

HELP! HELP! IN SHORT, THE SERVANT PROBLEM

By FAIRFAX DOWNEY

Illustrations by JEFFERSON MACHAMER

BUTLER—A man servant in a household whose principal duty is to take charge of the liquors.—Century Dictionary.

PERHAPS that definition explains the present alarming shortage of butlers in the United States, particularly of English butlers, who, all must admit, are butlers raised to the nth power. Their chief duty—small thanks to prohibition—having been somewhat reduced or assumed by the heads of the household, pursuant to the present wave of economy, it may be supposed that those butlers we miss have gone where duty called.

But that theory, convenient as it is to blame things on prohibition, fails to assign a tenable reason for the exceedingly short supply of all other ranks of the household staff. It can cover none of them, except possibly that creature of moods in the kitchen who was firmly of the belief that cooking sherry was necessary to the exercise of her culinary art. Somehow or other, the housemaid, once termed "general" by reason of her admirable versatility, has become a very rare specimen or has metamorphosed into a specialist, and a high-priced one at that. By that token, it is the unemployment problem upside down and the housing problem in reverse, with servants' quarters in a chronic state of vacancy.

It is a compound problem, the servant problem, with its latest admixture—so runs the startling yet authentic intelligence—the Irish problem. Sad experience has impressed upon the members of the family that it is the part of caution, sagacity and conservation to avoid all but the most cautious utterances in the presence of domestics of either of the contesting races. Reading unfavorable portions of the morning paper is nothing short of foolhardy while an impulsive Irish maid is passing the steaming coffee, and it is rashness itself to tempt a fervent Celtic nature by ill advised partnership, when such weapons as cyster forks and potato mashers lie ready to hand.

Discreet as one may be personally, however, there seems to be no way of avoiding the horrors of civil strife beneath one's own roof when an English butler begins talking politics with Sinn Fein maids and cooks. Agencies are frankly unwilling to place these two clashing elements in the same home, unless the householder is willing to see a replica in his ancestral halls of a lively little night in Dublin. The minute a correct and rubicund English butler, perhaps obtained after great trouble and expense, drives up to the door in a taxi or a lorry or something of the sort, and endeavors to take command of the situation and establish home rule, hostilities are apt to commence. And into the quiet family life may come a series of ambushes, impromptu grenade throwings, involuntary hunger strikes and finally a complete withdrawal of all forces.

Another bit of war still is with us: war wages. In the "help" sector apparently the battle is still raging fiercely, with the demand for munitions just as heavy, or lighter but a very little. In fact, the cry "Shell out!" is heard on all fronts. Employment agents, tracing a few economic curves in the air, declare that high wages will continue to be the word, as long as the demand exceeds the supply. To date butlers are unwilling to buttle for less than \$90 to \$150, and cooks to cook for less than \$60 to \$100 or so. Maids for general housework are quoted at from \$60 to \$65 (no washing), with the market very bearish. And even young, green girls are loath to inflict their young, green ways on the family china for less than a consideration of \$40.

Illuminating yet gloom encompassing is the experience of the head of a large employment



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agency. She wanted a girl for her own household. Could anything be simpler? one asks.

There were two in the family of the agency head. Two meals a day was their modest requirement; they lunched out. One cleaning a week was scheduled for the house, with the family dusting up between times. Laundry for two.

Be all that as it may, there were no takers at the tune of eighty bones! One girl said she might consider it, if the situation had been on the East Side, instead of the West Side. All the others to whom the offer was made declined. The agency head had been looking for more than a week and may be still.

"Thirty-two years ago," the agency head said, "I came to this country and got a position as a maid at \$10 a month. Do you know, I believe the girls were all happier, worked better and were better satisfied than they are now at \$60 a month."

And even trying to hire one for \$60 is no light work-out nowadays. You can see the attempt being made in the agency offices many times a day, and a very spirited little bout it is. The lady of the house enters and takes her seat in one corner of the ring; the maid, veteran of many a hard encounter, in another, while the agent introduces them with a both-members-of-this-club gesture. They do not shake hands; apparently there is bad blood between challenger and challenged, and it is to be a knockout affair.

"Experienced?" the lady leads. "Very," the maid counters. Then they exchange buffets thick and fast. "References?" "Plenty." "Cook?" "Sure." "Wash?" "No, mum!"

Staggered, the lady of the house falls back, and the maid, quick to press her advantage assumes the offensive. "Wages?" "Sixty dollars." "Nights out?" "Plenty." "Family?" "Three." "Baby?"



The English butler and the Sinn Fein housemaid

"Y-y yes." "Residence?" "Country." "Good day, mum!"

Thereupon the lady takes the count and the loser's end, which amounts to nothing at all. If she is a glutton for punishment she asks for another interview. Many a time and oft she leaves the agency utterly defeated, especially when her opponents find such a weak spot in her defense as a dwelling in the country. You might think her solution would be to obtain a country girl, but the

difficulty there, agencies declare, in getting her to stay in nights. New York maids are found to be the more staid and home loving. Even a maid captured and borne home in triumph may turn out to be only a Punic and fleeting victory. They may be most carefully cherished; they may be insured by their employers, as many of them are, but their staying can't be insured. Prayers may be offered up and sacrifices made, but all too frequently one's prayers, like one's ads, go unanswered.

action. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight, and since the war it has been all too uncommon.

The carriage—or, rather, motor—which awaited without has been announced only by the raucous croaking of the Klaxon. When once it was impressively stated with all due pomp and circumstance that "Dinner is served, milady," the same information now is casually conveyed by a pert maid who does just a little better than remark, "Come and get it." There is, too, in her aspect an intimation that it would be just as well not to keep the cook waiting any length of time. Alas, the imperturbable Hawkins who stalked through the halls, utterly correct in every detail, inspiring the family by his very mien to try to live up to him, is little with us now.

Perhaps the enormity of the loss may be expressed by a quotation from Anthony Heasel, who wrote "The Servants' Book of Knowledge," a volume which some housewives are certain is little in circulation nowadays. "A butler is intrusted with so many things that, unless he is a man of known integrity and a becoming carriage, he can never discharge his duties to the satisfaction of his superiors or his own reputation, and when both of these are wanting it signifies very little what character any man assumes. Take good care of your wine and other liquors, not only to keep them in good order but likewise to prevent their being embezzled or given away to any person besides those who have a right to them according to your instructions. Be ready when the company are at table to attend them with the greatest exactness, taking care that the glasses be kept extremely clean and wine poured into them in a genteel and easy manner, by which you will prevent any of the liquor from spilling, and being poured out in that manner it will not be jumbled together. Always have a fine clean cloth ready to wipe the mouths of the glasses, and when one begins to grow wet take another, for nothing can please the company more than cleanliness."

Are not the number of such erictions as these sadly diminished? One hears but little of them now, those trusty butlers, who used to assume charge of the dining room and all the under men servants and footmen, who used to set the table, clean the silver, make the salads, announce the meals, do the carving, serve the coffee, pass the cigars and sit up for the family. Unsung also is the inimitable first footman, among whose duties it is to wear black tie, studs and cuffbuttons when the family is in mourning.

And the fourth or useful man? Gone, too. An almost irreparable loss. It is as if some one had broken the mould in which that priceless person was made, and now one must pay each of the pieces what the whole asked for the performance of his simple tasks of bringing in the coal and wood, taking out the ashes and the garbage, handling the trunks, express and freight, cleaning the windows, the brasses, the walks, the piazzas, the vestibules, the dormers and the bedrooms and raising the temperature of the furnace and lowering that of the ice cream freezer. Ah, "useful man," your strength was as the strength of ten. If you could be hired now probably your wages would be.

Is the day still far distant when servants will not be as hen's teeth and they will not demand and receive the hefty stipend they do plus room and board? A month or two may tell, agencies say. It was the Russian winter that defeated Napoleon. Also looked forward to is that millenium when the household labor saving devices shall have reached such perfection that the servant problem will only be a matter of pushing the proper button.

In the mean time, if any one is worrying over "Why Families Leave Home," it isn't the hotels.

THE question is naturally asked by the beginner, when referring to last week's article, how often does it happen that a player who is strong enough to double a suit bid or a no-trumper is also strong enough to support a certain suit, and if that is the suit aimed at why not bid it, instead of doubling?

It has long been urged by certain writers on the game that it is much better to bid doubtful no-trumpers on cards that can stand a major suit take-out than on cards that cannot support such a call. The reason for this is that if the third hand is going to take out on any five cards of either major suit, hearts or spades, regardless of their strength or the rest of the hand, the no-trump bidder is wasting time if he will have to deny such a suit, unless he has something worth while as a secondary bid.

The same principle applies to the double. The doubler takes a chance that the partner will have a major suit call, but in case he hits the suit in which the doubler is weak there should be a good secondary bid in reserve. It frequently happens that the dealer will bid a minor suit, in which case common sense should tell any person that if the second player doubles the object of the double is not to get the partner to call the other minor suit. If the object of the double is the same as that of any other declaration, to get a contract that has some hope of going game, it must be made with a view to getting a heart or spade call from the partner, if he cannot risk no-trumps.

One who is not familiar with the finer points of modern bidding will find many opportunities for astonishment at the calls made by partners who have confidence in the soundness of each other's declarations. The difference in the results, as shown by the scores made, on certain hands in duplicate matches, serves to emphasize the importance of following out the principles of correct calling, even if appearances are against it.

In the next column is a deal, played in a duplicate game in Denver last winter, which shows how differently players may look at a

AUCTION BRIDGE---PLAYER'S SCHOOL

By R. F. FOSTER

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hand, and also how few are capable of reaching the acme of good bridge, which lies in finding the best possible declaration for the combined hands.

Z dealt and bid a diamond. It appears that several tables overcalled this with two clubs, held the contract and made it, but could not possibly make any more. Those that did not finesse the spade jack did not make two even. The interesting bids were those that followed when A doubled the diamond bid and Y passed. Not being able to stop the diamonds even once, there was no question of going no-trump, and those who knew the importance of bidding the higher ranking suit first called a spade, which Z passed.

Our correspondent says this happened at four tables, and at two of them A left it at spades, B making three odd by the spade finesse, but not the game. After three winning diamonds, Z led the club and B pulled all the trumps but the ten, which he forced out with the clubs.

At the two other tables A did not trust the spade call for being very strong, and went to

two clubs. At one of these he was left with it, and made it, scoring twenty-four points.

At only one table did B follow up the double correctly. Knowing that the double looks for a take-out in one of the major suits, when A denied the spades by going to two clubs, B correctly inferred that if A did not like the spades, but was strong enough to double diamonds and bid two clubs, the heart suit should fit his hand, so B overcalled the two clubs with two hearts.

On this contract he went game, scoring four odd and four honors with 125 added, 189 points, on a deal that no other table in the room made more than 45 on, and only two of them made that, the usual score being 24.

Against the heart contract Z ran off his three diamonds, Y discarding a club, and then led a heart, hoping to coax the king, in which he succeeded. Dummy then led two rounds of spades and finessed the jack. On the spade king he got a club discard.

B can now count Z's hand for a spade and two diamonds. Unless Z has the queen of trumps, game is impossible, because if Y has the unguarded queen Z has no clubs. The only chance being the trump finesse, B led the jack, caught the queen on the next lead and discarded his losing spade on the third club, four odd and game.

The solution to Problem No. 76, given last week, in which hearts were trumps, Z to lead and Y-Z to get six tricks, follows:

Z starts with the six of trumps, keeping the smallest and disarming A at the same time. Y wins and leads the ace of diamonds, upon

which Z discards the spade queen. Y then leads a spade and Z gets rid of the club queen. A may discard anything. Now, Y leads the trump, and it is up to B to solve.

If B plays the eight of trumps, Z makes both nine and queen at once. But if B puts on the ten Z ducks, playing the seven, so that when B leads the inevitable spade Z can ruff with the deuce of trumps and let Y over-trump with the five. Now Y can come through B's trumps, and he loses them both.

Queries and Answers

AUCTION BRIDGE

Question—The dealer bids a heart, second hand says no-trump, which all pass. What is the correct lead from this hand, and why? Queen and two small in diamonds; ace and three small in clubs; five spades to the queen ten nine; singleton small heart. N. W. B.

Answer—Why not lead the spade? There is no use leading the heart, which cannot be led again. There is a chance for the spades, especially if partner has either ace or king, as there are two possible re-entries.

Question—Dealer, Z, bids a club, A one spade, Z two clubs, A two spades, which Z doubles. Y then bids three diamonds, on five to the king queen, one small club, four small spades and three small hearts. Z bets he should have kept still. H. M.

Answer—The usual rule for deciding

whether the double means business or is asking partner to bid is that if it is asking a bid it shall be made at the first opportunity. As Z did not double A's first spade bid, it should be taken as a business double, even if the partner has not declared.

RUSSIAN BANK

Question—When this game is played with one pack should each player lay out four cards before making any changes, or can the first player make changes, if any offer, before the second player lays down a card? Mrs. T.

Answer—Each player, beginning with the non-dealer, fills four spaces. If a change can be made, it must leave a space open, and this

BRIDGE PROBLEM No. 77

♥ 7	♥ 52
♣ 8	♣ 7
♦ A8	♦ 4
♠ J72	♠ Q65
♥ —	♥ —
♣ J10	♣ —
♦ K9	♦ —
♠ 1098	♠ —
♥ —	♥ —
♣ —	♣ —
♦ —	♦ —
♠ —	♠ —

Hearts are trumps and Z leads. Y and Z want all seven tricks. How do they get them? Solution next week.

should be filled at once. It sometimes happens that the first player can lay down ten or more cards before the second player turns up anything.

Question—September 25 you decided that if a card is exposed on opponent's hand or stock that fits the foundations it must be played, under penalty of a stop, and that if it is not so played the opponent can play it, so that it does not matter. But suppose that immediately after taking a card, spade 7, for instance, from the opponent's pile, the player should turn the other spade 7. Has he not lost the opportunity to get rid of a card, while he has got rid of one of his opponent's for him? W. E. H.

Answer—If the player has built up a foundation to the point at which his opponent's seven of spades fits, he must have seen it coming, and must have got rid of several cards of his own in reaching that point. If there is no place in the tableau that the duplicate card fits, that is no worse luck than if he had turned any other card that did not fit anywhere.

PINOCHLE

Question—A leads the last diamond in play. B trumps it. C also trumps, but does not win the trick, although he can do so. Is he obliged to over-trump? A. S. F.

Answer—Yes. The rule in three-hand auction is that each player in turn must head the trick if he can.

Question—A gets the bid for 250, and melds 280. If he can win 120 in play he is game, but during the play he neglects to follow suit to a lead when he could do so. B bets he loses his game. Is this correct? J. McC.

Answer—The only thing affected by the revoke is the play, and the only penalty is the loss of the entire score for cards. As A's meld was enough to cover his bid, and he won a trick, he scores the 280; provided, of course, he won a trick in which he did not revoke.