

# AUCTION BRIDGE

By B. M. J.

**A** CORRESPONDENT (G. B. Cleveland, Ohio) has submitted a question as to what marks the dividing line between the actual or business double and the informative, and how is a player to determine which is which. This query is of such general interest and importance that no apology is necessary for elaborate treatment.

This very point has been the subject of free discussion by most of our leading writers for some time, but in my opinion the grouping of certain two and even three-trick doubles under the head of "informative" renders the whole hypothesis too impracticable and complicated for consideration, much less adoption, by the average club player. Goodness knows, the game, as now played is sufficiently involved for pleasurable occupation, and no desirable result is attained by making it still more technical. It is a grand game for the multitude; why convert it into a game for experts only.

The attitude I adopt towards the informative double is at once simple and readily understood. All doubles of a one-trick bid either in a suit or no trump declaration are regarded as purely informative or conventional. All doubles of two or more, either in a suit or no trumps, I regard as the real business thing. Here the convention is reduced to a simple prima-facie statement devoid of all the "ifs" and "ands" which so often spell disaster in what otherwise might be regarded as most excellent team work. What can be more annoying than to find when the rubber has been irrevocably chucked away, that your partner's double of, say two hearts, was purely informative when a game in two spades would have yielded you certain game and rubber?

Niceties of play, constituting a clear and well defined problem, are by no means uncommon, but in the hurry and bustle of the modern game are often overlooked by all but the man who engineered the coup. His opponents are quite aware that something has gone amiss with their defence, but that in most cases reflects the entire consideration of what in itself was a beautiful little problem, thought out and solved in masterly fashion. Here is such a case that I witnessed in a recent duplicate auction game in which the solver was the only player in the room to register a game. Of course, the denouement would have been impossible in double dummy, for West is clearly marked with the four tricks necessary to save game. Needless to say, the informative double by West helped South very materially in his deductions.

The card:

♠—Q.  
♥—A,J, 4,3,2.  
♦—10, 9, 3, 2.  
♣—Q,3, 2.

♠—K, 10,8.	N W E S	♠—4, 3, 2.
♥—K, 10,8.		♥—Q,9, 7, 6.
♦—K,Q, 6.		♦—J,S,4.
♣—K, 9, 8, 7.		♣—6,5,4.

♠—A, J,9, 7, 6, 5.  
♥—5.  
♦—A, 8, 7.  
♣—A,J,10.

The bidding: South dealt and bid one spade. West doubled. North passed and East bid two hearts. South two spades, in which the card

was played—undoubted. North and South made four by cards and game. The play: West opened king of hearts, which dummy won, leading queen of spades, taken by West. Latter now followed with ten of hearts, which was not covered in dummy and was trumped by South, who now cleared trumps in two rounds. South now made his coup by leading small diamond. Any other lead would have been fatal. West cocked up the queen and led his last heart, which South trumped and led out his ace and small diamond. West did consider ducking his king but was afraid that South had jack behind, in which event game would be sacrificed. He therefore was in the lead with his king and perforce compelled to lead a club. South cocked up queen, and whatever happened he must make the rest. Had East held king it would have made South's three clubs winners, but queen of clubs won the trick and the lead of dummy's thirteenth diamond allowed South to discard his losing club and score game.