How to play Bridge AUCTION and CONTRACT

by Wynne Ferguson

Author of "PRACTICAL AUCTION BRIDGE"

ARTICLE No. 31

Why is it that some players invariably lose the big rubbers and win the little ones? How and why do the big losses occur? Generally speaking, it's impossible to suffer big losses at Auction or Contract unless you are holding good cards. When you are holding worthless cards, there is no temptation to overbid and hence no big penalties. It's when you are holding good cards that are not quite good enough, or when you are suffering from bad "breaks" that you are apt to lose heavily. The good cards, instead of winning for you, are a source of loss. Why is this?

There must be some reason for it and the answer is really very simple. A player just cannot remain quiet with good cards. He must bid and keep on bidding. The good cards intoxicate one and you become blind to the many signs that the odds are against you. You fail to notice that your partner is passing and that both of your opponents are bidding. What can one good had do against two? If players would only ask themselves that question, many a big penalty would be avoided.

Moral: Don't overbid good hands. Remember, a good hand has a better defensive value against two good hands than it has when used for offensive purposes. It's an axiom of the game that one good hand against two has one hundred per cent. better chance to save a game than to make game. In nearly half of such hands, it would have been possible to have saved game and in the other half to have defeated the opponent's bid.

Recently the wirter kept a record of the over-bidding of one player during one evening's play. Out of fifteen of his bids that failed to make good, twelve were doubled. On ten of the hands, the player could have defeated his opponent's bid and on the other five he could have saved game. He was one of those players who consider it a personal affront to be overbid and his opponents knew he would continue to bid. Such a player is under a great handicap and yet cannot seem to realize what is the trouble with his game. He complains of his hard luck and of the big rubbers he loses, but hasn't the good judgment to realize that it is his temperament, rather than his bad cards that is making him lose. Take these remarks to heart and, if in the class specified, look for the result of hands in which you fail to nake your bid. If you could nave saved game or defeated your opponent's bid, your loss is not justifiable.

Is it more difficult to play the dummy hand against two opponents or for the two opponents to play against the declarer? That question has been the cause of much discussion, but to the writer there seems only one answer. It is much more difficult for the opponents of the declarer. The latter can see his twenty-six cards and should know the best way of combining them to the best advantage. He is not in the dark like his opponents, for they must guess as to the other's holding and they are just as apt to guess wrong as right. Also in the opening lead, the opponents of the declarer are at a disadvantage. If partner has not bid, what should be the opening lead? This is a question that puzzles the experts at times, but the average player can greatly overcome this difficulty by the careful study of a good table of leads. In playing against the declarer, try to convey as much information as possible to your partner by use of conventional leads and discards. Watch your partner's play and that of the declarer very closely. Not only try to make every play of your own convey information to your partner, but also try to learn something from every play of your partner and of the declarer.

The following hand looks easy but, unless the proper lead is made, the game is lost:

Hearts—Q, J, 8
Clubs—7, 4, 2
Diamonds—K, 10, 7, 4, 2
Spades—J, 4

The dealer bid one spade and all passed. What is the correct opening lead with the above hand? The correct lead is the queen of hearts. Any other lead with this hand would have lost game. The player who held it opened the four of diamonds, a very bad lead. Never open a suit containing the king against a suit bid, if there is any other possible lead. It is nearly always a trick loser.

Solution to Last Week's Problem

	Hearts—4 Clubs—8, 7, 6 Diamonds—none Spades—A, J, 7	
Hearts—9, 8 Clubs—4 Diamonds—10, 9, 8, 7 Spades—none	Y A B Z	Hearts—Q, J, 10 Clubs—Q, J Diamonds—3 Spades—8
	Hearts—K, 6, 5 Clubs—none Diamonds—K, Q, 6 Spades—10	

If spades are trumps and Z is in the lead, how can Y Z win all of the tricks against any defense?

Solution: Z should lead the king of diamonds and Y should discard the six of clubs. At trick number two, Z should lead the six of diamonds and Y should trump with the jack of spades. B should play the jack of clubs but, if he wants to make a fancy play, he can discard the eight of spades. Y should then lead the eight of clubs for Z to trump, and the last four tricks are then taken by the queen of diamonds king of hearts, seven of spades and ace of spades.

Suppose, however, B, at trick two, makes the proper discard of the jack of clubs. At trick three, Y should lead the seven of clubs, which Z should trump with the ten of spades and follow with the king of hearts and five of hearts. Y should trump the latter with the seven of spades and lead the ace of spades. Y's club is now good for the last trick.

At trick two, suppose B had discarded the ten of hearts. In that case, at trick three, Y should lead the four of hearts, which Z should win with the king and lead back the five of hearts. This trick Y should trump with the ace of spades and lead back the seven of spades. Z must win this trick with the ten of spades, and now has the good six of hearts and queen of diamonds for the last two tricks.

It is a clever little problem and worthy of the closest study.

What Is Thought?

By Ernest Dimmet, a French abbe, the author of "The Art of Thinking."

If we are bored by any topic above those which give food to our small dislikes or even smaller likes, we do not think. If, the moment a book or a newspaper raises a question demanding some supplementary information or reflection, we yawn, fidget, or hurriedly do something else, we abhor thinking. If, when trying to reflect, we at once feel a weariness, a drowsiness or a tendency to repeat mere words, we do not know what thought is.

People Do Not Think

Mental cowardice or sluggishness makes sheep of most people. Indeed the world lives on phrases which it goes on repeating till some thinker makes a breach in the solid and stolid wall of conformity. Such passivity cannot be too early counteracted. Children ought to be put through regular thinking exercises at school. The Montessori system arranges for intervals during which the children veil their little faces and think.

I have been tempted many times to annex Schopenhauer's maxim: "Do not read, think!" or to transform it into: Never read, always study. A harsh saying? Not if we realize that we should study nothing that does not interest us, and that studying only applies to the most enjoyable way of extracting from that, what will interest us the most. Whatever we read from intense curiosity gives us the model of how we should always read.

Obviously we must make a distinction between what we read for our information and what we read for our formation, between what we want for our use and what we need for our development. But whatever we read we must first comprehend and, when we have comprehended, criticize. We must develop the capacity to have our own opinion about an idea, a poem, a doctrine or a work of art, and to see it clearly enough to give it forcible expression. Comprehension is criticism, and criticism or judgment is a mere synonym for thought.

Educated men look for relations between ideas or between facts and never see a thing without visualizing another beside it, or behind it. What is that, if it is not thought, and yet, it is within the possibility of innumerable people. Let them keep away from trivialities, and, instead, stock their minds with knowledge worth while; let them range freely through this mass of data, and thought will be actively produced. On the whole the object of reflection is invariably the discovery of something satisfying to the mind which was not there at the beginning of the search.

Facts are only the material for thought. Thoughts themselves, that is to say, the illumination produced in our mind by the presence of rich facts, should be preserved even more carefully. Certainly it is difficult and sometimes it may be dangerous—for it stops the working of the mind—to interrupt an intellectual reaction un-

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der pretence of noting it. But to keep no track of what one learns or thinks is as foolish as to till and seed one's land with great pains, and when the harvest is ripe turn one's back upon it and think of it no more.

The principle which has never failed to confer superiority on a man's thinking acitvity is the well worn precept: Do not read good books—life is too short for that—only read the best. And of those only read what gives you the greatest pleasure. Great books, great men, great problems and great doctrines, great facts and their lessons cannot but result in high thought. The busier we are, the more severe our selection should be. Many men absorbed in business show such a rare quality of culture that we are surprised at it. The reason invariably is partly because hard work and even the weariness it leaves carry a nobility with them, but also because there is no room in such lives for inferior mental occupation.

You have no time, you say. Are you sincere, or are you just repeating what everybody else is saying? No time? Examine your conscience and answer. Is there no time you can reclaim, not from your work, not from your exercise, not from your family or friends, but from pleasure that really does not give you much pleasure, from empty talk at the Club, from inferior plays, from doubtfully enjoyable week ends or not very profitable trips? Do you know how to gather up fragments of time lest they perish? Do you realize the value of minutes? One of the Lamoignons had a wife who always kept him waitng a few minutes before dinner. After a time it occurred to him that eight or ten lines could be written during this interval, and he had paper and ink laid in a convenient place for that purpose. In time—for years are short but minutes are long—several volumes of spiritual meditations were the result.

What do you do in trains, cars or taxis? If you do nothing in perfect contentment, well and good, but if you feel restless you are to blame. Mankind might be divided between the multitude who hate to be kept waiting because they get bored and the happy few who rather like it because it gives them time for thought.

Learn to attack things frontally but according to the most scientific methods. Be the Lindbergh of whatever little ocean you have to cross. Our life should consist of a thousand brief dramas, complete in themselves, swift as a game of poker. Some busienss men have given me a truly artistic pleasure by the infallibility of their dictation. Each letter meant a rapid weighing of pros and cons, a decision, and the thing done at once.

Nothing can be truer and more encouraging to men equally gifted with a human desire for action and a human indulgence of laziness than the Greek sentence: The beginning is half the thing.

Axiom: Very busy people always find time for everything. Conversely, people with immense leisure find time for nothing.

NEW IDEALS

We think in a straight line, and cannot attend to a new idea until we dismiss the old one; but it is not impossible to conceive of a divine Mind which can entertain an unlimited number of concerpts at the same time.

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Dr. Williams' BABY'S OWN TABLETS

ISSUE No. 29—'32

A Canine Symphony

A writer in The Christian Science Monitor gives the reader a glimpse of a Belgian market day with its accompaniment of carts drawn by every known size and color of dog. We read:

It was market hour of a sunny August morning as we approached the Bourse in Brussels. The steps of this stately exchange were brilliant with tier upon tier of vegetables, looking from a distance like a carpet spread for the royal progress of all the kings of finance. There were masses of reds and purples, of greens and golds, glowing warm against the chill gray of classic columns. On the steps and in the streets that flanked the Bourse shoppers argued volubly with full-skirted, wooden-shod garden wives and blue-smocked men who displayed cartloads of colorful wares—pyramids of red cabbages beside silver-green ones, the Yorks and Lancashirians of the cabbage kingdom, bunches of silvery onions and of crisp red radishes, borders of lacy parsley and of watercress. At the rear of the Bourse, cartfuls of color—pansy-purple eggplants, yellow summer squashes, blanched celery stalks with feathery tops of green, rose-red tomatoes. Color again in the flower stalls whither we were being lured by eager women who beckoned with nosegays. Then something happened which put color quite out of our minds, and replaced it with sound.

The steeple clock chimed eight, and into the market strode a policeman, ringing a clamorous handbell. In the interim between the first ding and the answering dong came a mighty burst of sound, as if an orchestra concealed in a pit had begun fortissimo a bold presto movement. And so it had—an orchestra of dogs. For beneath each one of those hundreds of market carts came a lusty bark—bass viol barks issuing from the mouths of great mastiff-looking curs, squeaky piccolo yaps from puny puppies that seemed scarce stout enough to draw a doll cart, saxophone wails from canines of houndish extraction, and tubo tones, bassoon notes, and drum snarls from beneath we knew not which of the ranks of dogcarts. It was a mad modern symphony in an Old World setting. In orchestration it was like a dog show at feeding time, but in motif how different! These were no hunger cries, but the overtones and undertones of Heimweh. That bell was the signal for clearing away the market, and in half an hour all good and faithful dogs would be trotting off home, drawing their carts behind them. What visions of approving pats from the masters, of glad hugs of welcome from their own little Jeans and Maries, may have danced in their doggish anticipations?

We lingered as the market broke up, fascinated by the individualism of dogkind. What might not Browning have done in the listing of those dogs, he who could be eloquent over the Pied Piper's rats! There were big dogs and little ones, long-haired and short, blacks, browns, tans and white and all combinations thereof; there were dapper ones and seedy, gay ones and disconsolate. They were an appealing lot, and we longed to be friendly; but the day's work was too serious a business for them to be wasting wags and barks on trifling tourists. So the symphony went on—lente movements of anticipation. Then came a gradual diminuendo — dogs were trotting off home. And we were left standing in a prosaic street, where alert, hurrying business men jostled past us on their way to the Bourse.

What New York Is Wearing

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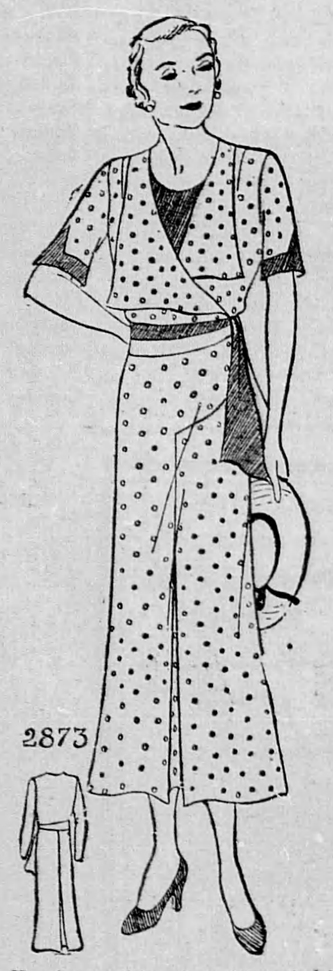

Here's something charming and chic for you—and kindly too if you're inclined to overweight.

You see the levers disagree as to size and length, which has a tendency to diminish bulk.

Inverted plaits at the centre-front and the centre-back aids slimness, creating height to the figure.

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Plain crepe in navy blue or black with white trim will make a nice dressier scheme for the heavier woman.

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Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Wilson Pattern Service, 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto.

STANDING ALONE

I honour any man, anywhere, who, in the conscientious discharge of what he believes to be his duty, dares to stand alone. The world, with ignorant and intolerant judgment, may condemn, the countenances of companions may be averted, the hearts of friends may grow cold, but the consciousness of duty done, shall be sweeter than the applause of the world, than the countenance of companion or the heart of friend. —Charles Summer.

Owl Laffs

Just a Mite of Difference

This new generation
Is famed for its hustle,
While the one that has passed
Was known for its bustle.

A party at the Zoological Gardens stood puzzled before a bird.

The First—"It's a heagle."

The Second—"It's not. It's a howl."

Bystander—"You are both wrong. It's an awk."

In explaining how you learn to play golf, a friend put it this way: "Of course the first six months you play pretty rotten golf. Then you keep on playing worse and worse."

Cub (to his fellow reporters, sighing)—"Oh, why was I ever brought up to be a writer?"

City Editor—"You weren't."

A young married couple started out with the baby to buy a baby carriage. They purchased one, put the baby in it and started home. Everybody smiled. They wondered why. Finally they noticed that the clerk had omitted to remove the sign from the carriage. It read: "Our own make."

Jennings — "I'm a man of few words."

Hennifer—"Well, you keep those mighty busy."

The ideal marriage is when a man finds a beautiful girl and a good housewife, says a philosopher. We thought that was bigamy.

Small Boy—"Pa, what did prehistoric monsters look like?"

Father—"I don't remember, son. Ask your mother."

Wife—"Women can get upstairs easily in the kind of dresses they wear now."

Husband — "Get up stares? I'll agree."

Patient—Yes, I'm a model and the artist I pose for does painting, etching and sculpturing."

"Doctor—"But of course he does some one particular thing better than anything else?"

Patient—"Oh, yes, but nevertheless he's pretty good at painting, etching and sculpturing."

If People Would:

Whistle more and whine less,
Hustle more and holler less,
Work more and worry less,
Boost more and beef less,
Give more and grab less,
Dare more and not depress—
Business would be a sight better.

At that Job got off pretty easily. If it had happened to-day they would have yanked his teeth, appendix and tonsils and left him only his ashes.

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GENIUS

Genius, like the lark, is apt to despise its nest upon the earth, and waste its time in fluttering and quavering among the clouds; but common-sense is the humbler fowl, which picks up the barley-corn and crows and fattens at leisure.—Anon.

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