly getting a doubled spade, or a rather sketchy red suit

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

declaration. The principle of declaring clubs on such a hand is the old one of the bird in hand being worth two in the bush, but, in this case, the birds in the bush are not confined to two — there may be a whole flock of them. If the No Trump declaration on a passed hand did not exist, we should have no doubt that the dealer ought to declare clubs with great strength in that suit, but there is always a possibility, and not a very slight one, with such a hand, of a No Trump declaration, in which case the strong club suit becomes of great value, and the game will probably be won. This is a chance well worth taking, and on this chance alone we should advise our readers never to declare clubs when dealer as an aggressive measure. If a player chooses to declare clubs as a defensive measure, that is quite a different matter. There is real defence in a strong club hand, with no risk of loss, and it then becomes simply a question of whether the player in question belongs to the school which believes in defensive black suit declarations by the dealer, or to the other, bolder school, which argues that defence is the province of the dummy and not of the dealer.

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

The original club declaration is a very debatable point, because there are a considerable number of good players, of long experience, who habitually declare clubs as dealer, when they are very strong in that suit, but not strong enough to declare No Trumps. They prefer to take a certain score, rather than to go for larger, if somewhat speculative, possibilities. They may possibly be right, although we ourselves do not hold with the theory.

### SPADES

The "defensive" spade declaration by the dealer because he has a very bad hand, is quite an innovation of modern times, and the Bridge-playing world is at present divided into two distinct schools on this point. The "defensive" school argue that when the dealer has a bad hand, he ought to fix the value of the game at its lowest point by declaring spades himself, and ought not to run the risk of his partner making an expensive declaration, when his own hand is able to render little or no assistance. Some of its disciples even go so far as to say that the dealer has no right to pass the declaration, unless he has a probability

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

of at least two or three tricks in his own hand. The other school maintain that attack only is the province of the dealer, and that defence should be left entirely to the dummy. They argue that, by declaring spades, the dealer not only arbitrarily deprives his partner of giving a proper value to his hand, if he should happen to have a good one, but that he also makes an unnecessary confession of weakness, and gives his opponents almost the same opportunities of finessing against him as if they had seen his cards. Certainly, nothing in Bridge can be more annoying than to play with a partner who declares a defensive spade, when you, as dummy, are waiting with an exceptionally good hand, possibly 100 aces, or six or seven hearts with four by honours; but, on the other hand, many a game is lost on a rather light No Trump declaration by the dummy, which could easily have been saved if the dealer had had the courage to take the reins into his own hands.

Both systems have their advantages, and both have their drawbacks, and it cannot be said that either is right or wrong. No end of statistics have

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

been published by the advocates of the defensive call to prove that their method is the right one; but against this there is the acknowledged fact that the best Bridge players of the day do not adopt it—in fact, at the one club, which is recognised as the headquarters of scientific Bridge in London, such a call is almost unknown. The defensive declaration may almost be called the refuge of the second-rate player, or at any rate of the player playing in second-rate company, when he dare not pass the declaration on a bad hand for fear of what his partner will do. A common penalty which a first-rate player has to pay for his greatness is that indifferent partners are very apt to make extremely light declarations when he passes the call, and then to say, “I only did that because you had to play the cards.” This is no doubt very complimentary, but it is also, at times, very expensive. A good player may be able to make every possible use of the cards dealt to him, but he cannot do conjuring tricks with them, nor can he give nines the value of kings or knaves the value of aces; when playing with such a partner as this, any player is fully justified in protecting

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

himself by taking the right of declaration away from his partner.

Every Bridge player of any experience will recognise the sensation of heaving a sort of sigh of relief when his partner declares spades, after he has passed the call on a very bad hand. It would certainly seem a sound argument that a player should not pass the call on such a hand that it will be a positive relief to him to hear his partner declare spades. With an evenly divided hand, which contains no card above a ten, the dealer is quite justified in declaring an original spade, as he cannot possibly win a single trick with his own cards whatever his partner declares, and it is too much to expect his partner's hand to fight the other two absolutely unaided; but when he has any possibility, however small, of helping his partner he should pass the declaration on the chance of finding an exceptionally strong hand in the dummy.

A few months ago a question was asked through the inquiry columns of a weekly contemporary as to what the dealer should do with the following hand:—

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

Hearts — 7, 6.

Diamonds — None.

Clubs — Queen, knave, 7, 5, 2.

Spades — Queen, knave, 9, 6, 4, 3.

The answer given was, "The dealer should declare spades on this hand at any point of the score." As has been already stated, opinions differ widely on this point, but it is difficult to see by what process of reasoning this decision could have been arrived at. When the dealer passes the call there are five declarations open to his partner, and on only one of these five would the above hand be without distinct value. If diamonds are declared, then it is a very bad hand, but with any other declaration it will win two or three tricks at least. Even if hearts are declared, two tricks can be made by ruffing the diamonds, while with No Trumps or a black suit it would be quite a useful hand, therefore it surely follows that the best policy must be to pass the call. The time to make a defensive declaration is when the dealer's side has a strong advantage in the score, such as a game to the good, and possibly 12 or 18 towards the next game. In this case it is of such great importance not to give the opponents a chance of

## DEFENSIVE SUIT DECLARATIONS

materially improving their position, that the dealer ought to make any declaration which will tend to keep them in check.

To sum up the whole question — when the dealer has an utterly impossible hand, so that it will come as a positive relief to him to hear spades declared by his partner, then and then only ought he to declare spades himself; but when, at the score of love, he has any possible element of strength in his hand, however bad the rest of it may be, he had better pass the declaration, provided that he is playing with a partner he can trust. The defensive declaration is a very dangerous weapon to put into the hands of an inexperienced player.



## CHAPTER V

### THE DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

THE declaration by the dummy is a very different matter from the declaration by the dealer. It has already been laid down as a Bridge axiom, that the dealer, in making his declaration, is perfectly entitled to assume that his partner will hold an average hand, but the dummy is not entitled to this assumption, when the call has been passed to him. He knows for certain that his partner is not strong enough to declare either No Trumps or a red suit, and the probability is that his hand is below the average; still it does not necessarily follow that he has nothing of value. The dummy's first consideration should still be whether he is strong enough to declare No Trumps, trusting his partner for assistance in one or two suits, but always bearing in mind that his partner's hand is probably somewhat below the average.

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

An exposed No Trump hand, that is, a hand which has to be laid down on the table, requires to have the value of one trick more in it than a hand which is held up. There are two reasons for this: first, that the opponents will be able to see exactly what the declaration has been made upon and will attack the hand in its most vulnerable point at the first opportunity; and secondly, that the opening lead will be through the hand instead of up to it, which is a very important consideration. For instance, a singly guarded king is a very useful asset in a held up No Trump hand, as, if the attack is commenced in that suit, one trick at least and a useful entry early in the game is a certainty, but, when the singly guarded king is led through, it becomes of very little use indeed unless the ace happens to lie behind it.

It has long been a favourite maxim of one of our best Bridge players that a No Trump call on a passed hand rarely does any good without two aces. This is by no means a rule; it is only an opinion, and it would be easy to give numerous imaginary instances of good sound No Trump calls on a passed hand with only one ace, but if any

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

one will take the trouble to watch it in actual play, he will be surprised to find how true it is and how well the maxim works out.

Any player who elects to follow the Robertsonian rule in declaring No Trumps, will do well to fix the figure value at 24 on a passed hand, instead of 21 as on an original call, which gives the hand the extra value of one queen. Again, a passed No Trump which is weak in the red suits is a dangerous call. The dummy's partner has practically told him, by passing the declaration, that he is not strong in the red suits, but he has told him nothing about the black ones, therefore the dummy should not hesitate to trust him for support in one or both of the black suits, but should be very shy of a doubtful No Trumper when his own weakness lies in the red ones.

The following is a type of No Trump hand, with which it makes all the difference whether it is held up by the dealer or exposed on the table by the dummy: —

Hearts — King, 8.

Clubs — Ace, queen, 9, 8, 5.

Diamonds — Knave, 6, 4.

Spades — King, knave, 3.

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

Although this is not a particularly strong hand, it is an undoubted No Trump when held by the dealer, but it would be a decidedly risky hand to declare No Trumps on when the declaration had been passed. The figure value of it, under the Robertsonian rule, amounts to 22, therefore it should be declared by the dealer but not by the dummy, especially as the weak spots in it are both in the red suits.

The *jeu de règle*, or three-ace No Trump, with little or nothing else, applies also to the declaration on a passed hand. It is universally declared among good players, but it partakes of the nature of a risky call, and sometimes leads to serious disaster; still it should be done, the three certain cards of entry being a great element of strength if the partner's hand is found to contain a long suit of five or six cards. The dummy has a somewhat freer hand in declaring No Trumps, if his partner is known to be a player who makes a defensive spade declaration as dealer when he has a worthless hand. Indeed, this is the strongest argument in favour of the defensive call, which was explained in the last chapter. When dummy has a difficult

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

declaration to make, it is of the greatest use to him to know that his partner's hand can be depended upon to make at least two tricks, but opinions differ so widely concerning the defensive declaration, that it is not safe to assume this knowledge unless one's partner's methods of play are thoroughly understood.

The first consideration of the dummy, when the declaration is passed to him, should always be whether he has a hand for attack or defence. "Badsworth" sums up this situation very concisely. He says: "If he determines to attack, dare he declare No Trumps? If he feels obliged to defend, must it be a spade?" It has been already stated that dummy should always declare No Trumps at the score of love when his hand offers a fair chance of success; failing No Trumps, the useful scoring suits of hearts, diamonds, and clubs present themselves, and they are all open to him. Hearts should always be declared by dummy on the same, or even on somewhat less, strength than is required to justify an original heart declaration by the dealer. Diamonds should be declared on considerably less strength; such hands as ace,

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

king, ten, and two other diamonds with little else, or five diamonds headed by king, queen, with one king or two queens in other suits, are undoubted diamond calls for the dummy; although not so for the dealer. The club suit also, which the dealer should never think of as an attacking measure, is often a very useful weapon in the hands of the dummy.

When the dealer has the option of making a declaration, he has to consider what more valuable declarations his partner may make if he passes the call, but this consideration does not enter into the calculations of the dummy at all. He has no option in the matter, he has to make a declaration of some kind, and his business should be either to give his cards their fullest value, if he has an attacking hand, or to escape as cheaply as possible, if he has a moderate or bad hand.

A very good general rule for the guidance of dummy is that he should make an expensive declaration when his hand offers a fair chance of the odd trick or more, with the assistance of a moderate, not an average, hand from his partner; also the honour score should enter more into his calcu-

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

lations than into those of the dealer. The dealer's game should be an attacking one, and he should only consider honours as trick-making factors, but the dummy is in a different position altogether — his province is defence, and when he sees but little chance of substantially advancing his score below the line he should consider whether he cannot benefit it above, and so minimise any possible loss. For instance, the hand quoted above — ace, king, 10, and two other diamonds, with little or nothing else — is undeniably a poor hand to attack with, and yet it has a distinct value. In the first place, it is not likely to be doubled; secondly, there is a certainty of 12 and a good chance of 24 for honours, and also the strength in trumps will prevent the hand from being cut up, and will give an increased value to any useful cards that the partner may hold.

The typical bad hand on which to make an expensive declaration is something of this kind: —

Hearts — Queen, 9, 8, 6, 3.	Clubs — 10, 8, 4.
Diamonds — Knave, 5.	Spades — King, knave, 3.

Yet this is just the sort of hand on which one constantly sees hearts declared by people who are

## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

pleased to call themselves "forward players." They are "forward" to their own and their partner's destruction. There is absolutely no strength in this hand. It is worth at the very outside four tricks, and, if the cards happen to lie badly, only two or possibly even only one trick. It has four by honours against it, and it is extremely likely to be doubled, in which case the game is probably lost on the declarer's own deal. It is a spade call, and nothing but a spade call, at the score of love.

The club suit is extremely useful to the dummy. It constantly offers him a haven of refuge when he is obliged to make a declaration on a doubtful hand, and it is a sort of compromise between attack and defence. When he holds such a hand that he can see a fair probability of six tricks, or even five, with clubs as trumps, counting on moderate assistance only from his partner, he should accept a little probable loss and declare clubs as the best chance of saving the situation, but let him not be deluded into declaring clubs, without the necessary qualification, because he is weaker still in spades. It is quite true that an impotent spade will probably be doubled, and will become as expensive as



## DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND

clubs, but it must not be forgotten that clubs may also be doubled, and become as expensive as hearts, in which case the loss may be very serious.

The expression that one so often hears, "I could not declare spades, partner, because I was so weak in them," is an absolute confession of want of knowledge of the game. The spade call is the refuge of the dummy, and it is futile and almost childish to risk a more expensive declaration when the gain can be so small and the loss may be so great.

It cannot be too often repeated that absolute defence is the business of the dummy when he has a bad hand. The value of the spades in the hand has nothing whatever to do with the call of spades — it merely means that the dummy has a moderate or bad hand, and that he elects to take the least possible loss, according to the lights vouchsafed to him.

This chapter refers entirely to the declaration at the score of love. In the next chapter we will consider advanced points in the score, and the varying effects that the score should have on the declaration.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

THE variations in the state of the score affect the game of Bridge more than any other card game. The correct play of the cards often alters materially when only one or two tricks are required to win the game, and still more often should the declaration be influenced by the fact that the declaring side is within a few points of the desired total. It must obviously be foolish to run any undue risk on the chance of making a big score when there appears a practical certainty of winning the game on a cheap declaration. Winning or losing the rubber makes a difference of 200 points, and winning one game is about two-fifths of the way towards winning the rubber, and therefore represents, roughly speaking, about 80 points. Surely this is too great a difference to risk for the sake of possibly scoring a few more points either above or below the line.

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

A notable instance of this once occurred to the present writer. The declaration was passed to him at the score of a game and 28 in his favour, against one game. The hand was —

Hearts — King, queen.

Diamonds — Ace, king, 7.

Clubs — Queen.

Spades — Ace, king, queen, knave, 7, 5, 2.

He declared spades, and, of course, the game and rubber were won. It so happened that there was rather a large gallery of critical onlookers, and when the hand was put down it was greeted with a chorus of uncomplimentary remarks — “Well, of all the cowards ——” “What do you expect?” “A No Trump at any point of the score,” etc., etc. When the cards were played it turned out that the leader had six clubs headed by king, knave, while his partner had the ace and two other clubs and the ace of hearts, so that the odd trick must have been lost at No Trumps. It is worth noticing that, when the declarer has an evenly divided hand, that is, a hand containing three cards of every suit, the other hands will in all probability be constituted in very much the

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

same manner, but when the declarer has one very long suit in his own hand he must be fully prepared to find an uneven distribution of the cards and possibly an equally long suit in the leader's hand.

Any original declaration which presents a chance of winning the game from the score of love must, *a fortiori*, present an increased chance of doing so at a more advanced point of the score, and any suit declaration which is a sound one for the dealer to make at the score of love will also be sound at any other point of the score. When the dealer's score is at 12 or 18, the objection to an original diamond declaration disappears altogether. Only two or three by cards are now required to win the game, and that should be well within the compass of a good diamond hand; also the consideration of whether his partner may be able to make a more expensive declaration does not now concern him at all. Whenever the dealer can see a fair chance of winning the game on any declaration, even if it is only in spades, he should make that declaration without hesitation, quite regardless of the fact that his partner may have a much

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

more valuable suit on which the game would also be won. Winning the game should always be the first consideration.

The No Trump declaration by the dealer is not affected by any point in the score under 20, except in the case of what is known as the One Suit No Trump. Six or seven clubs, headed by the ace, king, queen, and another ace, is a recognised No Trump call early in the game; but if the dealer's score is at anything over 12 he should declare clubs, and trust to his partner for the extra one or two tricks required to win the game. When the dealer has a fairly good hand, protected in every suit, but with no great strength in any particular one, he would not hesitate to declare No Trumps at the score of love; but at the score of 22 or 24 he should pass the declaration for his partner to declare his best suit, rather than risk disaster if his partner's hand should be very bad.

There are two kinds of declaration to the score by the dealer. The safe call, when the declaring side is well ahead and tries to make certain of winning the game without taking any undue risks, and the call of desperation, when the opponents

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

are almost certain to win the rubber on their next deal, and it becomes necessary to take even the most forlorn hope of snatching the game out of the fire. In the latter case, the dealer should declare No Trumps on the flimsiest of pretexts, say two aces, or one ace and two kings, or moderate protection in three suits. Failing a possibility of No Trumps, the dealer should always pass the declaration with his opponents at 24 or more and a game up, unless of course he has such a heart or diamond hand that there is a possibility of winning the game.

With the score at a game and 24 to love against the dealer, he should not think of making an ordinary red suit declaration, but, if he is not in a position to make a dash for the game himself, he should leave it to his partner, so as to take every chance of saving the situation, if it is in any way possible. When the opponents are 24 up, without a game to their credit, the situation is quite different. This is an occasion for extra caution on the dealer's part, so as to give the other side as little chance as possible of winning the game on that hand.

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

The state of the score affects the declaration by the dummy much more than it affects that of the dealer. When the score of the declaring side is well advanced, say to 24 against the opponents' love, the dealer will make any declaration which is likely to score the necessary 6 points, but if he does not see a good chance of doing this he at once shifts the responsibility on to his partner's shoulders by passing the call. The unhappy dummy is then obliged to declare something, and his position is often very difficult.

If he has either a good hand or a very bad one there is little or no difficulty, but there comes the sort of intermediate hand, with a chance of winning the game on a bold declaration, and an equal or greater chance of turning a strong position into a very weak one, if his effort misses fire.

It is very difficult to know what to do at the score of a game and 24, against a game and love, with such a hand as —

Hearts — Knave, 8, 6.

Clubs — 9, 5.

Diamonds — King, 9, 7, 4, 3.

Spades — King, 10, 6.

At the score of love the dummy should declare spades on this hand, but with his score at 24 he has

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

to make up his mind whether to have a dash for the required six points by declaring diamonds, or whether to fall back on the safety spade. On the one hand there is a distinct chance of winning the game and rubber, and on the other hand there is the fact staring him in the face that his opponents will double diamonds very readily at this point of score, and the game may be lost instead of being won. With the opponents at love, the spade declaration is better on this hand, as the opponents are not likely to double or to win three by cards, and they will want a big hand to win the game on their next deal; but if they are at 16 or 18, a dash for the game ought to be made while it is yet possible.

Not long ago the declaration was left to dummy with the following hand, score a game and 24, against a game and 12: —

Hearts — 3.

Clubs — Queen, 10, 6, 2.

Diamonds — King, queen, 9, 5.

Spades — Ace, 10, 7, 4.

He declared diamonds, was doubled, and lost the game and rubber. The only declaration which would have won the trick was clubs, and clubs



## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

was probably the right declaration. The opponents will not double clubs without overwhelming strength at the score of 24, and also the king, and queen of diamonds are very useful cards, with clubs as trumps. The declarer was no doubt influenced by the fact that one trick won the game in diamonds, whereas it required two tricks in clubs, but his declaration cost him the rubber.

Yet another difficult hand has been much discussed lately. The score was a game all, and 16 all. Dummy held —

Hearts — Ace, king, 7.

Clubs — 10, 8, 6.

Diamonds — Ace, queen, 9, 3.

Spades — 9, 7, 3.

He declared No Trumps and won the game, which, however, proves nothing. The declaration was very much criticised by the bystanders, and the declarer offered to bet that it was the right call at the score. He was promptly accommodated, and it was agreed to ask the committee of the Portland Club to decide the question. The Portland committee, however, do not adjudicate on questions of play, only on the interpretations of the rules, and it was therefore left to five well-known players.

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

Four of them said that the declaration was right at the score, and the one dissentient said spades.

It is an undoubted spade call at love all, but, with the opponents 16 up in the last game, some extra risk must be taken. Also, the spades are very weak, and unless the partner has some strength in that suit, the opponents are almost certain to win two or three tricks which will put them in a fine position. If the declarer's partner has strength in spades it must be a fair No Trump.

One suggestion made was diamonds, but that does not bear looking into. With diamonds as trumps the hand is worth little over four tricks, say four and a half, and nine tricks are wanted to win the game; therefore the declarer is asking his partner to do as much as he does himself, and guessing at his suit. When the declaration is left to the dummy at the score of games all and 24 all, he must declare his best suit even if it is no better than king and three others. There is now no question of defence, and he must declare the suit in which he can give his partner most assistance, quite regardless of the fact that a few extra

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

points will probably be lost by so doing. It is the case of a drowning man snatching at a straw.

When the opponents are a game and 24 up, it is a time to take even the most forlorn hope, and the wildest No Trumps become reasonable in a despairing effort to retrieve the position, but when the opponents are 24 in the first game, or still more strongly when the declaring side is a game to the good, the position is entirely reversed, and it becomes a position for defence.

The most common of all the mistakes at Bridge is to confuse these two positions. Almost every day one sees a wild No Trump declaration made because the opponents are at 24 or more in the first game, and then, when the inevitable disaster has occurred, the declarer says, "I am sorry, partner, but it was a declaration to the score." It is not a declaration to the score, it is exactly the opposite; but this is a fact that some players seem absolutely incapable of comprehending.

It cannot be too much insisted upon that, when the opponents are 24 or more up, without a game to their credit, is the time for a backward policy, not a forward one. This is the time when a de-

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

fensive declaration by the dealer, if he has a bad hand himself, is not only justifiable, but almost compulsory. Look what a difference it entails. If the opponents can win the game on his deal, they are in a fine position. They have the first deal in the next game, with one game to their credit, and it is well within the bounds of possibility that they may win the next game and the rubber straight away. But if they can be kept back, the position is entirely different. They may now have to utilise a No Trump hand to win the requisite 6, or 4, or 2 points, and when they have won it, the other side will have the first deal, with all its attendant possibilities, in the next game. Moreover, they are not certain to win the game on their own deal. Many and many a game is saved when the dealer is 24 or more up. It is undoubtedly a very desirable position to have the deal with 24 points already to your credit, but it is by no means a certainty. On the contrary, it is a position of some danger. Your opponents are in a fine position to double any expensive declaration, and you may depend upon it that they will not hesitate to do so upon the slightest pretext, and you may find

## THE DECLARATION TO THE SCORE

your fine position suddenly changing into one of great danger. It is a great mistake to abandon hope because your opponents are within a few points of game. It is just those last few points which are often so difficult to get. Above all things, never make a desperate declaration because your opponents are 24 up, unless they have already won a game. Do just the opposite; make an original spade on your own hand as dealer, or declare anything which is likely to prevent their winning the game on your deal. When they are a game and 24 up the position is indeed desperate, and desperate measures must be resorted to, but even this should be tempered with reason. If there is any possible chance of saving the situation, that chance should be taken, however forlorn a hope it may be, but it is folly to incur extra loss by an absolutely wild declaration, without some reasonable chance of success. On the sad occasions when you can see that you have got to die, die as cheaply as possible, and with a good grace.

## CHAPTER VII

### DOUBLING

NOTHING in the game of Bridge appeals so strongly to the fancy of the inexperienced player as the privilege afforded to him of doubling the declaration, and he is always looking out for opportunities of exercising this privilege. The more experienced player, on the other hand, is very chary of exercising it, and it requires something extra good to induce him to double an original declaration made by a trustworthy opponent. If he has a good hand, on which he can see a certainty of saving the game, and a possibility of increasing his own score, he accepts that blessing with gratitude, and does not risk converting a secure position into an insecure one by a rash double. It must not be understood from this that a player should never double on anything short of a certainty — there are occasions when it would amount to a very backward policy not to do so,

## DOUBLING

but he should always remember that doubling is attended by two grave dangers. In the first place, the matter does not end with the doubler, his opponents have the option of re-doubling, and he may find himself in the unpleasant position of losing a game which he had an absolute certainty of saving if he had restrained his ardour. Secondly, doubling a suit declaration gives enormous assistance to the player of the two hands. It tells him exactly where the strength in trumps lies, which is the very thing that he wants to know, and which it should be the policy of his opponents to conceal from him by every means in their power.

In the early days of Bridge doubling was far more common than it is at the present day, partly because the principles of declaring were not thoroughly understood, and some players' declarations used to be very wild and unsound, and partly because in those days certain players imagined that there was a sort of poker element in the game and that it was possible to bluff with success. Experience very soon proved that any attempt at bluffing had a way of recoiling sharply on the head of the would-be bluffer, and the recognised declara-

## DOUBLING

tions are now so well known that the opportunities of doubling are by no means common.

As there are two distinct games at Bridge, the No Trump game and the suit game, so there are two distinct forms of the double, doubling No Trumps and doubling a suit declaration. The double of No Trumps again must be divided under two heads, doubling with the lead and doubling as third player.

Doubling with the lead is comparatively simple. If the leader has seven certain or extremely probable tricks he should always double. Seven of a suit headed by ace, king, queen, or six headed by ace, king, queen, and another ace, are doubling hands. Some players do not double with the latter combination, as they say that the odd trick is a certainty if their long suit is good, and that, if it is not good, they may lose the game by doubling. There is reason in this argument, but experience teaches us that instances of a game, which could have been saved, being lost by this double are very rare, whereas there is a strong probability of the doubler advancing his score to the very useful point of 24, besides the considerable chance of



## DOUBLING

winning the game. Players who do not take such a chance as this when it offers itself are unlikely to win much at the game. It is not sound to double No Trumps with six certain tricks, and then to say that you only trusted your partner for one trick. What do you imagine that the dealer declared No Trumps on? The probability is that, when your six tricks are accounted for, the dealer will put down his cards and say, "The rest are mine," thereby scoring 24 instead of 12, and that point of 24 is such a very important one, either to get to yourself or to keep your opponents from reaching. It need hardly be said that, if the dealer's score is at 18 or more, the leader should not hesitate to double on six tricks, as it is practically immaterial whether the other side score 12 or 24, when 12 will win the game.

When the leader doubles No Trumps on one long suit, and is re-doubled by the declarer, he ought not to re-double again on anything short of an absolute certainty. He should remember that any distribution of the cards, however improbable, is always possible. Even if he hold eight of one suit, headed by ace, king, queen, it is quite pos-

## DOUBLING

sible that four of the remaining five cards may be in one hand, and when the declarer, being a sound player, re-doubles, the inferences point strongly to their being so placed.

Certain players may recollect an instance of this which occurred in actual play a few years ago. No Trumps was declared by the dealer, the eldest hand doubled, holding ace, king, queen, and four other clubs, and the ace and queen of diamonds. The dealer re-doubled and the process was continued up to the maximum of 100 points.

The dealer's hand was —

Hearts — Ace.

Diamonds — King, 6.

Clubs — Knave, 7, 5, 2.

Spades — Ace, king, queen, knave, 4, 2.

The leader led out his three winning clubs and then another one, hoping to come in with his ace of diamonds, but he never got another trick and lost four by cards amounting to 400 points. The dummy had two winning hearts and the ten and a small spade. The first double was not only perfectly sound but a very strong one; when it was re-doubled, however, the original doubler ought to

## DOUBLING

have realised that the dealer must be guarded in every suit.

As to doubling a call of No Trumps without the lead, that is, as third player, there exists a wide difference of opinion. English Bridge players are, at the present time, divided into two distinct parties, the one adopting the American, or Heart Convention, and the other adhering to the original English method, now known as the Short-suit Convention.

From the earliest days of Bridge it has been the custom in England for the third player to double a declaration of No Trumps, whether made by the dealer or the dummy, when he holds one long-established suit of seven or at least six cards. If he does not double on such a hand, there is no chance of his suit being led, and he will probably be obliged to discard from it, and may possibly never make a single trick in it; therefore he doubles on the chance of his partner being able to guess which suit he has doubled on, and to lead it at once. In answer to such a double the leader should sacrifice his own hand altogether and play entirely for his partner's. If he has an ace he

## DOUBLING

should lead it out and have a look at the exposed hand, when he will generally be able to locate the required suit, especially if the call has been made by the dummy. Not having an ace, he should lead the highest card of his weakest suit; his weakest suit meaning, not necessarily the numerically weakest, but a suit in which he holds no high card; also, *cæteris paribus*, giving preference to a red suit over a black one. The reason of this is easy to see; his partner has obviously doubled on entire command of one suit, therefore it cannot be a suit of which he, the leader, holds a high card, such as ace, king, or queen, and it is more likely to be a red suit than a black one, as the declarer would have preferred a suit declaration to a risky No Trump if he had been very strong in either red suit. This is called the Short-suit Convention. The Heart Convention is that the third hand only doubles when he wants a heart led to him, and it is obligatory on the leader, under this convention, to lead his hearts, from the highest downwards, however many he may hold. It is now the universal custom to ask one's partner, before commencing a rubber, which party he

## DOUBLING

belongs to, and this precaution should never be neglected.

Both systems have their merits. The heart convention ensures the success of the double, but it narrows the field very much, and a player is only able to double once, under this convention, for four times that he can do so under the short-suit convention, leaving out the very rare occasions when he will have a long-established suit, and a certain entry card in hearts as well. On the other hand the short-suit doubler is by no means certain to get his desired suit led to him. The leader may be in doubt between two or more suits and lead the wrong one, or it occasionally happens that he is entirely void of his partner's suit and cannot lead it, in which case severe disaster will probably occur. To players of the mathematical order, who object to taking chances, and wish to make the game as nearly a scientific certainty as possible, the heart convention commends itself strongly, and such players invariably adopt it; but to the real lovers of the game the speculative element in it is one of its greatest charms, and these are adherents of the old short-suit convention.

## DOUBLING

One curious point about the two systems is that, whereas many English players now adopt the American system, a considerable number of the Americans, who have been over here and played with us, say that they prefer our system, and some of them, on their return to the other side, have introduced the short-suit convention at their clubs. The heart convention has a minor disadvantage, which none of the learned writers on the subject have touched upon. It may be taken for granted that the opponents know that the doubler is a heart conventionist, and the dealer is sometimes in a grand position to re-double when he knows for certain that the first card led will be a heart.

Suppose he has declared No Trumps on seven winning spades and the ace of hearts, the third hand doubles on a long suit of hearts and one or both of the other aces, the dealer can re-double with the greatest certainty when he knows that a heart will be led, but he would not dare to do so against the short-suit convention.

It is sometimes very difficult for the leader to know what to lead with the short-suit system, and he simply has to guess, but generally speaking he

## DOUBLING

will have a king or a queen in one or more suits, which will limit his area of guesswork very much.

The following curious case recently occurred. The dealer declared No Trumps, and the third hand doubled. The leader's hand was —

Hearts — 6.

Clubs — 9, 8, 7.

Diamonds — Queen, 6, 4, 2.

Spades — Knave, 8, 6, 5, 2.

He naturally was going to lead the 6 of hearts, but the dummy re-doubled, which put quite a different aspect on affairs. The leader argued to himself, "My partner's suit must be either hearts or clubs, presumably hearts, but dummy would never have re-doubled without some strength in hearts," so, in fear and trembling, he led the 9 of clubs, and he was right. His partner had seven clubs with the quart major, and they won the game.

There is a curious analogy between the heart convention and the defensive spade declaration by the dealer (see page 95). The player who is in favour of the one is almost certain to be an advocate of the other. They are both prompted by the same idea — a desire to make the game as nearly a mathematical certainty as is possible, and to leave little or nothing to chance, taking no

## DOUBLING

risks which can be avoided. It has been frequently demonstrated by theoretical writers on the subject that these backward tactics show a profit — on paper — in the long run; that is, over a large number of hands, but each rubber must be judged on its own merits, and a rubber of Bridge is not a question of a large number of hands. It is a very short affair, so that if a player does not take every chance that presents itself of materially increasing his score, the rubber will probably be over before another such chance presents itself.

The advocates of the safe game do not seem to recognise this view of the situation, and they occasionally find themselves in the position of a man who has been waiting behind, and reserving his energies, in a short distant race. He may be full of running, and capable of doing great things, but the race is over, he has lost his chance, and the man who has made every post a winning post has beaten him, as he always will do.

After the publication of the above article we received a most interesting letter from Mr. R. H. Cunnington, analysing the respective chances rep-



## DOUBLING

resented by the double of a No Trump call under the heart convention and under the short-suit convention.

This letter is so much to the point, that we cannot do better than quote it verbatim.

“MAY 29th, 1905.

“To the Editor of the *Saturday Review*.

“SIR, — In the article on doubling No Trumps as third player in Bridge, it is unfortunate that the author has given no definite help to those uncertain whether to adopt the heart convention or the short-suit convention, nor is any reasonable analysis given in the text-books.

“Playing in the short-suit convention the third hand should not double unless he has ace, king, queen, and four others at least of a suit. This gives him a practical certainty of winning the odd trick if the suit is led, and makes it probable that the suit will be led. His partner is guided in his choice of suits by knowing that no suit in which he has an ace, king, or queen is right.

“The relative advantages of the heart convention and short-suit convention can be best discussed as a matter of mathematical probabilities. A player using the former can only double if he has the ace

## DOUBLING

of hearts, either included or in addition to his long suit. A long suit of seven, with ace, king, queen, under these conditions is only obtained once in 600 times, but when it does occur he will almost certainly obtain the odd trick (*i. e.*, eleven times in twelve). The dealer, however, is not so likely to declare No Trumps with an ace in addition to a whole suit against him, and practically the chance is still more remote. The doubler's long suit will be hearts only once in 900 times. Once in 800 times he will be justified in doubling with ace, king, queen, and three of a suit, with the ace of hearts; but in one in five of these times the suit will be blocked by an adversary. Summarising: on 2,400 occasions he can double four times with an eleven to one chance of winning, and three times with a four to one chance, or seven times in all.

“On the other hand if the short-suit convention is played, the opportunity of doubling — *i. e.*, having ace, king, queen, and four others of a suit — occurs once in a little over 200 times, or nearly twice as often as under the hearts convention. It is not quite so safe, but the risk of a wrong lead is small, because in twelve cases where No Trumps are thus doubled, ten cases will find the leader with one, two, or three of the suit, and eight cases will find him with only

## DOUBLING

one or two. Then, bearing in mind that the leader must not choose a suit in which he has an ace, king, or queen, it is clear that almost certainly in eight cases, and probably in ten, the right suit will be led. If led it is eleven to one that the doubler will win the odd trick.

“Summarising, on 2,400 occasions he has an opportunity of doubling twelve times, and although in only eight of these times can he be almost certain of winning, he has a very fair probability in two more. In the other two cases he probably loses, as his partner has either none or more than three of his suit.

“I think most players will agree that the adoption of the short-suit convention is worth the risk; but, to double, the third hand must have ace, king, and queen, with four of a suit. I remain,

“Yours faithfully,

“R. N. CUNNINGTON.”

We do not quite agree with the writer's theory that the third hand should not double unless he has ace, king, queen, and four others of a suit. With the adversaries' score at love, we should always double as third player with ace, king, queen, and three others. The odd trick is by no means ensured, if the required suit is led and is

## DOUBLING

good; but the saving of the game is then ensured, and it is very likely that another trick may be squeezed out of it. The great object of doubling with such a hand is to save the game, and the consideration that the adversaries may get to 24 should weigh very lightly against the chance of preventing them from winning those coveted three tricks.

In the article to which Mr. Cunnington refers, special prominence was purposely not given to one system over the other. Both systems are extensively practised among London players at the present time, and it was thought better to set forth the advantages and disadvantages of both impartially, although our own sympathies are strongly in favour of the short-suit convention. Mr. Cunnington's valuable analyses, which we have never seen published before, tend to prove that this convention is the better, and his figures altogether do away with the theory, which is often advanced by the opponents of the short-suit convention, that, when a player doubles, it is 2 to 1 against the desired suit being led. According to Mr. Cunnington's figures it works out at something like 4 to 1 on it, instead of odds against it.

## DOUBLING

We have now to consider the question of doubling a suit declaration. To double an original suit declaration made by a reliable player requires very great strength, and it is a comparatively rare occurrence among experienced players. There are many occasions when it could be done with success, but the opponents of the dealer are quite in the dark as to what amount of strength he has, and it must be remembered that any combination of the cards, however improbable, is always possible. A very extraordinary instance of this once occurred in actual play.

The dealer declared hearts, and the player on his left doubled, holding —

Hearts — Ace, king, queen, knave, 10.

Diamonds — Ace, king, 7.

Clubs — 10, 9.

Spades — Ace, king, knave.

The dealer re-doubled and it was continued up to the maximum of 100 points.

The dealer's hand was —

Hearts — 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Diamonds — None.

Clubs — Ace, king, queen, 7, 2.

Spades — None.

## DOUBLING

The result was that the dealer won two by cards, the doubler making nothing but his five best trumps. This was a justifiable double if ever there was one, and it looked as nearly a certainty as it is possible to get; but it only shows what extraordinary combinations do occur at times and how careful one ought to be. Doubling a suit declaration gives very useful information to the dealer, inasmuch as it tells him where the strength in trumps lies, and enables him to regulate his game accordingly. It may be taken as a sound general rule that the act of doubling will give an advantage to the dealer of one trick at least in the play of the cards; therefore if a player doubles and wins the odd trick, he has gained nothing by his double, as he would have won two by cards without the double. It is a most unsound proceeding to double one suit because you are strong in the others. If you have four trumps with two honours, and a very good playing hand, it may be right to double because you have good protection in the trump suit, but to double with only three trumps, however good the rest of the hand may be, is fraught with great danger.

## DOUBLING

A declaration made by dummy may be doubled much more readily. The dummy is obliged to make a declaration when the call is left to him, and sometimes it has to be a very forced one; also it is known that the dealer has not a very good hand, and again, it is sometimes very important for the third player to have a trump led, which he can only ensure by doubling the declaration. Spades are doubled far more often than any other suit, because the spade call does not necessarily mean strength in the spade suit, but is a declaration of weakness and may mean absolute impotence. A spade call should be doubled with great strength in other suits and only two or three spades. Occasionally one gets caught at it and is re-doubled on a long spade suit, but at the score of love all it is so very important to get to the point of 6 on one's opponent's deal, that it is worth while to take a little risk in one's endeavour to do so.

Thus, doubling an original red-suit declaration cannot be recommended on anything very short of a certainty. The last word does not rest with the doubler; he may be re-doubled by the dealer or by the dealer's partner, and very often the

## DOUBLING

dealer's partner has a considerable voice in the matter. The partner of the dealer, provided that he knows him to be a sound declarer, should always be on the look-out for an opportunity to re-double, when an original red-suit declaration is doubled. The value of the trumps in his hand should be a very small consideration. If he can see three tricks in his own hand, say an ace of one suit and ace, king of another, he should re-double without hesitation. The trump suit is plainly divided between the dealer and the doubler, and three tricks from the dealer's partner ought easily to turn the scale. This is an opportunity which is frequently missed, but an observant player will always be prepared to seize it when it presents itself.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP DECLARATION

QUITE the most important point in the whole gamut of Bridge, and at the same time one of the most difficult, is the original or blind lead before the dummy's hand is exposed on the table. So much frequently depends upon this opening lead, and the leader has so little to guide him. Like most other points of Bridge, this question divides itself into two branches, the lead against a No Trump declaration, and the lead against a suit declaration. These two branches are quite distinct from each other, and the correct lead in either case is governed by entirely different principles. Let us first consider the lead against a No Trump call.

It is a hard and fast rule that, when No Trumps are declared, the leader must open his numerically strongest suit, and this is a rule from which there

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

should be no departure, unless under very exceptional circumstances. There must now be no leading out a winning card to have a look round. Every possible card of entry is of such great value that it is a fatal mistake to sacrifice one for the sake of that "look round," which may or may not be of any use. When the dealer declares a genuine No Trump, the opponents are strictly on the defensive, and the best that they can hope for is to establish one long suit, and to win tricks with the small cards of that suit, by the aid of any other cards of re-entry which they may hold, and all their united energies should be devoted to this purpose. In no province of the game of Bridge does the combination of the two defending hands come in so strongly as when playing against a No Trump declaration, therefore the leader ought to be careful to give his partner all the information that is possible by his first lead. Not only is it important that the original lead should always be from the leader's numerically strongest suit, but also it is very important that every player should thoroughly understand the accepted leads from the different combinations of cards. These leads are

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

clearly defined, and there is remarkably little divergence in the tables quoted in the various textbooks by different authors.

The following will be found substantially correct.

Against a No Trump declaration, from a suit headed by —

Ace, king, queen .....	lead Queen, followed by king.
Ace, king, with five others .....	" King.
Ace, king, with less than five others ..	" Fourth-best.
Ace, king, knave, with a card of entry ..	" King.
Ace, king, knave, without a card of entry	" Fourth-best.
Ace, queen, knave .....	" Queen.
Ace, queen .....	" Fourth-best.
Ace, knave, ten .....	" Knave.
Ace, and any other combination .....	" Fourth-best.
King, queen, knave, and one other ....	" King, followed by queen.
King, queen, knave, and two or more others .....	" Knave, followed by queen.
King, queen, with five others .....	" King.
King, queen, with less than five others	" Fourth-best.
King, knave, ten .....	" Knave.
Queen, knave, ten .....	" Queen.
Queen, knave .....	" Fourth-best.
Knave, ten, nine, or lower sequence ..	" Highest of se- quence.
Any other combination .....	" Fourth-best.

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

These are the ordinary accepted leads of everyday Bridge, and it behoves every would-be Bridge player to learn them thoroughly by heart, so that he will be in no doubt about the right card to lead when he is eldest hand, and also, conversely, so that he will be able to judge correctly, from the card led by his partner, what is the strength or weakness of his partner's hand. For instance, when a knave is led, the leader's partner should know that it is either from ace, knave, ten, or king, knave, ten, or from a sequence headed by the knave, and, in the majority of cases, an observation of his own and the dummy's cards will enable him accurately to place the missing cards. In the case of the lead from king, knave, ten, some players adopt the old whist lead of the ten instead of the knave, and it is probably the better lead, inasmuch as it distinguishes between ace, knave, ten, and king, knave, ten, but the knave is the generally accepted lead from either combination, so it is better to abide by it, but all the same a player should be prepared to read the lead of a ten as being probably from king, knave, ten, and others.

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

A lead which is absolutely peculiar to Bridge, and a very necessary one to understand, is from ace, queen, knave, and others, with no card of re-entry. The whist lead from this combination, and also the correct lead at Bridge against a suit declaration, is the ace, followed by the queen, but in the No Trump game the queen is the correct and only lead. When the leader holds ace, queen, knave, and two or more others, it is highly improbable that his partner will have more than two of the suit, so that, if he leads out the ace and queen, the suit is established after the second round, but it is rendered absolutely useless by the fact that his partner cannot put him in again. The lead of the queen, on the other hand, offers great possibilities. If the dealer holds the king he wins the first trick with it and the suit is cleared. If the king and two others are in dummy, he will allow the queen to win, and the knave is then led, putting the dealer badly on the horns of a dilemma. He is in great doubt whether to treat the lead as being from queen, knave, ten, in which case the ace in the third hand must block the suit, or whether to play the king second

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

in hand on the chance of the lead being from ace, queen, knave, and he is very liable to read it wrong. If the third hand holds the king, singly guarded, he should always play it on the queen led, and, if it wins, return the suit at once. If he holds king and two others, he should pass the first trick and play his king on the second round, whatever card is led, so as to get out of his partner's way.

Whenever the leader has to lead a small card against a No Trump declaration, he should be particularly careful to lead his fourth-best. Never let him think that it does not matter which of his small cards he leads, when they are apparently equally valueless — it matters a great deal to an intelligent partner. The object of the fourth-best lead is to enable his partner to apply the Eleven Rule. What Bridge player is there who has not heard of the Eleven Rule? and how few thoroughly understand it! The Eleven Rule is one of the few valuable legacies bequeathed by scientific whist to skilful Bridge. Note the distinction between the two adjectives. Whereas whist was a game of elaborated science and combination,

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

Bridge is a game of individual skill, common sense, and observation. In the early days of whist the original lead was always the lowest card of the leader's longest suit, irrespective of numbers, then came the lead of the penultimate to show five, then "Cavendish" introduced the ante-penultimate lead to show six, and from that, some ingenious mortal, whose name is not given to posterity, evolved the idea of the fourth-best lead and the "Eleven Rule."

The Eleven Rule is that, when a player leads his fourth-best card of a suit, if the value of the card led is deducted from eleven, the remainder gives the number of cards, higher than the one led, which are not in the leader's hand. At first sight it is difficult to see why the figure should be eleven, but the explanation is quite simple. The ace being the highest card instead of the lowest, the value of the cards in each suit does not run from one to thirteen, but from two, the lowest card, to fourteen, that being the real value given to the ace, by placing it higher than the king, counting the knave as eleven, the queen as twelve, and the king as thirteen. It is obvious,

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

therefore, that the number of cards in the suit, higher than the one led, will be the difference between the value of that card and fourteen. Three of these high cards being known to be in the leader's hand, the number that is against him is at once reduced to eleven — hence the Eleven Rule. Useful as the Eleven Rule was at whist, it is far more useful at Bridge, because the third player has the extra advantage of seeing the dummy's cards in addition to his own.

Suppose that a 7 is led, the third hand holds queen, 8, 4, and the dummy puts down knave, 6, 5. By an easy application of the Eleven Rule, the third hand can see at once that the dealer has one card, and one only, of that suit higher than the 7, and, if the dealer has made the declaration of No Trumps, there is a strong supposition that his one high card is either the ace or king, therefore the third hand should pass the 7 led, and if his supposition is correct, the suit is established. If the third player did not understand the Eleven Rule, he would naturally play his highest, the queen, third hand, the dealer would win it with his ace or king, and would be free to go on with



## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

his own game, leaving the knave guarded in dummy to stop his opponent's suit on the third round.

This is where the great advantage of the fourth-best lead and the Eleven Rule comes in. It does occasionally happen that the application of the Eleven Rule discloses to the third player the fact that the dealer has no card in his hand capable of beating the one led, but these occasions are very rare, and when such a situation does arise, the player of the two hands, if he has any knowledge of the game, is certain to cover the original lead with a higher card from dummy's hand, so as to prevent the third player from passing it up. The real advantage of the Eleven Rule shows itself with such a hand as the one quoted above, when the third player is able to locate the exact number of high cards held by the dealer, and thereby to form a pretty correct estimate of what strength his partner has led from. It must be remembered that the dealer is perfectly well aware of the state of affairs. He knows that the third player can count the high cards in his hand of the suit originally led. When he has no card in his own hand

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

capable of beating the one led, he knows that that fact is patent also to the third player.

This is the one drawback to the Eleven Rule — that it can be applied by the dealer just as well as by the third player.

Not long ago, the present writer was looking over the hand of a man who is a very fine natural card player, but who disdains, and expresses the greatest contempt for, the conventions of Bridge. The player in question dealt and declared No Trumps on a good all-round hand, the 8 of hearts was led, his dummy put down the king, 10, 3, and he held the ace and 5 only. To any disciple of the Eleven Rule it was obvious that dummy's 10 was good enough to win the first trick, but our friend played the 3 and it took the ace to beat the 8. The game proceeded and he won two by cards, and then turned round and said, "It could never have been won." The answer was, "It could have been won if you had put on the 10 of hearts second in hand." To which he replied, "Yes, very likely, but I could not possibly tell, and I hoped that the third hand would play either queen or knave and leave me with the ten, ace in dummy." It is only waste

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

of breath to try to explain things to people who refuse to understand, so the only answer he got was, "Of course you could not tell," and everybody was satisfied; but no Eleven Rule player could have failed to win three by cards and the game. Any amount of instances of the value of the Eleven Rule could be adduced, they are always occurring, but the two instances given above will illustrate the point sufficiently for present purposes. The Eleven Rule is rarely of any use when the card led is below a 5, but anything above that is extremely valuable. Even the lead of a 3 or a 2 has a negative value. The lead of a 2, or a 3 if the 2 can be accounted for, tells the leader's partner that the suit is one of four cards exactly, and this information is occasionally very useful when it comes to a question of placing the last three or four cards correctly in order to save the game.

Some players adopt the fourth-best lead also when playing against a suit declaration, but this can be of no use, and may do considerable harm. When the strength in trumps is declared against the leader, as it clearly is by an original declara-

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP.

tion of hearts or diamonds, there is no chance of the leader's side bringing in a long suit, and therefore it is no use to adopt a number showing lead. The leader's business in this case is to make what tricks he can, as quickly as he can, and not to attempt the impossible. The lead of the fourth-best is invaluable at No Trumps, but it is wrong when there is a suit declaration. It is very apt to be mistaken by the leader's partner for the highest of a weak suit, and for this reason the eldest hand should lead the lowest of his long suit, if he elects to lead from a long suit, quite regardless of how many he holds. When he plays to the second round a higher card than the one led, his partner will be in no doubt, but will know that he has led the lowest of a suit of four or more, the exact number being practically immaterial.

It was necessary to devote considerable space to an explanation of the Eleven Rule, because a proper understanding of the nature and application of this rule is essential to success in the No Trump game. Having, we trust, thoroughly explained it, we will now revert to our original subject — the opening lead against a No Trump

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

declaration. A table of leads has been already given on page 143. These leads are generally adopted with very little variation, and there is a twofold reason why they should be adhered to. First, because they are the leads which have been proved, by long practice, to be the most profitable method of opening the game, and secondly, because a strict adherence to them will give the greatest amount of information to the leader's partner. Let us run through them in order.

Holding ace, king, queen, and others, the usual lead is the queen, followed by the king, the object being to give the leader's partner the opportunity of unblocking, should he hold four of the suit.

Holding ace, king, and others, the fourth-best should be led, unless the leader holds seven altogether. In that case there is a good chance of dropping the other six in two rounds and winning seven tricks in the suit, therefore the king and ace should be led out; but with less than seven of the suit it is not possible for the leader to exhaust all the rest, and, if he leads out his king and ace, he will probably not make another trick in the suit. When he holds less than seven he should give away

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

the first trick by leading an under card, always his fourth-best, trusting that his partner will be able to get in in some other suit and return the original lead, in which case the ace and king are winners, and probably all the small cards as well.

Holding ace, king, knave, and others, some players lead the king and then open another suit, if the queen is not in dummy, waiting for their partner to get in and return the lead, but every fresh suit opened by the defenders in a No Trump game is such a great disadvantage to them that this policy is not to be recommended. It is far better to give away the first trick and leave the dealer to open another suit for himself. Precisely the same argument applies to the lead from king, queen, 10, and others. If the leader opens with the king and neither the ace nor knave appears, he is no better off than he was before; he then has either to go on with a small one or to change his suit, and he is at a disadvantage in either case. He will do far better in the long run by leading his fourth-best and trusting to his partner for either the ace or knave. This is a lead about which there is much difference of opinion. Some

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

players always lead the king from king, queen, 10, and other players never do it. If the leader has a certain card of re-entry in another suit, the king is probably the better lead, but with no card of re-entry, the best chance of establishing the suit is the fourth-best lead. Holding king, queen, and small ones, the fourth-best should always be led with less than seven. When the leader holds seven his partner is unlikely to hold more than two, and may only hold one or even none, so that there is considerable risk of never making a trick at all in the suit unless the king is led.

Holding ace, queen, knave, and others, the queen should always be led. This is far the most useful of any of the conventional leads, and it is one which very frequently occurs. When the leader has five or six of a suit his partner cannot be reckoned upon to hold more than two, and if the ace is led followed by the queen, the suit is indeed cleared after the second round, but it is rendered quite useless by the fact that the holder of it cannot get in again to lead it. Also, if the dealer has king and two others, which is a very likely combination, he can hold up the

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

king until the third round, when the ace is out; but he dare not do so if the ace is still in, for fear of being led through and never making his king at all. The value of this lead is very great, and cannot be too much insisted upon.

Holding king, knave, 10, and others, the knave is the usual lead, but some players adopt the whist lead of the 10. It matters very little which of the two is led, and the lead of the 10 has the extra advantage of distinguishing between the lead from king, knave, 10, and the lead from ace, knave, 10. Either lead is equally correct, but it is generally better to abide by established custom, and custom ordains the lead of the knave.

Holding queen, knave, 10, and others, the queen is the lead, and as soon as the ace makes its appearance, the leader's partner can place the knave and 10 in the leader's hand. In all other cases the fourth-best should be led, unless the leader has three or more cards in sequence at the head of his suit, in which case he should lead the highest. All the foregoing leads are framed on the supposition that the leader has no certain card of re-entry in his hand. When he is fortunate



## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

enough to hold a long suit, and one or more cards of entry in the other suits, he can afford to play a much more forward game and to lead out winning cards at once. For instance, holding ace, king, 10, 7, 4, 2 of one suit and the ace of another, he could have three rounds of his long suit and clear it at once, keeping his other ace to come in with, but such a hand as this is not common against a genuine No Trump declaration.

“Cavendish” said, in his most excellent book on whist, that the object of leading from the numerically strongest suit is to “obtain for the small cards of it a value which does not intrinsically belong to them.” The same argument applies, much more forcibly, to the original lead against a No Trump declaration at Bridge. When the leader holds the ace, king, and three or four others of a suit, he knows that he is, in all probability, making his opponents a present of the first trick by leading a small card; but he does it, in the hope of “obtaining for his small cards in that suit a value which does not intrinsically belong to them.” Directly either he or his partner can re-

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

gain the lead, every card of his suit will be a winning one, with anything like an ordinary distribution of the cards, whereas, if he leads out the king and ace, he will win two tricks for certain, but there the power of his hand will end, and his numerically strong suit will have no value.

The reason why the opening lead should be so different against a No Trump declaration and against a suit declaration, is that, when there is a declared trump, if the dealer does not win tricks with his ace and king on the first two rounds of the suit, he will have no chance of winning tricks with them at all, as they will inevitably be trumped later on. In the No Trump game this danger does not exist, and it will always be worth the leader's while to give away one certain trick, on the chance of winning two or three tricks later in the hand by so doing. Nothing is more satisfactory, or more profitable, than bringing in a long suit against a No Trump declaration, and seeing the small cards of it become as valuable as aces and kings. This is the result which should be aimed at in the opening lead, rather than annexing one or two tricks in

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

a hurry, which may indeed save some small loss, but which cannot save the game. Occasionally when the declarer has a very strong hand, this policy will lose a trick, and it may possibly entail the loss of the small, or even the grand slam, but that is a slight consideration compared with taking a reasonable chance of saving the game.

Not only is it good policy to give away the first trick with the object of establishing a long suit, but sometimes the second trick in a suit has to be given away with the same object. Say that the leader holds ace, knave, 8, 4, 2 of a suit, and no other possible card of entry. He holds the 4, the dummy put down the king and two others, and plays a small one, the third hand wins the trick with the queen and returns the suit; now how is the leader to play? If he puts on the ace he certainly wins the trick, but his whole hand is then worth one trick and one only, and he is asking his partner to win three more tricks in order to save the game, supposing the opponents to be nothing up. If, on the other hand, he plays the knave, and allows the king in dummy to win the trick, his partner may hold the remaining card of his

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

suit, and one card of entry in another suit, in which case there are five tricks accounted for. It is seeing these chances, and taking these chances, and not being too anxious to win one trick, when winning that one trick ends the possibilities of his hand, that gives the good Bridge player so much advantage over his inferior brother in the No Trump game. The issue of more games hangs on this opening lead against a No Trump call than on any other point in the play of the cards at Bridge, and that is the reason why it has been dwelt on at such length. There is a great element of chance in it, as the position of the remaining cards is entirely unknown, but even chance can be brought within certain limits, and the accumulated experience of our most practised Bridge players having clearly defined the leads which offer the best chances of success, those leads should be rigidly adhered to.

In a previous article it was stated that the rule of leading from the numerically strongest suit was one from which there should be no departure, "unless under very exceptional circumstances." The exceptional circumstances referred to are when

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

the leader has absolutely no suit of any trick-making value. With such a hand as

Hearts — Knave, 9, 2.

Clubs — 10, 7, 5, 4.

Diamonds — 9, 6.

Spades — Knave, 8, 5, 3.

the theoretically correct lead would be the 3 of spades, but four spades to the knave is a perfectly hopeless suit to lead from. The hand itself is perfectly hopeless from a trick-making point of view, therefore the leader should, in such a case, depart from rule, and lead the card which is most likely to help his partner. With the hand given above it would be the knave of hearts. It is a very forlorn hope, and only to be resorted to *in extremis*, but sometimes it will come off and retrieve an otherwise impossible situation. When the leader has an absolutely hopeless hand, containing no suit of more than four cards, and no strength in that, he should lead his best heart, especially if the declaration has been passed and the call made by dummy. The only information that a passed No Trump call gives to the opponent is that neither the dealer nor the dummy has a strong heart hand; they may have protection in the suit, but neither of them can be very strong in

## ORIGINAL LEAD AGAINST A NO TRUMP

it or they would have declared hearts, therefore a heart is the best bow to draw at a venture. This strengthening lead is fraught with great danger, as it requires an intelligent partner to grasp the situation and to understand that it is a strengthening lead, otherwise he may sacrifice a high card in the suit with the idea of unblocking, but desperate situations demand desperate measures.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT DECLARATION

THE principles which govern the opening lead against a No Trump declaration and against a suit declaration are diametrically opposed to one another. We have already explained at some length that against a declaration of No Trumps the leader should not hesitate to give away one trick at first in the hope of establishing and bringing in the remaining cards of his long suit, but it would be a suicidal policy to do this against a strong suit declaration. When the dealer makes an original declaration of hearts or diamonds, the strength in trumps is then and there marked in his hand, and it is obviously useless for the opponents to aim at establishing a long suit which will have no value when it is established. Their first object should now be to win the number of tricks necessary to save the game, before their small

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

trumps are taken away from them, and before the dealer has an opportunity of discarding any of his losing cards.

The best of all the original leads against a strong suit declaration is a singleton, provided that the leader has two or three small trumps. This lead was rightly considered a bad one at whist, and there still remain certain ultra-conservative players who cannot bring themselves to acknowledge the value of it at Bridge, the reason being that they fail to recognise the fact that the conditions at whist and at Bridge are entirely dissimilar. The number of such dissentients, however, is decreasing day by day, and it has begun to dawn on even the slowest minded of them that many a game is saved by this lead, which could never have been saved by any other means. The lead of a singleton was, undeniably, a bad one at whist. At whist both sides start on equal terms, the strength in trumps is not declared in any one hand, and the leader's object is not to annex one or two tricks as quickly as possible, but rather to play for a big game, and to aim at winning the odd trick or more on that hand. At Bridge the con-



## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

ditions are quite different. When a red-suit declaration has been made by either the dealer or the dummy, the opponents' game should be purely defensive. Their first care should be to win the requisite number of tricks to save the game, and the original leader should take the best chance which offers itself of winning those three or four tricks before he thinks of anything further. As soon as the saving of the game is secure, he can then go for better results, but saving the game should always be his first consideration. The more experience that a player gains of the game of Bridge, the more fully he will realise what a strong weapon of defence is placed in his hand by this lead of a singleton against a strong suit declaration. It does not always succeed. Occasionally it may lead to disaster, but experience has abundantly proved that more games are saved by this lead than by any other. Great stress has been laid upon the singleton lead, because there does still exist a prejudice against it in some quarters, and certain writers on the game have rather gone out of their way to condemn it, but the fact remains that there is hardly a first-class Bridge player at the present

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

day who will not eagerly seize the opportunity of leading a singleton when he has the chance.

It must be borne in mind that the first lead is the only blind one. As soon as a card is led the dummy's hand is exposed on the table, and the leader is able to see, to a certain extent, how the hand lies. Holding ace, king, and others of a suit, the king is an excellent card to lead, as it enables the leader to see the exposed hand without parting with the lead and without losing the command of his suit; but, even when he holds an ace, king suit, a singleton in another suit is generally a better opening lead. Suppose that the dealer declares hearts, the leader's hand is —

Hearts — 9, 5, 2.

Clubs — Ace, king, 7, 5, 3.

Diamonds — 8.

Spades — Knave, 8, 4, 2.

If he leads the king of clubs first and then his single diamond, how can his partner be expected to know what he is playing at, or which suit he wants returned? His partner will probably credit him with ace, king, knave of clubs, and will return that suit, unless the queen is in dummy, and the value of the singleton lead will be lost. He had far better lead his singleton at once, and not con-

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

fuse his partner by opening two suits. It is only as an original lead that the singleton is so valuable; when it is led as a second consideration, it is difficult for the leader's partner to understand the situation, whereas a good player is always on the look-out for the opening lead being a singleton.

The first lead being the only blind one, it behoves the leader to regulate his opening lead so as to do as little harm as possible before the dummy hand is exposed. If the first lead cannot be aggressive, it should be purely defensive. The lead of a singleton has already been strongly recommended, as an aggressive measure, in the hope of making a small trump or two by ruffing, before the leader is able to draw all the trumps. Not having a singleton, the king from ace, king, and others is an excellent lead. Next to this, the king from king, queen, or king, queen, knave, and others, is a good lead, or the queen from queen, knave, 10, or the knave from knave, 10, and another, or, in fact, the highest card of any sequence. None of these leads can do any harm, and either of the two latter, from queen, knave, 10, or from knave, 10, and another, may be a fine one for the leader's partner, and

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

may enable him to kill a high card of the suit in the dummy hand. The lead from king, queen, and one other is not such a good one, as it may lose a trick if the ace is in the dealer's hand, still this lead enables the leader to have a look at dummy without losing the command of the suit, and if one trick is sacrificed by it, it is sacrificed in a good cause.

The leads to be specially avoided are from any suit headed by a tenace, such as ace, queen, or king, knave, or queen, 10, or from a suit headed by a high card well guarded, such as king, 10, and others. The leader's objective in opening the game against a strong suit declaration should not be to make a big score, but rather to endeavour to save the game, and he should be very chary of opening a suit in which he is likely to win one or two tricks, if that suit is opened by anybody but himself. It is far better to lead the highest of two or three valueless cards than to open from an ace, queen, or a king, knave suit. There are many men, who were good whist players, in times now fast growing historic, who have the idea that they must open their strongest suit so firmly rooted

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

in their minds, that no amount of experience will ever eradicate it. They cannot, or will not, recognise the different conditions existing in the two games. When the opening lead from weakness proves, as it must occasionally prove, disastrous, they say, "If you had only opened your strong suit, we should have saved the game." They quite ignore, or are obstinately blind to, the fact that, for one game that is saved by the lead from a long, guarded suit, three or four games are lost by it.

When hearts are declared, at the score of love, the defender's first aim and object is to win the necessary four tricks to save the game, and a guarded king, if the ace is not in the dummy hand, represents one trick, or a fourth of that aim and object, provided that the leader does not open the suit. On the same principle, a suit headed by ace, queen, in the leader's hand is probably good for two of the necessary four tricks, unless the king is in dummy, and unless the suit is opened by the leader. It is quite a common occurrence, when the leader has had occasion to open a weak suit — say he has led the 8 from 8, 7, 4 of hearts, against an original declaration of diamonds, and his partner's

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

king has been captured by the ace — to hear the partner say, in tones of deep reproach, “You sacrificed my king by your lead from nothing,” but is this so? The leader’s partner not having either the queen or knave, they must be both against him. The ace is in the dealer’s hand, and the queen and knave must be either in the dealer’s hand or in the dummy’s or one in one and one in the other, and in any of these three cases the king is as dead as the proverbial doornail. Certainly the king was sacrificed, but he was doomed to sacrifice from the start of the hand, and nothing could have prevented it, short of the dummy being unable to get the lead. It is idle to say that the lead from weakness sacrificed the king, when it was foredoomed to destruction in any case.

The lead of the knave, from knave, 10, and another, is one of the best and most useful openings. Not only is it a lead which may be of great assistance to the leader’s partner and strengthen his hand enormously, but also it can do no harm, as it is impossible to place the remaining high cards of the suit so that a trick will be lost by it. Even if the ace and queen are

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

in the dealer's hand, and the king with the leader's partner, nothing is lost by it, as the ace and queen must make, and the leader is left with the command of the suit on the third round, whereas, if the king should happen to be in the dummy, and the ace and queen with the leader's partner, every trick in the suit is secured.

Another useful opening lead, which cannot do harm and may prove very successful, is the lead of the queen from queen and one other. This is entirely opposed to all the cherished principles of whist leads, but it is a very useful opening at Bridge in spite of that. If the ace and king are both against the leader, his singly guarded queen is bound to fall on the second round, but if he should chance to find his partner with either or both of the two higher cards, the lead of the queen cannot fail to be a good one. Such leads as these, which cannot do harm and may do much good by strengthening the partner's hand, are far preferable to a blind lead from a guarded suit, when opening the game against a strong suit declaration.

Some players are very fond of leading out an ace at once, when they hold one, with the object

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

of having a look round. This lead has its advantages, inasmuch as it enables the leader to see the exposed hand before parting with the lead, but it is questionable whether this advantage may not be gained at too great a cost. Holding ace and king only of a suit, the ace, followed by the king, is an excellent opening. To lead the ace before the king is the recognised method of indicating to a partner that the leader holds no more of the suit led, and his partner, if he is possessed of ordinary intelligence, will give him the opportunity of making a small trump by a ruff as soon as he is able to obtain the lead. Holding ace and others of a suit, without a king, the advantage gained by leading out the ace and having a look round may be far too dearly bought. An ace has other uses beyond the winning of one trick, even when winning that one trick is coupled with the advantage of having a look at the dummy.

The primary object of an ace's existence is to kill a high card of the adversary's, and also that ace may become so invaluable as a card of re-entry later on, when the lead is badly wanted for a specific purpose. The lead is of very small advan-



## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

tage at first, before the dummy hand is exposed, and before the game has had time to develop, but later on in the hand it is a very different matter. The original leader has now had the opportunity of gaining a great deal of information from the fall of the cards, and it may be all-important to him to be able to get the lead, and he will very likely have occasion to bitterly regret that ace, lightly parted with at first for no adequate result.

When it is necessary to lead from a suit of ace and three or four others, the ace must be led by all means. There is too much danger of it being trumped and never making a trick at all, unless it is led originally, but why need that ace suit be touched at all? The leader must have some other suit which he could open. He should rather lead the highest of a weak suit, containing nothing of any value, and retain his ace as a certain card of re-entry later on, when he will know something about the position of the cards, and when the lead may be of real use to him. This is all in strict accordance with what has been already said, that the first lead should be purely defensive. Once in a while the small or even the grand slam may be

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

lost by not leading out an ace, but very rarely indeed will a game be lost by it which could have been saved by any other means. When the game is bound to be lost in any case, the consideration of whether one or even two tricks could have been saved is practically immaterial. The small extra loss incurred is nothing compared with the chance of saving the game.

When the dealer has passed the declaration and a suit has been declared by dummy, one of the very best opening leads is a trump through the declaring hand. This is an opening which is not made use of nearly often enough, even by our best players. It has so many advantages. When the leader has a fairly good protected hand and two or three small trumps, it relieves him from the responsibility of leading from any of his guarded suits, and it can do so little harm. It is possible that it may lose one trick. For instance, supposing that the dummy has declared hearts with ace, knave, and three others, the leader's partner has queen and two others, and the dealer king and one other. In this case the lead of a trump will undeniably sacrifice the partner's queen and will lose

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

a trick, but this is only one distribution of the cards out of many, and in the long run this lead will pay well. Suppose the dummy has declared hearts, and the leader's hand is —

Hearts — 10, 7, 5.

Clubs — Ace, queen, 8, 6.

Diamonds — King, 9.

Spades — Queen, 10, 5, 2.

Here there can be no possible doubt as to the right lead. The one lead is the 10 of hearts, partly with a view of helping the partner if he should happen to hold strength in the trump suit, and still more to avoid having to open any of the three guarded plain suits. The leader's partner, if he wins the first trick, will not return the trump suit, but will lead up to weakness in the dummy, and the leader's hand cannot fail to be materially benefited thereby. As we said before, the value of this opening lead is not anything like sufficiently recognised, even by good players.

There was an old adage at whist: "When in doubt lead trumps." There should be a still stronger adage at Bridge: "When in doubt lead a trump through the declaring hand, but not up to it."

An exception to the rule of the opening lead

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

being purely defensive is when the leader holds considerable strength in the trump suit — not sufficient strength to double on, but still strength enough to keep the declaring hand in check, and to prevent the dealer from extracting all the trumps. In this case the position of affairs is entirely altered. The game is in no danger, and the leader's plan of campaign should be an attacking, not a defensive one. He should open his best suit, and try to weaken the declaring hand by forcing him to trump, with the ulterior object of bringing in his own long suit, as at whist, when all the trumps are exhausted. Say that hearts are declared by the dealer, and the leader holds —

Hearts — King, knave, 9, 8.      Clubs — King, knave, 10, 9, 3.  
Diamonds — 6.                      Spades — Ace, 6, 2.

This is not a doubling hand, but it is a good hand, a hand on which there is practically no chance of losing the game, and a very fair chance of winning the odd trick or more with the assistance of one or two useful cards in the partner's hand. The lead of the single diamond would be a very bad one with this hand. The leader is in no hurry to make his trumps by ruffing. At least two, and

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

very likely three, of them are certain to make, with the declared strength behind him, and he would be only weakening his own hand by leading for a ruff. His lead here should be the knave of clubs, because, if his partner has either the ace or queen, the suit is at once established, and the strong hand against him can be forced with manifest advantage. The dealer has probably declared hearts on five, headed by ace, queen, or ace, queen, 10, and directly the dealer's hand is once forced, the strength in trumps is equalised between the dealer and the original leader. With these sorts of hands it is generally a case of the player who gets the first force on his adversary winning the odd trick or more.

When the dealer has passed the declaration, and the dummy has declared either diamonds, clubs, or spades, the heart suit is a very safe one to open, especially if the leader is himself weak in that suit. Somebody must have strength in hearts. Neither the dealer nor the dummy has declared hearts, therefore the strength does not lie with either of them, and it must be with the leader's partner.

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

It is always dangerous to open a weak black suit against a passed call. The dealer has practically declared, by passing the declaration, that he has no great strength in either hearts or diamonds, but he has said nothing about the black suits, and he may be very strong in either of them. When the declaration has been passed, it is always better, *cæteris paribus*, to open a red suit in preference to a black one.

The conditions are again entirely altered when the leader's partner doubles a suit declaration. The leader must now abandon his own game altogether, and play solely for his partner's hand. When the declaration has been made by the dummy, it is right, in nine cases out of ten, for the leader to open with his highest trump, whatever it may be, and whatever the rest of his hand may consist of. Showing his strong suit first, which some players are very fond of, is a mistake. His partner may be trusted to find out his strong suit without that, and it may happen that his partner has only one of that strong suit, and is not able to put him in again. When a player doubles, lying over the declarer, it is tantamount

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

to asking his partner to lead his highest trump on the first opportunity, and this demand should always be complied with. When the leader holds a singleton, and two or three small trumps, it is very tempting to lead the singleton, but it is not the right game. By so doing he is playing for his own hand instead of for his partner's, and when any declaration is doubled it is obligatory on the doubler's partner to give up his own game and to play entirely for his partner.

On the rare occasions when the leader's partner doubles a strong suit declaration made by the dealer the position is again different. Here the leader should not begin with a trump, as the declarer is now lying over the doubler. In this case he should lead a singleton if he has one, or failing that, he should open his strongest suit, and play an attacking game, not a defensive one, the strength in trumps being now declared with him instead of against him.

An extraordinary idea prevails among a large section of Bridge players that when the leader's partner doubles a declaration of spades made by the dummy, it is not right to lead a trump. It is

## OPENING LEAD AGAINST A SUIT

impossible to ascribe any why or wherefore to this idea, but there it is. In these latter days, aided by the light of experience, this idea is being slowly rooted out, but very slowly. Even now one meets many players who cannot be induced to lead a trump at once when their partner doubles spades — they will lead anything rather. “Hellespont” says, “If the leader’s partner does not wish a trump led to him at once, he has no business to double,” and in this case “Hellespont” is very right. The doubler has either doubled on strength in trumps, or on great strength in plain suits, or on a good all-round hand, and in any case it must be to his advantage to have a trump led at once, as no sane man would double simply on the chance of making a small trump or two by ruffing. Whenever a player, on the left of the declarer, doubles a suit declaration, it is obligatory on his partner to lead his highest trump, at the earliest possible opportunity.



## CHAPTER X

### THE PLAY OF THE THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

It has been written, by a recognised authority on the game, that "The play of the third hand presents less difficulties than the original lead, because he has the light of the exposed hand to guide him." This is no doubt true to a certain extent, but the matter is not quite so simple as the writer would have it appear. Let it be granted that the third hand has "the light of the exposed hand to guide him"; but this light may, or may not, be an illuminating one. When the declaration of No Trumps has been made by the dummy, the light is a very shining one, inasmuch as the strength on which the declaration was made is fully exposed, but, when the dealer has made the declaration, the light afforded by a view of the dummy hand may be a veritable will-o'-the-wisp, and not only may tell the leader nothing, but may even lead him into altogether false deductions.

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

The third player may be said to have responsibility thrust upon him. He has no voice in the original opening of the game. That is entirely in the hands of his partner. All that he knows is that his partner has opened his numerically strongest suit, and he has to draw his conclusions, and to determine upon the game to be played, by inferences that he can draw from the value of the card originally led, and from the forces exposed in the dummy hand. For this reason, it is absolutely essential that every player should have a thorough knowledge of the established and accepted leads against a No Trump declaration, a table of which will be found on page 143, and that he should be able to draw reliable deductions therefrom.

The deductions to be drawn from these leads are as follows: — The lead of

<i>Ace</i>	indicates	Ace, queen, knave, and others, with a card of re-entry.
<i>King</i>	“	(1) Ace, king, and five others. (2) Ace, king, knave, and others. (3) King, queen, knave, and one other.
<i>Queen</i>	“	(1) Ace, king, queen, and others. (2) Ace, queen, knave, and others. (3) Queen, knave, 10, and others.

## THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

- Knave indicates (1) Ace, knave, 10, and others.  
(2) King, knave, 10, and others.  
(3) King, queen, knave, and more than one other.  
(4) Highest of a sequence.

- Ten       “   (1) King, knave, 10, and others.  
(2) Sequence headed by the 10.

- Any lower card* indicates (1) Highest of a sequence.  
(2) Three higher cards exactly in the leader's hand.

These are the only accepted leads against a No Trump declaration, and every player who professes to play scientific Bridge ought to have them thoroughly at his finger-ends, so that he will never be in a position to say to his partner, "I did not understand what your lead meant." If he knows these leads by heart, he cannot fail to read his partner's lead correctly, or, at the worst, to be in doubt between one or two possible combinations. Thus, supposing the leader opens with the queen of a suit, there is nothing of any value in dummy, and the third hand holds king and two others. It is absolutely certain that the lead is either from ace, queen, knave, and others, or from queen, knave, 10, and others, and in either case the king should be played on the leader's queen at once —

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

not for purposes of unblocking, but to show the leader where the other high card lies. Or again, to take a more forcible example, suppose the leader opens with a knave, the dummy puts down two or three small ones, and the third hand holds queen and two others. In this case the lead is either from ace, knave, 10, or from king, knave, 10, or from a sequence headed by the knave, and in any case the queen should be played on the partner's knave without a moment's hesitation. It is a singular fact that many players, who would at once get out of their partner's way if they held queen and one other, will not do so when they hold queen and two or more others. They will say, "I saw no good in unblocking until it was necessary." But that is not the point. It is not a question of unblocking, but of making the game easy for their partner. The queen is of no possible value as regards establishing the suit, but what the leader wants to know is where the queen is situated, and that information they studiously withhold from him.

Take a very common instance. The leader holds ace, knave, 10, to five of a suit; he opens with the

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

knave, the second and third hands both play small ones, and the dealer wins with the king, leaving the position of the queen entirely unknown, but with a strong presumption that it is in the dealer's hand. The original leader gets in again, and what is he to do? He probably has no other card of entry, and he is afraid to lead out his ace for fear of leaving the queen in the dealer's hand to command the situation, so he tries to put his partner in with some other suit in the hope of having his original suit led to him through the dealer's hand, and the result is probably disaster. If the third hand had only made the game easy for him by showing him the queen, instead of leaving him to guess, four tricks in the suit would have been absolutely assured, but this is what they will not do — they will not make the game easy. What harm can it possibly do, with any combination of the cards, to throw a queen on the partner's knave led? The leader of the knave is bound to have either ace and 10, or king and 10, or 10 and 9, in addition to his knave, and in none of these three cases can it be anything but an assistance to him to see a high card played by his partner, supposing

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

of course that there is nothing of value in the dummy hand.

There is no more tiresome partner in a No Trump game than one who will persist in holding up a high card in your original suit. He will not block you — he flatters himself that he is too good a player to do that — but neither will he make the game easy for you by getting rid of a high card of your suit, which can be of no possible value to him, but which is bound to cramp your game as long as you do not know where it lies.

There is one golden rule laid down for the guidance of the third player against a No Trump declaration, and that is, always to return his partner's original lead, unless the ultimate establishment and bringing in of that suit is obviously hopeless. It will frequently happen that the third player has a stronger suit than the one originally opened, and that it would have been far better if he had had the opening lead, but he did not have it. His partner had to open the game, he has opened it with his best suit, and the attack must be continued in that suit, unless the cards ex-

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

posed in dummy are such as to render it manifestly fatal to do so. There are certain timorous players who will not return their partner's suit, when they have won the first trick with the king or queen, because they see the ace in the dummy hand. They will say afterwards, when the game has probably been lost through their bad play, "I did not like to return your suit up to the ace," but why not? An ace is by no means a bad card to lead up to—rather the reverse. The ace is bound to make, and, by returning the suit at once, the third player gives his partner a fine chance of utilising any tenace which he may hold, without helping his opponents in any way. The effect of opening some other suit, up to weakness in the dummy, is only to take a card of entry out of the partner's hand, and those precious cards of entry—there are not likely to be many of them—are so invaluable that they should never be lightly sacrificed.

It is a very strong measure for the third hand to abandon his partner's suit, and to open his own. By so doing, he is practically saying to his partner, "Give up your suit altogether, and play for

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

mine, it is by far the stronger of the two." There are occasions when it is right to change the suit, as, for instance, when the third player holds a suit of king, queen, knave to five, which will be established with the loss of only one trick, whereas the leader's suit will take two more rounds to establish; but these occasions are few and far between, and are only the exceptions which prove the rule. The general rule is, that it is a fatal policy for the two defenders to have disjointed interests by each playing for his own suit.

It will occasionally happen that the dummy puts down such a powerful hand as to render it patent to the third player that the game must be lost unless his partner holds one or more named cards. When this is the case, he should play for that card, or those cards, being in his partner's hand, as though he had seen them there, regardless of the fact that an extra trick may be lost by so doing. Saving the game, not saving one or two tricks, is the object to be played for.

The following hand, which occurred in actual play, is a very illustrative instance of this. A B were partners against Y Z. The score was love



### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

all. A dealt and left it to B, who declared No Trumps. Y led the knave of hearts, and B's and Z's hands were as follows:—

Y	
A	B
(dealer)	(dummy)
Z	

Hearts — King, queen.  
 Diamonds — Queen.  
 Clubs — Ace, king, queen, knave,  
           7, 4.  
 Spades — Ace, 9, 8, 5.

Hearts — Ace, 8, 3.  
 Clubs — 9, 7, 6.  
 Diamonds — King, 10, 9, 8.  
 Spades — Knave, 10, 4.

Z won the first trick with the ace of hearts, and he then had to consider how the game was to be saved. It was at once obvious that his partner must hold the ace of diamonds, otherwise the game was lost, six tricks in clubs, one in hearts, one in diamonds, and one in spades — three by cards. If he returned the heart, that suit was at once established, but it was then necessary for his partner to hold the king of spades in addition to the ace of diamonds. After a moment's hesitation, he led the king of diamonds, not a small one, as in that case his partner must have the knave as well as the ace to save the game. It came off to perfection. The dealer held knave

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

and three other diamonds, and the king, queen of spades; and any other lead than the king of diamonds must have lost at least five by cards. As it was, they made the ace of hearts and four diamonds and saved the game. This is not quoted as any great coup, but just as an instance of placing a high card in the partner's hand, and playing as though it were marked there, when it was absolutely necessary for it to be there in order to save the game. An inferior player would not have played it in that way, but would probably have returned the heart, and would then have said to his partner, after the game was lost, "If I had only known that you had the ace of diamonds, I could have saved that game." He could not possibly have known it, but he ought to have recognised that the game was lost unless it was there, and to have played as though he did know it.

At first sight it appears a very deadly game for the third player to return his partner's suit up to a major tenace, or two winning cards, in dummy, but to do so is often the lesser of two evils. Say that the leader has opened with a small heart, the third hand, holding queen and two small ones,

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

wins with the queen, leaving ace and knave in dummy. If he returns the suit, he is leading up to a certain tenace over his partner's king, but the tenace is there whatever he does. If he does not lead the suit, the dealer will do so as soon as he gets in, and the ace and knave will win all the same, so that he is really giving away nothing by returning the suit. It is far better to do this than to open a fresh suit at random, unless it is a very good one.

One of the strongest axioms of bridge is that every fresh suit opened by the opponents of the declarer of No Trumps is an enormous disadvantage to them. Where the attack is first begun, there it should be continued, unless the result of doing so will obviously be fatal.

The application of the "Eleven Rule," which was fully explained at page 147, is the one bright guiding star for the play of the third hand. For the benefit of any of our readers who may not have read, or, if they did read, may not have attached sufficient importance to this particular point, we will here repeat the conditions of the "Eleven Rule." When the original leader has

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

led his fourth-best card, if the value of the pips on the card led is deducted from eleven, the remainder will be the number of cards of that suit, higher than the one led, which are not in the leader's hand. The correct application of this rule is frequently of inestimable value to the player of the third hand. There are occasions when the position of every card in the suit can be accurately gauged, such as when the leader opens with the 7 of a suit, the dummy puts down queen, 8 and another, and the third hand holds ace, 10, and a small one. In this case it is a certainty that the dealer cannot beat the 7, as there are only four cards against the leader, higher than the one led, and they are all visible to the third player. Therefore, if the second hand covers the 7 with the 8, the third player puts on his 10, leads out the ace and a small one, and every trick in the suit is assured. This is an extreme case, which does not often happen. Much more frequently the third hand is able to judge that the dealer has one card and one only higher than the card led, and he then has to determine what that one card is likely to be. This is by far the most

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

common form of the application of the "Eleven Rule." Say that the leader opens with a 6, which shows five higher cards against him in the suit, the dummy puts down knave, 7, 4, and the third hand holds king, 9, 2. The dealer is marked with one card only higher than the 6, and that card may be ace, queen, 10, or 8. If the declaration of No Trumps has been made by the dealer, the probability is that that one card is the ace, or at any rate the queen, in neither of which cases can anything be gained by putting on the king as third hand. There is, of course, the possibility of the dealer having chanced that suit entirely, and of the original leader holding both ace and queen; but bridge is a game of probabilities, not possibilities, and the third hand has to consider the probable placings of the cards, not possible but improbable combinations. In this case he should play his 9 on the 6 led, whether the second hand covers or not, and, if his 9 is allowed to win, lead the king at once, so as to clear his partner's suit and to avoid blocking him. If the dealer holds ace and two small ones, he will probably allow the king also to win. The third one should then be

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

led in the hope that the leader may have a card of re-entry to bring in his thirteenth.

Let us take another case, which is by no means uncommon. Suppose the leader opens with a 5, the dummy puts down knave, 7, 3, and the third hand holds queen, 9, 6. According to the Eleven Rule the dealer can have one card only higher than the 5, and, if the declaration has been made by him, there is a very strong presumption that his one card is either the ace or the king. If the third hand puts on the queen, it is won by the ace or king in the dealer's hand, and the knave in dummy remains good for the third trick. If, on the other hand, the third player presumes that the dealer's one card is either the ace or king, and finesses his 9, every subsequent trick in the suit is assured, should his presumption prove correct. This is a good instance of the sort of chances that must be taken, and of the kind of finesses that should be made by the third player, and this is where the Eleven Rule helps him so much. It may happen that his partner has led from an ace, king suit, in which case several tricks, and probably the game, will be lost by his finesse; but the balance

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

of probability is strongly against it, and it is foolish to play for one possible combination of the cards, when there are many other combinations which are distinctly more probable.

The value of the card led, if it is a moderately high one, affords great information to an observant player of the third hand. Suppose the leader opens with the 7 of a suit, the dummy puts down the 8 and the 3, and the third hand holds king, 9, 4. Here again, the dealer is marked with only one card higher than the 7, but in this case the value of that one card is absolutely certain. The four missing higher cards are ace, queen, knave, and 10, and it is certain that the original leader cannot hold either ace, queen, knave, or ace, knave, 10, or queen, knave, 10, as he would have led one of the honours from either combination; therefore the cards in his hand must be ace, queen, 10, leaving the knave marked with the dealer. This should be as plainly apparent to the third player as though he had seen the knave in the dealer's hand. In this particular case the information is not of much use to him, as he would of course play the king in any case, there being nothing of

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

value in the dummy hand; but it is given as an instance of being able to place the high cards of the suit led, with the assistance of the Eleven Rule.

The dealer is acknowledged to have quite a disproportionate advantage in the play of the two hands when there are No Trumps, but the Eleven Rule is a strong weapon of defence against him in the hands of skilful adversaries, and the correct application of it will to some extent minimise the great advantages which he undoubtedly possesses.

It is a good wholesome general rule that it can never be good play to finesse against one's partner, but this rule admits of considerable exception in the case of the third player in a No Trump game. When an adverse call of No Trumps has been made, it is of such supreme importance to establish the suit originally led, that any finesse should be taken by the third hand, which offers a fair chance of defeating the cards exposed in dummy. If there is nothing of any value in dummy, then any finesse is bad. In this case the third hand should play his highest card of the suit led, or the lowest of two or more such cards in sequence,



### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

and leave all the finessing to his partner, and he should also endeavour to help his partner as much as possible by returning a higher card than the best one in dummy, so as to force the dealer to cover on the second round. It seems hardly necessary to say that when the third player holds four of the suit originally led, and the dummy puts down three, the dealer cannot possibly hold more than two, as the original leader must have at least four. It follows that the dealer's remaining card, whatever it may be, is bound to be played on the second round, therefore it is unnecessary for the third player to lead a strengthening card; he should rather show his partner four of the suit by returning a low one.

The time when a strengthening card becomes so useful is when dummy has two only of the suit. Suppose the leader opens with 3 of diamonds, dummy puts down 10, 5, and the third player holds king, knave, 4, 2. The third player puts on the king which wins the trick, and he should at once return the knave, in direct opposition to the old whist rule of showing four of the suit by returning a low one. The situation is so

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

obvious: the dealer has two diamonds, one of which is very probably the queen, and if the third player returns a small one, his partner has to put on the ace to beat the 10 in dummy, and the queen remains mistress of the situation, whereas by returning the knave both the queen and 10 are killed. All this is only common sense, but common sense is a faculty which many would-be Bridge players seem very devoid of at the Bridge table, however well furnished they may be with it in other walks of life. They get an idea fixed in their heads, such as that it is right to return the highest of three and the lowest of four, and they fail to see that the rule must be varied under differing conditions.

When there is a high card exposed in the dummy, the situation is entirely altered. In this case any reasonable finesse, not only may, but must, be taken by the third hand. Holding ace, 10, and another, the finesse of the 10 should always be made, if either the king or queen is in the dummy hand. It is quite possible that the leader has both of the other honours, but if he has only one of them, and the other is in the dealer's

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

hand, nothing can be lost by finessing the 10, as the dealer is bound to win at least one trick in the suit in any case. When the knave and two others are in dummy, on the other hand, nothing can be gained by finessing.

It is at all times radically wrong to take a finesse by which nothing can be gained, and this particular combination affords a common instance of such a mistake. When the dummy puts down knave and two others, and the third hand holds ace, 10, and another, it is impossible to place the cards so that the finesse of the 10 can gain a trick. The original leader may have both the king and queen, but in this case nothing is gained by the finesse, as all the other cards must fall — if he has only one of them, it is absolutely impossible to avoid losing a trick in the suit, and the only result of the third hand finessing is to mystify his partner by leaving him in doubt as to the position of the ace. The finesse of the 10 is in this case a bad one, because nothing can be gained by it, but the same finesse with either king or queen in dummy is a good one, because nothing can be lost by it, and much may be gained.

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

This is the principle which should govern the play of the third hand — to take any reasonable finesse which may result in profit if the cards lie favourably, but never to hold up a high card of his partner's suit when nothing can be gained by it, and when the only result of his so doing will be the complete mystification of his unfortunate partner. For instance, it is obviously useless to finesse ace, 9, and another, with the king or queen in dummy, as the dealer cannot hold either king, knave, or 10, or queen, knave, 10, and therefore one at least of those three cards is marked in the dealer's hand.

Certainly, a player should finesse more boldly as third hand in a No Trump game than at any other time, but even then his finesses should be tempered by judgment and by careful calculation of what high cards his partner may hold, and he will sometimes realise that he will render his partner more assistance by showing him at once the exact state of affairs than by taking a wild and generally useless finesse.

In this again, as in nearly every point during the temporary partnership at the Bridge tables,

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

the plainer and more straightforward the game is made, the better it will be for the interests of both partners.

Some players, holding ace and two small ones, will not put on the ace as third hand, if they see the king in the dummy, in the hope of catching the king on the second round of the suit. They will very likely succeed in so doing if there is a second round, but in the meantime they have allowed the dealer to win the first trick, and have wilfully deceived their partner by causing him to think that the ace is against him, with the result that he will be very likely to change his game altogether when he gets in again. It is far better to play the ace at once and to return the suit up to the king in dummy, so as to give the leader the chance of utilising his tenace if he has one, and also so as to leave him in no doubt as to the position of the ace. The one solitary instance in which it is right to hold up the ace is when the dummy puts down king, queen, 10, and the third hand holds ace and two small ones. The queen is certain to be put on second in hand, and if the third hand wins it with his ace, he leaves the king and

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

10 both good, and he is in the uncomfortable position of having either to return the suit up to the major tenace, or to open a fresh suit. If, on the other hand, he allows the queen to win the first trick, the dealer at once places the ace in the original leader's hand, and when the suit is led again the king is certain to be played and the suit is established, supposing, as is more than probable, that the original lead was from four or five, headed by the knave. Holding up the ace is the only possible way of preventing the dealer winning two tricks in the suit, and although it is true that the argument against deceiving one's partner applies here, in this particular instance it is the smaller of two evils.

It should be remembered that an application of the Eleven Rule will always tell the third player the exact number in the suit, higher than the one led, which are in the dealer's hand. When the dealer can be marked with two or more such cards, it is very unlikely that anything will be gained by finessing, but it is when he is marked with one higher card, and one only, that the opportunity for a useful finesse so often occurs. The third hand is

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

sometimes in a position to make a very shrewd guess at the value of that one high card, and when he can do this he ought to play as though he knew for a certainty that his guess was right. We will take a very simple instance of this — the dealer declares No Trumps, the 7 of hearts is led, the third hand holds king, 9, 5, and the dummy puts down queen, 4, 2, and also holds the ace and king of clubs. It is now very nearly a certainty that the dealer's one high card in hearts must be the ace, as he would not have declared No Trumps with the entire command of two suits against him, unless it was a one suit declaration, and even in that case the play of the king of hearts would not save the game, as the queen in dummy would win the third trick. If it was an ordinary sound declaration, the ace of hearts is practically marked in the dealer's hand, and the play of the king third hand will not only lose a trick, but also prevent the establishment of the suit.

There are players who finesse the ace, queen, on their partner's lead, and try to defend themselves by saying that it cannot matter as the king is bound to make if it is the dealer's hand. It may

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

matter a great deal, and that for two reasons. In the first place, it is quite possible that the king, in the dealer's hand, may be unguarded, and may fall to the ace, but a far more important consideration than this is that the play of the queen deceives the leader altogether as to the position of the ace, and he naturally marks it in the dealer's hand. There is one position, and one only, when it is right to finesse the ace, queen against one's partner, that is, when the knave and two others are in dummy. A minute's thought will show that in this one case nothing can be gained, and much may be lost by playing the ace and returning the queen, which would be the correct mode of play at any other time. If the leader has led from the king and others, it obviously makes no difference whether the third hand plays the ace or queen first, but if the king is in the dealer's hand, the play of ace followed by queen will leave both the king and knave good, and even if the king is unguarded and falls to the ace, the knave in dummy will still win a trick. It would be still worse to win with the ace and return the small one, as the original leader would then have to put on the king in order to beat



### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

the knave in dummy, and the third hand would be obliged to block the suit with his queen on the next round.

One of the most heinous offences at Bridge is what is known as "finessing against one's partner," by which is meant finessing against a card which is not in dummy and which therefore must be either in the dealer's hand or in one's partner's. It is the old story, that nothing can be gained by it and something may be lost. The instance quoted above is the one single exception to this rule.

The finesse of ace, knave, and another, with the queen exposed in dummy, does not come under this head, because the finesse is against two cards, one of which is known to be in dummy, and the only chance of winning every trick is that the king should be in the leader's hand.

It behoves the third player to be very careful not to block his partner's suit when there are No Trumps. Holding ace and one other, the ace should always be played on the king led, unless three to the knave or four to the 10 are exposed in dummy, in either of which cases the ace is obliged to be held up in order to win every trick in the suit.

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

Holding ace and two others, it is better to put the ace on the king at once, although it is not so imperative as with ace and one only. The lead of the king must be either from king, queen, knave, or from king, queen, 10, and nothing can be gained by holding up the ace when there is nothing of value in dummy. If the original leader holds king, queen, knave, he will continue with the queen, and his partner's ace will have to be put on the second round to avoid blocking the suit; if the lead was from king, queen, 10, there is a danger of the leader changing the suit for fear of finding the ace and knave in the dealer's hand, therefore the ace had better be put on the first trick, so as to leave no doubt.

Holding ace and one other, the ace should always be put on a queen led, unless the king singly guarded is in dummy. If the king and two others are in dummy, the result of passing the queen must inevitably be to block the suit. When the queen wins, the leader will continue with the knave, and even if the king is then put on, the suit is temporarily blocked, but if the king is not put on the second round the third hand has to play his

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

ace, and the suit is effectually blocked for all time. By far the better plan is to win the first trick with the ace, and return the suit at once up to the king, when the suit is bound to be cleared, and if the original leader has any card of re-entry he can bring his suit in.

Holding king and one other, the king should be played on an ace or a queen led. The lead of ace can only be from ace, queen, knave, and others, and the lead of queen is either from ace, queen, knave, or from queen, knave, 10, and in either case the king, singly guarded, can do nothing but harm in the third player's hand, therefore it should be got rid of as soon as possible. Holding king and two others, it is better to play the king at once on a queen led, not that the king will do any harm by blocking the suit if it is retained till the next round, but it can also do no good, so it is advisable to inform one's partner at once where it is situated.

Holding queen with either one or two others, the queen should be played on either king or knave lead, not for purposes of unblocking, as that could equally well be done on the next round, but

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

for the purpose of showing the leader where the queen lies. With neither of these leads will the queen be wanted to win a trick. The lead of king is probably from ace, king, knave, and the lead of knave is either from ace, knave, 10, or from king, knave, 10, or from knave, 10, 9, and in any of these cases the queen is better out of the way. If you have an intelligent partner, he will not be misled into thinking that your queen was single, he will only be grateful to you for showing him exactly how the cards lie.

We append a short table of these combinations:—

Holding { <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ace and one other</li> <li>ace and two others</li> </ul>	} play ace on king led (unless knave to three, or 10 to four are in dummy).
"     ace and one other	} play ace on queen led (unless king singly guarded is in dummy).
"     ace and two others	} play ace on queen led (unless king is in dummy).
"     { <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>king and one other</li> <li>king and two others</li> </ul>	} play king on ace or queen led.
"     { <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>queen and one other</li> <li>queen and two others</li> </ul>	} play queen on ace or knave led.

The third hand should always be on the lookout to unblock in his partner's suit, and the only

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

certain means of doing so is to retain his smallest card. Suppose a small heart is led, the dummy (who has declared the No Trump) puts down king and one other, and the third hand holds queen, knave, 5, the king in dummy's hand is put on, and the third hand must play his knave under it, otherwise he is very likely to block the suit. Any partner of ordinary intelligence will recognise the situation, and will lead another small one when he gets in again. Similarly, with knave, 10, and a small one, the third hand should play his 10 to the first round, whatever is led, and whatever is put on from the dummy.

The same principle applies to discarding. When the third hand, having originally three of his partner's suit, is compelled to discard one of his remaining two cards, he should discard the higher and keep the lower one to return to his partner. Say that he held queen, 10, 3, with nothing of value in dummy, he plays his queen on the first round, which is won by the ace in the dealer's hand; if he has to discard from that suit he should discard the 10 and not the 3, so as to give his partner a chance of utilising a tenace.

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

If his partner has both the king and knave it does not matter, but it is easy to see that if his partner has led from king, 9, and others, and the knave and another are in the dealer's hand, it will matter a great deal, and may make all the difference of saving or losing the game.

There is yet one other point in connection with this subject which is worthy of mention.

When the third player holds four of his partner's suit, and is able, from the original lead, to place his partner with only four, there is no necessity for him to get out of the way by unblocking. It then becomes a question of whether it will be more advantageous for himself or his partner to have the lead after the fourth round of the suit. This will generally depend upon whether the No Trump has been declared by the dealer or by the dummy, as it is obviously better to lead through the declaring hand rather than up to it. When the declaration has been made by the dealer, the third hand should retain a high card and return his lowest, at the same time showing four, if he is in a position to do so, by echoing in the suit. When, on the other hand, the dealer has passed and the

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

dummy has made the declaration, the third hand should part with his higher cards and retain the low one, so as to make sure of his partner winning the fourth round, and being in a position to lead through the strong hand exposed on the table.

Following the same line of argument, when the declaration has been made by the dealer, and the third hand has to lead, and has one card of his partner's suit, of which he knows that his partner has the winning card or even two winning cards, it is not advisable to continue that suit, unless that one or those two tricks will save the game. If the game can be saved for certain, by all means let him make sure of it, but if those one or two tricks will not save the game, he had far better lead a strengthening card through the strong hand, in preference to putting his partner in and forcing him to lead up to the strength at an obvious disadvantage.

In dealing with the question of the third hand finessing in his partner's suit, we omitted to point out that it is useless to finesse the ace, knave only, against the king doubly guarded in dummy. This proceeding can but result in blocking the suit.

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

With ace, knave only, the ace should be played on the first trick and the knave returning at once in the hope of drawing the king and clearing the suit, or the leader may hold the queen and 10, in which case he puts on the queen and clears it at once.

With ace, queen only, and the king doubly guarded in dummy, it is difficult to know what to do. If the third hand has at all a useful suit of his own, he should win with the queen and open his own suit; but if he has a bad hand with no suit that can be established, he had better win with the ace and return the queen, in the hope that the king may be put on the second round and the suit cleared with the loss of one trick. It is patent that he can make both the ace and queen, but having done so he has to open another suit at random, and his partner will require to have two cards of entry in order to bring in his original suit. If the king is not put on the queen, he is certainly left in the same position; but at least he has done no harm, as his ace and queen have both made.

The play of the third hand is a very important



### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

factor in the No Trump game. The original leader has to open the game blindfolded, before seeing the dummy hand, and the duty of determining how the attack is to be continued devolves upon the third player, should he be able to win the first trick. The broad general principles upon which he should act are:—

Firstly and of supreme importance, always to return his partner's original lead, unless he has a much stronger or more easily established suit in his own hand, or, unless the cards exposed in dummy are such as to render the establishment of the original suit impossible or highly improbable. Do not let him be afraid of returning his partner's suit because the ace of it, or the king, doubly guarded, is in dummy. The ace, or the guarded king, is certain to make sooner or later, and the only effect of opening a fresh suit will be to take a very useful card of re-entry out of his partner's hand.

Secondly, to finesse boldly against any strength in dummy, but to finesse nothing against his partner. One writer on the game of Bridge (Hellepont) says that the third player should always

### THIRD HAND IN A NO TRUMP GAME

finesse holding ace, queen, etc., or ace, queen, knave, etc.; but why this finesse more than any other? It is just one of those cases where nothing can be gained and something may be lost. With either of these combinations the third hand should play the ace to the first trick and return the queen, unless, holding ace and queen, he sees the knave, doubly guarded, in the dummy.

Thirdly, to pay particular attention to the value of the card led by his partner, always to apply the Eleven Rule when anything below an honour is led, and to be especially careful not to block his partner's long suit by retaining a high card of it.

Fourthly, when an honour is led, to make the game as easy as possible for his partner by parting at once with any high card, which cannot be wanted to win a trick, but the position of which will be doubtful to his partner if it does not come out on the first round, as, for instance, by playing the queen on a knave led. Any one who will bear in mind these simple principles will have no reason to blame himself if things go wrong.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PLAY OF THE THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT DECLARATION

THE difference between the Suit game and the No Trump game is perhaps more strongly marked in the tactics of the third player than in any other instance. In the first place, the obligation to return his partner's original opening lead no longer exists. He must not now take it for granted that his partner has opened his numerically strongest suit; rather the reverse. The opening lead is probably from one of four combinations.

1. A high card from a suit headed by two or more honours.
2. The lowest of a suit of four or more.
3. The highest of a weak suit, possibly a singleton, or possibly a suit of two or even three.
4. A trump, when the declaration has been

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

made by the dummy, and the leader has a protected hand which he wants led up to.

The first consideration of the third player must be to form an opinion as to which of these combinations his partner has led from, and this should not be a difficult task when he has the cards in his own hand and in dummy to guide him. Having formed his opinion he should regulate his game accordingly. There is no need for him to unblock, with the strength in trumps declared against him, the sole exception being when he holds ace and knave only, and his partner leads the king. In this case it is right to put on the ace and return the knave, so that if his partner has the 10 in addition to the queen (which is marked in his hand), he can win the second trick with his queen and continue the suit, giving the third hand a discard which may be very useful.

The favourite opening lead with all Bridge players, against a suit declaration, is the lead of king from ace, king, or from ace, king, queen, and others. When a king is led the third player has no alternative but to follow suit with his lowest card, unless he has only two of the suit,

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

neither of them being an honour. In this case he should show his partner that he has only two, by playing the higher on the first round and the lower on the second. This is known as the "call for a ruff," and it is the most useful of all the signals at Bridge. It is quite as useful in its negative side as in its positive. When you are playing with a trustworthy partner, and he does not call in a suit of which you lead the king and ace, you can place him to a certainty with at least one more card of that suit. This signal should never be used when one of the two cards is an honour. If your partner leads a king and you play the knave on it, he naturally credits you with either the queen or no more, and, not wishing to part with the entire command of the suit, he will lead a small one, with the result that a very valuable trick is given away if you have another one. Also, the situation will be equally disclosed by the fall of your knave on the second round, if you play your small one on the first round. Some players use this signal equally when they hold queen and two others, with a view to showing that they can win the third round of the suit, but

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

this is not to be recommended, as it is quite possible that the leader may have had six of the suit originally, in which case, seeing only two in the dummy, he will continue with a third round, when one hand will discard and the other ruff, which is the worst evil that can happen to the defenders early in the game. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the third hand should not show two of a suit when he does not want to be forced, either because he is strong in trumps, or because he has only two and those winning ones, such as ace and queen with the king exposed in dummy.

When queen is led originally, and the king is not in dummy, the third hand should always win it with the ace. He can gain nothing by holding up his ace, therefore he should make it at once, and then consider what to do next.

When a knave is led, the ace should always be put on it, unless either the king or queen is in dummy. With either the king or queen in dummy, the knave should be passed, otherwise both the king and queen are left good, and two tricks in the suit are lost. It is, of course, possible that the knave may be a singleton, but this is a pos-

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

sibility not worth going for, unless there is such great strength in dummy that every trick is of paramount importance.

The lead of ace and another signifies one of two things, either a suit of four or five headed by the ace, or ace and one other only, and it should not be difficult for the third hand to determine which it is, when he has his own cards and the dummy's to guide him. If he has king and three others and the dummy puts down queen or knave and two others, his partner has led for a ruff and he can force him with safety, but if he holds king and two others only and the dummy has only three, the situation is very doubtful and he must be guided by the fall of the intermediate cards, always bearing in mind the fact that the dealer will play a false card if he can; still the queen against him will remain good, if his partner's lead was from a five-card suit, and the best chance is to have a third round and trust to the lead having been from a short suit.

This exhausts what may be called the strong opening leads, and we will proceed to deal with some of the other combinations mentioned above.

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

In judging of the import of the original lead the personal element counts for a good deal. Some players always open from their best suit, and others prefer opening a weak suit to leading from a guarded one. When the third player knows his partner's game, it is generally easy to determine what the lead means, but when playing with a stranger it is sometimes not so easy. With nothing else to guide him, the third player should construe the lead of a small card as being from a long suit, and he should play his highest, just as he would in whist, and use his own judgment as to returning the suit. The dummy hand being exposed, there is no finessing to be done, excepting when he holds ace, knave, and the king or queen is in dummy. In this position he must credit his partner with the other honour, and finesse the knave, unless he has so many of the suit that it is likely to be trumped on the next round, or unless he suspects his partner of having led a singleton.

When the opening lead is obviously the highest of a weak suit, there is no obligation on the third hand to play his highest card; he must be guided by what he sees in dummy. If he can win the



## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

trick, either with the ace, or with the king when the ace is in dummy, he should always do so; but he should be very chary of parting with a high card, which is certain to be overtaken by the dealer. Suppose an 8 is led, the third hand holds king, 10, 7, 4, and the dummy puts down queen, 9, 5. The situation here is quite clear; the leader has opened the highest of a weak suit, and the leader holds the ace and knave. It would be very bad play for the third hand to put on his king; he should pass the first trick, or put on the 10 if the 8 is covered by dummy, so as not to clear the suit for the dealer, and also so as not to give the dummy a certain card of entry with the queen.

When the declaration has been made by dummy, and the leader opens with a trump, it does not at all follow that he wants the trump suit returned; very far from it. The lead of a trump probably means that he has a well-defended hand in the plain suits, and wishes to be led up to, rather than to have to open one of those suits blindfold. When the third hand gets in he should not think of returning a trump, but should lead his own best suit or a strengthening card up to weakness in dummy,

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

and if he gets in again he should rather open another suit than continue with the same, so as to give his partner every chance of making use of any tenaces which he may hold.

The typical sort of hand that a trump is led from is such a hand as —

Hearts — Ace, queen, 4.

Diamonds — 7, 2.

Clubs — Queen, 10, 7.

Spades — King, knave, 8, 3.

with diamonds declared by the dummy. With this hand there can be no possible doubt as to the 7 of diamonds (trumps) being the right lead, and there can also be no doubt that the more often the original leader's hand is led up to in different suits the better, the last thing that he wishes is to have to open any of the plain suits himself. This may seem to be rather an exceptionally strong hand, but it is given as an instance of the importance of being led up to, the strength of the hand being enormously reduced directly the lead has to come from it instead of up to it.

We wish to make it quite clear that an original lead of a trump through the declaring hand does

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

not indicate strength in trumps, but, on the contrary, it indicates some strength in the other suits, and a desire to be led up to in one or more of them, and it should be the business of the third hand to try to find out which suit his partner wants led.

It is not an uncommon occurrence to hear a good player remark to a less-experienced partner at the end of a hand, "The last thing that I wanted was the return of my lead." He has probably led something to try to put his partner in with the object of being led up to in another suit, and this object is entirely defeated by the prompt return of his own lead. Captain Beasley, in his recent book "London Bridge," says, "Before returning a lead which is going to put your partner in, consider carefully what he is going to lead next, and whether it would not be more advantageous to lead out that suit yourself."

The general principle for the third hand is to lead up to weakness in dummy, and, whenever it is possible, to lead a card higher than the best in dummy. Thus, if he is leading from a suit of king, 10, 7, 4 up to 9, 5, 3 in dummy, he should

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

lead the 10, so as to compel the dealer to cover with an honour. This lead is quite understood among good Bridge players, and there should be no danger of his partner assuming that the 10 is his best because he leads it up to the 9 exposed in dummy.

When there is no pronounced weak suit in dummy, an ace is by no means a bad card for the third hand to lead up to, unless he has the king himself.

The ace has to make a trick at some time, and by leading up to it the third hand will give his partner a chance of forcing it out as cheaply as possible. Holding knave, 10, and another, the knave is a fine card to lead up to an ace. If the king and queen are both in the dealer's hand there is no harm done, and if either or both of them are with the original leader it is clear that the lead of the knave must be a very assisting one.

When a suit declaration has been made by the dealer, and the third player is fortunate enough to win the first trick, it is often good policy for him to lead a trump through the declaring hand up to weakness on the table. When the dummy

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

puts down a short suit and two or three small trumps it is almost imperative to do so, with the view of preventing the dummy making his small trumps by ruffing.

Remember that, just as it is always good play to force the strong hand, so it is very bad play to allow the weak hand to get in a ruff, if it can possibly be avoided. If the dealer has had the lead, in either of his two hands, and has not led trumps, it is nearly always right for his opponents to lead them, as the dealer must clearly have some object in not taking the trumps out. Either he is trying to establish another suit before leading trumps, or he is playing for a ruff in the weak hand, and it should be his opponents' object to endeavour to thwart his amiable purpose.

A somewhat similar position is when the dealer declares a strong trump, and the dummy puts down a long, unestablished suit, with one other certain card of entry. The object of the defenders should be to get that card of entry out of the dummy hand before the trumps can be drawn. Suppose that the dealer declares hearts, the dummy puts down —

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

Hearts — 7, 5.

Diamonds — Knave, 6, 4.

Clubs — Ace, 9, 3.

Spades — Queen, knave, 10, 7, 4.

The 10 of diamonds is led, and the third player's hand is —

Hearts — 9, 3.

Diamonds — Ace, queen, 7, 5.

Clubs — Knave, 10, 6.

Spades — Ace, 8, 5, 3.

It requires very little reasoning power to infer that the dealer has a strong heart hand, with the king of diamonds (marked in his hand), and very likely the king of spades as well. The immediate object of the third hand, before thinking of anything else, should be to try to get rid of that ace of clubs before the spades can be established. He should at once lead the knave of clubs, so that, unless the king of clubs is also in the dealer's hands, the dummy hand is rendered absolutely powerless. If the dealer has everything, the situation is hopeless; but so long as that entry card remains in dummy there is always the danger of the long spade suit being brought in after the dealer has exhausted the trumps; therefore the entry card should be got rid of at any cost.

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

When his partner has doubled an original suit declaration made by the dealer, the third player should always lead his highest trump directly he gets it. If it should happen that he has an ace, king suit, and a second trump, he may lead the king first, so as to show his partner how to put him in again, and then his best trump; but it is highly improbable that he will have such strength as this when his partner has doubled.

When his partner doubles a declaration made by the dummy, he must be guided as to his lead by the strength exposed on the table. When it is a spade call which has been doubled, it is nearly always right to lead his best trump, unless, of course, he is leading up to a tenace in dummy.

When the third player holds king and one other only of a plain suit, that is, of a suit other than trumps, the king followed by the small one is a fine lead, if neither the ace nor the queen is in dummy. It can do no possible harm, as the king is hopelessly dead if both the ace and queen are in the dealer's hand; and if his partner has the ace, or still better the ace and knave, it becomes

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT.

a very good lead, and will often enable the third player to make a small trump.

It should not be difficult for the third player, after the first card is led and the dummy exposed, to form a pretty accurate estimate of the chances of the hand, having the light of twenty-seven cards to guide him. There are certain obvious inferences that he can draw. If the dealer has not declared No Trumps, and there is only one ace apparent in his own hand and the dummy's, his partner has certainly got one ace, and very probably two, and that represents one or two certain tricks. Somebody must have strength in hearts, and if the dealer has declared diamonds or has passed the call, and neither the third player nor the dummy has much in the heart suit, his partner is marked with at least two honours in hearts. If the dealer discloses considerable strength in two suits, it can safely be assumed that he has little or nothing in either of the other two, otherwise he would have declared No Trumps.

The first consideration of the third player should be to determine whether his partner has led from strength or weakness. If the opening lead is ob-



## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

viciously from weakness, it must by no means be taken for granted that the original leader has nothing of value. On the contrary, he very probably has one or more guarded suits which he did not wish to open, but preferred to have led up to him. A slavish adherence to the rule of returning one's partner's lead is a fatal mistake against a suit declaration. The third player has an absolutely free hand to return his partner's lead, or not to do so, as he thinks fit.

One of the most common mistakes at Bridge, and a mistake which sometimes proves very expensive, is for the third player to be in too great a hurry to lead out an ace, because there is only one card of the suit in dummy.

If there is any chance of dummy's singleton being discarded on another suit, the ace should be led at once, or it may never make a trick at all, but when dummy has three or four cards of each of the other plain suits, there can be no possible chance of his being able to discard his singleton, and it will not melt away into thin air.

By leading out his ace, the third player not only

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

parts voluntarily with a certain card of re-entry, but he also runs a considerable risk of clearing the suit for his adversary, the dealer. A hand which afforded a striking illustration of this danger occurred quite recently at a London Bridge club.

The four hands were as follows:—

Hearts — Queen, 8.  
 Diamonds — Ace, queen.  
 Clubs — Queen, knave, 10, 5, 2.  
 Spades — King, 7, 4, 3.

Hearts — Knave, 6, 2.  
 Diamonds — 8, 5.  
 Clubs — King, 6, 4.  
 Spades — Queen,  
 knave, 10, 8, 2.

	Y	
A		B
	(dummy)	
	Z	

Hearts — Ace, king,  
 10, 9, 3.  
 Diamonds — Knave,  
 9, 7, 4.  
 Clubs — 9, 7, 3.  
 Spades — 6.

Hearts — 7, 5, 4.  
 Diamonds — King, 10, 6, 3, 2.  
 Clubs — Ace, 8.  
 Spades — Ace, 9, 5.

The score was one game all, and A B 12, Y Z 24. A dealt and left it to B, who declared hearts. Y led the queen of clubs, which Z won with the ace. Instead of returning the 8 of clubs, Z first led out

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

the ace of spades, saying, as he did so, "We will secure that trick while there is yet time." He did secure it, but by so doing he gave away two tricks and lost the game and rubber.

He then led the 8 of clubs, which he should have done at first, and the dealer won the trick with the king. The dealer could now see that there was a possibility of winning the game, if the queen of trumps was singly guarded, so he went boldly for it and it came off. He first led the queen of spades, which Y was obliged to cover with his king, then led out the ace and king of trumps from dummy, and, the queen falling, he was able to put his own hand in again with the knave of trumps, and to make three tricks in spades, thus winning three by cards, the game, and rubber.

If the ace of spades had not been led out, the utmost that the dealer could hope for, even at doubly dummy, would have been to win the odd trick, and even that was by no means a certainty. In this case there was not the remotest possibility of B being able to discard his single spade, as Y had shown the club suit, and Z him-

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

self had the diamonds, therefore there was no danger, and Z could stop the spade suit at any time.

The man who made this *faux pas* was no beginner at the game, but a player of many years' experience, who fancies himself and his own methods considerably, and is rather fond of laying down the law to others. When the hand was over and the game lost, he remarked that it was a most unlucky lead, but there was no element of luck about it at all. It was sheer bad play, and nothing else.

When the third player returns his partner's lead he should observe the old whist rule of returning the higher of two remaining, or the lowest of three, unless he has the best card of the suit, in which case he should always lead that. In the No Trump game it is sometimes advisable to give away one trick in a suit in the hope of being able to make two or three tricks later on, but this must never be done against a strong suit declaration, as there is too great a danger of one's winning cards being trumped on the second or third round, and of never making them at all. Every certain trick

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

is now of vital importance, and should be made sure of without loss of time. Nothing is more annoying than to go to bed, as it is called, with one or two winning cards, simply because one would not make them when one had the chance.

One of the most important, and at the same time one of the most difficult, points in the play at Bridge is to be able to extract the greatest value out of a hand against a strong suit declaration. There are many players who can be trusted to extract the full value out of the two hands when they have the deal, but the players who can defend a hand really well, especially against a suit declaration, are few and far between. This is where the best American players are so much in front of our best English players. They can defend a hand very much better. Against a No Trump call the play is easier, as the opening leads are clearly defined and well known, and the attack is usually continued on the opening lines, but against a suit declaration a great deal depends upon the intelligence of the third player. The leading principles for him to go upon are: to give his partner every opportunity of making a ruff, to force the strong

## PLAY OF THIRD HAND AGAINST A SUIT

hand as often as possible, to lead through strength and up to weakness, and, above all, always to make sure of saving the game as early in the hand as he can, before he allows himself to think about subsequent possibilities.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND

“SECOND hand plays low” is almost as good a maxim at Bridge as it was at whist, but the fact that the dummy hand is exposed at Bridge gives the second player rather more opportunity of exercising his intelligence than he had at whist, when the other three hands were all unknown quantities. The second hand is the hand which is led through, whether the lead comes from the dealer or from the dummy. In speaking of the second hand it must be understood that we are referring only to the play of the defenders, not to the play of the dealer when his opponents have the lead.

Always to cover an honour led, if he has less than four of the suit, is an excellent general principle for the second player, but he must be guided a little by the cards exposed in dummy. When the dealer leads the queen of a suit, up to ace and

## DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND

others in dummy, and the second hand has king with one or two others, he should always cover the queen. He can gain nothing by passing, as the ace will not be put on the queen, and his only chance of winning a trick in the suit lies in his partner holding the knave or 10. Some players cannot bear to sacrifice a high card in such a position, and many a trick is given away by the second hand refusing to cover an honour. In a No Trump game, if the second hand holds king and three others, he should not cover a queen led, when ace and two others are in dummy, as it is obvious that his king must become good on the fourth round, but against a suit declaration there is no fourth round, and the second player should always play his king on a queen led, however many he has. If he has four or five of the suit, and the dummy has three, either the dealer or his partner must be short in it, and the queen is very possibly a single card.

Holding king, queen, and one other, or queen, knave, and one other, the second hand should always "split his honours" and play one of them when a small card is led. It is one of the many positions at Bridge when he can lose nothing by so



## DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND

doing, and may gain. If the ace is over his king and queen suit, the most that he can do is to win one trick in the suit, unless his partner holds the knave, in which case there is nothing lost by his putting on the queen second in hand.

When the dealer leads a knave up to ace, 10, and others in dummy, or a 10 up to ace, knave, and others, and the second hand has king or queen guarded, he should always cover with his high card. His partner is practically marked with the other honour, and will be able to win the first trick if the second hand passes it; but the remaining honour will then be hopelessly boxed in, and the only chance of winning two tricks in the suit is for his partner to hold the 9 in addition to his king or queen.

When the dealer leads up to ace, queen, 10 in dummy, or when he leads the 10 up to ace, queen and others, and the second hand holds king, knave and another, he should play the king and not the knave on the first round. If he plays the knave the dummy will win it with the queen, and the situation will be quite clear to the dealer, whereas if the second hand puts on the king, the ace will

## DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND

have to take it and the dealer will be very liable to place the knave in the other hand. Just as it is desirable at all times to give information to one's partner, so it is equally undesirable to give unnecessary information to one's opponents, and this is just one of the occasions when it is possible to deceive an opponent without doing any harm to one's partner.

When the whole strength in a suit is marked against him it is useless for the second hand to cover an honour led. Thus, suppose the dealer leads the knave of a suit, of which the second hand holds king and two others, and the dummy has ace, queen, 10 to five, the second player can gain nothing by covering the knave, as, if the dealer has another one to lead, the fourth player can have only three, and every card in the suit is good against him; therefore he should pass the knave and pray that the dealer may not have another one to lead. Holding king and one other only, with the ace, queen, knave lying over him in dummy, the second hand should not play the king when the suit is first led through him, and then say that it did not matter as his king was dead

## DEFENDER'S PLAY AS SECOND HAND

in any case. He must remember that the dealer is not to know that the king is singly guarded, and he will have to use an entry card to put his own hand in again in order to lead the suit a second time, and every entry card taken out of the dealer's hand is a distinct gain.

When the second hand, playing before dummy, can win the trick cheaply, as against dummy, he should always do so, in order to protect his partner's hand, but he should never put on an ace, second in hand, whatever is in dummy, unless it is very important for him to get the lead. A common instance of this is when the dealer leads a small card up to king, knave, and others in dummy, and the second hand has ace with one or two small ones. Unless one trick will save the game, or unless he particularly wants the lead, he should not put on his ace but should play a small one, so as to give his partner a chance of making the queen if the dealer finesses the king, knave. These are the general principles which should govern the play of the second hand.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE DISCARD

WE now arrive at the rather vexed question of the correct discard. One of the most remarkable features in the history of the game of Bridge is the way in which this question has been magnified and exalted altogether out of its proper place, until it has assumed an importance which in no way rightly belongs to it. The probable explanation of this phenomenon is, that the subject is one which rather lends itself to theoretical vapourings, and there are certain writers on the game who are fond of arguing a question from every possible point of view, some of whom have published elaborate statistics as to what should be the correct discard under seven or eight differing conditions. Such statistics may possibly be interesting reading for people who have nothing else to do, but, as regards throwing any light on the

## THE DISCARD

actual practice of the game, they are absolutely valueless and impossible. Then, again, some brilliant genius has evolved the idea of a "circular discard." This is an extraordinary contrivance by which a player is supposed to understand that, if his partner discards a diamond, he is strong in hearts, and that when he discards a heart he wants the spade suit led to him. We have no available information as to whether the game of Bridge is popular either at Colney Hatch or at Earlswood, but, if it is, we strongly recommend the "circular discard" to the serious attention of dwellers in those localities.

We do not say for a moment that the discard is of no importance in Bridge, but that it is a minor point, not to be compared in importance to several other points in the game, such as the original opening lead against a suit declaration, or the play of the third hand in a No Trump game. Occasionally the result of a hand will turn on information conveyed by a discard, but only very occasionally, and the experienced player attaches far less importance to the discard than the inexperienced player does, because he realises the fact

## THE DISCARD

that it is often a forced one. For instance, holding queen, 5, 2 of clubs, and ace, 5, 2 of spades, it requires no great acumen, or scientific knowledge of Bridge, to see that the 2 of spades is a better discard than the 2 of clubs, but no inference can be drawn from this. The spade suit is undoubtedly the stronger of the two, but still the 2 of spades is the right discard, irrespective of any conventions. The real way to arrive at the meaning of a convention is to consider how it originated. Suppose that a player had to make two or three discards, simply on his own hand, with no knowledge of conventional methods of conveying information to his partner, what would he do? Would he not discard cards which could be of no possible use, either as trick-making factors in themselves or as guards to higher cards? Again, if great strength was declared against him, and he held one long suit which he could see no reasonable chance of bringing in, would he not throw away from that long suit in preference to unguarding a card of another suit, which might possibly save a trick at the finish, if it remained guarded? Hence arose the two conventions of

## THE DISCARD

the discard from weakness and the discard from strength.

The principle was well illustrated by the remark of a level-headed north-country man who came out racing last year. One evening he was induced to make up a rubber of Bridge, and, when he was asked by his partner whether he discarded from strength or weakness, he replied, "I should be a dom'd fool to throw away my good cards when I had got bad ones, should n't I?" That was his natural way of looking at it, being entirely ignorant of any conventions on the subject. All these stereotyped conventions, from which so much information is supposed to be drawn, are really detrimental to the finer points of play. They are the refuge of the inefficient player, who is unable to draw his own conclusions.

The late Mr. Fred Lewis, one of the very finest whist players who ever lived, used to say that the introduction of the call for trumps robbed him of a great part of his scientific advantage in the play of the cards. Certainly, he had a marvellous, almost instinctive, knowledge of the right moment to lead trumps, but the so-called "peter" placed

## THE DISCARD

any ordinary bungler, provided that he could see an obvious call for trumps, on the same level with himself, and thereby his advantage was to a great extent nullified. Precisely the same argument applies, only more strongly, to the discard at Bridge. The first-rate Bridge player is quite capable of gauging the possibilities of his partner's hand for himself, with the assistance of the exposed dummy, and of arriving at the signification of his partner's discards, but this puts the inferior player, who is not capable of so doing, at a manifest disadvantage; therefore, to protect the inferior player against superior skill, certain prearranged methods of play, called conventions, are agreed upon, with the result that many of the finer points of play are sacrificed thereby.

Having said so much about the general principle of the discard, we will proceed to discuss the two recognised systems, the discard from weakness, and the discard from strength — no other system is worth talking about.

There are two entirely different systems of discarding at Bridge — from weakness and from strength — and both systems apply equally to a



## THE DISCARD

suit declaration and to the No Trump game. The discard from weakness means that a player's first discard is always from his weakest suit, and his second discard from the other suit, which he does not wish led to him, so that, by a simple process of deduction, his partner can arrive at a knowledge of what he does want.

The discard from strength is exactly the opposite. Under this system a player's first discard is always from the suit which he wishes led to him, so that the position is at once clearly defined. The system of the discard from weakness is not really a convention, or prearranged method of play; it simply resulted from the fact that a player would naturally discard cards which were of no use to him. It has obtained since the first introduction of Bridge into England, and it was universally adopted among English players until some four years ago, when the American system of discarding from strength was first introduced into this country.

This system, invented by American players, is an arbitrary convention, designed, like most other conventions, to render the game easier for the

## THE DISCARD

unintelligent player. It is generally adopted in America, but not universally, some of the best players on the other side preferring our system of the discard from weakness. The proportion of American players who adopt the weak discard is about the same as the proportion of English players who adopt the other system at the present time.

Both systems have their advantages, and both have their disadvantages. The advantages of the strong discard over the weak one are (1) that only one discard instead of two is required to indicate a player's best suit, and (2) that the discard from the strong suit often enables a player to keep better guards in his weaker suits, which is sometimes of great importance. For instance, with such a hand as queen and two others in each of two suits, and king, queen to four or five in the third, the advocate of the weak discard is at a great disadvantage. He does not want to unguard either of his two queens, but if he discards from the third suit, he is at once giving false information to his partner. The disadvantages of the strong discard are also twofold: (1) a trick is

## THE DISCARD

sometimes given away by discarding a card of the strong suit, which would eventually have won a trick if retained, and (2) the suit which a player wishes led to him may be one from which he cannot discard, except at a grave disadvantage, such a suit as ace, queen, knave only, or king, queen, 10 only, with the knave behind him. In either of these cases he, in his turn, is obliged to deceive his partner by discarding from a suit which he does not wish led.

A few weeks ago a letter appeared in the Bridge column of *Vanity Fair*, from an anonymous correspondent, throwing quite a new light upon the respective merits of the two systems. The writer advocated the discard from strength in preference to the discard from weakness, on the ground that, by discarding from strength, a player was able to indicate his best suit to his partner, leaving his opponent in doubt as to which was his weakest. On the other hand, the discard from weakness would at once inform his opponent which was his worst suit, but would leave his partner in doubt as to which was his best. This is a fresh view of the situation, which we have never heard of

## THE DISCARD

before, and it seems to bear the brand of sound common sense, but it is not altogether convincing.

These are the two systems, with their respective advantages and disadvantages, and the balance of profit and loss appears fairly even between them. Probably the discard from strength is the stronger weapon of defence, especially in the No Trump game, but uniformity is the great object to aim at, and as the weak suit system is the established and general custom in England, it is better for English players to abide by that, rather than to complicate the game further. There are many good players in London who think that the discard from strength is the better of the two, but who do not adopt it, for the above reason, and the soundest advice that can be given to beginners is to follow the prevalent custom and to discard from the suits which they do not wish led to them. The matter is really of no great importance, as we have already said, but so much rubbish has been written about it that it is necessary to put the merits of both systems clearly before our readers.

We strongly caution inexperienced players against attaching too much importance to their

## THE DISCARD

partner's discard. One sometimes hears a player say, after the hand is over, "I was obliged to lead you such and such a suit because you asked for it," when really he had a much better game of his own. Just as it is a fatal mistake to play entirely for one's own hand, so it is at times equally fatal to play entirely for one's partner's; a happy combination of the two hands is the object to strive for. Because a partner has indicated his best suit by his discard, it does not necessarily follow that he is very strong in that suit; it only shows that that suit is the best that he has, and it may be a very weak one. The strong player will not infrequently disregard his partner's discard altogether, either when he has a better game of his own or when he can see the saving of the game by playing differently. Much harm is often done, and many a game has been lost, by a slavish attention to a partner's discard. By all means watch his discard carefully, and lead him the indicated suit, if there is any doubt about what to lead, but do not run away with the idea that because your partner has discarded from two suits he is necessarily very strong in the third. The poor fellow has to discard

## THE DISCARD

something, however impotent his hand may be, and the utmost that he can do for you is to show you where his greatest weakness lies; but that does not presuppose great or even moderate strength elsewhere.

The advocate of the weak suit discard is sometimes in a position to indicate his strong suit to his partner by the more simple process of discarding a high card from it. Thus, to take an extreme instance, holding ace, king, queen, knave, and others of a suit, he can safely discard the ace, without running any risk, and his partner will immediately place him with the entire command of that suit. Similarly, if he discards the king of a suit which has not been led, he is marked with queen, knave, and others, and so on. By a logical extension of this principle it has come to be understood that, whenever a player discards an unnecessarily high card, either against a suit declaration or in a No Trump game, he has considerable strength in that suit, and wishes it led to him. This is known as the "call for a suit," and it is a very useful convention, founded on the lines of the "peter," or call for trumps, at whist. Before making use of

## THE DISCARD

this convention a player should be sure that he will have the opportunity of discarding twice, otherwise he may be deceiving his partner instead of giving him information. It has frequently happened that a player has commenced to call for a suit, but has not had the opportunity of completing his call before his partner has obtained the lead; and then, of course, instead of improving the situation, the attempted call will have upset it altogether, as the first discard, without the second one, will naturally be taken to indicate weakness instead of strength. For this reason, the first discard in a call should always be the highest card of the suit which can safely be spared, so that a clever partner may jump at the situation and understand that it is the beginning of a call, when a fairly high card, such as a 9 or a 10, is discarded. Supposing that a player wishes to call for a suit of which he holds ace, king, 10, 9, 5, 2, the 10, and not the 5, is the proper card to discard first, because the discard of the 5 would only indicate weakness, whereas the first discard of a 10 is something a little out of the common, and should at once set his partner thinking.

## THE DISCARD

It is always bad to blank a suit altogether by discarding the last card of it, as the position will be at once disclosed on the first round, and the dealer can then place every card in that suit and finesse to any extent against the other partner. Also, it is bad play to unguard an ace, unless it can only be kept guarded at the expense of throwing away winning, or more useful cards.

The first discard should always be made with the object of giving information to one's partner. It is waste of an opportunity to discard from a suit which he knows one cannot want led. The following is an instance of this. The third player's hand is —

Hearts — Queen, 7, 6, 2.	Clubs — King, knave, 9, 3.
Diamonds — 8, 7.	Spades — 10, 7, 4.

The dummy, who has declared No Trumps, puts down —

Hearts — Ace, 10, 4.	Clubs — Ace, queen, 6.
Diamonds — Ace, king, queen, 9.	Spades — 9, 6, 3.

The leader opens with four winning spades, and the third hand has to discard on the fourth



## THE DISCARD

round. His weak suit is diamonds, but the 7 of diamonds would be a very bad discard, as it would tell his partner nothing, and would leave him to guess between the other two suits. The proper discard is the 2 of hearts, so as to make it plain to his partner, who can see that the diamond suit is against them, that a club is the desired lead.

If a player discards a diamond in such a situation as this, it can only be taken to mean that it is immaterial to him which of the other two suits is led, and his partner must then play entirely for his own hand. Following out the same sequence of ideas, if the third player's hearts and clubs were of no value, he then ought to discard a diamond, so as to say to his partner, "You cannot help me by leading any suit; you must play for your own hand," and an intelligent partner would read it in that way, and would probably put the dummy in with a diamond so as to get his own hand led up to. This is an instance of what is meant by discarding with intelligence, as against discarding by fixed rule.

In the early stages of a hand the discard is fairly

## THE DISCARD

simple, but towards the end of the hand, when there are only four or five cards left, it is often very difficult. As a general rule, a player should endeavour to keep a guard in the suit which his partner is discarding, and should not hesitate to unguard the suit which his partner is keeping, so as to divide the defence between the two hands. The dealer will lead out any winning cards which he has, so as to force discards from his opponents, and their aim must be to give him as little information as possible, and no inference can be drawn from these forced discards.

The state of the score affects the discard at the end of a hand very strongly. When a player can see that the game is lost unless a certain card is in his partner's hand, he should discard as though that card were marked there, and not think of keeping guards which might possibly save a trick but could not save the game. It is more than useless to throw away a possible winning card in order to keep the queen of another suit doubly guarded, when the game is obviously lost unless one's partner holds the ace or king of it, yet it is

## THE DISCARD

constantly done, and then the offending player will say, "The game could have been saved, but I did not dare to unguard my queen." It was the only possible chance, but how often is that one chance missed.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

THE methods employed by the dealer in playing his cards should be quite different from those employed by his opponents. There is now no question of giving information to a partner; there are no conventional methods of play to be observed, no signals to be given or watched for, and no obligation to play the cards in any particular order. The dealer has an entirely free hand, unfettered by any conventions, and, so far from giving information, it should be his object to withhold it by every means in his power, and to deceive his opponents by playing false cards, or by any other artifice which may suggest itself to him. No formulated rules of play can be laid down for his guidance. All that can be done is to give a few hints, the result of long practice and experience, which may possibly be of use to the inexperienced player, by showing him how the strength of the

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

two hands which are temporarily under his charge can be combined to the greatest advantage. These hints can be better illustrated by examples than by explanations, therefore we propose to quote a few hands, and to play them out, card by card, giving the reasons for the methods of play adopted.

The first and most important point is to study carefully the two hands, directly the dummy is exposed, to note where they will combine to advantage and where the principal danger lies, and then and there to form a definite plan of campaign, either offensive or defensive, as the case may be. As soon as the first card is led, the dummy hand is exposed on the table, and if the dealer cannot form a fairly correct estimate of the probable result of the hand when he has twenty-seven cards to guide him, and has the manipulation of twenty-six of them, he ought not to play Bridge at all.

The dealer should always make this mental estimate at the beginning of every hand, whether there is a trump suit or whether there are No Trumps. It will be of the greatest use to him as a guide to his subsequent proceedings. He should first make a note in his own mind of how many

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

tricks he is bound to lose, and of how many more he may lose if the cards lie adversely for him, and then he will be able to realise the possibilities of the hand, given an ordinary distribution of the cards. If the cards are very unevenly divided, he will probably have to remodel his plan of campaign, or to abandon it altogether and form another, but the great point is that he should always have some definite plan in his head, and not drift on aimlessly, trusting to chance for something to turn up in his favour.

He should never be in a hurry to play from dummy's hand to the first trick, nor should he allow himself to be hustled by an irritable opponent saying, "Surely there cannot be any doubt which of those two cards to play." That is not the point. The dealer is not considering which of dummy's cards he shall play, but he is reviewing his forces, and forming his plan of campaign, and he is quite entitled to keep the game waiting for a few moments for that purpose.

The result of a No Trump game generally depends a great deal upon the suit originally opened. The exact value of the card led should be carefully

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

noted by the dealer and remembered. When the lowest card of a suit is led, the leader is marked with four exactly, but when a medium card, such as six or seven, is led, the lead is probably from five or more, and a fairly accurate opinion can be formed as to how many of that suit the leader's partner is likely to have. Also, the Eleven Rule can be applied by the dealer quite as well as by his opponents. The value of the card originally led will sometimes show him, thanks to the Eleven Rule, how he can win a trick cheaply in the dummy hand. For instance, an 8 is led, the dealer holds king and one other, and the dummy puts down ace, 10, and a small one. The 10 is a certain winning card, if it is played on the first round, and the dealer will win three tricks in the suit, whereas, if he passes the 8 and wins the first trick with the king, he will only win two. If a smaller card than the 8 were led, the 10 must not be played on the first round, in the hope that the third hand will play either the queen or the knave, leaving the major tenace in dummy.

When the dealer has good protection in the suit originally opened, that is, when he can stop it

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

twice, he is in a fine position to play boldly for a big game and to take doubtful finesses, but when it can only be stopped once there is considerable danger, and the dealer should hold up his one winning card as long as possible, until the original leader's partner is exhausted. When the dealer and his dummy are both very weak in the original suit, he must at once resign himself to lose four or five tricks in it, and he should then ask himself what the opponent's next lead is likely to be, after their own suit is finished, and should discard and regulate his game accordingly.

The following hand is a good illustration of the importance of forming a definite plan of campaign before playing to the first trick.

A B are partners against Y Z. Score, love all.  
A deals and declares No Trumps.

A's hand.  
Hearts — Ace, 3, 2.  
Diamonds — Ace, 10, 6, 3.  
Clubs — Queen, 5.  
Spades — Ace, king, 5, 4.

B's hand (exposed).  
Hearts — Queen, knave, 9.  
Diamonds — Knave, 2.  
Clubs — King, knave, 10, 9, 4.  
Spades — 8, 7, 3.

Y leads the 6 of hearts. A at once reviews the situation, and can see a certainty of winning the



## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

game, if he can bring in B's club suit; but to do this B must have a card of re-entry, as the adverse ace of clubs is certain to be held up until the second or third round. The only suit in which B can have a re-entry card is hearts, and then only if A's ace is played on the first round; therefore the 9, not the knave, should be played from B's hand, and the trick must be won with the ace, whether Z is able to beat the 9 or not. A then leads the queen of clubs followed by the 5 and the club suit is established, and B has a certain re-entry card in hearts to bring the clubs in with. If A does not part with his ace of hearts on the first trick, he will never be able to put B's hand in again, as the next two tricks in hearts will be won by the ace and king. This is quite a simple instance, but it is an opportunity which might easily be missed, if the dealer played too quickly and allowed his partner's knave or 9 to win the first trick.

Our next example is taken from the *Illustrative Games in "Bridge Abridged."*

Score, love all. A deals and declares No Trumps.

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

A's hand.		B's hand (exposed).
Hearts — 9, 4, 3.		Hearts — Ace, queen, 8, 5, 2.
Diamonds — King, 5.		Diamonds — 9, 6.
Clubs — Ace, king, queen, knave, 6, 5.		Clubs — 10, 3.
Spades — King, 2.		Spades — Knave, 9, 7, 6.

Y leads the 6 of hearts. A can see an absolute certainty of winning the odd trick and a strong probability of winning the game by putting the ace of hearts on at once. Z is marked with one heart, and one only, and that one is either the king, knave, or 10, as Y would have led an honour if he had held all three. A can make the ace of hearts and six clubs, which will give him the odd trick, and he will then put Y in with a heart and force him to lead up to one of his two guarded kings, and he will make one of his kings and at least one other heart, giving him the game. This hand occurred in actual play, and the dealer finessed the queen of hearts, found the king single over him, and lost two by cards instead of winning the game.

This disaster no doubt occurred through the dealer playing to the first trick too quickly, and taking the ordinary ace, queen finesse, without

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

giving himself time to study the possibilities of the two hands.

We will now take an instance of a plan of campaign with a suit declaration.

Score, love all. A deals and declares hearts.

A's hand.	B's hand (exposed).
Hearts — Ace, 8, 6, 5, 4, 2.	Hearts — King, 3.
Diamonds — Queen, 4.	Diamonds — Ace, knave, 7, 3, 2.
Clubs — King, queen, 10, 3.	Clubs — Knave, 6, 5.
Spades — 6.	Spades — Queen, knave, 2.

Y leads ace of spades. A's review of the hands tells him that he must lose one trick in hearts (trumps), one in clubs, and one in spades, and there was a chance of losing one in diamonds if the king is in Z's hand; but Y's lead of the ace of spades has helped the dealer very much, and he can now see his way to the game. Y's next lead is a small diamond. A must on no account finesse, but must put on the ace at once, and lead the queen of spades. The king is marked in Z's hand and will be put on, A trumps it, then leads out his ace and another trump, putting B in, leads the knave of spades and discards his queen of diamonds, and the game is won, unless there are four trumps in

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

one hand, in which case it could never have been won.

Very simple — too simple, possibly some of our readers may say — but the opportunities for playing brilliant coups are few and far between, whereas the opportunity of making the most out of a hand is always there. It is not playing coups, it is never missing one of these simple opportunities that constitutes the first-class and successful Bridge player.

The first consideration of the dealer, after he has formed his plan of campaign, should be to block the suit originally opened by holding up a winning card of it, if possible, until the third hand is exhausted. Even when the dealer has two winning cards in the suit opened, it is generally the best policy to give away the first trick, unless he can see a certainty of winning the game, or unless there is imminent danger in the opening of a fresh suit by his opponents.

For example, suppose the dealer holds ace and two small ones, and the dummy puts down king and one small one, he should allow the third hand to win the first trick. The suit is certain to be re-

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

turned, and it is now effectually blocked, especially if, as is more than probable, the original lead was from a five-card suit. Most players will hold up one winning card, in order to block the suit originally led, but it does not seem to occur to them that it is better still to hold up two.

An excellent general rule for the guidance of the dealer is to go at once for the suit of which he has the greatest number in the two hands combined, but, given two suits of nearly equal length, he should always go first for the one in which dummy holds the strength, for the obvious reason that the opponents, seeing dummy's cards, are certain to keep any guards that they have in his strong suit, whereas they may discard from the dealer's long suit, which is not exposed, and by so doing make the establishment of it much more easy.

The dealer should play false cards from his own hand whenever he can, but he must do so with intelligence, otherwise he gives away information instead of withholding it. "Badsworth" very rightly says that some players seem to borrow their tactics from the ostrich, which believes that it can escape observation by burying its head in the sand.

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

As an instance of this, he quotes the common error of a player, who holds ace and king of a suit of which the queen is led, winning the first trick with the ace instead of the king, under the impression that he is deceiving his adversaries. On the contrary, by so doing he tells the third player, as plainly as if he had shown him the card, that he holds the king in addition, as nobody would lead the queen from a suit headed by king, queen, whereas the lead of the queen is often from ace, queen, knave, and, when there is any chance of that combination, it is obligatory on the third hand to return the lead at once. It may be rather a revelation to some players to learn that the value of false-carding by the dealer is greater with small cards than with high ones. When playing family Bridge, against opponents who do not notice whether the dealer plays a 7 or a 2, as long as he does not win the trick, such refinements are altogether wasted; but, in these advanced times, the best players pay very careful attention to the fall of the low cards and draw deductions therefrom, and it should be the business of the dealer to cloud their conversation as much as possible — to quote

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

“Badsworth” again — by playing his small cards as much out of order as he can.

A ruse, which has often been brought off with success, is for the dealer to open a suit, directly he gets in, in which he is entirely undefended, with the object of keeping his opponents off it. It must be done at once, without a moment's hesitation, and even then experienced players will often see through it, but sometimes it is the only chance of winning a game. The following case, which occurred in actual play, is a good example of this. The third game of the rubber. Score, A B love, Y Z 24. A dealt and left it to B, who declared No Trumps.

A's hand.		B's hand (exposed).
Hearts — 7, 3.		Hearts — Ace, queen, knave, 2.
Diamonds — King, 9, 6, 4.		Diamonds — Ace, 8, 5, 3.
Clubs — 8, 3.		Clubs — Knave, 10, 4.
Spades — Queen, knave, 10, 8, 2.		Spades — King, 5.

Y led the 6 of hearts. A reviewed the situation, and saw at once that, presuming the king of hearts to be in Y's hand, which it was, he must still lose the ace of spades and at least four clubs, so that the game could not be won, if once his opponents led the club suit, which they were certain to do

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

under ordinary circumstances. He won the first trick with the knave of hearts, and then, without hesitating a moment, led the knave of clubs from B's hand. The opponents' hands were:—

Y's hand.	Z's hand.
Hearts — King, 10, 9, 6, 4.	Hearts — 8, 5.
Diamonds — Knave, 7, 2.	Diamonds — Queen, 10.
Clubs — King, queen, 7.	Clubs — Ace, 9, 6, 5, 2.
Spades — 4, 3.	Spades — Ace, 9, 7, 6.

Z passed the knave of clubs, and Y played a silly false card, winning the trick with the king, thereby marking the queen, from his partner's point of view, in A's hand. Y then led the 4 of spades, B's king was put on, and Z won with the ace and returned the 6, and then the trouble began. A made his four remaining spades, discarding two diamonds and one club from B's hand. Y had also to make three discards. He was obliged to keep three hearts, so he discarded two diamonds and one heart, and A B won five by cards, instead of winning the odd trick only, as must have happened if A had attempted to clear his spade suit at trick 2, instead of taking the one chance that there was of winning the game.

The following is yet another illustration of the value of a carefully thought out plan of campaign

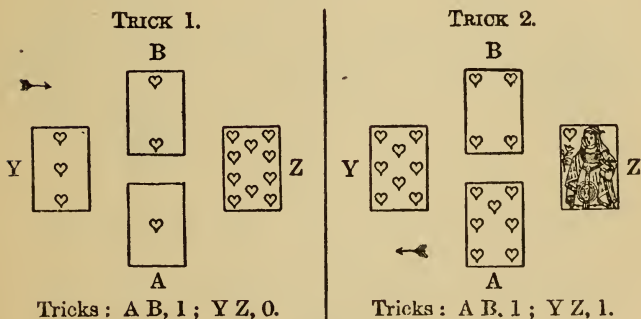


## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

on the part of the dealer. Score, one game all; A B 6, Y Z 24. A deals and leaves it to B, who declares No Trumps.

<p>A's hand.</p> <p>Hearts — Ace, 7, 5.</p> <p>Diamonds — Queen, 8, 3.</p> <p>Clubs — Knave, 6, 4.</p> <p>Spades — Queen, 7, 6, 3.</p>	<p>B's hand (exposed).</p> <p>Hearts — King, knave, 4, 2.</p> <p>Diamonds — Knave, 6, 2.</p> <p>Clubs — King, 7.</p> <p>Spades — Ace, king, 10, 4.</p>
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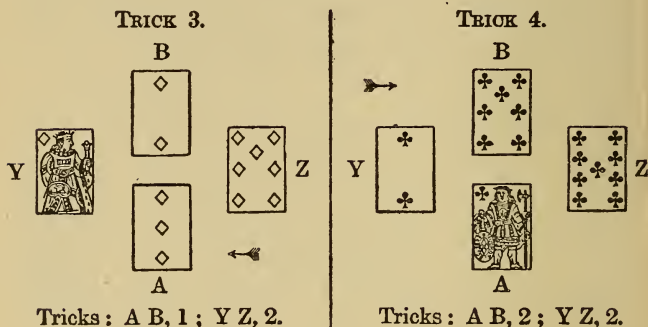
Y leads 3 of hearts. A B require eight tricks to win the game. A can see a practical certainty of four tricks in spades, a certainty (provided he plays correctly) of three in hearts, and one in either diamonds or clubs, if either of these suits is opened by his adversaries — which adversary is immaterial. Therefore A's object is to induce his opponents to lead one of those suits.



## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

TRICK 1. — A might hold up the ace, but it is quite possible that Z may have ace and queen of clubs, in which case he would return the heart at once, in order to put his partner in to lead the clubs through B's king, and A would have to win the trick and would thus defeat his own object.

TRICK 2. — A must on no account finesse the knave from B's hand. He knows that Z has one heart only remaining, but that one may be the queen. By giving away the second trick he makes an absolute certainty of winning three tricks in the suit, however the cards lie, and his opponents are almost certain to branch to another suit.



TRICK 4. — Y's lead is the best chance of saving the game. Z must have both the ace of dia-

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

monds and the ace of clubs in order to do so, and he may have either the queen of diamonds or the knave of clubs in addition. If he has ace and queen of diamonds nothing is lost by putting him in with a club, but if he has ace, knave of clubs and not the queen of diamonds, the return of the diamond would lose the game. A now leads a heart, and makes two tricks in hearts and four in spades, and wins two by cards, and the game and rubber.

Y's hand.		Z's hand.
Hearts — 9, 8, 6, 3.		Hearts — Queen, 10.
Diamonds — King, 5, 4.		Diamonds — Ace, 10, 9, 7.
Clubs — Queen, 5, 2.		Clubs — Ace, 10, 9, 8, 3.
Spades — Knave, 9, 5.		Spades — 8, 2.

In a previous chapter we expatiated on the disadvantage of opening fresh suits in a No Trump game, and the above hand is a strong instance of this. If Y Z had gone on with their original heart suit, they would not have lost the game as the cards happened to lie.

It is worth remarking that the dealer has an absolute certainty of one trick in any suit of which he holds the king in one hand and the knave in the other, provided that one of the honours, no

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

matter which, is doubly guarded, and that the suit is opened by one of the adversaries. It is a common error for the king, singly guarded, to be put on second hand on the original lead when the dealer himself holds knave and two others. "The queen might be in the third hand," says the novice, "and would win the trick." No matter if it is; the knave is still good, after the king has fallen to the ace. It is easy to see that if the ace is in the third hand and the queen with the original leader, every trick in the suit will be lost by putting on the king second hand. Again, with the queen and two others in dummy, and ace and two others in the dealer's hand, it is a great mistake to put up the queen, second hand, on a small card led. Let the first trick come up to the ace, and the queen remains good, if the king is with the original leader. If the third hand holds the king, it may have to be put on the first round, and the ace will take it, or, even if the third hand is able to finesse, he cannot return the suit, when he gets in, without making dummy's queen good. If the queen, singly guarded, is in dummy, it must be put on at once, otherwise it is very unlikely to win a

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

trick, but if it is doubly guarded, it should only be put up second hand when it is of vital importance to secure two tricks in that suit at once. A similar error, also not uncommon, is to lead a queen from one hand up to an ace in the other, without the knave behind it. In these advanced days no decent Bridge player will hesitate to play his king on a queen led, and when the king has been slain by the ace, the knave remains good. With ace in one hand and queen in the other, the only chance of winning two tricks in the suit is to lead a small one from the hand containing the ace, in the hope of finding the king on the right side of the queen, that is to say, behind her.

Cards of re-entry are very important factors in the success or failure of a No Trump hand. In most No Trump games the weak hand will have one or, at most, two cards of entry, and the result of the game will often depend upon the judicious use made of those cards. This is a point which should be carefully considered at the beginning of the hand. Nothing is more annoying than to have established a suit and then to find that you have left yourself, owing to a want of foresight

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

at the commencement of the hand, with no card to bring it in with. The first, and even the second trick, must sometimes be given away in order to ensure the ultimate bringing in of a long suit. The commonest form of this is when the weak hand holds ace, king, to five of a suit, and there are two small ones only in the other hand. In this case it is absolutely necessary to allow the opponents to win the first trick, so that the weak hand can be put in again to make the remaining four tricks in the suit, if the cards lie evenly. When the weak hand has only one card of entry, the greatest care must be exercised to make the best use of that one entry.

It is useless to lead up to an ace, queen, knave tenace, when you can never get in again to repeat the performance. If the finesse succeeds you are no better off, as the lead will have to be continued from the strong hand and the adverse king will still make, unless it was originally singly guarded. In such a case it is much better to lead up to a king, knave suit, or to a suit headed by the king, on the chance of finding the ace on the right of the king. If you have to lead yourself from a

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

suit headed by the king, with nothing of value in dummy, there is no earthly chance of making your king good, whereas if you lead the suit from dummy, it is an even chance whether the ace is on your right or on your left. Another case is when you have a suit of queen, knave, 10, and others in dummy, and ace and one other in your own hand. It is a bad mistake to lead the queen from dummy and take the finesse; it can only result in blocking your own suit, whichever side the king is. Lead a small one from dummy and put on the ace, then return your small one and the suit is cleared. You should never mind giving away one trick, when it is a certain gain of two or more tricks by so doing. Supposing dummy has declared No Trumps, with three suits well protected and only one or two small cards in the fourth suit. You, as dealer, have ace, queen, and three others of the weak suit, and no card of entry. You should never touch that suit. Do not be tempted to lead it from dummy and finesse the ace and queen. Keep off it altogether — your opponents are sure to lead it when they see that the other three suits are protected by dummy's

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

hand, and you will then win two or three tricks in it.

A very useful feature in a No Trump game is four of the same suit, headed by high cards, in each hand. It has many advantages. Say that the cards are

Dealer's hand — Ace, 8, 6, 2.

Dummy hand — King, queen, 7, 4.

Here you have four practically certain tricks in the suit, and in addition to this, you have two certain cards of entry in either hand, to enable you to lead up to any strength that there may be in other suits. Also, if you have to make discards, you can discard twice from either hand without any chance of sacrificing a trick.

When opening a suit of which you have two high honours in one hand and one in the other, you should always play or lead an honour on the first round from the hand which has two, so as to guard against a possible unequal distribution of the cards. Take the following combination, for instance: —

Dealer's hand — King, queen, 9, 7, 4.

Dummy hand — Ace, 10, 5, 3.



## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

If the dealer leads a small one from his own hand, or leads the ace from dummy, he may find four to the knave over him, and he must lose a trick in the suit, whereas if he leads the king or queen from his own hand, he must win every trick in it against any possible combination of the cards. It should be always borne in mind that any combination of the cards, however improbable, is possible, and it should be the business of the dealer to guard himself against these improbable combinations — not to say afterwards, when his own want of forethought has brought about disaster: “How very unlucky! Who could have expected the cards to lie like that?”

As a general rule, the formation of the hands in each deal is very much the same. When the dealer and his dummy have level hands, that is to say, not more than four cards in any one suit, it is fairly safe to conclude that the formation of the opponents' hands will be the same; but when the hands of the dealer and his dummy are broken up into long and short suits, then let him look out for danger. It is almost a certainty that his op-

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

ponents' hands will be formed on the same lines, and he must prepare himself for a very uneven distribution of the cards, and must take no risks whatever.

A correspondent signing himself "Onlooker" challenged the accuracy of this deduction. He wrote: "If the number in any suit from both hands combined were much less than, or much in excess of, the average (which is between six and seven) then this irregularity would occur in the other hands. But if, for instance, the dealer had one of a suit and the dummy five or six, there is no reason why the other hands should be affected in the least." From a mathematical point of view he is quite right — there is no reason whatever. If the twenty-six cards belonging to the opponents were taken aside, thoroughly shuffled, and dealt into two packets, there would be no reason, mathematical or otherwise, why the distribution of the suits should not be quite normal. But the cards are not treated in this manner. The four hands are dealt out at the same time, from the same shuffle, and, when the suits are very unevenly divided in two of the four hands, even though the

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

combined number in those two may be about the average, both the doctrine of probabilities and experience of the game teach us to expect an uneven distribution in the other two hands. This is a well-known fact, and the methods employed by any of our best players in dealing with a much broken No Trump hand will be found to be very different from the methods they will employ in playing a level, evenly divided hand.

We often hear it said, "What an extraordinary combination of the cards!" when a hand is very unevenly divided, but the only extraordinary thing about it is that the cards have been unusually well shuffled. The reason that the hands are generally fairly even is that the cards have been picked up in tricks, after the last deal, and have not been thoroughly shuffled. If it were possible to have a shuffling machine, so that no two cards were left together as they have been played, any combination of the cards would be just as probable as any other. A player would be every bit as likely to pick up thirteen hearts as any other named combination. The number of combinations of fifty-two things, taken thirteen at a time, is

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

635,013,559,600, so that the odds against any given combination, whether it is thirteen hearts, or thirteen spades, or any thirteen named cards of mixed suits, is 635,013,559,599 to 1. The distribution of the cards among the four hands is simply a question of shuffling, nothing more.

In the old days of whist it used to be said that there were hundreds of men wandering about the Continent in a state of impecuniosity, because they would not lead trumps with five in their hand. The same argument applies to the policy of the dealer at Bridge. When either the dealer or the dummy has made an attacking suit declaration and the dealer sees that he has a majority of the trumps in his two hands combined, it is always right to have at least two rounds out, unless the weak hand has a short suit in which a trick or two can at once be made by ruffing.

The dealer should form his plan of campaign in a trump game just the same as in a No Trump game, before he plays a card. It is true that he knows nothing about the disposition of the other trumps, but if there has been no double, he is justified in concluding that they will lie fairly

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

evenly, and one round, or at most two, will show him how the opponents' trumps are placed. One of the commonest and worst faults of the Bridge neophyte is that he will not have two rounds of trumps when he holds five in his own hand and three in his dummy, leaving only five altogether against him. He will say, "I did not see any object in getting the trumps out, as I had no suit established." He does not recognise that two rounds of trumps will exhaust his opponents' small ones, and effectually prevent their making a ruff, while his own small ones will still remain to stop his adversaries' long suit. It is a fatal mistake to be in a hurry to make a small trump by ruffing when you hold, say ace, king, and three others. Those small trumps are bound to win tricks sooner or later, especially if you lead out the ace and king, and take four trumps away from your opponents. Just as it is the policy of the defenders to force the strong trump hand as often and as soon as they can, so it should be the policy of the dealer to husband his small trumps as much as possible, knowing that they will come in very useful towards the end of the hand.

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

It is, naturally, better for the dealer that his opponents should lead trumps rather than that he should lead them, but as a general rule the opponents will not do so; sometimes, however, when there is a short suit in dummy, the dealer can induce his opponents to open trumps by leading the short suit from dummy. Suppose the dealer has declared hearts on king, knave, 10, 5, 4, and ace, queen, knave, and another club. The dummy puts down two small trumps and only one club. The dealer should get the lead in dummy's hand as soon as possible and lead the single club, playing his queen on it. If the fourth hand holds the king of clubs, he will win the trick and he is then very likely to dash out ace and another trump so as to prevent the dummy from ruffing a club, and this will be exactly what the dealer wants, as his king, knave, 10 of trumps will be led up to. If the queen of clubs wins, the dealer must not lead out the ace, but must lead a small one and ruff it in dummy, and then lead a trump up to his tenace, keeping the ace, knave of clubs still over the king.

The exception to leading trumps at once, with great strength in them, is when the weak hand has

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

a long unestablished suit with no card of entry except in trumps. Say that the dealer has declared hearts on ace, queen, knave, and two others, and dummy holds king and two other hearts, and king, queen, knave to five diamonds, of which suit the dealer has only one. In this case the diamond suit must be cleared first, and then, when the ace is gone, the dealer can lead out the ace and queen of trumps as soon as he gets in again, and put the dummy in with the king of trumps to make his diamonds.

When there is strength in trumps in both the dealer's hand and the dummy, a very important consideration is in which hand the lead will be wanted when the opponents' trumps are exhausted. The following hand was a typical instance of this: —

Dealer's hand.	Dummy's hand.
Hearts — Ace, knave, 10, 9, 8, 2.	Hearts — King, 6, 5, 3.
Diamonds — 4.	Diamonds — 9, 8, 5.
Clubs — 9, 8, 6.	Clubs — 10, 7, 4.
Spades — Ace, queen, knave.	Spades — 7, 6, 2.

The dealer was already 8 up, and he naturally declared hearts. The king of diamonds was led, followed by the queen. The dealer ruffed the

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

second diamond with his 2, led out the ace and another trump, winning the second round with dummy's king, and then led a small spade and took the finesse, which came off all right, but he could not put dummy in again to lead a second spade, and he had to lose three tricks in clubs and one in spades, and so missed the game. When it was over, he said, "It was bad luck not being able to put dummy in again to lead the spade through," but it was his own bad play. It was really so simple. He had only to ruff the diamond with the 8 instead of the 2 in order to make certain of being able to put dummy in twice in the trump suit, and this he ought to have seen from the beginning. Again and again does the winning or losing at Bridge turn on these little points of play.

A by no means uncommon occurrence, which all Bridge players will be familiar with, is when the dealer, either in a No Trump game or in a declared trump suit, has ten cards of the suit in his two hands combined, and is in doubt whether to finesse or to go for the drop of the king. One well-known writer on the game has laid it down



## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

that it is always best to go for the drop, but he misses a very fine point in the situation. The dealer should note carefully the card played by the second hand, and should judge from the value of that card whether to finesse or not.

Say that the dealer has declared diamonds on queen, knave, 10, 7, 6, 2, and his dummy puts down ace, 8, 5, 3. He leads the queen from his own hand, and, if the king is not put on second hand, it is a very moot point whether he should finesse or whether he should try to catch the king. Let him first make sure of the exact value of the three cards which are against him. In this particular case they are the king, 9, and 4. If the second hand plays the 4, the position is no clearer, and the best policy is to put on the ace and to play for the drop, but if the second hand plays the 9, the finesse is obligatory. The 4 is now marked with the fourth player, so that there is no chance whatever of catching the king, and the only possibility of winning every trick in the suit is to find the king, as well as the 9, in the second player's hand. This is a nice point, which is very often missed. The dealer will say, "I thought

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

the best chance was to go for the drop," when he ought to have known, from the fall of the small cards, that there was no earthly chance of dropping the king. Of course, there is a remote possibility that the second player may have played a false card, but this possibility is very remote. Certain extra fine players have been known to recognise this particular combination and to play a false card, such as the 9 instead of the 4, holding only the two, with the object of inducing the dealer to finesse, but this is a refinement of play which we need not consider. The ordinary Bridge player never dreams of playing a false card with low cards. He will occasionally do so with high cards, generally with disastrous results, but the idea of playing a false low card which may deceive his adversary, but cannot hurt his partner, never enters into his head. The low card which he plays first can always be depended upon to be absolutely his lowest.

We have now nearly exhausted the hints that can be given for the guidance of the dealer in managing the two hands which are under his charge. They are little more than hints, because

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

each hand is so different, and the best methods to be employed vary so widely according to the placing of the cards, that it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules for the dealer to observe. As these hints, such as they are, have been spread over several articles, it will be well to summarise them before going any further.

Let us first consider the No Trump hands. When the dealer, or his dummy, has declared No Trumps, a great deal depends upon the suit originally opened, and upon the value of the card led. Is there any Bridge player who has not experienced a feeling of relief, when he has made a No Trump, possibly a rather light one, and he is not at once attacked in his weak suit? *A propos* of this point, one often hears a player say, when a No Trump has gone wrong, "It was bad luck being attacked in that suit," but what did he expect? One's adversaries are not in the habit of opening one's best suit, and when the dealer has declared No Trumps, with pronounced weakness in one suit, he must be quite prepared for that suit being opened originally. It is more than possible, it is probable. There is no bad luck

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

about it, it is quite a natural probability, and it is a contingency for which he should be thoroughly prepared.

Directly the first card is led, before playing a card from dummy, the dealer should spend a few moments considering his two hands, observing where they will dovetail, how they will combine with each other, how many tricks he can be certain of winning, and in which suit his principal danger lies, and he should, then and there, form a definite plan of campaign, offensive or defensive, as the case may be. That is the main point to be remembered, to form a definite plan of campaign and to stick to it, unless the placing of the cards forces him to alter it. At least half the mistakes which are made by the dealer in playing a No Trump are made by playing too quickly to the first trick, before he has properly realised the capabilities of the two hands.

He should note carefully the exact value of the card originally led, and should apply the Eleven Rule to it, so as to be able to form an estimate as to how the cards in that suit are divided. If he has a master card of it, he should not be in a hurry

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

to stop the suit, unless he is so strong that there is a chance of small or grand slam, but should rather allow the suit to be continued until the third player is exhausted and has no card of it left to return to his partner, then he can finesse to any extent in other suits against the original leader, knowing that the third hand will have to open a fresh suit when he gets in. Even with king and one small one in dummy, and ace and two small ones in his own hand, it is generally wise for the dealer to give away the first trick so as effectually to block the suit.

When the dealer can only stop the suit originally opened once, the game is very different from when he can stop it twice, or even more. In the latter case he can afford to take a doubtful finesse and to go for a big game, but in the former case he must go at once for his own strong suit, and try to win the game, or to get as near to it as possible, before the opponents have a chance of bringing in their suit.

As a general rule, the dealer should go at once for the suit in which he has the greatest numerical strength in his two hands combined, being careful

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

to lead as often as possible from weakness up to strength, so as to utilise any possible finesses, and he should finesse against the third player rather than against the first player, for the reason that the first player, being marked with four or five of the suit originally opened, is less likely to hold strength in other suits. A frequent combination, familiar to all Bridge players, is when the dealer holds ace, knave, 10, and others of a suit, and the dummy has king and two small ones. In this case the dealer should lead the knave from his own hand, and, if the queen is not put on second hand, he should win the trick with dummy's king and take the finesse the other way. Occasionally, with this lead, the second hand will hesitate for some time, obviously whether to cover the knave or not, and will not do so; when this occurs, the dealer is perfectly entitled to take advantage of the information vouchsafed to him, and to finesse the knave, although he had not intended to do so. It is utterly opposed to the etiquette of Bridge to take any advantage of information that one's partner may give one, however unintentionally such information may have been given, but there

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

is no reason why even the most scrupulous of Bridge players should not take every advantage of information given by an adversary, whether it is given by obvious hesitation, or by injudicious remarks, or in any other of the many ways in which it is, at times, volunteered. There are players who have pronounced mannerisms at the Bridge table, and to act on information derived from such mannerisms on the part of a partner amounts almost to dishonesty, but to refuse to make use of information derived from an opponent's mannerisms amounts quite to Quixotism.

The strongest weapon which the dealer possesses in a No Trump game is his power of making a long suit good by finessing, or by giving away the first trick in it. When he holds ace, king, and three others of a suit in one hand, and two small ones in the other, he should lead a small one from either hand and allow his opponents to win the trick. When he gets in again, in either hand, he will make four tricks in that suit if the cards lie evenly. This is very elementary, but some players are very loth to give

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

away a certain trick, even with the prospect of making two or three extra ones by so doing.

In most No Trump hands the dealer will have one strong hand and one weak one, and he must be very careful to utilise his card or cards of entry in the weak hand to the best advantage. It is no use to lead from the weak hand up to an ace, queen, knave suit without another card of entry. If the finesse succeeds, he is no better off as regards establishing the suit. In such a case the one entry card should be utilised for some other purpose, say to lead up to a guarded king, where it may do practical good. When leading from weakness up to an ace, queen, 10, suit, the double finesse should always be taken, unless two tricks in that suit are all that are required to win the game. If the queen is put on and the king wins it, another finesse has to be taken, and if the queen wins the trick, the king and knave both remain in, and one of them must make; if the 10 is put on the first round it may draw the king, in which case the suit is established, or it may happen that both the king and knave are to the right of the strong hand, in which case neither of them will make. If the king and



## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

knave are both over the strong hand, they must both make.

Holding ace, queen, and small ones in one hand, and the knave in the other, or with ace, knave, and small ones in one hand, and the queen in the other, without the 10 or 9 behind it, it is a mistake, although a very common one, to lead the honour from the weak hand, as by so doing one trick in the suit must be lost, however the cards lie. A small one should be led from the weak hand, and the ace, queen, or ace, knave should be finessed in the strong hand. In this way if the king singly guarded is on the right side every trick in the suit can be won, and if the king is on the wrong side the weak hand is left with a very useful card of re-entry.

The leading a queen up to a suit headed by the ace, without holding the knave as well, comes under the same category, and is a still worse mistake. With ace, 8, 6, 2 in one hand, and queen, 7 in the other, the only possible chance of making two tricks in the suit is to lead a small one from the ace hand, in the hope of finding the king on the right of the queen.

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

Another bad finesse is with queen, knave, 10, and others in one hand, and the ace singly guarded in the other. The only result of leading the queen and finessing will be effectually to block the suit four times out of five. It is much better to play the ace and a small one, allowing the king to make, and the suit is then established.

It is generally better to take a finesse on the second round of a suit rather than on the first. Thus, with ace, 7, 4 in one hand, and king, knave, 9, 2 in the other, it is better to lead the ace and then a small one up to the finesse of king, knave, rather than to lead a small one first and to take the finesse on the first round.

Entry cards in the weak hand are very important. The dealer should note carefully, at the beginning of the hand, how many possible or likely entries he has in his weak hand, and he must be careful not to waste them. Sometimes he can make an extra entry card in the weak hand by throwing away a high card from the other hand or by under-playing. Suppose the dealer has ace, queen, 9, 2 of diamonds, and his dummy has the knave and 3 only. If he is anxious to get his

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

dummy in he should lead a small diamond and trust to the king being on his left, in which case the knave must make. Again, if he has the same hand of diamonds and his dummy has knave and two small ones, he should lead the queen from his own hand, and then, if the king does not appear, he should continue with a small one. If he were to lead out his ace, and queen, the king would be certain to be held up and dummy's knave would have no possible chance of making.

It should always be borne in mind that the dealer has one certain trick in any suit of which he holds the knave in one hand, and either the king or queen in the other, provided that one of the honours, no matter which, is doubly guarded and that the suit is opened by his opponents and not by himself. If he holds queen, 2 in one hand, and knave, 4, 3 in the other, there is no combination of the cards which can prevent his winning one trick in the suit, provided that his opponents lead the first round of it.

It is a well-known axiom of Bridge that every fresh suit opened by the defenders in a No Trump game is a distinct advantage to the dealer; there-

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

fore the dealer should force them to open fresh suits whenever he can. The simplest instance of this is when he has one losing card of a suit left, and there is one in against him, it will often pay him better to put his opponent in with his losing card and force him to open a fresh suit, than to open another suit himself.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing in Bridge quite as much as in other pursuits and occupations. In writing a series of articles such as these, treating on the various doubtful points of the game, it is necessary to lay down general rules — that it is best to do this, or that, or the other, under certain conditions — but such rules are all subject to variations in varying circumstances, and they should be regarded as general principles, not as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Take one simple instance: we have said that, in a No Trump game, when the dealer has one master card of the suit originally opened he should hold it up, if possible, until such time as the leader's partner is exhausted in that suit. This is a sound general principle, but there will occur many instances in which it will be, not only

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

right, but almost necessary, to win the first trick at once, either because there is a certainty of winning the game, or because there is great danger in an immediate change of suit, or for some other good reason.

The following hand, which occurred in a game quite recently, and which was woefully mismanaged, will illustrate this point. The score was 18 all in the last game of the rubber. A dealt, and left it to his partner B, who declared No Trumps.

A's hand (dealer).

Hearts — 9, 5, 3.

Diamonds — Ace, 6, 2.

Clubs — Ace, 10, 3.

Spades — 9, 6, 5, 3.

B's hand (exposed).

Hearts — Ace, 7, 2.

Diamonds — 9.

Clubs — Queen, knave, 9, 5, 2.

Spades — Ace, queen, 7, 4.

Y led the 6 of hearts. We will first consider how the hand was played, and then how it ought to have been played. As it was played, the dealer passed the first heart, Z won it with the knave, and immediately branched into the diamond suit. The dealer allowed the first two diamonds to win, and stopped the third round with his ace. He had now got the lead into the wrong hand, and was consequently unable to go for the finesse in clubs.

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

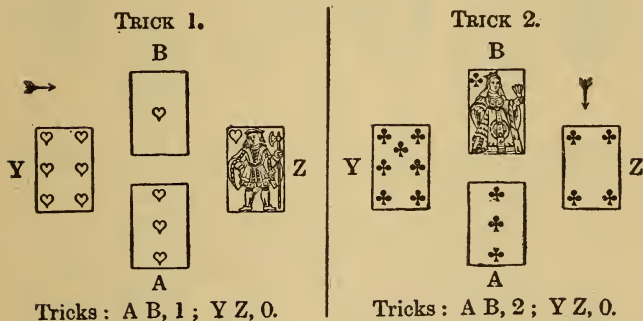
His best policy, even then, would have been to dash out his ace and 10 of clubs so as to clear the suit with the loss of one trick, but he did not even do this. He led a small spade and finessed the ace, queen in dummy's hand. Z, as it happened, held the king of spades single, and he got in and made his remaining diamonds, and the dealer lost two by cards, and the game and rubber, when he had an absolute certainty of the odd trick, if he had played correctly from the start.

Let us now consider how it should have been played.

Y led the 6 of hearts. If A had studied his two hands, he would have seen that, by putting on the ace of hearts, and leading the clubs at once, he had an absolute certainty of the game — four tricks in clubs, and the other three aces — unless Y had a very long suit of hearts. But Y's hearts could be counted. He could not have more than five of them. Is that clear? Do you see the reason that Y could not hold more than five hearts? By applying the Eleven Rule to Y's lead, A could see that Z must have two hearts higher than the 6. A and B had three each, and Z must have two at

## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

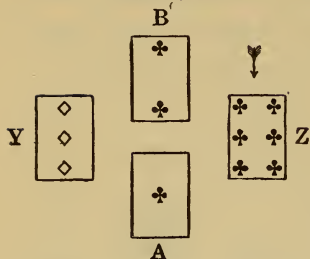
least, therefore Y could not possibly have more than five. That is quite an ordinary application of the Eleven Rule. The game proceeds thus:



TRICK 2. — A tries the finesse in clubs, as he can lose nothing by it. Mark Y's 7 of clubs — it is a very important card. If he has the 8 as well, the king in Z's hand must fall on the third round; but suppose he has not the 8? In that case Z will have (as he had) four to the king, and if A finesses again his ace will block the suit on the third round, and the game will not be won. At trick 3 he must lead the 2 from B's hand and put on his ace, so as to make a certainty of winning the game, even though he may lose a trick by so doing.

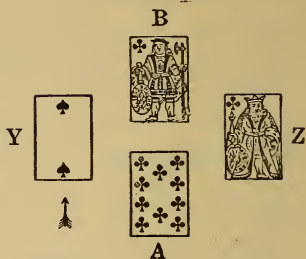
# THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

TRICK 3.



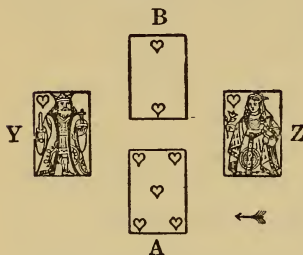
Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 0.

TRICK 4.



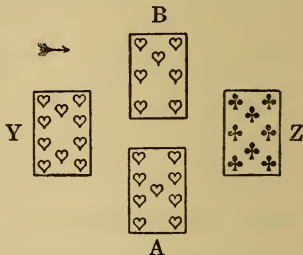
Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 1.

TRICK 5.



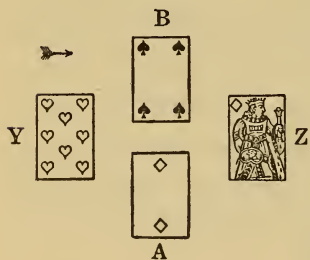
Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 2.

TRICK 6.



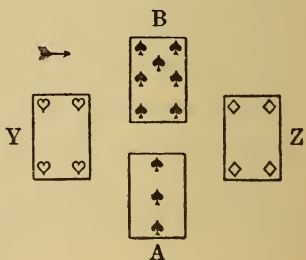
Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 3.

TRICK 7.



Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 4.

TRICK 8.

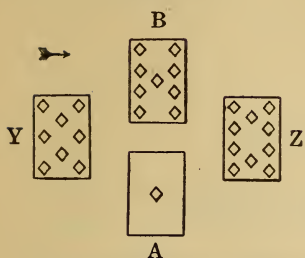


Tricks : A B, 3 ; Y Z, 5.



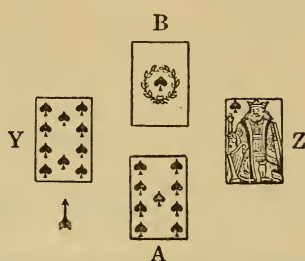
## THE PLAY OF THE DEALER

### TRICK 9.



Tricks : A B, 4 ; Y Z, 5.

### TRICK 10.



Tricks : A B, 5 ; Y Z, 5.

B makes his two remaining clubs and the queen of spades, and A B win two by cards and the game.

#### Y's hand.

Hearts — King, 10, 8, 6, 4.

Diamonds — 8, 5, 3.

Clubs — 7.

Spades — Knave, 10, 8, 2.

#### Z's hand.

Hearts — Queen, knave.

Diamonds — King, queen,  
knave, 10, 7, 4.

Clubs — King, 8, 6, 4.

Spades — King.

The player who made such a mess of the above hand was no beginner, but a Bridge player of some repute, only he fell into the common error of playing too quickly to the first trick, before he had properly gauged the capabilities of the two hands. He was the first to recognise his mistake when he had made it, but it was then too late, as it generally is.

## CHAPTER XV

### PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

THE *contest* between theory and practice is very keen in the world of Bridge just now, particularly on the literary side of it. On the theoretical side we have "Hellespont," "Doe," and other anonymous and unknown authors, who, presumably, are in the habit of playing Bridge somewhere, but where and in what company we are not told — all of whom rely on figure statistics, and maintain that they will defeat practical experience. On the practical side are ranged "Badsworth" and the present writer, both members of well-known London clubs, where scientific Bridge is daily played, and Mr Elwell of New York, quite one of the best of the American players — all of whom write of the game as they know it and see it played by the best players. Then comes the natural question, "Who are these so-called best

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

players?" They are men of no mean intelligence in other walks of life, who have studied the game in all its bearings for the last ten or eleven years, and have brought all their brains to bear on it. They are in no way bigoted. They have no prejudices in favour of one mode of play rather than another, they back the one they find pays them best. They know all these theories of figure calculations and defensive declarations, etc.; but they find that their own practical experience pays them far better, so they elect to abide by it. There is as much difference between Bridge as these men know it and theoretical Bridge as there is between the play of the Australians and the cricket of some little provincial club.

A book on Bridge was published in 1905 by an anonymous author, who is evidently a theorist, *pur et simple*, and who adduces endless statistics and rows of figures in his endeavour to prove his view of the case. He asserts that all declarations, whether it be No Trumps or a suit declaration, should be merely a matter of calculation by figures, and he goes so far as to give fractional values to the cards held.

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

Poor unfortunate neophyte in Bridge! He is told that one card or combination of cards is worth  $1\frac{1}{3}$  tricks, that another is worth  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a trick, and yet another is worth  $\frac{3}{5}$  of a trick, and he is expected to add all these together and to ascertain that they reach a certain value before he is justified in declaring No Trumps. To begin with, Bridge players are not all expert mathematicians, and many players would require to have a sheet of paper and a pencil by their side to reduce the different fractions to a common denominator before they could discover the value of their hand; and just fancy what delay and hesitation and improper information given to a partner this would entail! The author in question takes especial exception to the argument which has always been upheld in these articles, that the methods employed by the best players of the day are the surest guide to success at the Bridge table, and he supports his argument by saying that "Cavendish" never said such a thing in his book on Whist.

Certainly "Cavendish" never said such a thing, because in those days there was no need to say

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

so — it was universally understood. In the days of scientific whist there were no theoretical writers who published long statistics to prove that the accepted methods of play were all wrong; those methods were acknowledged to be the best. The late Mr. Henry Jones (Cavendish) was himself a first-class card player and he was accustomed to play whist every day of his life with some of the finest players who ever lived. He was very fond of conventions and stereotyped methods of play, and he introduced many such into the game of whist, but his most excellent book was not composed mainly of theories and statistics of his own invention; it was more a record of what he had observed and learnt from continual practice with the ablest exponents of the game. Speaking from a long personal acquaintance with Cavendish and his methods, we can confidently state that no man ever lived who attached more importance to constant practice with good players than he did, and any departure from the established methods of play was certain to meet with his disapproval.

In common with all the theoretical writers, this author is a strong advocate of an original

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

defensive declaration by the dealer; in fact on this point he out-Herods Herod, by saying that the dealer should always declare hearts or diamonds when he holds queen, 10, and three others, and nothing else of value, as a protective measure. Protective measure! One can understand a player protecting himself by declaring spades, so as to make the game as cheap as possible; but where does the protection come in when he gives the game an unnecessarily high value simply because he has a bad hand?

The keynote of the whole book is that theory is a better guide to success than practice and experience of what the author calls "the chance data of the card table"; and this is a proposition from which we dissent entirely. At the end of his book he gives sixteen illustrative hands, and, if the practice of the players with whom he is accustomed to play is correctly illustrated in these hands, it is not to be wondered at that he prefers theory to practice. In most of these hands the play of the cards is very much open to question, judged by the standard of our best-known English players. There is one hand in particular

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

in which the dealer is made to lose two by cards, when any average Bridge player, playing the two cards, could hardly fail to win the odd trick, if he were possessed of ordinary intelligence.

A fifth edition of "Hellespont on Bridge" was also published in 1905.

In an appendix to the original work the author propounds the theory that "it is in playing without trumps that a player's skill becomes of paramount importance. On one false step will often depend the winning or losing of the odd trick, or even sometimes of the game." Certainly it will; but does not this apply equally, or even more strongly, to the trump game? The real reason of indifferent players being so fond of declaring No Trumps is that they find the No Trump hands easier to play. It is when there is a suit declaration that the fine points of play present themselves, and it is then that the good player will sometimes convert into a victory what would have been a certain defeat in the hands of his weaker brother. Defending a No Trump game gives enormous opportunities for skill and combination, more so than any other phase of the game, but not

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

so the play of the two hands by the dealer. Occasionally one sees a very intricate No Trump hand, but the general run of them are cut and dried, so that the result of the game depends far more upon the tactics of the defenders than upon those of the dealer.

Having propounded the above theory, "Hellepont" proceeds to quote instances in illustration of it, and the first hand on his list is the following:—

Spades — Ace, king, queen, knave, 4, 3, 2.	Diamonds — 9, 8, 7.
Hearts — 10.	Clubs — 6, 5.

This is a hand on which he says that a strong player should declare No Trumps, but that "his weaker brother will do better to leave it." To begin with, the declaration of No Trumps on this hand is not Bridge at all, it is gambling pure and simple, like tossing for shillings, and to give this as an instance of a No Trump hand is to reduce Bridge to the level of baccarat, or blind hookey, or any other purely gambling game, and to eliminate from it every element of skill. Apart from this consideration, what possible opening for skill

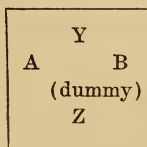


## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

can there be in the play of the above hand? It is a hand, if ever there was one, which the veriest neophyte could play every whit as well as the most learned professor of the game. The result entirely depends upon whether the dummy hand can win a trick — presuming that he has a spade to lead, which is by no means a certainty — and this again will depend, not in any way on the play of the dealer, but upon the placing of the cards, and upon the methods employed by the opponents. Any child of twelve years old, provided that he knew the value of the cards, could play this hand absolutely as well as “Hellespont” himself, yet this he quotes as his first instance of a hand in which “skill becomes of paramount importance.”

Spades — 10 (led).

Hearts — Ace, 10, 4.  
 Diamonds — Ace, king,  
           queen, knave, 3, 2.  
 Clubs — 9, 8, 2.  
 Spades — Queen.



Hearts — 6.  
 Diamonds — Nil.  
 Clubs — Ace, 5, 3.  
 Spades — Ace, knave,  
           9, 8, 7, 6, 4, 3, 2.

We give here a very curious hand which recently occurred in actual play, and which really does offer an opportunity for the exercise of

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

skill on the part of the dealer. It is a good instance of a hand on which a first-class player would, in all probability, win the game, while an indifferent player would be quite certain to fail to do so.

Score, love all. A dealt and declared diamonds. Y led the 10 of spades. The question is how should the dealer play the two hands so as to take the best chance of winning the game?

Directly the dummy hand is exposed, the king of spades is absolutely marked in Z's hand, and there is only one other spade, the 5, not accounted for. The ace of spades must be put on at once, and if Y's lead of the 10 was the higher of two spades, the king will fall, and the remainder is easy. A puts himself in with the ace of hearts, draws all the trumps, and puts his dummy in again with the ace of clubs to make the remaining spades.

If, however, as is probable, Y's 10 of spades was a singleton, the position is not so easy. It is imperative in order to win the game, that B's spades should be cleared before his only card of re-entry, the ace of clubs, is taken out of his hand,

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

and therefore the lead must on no account be parted with. A must lead another spade from B's hand, and trump it with his knave, so that he cannot be over-trumped. He is then left with five trumps and there are seven against him, so that it is a certainty that there must be four at least in one hand. If there are five in one hand the game cannot be won, but if the trumps are evenly divided, four and three, he can make sure of winning the small slam. He leads his three winning trumps, and if he finds them evenly divided, he then leads a losing trump, to take out the last one, and whatever is led, he wins all the remaining tricks, having the ace of clubs in B's hand to bring in the long spade suit. This is quite an instructive hand, and one which illustrates the advantage of reviewing the situation and forming a definite plan of campaign before commencing to play the hand.

The question of prearranged signals or codes of play between partners is rather a delicate one, but one which is well worthy of discussion. The first thing of the kind which was ever introduced was the call for trumps in the old whist days, and

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

there must be many whist players still alive who can remember the very heated arguments which this innovation gave rise to. A considerable section of whist players went so far as to say that it was cheating, and, for a time, they refused to play with men who used the call, but it had come to stay, and after a while they gave in, and tolerated the signal, even if they did not condescend to use it. A sort of tacit understanding was then arrived at, that a player was perfectly entitled to make use of any information which he could derive from the way in which his partner played his cards, but that it was not allowable to pre-arrange any signal or code. This arrangement was strictly adhered to at whist, and the practice of asking a partner whether he adopted the call for trumps was strongly discountenanced at the best clubs.

Bridge commenced life on the same lines, but there came a time when the parting of the ways between the heart convention and the short-suit convention, in answer to a double of No Trumps, was so strongly marked, and the consequences of not knowing to which school a partner belonged

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

were sometimes so disastrous, that it came to be understood that a player was entitled to ascertain his partner's views on this one point before commencing a rubber. If the matter had ended there, no great harm would have been done, but it has not ended there. There has lately been a growing tendency among certain Bridge players, chiefly indifferent ones, to put their partners through a sort of catechism before commencing to play. Not only do they inquire whether their partner wishes a heart or the short suit led to him when he doubles a No Trump call, but also whether he discards from strength or weakness, and even, in some cases, whether he leads from his longest suit or from a weak one against a suit declaration.

The principle is entirely wrong. When a player sits down to play with a strange partner it should be his business to ascertain for himself, from his partner's play of the cards, that partner's strength or weakness, and what methods he elects to employ for giving information as to his hand. It is entirely opposed to the spirit of the game to arrange an understanding on debatable points of play before starting. The principle could be so very

## PRACTICE *VERSUS* THEORY

easily extended. If it is allowable to say to one's partner, "If I double No Trumps, I want a heart led," why should it not be allowable to say, "If I say, 'I double that,' I want a heart; if I say, 'I double No Trumps,' I want a diamond; if I say, 'I double,' I want a club led," and so on? The principle is just the same, only that the one method is recognised and countenanced and the other is not.

It is laid down by every one of the accepted authorities on Bridge, that a player is entitled, and ought to ascertain, his partner's views as to the lead in answer to a double of No Trumps; therefore, let us accept that as a Bridge postulate, but we are strongly opposed to carrying the principle any further. Every lover of Bridge, who wishes to maintain the game, as it is at present, the prince of all card games, ought resolutely to set his face against this modern Bridge catechism, and to refuse to answer any questions above and beyond the one accepted point of the lead to a double of No Trumps.

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