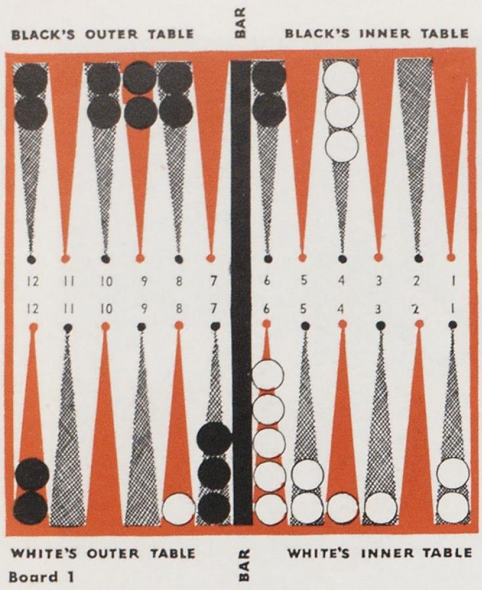
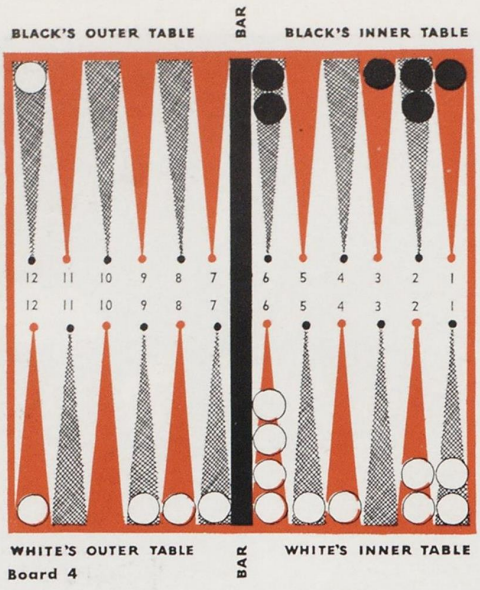
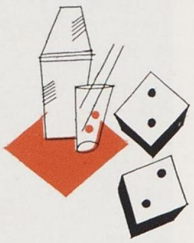
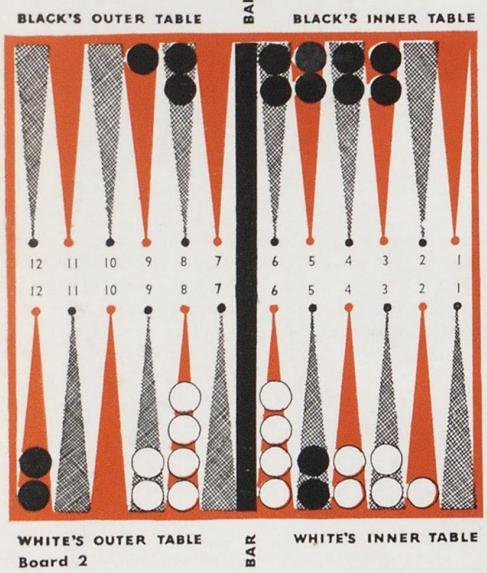


Board 1

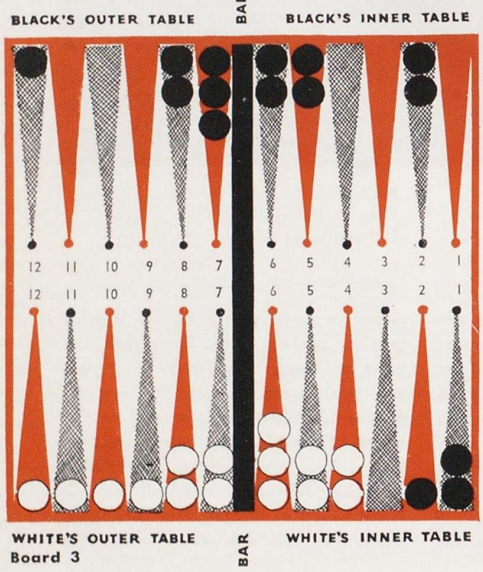


Board 4





Board 2



Board 3

Some typical situations

BOARD 1

B.'s Throw. So far it is anybody's game. Although W. has a good inner table, his three men in B.I.T. will meet with casualties before they get home. B. must build B.I.T. quickly, at the same time leaving two men in W.O.T. in order to hit W. on the way home. However, if his dice permit, B. should try to establish a side-prime and if he succeeds he will probably win the game. W.'s tactic is to escape with the third man on B.I.T. 4 as quickly as possible, leaving two men back to menace B.'s incoming men and make up his own I.T.

BOARD 2

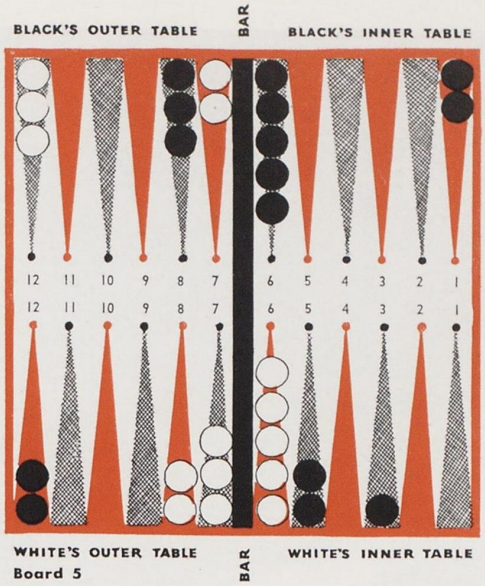
W.'s Throw. W. has doubled and B. has committed the all too common error of accepting. W. has only six men to bring into W.I.T. B., however, has three men in B.O.T. (which are counted as 3), two men in W.O.T. (counted as 4), and two men in W.I.T. (counted as 6); or an equivalent of 13 men to enter. B.'s only chance is to remain as long as possible in W.I.T. hoping that W. will break. Even if B. should throw a pair of high doubles, he must still lie back in W.I.T. moving his men in the outer tables

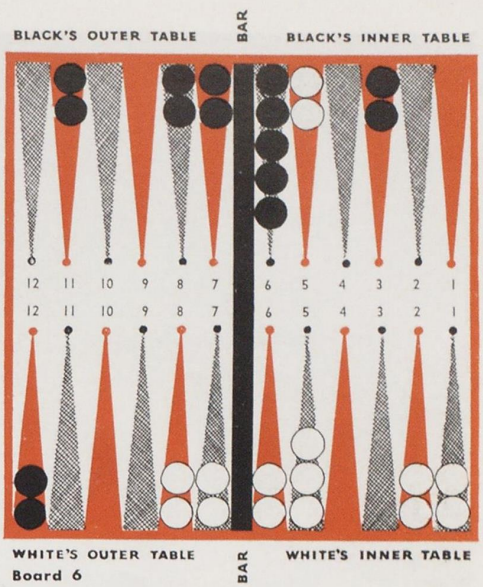
BOARD 3

W. has doubled last and is almost sure to establish a side prime. B.'s best chance is to build up as slowly as possible B.I.T. and hope for low dice and that his opponent will break. W.'s policy in the meantime is to make his points on W.I.T. 3 and W.I.T. 2 as soon as he can. If W., in order to erect a perfect sideprime, has to leave a blot on W.I.T. 2 or 3 and is hit, the damage is nevertheless slight. Re-entry is a matter of one or more shakes, while B. is still unable to retreat. B. must not move from W. 1 even if he throws double ones or twos

BOARD 4

W.'s Throw. W. has, of course, lost the game. W. has equivalent of six men to bring into W. I. T. and in order not to lose a gammon or double game, W. must not lose one single pip while entering. Example: W. throws 6-1 and moves one man from W.O.T. 12 and one man from W.O.T. 7 into W.I.T. 1. If W. throws a 3-2 he moves one man from W.O.T. 9 and one man from W.O.T. 8 into W.I.T. 1. If W. fails to bring all men in on every three cast of the dice, the penalty is almost sure to be a double game for B.





in Backgammon by Georges Mabardi

BOARD 5

W.'s Throw. W. has doubled last, although he has only a very slight advantage. Should W. throw any combination with a 5, he should move one man to safety from B.'s bar-point in the hope that he will get the other man safely by, for a running game on the next throw. But if B. picks up his blot, re-entry is quite easy and W. should still play a running game. In the meantime B.'s best hope of equalizing positions is to build B.I.T. and stay on W.I.T. 5 to pick up his homecoming opponent, if possible, running only with the man on W.I.T. 3

BOARD 6

B.'s Throw. The game is almost even, B. having a slight advantage of position. Each player has the equivalent of ten men to bring into his respective inner tables. B. should take no chances of losing his advantage by leaving a blot. Example: B. has 6-1. He enters two men from his own bar-point into B.I.T. Should W. throw double fives, or fours, then in this case only, should he retreat from B.I.T. 5. Otherwise he must remain to threaten B.'s homecoming. Either side is justified in doubling, and in accepting a proffered double

■ In these six boards, illustrated from situations that have actually developed in the course of games, there is no attempt to explain any particular subsequent throws of the dice. In other words these are not, in a limited sense, problems. The boards which show typical situations—frequently encountered in play, are merely presented to the player for study and it will profit him greatly if he will play each one out several times with different throws of the dice, in order to establish in his own mind what is likely to be the wisest course in strategy to pursue in similar circumstances in other games.

B.I.T. Black's Inner Table
B.O.T. Black's Outer Table
W.I.T. White's Inner Table
W.O.T. White's Outer Table

■ In the March issue of *Vanity Fair*, the strategies of the four games of Backgammon—the position game, the running game, the blocking or sideprime game and the backward game—were considered. It was stated that the backward game was the most overemphasized, overvalued and overplayed tactic in Backgammon. But as space did not permit full discussion of its disadvantages at that time, the backward game is given further consideration here. In at least three cases out of five, it ends in a gammon or a backgammon for the player who uses it without restriction; in the fourth case it ends in the loss of a single game; in the fifth a doubtful victory. In fact, this strategy, which is the one artificial element in the game, ends so frequently in disaster that the inexperienced player should never employ it, and the expert only on those rare occasions when his position is hopeless.

The principle of the backward game is this: when high throws of the dice have advanced the opponent past most of the player's men, or when the player has had one or more blots hit other than his outmost men, the player *may begin the game again* by getting *behind* the opponent and forcing him to pass by once more. During the second passing, the player hopes to be able to hit the opponent's blots one after another until he has returned enough of them to his (the player's) own board to equalize the positions again, and begin the running game once more, with the same opportunities he had when the game began.

■ In theory this is an excellent tactic, but in reality it is faulty—*because it depends on the opponent's cooperation for success.* In other words, *unless* the opponent takes up the backward game player's blots, no backward game is possible because the player cannot get *behind* the opponent except by being taken up. An attempt to get around this is made by the player of the backward game taking up all the opponent's blots he can while at the same time leaving as many of his own blots as possible in his inner table, so that the opponent cannot enter his men without taking up the player's blots. Experienced players, however, are rarely led into this predicament.

The only occasion when the backward game should be adopted without question is when the opponent opens with double-ones and the player's first throw is not a good one. The double-ones give the opponent his eight-, bar-, six-, and five-points, a position the strength of which cannot be overestimated; if in conjunction with this beginning, the player's own first throw is weak, he has only one alternative—the backward game.

In developing the (*Continued on page 100*)

Discord among the harmonists

(Continued from page 55)

are small scale beside one which extended to both sides of the Atlantic. Its latest phase was the sensational tour which Arturo Toscanini made last summer through Europe as conductor of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. For weeks, the night cables were humming with accounts of Europe's acclamation of the orchestra and the leader's genius.

Back of this tour were personal and international rivalries. The musical vendetta began seasons ago in New York City. In the season of 1925-1926, Toscanini first came as conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra to New York. His success was immediate and overwhelming. This success followed by only one season the almost equal success of a German newcomer. He was Wilhelm Furtwangler of Berlin and other middle-European centres. The American public, and especially perhaps, the nervous public of New York City, when it does take to a conductor—the orchestral conductor being anyhow the musical monarch of the present era, replacing in popularity and prestige the singer, pianist, or fiddler of a former day—takes to him handsomely. When Furtwangler mounted the rostrum, drew himself up to an impressive height, and, looming over the orchestra, gave the greatest performance of Brahms' First Symphony that the present writer ever heard, the public and press were at his feet. In one night, in one performance, he had completely conquered, and it seemed as though nothing could disturb his place in the public eye. But the head that wears the crown has reason to feel uneasy. Just a year later Furtwangler's decline began. Its unintentional author was a small, wiry, nervous man, then 59 years of age, under middle height, with a singular concentration and hypnotic power over his orchestra, and a sheer genius of incandescent temperament and command which are unique in the annals of orchestral conducting. This man was Toscanini. And yet it was not Toscanini who overthrew Furtwangler. What defeated Furtwangler was Furtwangler. Nothing else. Furtwangler, very sensitive to praise or blame, risen phenomenally in the ranks of German conductors of the day, surfeited with acclaim, came back to New York for his second visit as co-director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra with Mengelberg and Toscanini, arriving in time to hear and see a Toscanini performance, and that was the beginning of the end.

For Furtwangler heard what Toscanini did with the orchestra and saw the rapturous ovation that the audience gave Toscanini. From that day on he was another man, flustered in rehearsal, changeable, sometimes almost incomprehensible in his directions to the men. He went about town with scores under his arm, explaining the shortcomings of his competitor. He made unfortunate appeals to the socially influential to intervene with the critics, or approach the proprietors of newspapers and tell them to call off their outspoken reviewers. And much else ill-advised propaganda. The end was disastrous, and a case of pure psychology. Furtwangler remains a great conductor. And Furtwangler remains in Berlin.

Manhattan love

(Continued from page 56)

her. He wants to know of her only what he learns of her from herself.

A Townsman himself, he is acutely conscious of the difficulties that await him. In a big city it is as difficult to build up a deep relationship as it is easy to slip into a casual one, and with her he does not want anything but a deep relationship.

If only, he thinks, they could be together in the same setting, on some ship or in some country house party; if only for a few days. After he has driven her home and he is back again in his own apartment, he looks blankly at the calendar. It is six days before he will be seeing her again; six days during which they will be apart from each other, so occupied with other people and other interests that they will have no time to think more than at odd moments, of each other.

Were I to write a New York love story, I should tell how day by day the city would lay its spell upon him, so that he could not think of the city and her apart; so that he would never see the green lights flashing down Park Avenue without remembering the eagerness with which he had driven so often southwards to her home, watching the cruel haste of the mounting street numbers. He would be unable, no matter in what company to go after a theatre into a sandwich bar without remembering how after the opening night of *Topaze* they had gone to Reuben's, and how they had found there only one spare table; and that when they had sat together in the narrow alcove their elbows were too squashed for them to eat; and that when he had sat opposite her, they were too far away from each other to hear anything they said; so that the incredible fairyland that is Fifty-Ninth Street seen southwards from West Central Park would always recall the snowbound Christmas Eve when he had walked towards it, happy with the memory of a day spent with her, in his heart; so that he would see her across lines of poetry and periods of prose; so that *Young Man of Manhattan* would restate for him the heat and smoke and dust, the coca-colas and hot-dogs of Madison Square Garden and the cyclists' eternal pedalling.

In New York there would be no escape from her. Whatever the outcome of his love, he would be unable ever again to see with unstirred blood the skyscrapers and the flashing lights and the long, straight streets. He would have fallen in love with a whole city because it was her background.

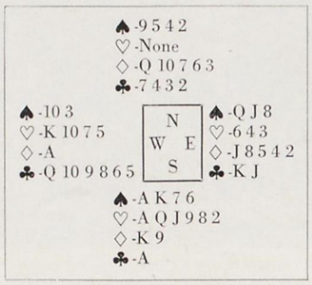
A few tough contract hands

(Continued from page 73)

went on the table. I saw that I had to get all the "breaks" in order to make the bid, so played the hand accordingly. I found three clubs to the queen and the ace of spades in Mr. Jacoby's hand, on my right, so was able to make six no trumps. After the hand had been played, Mr. Jacoby said it was the worst six bid he had ever seen, and I am inclined to agree with him, but I feel that the end justified the means. At any rate, it won us that match.

The New York newspapers took a great deal of interest in the various matches, and Mr. Shepard Barclay, of the *Herald-Tribune*, wrote daily articles about it that were widely quoted. In one of these articles Mr. Barclay said:

"Harold S. Vanderbilt had two excellent opportunities to display the brilliancy which has caused him to be rated as the equal of any player. One of these was in bidding and one in play. He had a crucial part to perform in perhaps the most peculiarly contracted hand of the entire competition. He held the weak North cards on the following deal:



"Seldom if ever has a hand brought so large a number of artificial, 'psychic', and conventional calls around the table. Leibenderfer started the 'didoes' in the South with the one club call originated by Vanderbilt to proclaim a hand of general power, meaning nothing in regard to the specific club holding. T. J. Carroll in the West followed with an honest-to-goodness club bid of two. Vanderbilt's pass indicated his general lack of strong cards. Mrs. Sims, in the East (noted for her surprising tactics in misleading her opponents) sensed an impending game bid in hearts, so bid two hearts herself to head it off.

"Leibenderfer, on the second round, indicated sure game strength and also no losers in clubs—the suit bid by the opposition—by declaring three clubs, his second club bid made without any desire to play the hand at clubs but insisting that his partner show preference among the other suits. When Carroll, remembering his partner's heart call and not knowing whether it was genuine or psychic, bid three hearts, he gave Vanderbilt a chance to present a perfect picture of his holding. Being utterly devoid of hearts, and therefore with no losers in it, he showed his partner support for both of the unbid suits (by naming the second suit of the opponents), and so bid four hearts.

"It was now clear as a bell to Leibenderfer that Vanderbilt was ready for either spades or diamonds as trumps, so that he ended the contracting with four spades, which were made, plus an extra trick, with the loss of only one trick each in spades and diamonds, in which latter suit the ace was led."

Backgammon situations

(Continued from page 63)

backward game from this beginning, all the rules of Backgammon are reversed. That is, the retreat towards the player's home table becomes an advance towards the opponent's home table; the outmost men, instead of being immediately extricated, are held on the one-point as the key to backward game play; blots are strewn about, every risk taken, every principle turned upside down. From then on it is the player's one desire to be hit as many times (up to four) as he can be, to get as many men (up to six) as he can in the opponent's inner table.

This strategy, as has been pointed out, is only successful when the opponent can be *forced* to take up the player's blots. Therefore the player must first *uncover* men all along the path the opponent must follow in running home, and then place blots in his own inner table so that the opponent, when entering, will be forced to hit them. As the player—supposing his tactics meet success—enters men in the opponent's table and consolidates a position there, he must begin to secure points in his own inner table, the better to keep out the new blots of his opponent which he expects to hit on his way home. The men not in the opponent's or his own inner table, the player should spread out in the two outer tables as catchers for the opponent's men already taken up.

This procedure must be kept up until the player, having taken up many of the opponent's blots and sent them back, and having now moved some of his own men out of the opponent's inner table, judges that he has not only caught up with the opponent in position, but has passed him, and is actually ahead. The player will then abandon the backward game, resume the position game, or even adopt a running game, while the opponent, depending on the strength of his position, will continue his running game, fall back on a position game, or *himself* adopt the backward game.

Defense against the backward game should be clearly understood by this time. Remember, simply, never to take up an opponent's blot unless your board is closed, and to abandon the running game with its necessary exposures for a cautious and careful position game, aimed first of all at preventing your opponent from getting behind you. If you prevent him from doing that, he has lost.