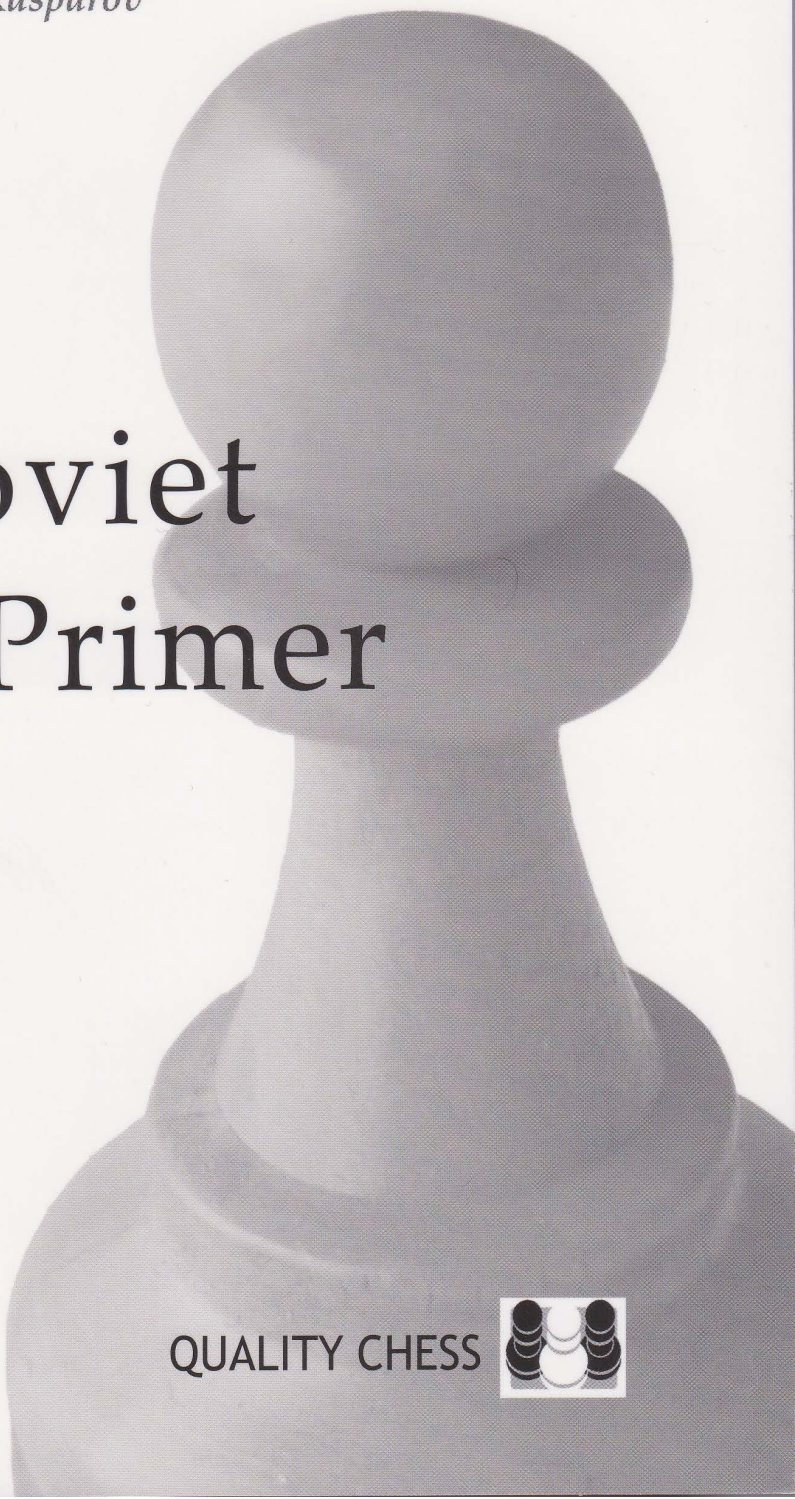
Chess Classics

*"A remarkable book, from which I learnt to play chess"* Garry Kasparov

*"A wonderful book"*
Anatoly Karpov

# The Soviet Chess Primer

Ilya Maizelis

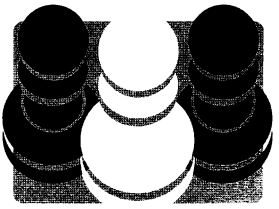


QUALITY CHESS

# The Soviet Chess Primer

By

Ilya Maizelis



Quality Chess
www.qualitychess.co.uk

First translated edition 2014 by Quality Chess UK Ltd



# THE SOVIET CHESS PRIMER



Paperback ISBN 978-1-907982-99-6

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Quality Chess UK Ltd,
20 Balvie Road, Milngavie, Glasgow G62 7TA, United Kingdom
Phone +44 141 204 2073
e-mail: info@qualitychess.co.uk
website: www.qualitychess.co.uk

Distributed in North America by National Book Network

Distributed in Rest of the World by Quality Chess UK Ltd through
Sunrise Handicrafts, ul. Skromna 3, 20-704 Lublin, Poland

Typeset by Jacob Aagaard
Proofreading by Colin McNab
Translated by John Sugden
Edit of the translated version by Daniel McGowan
Cover design by Carole Dunlop and www.adamsondesign.com
Printed in Estonia by Tallinna Raamatutrükikoja LLC

# Contents

# Foreword by Mark Dvoretsky

I didn't take up chess until rather late. At the Palace of Young Pioneers I joined the chess section in the fifth or sixth class. In those days the Soviet grading system included a Fifth and a Fourth Category. I managed to attain those categories in no time, but afterwards there was a halt in my progress. It was for that reason that I took the 1960 edition of Maizelis's *Chess* with me on summer holiday, intending to study it thoroughly.

It was an interesting and pleasant read. Large format, large diagrams, a wealth of striking examples. In both content and presentation, this was a very "tasty" book! I particularly liked the short section entitled "Entertainment Pages" with which nearly every chapter concluded. It contained amusing puzzles with witty, well-written captions. Interpolations like this embellish a book and make the material easier to absorb. When studying a serious subject it sometimes helps to divert yourself a little, to read something for pleasure, without at the same time straying too far from the main topic. After all, these "Entertainment Pages" consist of chess material with illuminating ideas, albeit conveyed in a different and lighter form. Many of the examples stuck in my memory; I even placed them in my card-index for later use.

Having studied the *Chess* book, I scored 10 out of 10 in my next tournament – more than fulfilling the norm for the Third Category. After that, I made it to the Second with a score of 10 out of 11, then progressed to First Category within a short interval.

Regrettably I was not personally acquainted with Ilya Lvovich Maizelis (1894-1978), but it is obvious he possessed a high level of culture. Though not exceptionally strong as a practical player, he was an excellent analyst; he made a study of pawn endgames and the "rook versus pawns" ending (about which he wrote a short book). Ilya Lvovich associated with several illustrious chessplayers, for example with Lasker in the pre-war years when the second World Champion was resident in Moscow. He even translated Lasker's famous *Manual of Chess* into Russian, as well as the story *How Victor Became a Chess Master*. In the pages of Maizelis's book you can find quite a few "traces" of the author's association with great players.

*Chess* is a teaching manual with an excellent selection of material convincingly presented, and a bright outward design. At the same time it is more than just a textbook. It is a story of chess as a whole, and thus its title wholly fits its content. Of course, this is not a book for the very young (writers for *them* go about it differently), but it will be very interesting and useful for schoolchildren and adults alike.

Maizelis lived in the Soviet era, and naturally he could not help incorporating certain ideological clichés into his text. This sprinkling of ideology is none too obtrusive, however, and is not experienced as an eyesore.

A notable fact is that many of my acquaintances – strong adult players – have wanted to acquire Maizelis's *Chess*. The book is very dear to me too; now and again I open it and read through a few pages afresh. Incidentally, the copy that I studied as a child was "borrowed" by someone long ago, and it wasn't possible to find another one in a shop and buy it. Then, in the seventies, I was in Sweden with the "Burevestnik" team, and we visited a chess bookshop there. Some Russian language publications were in stock, and Maizelis's book was among them. I bought it at once – money was no object! But afterwards the same thing happened to this copy: someone took it to read and didn't bring it back, so I had to look for it all over again... I now have my third or fourth copy in my library.

I am glad that Maizelis's remarkable work has finally been re-issued and will be available to many lovers of chess. It will, I hope, be both useful and pleasurable to acquaint yourselves with it.

*Mark Dvoretsky*

# Foreword by Emanuel Lasker

# The Meaning of Chess

The history of chess goes back a very long way. Many thousands of years ago – no one knows exactly when – people began to satisfy their need for play by fabricating primitive game boards, marking lines on them, arranging little objects like stones or pieces of wood on the squares (or on the intersections of the lines) and moving these objects around. In this way the game of draughts and many others arose. Illustrations of such games have been discovered in the ancient Egyptian pyramids. They are mentioned in old songs and sagas. One Chinese game is said to date back four thousand years; the game of chess has been known in India for more than two thousand. The Indian form of chess gave rise to a large number of games that are widespread across Asia.

Indian chess travelled across Persia and penetrated to Europe. The rules of the game changed – they were made more rational. Chess underwent its last significant change about four hundred years ago in Italy. But it still took a long time for the new rules to gain universal acceptance in Europe. What became "European" chess is now widely disseminated in all parts of the world.

In India, chess was an image of war. The chessboard figured as a battlefield. The pieces were divided between two hostile camps that were distinguished from each other by their colours (black and white). The classification of pieces according to their types of weapon was modelled on the ancient Indian army. At the head of the army stood the king, and it was for his life that the battle was fought. The army consisted of fighting elephants and horsemen, distinguished by their great strength and mobility, as well as lightly armed infantry. The pieces on the chessboard were moved by the players in keeping with the prescribed rules. Each player strove to eliminate his opponent's pieces and reach the enemy king, in order finally to "put him to death".

With the passage of time, the character of real war changed. The time when the life of one person – the king – was the prize at stake in the battle, receded into the distant past. So did the time when army elephants had taken part in hostilities. Yet the game of chess still retained the character it had had at birth. Even today, a chessplayer moving his pieces according to the established rules can view himself as a warlord in a battle where success depends on how well he has devised his plan. If we wanted to represent modern warfare in chess, we would need to alter all the rules of the game. The players, however, would gain precisely nothing from such an alteration, because what interests them is purely the execution and evaluation of cleverly conceived plans; and any rules that make this possible will serve – provided they are acknowledged by both opponents and strictly observed by them. All the better when the game possesses a very long history and a vast literature, from which advice and instruction may be gleaned.

In the life of man there are frequent situations where he is forced to deliberate on how to exert his powers and surmount obstacles of some kind. For this he needs to evolve a definite plan. The faculty of thought distinguishes man from an animal that acts out of instinct. Over the course of centuries, man has been working veritable miracles: he subjugates deserts, making them fruitful; he conquers vast areas, he erects cities; he builds up a social life; he brings forth monuments of art that triumph over time; he creates science and awe-inspiring technology. Creation proceeds by dint of struggle and effort. In the process of this struggle, man is not always successful in discerning the right plan; mistakes occur. Man is prone to yield to preconceived notions and prejudices rather than to reason and carefully considered judgement. He is inclined to put his trust in guile and ruse rather than in strength guided by reason. It is not enough for him to resolve to avoid these errors, for in the heat of the struggle such intentions are forgotten.

A chessplayer is greatly benefited, and his culture enhanced, by the fact that he accustoms himself to struggle in the very process of playing, and that he trains himself to form indispensable plans on the basis of much experience.

There is no doubt that combat training was a purpose that the inventor or inventors of chess (on the origin of the game we have no exact information) will have had in mind. This is evident from the rules of the game which are not borrowed from the experience of real war. In chess, both sides have the same quantity of forces at their disposal, with the same type of arms. In real life this does not occur. In this respect the game is more just than life, where brute force frequently prevails. In chess a successful outcome is determined not by the quantity of forces but by their skilful management. In chess, the opponents take it in turns to move; in a real battle, it goes without saying that a commander will not keep waiting to see what his opponent is going to undertake. This recognition of the opponent is invested with a profound meaning. Both players have an equal right of suffrage, and the opinion that is upheld is not the one that was voiced first but the one that triumphed in the debate. The student of chess thus acquires the civilized habit of hearing his opponent out – and more than that, of patiently waiting for his opinion.

In this manner the student gradually familiarizes himself with the principles of combat. Thanks to the exercise he derives from playing, he will gradually achieve mastery. But he should beware of mechanically following the advice of others. He should not play by rote. Studying material from books or from the words of a teacher is not enough – the student must form his own judgements and stand by them persistently. Otherwise he will be playing chess in the same way that a parrot pronounces words – without understanding their sense.

Personally I was never in my life given a more valuable lesson than on the day when I witnessed a serious game of chess between masters for the first time. My brother, together with one other master, was playing against a different pair of masters in consultation with each other. The two pairs were in different rooms. I was assigned the duty (being still a youth at the time) of relaying each move to the opponents as it was played. As messenger I was privy to the consultations, I followed the moves that were being suggested and listened attentively to the arguments "for" and "against". The discussion of individual moves would sometimes last a quarter of an hour and more, before the consulting masters reached a final decision. This taught me to work towards

a conclusion according to a plan, and to trust my own judgements. Even if I quite often found myself on the wrong track, I still gained far more from experience, especially from the defeats I suffered, than from blind faith in the authority of some book or some master or other. A defeat would distress me; it would always make me try to identify my mistake and work out some better continuations. In this way, in the course of time, I acquired a keen awareness of what is good and what is bad, what is genuinely strong and what amounts to a mere delusive mirage. After that I was no longer frightened by my opponents' cunning tricks; I learned to trust in strength more than in cunning, even though this is much the more difficult path. And eventually it turned out that by following that path, I had something of value to give.

Of course the student should not neglect the experience that has accumulated before him. It is not for nothing that chess has lasted for more than two millennia. It is not in vain that the game has produced great masters who have astounded their contemporaries and later generations by the skill of their play. It was not in vain that the theory of the game was developed and given practical application. It is not in vain that tournaments and matches between masters have been held and the games have been analysed so thoroughly. The student should acquaint himself with what is best in all of this, even if he can only devote a small amount of time to the work. Yet however pleased he may be to feel himself the heir to these abundant labours, he should still endeavour to assimilate them creatively. To that end he should subject them to analysis, and in the process he should not only investigate something that is recommended but also something that is quite the opposite, so as to be in a position to draw independent conclusions. In this way he will acquire the most valuable thing – a capacity for independent judgement and independent creativity – and after serving his term of chess apprenticeship he may become a fully-fledged artist of the game.

The perfecting of technique alone is a thankless task. What it perfects is a dead capability, suited to winning games against ignorant opponents and nothing else – whereas the faculty of thinking and conceiving plans remains constantly alive and can bring benefit in the most unexpected manner, not only in chess but in life itself.

This faculty is highly important and is precisely what a chessplayer ought to develop by exercise. Even if a shortage of free time prevents him from devoting much attention to chess, and he cannot therefore reach a high level of mastery in the game, nonetheless the habit he acquires of independently creating plans is of significant value in itself, and will stand him in good stead in various situations in life. The effort expended in acquiring and developing this ability will not be wasted.

*Emanuel Lasker* (World Champion 1894-1921)
Moscow, January 1936
*This article was written for the first edition of this book.*

## ADVICE TO BEGINNERS

When reading a chess book you need to use a chess board and pieces. Set up the diagrammed positions on your board, then carry out the indicated moves while pondering the explanations.

At the same time, consider some moves that are not given in the book, and try to figure out what results they lead to. This develops your independent thinking, and the knowledge you acquire will "stick" particularly well. Should questions arise that you can't deal with on your own, turn for explanation to a more experienced chessplayer.

Sometimes a diagram in a chess book doesn't reproduce the whole board but just that part of it where the relevant pieces are. This is mainly done so as to make some particular pattern of pieces easier to memorize, but sometimes the object is to allow more examples to be included. At first, until you have reached at least Third Category standard (about 1600 rating), all the examples (except possibly the very simplest) need to be played out on a chessboard, rather than in your head. The point is that clear visualization is essential for absorbing the material in the best way, and in addition you need to get used to viewing the chessboard as a whole. As your level of chess skill rises, you should try solving some of the less complicated examples in your head, so as to train yourself gradually to calculate moves in advance.

Don't try to work through a large number of examples at one session. The moment you feel some fatigue, stop reading and put your chess set aside. The important thing is not how much you have read, but how well you have assimilated it. You are therefore not advised to study the book for more than one or two hours a day. The opinion of former World Champion Lasker is interesting: he considered that you could successfully keep up your chess skill and competitive form by spending no more than 30-40 minutes daily on exercises (analysis).

Reading the book must be combined with practical play. Play with your friends, take part in tournaments. Don't get obsessed with playing at fast time rates ("blitz" chess). Such games are of some use only to high-graded players; for the junior categories they are downright harmful, as they teach superficial play and add nothing to your experience.

Keep the scoresheets of the games you play, so that later (either on your own or with friends) you can work out where you or your opponent went wrong, and how it would have been possible to play better. Not only the games you lost should be examined like this, but also those you won; the successful outcome doesn't in any way mean that all your moves were good ones.

Some initial advice on how to begin a game in accordance with the general principles of development can be obtained from Chapter 7. For more specific information, turn to Chapter 10.

Your chief goal should be to learn how to interpret the positions in a game, how to evaluate them and analyse the various possibilities. The path to a better understanding of chess, the path to mastery, is one that all players tread gradually. In this book you will find a body of instruction and advice which will in some measure make your task easier.

# Chapter 1

# The Game Explained

### 1. THE CHESS BOARD AND PIECES – OBJECT OF THE GAME

The chessboard is placed in such a way that there is a light-coloured corner square at each player's right. Each opponent's "army" consists of eight pawns and eight pieces (a king, a queen, two rooks, two bishops and two knights). The two opponents' forces are numerically equal, and differ from each other only in colour. Irrespective of their actual tint, they are referred to as "white" and "black". The pieces and pawns are represented in print as follows:

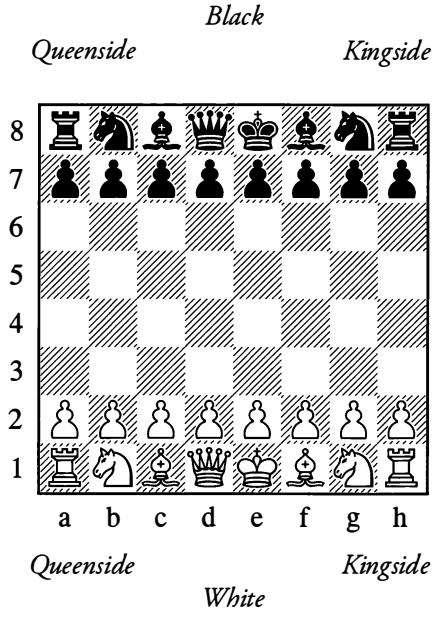
| White | | Black |
|---|---|---|
| ♔ | King (abbreviation: K) | ♚ |
| ♕ | Queen (abbreviation: Q) | ♛ |
| ♖ | Rook (abbreviation: R) | ♜ |
| ♗ | Bishop (abbreviation: B) | ♝ |
| ♘ | Knight (abbreviation: N) | ♞ |
| ♙ | Pawn (abbreviation: P) | ♟ |

The abbreviation for the pawn is used only rarely.

At the start of the game, the players' forces are arranged facing each other, as in illustration 1. (The image of the board and pieces is called a "diagram".)

The half of the board in which the kings are placed at the start is called the *kingside* (more exactly this means the three outermost columns in that half). The opposite area is the *queenside*.

**1**




The arrangement of the pieces in the starting position, which is the same for White and Black, needs to be memorized. In the corners there are the rooks, then come the knights and bishops, and in the middle the kings and queens – with the white queen placed on a light square and the black queen on a dark square, while the kings are on the opposite-coloured squares.

The pawns are often identified by the pieces they stand in front of – thus we speak of a rook's pawn, a knight's or bishop's pawn, the queen's pawn or the king's pawn.

Pieces with different names have different ways of moving.

*Pieces* can be moved on the board in all directions, but *pawns* can only ever move forwards.

Pawns also have some other peculiarities which we shall meet with presently. However, from now on, whenever we need to speak of pieces and pawns together, we shall simply say "pieces" for brevity.

The object of the game is to overpower the opponent's king – to "checkmate" it. We shall explain this in detail later.

**Modern chess pieces**

King Queen Rook Bishop Knight Pawn

## 2. IDENTIFYING THE SQUARES – RECORDING A POSITION

To identify the squares of the chessboard, we use the following simple and convenient system. All the ranks, that is the horizontal rows of squares running from left to right, are designated by the numbers from 1 to 8. All the vertical files, or columns pointing in the direction of the opponent, are designated by the letters from "a" to "h". Each square of the board is identified by the letter of the column and the number of the row in which it is located.

By using these names for the squares and the abbreviations or symbols for the pieces, we can concisely record any position on the board.

For instance, the starting position of the game (see Diagram 1) can be recorded as follows.

**White** – ♔e1, ♕d1, ♖a1 and h1, ♗c1 and f1, ♘b1 and g1, ♙a2, b2, c2, d2, e2, f2, g2, h2.
**Black** – ♔e8, ♕d8, ♖a8 and h8, ♗c8 and f8, ♘b8 and g8, ♙a7, b7, c7, d7, e7, f7, g7, h7.

In the above scheme, the most important pieces are placed first, followed by all the others according to their "strength". The functions and strength of the pieces will be discussed in due course.

The board is always visualized, so to speak, from White's point of view. Thus for example

in Diagram 1, all the black pawns are arranged on the seventh rank, and although from Black's viewpoint this rank is the second, he still calls it the seventh just as White does. He regards his own back rank as the eighth, in other words the counting starts from *White's* back rank. Every chessplayer needs to be well acquainted with the nomenclature of the squares on the board (see Diagrams 2 and 3).

**2**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | a8 | b8 | c8 | d8 | e8 | f8 | g8 | h8 |
| 7 | a7 | b7 | c7 | d7 | e7 | f7 | g7 | h7 |
| 6 | a6 | b6 | c6 | d6 | e6 | f6 | g6 | h6 |
| 5 | a5 | b5 | c5 | d5 | e5 | f5 | g5 | h5 |
| 4 | a4 | b4 | c4 | d4 | e4 | f4 | g4 | h4 |
| 3 | a3 | b3 | c3 | d3 | e3 | f3 | g3 | h3 |
| 2 | a2 | b2 | c2 | d2 | e2 | f2 | g2 | h2 |
| 1 | a1 | b1 | c1 | d1 | e1 | f1 | g1 | h1 |
| | a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h |

*Viewed from White's side*

**3**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | h1 | g1 | f1 | e1 | d1 | c1 | b1 | a1 |
| 2 | h2 | g2 | f2 | e2 | d2 | c2 | b2 | a2 |
| 3 | h3 | g3 | f3 | e3 | d3 | c3 | b3 | a3 |
| 4 | h4 | g4 | f4 | e4 | d4 | c4 | b4 | a4 |
| 5 | h5 | g5 | f5 | e5 | d5 | c5 | b5 | a5 |
| 6 | h6 | g6 | f6 | e6 | d6 | c6 | b6 | a6 |
| 7 | h7 | g7 | f7 | e7 | d7 | c7 | b7 | a7 |
| 8 | h8 | g8 | f8 | e8 | d8 | c8 | b8 | a8 |
| | h | g | f | e | d | c | b | a |

*Viewed from Black's side*

## 3. THE ORDER OF PLAY – MOVES AND CAPTURES

A game of chess is played by making moves on the board, that is, by transferring pieces from one square to another. The players make moves alternately. The game is always started by the player with the white pieces.

The question as to which of the opponents will have White is decided by lot.

In successive games, the players take White and Black alternately. In tournaments, tables giving the order of play are used.

After White's first move, Black carries out *his* first move, then White's second move follows, and so on.

Only a single piece can be moved at each turn. A piece cannot be placed on a square already occupied by a piece of the same colour.

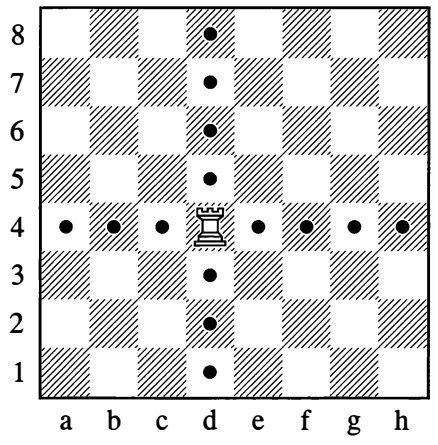
A piece *can* be placed on a square occupied by an *enemy* piece, as long as the move conforms to the rules. In this case the enemy piece is "captured", that is, it has to be removed from the board (you cannot of course capture pieces of your own).

## 4. THE MOVES OF THE PIECES – ATTACK AND DEFENCE – EXCHANGES

### THE ROOK

The rook moves along the ranks and files, in any direction and over any distance.

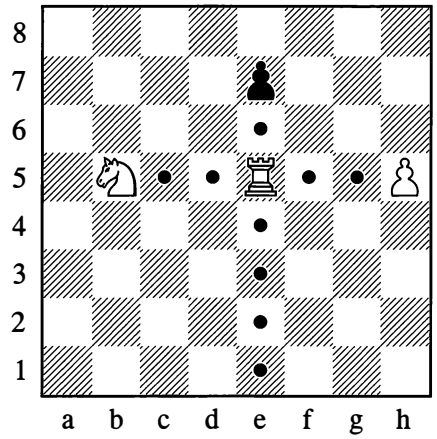
**4**



In the position in Diagram 4, the rook can move to any of the fourteen squares indicated.

The mobility of the rook, as of any other piece, is reduced if there are other pieces in its line of movement.

**5**

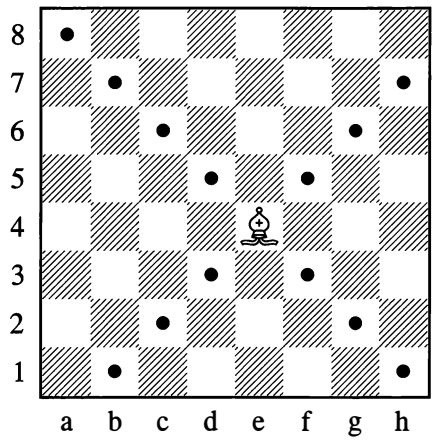



In the position in Diagram 5, there are only nine vacant squares that the white rook can move to. The rook may also, however, capture the enemy pawn on e7 (by removing the pawn from the board and occupying the e7-square itself). Thus, the total number of possible moves for the rook in Diagram 5 is ten.

## THE BISHOP

The bishop moves only along the diagonals, in any direction and over any distance.

**6**




The greatest number of moves that a bishop may have at its disposal is 13 (this is when the bishop is placed in the centre, that is on one of the squares e4, d4, e5 and d5). On b7, the bishop would have only 9 moves available, and on a1 it would have no more than 7. Thus the bishop's mobility is less than that of the rook, which on an open board always has 14 moves, no matter which square it is on.

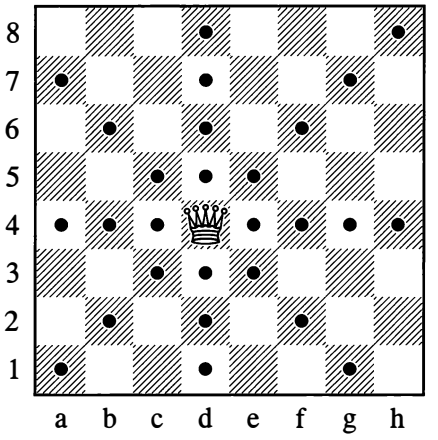
Furthermore the bishop operates on squares of one colour only – the light squares or the dark squares (hence we use the expressions "light-squared bishop" and "dark-squared bishop"), whereas all the squares on the board, irrespective of colour, are accessible to the rook's action.

This all goes to show that the rook is stronger than the bishop.

## THE QUEEN

The queen is the strongest piece of all; it can move like a rook *and* like a bishop. On an open board it has a choice of 27 moves from any of the centre squares.

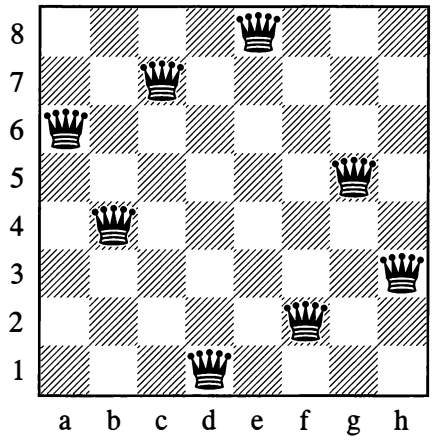
**7**




Thanks to its immense mobility and also to its option of making diagonal moves on either

the light or the dark squares, the queen proves to be a good deal stronger than a rook and bishop combined.

**8**
An ancient puzzle



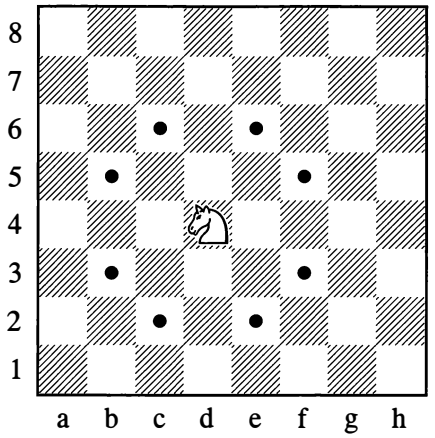

In this diagram, eight queens are placed in such a way that not one of them is within capturing range of another. In 1862, Carl Jaenisch proved that 92 such configurations are possible. From the solutions he gave, we have selected the one that is simplest in outward appearance. Try to find another one for yourself.

## THE KNIGHT

The knight's move is more involved than that of the other pieces. It can jump in any direction across one square and onto a square of the opposite colour to the one it is starting from. The knight, so to speak, takes a path that is mid-way between a rook's move and a bishop's move. But whereas the rook and bishop can go any distance, the knight only jumps across one rank or file.

The rook, bishop and queen, unlike the knight, are *long-range* pieces.

**9**

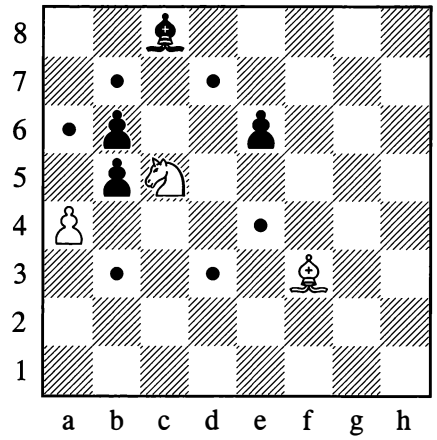



The greatest number of moves that a knight may have at its disposal is eight. This is when it isn't too close to the edge of the board. On a1, the knight would only have *two* moves – to b3 and c2. It is important to note the knight's characteristic of changing the colour of its square with every move. It is owing to this that all the squares on the board are accessible to it. In this respect the knight has an advantage over the bishop which considerably surpasses it in mobility and long-range action.

Another advantage of the knight is its greater capacity for multiple strikes: in theory it can attack eight enemy objects at once, while the bishop can only attack four (though these things never actually happen in practice). These advantages and shortcomings approximately cancel each other out, so that the knight is considered equal in strength to the bishop.

Unlike the other pieces, the knight has the right to jump over pieces of its own or the opposite colour.

**10**



In Diagram 10, the knight may move to any of the six squares that are marked; it cannot go to a4, as that square is occupied by a pawn of its own colour. By moving to a6, the knight is jumping over enemy pawns. The knight may also capture the pawn on e6, but in that case it is placing itself under attack from the black bishop on c8; so, since any piece is more valuable than a pawn, the capture on e6 is unfavourable to White.

The pawn on e6, as we say, is *protected* by the bishop. If the knight moves to b7, it will be under protection from the white bishop on f3. If the black bishop captures the knight on b7, it will be captured by the bishop on f3 in return. This is called "exchanging" a piece.

The bishop is equal to the knight in strength, hence neither opponent has reason to fear this exchange.

In other cases, the pieces captured may be of unequal value; for instance, the so-called "minor" pieces (bishop and knight) are weaker than the "major" pieces – queen and rook. Here we can speak of an exchange only perhaps if two minor pieces are obtained for a rook, or three for a queen.

This means that when exchanging you need to have a precise grasp of the relative strength of the pieces. We shall go into this in detail later (see page 60).

**An ancient puzzle**

Move a knight round all the squares of the chessboard without landing on any square twice, in such a way that from the final square the knight may move straight to the square it started from.

**11**

| | a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 31 | 54 | 47 | 8 | 33 | 10 | 27 | 50 |
| 7 | 46 | 7 | 32 | 53 | 28 | 49 | 34 | 11 |
| 6 | 5 | 30 | 55 | 48 | 9 | 36 | 51 | 26 |
| 5 | 56 | 45 | 6 | 29 | 52 | 25 | 12 | 35 |
| 4 | 43 | 4 | 57 | 20 | 61 | 14 | 37 | 24 |
| 3 | 58 | 19 | 44 | 1 | 40 | 23 | 62 | 13 |
| 2 | 3 | 42 | 17 | 60 | 21 | 64 | 15 | 38 |
| 1 | 18 | 59 | 2 | 41 | 16 | 39 | 22 | 63 |

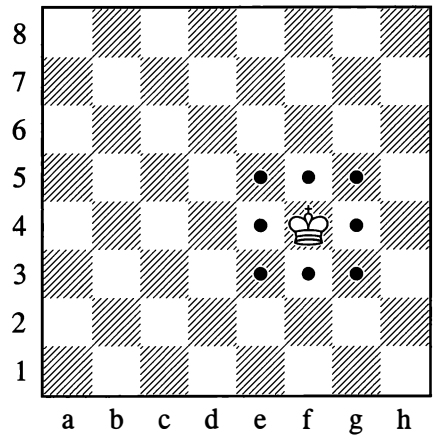
We give you the solution straight away. The numbers indicate the order in which the knight must visit the squares. Looking through the solution just once will give you a better grasp of the way a knight moves.

(From the numerous published solutions, we have selected one of those deriving from Jaenisch. Its special characteristic is that the numbers in any rank or file add up to 260. Apart from d3, the starting square could be not only d6 but also c2 or c7, f2 or f7. If you draw lines to mark out each step of the knight's route, a complete symmetrical picture will emerge.)

## THE KING

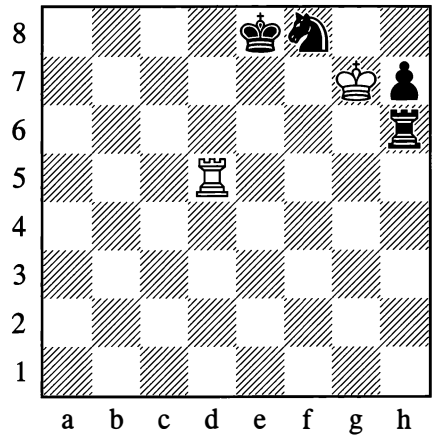
The king moves in any direction, either orthogonally (that is, along the file or rank) or diagonally, but only one square at a time.

**12**



The maximum number of moves available to the king is eight. What is special about the king is that the rules of the game forbid you to place it on a square that is under attack, in other words a square within the capturing range of an enemy piece. It follows that the king cannot capture a piece that is protected.

**13**



In this situation White can capture the unprotected rook on h6, which his king is attacking from the square g7. The king may also move to g8 or h8, but not to f6, f7 or g6. It does not have the right to take either the knight on f8 or the pawn on h7, since they are protected by other black pieces.

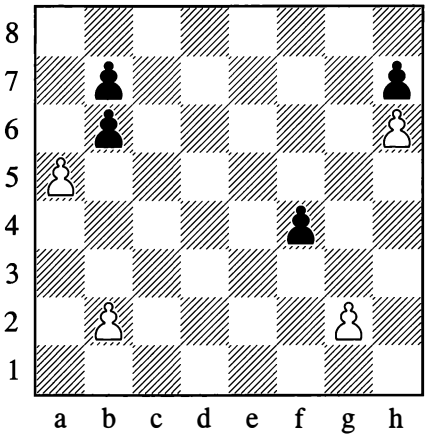
The black king in this position has one move only – to e7.

## 5. THE PAWN'S MOVE – CAPTURING "EN PASSANT" – PAWN PROMOTION

The pawn is weaker than any of the other pieces, since it moves only forwards along the file and only one square at a time. This rule has, however, one exception: if a pawn has not yet moved – in other words if it is still on the second (or seventh) rank – then it may, if desired, make a double advance, crossing over one vacant square and landing on the 4th rank (or the 5th rank for Black).

The pawn's capturing move is not the same as its ordinary move; in this respect the pawn differs from all the other pieces. To make a capture, the pawn goes one square *diagonally* forward. It conforms to the general rule, however, in occupying the square from which the captured piece has been removed.

**14**



If it is White to move here, he can take the pawn on b6 with his pawn on a5. The latter may also move to a6; in that case it will be under attack from the black pawn on b7.

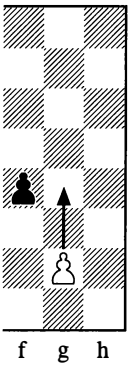
The black pawn on b6 has already moved (it can only have reached this square by making a capture from a7 or c7); at this moment it can only move to b5 or capture on a5.

The pawn on b2 has *not* yet moved – it is still on its starting square. It can therefore move to either b3 or b4. By playing b2-b4 White would be defending his pawn on a5 which at present is under attack.

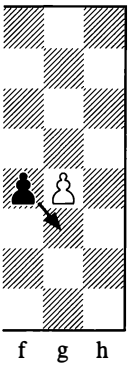
The pawns on h6 and h7 have no moves at all; they are "blocking" each other.

The pawn on f4 directs its attack against the squares e3 and g3. If White moves his pawn from g2 to g3, the pawn on f4 will be able to capture it. However, if White jumps across the attacked square by playing g2-g4, this does not deprive the black pawn of the right to capture; it may *still* take the white pawn by moving to g3, just as if the pawn on g2 had only gone one square forward. This type of capture is called a capture "en passant". The following set of diagrams illustrates it.

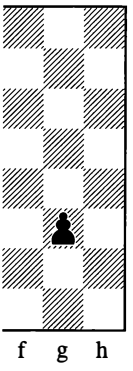
**14a**




*Initial position*




*White has played g2-g4*




*Black has captured "en passant"*

The capture *en passant* can only occur on the following move, that is, as an immediate reply to White's g2-g4; after any other move, the right to capture *en passant* is lost.

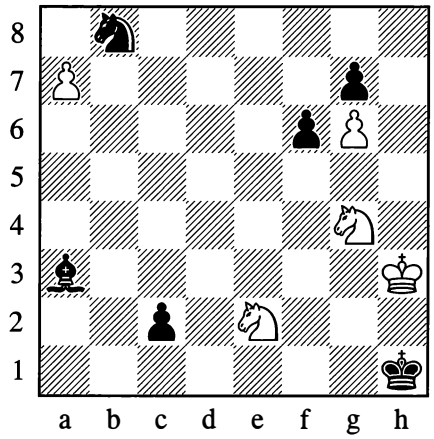
Let us make further use of Diagram **14** to explain some chess terminology.

Pawns such as those on b2 and g2 are called "backward", since the pawns on the adjacent a- and h-files have moved further forward.

The pawns on f4 and h7 are called "isolated" since they cannot be defended by other pawns. There are "doubled isolated" pawns on b6 and b7. If Black captures on a5, he will be disentangling his pawns and they will become "united", that is capable of defending each other.

When a pawn reaches the last rank (the 8th for White, the 1st for Black), it is immediately removed from the board, and the player chooses any other piece of the same colour (except a king) to put in the pawn's place. In this way he may place a second queen on the board (or even a third, etc.), or he may insert a rook or a minor piece (bishop or knight). Usually, the strongest piece – the queen – is chosen. The pawn's promotion to a piece is counted as a single move.

15



In the position in Diagram 15, by playing ...c2-c1, Black can obtain a queen on the c1-square. In that case the queen can be captured by the knight on e2, whereupon Black (with his bishop on a3) wins a piece in return for his pawn.

If it is White to move, he can take the knight on b8 with his pawn on a7 and place a queen or another piece on the b8-square (after removing the black knight and the pawn). Black cannot forestall this by playing his bishop to d6, as White also has the option of moving his pawn straight forward and queening on a8. The pawns on c2 and a7 (and also the one on f6) are called "passed pawns", since no enemy pawn can place an obstacle in their "path to queening".

In Diagram 15 White could also take the pawn on f6 with his knight ("sacrificing a knight for a pawn"). Then if the pawn on g7 takes the knight, the white pawn on g6 becomes "passed" and can promote to a queen within two moves, seeing that none of Black's pieces can hold it up.

## 6. CHECK AND MATE

The object of the game, as stated before, is to overpower the enemy king – to checkmate it (for checkmate we also simply say "mate"). This defines the role of all the pieces on the board: in the last resort, they are attacking the opponent's king and defending their own. The king's downfall signifies loss of the game. The king does not have the right to place itself under attack from a hostile piece. If one of the players does accidentally put his king under attack, then the king will not of course be captured, as the rules of the game do not permit this. The player who made the illegal move merely has his mistake pointed out, and he is obliged to make some other move with his king.

In general, according to the rules of the game, a piece that has been touched must be moved. This rule is very strictly observed. If you want to adjust a piece on its square, you tell your opponent first. (The French phrase "j'adoube" traditionally serves this purpose.) Otherwise you have to move the touched piece, or capture it if it is an enemy one. If, however, the piece cannot be moved or captured, any other move may be played.

If any piece positions itself in such a way that the enemy king could be captured on the following move, this threat to the king is called a "check". It is not obligatory to warn your opponent out loud that he is in check, and usually this is not done.

When your king is in check, you must free yourself from the check with your next move. There are three ways:

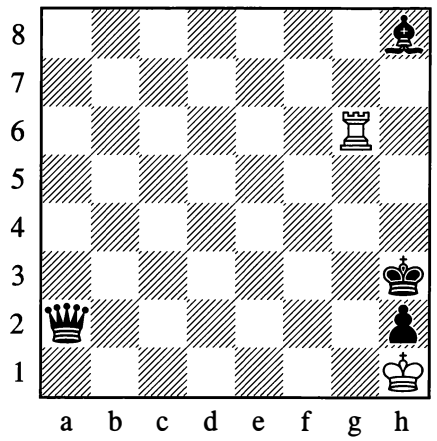
(1) Capture the piece that is giving check.

(2) Move a piece to block the line along which the enemy piece is delivering its threat (your king is then shielded from the check). And finally:

(3) Move your king to one of the adjacent squares that are not under attack from your opponent.

If all three methods of defence against check prove impossible, this means that the king has been mated.

**16**



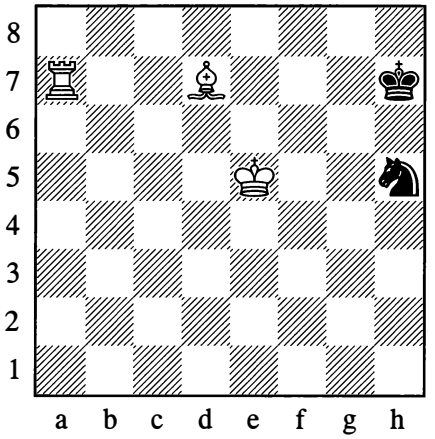
In this position, Black can give check to the white king by moving his queen to a1 or b1.

In reply, White can only shield his king by moving his rook to g1. After that, Black may take the rook with his queen; or he may capture it with the pawn on h2, promoting to a new queen (or a rook). In either case, White is mated.

The queen on a2 can also give check by going to a8 (or d5). If the white rook blocks the check on c6 (or g2), Black captures it, again giving mate.

In Position 15 which we examined earlier, White could mate the black king by moving his knight from g4 to f2. It sometimes happens that a move by one piece opens up the line of action of a different piece that is placed behind it, resulting in check to the opposing king. A check of this type is called a "discovered check"; if the piece that moves away gives check itself at the same time, this brings about a "double check". Here is an example:

**17**



Any move of the bishop in Position 17 results in a discovered check from the rook on a7. If the bishop goes to f5, it gives double check. The only defence against a double check is a move of the king.

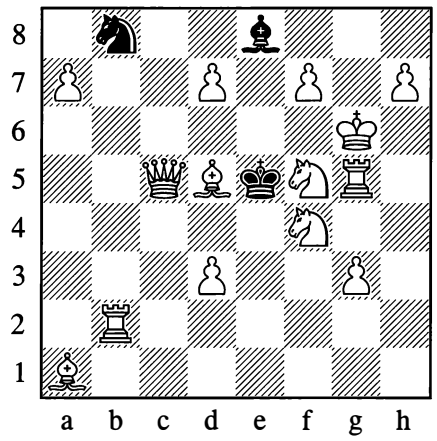
If the bishop goes for instance to e8, then Black has the option, apart from moving his king, of shielding it by playing his knight from h5 to g7. (After that, the knight is unable to move, as it is not allowed to expose the king to attack from the rook; it is "pinned" and deprived of mobility.)

If during a game you unexpectedly notice that one of the kings has been left in check, you must go back to the position where the check was given, and resume the game only from that point. Other irregularities are handled in the same way, for instance if the starting position was set up wrongly or a piece has made an illegal move, etc. In all such cases you must correct the error and continue playing from that point in the game.

In view of its special significance, the king is subject to constant threats and cannot therefore take an active part in the opening and middle phases of the game. In the final phase, however, its role increases.

**A fun exercise**

**18**



*Mate in one move, in 47 different ways*

Diagram **18** (a position from J. Babson, 1882) gives an example of mate in one move. In this position, mating in one move is not difficult, but it turns out that there are forty-seven ways of doing so. In practical play, such positions don't arise – this puzzle is in the nature of a joke.

To solve the puzzle, you need to remember that pawns can be promoted to various types of piece.

**SOLUTION**

In Diagram 18, the queen gives mate in six ways (on six squares), and the pawn on d3 has one mating move. In addition, mate arises from discovered checks: fourteen moves with the rook on b2, eleven with the bishop on d5, seven with the knight on f5. Finally, White can mate by promoting pawns: two of them can promote to queen or bishop (four options); two others can promote to queen or rook (four further options). The total is 47 moves.

## 7. DRAW – PERPETUAL CHECK – STALEMATE

Checkmating one of the kings is not possible in every game of chess. In many cases neither player can achieve victory, and the game is counted as a draw.

The following are types of drawn game:

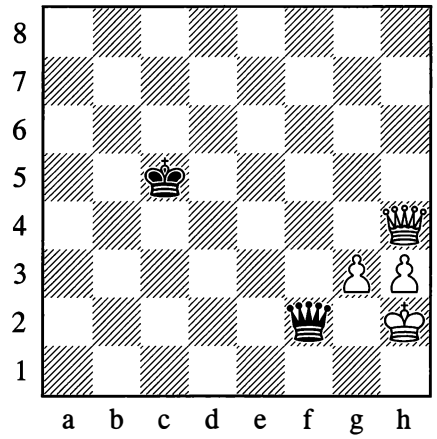
(1) When one of the kings is subjected to "perpetual check", that is a continuous series of checks from which it has no way of sheltering.
(2) When one of the players is "stalemated". That means he is in a position where neither his king nor any other piece can make a move, and his king is not at present in check (if it were in check, this would be checkmate).

In the position in Diagram 16 the weaker side can save itself from loss, thanks to perpetual check or stalemate. White, if it is his move, gives check on g3 with his rook. If the black king captures the rook, White is stalemated. If the king goes to h4, the rook checks again on g4, and so on. Black either allows perpetual check, or else (by taking the rook) stalemates his opponent. In either case the game is a draw.

A rook like this, persistently chasing the king and intent on perishing as a means to avoid losing the game, may be called a "rook running amok".

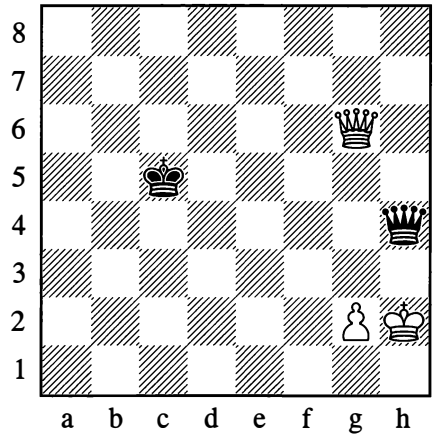
The next two diagrams, 19 and 20, show instances of perpetual check that occur extremely often in practical play.

**19**



Black gives perpetual check on the squares f2 and f1.

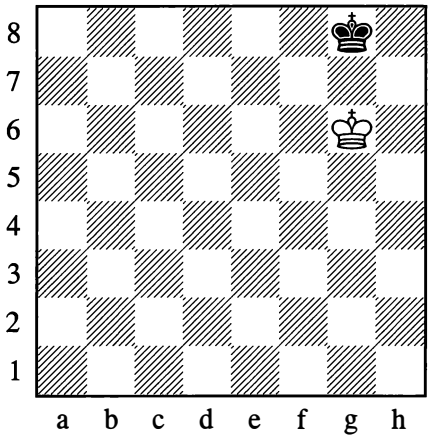
**20**



Here Black gives perpetual check on the squares h4 and e1.

(3) The next case of a drawn outcome is when neither side is left with sufficient forces to mate the enemy king.

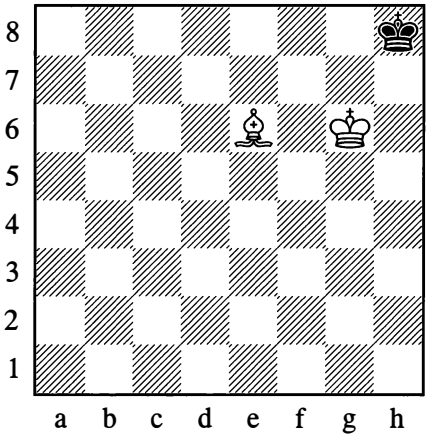
**21**



Here only the kings are left on the board. With his last move (♔g6) White has placed his king *vis-à-vis* that of his opponent. Such a situation of the kings is called "the opposition"; White "gained the opposition" with that move.

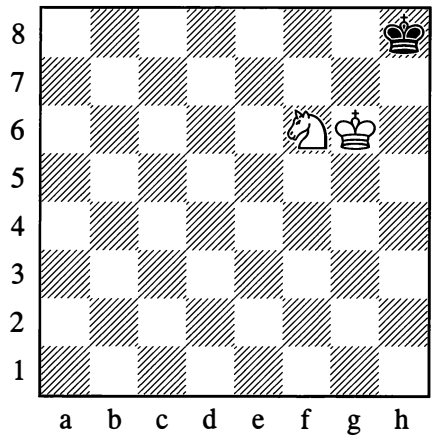
Although White has restricted the freedom of manoeuvre of the black king (which can't go to any square on the 7th rank), there are still two squares on the 8th rank that Black can move to. Neither king can go right up to the other, since neither one has the right to place itself under attack. Obviously the game is a draw.

**22**



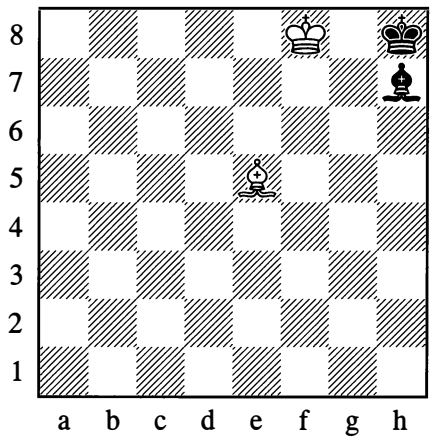
In Positions 22, the stronger side has an extra bishop. The black king in the corner is so cramped as to have no moves whatever. Yet since Black is not in check, a position like this is stalemate – that is, a draw once again. It is not possible to arrange things so that the bishop, while cutting off the king's moves on the 8th rank, gives check at the same time. If the bishop were on f6, the black king would be able to go to g8. Just as before, the position would be clearly drawn.

**23**

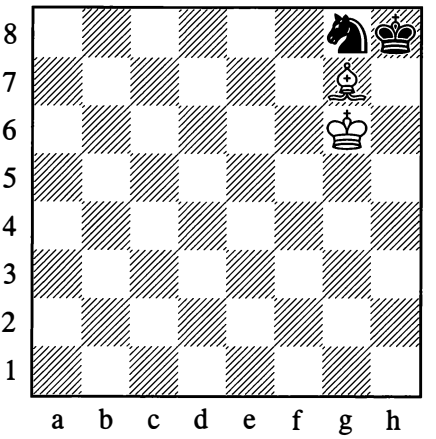



We have a similar situation when the stronger side has an extra knight. Here too, the position is clearly drawn.

**24**



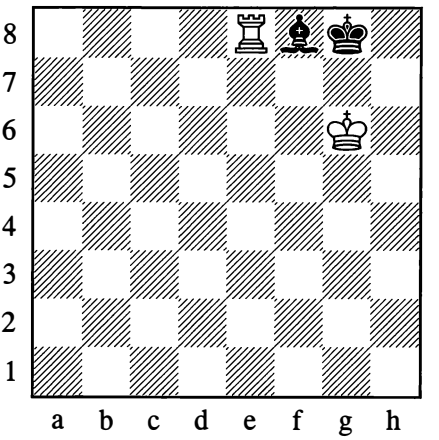

**25**




In Positions 24 and 25, Black too has a minor piece – that is, he has more forces than in Positions 22 and 23. And yet – strangely enough! – he has been checkmated. But this is very easy to explain. The black pieces are occupying exceptionally bad positions; they are cramping their own king, depriving it of an essential flight square.

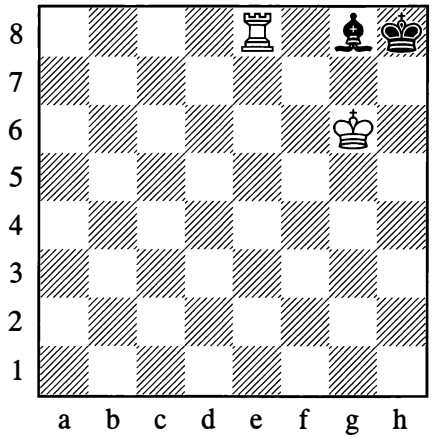
These examples show what forces cannot be considered adequate for victory. At the same time, we are beginning to see that a matter of great significance is the *arrangement* of the pieces – the positions they occupy.

**26**



In the position in Diagram 26, the forces are equal in quantity but not in quality: we know that the rook is stronger than the bishop. A rook's superiority in strength over a bishop (or knight) is called "the exchange". White, then, is "the exchange up". Is that sufficient to win? It turns out that in this position, it is. If White, in fact, makes a waiting move with his rook – to d8, say – then Black's sole and obligatory reply is ...♔h8, whereupon the rook captures the bishop, giving checkmate.

**27**




However, if this position is slightly altered by shifting the black king to h8 and the bishop to g8 (see Diagram 27), White's win no longer proves possible. If the rook goes to d8, this gives stalemate.

Other possible winning attempts by White are also futile. Here is an example (you would do better to come back to it after mastering the notation of the moves and acquiring some practical experience): 1.♖e7 ♗c4 2.♖h7† ♔g8 3.♖c7. White is attacking the bishop and simultaneously threatening to give mate on c8. However, Black replies 3...♗d3†, forcing White to abandon the opposition of the kings – after which the threat of mate disappears, and the game remains drawn.

So the question whether your forces are sufficient for victory is decided by the relative strength and positioning of the pieces.

Further cases of a drawn game are the following:

(4) The two opponents can agree to call the game a draw if they think it futile to continue the struggle (because there are no winning chances).

(5) If the same position (with the same side to move) occurs three times (this can come about, for example, through both opponents repeating their moves), a draw may be claimed by one of the players.

(6) Also if, during the course of 50 moves, not a single capture has been made on the board and not one pawn has advanced, a player may claim a draw. (Conventionally, "one move" is taken to mean a move by White together with Black's reply.)

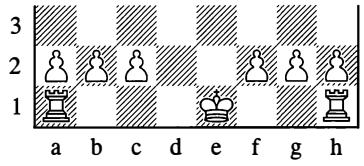
## 8. CASTLING

This is the name given to another possible move in a game of chess: the simultaneous movement of the king and one of the rooks. This is the only case of a move being made with two pieces at once. Each side is permitted to castle only once in the game. An essential prerequisite is that the squares between the king and the rook should not be occupied, either by the player's own pieces or by his opponent's.

Castling is carried out like this: the king jumps across one square in the direction of the rook, and the rook stations itself on the other side of the king, on the square next to it.

The king may castle towards either the king's rook or the queen's rook, as the player wishes. In the former case we speak of "castling short", and in the latter case "castling long".

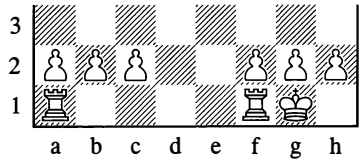
**28**



*Position before castling*

In this situation the king may castle on either side.

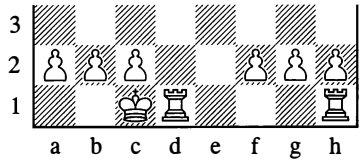
**29**



*Castling short*

White has castled on the kingside – that is, the king has moved to g1 and at the same time the rook on h1 has moved to f1.

**30**



*Castling long*

White has castled on the queenside – the king has moved to c1 while the rook on a1 has gone to d1.

For castling to be possible, the following conditions must be met:

(1) The king and rook must be on their original squares and must not have made any moves so far.

(2) The squares in between the king and the rook must be vacant.

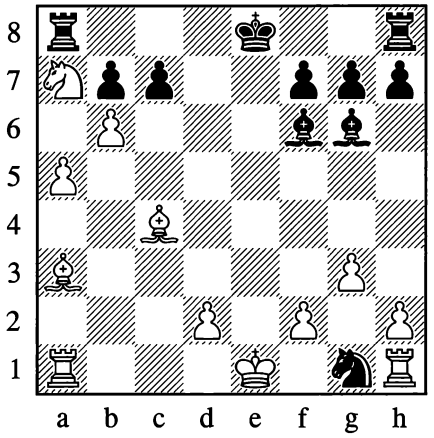
(3) The king must not be in check (you cannot reply to a check by castling), and the king must not be placed in check by the castling move.

(4) The square that the king moves across (f1 or f8 in the case of castling short, d1 or d8 for castling long) must not be under attack from any enemy piece.

If the rook, not the king, is under attack, or if the rook has to cross over an attacked square, this in no way prevents castling.

All these issues are illustrated by Diagram 31.

**31**



In this position, only White can castle – and only on the queenside. Black, if it is his move, could check on f3 with his knight and thereby deprive White of the right to castle at all, seeing that White would have to move his king from its starting position to one of the adjacent squares (he could not reply by castling).

Should one of the players castle in contravention of the rules, he must replace his king and rook on their starting squares and carry out a move with his king.

The point of castling is that it permits a major change in your king's position (when danger threatens), and also enables a powerful piece – the rook – to be brought quickly into play.

Preventing your opponent from castling is sometimes highly advantageous.

## 9. RECORDING THE MOVES – CONVENTIONAL SYMBOLS

For recording the moves of a game, we use so-called "algebraic notation" to indicate the square to which a piece is moved. If the move is made by a piece other than a pawn, we also insert the standard abbreviation or symbol for that piece. In addition, the following signs are normal in chess literature:

| | |
|---|---|
| **x** | captures |
| † | check |
| †† | double check (often not used, just described as †) |
| # | mate |
| **0–0** | castles short (kingside) |
| **0–0–0** | castles long (queenside) |
| ~ | any move |
| | |
| ? | a weak move |
| ?? | a blunder |
| ! | a good move |
| !! | an excellent move |
| !? | a move worth considering |
| ?! | a move of doubtful value |
| # | mate |
| | |
| ± | White is slightly better |
| ∓ | Black is slightly better |
| ± | White is better |
| ∓ | Black is better |
| +– | White has a decisive advantage |
| –+ | Black has a decisive advantage |
| = | equality |
| ∞ | with compensation |
| ⇄ | with counterplay |
| ∞ | unclear |

Thus, "e4" means that a pawn moves to e4; "♖xd6" means that a rook makes a capture on d6; "axb8=♕" means that a pawn on the a-file captures on b8 and promotes to a queen; "exd8=♘†" means that a pawn on the e-file makes a capture on d8 and promotes to a knight which gives check to the king; "♗h5††" indicates a bishop moving to h5 and bringing about a double check.

If two pieces of the same type may move to a particular square, we must specify which one of them is going there. For example, if one rook is on a1 and the other is on f1, we write ♖ad1 or ♖fd1. If there is a knight on a4 and another on a2, the notation is ♘4c3 or ♘2c3.

Apart from this "standard" algebraic notation, there is also a "long" version which records both the departure square and the destination square of the piece that is moving. The above moves

might thus be written as "e2-e4", "♖d1xd6", "a7xb8=♕" and so on. Although the long version is perfectly understandable, the short version is used by the overwhelming majority of chess players and publishers. By avoiding any superfluous information, it occupies less space and is quicker to write down.

Moves may be written in a column or across the page. As an example, we will take the following opening of a game:

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.e4** | **e5** |
| **2.♘f3** | **♘c6** |
| **3.♗c4** | **♘f6** |

Written across the page, the moves look like this: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6

Or in "full" notation: 1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♗f1-c4 ♘g8-f6

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

Take a chess set, start from the initial position (see Diagram 1), and play through some short games in order to master the notation of the moves, the conventional symbols, and some checkmating positions. Where the moves leading up to the mate are not indicated, find them for yourself. Then try solving the "fun exercises". They are not only amusing; in their own way they are also instructive.

## SHORT GAMES

### 1

**1.f4 e5 2.g3? exf4 3.gxf4?? ♕h4#**

White's mistaken play laid bare the e1-h4 diagonal.

The record for brevity would be this game:

**1.f3? e5 2.g4?? ♕h4#**

### 2

**1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.♕h5**

A lunge that is typical of beginners. We shall later see that moves with the queen in the opening stage are rarely useful and sometimes even harmful to the development of your game.

**3...d6??**

Black has defended his pawn on e5 but has failed to notice that first and foremost he is threatened with mate. The correct course was 3...♕e7 and then 4...♘f6, bringing a new piece into play ("developing" it) and repelling the white queen.

**4.♕xf7#**

### 3

**1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.♕f3 ♘h6?**

An unsuccessful way to defend the point f7, as the knight on h6 will presently be eliminated by the white bishop on c1. A sound defence would be 3...♘f6.

**4.d4! ♗xd4 5.♗xh6**

If Black now takes the bishop, he will be mated. But if he defends against the mate he will lose in the long run anyway, as he will be left with a piece less (for example: 5...0–0 6.♗c1).

### 4

**1.e4 b6 2.♗c4 ♗b7 3.♕f3 ♘f6 4.♘h3 ♗xe4?**

Better is 4...e6.

**5.♘g5?**

White could regain his pawn by 5.♗xf7† ♔xf7 6.♘g5† and 7.♘xe4.

**5...♗xf3??**
It was essential to play 5...d5.

**6.♗xf7#**

**5**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗c4 ♗g4**
The answer to 3...♘f6 would be 4.♘g5.

**4.c3 ♘c6 5 ♕b3 ♗xf3??**
He had to play 5...♘a5.

**6.♗xf7† ♔e7 7.♕e6#**

**6**

**1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘xe4 4.♘c3 ♘xc3 5.dxc3 d6 6.0-0 ♗g4?**
Better is 6...♗e7, followed by castling.

**7.♘xe5! ♗xd1**
In reply to 7...dxe5 White would not continue with 8.♕xg4, but would win the queen by 8.♗xf7† ♔e7 9.♗g5† ♔xf7 10.♕xd8.
Now, White mates in two moves.

**8.♗xf7† ♔e7 9.♗g5#**

**7**

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e5**
White could meet this by playing 5.♘f3, followed by ♗c4 and ♘c3, to seize control of the point d5.

**5.♘f5 ♘ge7??**
He should have played 5...d6 or 5...d5.

**6.♘d6#**
This type of mate is called a "smothered" mate.

**8**

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗g4 6.♕e2 ♗xf3??**
He had to cover his king with 6...♕e7.

**7.♘f6#**
Mate resulting from a double check.

**9**

**1.d4 f5 2.♗g5 h6 3.♗h4**
White tries to provoke a weakening of the e8-h5 diagonal.

**3...g5 4.♗g3 f4?**
The right move was 4...♘f6.

**5.e3 h5**
Black defends against the threat of ♕h5#.

**6.♗d3 ♖h6??**
He had to play 6...♗g7 7.exf4 h4.

**7.♕xh5†! ♖xh5 8.♗g6#**

**10**

**1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♗b7 3.♗d3 f5?**
Black has thought up a scheme for winning a rook, but he is weakening the e8-h5 diagonal.

**4.exf5 ♗xg2 5.♕h5† g6 6.fxg6 ♘f6??**
6...♗g7 was best, although Black is still in danger.

**7.gxh7†! ♘xh5 8.♗g6#**

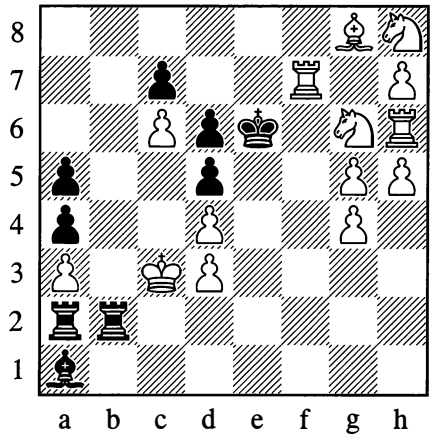
**11**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d5 3.exd5 ♕xd5 4.♘c3 ♕a5 5.♕e2 ♘c6 6.d3 ♗g4 7.♗d2 ♘d4 8.♕xe5†? ♕xe5† 9.♘xe5 ♘xc2#**

# FUN EXERCISES

**1**

You can't fail to solve it!



*Mate in 1 move*

"I haven't learnt to solve chess problems yet," says an inexperienced reader.

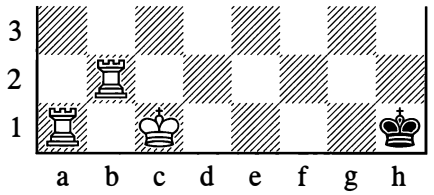
"Have a go anyway. Here's a problem you're quite sure to solve. What's more, you won't manage *not* to solve it!"

"You don't say! That *is* interesting. Well, which side is to move?"

"Usually White is. But this time, just as an exception, *either* White *or* Black gives mate in one move."

**2**

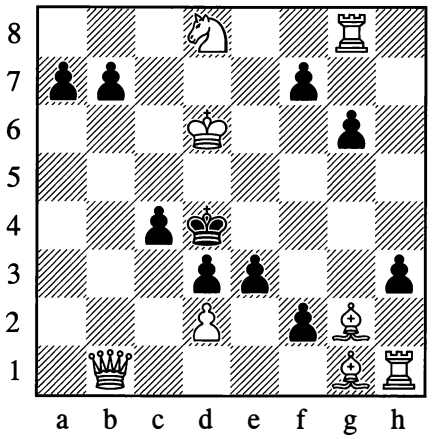
Do you know the rules?



*Mate in half a move*

**3**

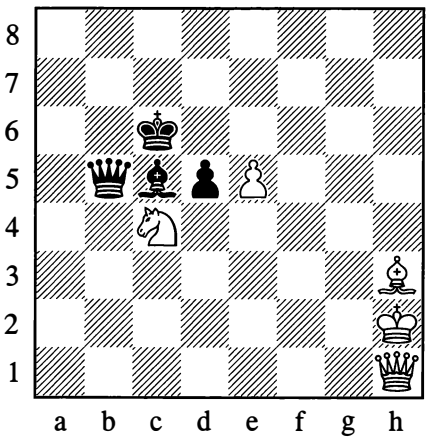
Correct the mistake!



There is clearly a mistake in this diagram. Find what it is, and you will then discover that White can give mate in one move, no matter which way you correct the mistake.

**4**

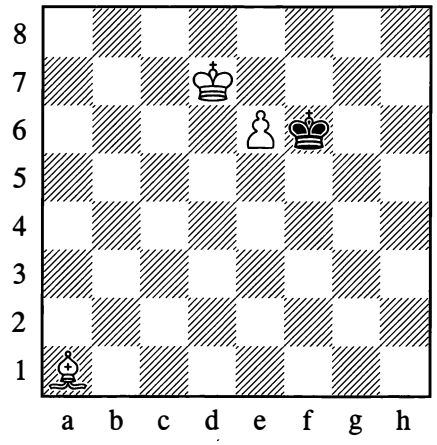
Have the rules sunk in?



*White mates in one move*

**5**

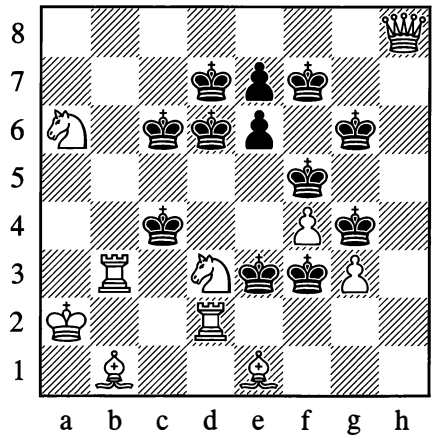
How did this position come about?



*Find the preceding moves*

**6**

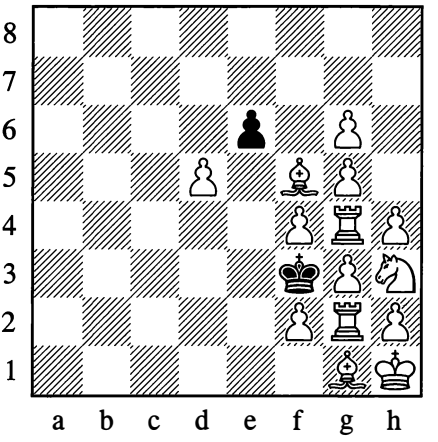
Killing several birds with one stone



Black has too many kings (ten), but all of them are mated by one single move.

**7**

Couldn't hear! Say that again!



The task for this problem – or at least the first part of the wording – was announced rather indistinctly in noisy surroundings by the famous problemist Sam Loyd. It was possible to catch the words "... to play" (now his voice grew stronger!) "and mate in four moves."

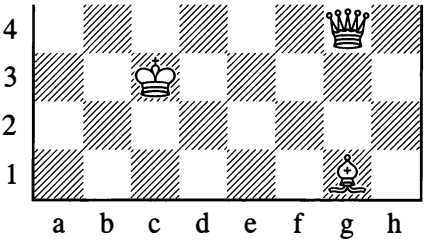
The listeners racked their brains for a long time, but their efforts to mate the black king within four moves came to nothing.

"White *cannot* give mate in four moves here," they finally decided.

"What do you mean, White?" Loyd asked in feigned astonishment, pleased to have had his listeners on. "I said quite clearly, it's Black to play and mate in four moves." Sure enough, the black pawn solves the problem easily and amusingly.

**8**

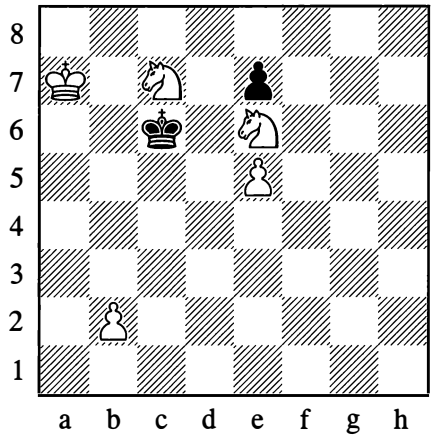
Three questions



Where must Black's king be placed, so that (1) he is in a mate position, (2) he is in a stalemate position, (3) White can mate him in one move? (Set up the pieces on a board – you need to see the *whole board* to find the solution.)

**9**

Straightforward

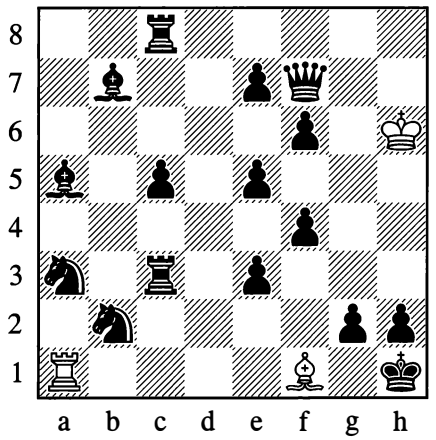


*Mate in 5 moves*

Don't be afraid of having to find five moves – the task is easy! You just need that number of p... (stop, no hints!).

**10**

"Fighting not with numbers, but with skill"

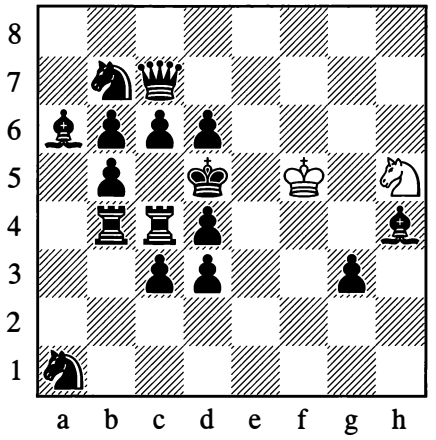


*White wins (mate in 10 moves at the latest)*

Already after White's first move, Black is essentially defenceless. All he can do is put off the mate until the tenth move by sacrificing his pieces and pawns (placing them in the way of the checks).

**11**

The horse is a useful animal!



*Mate in 12 moves*

With a solitary knight, White successfully fights against the entire hostile army. This is possible here because the black pieces are occupying exceptionally awkward (deliberately concocted!) positions.

**Fun questions**

**12.** What is the greatest number of knights that can be placed on the board in such a way that not one of them is within capturing range of another?

**13.** How must you play in any position in order to "guarantee" becoming a master within a certain time?

# SOLUTIONS TO FUN EXERCISES

**1.** The joke is that *any* move by White or Black brings about mate. Thus there are 30 mating moves: 16 for White and 14 for Black!

**2.** White completes the queenside castling move. He has moved his king from e1 to c1, and now he has to bring the rook from a1 to d1.

**3.** A ninth black pawn has been mistakenly placed on the board. Remove any one of them, and you will see that mate next move is possible.

**4. 1.e5xd6** (capturing the d5-pawn "en passant").

**5.** Once you have seen that last problem, solving this one is not hard. The pawn on e6 was previously on d4, and Black had a pawn on e7. There followed **1.d5† e5 2.dxe6†**.

**6. 1.♘e5#** (Some wits say that with a strength of "ten horsepower" this is the most aggressive move in the history of chess!) Inspect for yourself how the mate is performed on each individual king.

**7.** Naturally **1...exf5** etc. Of course, such a position could not arise in a practical game (look at the bishop on g1 and the pawn on h4), which means it infringes the rules that conventionally govern chess problems. But ... what would you not do for a laugh?

**8.** Sam Loyd, 1866: (1) on e3, (2) on h1, (3) on a8 (♕g4-c8#).

**9.** The pawn makes 5 moves and promotes to ... a third knight.

**10. 1.♗a6†! ♘b1 2.♖xb1† ♖c1 3.♖xc1† ♘d1 4.♖xd1† ♗e1 5.♖xe1† g1=♕** (or any other piece) **6.♗xb7† ♖c6 7.♗xc6† ♕d5 8.♗xd5† e4 9.♗xe4† f3 10.♗xf3#**

**11. 1.♘f4†, 2.♘e6†, 3.♘xc7†, 4.♘xa6†** Now round and back again. **5.♘c7†, 6.♘e6†, 7.♘f4† ♔c5 8.♔e4! d5† 9.♔e5 ♗f6† 10.♔e6! ♘d8† 11.♔d7** and **12.♘d3#**.

**12.** The maximum is 32 – on all the light squares or all the dark squares.

**13.** Well.

# Chapter 2

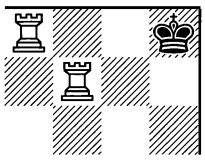
# Aim of the Game

From our preliminary discussion we already know that the customary finale (conclusion) to a game of chess is checkmate or a draw. We will now try to expand these introductory remarks; first let us study some finishes of a very simple kind.

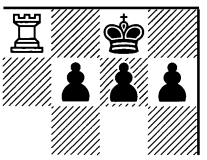
### 1. CHECKMATE

The ultimate aim of the game is to checkmate the enemy king. Let us examine some typical mating positions. We will start with those where the mate is given by a rook.

**32**

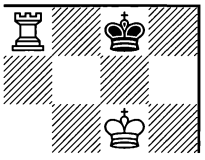


**33**

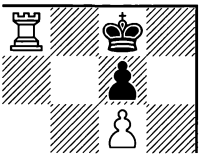


*Mate with rook*

**34**

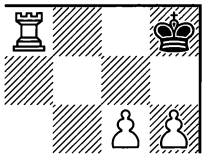


**35**

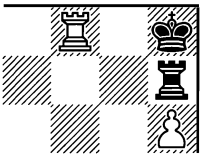


*Mate with rook*

**36**



**37**



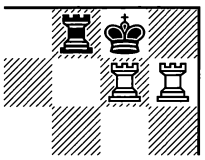
*Mate with rook*

In all the above positions, the rook is giving mate on the 8th rank. In practice, the edge of the board is nearly always (with very rare exceptions) the place where checkmate is achieved, as the king's mobility here is extremely limited.

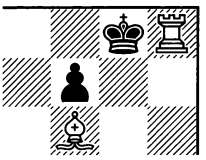
In the Diagrams 32-37 the king's escape to the seventh rank is prevented either by its own pieces or by those of the enemy, or sometimes a combination of both.

A rook in conjunction with some other piece quite often finishes the game in the following ways:

**38**

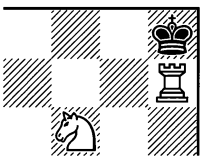


**39**

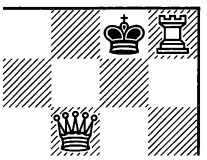


*Mate with rook*

**40**



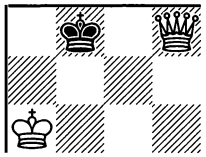
**41**



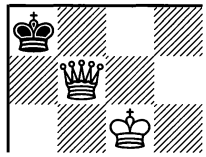
*Mate with rook*

Checkmate with the queen is illustrated by the next examples.

**42**

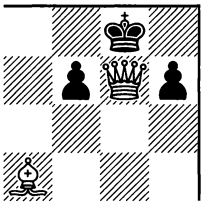


**43**

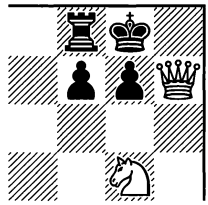


*Mate with queen*

**44**



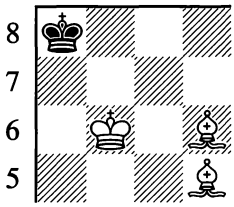
**45**



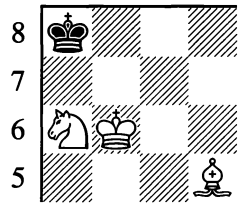
*Mate with queen*

In the positions below, the mate is carried out by minor pieces.

**46**

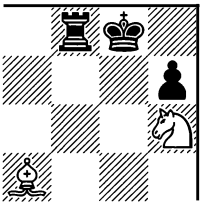



**47**

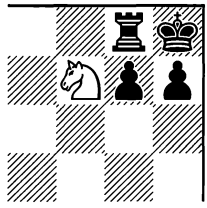



*Mate with bishop*

**48**



**49**



*Mate with knight*

In Positions 46 and 47 a bishop delivers the mate, while the other minor piece prevents the black king from sidestepping to b8. The mate with a knight in Position 49 is a so-called "smothered" mate. A pawn too can give mate just like the other pieces. Positions 50-50a may suffice as an example.

**50** **50a**

*Mate with pawn*

The positions we have given are frequently met with in practice, so it is useful to commit them to memory.

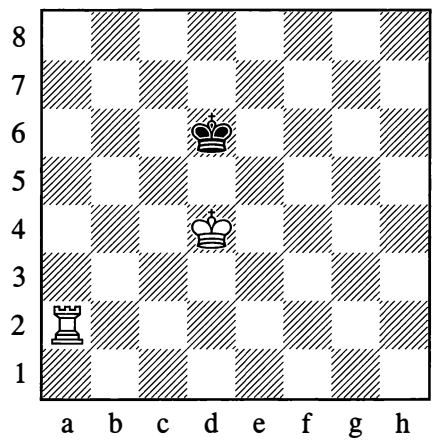
## 2. MATE IN THE SIMPLEST ENDGAMES

Towards the end of the game, one of the players may possess an extra piece while his opponent has only his king left. If the extra piece is a bishop or knight, it cannot give mate (see Diagrams 22 and 23 in Chapter 1).

It's a different matter if a rook – or an even stronger piece, the queen – is left on the board. In this case, winning (using your own king in support) is very simple. In order to mate the enemy king, you have to drive it to the edge of the board, where its mobility will be most severely curtailed (there will be no rank in the king's rear for further retreat).

In Diagram 51 the kings are in opposition; the black king is already somewhat restricted – all three squares ahead of it on the 5th rank are out of bounds.

**51**



*White to move*

**1.♖a6† ♔d7**

The black king is thrown back by one rank.

**2.♔c5**

So as to answer 2...♔c7 by giving check again and forcing the black king onto the edge of the board.

**2...♔e7 3.♔d5 ♔f7 4.♔e5 ♔g7 5.♔f5 ♔h7 6.♔g5 ♔g7**

Now that the opposition has been attained, a new check follows.

**7.♖a7† ♔f8 8.♔f6 ♔e8 9.♖h7**

Note this waiting move with the rook; now the black king will sooner or later be forced into an opposition situation.

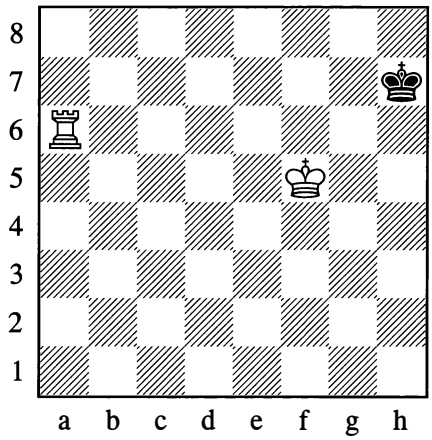
**9...♔d8 10.♔e6 ♔c8 11.♔d6 ♔b8 12.♔c6 ♔a8 13.♔b6 ♔b8**

The opposition is achieved.

**14.♖h8#**

In this example we have demonstrated the simplest way, though rather a slow one, to bring about the mate. After Black's 5th move the mate could have been achieved more quickly.

**52**



*White to move*

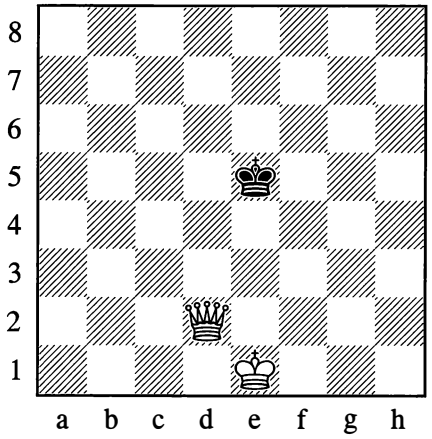
Here White can continue as above, with ♔g5, waiting for Black to move into opposition. With the following continuation, however, White can arrive at the mate sooner:

**1.♖g6 ♔h8 2.♔f6 ♔h7 3.♔f7 ♔h8 4.♖h6#**

A further solution is also possible: 1.♖a7† ♔g8 (1...♔h6 is met by the waiting move 2.♖b7 and then 3.♖h7#, while if 1...♔h8 then 2.♔g6) 2.♔f6 etc. Mate in four moves can also be achieved by 1.♔f6 (find it for yourself!). No matter how unfavourably the white pieces are placed to begin with, mating with a rook requires no more than 16-17 moves.

Mating with a queen is easier still; it takes 9-10 moves at the most.

**53**



*White to move*

**1.♕d7 ♔e4 2.♔f2 ♔e5 3.♔f3 ♔f6 4.♔f4 ♔g6 5.♕e7 ♔h6**

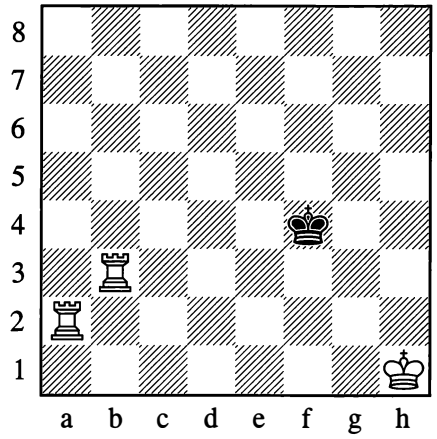
In such situations a little care is needed. If for instance White plays 6.♕f7?, Black is stalemated and the game is a draw.

**6.♔f5 ♔h5 7.♕h7#**

Or 7.♕g5#.

To mate with two rooks or queen and rook, there is no need for support from your own king.

**54**



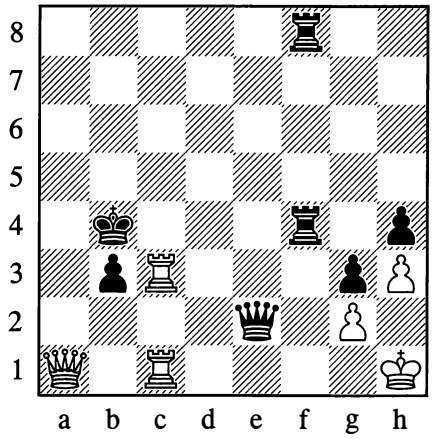
*White to move*

**1.♖a4† ♔e5 2.♖b5† ♔d6 3.♖a6† ♔c7 4.♖h5 ♔b7**

If 4...♔d7, then 5.♖h7† and 6.♖a8#.

**5.♖g6 ♔c7 6.♖h7† ♔d8 7.♖g8#**

**55**



*White mates in 7 moves*

**1.♖xb3†! ♔xb3**

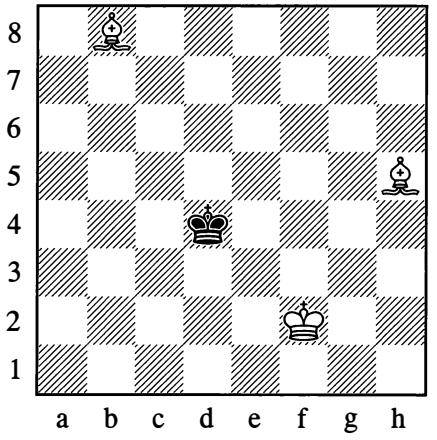
White forces mate in a characteristic manner:

**2.♖c3† ♔b4 3.♕a3† ♔b5 4.♖c5† ♔b6 5.♕a5† ♔b7 6.♖c7† ♔b8 7.♕a7#**

Two bishops or a bishop and knight, with the support of their own king, can also give mate.

The mate with two bishops can be achieved within 18 moves by driving the king into any of the corners. As in the foregoing examples, the winning process demands coordinated play with the pieces.

**56**



*White to move*

**1.♗f3**

The bishops occupy the diagonals a8-h1 and b8-h2, barring the black king's path towards the right.

**1...♔d3 2.♗e5 ♔d2 3.♗e4**

White has regrouped his forces. His bishops now additionally control the diagonals a1-h8 and b1-h7. The black king already has few squares left.

**3...♔c1**

Hoping for a draw after 4.♔e2?? (stalemate).

**4.♔e3 ♔d1**

With his next move White stops the black king from returning to c1 and begins to drive it gradually towards the h1 corner square.

**5.♗b2 ♔e1 6.♗c2 ♔f1 7.♔f3 ♔g1**

The answer to 7...♔e1 would be 8.♗c3†. Now White takes measures to prevent Black from breaking out via h2 and h3.

**8.♗f5 ♔f1 9.♗c3 ♔g1 10.♔g3 ♔f1 11.♗d3† ♔g1 12.♗d4† ♔h1 13.♗e4#**

These last moves with the bishops call to mind the mating process with two rooks in Position 54; there the rooks were advancing rank by rank, here the bishops encroach diagonal by diagonal.

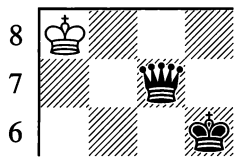
Mating with bishop and knight is more difficult; we shall examine this endgame later (see page 100).

## 3. DRAWN GAME

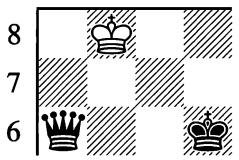
If the game has not been going our way, and the preponderance of force is on our opponent's side, then we must bend our efforts to saving the game in some way or other – we must try to reach a draw. Something was said about draws on page 23. Now let us look at some more examples.

A common type of draw is stalemate:

**57**

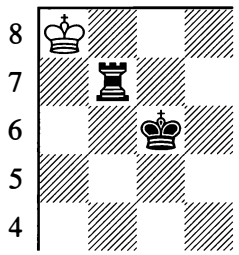


**58**

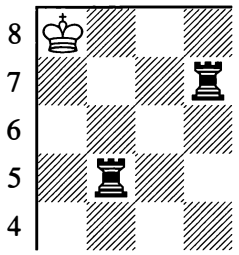


With his last move Black has made the mistake of depriving the white king of all its squares. White is stalemated. The game is a draw.

**59**

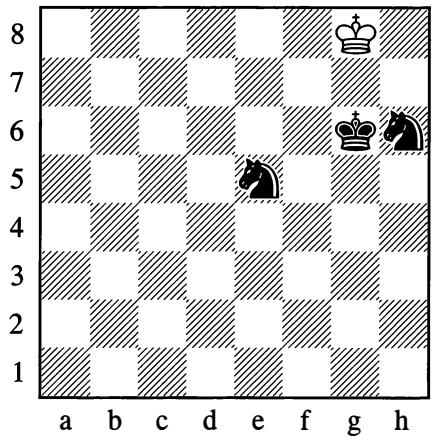


**60**



When trying to mate with king and rook or two rooks, you have to play carefully to avoid putting your opponent in a stalemate position – which is just what has happened in Diagrams 59 and 60. Two knights are *incapable* of giving mate if the opponent defends correctly.

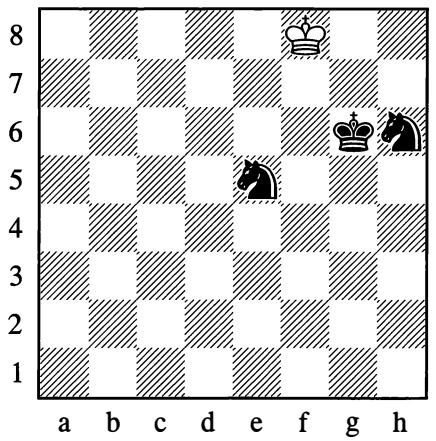
**61**



*The critical juncture: White is in check from h6*

In Position 61, if White makes the mistake of ♔h8?, he will be mated by ...♘ef7#. But after the correct **♔f8!**, the game will end in a draw.

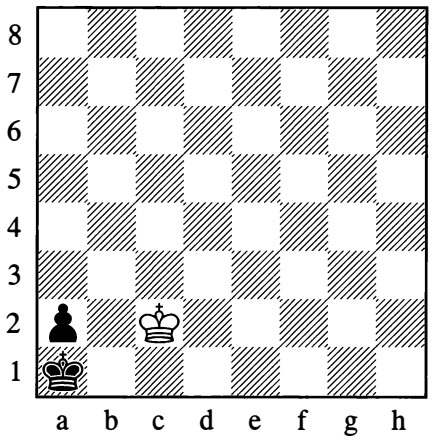
**61a**



*White has made the correct king move*

In Positions 57-60, the white king was playing a passive role and was stalemated as the result of an error on Black's part. Sometimes, however, the king fights for the draw actively and brings about stalemate by its own efforts.

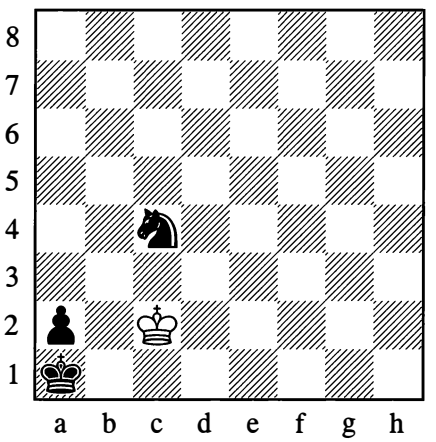
**62**



*White to move*

In Position 62, the black pawn is only one square away from queening. But the promotion square is occupied by Black's own king, and the white king will not let it out of its prison. If it is White's move here, he plays **♔c1** and Black is stalemated.

**63**

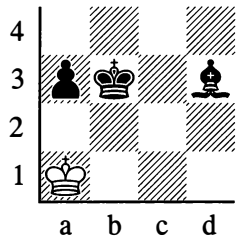


In Position 63, even the presence of a knight is no help to Black if it is his turn to move. White keeps playing ♔c1 and ♔c2, refusing to be sidetracked even if Black tries offering his knight as a sacrifice – say with ...♘d2. On the other hand if White is to move, he loses – for example 1.♔c1 ♘a3, and White is forced to move away to the d-file, freeing the black king's exit. The important thing for White is that the knight and king should match each other in switching the colour of their squares: for instance **1...♘a3†** (the knight occupies a dark square) **2.♔c1** (likewise moving to a dark square), etc.

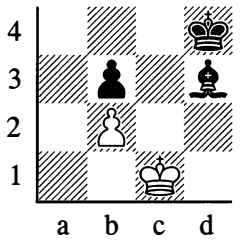
It is now easy to understand that if the white king were on d1 (let us say), and the black knight were at the other end of the board – so that White had the choice of moving his king to c1 or c2 – then he would need to choose the square of the same colour as that currently occupied by the enemy knight. (Try it and see!)

This last example is not the only case where a minor piece and a pawn are unable to win.

**64**




**65**

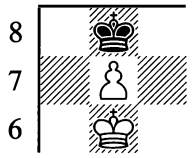



In Position 64, the bishop doesn't control the pawn's queening square, and the white king cannot be driven away from the corner. It can only be stalemated.

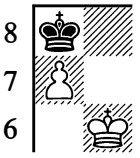
In Position 65 Black cannot win either, since the white king cannot be forced away from the defence of the b2-pawn. Any tries lead only to stalemate.

The king may also be stalemated when the opponent has just one pawn, as in the following positions:

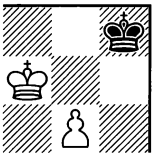
**66**




**67**




**68**

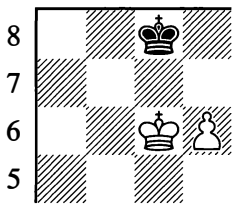


*Black to move – Stalemate*

## 4. CONDUCTING A PAWN TO ITS QUEENING SQUARE

An extra pawn in the final phase of the game will often enable us to win, seeing that after conducting the pawn to the far end of the board we can promote it to the strongest piece – the queen. There are, however, positions where one extra pawn is not enough for victory because the stronger side is unable to bring the pawn to its promotion square.

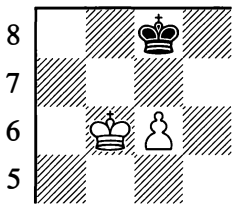
**69**




*White to move – Draw*

**1.d7† ♔d8 2.♔d6**
Black is stalemated.

**70**



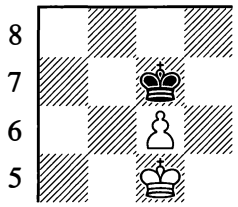

*White to move wins*

**1.c7 ♔d7 2.♔b7 ♔~ 3.c8=♕**
White wins.

In Diagrams **69** and **70**, the slight difference in the placing of the black king is decisive. The whole point is that in the first case Black has the opposition, but not in the second case. This will be explained more fully in Chapter 4, "Techniques of Calculation". If it were Black's move in Position 70, he would play **1...♔b8**, gaining the opposition and drawing.

It is worth memorizing the rule for this type of position: if the pawn advances to the 7th rank (for Black, the 2nd) with check, there is no win. If it goes there *without* check, the game is won.

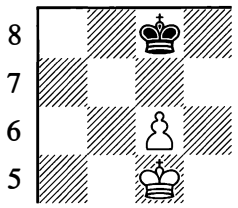
**71**




*Black to move*

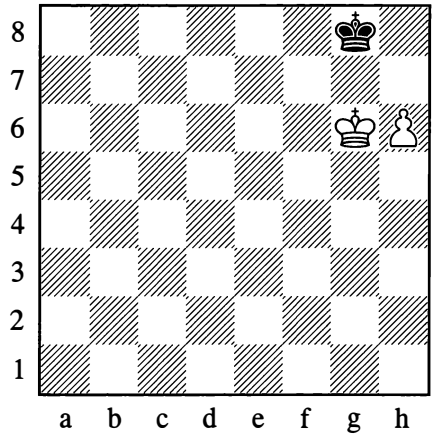
Black's salvation depends on which square he moves his king to. In Position 71 he retreats with his king to the crucial square c8, so that either move by the white king (to b6 or d6) can be answered by taking the opposition with ...**♔b8** or ...**♔d8**.

**71a**




Black has made the sole correct move, and the draw is now assured.

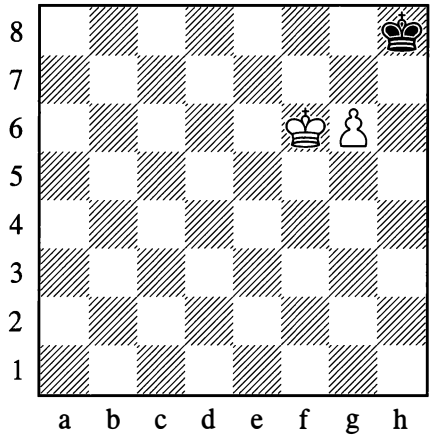
**72**



*Draw, whichever side is to move*

An attempt to win from Position 72 would lead to stalemate (compare Diagram 67).

**73**

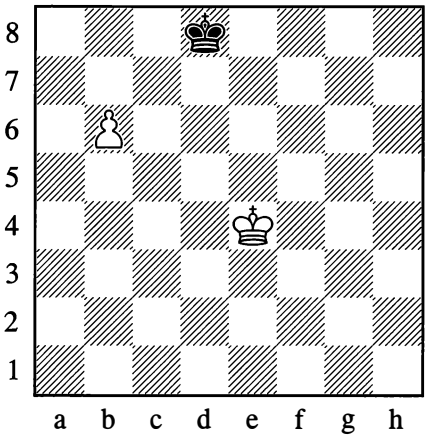


*White to move – Draw*

There is no win from Position 73 either. No matter how White continues, it will eventually be stalemate (see Diagrams 66, 68, 71 and 71a). Yet if Black is to move in this position, White *does* win.

These exceptions to the rule are due to the fact that the pawn is located either on the edge of the board (the rook's file) or on the next file from the edge (the knight's file).

**74**



*White wins*

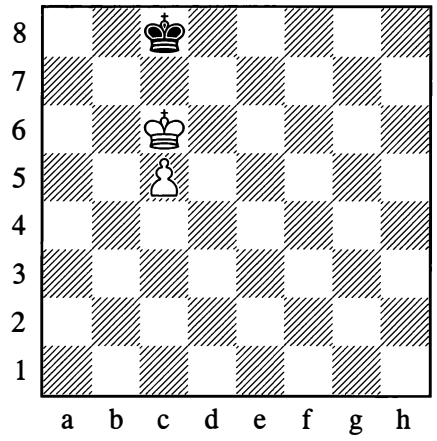
**1.♔d5 ♔d7 2.♔c5 ♔d8 3.♔d6! ♔c8 4.♔c6 ♔b8 5.b7**
Winning.

We have now examined all the basic situations that can come about with the pawn on the sixth rank (6th for White, 3rd for Black).

It is extremely important for the beginner to set up some examples on a chessboard independently and satisfy himself that he has fully mastered these positions and can infallibly tell what the play from any such position will lead to – win or draw – with either White to move or Black to move.

If your pawn – other than a rook's pawn – is on the fifth rank (counting from your own end), then it is always possible to win on condition that your king is in front of the pawn.

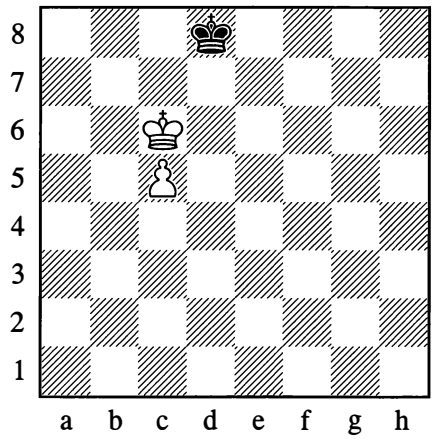
**75**



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

In Position 75, if it is Black to move and he plays **1...♔d8**, this gives Position 76.

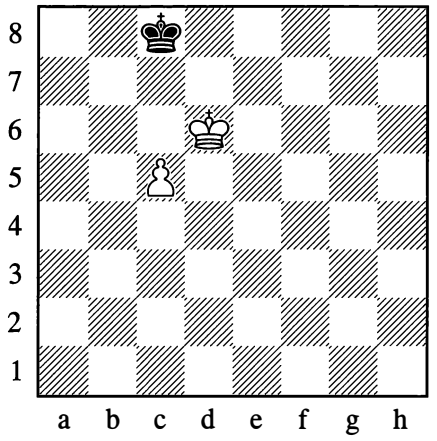
**76**



White replies **2.♔b7**, taking control of all the squares over which his pawn will advance to queen (c6-c8).

If it is White's move in Position 75, he can play **1.♔d6** (see Diagram 77).

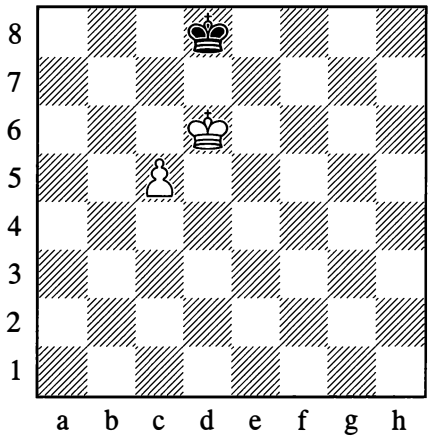
**77**



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

Then if Black replies **1...♔d8**, this gives Position 78.

**78**



Black is trying to retain the opposition, which is often very useful (recall for instance Diagram 69). However, with **2.c6**, White forces Black to abandon the opposition and wins as in Diagram 70.

In Position 77 if it is White to move, he gains the opposition with **1.♔c6**. Then when the enemy king steps aside to the right or left,

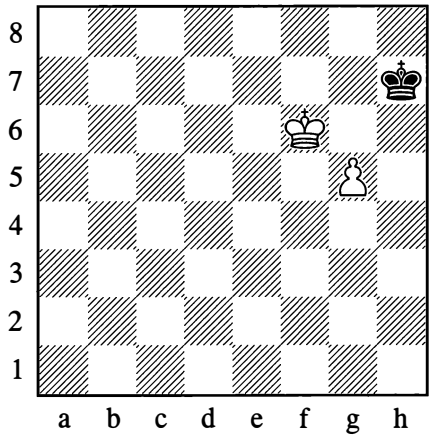
White goes to the opposite side as in Position 76. It would be wrong, on the other hand, to play 1.c6, as Black would play 1...♔d8, reaching Diagram 69.

Positions 75-78 present no difficulties once you have mastered Positions 69-71.

If the pawn is on a rook's file and the enemy king controls the queening square – if, that is, the king is in the corner or can get there – then the game will eventually come down to a draw (see Diagrams 72 and 67).

The most interesting case is when the pawn is on the knight's file, where the closeness to the edge of the board influences the play – owing to the danger of stalemate.

**79**



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

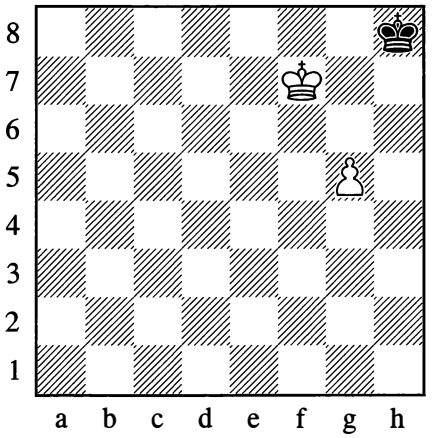
In Position 79, should White play 1.g6†, the reply would be 1...♔h8!, drawing as in Position 73. Therefore seeing that the pawn cannot yet advance, White plays:

**1.♔f7**

Black can reach Position 80 with his reply:

**1...♔h8**

**80**



Again it is White to move, and *this* time 2.g6? gives stalemate as in Position 68. The stalemate arises because Black, being on the edge file, is unable to step to the right. It remains to try to make him go to the left:

**2.♔g6! ♔g8 3.♔h6! ♔h8 4.g6 ♔g8 5.g7**

White wins.

There are some interesting devices to help you find your bearings quickly in any position where your pawns are advancing to queen; these will be demonstrated in Chapter 4 ("Techniques of Calculation").

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

### SHORT GAMES

**1**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 d6 6.♘xd4 ♗e7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.h3 ♖e8 9.♖e1 ♘d7?**

A fatal error. He needed to play 9...♘xd4.

**10.♗xf7†! ♔xf7 11.♘e6!!**

Black resigned, as he loses his queen (if 11...♔xe6, then 12.♕d5† and 13.♕f5#).

2

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘d7 3.♗c4 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7? 5.♗xf7†!**

A sound sacrifice.

**5...♔xf7 6.♘g5†**

Black resigned, since after 6...♔e8 or 6...♔f8 White wins the queen, while after 6...♔f6 he gives mate.

3

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘d4?**

This move is a trap, to which the simplest answer is 4.♘xd4.

**4.♘xe5? ♕g5! 5.♘xf7??**

This loses quickly. After 5.♗xf7† ♔d8 the play becomes double-edged and difficult for both sides (though Black still has rather the better chances).

**5...♕xg2 6.♖f1 ♕xe4† 7.♗e2**

After 7.♕e2 the queen is lost. Now, Black gives mate.

4

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♗d3 ♗xc3†**

Better is 4...c5, attacking the centre.

**5.bxc3 h6?**

Instead of this move, which is not just redundant but weakens the g6-square, Black should have played 5...♘e7, preparing to castle. White now makes a move that develops a piece and at the same time *stops* his opponent from castling.

**6.♗a3! ♘d7? 7.♕e2 dxe4**

White was threatening exd5.

**8.♗xe4 ♘gf6 9.♗d3 b6? 10.♕xe6†! fxe6 11.♗g6#**

5

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.c3 ♗d7? 4.♗c4 ♘f6? 5.♕b3! ♕e7 6.♕xb7 ♗c6 7.♕c8† ♕d8 8.♗xf7†! ♔e7??**

After 8...♔xf7 9.♕xd8 ♘a6! 10.♕xa8 ♗xa8 Black would be an exchange and two pawns down, but could continue the game.

**9.♕e6#**

6

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕a5 4.d4 c6 5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.♗f4 e6 7.h3 ♗xf3**

The retreat 7...♗h5 would have been better.

**8.♕xf3 ♗b4 9.♗e2 ♘d7 10.a3 0-0-0?**

Black doesn't notice the danger.

**11.axb4! ♕xa1† 12.♔d2 ♕xh1 13.♕xc6†! bxc6 14.♗a6#**

7

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗c4 ♗g4 4.h3 ♗xf3**

This exchange loses time and merely helps the development of White's pieces.

**5.♕xf3 ♕f6**

Hoping that White will exchange, when Black will bring his knight out with "tempo"; but White avoids that mistake.

**6.♕b3 b6 7.♘c3 ♘e7 8.♘b5 ♘a6?**

After 8...♔d8 9.♗xf7 White is much better, but the game continues.

**9.♕a4 ♘c5**

Rescuing his knight, Black comes up against a devastating double check.

**10.♘xd6†† ♔d8 11.♕e8#**

**8**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♗c5**

This gives White the chance to sacrifice a piece temporarily and regain it by means of a "fork", leaving him with the better development.

**4.♘xe5 ♘xe5 5.d4 ♗xd4 6.♕xd4 ♕f6**

This looks good, as Black not only defends the knight on e5 and the pawn on g7, but also threatens to win the queen with ...♘f3†. However, it turns out that White has a strong reply.

**7.♘b5!**

Defending the queen on d4, and threatening to take on c7.

**7...♔d8 8.♕c5! ♘c6? 9.♕f8#**

**9**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.d3 ♘ge7?**

The knight here gets in the way of other pieces. Better is 4...♘f6.

**5.♘g5 0-0 6.♕h5 h6 7.♘xf7 ♕e8?**

Black had to sacrifice the exchange – White's attack is very strong.

**8.♘h6†† ♔h8 9.♘f7†† ♔g8 10.♕h8#**

**10**

**1.f4 e5 2.fxe5 d6 3.exd6 ♗xd6**

Black is now threatening ...♕h4† and mate on g3.

**4.♘f3 g5 5.e4?**

A good option here is 5.d4 g4 6.♘e5, shutting off the diagonal of the bishop on d6.

**5...g4 6.e5 gxf3 7.exd6 ♕h4† 8.g3 ♕e4† 9.♔f2 ♕d4†!**

Now on 10.♔xf3, Black has 10...♗g4† winning the queen.

**10.♔e1 f2† 11.♔e2 ♗g4#**

**11**

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 ♘f6**

A dubious move. Better is 2...exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6, when Black develops his pieces while White loses time retreating.

**3.dxe5 ♘xe4 4.♘f3 ♗c5 5.♕d5 ♘xf2 6.♗c4 0-0 7.♘g5 ♘xh1 8.♘xf7 c6??**

8...♕h4† 9.g3 ♗f2†! should be played.

**9.♘h6†† ♔h8 10.♕g8†! ♖xg8 11.♘f7#**

**12**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗c4 f5**

A risky move that opens lines for an attack by the enemy pieces.

**4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 exd4 6.♕xd4 ♗d7?**

It was essential to drive the queen back at once with 6...♘c6.

**7.♘g5 ♘c6 8.♗f7† ♔e7 9.♕xf6†!! ♔xf6 10.♘d5† ♔e5 11.♘f3† ♔e4 12.♘c3#**

**13**

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘c6?**

Against the pawns on d4 and e5, which are cramping Black's development, it was better to proceed with ...c5!, and then ...♘c6, ...♕b6 etc. Now the advance of the c7-pawn is obstructed by the knight.

**4.f4 ♘ge7 5.c3 ♘f5**

In reply to this, White needs to play 6.♘f3, stopping the queen from checking on h4. With the following mistake, he throws the game away.

**6.♗d3? ♕h4†**

Aiming to answer 7.g3 with 7...♘xg3!. This same move would be the reply to 7.♔f1 or 7.♔e2. All the same, 7.♔f1 would be better than the continuation in the game.

**7.♔d2? ♕xf4† 8.♔c2? ♘cxd4†! 9.cxd4 ♘xd4†10.♔c3 ♗b4†!! 11.♔xb4 ♘c6†† 12.♔c3 ♕b4† 13.♔c2 ♘d4#**

**14**

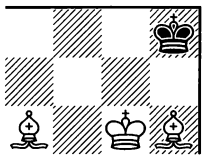
**1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♗g7 3.♘f3 d6 4.♘c3 ♘d7 5.♗c4 ♘gf6?**

White now overruns the centre and conducts the decisive attack.

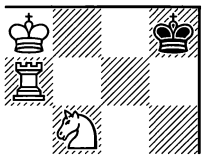
**6.e5 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘h5 8.♗xf7†! ♔xf7 9.♘g5† ♔g8 10.♕d5† ♔f8 11.♕f7#**

**FIND THE MATE IN ONE**

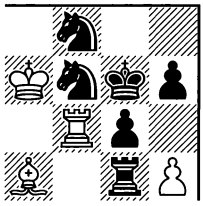
**1**



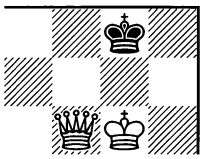
**2**



**3**

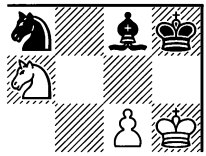


**4**

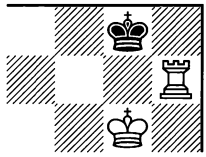


**FIND THE MATE IN TWO**

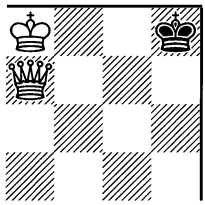
**5**



**6**

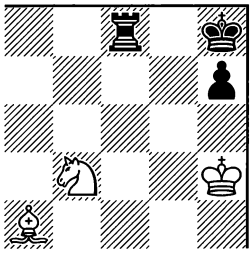


**7**

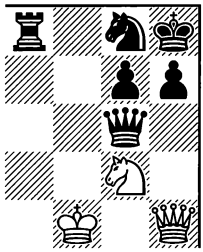


Note that 1.♔f8 or 1.♕f7 would give stalemate.

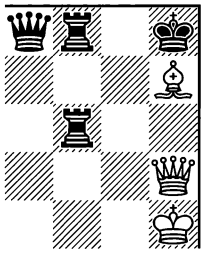
**8**



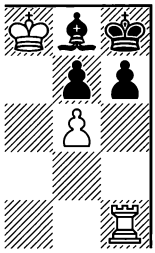
**9**



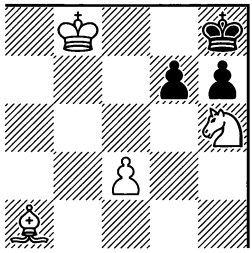
**10**



**11**

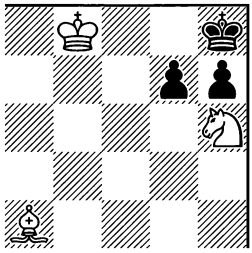


**12**

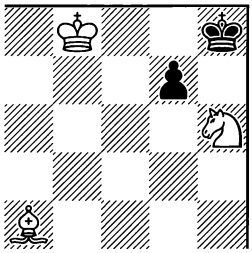


Without the pawn on f5, White mates in 3 moves; if the pawns on f5 and h7 are removed, he mates in 4 moves. Solve all three tasks.

**12a**



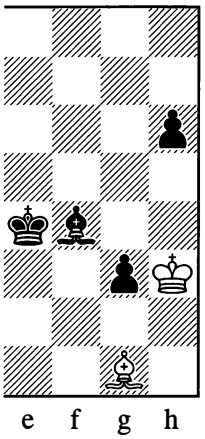
**12b**

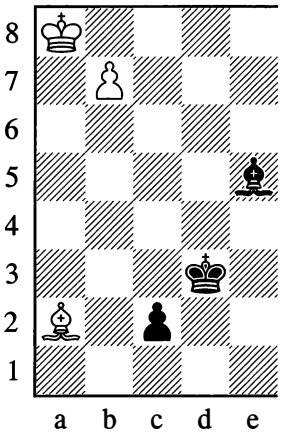


## FIND THE SOLUTION

**13** **14**

Different means to identical ends

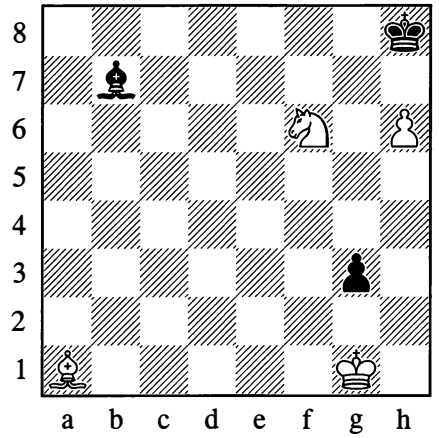




*White draws in both 13 and 14*

**15**

Not a "four-mover", and not a "six-mover" either!



"How many moves does White need, to give mate from this position?"

"It looks like four: 1.♗b2, 2.♗a3, 3.♗f8, 4.♗g7#. Black can't do anything to stop it, can he?"

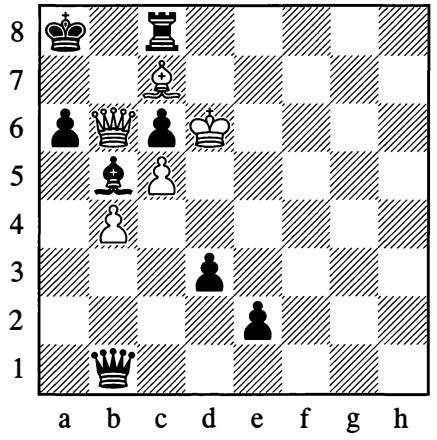
"Aha, Black isn't that helpless. On 1.♗b2, he plays 1...♗h1! 2.♗a3 g2, and he's stalemated."

"You're right. To let Black out of the stalemate, White needs another two moves: 3.♔h2 g1=♕† 4.♔xg1. So it's mate in *six* moves!"

"You were being too hasty before, now you're taking too long. It's actually mate in five moves! Try and find it."

**16**

An unusual case



*White to move*

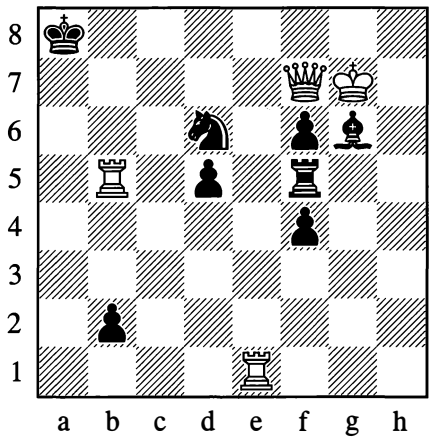
"I can't see you saving this game," said the player with Black. "I'm a rook up already, and I'm going to get a second queen for good measure."

"You're celebrating your victory too soon," came the unexpected retort. "*I'm* the one who's going to save the game, and *you* definitely won't manage to."

Indeed White won by spectacular means.

**17**

Relatively simple

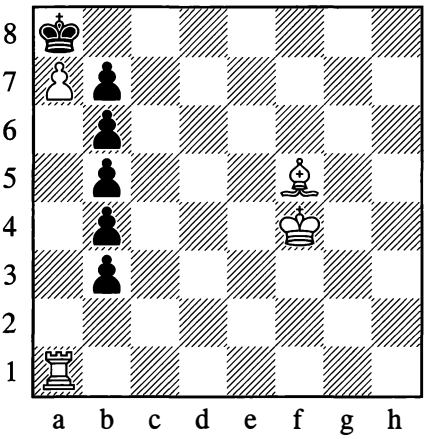


*Mate in 2 moves*

## FUN EXERCISES

**18**

Going up in the lift

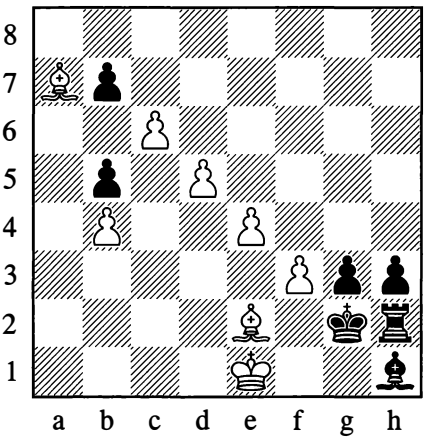


*Mate in 6 moves*

Just switch on the mechanism, and the rest follows easily.

**19**

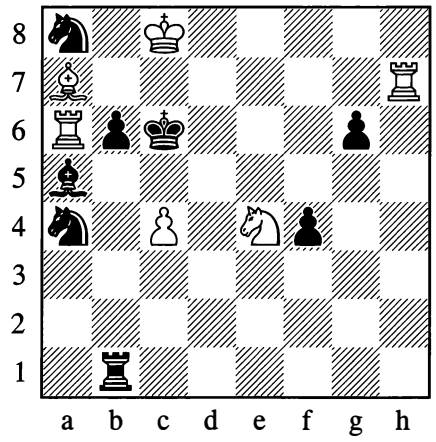
Coming down the escalator



*Mate in 5 moves*

Although it's a moving staircase, you still have to walk down slowly from step to step, to avoid a stoppage (stalemate!).

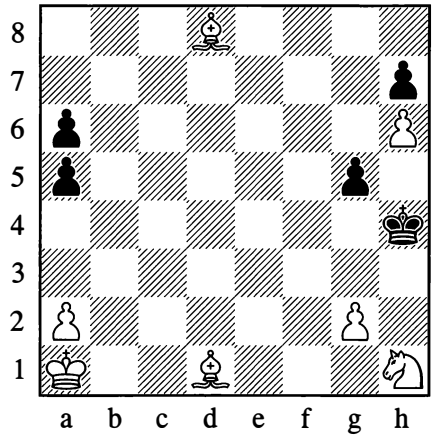
**20**
In the best-defended place



*Mate in 5 moves*

The surprising and amusing thing about this problem is that although the b6-point is defended five times, White's concluding move to give mate will be ♖xb6.

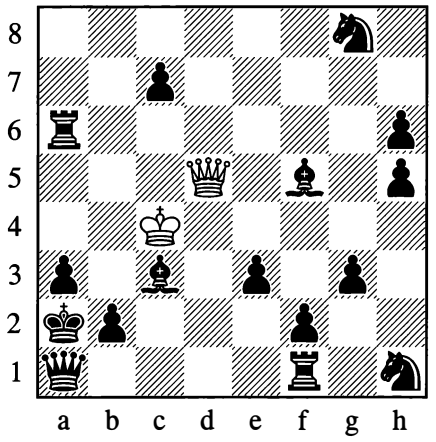
**21**
Timely assistance



*Mate in 7 moves*

"I've got to go and help my minor pieces," the white king decides. "They won't manage it in seven moves on their own. I daresay it's quite a long way, but maybe I'll get there in time."

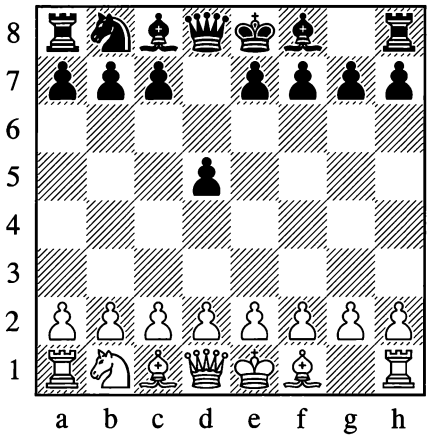
**22**
Hard-working queen



*Mate in (?) moves*

White has nothing but his queen against the entire hostile army. He wins nonetheless. By what means, and in how many moves?

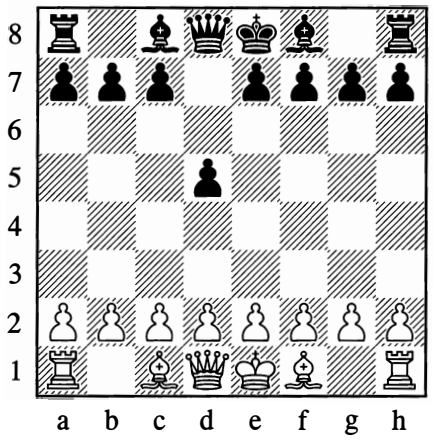
**23**
Tricky exercise



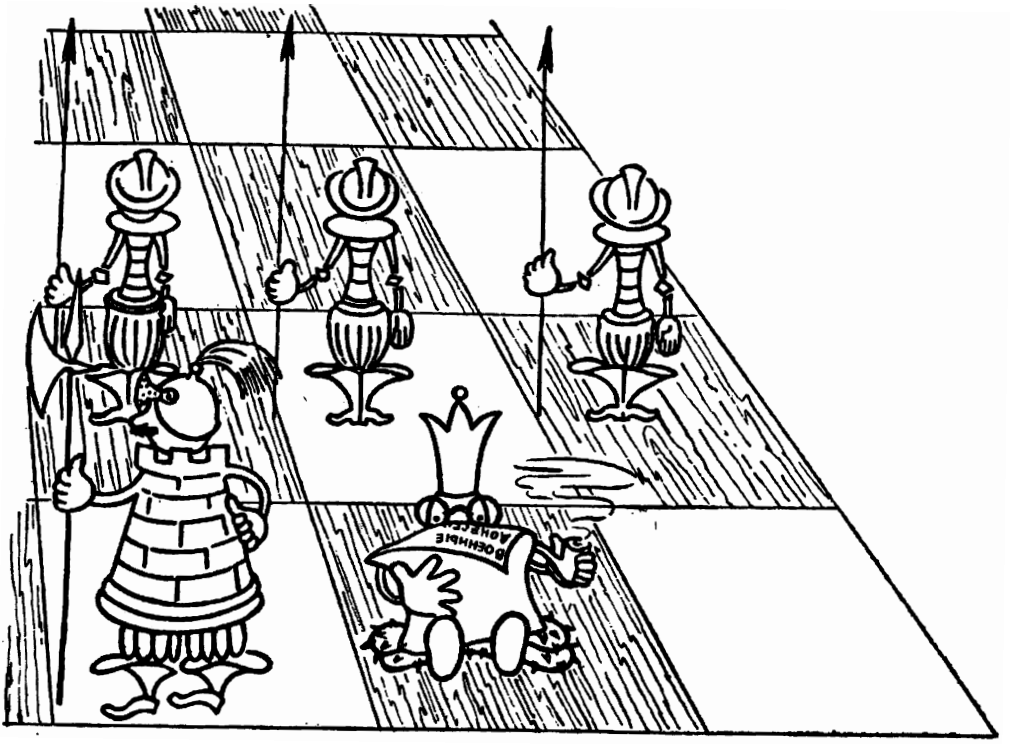
This position arose after 4 moves had been made by each side (the moves were objectively bad but wholly within the rules of the game). What were those moves?

**24**

Similar to the last one



In contrast to Exercise 23, this time not just two knights but all four are missing. The position can arise (in a different manner from last time!) after 5 moves. Find those moves.



# ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

### Mate in 1 and 2 moves

**1. 1.♗g7#**

**2. 1.♖h7#**

**3. 1.♖xg6#**

**4. 1.♕g7#** or **1.♕d8#**.

**5. 1.g7† ♘xg7 2.♘g6#**

**6. 1.♖f7! ♔h8 2.♖f8#**

**7. 1.♔f7! ♔h7 2.♕h4#**

**8. 1.♘f7† ♔g8 2.♘h6#**

**9. 1.♕xh7†! ♕xh7 2.♘f7#**

**10. 1.♗g6†! ♔g7** (or 1...♔g8) **2.♕h7#**

**11. 1.♖h6! gxh6 2.g7#**

**12. 1.f6**
**12a. 1.♗f6!, 2.♔f8** (Another solution, using the whole board, is 1.♗a7, 2.♔f8.)
**12b. 1.♔f7, 2.♘g8, 3.♗g7** (or 3.♗xg7†)

### Find the solution

**13. 1.♗h2!! gxh2** (1...♔f3 2.♗xg3!) **2.♔g2**

**14. 1.b8=♕! ♗xb8 2.♗b1!! cxb1=♕** stalemate. If Black promotes to a rook on b1 it is still stalemate and if he promotes to a bishop or knight, White takes the bishop on b8 and mate becomes impossible.

**15. 1.♗e5! ♗h1 2.♗xg3!** and **3.♗d6** etc.

**16. 1.♗b8! ♖xb8 2.♔c7!! ♖xb6 3.cxb6** and mate in at most three more moves.

**17. 1.♖e4!** Problem by E. Umnov, 1944.

### Fun exercises

**18. 1.♗b1!** Press the button, and the lift goes into action. **1...b2 2.♖a2 b3 3.♖a3 b4 4.♖a4 b5 5.♖a5 b6** Stop, we've arrived! **6.♗e4#**

**19. 1.♗b6! bxc6 2.♗c5 cxd5 3.♗d4 dxe4 4.♗e3 exf3** Now we just have to jump off! **5.♗f1#**

**20. 1.♖g7 ♖g1 2.♖f7 ♗c3 3.♖e7 ♘c5 4.♖c7† ♘xc7 5.♖xb6#**

**21. 1.♔b2 a4 2.♔c3 a3 3.♔d4 a5 4.♔e5 a4 5.♔f6** In the nick of time! **5...g4 6.♔g7† ♔h5 7.♘g3#**

**22.** White mates in 64 moves (by making use of checks and waiting moves to annihilate all his opponent's pieces and pawns except for the queen on a1 and the pawns on a3 and b2): **1.♔xc3†, 2.♕xf5†, 3.♕f7†!, 4.♕h7†, 5.♕xg8†, 6.♕h7†, 7.♕f7†, 8.♕f5†, 9.♕d5†, 10.♕e4†, 11.♕c4†, 12.♕xf1†, 13.♕c4†, 14.♕e4†, 15.♕d5†, 16.♕xh1†, 17.♕d5†, 18.♕d3†, 19.♕c4†, 20.♕xa6! ♔a2 21.♕c4†, 22.♕e4†, 23.♕e6†, 24.♕c4! g2 25.♕e4†, 26.♕d5†, 27.♕xg2 ♔a2 28.♕d5†, 29.♕c4 h4 30.♕e4†, 31.♕e6† 32.♕c4 h5** In similar fashion, all the remaining black pawns are forced to move. The white queen captures them on appropriate squares, and finally (after ...a3-a2) gives mate on f1 on the sixty-fourth move.

**23.** The knight on b8 is the one that started the game on g8. After this hint, try to solve the problem for yourself. Don't get into the habit of peeping at the solutions straight away; make your own attempt first, and only read the solution to check it. (Solution: **1.♘f3 d5 2.♘e5 ♘f6 3.♘c6 ♘fd7 4.♘xb8 ♘xb8**)

**24. 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘d4 ♘d5 4.♘xc6 dxc6 5.♘xd5 cxd5**

# Chapter 3

# Tactics and Strategy

### 1. THE CONCEPT OF A CHESS PLAN

In the confined space of the chessboard, the pieces of the two hostile "armies" carry out their operations. They move in various directions, attack, capture, defend themselves – in short, they are in constant confrontation with each other. The diversity of possibilities is a perplexity for the beginner.

Can we make sense out of all this? Absolutely! All the changes on the chessboard occur, after all, as a result of the moves of the two players, and these moves are not fortuitous. They are united by an overall purpose – to win, to checkmate the enemy king, to avoid defeat by the opponent. Every move attempts to do something which contributes directly or indirectly to achieving the ultimate aim.

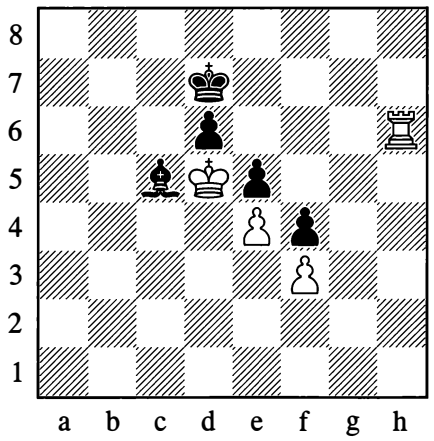
Out of such purpose-oriented moves, whole manoeuvres and game plans regularly take shape. The plans must be conceived in advance, and constitute what is known as strategy; the implementation of these plans is the task of tactics. Strategy clarifies what we need to do, what problems have to be solved to attain the end in view; tactics determines how we do this. Tactics solves each problem in its context (in the current situation on the board) by selecting the best moves and ascertaining their logic. Thus in addition to the general strategic plan (the general task), specific tactical plans arise (the specific task).

In Position 51 (on page 38) we already saw an example of play to execute a certain plan – that of mating the black king with White's king and rook. The plan consisted of driving the king to the edge of the board. The tactical device with the aid of which this gradual constriction took place was a check with the rook when the kings were in opposition.

Let us consider another example.

**81**

**Lasker**, 1926



*White wins*

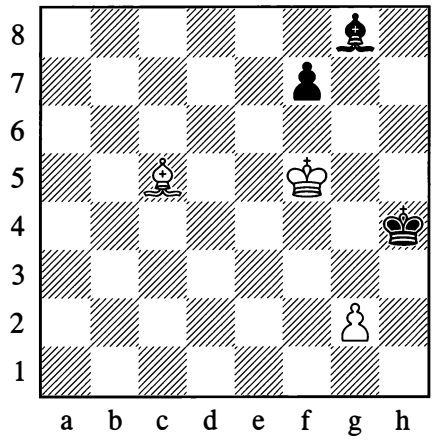
**1.♖h7† ♔d8 2.♔e6**

Black cannot prevent his opponent from carrying out the plan of ♖d7 and ♖xd6, which, although it involves giving up rook for bishop, enables White to win all the black pawns. Exchanging the rook for Black's bishop and pawns is what constitutes White's plan. The tactical means to this end lies in forcing the black king away from the defence of d6.

As another example, here is a study by a composer from the past (Diagram 82). Let us follow the solution, observing what White's plan is based on, and how he brings it to fruition.

**82**

**B. Horwitz**, 1857



*White wins*

**1.♗f2† ♔h5 2.g4† ♔h6 3.♔f6! ♔h7!**

The king is forced to retreat gradually into the most inauspicious position – the corner. Black cannot free his bishop on g8 by advancing his f-pawn, since the white king has stopped the pawn from moving; while 3...♗h7? would be met by 4.♗e3#.

**4.g5 ♔h8 5.♗d4!**

The bishop positions itself in ambush. If Black now tries 5...♗h7, White plays 6.♔xf7, which is checkmate resulting from a discovered check. As you can see, White's plan consists not only in driving the black king back, but also in keeping the bishop imprisoned on g8, where it hampers the king's mobility.

**5...♔h7 6.♗a1**

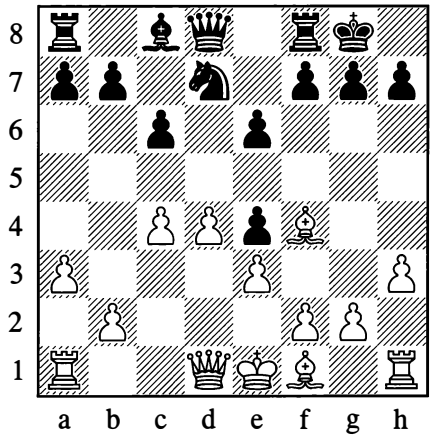
The bishop could also go to b2 or any other square on the diagonal. This is purely a waiting move; after the sole reply at Black's disposal, the end comes quickly.

**6...♔h8 7.g6 fxg6 8.♔xg6#**

We will now look at an example from tournament practice (Diagram 83).

**83**

**Tarrasch – Scheve**, Leipzig 1894



*White to move*

Only 11 moves have been made, in the course of which the players have exchanged two pairs of minor pieces; but already Black's camp has a characteristic peculiarity, namely the position of his pawn on e4.

Sooner or later Black will clearly have to defend this pawn with ...f5. After that, however, his centre will easily prove vulnerable – White will be able to attack it with f2-f3.

Thus, the general direction of the play may already be viewed as laid down; the *strategic* plan is clear. What remains is the correct *tactical* implementation of it, after suitable preparation.

**12.♕c2! f5**

If 12...♘f6, then 13.g4 (threatening g4-g5) and 14.♗g2.

**13.♗d6 ♖e8**

An improvement would have been 13..♖f7, but it hasn't yet dawned on Black that the point g7 will soon need defending. He wants to free his game by means of ...e5.

**14.0–0–0!**

Crossing Black's plans. His line-opening advance is now unplayable, since after exchanges an attack from the rook on d1 would be opened up against his queen.

**14...♘f6 15.♗e5 ♗d7 16.f3! exf3**

This is already forced; otherwise White plays 17.♗xf6 and 18.fxe4.

**17.gxf3**

White's strategic plan is fully disclosed: he has obtained the open g-file for an attack on the enemy king. Black will soon be forced completely onto the defensive.

**17...b5 18.♖g1 ♖f8**

To answer ♕g2 with ...♖f7. Of course 18...♖e7? would fail to 19.♗xf6; but ...g6, now or later, would weaken Black's entire castled position (the manoeuver h3-h4-h5, after preparation, would become a possibility).

**19.♖d2! ♖f7 20.♖dg2 a5**

The exchange ...bxc4 would merely facilitate the development of the bishop on f1, which would arrive in a good attacking position without loss of time.

**21.♕f2 ♘e8**

Endeavouring to prevent ♕h4.

**22.♖g5! ♕e7**

On 22...h6 (weakening the castled position!) White would continue with 23.♖g6 ♔h7 24.♕g3 ♕e7 25.♖xh6†!, but now the white queen conveniently comes across to h4 behind the rook's back, with the threat of ♕h6 and ♖h5.

Black misses his king's bishop; as a defender it might have prevented this dangerous concentration of white pieces on the dark squares.

**23.♕h4 ♘f6 24.♕h6 ♖a7**

White's attack is irresistible. On 24...g6, he wins with 25.♖xg6†. Now he has the possibility of 25.♗xf6, but he isn't content with the win of two pawns.

**25.♗d6! ♕xd6 26.♖xg7† ♔f8**

If 26...♔h8, then 27.♕xh7†! and 28.♖g8#.

**27.♖xh7†! ♔e7 28.♖xf7† ♔xf7 29.♖g7† ♔e8 30.♕xf6**

Black resigned, as after 30...♕f8 he loses his queen to 31.♕g6† (this is why White eliminated the h7-pawn) and 32.♖g8.

White's exploitation of the weakness of Black's e4-pawn gradually grew into a crushing attack.

The wins for White in the examples we have looked at were the result of play that was well thought out, planned and technically correct.

## 2. RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF THE PIECES

In Position 81, White wins by exchanging pieces. There are some difficulties for the beginner in the fact that White gives up a stronger piece (a rook) for a weaker one (a bishop), even though he is winning some pawns in the same process. How do we determine whether or not an exchange is favourable?

Naturally, with an exchange of pieces of the same type (bishop for bishop, pawn for pawn, and so forth) we are losing no material and the forces remain equal. On the other hand if pieces of differing types are involved in the exchange, we have to be acquainted with their relative strengths.

The strength of a piece is determined by its mobility in open space, in other words by its degree of influence on the squares (or lines) of the chessboard. Since mobility depends on a way of moving which always remains the same, the *absolute* strength of a piece undergoes comparatively little change (we would only recall the greater mobility of pieces in the centre of the board as opposed to the edge).

But during a game the chessboard is not empty. The mobility of a piece is influenced by the arrangement of other pieces on the board. The *position* of an individual piece can also be favourable or unfavourable for attaining the aims we are setting ourselves. Hence what is important to us is only the *relative* strength of the pieces – their strength in relation to each other in each particular situation. It is here that the fluctuations can be considerable.

Based on experience from an immense number of games played, the *average relative* strength of the pieces has been more or less accurately established. This scheme of values is useful to memorize. The gradual accumulation of experience will permit a player to cope with this issue more independently.

The pawn is taken as the *unit* of strength. The bishop is considered equal to the knight, and each of the minor pieces is held to be worth 3½ pawns (that is, a little stronger than three pawns but weaker than four). A rook and two pawns are equal to two minor pieces, and a minor piece

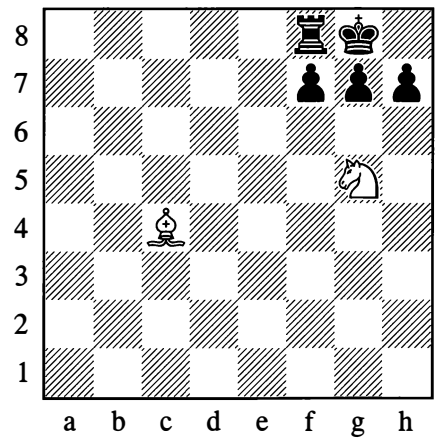
plus 1½ pawns is the equivalent of a rook. From this it follows (purely arithmetically) that a rook is equal to five pawns. The queen is considered equal in strength to two rooks or to three minor pieces, or sometimes also to a rook plus bishop and pawn. The king has approximately the strength of a minor piece (three units on the conventional scale).

If for the moment we ignore the factor of how the pieces are arranged and approach the matter arithmetically, we conclude that an exchange of pieces (that is, a simplification of the game) always favours the stronger side. Suppose that in some position White's forces count for twenty units and Black's for ten. White is twice as strong. But after an exchange of (say) five units, the ratio of forces will be 15:5, in other words White will be not just twice (20:10) but *three* times as strong.

Now let us come back to our example number 81. From an easy count, we see that the ratio of forces before the exchange was 10:9½, in other words White was stronger by a factor of 1.1. The exchange was to White's profit – in return for five units, he obtained 6.5. Following the exchange, the ratio of forces was 5:3, so White was stronger by a factor of 1.7 (compared with 1.1 before) – largely thanks to the mere fact of simplification, quite apart from the material gain from the deal. Such computations – of who is stronger by how much – are not to be carried out in practical play; we are just presenting them for greater clarity of explanation.

Applying this same scheme of relative strengths, we can ascertain that in Position 84 it doesn't pay White to give up two minor pieces for a rook and pawn (1.♘xf7 ♖xf7 2.♗xf7† ♔xf7).

**84**




For full material equality, White would have to win one pawn more. Whether even that would benefit him for the further course of the game is another question that would have to be decided in each individual case.

It must once again be emphasized that the relative strengths of the pieces in the scheme we have demonstrated are very approximate. Everything depends on the position. If this scheme remains more or less valid in the opening and middlegame, it may prove downright spurious in the endgame when as the result of exchanges there are hardly any pieces left on the board.

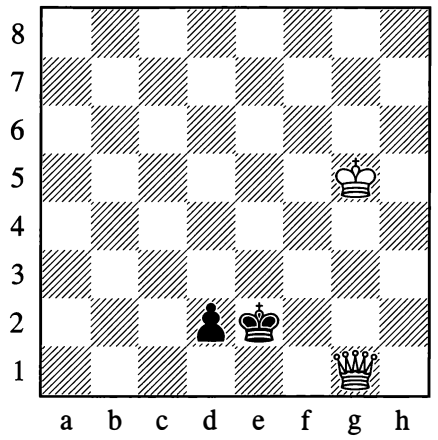
In the endgame the mobility of the pieces increases of course, but then the value of the pawns (the basic unit of measurement!) often rises incomparably faster as they advance and their chances of queening improve. It is by no means always possible to avoid losing, for instance, with a minor piece against three connected pawns or a rook against four, not to speak of the exceptional cases where just one or two pawns may win.

You should make a study of examples in which some peculiarities of the piece configuration upset the normal balance of strength of the remaining material. The play is then apt to take an unexpected turn.

## 3. HOW THE POSITION AFFECTS THE RELATIVE STRENGTHS

The queen, as a rule, wins easily against a few pawns. Yet in can happen that one single pawn, when close to its promotion square, requires serious measures to deal with it.

**85**




*White wins*

Let us follow the steps by which White achieves the win.

**1.♕g2† ♔e1**

If 1...♔e3, then 2.♕f1 – preventing 2...d1=♕ – followed by 3.♕d1, after which White approaches with his king.

**2.♕e4† ♔f2 3.♕d3! ♔e1 4.♕e3†**

This check is crucial.

**4...♔d1**

Black's king is forced to occupy the promotion square, impeding his own pawn and granting White the opportunity to bring *his* king up. White, as we say, has gained a *tempo* – he has gained time for a useful move.

**5.♔f4 ♔c2 6.♕e2**
Making use of a pin to stop the pawn from moving.

**6...♔c1**
If 6...♔c3, then 7.♕d1.

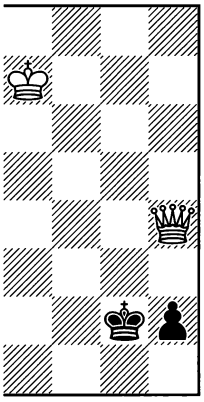
**7.♕c4†**
White carries out the same manoeuvre as before.

**7...♔b2 8.♕d3! ♔c1 9.♕c3† ♔d1**
Once more White has gained a tempo, this time for his king's decisive approach.

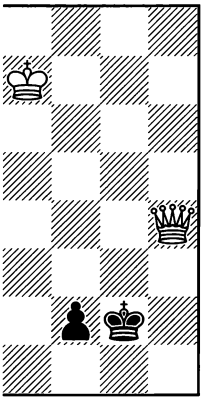
**10.♔e3 ♔e1 11.♕xd2† ♔f1 12.♕f2#**

In the next examples (against a *rook's* pawn and a *bishop's* pawn) the queen is quite unable to win, because Black makes use of a stalemate possibility while the white king, being far away, cannot lend support.

**86**



**87**



*White cannot win*

In Position 86 White gives a check:

**1.♕g4†**
Black now hides his king in the corner.

**1...♔h1**
Now if White makes a king move, Black is stalemated. There is no use either in:

**2.♕f3† ♔g1 3.♕g3† ♔h1**

Again the white king cannot approach.

**4.♕e1† ♔g2 5.♕e2† ♔g1!**

Not 5...♔g3? on account of 6.♕f1; another mistake would be 5...♔h1?, allowing 6.♕f1#.

**6.♕e1† ♔g2**

Draw.

However, if White's king in Diagram 86 were located nearer – for example on e5 – he could win by a noteworthy stratagem: 1.♕g4† ♔h1 2.♕d1† ♔g2 3.♕e2† ♔g1 Now the white king approaches decisively. 4.♔f4 h1=♕ 5.♔g3! Threatening mate on f2 or on the first rank, against which there is no defence.

Returning again to Diagram 86, an interesting position arises if we transfer White's king to h7 and his queen to e5. After 1.♕g7†, Black can draw as before by playing 1...♔f1 or 1...♔f2, only not by 1...♔h1?, which is met by 2.♔g6! ♔g2 3.♔f5†, and having brought his king two squares closer by means of the discovered check, White wins in the way we just demonstrated.

In Position 87, Black can draw as follows:

**1.♕g4† ♔h2 2.♕f3 ♔g1 3.♕g3†**

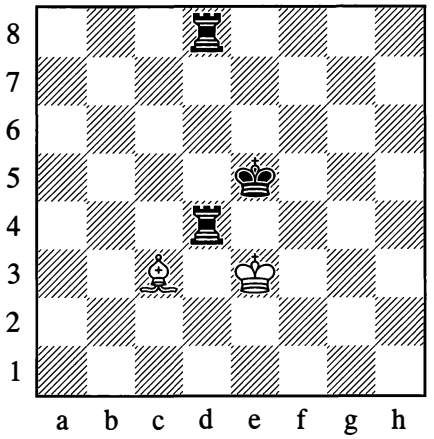
Now Black unexpectedly plays, not 3...♔f1, but:

**3...♔h1!**

If White captures on f2, this gives stalemate.

In Examples 86 and 87 White doesn't succeed in bringing his king up, and in spite of his huge material advantage he has to settle for a draw. The peculiarities of the position, as we can see, serve to level out the strength of a queen and a pawn.

**88**

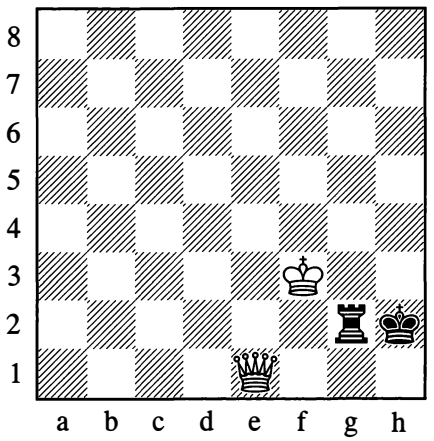


In this position a bishop, with waiting moves between a1, b2 and c3 at its disposal, draws against two rooks. If Black moves his rook from d8 to any square on the 8th rank or makes a king move, White plays ♗xd4, and with one rook Black is unable, in general terms, to win against a bishop (see Position 27 on page 26). This example shows just how important the pinning of a piece (in this case the rook on d4) can be.

We now turn to some examples of greater practical significance.

**89**

**Lolli**, 1763



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

A queen usually wins against a rook.

In Position 89, if it is Black to move, he cannot play 1...♔h3 owing to 2.♕f1, when the pinned rook perishes. Also 1...♖g1 fails to 2.♕h4#.

Consequently the rook is forced to move away from the king – and deprived of protection, it quickly succumbs. For example:

(a) 1...♖g7 2.♕e5† with simultaneous attack on the rook.

(b) 1...♖g8 2.♕e5† ♔h1 3.♕a1† ♔h2 4.♕a2†, and the rook is lost.

(c) 1...♖a2 2.♕e5† ♔g1 3.♕d4† ♔h1 4.♕h8† ♔g1 (4...♖h2 5.♕a1#) 5.♕g8† and again White wins the rook.

Thus whatever move Black makes, he quickly loses his rook after a series of checks.

If it is White's move in Diagram 89, he obviously needs to reach the same position with *Black* to move – after which the win is simple. This is achieved in three moves:

**1.♕e5† ♔h1**

If 1...♔h3 then 2.♕h5#.

**2.♕a1† ♔h2**

Not 2...♖g1 3.♕h8#.

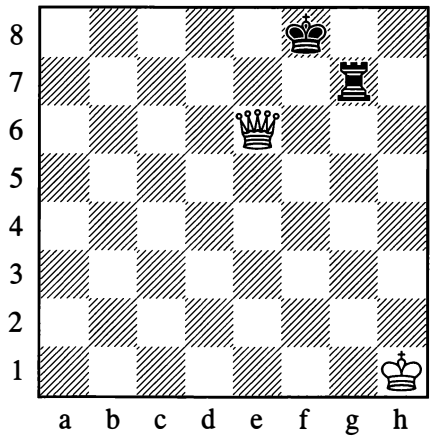
**3.♕e1!**

The goal is attained.

What is the rationale of this manoeuvre? In Position 89 it was White to move, but by executing a three-move manoeuvre he handed the move over to his opponent. Essentially, he lost a move. And yet a chessplayer will say that White gained a tempo – he gained the time necessary to achieve the aim he had in mind. Such cases of handing the move over are often encountered in games, and we shall have more to say about them later.

**90**

**Ponziani**, 1782

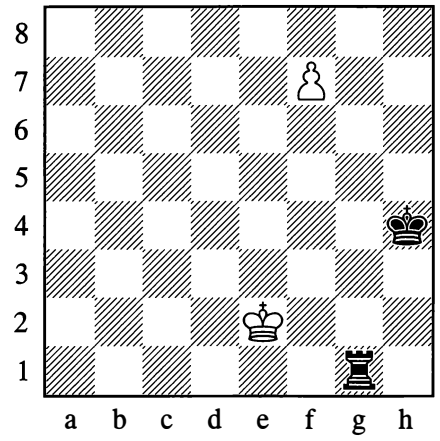


*Black to move draws*

In Diagram 90 the forces are the same as in Diagram 89, but their arrangement is different. It turns out that if it is Black to move here, he can draw by giving perpetual check on the h-, g- and f-files. The white king cannot go to the e-file on account of ...♖e7, winning the queen. If the king works its way, in the face of the checks, as far as h6, Black still plays ...♖h7†, as ♔xh7 gives stalemate. If the king goes to f6, the reply is ...♖g6†, and with ♔xg6 Black is again stalemated.

The draw is made possible here by the unfortunate position of the queen on e6. The queen has acted prematurely to cramp the black king's mobility before White's own king has arrived on the scene. If it is White to play from the diagram, he wins easily by first removing his queen (for instance, 1.♕d6† ♔e8) and then bringing his king up (via h6).

**91**



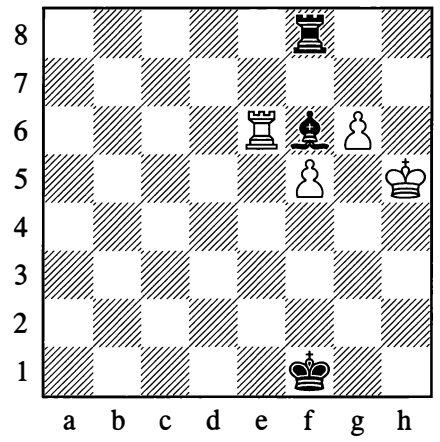
*Black cannot avoid loss*

A rook is incontestably stronger than a pawn, yet in Position 91 Black loses because the pawn on f7 cannot be stopped.

**1...♖g2† 2.♔f1**

Black has no more checks to delay the pawn's promotion. On obtaining a queen, White will win as in Position 89.

**92**



*White to play and win*

The position in Diagram 92 is a little more complex. Black has a bishop for two pawns. The white pawns cannot advance – their path is blocked. However, White plays:

**1.♖xf6! ♖xf6 2.♔g5**

This move was previously prevented by the bishop. Now, when Black's advantage might seem even greater than before (not just a bishop but a rook for the two pawns), White wins easily by advancing both pawns and obtaining a queen.

The examples we have examined show that the true correlation of forces depends not only on the material but on the position. At the same time it must not be forgotten that these examples are merely rare exceptions which by no means overturn the solidly established opinion of practical chessplayers concerning the average relative strengths of the pieces (see page 60).

The important thing to understand is that the relative value of the pieces must not be our sole guide; we must also take account of what role the pieces are playing, what work they are doing in this or that position.

To conclude, let us discuss the relative value of bishop and knight.

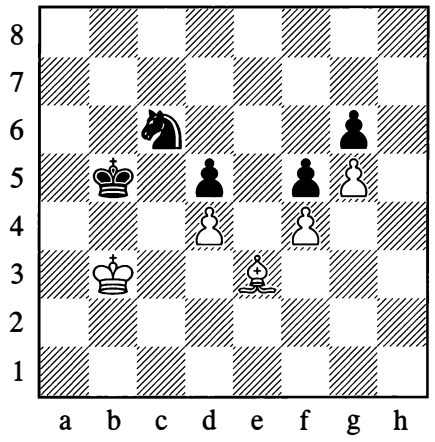
Beginners often seek to exchange off their opponents' knights by any available means, as they experience some trepidation in the face of a knight's unexpected forays. This is quite wrong. There is nothing unexpected if we carefully consider what squares an enemy knight can move to, what threats it can create when occupying these squares, and what our moves will be in reply.

Generally speaking, the bishop and the knight are of equal worth. The bishop, to be sure, has more mobility than the knight, but only the squares of one colour are accessible to it, whereas the knight changes the colour

of its square with every move. If the position is of the closed type, that is if the bishop's lines of action (the diagonals) are blocked by immobile pawns, then the bishop's long-range fighting power diminishes and the knight may prove more useful. If however the lines are open and the players have to contend with pawns advancing, then the advantage is rather with the bishop. Two bishops are often stronger than two knights or a bishop and knight, since while retaining the advantage of greater mobility they control all the squares of the board between them.

Depending on the position, sometimes one minor piece proves stronger, sometimes the other does. Let's look at the following examples.

**93**



*Black to move*

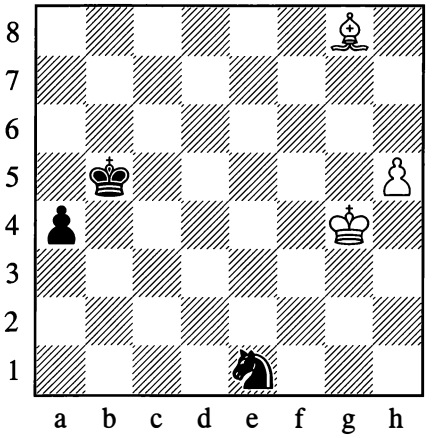
Black wins by driving the white king back and gaining the c4-square for his own king. For example:

**1...♘a5† 2.♔c3 ♔a4 3.♗f2 ♘c6 4.♗e3 ♘a7 5.♗f2 ♘b5† 6.♔d3 ♔b3**

All that remains now is for Black to give check on b4 or b2, and he conquers the square c4. Once his king is on that square, the white pawns will quickly fall.

However, if in Position 93 we transfer the white king c3, the black knight to e7 and the white bishop to f3, then Black can no longer win. The light-squared bishop in this (new) position is no longer playing the passive role of defending White's pawns like the bishop in the diagram, but acquires the possibility of attacking the pawns on the black side.

**94**



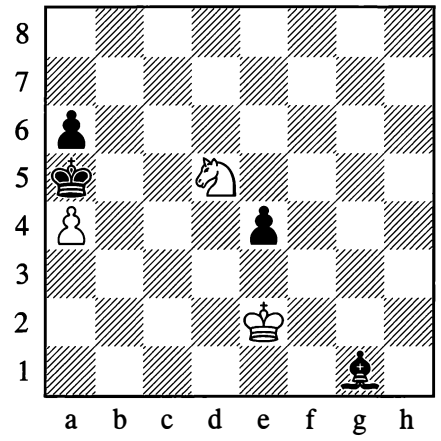
*White wins with either side to move*

Here the bishop is victorious, since it easily stops the advance of the a-pawn while Black has no possibility of sacrificing his knight for the h-pawn. For example:

**1...♘d3 2.♔f5**

The h-pawn will soon promote to a queen.

**95**



*Black to move*

Here again the bishop triumphs (the position occurred in a tournament game played by the author, with Black, in 1924). Black first exchanges his e-pawn for the white a-pawn, at the same time as shutting the white king out of the action:

**1...♔xa4 2.♘c3† ♔b3 3.♘xe4 ♔c2!**

Now White tries to hold up the advance of the a-pawn with his knight:

**4.♘d6 a5 5.♘b5 a4 6.♔e1 ♗e3! 7.♔e2 ♗c5**

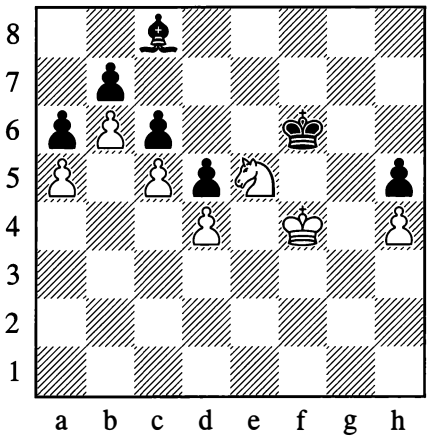
Black didn't play his bishop to c5 in one go, because it is important for him that the hostile king shouldn't be on e2 when he begins moving back with his own king.

**8.♔e1 ♔b3 9.♔d2 ♔c4**

White resigned, seeing that 10.♘c7 (not 10.♘c3? because of 10...♗b4) is met by 10...a3 11.♔c2 ♗d4 12.♔b1 ♔b3, and the pawn queens.

**96**

**Schlechter – Walbrodt**, Vienna 1898

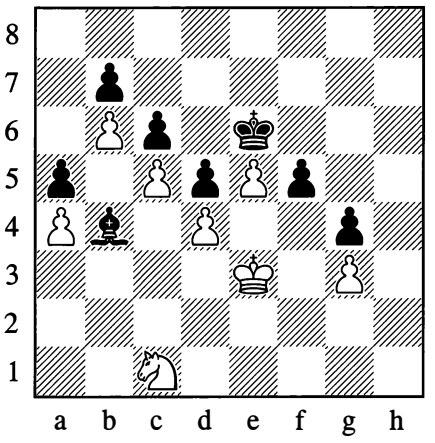


*Black to move*

In Position 96, the bishop is completely helpless against the knight. On 1...♗e6 or 1...♗h3, White plays 2.♘xc6 bxc6 3.b7 and obtains a queen. If on the other hand Black moves his king, White decides the game with ♔g5, winning the h-pawn. Black is in a situation where the obligation to make a move entails adverse consequences (such a situation is called *zugzwang*).

**97**

**Zukertort – Winawer**, London 1883



*White to move*

In Position 97 the knight is again stronger than the bishop:

**1.♘d3 ♗c3 2.♘f4† ♔e7**

Black couldn't save himself with 2...♔d7 either, in view of 3.e6† ♔e7 (if 3...♔d8 then 4.♘e2, with 5.♔f4 to follow) 4.♘xd5† cxd5 5.c6 and one of the pawns will queen.

**3.♘xd5†**

White wins as the queenside pawns will break through as in the note above.

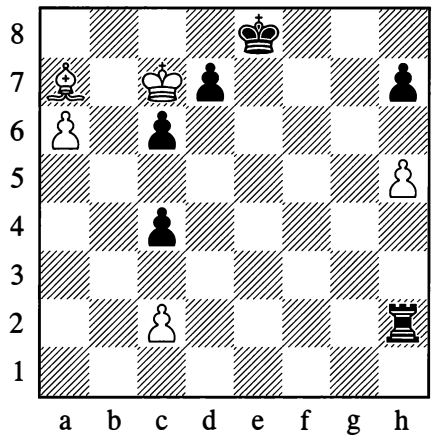
**...1–0**

## 4. FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PIECES

In the following position White achieves the win thanks to the possibility of successfully combining the *obstructing* and *striking* powers of a piece.

**98**

**F. Sackmann**, 1919



*White to move wins*

The only possible way to win is by queening the a6-pawn. But in front of the pawn there is the bishop, impeding its movement.

We observe this first characteristic of a piece: it often forms an *obstruction*, preventing other pieces from moving freely. For the pawn to advance, the bishop must move away.

How, then, will Black defend after the bishop moves?

The rook on h2 will capture on c2, then Black will stop the a-pawn with ...♖a2 and start pushing his own c-pawn. This being so, can't we utilize our bishop's power of obstruction to make it harder for the rook to get to a2?

By now the first move is clear:

**1.♗f2!**

Giving the rook a second obstacle on the second rank (the other obstacle is the pawn on c2). This is enough to make that rank "impassable".

**1...♖xh5**

Threatening to go to a5.

**2.♗b6**

Preventing this (the a5-square is placed under attack). We observe a second characteristic of the piece – its *striking power*.

Now 2...♖h2 would be useless, for the pawn on a6 no longer has the bishop in front of it, so it would have time to queen. Therefore:

**2...♖h3**

The subsequent play is easy to understand:

**3.♗c5**

3.♗a5! also wins after either 3...♖a3 4.♔b6 or 3...♖h5 4.♗c3.

**3...♖h1 4.♗d4 ♖h3 5.♗b2 ♖h5 6.♗c3**

White achieves the win by advancing his pawn, since the rook cannot reach the a-file in time: three ranks are barricaded, and the leftmost squares of the other two – a1 and a5 – are under attack.

In the above example we may also note the following. At first, each move with the bishop deprived the rook of some square on the a-file but at the same time released some other square, allowing the rook to aim at h1, h3 and h5 in succession – until the bishop took up the crucial post on c3 and all squares on the a-file were cut off.

We can very often observe positive and negative points combined in one move. Acquiring scope for action from its new square, a piece loses the influence it was exerting from its previous one. You need to keep a sharp eye on all these factors and clearly deduce what aim each move is pursuing and what action it performs.

## 5. RESTRICTIONS ON MOBILITY

A chess piece has to be active, it has to perform operations – attacking, confining the enemy units, winning them. A piece has to be mobile. Any restriction on its mobility lessens its power, making it weak – as a result of which it sometimes becomes a target for the enemy to attack. Let us see what the circumstances are in which mobility is restricted. The cases arise from a fair number of reasons, and a close study of all of them is essential.

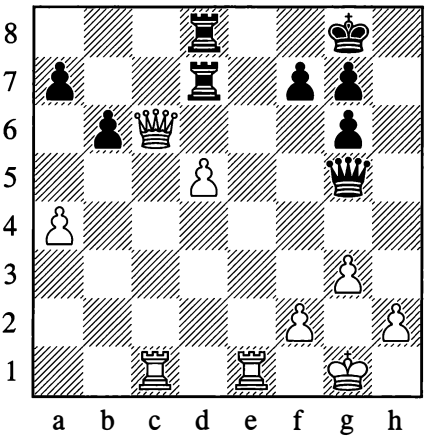
### OBSTRUCTION

The mobility of a piece is restricted by other pieces, by reason of the lines they obstruct and the squares they take up.

For a vivid illustration of how much the obstructing potential of the pieces influences mobility, recall the starting position of the game (Diagram 1 on page 14), in which the lines of action of the bishops, queens and rooks are completely blocked. Pieces also play the role of blockaders later in the game. Let us examine some examples.

**99**

**Alekhine – Colle**, Paris 1925



*White to move*

**1.♕xd7!! ♖xd7 2.♖e8† ♔h7 3.♖cc8**

Black resigned. The situation is tragi-comic: 3...♔h6 is useless, since the g5-square is blocked by Black's own queen; and for this same reason ...g5 (to escape with the king to g6) is impossible.

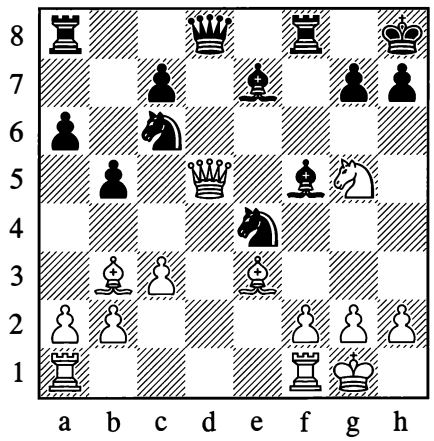
**1–0**

Obstructions lead to cramped positions in which, as a rule, the power of the pieces cannot be utilized for either attack or defence. You therefore need to think about *open lines* to ensure freedom of action for your pieces.

A restriction on the enemy king's mobility is often achieved by the attacking side in order to bring about mate.

**100**

**Atkins – Gibson**, Southport 1924



*White mates in 2 moves*

**1.♕g8†!**

Black's reply is forced:

**1...♖xg8 2.♘f7#**

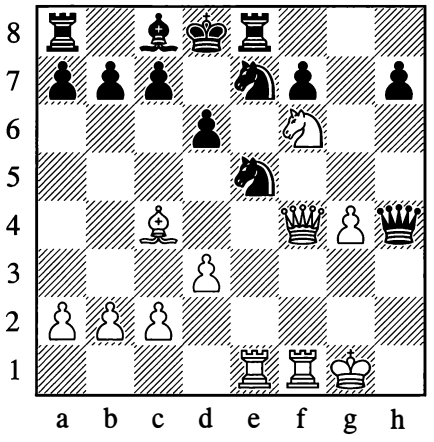
An example of smothered mate.

If in Position 100 the bishop on b3 is removed from the board and the rook on f8 is transferred to e8, White can give mate (in 4 moves) as follows: 1.♘f7† ♔g8 2.♘h6†† ♔h8 (if 2...♔f8, then 3.♕f7#) 3.♕g8†! ♖xg8 4.♘f7#

Various types of obstruction, as well as the possibility of opening lines for himself, were finely exploited by White in the following game.

**101**

**Chigorin – Davydov**, St Petersburg 1874



*White to move*

The black king is very cramped, but White still needs to open some lines to create dangerous threats. He begins with an exchange sacrifice.

**20.♖xe5 dxe5 21.♕xe5**

The threat is 22.♕d4† followed by mate.

**21...♗xg4?**

21...♗e6! is a better defence, based on the continuation 22.♕d4† ♘d5! 23.♗xd5 ♕g3†! 24.♗g2† ♕d6, and the black queen comes to the rescue of the king.

**22.♕d4† ♔c8 23.♗e6†!!**

Now 23...♗xe6 is bad because of 24.♕xh4, while in the event of 23...fxe6 Black's pawn on e6 would be creating an obstruction for his own bishop – and White would give mate in three moves, beginning with 24.♕d7†.

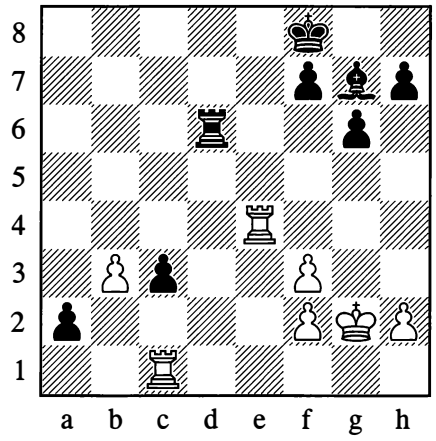
**23...♔b8 24.♘d7† ♔c8 25.♘c5† ♔b8 26.♘a6†! bxa6**

White now utilized the opening of the b-file by playing:

**27.♕b4#**

**102**

**Flohr – Tolush**, Tallinn 1945



*Black to move*

Black exploited his passed pawn by means of:

**34...c2 35.♖xc2**

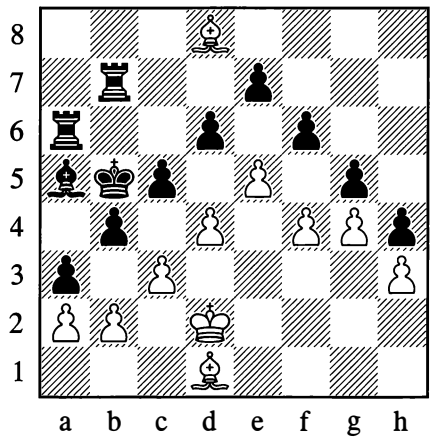
Threatening mate by ♖c8†.

**35...♗b2!!**

Freeing the g7-square for the king and screening the a2-pawn, for which a rook must now be given up. White resigned.

**0–1**

**103**



*White draws*

The significance of obstructions is amusingly demonstrated by this joke exercise.

**1.♗a4† ♔xa4**

If 1...♔c4 then 2.♗b3†, and the king is forced to return to b5. But now White seals up the position completely.

**2.b3† ♔b5 3.c4† ♔c6 4.d5† ♔d7 5.e6† ♔xd8 6.f5**

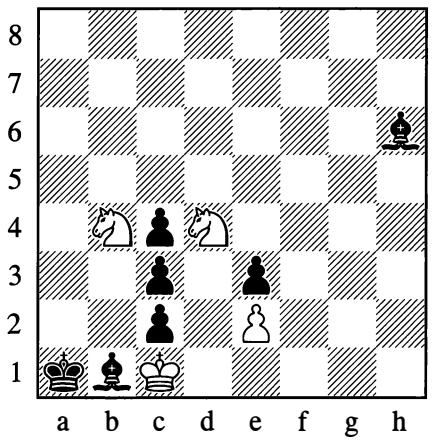
The construction of a wall that Black cannot breach is accomplished.

## CUTTING SQUARES OFF

The mobility of a piece is restricted when the squares to which it could move are under attack.

**104**

An ancient puzzle



*White mates in 3 moves*

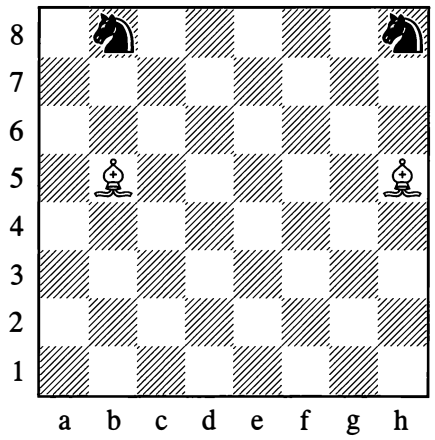
Black is extremely cramped: the squares for his king are all cut off, he cannot play ...♗a2 because of ♘xc2#, and his pawns are blocked. The only one of his pieces with some mobility is the bishop on h6.

**1.♘e6**

Robbing this bishop of all its squares. Wherever it goes, White captures it, and there follows:

**2...♗a2 3.♘xc2#**

**105**



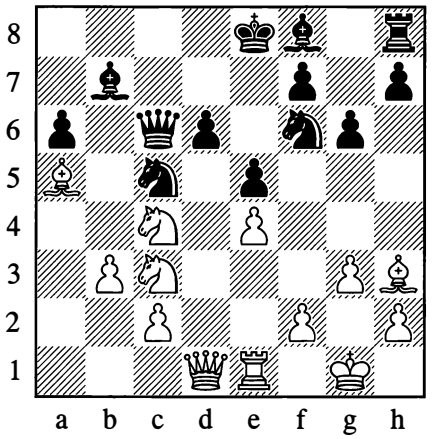
In Position 104, a knight deprived a bishop of all the squares it could move to. This is quite a rare case. It was made possible by the fact that one of the bishop's diagonals was obstructed by a pawn of its own colour.

As Diagram 105 shows, it is much easier for a bishop to deal with the task of taking squares away from a knight.

Restrictions on the mobility of pieces – through the inaccesibilty of squares and the blocking of paths – are a factor that plays an immense role in any game of chess. Sometimes it brings about a catastrophe, as for example in the following position.

**106**

**Keres – Kotov**, Pärnu 1947



*White to move*

**20.♘xe5!**

Here Black's queen succumbs since all the squares for its withdrawal are cut off; if 20...dxe5, then 21.♕d8#.

**1–0**

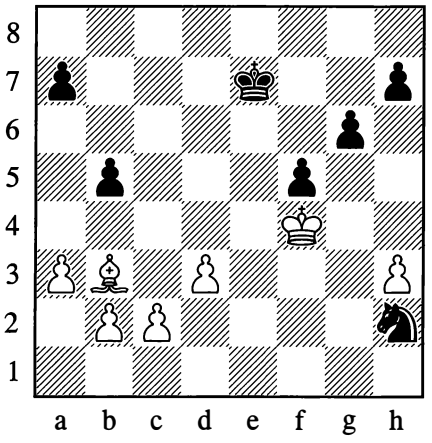
## EDGE OF THE BOARD

When a piece is far from the centre of the board – on or near an edge file or rank – this significantly affects its mobility.

In the starting position of the game, for instance – and even after a few pawn moves – the mobility of the pieces is very small.

To enable them to act effectively, they are brought closer to the centre – they are "developed". Quite often, pieces at the side of the board, cut off from their base, will quickly meet their doom.

**107**



*White wins*

**1.♔g3 ♘f1† 2.♔f2 ♘d2**
Or 2...♘h2 3.♔g2.

**3.♗a2**
Now Black has no good move with which to answer:

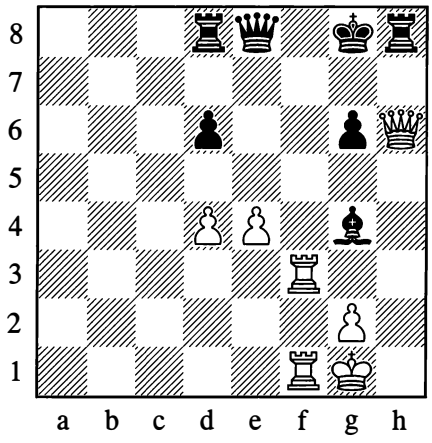
**4.♔e2**
The knight perishes.

In practice, when a king is checkmated, this nearly always occurs on one of the edges (see Diagrams 32-50), as the king's mobility here is minimal. Hence the basic principle for bringing about mate in the simplest endgames is to drive the enemy king gradually towards the side of the board, and sometimes even into the corner.

When mobility is curtailed by the edge of the board, this often combines with other factors: the cutting-off of squares, and obstructions to the pieces' lines of action.

In the following example, White exploits a situation where the mobility of Black's king is cramped by his own pieces.

**108**

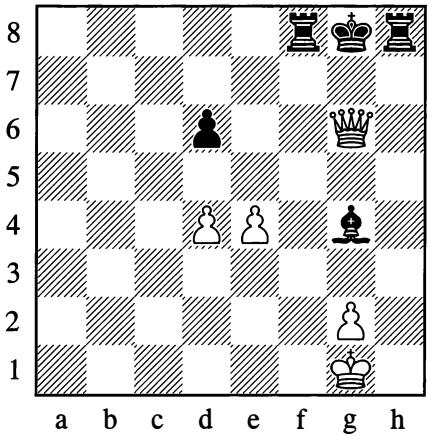


*White to move*

White plays:

**1.♖f8† ♕xf8 2.♖xf8† ♖xf8 3.♕xg6#**

**108a**

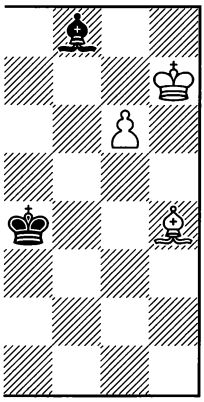


This is a so-called "epaulette mate".

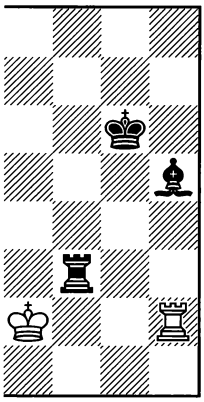
**DEFENSIVE PIECE**

The mobility of a piece is limited when it is occupied with the defence of another piece or of some important point. In many such cases, the diversion or capture of the defender proves decisive.

**109**



**110**



In Position 109 the bishop on f8 is defending the point g7, preventing the advance of the g6-pawn. White wins by:

**1.♗e7**

Diverting the defending piece from the f8-h6 diagonal.

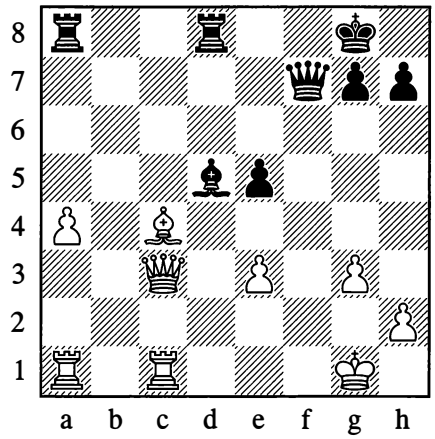
In Position 110, White wins a piece by:

**1.♖xh5**

The bishop was the black rook's only defender.

**111**

**Alatortsev – Konstantinopolsky**, Tbilisi 1937




*Black to move*

**29...♗xc4 30.♕xc4**

Black draws the white queen onto a square attacked by the black one. White's queen is defended by the rook on c1.

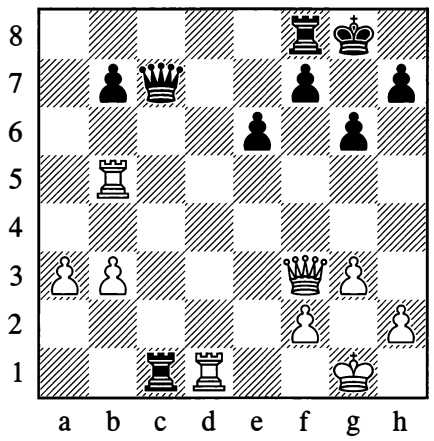
**30...♖d1†**

White resigned, seeing that 31.♖xd1 is answered by 31...♕xc4, while if 31.♔g2, then 31...♕xc4 32.♖xc4 ♖xa1.

**0–1**

**112**

**Ragozin – Panov**, Moscow 1940



*Black to move*

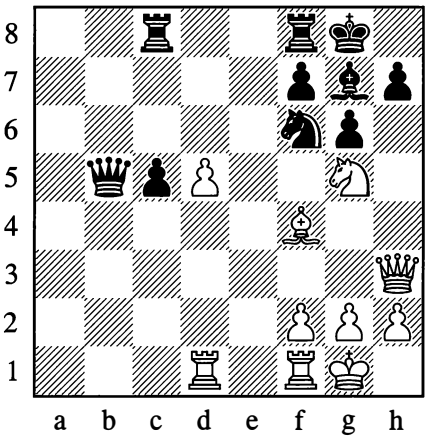
**25...♕c6**

White has no defence against the threatened loss of a rook. In attacking the white queen on f3, which defends the rook on d1, Black simultaneously attacks the rook on b5. He will answer 26.♕xc6 with 26...♖xd1† and then 27...bxc6.

Nor does 26.♕e2 or 26.♕d3 rescue White, since his queen cannot protect both rooks at once (26...♖xd1†).

**113**

**Keres – Fine**, USSR – USA, Moscow 1946



*White to move*

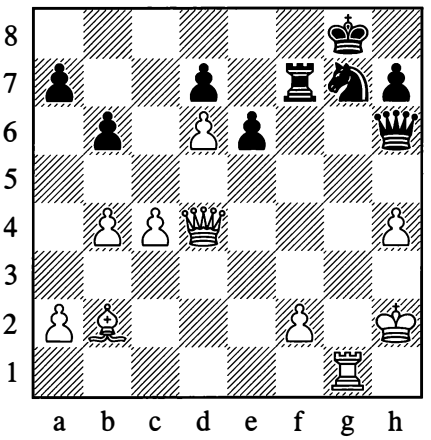
**25.♘xf7!**

Black can reply neither with 25...♔xf7 which allows 26.♕e6#, nor with 25...♖xf7 (diversion of a defending piece) which allows 26.♕xc8†, winning the exchange.

**...1–0**

**114**

**Levenfish – Chekhover**, Moscow 1935



*Black to move*

The queen on d4 is simultaneously defending the pawns on h4 and f2. It will amount to a catastrophe if this piece is forced to change its position.

**35...e5**

Hence this insignificant-looking move proved decisive. Black won shortly afterwards.

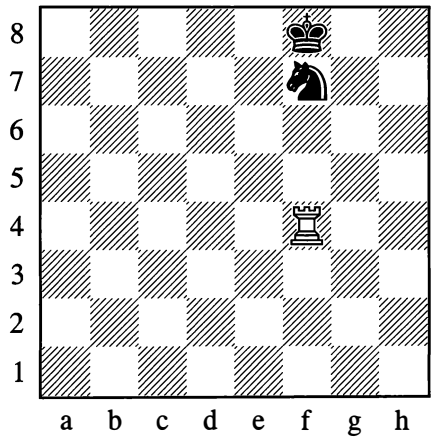
**...0–1**

Further examples of diverting or destroying a defending piece will come to our notice in due course.

## PIN

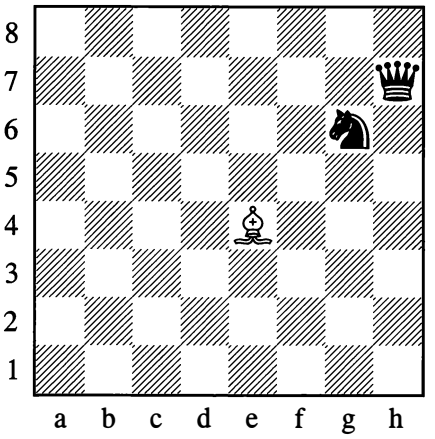
A piece is restricted in its mobility when pinned, that is, when it is acting as a shield for something important such as a valuable piece or a crucial point.

**115**



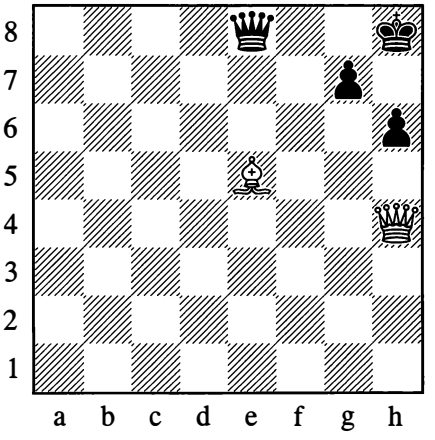
The pinned knight is totally deprived of mobility.

**116**



In Position 116, the knight is actually able to move, but if it does so, the queen on h7 will be under attack from the bishop.

**117**



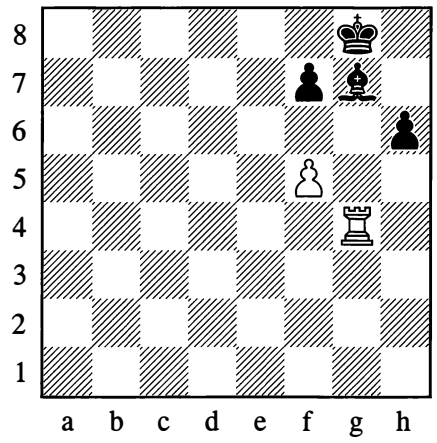
*White to move*

The pawn on g7 is pinned by the bishop on e5.

**1.♕xh6†**

White can play this move with impunity and follow with 2.♕xg7#.

**118**



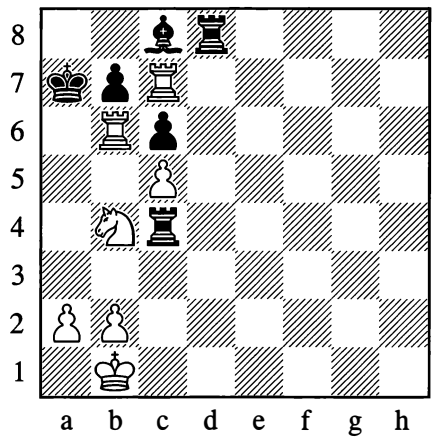
*White to move*

In Position 118, White has:

**1.f6**

Attacking and winning the pinned bishop on g7.

**119**



*White to move*

From Diagram 119 White plays:

**1.♘xc6†,**

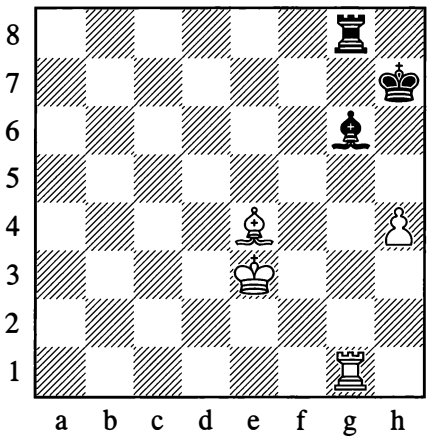
1...bxc6 is impossible since the b7-pawn is pinned by the rook on c7. Black is forced to reply:

**1...♔a8**

Now that the king has moved away, it might seem that the pawn is no longer pinned, but in actual fact it is shielding the key point a7. Forcing the diversion of this pawn, White gives mate in two moves:

**2.♖a6† bxa6 3.♖a7#**

**120**



*White to move*

In Position 120 White sets up a pin, and then wins a piece with his following move:

**1.♖xg6 ♖xg6 2.h5**

After Black's obligatory move with his king, White has to take the rook with his pawn, as he cannot win if he takes it with the bishop (see Diagram 64 on page 43)

In practical play there are cases where you can ignore the pin and move the pinned piece; but in such a case your move needs to attack a hostile piece of greater value than the one that your own piece was shielding (or at least a piece equal to it in strength); or alternatively you must be creating some dangerous threats

or other, for example a threat of mate.

As an example, consider the following game:

**1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 d6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.♘c3 ♗g4 5.♘xe5??**

White has moved his pinned knight away from f3, secretly hoping that Black won't be able to resist temptation and will capture the queen. That indeed is what happened:

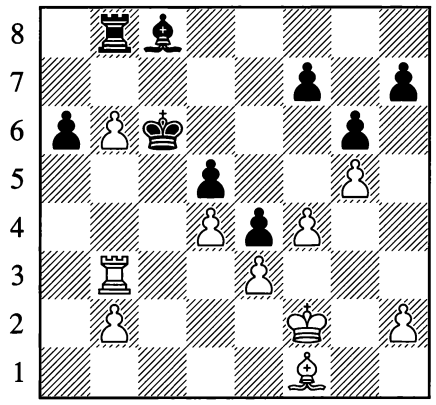
**5...♗xd1?? 6.♗xf7† ♔e7 7.♘d5#**

The so-called "Légal mate". If Black had been playing more attentively and had seen through the trap, he would have continued 5...♘xe5, fully guaranteeing victory for himself. Thus White's 5.♘xe5 was incorrect; his effort to administer a pretty mate could have been severely punished.

To play bad moves that rely exclusively on a mistake from your opponent is, of course, extremely unwise. Yet if the point e5 had not been defended by the black knight, the move ♘xe5 would have been very good. White could have answered ...dxe5 with ♕xg4, emerging with an extra pawn.

**121**

**Smyslov – Kasparian**, Pärnu 1947



*White to move*

The pawn on b6 is defenceless. Yet if White succeeds in winning the one on a6 in return for it, the outcome of the fight will be decided, thanks to his extra pawn – a *passed* pawn – on b2.

**39.b7! ♗e6**

If 39...♗xb7, then 40.♗xa6, exploiting the pin against the bishop on b7 and exchanging off all the pieces; while on 39...♖xb7, White wins a piece by 40.♖c3† ♔d7 41.♗h3†.

**40.♗xa6 ♔c7 41.♖c3†**

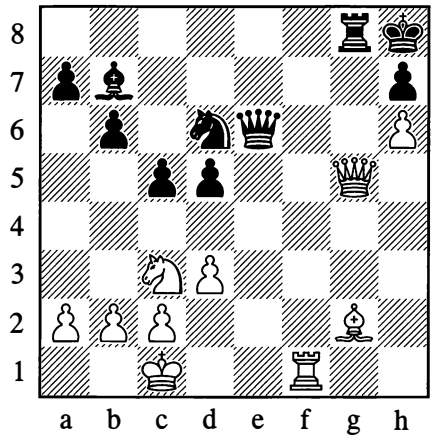
Black resigned. After 41...♔b6 there follows 42.♖c8! ♔a7, and with the black pieces tied down, White brings his king across to the queenside.

**1–0**

Some interesting cases of pins arose in the following games:

**122**

**Bykova – Bain**, Moscow 1952



*White to move*

**27.♖f8!**

Threatening 28.♕g7#.

**27...♘f5**

Or 27...♘e8 28.♖xe8! ♕xe8 29.♕f6†.

**28.♖xg8† ♕xg8 29.♕xf5**

This is simpler than 29.♕f6†.

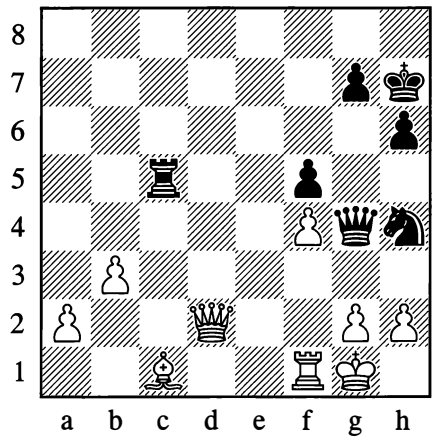
**29...♕xg2 30.♕f8†**

Black resigned, as a check on f6 and mate on g7 will follow.

**1–0**

**123**

**Euwe – Keres**, World Championship (1)
The Hague/Moscow 1948



*Black to move*

In Position 123 both opponents were in "time trouble", meaning they were forced to play extremely fast, as their allotted thinking time (two-and-a-half hours for 40 moves) was running out. Although Keres only had seconds left, he managed to spot the opportunity to win a piece.

**38...♖xc1!**

It becomes clear that White's queen and rook are both occupied as defenders, and it would consequently be bad to play either 39.♕xc1 on account of 39...♕xg2#, or 39.♖xc1 on account of 39...♘f3†, which wins the queen since the g2-pawn is pinned.

**39.h3**

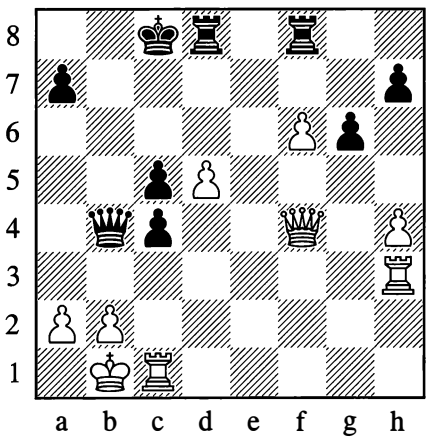
Black now replied 39...♕g3 in a flash, and went on to win on the 56th move. Had it not been for the time trouble, the following move would not have escaped his attention:

**39...♘f3†!**

White's resistance would then have been broken at once. Owing to the dual pins, neither 40.gxf3 nor 40.♖xf3 is possible; White's only move to avoid mate, 40.♔f2, would be answered by 40...♖xf1†.

**124**

**Klaman – Lisitsyn**, Leningrad 1937



*White to move*

The pin (horizontal and vertical) against the doubled pawns on the c-file is the characteristic feature of this position. White won immediately with:

**1.♖b3!**

If the queen moves away, White has the decisive 2.♕b8† followed by 3.♖b7†, while 1...cxb3 loses to 2.♕xb4.

**1–0**

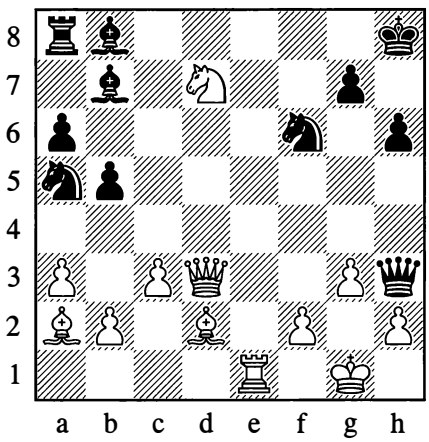
## INSUFFICIENT TIME

Time plays a major role in chess. The unit of time is the *move*, which in one way or another alters the arrangement of the pieces on the board. If we leave castling aside, each move is capable of altering the position of one piece only; the other pieces are forced to remain immobile at the moment when the move is carried out. Hence mobility in chess may be limited by a lack of time in which to move this or that piece.

To clarify this, we may take an example that was given earlier – Position 85 on page 62. In that example the pawn on d2 could not at any moment move to d1 and be queened, since White was constantly forcing Black to move his king, leaving him no time (no move) in which to promote the pawn. We may say that in this way the pawn was deprived of mobility. Let us look at another example.

**125**

From a game by **A. Neyman** (White)



*White to move draws*

Black has an extra piece and a strong position too: he threatens mate on g2, and the knight on d7 is under attack. It is essential to impede the normal action of the black pieces – to render them immobile; otherwise a catastrophe is unavoidable. White's first two moves serve as a spectacular prelude.

**1.♖e8†! ♘xe8 2.♕h7†! ♔xh7**

White now has the chance to give *perpetual check*.

**3.♘f8† ♔h8 4.♘g6† ♔h7 5.♘f8†**

By forcing Black to move his king continually, White condemns to inactivity the hostile pieces that are a danger to him.

**½–½**

In this ancient position, there is also another interesting possibility for perpetual check: 1.♕h7† ♘xh7 (1...♔xh7 2.♘f8† ♔h8 3.♘g6†=) 2.♖e8† ♘f8 3.♖xf8† ♔h7 4.♗g8† ♔g6 5.♗f7† ♔f5 6.♗d5† ♔g6 (not 6...♔g4?? 7.f3† ♔h5 8.♗f7† g6 9.♘f6#) 7.♗f7†=

Considering that whenever any piece moves the others remain immobile and often idle, players avoid making several moves in succession with the same piece in the opening phase of the game. Time (moves) must be used economically – more pieces must be brought into the fight in the smallest number of moves. If you neglect this rule, you will be left with many pieces bunched together on their starting squares. At the crucial moment there will no time to activate them and enable them to repel your opponent's pressure.

A lack of time also comes into play when two pieces are threatened at once. In most cases it is only possible for one piece to be moved away or defended, while the other succumbs to the attack.

In speaking of difficulties associated with a lack of time, we are essentially moving on to our next subject: the enhanced activity of the pieces resulting from so-called "forcing" moves which create various threats.

## 6. FORCING MOVES

The term "forcing" is applied to moves of particular power that compel the opponent to attend to them before anything else, on account of the dangers (threats) they create. An example of a threat is an attack on the king (a check, a threat of mate). A player may also be threatening to win material or to occupy a square that in some respect is important. Generally, the danger to the opponent cannot be met by a nondescript move. To most forcing moves, the playable replies are specific and limited in number; often only a single move will do.

### CHECK

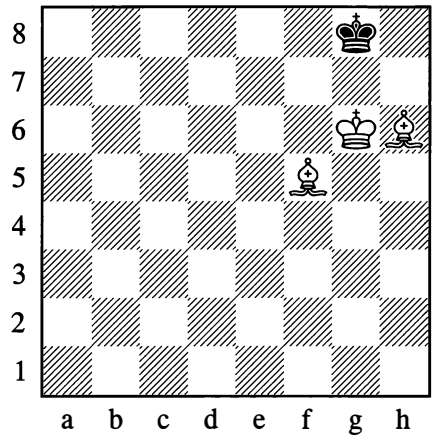
If your king is placed in check, your choice of moves in reply is small. Move the king out of check; shield the king with some piece or other, using that piece's blocking ability; or capture the checking piece. There are no other options. Parrying a check sometimes brings adverse consequences. Thus for example, moving the king to an adjacent square may involve it in new dangers. Shielding the king with a piece, as we know already, means that that piece is pinned, which again can be very dangerous.

Subconsciously feeling its power, a beginner will never miss giving a check if only he gets the chance. Isn't it pleasant to be in control of the events on the board! And the king of course is the chief enemy that has to be annihilated!

But a check that is unconnected with the further course of the play is often as harmless as a blank cartridge. Sometimes it can even harm your own cause, if for instance the check drives the king onto a better square, or if your own piece, after giving the check, is in a bad position.

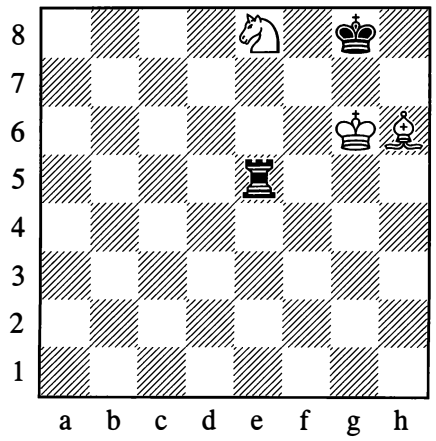
Check is a powerful tactical device if forming an integral part of the right manoeuvre.

**126**



*White to move*

**127**

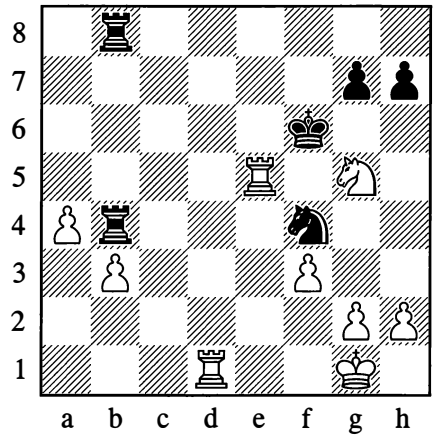


*White to move*

In Positions 126 and 127 White gives a check that drives the king into the corner and cuts off its possibility of moving away from there. White then gives mate with his bishop.

**128**

**Tolush – Randviir**, Pärnu 1947

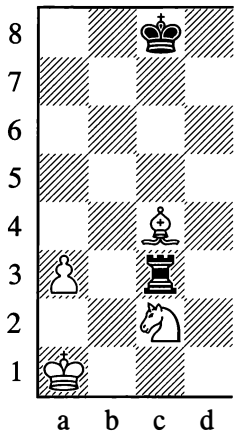


*White to move*

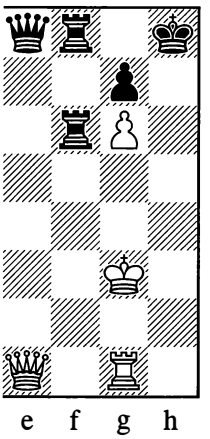
With a sequence of checks, White gave an original mate in 3 moves:

**44.♖d6†! ♔xe5 45.♘f7† ♔f5 46.g4#**

**129**



**130**



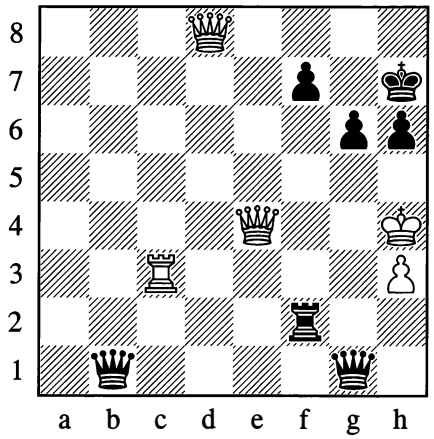
In Position 129 the rook has attacked the bishop and knight simultaneously. White replies **1.♗a6†**. By moving one piece away with check and forcing Black to move his king, White gains the time to defend his other piece with **2.♔b2**.

In Position 130, if the white queen could give a check on the h-file, that check would be followed by mate on h7. Black's material plus means that there is no time to lose, so White achieves his

aim with a continuous sequence of checks that involves sacrificing his rook:

**1.♖h1† ♔g8 2.♖h8†! ♔xh8 3.♕h1† ♔g8 4.♕h7#**

**131**



*White to move*

In this eccentric position with four queens (from the 1947 Tallinn Championship), the white king is in great danger as it lacks cover from pawns. However, White saved himself with the aid of a typical device:

**49.♕h8†! ♔xh8 50.♖c8† ♔g7 51.♕e5† ♖f6 52.♖g8†! ♔xg8 53.♕e8† ♔g7 54.♕h8† ♔xh8**

Stalemate! White sacrificed all his pieces with continuous checks.

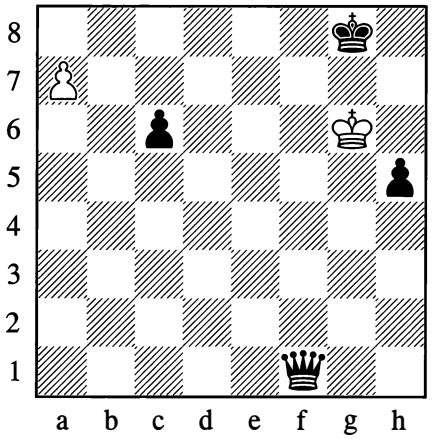
**½–½**

One instance of a continuous sequence of checks is perpetual check – this is when the weaker side constantly attacks the king to rescue itself from the threat of loss (see Diagram 125 on page 81).

Very often the purpose of a series of checks is to bring a piece into a crucial position without giving your opponent the time for any defensive moves.

**132**

**A. Troitsky**, 1930



*White to play and win*

**1.a8=♕† ♕f8 2.♕a2† ♔h8**

White transfers his queen to d4 by executing an original "staircase" or "step-ladder" movement:

**3.♕b2† ♔g8 4.♕b3† ♔h8 5.♕c3† ♔g8 6.♕c4† ♔h8 7.♕d4† ♔g8 8.♕d7**

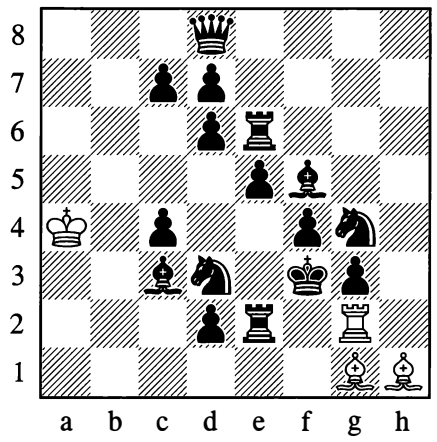
A mating net has been created from which Black cannot escape. (White threatens to give mate on h7, or on g7 if the black queen moves away. Black has no checks.) In this example White succeeded in bringing his queen straight across, so to speak, from a8 to d7, by means of a series of checks.

An even more powerful effect is produced by a *double check* – a variety of *discovered check* (see the commentary on Diagram 17 on page 22). The only defence against a double check is an escape move with the king.

**133**

**A. White**, 1919

Fun exercise



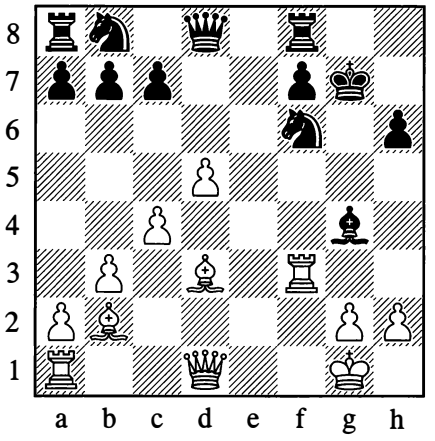
*White to play and win*

This exercise vividly illustrates the immense power of the double check. With a ladder movement (via f2, f3, e3, e4 and so on), the white rook gives a continuous series of double checks to drive the black king to a7. After **10.♖b7††** the king has the choice between 10...♔a6 (allowing immediate mate by 11.♖a7#) and **10...♔a8** – which allows one more double check, **11.♖a7††**, and then **12.♖a8#**. The clumsy rook has marched to a8 (diagonally, so to speak) in a highly amusing manner.

A similar rook march is also possible in practical play:

**134**

**N.N. – N.N.**, Paris 1922



*White to move*

**1.♖xf6 ♗xd1 2.♖g6†† ♔h7 3.♖g7† ♔h8 4.♖h7†† ♔g8 5.♖h8#**

A double check is not the only dangerous variety of discovered check. Another variety can arise when the piece that moves away attacks an enemy piece other than the king.

This produces a simultaneous attack, all the more dangerous since the king is one of the attacked pieces. Simultaneous attacks are what we shall examine next.

## DUAL ATTACK

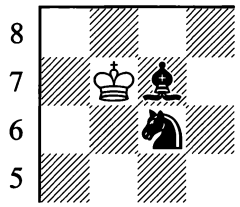
The simultaneous attack on a number of pieces – usually two of them (hence the term "dual attack") – is among the most dangerous of moves, and has decided the fate of many a game of chess.

A dual attack may be carried out by any piece in the appropriate circumstances.

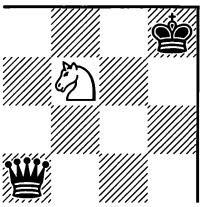
Of course the most varied forms of attack are performed by the queen, since the move of this piece amalgamates the moves of all the others except the knight.

Here are some typical examples of dual attacks of varied kinds, carried out by various pieces.

**135**

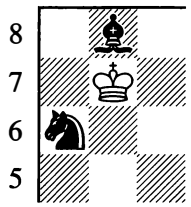


**136**

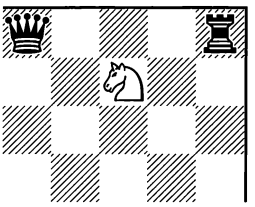


In Position 136, the knight simultaneously attacks the king and queen.

**137**

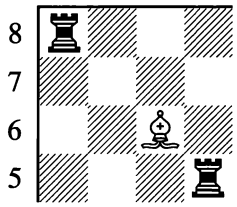


**138**

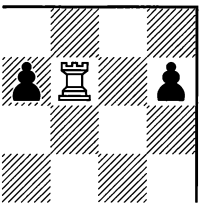


The king's attack on the minor pieces in Position 137 differs from Position 135 in that the knight, this time, is defending the bishop. If Black can defend the knight, he saves his piece.

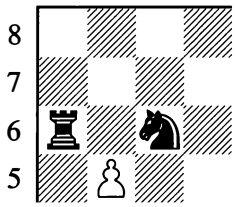
**139**



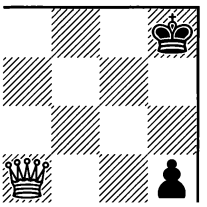
**140**



**141**



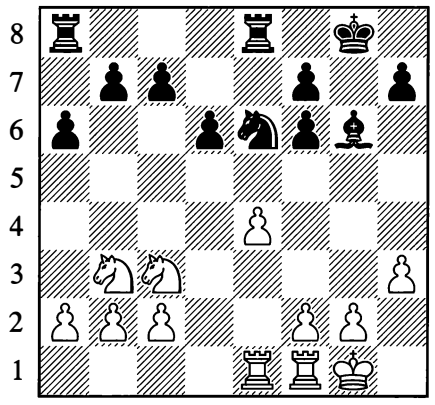
**142**



When one piece directly attacks enemy pieces in different directions, as in all the Examples 135-142, this is called a "fork". The characteristic device of winning a piece by a pawn fork was seen in the following game.

**143**

**S. Belavenets – N.N.**, 1936

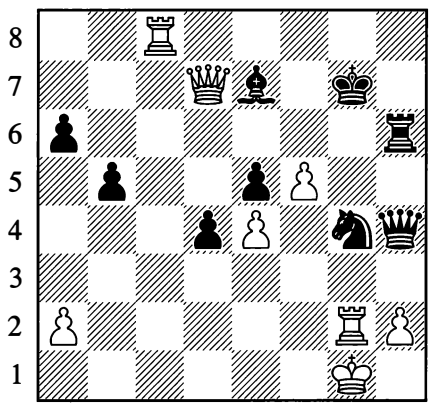


*White to move*

Here White played **1.f4**, and in an attempt to defend against the threatened f4-f5 Black replied **1...f5**. However after **2.g4!** he had to resign, as he could not avoid losing a piece.

**144**

**Chigorin – Showalter**, Vienna 1898



*White to move*

**41.f6†**

In this position, the fork wrecked Black's entire defensive set-up, creating all manner of interrelated threats.

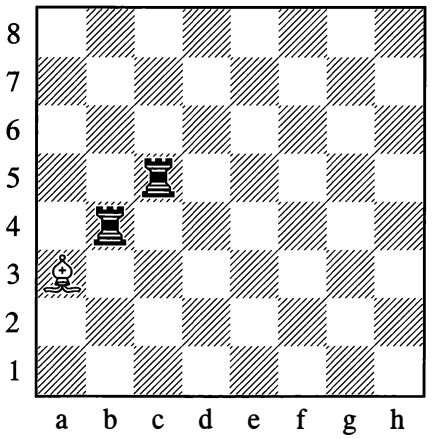
**41...♔xf6 42.♕f5† ♔g7 43.♖xg4†**

Black resigned.

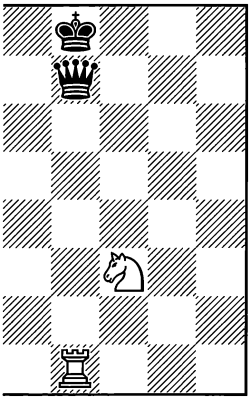
**1–0**

Simultaneous attacks are encountered in the most varied forms. These include cases where the attacked pieces are aligned one behind the other on a rank, file or diagonal.

**145**



**146**

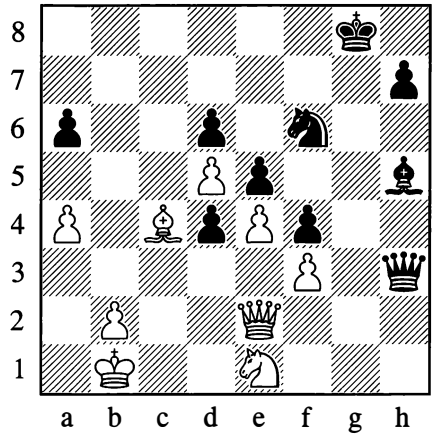


**147**

The attack is particularly incisive if one of the pieces in the alignment is the king, as in Diagrams 146 and 147 – for the defence is then burdened with a pin. (Pins were covered in greater detail earlier in this chapter.)

**148**

**Chekhover – Kasparian**, Yerevan 1936



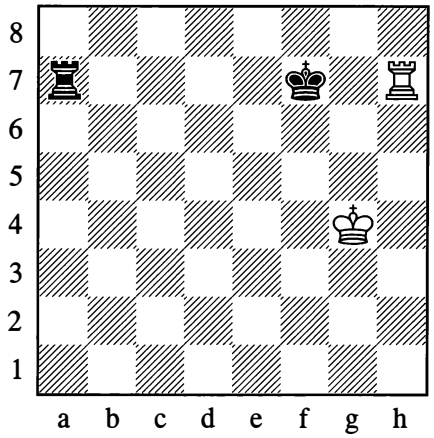

*Black to move*

**34...♘xe4**

Black has won a pawn and broken up his opponent's pawn chain. 35.♕xe4 ♗g6 would pin the white queen to the king, while 35.fxe4 is unplayable owing to the original pin on the f3-pawn.

**...0–1**

**149**

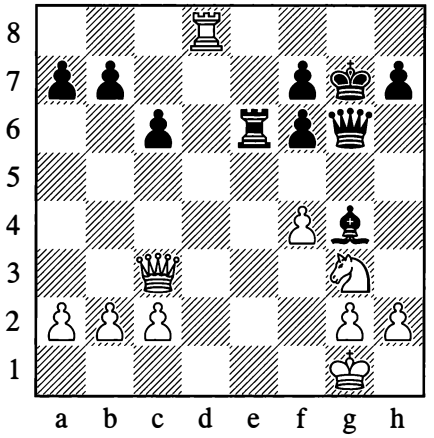


If the attacked pieces are the other way round, with the king (or the more valuable piece) "in front" and an undefended piece behind it, the latter inevitably succumbs. This is called a *skewer*. Diagram 149 shows a typical case where a player wins a rook on the 7th rank by means of a skewer.

Naturally, a simultaneous attack may aim not only at pieces but also at some points (squares on the board) which for some reason it is crucially important to occupy.

**150**

**Chigorin – Janowski**, Paris 1900



*White to move*

Here one dual attack is immediately succeeded by another. White first draws the black bishop onto the f5-square with the aid of a pawn fork:

**26.f5! ♗xf5**

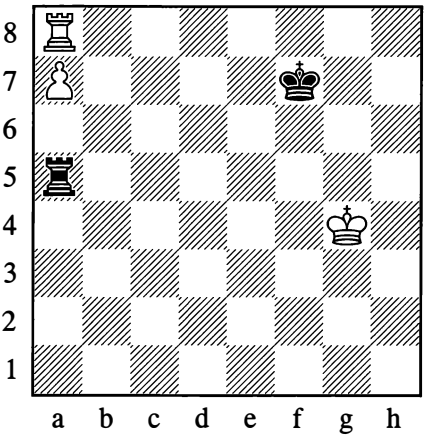
He then follows with the decisive dual attack:

**27.♕c5!**

Simultaneously aiming at the bishop on f5 and the point f8 (the threat is 28.♕f8#). Faced with this, Black resigned.

**1–0**

**151**



*White to move*

The rook on a8 is obstructing the pawn on a7, but if the rook moves away the pawn will fall. However, White can make use of a skewer:

**1.♖h8!**

Threatening 2.a8=♕.

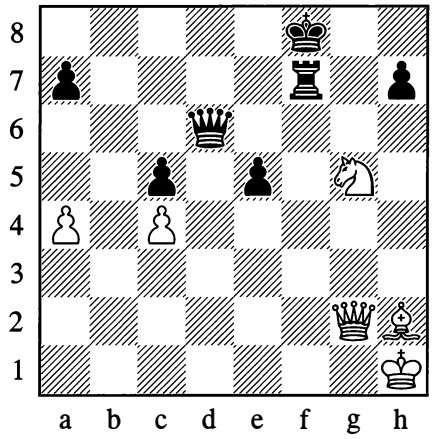
**1...♖xa7 2.♖h7†**

Winning the black rook as in Diagram 149. Black would also lose with his king on e7 or d7.

But if it is Black to move in Position 151, then after **1...♔g7** White cannot win.

**152**

**Petrosian – Simagin**, Moscow 1956



*White to move*

White cannot win by 1.♘xf7? on account of 1...♕d1†, with perpetual check. Instead there followed:

**1.♕a8† ♔g7**

Now a sparkling sequence of dual attacks decided the game:

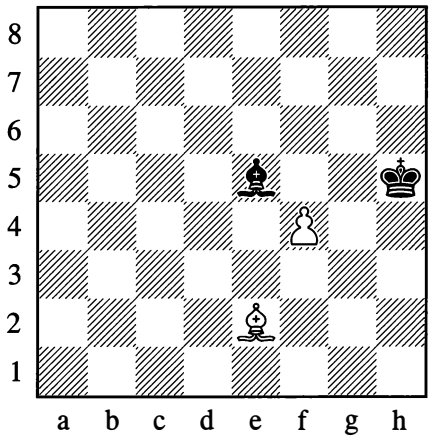
**2.♗xe5† ♕xe5 3.♕h8†!! ♔xh8 4.♘xf7†**

Black resigned. We shall frequently meet with examples of such dual attacks in the rest of this book.

**1–0**

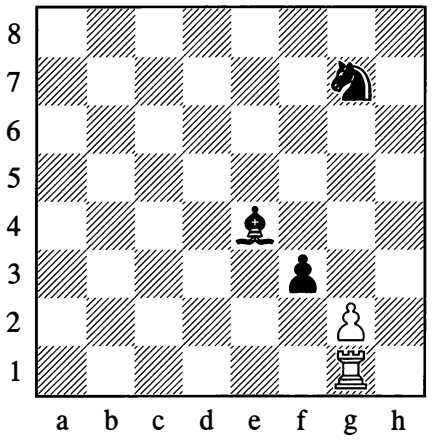
We will now give some more attention to simultaneous attacks created by a discovered check, or by a non-checking "discovery" against a piece.

**153**



In Diagram 153 White has played **1.f3-f4†**, accompanying the discovered check with an attack against the bishop on e5.

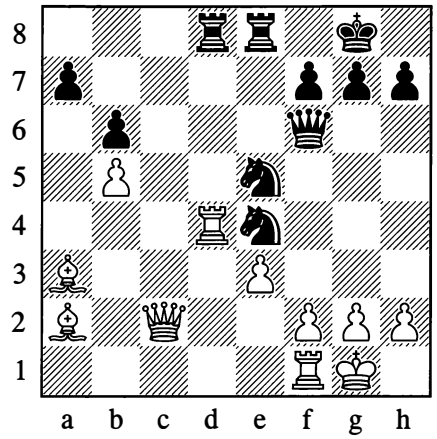
**154**



The similarity between a discovered check and a discovered attack is shown by Diagram 154. Here White can play **1.gxf3** with a dual attack on his opponent's minor pieces.

**155**

**Liublinsky – Baturinsky**, Moscow 1945



*Black to move*

**22...♘f3†!**

Black simultaneously attacks the king and rook.

**23.gxf3 ♕g6†**

Utilizing the file that has been opened, and taking aim at the queen on c2.

**24.♔h1 ♘g3† 25.hxg3 ♕xc2**

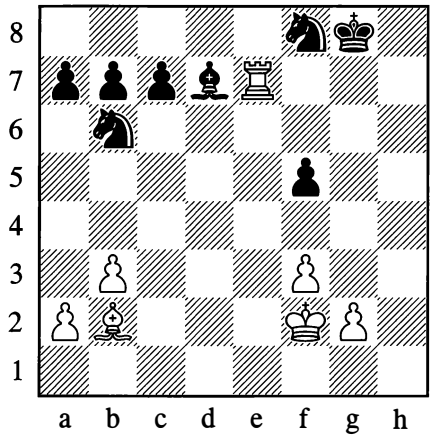
Black went on to win. In this case a fork and a discovered attack were interestingly combined.

**...0–1**

A discovered check becomes a particularly devastating weapon when it can be repeated several times over, as for example in the position below.

**156**

"See-saw"



*White to move*

**1.♖g7† ♔h8 2.♖xd7†**

The fact that the rook places itself under attack from both knights is of no importance, as Black has to move out of check.

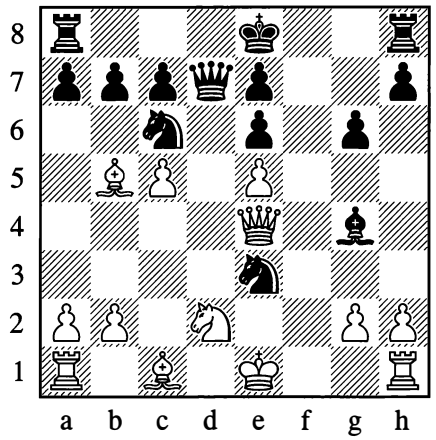
**2...♔g8 3.♖g7† ♔h8 4.♖xc7†**

In this way White picks up all the queenside pawns, and in conclusion he moves his rook to b7, winning the knight too. Such a manoeuvre (with its distinctive to-and-fro movements of the rook along the rank or file) is called a "mill" by Russian players; here we saw White "grinding" his opponent's entire queenside.

The power of dual attacks is so great that defending against them involves extreme difficulty; at any rate, the defence has to be based on equally sharp moves in reply. In Position 129 (on page 83), for example, White was able to save himself thanks to a forcing move – namely a check (one of his pieces moved away with an attack on a piece of greater value). The threat has to be answered by a counter-threat, as the following example shows.

## 157

**Ilyin-Zhenevsky – Levenfish**, Leningrad 1936



*Black to move*

The white queen threatens to take the knight on e3, but if the knight moves, the bishop on g4 is left undefended. Powerful defensive measures are needed.

**15...♕d4! 16.♗xc6† bxc6 17.♕xd4**

After 17.♕xc6† ♔f7, the menacing position of the black pieces would tell.

**17...♘c2†**

Thanks to the fork Black regained the queen, although White did still go on to win the game.

**...1–0**

## CAPTURES

The capture of a piece is also a forcing move, for in most cases it compels the other side to continue in only one way – with a recapture. Sometimes a capture can also be answered by a dual attack or by some other forcing move, but usually this will still have the same purpose of recovering the piece, as otherwise the game may be lost as a result of the opponent's material plus.

If a capture involves giving up one piece in return for a weaker one, this is called a *sacrifice,* just as when a piece is surrendered outright. In either case we are deliberately losing some material for the sake of obtaining an advantage in position.

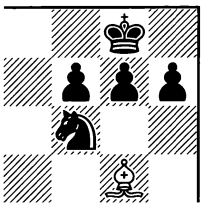
The aims pursued by sacrifices are of the most varied kinds; in this chapter we shall have the chance to acquaint ourselves with some of them.

If we are giving up a piece equal in value to the one captured, this is an *exchange.* What is achieved by an exchange? What aim can it pursue?

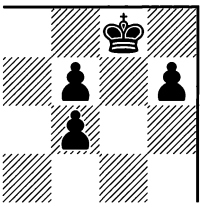
An exchange with the straightforward aim of reducing the material or, as we say, simplifying the position, was already seen at the start of this chapter. As a rule, such simplification favours the stronger side.

When exchanging it is very important not to allow a deterioration of your own position, especially your pawn formation – since defects in the pawn structure tend to be irreparable.

## 158



## 158a

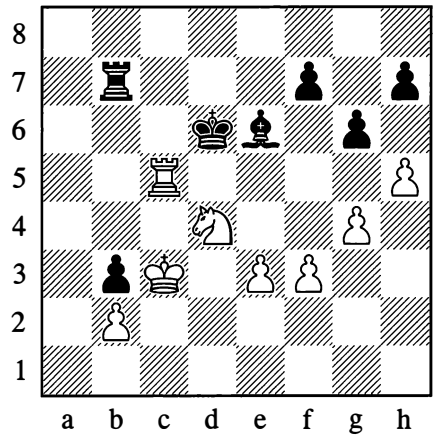


In Position 158, if Black allows the exchange of his knight, he is left with a disrupted pawn formation (see Diagram 158a). The pawns on f6 and f7 are doubled, which reduces their mobility; deprived of protection from other pawns, they are weak.

Apart from the damage to the pawn position, the exchange has opened up the g-file against the black king, possibly putting it in great danger. The h6-square has also become accessible to the white pieces.

**159**

**Nimzowitsch – Jacobsen**, Copenhagen 1923



*White to move*

By skilfully exchanging, White shattered his opponent's pawn formation:

**42.♖c6†! ♔d7 43.hxg6! hxg6 44.♘xe6! fxe6**

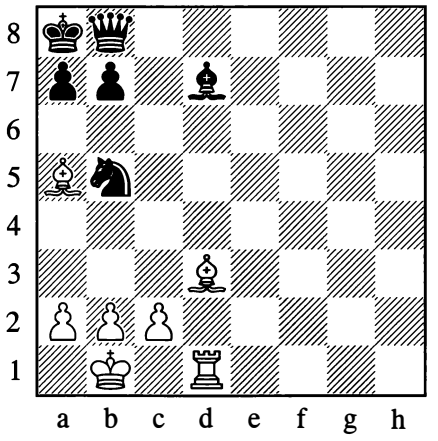
If 44...♔xc6 then 45.♘d8†, exchanging everything off and winning easily.

**45.♖c5**

Intending ♖g5xg6. White soon won a second pawn and the game.

**...1–0**

**160**



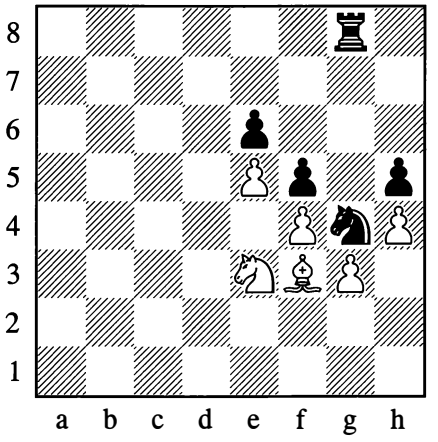
*White to move*

In Position 160, White exchanges pieces in order to open the d-file:

**1.♗xb5 ♗xb5 2.♖d8**

The rook pins the black queen and king.

**161**

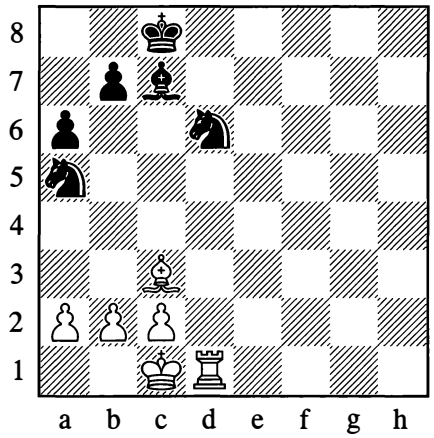


*White to move*

In Position 161 on the other hand, the purpose of exchanging with **1.♗xg4** or **1.♘xg4** is to force the opponent to *close* the g-file with

**1...hxg4** or **1...fxg4**, after which his pressure against the backward (and therefore weak) pawn on g3 is at an end. Black has to take on g4 with a pawn, as he would lose the exchange if he captured with the rook.

**162**



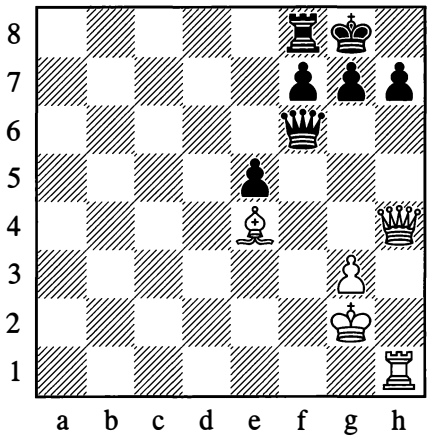
*White to move*

We already know that the diversion or elimination of a defending piece is often decisive. For instance in Position 162, White has an exchange:

**1.♗xa5**

Diverting a defender (the c7-bishop) from the knight on d6, which falls victim to the rook. If White had a rook on e7 instead of d1, he could play 1.♖xc7† (destroying a defensive piece) 1...♔xc7 2.♗xa5†, concluding a favourable transaction (two minor pieces for a rook).

**163**



*Black to move*

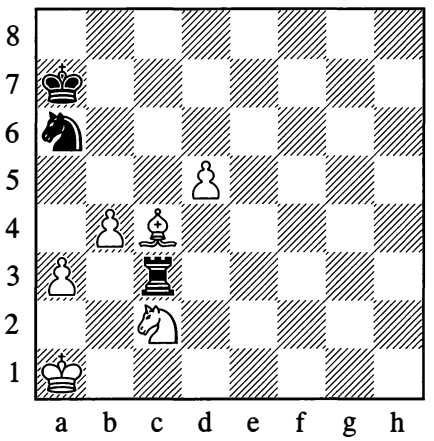
The aim of an exchange is often to eliminate hostile pieces that are especially mobile or dangerous. In Position 163, Black plays:

**1...♕xh4**

Eliminating White's most dangerous piece. After 2.♖xh4 Black easily defends the point h7 with ...g6 or ...h6.

A special category consists of exchanges that have the aim of gaining time.

**164**



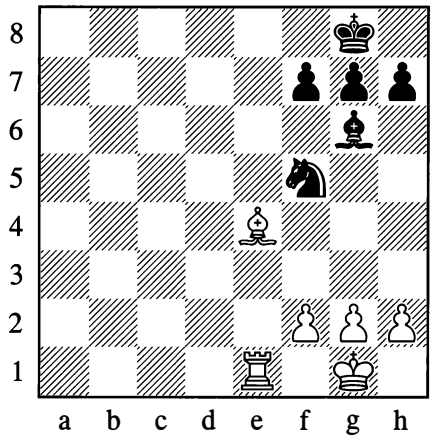
*White to move*

In Position 164, the rook has attacked the bishop and knight simultaneously. White is rescued from this dual attack by exchanging with:

**1.♗xa6**

He has now captured a piece and can therefore give up one of his own; he will then be able to move or defend his second piece. The gain of time here is obvious – exactly as in Example 129 (on page 83).

**165**



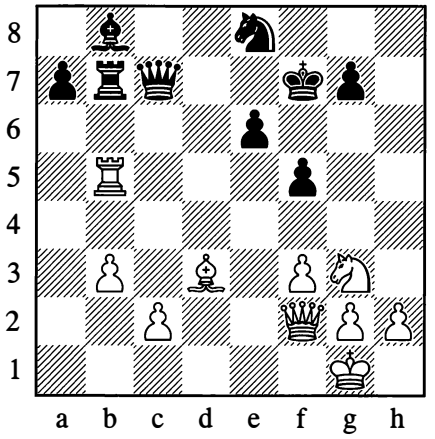
*White to move*

In Position 165, White wants to give mate on e8 with his rook. If he moves his bishop aside from e4 to f3, Black has time to defend himself (for instance by opening a loophole for his king with ...h6). White therefore plays:

**1.♗xf5**

Opening the file without loss of time.

**166**



*Black to move*

**1...a6**

White must be careful to avoid 2.♖c5, as 2...♕xc5 3.♕xc5 ♗a7 wins the exchange. Exchanging rooks is the only move.

**2.♖xb7 ♕xb7**

White now defends against the threat of ...♗a7 by moving his king or queen.

Black may also continue in a different manner from the position in the diagram:

**1...♖xb5 2.♗xb5 a6**

Threatening ...♗a7 as before. Now White has another exchange at his disposal to rescue him:

**3.♗xe8†**

If this move didn't give check it would be useless, and in defending against ...♗a7 White would lose his bishop on b5.

In practical play, exchanges for the purpose of gaining time can be encountered right from the very first moves. For example:

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5**

White now brings out a piece with:

**3.♘c3**

Attacking the queen at the same time and forcing it to withdraw, that is, to make a second move. After the queen's move White develops a new piece, thus drawing ahead of his opponent in the number of pieces brought into battle.

Another example:

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.dxe5 dxe5 4.♕xd8† ♔xd8**

Black has been deprived of the right to castle. As a result, White will bring his pieces (especially the rooks) into play more quickly than his opponent and will obtain better chances in the coming fight.

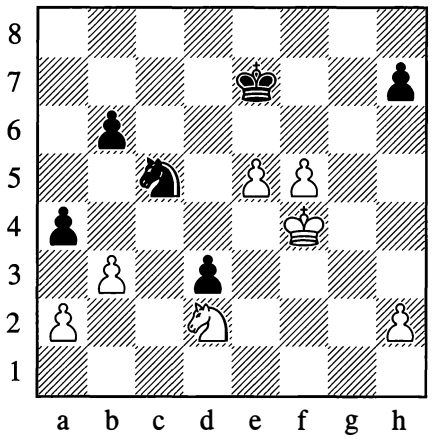
Such are some of the aims that are pursued through exchanges. In other cases, players will seek exchanges in order to give the position a particular character (open or closed); or to achieve the desired relation of fighting forces (such as knight against bishop, or the opposite – which may confer the advantage of the bishop pair); or to gain control of squares of one colour; and so forth. These cases are more complex, and we will not dwell on them at this stage.

## PAWN PROMOTION

The promotion of a pawn to a piece (usually a queen) is a special form of material gain. Usually it alters the balance of forces so greatly that players will often resign a game, acknowledging the uselessness of fighting on, if they recognize that they have no way of stopping a passed pawn. In view of this, the advance of a passed pawn, or sometimes even the mere threat of creating such a pawn, amounts to a sharp, forcing continuation.

**167**

**Chekhover – I. Rabinovich**, Leningrad 1934



*Black to move*

In this position, Black won a pawn with an unexpected move:

**46...♘xb3!**

The reply 47.axb3 would be bad on account of 47...a3, after which one of Black's pawns will queen. Similarly 47.♘xb3 loses to 47...axb3 48.axb3 d2, when the passed d-pawn – which, before the exchange, was blockaded by the knight and therefore immobile – is given its freedom.

**47.♔e3**

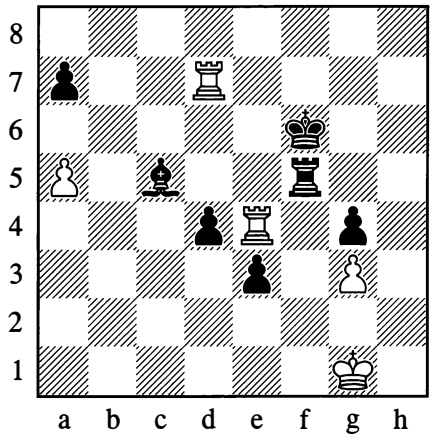
White must settle for the loss of a pawn due to the reasons given above. The game eventually concluded in a draw.

**...½–½**

The threat to queen a pawn has an especially powerful effect when other threats are combined with it.

**168**

**Lisitsin – Riumin**, Leningrad 1934



*Black to move*

**64...d3 65.♖xd3**

Black is able to queen his e-pawn by exploiting a discovered check and the constricted position of White's king.

**65...e2† 66.♔g2 ♖f2† 67.♔h1 ♖f1†**

Black has taken control of the pawn's promotion square, e1.

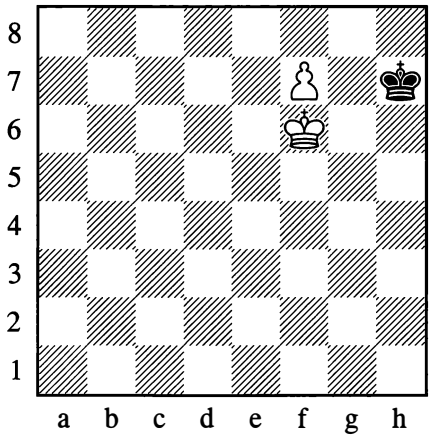
**68.♔g2 e1=♕**

White now has to give up a rook (69.♖xe1 ♖xe1), leaving Black with an extra piece.

**...0–1**

Cases where a pawn needs to be promoted to a piece other than a queen, though rare, do occur in practical play.

**169**



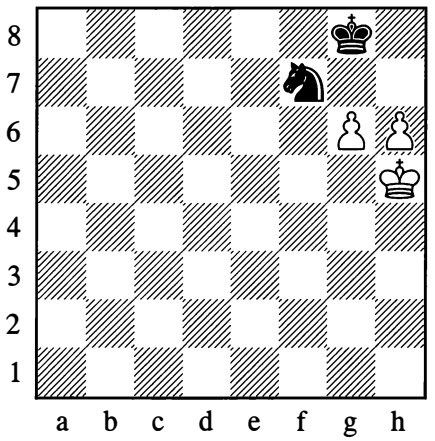
*The pawn has to promote to a rook!*

In Position 169 White wins by:

**1.f8=♖!**

1.f8=♕? would be stalemate.

**170**



*White to move*

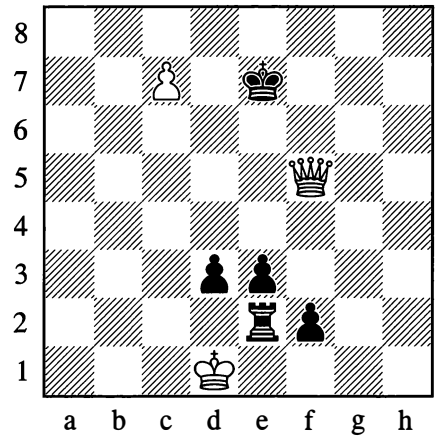
In Position 170 White plays:

**1.h7† ♔g7 2.gxf7 ♔xh7 3.f8=♖!**

The following is an example of a position where a pawn has to be promoted to a knight.

**171**

**Labourdonnais – N.N.**, 1837



*White to move*

Black is threatening ...♖e1#; and if 1.♕xd3, then 1...f1=♕#. The correct continuation is:

**1.c8=♘† ♔e8**

1...♔d8 is met by 2.♕xd3† and 3.♔xe2.

**2.♕g6†! ♔f8**

As before, the king cannot go to the d-file.

**3.♕f6† ♔g8**

Otherwise White gives mate on e7.

**4.♘e7† ♔h7 5.♕g6† ♔h8 6.♕g8#**

The examples we have examined show what great significance a passed pawn has. To advance your passed pawn you have to choose the appropriate moment, when your opponent cannot stop the pawn or win it. Sometimes the advance is carried out for the purpose of diverting enemy pieces.

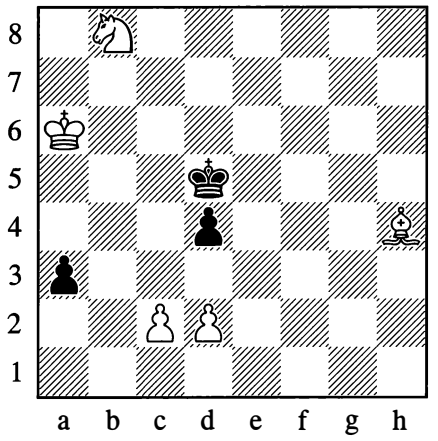
## THREATS

Inasmuch as a capture is a forcing move, it's easy to understand that even a simple attack, in other words the mere *threat* of a capture, can sometimes be a forcing move too, as it leaves the opponent with the choice between only a small number of defensive moves. For instance when a pawn attacks a piece, as indeed when any piece of lesser value attacks one of greater value, this nearly always causes the more valuable piece to move, and the number of suitable squares where it can go may be very limited.

Naturally other threats also arise in a game, not just threats to capture material. You can threaten to occupy an important square, to mate the enemy king, to promote a pawn, and so forth. Threats like this of course require your opponent to defend against them. However, an isolated threat, so dear to beginners, very often yields little. We attack a piece and it moves away, perhaps even attacking a piece of our own; we threaten mate in one move, but our opponent is playing attentively and parries this threat with ease. It's a different matter when a number of threats combine with each other or immediately follow one another.

**172**

**L. Kubbel**, 1922



*White wins*

In Position 172 for example, the black pawn on a3 is threatening to queen, and White would seem to have no way to prevent this. Yet he starts operating with a whole series of threats, of which the significance soon becomes clear.

**1.♘c6! ♔xc6**

Black takes the knight, seeing that 1...a2 would be met by the dual attack 2.♘b4† (a threat!). There is no use in 1...♔c4 either, on account of 2.♘xd4. Then if 2...♔xd4, White plays 3.♗f6†, gaining control of the pawn's promotion square; or if 2...a2, then 3.♘b3.

**2.♗f6 ♔d5**

White was threatening to take the d4-pawn, so Black defends it. He couldn't play 2...♔c5 because of 3.♗e7†, winning the pawn on a3.

**3.d3! a2**

To White's move, which looks incomprehensible, Black replies by pushing his pawn towards its queening square. But White has been preparing a fine manoeuvre.

**4.c4† ♔c5**

Of course 4...dxc3 would be bad in view of 5.♗xc3, when the a2-pawn is stopped. Black's 4...♔c5 seems wholly natural. Yet an unexpected dénouement follows.

**5.♔b7!**

Now 5...a1=♕ will be met by 6.♗e7#. With such a small quantity of pieces on the board, it would have been hard to suspect that this final threat was available – but it proves decisive. Black is compelled to move his king, whereupon 6.♗xd4 stops the pawn, and White easily wins.

Of course, this example comes nowhere near to exhausting the immense variety of threats. We have come across many types of threat already, and we shall meet with still more of them later. The very essence of any game of chess is the creating and parrying of threats of every kind. At this stage it was merely important to note that threats are forcing moves, restricting the opponent to a small number of defensive continuations.

## 7. SERIES OF MOVES WITH A COMMON IDEA

Up to here we have acquainted ourselves chiefly with the aims and effect of individual moves. We now proceed to look at how separate moves are associated or combined – in other words, we shall be examining sequences of moves which are in some way joined in a single whole.

What binds a series of moves into a single whole is a common idea – a plan. In Position 132 (on page 84), for example, we saw a series of moves (checks) that culminated in mate. That was what constituted the purpose of the sequence; each of the checks occurred as part of the common plan. In another case such as Position 172 (the study by Kubbel), a continuous sequence of threats from White pursued the aim of stopping the enemy pawn from queening; again a common plan united all these moves.

Moves by White and Black combined in a continuous unbroken sequence are called a *variation*.

If one of the players employs forcing moves – to which the playable replies are specific and few in number, and sometimes limited to one move only – then a *forced variation* comes about.

Such forced variations are termed *combinations* when they involve sacrifices from which the player counts on deriving some benefit or other. We have already come across numerous combinations in this book, and a separate chapter will be devoted to them later on.

But whether or not the variations are forced and a combination is possible, moves are always connected by an overall idea, a *plan*. The substance of such plans, notwithstanding their immense diversity, can ultimately be divided into two basic categories:

(1) We are *either* trying to achieve the final aim of a chess game – to checkmate the enemy – by direct means (that is by concentrating our pieces against the king, by attacking it and creating mate threats); *or*

(2) We are trying reach our goal by an *indirect* route, which first involves weakening our opponent by winning material from him or by gaining positional advantages, in other words an arrangement of the pieces that favours us better.

There is also one other category of plans that applies when we are in trouble, when we are thinking about defence rather than attack, and about somehow saving ourselves from impending defeat. We shall discuss this in more detail later.

All strategic plans are covered (in the most general sense, of course) by what has just been said. In a practical game of chess, however, such excessively broad and general plans are insufficient. There is usually a constant need to solve a number of simpler strategic tasks and to move gradually, step by step, towards the ultimate goal. The small-scale strategic ideas and plans that this involves are extremely numerous. There is an even greater quantity of tactical ideas and devices which help us to solve the specific and general strategic tasks.

## PIECE COORDINATION

Positions 168, 172 and many others that we have examined offer good examples of coordinated play with the pieces, without which there can be no good results. This is one of the most important principles of the game.

When a beginner stops just playing with this or that piece individually and starts combining their activities in his manoeuvres (even with only two or three pieces at once), this is the best sign that he is making progress.

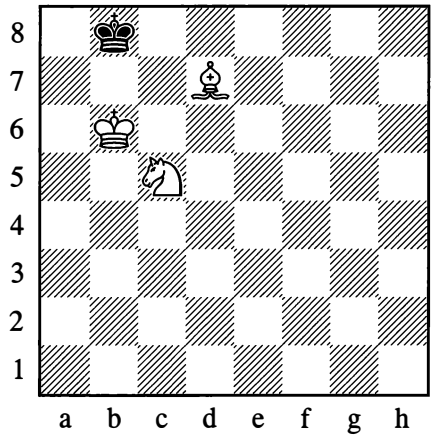
In some cases, achieving coordinated play with the pieces is very hard. Difficulties can arise even in simple endgames – such as when you need to drive your opponent's king to the side of the board or into the corner, using your united forces, in order to mate him. Mating with *bishop and knight* can serve as an example of such difficulties, and for the moment we will confine ourselves to this special example. Throughout this book, there are abundant examples of concerted piece play; essentially, not a single chess game is devoid of it.

The bishop-and-knight mate presents some problems even to experienced chessplayers. There are positions in which the mate is not to be achieved in under 34 moves. The trouble is that you have to coordinate the actions of all three white pieces in a highly skilful manner in order to drive the enemy king into one of the corners accessible to the bishop – since checkmate cannot be forced in the other corners.

The king that is being pursued will always try to remain in the centre of the board, but when compelled to withdraw, it will head towards the "wrong" coloured corner (where the bishop's action does not reach). It is only after this that the attacker begins a systematic process of driving the king to the opposite corner where it will be mated.

To master this endgame, you must first of all learn to solve some simple exercises of the following type.

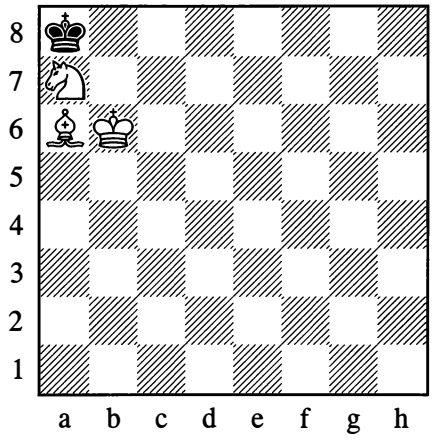
**173**



*Mate in 2 moves*

**1.♘a6† ♔a8 2.♗c6#**

**174**

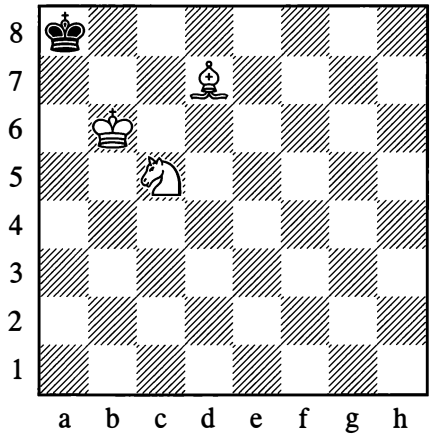


*Mate in 2 moves*

**1.♗b7† ♔b8 2.♘c6#**

These straightforward tasks can then be made a little more complicated by altering the arrangement of pieces as in Diagrams 175-8.

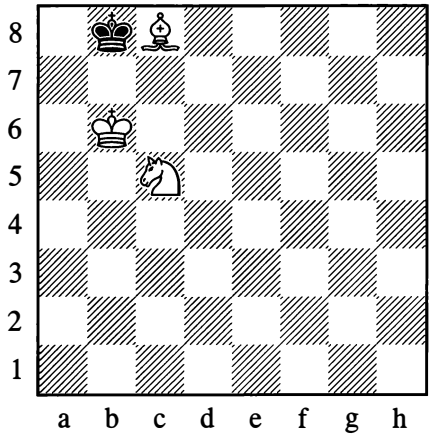
**175**



*Mate in 3 moves*

**1.♗e6 ♔b8 2.♘a6† ♔a8 3.♗d5#**

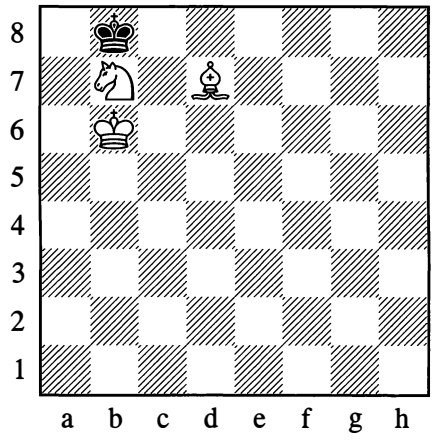
**176**



*Mate in 3 moves*

**1.♗a6 ♔a8 2.♗b7† ♔b8 3.♘a6#**

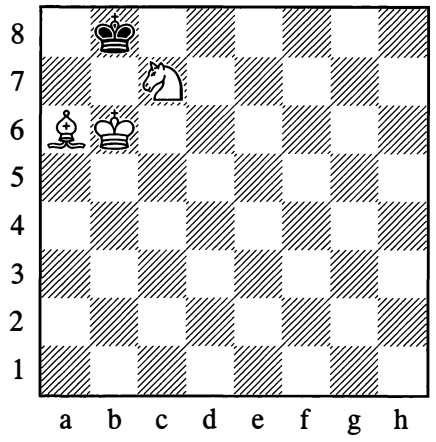
**177**



*Mate in 4 moves*

**1.♘c5 ♔a8 2.♗e6 ♔b8 3.♘a6† ♔a8 4.♗d5#**

**178**

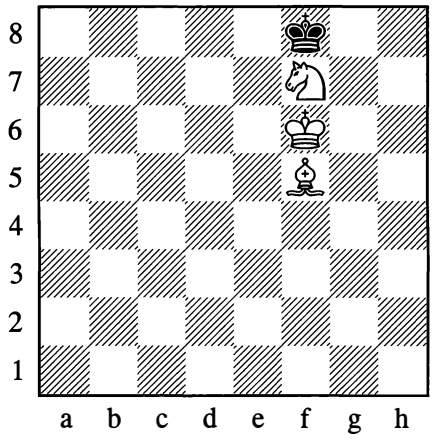


*Mate in 4 moves*

**1.♘d5 ♔a8 2.♘e7 ♔b8 3.♘c6† ♔a8 4.♗b7#**

Now let us see how the king is driven into the right-coloured corner – the one accessible to the bishop.

**179**



*Starting position for driving the king into the a8 corner*

**1.♗h7 ♔e8 2.♘e5! ♔d8**

In the case of 2...♔f8, White's task is simpler: 3.♘d7† ♔e8 4.♔e6 ♔d8 5.♔d6 ♔c8 (if 5...♔e8, then 6.♗g6† and 7.♗f7, with a configuration like the one after White's first move from the initial position) 6.♘c5 ♔d8 7.♗g6 ♔c8 8.♗f7 (to answer 8...♔d8 with 9.♘b7†, on a similar pattern to move 3) 8...♔b8 9.♔c6. If now 9...♔c8 then 10.♘b7, or if 9...♔a7 then 10.♗e6. In either case the black king will be mated (In this variation the solution could have been a little shorter. For greater clarity and easier memorization, we have preferred a longer method which keeps to a uniform device for driving the king in the required direction.) on the lines of Position 177.

**3.♔e6 ♔c7**

It now looks as if the black king is slipping out of the net. However, with his next two moves White sets up an impenetrable barrier along the a7-g1 and a6-f1 diagonals. (Basically this is the crucial and most difficult moment in the bishop-and-knight endgame.)

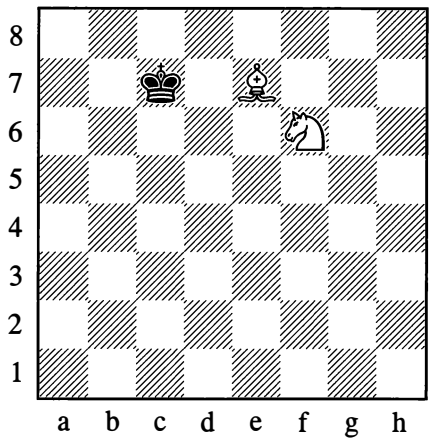
**4.♘d7! ♔c6 5.♗d3!**

Black cannot break through this cordon (the knight is covering the dark squares b6 and c5, while the bishop covers the light squares b5 and a6); he has to retreat, permitting the gradual approach of the white king. The net around Black's king is drawn tighter, and his remaining moves essentially amount to a helpless wait for his doom. For example:
a) 5...♔c7 6.♗e4 ♔c8 7.♔d6 ♔d8 8.♗g6 ♔c8 9.♘c5 ♔d8 10.♘b7† ♔c8 11.♔c6 ♔b8 12.♔b6 and so on, much as in Position 177.
b) 5...♔b7 6.♔d6 ♔c8 7.♘c5 ♔b8 (if 7...♔d8, then 8.♗b5 and 9.♗d7†) 8.♔d7 ♔a7 9.♔c7 ♔a8 10.♔b6 ♔b8 11.♗a6 and mate in two moves, as in Position 176.

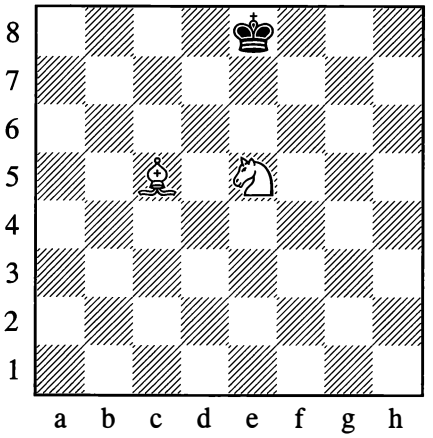
It remains for us to see how to force the enemy king into the "starting position" for this process (Diagram 179).

As a preliminary we should note that for constricting the king, the following arrangements of the pieces are important:

**180**



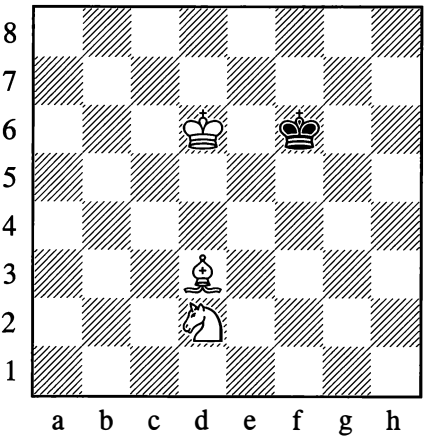
**181**



Given a set-up with the minor pieces co-ordinated (that is, in harmony with each other) as in Positions 180 and 181, Black is shut off from three or four squares on a particular rank or file – which thus becomes inaccessible to him.

We now turn to a practical example that reveals the typical devices for driving the king back.

**182**



In this position, the play may go as follows:

**1.♘f3**

Arranging the pieces on the pattern of Diagram 181.

**1...♔f7 2.♔e5 ♔g7 3.♘g5**

Now there are three variations:

a) **3...♔g8 4.♔f6 ♔f8 5.♘f7 ♔e8 6.♗f5 ♔f8**, and White has reached Position 179.

b) **3...♔f8 4.♔e6! ♔g7** (or 4...♔e8 5.♘f7) **5.♔e7 ♔g8 6.♔f6**, as above.

c) **3...♔h6 4.♔f6 ♔h5 5.♗e2† ♔h4** (on 5...♔h6, White reaches Position 179 by 6.♘f7† ♔h7 7.♗d3† ♔g8 8.♗f5 ♔f8) **6.♘e4!** (again White utilizes the scheme of Position 181, after which the king is quickly driven into the h1 corner. Observe that with this arrangement of the minor pieces, the black king cannot escape out of the d1-h5-h1 triangle – no matter where the white king is placed) **6...♔h3 7.♔g5 ♔g2 8.♔g4 ♔h2 9.♗f1 ♔g1 10.♗h3 ♔h2 11.♘g5 ♔g1 12.♔g3**, and mate in 2 moves (♗g2† and ♘f3).

In its configuration of minor pieces, the final mating position recalls Diagram 180. The patterns of Diagrams 180 and 181, when applied at the edge of the board and with the support of the white king, constitute the basic mating schemes (see the mating positions that result from Diagrams 173 and 174).

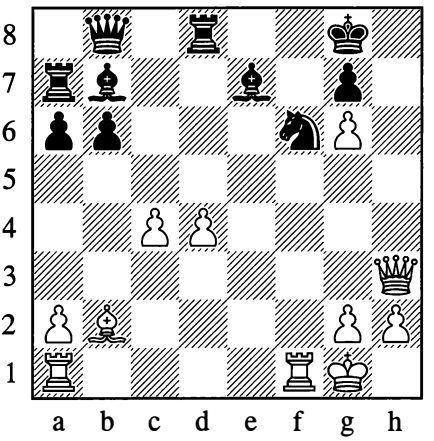
We can now see that in the "mate with bishop and knight" endgame, there is nothing that is difficult to understand. After gaining some chess experience, you can come back to this endgame and examine it afresh so as to absorb it better.

## ATTACKING THE UNPROTECTED KING

An insufficiently protected king becomes easy prey for enemy pieces operating in harmony. The last remaining cover is often destroyed by a sacrifice.

**183**

**Botvinnik – Chekhover**, Moscow 1935



*White to move*

White has already sacrificed two pieces to weaken the black king's position. With his next sacrifice he eliminates one more defending piece and quickly brings the game to its dénouement:

**32.♖xf6! ♗xf6 33.♕h7† ♔f8 34.♖e1**

Threatening ♕h8#.

**34...♗e5 35.♕h8† ♔e7 36.♕xg7† ♔d6 37.♕xe5† ♔d7 38.♕f5† ♔c6 39.d5† ♔c5 40.♗a3† ♔xc4 41.♕e4† ♔c3 42.♗b4† ♔b2 43.♕b1#**

Cases where similar attacks are carried out against an inadequately defended king are plentiful. Piece sacrifices that sweep away the last barriers are quite common. If you think about it, these sacrifices, far from weakening the attacker, give him a preponderance in the decisive battle sector, as they leave the defender with still fewer possibilities of defence. However, when sacrificing a piece it is essential to calculate all possible consequences precisely.

## CENTRALIZATION

The great mobility of pieces in the centre of the board and their restricted mobility at the edge compel us to acknowledge the special significance that the central squares have in the game, and the importance of occupying them with our pieces.

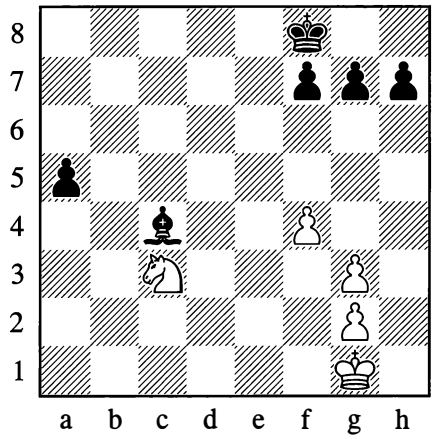
Occupation of the centre, as we shall soon see from numerous examples, allows us to generate multiple threats against both the kingside and the queenside.

In Diagrams 96, 155 and 159, strong and crucial positions in the centre are occupied by the knights (see also Position 185).

In Diagram 81 it is the white king that is occupying a very active position on d5. Generally speaking, in the endgame, when few pieces are left on the board and the king is threatened with no immediate danger, the king itself exerts a major influence on the further course of the play, and if it very quickly arrives in the centre, this is often of crucial importance.

**184**

**Rubinstein – Nimzowitsch**, Carlsbad 1907



*Black to move*

Black's advantage lies not only in his extra pawn (which is a passed pawn, too) on the a-file, but also in the fact that his king can occupy the centre more quickly. This soon compels White to lay down his arms.

**1...♔e7 2.♔f2 ♔d6 3.♔e3 ♔c5**

White has not managed to reach the d4-square. With his king on that square facing the black king on d6, he could still have fought on.

**4.g4 ♔b4 5.♔d4 ♗b3 6.g5 a4**

The advance of this pawn settles the outcome.

**...0–1**

Centralization is one of the cardinal principles of the game. You should constantly endeavour to control the centre and occupy it with your pawns and pieces, since this usually guarantees a lasting positional advantage.

The eminent master Peter Romanovsky defined the centre figuratively as "the heights commanding the terrain". We shall discuss the importance of the centre in much more detail later on.

## CONQUERING THE SEVENTH (OR EIGHTH) RANK

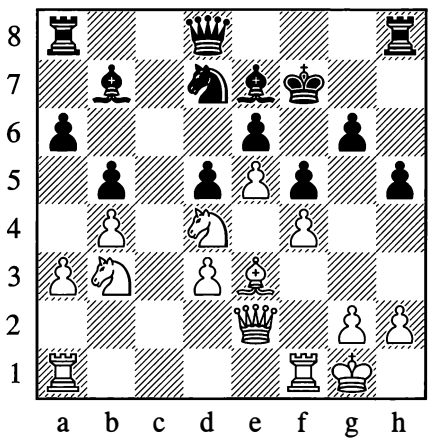
If the geometry of the chessboard dictates that the central squares will have special significance for the game, the initial arrangement of the pieces on the first and second ranks (for White) or the seventh and eighth (for Black) suggests to us that these ranks will be exceptionally sensitive if the hostile major pieces – in particular the rooks – should invade them in the course of the struggle. Normally on the seventh rank there will always be some pawns remaining (not all pawns get moved), and the action of a rook that has invaded there may be compared figuratively to a raid by a tank in the enemy's rear. On the eighth rank there is the enemy king – another welcome object

of attack – but as a rule, that rank (unlike the seventh) will be adequately defended by the opponent's own rooks. For this reason, a commoner strategic goal is the invasion of the *seventh* rank (or, conversely, the second – but for the sake of simplicity and uniformity, theory usually examines all questions from White's viewpoint).

Position 185 is a good illustration.

**185**

**Tarrasch**, 1931



*White to move*

The board is crowded with pieces; the c-file alone is open. White occupies this file with his major pieces in order to penetrate to c7 if he can. It's true that all Black's pawns have managed to move off the 7th rank, but his minor pieces and king are located there. Let's follow how White accomplishes his plan, methodically, step by step.

**1.♖ac1 ♖c8**

Black opposes the rook on c1 with his own rook, not conceding the file without a struggle.

**2.♘a5 ♗a8**

Now White exchanges one rook off, as he can occupy the c-file with his second one.

**3.♖xc8 ♕xc8 4.♖c1 ♕b8 5.♕c2**

Gaining ultimate control of the c-file, as Black can no longer oppose on c8 with his major pieces.

**5...♗d8**

Stopping White from occupying the c7-point. However, this obstacle is easily removed. (Observe what a superb position the centralized knight is occupying on d4.)

**6.♘ac6 ♕b7 7.♘xd8† ♖xd8 8.♕c7**

The aim is achieved.

**8...♕b8**

Black isn't in a hurry to exchange, as White's queen would be replaced by his rook. White uses the moment's breathing space to transfer his hitherto idle bishop from e3 via f2 to h4. In this fine position the bishop will strengthen the attack in a decisive manner. (Concerted play with all the pieces!) In this connection we should note how the dark squares in Black's camp became weak after the exchange of his dark-squared bishop, making the action of White's bishop on the h4-d8 diagonal very powerful.

**9.♗f2 ♕b6**

This attempt to hinder the bishop's redeployment is hopeless, as even the continuation 10.♗h4 ♕xd4† 11.♔h1 promises little for Black in view of the threat to capture on d8 and d7. White however rejects this variation and simplifies the game by forcing an exchange of queens.

**10.♘f3 ♕xc7 11.♖xc7 ♔e8**

Faced with the threat of ♗h4, Black defends his knight in time.

**12.♗h4 ♖b8 13.♘g5 ♘f8 14.♘f7**

Now mate is threatened in two ways: ♖e7# or ♘d6#.

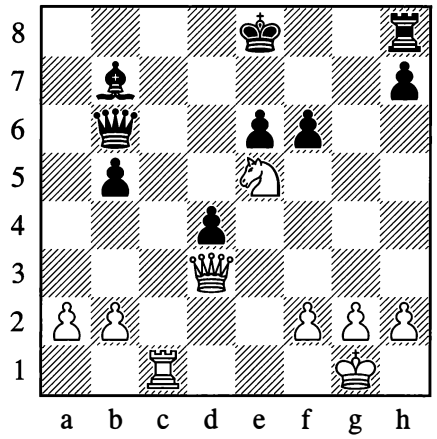
**14...♘d7 15.♘d6†**

And White wins a piece – the logical outcome of his occupation of the c-file and subsequent domination of the 7th rank.

The formidable significance of occupying the 7th rank was demonstrated with exceptional force by Botvinnik's play from the following position.

**186**

**Botvinnik – Euwe**, World Championship (12) The Hague/Moscow 1948



*White to move*

Black has played 21...f6, intending to continue with ...e5 and obtain strong pawns in the centre.

**22.♕g3!!**

A beautiful sacrifice which Black has to accept, as he cannot prevent White's 23.♕g7 anyway.

**22...fxe5 23.♕g7 ♖f8 24.♖c7! ♕xc7**

If 24...♕d6, then 25.♖xb7 d3 26.♖a7 ♕d8 27.♕xh7, and in view of White's threat to check on the diagonal, Black is defenceless. The move he plays doesn't save him either.

**25.♕xc7 ♗d5 26.♕xe5**

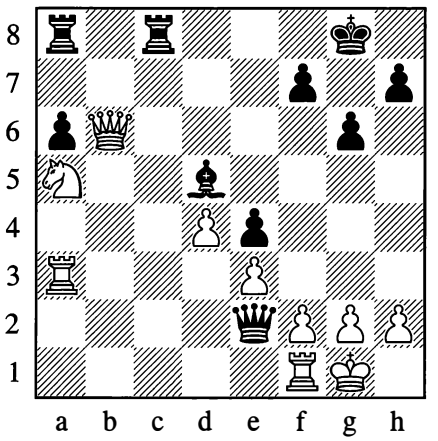
And Euwe resigned on the 36th move.

**...1–0**

The following example shows Botvinnik exploiting the simultaneous weakening of his opponent's first two ranks.

**187**

**Goglidze – Botvinnik**, Moscow 1935



*Black to move*

**26...♖ab8 27.♕d6 ♕xf1†! 28.♔xf1 ♖b1† 29.♔e2 ♖c2#**

Similar examples could easily be added, but those we have already shown give a clear impression of the positional and material advantages that come from invading the 7th and 8th ranks.

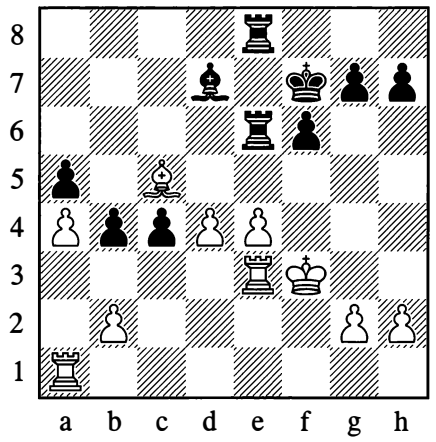
## CONCENTRATING THE FORCES AGAINST AN IMPORTANT POINT

In Position 81 we saw the white forces concentrated against a backward pawn. What made this possible was the immobility of the

pawn that White had selected as the object of his attack. It would be senseless to focus your strength on a mobile piece that could change its place at any moment.

On precisely these grounds, you may concentrate your forces against a piece that is pinned and totally immobile, or against a defending piece whose mobility, as we know, is also restricted.

**188**



*Black to move*

Black takes the opportunity to set up a pin on e4 by means of a sacrifice, then concentrates his forces against the pinned piece, wins it, and emerges with an extra pawn:

**1...♖xe4 2.♖xe4 ♗c6 3.♖e1 f5**

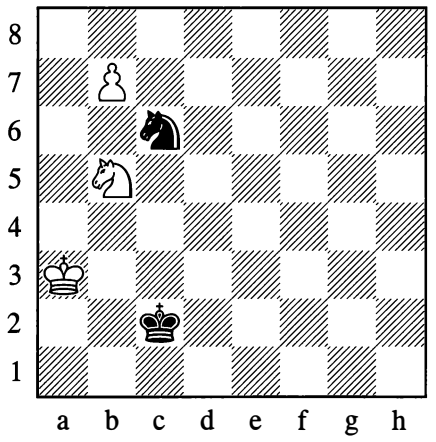
Sometimes the purpose of the concentration is to gain control of a line rather than a point, as was shown in Example 185. In general the device of concentration is too simple and comprehensible to be worth discussing in more detail.

## DRAWING AN ENEMY PIECE TOWARDS OR AWAY FROM A SQUARE

The idea of *diverting* an enemy piece or of *luring* it onto a particular square would seem to be as old as chess itself.

**189**

**Damiano**, 1512



*White to play and win*

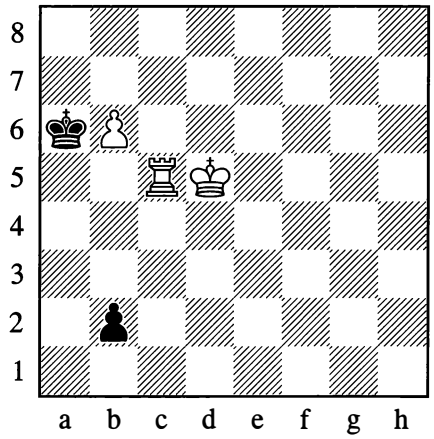
In Position 189, the knight on c6 is keeping the pawn's promotion square under control. Therefore by diverting the black knight with:

**1.♘d4† ♘xd4 2.b8=♕**

White settles the outcome of the game.

**190**

**Lolli**, 1763



*White to play and win*

In Position 190, Black is threatening ...b1=♕. White plays:

**1.♖b5**

Preventing the black pawn from queening and even preparing to eliminate it. Black's reply is forced.

**1...♔xb5**

The king has been lured onto the fateful b-file.

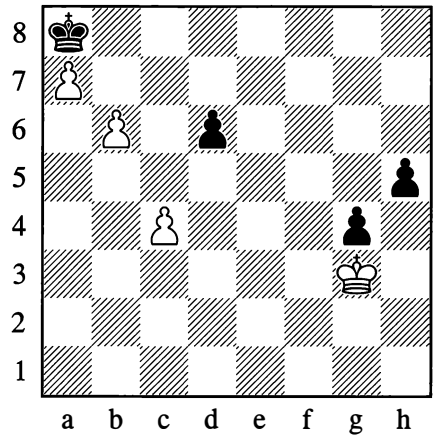
**2.b7 b1=♕ 3.b8=♕†**

White wins the queen with a skewer.

A blend of both motifs (diverting a piece *away* from a square, and luring a piece *onto* a square) can be seen in our next two examples.

**191**

**G. Reichhelm**, 1900



*White to play and win*

Under normal circumstances White wouldn't be able to move his king away from the connected pawns on g4 and h5, as they would be threatening to advance and queen.

Here, however, it turns out that White can create an even stronger threat of his own.

**1.♔f4 ♔b7 2.c5!**

Diverting the d6-pawn and thereby clearing the diagonal for encroaching further with his king (via e5 and d6). Black can't refuse to capture on c5, as the white pawn would immediately press on (3.c6† ♔a8 4.c7 ♔b7 5.a8=♕† ♔xa8 6.c8=♕#).

**2...dxc5 3.♔e5 g3 4.♔d6 g2**

The white king is already close enough to make the following combination possible:

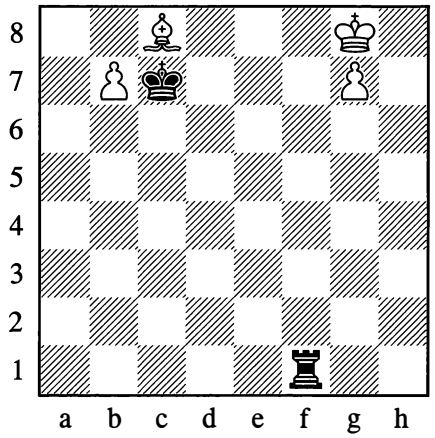
**5.a8=♕† ♔xa8 6.♔c7 g1=♕ 7.b7† ♔a7 8.b8=♕† ♔a6 9.♕b6#**

Note that the mate on b6 is only possible because the pawn on c5 is blocking the black queen's diagonal.

So the aim of the pawn sacrifice with 2.c5 was not only to divert the pawn from d6 and open the h2-b8 diagonal, but also to draw this pawn onto the c5-square in order to close a different diagonal: g1-a7.

**192**

From a game played in 1891



*White to play and win*

**1.♔h7 ♖h1† 2.♔g6 ♖g1† 3.♔f7 ♖f1† 4.♗f5!! ♖xf5† 5.♔g6 ♖f1 6.b8=♕† ♔xb8 7.g8=♕†**

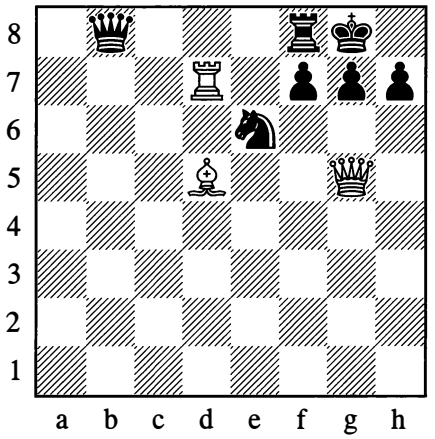
And White wins.

The ploy of enticing a piece onto a square may have the aim of limiting the opponent's mobility – for instance in order to bring about a smothered mate, as in Position 100 on page 71.

Attacks against defending pieces; forks; the opening and closing of lines; restricting the enemy pieces' mobility – all these are aims quite frequently pursued by the typical devices of drawing a piece away from or onto a specific square.

In conclusion we will give one more example possessing some practical significance.

**193**



**1.♗xe6**

White wins a piece, seeing that diverting the f-pawn would allow mate by:

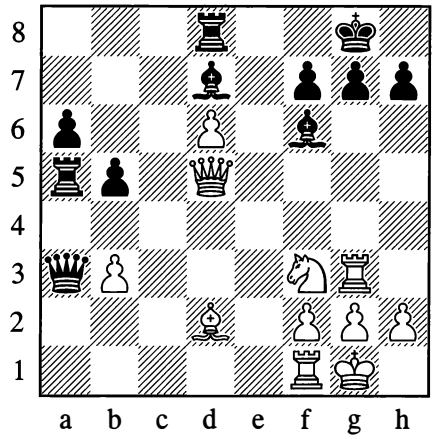
**1...fxe6 2.♕xg7#**

## EMPLOYING MANY-SIDED THREATS

Many simple threats, such as attacks on a piece, will often present no danger, as the opponent will usually have equally simple means of defence. For that reason, the plan for a manoeuvre is sometimes based on combining various threats so that if the opponent does save himself from one of them, he will fall victim to another. A many-sided threat acts in a much more powerful way than a simple one, and if you manage to bring it about, it constitutes one of the most devastating devices.

**194**

**Levitsky – Freiman**, Vilnius 1912



*White to move*

White could win the exchange with 27.♗xa5, but instead he selects:

**27.♘g5!**

This should bring him greater gains. Indeed one threat is ♕xf7†, and another is b3-b4 – with a dual attack, seeing that the knight's departure from the 3rd rank has cleared that line for the rook on g3.

To Black the latter threat seems the more serious, as he could be losing a rook.

**27...b4**

Shielding the rook on a5, blocking the pawn on b3 and even creating a dual attack against the white pieces on the 5th rank. This move appears better than 27...♗xg5, for after 28.♕xg5 Black would have to resign owing to the dual attack on g7 and d8. However White has a strong reply:

**28.♕xf7† ♔h8 29.♕xf6!!**

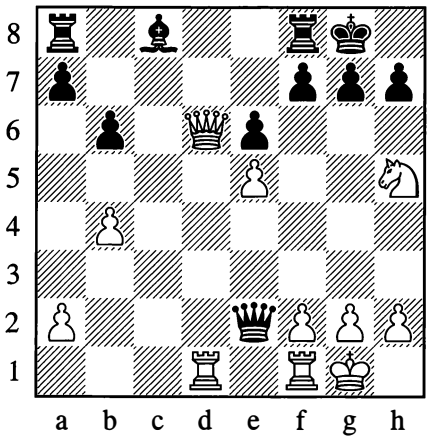
Again creating a number of threats: mate on d8, or ♘f7† followed by mate on g7; or if 29...gxf6, then 30.♘f7#. So Black resigned.

**1–0**

Here is one more example of a versatile threat.

**195**

**Levenfish – Riumin**, Moscow 1936



*White to move*

In this position, White played 27.♘g3?. Yet he could have set up a decisive double threat:

**27.♘f6†! gxf6 28.exf6**

White threatens 29.♕g3† with mate on g7, or 29.♕xf8† and 30.♖d8#. Defending with any one move against both threats at once is impossible.

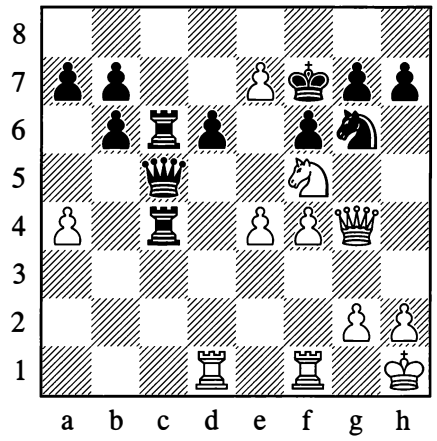
## THE OPENING AND BLOCKING OF LINES

The opening of lines for your pieces to increase their sphere of action is one of the most widespread measures. Position 185 offered a vivid example of the exploitation of an open c-file. A clearing of lines also occurred in a number of other positions (101, 144, 191). We have also come across play which blocks the lines of the opponent's pieces (to restrict their activity) by creating various types of obstacle (see Position 98 and others). If we nonetheless

return to this topic, we do so purely in order to point once again to the enormous significance of freedom of action for the pieces, and to emphasize the need for constant attention to the possibility of enhancing their fighting strength.

**196**

**Chigorin – Pollock**, New York 1889



*White to move*

White is a pawn down; in addition, his pawns on the 4th rank are under attack from the rook on c4. If White doesn't make use of the powerful placing of his pieces, his opponent may manage to gain the advantage.

The basic task for White is to increase the active strength of his rooks (his other pieces are excellently placed). To this end he attacks his opponent in what might seem an impregnable place – e5 – and achieves the decisive opening of lines.

**32.e5!!**

Threatening 33.exd6, so Black is forced to take the e5-pawn. But whichever way he does so, a file is unavoidably opened for one of the white rooks.

**32...fxe5**

In the event of 32...dxe5, there would follow: 33.♖d8 ♘xe7 (on 33...♖e6, White wins by 34.e8=♕† ♖xe8 35.♘d6†) 34.♕xg7† ♔e6 35.♘xe7, with the threat of f4-f5#. After the move played, White opens both files and exploits the position of his rook on f1 facing the enemy king.

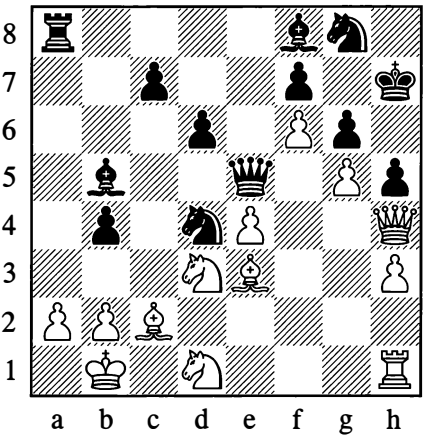
**33.♘xd6† ♖xd6 34.fxe5† ♖f6 35.e8=♕†! ♔xe8 36.♕d7† ♔f8 37.exf6**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**197**

**Ratner – Konstantinopolsky**, Kiev 1933



*Black to move*

Black forces a decisive opening of lines in White's castled position:

**32...b3! 33.axb3**

33.♘xe5 loses at once to 33...bxa2† 34.♔c1 a1=♕†, followed by 35...dxe5.

**33...♖a1†!**

Black employs the idea of drawing a piece onto a specific square, with the subsequent elimination of a defender

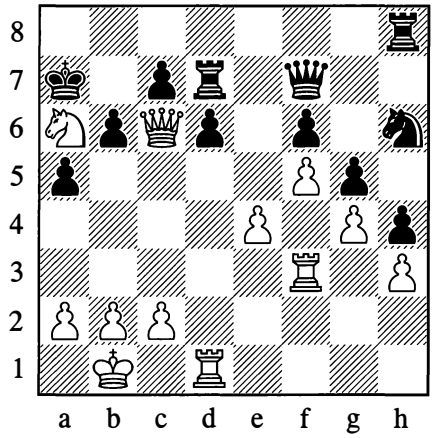
**34.♔xa1 ♘xc2† 35.♔a2 ♗xd3**

Black soon won.

**...0–1**

**198**

**Keres – Mikenas**, Tbilisi 1946



*White to move*

Here the game was decided by a spectacular concluding move:

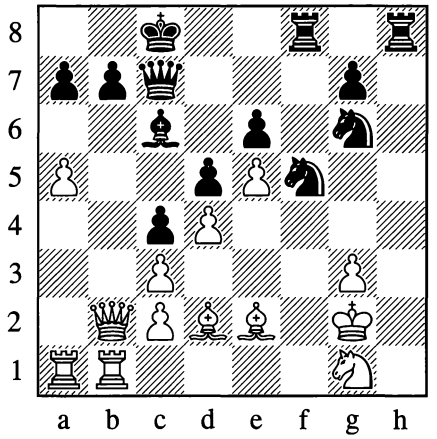
**29.♘c5!**

Black resigned, as 29...dxc5 is met by 30.♖xd7, while in the event of 29...bxc5 White's other rook goes into action with 30.♖a3.

**1–0**

**199**

**Rudenko – Ignatieva**, Moscow 1947



*Black to move*

Black energetically opens up lines against the white king and diverts or eliminates the pieces defending it:

**32...♘xe5!**

Intending, after 33.dxe5, to continue 33...♕xe5 34.♗f4 d4† with a winning attack.

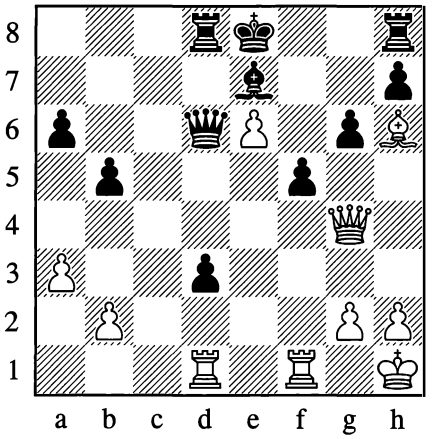
**33.♗f4 g5!**

White can't answer this with 34.♗xe5, on account of 34...♘e3#.

**34.♗xg5 ♘d3! 35.♗f4 ♘xf4† 36.gxf4 ♕xf4 37.♘f3 ♕g3† 38.♔f1 ♘e3#**

**200**

**Rubtsova – Keller-Hermann**, Moscow 1952



*White to move*

**25.♖xf5!**

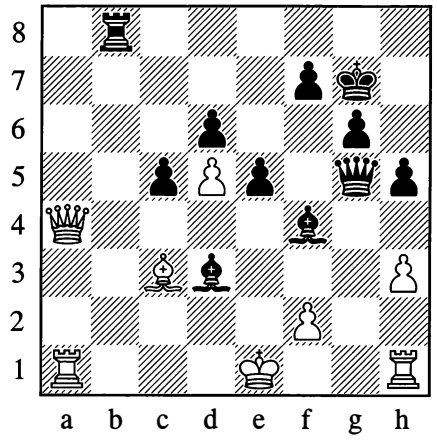
Now Black can play neither 25...gxf5, on account of 26.♕h5#, nor 25...♕xe6 in view of 26.♖f8† ♔d7 27.♖xd3† ♗d6 28.♖f7†, winning the queen.

**...1–0**

We now give examples of the closing of lines.

**201**

**Kopaev – Ragozin**, Kiev 1945



*Black to move*

Black has the move ...♕g2 available, but at the present moment White could answer it with ♕xf4, after which the game would drag on.

**36...♖b4! 37.♗xb4**

The rank is now closed to the white queen, and the hindrance is removed.

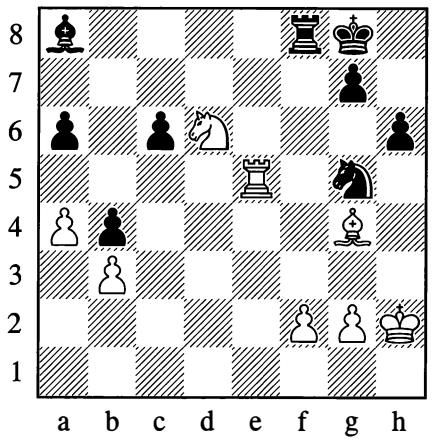
**37...♕g2 38.♔d1 ♕f3†**

With mate next move.

**0–1**

**202**

**Levenfish – Kan**, Leningrad 1934



*White to move*

**41.f4! ♖xf4**

Acceptance of the sacrifice is forced, as Black has no suitable knight move that copes with ♗e6.

**42.♗f5!**

White cuts off the rook's retreat. There followed:

**42...♖xf5**

42...g6 wouldn't have saved Black either, but it would have been more tenacious.

**43.♘xf5 ♔f7 44.♘d6†**

Black resigned in view of the inevitable 45.♖e8 which wins the bishop.

**1–0**

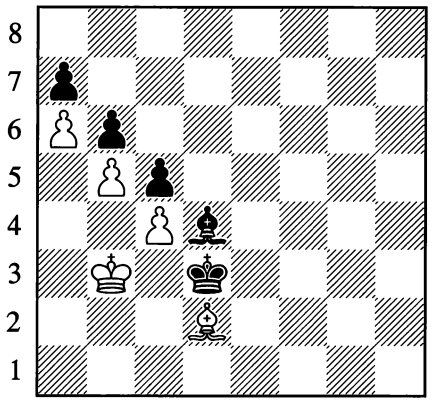
## BREAKING THROUGH THE PAWN POSITION

If one of the opponents possesses a majority of pawns on the flank (for instance three pawns against two), then by gradually advancing and exchanging he can acquire a passed pawn (see Positions 261 and 262, which we discuss later).

The matter is different when two complete chains of pawns are facing each other. Then a pawn can only become a passed pawn as the result of a breakthrough.

Let us look at some characteristic examples.

**203**



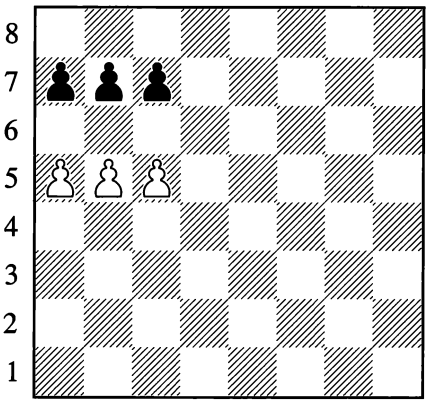
*White to move*

In Position 203, there follows:

**1.♗a5! bxa5**
Otherwise 2.♗xb6.

**2.b6 axb6 3.a7**
White wins.

**203a**



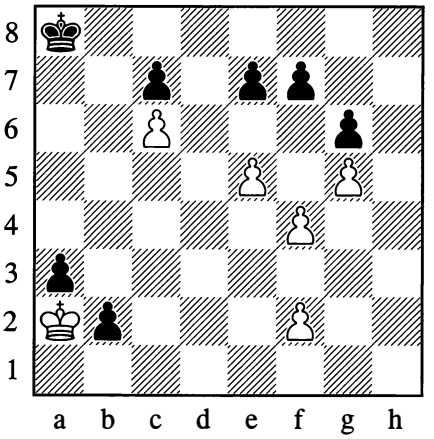
*White to move*

A breakthrough is again possible:

**1.b6! cxb6 2.a6! bxa6 3.c6**
Alternatively: 1...axb6 2.c6!

**204**

**Horwitz and Kling**, 1851



*White to move*

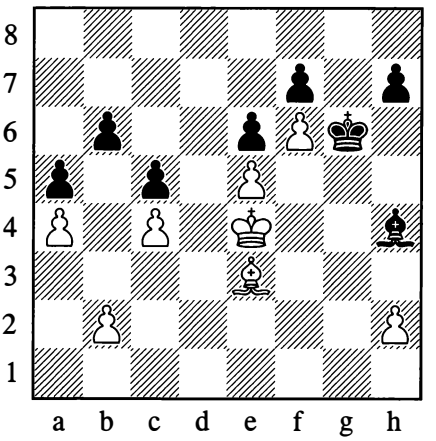
**1.f5 e6!**
If 1...gxf5, then 2.e6.

**2.fxg6 fxg6 3.f4**
If White had not had two pawns on the f-file, the breakthrough would have been impossible.

**3...♔b8 4.f5 exf5 5.e6 ♔c8 6.e7**
The pawn queens.

**205**

From a game by **Smyslov**, 1937



*White to move*

Smyslov forced the breakthrough in a striking manner:

**1.b4! axb4**

1...cxb4! 2.♗xb6 b3 was a better defensive try.

**2.♗xc5! bxc5 3.a5 b3 4.♔d3**

White soon won.

A breakthrough can also have aims other than the acquisition of a passed pawn, but we shall acquaint ourselves with these later.

## TEMPO GAIN AND ZUGZWANG

The moves of the players pursue various purposes which ultimately come down to winning the game, that is checkmating the enemy king, or else averting loss when things are going badly.

A move is a player's exercise of his right to reposition a piece in order to come closer to the goal he has set himself. If a move doesn't fulfil this requirement, then it is bad or at best useless, and amounts to a loss of time – or, as chessplayers say, "the loss of a tempo". If our opponent has made a useless move, he has lost a tempo and we have gained one. We can gain a tempo by making a *purposeful* move in reply to our opponent's useless one.

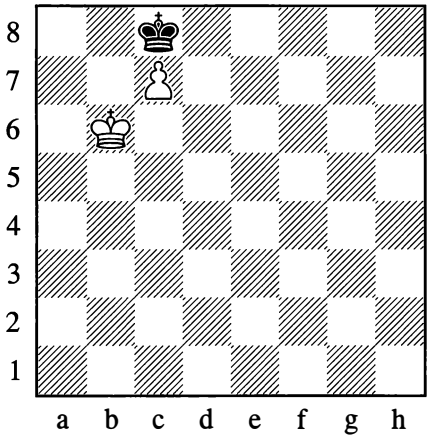
We have already seen an example of a gain of tempo in the opening, when Black was forced to withdraw an attacked piece, that is, move it a second time (see pages 95-6). This repeated move with one piece, which Black merely carried out to defend himself from the threat, was turned to account by White when he replied with a useful move, bringing a new piece into play.

In Position 156 on page 91 (the "see-saw"), the repeated discovered checks compel Black to switch back and forth between two squares with his king, in a senseless manner (from the viewpoint of his own interests). These lost tempos are exploited by White to win another piece or pawn with every move of his rook.

In Position 89 (see page 64) we had a special case. With three successive queen moves White brought the position back to where it was before, only with Black to play instead of White. The explanation was precisely that if Black *is* to play from that position, White easily wins. Clearly White lost a *move,* but he gained a *tempo* because he came closer to his basic goal – which is the main thing. It thus emerges that you may gain a tempo by losing a move, that is, by handing the move to your opponent.

From that last example we can see that the right to make a move is not always an advantage; it can sometimes be a heavy obligation.

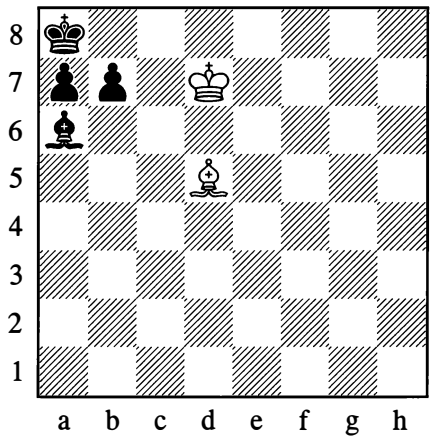
**206**




*Black to move*

In Position 206, under the obligation to make a move, the black king is forced to cede the square b7 to the white one, allowing the pawn to queen.

**206a**



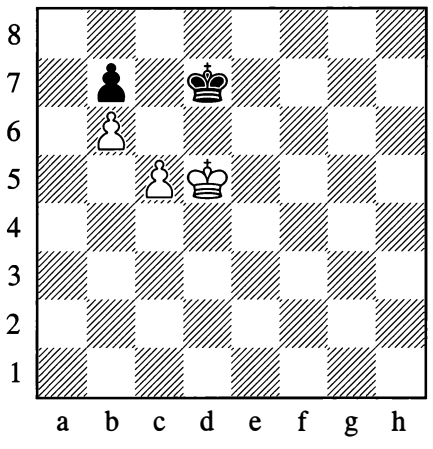
*White to move*

White plays **1.♔c7**, forcing Black to move his bishop from a6, as there is nothing else he *can* move. Then **2.♗xb7#** follows.

As we know, the type of situation where the obligation to move brings adverse consequences is known as zugzwang (see Diagram 96 on page 68).

The act of handing the move to the other player in order to gain a tempo is precisely what occurs in zugzwang situations.

**207**



*White to move*

The move 1.c6† fails to win here. Of course if Black made the mistake of 1...bxc6, White could win with 2.♔c5 ♔d8! 3.♔d6! (threatening b7) 3...♔c8 4.♔xc6 (fighting for the opposition as in Diagrams 69-80).

However, in answer to 1.c6†? Black plays 1...♔c8! 2.♔d6 ♔b8!. Now either 3.cxb7 or 3.c7† leads only to a draw.

It would be a different matter if Black were to move in the diagram position. Then the win would be possible, as Black would fall victim to zugzwang and would have to make way for the white king.

The gain of a tempo (handing the move over to the opponent) is achieved in this case by a characteristic manoeuvre of the white king on the triangle of squares d5-d4-e5. Black's scope for manoeuvre is restricted by the inaccessibility of the c7-square and by the fact that he cannot go to the e-file (he needs to keep an eye on the b6-pawn, which might become passed).

**1.♔e5 ♔c6**

Not 1...♔e7, on account of 2.c6 bxc6 3.b7.

**2.♔d4 ♔d7 3.♔d5**

The aim is achieved: White has gained a tempo, as the position is the same as before but with Black to move. The following moves reflect the struggle for the opposition:

**3...♔c8 4.♔e6!**

By taking the so-called "diagonal opposition", White is ready to answer ...♔d8 with the "vertical" opposition move ♔d6.

**4...♔d8 5.♔d6 ♔c8 6.♔e7 ♔b8 7.♔d7 ♔a8**

Now 8.♔c7? would be stalemate. The moment has come to turn the b6-pawn into a passed pawn:

**8.c6! bxc6**

On 8...♔b8 White plays 9.c7†, with mate to follow.

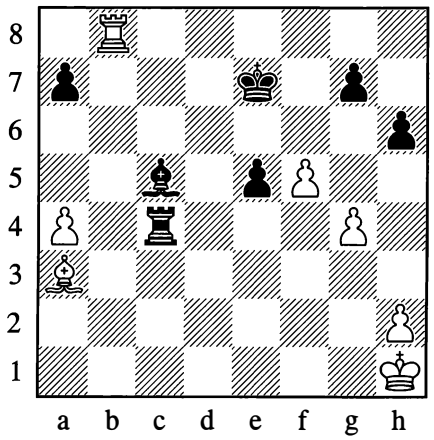
**9.♔c7 c5**

White now gives mate in 3 moves, as in the solution to Position 191. The present example is a good illustration of a distinctive ploy for gaining a tempo in situations of zugzwang.

However, the ploy of handing the move over is a special case. More often you gain a tempo when your opponent makes moves that are no use to him, and sometimes he can be forced to do this – for instance as the result of a pin. Here are some typical examples.

**208**

**Pitschak – Foerder**, Breslau 1930



*White to move*

After 1.♗xc5† ♖xc5 2.♖b7† ♔f6, Black succeeded in drawing. A much stronger line is:

**1.♖c8! ♔d6 2.♖xc5! ♖xc5**

And now not 3.♗xc5†? – this is a case where the threat is stronger than the execution!

**3.h4!!**

Gaining a decisive tempo. Black is now forced to use up a move.

**3...♔d5**

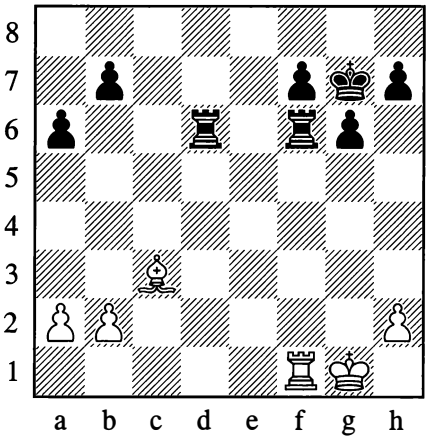
Freeing himself from the pin. There follows:

**4.♗xc5 ♔xc5 5.g5 hxg5 6.f6!! gxf6 7.h5!**

The black king cannot stop this pawn.

**209**

From a game played in 1942



*White to move*

White wins here, in spite of being the exchange and two pawns down:

**1.♖xf6 ♖xf6 2.h4!!**

White aims to answer 2...h6 3.♔g2 g5 with 4.h5!, preventing Black from releasing himself from the pin by ...♔g6. When Black runs out of pawn moves, he loses his rook. (Note that 1.h4? would be bad on account of 1...♖c6, and if 2.♖xf6 then 2...♖xc3!.)

## COUNTERING THE OPPONENT'S PLANS

By numerous examples we have demonstrated certain tactical and strategic ideas which are more often encountered than others. Knowing about them makes it easier to devise a general or specific plan during play.

Naturally, the entire wealth and vivid diversity of ideas inherent in the game of chess are not by any means exhausted by this fairly short list. Some themes will be elucidated in the pages that follow, and there is much that

will later become comprehensible from the study of master games.

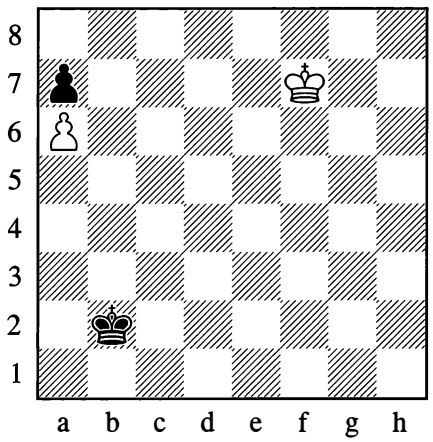
The important thing is to absorb what you have been shown. The best way to do this is to try applying your hitherto fragile knowledge in practical play. If your first steps are unsuccessful, you must not of course let this trouble you.

It must always be remembered that a game of chess is above all a struggle. We strive to accomplish our plans, but in so doing we are struggling with our opponent's moves and with *his* plans. Countering the opponent's plans is a fundamental rule of chess strategy.

Nearly all the positions we have so far examined offer examples of this struggle. You might think that all this goes without saying. Yet in practice we quite often see cases where players obsessed with their own plans cease to take those of their opponents into account. And this has bad consequences.

**210**

**Maizelis**, 1921



*White wins*

This position is from a tournament game, in which the continuation was 1.♔e6 ♔c3 2.♔d6 ♔d4 3.♔c6 ♔e5 4.♔b7 ♔d6 5.♔xa7 ♔c7. Here the players agreed a draw, as after 6.♔a8 ♔c8 7.a7 ♔c7 White is stalemated.

The players remained in the dark about the point of this endgame. With such scarce material, the possibility of a fight didn't even occur to them, and they played the concluding moves, so to speak, "as a matter of conscience". And yet even in this simple position it is possible to fight, and possible for White to win – as was first demonstrated in 1921 by the author of this book.

You can easily ascertain that Black has no defence other than the one he employed in the game (going towards the a6-pawn via b3 and b4 is useless).

White, however, *can* play differently. Whatever happens, he needs to spend five moves on crossing the board to capture the pawn on a7, but there is more than one route his king can take – along the seventh rank, or the sixth, or even by a *third* path. This third path is decisive, as it allows White to carry out his plan while at the same time hindering the black king's approach (via d4 and e5 to d6, etc.).

The solution is:

**1.♔e6! ♔c3 2.♔d5!!**

Black's whole system of defence collapses. He cannot now move to d4 and therefore loses a highly important tempo. Wherever the black king goes, White will play 3.♔c6 and then 4.♔b7, winning easily.

This kind of king march, with the seemingly incidental effect of barring the enemy king from a square it needs, is crucial to a number of endgames in which the issue is decided by manoeuvring with the kings.

On concluding this chapter we proceed to "Techniques of Calculation" in chess, and then in the chapters on "Combination" and "Positional Play" we shall extend our initial acquaintance with the foundations of chess tactics and strategy.

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

### SHORT GAMES

#### 1

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♕f6?**

The queen shouldn't be brought into play too early; it will come under attack from less valuable pieces and will be forced to retreat. This will involve loss of time (tempos).

**3.♗c4 ♕g6**

Black is enticed by the prospect of winning a pawn (with the attack on e4 and g2), and forgets about the need to develop his pieces.

**4.0–0 ♕xe4? 5.♗xf7† ♔e7**

If 5...♔xf7 then 6.♘g5†, winning the queen. If instead 5...♔d8, then 6.♖e1, after which White wins a pawn and has the better position since Black has lost the right to castle.

**6.♖e1 ♕f4 7.♖xe5†! ♔xf7 8.d4 ♕f6**

A fifth move with the queen already!

**9.♘g5† ♔g6 10.♕d3† ♔h5 11.g4†**

With mate to follow.

#### 2

**1.e4 e5 2.f4 ♕h4†?**

An example of a redundant check.

**3.g3 ♕h6**

Better 3...♕e7, seeing that h6 is another bad place for the queen.

**4.♘c3 exf4 5.d4 ♕f6 6.♘d5 ♕c6 7.♗b5 ♕d6**

Not 7...♕xb5 on account of 8.♘xc7†.

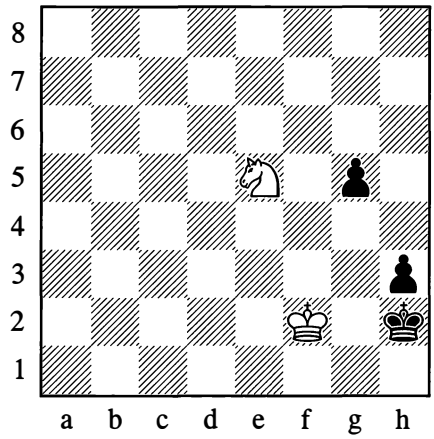
**8.♗xf4 ♕g6**

All the while that Black has been making repeated queen moves, White has been bringing out piece after piece.

**9.♘xc7† ♔d8 10.♘xa8 ♕xe4† 11.♕e2 ♕xh1 12.♗c7#**

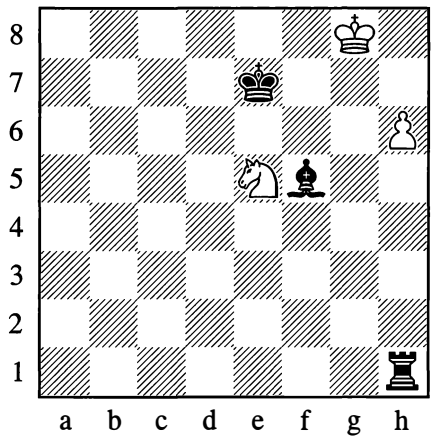
### FIND THE SOLUTION

#### 1



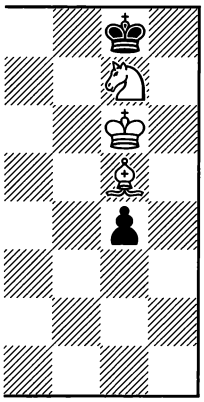
*From an ancient manuscript – Mate in 3 moves*

#### 2

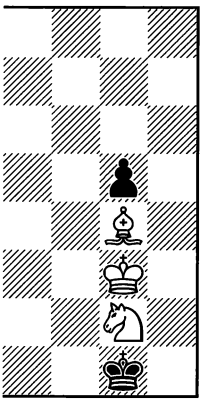


*After 1.h7, why would 1...♖xh7 be a mistake?*

**3**



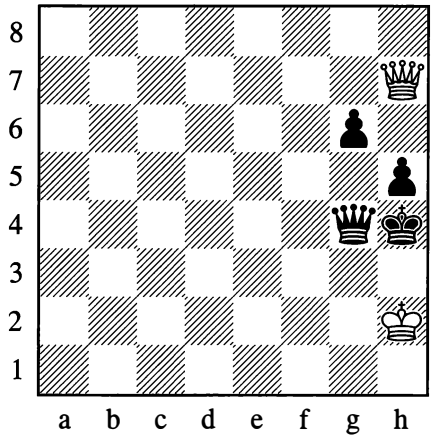
**4**



*Mate in 4 moves, by two different methods; Position 4 is rather more difficult*

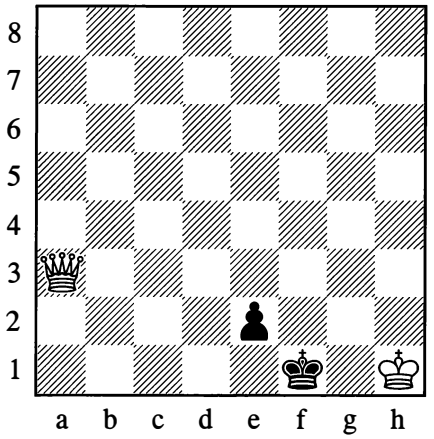
Three problems by Sam Loyd, illustrating zugzwang:

**5**



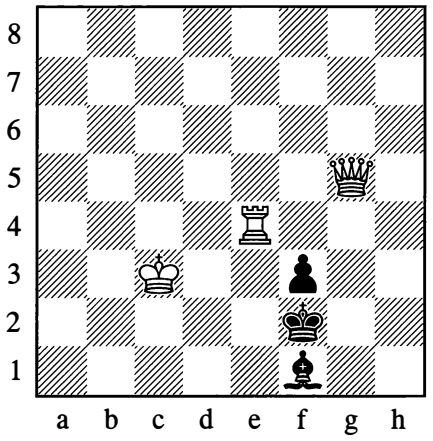

*After three more moves, Black resigned*

**6**



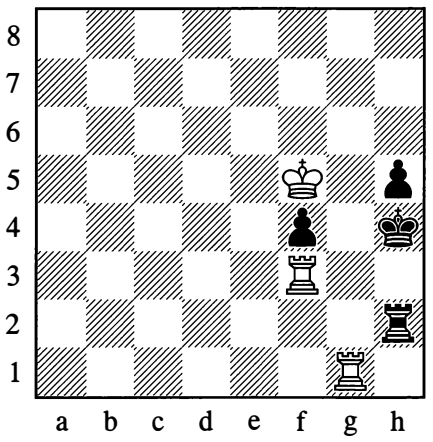

*Mate in 5 moves*

**7**



*Mate in 2 moves*

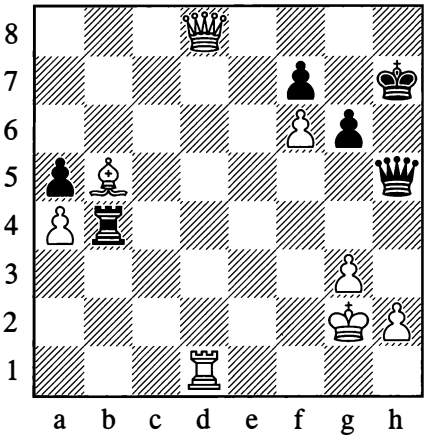
**8**



*Mate in 3 moves*

**9**

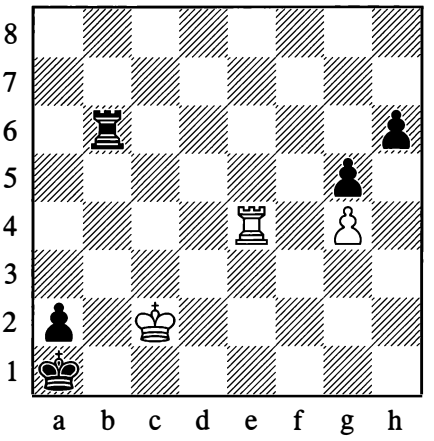
Cross-pin



*After 1...♖b2† 2.♖d2,*
*Black gained a material advantage*

**10**

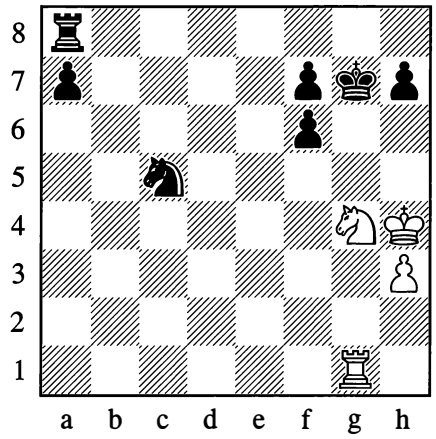
A decisive zugzwang



*White wins (mate in 7 moves)*

**11**

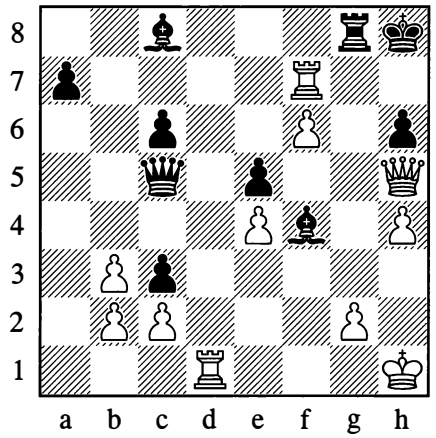
Simple solution



*White achieved a draw by elegant means*

**12**

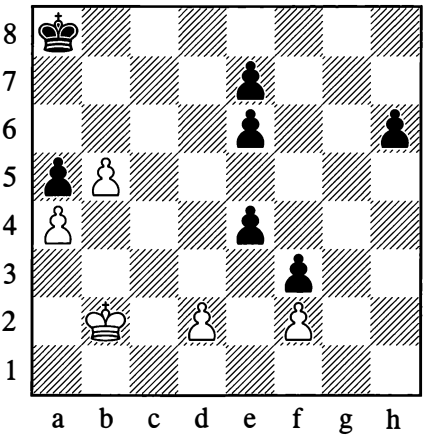
Major piece attack



*White mates in a few moves*

**13**

With a twofold objective

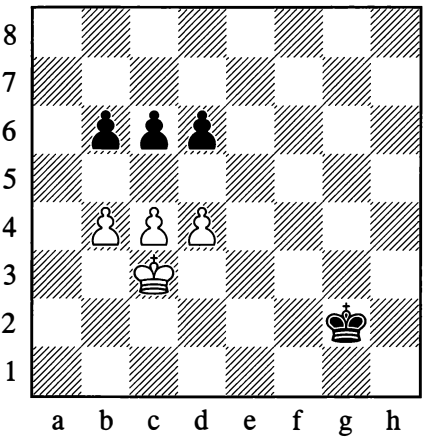


*White wins*

The king's "crooked" march, with its covert mate threat, enables White to stop the h-pawn.

**14**

Deceptive appearance



*White wins*

"I know about this! It's the well-known breakthrough with 1.c5."

"Not here, it isn't! That would only lead to a draw."

## ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

**1.** G. Greco, 1624: **1.♘g4† ♔h1 2.♔f1! h2 3.♘f2#**

**2.** Because of **2.♘g6†!!**, drawing.

**3. 1.♗e7**, **2.♘f5**, **3.♘h6(†)**

**4. 1.♘e3!**, **2.♔f2!**, **3.♘f1†**

**5. 1.♕e7† ♕g5 2.♕e4† ♕g4 3.♕e3!!**

**6. 1.♕f8†**, **2.♕d6**, **3.♕f4†**, **4.♕d4**, **5.♕g1#**

**7. 1.♖e1!**

**8. 1.♖g5 ♖h1** (otherwise 2.♖xh5†) **2.♖g2**

**9.** With **2...♕d1!** Travin – Zek, Leningrad 1933.

**10.** P. Stamma, 1745: **1.♖e1† ♖b1 2.♖c1!! ♖xc1† 3.♔xc1 h5 4.gxh5 g4 5.h6** etc.

**11. 1.♘h6†! ♔xh6 2.♖g8! ♖xg8** stalemate.

**12. 1.♖d8! ♖xd8 2.♖h7†! ♔xh7 3.♕f7†** and **4.♕g7#**.

**13. 1.♔c3! e5** (otherwise ♔d4xe4xf3) **2.♔c4 e6 3.♔c5 h5 4.♔d6! ♔b7** (if 4...h4, then 5.♔c7 and mate in 4 more moves) **5.♔xe5** and wins.

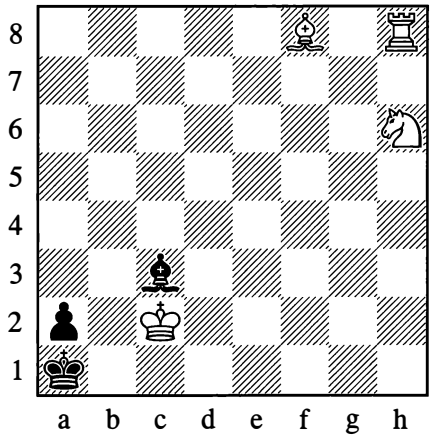
**14.** 1.c5? gives nothing. After 1...bxc5 (1...dxc5 is also playable), White would even lose with 2.d5?? on account of 2...cxb4† 3.♔xb4 c5† etc. The only correct solution is **1.♔d2!!**, for example: **1...♔f3 2.c5 bxc5 3.d5 cxd5 4.b5 c4 5.b6 c3† 6.♔xc3 ♔e3 7.b7 d4† 8.♔b2** etc.; or **1...c5** (if 1...b5 then 2.d5) **2.bxc5 bxc5 3.dxc5 dxc5 4.♔e3** and wins.

## FUN EXERCISES

### Elephant hunting episodes

Thomas Mayne Reid, an author of adventure novels who was popular in his day, wrote about the habits of elephants and about elephant hunting. Although he knew a great deal on this subject, we can still fill in some gaps for him. (Readers of the English edition may be wondering why elephants are being discussed in a chess book! The point is that the piece named "bishop" in English is known as "elephant" in some other languages, including Russian, the language in which this book was originally published.)

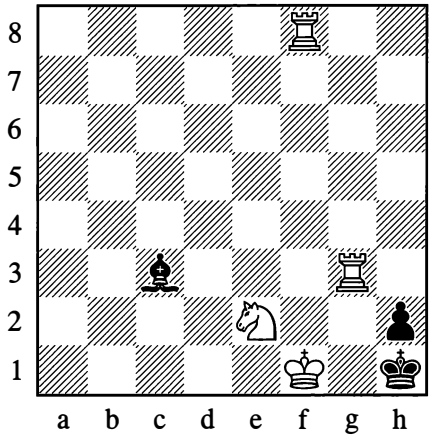
**1**



*Mate in 3 moves*

Catching an elephant in a "mousetrap" is possible only in chess. Mayne Reid would never have dreamt of any such thing! Exercise 1 shows a simple case. Here the black elephant on c3 (the wild one!) is destroyed with the help of the white elephant on f8 (the tame one!).

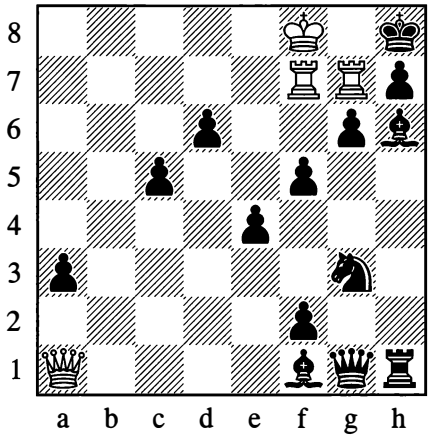
**2**



*Mate in 3 moves*

Exercise 2 is just that bit more difficult. White manages to cope with the "rogue elephant" on c3, but only after great losses.

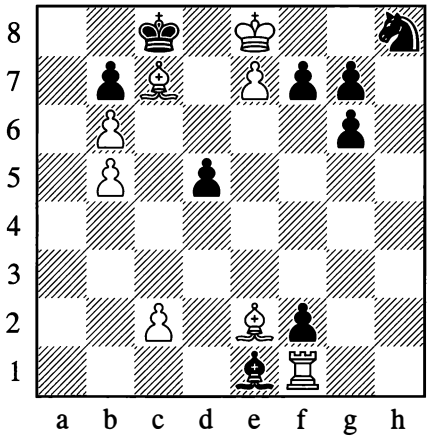
**3**



*Mate in 13 moves*

In Exercise 3, the virtually "rabid" elephant on h6 doggedly pursues the hunter. "Such a tiresome elephant!" the white king thinks. "There's no way I can shake it off." The king decides to run for help, all the while keeping a watchful eye on the other elephant on f1.

**4**



*Mate in 4 moves*

In Exercise 4, 1.♔f8 would be met by 1...♗b4. White cunningly succeeds in "taming" this elephant, after which the decisive blow is struck by the domesticated elephant on e2.

## SOLUTIONS TO FUN EXERCISES

**1. 1.♘f5! ♗xh8** (The threat was 2.♖h1† ♗e1 3.♗g7#, and if 1...♗e1 then 2.♗g7† ♗c3 3.♖h1#.) **2.♘g7!** The "mousetrap" has worked! **2...♗xg7 3.♗xg7#**

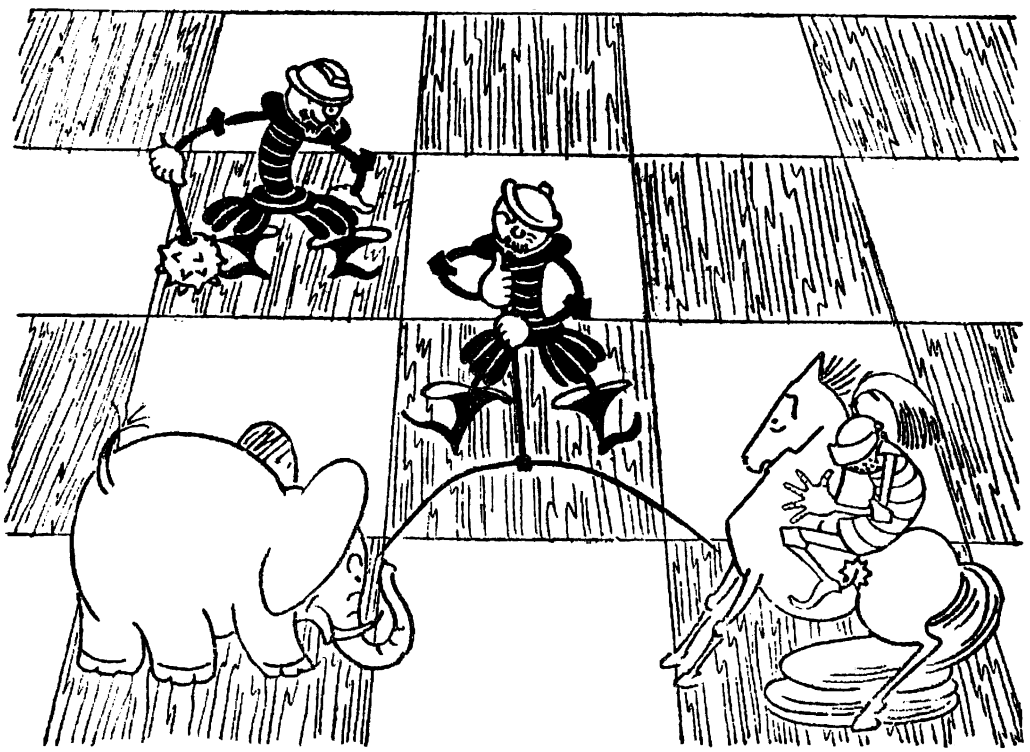
**2.** If the rook on g3 moves, Black plays ...♗e5. Therefore: **1.♖h8! ♗xh8** (otherwise 2.♖g1#) **2.♖g7!** Done it! **2...♗xg7 3.♘g3#**

The first hunter to catch elephants in this manner was probably T. Niels, the author of the following problem (1929). White: ♔**f8**, ♕**h8**, ♖**a8** and **g7**, ♗**e1**, ♙**h2**; Black: ♔**h1**, ♖**g1**, ♗**a1** and **f1**, ♙**e2** and **g2**. Mate in 4 moves: **1.♖g3!** (otherwise 1...♗e5) **1...♗xh8 2.♖g7! ♗xg7† 3.♔xg7 ♔xh2 4.♖h8#**

**3. 1.♔e7! ♗g5† 2.♔xd6 ♗f4† 3.♔xc5 ♗e3† 4.♔b4 ♗d2† 5.♔xa3 ♗c1† 6.♔b4** The queen is woken up, the king can start the return journey! **6...♗d2† 7.♔c5 ♗e3† 8.♔d6 ♗f4† 9.♔e7 ♗g5† 10.♔f8 ♗h6 11.♕a8** Here comes the help! **11...♗xg7† 12.♔e7†! ♗f8† 13.♕xf8#**

**4. 1.c3! ♗xc3 2.♖a1! ♗xa1** The darling animal is decoyed! **3.♔f8 ♗f6** Now ...f7-f5 is impossible. **4.♗g4#**

It's too soon yet to be setting off for Africa with the knowledge you have gained. Read the whole of this book first (you will find it contains some more of these fascinating hunting practices).



# Chapter 4

# Techniques of Calculation

From numerous examples in the foregoing chapter, we could ascertain how important it is to be able to calculate moves ahead correctly, to anticipate the further course and probable outcome of the struggle. Precise long-range calculation is not, however, possible in all cases, nor is it always needed.

In any quiet position where everything is defended, where your pieces and those of your opponent have not come into close contact and there are no immediate threats, the players usually have the choice of a few moves of equal worth, which in turn can be answered in various ways that have no noticeable drawbacks.

In this case an attempt to calculate moves ahead with precision would be futile. In such positions the choice of moves is determined by a general plan. In selecting this or that move, we consider what our piece will be capable of doing on its new square (by itself and in conjunction with our other pieces), and also what consequences may follow from abandoning the square it occupied before.

It is a different matter in positions where sharp, forcing moves are possible. These positions only permit of a small number of replies, and if play continues with new forcing moves, the result is a continuous sequence that lends itself to exact calculation. It is in just this way that combinations take shape.

This type of calculation requires a particular skill, the faculty of mentally visualizing and evaluating the positions that will arise.

This skill and the art of correctly assessing chess positions are only gradually acquired. Here the only advice that can be given to any chessplayer is to educate and train his faculties of calculation properly. From the very outset you must train yourself to perform a calculation economically.

For example, when considering two possible continuations, you should follow one of them through to the end, and then, after arriving at an assessment, proceed to examine the other line of play without returning to the first one. Having settled on one continuation, you should check it through (calculate it once more), but you shouldn't re-check all the alternative continuations.

If you train yourself to work out the moves in such a manner all the time, this training will come in very useful later when playing with tournament clocks which limit your amount of time for thinking. This method also eliminates the unnecessary fatigue that often brings mistakes in its wake.

In the process of calculating moves, however, what brings about a decision is not the calculation itself but the *correct evaluation* of the positions that can arise. An economical means of arriving at correct evaluations is just what we have in mind when we speak of techniques of calculation.

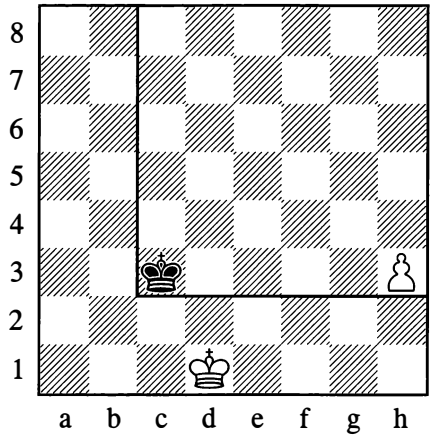
Correct evaluation is a difficult matter. It is this, essentially, that constitutes the art of chess. To evaluate complex positions, extensive experience is needed.

On the other hand, in many typical positions there are devices that make it very easy for you to carry out your deliberations – that is, to evaluate the position correctly (envisaging the ultimate outcome of the game) and to shape your play accordingly.

Let us examine some of these simplified devices:

## 1. THE RULE OF THE SQUARE

**211**




It is White to move. Can the black king stop the pawn if it starts advancing to queen? To answer this question, it would be rather tedious to start following in your head the two different paths of the king and pawn, to see how they match up. The problem can be solved more simply by other methods.

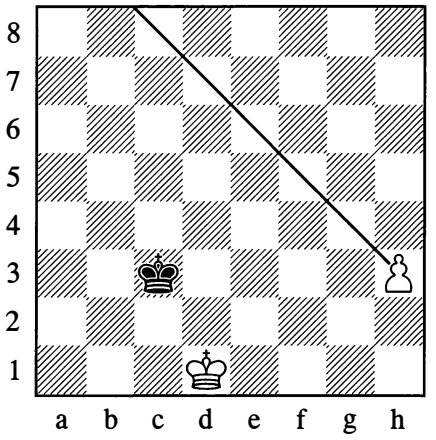
The first method is an arithmetical one. You can count how many moves the pawn needs, and you can make a separate count of how many the king needs. The pawn on h3 can get to h7 in four moves; the black king needs the same number of moves to get to g7. Clearly the pawn advancing to queen will be stopped.

The second method – the geometric one – allows you to solve the problem at once, from a single glance at the board. It will take the pawn on h3 five moves to reach its queening square (h8). From where the pawn stands, you count out that same number of squares in the direction of the enemy king (to the left), and trace an imaginary line as shown in Diagram 211. This gives a geometric square which chessplayers call "the square of the pawn". If the opponent's king is inside this square, it can always stop the pawn, irrespective of who moves next. If the king is outside, we need to see whether it can enter the square if it is that player's turn to move.

In Position 211 the king is already within the square. Consequently if the pawn tries to advance to queen, it will be stopped.

Visualizing how the square will look is a fairly simple matter, but this too can be simplified by mentally drawing just one line – the *diagonal* of the square.

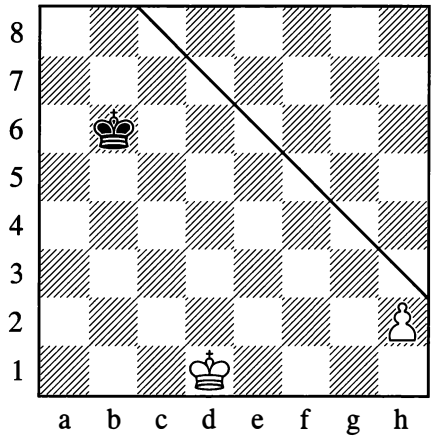
**211a**



The diagonal line from h3 to c8 in Position 211a shows at once that the king is inside the square of the h3-pawn.

The case demonstrated in the next diagram is very important in practical play:

**212**



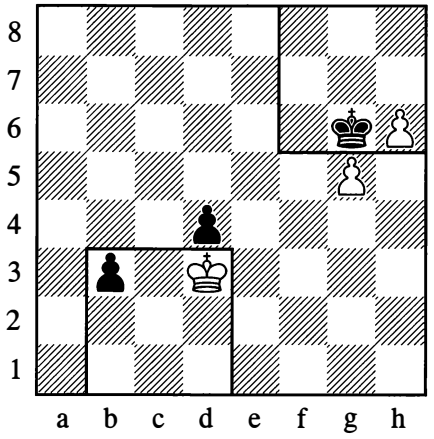
The pawn on h2 hasn't yet moved and may take a double step forward to h4; just like a pawn on h3, it requires five moves to reach h8. It follows that the "square" of an h2-pawn is *the same as that of an h3-pawn.* The black king is located outside the confines of this square, so if White advances to h4 the king will not catch the pawn.

The rule of the square is valid without reservation if only two pieces – the pawn and the enemy king – are in contention. If however the pawn can be helped by its own king or if there are additional pieces on the board, then the rule of the square may not hold true.

In Diagram 211, for instance, let us add a black pawn on f6. This might appear to help Black's cause, and yet this very pawn brings about his downfall as it obstructs the king's route to g7.

With due allowance for such hindrances, the rule of the square should be borne in mind in all cases where the king is fighting against pawns.

**213**



*Draw*

White cannot take the pawn on d4, as his king would then be stepping outside the square of the b3-pawn.

For the same reason, Black cannot take the pawn on g5.

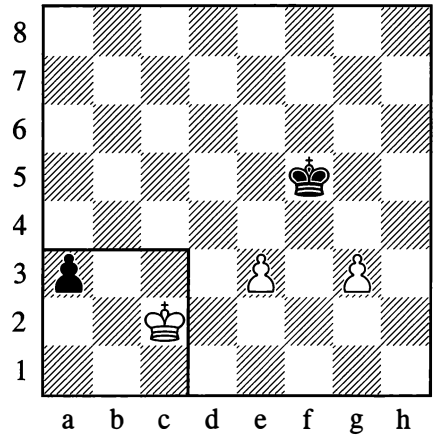
In both cases the pawns are securely defending each other, and there is nothing left for the kings to do except repeat moves to stop the pawns from advancing further

**1.♔d2 ♔h7 2.♔d3 ♔g6**

The kings will continue moving in this manner and the game will be a draw.

The following case, shown in Diagram 214, is often seen in practice.

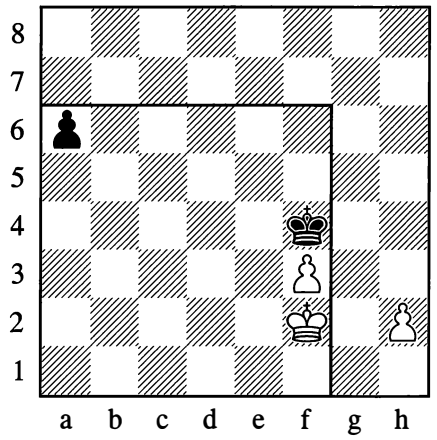
**214**



*White wins*

The black pawn on a3 is defenceless, while the white pawns can look after themselves. If the black king attacks one of them, the other will advance, putting paid to the king's aggressive designs.

**215**



Knowing about the foregoing positions, we can easily ascertain that if it is White to move here, he wins by:

**1.h4**

His pawns defend each other without their king's aid, while the king will round up the a6-pawn.

If however it is Black's move in Position 215, then he has:

**1...a5**

The white king is now outside the square of the black pawn and must immediately step inside it.

**2.♔e2 a4 3.♔d2**

The a-pawn will admittedly not queen, yet both the white pawns perish:

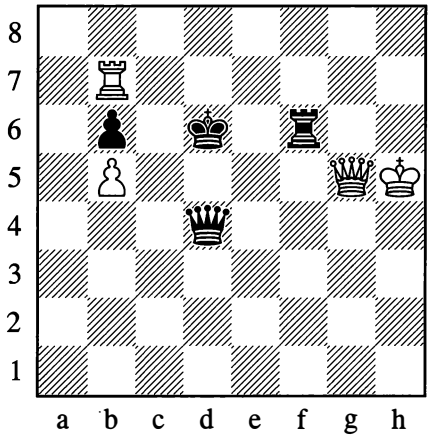
**3...♔xf3**

To win the second pawn, Black must not play ...♔g2?, as the reply would be h2-h4 and his king would be left outside the square of the h-pawn. The correct way, of course, is ...♔f3-g4-h3.

The rule of the square sometimes comes into play in a position where it looks as if the end is still a long way off (compare Diagram 208 on page 118).

**216**

**J. Berger**, 1889



*White to move*

If White goes into the ending with 1.♖xb6† ♕xb6 2.♕xf6† ♔c5, then a draw is unavoidable, whether or not he exchanges queens. There is, however, a correct path:

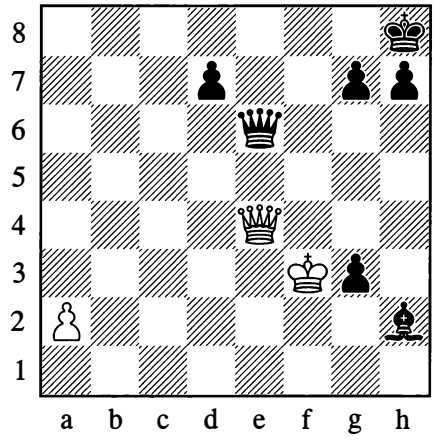
**1.♕xf6† ♕xf6 2.♖xb6† ♔e5 3.♖xf6 ♔xf6 4.b6**

White wins, because there is no stopping the pawn.

Our knowledge of the rule of the square tells us when we should hurry to advance our pawn and when a different move would serve us better.

**217**

**D. Ponziani**, 1782



*White to move*

**1.♕xe6 dxe6**

White mustn't yield to his first impulse and play a2-a4. *Even if it were Black's move following the queen exchange, his king couldn't enter the square of the white a-pawn.* White can therefore use his next move to shut the black bishop out of the game:

**2.♔g2!**

Now he can advance his pawn afterwards. If Black replies 2...e5 and goes straight ahead to e1, this fails because White's new queen on a8 will deliver mate. In the event of 2...h5 3.a4 h4 4.a5 h3†, White of course plays 5.♔h1!.

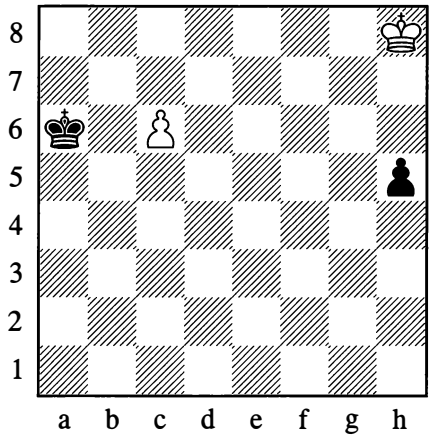
**2...e5 3.a4 e4 4.a5 ♗g1 5.♔xg1 e3**

With 6.♔f1! White will paralyse both black pawns.

If we have pawns of our own on the board, and there is the possibility of lending them support, then our *struggle to enter the square* sometimes assumes interesting forms, as for example in the following study.

**218**

**R. Reti**, 1921



*White to move – Draw*

The white king is a long way outside the square of the pawn on h5, and pursuing it appears senseless. White's own pawn on c6 looks irrelevant, as the black king is too close. And yet – however strange this may seem – the presence of the c6-pawn actually secures White a draw. Let us see:

**1.♔g7 h4 2.♔f6 h3 3.♔e7! h2 4.c7 ♔b7 5.♔d7**

And the opponents obtain queens at the same time.

Alternatively:

**1.♔g7 ♔b6**
To deal with the dangerous pawn at once.

**2.♔f6**
Threatening ♔g5.

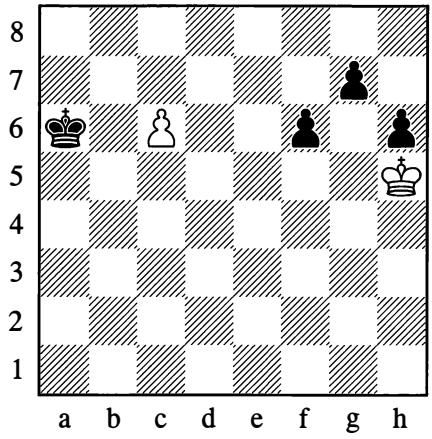
**2...h4 3.♔e5**
Threatening ♔f4.

**3...h3 4.♔d6! h2 5.c7**
Drawing again as before.

White's ingenious defence is based on the fact that in moving via g7, f6 etc., his king is pursuing a double aim: to catch the h5-pawn or give support to White's own c6-pawn. Black is powerless to oppose both plans at once.

**218a**

**R. Reti**, 1928



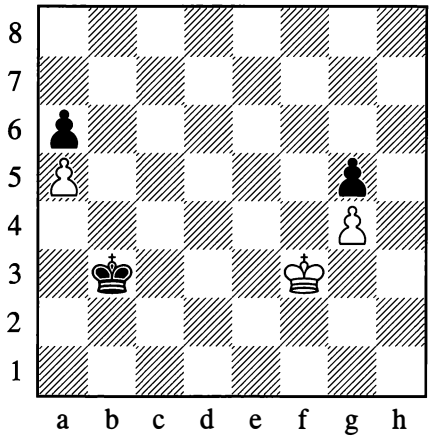
*White to move – Draw*

The possibility of a draw looks even more unlikely here than in the previous position. Nonetheless, *by employing the same idea,* White saves himself from the loss that appears inevitable. He plays 1.♔g6, then continues (in answer to any move by Black) with 2.♔xg7. By now there should be no difficulty in finding the remaining moves (figure out the variations for yourself!).

## 2. THE COUNTING OF MOVES (OR SQUARES)

A device of no less significance than the rule of the square is a simple arithmetical count.

**219**



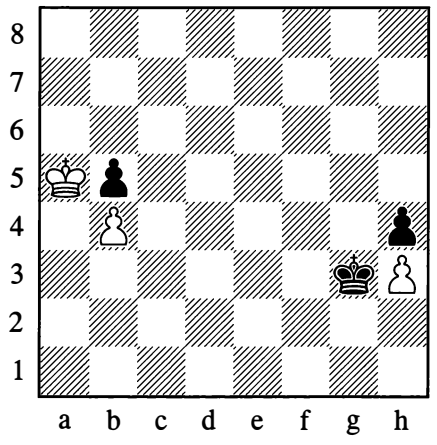
*White to move*

White needs to spend three moves on capturing the g5-pawn, then one move on stepping aside to the right or left with his king, and four moves advancing his g4-pawn to queen – eight moves in total. Black similarly needs eight moves to queen his a6-pawn.

Both sides will obtain a queen at the same time – White will (since he moves first from the diagram), and immediately afterwards Black will.

This count demonstrates that the game will end in a draw, since in the position arising after the pawns promote, neither side can win the enemy queen or give mate.

**220**



*White to move*

White needs six moves to queen his pawn, Black only needs five. But it is White to move first, and consequently he will obtain a queen just after Black does, thereby securing a draw. An important point to note is the following.

**1.♔xb5 ♔xh3**

White has to move his king aside to clear his pawn's path. He must make this move with care, for in the wrong position his king will be exposed to a winning check from Black's new queen. For example:

**2.♔c6? ♔g4 3.b5 h3 4.b6 h2 5.b7 h1=♕†**

Owing to the check, White will *not* now obtain a queen; by the process that was shown in Position 85 (on page 62), Black will not only stop the pawn on b7 from promoting, he will win it.

Or again:

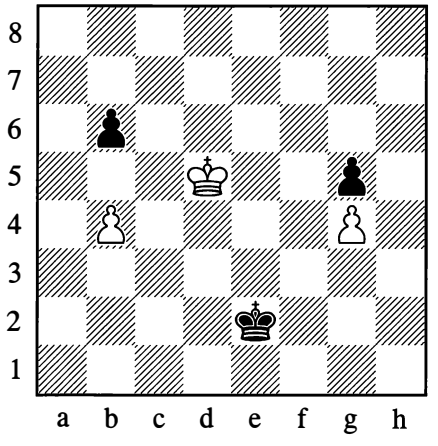
**2.♔a4? ♔g4 3.b5 h3 4.b6 h2 5.b7 h1=♕ 6.b8=♕**

And now Black wins the white queen:

**6...♕a1† 7.♔- ♕b1†**

Any move off the b-file other than 2.♔c6? or 2.♔a4? is completely safe.

**221**



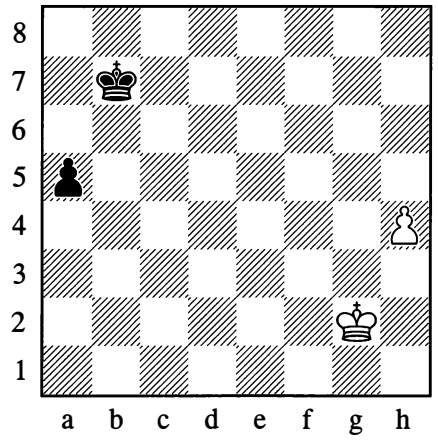
*White to move*

Here White can win the pawn on b6 or the one on g5. If he goes after the b6-pawn, it will take him 7 moves to queen his own b4-pawn. Within that time, Black will promote his g5-pawn (likewise 7 moves). The result will be a draw. If on the other hand White plays to queen his g4-pawn, this will admittedly take eight moves, and yet Black will need nine to queen his b6-pawn. This means that at the moment when White plays g7-g8=♕, Black's reply will be ...b2 and not ...b1=♕. But with a queen on g8 when Black's pawn is still on b2, White wins. In this way, the counting of moves makes it easier to choose the right continuation.

It must be emphasized that in such endgames there is danger in wasting time on any moves that are a distraction from the main purpose. For example, in the variation 1.♔e5 ♔d3 2.♔f5 ♔c4, if instead of 3.♔xg5 White plays 3.b5?, he will be letting the win slip, for after 3...♔xb5 both sides will obtain queens at the same time. The redundant pawn move will prove to have been a decisive loss of tempo.

The case where the pawns are on the rook's files is interesting.

**222**

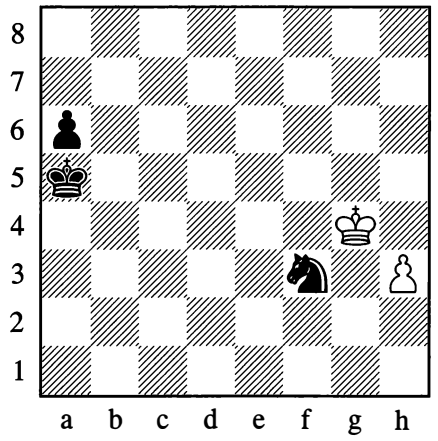


*Whoever moves first wins*

The new queen prevents the opponent from obtaining one.

**223**

**Salwe – Flamberg**, St Petersburg 1914



*Black to move*

Black decided the game in striking manner:

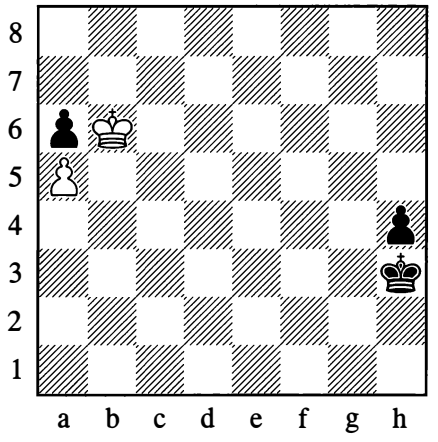
**63...♘h4!**

After 64.♔xh4 we reach a position analogous to Diagram 222, where the win depends on whose move it is. Being the first to move his king aside, Black wins.

Instead, 63...♔b4 64.♔xf3 a5 would have been inadequate because of 65.♔e3! (not 65.h4? which loses). White threatens to get his king to a1, and in the event of 65...a4 66.♔d2 ♔b3 67.♔c1 ♔a2 he draws with 68.♔c2. If, in answer to 65.♔e3, it occurs to Black to head the white king off with ...♔c3, he will even lose – since White will not only be able to queen his pawn (thanks to the black king obstructing the long diagonal), he will actually win the black queen with a skewer.

**0–1**

**223a**



*White to move – Draw*

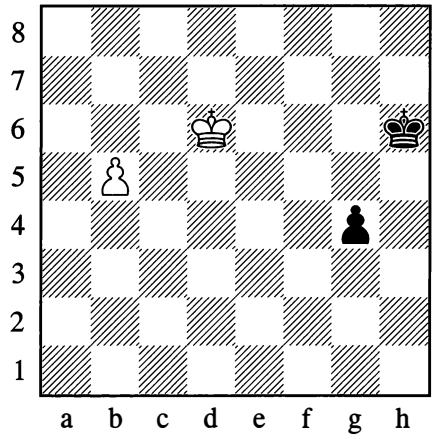
**1.♔xa6 ♔g3**

White would lose with 2.♔b6?. The way to save himself is with:

**2.♔b7!**

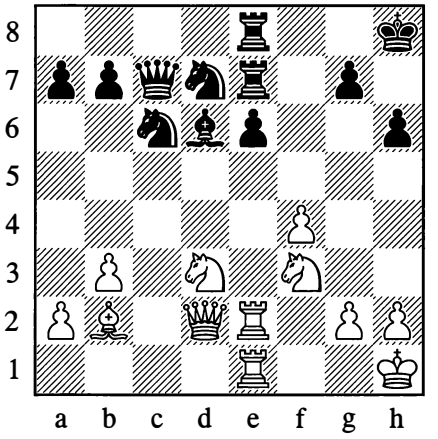
White then draws as in Position 86 (see page 63).

**224**



*Whoever moves first wins*

**225**



In Example 224 (a skewer to win the queen!) it isn't hard to work out the play for yourself.

So in the endgames we have looked at, the chances of gaining a queen are easily ascertained by the counting of moves. But then you need to form a mental picture of the ensuing position (the squares where the kings and queens will be placed) in order to take account of possible attacks and their consequences.

### 3. COUNTING THE NUMBER OF ATTACKS

Counting the number of attacks and defences is often of great importance in a game. This is well illustrated by the following textbook examples from Edward Lasker.

A beginner on the point of playing ...e5 will usually reason like this: I move my pawn forward, then my opponent takes it with *his* pawn; I take with a knight, he takes with *his* knight; I take with my bishop, he ... and so on. This method of calculation is quite wrong; time and mental energy are wasted. On reaching the third or fourth move, the beginner is likely to forget which pieces have already been exchanged, and he will get mixed up in his calculations. It is more correct and simpler to reason as follows: I move my pawn forward, then it will be under attack from six white pieces, but there are also six pieces defending it, and moreover the value of the attacking and defending pieces is the same; it follows that the move ...e5 is perfectly safe.

It remains to add that after satisfying ourselves in this purely arithmetical manner that ...e5 is playable, we need to visualize the position resulting from the possible all-out exchange and consider what continuations might follow – whether or not they are in our favour. It is much easier to do this if our mental energy hasn't been wasted on working our way through the exchanges, and our attention hasn't become dulled.

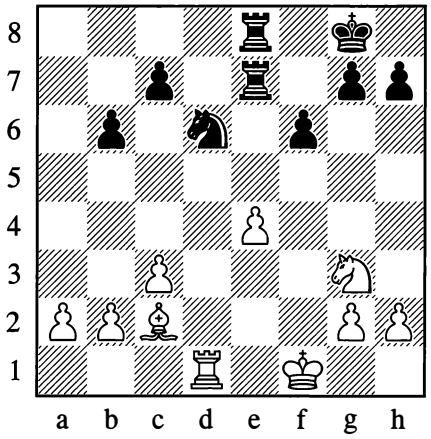
Let us suppose that in Position 225 the black h-pawn is still on h7. It then turns out that ...e5 is *not* playable. The point is that after exchanges, all the minor pieces and both rooks will have disappeared from the board, leaving just the queens – the white one on d2 and the black one on e5; it will be White to move, all lines will be open, and with ♕d8 White will mate the black king.

In addition, before making a move such as ...e5 which allows White to begin a sequence of forcing moves (captures!) and, most importantly, to break off this sequence at any moment in pursuit of other ideas, it is useful for us to visualize the disappearance of this or that piece and the consequences that this will have (the opening of lines, etc.).

Suppose the white queen in Position 225 is on c2 (instead of d2). Then our arithmetical count is made complicated by the pin against the knight on c6. White will be able to answer ...♘xe5 with ♕xc7, eliminating one of the defending pieces and upsetting the arithmetical balance.

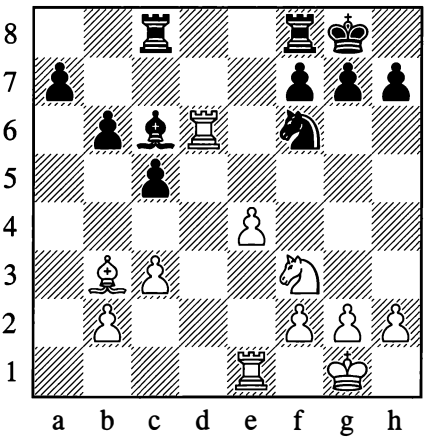
Now consider a few more examples in which the very important procedure of counting comes up against various complications.

**226**



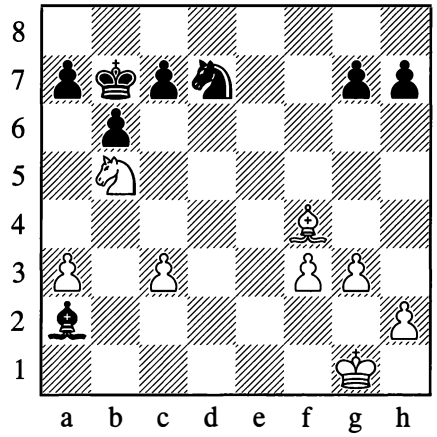
To play ...♘xe4 here, on the grounds that the e4-pawn is attacked three times and defended only twice, would be a mistake. The value of the attacking and defending pieces is unequal, and Black loses the exchange.

**227**



In this example, the pieces attacking the e4-pawn are themselves in the line of fire. Consequently 1...♘xe4 is unplayable owing to 2.♖xc6, which leaves the knight undefended and enables White to win two pieces for a rook and pawn. For the same reason 1...♗xe4 also fails, to 2.♖xf6. If Black then tried to extricate himself with 2...♗xf3, he would even come out a whole piece down after 3.♖xf3 (be sure you understand how this happened).

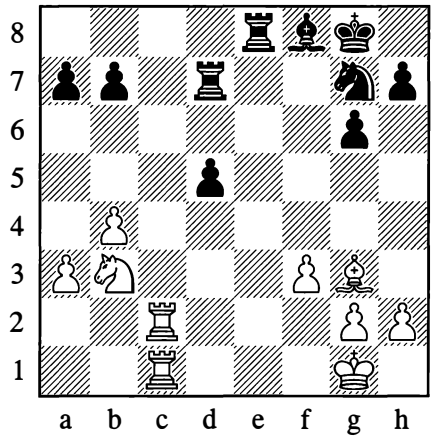
**228**



In the event of 1.♗xc7, Black replies 1...a6 and wins one of the pieces. The position of the attacking pieces is just as insecure after 1.♘xc7 on account of 1...g5! 2.♗d6 ♔c6 3.♘e8 ♗f7, and again one of them is lost. The quantity of possible attacks and defences always needs to be anticipated.

Let us for instance take the following position:

**229**



If Black wants to play ...d4 here, he should first perform the following calculation. On d4 the pawn will be under attack from one piece and defended by one piece. But with his next three moves White can bring three more pieces up (1.♖d1, 2.♖cd2, 3.♗f2). During that time, however, Black will mobilize three pieces for the defence (1...♘e6, 2...♗g7, 3...♖ed8). Thus the pawn will not be in immediate danger; nor does there seem to be any possibility for White in the near future to increase his attack or to strike at any of the defending pieces. It would be wrong, however, for Black to answer ♖d1 with ...d3, as White could then attack the pawn with a further two pieces – his other rook and his knight – while Black would have only one extra defence (...♖ed8).

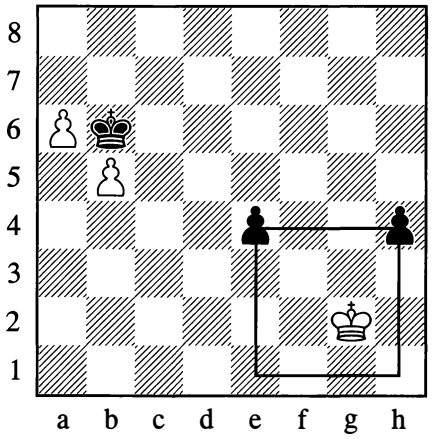
## 4. THE "WANDERING SQUARE"

In Position 214 (on page 130) we encountered a pair of separated pawns that were defending themselves. Separated pawns like these, however, not only possess a certain *defensive* strength – their *aggressive* power is also sometimes great, and quite often they can go through to queen wholly independently, that is without the help of their king.

Diagram 230 can serve as an example.

**230**

**A. Studenetsky**, 1939

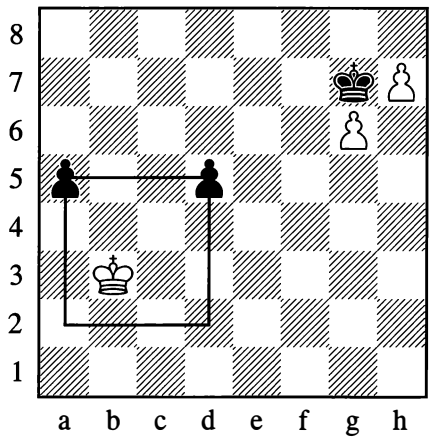


*Whichever side is to move, one of the black pawns will queen independently*

*Practical guideline*: at each turn Black must move the pawn that is further from the enemy king.

In such positions it is useful to apply Studenetsky's principle of the "wandering square". It amounts to the following: Two separated pawns, say on e6 and h6, are at the corners of a *common* square: e6-h6-h3-e3. As the pawns advance, the position of the square also changes. When this mobile square incorporates the final rank (see Diagram 230) or extends beyond it, the king is helpless against the pawns. If the square doesn't reach as far as the final rank, the pawns cannot be queened (see Diagram 231).

**231**



Here the black pawns are doomed – they don't even possess any defensive strength (a distance of two files in between the pawns is the most disadvantageous).

**1...d4**

White naturally replies with:

**2.♔c4**

After winning the d-pawn he has time to enter the square of the advancing a-pawn.

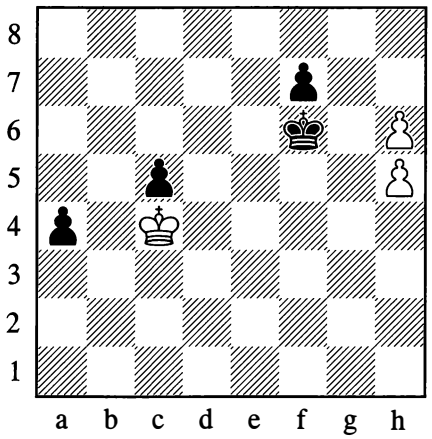
If it is White to move, he plays:

**1.♔a4 d4 2.♔b3!**

Continuing as in the foregoing variation (but not 2.♔xa5 on account of 2...d3).

If the pawn on d5 were transferred to c5, the separated pawns could at least defend themselves, and the game would be a draw. Yet if the black king were entirely deprived of moves, the pawns would once again succumb (see Diagram 232).

**232**

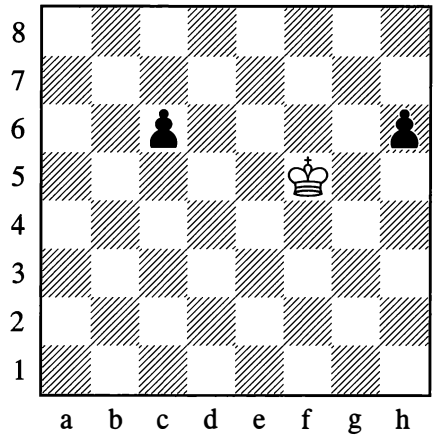


**1.♔c3**

Black must resign after this waiting move.

A notable factor here is the defensive position of the *doubled* pawns on h5 and h6. The black king has to stay in touch with the g7-square and is therefore totally paralysed. For their part, the white pawns cannot move either.

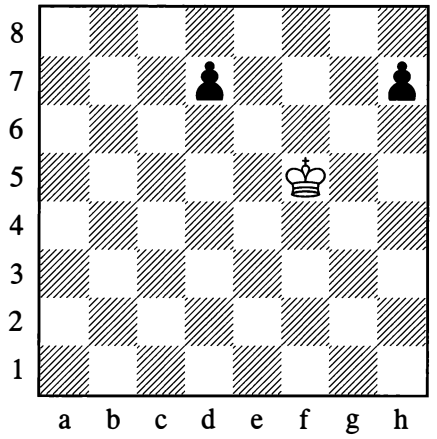
**233**



It's easy to establish that Black wins here. If the position of the pieces is shifted one square further up the board, Black still wins, as his pawns on c7 and h7 have the right to make a double advance.

Diagram 234, where there is less distance between the pawns, presents a different picture.

**234**



Here the pawns cannot independently advance to queen. For example:

**1.♔f6 d6**

Not 1...d5, as after 2.♔e5 both pawns will succumb.

**2.♔f5**

White too is forced to defend carefully; 2.♔e6 would lose to 2...h5.

**2...h6! 3.♔f6** (or **3.♔f4**)

White is compelled to keep to these squares without having the possibility to attack either of the black pawns.

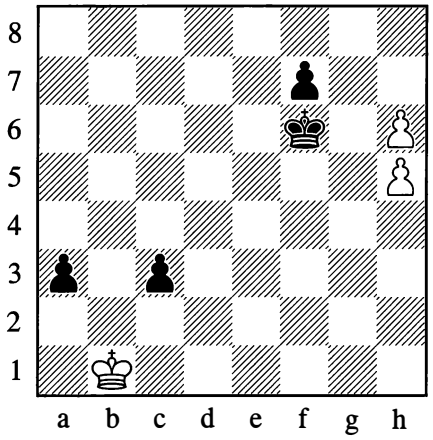
But then Black for his part cannot advance either of the pawns to the 4th rank (counting from his end), as that pawn would quickly fall, with the other one to follow. Therefore if the black king were deprived of mobility (place it on a8, add a black pawn on b7 and white ones on a7 and b6), the d- and h-pawns would inescapably perish.

The rule of the "wandering square" needs refining in some senses, given that it says nothing about the position of the opponent's king or about cases where one of the pawns is further advanced; nor does it take account of cases where it makes a crucial difference which side is to move.

It goes without saying that the rule is invalidated if the opponent has his king on a square from which it can capture one of the pawns and it is his turn to move, or sometimes even when it is *not* his turn (for instance if we place the white king on b3 in the next diagram, number 235).

Moreover exceptions are possible when the pawns are on the 6th rank (counting from their own end) with one square separating them.

**235**



*Both sides are in zugzwang – Whoever moves loses*

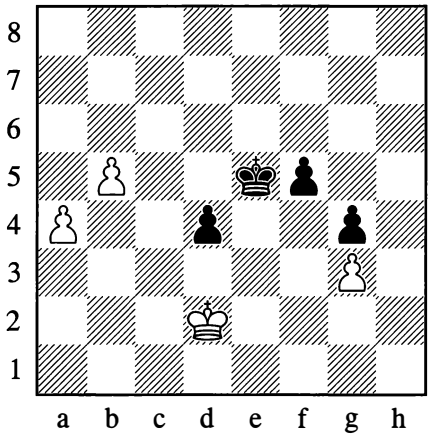
If it is Black to move, the rule of the "wandering square" is not valid.

Nonetheless, if we allow for the exceptions that have just been indicated, this rule is very convenient and eases the task of calculation on which a move is based.

Finally let us look at a case where there are separated pawns on both sides:

**236**

**Stoltz – Nimzowitsch**, Berlin 1928



*Black to move*

**1...f4 2.gxf4† ♔d6!!**

An unexpected move that clarifies the position at once. The black pawns are unstoppable, while an advancing white pawn can be halted at the last moment by a *single* move (to *c7* or e7), that is with a minimal loss of time. Hence Black advances his pawns more quickly, and wins. Instead 2...♔xf4 would be bad, since the b5-pawn would queen *with check.*

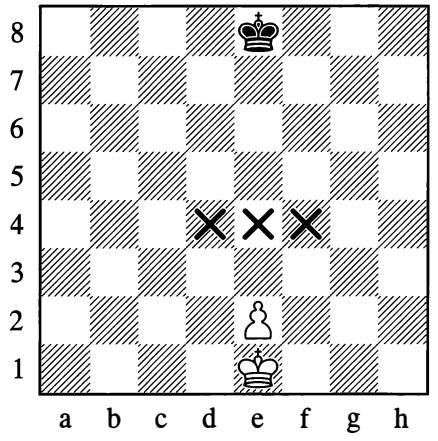
## 5. CRITICAL SQUARES FOR A PASSED PAWN

In the endgame it is often essential to advance your pawn to its queening square with the aid of your king. Clearly, in order to win you need to send the king on ahead, so as to gain control of the squares over which the pawn will pass. But where, precisely, should the king go? And will the win be achieved?

Calculation is greatly facilitated if you know that the secret of all such endings lies in gaining possession of the pawn's "critical" squares.

**237**

**P. Durand**, 1871



*White to move wins – Black to move draws*

For a pawn on e2, the "critical" or "decisive" squares – in other words the most sensitive ones from the opponent's viewpoint – are d4, e4 and f4, separated from the pawn by one rank (see Diagram 237).

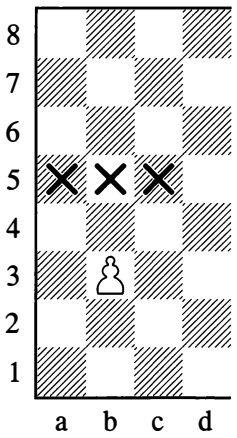
*Rule*: If White can occupy one of the three critical squares (it doesn't matter which) with his king, then he wins easily, irrespective of where the black king is placed, and no matter whose move it is – unless Black is able to capture the pawn with his very first move.

If White cannot occupy a critical square, the game is a draw, as it will not be possible to advance the pawn to queen.

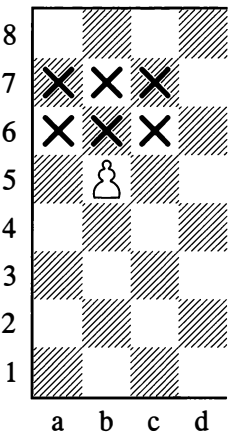
A simple arithmetical count in Position 237 shows that if White moves first he can occupy any of the critical squares within three moves, and Black is unable to prevent this. On the other hand if Black begins, then in three moves he can reach e5 (or d5 or f5 – in opposition to the white king), preventing White from occupying any of the critical (or, if you like, "key") squares.

It has to be borne in mind that as the pawn advances, the location of the critical squares changes accordingly.

**238**




**238a**

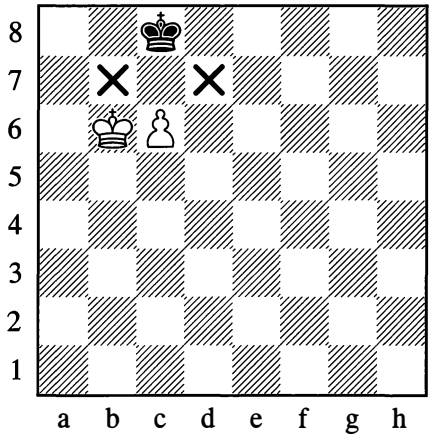



For a pawn on b3, the critical squares are a5, b5 and c5; for a pawn on b4, they a6, b6 and c6. But if the pawn advances still further towards the end of the board and reaches the fifth rank, the enemy king is left with little room for normal manoeuvring. This is an advantage for the attacking side (in this case White); in addition to the squares that are critical according to our original rule (a7, b7 and c7), there are now three new ones: a6, b6 and c6.

Thus a pawn on the fifth rank (counting from its own end) has six critical squares (see Diagram 238a). If the player with the pawn occupies any of these six critical squares with his king, the win is guaranteed, no matter where his opponent's king is placed.

A number of such positions were given earlier, in Diagrams 75-80; let us explain their rationale.

**239**

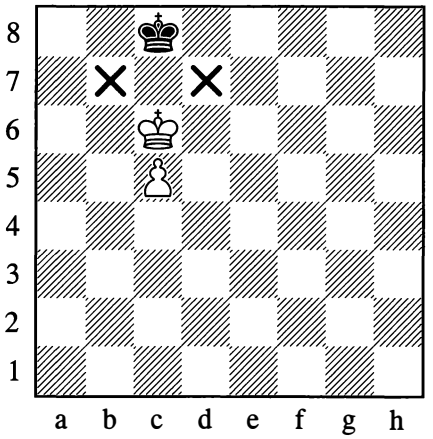


*White wins only if it is his move*

In Position 239, White can queen his pawn only by occupying one of the squares b7 or d7 with his king. These are the *fundamentally* critical squares, or key squares – for which, ultimately, the fight is being conducted.

If it is White's move, he attains his goal with 1.c7. But if Black is to move, then with 1...♔b8, using the opposition as a means of defence, he stops his opponent from occupying the key b7-square. After 2.c7† ♔c8 that square is still inaccessible to White, and the game is therefore drawn.

**239a**



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

If it is Black to move in Position 239a, he is forced to concede one of the key squares immediately. If it is White's move, then after 1.♔b6 ♔b8 he gains the opposition for himself by means of 2.c6; now 2...♔c8 is met by 3.c7 (as in Example 239), and White conquers the key square b7.

Let us return to Position 237 and see how the win is achieved:

**1.♔d2 ♔e7 2.♔d3 ♔d6 3.♔e4**
White has seized a critical square.

**3...♔e6**
Black has placed himself in opposition, which means he is barring the white king from the squares d5, e5 and f5.

**4.e3**
Now the squares d5, e5 and f5 have become the critical ones; if it were White's move now, he could not gain access to any of these squares, and the position would be drawn.

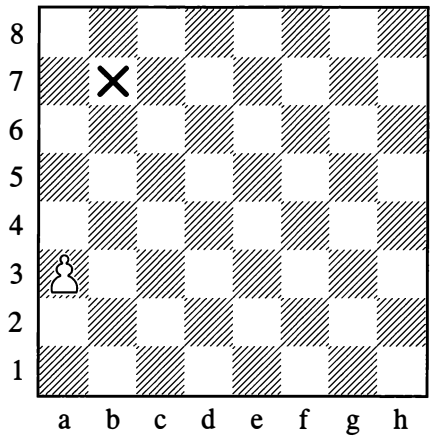
**4...♔f6 5.♔d5**
Again occupying a critical square.

**5...♔f7**
If 5...♔e7, then 6.♔e5.

**6.♔d6**
Ensuring the advance e3-e4, since a critical square for the pawn on e4 has now already been occupied; on 6...♔f6 for example, 7.e4 is playable.

**6...♔f8 7.e4 ♔f7 8.e5**
White's pawn has reached the 5th rank, and his king is on a critical square. The win is not complicated: if 8...♔f8, then 9.♔d7, and the pawn goes through; or if 8...♔e8, then 9.♔e6 etc. This example shows that the pawn should only be advanced when control of its new critical squares is assured.

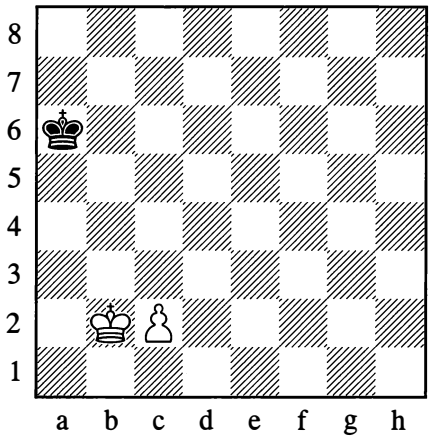
**240**



*There is one key square – b7!*

In the case of a rook's pawn there is only *one* key square (see Diagram 240), and the possibility of occupying it decides the outcome. If the black king succeeds in occupying the c8-square, a draw is unavoidable.

**241**



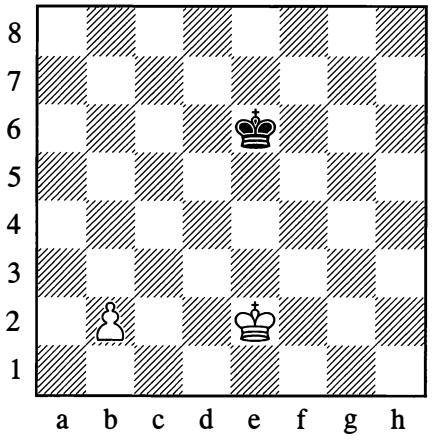
*White wins*

In Position 241, the key squares are b4, c4 and d4. We can see at once that Black cannot defend the d4-square, and we win easily with:

**1.♔c3 ♔~ 2.♔d4**

Any move other than 1.♔c3 would be an irreparable error, allowing Black to draw. For example: 1.♔b3? ♔b5! or 1.♔a3? ♔a5!; or 1.♔a2? ♔b6! (to answer 2.♔a3 or 2.♔b3 with 2...♔a5 or 2...♔b5). The moves with the black king must be made with care, so that the critical squares can be defended.

**242**



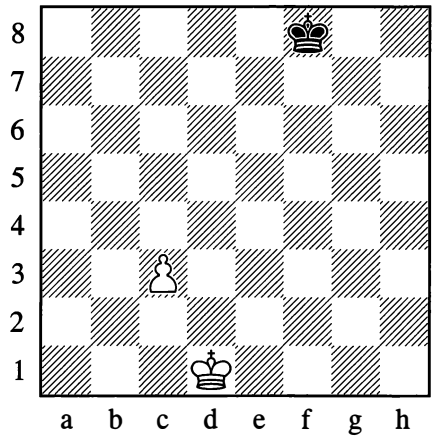
Here the game is a draw irrespective of who is to move, as White cannot gain possession of a critical square. If it is Black's move, the one way to draw is:

**1...♔d6!**

So as to be able to meet 2.♔d3 with 2...♔d5; or if 2.♔d2, then 2...♔c6! (3.♔c3 ♔c5!). But Black loses if he begins with 1...♔d5?, in view of the reply 2.♔d3 (for example: 2...♔c5 3.♔c3 ♔b5 4.♔b3 ♔a5 5.♔c4, occupying a critical square).

As we can see from this example alone, king-and-pawn endings require delicate handling, but calculation is facilitated when the idea that underlies an ending is clear to us.

**243**



*White to move wins*
*(similarly with the pawn on b4)*

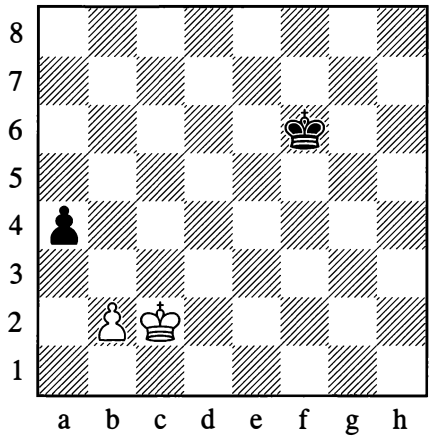
Here the critical squares are b5, c5 and d5. The furthest away, and hence the most vulnerable from Black's point of view, is b5. White therefore heads for that point:

**1.♔c2! ♔e7 2.♔b3 ♔d6 3.♔b4! ♔c6 4.♔c4**

White occupies one of the critical squares with his next move. A mistake would be 1.♔d2?, on account of 1...♔e7 2.♔d3 ♔d7! (with the same idea as in Position 242), and White cannot gain possession of a critical square.

We now proceed to some complex examples.

**244**



*White to move wins*

Winning for White doesn't look difficult: he picks up the a4-pawn and conquers a critical square at the same time. Black, however, has the sly defence ...a3 up his sleeve. Then if White plays bxa3, his pawn becomes a *rook's* pawn and there will be no win. Obviously he will have to answer ...a3 with b2-b3; then the critical squares will be transferred to a5, b5 and c5. Of these, a5 will be the most vulnerable from Black's viewpoint. So seizing this square (or either of the other critical ones) should be White's immediate task.

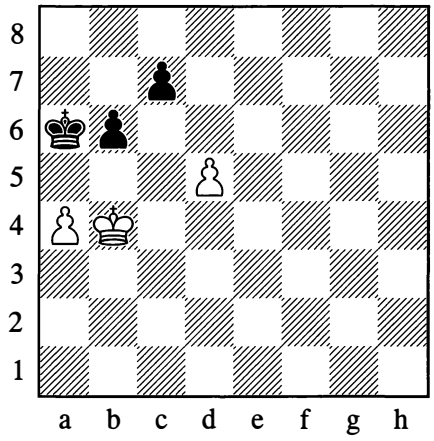
However, the natural move 1.♔c3 fails to achieve this aim, since in order to win the a-pawn after 1...a3 2.b3 White must either play b3-b4 and ♔b3 – when the critical squares change to a6/b6/c6 and become inaccessible to him – or else try ♔c3-c2-b1-a2. But that would mean losing two tempos in treading a path which White can embark on immediately without any superfluous king moves.

The solution is now clear:

**1.♔b1! a3! 2.b3! ♔e5 3.♔a2 ♔d5 4.♔xa3 ♔c5 5.♔a4 ♔b6 6.♔b4**

White can now occupy a critical square – a5 or c5 – and easily wins.

**245**



*White to move draws*

In Position 245, White saves himself from loss by forcing an advantageous change of the critical squares:

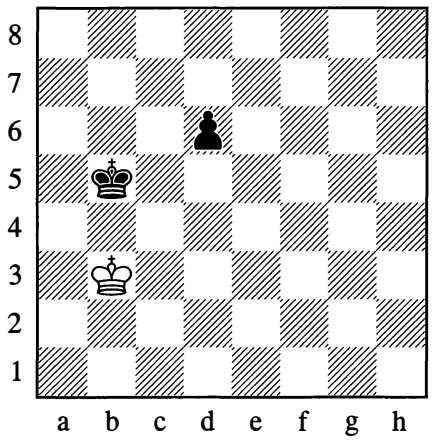
**1.♔b3!**

The point of this move will presently become clear.

**1...♔a5 2.♔a3 b5 3.axb5 ♔xb5**

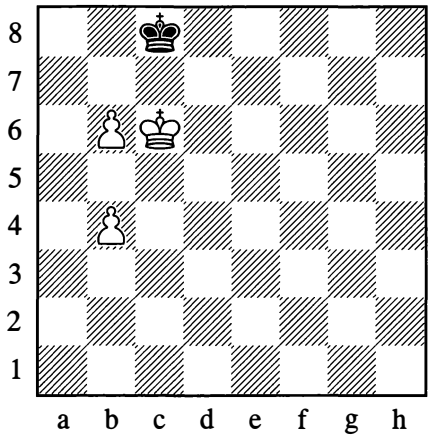
Black has gained control of the critical squares (b5, c5, d5) for his c7-pawn, and a loss for White looks inevitable. However, the picture abruptly changes after the following moves:

**4.d6! cxd6 5.♔b3!**



The critical squares have now become c4, d4, and e4; and the black king cannot take possession of any of them. The game is a draw.

**246**



*White wins*

In Position 246, the pawn on b6 doesn't win the game. But the white king is occupying one of the critical squares for the b4-pawn. He therefore has to sacrifice the forward pawn and secure victory with the aid of the other one:

**1.b7† ♔b8 2.b5 ♔a7 3.b8=♕†!**

3.♔c7 would be stalemate.

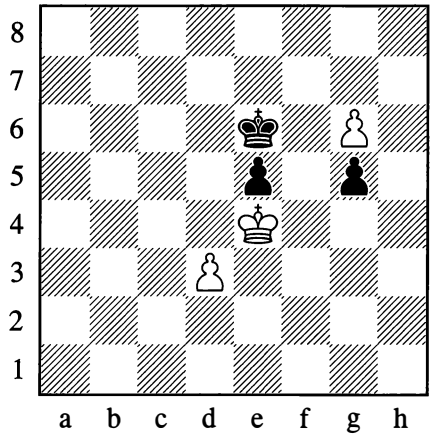
**3...♔xb8 4.♔b6**

White wins in the standard manner.

Now try solving the following study (247) for yourself.

**247**

**N. Grigoriev**, 1923



*White wins*

To solve this, you have to bear in mind that Black has some subtle defensive moves at his disposal:

**1.g7 ♔f7 2.♔f5!**

2.♔xe5 ♔xg7 3.♔f5 ♔f7 4.♔xg5 ♔e6 leads only to a draw.

**2...♔g8!**

Not 2...♔xg7? 3.♔xg5 and White wins. The next move is tricky to find.

**3.♔g4!**

3.♔xg5 fails to 3...e4! 4.dxe4 ♔xg7, drawing.

**3...♔f7**

Not 3...♔xg7? owing to 4.♔xg5. If 3...e4 4.dxe4 ♔f7 5.♔f5 ♔g8, then 6.♔f6 g4 7.e5.

**4.♔xg5! e4**

4...♔xg7 would be met by 5.♔f5 e4 6.♔xe4!.

**5.♔h6!**

White wins, thanks to the threat of ♔h7; if 5...♔g8, then 6.dxe4. Note that 5.dxe4? ♔xg7 leads to a draw.

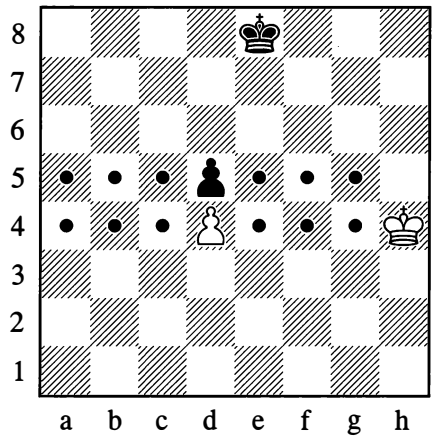
See what subtle play was needed to win this ending that didn't look all that complicated!

## 6. CRITICAL SQUARES FOR A BLOCKED PAWN

For blocked pawns, deprived of mobility (see Diagram 248), the system of critical squares is different. For a black pawn on d5, the critical squares are e5/f5/g5 and a5/b5/c5; correspondingly for a white pawn on d4, they are e4/f4/g4 and a4/b4/c4.

**248**

**P. Durand**, 1871



**1.♔g5**

Taking possession of one of the key squares, the fate of the d5-pawn is settled. For example:

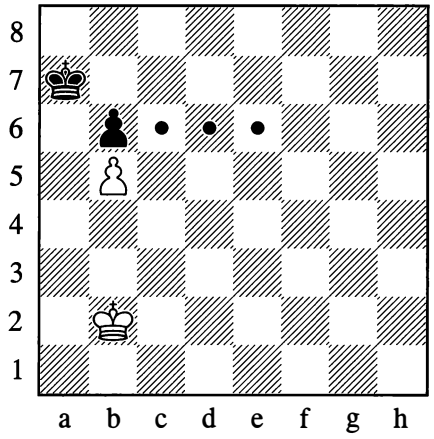
**1...♔e7 2.♔f5 ♔d6 3.♔f6 ♔d7 4.♔e5 ♔c6 5.♔e6**

Winning the pawn. Taking account of the inevitable fall of his pawn on d5, Black must subsequently play in such a way as not to allow the white king to occupy any of the critical squares for the d4-pawn.

**5...♔c7! 6.♔xd5 ♔d7!**

With a draw.

**249**



Here White wins the b6-pawn and with it the game, since his own pawn is on the fifth rank:

**1.♔c3 ♔b7 2.♔d4 ♔c7 3.♔e5**

Threatening to occupy the e6-square.

**3...♔d7**

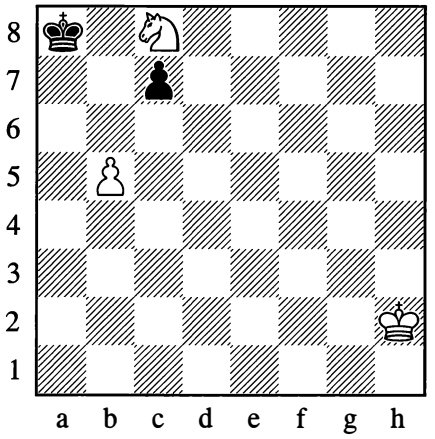
Black has defended all three of the critical squares, but he is forced to concede one of them after White's reply:

**4.♔d5**

White wins.

**250**

Study by an unknown author



*White to play and win*

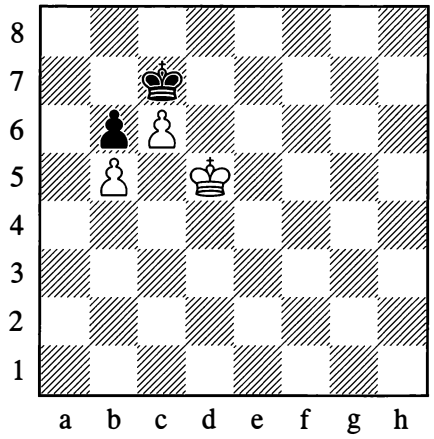
The difficulty of winning this position is due to the threat of ...♔b7 and ...c6, exchanging White's pawn and leaving him with only his knight. There is no use in 1.♘e7 owing to 1...♔b7 2.♘c6 ♔b6 3.♘d4 ♔c5, after which the b5-pawn falls. Alternatively 1.♘e7 ♔b7 2.♘d5 c6.

The winning move is pretty:

**1.♘b6†!**

If Black takes the knight, a position with blocked pawns arises, and White wins by gaining possession of one of the critical squares for the b6-pawn (c6, d6, e6). On the other hand if 1...♔b7, then 2.♘c4, barring the black king's approach to the b5-pawn (an important case of knight and pawn cooperating). On 2...c6 White plays 3.b6, and his pawn is securely defended while he brings his king up; another possibility is 3.♘a5† ♔b6 4.bxc6, and Black cannot take the knight, as his king would be stepping outside the square of the pawn.

**251**



*White wins*

An attempt to queen the c-pawn is hopeless: 1.♔e6 ♔c8! (diagonal opposition) 2.♔d6 ♔d8!, and now 3.c7† ♔c8 4.♔c6 would be stalemate.

To win the game, White must sacrifice his c-pawn and then win the black pawn on b6 after occupying one of its critical squares.

If White is to move, the solution is as follows:

**1.♔e6 ♔c8! 2.c7! ♔xc7**

White answers 2...♔b7 with 3.♔d7, and after 3...♔a7 he promotes his pawn to a rook!

**3.♔e7! ♔~ 4.♔d6**

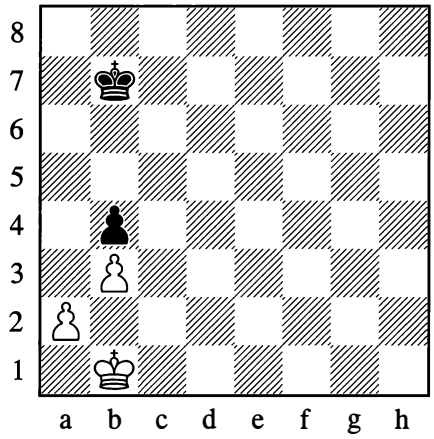
If Black is to move:

**1...♔c8! 2.c7 ♔d7**

2...♔xc7 3.♔e6 and the king reaches a critical square.

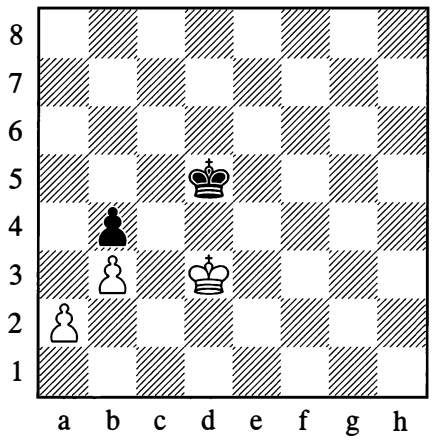
**3.c8=♕† ♔xc8 4.♔c6**

**252**



In Position 252 White cannot win, as he is unable to seize the critical squares for the b4-pawn. If he gives up his a-pawn for the black b-pawn (after ♔b2 and a2-a3 or a2-a4), he cannot dominate the critical squares for the remaining pawn on b3.

**252a**



The situation of the kings in Diagram 252a, with one square in between them, is – as we know – called the opposition. It should be noted that if there are three or five squares between the kings, we *still* call this the opposition – the *distant* opposition. The kings are in this distant opposition in Diagram 252:

**1.♔c2 ♔c6**

Black retains the distant opposition, at a distance of three squares this time instead of five.

**2.♔d3 ♔d5**

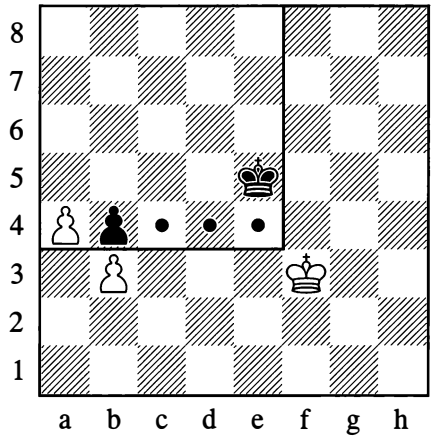
Taking up the customary stance of near opposition (see Diagram 252a) and defending all the critical squares.

**3.♔e3 ♔e5**

White cannot make progress. After 4.♔f3? now, White would even lose to 4...♔d4.

Retention of the distant opposition is sometimes essential with every move, but in Example 252, where Black's task is merely to guard the critical squares c4/d4/e4, he only needs to oscillate with his king between d6 and e6 for the purpose of answering White's ♔d3 or ♔e3 with ...♔d5 or ...♔e5 respectively. On ♔f3 he should move into diagonal opposition with ...♔d5!, to retain the option of meeting ♔e3 with ...♔e5, or ♔f4? with ...♔d4!.

**253**



*White to move wins –*
*Black to move draws*

Here the manoeuvring of the black king is restricted by White's pawn on a4: Black mustn't step outside the square of that pawn, but at the same time he has to defend the critical squares of his own b4-pawn.

If White is to move, then he wins with:

**1.♔e3! ♔d5 2.♔d3 ♔c5 3.♔e4**

And White has claimed a critical square.

If it is Black to move he is able to draw with:

**1...♔d5!**

It is now useless for White to push his passed pawn – Black will catch and win it, and if in return White wins the b4-pawn, Black will be able to meet ♔xb4 with ...♔b6!, drawing.

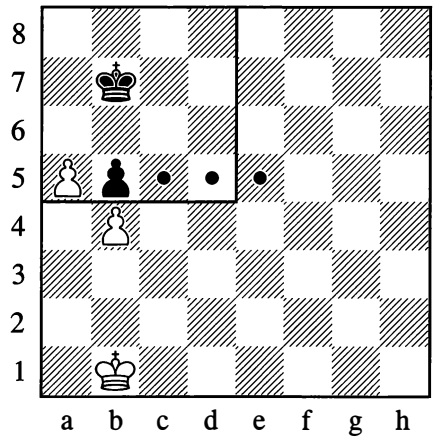
Nor does White get anywhere after 2.♔f4 ♔d4 3.♔f5 ♔d5! (not 3...♔c3, as the a-pawn will be first to queen) 4.♔f6 ♔d6 – and so on, all the way to the eighth rank.

As another try, White could move his king along the 1st and 2nd ranks or else along the g- and h-files, in order to wrest the opposition from Black at a crucial point as a result of his manoeuvres.

In the former case, all the black king needs to do – just as in Position 252 – is move between the squares d6 and e6, so as to meet ♔d3 or ♔f3 with ...♔d5, or to play ...♔e5 in reply to ♔e3 or ♔g3. (On ♔h3 Black must again play ...♔d5, so that he can answer ♔g3 with ...♔e5, or meet ♔g4 with ...♔e4!.)

If the white king moves along the g- and h-files, Black's simplest course is to take the distant or near opposition at every turn, without stepping outside the square of the a-pawn. For example: 2.♔g4 ♔e4 3.♔h4 ♔d4 4.♔h5 ♔d5 5.♔g6 ♔e6 6.♔h6 ♔d6 7.♔g5 ♔e5 8.♔h4 ♔d4 9.♔g3 ♔e5! etc.

**253a**

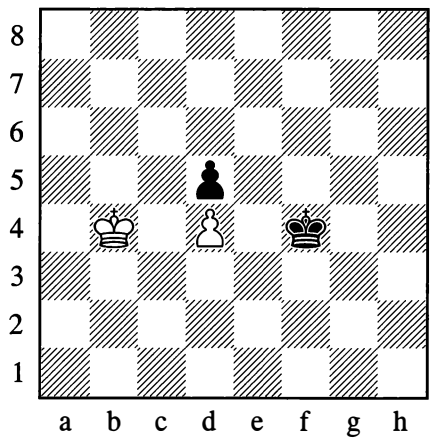


*White wins*

The most remote of the critical squares, e5, is outside the square of the passed pawn, and Black cannot successfully guard it against invasion by the white king, seeing that he has to watch the a5-pawn at the same time.

If the white king goes to d4 Black can indeed reply with ...♔d6, but then after ♔e4 he cannot play ...♔e6 because the a-pawn would advance; while ...♔c6 loses to ♔e5.

**254**



The black king is already on a critical square for the d4-pawn, while the white king has not occupied the corresponding critical square for the d5-pawn. The advantage is therefore with Black, and he wins the white pawn irrespective of who is to move.

However, he has to be careful to attack the pawn the right way.

**1...♔e3!**

Black mustn't play 1...♔e4?, as after 2.♔c5 he would lose.

**2.♔c5? ♔e4**

This move has now been played at the correct moment.

This example makes clear how important it is to give due regard to the critical squares. Realizing that he cannot hold his own pawn, White has to answer 1...♔e3 with:

**2.♔c3! ♔e4 3.♔c2!**

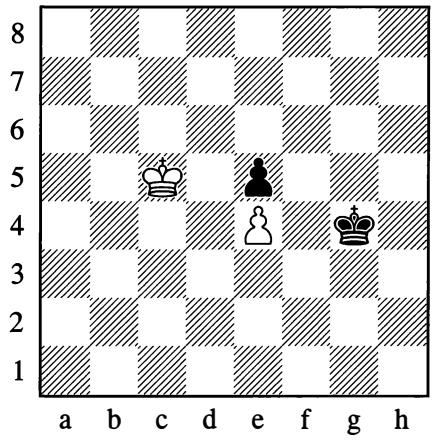
Black wins the pawn, but White defends.

**3...♔xd4 4.♔d2!**

Attending to the defence of the critical squares for the d5-pawn (c3, d3, e3).

If we shifted the position down the board by one rank, Black's pawn would be on the fifth rank counting from his end, and by winning the pawn on d3 he would also win the game.

**255**

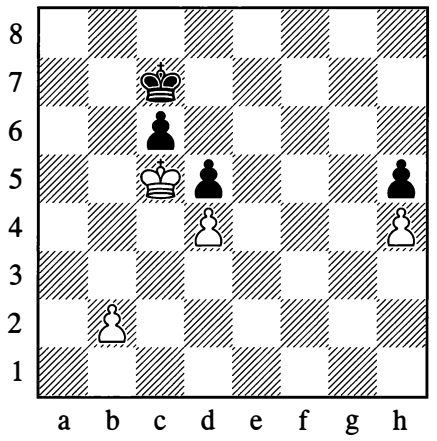


*Equal chances*

Here the two kings are occupying mutually critical squares, and the player who moves next wins. But he must begin by attacking the pawn with the accurate move (♔d6 or ...♔f3)!

Here are two more examples to conclude:

**256**



First of all, by pushing his b-pawn, White destroys the protection of the black pawn on d5:

**1.b4 ♔d7 2.b5 cxb5 3.♔xb5**

Now the d5-pawn is doomed:

**3...♔d6 4.♔b6 ♔d7 5.♔c5 ♔e6 6.♔c6**

White wins after either of Black's replies:

**6...♔e7**

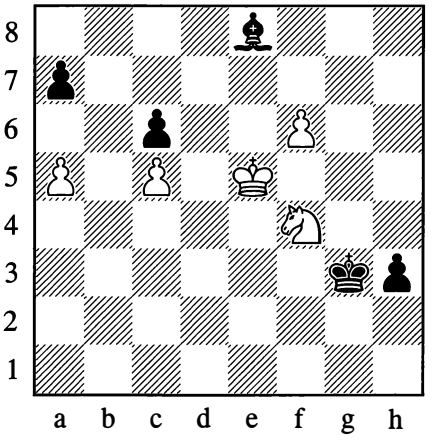
6...♔f5 7.♔xd5 and Black needs seven moves to promote his pawn, White only five.

**7.♔xd5 ♔d7 8.♔e5**

White will queen his h-pawn.

**257**

**Bernstein – Maroczy**, San Sebastian 1911



Here the winning line is as follows:

**1.♘xh3 ♔xh3 2.♔d6! ♔g4 3.♔c7! ♔f5 4.♔b7 ♔xf6 5.♔xa7 ♗f7 6.♔b7 ♗c4 7.a6 ♗xa6† 8.♔xa6**

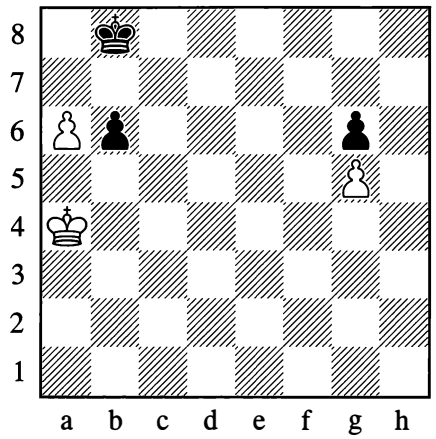
Black resigned. On 8...♔e6 White plays 9.♔b7! etc., as in Positions 254 and 255.

**1–0**

## 7. CORRESPONDING SQUARES

Sometimes the need arises to employ some fairly complex devices of calculation, of which the handling of "corresponding squares" can serve as an example. Some understanding of this device can be gained from the very simple textbook positions that were supplied by Soviet Master N. Grigoriev.

**258**

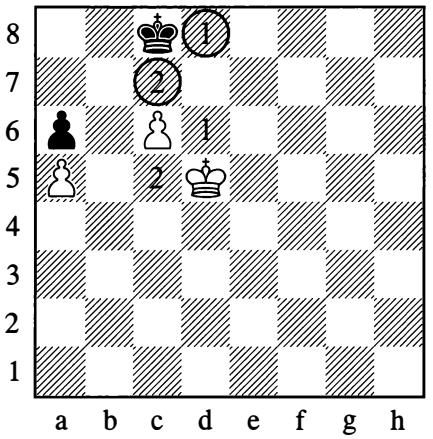


The first player to attack his opponent's pawn loses: 1.♔b5? is met by 1...♔a7. The kings therefore manoeuvre in such a way that a move to a7 by Black can always be answered by a move to b5 by White – and vice versa:

**1.♔b4! ♔a8! 2.♔c4 ♔b8 3.♔b4! ♔a8!**

The white king must not lose touch with the b5-square, while Black, correspondingly, must not lose touch with a7. There is enough space for the manoeuvring – each player only has one square that he needs to watch, so the game here ends in a draw.

**259**



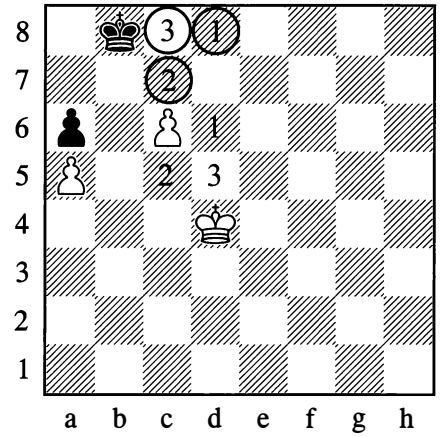

In Diagram 259, Black has to have the possibility of answering ♔d6 with ...♔d8; otherwise he loses at once, as the pawn on c6 will go on to queen. From this, we identify a correspondence between the squares d6 and d8. In the diagram they are marked by the number "1".

White can also, however, play ♔c5 with a threat to occupy the point b6 and win the a6-pawn. Black needs to be able to answer ♔c5 with ...♔c7, thwarting White's plans. This establishes a correspondence between the squares c5 and c7; they are marked by the number "2".

In the diagram we are looking at (number 259), the white king is placed so as to be able to occupy either of the squares "1" and "2"; but then Black is in a position to reply by moving to either of *his* "1" and "2" squares. Clearly there is an additional correspondence between the squares d5 and c8. In Diagram 259a they are marked as "3".

After 1.♔d5-d4 (from Diagram 259), the white king has the option of going to either of the squares "2" and "3"; therefore Black has to play 1...♔b8 or 1...♔d8 (the former leads to Diagram 259a), so that he can correspondingly occupy his "2" square or his "3" square.

**259a**




Up to this point, Black has always had the "corresponding" squares available. However, after playing ♔c4 (from Diagram 259a), White is still threatening to occupy square "2" or square "3", while Black lacks a second position from which he could move to either of his own "2" and "3" squares (seeing that b7 is inaccessible to him). Black is forced to abandon the "correspondence", and loses.

The solution to Position 259 is now clear:

**1.♔d4 ♔b8**

Moving to the corresponding square.

**2.♔c4! ♔c8**

The correspondence is lost!

**3.♔d5**

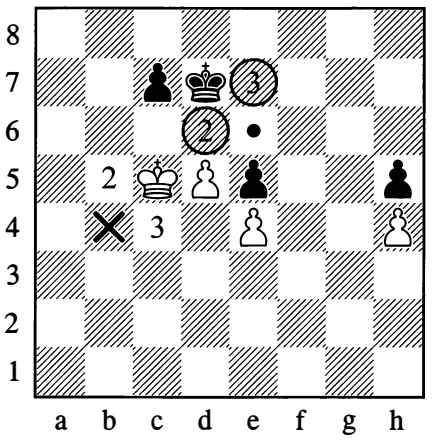
We arrive back at the situation we started from, but with the difference that this time Black is to move. No matter how Black now plays, the white king will occupy a decisive position: 3...♔c7 is met by 4.♔c5, while on 3...♔d8 (or 3...♔b8) White plays 4.♔d6.

The white king has made use of a "triangle" of squares – d5, d4, c4 – in a way that recalls Diagram 207 (see page 117). The secret of the "magic triangle" can now be understood: we have been utilizing "corresponding squares"!

Here is a new example on the same theme:

**260**

**Maizelis**, 1957




*White wins*

White needs to occupy the c6-square with his king; then, after d5-d6, the win is simple.

Let us now identify the "corresponding" squares.

The situation of the kings in this diagram is the basic critical position, so we will mentally designate the squares c5 and d7 by the number "1".

The second decisive position involves the squares b5 and d6 (marked with the number "2").

The third pair of corresponding squares is c4 and e7 (marked by "3").

What conclusion emerges from this? White only needs to move his king to b4, from where he can occupy square "1", "2" or "3" at his own choice – and Black will be deprived of a corresponding move, since the e6-square, which is analogous to b4, is inaccessible to him.

White can play any move to start with, for example:

**1.♔b5**

Or 1.♔c4 ♔e7 (1...c6 is met by 2.♔c5!) 2.♔b4 etc.

**1...♔d6 2.♔b4!**

Not 2.♔c4? c6!, but now after 2...c6 3.dxc6 ♔xc6 4.♔c4 White has the opposition.

**2...♔e7 3.♔c4**

Having occupied the "corresponding" square, White wins.

**3...♔e8**

Or 3...♔d6 4.♔b5 ♔d7 5.♔c5 as below.

**4.♔b5 ♔d7 5.♔c5 ♔e7 6.♔c6 ♔d8 7.d6 ♔c8 8.♔d5**

Manoeuvring over "corresponding" squares is the only way of solving many a position characterized by blocked (immobile) pawns.

## 8. FURTHER DEVICES TO SIMPLIFY CALCULATION

From examining the devices of calculation that you have so far been shown, you will have grasped that they aren't relevant to all situations that can arise on the chessboard, but only to positions of a specific type.

To be sure, these positions are encountered very often, and it is for just that reason that the simplified examples we have demonstrated are so valuable.

Overall precepts for calculation, which would serve in all cases, cannot be established in chess. Every position has to be approached in a special way, in accordance with its content.

And yet if some positions, notwithstanding the different configurations of the pieces, do display a high degree of similarity – if they are what is called *typical* – then there tend to be *typical devices* that apply to them. Knowing about these devices makes calculation easier – that is, it enables you, quickly and accurately, to evaluate the position and take a decision about the method of continuing the game.

From this we can clearly see how great the importance of experience is in chess.

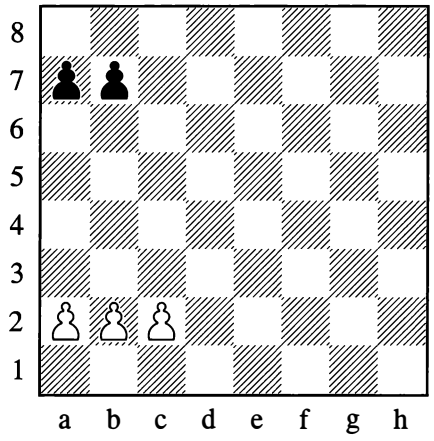
Knowledge of a whole range of typical positions is just what distinguishes the experienced player from the novice. The former knows the shape of the play in such positions; he knows what to aim for, and how to go about it.

In such cases the devices of calculation, the assessment of the position and the formulating of a plan are organically merged into the single whole which goes by the name of chess technique.

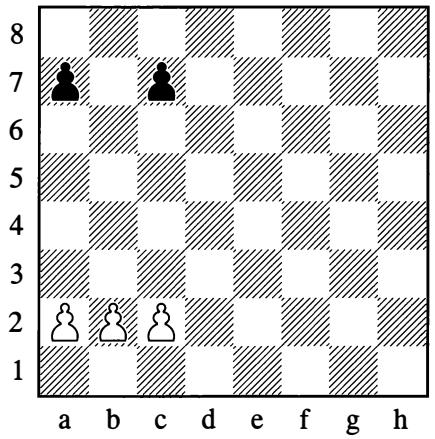
These typical positions which allow you to employ simplified calculating devices are very numerous.

The following are a few examples that are important for practical play.

**261**



**262**



In both of these positions, White has a pawn majority on the flank (three pawns against two). By exchanging, he can obtain a passed pawn. How must he play, to bring this about?

To set about creating a passed pawn, White begins by moving the pawn which has no enemy ahead of it, and which, consequently, has the greatest expectation of becoming "passed".

In Position 261, White should continue as follows:

**1.c4!**

White's plan consists of b2-b4, c4-c5 (again the c-pawn is the first to advance to a new rank), b4-b5 and c5-c6!. Should Black reply to 1.c4 with 1...a5, White mustn't continue with 2.a3? (aiming for b2-b4) on account of 2...a4, when the white pawns are brought to a halt. The correct method is 2.b3, then a2-a3, and finally b3-b4.

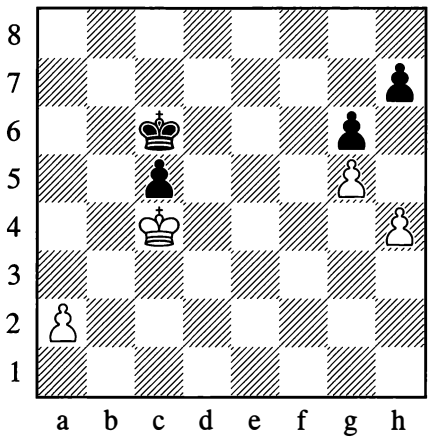
Whereas in Position 262, the correct continuation is:

**1.b4!**

White aims to place his pawns on the fifth rank (b4-b5!, then a4-a5 and c4-c5) and play b5-b6!, obtaining a passed pawn.

It would be a mistake in Position 261 to play 1.b4. After 1...b5, the white pawns are stopped.

**263**



Here the players have a passed pawn each, but the a-pawn is nearer to the edge of the board, and further away from the black king than the c-pawn is from the white king. The advance of the a-pawn will compel the black king to deviate to the edge, and as a result Black will lose all his pawns. Thanks to his outside passed pawn, White wins:

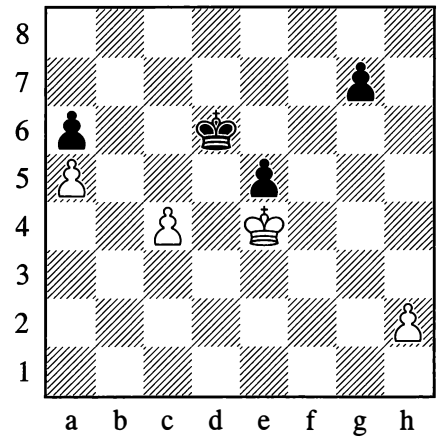
**1.a4 ♔b6 2.a5† ♔xa5**

Otherwise the pawn advances further.

**3.♔xc5**

The white king will now heads towards the h- and g-pawns.

**264**



Here, the outside passed pawn is the one on c4. The advance of this pawn will divert the black king, after which the e5-pawn falls and the g-pawn is doomed. But Black, of course, will go after the a-pawn.

Thus the concept of the outside passed pawn is combined, in this case, with the rule of counting.

A move count shows us that after 1.c5† ♔xc5 2.♔xe5, White and Black need 8 moves each to obtain a queen. But it is Black to move next; so he will promote his pawn first, and the white king on g7 will be checked by the new queen on a1. This will prevent White from promoting his pawn on h7 (the game will be a draw, on the lines of Position 86 on page 63).

However, White can alter the picture by putting off the advance of his passed c4-pawn:

**1.h4!**

White has made a useful move, bringing his h-pawn closer to its ultimate goal, while Black cannot make a similar useful move of his own. On 1...♔e6, White continues with 2.c5 etc. If Black plays 1...♔c5, then with 2.♔xe5 White obtains a queen two moves sooner and prevents Black from queening. Finally, 1...g6 brings the g-pawn closer to the white king; now 2.c5† wins easily, since after 2...♔xc5 3.♔xe5 Black needs eight moves to queen his pawn, while White needs only six.

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

Samuel Reshevsky was once asked how far ahead he calculated variations. Probably in jest, but at any rate in strict accordance with the demands of American self-publicity, he replied: "One move further than my opponent". To an analogous question, Richard Réti replied – without any "clever" sophistry – that there was usually no cause to calculate moves a long way ahead at all, but that if there were few variations and they were forced, it was no doubt possible to calculate 20 moves ahead and more.

It was once recorded in print that in a certain game a player had announced mate in 30 moves – but that was a game by correspondence. Once when giving a blindfold display, the distinguished nineteenth-century grandmaster Joseph Blackburne announced a mate in sixteen. This was checked, and it was found that he was not mistaken.

One of the greatest chess geniuses of all time – Alexander Alekhine – had phenomenal powers of calculation. It is said that one day he was shown a position and asked how he would play from there; the position was from a game Anderssen – Zukertort (1862), in which Anderssen sacrificed his queen and achieved a draw with the aid of a pretty combination. After a little thought, Alekhine came out with the same moves that had been made by Anderssen. However, on cogitating for a few minutes more, he indicated a different line which would have won, not drawn!

But not infrequently in chess games, positions of exceptional complexity can arise. In the eleventh Capablanca – Alekhine match game of 1927, Capablanca, who was renowned for his speed of play, spent two hours thinking about a single move, and Alekhine needed an hour and three quarters for his reply.

However that may be, the long-range calculation of variations is an astounding faculty of the human mind. The development of this faculty – such an essential one for practical chessplayers – can undoubtedly be achieved through systematic exercises.

## SHORT GAMES

At first you might think it would be difficult to find examples of short games in which variations of some length were calculated, but in reality there are plenty of them.

At any rate, consider the following cases in which forced lines of play arose after just a few opening moves.

### 1

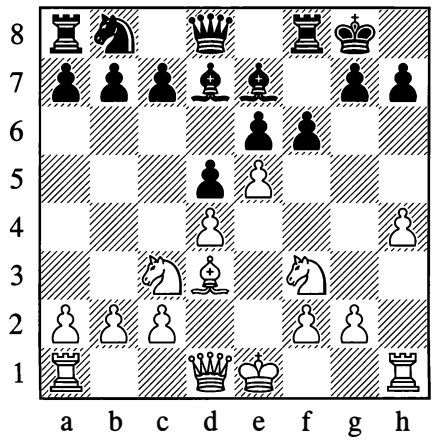
**Schlechter – S. Wolf**, Vienna 1894

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.♗xf6 ♗xf6 6.♘f3 0-0 7.e5 ♗e7 8.♗d3 ♗d7?**

Better was 8...c5 in place of this weak move.

**9.h4! f6?**

White was threatening 10.♗xh7† followed by ♘g5† and ♕h5. Black supposed that the move he played was parrying this threat. In actual fact he had to play 9...h6.



**10.♘g5!! fxg5**

It would be better not to accept the knight sacrifice, as we can see from the following continuation which White had precisely calculated.

**11.♗xh7† ♔xh7 12.hxg5† ♔g8 13.♖h8†!! ♔f7**

Black doesn't fancy the prospect of 13...♔xh8 14.♕h5† ♔g8 15.g6!, but fleeing with his king doesn't save him either.

**14.♕h5† g6 15.♕h7† ♔e8 16.♕xg6#**

### 2

**Alekhine – Amateur**, Vienna (simul) 1936

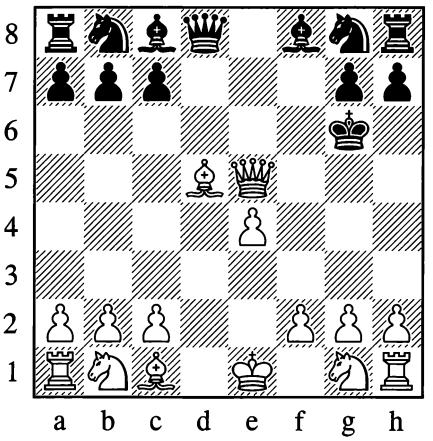
**1.e4 e5 2.d4 f6? 3.dxe5 fxe5??**

Relatively better is 3...♕e7.

**4.♕h5† ♔e7 5.♕xe5† ♔f7 6.♗c4† d5**

6...♔g6 allows 7.♕f5#.

**7.♗xd5† ♔g6**



"A challenge is thrown down to White," Alekhine stated in his notes to the game. "He is called on to give mate in the shortest number of moves, and I think he solves this exercise satisfactorily."

**8.♕g3† ♔h5 9.♗f7† g6 10.h3!**

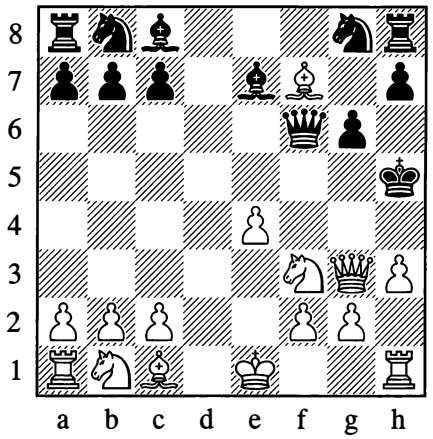
Threatening 11.♕g4†!! ♗xg4 12.hxg4† and 13.♗e6#.

Despite Alekhine's above comments, he could have mated more quickly with 10.♕e5†! here. For example, 10...♔h4 11.♘f3† ♔g4 12.h3# or 10...♗f5 11.♕xf5† ♔h4 12.g3#.

**10...♕f6 11.♘f3**

Now the threat is mate in 4 moves (as before, except that after ♗e6† ♕xe6, White plays ♖h4#).

**11...♗e7**



In this position White announced mate in 6 moves:

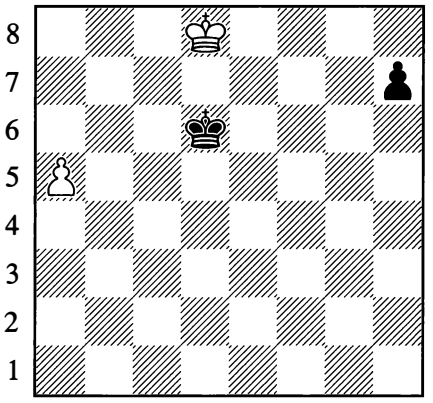
**12.♕g4†! ♗xg4 13.hxg4† ♔xg4 14.♘h2† ♔h5 15.♘f1†! ♔g4**

Or 15...♕h4 16.♘g3† and 17.♗e6#.

**16.♗e6† ♕xe6 17.f3#!**

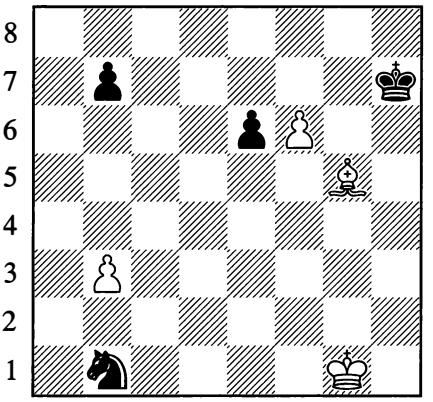
## FIND THE SOLUTION

**1**



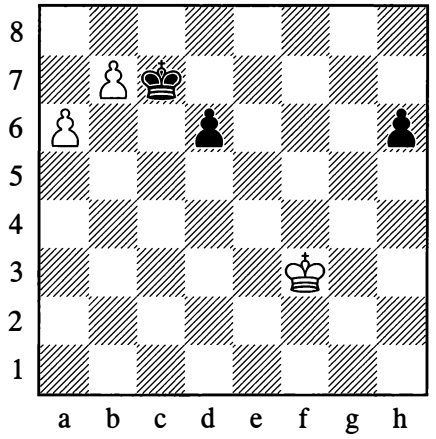
*White draws*

**2**



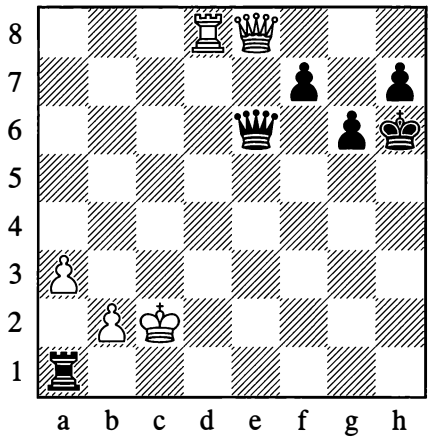
*White wins*

**3**



*White wins*

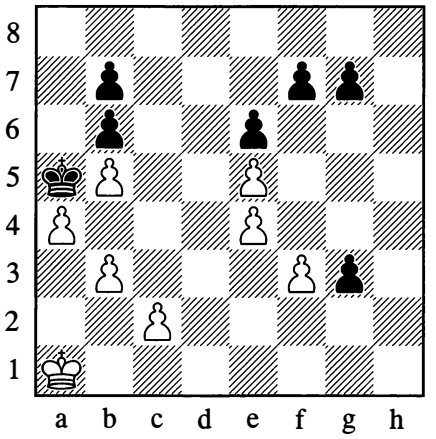
**4**



*White won in an amusing manner*

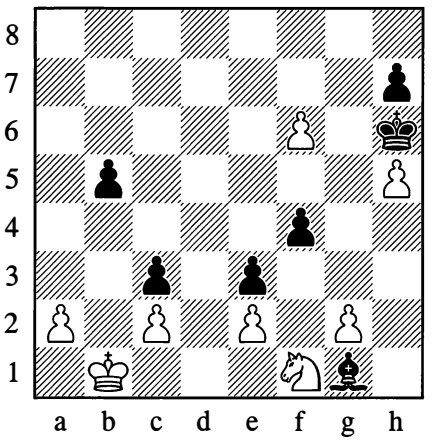
Here are two more positions (supplementing Number 4) in which the solution is full of original humour.

**5**



*White wins*

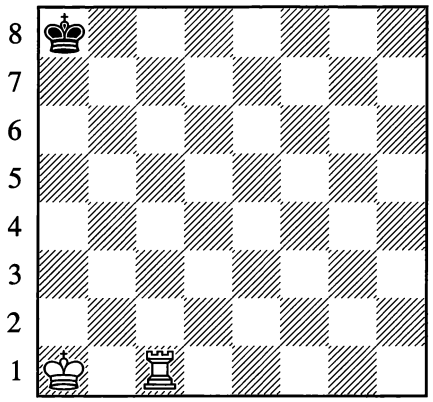
**6**



*White wins*

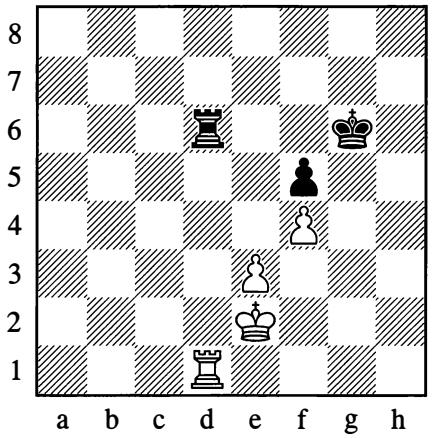
The next three positions illustrate the opposition and control of key squares. The joke exercise Number 7 was very popular in the nineteenth century but is virtually forgotten today. White is required to give mate with the proviso that only one of his moves (the final one!) will be made with his rook.

**7**



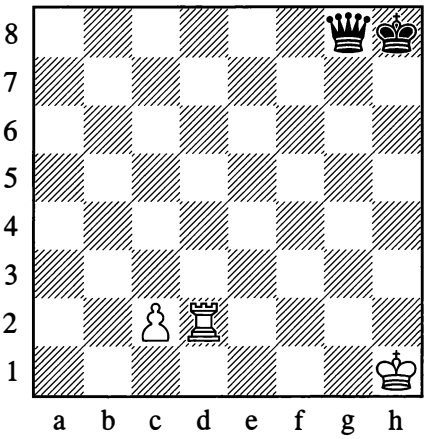
*Serious matters in light-hearted guise*

**8**



*Black to play –*
*Was he right to exchange rooks?*

**9**

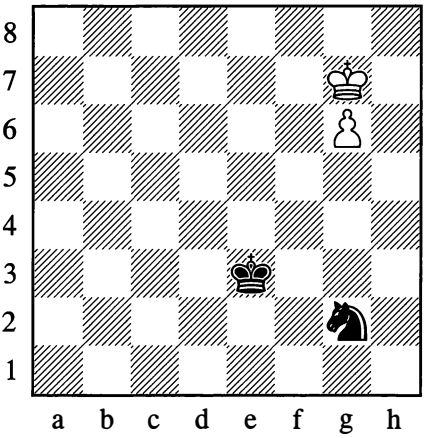


*White wins (even against the best defence) by precise play*

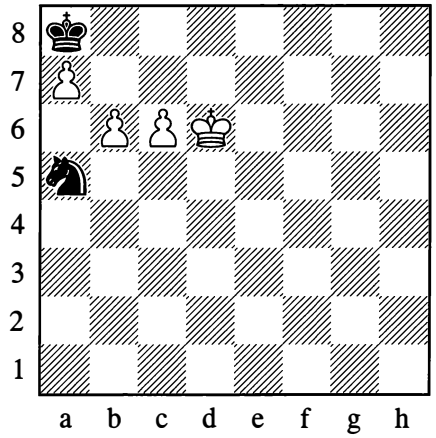
## LEARN TO ANALYSE

In both the positions below, White wins. Their substance is the characteristic play of king against knight (avoidance of checks!).

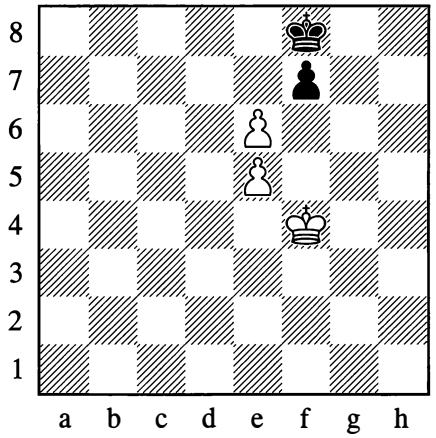
**10**



**11**

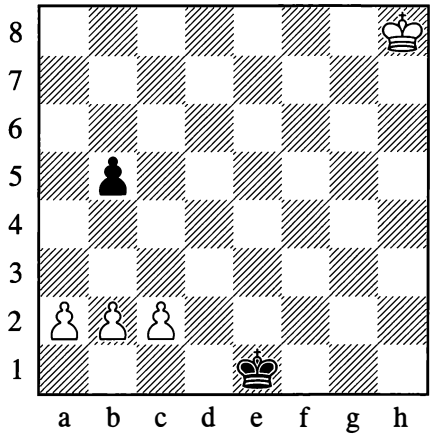


**12**



*White wins*

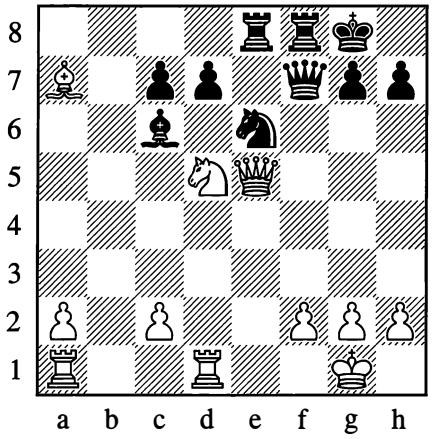
**13**



*Can White win?*

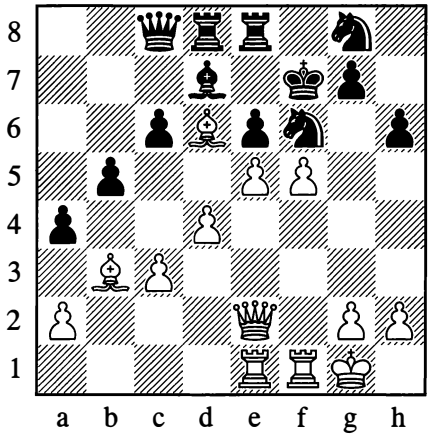
Continuations to be calculated in middlegame positions – with multiple variations (Number 14), or a long variation (Number 15)

**14**



White's ♗e3xa7 was an error. After the modest-looking reply 1...d6! he has no defence. Consider all the white queen's moves.

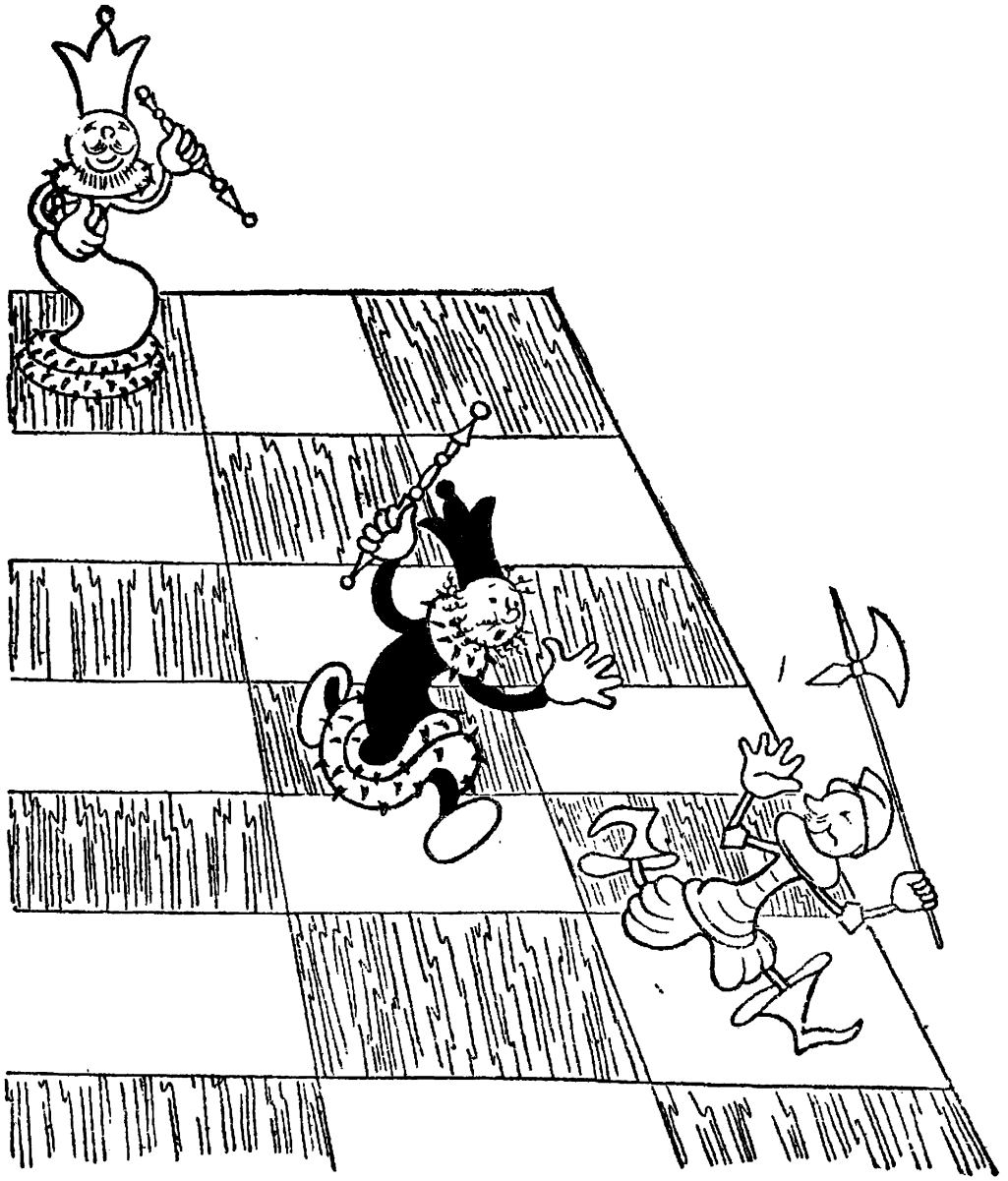
**15**



In this position (from a simultaneous display, Paris 1913) Alekhine announced mate in 10 moves. Find the longest variation.

Try this test. Once you have seen the solution of both these positions, can you work through

all the variations in your head, starting from the diagram? If you don't manage to do this the first time, try again later (after six months or a year), to see whether you have begun to calculate variations better.



## ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

**1. 1.♔c8! ♔c6** (White threatened 2.a6) **2.♔b8 ♔b5 3.♔b7!! ♔xa5 4.♔c6**, and the white king is in the square of the h7-pawn. Draw.

**2. 1.f7! ♔g7 2.♗e7! ♔xf7 3.♗b4!**. The knight on b1 finds its retreat cut off, and White wins it by means of **♔f2-e3-d3** etc. – but not by moving his king along the 1st rank, as Black would then be able to play ...e6-e5-e4-e3 and ...♘b1-d2.

**3. 1.♔f4 ♔b8 2.♔f5 ♔c7 3.♔f6 ♔b8 4.♔g6! d5 5.♔f5 h5 6.♔e5** (or 6.♔e6), and now **6...♔c7 7.♔xd5**, or alternatively **6...d4 7.♔d6**, heading for b6 or c7.

**4.** Petrosian – Taimanov, Moscow 1957: **1.♕xe6 fxe6 2.♖d1! ♖xd1 3.♔xd1**, and the black king is outside the square of the a3-pawn.

**5.** What is White to do about the terrible threat of ...g3-g2? Solution: **1.♔b2 ♔b4** (otherwise 2.♔a3) **2.c3† ♔c5 3.♔c2 f6** (The threat was 4.♔d3 followed by mate.) **4.♔d3 fxe5 5.♔e2** and wins.

**6.** The first requirement is to stop the bishop on g1 from emerging to freedom (...♗f2-h4 etc.). Therefore: **1.♘g3!! fxg3** (2.♘f5† was threatened) **2.a3 ♗f2 3.♔a2 ♗e1** (Now White gets nowhere with 4.♔b3 ♗d2 5.♔b4 ♗c1, so he makes use of "triangulation" in order to gain a tempo.) **4.♔a1!! ♗d2 5.♔b1! ♗e1** Panic retreat. **6.♔c1 ♗f2 7.♔d1 ♗g1 8.♔e1 ♗h2 9.♔f1** and wins. Another "elephant hunting" episode (compare pages 124-6).

**7.** The white king gains the distant opposition, which enables it to advance to the target square b6. The secret of White's manoeuvring is this: whenever the black king is on the b-file (which here counts as the "main thoroughfare"), White takes the opposition; when Black is on the a-file, White advances via a "detour" on the c-file. So **1.♔a2! ♔b8! 2.♔b2! ♔a8 3.♔c3! ♔b7** (if 3...♔a7, then 4.♔c4!) **4.♔b3! ♔a7 5.♔c4 ♔b8 6.♔b4 ♔a8 7.♔c5 ♔b7 8.♔b5 ♔a7 9.♔c6 ♔b8** (or 9...♔a8 10.♔c7) **10.♔b6 ♔a8 11.♖c8#**. Should Black gain the opposition (through a mistake in White's manoeuvres, or if it is Black to move in the initial position and he plays 1...♔a7), the problem cannot be solved. For fun, try giving this exercise to someone who isn't in on the "secret".

**8.** No! **1...♖xd1? 2.♔xd1 ♔f6 3.♔d2 ♔e6 4.♔c3!** (Black had only reckoned with 4.♔d3 ♔d5, drawing) **4...♔d5 5.♔d3**, and by gaining the opposition on the d-file, White wins: **5...♔d6 6.♔d4**, or **5...♔c5 6.e4!** Szabo – Steiner, Groningen 1946.

**9. 1.♖h2† ♕h7!** (If 1...♔g7, then 2.♖g2† and 3.♖xg8; but now, in the event of 2.♖xh7†?, Black will have the opposition.) **2.♔g2!!** and wins (after 2...♕xh2† 3.♔xh2, White's possession of the distant opposition will enable him to seize the key squares for his c2-pawn).

**10.** The sole winning move is: **1.♔h8!!** (Check it for yourself!)

**11.** 1.c7? is useless in view of 1...♘c4† and 2...♘xb6 (so is 1.♔c7?, owing to 1...♘xc6). The only correct solution is **1.b7†! ♘xb7†** (or 1...♔xa7 2.c7! ♔xb7 3.♔d7) **2.♔d5!!** (a move of exceptional beauty), and White wins.

**12.** The only way to win is **1.♔e4!** (After 1.♔g5? ♔e8 2.♔f6 ♔f8! White cannot make progress.) **1...fxe6** (or 1...♔e7 2.♔d5 ♔e8 3.♔d6) **2.♔d4 ♔f7 3.♔c5 ♔g6 4.♔c6!** etc.

**13.** He can, but there is only one way: **1.a3!!**, and then **2.b3**!. Satisfy yourself that other moves (1.a4, 1.c4, 1.b3, 1.b4, 1.c3) fail to win.

**14.** Shcherbakov – Yudovich, Moscow 1957: (a) **2.♕c3** (or 2.♕b2) **2...♗xd5 3.♖xd5 c5!**, threatening ...♕xf2† and ...♕xa7; (b) **2.♕e4 ♗xd5 3.♕xd5** (3.♖xd5 ♘f4) **3...c6 4.♕a5 ♖a8**; (c) **2.♕e3** (2.♕e2, 2.♕e1) **2...♗xd5 3.♖xd5 ♘f4**; (d) **2.♕g3** (as played in the game) **2...♗xd5 3.♖xd5 ♘f4 4.♖d2 ♘e2†** etc.

**15. 1.♕h5†!! ♘xh5 2.fxe6†† ♔g6 3.♗c2† ♔g5 4.♖f5† ♔g6! 5.♖f6†† ♔g5 6.♖g6† ♔h4 7.♖e4† ♘f4 8.♖xf4† ♔h5 9.g3!** and **10.♖h4#**.

# Chapter 5

# Combination

## 1. COMBINATIVE MOTIFS AND IDEAS

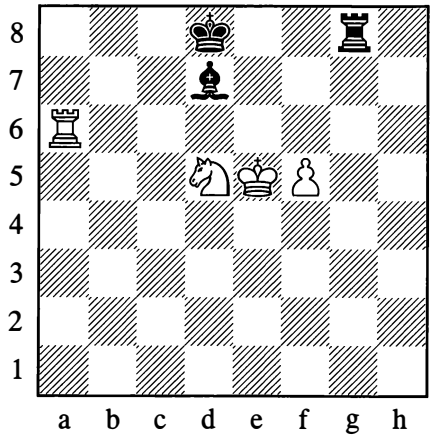
We already know that a *combination* is the name given to the concerted action of some pieces which takes the form of a *forced variation involving the sacrifice of material* – as a result of which a player counts on obtaining benefits of some kind. The purpose of a combination may be to give mate or to win material, or sometimes it may be to save the player from defeat by bringing about perpetual check or stalemate. But then again, a combination may also pursue such aims as breaking up your opponent's pawn formation, or seizing some good squares or lines for your pieces, or exchanging your opponent's active pieces off, and so forth. In these latter cases, with the aid of the combination, you are acquiring what are known as positional assets – that is, an advantage in the placing of your pieces.

The most characteristic things about a combination are the forced nature of the moves that constitute it and also, in most cases, their unexpectedness (sacrifice!) – which strikes us most forcefully (and also finds its explanation) in the culminating point, the climax which defines the *essence* of the combination.

Even though a combination follows logically from the position on the board, the unconventional nature of some of the moves (material sacrifice) disrupts, so to speak, the normal flow of the game, and abruptly steers it into a new channel (like a jump or an explosion). The result is a different correlation of forces on the chessboard and a completely new setting for the struggle.

In the positions given below, try to find the combination for yourself each time, before reading on.

**265**



*White to move*

**1.♖a8†**

With a dual attack (check and skewer) against Black's king and rook.

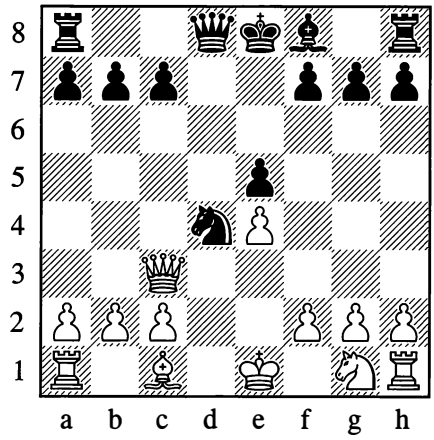
**1...♗c8**

White now temporarily sacrifices the exchange:

**2.♖xc8†! ♔xc8 3.♘e7†**

A new and this time decisive dual attack. The rook check was a preparatory move, the exchange sacrifice was the *climax* of the combination; its idea consisted in drawing the king onto an unpropitious square exposed to the dual attack from the knight. As the result of this combination all Black's pieces are eliminated, and further resistance on his part is senseless.

**266**



*Black to move*

**1...♗b4!**

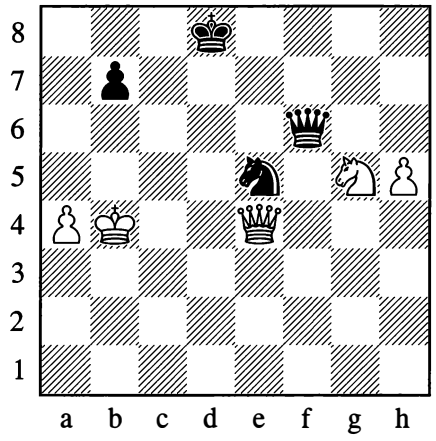
Black wins the queen for a minor piece, since capturing the bishop is met by:

**2.♕xb4 ♘xc2†**

A combination is not possible in every position. In various examples, the basis of the combination – the *motif* which suggests its very possibility – is the location of some enemy pieces in a straight line (a diagonal in this last example), in other words a motif of a purely geometric type.

Drawing the hostile pieces onto squares exposed to a knight's fork constitutes the idea of the following combinations.

**267**



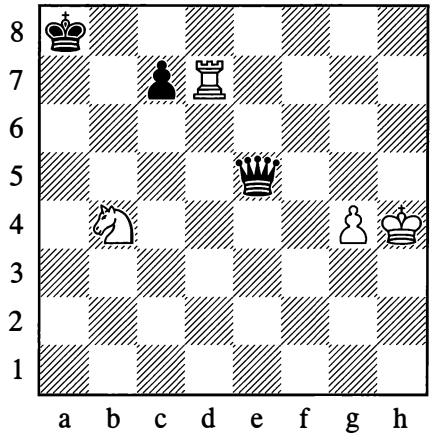
*White to move*

**1.♕xe5!**

With this capture which simultaneously defends his own knight, White wins a piece. White will immediately regain his queen with a check on f7:

**1...♕xe5 2.♘f7†**

**268**



*White to move*

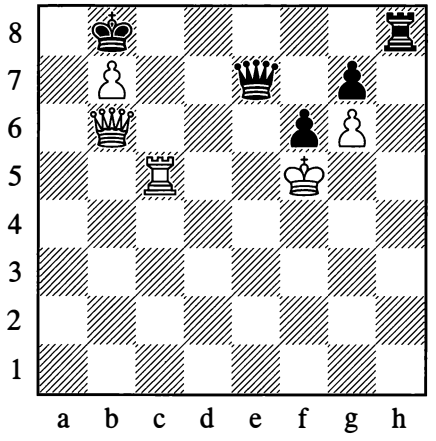
Here the king is drawn onto the fatal square by means of a rook sacrifice:

**1.♖d8† ♔b7 2.♖b8†! ♔xb8 3.♘c6†**

Winning the queen.

The combination in Position 269 is a good deal more complex. In this case, the device of drawing the king onto a specific square enables a decisive dual attack that is performed by a pawn promotion.

**269**



*White to move*

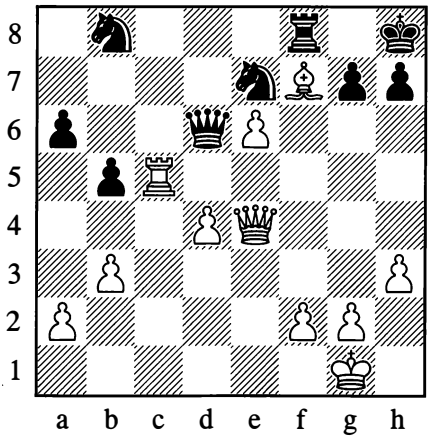
**1.♖c8†! ♖xc8 2.♕a7†!! ♔xa7 3.bxc8=♘†!**

White wins back the queen and emerges with an extra piece. This clearly brings out the meaning of a combination – a tactical stroke that uses time economically and is crushing in its effect. If White failed to find it, his own king could easily fall victim to an attack by the opponent's major pieces.

The cramped position of the enemy forces is another factor that often gives rise to combinations. All the forms of cramping that we examined earlier – cutting squares off, obstructing lines of action, proximity to the edge of the board – can serve as the themes of combinations.

**270**

**Sebestyen – Füster**, Budapest 1950

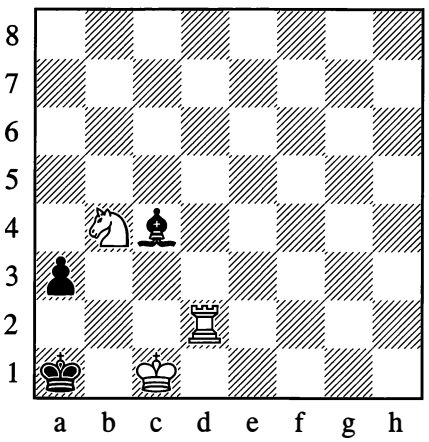


*White mates in 2 moves*

The idea of White's combination is a queen sacrifice to open up a file against the black king, whose mobility is extremely restricted:

**1.♕xh7†! ♔xh7 2.♖h5#**

**271**

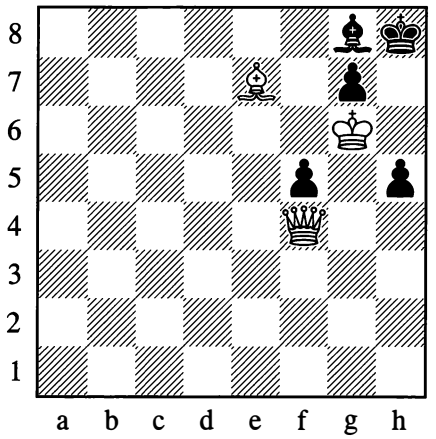


*White mates in 2 moves*

White compels Black to place an obstruction on the a2-square and follows with mate:

**1.♖a2†! ♗xa2 2.♘c2#**

**272**

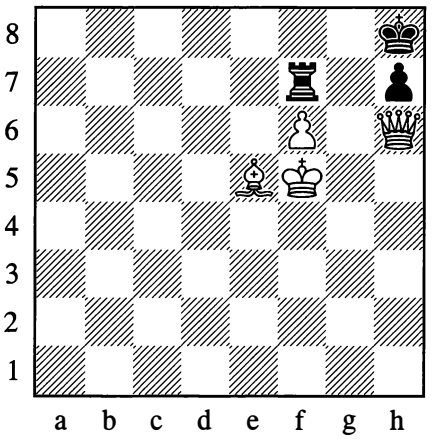


*White mates in 2 moves*

White forces the key diagonal open:

**1.♕h6†! gxh6 2.♗f6#**

**273**

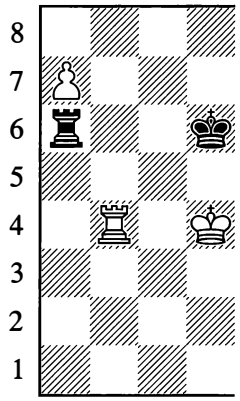


*White mates in 2 moves*

White again forces open the key diagonal, this time by sacrificing his queen to divert the rook:

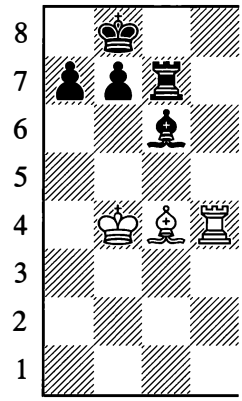
**1.♕f8†! ♖xf8 2.f7#**

**274**



*White wins*

**275**



*White draws*

By diverting the black rook in Position 274, White allows his pawn to be promoted:

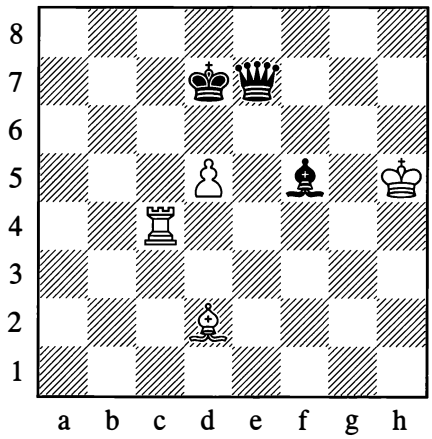
**1.♖b6†! ♖xb6 2.a8=♕**
Winning.

White ingeniously achieves a draw in Position 275 by sacrificing his bishop:

**1.♖d8† ♖c8 2.♖xc8† ♔xc8 3.♗a6!!**
It makes no difference whether Black takes the bishop at once or only after ♗xb7; either way he is unable to win, as the bishop on c6 cannot control the a1-square (see Diagram 64 on page 43).

Sometimes the cramping of your own king's mobility can be utilized as the theme of a combination to save you from loss.

**276**



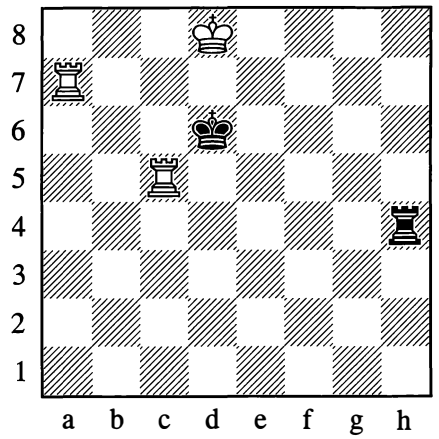
*White draws*

**1.♖c7† ♔xc7 2.d6† ♕xd6**
If 2...♔xd6, then 3.♗b4†.

**3.♗f4! ♕xf4**
Stalemate!

**277**

An ancient position (1450)



*White wins*

At first sight, winning from Position 277 looks difficult: Black is threatening ...♖h8# or ...♔xc5.

**1.♖h5!**

White bars the h-file and creates his own threats of ♖xh4 or ♖a6#.

**1...♖xh5**

The black rook has been drawn onto a square where it is vulnerable to a skewer:

**2.♖a6† ♔~ 3.♖a5†**

The examples we have examined give only a small quantity of the themes and ideas on which combinations are built. These themes and ideas are just as inexhaustible as the endless possible permutations in the number, arrangement and mutual influence of pieces on the chessboard.

A spectacular and correct combination that represents the unique and and shortest path to victory will often produce a powerful effect by reason of its artistry.

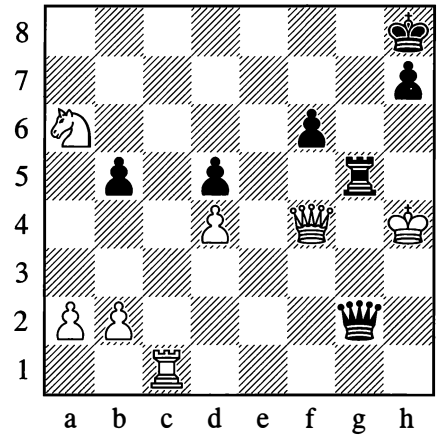
When studying the purpose and effect of some moves in Chapter 3 ("Tactics and Strategy"), we acquainted ourselves with the "mechanism" of combination – with forcing moves, with themes and ideas. To learn to carry out combinations yourself, you need to consolidate your knowledge in practical play; everything you have remembered should be tested and verified by your own experience. Continue to study the ideas and themes of combinations in master play; you must understand them first and then try applying them in practice.

## 2. TYPES OF COMBINATION AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

In practical games – especially those played by masters – you can find plenty of examples of beautiful and precisely calculated combinations. When examining these combinations – some fairly simple, others complex – it is most important to grasp the themes and ideas on which they are founded. We recommend that you memorize some combinations of various types that you come across in your study of the game, and mentally reproduce the moves that carried them out (that is, look at the board and work through all the variations of the combination in your head); in this way you will gradually develop your creative imagination

Some of the combinations we have so far examined were calculated two or three moves ahead, but in the main they were one-movers, in which the preparation and climax were combined in a single stroke. The ensuing dénouement was simple, and there were no alternative variations. From this, however, it by no means follows that combinations many moves long, or those with many variations, are always more complicated to work out or harder to find.

**278**



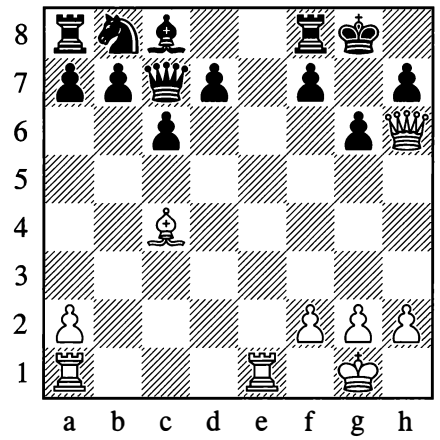
*Black to move*

Position 278 is from a variation that could have occurred in an actual game. Black saw that if the play led to this position, he could give mate in four moves:

**1...♖h5†! 2.♔xh5 ♕h3† 3.♕h4 ♕f5†**

Black will mate on either g5 or g6 depending on White's reply. In the game, however, White saw this mate too, and didn't go in for the variation in question.

**279**



*White to move*

In Position 279 (from a consultation game in 1909), the continuation was:

**1.♗xf7†! ♔xf7**

1...♖xf7? 2.♖e8† with mate next move.

**2.♕xh7† ♔f6 3.♕h4†**

Another route to victory is 3.♕e7† ♔f5 4.♕xf8† ♔g5 5.♖e4! when the threat of 6.h4† ♔h5 7.♕h8# is decisive.

**3...♔g7**

Other king moves are no good either: 3...♔f7? 4.♖e7† leads to mate, while 3...♔f5 4.g4† ♔f4 5.♕g3† wins the black queen. If 3...g5, then 4.♕h6† ♔f7 5.♕h7† ♔f6 6.♕e7† is winning for White.

**4.♖e7† ♖f7 5.♕d4† ♔f8**

5...♔g8 6.♖e8† ♖f8 7.♖xf8† ♔xf8 8.♕f6† ♔g8 9.♖e1 and White will soon deliver checkmate.

**6.♕h8†! ♔xe7 7.♖e1† ♔d6 8.♕d4#**

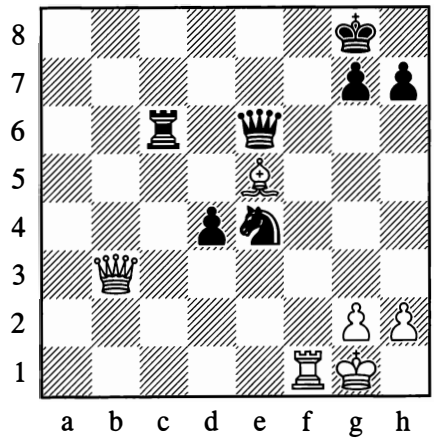
In these last two examples there are a fair number of moves, and the play from Diagram 279 even involves several variations, but finding and calculating the combination isn't especially difficult in either case.

In both positions, the opponent's material advantage and threats (in number 279, after ...d5, Black's extra piece would immediately tell!) demand the most resolute action from the attacker, and his options for this are few.

But here are some more examples, this time a good deal more complex.

**280**

**Berthold Lasker – Kagan**, Berlin 1894



*White to move*

In Position 280, Black has blocked White's check by playing his queen to e6, counting on answering 1.♕b8† with 1...♖c8. At this point Black offered a draw; he thought the inevitable continuation would be 1.♕xe6† ♖xe6 2.♗xd4, with complete equality. However, White had an unexpected reply:

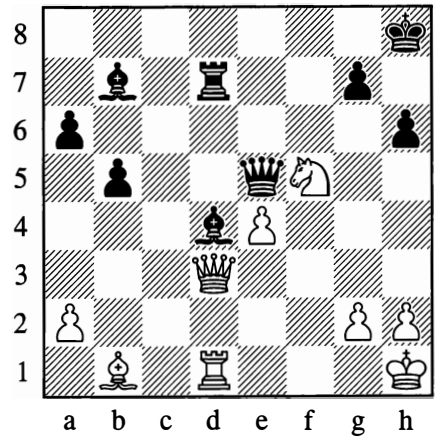
**1.♗d6!!**

Placing the bishop under attack from three pieces! Black could only resign at once.

**1–0**

**281**

**Popiel – Marco**, Monte Carlo 1902



*Black to move*

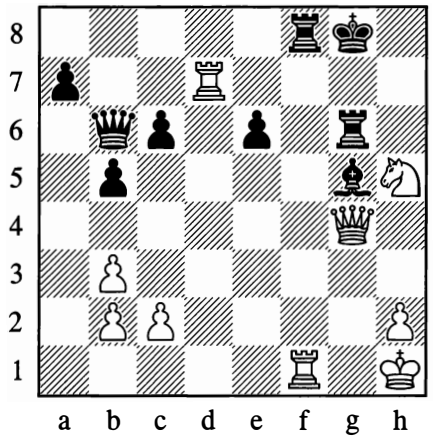
Position 281 is habitually cited as a classic instance of "chess blindness". Not finding a way to save his pinned bishop on d4, Black resigned. And yet there was a winning move:

**1...♗g1!!**

Attacking the white queen and threatening mate on h2.

**282**

**Aronin – Chekhover**, Leningrad 1947



*White to move*

In Diagram 282, exploiting the pin against Black's bishop on g5, White won by 1.♘f6† ♖fxf6 2.♖xf6 ♕e3 3.♖xg6† ♔f8 4.♕xg5.

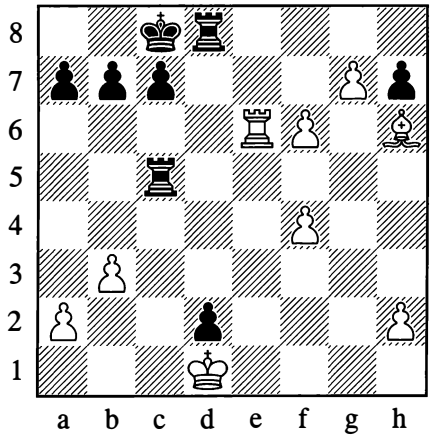
An annotator gave 1.♘f6† an exclamation mark, but later it was noticed that there was a mate in three moves:

**1.♕xe6†!**

1...♖xe6 2.♖g7† and mate follows on f8. It's hard to explain why this move wasn't seen at once. Perhaps Nimzowitsch was right when he once said that "a chessplayer will sooner put his head in a lion's mouth than place his queen under attack".

**283**

**C. Torre – N.N.**, New York (simul) 1924



*White to move*

Here White resigned in view of the terrible and seemingly unanswerable threat of ...♖c1†. And yet he could have won the game by playing:

**1.♖d6! ♖xd6**

1...cxd6 2.f7 and the pawns are overwhelming.

**2.g8=♕† ♔d7**

2...♖d8 3.♕xd8† ♔xd8 4.f7 is again winning for White.

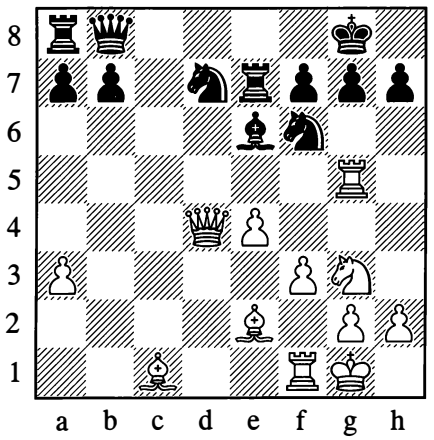
**3.♕f7† ♔c6 4.♕e8† ♔b6 5.♕e3 ♔c6 6.♕xc5†**

Combinations based on "quiet" moves (not involving checks or captures) are of course all the more difficult to find. Clearly the difficulty of a combination is not determined by the quantity of moves or variations.

Combination is undoubtedly the soul of chess! Complex combinations are distinguished by an interweaving of themes. Earlier, in the "Tactics and Strategy" chapter, we gave some examples of combinations that were mostly based on a single theme of one kind or another. We now consider some more complicated examples.

**284**

**Botvinnik – Keres**, World Championship (10) The Hague/Moscow 1948



*White to move*

In this position, the action of White's queen against the g7-point is exploited to create a pin on Black's knight on f6.

**21.♖xg7†! ♔xg7 22.♘h5† ♔g6**

On 22...♔f8, White continues 23.♘xf6 ♘xf6 24.♕xf6 and the black king can't escape from the mating net.

**23.♕e3!!**

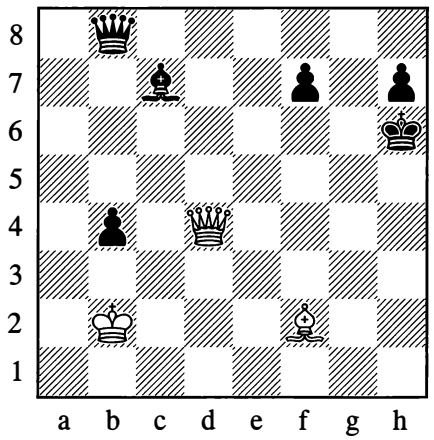
Black resigned. The climax of the combination and its entire charm lie in this modest ("quiet") final move, after which there is no defence against mate.

**1–0**

The theme of a pin, which was one of those utilized in this last example, plays a major role in many a combination.

**285**

Study by **A. Troitsky**, 1930



*White to play and win*

The main point of the play in this study is the twofold exploitation of a pin motif:

**1.♕f6† ♔h5 2.♕f5† ♔h6 3.♗e3† ♔g7 4.♕g5† ♔f8**

4...♔h8? 5.♗d4† and mate follows.

**5.♗c5† ♗d6**

Not 5...♔e8 in view of 6.♕e7#.

**6.♕e5! ♔g8 7.♗xd6 ♕d8**

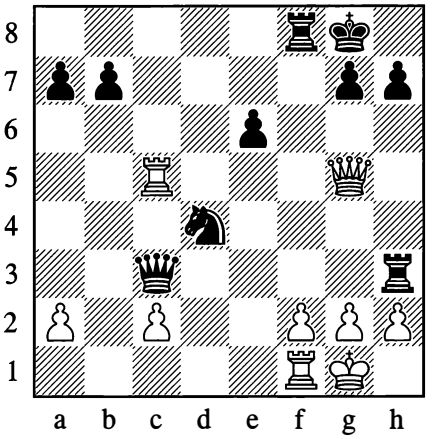
Preventing 8.♕g5† and 9.♗e5†.

**8.♕g3† ♔h8 9.♗e5† f6 10.♕g5!**

White wins the queen or gives mate.

**286**

**Levitsky – Marshall**, Breslau 1912



*Black to move*

Black has won a knight, but his queen and rook are under attack. However, he forced White's resignation with the following spectacular move:

**23...♕g3!!**

24.hxg3 ♘e2#; or 24.fxg3 ♘e2† 25.♔h1 ♖xf1#; or 24.♕xg3 ♘e2† 25.♔h1 ♘xg3† 26.♔g1 ♘xf1 (alternatively 26...♖h5).

White resigned.

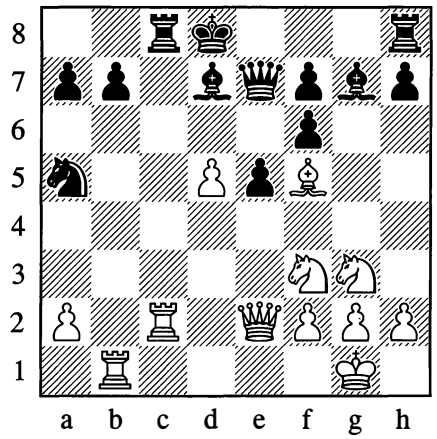
**0–1**

Black's grandiose attacking move led neither to mate nor to the win of material. Essentially this was an "exchanging" combination for the sake of preserving Black's extra piece while greatly simplifying the position.

It must be said that this aim could also have been achieved by 23...♕e3, although the exchanges would not then have been on such a large scale.

**287**

**Tolush – Flohr**, Pärnu 1947



*White to move*

In this case, pins (in conjunction with other motifs) are exploited repeatedly and in various forms:

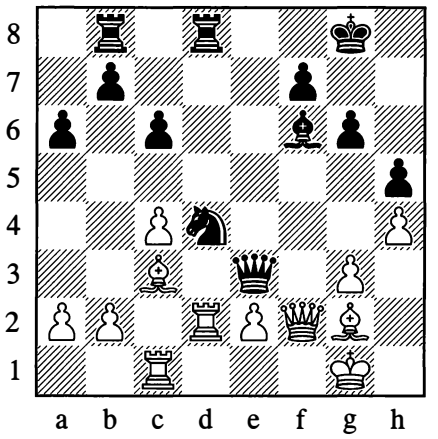
**20.d6! ♕e8**
Or 20...♕xd6 21.♖d2.

**21.♖xc8†! ♔xc8**
Or 21...♗xc8 22.d7 ♗xd7 23.♖d1.

**22.♕b5!**
Black resigned. 22...♗xf5 23.♕xa5; 22...♕d8 23.♗xd7†; 22...b6 23.♕a6†, and then 24.♕xa5 or 24.♕xa7.
**1–0**

**288**

**Bannik – Tal**, Moscow 1957



*Black to move*

In Position 288, pins are utilized in conjunction with the opening of lines and with a fork:

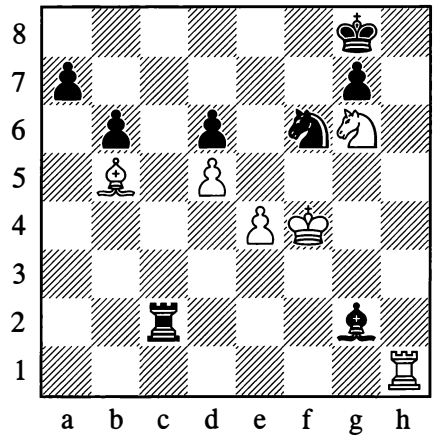
**27...♘xe2† 28.♖xe2 ♕xc1† 29.♖e1**
Hoping for 29...♖d1? 30.♕xf6! ♖xe1† 31.♔h2.

**29...♗xc3!! 30.♖xc1 ♗d4**
White resigned.
**0–1**

In the following examples, a major role is played by the motifs of diverting an enemy piece or enticing it onto a specific square.

**289**

**Bondarevsky – Ufimtsev**, Leningrad 1936



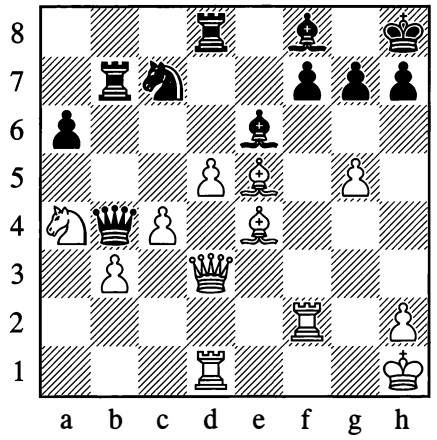
*White to move*

If the knight on g6 were protected, then 43.♖h8† ♔f7 44.♖f8 would give mate. But 44.♔g5 can be met by 44...♘xe4†. The knight on f6 needs to be diverted by some means. Therefore:

**43.♖h8† ♔f7 44.♗e8†! ♘xe8 45.♔g5**
The mate cannot be prevented.
**1–0**

**290**

**Taimanov – Panov**, Baku 1944



*White to move*

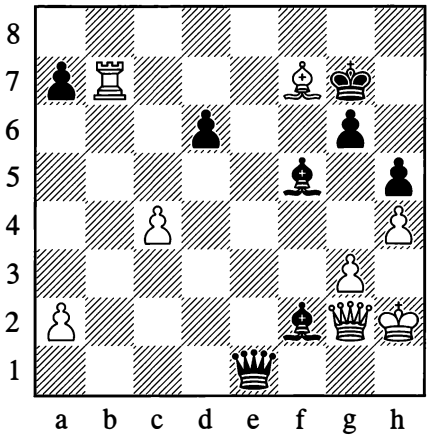
The game was decided by a combinative stroke:

**30.♖xf7!**
With the idea of luring the bishop away from its defence of the h3-square: 30...♗xf7 31.♕h3 ♗g8 32.♗xh7 ♗xh7 33.g6.

**30...♕xb3 31.♖xc7**
Black resigned.
**1–0**

**291**

**Lilienthal – Tolush**, Pärnu 1947



*Black to move*

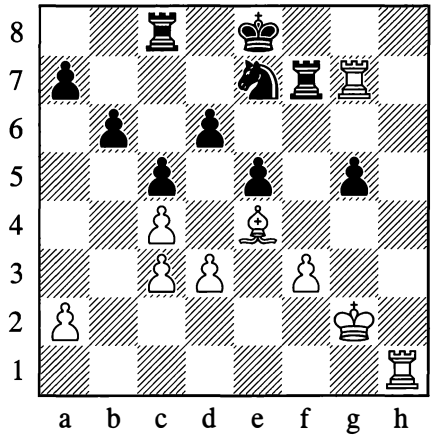
Black is the exchange down, but the following combination saves him from loss:

**28...♗g1†! 29.♕xg1 ♕e2† 30.♕g2 ♕xg2†**
Drawing the king onto the g2-square..

**31.♔xg2 ♗e4† 32.♔f2 ♗xb7**
And the game ended in a draw.
**...½–½**

**292**

**Simagin – Zagoriansky**, Ivanovo 1944



*White to move*

**39.♖h8† ♔d7**

After 1...♖f8 2.♖h6, Black has no good way to defend his d6-pawn. For example, 2...♖d8 3.♖e6 ♖d7 4.♗c6 or 2...♔d7 3.♖hh7 ♖ce8 4.♗g6, and White wins material in both cases.

**40.♗c6†!! ♔e6**

Capturing the bishop in any of the three possible ways would clearly be bad.

**41.♖h6†**

41.♗d5† fails after 41...♘xd5 42.cxd5† ♔xd5.

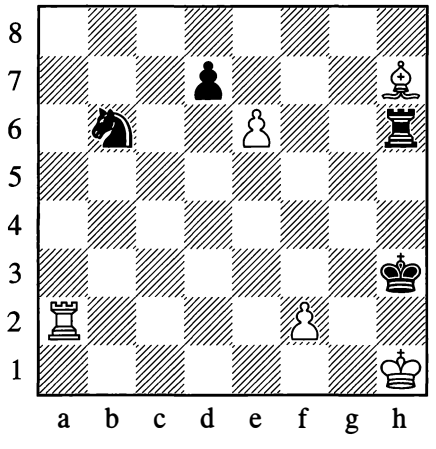
**41...♖f6 42.♗d7†!!**

White won easily with his extra exchange. An interesting twofold sacrifice of a bishop!

**...1–0**

**293**

**H. Rinck**, 1912



*White wins*

Here, a defending piece is skilfully enticed onto a square where it succumbs to a decisive fork:

**1.e7 ♔g4†**

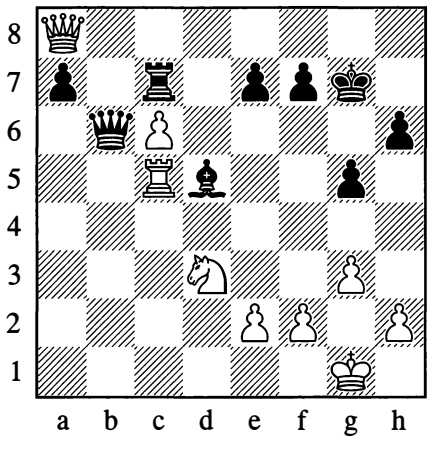
1...♖e6? fails to 2.♗f5†.

**2.♔g2 ♖e6 3.♖e2!! ♖xe2 4.♗e4! ♖xe4 5.f3†**

White wins.

**294**

**Mikenas – Aronin**, Moscow 1950



*Black to move*

In Position 294, Black executed a fine exchanging combination to win a pawn. He made use of a dual attack which took the form of an ingenious "discovery".

**32...♕b1† 33.♖c1**

If 33.♘c1, then 33...♕e4 34.f3 ♕e3† winning the rook.

**33...♕xc1†!! 34.♘xc1 ♖xc6!**

The climax of the combination; mate is threatened.

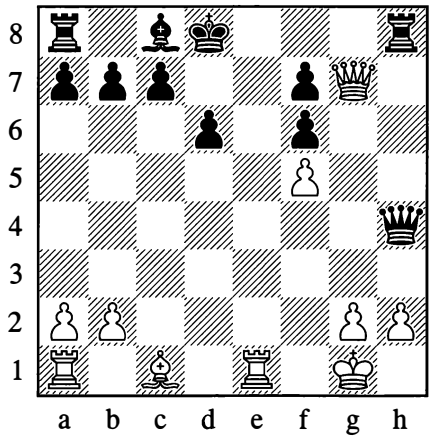
**35.♘d3 ♖c1† 36.♘xc1 ♗xa8 37.f4 gxf4 38.gxf4 a5**

White resigned.

**0–1**

**295**

**Rojahn – Lasker**, Copenhagen (simul) 1927



*White to move*

In this position, Lasker was stunned by a long and beautiful combination utilizing an obstruction (the blocking of a diagonal):

**1.♗g5!! fxg5**

1...♕xg5? allows 2.♕xh8†.

1...♕xh2† 2.♔f1 ♕h1†? 3.♔f2! and almost every piece in the black position is attacked.

**2.♕f6† ♔d7 3.♕e7† ♔c6 4.♖ac1† ♔b5 5.a4† ♕xa4**

This is more stubborn than 5...♔a6? 6.♕e2†; or 5...♔a5 6.♖c5†!; or 5...♔b6 6.♕xc7† ♔a6 7.♕xd6† b6 8.♕d3† ♔b7 9.♖e7†.

**6.♖e4 ♕b3**

6...♕a5 7.♖e5†! dxe5 8.♖c5† ♔a6 9.♖xa5† ♔xa5 10.♕xe5† White will take the rook on h8 next and will be left with a decisive material advantage.

**7.♕xc7 ♕d3**

Other moves are no help either.

**8.♖e5†!**

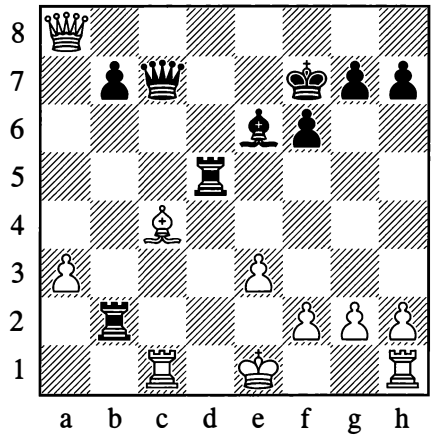
Black resigned, as mate will follow: 8...dxe5 9.♖c5† ♔a4 10.♕a5† ♔b3 11.♕a3#

**1–0**

The theme of the following combinations is basically a devastating invasion of the 7th or 8th (1st or 2nd) rank in the opponent's camp.

**296**

**Baturinsky – Romanovsky**, Moscow 1945



*Black to move*

In Position 296, Black exploits White's delay in castling and the weakness of his second rank:

**31...♖d1†!! 32.♖xd1**

Or 32.♔xd1 ♕d6† with mate to follow on the second rank.

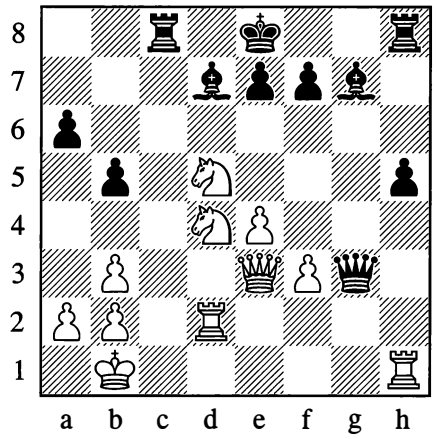
**32...♕xc4 33.♖d2 ♕c1† 34.♖d1 ♕c3† 35.♔f1 ♕c2**

White resigned.

**0–1**

**297**

**Boleslavsky – Bondarevsky**, Moscow 1941



*Black to move*

Black begins with a skewer:

**25...♗h6!**

White attempts to parry with a pinning move:

**26.♖xh5**

A better option would have been 26.♕f2 ♕xf2 27.♖xf2 e6 28.♘f6† ♔e7 29.♘xd7 ♗e3 30.♘f5† exf5 31.♖e2 f4 32.♘e5. After the move in the game, the dénouement comes about with unexpected speed.

**26...♖g8!!**

Black renews the skewer and at the same time decisively exploits the weakness of the first rank.

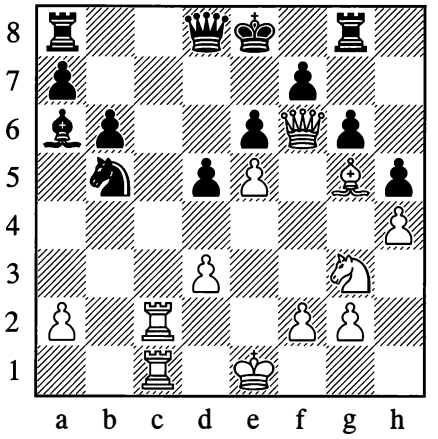
**27.♕d3 ♕g1†!**

White resigned in view of 28.♖d1† ♖c1†! with mate next move.

**0–1**

**298**

**Bronstein – Goldenov**, Kiev 1944



*White to move*

In Position 298 Black has no defence against mate after:

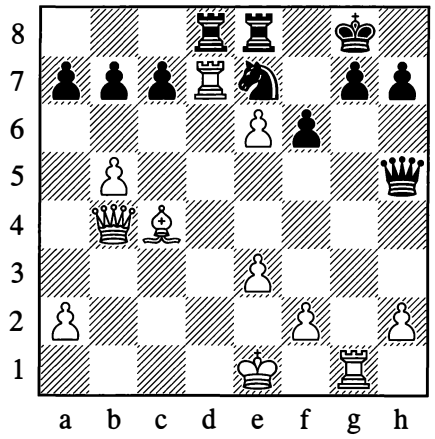
**24.♖c8!!**

What is interesting is the interplay of various motifs here. In the event of 24...♗xc8 the eighth rank is obstructed, so the queen is deprived of protection from the rook. After 24...♖xc8 25.♖xc8, the white rook cannot be captured by the queen because the latter has to defend the e7-square; nor can the queen move away on account of the pin, and meanwhile White threatens 26.♕xd8#.

The interweaving of various themes is in fact characteristic of most combinations.

**299**

**Smyslov – Airapetov**, Leningrad 1948



*White to move*

White's interesting combination is based on the temporarily concealed weakness of Black's seventh and eighth ranks, and the strength of the passed pawn on e6 supported by the bishop on c4.

**21.♕xe7! ♖xe7 22.♖xd8† ♖e8 23.e7† ♔h8 24.♗e6 ♕xb5 25.♗f7 ♕b1†**

Now all White has to do is escape with his king from the checks.

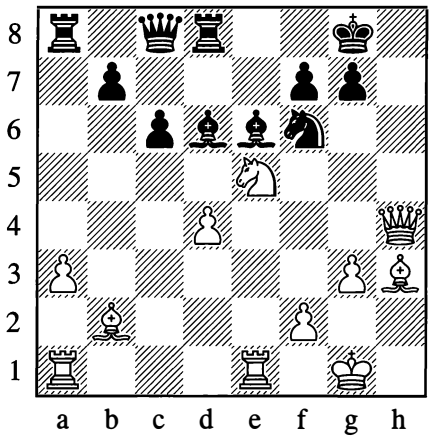
**26.♔e2 ♕b5† 27.♔f3 ♕f5† 28.♔g2**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**300**

**Kuzminykh – Taimanov** (var), Leningrad 1950



*White to move*

This position could have arisen in Black had played ...♗b3-e6 on his last move. It would have proved fatal on account of:

**1.♘g6 ♘h7**

1...fxg6 allows 2.♗xe6†, winning the queen.

**2.♖xe6!! fxe6 3.♕xd8†! ♕xd8**

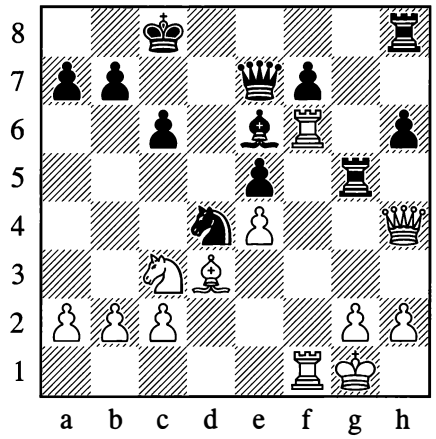
3...♔f7 4.♘h8#

**4.♗xe6#**

A rare minor-piece mate!

**301**

**Freiman – Bernstein**, Vilnius 1912



*Black to move*

**1...♘f5!**

Black breaks the communication (contact) between the white rooks, and by giving up his knight he picks up the rook on f6 – that is, he wins the exchange. This is a typical and, in essence, fairly simple ploy, but in the present case a complication is introduced by the theme of a discovered attack: if White tries to defend himself with 2.♖6xf5, so as to gain two minor pieces for the rook, Black wins the queen with 2...♖xg2†.

**2.exf5 ♕xf6**

Threatening ...♖xg2†.

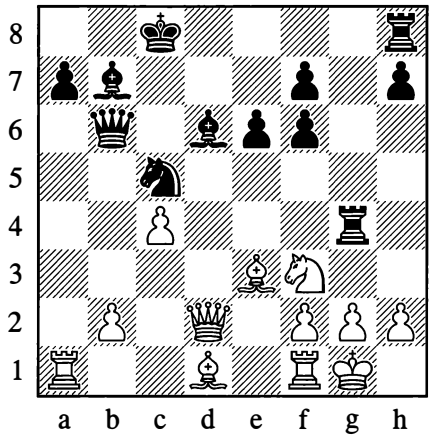
**3.♕f2 ♗d5**

Black maintains a material plus.

**...0–1**

**302**

**Boleslavsky – Ufimtsev**, Omsk 1944



*Black to move*

In Position 302 Black conducted a devastating attack, in which many of the combinative themes that we already know about were interwoven:

**19...♘e4!**

If White answers this with 20.♗xb6, then 21...♘xd2 wins.

**20.♕a5 ♖hg8!**

If now 21.♗xb6, then 21...♖xg2† 22.♔h1 ♘xf2†! and mate next move.

**21.♘e1**

21.g3 wouldn't save White either, in view of 21...♘xg3 22.hxg3 ♖xg3† 23.fxg3 ♕xe3†.

**21...♖xg2†! 22.♘xg2 ♘d2!**

Threatening 23...♖xg2† followed by 24...♖xh2† and 25...♖h1#. White is defenceless. The concluding moves were:

**23.♕d5 ♗xd5 24.cxd5 ♕xb2 25.♗xd2 ♕xa1 26.♗f3 ♗xh2†**

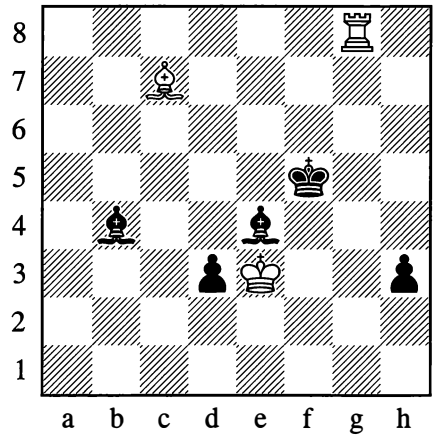
White resigned.

**0–1**

The geometric idea of occupying the "point of intersection" of two lines (to bring about an "interference") is interesting even though rarely encountered in practical play. The following position can serve as a striking example.

**303**

**Nenarokov – Grigoriev**, Moscow (11) 1923



*Black to move*

**98...d2**

White can't stop this pawn with 99.♖g1 because of 99...♗c5†. Nor is 99.♔e2 any use, in view of 99...♗f3†!.

**99.♖d8**

At this point the d-pawn is prevented from queening by the rook, while the h-pawn is stopped by the bishop on c7. The lines of action of these two pieces intersect at d6. Now Black prettily exploits the idea of interference by placing his bishop on the "crossroads".

**99...♗d6!!**

If 100.♗xd6, then 100...d1=♕, since the rook's line is shut off. There followed:

**100.♖xd6**

Now the bishop's line is blocked.

**100...h2 101.♖xd2 h1=♕**

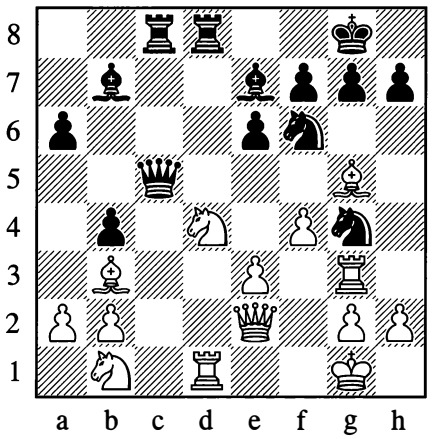
White resigned.

**0–1**

Now let us look at an example of a "positional" combination.

**304**

**Pogrebyssky – Konstantinopolsky**, Kiev 1932



*Black to move*

The attack against the knight on g4 was met by a sacrifice:

**20...♘xe3!**

Black had prepared this well in advance. Its point soon becomes clear.

**21.♕xe3 ♗e4!!**

Thanks to the pin that arises on the a7-g1 diagonal, Black can make use of the poor position of White's knight on b1. If for example 22.♘d2, then 22...♖xd4 23.♗xf6 ♗xf6 24.♘xe4 ♖xe4!. In view of this, White voluntarily returned the piece:

**22.♘c3 bxc3 23.bxc3 ♗g6**

White is left with a weak pawn on the c3-square. Black eventually won this pawn, and with it the game.

However, there remains one important variation that we have not yet examined. In this connection, and seeing that the case before us is a typical one, you should remember the following piece of practical advice:

If a piece has been sacrificed against you, and this is not a combination of the "check, check, mate" type – if, in other words, you are left with some choice of moves – then first of all consider variations in which you immediately take a new piece from your opponent. With two pieces down he will be forced, as a rule, to follow one single continuation which is easy for you to calculate. You may come to the conclusion that your second capture is no use, but it is only then that you should proceed to examine other, possibly better, continuations.

From this point of view, White first of all had to consider 22.♗xf6, after which a forced variation arises: 22...♗xf6 23.♕xe4 ♖xd4 24.♖xd4 ♕xd4† 25.♕xd4 ♗xd4† 26.♔f1 ♖c1† 27.♔e2 ♖xb1. Black has kept an extra pawn and is even winning a second one (provisionally), but with opposite-coloured bishops White's possibilities for fighting are not exhausted. For example: 28.♖d3 ♗f6 29.♖d6 ♖xb2† 30.♔f3 a5 31.♖a6 ♗d8 32.♖d6! ♗e7 (or 32...♗c7 33.♖c6) 33.♖a6

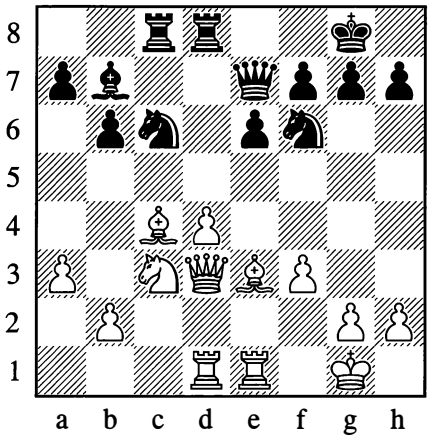
We can see, then, that Black's combination was deep and sound, but after White's strongest reply (22.♗xf6!) Black would have had some hard work to do in the endgame.

**...0–1**

Here is another example with repeated mutual captures.

**305**

**Barda – Keres**, Moscow (ol) 1956



*Black to move*

**1...♘e5**

Black exploits the bad position of the bishop on c4.

**2.dxe5 ♖xd3 3.exf6 ♖xd1!**

Of course not 3...♕xf6? 4.♗xd3.

**4.fxe7 ♖xe1† 5.♔f2 ♖xe3 6.♔xe3 ♖e8**

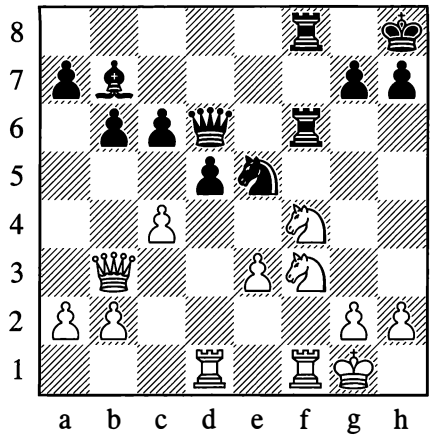
White resigned. A more destructive raid by a rook is difficult to imagine. Rather like a game of "losing chess"!

**0–1**

So-called "trappy" combinations are also frequently seen in practice. We are already acquainted with one example of a trap (see the brief game on page 79). Here is another example of a trappy combination.

**306**

**Steiner – Balogh**, Bad Pistyan 1922



*White to move*

In this position White played "for the trap".

**20.♘g5**

Black was now lured by the prospect of winning a pawn.

**20...♘xc4?**

This was met by the combination:

**21.♕xc4! dxe4 22.♖xd6 ♖xd6 23.♘g6†**

With mate next move.

**1–0**

A trap begins by offering the opponent some kind of "bait", and if he is tempted by the material gain he is snared. Thus a trap differs from a genuine combination inasmuch as the first move – after which the forced variation begins – is not itself a move that your opponent is in any way forced to make. If he realizes what you have in mind and ignores the "bait", the trap you have concocted may turn out to be useless (it may have wasted a move or in some cases even worsened your own position). That is why playing for a trap is only appropriate when it can be combined with pursuing your normal game plan – or else when you are conducting a difficult and ultimately hopeless defence, and you have strictly nothing to lose. You can find some examples of traps in the supplements to this chapter.

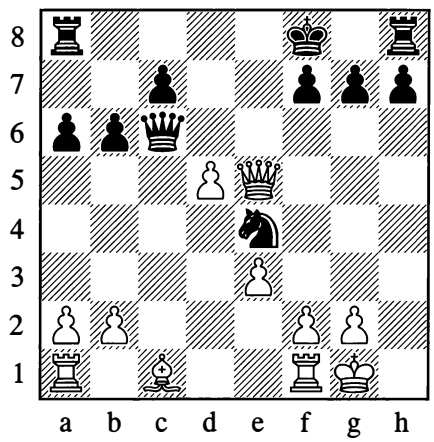
## 3. THE TECHNIQUE OF COMBINATIONS

"A combination has to be sound," Lasker once wrote, "otherwise it is just an attempt, a blunder, a delusion; put more simply, it is senseless."

*Sound* combinations have to be accurately calculated in all variations; they have to take account of the opponent's replies (whether natural or the most extraordinary), and they have to yield beneficial results of some kind.

To illustrate the point, consider a few combinations in which errors of one sort or another were committed.

**307**



*Black to move*

Black's position cannot be called a good one. But whatever the case, he had to answer White's d4-d5 with ...♕c2, defending his knight.

Instead, however, he chose a combinative move:

**1...♖e8**

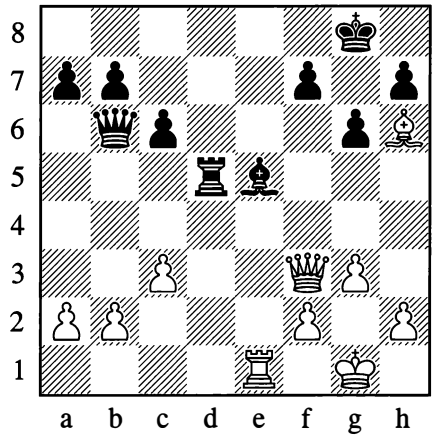
Vesting all his hopes in the variation 2.dxc6? ♖xe5 or 2.♕xe8†?? ♕xe8!.

**2.♕xe4!**

The one variation Black had not allowed for. White simply emerges a piece up.

The refutations of unsound combinations are not always so simple.

**308**



*Black to move*

The bishop on h6 is embedded like a splinter in Black's position; the eighth rank is dangerously exposed.

**1...♕xb2**

Black saw that in the variation 2.♖xe5 ♖xe5 3.♕f6 he would have perpetual check (...♕b1†, ...♕e4†). However, White has a sharper continuation.

**2.♕f6!**

What is Black to do now?

**2...♕xc3**

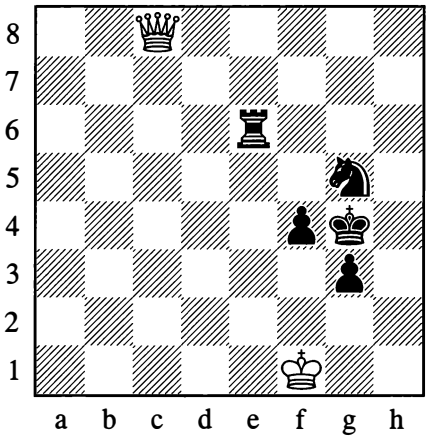
This looks good, but it results in mate to the black king. Afterwards, a move of rare beauty was discovered: 2...♕c1!! If 3.♕xe5 (best!), then 3...♕xh6, and Black can defend successfully. A combination and its possible refutation both have to be attentively and persistently searched for.

**3.♕g7†!! ♗xg7 4.♖e8† ♗f8 5.♖xf8#**

Here is an example of a combination that was not calculated to the end.

**309**

**Zagoriansky – Tolush**, Moscow 1945



*White to move*

With difficulty White holds up the advance of the black pawns:

**1.♕c4**

Black's advantage is substantial, and he ought to win easily by gradually improving the position of his pieces in order to promote a pawn. Instead, he conceived the idea of settling matters immediately with a combination that involved sacrificing the f4-pawn, but he didn't take everything into account.

**1...♔h3? 2.♕xf4 g2† 3.♔f2 ♖f6**

To meet 4.♕xf6 with 4...♘e4†. White now had an unexpected reply:

**4.♔g1!**

Black's next move is forced.

**4...♖xf4**

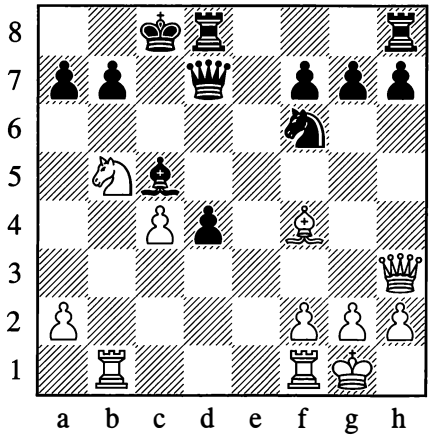
Stalemate.

**½–½**

A further aspect of combinative play is brought out by the following examples.

**310**

**Mikenas – Flohr**, Folkestone (ol) 1933



*White to move*

**1.♘xa7†!**

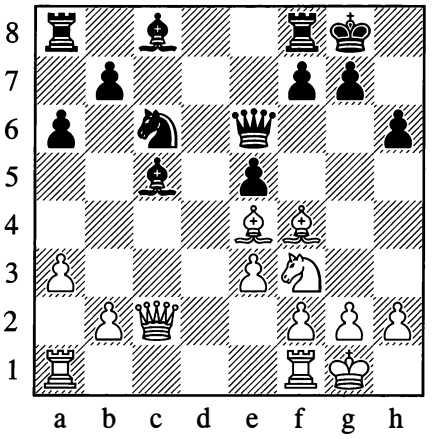
This example shows the importance of the *correct order of moves* in a combination. A much more spectacular move in the diagram position appears to be the immediate 1.♕a3, but then comes 1...♕xb5!, and White loses.

**1...♗xa7 2.♕a3**

Black resigned, as 2...♗b8 is met by 3.♕a8, while if 2...b6 then 3.♖xb6! (threatening 4.♕a6†) 3...♗xb6 4.♕a8#.

**1–0**

**311**



*White to move*

In Position 311, White played 1.♗h7† ♔h8 2.♕xc5, but Black defended his rook on f8 with 2...♗d7, leaving White with two pieces under attack. He had to be content with an extra pawn after 3.♗xe5 ♔xh7.

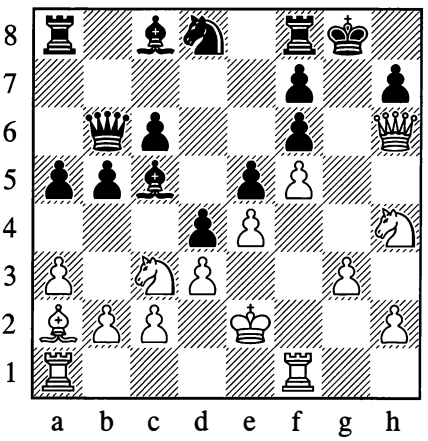
The correct order of moves was:

**1.♕xc5 exf4 2.♗h7†**

Winning the exchange.

**312**

**Alexander – Marshall**, Cambridge 1928



*White to move*

**1.♖f4 exf4 2.♘a4**

Intending after 2...bxa4 to open the g-file with 3.gxf4; mate would then be unavoidable. The knight sacrifice is indispensable – 2.gxf4 would be met by 2...dxc3, depriving White of the g1-square. However, Black answered with an "intermediate" check:

**2...f3†!**

Preventing the opening of the g-file.

**3.♘xf3 ♕a7!**

It is true that 3...bxa4 fails to 4.♘g5! fxg5? (4...♗xf5 has to be tried) 5.f6!, but the text move ensured Black an adequate defence:

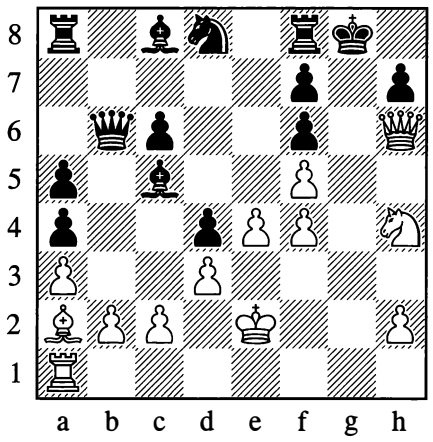
**4.♘g5 fxg5 5.f6? ♘e6 6.♗xe6 fxe6**

White's attack is repelled.

**0–1**

The correct order of moves from Position 312 was:

**1.♘a4! bxa4 2.♖f4! exf4 3.gxf4**

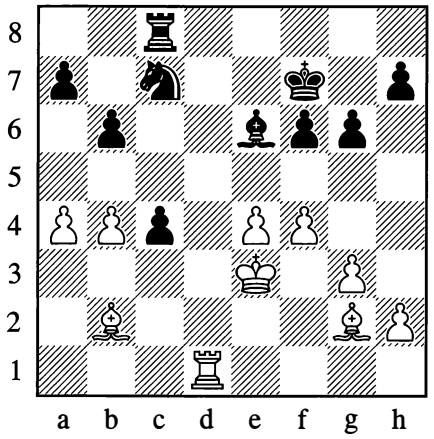


Mate will follow on the g-file as discussed above.

Not infrequently a combination will prove unsound on account of some unforeseen "intermediate" move from the opponent – a so-called *Zwischenzug* (often involving a check).

**313**

**Bondarevsky – Keres**, Moscow 1941



*White to move*

This ending is more pleasant for White. For instance by systematic play, as Botvinnik showed, he could make some improvement to his position with 31.♗c3 f5 32.♗f3.

Instead, White resolved on increasing his positional assets with the aid of a combination that was aimed at disrupting his opponent's pawn position:

**31.f5 gxf5 32.exf5 ♗xf5 33.♖f1**

His idea was to answer a bishop move by taking the f6-pawn, or to meet 33...♔g6 with 34.♖xf5 (34...♔xf5 35.♗h3†, or 34...♖e8† 35.♗e4). However, an unforeseen "intermediate" check was given *before* Black's ...♔g6.

**33...♖e8†!**

Removing the rook from the danger square c8.

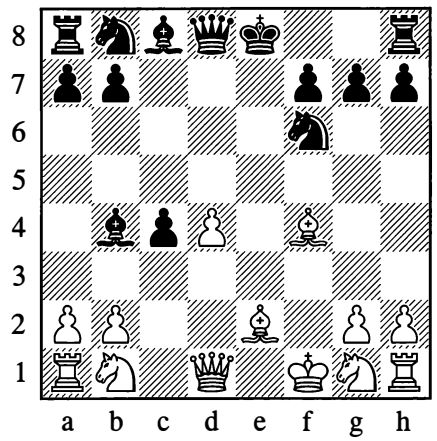
**34.♔d2 ♔g6**

Black was left temporarily with an extra pawn and the game ended in a draw.

**...½–½**

**314**

**Tartakower – Capablanca**, New York 1924



*White to move*

**1.♗xb8**

Reckoning on 1...♖xb8 2.♕a4† which wins a piece. However, Black is not obliged to recapture at once. He played:

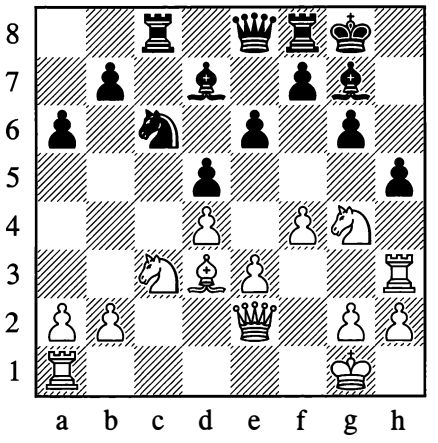
**1...♘d5!**

Defending his bishop and threatening ...♘e3†; if now 2.♗f4, then 2...♕f6!, and again ...♘e3† is threatened. The game continuation was 2.♔f2 ♖xb8, and having recovered his piece, Black quickly gained the advantage thanks to his better development.

**...0–1**

**315**

**Grünfeld – Wegemund**, Frankfurt 1923



*White to move*

From Position 315 play continued with:

**1.♖xh5**

The idea of the sacrifice is 1...gxh5 2.♘f6†! ♗xf6 3.♕xh5 followed by mate, since the defence ...f5 is impossible.

**1...♘xd4!**

This refutes White's combination.

**2.exd4 gxh5**

3.♘f6† ♗xf6 4.♕xh5 no longer works on account of 4...♗xd4† and 5...f5. Nevertheless, White did go on to win the game.

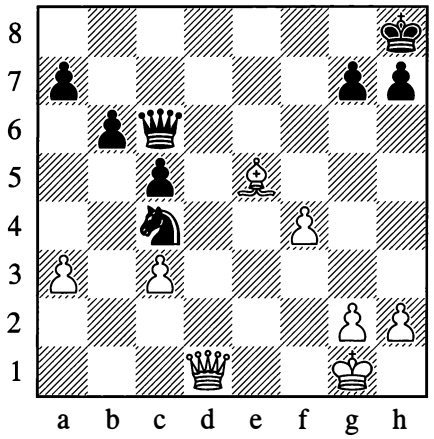
**...1–0**

Such are examples of unsound, faulty combinations, that is ones that contain some flaw and are not calculated accurately to the end.

Of course, going in for combinations without necessity – just for the sake of it – is wrong. You always have to form a clear idea of the results your combination will lead to. Sometimes you might win a pawn but end up with a lost game.

**316**

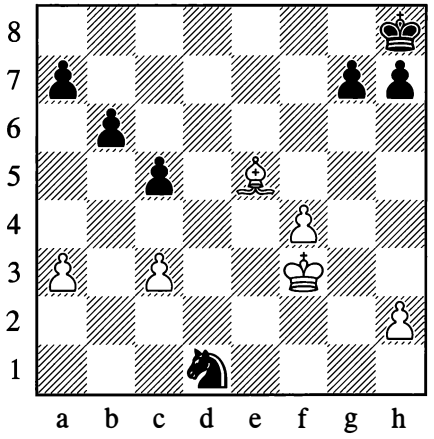
**Marshall – Swiderski**, Monte Carlo 1904



*Black to move*

In this position, Black executed a combination to win a pawn:

**1...♕xg2† 2.♔xg2 ♘e3† 3.♔f3 ♘xd1**



Yet after White's next move he was forced to resign.

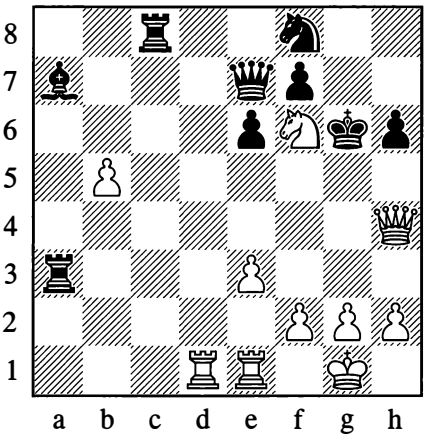
**4.c4!**

The knight on d1 is doomed.

**1–0**

Black assuredly hadn't seen the move 4.c4, but here is another example – illustrating what might be called "absolute" short-sightedness.

**317**



*White to move*

As a result of the stereotyped combination 1.♕xh6† ♔xh6 2.♘g8†, followed by 3.♘xe7, White won a pawn, but of course he went on to lose the game since he was a piece down. A more attentive examination of the position would surely have suggested the correct solution:

**1.♕g4†! ♔xf6 2.♕h4†**

Winning the queen. White chose the worse of the two possible combinations.

We have briefly acquainted ourselves with the technical demands that are made on a combination. But technique is one thing; the faculty that goes by the name of good combinative vision – the unearthing of concealed combinations that lurk within a position – is something else.

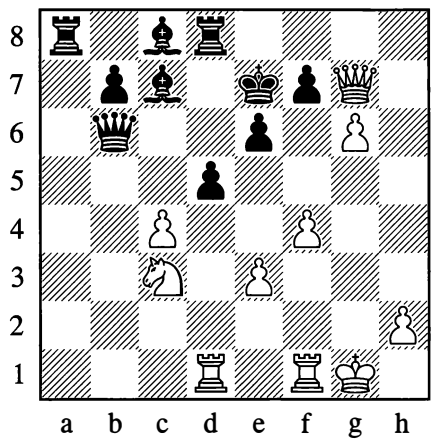
## 4. PREREQUISITES FOR A COMBINATION

There are certain signs which can lead us to suppose that a combination is possible in the position before us, and that it makes sense to begin searching for it. Let us try to characterize those signs in a little more detail.

From examples already given, we were able to convince ourselves that a prerequisite for combination is usually a *preponderance of forces* (or greater mobility of the pieces) which one side possesses in some particular sector of the board. If we are conducting an attack that does something to shake the enemy position, then the direction taken by the attack is usually also the direction in which we should be looking to find a combination.

However, the necessary configuration of pieces for a combination doesn't always turn up "ready made", so to speak; in most cases it has to be created!

**318**



*White to move*

The black king is threatened by the white queen from the side and by the rook and knight from the front:

**1.c5!**

1.♕xf7† ♔d6 2.♘xd5! is also powerful for White.

**1...♕xc5**

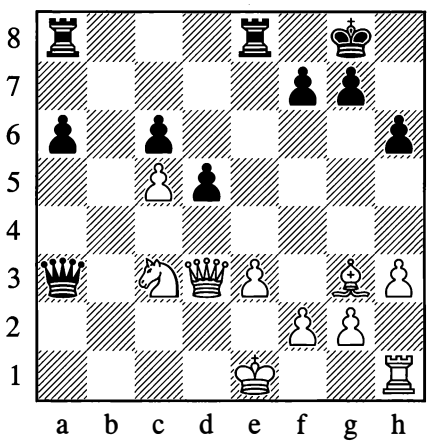
Otherwise 2.♕xf7#.

**2.♕xf7† ♔d6 3.♘e4†**

Winning the queen.

**319**

**Pirc – Stoltz**, Prague (ol) 1931



*Black to move*

The elements of a combination are present: the first rank is exposed, the pawn on e3 is pinned. Yet after 1...♕a1† 2.♘d1, everything is defended. How is Black to play from here?

**1...d4!**

The point is that the knight is pinned too!

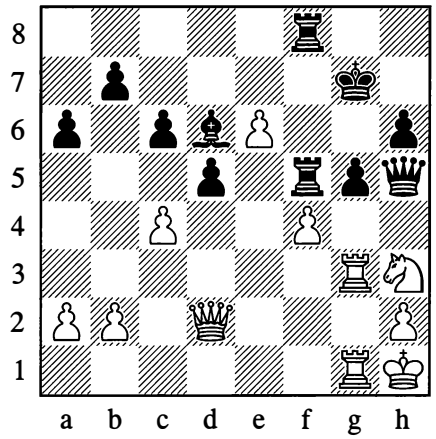
**2.♕xd4 ♕a1†**

Only now! White is faced with the choice of what to lose – his queen, his rook or his knight.

And here is a deeply calculated combination by Alekhine.

**320**

**Alekhine – Tylor**, Margate 1937



*White to move*

**1.♘xg5 ♗xf4 2.♕c3†! ♖8f6**

2...♗e5 3.♘f3† and White will regain the piece with a tremendous attack.

**3.♘e4† ♗xg3 4.♖xg3† ♔h8**

4...♔f8 5.♕b4† leads to mate in several moves time.

**5.♕xf6†! ♖xf6 6.♖g8†!**

With 7.♘xf6† to follow. The fact that Black's king was defended by all the pieces he possessed was of no help to him.

**1–0**

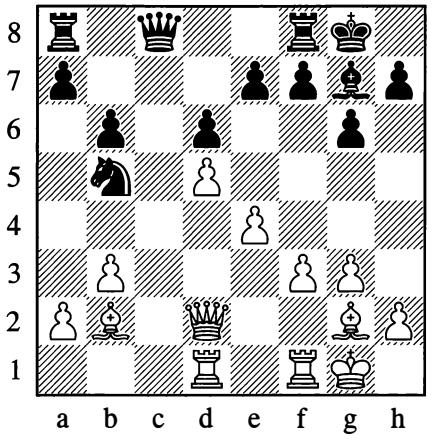
We see that an essential precondition for a combination is the presence of *weaknesses* of some kind in the opponent's camp. Sometimes his weakness will be his king position which is too open or, on the contrary, too cramped. In other cases it will be the crowded position of his pieces, their limited mobility, their undefended state. In Example 320 which we have just examined, a crucial factor was the availability of open lines and diagonals (and the creation of extra ones) for the action of the white pieces (the queen on the c3-h8 diagonal and the rooks on the g-file).

Thus when looking for a combination, the direction of our search is prompted by the location of our opponent's weak points.

We shall familiarize ourselves in detail with various types of weakness in the next chapter, "Positional Play". Here we would just note that a combination may be triggered by the bad placing of individual pieces, sometimes with limited possibilities of retreat.

**321**

**Botvinnik – Golombek**, Moscow (ol) 1956



*White to move*

The knight on b5 is badly placed; in the event of a2-a4 it only has the square c7 to retreat to. How can this be utilized for a combination?

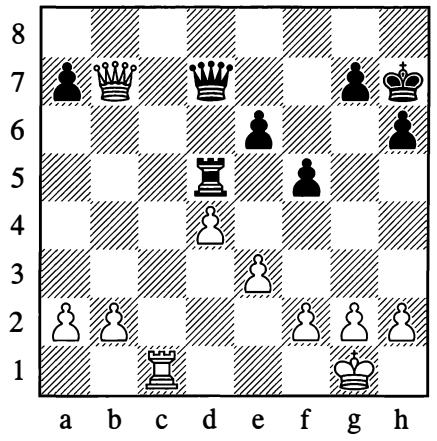
**1.♗xg7 ♔xg7 2.♖c1!**

Black resigned, anticipating the following moves: 2...♕d7 3.a4 ♘c7 4.♕c3†

**1–0**

What is harder to find is a combination that crops up by chance – for combinations do also exploit the chance opportunities afforded by a momentary configuration of the pieces.

**322**



*White to move*

Here the simplest course for White is to exchange queens and then, after ♔f1, to play ♖c1-c6-a6 and gradually exploit his material superiority. But this method seemed to him to be too long-winded.

**1.♖c7**

Trying to win "on the spot", but there is a stunning combinative refutation.

**1...♖c5!**

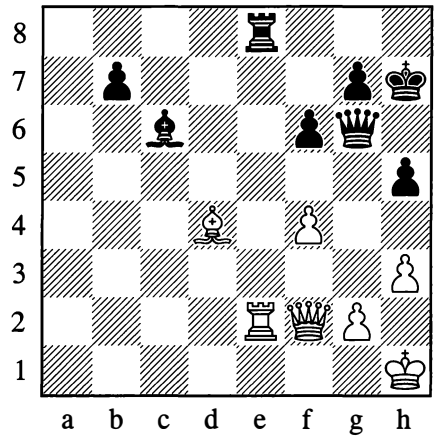
White had to resign at once.

It is of course impossible to give any general guidelines for similar cases. But you must always be on the lookout and remember that one single move can sometimes make changes to the position such that an unexpected and previously unavailable combinative dénouement becomes a reality.

It's essential to develop your combinative abilities by studying good examples. This includes learning from practical experience. Positions may not repeat themselves exactly (though this does happen sometimes!), but the ideas of combinations definitely do recur.

**323**

**Kotov – Botvinnik**, Leningrad 1939



*Black to move*

From Position 323, there followed:

**1...♕xg2†! 2.♕xg2 ♖xe2**

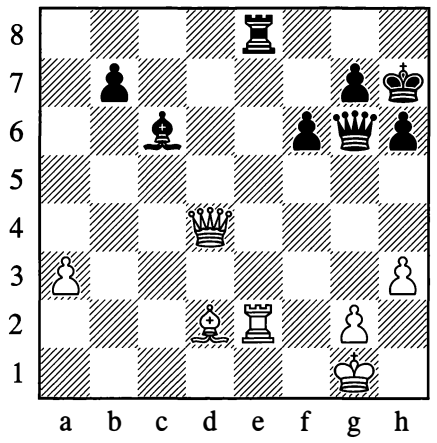
White resigned.

**0–1**

A few years later, Kotov had an opportunity to benefit from the experience gained.

**324**

**Guimard – Kotov**, Groningen 1946



*White to move*

**1.♕f2?**

1.♖f2 was of course necessary.

The position is almost the same as in Diagram 323, only this time the white king is not on h1. All right, then – the diagonal pin must be replaced by a vertical one!

**1...♗xg2 2.♕xg2**

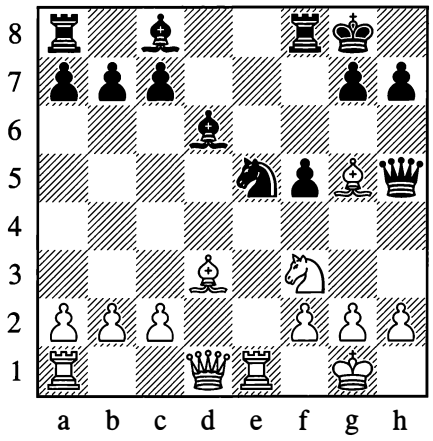
The game actually went 2.♖xe8 ♗e4† 3.♔h2 ♕xe8, and Black easily won.

**2...♖xe2**

Black wins material.

**325**

**Alekhine – Koehnlein**, Düsseldorf 1908



*White to move*

**1.♘xe5 ♕xg5 2.♗c4† ♔h8**

Now White could have won the exchange by 3.♘f7†. However, the sixteen-year-old Alekhine wasn't hasty – he played a much stronger combination:

**3.♕xd6!! cxd6 4.♘f7† ♔g8**

4...♖xf7 is unplayable owing to 5.♖e8†.

**5.♘xg5†**

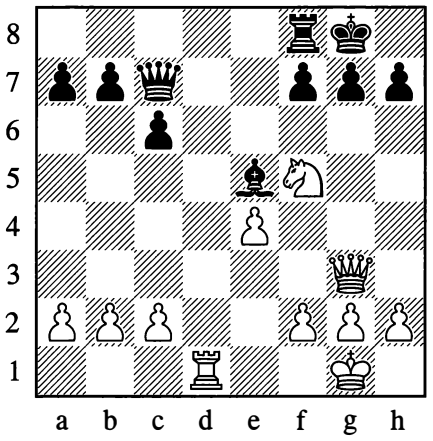
White emerges a full piece up. Black resigned.

**1–0**

This combination was repeated in its entirety eighteen years later, in a tournament in Paris. But even more interestingly, the same combinative idea was also echoed in a completely different setting:

**326**

**Capablanca – Fonaroff**, New York 1918



*White to move*

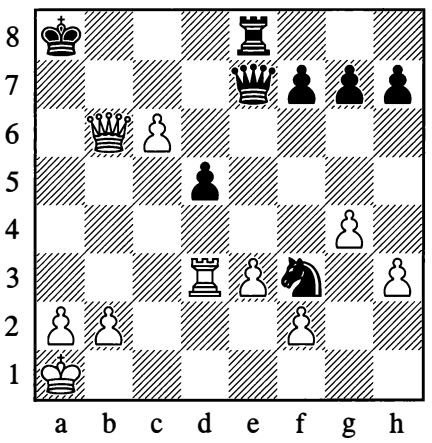
**1.♘h6† ♔h8 2.♕xe5!! ♕xe5 3.♘xf7†**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

The following is an amusing case:

**327**



*Black to move*

From Diagram 327, with both players in time trouble, the game went 1...♖b8 2.♖a3† ♕xa3, and Black offered a draw – which White immediately accepted, fearing that he was going to come out a piece down. The position attracted attention and began to be analysed – and someone discovered that White could have won by 3.c7! (3...♕a7 4.♕c6† ♕b7 5.♕a4† ♕a7 6.cxb8=♕† ♔xb8 7.♕e8† ♔b7 8.♕xf7† and 9.♕xf3).

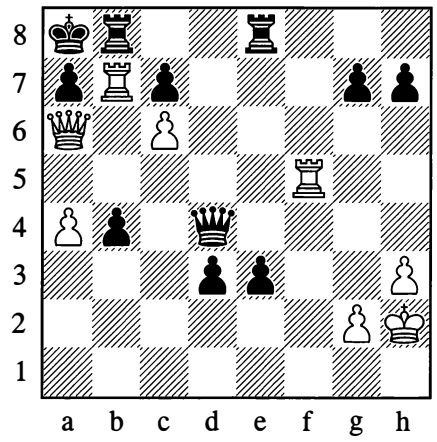
Not bad, but White had an immediately decisive combination after Black's first move:

**1...♖b8 2.♕a6†! ♕a7 3.♖a3!!**

Black cannot prevent mate. Just such a combination had been carried out for the first time by Capablanca in a similar position, in the following well-known game:

**327a**

**Capablanca – Raubitschek**, New York 1906



*White to move*

**1.♖xa7†! ♕xa7 2.♖a5 ♕xa6 3.♖xa6#**

You can of course find a combination like this independently, but how much easier it is if you know some classical examples! Cases where *ideas are repeated* are innumerable.

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

### GAMES

**1**

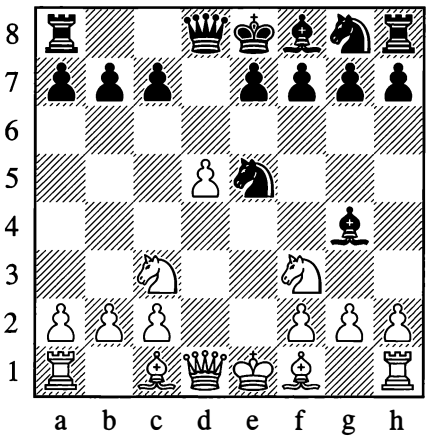
**Mieses – Ekvist**, Nuremberg 1895

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d8**

A more active continuation here is 3...♕a5.

**4.d4 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.d5 ♘e5?**

It was essential to play 6...♘b8.



**7.♘xe5!**

Black resigned. On 7...♗xd1, there follows 8.♗b5† c6 9.dxc6 a6 (9...♕b6 10.cxb7†) 10.c7†.

**1–0**

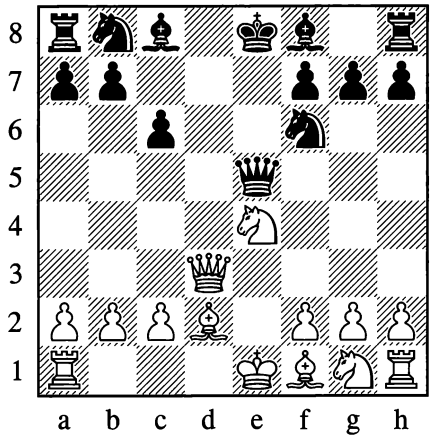
**2**

**Réti – Tartakower**, Vienna (friendly) 1910

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘f6 5.♕d3 e5?**

The right course is 5...♘xe4 6.♕xe4 ♘d7, with ...♘f6 to follow.

**6.dxe5 ♕a5† 7.♗d2 ♕xe5**



**8.0–0–0! ♘xe4??**

Of course not 8...♕xe4 on account of 9.♖e1, but the move played also loses at once. Black had to play 8...♗e7.

**9.♕d8†!! ♔xd8 10.♗g5† ♔c7**

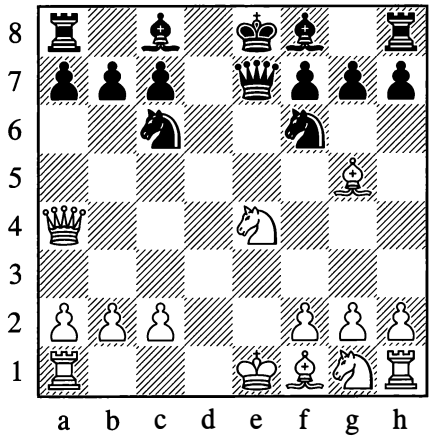
Or 10...♔e8 11.♖d8#.

**11.♗d8#**

**3**

**Bronstein – Amateur**, Moscow 1950

**1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.♕xd4 ♘c6 4.♕a4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d5 6.♗g5 dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♕e7**



**8.0–0–0!**

It looks as if White has miscalculated. But in actual fact the knight on e4 is taboo.

**8...♕xe4? 9.♖d8†!! ♔xd8 10.♕xe4**

Resigns. A gem of combinative art!

**1–0**

**4**

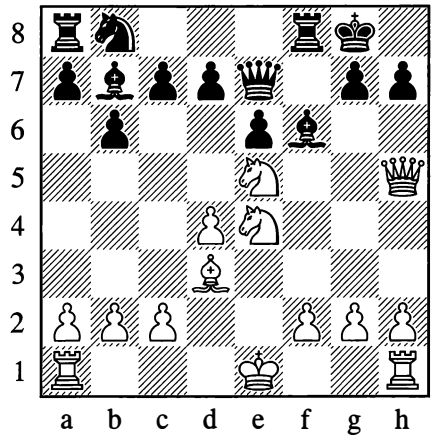
**Ed. Lasker – Thomas**, London 1921

**1.d4 f5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.♗xf6 ♗xf6 6.e4 fxe4 7.♘xe4 b6 8.♗d3 ♗b7 9.♘e5 0–0**

Black's development has been too slow and has allowed White to build up a strong attacking position. It was necessary to play 9...♗xe5 and 10...♕h4.

**10.♕h5 ♕e7?**

Black should still have preferred 10...♗xe5 (11.♘f6†? ♖xf6). Now White forces the black monarch to go for a long walk which will definitely be harmful to his health.



**11.♕xh7†!! ♔xh7 12.♘xf6† ♔h6**

Or 12...♔h8 13.♘g6#.

**13.♘eg4† ♔g5 14.h4†**

14.f4† followed by 15.g3† also leads to a quick mate.

**14...♔f4 15.g3† ♔f3 16.♗e2†**

A more accurate move was 16.♔f1, with mate to follow.

**16...♔g2 17.♖h2† ♔g1 18.0–0–0#**

White could also play 18.♔d2#. An uncommon final position – if you began by showing it to someone, they would have difficulty believing that it could be reached in the course of a normal game.

**5**

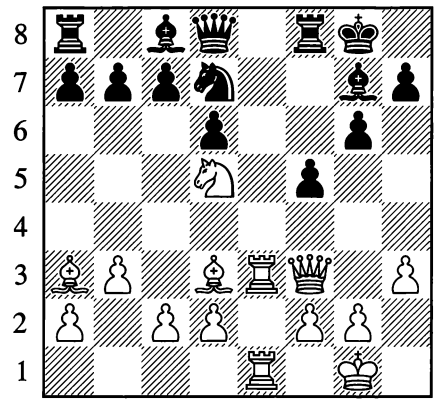
**Nezhmetdinov – Kotkov**, Krasnodar 1957

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0–0 ♘xe4 5.♖e1 ♘d6 6.♘xe5 ♗e7 7.♗d3 ♘xe5 8.♖xe5 0–0 9.♘c3 ♗f6 10.♖e3 g6**

White was threatening 11.♗xh7† ♔xh7 12.♕h5† and 13.♖h3.

**11.♕f3 ♗g7 12.b3 ♘e8 13.♗a3 d6 14.♖ae1 ♘f6 15.h3 ♘d7 16.♘d5 f5**

On 16...♘e5, White could continue 17.♖xe5! ♗xe5 18.♖xe5! dxe5 19.♗e7!! and then ♘f6†. The move played, which weakens the c4-g8 diagonal, allows White to conduct a beautiful attack.



**17.♘xc7! ♕xc7 18.♕d5† ♔h8 19.♖e8 ♘f6 20.♖xf8† ♗xf8 21.♗b2 ♗g7 22.♗c4! ♗d7**

Of course not 22...♘xd5 23.♖e8#.

**23.♗xf6 ♗xf6 24.♕f7 ♕d8**

On 24...♗g7 White plays 25.♖e7. If 24...♗g5, then 25.f4! ♗h4 26.g3 ♕c5† 27.♖e3.

**25.♖e8†!!**

Black resigned. White will mate on g8 or f6 next move.

**1–0**

**6**

**Rotlewi – Rubinstein**, Lodz 1907

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 e6 3.e3 c5 4.c4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♘f6 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.a3 a6 8.b4 ♗d6 9.♗b2 0–0**

Black needn't fear 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♘xd5, in view of 11...♘xd5 12.♕xd5 ♗xb4† winning the queen.

**10.♕d2 ♕e7!**

Now if 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♘xd5 ♘xd5 13.♕xd5, then 13...♖d8! 14.♕b3 ♗e6, followed by 15...♘xb4 with a strong attack. White should play 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗e2, avoiding the loss of tempo which now follows.

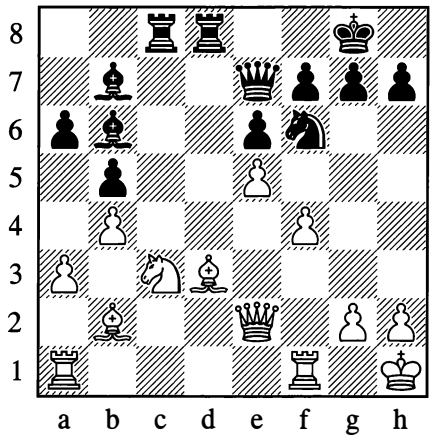
**11.♗d3? dxc4 12.♗xc4 b5 13.♗d3 ♖d8 14.♕e2 ♗b7 15.0–0**

The positions are almost symmetrical – but as a result of White's loss of time, the right to move next has passed to Black; and in addition a black rook has already occupied the d-file. Utilizing his better development, Black opens some lines.

**15...♘e5 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.f4**

Black was threatening 17...♗xh2† 18.♔xh2 ♕d6† and ...♕xd3. He would have met 17.♖fd1 with 17...♕c7, attacking c3 and h2. The move in the game has the drawback of weakening the pawn on e3 as well as the diagonals a7-g1 and a8-h1; pushing the e3-pawn to e4 or e5 will obstruct the lines of action of White's own bishops.

**17...♗c7 18.e4 ♖ac8 19.e5 ♗b6† 20.♔h1**



The superiority of Black's position is obvious; the diagonals of his bishops and the files where his rooks are placed are completely open. What follows is a short, decisive and beautiful attack.

**20...♘g4!!**

Now 21.♕xg4 is unplayable owing to 21...♖xd3, followed by ...♖d2.

**21.♗e4 ♕h4 22.g3**

In answer to 22.h3, Black had prepared the brilliant 22...♖xc3!! 23.♕xg4 (if 23.♗xc3, then 23...♗xe4 24.♕xe4 ♕g3 25.hxg4 ♕h4#) 23...♕xg4 (23...♖xh3†! also wins) 24.hxg4 ♗xe4 25.♗xc3 ♖d3, threatening mate on h3.

**22...♖xc3!! 23.gxh4 ♖d2!! 24.♕xd2 ♗xe4† 25.♕g2 ♖h3!**

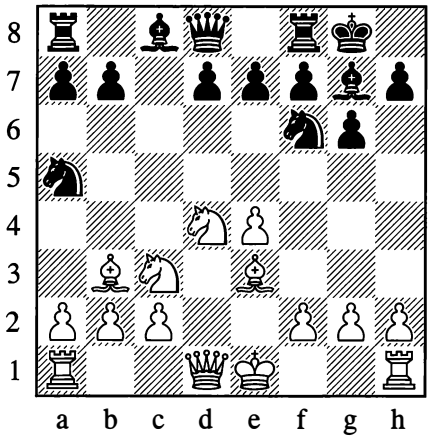
And White resigned.

**0–1**

7

**Fischer – Reshevsky**, New York 1958

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0–0 8.♗b3 ♘a5?**



**9.e5! ♘e8 10.♗xf7†! ♔xf7 11.♘e6!**

The black queen has no squares. 11...♔xe6 12.♕d5† will soon lead to mate. Reshevsky struggled on for quite some time, but to no avail.

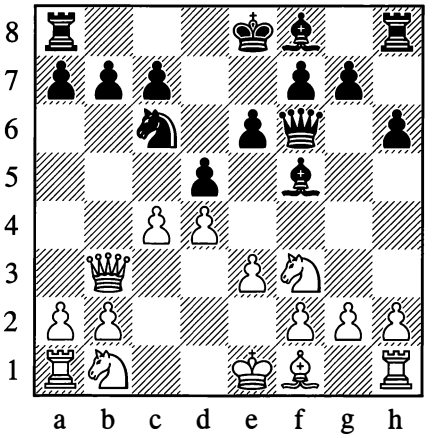
**...1–0**

"Teaching young Euwe a lesson"

**8**

**Oskam – Euwe**, Amsterdam 1920

**1.d4 d5 2.♗g5 ♗f5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.c4 e6 5.e3 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♕b3 ♘c6?**



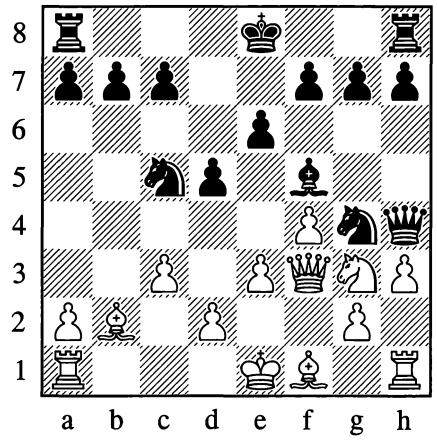
**8.♕xb7 ♔d7 9.cxd5! exd5 10.♗b5**

Black resigned. White threatens a devastating knight check on e5.
**1–0**

**9**

**Capablanca – Kevitz**, Brooklyn (simul) 1924

**1.b4 d5 2.♗b2 ♗f5 3.e3 e6 4.f4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♗xb4 6.♘c3 ♘bd7 7.♘e2 ♘g4 8.c3 ♗e7 9.h3? ♘c5! 10.♘g3 ♗h4 11.♘xh4 ♕xh4 12.♕f3**



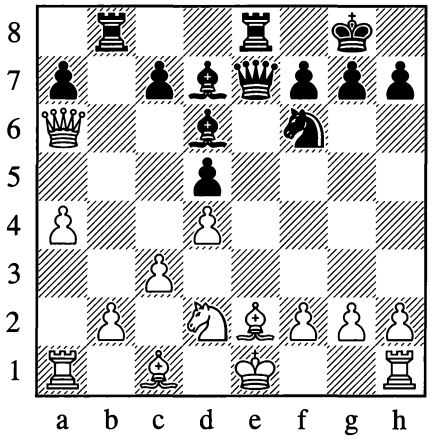
**12...♘xe3!**
With the idea of 13.♕xe3 ♘e4.

**13.♕f2 ♘xf1!**
White resigned (14.♔xf1 ♘d3! 15.♕e3 ♕xf4†!, and Black is three pawns up).
**0–1**

## SOME COMBINATIONS BY ALEKHINE

**1**

**Fink – Alekhine**, Pasadena 1932



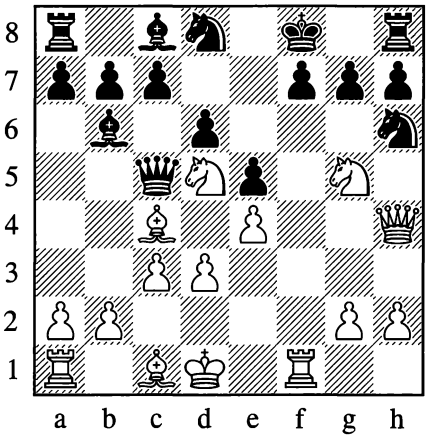
*White to move*

**14.♘f1**
White wishes to follow with ♘e3, freeing himself from the pin on the e-file that is stopping him from castling. After Black's unexpected reply however, he had to resign:

**14...♗b5!!**
**0–1**

**2**

**Alekhine – Lugowski**, Belgrade (simul) 1931



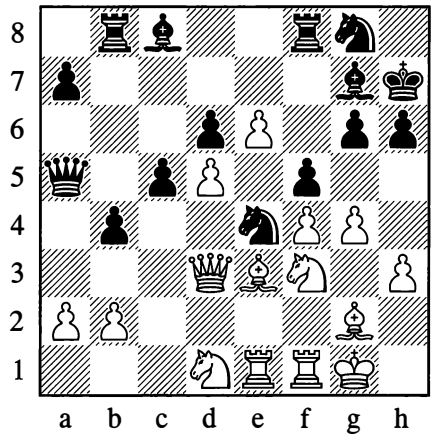
*White to move*

In this position, White announced mate in four moves:

**13.♘e6†! ♘xe6 14.♕e7† ♔g8 15.♕e8† ♘f8 16.♘e7#**

**3**

**Alekhine – Fletcher**, London (simul) 1928



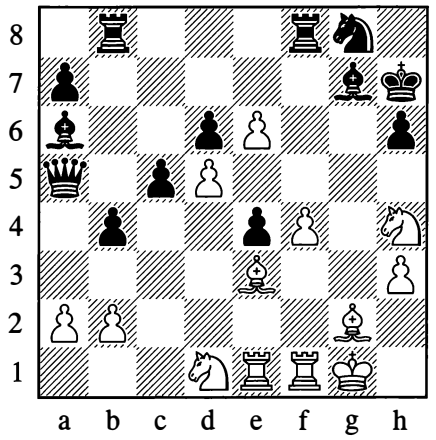
*White to move*

To Black's last move, 23...♕a5 (with the threat of ...♗a6), White replied as follows:

**24.gxf5 gxf5 25.♘h4!**

As if overlooking the threat!

**25...♗a6 26.♕xe4!! fxe4**



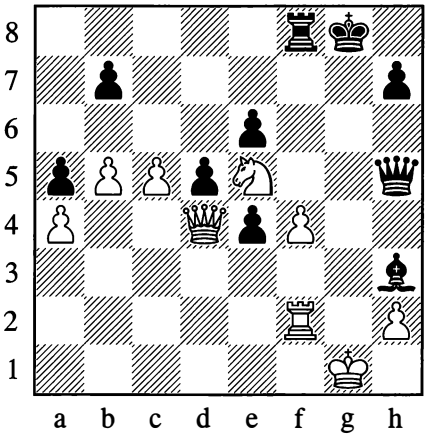
Here White announced mate in six. Can you find for yourself the concluding moves of this combination that Alekhine had already planned when making his 24th move?

Solution:

**1.♗xe4† ♔h8 2.♘g6† ♔h7 3.♘xf8† ♔h8 4.♘g6† ♔h7 5.♘e5† ♔h8 6.♘f7#**

**4**

**Rotunno – Alekhine**, Montevideo (simul) 1938



*Black to move*

**36...♖xf4! 37.c6**

If 37.♖xf4, then 37...♕g5†.

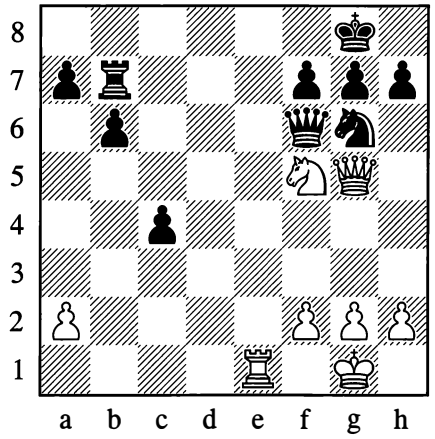
**37...♕e2!!**

White resigned, there is no way to stop mate.

**0–1**

**5**

**Alekhine – N.N.**, New York (simul) 1924



*White to move*

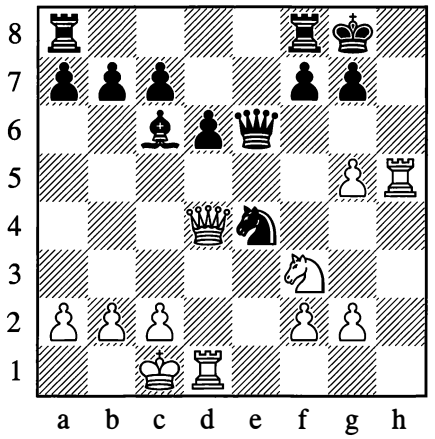
White announced mate in four:

**23.♖e8† ♘f8 24.♘h6†!! ♕xh6 25.♖xf8† ♔xf8 26.♕d8#**

This was from a simultaneous blindfold display on 26 boards!

**6**

**Alekhine – Hulscher**, Amsterdam (simul) 1933



*White to move*

There followed:

**15.♖dh1 f5**

So as to escape with his king via f7.

**16.♘e5!! dxe5**

Or 16...♕xe5 17.♕xe5 dxe5 18.g6 and mate is unstoppable.

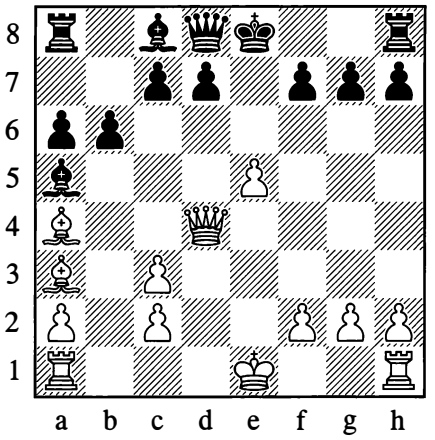
**17.g6!**

Black resigned, as 17...♕xg6 would be met by 18.♕c4† ♕f7 (or 18...♖f7; Black no longer has ...d5 available!) 19.♖h8#.

**1–0**

**7**

**Alekhine – Forrester**, Glasgow (simul) 1923



*White to move*

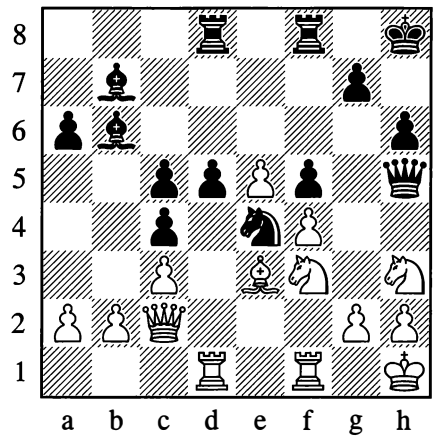
Here the continuation was:

**12.e6! ♕f6 13.♗xd7† ♔d8 14.♗c6†! ♕xd4 15.e7#**

It is rare to see checkmate with a pawn, let alone so early in the game!

**8**

**Torres – Alekhine**, Seville (simul) 1922



*Black to move*

**1...d4!**

To clear the diagonal for the bishop on b7.

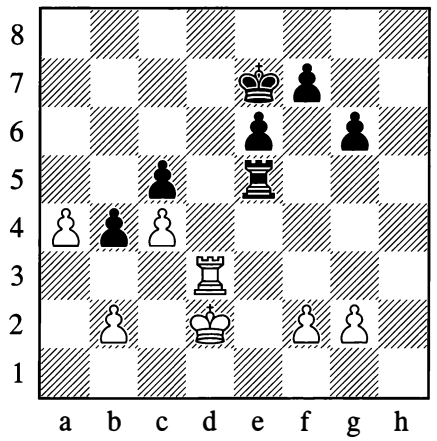
**2.cxd4 cxd4 3.♗xd4 ♗xd4 4.♖xd4 ♖xd4 5.♘xd4 ♕xh3!**

Black has won a knight for a pawn. The game concluded with:

**6.gxh3 ♘f2†† 7.♔g1 ♘xh3#**

**9**

**Alekhine – Amateur**, Groningen (simul) 1933



*White to move*

White achieved victory in the sole possible way, which is extremely subtle:

**1.g4!!**

The black rook cannot stop the a-pawn.

**1...♖e4 2.a5 ♖xg4 3.a6 ♖h4**

If 3...♖g1, then 4.a7 ♖a1 5.♖a3!! bxa3 6.a8=♕ axb2 7.♕b7† and 8.♕xb2 winning.

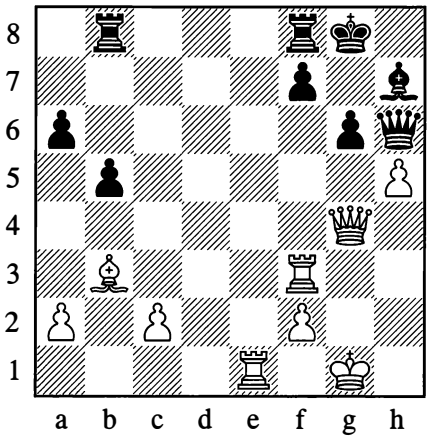
**4.♖d8!! ♔xd8 5.a7**

Black resigned. An endgame study in a practical game!

**1–0**

**10**

**Alekhine – Pias**, Lisbon (simul) 1942



*White to move*

White brought off the following combination:

**28.♗xf7†! ♖xf7 29.♖xf7 ♔xf7 30.♕e6† ♔g7 31.♕e5† ♔f7 32.♕c7†!!**

White is winning the queen, not just the exchange.

**32...♔f6 33.♕e7† ♔f5 34.♕e6† ♔g5 35.♕e3† ♔xh5 36.♕h3†**

Black resigned, as 36...♔g5 is met by 37.f4†.

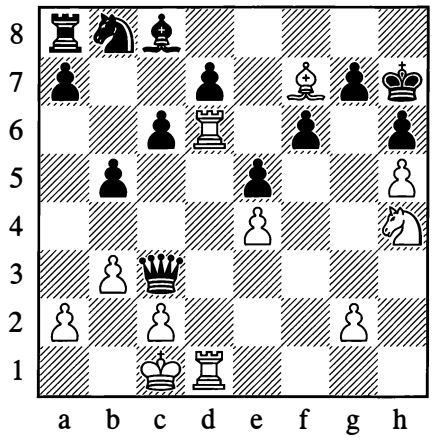
**1–0**

## SIX TRAPS

Failure to understand your opponent's designs can be very dangerous; you usually have to pay for it with defeat. Here are some examples from games by various masters.

### Lured by the bait

**11**



*White to move*

White had given odds of queen for knight. In the diagram position, endeavouring to prepare the decisive combination, he continued as follows:

**1.♖1d3**

The knight on h4 appeared to Black to be a "tasty morsel".

**1...♕e1†**

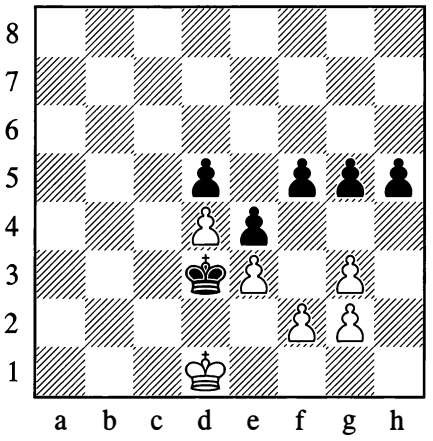
Falling into the trap.

**2.♔b2 ♕xh4 3.♗g6† ♔g8 4.♖e6! dxe6 5.♖d8#**

Why not 1.♗g6† ♔g8 2.♖e6 at once? Black would then have replied 2...♕a1† ("Nothing else for it!") 3.♔d2 ♕xd1†! 4.♔xd1 dxe6.

### He understood nothing

**12**



*Black to move*

As if despairing of his attempts to cramp White still further, Black started withdrawing his king at full speed:

**1...♔c4 2.♔c2 ♔b5 3.♔b3 ♔c6 4.♔b4 ♔d6**

It was worth having a think about why Black was so blatantly "playing for a loss".

**5.♔b5 ♔d7 6.♔c5 ♔e6 7.♔c6 g4 8.♔c5**

"That decides the game – Black's moves have run out."

**8...f4!!**

The point of enticing the white king forward is now clear: Black threatens a breakthrough with 9...h4 10.gxh4 g3.

**9.exf4 h4 10.gxh4 g3 11.fxg3 e3**

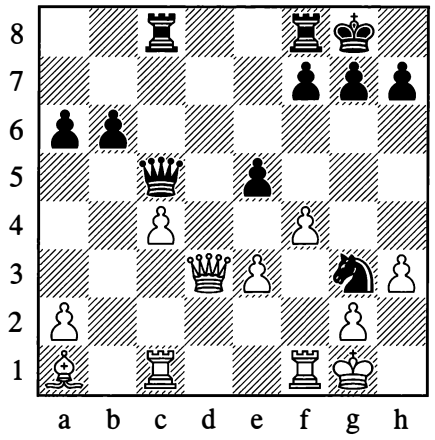
White resigned.

**0–1**

**He thought he understood**

**13**

**Reshevsky – Shainswit**, New York 1951



*White to move*

In this position White made the following natural move:

**1.♖f3**

It's perfectly understandable that he wanted to remove his rook from attack, while at the same time attacking the black knight and defending his weak pawn on e3. "However", Black decided, "that move is a blunder. He's overlooked a fork!"

**1...e4**

This is just what White needed. There then followed:

**2.♖xg3! exd3 3.♖xg7† ♔h8 4.♖xf7† ♔g8 5.♖g7† ♔h8 6.♖g3†**

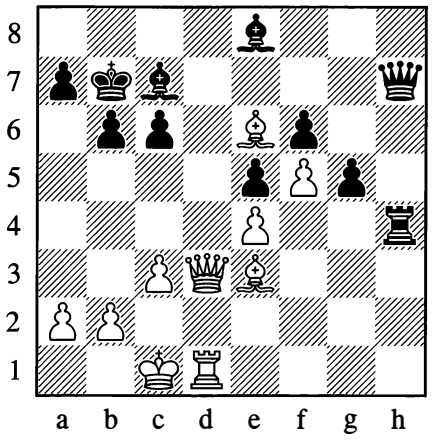
Black resigned.

**1–0**

**He misunderstood it**

**14**

**Jacobsen – Hennig**, Gothenburg 1920



*White to move*

Black has a material and positional plus, and White tries his last chance.

**1.a4 ♕h5**

Aiming to descend on the weak e4-pawn.

**2.b4**

"Pathetic attempts to work up an attack", Black concludes.

**2...♕f3**

Then (like a bolt from the blue) there followed:

**3.♕a6†!!**

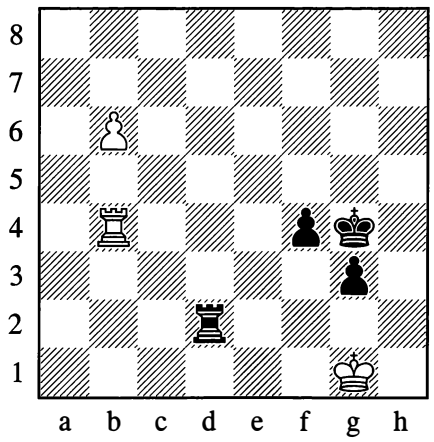
Black resigned. White has a forced checkmate: 3...♔a8 (3...♔xa6 4.♗c8#) 4.♖d8†! ♗b8 5.♖xb8† ♔xb8 and 6.♕c8#. Too much self-reliance doesn't pay. You have to take your opponent's strength into account!

**1–0**

**He understood it but underestimated it**

**15**

**Kostic – Reti**, Gothenburg 1920



*Black to move*

Black cannot win, but he makes one last attempt:

**1...♔g5**

Clearly intending ...f3. It's equally clear that 2.♖b3 draws. "But then, there's nothing terrible about Black's threat!"

**2.b7 f3 3.♖b1 ♖g2†!**

White obviously hadn't reckoned with this.

**4.♔f1**

4.♔h1 ♖h2† 5.♔g1 f2† 6.♔f1 ♖h1† wins for Black.

**4...♖h2 5.♖b5† ♔g4 6.♔e1 ♖e2†**

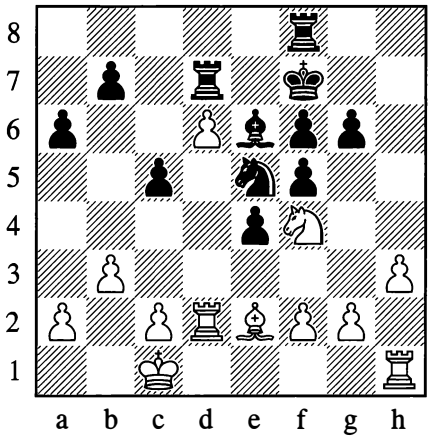
White resigned. He has no meaningful checks and the g-pawn will soon queen and give mate.

**0–1**

**Mysterious rook move**

**16**

**Middleton – Rubinstein**, Barmen 1905



*White to move*

**1.♖e1**

Strange! Why isn't White thinking about the defence of his d6-pawn? What business has the rook on this completely obstructed file? Tarrasch once applied the term "mysterious" to an analogous move by Nimzowitsch, and the latter – in retaliation, and also ironically – gave the heading "Mysterious rook moves" to an entire section in one of his books. To be sure, the sense of this kind of move lies in the calculation that the file will later open up.

In the game in question, Black replied:

**1...♖fd8**

Reckoning that moves like f2-f3 were not dangerous to him. The correct course was 1...b5 2.a4 ♖b8, and then ...♖b6.

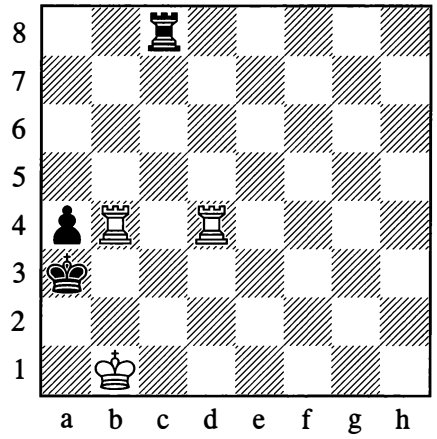
**2.♘xe6 ♔xe6 3.f4!!**

Black loses his knight, as he cannot play 3...exf3 or 3...♘c6 on account of 4.♗c4#! Black did however struggle on after 3...♖xd6 and eventually held the game.

**...½–½**

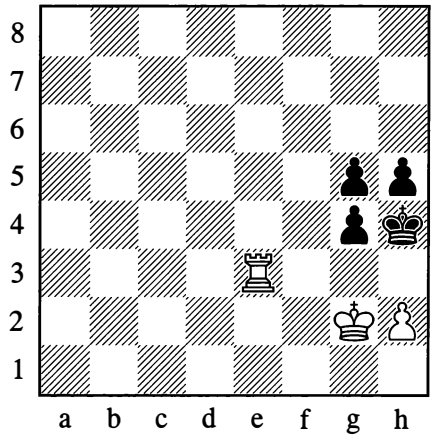
## FIND THE COMBINATION

**17**



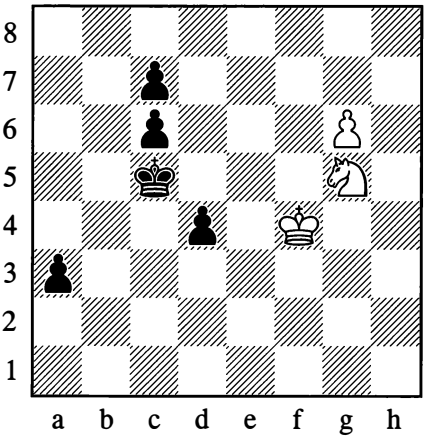
*Black saves himself*

**18**



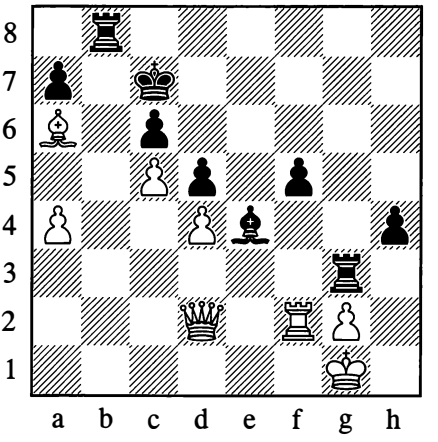
*White mates in 4 moves*

**19**



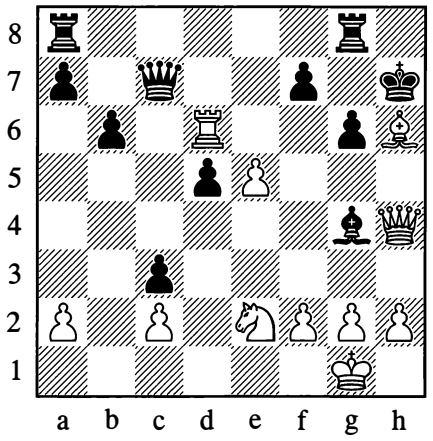
*White wins*

**20**



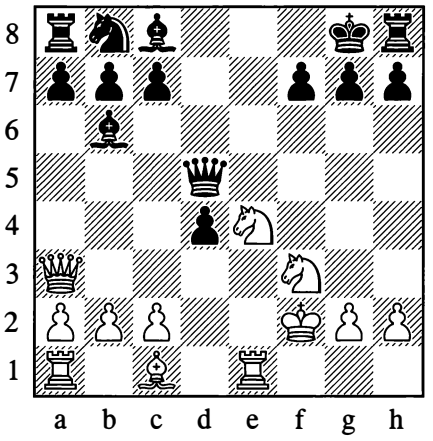
*After 1...♖b1† 2.♔h2?, what follows?*

**21**



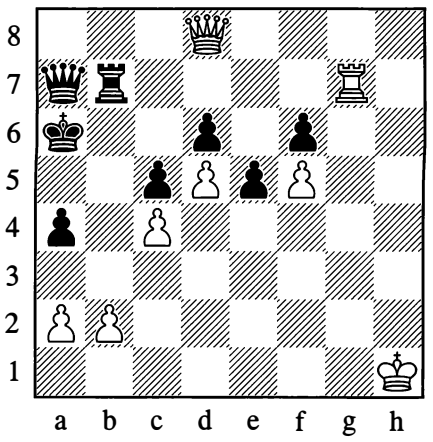
*White mates in 3 moves*

**23**



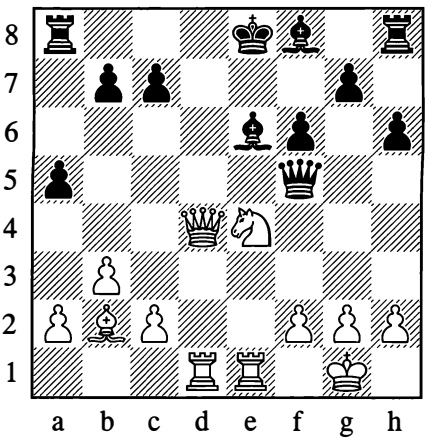
*White mates in 4 moves*

**22**



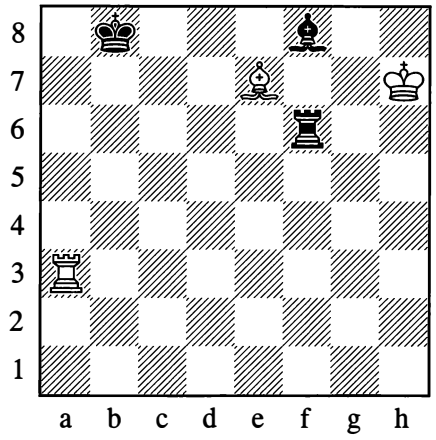
*White wins*

**24**



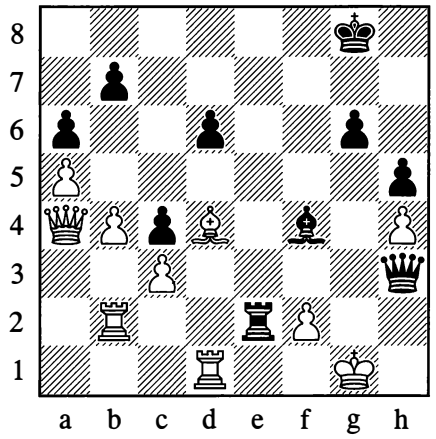
*White mates in 5 moves*

**25**



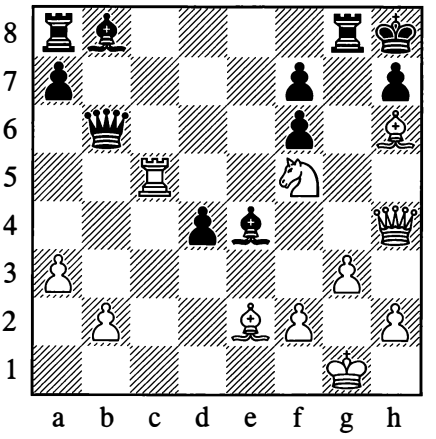
*White wins*
(Note: if 1.♖b3†, then 1...♖b6!.)

**26**



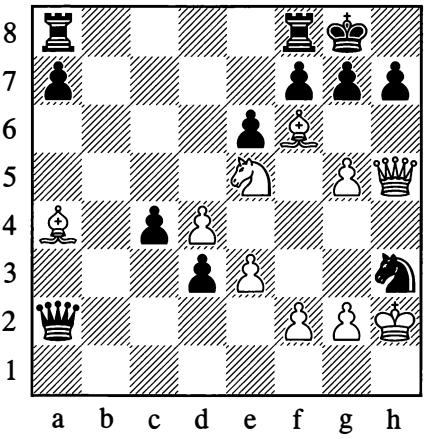
*Black gives mate*

**27**



*White wins*

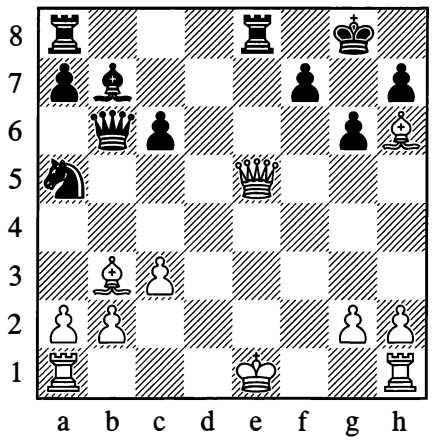
**28**



*White wins*

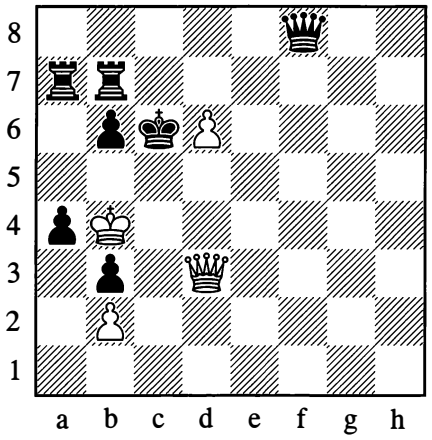
## NEVER DESPAIR

### 29



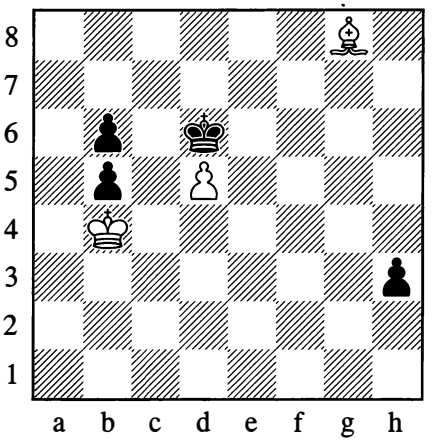
*How is the queen to be saved?*

### 30



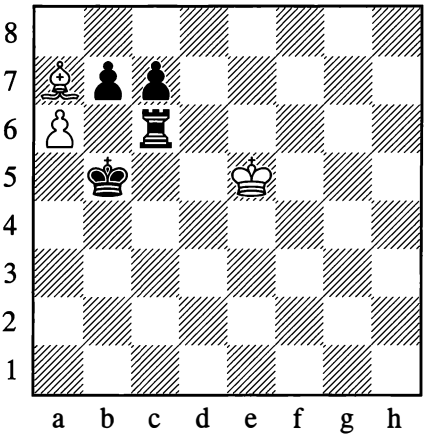
*Can White save himself?*

### 31



The pawn on h3 is not to be stopped, and Black is guaranteed a new queen. Nevertheless White can avoid loss.

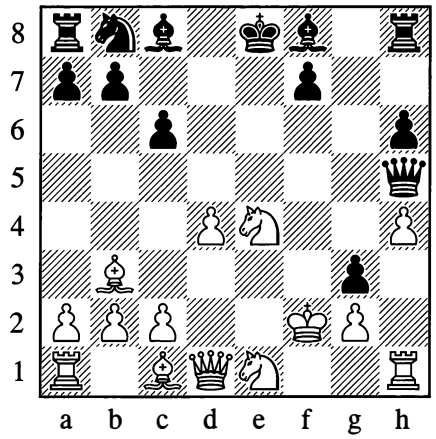
### 32



White played 1.axb7 and was inwardly celebrating victory, but he turned out to be deluded in his calculations.

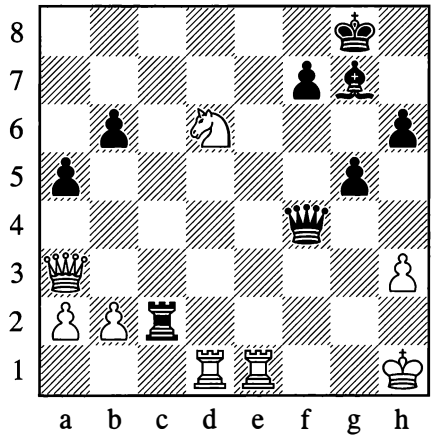
## FIND THE REFUTATION

### 33



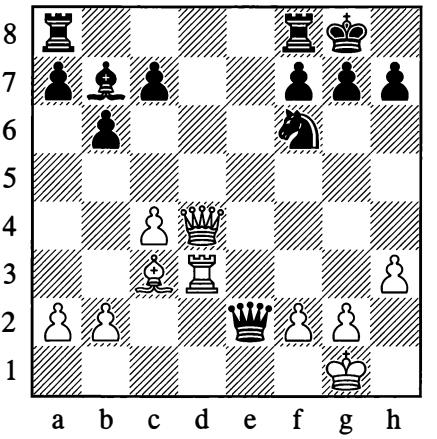
After sacrificing a knight and playing ...g3†, Black was waiting for the words "I resign!" But his combination was to prove unsound.

### 34



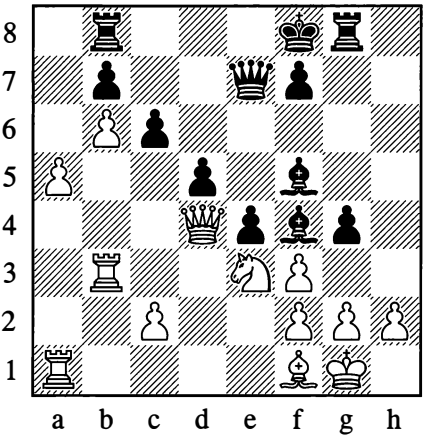
Black has given up a rook, reckoning that White now has no defence against mate. Yet there is a flaw in Black's calculations, as White was to demonstrate with a forcing counter-combination.

### 35



To reach this position, White has sacrificed a rook and a knight. After 1.♕xf6, Black resigned. And yet he had a possibility not only to defend himself but even to win the game.

### 36



Here the continuation was 1...♗xh2† 2.♔xh2 ♕h4† 3.♔g1 ♖h8, with the threat of mate on h1 – against which there might seem to be no good defence. Is Black's combination sound?

## ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS

**17. 1...♖b8!!** draws.

**18. 1.♖h3†!! gxh3† 2.♔f3 g4† 3.♔f4 g3 4.hxg3#**

**19. 1.♘e6† ♔c4 2.♘xd4! ♔c3** (2...♔xd4 3.g7) **3.g7 a2 4.♘b3!** etc.

**20. 2...♖h3†!** and **3...♖h1#**.

**21. 1.♗f8† ♗h5 2.♕xh5†!** and **3.♖h6#**.

**22. 1.♕e8! ♔a5** (1...♖xg7 2.♕b5#) **2.♕c6!!** etc.

**23. 1.♘f6†! gxf6 2.♕f8†! ♔xf8 3.♗h6† ♔g8 4.♖e8#**

**24. 1.♕d7†!! ♗xd7 2.♘d6†† ♔d8 3.♘f7† ♔c8 4.♖e8† ♗xe8 5.♖d8#**

**25. 1.♖b3†! ♖b6! 2.♖xb6† ♔c7! 3.♗d8†! ♔xd8 4.♖b8† ♔e7 5.♔g6!** and wins (study by T. Gorgiev, 1930).

**26. 1...♗h2†! 2.♔h1 ♗e5†! 3.♔g1 ♕h2† 4.♔f1 ♗xd4!** and mate on f2 or h1.

**27. 1.♗g7†!! ♖xg7 2.♖c8† ♖g8 3.♕g4!! ♕d8 4.♖xd8** etc.

**28. 1.♗e8!! ♖axe8 2.♕h6!! gxh6 3.♘g4** etc.

**29. 1.♗xf7†! ♔xf7 2.♖f1† ♔g8 3.♖f8†! ♖xf8 4.♕g7#**

**30.** Yes – with **1.♕b5†! ♔xd6 2.♕c5†!! bxc5† 3.♔a3**, drawing.

**31. 1.♗h7 ♔xd5 2.♗f5 h2 3.♗c8 ♔c6 4.♗g4! h1=♕ 5.♗f3† ♕xf3** stalemate.

**32. 1...♖e6†! 2.♔xe6 ♔c6**, and now **3.b8=♕** (or ♖) gives stalemate, while **3.b8=♘** is answered by **3...♔b7**. (In a Dutch chess magazine of 1914, this position was given as the finish of a practical game, but in reality it is a study by A. Troitsky, 1895.)

**33.** After **1.♔e3! ♕xd1 2.c3!**, Black in turn had to lose his queen and afterwards the pawn on g3.

**34.** White played **1.♖e8† ♗f8** (if 1...♔h7 then 2.♕d3†) **2.♖xe8† ♔xf8** (else 3.♖xf7†) **3.♘f5† ♔g8 4.♕f8†!**, and Black resigned, as **4...♔xf8** is answered by **5.♖d8#**.

**35.** With **1...♕g4!!**.

**36.** No. After **4.♕g7†! ♔e8** (4...♔xg7 5.♘xf5†) **5.♕e5† ♔d7** (otherwise 6.♕xb8†) **6.♕d6†!** Black can only resign.

# Chapter 6

# Positional Play

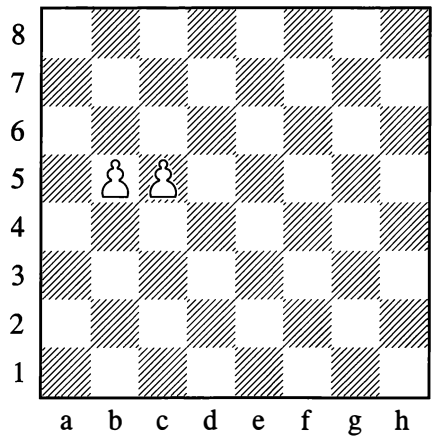
A factor of paramount importance for successfully conducting the struggle is the positional structure: that is the overall arrangement of the pieces, their influence on each other and also on the squares and lines of the chessboard. With every move in a game we should endeavour, as far as possible, to improve our own position, to worsen that of our opponent and to exploit any kind of defect in his piece formation. There are many outward signs that enable us to judge whether a position is good or bad, and whether the move that we are thinking of making meets the positional requirements.

## 1. WEAK POINTS (SQUARES AND PAWNS)

Usually a fundamental role in the structure of the position is played by the pawns. This is understandable. Pawns possess very little mobility and are often unable to move at all – such as when they are blockaded, or when the squares ahead are inaccessible to them because placed under enemy attack. This causes pawns to remain in the same places for a more or less prolonged stretch of time, thus defining the general pattern of the position – or its "skeleton", as people sometimes figuratively call it. The pieces with greater mobility adapt themselves to the "pawn skeleton" as they take up their positions, creating a "living tissue" of movements, manoeuvres and combinations in the process of the game.

Pawn structures greatly vary. In some positions the pawns are arranged in unbroken chains, whereas in others they are in separated groups. They usually form a compact mass (connected pawns), but sometimes they are in a weakened state – split up and isolated. It's essential to familiarize yourself with these peculiarities of the pawn structure, so that you can learn to evaluate various positions in their entirety.

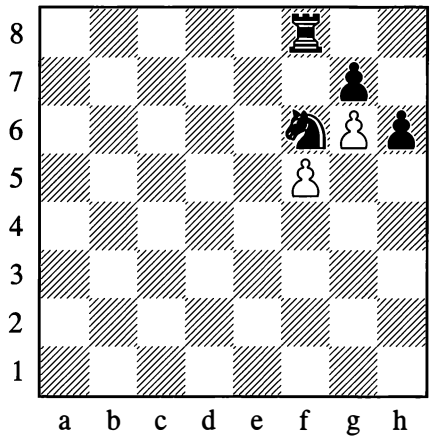
**328**



This diagram shows connected pawns. Pawns standing side by side occupy a formidable position, making the squares in front of them inaccessible to the enemy pieces.

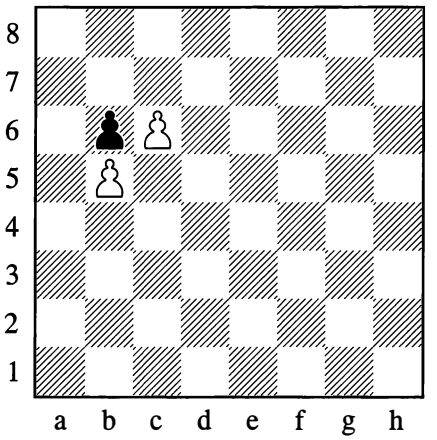
Should either of the pawns advance, however, the position of both of them is significantly weakened at once. Advanced pawns can easily be blocked and become objects of enemy attack on account of their immobility.

**329**



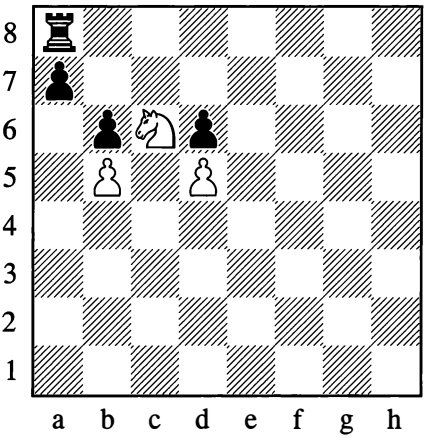
In Position 329 the blockading square f6 is occupied by the knight; for Black this square is a strong point. Black will direct his attacks against the backward pawn on f5 for the purpose of destroying the f5/g6 pawn chain, seeing that the f5-pawn is the foundation (base) of the chain and constitutes its weakest link.

**330**



It would be wrong to maintain that advanced pawns are always weak. In many cases the opponent doesn't even have the possibility of blocking them, and their position is sometimes very strong. For example in Position 330, White has a protected passed pawn – an investment for future victory – while the weak pawn on b5 is shielded by the black b6-pawn against frontal attacks (from a rook on b8, say).

**331**

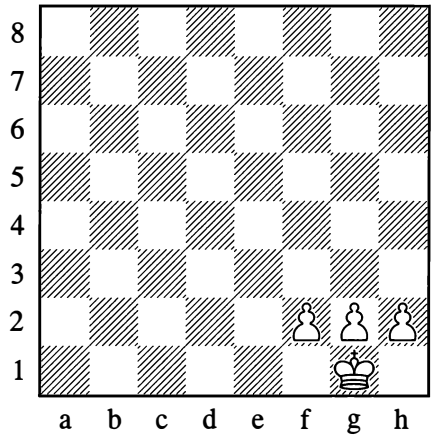


Despite this, when moving any pawn it must never be forgotten that *a pawn's advance weakens the squares next to it on the same rank* – the squares that were previously under attack from this same pawn. In Position 331, as a result of the moves made by the black b- and d-pawns, the square c6 is a weak point for Black (a strong point for White). If a minor piece is occupying such a position and cannot be exchanged, it is quite often equal in strength to a rook. The knight on c6 cannot be driven away by pawns, and if it is exchanged off, a protected passed pawn arises. Black is simply obliged to defend against the threats this piece creates – given that a number of points usually *are* threatened by a piece entrenched like this in the opponent's position. Under cover of the knight on c6 White may carry out a concentration of his forces; for example he may double rooks and then move the knight away at the right moment, clearing the c-file for the rooks to invade the seventh or eighth rank.

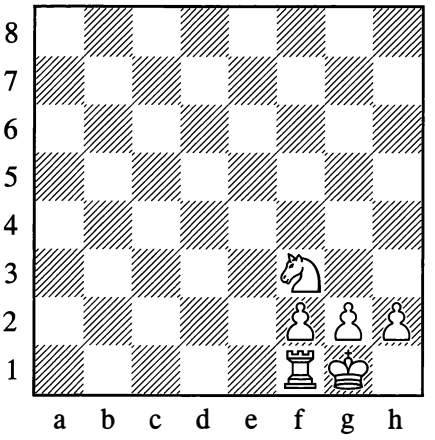
We must now explain what kind of weaknesses can arise in a king's castled position – in the pawn "shield" which shelters the king from attacks.

A castled position tends to be especially robust when the pawns are still on their starting squares, forming a solid wall (Position 332).

**332**



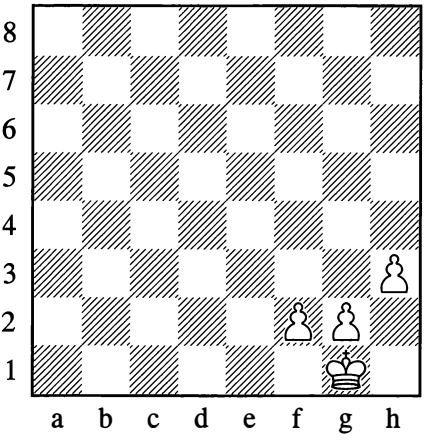
**333**



In the normal castled position (see Diagram 333), the points f2 and h2 are each defended twice. True, the g2-point is defended only once, but then it isn't so easy for the enemy pieces to mount an attack against it.

A move with any of these three pawns usually weakens the position of the castled king, and since pawns cannot go backwards, the weakness is irreparable (lasting).

**334**

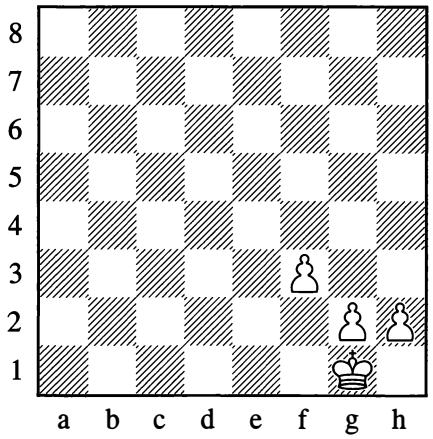


In Diagram 334 the castled position is slightly weakened. Imagine a white knight on f3, and black pawns on g5 and h5; then the

move 1...g4 is highly unpleasant for White. In the event of 2.hxg4 hxg4, the h-file is opened, while the knight on f3 is also forced to abandon the defence of the h2-point. If instead of 2.hxg4 the knight on f3 moves away somewhere, then after 2...gxh3 3.gxh3 a file for an attack by the enemy pieces is opened all the same, while the pawns on f2 and h3 are isolated and weakened. Thus the *forward pawn* on h3 can be a convenient *target* for an enemy attack.

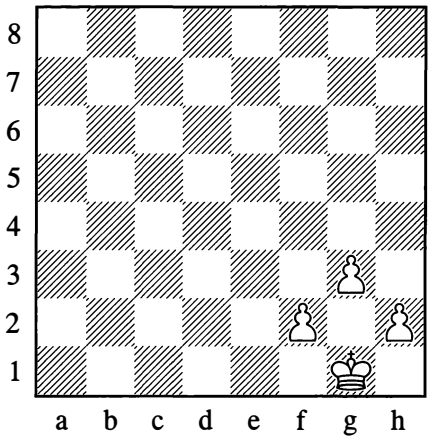
The move h2-h3 sometimes has to be made in order to create a "loophole" for the king and thus guard against mate by a rook or queen on the first rank. The move should not, however, be made "just in case", but only when faced with actual danger or when the pawn's advance is needed for some special purposes; otherwise this move will in some measure weaken the position and will also waste a tempo, seeing that moves at the start of the game are better used for developing the pieces.

**335**



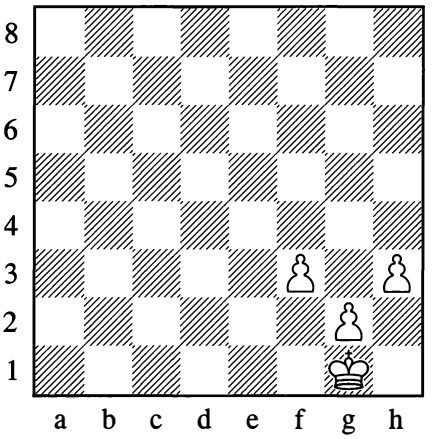
Everything we are saying here about a weakening of the pawn position applies chiefly to the middlegame. For example in Position 335, the move f2-f3 amounts to a serious weakening of the a7-g1 diagonal (attacks by a bishop are possible, with unpleasant pins; recall Diagram 166); moreover a pawn on f3 is often depriving a knight of its best square. In the endgame, however, this move can be beneficial, as it allows the king to reach the centre quickly.

**336**



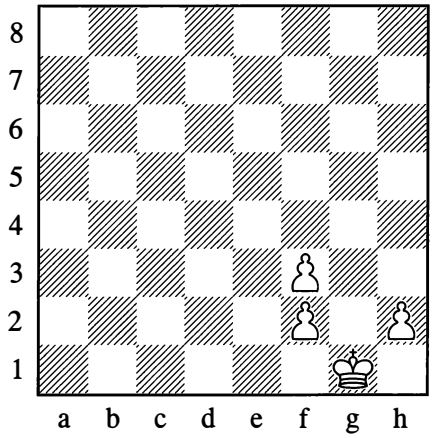
In Position 336, the light squares are weak. However, if White has a bishop on g2, covering the diagonals a8-h1 and f1-h3 as well as the weak squares f3 and h3, his position in most cases is perfectly safe. (A position like this, with a bishop developed on the flank, is called a "fianchetto".)

**337**

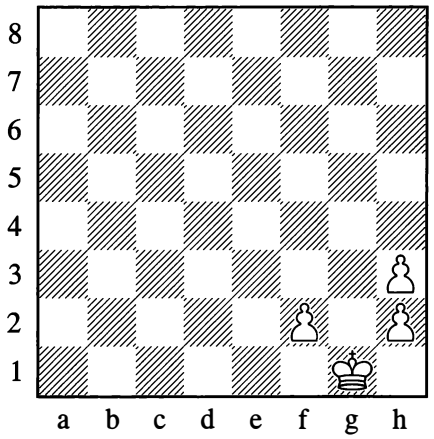


The position in Diagram 337 is much worse. Here the dark squares are weak, diagonals are open, and there is a gaping "hole" on g3 – a convenient point for invasion by enemy pieces.

**338**

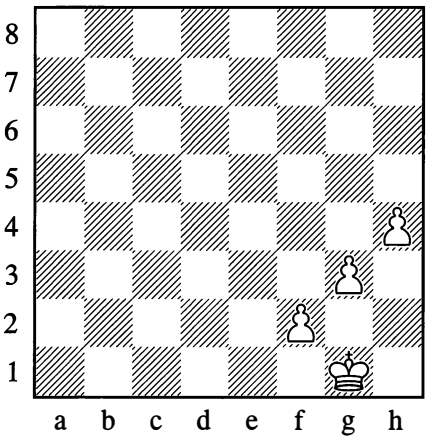


**339**



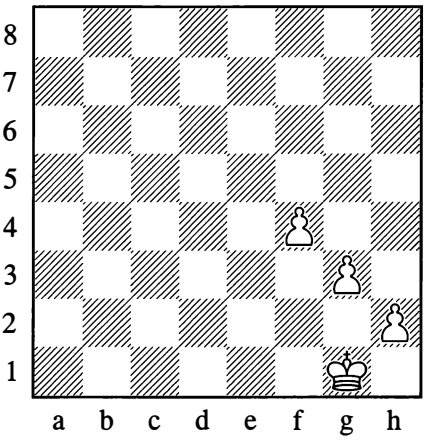
The diagrams above show pawns that are split, isolated, and also doubled. The doubled pawns on the rook's file (Position 339) are especially weak and devalued.

**340**



White's castled position is severely weakened in Diagram 340, where diagonals are open and hostile pieces may settle on the squares f3 and g4. An even worse case is the completely open position in Diagram 341, where the king is unprotected against attacks either on the diagonals or along the second rank. In both examples the advanced pawns can easily be attacked by hostile ones and become disconnected, isolated.

**341**



Some pawns, then, are weak in themselves – such as isolated, doubled and backward ones. Their weakness stems from the fact that

if attacked, they cannot be defended by other pawns. Hence in order to defend them, pieces of much greater value have to be diverted, cramping their freedom of action. It stands to reason that such pawns must be recognized as *weak points* of the position. Other weak points are *squares* that have been weakened by pawn moves – as was shown in the foregoing diagrams. As a rule, the squares beside and in front of an isolated pawn are weak. Squares no longer under the control of pawns are weak because they offer the possibility of a lasting and often dangerous invasion by the enemy pieces. It must be stated as a general proviso that weak points cannot always be exploited, which means that in many cases a weakness has no practical importance. In plenty of other cases, however, the presence of weak points in a position brings woeful consequences, as we shall show by examples from practical games.

In addition we shall see that not only individual squares but also whole groups of them (square complexes) can be weak. We are already familiar with examples of weak seventh and eighth ranks, or weak files along which an invasion by major pieces takes place. But there are also positions where squares of one or the other colour (light squares or dark squares) are weak. Diagram 83 may serve as an example.

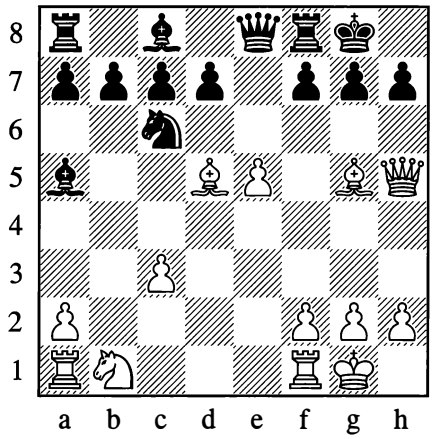
## 2. PIECE CONFIGURATION – TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT WEAKNESSES

If a bad pawn formation sometimes makes for enduring and irreparable weaknesses in the position, then a poor arrangement of the pieces – more mobile units than pawns – gives rise in most cases to *temporary* weaknesses which can also become very dangerous if you don't attend to eliminating them. Pieces have to possess mobility; they have to be active and work concertedly in the interests of attack and defence. If this rule is broken, weaknesses in the position can arise.

Cases where one player's development is retarded or not fully effective are extremely common in practice. It can naturally be very hard to conduct the fight if several of your pieces are still on their starting squares while your opponent's development has progressed a long way. In such cases, the side that lags in development will have too few combat-ready pieces to pit against the active forces of the enemy.

**342**

**Chigorin – Shabelsky**, Corr. 1884-5



*White to move*

White is a pawn down, but he has a certain lead in development over his opponent; furthermore his pieces are much more *actively* placed than Black's. Nonetheless White's own development is still not completed, and he has some difficulties to face. His pawn on e5 is under attack. He cannot bring his knight out from b1, owing to ...♗xc3.

There is of course no doubt about White's positional advantage. Like any advantage in development, it can be expressed in terms of time – in terms of a number of moves – and it has to be utilized without delay. If White continues quietly and slowly, his temporary advantage may vanish like smoke; Black

may succeed in bringing up his pieces to the defence, and then his extra pawn will tell. In such situations you have to select the most energetic moves.

Where should White direct his strike? The choice is fairly simple – Black's castled position is almost bereft of defensive pieces.

**13.♗f6!**

The bishop cannot be captured on account of 14.♗e4. Meanwhile White threatens 14.♕g5 g6 15.♕h6.

**13...♘e7!**

To answer 14.♕g5 with 14...♘g6. At the same time the knight attacks the bishop on d5.

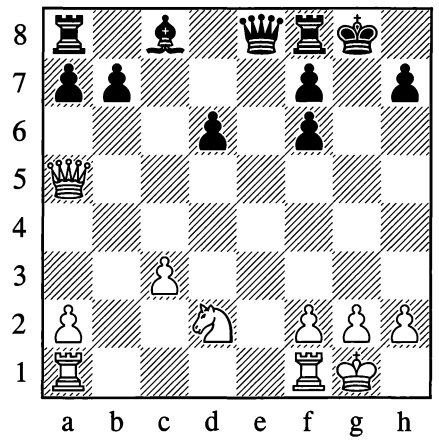
**14.♘d2!**

It's essential to bring up the reserves.

**14...d6!**

Not 14...♘xd5, on account of 15.♕g5. Black doesn't have time for 14...♗xc3 either; for instance, 15.♘e4 ♗xa1 16.♗xg7! ♔xg7 17.♘f6 and White wins.

**15.exd6 ♘xd5 16.♕xd5 gxf6 17.♕xa5 cxd6**



Black has succeeded in fending off the pressure that threatened him with immediate disaster, and he has even kept his extra pawn; but this has been achieved at the cost of a significant weakening of his overall pawn formation. As a result of White's attack, some *permanent* pawn weaknesses have been added to the temporary weakness (backward development) that Black has still not entirely overcome. But then, White's attack has not by any means expired yet; it merely takes a new course, in keeping with the altered character of the weaknesses and of the position as a whole.

**18.♖ae1 ♕c6 19.c4!**

Preventing ...d5.

**19...♕c5 20.♕c3 ♗f5**

Black makes "heroic" efforts to catch up with his development. In the event of 21.♕xf6 ♖fe8 he impedes White's operations in the e-file, and although in the worse position, he can fight for the draw.

**21.♘b3! ♕b6 22.♘d4 ♗g6 23.f4 ♖fe8 24.f5 ♖xe1**

If 24...♗h5, then 25.♖f4 with the threat of g2-g4. (Also strong is 25.♖b1! ♕c5 26.♖b5 ♕c7 27.♕g3† and 28.♕h4.)

**25.♖xe1 ♗xf5**

The piece cannot be saved. On 25...♗h5, White plays 26.h3 and 27.g4.

**26.c5! ♕xc5 27.♕xc5 dxc5 28.♘xf5**

White is in complete control. There now followed:

**28...h5 29.♖e7 ♖d8**

If 29...♖b8 then 30.♘h6†.

**30.♖xb7**

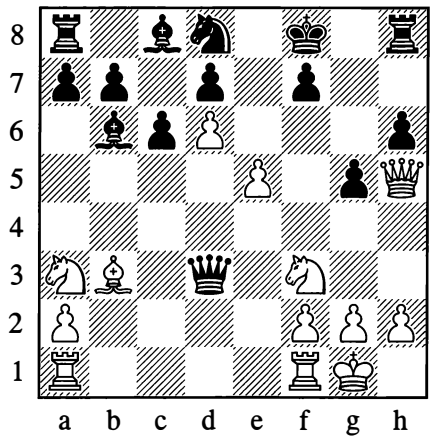
With his extra piece White gained the win.

**...1–0**

The following is another illustration of backward development combined with the ineffective placing of those pieces which *have* been brought out.

**343**

**Chigorin – Steinitz**, Havana (7) 1889



*White to move*

The characteristic feature of this position is the pawn on d6 – the "wedge" that White has driven into Black's formation. By playing ...c6 (aiming to continue with ...d5), Black weakened the d6-point, and a white pawn has established itself there, hampering the development of Black's entire queenside *for the long term*. The black kingside has also been weakened by the move ...g5. White's positional advantage more than compensates for the pawn minus.

There is just one circumstance that calls for attention. White's centre pawns are too far advanced, they have detached themselves from their base; in themselves they are weakened, and the blockading square e6 is under Black's control.

The question to be asked is whether Black will succeed in destroying these pawns in the coming struggle.

We should note that weaknesses "in themselves" are of no importance if the opponent cannot make use of them. *What cannot be attacked is not weak.* Take a look, for instance, at Diagram 93 (page 67). There Black's pawns are just as weak as White's. But there is nothing to attack them, and so speaking of their weakness is simply not called for. If White's bishop were the light-squared one, the weakness of Black's pawns would be obvious.

In Position 343 which we are examining, Black will have to devote many moves to defence before he can realistically think about attacking White's centre pawns. At the moment they are strong, not weak. All the same, the position is such as to *require* White to conduct a victorious attack, as otherwise the pawns will prove weak at the end of the day.

**20.♖ad1!**

On 20.♘xg5, the pinning move 20...♕f5 is unpleasant. The move played reinforces the role of the d6-pawn without loss of time (in other words, with tempo). If now 20...♕g6 (for example), White wins a piece by 21.♕xg6 fxg6 22.e6. As we see, although at first sight the storming pawns are held up, their inherent urge to advance further can still make itself felt.

**20...♕h7**

White now makes use of his opponent's helplessness to bring his one badly placed piece into the game.

**21.♘c2 ♔g7 22.♘cd4 ♕g6**

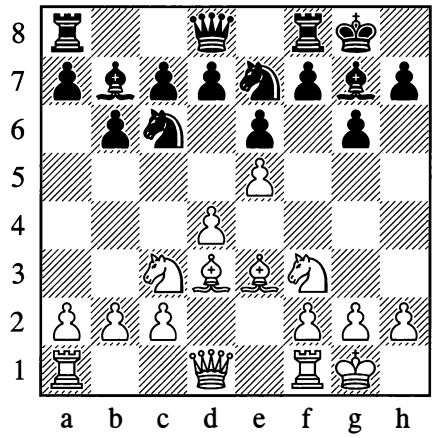
White was threatening 23.♗c2. If 22...♗xd4, then 23.♘xd4 with f2-f4 to follow (the g5-pawn is a natural target for attack, and White has an interest in opening up the file for his rook on f1). Black doesn't have the pieces for the fight against the fully mobilized hostile army. The remaining moves of the game were:

**23.♕g4 h5 24.♘f5† ♔f8 25.♕xg5 ♕xg5 26.♘xg5 h4 27.♔h1 ♖h5 28.f4 ♘e6 29.g4 hxg3 30.♘xg3 ♖h6 31.♘xf7! ♔xf7 32.f5 ♔e8 33.fxe6 dxe6 34.♘e4**

Black resigned. If 34...♗d8, then 35.d7† ♗xd7 36.♘d6† ♔e7 37.♖f7#. A fine model of powerful cooperation between the pieces!
**1–0**

Backwardness in development is not the only reason why the other side may acquire a large positional plus. It quite often happens that while both players have brought out the same number of pieces, one side is in a less active or cramped position.

**344**



White's pieces are arranged on five ranks, Black's on three. White's position is *freer*. It's easier for him to manoeuvre with his pieces, since he controls more space.

Although cramped, Black's formation would be solid enough if it were not for the weakening of his castled position due to the move ...g6. For the moment, the weak squares f6 and h6 are covered by the bishop on g7.

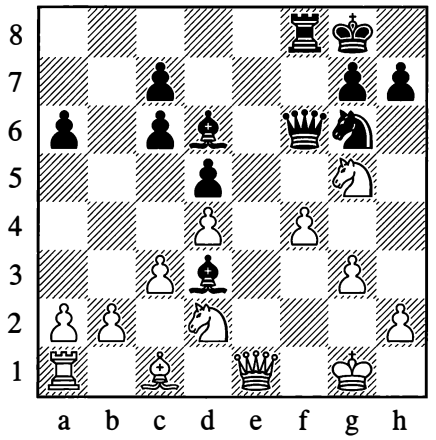
White may therefore adopt the plan of ♕d2 and then ♗h6. It would not pay Black to capture on h6, as after ♕xh6 and ♘g5 there would be a threat of mate on h7. Black would prefer the exchange to be carried out by White (♗xg7 ♔xg7), but in any case, with the departure of Black's dark-squared bishop, the squares f6 and h6 would be weakened still further; in some circumstances the manoeuvre ♘c3-e4-f6 would be possible. If necessary Black could give extra protection to f6 and h6 by playing ...♘g8, but he would be condemned to defend while White could pursue active play.

The bishop's manoeuvre to h6 can be made into an integral part of some broader game plan for White, beginning (for example) with a strengthening of the centre (♕d2, ♖ad1). White has vastly greater freedom of action than Black. His pieces are more actively placed; the initiative is in his hands.

Let us now look at some positions of a different type:

**345**

**Euwe – Keres**, World Championship (11) Hague/Moscow 1948



*Black to move*

Black has sacrificed a pawn and obtained the more active deployment for his pieces, which have all been brought into play and are marshalled to strike the decisive blow. The pawn cover in front of the enemy king has been weakened (as in Position 341), and White is behind with his queenside development. He is, however, threatening to play ♕e6†, exchanging queens and thereby depriving Black of his chief

attacking piece. Moreover White is essentially just one move short of fortifying his position with ♘df3 (after which ♘e5 will be possible).

Black has no time to lose. He intends to sacrifice a piece on f4, exploiting the unfavourable position of the knight on d2 which for a brief moment is blocking the diagonal of the bishop on c1. However, 19...♘xf4 would be inadequate here, in view of 20.gxf4 ♕xf4 21.♕e6† ♔h8 22.♘df3, and White has defended himself. Black therefore played:

**19...♗xf4! 20.gxf4 ♘xf4 21.♘df3 ♘e2† 22.♔g2 h6 23.♕d2 ♕f5 24.♕e3 hxg5 25.♗d2 ♗e4**

The devastation of the white position is obvious. White resigned.

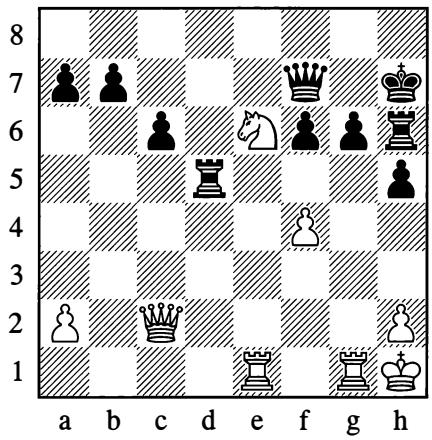
**0–1**

Another thing Black was exploiting in the previous example was the weakening of the light squares in his opponent's castled position.

Cases like this, when a position is not bad overall but is spoilt by the poor placing of some individual piece, occur very often in practical play.

Here is a simple little example:

**346**



*White to move*

Here the rook on h6 is occupying an extremely awkward position (it could show its strength if placed, for instance, on e7 or d7). White can exploit this positional defect by combinative means:

**1.♘g5† fxg5 2.fxg5**

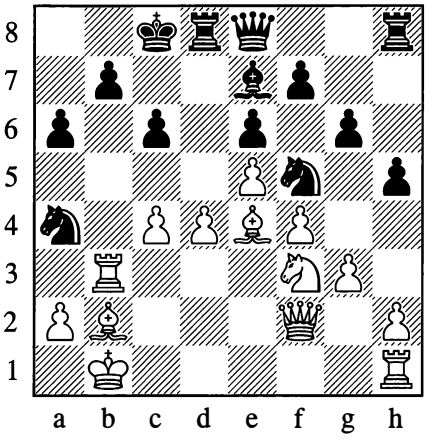
The rook on h6 perishes.

Of course, the bad placing of a piece doesn't necessarily have to be exploited combinatively. Simple manoeuvres are often sufficient.

Diagram 347 can serve as an example of this:

**347**

**Chigorin – Walbrodt**, Vienna 1898



*White to move*

**23.♗a1! ♕d7 24.c5!**

The knight on a4 has its retreat cut off, and its fate is sealed. Play continued with:

**24...♕c7 25.♖c1**

Preventing ...b5.

**25...♖d7 26.♕e1 ♖hd8 27.♕b4 ♘xc5 28.dxc5**

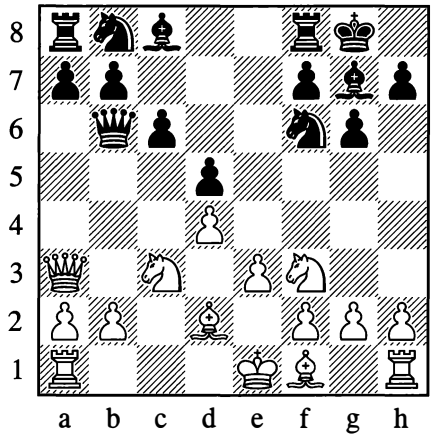
White converted his extra piece shortly afterwards.

**...1–0**

The following is a novel case:

**348**

**Freiman – I. Rabinovich**, Leningrad 1934



*White to move*

In astonishing fashion White demonstrates that b6, in these circumstances, is a bad place for the queen:

**10.♘a4 ♕d8 11.♘b6!!**

Black loses the exchange, seeing that White would win the queen after 11...♕xb6 12.♗a5. Here the freedom of action that White's pieces enjoy on the queenside, towards which both his bishops are directing their fire, is clearly displayed. However, in the game itself, Black did manage to fight back for a draw after 11...axb6 12.♕xa8.

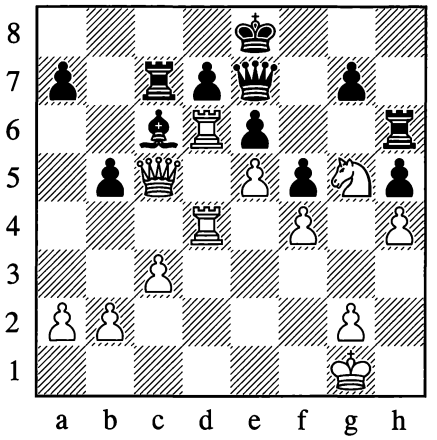
**...½–½**

We have examined a few examples of the bad and unsafe placing of individual pieces. In practical play it is always most important to find strong, secure posts for the deployment of our pieces – posts from which they can put active, effective pressure on the enemy formation.

The exploitation of long-term (permanent) weaknesses in the following examples is instructive:

**349**

**Chigorin – Tinsley**, London 1899



*White to move*

Black has a weak point on d6, and indeed all the important dark squares are controlled by the white pieces. In typical fashion White has concentrated his forces against the backward pawn on d7. True, this pawn is sufficiently defended, but the blockade against it is disrupting Black's communication between the two flanks. The rook on h6, for instance, cannot be brought across to defend the queenside (compare Diagram 346). Nor can ...♕d8 be played for that purpose, owing to ♘xe6. With the pin on the black bishop also taken into account, White proceeds to break open and demolish his opponent's queenside position.

**31.a4! ♔d8**

31...a6 would be met by 32.♕b6; on 31...bxa4, White continues 32.♖xa4 ♗xa4 33.♕xc7, after which the pawn on a7 is doomed and Black has still not at all extricated himself from White's grip.

**32.axb5 ♗xg2 33.♕a3! ♗d5 34.♖a4 ♖b7 35.♖xa7 ♖xb5 36.♖dxd7†**

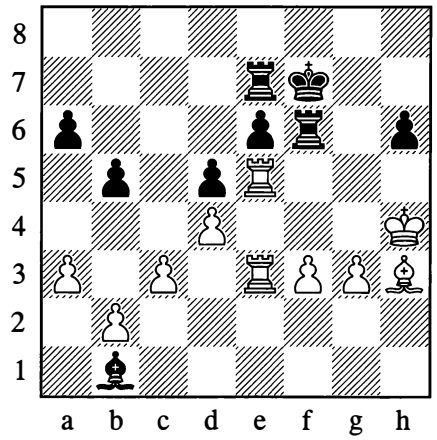
The blockaded pawn does finally fall, and White mates in three more moves.

**1–0**

Now let us consider the position in Diagram 350:

**350**

**Sorokin – Lisitsyn**, Moscow 1931



*White to move*

With the white rooks arranged as they are, this position rather recalls the previous one; but here (with the endgame stage already reached), the blockade of the e6-pawn is virtually the sole focus of the play. Winning this pawn is perhaps the only way – the most convenient one, at any rate – for White to realize his advantage, material and positional. How can he accomplish this task?

White has no more pieces to hand for the additional attack on e6 which the situation demands. As a rule in such cases, the decisive blow will be struck by a pawn.

However, f3-f4-f5 is unplayable owing to ...♗xf5, while if White tries g3-g4, ♔g3 and f3-f4 he is blocking the diagonal of his bishop on h3; moreover f3-f4 can be met by ...♗e4.

White finds a noteworthy solution – an attack on the e6-point with his d-pawn. He will make this possible by staging a breakthrough on the queenside which at first sight looks unassailable.

**45.b3! ♗c2**

If 45...♗a2 then 46.f4, and now 46...♗xb3 47.f5 or 46...♗b1 47.c4.

**46.c4 bxc4 47.bxc4 dxc4 48.d5!**

The goal is attained.

**48...♖b7**

48...♗f5 would have offered a better defence.

**49.♗xe6† ♔f8 50.d6 ♗a4 51.♖c5 ♗d7 52.♖c8†! ♔g7**

After 52...♗xc8 53.♗xc8 Black loses material.

**53.♗xd7 ♖xd7 54.♖e7† ♖f7 55.♖xd7**

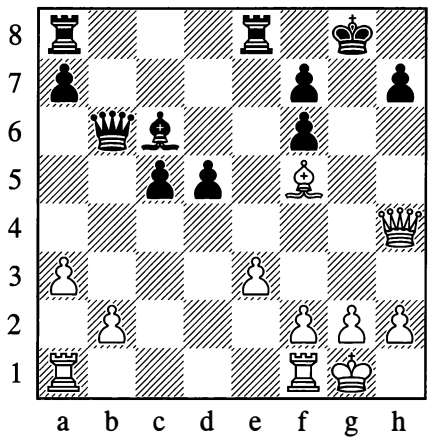
Black resigned in view of 55...♖xd7 56.♖c7.

**1–0**

The next two examples illustrate other weaknesses, chiefly in a player's castled position:

**351**

**Zagoriansky – Levitin**, Moscow 1934



*White to move*

In this position White could take the pawn on h7 at once, but then the black king would escape via f8 to e7, the black rooks would occupy the h- and g-files, and the struggle would drag on. Therefore:

**1.♕h6!**

Creating the mating threat: 2.♗xh7† ♔h8 3.♗g6† ♔g8 4.♕h7† ♔f8 5.♕xf7#.

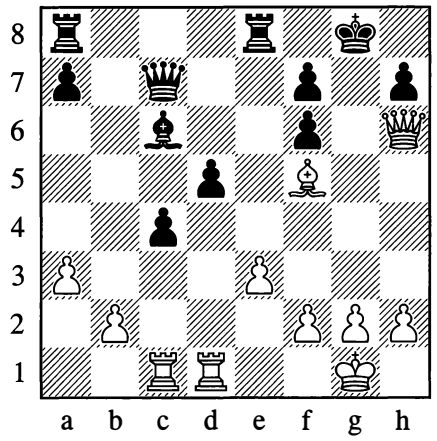
**1...♕c7**

The point f7 is defended, and in order to give mate White must bring up a rook to join the queen and bishop. However, Black's so-called "hanging" pawns on c5 and d5 are very strongly placed, denying the white rooks the possibility of penetrating along the 4th rank. The hanging pawns will only become weaker if one of them advances.

**2.♖ac1! c4**

Forced. If the bishop on c6 moves, White simply plays 3.♖xc5 (since the queen is tied to the f7-square). But with the advance of the c5-pawn, the point d4 is weakened.

**3.♖cd1**



White won quickly from here:

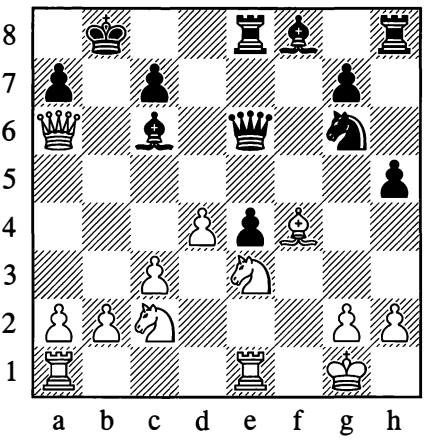
**3...♖e5 4.♗xh7† ♔h8 5.♖d4**

White's attack is too powerful. Black resigned.

**1–0**

**352**

**Chigorin – Steinitz**, Vienna 1898



*White to move*

Here the black pawns, split into four "islands", are all weak. The white knight on e3 is occupying a strong position blockading the e4-pawn. Black's king position has been weakened. White, who has an extra pawn already, exploits all these factors energetically. From the diagram he played:

**22.♗xc7†! ♔xc7 23.d5 ♗xd5 24.♕a5† ♕b6**

Not 24...♔c6? 25.♘d4†, or 24...♔d6 25.♘xd5 ♕xd5? 26.♖ad1, losing the black queen to either a knight fork or pin.

**25.♕xd5**

With his enduring attack, White went on to win nearly all the black pawns:

**25...♗d6 26.♘d4 ♘f4 27.♘b5† ♔d7 28.♕f5† ♔d8 29.♘xd6 ♕xd6 30.♘c4 ♕c6 31.♕xf4 ♕xc4 32.♖ad1† ♔c8 33.♖d4 ♕c5 34.♖exe4 ♖hf8 35.♕e3 ♖xe4 36.♕xe4 a5**

**37.♕e3 ♕f5 38.h3 g5 39.♖c4† ♔b7 40.♖c5 ♕d7 41.♕e4† ♔b6 42.♖d5 ♕c6 43.♕d4† ♔b7 44.♖xa5**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

These examples don't of course exhaust all the diverse peculiarities of chess positions in practical play. They merely elucidate some key factors on which positional play is based: the exploitation of weaknesses permanent and temporary, and also the use that can be made of an active position when your opponent is behind in development, or when his pieces are deployed to little effect or downright badly.

## 3. THE CENTRE (PAWN CENTRE AND PIECE CENTRE)

One of the basic strategic principles of chess, as we indicated before on page 105, is to centralize the pieces, to control the centre, or at least to occupy just as solid and strong a position there as our opponent. "The centre" is what we call the fairly small area formed by the squares d4, d5, e5 and e4; the "extended centre" is the rather larger area with c3, c6, f6 and f3 at its corners.

We can gain possession of the centre by concentrating our pieces and pawns there. The pawns need to be placed in the centre first; they will constitute its foundation, they will take valuable squares away from the opponent and provide our pieces with future outposts; but then the firepower of our pieces must be focused on the centre too. The point of this concentration of forces is that our control of the centre enables us, if we wish, to carry out a breakthrough there by using the storming power of our pawns, or alternatively, under cover of our strong centre, we can start active operations on the flanks – in which case the possibility of rapidly switching pieces from one flank to the other will be very useful.

It doesn't pay to occupy the centre with pieces alone, as the enemy pawns will easily drive them away. A centre like that would be unstable. The matter is different if the movement and exchange of pawns causes weak squares (from the opponent's point of view) to be formed. Imagine for example an isolated black pawn on d5; a knight of ours on d4 would then be occupying a very strong central position. It is true that a pure "piece centre" does sometimes come about, but what this involves is not so much occupying the centre with our pieces as subjecting it to their powerful fire; and even then, we will take the first convenient opportunity for a thrust against the enemy pawn centre with one of our own "c-f" pawns. Playing with a "piece centre" can be very difficult and sometimes risky; but the same can also be said of a pure pawn centre. This explains why the "piece-and-pawn" centre is the prevalent type.

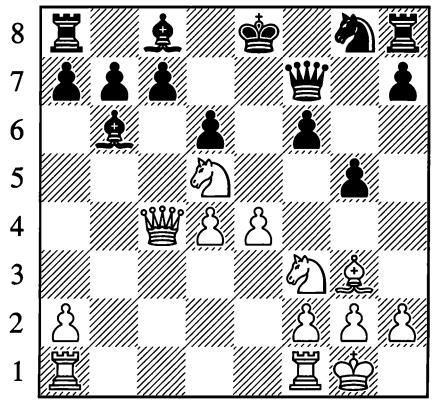
The ideal arrangement of the centre pawns is on the squares d4 and e4 (for simplicity we will explain things from White's viewpoint only). With such a centre the mobility of the opponent's pieces is significantly restricted; both our bishops have a free route into the open; and the knights can station themselves comfortably on c3 and f3, directing their fire at the central squares. The great advantage of such a centre lies also in its mobility, its assault potential. At any moment, depending on preparation, we may play e4-e5 or d4-d5, initiating an attack.

Naturally our opponent will try to attack our pawn centre so as to cause an exchange or a weakening advance of one of the pawns. If the pressure from the opponent's pieces is very strong and promises to increase systematically, our centre will need constant protection. To be truly strong, a pawn centre must be well supported.

Let us look at a set of examples illustrating the strength and weakness of a pawn centre in various situations:

**353**

**Chigorin – Steinitz**, London (17) 1883



*Black to move*

White is a pawn down, but his positional advantage is obvious. Black is behind in development, and his kingside has been weakened by the advance ...g5. At the same time White's pieces are occupying a strong centralized position. He has the "ideal" pawn centre.

The question of whether this centre is weak or strong is what interests us first and foremost.

When evaluating a position it is always essential to give attention to the presence of threats from one side or the other. White may play 16.♖ac1, and if 16...c6 then 17.♘xb6 axb6 18.♕b4, attacking d6 and b6 and shattering Black's position; but his chief threat lies in preparation for an assault with e4-e5, opening lines against Black's uncastled king.

What Black's threats may amount to, we shall presently see.

**15...♗e6**

Black threatens to liquidate White's pawn centre by exchanging, and then castle. We are now looking at the critical moment in the game – will White succeed in thwarting his opponent's plan and demonstrating the power of the pawn centre?

**16.♕a4†**

The queen sidesteps the pin with tempo. Now 16...c6 fails to 17.♘xb6, while 16...♕d7 is met by 17.♘xb6 cxb6 18.♕a3.

**16...♗d7 17.♕a3 ♖c8**

There is nothing better, in view of the threatened ♘xb6. White's strategy has triumphed thanks to the strong tactical threats at his disposal. In what follows, White strengthens his pawn centre still further and carries out the decisive breakthrough.

**18.♖fe1 g4 19.♘xb6 axb6 20.♘d2 ♗e6**

On 20...♘e7, White has the very powerful 21.e5, followed by 22.♘e4!.

**21.f4 gxf3**

Otherwise White will play f4-f5 and e4-e5.

**22.♘xf3 ♘e7 23.e5**

The aim is achieved. The pawn centre is used as a "battering ram" to open lines. (In other cases, the presence of a strong pawn centre allows a player to build up a flank attack at his leisure; see for example Diagram 467.)
The remaining moves were:

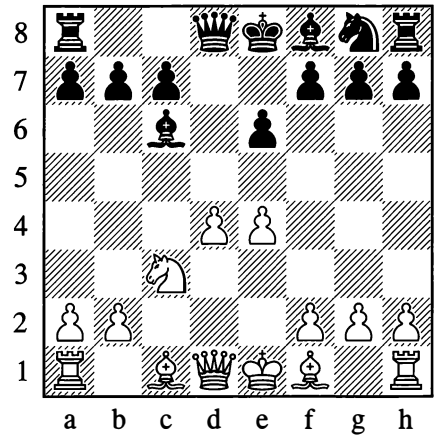
**23...fxe5 24.dxe5 d5 25.♖f1 ♘f5 26.♘d4 ♕g6 27.♘xf5 ♗xf5 28.♗h4 c5 29.♖f3 ♔d7 30.♖af1 ♖hf8 31.♖g3 ♕h6 32.♗f6 ♗e6 33.♕a7! ♔c7 34.♖b3 ♔d7 35.♕xb6 ♖c6 36.♕xb7† ♖c7 37.♕a6!**

Black resigned.
**1–0**

Here the pawn centre was strong. But if it is insufficiently robust and endlessly requires defending, then however "beautiful" and menacing it may look, a pawn centre may become a source of difficulties.

## 354

**Pillsbury – Chigorin**, St Petersburg (11) 1895/6



*Black to move*

White's last move was 7.e4. Outwardly this move looks good. But will White's pawn centre be strong in the absence of adequate support from his pieces? Would 7.e3 perhaps have been more cautious and better? To these questions Chigorin gives a clear-cut answer.

**7...♗b4 8.f3**

Owing to the pin, the knight on c3 is no longer defending the e4-pawn, but now the latter would seem adequately guarded.

**8...f5!**

After this hard-hitting blow, it emerges that the point e4 is indefensible. There is no use in 9.♕d3 owing to 9...♘f6, after which White's queen is only blocking the path of his own bishop. White is only left with the choice between 9.exf5 and 9.e5, both of which mean a significant weakening of his pawn centre.

**9.e5**

It is only natural that the continuation 9.exf5 exf5 10.♗c4 ♕h4† 11.g3 ♕e7† 12.♔f2 (not 12.♕e2 on account of 12...♗xf3) 12...0–0–0 (threatening ...♕f6 and ...♗c5) seemed dubious to White. Now, however, Black obtains the strong blockading square d5 for his use, and can play against the backward pawn on d4. In the game, there followed:

**9...♘e7! 10.a3 ♗a5 11.♗c4 ♗d5! 12.♕a4†**

12.♗xd5 ♘xd5 13.♗d2 is bad in view of 13...♕h4† and 14...♕xd4.

**12...c6 13.♗d3**

Again 13.♗xd5 ♘xd5 14.♗d2 fails, owing to 14...b5 and 15...♕h4†.

**13...♕b6!**

Threatening ...♗b3.

**14.♗c2**

Or 14.b4 ♕xd4, attacking the pieces on both c3 and d3.

**14...♕a6!**

Threatening ...b5. If now 15.b4, then 15...♕c4 16.♗b2 ♗b6, pressurizing d4.

**15.♗d1 ♗c4! 16.f4 0–0–0 17.♗e3 ♘d5 18.♗d2 ♘b6 19.♕c2 ♖xd4**

The d4-pawn has perished, and Black has both a material and positional advantage.

**20.♖c1? ♗d3 21.♕b3 ♘c4!**

Owing to the threat of ...♘xd2 followed by ...♗c4†, White cannot avoid further material losses. Black soon won.

**...0–1**

So at move 7, White would have done better with the modest 7.e3. After 7.e4, his pawn centre quickly collapsed as a result of his opponent's shattering blows. Black first weakened it, then destroyed it.

Of course, a major role in all this was played by the strong position of Black's bishop on c6.

If we imagine a position like Diagram 354 only with this bishop on c8, then White's advantage is obvious.

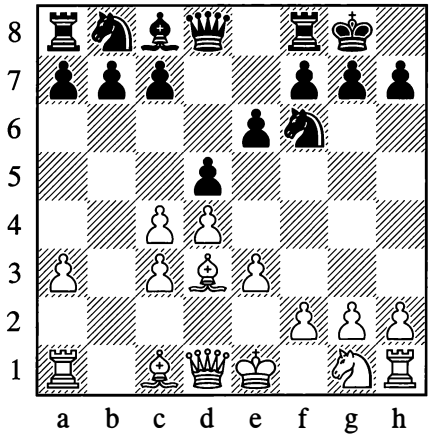
Generally speaking, a situation where White has one centre pawn on e4 or d4, facing a black pawn on d6 or e6 respectively, represents a form of central advantage that is rather commoner in practice than the "ideal" centre. The advantage lies in the unrestricted mobility of the bishops and in White's greater freedom of action.

Configurations of pawns in the centre are in practice extremely varied. In the main, your own and your opponent's pawns will be blocking each other, and a kind of balance of forces in the centre will be established.

If, however, the pawns acquire freedom, then a pawn centre well supported by pieces will often become very dangerous (see Diagram 355).

**355**

**Kotov – Lilienthal**, Moscow 1944



*Black to move*

White has made several moves with his pawns and is somewhat behind in the development of his pieces; Black therefore takes the decision to open up the game.

**7...e5**

Aiming to answer 8.dxe5 with 8...dxc4!. Meanwhile the threat is ...e4 which could be unpleasant for White, with his bishops shut out of play.

**8.♘e2!**

White goes in for a positional pawn sacrifice, very astutely evaluating the formidable power of his future pawn centre.

**8...e4 9.♗c2 dxc4**

As the further course of the game shows, Black would do better to decline this "gift" and play ...c6; his position would then be satisfactory. There followed:

**10.♘g3 ♖e8 11.0–0 c5 12.f3! cxd4 13.cxd4 exf3 14.♕xf3 ♕d5 15.♕f4 ♘c6 16.♗b2**

Strategically the game is already decided. Black has nothing with which to resist the fearsome threat of e3-e4 (thus, 16...c3 17.♗xc3 ♕c4 fails to 18.♖ac1). The continuation was:

**16...♘h5 17.♕h4! g6 18.♘xh5 ♕xh5 19.♕f6! ♕d5 20.e4 ♕e6 21.♕f4 ♘d8 22.♔h1**

Not 22.d5 at once, in view of 22...♕b6†.

**22...♕g4 23.♕f2**

Black is helpless against the threat of d4-d5 and ♕f6. He hastened his own downfall with an unsound combination:

**23...♗f5**

Counting on 24.exf5? ♖e2.

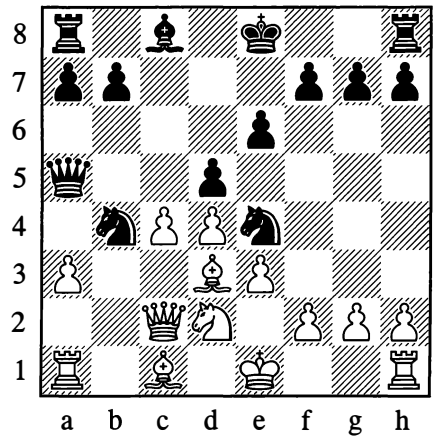
**24.h3 ♕h5 25.♗d1 ♕g5 26.exf5**

Black remained with a piece less.

**...1–0**

### 356

**Verlinsky – Kirillov**, Moscow 1931



*White to move*

In this position, Black's last move was 11...♘b4 (the a3-pawn being pinned). He was counting on obtaining a satisfactory game after a move of the hostile queen and the exchange of his knight for the bishop on d3.

**12.axb4!**

White sacrifices the exchange after weighing up the strength of the menacing pawn avalanche that he obtains in the centre. The further play is easy to understand:

**12...♕xa1 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♗xe4 f5 15.♗d3 ♗d7 16.0–0 ♕a4 17.♕b2 0–0 18.♗d2 ♕c6 19.f3 ♖ac8 20.♖c1**

20.♖a1 at once would have been more precise.

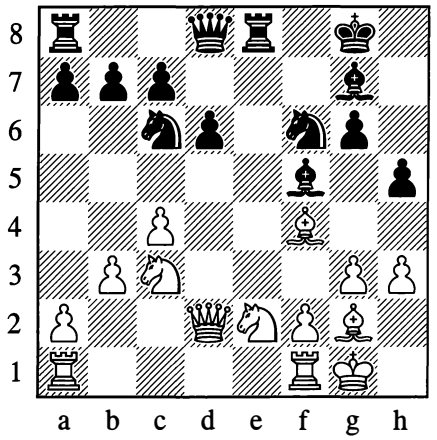
**20...♗e8 21.b5 ♕c7 22.♖a1 b6 23.♗b4 ♖f6 24.♕a3 ♖h6 25.♗d6 ♕d8 26.♗f4 g5 27.♗e5 ♖a8 28.c5! ♖g6 29.♕b3 ♗f7 30.c6 g4 31.f4 h5 32.e4 h4 33.♕c2 ♖f6 34.c7!**

Black resigned. White's two active bishops gave powerful support to the advance of his pawns, while the black rooks, lacking open files, were wholly unable to exert their strength. **1–0**

Examples of a fight against the opponent's pawn centre will be given further on. For the moment we will look at an example of a "piece centre".

### 357

**Botvinnik – Lilienthal**, Leningrad 1941



*White to move*

Neither side has pawns in the centre, but all the central squares are under fire from white and black pieces. It isn't easy to ascertain who has the advantage in this sector. The point d5 of course belongs to White, but the black pieces clearly have the squares e4 and especially e5 under their control. However, if we also take the pawn configuration into account, we can identify a certain advantage on White's side. The pawn on d6, in fact, although performing some services for Black in his fight for the centre, is nonetheless slightly cramping him. But the main thing is that Black's kingside has been weakened. The bishop on f5, for example, is a piece he should not exchange off, as the g6-pawn would then become weak.

Black's last move was 16...h5. He was forced to make this weakening move to stop White from playing g3-g4 and then at a suitable moment g4-g5. By driving the black pieces

back from the centre, this would have allowed White to gain the ascendency there and later to establish his pieces there.

A series of subtle and complex manoeuvres begins, with the aim of increasing the pressure on the centre squares.

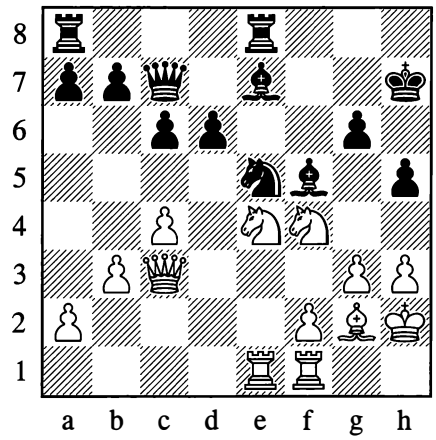
**17.♖ae1 ♕d7 18.♔h2 ♔h7 19.♗g5**

Making the manoeuvre ♘e2-f4-d5 a possibility. For this reason Black decides on ...c6.

**19...♘e5**

Black doesn't have to fear 20.♗xb7, in view of ...c6 with the double threat of ...♘f3† and ...♕xb7.

**20.♘f4 c6 21.♗xf6 ♗xf6 22.♘e4 ♗e7 23.♕c3 ♕c7**



White was already threatening 24.c5, undermining the knight's position on e5. As indicated earlier, exchanging on e4 would have its drawbacks, condemning Black to prolonged defence of the point g6. But now White expels the black pieces from the centre, seizes it for himself, and conducts an attack against the black king.

**24.♘e2 ♖ad8 25.f4 ♘f7 26.♘d4 ♘h6**

If the bishop moves away, a breakthrough with f4-f5 follows. However, as indicated by Botvinnik, a better move was 26...♕c8. White has now achieved his aim – he has won the battle for the centre and established himself there with his knights. He proceeds to strike a blow that proves immediately decisive.

**27.♘g5†**

Black resigned, as 27...♔g8 is met by 28.♘de6 (here it emerges that 24...♖ad8 was not a good move); while in the case of 27...♗xg5 28.fxg5 ♘g8, White wins by 29.♘xf5 gxf5 30.♖xf5, with an extra pawn and a powerful attack.

A classic example of the struggle in a "piece centre". It vividly characterizes the difficulties of such a struggle, which demands far-sightedness and manoeuvring skill.

**1–0**

## 4. POSITION AND STRENGTH OF THE PIECES – THE TWO BISHOPS

We have already spoken of how greatly the strength of the pieces is influenced by the position. In the chapter "Tactics and Strategy" we could see, for example, that if a pawn has reached the penultimate rank and is supported by its king, it sometimes holds out successfully against a queen.

We also encountered some more colourful positions in which some weak pieces not only held their own in single combat against much stronger ones, but even overcame them. True, such cases were exceptions, but at the end of the day they were not such rare ones as all that – we need only recall our last chapter, "Combination". The strength of pieces participating in a combination was determined exclusively by their role, that is, by the threats they created. In a combination pieces are sacrificed, sometimes several of them in succession; here the customary measure for the value of the pieces is transformed.

But these combinative factors are not what interests us now. It is important to note that even in the positional struggle – which predominates in practice and is determined not by combinations but by manoeuvres – major fluctuations in the strength of the pieces occur very often, albeit not in so striking a form. Depending on the position, the strength of an individual piece may prove to be either above or below what is normal, either temporarily or in the long term.

The strength of a piece naturally grows when lines of movement – files or diagonals – are open to it, and also when you succeed in stationing it in the centre of the board. Its strength increases still more when it is creating threats; the more dangerous the threats, the stronger the piece. If a white pawn has advanced to h6, right up to the enemy king's castled position, and if the black g-pawn is missing or has moved to g6, then the white pawn can sometimes have the same effect as a bishop (if for instance threats of mate on g7 or on the eighth rank arise). A knight established inside the opponent's camp may prove equal in strength to a rook.

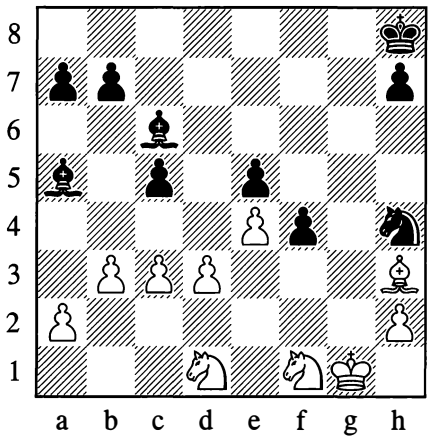
The strength of a piece decreases and falls short of the norm if it is deprived of mobility by obstacles (for instance when bishops are behind pawn chains), or if it is tied to its post for other reasons; or if it is on the edge of the board; and so on.

In the section "How the Position Affects the Relative Strengths" we saw that a bishop can be sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker, than a knight. We also observed that two bishops, as a rule, are stronger than a bishop and knight or two knights. We saw the immense power of a bishop pair in Positions 355 and 356.

Here are some examples illustrating different methods of utilizing "the advantage of the two bishops".

**358**

**Makarov – Vasiukov**, Kishinev 1951



*Black to move*

The advantage of the two bishops manifests itself chiefly in their great mobility. They need open diagonals. Hence if White in Position 358 managed to play c3-c4, the bishop on c6 would be shut out of the game and White would obtain excellent drawing chances, seeing that the bishop on a5 cannot create decisive threats on its own.

In a very pretty and strategically correct manner, Black forestalls White's c3-c4.

**41...c4!! 42.bxc4 ♗a4 43.♗g4 ♗b6† 44.♔h1**

Or 44.♘f2 ♗c2 45.♗e2 f3, winning a piece.

**44...♗c2 45.♘b2 f3!**

Black sacrifices another pawn in order to prevent 46.♗d1!.

**46.♘d2 ♗a5 47.♘xf3 ♘xf3 48.♗xf3 ♗xc3 49.♘d1**

Or 49.♗d1 ♗b1 and the pawns will fall.

**49...♗d4 50.♗e2**

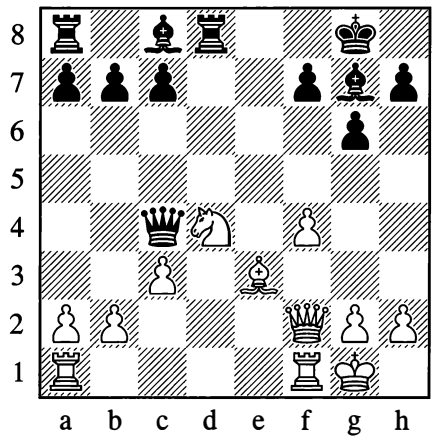
White's pieces are paralysed.

**50...a5! 51.♔g2 a4 52.♘f2**
Threatening 53.♗d1.

**52...♗b3! 53.a3 ♗c5 54.d4 exd4 55.♘d3 ♗xa3 56.c5 ♗b2!**
White resigned, as after 57.♘xb2 a3 the pawn goes on to queen.
**0–1**

**359**

**Rosenthal – Steinitz**, Vienna 1873



*Black to move*

If in the last example the mobility of the white pieces was restricted by the more freely positioned black ones, the present example shows that the enemy's mobility may also be confined by the encroachment of the pawns, which deprive his pieces of squares and obstruct his lines of action. It's true that when pawns advance they are often weakened as a consequence, but in the presence of the two bishops this is not so dangerous.

**16...c5 17.♘f3 b6**
As a result of these moves, the white pieces are deprived of the d4-square. In addition the g1-a7 diagonal is closed to the bishop on e3, while this bishop's movement on the other diagonal is confined by White's own f4-pawn.

**18.♘e5 ♕e6 19.♕f3 ♗a6 20.♖fe1 f6**
Black takes away the strong point e5 from the white knight, which he drives right back with his next move.

**21.♘g4 h5 22.♘f2 ♕f7**
The white minor pieces are very badly placed – it's hard for them to undertake anything. White's attempt to free himself with f4-f5 merely leaves this pawn weak.

**23.f5 g5 24.♖ad1 ♗b7 25.♕g3 ♖d5 26.♖xd5 ♕xd5**
The f5-pawn is already indefensible; if 27.♕h3, then 27...g4.

**27.♖d1 ♕xf5 28.♕c7 ♗d5 29.b3 ♖e8 30.c4 ♗f7 31.♗c1 ♖e2 32.♖f1 ♕c2**
Threatening 33...♖xf2 34.♖xf2 ♕xc1†. In view of this, White must wholly renounce any hopes of counterplay.

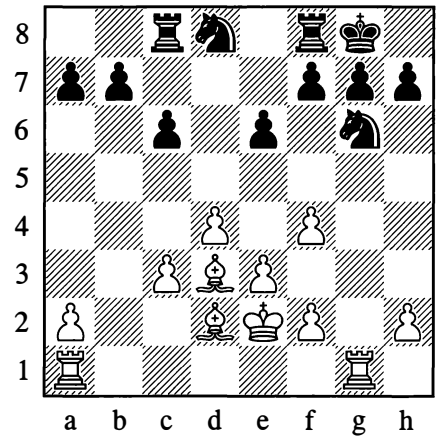
**33.♕g3 ♕xa2 34.♕b8† ♔h7 35.♕g3 ♗g6 36.h4 g4 37.♘d3 ♕xb3**
The knight on d3 is pinned and not to be defended.

**38.♕c7 ♕xd3**
White resigned.
**0–1**

In the battle of the minor pieces, the pawn configuration has of course a decisive role to play. Later, in Example 439, we shall see two knights triumphing against a knight and bishop, thanks to a favourable pawn formation. Let us now examine a fairly rare case of the knights carrying the day in a struggle of two knights against two bishops.

## 360

**Lasker – Chigorin**, Hastings 1895



*White to move*

After 17.f5! exf5 18.♗xf5 ♖c7 19.c4, some diagonals would open up for the bishops, and White's advantage would then be obvious. Instead of this, he goes for an attack on the g-file, which however gives him nothing.

**17.♖g3 c5! 18.♖ag1? c4! 19.♗c2 f5!**

The picture has been radically altered in the space of three moves! Five white pawns are fixed for the time being on dark squares, the bishops' mobility is limited, and a superb outpost on d5 has been made available to the black knights.

**20.♗c1 ♖f7 21.♗a3 ♖c6 22.♗c5 ♖a6!**

Taking the a4-square away from the bishop on c2.

**23.a4 ♘c6 24.♖b1 ♖d7 25.♖gg1 ♘ge7 26.♖b2 ♘d5 27.♔d2 ♖a5**

The threat of ...♖xc5 is not a danger to White, so it was better to lose no time in playing 27...♘f6 and 28...♘e7, followed by ...♘ed5 with the threat of ...♘e4†.

**28.♖gb1 b6 29.♗a3 g6 30.♖b5 ♖a6 31.♗c1 ♘d8 32.♖a1 ♘f7 33.♖bb1 ♘d6**

As Steinitz rightly noted in the tournament book, now was the time (rather than two moves later) to play 33...g5! 34.fxg5 ♘xg5, followed by 35...♘e4† with advantage.

**34.f3 ♘f7 35.♖a3! g5? 36.♔e2!**

A reply that Black had not foreseen, made possible by the fact that the rook on a3 has taken over the defence of the c3-pawn. Now 37.fxg5 and 38.e4 is a threat. Evidently Black would have done better not to open the game with 35...g5, but to continue with 35...♘d6 and 36...♖f7, preventing e3-e4.

**36...gxf4 37.e4! ♘f6 38.♗xf4! ♘h5 39.♗e3 f4! 40.♗f2 ♖a5!**

Black wants to blockade the white pawns again by means of ...e5, but the immediate 40...e5 would fail to 41.♖b4 ♖c7 42.a5! bxa5 43.♖b8† ♔g7 44.dxe5 ♘xe5 45.♗d4.

**41.♖g1† ♔f8 42.♖aa1?**

Again Lasker has failed to grasp his opponent's intentions. It was essential to play 45.e5!, securing open diagonals for his bishop.

**42...e5! 43.♖ab1 ♘g7 44.♖b4 ♖c7 45.♗b1 ♘e6 46.♖d1 ♘ed8! 47.♖d2?**

The decisive mistake. Better was 47.♗c2 or 47.dxe5. The remaining moves were:

**47...♘c6! 48.♖b5 ♖xa4 49.dxe5 ♘fxe5 50.♗h4 ♖g7 51.♔f2 ♖g6 52.♖dd5 ♖a1!**

Defending against ♖xe5 and threatening ...♖h6.

**53.♗d8 ♘d3†!**

A pretty combination; there is a threat of ...♘cb4!.

**54.♗xd3 cxd3 55.♖xd3 ♖ag1!**

This is the point of the combination: Black threatens ...♖6g2#.

**56.♖f5† ♔e8 57.♗g5**

There is no defence; if 57.♖xf4, then 57...♖6g2† 58.♔e3 ♖e1#.

**57...♖6xg5**

White resigned.

**0–1**

In the skilful hands of Chigorin, who was a master of the art of playing with them, the knights achieved victory. And yet, as we saw, this required some errors from his opponent; otherwise the bishops would have proved their power. "The advantage of the bishop pair" is a firmly established concept in chess theory, even though there is hardly ever any rule without exceptions, in chess or elsewhere.

It remains to be noted that if the advantage of the two bishops is usually more pronounced when they face two knights – given that coordinated play with knights involves major difficulties and also requires the presence of pawn barriers – then the advantage of two bishops over a bishop and knight is very often insignificant and may play no role whatever.

## 5. EVALUATING A POSITION

Let us briefly sum up. In this chapter we have looked at a set of examples which, taken as a whole, give some idea of the nature of the positional struggle.

For the overall assessment of a position – as the foregoing material should have made clear to us already – a number of factors have to be taken into account.

First of all, we look at the material distribution of forces. If the forces are unequal (if, say, one side is a pawn down), we decide whether there is any compensation of a positional kind, such as an attack, a superior formation, and so on.

In addition we consider the extent and quality of each player's development. How many pieces have been brought out? How they are deployed, how secure are they in their positions? How mobile are they (are open lines and diagonals available)? How active are they (what scope have they for attacking hostile pieces and pawns)?

Then we have to assess the situation in the centre, and also in other important sectors of the board where a fight is in progress or starting (for instance the position of the kings, and the pieces and pawns sheltering them).

After this we must ascertain the balance of strong and weak points, as well as the possibility of new weaknesses arising.

Finally we decide whether there are any threats on either side, how significant they are, and what means of attack and defence are available.

It's hard to say exactly in what order this mental process comes together in a chessplayer's consciousness, but all the elements we have mentioned are taken into account without fail. An interesting point here is that notwithstanding the abundance of factors to be considered, an experienced player's overall assessment of a position (without deeper investigation, of course) takes shape very quickly.

A striking proof of this is supplied by simultaneous displays in which a master conducts games on twenty-five or thirty boards at great speed.

In accordance with his evaluation of the position and the possible variations in it, a player decides on his plan for further action, he selects particular moves and gives this or that direction to the play.

For a chessplayer, correct evaluation of the position is fundamental.

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

### GAMES

### 1

**Stoltz – Bronstein**, Helsinki (ol) 1952

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 e6 4.d4 d5 5.e5 ♕b6**

A position from the "French Defence" has arisen, where White usually plays 6.a3 or 6.♗e2. Instead Stoltz weakens his own position in the centre, and Bronstein exploits this mistake very subtly and instructively.

**6.dxc5? ♗xc5 7.♕c2 ♕c7**

Now in the event of 8.♗f4 ♘ge7 (of course not 8...f6? 9.exf6!) 9.♗d3 ♘g6, White would have to concede the advantage of the bishop pair. This makes Stoltz, as a "bishop fan", choose another way of defending the e5-pawn, but one which holds up the development of his pieces.

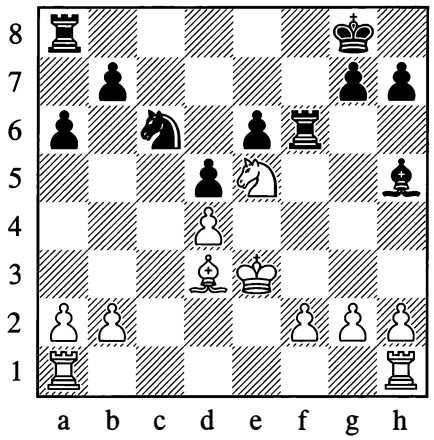
**8.♕e2 ♘ge7 9.♗e3 ♗xe3 10.♕xe3 ♘f5!**

Planting the white queen back on its previous square. On 10...♘g6, White would have 11.♗b5 as a defence.

**11.♕e2 0–0 12.♘a3 f6! 13.♘b5 ♕a5 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.♕d2 a6 16.♘bd4 ♘fxd4 17.cxd4 ♕xd2† 18.♔xd2 ♗d7 19.♗d3 ♗e8 20.♔e3 ♗h5**

The pawn on d4 turns out to require no less care than the one on e5 did earlier. On 21.♗e2, Black has 21..♖af8 22.♖ad1 ♖f4 23.♖d3 ♖e4† 24.♔d2 ♗xf3 25.♗xf3 ♖xd4. To White's following attempt to free himself, Black replies with an unexpected and fine combination.

**21.♘e5**



**21...♘xe5 22.dxe5 d4†!! 23.♔xd4 ♖xf2 24.♗e4 ♖d8† 25.♔c5**

On 25.♔c3 Black would decide the game quickly with 25...♗g6, but now White even faces a mating attack.

**25...♖xb2 26.♖hb1 ♖c8† 27.♔d6 ♖d2†**

And White resigned in view of 28.♔xe6 ♗g4† 29.♗f5 ♖e8#.

**0–1**

### 2

**Averbakh – Ragozin**, Kiev 1954

**1.c4 f5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♗g2 e6 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.0–0 0–0 6.d4 d6 7.♘c3 ♕e8 8.♖e1 ♘e4 9.♕c2 ♕g6**

After this, White can't play 10.♘xe4? fxe4 11.♘d2 on account of 11...e3!.

**10.♗e3 ♘xc3**

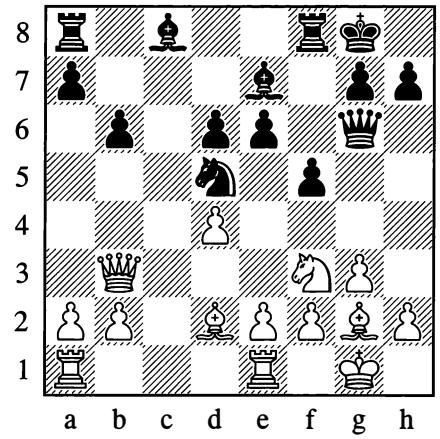
Now White *was* threatening 11.♘xe4.

**11.♕xc3 ♘d7**

Black prepares to continue with ...♗f6 and ...e5, giving him a good game. White therefore decides on a thrust in the centre to divert his opponent from that plan.

**12.c5 ♘f6 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.♕b3 ♘d5 15.♗d2 b6?**

Black needed to bolster his centre with 15...♖b8 and ...♗c8-d7-c6. The move he plays would seem to achieve the same thing, without losing time. However, the opening of the g2-a8 diagonal allows White to start an attack in the centre.



**16.♗g5! ♗xg5**

Continuing with 16...♗b7 would cost a piece, in view of 17.♗xe7 ♘xe7 18.♘h4.

**17.♘xg5 ♗b7 18.e4!!**

This is the idea of the combination: the temporary position of the knight on g5 is utilized for an undermining of the centre!

**18...fxe4 19.♘xe4 ♘e7?**

Black's pawns on d6 and e6 are weak, and the position of his knight on d5 is unstable, but rather than defend patiently he prefers to seek counter-chances in a combinative fight – which he has not, however, calculated accurately.

**20.♘xd6 ♗xg2**

Black has failed to take the following intermediate move into account:

**21.♕xe6†! ♕xe6 22.♖xe6 ♗h3 23.♖xe7 ♖ad8 24.♘e4 ♖xd4 25.♖e1**

White has a strong position with a centralized knight and an extra pawn. In time trouble Black sheds a second pawn, and the game concludes without a struggle.

**25...h6 26.♖xa7 ♖c8 27.f3 ♖c2 28.♘f6†!**

Resigns.

**1–0**

**3**

**Niemela – Geller**, Helsinki (ol) 1952

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 0–0**

Challenging his opponent to continue with 5.e5 ♘e8 6.f4, Black aims to undermine the centre afterwards by 6...d6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.♗e2 c5.

**5.♘f3 d6 6.♗e2 ♘bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.♗e3 c6**

A position from the "King's Indian Defence" has arisen.

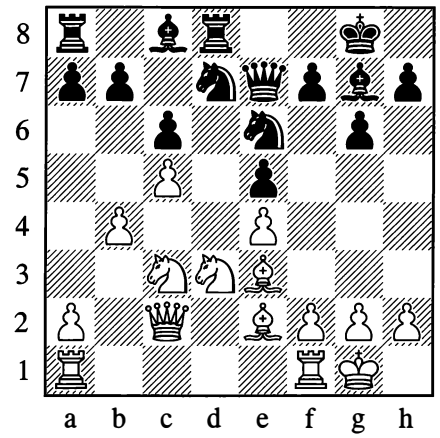
**9.dxe5 dxe5**

Having liquidated the tension in the centre by means of this exchange, White proceeds with an injudicious regrouping of his pieces.

**10.♘e1 ♕e7 11.♘d3?**

Better 11.♘c2, with regard to the weakness of the d4-point.

**11...♖d8 12.♕c2 ♘f8 13.b4? ♘6d7 14.c5 ♘e6**



Already Black is prepared to invade with ...♘d4, whereas White needs a good deal of time for the manoeuvre ♘b2-c4-d6. With some simple and powerful moves, Geller punishes his opponent for his neglectful treatment of the centre and the slowness of his strategic deployment.

**15.♖ad1 ♘d4 16.♕c1 a5!**

Exploiting White's weak 13th move, Black opens the file for his rook.

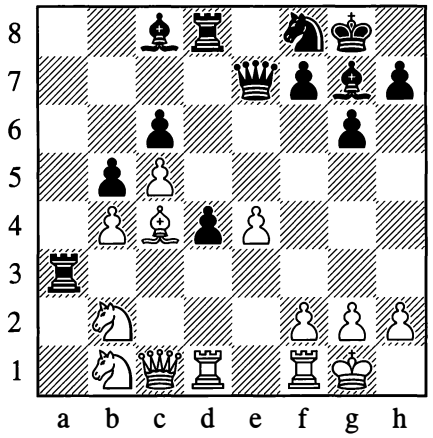
**17.a3 axb4 18.axb4 ♘f8 19.♘b2 ♖a3!**

Threatening 20...♖xc3.

**20.♗c4 b5 21.♗xd4**

Or 21.♗d3 ♘fe6. White can't play 21.♗a2? on account of 21...♖xc3! 22.♕xc3 ♘e2†, winning the white queen.

**21...exd4 22.♘b1**



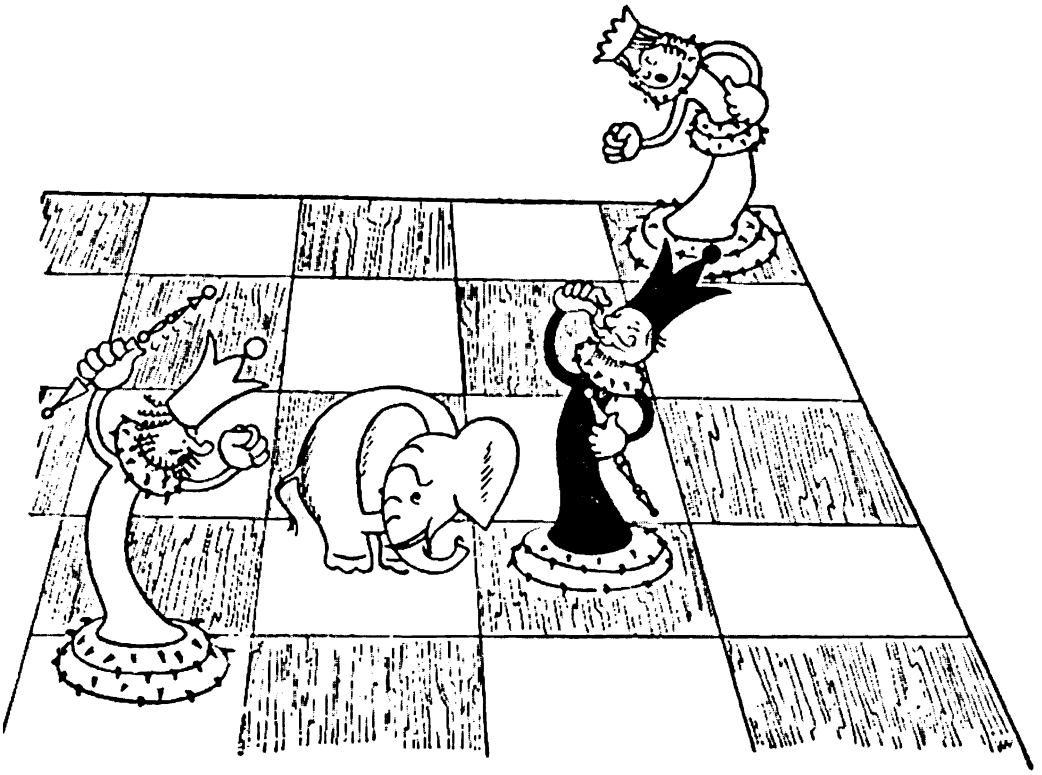
**22...♖c3!!**

Refuting all his opponent's calculations.

**23.♘xc3 dxc3 24.♖xd8 ♕xd8 25.♕f4 bxc4 26.♘xc4 ♘e6 27.♕b8 ♗a6 28.♕xd8† ♘xd8 29.♖d1 ♗xc4 30.♖xd8† ♗f8 31.♖d1 ♗h6**

White resigned.

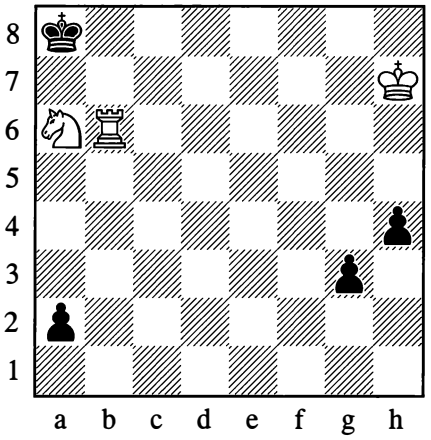
**0–1**



# FUN EXERCISES AND "SERIOUS" EXERCISES

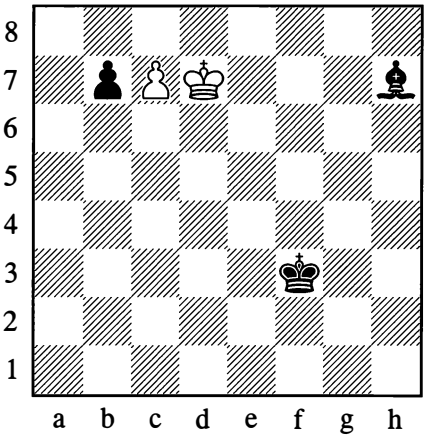
## Astounding draws

**1**
Cunning mechanism



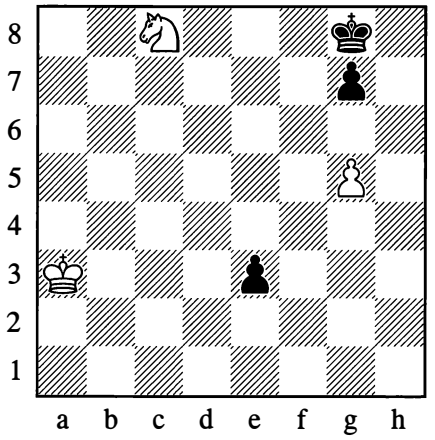
*White draws*

**2**
Extraordinary route



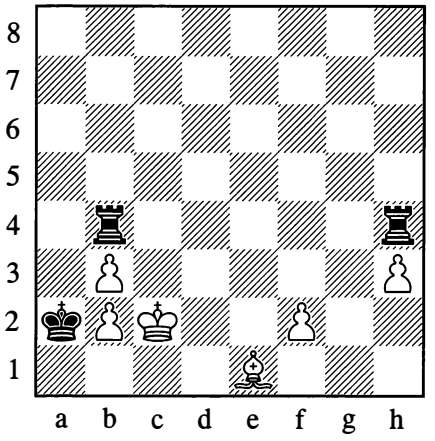
*White draws*

**3**
One warrior is not enough



*White draws*

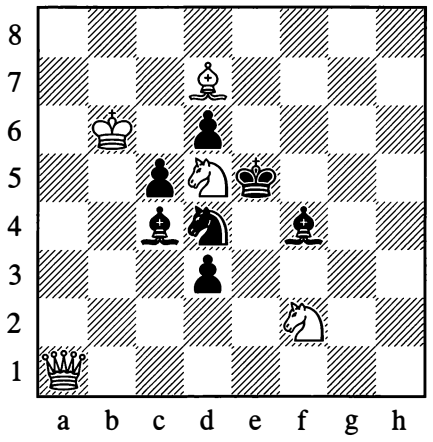
**4**
The threat is stronger than the execution



*White draws*

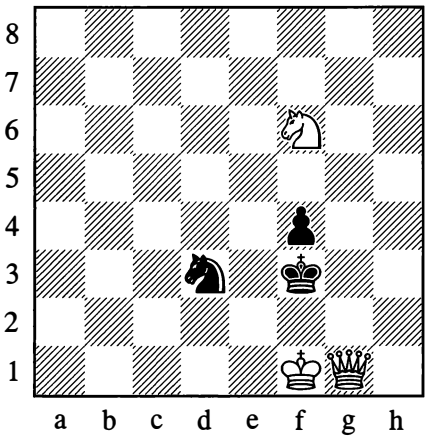
## Amusing movements of the pieces

**5**
Round all four corners



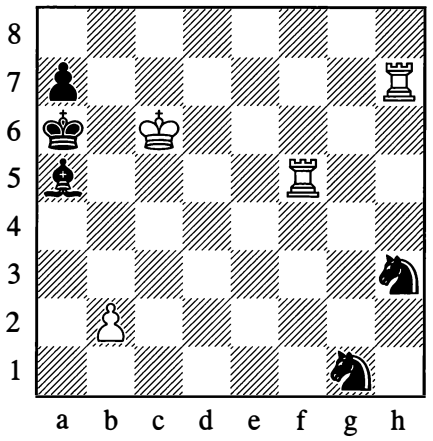
*Mate in 4 moves*

**7**
Triangle



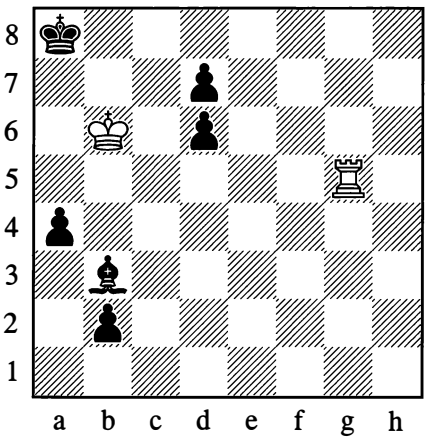
*Mate in 4 moves*

**6**
Parallelogram



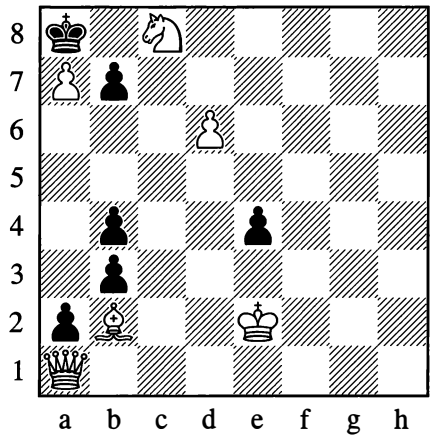
*Mate in 5 moves*

**8**
Pendulum



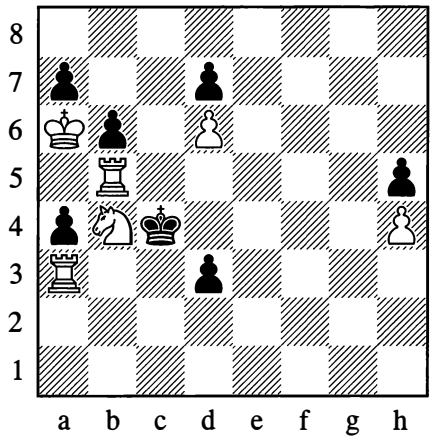
*Mate in 5 moves*

**9**
Return trip



*Mate in 3 moves*

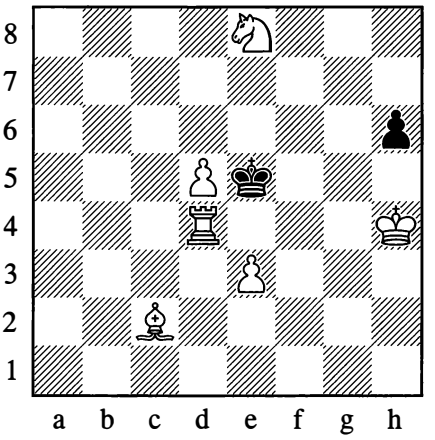
**10**
Ambling knight



*Mate in 6 moves*

With a playful ambling gait, veering left and right, the knight escorts the black king down the long, straight road towards the fateful square.

**11**
Cunning rook



*Mate in 4 moves*

When a clumsy rook starts to dissemble and mask its intentions, its movements sometimes follow odd (almost crooked) paths.

## SOLUTIONS

**1.** There is no use in 1.♘c7† ♔a7 2.♖a6†, as after 2...♔b7 3.♖xa2 h3 the rook is powerless against Black's far advanced pawns. Solution: **1.♘b8! ♔a7!** (1...a1=♕? loses to 2.♘c6!) **2.♖b4!! a1=♕ 3.♘c6† ♔a6 4.♘b8†**, drawing by perpetual check. A device that has great practical significance!

**2.** Endgame study by A. and K. Sarychev (1928). White would lose with 1.c8=♕? owing to 1...♗f5† 2.♔c7 ♗xc8, or with 1.♔e6? owing to 1...♔e4. The point is not to queen White's c7-pawn (survival has to come first!) but to liquidate Black's b7-pawn. The solution is stunning: **1.♔c8!! b5 2.♔d7! b4 3.♔d6! ♗f5 4.♔e5 ♗~ 5.♔d4!**. A veritable masterpiece!

**3.** P. Ilyin, 1947: **1.♘e7† ♔h7** (otherwise, by checking, the knight gets back to stop the e3-pawn: 1...♔h8 or 1...♔f8 2.♘g6†; 1...♔f7 2.♘c6 e2 3.♘e5†) **2.g6† ♔h8** (2...♔h6 3.♘f5†) **3.♔b4!! e2 4.♔c5 e1=♕ 5.♔d6** and draws, since the queen alone is unable to drive the white king away from the knight, while the black king stays imprisoned for good.

**4.** N. Rossolimo (1935). With 1.♗xb4? White would win the exchange but lose the game. How, then, is he to save himself? The answer is, with **1.f3!**. White needs to keep both rooks under attack at once, so that neither of them can retreat. For instance: **1...♖hd4 2.♗c3**; **1...♖hf4 2.♗d2**; **1...♖bd4 2.♗f2**; **1...♖bf4 2.♗g3**; **1...♔a1 2.♔c1**

**5. 1.♕a8! ♘e6** (the threat was 2.♕e8†) **2.♕h8†! ♘g7 3.♕h1! ♗xd5 4.♕a1#**

**6.** The bishop travels round a rectangle in vain attempts to save Black from mate: **1.♖hh5! ♗e1** (1...♗b4 2.♖f1!) **2.♖h4! ♗xh4 3.b4 ♗d8 4.♖a5†! ♗xa5 5.b5#**

**7. 1.♕a7! ♔g3 2.♕g7†! ♔f3 3.♕g1!** and **4.♕f2#**

**8. 1.♔c7** (threatening ♖a5#) **1...d5 2.♔b6** (threatening ♖g8#) **2...d4 3.♔c7 d5 4.♔b6** and **5.♖g8#**

**9. 1.♗h8! e3** (1...b6 2.♕g7!; 1...b2 2.♕xa2!) **2.♗b2! b6 3.♕h1#**

**10. 1.♘xd3 ♔d4 2.♘e5 ♔e4 3.♘f3 ♔f4 4.♘g5 ♔g4 5.♘h3 ♔xh4 6.♖b4#**

**11. 1.♖d1! h5 2.♖c1! ♔xd5 3.♗f5 ♔e5 4.♖c5#**

# Chapter 7

# How to Begin a Game

## 1. THE OPENING AND ITS TASKS

The struggle in a game of chess begins right from the first moves. What exactly are we struggling *for* when playing the opening? What aims are we setting ourselves here?

Clearly the first task is to bring the pieces out, to give them squares and lines that enable them to exert their power. In the initial position (see Diagram 1), all the pieces except the knights are wholly deprived of mobility and unable to act in any way against the hostile formation. They must first of all be drawn up in battle order, placed in positions where they can exercise the greatest activity.

A piece in the centre of the board has considerably more mobility than in the corner or on the edge. For that reason, as we indicated earlier, it is important to gain control of "the centre". Controlling the centre means either occupying it with our own pawns and pieces or bringing powerful fire from our pieces to bear on it. This is why the best moves for White are 1.e4 and 1.d4 (or 1.c4 which is also sometimes played). In developing the pieces, it is useful to bring them out towards the centre or to arrange them in such a way that they all strike at the centre or threaten the enemy pieces that are trying to defend it.

This basic principle of the game should not be understood too narrowly. In practice, depending on our chosen plan, deviations of one sort or another may occur, but only temporary ones. The fundamental idea – to control the centre, or at least to be no less strongly placed in the centre than our opponent – is the thread that runs all the way through the opening. In this connection, what is important is not just the "centre" in the strict sense of the word (the squares e4, d4, e5 and d5), but also the "extended centre", that is the area marked out by the squares c3-c6-f6-f3.

The significance of creating a strong centre with pawns (or sometimes pieces), as the basis of an entire positional build-up and with the aim of securing strong points for our pieces to occupy, was already made clear in the chapter on "Positional Play".

Common sense suggests that we should try to bring as many pieces into play as possible, so that by their united force we can break down our opponent's resistance or fend off his pressure. A fundamental law of chess strategy states that in order to achieve success at any point on the board, we need to be stronger in that sector than our opponent. We must therefore endeavour to bring *all* our pieces into the game and not limit ourselves to just a few of them.

For successful mobilization, a further requirement is *speed*: the pieces have to be mobilized without loss of time. At the beginning of the game, as a rule, it is not advisable to move the same piece several times unless this brings some immediate benefits. It is better to bring a new piece into play with every move, so as to complete our development in as few moves as possible. We may say that the initial stage of development is essentially complete when the minor pieces have been brought out and the king has castled. After that, in general, the queen will be brought out to c2/d2/e2 or b3/d3/f3 (depending on circumstances and our overall development plan), in order to establish connection between the rooks and allow them to be brought into the game, that is, stationed on the d-, e-, c- or f-file as required.

Naturally the development of the pieces should not be based on any casual notions. A specific development *plan* must be chosen – the pieces must be brought out according to a certain system, a certain logic, keeping in mind the clear aim that we have set ourselves (the fundamental aim being to secure for our pieces the necessary influence on the centre).

In pursuit of our development plan and chosen aim, we should endeavour to deploy as many pieces as possible in the best possible positions within the smallest number of moves. But this is still not all. In conducting the game we are facing an opponent who, of course, is striving after the same thing as we are. If we want to conquer the centre, so does he. Thus from the very first moves, a fight for the centre begins.

As the opening proceeds, both sides are aiming not only for development but for an *advantage* in development (more pieces in play, better positions for them).

It is therefore important that we should be concerned not only to develop our own pieces freely but also to hinder our opponent, to make *his* development as difficult as we can, to slow it down, to make him play moves that weaken his position.

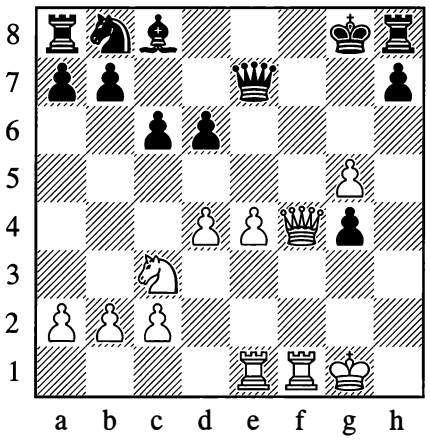
Carrying out our own plans, struggling with our opponent's dangerous designs – this is the theme of every game of chess, in any of its phases: opening, middlegame, endgame.

## 2. CONTROL OF THE CENTRE – SUPERIOR DEVELOPMENT

In Chapter 6 (in the section on "The Centre") we gave examples of a strong and weak pawn centre, while at the same time throwing light on how the centre is fought for, that is, on the efforts of players to create their own centre or destroy that of the enemy.

Control of the centre makes it possible for the pieces to develop comfortably and display their strength more fully. Let us look at some examples confirming the kind of benefits that come from superior development with control of the centre and the availability of open lines.

**361**




*White to move*

White's positional advantage is obvious. The development of his forces is already complete. He has seized the centre and concentrated his major pieces in the open f-file.

In Black's camp we see a different picture. His queenside pieces are completely undeveloped. His king, which in the course of the play was deprived of its castling rights, is blocking his rook's exit from h8. Black has nothing in play except his queen, and even that piece is compelled to guard the squares f7 and f8 against the threat of mate, so its mobility is limited.

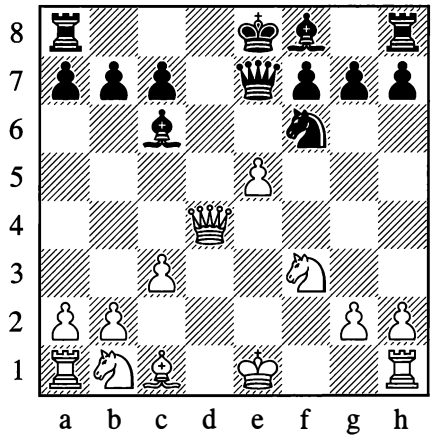
But then White does have a piece less, so he is obliged to make use of his positional advantage as quickly as he can, without allowing Black to catch up with him in development. In such positions, a combination is nearly always possible; its idea usually amounts to an opening of lines, so that some new pieces, previously inactive, can take a decisive part in the fight.

White achieved his aim with:

**1.♘d5! cxd5 2.exd5**

The file was opened up for his rook on e1, and Black resigned due to 2...♕g7 3.♖e8†. If Black hadn't taken the knight, he would have lost his queen with 1...♕g7 2.♘f6† and 3.♘h5†.

**362**



*Black to move*

In Position 362, what strikes you at once is Black's superior development. White's far advanced pawn on e5, isolated and weak, is pinned into the bargain. With his next move Black develops another piece, occupying the open d-file with his rook.

**1...♖d8**

The central squares are under fire from the black pieces – Black controls the centre.

**2.♕e3 ♘g4**

Black's better development already takes effect. Now 3.♕e2 can be met by 3...♗xf3, winning the e5-pawn. White seeks salvation in an exchange of queens.

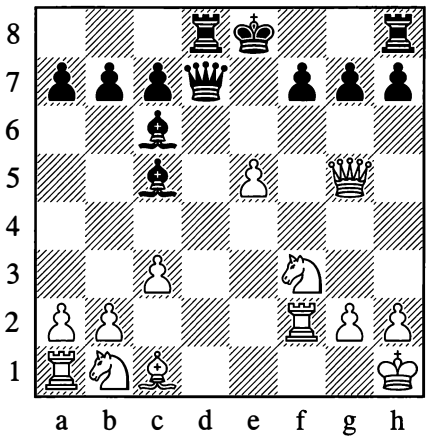
**3.♕g5 ♕d7**

Black of course declines the exchange. He has protected his knight and is threatening ...♕d1#. In addition he can now bring out his dark-squared bishop.

**4.0–0 ♗c5†**

Typical development with tempo, not leaving White time for the defensive move h2-h3. The remaining moves were:

**5.♔h1 ♘f2† 6.♖xf2**



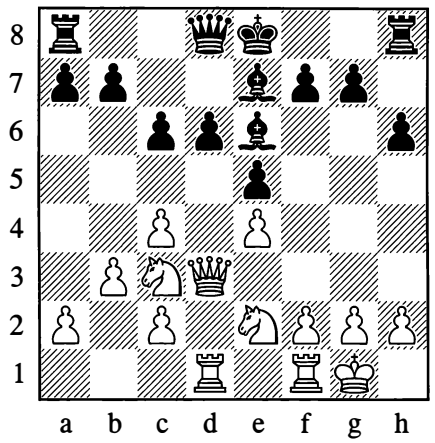
**6...♕d1†! 7.♘g1 ♕xg1† 8.♔xg1 ♖d1#**

These examples show how important it is to acquire a lead in development, to gain control of the centre and seize open lines for your pieces.

The next examples illustrate the struggle for the centre.

**363**

**Schlechter – Steinitz**, Cologne 1898



*White to move*

Black's position in the centre appears solid. White, however, *undermined* his opponent's centre with a typical move:

**1.c5! dxc5 2.♕g3**

This dual attack deprives Black of the right to castle.

**2...♗d6 3.♕xg7 ♔e7 4.♘f4!**

White's attack quickly attains its goal.

**4...♖g8**

4...exf4 was better, but after 5.e5 White would control the centre with a vastly superior position.

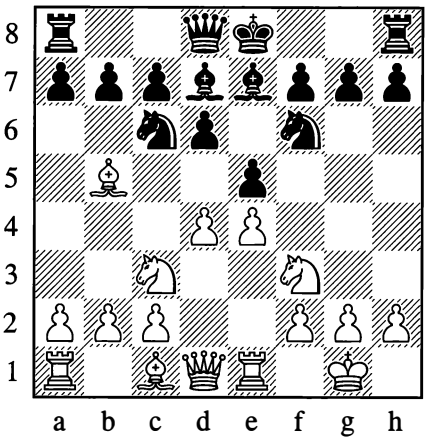
**5.♘g6†**

White soon broke down the black defences.

**...1–0**

**364**

**Tarrasch – Marco**, Dresden 1892



*Black to move*

In this well-known theoretical position (arising from a variation of the Ruy Lopez after White's 7.♖e1), White has deployed his pieces to create the threat of winning the pawn on e5. This is how play may continue if Black ignores the threat:

**7...0–0?**

In view of the threat to the e5-pawn, which he cannot parry, Black is obliged to abandon the centre with 7...exd4. Then after 8.♘xd4 White obtains the freer position, with strong points in the centre in his possession.

**8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♕xd8 ♖axd8**

10...♖fxd8 is no better.

**11.♘xe5 ♗xe4 12.♘xe4 ♘xe4 13.♘d3 f5 14.f3 ♗c5† 15.♘xc5**

If Black had played 10...♖fxd8, White would win with 15.♔f1 here.

**15...♘xc5 16.♗g5 ♖d5 17.♗e7 ♖e8 18.c4**

Winning the exchange. Black resigned at this point in the above game. In Yates – Price,

Hastings 1923/4, the second player struggled on for several more moves, but with the same end result.
**1–0**

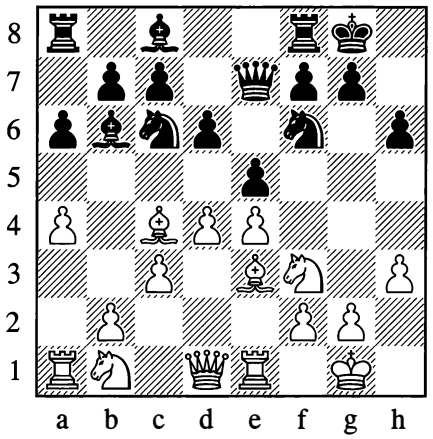
The struggle for the centre is one of the most complex strategic problems in chess.

It is sometimes possible to concede the centre and after that obtain fully viable and rich prospects for play. Sometimes a player who has abandoned the centre can reconquer it to continue the fight in more favourable conditions.

The following example is instructive:

**365**

**Tarrasch – Alekhine**, Baden-Baden 1925



*Black to move*

In Position 365, Black unexpectedly returned an already developed piece to its starting square:

**11...♕d8!!**

A profound move. Your first impression is that Black has simply removed his queen from the line of action of the rook on e1, and is threatening ...♘xe4. The real point is that he has decided to relinquish the centre with ...exd4 and then, after due preparation, to carry out ...d5. This decision is prompted by the fact that with his queen on e7 Black would have difficulty undertaking anything against White's powerful centre.

**12.♗d3 ♖e8 13.♘bd2 ♗a7**

Protecting the bishop against a possible sally with ♘c4.

**14.♕c2**

White gives extra protection to his e4-pawn (in case of ...exd4) and prepares ♘d2-f1-g3.

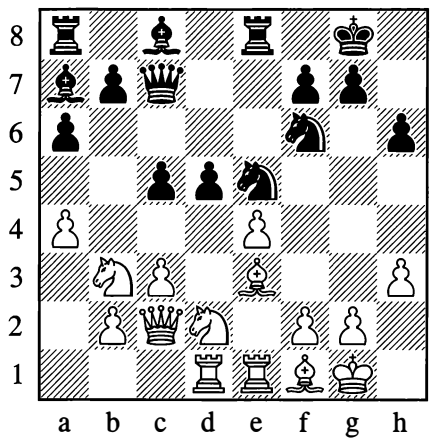
**14...exd4!**

The time is now ripe for this stroke. If White replies 15.cxd4, then 15...♘b4 exchanges his bishop on d3.

**15.♘xd4 ♘e5 16.♗f1 d5!**

Now if White is tempted by the possibility of 17.f4 ♘g6 18.e5, he loses a pawn to 18...♘h5.

**17.♖ad1 c5 18.♘4b3 ♕c7**



Black has seized the initiative. Already it's hard for White to find a good continuation. If he plays 19.exd5, liquidating the pawn centre, there follows 19...♘xd5 20.♘c4 ♘xc4 21.♗xc4 ♘xe3 22.♖xe3 ♖xe3, with the advantage of the

two bishops and an overall positional plus for Black. But after the move played, Black still gains the advantage of the bishop pair.

**19.♗f4 ♘f3†! 20.♘xf3 ♕xf4 21.exd5?**

Winning a pawn but losing the game. True, Black would also retain the advantage after 21.e5 ♗f5.

**21...♗f5! 22.♗d3**

Or 22.♕d2 ♕xa4.

**22...♗xh3 23.gxh3 ♕xf3 24.♖xe8† ♖xe8 25.♗f1 ♖e5 26.c4 ♖g5† 27.♔h2 ♘g4† 28.hxg4 ♖xg4**

White resigned.

**0–1**

In the pages that follow, we shall very often meet with examples of the fight for the centre and the fight to gain strong points there. For now we will limit ourselves to this preliminary overview.

## 3. EXAMPLES OF OPENING PLAY – OPENING MISTAKES

A move frequently seen at the start of the game is 1.e4. Other openings generally lead to a more slow-moving game. Beginners should be advised to give preference to 1.e4 for a long time, to familiarize themselves with the character of the struggle in the so-called "open games" and acquire certain essential skills.

What is the aim of 1.e4...? The pawn on e4 establishes a strong point in the centre for White's further operations; by moving this pawn he opens lines for his pieces.

At this stage we can already formulate the following general plan of development: (1) bring out the minor pieces on the kingside; (2) castle; (3) bring out the minor pieces on the queenside.

This of course is an approximate plan, since we need to make allowance for the way our opponent is playing. If he makes a mistake, we attempt to take immediate advantage of it, even if this means going against our development plan. In place of this approximate plan we devise a new *specific* plan to exploit the opponent's error. If his moves don't seem to us to be errors, we will strictly adhere to the principle of fast development. For this purpose, a beginner should be advised to be sparing with pawn moves at the beginning of the game. The main task, after all, is to develop the pieces; pawn moves usually serve only to open lines and create strong points. For the time being, therefore, the best way to handle the opening is to move only the central e- and d-pawns, letting the bishops out – and not to move any other pawns except in case of necessity.

A good answer to 1.e4 is 1...e5. This move pursues the same aims as 1.e4; it hinders the occupation of the centre by a second white pawn (d2-d4), and blocks the white e4-pawn which might in some circumstances move forward advantageously (although in general you are not recommended to push the central pawns prematurely, especially when they would lose contact with their base and could become weak).

After the moves 1.e4 e5, in accordance with the plan already outlined, White can bring out the knight on g1 or the bishop on f1. In general terms, these moves are of equal worth; however, unless your development plan is affected in some specific way, it is considered better to bring out the knights first, then the bishops. The point is that the knight has essentially no choice of moves. If we play 2.♘e2, we are blocking the bishop's exit. The move 2.♘h3 is bad because on the edge of the board the knight's mobility is restricted. Clearly the best developing move for the king's knight will usually be 2.♘f3. With the bishop it is another matter. Depending on how the

game continues, the bishop may go to c4 or b5, or sometimes to d3 if White has played d2-d4 first. It is therefore better not to limit the bishop's possibilities in advance but to move it later.

So we will play 2.♘f3. The fact that this stops the queen from coming out is immaterial – we were not intending an immediate queen move anyway. It will be a while before that piece does move. Let us state from the outset that unless the queen is intervening in the fight in a decisive manner, moves made with it at the start of the game are not to be recommended; in the face of attacks from less valuable pieces, the queen will be forced to lose time retreating, thus furthering the opponent's development.

Now Black needs to defend his pawn on e5. He can do this in various ways, but not all of them are good.

Thus, 2...♗d6 prevents the d7-pawn from moving and holds up the development of the queenside. There could follow 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.d4, after which White has a fine, free game, while Black is cramped. If 4...exd4?, then 5.e5 ♕e7 6.♕e2, winning a piece. Or if 4...♘xe4?, then 5.dxe5 ♗~ 6.♕d5.

Moves with the queen, 2...♕e7 or 2...♕f6, also hinder the development of Black's own pieces and involve a loss of tempo, if not immediately then later. For example, 2...♕e7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 with the better game for White. Or 2...♕f6 3.♗c4 (so as to castle without delay), and if now 3...♕g6 4.0–0 ♕xe4?, then 5.♗xf7†. Black cannot capture with 5..♔xf7 in view of 6.♘g5†, while after 5...♔e7 or 5...♔d8 White plays 6.♖e1, winning the e5-pawn with the better position; to add to his troubles, Black has lost the right to castle. Of course, the play doesn't have to go exactly like this. The important thing to grasp is simply that bringing the queen out early contradicts the principles of opening development and often has adverse results.

Defending with 2...f6 is another typical beginner's mistake. This move is wrong for several reasons. It offends against the principles of normal development; as we know already, it suits our purpose better if the centre pawns are the only ones moved in the opening. The pawn on f6 deprives the knight on g8 of its best square. In addition the point f7, which at the start of the game is defended only by the king, is now weakened still further, since the diagonals a2-g8 and e8-h5 are opened up for the white pieces. White can exploit this weakness with 3.♗c4, continuing to develop his pieces normally and at the same time making it hard for Black to do so, as the bishop is preventing him from castling short. Against any reply from his opponent, White maintains the freer and better game.

An interesting and sharp attempt to refute 2...f6 is the knight sacrifice 3.♘xe5. Black loses quickly if he accepts the sacrifice. For example: 3...fxe5 4.♕h5† ♔e7 5.♕xe5† ♔f7 6.♗c4† d5 (6...♔g6 7.♕f5† ♔h6 8.d4† g5 9.h4! leads to mate) 7.♗xd5† ♔g6 8.h4, and Black is helpless against the threats of h5† ♔h6, d4† or ♗xb7 ♗xb7, ♕f5†. A better reply to 3.♘xe5 is 3...♕e7, after which it would be wrong to play 4.♕h5† g6 5.♘xg6 in view of 5...♕xe4†, winning the knight. White should continue 4.♘f3 ♕xe4† 5.♗e2 with the better game, as Black is badly behind in development (he will lose another tempo after ♘c3, while White threatens 0–0 and ♖e1) and the weakness resulting from ...f6 has not been eliminated.

The answers to 2.♘f3 that we have so far examined were clearly bad. From analysing continuations that were more worthy of attention, chess theorists came to the conclusion that a better defence was 2...d6, although this too is not free of defects, since the pawn on d6 obstructs the path of the bishop on f8. They further concluded that

2...♘f6 (defending by counter-attacking) was fully satisfactory, but that 2...♘c6 should be acknowledged as the *best* defence, since with this move Black in his turn brings a piece into play and maintains the essential balance of forces in the centre.

In like manner, theory has established that on his third move White has a number of perfectly acceptable continuations, but that the richest in possibilities and strongest (and at any rate the most logical) is 3.♗b5 – the so-called 'Ruy Lopez' or Spanish game – whereby he intensifies the pressure against the central point e5 that began with 2.♘f3. At this stage we will not go more deeply into the theory of 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 or of any other sample opening, but will merely concentrate on the question of opening errors.

We have so far given examples of some weak moves and gross errors that are made, if at all, in beginners' games. An experienced chessplayer will never commit such offences against the principles of normal opening development. In practice, however, we come across cases where errors in the opening are not so blatant. These include the typical case of an unobtrusive loss of tempo, sometimes resulting from an exchange.

As an example we will take a game played by Morphy (White) in the middle of the nineteenth century:

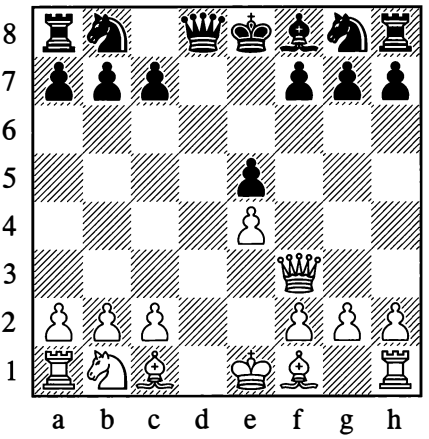
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♗g4**

Black doesn't want to surrender the centre with 3...exd4, but that being so, he should have played 3...♘d7. The move chosen is a good deal weaker.

**4.dxe5 ♗xf3**

Forced; if 4...dxe5, then 5.♕xd8† ♔xd8 6.♘xe5.

**5.♕xf3 dxe5**



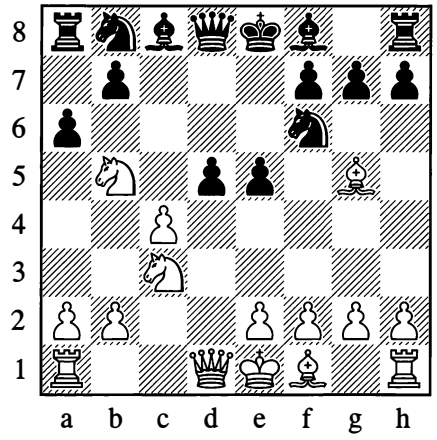
It is now obvious that White has gained a tempo: he has not only brought a piece out – it is also his turn to move. This came about because the black queen's bishop used up two moves to capture the knight on f3 which had only made one; while in recapturing on f3 with his queen, White was simultaneously making a developing move. White has thus gained a certain advantage, and after some fresh mistakes by his opponent he won quickly.

An error frequently seen in the opening is premature activity, which means any kind of attack with incomplete development and insufficient support for aggressive undertakings (the game Belavenets – Lisitsyn, which we quote in the next chapter, should suffice as an example; see also Position 455). With good attentive play, even slight violations of the basic development principles can be convincingly exploited.

The most widespread type of opening errors are those where a player gives insufficient attention to some special features of the piece configuration. In many openings there are various "reefs" on which you can easily be "shipwrecked" if you examine the variations superficially, trusting that the position is harmless or not very complex. This is where unexpected and devastating moves from the opponent are a possibility.

**366**

**Fine – Yudovich**, Moscow 1937



*White to move*

**8.♘xd5?**

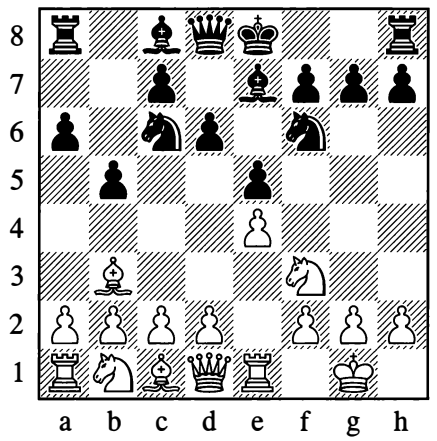
Lured by the prospect of winning the exchange (as it seemed to him) after 8...axb5 9.♘xf6† gxf6 10.♕xd8† ♔xd8 11.♗xf6†. However, he hadn't taken into account the constricted position of his king and the undefended state of the a5-e1 diagonal. In the game, there followed:

**8...axb5! 9.♘xf6† ♕xf6!! 10.♗xf6 ♗b4† 11.♕d2 ♗xd2† 12.♔xd2 gxf6**

Black emerged with an extra piece.

**...0–1**

**367**



*White to move*

In this well-known theoretical position (arising after Black's 7th move in a variation of the Ruy Lopez), White is not advised to play as follows:

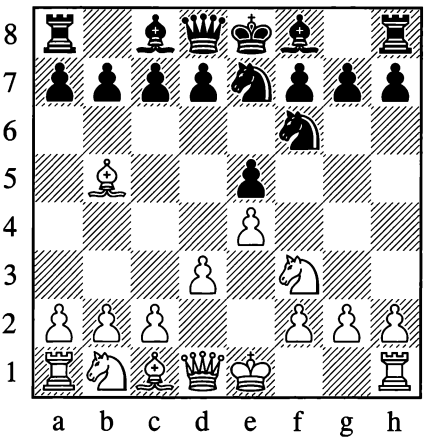
**8.d4?! ♘xd4 8.♘xd4 exd4 9.♕xd4?**

Now Black will continue with 9...c5 and 10...c4, winning the bishop on b3.

Such mistakes are often called opening traps. This is not always accurate. A trap, after all, is characterized by "bait", and the only thing that can be viewed as a bait here (in a decidedly relative sense) is perhaps White's desire to open the diagonal for his bishop on c1 and to use the advance of his d-pawn to assault the centre.

Compare the following example of a genuine trap.

**368**



This position arises after the opening moves 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♘e7. Black's last move intends to post the knight on g6 before developing the other pieces. However, it appears to leave the e5-pawn undefended.

**5.♘xe5? c6!**

The trap is sprung! If White retreats his bishop, then 6...♕a5† wins the knight on e5.

Once they have been "invented", opening traps and pitfalls such as the ones given above become the property of theory, which in its analysis of diverse variations warns the student about the possibility of such "shocks". Knowing about them is a good thing of course, but an even safer approach is to work out the variations carefully for yourself, especially when "bait" is being offered.

In this chapter we have given some elementary information on the opening. To acquire a better grasp of the general principles of opening development that we have set out here, you should once again carefully play through all the short games that were given before (at the end of each chapter).

These games are especially instructive because they show one side committing patent errors in the opening, whereupon the other side succeeds in exploiting those errors vividly and convincingly – in most cases with the aid of sharp tactical strokes and pretty combinations.

## ENTERTAINMENT PAGES

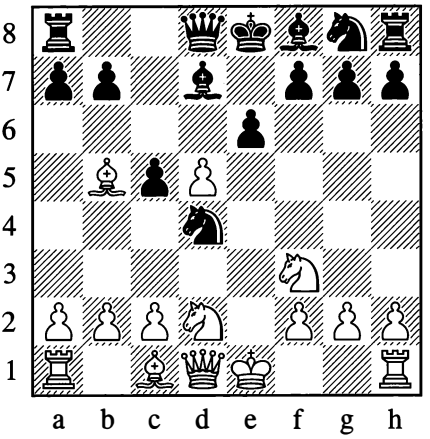
### GAMES

### 1

**Alekhine – Sanchez**, Bogota 1939

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.♘gf3 ♘c6 5.♗b5 ♗d7 6.exd5 ♘xd4?**

This move leads to a weakening of Black's position. Better was 6...exd5.



**7.♘xd4 cxd4 8.dxe6! ♗xb5 9.♕h5 ♕e7 10.♕xb5† ♔d8 11.0–0 fxe6 12.♘f3 ♕d7**

Black seeks to ease his position with a queen exchange.

**13.♕b3 ♕d5 14.c4! ♕d7**

Not 14...dxc3 on account of 15.♖d1.

**15.♘xd4! ♔c8 16.♖d1 ♗c5 17.♗e3**

White makes some simple developing moves, and his attack soon becomes irresistible. The threat now is 18.♘xe6.

**17...♗xd4 18.♖xd4 ♕e7 19.c5! ♘f6 20.c6 b6**

Or 20...bxc6 21.♖c1.

**21.♗g5 ♖e8**

So as to answer 22.♖d7 with 22...♕c5.

**22.♖c1! a5**

Reckoning on meeting 23.♕xb6 with 23...♖a7, to maintain a defence of sorts.

**23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.♖d7 ♕b4 25.♕d3!**

Black resigned, as he has no good defence against the threat of 26.♖c7†! ♔xc7 27.♕d7† with mate next move.

**1–0**

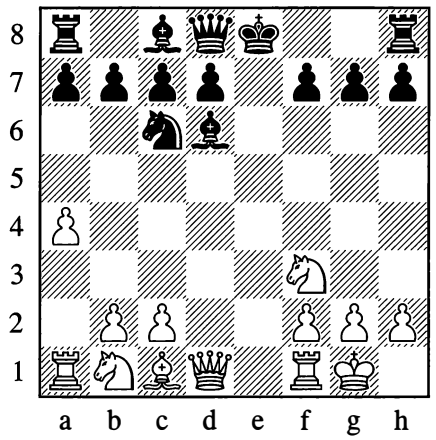
## 2

**Alekhine – Poindle**, Vienna (simul) 1936

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0–0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.dxe5!? ♘xb5 7.a4 ♘d6?**

Black should prefer either 7...d6 or 7...♘bd4.

**8.exd6 ♗xd6**



**9.♘g5! ♗e7**

If 9...0–0, then 10.♕d3! induces a weakening of Black's pawn position.

**10.♕h5 g6**

Already this is forced.

**11.♕h6 ♗f8 12.♖e1† ♘e7 13.♘e4! f5**

The only move. If 13...♗xh6, then 14.♘f6† and 15.♗xh6#.

**14.♘f6† ♔f7 15.♕h4 ♗g7 16.♗g5 h6 17.♕c4† ♔f8**

Not 17...d5 18.♘xd5 ♕xd5?, in view of 19.♖xe7† winning the queen.

**18.♖xe7! ♕xe7 19.♘h7† ♖xh7 20.♗xe7† ♔xe7**

The game is essentially decided, but the continuation is still instructive.

**21.♕xc7 ♗xb2 22.♖a2 ♗f6 23.c4 ♔f7 24.♖e2 ♖h8 25.♕d6**

Preventing 25...♖e8.

**25...a5 26.♘c3! ♖a6**

He couldn't play 26...♗xc3 in view of 27.♖e7†, forcing mate.

**27.♕d5† ♔g7 28.♘b5 ♖e6 29.♘d6! ♖d8**

Not 29...♖xe2 30.♕f7#.

**30.♔f1!**

Black resigned, as there is no defence against the threatened ♘xc8 and ♕xd7†.

**1–0**

## 3

**Bronstein – Mikenas**, Rostov-on-Don 1941

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 f5**

Premature activity.

**3.♘xe5 ♕f6**

Of course not 3...fxe4 at once, in view of 4.♕h5† g6 5.♘xg6.

**4.d4 d6 5.♘c4 fxe4 6.♗e2 ♘c6 7.d5 ♘e5 8.0–0 ♘xc4 9.♗xc4 ♕g6 10.♗b5† ♔d8**

10...♗d7 is better, but Black wants to preserve his bishop for an attack. In actual fact the attack doesn't materialize, since he is neglecting the development of his pieces.

**11.♗f4 h5?**

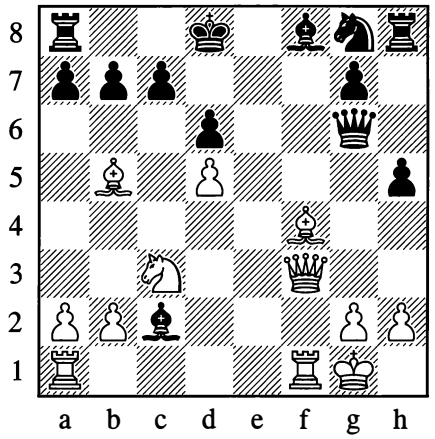
Wasting time.

**12.f3 ♗f5 13.♘c3 exf3**

An opening of lines favours the better developed side. Black needed to play 13...♘f6.

**14.♕xf3 ♗xc2**

A further loss of time, all the more dangerous since White's development is already finished.



**15.♗g5†! ♘f6**

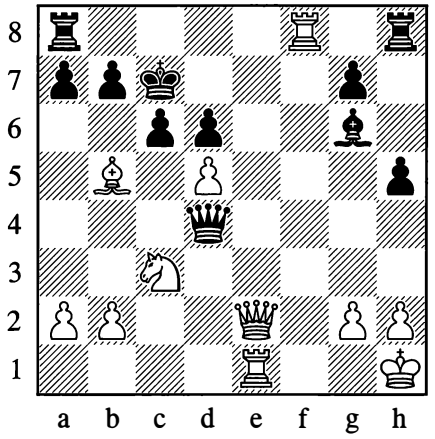
If 15...♗e7, then 16.♕f8†.

**16.♖ae1! c6**

Not 16...♕xg5, in view of 17.♕xf6† and 18.♖e8#.

**17.♗xf6† ♕xf6 18.♕e2 ♕d4† 19.♔h1 ♗g6 20.♖xf8†! ♔c7**

Or 20...♖xf8 21.♕e7†. White's sharp combinative attack in this game is crowned with a pretty finish.



**21.♗xc6! bxc6 22.♘b5†!! cxb5 23.♕xb5 ♖e8 24.♖e7†! ♖xe7 25.♕c6#**

## 4

**Petrosian – Tolush**, Moscow 1950

**1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♕c2 ♗d6**

Better is 6...♗e7, averting the following pin. Another good move is 6...♗g4, to transfer this bishop via h5 to g6.

**7.♗g5 0–0 8.e3 ♗g4**

This manoeuvre now comes too late.

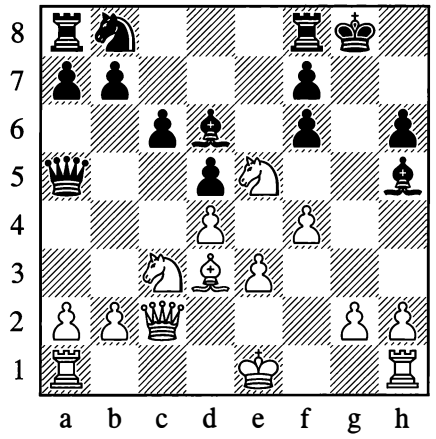
**9.♘e5 ♗h5 10.f4 ♕a5**

He had to see about freeing himself from the pin by means of 10...♕e8, utilizing the weakness of the e3-pawn (in case of 11.♗xf6 gxf6), with ...♘fd7 to follow.

**11.♗d3 h6?**

After this, Black's castled position is weakened decisively. He could still have defended with 11...♘e4, even though this involves a pawn sacrifice.

**12.♗xf6 gxf6**



**13.g4! fxe5 14.fxe5 ♗e7 15.0–0–0!**

White completes his development to ensure that his rooks can penetrate on the open files. He can regain the piece afterwards.

**15...♗g5 16.gxh5 ♔h8**

If 16...♗xe3†, there would follow 17.♔b1 ♔h8 18.♕e2 ♗xd4 19.♕d2.

**17.♕f2 f5 18.h4 ♗e7 19.♕f4**

Resigns.

**1–0**

**5**

**Geller – Vatnikov**, Kiev 1950

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗c4 e6**

Here 6...g6 is bad in view of 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5, when 8...dxe5 fails to 9.♗xf7†, winning the queen.

**7.0–0 ♗e7 8.♗e3 0–0 9.♗b3**

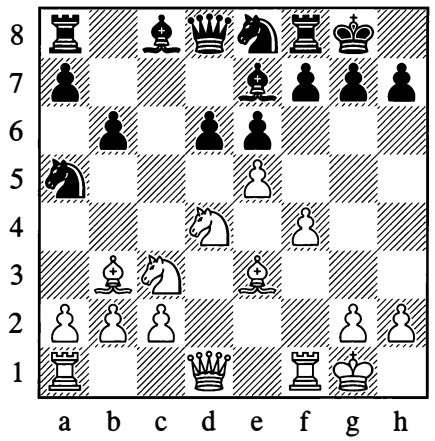
The immediate 9.f4 would be met by 9...d5!?.

**9...♘a5 10.f4 b6**

Weakening the c6-square. Better was 10...♘xb3.

**11.e5! ♘e8?**

He should have played 11...dxe5 12.fxe5 ♘e8 with a sound position.



**12.f5! dxe5**

If 12...♘xb3, then 13.♘c6! ♕c7 14.♘xe7† ♕xe7 15.f6 with a strong attack. If 12...exf5, White has the strong reply 13.e6!.

**13.fxe6!! f6?**

The best defence, which would cost Black only a pawn, lay in 13...exd4 14.exf7† ♔h8 15.fxe8=♕ ♕xe8.

**14.♘f5 ♘xb3 15.♘d5! ♘d4**

On 15...♘xa1, White wins the queen with 16.♘dxe7†. On 15...♗d6, he has 16.e7. If 15...♗xe6, then 16.♘fxe7† with 17.axb3 to follow.

**16.♘dxe7† ♔h8 17.♘g6†!**

Black resigned in view of the unanswerable threat of 18.e7.

**1–0**

**6**

**Furman – Spassky**, Moscow 1957

**1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.e4 ♗g7 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘c6 6.♗e3 ♘h6**

Black wants to carry out ...f5. In the event of 6...♘f6 7.♘c3, White would have a clear preponderance in the centre.

**7.♘c3 0–0 8.♗e2 f5 9.exf5 ♗xd4**

Unexpected, and boldly played. Black gives up the bishop that was protecting his king, but correctly judges that his knights will take up active positions.

**10.♗xd4 ♘xf5 11.♗c5 d6 12.♗a3 ♘fd4 13.0–0 ♗f5 14.♖c1**

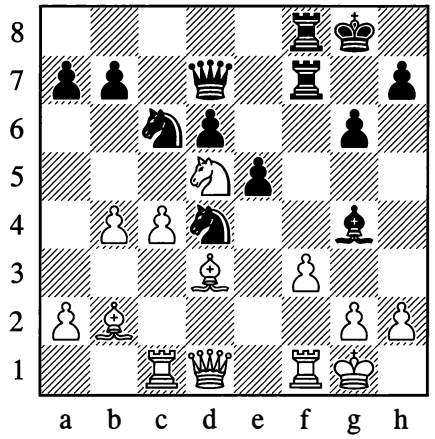
Better was 14.♗d3.

**14...♕d7 15.♘d5 ♖f7 16.b3 ♖af8 17.♗b2 e5 18.b4 ♗e6 19.♗d3?**

He had to play 19.b5 with exchanges to follow, disturbing the coordination of Black's pieces.

**19...♗g4! 20.f3**

As a result of his barely perceptible errors, White's position has become very difficult. If 20.♕d2, then 20...♘f3†! 21.gxf3 ♗xf3 22.♕g5 ♘xb4! 23.♘xb4 ♖f4 and Black wins the white queen.



**20...♗xf3! 21.gxf3 ♘xf3† 22.♔h1**

He could have fought on more stubbornly after 22.♖xf3.

**22...♕h3 23.♖f2**

After 23.♕e2 ♘xh2! 24.♕xh2 ♖xf1† 25.♖xf1 ♖xf1† 26.♗xf1 ♕xf1† 27.♕g1 ♕xc4, Black gains five pawns in return for the piece.

**23...♘e1!!**

White resigned. A spectacular finish.

**0–1**

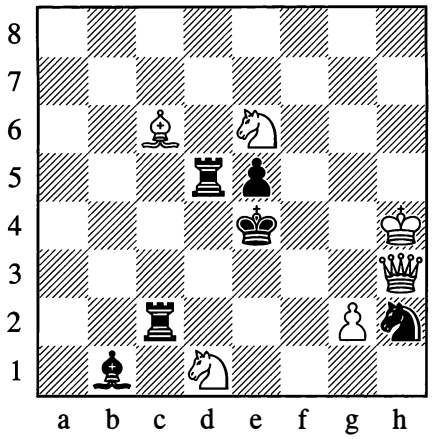
## PROBLEMS THAT ARE "NO JOKE"

The problems given below are entertaining and not lacking in humour, although undoubtedly their authors did not mean to "have a joke" in every case. You may have a try at solving them for yourself. However, solving difficult problems with variations many moves long is often no joking matter. For that reason we are appending the solutions straight away, especially since there are some interesting stories to be told about some of them.

**1**

Slowly but surely

**J. Kohtz** and **C. Kockelkorn**, 1896



*Mate in 5 moves*

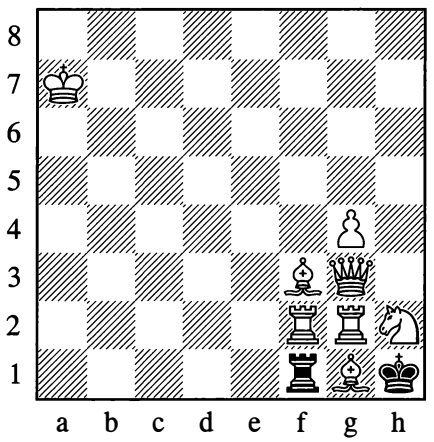
The authors of this problem may possibly have been in a very serious mood, but you can't help smiling when you see the solution:

**1.♔h5! ♗a2 2.♔h6 ♗b3 3.♔h7 ♗a4 4.♔h8 ♗xc6 5.♕h7#**

**2**

A tough nut to crack

**P. Heyeker**, 1925



*Mate in 3 moves*

The very layout of this problem – a comical clump of pieces on the kingside – tells you that the composer intended to have a joke with his readers. And yet this "barbed" joke is a phenomenally difficult exercise! The solution is

**1.♔a6!!**

It may amaze you, but this is the only move to solve the problem. 1.♗b7? fails to 1...♖b1!.

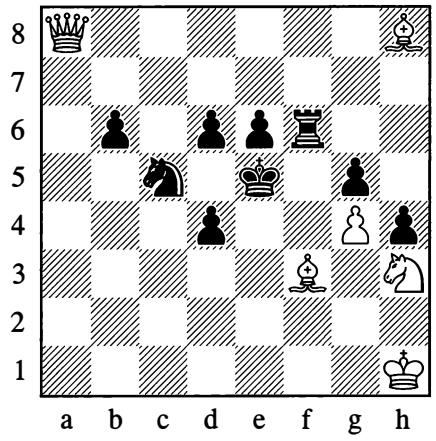
**1...♖a1† 2.♖a2!**

A checkmating discovery by the rook on g2 is ensured. Alternatively 1...♖b1 (or 1...♖e1) 2.♖f1!!, and a check on the 6th rank will be thwarted by the white bishop from g1.

**3**

Roundabout route

**G. Shories**, 1929



*Mate in 4 moves*

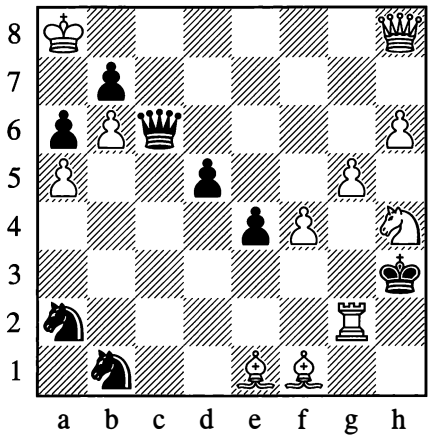
Another amusing piece of ingenuity! Relying on the fact that Black can only move his b-pawn (otherwise he is mated at once), White carries out a decisive regrouping which must surely be exceedingly hard to find:

**1.♔g1! b5 2.♗h1! b4 3.♕g2! b3 4.♕h2#**

**4**

From an unexpected quarter

**S. Loyd**, 1867



*Mate in 4 moves*

This problem is much harder still, as Black has many defences (i.e. many variations arise).

**1.♗xa6!! ♕c5**

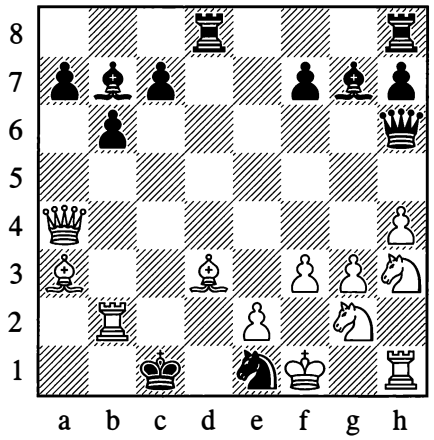
Other defences: 1...bxa6† 2.b7 ♕e6 3.♕c8!!; 1...♕c2 2.♗e2 ♕xe2 3.♕c8†; 1...♘ac3 (or 1...♘bc3) 2.♗xb7 ♕xb7† 3.♔xb7.

**2.♕e8! ♕c6 3.♕xc6 bxc6 4.♗c8#**

**5**

(a) "In its unkempt state..."

**Sam Loyd**, 1889

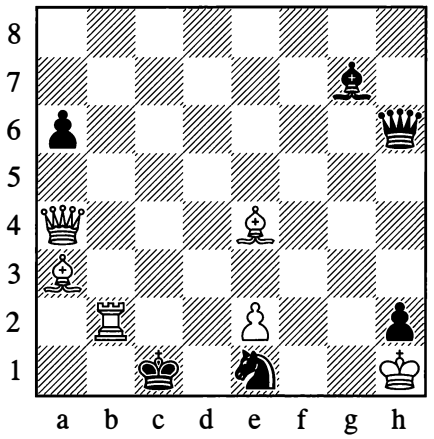


*Mate in 2 moves*

**6**

(b) "Trimmed and groomed..."

**W. Holzhausen**, 1935



*Mate in 2 moves*

This is how Sam Loyd arranged his problem with an eye to readers who were not versed in the chess composer's art. He introduced several superfluous pieces, to make the position more like a practical game and more attractive to solve.

The idea is akin to problem number 4. The solution is

**1.♗f8!!**

The bishop brazenly exposes itself to attack from three black pieces, but then White is threatening 2.♕a1#.

**1...♗xb2 2.♗xh6#**

Now see Problem 6.

Here before us we have that same problem (number 5), in an arrangement by a different composer.

Holzhausen removed the superfluous pieces that were at odds with the principle of economy, leaving only what is essential to convey the idea. "Cinderella has been turned into a princess" is what one commentator said about it.

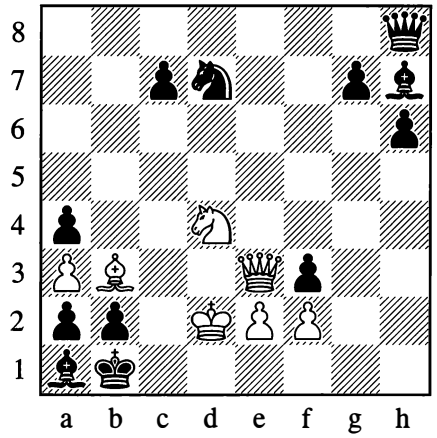
Which version of the problem we find more pleasing is an interesting question. There is a form of beauty in a rough diamond, as well as in a cut and polished gemstone – and in practical chess, as well as in a composition.

**7**

You'd be surprised what goes on in chess

**W. Grimshaw**

1881



*Mate in 3 moves*

With this problem, a remarkable thing happened. The composer's idea went as follows:

**1.♘f5! ♗xf5 2.♕e6!! ♗xe6**

Or 2...axb3 3.♕xf5#.

**3.♗c2#**

A good problem – beautiful!

Later, a surprising and thematic additional solution was found:

**1.♕g5!!**

Threatening ♕g1#.

**1...hxg5 2.♘b5**

Now the threat is ♘c3#; and ...g5 of course has become impossible.

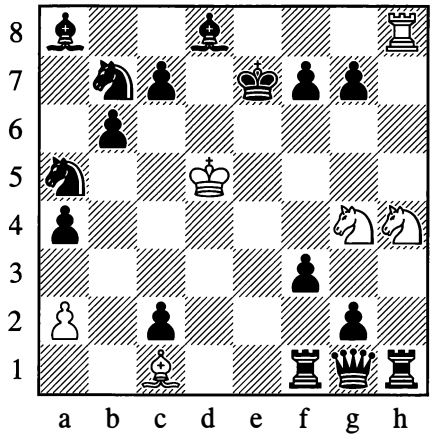
**2...g6 3.♗c2#**

Which solution is prettier? The composer's own, or the other (secondary) one?

Usually, a dual solution is considered to spoil a problem. Yet in this case it has only added to the problem's value.

**8**

Circus



*White to play and draw*

The white knights chase the black king endlessly round a ring that has the white king at its centre. Black is allowed no time to utilize his material plus.

**1.♘f5† ♔d7 2.♘e5† ♔c8 3.♘e7† ♔b8 4.♘d7† ♔a7 5.♘c8† ♔a6 6.♘b8† ♔b5 7.♘a7† ♔b4 8.♘a6† ♔c3 9.♘b5† ♔d3 10.♘b4† ♔e2 11.♘c3† ♔f2**

11...♔e1? 12.♘d3#.

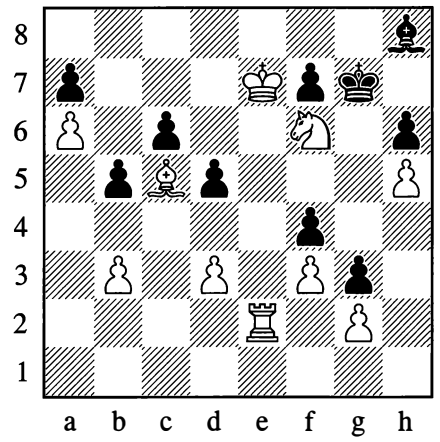
**12.♘d3† ♔g3 13.♘e4† ♔g4 14.♘e5† ♔f5 15.♘g3† ♔f6 16.♘g4† ♔e7**

16...♔g6 17.♘e5† and the king must return to f6.

**17.♘f5†**

The whip is cracked and the pursuit round the ring continues.

**9**
A crazy path



*Mate in 4 moves*

It has to be said straight away that solving this problem is very difficult. When someone starts showing you the solution, a feeling of bewilderment comes over you – either you are being "led up the garden path", or there is something not quite normal about that other person.

Suppose he is taciturn and just confines himself to making the moves on the board; you on the other hand are anything *but* taciturn, and bestow some sort of commentary on each of White's moves. Then your peculiar "dialogue-monologue" might go somewhat as follows:

**1.♖a2**

"Oh, come now!" *(In astonishment.)* "You mean to say *that's* the shortest way to mate! Well, well..." *(Now a little worried, but trying not to show it:)* "Tell me, though – how have you been feeling lately? Have you been having any headaches?"

**1...d4 2.♖a5**

"I see, I see!" *(Hearty in tone – then soothing)* "Don't get too excited. This is all very interesting. I'm following you – just two more moves and it'll be mate if you say so."

**2...b4 3.♔d7**

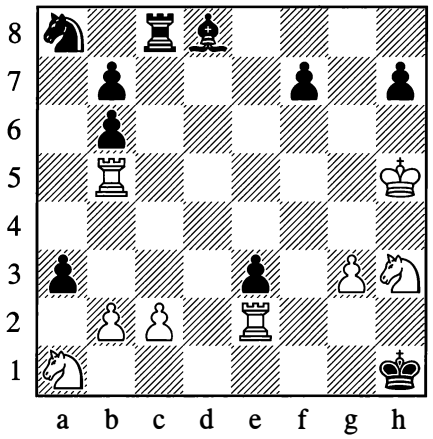
"Aha!" *(Brightening up, as if a light has started glimmering in pitch darkness Then speaking "aside":)* "This is all too much for me!"

**3...♔xf6 4.♗xd4#**

"Just look, it *is* mate! So *that's* it – all the rook had to do was gain control of the fifth rank." *(Aside:)* "Just like that line in *Hamlet*: 'Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.'"

**10**
"Excelsior"

**S. Loyd**, 1861



*Mate in 5 moves*

The distinguished American problemist Samuel Loyd (1841-1911) thought up this problem as a joke. One of his friends, himself a composer of chess problems, was in the habit of betting that when shown any problem he could always tell in advance which piece was going to give mate in the main variation. Setting up the diagram position in front of his friend, Loyd said:

"I'd like to put the question differently. Look the problem over in your usual way, and say which of the pieces *can't* give mate."

"Mate with the b2-pawn would be the most unlikely," came the quick reply.

"You can see from the solution which of us won the bet," Loyd would tell people afterwards.

The Latin word *excelsior* is usually translated as "eminent", but although this problem is indeed eminent, Loyd had no wish at all to be immodest. Another meaning of *excelsior* is "striving higher". The heading of the problem corresponds to the title and refrain of a poem popular in America, Longfellow's ballad of the young Alpine climber. The appositeness of the heading is obvious: in the course of the solution the b2-pawn reaches the highest summit, the square a8. Subsequently, other composers were to produce quite a few chess problems on this same theme of "the pawn's triumphal procession".

The solution goes:

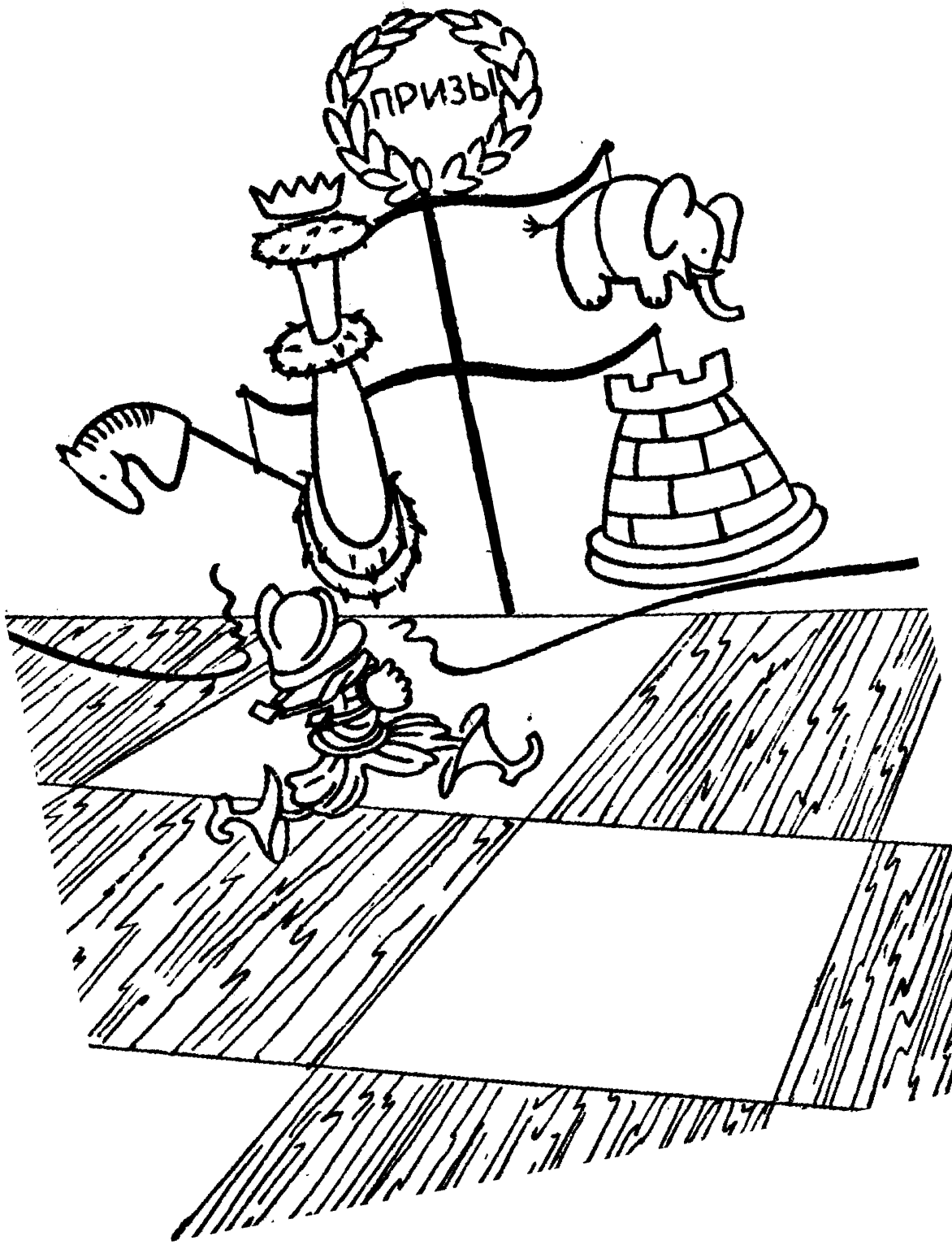
**1.b4!**
Threatening ♖f5.

**1...♖c5† 2.bxc5**
Threatening ♖b1#.

**2...a2 3.c6**
Threatening ♖f5.

**3...♗c7 4.cxb7 ~ 5.bxa8=♕#**
If Black defends differently, he is still mated within five moves (1...♖c6 2.♖d5; 1...♖xc2 2.♘xc2; 1...♗g5 2.♖f5).

For further problems and studies, see the Appendix, where the special section "Chess Compositions" is devoted to them.


ПРИЗЫ

# Chapter 8

# The Endgame

## 1. BASIC IDEAS OF THE ENDGAME

With the onset of the endgame, there is normally a radical change in the general character of the play. Dashing attacks against the king, threats of mate, sharp tactical blows – these are all things of the past. The king no longer needs to be constantly defended by its pieces and can take an active part in the game. To make no use of the king would even be foolish; in many cases it would mean playing under unequal conditions, with a piece less. The endgame further alters the power and importance of the pawns, given the possibility of queening them more easily. The strength of other pieces also grows, thanks to the increase in their mobility and sphere of action. The rooks start to be especially active, after earlier operating only in a small number of open files.

Of course, in the distinctive small-scale war of the pieces that constitutes the endgame, the basic principles of strategy and tactics that we set out earlier remain in full force. In the endgame any forms of restriction on mobility, and conversely any open lines for active piece play, actually gain in significance; the overall reduction in the number of pieces sometimes makes these factors decisive. Various types of weakness in the position are also apt to tell more acutely in the endgame stage.

The general aims of the players in the endgame remain unchanged – to exploit a material or positional advantage if you have one, or to endeavour to acquire one if you have not. The queening of pawns – that special type of material gain – is a basic and highly characteristic target of endgame play. It is round this target that the battle flares up; it is in pursuit of this aim that attacks on weak pawns are undertaken, and pawn breakthroughs organized. Players employ the full arsenal of devices, all the typical precepts: centralizing the pieces, especially the king (this is less important for the long-range pieces, rook and bishop); cramping the mobility of your opponent's pieces, and securing maximum activity for your own; and also applying such characteristic concepts as a gain of tempo, zugzwang, triangulation, corresponding squares, and so on.

Despite the limited material left on the board and the appearance of simplicity, endgames incorporate a boundless variety of specific ideas and subtleties of various kinds. Playing an endgame often demands exceptional accuracy, when you need to attend to the minutest peculiarities of the position and take every tempo into account. It must be stressed that in the endgame a player's very mode of thinking is in some way modified. If tactics – the calculation of concrete

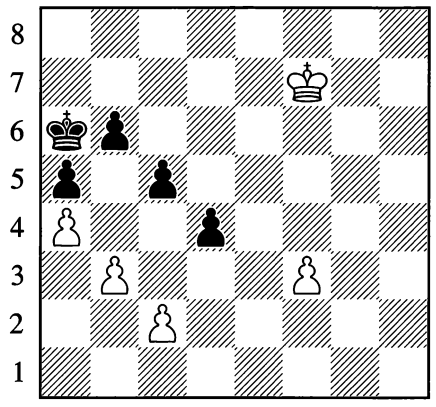
variations, threats, combinations – was of great importance in the middlegame, then strategy – the general plan for attaining the goal with the appropriate formation of pieces – acquires paramount significance in the endgame; elaboration of the plan by concrete calculation plays a subordinate role here. The endgame is by nature positional. If in the middlegame much depends on the players' imagination, in the endgame logic comes right to the fore.

It must not of course be claimed that this holds good for all types of endgame (exceptionally sharp positions, combinations and tactical strokes are met with in endgames too), but it does in the majority of cases. Combinations in the endgame often have a special, distinctive character, for their aim differs from the usual ones of mate or the win of material. In what follows, we shall more than once be able to verify this from a series of examples (the next two alone will suffice).

We are already familiar with cases where a passed pawn is obtained by means of a breakthrough. Here is another interesting example:

**370**

**Zubarev – Grigoriev**, Leningrad 1925

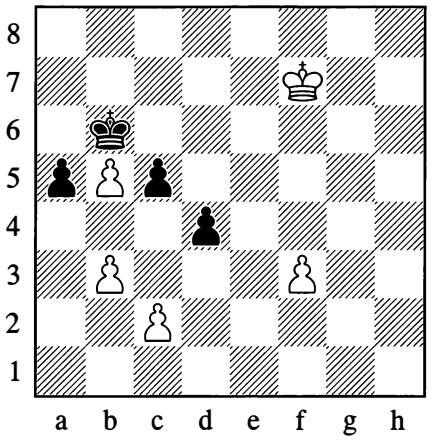


*Black to move*

**56...b5**

It's clear that this break is Black's only chance. But what comes afterwards is totally unexpected, and shows how accurately such apparently simple positions need to be calculated.

**57.axb5† ♔b6!!**



A characteristic endgame combination – Black refrains from taking on b5. Mysterious at first sight, the aim of this move will soon be understandable.

**58.♔e6**

Or 58.f4 c4! and Black wins.

But now 58...c4? would fail to 59.bxc4 a4 60.♔d6 and 61.c5†. Play would proceed more tenaciously and interestingly after 58.♔e7! a4!.

**58...a4! 59.bxa4**

This is the whole point – the capture on a4 doesn't give check, as it would have done if the black king had been on b5. This allows Black to create a passed pawn with no loss of time and beat his opponent in the ensuing race to queen (you will recall the move-counting procedure).

**59...c4 60.f4 d3**

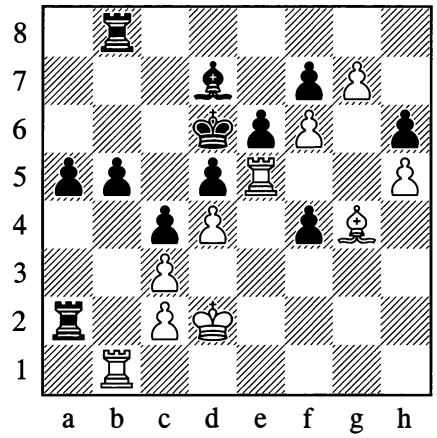
Black won.

**...0–1**

In the following position, White's combination pursues the aim of acquiring two united passed pawns. When such pawns are close to their promotion squares, they prove stronger than a rook.

**371**

**Panov – Zagoriansky**, Moscow 1945



*White to move*

**34.♖g5!!**

Now on 34...♖g8, White would play 35.♖g6!! threatening ♖xh6-h8. The game continued:

**34...hxg5?**

34...b4! is the best defence; then 35.g8=♕ ♖xg8 36.♖xg8 b3 gives Black counterplay.

**35.h6 b4 36.h7 bxc3† 37.♔c1 ♖ab2 38.♖xb2 cxb2† 39.♔b1 ♗a4 40.♗d1 f3 41.h8=♕**

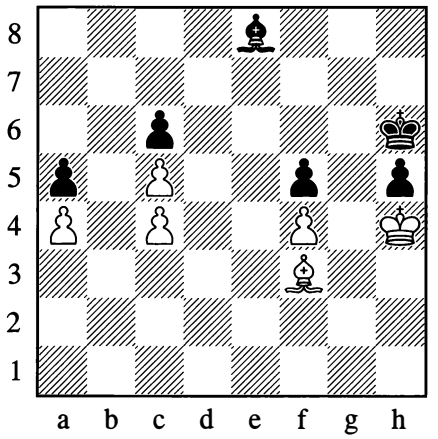
Black resigned.

**1–0**

In both examples, the sacrificial combinations were aimed at obtaining a positional advantage which guaranteed the win of material only at a later stage.

A factor of immense significance in the endgame is an active, aggressive piece formation facing the opponent's passive, defensive one.

**372**



*White to move*

Black's freedom of action is curtailed by the need to defend his weak pawns on c6 and h5. It's easy to see that he is in a zugzwang position: if it were his turn to move here, he would lose the game at once with 1...♗f7 2.♗xc6 ♗xc4 3.♗e8!; while 1...♗d7 leads us to the main variation.

In such cases, as we already know, the task is to gain a tempo – to hand the move to the opponent.

Here the tempo gain is achieved thanks to the fact that the bishop on f3 has three squares at its disposal for manoeuvring (f3, g2, h1), while the bishop on e8 has only two (d7, e8). The ensuing play is now easy to understand:

**1.♗g2 ♗d7 2.♗h1 ♗e8**

1...♔g6 and 2...♔h6 would have led to the same position; Black has no king moves other than these, since he has to guard the g5-square against an invasion by the white king.

**3.♗f3**

The aim is achieved.

**3...♗d7 4.♗xh5 ♗c8 5.♗e8 ♗b7 6.♗d7 ♔g6**

After losing the pawn, Black is once again in

a passive, defensive position. All that remains now is for White to bring his king round to the e5-square:

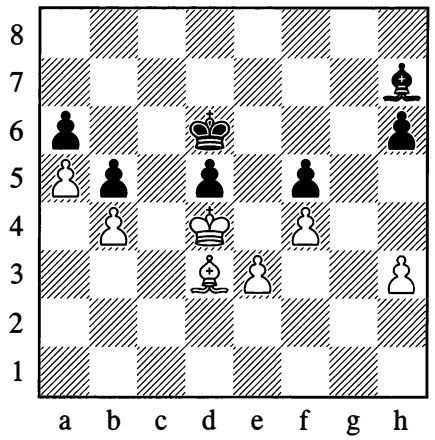
**7.♔g3 ♔f6 8.♔f3 ♔g6 9.♔e3 ♔f6 10.♔d4 ♗a8 11.♗c8**

With the b7-square taken away from it, the bishop in the corner of the board is "dead and buried"; White gains possession of the point e5, and wins.

We will now give a related example that interests us in two respects. First, it shows how much easier an endgame becomes if you are acquainted with the idea of endings of a similar type; secondly, it shows that knowing the general idea is not in itself sufficient, since every position demands careful consideration of its concrete particulars.

**373**

**Post – Leonhardt**, Berlin 1907



*White to move*

By playing only against the pawns on d5 and f5, White can achieve nothing. Black has to be given one more weakness – his h-pawn has to be forced to advance to h5.

**1.h4 ♗g6 2.♗c2 h5**

This is forced, since after 2...♗h7 3.h5 Black either loses his f5-pawn or else has to allow White's centralized king to invade on c5 or e5. Now 3.♗d1 would be useless in view of 3...♗e8! 4.♗f3 ♗f7!, leaving White to move. To obtain the same position with Black to move, White has to play more precisely.

**3.♗d3! ♗h7 4.♗f1!**

This is now winning, as the following moves show:

**4...♗g8**

Or 4...♗g6 5.♗g2!, leading to the same position.

**5.♗e2! ♗f7 6.♗f3**

White has successfully carried out his objective. Black is in zugzwang.

**1–0**

We have now seen a few examples clearly reflecting many fundamental ideas that are common to different types of endgame, regardless of the material participating in the struggle. At the same time we have seen that each class of fighting material in the endgame comes with its own peculiarities and typical measures, its specific ideas. The more we find out about these, the more fully we will master the art of endgame play.

## 2. REALIZING AN ADVANTAGE

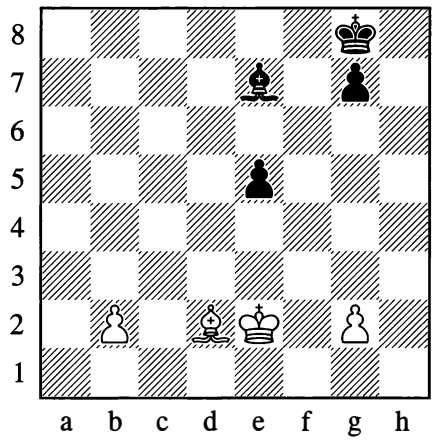
As already indicated, the basic task in an endgame is to conduct to victory the advantage you have acquired in the middlegame, or to achieve a draw if the game is heading in the direction of a loss. The decisive factor is usually the presence of passed pawns and the measures taken to force them through to queen.

The first rule that the student should learn is not to act with any unnecessary haste in the

exploitation of an advantage. It is far more important, if circumstances permit, to prepare the ground first, to increase your positional assets, to strengthen your position as a whole by a suitable arrangement of your pieces. After that, the exploitation will proceed more safely and with fewer attendant difficulties.

Let us examine the following interesting and highly instructive example.

**374**



*White to move*

White has an undoubted positional advantage: his outside passed b-pawn is more dangerous than Black's e-pawn.

In such situations, the beginner's first impulse is to start pushing his pawn at once. But playing that way is often incorrect, for example: 1.b4 ♔f7 2.b5? ♔e6 3.b6? ♔d5 4.b7? ♗d6 5.♗e3 ♗b8; Black has succeeded in centralizing his king, and draws easily with 6...♔c6. He would have more trouble drawing in the event of 4.♗e3 ♗d6! 5.♔d3, but the centralization of his king still gives him good chances to defend successfully.

The correct method of play for White is to begin by improving his position and constricting his opponent.

**1.♗c3 ♗d6**

On f6 the bishop would be no stronger than a pawn and could not hinder the white b-pawn's advance. White now centralizes his king and ties Black down by pressurizing the e5-point.

**2.♔e3 ♔f7 3.♔e4 ♔e6**

It is only after this that the time has come to send the b-pawn forward.

**4.b4 ♗c7 5.b5 ♔f6**

To answer 6.♔d5 with 6...♔f5, creating double-edged play.

**6.g4 ♔e6 7.g5 g6**

It remains to conduct the final part of the ending, that is, to find the correct plan for the further play. Usually everything in an endgame is decided by strategic plans. But here the calculation of concrete variations also starts to play an important role.

**8.♗b2**

Thanks to this waiting move White will again be able to advance his pawn. Of course, such a committal step has to be precisely worked out:

**8...♗d6 9.b6 ♗b8 10.b7 ♗d6 11.♗a3 ♗c7**

On 11...♗b8 White plays 12.♗c5! at once, putting Black in zugzwang.

**12.♗b4 ♗b8 13.♗c5 ♔d7 14.♔d5 e4**

14...♔c7 15.♗d6† and White will mop up on the kingside.

**15.♗e3**

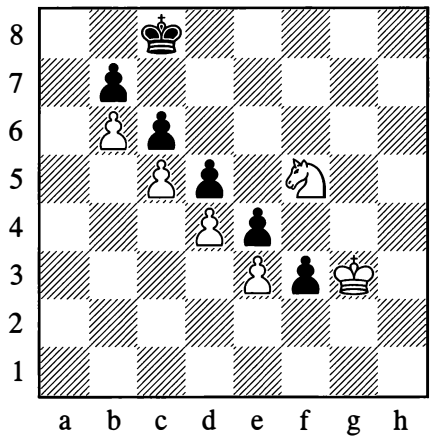
White wins. 15...♗- 16.♗a7; or 15...♔c7 16.♗f4†; or 15...♔d8 16.♔xe4 and 17.♗f4.

It may be that the win from Position 374 can be achieved more simply; for our present purposes that is immaterial. The important point is that, in principle, the correct winning

plan has to be of just this nature – gradual and methodical, eliminating any risk of a draw and any risk that a tedious calculation of obscure variations will be needed. In this last respect, the following example is characteristic:

**375**

**Botvinnik – Thomas**, Nottingham 1936



*White to move*

In this amusing position, if White gives up his knight for two pawns (♘f5-h4xf3 and ♔xf3), we arrive at a study by Horwitz and Kling (1851), in which White has to exchange pawns gradually and reach a "two against one" endgame (see Diagram 207 on page 117); with precise manoeuvring, this endgame is a win.

Botvinnik did *not* give up his knight, but essentially his winning method proved to be *more* "study-like":

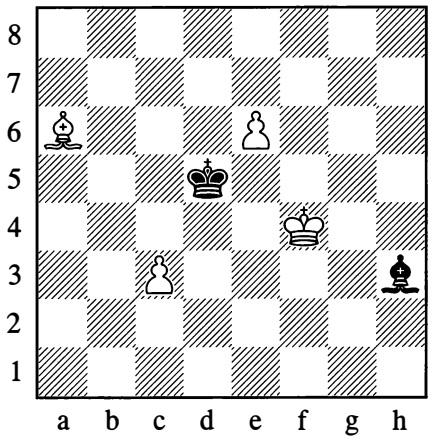
**63.♔f4! ♔b8 64.♔e5 ♔c8 65.♔e6 ♔b8 66.♔d7 ♔a8 67.♘g3! ♔b8 68.♘f1 ♔a8 69.♔c8!**

Black resigned, as he would have to play ...f2, after which White would pick up this pawn with his king (while keeping his extra knight). Annotators were surprised that Botvinnik had chosen what might seem a relatively leisurely path; they didn't consider that in reality this was the quickest way to force the opponent's resignation.

**1–0**

Naturally the method of exploiting an advantage depends on the character of the position in each individual case. We also come across situations where we need to look for a combinative solution to the problem.

**376**



*White to move*

Here, White cannot win with either 1.c4† ♔d6 or 1.e7 ♗d7 2.♗c8 ♗e8 3.♔f5 ♔c4 4.♔e6 ♔xc3 5.♗d7 ♗h5 6.♔f6 ♔d4 7.♗e6 ♗e8! 8.♗f7 ♗a4 (in this case, the extra pawn with bishops on the same colour fails to win). A combination decides the game:

**1.♗c8! ♗f1**

1...♗xe6 2.♗xe6† ♔xe6 fails to 3.♔e4; while 1...♔d6 fails to 2.e7.

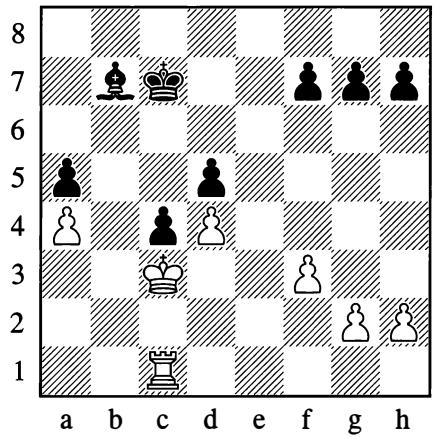
**2.e7 ♗b5 3.c4†! ♔xc4 4.♗a6!**

Now consider a few more examples of how typical advantages are exploited. They involve various distributions of material.

Quite often in the endgame you need to exploit the advantage of the exchange – the advantage of a rook over a minor piece. The basic idea of such endings is to open up lines (or utilize those already opened) for your rook to invade the opponent's camp, with the aim of winning enemy pawns and creating a passed pawn for yourself.

377

**Levenfish – Freiman**, Leningrad 1934



*White to move*

White's solution of the problem confronting him is very logical and methodical. He would gain nothing from 42.♖b1 on account of 42...♗c6. Therefore:

**42.♖e1! ♔d7 43.♖b1! ♗c6**

Or else 44.♖b5, but White is guaranteed an entry point in any case.

**44.♖b6 ♗xa4 45.♖b7† ♔e8 46.♖a7 ♗d7 47.♖xa5 ♗e6**

The first stage is completed – lines have been opened up for the rook. White now conducts an attack against the weak points d5 and h7, with the aim of acquiring a passed pawn.

**48.f4! g6 49.f5!! gxf5**

Now the h7-pawn is helpless, since without a g-pawn the defensive move ...h5 is unavailable.

**50.♖a8† ♔e7 51.♖h8 ♔f6 52.♖xh7 f4 53.♖h8! ♔g6**

Or 53...♗f5 54.♖e8, followed by pushing the h-pawn.

**54.♖g8† ♔h6**

After repeating moves to gain time on the clock, White continued as follows:

**57.♖d8 ♔g6 58.♔d2 ♔f5**

White was threatening to play ♔e2 and attack the f4-pawn. If 59...c3, then 60.♖d6 and ♖c6.

**59.♖g8 ♔e4 60.♔c3 ♔f5**

White only now begins advancing his h-pawn, so as to divert the enemy pieces towards it.

**61.h4 ♔f6 62.h5 ♗f5 63.h6 ♗g6**

White now has everything in place for a final winning push.

**66.♖d8 ♗e4 67.♖d6† ♔g5 68.h7 ♗xh7 69.♖xd5† ♔g4**

Against the passed d-pawn Black is powerless.

**70.♖e5 f3 71.gxf3† ♔xf3 72.d5.**

Black resigned.

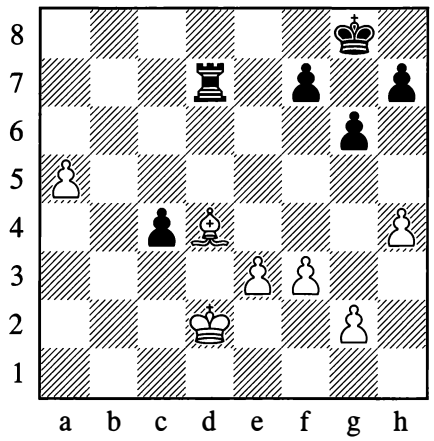
**1–0**

With no pawns on the board, a rook wins against a bishop only in exceptionally favourable positions, of which Diagram 26 (on page 25) may serve as an example (see also Diagrams 412 and 414 below).

If the side with the bishop has dangerous passed pawns, the exchange is sometimes insufficient to win; there can even be cases where the player with the rook loses.

**378**

**Bernstein – Rubinstein**, Ostend 1906



*White to move*

White can win here by:

**1.♔c3!**

In the game 1.a6 was played immediately, and after 1...♖d6 2.a7 ♖a6 3.♔c3 ♖a4! Black was able to hold the draw. His rook was *actively* placed to halt the a-pawn while simultaneously defending his own c-pawn. ...½–½

**1...♖c7**

Or 1...♖d5 2.♔b4.

**2.a6 ♖c8 3.a7 ♔f8 4.♗e5 ♖a8**

Else White's next move forces promotion.

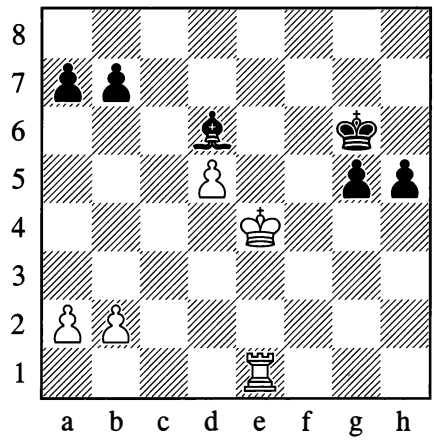
**5.♗b8**

After ♔xc4 the white king reaches b7 or e7.

The best way of holding up an enemy pawn is to place your rook *behind* it, as the rook then retains some activity – that is, it can exert useful influence along the rank; for instance in the note to White's first move above, the rook was able to do the extra work of defending the c4-pawn.

**379**

**Verlinsky – Maizelis**, Moscow 1925



*Black to move*

In this position, Black is the exchange down but his two passed pawns on the kingside give him enough compensation.

**33...g4 34.♔d4 ♔f5 35.♖e6**

This attempt to exploit the d5-pawn leads to loss, as White can no longer cope with Black's passed pawns.

**35...♗f4**

Cutting the white king off.

**36.♖e8 g3 37.♖f8† ♔g4**

Sacrificing on f4 at this point is useless, as the g-pawn promotes with check.

**38.♔e4 ♗g5 39.♖f1 h4 40.d6 g2 41.♖g1 h3 42.d7 ♔g3 43.♔f5 ♗d8**

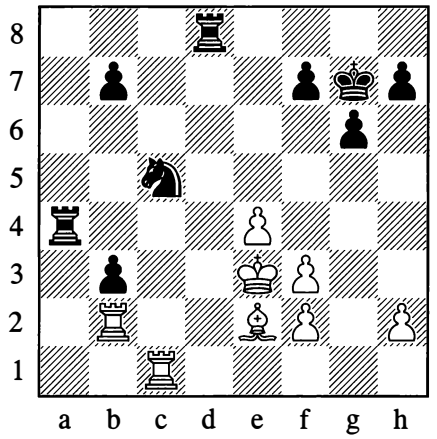
White resigned.

**0–1**

A combinative method of exploiting a passed pawn is demonstrated in the next example.

**380**

**Euwe – Smyslov**, World Championship (24)
The Hague/Moscow 1948



*Black to move*

White has played 30.♖c1; by attacking the knight he increases the pressure on the b3-pawn. There now followed:

**30...b6 31.♗c4 ♖da8!**

Defending the b-pawn indirectly; if 32.♗xb3, then 32...♖b4 33.♖c3 ♖a3.

**32.♗d5 ♖a2! 33.♖cb1 ♖8a4 34.♔d2 ♖d4† 35.♔e2 ♘a4 36.♖xa2 bxa2 37.♖a1**

On 37.♗xa2, Black wins a piece by 37...♘c3† 38.♔e3 ♖a4 39.♗b3 ♖a3.

**37...♘c3† 38.♔e3 ♖d1!**

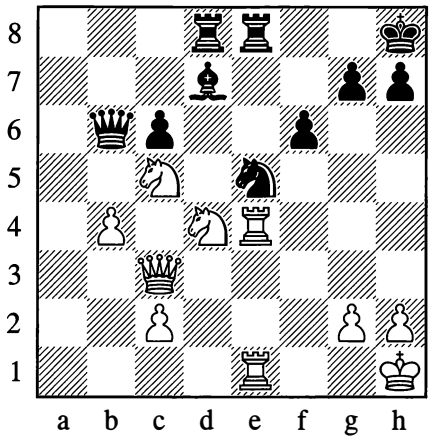
White resigned.

**0–1**

A passed pawn often arises as the result of gradually prepared exchanges when one of the players has a pawn majority on the flank.

**381**

**Botvinnik – Boleslavsky**, Moscow 1941



*White to move*

In this example, the passed pawn materialized quickly from some sharp combinative play. The game went as follows:

**26.♘xd7 ♖xd7 27.♕xc6 ♕d8**

27...♕xb4 fails to 28.♕xd7! ♘xd7 29.♖xe8† ♘f8 30.c3! and 31.♘e6; not, however, 28.♖xe5? ♕xe1†!.

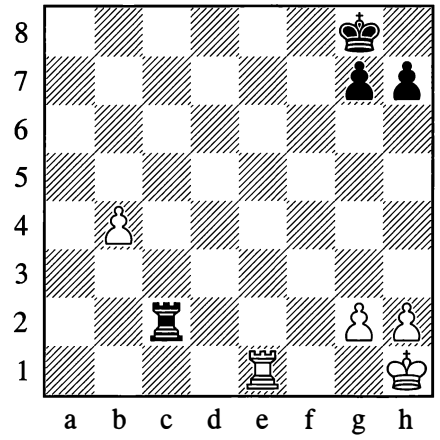
**28.♘f3 ♖c7 29.♘xe5! fxe5**

If 29...♖xc6, then 30.♘f7† ♔g8 31.♘xd8 ♖xd8 32.c4, and White's two passed pawns should prove decisive in the endgame.

**30.♕xe8†!! ♕xe8 31.♖xe5 ♕g8 32.♖e8 ♖xc2 33.♖xg8† ♔xg8**

A classic example of realizing an advantage through simplification and transition to a won endgame. The rook ending that has now come about is highly instructive in all its phases.

**381a**



*White to move*

**34.♖b1!**

As a rule, rooks belong not only behind enemy pawns but also behind your own, to give the pawns extra strength. The advance of the b-pawn will divert Black's pieces, and White will then gain the upper hand on the kingside.

**34...♔f7 35.b5 ♔e6 36.b6 ♖c8 37.h3!**

After 37.b7 ♖b8 Black would manage to win the b-pawn and get back with his king to his own pawns in time.

**37...♖b8 38.♔h2 ♔d5 39.♔g3 ♔c6 40.♔g4 ♔b7**

40...♖xb6 would be met by an exchange of rooks and ♔g4-f5-e6-f7.

**41.♖e1**

Another typical ploy: to increase its activity, the rook now comes round to defend the pawn from along the rank. If 41...♔xb6, then 42.♖b1†.

**41...♖g8 42.♖e6 ♔a6 43.♔g5 ♔b7**

Now White weakens the black pawns by pushing his h-pawn to h6.

**44.h4 ♔a6 45.h5 ♔b7 46.g4 ♔a6 47.♔h4 ♔b7 48.h6 gxh6 49.♖xh6 ♖g7 50.♔h5 ♔a6**

After this, White has no need to manoeuvre with g4-g5, ♖f6, ♔h6 etc.; he can win the h7-pawn by other means.

**51.♖c6 ♖e7 52.♖c7 ♖e5† 53.g5 ♔xb6 54.♖xh7 ♔c6 55.♔h6 ♔d6 56.g6 ♖e1**

Aiming to answer 57.g7 by giving a series of checks from behind and then stationing his rook on g1.

**57.♖f7 ♔e6**

The king can go no further – it is cut off along the f-file.

**58.♖f2 ♖a1 59.g7 ♖h1† 60.♔g6 ♖g1† 61.♔h7 ♖h1† 62.♔g8 ♔e7**

White was threatening to play 63.♔f8 and 64.g8=♕. On 62...♖a1 he would have continued with 63.♖h2, and then 64.♔h8 or 64.♔h7.

**63.♖e2†**

In typical fashion White drives the black king one file further to the left, so as to free the square f7 for his own king.

**63...♔d7 64.♖e4**

The well-known device of building a so-called "bridge" for the white king. This is more precise than 64.♖e5, in view of the reply 64...♔d6.

**64...♖h2 65.♔f7**

At this point Boleslavsky resigned. If a few more moves had been played, we would have witnessed the building of a bridge according to all the rules of endgame art, namely:

**65...♖f2† 66.♔g6 ♖g2† 67.♔f6 ♖f2† 68.♔g5 ♖g2† 69.♖g4!**

The king has been "shielded" from the checks, and White wins.

**1–0**

It should be observed that winning the rook endgame with an extra pawn was not difficult in this case, since the black king was a long way from the pawn.

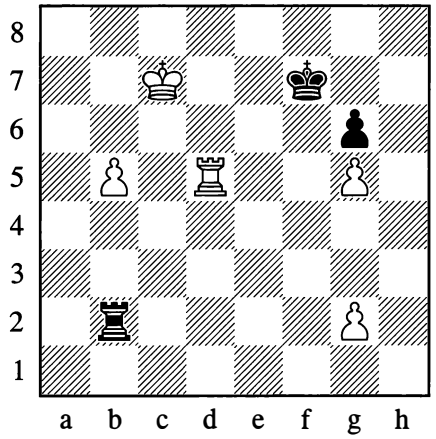
In general, though, one extra pawn in a rook endgame does *not* win. Naturally there are many exceptions, but we shall explore all this in the next section – "Theoretical Endgames".

We shall shortly see some examples of exploiting an advantage with other distributions of material. For the present, apart from some acquaintance with the tactical power of various pieces, the essential thing has been to grasp three *methods* of exploitation – by systematic positional pressure, by combinative play, or through consistent simplification, that is the transition to simpler positions from complex ones. Of course, in practice these methods may combine with each other and supplement each other.

The need for great care when exploiting an advantage is especially worth remembering.

In a game between two First Category players in Moscow 1924, the following position arose. (The author, I am afraid, was playing Black.)

**382**



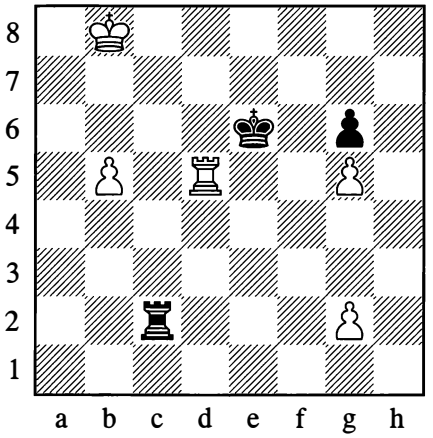
*Black to move*

Black's situation is hopeless, but he carries on defending "out of inertia":

**64...♖c2† 65.♔b8??**

Simply incredible! It obviously seems to White that his pawn is going to get to b7 in complete comfort. 65.♔d7 would have ensured victory.

**65...♔e6!**



Putting a stop to White's dreams. There is suddenly no way to save the b-pawn.

**66.♖d1 ♖b2 67.♖e1† ♔f5 68.♔c7**

If 68.g4†, then 68...♔f4!.

**68...♖xb5 69.♖e2?**

White is clearly demoralized; having let the win slip, he even squanders the drawing chances that 69.♔d6 would still have given him.

**69...♖d5! 70.♔c6 ♖d1**

With the white king cut off, Black was able to win.

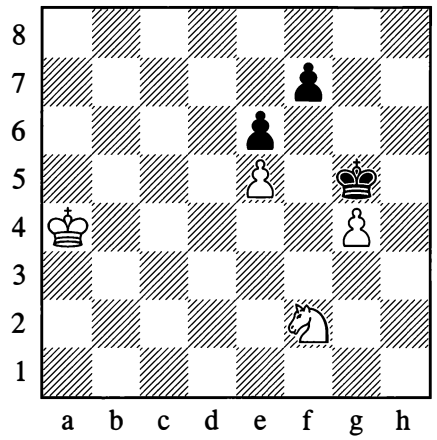
**...0–1**

To conclude this section, let us draw attention to some special methods of defence. We know that if the opponent only has one minor piece

or two knights, the weaker side often seeks salvation by exchanging off all the pawns, as in that case the remaining forces are inadequate to mate.

**383**

**Nimzowitsch – Rubinstein**, Carlsbad 1911



*White to move*

The win for White is difficult here, even though he has an extra piece. The game continued 1.♘d3?, which allowed 1...f6! 2.exf6 ♔xf6 3.♘f2 ♔g5 4.♔b4 e5 5.♔c4 e4, when Black drew because White is powerless against the threat of ...♔f4 and ...e3, forcing the exchange of the last pawn. ...½–½. Nimzowitsch could have won by the following method:

**1.♔b4 ♔f4**

If 1...f6, then 2.♘e4† followed by 3.exf6, or alternatively 2.exf6 ♔xf6 3.♘e4† ♔e5 4.g5!, and Black cannot take the knight since he would be stepping outside the square of the g5-pawn. In the event of 1...f5, the win is achieved by 2.exf6 ♔xf6 3.♘e4† as above, or in a different way again: 2.gxf5 ♔xf5 (if 2...exf5 then 3.♔c5) 3.♘d3 ♔e4 4.♔c5

**2.♘d3† ♔xg4 3.♘c5 ♔f5**

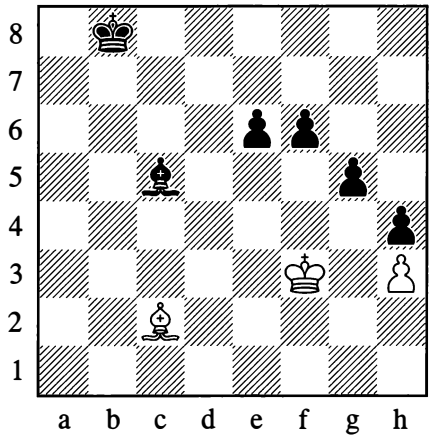
Black threatens to exchange off the remaining pawn by ...f6.

**4.♘d7!**

At this juncture the knight is the key to the whole situation: an exchange on f6 is impossible, and in due course the white king will penetrate via d6.

Another possibility for defence in the endgame is to try to bring about a position with bishops of opposite colours, since in this case the presence of one or even more extra pawns can be insufficient to win.

**384**



*White to move*

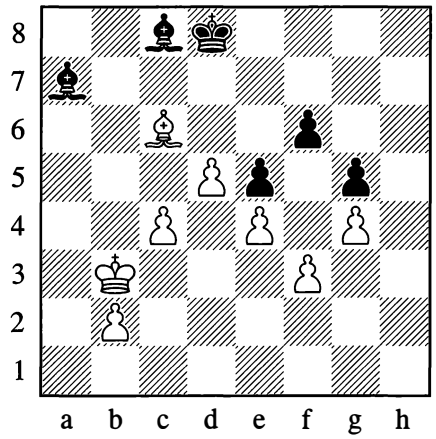
**1.♗b3 e5 2.♗e6 ♔c7 3.♔e4**

All the black pawns are paralysed (the white bishop will constantly oscillate between f5 and g4). However, if Black is to move in the diagram position, he wins easily, for instance:

**1...♔c7 2.♗b3 ♔d6 3.♔e4 f5† 4.♔f3 e5 5.♗c2 e4†**

**385**

**Bogoljubow – Rubinstein**, Berlin 1926



*Black to move*

Position 385 gives a more complex example of "opposite bishop" play. With three pawns for a bishop, White has chances of winning. However, Black forced a draw in the following artful manner:

**72...♗d4! 73.♔a3 ♗a6 74.b3 ♗xc4! 75.bxc4 ♔c7**

In spite of White's two extra pawns, the win is now impossible.

**½–½**

Later on we shall acquaint ourselves with some further resources (methods) for the defence which can complicate the task of exploiting an advantage.

## 3. THEORETICAL ENDGAMES

The most characteristic feature of Example 381 was the skilfully applied method of simplifying the game – the logical transition, step by step, to simpler positions, leading finally to an endgame of the simplest category of all, a so-called "theoretical" endgame which has been studied before in precise detail. In practice, complex endgames (complex not in the sense of difficulty but merely in the sense of including several pieces) constantly tend to be converted into theoretical ones of this type, as a result of gradual simplification. You can easily understand how important it is to know these theoretical endgames in advance – to know whether they are won or drawn. Armed with this knowledge, we avoid going into one kind of endgame and try to reach a different one that is more favourable to us.

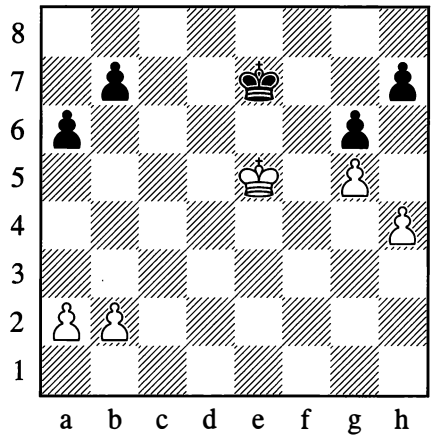
We are faced, then, with the need to study various types of theoretical endgame featuring various combinations of pieces on each side.

In what follows, we demonstrate a number of theoretical endgames that are of great significance in practice. In so doing, of course, we are far from supposing that we have managed to include even the most important endgames in their totality, given that the richness of chess is truly inexhaustible. To avoid repeating ourselves, we are only giving endgames which either don't occur at all in other parts of this book, or are only mentioned there in passing. The examples are all grouped according to the remaining types of material (pawn endings, bishop or knight endings, and so on) and in ascending order of difficulty.

Rook endings, which are the type most often seen in practice, are presented in greater detail and are placed right at the end of this section.

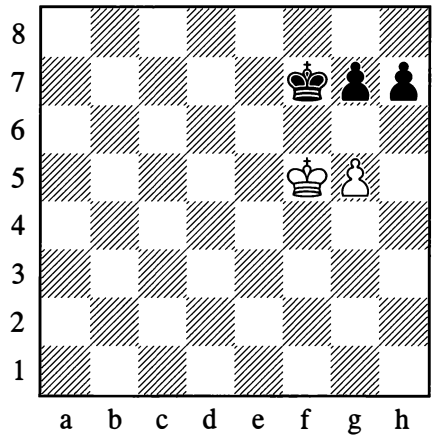
Many pawn endings are already known to us. Here are a few more positions. (Unless otherwise stated, it is always White to move from the diagram.)

**386**



*White wins, whichever side is to move*

**387**



*White draws*

White's queenside pawns are still unmoved, so he will always be able to block the enemy ones, after which the white king will penetrate to f6 or d6. It isn't hard to work out how the pawns should be handled to ensure that the final move on the queenside will be made by White. Black will then be compelled to move his king, opening a path for the white king towards the right or left.

This example illustrates the advantage of holding the "near opposition". (Possession of the "distant" opposition, and its conversion into the "near" or normal type, were themes elucidated in Chapter 4; see Exercise 7 and its solution on pages 160 and 163.)

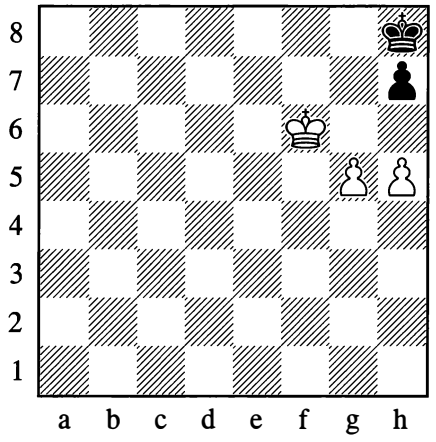
White to move in Position 387 plays:

**1.g6†! hxg6 2.♔g5**

A typical device!

There is no win with Black to move either: 1...♔e7 2.♔e5 g6 (or 2...♔d7) 3.♔d5.

**388**

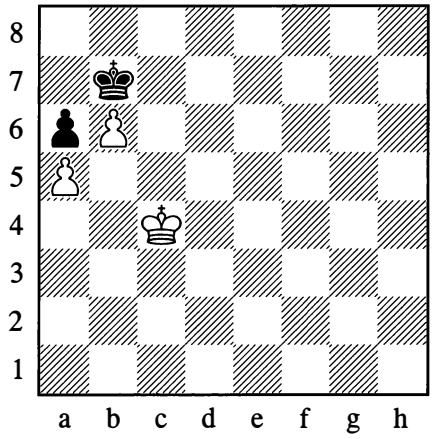


*Draw, whichever side is to move*

In Position 388, Black meets **1.g6** with **1...h6** or **1...♔g8** (only not 1...hxg6?), drawing; 1.h6 or 1.♔f7 h6 would also be useless.

If it is Black's move, he can play either **1...♔g8** or **1...h6**.

**389**



*Draw*

In Position 389, the extra pawn doesn't win.

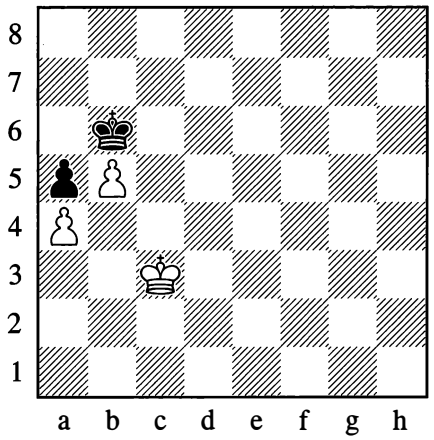
**1.♔c5 ♔b8**

1...♔c8(a8) 2.♔c6 ♔b8 3.b7 ♔a7 4.♔c7 is also stalemate.

**2.♔c6 ♔c8 3.b7† ♔b8 4.♔b6**

Stalemate.

**389a**



*White wins*

However, if the position is shifted just one file to the right or one rank further down (Position 389a), White *does* win. The precise manoeuvring of the kings is very interesting:

**1.♔c4 ♔c7!**

Not 1...♔b7? 2.♔c5 ♔c7 3.b6†, winning.

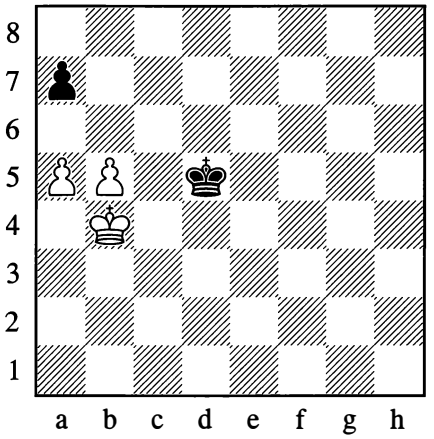
**2.♔d5!**

2.♔c5 also wins, but in a more difficult manner: 2...♔b7 3.♔d6 ♔b6 4.♔e6!! Now Black loses the opposition. 4...♔c7 5.♔e7 ♔b7 6.♔d7 ♔b6 7.♔d6 ♔b7 8.♔c5 White wins.

**2...♔b6 3.♔d6 ♔b7 4.♔c5**

Having reached this decisive position, White wins.

**390**



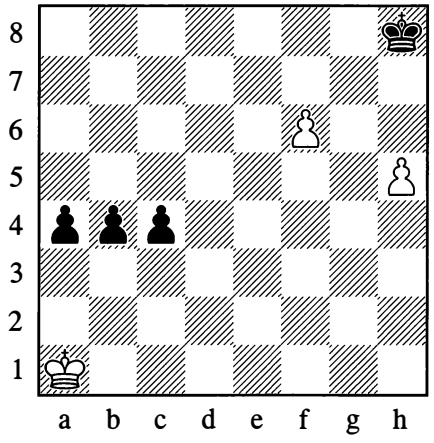
*White wins*

In Position 390, White has a decisive combination:

**1.a6! ♔d6 2.b6!**

Black is helpless.

**391**



*White to play and win*

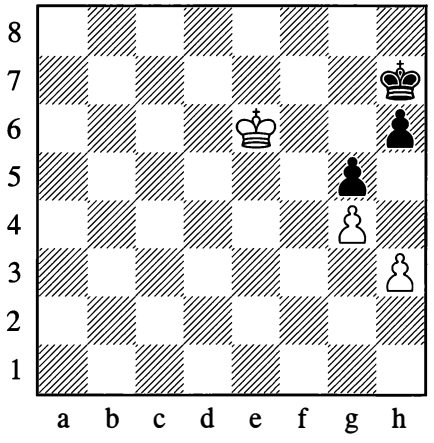
**1.h6 ♔g8**
Otherwise White will play 2.f7.

**2.♔b1!**
The black pawns are held up and perish one after the other. For example:

**2...a3**
2...c3 3.♔c2! (the king blocks whichever pawn has advanced).

**3.♔a2! c3 4.♔b3**
Black is in zugzwang, and loses.

**392**



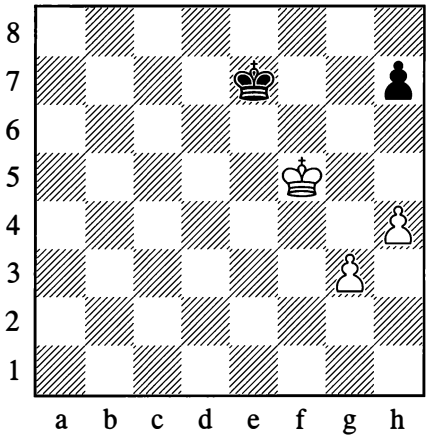
*White wins*

In Position 392, an interesting breakthrough is possible:

**1.♔f7! h5**
Otherwise 2.♔g6

**2.h4!!**
Winning. 2...hxg4 3.hxg5; 2...gxh4 3.g5!; 2...♔h6 3.♔f6, and then 4.hxg5† or 4.g5†.

**393**



*White wins*

The endgame in Diagram 393 deserves close attention:

**1.♔g5 ♔f7 2.♔h6 ♔g8**
After this, White advances his pawns to h5 and g5 and then plays g5-g6. Black in the meantime will have been playing ...♔g8-h8-g8 etc. We can easily see that White wins if **g5-g6** is carried out when the black king is on h8; for then ...♔**g8** is met by **g6-g7** (without check) ...♔**f7** ♔**xh7**. If on the other hand g6-g7 occurs with check, then after ...♔g8 the game is a draw.

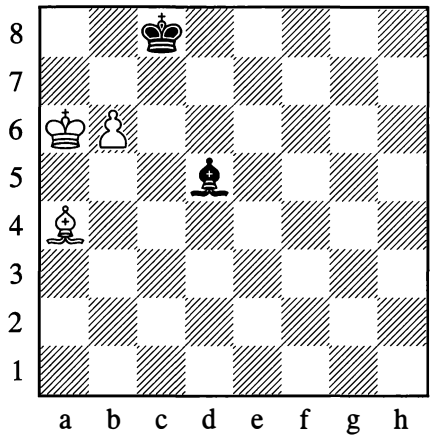
In Position 393 as it stands, White wins. But with a different arrangement of the white pawns – with one of them still on its starting

square – the question whether to move it one or two squares forward, in order eventually to play g5-g6 with the black king on h8, would have to be precisely worked out. In such cases you can conveniently be guided by the so-called "colour rule": if the kings are on the same colour of squares (♔h6 – ♔h8), then the connected pawns need to be on the same colour as each other; if the kings are on opposite colours (♔h6 – ♔g8), the same needs to be true of the pawns. We could see this in Example 393; now take a different example (altering the position of the white pawns) and satisfy yourself that by observing this rule White does indeed achieve the win (without first having to calculate the whole sequence of moves).

As we have seen already from plenty of examples, the manoeuvring of the kings and the exact calculation of every tempo are of decisive importance when playing pawn endgames. In practice, an extra pawn in a pure pawn endgame almost always guarantees victory. If there are many exceptions in the case of a lone pawn or two against one, the chances of converting an extra pawn into a win are much increased when the number of pawns is greater – unless of course the king and pawns are in some particularly bad position.

Let us turn to endgames with bishops on the same-coloured or opposite-coloured squares.

**394**



*White wins*

In Position 394, White forces first the king and then the bishop away from the b7-point:

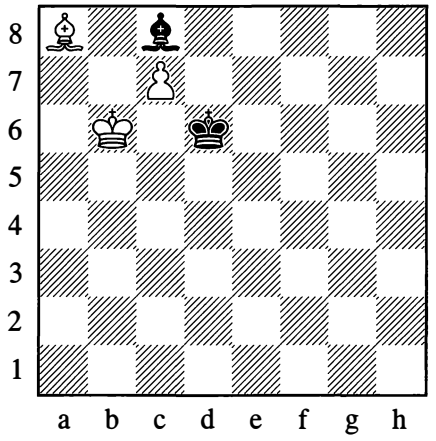
**1.♔a7!**

Otherwise ...♔b8 is an obvious draw.

**1...♗f3 2.♗b5 ♗d5 3.♗a6† ♔d8 4.♗b7! ♗e6! 5.♗f3 ♗c8 6.♗g4!**

White wins.

**395**



*White wins*

In Position 395, the first task is to transfer the white king to b8:

**1.♗f3**
1.♗b7 achieves nothing in view of 1...♔d7.

**1...♔e5**
1...♗a6? 2.♗b7! loses immediately, while 1...♗f5 2.♔b7! allows the king to reach b8 without a fight.

**2.♗b7**
Not an entirely accurate move, as we shall later see.

**2...♗h3 3.♗a6 ♔d6 4.♔b7 ♔c5**
A characteristic ploy for the defence: Black brings his king round to station it in *vertical* opposition – that is, with ♔b6 versus the white king on b8 – which suits him best here. If instead he played 4...♗g4 5.♔b8 ♗h3, leaving the kings in diagonal opposition, White's win would be simpler – since the black bishop could easily be driven off the diagonal a6-c8 by 6.♗c8 ♗f1 7.♗g4 ♗a6 8.♗e2.

**5.♔b8 ♔b6 6.♗c8 ♗g2**
Or 6...♗f1 7.♗g4 ♗a6 8.♗f3 ♔c5 9.♗b7.

**7.♗g4 ♗b7 8.♗e2!**
Zugzwang!

**8...♔c6 9.♗f3†**
White wins.

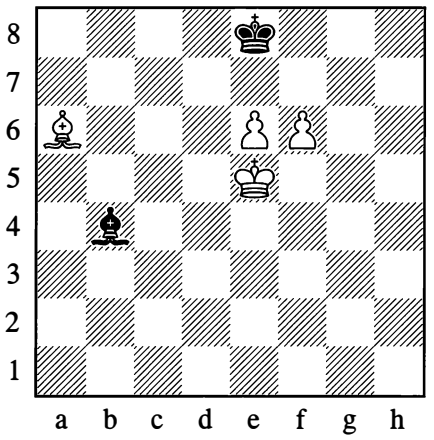
We have given all the moves of the solution as set out in endgame handbooks, in order to underline the significance of the vertical opposition. Admittedly it didn't help Black here, as there were only three squares on the short diagonal (a6-c8), and the bishop was unable to retreat along it; but in an analogous position with a centre pawn, Black would draw. That is why the flank pawns give better winning chances (compare this with the solution to Position 376 on page 266). From Diagram 395 White can win more quickly with accurate play (not allowing Black to place himself in vertical opposition), thus:

**1.♗f3 ♔e5 2.♔a7! ♔d6 3.♔b8 ♗h3 4.♗b7 ♔c5 5.♗c8 ♗f1 6.♗g4 ♗a6 7.♗e2**
White wins.

With bishops of opposite colours, one pawn as a rule fails to win. Even with two pawns the win is not always possible.

Let's begin with cases where the pawns are connected. The basic means of defence is to sacrifice the bishop for both of them.

**396**




*White wins*

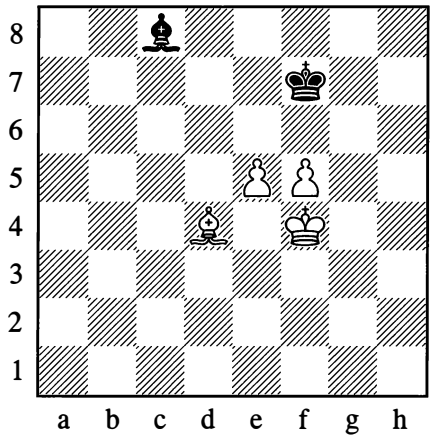
Of course, 1.f7†? would lead to a clear draw. Only the advance of the e-pawn will work, and that cannot be done at once either, owing to ...♗xe7.

**1.♗b5†!**
The e-pawn's advance has to be supported by the king from d7 or f7, depending on where the black king goes.

**1...♔f8 2.♔d5(-c6-d7)** and **e6-e7†**

In the event of ...♗c3, White will play e6-e7† at once.

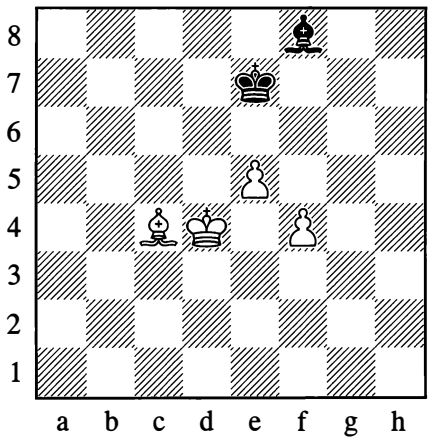
**397**



*Draw*

In order to play e5-e6† without worrying about ...♗xe6, White would have to transfer his king to d5, but then the f-pawn would be left unprotected. The draw is therefore obvious. This is the basic defensive set-up for Black.

**398**



*White wins*

Here the f-pawn needs to be pushed, but after 1.f5? ♗g7! Black reaches a drawn position as in Diagram 397. The win can only be achieved by exploiting the restricted mobility of Black's bishop.

**1.♔e4 ♗g7 2.♔f5! ♗h6**

Preventing ♔g6.

**3.♔g4! ♗f8**

Black is in zugzwang; if his king moves, then f4-f5-f6.

**4.♔g5 ♗g7 5.♔g6 ♔f8**

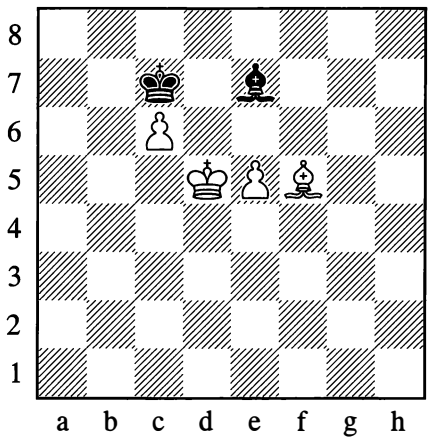
If 5...♗f8, then White can play 6.f5.

**6.♔h7!**

White wins.

With opposite bishops, separated pawns prove stronger than united ones. Generally speaking, the win is impossible only if the pawns are separated by just one file.

**399**

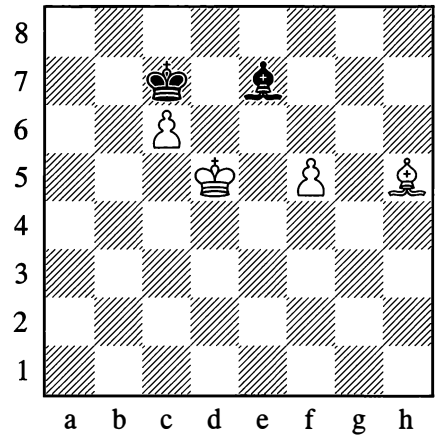


*Draw*

**1.♔e6 ♗b4 2.♗e4 ♔d8 3.♔f7 ♗a3 4.e6 ♗b4**

It is impossible to queen either pawn.

**400**



*White wins*

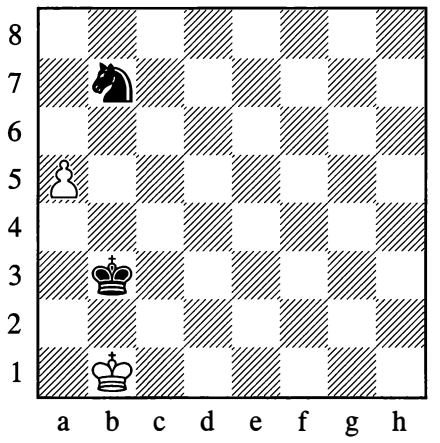
Here the pawns are separated by *two* files, and White wins by bringing his king to the pawn that is being held up by the black bishop:

**1.♗f3! ♔d8 2.♔e6 ♗b4 3.f6 ♗a3 4.f7 ♗b4 5.♔f6 ♗c3† 6.♔g6 ♗b4**
Or 6...♔e7 7.c7.

**7.♔g7**
White wins.

Now let us look at the struggle of a knight against passed pawns. In this context the knight is weaker than the bishop. The knight has particular difficulty contending with a rook's pawn (since manoeuvres are possible on one side of the pawn only).

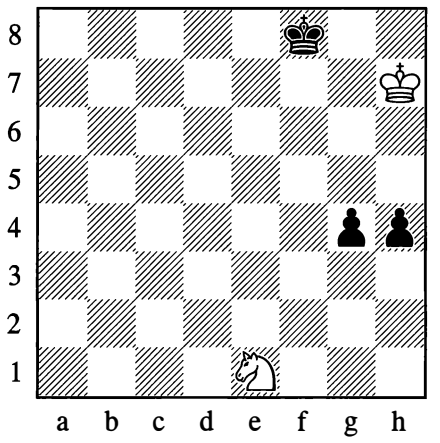
**401**



*White wins*

**1.a6**, the knight cannot stop the pawn.

**402**



*Draw*

In Position 402, White halts the advance of the pawns by manoeuvring accurately with his knight, then captures them with his king:

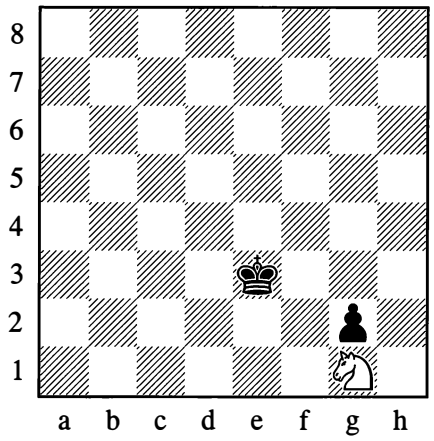
**1.♘d3! h3**
Or 1...g3 2.♘f4 g2 3.♘h3!.

**2.♘f2!**
A typical attack against both pawns.

**2...h2 3.♘h1!**

Draw. Neither pawn can advance any further.

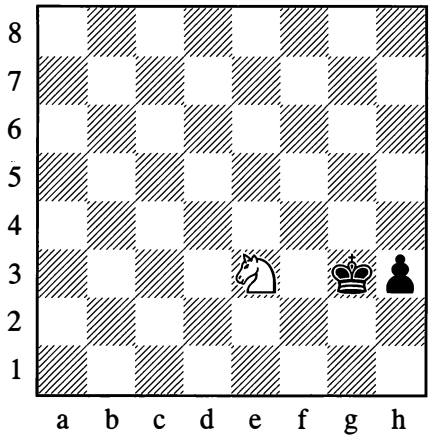
**403**



*Draw*

It's easy to see that achieving the draw in Position 403 (even without the king participating) presents no difficulty.

**404**



*Draw, whichever side is to move*

Drawing from Position 404 is also easy:

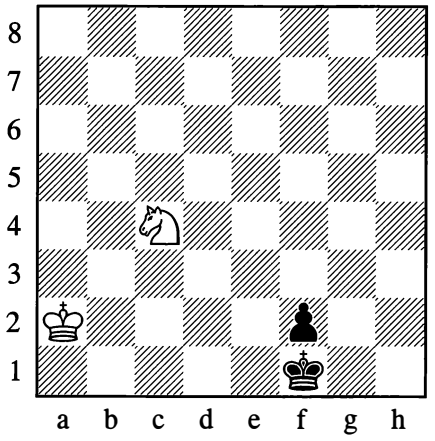
**1...♔f2**

Or 1...h2 2.♘f1† and 3.♘xh2.

**2.♘g4† ♔f3 3.♘h2† ♔g2 4.♘g4 ♔g3 5.♘e3**

There is the same "merry-go-round" if White moves first, for example: 1.♘f1† ♔f2 2.♘h2

**405**



*Draw*

White would lose with 1.♘e3†? owing to 1...♔e2 2.♘f5 ♔f3! 3.♘d4† ♔e3 4.♘f5† ♔f4!. He draws with:

**1.♘d2†! ♔e1**

Or 1...♔e2 2.♘e4.

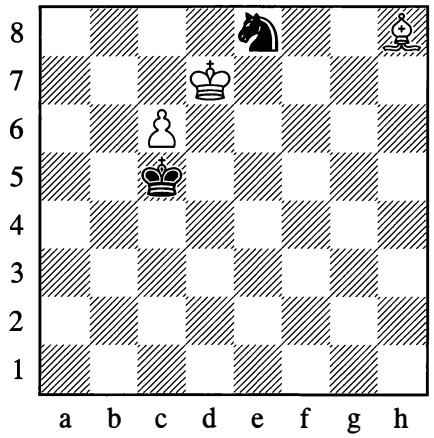
**2.♘f3† ♔e2 3.♘h2**

It isn't difficult to grasp that in a position with all these pieces shifted one file to the right (White ♔b2, ♘d4 versus Black ♔g1, ♙g2) White must lose, as there is no square analogous to h2 for his knight.

With one sole pawn on the board, the player rarely succeeds in queening it if he only has a bishop against a knight or, conversely, a knight against a bishop. Exceptions are possible when the king of the weaker side doesn't control the queening square or is driven away from it.

We will confine ourselves to two examples; to some extent they show the typical features of such cases with either the bishop or the knight on the winning side.

**406**



*White wins*

Winning the endgame in Diagram 406 is far from simple. In the first place, the bishop has to keep control of the f6-square (otherwise Black draws with ...♘f6†, ...♘e8†); and at the same time, it has to place the black king in zugzwang.

White gains nothing from 1.♗e5 ♔b6! (not 1...♔b5? 2.♗d4) 2.♗d4† ♔b5, and the bishop has no good waiting move. Here is the correct solution:

**1.♗c3! ♔b6**

If 1...♔b5 or 1...♔d5, then 2.♗d4!; if 1...♘d6, then 2.♗b4†.

**2.♗a5†! ♔b5 3.♗d8**

The bishop switches to the d8-h4 diagonal, where it will have two squares – g5 and h4 – for tempo play.

**3...♔c5 4.♗h4! ♔b5 5.♗g5! ♔c5 6.♗e3† ♔d5**

Or 6...♔b5 7.♗d4.

**7.♗d4!**

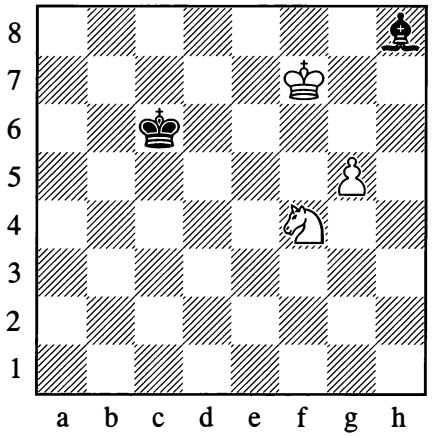
Zugzwang!

**7...♘d6 8.c7**

White wins. Even the possibility of 8...♘c4 9.c8=♕ ♘b6† is forestalled by the bishop on d4.

But if the bishop comes splendidly into its own in positions where a tempo needs to be gained, the knight is inimitable in its activity of gyrating, so to speak, on alternate-coloured squares (see Diagram 407).

**407**



*White wins*

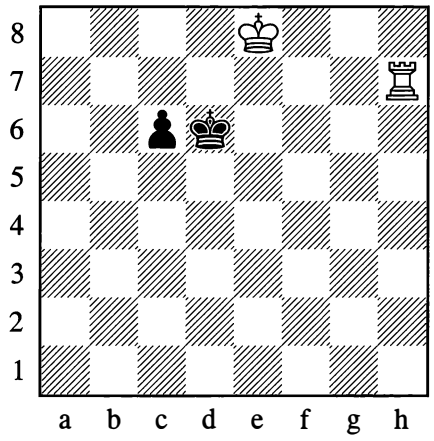
In this position, White achieves victory by the following method which is of great practical significance:

**1.♘h5! ♔d6**

If 1...♗d4, then 2.♘f6 ♗e3 3.g6 ♗h6 4.♘g4.

**2.♘g7! ♔e5 3.♔g8! ♔f4 4.♘e6†!! ♔f5 5.♔xh8**

**408**



*White wins*

In endgames such as this, superfluous checks, which only bring the black king closer to the pawn's queening square, need to be avoided, as do losses of tempo that allow the pawn to advance.

In Position 408, with the pawn still not far advanced, there are various ways for White to win easily, even though his king is in an unfavourable position (the basic idea consists of bringing the white king to the b-file).

The simplest method is:

**1.♖h5 c5**

Or 1...♔e6 2.♔d8 ♔d6, and now either ♔c8-b7-b6 and ♖c5, or else the waiting move 3.♖g5 as in the main line.

**2.♔d8 c4**

Or 2...♔c6 3.♔e7 and the white king will arrive to help out.

**3.♖g5! c3**

On 3...♔c6 White plays 4.♔e7 and 5.♔d6

**4.♖g3 c2 5.♖c3**

White wins.

White also wins easily with:

**1.♖h6† ♔d5 2.♔d7 c5 3.♖h5†**

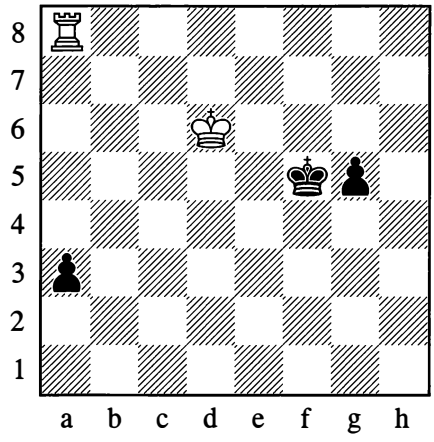
Note that, in this line, 3.♖h4? (which was the best method when the pawn was only on the 6th rank) leads to a draw.

**3...♔d4 4.♔c6**

Followed by 5.♔b5 and 6.♖c5.

If all the pieces in Diagram 408 are shifted one rank further down the board (♔e7, ♖h6 versus ♔d5, ♙c5), Black draws. The methods indicated above all fail to win. If gradually constricted by 1.♖h5† ♔d4 2.♔d6 c4 3.♖h4†, Black will eventually promote his pawn to a knight (see Diagram 411). For example: 3...♔d3 4.♔c5 c3 5.♖h3† ♔d2 6.♔d4 c2 7.♖h2† ♔d1 8.♔d3 c1=♘†.

**409**



*White wins*

The move 1.♖xa3? would prove a decisive loss of tempo and would lead to a draw. White's main task is to play against the g-pawn, which is supported by its king. The correct way is:

**1.♔d5**

Gaining the horizontal opposition.

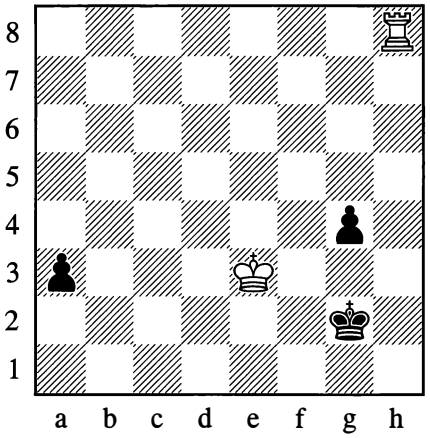
**1...♔f4 2.♔d4 g4 3.♖f8†!**

White ignores the a-pawn as innocuous, while thanks to the opposition he forces the black king to go in front of the pawn and slow its advance.

**3...♔g3 4.♔e3 ♔h2**

4...a2 is met by 5.♖a8 and 6.♖xa2.

**5.♖h8† ♔g2**



**6.♔f4**

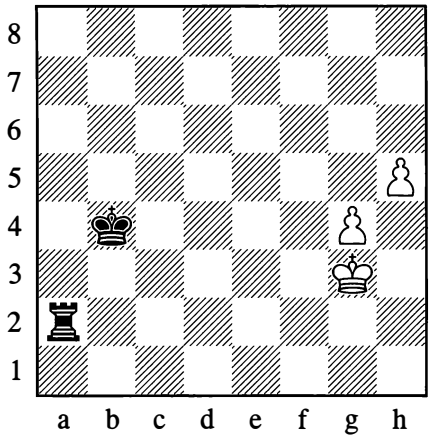
White wins after 6...g3 7.♖g8 or 6...a2 7.♖a8.

The final part of this endgame is simple, and White can win it in various ways; but sometimes there are "underwater reefs" that have to be negotiated. For example, after 6.♖a8 g3 7.♖xa3 ♔h2, it would be no good playing 8.♖a2†? (or 8.♔f3? or 8.♖a8?), in view of 8...g2 9.♔f3 ♔h1 with a draw. The right method would be: 8.♖a1 Taking the queening square under control. 8...g2 (8...♔g2 9.♔e2 gives the same result) 9.♔f2

Against two connected pawns that are far advanced and supported by their king, the rook sometimes loses. (If the pawns have reached the 6th rank, they usually no longer need the king's support.)

The following position, demonstrated by the author in 1939, is an instructive example. In practice it could come about after White had given up his rook for a dangerous pawn on a2.

**410**



*White wins*

**1.g5 ♖a1**

Attempting to stop the pawns from the front by 1...♖a8 is hopeless.

**2.g6!**

In such situations it is often better to push the pawn that is closer to the centre, for this means that the h-pawn will be the only one vulnerable to the black king – and it is the one further away from it. This is also an important point in some king-and-pawn endgames.

**2...♔c5**

Or 2...♖h1 3.♔f4!, and 3...♖xh5 fails to 4.g7; if Black then plays 4...♖h4†, the white king retreats along the f-file on its way to g1.

**3.♔f4 ♖g1**

The threat was 4.h6, after which the pawns would get through without the aid of the king. The rook has to be placed in the rear of the "leader" pawn.

**4.♔e5!!**

Heading for f6, the white king simultaneously stops the black one from approaching. Now 4...♖g5† is not dangerous in view of 5.♔f6, when 5...♖xh5 again fails.

**4...♔c6**

Black has no useful move.

**5.♔f6 ♔d6 6.g7**

White wins.

Alternatively White has:

**1.g5 ♖a1 2.g6! ♔c4 3.♔f4 ♖g1 4.♔e5! ♔d3 5.♔f6 ♖f1† 6.♔g7 ♔e4 7.♔h7**

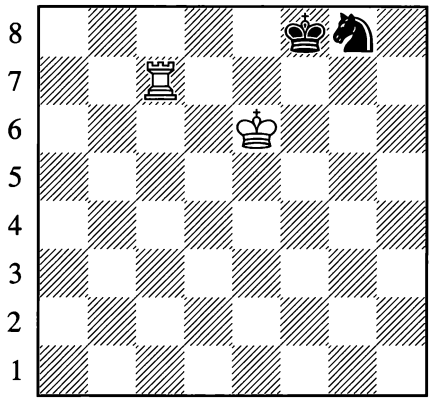
A mistake would be 7.h6 ♔f5 8.h7?, owing to 8...♖h1 with a draw.

If in the diagram position we transfer the white king to f3, then after 1.g5 Black demonstrates a draw at once with 1...♖h2. An interesting point is that even with the king on f4, which looks more favourable to White, the position is again drawn: 1.g5 ♖f2†! (an important intermediate check; if 1...♖h2? at once, then 2.g6!). Now after 2.♔e5 or ♔e4 there follows 2...♖h2, forcing 3.h6 ♔c5 and drawing because the rook's pawn is the one that has gone ahead. If instead 2.♔g3, then 2...♖f1!, and this time, when bringing his king up to the pawns, White doesn't have the possibility of that active manoeuvre which restricted the black king's mobility. (Check it for yourself!)

In a struggle of rook against knight or bishop, the rook cannot usually prevail, and as a rule the game ends in a draw – although exceptions do occur, occasioned by the bad placing of the defending pieces.

To defend with a knight, you should keep it next to the king or nearby, as in Position 411.

**411**



*Draw*

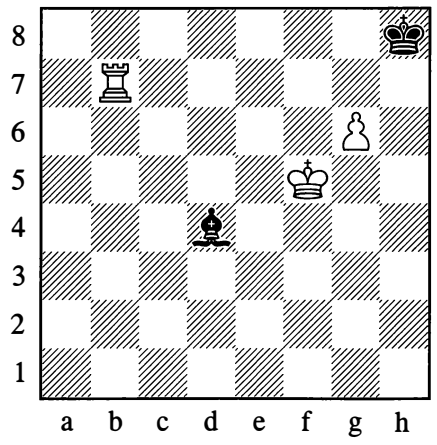
In this position, all attempts at winning are futile. For example:

**1.♖a7 ♘h6 2.♖h7 ♘g8!**

On the other hand 2...♘g4?, separating the king and knight, would be a mistake – under such conditions, the exceptional cases are those where the defender saves himself. Thus in the present case, White could win at once with 3.♖h3!, after which Black loses his knight or is immediately mated: 3...♘f2 4.♖f3†; or 3...♔g7 4.♖g3; or 3...♔e8 4.♖h8#.

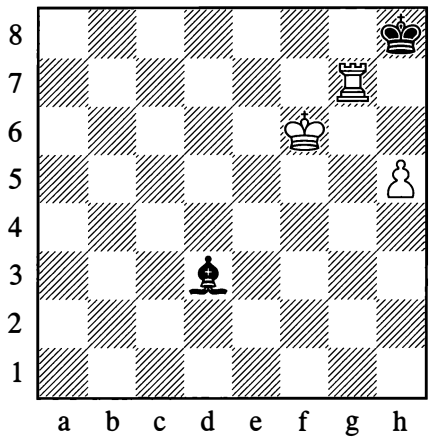
In the next example, a rook defeats a bishop thanks to the presence of a pawn which White can sacrifice to put the enemy king in an extremely bad position. In practice this is the most important instance of the win with rook against bishop.

**412**



*White wins*

**413**



*Draw*

**1.g7†! ♔h7**

1...♗xg7 2.♔g6 ♗e5 3.♖e7 and White attacks the bishop while threatening mate.

**2.♖f7!**

So that the black king doesn't slip away afterwards via f8.

**2...♗c5**

2...♗xg7 3.♔g5 ♔g8 4.♔g6 and White will next attack the bishop while threatening mate as above.

**3.g8=♕†! ♔xg8 4.♔g6 ♗g1! 5.♖f1 ♗h2 6.♖h1 ♗g3 7.♖g1 ♗h2 8.♖g2! ♗e5**

8...♗f4 9.♔f5† is a winning discovered check.

**9.♖e2**

White wins.

On the other hand in Diagram 413, where in spite of White's extra pawn the black king can't be forced to occupy a bad position, the win is impossible. The reason for this, of course, is that the pawn is a rook's pawn. (With a centre pawn, the win is usually not difficult.)

**1.♖b7 ♗c2 2.♔g5 ♗d3 3.♔h6 ♔g8 4.♖b8† ♔f7 5.♖b7† ♔g8 6.♖g7† ♔f8!**

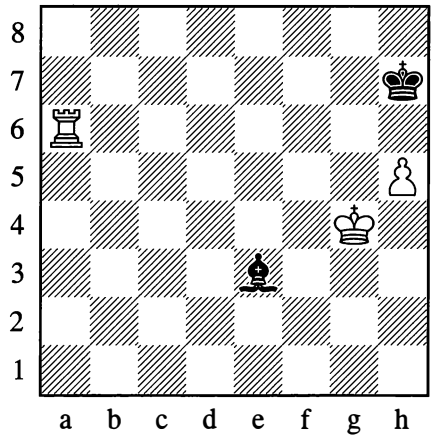
With a draw. 7.♖g6 ♔f7 8.♔h7 ♗c2, and Black waits for ♔h8 before playing ...♗xg6.

After move 6 it would still be possible to achieve the win with the aid of some fairly complicated manoeuvres (based on the idea of transferring the king to f6) if the white pawn were on h4, not h5 – since the h5-square would be essential for manoeuvring with the white king (after ♖g7-g5). With the pawn on h5, theory considers the position to be drawn.

Note that in the above variation 6...♔h8? (in place of 6...♔f8!), would be a mistake in view of the following manoeuvres based on accurate calculation: 7.♖d7 ♗c4 8.♖d8† ♗g8 9.♔g5! ♔g7 10.♖d7† ♔h8 (otherwise 11.h6) 11.♔g6! ♗b3 12.♖h7†! ♔g8 13.♖c7! (preventing a check on c2) 13...♔h8 14.h6 ♗a2 15.h7 ♗b1† 16.♔h6, and wins.

A very important condition for reaching the draw in Position 413 was the fact that Black's bishop was the light-squared one. If the bishop is on the same colour as the corner square, the defence as a rule is hopeless.

**414**



*White wins*

**1.♔f5 ♗d2 2.♖g6!**

Depriving the black king of the chance to slip away.

**2...♗c1 3.h6!**

If now 3...♗xh6, then ♔f5-f6-f7 and White wins as in Position 412. If instead 3...♗b2, he wins easily with ♔f5-g5-h5, followed by a check on the 7th rank – say on a7 or b7 – and then ♔g6.

**3...♗d2 4.♖g7†! ♔xh6**

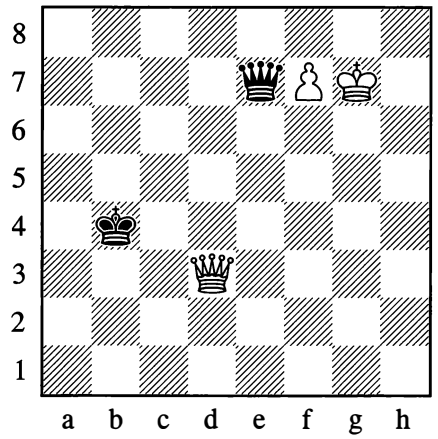
It's important for White to get rid of his pawn which is shielding the black king from checks on the h-file, but Black has no choice: if 4...♔h8, then 5.♔g6 ♗xh6 6.♖a7.

**5.♖g6† ♔h7**

Or 5...♔h5 6.♖g2. And now after ♔f5-f6-f7 we arrive at the solution to Position 412.

Endgames with queen and pawn against queen are encountered quite often in practice. Owing to the large number of checks (of which the most effective are those that come from behind and from close range) and also the many pins, it can be quite hard to advance the pawn as far as the seventh rank. But even with the pawn on the threshold of queening, major difficulties sometimes arise. Of course it all depends on the position. The following example reveals some characteristic features of this endgame.

**415**



*White wins*

**1.♕f5!**

By occupying a square in the centre or close to it, the white queen deprives the black one of a range of checking possibilities. The threat now is 2.♔g8, seeing that the answer 2...♕e6 – with a powerful diagonal pin – is no longer possible.

**1...♕a7**

Already Black is forced to remove his queen to an unfavourable distant square. He can't play 1...♕b7 because of 2.♕b1†; while on 1...♕c7 White plays 2.♕g4†, denying the black queen the c4-square, then 3.♔g8.

**2.♕b1†! ♔c3 3.♔g8**

The black queen can neither check on g1 nor set up a pin from a2.

Such a quick loss is explained by the bad placing of Black's pieces as against the exceptionally strong placing of White's.

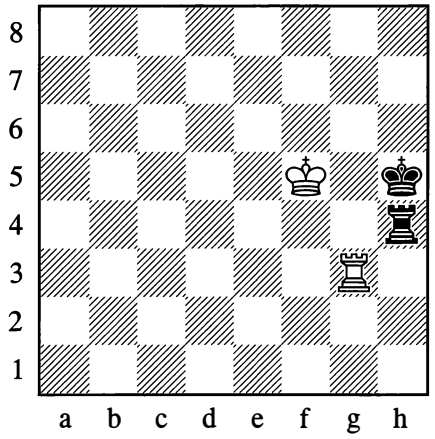
In the diagram position the resources of the defence are noticeably increased if we merely reposition Black's king on a4, so that it won't get in the way of his own queen's manoeuvres; for example 1.♕f5 ♕b7, and possibilities for either checking or pinning along the diagonal are opened up for Black.

Practice has shown that the win is achieved more easily with a centre pawn than with a bishop's pawn or (harder still) a knight's pawn. This can be explained by the fact that with the pawn shifted towards the flank, the king of the weaker side can find its most suitable square more easily; this square will be away from the manoeuvring paths of the queens (where the king's presence, in adverse circumstances, could even lead to an exchange).

Let us turn to rook endings (by which rook-and-pawn endings are understood).

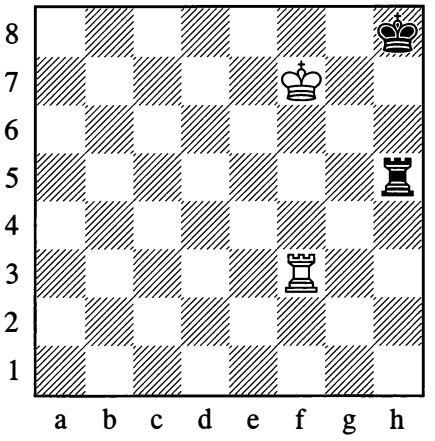
With no more than one rook on each side, a win is possible only as the rarest of exceptions – for example in positions on the edge of the board, of the following type:

**416**



*White to move wins*

**417**



*White to move wins*

In both cases, a dual attack involving a mate threat is decisive. In Position 416 White plays:

**1.♖g8**

With the threat of ♖h8#.

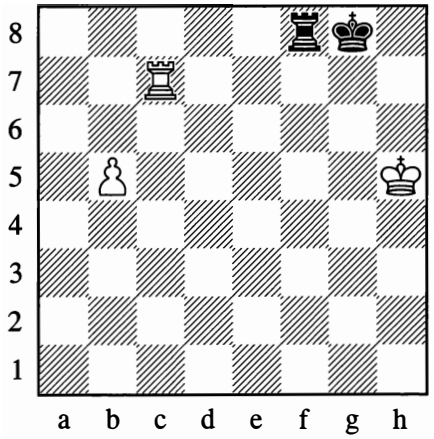
In Position 417 he plays:

**1.♔g6**

Threatening ♖f8#. After the black king moves, White wins the rook. If in Position 417 we transfer the white king to f6 and the black one to f8, the discovered check 1.♔g6† wins. Of course, notwithstanding these exceptions, anyone will call the endgame of rook versus rook hopelessly drawn.

Even with rook and pawn against rook, there is usually no chance of winning if the king of the weaker side controls the pawn's promotion square or can hold up its advance by other means. Here again the win can be considered an exception, albeit not such a very rare one. To achieve it, the support of the stronger side's king is normally essential. And yet there are some known cases where the rook and pawn can do without that support.

**418**



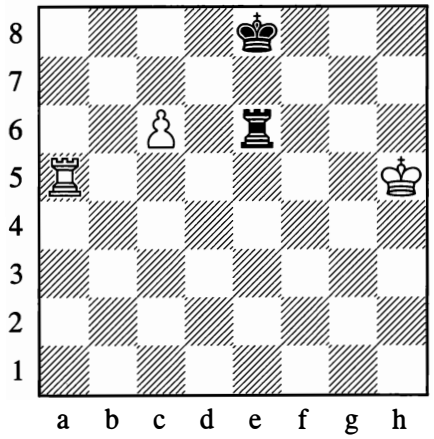
*White wins*

Black's king is cut off along the 7th rank, and he is powerless against the pawn advance:

**1.b6**

Followed by b7 and ♖c8(†).

**419**



*White wins*

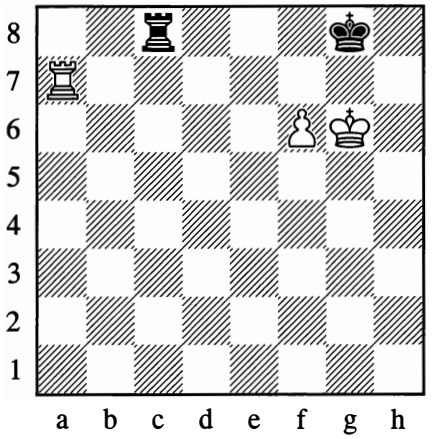
Here 1.c7? doesn't work in view of 1...♔d7, but White can make use of a characteristic ploy. Black's king, although close to the pawn, is facing it obliquely:

**1.♖a8†!**

Black cannot reply by attacking the pawn (as he could if the king were on d8). After 2.c7, the pawn is not to be stopped from promoting.

Although these two endings (418 and 419) are in the nature of exceptions, the ideas they contain are quite often met with in practice. Nonetheless, cases where the pawn cannot possibly do without the support of its king are of vastly more frequent occurrence.

**420**



*White wins*

**1.♖g7† ♔f8**

1...♔h8 2.♖h7† ♔g8 3.f7† ♔f8 4.♖h8† is no better.

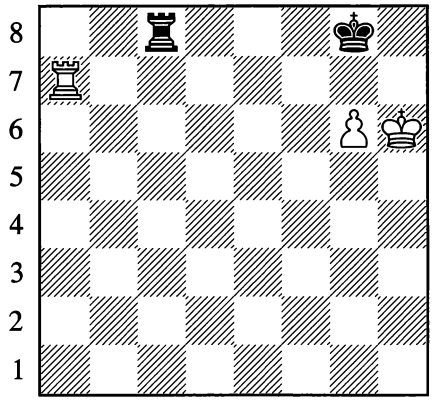
**2.♖h7 ♔e8**

Black was threatened with mate, and if 2...♔g8 then 3.f7† as above.

**3.♖h8†**

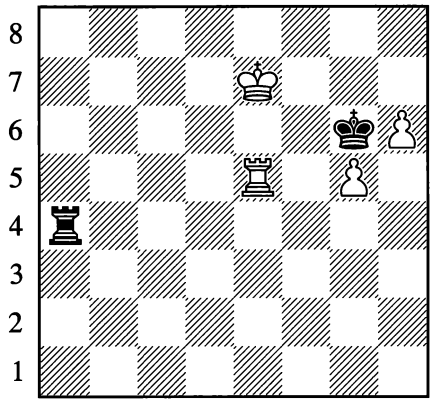
Followed by 4.♖xc8.

**421**



*Draw*

**422**



*Draw*

The knight's pawn proves nowhere near as dangerous as the bishop's pawn.

**1.♖g7† ♔h8!**

A draw can be agreed. True, Black would lose after 1...♔f8?, but in a different way from before: 2.♔h7 ♖c1 3.♖f7† ♔e8 4.♔g7, and White wins by constructing a "bridge" as in the conclusion of Example 381a on page 270 (see also Diagram 426).

In Examples 420 and 421 White had an exceptionally favourable and active position (his rook was on the seventh rank, his pawn was shielding his king from checks along the sixth), while Black had an extremely passive one. And yet in order to win, it was essential to have the bishop's pawn (which in practice more rarely "survives" to the endgame stage).

If in Diagram 420 we transfer the white rook to f7 (so that Black isn't threatened with mate) and the black one to an active post on c1 (so that it can give checks from behind), then White can no longer win (1.♖g7† ♔f8!).

In the examples below, even two pawns are insufficient to win:

**1.♔f8 ♖a8† 2.♖e8 ♖a7 3.♔g8 ♖b7 4.♖e6†**

4.h7 ♖g7† wins the pawn with a tempo.

**4...♔f5!**

This move saves Black. White then gets nowhere with:

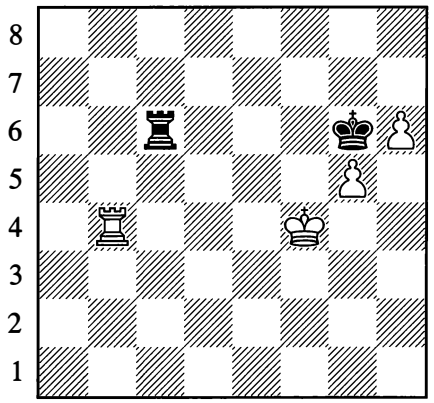
**5.♖d6**

5.g6 ♔xe6 and Black's king and rook do enough to hold off the pawns.

**5...♔xg5 6.h7 ♖b8† 7.♔g7 ♖b7†**

A perpetual check is coming.

**423**



*Draw*

Here of course there is no use in 1.♔g4 ♖a6 2.h7 ♔xh7 3.♔h5, which could lead to Position 421.

**1.♖d4 ♖a6 2.♖d8**

This is the only winning attempt worthy of attention. In the event of 2.♖d7, White gets nowhere after 2...♖a4† 3.♔e5 ♔xg5 4.h7 ♖a8! 5.♖g7† ♔h6 6.♖g8 ♖a5† and 7...♔xh7.

**2...♖a4† 3.♔e5 ♖a7!**

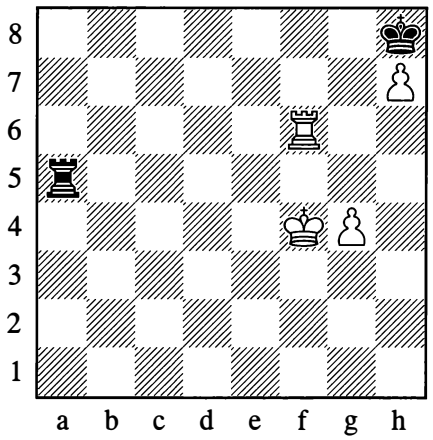
Black's simplest course. 3...♖a5† 4.♖d5, followed by ♔d6 or ♔e6, leaves White with the possibility of some further pressure after all, as we saw in the previous example.

**4.♖g8† ♔h7 5.♖d8 ♔g6**

With an obvious draw.

Note also the following position (we shall refer to it again, when examining Position 449).

**424**



*Draw*

White can preserve both pawns with 1.♖f7 or 1.♖h6, but he cannot win:

**1.♖f7 ♖a4† 2.♔f5**

On 2.♔g5 or 2.♔g3, Black plays 2...♖xg4†, winning the pawn or forcing stalemate.

**2...♖a5† 3.♔f6**

3.♔g6 ♖g5† is the same as above.

**3...♖a6† 4.♔g5 ♖g6† 5.♔f5 ♖g5†**

Followed up with ...♖xg4, drawing.

**1.♖h6 ♖a4† 2.♔g5 ♖a5† 3.♔h4**

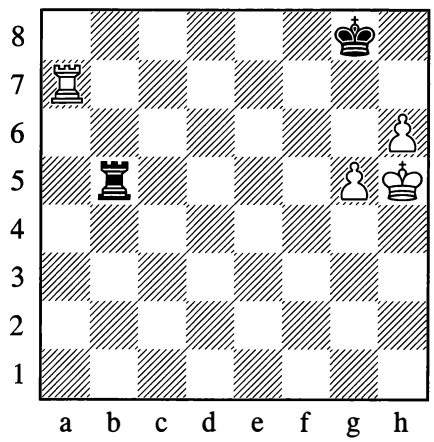
3.♔g6 ♖a6†, followed by 4...♖xh6.

**3...♖a1**

Again with a draw.

Of course, Positions 422-4 belong to a category of exceptions that aren't all that numerous. In the majority of cases the two pawns do win, although sometimes not without difficulty.

**425**



*White wins*

The black rook on the 5th rank is hampering White's movements. White can't play 1.h7† ♔h8, in view of 2.♔g6 ♖xg5†, or 2.♔h6 ♖b6†, and now 3.g6 ♖xg6† or 3.♔h5 ♖h6†. He also gains nothing from 1.♖a8† ♔h7, when 2.g6# is impossible since the pawn is pinned. Another useless try is 1.♔g6 ♖b6†. First of all, the 5th rank has to be wrested from the black rook.

**1.♖a1 ♖c5 2.♖f1 ♖a5 3.♔g4 ♖a4† 4.♖f4 ♖a5 5.♖f5! ♖a4† 6.♔h5 ♖a1 7.♖b5! ♖a8**

Not 7...♖h1† 8.♔g6; but now the black rook is tied to the 8th rank until the very end.

**8.g6! ♔h8**

If 8...♖c8, then 9.h7†, 10.♖b7† and 11.♔h6.

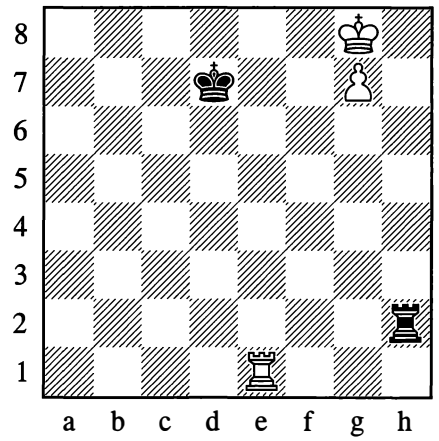
**9.h7!**

The right pawn! Black cannot now prevent ♔h6 with the threat of g6-g7# (...♖a7, ♖b8#). On 9...♔g7, White plays 10.♖b7† and 11.♔h6.

Let us return to positions with a single pawn:

In the notes to Position 381a, we already had the chance to acquaint ourselves with what a "bridge" means. In view of the great practical importance of this device, we will now give a separate example of it.

**426**



*White wins*

Nothing comes of 1.♔f7 ♖f2†, or 1.♖f1 ♔e7. The right method is:

**1.♖e4! ♖h1 2.♔f7 ♖f1† 3.♔g6 ♖g1† 4.♔f6 ♖f1†**

Otherwise ♖e5 followed by ♖g5.

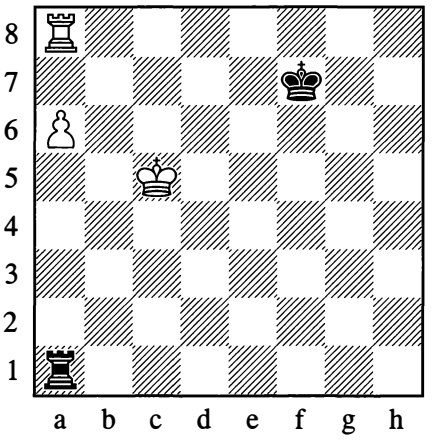
On 4...♔d6 White plays 5.♖d4†, with either 6.♖d5 or 6.♖d8 to follow.

**5.♔g5! ♖g1† 6.♖g4**

Sometimes people ask, "What is White to do if the black king isn't on d7 in the initial position, but on d6? Then 1.♖e4 is met by 1...♔d5, getting in White's way." Not so! After 2.♖g4! White's win is obvious (the point is that the black king has let the white one escape to freedom).

Let us turn to some other examples of practical importance.

**427**



*White wins*

A clear draw results from 1.a7? ♔g7! (see Diagram 151 on page 89). The only reason why White can win here is that the a7-square affords his king shelter against checks from the rear.

**1.♔b6 ♖b1†**

Not 1...♔e7 on account of 2.a7!, with ♖h8 to follow (the white king escapes from checks by moving down the board).

**2.♔a7 ♔e7**

It now *does* make sense to approach with the king.

**3.♖b8 ♖c1**

With 3...♖d1 Black aims to give checks along the rank, but this is no use in view of: 4.♔b7 ♖d7† 5.♔b6 ♖d6† 6.♔a5 ♖d5† 7.♖b5 ♖d8 (or 7...♖d7 8.♖b7) 8.a7

**4.♔b7!**

Not 4.♖b6? which would give a drawn position after 4...♔d7!, for example: 5.♔b7 ♖c7† 6.♔a8 ♖c1 7.a7 (or 7.♔a7) 7...♔c7 The move ♖b6 is only good in situations with the black king further away from d7.

**4...♖b1†**

As a result of 4.♔b7, Black's 4...♔d7 no longer works, seeing that after 5.a7 the white king escapes from the checks via a6, b6, c5.

**5.♔a8 ♖c1 6.a7 ♔d6**

Trying to put off the inevitable loss. White answers 6...♔d7 with 7.♔b7, as in the note to Black's 4th move.

**7.♔b7 ♖b1†**

At this point 8.♔a6 is no use to White, but his king does escape via the c8-square.

**8.♔c8 ♖c1† 9.♔d8 ♖h1**

One more brief tactical skirmish ensues.

**10.♖b6†! ♔c5!**

10...♔d5? 11.a8=♕† and 10...♔e5? 11.♖a6! are quicker wins for White.

**11.♖c6†!**

But not 11.♖a6, owing to 11...♖h8† 12.♔d7 ♖h7†!, and now 13.♔e6? fails to 13...♖h6†, while on 13.♔d8 Black plays 13...♖h8† 14.♔e7 ♖a8 15.♔d7 ♔b5 and 16...♔b6.

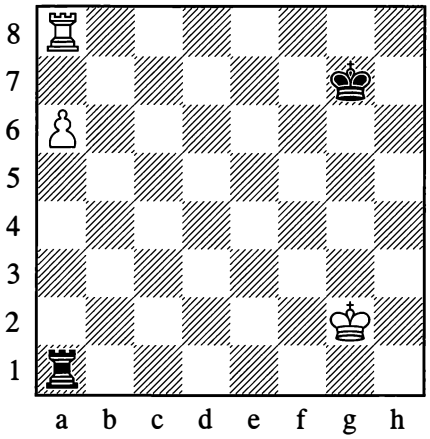
**11...♔b5**

Or 11...♔d5 12.♖a6! ♖h8† 13.♔c7.

**12.♖c8! ♖h8† 13.♔c7 ♖h7† 14.♔b8**

Diagram 427, illustrating the basic winning method, is one of the most important positions in rook endgames. Another of no less importance is the following, which demonstrates the chief means of defence.

**428**




*Draw*

Here Black is able to transfer his rook to a better position, namely the 6th rank. With the white king far away, this guarantees a draw.

**1.♔f2**

White would gain nothing from 1.♖a7† ♔g6. On 1.♔f3?, Black plays 1...♖f1† and 2...♖f6!.

**1...♖a5**

With the idea of ...♖f5† and ...♖f6. Thanks to the check, the pawn is kept under constant "observation" from the black rook. This explains why 1...♖a5 is simpler than the manoeuvre ...♖a1-d1-d6. In such positions, generally speaking, if Black plays ...♖d1 he has to reckon with the possible reply ♖b8 followed by a regrouping of the white rook and pawn – which could be crucial, depending on the position of the kings. If White had played 1.♔g3, however, the correct reply would have been 1...♖f1! 2.♔g4 ♖f6!, or 2.a7 ♖a1!.

It must be observed that this position is a critical one and that everything hangs by a single tempo. With the white king e2 (for instance), the whole system of defence no longer works. Let us see: 2.♔d3 ♖d5† 3.♔c4 ♖d6 4.♔b5 White has defended his pawn and threatens ♖c8, to shield himself from checks – with decisive effect. Now 4...♖d5† fails to save Black, as 5.♔c6 involves an attack on the black rook, giving White the time for ♖c8 or ♖b8.

For the defence to be successful, the black rook needs to be further to the right – on the e-file if not the f-file – as we shall presently see.

**2.♔e3 ♖e5† 3.♔d4 ♖e6!**

The game will finish as a draw. For example:

**4.♔d5**

No better are 4.a7 ♖a6, or 4.♖a7† ♔g6.

**4...♖f6 5.♔e5**

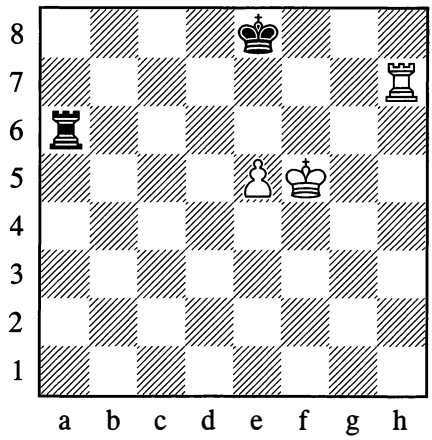
Threatening ♖g8†.

**5...♖b6 6.♔d5 ♖f6 7.♔c5 ♖f5†**

After driving the king back by giving checks along the rank, Black again plays ...♖f6.

Let us now turn to positions with a centre pawn, and after that, a bishop's pawn.

**429**



*Draw*

Here the black rook occupies an active position, keeping the white king off the 6th rank where it could create a threat of mate or of forcing the pawn forward. For a successful defence, the simplest plan is for Black's rook to stay on the 6th rank as long as White is manoeuvring with his rook or king, for example:

**1.♖b7 ♖c6**

However, once White pushes his pawn to e6, the rook must immediately prepare for checking and attacking the pawn from behind.

**2.e6 ♖c1**

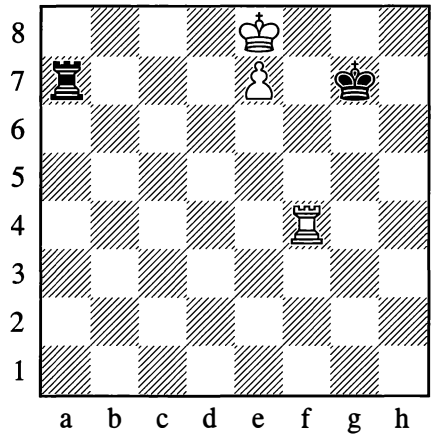
Black will easily hold the draw.

If Black doesn't observe this rule, he can lose quickly. For example: 1.♖c7 ♖b6 2.♖a7 ♖b5?? 3.♔f6, and if 3...♖b6† then 4.e6 ♔d8 5.♔f7, winning; or if 3...♖b1, then 4.♖a8† ♔d7 5.e6† ♔d6 (otherwise 6.e7) 6.♖d8† ♔c7 7.e7, and again White wins.

Of course, when defending, you don't always manage to take up such a favourable position with your rook as in Diagram 429, and the pawn often succeeds in reaching the sixth and sometimes the seventh rank. Is a successful defence then possible, even if the black king has been driven away from the pawn's promotion square? It turns out that it sometimes *is* possible.

This brings us to a department of rook endgame theory that that is very important for practical play. Its detailed study is one of the most substantial achievements of a group of Soviet endgame theoreticians (most notably N. Grigoriev).

**430**



*Black to move – Draw*

The e-file, on which the pawn is located, divides the board into two unequal parts: on the right is the "short side" (three files), on the left is the "long side" (four files). If the black rook is on the long side and far enough away (with three files between the rook and the pawn), as in Diagram 430 – and if the white rook is ineffectively placed – then Black has a highly promising possibility for defending by means of checks from the side (along the rank). At the same time of course, Black's king has to be on the short side, so as not to get in the way of his own rook's checks.

**1...♖a8† 2.♔d7 ♖a7† 3.♔d6 ♖a6† 4.♔d5**
White continues to prevent ...♖e6.

**4...♖a5† 5.♔c6 ♖a6†!**
Not 5...♖e5? in view of 6.♔d6 and 7.♖f8.

**6.♔d7**
White's manoeuvres on the same side as the black rook have come to nothing; on 6.♔b5 or 6.♔b7, Black plays 6...♖e6, winning the pawn.

**6...♖a7† 7.♔e6**
In order to withdraw to g4.

**7...♖a6† 8.♔e5**
If 8.♔f5, then 8...♔f7.

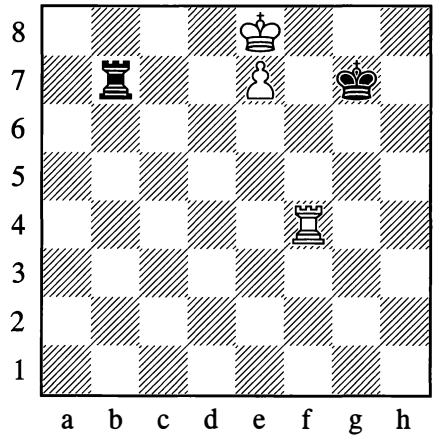
**8...♖a5†**
Not 8...♖a8? which is met by 9.♖a4! ♖b8 10.♔e6 ♖b6† 11.♔d7 ♖b7† 12.♔d8 ♖b8† 13.♔c7 ♖e8 14.♔d7 and White wins

**9.♔e4 ♖a4† 10.♔e3 ♖a3†**
Not 10...♖xf4? because of 11.e8=♕.

**11.♔f2 ♖a2† 12.♔f3 ♖a3†**
With a draw. On 13.♔g4, Black has 13...♖e3.

Now let us alter Diagram 430 by placing the black rook on b7. In this case there are only two files separating the rook and the pawn, and the "long side" proves to be "not long enough". Let us see:

**430a**



*Black to move – White wins*

**1...♖b8† 2.♔d7 ♖b7† 3.♔d8 ♖b8† 4.♔c7 ♖a8**
Or 4...♖e8 5.♔d7.

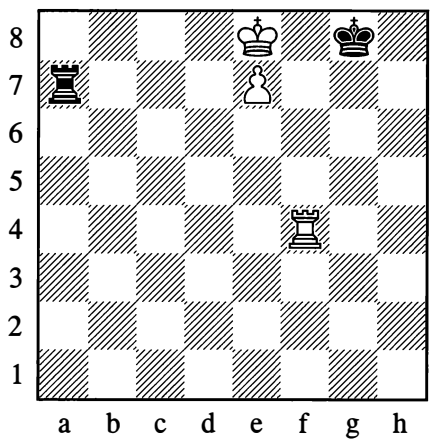
**5.♖a4! ♖e8**
5...♖xa4 allows the promotion 6.e8=♕.

**6.♔d7 ♔f7 7.♖f4†**

From this we can see why the black rook is badly placed for defence if it is on the short side – in those circumstances the number of files between the rook and the pawn cannot be more than two.

That, then, is the basic idea of the defence with checks from the side. Of course, much depends on the details of how the pieces are placed, making various exceptions possible. If, for example, Black's king in Position 430 is transferred to g8, he loses because the white king can reach the f6-square:

**430b**



*Black to move – White wins*

**1...♖a8† 2.♔d7 ♖a7† 3.♔e6 ♖a6† 4.♔e5 ♖a5† 5.♔f6!**

The point behind the example.

**5...♖a6† 6.♔g5! ♖a5†**

If 6...♖e6 then 7.♖f8†, bringing out a further disadvantage of the black king's position.

**7.♔g6 ♖a8**

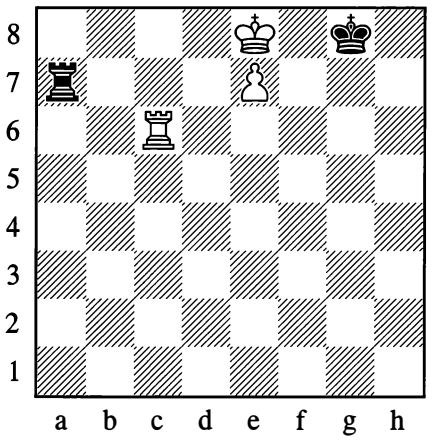
Or 7...♖a6† 8.♖f6 followed by ♖f6-d6-d8.

**8.♖e4!**

Or ♖f4-f6-d6 (as in the last note). Note that 8.♖d4? would premature on account of 8...♖a6†.

White fails to win if his rook in Position 430 is on any square of the h-file or b-file (other than b8). If the rook is on c6 he also fails:

**430c**



*Black to move – Draw*

**1...♖a8† 2.♔d7 ♔f7! 3.♖c1**

3.♖c7 ♖e8 4.♔d6 ♖a8 also draws.

**3...♖a7† 4.♔d8 ♖a8†**

Not 4...♖xe7 5.♖f1†.

**5.♔d7 ♖a7† 6.♔d6 ♖xe7**

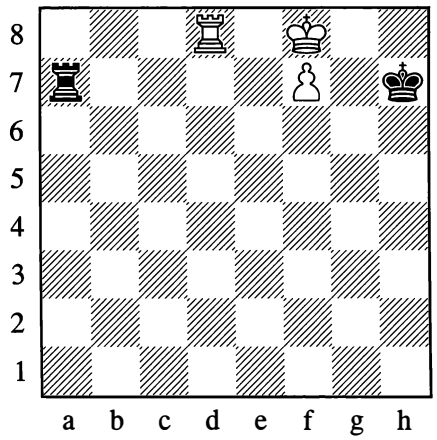
With a draw.

The numerous exceptions – similar to those we have seen already, and explicable by this or that peculiarity of the piece configuration – mean that rook endings, so simple in appearance, are among the most difficult of endgame types. The handling of these positions can be made easier only by good knowledge of the theoretical cases. In particular, you need to acquire a thorough grasp of all the features of positions with the pawn on the seventh rank,

and then those with the pawn on the sixth – for it is to such positions that more complex ones gradually reduce.

We will now look at some cases analogous to Diagram 430, only with the pawn not on a centre file but on the f-file – since this is more frequently seen in practice.

**431**



*Black to move – White wins*

With an f-pawn, the "long side" becomes even longer (five files), and this facilitates Black's defence, since the b-file as well as the a-file becomes suitable for the rook. (With a g-pawn, the division between a short and a long side loses any meaning. Hence the endgame category under examination has only two sub-classes – bishop's pawn and centre pawn.)

In Position 431, the lateral checks fail to save Black. No matter where the black rook is placed, White wins as long as his own rook is on the 8th rank (anywhere on the long side) or on any square of the d-, e- or f-files other than d6 (or of course d7).

With the white rook on d6, Black draws in a manner familiar to us already from Position 430c: 1...♖a8† 2.♔e7 ♔g7!

Placed on the 8th rank or the f-file, the white rook lends extra strength to the pawn, while with his rook on the d- or e-file White can shield himself from checks.

Given the threat of ♔e8, the only defence that remains for Black in Position 431 is:

**1...♔g6 2.♖d6† ♔h7**

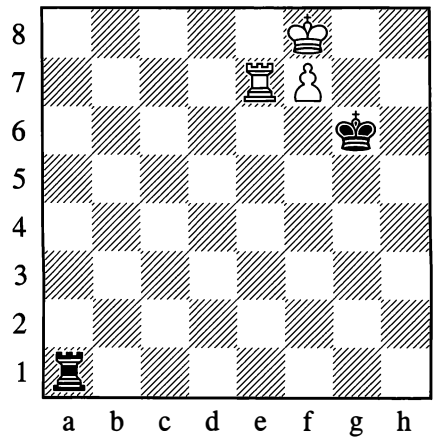
Now White has several winning moves (for example 3.♔e8 or 3.♖d1), but the all-purpose solution – seeing that it would also work with the rook on b6, c6 or e6 – is:

**3.♖f6!**

Observe that with the white rook on the e6-square, 3.♔e8? leads to a draw on account of 3...♖a8† 4.♔e7 ♔g7!.

In positions of this type, the placing of the black king is of no particular significance unless it enables Black to win the pawn or force a draw by some other special means, as in the following case.

**431a**



*Black to move – Draw*

**1...♔f6! 2.♔g8 ♖g1† 3.♔f8 ♖a1 4.♔e8**

4.♖e2 ♖a8†! 5.♖e8 ♖a7! wins the pawn.

**4...♖a8† 5.♔d7 ♖a7†**

Black can also play 5...♔g7.

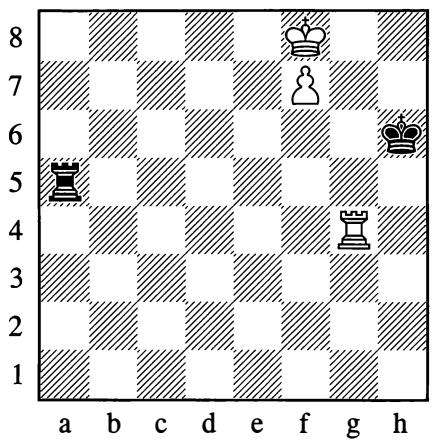
**6.♔d6 ♖a6†**
Or 6...♖a8 7.♖e8 ♖a6†.

**7.♔d7 ♖a7†**
With perpetual check.

To return to Diagram 430, if it is White's move in that position he cannot win by 1.♖g4† ♔f6 2.♔f8, in view of 2...♖xe7 3.♖f4† ♔e5 or 3...♔g5 (the white rook is too close). But now that we know the "winning zone" for the rook, we can play it to e4, d4 or c4 – only not to b4, for in that case White cannot shield himself from checks without losing the pawn. For example: **1.♖e4! ♔f6 2.♔f8**; alternatively **1.♖d4 ♖a8†** (1...♔f6 2.♖d6† ♔g7 3.♖e6) **2.♔d7!** Simplest. **2...♖a7† 3.♔e6**; or finally, **1.♖c4 ♖a8† 2.♔d7 ♔f7** (2...♖a7† 3.♖c7) **3.♖f4†**.

In Position 431, if the white rook isn't on one of the squares in the "winning zone", the game generally ends in a draw.

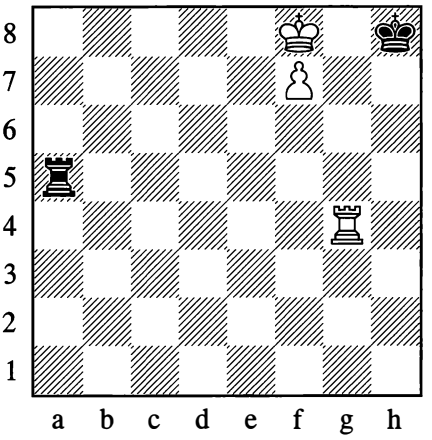
**432**



*Black to move – Draw*

In the above diagram the draw is achieved by checks from the side, followed eventually by an attack on the pawn from behind – as in Position 430. However, in contrast to the position with the centre pawn, Black doesn't lose here even if his king is on h8:

**432a**



*Black to move – Draw*

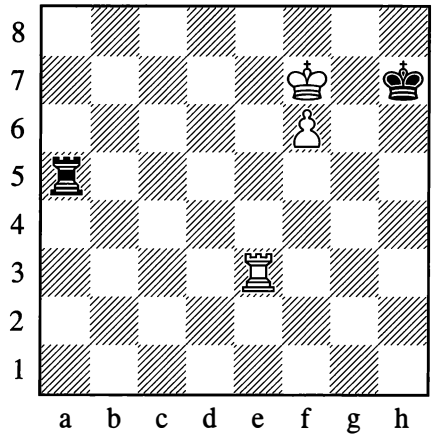
**1...♖a8† 2.♔e7 ♖a7† 3.♔e6 ♖a6† 4.♔f5 ♖a5† 5.♔g6**
If 5.♔f4 ♖a4† 6.♔f3, then ...♖a4-a8-f8.

**5...♖a6† 6.♔h5 ♖a5†**
6...♖h6†? would be a mistake because of 7.♔g5 ♖g6† 8.♔f5.

**7.♔h6 ♖a6† 8.♖g6 ♖xg6† 9.♔xg6**
Stalemate.

With the pawn on the 6th rank, the drawing chances for the weaker side increase still further. But the play now becomes more complex: the web of variations and the quantity of exceptions multiply. Only players who have at their fingertips all the basic positions with the pawn on the sixth (with various configurations of the rooks and kings) can consider that they know these endings properly.

**433**



*Black to move – Draw*

**1...♖a7† 2.♖e7**

If 2.♔f8, then 2...♔g6 draws. On 2.♔e6, Black draws with either 2...♖a8 or 2...♖a6†, as will be shown below. Alternatively there is 2...♔g6, and now 3.f7 ♖a6†, or 3.♖g3† ♔h7 4.f7 ♖a6†!, as in Position 432.

**2...♖a8**

Any other move on the a-file is also playable, apart from 2...♖a6?, which loses to 3.♔f8† ♔g6 4.f7 ♔f6 5.♔g8!, since Black has no saving check on the g-file.

**3.♖e6 ♖b8**

This is one of two drawing moves, along with 3...♔h6. Any rook move on the a-file is decisively met by 4.♔f8!, while 3...♖c8 loses to 4.♖e8 ♖c7† 5.♔e6 ♖c6† (5...♔g6 6.♖g8† and 7.f7) 6.♔e7 ♖c7† 7.♔d6 ♖f7 8.♔e6 ♔g6 9.♖g8†.

From this line we can conclude that if Black had played 2...♖a1 (for instance) instead of 2...♖a8, then after 3.♖e6 the reply 3..♖a8! would have been obligatory.

The following variation from Position 433 is also of interest:

**1...♖a7† 2.♖e7 ♖a8 3.♖e8**

White also gains nothing by 3.♔e6† ♔g6 4.♖g7† ♔h6, or by waiting with 3.♖d7 ♔h6.

**3...♖a7† 4.♔e6**

Or 4.♔f8 ♔g6.

**4...♖a6† 5.♔f5 ♖a5† 6.♖e5 ♖a8**

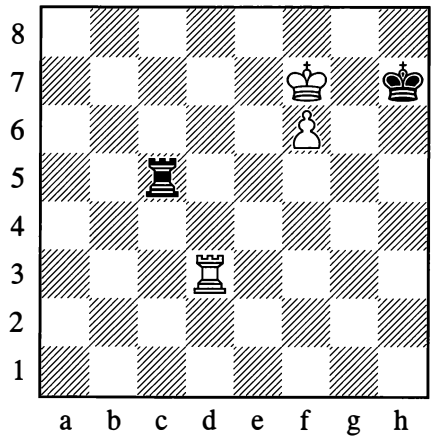
6...♖a1 is also possible.

**7.♖e7† ♔h6!**

Black draws.

How far the drawing chances are enhanced when the pawn is an f-pawn on the 6th rank can be seen from the fact that the draw is still attainable from Position 433 if we rearrange the rooks with the white one on d3 and the black one on c5 (separated from the pawn by just two files, not three!).

**433a**



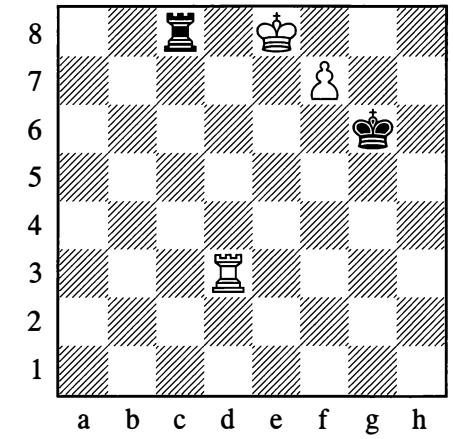
*Black to move – Draw*

**1...♖c7† 2.♔e8 ♔g6!**

2...♔g8? loses to 3.♖g3† and 4.♖f3!.

**3.f7 ♖c8†**

Not 3...♖xf7? ♖g3†.



**4.♔e7**
Or 4.♔d7 ♖a8.

**4...♖c7† 5.♔e6**
One last winning attempt.

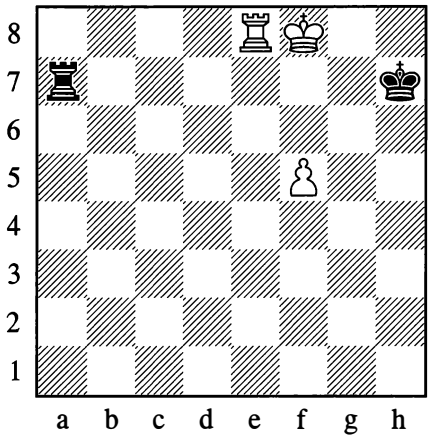
**5...♖c8!**
Avoiding the trap: if 5...♖c6†?, then 6.♔d7! ♖f6 7.♔e8 ♖e6† 8.♔f8 ♖f6 9.♔g8 and wins.

**6.♖f3 ♔g7 7.♖g3†**
Or 7.♔d7 ♖a8.

**7...♔h7**
Black draws.

With the pawn on the *fifth* rank, the position of Black's rook on the long side (or, sometimes, in the rear of the pawn) similarly facilitates the defence. In this case, naturally, the play in a number of positions can be even more complicated than with the pawn on the sixth. We will give just one simple but important example.

**434**



*Black to move – Draw*

White is threatening ♖e7†, and the defence has to be conducted with care. The obvious-seeming 1...♔h6?, for example, loses after 2.♖e6† ♔g5 3.f6 in a manner already familiar to us: if 3...♔g6, then 4.f7† ♔f5 (4...♔h7 5.♖f6) 5.♖b6 (or 5.♖e1, only not 5.♖e8? ♔f6) and White wins; or if 3...♔f5, then 4.♖b6 and 5.f7. Black also loses with 1...♔h8? or 1...♖a5?, on account of f5-f6-f7.

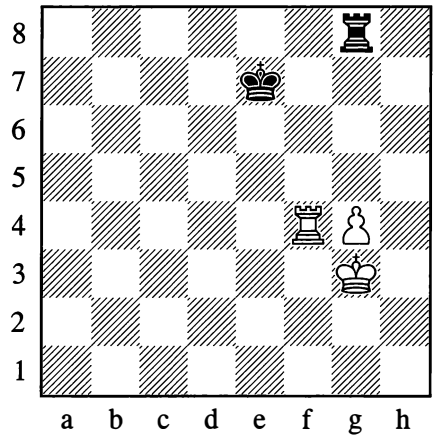
The only move to draw is:

**1...♖a6!**
One possible continuation would be:

**2.♖e7† ♔h8! 3.♔f7 ♔h7 4.f6 ♖a8**
Drawing as in Position 433.

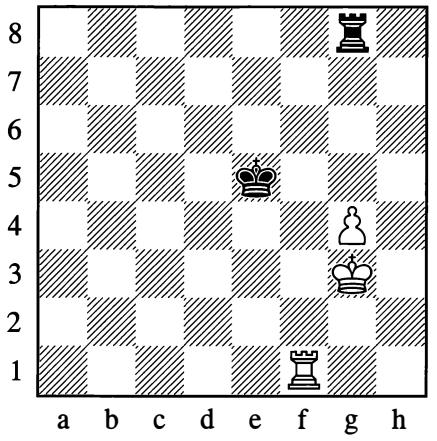
With the pawn on the *fourth* rank, attacks on the pawn from the front and checks from that direction acquire great significance (there is little space for checking from the rear).

**435**



*White to move wins*

**436**



*White to move – Draw*

If it were Black's move he would be able to draw with 1...♔e6 or 1...♖h8; or with 1...♖f8 (2.♖xf8 ♔xf8 3.♔h4 ♔g8!).

With White to move, the win is quite simple to achieve, since the pawn is defended by the rook and the white king reaches h7 or g7 unhindered – after which the pawn advances:

**1.♔h4! ♖f8**

Or 1...♖h8† 2.♔g5.

**2.♖xf8 ♔xf8 3.♔h5!**

White wins.

In Position 436, on the other hand, Black's frontal checks prove an adequate means of defence.

**1.♔h4 ♖h8† 2.♔g5 ♖g8† 3.♔h5 ♖h8† 4.♔g6 ♖g8†**

The king has to withdraw to h5 and subsequently to g3 – after which ...♖g8! again follows, preventing the pawn's advance to g5.

Other tries are no better for White:

**1.♖f5†**

1.♖f4 (1.♖a1? ♔f6 establishes the draw at once, as the king places itself in front of the pawn.) 1...♔e6 2.♔h4 ♔e5! leads to equality.

**1...♔e6 2.♔h4 ♖h8†! 3.♔g5**

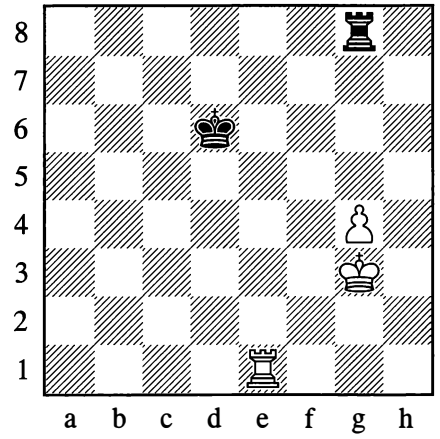
If 3.♖h5 then the black rook has a choice of squares.

**3...♖g8†! 4.♔f4 ♖a8**

With a draw. But not 4...♔e7? or 4...♖g6?, owing to 5.g5, winning.

Now let us transfer the black king (in Position 436) to d6, and the white rook to e1. The black king is now cut off by *two* files, but even this turns out to be insufficient for a win, as long as the king is able to cover the white rook's points of invasion – and as long as the white pawn is a *knight's* pawn.

**436a**



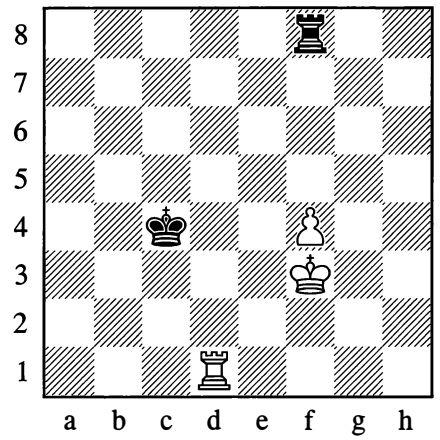
*White to move – Draw*

**1.♖e4 ♔d5! 2.♖e7 ♔d6!**
Not allowing the white king to go forward and hide from checks behind the rook.

**3.♖e4 ♔d5 4.♔f3 ♖a8 5.g5 ♖g8 6.♖a4 ♔e6! 7.♔g4 ♔f7**
With a draw.

However, cutting the black king off by two files *is* sufficient to win in the case of a bishop's pawn or centre pawn.

**437**



*White wins*

In Position 437, the winning idea for White consists of first bringing his king up towards the black rook (with the aim of securing squares for the pawn's advance), and then placing his own rook behind the pawn. Black's king is too far away to profit from being no longer cut off.

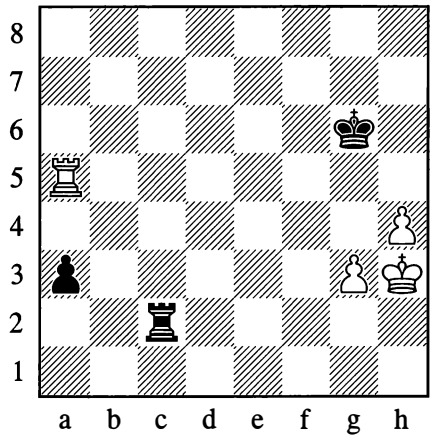
**1.♔g4 ♖g8† 2.♔f5 ♖f8† 3.♔g5 ♖g8† 4.♔h6!**
The winning manoeuvre, which was impossible owing to lack of space in the case of the knight's pawn.

**4...♖f8**
If 4...♖h8†, then 5.♔g7 ♖h5 6.♔g6.

**5.♖f1! ♔~ 6.♔g7 ♖f5 7.♔g6 ♖f8 8.f5**
White wins.

Now for another position of practical importance, in which the presence of a far-advanced passed pawn on the flank permits successful defence against two united passed pawns on the other side of the board.

**438**



*Black to move – Draw*

**1...a2!**
Black can hold the draw if he defends carefully. Note that 1...♖a2? would lose, as

demonstrated in the game Tarrasch – Chigorin, St Petersburg (9) 1893.

**2.h5† ♔f6**

Or 2...♔h6 works just as well.

**3.♔h4**

If 3.g4, then 3...♖c5! 4.♖xa2 ♔g5, with a draw as in Position 423 on page 290.

**3...♖h2† 4.♔g4 ♖b2 5.♖a6† ♔g7 6.♔g5 ♖b5† 7.♔h4 ♖b2 8.g4 ♔f7!**

This is an obligatory move that leads to a drawn position. After 8...♖c2? 9.h6†! and 10.♔h5!, we quickly reach a position that is lost for Black on the pattern of Diagram 425 (see page 291).

**9.♖a7†**

9.h6 is met by 9...♖b6!, while 9.♖a4 (threatening ♔g5-h6) fails to make progress after 9...♔g7! 10.♖a6 ♔f7!.

**9...♔f6! 10.g5† ♔f5 11.h6**

11.♖a5† allows 11...♔f4.

**11...♖h2†**

With ...♖h5 to follow.

It would be over-hasty to conclude that positions like Diagram 438 are generally not won. A draw is the most likely outcome when the pawn on the edge of the board is in a forward position and the one nearer the centre is further back (g4, h5). If the pawns are placed the other way round (g5, h4) the king is sheltered from horizontal checks and Black's resistance is hopeless. Among other things, this pawn configuration was also of vital importance in Position 410 on page 284 (Diagram 454 will be another case in point).

The study of theoretical endgames leads to the conclusion that with only one pawn left on the board together with some other pieces, the play tends to be quite difficult. It follows that exchanging pawns in the endgame is unfavourable to the stronger side.

As a rule, an advantage is easier to exploit in positions where each side has several pawns.

The play becomes much harder in endgames with no pawns at all. The struggle assumes a peculiar character of positional manoeuvring, the aim of which is the maximum constriction of the enemy pieces, particularly the king.

A rook and minor piece cannot usually win against a rook, nor can a queen and minor piece against a queen. The strongest pairings, which do give certain winning chances in practice, are respectively rook plus bishop and queen plus knight.

A queen can sometimes win against two minor pieces. It's interesting to note that a bishop and knight have the least power of resistance, whereas two bishops or two knights offer better drawing chances. In particular, two knights placed side by side can prevent the approach of the hostile king, providing the basis for a successful defence.

Against a rook and pawn, a queen doesn't always win if the rook is stopping the enemy king from attacking the pawn. These endings are complicated, but ultimately the queen's winning chances must be rated quite highly.

Two knights are sometimes capable of winning (giving mate) if the opponent possesses a pawn which is not very far advanced. On the analysis of these difficult endgames, much work was done by Alexey Troitsky (1866-1942), the world-famous composer of studies. His analyses have been refined and supplemented by Vitaly Chekhover and Yuri Averbakh.

## 4. THE ENDGAME IN PRACTICAL PLAY

Simple theoretical endings such as the ones examined in the foregoing section don't come about immediately with the transition from middlegame to endgame. There are usually a number of intermediate stages; as the quantity

of pieces gradually diminishes, different classes of endgame arise with various distributions of material. It sometimes happens that the material resources of the players are already severely depleted in the middlegame struggle, so that an exchanges of queens, or of some other pieces that were still sustaining the middlegame attack, is all it takes to bring about an ending of a relatively simple type. But then conversely, there are endings with several pieces (excluding queens) which reduce to simpler ones as the result of exchanging gradually.

The prevalent type of complex ending is a position where each side has a rook (often both rooks) and some minor pieces.

When exchanges are possible, we always have to weigh up which pieces we should leave on the board, which to be rid of, and which of the opponent's pieces we should be trying to destroy.

Of course we would nearly always prefer to keep both bishops. If we do have to part with one of them, we need to have a good think about whether the light-squared or the dark-squared bishop will be more use to us. The decision usually rests on an assessment of the pawn weaknesses on either side, or of the dangers that some enemy piece may cause us. If the question is whether we want to be left with a bishop against a knight, or the other way round, we will basically be guided by the type of position – open or closed – in which we will have to continue; the additional presence of rooks, on the whole, does little to alter matters here. Bishops of opposite colours, with their drawing possibilities in the endgame (though by no means always in the middlegame!), are a special case. A book can give only the most general guidelines; a player has to take his own decision depending on the concrete circumstances.

When the number of pieces left is very small, it is most important to assess the chances in a pure pawn endgame, so as to know in advance whether it pays us to go in for an exchange of the last remaining pieces.

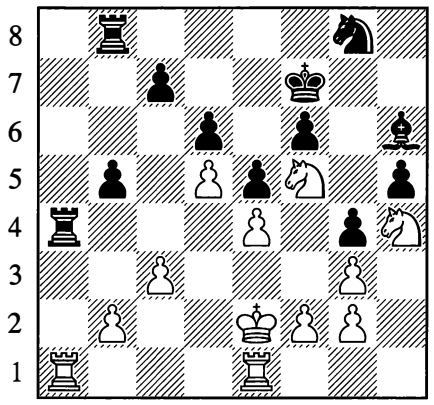
Endgame play is most often a matter of rook endings. That is understandable, seeing that the rooks usually enter the fight later than the other pieces (owing to the pawn obstacles in their way) and don't come into contact with each other as frequently as the minor pieces and queens. It is important therefore to gain wide experience of playing rook endgames in particular.

It remains to recall that an active, aggressive deployment of our pieces, facing a passive and defensive position on the other side, is usually of crucial importance in chess. In quiet positions, the general method of play (as indicated before, in the section on "Realizing an Advantage") should consist of improving our piece formation gradually, in an endeavour to increase the advantage we already possess or to obtain a new one in another part of the board.

We will clarify what has been said with some examples from practical games.

**439**

**Smyslov – Euwe**, Groningen 1946



*White to move*

Taking account of the cramped position of Black's minor pieces and in particular the lack of prospects for the bishop on h6, White correctly decides to exchange the major pieces off, for his two knights will then prove stronger than the black knight and bishop.

**28.♖xa4! bxa4 29.♖b1 ♖b3**

This is forced, as otherwise, after ♔e2-d3-c2 and ♖a1, White will quickly win the a4-pawn. If 29...a3, then 30.b4 and the pawn is doomed.

**30.♔d3 a3 31.♔c2 ♖xb2†**

White's aim of exchanging rooks is achieved.

**32.♖xb2 axb2 33.♔xb2 ♗d2**

Nor is 33...♗g5 any better, for example: 34.♔b3 ♗xh4 35.gxh4 ♘e7 36.♘xe7 ♔xe7 37.♔c4, and the king-and-pawn ending is lost for Black. If he tries 37...f5, White replies 38.f3!, locking the kingside and going for a dénouement on the queenside. There could follow: 38...f4 Best, as it leaves Black with a tempo in reserve. He can't keep this pawn on f5 – his king is needed for the defence of the queenside. 39.♔b5 ♔d7 40.c4 ♔c8 41.♔c6 ♔d8 42.c5 dxc5 43.♔xc5 ♔d7 A position like Diagram 260 (on page 153) has arisen, but with the difference that Black has a tempo move in hand. White must therefore continue with: 44.♔b4 (44.♔c4 ♔e7 45.♔b4! is also possible, only not 44.♔b5? ♔d6 45.♔b4 c6! 46.dxc6 ♔xc6 47.♔c4 g3! with a draw) 44...♔e7 (44...c6 45.♔c5) 45.♔c4! ♔d6 46.♔b5 ♔d7 47.♔c5 White wins.

**34.♔c2 ♗e1 35.f3 ♘e7 36.♘xe7 ♔xe7 37.fxg4 hxg4 38.♘f5† ♔f7**

The ending has been simplified still further; in positions like this, the knight is clearly stronger than the bishop.

**39.c4 ♔g6 40.♔b3 ♔g5**

Black prepares to sacrifice his bishop, since passive resistance is hopeless for him.

**41.♔a4 ♗xg3 42.♘xg3 ♔f4**

A new endgame category – the fourth so far in this game.

**43.♘h5† ♔xe4 44.♘xf6† ♔f5**

If 44...♔f4 45.♔b5 e4, then 46.♘xe4 and 47.♔c6.

**45.♘e8! e4 46.♘xc7 e3 47.♘b5! ♔f4 48.♘c3 ♔g3 49.c5**

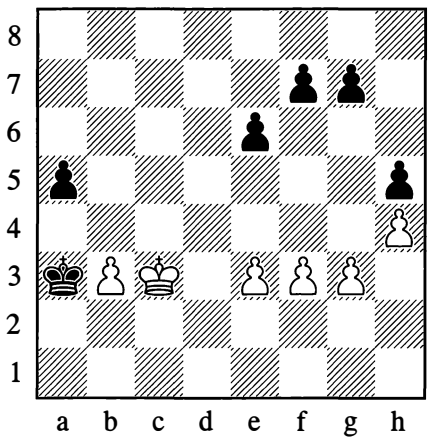
Black resigned.

**1–0**

Now let us look at some pawn endings.

**440**

**Lisitsyn – Alatortsev**, Moscow 1935



*Black to move*

**47...♔a2!**

With this move, going right round the rear of his opponent's position, Black soon achieved a won game:

**48.♔c2**

48.b4 would be met by 48...axb4† 49.♔xb4 ♔b2.

However, 48.e4! ♔b1 49.e5 was correct, making the kingside pawns harder to attack.

**48...f5**

With the aim of clamping White's pawns.

**49.♔c3 ♔b1!**

If now 50.b4, then 50...a4!.

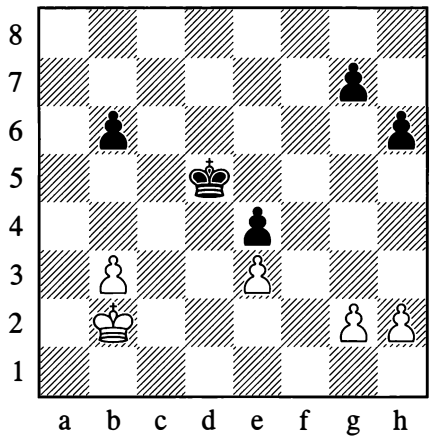
**50.e4 fxe4 51.fxe4 e5 52.♔d3 ♔b2 53.♔c4 ♔c2 54.♔d5 ♔xb3**

Black soon won.

**...0–1**

**441**

**Riumin – Ilyin-Zhenevsky**, Moscow 1931



*White to move*

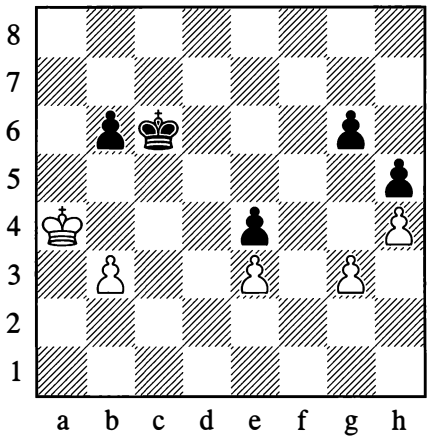
As in Position 386 (see page 274), White has a tempo in hand (due to the placing of the black pawn on h6, not h7). He needs to bring about a situation on the queenside where this extra tempo will play a decisive role.

A mistake would be 49.♔c3?, as after 49...♔c5 Black closes the position by advancing his b-pawn. There is a more cunning way.

**49.♔a3! ♔c5**

Stopping the white king from penetrating to b4. If 49...b5 50.♔b4 ♔c6 (or the other way round, 49...♔c6 50.♔b4 b5; Black is depriving the white king of the c4-square), then 51.♔a5 ♔c5 (otherwise b3-b4), and a position is reached in which White can indeed make use of his extra tempo: 52.g4! g6 53.h4 g5 54.h5! b4 55.♔a4, or 54...♔c6 55.b4, and White wins.

**50.♔a4! g6 51.h4 h5 52.g3 ♔c6**



**53.b4!!**

Now that White's extra tempo has been used up, the continuation 53.♔b4? b5! would lead to a draw after 54.♔c3; or if he took it into his head to play 54.♔a5??, White would even lose to 54...♔c5.

**53...♔c7 54.♔b5 ♔b7 55.♔c4 ♔a6**

On 55...♔c6, White would play 56.b5† and 57.♔d4.

**56.♔c3!**

Accurate to the end. He could also have won by 56.♔d4 ♔b5 57.♔xe4, with a forced exchange of queens after each side promotes a pawn. But with the move in the game, White gains a tempo and considerably simplifies his task.

**56...♔b7**

If 56...♔b5, then 57.♔b3 ♔c6 58.♔c4, and the black king has to make a move away from the b5-square in any case.

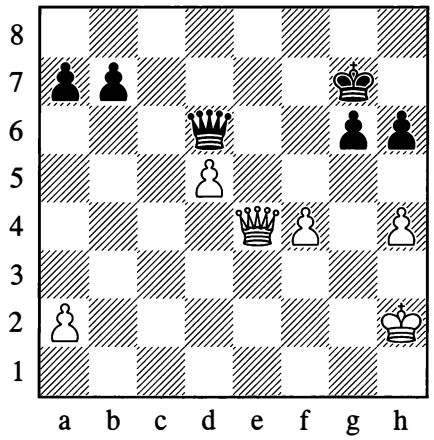
**57.♔d4 ♔c6 58.♔xe4 ♔b5 59.♔d4 ♔xb4 60.e4**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**442**

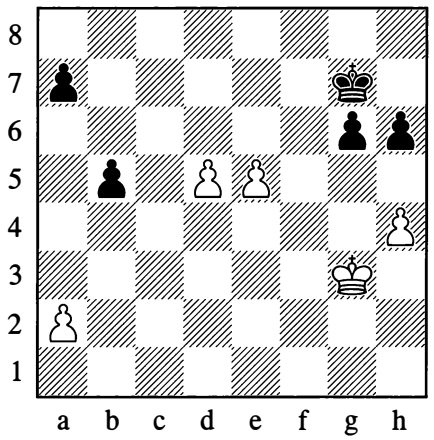
**Pillsbury – Tarrasch**, Nuremberg 1896



*White to move*

If a player can acquire passed pawns on both wings, they often prove stronger than connected pawns in the centre, except in cases where the centre pawns are close to their promotion squares and supported by their own king. The game went:

**48.♕e5† ♕xe5 49.fxe5 b5 50.♔g3**



**50...b4 51.♔f4 g5†? 52.hxg5 hxg5† 53.♔xg5 a5 54.d6 ♔f7 55.♔f5 a4 56.e6† ♔e8 57.♔f6 b3 58.axb3 axb3 59.d7† ♔d8 60.♔f7**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

Afterwards Tarrasch voiced the opinion that the right course was:

**50...a5 51.♔f4 ♔f7 52.h5**

Otherwise the white king can't support its pawns.

**52...gxh5 53.♔f5 h4**

The advance of this pawn is very dangerous.

**54.d6 h3 55.e6† ♔e8 56.♔f6 h2 57.d7† ♔d8 58.♔f7 h1=♕ 59.e7† ♔xd7 60.e8=♕† ♔d6 61.♕d8†**

Not 61.♕xb5 on account of 61...♕d5†, exchanging queens.

**61...♔c5 62.♕xa5 ♕b7† 63.♔f8 ♔c4**

Black has every chance of winning. For example:

**64.♕e1**

Not 64.a4? bxa4 65.♕xa4† ♕b4†.

**64...♕f3† 65.♔g8**

65.♔g7? is met by 65...♕c3†.

**65...♕d5† 66.♔f8 h5**

With the queen centralized and defending both pawns, the black king can sidestep the checks and get at the a2-pawn.

Not agreeing that the queen exchange in the diagram position leads to loss, Fine proposed:

**50.h5!**

The idea of this move is to meet 50...gxh5 by approaching with the white king via h5, thus eliminating the dangerous h-pawn on the way – for example:

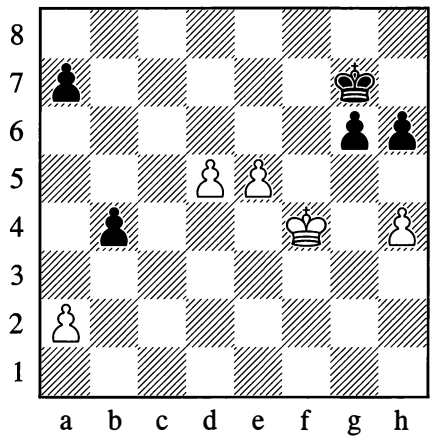
**50...gxh5 51.♔g3 a5 52.♔h4 b4 53.d6 ♔f7 54.d7 ♔e7 55.e6 a4 56.♔xh5 b3 57.axb3 axb3 58.♔g6 b2 59.d8=♕† ♔xd8 60.♔f7 b1=♕ 61.e7† ♔c7 62.e8=♕**

However, Black can continue to press for a win here.

**62...♕f5† 63.♔g7 ♕g5† 64.♔h7 h5**

White still needs to prove that he has a draw.

Actually, the final mistake by Tarrasch in the game came only on the 51st move. Black could have drawn with:



**51...♔f7 52.e6† ♔f6! 53.♔e4 a5 54.♔d4 a4 55.♔c5!**

55.♔c4? loses to 55...b3 56.axb3 a3 57.♔c3 g5 when the black pawns are better than the white ones.

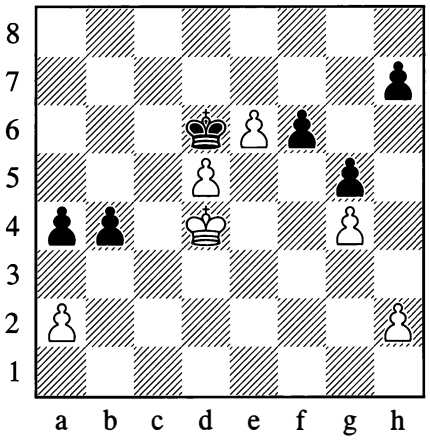
**55...b3 56.axb3 axb3 57.♔d6 b2 58.e7 b1=♕ 59.e8=♕ ♕b4† 60.♔c7 ♕a5†**

With perpetual check.

In the following game White similarly had the central pawns but his opponent didn't yet have passed pawns on both wings, and it would have taken time to acquire them. For that reason the player with the centre pawns held the advantage.

**443**

**Pillsbury – Gunsberg**, Hastings 1895



*Black to move*

Black actually lost quickly after: 1...h5? 2.gxh5 a3 3.♔c4 f5 4.h6 f4 5.h7 1–0

A noteworthy and instructive ending would have resulted from:

**1...♔e7!**

After this move, the only way to win is the immediate:

**2.♔c4!**

Instead, 2.h3 would be a decisive loss of tempo: 2...b3! 3.axb3 (3.♔c3 bxa2 4.♔b2 a1=♕† 5.♔xa1 f5 6.gxf5 h5 7.♔a2 g4 and wins) 3...a3! 4.♔c3 f5 5.gxf5 h5 The black king holds up all three pawns! 6.b4 a2 7.♔b2 a1=♕† Drawing the king onto the fatal square! 8.♔xa1 g4, and again Black wins.

White's win is achieved like this:

**2...b3 3.axb3 a3 4.♔c3 f5 5.gxf5 h5 6.b4 a2 7.♔b2 a1=♕† 8.♔xa1 g4**

The difference between this and the previous line is that White has spared himself the move h2-h3 while Black has to spend another tempo on ...h4.

**9.b5 h4 10.b6 g3 11.hxg3 hxg3 12.d6†!**

White now gets his own back for the moves that drew his king onto or away from the crucial squares; he uses these tactics himself in order to queen with check.

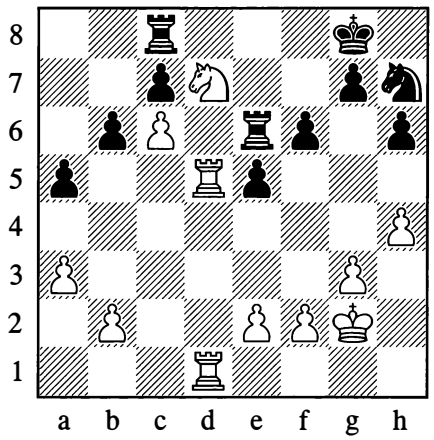
**12...♔xd6 13.b7 ♔c7 14.b8=♕† ♔xb8 15.e7**

White wins.

From Position 444, the game quickly reduced to an ending with an extra pawn for White. It should be noted that in knight endings, just as in king-and-pawn endings, the presence of an extra pawn in a more or less quiet position almost always guarantees victory.

**444**

**Ragozin – Pinkus**, USSR – USA match
Moscow 1946



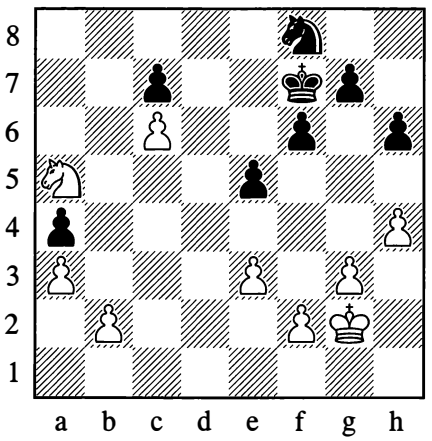
*White to move*

Having taken control of the d-file, White utilizes the position of his pawn on c6 to carry out a combination that wins a pawn:

**32.♘xb6! ♖ce8**

32...cxb6 is bad on account of 33.♖d8† ♖e8 34.♖xe8† ♖xe8 35.c7 and 36.♖d8. Now White simplifies the game.

**33.♖d8 ♘f8 34.♖xe8 ♖xe8 35.♘c4 a4 36.♖d5 ♖a8 37.e3 ♖a6 38.♖a5 ♖xa5 39.♘xa5 ♔f7**



The knight ending that has come about is easily won for White. He picks up the pawn on a4, giving himself a passed pawn which diverts the black king to the queenside. After that, by centralizing his own king, White acquires freedom of action on the kingside and in the centre.

**40.♘b7 ♔e6 41.♘c5† ♔d5 42.♘xa4 ♘g6 43.♘c3† ♔xc6 44.♔f3 ♘e7 45.♔e4 ♔c5 46.h5! c6 47.a4 ♔b4 48.f3 ♔a5**

Black can't play 48...♔b3 owing to 49.a5.

**49.f4 exf4 50.♔xf4 ♔b4 51.e4 ♔a5 52.e5 g5† 53.♔e4! f5† 54.♔d4 f4**

White was threatening e5-e6 and ♔e5.

**55.gxf4 gxf4 56.♔e4 f3 57.♔xf3 ♘f5 58.♔g4 ♘g7**

The knight is forced to occupy this passive position, seeing that 58...♘d4 would be answered by 59.♘e2! ♘xe2 60.e6, and the pawn is not to be stopped.

**59.b3 ♔b4 60.♘e4 c5 61.♘d6 ♔xb3 62.a5 c4 63.a6 c3 64.♘b5!**

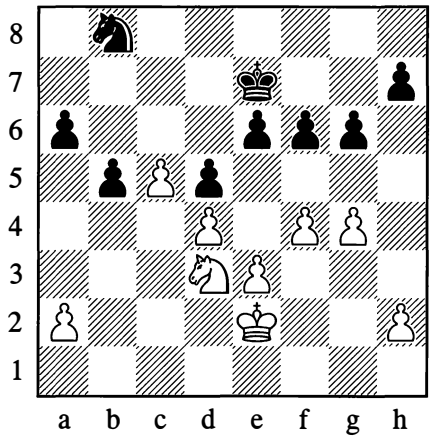
Black resigned.

**1–0**

At the result of some sharp play, the following position quickly changed from a knight ending to a king-and-pawn ending.

**445**

**Pillsbury – Gunsberg**, Hastings 1895



*White to move*

Black had made the mistake of playing 26...♘d7-b8 instead of 26...a5!, and White achieved a breakthrough with the aid of a combination.

**27.f5! g5**

If Black captures on f5, the d5-pawn perishes.

**28.♘b4 a5**

White was threatening 29.fxe6 ♔xe6 30.c6 ♔d6 31.c7 ♔xc7 32.♘xd5†.

**29.c6! ♔d6 30.fxe6! ♘xc6**

30.axb4 fails to 31.e7! and 32.c7.

**31.♘xc6 ♔xc6 32.e4!**

A typical device to obtain connected pawns.

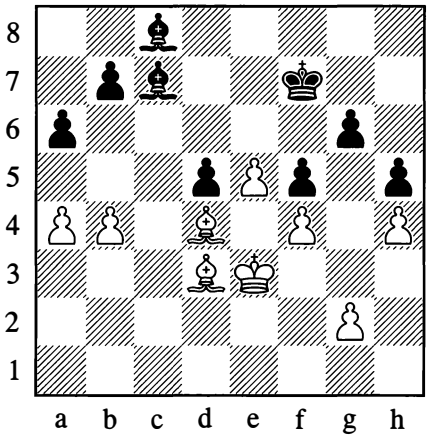
**32...dxe4 33.d5† ♔d6 34.♔e3 b4 35.♔xe4 a4 36.♔d4**

We have Position 443 before us.

Position 446 gives us an example of winning by achieving zugzwang.

**446**

**Schlechter – Wolf**, Vienna 1905



*White to move*

White has a centralized and freer position, and also a passed pawn alongside Black's weak one on d5. White's priority task is to limit his opponent's mobility still further and exchange off the dark-squared bishops, for then, with the obligation to defend his d5-pawn, Black will soon succumb to zugzwang (compare Diagram 372 on page 263).

**31.a5! ♗d8 32.g3 ♗d7 33.♗b6 ♗e7! 34.♗c5 ♗xc5†**

This exchange is now forced; if 34...♗d8, then 35.♔d4 ♔e6 36.♗c2 ♗b5 37.♗b3 ♗c6 38.♗a2 ♗c7 39.♗b6 ♗b8 40.♗b3, and thanks to zugzwang, the d5-pawn falls.

**35.bxc5 ♗a4 36.♔d4 ♔e6 37.♗e2! ♗b3**

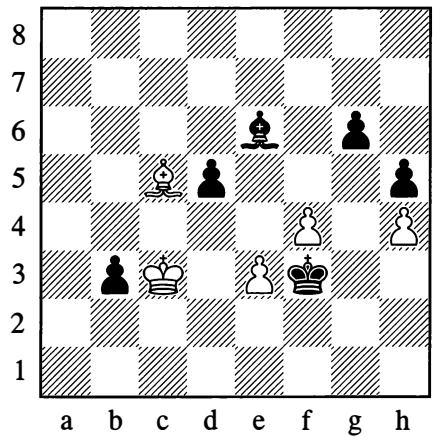
Zugzwang again: on 37...♗d7, White plays 38.♗f3 ♗c6 39.♗g2; or if 37...♗b5, then 38.♗xb5 axb5 39.c6 bxc6 40.a6; but in the game continuation, White still obtains a second passed pawn.

**38.c6 bxc6 39.♗xa6 ♔d7 40.♔c5 ♔c7 41.♗d3 ♔b7 42.a6† ♔a7 43.e6 d4 44.♗c4**
Black resigned.
**1–0**

With an unexpected and beautiful combination involving the sacrifice of two pawns, Black won the following seemingly drawish opposite-bishop ending.

**447**

**Kotov – Botvinnik**, Moscow 1955



*Black to move*

In spectacular fashion, Black sets about acquiring a passed pawn on the kingside:

**59...g5! 60.fxg5**
If 60.hxg5, then 60...h4 61.♗d6 ♗f5 62.g6 ♗xg6 63.f5 ♗xf5 64.♔xb3 ♔g2, winning the bishop for the passed pawn.

**60...d4†! 61.exd4**
61.♗xd4 would not alter matters.

**61...♔g3 62.♗a3**
Or 62.♗e7 ♔xh4 63.g6† ♔g4.

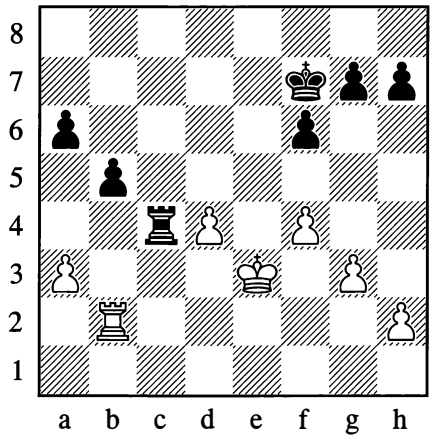
**62...♔xh4 63.♔d3 ♔xg5 64.♔e4 h4 65.♔f3**
Or 65.d5 ♗xd5†.

**65...♗d5†**
White resigned.
**0–1**

Let us look at some instructive rook endgames.

**448**

**Marshall – Chigorin**, Barmen 1905



*Black to move*

With full material equality, Black's positional advantages are obvious. His rook occupies an open file; he has a pawn majority on the queenside, and his pawns there are connected, while White's a-pawn and d-pawn are weak. Furthermore it is Black's move now, and he can actually win the a-pawn with 39...♖c3†.

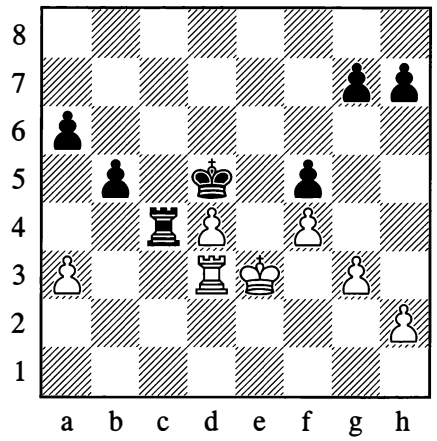
The remarkable thing is that this way of winning doesn't at all appeal to Chigorin! Instead he prefers to improve his position still further by centralizing his king. And indeed, 39...♖c3† would be met by 40.♔e4 ♖xa3 41.♔d5!. Then 41...♖c3 is bad on account of 42.♖a2, so Black has to allow 42.♖c2 – after which White forces the black king back by means of ♖c7† and starts pushing the d-pawn. The advance of Black's united pawns will be slowed down by the action of the white rook in their rear (from the a7- and b7-squares). In any event White will obtain serious counterplay.

In the game, there followed:

**39...♔e6!**

Now Black *is* threatening 40...♖c3†, and if 41.♔e4? then 41...f5#.

**40.♖b3 ♔d5! 41.♖d3 f5**



It turns out that White is in zugzwang. Once the moves of the white pawns are exhausted, Black will attain a material plus without any risk.

**42.h3 h5 43.♔e2**

Or 43.h4 g6; alternatively 43.♖d2 ♖c3† 44.♖d3 ♖xd3† 45.♔xd3 a5, and the outside passed pawn will decide the game.

**43...♖xd4 44.♖c3 ♖e4† 45.♔d2**

In the event of 45.♔f3, Black wins quickly with 45...♔d4 46.♖c7 ♖e3†.

**45...h4!**

A typical device to undermine the pawn position.

**46.♖c7 hxg3 47.♖xg7 ♖xf4 48.♖xg3 ♔e5 49.♔e2 ♖c4 50.♖g6 ♖a4 51.♖g3 f4 52.♖b3 ♖c4 53.♔d1 ♔e4**

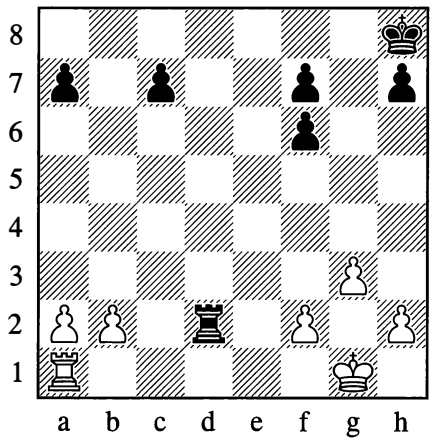
Black easily won.

**...0–1**

The drawing possibilities that arise in rook endgames are well illustrated by the following instructive finale:

**449**

**Chigorin – Tarrasch**, Budapest 1896



*White to move*

White sacrifices a queenside pawn in an attempt to secure what is the most important thing in rook endgames – an active position for his rook.

**22.♖c1! ♖xb2 23.♖xc7 ♖xa2**

Black's defence is also difficult but not entirely hopeless after 23...♔g7 24.♖xa7. The task of exploiting White's extra pawn is made complicated by the position of the rooks: White's is unfavourably placed in front of the passed pawn, while Black's will occupy an ideal post behind it. After the move in the game, White obtains a clear positional advantage: control of the seventh rank with the black king cut off.

**24.♖xf7 ♖a6 25.♔g2 ♔g8 26.♖b7 ♖a2 27.h4 a6**

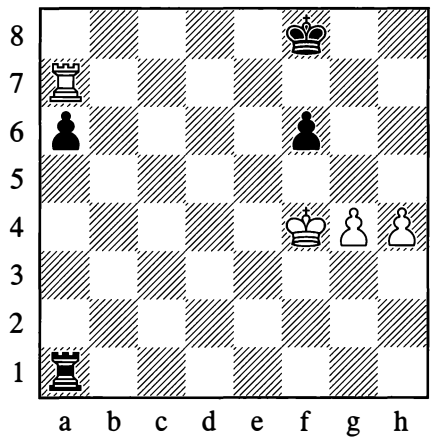
Why not 27...a5? The explanation is that if White's king manages to get at the f6-pawn or

penetrate to h6, his advantage will be decisive. Black therefore (quite rightly) reserves the possibility of playing ...♖a5 to bar the king's route. In addition, Black wishes to play ...h5 without fearing the reply ♖b5.

**28.♔f3 h5 29.♖c7 ♖a5 30.♔f4 ♔f8 31.f3 ♔g8**

At this point, as Grigory Levenfish has shown, White committed an inaccuracy (the wrong order of moves), of which Black failed to take advantage. The right continuation was 31.♖a7 (on 31.f3, Black could have played 31...♖a4† 32.♔f5 ♖a3 33.f4 ♖xg3 34.♔xf6 ♔g8 35.♖c5 ♖g4! 36.♖g5† ♔f8 with a draw) 31...♔g8 32.f3, since 32...♖a4† 33.♔f5 ♖a3 would be answered by 34.♔g6 ♔f8 35.♖f7† and then 36.♖xf6.

**32.♖a7 ♔f8 33.g4 hxg4 34.fxg4 ♖a1?**



Black has been defending well, but here he commits the decisive error, allowing the white king to penetrate his position. The advance of the h-pawn will certainly have seemed dangerous to him, and he decides that the safest option is to defend by checking from the rear, especially in conjunction with one interesting manoeuvre that he has thought up. But his idea is brilliantly refuted by Chigorin.

Black could have reached a draw by 34...♔g8 35.h5 ♖g5 (neglecting the defence of his a6-pawn), for example: 36.♖xa6 ♔g7 (or 36...♔f7), and now if 37.h6†, then 37...♔g6! (but not 37...♔xh6? in view of 38.♖xf6† ♖g6 39.♔f5!) 38.♖b6 (38.♖xf6† also gives no more than a draw) 38...♖a5.

If in this variation White plays 37.♖a7†, the path to a draw is a little more complicated: 37...♔g8 38.h6 ♖g6 39.h7† ♔h8 40.♖f7! (if at once 40.♔f5, then 40...♖g5†!), and now Black needs to avoid another tactical trap. On 40...♖h6?, White wins with 41.♔f5 ♖h5† (or 41...♖h4 42.♖c7 followed by 43.g5!) 42.♔g6 ♖g5† 43.♔h6. However, 40...♖g5! 41.♖xf6 ♖a5 gives the drawn Position 424 that we examined earlier on page 291.

Apart from 35...♖g5, Black could also play 35...♖b5 or 35...♖c5.

**35.♔f5 ♖f1† 36.♔g6 ♖f4**

This is what Black has pinned his hopes on, but with fine play Chigorin demonstrates that the black position is already lost.

**37.g5! fxg5**

If 37...♖xh4, then 38.♖xa8†! and 39.gxf6†.

**38.hxg5 ♖a4**

Or 38...♔g8 39.♖a8†! ♖f8 40.♖xf8† ♔xf8 41.♔h7. Black is unable to reach the drawn Position 421, which would be possible for instance in the case of 39.♖xa6? ♖f8.

**39.♖a8† ♔e7 40.♔h6 a5**

Other moves don't help here either.

**41.g6 ♖a1 42.g7 ♖h1† 43.♔g6 ♖g1† 44.♔h7 ♖h1† 45.♔g8 ♖a1 46.♖a7† ♔e8 47.♖a6 ♖h1**

The threat was 48.♔h7 ♖h1† 49.♖h6.

**48.♖xa5 ♖e1 49.♖h5 ♖g1 50.♖e5† ♔d7 51.♔h7**

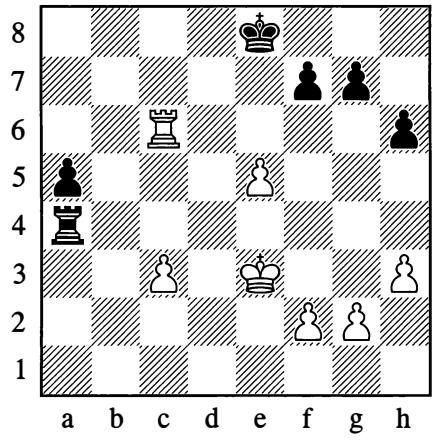
Black resigned.

**1–0**

Tarrasch was mindful of the lessons from this endgame when playing the following one, in which a way had to be cleared for his king to invade the black position.

**450**

**Tarrasch – Schlechter**, Cologne (8) 1911



*White to move*

White occupies the 7th rank, cutting the black king off and simultaneously creating the threat of e5-e6 (which is the distinctive theme of the position).

**38.♖c7! ♖a1**

If now 39.e6, then 39...♖e1†.

**39.♔f4 ♔f8**

Otherwise 40.e6.

**40.g3 ♖e1**

Black is intending ...g5† and ...♔g7 to free himself, and stops White from answering this with e5-e6; however, White counters his opponent's plan by threatening to occupy the f6-point.

**41.♔f5 a4 42.h4 ♖f1**

Not 42...a3 in view of 43.♖a7; but Black soon does make ...a3 possible.

**43.f4 ♖f3 44.c4 ♖e3**

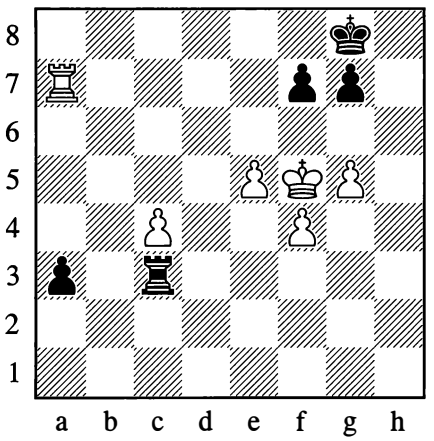
Black refrains from taking on g3, preferring to prevent ♔e4 and the advance of the c-pawn.

**45.g4 a3 46.♖a7 ♔g8**

On 46...♖c3, White plays 47.e6 fxe6† 48.♔xe6 with a threat of mate, and follows with 49.♔d5.

**47.g5 hxg5 48.hxg5 ♖c3**

Now White turns his e-pawn into a passed pawn.



**49.g6! fxg6† 50.♔xg6 ♖g3† 51.♔f5 ♖c3 52.♖a8† ♔f7 53.♖a7† ♔g8 54.♖a8† ♔f7 55.♖a7†**

Black's next move repeats the position for the third time, but in 1911 the rule enabling a player to claim a draw by threefold repetition had not yet been introduced.

**55...♔g8 56.♔e6! ♖xc4 57.♖a8† ♔h7 58.f5 ♖c3 59.♔d7 ♖d3† 60.♔e7 ♖d5 61.e6! ♖xf5 62.♔d6 ♖f1**

After 62...♖f6 63.♔d7 ♔g6 64.e7 ♖f7 65.♔d6 ♖xe7 66.♔xe7 ♔f5, the position is the same type as Diagram 409 on page 283.

**63.e7 ♖d1† 64.♔c5 ♖e1 65.e8=♕ ♖xe8 66.♖xe8**

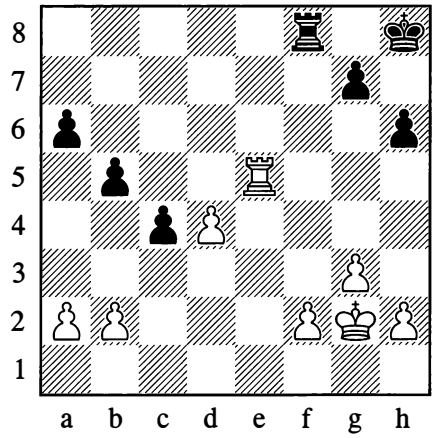
Black resigned.

**1–0**

From Position 451, White exploited his extra pawn with classic simplicity.

**451**

**Levenfish – Riumin**, Moscow 1935



*White to move*

**30.♖c5! ♔g8**

If 30...♖d8, then 31.d5 ♔g8 32.♔f3 ♔f7 33.♔f4 ♔e7 34.♔e5 ♔d7 35.d6 ♖e8† 36.♔d5 and 37.♖c7†.

**31.a4! ♖d8 32.axb5 axb5 33.d5 ♖b8 34.♔f3 ♔f7 35.♔e3 ♔e7 36.♔d4 ♔d7 37.♔c3! ♔d6 38.♔b4 ♖f8**

Or 38...♖e8 39.♖xb5 ♖e2 40.♔xc4, winning.

**39.f4 g5 40.fxg5 hxg5 41.♖xb5 ♖f2 42.♔xc4 ♖xh2 43.♖b6† ♔d7 44.♖g6 ♖xb2 45.♖xg5**

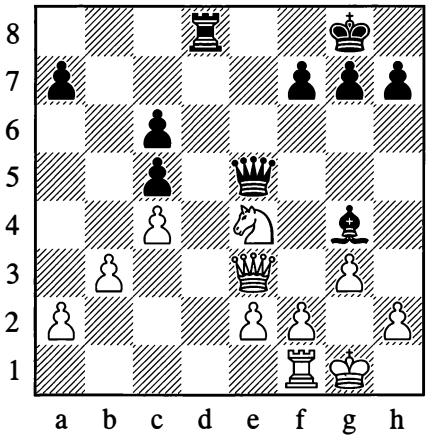
White easily won.

**...1–0**

Position 452 shows how insignificant extra pawns can sometimes be in rook endgames.

**452**

**Lilienthal – Smyslov**, Leningrad 1941



*Black to move*

Black has sacrificed a pawn, taking into account the drawish character of the ending which now follows:

**21...f5 22.♘c3 ♕xe3 23.fxe3 ♖d2 24.♖d1 ♖c2**

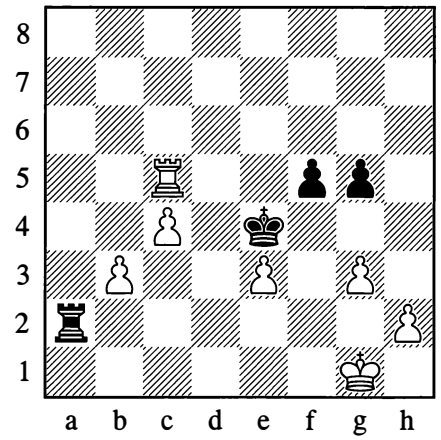
A rook exchange would take away Black's advantage of possessing the second rank and leave White with the better minor piece ending, seeing that the knight here is stronger than the bishop and would immediately start active operations with ♘a4. A rook endgame, with its drawing possibilities, is the one option that suits Black.

**25.♖d3 ♗xe2 26.♖d8† ♔f7 27.♘xe2 ♖xe2 28.♖d7† ♔e6 29.♖xa7**

29.♖xg7 ♖xa2 30.♖xh7 ♖b2 31.♖xa7 ♖xb3, or 31.♖b7 a5, would similarly give Black every chance of drawing.

**29...g5 30.♖xh7 ♖xa2 31.♖h6† ♔e5 32.♖xc6 ♔e4 33.♖xc5**

White has become obsessed with decimating the black pawns, on the assumption that ...♔f3 fails to ♖xf5†. However, Smyslov gladly sacrifices one more pawn to secure the most active position possible for his king.



**33...f4!**

A typical trick to close a file!

**34.exf4 ♔f3 35.h3 ♖a1†**

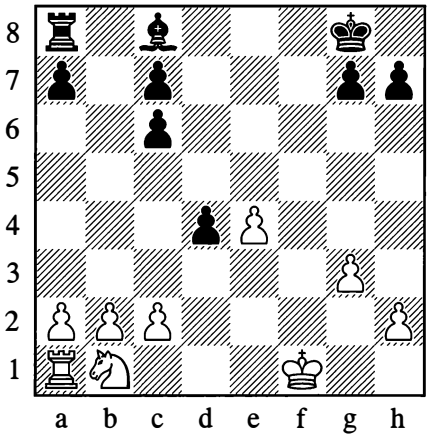
Draw, in spite of White's material advantage of four pawns.

**½–½**

An interesting rook manoeuvre was demonstrated by Black in the following game:

**453**

**Marshall – Lasker**, USA (1) 1907



*Black to move*

The possibility of bringing his pieces quickly into play with 19...♗h3† 20.♔e2 ♖f8 promises Black no noticeable advantages. After 21.♘d2 White's position would be satisfactory, and a subsequent ♘b3 could prove unpleasant for Black.

For that reason there followed:

**19...♖b8!**

Forcing b2-b3 and thereby depriving the knight of the b3-square.

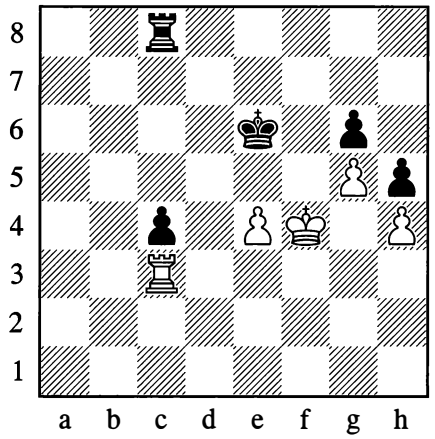
**20.b3 ♖b5!**

The rook occupies the open fifth rank, from where it can attack any of the white pawns. Black's advantage has become clear. Later, after playing ...c5, Black manoeuvred with his rook along the *sixth* rank. He went on to win the game.

**...0–1**

**454**

**Botvinnik – Euwe**, Groningen 1946



*White to move*

White's situation looks difficult, yet with careful play he can successfully defend.

**41.♔e3 ♔e5 42.♖c2!**

This is the most sensible move, though 42.♖a3 is also enough to draw. It looks dangerous allowing the pawn to advance to the second rank, but after 42...c3 43.♖a5† ♔d6 44.♖a1 c2 45.♖c1 ♔e5 46.♔d3 ♖d8† 47.♔e3! ♖d4 48.♖xc2 ♖xe4† 49.♔f3 ♖xh4 50.♖c6! we have the same drawn position that was reached on move 47 in the game.

**42...c3 43.♔d3 ♖d8†**

If 43...♖c7, then 44.♖xc3 ♖xc3† 45.♔xc3 ♔xe4 46.♔c4 ♔f4 47.♔d4 ♔g4 48.♔e5 ♔xh4 49.♔f6, and White too will queen his pawn in time. The position of White's kingside pawns proved to be the more favourable here because his forward pawn was the one closer to the centre.

**44.♔e3! ♖d4 45.♖xc3 ♖xe4† 46.♔f3 ♖xh4 47.♖c6!**

The most precise; the draw now becomes obvious.

**47...♖f4†**

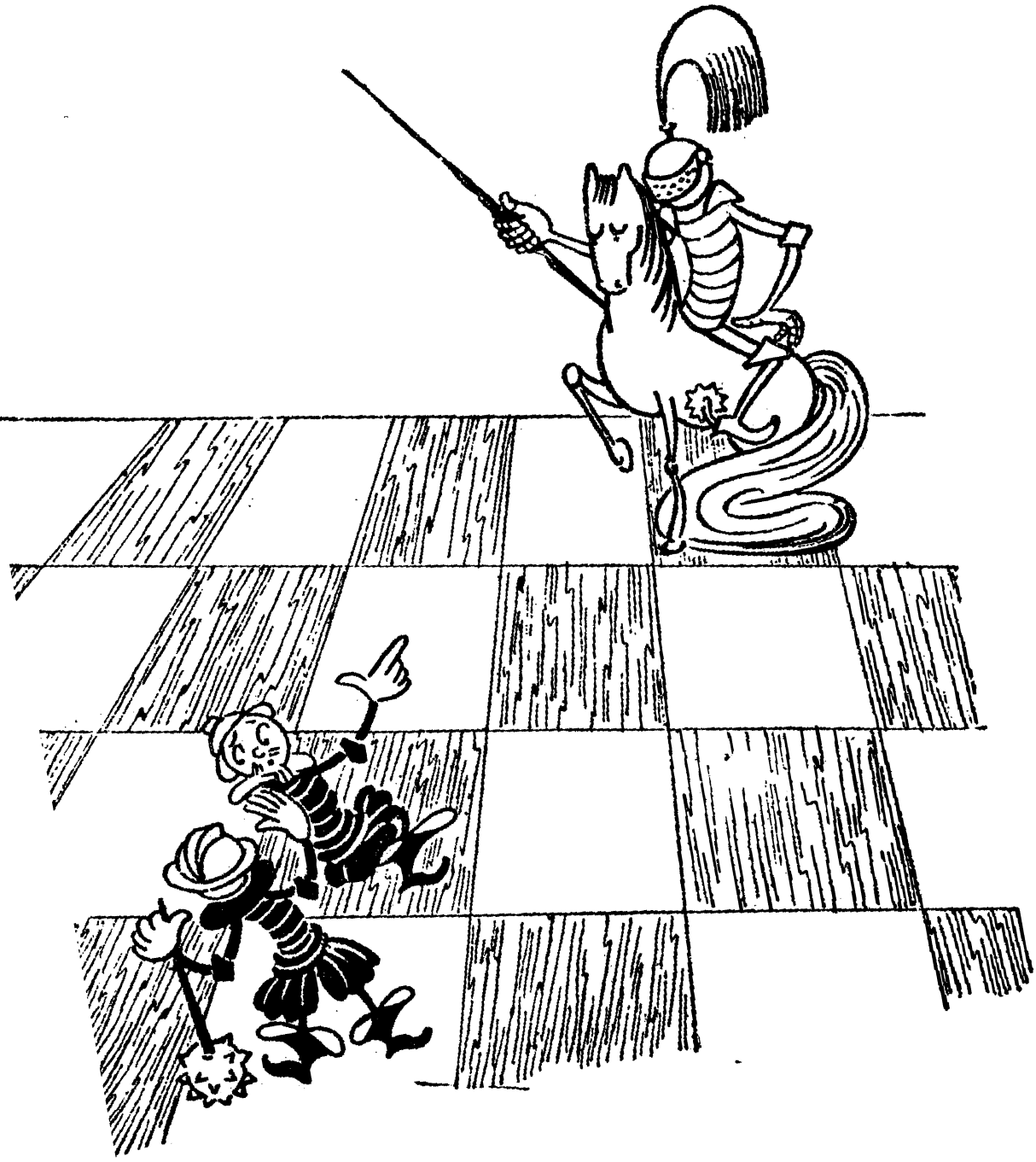
Or 47...♔f5 48.♖c5† ♔e6 49.♖c6† ♔f7 50.♖c7†.

**48.♔e3 ♖e4† 49.♔f3 ♔f5 50.♖f6† ♔xg5 51.♖xg6†!**

Draw.

**½–½**

The reader will also find a number of practical endgames further on, where they represent the conclusion to the play from a middlegame position under discussion.



# Chapter 9

# The Middlegame

## 1. STRATEGIC IDEAS OF THE MIDDLEGAME

If even the endgame – the simplest part of a game of chess, as you might suppose – embraces such a wide variety of ideas and methods of combat, then you can easily imagine how much richer in content the middlegame can be, when the board is still full of pieces and there is wide scope for all manner of strategic designs and tactical strokes.

The basic idea of endgames is to conduct to victory an advantage that you already possess. The main idea of the midlegame is to attain that advantage in the first place.

Strictly speaking, the strategic ideas of the middlegame, especially its early stage, are already laid down in the opening. If you have managed to acquire an advantage out of the opening, you need to build on your success and increase that advantage. Utilizing the weaknesses that have appeared in your opponent's camp, and if possible creating new ones, you must try to obtain an attack and make your advantage decisive. If the opening has turned out badly, you need to defend, improve your position, and strive to obtain counterplay. In equal positions you should try to gain the initiative and then create some weaknesses in the enemy formation.

Each phase of a chess game is characterized by its own specific difficulties. In the endgame, however, there are circumstances that often make our overall task and all kinds of calculations easier. There is the fact that the direction taken by the struggle is already determined; there is the paucity of material left on the board; and there is the fact that this material has to some extent been studied by theory. Likewise in the opening, standard systems for the initial development of the pieces have already been established and tested in practice, and in a measure they come to our aid. The middlegame is a different matter. Here, faced with an endless variety of complex positions, ideas and modes of combat, a player is left to his own devices to a much greater extent. He is compelled to rely almost entirely on his own powers – his understanding of the game and his skill.

Nevertheless, theorists have studied many of the most typical features of the middlegame from the experience of countless games played by masters. Consequently even in this phase of the game, they can somewhat alleviate a player's task with advice on general principles, concerning the means of conducting the attack and defence and also of playing in equal positions.

In the opening and endgame, the elements of chess "science" assert themselves very noticeably. It is characteristic of the middlegame that the elements of art predominate. Anyone can enrich

his own creative potential and widen its boundaries if he studies the best paradigms of master play conscientiously and in depth.

## 2. ATTACK AND THE METHODS OF CONDUCTING IT

If with some move or other we place an enemy piece under fire, threatening to capture it, or if we take aim at an important square in order to occupy it, we are performing a simple act of aggression. If on the other hand, in persistent pursuit of our aim, we perform a logically connected series of such acts – even if they are interspersed with some preparatory ("quiet") moves or manoeuvres – then we are *conducting an attack*. An attack is generally understood as a series of moves linked by a common plan and aim, with the help of which a player endeavours to mate the enemy king or achieve a material or positional advantage, surmounting the obstacles encountered on the way.

For an attack to be successful, two prerequisites are essential:

(1) In the opponent's formation there must be some weaknesses, which will tell us where our attack should be directed; alternatively we must be confident that some weak points are bound to be formed in the process of the attack itself, or as a result of it.

(2) We must possess superior forces in the sector where battle is going to be joined; or else we need to calculate in advance that we will gradually be able to concentrate more forces there than our opponent.

It goes without saying that at the start of the attack our own position must be sound enough to avoid being overthrown or shattered by a strike from the other side (a counter-attack). Our best guarantee, as we have seen from many previous examples, is a sturdy centre.

Attacks can have the most varied aims, given the large quantity of different types of weakness. The greatest weakness in a position is the king. Consequently an attack will often be conducted against the castled position, or against the position of the uncastled king if for some reason castling has been held up. This is the most dangerous type of attack, seeing that it may be crowned by the king's demise (a "mating attack"). For the purpose of averting this, players will naturally take advance measures to make the position of their king sufficiently robust and safe. The attack then focuses on other objects, that is, other weaknesses – such as weak pawns and squares, files for an invasion with the major pieces, the seventh and eighth ranks, pieces that are badly placed, and so on.

From the chapter on "Positional Play" we know that there are temporary weaknesses and lasting ones. This distinction determines the pace of our attack and the means of conducting it. Play against temporary weaknesses, which require swift exploitation, has to be as sharp and energetic as possible. Most often in these cases, the attack is "explosive", combinative. The same is true, as a rule, when the attacker has a significant preponderance of forces in the combat zone. On the other hand, lasting (permanent) weaknesses allow planned, systematic preparation of the attack, in other words a positional exploitation – which may also finally be crowned by a combinative stroke.

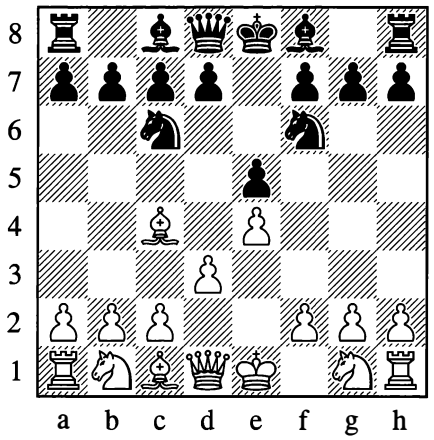
It is essential in both cases to draw up a precise strategic plan for utilizing the weakness, and the tactical execution of this plan must be well thought out. It must never be forgotten that a tactical error is often fraught with dire consequences; in a trice it is liable not only to destroy the fruits of all your previous work but also to bring about defeat.

With a series of examples we will clarify what has been said. At the same time we shall

be throwing light on many other features that characterize the different types of attack and the methods of conducting them.

### 455

**Spielmann – Chigorin**, Nuremberg 1906



*White to move*

White has chosen a passive system of development that presents Black with no difficulties. Black is already threatening to play ...d5, opening up the game in a way that suits him and demolishing White's pawn centre. The move 4.♘c3 seems indicated. Instead of this, White played as follows:

**4.f4**

Premature activity. This kind of attacking move, opening the f-file, would have made more sense after White had finished his development and castled.

**4...exf4 5.♗xf4 d5! 6.exd5 ♘xd5 7.♗d2?**

Better is 7.♗xd5 at this point, avoiding a retreat that wastes time; White shouldn't be worrying about preserving his bishop pair here.

**7...♗c5**

Threatening ...♗xg1 and ...♕h4†.

**8.♕f3 ♕e7†!**

White is behind in development and hasn't managed to castle; after his next move Black conducts a devastating attack on the position of White's uncastled king.

**9.♘e2 ♘d4! 10.♕e4 ♘xc2† 11.♔d1 ♘de3†! 12.♔c1**

After 12.♗xe3 ♘xe3†, Black would win a piece by ...♕xe4 and ...♘xc4.

**12...♕xe4 13.dxe4 ♘xa1 14.♗d3 ♗e6 15.b4 ♗b6 16.♔b2 0-0-0**

White doesn't even succeed in picking up the knight in return for the rook he has lost.

**17.♘c1 ♘ac2! 18.♗xc2 ♘c4† 19.♔c3 ♗d4†**

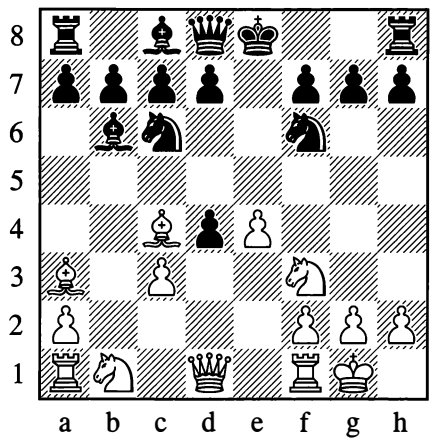
White resigned in view of 20.♔b3 ♘xd2† or 20.♔d3 ♗e3†.

**0–1**

Players in the old days had a poor grasp of the dangers that arise in an open position when castling is delayed, or – worse – made completely impossible.

### 456

**Steinitz – Rock**, London 1863



*White to move*

The bishop on a3 is preventing Black from castling. Black has omitted to play ...d6 in good time, and now his king is forced to remain in the centre – where it splits the two flanks of its army, slows the development of the pieces and comes under attack from superior forces. White's immediate task is to demolish the enemy centre and open the e-file for his major pieces. The game proceeded as follows:

**9.♕b3 d5 10.exd5 ♘a5**

Aiming to exchange the attacking bishop on c4.

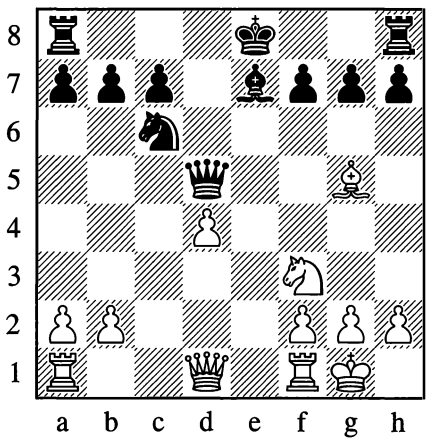
**11.♖e1† ♗e6 12.dxe6! ♘xb3 13.exf7† ♔d7 14.♗e6† ♔c6 15.♘e5† ♔b5 16.♗c4† ♔a5 17.♗b4† ♔a4**

By a forced march the king has arrived at the place of its doom.

**18.axb3#**

**457**

**Steinitz – Bardeleben**, Hastings 1895



*White to move*

The initiative here evidently belongs to White. Black is two tempos behind in development: he has not castled (as White has), and it is White to move in this position. The c- and e-files are open for the white rooks. White's position in the centre is preferable – he is the only one with a pawn there. True, the pawn on d4 is isolated, and whether this pawn is strong or weak is not yet fully clear. How is White to make use of his advantage?

It is obvious, at any rate, that this advantage is only temporary and that White must operate with exceptionally powerful threats. One moment's delay, and Black will castle – after which the situation of the d4-pawn will become critical.

With the help of a typical device – a frontal pin on a piece – White stops his opponent from castling.

**13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♖e1! f6**

Preparing a loophole for what is known as "castling by hand" (...♔f7 and ...♖he8). There is no other way for Black to free himself from the pin on the e-file.

**15.♕e2 ♕d7 16.♖ac1?**

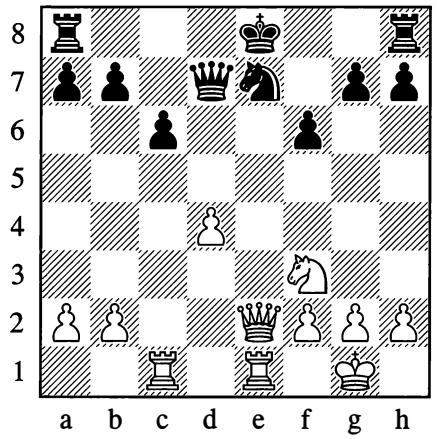
The "automatic" occupation of an open file is sometimes quite a good move, but here it is definitely not in keeping with the sharpness of the position. A stronger continuation was indicated by P. Romanovsky, namely 16.d5! ♔f7 17.♖ad1!, and Black cannot rid himself of his difficulties. For example: 17...♘xd5? 18.♘g5† fxg5 (18...♔g8 is wholly bad in view of 19.♖xd5 ♕xd5 20.♕e8† and mates) 19.♕f3† and 20.♖xd5; alternatively if 17...♖he8, then 18.♕e6†! ♕xe6 19.dxe6† ♔f8 20.♖d7 ♖ac8 21.♘d4 a6 22.b4, and the threat of ♖c1 gives White good chances.

**16...c6?**

Black prematurely tries to emphasize the weakness of the d4-pawn. He should first have completed his intended plan of defence by playing 16...♔f7, with ...♘d5 and ...c6 to follow. In so doing, there was no need at

all to be afraid of the sacrifice 17.♕xe7† ♕xe7 18.♖xe7† ♔xe7 19.♖xc7†, in view of 19...♔d6! 20.♖xb7 ♖ac8, and then 21...♖c7, after which White could scarcely save himself from loss.

After the move in the game, White's 16.♖ac1 justifies itself completely, and from here on he conducts the attack impeccably.



**17.d5!**

Another typical ploy: a pawn sacrifice to clear the d4-square for the knight (and open the c-file at the same time).

Incidentally, this example already brings home to us how an isolated pawn on d4 can be either weak or strong according to circumstances. It is strong when securing outposts for pieces in the centre, or when it can advance like a "battering ram" (usually exchanging itself to create a breakthrough or to open lines). The pawn is weak when its position is passive, that is, when totally blockaded and with no outposts to be secured.

**17...cxd5 18.♘d4! ♔f7**

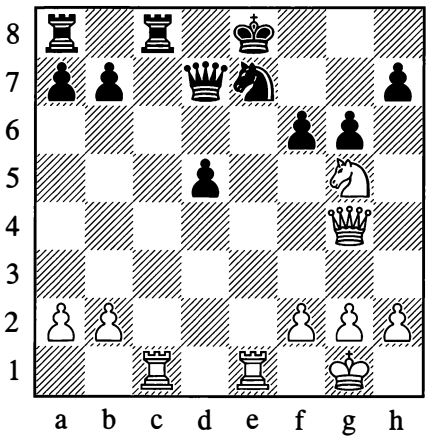
White was threatening ♘f5.

**19.♘e6 ♖hc8**

Parrying the threat of ♖c7.

**20.♕g4 g6 21.♘g5† ♔e8**

The need to defend the queen compels Black to return his king to the dangerous e-file. But how does White carry on from here? Both his aggressive pieces – queen and knight – are under attack. The sharp situation that has come about obliges him to execute some strong threats without giving Black a breathing space. He has to be repeatedly checking, or capturing with check.



**22.♖xe7†!**

This move is the start of a superb combination. It turns out that Black cannot capture the rook: if 22...♕xe7 then 23.♖xc8†, exchanging all Black's pieces to reach an endgame with an extra knight; or if 22...♔xe7, then 23.♖e1† ♔d6 (after 23...♔d8 24.♘e6†, Black will lose his queen) 24.♕b4† ♔c7 25.♘e6† ♔b8 26.♕f4†.

**22...♔f8**

This would seem to be an adequate defence, as *all* White's pieces are now attacked and he is even threatened with mate on c1. The further course of White's combination is easy to understand:

**23.♖f7† ♔g8**

Not 23...♕xf7 24.♖xc8† and not 23...♔e8 24.♕xd7#.

**24.♖g7† ♔h8**

Again 24...♕xg7 fails to 25.♖xc8†, while on 24...♔f8 White has the decisive 25.♘xh7†.

**25.♖xh7†**

Black resigned at this point.

**1–0**

I shall give the rest of the combination as would have been played:

**25...♔g8 26.♖g7† ♔h8**

Again, if 26...♔f8 then 27.♘h7†.

**27.♕h4†**

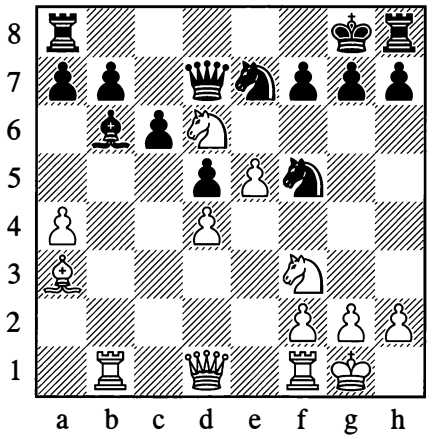
Now that the h-pawn has gone.

**27...♔xg7 28.♕h7† ♔f8 29.♕h8† ♔e7 30.♕g7† ♔e8! 31.♕g8† ♔e7 32.♕f7† ♔d8 33.♕f8† ♕e8 34.♘f7† ♔d7 35.♕d6#**

A good example of a precise combinative attack.

## 458

**Chigorin – Steinitz**, World Ch, Havana (1) 1892



*White to move*

In this position – where the uncastled king, under threats from the white pieces, has been driven across to g8 and is shutting the rook on h8 out of the game – Chigorin played one of his most brilliant combinations, distinguished by its uncommon beauty and the depth of its conception. How difficult it was to calculate may be gauged from the fact that numerous annotators, even to this day, have been coming forward with various supplementary analyses which have gradually, more and more comprehensively, revealed the scope of Chigorin's profound vision.

Diagram 458 is of further interest as an example of a case where the attacking problem can also be solved by a positional approach, depending on the player's inclinations and style. Lasker, for instance, suggested the following *positional* method of attacking from here: 19.a5 ♗xa5 20.♖xb7 ♕d8 21.♕a4, and now 21...h6 22.♘xf5 ♘xf5 23.♕xc6 ♕c8 24.♕b5, or 21...h5 22.♘g5 ♘xd6 23.exd6 ♘f5 24.♘xf7 ♕c8 25.♖fb1 ♗b6 26.♕a6, and under the pressure of his opponent's superior forces, Black loses because his rook on h8 is out of play.

Chigorin's different and more striking solution is prompted by his combinative style.

**19.♘xf7! ♔xf7 20.e6†! ♔xe6**

Of course not 20...♕xe6, because of 21.♘g5†.

**21.♘e5!**

With gain of tempo, White denies the black king the possibility of convenient retreat.

**21...♕c8**

A more tenacious move, leading to more complicated variations, was 21...♕e8, but that continuation also loses in the end.

**22.♖e1 ♔f6 23.♕h5 g6**

White would meet 23...♘g6 with 24.g4, threatening 25.g5†.

**24.♗xe7† ♔xe7**

On 24...♘xe7, White wins with 25.♕h4† g5 26.♘g4† ♔f7 27.♕xg5.

**25.♘xg6†† ♔f6 26.♘xh8 ♗xd4**

Black also fails to save himself with 26...♕xh8 – in view of 27.♖e5 ♕c8 28.g4 – or with 26...♕d7, on account of 27.♖b3! ♖xh8 28.♖f3 ♖g8 29.♖e5 ♖g5 30.♕h6† ♖g6 31.♖fxf5† ♕xf5 32.♕f8†.

**27.♖b3! ♕d7 28.♖f3 ♖xh8 29.g4 ♖g8 30.♕h6† ♖g6 31.♖xf5†**

Black resigned.

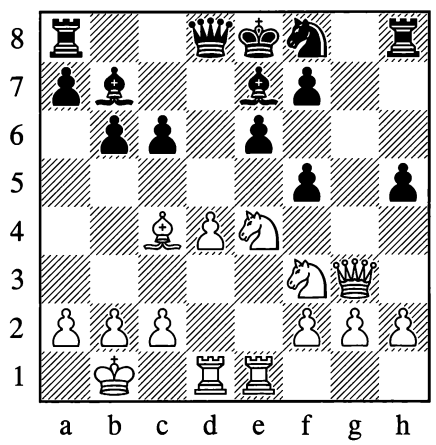
**1–0**

The examples we have given demonstrate clearly that when attacking against *a king that has not castled*, the basic strategic idea is a breakthrough in the centre.

The following positions may serve as additional vivid illustrations:

**459**

**Kotov – Kalmanov**, USSR 1936



*White to move*

Exploiting the menacing position of his rooks opposite the black king and queen, White attacks in a place that might seem to be a strongpoint for his opponent – d5. The centre pawn on d4 is used as a mighty battering ram to open up a line (a file or diagonal).

**1.d5! cxd5**

Of course not 1...exd5 because of 2.♘f6#; if 1...fxe4, then 2.dxe6, attacking the queen and threatening 3.exf7#.

**2.♗b5† ♘d7 3.♘e5 ♕c7**

White was threatening to play ♕g7 and then take on d7; if 3...♗c8, then 4.♘c6 ♗h4 5.♕g7.

**4.♗xd7† ♔d8**

4...♔f8? allows 5.♘g6†, a discovered attack on the black queen.

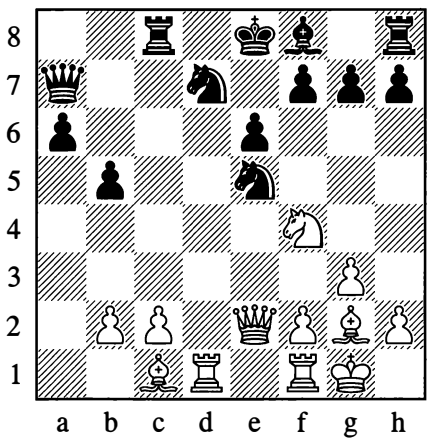
**5.♕g7 ♖f8 6.♘g5 ♕c5 7.♗xe6**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**460**

**Ravinsky – Panov**, Moscow 1943



*White to move*

White conducted a dashing and beautiful attack on the uncastled king, demolishing his opponent's position in the centre.

**20.♖xd7! ♘xd7 21.♘xe6! fxe6 22.♕xe6† ♗e7**

If 22...♔d8, then 23.♗g5† ♔c7 (23...♘f6 24.♖d1†) 24.♕c6† ♔b8 25.♗f4† ♖c7 26.♗xc7† ♕xc7 27.♕a8#.

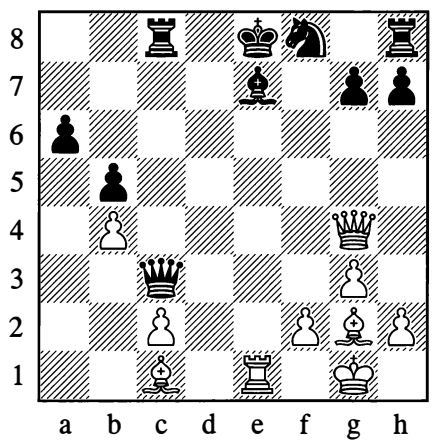
**23.♖e1 ♕c5**

Preventing 24.♗g5, seeing that 23...♘b6 24.♗g5 ♖c7 25.♗c6† ♔f8 26.♖e3 would be worse.

**24.b4! ♘f8**

A more stubborn defence would be 24...♕xb4 25.♗g5 ♕xe1† 26.♕xe1 ♘f6 27.♕e6 ♖xc2, but after 28.♗c6† Black's resistance would still be hopeless, for instance: 28...♖xc6 (forced; if 28...♔f8, then 29.♗xf6 gxf6 30.♗d5 ♔e8 31.♕xa6 with numerous threats) 29.♕xc6† ♔f7 30.♕xa6 b4 31.♕c4† ♔g6 32.♗e3, after which White plays ♕e6 and encroaches with his pawns. Conceivably some even stronger continuations for White might be found.

**25.♕g4! ♕c3**



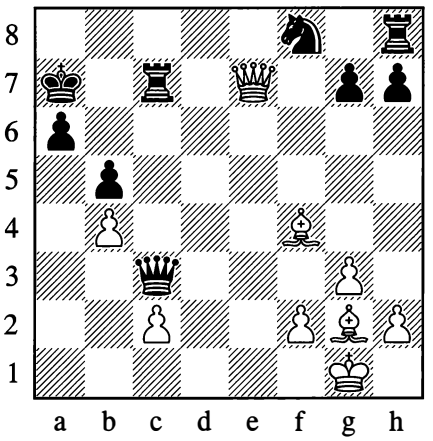
**26.♖xe7†!!**

In this game, the cost of rooks is not counted. This sacrifice would also have been the strongest answer to 25...♕c7.

**26...♔xe7 27.♗g5† ♔d6**

On 27...♔e8 White plays 28.♕e2†! ♔f7 (28...♔d7 29.♕e7#) 29.♗d5† ♔g6 30.♕e4† ♔xg5 (30...♔h5 31.♗f7† ♘g6 32.♕h4#) 31.♕f4† with mate to follow.

**28.♕d1†! ♔c7 29.♗f4† ♔b6 30.♕d6† ♔a7 31.♕e7† ♖c7**



**32.♗xc7**

"When you see a good move, look for a better one." At this point a quicker path to White's goal was 32.♗e3†! and mate in two more moves (32...♕c5 33.♕xc7# is very elegant!). This would have been the fitting conclusion to a brilliantly conducted attack. In the game, the concluding moves were:

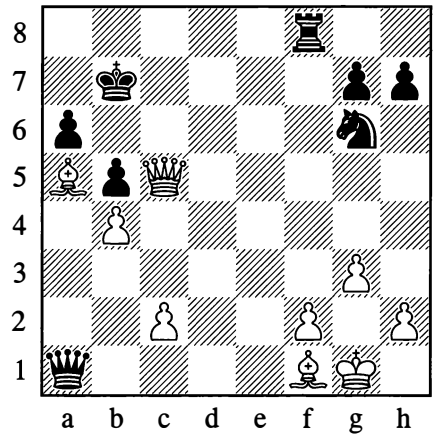
**32...♕a1†**

Bringing about a pin on White's bishop. If 32...♘g6 at once, then 33.♗b6†! with mate to follow.

**33.♗f1 ♘g6 34.♕c5† ♔b7 35.♗a5!**

After his slight lapse on move 32, White needs to come up with something again; his ingenious 35.♗a5 forces mate or the win of the queen, for example: 35...♖c8 36.♕b6† ♔a8 37.♕xa6† ♔b8 38.♗c7† and 39.♕xa1.

**35...♖f8**



**36.♕b6†**

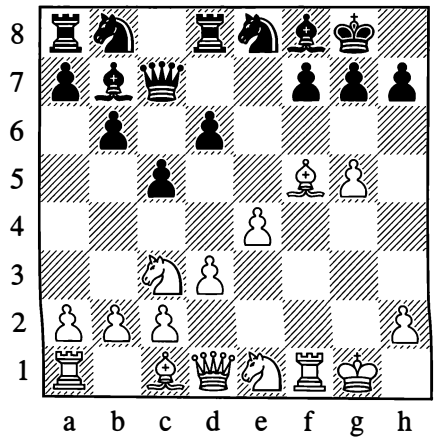
Black resigned, as after 36...♔a8 37.♕c6† he is quickly mated. The game was awarded a special brilliancy prize.

**1–0**

An attack against the position of a *castled* king develops with special impetus if the king is insufficiently defended or wholly bereft of defending pieces, while substantial hostile forces are concentrated for the offensive. In such cases, piece sacrifices will open up crucial lines and sweep away the last obstacles.

**461**

**Kasparian – Chekhover**, Yerevan (9) 1936



*White to move*

With g4-g5 White has driven the knight back from f6 to e8. The point h7 is insufficiently defended. There followed:

**15.♗xh7† ♔xh7 16.♕h5† ♔g8 17.♖xf7! ♕xf7 18.g6**

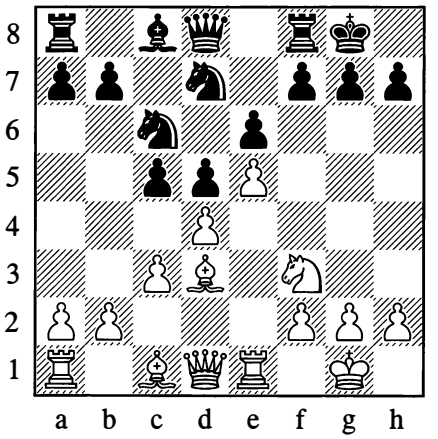
Black is defenceless.

**...1–0**

In the centuries-long history of chess, the light-squared bishop has countless times died a glorious death on the h7-square.

Here is one of the typical attacking schemes:

**462**



*White to move*

**1.♗xh7† ♔xh7 2.♘g5† ♔g8**

On 2...♔g6 White plays 3.♕d3†, and now 3...f5 4.exf6† ♔xf6 5.♖xe6#, or 3...♔h5 4.♕h7† ♔g4 5.♕h3#.

**3.♕h5 ♖e8 4.♕xf7† ♔h8 5.♖e3**

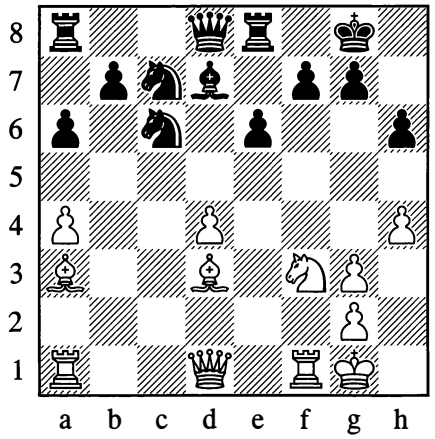
And mates.

With the white pawn on g3 instead of g2, the finish would be different:

**5.♕h5† ♔g8 6.♕h7† ♔f8 7.♕h8† ♔e7 8.♕xg7#**

**463**

**Lisitsyn – Ragozin**, Leningrad 1934



*White to move*

Here the battery of white pieces is on full combat alert, as in the previous example – but the pawn on h6 is depriving the knight of the square g5. Despite this (and thanks to the temporarily masked attack by the white rook against f7), an onslaught based on the themes already familiar to us is still possible.

**20.♗h7†! ♔xh7**

On 20...♔h8 White would play 21.♘g5! hxg5 22.♕h5.

**21.♘g5† ♔g8**

If 21...hxg5, then 22.♕h5† ♔g8 23.♕xf7† ♔h8 24.♕h5† ♔g8 25.hxg5 (threatening 26.g6) 25...♘e7 26.♕f7† ♔h8 27.♔f2, with 28.♖h1† to follow.

**22.♘xf7 ♕b8 23.♘xh6†! gxh6 24.♕g4† ♔h8 25.♖f7**

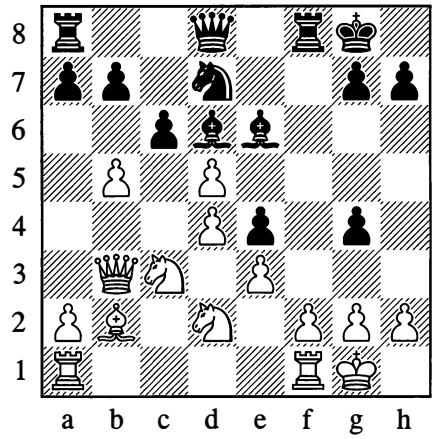
Black resigned.

**1–0**

Here is another typical bishop sacrifice, which takes place even though at first sight Black isn't quite ready for the attack, with his bishop on e6 *en prise*.

**464**

**Sokolsky – Kan**, Omsk 1943



*Black to move*

**14...♗xh2† 15.♔xh2 ♕h4† 16.♔g1 ♖f6 17.♘dxe4**

White would be mated immediately after 17.dxe6 ♖h6 18.exd7† ♔h8 19.f4 g3.

**17...♖h6 18.f4 cxd5! 19.♘xd5 ♔h8!**

Black calmly prepares the decisive strike.

**20.f5 ♘f6!**

Against this, White has no defence. If 21.♘exf6, then 21...g3; or if 21.fxe6, then 21...♘xe4.

**21.♘dxf6 ♗xb3 22.axb3 gxf6 23.♖f4 ♖c8 24.♘c3 ♕g3 25.♖e4 ♖h2**

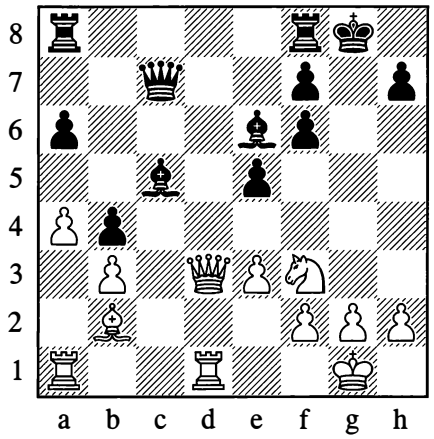
White resigned.

**0–1**

Dashing attacks can also arise when the pawn cover in front of the king has been weakened.

**465**

**Flohr – Horowitz**, USSR – USA Radio Match 1945



*White to move*

Here White needs to make the g5-square accessible to his knight.

**18.♗xe5! fxe5 19.♘g5 ♔g7**

Black can't save himself with 19...♖fc8, in view of 20.♕xh7† ♔f8 21.♘xe6† fxe6 22.♖d7.

**20.♕xh7† ♔f6 21.♘e4† ♔e7 22.♕h4† f6**

Not 22...♔e8, on account of 23.♘f6†.

**23.♖dc1!**

23.♖ac1 would be less accurate owing to 23...♖ad8!, but now White wins back the sacrificed piece while maintaining a material plus and an attack.

**23...♖ac8 24.♖xc5 ♕b8 25.f4 ♖xc5 26.♘xc5 ♕b6 27.♘xe6 ♕xe3† 28.♔h1 ♔xe6 29.fxe5 fxe5 30.♕g4† ♖f5 31.♕g6† ♖f6 32.♕e8† ♔f5 33.♖f1†**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

Example 466 illustrates the gradual squeezing of the enemy position in the centre, a strategy founded on the control of greater space.

**466**

**Alekhine – Zubarev**, Moscow 1915

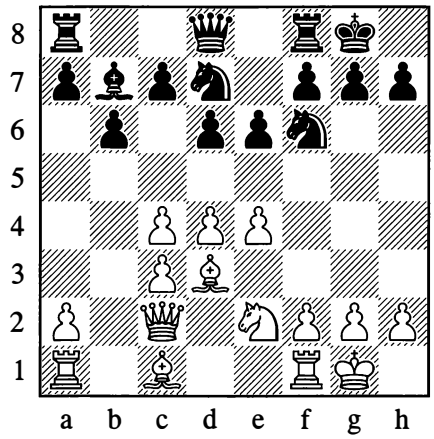
This game was played in the 9th round of the Moscow Chess Club championship. It is given here with Alekhine's annotations that were first published in January 1917.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 b6 5.e4 ♗b7 6.♗d3 ♗xc3†**

Black has selected a weak variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

**7.bxc3 d6 8.♘e2 ♘bd7 9.0-0 0-0**

The answer to 9...e5 would also be 10.f4.



**10.f4 h6**

It would be better to avert the threat of e4-e5 with ...e5, but Black doesn't want to present the f5-square to the white knight.

**11.♘g3 ♕e7**

A poor position for the queen, seeing that ...e5 can be met by ♘f5 with tempo. Black had to play ...c5, ...♖e8, ...♕c7 and ...e5.

**12.♕e2 ♖ae8**

12...♖fe8 would be preferable; Black's pieces are too congested.

**13.♗a3 c5 14.♖ae1 ♔h8 15.d5 ♘g8**

15...e5 would fail to 16.♘f5.

**16.e5! g6 17.♕d2! exd5**

White was threatening 18.dxe6 ♕xe6 19.f5.

**18.cxd5 dxe5**

If 18...♗xd5, then 19.♗b5 ♗e6 20.exd6 ♕d8 21.f5.

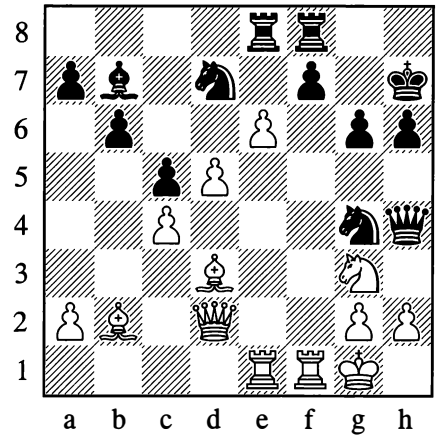
**19.c4! ♔h7**

White has skilfully opened diagonals for his bishops.

**20.♗b2 ♘gf6**

In a strategically lost position Black goes in for some hopeless counterplay.

**21.fxe5 ♘g4 22.e6 ♕h4**



This is refuted by a striking combination.

**23.♖xf7†! ♖xf7 24.♗xg6†!! ♔xg6 25.♕d3† ♔g5 26.♗c1†**

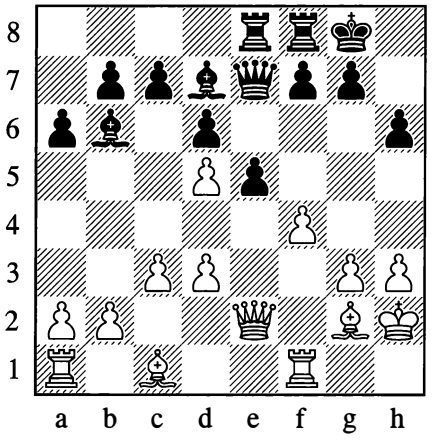
Black resigned. 26...♔f6 is met by the devastating 27.♕f5†, with inevitable mate. On 26...♖f4, White mates at once with 27.♕f5#.

**1–0**

Pawns that have moved forward in front of their own king's castled position serve as natural "targets" for an attack, which may be carried out both by pieces and by pawns. The following textbook example illustrates the power of a *pawn storm*.

**467**

**Mieses – Janowski**, Paris (14) 1895



*White to move*

Black's position has been weakened by the move ...h6. This gives White the opportunity for an attack, of which the immediate object is the opening of lines.

**1.f5! f6**

White was threatening f5-f6.

**2.h4 ♖c8 3.g4 ♔f7**

In order to save himself by flight if the occasion arises, or else to bring a rook across to g8 or h8, depending on which file is opened as a result of the pawn storm.

**4.g5 hxg5 5.♕h5† ♔g8 6.hxg5 fxg5 7.♗e4!**

The breakthrough is accomplished; the pawn on g5 won't run away.

**7...♕e8**

Aiming to weaken the attack by exchanging.

**8.♕g4 ♔f7 9.♗xg5 ♖h8† 10.♔g2 ♔g8 11.♖h1**

Preventing ...♕h5 and recapturing the h-file from Black.

**11...♖xh1 12.♖xh1 c6 13.♕h4 ♗d8**

Black's position is hopeless.

**14.f6! ♗xf6 15.♗xf6 ♔f7**

On 15...gxf6 White would give mate in two moves; now he mates in three:

**16.♗g6† ♔xg6 17.♕g5† ♔f7 18.♕xg7#**

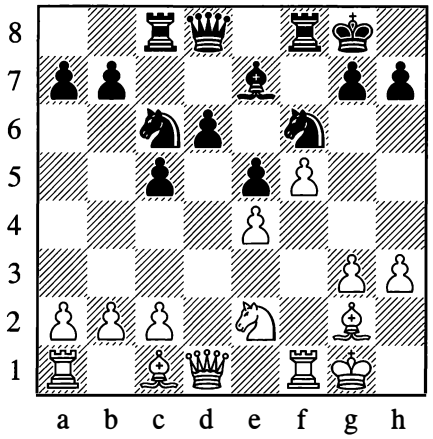
If a pawn storm uses pawns that were sheltering your own king, the latter's position is naturally weakened. Usually, therefore, you are only advised to go ahead with the assault if your opponent has no possibility of exploiting this weakness by some dangerous counter-stroke, particularly in the centre. In the example we just examined, the centre was fairly tightly closed and under White's control, which is why Black proved so helpless in face of the attack. But then it is also true that he was defending too passively. Instead of the fruitless attempts to "flee" with his king, he should have initiated counter-pressure against the centre as soon as possible with ...♖c8, ...c6 and so forth, however slim a chance it might have been. In addition, considering that the king's shelter of pawns was inevitably going to be breached, he should have tried organizing a defence of the king with his major pieces on the seventh rank and his bishops on d8 and e8.

A pawn storm may also be carried out if a thorough and precise assessment of the position has convinced you that you will reach your goal before your opponent's counter-manoeuvres in the centre can take effect.

Here is an example:

**468**

**Chigorin – Schiffers**, St Petersburg (14) 1897



*White to move*

**13.c3**

Before going ahead with the attack White fortifies his centre as much as possible, depriving the black knight of the d4-square.

**13...♔h8**

There was a threat of ♕b3† and ♕xb7.

**14.g4 ♘e8 15.♔h2!**

Freeing the g1-square for a knight manoeuvre.

**15...♖c7 16.♘g1 ♖d7 17.♕e2 ♘c7 18.♘f3 d5**

White, as we shall now see, has made his preparations for launching a pawn storm, but Black for his part has managed to prepare a counter-blow in the centre.

**19.h4! dxe4**

19...♗xh4 would lead to the loss of a piece after 20.g5. However, 19...d4, which maintains the tension in the centre instead of relaxing it, would have given White more trouble. He would have had to spend some time preventing any damage from his opponent's breakthrough, but now his task is made easier.

**20.♕xe4 ♘e8**

Preventing 21.g5, in view of the reply 21...♘d6.

**21.♘g5 ♗xg5**

White was threatening ♘e6.

**22.hxg5 ♘d6 23.♕e3 ♕b6 24.g6! ♘e8**

Not 24...hxg6 because of 25.♕h3†, with 26.♗d5† and 27.fxg6 to follow.

**25.♕h3 h6 26.♗xh6 ♘f6**

Or 26...gxh6 27.♕xh6† and 28.♗d5†.

**27.♗g5† ♔g8 28.♗xf6 ♖xf6 29.♕h7†**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

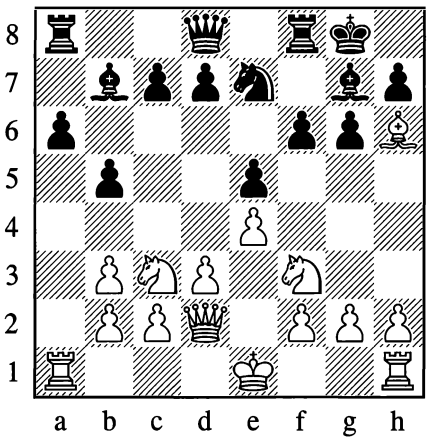
Mutual pawn storms, when the players have castled on opposite wings, are a special case. Here, a pawn offensive with the aim of opening lines does not entail a weakening of your own king's position, so the question of a sufficiently stable centre is of much less importance.

The crucial question is whose pawns will come into contact with the enemy and start opening lines sooner, thus helping to create dangerous threats. The first player to be forced to go over to defence will end up in the worse position. Therefore before starting the assault (and even before castling on the opposite wing to his opponent), a player will usually take pains to weigh up the mutual attacking chances, to count how many pawn moves each side will need and to assess the kind of threats that will result from breaking through.

It normally takes 4-6 moves for two pawns to get through; you have to work out what your opponent will manage to do in that time. Sometimes in order to secure the better chances for himself, a player will slightly delay castling and try to make at least one of his aggressive pawn moves in advance.

**469**

**Chigorin – Pillsbury**, St Petersburg 1895/6



*White to move*

An advance of the g- and h-pawns to g5 and h5, in conjunction with the exchange of dark-squared bishops, appears tempting to White, as it ensures the opening of files for his rooks and the demolition of his opponent's kingside. But castling long is not without its dangers: Black has already made one of his own pawn-storming moves (...b5), and the advance of his a-pawn will guarantee the opening of a file for *his* rook. Nonetheless Chigorin decides that the move ♘b1 will give him a sufficient defence in the short term, and that he will have time to implement his plan.

**13.h4! d6 14.0-0-0 c5**

Stopping White from taking over the centre with d3-d4.

**15.g4 b4 16.♘b1 a5 17.♖dg1 a4 18.bxa4 ♖xa4 19.♕e3**

With many-sided aims: the knight on f3 receives protection in case of ...f5, the d2-square is vacated for the king in case of danger, and from here the queen can more easily cross to the g- or h-file.

**19...♘c6 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.g5 ♘d4 22.h5 ♘xf3 23.hxg6!**

There is no time for 23.♕xf3, in view of 23...fxg5 and ...♕f6.

**23...♘xg1**

On 23...♘xg5, White can win with 24.♖xh7†! ♘xh7 25.gxh7† ♔f7 26.♕h6.

**24.gxf6† ♔xf6 25.gxh7 ♔e6**

Subsequent analysis established that it was possible for Black to defend with 25...♔f7.

**26.♖xg1 ♔d7 27.♕h3† ♔c6 28.♕e6 ♖a8**

White was threatening ♖g8.

**29.♖g7 ♔b6**

Evading ♕d5†, but 29...♕c8! 30.♕d5† ♔b6 31.♕xd6† ♕c6 was a better defence.

**30.♘a3! ♗a6**

Or 30...bxa3 31.♕b3†.

**31.♖d7 ♕xd7 32.♕xd7 ♖ad8 33.♕g7 bxa3 34.bxa3 c4? 35.d4 ♖xf2**

35...c3 also loses, to 36.dxe5 ♖xf2 37.♕g1 ♖df8 38.h8=♕.

**36.h8=♕ ♖xh8 37.♕xh8 ♖f1† 38.♔b2 exd4 39.♕xd4† ♔c7 40.a4 ♖f7 41.a5 ♔c8 42.♕xd6 ♖b7† 43.♔c3 ♗b5 44.a6 ♖c7 45.a7**

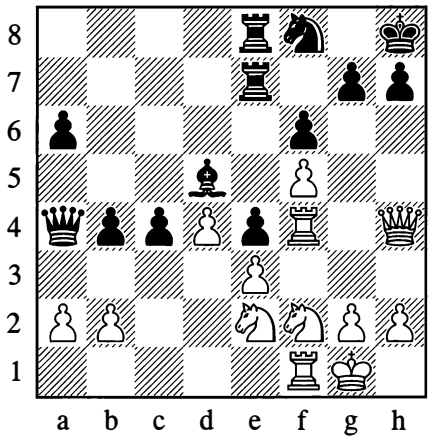
Black resigned.

**1–0**

Mutual pawn storms on opposite flanks quite often arise even when the players have castled on the same side. Suppose both opponents have castled short and White has started a pawn storm against the enemy king's position, after first taking care to close the centre firmly as a safety measure. Then Black will often be left with no other option than to begin an impetuous pawn offensive of his own on the queenside. Here again, the decisive question is which player will first be compelled to go over to long-term defence. In general, practice has shown that the attack against the king is more dangerous, as it is linked to mating threats. The following example is characteristic.

**470**

**Pillsbury – Tarrasch**, Hastings 1895



*White to move*

Black's position on the queenside is already fearsome. It's clear that White will lose if his kingside attack doesn't work.

**29.♘g4 ♘d7**

White was threatening 30.♘xf6 gxf6 31.♕xf6† ♖g7 32.♖g4 ♕d7 33.♘f4 and 34.♘h5.

**30.♖4f2!**

So as to answer 30...♕xa2 with 31.♘f4, threatening ♘g6† and the win of the exchange. Black has no wholly good defence against this, but perhaps he should have gone in for the variation all the same.

**30...♔g8 31.♘c1 c3 32.b3 ♕c6 33.h3**

Having secured his queenside to some extent, White proceeds to a pawn storm on the kingside.

**33...a5 34.♘h2! a4 35.g4 axb3 36.axb3 ♖a8 37.g5 ♖a3 38.♘g4 ♗xb3 39.♖g2! ♔h8**

Not 39...fxg5, in view of 40.♕xg5 ♔f8 41.f6.

**40.gxf6 gxf6**

40...♘xf6 was preferable.

**41.♘xb3 ♖xb3 42.♘h6 ♖g7 43.♖xg7 ♔xg7 44.♕g3†!**

A beautiful concluding combination. Instead, 44.♔h1 would unnecessarily give Black the time for some defensive move.

**44...♔xh6 45.♔h1!**

Now it's clear that Black is lost.

**45...♕d5 46.♖g1 ♕xf5 47.♕h4† ♕h5 48.♕f4† ♕g5 49.♖xg5 fxg5 50.♕d6† ♔h5 51.♕xd7 c2**

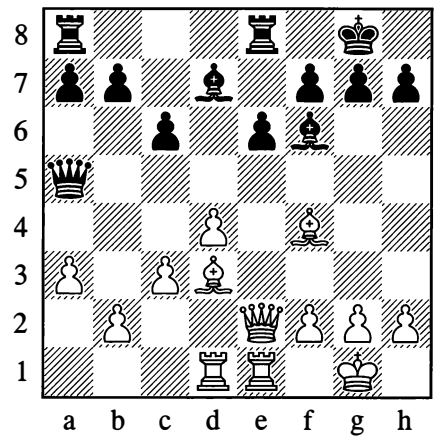
Black is nearly there, but...

**52.♕xh7#**

Let us now turn to some examples of attacks with pieces, or pieces and pawns combined, against pawns that have advanced in front of their own castled king.

**471**

**Lasker – Capablanca**, Moscow 1935



*White to move*

With his next move White forces a weakening of Black's castled position.

**17.♕c2 g6**

White now starts an attack against the pawn that protrudes; and he tries, by exchanging the dark-squared bishops, to bring about a permanent weakening of the dark squares in Black's camp.

**18.♗e5 ♗g7 19.h4 ♕d8 20.h5 ♕g5 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♖e5 ♕e7 23.♖de1 ♖g8**

Having concentrated his rooks in the half-open e-file in order to switch them to the kingside, White takes aim at the h6-point which he has weakened by the foregoing manoeuvres, and conducts his advantage to victory by logical means.

**24.♕c1! ♖ad8 25.♖1e3 ♗c8 26.♖h3 ♔f8**

The threat was hxg6 followed by ♕h6†.

**27.♕h6† ♖g7 28.hxg6 hxg6 29.♗xg6!**

A combination to crown White's positional manoeuvres. Black can't take the bishop, as 29...fxg6 would be met by 30.♕h8† ♖g8 31.♖f3†.

**29...♕f6 30.♖g5**

Now White threatens ♖f3, followed by capturing on f7.

**30...♔e7 31.♖f3 ♕xf3 32.gxf3 ♖dg8 33.♔f1 ♖xg6 34.♖xg6 ♖xg6 35.♕h2**

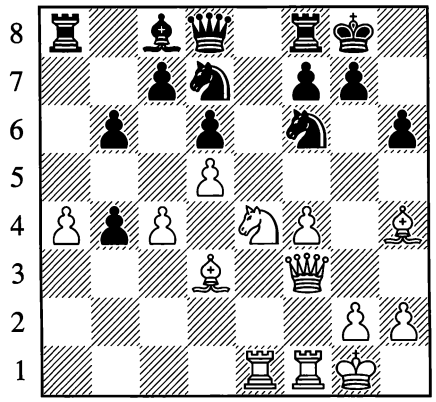
Thanks to the material plus he has acquired, White went on to win.

**...1–0**

White skilfully carried out an attack against a protruding kingside pawn in the following position.

**472**

**Chigorin – Gunsberg**, Havana (11) 1890



*White to move*

**21.♗c2**

Defending the pawn on a4 and making way for the queen.

**21...♗b7 22.♕d3 g6**

This weakening of the position is forced, since White was threatening to take twice on f6 and give mate on h7. When attacking it is nearly always useful to force your opponent into making pawn advances.

**23.♘xf6† ♘xf6 24.♖e6!**

White conducts the attack beautifully. On 24...fxe6, he mates in three moves.

**24...b3 25.♗xf6 ♕d7 26.♗c3**

With the decisive threat of ♖xg6†.

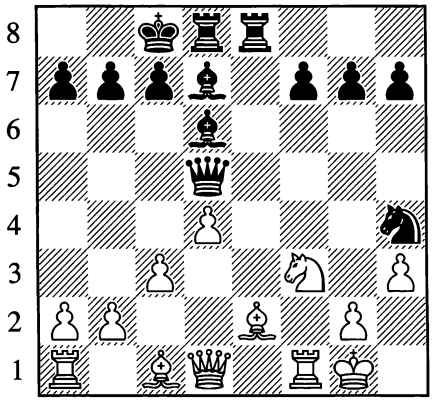
**26...f6 27.♗xf6 ♖xf6 28.♖xf6 bxc2 29.♖xg6† ♔f8 30.♖f6† ♔e7 31.♕g6**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**473**

**Steinitz – Lasker**, London 1899

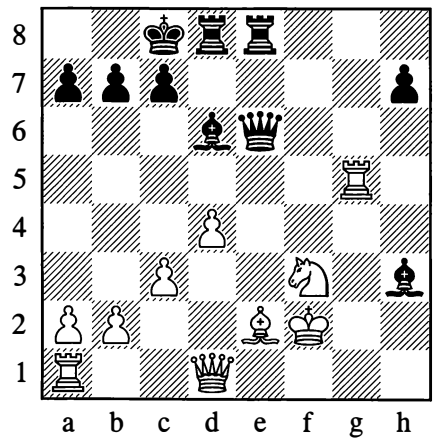


*Black to move*

**15...♘xg2!! 16.♔xg2 ♗xh3†!! 17.♔f2**

Not 17.♔xh3 on account of 17...♕h5† 18.♔g2 ♕g4†. The pawn cover in front of White's king is now destroyed.

**17...f6! 18.♖g1 g5 19.♗xg5 fxg5 20.♖xg5 ♕e6**



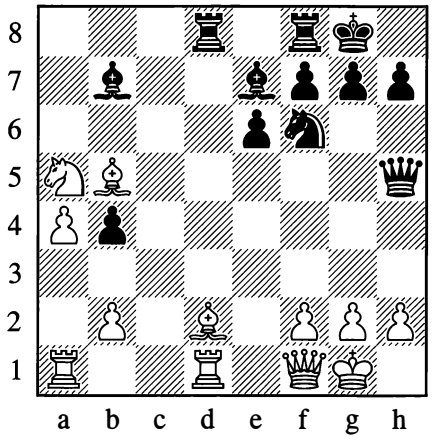
Black won on the 30th move.

**...0–1**

In the absence of any evident weaknesses in your opponent's position, you endeavour to create some, with the aid of various manoeuvres like those in the games we have seen already. Sometimes the way to do this is far from obvious and demands a high degree of skill.

### 474

**Fridstein – Smyslov**, Moscow 1944



*Black to move*

White has played 21.♘xa5, which is answered by an unexpected and sharp-witted exchanging combination, giving Black a big positional advantage.

**21...♗f3!! 22.gxf3 ♖xd2! 23.♖xd2 ♕g5† 24.♔h1 ♕xd2**

Black went on to win, thanks to the pawn weaknesses that have appeared in his opponent's camp.

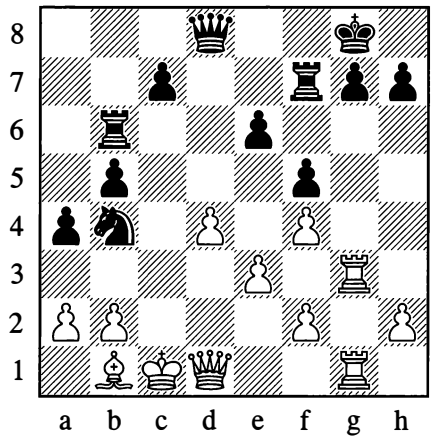
**...0–1**

Up to now we have been looking at examples of the attack against a castled position on the kingside. In principle, attacking a king that has castled long entails nothing new. To succeed in either case, the attack requires the opening of lines, a concentration of forces, and weaknesses in the enemy position. We can only note that defending a castled position on the queenside tends to be slightly more difficult, mainly owing to the weakness of the pawn on a2 (a7), which often necessitates an extra king move to b1 (b8). Hence when the players castle on opposite wings, the king position on the queenside will be slightly the more vulnerable when the opponent attempts to open lines.

Here are three examples of attacks against castled positions on the queenside with different types of weakness:

### 475

**Pillsbury – Chigorin**, London 1899



*Black to move*

With one of his own rooks Chigorin has frozen the activity of both the white ones, and consequently he has a preponderance of forces on the queenside.

**20...a3! 21.bxa3 ♘d5 22.♕b3 b4 23.axb4 ♖xb4 24.♕d3 c5! 25.dxc5 ♕a5!**

Stopping the white king from escaping to the d-file.

**26.♗c2 ♕xa2 27.f3 ♖c4 28.♖1g2 ♖d7 29.c6! ♖xc6 30.♕d4 ♕a3†!**

Black's attack is irresistible.

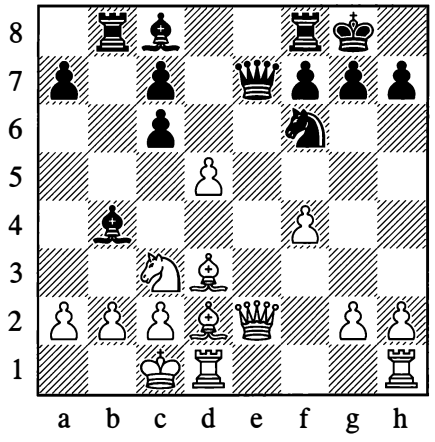
**31.♔d2 ♖xc2† 32.♔xc2 ♘xe3† 33.♔b1 ♖xd4 34.♖xg7† ♔f8 35.♖g8† ♔e7**

White resigned.

**0–1**

**476**

**Slonim – Riumin**, Moscow 1931



*Black to move*

With a pretty combination, Black exploits the weakness of the b2-point on the open file:

**13...♗a3! 14.♘a4 ♗xb2†! 15.♘xb2 ♕a3 16.♕e5 ♖e8 17.♕d4 c5 18.♕c3 ♕xa2 19.♗e1 ♖e2!**

Now the king won't manage to slip away via d2.

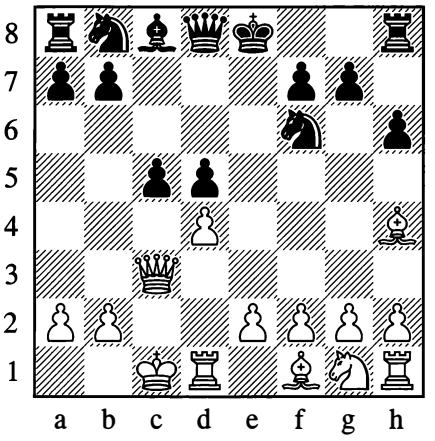
**20.♗xe2 ♘e4**

White resigned.

**0–1**

**477**

**Keres – Botvinnik**, Moscow 1941



*Black to move*

With accurate play Black demonstrates that after the opening of the c-file, White loses:

**9...g5**

Black will need his king's knight, so he preserves it from exchange.

**10.♗g3 cxd4! 11.♕xd4 ♘c6 12.♕a4 ♗f5**

Stopping the white king from withdrawing to a1.

**13.e3 ♖c8 14.♗d3 ♕d7!**

Threatening a murderous discovered check.

**15.♔b1 ♗xd3† 16.♖xd3 ♕f5 17.e4 ♘xe4 18.♔a1 0-0**

Not 18...♘c5, in view of 19.♖e3†.

**19.♖d1 b5! 20.♕xb5 ♘d4 21.♕d3 ♘c2† 22.♔b1 ♘b4**

White resigned.

**0–1**

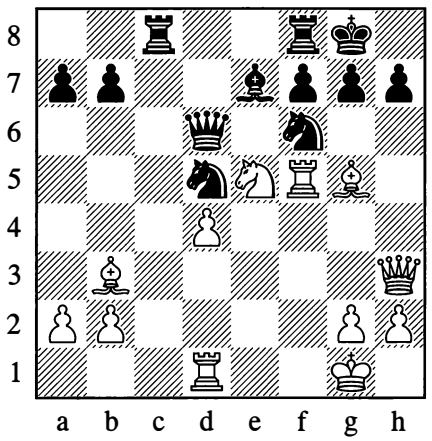
In the examples given above, there was either some obvious weakness in the castled position

that was being attacked, or else weaknesses in that area were created and magnified, at the start of the attack or in the course of it.

Yet even what looks like an absolutely safe king position, sufficiently defended by numerous pieces, can be demolished with catastrophic speed as the result of a combination that subtly takes account of various kinds of concealed weakness. With the first blow that shatters the seeming equilibrium of forces and the outward calm, these weaknesses come to light.

**478**

**Botvinnik – Vidmar**, Nottingham 1936



*White to move*

As the result of his attack, White's pieces have occupied extremely active posts, but Black's position appears exceptionally solid.

There is nothing, you might suppose, to indicate that the tension has reached its culminating point and that a mighty combinative blow is just about to be struck. Yet this is what nonetheless occurred.

For a full understanding of the grounds of White's deep combination, observe the masked "X-ray" action of his pieces: the queen hitting the rook on c8, the bishop hitting the points f7 and g8, and the rook on f5 hitting the points d5 and f7.

**20.♘xf7!! ♖xf7**

On 20...♔xf7, White would play 21.♗xd5† (thanks to the hitherto concealed action of the rook on f5!). But now the rook on c8 is deprived of protection.

**21.♗xf6 ♗xf6**

If 21...♘xf6, then 22.♖xf6 followed by 23.♕xc8†.

**22.♖xd5 ♕c6 23.♖d6!**

But not 23.♖c5, in view of 23...♗xd4† 24.♖xd4 ♕xc5.

**23...♕e8 24.♖d7**

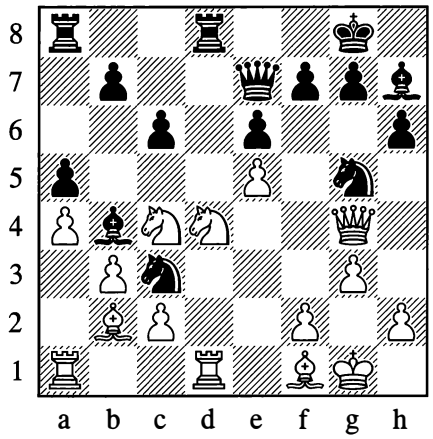
Black resigned.

**1–0**

As we have seen a few times already, a combinative strike is the shortest way to achieve the aim when the aggressive tension has reached its peak and the pieces needed for the combination are deployed in full readiness for combat.

**479**

**Tolush – Smyslov**, Moscow 1944



*Black to move*

**21...♖xd4!**

White's castled position has been weakened by g2-g3, and Black eliminates one of the defenders of the f3-square.

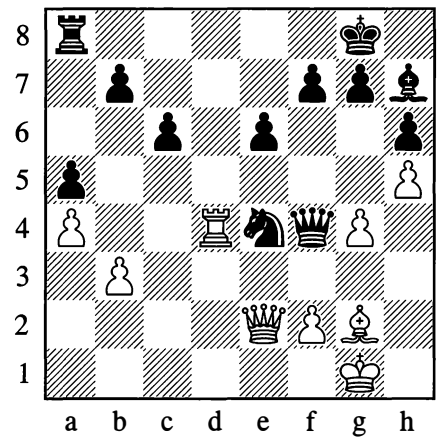
**22.♖xd4 ♗f5!**

Against this, White already has no defence. If 23.♕h5, then 23...g6 24.♕xh6 ♘f3† and 25...♘xd4; or if 23.♕f4, then 23...♘e2† 24.♗xe2 ♘h3†, exploiting the weakness of h3 as well.

**23.♗xc3 ♗xc3 24.♕e2 ♗xd4 25.♖d1 ♕c5 26.c3 ♗xc3 27.♖d7 ♗xe5 28.h4**

Black answers 28.♘xe5 with 28...♕xe5. That f3-square again!

**28...♘e4 29.♘xe5 ♕xe5 30.g4 ♗g6 31.h5 ♗h7 32.♗g2 ♕f4 33.♖d4**



**33...♘c3!**

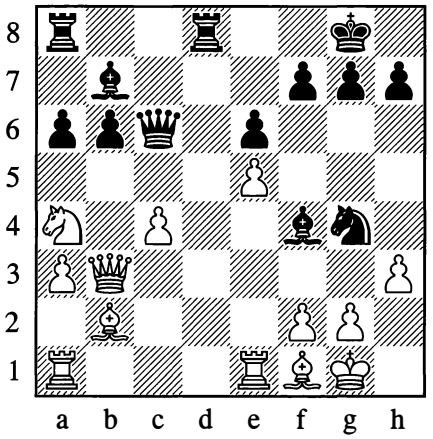
To be followed by 34...♘xe2† or 34...♕xd4. White resigned.

**0–1**

Roughly the same combinative motif had been exploited by Smyslov in another of his games for the purpose of bringing an extra piece into play, unexpectedly and decisively. With the aid of that piece, the attack which had already reached maximum pressure was quickly concluded.

**480**

**Gerasimov – Smyslov**, Moscow 1935



*Black to move*

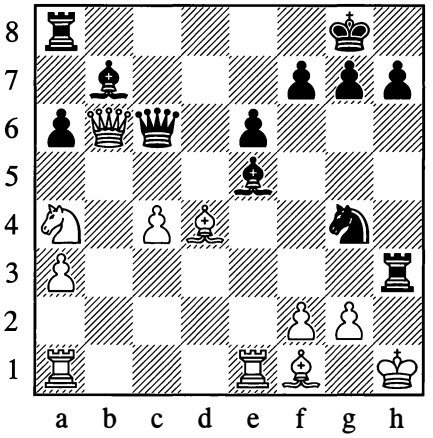
**1...♖d3!!**

White couldn't reply with 2.♕xd3 on account of 2...♗h2† and 3...♘xf2†.

**2.♕xb6 ♖xh3! 3.♗d4**

Not 3.♕xc6 on account of mate in 2 moves.

**3...♗h2† 4.♔h1 ♗xe5†**



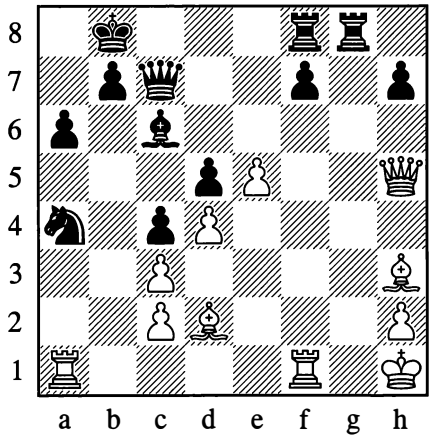
White resigned, as a distinctive "see-saw" has been set up: 5.♔g1 ♗h2† 6.♔h1 ♗c7†, winning the queen.

**0–1**

When concealed reserves are suddenly thrown into play, this often makes a great impact.

**481**

**Lilienthal – Ragozin**, Moscow 1944



*White to move*

Should White play 23.♗f4 here, his positional advantage would quickly take its toll. However, not suspecting the existence of hidden dangers in the position, he played as follows:

**23.♖f6**

His resourceful opponent now took the chance this gave him. A piece which had seemed to be shut out of the game for a long time was brought into the fray with most powerful effect:

**23...♘c5!**

There is now a threat of ...♘e4.

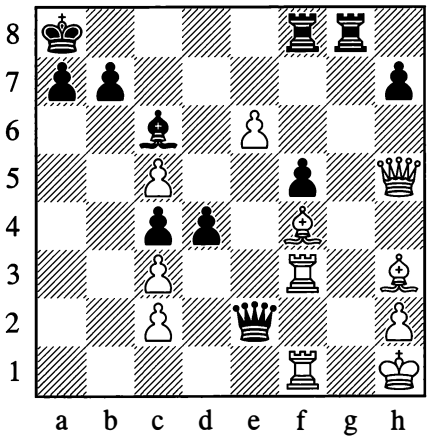
**24.dxc5 d4† 25.♖f3 f6! 26.e6 ♕e5!**

Black persistently seeks to open the f-file.

**27.♗g4 f5! 28.♗h3 ♕e2**

The pin proves fatal to White.

**29.♗f4† ♔a8 30.♖af1**



**30...♖g4!!**

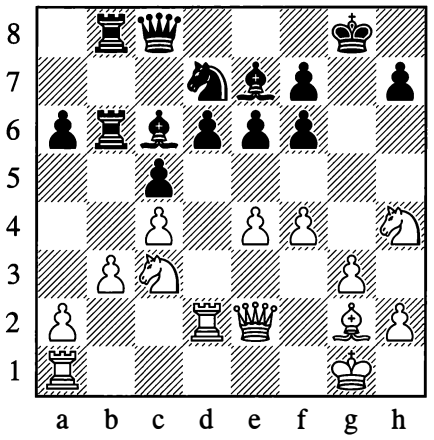
White resigned because 31.♗xg4 fails to 31...♕xf1#.

**0–1**

Very often the themes of opening up lines and pinning will play an immense part in the attack. In this respect our next example too is instructive. Another distinctive feature of it is that the attack is conducted combinatively – in the centre and on the kingside.

**482**

**Alatortsev – Goglidze**, Leningrad 1933



*White to move*

**21.♘d5! ♗xd5**

Or 21...exd5 22.exd5 – which, with the e-file opened and the point f5 weakened, would be still worse for Black.

**22.exd5 ♘f8**

Black had to secure the defence of e6. But now White exploits the pin against the pawn on that square, which is shielding the unprotected bishop on e7.

**23.♘f5 ♕d7 24.dxe6 fxe6 25.♕g4† ♘g6 26.♗d5!**

A brilliant stroke. Black can't now play 26...exf5, as his pawn is pinned; while if 26...exd5, then 27.♘h6† with a discovered attack on the queen. On the basis of this same idea, White is threatening to take on e6; for example, 26...♔f7 27.♗xe6† and then 28.♘h6†.

**26...♔f8 27.♘xe7 ♔xe7 28.♖e1! e5 29.f5 ♘f8**

The threat was not 30.fxg6 (in view of 30...♕xg4), but 30.♗e6 and *then* 31.fxg6.

**30.♕g7† ♔e8 31.♕xf6 ♕e7 32.♕h8 ♕g5 33.♖f2 a5**

A belated attempt to break through with ...a4.

**34.f6 ♖8b7**

Black has to give up the exchange, as White was threatening ♕g7 followed by ♕e7#.

**35.f7† ♔e7 36.♕g8 ♕h6 37.♗xb7**

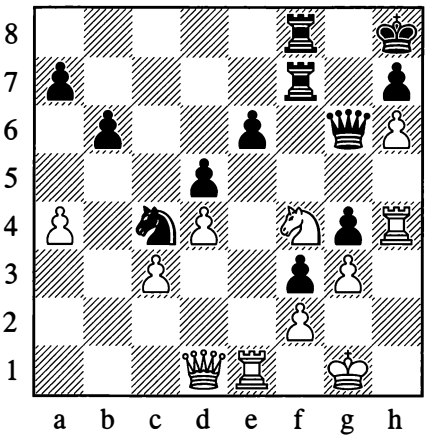
White soon won.

**...1–0**

With an intense concentration of forces, the action of breaking though the position with piece sacrifices is frequently seen. The sacrifices make it a combinative measure.

**483**

**Reshevsky – Botvinnik**, World Ch (19) The Hague/Moscow 1948



*Black to move*

**39...♖xf4! 40.gxf4 ♖xf4**

White now has no defence against the threat of ...g3. On 41.♔f1, Black plays 41...♕g5 42.♖h1 g3; while if 41.♔h1, then 41...g3 is immediately decisive.

**41.♕b1 ♖f5! 42.♕d3 g3 43.♕f1 gxf2†† 44.♔xf2 ♖g5! 45.♕h3 ♖g2† 46.♔xf3 ♘d2† 47.♔e3 ♖g3†**

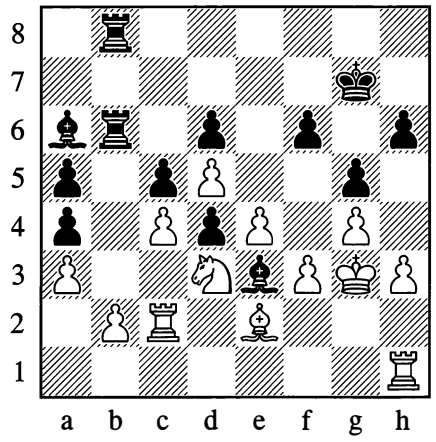
White resigned.

**0–1**

The breakthrough is not necessarily a frontal attack. Its purpose is often to invade the 7th or 8th rank, as in the next two examples:

**484**

**Kan – Rudakovsky**, Moscow 1945



*Black to move*

**32...♗xc4!! 33.♖xc4 ♖xb2! 34.♖e1**

If 34.♘xb2, then 34...♖xb2 35.♖e1 d3, and White loses in spite of his extra rook. He cannot play 36.♗xd3 on account of 36...♗f4#.

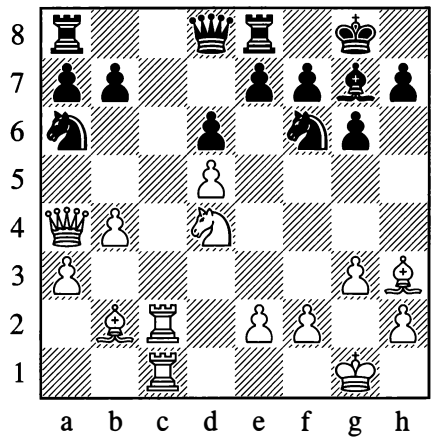
**34...♖d2 35.♔g2 ♖b3 36.♔f1 ♖xa3**

White is completely helpless; he resigned on move 47.

**...0–1**

**485**

**Ragozin – Khavin**, Moscow 1944



*White to move*

**22.♖c8! ♕b6 23.♕xe8†!! ♘xe8 24.♖xa8 ♗xd4**

24...♘c7 would give rise to a pretty variation, namely: 25.♖xc7! ♕xc7 26.♖xe8† ♗f8 27.♘e6! fxe6 28.♗xe6#

**25.♖xe8† ♔g7 26.♗xd4† ♕xd4 27.♖xe7 ♕d2**

27...♕xd5 is met by 28.♗e6.

**28.♖c8 ♕d1† 29.♗f1 ♕xd5 30.e4 ♕d4 31.♗c4**

White went on to win on the 37th move.

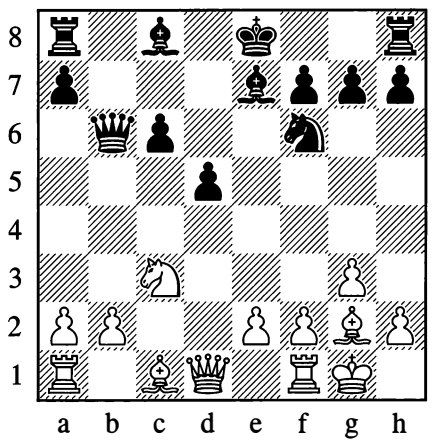
**...1–0**

If the king is well defended, and a direct or indirect attack against it promises no success, other objects of attack are chosen. These objects may be undefended or pinned pieces, weak pawns and so on. In Example 185 which we examined on page 106, the plan of attack amounted to gaining control of the open c-file and then the seventh rank.

Here is another example of an attack on the queenside:

**486**

**Rubinstein – Salwe**, Lodz 1908



*White to move*

The weakness of Black's position is the backward pawn on c6. Endeavouring to fix this weakness, White gains possession of the c5-square and establishes one of his pieces there.

**11.♘a4 ♕b5 12.♗e3 0-0 13.♖c1 ♗g4**

For now, the c6-pawn is deprived of mobility. By playing ...♗g4, Black induces White to obstruct the diagonal of his bishop on g2; after that, he will try to regain control of c5.

**14.f3 ♗e6 15.♗c5**

White occupies c5 with the bishop rather than the knight, in order to weaken his opponent's dark squares by exchanging on e7.

**15...♖fe8**

Exerting latent pressure against the e2-point. White's next move defends this point and prepares to double rooks on the c-file.

**16.♖f2 ♘d7 17.♗xe7 ♖xe7 18.♕d4**

Taking control of the c5-square for good. The further development of White's attack involves e2-e3.

**18...♖ee8 19.♗f1 ♖ec8 20.♘c5 ♘xc5 21.♖xc5 ♕b6 22.e3 ♖c7 23.♖fc2 ♖ac8 24.b4**

After this, Black is forced to reckon with the threat of ♕c3 and b4-b5, seeing that the c6-pawn will be pinned. To forestall this breakthrough, Black has to go in for a further weakening of his position.

**24...a6**

Now the a6-pawn too becomes an object of attack.

**25.♖a5 ♖b8**

Black can't exchange queens, as his a-pawn would then be defenceless. Now on 26.♖xa6, he has 26...♕xb4.

**26.a3 ♖a7**

This defensive move essentially defends nothing, but Black didn't have anything better. If 26...♗c8, then 27.♖xd5.

**27.♖xc6 ♕xc6 28.♕xa7**

The attack is concluded: its objective (c6) has been destroyed.

**28...♖a8 29.♕c5 ♕b7**

Exchanging queens is bad for the weaker side.

**30.♔f2 g6 31.♗e2 g6 32.♕d6 ♕c8 33.♖c5 ♕b7 34.h4 a5**

Unable to endure his hopeless state, Black makes a pawn move that allows White a passed pawn and hastens his victory.

**35.♖c7 ♕b8 36.b5 a4 37.b6 ♖a5 38.b7**

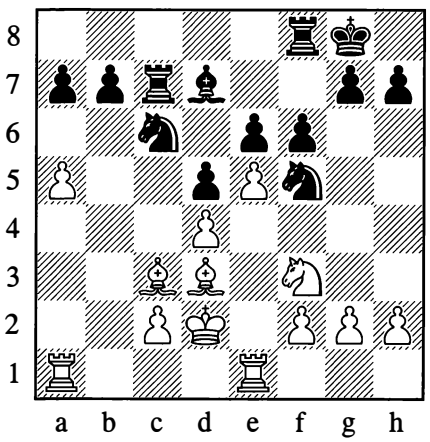
Black resigned, as the threat is 39.♖c8†, and on 38...♔g7 White wins with 39.♖xf7†.

**1–0**

Let us now look at an example of an attack conducted combinatively on the queenside and in the centre. Positional in essence, the attack involves sharp tactical strokes at the appropriate moments.

**487**

**Smyslov – Letelier**, Venice 1950



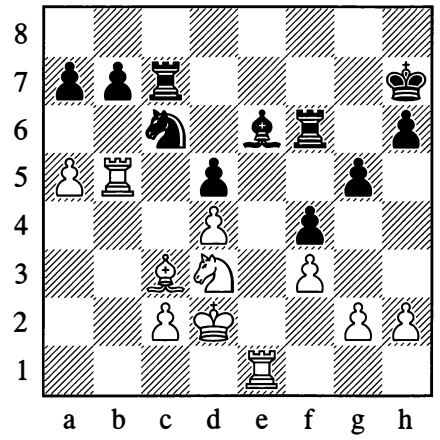
*White to move*

Assessing the position correctly from the strategic viewpoint, Smyslov answers Black's last move 16...f6 by renouncing the celebrated advantage of the bishop pair. In return he creates the weak points c5 and e5 in Black's camp, while at the same time preventing Black from opening the f-file for counterplay.

**17.♗xf5! exf5 18.exf6 ♖xf6**

A systematic siege of the pawns on b7 and d5 now begins.

**19.♖ab1 h6 20.♖b5 ♗e6 21.♖eb1 ♖ff7 22.♘e1 f4 23.f3 g5 24.♘d3 ♔h7 25.♖e1 ♖f6**



**26.♖c5!**

White's attack enters its decisive phase. Black cannot now play 26...b6 in view of 27.axb6 axb6 28.♖b5, after which 28...♖b7? succumbs to the tactical blow that White has prepared: 29.♘c5!. Meanwhile the threat is 27.♘b4, since the knight on c6 is pinned.

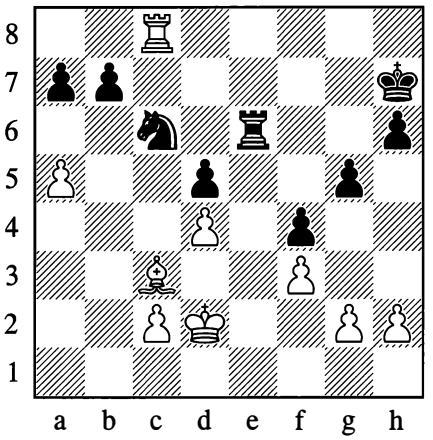
**26...♖c8 27.♘b4 ♘xb4**

Instead 27...♘e7 could be met by 28.♗b2, after which c2-c4 is a strong threat. If Black replies 28...♖xc5 29.dxc5 ♖g6, then his pieces are quite awkwardly placed defending each other.

What now follows is a forced variation, calculated a long way ahead, in which Smyslov has prepared some additional tactical surprises.

**28.♖xe6! ♖xe6 29.♖xc8 ♘c6**

Black appears to have rescued himself (30.♖c7† ♖e7), but the full depth of White's calculations is now revealed.



**30.a6!! bxa6 31.♖c7† ♔g6 32.♖d7 ♘e7 33.♗b4 ♘f5 34.♖xd5**

The attack is concluded: White's united passed pawns should guarantee him victory.

**34...♘e3 35.♖d8 ♘xg2 36.d5 ♖b6 37.♗c5 ♖b7 38.♖c8! ♘h4 39.♔e2 ♘f5 40.♖c6† ♔h5**

If 40...♔f7, then 41.♖xa6 ♖c7 42.♖xa7 ♖xa7 43.♗xa7 with an extra pawn and a won endgame. Now the dénouement comes about even more quickly.

**41.d6 ♖d7 42.♖c7**

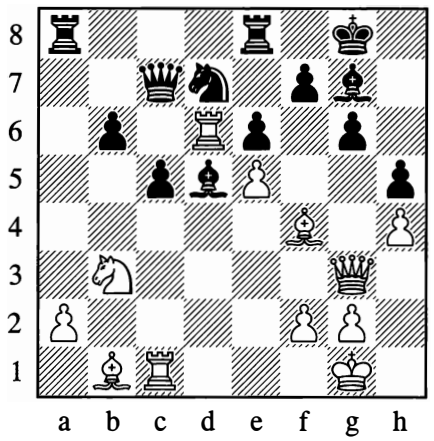
Black resigned, in view of 42...♖d8 43.d7 g4 44.fxg4† ♔xg4 45.♖xa7 with the unanswerable threat of ♗b6.

**1–0**

The next example shows an attack that develops owing to the unfortunate placing of an individual piece (the bishop on f4).

**488**

**Marshall – Chigorin**, Hannover 1902



*Black to move*

Winning the exchange at this point with ...♗f8 and ...♗xd6 would be bad, as the dark squares in Black's castled position would be left catastrophically weak. Chigorin rightly decides that the "key" to the position is the situation of the bishop on f4.

**29...♖a4! 30.♖d1 ♖xf4! 31.♖xd7**

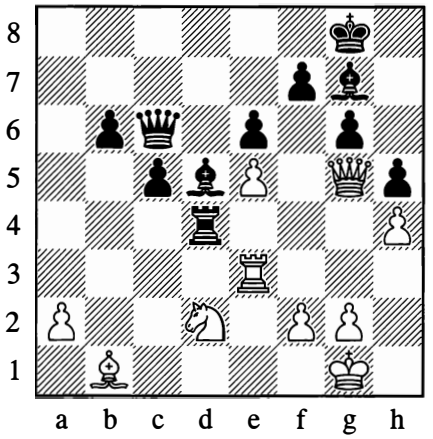
On 31.♕xf4, Black wins with either 31...♗xe5 or the equally strong 31...♘xe5.

**31...♕xd7 32.♕xf4 ♕c7 33.♖e1 ♕c6 34.♕g5 ♖a8! 35.♖e3 ♖a4**

The a4-square has proved to be an excellent base for the invasion by the black rooks, one after the other.

**36.♘d2 ♖d4**

An alternative route to victory is: 36...♖g4 37.♕d8† ♔h7 38.f3 ♖d4!



**37.♖a3 ♕c7 38.♘f1 ♖g4**

White resigned. Black chose the correct plan of attack, and it developed with astonishing ease.

**0–1**

Our concluding example (see Diagram 489) illustrates that dangerous weapon, a "theoretical novelty". Although introduced in the opening, such a novelty is bound to place a specific imprint on the middlegame phase, and will indeed often bring about a quick transition from opening to middlegame. Position 492 (Capablanca – Marshall), which we examine later, is also characteristic of this.

We are not speaking of any new and profound strategic constructs, but of cases where you try to catch your opponent in a variation you have prepared in advance, containing some tactical idea which has not been employed in practice previously and is usually sharp – thus setting him the difficult problem of finding a satisfactory rejoinder at the board, with limited thinking time.

As a rule, this kind of ploy is double-edged: sometimes it brings success, sometimes it meets with a determined refutation. It all depends on how solid the positional basis for the novelty is, and how thoroughly it has been prepared. In home analysis it can be hard to find the objectively best moves for both sides;

hence the novelty undergoes genuine testing only in a tournament – with its "baptism of fire".

In the example given below, as we shall see from the notes, the idea of the attack was sound but the variations were inadequately worked out.

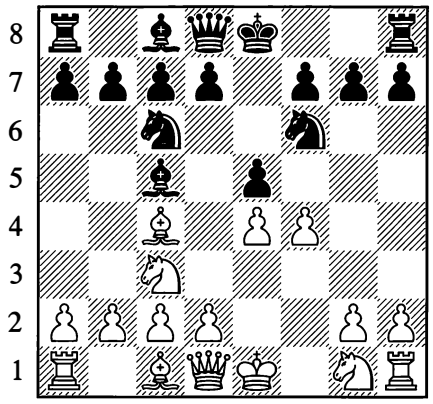
## 489

**A. Rabinovich – Alekhine**, Moscow 1917

This game is little-known. It was played at the Moscow Chess Club on 21 February 1917. Alekhine published the annotations in March of the same year. The opening moves were:

**1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.f4 ♗c5**

In place of 4...♗c5, according to theory, 4...♘xe4! is stronger.

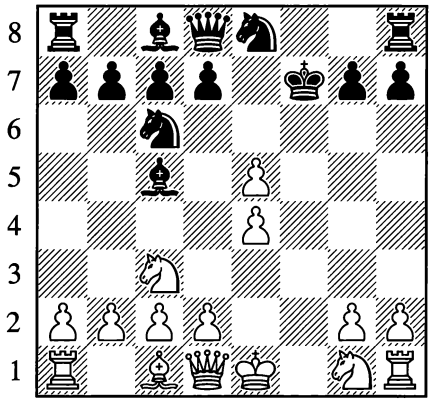


**5.♗xf7†!**

A very interesting combination; apparently it is a theoretical novelty which V.A. Perelzweig, a Moscow Chess Club member, had the honour of inventing. This possibility casts doubt on the correctness of Black's preceding moves. The answer to 5.fxe5 could have been 5...♘xe5 or 5...♘xe4, or even 5...d5!?, with very interesting complications.

**5...♔xf7 6.fxe5 ♘e8**

Apparently the only move; if 6...♗xg1, then 7.exf6 ♗d4 8.♕h5†, with a dangerous attack.



**7.♕h5†**

The wrong continuation of the attack; the right way is 7.♘f3, and if 7...♖f8 then 8.d4 ♗e7 9.d5 ♘b8 10.d6, threatening ♕d5†. It then appears that Black's best option is to give the piece back, but in that case he would scarcely find compensation for the pawn lost.

**7...♔g8 8.♘f3 ♕e7**

Even now the game is not easy for Black. However, with the aid of a constant threat to exchange queens, he gradually succeeds in bringing his pieces into combat formation and repelling the attack.

**9.♘d5 ♕f7 10.♕h4 ♗e7 11.♕g3 ♕g6 12.♕f4 h6 13.0-0 ♗g5! 14.♘xg5 hxg5 15.♕f3 d6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.d4**

17.d3 is a little better.

**17...♗e6 18.♘e7† ♘xe7 19.♕f8† ♔h7 20.♕xe7 ♕xe4 21.♕xg5 ♕xd4† 22.♗e3 ♕g4 23.♕b5 ♘f6 24.♖f4 ♕g6 25.♖d1 ♕xc2 26.♖xd6 ♕b1† 27.♖f1 ♕e4 28.♗d4 ♗d5**

White resigned.

**0–1**

From the examples given, we can already see how much diversity there can be in the types of attack, their aims, the ways in which they arise and the methods of conducting them. A large specialized book could be written on this topic alone, and it would still not exhaust it. In any event the examples show that the ability to attack is a great and complex art.

There are, of course, situations where the opponent's camp contains certain typical kinds of weakness and the attack "plays itself", so to speak (essentially it proceeds by analogy with countless games played earlier). But leaving aside such attacks that follow well-worn patterns, a player needs delicate understanding of the position and great inventiveness to conceive the plan for an attack and then prepare and execute it. We shall go into this in more detail in the section on "Equal Positions".

### 3. DEFENCE AND COUNTER-ATTACK

For the side that lags in development and is under attack, the guiding strategic idea is to parry the enemy's threats – to defend – and to try to equalize the game after catching up in development, proceeding afterwards (should it prove possible) to a counter-attack.

When some weakness in our position has given our opponent the chance for aggression, the task of the defence is to increase the obstacles in the attacker's path in any way possible, and to set up new ones if we can. In the process we must of course try to rid ourselves of our existing weakness in one way or another (for instance by advancing a backward pawn, exchanging an isolated one, and so on).

Many chessplayers find defending easier than attacking. The defender doesn't have to think up an aggressive plan and exert himself to find all sorts of ways of reinforcing the attack; he doesn't have to worry about sustaining its pace and its unabating tension. He is not running the risk that the attack may fail, in which case the weaknesses in the aggressor's own position, incurred in the process of the attack, can easily make themselves felt. Others players conversely feel that defence is more difficult, because when defending you have to be on full alert for a long stretch of time, ready to repel any threat or series of threats that your opponent manages to devise – and with an imprecise defence you can quickly lose.

It's hard to decide which opinion carries more weight. It would be most correct of all to say that attack and defence in equal measure demand significant effort and skill. Great masters have always been capable both of attacking well and of defending well. But at all events there is no doubt that games are not, as a rule, won by defence alone.

Of course, the defensive method that you select depends on the character of the attack in each case, but basically a distinction is drawn between two kinds of defence: passive and active.

Passive defence is adopted out of necessity in cases where our opponent's attack is especially sharp and dangerous (such as when he is playing for mate). Here every move has to further the aim of bolstering our position against his immediate or presently impending threats; or else it must seek exchanges to weaken the pressure of the hostile pieces.

If we succeed in beating back the onslaught, and our opponent then has to spend some moves on bringing up his reserves and on all kinds of preparatory manoeuvres, we must at once go over to active defence. With a certain choice of moves at our disposal, we will prepare only the essential defences against threats that are imminent; we will use the rest of the time for gradually strengthening our position in a way that will permit us to deliver a counter-stroke in some important sector of the board, to reduce the pace of the enemy attack still further and perhaps even repulse it completely.

The time that the opponent loses by retreating we must utilize for preparing or launching a counter-attack. The ultimate aim of active defence should consist of just this – counter-attack – or at least in endeavouring to wrest the initiative from our opponent.

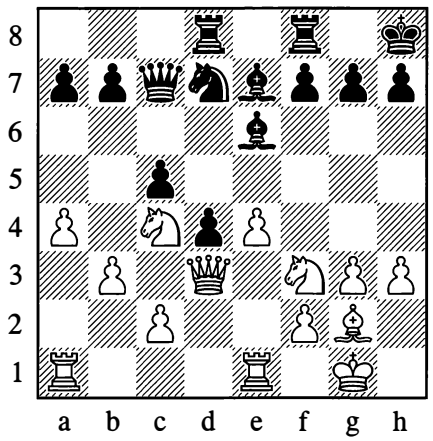
Of course, if the opponent has launched an attack that is premature or has little foundation generally, then the defence proves much easier and the counter-attack is achieved more quickly.

A basic principle of the defence is never to do voluntarily what our opponent wants to force us to do. No concession and no weakening, until compelled by force of circumstances! The more effort it takes our opponent to achieve his end, the more time we will have at our disposal for repelling the attack.

We will now elucidate these methods and principles of defence in concrete terms.

**490**

**Chigorin – Schiffers**, St Petersburg 1897



*Black to move*

**19...f6! 20.♘h4**

Better was 20.♘fd2.

**20...♘e5! 21.♘xe5**

Forced, as otherwise Black will play ...♘xc4 to weaken White's queenside pawns.

**21...fxe5**

By now Black's positional advantage is beyond doubt. With his two bishops, strong centre, possession of the f-file and the possibility of a break with ...c4, he obtains a very powerful attack.

**22.♘f5 c4! 23.bxc4 ♗b4! 24.♖ec1 ♗xc4 25.♕d1 g6**

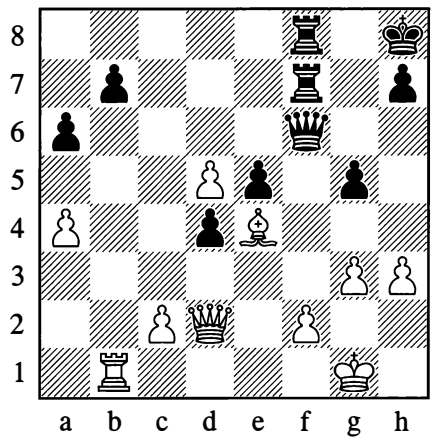
An ill-considered move; the immediate 25...♗c3 was better.

**26.♘h4 ♗c3 27.♖ab1 ♗a2 28.♖b5 a6 29.♖d5**

With the white knight on f5, this move would have been unplayable. True, Black is still winning the exchange, but in return White obtains a strong passed pawn and also the square e4 for his minor pieces.

What happens here is something we can frequently observe: with the win of material, the attack seems to reach its climax and then immediately abates. If White's defence, so far, has been necessarily passive, Chigorin now switches to defending actively.

**29...♗xd5 30.exd5 g5 31.♘f3 ♕e7 32.♘d2 ♗xd2 33.♕xd2 ♕f6 34.♖b1 ♖f7 35.♗e4! ♖df8**



With every move, White improves his formation (by deploying all his pieces in strong aggressive positions); he puts a final stop to all his opponent's attempts at reviving the attack, and eventually obtains a powerful counter-attack of his own.

Black's defence, conversely, will remain extremely passive for the rest of the game. Rather than make fruitless attempts to attack on the kingside, he needed to devise some plan for active defence, for instance by preparing a counter-sacrifice of the exchange on d5.

**36.f3 ♖g7 37.a5!**

Chigorin's masterly play calls for admiration. Perhaps the greatest of chess skills, in both defence and attack, is the ability to achieve major results with a minimum of forces. After White's 36th move we could see that Chigorin would only need his bishop on e4 and his pawn on f3 to paralyse the activity of black's three major pieces and g-pawn, and to secure his own kingside permanently. With 37.a5 White has paralysed two black pawns with one of his own, cramped his opponent and acquired the square b6 for an invasion with his rook.

**37...♕d6 38.♔g2 ♖f6 39.c3! dxc3 40.♕xc3 ♖c7 41.♕d2 h6 42.♖b6 ♕f8 43.♕b2! ♕e7 44.♗f5!! ♔g7**

If 44...♖xf5 then 45.d6.

**45.g4! ♖d6? 46.♗e6! ♔f6 47.♕b1! ♖xb6 48.♕f5† ♔g7 49.♕xe5† ♔h7 50.axb6 ♖d7**

Otherwise White would play 51.♗f5†, winning the queen, but now a beautiful finale occurred:

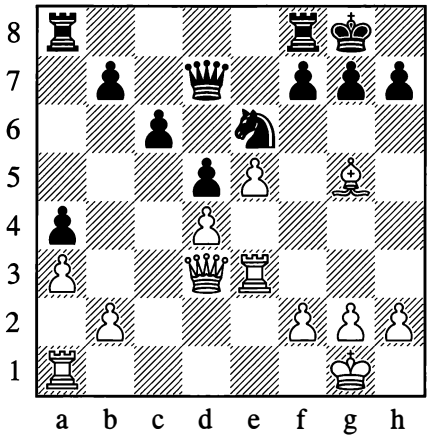
**51.♔f1!**

Black resigned. (If instead 51.♕f5† and 52.♗xd7, Black would have a draw by perpetual check.)

**1–0**

**491**

**Smyslov – Keres**, Leningrad 1941



*White to move*

Smyslov's positional advantage ought to guarantee him victory. As indicated by Botvinnik, White should have continued with 22.♗f6. For example: 22...gxf6 23.♕f5 ♖fd8 24.♖g3† ♔f8 25.exf6 ♕d6 26.♕xh7 ♔e8 27.♖e1, or 22...♘f4 23.♖g3 ♘g6 24.♗g5 ♔h8 25.♕f3. In the latter variation, White threatens 26.♕h5 and 27.♖h3.

Instead of this, White played:

**22.♕f5**

This could have led to a simple transposition of moves (the threat is 23.♗f6), but Black seizes the opportunity it offers; he gives White the choice of exchanging queens or allowing the black knight to reach the more active square e4.

**22...♘c5 23.g4**

White doesn't want to waste time retreating his queen (although the best move now would be 23.♕f4), and after the following exchange he sets great hopes on a powerful pawn centre.

**23...♕xf5 24.gxf5**

However, with active defence, Black succeeds in breaking up the menacing pawn centre at once:

**24...f6! 25.exf6**

The advantage remains with Black after either 25.dxc5 fxg5 or 25.♗xf6 ♘e4 26.♗h4 ♖xf5.

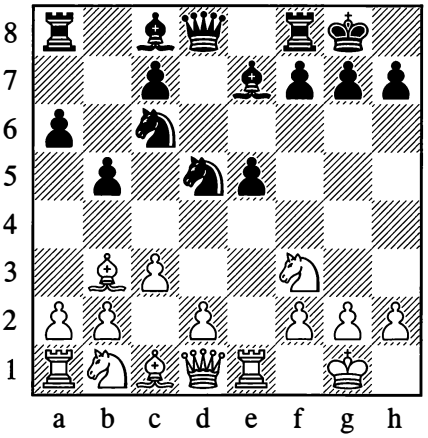
**25...♘e4 26.fxg7 ♖xf5 27.♗e7 ♔xg7**

No trace of White's attack is left. On the contrary, he is now forced to defend the many weaknesses resulting from a move he made in the process of that attack – the unfortunate 23.g4. Black went on to win on the 67th move. Such are the dangers entailed by an unsuccessful attack when it has involved weakening your own position.

**...0–1**

**492**

**Capablanca – Marshall**, New York 1918



*White to move*

White can win the pawn on e5, but this will mean exchanging his knight on f3 – the only piece defending his king. It's clear that he will come under a strong attack. However, the temptation to win an important centre pawn is very great, and White resolves on this continuation, trusting to his defensive skill.

**10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.♖xe5 ♘f6 12.♖e1 ♗d6 13.h3**

Black starts his attack, ignoring this defensive pawn move. A veritable combinative storm breaks over White's head.

**13...♘g4**

This daring knight cannot be taken, as 14.hxg4 is answered by 14...♕h4, and if 15.g3 then 15...♗xg3 16.fxg3 ♕xg3†, with ...♗xg4 to follow; or if 15.♕f3, then 15...♗h2† 16.♔f1 ♗xg4 and Black wins after 17.♖xe4 ♗f4!! or 17.g3 ♕h5. Instead White chooses an active defensive move with his queen, which exerts pressure against the points a8 and f7.

**14.♕f3 ♕h4**

White still cannot take the knight. Nor can he play 15.♕xa8, owing to mate in two moves. If he tries 15.♖e8, to answer 15...♖xe8 with 16.♕xf7†, Black parries with 15...♗b7, for example: 16.♖xf8† ♖xf8 17.♕xg4 ♖e8 18.♔f1 ♕e7 19.♗e6 ♗d5 (so as to take on e6 with the bishop, not the pawn), and Black has the better game. Of course, 16.♕xf7† ♔h8 gives White nothing either. He therefore uses the time at his disposal to play a natural developing move.

**15.d4 ♘xf2**

A subtle trap. It looks as if White can play 16.♕xf2, since 16...♗g3 would be met by 17.♕xf7† ♖xf7 18.♖e8#. However, Black first plays 16...♗h2†, forcing 17.♔f1 and only then continuing with 17...♗g3. Now ♕xf7† is no longer playable, as Black would take the queen with check, giving himself time to guard against the mate.

White has seen all this and continues to defend himself calmly. The threat at present is ...♘xh3†, and if gxh3 then ...♕xe1†. Black keeps on devising new attacking moves, and

for a while White's defence is of a passive nature; for the moment he cannot think about any counter-strokes.

**16.♖e2 ♗g4**

Sacrificing on h3 would not work here, for example: 16...♘xh3† 17.gxh3 ♗xh3 18.♖e4, and the attack is repulsed. But also after the move in the game, White succeeds in weakening the force of the onslaught.

In recent years it has been found that in place of 16...♗g4 Black does better with 16...♘g4. With that in mind, a more accurate move for White is 16.♗d2 rather than 16.♖e2.

**17.hxg4 ♗h2† 18.♔f1 ♗g3 19.♖xf2 ♕h1† 20.♔e2 ♗xf2**

Alternatively 20...♕xc1 21.♕xg3 ♕xb2† 22.♘d2, with advantage to White.

**21.♗d2 ♗h4 22.♕h3 ♖ae8†**

White has escaped from the attack with two minor pieces for a rook, so a queen exchange is not in Black's interest.

**23.♔d3 ♕f1† 24.♔c2 ♗f2 25.♕f3 ♕g1**

To free his bishop from the pin. On 25...♖e2 White would continue with 26.a4.

**26.♗d5 c5 27.dxc5 ♗xc5 28.b4**

Black's attack has long since run out of steam. The initiative passes to White, and he quickly decides the issue by catching up with his queenside development and exploiting the disorderly arrangement of the black pieces which is characteristic of an attack that has failed. (Having detached themselves from their camp for attacking purposes, they are occupying positions unsuited to defence.)

**28...♗d6 29.a4 a5 30.axb5 axb4 31.♖a6 bxc3 32.♘xc3 ♗b4 33.b6 ♗xc3 34.♗xc3 h6**

Black would like to play 34...♖e3, but that would be met by 35.♕xf7†.

**35.b7 ♖e3 36.♗xf7†**

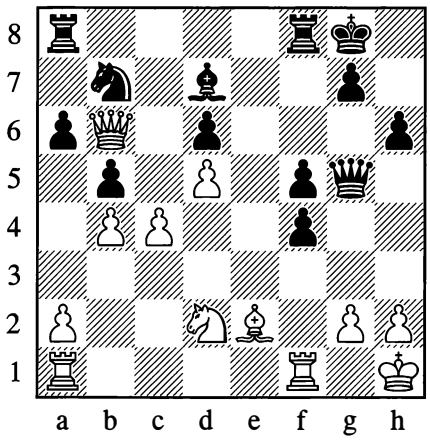
White mates in five more moves, beginning with b7-b8=♕† and perhaps ♖xh6† according to how Black plays.

**1–0**

Botvinnik showed himself to be a wonderful master of active defence in many of his games:

**493**

**Romanovsky – Botvinnik**, Moscow 1945



*Black to move*

Following White's 22.♕e3-b6, the situation appears hopeless for Black. With astounding resourcefulness, Botvinnik devises a plan for sharp counterplay.

**22...♖ab8! 23.♕xa6 ♕e7! 24.♖ae1? ♕e3!**

Black has exploited the temporary undefended state of his opponent's minor pieces in order to prevent the total destruction of his own queenside and to prepare an unexpected trap for the white queen.

**25.♘f3 ♖a8! 26.♕xb7 ♖a7**

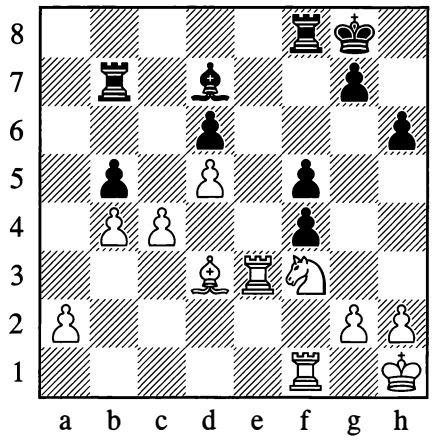
The picture has now changed abruptly: White was looking forward to victory, but now he is faced with the loss of the exchange.

In cases like this it isn't easy to keep calm and perform further calculations with full clarity.

**27.♗d3**

It wasn't easy to see that 27.♗d1 would have been better.

**27...♖xb7 28.♖xe3**



At this point White had only reckoned with 28...fxe3 29.c5, which could indeed have occurred if he had played 27.♗d1; it would then have led to a level ending after 29...dxc5 30.bxc5 ♖c7 31.c6 ♗xc6. But a new surprise follows:

**28...bxc4!**

Black wisely contents himself with a smaller but more secure material plus, preferring to neutralize White's dangerous pawns.

**29.♖e7 cxd3 30.♘e1 ♖f7 31.♖xf7 ♔xf7 32.♘xd3 ♗b5 33.♖d1 ♗xd3 34.♖xd3 ♖xb4 35.♖d1 ♖a4 36.♖d2 ♔f6**

Black's king is in the square of the a-pawn, so 37.♖e2 can be met by 37...♖e4.

**37.h4 g5 38.♔g1 ♔e5**

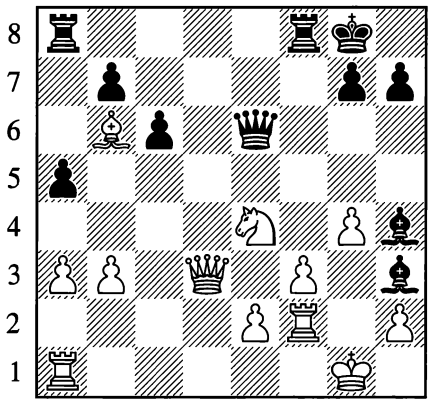
White resigned.

**0–1**

Let us look at some more examples of active defence:

**494**

**Kotov – Sokolsky**, Moscow 1947



*White to move*

In answer to 24...♗h4, White would prefer to avoid the passive 25.♘g3.

After probing deeply into the position, White adopts a plan of active defence that involves sacrificing the exchange and obtaining a counter-attack. The astonishing thing about it is that the counter-attack proves very dangerous in spite of the dwindling material resources.

**25.♕c4! ♕xc4 26.bxc4 h5**

Not 26...♗xf2† at once, in view of 27.♘xf2.

**27.gxh5!**

Opening up the g-file.

**27...♗xf2† 28.♔xf2 ♗e6**

28...♖ae8 is stronger, but Black doesn't suspect the danger.

**29.♖g1! ♗xc4 30.h6 g6**

30...♖f7 allows a knight fork with 31.♘d6.

**31.♖xg6† ♔h7 32.♖d6 ♖f5**

The threat was ♘g5†.

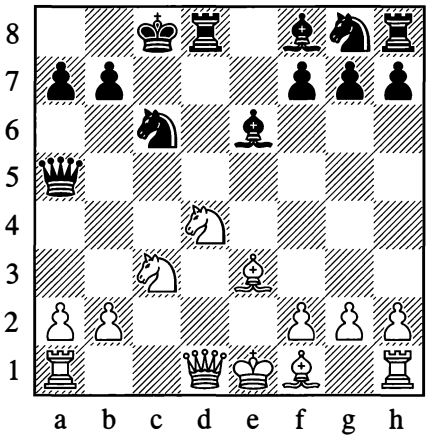
**33.h4 ♖g8 34.♗e3 ♖g6 35.♖d7† ♖f7 36.♖d8! ♖xh6 37.♗xh6 ♔xh6 38.♘d6 ♖f4 39.♔g3**

Black must lose a piece, and so resigned.

**1–0**

**495**

**Lasker – Janowski**, Berlin (5) 1910



*White to move*

As the result of a badly played opening, White has landed in a grave situation in view of the pin against his knight on d4. There is nothing for it but to defend patiently, creating all possible obstacles for his opponent and setting him new and difficult tasks with each move.

**11.a3**

Black is now faced with the need to set about calculating a large number of variations. White will answer 11...♗c5 with 12.b4. Will a knight or bishop sacrifice on b4 give Black anything?

Black must have come to the conclusion that with defensive moves such as ♕c1 and ♖a4 available to White, neither of the sacrifices on b4 would serve his purpose. (Check this for yourself!)

Perhaps Black should meet 12.b4 with 12...♗xd4. It's hard to imagine that Janowski, a master with a strikingly combinative style, could have overlooked this possibility. But we may suppose that the variation 12...♗xd4 13.bxa5 ♗xc3† 14.♗d2 ♖xd2 15.♕xd2 ♗xd2† 16.♔xd2 ♘xa5, leaving Black with two knights and a pawn for a rook, seemed to him to yield too modest a gain for his powerful position. Indeed could this prosaic ending be won at all, against Lasker?

Black was evidently not keen on it. He decided that the possibilities of the position were not yet exhausted, and aimed to attack the pinned knight on d4 from f5.

**11...♘h6**

The knight could also reach f5 via e7. But without knowing White's method of defence, it was hard to foresee whether 11...♘ge7 would be better. Black prefers not to block the diagonal of his bishop on f8.

**12.b4 ♕e5 13.♘cb5**

What if 13...a6 now? Against this, it turns out that White has the cunning defence 14.♕c1!, after which he is out of danger. For example, 14...axb5 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♕xc6† ♕c7 17.♕a6†. This line would have been impossible after 11...♘ge7. In that case there would hardly have been any adequate defence for White.

**13...♘f5 14.♖c1**

White now loses a pawn, but in his turn he has managed to set up a pin against the knight on c6.

**14...♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♕xe3† 16.♗e2 ♗e7 17.♖c3 ♗h4†**

White is clearly slipping out of trouble, but the continuation 17...♕xc3† 18.♘xc3 ♘xd4 would have been double-edged after the reply 19.♕d3.

**18.g3 ♕e4 19.0-0 ♗f6**

White's difficulties are over. A brief counter-attack follows, aimed at the c6-point.

**20.♖xf6! gxf6 21.♗f3 ♕e5 22.♘xa7† ♔c7**

Black is defenceless.

**23.♘axc6 bxc6 24.♖xc6† ♔b8 25.♖b6† ♔c8 26.♕c1† ♔d7 27.♘xe6 fxe6 28.♖b7† ♔e8 29.♗c6†**

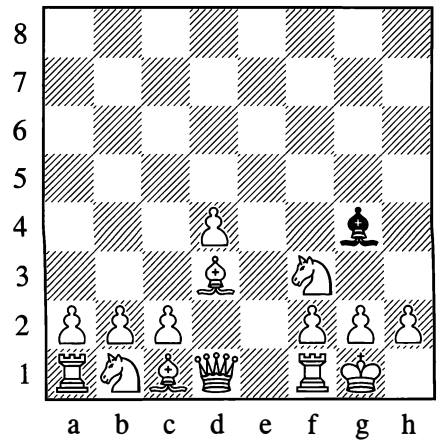
Black resigned in view of 29...♔f8 30.♕h6†. A triumph of active defence!

**1–0**

In this last example, the play was based on the theme of mutual pins against knights.

In the middlegame in general, pins have a major role to play. Let us look into them a little more closely. This will involve examining the most typical case of a pin.

**496**



The knight on f3 is pinned. To a certain extent the queen too is tied down, for if it moves away Black will capture on f3, and White's pawn position (after g2xf3) will be disrupted and weakened.

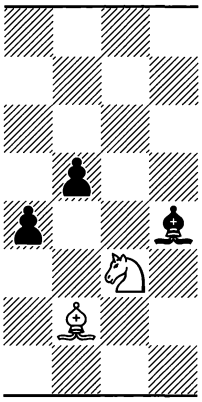
When a pin arises you have to try to free yourself from it, or your opponent may gradually build up an attack based on the pin motif. Prevention of the pin by h2-h3, as we already know, gives the enemy's attack a target and is sometimes dangerous.

There are a number of basic methods of freeing yourself. You can play ♗e2, after which there is no longer any pin at all. If the bishop on g4 is undefended, the tactic demonstrated in Position 497 is sometimes possible: **1.♘xd4**, and if 1...exd4 then 2.♗xg4, or if 1...♗xe2 then 2.♘xe2, winning a pawn in either case. (This ingenious leap with the knight is useful to remember; we saw it employed in Position 491, among other places.)

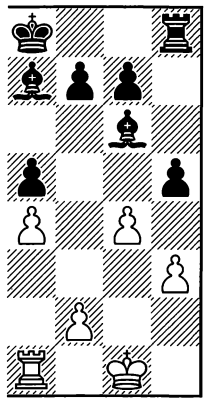
Another possibility to free yourself (in Position 496) is the following. First bring out the bishop from c1 to e3, f4 or g5; then play ♘bd2 and c2-c3, and afterwards (say) ♕c2 or ♕b3. This completes the freeing manoeuvre – the defence of the knight on f3 has been taken over by the one on d2.

One other freeing plan that may be applied is ♖e1, ♘bd2, ♘f1, ♘g3 and then h2-h3. After this, Black can only withdraw his bishop along the h3-c8 diagonal or else make an exchange on f3 that favours White. The presence of an additional piece on the kingside (the knight on g3) makes the move h2-h3 less dangerous.

**497**



**498**



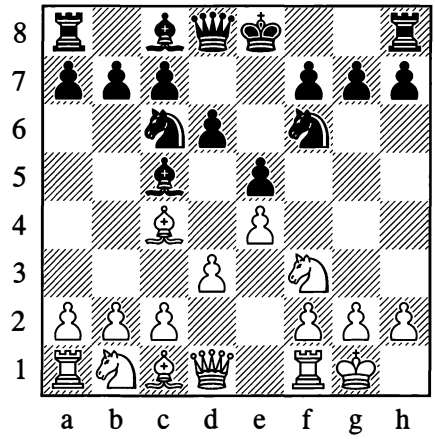
There might seem to be a simpler way to free yourself – by playing h2-h3, ...♗g4-h5 and g2-g4. But your own pawn position is greatly weakened by this all too straightforward method of driving the bishop away.

The bishop withdraws from h5 to g6, and then the g4-pawn is subjected to an attack by ...h5. This move is especially unpleasant if Black has not yet castled, so that the file is opened for his rook (see Diagram 498).

Driving the bishop back with the pawns like this is sometimes justified if you can create an attack on the same wing, concentrating your pieces there.

**499**

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 d6**




**6.♗g5?**

Pinning the knight on f6 with ♗g5 before Black has castled is very risky.

**6...h6 7.♗h4 g5 8.♗g3 h5!**

Threatening to win the bishop with ...h4.

**9.♘xg5 h4! 10.♘xf7 hxg3!**

Black is obtaining such a strong attack that he can sacrifice his queen.

**11.♘xd8**

If in this interesting variation White doesn't take the queen but plays 11.♘xh8, there can follow: 11...♕e7 (threatening ...♕h7 and ...♘g4) 12.♘f7 ♗xf2† 13.♖xf2 gxf2† 14.♔xf2 ♘g4† 15.♔g3 ♕f6 16.♕f3 ♕g7 Black has a clear advantage.

**11...♗g4 12.♕e1 ♘d4**

With the threat of 13...♘e2†, or alternatively 13...♘f3† 14.gxf3 ♗xf3 followed by 15...gxh2# or 15...♖h1#.

Instances of an inopportune pin are only exceptions, however. In most cases a pin hampers the opponent and is extremely useful to the attacker, as we have seen from many examples. As soon as a pin arises, therefore, the defender has to think about the best means of freeing himself from it.

Removing a pin without impairing his own pawn formation is just one event that may be part of a defender's struggle. Practice recognizes a good many other equally typical actions that have local importance, such as the methods of fighting for possession of an open line, or reconquering a file from the opponent, or guarding the invasion squares in a file, and so on. It pays to give close attention to all these devices when playing through master games, seeing that acquaintance with these games serves to improve your technique and raise the overall class of your play.

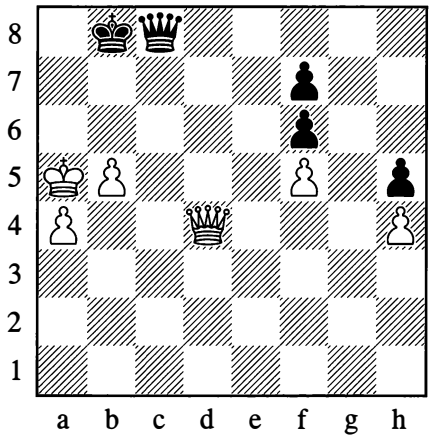
An important defensive measure is to make use of the special possibilities that sometimes result from going into an endgame; this means exploiting the particular features of the material that remains after exchanges (for example, bishops of opposite colours). We spoke of this before, in the section on "Realizing an Advantage", and some further advice will be given at the end of this chapter.

In elucidating the methods and resources of defence, we have so far been speaking only of defence in the direct sense of the word; defence in this sense meant opposing force against force, in other words relying on the power of one move to counter another, while only rarely making use of the peculiarities of the material (opposite bishops and the like). And yet other defensive methods also exist. The first of these amounts to an attempt, so to speak, to bypass the problem, to oppose force with guile, with a trap. The second method endeavours to remove the problem itself, that is, to eliminate the very need for defence; it relies on preventing the attack by anticipating it with so-called "prophylactic" moves.

Here is an example of a trap that Chigorin once fell for:

**500**

**Chigorin – Schlechter**, Ostend 1905



*Black to move*

The simplest way for White to win would be through an exchange of queens. This is what Black relies on, to bait a trap in his hopeless position:

**1...♕c7†**

This looks like an obvious mistake, as White can interpose his queen (with check!) to bring the exchange about. There followed:

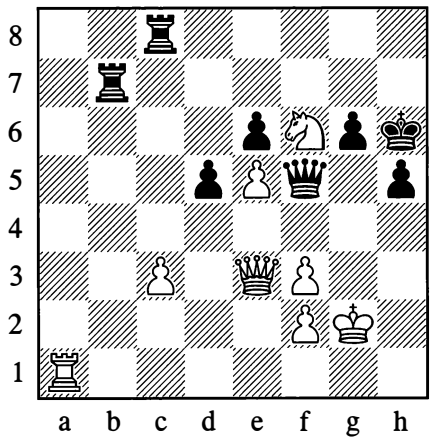
**2.♕b6†? ♔a8!!**

Suddenly the game was drawn, seeing that 3.♕xc7 is stalemate, while 3.♔a6 is met by 3...♕c8† 4.♔a5 ♕c7!. Instead of the hasty 2.♕b6†, White should have played 2.b6. Sometimes, moves that set traps are harmful to the player's own position. Here, where Black has nothing to lose, the trap is entirely appropriate.

**½–½**

The same psychological motif had more severe consequences in the following position.

**501**



*Black to move*

White has given check on e3, and it looks as if he has blundered, overlooking that Black can exchange queens. However, as Black attempts to do so, the trap snaps shut:

**1...♕g5† 2.♘g4†!! hxg4 3.♖h1†**

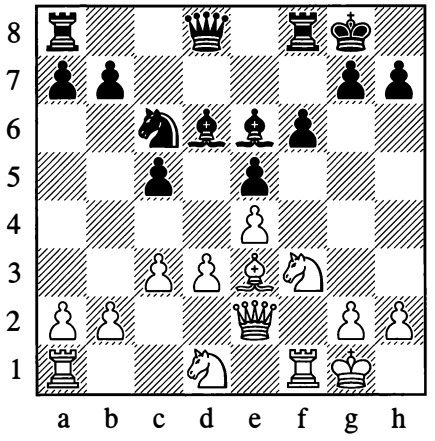
The black queen is lost.

Traps, especially such refined ones as those we have just shown, are seen comparatively rarely in practice, however. They can be evaded with very attentive play, if you persist in trying to figure out why your opponent has made such-and-such a move that looks bad for him, and don't jump to the conclusion that he has simply made a mistake.

Preventive (prophylactic) moves are of much greater importance. Their idea is to thwart the opponent's aggressive intentions well in advance.

**502**

**Blackburne – Nimzowitsch**
St Petersburg 1914



*Black to move*

If Black plays **...♖e8** here, this move can have only one point: Black is trying to oppose the advance d3-d4. His opponent will be forced to think hard about whether to play that way, given that after ...exd4 the e-file will be opened

up for the black rook – which will start to exert pressure (albeit masked at first) against the pawn on e4 and the queen on the same file. Black's ...♖e8 is a typical "prophylactic move".

Active opposition to the opponent's plans may be expressed not only in individual moves, as in the above example, but in a whole series of them, a complete defensive system.

To illustrate this, let us consider the openings known as gambits. In these openings, one player (generally White) sacrifices a pawn in the interests of fast development for his pieces. In the old days the other player would take the gambit pawn and then strive to hold on to it with all his might, presenting his opponent with an advantage in development and allowing him to work up a formidable attack. Present-day masters, on the other hand, attempt to nip the opponent's aggressive intentions in the bud; they do take the gambit pawn but are more concerned about developing their pieces, and will give the pawn back willingly once the opponent has expended some effort (to the detriment of *his* development) to recover it.

Take the opening known as the Evans Gambit:

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.b4**

This is what a "gambit" amounts to – a pawn sacrifice.

**4...♗xb4 5.c3 ♗a5 6.d4**

So far everything has gone smoothly – White has set up a strong pawn centre. In the old days Black used to continue with 6...exd4, and after 7.0-0 he faced a difficult choice: whether to play 7...dxc3, winning a second pawn but allowing White a considerable lead in development, or to make some developing move without allowing White to obtain an "ideal" pawn centre with 8.cxd4. In either case Black had no easy task ahead of him. Contemporary masters don't play 6...exd4, but a more modest continuation:

**6...d6!**

This restricts Black to the gain of one pawn only, but at the same time fortifies the centre. After this White's attacking chances are immediately reduced, since he can no longer hamper Black's development by advancing his centre pawns. White begins to worry about regaining his sacrificed pawn, as otherwise his opponent will eventually be left with the advantage.

**7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♕xd8† ♘xd8 9.♘xe5**

Black can now obtain a comfortable game by playing:

**9...♗e6**

This whole variation was first employed by Lasker, and White has come away empty-handed. He wanted to attack, but now he has to play a most prosaic ending, in which his position is actually worse in view of the weakness of his queenside pawns. Thus his aggressive designs already come to grief in the first few moves.

The above examples have shown us prophylactic moves in use. It must be said that in practice such moves are employed very widely. We may definitely say that there exists a third wholly distinct type of defence (apart from active and passive), which we would call "preventive", prophylactic defence.

In essence, preventive defence is applied right from the start of the game, when, with the aid of swift and centralized development of the pieces, we strive not only to create a basis for future active operations but also to forestall any possible aggressive designs on our opponent's part. Preventive defence takes sober account of all the opponent's possibilities; it ascertains the direction or directions in

which he may try to act; it tries to anticipate his possible attacking plans, and prepares the defences in advance (his attack will come up against well-placed defensive pieces).

Thus the idea of preventive defence simply consists of not permitting any attack from our opponent's side – in making it impossible from the very outset.

But then how are we to conduct the game, how do we work up an attack and try to win, when both players concern themselves with preventive measures and set up sturdy defensive positions with no evident weaknesses? This will be the subject of the next section.

## 4. EQUAL POSITIONS

Free and harmonious development of the pieces on both sides; each player caring about a sturdy centre and about not permitting weaknesses (at least not obvious ones) in his own formation; and each of the opposing sides attending to "preventive defence" in the way we mentioned – all this, as a rule, leads to so-called "equal positions", or more precisely, positions with a relative equilibrium of forces.

Genuinely equal positions – equal through and through – only tend to arise later on, after simplifying exchanges. If at that stage there are no attacking possibilities left that might promise even the smallest success, and if the pawns facing each other in equal numbers on the wings are arranged in such a way that no means of creating a passed pawn can be discerned – then of course it makes no sense to play on, and a draw should simply be agreed.

The positions that call for our attention, however, are not these hopelessly drawn ones, but those where the possibilities of gradually obtaining an attack are not yet exhausted, where the equilibrium of forces is a relative matter and can still be disturbed as a result of some kind of manoeuvres by one of the players. These positions are of special practical interest because they are the very ones in which the fight usually has to be conducted after good opening play by both sides.

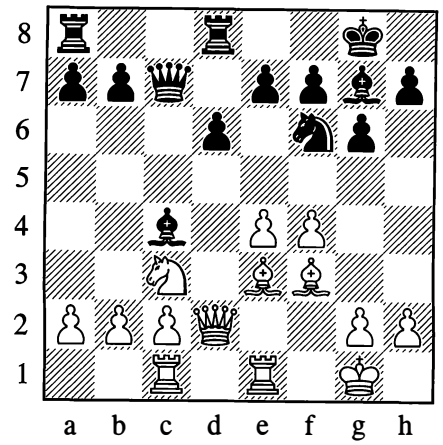
The struggle in such balanced positions presents no small problems, given that there are no obvious weaknesses, and that if any slight weaknesses do exist, they are well defended; thus the overall configuration of the pieces fails to indicate any clear lines along which a future attack could gradually be developed. It follows that the formulation of a game plan is our principal difficulty.

In some positions of comparative equilibrium, it is possible to probe some unobtrusive weaknesses – you might say microscopic ones – in the opponent's formation, and gradually magnify them by a process of delicate manoeuvring. In such cases we will be aiming to improve our own position steadily, step by step, through increasing the sphere of action of each piece.

Any hasty undertaking in a balanced position is dangerous because when we divert pieces to that end, we may be causing some squares in other sectors of the board to be weakened – and our opponent may make use of this. It can be taken as characteristic of many balanced positions (even as a special kind of law) that to obtain an advantage in one place you have to grant concessions of some sort in another. Weighing the advantages against the concessions requires both wide experience and great perspicacity. To start an attack under such conditions, we need an acute assessment of the level of risk as well as the expected gains. We need a well developed feeling of measure for determining the strength and speed of the attack, which must not entail sacrificing the stability of our centre or of our position as a whole.

## 503

**Rauzer – Botvinnik**, Leningrad 1933



*Black to play*

Both sides are fully developed. White has played the opening rather passively. His pieces are not subjecting the enemy formation to that pressure which should, and could, have been achieved by the player with the right of the first move. For this reason, the decision Black takes – to try to seize the initiative immediately – would seem perfectly well-founded.

But where and how is he to strike his blow? Many chessplayers would not even give this a thought. They would "automatically" make a move that is good on general principles but bad in the current situation, namely 15...♖ac8, on the grounds that they were "finishing off their development". Why is this move bad? Not of course because of 16.♗xa7? (...b6!), but because of 16.b3, when difficulties arise for Black. (Where is his bishop to go, and how does he prevent White from moving his knight and then playing c2-c4 with a clear positional plus?)

Subtly weighing up the situation, Botvinnik makes use of the position of his rook opposite the enemy queen.

**15...e5!**

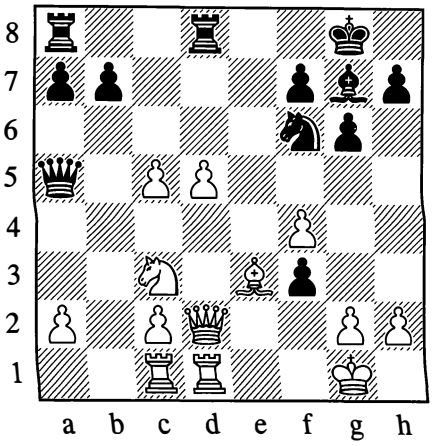
The e4-pawn has to be stopped from advancing.

**16.b3 d5!!**

Creating a very sharp situation as the result of two moves.

**17.exd5 e4! 18.bxc4! exf3 19.c5 ♕a5 20.♖ed1**

In Ragozin's opinion, 20.♕d3 would have given better chances.



**20...♘g4!**

Black's attack is irresistible.

**21.♗d4 f2†! 22.♔f1**

After 22.♔h1? Black can win the white queen with 22...♖xd5! 23.♘xd5 f1=♕† 24.♖xf1 ♕xd2.

**22...♕a6† 23.♕e2 ♗xd4 24.♖xd4 ♕f6! 25.♖cd1 ♕h4 26.♕d3 ♖e8 27.♖e4 f5! 28.♖e6 ♘xh2† 29.♔e2 ♕xf4**

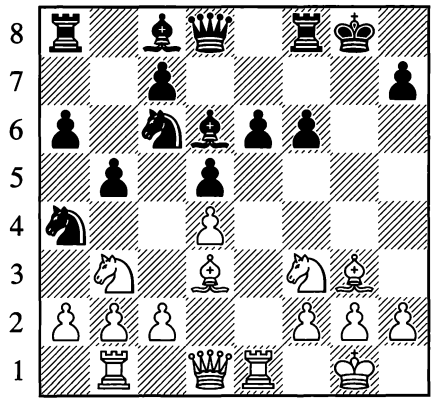
White resigned.

**0–1**

The following is an example of a highly complex manoeuvring struggle.

**504**

**Botvinnik – Boleslavsky**, Moscow 1944



*White to move*

Following 14...b5 (played to prevent c2-c4), the square c5 is felt as a certain weakness in Black's position, even though at present his minor pieces are guarding it. Should White play 15.♗xd6, Black would not of course answer with 15...♕xd6? but with 15...cxd6!, making c5 inaccessible to the white pieces. White cannot, then, utilize the weakness of c5 at the moment.

Turning to the position of Black's e- and f-pawns, we can easily recognize that if either of them moves, weaknesses will be formed in the black camp – on e5 after ...f5, or on f5 after ...e5; but if they stay where they are, the pawns will safely cover White's invasion squares. Thus although Black's position appears rather cramped, it is nonetheless solid enough.

White's position, on the other hand, has no weaknesses. It is much freer than that of his opponent. The initiative unquestionably belongs to White. But what can he undertake here?

It is interesting and instructive to follow the overall plan that Botvinnik selects, and also the manoeuvres of his pieces that he carries out with a view to that plan's accomplishment.

**15.c3 ♗d7**

At the present moment 15...e5 is unplayable owing to 16.dxe5, 17.♗xb5 and 18.♕xd5†.

**16.♘h4!**

White starts preparing tactical threats against the black king. If 16...e5, then 17.♗f5.

**16...♖f7 17.♖e3 ♖g7 18.♕e2 ♕f8 19.♗xd6!**

A first achievement for White: Black is forced to play 19...♕xd6 and allow the weakness of c5 to increase, seeing that 19...cxd6 could be answered by 20.♖xe6 ♗xe6 21.♕xe6†, followed by a capture on d6 or d5. With sufficient material compensation for the sacrificed exchange, White would obtain a strong attack, thanks to the weakening of the f5-point. White's plan thus becomes perfectly clear. All his manoeuvres are directed at the points c5 and f5.

**19...♕xd6 20.♖g3 ♖xg3**

White was threatening 21.♗xh7† ♔xh7 22.♕h5† ♔g8 23.♘g6.

**21.hxg3 ♕e7 22.♖e1 ♕g7 23.♕c2 ♘d8 24.♘c1 ♖c8**

Aiming for ...c5 to rid himself of the weakness on the c5-square, but White has made preparations in good time to forestall that move.

**25.b3 ♘b6 26.b4 ♖a8 27.♘b3 ♘b7 28.♘c5 ♘xc5 29.bxc5 ♘a4 30.c6! ♗c8**

If 30...♗xc6, then 31.♖xe6 and White gains control of f5. Now he clears the c-file with an ingenious manoeuvre.

**31.c4! bxc4 32.♗xc4 ♘b6 33.♗d3 ♖b8 34.♕c5 ♕f8**

White has won the battle for the c5-point, and Black decides to seek salvation in an ending, even at the cost of his h-pawn. Black has made his plans, but White introduces some amendments into them:

**35.♗xh7† ♔g7 36.♘f5†! exf5**

The f5-point has not escaped its fate either.

**37.♖e7† ♔h8 38.♗g6**

The game is decided. The threat is 39.♖h7† ♔g8 40.♖h8†.

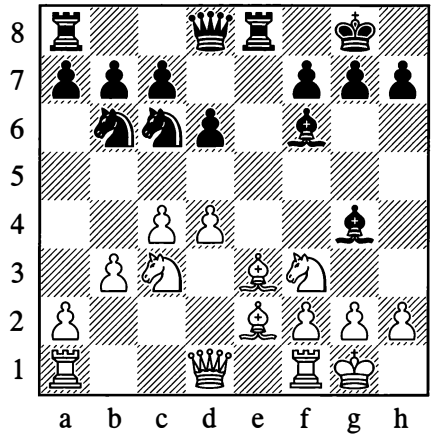
**38...♗e6 39.♖xe6 ♕xc5 40.dxc5 ♘a4 41.♗xf5 ♘c3 42.♖e7 ♘b5 43.♗d3 ♖c8 44.a4 ♘d4 45.♗xa6 ♘xc6 46.♖e6**

Black resigned. Subtle mastery of positional play!

**1–0**

## 505

**Konstantinopolsky – Panov**, Moscow 1946



*White to move*

Black's pieces might seem well developed. A certain defect of his position, perhaps, can only be discerned in the placing of his knight on b6, which is somewhat out of the action. If this piece can be transferred to the kingside, the position promises to level out before long. The "pride" of White's formation is his strong pawn phalanx on c4 and d4, depriving the black pieces of important central squares.

**12.♖c1 d5**

It emerges that bringing either knight across to the kingside is not so simple: 12...♘d7 would present White with the advantage of the bishop pair after 13.♘d5, and so would 12...♘e7 after 13.♘e4. Consequently, given his overall difficulty in undertaking anything, Black decides to bolster his position in the centre, reckoning that if his knight is driven back to c8 this will only be a passing incident.

**13.c5 ♘c8 14.h3 ♗h5 15.♕d2 h6**

He couldn't play 15...♘8e7 on account of g2-g4-g5. Thus the poor placing of that knight ceases to be a "passing incident" and starts to be a chronic, permanent defect of Black's game. This was not bound to lead to his defeat. Yet it is worth noting that in steadily improving his own position, White never for one moment loses his opponent's "stricken" knight from view.

**16.♖fe1 a6 17.♖cd1 g5?**

Black loses patience and tries without justification to seize the initiative. Of course, 17...♘8e7 held little appeal for him in view of 18.g4 and 19.h4, but it was possible to play a waiting game with 17...♗g6. The move Black makes steers the game on a new course, and White settles the issue with a short, sharp combinative attack.

**18.♘xg5! ♗xe2 19.♘xf7! ♔xf7 20.♕xe2 ♘8e7**

The threat was ♕h5† and ♘xd5.

**21.♕h5† ♔g8 22.♗xh6 ♕d7 23.♖e3 ♘f5 24.♘xd5! ♕xd5 25.♖g3† ♘xg3**

Or 25...♗g7 26.♖xg7† ♘xg7 27.♕xd5†.

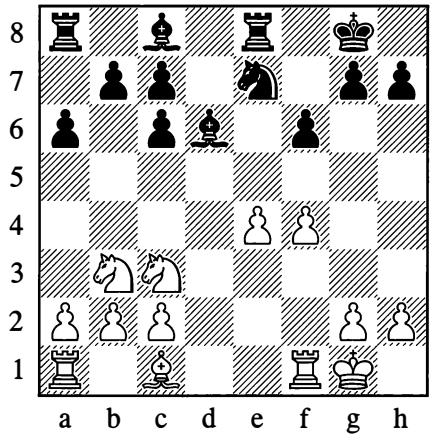
**26.♕g6†**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

**506**

**Lasker – Capablanca**, St Petersburg 1914



*White to move*

In this position White has a pawn majority on the kingside, and you might think that his efforts should be bent towards reaching an endgame and then preparing e4-e5 to acquire a passed pawn. Instead, there unexpectedly followed:

**12.f5**

After this the pawn on e4 becomes backward and weak, and the e5-square is turned into a strongpoint for Black. In compensation for this weakening, however, White has obtained a number of assets. The mobility of the knight on e7 and the bishop on c8 is restricted; the f4-square has been cleared for the bishop on c1; and the f5-pawn presses against Black's weak point e6. A characteristic example of gaining certain advantages in return for some concessions!

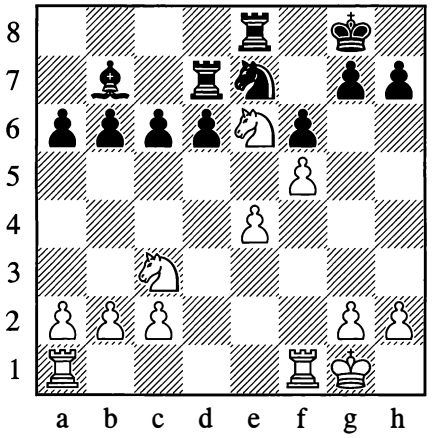
**12...b6**

Black has decided at once to open fire against the e4-pawn from all his batteries. The move he plays shows his intention to fianchetto his bishop and bear down on e4 from b7 – a double-edged plan, as the square e6 is weakened still further.

**13.♗f4 ♗b7**

Better was 13...♗xf4 with ...♗b7 to follow, not allowing a new weakness to be formed on d6; the manoeuvre ...♘e7-c8-d6 would then be possible.

**14.♗xd6 cxd6 15.♘d4 ♖ad8 16.♘e6 ♖d7**



Black's play in the first middlegame phase has clearly not been best: the knight on e6 is exerting strong pressure and simultaneously shielding the e4-pawn from a frontal attack by the black rooks.

**17.♖ad1 ♘c8 18.♖f2 b5 19.♖fd2 ♖de7 20.b4! ♔f7 21.a3 ♗a8**

Freeing the a7-square for a rook.

**22.♔f2 ♖a7 23.g4 h6 24.♖d3 a5 25.h4 axb4 26.axb4 ♖ae7**

There is nothing for the rook to do on the a-file, and it would have been better not to open it.

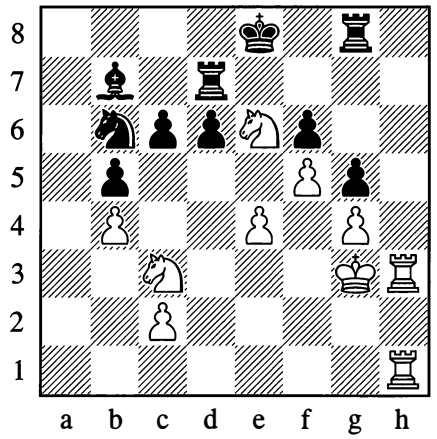
**27.♔f3 ♖g8 28.♔f4 g6 29.♖g3 g5†**

29...gxf5 would have been better.

**30.♔f3! ♘b6 31.hxg5**

Not 31.♖xd6, in view of ...♘b6-c4-e5†.

**31...hxg5 32.♖h3 ♖d7 33.♔g3! ♔e8 34.♖dh1 ♗b7**



**35.e5!**

White places no value on his inferior e-pawn. He sacrifices it to free a square for his knight.

**35...dxe5 36.♘e4 ♘d5 37.♘6c5 ♗c8**

If the rook moves, White plays 38.♘xb7 and 39.♘d6†.

**38.♘xd7 ♗xd7 39.♖h7 ♖f8 40.♖a1**

Both open files are occupied by White's rooks.

**40...♔d8 41.♖a8† ♗c8 42.♘c5**

Black resigned, as there is no defence against the threatened ♘e6† or ♘b7†.

**1–0**

In our discussion of play in equal positions we will limit ourselves to the examples above. It is quite easy to see that situations of this kind are the very ones where a player's highest skill is displayed. No matter what level of qualification the player may have attained, there will still be wide scope for further improvement here, by means of deep analysis and study of exemplary tournament games.

## 5. TRANSITION TO THE ENDGAME

A player who gains a positional advantage in the middlegame will of course try to increase it and launch an attack on the basis of it, targeting the king or other objectives to deliver mate or win material. If however the attack runs up against difficulties, or if the advantage (particularly a material one) is of a type that can be more easily converted into a win in the endgame, then it makes sense to set about simplifying the position.

So after a successful attack, you may want to go into an endgame to exploit the advantage you have acquired; but also after an attack that has not completely worked, you may look to the endgame to make good what you failed to achieve in the middlegame, or to deny your opponent the chance to start a counter-attack.

But then again, when defending, you often attempt to reach an endgame so as to reduce or repel the attack – and also sometimes to obtain a counter-attack – as a result of the exchange of pieces. Position 494 on page 352 (Kotov – Sokolsky) provides a good example of transition from an unfavourable middlegame to a pleasant ending, in which White, though the exchange down, has a counter-offensive. Position 493 (Romanovsky – Botvinnik), where Black went into the ending while repulsing his opponent's attack, is also characteristic.

The transition to an endgame is a crucial turning point in a game of chess, demanding thorough attention to a number of factors. The most important of these have already been mentioned in the "Endgames" chapter. However, the variety of special points here is so great that there would be no use in any kind of general advice on how and in what circumstances to go into an endgame. The concrete peculiarities of the position must be the decisive arguments in each case.

There is just one typical scenario that is worth dwelling on; it involves players who are

not very experienced. You can often observe that after winning material (a pawn, say, or perhaps the exchange), their fighting energy is virtually extinguished. A player who has just been playing with imagination and boldness supposes that his aim is achieved, and in fear of forfeiting his "gains" he suddenly becomes all too cautious and irresolute. He sees exchanges as the sole aim and rationale of the subsequent play – even when they are antipositional, involving losses of tempo and so forth. Such a primitive approach to the matter of going into an endgame is of course profoundly mistaken. Achieving an advantage is not enough – you still have to convert it into a win. As the result of timid and feeble manoeuvres by the lucky possessor of an extra pawn, his opponent acquires a number of positional assets, which in the end may enable him to regain the material; or even if this fails, the advantage will still have been made more difficult to exploit.

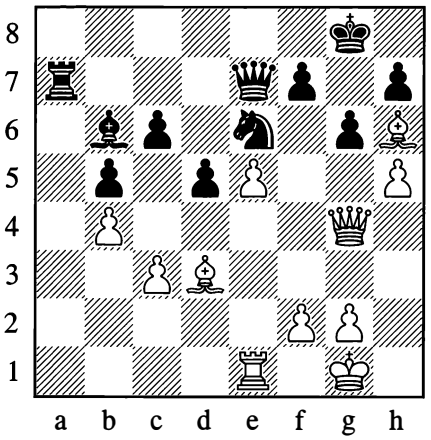
It must never be forgotten that having the attack is an advantage, and no small one either. A serious attack is testimony to a major positional achievement. After winning material, you must continue the attack just as imaginatively as before; or if it is exhausted, try to achieve an active piece formation once again.

In renewing the attack (or perhaps merely organizing active pressure on your opponent's position), your aim need not be the further gain of material. If the advantage you have is sufficient, you have no reason to increase it. But with your opponent under pressure, it is much easier to force him into an endgame at the right moment, under conditions that favour yourself.

We now give some examples of purposeful transition to an endgame:

**507**

**Bronstein – Makogonov**, Moscow 1944



*White to move*

White's attack has reached a dead end – it is hard to strengthen it. Black's chances in the coming struggle can perhaps even be rated as somewhat superior, considering the strong position of his rook on a7 on the open file, and the weakness of White's pawn on c3. White therefore takes the sensible decision to go into an ending, and achieves this with the help of a combination calculated a long way ahead.

**32.hxg6 hxg6 33.♗xg6 fxg6 34.♕xg6† ♔h8**

Now White neatly exploits the placing of the bishop on b6 and the rook on a7.

**35.♗e3! ♗xe3 36.♖xe3 ♖a1† 37.♔h2 ♘f4!**

With this move, directed against h3, Black has counted on refuting his opponent's combination.

**38.♕h6† ♕h7**

White's queen is pinned, and it looks as if he must lose the game. With the following beautiful move, however, he forces a drawn position.

**39.♖h3!! ♕xh6**

If 39...♘xh3, then 40.♕f8† and 41.♕h6†.

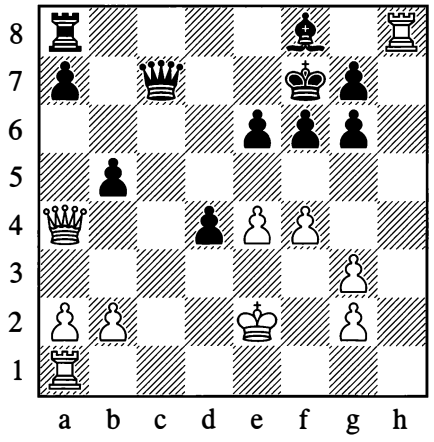
**40.♖xh6† ♔g7 41.♖xc6 d4 42.cxd4 ♖b1 43.g3 ♘d3**

The game ended in a draw. White may even hold the advantage now, but Black's rook and knight should hold the pawn mass at bay.

**½–½**

**508**

**Blumenfeld – Gothilf**, Leningrad 1927

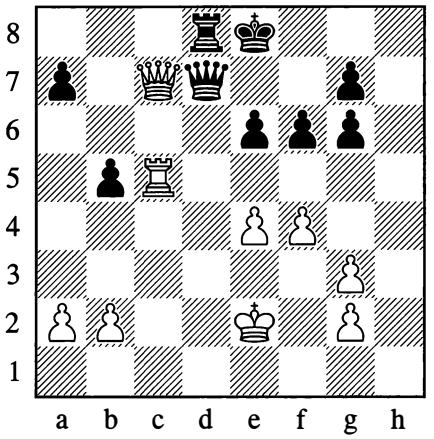


*White to move*

By playing 23...b5, Black has complicated White's task of turning his material plus (rook for bishop and pawn) into a win. Clearly 24.♕xb5 is weak on account of 24...♖b8, while 24.♕b3 (or 24.♕d1) 24...♕c4† gives Black quite good counterplay. Therefore White decides to return the exchange and go into a simple and favourable rook endgame, avoiding the risk and complications of a middlegame with major pieces and an open king position.

**24.♕xd4! ♗c5 25.♖c1 ♖xh8 26.♕xc5 ♕d7 27.♕c7 ♖d8 28.♖c5 ♔e8**

Or 28...a6 29.♖c6.



**29.♕xd7† ♔xd7 30.♖xb5 ♔c6 31.♖a5 ♖d7**

This hastens Black's loss, but after 31...♔b6 32.♖a3, threatening ♖d3, White should soon win anyway. The threat to exchange rooks makes Black's defence difficult, since going into a pawn endgame would be hopeless for him.

**32.♖a6†**

Black resigned.

**1–0**

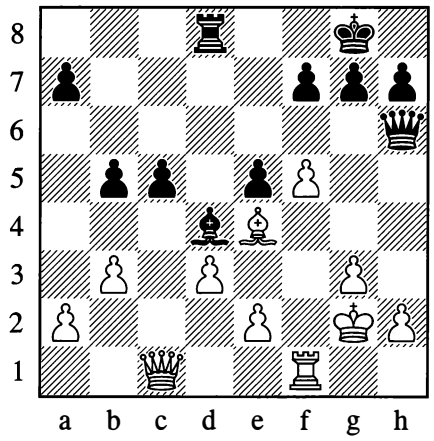
In the "Endgames" chapter we examined the characteristic defensive resources based on the fact that with certain distributions of pieces in the endgame, some types of material advantage are insufficient to win. Such for example are the cases with just one minor piece left, or two knights with no pawns; or again the numerous positions in rook endgames where one extra pawn doesn't guarantee victory and sometimes even two pawns are no help.

Positions of this kind are sometimes the refuge that the weaker side is seeking when going into an endgame. A particularly typical case is where the defender tries to reach an ending with opposite bishops, of which the drawing tendency is well known. It should however be observed that the presence of opposite bishops in an ending gives no complete guarantee that the game will end in a draw.

The following instructive endgame may serve as an example:

**509**

**Reti – Romanovsky**, Moscow 1925



*Black to move*

**26...♕xc1**

Black went into an ending which, with the opposite bishops, looks drawish. Here is what happened, however:

**27.♖xc1 b4**

Seeing that e2-e3 is inevitable, Black enables his bishop to move away to c3, but at the same time this move frees the c4-square for the white rook; and the Czech Grandmaster, the composer of many a subtle endgame study, very far-sightedly assesses the significance of this square as a springboard for transferring his rook to the kingside.

**28.♖c4! ♔f8 29.♔f3 ♖c8 30.e3 ♗c3**

The bad position of this bishop, virtually shut out of the game, is Black's main trouble. Before anything else, White rids himself of his weakness on a2.

**31.a4! ♔e7 32.♗d5 ♖c7 33.♖h4 h6 34.♔e4**

The centralized king occupies an exceptionally strong position.

**34...♔f6 35.♖h5 ♖d7**

If 35...g6, then 36.fxg6! ♔xg6 37.♖f5.

**36.g4 g6**

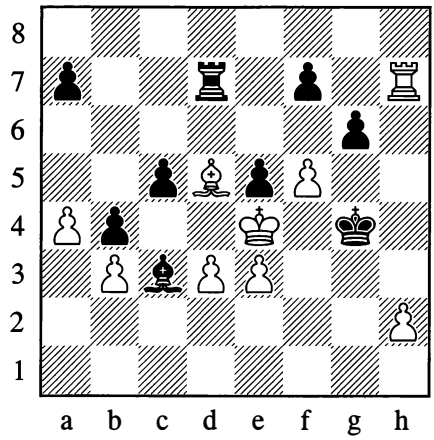
White was threatening 37.h4 and 38.g5†.

**37.♖xh6**

37.fxg6 was also possible, but White already has the decisive combination planned.

**37...♔g5 38.♖h7 ♔xg4**

Threatening 39...gxf5#; if 39.fxg6, then 39...f5#.



**39.♗e6! fxe6**

Or 39...♖e7 40.♖xf7 ♖xf7 41.fxg6†.

**40.fxg6!**

Of course not 40.♖xd7? because of 40.gxf5#.

**40...♖d8 41.♖xa7 ♔g5 42.g7 ♔h6 43.a5 ♔h7 44.a6 ♖d6**

The threat was ♖b7.

**45.h4 ♗e1 46.h5 ♗h4 47.h6**

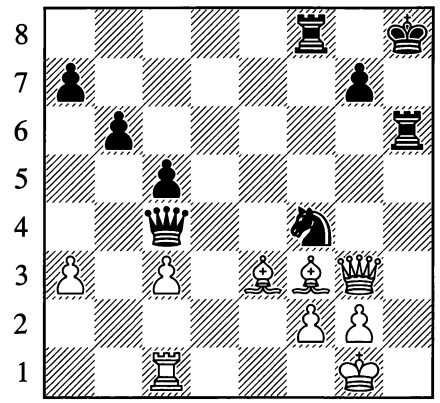
Black resigned. Essentially he had been playing without his bishop.

**1–0**

Example 510 illustrates the transition to an endgame as the result of an exchanging combination:

**510**

**Geller – Smyslov**, Amsterdam 1956



*Black to move*

In the course of the foregoing play Black has won the exchange, but White's position, with the two bishops and the pin against the knight on f4, still looks fairly robust. How is Black to bring about simplification?

**41...♕e4!!**

Setting up the terrible threat of ...♕h7. If 42.♗xe4, then 42...♘e2† 43.♔f1 ♘xg3† 44.♔e1 ♖h1† 45.♔d2 ♘xe4†.

**42.♕xf4**

A curious situation for the queens!

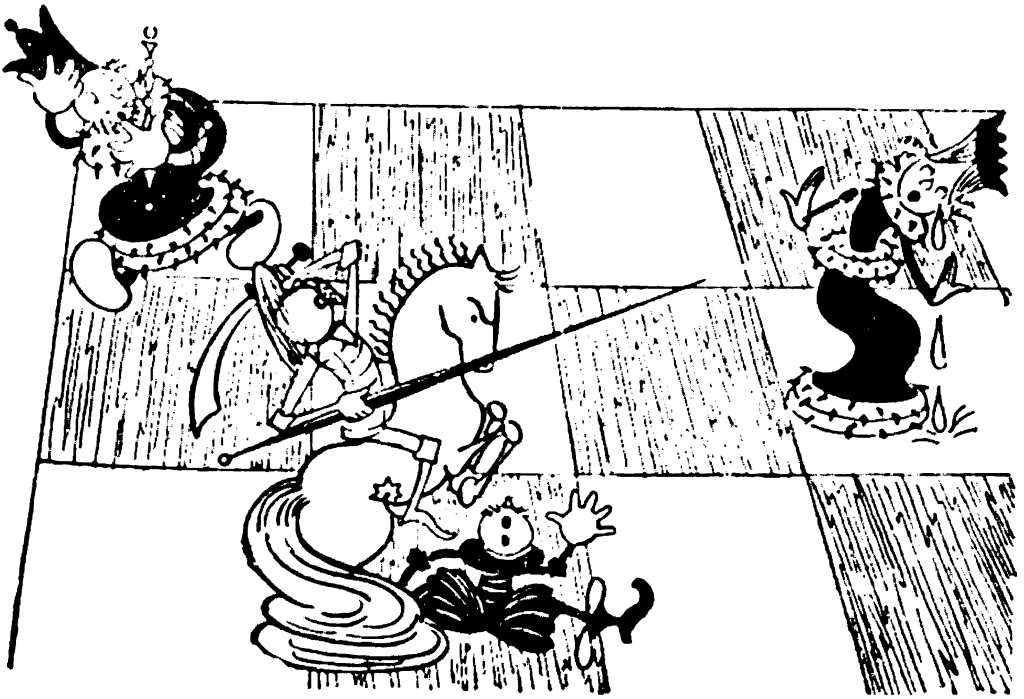
**42...♕xf4 43.♗xf4 ♖xf4**

Black is now an exchange up. The game continued:

**44.♖e1 ♖a4 45.♖e8† ♔h7 46.♗e4† g6 47.g4 ♖xa3**

Black soon won.

**...0–1**



# Chapter 10

# The Foundations of Opening Theory

## 1. THE MODERN OPENING AND HOW IT IS PLAYED IN PRACTICE

The most intensively studied branch of chess theory is probably that of the openings. The game's researchers have given it more attention than anything else, and the reason for this is not hard to understand. Every chessplayer, after all, is concerned to deploy his pieces in the best possible manner at the start of the game. He looks for formations that will ensure his king's safety and enable him to mount strikes against his opponent's position.

But what is the nature of these formations? Among the great diversity of opening moves, you can easily land in a muddle if you don't have a clear notion of the basics of opening strategy. In the earlier chapters of this book we have already spoken of the dangers lying in wait for a player at the start of the game if he neglects the basic principles of normal opening development.

Correctly conducting the opening of a game is no simple task. The theory of the openings didn't take shape all at once. Many years passed before those key ideas which ought to guide a player in the opening were precisely formulated. The accumulation of material for opening theory began from the end of the fifteenth century. At first, investigators merely sought and discovered various continuations which they would improve and systematize. But this was not enough. Generalizations, appropriate laws, were needed to offer guidance in the labyrinth of variations. Such generalizations emerged for the first time in the eighteenth century, and in our own day they have been converted into an orderly system of opening knowledge.

The principles of opening strategy that characterize all opening systems were discussed before, in Chapter 7. It would be a mistake to suppose, for instance, that such principles as the efficient and speedy development of the pieces, control of the centre, and so forth, are purely for the guidance of beginners. Promoted and borne out in the tournament practice of many years, these principles direct the conduct of the opening even in master chess.

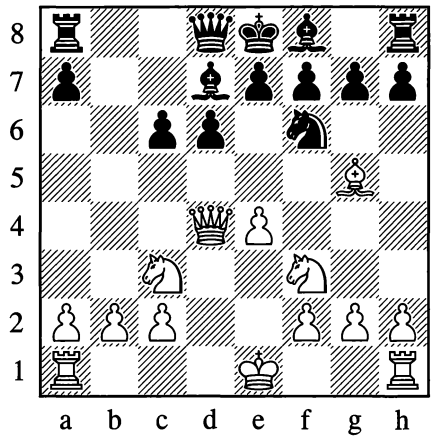
However, besides the requirement to observe general principles, every opening presents its own particular, specific tasks, determined by the formation of pieces that characterizes it. We can of course only speak of these tasks when examining each opening separately.

Understanding an opening is the first and most important step towards learning to play it correctly. Anyone who understands the opening he is playing will hardly ever give his opponent opportunities to make serious gains at the beginning of the game.

As an example, let us look at the following game played in the Sicilian Defence.

**Borbely – Kovacs**, Oradea 1948

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♕xd4 ♘c6 5.♗b5 ♗d7 6.♗xc6 bxc6 7.♘c3 ♘f6 8.♗g5**



**8...♖b8 9.e5 dxe5 10.♘xe5 ♖xb2 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♘xd7 ♕xd7 13.♕xd7† ♔xd7 14.0-0-0†**

Black resigned, as he loses a rook.

**1–0**

Just what went on in this little game? Let us attempt a critical examination of the way the events unfolded.

White's 4th move was a deviation from the generally accepted continuation 4.♘xd4. According to everything we have already said about the foundations of opening strategy, this move cannot be all that dangerous to Black. The white queen has undoubtedly come into play too early.

Black's decision to take on c6 with the pawn (6...bxc6) appears questionable. Black is behind in the development of his kingside pieces, and from this viewpoint it would be more useful to take on c6 with the bishop. Then a subsequent ...♘f6 would set up an attack on the e4-pawn, and an advance with e4-e5 could be met by ...♗xf3. Nonetheless 6...bxc6 does have its positive points.

The position after 8.♗g5 deserves a diagram. The fact that Black has not understood the character of the struggle in this opening is confirmed by the move 8...♖b8. With his backward development he shouldn't be allowing an opening of lines that can benefit only White. Black should have played 8...e5, reinforcing his position in the centre; he would then have had a game rich in possibilities.

In the position after 10.♘xe5 it is already obvious that Black has played the opening badly, and his position is very difficult. The most tenacious way to defend would have been 10...♖b7, and if 11.0-0-0 then 11...♕b6.

After 10...♖xb2?! White can simply play 11.♖d1 ♖b7 12.0–0, and Black could hardly expect to survive the pressure along the centre files.

On 11.♗xf6, Black should have tried 11...exf6, and after 12.♘xd7 he could have confused the issue with 12...♕e7†; for example, 13.♔f1 ♕xd7 or 13.♘e4 ♖b4.

One other comment – about 12.♘xd7. Why didn't White take on d7 with his queen? Wouldn't this have been more forcing? Here we can once again see how careful and attentive you need to be, even in a winning position: after 12.♕xd7† ♕xd7 13.♘xd7 Black would reply 13...♖xc2, and the outcome of the fight would then be far from clear.

In this game Black clearly neglected the principles of correct opening development. His attack on the b2-pawn, which was eventually to prove his undoing, was undertaken at the very moment when he should have given serious thought to developing his bishop on f8 and securing the kind of set-up that would have given him adequate counter-chances in the coming struggle.

Such a complicated concept as the modern opening cannot be characterized lucidly in

general terms. We will confine ourselves here to some general hints and advice.

Experience shows that as a rule it does Black little good to copy his opponent's moves, in other words to develop symmetrically. This is because White, possessing an extra tempo, is the first in such positions to start resolute action (one of the lines in the Four Knights Game is a characteristic example). Black has to play very carefully in symmetrical situations – it is hard for him to fight for the initiative. This is what explains the fact that in contemporary practice, openings where Black declines to meet 1.e4 or 1.d4 with 1...e5 or 1...d5 have become so widespread.

Don't make it your aim to settle the fight as early as the starting stage. Such tactics can only work against a very weak opponent; usually the results are deplorable. Don't be carried away by winning material in the opening. If the price of winning a pawn (or sometimes even a piece) is backward development or the diversion of key pieces from your position, be very attentive and cautious. If you do decide to go in for such a variation, check the tactical strokes that ensue.

Let us look at a characteristic example from a simultaneous display in the Red Guards Palace of Young Pioneers (Moscow).

**Mikhail Yudovich – N.N.**

**1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♕xd5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.♗e2 0-0-0**

Black could not of course win a pawn by 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 ♕xd4?, as this would lose the queen to 9.♗xc6†.

**7.dxc5**

Premature; White should have played 7.♗e3.

**7...♕xc5**

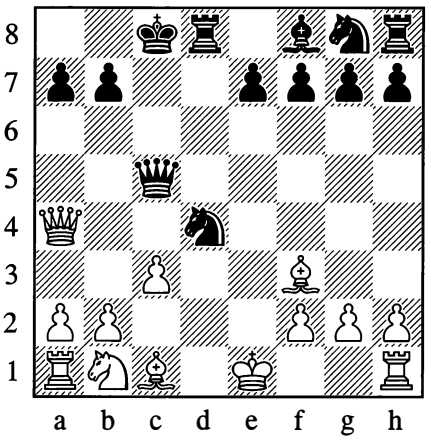
But this too is a poor move; better was 7...♕e4, and if 8.♘bd2 then 8...♗xf3.

**8.♕a4 ♗xf3**

8...♘f6 was necessary.

**9.♗xf3 ♘d4**

The point of Black's play; he was counting on this move without allowing for White's combination in reply.



**10.cxd4!**

In this way White obtains a big advantage in development.

**10...♕xc1† 11.♔e2! ♕xb2†**

Or 11...♕xh1 12.♕c4†! ♔b8 13.♕b5 b6 14.♕c6, and Black is quickly mated.

**12.♘d2 ♕xd4 13.♕c2† ♔b8 14.♖hc1**

An instructive position; Black has two extra pawns but all his kingside pieces are undeveloped, so that for practical purposes White has a huge preponderance of forces.

**14...♕d7 15.♖ab1 b6**

Or 15...♖c8 16.♕e4! with unstoppable pressure against b7.

**16.♘c4 ♖c8**

White threatened a knight sacrifice on b6.

**17.♕e4 ♕e6 18.♘e5 ♕xa2† 19.♔f1**

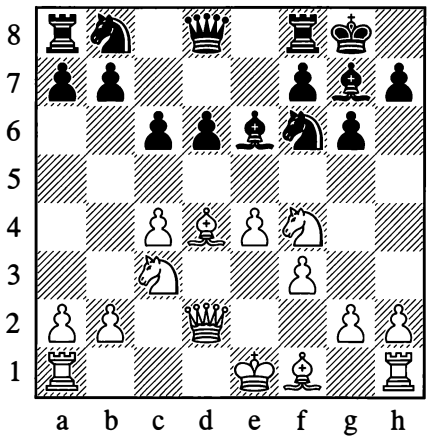
Black resigned, as he will shortly be mated.

**1–0**

We should mention one other important issue. It must be clearly borne in mind that the opening is an organic, integral part of the game as a whole, and in many ways determines its further course. Some players regard the opening as a series of moves of little interest, where nothing is especially critical; once the opening is over (they think), the real struggle begins. Such an attitude is mistaken. Many years ago Alekhine was already pointing out that the division of a chess game into three basic parts (opening, middlegame, endgame) is very much a matter of convention. In practical play it would be more correct, in his opinion, to regard the first part of a game as continuing until the balance is disturbed and a concrete aim emerges; the second part, as he saw it, consists of achieving the aim you have in view. At any rate, when playing an opening you need to be thinking about the plans for the coming struggle, not about arranging your pieces first and only then deciding what you might undertake. Such an unthinking conduct of the opening can have unpleasant consequences.

Let's look at the following instructive example:

**Hukel – Yudovich**, USSR – Czechoslovakia
Corr. 1956-8



In this position it is *Black to move*, and it might seem simplest for him to play 10...♘bd7 and resolve the questions of attack and defence afterwards. Yet this natural continuation is not so free from drawbacks. Let us look into the position rather more closely.

White's plan is clear. He wants to castle long and then organize pressure against the weak pawn on d6. It's easy to see that defending this pawn is not at all simple. Another fact that complicates the situation is that White may also start an attack on the kingside by advancing his g- and h-pawns at the first convenient opportunity.

Now let us return to 10...♘bd7. Does this move offer any obstacles to White's development of his initiative? It does not, for after 10...♘bd7 11.0-0-0 White is already threatening 12.♗e3, and on 11...♘e8 he plays 12.h2-h4. After 10...♘bd7, which does nothing to oppose his opponent's designs, Black would probably have to conduct a long and difficult defence.

This is why, after weighing up the concrete situation, Black chose a different plan:

**10...c5 11.♗e3**

After an exchange on f6, Black's bishop would acquire ample prospects on the a1-h8 diagonal.

**11...♘c6 12.0-0-0**

It looks as if Black has merely worsened his own position; the d6-pawn has now become weaker still, hasn't it?

**12...♘d4!**

Making Black's plan clear; after this invasion he obtains adequate counterplay. Now 13.♗xd4 cxd4 14.♕xd4 is bad on account of 14...♘d5!.

**13.h4 h5 14.♕f2 ♘d7**

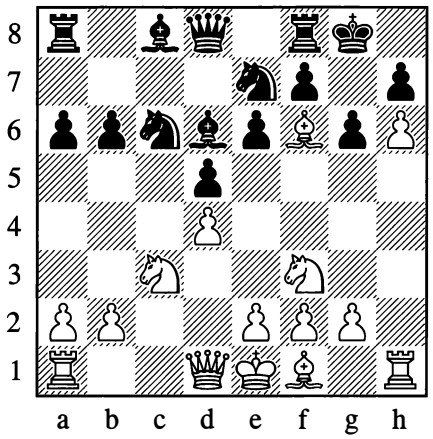
A sharp situation has arisen, in which Black's

chances are no worse. The opening of this game clearly shows how important it is to link an opening to the coming middlegame struggle.

A classic example of correct opening strategy for White is shown at the start of the following game:

**Alekhine – Rubinstein**, The Hague 1921

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c4 a6 4.c5 ♘c6 5.♗f4 ♘ge7 6.♘c3 ♘g6 7.♗e3 b6 8.cxb6 cxb6 9.h4 ♗d6 10.h5 ♘ge7 11.h6 g6 12.♗g5 0-0 13.♗f6**



We have seen what moves brought the players to this unconventional position. But why did White in this game neglect the gradual and logical development of his pieces?

Let us quote Alekhine's own words, from his annotations to the game. Of the diagram position, he wrote: "An unusual position after thirteen moves of a Queen's Gambit! Of these first 13 moves, White has made three with his c-pawn, three with his h-pawn and four with a bishop, after which he has achieved, if not a won position, then something close to it." Alekhine goes on to explain why he played that way: "In the opening Black made some eccentric moves (3...a6, 5...♘ge7, 6...♘g6) which would have given him a good game if his opponent had ignored them (for instance by playing 7.e3 instead of 7.♗e3, or 9.g3 instead of 9.h4). It was not at all from preconceived motives, but out of necessity, that I advanced my h-pawn to prevent Black from gaining the advantage in the centre."

There is an abundance of openings, a multitude of tempting continuations. Which of them do you select, to which ones should you grant preference?

It would be wrong if you let your choice be dictated by what our leading players play most often. Bear in mind the great importance of playing in just the way that suits you, the way that is to your liking. This is the true key to success in tournament play.

All players have their own tastes in chess. Some like to attack, to sacrifice, to play combinations. Well then, it makes sense for these players to exercise their powers in gambit openings. But then again there are those lovers of chess who like a manoeuvring game, who are not averse to defending. They too can select openings to suit their taste.

In general, for players who don't yet possess much tournament experience, settling on open games is more suitable. The strategic ideas of these systems are clearer and simpler than those of half-open and closed games.

Opening variations should not be taken on board by "cramming", and learnt by heart. The mechanical assimilation of a series of moves in some line or other is perhaps not difficult, but to say the least it is useless. After all, the very reason why we love chess is that its latent possibilities are boundless. And what if your opponent plays something that isn't in the book? Will you know how to reply to his move? We may say "no" straight away if you have been learning by rote. And yet if you understand the essence of your opening system, if you have mastered its fundamental strategic ideas, you will not be caught off guard by something unexpected.

We have already pointed out that the theory of openings in our time has been cultivated in extraordinary breadth and detail. Nevertheless we are still infinitely far from exhausting all the wealth of chess ideas. Variations that you study in a book should of course not be viewed as something wholly indisputable, something established once and for all. The practice of the chess struggle is constantly introducing fresh content into numerous opening schemes; opening lines keep being elaborated and refined. Comparatively recently, many of the schemes we employ today were still held to be of minor importance or even worthless.

Let us give some characteristic examples:

In Russia in 1913, a book by the well-known Moscow master A. Goncharov was published. In this book the Russian player collected together everything of most importance that had been achieved in the openings at that time.

Here is what the book had to say after the moves 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3: "At this point 3...♗b4 is weak. After 4.exd5 exd5 5.♗d3, Black's bishop will soon prove to be of no use on b4; it will later have to retreat with loss of time or else take on c3, presenting the white bishop with a superb post on a3."

This view of 3...♗b4 persisted for many years among chessplayers who were theorists, right up until 1927 when Alekhine, in the first game of his match with Capablanca, showed that the exchange on d5 promises White little. In our day the continuation 3...♗b4 has become a main variation of the French Defence.

Today, when the study of theory has made great advances, when a multitude of contests take place and the number of strong chessplayers increases not by the day but by the hour, it rarely happens that the assessment of fashionable opening lines remains unchanged for long. Many a theoretical variation, before our very eyes, follows a path of blossoming, wilting and blossoming anew, with the possibility of wilting again in the future.

As an example, let us look at the fairly old and yet still not concluded history of one variation in the Ruy Lopez:

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♘xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗e6**

White usually plays 9.c3, preserving his bishop on b3 from exchange and taking control of the important central square d4. In the World Championship Match-Tournament of 1948, Keres and Smyslov employed a different plan:

**9.♕e2**

Intending after 9...♘c5 10.♖d1 ♘xb3 11.axb3 ♗e7 to continue with 12.c4. The attack with c2-c4 is dangerous even if Black has removed his queen from the d-file. In Smyslov – Euwe (Moscow 1948 – in the Match-Tournament mentioned), Black played 11...♕c8 (instead of 11...♗e7). Play continued: 12.c4 dxc4 13.bxc4 ♗xc4 14.♕e4 ♘e7 15.♘a3 c6 (15...♗e6 16.♘xb5 is bad for Black) 16.♘xc4, and White quickly won.

Keres's idea gave rise to a number of interesting variations. Black clearly has no reason to hurry with 9...♘c5;

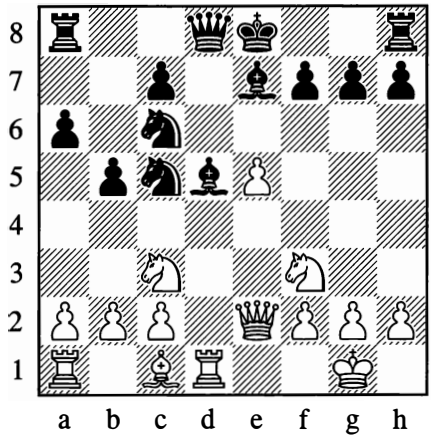
**9...♗e7**

Black attends to finishing his development with this move.

**10.♖d1**

White still continues as intended, and in answer to Black's 10th move he has a combinative stroke at his disposal:

**10...♘c5 11.♗xd5 ♗xd5 12.♘c3**



Which of the opponents does this position favour? How should the subsequent play develop? Let us examine some notable lines.

After 12...♘b4 13.♘e1! (only not 13.a3, on account of 13...♗c4 14♖xd8† ♖xd8 with a strong attack for Black) 13...c6 14.a3, White obtains a good position.

Once it was established that 12...♘b4 is by no means as strong as it looks, the following moves were suggested for Black:

**12...♗c4 13.♖xd8† ♖xd8**

Once again a scrutiny of all the possibilities began, for both White and Black:

**14.♕e3**

White needs to play this move, as 14.♕e1 would be very strongly answered by 14...♘b4.

**14...b4**

Black now continues the offensive in this way, because 14...♘b4 would be met by 15.♘e1. At first sight White has no choice. He has to move his knight to e4, but after 15.♘e4 ♖d1† 16.♘e1 Black obtains a very dangerous attack with 16...♘d4.

**15.b3**

This clever move was discovered instead of 15.♘e4. The idea is to answer 15...bxc3 with 16.♗a3, getting rid of the threat to the back rank and attacking two pieces at once. In view of this, however, Black doesn't take on c3 but withdraws his bishop to e6.

To this day many players champion this position for White, while to many it seems promising for Black.

Here for instance is what happened in Boleslavsky – Karaklajic, USSR – Yugoslavia team match, Leningrad 1957:

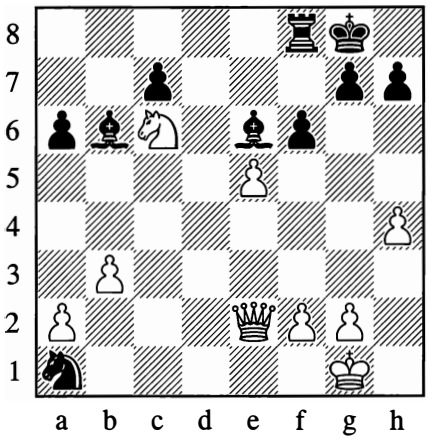
**15...♗e6 16.♘e4 ♖d1† 17.♘e1 ♘d4 18.♗b2! ♘xc2 19.♕e2 ♖xa1 20.♗xa1 ♘xa1 21.♘xc5 ♗xc5**

All these acute moves were analysed by Candidate Master L. Radchenko. Demonstrating an advantage for White is very difficult. If now 22.♕b2, then 22...♘xb3 23.axb3 0-0, and for the queen Black has adequate compensation – rook, bishop and pawn, with an active position.

**22.♘d3! ♗b6**

22...♗e7 is strongly answered by 23.♘f4.

**23.♘xb4 0-0 24.♘c6 f6 25.h4!**



Up to here the game had been following familiar patterns, but in earlier games White had played 25.h3 at this point. Boleslavsky's 25.h4 might not seem to be any improvement for White, but the whole matter is not so simple. In the subsequent struggle the h-pawn

advances further, so its position on h4 acquires great significance.

**25...♔h8 26.♔h2 ♗d7**

26...♗g8 was better.

**27.exf6! ♗xc6**

The pawn cannot be taken either way, on account of 28.♕e7.

**28.♕e7 ♖g8 29.fxg7†**

29.f7 is inadequate in view of 29...♗d5 30.f8=♕ ♖xf8 31.♕xf8† ♗g8, with three pieces for the queen.

**29...♖xg7 30.♕f8† ♖g8 31.♕f6† ♖g7 32.h5! ♔g8 33.♕xc6 ♖f7 34.♕c3**

White soon won.

After this, can we say that the variation with the queen sacrifice is discarded outright and relegated to the archives? Of course not. Black too undoubtedly has possibilities for strengthening his play. The assessments have already changed more than once in this variation, and they may change again. They did indeed change after the game Suetin – Geller, 25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958, in which (after 25.h4) the continuation was:

**25...fxe5 26.♕xe5 ♖f6 27.g4 ♗xf2† 28.♔h1 ♗xh4**

With an eventual draw.

It is now up to White to say the next word, and he will – we can have no doubt about that. Such are the paths of creative investigation that should be followed by all lovers of chess who strive to perfect their play.

Any player can join in this great creative work. Is it not interesting to invent new variations yourself, to refute the plans and combinations of chess masters or to find valuable improvements in old theoretical lines?

Interesting it is, of course, but by no means easy. To work on chess theory in this way, you need a good deal of knowledge and great persistence.

Don't try to tackle everything at once. To begin with, settle on one or two openings that you will play with White, and one or two that you will play with Black. Try to learn as much as possible about the openings you have chosen. Check through their main variations several times, using an openings manual. Play these openings in tournaments and friendly games; this will give you useful experience and acquaint you with the typical positions that characterize your opening. If you study opening systems in this way, you too will possibly succeed in finding major improvements in them – finding "innovations", as chessplayers say.

And now, a few concluding remarks on how openings should be studied.

You should play through opening variations on a chessboard, looking carefully into the rationale of the manoeuvres involved. You must not simply accept on trust everything written in the handbooks; you need to form an independent assessment of the positions that arise. You are therefore definitely not advised to play through opening after opening, particularly at a fast pace.

Opening variations usually end with an evaluation: "White has the advantage", "Black's position is better", "The chances are equal", and so on. Try to understand what these verdicts are based on. Don't forget that at the present time, the opponents in a game will usually be striving for positions that offer a wealth of possibilities for play, and chances for both sides.

Thoughtful and expedient preparation of the openings will contribute to your successes in tournaments; it will enrich your play, and help you to learn the art of objective and accurate analysis.

# Appendix

# Chess Compositions

Chess compositions (problems and studies) are an independent department of chess, separate from the practical game. They present us with artificially constructed chess positions in which we are called upon to carry out a task set by the composer. Thus, their immediate purpose is to set the solver a puzzle; a more elevated purpose lies in the artistic expression of certain chess ideas.

The solution of a *problem* is confined within a prescribed number of moves (for example, mate in two). *Studies* are free from this limitation – they merely require you to reach by force a position that is clearly won or clearly drawn, according to what the composer stipulates.

The composer of problems or studies must fulfil a number of demands. The chief of these is that there should only be one solution and that the position should be constructed economically (with no redundant pieces or pawns). The position must also be legal (that is, it must be one that could possibly be reached in a game from the normal starting position). Apart from these obligatory requirements, there are some others – so-called "artistic" ones. The latter cannot be considered wholly undebatable, and some of them, especially in the case of problems, are conventional in character, sometimes merely answering to the aesthetic tastes of a particular epoch.

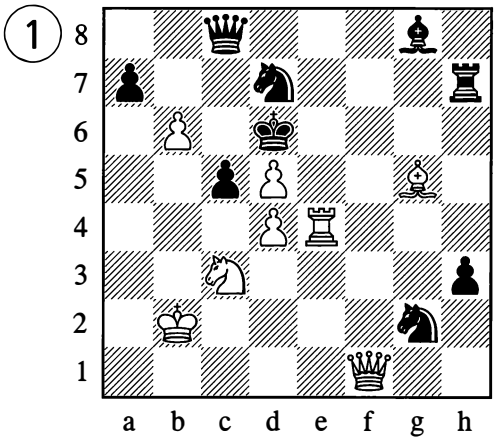
The following are examples of concepts recognized in the world of chess problems. A *pure* mate is when each square round Black's king is denied to him for one reason only (the square is either occupied by a black piece or attacked by a single white one). An *economical* mate is one in which all White's pieces participate (exceptions are allowed for the king and pawns). A *model* mate is one that is both pure and economical. However, to require all variations to end in a model mate would be too severe and often unattainable. There are also other requirements, neglect of which is considered a defect, as it detracts from the artistic value of the problem. The first move, for example, is not allowed to be a check (this restriction doesn't apply to studies!) or a capture, or a pawn promotion (particularly to a queen). It is also undesirable for the first move to deprive the black king of square it can move to. All this is understandable, since such primitive methods would rob the problem of its necessary difficulty; they would be improving White's position in a very obvious way. (Usually White is the player presented with the task, and White moves first.)

## CHESS PROBLEMS

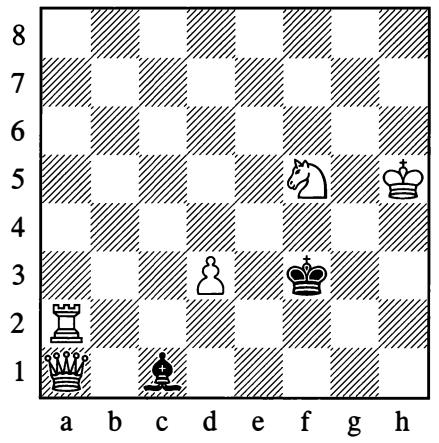
Historically, problems and studies arose out of endgames. But whereas studies give us natural configurations of pieces reminiscent of practical play, such positions are only exceptionally seen in problems. Many practical players don't like this. "White's huge advantage means there's no need for any struggle," they say. "As for finding a mate in *two* moves when a mate in *three* is no trouble, this isn't of much importance." Perhaps you too reason in the same way, dear reader. But a struggle is completely beside the point here. The problem challenges your *ingenuity*. It requires you to discover a surprising move, even (let us say) an incredible one. The expression "problem moves" does not exist for nothing. The brilliance of such moves creates an impression of artistry. The problems given below are deliberately chosen to reflect various epochs, themes and styles. They are united only by their acuity of thought and their power to entertain.

### (A) TWO-MOVERS

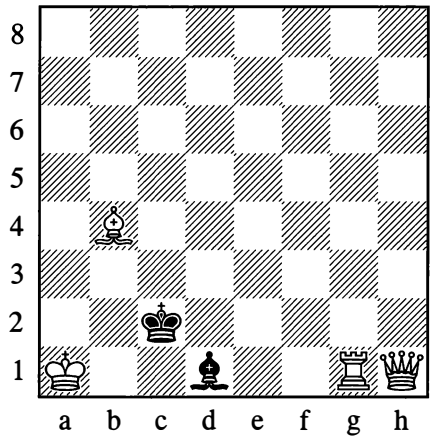
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)



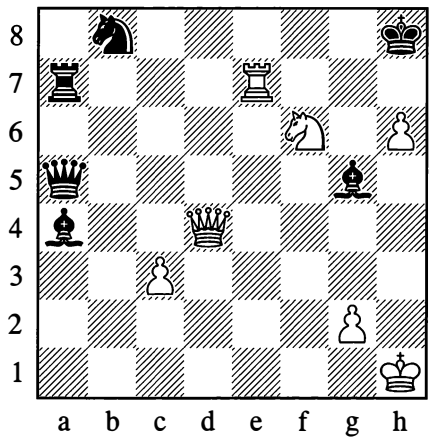
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)



(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

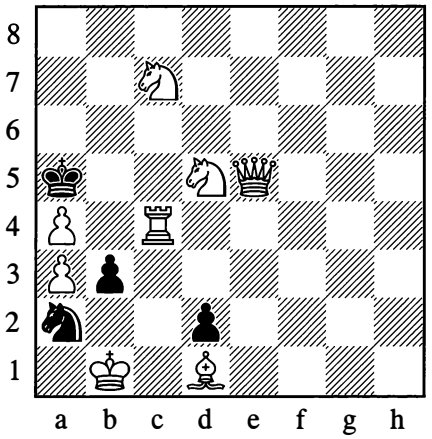


(White to play and mate in 2 moves)



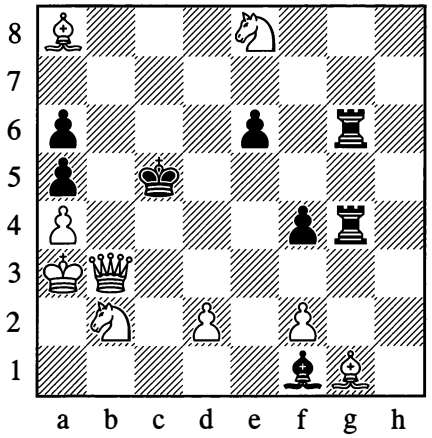
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

5



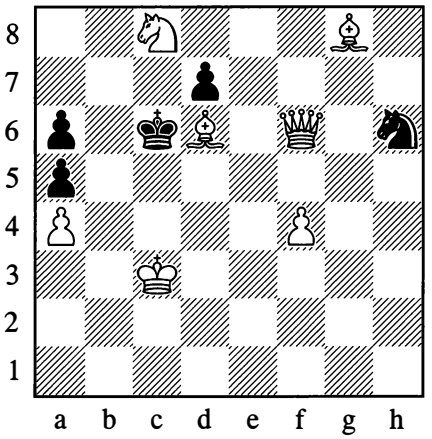
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

8



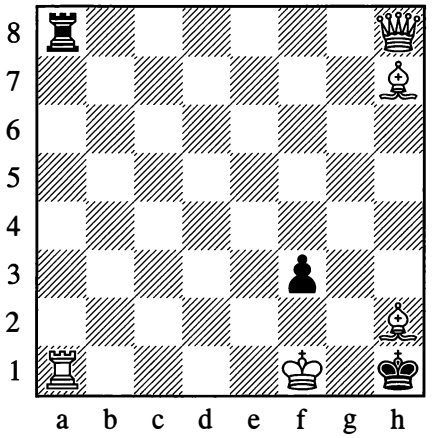
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

6



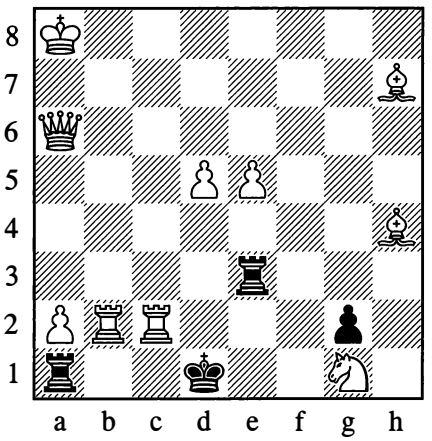
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

9



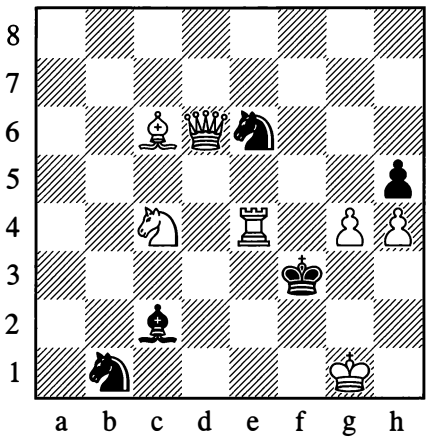
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

7



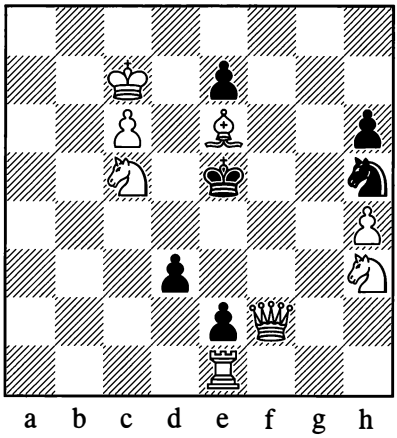
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

10



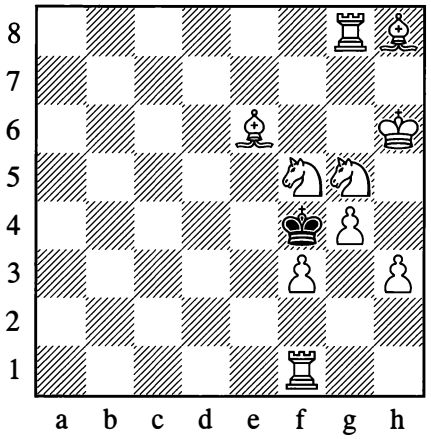
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

11



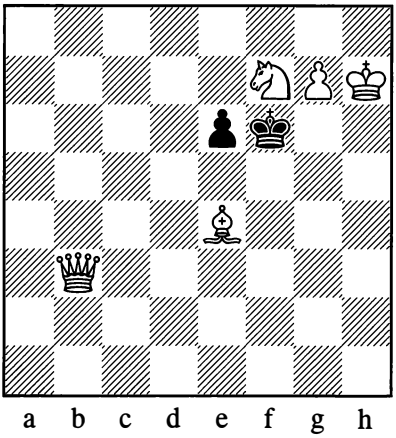
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

14



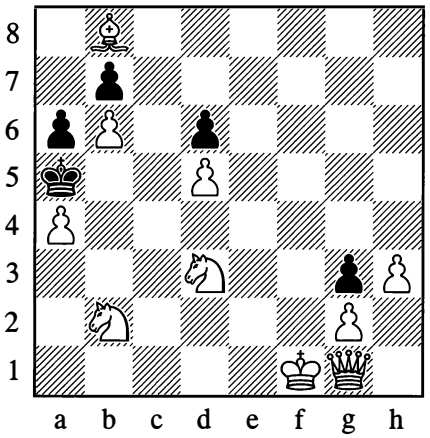
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

12



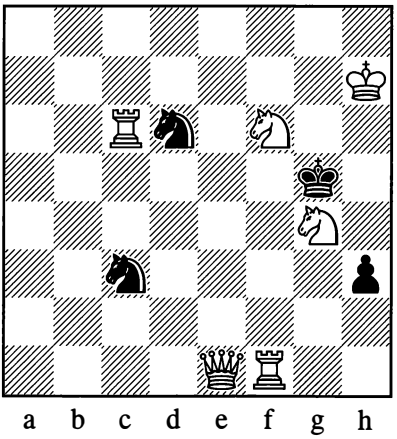
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

15



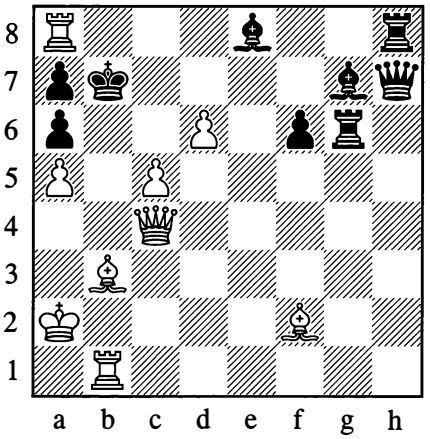
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

13



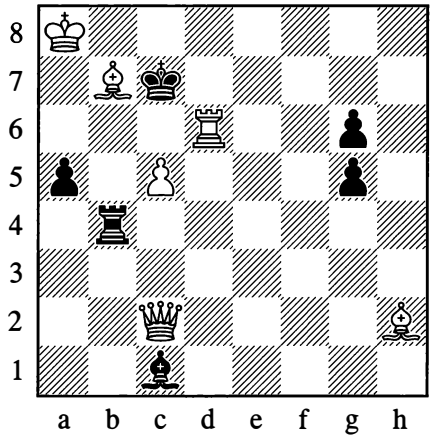
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

16



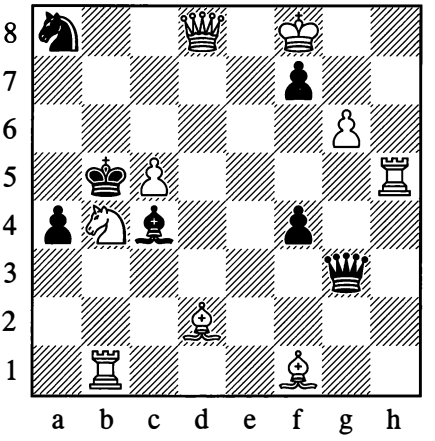
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

17



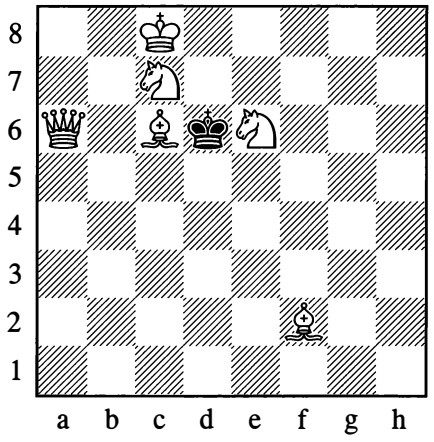
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

20



(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

18

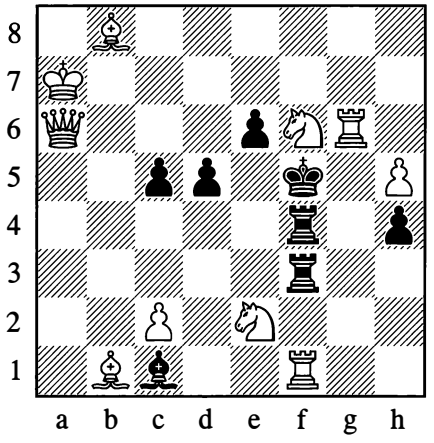


(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

**(B) THREE-MOVERS**

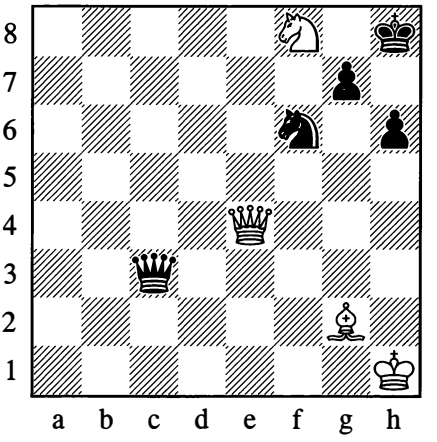
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

19



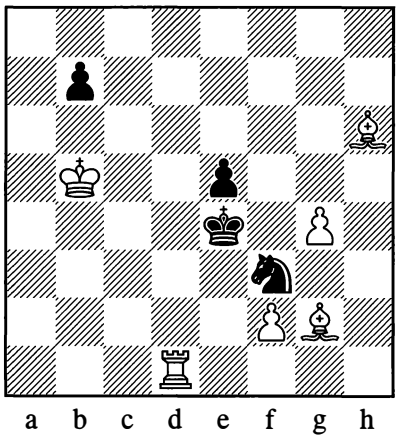
(White to play and mate in 2 moves)

1



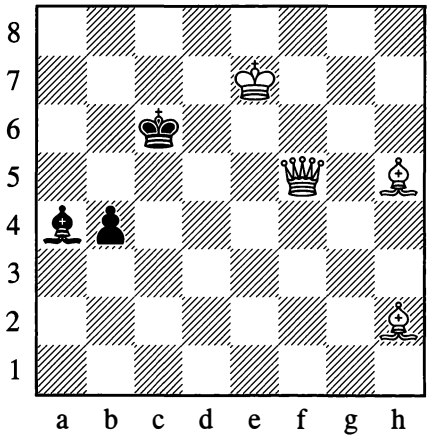
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

2



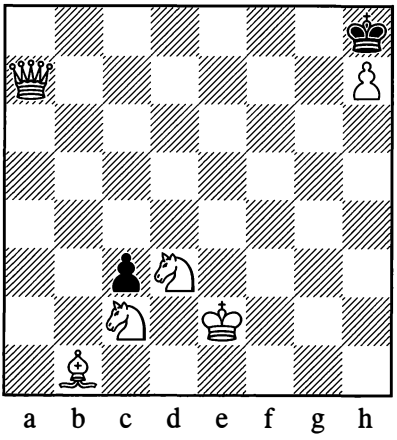
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

5



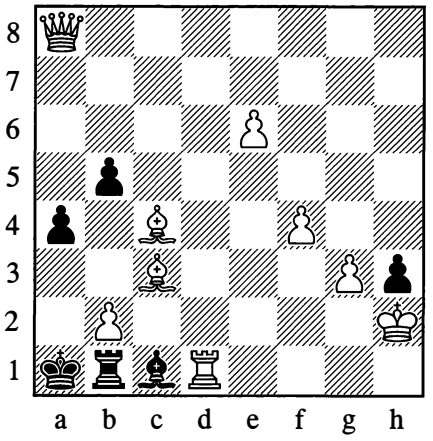
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

3



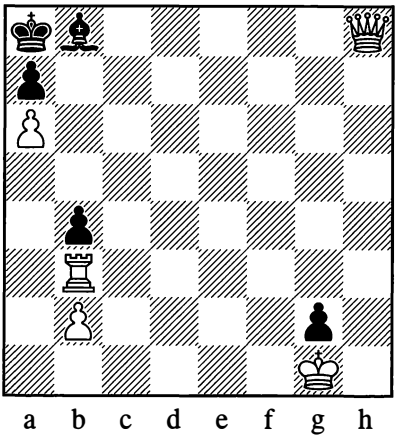
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

6



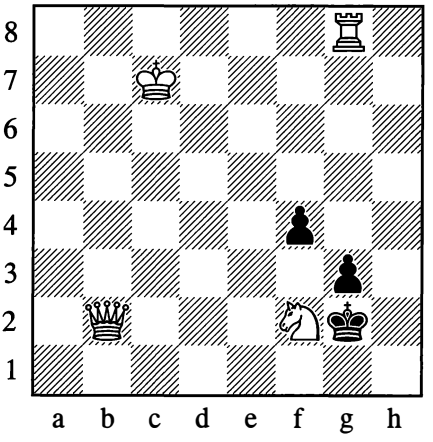
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

4



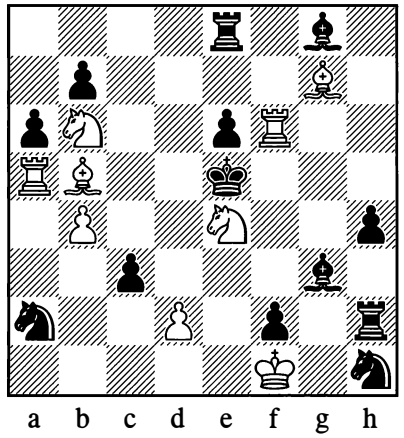
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

7



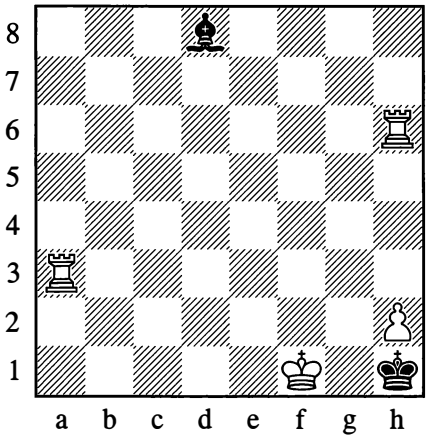
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

8



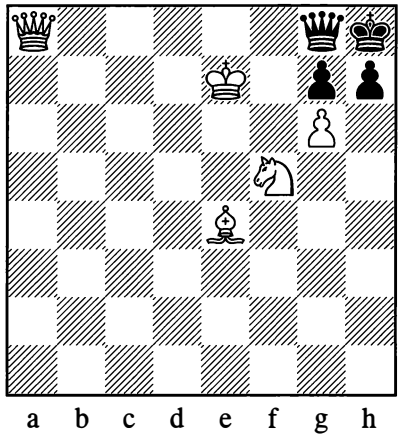
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

11



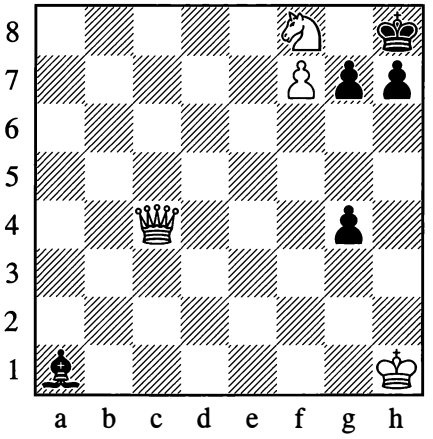
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

9



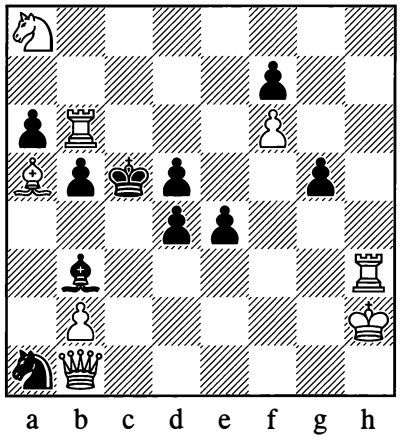
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

12



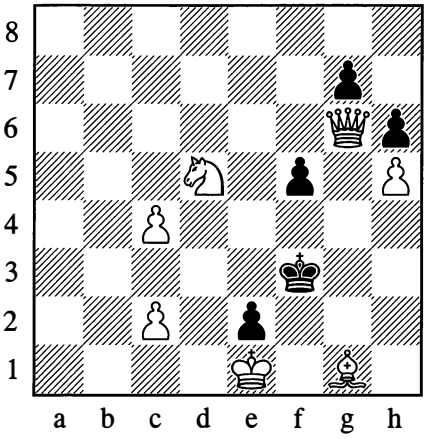
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

10



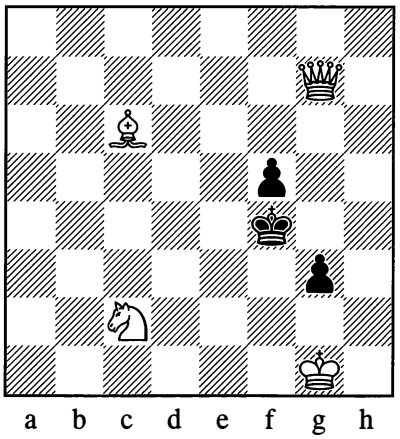
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

13



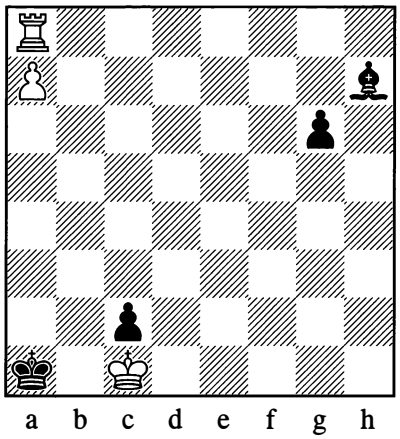
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

14



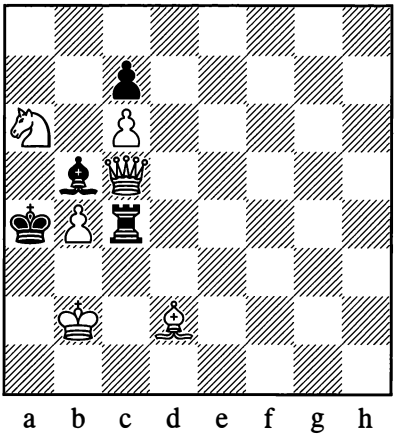
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

17



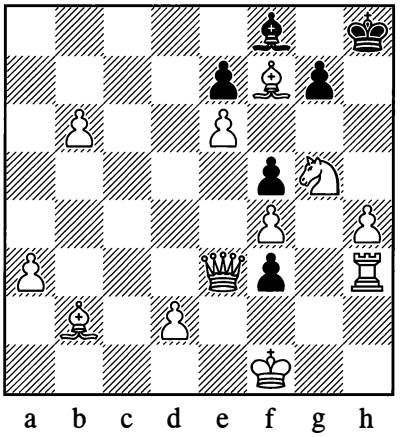
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

15



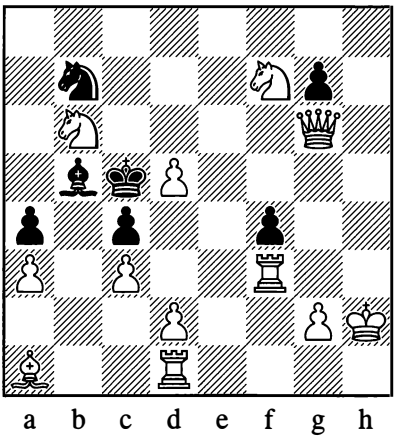
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

18



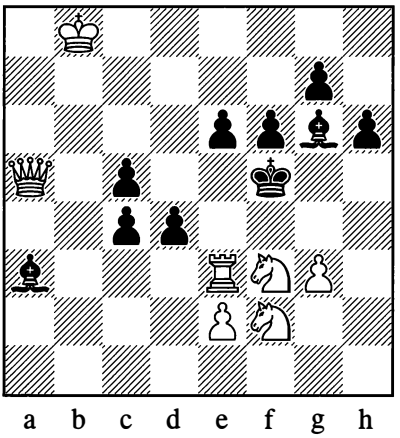
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

16



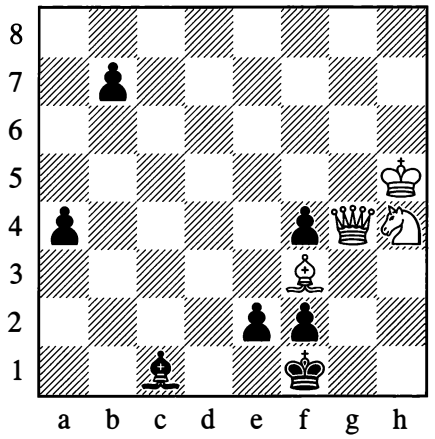
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

19



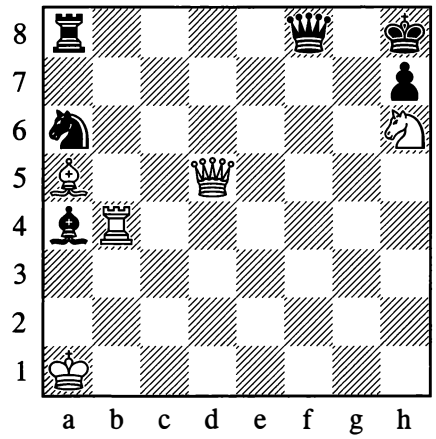
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

20



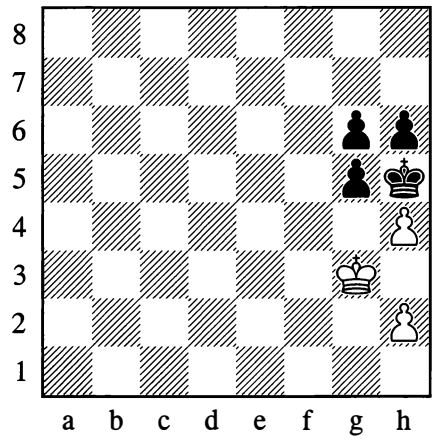
(White to play and mate in 3 moves)

2



*Mate in 4 moves*

3

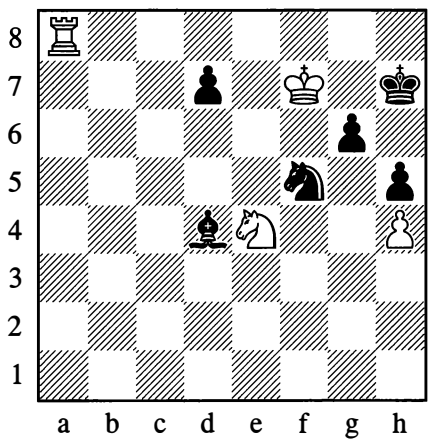


*Mate in 4 moves*

## (C) MORE-MOVERS

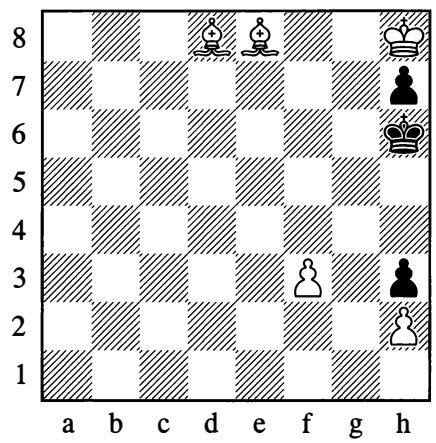
The difficulty of the solution isn't determined by the number of moves – more-movers are often easier than three-movers. But if your attempts fail, simply consult the solutions. The ideas of these problems are closely related to practical chess and are highly amusing.

1



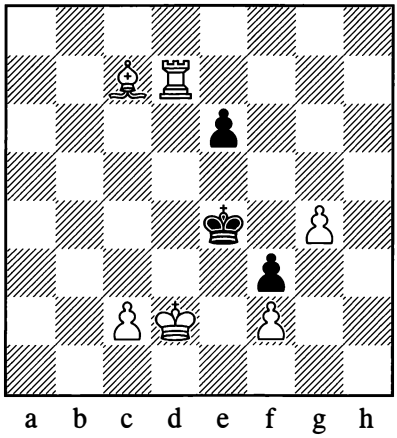
*Mate in 5 moves*

4



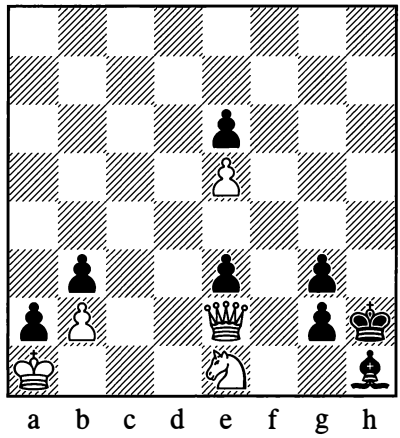
*Mate in 4 moves*

5



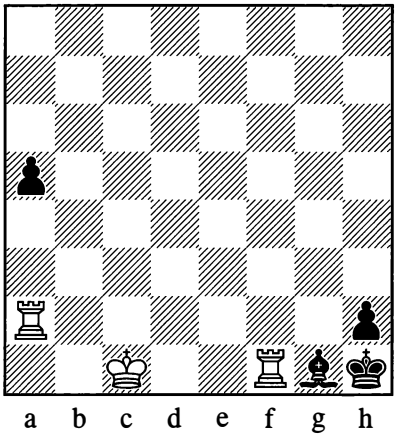
*Mate in 4 moves*

8



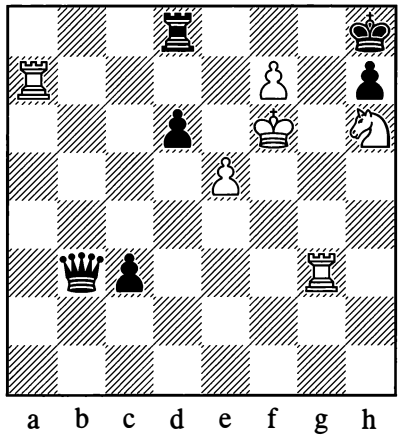
*Mate in 4 moves*

6



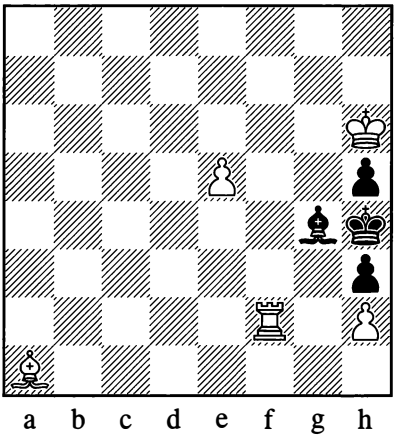
*Mate in 5 moves*

9



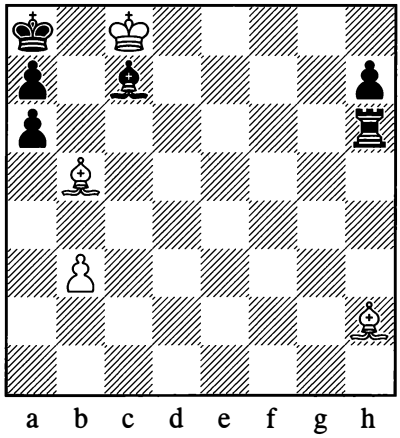
*Mate in 5 moves*

7



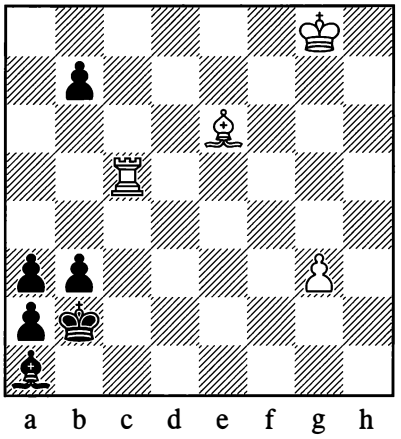
*Mate in 4 moves*

10



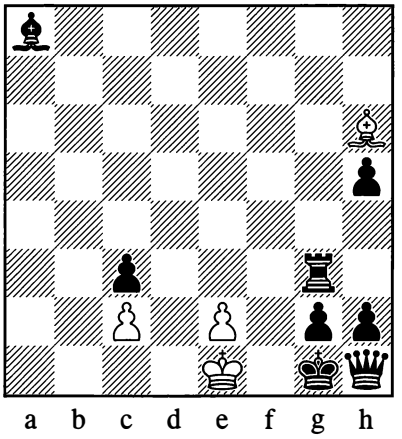
*Mate in 6 moves*

11



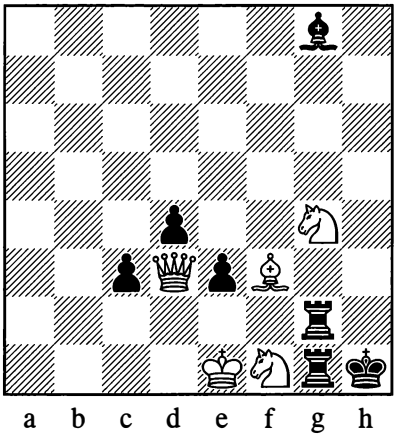
*Mate in 17 moves*

14



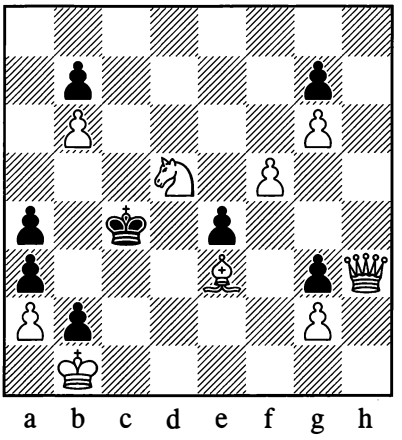
*Mate in 5 moves*

12



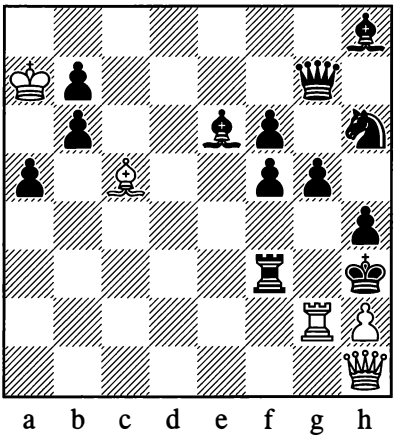
*Mate in 4 moves*

15



*Mate in 4 moves*

13



*Mate in 7 moves*

# STUDIES

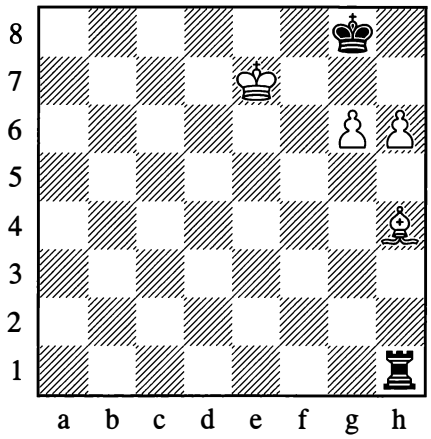
The studies given below are arranged in increasing order of difficulty – the easier ones are on this page, while those on the next pages are more difficult. Try to solve each one of them for yourself – even over the course of several days, if you don't succeed straight away.

## (A) WINNING PLAY

**(White to play and win)**

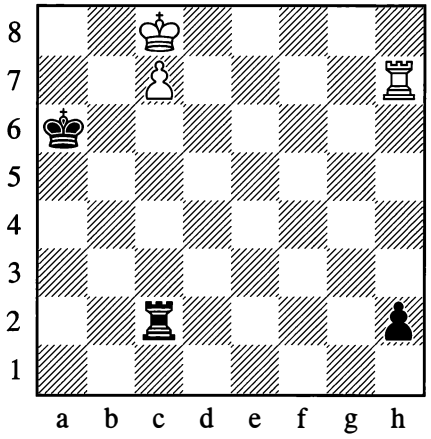
W. Steinitz, 1880

1



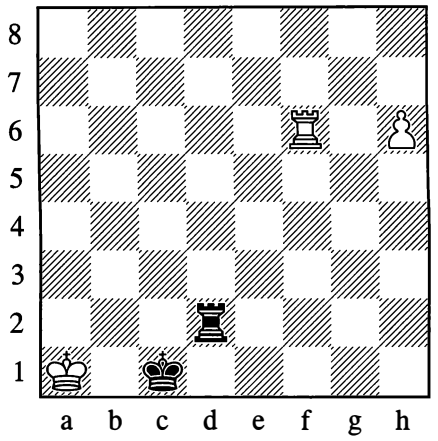
Em. Lasker, 1890

2



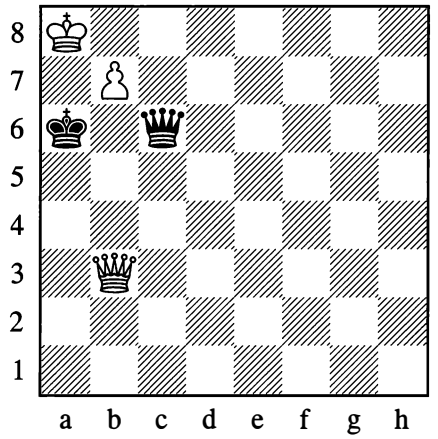
A. Troitsky (before 1924)

3



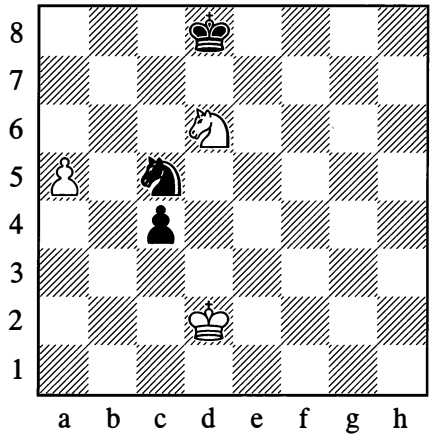
L. van Vliet, 1888

4



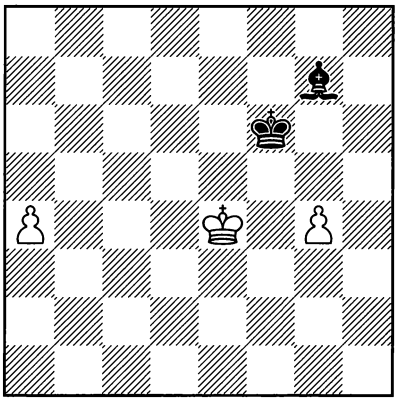
Textbook study

5



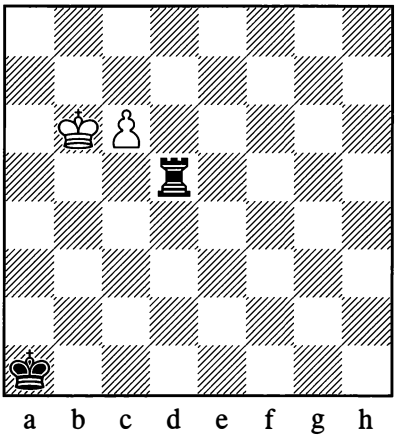
H. Otten, 1892

6



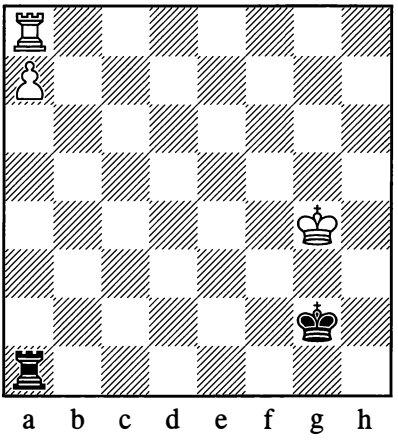
F. Saavedra, 1895

7



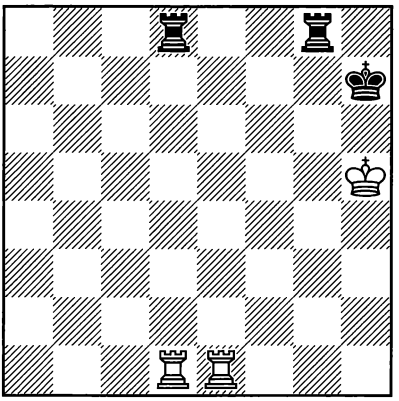
A. Troitsky, 1896

8



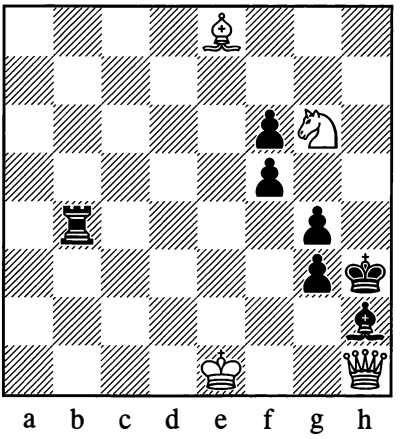
H. Rinck, 1921

9



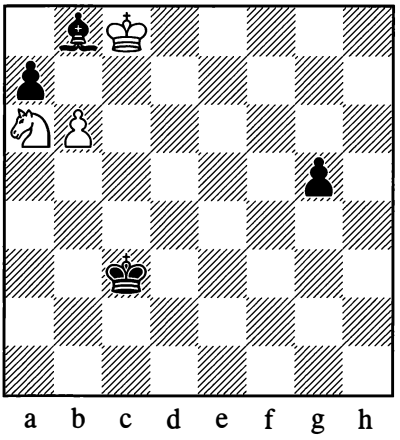
A. Troitsky (version), 1897

10



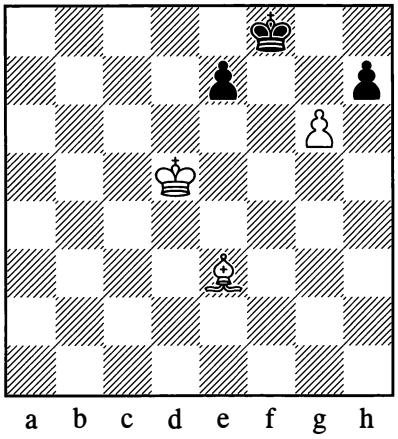
H. Rinck, 1904

11



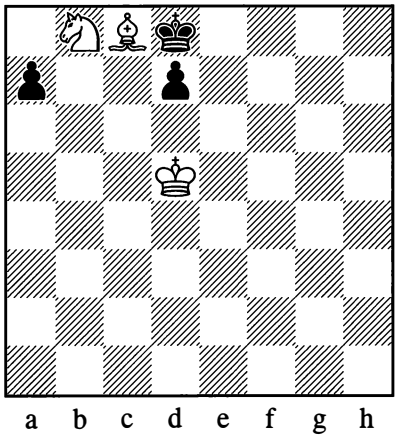
A. Troitsky, 1895

12



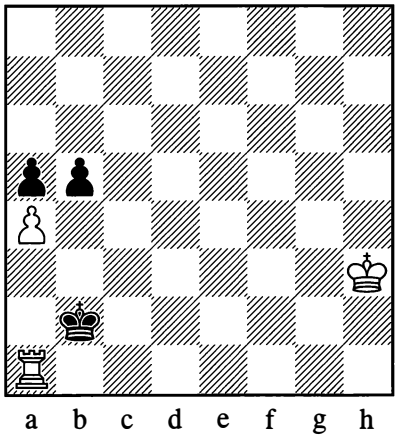
J. Gunst, 1922

13



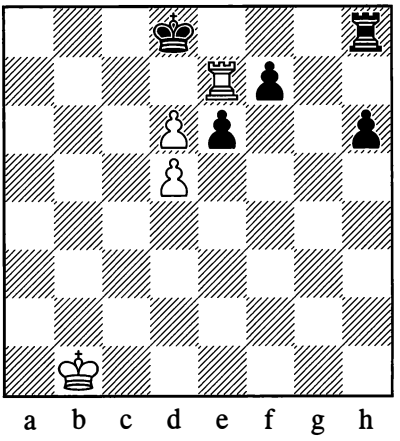
M. Grinfeld, 1903

14



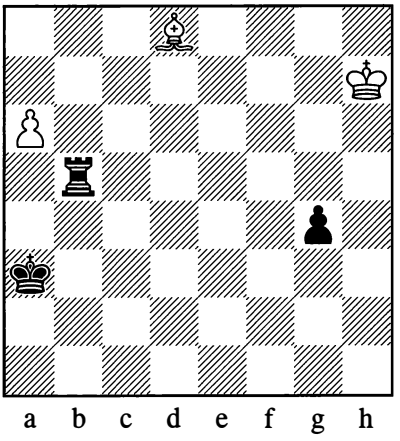
A. Nimzowitsch (version) 1919

15



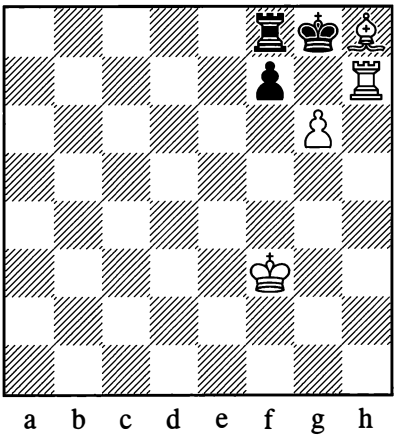
A. Troitsky (before 1924)

16



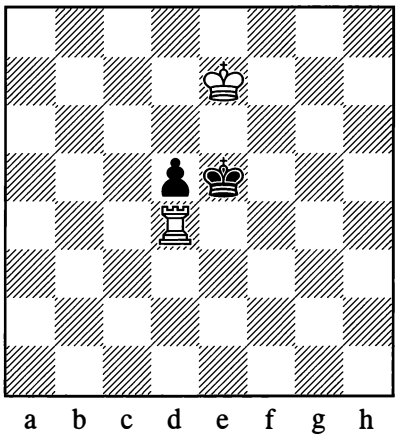
S. Kozlovsky, 1931

17



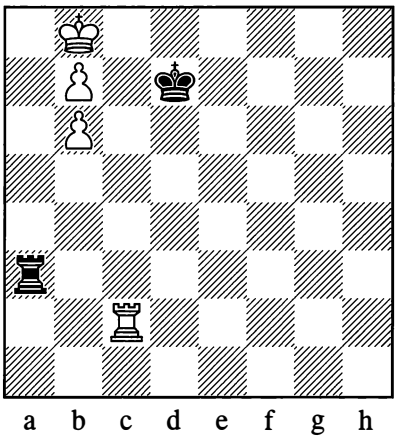
R. Reti, 1922

18



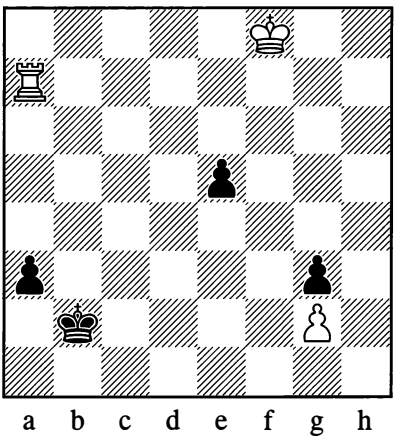
O. Duras, 1902

19



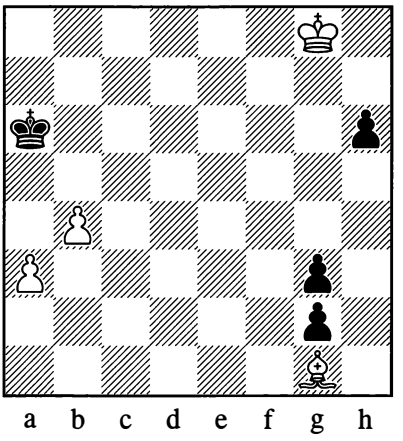
B. Horwitz, 1879

20



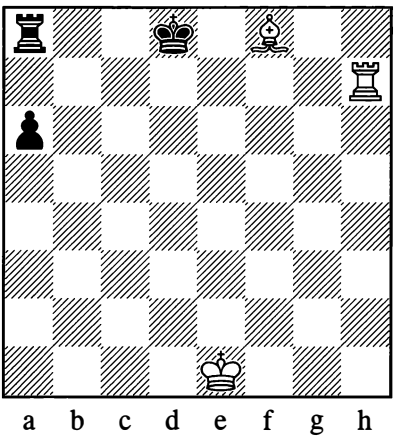
L. Kubbel, 1909

21



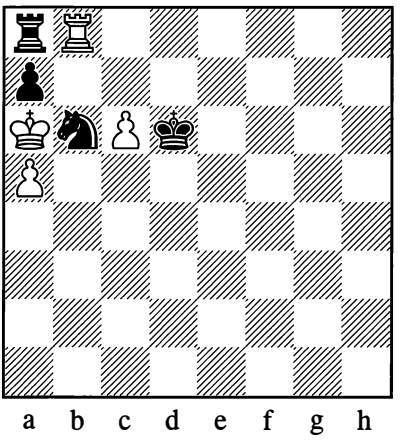
L. Kubbel, 1909

22



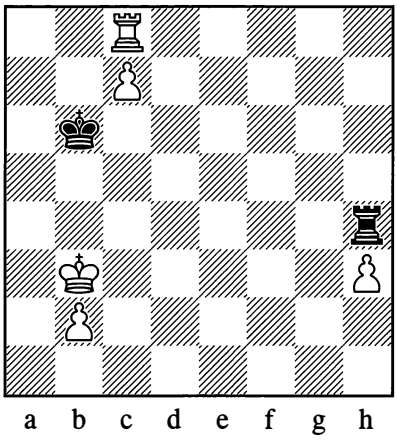
M. Kliatskin, 1924

23



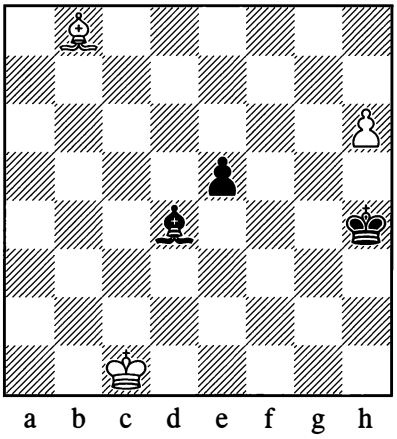
T. Kok, 1936

24



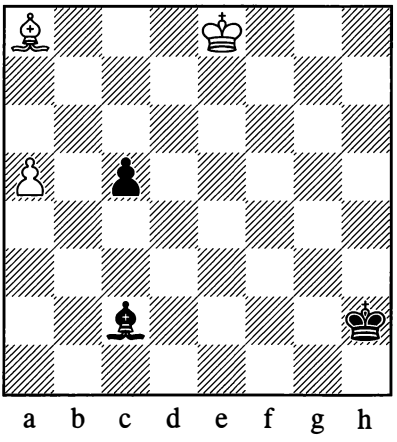
P. Heyeker, 1930

25



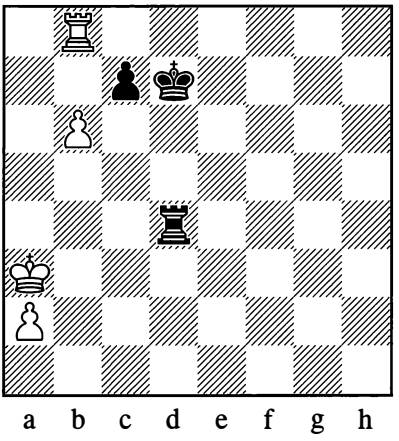
A. Troitsky, 1925

26



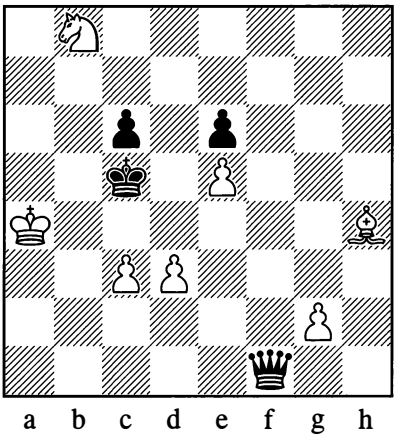
J. Moravets, 1937

27



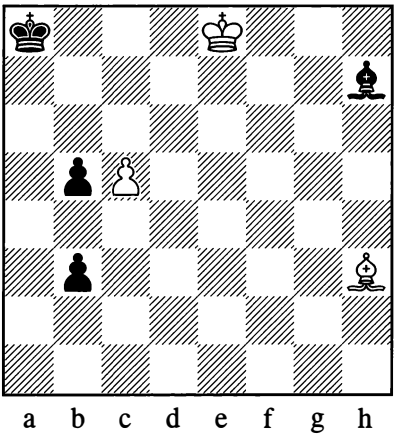
L. Kubbel, 1918

28



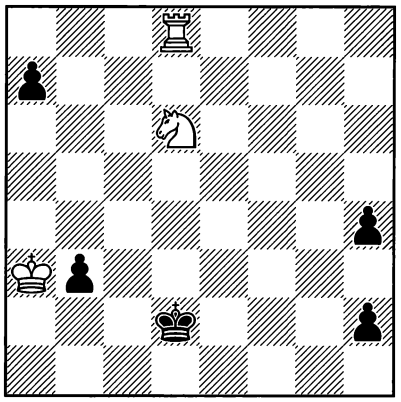
A. Troitsky, 1927

29



R. Reti, 1923

30



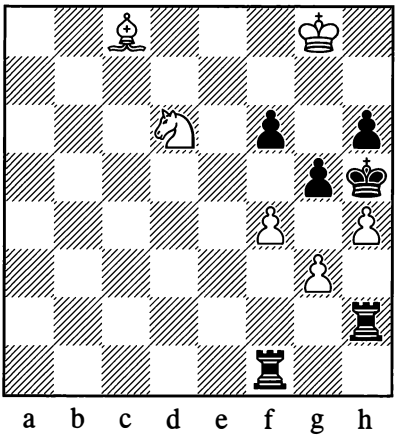
## (B) DRAWING PLAY

**(White to play and draw)**

These studies are given separately from those involving winning play, so that the typical methods of defence in the endgame can be brought out more distinctly. Sometimes the solution involves stalemate, in other cases it utilizes some peculiarities of the piece configuration that make for interesting exceptions to the rules.

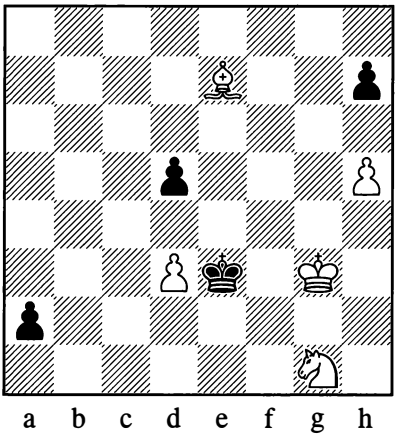
G. Kasparian, 1935

31



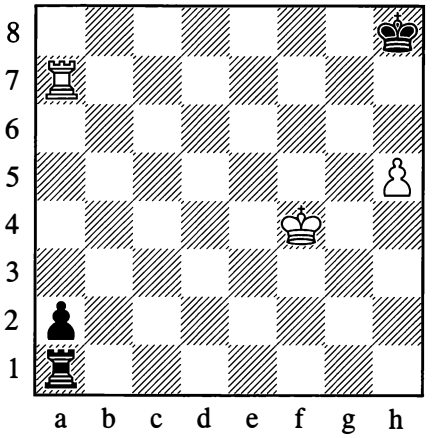
V. and M. Platov, 1909

32



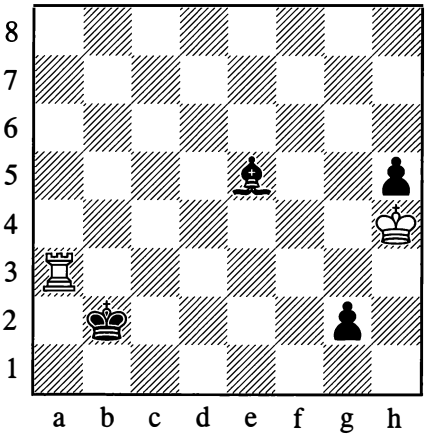
D. Ponziani, 1769

1



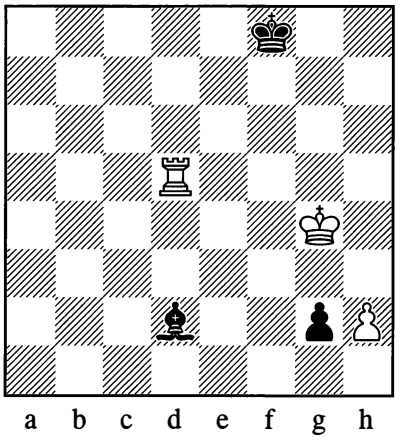
A. Troitsky (before 1910)

2



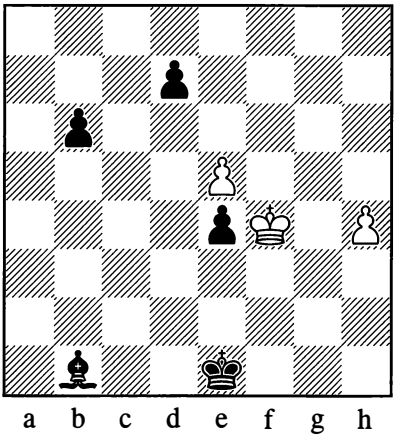
A. Troitsky, 1895

3



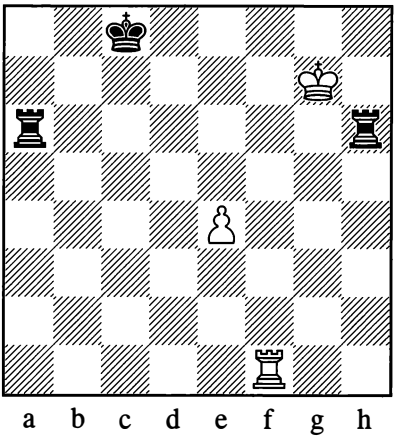
G. Andersson, 1934

4



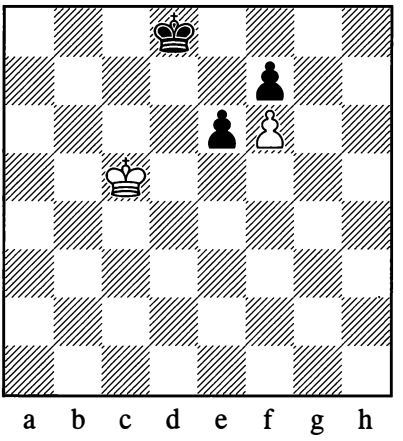
S. Kozlovsky, 1930

5



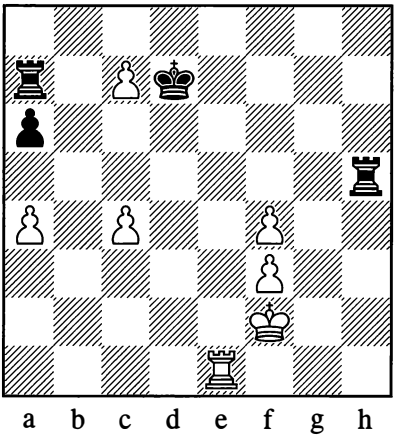
N. Grigoriev, 1924

6



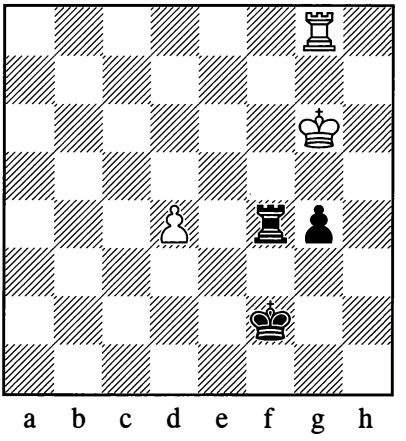
S. Kozlovsky, 1932

7



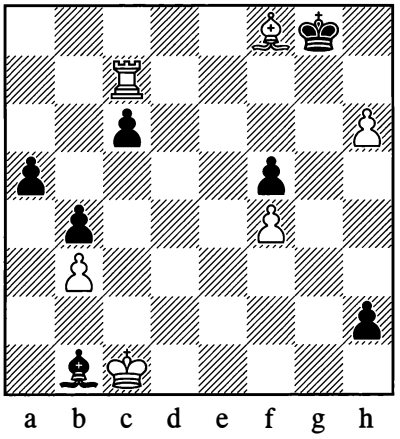
A. Herbstmann, 1935

8



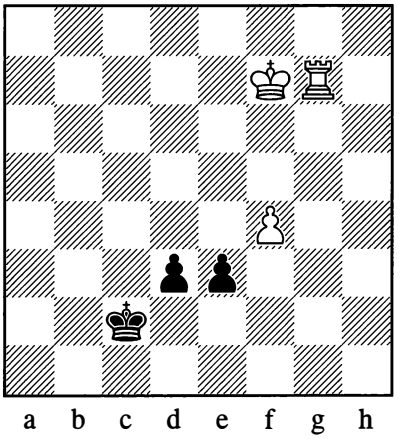
V. and M. Platov, 1907

9



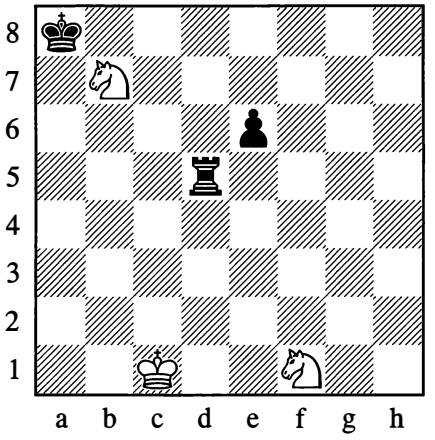
V. Chekhover, 1945

10



M. Liburkin, 1946

11



# SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

## (A) Two-Movers

**1.** I. Shumov, 1878: **1.♕f7!!**

**2.** A. Galitsky, 1905: **1.♖d2!**

**3.** M. Havel, 1900: **1.♖g4!**

**4.** A. Petrov, 1864: **1.♕d7!!**

**5.** S. Loyd, 1878: **1.♕a1!!** (1...♘b4 2.axb4#)

**6.** N. Maksimov, 1898: **1.♕h8!!** (1...♘xg8 2.♕h1#; 1...♔b7 2.♗d5#)

**7.** J. Babson, 1893: **1.a4!!**

**8.** N. Maksimov, 1898: **1.♕g3!** (1...fxg3 2.f4#)

**9.** J. Khokholous, 1879: **1.♗c7!** (1...♖xa1† 2.♗b1#; 1...♖a2 2.♗c2#)

**10.** A. Galitsky, 1894: **1.♗a4!!** (1...♗xe4 2.♗d1#)

**11.** W. Shinkman, 1909: **1.♖f1!** (1...exf1=♕ 2.♕b2#)

**12.** H. Gottschall: **1.♗f5!!**

**13.** S. Loyd, 1876: **1.♘f2!!**

**14.** D. Chinn, 1860: **1.♔g7!!**

**15.** R. Wormall, 1866: **1.♕h1!!** (1...♔xb6 2.♘c4#)

**16.** W. Grimshaw, 1853: **1.♕g8!!** "Clearing a path" (for the bishop)

**17.** J. Hartong, 1920: **1.♕b2!!** (1...♖xb2 2.♖d2#; 1...♗xb2 2.♖d4#)

**18.** A. Guliaev, 1956: **1.♕f1!**

**19.** L. Kubbel, 1928: **1.♘e8!** (1...♖a4 2.c4#; 1...♖a3 2.c3#)

**20.** L. Isaev, 1930: **1.♕f6!** (1...♕xg6 2.♘c2#, not 2.♘d3; 1...♕g5 2.♘a6#, not 2.♘d3; 1...♔a5 2.♘d3#!)

## (B) Three-Movers

**1.** Ercole del Rio, 1750: **1.♕h7†! ♘xh7 2.♘g6† ♔g8 3.♗d5#**

**2.** G. Lawday, 1845 (simplified version by L. Kubbel): **1.♗c1! b6 2.♖d2! ♔f4 3.♖d4#** The Indian theme.

**3.** J. Tolosa y Carreras, 1892: **1.♘b2! cxb2 2.♘a1! bxa1=♕ 3.♕xa1#**

**4.** P. Daly, 1935: **1.♖h3! b3 2.♖h1! gxh1=♕† 3.♕xh1#**

**5.** W. Shinkman, 1890: **1.♗e2!** (1...♔b6 2.♕a5†!!; 1...♔b7 2.♕c8†!!)

**6.** A. Galitsky, 1890 (corrected 1903): **1.♗h8!!** (1...♗xb2 2.♖h1; 1...♖xb2† 2.♕g2!)

**7.** S. Loyd, 1857: **1.♘g4†** (1...♔h1 2.♕h2†!!; 1...♔h3 2.♘h2!!; 1...♔f3 2.♕c2!; 1...♔f1 2.♖a8)

**8.** S. Loyd, 1903 ("Steinitz Gambit"): **1.♔e2!! f1=♕†** (1...f1=♘† 2.♖f2†) **2.♔e3!**

**9.** T. Herbeck, 1923: **1.♘h6!! gxh6 2.g7†! ♔xg7 3.♕a1#**

**10.** I. Kers, 1932: **1.♕d3! g4** (threatening ...g3†; 1...♘c2 2.♕xb3; against other moves, 2.♖h8 is playable) **2.♕c4†!!**

**11.** F. Palitsch, 1930: **1.♔f2! ♗h4† 2.♖g3!!**

**12.** S. Loyd, 1869: **1.♕f1! ♗b2 2.♕b1** (attacking the bishop and the h7-point); **1...♗c3(d4) 2.♕d3!**; **1...♗e5(f6) 2.♕f5!**; **1...h6 2.♕b1**; **1...g3 2.♘g6†**

**13.** S. Loyd, 1876: **1.♗a7! f4** (1...♔e4 2.♕g3) **2.♘b6!! ♔e3 3.♕d3#**

**14.** J. Kohtz and C. Kocklekorn, 1903: **1.♗h1! g2 2.♔xg2! ♔e4 3.♕d4#**

**15.** P. Orlimont, 1907: **1.♕f5! ♖xc6 2.♕c5! ♖xc5 3.♘xc5#**

**16.** F. Healey, 1861: **1.♖h1!! ♗e8** (1...♘ 2.♕d6#) **2.♕b1 ♗b5** (otherwise 3.♕b4#) **3.♕g1#**. Theme of "clearing a path" (or "Bristol" theme).

**17.** J. Møller, 1918: **1.♖g8! ♗xg8** (1...♔a2 2.♖b8) **2.a8=♕†! ♗a2 3.♕h8#**

**18.** N. Heeg, 1906: **1.♕b3!! f2 2.♖c3 g6 3.♖c8#**

**19.** N. Malakhov, 1924: **1.♕d8! ♗h7 2.♖e5†! fxe5 3.♘h4#** (1...♗f7 2.♘h4†; 1...dxe3 2.♕d2!! exd2 3.e4#)

**20.** S. Kriuchkov, 1927 (developing a theme from Galitsky): **1.♗c6!! bxc6 2.♘f3!** (threatening 3.♕h3#; 2...e1=♕ 3.♘h2#); **1...e1=♕ 2.♗g2†**; **1...e1=♘ 2.♗b5†**; **1...♔e1 2.♘f3† ♔d1 3.♗xa4#**

## (C) More-Movers

**1.** A. Petrov, 1845: **1.♘g5† ♔h6 2.♖h8†! ♗xh8 3.♔g8!! ♘d6 4.♔xh8 ♘f7† 5.♘xf7#**

**2.** J. Kling, 1850: **1.♖b8! ♖xb8 2.♗c3† ♕g7 3.♕g8†! ♖xg8 4.♘f7#**

**3.** A. Galitsky, 1900: **1.h3! gxh4† 2.♔f4 g5† 3.♔f5 g4 4.hxg4#!**

**4.** A. Anderssen, 1842: **1.♗h5!! ♔xh5 2.♔g7 h6 3.♔f6! ♔h4 4.♔g6#**

**5.** P. Homma, 1939: **1.♔c3! e5 2.♖d4†! exd4† 3.♔c4 d3 4.cxd3#**

**6.** S. Loyd, 1859: **1.♖af2! a4 2.♔d2! a3 3.♖a1! a2 4.♔e1! ♗xf2† 5.♔xf2#**

**7.** S. Loyd, 1877: **1.♖b2! ♗e2 2.♖b4† ♗g4 3.♗d4!** and **4.♗f2#**.

**8.** P. Orlimont, 1939: **1.♘d3! ♔g1** (otherwise mate next move) **2.♘f4 ♔h2 3.♘h3! ♔xh3 4.♕h5#**

**9.** E. Zepler, 1936: **1.♖a8!! ♖xa8 2.e6!!** (threatening ♖g8†) **2...♕b8 3.♖g8†! ♕xg8 4.fxg8=♕† ♖xg8 5.♘f7#!**

**10.** H. Hindre, 1952: **1.♗c4!** (1.♗f1? ♖g6!) **1...♖h5 2.♗d3!** (2.♗xa6? ♖b5!) **2...♖h4 3.♗e2 ♖h3 4.♗f1 ♖xh2 5.♗xa6** and **6.♗b7#**

**11.** A. Guliaev, 1950: **1.♔h7! b6 2.♖c6! b5 3.♔h6 b4 4.♗g8! ♔b1 5.♗h7† ♔b2 6-13.♔g6-d2† ♔b2 14.♖g6! ♔b1 15.♖d6† ♔b2 16.♖d3 ♔b1 17.♖xb3#** A pretty alternative solution was found by A. Studenetsky (1953): **15.♖g4(b6)† ♔b2 16.♗c2! bxc2 17.♖xb4#**

**12.** P. Orlimont, 1906: **1.♔d1!! ♗b3†** (1...c2† 2.♔c1!; or 1...e2† 2.♕xe2!) **2.♔c1 ♗c2 3.♕d1! ♗xd1 4.♘g3#**

**13.** L. Kubbel, 1939: **1.♖g1 ♖g3 2.hxg3† ♔g4 3.gxh4† ♔h5** (3...♔f4 4.♗d6† ♔e3 5.♖g3† ♔d4 6.♕d1† ♔c4 7.♕d3#) **4.hxg5† ♔g6 5.gxh6† ♔h7** (5...♔f7 6.♕h5† ♔g8 7.h7#) **6.hxg7† ♔g8 7.gxh8=♘#**

**14.** S. Loyd, 1886: **1.♗c1! h4 2.♗f4! ♗b7** (2...♗c6 3.♗c7; 2...♗d5 3.♗d6; 2...♗e4 3.♗e5) **3.♗b8** and **4.♗a7**(†).

**15.** A. Nemtsov, 1947: **1.♕h7!! ♔d3 2.♕h8!**, placing Black in zugzwang: **2...♔e2 3.♕h1!**; **2...♔c4 3.♕e8!**. In the event of 1.♕h8? ♔d3!, White would be in zugzwang himself. Other variations: 1...♔xd5 2.♕g8† ♔c6 3.♕e8†; 1...♔b5 2.♕xg7 ♔a5 3.♕c3†

## SOLUTIONS TO STUDIES (Winning Play)

**1. 1.h7† ♔g7 2.h8=♕†! ♔xh8 3.♔f7 ♖f1† 4.♗f6† ♖xf6† 5.♔xf6 ♔g8 6.g7** and wins.

**2. 1.♔b8 ♖b2† 2.♔a8 ♖c2 3.♖h6† ♔a5 4.♔b7 ♖b2† 5.♔a7 ♖c2 6.♖h5† ♔a4 7.♔b6** (threatening 8.♖xh2) **7...♖b2† 8.♔a6 ♖c2 9.♖h4† ♔a3 10.♔b6 ♖b2† 11.♔a5 ♖c2 12.♖h3† ♔a2 13.♖xh2!** and wins.

**3. 1.h7 ♖h2 2.♖f1† ♔~ 3.♖f2†!**, or **1...♖d8 2.♖c6† ♔~ 3.♖d6†** and wins.

**4. 1.♕b4 ♕h1!** (in a study dated 1851, the queen is on h1 already; if 1...♕d5 or ♕f3, then 2.♕a4† ♔b6 3.♕b3† ♕xb3 4.b8=♕†; if 1...♕g2 then 2.♕a3† and 3.♕b2†) **2.♕a3† ♔b6** (or 2...♔b5 3.♕b2† ♔c4 4.♔a7 ♕g1† 5.♔a6 ♕g6† 6.♕b6) **3.♕b2† ♔a6** (3...♔c7 4.♕h2†! and 5.b8=♕†; 3...♔c5 4.♔a7 ♕h7 5.♕b6† and 6.♔a6) **4.♕a2† ♔b6 5.♕b1† ♕xb1 6.b8=♕†** and wins.

**5. 1.♘b7†! ♘xb7 2.a6 c3† 3.♔c2** (3.♔xc3? ♘d6) **3...♔c8 4.a7** and wins.

**6. 1.a5 ♗f8 2.♔d5 ♗h6 3.g5†! ♗xg5 4.♔e4 ♗h4 5.♔f3** and wins.

**7. 1.c7 ♖d6† 2.♔b5!** (2.♔c5? ♖d1) **2...♖d5† 3.♔b4 ♖d4† 4.♔b3 ♖d3† 5.♔c2 ♖d4!** (with a view to 6.c8=♕ ♖c4† 7.♕xc4 stalemate) **6.c8=♖! ♖a4 7.♔b3!** and wins.

**8. 1.♔f4 ♔f2 2.♔e4 ♔e2 3.♔d4 ♔d2 4.♔c5 ♔c3 5.♖c8! ♖xa7 6.♔b6†** and wins.

**9. 1.♖e7† ♔h8 2.♔h6 ♖ge8** (2...♖gf8 3.♖h7† and 4.♖g1#) **3.♖dd7!! ♔g8 4.♖g7† ♔h8 5.♖h7† ♔g8 6.♖dg7†** and **7.♖h8#**

**10. 1.♗c6! ♖b1† 2.♔e2 ♖xh1 3.♗g2†!! ♔xg2 4.♘f4† ♔g1 5.♔e1 g2 6.♘e2#**

**11. 1.b7 g4** (1...♗~ 2.♘c7) **2.♘xb8 g3 3.♘c6 g2 4.♘d4! ♔xd4** (else ♘e2†) **5.b8=♕ g1=♕ 6.♕xa7†** and wins.

**12. 1.♗h6† ♔g8 2.g7 ♔f7** (2...e5 3.♔e6 e4 4.♔f6; 2...e6† 3.♔d6! ♔f7 4.♔e5 ♔g8 5.♔f6) **3.g8=♕†!! ♔xg8 4.♔e6 ♔h8 5.♔f7** and **6.♗g7#**

**13. 1.♗b7!!** (1.♗xd7? ♔c7; 1.♗a6? ♔c7 2.♔e5 d6†! 3.♔e6 ♔xb8) **1...♔c7 2.♗a6! ♔xb8 3.♔d6** and wins.

**14. 1.♖a3!!** (White fails to win with either 1.axb5? or 1.♖a2†?) **1...♔xa3** (or 1...b4 2.♖g3 b3 3.♖g5) **2.axb5** and wins.

**15. 1.♖a7 ♖e8** (1...♖h7 2.dxe6) **2.d7 ♖e7 3.d6 ♖xd7 4.♖a8#**

**16. 1.♗c7! ♖h5† 2.♔g7 ♖g5† 3.♔f7 ♖h5** (3...♖f5† 4.♔g6) **4.a7 ♖h8 5.♗d6† ♔~ 6.♗f8 ♖h7† 7.♗g7** and wins. Or **1...♖b1 2.a7 ♖h1† 3.♔g7 ♖g1† 4.♔f7 ♖f1† 5.♔e7 ♖e1† 6.♔d7 ♖d1† 7.♗d6†** and wins.

**17. 1.♖g7†!! ♔xh8 2.♖h7† ♔g8 3.g7!!** and wins.

**18. 1.♖d2(d3)!! d4 2.♖d1! ♔d5** (2...♔e4

3.♔d6) **3.♔d7! ♔e4 4.♔d6**, followed by **5.♔c5** winning.

**19. 1.♖d2† ♔e7 2.♖d6!! ♔xd6** (2...♖c3 3.♖c6! ♖xc6 4.♔a7) **3.♔c8 ♖c3† 4.♔d8** and wins.

**20. 1.♔e7! a2! 2.♔d6! e4 3.♔c5!! e3 4.♔b4! e2** (or 4...a1=♕ 5.♖xa1 ♔xa1 6.♔c3 e2 7.♔d2) **5.♖e7! a1=♕ 6.♖xe2† ♔b1 7.♖e1† ♔b2 8.♖xa1** and wins.

**21. 1.♔f7! h5 2.♔e6 h4 3.♔d5! h3** (3...♔b5 4.♔e4!) **4.♔c6! h2 5.♗b6 ~ 6.b5#**

**22. 1.♗c5! ♖c8** (1...♖b8 2.♖h8† ♔c7 3.♗d6†; 1...♔c8 2.♗a7!) **2.♗b6† ♔e8 3.♗c7! a5 4.♔d1 a4 5.♔c1 a3 6.♔b1 a2† 7.♔a1!** and wins.

**23. 1.c7!! ♔xc7 2.axb6†! ♔xb8 3.b7!** and wins.

**24. 1.♖d8! ♖xh3† 2.♖d3!! ♖xd3† 3.♔c2** (3.♔c4? ♖d1) **3...♖d6!** (3...♖d5 4.c8=♕ ♖c5† 5.♕xc5† ♔xc5 6.♔c3! and wins; but now 4.c8=♕? leads to a draw) **4.c8=♘†!** and wins.

**25. 1.♗a7! ♗a1 2.♔b1 ♗c3 3.♔c2 ♗a1 4.♗d4!! ♗xd4** (4...exd4 5.♔d3) **5.♔d3 ♗b2 6.♔e4!** and wins.

**26. 1.a6 c4 2.a7 c3 3.♗h1!! ♗a4† 4.♔f7! ♗c6! 5.♗xc6 c2 6.a8=♕ c1=♕ 7.♕a2† ♔g3 8.♕g2† ♔f4** (8...♔h4 9.♕f2†) **9.♕f3† ♔g5 10.♕g3† ♔f5 11.♕g6†** and wins (11...♔f4 12.♕h6†; 11...♔e5 12.♕f6#).

**27. 1.♖d8†!** (1.♖b7? ♔c6) **1...♔xd8 2.b7 ♖b4! 3.♔xb4 c5† 4.♔b5!! ♔c7 5.♔a6! ♔b8 6.♔b6! c4 7.a4** etc., leading to mate.

**28. 1.♘d7† ♔d5 2.♘b6†! ♔xe5** (or 2...♔c5 3.♗f2†! ♕xf2 4.♘d7†! ♔d5 5.♘f6†! and wins) **3.♘c4† ♔f4 4.g3†**, followed by winning the queen with a knight check.

**29. 1.c6 b2** (1...♗e4 2.c7 ♗b7 3.♗g2!) **2.c7 b1=♕** (or 2...♗g6† 3.♔d8 b1=♕ 4.c8=♕† ♔a7 5.♕c7† ♔a8 6.♗g2† ♗e4 7.♔c8 and wins) **3.c8=♕† ♔a7 4.♕c7† ♔a8 5.♗g2† ♗e4 6.♕h7!! ♔b8 7.♗xe4** and wins.

**30. 1.♖e8!! h1=♕ 2.♘e4† ♔c1(c2) 3.♖c8† ♔b1 4.♘d2† ♔a1 5.♘xb3† ♔b1 6.♘d2† ♔a1 7.♖c2** and wins.

**31. 1.♘e8** (threatening 2.♘g7† and 3.♗f5#) **1...♔g6 2.h5†! ♖xh5 3.f5†! ♖xf5 4.g4 ♖e5 5.♗f5†! ♖xf5 6.♘g7** and mate next move.

**32. 1.♗f6 d4 2.♘e2!! a1=♕ 3.♘c1!!** (not 3.♗xd4† ♕xd4 4.♘xd4 ♔xd4 5.♔g4 ♔xd3, with a draw; but now the threat is 4.♗g5#) **3...♕a5** (3...♕xc1 4.♗g5†; or 3...♔d2 4.♘b3†; or 3...h6 4.♗e5 and 5.♗f4#) **4.♗xd4†** and **5.♘b3†**.

## SOLUTIONS TO STUDIES (Drawing Play)

**1. 1.♔g5 ♖g1† 2.♔h6 a1=♕ 3.♖a8†! ♕xa8** stalemate.

**2. 1.♖g3!! ♗xg3† 2.♔h3!! g1=♕(♖)** stalemate. (A variation from the finale of a more complex study where the task is to win.)

**3. 1.♖f5† ♔e7** (1...♔g7 2.♔h3! g1=♕ 3.♖g5†!) **2.♖e5† ♔~ 3.♖e1!! ♗xe1 4.♔h3! g1=♕(♖)** stalemate; or **4...g1=♘† 5.♔g2 ♘e2 6.♔f1**, draw.

**4 1.e6!! dxe6 2.♔e3! ♗a2 3.h5 e5 4.h6 ♗g8 5.h7! ♗xh7** stalemate.

**5. 1.♖f8† ♔d7 2.♖f7† ♔e6 3.♖f5!!**, and the threat to win a rook secures the draw.

**6. 1.♔c6!!** (not 1.♔d6? ♔e8 2.♔e5 ♔d7! and wins) **1...♔e8 2.♔d6 ♔f8 3.♔e5 ♔g8 4.♔f4 ♔h7 5.♔g5**, draw.

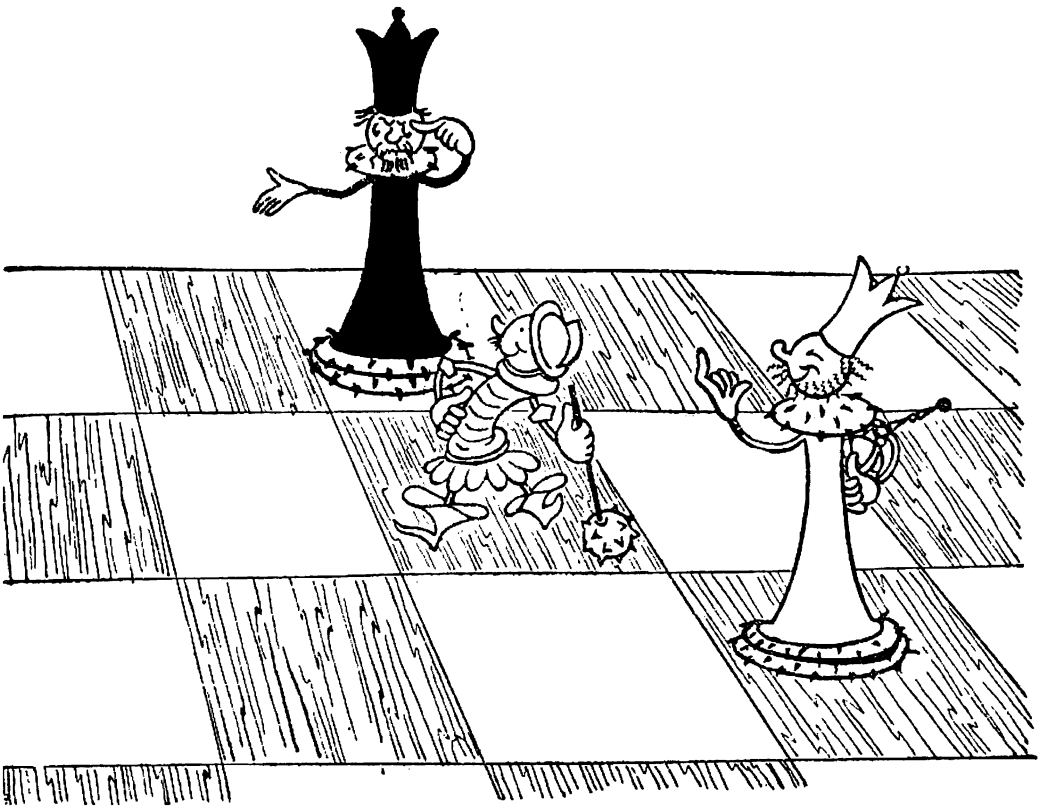
**7. 1.♖e7†! ♔c8 2.♖e8† ♔xc7 3.♖e7† ♔b6 4.c5†! ♖xc5 5.a5†! ♖xa5 6.♖e6† ♔c5 7.♖e5† ♔b4 8.♖e4†**, draw.

**8. 1.♔g5! ♖xd4 2.♔h4 g3†** (or 2...♔f3 3.♖g7 etc.) **3.♔h3 ♖d3 4.♖g7!** (not 4.♖f8†? ♖f3 5.♖g8 ♖f7 and wins) **4...♖f3 5.♖g4!! ♖f8 6.♖f4†! ♖xf4** stalemate.

**9. 1.h7† ♔h8 2.♗g7†! ♔xh7 3.♗a1†!! ♔h6 4.♖xc6† ♔h5 5.♔b2!! h1=♕** (the threat was ♖c1; if 5...♗c2, then 6.♖c8 and 7.♖h8†) **6.♖h6†! ♔xh6** stalemate. A surprising and artfully conceived finale!

**10. 1.♔f8!! d2** (or 1...e2 2.♖e7 ♔d1 3.f5) **2.♖d7 e2 3.♖xd2†!! ♔xd2 4.f5 e1=♕ 5.f6** and then **6.f7**, drawing.

**11.** Instead of the knight on b7, White gives up the other one: **1.♘e3 ♖d3 2.♔c2! ♖xe3 3.♘d8!! ♖e2†** (Black is in zugzwang; on 3...♔b8 or 3...♔a7, White attacks the rook and ...♖e5 fails to ♘c6†) **4.♔d3 ♖e1 5.♔d2 ♖e4 6.♔d3 ♖e5 7.♔c3! ♖c5† 8.♔b4! ♖e5 9.♔c3**, draw.



# The Soviet Chess Primer

## Ilya Maizelis

Ilya Maizelis's masterpiece is the definitive introduction to the game of chess. It has inspired generations of Russians to take up the game, including arguably the two greatest players of all time, the 12th and 13th World Champions.

In the original Russian, this landmark work is simply called "Chess" – no other explanation was considered necessary. **The Soviet Chess Primer** is a modern English translation of Maizelis's witty introduction to the royal game.

This new edition of a timeless classic includes an original foreword from the 2nd World Champion, Emanuel Lasker, as well as an introduction from the most celebrated chess trainer of modern times, Mark Dvoretsky.

**Praise for the original Russian edition:**

*"A remarkable book, from which I learnt to play chess"* – Garry Kasparov

*"A wonderful book which I studied myself"* – Anatoly Karpov

Also available


€19.99 $24.95

ISBN 978-1-907982-99-6

9 781907 982996 52495

QUALITY CHESS
www.qualitychess.co.uk