Bridge. - In the article on “The Principles of the Declaration at the game of Bridge,” which appeared in our issue of October last, the views of the leading authorities on the game so far as then published were considered, but the titles were not given. They are as follows: - “How to play Bridge,” by Badsworth (De la rue * Co.), “Bridge Conventions,” by John Doe (Pioneer Press, Allahabad), “Bridge and how to play it,”, by A. Dunn, jun., (Routledge & Co.). Among these works Mr. John Doe's “Bridge Conventions” contains, in the opinion of many, the best chapter upon the subject of the “Declaration.” It was largely drawn upon, and it may be remembered, in one or two cases, the writer’s propositions were criticised. Practically the same book is now published under the title of "The Bridge Manual" (Mudie & Sons) and we hope to give a review of it in our next issue.

Mr. John Doe (Note: pseudonym for F.R. Roe) tells us in his preface to this neat little volume that a generation “is rapidly arising which, though passably proficient in Bridge, is entirely ignorant of Whist.” While we hope that it may be long before the star of the greatest of card games declines, we recognise the rapidity of the strides made in popular favour of Bridge, and its progress cannot fail to be accelerated by a “practical course of instruction” so lucidly and pleasantly written, so well arranged and so carefully considered as this. Mr. Doe, in our judgment, has written the best of the several works that have yet appeared on the game. He is of opinion that the rules of Bridge require revision in some respects, and in this many will agree with him. Broadly speaking, he is in favour of more drastic dealings with mistakes; he would penalise the dealer who leads from the wrong hand, and would penalise failure to give the partner a chance of doubling, and for doubling out of turn. The fact is, Bridge is still in its youth as a game, and revision of the rules will, no doubt, be undertaken be some central authority before long. Books of instruction in card games are generally dry reading. Mr. Doe deserves congratulation for that he has shown the possibility of making the teacher’s task a musing; his pages, in their lightness of touch and humour, recall the classic “Whist or Bumblepuppy.” It is a pleasure to learn from such a book.
The extraordinary popularity which has recently been attained by “Bridge” has led Mr. Frank Haddan to investigate the Russian national card game, Vint,* which possesses many of the features of the game of Bridge whilst it appears in every way to be a more complicated and difficult affair.

The respective value of the suits is the same as at Bridge, spades being the lowest and “without trumps” the highest, but the business of making trumps is difficult, for although the dealer has the first right of proposing what game shall be played he can be overcalled by any other player who desires to make the game higher, the chance of raising the game going round, as at Poker, until there is no further bidding, when the game is played according to the proposition of the highest bidder. This is another difference from the declaration at Bridge, where the declarant merely indicates what suit is to be trumps, for at Vint, should any of the players desire to play a higher game than a simple one the propositions must be increased corresponding to the value of the game desires: thus “2 spades” indicates making 8 tricks, “3 hearts” 9 tricks, “5 no trumps” 11 tricks up to the highest call of all “grand slam no trumps,” indicating that the declaring side will make every trick and play the game without trumps.

For every rise in the game the value per trick obtained also rises in due proportion; thus the simple game scores 10 per trick, the game of “2” 20, up to “grand slam” 70 points per trick. There is a terrible penalty attaching to these high calls, for should the declarants fail to make the necessary number of tricks required according to the value of the game they declare, they have to pay a penalty to the other side of 1,000 points per trick in a simple game for every trick under, the value of each such undertrick increasing in a due proportion according as the game is raised; so that “grand slam” lost by one trick entails a penalty on the declaring side of 7,000 points for such trick in addition to the declared points. All penalties, however, are scored with the honours above the line as at Bridge, and do not affect the progress of the game, which is 500 up, and whichever side reaches 500 first at any period of a hand, wins the game.

We must confess that the figures used in the scoring of Vint are somewhat overwhelming to our Bridge mind, for should little or grand slam be declared and scored, 5,000 or 10,000 points are scored, the slams being 1,000 and 2,000 respectively if undeclared, whilst in case of failure the above points go as penalty to the non-declaring side. 2,000 points are added for rubber points, and honours have a variable value, to our mind always excessive; in the case of “no trumps” the aces count 250 each in a simple game up to 1,750 per ace in grand slam. It is impossible for us here to do more than touch upon one or two features of the game; but those who do not find sufficient variety in Bridge will do well to buy this little handbook of Mr. Haddan where Vint is explained in as lucid a manner as we should think its nature will permit. For those gamblers who are discontented with the Russian game in its general form there are special developments such as “vint with a refuse-heap”, “auction vint for
four players,” “buying cards from stock,” “exchanging cards by declarants”, and “the last straw”.

Vint may be a game worthy of the greatest gambling nation in Europe, at present modest Bridge is likely to satisfy our requirements.