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The Double Life.

My neighbor leads a double life—

A fashion much in vogue—

A dramatic rascal he is, sure,

And a literary rogue.

For when my neighbor is at home

His choice of books or play

Is not at all the same as when

My neighbor goes away.

When he is home he buys the books

Of literary style

That analyze the human soul

And woe and gloom up-pile.

He goes in for dissection keen,

With problems of the time,

The novels on heredity,

And on the Modern Crime.

But when my neighbor goes away

The books he reads—oh, my!

Adventures, yellow tales and jokes

As low as breakfast pie.

To latest books, he says, "Go 'way!

Or I'll do something rash;

At home I have to read that rot—

Now give me good old trash."

My neighbor, when he is at home,

And feels the drama draw,

Will only go to Isben plays

Or rave o'er Bernard Shaw.

He'll see none but a problem play,

A work that makes one think—

And turns in scorn from mere mirth shows,

Philosophy to drink.

But when my neighbor goes abroad

No Isben does he see.

He fights in throngs that rush to buy

Good seats for "Fiddle-Dee."

He takes revenge for Shaw et al.

In song and dance and buzz;

And most of us, I think somehow,

Do as my neighbor does.

—Baltimore American.



Fortune.

Jes' aroun' de corner

Dar's good luck, so dey say.

Sometimes it never gits here,

But it's allus on de way.

No matter what's yoh trouble

Dar's a chance to work an' learn;

It's jes' aroun' de corner,

If you knows which way to turn.

But you musn't sit complainin'

'Cause yoh luck is overdue.

Sometimes 'twill run to catch you,

But it isn't likely to.

You's got to keep a-movin';

'Tain' no use to stand in doubt.

It's jes' aroun' de corner,

But you's got to seek it out.

—Washington Star.

THE TYRANNY OF BRIDGE



HE casual observer needs only to look about the hotel corridors here, at evening, to get a fair idea of the hold bridge whist has upon its legion of devotees. To be sure one sees here "social bridge" and not "gambling bridge;" nevertheless, the following comments will be read with interest by all lovers of the game—EDITOR.

It seems to be agreed on all sides, says the *Springfield Republican*, that the comparatively new game of bridge has already achieved a supremacy and a vogue far beyond that of any other game of cards, and though the mania has not yet reached in this country—save in certain fashionable circles—such a pitch as in England, whence distressing reports have been emanating for some years past, it would be most rash to set any limits to the possible intensity and range of the contagion. If the American reputation for carrying good amusements to a baneful extreme is carried out in this case, the country will in a few more seasons be turned into one great Monte Carlo. For it is to be noted that the gambling habit which has, as a rule, been discountenanced in American society, and was not a characteristic feature of the whist epidemic, is so strongly associated with bridge that it seems to be forcing its way into circles where playing cards for money has always hitherto been frowned upon. Probably no great harm has been done as yet. No reports have been made of reckless play such as have been made public in England, where people who had no desire to gamble and could not afford to lose have been socially obliged to play for high stakes, sometimes with disastrous results. In England there has not been the general disapproval of playing cards for money that has characterized those parts of the United States where the Puritan influence is strong. A small wager on a rubber of whist has been the conventional and respectable thing, and that sedate game caused little trouble. But bridge is a different matter and lends itself readily to the feverish gambling spirit which acute observers have noted as characteristic of the English temper during the era of imperialism and speculation. It cannot plausibly be maintained that Americans are more sober and discreet in such matters, and if the practice of gambling once secures a hold upon the very section of society that has always resisted it, it hard to say what the end will be.

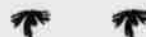
The special and insidious danger of bridge lies in its tendency, under the sanction of social custom, to force gambling upon those who would otherwise never be tempted to play for money. Roulette and poker are understood for for what they are, and no one is under compulsion to play at them or go where they are played. But in one of the most authoritative of the new books we read: "Proficiency at the game has become a positive social qualification. We have more than once heard it said, 'I should like to ask so-and-so, but he doesn't play

bridge.'"

Talleyrand once said to a young man who did not play cards, "What a dismal old age you are preparing for yourself!" But it is a dismal present, according to these authorities, that those who reject bridge bring upon themselves: "Some few malcontents there be who still remain obdurate, but they may safely be allowed to gnash their teeth in the outer darkness which they have chosen." Now if it is true that bridge is becoming a social passport, without which there is no admission—nor for that matter anything to be admitted to—it is the more important that playing for money should not become the conventional practice. There are plenty of ways to gamble; they might well be left to the gamblers.

But gambling aside, there are some grounds for disquietude in the monopoly which bridge seems to exercise. From cities so separate as Boston and Pittsburg comes the complaint that people have ceased to attend concerts because they are too engrossed in bridge. It is, as a matter of fact, a bad season for concerts everywhere, and perhaps the same reason holds. Possibly those who like bridge and dislike music are better employed at the card table, but that is not quite the point. In the abstract it is readily admitted that any country or any age which has so run wild over an amusement that the arts are neglected has deteriorated. A social group can as easily as an individual give too much of its time and energy to cards, and the current of intellectual life must run correspondingly low.

It is precisely because bridge is one of the best of all indoor games that its reign is oppressive. A primitive and foolish recreation like "hearts" or ping-pong matters little; the world goes mad for a day and recovers. But bridge is a serious affair; one might almost learn a foreign literature in the time it takes to master it. It is hard to be exiled from society for not playing the game, if that is indeed what we are coming to; it is almost as hard to be slain with pin-pricks for playing it badly. So there is no resource for an ambitious or a thin-skinned person but to practice it with an energy and assiduity which few busy people can afford. Thus as bridge strengthens its hold and the standard of play becomes higher, there is less and less room in the general social scheme for the people who lack either the time or the disposition to acquire skill. Tyranny in amusements is as objectionable as in politics, but it is not so easy to organize a revolt. The outcasts will have to get on as best they can till the crest of the wave has passed, consoling themselves with the reflection that Americans take new sports so hard that there is apt presently to be a reaction.



Hard Hitting the Feature.

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