PRACTICAL POKER

WORKS BY R. F. FOSTER

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Poker, although it has been prominently before the public for forty years, and is probably more widely known and played than any other game of cards, has, unfortunately, no well-established set of laws, simply because there are no clubs of acknowledged standing that will undertake to father such a code. This is chiefly on account of the old prejudice against poker as a game of chance, and the difficulty of securing its proper recognition for what it is—a game of skill.

Many writers on the game have attempted to supply this deficiency, and there are to-day about thirty different versions of the Laws of Poker. Many of these were framed to meet the demands of a game which is no longer played, while others are designed to embody the individual ideas of their authors, who too frequently forget that there are certain fundamental principles, inherent in the game itself, which neither they nor anyone else

can change, no matter how easy it may be to point out the possibility of improvement.

All these codes I have carefully collected, indexed, and compared, getting together under separate heads the various decisions upon different points, and noting the time and circumstances under which new laws were introduced to meet the gradual changes in the development of the game.

But a mere book-knowledge of printed laws is not enough. Of my practical experience at the Poker table I will not speak, except to say that I learnt in a hard school. My most valuable experience is an accumulation of the experience of others.

Having been called upon, during the past ten years, to deal with an average of eighty letters a week relating to Poker disputes alone, I have probably had exceptional facilities for sifting out and analysing Poker Laws. Card-players of all classes and in all countries have submitted an enormous number and variety of examples from actual play, showing how certain rules work out in practice, and how some of them will not work. If there is any possible quibble or misunderstanding that has

HISTORICAL

IT is curious that such a popular game as Poker should have had so little attention paid to its origin or the history of its development. Among the forty different authors who have written books devoted exclusively to the game, only one or two offer any explanation of its derivation, and their efforts are merely guess-work unsupported by the slightest historical or circumstantial evidence. Only one writer attempts to account for the name Poker, which he fancies might have been derived from the old English game of Post-and-Pair.

Poker is universally regarded as an American game, but is frequently spoken of as of English origin—a direct descendant of the game of Brag. If this were the true explanation of its origin, the Americans would have derived Poker from the English, it would have been first played with an English pack of fifty-two cards (like Brag), it would have had an English name, and it would probably have first appeared in that part of America to which the English emigrated. Nothing of the kind is the case.

A series of investigations undertaken by the
New York Sun, with a view to discovering the
earliest date at which Poker had been known in
America, and the manner in which it was first
played, elicited a large number of letters from old
card-players in various parts of the States, which
proved pretty conclusively that the game either
came to America by way of New Orleans, which
was the capital of the French Colony of Louisiana,
or that it originated in that city, very early in the
nineteenth century.

An exhaustive search through the literature of
card-playing has brought out a number of closely
co-related facts, which point to Poker as a game
of Persian origin, with a name borrowed from a
French game, Poker being nothing but an English
mispronunciation of the French word "Poque."

The combinations of cards which are of value
in Poker are to be found in a great many games.
They can be traced back to the ancient French
game of Gilet, and even to the Italian game of
Primero, from which Gilet was probably derived.
In the time of Charles IX. we find Gilet changed
into Brelan, a game which is now extinct, although
the technical terms used in it are still extant in all
French games of cards. From Brelan were de-
rived the French games of Bouillotte and Ambigu
—the latter described as far back as 1654. From
these we get the English games of Post-and-Pair
and Brag. The first mention we find of Post-and-

Pair is in "Cotton's Compleat Gamester," 1674; but Brag is not mentioned until the 1721 edition. An earlier reference to Brag is in the "Memoirs of the Lives, Intrigues, and Comical Adventures of the Most Famous Gamesters and Celebrated Sharpers," by Theophilus Lucas (London, 1714). In this there is a graphic description of the art of bluffing, and mention is made of one Patrick Hurley, a very good player.

Brag has in it the peculiarity of attaching certain arbitrary values to three particular cards—the ace and nine of diamonds and the jack of clubs. This is quite foreign to the game of Poker; and Mistigris, which adopts the idea, using the joker, was first played in 1875. Three-stake Brag, which came later, is evidently an imitation of the French game of Poque and its cousin the German game of Pochen, as it introduces the counting for the point, and the showing of certain cards for the parts of the pool before betting on the pairs and triplets in the hands themselves.

Brelan, Bouillotte, and Brag were played with three cards only; Ambigu with four. In Bouillotte, however, there was a turn-up card which might be combined with the three cards in the hand of the player to increase the value of his combination, three queens in hand and one turned up being reckoned as four of a kind. Bouillotte was played by four persons with a pack of twenty cards only, the ace, king, queen, nine, eight of each suit being

retained. Ambigu was played with a pack of forty cards, the king, queen, jack of each suit being thrown out. Brag was always played with the full pack of fifty-two cards.

In all these games the combinations of value were very various, beginning with the point, which was the greatest number of pips on two or more cards of the same suit. Then came sequences, triplets, flushes, and fours. A single pair had no value in any of the French games; and any such thing as a double combination, two pairs, or a full hand, was impossible.

It is very evident that Poker was not derived from any of this group, because it was always played with five cards; pairs always had a value, sequences had not; there was no draw, and no such thing as counting for the point; while double combinations were always a characteristic. Had Poker been derived, as some suggest, from a further development of Ambigu—adding another card to the player's hand, just as Ambigu added one to the three which were proper to Brelan and Bouillotte—it would certainly have retained the very interesting feature of the draw to improve the hand, which distinguished Ambigu from other games of this group. Poker was played in the States for at least sixty years before such a thing as the draw was even suggested.

The only game which Poker resembles in all its essential features is the ancient Persian game

of *Âs nâs*. The old Persian pack consists of twenty cards only, divided into four suits of five cards each, which are known as lions, kings, ladies, soldiers, and dancing girls. The pictures of these characters take the place of our ace, king, queen, jack, ten. These packs of cards are called *varak i âs*, *varak i âsanâs*, or simply *âs*, from the game *âs* or *âsanâs*, which is always played with them. The name *ganjîfeh* is applied to the modern European cards, the word being probably derived from the Chinese, and meaning "paper cards."

In *Âs nâs*, five cards are dealt to each player, and the rank of the hands is as follows:—Four of a kind; three of a kind and a pair; three of a kind; two pairs; one pair.

There was no draw to improve the hand, and it is worthy of note that sequences were not reckoned. The sequence or straight was not introduced to Poker until about 1870, and seems to have come in at the same time as the draw.

In this Persian game we have all the characteristics that would naturally present themselves in the parent of the Poker family—the twenty-card pack, five cards to each player; the recognition of single pairs and of double combinations, such as full hands and two pairs; and the absence of the draw to improve the original hand. The betting arrangements were precisely similar to those that obtained in straight Poker, and the bluff was very common.

From what we can gather from contemporaneous literature, Poker was introduced to America by way of New Orleans, either during or shortly after the time of the French Revolution. It is remarkable that Bouillotte was all the rage in France about this time, but chiefly among the fashionable classes. Among the common people there was another game, something like it, and also of ancient lineage, called Poque, which was derived from the older game of Hoc.

This game of Poque is very fully described in the "Académie Universelle des Jeux" (edition of 1718), an authoritative work on all games, which was published at the Palace, Paris, by Theodore Legras. Poque is still played in Germany under the name of Pochen, and the apparatus for it can be found in any German stationer's shop. Its peculiarity is, that after the cards have been dealt and the payments for the various cards held have been taken out of the pools, just as in three-stake Brag, the players propose to bet on the pairs or triplets they hold, just as we now bet on Poker hands. In the French descriptions of the game we are told that the betting was begun by some player naming the amount he was willing to risk by saying, "Je poque d'un jeton," or whatever the number of chips might be. In Germany one hears exactly the same expression to-day, "Ich poche eins," or whatever number the bettor pleases, and the answer from the other players is always, "Ich poche mit."

In the English translations of the "Académie des Jeux," and in all the English descriptions of the game of Poque, we find the players are instructed to say in English, "I poque for so much," and the opposing players are to respond, "I poque against you." Show this to any ordinary English-speaking person not acquainted with French, and he would undoubtedly read it as if the word "poque" were divided into two syllables, and would pronounce it "po-que." In German, the word "poche" is as near "poker" as the vowel sound will admit.

It would seem probable that any Englishman who had played Poque, and almost certain that any resident of New Orleans of French birth or extraction already familiar with Poque, upon seeing "Âs nâs" played for the first time, or on having the game described to him, would use the expression "Je poque," and that the English-speaking people who carried the game up the river from New Orleans would say "poke" or "poke-ah." The curious and difficult foreign name of "Âs nâs" would soon be dropped in favor of the simpler "po-que," which would easily be spelt "poker." We have endless examples of games that have lost their original names, and taken on names derived from some feature of the play, like Pitch, Set-back, Cinch, and others.

So much for the probable derivation of the name, and the main features of the game itself. Its gradual growth and development can be easily

traced in the literature of cards, although it did
not appear in any text-books until it had worked
its way to the Eastern States.   In its early days it
was a river game, peculiar to towns on the Ohio
and Mississippi.   After the railway came, it trav-
elled with it to the sea-coast towns in the East,
and wended its way with the **mule-wagons** on
their journeys to the West.

The earliest mention that we have of Poker is
in a work entitled "An Exposure of the Arts and
Miseries of Gambling," published by G. B. Zieber,
Philadelphia, in 1843.   The author of this remark-
able book, and of many similar ones, was a re-
formed gambler, who in 1888 entered the Soldiers'
Home at Dayton, Ohio.   He was then eighty
years of age, and had served in the 35th Indiana,
Company F.   The book was afterwards published
by T. P. Peterson, Philadelphia, in 1857; and the
same firm published, in 1858, another work by the
same author, "The Reformed Gambler; or, The
History of the Later Years of Jonathan H. Green."

Green tells us, in his preface, that he wrote
"Gambling Exposed" in 1843; and in the book
itself he refers to several Poker incidents as having
happened "a few years ago," which must have
meant some time in the thirties.   The earliest
positive date that can be fixed upon in any of
Green's works for a particular game of Poker is
June, 1834.   He relates, in the "Reformed Gam-
bler" (page 140), an incident that occurred at the

time on a steamer travelling from New Orleans
to Louisville, the game being described as "twenty-
card Poker." In the same book (page 164) there
is another story of a Poker game, which took place
in 1837 on the steamer *Smelter*, Captain Harris,
running between Cincinnati and Galena. The
chief figure in this game was a well-known Cincin-
nati gambler named John Howard. This man
is the first to mention "full-deck" Poker as a
game known to him. He speaks as if it were at
that time (1837) something not generally known,
twenty-card Poker being evidently the regular
thing. On page 83 of "Gambling Exposed" is a
chapter entitled "A Game of Poker," which begins
by saying that there is no mention of Poker in any
of the "Hoyle's Games." This remark would re-
fer to any of the American Hoyles which were pub-
lished previous to 1843, the date at which Green
was writing. There were two works then in print,
both entitled "Hoyle's Games," one published by
George Long, New York, in 1825; and another by
G. Cowperthwait, Philadelphia, in 1838. It should
be mentioned that any book which treats of a
number or variety of games is in America called
a "Hoyle," no matter by whom written or edited.

The game which Green describes is twenty-card
Poker, and he makes no mention of the full-pack
game. He says: "It would seem to be a varia-
tion of the game of Brag, being similar in many
particulars, such as making pairs, passing, becom-

ing eldest hand. It is usually played with twenty
cards—ace, king, queen, jack, ten, of each suit—
and by two, three, or four persons, each having
five cards."

When we come to text-books, we find that
Poker was not mentioned in England until 1875,
although it was played some years earlier. The
Hon. Robert C. Schenck tells us that it was in the
summer of 1872, while on a visit to a country house
in Somersetshire, that he showed the guests how
to play the American game. The hostess, Lady W.,
asked him to write out the rules for her, which he
did, and a friend of hers printed them on his
private printing-press. This is undoubtedly the
first time the rules of the game were published in
England.

The English Hoyles, and Bohn's "Handbook of
Games," make no reference to Poker. "Cavendish,"
the great authority on Whist, and for forty years
card editor of the *Field*, which, during his life-
time, was the recognised authority on all matters
relating to cards, mentions Poker in his "Round
Games of Cards," published by De La Rue & Co.,
in 1875.

Bohn's handbook was first published in 1850,
but the English plates remained unchanged until
1884. The American reprint, which came out in
1850, tacked on a brief description of Poker, and
draw Poker was inserted, out of place, in 1887.

H. F. Anners, of Philadelphia, was the first

American publisher to include Poker in his
" Hoyle's Games." There is no mention of Poker
in his 1845 edition, but a brief notice of it appears
in the supplement to the 1850 edition. He says
it was played with the full pack, and that any num-
ber of persons up to ten could take part, which
shows conclusively that there was no draw in 1850.
According to his laws, cards faced in dealing could
be refused or accepted by the player, and if anyone
held a hand better than three of a kind, each of the
others at the table had to pay him a bonus; so that
he got something, whether anyone bet against him
or not. The modern revival of this custom is the
" whangdoodle," a round of compulsory jack-pots
after a big hand has been shown.

In the Hoyle published by Dick & Fitzgerald
(edition of 1867) we find the first mention of draw
Poker, but the old custom of putting up an ante
by all the players before the cards are dealt, and
the blind bet after cards are dealt, shows that the
betting arrangements of straight Poker were still
adhered to. In the old days, the blind succeeded
the ante, and the player to the left of the one who
put up a blind, which we should call a straddle,
could either double it or call it; so that it was really
nothing but a bet before the draw.

Green mentions a case in the thirties, in which
the player on the left of the dealer steadily refused
to put up more than the ante, which was a "bit"
—12½ cents—until in one particular deal he was

bantered into "blinding" a quarter. Each suc-
ceeding player, all of whom were sharpers, imme-
diately doubled him, and by the time it came rou l
to him to make good his blind, it cost him $15.75.
On the top of this he bet a hundred dollars, and the
dealer, who was the principal card sharper, raised
him four hundred, which was called and the hands
shown.

In Thomas Frere's Hoyle, published in 1857 by
T. W. Story, New York, on page 94 there is an
explanation of this peculiar doubling of the blind.
In those days the blind and the ante stood in posi-
tions exactly opposed to those they now occupy,
Before the cards were dealt a stated ante was
placed in the pool by each player. During the
deal, or at least before any of the cards were looked
at, it was the privilege of the eldest hand, and of no
one else, to put up a blind bet. This blind bet
could be doubled by any player in turn to the left.
This seems to survive in our modern straddle of the
blind, which must be started by the man to the
left of the eldest hand. There is no mention of
draw Poker in this work, published in 1857.

It would seem, from a comparison of these dates
—Frere in 1857, and Dick & Fitzgerald in 1867—
that draw Poker must have been introduced about
the time of the Civil War, but that there was at first
no change in the manner of putting up the ante
and betting on the hands. Everyone had to ante,
whether he wanted to draw cards or not, and the

only optional bet was the blind. Nowadays the blind is compulsory, and no one puts up an ante until he has seen his cards and decided to play them.

In the same edition of Dick & Fitzgerald (1867) we find the first mention of the straight, or sequence; but it is ranked as better than two pairs, and not as good as threes. This shows the combination was new, and its real value had not been ascertained. For more than fifteen years after straights were introduced, players were warned by all writers on the game to ask, before they sat down to play, whether or not straights were played; and, if so, what they beat. The straight naturally led to the straight flush, to beat four of a kind, which is also mentioned in this 1867 edition. It is worthy of notice that almost all the questions submitted to Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times* from 1870 to 1874 were disputes about the proper rank of straights. It was about this time that the limit began to be insisted on; but its amount was much greater in proportion to the ante than it is now, one hundred times the ante being the usual thing.

Jack-pots were not mentioned in any work on Poker until 1875. The 1870 edition of Dick & Fitzgerald's Hoyle does not speak of them, but both jack-pots and mistigris—playing with the joker in the pack—are described in the 1875 edition. In the decisions in the *Spirit of the Times* there is not a single question about jack-pots until

the year 1874. Then a correspondent asked if he must show his entire hand or openers only when he was called, to which the editor replied, "We know of no rules for jack-pot Poker."

Nothing since the introduction of the draw has so completely changed the game of Poker as the invention of the jack-pot, and no other innovation has been so fiercely fought against by the best players. It is undoubtedly true that the jack-pot has been the ruin of the scientific Poker player of the old school, because it has introduced the element of a compulsory payment not based on judgment. Before the advent of the jack-pot, the player who refused to come in on less than a pair of court cards had a steady percentage of two-elevenths in his favour against players who were in the habit of coming in on lower pairs. This in itself was enough to beat any game. But in playing jack-pots a man must contribute to the pool whether he wants to or not, no matter what he holds.

It is probable that the scientific players brought their troubles on themselves by driving their less cautious opponents to the invention of the jack. Most people like to play whether they hold court cards or not; and sitting out hand after hand, waiting for court cards, is not amusing, even if it has a percentage of two-elevenths in its favour financially. Winterblossom says that jack-pots were evidently invented for the special purpose of stimulat-

ing close players to come in oftener. The conservative players of the old days, who never came in on anything less than court cards, were continually throwing up their hands without putting up a chip, and the liberal players had no one to bet against. It was therefore suggested that when no one came in everyone should be obliged to put up an amount equal to the usual ante, and that no one should be allowed to draw cards unless someone had a pair of court cards. As the lowest court cards are jacks, the opener must have jacks or better. This accomplished a double object. It made the close players pay, whether they had any cards or not, and it prevented the liberal players from throwing away their money on small pairs.

The jack-pot, with its accompanying small-limit game, has completely killed bluffing—that pride and joy of the old-timer, and eternal source of inspiration to the story-teller. Modern Poker has gradually become more of a lottery than anything else, "with the addition of a condition which the lottery system lacks," as Blackbridge puts it; "namely, that all the players *must* buy tickets."

By the year 1880 the rank of the straight had been fixed, and the unlimited game had totally disappeared. Since then there has been little or no change in the game, except in a continued tendency to narrow the proportion between the ante and the limit, and to straighten out some minor difficulties in the laws.

The two great steps in the history and progress of Poker have undoubtedly been the introduction of the draw to improve the hand, and the invention of the jack-pot as a cure for cautiousness. Whatever may be said against it, and no matter how much it has upset all the fine calculations of the old school, the jack-pot has undoubtedly come to stay, and any person who aspires to a thorough knowledge of Practical Poker must adapt himself to the circumstances, and study the new conditions under which the modern game must be played.

THE LAWS OF POKER

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FORMATION OF TABLE

1. Any number from two to seven can play at the same table. If eight play, the dealer takes no cards, and deals off his own jack-pot without anteing.

2. After the pack has been properly shuffled and cut, any person may throw round one card to each player, face up, and the first jack deals.

3. After the first dealer has been decided upon, should any player demand it, the other seats may be determined by the dealer's throwing round a card to each of the other players, face up, each taking his seat in accordance with the rank of the card received, beginning with the lowest, who shall sit on the dealer's left, the next lowest on his left again, and so on. Ace is low in cutting.

4. In case of ties, the cards tieing shall be taken up and two others thrown out; but the new cards shall decide nothing but the tie, the others retaining their original order.

5. At the end of every hour from the time play begins, there may be a similar demand for a rearrangement of the seats; but in all such subse-

quent throwing round for position, every player at
the table, including the dealer, shall have a card
dealt to him.

6. If any candidate enters a table at which play
is in progress, any of those at the table may demand
that a card shall be thrown round between each of
those playing, and the newcomer shall take his seat
where the lowest of these cards falls.

LIMITS

7. Limits must be agreed upon, before play
begins, for the amount of the blind, for the ante
in jack-pots, and for the amount of the raise. It
must also be agreed whether the blind shall or
shall not be variable in amount at the option of
the age. (The amount of a regular penalty should
also be agreed upon for such minor offences as
refusing to show a hand in the call, or a part of
such hand; telling how many cards another player
drew, etc. The amount of premium to be paid to
straight flushes, if any, should also be settled.)

DEALING

8. Any player at the table shall have the right to
shuffle the cards, the dealer last. When two packs
are used, the second player from the dealer on his
left shall make up the still pack for the next deal.

9. The dealer must present the pack to the pone
(the player on his right hand) to be cut. The pone
can either cut them or let them run. If he declines

to cut them, no other player can insist on doing so. If the cards are cut, at least five must remain in each packet.

10. If there is any confusion in the cut, or if any card is exposed, the pack shall be re-shuffled and again presented to be cut.

11. After a cut, the parts of the pack must be re-united before dealing. Any deal made with only a part of the pack in the dealer's hand is a misdeal.

12. The cards must be dealt one at a time, face down, in rotation from left to right, beginning on the dealer's left hand, and continuing until each player has received five cards.

13. If a player deals out of turn, or with the wrong cards, he must be stopped before the last card is dealt, or the deal stands good.

14. The deal passes in regular rotation to the left, except in a round of jacks (a whangdoodle), when the same player must continue to deal until the pot has been opened and won.

MISDEALING

15. It is a misdeal if any card is found faced in the pack when dealing the original hands, or if the pack is proved to be imperfect, or if the dealer gives six cards to more than one player, or if he deals too many or too few hands, or if he exposes more than one card in dealing.

16. If there is a misdeal, the same dealer must deal again with the same cards.

17. An imperfect pack is one in which there are missing cards, duplicate cards, or any card so marked that it can be identified by the back.

18. A misdeal on account of an imperfect pack must be claimed before the last card is dealt for the draw, unless duplicate cards are drawn.

19. If any card is faced in dealing it to a player, the player must accept the faced card, provided it was not faced in the pack; but if two cards are exposed in the same deal, even to different players, there must be a new deal.

IRREGULAR HANDS

20. Any hand of more or less than five cards, any part of which has been lifted or looked at, is foul.

21. If, during the deal, or after the cards are all dealt, any player discovers and announces, before lifting or looking at any of his cards, that he has less than five, the others having their right number, the dealer must give him another card from the top of the pack to complete his hand, as soon as his attention is called to it.

22. If a player discovers that he has more than five, the others having their right number, he can demand a new deal, or he can ask the dealer to draw a card, provided no ante has been made by any preceding player. The card so drawn shall be placed at the bottom of the pack without being shown to anyone.

23. If any ante has been put up, or if more than one player has been given six cards, there must be a new deal.

24. If one player finds he has six cards, while the player sitting next him has four only, neither of them having lifted or looked at any of his cards, the dealer must be called upon to draw one from the surplus hand, giving it to the other hand.

25. If both players have lifted or looked at any of their cards, their hands are both dead, and they must stay out of that pool, leaving in it any antes they may have made.

26. If one has lifted or looked and the other has not, the dealer must draw, face down, from the surplus hand to make the hands equal, and the hand which has not been lifted or looked at can then be played, the other being dead.

"BLIND" AND "STRADDLE"

27. Before the cards are dealt, the age (the player on the dealer's left) must put up the amount agreed upon for the blind.

28. The player immediately on the left of the age may straddle this blind by putting up double the amount, provided he does so before seeing any of his cards. If he straddles, the player next to the left again may straddle him in turn, and so on until half the betting limit is reached.

29. Should any player in his proper turn refuse to straddle, no player on his left can do so.

THE ANTE

30. After the cards are dealt, each player in turn, beginning on the left of the age, or the last straddler, if any, must declare to play or pass. If he plays, he must put into the pool an amount equal to double the blind or straddle. If he passes, he must throw his cards into the discard pile, which should be in front of the next dealer, or the player who will collect and shuffle the cards for the next deal when two packs are used.

31. A player, having once thrown up his cards, cannot take them back again under any circumstances.

32. Any player putting up an ante is at liberty to raise it any amount within the betting limit, and following player will have to see both ante and raise, or throw up his cards.

33. Any player who is already in, having anted, but who is raised by a following player, must either meet the raise or pass out. If he has been raised, he can raise again in turn.

34. Any count once placed in the pool, whether in the player's right turn or otherwise, cannot be taken out again. Should any player ante or raise out of turn, that shall not bar any preceding player, whose proper turn it was, from raising.

35. If any player raises the ante, and no other will meet the raise, the one who raised takes the pool without showing his hand.

36. If only one player antes, the age may either fill his own blind, raise the ante, pass out altogether, or make a jack-pot of it by paying the amount of the ante to the single player who put it up.

37. If no one antes to play against the age, it is a natural jack-pot for the next deal.

DRAWING CARDS

38. When two or more players have anted equal amounts, each of those who have so anted, beginning with the one next on the left of the dealer, may discard any or all of the cards in the original hand, and draw others in their places.

39. In dealing for the draw, the pack must not be re-shuffled or cut, and all the cards drawn must be dealt face down, the dealer giving each player all the cards he asks for before proceeding to help the next one.

40. Each player who is entitled to draw cards must ask distinctly for the number he wants, first discarding an equal number from his original hand. When helping himself, the dealer must name aloud the number he takes.

41. No player but the dealer need reply to any question as to how many cards he drew, and neither the dealer nor any other player is allowed to give the information. (There should be a penalty for so doing.) But any player may ask how many cards the dealer drew, and the dealer must

answer correctly, provided the player putting the question is still in the pool and has not made a bet.

42. If any card is found faced in the pack when dealing for the draw, it must be placed amongst the discards, after having been shown or named to all the players.

43. If a card which was not faced in the pack is exposed in the act of giving it to a player in the draw, or if it should by any means be turned over or exposed after leaving the dealer's hand, and before the player for whom it is intended touches it, the player cannot take it, but must wait until all the other players, including the dealer, have been helped, before the exposed card can be replaced; but the player shall retain any other cards asked for and given at the same time which are not exposed. Cards falling below the table are not exposed cards.

44. Any cards once placed on the discard pile cannot be taken back into the hand, or even looked at, under any circumstances.

45. Each player must watch and guard the cards laid off for him by the dealer. Should any such cards become mixed with the discards, or with the cards of another player, and the players whose cards are mixed not be able to agree which are which without looking at their faces, the dealer may be called upon to pick them out. If he is unable to do so, the players must draw at random, face down, or abandon the hand.

46. Should any player inadvertently throw his discard on the cards just laid off by the dealer for another player, in such a manner that they cannot be separated without looking at the faces, the dealer may be asked to say which are which, or the player who has discarded may be called upon to write down the cards he discarded, and the player whose draw has been mixed with these cards may then pick them all up and select from them those that the other discarded, and after showing them to him to be sure that they are correct, lay them upon the discard pile, retaining the others.

INCORRECT DRAWING

47. Should any player ask for an incorrect number of cards, and discover the error before lifting or looking at any of those given him, he may amend his call, provided the next player has not been helped. If the next player has been helped, the number of cards asked for must be taken into the hand. If too many have been asked for, an additional discard must be made before seeing them. If too few, the hand is foul.

48. If the dealer gives a player more or less than the number he asked for, and attention is called to the error before the player lifts or looks at any of the cards laid off, the dealer must correct the mistake as soon as his attention is called to it, even if he has helped other players in the interval. Such other players retain the cards given them.

49. In case of any dispute as to whether the player or the dealer is in fault, such as the player's insisting that he asked for two, and the dealer's maintaining that he said three, the majority vote of the players shall decide. If it is a tie, the dealer has the casting vote.

50. If a player lets another player on his left be helped out of his proper turn, the player who has been passed by has no remedy, and must either play his hand pat or retire from the pool. If he has already discarded, his hand is dead.

BETTING ON THE HANDS

51. After all the cards have been dealt for the draw, the first player on the left of the age must either bet on his hand or pass out of the pool. If he bets, each player in turn on his left must either call the bet, or raise it, or pass out.

52. Even if the age has passed out, or has been straddled, the first player on his left must make the first bet, as the privilege of the age (having the last say as to betting) never passes.

53. Any player betting or raising out of his proper turn, shall not be allowed to take his money out of the pool again; and any such irregular betting or raising shall not prevent any preceding player from raising in his right turn.

54. Any player who borrows to raise a bet, must also borrow to call if he is raised in turn. He cannot borrow to raise, and afterwards call for "a sight."

55. Any money or chips once placed in the pool, even by mistake, cannot be taken out again, unless it is admitted that the player was mistaken as to the value of the counters put in.

CALLING AND SHOWING

56. When a call is made by two or more players betting an equal amount, all the hands in the call must be shown to the table, and the best Poker hand wins. There is no penalty for mis-calling a hand, as the cards show for themselves. (Any player who is in a call, and refuses to show his hand, or any part of it, even if he acknowledges it is not the best, should be penalised an amount agreed upon by the players.)

57. In calling, the whole hand must be shown. It is not enough for the calling hand to show just enough to beat the called hand.

58. Should any of the hands shown in a call contain more or less than five cards, it is foul, and cannot win the pool, provided any other player has a fair hand to dispute it. If both hands shown for the pool are foul, the chips remain on the table, and the next deal is a jack-pot.

JACK-POT LAWS

MAKING JACK-POTS

59. When no one comes in against the blind, the next deal must be a jack-pot. If only one player comes in against the blind, the age may make the next deal a jack by paying the player who came in the amount of his ante. If any hand shown in a call, to decide the winner of a pool, is better than a flush, the next deal must be a jack-pot. Hands which are shown, but were not called, do not count unless by agreement. If four of a kind, or a straight flush, is shown in a call, there must be a whangdoodle—that is, a round of jack-pots, each player at the table dealing off his own jack. (It may also be agreed that a straight flush shall be paid a premium by each of the other players before beginning the whangdoodle.)

60. Any other jack-pots (such as those made by showing hands of less value, by the circulation of a "buck," or for misdeals) must be matters of previous agreement among the players. That the last hands before quitting time shall be a round of jacks, must also be agreed to.

JACK-POT ANTES

61. Before the cards are dealt, each player must put up the amount agreed upon for the ante in jack-pots. Any player may request to be left out, putting up no ante and receiving no cards, provided the other players all agree to it.

OPENING JACK-POTS

62. Each player in turn, beginning on the left of the dealer, must declare whether or not he will open it and for how much. The opener must have jacks or better, but no one is obliged to open if he does not wish to.

63. Progressive jacks are a matter of agreement, otherwise the openers will always be jacks or better. Variations in the amount for which the pot may be opened, depending on the amount already in the pool, must also be matters of agreement.

64. After the pot has been opened, each player in turn, beginning on the left of the opener, must declare to stay or to pass out. If he stays, he must put up an amount equal to that for which the pot has been opened, with the privilege of raising it any amount within the betting limit.

65. Players who have passed before the pot was opened may not only come in after it is opened, but may raise the opener in their proper turn if they wish to; but any player who has once passed

cannot afterwards open it if any player on his left has in the interval declared to pass.

FALSE OPENERS

66. Should a player open without the proper qualification, his hand is dead, and all he has put into the pool is forfeited.

67. Should any player have come in to play against the false openers, the pot shall be played for just as if it had been legitimately opened.

68. If the false opener discovers his mistake before all have declared (none of those who have declared having come in), any player declaring after the mistake has been announced must have openers in his own hand in order to open it, just as if the false opener had passed.

69. If the false opener does not announce his mistake until after he has drawn cards, he not only forfeits all his rights to the current pool, but after the pool is decided he must ante for all the other players and for himself for another jack-pot, which shall immediately follow the one falsely opened.

70. Should the false opener have played his hand pat—that is, without having drawn any cards—he shall not be liable to this second penalty of giving the others a free ride.

SHOWING OPENERS ONLY

71. As any player coming in against the opener may raise the ante any amount within the betting limit, the opener may decline to meet this raise. If he does, before withdrawing from the pool, he must show his entire hand, face up, to the table. (*See* Law 74.)

DISCARDING AND DRAWING

72. If any player stays in against the opener, or if two or more stay in after the opener has been raised out, they can discard and draw subject to the same rules as those in force for pools which are not jacks, the first man to the left of the dealer being helped first, no matter who opened.

SPLITTING OPENERS

73. The player who opens a jack-pot shall not be allowed to discard in such a manner as to destroy or split his opening qualification, not even to draw for a flush or a straight, unless it is agreed that four cards of a flush or straight shall constitute legitimate openers.

BETTING

74. If the opener is still in the pool after the draw, he must make the first bet. If he declines to bet, he must show openers, but need not show the remainder of his hand.   (*See* Law 71.)

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75. If the opener is not in the pool after the draw, or if he refuses to bet, the next man on the left of the opener must make the first bet, and this bet may be called or raised by any following player in his proper turn.

FATTENING

76. If no one opens a jack-pot, the deal passes to the left, except in whangdoodles, and each player adds one white counter to the pool. If it is not opened on the second deal, another white counter must be added by each player, the deal again passing to the left, and so on for each succeeding deal until the pot is opened and won.

DISPUTES

77. Any dispute as to matters of fact should be left to the decision of the majority of the players, the dealer having the casting vote if it is otherwise a tie, he being one of the disputants.

DISPUTED RULES

There are several points in the Laws of Poker about which disputes and misunderstandings continually arise, and newspapers are constantly called upon to settle wagers which are laid as the result of the players' imperfect knowledge of the laws of the game. Unfortunately, the persons called upon to decide these questions are often no better informed than those who submit the points for decision— rulings which flatly contradict one another being continually given by the editors of various card columns.

In the absence of any official code of laws for Poker, such as we have for games like Whist, Bridge, and Skat, the laws drawn up by any particular writer, or even agreed upon by several, cannot be accepted as final or official. Every club in which Poker is permitted has its own House Rules for the minor details, but the main principles of the laws are usually about the same. It is only by a careful comparison of a large number of these codes, and an exhaustive examination of the reasons that have led to the modification of certain laws from time to time, that we can arrive at a just estimate of the value or fairness of any individual law upon which authorities differ.

An authority whose decision is worth anything must not only know the printed rules of the game, but he must be thoroughly familiar with the reasons underlying those rules—he must know why the law was made, or why it was changed.

The Author has made a special study of this part of the subject, and has probably decided more Poker disputes than any person living. The reasons underlying many of these decisions (which are also the reasons for the existence of the laws themselves) are given here, in order that every Poker player may not only understand his own rights, but be able to explain his position to the satisfaction of others with whom he may become involved in a dispute.

The object of a code of laws is not to burden the game with unnecessary regulations, but to provide the honest player with a weapon, so that he can protect himself against the trickster without having to make accusations which it might be difficult or impossible to prove.

All the laws in the books are not for everyday use, just as there are a great many laws upon the statute books which are not enforced; but they are there in case they are wanted to reach any person who cannot be reached in any other way. The same is true of card laws. For instance, we have the general rule in all card games that any player at the table may demand to shuffle the pack, no matter whose deal it is. But for this rule, an honest player, seeing something suspicious in the

way the cards were gathered together, and noticing
that there was nothing but a pretence at shuffling
them, would have either to submit to it, or charge
the dealer with unfairness—a rather unpleasant
alternative.

A few of the points about which misunder-
standings and wagers most frequently arise are
the following:—

In dealing cards for the draw, if a card is
exposed, there is almost always a dispute as to
whether the player should be compelled to take
the card, or be given another in its place imme-
diately, or should wait until all the others, includ-
ing the dealer, have been helped. The correct
or strict ruling is, that he must wait until all the
others have been helped.

Many persons cannot see any reason for this
decision, and argue that it would save time and
trouble to replace the card immediately. So it
would, and if no one objects it may be done; but
the law must stay on the books for the reason al-
ready given—in order that the players may protect
themselves should it seem to them necessary to do
so. The rule was made because certain dealers
were in the habit of locating certain cards in the
pack in such a manner that when it came to dealing
for the draw, they could give to one man, whom they
wished to pluck, three of a kind, such as three tens;
and to themselves, or to a confederate, three of a
kind slightly better than tens. The cards were
"stacked" on the assumption that any intervening

player would draw three cards. If he did not draw three, but two or one only, the dealer turned over or "faced" the others as if by accident, so that the two triplets fell as originally intended. In order to prevent this alteration of the run of the cards, the law was changed so that it made no difference whether the cards were faced or not. The enforcement of this rule very soon put a stop to what was known as the "top stock."

The objection to compelling a player to take a card faced in the draw, just as he has always been compelled to take one faced in the original deal, is that one of the cards in his complete hand would be absolutely known to all the other players; whereas he may have discarded the card which was faced in the original hand.

The most frequent disputes which arise at Poker are in connection with jack-pots, especially in such matters as splitting openers, false openers, and abandoned hands. In the following code these points have been covered by laws which are framed with a view to doing justice to both sides of the dispute, not forgetting at the same time that due allowance must be made for human nature. A man is not a machine, and there are certain things which you cannot make him do at the card-table. For instance: no one should throw up his cards in a jack-pot until everyone has passed out, or until it comes round to his turn after it has been opened; but players will do it, and no rule has been sug-

gested that will stop them. A trifling irregularity
or carelessness on the part of one player should
not deprive another of his rights, but contributory
negligence on the part of any player should prevent
his demanding a penalty to which he would other-
wise have been entitled.

There is a law to the effect that no one but the
dealer can be required to tell how many cards he
drew, but in several books it is stated that the dealer
cannot be compelled to answer the question "after
a bet has been made." This statement of the law
is clearly defective and unjust, because many per-
sons, having the first say, will make a bet the
moment their cards are dealt to them in the draw,
often without looking at the draw at all or waiting
to see what others ask for. This bet would prevent
any player asking the dealer how many cards the
dealer drew, although the bet was made before
the dealer drew at all. It is manifestly fairer to
make the rule that the dealer must answer, pro-
vided the player asking him has not made a bet,
but is still in the pool. That the player be in the
pool is a necessary qualification, otherwise a person
who had no interest in the pot might unfairly call
attention to the dealer's draw, which the other
players might have failed to notice.

The rule that the dealer shall not tell the num-
ber of cards drawn by any player other than himself
is sound for two reasons. In the first place, it is
the business of each player to watch the draw for

himself, and everyone but the dealer has to ask for
cards, so that anyone can hear what another gets.
It is just possible that the dealer may help himself
without stating the number he takes, therefore the
question can be asked him. In the second place,
why should the dealer be allowed to give informa-
tion about a player which the player himself can
refuse? What guarantee is there that the dealer
remembers correctly the number asked for by any
particular player? Previous to 1870, each player
was obliged to tell how many cards he drew, if
asked by an opponent; but so many mistakes were
made, intentionally or otherwise, and so many con-
tradictions were hurled across the table, that the
present rule came into force.

One of the modern vexed questions at Poker
is the splitting of openers in jack-pots. The most
rational decision seems to be that the player who
opens a jack-pot shall not be allowed to split his
openers under any circumstances. The moment
the opener is allowed to split, a string of compli-
cations enters the game, to be followed inevitably
by unpleasant circumstances. If an opener is al-
lowed to split, the other players must either take
his word for it that he had openers, or he must be
able to prove it.

The usual method is for the opener to lay aside
his discard, with a view to producing it later; but
the proof thus offered is only presumptive. What
positive evidence is there that the card shown in

his hand was in his hand before the draw? Laying aside a discard, whether attention is called to it or not, either betrays the nature of the player's game (which is contrary to the whole spirit of Poker) or it is a bluff. What is to prevent a player holding two pairs, or three, or even four of a kind, opening a jack-pot and carefully laying aside his discard, ostentatiously calling attention to it?

If an opener is allowed to split a pair, why should he not be allowed to split two pairs, laying aside three cards? Many players, on being raised, will discard one of two small pairs on the chance of making threes out of the other pair. Why should they not be allowed to do it after they have opened a jack-pot?

The preservation of the discard leads to endless trouble. What is the player to do with it? If he puts it in his pocket, he may forget it, and the next deal will be made with an imperfect pack; or he will be accused of cheating if cards are found in his pockets. If he leaves it on the table, it may be gathered up with the other discards, and he will not be able to produce it. In the hurry and confusion of a large game, it is difficult enough to keep one's hand and draw from being interfered with, without having to take care of a discard as well. There is no place to put a discard without calling attention to it, and that is the chief objection to the practice.

Openers are almost always split for the purpose

of trying to fill a flush or a straight. It was this
fact that prompted the introduction of the rule
allowing a player to open a jack-pot with a bobtail,
so that whether he split a pair of openers to draw
to a bobtail, or opened on the bobtail itself, did not
matter. This was a very good rule—better even
than its proposers knew—and it is a pity it is not
generally adopted, as it does away with all the
troubles of a protected discard.

If a player is allowed to open on a four-card
flush or straight, there can be no question about
his complying with the rule of keeping openers,
because he must keep his bobtail, having nothing
else to draw to if he takes one card only. If he
drew one card to two pairs, they are openers. In
any case, the hand will show for itself.

If the idea of fixing upon "jacks or better" was
to force the player to hold a hand of a certain value
before allowing him the privilege of opening, why
not allow him to open on any hand of equal value,
just as he is allowed to open on any hand of greater
value? It is very easy to ascertain the rank or
value of jacks or better. In the 2,598,960 possible
Poker hands which can be held, all different, there
are 549,564 which are jacks or better, and there are
573,916 which are four-card flushes or straights,
in which the fifth card does not make a pair of
jacks or better.

That is to say, the odds against any player
having dealt to him a hand good enough to open

on, jacks or better, are 2,598,960 to 549,564, or 37 to 10; while the odds against any player having a bobtail dealt to him are 35 to 10.

It is very curious that there should be no possible hand at Poker so near the average value of jacks or better as a four-card flush or straight. If the rule were adopted to allow bobtails to open jackpots, all the troubles and disputes about splitting openers would be immediately done away with.

When the player is allowed to split openers, but is not allowed to open on a four-card flush or straight, there are two ways of overcoming the difficulties of the preserved discard:—

(*a*) The player can be made to show both his openers before he splits them, and can be compelled to discard one of them face up. This is necessary in order to provide against his showing a pair of jacks, then putting them back into his hand, laying out some card not shown, and drawing to jacks up. The objection to this method is, that showing a pair of high denomination may seriously affect the draw or the play of someone else at the table.

(*b*) The player can be made to lay aside both his openers without showing them, keeping them together on the table, and drawing one card to the three remaining in his hand. If the card drawn fills a flush or a straight, with either of the discarded pair on the table to complete the hand, the hand shows for itself; and there is no question about the

openers, because they have never been separated. In this case there can be no bluff, such as holding a pair in the hand and laying a pair on the table, because one of the pair on the table is lost and cannot be taken back into the hand after the draw. To draw one card to a pair in the hand, in the hope of making threes, would be folly.

Both these methods are open to the objection that they force the owner to disclose the nature of his hand. It cannot be too strongly urged that this violates one of the fundamental principles of the game. The guarded or "nailed" discard compels the player to admit that, although he opened the pot, he has nothing but a bobtail to draw to. The only remedy for this seems to be to make the opener of a jack-pot always preserve his discard, no matter what he draws to, or whether he splits or not. This would prevent calling any special attention to the hand when the openers were split. As the practice now is, it is only when the opener splits that he preserves his discard. The objection to it has already been mentioned—the difficulty of taking care of a discard amidst the confusion of an ordinary game, in which there are so many other things to watch.

If the discard were always preserved by the opener, such cases as the following would not arise: —A opened, asked for two cards, and threw his discard into the deadwood. He looked at the two cards drawn, and bet the limit. On being raised the limit, he knocks on the table, saying, "Your

money." When asked to show openers, it was
found that he had not a pair of any kind in his
hand nor a face card. He said he had opened on
three nines, and must have discarded two of them
by mistake. As his discard was not preserved, he
could not prove this statement, nor could any of
the other players successfully deny it. Having
apparently drawn to false openers, is he to pay the
penalty of giving the others a free ride, or not?

Here is another case:—A opened, and several
came in. A asked for three cards, which were laid
off by the dealer. The next man, B, asked for three
and got them, just as A announced that he had
made a mistake and wanted two only. Dealer says
it is too late, and A must discard and take in the
three asked for and given. This he does. On the
show-down, A has three tens. B insists that A
cannot win the pot, as he drew three cards to a
pair of tens, and therefore did not hold openers.
A says he had three tens to come in on, and had to
discard one, and that his asking for three instead
of two was simply inadvertence. In such a case
A's discard should certainly have been preserved.

The rule that the opener shall not be allowed to
split seems the simplest, and although it trenches
a little on the principle that a player shall discard
and draw as he likes, it may be taken as a compen-
sation of the privilege of opening a jack. If a
player goes into a pool with the understanding
that the privilege of opening carries with it the
obligation of holding his openers, it should be fair

enough. In the opinion of the Author, the diffi-
culties and complications of preserving a discard
are greater than the hardship of being forced to
keep openers. One always has the remedy of not
opening the pot if one has a bobtail as well as a
pair of openers.

Another great source of trouble at the Poker
table is false openers. There is no use in en-
forcing harsh penalties against a player for a lit-
tle carelessness in looking at his cards. When a
player inadvertently opens a pot which he should
not have opened, he seldom discovers his error
until he comes to draw cards, unless he is raised
and takes a second look.

If no one comes in against the false openers, the
remedy is very simple—the opener loses what he
has put up to open it, and the deal passes to the
next player whose turn it is to deal.

If anyone has come in against the false openers,
there are three ways to play: to go on and play for
the pot as if the opening had been regular, the false
opener being out of it, of course; to withdraw all
the bets but the false opener's, and see if anyone
can open it; to withdraw the bets and deal the
cards afresh, either by the same dealer or the next
in turn.

Both the latter methods involve more or less
confusion and loss of time, and the simplest solu-
tion of the difficulty seems to be, to make the rule
that a pot once opened, even if wrongly, shall be

played for, provided anyone has come in against the false openers before they are discovered.

If no one has come in before the error is announced, but some are still to say, it may fairly be assumed that any who have passed could not have opened; but if anyone who has still to say can open, those who have passed must be allowed to come in against him, provided they have not thrown up their hands, the false opener being out of the pool in any case.

If anyone has come in against the false openers, the play proceeds exactly as if the false opener had been raised out, or had a foul hand, his money staying in the pot as a forfeit.

Should the player draw to false openers without announcing them, the play is, to say the least, suspicious, and he should not only forfeit all he has put into the pool, but be obliged to ante for all the others at the table for another jack-pot after the current one has been decided. This is better than making him return the antes and fatteners to each player, and is not as hard a penalty as it seems, because the penalised player has a chance to win all his forfeit-money back again if he can win the next jack. This putting up for all the others in a jack-pot is called "giving them a free ride."

It is necessary to distinguish between cases in which the player has actually drawn cards to false openers, and those in which he stands pat. If he looks at his hand, opens a jack, looks at his hand

again, discards from it, and draws to it, he must suffer the double penalty; losing all he has put into the current pool, and giving the players a free ride for the next one. But if he has looked at his hand once only and played it pat, perhaps thinking he has a straight or a flush, he is not subject to the second penalty, but simply loses his interest in the current pool.

Disputes frequently arise as to whether the opener of a jack-pot shall show his entire hand or openers only, when he is not called. The rule is, that if no one has come in against him, he must show his entire hand; but if anyone has come in against him, and they draw cards, the opener need show openers only. The reasons for this decision are as follows:—

In a jack-pot, every player has paid an equal amount for his original hand of five cards; therefore each would have an equal right to see what the others had, if it were a show-down without betting. But one player has openers, and puts up a bet. If no one will see this bet, he must take it down again and show his hand for the pool; and as the pool he shows for has been equally contributed to by all the players, he must show his whole hand—not in competition against the others, but to satisfy them that he has taken it legitimately.

But if the opener bets, and another person comes in and bets against him, those who refuse to stay in the pool are no longer on an equality. Suppose those who stay draw cards, and the opener bets

against them and is not called. It is clearly no
one's business what he drew, because they will not
pay the additional amount necessary to see that
part of his game. All they are entitled to see is the
part of the original hand which justified him in
opening the pot. Everyone at the table can de-
mand to see that. No one can see what he drew
unless they call the bet he made after the draw.

Players should be careful never to throw their
hands into the deadwood until they have seen
openers. Even if they refuse to come in after the
pot is opened, it is wise to hold on to the original
hand, because the opener's hand may be foul; but
if no one has any hand at all, who is going to ques-
tion it?

This habit of throwing up hands prematurely
leads to some of the most complicated questions
submitted for decision. Here is a case in point:—
A opens a jack-pot; B, C, and D stay, and all
draw cards. The opener bets the limit. B, C, and
D each in turn throws his hand into the dead-
wood, and *then* they ask to see openers. A shows
a pair of queens, but he has six cards. This
being a foul hand, B, C, and D claim that he
cannot win the pot; and they, having abandoned
their cards, cannot win it either. Then what be-
comes of it?

A wins it, because it is a fundamental principle
of card laws that, when several players are guilty of
contributory negligence, they lose the strict rights
they would have had under the laws. In this case

B, C, and D had no business to abandon their hands in a jack-pot until they had seen openers. It is true that A's hand is foul; but it is better than no hand at all. Further, there is no evidence that it was foul before the draw; and there is no evidence that the hands of B, C, and D were not also foul; therefore A must be allowed to take the pot, provided he can show openers. This may come as a surprise to some players, but it has been decided in that way for more than thirty years, the first time being in Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times*, in 1872, when the editor says, in answer to a correspondent, "Who has a right to question the hand if all the others have abandoned their cards?"

Another case which is very common is, abandoning hands before the decision not to open has been announced by all the players. Six men were playing, and all passed except the dealer, who remarked, "No one can open it"; and, after a pause, "but I will." Between the first part of the remark and the last, three men have thrown their hands into the deadwood, understanding, they said, that the dealer included himself in the remark that no one could open it.

Here is another case of a different character:— A opens a jack-pot and B stays. A stands pat and bets. B throws up his cards and asks to see openers. A has mistaken his hand, having a bobtail straight only. B says he has a pair of queens, and picks them off the top of the discard pile. But no player is allowed to take cards into his hand again

that have once been thrown on the deadwood, and
B's hand is abandoned. A, not having openers,
has no claim to the pot; and it must stand as it is,
with the money of A and B left in it, to be decided
on the next deal. The conditions here are precisely
the same as if A had discovered his false openers
when no one came in against him, B losing his con-
tribution to the pot through his own carelessness.

Several of the laws have lately been changed, so
as to cover cases in which a slight irregularity may
be remedied without trespassing on the rights of
the other players. For instance, if any player finds,
before raising his cards, that he has more or less
than five, he can either demand a new deal, or he
can ask the dealer to draw a card if he has too
many, or give him one from the pack if he has too
few, provided no bet has been made. But if a bet
has been made—that is, if any player has already
anted—there must be a new deal. In this case it
is evident that a misdeal has been made; but if no
one has declared, it is easily remedied.

Some players argue that the old law was good
enough, and that a bet having been made does not
alter the circumstances, because the player with too
many cards cannot tell whether it would be to his
advantage to let the dealer draw one, or whether
it would be better to have a new deal. In some
cases this is true; in others it is not; and in others,
again, his choice might be influenced by his friend-
ship for one of the players betting ahead of him.

Suppose six are playing. A has the age, B antes, C raises, and D raises C again—all before F discovers that he has six cards. As F knows it is very improbable that he will hold a hand that will beat D, he may demand a new deal; but if D is a friend of F's, F would naturally like to have the deal stand, as it costs him nothing either way, unless he gets a hand good enough to play, and it may be a good thing for D if he has a strong hand. But F is not allowed any choice in the matter under such circumstances; and, a bet having been made, there must be a new deal.

Suppose two players get their cards mixed, one taking a card belonging to another, so that one has four and the other six: it is not a misdeal, and neither can demand a new deal. If either player lifts any of his cards before discovering the error, that hand is foul. If one lifts and the other does not, the dealer must draw a card, face down, from the superfluous hand to make the other good. If neither player has lifted, they must ask the dealer to draw the card and set the hands right. In this case any previous betting makes no difference, as there was no misdeal, the confusion being caused by the players themselves.

Sometimes, in dealing for the draw, the player's card or cards will become mixed with the discards. In such cases the player must not attempt to pick it out for himself, but must call upon the dealer to do so.

Some players still insist that, if the age hand passes out, the privileges of the position should go to the next player. The age never passes. The privilege of having the last say in the betting is given as a compensation for being compelled to put up a blind, and no one who is not compelled to put up a blind can claim the privilege. If the one who has paid for it abandons it, it is just as dead as his hand.

Some persons argue that the age should pass to the person who straddles, on the principle that if a man straddles he is risking more in the dark than the original blind, and that he should therefore have the privilege of the age. But the straddle is not compulsory, while the blind is. It is easy to imagine a case in which buying the age by straddling would be a great injustice to several players. Suppose that the amount of the blind is optional, and that one player habitually blinds half what the others do. The player fortunate enough to sit on the left of this man could straddle him every time, and still make the ante no higher than usual, securing to himself at the same time two ages in every round of deals.

In calling, many persons, upon seeing the hand they call is better than theirs, throw their cards into the deadwood, with the remark, "That's good," or, "You win." This is against the rules, but there is no penalty for it, although there should be, because it is a direct violation of the rights of

the other players at the table. The player who is
called has just as much right to see the caller's hand
as the caller has to see his. Not only that, all the
players at the table have a right to see both the
hands in the call, because that is their only protec-
tion against collusion. It was to expose this collu-
sion that the law was made.

Formerly, much more than now, it was a com-
mon practice for two players, with a secret under-
standing between themselves, to stay in and raise
one another when one of them had an exceptionally
strong hand. This would compel any other player
either to drop out or to bet a great deal more on his
cards than they were worth. When none but the
two confederates were left in, the strong hand would
be called and shown, and the other, which usually
contained nothing at all, would be thrown into the
deadwood, with the remark, "That's good." Un-
der the rule that all hands in the call must be
shown to the whole table, this cheat would be at
once apparent.

It frequently happens that a player mis-calls his
draw, asking for a wrong number of cards. If he
amends this call before the next player has been
helped, it is obvious that no harm has been done,
and the dealer must give him the correct number
of cards, provided the player has not picked up or
seen any of those first given him. If the following
player has asked for cards, but not been helped
when the amended ask is made, he may insist that

it is unfair for the first man to amend his call
after having heard how many the following player
wanted. This claim must be allowed, provided the
following player did not ask before his turn (which
so many players do), and also provided the first
player had not discarded, because if the first player
had discarded before asking, his hand shows for
itself that his call was a slip of the tongue, and that
no advantage was taken of the following player's
asking for a certain number.

A great deal of trouble arises through players'
cards being snatched up and mixed with the dis-
cards in gathering the pack for the next deal.
Some of the old text-books on Poker recommend
laying the hand down on the table in front of the
player, because the table does not tremble, but the
fingers do. Others recommend laying a chip on
the cards, so as to prevent their being gathered
up. The dealer is the only player at the table
who need take this precaution, because all the other
players have both hands at liberty to hold their
cards. If a player's hand, or any part of it, is
blown away, turned over, picked up, or has other
cards thrown on the top of it, or any such mis-
fortune, he must suffer the consequences, as it is
his business to protect his hand from any such
contingencies.

It frequently happens that an imperfect pack
is brought into play, and is not discovered until
several deals have been made with it. Strictly

speaking, an imperfect pack is one in which there
are duplicate cards, missing cards, superfluous
cards, torn cards, or cards so marked that they can
be distinguished by the backs. The rule is, that
upon the discovery of the imperfect pack all bets
depending on that deal are void, but all previous
deals and bets stand good.

This law requires special modification in Poker,
so as to prevent a player who is a loser from making
a pack imperfect. It is obvious that the previous
deals must be allowed to stand, because it cannot
be absolutely proved that the pack was imperfect
on the previous deal. Even in such a case as sev-
eral deals having been played with a pinochle or
Bézique pack, which must have been imperfect on
the previous deals, the law still stands that the bets
and deals must stand; but in this case it is simply
to avoid confusion.

To prevent the possibility of making a pack
imperfect during the betting on the hands, as by
withdrawing a card, or tearing or marking one, it is
the rule that such trifling imperfections as torn or
marked cards shall not invalidate the deal; but the
pack must be made perfect for the next deal. The
limit of time for claiming an imperfect pack is
usually stated as "during the deal"—that is, after
the last card has been dealt for the draw it is too
late to claim an imperfect pack for that deal, unless
duplicate cards are drawn. The reasons for this
are obvious.

No player can win a pot on a hand of more or
less than five cards, if there is any hand to dispute
the pot with him—that is, unless all the other play-
ers have abandoned their cards. There should be
no objection to a person holding four cards only, as
he cannot possibly derive any advantage by play-
ing with a short hand; but the laws of the game
are against it, and no matter whose fault it is, a
hand of more or less than five cards is foul.

There is a great want of some generally accepted
rule for changing places at the table. The usual
custom is, for the players to take their seats at
random, and to remain in them until the end of
the game. One does not like to get up and say,
"I won't sit here any longer," because, if there is
anything objectionable in the seat, why should it
be forced on another player who is satisfied where
he is?

It cannot be denied that there is something in
seats, quite apart from any superstition, because
there are certain players whom one does not like
to sit next to, on account of their habit of raising
everything, or something of that kind; and it seems
only right that there should be some method of
changing seats without having to appear peculiar.
The rule that, if any player demands it, the cards
may be thrown round for seats at the expiration of
a given time—such as every hour—seems to be an
excellent one, and I have adopted it in the code.
The determination of the seat to be occupied by a

new-comer is also necessary, as many players object to having a player push himself in between them and their neighbour.

There is a great need of a small general penalty for a number of minor irregularities, such as refusing to show a called hand; and I should be glad to have the views of any reader as to what this should be, and for what it should be enforced.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME

DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME

POKER is played with a full pack of fifty-two cards, the suits of which are of equal value and rank. The cards rank from the ace, king, queen, down to the deuce; but in order to form a sequence, the ace may be ranked below the deuce. When it is so used, it loses its rank as the highest card in the pack. In order to accommodate a larger number of players, an attempt was made some time ago to introduce packs of sixty cards, containing elevens and twelves; but they never became popular.

Any number of persons from two to seven can play. When eight play, it is considered better for the dealer to take no cards than to make two tables of four players each.

COUNTERS

Poker chips, counters, or checks are generally used in place of money. These checks should be of uniform thickness, so as to stack accurately. The white checks are usually of the smallest value, the red next, and the blue next; and it is always best to have these various colours represent as nearly as

possible some piece of currency.   In English money
the white may be sixpence, the red a shilling, and
the blue a half-a-crown, five shillings, or ten shil-
lings.   In America the white is usually ten cents,
the red a quarter, the blue a dollar.   It is a common
practice to make the most valuable chip equal to
the limit of the raise in small-limit games.

BANKER

These chips should be sold to the various play-
ers by one of their number, who is elected to act
as banker; who will also redeem checks returned
when a player retires from the game.   It is not
usual for the banker to sell more counters than the
game started with, unless additional players come
in, those who lose their original stake being sup-
posed to buy from those who are ahead.

If there is no individual banker, each player
starts with an equal amount, represented by chips;
and upon retiring from the game, he must leave
that amount on the table.   If he has not enough
chips to do so, he must buy from those who have
chips to sell.   If he has more than he started with,
those who have not their original capital must buy
from him.   At the end of the game, all accounts
can be balanced in this manner without the inter-
vention of an individual banker.   In clubs, count-
ers may be bought and sold by an attendant, quite
independently of the players.

PLAYERS

The positions occupied at the table are not of much importance; but the first dealer must be decided upon by lot. The simplest manner of doing this is for any person to shuffle the pack, and then deal off the cards, one at a time, to each player in turn until a jack appears. The one to whom this card falls is the first dealer. This method is much simpler than cutting or drawing cards, and is now almost universally adopted. Cards may be thrown round for the other seats, if any player demands it; and a complete change of position may be drawn for every hour, if demanded. (*See* Laws 3 to 6.)

BETTING LIMITS

Before play begins, there are three principal bets, the amount or limit of which must be agreed to. These are:—

> The blind.
> The ante in jack-pots.
> The raise, or limit.

The blind is always half the amount of the ante in an ordinary pool, but a special ante is sometimes agreed on for jack-pots.

The limit is not the limit of any one bet, but the limit by which any previous bet may be raised. If A bets the limit, and B raises him the limit, it is obvious that B has put up twice the amount of the

betting limit, and that any player calling both A and B would have to do the same. Suppose C raised B again, C would be putting up three times the betting limit, and D would have to put up the same amount to call.

In the old days, the raise, or limit, was always fifty or a hundred times the amount of the ante; but the constant tendency of modern Poker is to make the proportion less and less. Penny ante and shilling limit, sixpence ante and half-crown limit, or shilling ante and two-and-six to ten-shilling limit, is now the usual game. In America ten-cent blind, call twenty-cent ante, dollar limit; or fifty-cent ante, two-and-a-half limit, are the most popular. The theory is, to make every pot worth playing for. When the ante was ten cents and the limit ten dollars, there was nothing to play for unless two good hands were opposed.

Special arrangements for regulating the raises, such as Progressive Poker and table stakes, will be dealt with later.

THE BLIND

Before the cards are dealt, the player immediately on the dealer's left must deposit one white chip in the pool as a blind. This blind determines the value of the ante, which is always twice as much as the blind. In some games it is at the discretion of the player to increase the amount of blind, but the practice is not to be recommended.

The player who puts up the blind is known as the eldest hand, or "age," sometimes corrupted into "edge." The player on the dealer's right is the "pone."

THE DEAL

After the cards have been properly shuffled, they must be presented to the pone to be cut. He can either cut them or tap them with his knuckles, or tell the dealer to "run them," which means to run them off without cutting. If the pone declines to cut the cards, no other player can insist on doing so.

Beginning on his left hand, the dealer distributes the cards, face down, one at a time in rotation, until each player, including himself, has received five. These are known as the "original" hands.

THE STRADDLE

During the deal, or at least before seeing any of his cards, the player sitting immediately on the left of the age may straddle the blind, if he chooses, by putting up double the amount. The effect of this will be to double the usual amount of the ante, and also to make the man on the left of the straddler the first to declare whether or not he will play.

If the blind is straddled, the player next to the left of the straddler can straddle again, if he choose, and then the man on his left can straddle him, and

so on, until the limit of straddling is reached; but
the total amount of the straddle must never exceed
half of the betting limit, because the ante must be
double the amount of the last straddle, and the
ante itself can never be greater than the "limit"
agreed upon at the beginning of the game.

Should any player in his turn refuse to straddle,
that prevents any player on his left from so doing;
so that if the man next the age does not start it,
no one can.

THE ANTE

The player immediately to the left of the age is
known as the first bettor, or the man "under the
gun." If he did not straddle, he must make the
first declaration as to whether or not he will play.
If he has straddled, the man on his left, or on the
left of the last straddler, must declare.

After spreading his cards, face downwards, on
the table, to be sure that he has neither more nor
less than five, he takes them up and examines
them. If he does not wish to play, he says, "I
pass," and throws his cards, face downwards, in
the centre of the table, or opposite the next dealer.
If he wishes to play his hand, or to draw cards to
improve it, he must deposit in the pool double the
amount of the blind or last straddle, if any. This
is the ante.

Any following player, wishing to come in, must
put up an equal amount for the ante, and the age

must put up enough to make his blind equal to
the ante. If there have been any straddles, the
straddlers must add enough to make up the ante.
Suppose the age put up a white check blind,
straddled by B and again by C. The ante, in such
a case, would be eight chips. If D put up the ante,
and the age had the next say, he would have to put
in seven more, B would have to put in six more,
and C would have to put in four more. Unless
he has been straddled, the age always has the
last say as to whether or not he will make good
his ante. If there is a straddle, the last straddler
has the last say. Either the age or any straddler
can decline to make good the ante if he pleases;
but the blind or straddle already put up remains
in the pool.

The blind is a bet made before seeing anything,
and the straddle is simply an increased blind.
The ante is a bet made after seeing the original
hand, but before the draw.

RAISING THE ANTE

Any player, when putting up or making good
his ante, can raise it by any amount within the
betting limit. Such a raise will compel any follow-
ing player to ante a similar amount to throw up
his cards. If one or more players have already
put up the ante when it is raised, they must "see"
the raise or drop out of the pool. If one player

raises the ante, any following player may raise
him again, any amount within the limit.   Suppose
A has the age, B antes, C antes, D raises the
ante, and E sees both ante and raise: A, B, and C
must also see the raise, or drop out.

When a player simply meets the raise with-
out raising in his turn, he is said to "see" it.
"Calling" usually refers to the betting on the com-
plete hands after the draw.

The betting rule, simply stated, is, that when
a player is called upon to ante, or to meet the
raise of another player, he can do one of three
things—see it, raise it, or drop out.   He cannot
raise unless it is his turn to meet or raise some
other player; that is, he cannot raise his own bet
if no one raised him after he made it.

Should any player refuse to meet a raise, he
must drop out and throw up his cards.   If one
player raises and no other player will see the
raise, each in turn throwing up his cards, it is
obvious that there will be no one to dispute the
pool, and the player whose last raise was not
seen will take the pot without showing his hand;
and the cards will be gathered for the next deal.

When two or more players remain in, each
having an equal amount in the pool, the antes
are said to be "made good," and the players
are ready to draw cards.   The effect of any
straddling entirely ceases with the making good
of the antes.

THE DRAW

In dealing for the draw, after the antes are
all up, the pack must not be cut or shuffled, but
the cards must be given from the top, just as if
it were a continuation of the deal before the draw.

The age has the first say as to how many cards
he will take, and after him each man in turn to
the left who is still in the pool.

A player can either stand "pat" on his original
hand, or he can draw any number of cards from
one to five, first discarding from his original hand
the cards he does not want. Each player in turn
asks the dealer for the number of cards he wants,
and the dealer gives them to him from the top
of the pack. Each man must receive the num-
ber of cards he asks for before the next man is
helped. The dealer discards and helps himself in
his proper turn, announcing how many he takes;
and then the hands are known as "complete"
hands, and are ready for the betting.

BETTING UP THE HANDS

Whether the blind was straddled or not, the
first man to the left of the age who still holds
cards must make the first bet. If the age has
passed out by declining to make good the ante,
that makes no difference, as the privilege of having
the last say as to betting on the hand passes out
with him.

If the player whose turn it is to bet will not bet,
he must throw his cards into the deadwood with
the previous discards, and the next man to his left
must bet, or pass out in turn. If all but one pass
out in this manner, the last to say, having no
opponents to dispute the pool with him, takes the
pot without showing his hand. If the age is in
and no one bets, the age takes the pool. If the
age has passed out, the player nearest on his right
will be the lucky man.

If any player makes a bet, the next player on his
left must either "call" it by putting up an equal
amount, or drop out. He has also the privilege
of raising it. If he calls, any other player to the
left will have to do the same, or raise, or drop
out. If anyone raises the first bet, each player in
turn to the left will have to call both the original
bet and the raise, or raise again, or drop out.
When it comes round to the one who has been
raised, he will have to call the raise, or lay down
his cards. He has, of course, the privilege of rais-
ing again in his turn. If no one will call the last
raise, the player making it takes the pool without
showing his hand.

If the bet is called and not raised, all those in
the call—that is, all those who have bet an equal
amount—show their hands to the board, and the
best Poker hand takes the pot. The cards are
then gathered up and shuffled for the next deal,
the player who was the age in the last hand being
the dealer in the next.

POKER HANDS

When two or more players show their cards in order to decide which of them gets the pool, the one with the most valuable combination wins.

There are ten different classes of "hands" at Poker, which out-rank one another in the order shown by the following diagrams, beginning with the lowest, which is a hand without a pair.

The figures underneath show the odds against such a hand being held by any player before the draw—that is, in his original hand. A comparison of these figures will be the best guide for the novice who wishes to learn the comparative value of the various hands, and the probability of their being held.

If the odds are 254 to 1 against a certain hand being dealt to any player, the hand must be a much better one than a hand which the odds are only 20 to 1 against, and at the same time the better hand must be much more uncommon. This knowledge of the probability of hands of a certain strength being out against him, will soon teach the novice the probable value of his own cards.

For instance: if it is 46 to 1 against any player holding three of a kind originally, and there are five in the game, it is one-fifth of those odds, or 9 to 1, that no one at the table has three of a kind before the draw.

Asterisks are placed over the useless cards in each of the examples. These cards add nothing to the value of the hand, and may be discarded before the draw.
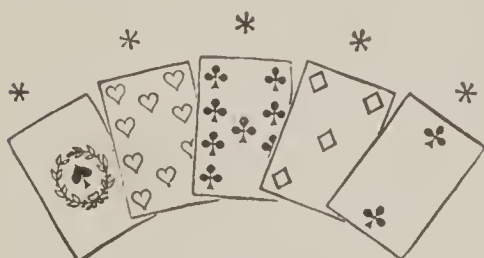
EVEN.

Five cards of various suits without a pair, and not in sequence.
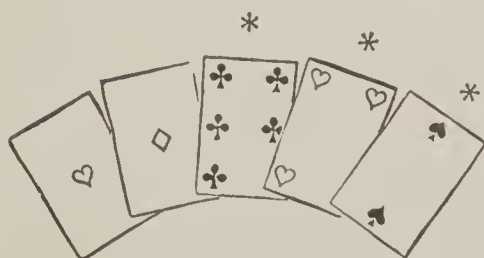
13 to 10.

One Pair.—Two cards of the same denomination, and three useless cards.

20 to 1.

Two Pairs.—Two cards of the same denomination, two of another denomination, and one useless card.

46 to 1.

Threes.—Three cards of the same denomination, and two useless cards.

Straight.—All five cards in sequence, but of different suits.

254 to 1.

Flush.—All five cards of the same suit, but not in sequence.

508 to 1.

Full Hand.— Three cards of the same denomination, and two of another denomination. No useless cards.

693 to 1.

Fours. — Four cards of one denomination, and one useless card.

4164 to 1.

Straight Flush.— Five cards of the same suit, all in sequence with one another.

64,973 to 1.

649,739 to 1.

Royal   Flush.—A straight flush which is ace high.

In addition to these hands, which are everywhere recognised as the standard, there are a few combinations which are played in certain localities as a matter of custom, and in others by agreement. These are:—

3008 to 1.

A Blaze.—Five court cards; usually played to beat two pairs, and lose to three of a kind.

636 to 1.

A Tiger.—Must be seven high and deuce low, without a pair, sequence, or flush. When played, beats a straight and loses to a flush.
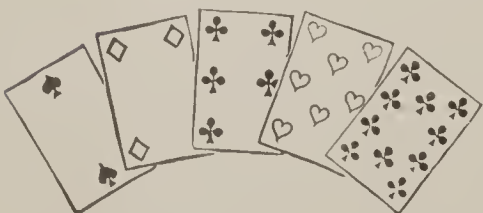
423 to 1.

A Skip, or Dutch Straight.—A sequence of alternate cards of various suits. When played, it beats two pairs and a blaze.

Round - the - Corner.—A straight in which the ace connects the top and bottom of the suits. When played, it outranks the lowest possible straight.

848 to 1.

That these extra hands have been assigned their rank by guess-work, and not by experience or calculation, is evident from the fact that none of them is appreciated, and the players who adopt them must be absolutely blind to their true value.

The rank of the standard hands was probably determined by long experience of the relative frequency of their appearance, which has since been confirmed by mathematical calculation. When straights were first introduced, about 1870, there was a great deal of discussion as to whether they should beat two pairs or threes, which shows that the observation of the players was not accurate enough to determine their rank. Calculation finally assigned them their proper place.

In the case of the extra hands—blazes, tigers, skips, and round-the-corners—calculation shows that they are all ranked entirely too low.

A skip is almost twice as·difficult to get as any other straight, the exact odds against it being 423 to 1, while the odds against an ordinary straight are 254 to 1 only.

A round-the-corner is still more difficult to get, because there are so few of them; the odds against them being 848 to 1, they should beat a full hand.

A tiger is harder to get than a pat flush, the exact odds against it being 636 to 1; while the odds against the flush are 508 to 1 only.

The blaze, which is ranked the lowest by those who play these hands, should be the highest, as it is the most uncommon, on account of the condition that it must be all court cards—that is, kings, queens, and jacks; for the ace is not a court card. The odds against a blaze are 3,008 to 1, which would make it better than a full hand.

In a game in which all these hands were played, the proper rank of the various combinations or classes of hands would be:—

One Pair..................	$1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1
Two Pairs	20 " 1
Three of a Kind	45 " 1
Sequence or Straight...........	254 " 1
Skip or Dutch Straight.........	423 " 1
Flush....................	508 " 1
Tiger (big or little dog)..........	636 " 1
Full Hand.................	693 " 1
Round-the-corner Straight........	848 " 1
Blaze....................	3,008 " 1
Four of a Kind..............	4,164 " 1
Straight Flush...............	64,973 " 1
Royal Flush	649,739 " 1

If the various Poker combinations (pairs, two pairs, triplets, etc.) are considered as classes of hands, the rank of the individual cards is evidently

necessary to decide between competing hands in the same class, otherwise any player with a pair would have as good a hand as any other player with a pair.

By giving the cards a certain rank, we practically agree that a pair of tens shall beat a pair of nines, and that three sevens shall beat three fours; and we establish a standard of comparison or degree. This standard is artificial, it is true, because if we reverse the order (as is done in the black suits in Spoil-five), making a six beat a seven, the game of Poker would still be the same so far as the difficulty of getting hands of a certain class was concerned, and three of a kind would still beat two pairs.

The odds against any player getting a pair dealt to him are 13 to 10. These are the odds against any pair, and he is just as likely to get a pair of aces as a pair of treys. It is the rank assigned to the individual cards that makes the pair of aces the better hand, and not any greater difficulty in getting aces instead of treys.

This rank of the cards must decide all questions of ties, because the suits have no rank at Poker, and a pair of red aces is no better than a pair of black ones; a flush in hearts is no better than a flush in clubs. When two hands of the same class are shown for the pool, the rank of the cards determines the winner.

In pairs, the pair of higher rank wins. If the pairs are alike, the highest outside card wins. If that is still a tie, the next card, and so on. If all

the cards are alike in each hand, the players divide
the pool.

In two pairs, the higher pair wins, regardless of
the rank of the second pair in the same hand.
Queens up will beat jacks up, even if the pair with
the queens are only deuces, while the pair with the
jacks are tens.   If the higher pairs tie, the second
pair must decide; tens and eights will beat tens
and sixes.   If both pairs tie, the outside card must
decide; and if that is also a tie, the hands divide
the pool.

There can be no tie in showing three of a kind,
and the highest ranking triplet wins, three sixes
beating three fives, regardless of the outside cards.

In straights, the card at the top of the sequence
determines its value.   If an ace is used at the
bottom of a straight, the straight is only five high,
and a six-high straight will beat it.

In flushes, the highest card wins.   If that is
a tie, the next card; and so on, until a card is
found in one hand higher than in the other.   If
two flushes are shown—one ace, king, jack, eight,
three; and the other ace, king, jack, six, three—
the first wins, because the eight is higher than the
six.   If all the cards are a tie, the hands divide
the pool.

In full hands, the triplet decides, irrespective of
the rank of the accompanying pair.   Three fives
and a pair of deuces will beat three fours and a
pair of aces.

In straight flushes, the top card of the sequence

decides, so that a straight flush, eight, seven,
six, five, four, will beat a straight flush, five,
four, three, two, ace. Many persons think that,
in such a double combination, the hand with
the ace in it should win, because the flush by
itself would be ace high. But if the ace is ranked
below the deuce in order to make one part of the
hand, it cannot be ranked differently to make
another part. That would be almost like allow-
ing a player to hold six cards.

While it is true that the rank of Poker hands
is based upon scientific principles, those most diffi-
cult to get being the most valuable, and that the
relative difficulty of getting them can be mathe-
matically demonstrated, it is not true that each
individual hand holds its proper rank, because
many hands which are very difficult to get are
beaten in the show-down by hands which are
comparatively easy to get.

A few examples of this curious anomaly (which
cannot, however, be remedied without upsetting
the whole game, and unnecessarily complicating
it) will make the matter clear. Let us suppose
two hands to be shown, neither containing a pair,
flush, or sequence, the one ace high and the other
seven high. The ace-high hand wins, and every-
one takes it as quite natural that it should; yet it
can be demonstrated that the seven-high hand
is more difficult to get than a pat flush. No one
questions that ace-high is better than jack high,
yet one holds ace high four times as often as jack

high. The reason is simple: jack high must be
made from suits of ten cards only, while the ace-
high hand has suits of thirteen to draw upon; and
the permutation of these two numbers makes the
difference in the probability of holding the hands.

The same is true of flushes; and when a ten-
high flush lets an ace-high flush take the pot,
the holder of the better hand—or at least the
one that is harder to get—is really allowing an in-
ferior hand to win the money. Every time that
two flushes are in a call, the best hand, judged by
the difficulty of getting it, loses.

When we come to two pairs, we find the ratio
of probability and value still further inverted. A
player will hold aces up—that is, aces and another
pair inferior to aces—twelve times as often as he
will hold threes up. The reason is obvious:
with aces up he can hold any one of twelve differ-
ent inferior pairs; with the treys he can hold only
one inferior pair, deuces.

If the rank of the individual hands in each
class were determined upon the same mathemati-
cal principles that govern the classes themselves,
always giving the superior value to the hand which
was the most difficult to obtain, in all the hands
belonging to the class known as two pairs it should
be the rule that the lower the rank of the higher
pair the better the hand would be. At present,
every time two pairs eights up call two pairs queens
up, the better hand does not win the money.

JACK-POTS

The jack-pot is an incident—an interruption to the regular course of the game which has been described. It differs from the ordinary pool in two ways:—

(*a*) Instead of a blind put up by the age, and a voluntary ante put up by those who are willing to play their hands after they have seen them, each player is obliged to ante an equal amount in a jack-pot, before the cards are dealt.

(*b*) Instead of being allowed to come into the pool on anything or nothing, at least one of the players must have a hand of a certain value dealt to him before there can be any betting or drawing cards. This hand is generally defined as "jacks or better"—that is, a pair of jacks, or some hand which is better than a pair of jacks. Any player holding such a hand may bet upon it by putting into the pool any amount he pleases within the betting limit. This is called "opening" the pot. He is not obliged to open, no matter how good a hand he has; but if any player does open, all restrictions are immediately removed, and each player in turn to the left of the opener, round to the player on his right hand, can "come in," regardless of what he holds, provided he sees the amount for which the pot is opened.

G

Jack-pots may arise in two ways: they may be formed naturally from the circumstances of the play, or they may be forced by the introduction of some artificial arrangement. All forced jacks must be a matter of agreement among the players.

The natural jack arises in two ways. If no one will ante in an ordinary pool, the age takes down his blind, and every player at the table puts up the amount of the ante agreed upon for jacks. This amount may be the same as the usual ante, or it may be more. It is usually at least double. The player who put up the blind on the previous deal becomes the dealer in the jack-pot.

Natural jacks are also formed when one of the hands shown in a call is above a certain value. This value must be agreed upon at the beginning of the game, otherwise a full hand is the usual standard; but some call for jack-pots on flushes or straights. If the hand is not called, no notice is taken of it. It is only when the hand is called by another hand, and shown for the purpose of deciding the pool, that a jack-pot must follow on the next deal.

When four of a kind or a straight flush is shown in a call, there must be a round of jacks—that is, a jack-pot for each player at the table. This is known as a "whangdoodle."

It is sometimes insisted that a jack-pot should follow a misdeal; but such a practice is not to be recommended, as it makes it possible for any player to make a jack at his pleasure.

Forced jacks are made in various ways. The most common is to place a "buck" in the first pool played for. The buck may be a penknife, or any article of that kind, and it is taken down with the chips by whoever wins the pool. When it comes round to this player's turn to deal, it is a jack-pot, and he must place the buck in the pool with his ante, to be won, taken down, and indicate the advent of another jack in the same way, as long as the game lasts. This device makes a great many jacks, usually two in each round of deals.

When only one player antes to play against the blind, it is sometimes declared a forced jack. If the blind has been straddled, or if the single player coming in has raised the ante, that bars the jack, and the player wins the blind if the age will not make good.

In some places the making of a forced jack, when only one player antes, rests with the age. If the age wishes to play his hand, he can do so; otherwise he must return the ante to the player who came in, and must ante for both himself and that player in the following jack. When this custom prevails, the last player to say—that is, the dealer—may announce that he will pass, provided the age will make it a jack. For instance: A blinds in a five-hand game. B and C pass, D antes, and E says, "I pass for a jack." That is, if the blind agrees to make it a jack, E will not come in; otherwise E will ante, and draw cards.

It is sometimes made a jack-pot when no one draws cards; or, more correctly speaking, when one player raises out all the others before the draw. Suppose A blinds, B and C come in, and D raises the limit, which no one will see. D wins the antes, but the next pot is a jack.

By agreement among the players, the game may be all jack-pots. When all jacks are played, it is usual to double the ante when a hand of a certain value has been shown in the previous pool.

The betting limit is sometimes doubled in whang-doodles; but all such matters must be agreed on.

In what are known as "progressive jacks," if the pot is not opened on the first deal, it will take queens or better to open on the next, kings or better on the third, and so on up to aces, and then down again to jacks. Fortunately, this progression is dying out. It is very confusing, and frequently leads to a player's inadvertently opening on queens when he should have had kings; or something of that kind.

There is no such thing as the straddle in a jackpot, because there is no blind, and therefore no age.

The first man to the left of the dealer has the "say" as to whether or not he can open. If he opens, he must put up some amount as a bet on his hand for the others to see or pass. If the first man to say cannot or will not open, the next man on his left has the say, and so on round the table until it comes to the dealer.

If a player has passed once, declining to open, that does not prevent his coming in if someone else opens. Suppose A has the first say, and passes; B, C, and D also pass. E opens for the limit. A, B, C, and D can each come in in turn, if they are willing to see the amount put up by E.

No one is allowed a second chance to open the pot. If all pass the first round, the cards must be thrown up, and there must be a new deal, the deal passing in regular rotation to the left. In whang-doodles, if the pot is not opened, the same dealer deals again, and continues to deal until the pot is opened. This is called "dealing off his jack," and ensures the same number of jack-pots as there are players.

When the pot is not opened, instead of putting up another ante for the second deal, it is usual for each player to "fatten" by adding one white chip to the pool. This fattening process is continued for each succeeding deal in which no one opens. As fattening gives rise to frequent disputes as to "who is shy" it is often the rule that the first ante shall be the only one.

When the pot is opened, any player coming in against the opener has the privilege of raising the bet when he comes in; and this will compel any following player to see both the amount opened for and the raise, or to drop out. If the player who opened wishes to stay, he must see the raise, with the privilege of raising again in turn, of course. If the opener is raised, and will not see

the raise, he must show his whole hand to the table, disclosing what he opened on, and then withdraw from the pool.

If a player opens and no one comes in against him, he shows his five cards to the board; and if he has legitimate openers, he takes the pool.

If two or more stay in a pool after it has been opened, each putting up equal amounts, they are then at liberty to draw cards, the player nearest on the left of the dealer being helped first, no matter who opened.

If the opener stays in the pool and draws cards, he must keep his openers. He is not allowed to "split" them, to try for a flush or a straight, unless it has been agreed that a pot may be opened on a four-card flush or straight, in which case the bob-tail itself is an opener, and it does not matter whether the opener has a pair of jacks or better with it or not. The reasons for this rule against splitting openers have been given at length in the chapter on "Disputed Rules." Those who have come in against the opener, being under no restrictions, may draw to anything they please.

After the draw, the first bet must be made by the player who opened the pot, no matter where he sits. If he declines to bet, he must show what he opened the pot on before he abandons his hand. After the draw, he need not show his entire hand, but only openers If the opener has been raised out before the draw, the first bet must be made by the player on the left of the opener. In either

case the betting proceeds as in an ordinary pool; but before the pot is taken down the openers must be shown to the board. Suppose the opener is still in the pool, but is raised out after the draw. Before he abandons his hand he must show openers.

If a player opens a jack without the cards to justify it, and discovers the mistake before he draws cards, his hand is dead, and he forfeits whatever amounts he may have put into the pool. If no one has come into the pool before the error is announced, but there are still some to declare, the game proceeds as if nothing had happened, except that the pool is richer by the amount contributed by the false opener, any of the other players who can open it being at liberty to do so.

If any one has come in against the false openers, the pot must be played for precisely as if it had been legitimately opened. The possibility of such an occurrence shows the necessity for each player to preserve his cards, even when he passes, until he is sure about the legitimacy of the openers. Suppose A opens; B, C, and D pass; E comes in, and then A announces that he made a mistake about having openers. If B, C, and D have thrown up their cards because they would not play against a hand declared to be jacks or better, they cannot take them back again now that it is possible the only hand against them (E's) may be nothing but a small pair.

If the false opener does not discover his mistake

until he has drawn cards, he not only loses all his interest in that pool, but he is penalised by being compelled to ante for all the other players, including himself, for another jack-pot. This is called "giving them a free ride." If the false opener has not drawn cards, but stood pat, he is not subject to the second penalty of the free ride.

THE KITTY

It is a common practice to take a chip for the "kitty" out of every pool in which a hand above a certain value is shown. This accumulation of chips must be kept in some receptacle provided for the purpose, and should be under the care of one man, usually the banker for the evening. Some Poker tables have a small slot in the centre, down which the chips for the kitty may be dropped. In clubs the kitty may be used to pay for the cards or for refreshments. In private games it may be devoted to paying for the weekly supper. When the amount exceeds the purpose for which it is intended, the surplus may be used up in giving the players a free ride for a jack-pot.

Three of a kind is usually the minimum hand for taking out for the kitty, but in some gambling houses there is a regular scale for hands of different values—one chip for two pairs, two for triplets or straights, and three for flushes or fulls. The amount in the kitty must be accounted for by the banker in settling up at the end of the game.

PROGRESSIVE LIMITS

It is sometimes agreed that, instead of fixing any limit for the amount by which any bet may be raised, it shall be at the option of any player seeing a bet to raise it by doubling the amount already bet, the first bet only being limited.

Suppose A has bet the limit—let us say a blue check, as a starter after the draw. B can either call this blue check or bet two blues, which is doubling. If B doubles, A can bet four blues if he likes, which is double the amount of B's bet; and B in turn can bet ten, which is double the whole amount A has bet. This will allow A to bet twenty-four, double the total amount that B has put up.

This is sometimes varied by making each bet twice the amount of the last one only: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 being the amounts; and again, by allowing the player to include the ante in the amount doubled.

Even in this game there must be a limit, and in most games it is arranged so as to stop at the sixth or eighth raise. Some players consider this the best of all the betting arrangements so far proposed. It is very popular in England, but is little known in America.

The original amount for which a jack-pot may be opened is also controlled by the amount of the antes in the pot, in some cases. Whether this shall be equal to all the antes, or one-half, or double, must be a matter of local custom or agreement.

VARIETIES OF POKER

There are six well-known varieties of the game of Poker, some depending on a difference in the arrangements for the betting, and others introducing entirely different methods of play.

FREEZE OUT

At the beginning of the game each player starts with an equal number of counters, the individual value of which does not matter, the game being for a fixed sweepstake, contributed to by each player. Suppose four play for a sovereign, or five dollars a corner; they may take 20 counters each, or 25, or 50, as may be agreed upon.

The blind, ante, straddle, raise, and bet are precisely the same as in the ordinary game; but the moment any player loses his last counter, he is "frozen out," and must retire from the game. The others continue to play until only one remains, and this survivor wins all the stakes bet upon the result.

If a player has not enough chips to call any bet, he may "call a sight" for what chips he has left; and if he has the best hand, he wins that number of chips from those who bet against him.

This is a good game for two or three players, but for a large number it is open to the objection

that the first players frozen out sometimes have to wait a long time before they can get into the game again. When two play, it makes a good substitute for agreeing to quit at a certain hour, as the game is over when one loses all his chips.

TABLE STAKES

Table stakes is a compromise between the modern game of small limits and the old-fashioned game, in which a player could bet any amount he chose, provided he could put it on the table in some negotiable form.

At the start, each player can put on the table in front of him any amount he pleases, either in cash or in its equivalent in chips, or both. This amount is his stake, and he is not allowed to increase or diminish it between the time he looks at his cards and the decision of the pool. Before or during the deal he may add to his stake, dispose of some of his chips to other players, or put some of his capital in his pocket. It may be agreed that a buck placed among a player's chips shall mean, "I have as much on the table as any other player."

Under no circumstances can one player borrow from another during the play of a hand; neither can he owe anything to the pool. If he has anything in front of him, he can bet that amount and no more. The best players consider it wise to keep as much in front of them as any other player at the table shows.

One of the peculiarities of table stakes, and also of freeze out, is "calling for a sight." If A makes a bet which B wishes to call, but has not money enough, B can call a sight for what money he has on the table. This does not prevent A's bet standing for its full amount against any other player who may have chips enough to call it.

An example will make this clear:—A bets ten blue chips, and B has only eight in front of him, but wishes to call A's hand. B says, "I call a sight for eight," putting them up. A then separates two blue chips, laying them aside from the pool for any other player to call. Suppose C not only calls A's ten, but raises him ten; eight of C's chips go into the pool with B's, the other twelve remaining outside for A to see. Suppose A refuses to call C. B shows his hand, and if it is better than C's he takes the first part of the pool; but C wins the two extra blues that A put up. If C has the best hand, of course he wins everything. Suppose that, when the hands are shown, A finds that, though B can beat C, A could have beaten both of them. Some persons insist that, as B only called A, A should win from B the amount of the sight bet. But when A refused to call C, he practically acknowledged that C had the better hand; and if B can beat this hand, which was supposed to be better than A's, A must be taken as giving in to B also. A was raised out, and when he refused to call he lost his right to any part of the pool.

MISTIGRIS

Sometimes the joker is added to the pack, and the player to whom it is dealt, either before or in the draw, may call it anything he pleases. The joker and a pair of kings may be called three kings; four hearts and the joker may be called a flush, or the joker may be used to fill out a straight. Four of a kind and a joker will beat a royal flush, because it is really five of a kind. In case of ties in the denomination of the cards, the hand with the joker in it wins. A queen and a joker will beat a pair of queens. A flush, joker high, will beat one ace high. The joker with two pairs makes a triplet of the higher pair, so that it is a full hand.

This form of the game is more common in England than in America. It makes the hands lively, and improves them on the average; but the introduction of such a card as the joker upsets all the calculations of probability to which old players are accustomed, and rapidly spoils them for the regular game.

It is usual to make two pairs rank below three of a kind; but with the joker, three of a kind is easier to get than two pairs, and the rank of these two hands should be reversed.

STRAIGHT POKER

This is often called "Bluff," because bluffing is the principal element of success. The great difference between straight Poker and draw Poker

is, that there is no draw to improve the hand in Bluff.

There being no age, the deal is of no importance, and anyone can begin. A buck of some kind must be provided, such as a penknife, which is used to mark the player who must ante. The dealer of the first hand puts up the ante for all the players at the table, and then passes the buck to the player on his left, who must ante for the next deal.

The ante never varies in amount, and it and the betting limit, or raise, must be agreed upon before play begins.

Instead of the deal passing to the left, the winner of each pool deals for the next one.

After the cards are dealt, each player, beginning on the dealer's left, may either bet or pass. If all the players pass, the holder of the buck antes, making it a double pool, and passes the buck to his left. The deal passes to the left when no one has made a bet on the previous deal.

If any player makes a bet, each player in turn to his left must either see it, raise it, or pass out. Those on the right of the first bettor, who have passed before any bet was made, can now come in and bet if they wish to.

The rules for calling and showing are precisely the same as in draw Poker. The hands usually run much weaker, however, three of a kind being very strong; and two pairs will win three pools

out of four in a five-hand game, unless they are bluffed out. If the limit is large enough, a well-placed bluff usually pays better than good cards.

STUD POKER

In this form of the game, one card is dealt to each player face down, and then one face up. The player with the highest card "showing," or face up, has the first say, to bet or pass; and then the player to his left must bet or pass, and so on. Of course, each player looks at his own first, or "down" card, before deciding whether to bet or not. If a bet is made, each player to the left of the bettor must either see it or throw up his cards, passing out of the pool. If there is no bet, or if any bet has been seen, another card is dealt face up to those who remain in the pool; and then the player with the highest hand showing in his two cards has the first say to bet or pass.

As long as two or more players remain in the pool, this goes on until each has received five cards, one face down and four face up. After the betting on the last card dealt comes to an end, the down cards are turned up, and the best Poker hand takes the pool; and the cards are gathered and dealt for the next hand, the deal usually passing to the left.

Straights and straight flushes are usually of no value in stud or straight Poker, which were invented before straights were played.

WHISKY POKER

This form of the game was originally played in the lumber camps of America, to decide who should pay for the drinks.

An extra hand, or "widow," is dealt in the centre of the table. The dealer gives five cards to each player, face down, one at a time in rotation, dealing to the widow just before he deals to himself. The deal passes to the left.

The player on the left of the dealer has the first say, and after he has examined his cards he can do any one of three things:—

(*a*) Exchange his whole hand for the widow, on the chance that it is better than his own. If he takes the widow, his own cards are laid on the table face up, and spread out so that the others can see what they are.

(*b*) He can "pass" without doing anything, holding his cards. This will transfer to the player on his left the option of taking the widow.

(*c*) He can play his hand "pat," to signify which he knocks on the table, or says, "I knock." This passes the option of taking the widow to the next player.

If the widow is taken, each player to the left can do any one of three things—take the whole five cards in exchange for his own five; or discard any one card from his own hand, leaving it face up on the table as part of the widow, and taking

one of the widow's cards in exchange for it; or knock on the table. A player cannot draw and knock at the same time, neither can he pass without either drawing or knocking after the widow has been turned up, unless some previous player has knocked.

The opportunity to draw or exchange continues to pass round the table in this manner, each player having perhaps several draws, until some player is content and knocks. As soon as any one knocks, that means that when it comes round to his turn again, all the hands must be shown; but after the knock each of the other players still has one more chance to draw or exchange.

If a player knocks before the widow is exposed, it is sometimes the custom to turn the widow up immediately; but such a practice handicaps any one who knocks on a pat hand.

If no one takes the widow until it comes to the dealer, he must either take it or turn it face up on the table. Even if the dealer knocks without exchanging, he must turn up the widow and let each player see it, and draw or exchange.

When the hands are shown, the best Poker hand wins. If the pool has been made up by each player putting up a chip, the winner takes all. If the game is for refreshments, the worst hand pays.

H

COMING IN

It is obvious that, after he has learned the rules of the game and the comparative values of the various hands, the first matter in which the Poker player will be called upon to exercise his individual judgment will be as to coming in. It may be as to putting up the ante in an ordinary pool, or it may be as to opening a jack-pot, or going into one already opened; whichever it is, judgment is necessary.

There is nothing about which opinion differs so much as to the proper qualifications for going in. Several things tend to complicate the problem, such as the player's position at the table with regard to the age, the amount it will or may cost him to draw cards, and the number of players who are already in, or may come in. It is evident that all these considerations affect the value of the player's original hand.

The ultimate deciding point of the whole question of coming in must, of course, be the five cards that the player holds. With certain hands there is no question about coming in, no matter what the circumstances may be; with others there is no question about staying out; but with the majority of hands it is a problem, upon the correct solution of which much of the success at the game depends.

Some players come in on anything, some on average hands, some on "sure things," and some on inspiration. Many good players will tell you they have tried all sorts of systems about coming in, and they do not see much difference in the result. They say, "It's all in the draw."

The most potent reason for coming in on any kind of a pair is, that the person likes to play, likes to take his chance with the rest, likes to be in every pot and enjoy the game as it goes, instead of sitting out hand after hand, waiting for court cards and sure things. If the object of playing Poker is to enjoy yourself, this is an excellent reason; if the object is to win, it is a very bad way to go about it.

The jack-pot has killed the "sure thing" players. Proctor advised never going into a pot with less than three of a kind; but he was a mathematician, and not a player. With five or six in the game, and an average of at least one jack-pot every round, a person will ante himself away waiting for triplets, which will not be dealt to him originally more than once in nine rounds; and he will not always win the pot with them when he does get them. Any player who passes every hand for nearly two hours (which is about the time it takes to play about forty or fifty deals) would certainly attract attention; and when he did play, his hand would be called as cheaply as possible, and very carefully examined. The next time he put up an

ante, everyone who had not three of a kind or better would drop out and make a jack-pot of it.

If a player cannot afford to wait for sure things, what is he to wait for, or should he draw to anything and everything? The answer to this question must depend on the kind of game he is in.

The authorities who base their theories upon mathematical calculations will tell you the exact average value of any hand when five are playing or when six are playing, and they will advise you never to go in unless you have a hand at least equal to that average.

But you are not playing against the average value of the six hands dealt. You are playing against those who come into the pool, which is quite another thing. It is not of the slightest practical use to you to know the average value of the dealt hands; what you want to know is the average value of the hands that ante to draw cards. Observation of the methods of the men who hold the cards is the only answer to this question.

There are two kinds of players, and they make two kinds of games, the close game and the liberal game. If you are one of six players, none of the others coming in on less than tens, while you draw to anything from deuces up, you are getting the worst of it all the time. But if you never draw to anything less than tens, and the other five draw to any kind of a pair, you are getting the best of it, if you have not frightened them to such an extent that they will not play against you unless they can

beat tens. If you choose to adapt your game to theirs, coming in on their level, and drawing to anything and everything, you have an average hand every time you are dealt eights or better. In the close game, you must hold kings to be on the average.

There is a certain law of compensation about coming in, which adjusts the differences between the risks and the rewards. The greater the number of players that come in against you, the greater the probability that an average hand will be beaten; but by the very fact of their coming in against you these players make it worth your while to risk it, because of the increased value of the pool.

Suppose six are playing, four will be the average number to come in, of which you are one. It is then three to one that they will beat you; but by coming in they make the pool worth four times as much as you contributed to it, which is practically betting you three to one. If only one man came in against you, it would be even betting, as both your antes would be equal, and the chances of improvement, both having average hands, would also be equal. If you ante against three other players four times in succession, you should draw the best hand once and win one pot out of the four, if you have always gone in on average hands. What you may win on this hand, and what you may lose on the others which are not the best, does not depend on the coming in, but on your judgment in playing the completed hand.

If you do not go in on equal hands, but on
inferior ones, it must be obvious that you decrease
your chances of having the best hand after the
draw even once in four times. It is useless to
argue that you have a chance to make three of a
kind by drawing to a pair of deuces, which will
beat aces up. Any other player at the table has an
equally good chance of making threes, if he draws
to a pair of tens or jacks; and if you draw and he
draws a hundred times, you to deuces and he to
tens, he will win all your money, and will have the
best hand after the draw four times out of five, as
we shall see when we come to consider going into
jack-pots. When he does not improve, he will
not bet against you; when he does improve, he will
beat you.

Many persons ask, what is the use of a knowl-
edge of Poker probabilities and odds? If the mind
is not burdened with a mass of unnecessary and
unclassified figures, but taxes itself with the gen-
eral principles only, they are very useful. The
odds against coming in on weaker hands than those
which the other players habitually draw to, is a
case in point. Few persons realise the enormous
advantage held by a player who draws to a pair of
tens against a player who draws to any pair less
than tens.

Blackbridge, who was a great calculator, says,
that a pair of tens is worth nearly forty per cent.
more than a pair of eights on the go-in, and con-
tends that if A always has aces to go in with, and

B always has eights, A will beat B five times out of six. I consider this a low estimate, because the eights must always improve to triplets to beat any sort of improvement in the aces.

One thing that is overlooked by those who discuss the merits of going in on certain strength is, that the going in is voluntary in an ordinary pool, and that B, who goes in on eights or anything, will win a number of pools that A will not go into at all, because A has no aces. These players who go in all the time pick up a number of small pots that those who wait for large pairs never play for.

Fortunately, Poker cannot be played by machinery, and no player can assure to himself any permanent advantage from the mere fact that he goes in on hands of a certain value only, because after he has got his hand he has still to play for the pot. Some Poker players are skilful enough to make up in the betting for any slight percentage against them in coming in; while others, who may have gained a slight advantage in the ante, lose it by injudicious betting after the draw.

In estimating the strength required for an average go-in hand, the position at the table must be considered. This position may be said to improve the nearer it is to the right of the dealer, whether it is a jack-pot or not. The majority of players will tell you that the better the position, the less the necessity for a good hand; the worse the position, the greater need for a hand to compensate it.

Some authors have made fanciful diagrams of the relative value of the seats with regard to the age. Taking the average value as 10 in a six-hand game, they call the age worth 14; the dealer, 12; and the others to the right of the dealer, 10, 9, 8, and 7 respectively. This makes the age twice as valuable as the first bettor—an estimate which is flatly contradicted by others, who think the age is the most deceptive seat at the table.

The fact of the matter is, that one position is about as good as another, if it is properly played. The endless variation of Poker tactics, according to the position of the player, adds not a little to the attraction of the game and to the test of a player's abilities. These points about the play of certain positions should be carefully studied by the beginner.

The first man to declare whether he will come in or not in an ordinary pool, is the player on the left of the age, if there has been no straddle. He is popularly spoken of as "the man under the gun," and it is a very appropriate title, because every player at the table has the drop on him. He has to give the option on everything—on his ante, on his draw, and on his first bet.

The greatest temptation to the man under the gun is to get out of part of his difficulties by straddling the blind. Blackbridge says some persons seem to imagine the best time to straddle is when they are in bad luck, on the principle that bad luck and bad play combined must win. The best

players are always averse to straddling, because it is paying for a privilege which is not worth its cost. The only effect of the straddle is to give the straddler the last say about making good his ante; he still has to draw and bet in his regular turn. If, after straddling, he finds he has a good original hand, he has probably kept out several antes by his straddle. If he has not a good hand, he has simply fattened the pool for some one that has.

There is a much simpler way out of the alleged difficulties of this position, and that is to avoid going in unless the original hand is decidedly above the average. The standard is generally put down as jacks or better among liberal players, aces or better among close players. With a pair at least as good as court cards to come in on, the player should be willing to stand a raised ante, although he cannot well raise himself. He should also be willing to bet at least a white chip after the draw, to see how things go.

The worst mistake that a player can make, in this position, is in going in on weak hands, and then standing by them after the ante has been raised, simply because he is already in.

If the man under the gun comes in, the player next on his left occupies a position very similar to that of the first man to say after a jack-pot has been opened. If the play of the man on the right has been carefully observed, it should be known whether he goes in as first bettor, on anything at

all, or only on hands of a certain strength. This is carrying out the principle of adjusting your play to that of the others at the table, according to whether it is liberal or close.

If the man under the gun is a close player, you should know that you are coming in against at least one hand that will beat yours four times out of five, if you are not equally strong, both of you having equal chances to improve.

It is very strange that so few players allow their decision about coming in to be influenced by the fact that the man under the gun has or has not come in ahead of them. If they are not in that position themselves, they pay no attention to it, but come in on average hands (usually a pair of any kind), without any regard to the fact that if the man under the gun is a close player they are beaten, by one hand at least, before the draw. To be strictly scientific, if the first bettor is a close player, no one should come in against him who does not hold court cards or better. The position is about the same as a jack-pot which is opened, but with the great difference, as we shall see presently, that there is no outside pool to be played for.

If the man under the gun does not come in, the next man to say has the same difficulties to face, but in less degree, because there is at least one player less to contend against; therefore the second man to say can come in on a slightly weaker hand

than the first bettor would require, but it should
still be above the average. This is the theory.

In practical Poker it will be found that the first
bettor does not pay much attention to the theo-
retical difficulties of his position, but comes in on
about the same hands in that position that he
would ante on in any other position. It is also
unquestionably true that the other players round
the table come in on the hands that they usually
regard as worth drawing to, without paying much
attention to the first bettor's being in or not. I
have never seen a player who was in the habit of
coming in on eights, or better, lay them down
simply because the man under the gun had come
in ahead of him.

If the first two men to say in a six-hand game
refuse to come in, the third man to say can have
but three opponents at the most, and in accordance
with the principle that the smaller the number of
players the more valuable the hands, he can safely
come in on pairs which are even below average.

When it comes round to the dealer's right hand,
the number of players who have already come in
may greatly affect one's decision, because the larger
the number who have anted, the greater the value
of the pool, and therefore the greater the tempta-
tion to risk something to win it. The less one has
to pay in proportion to the whole pool, the better
the investment. Some persons insist that it is
equal whether they come in against one player,

each putting up an equal amount, or play against
four others at odds of four to one. This is only
true of certain cases, which will be more thoroughly
discussed in the chapter on "Betting."

When the amounts already anted are not equal
—after a raise, for instance—the circumstances are
entirely changed. Suppose no one has come in
until it is the dealer's turn, and he has a pair of
tens. They are well worth drawing to against the
age—in fact, it is odds that the age cannot beat
them. But if four men have already come in, and
two of them have each in turn raised the ante the
limit, the dealer's pair of tens is not much of a
hand to pay twice the limit to draw to, against such
declared strength in the other hands.

If it is true that the value of a weak hand in-
creases as its position approaches the age, the
age itself must be the best position in which to
play a weak hand. This is true, for two reasons:
everyone has declared before the age is called on
to decide; and the age can come in at half-price,
if the ante has not been raised. It is for the
second reason that the age can afford to draw to
hands which another player should lay down.

An illustration will make this clear. Suppose
two players have anted, two chips each, and the
dealer has a four-card straight, open at both ends.

There are five chips in the pot, and he will have
to pay two to draw cards, with the chance of being
raised by the age. The draw is not worth it, be-

cause it is five to one against making the straight, and the pool offers him only five chips to two. But suppose the dealer has a pair, and goes in, and the age is the one that holds a four-card straight. There are now seven chips in the pool, and the age can draw to his bobtail by putting up one chip only; so that the chance is well worth it.

If there were five players already in without raising the ante, there would be eleven chips in the pool, and the age could afford to draw to an inside straight, the odds against filling it being eleven to one. Should any other player have paid to draw to an inside straight, no matter what his position, he must have paid more than twice what it was worth for the chance.

All these little things show the necessity for a player's being familiar with that part of Poker statistics which relate to the probabilities of filling or improving certain classes of hands. Unless he can compare the odds against him with the money on the table, he does not know what he is doing.

What it will cost to draw cards is always doubtful, except to the age or the last straddler. The ante may be two chips, but any following player may raise it the limit. The fewer players there are still to declare, the less likely it is that the ante will be raised; but the possibility must always be taken into account, and no player should ante who is not willing to face the alternative of having to sacrifice his ante or meet a raise.

OPENING JACK-POTS

Whether or not to open or go into a jack-pot depends on somewhat different considerations from those which affect the decision in an ordinary pool.

The great difference between jack-pots and ordinary pools, which is generally overlooked by beginners, is that there is a sort of bonus, or premium, in a jack, made up of the original antes; and that the cost of playing a hand is therefore proportionately much less in a jack than it is in an ordinary pool.

For the sake of convenience in discussing jacks, it will be assumed that the ante agreed upon is always half the betting limit; so that, if six are playing, there is three times the limit in the pool to begin with.

Good players differ considerably as to the advisability of the first man to say coming in on "bare openers"—that is, just a pair of jacks, sometimes called "openers only." I could never see anything in this objection to opening as first-to-say simply because the player holds only just enough to open on. One should be very glad to have openers, and only too ready to play them, for reasons which will appear presently.

But if a person does not like to open a jack when first to say, he should have a clear conception of the possibilities of his position if he passes, holding bare openers.

The larger the number of players in the game, the greater the probability that some one else can open if the first man does not. It is nearly four to one against any particular hand holding openers, jacks or better. With seven players in the game, openers should be held about four times in five deals; with six playing, three times in four deals; with five playing, twice in three deals. It is therefore evident that if the first man to say has openers and passes, the odds are slightly against any other player at the table being able to open.

The objection to opening on the weakest possible qualification, when you are the first to say, is that although you have no idea of the strength of the other hands, except what you can judge from the draw, you have to take the initiative in everything, and give all the others an option on your play.

With better than bare openers—that is, with two pairs of triplets—there is nothing to be gained by waiting for someone else to open. What is the object of letting another player open it? To raise him? What is the object of raising him? To drive out all the others? Do you want to drive them out if you have a hand good enough to beat them? Three of a kind before the draw should

win five pots out of six against all improvements.
If your hand is not good enough to beat the others,
do you want to raise it just to fatten the pot for
them?

Suppose that you are strong enough to raise
the opener, and pass for that purpose, and that
he happens to sit on your right hand.   What
happens when you raise him?   All the players
on your left are driven out.   Had you opened,
some of them might have come in, and the player
on your right might have raised, and then you
would have been master of the situation, to drive
them out with a return raise, or let them come
in and fatten the pot by meeting the single raise,
if you felt strong enough to beat them after the
draw.

If the first man to say does not open, the second
or third man should open on anything that will
open.

If the opener has a fairly strong hand, he will
sometimes make the mistake of opening it cheap,
so as to get in all the antes he can, forgetting that
the more players he induces to draw cards, the
more chances they will have to beat him.   A player
who is let into a jack-pot cheaply will sometimes
make the most extraordinary draws.   If a white
chip is worth a fourth of the limit (which is putting
a high value on it), it is surely better to get in one
man for the limit than to coax in four for a chip
each.   Opening for the limit, with a view to

driving out weak hands, is good policy when the opener is not particularly strong himself, and is especially good play when several have already refused to open.

With such a strong hand as three court cards, four out of six men having passed, the opening should always be for the limit, because if the players who have passed come in, they are probably drawing to bobtails or pairs smaller than court cards; their draw will tell which. Even if they improve their pairs to threes, they will not be able to beat your threes; but they will almost surely call any bet you make after the draw, and will very probably raise you, because there is something in human nature which makes a man who has drawn a strong hand think a great deal more of it than if he had held it originally.

It is rather interesting, in these days of universal jack-pots, to read over some of the opinions expressed about them when they were quite new to the game, and still very little played. Blackbridge, writing in 1874, which was not more than two or three years after jack-pots were invented, says:— "The first man to say should never open on less than triplets; but if no one has opened until it comes to the dealer's turn, he can open on a single pair, and the chances are that all the others will throw up their hands. Those who do come in, and draw one card after having passed, may be drawing to

bobtails." The following axioms about jack-pots
he considers unquestionable:—

"They are usually opened too near the left of the dealer,
and on hands insufficient to justify the risk ahead of them."

"When opened on the left of the dealer, they are usually
opened for too much money."

"The right of the dealer, or the dealer himself, usually
opens with a limit bet on a weak hand and a coaxing bet on
a strong hand."

"The more money a weak hand puts into a jack-pot, the
less it wins."

"Jack-pots should never be played except on strong
hands, because the game is a show-down, and the weaker
hand has no chance of driving out the stronger."

COMING INTO JACK-POTS

After a jack-pot has been opened, the question of coming in against the opener presents itself to each player in turn. All writers on Poker insist that it is useless to come into a jack-pot against such declared strength as openers, unless you have as good as openers yourself, because, although you may occasionally draw enough to beat the opener, you will not be able to do so often enough to compensate you for your losses when you try to beat him and fail.

This is all very well in theory, but I have never seen the game in which it was carried out in practice. If the opener were never opposed by any but those who had as good as openers, he would take the pot without opposition more than half the time.

In practical Poker, any player with a pair as good as eights will come in against the opener, and in the majority of games a player who holds a pair of any kind will come in and try his luck. As we shall see presently, a pair of deuces is just as good as a pair of tens to draw to against openers.

Suppose the ante for jack-pots is half the limit, and six are in the game. The player argues that there are six antes already in the pool, and that three besides himself will probably play for it. If it is opened for the limit, there will be six limits in the pool; and by paying one-sixth of that amount,

he can draw to a pair, the odds against improving which are less than three to one. If he takes this risk six times, he should improve twice, and it would then be simply a question as to whether his improvement was good enough to win the pot.

This refers to drawing to pairs; bobtail straights and flushes have not so much in their favor, the odds against improving them being nearly twice as great. It is very seldom worth while to pay for the privilege of drawing to a four-card straight or flush unless there is money enough in the pot to justify the risk, and you are the last to say, so that you cannot be raised. The only occasion upon which it would be right to draw to an inside straight, would be when the pot is opened so cheaply that there is more than twelve times as much money in it as you will have to pay to draw cards.

A very important principle to be remembered in coming in, whether it is a jack-pot or not, is that when you have once decided on the value of the hand which you will support, you must stick to it upon every occasion, unless the ante is raised. No play is sound for one time that would not be sound all the time. It is useless to draw to bob-tails upon some occasions, and not upon others; either drop them altogether, or play them every time you get them. Come in against openers every time you have a pair of any kind, or else make up your mind never to come in with less than openers yourself. If you are not willing to pursue a certain theory or system for a hundred

deals in succession, do not waste your money trying
it once or twice in an evening.

The opener and any others who come in, have,
of course, equal chances of improvement. It can
be demonstrated, both by calculation and experi-
ment, that if the opener has the best hand to
start with, he will have the best hand after the
draw in the majority of cases. But there is always
this element of chance in the game, that the opener
may not improve in the same pot, or to the same
extent, that the player drawing against him im-
proves. Human nature is stronger than mathe-
matics, and no amount of scientific demonstration
will ever prevent a practical Poker player from
drawing to a fair-sized pair, in the hope of beating
the opener in a jack-pot, when he can get the
privilege of drawing to his little pair for one-sixth
of the total value of the pool.

There must be some good reason for good
players persistently going into jack-pots, and draw-
ing against openers, in spite of all the scientific
warnings against the practice. The explanation of
it would seem to be that experience does not con-
firm calculation in the matter. As Winterblossom
says, we learn from experience that certain events
occur more frequently than others, and from this
experience we deduce that there are certain proba-
bilities in favour of such events. Calculation usual-
ly confirms this, as in the case of the rank of Poker
hands, which were first fixed by experience. Per-
haps the want of harmony in this case is due to the

fact that the calculations have not been founded
on sound premises.

If there is anything in the following analysis of
one phase of the question, this going in against
openers is based on sound principles, because, if
the player does not go in at all, he submits to the
immediate and inevitable loss of his antes; whereas
if he does go in, it would seem that he saves or
recovers two-thirds of these antes.   If everyone at
the table had a pair, and they all went into every
jack-pot, this would not be true; but if six are
playing, the average number to go in will be three
or four.   It is the fact that the others have aban-
doned their interest that makes it worth while for
any player with a pair to play for his share of these
abandoned antes.

As this question of coming into jack-pots is one
of the most disputed at Poker, and as more money
is won and lost on the play than in any other way, it
is to the interest of every player to settle it for him-
self.   Anyone who has a couple of hours to spare can
satisfy himself as to the wisdom of coming in against
openers by making the following experiment.

Take from the pack and lay upon the table a
pair of jacks, a pair of tens, a pair of nines, and
a pair of eights, thus:—
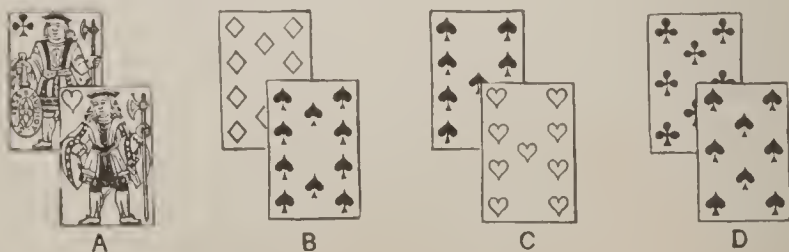
A is supposed to be the opener, and the others are four out of six players, who have anted to draw to their pairs. Take the remainder of the pack, shuffle it thoroughly—at least ten intricate shuffles and a cut—and then help each of these four men to three cards, laying them face up, near, but not mixed with, their original pairs. Repeat this experiment a hundred times, noting on a slip of paper which of the four players, A, B; C, or D, has the best hand after the draw.

Here is the result of one such hundred deals, ten intricate shuffles and a cut between each draw. In order to show the regularity of the results, the score for each ten successive deals is given separately, the figures indicating the number of times in ten that the hand was the best of the whole four after the draw:—

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Total.
A's Jacks...	5	6	5	3	6	5	4	5	2	5	= 46
B's Tens....	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	= 20
C's Nines...	1	1	1	1	-	3	1	1	4	3	= 16
D's Eights..	2	1	1	4	2	1	2	1	3	1	= 18

It will be seen that eighteen is the average number of times that the best improved hand will be held by one of those opposed to the opener. Let us analyse the case of the player D, who draws to the lowest pair, which might therefore just as well be deuces.

Suppose the amount in each pool to be six antes of half the limit, and that each pot is opened for the limit by A, seen by three players, B, C,

and D. Then there is always seven times the limit in the pool before a bet is made. D has anted a hundred times the limit to draw cards, and he has had the best hand after the draw in eighteen pools out of this hundred. To find what he would have got out of it if there had been no betting after the draw, multiply his 18 by 7 (the number of limits in each pool), and 126 times the limit is what he takes out. A, who wins or has the best hand 46 times, takes out 46 multiplied by 7, or 322 times the limit.

These figures are set down in the following table, column A showing the amount contributed to the 100 pools by each of six players, column B the amount taken out in antes, and column C the plus and minus so far.

But there must be a bet after the draw; and, just for the sake of getting an average, let it be assumed that the bet and call is for the limit, so that the opener bets the limit on every hand after the draw. The expectation of improvement in the other hand being actually 1 in $3\frac{1}{2}$, it is fair to assume that they would improve sufficiently to justify them in calling about 25 times in the 100 pools. If each of the three players, B, C, and D, called 25 times, they would contribute 75 limits in bets; while the dealer would contribute 100, as he bet on every hand. This makes the total amount bet, in addition to the antes, 175 times the limit.

A, the opener, would win 46 hundredths of this amount, or $80\frac{1}{2}$ limits. Deduct this from the 100

he bet, and he is $19\frac{1}{2}$ to the bad, as shown in column D. Deduct this $19\frac{1}{2}$ from the 172 which he had the best of in the antes, and he is still $152\frac{1}{2}$ to the good on the 100 pools, as shown in column E.

D, with the smallest pair to go in on, has won just the average, 18 hundredths of this 175 limits bet. Deduct this from the 25 times he bet a limit each on his improved hands, and he is still $6\frac{1}{2}$ to the good on the betting. He had 24 the worst of it in the antes, and has recovered $6\frac{1}{2}$, so he is still $17\frac{1}{2}$ to the bad. B and C's account have been adjusted in the same way; but it may be remarked that there is no reason why they should not all be equal with D.

			A	B	C			D		E
A	Jacks	46	150	322	172	—	—	$19\frac{1}{2}$	$152\frac{1}{2}$	—
B	Tens	20	150	140	—	10	10	—	—	—
C	Nines	16	150	112	—	38	3	—	—	35
D	Eights	18	150	126	—	24	$6\frac{1}{2}$	—	—	$17\frac{1}{2}$
E	—		—	50	—	—	50	—	—	50
F	—		—	50	—	—	50	—	—	50
Totals.....			700	700	172	172	$19\frac{1}{2}$	$19\frac{1}{2}$	$152\frac{1}{2}$	$152\frac{1}{2}$

The average loss of each player who comes in on any kind of a pair seems to be $17\frac{1}{2}$ times the limit. The loss of those who do not come in at all is 50 times the limit. It would seem to be true, therefore, as already pointed out, that the

player who comes in against openers with any
kind of a pair, stands to save two-thirds of his
money; whereas if he goes out without drawing,
he abandons it all.

If this analysis were extended to cases in which
one player, B, C, or D, had better than jacks, which
is often the case in actual play, it must also be
extended to cases in which the opener has better
than jacks; so it is all a question of proportion.
The point to be decided is, should a player come in
against openers—even the lowest openers possible
—when he has less than openers?   The main fact
to be remembered is, that the hand which is the
strongest at the table before the draw will be the
strongest after the draw, in the majority of cases.

It is worthy of notice that a pair of eights is just
as good as a pair of tens or nines, when drawing
against openers.   This explodes the whole fallacy
that a man might draw against openers if he had
tens, but would be foolish to do so if he had deuces
only.   It might be assumed that, as tens are better
than eights, they should win oftener. So they would
if the jacks were not in the same pool.   It is not a
question of tens beating eights, but of eights beat-
ing openers, which are jacks.   If the eights can
beat the openers, of course they can beat the tens.

None of the pairs held by B, C, or D are worth
anything unless they improve, and then they are
not worth much unless they can beat the improve-
ment of the other hands.   If D's eights can be im-

proved often enough to beat A's improved jacks, of course they will beat improved tens as well, on the average. Any person trying the experiment of a hundred deals for the draw to improve, will see that the openers are not by any means always the second-best hand.

When no one improves, the openers must win on their merits. In actual play, no one would call if no one had anything better than one pair smaller than jacks. When the improvement is of the same class in two or more hands, one of them being the openers, the openers must win on account of their initial superiority. A small pair drawn leaves jacks up still the best hand. A third card leaves three jacks still the best. But if a higher pair is drawn to the smaller pair, jacks up may be beaten; and any three of a kind will beat jacks up.

From all the foregoing considerations, we are led to the following conclusions:—

It pays better to draw against openers, if you hold any kind of a pair, than to abandon the pool altogether.

It does not matter what the value of the pair you draw to, as the pair must be improved to beat the openers; and one improved pair is as good as another when opposed to an original pair which was better than either.

RAISING THE ANTE

If a player decides to come into any pot, he puts up the amount of the ante, and at the same time he has the privilege of raising it, so as to make it cost more to draw cards. If some player has already raised, any player coming in after him can raise him again, and any player that he has raised can raise in return. There is no limit to the number of times that the ante may be raised.

Most persons suppose that when a player raises the ante, his object is to make the pot as big as possible; but such is not always the case.

One of the most common reasons for raising the ante is to drive out weaker hands, especially when those weaker hands have already put up the ante, and usually when the player who raises it has a hand above the average, but one that is still quite easily beaten.

Some players always raise the ante on a pair of aces, because they know the odds are eleven to one that no one player can beat them before the draw. If there are six in the game, and four of them are allowed to come in and draw to small pairs, the aces may be beaten. If all but one of them can be driven out by raising the ante, the aces will most likely win the pool.

Every good player raises the ante on two pairs for the same reason. The chance of improvement is small, and the risk of their being beaten after the draw is great; so it is better to reduce the number of opponents before the draw, if possible. It is a good general maxim to do all your betting on two pairs before the draw, while the odds are thirty-four to one against any one having a better hand, and to lose confidence in them if they are opposed in the betting after the draw.

There is little to be gained by raising the ante to keep others out, when none of them have come in because there is nothing in the pool to win but the blind. For this reason, the first man to say seldom or never raises unless he has a pat hand, in which case he must take his chances of getting as much money in the pool as possible before his strength is exposed. Some will not raise unless there are two men in ahead of them; but the blind and one other will usually justify a raise.

It is always advisable to raise the ante with a hand of such a character that its strength will be shown or suspected in the draw, because it is well known that players will pay more to see what they can draw than they will pay to see what you have drawn.

A very common reason for raising the ante is, to make the pot worth having when the hand is one that is almost sure to be the best at the table, if it improves. Suppose three men have come in, and

the fourth to say has a bobtail flush or straight. He is going to draw one card; and, for fear no one will call him after the draw, he raises the ante, on the chance that he will win a good pot of antes at least, if he fills.

Many players, after having raised for this reason, take advantage of the fact that they have created the impression of having a strong hand, and try to steal the pot by bluffing for it after the draw. Some raise the ante for the deliberate purpose of bluffing after the draw, even when they have no chance of filling or getting a strong hand. The Southern custom of raising the ante on a kilter, and then standing pat, is a case in point. Without the raised ante, the bluff on a pat hand would be absurd.

One peculiar use of the raised ante is, to find out what the other players think of their hands. It is seldom resorted to, because it is expensive, unless used with good judgment. Suppose four men are in, six playing, and the dealer raises the ante, not as much as the limit, but just a little "boost," as it is called. He then watches carefully the expressions on the faces of the various players who have already come in, in order to judge whether or not they feel the pinch. Sometimes a small raise of this kind will frighten players out more quickly than a limit raise, because they know a small raise is very unlikely to be the foundation for a bluff, but looks much like a coaxer. If one or two men

come in readily to meet the small raise, it is more than probable that they have pairs above the average.

It is bad policy to raise the ante if you have a strong hand which can be drawn to as if it were a weak one, because raising the ante calls attention to you, and prevents liberal betting against you after the draw. With three of a kind, for instance, to which you intend drawing two cards, it is better not to raise the ante unless someone has already raised it, and several others are already in, because if you draw two cards without raising, everyone at the table will credit you with a small pair and a kicker, and will bet against you freely at first, just as no one is afraid of a player who draws two cards after having refused to open a jack-pot. If you are going to draw one card only, three of a kind is a most valuable hand on which to raise the ante; and, for the same reason, if you have raised the ante, you should never draw two cards to a triplet afterwards, unless you feel that you need all your strength. Most players look upon three of a kind pat as good enough to win the pot, without any improvement.

With four of a kind, to which you will draw one card, if you do not raise, the other players will credit you with a bobtail. If you raise, they will think you have two pairs at least, perhaps three of a kind and a kicker, and they will be very shy of calling you, and still more shy of raising. The

objection to drawing one card without raising is, that the moment you bet they credit you with having filled a flush or a straight; whereas, if you have raised before the draw, the bet after the draw may be a bluff, or it may be a bet on two pairs, they will not know which, and may not only call you, but raise you. Some very good players make it a rule always to raise the ante before a one-card draw, no matter what they are drawing to.

With a full hand, you are practically compelled to raise before the draw, as it is very unlikely that anyone will bet against you after it.

If the ante has already been raised, and you have to decide about meeting it, a good deal will depend on previous observation of the player's methods, and still more will depend on whether or not it is worth while to pay the increased price to draw cards, with the probability of at least one strong hand out against you.

Here is an example, from actual play, of raising before the draw. There were six in the game, but the age and the dealer both dropped out after the first raise, leaving these four hands to play for the pool. A was the man under the gun, and he anted two chips.

C

B

D

A

B, with his aces up, raised the ante the limit, and C raised him the limit in turn. D, who was playing in good luck, raised both of them, and A very properly dropped his pair. In the draw, B and C having both called D's raise, B got another five, C did not improve, and D filled his flush. B bet the limit, and D raised him. Upon B raising the limit again, D very properly laid down his hand without calling, as he saw B must have raised the ante originally on two pairs, and must have improved to raise a hand that had double-raised the ante.

DRAWING TO IMPROVE

The following odds against improving any particular class of hand should be familiar to every player, so that he may be able to compare the figures here given with the amount of money on the table.

Drawing three cards to a pair, the odds against any kind of improvement are $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. Drawing two cards only, the odds are 4 to 1.

Drawing one card to two pairs, it is 11 to 1 against getting a full hand, which is the only improvement possible. If you discard the smaller pair, the chances of improvement become the same as drawing three cards to a single pair; therefore it is $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 that you make your hand worse instead of better, while it is 7 to 1 against your getting a better hand of some sort—that is, better than two pairs. Some players consider this 7 to 1 chance for triplets, or a full, better than the 2 to 1 chance for the full when one card is drawn to the two pairs. If the hand improves to two

pairs, it is no better than it was originally; if it improves to triplets, it is very much stronger. It must not be forgotten that, although the odds against the one-card draw are 11 to 1, if the hand does improve, it is practically sure of winning the pool. Taking all these considerations together, it is about an even thing whether the player draws one small card to two small pairs, or discards the smaller pair and draws three cards.

Drawing two cards to three of a kind, it is about 7 to 1 against any improvement. If only one card is drawn, it is 11 to 1 against.

Drawing one card to an open-end straight, it is about 5 to 1 against filling. There is a chance of getting a pair.

Drawing one card to an interior straight, it is 11 to 1 against filling, with the added chance of a pair, of course.

Drawing one card to a flush, it is about $4\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 against filling. There is also a chance for a pair.

Drawing one card to a straight flush which is open at both ends, the odds are 3 to 1 against any improvement. Against getting the straight flush they are 24 to 1.
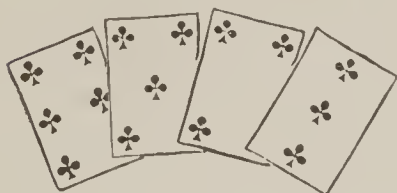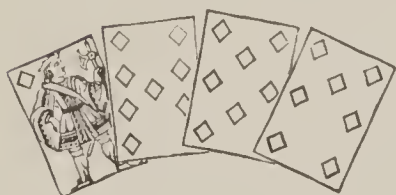
Drawing one card to an interior straight flush, it is 4 to 1 against any improvement, the odds against the straight flush being 46 to 1.

There are some odds which are more interesting than useful, such as the following:—

Drawing four cards to an ace, it is 4 to 1 against getting a pair of aces, and 12 to 1 against getting aces up or better.

Drawing three cards to an ace and king, it is 3 to 1 against making a pair of either.

Drawing two cards to a three-card straight, open at both ends, it is 24 to 1 against filling it.
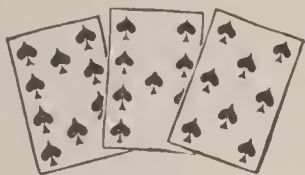
Drawing to three cards of a straight flush, open at both ends, it is 12 to 1 against getting either the straight or the flush.

Several of these odds may be divided into their separate parts, if it is required to be known what the chances are against improvement of a special character. Take the draw of three cards to a pair, for instance. It is about $5\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 against getting two pairs, 8 to 1 against triplets, 97 to 1 against a full hand, and 359 to 1 against four of a kind. When all these fractions of probability are added together, as will be explained in the chapter on "Poker Calculations," the result will be a fraction of about 1 in $3\frac{1}{2}$, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against any of all these various forms of improvement.

One of the most peculiar idiosyncrasies of the beginner is holding up a kicker with a small pair. A kicker is an ace or king, or some card which is no use to the hand as it stands, but might be useful if it could be matched. There are two objects in holding it up: to get a mate to it, and to conceal the fact that the player is coming in on a single pair. That any authority should recommend such a thing as holding up a kicker with a small pair, except to vary the draw, is surprising, because the absurdity of it must be at once apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to analyse the possibilities of the case.

If the object is to improve the hand, part of the chances are thrown away by holding up the odd card, because, if three cards are drawn to the pair, it is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against improving; while, if two are drawn, it is 4 to 1 against. It is easier to get a third card to match the pair, than it is to get a second ace to match the kicker.

If the object is to make the other players think you have three of a kind all the time, you must raise the ante, or they will not pay much attention to you. Suppose your dream is realised, and that you get the two pairs you were drawing for, aces up. You will probably be sorry if you have succeeded in making anyone think you had three of a kind, because they will not call you. If anyone comes in against you and bets, he can probably beat threes, unless they are big ones. If you have not improved, and are going to bluff it out by betting high on the little pair and the kicker, you are presuming on the players opposed to you. You must always give your opponents credit for being able to judge your play by your coming in and your draw.

AVERAGES

Some persons find great difficulty in understanding averages. This is especially true of such matters as the average expectation of improvement in the draw. The theory of it is this: what you win or lose in one particular pool, or in two or three pools, or in one evening's play, is not the point.

What you would win or lose if you persisted in the same policy consistently for a thousand pools, is the question. The total result of these thousand trials, divided by a thousand, would give you an average of loss or gain.

If you draw to a certain hand—let us say a pair of deuces—a thousand times, your hands after the draw will be of all sorts, from four of a kind down; but they would have a certain value on the average. The only way of stating this average is to suppose that some other player had a certain hand against you for every one of these thousand deals, and that he stood pat on it, never improving it; and that this hand was of such strength that he would beat you just about as often as you would beat him with your three-card draw to your pair of deuces.

What this hand would be can be calculated, and it can also be proved by experiment, the test being similar to the one already described in connection with coming in against openers in jackpots. It would not take any person a moment to decide that, if the pat hand were a flush or a full, the player drawing to deuces would have no chance against it; so a flush or a full must be entirely too high a statement of the average. There would also be very little hesitation in saying that, if the pat hand were a pair of treys only, the deuces, with the advantage of the draw, in a six-hand game, would beat them hollow in a thousand trials; so treys must be too low an average.

The real average lies somewhere between these two extremes, and it can be demonstrated to be a pair of jacks. That is to say, if you drew three cards to a pair of deuces, and another man stood pat on a pair of jacks, you would each have the best hand at the table about an equal number of times if you continued the experiment for a thousand trials; but if he had aces pat, he would win more pots than you; and if he had nines pat, you would win more than he in the long run, no matter how many others were in the game.

The following table will give the player a general idea of these averages, the value given in the right-hand column being what the hand will be worth, on the average, after the draw.

Drawing to:—

An ace, or ace, king	Pair of eights.
Ace, king, queen, or ace, king, queen, jack	Pair of fours.
A four-card flush	Pair of jacks.
An open-end straight	Pair of nines.
An interior straight	Pair of deuces.
Any pair below sixes	Pair of court cards.
Pair of sixes, sevens, or eights	Two small pairs.
Pair of nines, tens, or jacks	Two big pairs.
Pair of queens or kings	Aces up.
Pair of aces	Small triplets.

The value of this table consists in its being a guide to the probabilities of the complete hand. The beginner, about to draw to a pair, lets his fancy wander over its many possibilities, without

the slightest conception of what its true or average value will be after the draw has been made. Instead of asking yourself, "Is it worth while to draw to a pair of eights?" put the question in the other form, "Will two small pairs be good enough, after the draw, to win the pool?" Instead of considering the advisability of coming in on a pair of fives, with all their possibilities, ask yourself whether you would go into the pool if you knew that a pair of jacks would be about the value of your hand after the draw.

That a pair of fives can turn into a pair of jacks is, of course, impossible; and therein lies the difficulty of understanding this method of stating average values. But the fact remains that if you had a pair of fives before the draw one hundred times, you would be in exactly the same position as that of a player who had a pair of jacks after the draw a hundred times.

MAXIMS FOR DRAWING

The player who is thoroughly familiar with the odds against getting any particular hand which he thinks of drawing for, has a great advantage over those who are without this technical knowledge, because he can always decide understandingly whether or not it is worth what it will cost to try the experiment.

There are five general principles with regard to the draw, which should be thoroughly understood:—

1. The smaller the number of players in the pool, the greater the value of the hands; the larger the number in, the greater the probability that any given hand will be beaten.

2. The draw is of more value to the weak hand than to the strong, because the weaker cannot beat the stronger unless it improves.

3. A draw which is improbable should never be attempted unless it can be cheaply purchased, because it is not worth while to pay even money for a 10 to 1 chance.

4. If two different draws offer in the same hand, the most probable should be selected, unless the improbable one is necessary to win the pool.

5. Holding up useless cards reduces the chances of improvement.

These principles, although pretty obvious, may be briefly illustrated.

(1) In a pool in which there is only one player opposed to you, a pair of eights is a fair hand to draw to, because it is nearly 6 to 1 that the other player cannot beat them; but if six men have come in ahead of you, it is 23 to 1 that your pair of eights are not worth drawing to.

(2) A player with two pairs would rather put up a limit bet to keep the others from drawing, than he would pay a white check to draw cards himself. A player with a small pair in a big pot would sooner pay the limit to draw cards, than be allowed to stand pat for nothing, if such a thing were possible.

(3) A player with an inside straight would be foolish to pay the limit for the privilege of drawing to it, if there was only one man in against him, because the odds against filling are 11 to 1, and the bet is even money; but if five men had already come into a jack-pot, the sixth man would be foolish not to draw to a four-card flush, because the odds against filling it are only $4\frac{1}{4}$ to 1, and he can buy the privilege of drawing cards for one-eighth of what is in the pot. It is because he can draw cheaply that the age usually plays such hands as bobtails, small pairs, and even monkey flushes.

(4) If a player holds a pair of queens and four cards of a straight, he is more likely to improve the queens than he is to make the straight, it being $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against improving the pair, and 5 to 1 against getting the sequence. But if the ante has been raised by a player ahead of him, who has drawn two cards only, it is improbable that two pairs (even queens up) will be good enough to win the pool; and the chance against getting three queens, 8 to 1, with the possibility that they might not win the pot after all, suggests that it would be better to break the pair and try the 5 to 1 chance for the straight, which will beat three aces if it fills.

(5) Good players usually draw to the full strength of the hand. If the hand is masked, it should be a hand which is probably strong enough to win the pool without improving. Some

authorities insist that, as the odds are nearly
20 to 1 that three of a kind will not be beaten,
even after the draw, the hand should always be
masked. If only one card is drawn to three of
a kind, the chances of improvement are cut in
half. If two pairs are played pat, all chance of
improvement is abandoned. In the first case,
the object is to induce the other players to bet
against you; in the second case, it is to prevent
them from doing so.

MASKING THE HAND

It is very important that the player should draw
to the same class of hands in various ways at dif-
ferent times; otherwise his draw, when compared
with his ante, will always give his adversaries a
clue to his hand.

For this reason good players usually play two
pairs pat about half the time, and draw two cards
to three of a kind about as often as they draw one,
sometimes with a raised ante, sometimes without it.
Some players go so far as to draw two cards, or
only one card, to a good pair, when there is no
evidence of any strong hands out against them.

The occasional draw of one card to a pair of
kings or aces, without raising the ante, has a very
demoralising effect on some players when they call
the hand. The one-card draw they assume to be
to a bobtail, as the ante was not raised, and the
bet after the draw they take to be a bluff, which
they will call with any average pair. Next time,

when you draw one card to a bobtail without raising the ante, the recollection of your last play is fresh in their minds, and they will not only call your flush or straight, but probably raise you if they have anything better than a pair, on the theory that this is their chance to get even. Next time you draw one card they do not know what you have, which is just what you want.

DRAWING TO NOTHING

There are times when a player feels as if he would like to go in, but has nothing in his hand to draw to. The age throws away a lot of money indulging in this luxury of coming in on nothing, and many players yield to the temptation when they are the last to say and it is a good-sized pot, especially a jack-pot.

One of the most common mistakes is holding a card to draw to, instead of taking five fresh cards. The card held is usually an ace or a king, instead of a smaller card, such as a ten or nine. The high card may be better in a jack-pot, when the object is to beat jacks at least; but in an ordinary pool, it must not be forgotten that there are other things besides pairs. If four cards are taken to a ten, there are chances for straights and flushes as well as pairs. It is more likely that you may get a straight if you hold up a ten, than if you hold up an ace, because there are five different straights that contain a ten, and only two that contain an ace.

The odds against getting a mate to an ace or a king by drawing four cards are 4 to 1, while the odds against getting a pair of some kind by drawing five fresh cards are only $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1. When the pack has been played with for some time, good hands which have been thrown up on the previous deals often stay together, especially if the cards are not thoroughly shuffled; and a player drawing five cards will sometimes hit upon one of these hands, or parts of two such hands.

Monkey draws, to three-card flushes or straights, are not to be seriously considered as a possibility of the game, although they may be indulged in now and then when a player feels called upon to give back some of his winnings.

BETTING

Before proceeding to a consideration of betting on and calling hands, the theory and principles of betting itself should be thoroughly understood.

The mistaken idea of many Poker players is, that they are betting against another player; whereas every bet is against the money on the table in the proportion of odds. All that you have to do with the other player is to judge whether or not he is more likely to win this money than you are.

There is one principle in connection with betting which is very little understood. If you make a single bet upon any proposition, it makes very little difference to you what odds you lay or take; and it does not matter whether the odds are the right odds or not, because if you win you win, and if you lose you lose, and that is the end of it. But if you are going to bet upon the same kind of proposition a great many times, or with a great many people, a thorough knowledge of the odds is of the greatest importance; and, if you expect to win anything in the long run, you must always have these odds in your favour.

This principle is very easily illustrated. Let us take a very obvious case first. You bet a man two to one, in pounds or dollars, that he will not toss a coin heads up. If he fails you win a pound,

and that is the end of it; but, if you proposed to bet him two to one on tossing a coin a hundred times, it would be absolutely impossible for you to win anything, because the odds are steadily against you. When the state of the case is so obvious, people will shrink from laying them, even for a "flier" on one event; yet they will unhesitatingly go into a bet when the odds are not so obvious as they are in tossing. When you buy a lottery ticket, what do you care whether the chances are 300 to 1 against you, or 10,000 to 1? But the lottery people care a great deal, because they are in that business all the time, and against a great many people. If they did not have the chances in their favour, they could not exist.

A former Earl of Yarborough used to bet any man at the Whist table 1,000 to 1 that he would hold some card higher than a nine. The men who took him on did not stop to haggle about the exact odd, because it was just a flier with them, to lose a sovereign or win a thousand. But the Earl, who was in the habit of offering this wager all the time, was very careful to have the odds in his favour, it being really 1827 to 1 against the event that he laid only 1000 to 1 against.

You take a fancy to a certain horse in a race, and you make a bet with a friend that it will win. What do you care whether the exact odds on that horse are 17 to 3, or 6 to 5? But if you were a bookmaker, laying and taking hundreds of wagers every day on dozens of races, you would have to

study the question of odds very carefully, or you would soon get the worst of it.

You take a little flier at Monte Carlo with a hundred francs. What do you care about the odds against you being greater at one game than at the other? You will try your luck at the wheel for a while, and then at Rouge et Noir. If you win, you are satisfied with whatever the croupier gives you; if you lose, you can afford it, and you have enjoyed yourself in either case. With the Casino Company, it is a very different matter; and they have studied the question of odds until they have reduced it to an exact science.

Poker is one of the games in which you have to do the studying of the odds, because you do not take a flier on one hand, but sit down to bet steadily hour after hour on a series of propositions which differ continually in the problem they present. If you do not thoroughly understand the chances of the game, and keep the odds slightly in your favour, you will inevitably get the worst of it, unless you have phenomenal luck.

It is a curious fact, to which attention has been called by many writers on betting, that the more ignorant a person is of the chances against him, the greater the fascination the game seem to have for him.

In several banking games it can be demonstrated that, if a person persists in playing against them, he must inevitably lose. The most striking illustration of this that I know of is, that if ten men with ten

dollars each play Keno (which is the same as Lotto) for a dollar a card, and each of them wins ten kenos, not one of them will have a dollar left. The explanation of this is that the bank takes out 10 per cent.; and, as it gets a dollar on each keno, it must get a hundred dollars on the hundred kenos, which is all the money the ten players have. If one man played all the ten cards each time, he would constantly be paying ten dollars to win nine; but, as he plays only one card, and occasionally wins nine dollars for a dollar, he does not see this.

If a person is foolish enough to play against a mathematical impossibility of winning, he must, as Winterblossom says, be either unconscious of the fact that he is playing against an impossibility, or he must be crazy. The more infatuated he is with such a game, the more ignorant must he be of the mathematical aspects of the case. All games of chance owe their fascination to the manner in which the ease of winning is presented to the player's imagination, and the difficulty of winning is concealed from his reasoning powers.

Very few persons realise what a small percentage of advantage is absolutely sure to win in the long run. If the thing is put to them in such a way that they can see the percentage staring them in the face, they will refuse to play the game for any length of time; but if they do not see it, or cannot understand it, it is almost impossible to prevent them from playing. This is the secret

of the success of all banking games, such as those at Monte Carlo, and is the magnet in all "get-rich-quick" concerns.

Suppose a man offered to throw two dice against your two dice, a hundred times, betting you even money on the higher throw each time. The game would not interest you, because you can see it is a perfectly even thing. Suppose that he then offered to bet you 2 to 1 that you could not throw an ace with your two dice. The odds might tempt you to try your luck. You would naturally argue that, as two numbers must come up each time, and there are only six on the dice, it is a perfectly fair bet. But the fact is, that it is 14 to 11 against you every time you throw; and that, if you throw a hundred times, you will lose 12 per cent. of whatever amount you bet.

Suppose he bet you even money that you could not tell whether the total of the two dice thrown each time would be under or over seven. You might try that for a while, not knowing that the odds were 21 to 15 against you every time you bet. Here the advantage is concealed. But suppose he had two dice which had fives on opposite sides, instead of a deuce opposite the five, so that there were 24 pips on each of his dice, while there were only the usual 21 pips on yours, would you bet on throwing higher than he threw? You would think any person crazy who suggested such a thing, yet his advantage over you with these two crooked dice is not nearly so great as it was when you bet

on under or over seven, and is just about the same as when you bet on throwing an ace with two dice. You can see the crooked dice; you do not see the percentage in the game.

There is no game in the world so full of these concealed percentages as Poker; and this is one of the secrets of its fascination, and one of the principal reasons why people continue to play it, no matter how often they lose. The chances of winning are so evident; the percentages against them are so cunningly concealed.

Some players are suspected of cheating at Poker simply because it is observed that they so often have a hand slightly better than the one opposed to them—"just top it," as they say. This continual but slight superiority is not due to any stacking of the cards, but to the player's skill in availing himself of the percentages of the game.

Every first-class Bridge player keeps his eye on the score, in order to know exactly how many tricks he must make to save or to win the game. Every first-class Poker player must keep his eye continually on the pool, in order to know exactly how many chips he can afford to risk on any given hand.

But in order to know what he can afford to risk, a player must know what his hand is worth. Before the draw, with nothing to guide him in his estimate but the hand itself, he must go upon general principles—such as that a pair of aces is so much above the average go-in hand, that it is probably the best

hand at the table; that, if he has a pair of tens, they are well worth drawing to if no one has raised the ante, and so on. What the value of his hand may be when it comes to betting for the pot, is a matter of judgment based on observation of what the others draw, and how they bet up their hands. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Most of the money lost at Poker is lost before the draw.

The explanation of this is, that the players do not understand the percentage against them in given cases, and do not appreciate the importance of comparing their chances with the odds which the table bets against them.

As already stated, every bet made by a player before the draw is a bet against the money on the table, and not against any individual player. Money once placed in the pool, no matter by whom, belongs to the table; so that if a player has himself contributed to the pool, as by putting up an ante in a jack-pot or coming in, he must regard that money as no longer his, but the table's. It is a common but serious mistake to reckon upon chips you have already put up as still belonging to you, and that you are therefore bound to "protect" them by putting in more. This is one of the fallacies that cost the age so much money. If you have anted to draw cards, and are raised by some following player, it is not a question of paying more in order to protect your ante, but of whether your chances are good enough to justify your meeting

the raise.   This question can be answered only by
comparing your chances of improvement with the
odds which the table is betting you.   To do this
intelligently, you must know what your chances are.
An illustration will make this clear.   Three men
have come in, two chips each, making, with the
blind, seven chips on the table.   You have an
average pair, and the odds against improving this
pair are $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.   Will the table lay you odds of $2\frac{1}{2}$
to 1 against improving?   If there are seven chips on
the table, and it costs you two to come in, the table
is betting you 7 to 2, which is $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1; so of course
you come in.   If the blind makes good, there will
be 4 to 1 on the table against your two chips.

But you hold an inside straight.   The odds
against improving it are 11 to 1.   Will the table
bet you 11 to 1, even if the blind comes in?   No.
Then if you put up two chips to draw to your in-
side straight, what are you doing?   You are bet-
ting 11 to 4 against yourself.   You are accepting
eight chips when you ought to get twenty-two.
You are playing against loaded dice.

Take another case.   You are the third man to
say, two having come in for two chips each, five
chips on the table counting the blind.   It will cost
you two chips to draw to a four-card flush—that is,
the table bets you 5 to 2.   But the odds against
getting a flush are $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and there should be nine
chips on the table to justify your drawing cards.
If you go in as it stands, you are betting 9 to 5
against yourself.

In addition to this disadvantage, you cannot tell how much more it may cost you if some player who has still to say, perhaps the age, raises the ante. Suppose you put up two chips, and the age raises it ten, making sixteen in the pool. One of the others comes in, making it twenty-six. If you see the raise, the table is betting you 26 to 10, or about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, when you should demand $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

But, you say, if you fill the flush you win the pool. This is exactly where the fascination of the game shows itself. The chance of winning is so glaring; the odds against you are so obscure. Let us suppose that you get your flush as often as you should get it. What happens? We have already seen that no play can be sound for one time which would not be sound for all the time, if you are going to stick to the game; so we shall suppose that you were placed in exactly this position, not once, but fifty-five times. The probabilities being that you will fill your flush once in every $5\frac{1}{2}$ times, in 10 of these times you would win the pool with it— 260 chips. In the other 45 deals you would lose your 10 chips—that is 450, or 190 to the bad.

Take a simpler case, one that is much more common. Two men come in, five chips on the table with the blind. The third man raises it ten, making fifteen on the table. You have a pair of tens, against improving which the odds are $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, while the table offers you 15 to 12 only. Suppose you pay and draw. The one who raised probably has aces or two pairs to go with, and if you do not

improve you are beaten. If both of you improve,
he will beat you three times as often as you will
beat him, as has been shown in the chapter on
coming in against openers in jack-pots. There is
no reason why you should improve oftener than he
does, or why you should improve and he should
not; so that if you try the experiment, let us say
forty times, you will win ten times, which will be
150 chips, and you will lose thirty times twelve
chips (360), or 210 to the bad.

This refers to the state of the pool at the time
you ante, of course. What may happen after the
draw is another matter; but the weaker hand before
the draw will get the worst of it after the draw, in
the long run.

The only reason that Poker players do not
realise these facts is, because in most cases they
are all in the same boat, and what one throws
away in one pool by injudicious coming in, the
others give him back by their equal want of judg-
ment in other pools.

WATCHING THE DRAW

No player can be required to tell how many cards he drew, and the dealer is not allowed to supply the information, except with regard to his own hand; so each player must watch the draw for himself.

The man with a good memory (which is another name for the power of attentive observation) has an immense advantage in Poker. Anyone who can remember distinctly the number of cards drawn by those in the pool, will be able to form a very good idea of what they drew to, if their hands are shown in the call. A player should be on the alert during the draw, paying no attention to his own cards until his turn comes to decide. It may be rather difficult at first to keep the respective draws of three or four players in mind; but practice will make it easy enough. If the practice is never begun, the habit will never be acquired.

I was present at a Poker game once, in which one of the players with a king full was raised very heavily by a player who had drawn one card. That was before the days of small limits. The player with the king full spent several minutes in reviewing all the hands to which his opponent had drawn, what he had held in each case, and how he had bet them up—his idea being to form some

accurate judgment of what he now held. At the
end of his deliberations, he threw his king full into
the deadwood.

Some draws need more careful watching than
others, so that something may be learnt of the na-
ture of the original hand. Three-card draws one
need not pay much attention to, except to note
which players are in the habit of coming in cn
very small pairs, or of making such freak plays as
holding up an ace and a king. All two-card draws
should be very carefully watched; and if it is found
that a certain player always has three of a kind
when he draws two cards, he should be marked.

The methods adopted by each player with re-
gard to raising before the draw should also be
carefully noted, because it may often be a nice
question to decide whether the player who has
raised, but has not yet drawn, has simply a good
pair, such as aces, or a much stronger hand. If
you have observed that he has not raised on several
occasions when he held aces to go with, it is more
than probable that he holds better than aces when
he does raise. Some players cannot help falling
into the habit of playing upon a certain system;
and once the key to that system is found, it is
comparatively easy to read them.

Some players become so expert in this matter of
observation and memory, that they can tell very
nearly what each other player holds by the manner
in which he antes and draws cards. Curtis gives

this interesting example:—Six playing, A has the age; B, C, and D come in for two chips each; and E chips in with a pair of kings, the dealer passing out. The age makes good and draws three cards, B (the man under the gun) stands pat, while C draws two cards, and D three.

It is evident to E that both A and D had pairs too small to justify raising the ante, and that C held up a kicker with a small pair, or he would have raised. B probably has a genuine pat hand, but did not like to raise, as he was the first to say, and was afraid of driving everyone else out. This being the situation, as E reads it, he splits his pair of kings and draws for a monkey flush, knowing that the only improvement to the kings which would be likely to win the pot from B would be to get a full hand, the odds against which are 97 to 1, while the odds are only 23 to 1 against getting two cards to fill out his three-card flush. This play shows good judgment, based on observation of the draw, and knowledge of the respective probabilities of two different ways of drawing to the hand. It must be observed that, in this case, E is not dealing with any question of what it will cost him to try the experiment of drawing, as his ante is already up. The problem before him is, the best chance to beat B's pat hand.

CALLING AND RAISING

After the draw, with all the information which it affords, each player's estimate of the value of his own hand must be corrected by his inferences as to the value of the other hands to which he is opposed in the pool. Here is such a case:—

B, the first man to say, has come in on aces without raising the ante. C came in, and then D raised it ten. Both the age and C stayed. A, the age, took three cards, and B got another pair with his aces, which would justify him in betting the limit, even against D, but for the fact that C, who did not raise, drew one card; and D, who did raise, took two only. This draw entirely changes the apparent value of B's aces up, and to bet even a white chip on them would be useless, unless he was prepared to call a limit raised from D—perhaps from both C and D.

Here is another case:—D, the fourth man to say in a jack-pot, opened it on three queens. B, who had already passed, was the only man to come in against him. B drew one card. D did not improve, but bet the limit on his three queens; whereupon B raised him the limit. It is now a nice question for D to decide whether B has filled a bobtail on which he could not open, but was willing to pay the limit to draw to, or is bluffing. It is useless for D to raise, because, if B is bluffing, he

will not see it; and, if he is not bluffing, he will raise in return. Should D call, or lay down his three queens? In the actual game he laid them down.

Again, the dealer has three tens to go with, and raises the ante the limit; B, C, and D being already in for two chips each. The age raises back the limit, and the others all drop. The age takes one card only, and the dealer draws two without improving. He bets the limit, counting the age for two good pairs, and the age raises him the limit. It should now be evident to the dealer that the age has either filled, or was masking three of a kind from the first. In any case, it is evident that the age is not afraid of the dealer's two-card draw after the raised ante. The dealer laid down his tens.

It is a common saying that the hand that is good enough to call is good enough to raise; but this maxim must not be taken too literally in cases in which it is evident that the player will be exposed to a re-raise, which he might not be very anxious for. Here is a case:—

C is one of three men to ante without raising, and the blind passes out. C gets a third eight to his pair; D and E also draw three cards. C bets the limit, and D drops; but E comes back the limit better. E has evidently improved, and must have assumed that C improved also. E would hardly raise a limit bet on two pairs; and C's three eights are so near the average that, while they are good enough to call on, they are hardly good enough to raise on.

Curtis gives this example of a hand which is good enough to call, but not to raise:—In a jack-pot, C, the third man to say, had queens up, and opened it. The dealer raised him, and C saw the raise, all the others dropping out. C took one card, and filled. The dealer took three cards, showing that he had raised on a very strong pair, probably aces. C bet the limit, and the dealer raised him the limit, showing that he must have improved his aces, or he would hardly bet against the opener's one-card draw. C raised again, and the dealer raised him. This led C to infer that the dealer had even better than three aces, probably an ace full, because the dealer must credit C with having improved. In such a position it would be foolish for C to raise again, and equally foolish to lay down his hand without calling, as the dealer's hand might be a full, and yet smaller than a queen full. The dealer had four aces.

Curtis gives this example of neither calling nor raising:—No one had raised the ante. A, the age, drew two cards only; B drew three cards, and made three fours; C drew one; D and E drew three each, and F drew one. B bet a white chip on his three fours, to see what would happen; C dropped, showing that he had not filled his bobtail; D raised the limit; E, F, and the age, all saw it without raising it, waiting for B, who promptly threw his three of a kind into the deadwood. It was evident that either the man who bet the limit, or one of the three who called him, could beat a small triplet.

There is a good deal of judgment required in letting some other player make the running for you, instead of raising the bet yourself, and so attracting the attention of the table to the fact that you are probably the dangerous hand.   This can be done only when you are pretty sure that someone else has a hand on which he will raise, otherwise you are wasting an opportunity.   If you keep quiet until the proper moment comes, they may think you are just hanging on, because your hand is a shade too good to lay down.   Here is an example:

There were six at the table, but only four anted, A holding the age.   These were the hands before the draw:—
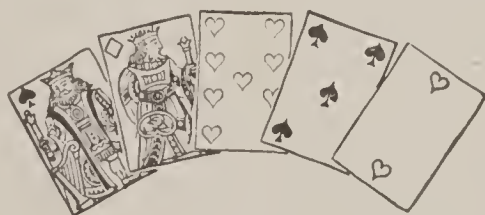
B

A

C

D

D raised ten chips; A, B, and C all saw it. A did not improve, B and D both got another pair, and C got a third jack. B bet a white chip, waiting for D. C bet a chip, knowing D would make the play; and D raised the limit. A and B both called, and then C raised the limit, forcing them all to call him.

Had C bet the limit on the first round, everyone at the table would have known that he had improved enough to beat the age at least, whose one-card draw without re-raising marked him with two pairs at the lowest estimate.

Here is another instructive example: there were six in the game, but two passed out after D came in. These were the hands before the draw, A having the age:—

B

A

C

D
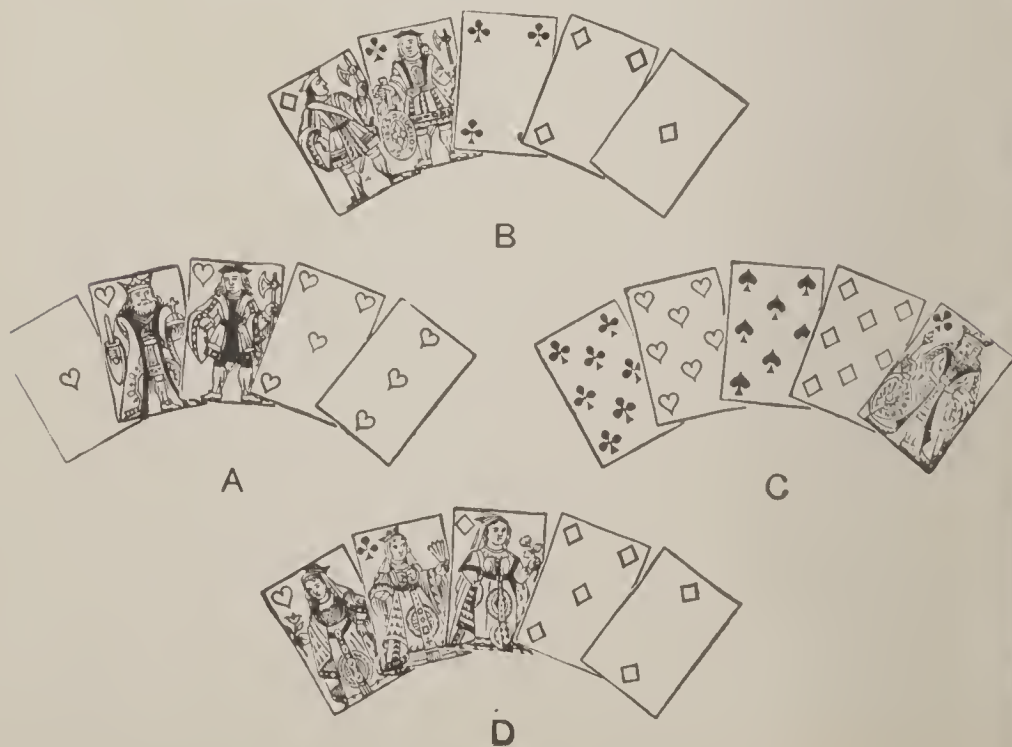
B did not raise the ante, because he was the first man to say. C did not raise, and D, having such a strong hand, thought it better to let E and F come in, if they would; but they dropped out. A raised the limit; B and C both saw it; and then D, believing his opportunity had come, raised the limit again. A, still confident of his high flush, raised once more; and B dropped out. C simply called, and D did the same. Many players would make the mistake of taking up the raising at this point with C's hand.

A stood pat, and C very cleverly did the same. D took two cards, and got a pair of treys to his three queens. C bet a white chip, confident that A would not call, even if D dropped out. D, sure that he had both pat hands beaten, bet a chip; and A, who knew he could beat any pat hand C might hold, bet the limit. C did not raise this bet, because he argued that D, who was a very good player, would not have wasted even a white chip if he had not been willing to stay in and play against the pat hands, if either of them raised.

D did raise, and A began to lose confidence in his flush, and called. C, seeing that if he did not raise now the game was at an end, raised D the limit; and D, who had not paid much attention to C until now, raised him again, still sure he could beat a pat hand of any sort; but upon C's re-raising him, D called. By his waiting game in the antes, and allowing A and D to bet up his hand

M

for him as far as they would go, C won a pool containing thirty-three limits and ten white chips.

Compare his play with the following. The four men left in were the dealer and three others. A had the first bet, as D dealt:—

B
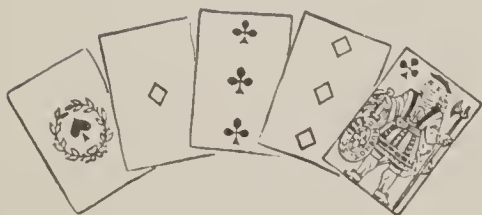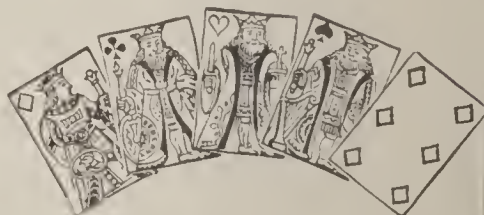
A   C

D

The man under the gun passed out; A anted, B anted, C raised it the limit, D re-raised the limit, and the age went out. A saw it with his aces up, but B dropped his four-card flush; C raised D, and D re-raised; whereupon A dropped out. Then C, instead of raising again, having no one but D against him, called and drew one card, which was

an ace; D standing pat. C then bet the limit, and D, feeling certain that C could beat a pat hand, laid down without even calling.

In this case, C wins only ten limits and nine white chips, simply because he was in too great a hurry to play his hand himself. Had he not raised the ante at all, and simply called D's raise, A would have drawn cards, and would have got the ace that C drew, making him an ace full; and C would have reaped the benefit of two full hands fighting each other, and paying no attention to him until the last raise.

One thing which will probably have as much influence as anything else on a player's raising or calling, will be his idea of the kind of game he is playing against—that is, whether it is a liberal or a close game. Whichever it is, he must adapt himself to it.

The disadvantage of playing a liberal game in close company is, that whenever you have the better hand you are called early; but when you have slightly the worse hand, you force your adversaries to win more money from you than they naturally would do if you were not so liberal.

For instance: you have masked three of a kind by drawing one card against a one-card draw, and it is your first bet. You put up the limit—let us say, ten chips—and are immediately called by the age, who has aces up. Upon another occasion you have two pairs (aces up), and another player,

who has drawn one card, bets ten chips. You raise him ten chips. In this case he is the one with three of a kind, and you practically force him to call you, if not to raise you, and so present him with twenty chips. In your position, being a close player, he would have called at once, and lost ten only.

It is useless to argue that by raising with the better hand you win more, because you do not. You put more of your own money on the table, but the close player will not call you. That he wins less than a liberal player is also untrue, because he wins just as much as you do from other close players like himself, and loses less than you do, because he does not bet his hands so freely.

The distinguishing characteristics of the close player are: a decided aversion to bluffing, a strong dislike to raised antes, and a rather over-anxiety to call at the first opportunity. He usually plays a very dull and uninteresting game, and spends most of his time stacking up and counting his chips. Unless he has a great run of luck, he never wins any large amounts; but, on the other hand, he is seldom a heavy loser.

The liberal player makes a lively game, and is a terror to beginners and timid players. He goes into every pot, no matter what he holds. He gets so accustomed to going in on worthless hands, that when he gets a four-card flush or an interior straight, he immediately raises the ante on it. It

is his boast that no one can bluff him; and he will call anything, from a two-card draw that has raised the ante, to a four-card draw that has stood two raises in the betting. One of his chief amusements is trying to bluff out pat hands, or make a pair of eights beat openers. Aces up is his idea of a strong hand, and he will usually stand about four raises on them. Both the close and the liberal player fall easy victims to the conservative player, who knows how to manage them and take advantage of their weak points; who knows how to get all there is out of any hand, and how to keep the percentage of the game constantly in his favour, whether he is in good luck or bad.

As already stated, most of the money lost at Poker is lost before the draw; most of the money won at Poker is won by judicious betting after the draw.

MANNERISMS AND TALK

There is nothing so necessary to a Poker player as self-control, especially in the matter of facial expression. So well aware of this are some experts, that they never trust themselves to look at the cards they draw when they first receive them, because the whole table is watching them at that time. They prefer to wait until the players are watching some following draw. Many persons will bet a chip without looking, so as not to betray the true value of their hand, which they do not yet know themselves.

A watchful adversary will draw inferences from the slightest movement, such as a quick nervous glance by the player at the number of chips he has left in front of him, as if to see how much he can bet on his hand; or a curious look round the table, as if to pick out the lucky man who will win the pot he has no hope for himself. Sometimes a half smile at the dealer, who has given him just the card he wants, will betray the hand.

Many players betray themselves by their very effort to appear indifferent. Throwing down the hand on the table in front of them, as if they did not care anything about it, but snatching it up again instantly if anyone attempts to touch it. Getting ready a white chip, as if that was all they intended to bet, when they are really waiting for a chance to raise it the limit. Scratching the head, as if in doubt whether to call or drop, when they have really an invincible hand.

It is curious that some players, in their effort to
cure themselves of a habit which they know betrays
them, often fall into another habit which is worse,
but of which they are unconscious. I knew a
player once who had a habit of pulling his ear
with his right hand when he had very good cards.
To prevent himself from doing this, after his atten-
tion had been called to it, he used to separate his
cards, holding two or three in one hand and the
rest of them in the other hand, so that his hands
were both occupied, and he could not caress his
ear. Had he done this with every hand, it would
have been all right; but it was only when he felt
the temptation coming on to pull his ear that he
separated his cards; so whenever he held his cards
that way after the draw, we used to pass out im-
mediately, unless we could beat three aces.

Sorting the hand, or sticking the fingers between
a pair and the worthless cards, is a very bad habit,
because it shows that the hand is worth sorting out
—that it contains at least a pair. Discarding be-
fore everyone has announced what he will do with
the ante, is another very bad habit; because some
following player, seeing you throw out three cards,
will know you cannot have better than a pair, and
that may influence him to raise you out. Even
discarding before your turn, after all the antes are
up, is unwise, as a player ahead of you who has
not yet drawn may be influenced by what he sees
you are going to draw.

Nothing shows the expert Poker player so much

as his manner of looking at his cards. In the first place, he never picks up a hand or a draw without counting it on the table, face down. When he lifts his original hand, he does not spread it out so that any stool-pigeon behind him can see it, but holds the palm of his right hand completely over the face of the first card, and separates the others just enough to peep at the squeezer marks in the corners, like a man looking down between the leaves of an almost closed book. When he lifts his draw, he always places it under the cards drawn to; so that, when he lifts it from the table, the cards that were retained cannot be seen.

There is a great deal of finesse in talking during the play of a hand, and the beginner should be on his guard against a fluent speaker who is always trying to "jolly" the game along. Although it is distinctly understood to be the rule that talk does not count in Poker, and that a player may say what he pleases without in any way affecting the play of another, there are frequent opportunities to drop remarks which will entirely mislead the adversaries, in spite of the fact that they should not pay any attention to them.

A player in a jack-pot remarks, in a cheerful tone of voice, that he will have to open it. He is told that the pot is already opened. He knows this, but affects surprise, and says that if such is the case he will have to raise it. Had he simply put up his chips without any comment, no one would have paid much attention to him; but by his re-

marks he has created the impression that he had cards good enough to open a jack-pot, and also good enough to raise the opener. Let him carry out the scheme by standing pat, and it will take some courage for anyone to call him.

Here is another case:—A is age, B comes in, and C has three fives to go with, but does not raise. The others drop out, and the age raises the ante the limit. B and C both stay, and the age draws three cards; B and C one only. They chip along to the age, who raises the limit, upon which B drops. C skims over his cards very deliberately, and remarks, as if to the player next to him, "It's all a question of what his small pair is." After some further hesitation, C raises the limit; and the age, who has aces and jacks, thinking C has two pairs also, as he drew one card, and probably aces up if the hand is to be judged by his remark, re-raises; but on C's coming back again, simply calls.

In this case C played on a certain theory from the start. He judged that the age had a high pair when he raised the ante, and he took the chance that he had not improved to three of a kind. Having made up his mind to play the age for two pairs, and not for threes, C is right, after drawing one card only himself, to raise every time he is raised; but if C had not determined from the first to play the age for two pairs only, his hesitation and his remark would have been useless. As it was, C's remark undoubtedly got another raise out of A.

Here is a variation of the same tactics:—B, the

man under the gun in a seven-hand game, being a
liberal player, comes in on a pair of treys. All
pass, until the dealer and the age are the only
ones to say. B thereupon remarks, with apparent
annoyance, "Just my luck for everybody to go out,"
and then draws two cards and bets the limit. As
usual with liberal players, he cannot conceal his
pleasure at bringing off such a bluff, even if it wins
only two antes, and he shows his hand. Later in
the evening he made the same remark, under about
the same circumstances, and was promptly called
by two players; but this time he had three kings.

One species of talk should be forbidden by
penalty in any game, and that is expressing an
opinion of any player's hand while that player is
still betting for the pool.

For instance:—A has the age; B has drawn one
card only without raising the ante, and bets a white
chip. C, D, and the age are all in the pool. C
lays down two pairs, face up, with the remark, "I
wouldn't call you if I had three eights." This is
unfair to B, because it gives those who have still to
bet the benefit of C's opinion of B's hand, and may
call their attention to something which C noticed
that they overlooked.

Silence, combined with a composed countenance,
is, after all, more powerful as a weapon of attack
than any talk. There is no player so much to be
feared as the man who sees everything and says
nothing, especially if he is one of those who seldom
make good their own blind.

POSITION PLAY

The skilful Poker player varies his game according to his position at the table with regard to the dealer. Each position has its opportunities, which some persons call advantages and disadvantages. If thoroughly understood, they are a great help to a player, not only in guiding him as to his best course in any given position, but in showing him what other players are probably doing—not on account of their cards, but on account of their position at the table.

THE AGE

Almost everyone who writes on Poker seems to think that all a person needs is to have the age often enough, and he must win all the money at the table. Florence is the only one who disagrees with this general assumption of the value of the age. He says: "Everyone supposes it to be the best position at the table; yet, if anyone held the age all the time, he would be bound to lose, because he must put up one chip every time, and usually puts up another, whether he holds anything or not."

This is hardly true, as Florence would have discovered had he tried the experiment, and given one player the age all the time. It was tried for two months in a Cincinnati club; each player of a set of six taking turns to have the age for an

entire evening. . In fifteen out of eighteen sittings the age won, and five times he was the largest winner. By a curious coincidence, the man under the gun quit loser every time but once.

Florence confuses the position with the bad play in the position, which is what loses the money, when it is lost. According to his own estimate of the time it takes to play the hands, a man would chip in only four times an hour as age. It is the temptation to come in on hands that are not worth coming in on, in any position, that costs the money.

It is quite true that the age usually wastes more chips than any other position at the table; but these chips are not wasted because the position is a bad one, but because the play is bad. The chip put up for the blind is gone. Every player at the table is put under the same tax. The question for the age to decide is, would he draw to his hand if he did not hold the age, but could come in for one chip instead of two? The temptation to come in because it costs only one chip, is something like being coaxed into a jack-pot against a big hand by a cheap opening.

Suppose that three men out of six had come in, and that you were the fourth to say, not being the age. Would you come in because it cost you only one chip instead of two; or would you come in because you had the cards to justify you in taking the odds that the table laid you, 7 to 1? If the first is your reason, it is a bad one; if the second, it is sound, age or no age.

The only possible difference to the age in calculating the odds that the table lays him is, that if no one has raised the ante, he knows it cannot possibly cost him any more to draw cards than the amount he puts up. No other player has this assurance, because any following player may raise the ante. If the ante has been raised, the age is never sure that some intervening player will not raise it again. A consideration of this point will show that the moment any player, not sitting next the age on his left, raises the ante, or the player on the age's left straddles it, one of the advantages of the age's position disappears.

When the age has a good pair, he is in a very good position to raise the ante himself, if he wants to drive some of the others out. If he has a pair of aces, and a player on his right has already raised, the age can usually afford to re-raise on the probability that the player on his right is taking advantage of his own position, and raising on one good pair—no one else having raised.

So general is the experience that the age comes in on anything or nothing, simply because he can come in cheaply, that it results in no one ever giving him credit for holding anything unless he raises the ante. This suggests to some good players that it is perhaps better not to raise when they have a good hand as age, leaving their opponents in the belief that the age has nothing, and letting them bet up the pool until it is time for the age to step in and raise them. Even when the

age makes a suspicious looking draw, after having raised, no one attaches much importance to it. If four have come in without raising, and the age raises it, and draws one card, no one believes he has anything better than a bobtail; and when he bets after the draw, everyone sets it down as a bluff. The age may even draw two cards, after having raised the blind, without fear of being credited with anything better than a pair and a kicker, or a monkey flush.

As a rule, it is bad policy for the age to draw two cards, unless he has been raised by some other player before the draw. If he makes a strong bet after such a draw, the player opposed to him will think he must have filled his monkey flush, or made a full hand out of his kicker, or some such luck. Three of a kind should be strong enough to win nine pots out of ten without drawing two cards to it, and it is better for the age to create the impression that he took a flier on a bobtail by raising the ante, than it is for him to leave his opponents with the suspicion in their minds that he has made a big hand by a two-card draw.

The great weakness of most players in this position is, putting up money to "protect" the blind. They look upon the chip they have been obliged to put up, as a sort of hostage to fortune, which they are bound to redeem, even at the expense of sacrificing a number of other chips. Take the average case of four men in a pool out of six playing, and suppose the age has a pair—the smallest pair, for

the sake of illustration—deuces. If he puts up a chip to draw to them, he has not much chance, even if the table is laying him 7 to 1, because such a weak pair should improve to triplets to beat the average improvement of the three hands opposed to it; and the odds against that are 8 to 1.

Drawing to such hands as four-card flushes and straights is another matter, because, if they improve, they are so strong that they practically win the pool; but an improved pair of deuces may make you sorry that you got another pair with them.

It seems to be one of the compensations of the game that, while no one believes the age has much of a hand, and so gives him a slight advantage over the other players at the table, the age himself throws away this possibility of gain by doing the very thing they credit him with doing, and coming in on nothing most of the time.

There is one very strong point in favour of the position of age, and that is that he can get a great many supposed bluffs called. A play which has been carefully built up to look like a bluff, might go through without being called in any other position; but nearly everyone calls the age when there is the slightest suspicion of bluff about his play. For this reason the age should never bluff, but should create the impression of bluffing more than any other player.

For some reason or other, everyone looks upon the age as his natural enemy, and feels as if he was, for the time being, granted some special privileges

which came very near being robbery. That is why they all play against the age, call his hands, and try to raise him out in the antes. If the age is clever enough to take advantage of their liberality in these matters, he may win a great deal of money that no other position at the table could win.

THE DEALER

The dealer has almost as many advantages as the age in the betting, and slightly more in the drawing, because the age has to draw first and the dealer last. It is of considerable advantage to know what each player will draw before you draw yourself, and it is also some advantage to see how several players bet up their hands before your turn comes. Another point in the dealer's favour is, that after the draw many players will abandon their hands in preference to betting on them, if they fail to improve; so that the dealer knows pretty well how many will actually oppose him in playing for the pool. Many hands are thrown up on account of the number of players behind them, which, if held by the dealer or the age, would win the pool.

Before the draw, the dealer should always raise with aces, and usually on kings. If the ante has already been raised, much will depend on how far from the dealer the raise was made. The farther from him on the right, the more likely it is to be from real strength; the nearer to him, the more probably for the purpose of driving out weak hands, or laying the foundation for a bluff. With more

than average strength, such as aces or two pairs, the dealer should re-raise, if the raise is close to him on the right; but with such a hand as three of a kind, it is often better to let the others come in, and do the betting after the draw, especially as the player who raises the ante will almost certainly make the play for you.

FIRST BETTOR

If the man under the gun has come in on pairs better than the average, such as jacks or tens, and no one has raised the ante, he can usually afford to bet a white chip to keep in the pool until he sees how things go, even if he has not improved. If he has improved, it is probably better to bet on the hand immediately, than to wait for someone else to raise.

Betting a white chip on pairs above the average, such as kings or aces, is usually a weak game, because it gives the timid and the close players a chance to call on average hands, which may just beat yours; and it exposes you to a raise, which may be a bluff or may be from strength. As a rule, the first bettor will win more in the long run by getting calls for limit bets instead of for white chip bets, than he will lose by being raised out on an original limit bet. If he has the best hand at the table after the draw, he wins a limit bet or two. If he has not the best hand, he will certainly be raised by any player who holds better cards than those upon which the man under the gun is supposed to come in. The first bettor would then have either to

abandon his white chip, or see the limit raise. The argument of the beginner is, that by betting a white chip he gets off cheaply if anyone can raise. The argument of the expert is, that he is usually bluffed out of his white chip, and would have won the pool had he bet the limit.

Making the first bet is always a disadvantage, because it gives every player at the table an option. Each in turn can either throw up his cards, or call, or raise, and it is often extremely difficult to decide, when a player raises the first bettor, whether it is a bluff or not.

My own personal experience has been, after trying both methods for a considerable length of time, that if the man under the gun is going to bet on his cards at all, he may as well bet the limit, just as if he had opened a jack-pot, unless he has noted some one-card draw round the table which he would like to hear from first. The theory of betting a white chip when you have improved, so as to get a raise on any one who raises you, is letting some one else do what you can do yourself. A white chip bet exposes you to the risk of a bluff raise from any one-card-draw hand, which would probably have been laid down had you started with the limit.

OTHER POSITIONS

With a thorough understanding of the advantages and disadvantages possessed by the three principal positions at the table—the age, the dealer, and the

first bettor—any intervening player should know pretty well what to do with his cards, remembering the general principle that the nearer he is to the dealer's right hand, and the more players have passed out before him, the more valuable his hand becomes.

Half-way round the table, for instance—that is, third man from the age with six playing—if the first bettor is in, it would be safer to call on any single pair; but if the first bettor is not in, and the next man has thrown up his cards, the limit should be bet on aces or kings, if there is nothing suspicious in the draw of the players who have still to say. With an improved hand, the necessity of betting on it yourself, instead of waiting for a raise, increases the nearer you sit to the dealer's right hand.

Curiosity is no excuse for bad play. Some persons tell you they want to find out how such a one plays his cards, what he drew to after raising, and so on. That can all be learnt if you will have a little patience. This is not the only hand the player is going to draw to in that way; if it were, your purchased experience would not be worth much to you.

Calling because one has already put money in the pool is a serious error. Some persons have a strong dislike to making a bet on a hand, and then laying it down—a weakness which will be quickly taken advantage of by observant adversaries.

It may be objected by the beginner, that as so much of the play depends on inferences from the play of others, these inferences will all be false if those in the game do not know how to play.   This is true; but if you cannot beat those who do not know how to play, you must know very little of the game yourself.   The best way to learn (if that is your object) is to get into a game with the best players you know of, for the smallest stakes that they will play for.   Playing with reckless or indifferent players will soon get you into careless habits yourself—habits which you may find it difficult to overcome when you find yourself in a hard game.

BLUFFING

Bluffing is rapidly becoming a relic of the past, as the whole tendency of modern Poker is to make it more and more difficult. In the days of straight Poker, when there was no draw to guide the judgment of the other players' hands, and no discard to betray your own, bluffing was a great weapon in skilful and daring hands. The successful bluffer was the top-notch Poker player in the old days, and many a fairy tale is told of two deuces driving out three aces by betting something less than a million on the deuces without as much as the quiver of an eyelash. In all the lies about bluffing that have been published, I have never seen one in which the bluffer held an average pair, such as jacks or queens. It is always deuces, just as all the niggers that were bet "before the war" were thrown into jack-pots, although jack-pots were not invented until many years after slavery was abolished.

That the bluff is inherent in human nature, and that bluffing was always an attractive element in any game belonging to the Poker family, is evident from Seymour's description of its fascinations two hundred years ago:—

"The endeavour to impose on the judgment of the rest who play, and particularly on the person who chiefly offers to oppose you, by boasting or bragging of the cards in your hand. Those who,

by fashioning their looks and gestures, can give a
proper air to their actions as will so deceive an un-
skilful antagonist, that sometimes a pair of fives,
treys, or deuces in such a hand, with the advantage
of his composed countenance and subtle manner of
over-awing the other, shall out-brag a much greater
hand and win the stakes, with great applause and
laughter on his side from the whole company."

This little quotation shows that one very common
Poker fault is as old as the hills; showing a hand
which has successfully bluffed out a stronger one.

The small-limit game, and the introduction of
the jack-pot, have practically killed bluffing as a fine
art. In the case of the jack-pot, it is curious that
it should be so, because it is in the jack-pot that
the player has the most at stake, having been com-
pelled to come in for more than the usual ante.
These pots should be his best chance to get his
money back by bluffing, if his hand is not strong
enough to win on its merits. As it is, the jack-pot
is simply a lottery, in which the best hand wins,
and all are compelled to pay it, whether they will
or no. It is practically impossible to bluff in a
jack-pot, except on rare occasions, when the draw
or the play so shapes itself as to make the oppor-
tunity, because of the willingness of someone to
call for the small proportion that his call bears to
the whole pool.

If the small-limit game had not accompanied
the advent of the jack-pot, bluffing might have

survived. In table stakes the bluff is still possible, or in any game in which the limit is at least fifty times the ante. But the general run of modern players have not the nerve to play such a game. With a shilling ante, half-crown limit, the bluff is a freak, and the player who makes one ought to be ashamed of himself, even if he brings it off.

When the limit is so small in comparison with the blind or ante, the game becomes what is known as "show-down," because there is no variety in the play of the hands. If a person will pay as much to draw to a monkey flush as he will pay to draw to three aces, there is nothing to be learnt from his ante. If he will put up as much on a pair of tens as he will on a straight flush, there is not much to be learnt from his bet. If a player will see a limit ante merely to satisfy his curiosity as to what he can draw to an ace or a king, how can you expect to stop his curiosity with regard to your hand by betting the limit as a bluff?

In spite of all these considerations, people will bluff. They seem to think they are not playing Poker unless they bluff occasionally, just as people will not believe they are playing Whist unless they can make a freak finesse every now and then.

Those who will insist on indulging in the expensive luxury of bluffing in a small-limit game, should keep the following general principles in mind:—

The greater the number of players that have made a bet, or had a chance to do so, the greater

the opportunity for judging whether or not the bluff will succeed. For this reason, the nearer the player is on the right of the age or the dealer, the better his position for bluffing. This advantage, like every other, has its compensation in the fact that the players expect more bluffs from that quarter, and call them more freely.

The fewer players there are in the pool, the less chance that the bluffer will be caught.

The more the indications of the previous play, such as the ante and draw, point to the probability that a player has a strong hand, the more likely it is that he can make the other players think he really has it. For this reason, it is most important that a player should never bluff after the draw, unless his play before the draw has been calculated to give an impression of strength.

The less money there is on the table, the easier it is to steal it by bluffing.

Bluffs on absolute weakness against probably strong hands are not nearly so likely to succeed as bluffs on moderate strength against hands which are only a little stronger. A pair of jacks are much more likely to bluff out a pair of kings, than a pair of deuces are to bluff out aces up.

All bluffs made on weakness are ridiculous if there is a man in the pool who makes a practice of calling everything. When opposed to such a player never bluff; but pretend that you are bluffing by making big bets on hands slightly above the average, such as pairs of aces or kings.

The most dangerous time to bluff is when there
is a good deal in the pool, because the largest
amount that you can bet in a small-limit game is
such a small percentage of the whole pot, that
some player is almost certain to call you as a
sort of ten-to-one shot.   Any professional gambler
will tell you that most of the money won at Poker
is not won on the big hands in big pots; but on
moderate, or what they call "broken hands" —
that is, by the continual winning of the small
pots in which nobody seems to be particularly
interested.   These are the pots that should be
bluffed for, not by betting on nothing, so much
as by betting a great deal more on the hand
than would be justifiable if the pot were a good
one.

Suppose six play, and four come in.   The first
bettor drops out after the draw; the next man chips,
and looks bored; the third man to say has a pair
of tens, and bets the limit on them.   The pool is
immediately pushed over to him, and the cards
gathered for a new deal.   No one cares what he
had, as he wins nothing but a few antes; and the
second man, who held jacks, has not the slightest
idea that he might have made money by calling.
Sometimes a player will suspect this limit bet for
such a small pool is a bluff; but such players
usually make the mistake of calling with a small
pair, such as eights, and the supposed bluffer,
although he has no hand to speak of, has enough
to beat the caller.

It must never be forgotten that a bluff of any
kind is based on the supposition that no one has
a hand strong enough to justify calling what the
bluffer pretends he has.

To illustrate: A intends to bluff, and raises the
ante before drawing two cards to a pair of sixes and
an ace. After the draw he bets the limit. What
he is betting on is, that having pretended he had
three of a kind all the time, no one at the table
will have three of a kind to call him with.

Now, if A's judgment of the situation is cor-
rect, and no one has threes, the only player who
is likely to call him is one who has not a hand to
justify calling three of a kind, but who suspects a
bluff. This player usually has a pair of some kind
about average, and when he suspects a bluff, he
calls it upon the assumption that the bluffer has
drawn to a monkey flush, or something of that
kind, and has nothing at all. Why people should
always take it for granted that a suspected bluffer
has nothing, would be rather difficult to explain;
but such is undoubtedly the case.

Good players often take advantage of this fact,
and build up a most palpable bluff, with a pair of
kings or queens in their hands, knowing that they
are more likely to get a call from a weak hand, if
they can pretend to be bluffing, than if they simply
bet on the average value of their cards. This
might be called bluffing that you are bluffing, or a
bluff bluff. When the time for it is well judged, it
is certainly the most successful of all.

The age is the best position in which to try this experiment, because everyone at the table is prone to think that the age must be bluffing if he bets high, and someone is sure to call with a moderate pair, such as jacks or tens. With anything better than a pair, they would raise.

The chief objection to any form of bluffing is, that it gives every player at the table an option for which he pays nothing. If he has a poor hand, he can lay it down; if he has a good one, it pays him a premium on it, to which he is not entitled. In this respect, bluffing is very much like betting against a man's own trick. It is a well-known principle in betting, that if a man makes a proposition that he can do a certain trick, which seems impossible, and you bet he cannot do it, putting up your money, if he is lying, he will back down; but the moment he puts up his money, your money is gone. It is, therefore, clearly impossible for you to win his money; but very easy to lose your own. That is the way with the bluffer. He puts up his money on the proposition that you are afraid to call him. The moment your money is up, his is gone.

When the bluffer has made his bet, and is called, there is nothing for it but to show the hands to the board. But suppose he is raised? Two courses are open to him: to raise again, or to lay down this hand; and which he does must depend on his opinion as to whether he is being bluffed in turn by the player, who thinks he is bluffing; or whether he has "struck a snag," as they say,

and run foul of a better hand than he expected in that locality.

The first impulse of the raised bluffer usually is to stick to his guns, and raise again. To call would be foolish. It takes nerve to raise a raise when you are bluffing, but most players believe it is worth the trial. The true gambler dislikes to acknowledge detection and defeat, by depositing his cards upon the deadwood, without one shout of defiance before he dies.

This raising the bluffer works both ways, and the one who suspects a bluff may find himself mistaken. It may also happen that, while one player is arranging to bluff off the others, one of his intended victims is laying plans to bluff him. Here is an example of such a case:—

A had the age, B and C passed out; but D, E, and F came in without raising; whereupon the age raised it the limit. E and F stayed. The age drew two cards, E and F three each. E bet a white chip; and F, knowing that the age would raise whether he was bluffing or not, chipped along, and waited. A did raise, and E dropped out. F raised back again, although he had only a pair of sevens; and A laid down his cards.

F's reading of the situation in this case was correct—that, with three of a kind in his hand originally, A would most likely have masked it, and drawn one card only, after raising the ante; or, if he did intend to draw two cards only, he would

not have raised the ante at all, having a hand
strong enough to win in the betting after the draw.

Some persons make bets which are so like bluffs
that they will almost certainly be called; and,
therefore, players of good judgment never really
bluff when they intend making such a bet, but use
the occasion to make a good haul on a fair hand.
Suppose A has the age; B, C, D, and E all come
in, the dealer passing out. All draw three cards
but E, who takes two only. They chip along to
E, who bets the limit. Now, E cannot have had
three of a kind before the draw, or he would have
raised the ante with three antes and the blind
already in the pool. His bet looks like a bluff;
but, at the same time, E may have been laying low,
knowing that he was in a good position to bet up
his hand after the draw; or he may have made a
very lucky draw with his two cards. Someone of
the four in the pool against him will be almost sure
to call him; therefore, a good player would not
make a bluff under such circumstances, but would
always bet in this way, if he thought his hand
was slightly better than any other at the table;
but not so strong that he could afford to invite
a raise, or risk being called on to show his hand
for a white chip. Such a hand at aces up, having
held up a kicker just to vary his draw, would be
a good one.

There are some bluffs which might be called
half-breeds, because the pretence is not in the

betting, but in the draw. Raising the limit, and standing pat on one pair, is an example. The bluff is in standing pat, not in betting the limit; whereas all full-blooded bluffs are bets pure and simple. Hesitation over the draw is another half-breed; pulling out a card, laying it on the table, and saying, "Give me—wait a minute," and then putting the card back in the hand, taking out two with a great show of final determination, and saying, "No, I'll draw to the full strength of my hand;" the strength referred to being actually a pair of kings and a four spot. I have seen a player bring off this style of bluff three times in one evening, drawing two cards to nothing at all.

Many players imagine that a very good opportunity for a bluff is, that, after winning two or three pools in succession, they can probably steal the next one on their reputation for being in luck. This shows a want of knowledge of human nature, because nine persons out of ten will think it so improbable that the same man should have the best hand out amongst six players four times in succession, that they will feel sure he is trading on his reputation, and call him, especially if he stands pat.

LIMITS

Closely connected with the question of bluffing is that of the limit. The small limit stops bluffing more than it stops anything else. That it stops losses, or that a small-limit game is a cheap game, is a popular fallacy, but a fallacy which is too deeply rooted to be overthrown by writing about it. The man who has a run of bad luck in a small-limit game cannot possibly get even on one or two good hands, for the simple reason that he loses nearly as much on each of his poor hands as he can win on a straight flush, if he gets it. In a big-limit game, or table stakes, on the contrary, one good hand will recoup the loss of forty antes. The larger the limit in proportion to the ante, the greater the chance to bluff, although the limit is not usually extended for that purpose.

The usual reason for fixing upon a certain limit is to accommodate the game to the means of the players engaged, just as the points in games like Bridge are fixed. The basis of this calculation is usually the amount which it is possible to lose during a run of very bad luck. What it is possible to win does not enter into the question at all, for the simple reason that, if you sit down to play with five pounds, or with fifty dollars, in your pocket, that is all you can lose; but you may win all the

money at the table if you do not get cold feet.
If it hurts you to lose as much as five pounds, you
must play in a smaller game.

Taking the average at about twenty hands an
hour, with an ante of two white chips, you going in
four times out of six and losing all the time, you
will lose 160 white chips in antes alone if you play
for six hours. Add to this the times you will bet
on a hand, as an offset to the times you will win a
trifling pot, and you may take it as a safe estimate
that you should not sit down to play unless you
can afford to lose 200 white chips, whatever their
value may be, the blind being one white chip to
call two.

Any player with a limited capital, who knows
that one or two unlucky hands will break him
cannot play his game. His mind is not free, his
courage is tied down, and he is continually making
the mistake of under-playing his hands for fear of
losing what little money he has, instead of over-
playing them in the hope of getting more capital
when he has the chance. It is a well-known
principle that the value of a sum of money to any
person varies inversely as his whole fortune; there-
fore, if you have only twenty chips left, it hurts you
to think of calling a suspected bluff of ten; but if
you have two hundred, you can well afford to take
the chance.

Those who play all the time take as a basis of
their calculation for the limit the amount they can

afford to spend on Poker as an amusement in a
year. But it is against human nature to figure on
losing for a whole year, or even the greater part of
it, in a game which you go into for the special
purpose and with the strongest hopes of winning.
The more sensible way, and the most common, is
to ask yourself what you can afford to lose at a
sitting; and if you lose it at that sitting, or at
several, to quit the game for a time, but to keep
on as long as your capital lasts. Borrowing
money or running into debt to play beyond your
means, on the theory that as you have had such
bad luck it must turn, and you must win next
time, has led many persons into very serious
trouble.

Blackbridge recommended those who played all
the time to divide the amount they could afford to
lose in a year by the number of times they would
probably play in the year, and make one-fourth of
that the limit of the betting. To take a very
common case, suppose you intend playing twice
a week, which is about a hundred times a year.
Turn the number of dollars you can afford to lose
into cents, and one-fourth of them will be your
limit in Poker.

As an example of how this plan of Blackbridge's
would work out:—Suppose a man says he can
afford to lose two hundred a year at Poker without
hurting himself. Call it two hundred cents, and a
fourth of it is fifty-cent limit. On the same plan a

man who can afford fifty pounds a year should play half-crown limit.

Penny ante and half-crown limit would make a very good game after the draw, but shilling ante and half-crown limit is show-down. The tendency is consequently towards making the pot bigger before the draw, so that the play of the hands after the draw shall be little more than a weeding-out process, those which do not improve throwing down, and those which do showing after one or two raises at the most.

Players who have only a certain amount to spend on Poker in a year should remember that, if they add considerably to their capital by a run of luck, this additional capital should be preserved in order to meet possible reverses on other occasions. If a player wins largely to-day, and spends all his winnings to-morrow, a run of ill-fortune next week may leave him without the means to play again for some time. Had he kept his Poker purse intact, he would have been just as well off after his run of bad luck as he was when he began to play.

POKER CALCULATIONS

Every Poker player is more or less interested in the chances of the game, especially after he has learnt how much a knowledge of these probabilities may influence his play.

As a rule, experience would supply the information which is derived from calculation, if a person had time enough to extend his experience to all possible cases, and were industrious enough to annotate and compare the results. As it is, experience usually suggests that something is wrong —arouses a suspicion in the player's mind—and calculation either confirms his opinion or corrects it, according to whether the facts observed are normal or abnormal. This is what occurred when straights were first introduced.

Human nature is full of strange prejudices on the subject of probabilities, and many writers have gone astray when they touched upon the subject of chance. Blackbridge, the earliest writer on the game of Poker, falls into the most astonishing errors when he comes to write of probabilities. He never believed that flushes were really filled as often as calculation said they should be, and the explanation he offered was, that the player's having already received more than his share of one suit, such as hearts, makes it much more improbable

that he will get another heart in the draw, than that
a player who had no hearts in his original hand
would draw one.

This is another form of the old fallacy called
"maturity of the chances," the theory of which
is, that because a thing has happened six times
in succession, it is unlikely to happen a seventh.
There is something in human nature which makes
men willing to bet odds that it will not happen a
seventh time, although both calculation and experi-
ence have proved, time and time again, that having
happened six times it will happen the seventh just
as often as not. It is very curious that those who
believe that there must come a change in such
matters as these, hold exactly the contrary belief
when it comes to what they call "runs of luck,"
and that they will push their luck when they are
"in the vein," in the full confidence that it will con-
tinue in one way because it has started in that way.

All Poker calculations are made by the use of
certain simple formulas, which, once mastered, will
enable any person to make or verify any Poker
problem for himself.

All calculations of Poker probabilities are ex-
pressed in fractions. The "chance" may be either
for the event or against it; the "probability" is
always for it. What we call the "odds" is the
difference between the numerator and the de-
nominator of our fraction of probability.

In these fractions, D, the denominator, is always

the total number of events possible; and N, the
numerator, is always the number of events which
would be favourable to the desired result. If five
men are in a jack-pot, and you want to find A's
chance of winning it, D will be the number of
things that can happen (five), because any one of
the five players might win it. That A wins it is one
out of these five chances, so the fraction is $\frac{1}{5}$, and
by deducting N from D we get the odds, 4 to 1,
against his winning it.

The first and most important denominator that
we must find for Poker calculations, is the total
number of hands of five cards, each hand different
from the other, which it·is possible to get out of a
pack of fifty-two cards.

This is found by multiplying together the num-
bers from 52 to 48, a card less in the pack each
time, and then multiplying together the numbers
from 1 to 5, a card more in the hand each time,
thus:—

$$52 \times 51 \times 50 \times 49 \times 48 = 311{,}875{,}200$$
$$1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 = 120$$

The upper figure is then divided by the lower,
the whole process being expressed in this manner:— ·

$$\frac{52 \cdot 51 \cdot 50 \cdot 49 \cdot 48}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4 \cdot 5} = 2{,}598{,}960$$

That this method must be correct can be shown
by taking a simpler proposition, and calculating it

in the same way. For instance, if you have four things, such as aces, how many ways can you get them, two at a time? Beginning with the figure 4 for the aces, just as you began with the 52 for the whole pack, you have $\frac{4 \cdot 3}{1 \cdot 2} = 6$. This is easily proved by laying out the four aces in a square—

when it will be at once evident that each of the four sides and each of the two diagonals will make a totally different pair, showing that the answer, 6, is correct.

The rank of all Poker hands is found by means of this denominator, which we have found to be 2,598,960, and which we shall always call D. In order to find out how many hands of a certain class it is possible to hold, as compared with hands of another class, we must find out how many of each we could get out of the pack, and call the numbers N. It is by this process that it was demonstrated that straights should rank higher than three of a kind.

STRAIGHT FLUSHES

To begin with, the best of all hands—the straight flush—as the ace may be either the top or the bottom of a sequence, it is evident that ten different straights are possible, the highest card being anything from an ace to a five, and the lowest anything from a ten to an ace. As these straights may be in any one of the four suits, there must be forty of them in the pack, and our fraction of probability is therefore:—

$$\frac{N}{D} \frac{40}{2,598,960} \text{ or } \frac{1}{64,974}$$

Therefore the odds against getting a pat hand, with a straight flush in it, are 64,973 to 1.

FOUR OF A KIND

The four of a kind may be of any denomination from deuces to aces, so there are 13 different fours. But no matter which of these you hold, you must have with it an outside card, which must be one of the 48 other cards in the pack; and, as there is no reason why it should be one any more than another, there must be 48 times 13 = 624 different ways of getting a hand with four of a kind in it. Therefore:—

$$\frac{N}{D} \frac{624}{2,598,960} = \frac{1}{4165}$$

So the odds against getting four of a kind pat must be 4164 to 1.

FULL HANDS

We can get any three of a kind from four of the same kind in $\dfrac{4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3} = 4$ different ways. This is evident from the fact that any one of the four cards—heart, club, diamond, or spade—may be the missing card in our three of a kind. As there are 13 sets of four cards each from which to select three of a kind, there must be $13 \times 4 = 52$ different ways of getting three of a kind of some sort.

As the pair to be held with the triplet cannot be of the same denomination, having selected our triplet, we have 12 other sets of 4 cards each from which to get the pair that is to fill the hand. As we have already seen, in the illustration of the four aces, we can get a pair from any of these 12 sets in 6 different ways; therefore $12 \times 6 = 72$. If we now multiply these possible pairs by the possible triplets, we have $72 \times 52 = 3744$ possible full hands. Therefore:—

$$\frac{N}{D} \frac{3744}{2{,}598{,}960} = \frac{1}{694}$$

Then the odds against getting a pat full are 693 to 1.

FLUSHES

This calculation is very similar to that for the total number of hands possible in the whole pack, except that, instead of calculating for all four suits

together, we take only one suit of 13 cards, and write the formula thus:—

$$\frac{13 \cdot 12 \cdot 11 \cdot 10 \cdot 9}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4 \cdot 5} = 1287$$

As this is correct for any of the four suits, we must multiply the result by four, $1287 \times 4 = 5148$. But among these flushes will be 40 straight flushes, which we have already found; so that N is reduced to 5108, and we have:—

$$\frac{N}{D} \frac{5108}{2,598,960} = \frac{1}{509} \text{ nearly.}$$

Therefore the odds against getting a pat flush are 508 to 1.

STRAIGHTS

It has already been shown that there are ten different straights possible; but, as the cards in the ordinary straight may be of different suits, it is evident that, if we determine the denomination of the first card, it may be any one of four suits; and the second card of the sequence may also be any one of four; and so on to the fifth. So the number of different ways in which we might get a straight of the same denomination of cards, say from the queen to the eight, must be $4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 1024$. As there are 10 different sequences, there must be $10 \times 1024 = 10,240$ altogether. But we have already

found and calculated 40 which were both sequence and flush, which must be deducted, leaving:—

$$\frac{N \ 10,200}{D \ 2,598,960} = \frac{1}{255} \text{ nearly.}$$

Therefore the odds against getting a pat straight of any kind are 254 to 1.

THREE OF A KIND

We have already calculated that three of a kind may be got in 52 different ways. Leaving out of the question the fourth card of whichever denomination we select for the triplet, we have 48 other cards which may be used to fill out the hand, and we have already seen that we get these in $\frac{48 \cdot 47}{1 \cdot 2} = 1128$ different ways. As each of these ways can be combined with any of the 52 ways for holding the triplet, we have $1128 \times 52 = 58,656$ altogether. But as these 48 other cards will make a great number of pairs, we must deduct all the full hands, which we have already found to number 3744, leaving us:—

$$\frac{N \ 54,912}{D \ 2,598,960} = \frac{1}{47} \text{ nearly.}$$

So the odds against getting three of a kind pat are about 46 to 1.

The first calculations of the probabilities of the various Poker hands were made by Dr. Pole, in response to a suggestion by "Cavendish" in the

Field, March 28th, 1874, that he should under-
take the task. Dr. Pole responded to this by
publishing both his methods and his results in
the *Field*, April 11th and April 18th, 1874; and,
as usual with such matters, they were generally
accepted as correct, and have been copied and
quoted by writers on Poker for thirty years.

Some serious errors in these calculations of Dr.
Pole's were pointed out by Lieut. William Hoffman,
U.S.N., of Fort Concho, Texas, in a letter to the
Spirit of the Times, New York, dated May 23rd,
1874. In calculating the probability of triplets,
Dr. Pole reckoned for 49 cards outside the three
of a kind, which made his result include all four-of-
a-kind hands, as well as fulls. But when he came
to deduct the number of four-of-a-kind hands
already found, he overlooked the fact that he had
selected his triplets in four different ways, but
deducted them in one way only; hence his result
of N 56,784, which is exactly three times 624 too
much. This is only another example of the
well-known truth that the difficulty is not in the
process of calculation, but in the statement of
the proposition.

TWO PAIRS

The simplest method of calculating this com-
bination is that given by Philpots. As every four
cards of the same denomination will make six
different pairs, and as any of these six can be
combined with any six of a different denomina-

tion, we have $6 \times 6 = 36$ different ways of getting
any pre-determined two pairs, such as kings and
deuces. As there are thirteen denominations to
select from, we can get two different pairs from
them in $\frac{13 \cdot 12}{1 \cdot 2} = 78$ different ways. In addition
to these there will always be 44 outside cards of
different denomination from either of the two
pairs, to fill out the hand; so we get $36 \times 78 \times 44$
$= 123,552$ different hands containing two pairs.
Therefore:—

$$\frac{N}{D} \frac{123,552}{2,598,960} = \frac{1}{21} \text{ nearly.}$$

So the odds against getting two pairs pat are
about 20 to 1.

ONE PAIR

In this calculation also Dr. Pole and his fol-
lowers have gone astray. Dr. Pole arrived at his
published results by a very complicated and quite
unnecessary process. The method adopted by
Philpots is much simpler.

As six different pairs can be made out of each
one of the thirteen denominations in the pack,
there must be $6 \times 13 = 78$ different ways of get-
ting a pair out of a pack of 52 cards. But in order
to complete the hand, there must be three other
cards of different denomination from the pair,
and also different from one another. The pair
having been determined upon, there are 48 other
cards in the pack from which to select the three
outside cards in the pair hand.

Having determined, for the sake of calculation, what the denomination of the first of these three outside cards shall be, it may evidently be any one of four suits, and it may be combined with any one of the four suits, for the second.card, and so on for the third; therefore, there are $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ different ways in which we may get these three cards from any three of the twelve denominations available.

These three denominations themselves can be selected from the twelve denominations in $\frac{12 \cdot 11 \cdot 10}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3} = 220$ ways. Therefore, the total number of hands containing a pair must be $78 \times 64 \times 220 = 1,098,240$, and the fraction is:—

$$\frac{N \ 1,098,240}{D \ 2,598,960} = \frac{100}{236}$$

This gives us about $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 10, or $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1, against having a pair of any kind pat.

NO PAIR

In order to show that the foregoing calculations are correct, we must find the probability that the original or pat hand will not contain a pair. Dr. Pole did not attempt this, except by deduction; but Philpots and Hoffman give it as follows:—

Five different cards may be selected from any five of the thirteen different denominations of four cards each in $4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 1024$ different ways. These five denominations can be selected from the thirteen denominations available in $\frac{13 \cdot 12 \cdot 11 \cdot 10 \cdot 9}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4 \cdot 5} = 1287$ different ways.

If we multiply these together, we get 1024 $\times$ 1287 = 1,317,888 as the total number of ways in which five cards (without a pair among them) can be selected from a pack of fifty-two cards. But although there are no pairs among them, there will be all the flushes and straights already calculated for—that is, forty straight flushes, 5108 flushes which are not straight, and 10,200 straights which are not flushes = 15,348 to be deducted from 1,317,888, leaving 1,302,540.

Add together the results of all these various calculations, and we have the following table, showing the number of Poker hands in each of the nine classes. These figures are given in the column on the left. On the right is given the odds against any individual player having a hand of that class dealt to him pat:—

TABLE OF POKER HANDS

Number.	Class.	Odds Against.
40	Straight flush	64,973 to 1
624	Four of a kind	4,164 " 1
3,744	Full hand	693 " 1
5,108	Flush	508 " 1
10,200	Straight	254 " 1
54,912	Three of a kind	46 " 1
123,552	Two pairs	20 " 1
1,098,240	One pair	$1\frac{1}{4}$ " 1
1,302,540	No pair	Even

2,598,960

DIVISIONS OF CLASSES

For some purposes of calculation it is interesting to know how the various classes may be divided into hands of a certain individual rank, such as the number of two pairs, aces up, as compared to any other denomination.

To begin with the two-pairs class. We must first find the total number of the lowest possible hand in this class, and then each better hand will be simply a multiple of this number, as will be obvious when the problem is stated for working out.

The lowest possible two-pair hand is treys and deuces. It has already been proved that two pairs may be combined in $6 \times 6 = 36$ different varieties between themselves, because there are six ways of getting the treys and six of getting the deuces. Leaving out the other treys and deuces in the pack, which must not be used, as they would make the two pairs into a full hand, we have forty-four cards available to supply the odd card with the two pairs. Therefore there must be $36 \times 44 = 1584$ ways of getting a hand containing two pairs, treys up. This figure is, then, the basis of the whole table.

If we calculate for fours up, there will be no variation in the 44 outside cards; but with the fours we can have either treys or deuces—two sets to choose from, while we had only one when we had treys up—so there will be twice as many two

pairs, fours up, as there were treys up. The same is true of fives up, and the ratio of increase goes on steadily all the way to aces up.

TABLE OF TWO PAIRS

Number.	Class.	Odds Against.
19,008	Aces up	135 to 1
17,424	Kings up	148 " 1
15,840	Queens up	163 " 1
14,256	Jacks up	181 " 1
12,672	Tens up	204 " 1
11,088	Nines up	233 " 1
9,504	Eights up	272 " 1
7,920	Sevens up	327 " 1
6,336	Sixes up	410 " 1
4,752	Fives up	536 " 1
3,168	Fours up	820 " 1
1,584	Treys up	1,640 " 1

123,552

TABLE OF NO PAIRS

Number.	Class.	Odds Against.
502,860	Ace high	4 to 1
335,580	King high	7 " 1
213,180	Queen high	11 " 1
127,500	Jack high	19 " 1
70,380	Ten high	36 " 1
34,680	Nine high	74 " 1
14,280	Eight high	181 " 1
4,080	Seven high	636 " 1

1,302,540

ODDS AGAINST IMPROVING

The foregoing calculations are all for pat hands; the chances of improving by the draw are calculated in a different manner, but the denominator is still always the total number of events possible, and the numerator is still the number of events that would be favourable to the desired result. The problems that present themselves in calculating for the draw are of various kinds, each of which should be studied separately.

If it is necessary to find the probability of two separate events happening at the same time (such as drawing two cards that shall be both hearts to fill out a three-card flush), the problem is called one of "compound" or "concurrent" events.

If it is necessary to find the probability of an event which is one of several, any of which can happen, but one of which precludes the others, the problem is called one of "conflicting" events — such as the chance of getting a full hand by drawing to two pairs. You cannot get the third card of both pairs, and whichever you do get will preclude your getting the other.

If it is necessary to find the general average of probability for several events which are not equally probable, the chance for each event must first be

P

found separately. Such a calculation would be the probable improvement in drawing to a pair, in which four events are possible: to get another pair, to get three of a kind, to make a full hand, or to get four of a kind.

Examples of these various calculations, and the methods adopted for arriving at the solution, will show how all such problems are solved. To begin with the simplest cases first.

FILLING FLUSHES

You want to know the probability of drawing a heart to fill out a four-card flush already in your hand. You discard one card, which you know is not a heart, and which you cannot take into your hand again; there are, therefore, 47 cards in the pack for you to draw from, and there is no reason why you should draw one any more than another; so we must call the denominator of our fraction 47. Among these 47 cards there are 9 hearts, therefore the numerator of our fraction is 9, and the chance of getting another heart to fill the flush is $\frac{9}{47}$.

To find the odds for or against the event, we deduct 9 from 47, which leaves 38—that is to say, there are nine favourable events and 38 unfavourable, and we express the odds against getting another heart as 38 to 9, or reduce it to about $4\frac{1}{4}$ to 1.

Suppose you held three hearts only, and determined to draw two cards, what are your chances of filling a flush? The first thing to do is to find the probability of getting one heart, and then to suppose that you succeed in getting it, and proceed to calculate your chance of getting the second. If you get the first, your chance of the second is very nearly the same as in drawing to a four-card flush in the first place.

The chance of getting the first heart is 10 in 47, because there are 10 hearts which you do not hold, and there are 47 cards to draw from. But this heart will do you no good unless you can go on and get the second one, the chance for which is 9 in 46, as there are now only 46 cards left, but still 9 hearts.

To find the probability of two such events happening concurrently, you must multiply together the two fractions of each separate chance, thus:

$$\frac{10}{47} \times \frac{9}{46} = \frac{90}{2162},$$ which can be reduced to $\frac{1}{24}$, or 23

to 1 against the compound event.

To find the probability of drawing three hearts to two, another fraction must be added to express the probability of getting one of 11 hearts out of 47 cards. The three fractions: 11 out of 47, 10 out of 46, and 9 out of 45, being all multiplied together, will give 990 chances out of 97,290, reducible to 1 in 97, or 96 to 1 against getting three hearts to a two-card flush.

FILLING TWO PAIRS

This problem is something like the one of getting two hearts in the way of finding each of the chances separately; but it differs in the ending, because both the chances calculated for cannot happen. They are conflicting events.

Suppose the two pairs you hold are sixes and deuces. There are two other sixes in the 47 unknown cards, so the fraction for the sixes is $\frac{2}{47}$. There are also two deuces in the same 47 cards; but, instead of multiplying these fractions together as we did in the case of the flushes, we simply add them, remembering that the numerators only are added, the denominators remaining the same: $\frac{2}{47} \times \frac{2}{47} = \frac{4}{47}$. This is about 1 in 12, or 11 to 1 against filling.

DRAWING TO THREES

If you draw two cards to three of a kind, you have two chances of improvement—to get a fourth card, or to get a pair. The chance for the fourth card is easily seen to be 2 in 47, because, although there is only one card that will match your triplet, you have two chances to get it if you draw two cards. The odds against making four of a kind are, therefore, 1 in $23\frac{1}{2}$, or $22\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against it.

The chance of getting a pair depends on drawing a second card of the same denomination as the

first drawn. If you draw to three tens, there will be 46 cards in the pack which are not tens, and these 46 cards will be made up of ten sets of 4 cards each, and 2 sets of 3 each, you having discarded the fourth card of these two sets. If you draw one of these four sets, your chance for drawing another of the same set or denomination must be 3 in 45, because there are 45 cards left, and 3 more of that set among them. If you draw one of the same cards that you have discarded, you have only 2 chances in 45 to match it; but the odds are 40 to 6 that the first card you draw is not the same as either of those you discarded.

Taking all these things into account, it is about 287 in 4500, or 14½ to 1 against getting the pair. Adding the two chances together (for the four of a kind and for the pair), it is very nearly 5 in 47, or 8¼ to 1 against any kind of improvement.

Drawing only one card increases these odds one-half, as there is only one chance in 47 to get four of a kind, and not quite 3 in 46 to make a pair by matching your odd card. Taking these together, it is about 4 in 47, or 11 to 1 against improving.

DRAWING TO STRAIGHTS

The chance of filling a straight is very nearly the same as that for a four-card flush, provided the straight is open at both ends. Suppose it is four, five, six, seven, either a three or an eight will fill it; and, as there are 8 such cards in the 47 which

you do not hold, your chances of filling an open-
end straight are 8 in 47, or about 5 to 1 against it.

It is easier to fill a four-card flush than an open-
end straight; but the first part of the flush is harder
to get; so the two events combined—getting the
flush and then filling it—make it still the better
hand. It is also impossible to discriminate in
Poker between hands which were dealt pat, and
those which were made by drawing to them. On
the show-down, the best Poker hand wins, whether
it was pat or filled.

The chance of filling an interior straight is just
half that of the open-end, because only one card
will do, and there are only four of them among the
47 to be drawn from; so it is about 11 to 1 against
filling an interior straight.

This straight being still harder to fill than a
four-card flush, many persons think flushes unjust-
ly ranked. But how is a player to prove he filled
inside and not open-end?

It is hardly worth while to give all the details of
the calculations for the probability of holding four-
card flushes or four-card straights in the first five
cards dealt, but the results may be interesting.

It is $\dfrac{103,808}{2,598,960}$, or 24 to 1 against holding an
open-end straight pat. Multiply this chance by
the chances against improving it, and you get 146
to 1 as the odds against both having and filling
an open-end straight.

The odds against an interior straight being dealt pat are $\frac{395,264}{2,589,960}$, or about $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against it. Multiply this by the chance against improving, and it is still easier to hold and improve than an open-end straight, the total chance against the double event being 101 to 1 only.

The odds against a four-card flush being dealt pat are $\frac{111,540}{2,598,960}$, or about $22\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 against it. Multiply this by the chance of improvement, and the total is about 119 to 1 against the double event.

As a player will get four times as many four-card interior straights dealt to him as he will four-card open-enders, the average on all kinds of straights, to hold four cards of them pat and to improve, is 110 to 1; while the odds against the same concurrent events in the case of the flush are 119 to 1.

DRAWING TO ONE PAIR

In this calculation we must find a denominator which will give us all the possible variations in the draw, and then find how many of this number will give a certain result or kind of improvement. As there are 47 cards to draw from, this denominator will be $\frac{47 \cdot 46 \cdot 45}{1 \cdot 2 \cdot 3} = 16,215$, the total number of ways in which these three cards can be obtained.

TABLE OF IMPROVEMENT IN PAIRS

Number.	Condition.	Odds Against.
45	Improved to fours	359 to 1
165	Improved to fulls	97 " 1
1,854	Improved to triplets	8 " 1
2,592	Improved to two pairs	5 " 1
11,559	Did not improve.	

16,215

If these four different chances of improvement are brought to fractions having a common denominator, and then added together, it will be found that the odds against any kind of improvement are about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

The odds against getting the full of the four of a kind are so great that it will give a better working fraction to say that it is almost $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 that the hand will not improve to two pairs or three of a kind—that is, the player who hopes for or needs two pairs or threes, has 1 chance in $3\frac{1}{2}$ to get one or the other.

POPULAR FALLACIES

Many persons have an idea that the number of players in the game must, in some way, alter the conditions upon which the probabilities of the game are usually calculated. The belief that having got four of a suit makes it more than usually improbable that you will draw one of the same suit, has been touched upon; yet the same people do not attach so much importance to having

got two of a denomination as affecting the chance
of their getting a third.

The only thing that is affected by the increase or
decrease in the number of players is the relative
value of any individual hand. With only two play-
ing, it is even betting that the smallest possible
pair, deuces, is the better hand before the draw, and
it is 10 to 1 that aces are the better hand. But
the moment a third or fourth player takes part in
the game, the comparative value of these hands
diminishes very rapidly.

The exact value of any hand, as compared to
other hands, is always its individual value when
competing with only one other hand. For instance,
you know that three deuces is a hand very much
above the average; but if you held them in a pool
in which three men had raised one another two or
three times before the draw, you would not think
much of such a small triplet. Apart from any
such indications in the betting, and judging only by
the number of players opposed to you in the pool,
if you know that your hand is better than the
average of any other individual player, you can
multiply the fraction of these odds by itself, and
find out the comparative value of your hand.
This is something which can be done roughly in
the head, and with a little practice most players
become so familiar with the comparative value of
a given hand, according to the number of play-
ers in the game, that they do not need to stop
and calculate it.

Suppose that it is 2 to 1 that yours is a better hand than your adversary's, when two play. The fraction that expresses this value is $\frac{2}{3}$. If you are opposed to two players, the value of your hand becomes $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{4}{9}$, which is almost even. If three are opposed to you, it becomes, $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{8}{27}$, which is more than 2 to 1 against you. It is in this manner that the various chances of improvement are calculated when one hand is drawing against several others. The different chances of those opposed must be added together to find their total expectation as against yours, because you have not to beat any one of those drawing, but all of them. If you draw to.tens up, and one of those against you draws to a bobtail flush, another to a pair of kings, another to an open-end straight, their total chances of improvement to hands that will beat your two pairs are 22 in 47, about. Your chances are about 4 in 47; so it is 22 to 4, or more than 5 to 1, that they beat you after the draw. This is why good players do all their betting on two pairs before the draw, or at least try to prevent so many drawing against them.

In spite of all beliefs to the contrary, the number of players in the game, or the number of cards they have drawn, makes no difference in the chances of improving any given hand.

Supposing there was no game at all, and you were just amusing yourself by dealing off five cards from the top of the pack, and that you found upon one occasion that three of them were aces; what is

your chance of drawing another ace if you discard and take two cards? In this case you have the whole pack to draw from—that is, 47 cards—and as there is no other player holding cards, your ace must be in the pack. As there is only one ace, and you are taking two cards, you have 2 chances in 47, as we have already proved in calculating these odds.

Now, there is no reason why this ace should be in any particular position in the pack, and it should make no difference to your chance of drawing it whether you took the two top cards or the two bottom cards, or one of each, or spread out the pack and draw two cards at random, or shuffled them all up and cut them, and then took two cards from the top or bottom, or anywhere. About twice in every forty-seven trials you would probably get an ace. It is just like taking a bag with a hundred black beans and ten white ones in it. It does not matter how much you shake the bag, or what part of it you put your hand into, it is 10 to 1 against your drawing a white bean.

It is perfectly clear to most people that the chances of getting the fourth ace are 2 in 47 if you have the whole pack to draw from, because they know the ace is there. But many persons insist that if there are five players at the table, all holding hands and drawing cards, the chances can no longer be 2 in 47, because there are, perhaps, only ten or a dozen cards left in the pack when your turn comes to draw. The extreme case that they

suggest is, that there may be only three cards left in the pack. How then, they ask, is it possible for the odds to be 2 in 47, or 1 in $23\frac{1}{2}$ against your getting the ace, when you have only three cards to draw from.

It can be shown that the odds remain the same, regardless of the number of players in the game or the number of cards remaining in the pack when it comes to your turn to draw.

If there are only three cards left, the other players must have held or drawn 44 of the 47 which are not in your hand. What are the chances that they have drawn your ace?

In this case it does not matter how many cards each individual player drew in addition to his original five cards, because you are calculating the chance for the whole table as against yourself. The total of their probability of having drawn the ace is expressed by the fraction $\frac{44}{47}$; therefore the chance that they have not drawn it—that is, the odds against their drawing it—must be the difference between 44 and 47, which is 3 in 47; while your chance of getting the ace is now 2 in 3, because there are only three cards left, and you are going to take two of them.

As these are what are called conflicting events, it being impossible for you to get the ace and for them to get it, the two fractions of probability, yours and theirs, must be multiplied together thus:

$$\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{3}{47} = \frac{6}{141} = \frac{1}{23\frac{1}{2}},$$ which is just what it was

when you had the whole pack to yourself to draw from.

Any other chance for any other event may be calculated in the same way, and the result will always show the truth of the general principle, that your chance among the whole 47 cards is exactly the same whether you actually have the 47 cards to draw from, or whether a large part of that number is distributed among the hands of the other players. It is precisely the same thing as if you were to be helped from the top of the complete pack, and the cards to be held by the others were to be given to them afterwards; or they got theirs first, and you were helped from the bottom of the pack.

LUCK AND SUPERSTITION

Probably no work on Poker would be considered complete without a word on the subject of luck.

Luck is simply another name for success, and the word itself is a derivative from the German verb "to succeed." When a person is successful in any undertaking in which it is very likely that anyone else would have done as well, he is not spoken of as particularly lucky. The Poker player who improves a pair does not attract much attention, although one who fills an inside straight may do so for the moment; but when a player draws to the five, six, nine of clubs, and makes a straight flush against four aces, he is talked about for a month.

This shows that it is the improbability of the event which makes us regard the one to whom it happens as a lucky man. There is no particular luck in winning an ordinary pool, because someone must win it; but to win ten jack-pots in succession would be looked upon as phenomenal. To draw four cards to an ace and make an ace full, is regarded as a remarkable stroke of luck; but that must happen to someone every now and then. It is only because it happens to one and not to another, that the one is spoken of as lucky.

Some persons insist that good luck attaches

itself to individuals, just as cats attach themselves
to houses, and that such people are lucky nearly all
the time, just as the cat is nearly always at home.
Others believe that man's natural right is to be
lucky, and that bad luck is a sort of temporary
hoodoo, which can be shaken off by various charms,
such as walking three times round the chair, chang-
ing seats, staying out of the game for a few hands,
or calling for new cards. Strange to say, the man
who is in good luck makes no objection to any of
these proceedings, although they are evidently direct-
ed at him, and intended to divert his good fortune
(or, at least, a part of it) into other channels. Why
does not some authority on the subject of luck sug-
gest some ceremony to be gone through by the lucky
man, in order to prevent his good fortune from de-
serting him?

All efforts to break into the run of luck enjoyed
by some persons seem to be unavailing. It would
be very strange if some men were not lucky all the
time, and some equally unlucky; because, while
there are so many people in the world, there must
be great variations in their fortunes, just as there
must be great differences in anything which is dealt
with in large quantities.

The probability of certain events, lucky or un-
lucky, is exactly the same as any other probability;
and the greater number of people you consider, the
greater the variety of their luck. If a thousand
people sat down to play ten games of Euchre in a

tournament, it would be very surprising if one of them did not lose all ten games, and equally surprising if another player did not win all ten.

If you tossed a coin a great number of times, it would be most extraordinary if the record of heads and tails did not show great variations. Sometimes it would come head and tail alternately, just as a man's good and bad luck comes in streaks. Sometimes it comes heads for a long time, with only an occasional tail in between, just like some men's general good luck, with only an occasional set-back. Sometimes it will come long streaks of heads, and then long streaks of tails, just like some men's luck again. The greater the number of times you toss the coin, the greater the probability that there will be long runs of heads or tails to record. If you tossed a thousand times, it would not be remarkable if it came heads ten times successively at some time during the experiment; on the contrary, it would be much more remarkable if it did not.

Now, if there are half-a-million of people in one town, it can be mathematically demonstrated that there should be some one person in that town who will have uninterrupted good luck for nineteen years, and some other who will have steady bad luck for the same time. But in the same town there will be at least five hundred people who will have good luck for ten years at a stretch, and to balance them there must be about five hundred who will be unlucky for ten years at a time. Among the

millions of the earth there should be thousands
upon thousands who would have uninterrupted
good luck during their entire lives.

At the start, the chances are against a long run
of luck for any named individual; but after a
Poker player's luck, or any other man's luck, has
lasted for ten years, it is just as likely to last for
another year as it is to change. Because a man
has been lucky for ten years, is no reason why he
should be lucky next year; and because a man has
been unlucky all his life so far, is no argument
against his being extremely lucky for the future.
You can never tell when it will change. To be
lucky means to have succeeded in the past. Every
time you sit down to play Poker is like a new toss
of the coin, and no living man can make it come
his way every time.

Luck, or what we call luck, is certainly a very
strange thing, the bacteria of which would be well
worth cultivating if it could be found. That every-
thing depends on skill, many persons besides Poker
players will tell you is a mistake. Any self-made
man will tell you that there have been many things
that he has struggled hard for, but could never
reach, with all his supposed abilities and shrewd-
ness; and that other things, which he did not
think much about, have turned out to be the things
that carried him along. The tide in the affairs of
life is an accident, whether you take it flood or
ebb, in business or in playing cards. No man,
finding himself afloat on a strange river for the

first time, can have any idea of where he will drift
to if he abandons himself to the current. Shake-
speare says, to take it at the flood; but he does not
say which way to go. It may lead to fortune, or it
may founder you. Two men of equal ability will
take the same stream on the same tide on different
days, and the one will get through and the other
will not, just as two Poker players will get the same
hand on different days, and it will make the one
and break the other. The bottom sometimes falls
out of the most carefully laid schemes, and the
reasons for some failures were impossible to foresee.
If it had not rained the night before, Napoleon might
have won at Waterloo. The very care and anxiety
of some men to provide for every possible contin-
gency, seems to defeat the end they have in view.

It is so in Poker. The most careful players, and
those who have the best intellectual endowments
for the game, are not always the most successful.
You cannot play Poker by machinery; and, in
spite of all scientific theories to the contrary, there
is such a thing as luck, especially in cards. That
it will equalise itself in time, may be true; but, as
in the case of tossing the coin, the length of time is
uncertain, and life may be over before the tide
turns. The technical knowledge of the good player
must reduce his losses when he is in bad luck, and
it should help him to increase his winnings when
things are going his way; but it will never guarantee
that he will win all the time, and any player who
never loses should be watched.

Common-sense usually solves the question of luck at the Poker table, because players who are continually unlucky soon quit the game, finding in it nothing but vexation, instead of amusement. Those who are lucky naturally stick to it. The combination of good luck and good play is invincible, and it will take a large mixture of bad play to overcome good luck. Bad play and good luck will beat good play and bad luck all the time.

These pages are intended to supply the principles of good play. I regret that I cannot do anything but wish for the reader's good luck; but I might conclude with the words of the old song:—

Playing Poker is a science but a few understand,
　Some men play in defiance of the worth of their hand;
And they win too, or they seem to, but you'll find in the end,
　They will not be the players with money to lend.

Though the bluffer may not suffer on the spot for his bluff,
　His doom will be rougher when he's bluffed just enough.
Shun a bobtail, if you'd play well, or, my poor noodle,
　You'll lose your boodle; it's a question of time.

TECHNICAL TERMS

Age.—The player next the dealer on his left. The one who puts up the blind. The eldest hand.

Alternate Straight.—Two, four, six, eight, ten; sometimes called a skip. When played, it beats two pairs and a blaze.

Ante.—The bet before the draw. The amount that a player must pay to come into a pool after he has seen his cards. Double the amount of the blind.

Banker.—The one who sells chips to the players, and redeems them afterwards.

Big Dog.—A hand which is ace high and nine low, one card of the sequence missing—such as ace, king, queen, ten, nine. When played, it beats a straight or a Little Dog, and loses to a flush.

Blaze.—Five court cards. Although only two pairs, it beats any other two pairs, except a higher blaze, when played.

Blind.—The amount put up by the age before the cards .are dealt. This is a compulsory bet, not to be confounded with the ante, which is voluntary except in jack-pots.

Bluffing.—Betting as if you had a better hand than you actually hold. Any attempt to drive out better hands than your own.

Bobtail.—Four cards of a straight or flush, the fifth card not fitting in.

Bone.—The white chips used in play. Those of smallest value.

Buck.—A marker to show when it will be a jack-pot.   In straight Poker, to mark the player's turn to ante for the whole table.

Burnt Card.—A card turned face up on the bottom of the pack, to prevent seeing the bottom card or dealing it off.

Calling.—Betting an equal amount instead of raising, so that the hands must be shown without further betting.

Checks.—The white check is the unit, the red is worth five whites, and the blue is worth five reds; but special values are usually attached to them.

Chip Along.—Putting up one white chip only, in order to see what the following players will do.

Chips.—The counters or checks used instead of money.

Cold Deck.—A pack which is surreptitiously substituted for the one in play, and which is usually pre-arranged for the next deal.

Cold Feet.—Any excuse for leaving the game before the time agreed on.

Coming In.—Declaring to play for a pot. or at least to draw cards.

Complete Hand.—A hand which has been discarded from and drawn to.

Counters.—Checks or chips.

Court Cards.—Kings, queens, and jacks.   Aces are not court cards.

Dead Man's Hand.—Jacks and eights.

Deadwood.—The cards that have been thrown out by the various players before drawing to complete their hands. The discard pile.

Deck.—A common name for the pack.

Devil's Bed-Posts.—The four of clubs.

Discard.—The cards which are thrown out of the original
hand in order to fill the complete hand.

Draw.—The cards which are taken in after the discard.

Duffer.—A person who is not well versed in the principles
of the game.

Dutch Straight.—A skip, such as four, six, eight, ten,
queen. When played, it beats two pairs and a blaze.

Edge.—A corruption of the word "age."

Exposed Cards.—Cards which are turned up in the act of
dealing, but were not faced in the pack.

Faced Cards.—Cards which are found face up in the pack.

Fatten.—Adding chips to a jack-pot which no one opened
on the previous deal.

Filling.—Drawing cards which improve the original hand.

Flush.—All five cards of the same suit.

Foul Hand.—Any hand containing more or less than five
cards.

Four Flush.—Any four cards of one suit to draw to. If
drawn to and not filled, it is a bobtail.

Fours.—Any four cards of the same denomination, as
four kings.

Free Ride.—Putting up for all the other players in a jack-
pot. The penalty for drawing to false openers.

Freeze Out.—A form of the game in which each player
retires as soon as he has lost his original stake.

Frozen Out.—When a player has lost what he started
with in a game of freeze out.

Full Hand.—Three of a kind and a pair. Flushes and
straights are never spoken of as full hands.

Fuzzing.—Milking the cards instead of shuffling them.

Gallery.—Spectators who are simply watching the play.

Going In.—Deciding to play a hand, or at least to draw cards to it. Putting up the amount of the ante.

Greek.—A card-sharper. (Grec.)

Hand.—The five cards given to each player by the dealer is the original hand. After the discard and draw, it is the complete hand. If it is played without drawing, it is a pat hand.

Hustler.—One who inveigles people into games which are not strictly honest.

Imperfect Pack.—A pack in which there are duplicates, or cards short, or cards so torn or marked that they can be told by their backs.

Inside Straights.—Sequences which require an intermediate card to fill them—such as two, four, six, seven; or eight, nine, ten, queen.

Intricate Shuffle.—Butting the two parts of the pack together at the ends, and riffling them into each other.

Jack-Pots.—Pots to which all players contribute an equal amount before the cards are dealt, and which cannot be opened for betting except by a player who holds a pair of jacks or better.

Jonah.—A player who is in very bad luck.

Kicker.—A card held up with a pair, such as an ace held with a pair of fours, drawing two cards only.

Kilter.—No pair and no card above a nine, with no chance for either straight or flush. Usually played pat by Southerners.

Kitty.—Taking one white chip from the pool every time a certain hand is shown, such as threes or better. The kitty either goes to pay the expenses of the room, or to make up a refreshment fund.

Limit.—The amount by which any previous bet may be increased. More properly called the "raise limit."

Little Dog.—Deuce low and seven high, one card of the sequence missing—such as two, three, four, six, seven. When played, it beats a straight, but is out-ranked by a flush or a Big Dog.

Make Good.—Adding enough to the blind or straddle to make it equal the ante.

Make Up.—Shuffling the cards for the next dealer when two packs are used. The second man to the left of the dealer does this.

Making the Pass.—Shifting the cards back again as they were before they were cut.

Marker.—Some object which shows that the player behind it owes that amount of money in the pool, and is still playing his hand. Chips borrowed from the pool, and placed on a match box.

Milking.—Shuffling by taking a card from the top and bottom of the pack simultaneously, and dropping them on the table two by two. Sometimes called "snowing the cards."

Misdeal.—Any irregularity in the distribution of the cards which requires a new deal by the same dealer.

Mistigris.—The joker added to the pack. The player holding it can call it anything he pleases. Four clubs and the joker is a club flush.

Monkey Flush.—Three cards of a suit, to which two cards are drawn.

Mouth Bets.—Bets made by word of mouth, without putting up any money.

Natural Jacks.—Jack-pots which are made by the natural process of no player putting up an ante to draw cards.

Nicknames for Cards.—Diamond nine, "the curse of Scotland." Club four, "the devil's bed-posts." Club ace, "the puppy foot." The four queens are "typewriters."

Odds.—The difference between the numerator and the denominator of the fraction which expresses the probability or improbability of any event. For instance: the chances of getting a fifth heart to fill a flush are nine in forty-seven; the odds against it are therefore thirty-eight to nine.

One-end Straight.—A sequence which only one card will complete—such as ace, king, queen, jack; or ace, two, three, four.

Open-end Straight.—A sequence which can be filled at either end—such as four, five, six, seven. Either three or eight will fill it.

Openers.—Any hand which entitles the holder to open a jack-pot.

Original Hand.—The first five cards given to the player by the dealer. After the draw, it becomes the Complete Hand.

Pass.—Refusing to come into a pool, or refusing to call a bet.

Pat Hand.—One which cannot be improved by drawing to it.

Pelter.—Or Chicago Pelter. The same as a Kilter.

Philosopher.—A polite name for a card-sharper.

Pile.—All the chips in front of the player. All the money he is willing or able to risk on the game.

Pone.—The player on the dealer's right. The one who cuts the cards.

Pool.—The assemblage of all the antes and bets made by all the players.

Pot.—The compulsory contributions of the players to form a jack.

Probabilities.—The odds in favour of any event. The chance may be for or against; the probability is always for it.

Puppy Foot.—The ace of clubs.

Raise.—The amount by which any previous bet may be increased. The term "limit" is often mis-used for "raise."

Rake-off.—The percentage which the house takes out of the game by means of the kitty.

Ring In.—Substituting an unfair pack for the one in use.

Rooking.—Inducing ignorant or weak players to join in a game for the purpose of fleecing them.

Round of Jacks.—Nothing but jack-pots until each player at the table has had a deal. A whangdoodle.

Round-the-Corner.—A straight which connects the top and the bottom of a suit—such as three, two, ace, king, queen. When played, it ranks as the lowest possible straight, but beats three of a kind.

Royal Flush.—The highest possible hand; the ace, king, queen, jack, ten, of any suit.

Run.—The same as a sequence or straight.

See.—To call a bet without raising it.

Sequence.—Any natural order of the cards, not necessarily of the same suit—such as three, four, five, six, seven.

Short-card Player.—One who plays Poker; usually also a sharper.

Show-down.—Laying the hands face up on the table when a call is made.

Show-down Poker.—A game in which the limit is so small as compared to the ante, that bluffing is impossible.

Shuffling.—Any method of mixing the cards so that their previous arrangement is completely disturbed.

Shy.—A player who has not put up his ante for a jack-pot is shy.

Sight.—If one player bets more than his opponent has, the one that is unable to call the whole amount may demand a show for the amount that he has on the table.

Skin Game.—One in which two or more sharpers combine to fleece the unwary.

Skip.—The same as a Dutch Straight: two, four, six, eight, ten. When played, it beats two pairs and a blaze.

Snowing Cards.—The same as milking.

Splitting.—Having opened a jack-pot with a single pair, discarding one of the pair in order to draw for a better hand, such as a flush.   ·

Square Game.—One in which the cards have not been trimmed wedge-shape. Usually applied to games in which there is no unfairness of any kind.

Squeezers.—Cards with a small indicator mark on the upper left-hand corner of the faces. Almost all modern cards are squeezers.

Stack.—Twenty chips or counters is a stack of chips.

Stacking Cards.—Arranging the pack during the shuffle. Locating certain cards before dealing.

Stakes.—The amount of money each player puts on the table at the beginning of the game.

Standing Pat.—Refusing to draw any cards. Playing the original hand.

Stay.—Coming into a jack-pot which has already been opened by another player. Calling the raise of a player who attempts to raise you out before the draw.

Still Pack.—The one not in play when two are used.

Stock.—The cards that remain in the pack after dealing the original hands. The part from which the draws will be dealt.

Stool-Pigeon.—An outsider who overlooks the hand of a player, and indicates its contents to a confederate in the game.

Straddle.—Double the amount of the blind, put up by the player to the left of the age, before seeing any of his cards.

Straight.—A sequence or run, such as five, six, seven, eight, nine.

Straight Flush.—Any sequence of cards in the same suit, such as the five, six, seven, eight, nine of hearts. *See* Royal Flush.

Strippers.—A pack so trimmed that the dealer or the pone can withdraw certain cards at will.

Sucker.—A gambler's victim.

Sweeten—The same as fatten. Adding to a jack-pot which no one opened on the previous deal.

System.—Any theory of play which regulates a player's game.

Table Stakes.—A variety of the game in which a player cannot bet any more than he has on the table at the time.

Talon.—The remainder of the pack after dealing the original hands.

Threes.—Triplets, or three of a kind.

Tie.—Two hands of equal value, which divide the pool.

Tiger.—The lowest possible combination of the cards, seven high and deuce low, one card of the sequence missing, such as two, three, four, six, seven. The same as a Little Dog. When played, it loses to a flush, but beats a straight.

Triplets.—Three of a kind.

Under the Gun.—The first man to bet; the player immediately to the left of the age.

Unlimited Poker.—The game in which a player may bet as much as he pleases, and any other player has twenty-four hours in which to find the money to call.

Up.—The denomination of the higher pair of two in calling a hand. Queens "up" would mean two pairs, the queens being the better.

Wedges.—A pack so trimmed that certain cards are strippers, and can be pulled out at will.

Welcher.—One who makes mouth bets, and afterwards refuses to pay.

Whangdoodle.—A round of jack-pots, played as a compulsion after such a hand as four of a kind has been shown to win a pot.

Widow.—An extra hand dealt to the table, especially in Whisky Poker.

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CHRONOLOGY

The chronological order in which the foregoing works have appeared is as follows. When the author is anonymous, the publisher's name is given in italics:—

1872. R. C. Schenck, Eng.

1875. John Blackbridge, U.S.A.

1875. H. T. Winterblossom, U.S.A.

1877. C. H. W. Meehan, U.S.A.

1879. Alfred Percy, India.

1881. J. Abbott, U.S.A.

1882. Charles Welsh, U.S.A.

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1897. R. F. Foster, U.S.A.

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1900. E. Edwards, U.S.A.

1901. David A. Curtis, U.S.A.

1901. *Cleveland Club*, Eng.

1901. A. Reynolds, Eng.

1903. G. Brown, U.S.A.

1903. L. H. Virt, Paris.

1904. E. P. Philpots, Eng.

1905. R. F. Foster, Eng.

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