

**BRIDGE ABRIDGED;
OR,
PRACTICAL BRIDGE**

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Bridge Abridged; Or, Practical Bridge by W. Dalton

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W. DALTON

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
<hr/>	
THE GENERAL SCHEME OF BRIDGE	1
THE MAKING OF TRUMPS	5
"NO TRUMPS"	6
SUIT DECLARATIONS	17
THE DECLARATION ON A PASSED HAND	25
DOUBLING	29
RE-DOUBLING	32
PLAYING TO THE SCORE	34
THE FIRST LEAD	41
THE PLAY OF THE HAND—THE DEALER	52
" " " THIRD HAND	60
GENERAL PLAY	68
DISCARDING	73
ETIQUETTE	76
DUMMY	85
DOUBLE DUMMY	89
CUT-THROAT BRIDGE	89
MAXIMS IN BRIEF	95
SOME DECLARATIONS CONSIDERED	99
SOME HANDS ON WHICH THE CALL SHOULD BE LEFT AT THE SCORE OF LOVE-ALL	106
<hr/>	
ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES	111
<hr/>	
THE LAWS OF BRIDGE	149

INTRODUCTION.

HAD anyone been bold enough, some seven years ago, to propound the idea that, by the end of the nineteenth century, the game of Whist would have become a dead letter at the leading London Clubs, his remarks would have been treated as the wanderings of a harmless lunatic. Yet so it has proved.

One afternoon, in the autumn of 1894, Lord Brougham was in the Portland Club, and before starting the usual rubber of Whist he showed the game of Bridge to three or four men who were there. The result was almost magical. They started playing it at once, and as other members dropped in they nearly all fell in love with the new game at first sight; and in a few weeks it was the standard game at the one club which had been always considered the greatest stronghold of Whist.

A few enthusiastic Whist players held out for a time, but one by one they gave in, until the

late Henry Jones ("Cavendish") was left almost alone in his glory as an opponent of the new game. From the Portland, Bridge spread like wildfire to other clubs, until to-day there is hardly a well-known club at the West End of London which does not own its sway.

The downfall of Whist was sudden, unexpected, and complete; but the reason of it is really not far to seek. It had become much too scientific. "Cavendish" had introduced, and continued to introduce, fresh intricacies and developments, until a first-class Whist player was fast becoming a sort of Whist automaton.

It must be borne in mind that a large majority of the men who play cards at London Clubs are professional or business men, or men with other and varied pursuits and occupations, who play cards to a great extent as a relaxation, and they do not want to be bothered with ante-penultimates, and American leads, and sub-echoes, *et hoc genus omne*.

Consequently, they no sooner saw Bridge than they welcomed it with open arms as being a delightful change from the stereotyped conventions of Whist.

Bridge possesses an individuality which Whist could never possess. It is essentially a game of

quick perception and individual enterprise, as against recognised methods of combination, and established leads and rules of play.

Besides this, it possesses strongly the gambling element so dear to the inmost heart of every Englishman. You can back your luck and play a forward game at Bridge in a way which was quite impossible at scientific Whist.

Also, Whist is a game of very narrow limitations. It is possible that you may hold four by honours and win every trick, but when you have done so you have, at the most, won a treble; whereas at Bridge you can always buoy yourself up with the hope that, when your deal comes, you will hold a hundred aces and win the Grand Slam in "no trumps" doubled. You are not likely to do so, but it is possible—it is always there. Whatever the merits or demerits of the game may be, it undeniably possesses a fascination peculiarly its own, and it is daily becoming more popular with all classes and with both sexes.

This little work has no pretension to be a handbook to the game. It is written neither for the elementary education of the beginner, nor for the captious criticism of the learned, but rather as a possible means of assistance to the many who