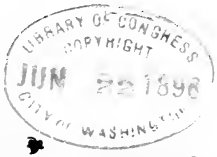
HOWELL'S WHIST OPENINGS.

WHIST OPENINGS

A Systematic Treatment of the Short-Suit Game

BY
EDWIN C. HOWELL



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This volume is gratefully dedicated to

Charton L. Becker,

Charles M. Clay,

AND

Charles S. Knowles,

Who have contributed valuable suggestions to the theory of the new whist, and have heartily coöperated with the author in its study and trial. Without their assistance the short-suit system of play could never have been developed and given to the whist world in its present form.

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APOLOGETIC.

For his frequent use of the first personal pronoun in these pages the author craves the indulgence of his readers. Although he believes the sort of whist-play here advocated to be of a thoroughly scientific character, he has not ventured to assume that it rests upon an established scientific basis, because it is too new for that. Hence he could not bring himself to write about it in an uncompromising, taken-for-granted manner, in the style of books on arithmetic. He feels that he is addressing an audience upon a novel topic, or at least an entirely novel treatment of an old topic. Some of his auditors will at the outset surely listen with distrust. The author's desire, therefore, is to suggest and persuade, rather than to lay down the law in a dogmatic way.

Will the reader, then, forgive this perfectly transparent attempt to take him into the author's confidence?

EDWIN C. HOWELL.

American Whist Club,
Boston, Mass., June 1, 1896.

INTRODUCTORY.

To those sensitive Tristians who look upon the fourth-best and American leads as both the means and the end of existence, the short-suit game of whist appears to be somewhat painful. Why, it is hard to tell, but it is so. One of my long-suit friends, for instance, calls it "cut-throat" whist, thereby expressing the acute effect that its practice exerts upon his delicate organism. His sincerity I question. There are other players who rank Cavendish a peg below the Mahatmas, and believe that out of Foster, the eccentric and maligned, some good may yet arise. To all such unprejudiced and charitably inclined individuals I recommend this outline of a short-suit system as a novelty worthy at least of investigation and trial. For my own part, I am convinced that with equally skilful handling it will beat the ordinary long-suit game all the time. The fallacies of the long-suit game, absurdly shallow when you see through them, Foster has exposed in his books and

in the *New York Sun;* and the practical superiority of the short-suit game its ablest exponents have time and again been ready to demonstrate in actual play. Nevertheless, short-suiters of the first force have at no time been numerous, because this style of play was the outward manifestation of genius, and could not be (or was not) taught by any text-book. In a word, the short-suit game was never systematized.

A few years ago, discussing with Foster the short-suit ideas promulgated in his "Whist Strategy," I asked him if he thought they could be reduced to a system, as methodical, perhaps, as long-suit whist, or the so-called "modern scientific" game. He did not see how. In fact, he could not lay down any hard-and-fast rules for the different sorts of leads—could not erect guide posts, to tell the wayfarer when to follow the long-suit highroad, and when to turn down a short-suit lane; and, what is more, he did not want to. He would have every good player open his hand as he saw fit. What he wished beyond all to avoid was a cut-and-dried, wooden, or "parrotic" style of play.

This notion was very charming and ingenious, but I held then, have always maintained, and believe now more firmly than ever, that a definite *system* of play, founded in principle and developed by information-giving conventions, is essential to the practice of whist, however pleasing the go-as-you-please tactics may be in theory. This conclusion I reached through bitter experience. There may be mind-reading souls who can comprehend unmeaning leads, size up situations in the dark, and grasp unforeseen opportunities, but I have looked for them long and earnestly, and they have not yet appeared. Many is the time and oft, in experimenting with the style of game that is *not* cut-and-dried, wooden, or "parrotic," that my partner and I have gone creeping, groping, floundering around, searching for a will-o'-the-wisp from the alpha to the omega of a hand, while our adversaries, standing on an imperfect but simple long-suit platform, have viewed our paroxysms with unconcern, and with a blind and unreasoning faith have captured all the tricks that belonged to them, and a few that ought to

have come to us. And then the post-mortems, the might-have-beens, the "why didn't you do this, partner?" and the "why did you do that?"—which enlivened those solemn sessions! They were agonizing, but they taught me this valuable lesson—that any system whatever, good, bad, or indifferent, is better than no system at all. Therefore have I patiently pursued my investigations, with the one aim of discovering or inventing a new system of play, definite and logical and practicable. It is for whist-players to say whether or not I have succeeded.

"But why," asks the devoted long-suiter, "why seek a new system? Is not the modern scientific, American game the acme and apotheosis of all that is great and ennobling in whist? Are you too dull to see that Cavendish is the supreme master, and that his dicta are inexorable and his maxims inspired?"

To which I reply that I am a man of little faith, not a hero-worshipper, and perhaps an iconoclast. It is never too late to mend. I have always felt that there *might be* some-

thing better than Cavendish, and that there *probably was.*

Such is my excuse.

And now that I have apparently found the thing that I have been looking for, I am willing to let it go forth as its own vindication; for—presumptuous though the statement may seem—I am entirely confident, after much examination and analysis of recorded play and testing of the system in play at the table, that this outline of the short-suit game, here presented, contains the root and a good deal of the branch of a theory and practice of whist, which for trick-taking purposes is away ahead of anything ever dreamed of by Cavendish and his imitators and parasites. This vindication of the new whist openings is sufficient, so far, only to myself and a few friends and colaborers in the short-suit field; but if it shall not prove satisfactory to others, it will be either because they do not give the system a fair trial, looking into it independently of my say-so, or else because I am utterly mistaken. The latter contingency I of course consider impossible. 'Twould not be good whist to

think otherwise. All I ask is a careful perusal of these pages, a conscientious examination of the hands to which I refer, and then a fair trial, at duplicate whist, of the system proposed. If, in any person's experience, it beats the long-suit game in a series of encounters on even terms, that person will be inclined to keep at it; and he will be quite sure to keep at it if he finds the game agreeable to his temperament and nerves. In the case of genuine whist-players I have no fear of the result, and there is some hope that even the long-suit invalid (who, in his affliction, has the short-suiter's heartfelt sympathy) may, with courage and determination, be able to assimilate the dose of medicine here offered to him, and recover his health.

EXPLANATORY.

The *raison d'etre* of the short-suit game, by which we mean the reason that has induced players, past and present, to dally with it, is in a sense negative. To many minds it has seemed better than the long-suit game because the long-suit game appeared not good at all for its ostensible purpose—that of taking tricks by means of the establishment of suits. The long suit's pretensions in that direction were finally exploded in a series of articles in the New York *Sunday Sun,* beginning February 23, 1896. I won't go into details. The gist of the exposé was that the long suit does not accomplish what is claimed for it. Every player knows that when, from a generally weak hand, he lays on the table the fourth-best card of a long suit, he stands only a small chance of winning a trick with the first-best. Is there any way of improving that chance? Is there any way of relieving partner from the necessity of backing you in a clearly unprofitable venture? The short-

suiter says there is. It is simple enough—don't touch the long suit at all, but open a short one and wait. Here is the principle—the epitaph of the long-suit game and the short-suiter's epiphany hymn:

Given a long suit not headed by a sequence of two or more high cards, and not accompanied by such strength in trumps and the other plain suits that, with reasonable assistance from partner, you can establish and bring it in, you will be more likely to win tricks in the suit if somebody else opens it than if you open it yourself.

Ergo, with such a hand let the long suit alone. Lead a suit in which you don't expect to take a trick, and then you will not be disappointed. Nor will you compromise partner's hand by forcing him to make a probable sacrifice that can do neither of you any good. If you lead a fairly high card you will probably strengthen partner's hand more or less, and if you lead a very short suit you will not improbably win a trick or two in trumps just when you need them. Such are the distinct ear-marks of the short-suit game—tender nursing of strength that cannot take care of itself, sup-

port of partner without self-sacrifice, and cheerful consent to a "force" with weak trumps or strong if you see nothing better.

Suppose, for example, that you have the hand Hearts, K 9 8 5; Clubs, K J 9 6 3; Diamonds, 10 4; Spades, 9 6. Hearts are trumps, Queen of Hearts being turned. (In all the illustrative hands and play in this book Hearts are trumps, Clubs the best plain suit, Diamonds the next best, and Spades the weakest suit.) This is the opening hand (the suits being transposed) of deal No. 22, A. W. L. Trophy finals, 1894. What should you lead from the hand? As actually played, of course, by the Minneapolis and Chicago long-suiters at Philadelphia, the fourth-best of the long suit—6 of Clubs—was led at both tables. The short-suiter considers this a quite unreasonable play. Without a single card of reëntry in Diamonds or Spades, and with only moderate trump strength, he knows that the probability of bringing in the Clubs is too faint to waste a thought upon. His best chance for making Club tricks is to lie low in that suit. He therefore resorts to a short suit,

naturally choosing that which contains the better supporting card. The lead from the hand, then, is 10 of Diamonds. I gave this deal to four strong players, the original leader and his partner being practitioners of the system advocated in this book, and their adversaries being shrewd players of the long-suit school, and this is the way they did it:

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	10 ♢	J ♢	K ♢	A ♢
2	♡ 5	♡ J	♡ A	♡ 3
3	♣ K	♣ 7	♣ 10	♣ Q
4	♣ J	2 ♢	♣ 2	♣ A
5	♣ 3	♡ 2	♣ 4	♣ 5
6	6 ♠	5 ♠	3 ♠	Q ♠
7	♡ 8	3 ♢	♡ 4	♡ Q
8	9 ♠	J ♠	A ♠	7 ♠
9	♡ 9	5 ♢	♡ 6	♡ 7
10	♡ K	8 ♢	♣ 8	♡ 10
11	♣ 9	2 ♠	10 ♠	7 ♢
12	♣ 6	8 ♠	6 ♢	4 ♠
13	4 ♢	K ♠	9 ♢	Q ♢

NOTES.

Trick 1—East plays properly in covering the 10 led. As a general rule second hand should cover a short-suit, supporting card led, if he can do so without risking the loss of a valuable card, and sometimes even then.

Trick 2—West's trump lead is perfectly justifiable; almost any player would consider it the best lead from the hand.

Trick 3—South, having the second-best Diamond guarded, carefully avoids that suit, and returns to partner a supporting card in another suit. The Clubs being worthless except as a possible help to partner, he opens them from the top. West, at second hand, follows the usual practice of just covering, so as to prevent third hand from finessing too deeply; some players, however, in West's position, would play low, and still others would go in with the Ace.

Trick 4—North now clears his long suit, having a much more favorable opportunity than he would have had if he had originally opened it.

Trick 7—Again West's trump lead is correct enough, but North's pretty underplay balks his adversary's intention.

Trick 9—South can now place the trumps exactly, and does not fail to do his duty at the critical point of a beautifully played hand.

North makes good three of his five Clubs. In the A. W. L. Congress play one North player did not win a trick in that suit, and the other succeeded in scoring with his Jack. At each table five tricks were taken North and South by long-suit play; by the short-suit play North and South won seven tricks. The moral is obvious. There is nothing peculiar or exceptional about the deal; it is like myriads of others that a whist-player meets, in which the original leader would fare much better with his long suit if he would only let it alone until he has an opportunity to do something with it.

What I have said about the original opening of a suit not headed by a sequence does not apply, of course, to a very strong suit, either virtually established (like A K Q and

others) or in such a condition that it can be speedily cleared without assistance from partner (like K Q J and others). With such a suit your reason for opening "short" is gone. If it is backed by sufficient trump strength and courage, lead trumps; if not, make what you can out of it while you have the opportunity. The latter method is what one of my short-suit friends calls the brute game. It is a mean kind of strategy, like hitting a man with a club, and, I am glad to say, it is not often necessary; but it demands respectful consideration. If, with the simon-pure long-suiters, I could conscientiously acknowledge that every long suit, whether indifferently strong or utterly weak, is an efficient weapon, I might believe in its use in season and out of season; but I cannot make that acknowledgment. On the contrary, I regard the ordinary long suit, compared with the short, as a single-stick to a rapier. I prefer the rapier.

But if you have a really good plain suit (K 10 and three or more small, for instance), with trump strength behind it, and with means of protection and reëntry in the other suits, I am not so incredulous as to scout

the idea of establishing and bringing in that good plain suit; and, being able to count, I can see that such a result is all I have a right to expect from the hand under any system. Hence I believe in the long-suit game when (and only when) it will probably, or with a reasonable degree of probability, do what it is intended to do—namely, establish and bring in the long suit. Establish and *bring in*, mind you. We short-suiters don't care a fig about merely clearing a suit; we must also do some business with it afterward in order to gratify our covetous inclinations. We would rather take tricks in a suit without establishing it, than establish it without taking tricks.

Have I so far made my meaning sufficiently clear? If I have—if the reader feels that the short-suit idea is not a mere whim and symptom of contrariness (which some people seem to consider it), but has a foundation in common sense and logic (as we short-suiters understand those faculties)—then we are prepared to go on and see whither this alleged system will carry us.

FORMS OF STRATEGY.

There are five ways in which you may win tricks at whist.

In the first place, you may establish a long plain suit, exhaust the adversaries' trumps, and make the small cards of the established suit. That is the *long-suit game* in all its integrity and pristine vigor.

Or, with or without the establishment of a suit, you may pick up tricks here and there with high cards, and if you make all the high cards you have, never fretting about the small ones, you may consider yourself lucky. If you play with this end definitely in view, preserving your high cards and tenace strength, and leading cards worthless in your own hand, but of such a size that they may help partner, then your method is what we generally call the *supporting-card game.* Foster uses the expression "tenace" game, but I prefer to retain the usual, restricted meaning of the word "tenace," as applied to the best and third-best of a suit

and a couple of similar combinations that I will speak about later.

Or, having several high cards in sequence in a plain suit, you may endeavor to win tricks with them, as early as possible, without regard for the rest of the hand. That is the *high-card game.*

Or, you may make small trumps by ruffing a suit in which you were short originally. If you start in with the lead of a very short suit (whose nature partner will recognize by the card led, as I will afterward explain), and aim to win tricks by ruffing that suit, your method is the *ruffing game,* pure and simple.

Finally, having length and strength in trumps, and at least one good plain suit or winning cards scattered among the three plain suits, you may lead trumps originally, with the object of exhausting the adversaries' trumps and protecting whatever plain-suit strength you and your partner may have. I shall call this the *trump attack.*

Each one of these five methods of winning tricks has the character of a distinct *plan,* or

form of strategy, if it is definitely adopted and indicated to partner either at the beginning or later during the play of a hand. You may, to be sure, start out with one end in view—that is, with one plan—and, something better showing itself, may promptly switch to a quite different line of play. Such a proceeding does not destroy the systematic character of the game. It changes the form of strategy, but is in itself pre-eminently strategic. He is the best strategist, indeed, who, knowing how to use his resources in the most effective manner, is always ready to adapt himself to circumstances. I cannot teach the art of doing this. What I can do is to point out how, according to the short-suit theory, a hand should be opened, and how, in a general manner, the play may be developed, according to one plan or a combination of several plans; but at just what point in the progress of a certain game the player should change his tactics, he will always have to determine for himself. As an illustration of the seizure of opportunities resulting in the successive adoption of all five different forms of

strategy in one deal, I present the following:

(Deal No. 18, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1895; 8 of Hearts turned. North leads from the hand Hearts, A 10 9; Clubs, K 10 9 6 2; Diamonds, 9 7 5; Spades, 8 5.)

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	8 ♠	J ♠	Q ♠	A ♠
2	5 ♢	3 ♢	4 ♢	Q ♢
3	7 ♢	6 ♢	8 ♢	J ♢
4	9 ♢	K ♢	♡ 4	2 ♢
5	5 ♠	K ♠	10 ♠	4 ♠
6	♡ A	♡ J	♡ Q	♡ 6
7	♡ 10	♡ 2	♡ 5	♡ 7
8	♡ 9	♡ 3	♡ K	♡ 8
9	♣ 2	2 ♠	9 ♠	6 ♠
10	♣ 6	♣ 7	7 ♠	10 ♢
11	♣ 9	♣ Q	3 ♠	♣ 3
12	♣ K	♣ A	♣ 8	♣ J
13	♣ 10	A ♢	♣ 5	♣ 4

NOTES.

Trick 1—North, having the choice of two short suits, neither of which contains a probably good supporting card, selects the shorter suit. The 8-spot led, as we shall see later,

by this system indicates to partner a desire to play the ruffing game, with not more than two cards in the suit led. Contrary to expectation the 8 of Spades turns out in fact to be an excellent "strengthener" for partner's hand, and the lead therefore actually initiates the supporting-card game.

Trick 2—West plays the high-card game.

Trick 4—West's persistence in the Diamond suit, in spite of the certainty that the third round will be ruffed by one of the adversaries, is an indication, to everybody else at the table, of weakness in trumps.

Trick 5—South proceeds to clear his Spade suit, playing now the long-suit game, and at the same time giving partner his desired opportunity to ruff if he has no more Spades.

Trick 6—If East leads the Diamond, one adversary will discard and the other ruff. If he leads the Spade, South will win and North will get a discard, or else, if West can ruff, North will ruff over him. He cannot open his tenace in Clubs right up to North, who has strength in that suit if he has in anything. East is therefore almost forced to lead the trump as a defensive measure.

It is not his fault that the trump lead gives the adversary a chance for a coup. That is a peculiarity of the short-suit game; the adversary of the short-suit leader is much more frequently driven to the wall and compelled to adopt desperate measures than the adversary of the long-suiter is. The game is now over. North knows that neither adversary has more than three trumps, and partner has at least three left, including the King; he therefore wins his partner's trick and goes back with the trump, that partner may win the third round and make his spades. This is the trump attack late in hand, just when it is most effective.

By no other method than the short-suit opening can either North or South make anything of his long suit, if the adversaries play good whist. After the long-suit opening from the Clubs, the North and South hands are worth only four tricks, as compared with seven, the result obtained above by short-suit play. As played at the Minneapolis Congress, one North and South pair made four tricks, and the other, by frightfully bad play on the part of East, got in six.

THE NEW OPENINGS.

Every hand should be opened with one of the foregoing forms of strategy in view. Our theory is, in a word, that the original leader should consider only the possibilities of his own hand. Beyond that he knows nothing about the situation, and if he plays in such a way as most probably to do himself good, and receives intelligent support from partner, he should in the long run achieve the greatest possible degree of success with his cards. But, in order to receive intelligent support from partner, he must give definite information by his original lead, and how he may do this I now propose to show.

We have a system of original leads, evolved from long experience and a careful study of many hands, in which every one of the thirteen cards of a suit, originally led, has a certain particular meaning. With this system the player can inevitably declare, by the very first card that he lays on the table, which of the five forms of strategy he desires

to practise during that hand; in other words, he tells the general character of his hand by the original lead. I am not an enemy of the information-giving game. It is not on account of its informatory character that I object to the long-suit game. The player must give information, or a partnership game is out of the question. The only matter of choice is, what sort of information is the most advantageous. I have always favored general information. Under the long-suit system, if you open the hand with a small lay card, you say: "Partner, this is the fourth-best of my longest suit. It may not be the best thing to play for, but here it is, and we can determine later whether or not we should stick to it." Now, I don't like that so much as what I can say if we play any one of the forms of strategy of the present short-suit system, as: for the long-suit game, "Partner, here is my best suit. It is fairly strong, and I have, besides, so much trump and reëntry support, that if you can back me up just a little bit, we shall bring it in;" or, for the supporting-card game, "Partner, I haven't a long suit worth fighting for.

Don't expect a trick from me in this suit, but help me make my high cards in other suits, and use my trumps as you see fit;" or, for the high-card game, "Partner, here's a very strong suit, the only thing in my hand worth considering. Let me get what I can out of it, and then look out for yourself;" or, for the ruffing game, "Partner, this suit is very short. I can certainly ruff it on the third round, and don't see anything better to do."

When, after much figuring and experimenting, I hit upon the means of giving all this information by the original lead, I felt that it was a revelation. However, whether it was a revelation or an illusion, I ask nobody to accept this system of leads on faith, but hope that all my readers may investigate their value in as careful and unbiased a manner as I have done.

THE LONG-SUIT GAME.

The elimination of the fourth-best, as an original lead from plain suits, is the first natural sequel of our theory of long-suit strategy. The fourth-best is quite unnecessary now, because, when you open a long suit, you command partner to help you bring it in, regardless of all other considerations. The length or strength of your suit is none of his business; you will take care of that. Moreover, some of those cards which are now led as fourth-bests are needed for a special purpose in our system. A thorough investigation convinces me that the only cards required as low leads from long suits are the four smallest—2, 3, 4 and 5. I cannot say that even these are absolutely necessary; for, according to our ideas of the long-suit game, a player is very seldom justified in adopting that form of strategy unless he is strong enough in trumps to lead them before starting his suit. My own inclinations in this regard are radical. By reserving the 2, 3, 4 and 5 for long-suit leads I give plenty

of latitude to any short-suit player who may not be quite satisfied to restrict himself within the limits advised in this book; but, for myself, I am nearly ready to throw overboard altogether the low-card lead from long suits, except as a purely conventional indication of trump strength, or as a bold venture for a great score. Here is a hand from which I supposed such a lead was surely advisable: Hearts, Q J 8; Clubs, A 10 9 6 3; Diamonds, Q 5 2; Spades, A 2, and yet, when I gave it to a short-suiter to play, he opened with the Ace and 2 of Spades, and made one more trick than it is possible to make by any other original lead. I considered the lead of 3 of Clubs probably the best because that suit seemed to be worth playing for, because there are reëntry cards in the other plain suits, and because the trump strength of the hand is above the average. There was a fair chance, in my judgment, of establishing and then bringing in the Clubs. My friend, however, is even a shorter-suiter than myself, and his judgment led him into the "short-suit lane."

This was the play:

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	A ♠	4 ♠	3 ♠	6 ♠
2	2 ♠	K ♠	J ♠	7 ♠
3	2 ♢	5 ♠	Q ♠	8 ♠
4	♣ 3	♣ 5	♣ J	♣ 4
5	♡ Q	♡ 2	♡ 7	♡ 4
6	♡ J	♡ 3	♡ 9	♡ 6
7	♡ 8	♡ 5	♡ K	♡ 10
8	♣ A	9 ♠	♣ Q	♣ K
9	♣ 10	10 ♠	♣ 2	♣ 8
10	♣ 9	3 ♢	♣ 7	4 ♢
11	♣ 6	6 ♢	10 ♢	7 ♢
12	5 ♢	9 ♢	K ♢	A ♢
13	Q ♢	J ♢	♡ A	8 ♢

NOTES.

(This is deal No. 8, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894; 6 of Hearts turned).

Trick 1—North's play is not a "lucky shot," but a scientific and well-considered lead, made for the purpose of preserving his tenace strength in Clubs until a favorable opportunity for using it should arise.

Trick 3—In East's situation some players

would open the Diamond suit, and others would lead the singleton Club, but his actual play is as good as any other. The situation is an excellent illustration of the dilemma in which the adversary of the short-suit leader is commonly placed when the latter has led into his strongest suit. Whether to continue his suit, or to start trumps, or to open another long suit, or to lead short, is the question that perplexes him; and his perplexity is always to the advantage of the short-suit partners.

Trick 4—South leads Jack instead of Queen because under this system Queen indicates not more than two in suit.

Trick 5—The Jack of Clubs having won, rendering it probable that partner has the Ace, South starts trumps. North, by playing Queen before Jack, shows at least one more trump remaining, by a form of the "three-trump echo." The remainder of the hand plays itself. North and South win eleven tricks, whereas by the long-suit opening of the Clubs they cannot get more than ten, and are more likely to get only nine. The only way to make the most out of the

Clubs is to delay the development until the situation is clear for South to come through with his Queen and kill West's King.

In order to give every player sufficient room to exercise his long-suit proclivities, if he is loth to abandon them altogether, I enunciate the following maxim, which, I think, is quite liberal:

Play the long-suit game if you have a good plain suit, fair strength in trumps, and at least one reasonably probable card of reëntry in another suit

On so much (or so little) I insist. An attempt to play the long-suit game with less strength than this is a speculation, which is justifiable only under rare conditions.

Now let us see what the three elements of strength here mentioned are held to mean to the consistent short-suiter.

First, there is the good plain suit. Under that head come a few—and only a very few—four-card combinations. The fundamental condition seems to be that the suit, after establishment and protection, should be worth at least two tricks. Three four-card combinations satisfactorily meet that

requirement— A K x x, K Q J x, and K Q 10 x. There are two others—A Q J x and Q J 10 x—which appear to come up to the mark, but the latter is generally too hard to establish, unless you have cards of reëntry in both the other plain suits, and the other is a tenace combination from which the short-suiter hates to lead unless he is compelled to, or has a great game in sight. We can therefore lay it down as a rule that the only four-card suits worth opening for an attempt at the long-suit game, pure and simple, are A K x x, K Q J x and K Q 10 x; but weaker suits, or suits containing tenaces, may be opened under compulsion, or as speculative coups, or for the sake of information, as we shall afterward see.

The good five-card suits are those which contain at least two high cards (counting the 10 as a high card), excepting, as a general thing, suits headed by A Q, A J or K J. These are the three tenaces to which I have referred. A Q is the major tenace, K J the minor tenace; and A J, I shall call the vice-tenace (a term invented, I believe, by Foster), because it becomes the major tenace

as soon as one of the honors (K or Q) falls. Here, once for all, I want to say that the radical short-suiter avoids touching tenace suits in the opening, no matter how long they may be, unless they are backed by other strength of a pronounced character. By originally holding on to A Q J x x x x, for instance, and leading short, you may lose a trick, to be sure, but I believe that the chances are against it, and my faith in the short leads is so firm that I consider your prospect of gain far greater than that of loss.

This is carrying the short-suit theory to its limit, but why be afraid? We have had enough of the long-suit game with short-suit attachments, and the short-suit game with long-suit frills. Between the two styles of play there is no happy medium, any more than there is between oil and water. If I see an opportunity, or even a plausible chance, for the long-suit game, I try to improve it, but if the short suit appears to me to be the correct thing in a given hand I am not going to abandon it for the sake of getting in a single Ace "out of the wet."

The chance of gain by "nursing" A Q and four small, if there is not a reasonable hope of establishing and bringing in the suit, is practically as good as when the tenace is accompanied by only one other. Insufficiently supported, the long tenace suit should be treated like a short one, because only the top cards are likely to be effective.

When we come to suits of more than five cards, I am willing to call them good if they contain at least one high card (placing the 10 in that category). Of course I except suits headed by the major, minor or vice-tenace, unless, with the rest of the hand, they afford hope of a decided gain.

What I call the speculative coup in the opening is illustrated by the following example of long-suit play—a bold try for a big gain, leading low, for partner's instruction, from a long tenace suit, without the regulation means of reëntry (deal No. 31, A. W. L. Trophy finals, 1895; 9 of Hearts turned):

The leader's hand—Hearts, A 10 8 6; Clubs, A Q 8 7 6 3; Diamonds, Q 7; Spades, 6.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	♣ 3	♣ 4	♣ 10	♣ J
2	6 ♠	8 ♠	A ♠	10 ♠
3	♡ A	♡ 7	♡ 2	♡ 3
4	♡ 6	♡ Q	♡ K	♡ 5
5	♡ 8	3 ◇	♡ J	♡ 9
6	♣ Q	6 ◇	♣ 5	♣ 9
7	♣ A	8 ◇	♣ 2	♣ K
8	♣ 8	9 ◇	2 ◇	4 ◇
9	♣ 7	10 ◇	4 ♠	5 ◇
10	♣ 6	J ◇	5 ♠	2 ♠
11	Q ◇	K ◇	♡ 4	3 ♠
12	♡ 10	Q ♠	9 ♠	J ♠
13	7 ◇	A ◇	7 ♠	K ♠

NOTE.

The original lead of a trump will not do so well, because, after three rounds, partner will be in without knowledge of your suit. The small card lead by this system is three tricks better than the usual Ace first.

Next, let us see what we mean by fair trump strength. I am almost disposed to leave this matter, without more words, to

the player's judgment, but I submit this maxim—that

You should not indicate the long-suit game by your original lead unless you are perfectly willing that partner should immediately lead trumps, from strong or weak ones.

This is an immediate result of our understanding of the long-suit game. If partner wins the first trick in your long suit, he is bound to play for your suit instanter, and of course a trump lead is generally the first step in that direction. My own experience is that the original leader should not attempt nor indicate the long-suit game unless he has four trumps with an honor, or two honors, irrespective of length. Still, I do not wish to lay down a hard-and-fast rule to that effect. The player must use his discretion, always keeping in mind the maxim above enunciated.

In this connection it is important to remember that if you have two trumps originally, it is about an even chance that partner has four or more. You cannot depend on him for good ones, but if you have the good ones yourself, even though they be only two

in number, you may take chances, if you like, on his having the length.

Here is an example of the long-suit game, the original leader having two high trumps and depending on partner for length (deal No. 5, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893; 2 of Hearts turned):

The leader's hand—Hearts, A Q; Clubs, K 9 6 3 2; Diamonds, 10 9 7 3; Spades, K J.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	♣ 2	♣ 5	♣ A	♣ 4
2	♡ A	♡ 7	♡ 8	♡ 2
3	♡ Q	♡ 9	♡ K	2 ♢
4	♣ 3	♣ 10	♣ J	♣ 8
5	♣ K	4 ♠	♣ 7	♣ Q
6	♣ 9	6 ♠	3 ♠	5 ♢
7	♣ 6	8 ♠	5 ♠	8 ♢
8	3 ♢	4 ♢	♡ 3	J ♢
9	7 ♢	9 ♠	♡ 4	Q ♢
10	9 ♢	Q ♠	♡ 5	2 ♠
11	10 ♢	6 ♢	♡ 6	7 ♠
12	J ♠	K ♢	♡ 10	10 ♠
13	K ♠	A ♠	♡ J	A ♢

NOTE.

The original lead of 9 of Diamonds (supporting-card game) should effect the same result.

The third essential of the long-suit hand is a reasonably probable card of reëntry outside of the best suit. An established suit, even with trumps out of the way, is of no value unless you can "get in" to make it. And since, very generally, you are not in the lead when you want to be, and cannot obtain the lead with a card in your established suit, an attempt to play the long-suit game is almost certainly futile unless, at the outset, you have sufficient means of reëntry. The one reasonably probable card of reëntry is what I may call the minimum limit of auxiliary long-suit strength. An Ace, a King or Qŭeen guarded, or a fifth trump, may be regarded as satisfying this condition.

As I have already intimated, the long-suit form of strategy can profitably be adopted but seldom in the opening of a hand. It generally comes in later, after a

trump attack or a short-suit opening, as opportunity arises. I fancy, indeed, that with the general adoption of the short-suit play more long suits will be brought in than now ever "see daylight." The most valuable use of the long-suit opening is, however, yet to be explained. In this system the original lead of a very small card—2, 3, 4 or 5—indicates the leader's desire to play the long-suit game, with all therein implied. What it implied principally, so far as the leader's partner is concerned, is that, with any strength at all in his hand, he should lead trumps at the earliest opportunity. In other words, the original lead of a 2, 3, 4 or 5 is an invitation to partner to lead trumps —a very pressing invitation, too, which amounts to a command when partner wins the first trick. It is easy enough to extend this idea, and lay down the general proposition that—

With any hand such that you desire trumps to be led, but do not consider it advisable to start them yourself, it is proper to lead originally a low card — 2, 3, 4 or 5 — of a plain suit.

We have here a logical convention, which

may be applied with effect to several classes of hands. In the first place there is the hand containing five trumps, with a weak or only moderately strong four-card suit, and little or no strength besides. From such a hand the best players have always favored the plain-suit opening, but at the same time they have always felt that they ran a risk of disaster in delaying the trump lead. With our system the plain-suit opening is rendered quite safe, for if partner has any means of support in his hand—as he almost invariably will have—he will give you the trump as soon as he gets the lead. From the following hand, for example (deal No. 23, A. W. L. Trophy finals, 1895; Jack of Hearts turned), only the most forward trump-leader would gratify his inclination: Hearts, 9 5 4 3 2; Clubs, A 10 6 5; Diamonds, K 10 8; Spades, 10. By our system the player can open his Club suit and at the same time indicate his strength in trumps. This is how the deal was played for me by two short-suiters (North and South) against two long-suiters:

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1.....	♣ 5	♣ K	♣ 2	♣ 7
2.....	10 ♠	7 ♠	A ♠	4 ♠
3.....	♡ 2	♡ 7	♡ A	♡ 6
4.....	♡ 3	♡ 10	♡ 8	♡ J
5.....	♡ 4	3 ♠	2 ♠	K ♠
6.....	♡ 5	♡ K	♣ 3	♡ Q
7.....	♡ 9	Q ♠	♣ 4	J ♠
8.....	K ◇	4 ◇	6 ◇	2 ◇
9	10 ◇	7 ◇	J ◇	3 ◇
10.....	8 ◇	9 ◇	Q ◇	5 ◇
11.....	♣ 6	6 ♠	A ◇	5 ♠
12.....	♣ 10	8 ♠	♣ J	♣ 9
13.....	♣ A	9 ♠	♣ 8	♣ Q

NOTES.

Trick 2—South, seeing the trumps, Clubs and Diamonds in his own and partner's hands, wastes no time on the Spades, but jumps in at second hand and makes sure of two rounds of trumps at once.

Trick 6—North takes the chance of finding both the remaining trumps in one hand, but he gives partner credit for some protection in the Spade suit.

Trick 8—South having discarded two Clubs, North plays for the Diamonds, retaining command and tenace advantage in Clubs. The result is complete success for bold play throughout, based on the valuable information of trump strength given by North's original lead.

North and South win ten tricks; at the Minneapolis Congress one North and South pair got six, and the other seven.

Again, suppose that an honor is turned at your right, and you want trumps to come through it. The "modern scientific" and much practised device to command partner to lead through the honor turned is an irregular original opening, which in principle is so unreasonable—a weak lead as an indication of strength—that many of the best players have discarded the play after a thorough trial of its virtues. It works beautifully sometimes, but, like all other illogical and purely artificial conventions, it is a loser in the long run. By our system, however, if we want a lead through the honor turned, we can open a plain suit with

a small card (2, 3, 4 or 5), thereby at once giving the necessary command to partner and treating the leader's hand according to its deserts.

Take, for example, deal No. 14, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893; King of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, A J 8 2; Clubs, A Q 10 7 6 2; Diamonds, J 6 5; Spades, none.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	♣ 2	♣ K	♣ 4	♣ 5
2	5 ♢	10 ♠	Q ♠	2 ♠
3	♡ J	♡ Q	♡ 9	♡ 10
4	6 ♢	J ♠	A ♠	3 ♠
5	♡ 2	♡ 4	♡ 7	♡ 3
6	♡ 8	2 ♢	♡ 6	♡ 5
7	♡ A	3 ♢	4 ♠	♡ K
8	♣ A	♣ 8	♣ 3	♣ 9
9	♣ Q	4 ♢	7 ♠	♣ J
10	♣ 10	7 ♢	8 ♢	5 ♠
11	♣ 7	6 ♠	10 ♢	8 ♠
12	♣ 6	9 ♠	K ♢	9 ♢
13	J ♢	K ♠	A ♢	Q ♢

NOTE.

There is a gain here, over any other method of play, of one trick for North and South.

There is still another case, of less importance than either of the others, but of occasional occurrence, in which a small card (2, 3, 4 or 5) can be led originally as a trump call. It is when you have a very long, weak suit, two other suits of considerable strength, and no trumps. With this holding it is nearly always advantageous for you to have trumps led, and by our system you can impart your desire to partner by starting your long, weak suit. When trumps are led you can discard that suit if you wish, or, if you find that partner has support in it, you can discard from the other suits, keeping only the high cards for reëntry. For example, you would lead 2 of Clubs from the following hand (deal No. 24, A. W. L. finals, 1894): Hearts, none; Clubs, 9 8 6 5 4 2; Diamonds, K Q 6 3; Spades, A Q 7. 9 of Hearts turned.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	♣ 2	♣ Q	♣ 7	♣ K
2	7 ♠	10 ♠	K ♠	2 ♠
3	3 ♢	♡ 3	♡ K	♡ 2
4	♣ 4	♡ 5	♡ A	♡ 4
5	♣ 5	♡ 10	♡ 7	♡ 6
6	6 ♢	♡ Q	♡ 8	♡ J
7	♣ 6	♣ A	♣ J	3 ♠
8	♣ 8	♣ 10	4 ♢	5 ♠
9	Q ♢	9 ♢	J ♢	2 ♢
10	♣ 9	♣ 3	4 ♠	♡ 9
11	Q ♠	6 ♠	9 ♠	8 ♠
12	A ♠	J ♠	8 ♢	7 ♢
13	K ♢	5 ♢	A ♢	10 ♢

THE SUPPORTING-CARD GAME.

We come next to the supporting-card game, which under our system is in many respects the most important division of whist strategy, because it is the most generally available and the most frequently adopted. It is, indeed, the essence of short-suit play—the theme, of which the other forms of strategy are but variations. It is a hard game to play, requiring close observation, fine judgment, and a steady nerve. It is also a hard game to play against. If one hopes to attain success at the supporting-card game, he must cultivate whist perception until he is able to see and seize opportunities, whenever and however presented, with the alacrity and force of a fencer or a pugilist. It is a game of opportunity. The original lead of a supporting card from a suit that is itself worthless, so far as winning tricks is concerned, is in the nature of a sacrifice. Such an opening at whist I may liken to a gambit at chess, where the player sacrifices a pawn at the out-

set, thereby freeing his game, and afterward plays for position and for attack upon the exposed points in his adversary's line. Both the supporting-card opening at whist and the gambit at chess afford the greatest possible scope for the subsequent exercise of genius and skill, and lead to the most interesting developments in the progress of play. At this style of game "piano" hands —another name for excessive dullness and waste of time—are much less numerous than under the flat long-suit routine.

The original lead at the supporting-card game is not a very complicated matter. If the hand does not contain the elements of strength necessary for an attempt to play the long-suit form of strategy, nor a plain suit so very strong as to justify the high-card opening, nor trumps sufficient to warrant the trump attack, the player must resort to the supporting-card or the "ruffing" lead. Since the latter is but a modification or special instance of the former, I shall for the present confine my attention to the supporting-card game. For this opening we reserve four cards—Queen, Jack, 10 and 9.

They are generally led as the highest of short, weak suits. I wish to state at once, however, and emphatically, that while our Queen, Jack, 10 and 9 are generally "the top of nothing," they by no means absolutely deny better cards in the suit opened. That is, we are free to use supporting cards as interior leads. The Queen is an exception. Since it is unsafe to lead a Queen from the head of three or more in suit, unless it is accompanied by the Jack, we reserve the Queen lead for not more than two in suit, and, of course, the higher of those two. From a suit of Q J x we lead J. As the best card Jack is led from not more than three in suit, but as an interior card it is led also from Q J and one or more others, and also, under compulsion, from K J 10 and A J 10, not more than three in suit. From A J 10 and one, and K J 10 and one or more small cards, the proper supporting-card lead is the 10, the principle being:

Of two supporting cards in sequence the higher is led from a short, and the lower from a long, suit.

Hence, from J 10 x lead J, but from J 10 x x lead 10. The 10 may also be led effect-

ively from A 10 9, K 10 9, Q 10 9, and under compulsion from other combinations, which I need not enumerate, but which the player will recognize as occasion arises.

As the "top of nothing" the 10 is led from more than three in suit, in which respect it is unlike the Jack and Queen. The 9 is led from even more combinations than the 10. It is hardly a "supporting" card, but is used in that sense in order to give a sufficient latitude of choice to the original leader. As an interior lead the 9 is particularly serviceable.

The principle above enunciated relative to supporting cards in sequence applies to 10 9 as well as to J 10. It appears to be available with reference to Q J only when accompanied by 10; in which case, if the suit is long, J is followed by Q, and, if the suit is short, by 10.

At the supporting-card lead from the interior of suits many players may shake their heads in distrust, fancying that it renders too indefinite for partner the character of the suit originally led. If, however, they will consider that this indefiniteness of meaning

is imparted also to the adversaries, their objection will lose a great deal of its force. And if, still further, they will remember that a common and very effectual defence to the ordinary, crude short-suit game is the play up to weakness from the left-hand adversary of the original leader, and that the practice of opening suits from the inside, as well as from the top, nullifies this defence, my doubting friends will be almost ready to agree with me that the interior lead, far from being a drawback, is a safeguard of the supporting-card game. From the hand (deal No. 7, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894), Hearts, A 7 4; Clubs, K 10 7 6; Diamonds, A 9 8; Clubs, A 3 2, the proper original lead is 10 of Clubs, because it at once conveys to partner correct information as to the general character of your hand, and is most likely to result advantageously for yourself. This deal was played as follows by two short-suiters, North and South, against two "longs," East and West.

6 of Hearts turned. The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	♣ 10	♣ J	♣ A	♣ 3
2	8 ♢	♡ 3	K ♢	3 ♢
3	♣ 6	♣ 2	♣ 9	♣ 8
4	♡ 4	♡ 5	♡ Q	♡ 6
5	♡ A	♡ 2	♡ 9	♡ 8
6	♡ 7	♡ 10	7 ♠	♡ K
7	2 ♠	J ♠	8 ♠	4 ♠
8	3 ♠	Q ♠	10 ♠	5 ♠
9	A ♠	6 ♠	2 ♢	9 ♠
10	A ♢	♡ J	4 ♢	5 ♢
11	♣ 7	♣ 4	6 ♢	K ♠
12	♣ K	♣ 5	J ♢	7 ♢
13	9 ♢	♣ Q	Q ♢	10 ♢

NOTES.

Trick 3—As the cards lie, East's lead of 2 of Clubs is about the worst thing he could do, but it also appears to be the best. He supposes that partner has King of Clubs, and plays to clear the suit. The situation is another forcible illustration of the dilemma in which the adversary of the short-suit leader is so apt to find himself at the second or third trick of a hand.

Trick 4—South's trump lead is an instance of the seizure of opportunities, to which I have referred as a characteristic of the supporting-card game.

Trick 8—North's underplay saves a trick. The rest of the play is simple. North and South win two more tricks than they could by an original long-suit lead.

I have said that we open K J 10 or A J 10 with J under compulsion, by which I mean that we resort to such a lead only when we have no short suit headed by a proper card (Q, J, 10 or 9), because K J 10 and A J 10 are tenace combinations, and the short-suiter will not ruthlessly break into a tenace combination. From K J x and A J x the Jack lead is positively disadvantageous, and rather than open one of these combinations, if the hand presents no other opportunity for a correct informatory lead in a plain suit, I would fall back on the resource of starting trumps, either from strength or from weakness. Above all, the original leader must fight shy of deceptive openings. An example of the trump lead as a subterfuge is found in this hand (deal

No. 42, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1895): Hearts, 8 7 2; Clubs, K Q 9 8; Diamonds, Q 7 6 3; Spades, K 10, from which I should not hesitate to lead 8 of Hearts. The only other plausible opening is King of Clubs, but the short-suiter would prefer to do almost anything rather than start a K Q x x suit. If that is the best suit he has, he can hardly lose anything by refusing to open it, and may gain through the Ace being led by the adversary. An example of such a gain may be found on page 63.

I append several examples of short-suit play with the supporting-card opening, which the student should carefully examine.

Gambit opening from a hand approaching long-suit strength, but not quite good enough for long-suit treatment (deal No. 16, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893); 8 of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, K J 5 3; Clubs, 10 9 7 4 2; Diamonds, A J; Spades, J 7.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1.....	J ♠	2 ♠	4 ♠	K ♠
2.....	♡ 3	♡ 2	♡ 10	♡ 8
3.....	A ♢	2 ♢	K ♢	5 ♢
4.....	J ♢	3 ♢	4 ♢	7 ♢
5.....	7 ♠	8 ♠	Q ♠	10 ♠
6.....	♡ J	♡ 4	♡ 6	♡ 7
7.....	♣ 10	♣ J	♣ K	♣ 3
8.....	♣ 2	8 ♢	Q ♢	10 ♢
9.....	♣ 4	3 ♠	9 ♢	♡ 9
10.....	♡ 5	5 ♠	♣ 5	♡ A
11.....	♣ 7	♣ A	♣ 8	♣ 6
12.....	♡ K	9 ♠	A ♠	♡ Q
13.....	♣ 9	6 ♠	6 ♢	♣ Q

The short-suit play is at least one trick better than the long on this deal.

Gambit opening from a hand which in plain suits is slightly stronger than the foregoing (deal No. 30, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893); 6 of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, Q 8 3 2; Clubs, A J 5 4; Diamonds, 10 6 4; Spades, J 8.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	J ♠	2 ♠	9 ♠	4 ♠
2	8 ♠	A ♠	Q ♠	7 ♠
3	4 ♢	K ♢	2 ♢	9 ♢
4	6 ♢	Q ♢	5 ♢	3 ♢
5	♡ Q	♡ 10	♡ 4	♡ 6
6	10 ♢	A ♢	7 ♢	J ♢
7	♡ 2	♡ 7	♡ 5	♡ J
8	♡ 3	3 ♠	♡ 9	♡ A
9	♡ 8	5 ♠	♣ 2	♡ K
10	♣ 4	♣ 7	♣ 9	♣ 3
11	♣ 5	6 ♠	♣ K	♣ 6
12	♣ J	10 ♠	K ♠	♣ 8
13	♣ A	8 ♢	♣ Q	♣ 10

Gambit opening worth two tricks more than long-suit.

Supporting-card opening and ruffing-card return (deal No. 5, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894); 9 of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, 8 6 3; Clubs, A 8 6 2; Diamonds, J 9 5; Spades, 9 8 6.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	J ♢	Q ♢	A ♢	6 ♢
2	6 ♠	5 ♠	7 ♠	K ♠
3	8 ♠	Q ♠	♡ 5	A ♠
4	♣ A	♣ 9	♣ 3	♣ 5
5	9 ♠	♡ 10	2 ♢	2 ♠
6	♡ 3	♡ A	♡ 7	♡ 9
7	♡ 6	♡ J	4 ♢	♡ K
8	♡ 8	♡ Q	♣ 7	J ♠
9	♣ 2	♣ 4	♣ K	♣ 10
10	9 ♢	K ♢	7 ♢	3 ♠
11	5 ♢	♡ 4	♣ J	4 ♠
12	♣ 6	♡ 2	8 ♢	10 ♠
13	♣ 8	3 ♢	10 ♢	♣ Q

Would a trump lead from West be justifiable at trick 3? If not, the gambit play is *plus* two tricks.

Gambit opening from very weak hand (deal No. 18, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894); 9 of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, 7; Clubs, K 7 6 5 3; Diamonds, Q J 8 6 2; Spades, 9 7.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	9 ♠	10 ♠	Q ♠	8 ♠
2	7 ♠	2 ♠	A ♠	3 ♠
3	2 ♢	J ♠	4 ♠	♡ J
4	♡ 7	♡ 5	♡ 8	♡ A
5	6 ♢	♡ 3	♣ 2	♡ K
6	♣ 3	♣ 9	♣ A	♣ J
7	♣ K	♣ Q	♣ 4	♣ 8
8	J ♢	K ♢	A ♢	5 ♢
9	Q ♢	4 ♢	7 ♢	9 ♢
10	♣ 5	♡ 2	♣ 10	10 ♢
11	8 ♢	K ♠	5 ♠	♡ 4
12	♣ 6	♡ 10	6 ♠	♡ 6
13	♣ 7	♡ Q	3 ♢	♡ 9

"Top of nothing" play *plus* two tricks.

Gambit opening from a hand that would justify the long-suit game if it were not void of one suit (deal No. 28, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1895); 4 of Hearts turned. The leader's hand—Hearts, A Q 3; Clubs, K J 8 6 5 4 3; Diamonds, A 9 8; Spades, none.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	9 ♢	Q ♢	K ♢	3 ♢
2	♣ K	♣ A	♣ 7	♣ 2
3	♡ 3	2 ♠	3 ♠	K ♠
4	♣ 3	♣ 9	♡ 6	♡ 8
5	♡ A	♡ 2	♡ 7	♡ 9
6	♣ 4	♣ 10	♡ 10	4 ♠
7	♡ Q	6 ♠	J ♠	5 ♠
8	♣ 5	♣ Q	7 ♠	6 ♢
9	♣ 6	8 ♠	9 ♠	A ♠
10	A ♢	2 ♢	4 ♢	7 ♢
11	♣ J	♡ J	10 ♠	J ♢
12	♣ 8	Q ♠	5 ♢	♡ 4
13	8 ♢	♡ K	10 ♢	♡ 5

Short-suit lead *plus* two tricks.

This is distinctly not a harum-scarum system of whist, nor is it intended to furnish the guerrilla player with fireworks. It is, on the contrary, based on the principle of partnership and correct information to partner, and that principle must never be violated.

The mere lead, at the supporting-card

game, is of course only a small part of this form of strategy. Let us suppose that an original supporting-card lead has been made, and see what then happens, or should happen. The first maxim is:

Third hand, the partner of the original leader, is expected to finesse deeply the card led.

This being the practice, it is necessary that second hand should, if possible, prevent the finesse, by covering the card led. I have seen many a trick lost by disregard of this principle. It is easy enough to formulate rules for second-hand play on this basis. They are as follows:

(1) 9 being led, cover with 10 or J; with Q if you have Q x, K Q or A Q; and with K if you have K x or A K.

(2) 10 being led, cover with J; with Q if you have Q x, K Q or A Q; and with K if you have K x or A K.

(3) J being led, cover with Q if you have Q x, Q 10 x, K Q or A Q 10; with K if you have K x or A K; and with A if you have A Q x. (If you have A and small ones, pass the J led.)

(4) Q being led, cover with K if you have

K x, K J x or A K; and with A if you have A and small ones.

There is a difference of opinion with regard to the play on 10 led, with A Q x. Some players advise passing, that partner may have an opportunity to win with J, and others recommend the A at once. In view of the fact, however, that under our system 10 is frequently led from J 10 x x or K 10 and others, I think the sound play is just to cover, with Q.

Take third hand again. If second hand has not covered, third hand is to follow the maxim and finesse deeply. Just what he should do with different combinations of high cards may be thus pointed out in detail:

(1) Whatever you have, finesse Q led.

(2) Finesse J led, unless you have both A and K, without Q.

(3) Finesse 10 led, unless you have both A and K, or both A and Q, or both K and Q, or K and one small only.

(4) Finesse 9 led, unless you have both A and K, or both A and Q, or K and one small only.

If second hand covers, third hand should nearly always head the trick if he can. It is sometimes well to pass, as when you want to tempt a trump lead from the adversary, or to preserve a card of reëntry for the long-suit game, but such instances, exceedingly rare, are of the nature of coups, which the fine player will perceive on occasion, but will not hunt for. In general, when second hand covers, third hand should still finesse, if he can. For example, if the original lead is a 9, and second hand puts in the 10, third hand, having A J and others, should play J, and not A. There is this difference between the long-suit and the short-suit openings, that in the former the original leader and his partner try to win the first trick, whereas in the latter they only try to make the winning of the trick as expensive as possible for the adversary. It is the gambit idea in its integrity.

Next, coming to fourth hand, we have to consider nothing more than what he should do if he wins the first trick. If he is a long-suit player, I won't presume to advise him. If, on the other hand, he is simply a whist-

player, it will be sufficient for me to caution him against indulging in skyrockets, merely because the original leader opened a short suit. Don't lead trumps recklessly. Don't be too sure that you know where the strength lies in the suit just opened. Don't be afraid of starting a short suit yourself. Don't go behind the returns. Don't proceed on the assumption that the supporting-card lead is unsound—unless you want to learn wisdom by pulling chestnuts out of the fire for Jocko. If the first trick shows you anything positively, act on your information; otherwise play your own game, and, if you are prudent, you will play along exactly the same lines as your adversaries—namely, the short-suit game. I am thoroughly convinced that the only defence to the short-suit game is to play it yourself.

Second hand, too, may win the first trick. To him, as well as to fourth hand, those "don'ts" apply. In addition, he is subjected to the temptation of returning the originally opened suit up to the original leader, on the supposition that the latter is weak in that suit. Don't make that mis-

take. He may have opened his very best suit, with an interior card, in which case he will be pleased to have it come back to him; or he may have led a singleton, in which case he will get in a little trump. Better play your own game.

Or, third hand may win the first trick. Then, if he has not strength enough to lead trumps, he should usually start another suit, short or headed by high cards, from his own hand. He must be cautious about returning the suit opened by partner. In fact, I believe there are only three situations in which this should be done; namely, when the suit happens to be third hand's best, and he can clear it without partner's assistance, or when he has only one card left in it, or when partner is obviously weak, and a change of suits is undesirable. Until farther developments you would better assume that partner's lead was actually from a weak short suit, and expect nothing from him in that direction. Keep your eyes open, however, and be ready at any moment to change your views and your line of play. Of course, if you open a new suit, you must

do so with a correct informatory card, just as though it were your original lead.

If, finally, the original leader's supporting card wins the first trick, he should either go on with the same suit, or, if he has trump strength or infers a probable call from partner, should lead trumps. Don't switch to another plain suit, and don't start trumps unless you are pretty sure that you and partner have the balance of strength. If you have led a singleton and it has held the trick, then you may safely lead the lowest card of your longest suit, hoping that partner may win and return your original suit for a ruff. Partner will not misunderstand the play. At the same time, there is this objection to the original lead of a singleton supporting card (Q, J, 10 or 9), that, if it wins, you can no longer give the suit to partner; and therefore, if you have a choice between a singleton "strengthener" and one from a suit of several cards, it is generally advisable to select the latter unless you are anxious for the ruff.

THE RUFFING GAME.

We come next to the ruffing modification of the supporting-card game. For the original lead having in view the ruff as well as the pure "gambit" development, we use the cards not devoted to other purposes—namely, the 8, 7 and 6. Here it is necessary to inform partner absolutely that your suit is short. The 8, 7 and 6 are therefore never led as interior cards, but are always "the top of nothing," and nearly always from not more than two in suit. Occasionally you will be compelled to open a three-card suit headed by 8, 7 or 6, but you must not do so if you have a possible supporting-card lead. An 8, 7 or 6 is sometimes of considerable value, however, as a supporting card. I have already given an example of this (deal No. 18, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1895), and here is another (deal No. 14, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1895), in which the original leader plays an 8 from the top of a three-card suit, his hand being Hearts, Q 9 6;

Clubs, K Q 8 7; Diamonds, K 10 5; Spades, 8 5 2; Jack of Hearts turned.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	8 ♠	Q ♠	7 ♠	3 ♠
2	♡ Q	♡ 2	♡ 3	♡ 10
3	5 ♠	4 ♠	J ♠	6 ♠
4	5 ◇	A ◇	J ◇	2 ◇
5	♡ 6	♡ 5	♡ 4	♡ J
6	♡ 9	♡ 7	♡ 8	♡ A
7	♣ 7	♣ 3	♣ 2	♣ A
8	♣ Q	♣ 4	♣ 6	♣ J
9	2 ♠	10 ♠	A ♠	9 ♠
10	10 ◇	♡ K	7 ◇	8 ◇
11	♣ 8	K ♠	4 ◇	3 ◇
12	♣ K	♣ 10	♣ 9	6 ◇
13	K ◇	♣ 5	Q ◇	9 ◇

NOTES.

Trick 1—It is by a process of exclusion that North arrives at his choice of 8 of Spades as the lead from this hand. He cannot start trumps, will not touch the Clubs K Q x x (the ordinary long-suit opening),

and prefers not to break into the three Diamonds headed by K. South refuses to win the trick because, if he did, he could not return the Spades, having the second-best guarded; and with a weak hand himself he prefers to make the adversary responsible for the development of the play.

Trick 2—The trump lead and West's finesse are due to East's placing Ace of Spades with partner, together with the long suiters' lack of respect for the ruffing game opening. The finesse, however, may be justifiable.

Trick 3—North properly persists in the Spade lead, rather than change to another suit, although the Spades appear to be all against him.

Trick 7—West marks King and Queen of Diamonds and Ace of Spades with the adversary, and supposes that partner must have strength in Clubs. The rest of the play is unimportant. North and South gain two tricks over the best long-suit routine, one by winning a round of trumps and the other by saving two Clubs instead of only one, which is all they could get after the original lead of King of Clubs.

With hands adapted neither to the long-suit nor to the high-card form of strategy, nor to the trump attack, you will frequently have the choice of a supporting-card or a ruffing-card lead. In such cases I would generally recommend the latter, but if you have four trumps and one fair plain suit, with two short suits headed respectively by a supporting card and a ruffing card, I should then prefer the former. In a word, you should not invite the ruff if you think it may injure your hand. For instance, from the hand (deal No. 28, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893), Hearts, Q J 9 7; Clubs, A Q J 8 6 4; Diamonds, 10 2; Spades, 7, you have the choice of 10 of Diamonds as an indication of the supporting-card game, or 7 of Spades, as a bid for the ruff; and 10 of Diamonds is unquestionably the better card to lead. On the other hand, from (deal No. 27, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894), Hearts, 7 5 3 2; Clubs, J 10 8 3; Diamonds, J 6 4; Spades, 8 3, I should pick 8 of Spades as the proper card.

The matter of trump strength or weakness should seldom influence your indica-

tion of the ruffing game. If you confine your adoption of that line of play to hands with weak trumps, you give the adversary encouragement to lead trumps and defeat your object in the opening. If, however, you are wont to indulge in 8, 7 and 6-spots whether you have one trump or six, if you see nothing better or more hopeful in your hand, you will constantly keep the enemy guessing, and he will hardly ever be able to determine from your original lead whether a force or a trump lead would suit you best. If he leads trumps "short," in order to defeat your desire to ruff, he flies in the face of Providence, as the score after a few games will show.

Following are two examples of a not infrequent phase of the ruffing game, in which the leader has weak trumps, but finds his partner strong in trumps and the suit led. The first is deal No. 9, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893; Queen of Hearts turned. The leader's hand is Hearts, J 3; Clubs, K 9 8 4 2; Diamonds, A Q 6 4; Spades, 6 2.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1 ..	6 ♠	Q ♠	K ♠	5 ♠
2.	2 ♠	3 ♠	8 ♠	J ♠
3.	♡ 3	♡ 2	♡ A	♡ K
4.	♡ J	A ♠	9 ♠	7 ♠
5.	♣ 9	♣ 10	♣ Q	♣ A
6.	6 ◇	K ◇	♡ 4	5 ◇
7.	4 ◇	♡ 8	♡ 10	♡ Q
8.	♣ K	♣ 3	♣ 6	♣ 5
9	A ◇	7 ◇	4 ♠	2 ◇
10.	Q ◇	8 ◇	10 ♠	3 ◇
11.	♣ 2	9 ◇	♡ 6	♣ 7
12.	♣ 4	10 ◇	♡ 9	♡ 5
13.	♣ 8	J ◇	♡ 7	♣ J

NOTES.

Trick 1—Of course, if East does not cover, which here appears to be disadvantageous, South, with such strength in trumps and in the suit led, goes up with the K just the same.

Trick 6—West's lead and East's play are immaterial. North's reverse follow on this and the next trick is the plain-suit signal to show command of the Diamonds.

North and South win two more tricks than they could by long-suit play, and the gain is almost assured from the moment that North leads his 6 of Spades. Both North and South pairs at the Chicago Congress made eight tricks on this deal.

In deal No. 3, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893, 6 of Hearts turned, the leader's hand is Hearts, J 3 2; Clubs, K 9 8 6 4 2; Diamonds, A 7 3; Spades, 8.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	8 ♠	6 ♠	K ♠	4 ♠
2	3 ♢	3 ♠	A ♠	7 ♠
3	♡ 2	10 ♠	2 ♠	9 ♠
4	♣ 2	♣ 7	♣ Q	♣ 3
5	♡ J	♡ K	5 ♠	Q ♠
6	A ♢	6 ♢	8 ♢	J ♢
7	♣ 4	♣ J	♣ 10	♣ 5
8	7 ♢	5 ♢	10 ♢	Q ♢
9	♡ 3	♡ 4	♡ 8	K ♢
10	♣ 6	♡ A	♡ Q	♡ 6
11	♣ 8	♣ A	♡ 9	2 ♢
12	♣ 9	♡ 5	♡ 10	4 ♢
13	♣ K	♡ 7	J ♠	9 ♢

NOTES.

Trick 4—It goes almost without saying that North's lead of 2 of Clubs so late in hand is not indicative of the long-suit game, but is only to put partner in, if possible, for another round of Spades.

The play throughout is plain and straightforward, and by the success of the ruffing game, pure and simple, gains two tricks for North and South over the best long-suit methods.

Second hand should cover one of the ruffing-card leads. Through a failure to do so I have seen many hands slaughtered.

Third hand, in turn, should finesse very deeply. If second hand covers, just top him; and if he does not cover, don't try to win unless you have considerable strength in the suit. If you win the trick, send the suit right back, unless you have the long-suit game in your hand, or a powerful high-card suit. The ruffing game *per se,* apart from its supporting qualities, calls for quick action. Partner having bid for it, don't

start another suit yourself until you have got out of the ruff all there is in it.

Fourth hand will frequently win the first trick of a ruffing game lead. What he should then do is sometimes difficult to determine. I don't know of any universal maxim applicable to his play, but the "don'ts" that I gave him for use in the supporting-card game are equally good in this connection.

With six or more trumps, lead a singleton, if you have it, whatever its size may be. If it is small, and partner takes it for a trump call, no harm is done; and if it is a regular short-suit card (6 to Q), or even K or A, you can take care of anything the adversaries may afterward do. Here is a somewhat pretty illustration of the superiority of the short over the long lead from a hand containing six trumps and a weak five-card suit (deal No. 2, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1894), Ace of Hearts turned, the leader's hand being Hearts, J 10 7 5 4 2; Clubs, J 8 7 6 5; Diamonds, 8; Spades, 5.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	8 ♢	10 ♢	Q ♢	5 ♢
2	♡ 5	3 ♢	2 ♢	J ♢
3	♣ 5	♣ 2	♣ A	♣ 10
4	5 ♠	A ♢	4 ♢	♡ Q
5	♡ 2	♡ 3	♡ 6	♡ A
6	♡ 4	3 ♠	10 ♠	A ♠
7	♣ 6	♣ 3	♡ 8	♣ K
8	♣ 7	4 ♠	K ♢	2 ♠
9	♣ 8	♣ 4	9 ♢	6 ♠
10	♣ J	♣ 9	7 ♢	7 ♠
11	♡ 7	♣ Q	6 ♢	8 ♠
12	♡ J	9 ♠	♡ 9	J ♠
13	♡ 10	K ♠	♡ K	Q ♠

NOTES.

Trick 3—It may be laid down as a general rule that after you have had one ruff at this style of game, you should try to put your partner in for another force by means of your best suit. Hence North's play of 5 of Clubs, and not, as some crude short-suiters would select, 5 of spades.

Trick 4—West's play is bad. By discarding a Spade he makes sure of one more trick.

North and South win eleven tricks, two more than either North and South pair got at Philadelphia. With the best play on the East and West side the short-suit lead is worth one more than the long.

Another: (Deal No. 1, A. W. L. Trophy finals, 1894), 10 of Hearts turned, the leader's hand being, Hearts, K 7 5 4; Clubs, J 6 4 3 2; Diamonds, 7 4 3; Spades, K.

The play—

	North.	East.	South.	West.
1	K ♠	5 ♠	2 ♠	A ♠
2	♣ 2	♣ A	♣ 8	♣ Q
3	3 ◇	Q ◇	A ◇	J ◇
4	4 ◇	7 ♠	Q ♠	6 ♠
5	7 ◇	8 ♠	J ♠	♡ A
6	♣ 3	2 ◇	♡ 6	♣ K
7	♡ 4	5 ◇	9 ◇	♣ 5
8	♣ 4	♡ Q	3 ♠	♣ 7
9	♡ 5	♡ 9	♡ J	♡ 2
10	♡ 7	6 ◇	8 ◇	♣ 9
11	♡ K	♡ 8	4 ♠	♡ 3
12	♣ J	10 ◇	9 ♠	♣ 10
13	♣ 6	K ◇	10 ♠	♡ 10

NOTES.

Trick 1—North has not six trumps, but his lead is the best from the hand. His long, weak Clubs, without a card of reëntry, are worthless, and the only thing he can do is to try for partner's suit.

Trick 5—I am unable to say what West's best play here is, but what he does is in accordance with the usual practice.

Trick 6—Here, however, West should certainly lead a trump, and by his failure to do so he loses two tricks.

North and South win eight tricks. They are entitled to six after the short-suit opening. At Philadelphia each North and South pair got three out of their hands.

The Queen lead (from not more than two in suit, invariably) is not to be considered a bid for the ruff, but partner should never hesitate to force you in the suit if he sees nothing better to do.

A peculiar lead, sometimes necessary in carrying out the short-suit idea, is that of A

followed by a small one, which should in general be adopted with only just two cards in suit, although it may be advisable sometimes with as many as three. (See the third illustrative deal given in this book—page 26.)

THE HIGH-CARD GAME.

We come now to the high-card game, of which little is to be said. The only regular high-card openings are from A K and at least three small, A K Q and one or more small, and K Q J and one or more small. Only with exceptional hands is it ever necessary to make high-card leads from suits not so strong as these. In playing the high-card game straight—that is, when you don't expect to make anything beyond a trick or two in your strong suit—open the suit from the top, and play it downward, as an indication to partner. If, on the other hand, you have a hope of bringing your suit in, it is better to lead K from all three of the combinations above given. At all events don't use the number-showing American leads.

THE TRUMP ATTACK.

The trump attack I believe to be justifiable in three instances: First, when your hand is strong all around, regardless of the number of your trumps; secondly, when you have five or more trumps (or four very good ones) and one good plain suit; thirdly, perhaps, when you have just five trumps and no four-card suit. Upon the last-named condition I do not insist. By using this system of play we have an advantage over the long-suiter, in that, having five trumps, we can indicate trump strength without opening them, through the lead of a small card from a moderately good four-card (or a weak five-card) suit. Of course, if the long plain suit is also strong, anybody will lead from five trumps to protect it; but if you have no four-card suit along with the trumps, you may or may not initiate the trump attack, according to your individual judgment and inclination. A safe principle to go by is this—that the object of the trump attack is to exhaust the adversaries' trumps,

so that they may not ruff your winning cards; but if you have no winning cards, there is no use getting trumps out for what you may possibly find in partner's hand. That is a pure gamble, and trumps are too valuable to gamble with. Don't make an original lead of trumps without an object, and the only sound object that you can have is the protection of your own plain-suit strength. I wish to warn the player also against speculative trump leads, late in hand, at the supporting-card game. This style of play requires patience, and the nervy short-suiter will often enough enjoy injudicious trump leads from the adversary, without committing the same error himself.

An efficacious form of the trump attack that does not come under any of the foregoing heads is the lead of a singleton small trump when each of the plain suits contains at least three cards and fair protection. In this case you cannot hope to win a trick by ruffing, and if you find partner strong you will be glad to see him go on and draw two trumps for one, a proceeding that is inevitably expensive for the adversary.

A very valuable rule for the trump attack, which, however, commonly comes into play after the development of the hand, is this maxim of Foster's:

With an established suit (either in your own or in partner's hand), four trumps, and a card of re-entry in another suit, lead trumps.

In trumps use the American leads to show number, including the fourth-best; lead the fourth-best from K J 10 and others, and 10 from Q J 10 and others.

SECONDARY LEADS.

All that I have so far said applies specifically to cases in which the short-suiter has the original lead. If he and his partner are second and fourth hands, with long-suit adversaries, they will commonly learn from the first trick all they require to know about the subsequent conduct of the hand. They must freely use that powerful tactical weapon of leading up to the weak and through the strong hand. If a short-suiter wins the first trick at fourth-hand, and has not more than two remaining in the suit led, with no high-card combination to open, he should nearly always return the suit at once, through the original leader. In this situation underplay freely. If, as only seldom happens, you cannot shape your play by the development of the hand previous to your getting in, you can go on as though it were your original lead. An observant partner can always tell whether you are playing to the fall of the cards or for the sake of giving information to him. Beyond urging the

player, as emphatically as I can, to lead up to the weak and through the strong long-suit hands, I cannot lay down any maxims for his guidance at second and fourth hands, except this, which is gospel for the short-suiter at all times and in all situations:

Keep your nerve, and don't turn a hair even if the development seems to run dead against you; stick to your game, and sooner or later the adversary will abandon his, which shall be the short-suiter's victory and reward.

I have never known it to fail; the adversary of the short-suiter is insensibly led into an imitation of the same style of play, but he falls short of the mark because he has no system nor consistency in his aim. Outlandish "shots" have no place in the real short-suit play; they are rather characteristic of the wavering long-suiter, who has not the courage of his convictions nor the faith of yours.

SIGNALS AND DISCARDS.

Signals and discards remain to be considered. In a game that has so much of the ruffing element about it, the player should prepare a trump call early, if he wants to have trumps led by partner. Therefore we use the call perhaps oftener than the long suiters. On the adversary's lead, having four or more trumps, always at least prepare to call, provided you can conceal the call later if you wish. The four-trump signal (made by playing the penultimate, then the ante-penultimate and then the lowest of a suit led by the adversary) is one of the most valuable devices conceivable in connection with this system of play, and it should be employed whenever feasible.

On partner's call or trump lead, or after he has opened the hand with a small card, echo with three or more trumps. There are several variations and refinements of the three-trump echo, but the most valuable in the main is the simple echo with three or

more, either in the trump suit or in a plain suit.

Discard always from a suit that you do not want led (which will generally, but not invariably, be your weakest suit), if you can do so without unguarding an honor or blanking an Ace; but if you have to discard from a suit in which you have strength, make the reverse discard, or call in the suit. Or, if a suit is led by the adversary or by partner, and it is apparent that you will have command after two rounds, call in the suit whenever the signal cannot be mistaken for a trump call.

LAW OF STRATEGY.

To sum up:

Each of the five forms of whist strategy is a plan. That plan which appears to be the best for his own hand the original leader should choose and clearly indicate by his original lead, and his partner should then coöperate in the development and execution of that plan, unless or until he can adopt a distinctly better or more profitable form of strategy.

This is the grand law of whist strategy as the systematic short-suiter understands it. I hope that no long-suit critic of this system will call it a "mongrel" or a "guerrilla" game. Not that a mongrel is naturally worthless, nor a guerrilla habitually a scoundrel; but this theory is neither a shot in the dark nor a cross between two breeds. It is a tried theory, whose practical application, in the full light of day, has been uniformly successful over the long-suit routine; and it is by no means a hybrid long-and-short affair, because its crowning characteristic is distinctly short-suit play.

MEANINGS OF LEADS.

Here, in brief, are the meanings of the leads peculiar to this system:

Ace—followed by King, indicates the high-card game, generally five or more in suit, with little or no strength outside of the suit led; followed by small card, indicates the ruffing game, with probably no more in the suit led.

King—followed by Ace, indicates the high-card game, but greater accompanying strength than Ace followed by King; unaccompanied by Ace, indicates the high-card game, with probably Queen and Jack and others of the suit remaining.

Queen—indicates the supporting-card game, and not more than two in suit.

Jack—followed by Queen, indicates the high-card game, the suit led being Q J 10 and others; followed by Ace or King or a small card, indicates the supporting-card game, and generally not more than three in suit.

10 or 9—indicates the supporting-card

game; followed by Jack or 10, respectively, indicates a suit of four or more; does not deny higher cards in the suit.

8, 7 or 6—indicates the ruffing game, with generally not more than two in suit; generally denies any higher card in the suit.

5, 4, 3 or 2—indicates the long-suit game, with probably a good suit, and certainly trump strength; commands partner, if he gets in early, to lead trumps.

EXAMPLES OF LEADS.

As examples of "the card to lead" I submit the following hands, which were the leaders' in the final contests of the American Whist League Congresses in 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1895. They are published in the League "Proceedings" and *Whist.* The suits are transposed as in preceding illustrations of play. The card to lead from each hand is italicized. The short-suit student is advised to examine these tables very carefully.

HAMILTON TROPHY FINALS, 1892.

Deal No.	Trump Turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	2	J 8 7 6 4	K Q 5 3 2	**8**[1] 6 3	none
2	A	none	A Q J 8 5 2	K J **10**[2] 7 4	8 6
3	7	A K 10	K 10 8 5 2	Q 9 8	A 6
4	5	10	Q J 10 6 4 3 2	Q 9 2	**Q**[3] 8
5	A	8 5 2	J 10 9 6 5 3	10 7 2	**10**
6	7	Q J 10 9	K J 10 **4**[4]	Q 7 3	A 5
7	K	10 9 4	**A**[5] K J 10 8 2	K 2	Q J
8	8	J 9 3	**A** K Q 9 7 3	10 3	8 6
9	3	5 2	K 9 8 7 6	A 7 3 2	**10** 7
10	Q	6	A K Q 10 9 7 5 2	Q 5	4 3
11	4	A 7 2	K **J**[6] 8 6 3	5 4 3	4 2
12	4	6 3 2	**A**[7] K 8 5	Q 8 3 2	5 4
13	8	Q 5	A Q 5 4 3 2	Q 8 2	**A**[8] 6
14	9	A K Q **J**[9] 10 7 6	K J 7	9 4	6
15	10	J 8 6 4	A 5 4 2	K 7 3	**J** 10
16	Q	J 10 7 6 5 2	A J 9 2[10]	A	4 2
17	K	Q J 8 7 6	A Q 10 3[11]	K 8	Q 4
18	7	A 10 6 **5** 2	K J 10 8 4	Q 7	4
19	A	K J 7 4	K 9 7 6	**J**[12] 3 2	A J
20	K	Q 7 2	**A** K J 10 8 7	Q 10 7 2	none
21	8	9 7	Q 9 6 3	J 7 6 3	Q **J** 8
22	3	A 10 **8**[13]	A Q J 7	K 8 4	Q 4 3
23	3	**10**[14]	A Q J 10 6 3	K 7 5	K 3 2
24	5	K 8 7	A 10 9 7 **5**	Q 8 3	A J

(PLAY-OFF.)

1	7	10 4 3	Q **9**[15] 6 5	K J 5	Q 6 2
2	A	2	A Q 9 6 4 2	Q 10 **9** 8	5 3
3	10	J 5 2	A J 9 8 3	10 6 2	**J** 6
4	3	J 10 5	A J 4 2	Q **10** 4 2	3 2
5	4	2	K Q 9 5 4 2	Q **J** 5	7 6 5
6	3	A K 5	K 9 8 5 3	A Q 10 3	6
7	3	Q J 6	A Q 9 8	10 7 5	**9**[16] 8 7
8	9	A K 6 2	A J 3 2	A 10 9	**10**[17] 2
9	A	Q 9 8 7	Q 9 7 3 2	K 2	**J**[18] 5
10	6	Q 10 3	J 10 8 2	A 6 4	**J** 10 6
11	9	4	Q J 9 8 3 2	A Q 10 9	**8** 3
12	K	A 10 7	K Q 8 7	A Q 10 6	**10** 6
13	10	none	**K** Q J 8 4	Q 10 7 6 3	Q 6 3
14	9	Q 6 3	A Q 9 8 6 2	A J 4	**10**[19]
15	5	K 4	**A** K Q J 7 3	K Q 7 6	10
16	2	**10** 8	Q 8 6 3	8 5 3 2	Q 8 7

[1] Because one suit is absent. [2] Not J, because suit is long. [3] Or, ♣ J—high-card game. [4] Or, ♡ 10. [5] High-card game. [6] A difficult opening. [7] High-card game, only four in suit. [8] Followed by ♠ 6. [9] Or, ♠ 6. [10] Call through honor. [11] Call through honor. [12] A small ♣ if there were one. [13] Or, ♣ J as a venture. [14] All 'round strength. [15] Or, ♡ 10. [16] Better "strengthening" suit than ◇ s. [17] Or, ♣ 2. [18] Or, ♣ 2. [19] Not quite long-suit strength.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

HAMILTON TROPHY FINALS, 1893.

Deal No.	Trump Turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	A	J 10 3	Q 6 5 4 3[1]	A J 2	K 4
2	8	K 10 7 5 4	A 8	**J**[2] 5 4	7 4 3
3	6	J 3 2	K 9 8 6 4 2	A 7 3	**8**
4	6	K 8	A 8 3 2[3]	K J 8 7	K 8 5
5	2	A Q	K 9 6 3 2	10 9 7 3	K J
6	J	10 3	A J 8 3	10 8 4 3 2	**Q** J
7	J	A K	Q 7 5 3	J **9**[4] 8 6	9 8 6
8	10	9 6 3	J 6 3 2	A 10 5	**9** 6 4
9	Q	**J** 3	K 9 8 4 2	A Q 6 4	**6** 2
10	K	A 5 3	K J 9 8	**J** 9 2	9 5 2
11	6	10 7 4	10 8 7 6 4	A K 9	**9** 5
12	3	9 5	Q J 9 8 7 6 5 4	A 4	**9**
13	10	A **K** Q 2	A Q 4	K 10 9	J 5 2
14	K	A J 8 2	A Q 10 7 6 2[5]	J 6 5	none
15	Q	A J 9 7 5	A 8 3	Q 10 7	**6**[6] 4
16	8	K J 5 3	10 9 7 4 2	A J	**J** 7
17	J	5	Q **J** 3 2	10 6 4 3 2	7 5 2
18	4	**8**	Q J 7 5 2	Q J 8 5	A 8 4
19	8	J 5 2	K J 8 5	7 5 3 2	**10** 2
20	6	7 5 4	Q 9 5 2	A 9 7	**9** 8 6
21	7	J 2	K 9 8 2	**9** 7 5 3	7 5 2
22	6	A J 10 5	J 5 3 2	8 7 2	**10** 9
23	J	none	Q **J** 10 9 4	8 6 4 3	6 4 3 2
24	9	A K J 7 6 5 3	10 9 7 3	A	**10**[7]
25	4	8	K Q J 7 4	A **K** Q 9	9 4 3
26	2	A 10 9 6	A K 7 5	7 6 4	**8** 6
27	10	A K 5	10 **9**[8] 5 2	A J 5	K 10 5
28	6	Q J 9 7	A Q J 8 6 4	**10**[9] 2	7
29	K	Q 10 9 5	**K** Q J 7 4 2	10 6	**J**
30	6	Q 8 3 2	A J 5 4	10 6 4	**J** 8
31	J	A 8 7 4	K J 10 7	K Q 9 2[10]	10
32	9	Q 5 4	Q J 10 6 3 2	**J**[11] 5	8 3
33	Q	6 4	**A** K 10 7 6 3	A 9 7 6	7
34	J	K Q 10 6 2	Q 10 6	9 4 2	**10**[12] 8
35	A	K 9 6 2	A K Q 9	A K 2	K 4
36	10	Q 9 8 7 5	A K 6 5 4	7 2	9

[1] Difficult opening; not quite long-suit strength. [2] Or, ♡ 5. [3] All 'round strength. [4] Or, ♠ 9. [5] Call through honor. [6] Or, ♣ 3. [7] Or, ♡ A. [8] Or, ♣ 2. [9] For a "plunge," ♣ 4. [10] Call through honor. [11] Or, ♣ J. [12] Or, ♡ Q.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

HAMILTON TROPHY FINALS, 1894.

Deal No.	Trump Turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	3	J 6	**K** Q 10 9 7 5 4	Q 8 6 2	none
2	A	J 10 7 5 4 2	J 8 7 6 5	**8**	5
3	9	K Q 2	Q 10 **9**[1] 6	10 9 3	Q 10 7
4	Q	10 9 7 6	K 8 7 5 4 **2**[2]	Q 9 3	none
5	9	8 6 3	A 8 6 2	**J** 9 5	9 8 6
6	6	5 4 2	K **10** 8 5	K 7 2	5 4 2
7	6	A 7 4	K **10**[3] 7 6	A 9 8	A 3 2
8	6	Q J 8	A 10 9 6 **3**[4]	Q 5 2	A 2
9	10	A J 6 **4**[5] 5 2	8 4 3 2	K 9 5	4
10	A	K Q **J** 9 7	A Q 7 4	6 5 4	K
11	4	A 8 6	Q 7 6 2	Q 9 4	**10** 3 2
12	5	A K 10 7 4	**10**[6] 6 2	9 7 3	6 5
13	7	A 6	A 7 6 5 **4**[7]	A Q J	Q 7 6
14	2	K Q 7 **5** 4	A 8 5 4 2	A 3	**J**
15	8	5 2	K J 6 5 3	**10** 6 4	7 6 3
16	6	J 9 5 2	A **K**[8] 9 5 2	K Q 10 9	none
17	J	A 8 2	A K 4 3	A 10 9 3	**Q** 4
18	9	7	Q J 8 6 2	K 7 6 5 3	**9** 7
19	9	**4**	K 10 6 4 2	A Q 10 9	A 10 4
20	J	5 4	K J 5 2	8 6 5 4 2	**9** 2
21	Q	K J 2	J 7 5 2	**10**[9] 5 4 2	8 2
22	7	5 2	Q **J** 10 7 2	K 7 4	K 5 2
23	2	8 7 3	A 7 4 3	A 9 7	**10** 8 2
24	**8**	4	A 10 8 7 6 4	A Q 9 3	**10**[9]
25	8	9 2	**A** K 10 9 6	A Q J 7 4	7
26	7	9 6 2	**A** K 10 7	K 8 5 2	3 2
27	Q	7 5 3 2	J 10 8 3	J 6 4	8 3
28	3	6 4 2	A 9 7 3	J 6 4	**10** 6 2
29	Q	6	10 8 6 4 2	J **10** 8 5	8 7 5
30	J	9 7	K J 7 3 2	7 5 4 2	**7** 6
31	4	K J 7 **5** 3	A J 9 4 3	10 5	K
32	A	10 9 6 3	A **K**[10] J 5 3	K Q 8	7
33	7	A K **Q** 6 4	A K 2	K 7 4	6 2
34	Q	9 8 6 3	A Q J 5	Q 10 5 4	**7**
35	K	A J 8 4	A 10 **2**[11]	K 8 4	Q 6 3
36	3	A Q J 4	A Q 8 5	K 3	**8**[12] 6 4
37	K	7 2	A Q 8 7 2	A Q 10 3	**A**[13] 4
38	9	K 10 4 2	J 9 3 2	Q 6 5	**9** 2
39	7	6 4	A Q J 10 5 4 3 2	A 6	**J**
40	K	J 9 7 6 5 2	A Q J 8	A 4	**10**[14]
41	9	10 6	**A** K Q J 8 4	Q 9 6	7 3
42	8	J 6 3 2	Q 9 7 4 **2**[15]	A 7	J 4
43	J	9 5 2	A Q J 5 3	**A**[16] K 9 6	3
44	A	K 2	A J 7 2	K J 9 2	A 3 2
45	A	none	A 10 9 7 6	A K 6 4	K J 5 2
46	**J**	A 5 3 2	A 9 8 7	**9** 7 5	4 3
47	Q	A 8 7 6	A Q J 6 2	**J**[17] 7	3 2
48	10	6 3	J 7 6 2	J 7 5 4	Q **10**[18] 5

[1] Or, ◇ 10. [2] Long-suit under compulsion. [3] Or, ♣ 6 cannot be injurious. [4] Or, ♡ Q ; or, ♠ A and 2. [5] Or, ♣ 2. [6] Or, ♡ 7. [7] Trusting partner for trumps. [8] ♡ 2, but for void suit. [9] Or, ♠ 8. [10] Or, ♡ 3. [11] Call through honor. [12] Or, ♣ 5. [13] Followed by 4. [14] Or, ♡ 6. [15] Or, ♠ J. [16] Followed by singleton ♠ . [17] Or, ♣ 2 as a "plunge." [18] A difficult opening.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

A. W. L. TROPHY FINALS, 1894.

Deal No.	Trump Turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	10	K 7 5 4	J 6 4 3 2	7 4 3	**K**
2	A	6 5 3	J 10 7 3	A J 7	**10**[1] 8 6
3	8	**9** 4 3	A Q 8 3 2	K J 9 2	A
4	10	A K 7 2	A 7 3 **2**[2]	K 9 7	K 9
5	5	9 6 4	K 9 6 2	**10** 7 6 2	K J
6	A	Q 6	K 7 6 5	**9** 8 6 4	Q 10 9
7	5	Q J 8	**9** 8 6 3 2	Q 9 5	A 9
8	3	9 4	Q J 9 8 5	Q J 3 2	**10** 9
9	9	8 5	10 **9** 8 7 6 5	A 8 7 5 2	none
10	A	Q J 7	K 7 4 3	J **9**[3] 5 4	10 8
11	9	A Q 10 7 4	K Q J 8 2	A 2	6
12	2	J 9	A Q 10 9 5 2	A 8 2	**9** 2
13	9	A K 2	**K** Q 9 5 2	K Q 7 6	8
14	Q	J 3 2	K **9**[4] 8 7	Q 8 5	6 5 3
15	3	J 7 2	K J 10 8 7 6	**J** 8	J 5
16	Q	A K J 10 9 3 2	K 6 5 **3**[5]	9 2	none
17	5	9 6 2	J **9** 6 5 2	6 4 3	5 4
18	10	Q 8	Q 7 6 5 2	A Q 10	K **10** 5
19	3	K 10 6	J **10** 8 6 3	A 4 3 2	2
20	5	none	**K** Q J 7 4	9 8 5 3 2	Q J 5
21	9	Q 8 6 2	A **K**[6] 10 9 6	A 6 2	8
22	Q	K 9 8 5	K J 9 6 3	**10** 4	9 6
23	7	K J 8 2	10 7 4 2	K 9 5	**8** 7
24	9	none	9 8 6 5 4 2	K Q 6 3	A Q 7
25	7	Q 9	**A** K 8 6 3	10 4 2	5 4 2
26	3	**A**[7] 5	A K J 6	Q J 8 4	K J 2
27	K	A 7 4	K J 8 6	A 10 6 3	**7** 3
28	6	Q 4 3	A J 10 7 5 4 2	**10** 9	8
29	5	9 2	A Q 10 8 2	K 8 3	**9** 8 2
30	4	10 9 6	**K** Q 10 8 4	K Q 9 8	5

[1] Or, ♣ 10. [2] Or, ♡ 2. [3] Or, ♠ 10. [4] Or, ♠ 6. [5] Call through honor. [6] Or, ♡ 2. [7] Followed by ♡ 5.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

HAMILTON TROPHY FINALS, 1895.

Deal No.	Trump Turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	10	K 8 6 **5** 3	A Q 6 4	A 6	3 2
2	Q	K J 9 4	A 9 2	**10** 6 5	8 7 5
3	A	J 6 5	K 9 7 4 2	**J** 9 6	A 5
4	6	A 8 4	A Q J 9 4 3	**9** 3	7 **6**
5	Q	10 3	A Q 3 2	A 7 3 2	**10** 7 2
6	8	K 4	Q 10 6 5 3	10 7 6 5	**9** 6
7	J	K 10 6 5 2	J 8 6 **5**	K 8 2	3
8	10	A K	A **K**[1] J 10 6 5	Q 10 8 6	3
9	Q	J 9 7	9 5 4 2	K 5 4	**9** 6 5
10	7	A 10 8	J 9 5 3	9 6 4 2	7 2
11	Q	**A** K 10 7 2	A K J 7 2	A K 3	none
12	8	10 9 7	**A**[2] K 10 9 8 4	A 3 2	6
13	7	4	K J 9 8 7 4	K Q 2	**10**[3] 4 2
14	J	Q 9 6	K Q 8 7	K 10 5	**8** 5 2
15	7	K 2	K J 10 **9** 8	A J 10	K 3 2
16	K	A 10 7 2	K Q 9 6 **3**	K Q	6 4
17	3	**4**	Q 10 7 6 5	Q J 8 4	A K 7
18	8	A 10 9	K 10 9 6 2	9 7 5	**8** 5
19	Q	A K 10 9	Q J 10 9 6 **2**[4]	6 5 2	none
20	J	K 8 6 3	A Q 9 6 **3**[5]	A 6	J 9
21	J	10 9 8 6	Q J 8 5	Q 10 4	**Q** 4
22	J	9 7 6	A K J 4	**J** 4 2	8 3 2
23	4	Q 9 6 2	8 7 6 5	Q 8 3	**A**[6] 7
24	10	Q 4	**A** K Q 8 7	9 6 4 3	7 2
25	4	Q 3	**A** K J 9 8	K 4 3	8 7 2
26	7	A 2	A 9 8 5 2	K Q 7 4	**10** 4
27	J	K Q 10 8 2	Q J 7 **4**[7]	K 10	Q 3
28	4	A Q 3	K J 8 6 5 4 3	A **9**[8] 8	none
29	10	K J 9 8 5 4	K Q 9 8	**8**[9] 7 6	none
30	J	K	Q **J** 10 8 7 5 4 2	A 5	8 6
31	A	K J 8 6	K 10 6 **5**[10]	A Q 2	J 10
32	Q	9 8 5	J 10 6 4	J 7 3	**9**[11] 7 6
33	4	9 8	A **9** 8 2	8 5 3 2	A 7 3
34	4	**6**	K J 8 7 6	K J 6 5	A 7 3
35	2	none	Q **J** 10 9 8 5	A Q 3 2	Q J 4
36	J	A 9 6 4	A Q 5 3	K Q 3	**A**[12] 9
37	4	7 2	A Q J 10 9 2	**6** 5 3	5 4
38	3	A J 5 2	Q 8 5 4	A Q J	**7**[13] 3
39	5	J 6 3 2	J 10 5 4 2	10 6	**8** 6
40	K	4 2	K Q 7 6 2	Q 9 4	**9** 6 2
41	6	10 4 3	K J **10**[14] 4	K 4 2	Q 9 3
42	5	**8** 7 2	K Q 9 8	Q 7 6 3	K 10
43	7	A 6 4 3	A 9 8 5 **4**	K J 4 2	none
44	Q	J 10 8 7 3	A Q 7 2	**J**[15] 6 3	6
45	7	Q 4	Q 9 6 5 2	A J 9	**10** 9 3
46	8	5 3	K J 10 8 5 2	7 4 2	**9** 6
47	9	K 8	K Q 8 5 4	A 10 6 4	**A**[16] 6
48	9	10 7	A 10 6 4 2	A 10 8 2	**6** 2

[1] Or, ♡ A and K. [2] Followed by ♠ 6. [3] Or, ♡ 4. [4] A "plunge," otherwise, ♣ J. [5] Or, ♠ J. [6] Followed by ♠ 7. [7] Or, ♡ Q. [8] Or, ♣ 3. [9] Or, ♡ 8. [10] Or, ♠ J. [11] Or, ♣ 10. [12] Followed by ♠ 9. [13] Or, ♣ 4. [14] Or, ♡ 10. [15] Or, ♣ 2. [16] Followed by ♠ 6.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

A. W. L. TROPHY FINALS, 1895.

Deal No.	Trump turned	♡	♣	◇	♠
1	8	J 7 3	9 7 6 4 3 2	A K 6	**6**
2	3	Q 8 5	Q 10 **9** 8 7 6	A Q	A 8
3	7	**A**[1] 2	A K Q J 7	A 8 5	A 4 2
4	Q	**9**[2] 8	K 10 8 3	Q 10 9 6	A 9 6
5	K	Q 5	**A** K J 8 5	Q 10 3	7 6 4
6	**J**	K 10 8 7	K J 10 3	**J** 8 7	5 3
7	8	Q 9 4	A **J 9** 5	A 7 5 4	5 4
8	Q	A K 5 4	Q 10 **3**[3]	J 7 4	6 4 2
9	3	9 4	Q 10 5 4	**9** 5 4 2	K 6 2
10	2	7 3	A J 10 3	K Q 9 4	**8** 7 2
11	K	A 3	A 10 6 5 2	A **K**[4] 7 2	5 2
12	9	5	K 8 7 5 2	**10** 6 4 2	Q 5 3
13	5	A J 4 2	K J 5 4 2	**10** 8	3 2
14	10	A K 7 5	K 8 5	**9** 5 3	7 6 3
15	4	**J** 10	A Q 7 3	K J 6 4	A Q 10
16	10	A 2	K 10 7 3	**9** 8 7 4	A 10 8
17	3	Q 6 4	A J 7 3	Q 5 4 **2**[5]	K 9
18	J	9 8	A 6 5 3	10 **9** 5 4	K 10 9
19	9	Q J 7 6 4 2	A Q 4	A 10 3	**10**[6]
20	Q	A K J 7 3	J 9 3 **2**[7]	Q 8 6	3
21	7	10 6 4	A 9 5 3 2	K Q J	**A**[8] 4
22	A	Q 10 7 5	K Q 9 6 **2**	A 10 5	K
23	J	9 5 4 3 2	A 10 6 **5**	K 10 8	10
24	K	10 6 5 3 2	J 9 5 3	Q 6 3	**8**[9]
25	10	K 6 4 2	A Q 10 6	**8** 6 3	K 8
26	9	A K J 4	A J 10 6	A Q 6 **4**[10]	6
27	2	10 6	Q 10 9 4	J **10** 9 3	Q 7 2
28	5	A 9 6	Q 10 4 3 2	Q 9 2	**Q**[11] J
29	A	J 9 3	A Q 5 2	A 8 7 5	**A**[12] 7
30	6	K 10 7 3	K 9 8 5 4	**10** 3	9 3
31	9	A 10 8 6	A Q 8 7 6 **3**[13]	Q 7	6
32	5	K 10 3 2	K Q 5	K 6 5	**6**[14] 4 3

[1] Followed by ♡ 2. [2] Or, ◇ 9. [3] Call through honor. [4] Or, ♣ 2. [5] Or, ♣ 3. [6] Or, ♡ 6. [7] Call through honor. [8] Followed by ♠ 4. [9] Or, ♣ 3. [10] Or, ♡ K. [11] Or, ♣ 2. [12] Followed by ♠ 7. [13] The speculative coup; otherwise ◇ Q. [14] Or, ♡ 2.

NOTE.—The card led in each suit, through the different deals, is printed in bold-face type.

We have, above, 234 hands. From 108, supporting cards are led; from 33, intermediate cards (or Ace followed by small) inviting the ruff; from 36, small cards indicative of the long-suit game; from 32, honors from high-card sequences; and from 25, trumps. It will be observed, therefore, that the several forms of strategy are indicated by the original leads in about this proportion: Supporting-card game, in one-half the whole number of cases; long-suit game, one-eighth; trump attack with long-suit game in view, one-eighth; ruffing game, one-eighth; high-card game, one-eighth. Or, roughly speaking, the supporting-card game occurs as frequently as all the other forms of strategy together, and these occur with about equal frequency. From these hands 111 short suits are opened originally, or practically in one-half the instances.

I have given nineteen illustrations of play according to the system explained in this book. These deals show an unmistakable gain of thirty-four tricks for the short-suit play. Among the League deals that I have closely examined—those for 1893, 1894 and

1895—there are many more that yield an advantage to the new openings. In the majority of them the original lead is perfectly immaterial. In some cases the short-suit development is inferior, but to other investigators I leave the task of finding any nineteen—or any number, for that matter—that contain a surplus of thirty-four tricks for the "modern scientific" long-suit routine.

VARIATIONS.

I have presented the openings of the new system in a single definite form, but the reader has without doubt perceived that they are capable of considerable variation. The choice of the 2, 3, 4 and 5 for long-suit leads; the 6, 7 and 8 for the ruffing game; the 9, 10, J and Q as supporting cards, and the K and A as high cards, is in a sense empirical, although this division appears to be the most natural and the best adapted to general use. If a pair of partners desire more or less of the long-suit game, or of the short-suit game, than I have recommended, there is no law of the Medes and Persians to prevent them from agreeing to transfer any of the thirteen cards from one class to another. Even the edict of the American Whist League condemning "private conventions"—which was issued at Minneapolis in 1895 on account of myself and the three gentlemen whose names appear on my dedicatory page—can scarcely be held to apply to the definition of openings for

the four forms of plain-suit strategy. About a dozen distinct species of trump signals, echoes and sub-echoes are in common and uncommon use; discards from weakness, strength and anything at all, with the "reverse" to mean strength, weakness or nothing, accordingly, are practised from Woonsocket to Fergus Falls; and the leads, English, American, Philadelphian and what not, simple or compound, are in the condition of Buttercup's babies. To this jumble of conventions—public, and not "private," because they have at some time been published somewhere—I have added my fairly liberal contribution, and I now propose to make matters worse by exploiting certain variations on the new openings, which variations, having been published, will not, I hope, come under the ban of "private conventions."

Let us begin at the bottom of the suit, and work upward. I have not yet met the short-suiter who was unwilling to give the long suit as many opening cards as the 2, 3 and 4, but I do know radicals who want the cards all the way from the 5 to the 9 to

be led ultra-"short." The extreme division of the leads in this direction, then, would be: Long-suit game, 2, 3 and 4; ruffing game, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9; supporting-card game, 10, J and Q; high-card game, K and A. With this classification, however, it is quite impossible to play the ruffing-game openings "straight." That is, the 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9 must sometimes be led from a long suit, top or bottom or interior. It is customary, therefore, to call one or more of them "doubtful," the subsequent fall of the cards determining their true character. To this category the 5 and the 9 may be relegated. Suppose you have the hand Hearts, J 10 3; Clubs, Q 6 5 4 3; Diamonds, A J 2; Spades, K 4; A of Hearts turned (deal No. 1, Hamilton Trophy finals, 1893). In the table (page 88) I have given 3 of Clubs as the proper opening, with a note that the hand has "not quite long-suit strength." In this hand, the reader will notice, the strength of the plain suit (Clubs) is below the standard (see page 29), and the trumps, too, are not up to the mark (see page 33) for the long-suit game. Now, counting the 5 as a

doubtful card, you could lead the 5 of Clubs here, and partner would understand, after you dropped the 6 or Q—a *higher* card than the 5—on the second round, that your opening was from a fair hand, but with an element of weakness that rendered it not quite good enough for the long-suit game, and he would govern his play accordingly. The same sort of 5-lead might be made from the hand No. 27, page 88. An example of the 5-lead "short" is found in the hand No. 17, page 90,—Hearts, 9 6 2; Clubs, J 9 6 5 2; Diamonds, 6 4 3; Spades, 5 4; 5 of Hearts turned. From this hand you could lead 5 of Spades, and, dropping the 4—a *lower* card than the 5—on the second round, would tell partner that the suit was short, and you desired to ruff. The singleton 5 of Spades might be led with good effect from the hand No. 30, page 90.

The doubtful 9 is used in a similar way, as on the dividing line between the long-suit and the ruffing games. See the hand No. 3, page 89,—Hearts, K Q 2; Clubs, Q 10 9 6; Diamonds, 10 9 3; Spades, Q 10 7; 9 of Hearts turned. If you open with the

doubtful 9 of Clubs here, and afterward drop the 10, partner will give you credit for just an approximation to long-suit strength, as in the case of the 5-opening of the same character. There is this difference, however, between the 5 and the 9, counted as doubtful cards,—that the 5 is more often led "long," and the 9 more often led "short." I advise the reader to run through all the hands on pages 87 to 92, and see in how many of them the doubtful 5 and 9 would be of service.

The 6, 7 and 8 in our variation are used exactly as in the regular system, but I may as well point out—what, for the sake of definiteness and simplicity, I have avoided in the foregoing pages—that the 6, 7 and 8 may be led sometimes, under compulsion, from long suits, on the principle that injury can scarcely result from the possession of greater strength than you indicate. Still, I do not believe in the introduction of that uncertainty into the openings which would surely follow the use of the 6, 7 and 8 as doubtful cards; and in all the League hands quoted in this book there is not one in

which this use of the ruffing-game cards appears to be either necessary or expedient. I have merely hinted at such an opening from the hand No. 3, page 89 (which see).

Let us consider another variation. We will this time reckon the 2, 3, 4 and 5 as long-suit openings, pure and simple, and make the 6 doubtful. Then the 7 and 8 are led for the ruff, and the 9 may be made doubtful or not, as you please, although I think that in accordance with the spirit of the variation—which is a slight extension of the long-suit idea, just as the first variation was a step in the short-suit direction—the 9 should be left in the supporting-card category. This variation I would recommend to players whose long-suit bent, the effect of education and practice, is still too strong to be comfortably resisted.

And if, ascending another degree in the scale, we call the 6, as well as the 5, 4, 3 and 2, a long-suit card, without "doubt," then we can put the 7, or the 7 and 9, or even the 7 and 8, in the "doubtful" class. This is yielding too much, in my opinion, to the long-suit tendency, but I give the sug-

gestion for what it is worth, and experiment may show it to possess some value. A few players could probably handle the ultra-"long" variation—2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, long suit; 7 and 8, doubtful, as on the line between the long-suit and the ruffing games—better than any of the other variations; in which case they should certainly adopt this variation as the basis of their play.

It is possible, moreover, that the wisdom of adopting one variation or another may depend somewhat on the style of the adversaries' play, but my experience does not justify the giving of any advice on this point.

Still another variation, or series of variations, grows out of the use of the Q as a doubtful card, on the line between the high-card and the supporting-card games, in which case the Q is led from Q J 10 and others as well as from Q and one small, and even from Q J and one or more small. Or if you believe with Cavendish that the Q from Q and one small is "the weakening Queen," you may place the Q definitely in the high-card class.

I desire earnestly to recommend the making of experiments with variations on the main system, and to suggest that the small doubtful cards—5 or 6, or, perhaps, 7—may be of particular value.

A few excellent players have of late tried the practice of playing short suits always from the top downward. Suppose, for example, that you open a suit consisting of 9, 6 and 2. You lead the 9. Then, on the second round of the suit, whether you or anybody else lead it, you play the 6. Partner can now, barring false cards, probably mark the 2 alone in your hand. The plan is peculiarly serviceable as showing exactly two of a suit. Thus, if you lead the 9 from the 9 and 2, and drop the 2 on the second round, partner marks you to a certainty with no more. This convention of course renders impossible a trump call in a short suit that you have opened, but the advisability of a call in such a situation is hardly conceivable.

The "top downward" method of playing short suits may be applied also to short

trump leads. If, for instance, in response to partner's call, you lead the 7 of trumps from 7 6 2, you follow with the 6, no matter who leads the second round. This practice is quite consistent with the three-trump echo, and I believe it to be a trick-winner.

THE END.