

# The Game of Bridge.

## THE PLAY OF THE HAND.

(By "CUT-CAVENDISH," Author of "How to Win at Bridge," "The Complete Bridge Player," etc.)

Much has already been written dealing with the play of the hand. Leads, discards, doubles, each one has its bearing on the subject, yet much still remains unsaid.

Doubtless the dealer's task is the simplest. Not only has he or his partner enjoyed the privilege of the declaration, but once the initial lead has been made he knows wherein lies his strength or weakness. Some plan of campaign should quickly originate in his brain as the result of reviewing the forces at his disposal. Certain cards, he can see at a glance, are good for tricks, whilst there are possibilities in others. A successful finesse or the establishment of a long suit may assist him to victory. Howbeit he must never hazard the loss of a game for the sake of a few extra points.

### TO ESTABLISH A SUIT.

On a declaration of No Trumps, the dealer's first aim must be to establish one of his long suits. As the play of the hand advances his opponent's discards should show him in which quarter danger is to be apprehended, for he knows what manner of discard they practise. To apply the information so gathered will frequently lead to a successful finesse, and by such finesse he not only hopes to win the immediate trick with a lower card than is out against him, but to fall that intermediate card, in the process, when all should be plain sailing. Whenever possible a finesse is left to the second round of a suit, as the fall of the cards in the first round may throw light on the position. Again, all things equal, you would finesse into a hand whence, in the event of failure, you would rather the lead sprang.

A finesse may also be the means of making an additional card of re-entry in a suit, and such additional card of re-entry may prove of inestimable value. The dealer must know where he wishes to place the lead, but how is it to be done if there be no cards of re-entry in the desired quarter? He should retain a card of re-entry in either hand just as long as he can. Nothing is quite so annoying as to have a number of winning tricks in a hand with no card of re-entry to the same, although sometimes the dealer will be able to get over the difficulty by the timely sacrifice of a card in his other hand. Thus he may try to draw the ace of a suit with his king so as to make good his queen in the other hand, but his opponents will doubtless be on the lookout for such manoeuvres, and are not always to be drawn.

Take Dummy's hand, and let us suppose that it contains ace, king to five of Diamonds with no other cards of re-entry of any sort or kind. The dealer, who has called No Trumps, has only two small Diamonds at his command. Two tricks are to be won in the suit without difficulty, but should Dummy's ace and king be held up on the first round, just double the number will be made if the outstanding Diamonds be equally divided.

### DECEIVING THE OPPOSITION.

A formidable weapon in the hands of the dealer is the false-card, which, as its name implies, is a card played with the sole intention of deceiving the opposition as to the other cards held in the suit. As in the case of the finesse, it may be employed to the play of any declaration. Its object is to make your opponents either discontinue or continue a suit they have opened. For example, the dealer holding ace, king of a suit, and wishing it led him again, would take the trick with the ace, so that one or both the allies would be inclined to place the king with his partner rather than with the dealer.

Next let me cite an instance of the dealer wishing to frighten the enemy off a suit they have opened. Hearts is the declaration, and the lead is a Diamond, a suit in which the dealer recognises that he has three tricks out against him. Dummy holds three or four worthless cards of the suit, and the dealer knave to three. His express desire is to drive the opposition off the suit so that he may finally discard from it. If therefore he plays his knave to the second round in the hope that his opponents, fearing a small trump on the third round, will

drop the suit of their own accord.

In conducting the play of an attacking suit declaration the dealer's first duty will be to draw his opponents' trumps. Once having drawn them, he can ruff their long suits and proceed to establish a plain suit on his own. The opposition, on the other hand, cannot return the compliment. Only in the event of his being able to utilise one or two little trumps in the weaker hand or the establishment of a cross ruff should the dealer steer clear of several rounds of trumps. To hoard trumps till the end of a hand is worse than useless.

To the allies. I would say, do not over elaborate the conventions, or they may distract your partner instead of assisting him. Against No Trumps your prospects of success lie in making a small card or two in a long suit. Make a point of returning your partner's original lead, unless you are satisfied that you hold a suit that can be more easily established. To open a fresh suit and to lead up to weakness in Dummy, simply because you see the latter can win the next trick in the suit originally led, is a suicidal proceeding. Changing and chopping suits at No Trumps is not to be encouraged.

False-carding must be eschewed by the allies, as it would merely mislead each other. Finessing, too, is seldom to be attempted, and it is a mistake to finesse against one's partner's lead to an attacking suit declaration. It may lead to the loss of a trick or two, as later in the hand your high cards may be trumped, besides which it may very easily mislead your partner.

Occasionally, however, a finesse may be attempted against a No Trumper. That is to say, if third-in-hand in response to an original lead sees that Dummy can only be prevented from making a trick in the suit by his trying a finesse, then he may tempt the gods.

### THE CALL.

The "call" for a suit at Bridge is the playing of an unnecessarily high card (not above ten), followed by the play of a lower one. To a suit declaration it is tantamount to saying "I can trump the suit on the third round." Against No Trumps the "call" signifies that you possess great strength in that suit, and in either instance it is a demand for the suit to be led again.

One form of discard which has not yet been mentioned is useful on occasion, and can be put into effect against a No Trumper or suit declare. It is the discard of the ace from a sequence which includes ace, king, queen, knave, etc. On getting in your partner would instantly give you a card of the suit, and your good cards would then not be wasted.

Above all things, avoid carelessness. The play of one small card instead of another may completely deceive your partner, and is calculated to ruffle his

temper to a sad degree. Thus you should ever play to a trick from the bottom of a sequence. It is only the leader, who opens from the top of a sequence, always excepting the lead of king from ace, king, and others.

The leader to a red suit declare need never be afraid of forcing the declarer's trumps, but he must carefully avoid leading a card which will admit of the dealer trumping from his weak hand.

### THE PLAY OF THIRD-IN-HAND

presents few difficulties. His business is to take the trick if he can in the majority of instances, unless it is already his partner's. Occasionally he will deviate from this course and hold up a card in a suit so as to prevent Dummy from establishing a long suit. Against No Trumps he must also be careful not to get in his partner's way, and so block the suit originally led. To prevent such an unfortunate mischance he had better retain the lowest card of the suit led to the last, even if it be the means of his tak-

ing a trick already his partner's. Thus, holding ace and one other, he would take his partner's king if it were led, unless he could see that by so doing Dummy was bound to make a trick in the suit.

The allies will also draw Dummy's cards of re-entry when feasible if by such methods they can prevent a long suit being established in his hand.

Second-in-hand plays the lowest card to a trick, but should he see his way to annexing it with a lower card than ace or king, he had better win it in the case of a suit declare, unless it be a trump, and he can make the card in question in good time.

Cover queen, knave, or ten if it be led, and you hold the card above it in value. Depend upon it a finesse is in progress. The trick will in all probability be lost, but it will have cost the opposition two high cards to your one, and may help you or your partner to a trick in the long run.

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