

Grandmaster Répertoire

Jacob Aagaard
Nikolaos Ntirlis

**The
Tarrasch
Defence**



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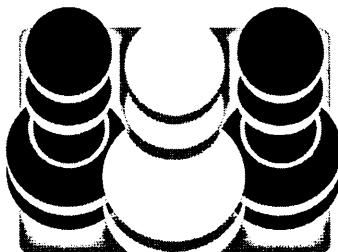


Grandmaster Repertoire 10

The Tarrasch Defence

By

**Jacob Aagaard
& Nikolaos Ntirlis**



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Grandmaster Repertoire 10 – The Tarrasch Defence

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8.0–0 0–0**

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Key to symbols used

+	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
→	with attack
↑	with initiative
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
!?	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
#	mate
□	only move

Preface

By Nikolaos Ntirlis

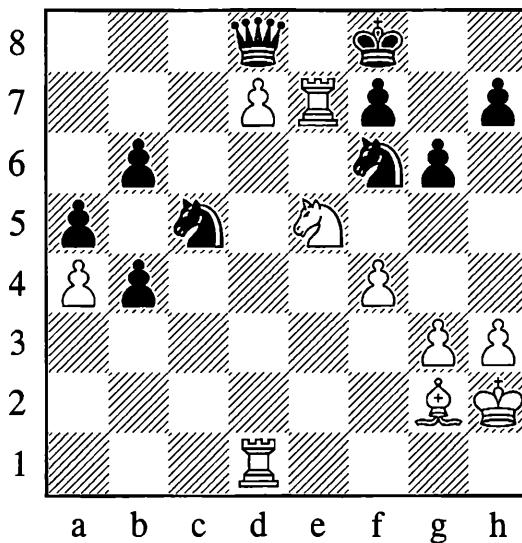
Man plans and God laughs – Yiddish proverb

Sometimes when you have a dream, a vision, and you carefully plan how to transform it into reality, life decides otherwise. A man with such a vision was my former trainer, mentor, teammate, and above all the big brother I never had, Nikolaos Karapanos. Karapanos was one of the most loved chess figures in Greece. When he participated in a tournament as a player, or more frequently as a coach, everybody sought out his company, enjoyed hearing his funny stories, and wanted his friendly support. Nikolaos devoted his life to teaching young and upcoming juniors. He was an enormous chess talent as a junior himself, but he never had the will or motivation to become a professional chess player. He was a “man for the team” and not a “man for himself”. He could easily draw or even win against a grandmaster if his team needed him to do so, but he could make a 15-move draw against a 1600 amateur in order to go with him and have a coffee and a pleasant talk about history, poetry, women or football, if he considered him an interesting person!

Nikolaos lived an exciting life. His sudden death, during the traditional Acropolis Tournament in the summer of 2009, was a big shock for the whole Greek chess community. The story of his death was published on chess sites all over the world.

FM Nikolaos Karapanos – IM Dan Zoler

Chalkida, 10.08.2009



The spectators were thrilled by Nikolaos's play during the game. His aggressive style created unbearable problems for his experienced opponent. Everybody now expected White to deliver the decisive and quite obvious blow 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ followed by 38. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$. Nikolaos sat down, looked at the board and stayed calm for two minutes without moving. When everybody was convinced that he was making sure that his next move would win, he suddenly fell from his chair unconscious. His opponent, Dan Zoler, was a doctor and provided first aid for him, and after a short time he

was taken to the hospital. A few hours later, his death from a cardiac arrest was confirmed.

Nikolaos's vision was to create a chess school. He was one of the most successful trainers in Greece, so he had clear and strong ideas about how such a school should work. He knew that no man can achieve anything without the support of people that he respects and trusts. One of those people from his very close circle was me. Nikolaos told me in 2004: "Someday you'll become a good player, but never a great one. But there is no doubt that you can become a great chess coach!" Of course Nikolaos always exaggerated in order to make someone feel comfortable with himself, but he proved that his thoughts about me were sincere as he brought me into his team, where I started my first lessons with young kids. He knew that I had a special love of opening theory and that I devoted much of my chess study to that area, so he made me responsible for analysing the openings he wanted to teach to his most ambitious students.

One of the openings that Nikolaos used with success in his own games was the Tarrasch Defence. In practice, he used it only against opponents that he knew would have prepared something strong against his pet defence, the King's Indian. He liked the fact that the pawn structure that arises in this opening (e6-d5-c5, with knights on f6 and c6 – I named it in my notes back then "The Universal Tarrasch Structure") can be used against everything except 1.e4, so his opponent couldn't avoid it! In 2006 he asked me to make a simple repertoire with the Tarrasch Defence, so that we could use it for training purposes. I also had other projects running during that period and the Tarrasch wasn't really an opening I greatly respected, so the material I gathered back then wasn't anything special. But I continued enriching these files over the years and the Tarrasch was used with great success in the games of our juniors. This was part of the material he wanted to be taught in "his" school.

After Nikolaos's death in 2009, I decided as a close friend and student of his that although I don't have the power to make his vision come true, I could publish some parts of the work I did for "our" school to honour his memory. The project of the Tarrasch Defence seemed a good choice as the theory needed to be updated. After a lot of hard work I felt ready to publish my analysis. Unfortunately I didn't have the necessary support in Greece to do so, so I turned to my favourite publisher, Quality Chess and especially to the man whose books I have enjoyed reading for many years, GM Jacob Aagaard. The rest is a story that Jacob can tell better than me, but the result was the beginning of a partnership (and friendship) that resulted in the book you hold in your hands and (hopefully) in various other projects in the future.

In finishing this preface, I must not neglect to thank the people who helped me from 2006 to the present day in the completion of this work.

First of all my close friends: Vasileios Kokkalis, Geogrios Karamalis, Gregorios Pitselis, Nikolaos Tepelenis and Ilias Katsikaros, for helping at any level when I needed them.

My internet friends: Tony Rotella, Mark Morss, Dan Avery, Bryan Paulsen, Christoph Tiemann, FM Stefan Bücker, Philippe Girardot and many others who I may have forgotten from www.chesspublishing.com, for help with analysis and criticism of my ideas which helped me to find the correct path when I seemed lost. I hope that in the end I met their high expectations.

Haris Siembos, Dimitrios Pavlidis, Kostas Papakonstantinou and a special thanks to FM Sotirios Logothetis for believing in me from the start, and IM Panayotis Frentzas for offering his thoughts on a specific position that was troubling me for a long time.

The Greek chess bloggers “Schrödinger’s Cat” and “Trandism” for presenting my work in their popular blogs.

And IM Ashot Nadanian, who lost a game against Nikolaos Karapanos at the Panormo Zonal in 1998. It was this game that Nikolaos demonstrated at the Chess Club on a winter night in 2004, gaining my attention and encouraging me to talk to him about becoming a better trainer and player. When I shared this story with Mr Nadanian (that I became who I am because he lost that game!) he was impressed and offered his analysis of that game (which was published in *Chess Informant* 74) to a Greek Chess site www.skakistiko.com for the anniversary of Karapanos’s death in August 2011.

A big thanks to my family and especially my dad who watched me studying chess instead of my Computer Engineering courses. And lastly, the least I can do is to thank John, Andrew, Colin and especially Jacob (the famous QC team!) and Jacob’s wife Anne, for their support and warm hospitality when I visited them in Glasgow.

Nikolaos Ntirlis

Patras, Greece

November 2011

Preface

By Jacob Aagaard

In 2002 I helped some friends with the writing of two books for Everyman Chess, *Meeting 1.e4* and *Meeting 1.d4*. On the first book I worked as an editor only, while with the second book I wrote it together with Esben Lund (now a strong IM with a GM-norm in his pouch). We focused on the Tarrasch Defence for Black, with additional systems against the Reti, London and so on.

This was primarily Esben's project and he wrote most of the Tarrasch chapters, especially on his favourite line 9.♗g5 c4. I had the thankless task of trying to make 9...cxd4 work, something I probably did not do too badly, but on the other hand I cannot imagine that anything I did influenced practice significantly.

This is the main reason why I decided to offer my services to Nikolaos Ntirlis (referred to as Nikos in the rest of the book); I wanted to do better than first time around. This we have done. Nikos at some point said that we had moved the theory on the Tarrasch a few years forward, which is a very kind thing to say, as it is essentially he who has done this.

Our working relationship on this book has been one of the ideas man and his editor. Nikos started out with lots of ideas everywhere (based on a massive amount of research and sheer hard work), while I analysed everything carefully, checked if any games unknown to Nikos were available, and then wrote and rewrote every sentence of the book.

Esben and I wrote together in the same room and sought each other's advice, while Nikos and I are on two far corners of the European continent. We met up only briefly in Glasgow in February 2011 and are together in Greece in November 2011, at the time this book is being printed. However our work has been truly co-authored and not split as with my previous experience with the Tarrasch. It was definitely more social the first time around, but I think the reader will be happier with the result of the less social and more analytical approach taken this time around.

It has been seven years since I last wrote an opening book, and I have never had an opening book published by Quality Chess. Not only is this the start of the third part of my career as a chess writer, the first being working for Everyman and the second being essentially the *Attacking Manuals* and the spin-off prequel *Practical Chess Defence*, it is hopefully also the beginning of a close working relationship with Nikos. We have planned a number of things to work on together in the future and I look forward to it a lot.

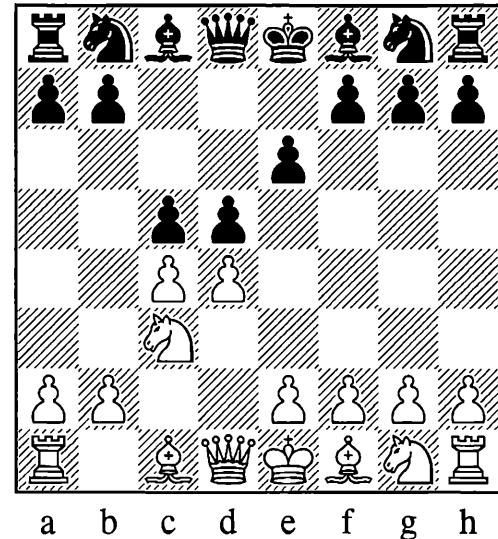
I think this is a good book on a good opening and I hope you will enjoy it.

Jacob Aagaard
Halkidiki, Greece
November 2011

Introduction

The Tarrasch Defence was invented and defended vigorously by one of the greatest players and writers in the history of chess. His impact is felt to this day; there is his oft-repeated comment about rook endings (which you delete about once a day as a chess book editor) and, more significantly, the various variations he invented.

Tarrasch was less committed to his dogmatic ideas than people often believe, with the exception of his delight with his own defence. After **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3** his commitment to **3...c5** was so great that at times it was difficult to tell if the opening was his defence or if he was the defender of this opening.

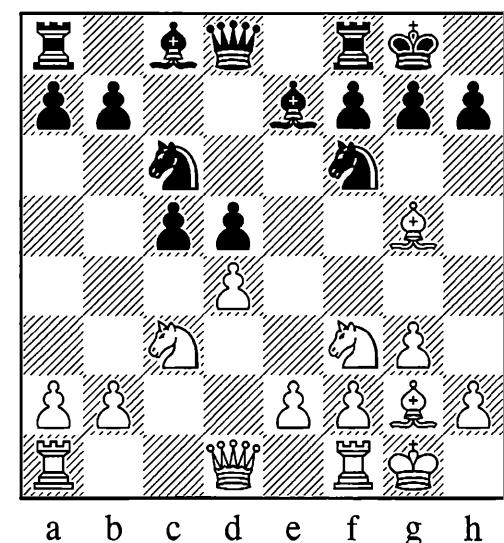


When the Tarrasch Defence was first introduced, White would react meekly with **4.cxd5 exd5 5.e3**, taking a passive position straight out of the opening. If this trend had continued Tarrasch would definitely have been right in giving **3...c5** an exclamation mark; and applying question marks to moves we today consider standard in the Queen's Gambit Declined.

The first threat to the Tarrasch Defence came with Rubinstein's invention, **4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3**, which allows the bishop to

play a more active role from g2, eyeing the d5-pawn, at the same time allowing the c1-bishop to occupy an active position on g5.

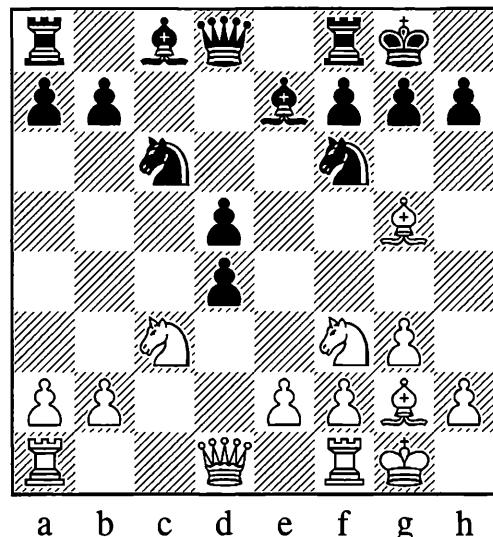
The main line was quickly established to be:
6...♗f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5



Indeed this remains the main line to this day. For a while **9...♗e6** was regularly played, among others by Keres, but over time several ideas were found that lead to unsatisfactory play for Black; one of them by Petrosian in his World Championship match with Spassky. (We give both this and what we think is an even more compelling argument for abstaining from this line on page 163.)

Then in the 1980s Kasparov enjoyed a good deal of success with the **9...cxd4** variation, but gave it up after repeatedly getting the sensation of punching into thin air in his first match against Karpov in 1984. Later in the match he changed to the Queen's Gambit Declined with success and memorably came back from 0-5 to 3-5 before the match was abandoned.

In our opinion Kasparov was right to give up this line. The reason for this is given by the two American IMs, writers and friends Vigorito and Rizzitano:

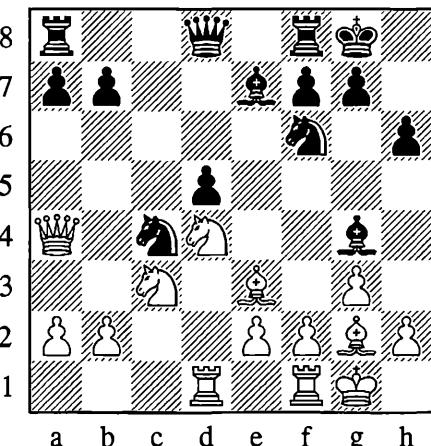


10.♘xd4 h6 11.♖e3

Another serious way to depress Black exists at this point: 11.♗f4 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗e6 (12...♗h5 13.♗c1 ♗e8 14.♗a4±) 13.♗c1 ♗c8 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.e4 d4 16.e5 dxс3 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.bxc3 ♗xd1 19.♗fxd1±, as in I. Sokolov – Akopian, Calatrava 2007, is also a bit unpleasant, but seems to be defendable in practice. Akopian drew without too many difficulties, but it does not fully erase the dour impression.

11...♗e8

This is the most common move at this point, but the main alternative is not completely irrelevant for practical play: 11...♗g4 12.♗a4 ♗a5 13.♗ad1 ♗c4



14.♗b3! is the line recommended by FM Stefan Bücker on the ChessPublishing forum. Black usually gets some compensation in

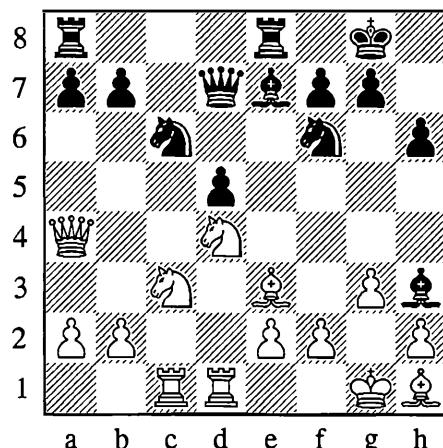
this kind of position, but there are certainly limitations to the excitement we can feel about such prospects. White won in the only game played from here, Anton – Hoffman, Dos Hermanas 2003, but obviously the advantage is not decisive at this point.

12.♗c1

Best according to Kasparov.

12...♗f8

12...♗g4 has also been tried here, but the general impression is that of a slight edge for White. For example, 13.♗a4 ♗d7 14.♗fd1 ♗h3 15.♗h1 is interesting.



White has a huge 82% score here, most recently: 15...♗g4 16.♗xc6 ♗xe3 17.♗xe7† ♗xe7 18.♗d3 ♗c4 19.♗b5 ♗b6 20.♗xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗xd5± Gareev – Cornejo, Irvine 2010. This is not meant to be a conclusive opinion, but an example of our general feelings looking through these lines.

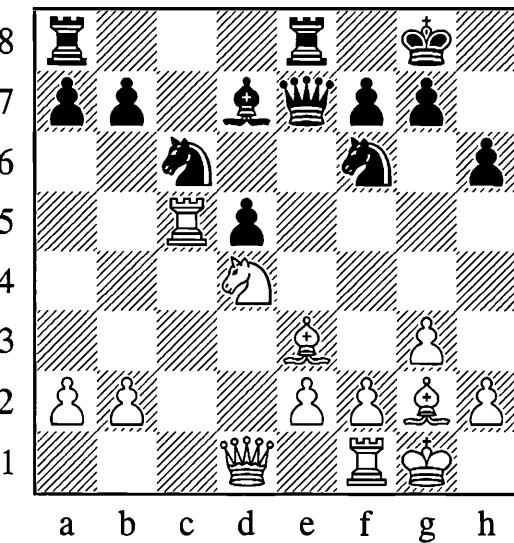
At this point White has a lot of options. Probably a number of them raise cause for concerns, but we are particularly unhappy with what is on offer for Black in the following line:

13.♗a4 ♗d7 14.♗c5

A simple plan. Black has accepted a weakened pawn structure and is now forced to

give White the two bishops. A life like this is not really worth living.

14...♝xc5 15.♝xc5 ♜e7



16.♝xc6!

This is a rare line, but nonetheless we consider it best.

16...bxc6

Wenzel – Markevich, Stockholm 2011.

17.♝c2!N

A more harmonious way of defending the e2-pawn than Wenzel's 17.♝e1.

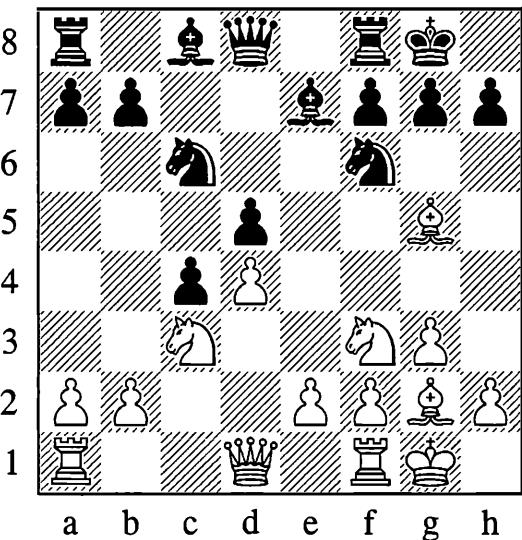
17...♛e4 18.♝d4 a5 19.♝fc1±

It is clear that White is better at this point. The bishops are well placed and the rest of the position is in general harmony. Obviously there will be those who are ready to defend this position, but they will have dreams that White will not actually go this way, but instead provide Black with an interesting dynamic position under more favourable circumstances.

9...c4! – The Modern Treatment

Over time it was realized that Black will always struggle in the Tarrasch Defence if he is left with an isolated d-pawn and White has control

over the d4-square (which is not the case in the 9.dxc5 variations; there Black has control over d4 through his active piece placement). So instead of 9...cxd4 Black's reaction to 9.♝g5 should be: 9...c4!



This was played first by Maroczy against Flohr in 1932, according to our database. White won a dull technical game after 10.♝e5 ♛e6 11.♝xc4 dxc4 12.♝xf6 ♛xf6 13.d5, which was presumably understood to be some kind of positional refutation, as Maroczy got a slightly inferior position after 13...♝d7. Maybe this is the reason why in the following decades only one game is to be found in the database, a 1960 draw between two little known players.

Black's first success with this modern move came in 1975, when German GM Helmut Pfleger won against one of the best players of the time. Without indulging in the theoretical nuances at this point, we want to give this early success to show how the line was played at the time.

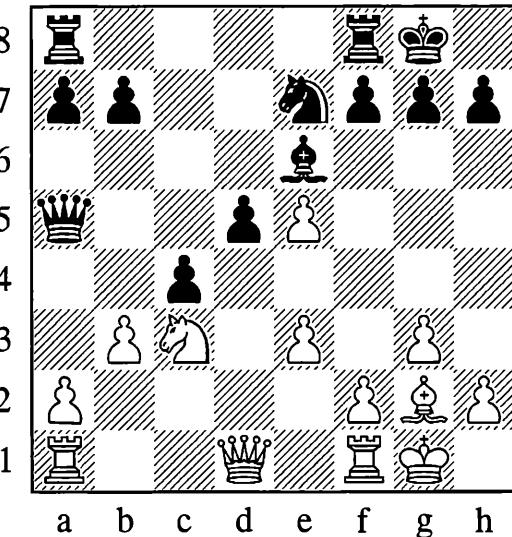
Polugaevsky – Pfleger

Montilla 1975

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♗g2 c5 5.0–0 ♘c6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.d4 ♛e7 8.♗c3 0–0 9.♗g5 c4 10.♗e5 ♛e6 11.e3

Quite a sensible move; recommended by Khalifman, and the subject of Chapter 4. Pfleger reacted reasonably.

**11...Qd7 12.Qxe7 Qxe7 13.b3 Qxe5
14.dxe5 Wa5**



It would be fair to say that the opening battle is over and that Black has been the victor. The queenside pawns are ready to march forward and White must already have been regretting the advance of the b-pawn. As so often with emerging variations, it took a while for players to fully grasp the positional nuances and patterns, and so their strategic play looks poor to our modern eyes, in exactly the same way that we will look clueless to future generations.

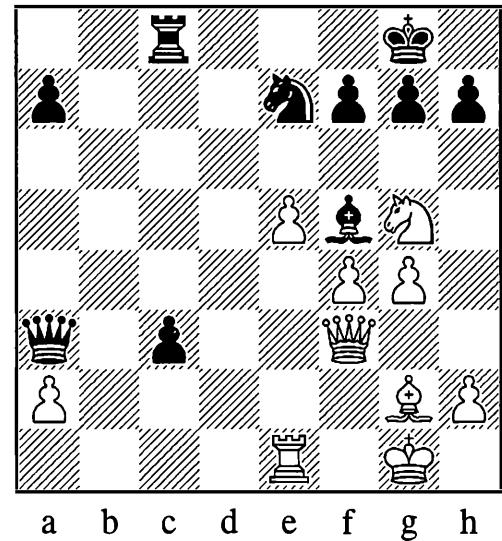
**15.We1 Bfd8 16.bxc4 dxc4 17.f4 Bd3
18.Qe4 Wa3**

Things have gone from bad to worse for White. The e-pawn is going and only a half-baked tactical operation prevents White from being materially behind. However, the positional ramifications are felt and the power of the c-pawn quickly becomes apparent.

**19.Qg5 Bxe3 20.Wb1 Qf5 21.Wxb7 Bf8
22.Bae1 Bxe1 23.Bxe1 c3 24.Wf3 Bc8 25.g4**

This last attempt to force the black bishop away from the battle scene is akin to a tax rise

in Greece. It is not working, but what else can you do?



25...Wc5† 26.Qh1 c2 27.Bc1 Qxg4!

Classical diversion. If White takes the bishop, the queen lands on e3 taking control over the c1-square. White's position is collapsing.

**28.Wb3 Wc4 29.Qe4 We2 30.Qc3 Bxc3
0-1**

With this, the variation was truly born. Through the second half of the 1970s, strong players like Larsen and, most frequently, Lputian played the line. Pfleger beat Polugaevsky again, but still the main line was 9...cxd4, mainly (we assume) because Kasparov was so successful with it on his way to the World Championship match.

The variation continued to be seen in tournament play throughout the 1980s and 1990s, but the number of grandmasters playing it was low. Lputian defended it for a while and Rogers sort of took over in the 1990s, but in general the score was low and the players defending the opening untitled (it is not too hard to imagine a connection between these factors). Eventually even Rogers gave up on the line and it left the eye of “serious chess theory” for a while.

Then in 1998 Halkias from Greece took up

the opening. Although not yet a grandmaster, he was already a strong player, and his successes with the opening certainly influenced his later training partner Kotronias to take up the opening. By 2001 he had played the opening so frequently that it was only natural that an inventive super-GM like Grischuk should step forward to be the new champion of the variation. He played it a few times, but failed to solve the general problems of the variation and moved on, rather than being a sitting target.

Only Halkias remained true to 9...c4.

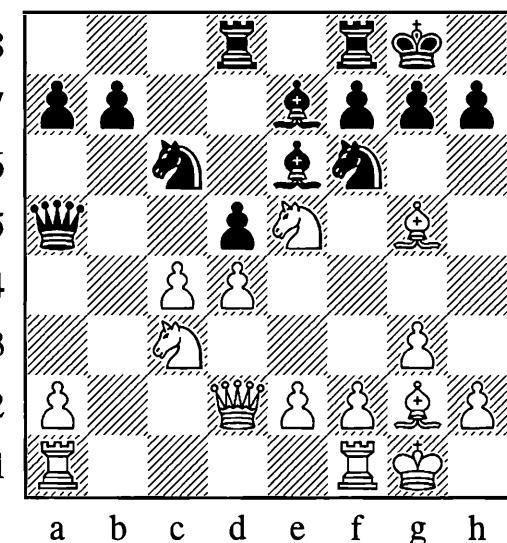
Blauert's Big Bang

In these modern times you don't have to be a super-GM to come up with important contributions to chess theory. One of the loyalists to 9...c4 is the German IM Blauert. Analysing the 2004 game between Gelfand and Grischuk he discovered a big idea that changed the theoretical evaluation of the line entirely.

St. Pedersen – Blauert

Gausdal 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3
 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♕e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.♗g5
 c4 10.♘e5 ♕e6 11.b3 ♕a5 12.♕d2 ♕ad8
 13.bxc4



Here Grischuk played 13...♗b4, but Black has a stronger option, which computers spotted rather quickly, even back then. So although Blauert was the first to uncork the line, maybe others were ready with it as well?

13...♗xd4!!

A surprise for Steffen Pedersen no doubt. Suddenly he is faced with a lot of tactical threats and his dark squares are anything but under control. As with Polugaevsky, he was not able to find the best continuation over the board.

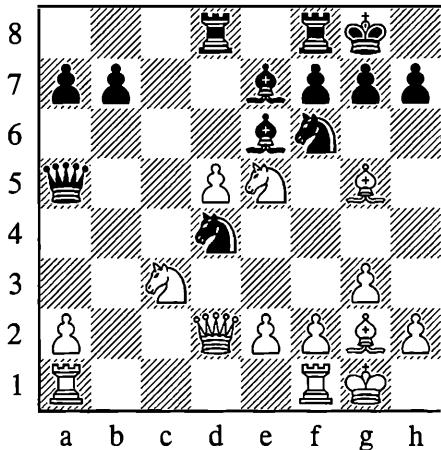
14.♗xd5?! ♕xd2 15.♗xe7† ♔h8 16.♗xd2
 ♗xe2† 17.♔h1 ♕xd2 18.f4 ♕e8†
 ½–½

Black is already a bit better, but Blauert was no doubt happy to have been allowed to play his super novelty, and not in a mood to ruin it with poor play. Besides, he may have been emotionally ready to make a quick draw, based on the computer's main line: 14.♕xd4 dxc4 15.♕e3 ♕c5 16.♕f4 ♕xc3 17.♕xf6 gxf6 18.♕xf6

Malakhatko – Meinhardt, Paris 2005. The choice for Black is between 18...♗e7!= and 18...♗d6 forcing an immediate draw. Meinhardt played differently and later erred. However, the position here holds no dangers for him.

It was because of this line that Boris Avrukh rejected 9.♗g5 entirely in his 2008 book *Grandmaster Repertoire 1 – 1.d4 Volume One* and instead studied Reti's line with 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.♘a4!? (covered here in Chapter 10).

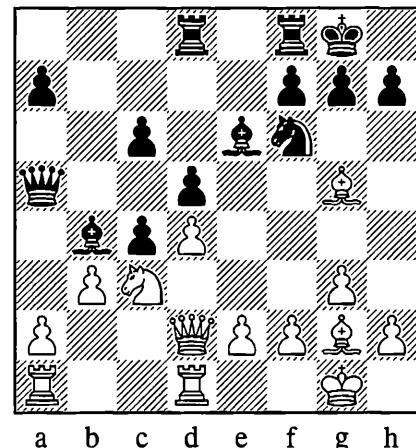
It seems that once Black gets to play 13...♗xd4! White does not have an advantage. The most recent example can be considered a very reliable test of the variation: 14.cxd5 This is the closest White comes to a try here.



14... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ Halkias has of course studied this line carefully and is absolutely right in assuming that the ending is easily held by Black. 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 19. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 20. $e7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 21. $exd8=\mathbb{W}$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $b6$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}d7=$

Whether you call this ending equal or slightly better for White is not important. You will not defeat a grandmaster from here and indeed this did not happen in Sargissian – Halkias, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

In 2009 Lars Schandorff came up with quite a significant improvement for White in *Playing the Queen's Gambit*, after the moves: 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxcc6$ 14. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

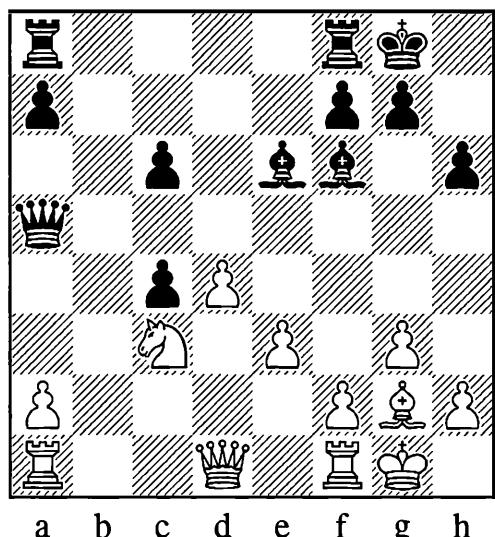


15. $\mathbb{E}dc1!$ However, this is still untested. We have analysed this extensively, coming to the conclusion that in this particular line Black has no realistic chance of achieving equality. Having said that, at the European Team

Championship in Halkidiki, from where we are completing this introduction the day before the book goes to the printer, we have had conversations with other believers in the 9...c4 line, who claim that they have found a solution to Schandorff's novelty! The future may tell who is right.

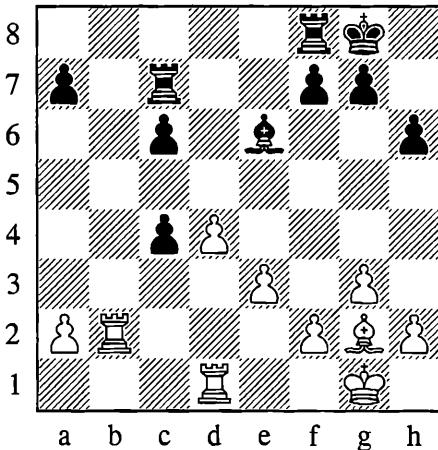
The Modern Lines with ...h6!

We started by analysing the complications after: 11...h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxcc6$ 14. $bxcc4$ $dxc4$ 15.e3 $\mathbb{W}a5$



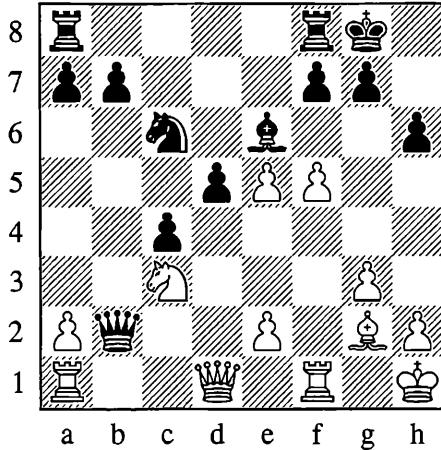
As we shall see in Chapters 6-8, this is a rich position which appears no worse for Black, but rather features some interesting variations where both players will have lots of chances to err.

In this line the worst position we have found ourselves defending is the following endgame:



However, after the brilliantly deep move 22...g5!! Black is able to neutralize White's advantage and achieve a draw. In this way the Tarrasch is not any different from many other black defences, in that against some lines you will have to defend less than exciting positions, but if you ever reach them, both you and your opponent are liable to know that a draw is the likely outcome. For more, see page 114.

The basic concept of 11...h6! was so attractive to us that we started to look at it in lots of lines and found that it is frequently a strong move. If White takes on f6, Black benefits greatly from having the two bishops, and therefore the loss of time is justified. There are some important tactical nuances that have to be covered, for example the line: 11.f4 h6 12.Qxf6 Qxf6 13.f5 Qxe5 14.dxe5 Wb6† 15.Qh1 Wxb2!



Black is completely okay, as can be seen in Chapter 5.

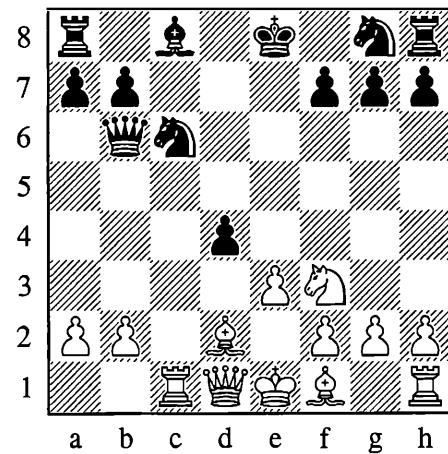
Our final conclusion is that after 9.Qg5 c4 White cannot count on an advantage. We say this with some confidence, but obviously also a lot of hesitation, as chess theory has a tendency to develop in surprising directions.

The Big Discovery – The Strength of dxc5

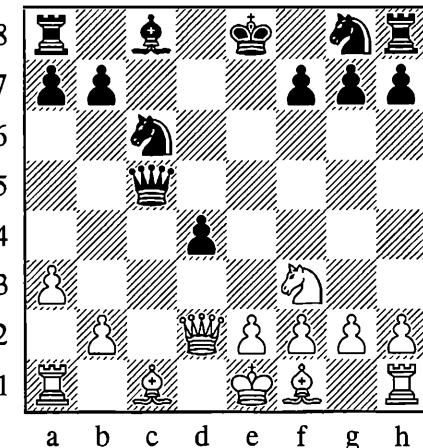
Probably the biggest revelation of this book is that 6.dxc5! is the main line of the future. As far as we can tell, this is the critical move. Our attempts to make 6...Qf6 work have so far been futile (but Nikos is obsessed with analysing it further, so maybe in three or four years 6...Qf6 will be in the second edition!) so Black has to play 6...d4 7.Qa4 Qxc5 8.Qxc5 Wa5†.

White now has a choice:

- a) 9.Qd2 Wxc5 10.Qc1 Wb6 11.e3

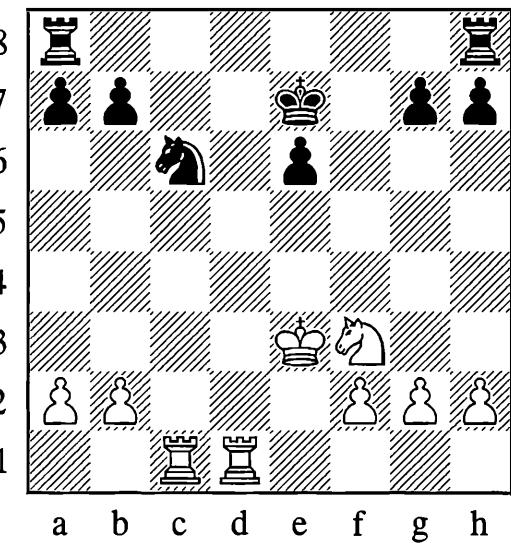
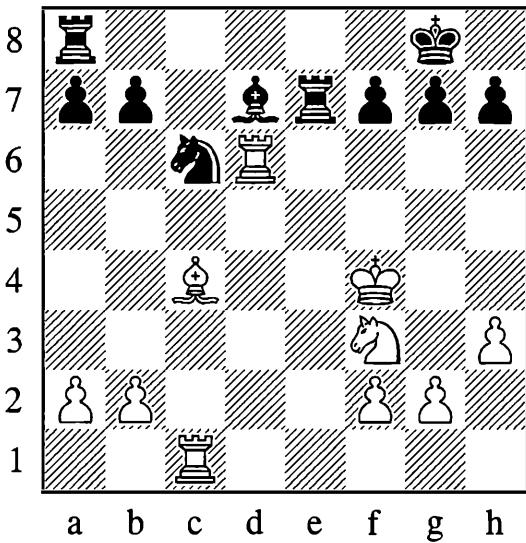


- b) 9.Wd2 Wxc5 10.a3!



In both lines Black is forced to answer serious questions. In many cases he must quickly allow an ending, which has to be played with considerable accuracy. However, we do not think that these lines should dissuade Black players from choosing the

Tarrasch. For example, consider the following two positions:

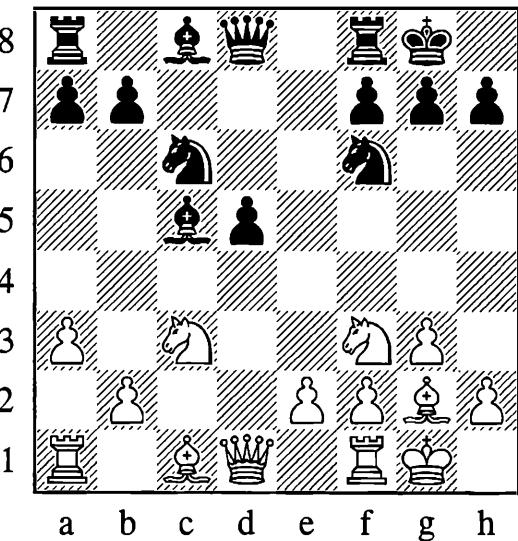


Are these positions really worse than the positions people are willing to take on in the KID, Grünfeld, Petroff, Berlin or Classical Ruy Lopez, just to mention a few major openings? Certainly Black is under a bit of pressure, but is well within the drawing range. In Chapter 17 on pages 283-284 you can choose between these two positions for Black. In our opinion these are the worst positions you risk facing against the best-prepared players, who have either read this book, or found its discoveries on their own.

We have analysed these 6.dxc5 lines extensively and believe in Black's resources, but

to think that we have exhausted this particular area of chess theory would be naive. There is only so far a book can advance chess theory and we feel that we have done more than our share with this book.

One other area where the theory of the Tarrasch Defence will develop extensively in the future is the line: 9.dxc5 ♜xc5 10.a3!



This seems a good deal more dangerous for Black than the traditional lines with 10.♗g5 and even the trendy Reti line with 10.♕a4.

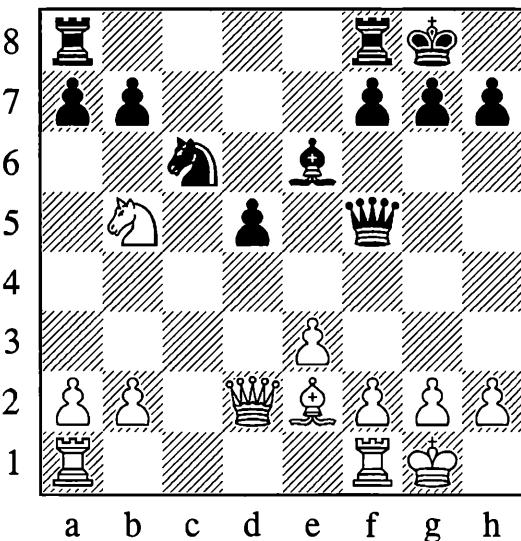
We believe we have found a solution in 10...♝e4!? but practical tests are needed before this can be confirmed with certainty.

Common Traits of the Tarrasch Defence

The Tarrasch Defence is an active opening with a lot in common with openings such as the Grünfeld Defence and the Sicilian Defence. In general Black does not have many structural decisions to make, but simply has to keep his position as active as possible.

Another trait is the importance of the d4-square. We mentioned earlier that we don't like the 9...cxd4 line for both concrete and principled reasons. It feels wrong to give White full control of the d4-square without a fight.

Here is an example from our analysis, which for entirely different reasons did not make it into the book:



At this point White has achieved a lot of his goals. He has given Black an isolated pawn and exchanged a number of minor pieces. If he was successful in exchanging a pair of knights as well, he would have a real advantage. However, Black is able to fight for control of the d4-square, and after 17... $\mathbb{W}f6!$ 18. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$

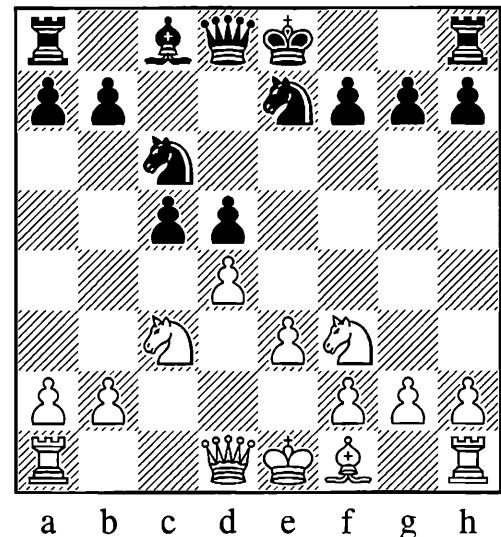
19. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
White is forced to take with the e-pawn, offering Black an equal ending. Note that White cannot prevent this in any sensible way, as Black will otherwise get into c2 with a rook or be able to push the d-pawn to d4, when he might be fighting for an advantage.

In general Black is not desperately *seeking* positions with an isolated d-pawn. He is prepared to *accept* them if White gives up the control over d4, but otherwise hardly ever. The program move is ...c5-c4! when Black establishes a pawn majority on the queenside. Here is a simple example from one of Jacob's games that was played only a few days before the book was printed.

Rewitz – Aagaard

Denmark 2011

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}gxe7$ 8.e3



8...c4! 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 10.0–0 b5

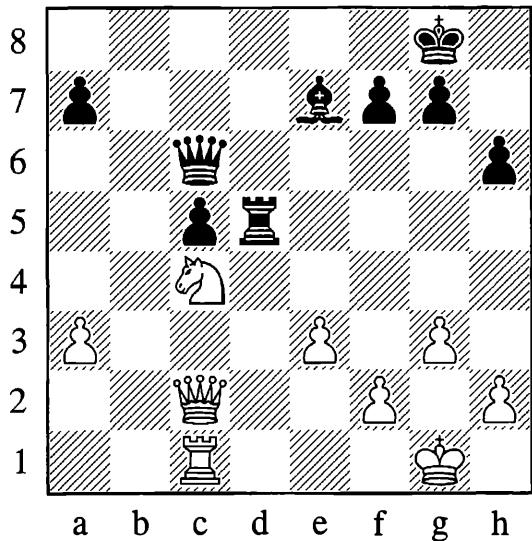
Black has already taken over the initiative. The full details of this line can be found on page -265.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ h6 15.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

Black is already better and went on to take the full point in reasonably convincing style.

In general Black is happy to play on the queenside and he gets to do this often enough for us to claim that the Tarrasch is a really entertaining opening to play. We do not know any black opening where a well-prepared opponent cannot force us into a slightly passive position, which might seem unpleasant, but if you know how to play it, there are no real problems. Modern chess is more and more leaning towards White having a choice between safety first (and probably no win) and variations with complications and mutual chances.

There are a few positions in our repertoire that might appear worse for Black, but are in fact completely fine. Here is a typical example:

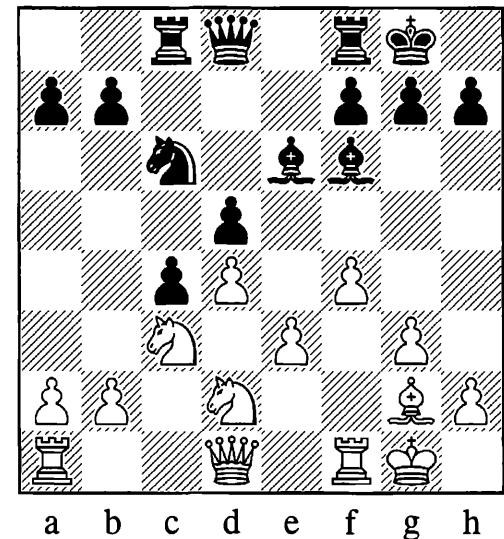


This is an archetypical ending which can arise after White has played d4-d5, ensuring the exchange of the light-squared bishops and thus being able to pick up a black pawn on c4.

This type of position would be seriously unpleasant if the queens were off and White had his king on e2 and rook on b1. But in the meantime Black has counterplay on the kingside by advancing his pawns; and White has to spend a good deal of his attention on holding on to the c4-square.

In our opinion the position is dynamically equal.

We are not going to spend too much time going through all the different typical positions from this book. There are certain structures that reappear frequently, but always with slightly different nuances. For example:



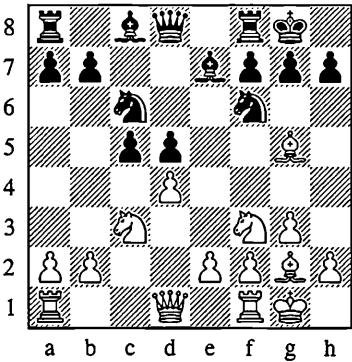
White has fortified his centre and started a kingside expansion. In general Black replies with moves such as 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 14.g4 g6, when it is difficult for White to advance sensibly on the kingside. And his last few moves have left him with a lot of weaknesses and thus commitments.

One added benefit of including the Tarrasch in your anti-1.d4 repertoire is gaining extra flexibility against several of White's other first moves. Against flank openings, such as 1.c4, 1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ or 1.g3, Black can play ...d5, ...c5, ...e6, ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (in all sorts of move orders) in the knowledge that d2-d4 will still be within your repertoire. Thus many of the Tarrasch games in this book did not start 1.d4.

The Tarrasch Defence is an exciting dynamic defence, which has for far too long been considered worse than it actually is. We hope to convince some grandmasters that it is worth a try, if not directly by making them buy this book, then at least by suffering greatly against you, the reader, who will be armed with a strong repertoire that so far has done well against grandmasters rated up to 2705.

Chapter I

9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$



Various 10th Moves

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
8.0–0 0–0 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

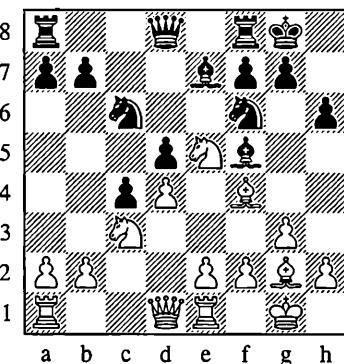
9...c4!

A) 10. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ h6!	22
A1) 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$	22
A2) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$	23
B) 10. $\mathbb{Q}c1$	24
B1) 10...h6!?	25
B2) 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$	26
C) 10.e3	27
D) 10.b3	29
D1) 10...cxb3!?	30
D2) 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$	32
D21) 11. $\mathbb{Q}c1$	32
D22) 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$	34
D23) 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$	36
D24) 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$	37

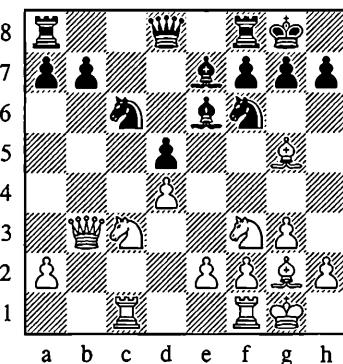
A1) after 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

B2) after 12. $\mathbb{W}xb3$

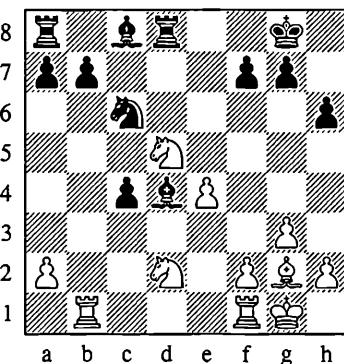
D23) after 17. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$



12... $\mathbb{W}e8!N$

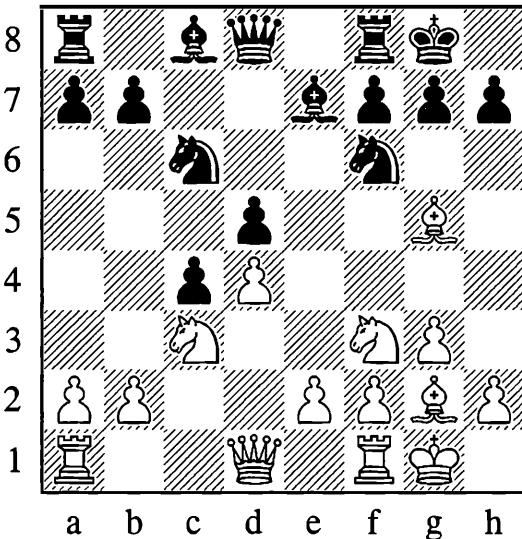


12... $\mathbb{W}b6!N$



17... $b5!N\bar{f}$

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8.0-0 0-0
 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4!



The big move here is of course 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$, putting immediate pressure on the d5-pawn. Although the principal alternatives to the main line generally occur on move 11, various other 10th moves are played from time to time. In this chapter we shall look at: A) 10. $\mathbb{Q}e1$, B) 10. $\mathbb{Q}c1$, C) 10.e3 and D) 10.b3. None of them should be considered critical, but on the other hand they are not entirely lacking in ideas, and they deserve some respect and a decent investigation. We have tried to provide both, but hopefully been more successful in the latter aspect.

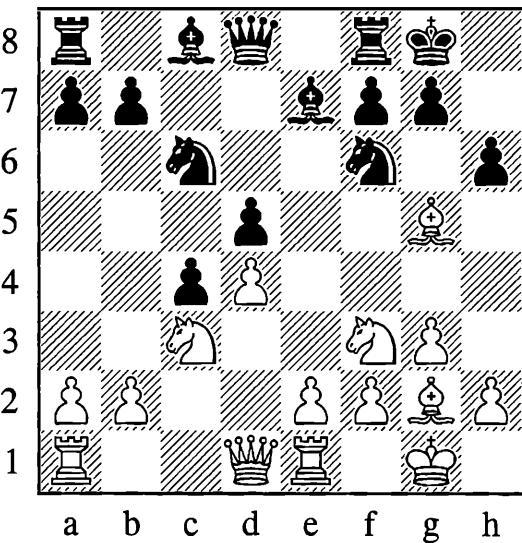
A) 10. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

This type of slow move has no chance of challenging the black set-up. Contrary to popular belief, the Tarrasch is a positionally acceptable opening. It is true that in many lines Black accepts the isolated d-pawn and thus relies on a fair amount of activity, but other lines, such as this one, are more about structure than dynamics. If nothing happens for a few moves, Black will be able to start a pawn storm on the queenside and be positionally preferable. For this reason White

needs to challenge the black centre rapidly, and not waste time on moves such as 10. $\mathbb{Q}e1$.

10...h6!

For Black there is no reason to hesitate; why not collect the two bishops immediately? Obviously there is nothing wrong with 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, but given the chance, Black should ask White to either release the pressure a bit or concede the two bishops.

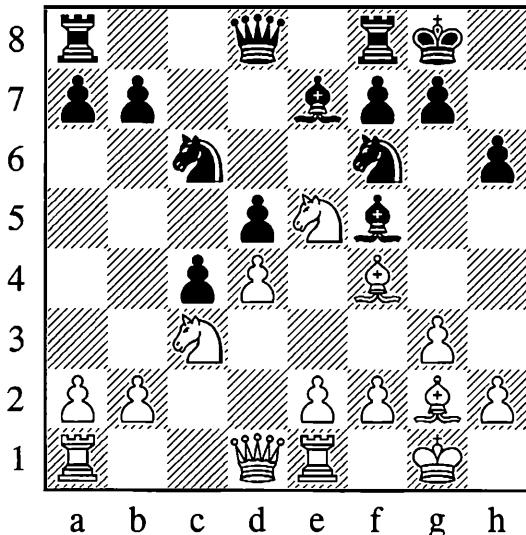


At this point White has the choice between A1) 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$, which seems a bit inconsistent, and accepting the challenge with A2) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

A1) 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

This reaches a favourable version of a line we shall examine in Chapter 14, dealing with 9th move alternatives (the variation with 9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$). Here Black has gotten the useful move ...h6 thrown in for free, and also White has played the non-threatening $\mathbb{Q}e1$. In general the e6-square is a rather passive square for the bishop, but it usually has to go there to support the d5-pawn. However, when we are given the chance, we should choose the more active f5-square, where the bishop plays an active role in the centre.

12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$



12...Rxe8!N

A small refinement to existing practice. We want to target the important e4- and e5-squares before turning our eyes to the queenside.

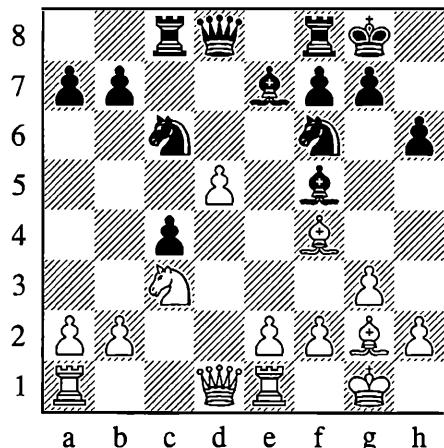
In the only game in this position in our database, Black played:

12...Rc8

The idea is to take on c6 with the rook. This is acceptable, but a bit unnecessary.

13.Qxc6

There is a small trap in that White may be tempted by 13.Qxc4? dxc4 14.d5, hoping to regain the piece by the further advance of the d-pawn.



14...g5! A tactical solution, which should be borne in mind as a resource in other similar positions. After 15.dxc6 gxf4 16.cxb7 Rb8 White does not have enough for his piece.

13...Rxc6 14.e4!?

This does not look great positionally, but White is trying to justify his play up to this point.

14...Qxe4 15.Qxe4 Rxe4 16.Qxe4 dxe4 17.d5?!

Better was the simple 17.Qxe4 Qf6, when White is only marginally worse.

17...Rc5 18.d6 Qf6†

Tuerk – Bach, Dortmund 1995.

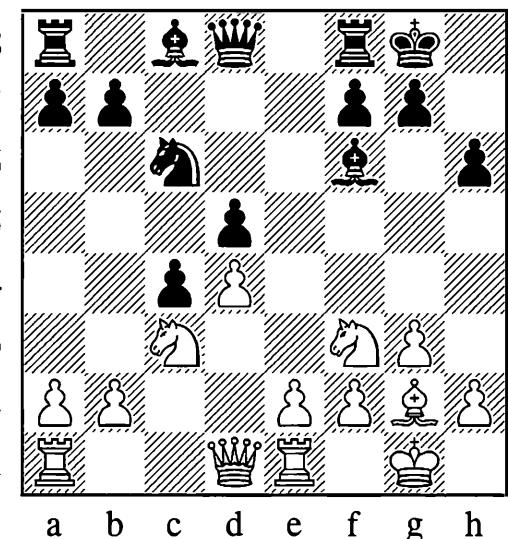
13.Qxc6

If 13.Qc1 then 13...Bb4!? looks an interesting idea, although we can now also afford the luxury of playing 13...Rc8.

13...Rxc6

Black has a comfortable position. He can consider ...Bb4 to take control over the e4-square, and if White prevents this with 14.a3 then 14...Qd6 gives Black a slight edge.

A2) 11.Qxf6 Rxf6



12.e4N

This is the move that makes sense of 10.Qe1, although when the opponent has two bishops, it is in principle not advisable to open the position, taking on a weak d-pawn in the process. However, White can probably maintain the balance fairly easily, with the help of a few computer moves.

12.♗d2

This is rather tame. The long-term features of the position are all in Black's favour, so White should be looking to disrupt the flow of the game.

12...♗f5

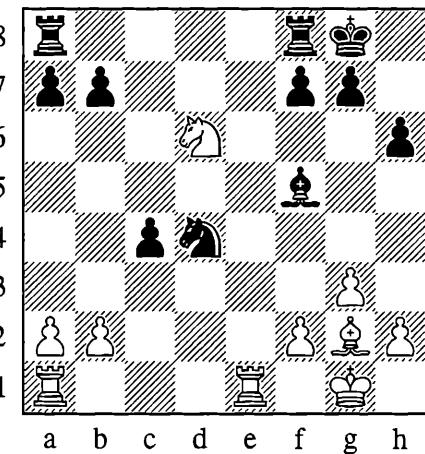
The more active move, although 12...♗e6N is of course also possible and good. It is not easy for White to find an active plan.

13.e4!?

This move may still be White's best try for equality.

13.b3 cxb3 14.axb3 ♜e8± was Bazart – Berges, Besancon 1999. Black has the two bishops, the better pawn structure and controls the important e4- and e5-squares.

13...dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4
16.♗xd4 ♗xd4 17.♗d6



17...♗d3!

We could stop here and say that White is struggling to equalize, but let's supply a bit of evidence:

18.♖e7 ♘ab8!

Black's target is b2; if that falls the c-pawn will become very strong.

19.♗xb7 ♘fe8 20.♗d7 ♘e2† 21.♔h1 ♘e5

White still has a lot of problems to solve. Black may continue with either ...♗b5 or ...♗f5.

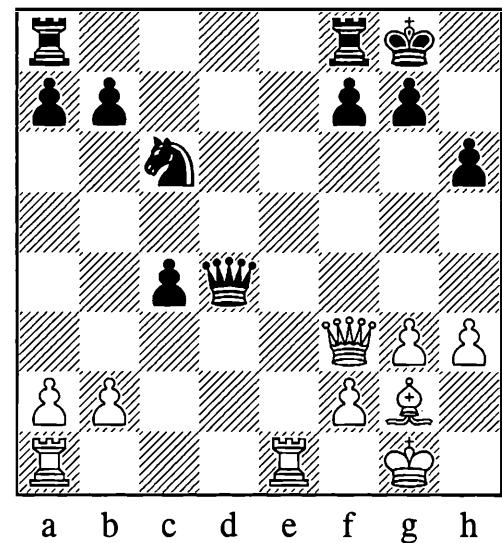
12...dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗g4

The pressure on d4 is evident, so White needs a concrete solution.

14.h3!

14.d5?! ♘b4 15.♗xf6† ♗xf6 16.♗e4 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 looks like a logical continuation, but after 17...♗d3 Black has a slight but pleasant advantage. Notice that 18.b3? ♘fe8+ takes advantage of the pressure against f2. Instead 18.♗e2 is better, but after 18...b5 White is still under some pressure.

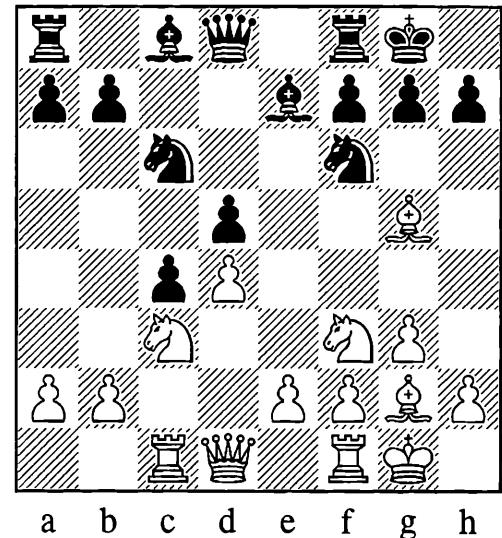
14...♗xf3 15.♗xf6† ♗xf6 16.♗xf3 ♗xd4



17.♗c3!?

White has enough counterplay down the long diagonal to regain the pawn and achieve equality, although he may have to play a few moves to demonstrate it.

B) 10.♗c1

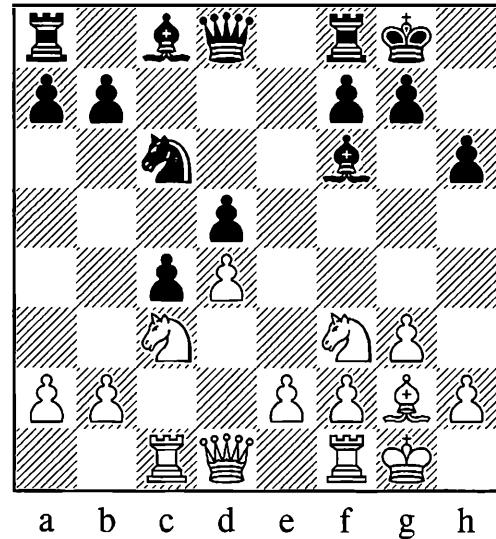


This makes a bit more sense than 10.♕e1. Here we shall consider **B1) 10...h6!?** and **B2) 10...♗e6**. The first of these is attractive enough, and sufficient for equality, albeit rather a complicated way to deal with a subvariation. 10...♗e6 is livelier and simpler, and is thus our main recommendation for once.

B1) 10...h6?! 11.♖xf6

After 11.♖xf6 Black has a fine position. As we have said already, there is no need for ...♗e6 when the d5-pawn is not threatened. 12.♗e5 ♜e8= If White now plays 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.b3? ♜a3, he loses the exchange, which means that the white rook gains no benefit from being on c1.

11...♗xf6



12.e4!

This is not usually a very attractive move, but in this case we have an exception, because the rook on c1 is able to attack the c4-pawn quickly.

The alternatives are not really dangerous:

12.b3? ♜f5?

12.e3 is rather tame. Black can choose between

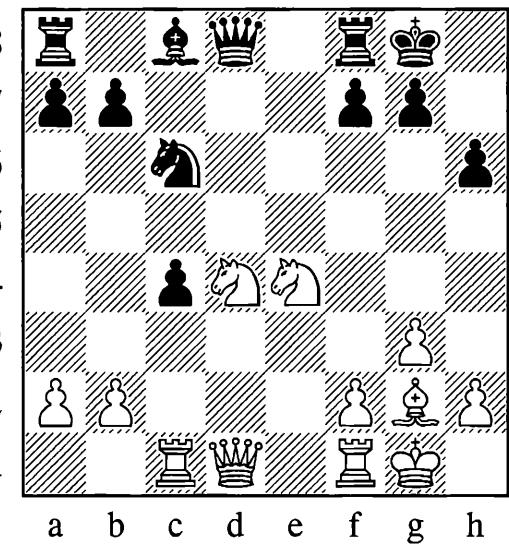
the simple 12...♗e6 and the more active 12...♗f5!?. In the latter case, moving the bishop again after 13.♗e1 ♗e6 does not feel like too great a concession, and 14.b3 ♜a5 15.b4 ♜c6 was fine for Black in Foierl – Modes, Germany 1993.

12.♗e5 ♜e6 13.f4 transposes to line D2 of Chapter 3.

12...dxe4

12...♗b4 is worse. White can reply with either 13.♗xd5 or 13.e5! ♜e7 14.♗e1 ♜e6 15.f4 with the idea 15...g6 16.a3 ♜c6 17.♗c2, and White will prepare f4-f5 with ♜e3 and possibly g3-g4.

13.♗xe4 ♜xd4 14.♗xd4



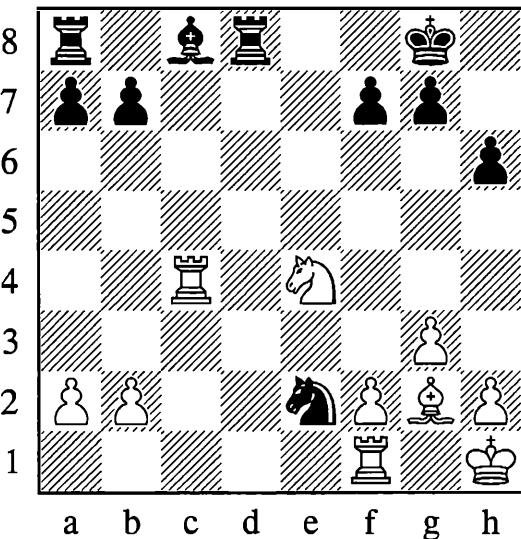
14...♝xd4!N

After 14...♝xd4 15.♜xc4± Black had not really solved his problems in Michenka – Netusil, Czech Republic 1996. The b7-pawn is a weakness and White has ideas such as ♜c5 or ♜d6.

15.♝xd4 ♜xd4 16.♜xc4 ♜e2†!

This might look risky, but the time gained is very useful.

17.♝h1 ♜d8

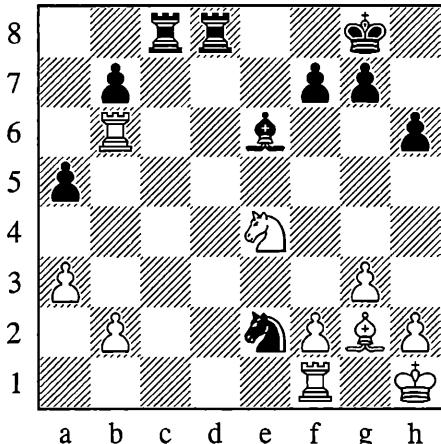


A quick look at the position might suggest that White has some chances to create a bit of pressure, but in reality Black does not have any problems equalizing. Here are some possible lines:

18. Qc5 Bb8 19. Be4 b6! The only move, but good enough. 20. Qb3 Qa6 21. Ba4 Bb5 22. Bxa7 Bbc8?

18. Bc7 Bb8 leaves White without a real follow up.

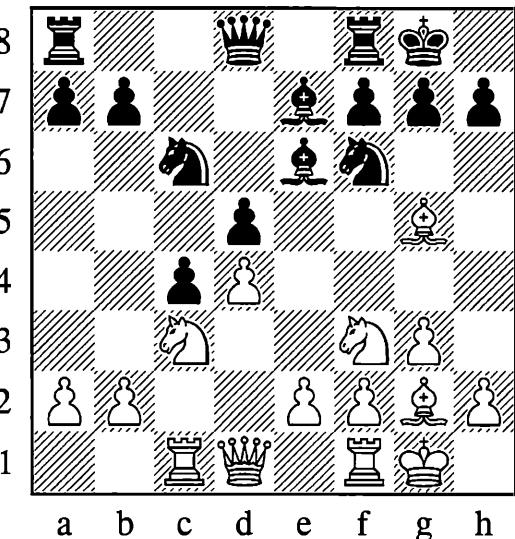
18. Bb4 a5! 19. Bb6 Qe6 (probably 19...Ba6!? is also sufficient, but we like this active approach) 20. a3 Bac8!



Aiming for the second rank. 21. Bxb7 (21. b4 axb4 22. axb4 Bc2 23. Qc5 Qc4 24. Qxb7 Bd4 is similar) 21... Bc2 22. b4 axb4

23. axb4 Qc4 24. Be1 f5 25. Qc5 Qc3 With enough counterplay, and maybe a draw after 26. Bg1 Qe2† 27. Bh1.

B2) 10... Be6



The classical approach leads to the most interesting game here.

11.b3

11. Qe5 transposes to 10. Qe5 Qe6 11. Bc1, found in Chapter 3, where Black has good play in all lines.

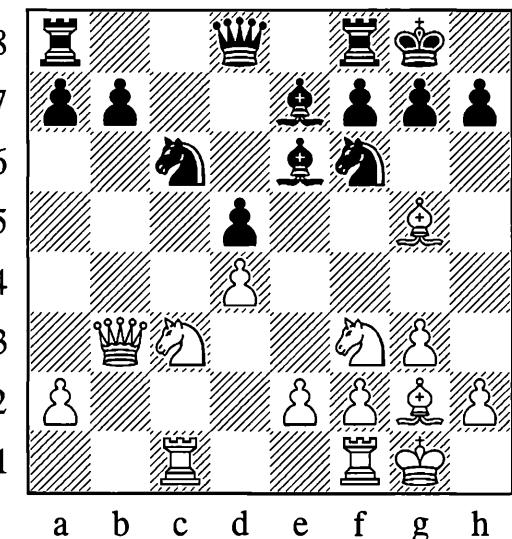
11. Be1 Bc8 12. e4 was played in Budihardjo – Oliver, Adelaide 2003. Here Black can improve with simple play: 12...dxe4!N 13. Bxf6 Qxf6 14. Qxe4 Qxd4†

11. Bc2 h6 12. Qf4 does not make a lot of sense. Not surprisingly, after 12... Wa5 13. Bfd1 Bac8 14. Qe5 Bfd8= Black was already living a problem-free life in Prost – Midoux, Lyon 2003.

11. Qf4 Bb6 12. Qa4 Wa6= is also fine for Black, Van Heel – Wiersma, Utrecht 2004.

11... cxb3!?

Black tries to exploit the move order. 11... Wa5 12. Qe5 transposes to a line that we do not recommend for Black (see page 92)

12.♗xb3**12...♗b6!N**

Black attacks the white centre, at the same time daring White to “give” him doubled pawns. As it happens, Black equalizes very easily here.

It was quite surprising to us that after 12...♗b6 13.♗b1 ♜fc8 14.♘e5±, Black does not have an easy way to solve his problems. At least, we could not find it. Mendez Ataria – Cranbourne, Buenos Aires 1991.

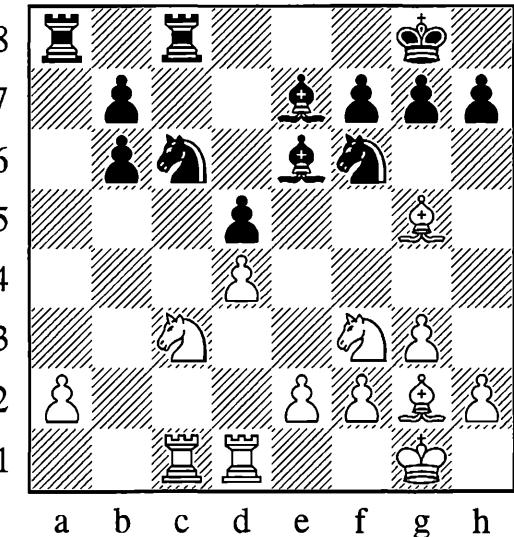
Another decent move is 12...♘e4!?N 13.♕xe7 ♜xe7 14.♗fd1 ♜fd8= and the position is roughly equal.

13.♗xb6

There is not really a way to avoid it. 13.♗a4 looks odd, and we cannot believe that this is the right move, no matter what our electronic horses neigh out. 13...♜fc8 14.♗b1?! (14.♗fd1= is probably better) 14...♗a5 15.♗xa5 ♘xa5 16.♗d2 b6 Black has come out of the opening with a good grip on the c4-square. After something along the lines of 17.♘g5 ♘c4 18.♗c1 ♘e3 19.♗xe3 ♜xc3± it is definitely White who is fighting for equality, and maybe without success.

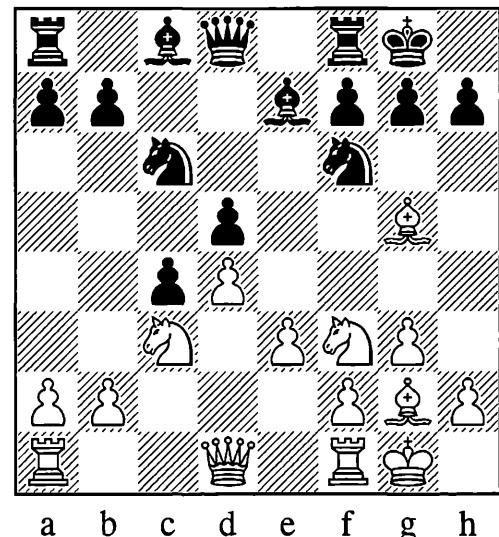
13...axb6 14.♗fd1

14.♗b1 ♜b4! gives White immediate problems on the a-file.

14...♜fc8

With the threat of ...♗a3 followed by ...♘xd4, this gives Black a good game. White needs to force matters:

**15.♗xf6 ♜xf6 16.e4 dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♜d8
18.♘xf6† gxf6 19.♗b1 ♜xa2 20.♗xb6 ♘xd4
21.♘xd4 ♜xd4 22.♗f1!=**

C) 10.e3**10...♗e6**

10...h6?! is also playable, but it seems to be White's intention to take on f6 anyway, so

why give up the tempo? After 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$, the chances were roughly even in Borg – Takashima, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988.

11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$?

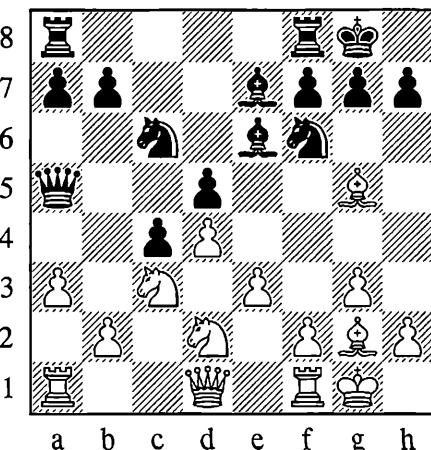
This move has an artificial feel to it. The best way forward must be 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$, which transposes to Chapter 4. If you would rather not play this as Black, you can meet 10.e3 with 10...h6!? as mentioned above, but of course there is no way of avoiding it if White plays the superior move order of 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11.e3.

There is always a question as to what point you should stop analysing a line. We could quite feasibly stop here and say that Black is obviously fine and should look forward to the middlegame with glee. But as this is a grandmaster repertoire book, we choose to provide a more extensive investigation. We hope that the reader understands that none of the authors of any of the *Grandmaster Repertoire* books expect the reader, or even themselves, to necessarily memorize all lines. Sometimes, such as here, seeing the illustrative examples is a benefit in itself.

At this point Black has two pleasant looking options, 11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$. We have chosen to cover the first, as it gives Black more options.

11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12.a3 should not be a problem for Black either, but he has to be careful:



a) After 12... $\mathbb{Q}fe8$?! 13.b4! Black is in a slightly inferior situation.

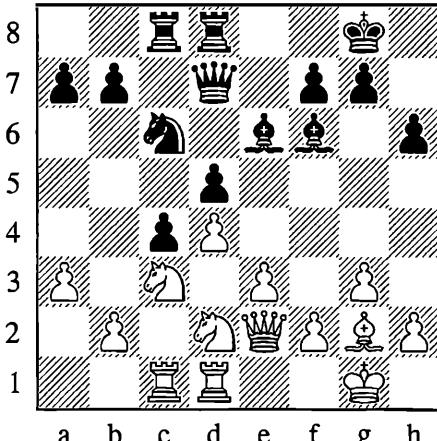
b) 12...h6?! 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was better, but we fear that Black has to play accurately to avoid ending up in a worse position after 16.b3) 16.b3 b5? (again 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was best) 17.a4!± Graf – Meins, Osterburg 2006.

c) We have a lot of analysis on 12... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$, which is fully playable, but we prefer to play the rook to c8 on the 11th move and keep our (queen's) options open.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

This is hardly the strongest idea here.

White also fared poorly after: 12.a3 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ h6 Black has played all his truly constructive moves, so this now makes sense. 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$



Mrva – Mozny, Slovakia 2002, continued with the natural 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with a slight edge for Black. There is nothing wrong with this, of course, but it was more accurate to play 16...b5!N right away. Black is just better. White is struggling to find a good move and the digital monster even wants to play 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ ±, which we cannot be displeased with.

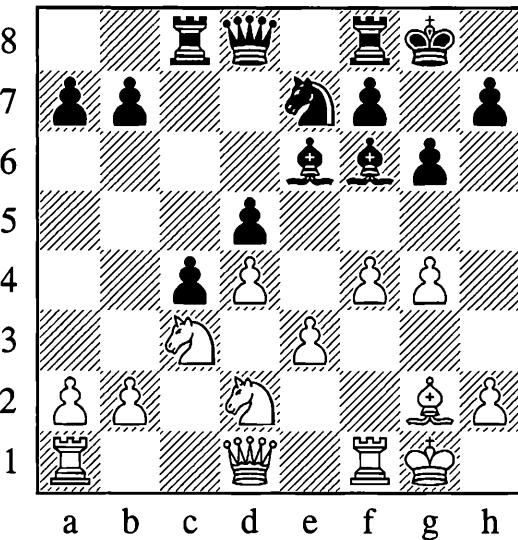
12... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13.f4

White has played his hand. No face cards, only threes and fours...

13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ looks tempting, but Black has a strong riposte in 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ \mp .

13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $g4$ $g6$

The standard set-up. Black is doing well.



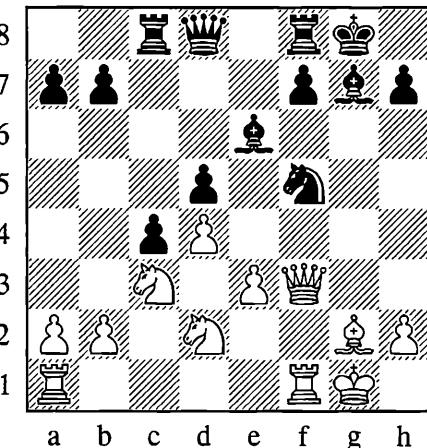
15. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

This looks simply wrong, but it is hard for White to find pleasant looking moves.

15. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7!$ \mp

The idea of blocking off all White's play with ...f5 looks great. And if White tries to do anything immediately, he will find himself unprepared for the tactics.

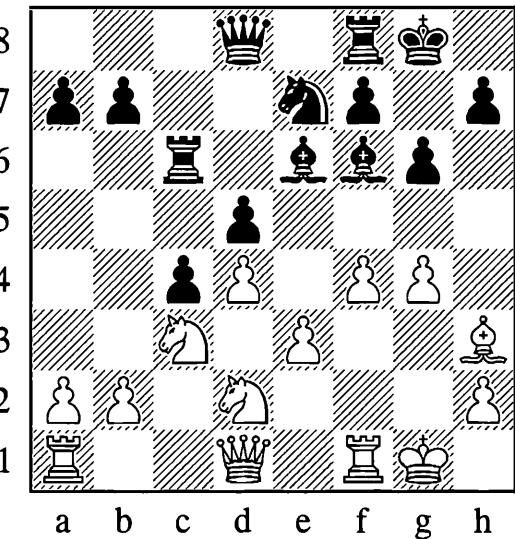
16. $f5?!$ $gxf5$ 17. $gxf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ \mp



19. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{E}g8!$
21... $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ also works.

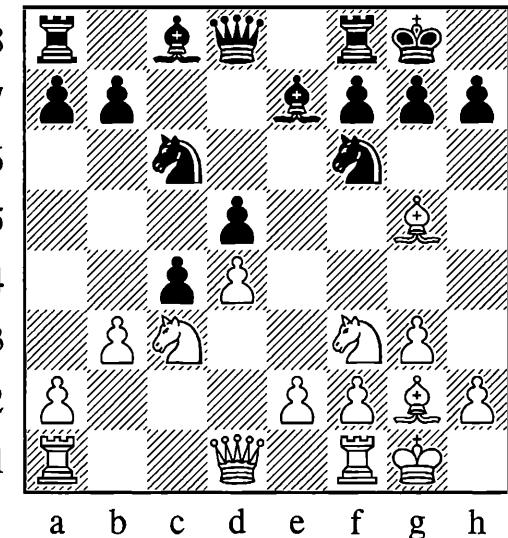
22. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
The two bishops prevail.

15... $\mathbb{E}c6!$



Keeping an eye on f6 and other important squares along the sixth rank; and also freeing c8 for the bishop – just in case. The opening is over and Black holds the better chances. His dark-squared bishop will one day become great, and White has no significant threats on the kingside to counter the long-term expansion Black is planning on the queenside, Volke – Bachmayr, Munich 1993.

D) 10. $b3$



Black is simply a pawn up, based on:

18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$

Black wins after some complications.

This makes less sense without the inclusion of 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ first. It is our belief that Black can equalize in various ways, but we had to choose. So we have decided to go for just two of these: D1) 10...cxb3!? and D2) 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$.

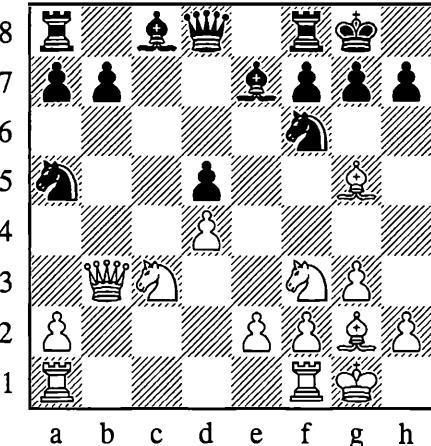
D1) 10...cxb3!?

This is the secondary option – but still worth a look.

11.axb3

The second option here is not surprisingly also a recapture:

11. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$



This line should not pose Black great problems. The c4-square will come in very handy.

12. $\mathbb{W}b5!$

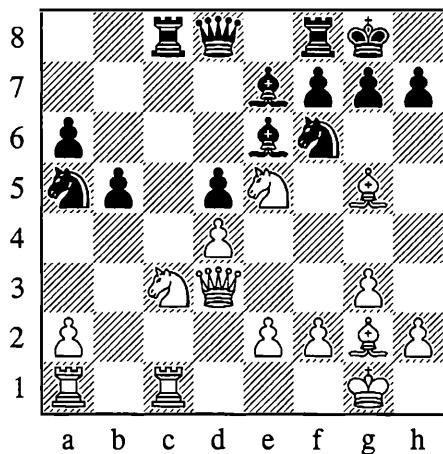
The most testing.

12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with the idea ... $\mathbb{B}c8$ should not be problematic for Black. For example: 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d3$ h6 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ b5 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}fc8$ 20. e4 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 21. $\mathbb{E}cd1$ dxе4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ Keskisarja – Martynov, Helsinki 1999. After 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}b5\#$ Black has ample play for the pawn.

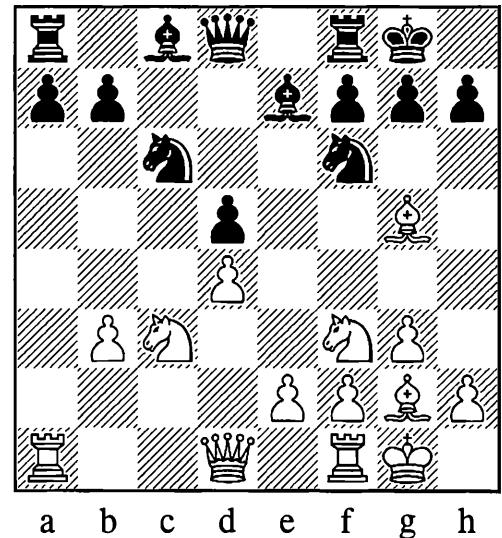
12... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$

By not harassing the queen yet, Black keeps the knight on c3 unprotected a bit longer, thereby gaining a tempo with ... $\mathbb{B}c8$.

Less precise is 12...a6 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$, as played in Rapparlie – Tschann, Germany 1996. White should probably use his extra time to play 15. f4!N, when Black lacks a good reply. For example: 15...g6 16. $\mathbb{Q}h6$, based on 16... $\mathbb{B}e8$?! 17. f5! $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xf5$ gx $f5$? 19. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ with the threat of $\mathbb{W}g8\#$, forcing Black into 21... $\mathbb{B}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f6\#$! $\mathbb{B}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$ and everything is coming to an end. 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ a6 15. $\mathbb{W}d3$ b5



Black has fully equalized.



11... $\mathbb{B}f5!$

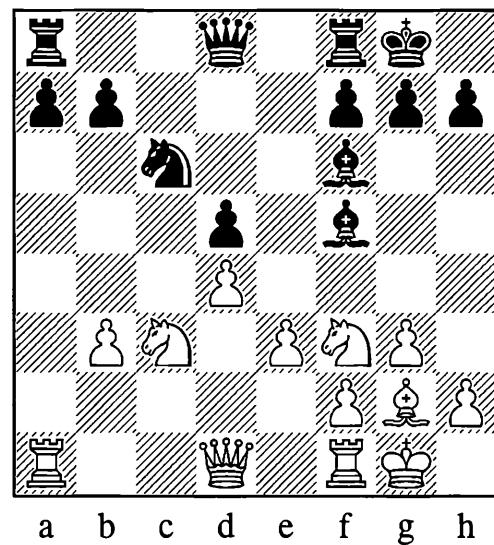
A very logical move, first played in Sasikiran – Kotronias, Bursa 2010. Previously the bishop had gone to the passive e6-square, where it has little to do. Kotronias correctly took advantage of the fact that d5 is no longer under attack.

12.♗xf6

A typical plan in these structures. White's idea is that his central pawns on d4 and e3 will restrict Black's dark-squared bishop.

If White tries 12.e3 ♜c8 13.♗e5, Black will reply with 13...♗b4!= getting his pieces to good squares.

12...♗xf6 13.e3



13...♝c8!N

This is a slight refinement on Sasikiran – Kotronias, which is the model game for how to play this variation. Basically we think it is better to control e5 before initiating the plan with ...a5 and ...♗b4.

We have analysed some alternatives:

13...♝d6!? 14.♝d2 ♜fc8 15.♝ac1 g6 looks like another reasonable set-up: 16.♗e5!? ♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♜xe5 18.♗xd5 ♜xc1 19.♗xc1 ♜c8=

13...♗b4 14.♝d2

For some time we seriously feared that White could be a bit better after 14.♗e5!? ♜c8 15.♝d2 a5 16.♝fc1 ♜e8 17.f4, though Black can reply with 17...g6! when the correct evaluation should be “unclear”. After this move Black plans to play ...♗g7 and ...f6. We don't think Black is getting a lot from

his two bishops, but exactly what White is doing is also not clear to us. 18.♗b5 ♜e7 Once the knight has gone to b5, this is more logical; the bishop will go to f8.

14.♗a2!? is also worth considering, with roughly equal chances.

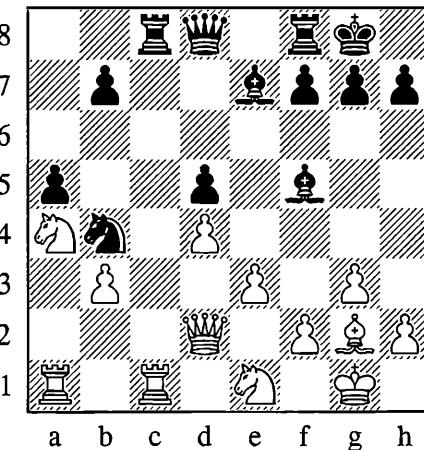
14...a5

We also spent a good deal of time analysing 14...♞e7, but you cannot cover everything in a single volume.

15.♝fc1 ♜c8 16.♗e1

16.♗e5!?

16...♞e7 17.♗a4



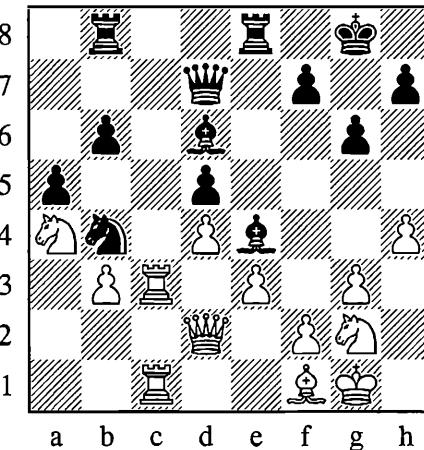
17...♝d6

Black has emerged from the opening with a good position.

18.h4 b6 19.♗c3 ♜d7 20.♝f1 ♜d6

As there are no obvious actions for either party to undertake, the game enters a slow manoeuvring phase.

21.♗a4 ♜b8 22.♝c3 g6 23.♝ac1 ♜fe8 24.♗g2 ♜e4



Objectively the position is equal, but Black is starting to put some pressure on White's kingside, meaning he has to take care not to drift into a worse position.

25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 28. $exf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

It was also possible to try 30... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$!? 31. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$, but White can defend with 32. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $b5$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and Black will not be able to win the ending.

31. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 33. $h5$

Draw agreed, Sasikiran – Kotronias, Bursa 2010. Black is at least not worse.

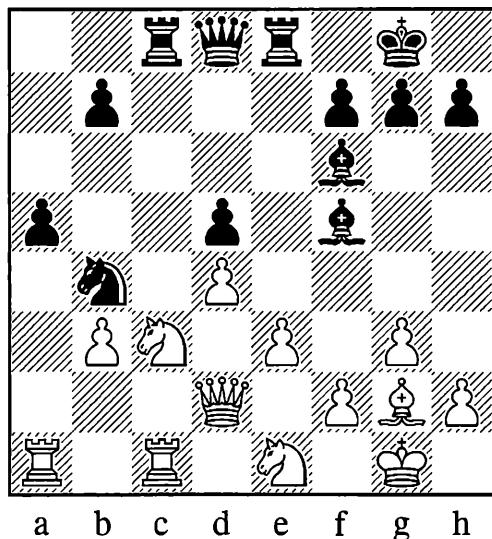
14. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$

15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5\#$

15... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

The e5-square is now under full control.

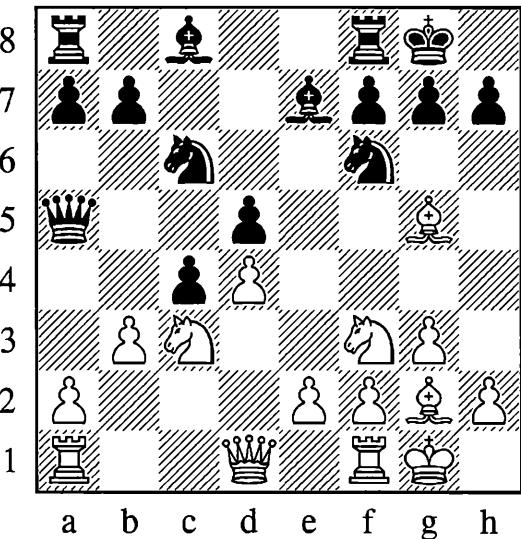
16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$



We have (almost!) transposed to Sasikiran – Kotronias. Black has a good game, but the position is a bit static, so maybe this is not the path to follow if you desperately need to win!?

D2) 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$

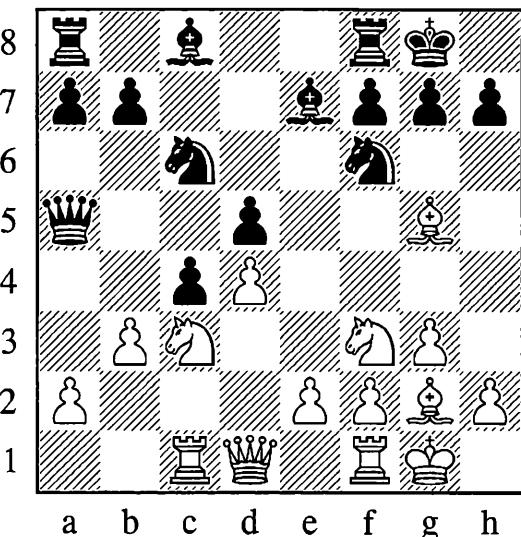
This is our main recommendation. Compared to 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. $b3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$, Black is under less pressure in the centre and can thus act more forcefully.



White now has the following options at his disposal: D21) 11. $\mathbb{Q}cl$, D22) 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$, D23) 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$ and D24) 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13. $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is given as equal by Lund, but one might ask if Black is not already doing quite well.

D21) 11. $\mathbb{Q}cl$



11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

The most direct way to play. 11... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8=$ transposes to a line we rejected for our repertoire (see page 92)

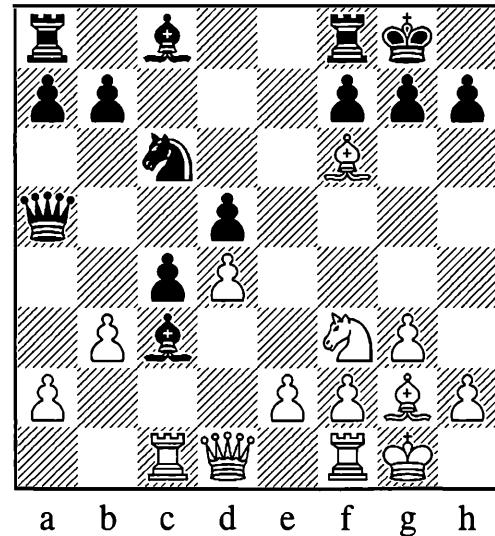
12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

After 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ White should transpose to the main line by 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$; instead 13. $\mathbb{W}xc3$?

$\mathbb{W}xc3$ 14. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ would give White problems with most of his pieces.

12... $\mathbb{E}xc3!$

The accurate move order. The immediate recapture on f6 unnecessarily gives White extra options.



13. $\mathbb{W}c2$

This is more or less forced. 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 14. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $c3$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ looks very clever, but Black has: 15... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 16. $\mathbb{E}xb2$ $cx b2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $b1=\mathbb{W}$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ (20... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ is a bit passive, and with 21. $\mathbb{E}c1$ White might be able to hold the balance) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ Black obtains winning chances in the endgame because of 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{E}fe8\bar{f}$.

13... $gx f6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 15. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $b5$ 16. $bxc4$ $bxc4$

This is quite a typical position for the old-fashioned 9...c4 Tarrasch, where Black accepts the doubled pawns with the argument that it does not matter at all, as they cannot be attacked, and that it is at least as important that he has a passed c-pawn. Additionally, the f6-pawn prevents any $\mathbb{Q}f3-e5$ jumps.

17.e4?!

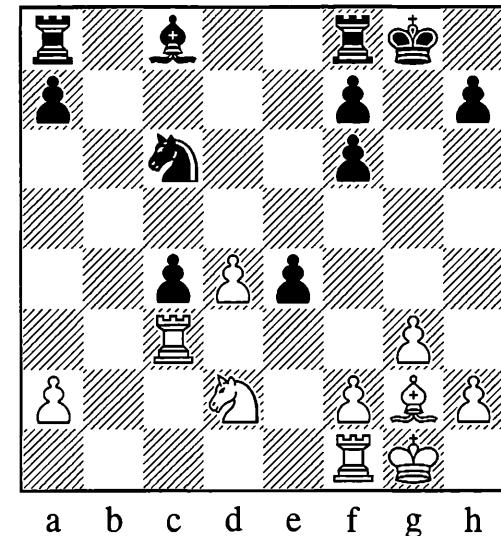
White is trying to force matters, but goes overboard in the process.

17. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18.e4 $dxe4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ should not give Black any problems. He is already thinking about ... $\mathbb{Q}b4(e7)-d5$ with active play.

17.e3 $\mathbb{E}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ with even chances seems to be the most reasonable way to play, as long as it is not followed up with 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4?!$ $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ when Black is playing for an edge.

17... $dxe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$

Losing the plot. Necessary was 18. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $exf3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7\bar{f}$. White should hold, but will not enjoy the process of proving this assumption.



18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!N$

One of these obvious improvements, found by the process of elimination. 18...f5 was the less fortunate choice in Kostiuk – Grabuzova, Vladimir 2008.

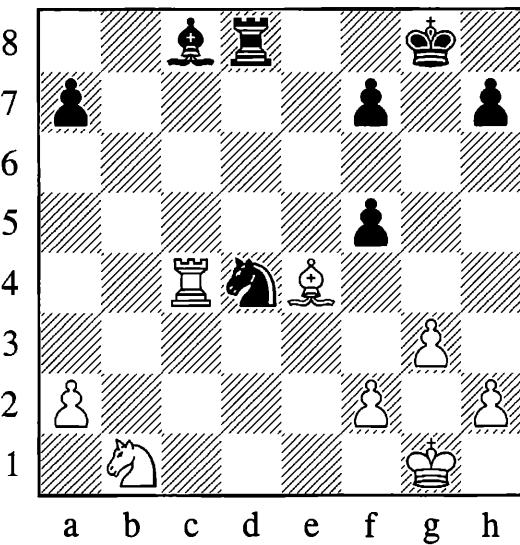
19. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}d8!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h5\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}h6\bar{t}$ leads to Black being an exchange up.

20... $\mathbb{E}b8!$

White is faced with threats such as ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e2\bar{t}$, both picking up material. Forced is therefore:

21. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}xb1\bar{t}$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ f5!



23.♗d5□

White has to put the bishop somewhere, but the number of squares is limited.

As an example, 23.♗h1 loses brutally by force to: 23...♝e2† 24.♗g2 ♜b7† 25.f3 ♕d1! 26.♕c3 Other moves lose as well. 26...♝g1† 27.♗f2 ♜xh1 28.♗xe2 ♜xh2† 29.♗e3 ♜xe2†! 30.♗xe2 ♜a6 31.♗d3 f4! 32.gxf4 h5—+

23...♝e2† 24.♗g2□

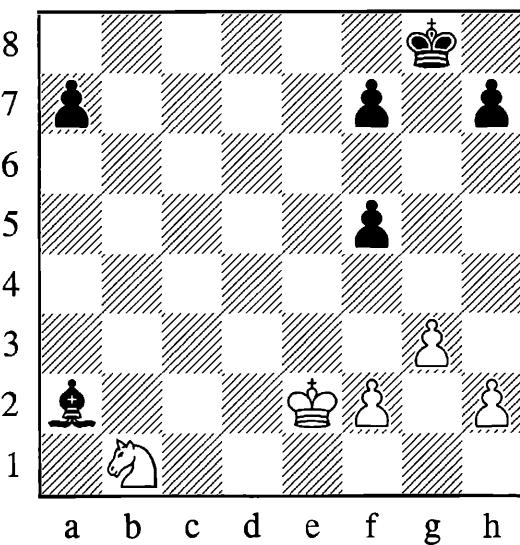
24.♗f1 ♜a6 25.♗c6 ♜d3! wins outright.

24...♜a6 25.♗c5 ♜xd5 26.♗xd5 ♜b7 27.♗f1 ♜xd5

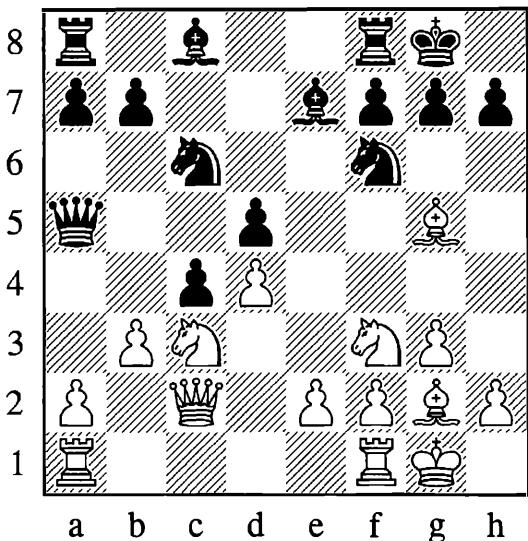
27...♝xg3† 28.fxg3 ♜xd5 may also give Black some winning chances.

28.♗xe2 ♜xa2

Black should win.



D22) 11.♔c2



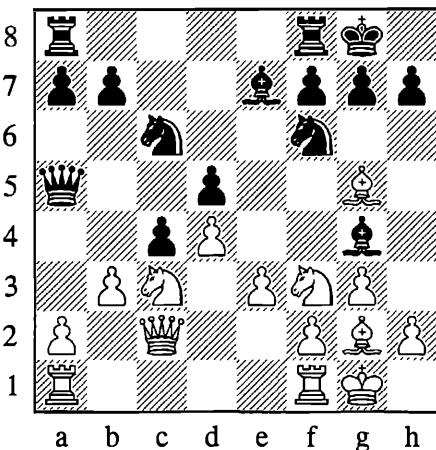
This looks like a flexible and normal move, but it has a downside; the d4-pawn can be attacked and Black thus equalizes comfortably.

11...♝g4!

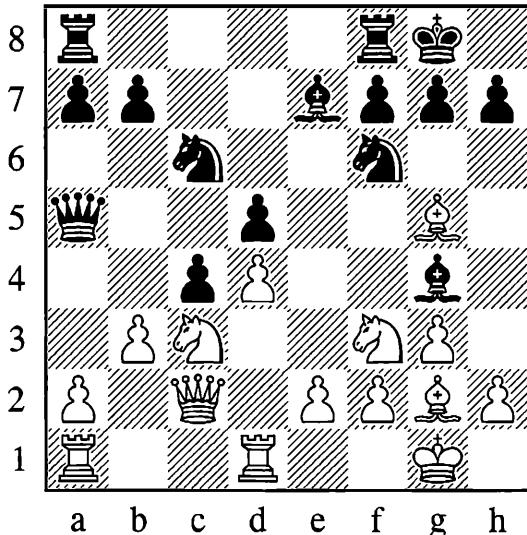
With an obvious threat to the d4-pawn.

12.♗fd1

12.e3 looks quite solid.



Our suggestion is 12...♝ac8!N with an active and interesting game. The only game to be played here continued instead 12...♝b4 13.♗xf6 ♜xf3 14.♗xf3 ♜xc3 15.♗ab1 gxf6 16.bxc4 ♜xd4 17.exd4 with a draw in Nenciulescu – Shishkin, e-mail 2005, based on the fact that 17...♝xd4 18.♔d1 ♜xf3† 19.♔xf3 dxc4 is rather equal.



So far we have been following Vossen – Wacker, Germany 2001. Here we have a significant (though thematic) improvement.

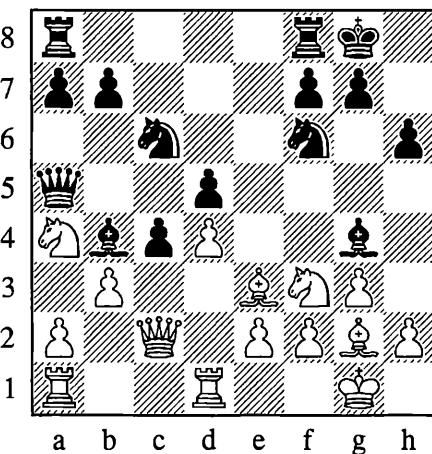
12...h6!N

Taking advantage of the fact that 13.♗d2 is not possible at this moment.

13.♗c1

13.♗e3 ♜b4 14.♗a4

14.♗ac1 ♜a3! followed by ...♗b4 and ...♗f5 looks unpleasant for White, even if he holds the balance. If nothing else, after 15.♗b1 Black has 15...♗e7!? or 15...♗b4!=.



14...♗e7!

With the ideas ...♗f5 and ...b5, Black is at least equal. For example:

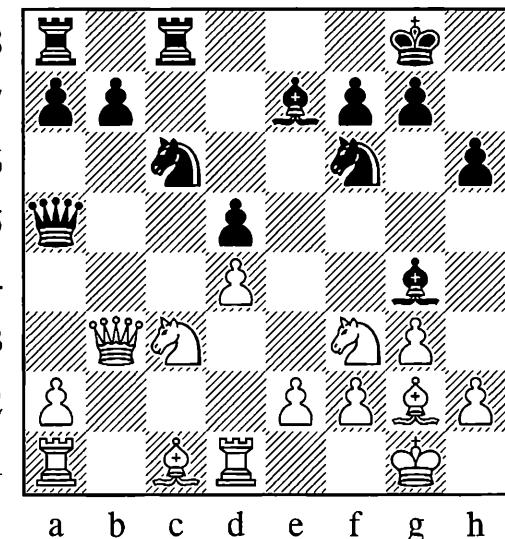
15.a3 ♜f5 16.♗a2

16.axb4?! ♜xa4!?

16....♗d6 17.♗c5 b5?→

13...cxb3 14.♗xb3 ♜fc8

Black has fully equalized. The following is just an illustrative line.



15.♗b2

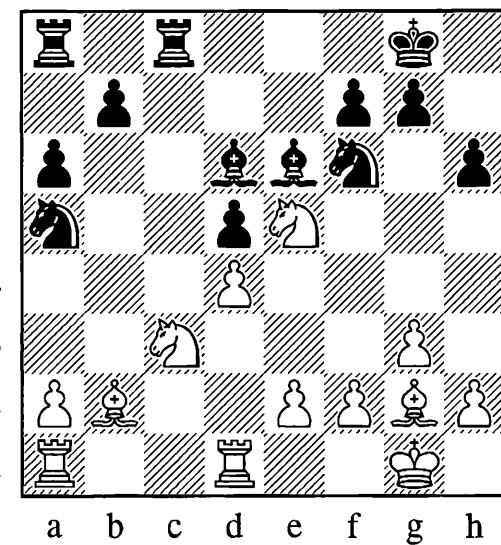
15.♗xb7?? ♜ab8+–

15...♜e6

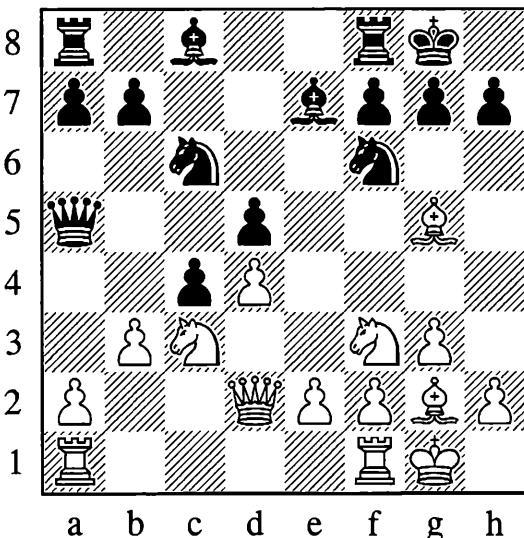
Black has other good ways to play this position. For example: 15...♝d8!? 16.♗e5 ♜a5 17.♗a4 ♜c4 18.♗b3 ♜xb2 19.♗xb2 ♜e6 and Black is at least equal.

16.♗e5 ♜d6 17.♗b5 a6 18.♗xa5 ♜xa5

What a pretty picture! White's bishops are both fianchettoed while Black's are placed "classically" in the centre. Black is by no means worse.



D23) 11.♗d2



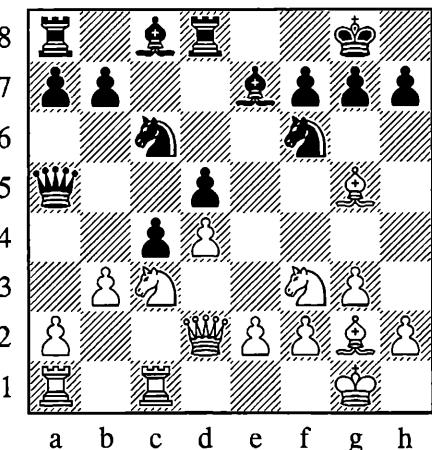
Not surprisingly there are no great benefits to entering into the pin.

11...♝d8!

Protecting d5 and keeping an eye on d4 (and d2).

12.bxc4

White tried the more circumspect 12.♗fc1 in Dolezal – Juarez, Villa Ballester 1992.

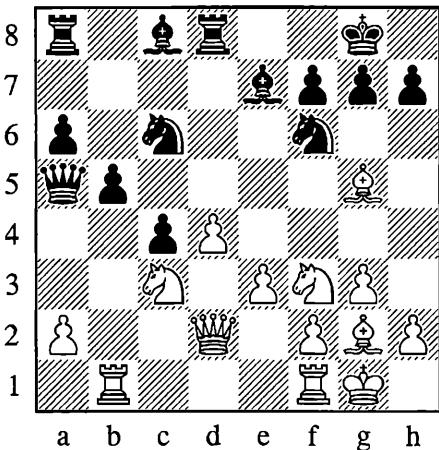


Black should be absolutely fine after either 12...♞e6N= or 12...h6!N. The latter could continue: 13.♗xf6 ♞xf6 14.bxc4!? (14.e3 ♞f5=) 14...dxc4 15.e3 ♞f5 Black has a good game. He is planning ...♝b4-d3, and after 16.a3 b5→ it looks to be more fun to be Black.

12...dxc4 13.e4?

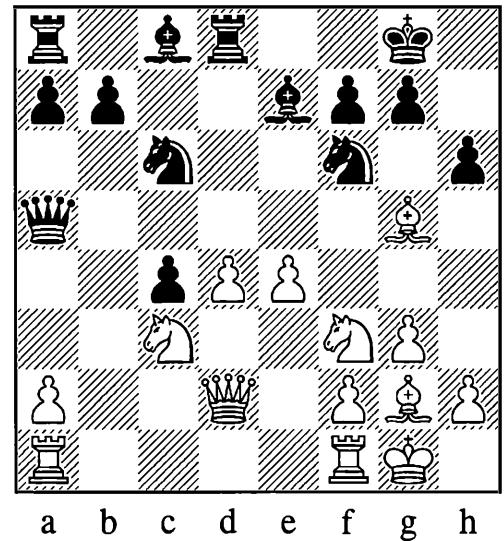
This is overambitious; White will not be able to keep control over the centre.

Better was 13.♗ab1N, but after 13...a6 14.e3 b5! Black has an excellent and interesting game.



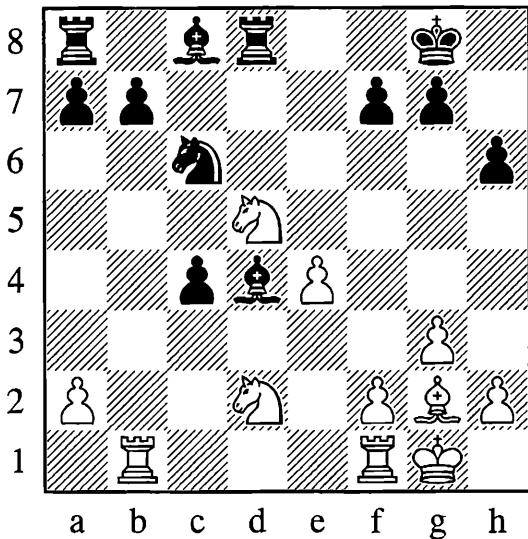
The main point is that after 15.♗e5?! ♛xe5 16.♗xa8 ♜f5 White has nothing better than 17.♗xf6 gxsf6 18.♗g2 ♜xb1 19.♗xb1 ♜xd2 20.♗xd2 ♜d3, when he will be fighting for equality.

13...h6!



14.♗xf6 ♜xf6 15.♗d5 ♜xd2 16.♗xd2 ♜xd4 17.♗ab1

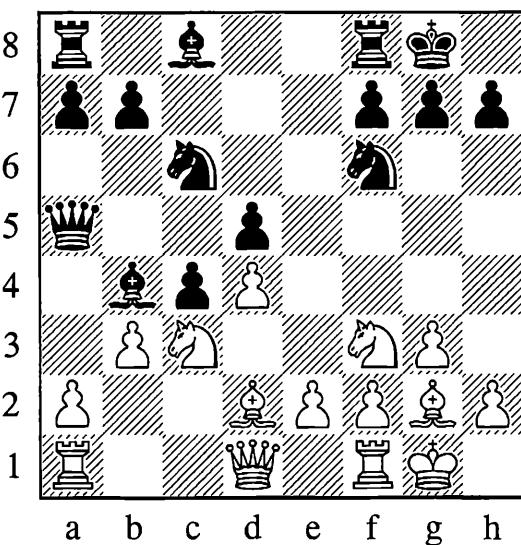
Saladino – Cranbourne, Buenos Aires 1986. Here Black missed his chance:



12...b5!N†

Based on 18...Rxb5? c3 followed by 19...Ra6+.

D24) 11.Qd2 Qb4



12.Wc2

We should also consider:

12.We1 Ra6 13.e3 Re8

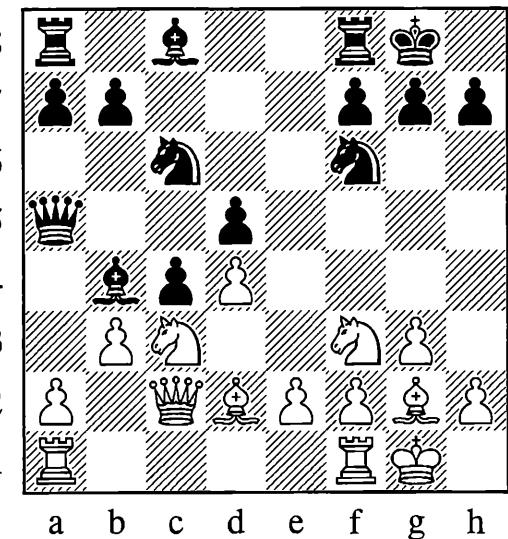
13...Rf5 or even 13...b5 14.Qe5 Qxc3 15.Qxc3 Re4 16.Qb4 Re8 gives Black comfortable play.

14.Qe5 Qxe5 15.dxe5

This was played in the game Haik – Miralles, Marseille 1987. Now instead of 15...Rxe5?!, Lund proposes:

15...Qxc3!N 16.Qxc3 Qe4

With equality.



12...Re8?!

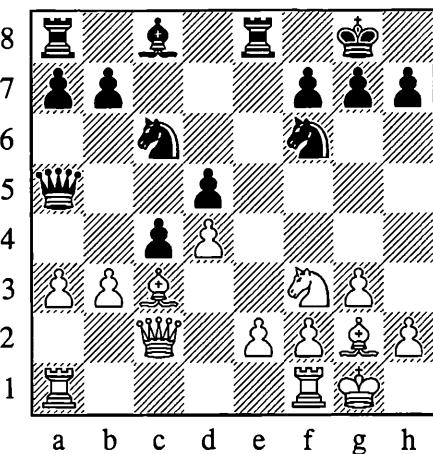
This logical move produces interesting play.

12...b5 13.a4 Qxc3 14.axb5 Rxb5 15.bxc4 Rxc4 16.Qxc3± Tarjan – Zwaig, Hastings 1976, is not the way we want to go.

13.bxc4!N

This is definitely the critical test, even if it is not clear whether it is the best move.

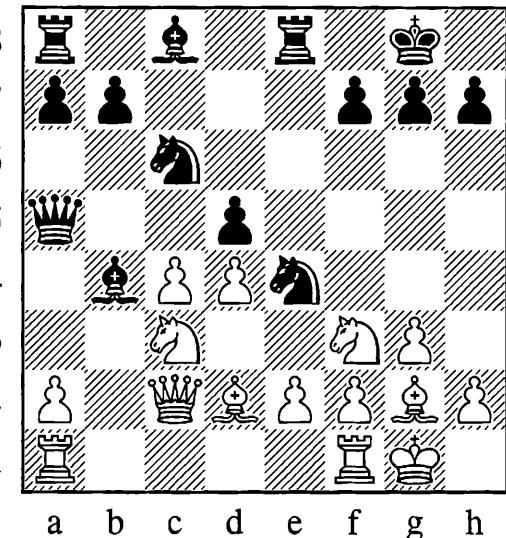
13.a3 Qxc3 14.Qxc3 should not be a problem at all:



14...Rf5! Black needs to remember this zwischenzug. 15.Qd2N (15.Qxf5 Rxc3 16.bxc4 Rxe2 was level in Granberg – Vodep, corr. 1984) 15...Ra6 Black looks all right here. For example: 16.bxc4 Rxc4 (or 16...Re4 17.Qb2 Qxc3 18.Qxc3 Rxc4=) 17.Qe5 Qxe5 18.dxe5 Re4 19.Qxe4 dxe4=

9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 13... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

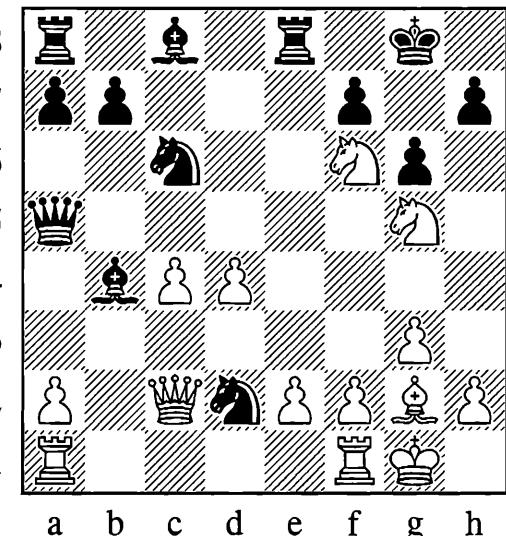
This leads to wild forcing lines.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

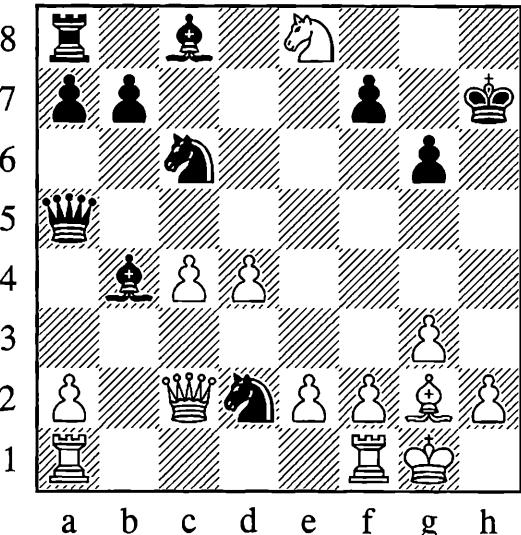
This piece sacrifice is the critical direction.
14. $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}f5!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb4 \mathbb{W}xb4\#$ makes no sense.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

The only idea. There are a lot of only moves around here...

15... $g6!$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ 16... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

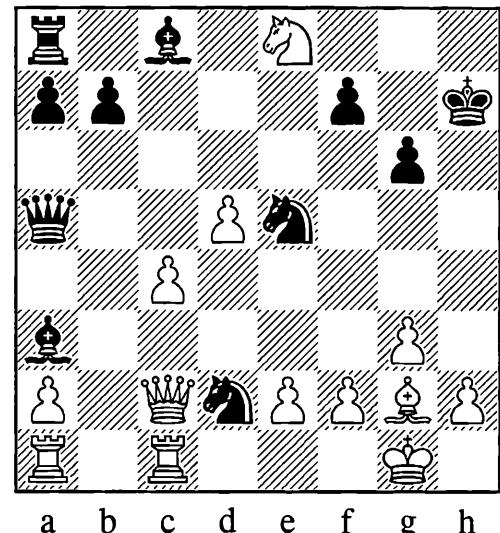
16... $\mathbb{Q}h8?!$ leads to problems for Black:
17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{R}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$
20. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\#$ $bxc6$ 22. $\mathbb{R}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
23. $c5! \pm$

17. $\mathbb{Q}gxh7\#$ 17. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}gxh7\#$ transposes.17... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 19. $d5?!$

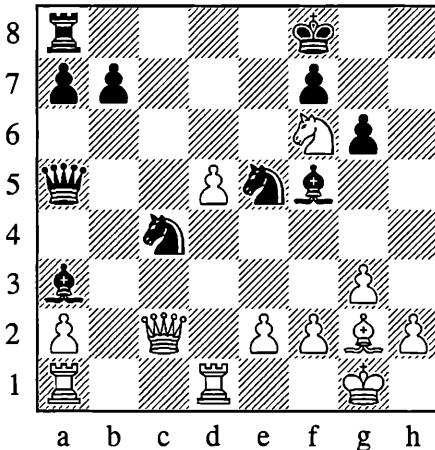
19. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 21. $\mathbb{R}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3\infty$ offers White three pawns for the piece, but Black has some good things to say about his position too.

19... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Black needs to avoid 19... $\mathbb{Q}d4?!$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6! \pm$.

20. $\mathbb{R}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 21. $c5!$

White has to play for structure and activity. If he plays slowly, he ends up in troubled waters: 21.♕d1 ♜dxc4 22.♗f6† ♔g7 23.♗e8† ♔f8 24.♗f6 ♔f5!



25.♕e4 (25.e4 ♔c8!!†) 25...♔d8 26.♗h7† ♔g7 27.♗xf5 ♔xh7†

21...♗f5 22.♗f6†

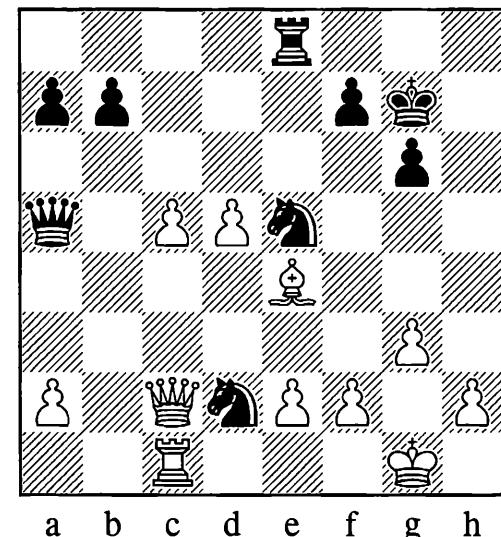
22.e4? would critically weaken the f3-square. Black plays: 22...♗ef3† 23.♗xf3 ♗xf3† 24.♗g2 ♕xe8 25.exf5 ♔xc1†

22...♗g7 23.♗e4

23.e4 is still not working out the way White would like: 23...♔xc1 24.♕xc1 ♗xf6 25.exf5 ♗df3† 26.♗h1 gxf5†

23...♔xc1 24.♕xc1 ♕xe4 25.♕xe4 ♕e8!

Black still needs to play accurately. After 25...♔c8? 26.♗d3± his pieces are not as well placed as he would like.

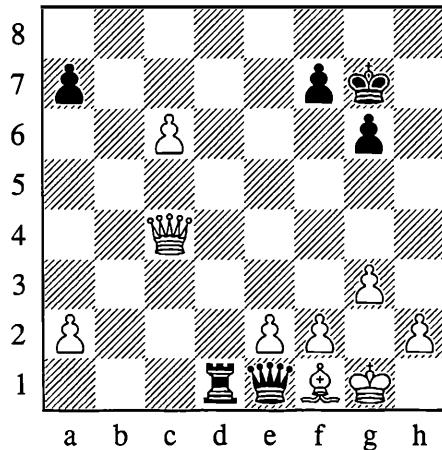


Now we should consider two options:

26.♗g2?! ♜xe4 27.♕xe4 ♜xa2 28.c6 bxc6 29.dxc6 f6!†

Black is better, based on 30.f4? ♕d2 31.♗c2 ♜xc6!..

26.♗g2 ♜dc4 27.c6 bxc6 28.dxc6 ♕d8 29.♕b3 ♕d2 30.♕xc4 ♜xc4 31.♕xc4 ♕d1† 32.♗f1 ♜e1



33.e3 ♕d2 34.♕f4 ♕d1 35.♕c4 ♕d2=

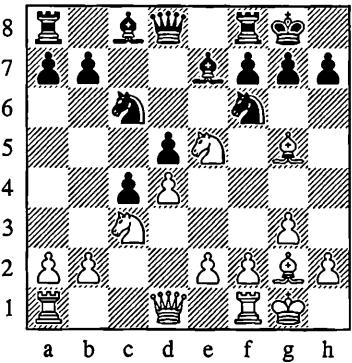
Conclusion

The only challenging move against 9...c4 is 10.♗e5. In this chapter we have given good replies against the various alternatives, and demonstrated that there are several ways to deal with all of them.

One thing to pay attention to is the way the e2-e4 break is often a poor decision for White, leaving the d-pawn weak and unattended. This is often a strategic mistake; and quite a popular one.

Another thing to pay attention to is how the black bishop in most cases is far better placed on f5 than on e6, and how this alone can be the difference between a complex game (as in the coming chapters) and easy equality.

Chapter 2



9...Bg5

Various 11th Moves

Variation Index

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Bc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf3 Bc6 6.g3 Bf6 7.Bg2 Be7
8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 c4 10.Be5**

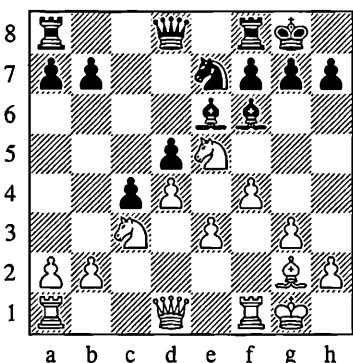
10...Be6

A) 11.e4?	41
B) 11.Be1	42
C) 11.Bxf6?!	43
D) 11.Bxc4?!	45
E) 11.Bd2	46

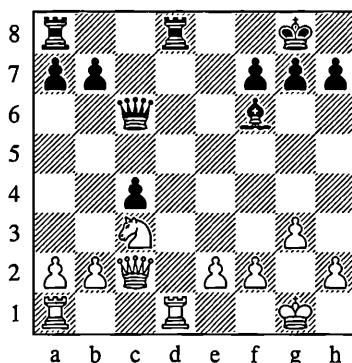
C) after 13.e3

D) after 18.Wc2

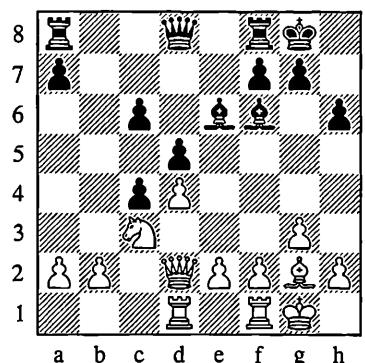
E) after 14.Bad1



13...b5!N



18...b5!N

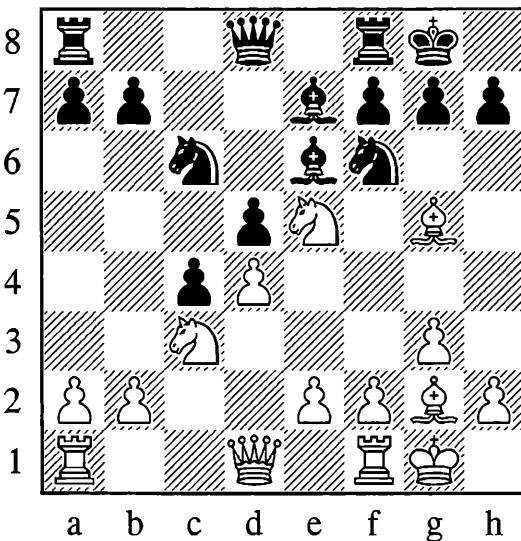


14...Bb8!N

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0
9.♗g5 c4 10.♗e5**

This is the most logical move by quite a long way. White moves the knight to the centre and puts immediate pressure on d5, forcing Black to defend it with the bishop.

10...♗e6



This is the starting point for quite a lot of this book and historically the most challenging direction of the Tarrasch Defence. It is our understanding that White fails to get an advantage in these lines after accurate play, as long as Black knows what he is doing.

White has essentially three strategies to choose from:

1. Playing for a kingside attack with f2-f4, solidifying the knight on e5 and closing the centre. This includes further options with f4-f5, trying to undermine the defence of the d5-pawn. This is positionally justified, but we have yet to see a scenario where this works well. The main place to find this plan will be in Chapter 5, where White plays 11.f4; but it is also covered in other places.

2. Breaking up the queenside with b2-b3, aiming to leave Black with a weakness on d5, c6 or b7. This is again positionally justified,

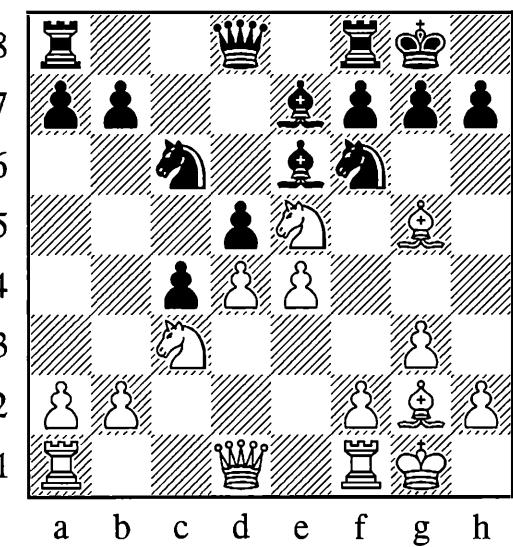
among other reasons because it interferes with Black's desires to play ...b7-b5 and use his pawn majority.

3. White can decide not to show his hand straight off, and play a flexible move like 11.e3 or 11.♘c1, securing the centre before deciding how to continue.

One might expect the third plan to be the most dangerous for Black, but in reality White should act quickly if he wants to play for an advantage. Black can do a lot with an extra move; for example, exchanging White's dark-squared bishop with ...h6, ...♗d7 or ...♗e8. And if White quickly exchanges the knight on f6, Black has the option of ...♗e7, when his pieces are well coordinated and ready to support the centre while action is undertaken on the queenside.

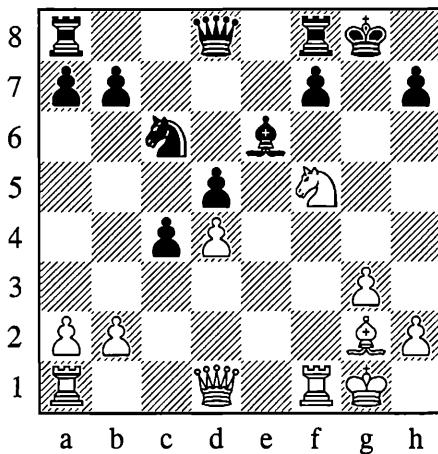
Finally, there is the plan of breaking in the centre with e2-e4, but that is too poor to be awarded a number. Instead we assign a letter to it: A) 11.e4?. Of various other poor ideas, B) 11.♘e1, C) 11.♗xf6?! and D) 11.♗xc4?! should be mentioned. There is nothing seriously wrong with E) 11.♗d2, but it just seems to lack sense and purpose. (The “big brothers” to these moves will be found in the following chapters.)

A) 11.e4?



11... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

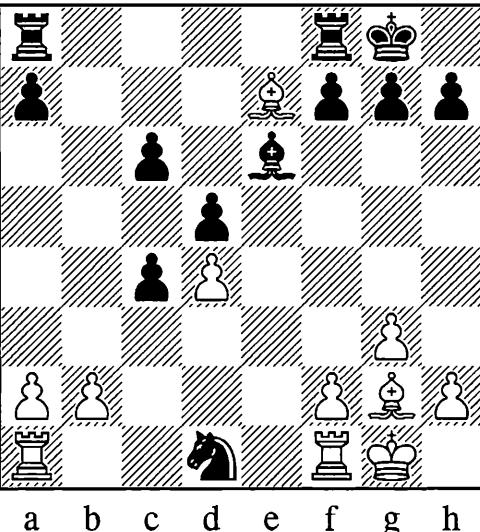
After 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ Black is just a pawn up, E. Popov – Sen, e-mail 2006. How someone can lose a pawn by move 12 of an e-mail game is beyond us, but still it is nice to see that some people have not polluted that game with computer assistance. However, even with the pawn deficit, this is a better try for White than our main line. In the position after 13. $\mathbb{Q}xg5N$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 14.f4 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 15.f5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16.f6 gxf6 17. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ f5 18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf5\#$



Black is better, but White has managed to create some problems for him.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$

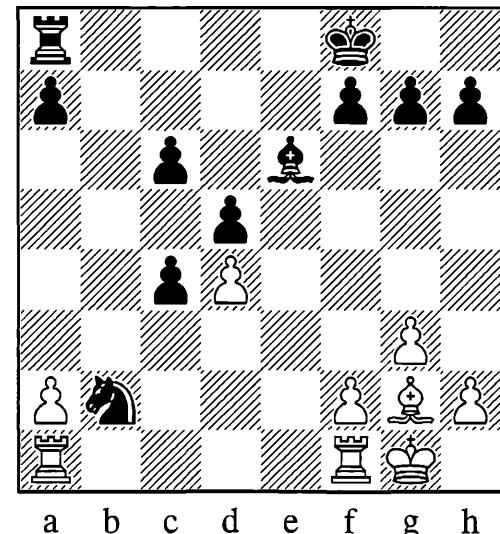
14. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{W}xe7\#$ simply leaves White a pawn down, Saatdjian – Ludwig, Calvi 2005.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ **15... $\mathbb{Q}xb2!$**

15... $\mathbb{Q}fe8??$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ would be a grave error, reversing the roles.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8\#$

Black has two pawns for the exchange, a passed pawn and the better pieces. It is hard for White to get the rooks activated quickly, so his aim must be reduced to fighting for a draw. There have been a number of games played from this position, with Black scoring a remarkable 100%. J. Burnett – Kiriakov, West Bromwich 2005, is a good example of how Black should play:



17. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a5 19. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ a4 20. f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c5 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24. $dxc5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

White resigned; the pawns are storming forward.

B) 11. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

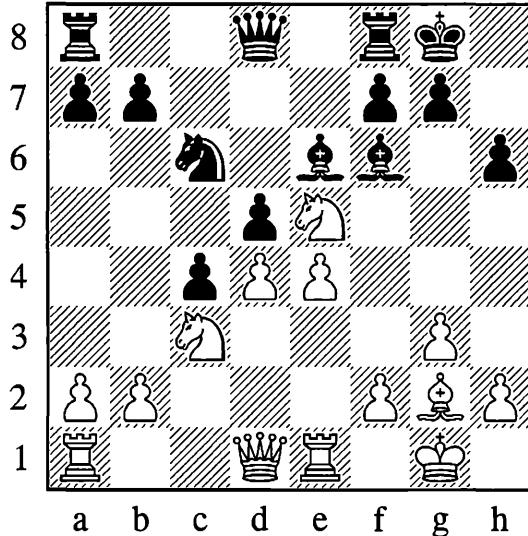
If played with the idea of continuing with e2-e4, this is equally poor.

11...h6! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. e4?

13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ (13... $dxc4N$ 14. d5 $\mathbb{W}b6!\#$ is very similar to variation D on page 45) 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Maybe the a3-square was better, but it is not a pleasant sight. 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 15. $fxe3$

$\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$
 $\mathbb{E}ad8\#$ Milchev – Velchev, Kula 2009.

White can of course exchange knights on c6, although that is quite comfortable for Black.



13...dxe4

Simple and strong. But also worth a thought was: 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5\#N$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ $d4$ Ouch!) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6\#$

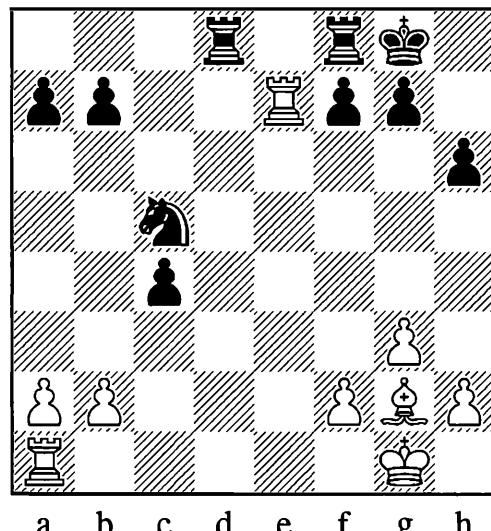
14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Black is just a pawn up.

16. $\mathbb{W}xd8$

16. $\mathbb{Q}c5\?!$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xd3\#$ offers White some compensation, but not enough.

16... $\mathbb{Q}axd8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e7$



19... $\mathbb{Q}fe8\!N$

After 19... $\mathbb{Q}d2\?!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $b6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1\#$ White managed to hold this ending in Teplyi – Aagaard, Danish League 2011. I (Jacob) had missed this last move and was kicking myself. Had I won this game, the club would have won the league for the first time ever. A big disappointment.

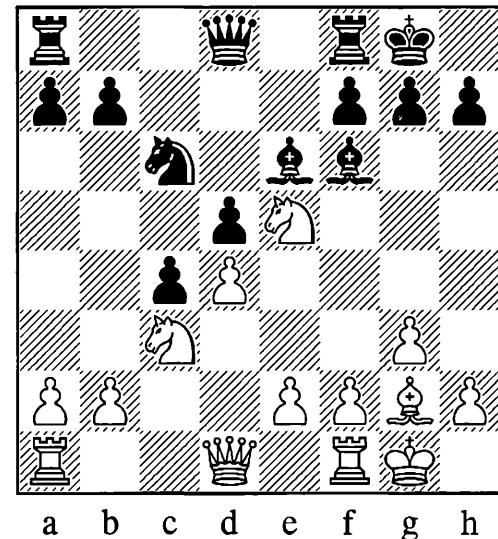
20. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8\#$

This had been my original intention, but I became concerned about some nonsense not even worth talking about.

C) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\?!$

As we often play ... $h6$ to provoke this, we cannot be anything but grateful at this point.

11... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



12.f4

This is the only move that makes sense, but the white pawn structure is already quite inflexible. Black has easy play.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 13. $d5$ $\mathbb{W}b6\!$ transposes to line D below.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Another interesting idea we seriously considered was:

12...♝b8!N 13.e3

The alternative is 13.♗d2 ♜xe5 14.fxe5 b5 with chances for both sides. We have analysed this position deeper than we probably should have, with the evaluation that Black is at least not worse.

13...g6

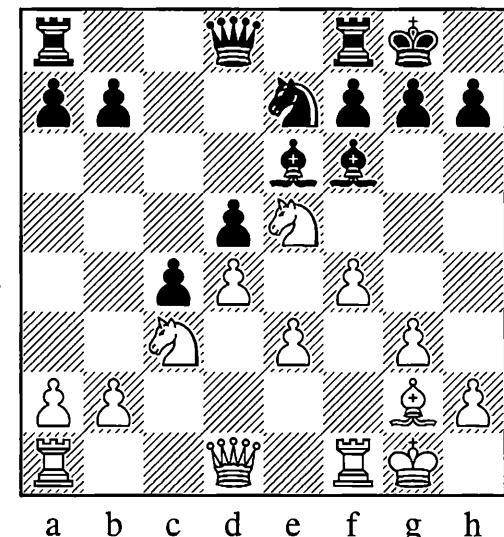
We also think that 13...♜xe5 14.fxe5 ♜b4 15.♗d2 ♜d3 16.♗e2 b5! 17.♗f4 ♜xf4 18.exf4 ♜f5 would give Black a good game.

14.g4 ♜e7 15.♗f3 ♜g7?

Black will initiate queenside play with ...b5-b4 etc.

13.e3

13.♗d2N is possibly a bit more accurate, after which 13...♝b8 is one interesting move, leading to even chances.



So far we have been following Abeln – Van den Berselaar, Hertogenbosch 2003. At this point Black played the reasonable 13...♞f5. But it turns out that there is a more direct move, which for some reason is often overlooked by black players.

13...b5!N 14.♗f3

The most natural active idea for White is g4-g5. This does not fully work, but it must be analysed seriously.

Against 14.♗d2 Black should probably not rush with his queenside activity, but prepare it first with 14...♝b8. The game is about equal.

14.♗xb5 ♜b8 15.♗c3 ♜xb2 16.♗c1 ♜b4 leads to good play for Black. White has not got going yet.

14...♝b6!

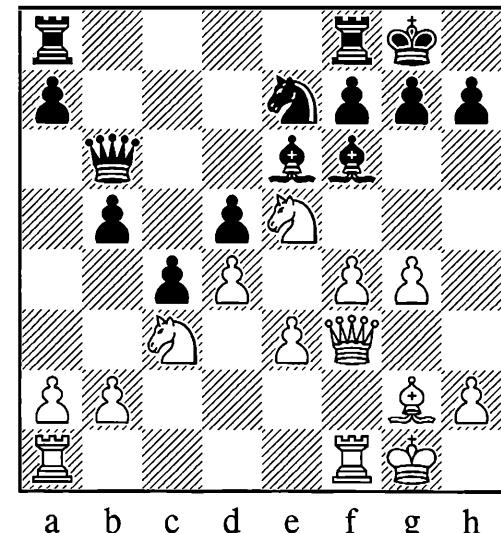
14...b4 15.♗a4 ♜c8 with the idea ...♝a5 also appears to be interesting, but the text is simpler. We find it hard to come up with a good suggestion for White here, which is a clear indication that the line is attractive for Black.

15.g4

This logical continuation does not work out well.

15.♗g4 ♜xg4 16.♗xg4 ♜ad8 17.a3 (17.♗f3?! ♜f5! causes White a lot of concern. The threat to d5 is far less significant than the threat to take on e3: 18.♗xd5 ♜xd5 19.♗xd5 ♜xe3?) 17...a5? White has to find a plan of defence, and fast.

15.♗f2 may be best, but it is hardly a try for an advantage.



15...b4! 16.♗a4 ♜b5 17.♗c5 ♜ac8

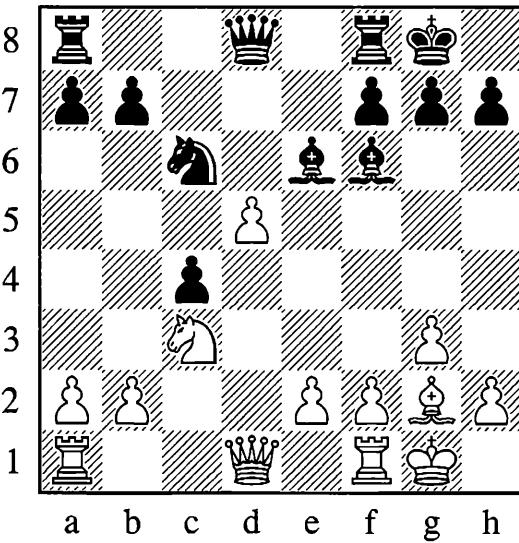
Black is contemplating a strong exchange sacrifice. For example:

**18.g5 ♜xe5 19.fxe5 ♜xc5 20.dxc5 ♜xc5
21.♘f4 ♖f5 22.♗fe1 c3†**

D) 11.♗xc4?!

This trick brings White no joy against correct play.

11...dxc4 12.♕xf6 ♜xf6 13.d5



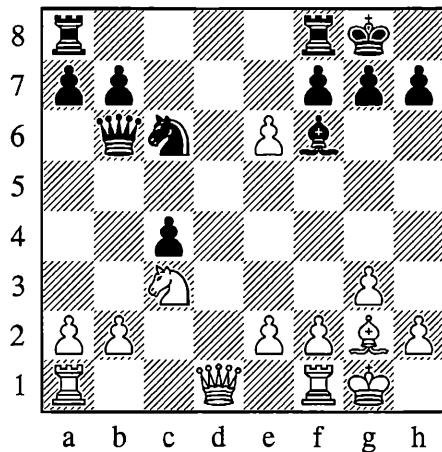
13....♗b6!

Other moves have been suggested here, but there is no reason to make things complicated. The threat to b2 is very real and White has to respect it.

If Black reacts compliantly, White might get some sort of a pull: 13...♗d7 14.dxc6 ♜xc6 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♗xd8 ♜fxd8 17.♗ad1! (more accurate than 17.♗fd1, when Black would later have some ...♗xb2! ideas) 17...♗db8 18.♗d2 ♗b4 19.♗c1 ♗ab8 20.♗cc2 To say that White is better is maybe too much (unless you are Rybka, of course). However, it is clear that the position is stale and offers winning chances only to White. Indeed, he did win in T. Sorensen – Ostergaard, Copenhagen 2010.

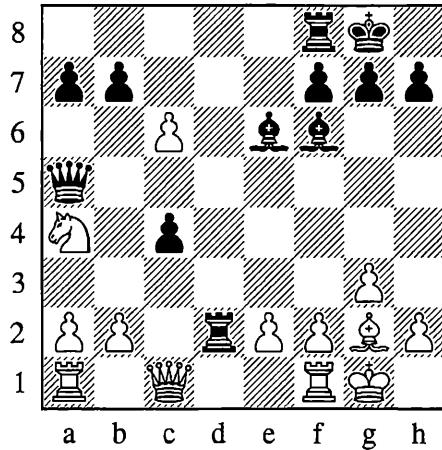
14.♗c1

14.dxe6 was played in Luoma – Sabel, Finland 1980.



But for some reason Black did not play 14...♗xb2!N 15.exf7† ♔h8†, when he wins material.

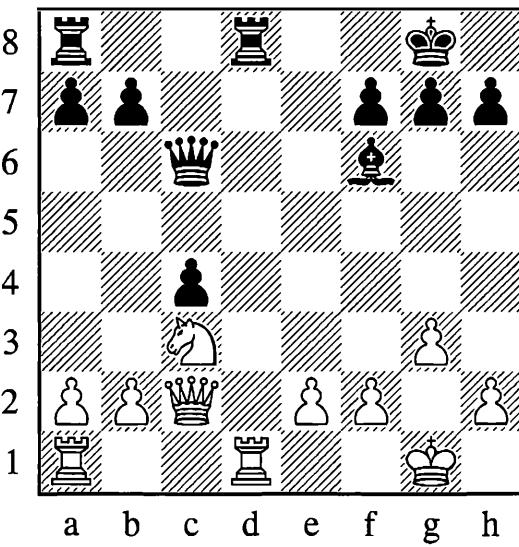
14.♗a4?! 14...♗a5 15.dxc6 ♜ad8 16.♗c2 ♜d2 17.♗c1 was what happened in Csiszar – Dupsky, Zalakaros 1993. Once again, you have to wonder what the black player overlooked to make him refrain from playing the following:



17...bxc6!N 18.♗c3 ♜fd8†

So having looked at the things that can go wrong, we may conclude that 14.dxc6N is the lesser evil. After 14...bxc6 15.♗c2 ♜ab8 16.♗ab1 ♜fd8 Black is at least equal. It is not hard to imagine White gradually drifting into a worse position from here.

14...♝d7 15.dxc6 ♜xc6 16.♝xc6 ♜xc6
17.♝d1 ♜fd8 18.♝c2



18...b5!N

Not a difficult improvement to find.
18...g6 19.e4 ♜d4?! 20.♝d5 ♜c5?! 21.♝c3 was very unpleasant for Black in T. Eriksen – Fuhrmann, e-mail 1999.

19.e4 ♜xc3! 20.bxc3 a5=

E) 11.♝d2

This in no way puts pressure on the black centre, so already here we would like to declare equality. But as is well known, equality can go as quickly as it comes.

11...h6!

We prefer to recommend this move whenever it is playable. Obviously it makes the lines easier to remember, but the main reason is that we both have a fondness for the bishop pair and think we should claim it if we can, especially when we are choosing between seemingly equal options. However, let's have a quick look at two alternatives anyway:

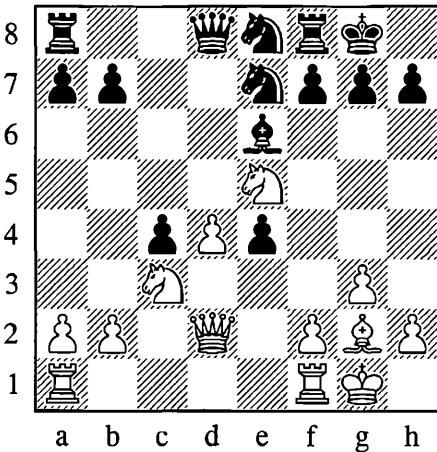
11...♝e8 12.♝xe7 ♜xe7

This looks very attractive, with ideas such as ...f6 followed by ...♝d6 and ...b5. However,

White has a strong continuation at his disposal:

13.e4 dxe4

Stettler – Treppner, Germany 2003.



14.♝ad1!N f5?!

14...♜c7 15.♝xe4 ♜d8 16.♝fe1 also gives White a chance to play for an advantage.

15.d5 ♜f7 16.d6 ♜c6

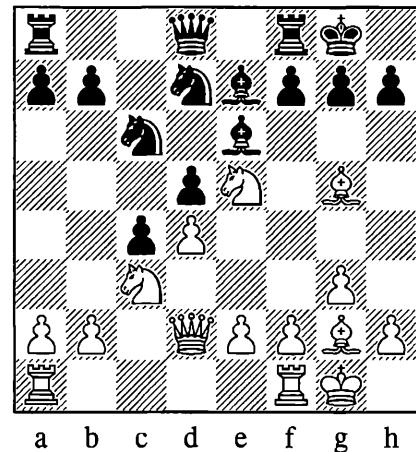
16...♝g6 17.♝xf7 ♜xf7 18.♝d5! ♜f8±

17.♝xc6 bxc6 18.♝f4=

With lots of compensation. For example:

18...♜a5 19.♝h3 ♜h5 20.d7 ♜f6 21.♝d6 g6 22.g4!=

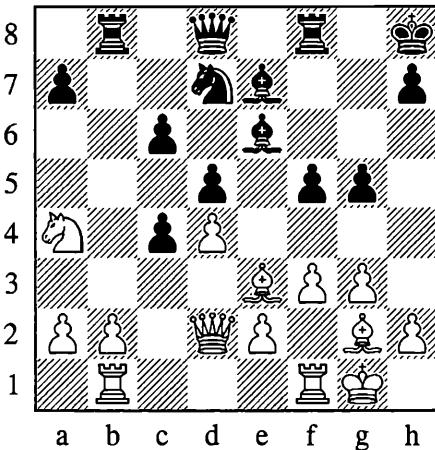
11...♝d7



White has two sensible tries from here:

a) 12.♝xc6 bxc6 13.♝xe7

13.♝f4 g5?! 14.♝e3 f5 15.f3 ♜b8 16.♝ab1 ♜h8 17.♝a4 was played in Vioreanu – Zierke, Germany 2006.



Here 17...Bb4!N 18.Qc3 h6 would keep the position unclear.

13...Wxe7 14.e4 dxe4

This is a typical position, the like of which we meet again and again. Generally White should capture on e4 with the knight, because it may threaten to go to c5; also White avoids ...Qf6 winning a tempo on the bishop on e4.

15.Qxe4

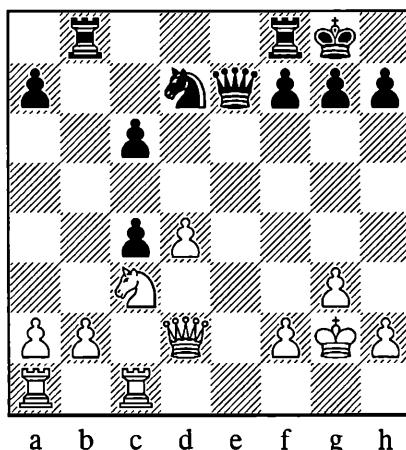
15.Qxe4 Wd6 16.Bad1 Qf6 17.Qf3 Bab8=

15...Bab8

15...Bfd8?!

16.Bfc1 Qd5 17.Qc3 Bxg2 18.Qxg2

So far this was Volkov – Kiriakov, Ekaterinburg 1999. The suggested improvement is very basic:



18...Bfd8N 19.Bc2 Qc5=

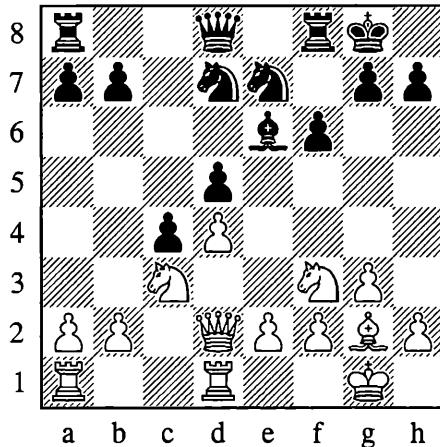
b) 12.Qxe7 Qxe7 13.Bfd1

13.f4 f6 14.Qxd7 Wxd7= Barle – Sinadinovic, Caorle 1988.

13.e4 has not been played yet, and for good reason. Black has a simple reply in 13...Qxe5 (which is, of course, the main difference between 11...Qe8 and 11...Qd7) 14.exd5 (14.dxe5 d4+) 14...Qd3 15.dxe6 Wxd4 and Black is not worse.

13...f6 14.Qf3

Up to this point we have been following Zawadski – Pecot, France 1997.

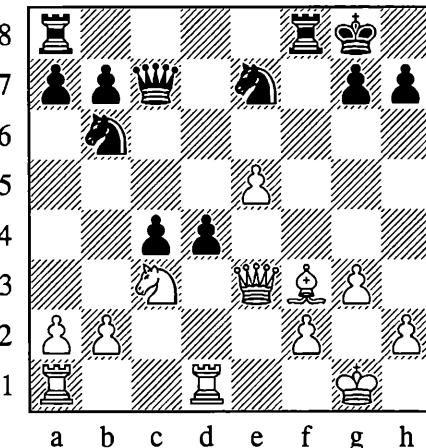


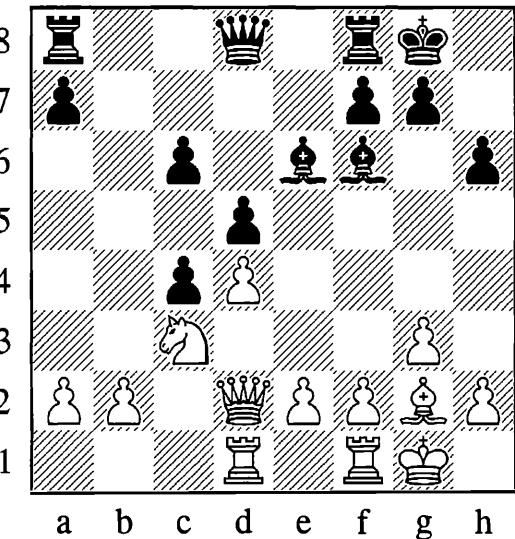
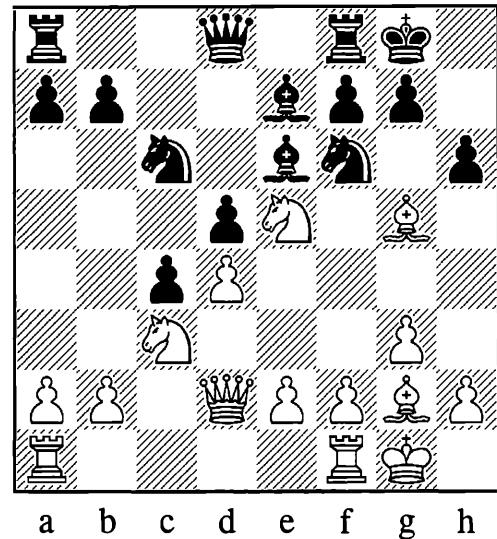
14...Qb6!?

The idea is to play ...Wd7 and ...Ba4, and at the same time to be optimally prepared to face the e2-e4 break. It is hard to see any plans for White that do not involve either e2-e4 or b2-b3, so the knight is quite well placed on b6.

15.e4 Wc7

With chances for both sides. Black will play ...Bad8 before taking the e-pawn. And if 16.e5? Black has 16...Bg4! 17.We3 Bxf3!, with the idea: 18.Bxf3 fxe5 19.dxe5 d4!!+





12.♘xc6

12.♗e3 ♛f5!∞ was played in Farstad – Mogstad, Molde 2002. It is not obvious how White can put any pressure on the black position.

12.♗f4 ♛b4 13.♗fd1 ♛f5 14.f3 ♛e8 gave Black a good game in Thapa – Shiomi, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010.

12.♗xf6 ♛xf6 13.f4 ♘e7 14.e3 transposes to line B1 of Chapter 4.

12...bxc6 13.♗xf6

13.♗f4 ♘h5 14.♗e3 ♜d7 is at least equal for Black.

13...♗xf6 14.♗ad1

14.e4 dxe4 15.♗xe4 ♜xd4+ is just a favourable ending for Black, Bonazzi – Sbarra, Gorgonzola 2003.

We have been following Glicenstein – Sillam, Romans 1999. Here Black has an obvious improvement:

14...♗b8!N

It is our opinion that Black is already better. He has the two bishops and play down the b-file, and White will not achieve anything in the centre or on the kingside.

Conclusion

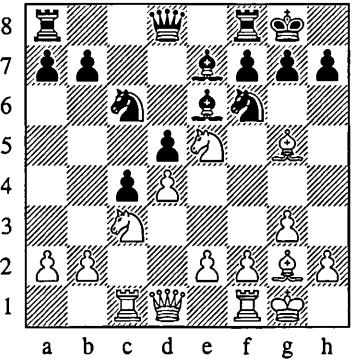
Although 10.♘e5 is the most dangerous move, giving White many ways to fight for an advantage, none of them are to be found in this chapter. The ideas with e2–e4 create a structure which in general is favourable for Black, and the tactics do not back up White's course of action either. The early exchange on f6 is illogical and the trick with 11.♘xc4 simply does not work.

That only leaves us with 11.♗d2 as reasonable from the bunch investigated here. However, the best thing that can be said about this move is that it does not cause direct damage to the white position.

The serious moves will be found in later chapters.



9.♗g5



11.♖c1

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7
 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5 c4 10.♘e5 ♗e6 11.♖c1

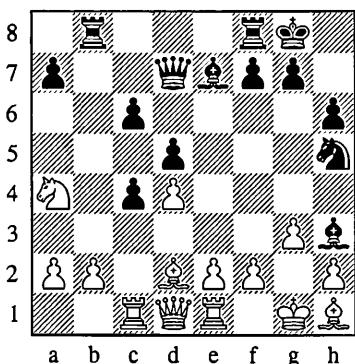
11...h6!

A) 12.♗e3	50
B) 12.♘xc6	51
C) 12.♗f4	52
C1) 12...♝a5	53
C2) 12...♝b6	54
D) 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6	55
D1) 13.♘xc6	55
D2) 13.f4	56

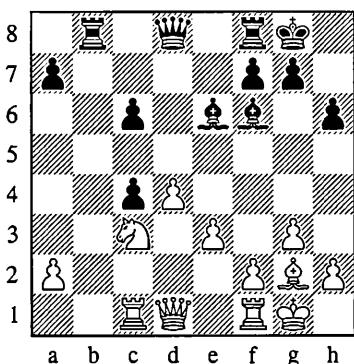
B) after 17.♘a4

D1) note to 14.e3

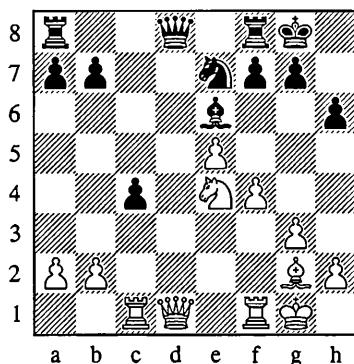
D2) after 16.dxe5



17...f5!N



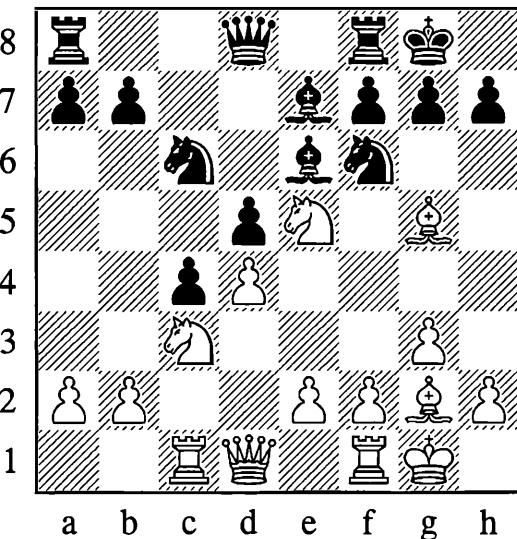
16...c5!N



16...♝b6†!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5
 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8.0-0 0-0
 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

Most of the chapters in this book are based around a key strategy. This chapter is an exception. This rook move has been played often enough for it to make sense to compartmentalize it as a separate chapter. However, this does not mean that we find it especially interesting and think it has a deep strategy of its own. Actually White is just playing a rook to the half-open file. As it is not clear that it belongs here, this move has significantly less sting than the choices from the following chapters. On the other hand, there are still some details to be considered.



11...h6!

This is likely to be the best move. As always, since White is not planning to do anything immediately, it is a good idea to go for the two bishops. Here is a (very) quick summary of the alternatives:

11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12.e3 a6

This was Esben Lund's proposal.

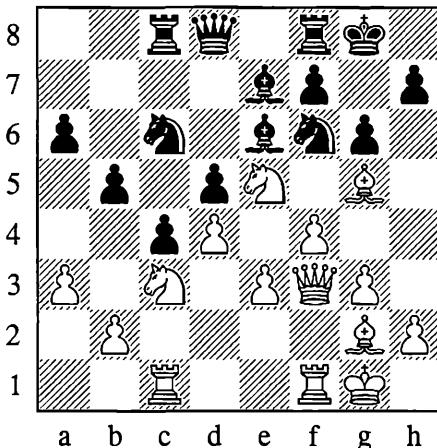
12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
 15.e4 is a bit better for White. We have a lot of analysis to back up this conclusion. Here is just one possible line: 15...dxe4
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8N$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$

19. $\mathbb{W}c1\pm$ and we are not fully satisfied with the black position.

13.f4! g6

Black also finds no joy after 13... $\mathbb{Q}e8$
 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 16. f5
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. e4 dxe4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$
 J. Horvath – Monin, Zalakaros 1993.

14. $\mathbb{W}f3$ b5 15.a3±



White has a great position. He has many plans at his disposal, and Black is struggling to find any activity. For once the d5-pawn is a target. One example from practical play went:

15... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18. g4
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. f5 gxf5 20. gxf5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xd5$

White eventually won in Fages – Vaassen, e-mail 2008.

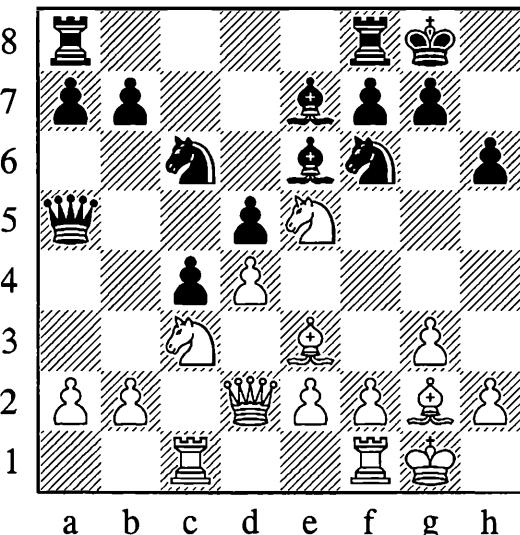
11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was suggested as best by John Cox. However, White is probably a bit better after:
 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 14. e4 dxe4
 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1\pm$

At this point we shall investigate A) 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$, B) 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$, C) 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and D) 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

A) 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

The white set-up looks a bit artificial and Black can develop freely.

13. $\mathbb{W}d2$

**13...♜ad8**

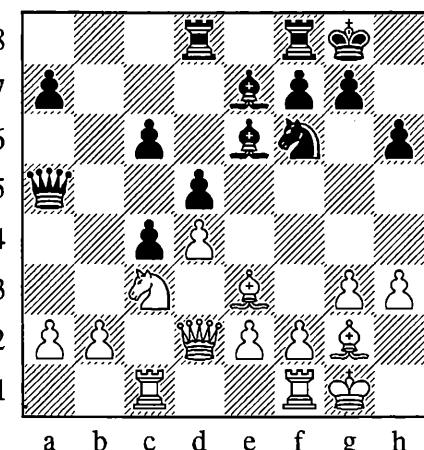
It is our opinion that the rooks are best placed on d8 and e8. However, we cannot resist showing this little example: 13...♜fd8 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♗xd5? ♜xd5—+ Tausanov – Sarenac, Paracin 2009. Obviously it is not important if the rook is on a8 or f8 in this position, so you are not missing out...

14.f4?!

This weakens the e4-square unnecessarily.

If White plays more solidly, he is not better, but he should not be worse either. Here is one example:

14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.h3

**15...♝b4**

This does not make much sense, but of course it is playable.

15...♝f5N and 15...♝e8!N both look logical.

16.♗c2 ♘e8 17.♗a4 ♘e7

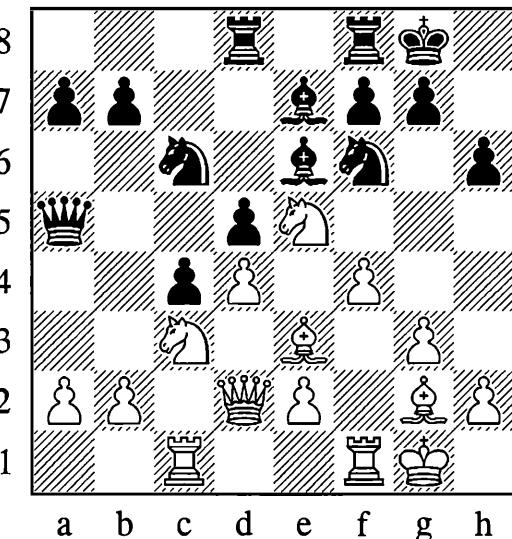
Even after losing a bit of time, Black is still okay.

18.b3 ♘d6 19.♗c5 ♘f5 20.♗b2

This was Balenovic – Takac, Sisak 2000. Here Black should play:

20...♞f6!N

Black has at least equality.

**14...♝f5!**

This is preferable to the riskier approach of 14...♝xe5?! 15.fxe5 ♘g4 16.♗f4 g5 17.♗e3 ♘g7†. In this line Black takes the two bishops, but his king could be exposed in the long term.

15.h3 ♘b4

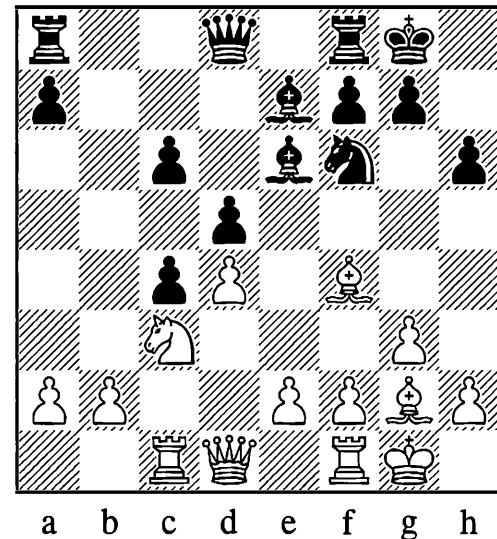
A typical idea to gain control of the e4-square.

16.g4 ♘e4

Black is already better, Etcheverry – Roux Cabral, Montevideo 1962.

B) 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♗f4

The white set-up is entirely non-threatening. Black's centre is solid and his pieces are easily able to find good squares.



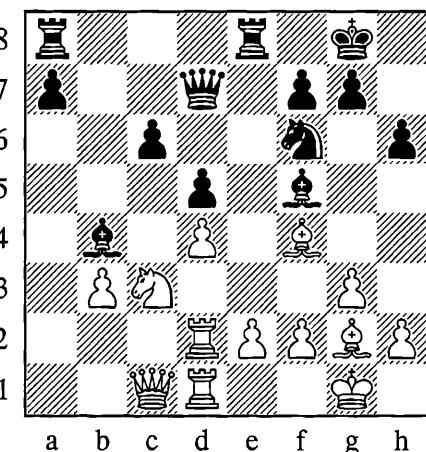
13...♝d7 14.♝e1

White had no success with:

14.b3 ♕a3 15.♝c2

15.♝b1 ♕b4 16.♛a4 ♕f5 17.♝c1 allows Black to equalize immediately with 17...♞a3. Or he can try a clever move: 17...c3?! 18.♝e1 (18.♝xc3 ♕a3 might give White enough compensation, but we like being an exchange up all the same) 18...♝e4 19.f3 ♜d2 20.♝f2 ♜fe8∞, with ideas such as 21.e3 c5?! 22.♝xc5 ♜e7 or 21.♝xc3?! ♜b1 22.♝xb1 ♜xb1 23.a3 ♜xc3 24.♝xc3 ♜h7 and Black must be better.

15...♝f5 16.♝d2 ♕b4 17.♝c1 cxb3 18.axb3 ♜fe8± 19.♝fd1



19...g5! 20.♕e5 ♜g4 21.h3 ♜xe5 22.dxe5

Lemos – Arguinariz, Buenos Aires 2003.
Again we have a case of “Obvious Novelty Syndrome”:

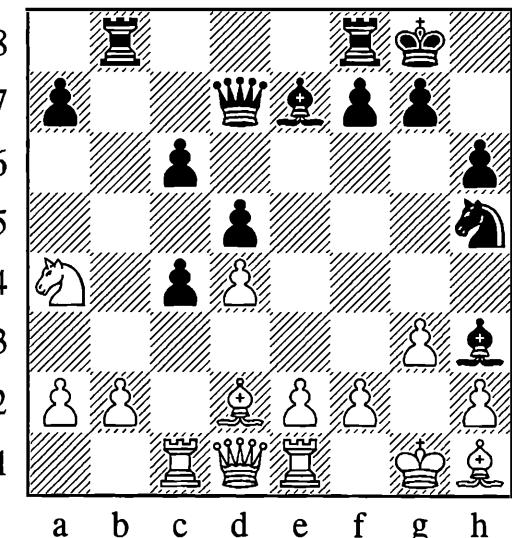
22...♜xe5N

This looks crushing for Black.

14...♞h3 15.♞h1 ♜h5 16.♞d2

16.♞e3?! looks artificial, and can probably be exploited. 16...♜ab8 17.♝d2 (17.♛a4 f5?! 18.♞d2 f4→) 17...f5→ White seems to be forced into the unpleasant: 18.♞f3 f4! 19.♞xf4 ♜xf4 20.gxf4 g5!+

16...♜ab8 17.♛a4



We have been following Krause – Boehme, Oldenburg 2001. Black can play more or less what he likes, for example ...♝f6-e4 is simple and sound, but we prefer a more aggressive approach.

17...f5?!N

This leads to complicated play after the best move, 18.b3. Note that White does not have 18.e4? because of 18...fxe4!± 19.♝xh5? ♜g4 20.♝g6 ♜f6–+.

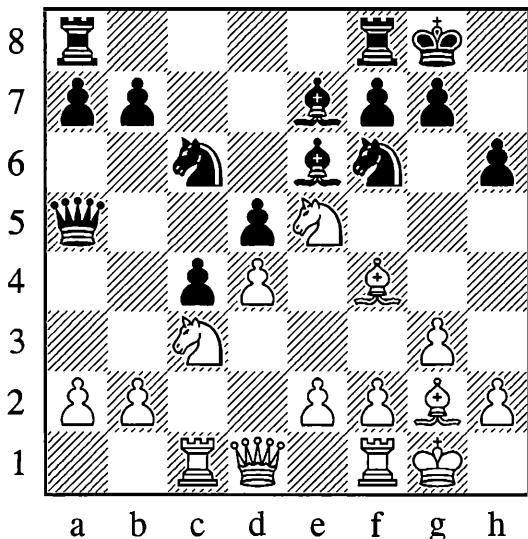
C) 12.♞f4

At this point Black has a quite sensible choice between C1) 12...♝a5 and C2) 12...♝b6.

12...♝c8 has also been tried in practice with success. The position is just equal, and we find

the following a bit boring: 13.♕xc4! N dxc4 14.d5 ♕xd5 15.♕xd5=

C1) 12...♝a5



13.♝d2

If you are not a grandmaster, and not playing against a grandmaster, you will at times meet people who don't have a clue what to do in positions such as these. My experience (Jacob's, that is) is that people up to 2400 rating belong to this category.

Here is a good example of how things can go wrong: 13.a3 ♜b6 14.♕xc6 bxc6 15.♖c2 ♜fd8 16.f3 ♜ac8 17.♔h1 c5= Sorvar – Pietarinen, Finland 2003. White's play might have made sense on a move by move basis, but not as a coherent strategy.

13...♜ad8

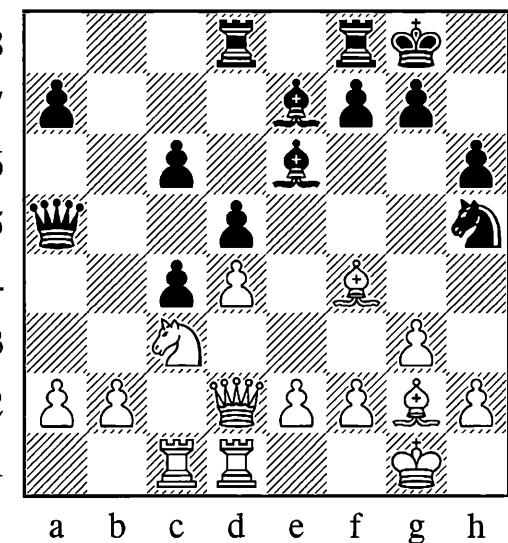
Black should generally keep open the option of ...♝h5 and ...f5 with an attack.

Also possible is 13...♜fd8 14.♕xc6 bxc6 15.b3 ♜ac8=.

14.♕xc6 bxc6 15.♖fd1 ♜h5

15...g5!? 16.♔e3 ♜g4∞ is also interesting. In general the computers are in favour of gaining the two bishops in this way; but for a human it is a bit more difficult to advance the g-pawn

in front of your king, and then to exchange the main defender. It is essentially a matter of taste and personality.



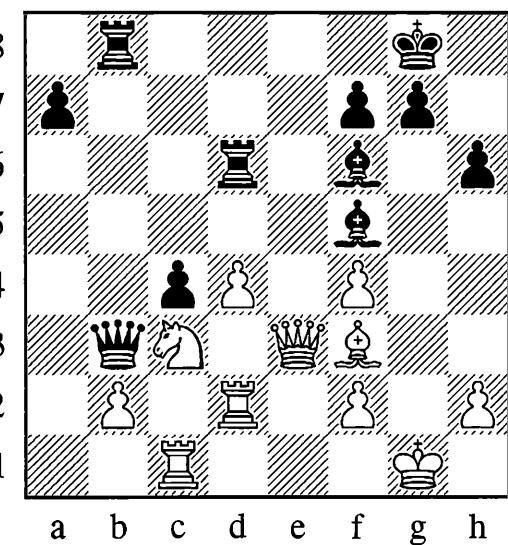
16.e4?

16.♔e3 was better, when Black likely intended to play 16...f5!? 17.♔f3 ♜f6 with roughly even chances.

16...♝xf4 17.gxf4

17.♝xf4 ♜g5 is obviously no good.

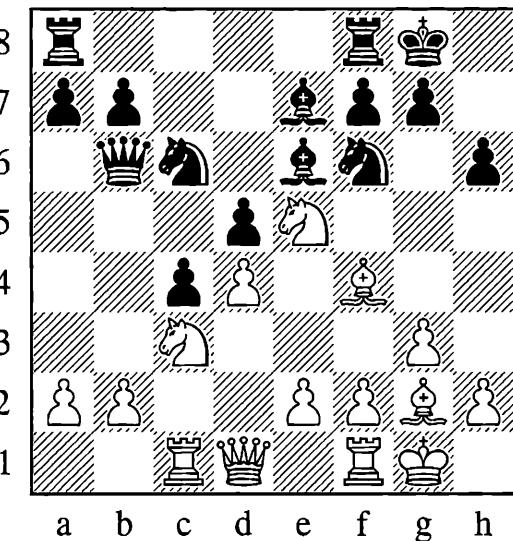
17...dxe4! 18.♕xe4 ♜f6 19.♔e2 ♜xa2
20.♕xc6 ♜d6 21.♔f3 ♜b8 22.♔c3 ♜b3
23.♕e3 ♜f5 24.♔d2



25...♜e6 25.♔e4 ♜be8–+

Leski – Prie, Puteaux 1980.

C2) 12...♝b6



With the d7-square being unavailable, the queen needs to look for a new square. On the plus side, the queen will have the option of recapturing on c6.

13.♝d2

13.♕xc6 ♛xc6 14.♗c2 was Schulz – Hanrahan, Winnipeg 2001. Here it would have been more consistent to play 14...b5!N, when Black already has the more pleasant game.

13...♝fd8 14.♝fd1 ♜ac8=

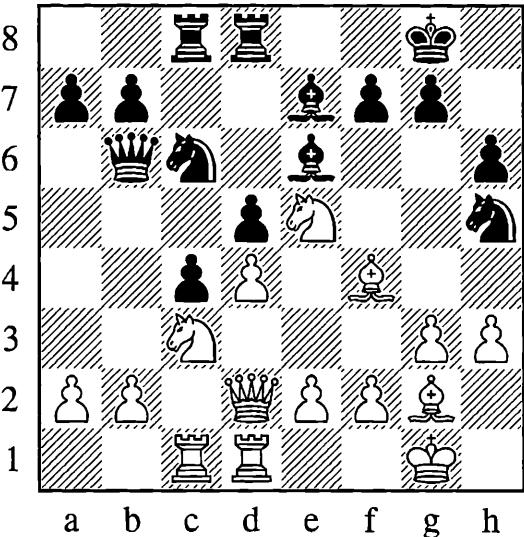
Black has equalized, which is nice to know, but that in itself does not offer a lot of advice on how to continue. In general the plan here is ...♝xe5, ...♛c6 and ...b5, with queenside activity.

15.h3?!

This lacks soul, but was nonetheless played in Laurentius – Barcza, Munich (ol) 1936. Here Black has a beautiful option:

15...♝h5!N

15...♝xe5 16.♝xe5 ♛c6 is sufficient for equality; but Black is quite rightly going for more.

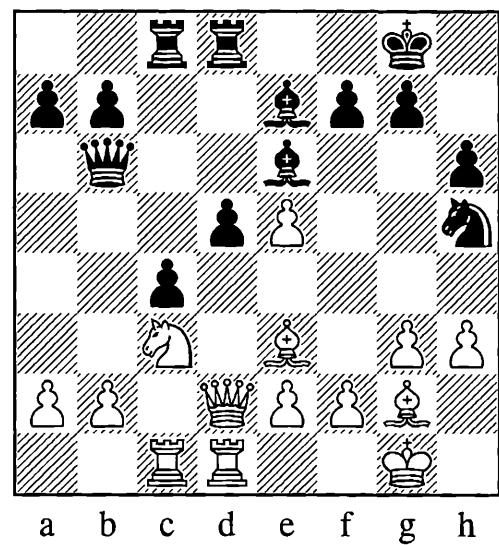


16.♝e3

16.♕xc6 ♛xc6 17.♝e3 b5† is excellent for Black. White did not get time to play a2-a4 to slow Black down.

16...♝xe5 17.dxe5

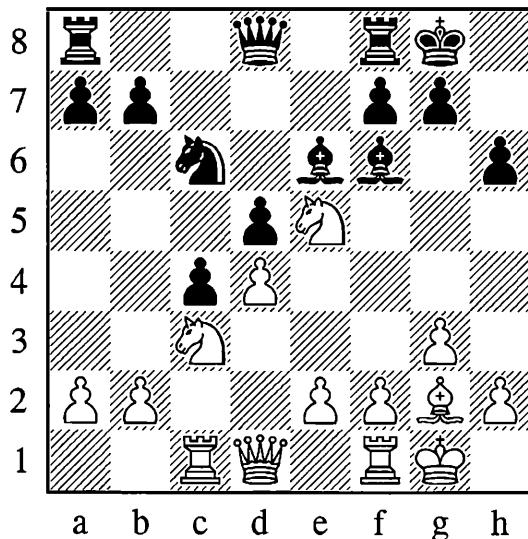
White is ready to win a piece with g3-g4, but he is in for a surprise.



17...d4!! 18.♝xd4 ♜xd4 19.♛xd4 ♜c5 20.♝a4!

The only defence. 20.♝d2?! ♜xf2† 21.♝h1 ♜xg3†† is devastating.

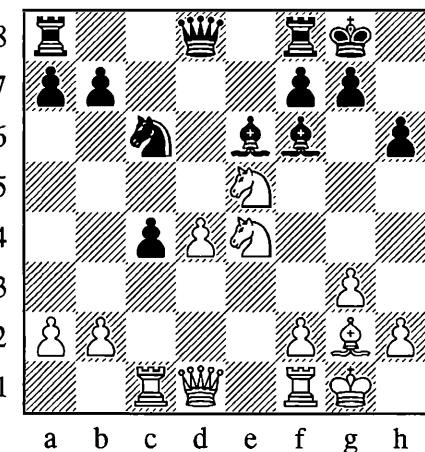
20...♝xd4 21.♝xb6 ♜xb6 22.♝xb7 ♜c5 23.e3 ♜xe5†

D) 12.♕xf6 ♕xf6

White has two sensible moves here: **D1) 13.♘xc6** and **D2) 13.f4**. We can also have a quick look at the (almost always) bad idea of e2-e4:

13.e4?! dxе4 14.♘xc6

We should also consider 14.♘xe4, as was played in Hole – Lie, Gausdal 2003. Here Black can improve with simple measures.



14...♕xe5!N 15.dxe5 ♜b6+ Black is on his way to a win, unless something unforeseen happens. For example: 16.♗d6 ♜fd8 17.♗c5 ♜xb2 18.♗b1 ♜xe5 19.♗xb7 ♜xc5 20.♘xc5 ♜d4 The extra pawn is very real (and dangerous).

14.d5? fails to 14...♕xe5 15.dxe6 ♜d3+.

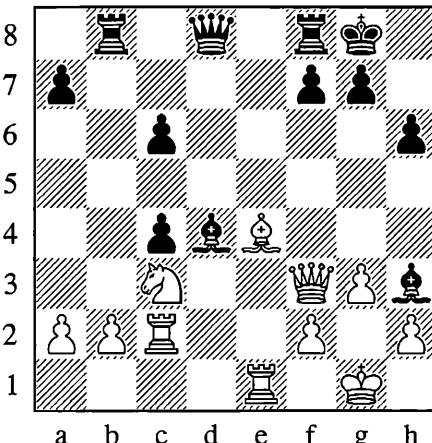
14...bxс6 15.♕xe4 ♜h3

16.♗e1 ♜xd4+

Black has a straightforward advantage with the two bishops and more active play. For example:

17.♗f3 ♜b8! 18.♗c2

Aranha Filho – Felizes, Sao Paulo 2004. A little accuracy is needed; but it is not too difficult.



18...♗e8!N 19.♗ce2 ♜f6+

D1) 13.♘xc6 bxс6

White needs to react to the threat to his knight, but this also strengthens the black centre.

14.e3

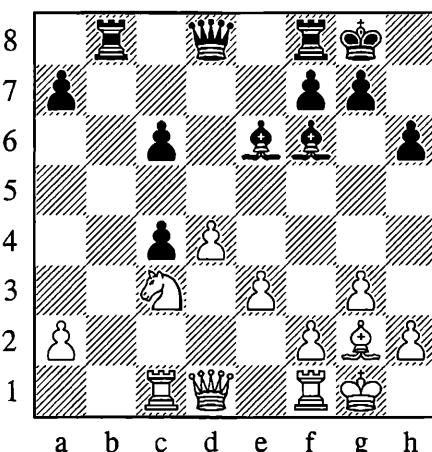
White has also tried the immediate:

14.b3 ♜b8!?

We like this, although 14...cxсb3 has been played a few times and is entirely acceptable as well.

15.bxc4 dxс4 16.e3

Sarec – Hirn, Puschendorf 1999. At this point Black can equalize easily.



16...c5!N 17.dxc5

17.d5 is sublimely met by 17... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$. Here White can repeat moves with 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$ or try 18.e4 $\mathbb{Q}d7=$. In the latter case, Black has no problems, as he has created a great square for his bishop on d4.

17... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5!$

Unless White has good activity, doubling the f-pawns is usually entirely insignificant.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ gxf6 20. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 21.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$

Black has no problems whatsoever. For example:

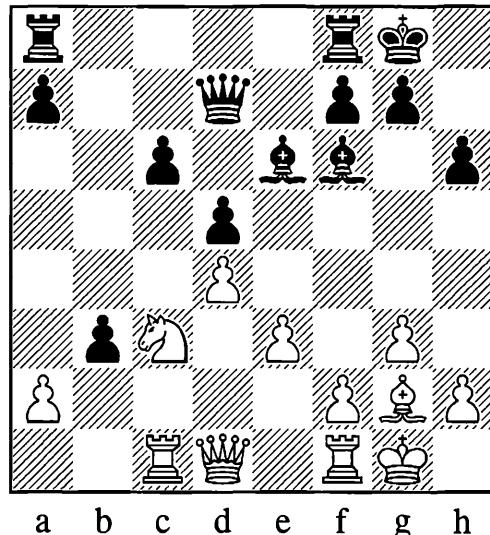
22. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c3!=

14... $\mathbb{W}d7$

Choices, choices... 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, as played in Misanovic – Chelushkina, Subotica 1991, is also logical.

Also after 14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16.b3 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a1$, as in Rensen – Rehatschek, e-mail 1996, Black obtains a good game as long as he continues with: 17... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ N 18.bxc4 dxc4 19.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$

15.b3 cxb3



16.axb3N

This is the standard recapture.

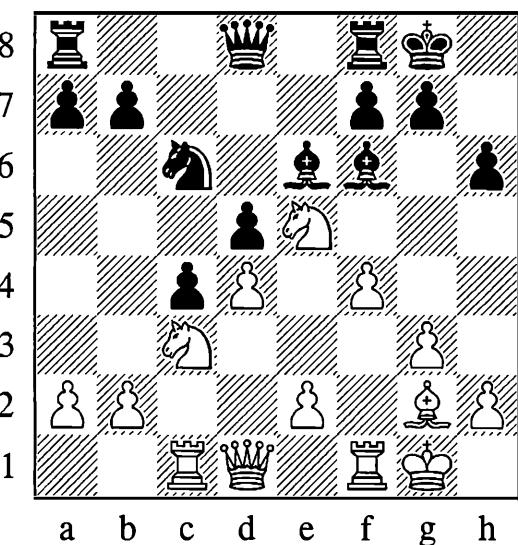
In the game Schwarz – Schein, Austria 2007, White drifted into a worse position with:

16. $\mathbb{W}xb3?$! $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
19. $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}fb8\#$

16... $\mathbb{Q}fb8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$
22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7=$

A typical position. White does not have any real advantage in the ensuing ending.

D2) 13.f4



This position can also be reached after 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11.f4 h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ – although 13.f5 is obviously more critical there.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$!

A standard move in this type of position. We like this flexible approach, although there is nothing wrong with the more concrete alternative:

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$! 14.fxe5

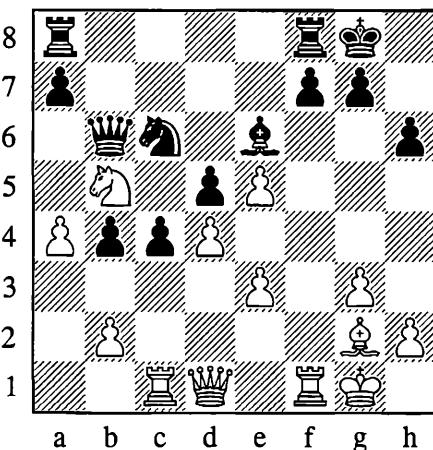
14.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}b6\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 16.f5 transposes to variation A2 of Chapter 5 on page 81.

14...b5!

With good active play. White cannot take the b-pawn because of ... $\mathbb{W}b6$, so Black will be able to get his queenside going quickly.

The following line illustrates some of the possibilities, although it is by no means forced:

15.a4 b4 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17.e3



Now 17...a6 18. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ leads to equality after 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, with an even ending approaching. Therefore we prefer:

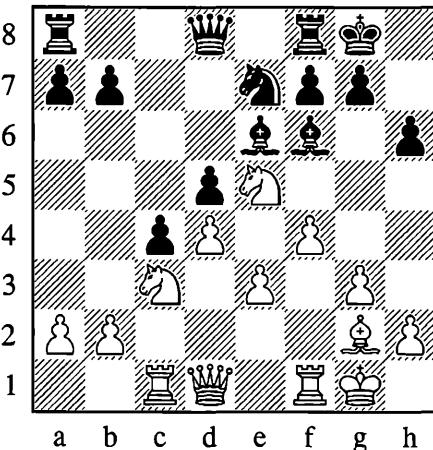
17...b3!?

With the idea ... $\mathbb{Q}b4-d3$.

14.e4?!

As usual this is the critical move; however, White will find himself struggling for equality. Two less interesting moves are:

14.e3

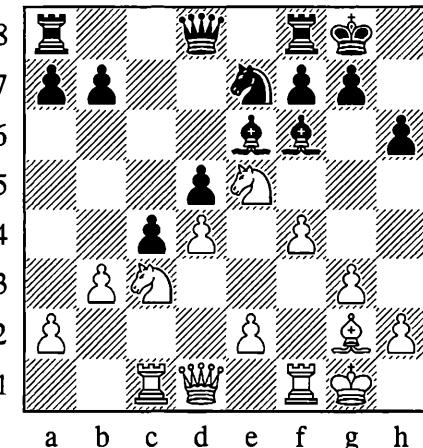


14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

This is not bad, but it makes most sense to play 14... $\mathbb{Q}b8N$ or 14... $b5!N$ immediately. 15. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $b5\rightleftarrows$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $a5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $b4\rightleftarrows$

Black went on to lose in Barcza – Kluger, Budapest 1961, but that was not the opening's fault.

14.b3



14... $\mathbb{Q}c8!?$ N

This improves upon 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$? 16. $e3$ $cxb3$ Kubos – Soucek, Sec 2007, when 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!N$ would have given White a big advantage.

15.e3

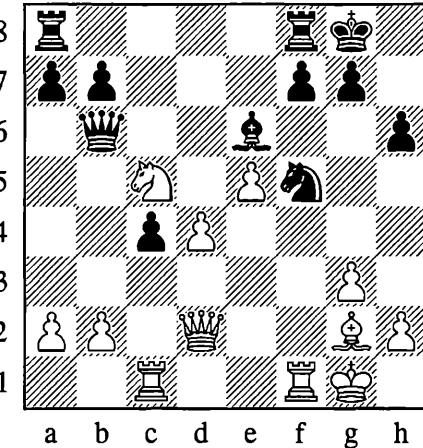
After 15. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4\bar{F}$ the structure is excellent for Black.

15... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8\rightleftarrows$

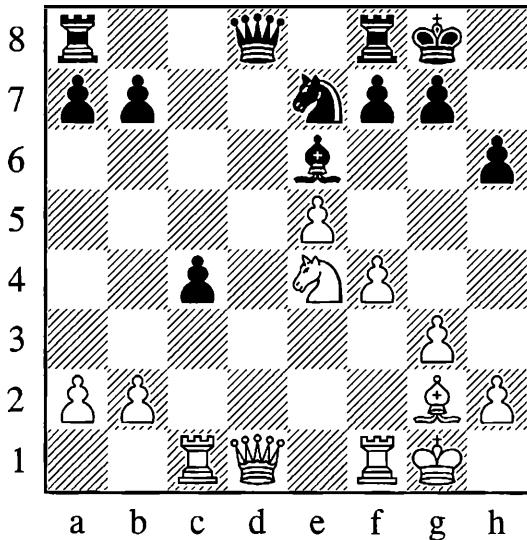
Black is at least equal.

14... $dxe4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16. $dxe5$

As we shall see below, this should not turn out well for White, so it would be worth considering: 16. $fxe5N$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}b6!$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d2$



18...♝ac8† (18...♝ad8 19.♗xe6 fxe6 20.♝xc4 ♝xd4 21.♝xf8† ♞xf8 22.♛f2† ♞e7 is an unusual position that ends in a draw according to the machine!)



This position occurred in the game Herrmann – Rellstab, Lueneburg 1947. Black now missed the chance to take over the initiative with:

16...♛b6†!N

Not a terribly surprising novelty, but it is the best move, so it deserves the exclam!

17.♝h1

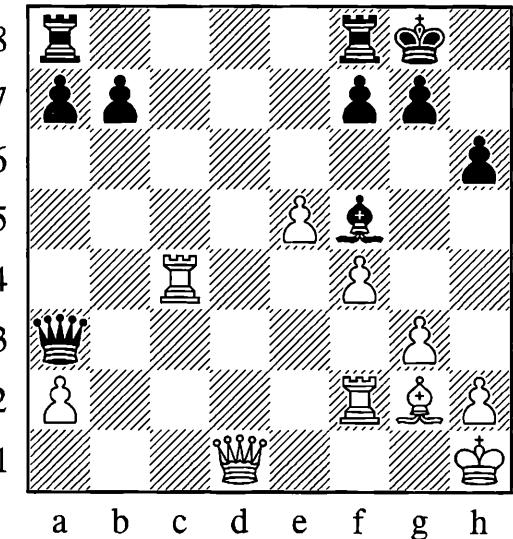
17.♝f2 is a bit awkward, although it has the obvious merit of defending the b-pawn. 17...♝ad8 18.♛e1 And now Black is a bit better after both 18...♝f5 and 18...♝d3.

17...♛xb2

17...♝f5 18.♛e2 ♘fd8 is good enough for equality, but probably no more.

18.♝f2 ♛a3 19.♝d6 ♜f5! 20.♝xf5 ♘xf5

21.♝xc4



21...b5!†

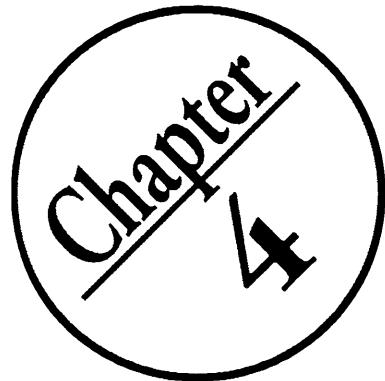
The endgame is unpleasant for White. His king is slightly exposed and Black will be able to create a strong passed pawn on the queenside.

Conclusion

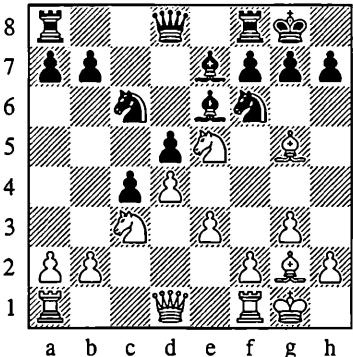
11.♝c1 is not a bad move by any means, and compared to the moves in the previous chapter, it actually does improve White's position.

However, this is as far as the praise will go. Once again Black is not under direct pressure and thus has time to ask for the two bishops with 11...h6!.

If White declines the request, all the pressure on the black position is lifted. And if he accepts, then White has nothing better than going for some innocuous standard structure, in which the rook on c1 does not do a great deal for the white position.



9. Qg5



11. $e3$

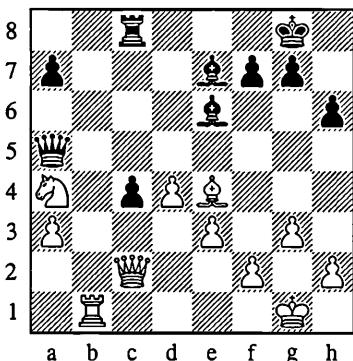
Variation Index

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Qc3 c5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Qf3 Qc6 6. g3 Qf6 7. Qg2 Qe7
8. 0-0 0-0 9. Qg5 c4 10. Qe5 Qe6 11. $e3$

11... $\text{h6}!$ 12. Qxf6 Qxf6

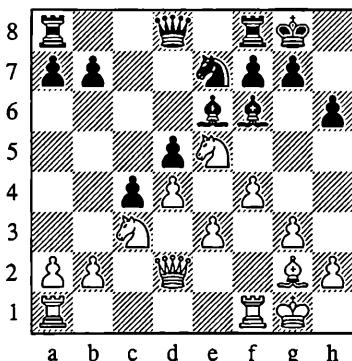
A) 13. Qxc6	61
B) 13. $f4$ $\text{Qe7}!$	65
B1) 14. Wd2	66
B2) 14. Qg4	67
B3) 14. $\text{We2}!?$	68
B4) 14. $g4$	71

A) note to 14. b3



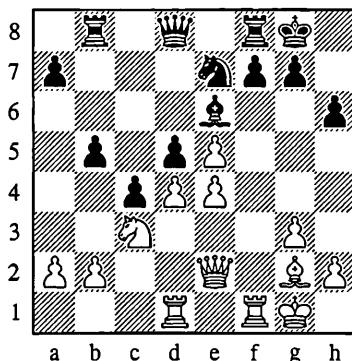
22... $\text{c3}!N$

B1) after 14. Wd2



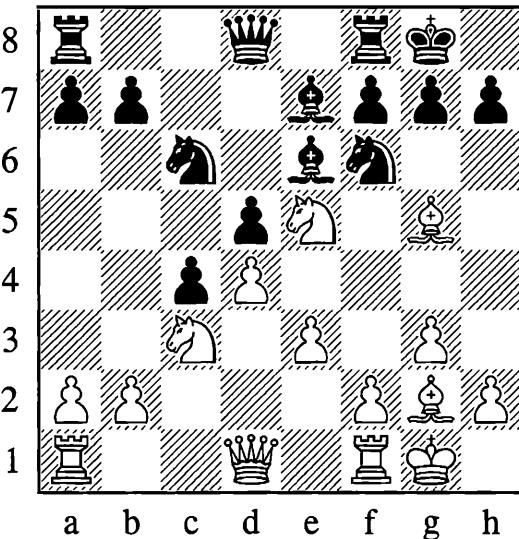
14... $\text{Wa5}!N$

B3) after 17. fxe5



17... $\text{b4}!N$

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0
 9.♗g5 c4 10.♘e5 ♗e6 11.e3



This rather placid move was proposed by former World Champion Alexander Khalifman in *Opening for White According to Kramnik Vol. 5*. There are many positions where the solidifying of the centre is an advantage; however, it also gives Black a moment to improve his position. For this reason, we don't think that this should be a great challenge to the Tarrasch.

11...h6!

We have chosen this in preference to the "old" main line, 11...♘d7. We like the consistency of offering the ...h6 move against most lines, and have done a lot to make this idea work. Meanwhile we have particular reasons for not recommending the other two alternatives:

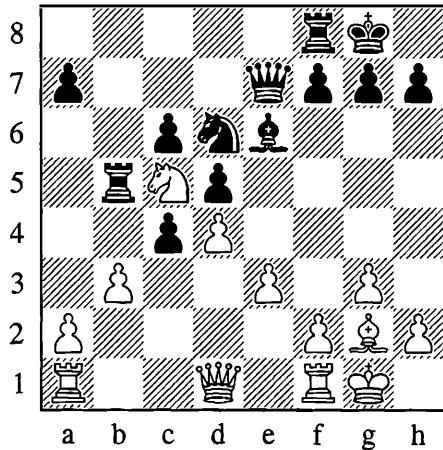
11...♗e8

This is an interesting and probably slightly underrated alternative to the main lines; however, it does not fully equalize. Without going into great detail, the following line is our reason for rejecting this move.

12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗xe7 ♔xe7 14.b3 ♘d6
 15.♘a4

The line recommended by Khalifman.

15...♗ab8 16.♘c5 ♕b5



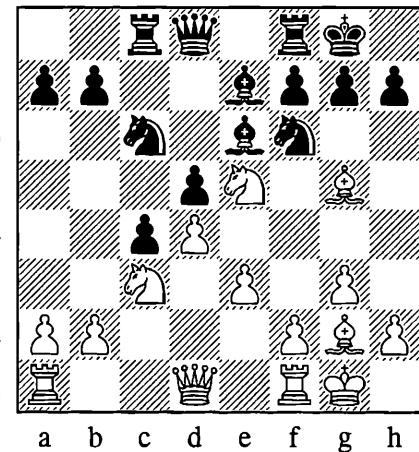
17.♗c1N

17.♗d2 ♕fb8 → Andersen – Valiente Roy, Calvia 2009.

17...♕fb8 18.♗e1±

11...♗c8

This was recommended by Lund, but White is better:



12.f4! ♘e8

12...♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘g4 14.♗xe7 ♔xe7
 15.♗d4!± turned out badly in Sharma – Banerjee, Mumbai 2008.

12...g6 is as usual met by 13.♗f3!, leading to a headache for Black. For example:
 13...♗e8 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 15.♘xd5± Muench – Strohhaeker, Boeblingen 2006.

13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗xe7 ♔xe7 15.f5 ♘d7 16.e4 dxе4

16...♘d6 17.f6→ was devastating in Walther – Muellner, Dresden 2000.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4 \mathbb{Q}f6$

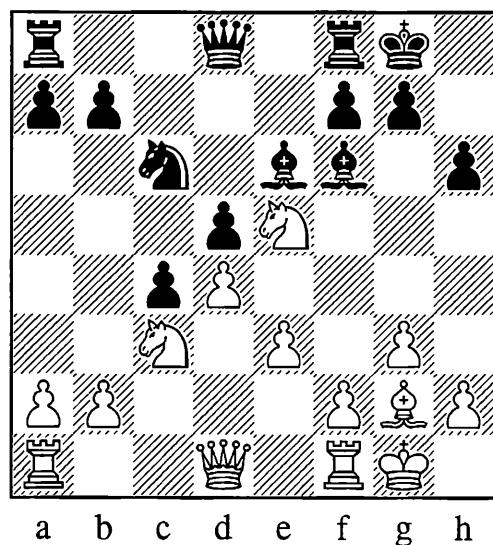
17... $\mathbb{Q}d6?$ was played in Premuzic – Samardzic, Rijeka 2007, and here White missed the crushing 18.f6!+–.

White now secures an advantage with the typical:

18. $\mathbb{Q}c5! \pm$

Hagen – Lauridsen, Denmark 2007.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{Q}xf6$



The first split. Possible here are A) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ and B) 13. $f4$.

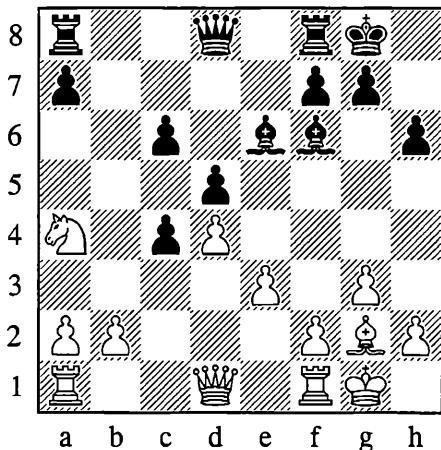
A) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

This is a natural-looking exchange. However, it does solve a lot of Black's problems. The d5-pawn is no longer a weakness and White has no strong way to advance on the kingside. On the other hand, similar things can be said in defence of White's position. Black will find it hard to do much after the ...c5 push, and White is in time to start action on the queenside. Overall we think the position is equal, but what kind of equal position is still not clear.

13... $bxc6$ 14. $b3$

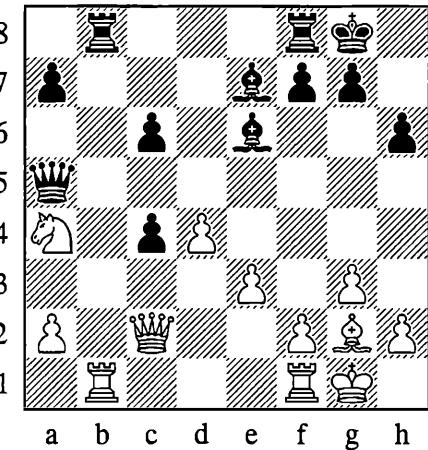
The main alternative is:

14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$



The following correspondence game has all the hallmarks of computer analysis and thus represents Black's chances quite well:

14... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 15. $b3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 17. $bxc4$ $dxc4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}ab1$



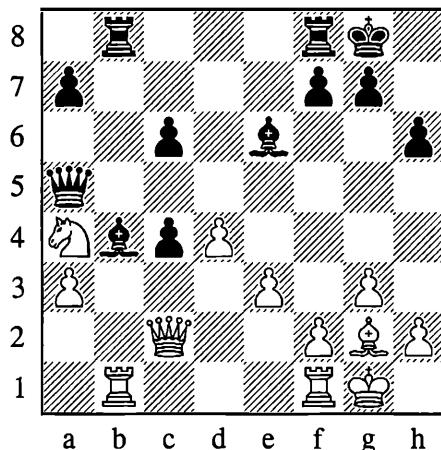
18... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$

Black can also equalize with: 18... $\mathbb{Q}f5! \pm$ N 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \square$ (19. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20. $f4$ $\mathbb{E}xb1$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xb1$ $\mathbb{E}d8\mp$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{E}xb1$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1$ a5= We prefer the main line (that's why we made it the main line...), but think it is important to know that Black has more than one way of obtaining equality; showing that White's pressure has definitely decreased.

19. $a3!$

19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ does not cause Black any trouble. The main reason for this is that the diagonal from e8 to a4 is opened and the knight on a4 is exposed. 19... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$ (better is 20. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5=$) 20... $c3$ 21. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ (21. $\mathbb{E}fd1$

$\mathbb{Q}d7\#$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 22. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
 24. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xb8$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d3$ c2
 27. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xc5\#$



19... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

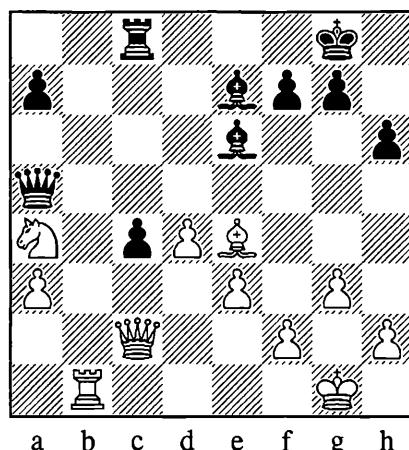
This is very slightly more accurate than 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa3?$ 20. $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{B}b3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}c3=$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xb1$

There is only one trap to be aware off. 20... $\mathbb{B}b3?!$ looks really pleasant, but there is a smart refutation: 21. $d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f5!$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ 23. $e4$ g6 24. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc5\pm$ White wins the exchange and has good winning chances in the ending.

21. $\mathbb{B}xb1$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

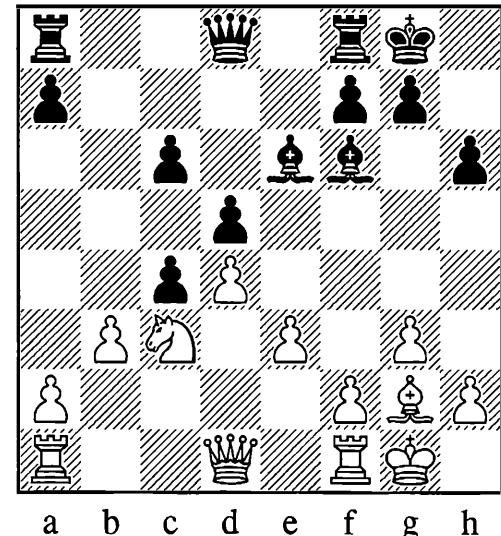
After 22. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5\#$ the weakness of the a3-pawn gives Black an edge.



22... $c3!N$

B. Toth – Soltau, e-mail 2007, concluded 22... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$. But we fear that White is a bit better after: 24. $d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

25. $dxe6$ $fxe6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}b7\#$
 23. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3=$
 Black has no problems.



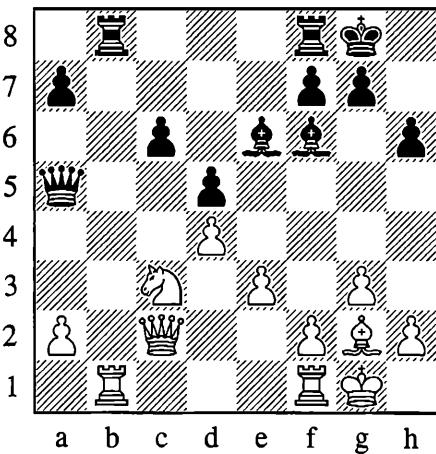
At this point we think there is more than one route to equality. It is not the entirely simple equality we might like, but rather equality with pluses and minuses. It is therefore natural for us to present the options to the reader and allow him to make up his own mind about which one he wants to choose.

14... $c5!?$

Obviously we need to investigate the other main route to equality carefully as well.

14... $cxb3$ 15. $axb3!N$

15. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ This is the only move tried in practice. It appears to be inaccurate due to 15... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}a5\rightleftharpoons$ and Black can double on the b-file. White played 17. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ in Yaksin – Matinyan, Russia 2004, but now:



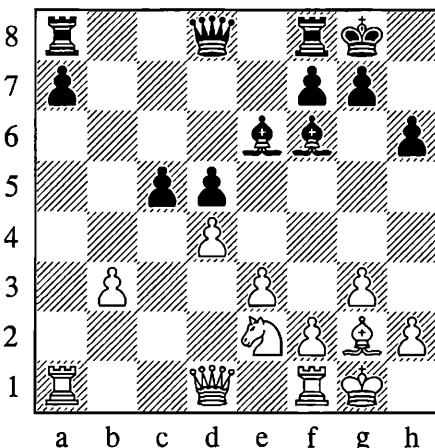
17...g6!N gives Black slightly the better chances. For example: 18.♗b3 ♖f5 19.♗b2 ♗xb3 20.♗xb3 ♖b6=

15...c5

We think the position after 15...♗d7 16.♕a4 ♖e7 17.♗c2 ♗ab8 18.♗fc1 ♗fc8 19.♗c5 ♖xc5 20.♗xc5 ♗b6 is absolutely playable. The only way we can see for White to create any problems for Black by 21.♗f1 ♗cb8 22.♗a6 ♗xa6 23.♗xa6 ♗xb3 24.♗xc6 ♖xc6 25.♗xc6, but Black should be okay after 25...♗f5=.

16.♕e2

Black is definitely fine after 16.♕a4 cxd4 17.exd4 a5, with the ideas ...♗b8-b4 and/or ...♗b6 with pressure against d4. For example: 18.♗c5 ♖b6=



16...♗g4

This looks like the simplest way to play.

16...♗b6 17.dxc5 ♖xc5 18.♗c1 ♖b5 19.♗f4± is equal according to the computer, but we are a bit uneasy about this evaluation.

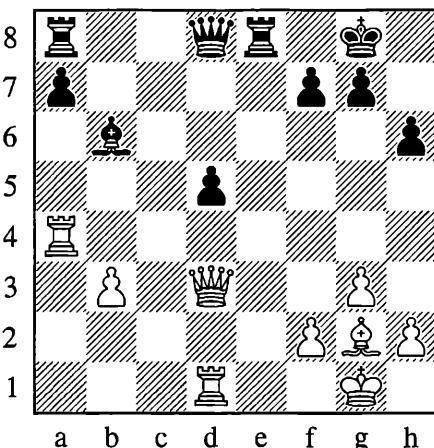
And 16...cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♖b6 with the idea ...♗xd4 also scores well digitally, but the position after 18.♗xe6 fxe6 is not one a grandmaster would feel 100% confident about. Those with long memories will remember the “light-squared symphony” where Karpov outplayed Kasparov in a similar structure with similar material in the mid-eighties. We could call this position

equal in theoretical evaluation, but more demanding for Black in practice.

17.♗d2 ♖xe2 18.♗xe2 cxd4 19.exd4 ♖xd4 20.♗a4! ♖b6

It is important to have counterplay. 20...♗f6 21.♗d1 ♗e8 22.♗d3 ♗c7 23.♗xd5 ♗ad8 24.♗a6± is unpleasant for Black.

21.♗d1 ♗e8 22.♗d3



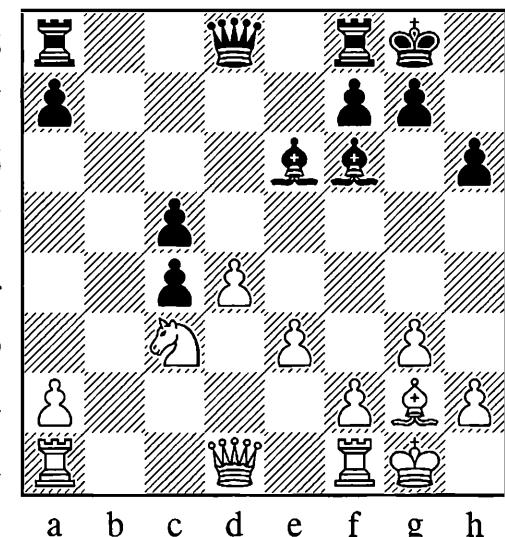
22...g5!

This is necessary to prevent a rook landing on f4. It feels ever so slightly uncomfortable, but it all hangs together.

23.♗xd5 ♖f6 24.♗d2 ♗ac8=

15.bxc4 dxc4!

15...cxd4 16.cxd5 dxc3 17.dxe6± is the digital route. The ending is tenable, but please don't go there.



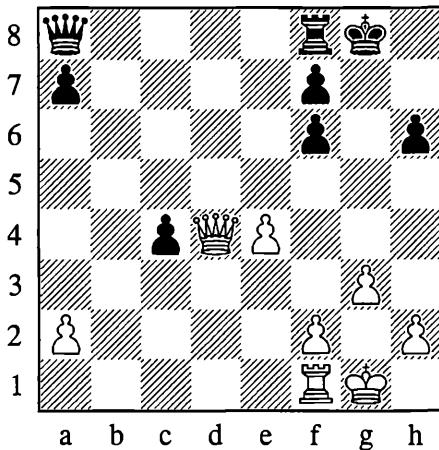
16. $\mathbb{Q}xa8!?$ N

In our opinion this is the most challenging, but you need to be familiar with the following line as well:

16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ cxd4 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ gxf6 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$

18. exd4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is a standard type of Tarrasch position. Black holds because White can harass the black king only with his queen.

18... $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 20. e4 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$



21... $\mathbb{Q}e8!N$

It is very important to play this move, so that White cannot keep his immaculate structure.

21... $\mathbb{W}c6?!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ led eventually to defeat for Black in Maki Uuro – Eriksson, Stockholm 2008.

22. f3

Black has no problems after 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}e6=$ or 22. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7=$.

22... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

And now both 24... $\mathbb{W}b5$ and 24... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ give Black full equality.

16... $\mathbb{W}xa8$

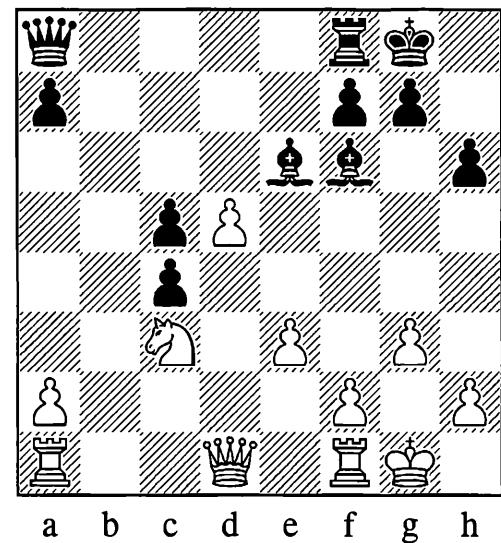
16... cxd4 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ dxc3 18. $\mathbb{W}c2\pm$ does not give as much compensation for the exchange as we would like; even if it looks generally playable.

17. d5!

Entering forcing territory, although White will also need to be careful.

After something like 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1?$ $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ White

would find himself with knight and rook against two very powerful bishops supporting a passed pawn. This could easily spell disaster.



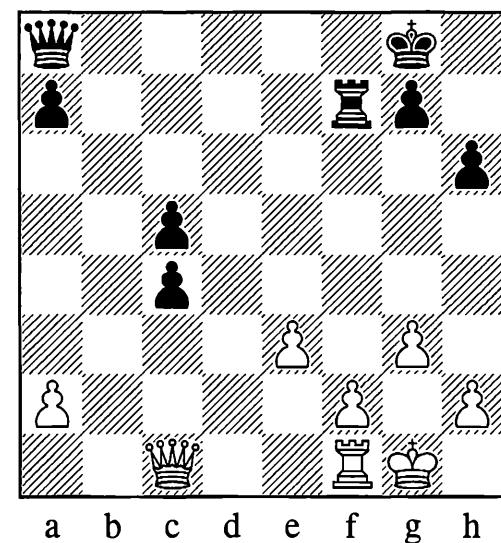
17... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

After 18. dx6 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 19. exf7# $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ Black secures equality. In lines like this, Black relies on his far-advanced passed c-pawn in the queen ending, whereas White will likely have to escape with a perpetual.

18... $\mathbb{Q}b2$

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 20. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is more or less playable, but White should be a bit better here.

19. dx6 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 20. exf7# $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc1$



21... $\mathbb{W}e4!$

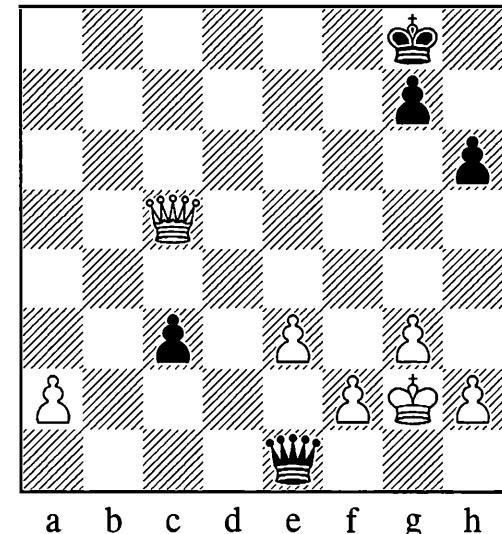
A very important move, fighting for key light squares.

21... $\mathbb{W}d5?$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2!±$ is not the way to go.

22. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d3!$ 23. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e2=$

Play could continue:

24. $\mathbb{B}d8†$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xf8†$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b8†$
 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xa7†$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}e1†$
29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c3



White must make a draw soon; the c-pawn is too strong.

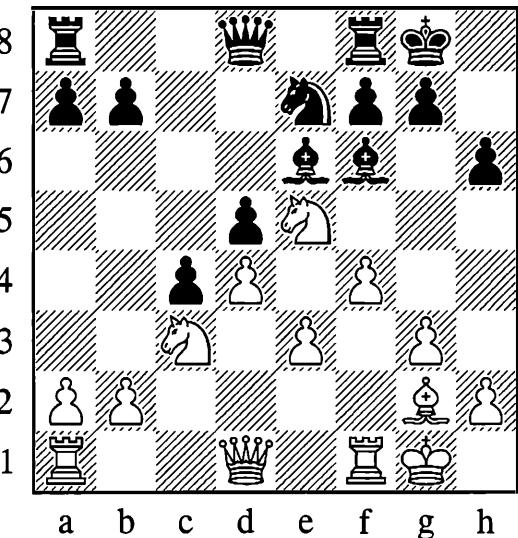
B) 13.f4

One of White's typical plans, and here it is the main line.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

We like the harmony of the black minor pieces in this constellation.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ is the other logical approach. White has two ways to recapture, and the stronger way is the less natural one: 14.dxe5! $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16.g4 f5 (16...g6!?) 17.exf6 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}ad1±$ Lacroix – Vandervoort, Charleroi 2004.



This is the big branching point. First we deal with the innocent-looking B1) 14. $\mathbb{W}d2$, which should not offer a great challenge to Black. Then comes B2) 14. $\mathbb{Q}g4$, which leads to sharp equality. We follow with the sensible B3) 14. $\mathbb{W}e2!?$ and finally end with Khalifman's suggested line, B4) 14.g4.

Beyond this, White can also play 14. $\mathbb{B}c1$, transposing to the note to White's 14th move in line D2 of Chapter 3.

Finally, there is one little move that we want to give more attention that it really deserves:

14.b3

This was played by a GM in one serious game. It was also the choice of a 2700+ GM playing against Jacob in a 3-minute blitz game on the PlayChess server. We shall give the full game, with just a few comments, to add a bit of colour. To protect the player's privacy we have invented a handle for him, which is probably used by someone else somewhere. We apologize for any confusion. ("Get on with it!" we hear you say.)

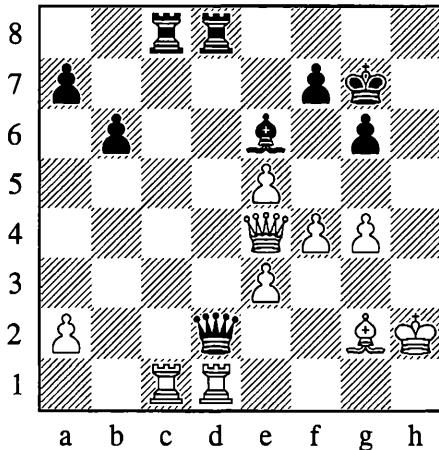
14... $\mathbb{W}a5$

Correct was: 14... $\mathbb{B}c8!N$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16.fxe5 $\mathbb{W}d7=$

15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

White did well with 15. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}a6!?$ 16.bxc4 dxc4 17. $\mathbb{B}b1±$ in Arkell – Holland, London 2010.

15...cxb3 16.♗xb3 b6 17.♗ac1 ♕ac8 18.♗c3
 ♜fd8 19.♗b5 ♕a3 20.♗d3 ♜f5 21.♗d2 h5
 22.h3 ♜e6 23.♗h2 g6 24.♗d3 ♜g7 25.♗d2
 ♜f5 26.♗fe1 ♕a5 27.♗d3 ♜d6 28.g4 hxg4
 29.hxg4 ♜xe5 30.dxe5 ♜e4 31.♗xe4 dxe4
 32.♗xe4 ♜d2 33.♗ed1



33...♝xc1?!

33...♝f2!

34.♝xd2 ♜xd2 35.f5 ♜d5 36.♝xd5 ♜xd5
 37.♜xd5 ♜e1 38.e4 a5 39.♗g3 b5 40.♗f4
 b4 41.e6 fxe6 42.♜xe6 gxf5 43.gxf5 a4 44.e5
 ♜b1?

44...b3!—+

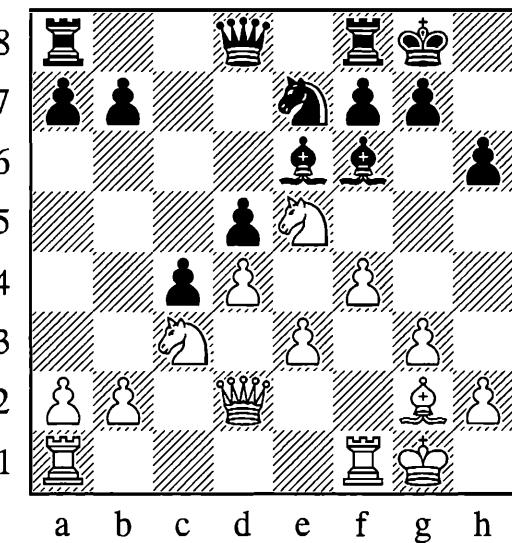
45.f6† ♜f8 46.♗f5?

46.♗c4!=

46...♝f1† 47.♗g5 ♜xf5† 48.♗xf5 b3

0–1 “Mr X” – Aagaard, Internet 2011.

B1) 14.♗d2



This position has occurred only once, in Tejas – Satra, Mumbai 2009. The most natural move seems to be:

14...♛a5?!N

This position is not that different from a lot of other generic Tarrasch positions. Chances are about equal, and the game is full of life and opportunity. While analysing we got a bit carried away and thought up this fantasy line:

15.♝ad1 ♜fd8 16.e4

Usually this is not a good idea, but this time White is well prepared.

16...dxe4 17.♜xe4 ♜ab8 18.♝e2 b5

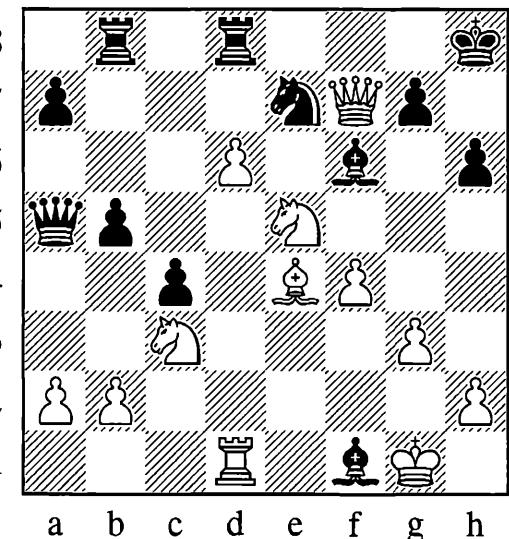
Structurally White is suffering, but he has the chance to push the d-pawn, creating a lot of dynamic possibilities.

19.d5 ♜h3 20.♝h5!

Forced, but also strong.

20...♜xf1 21.♝xf7† ♜h8 22.d6!

The d-pawn creates real threats to the black king by attacking the vital e7-knight.



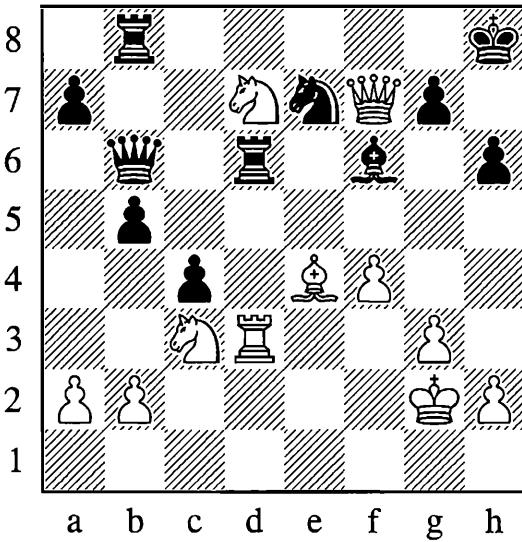
22...♜d3!

22...♝b6† 23.♝xf1 ♜xd6 is less advisable, due to 24.♗d5! ♜xe5 25.♗xb6 ♜xd1† 26.♗e2 and White seems to have the advantage.

However, 22...♜h3 is also sound.

23.♗xd3

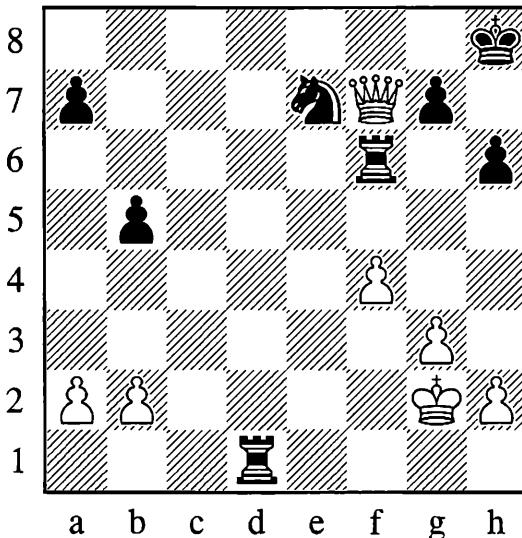
A simpler line is 23.dxe7 ♜b6† 24.♔g2 ♔xe4† 25.♕xe4 ♘xd1 26.e8=♕†, with a draw.

23...♛b6† 24.♔g2 ♘xd6 25.♘d7

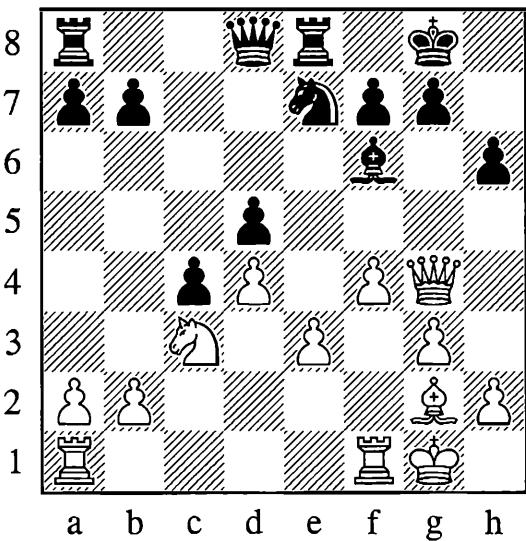
It appears that White has a very strong attack, but Black is able to save the game with a queen sacrifice.

25...cxd3!! 26.♘xb6 d2 27.♕f3 ♛xb6

Black has two rooks and a strong passed pawn for the queen. White is able to make a draw in only one way.

28.♘e4! d1=♛ 29.♖xd1 ♖xd1 30.♘xf6 ♖xf6**31.♛xe7 ♖d2† 32.♔h3 ♖xb2 33.♛xa7 ♖e6=****B2) 14.♘g4**

The decision to reclaim the bishop pair looks natural, but it exposes the weak e-pawn, allowing Black to obtain good play.

14...♗xg4 15.♕xg4 ♖e8!

Black immediately eyes the e3-pawn. White has a number of options, most of them bad:

16.♕f3? ♘f5 The theme of sacrificing on e3 is immediately apparent. 17.♖ae1 ♘xe3! 18.♖xe3 ♖xd4 19.♖xd5 ♘xe3† 20.♖xe3 ♛b6 21.♖e1 ♛xb2† Black has his opponent tied down, and the c-pawn is very strong. White will soon be fighting for his life.

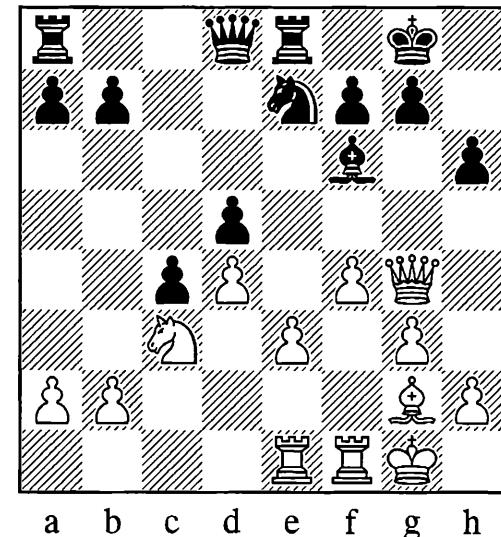
White can improve this a little with 16.♕h5?! g6! 17.♕f3, but it is still not very good: 17...♘f5! 18.♖ae1 ♘xe3 19.♖xe3 ♖xd4 20.♖xd5 ♘xe3† 21.♖xe3 ♛b6 22.♖e1 ♛xb2 23.f5 g5†

16.b3 is just about playable, but Black is doing quite well after 16...♛a5 17.♖ac1 ♖ad8→.

By elimination, we can conclude that the most natural move is also the best:

16.♖ae1

9.♕g5



16...♝d6!N

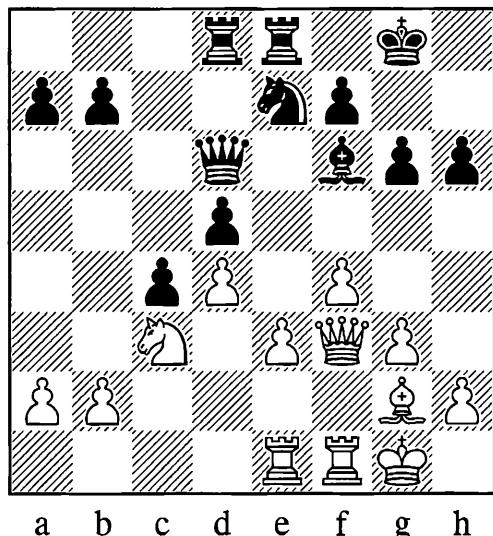
We think this is a small improvement, giving Black the chance to fight for the initiative.

Black was successful with 16...♝b6 in Neuman – Michalik, Czech Republic 2009. However, White should have simplified the position with: 17.♗xd5N ♗xd5 18.♕xd5 ♜xe3 19.♕xe3 ♜xd4 20.♔h1 ♜xe3 21.♝d7 ♜f8 22.♝xb7 ♜xb7 23.♝xb7 ♜b8 24.♕d5 ♜xb2 25.♕xc4=

17.♔h5

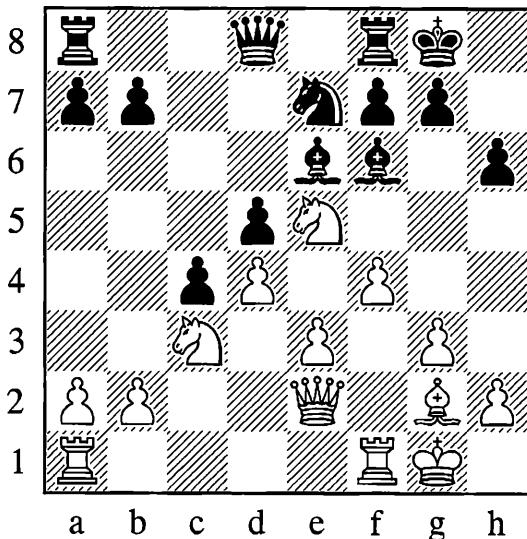
17.♔h1 a6 18.a4 ♜ad8 is at least okay for Black.

17...g6 18.♗f3 ♜ad8?



The position holds advantages for both sides. It is our belief that the possibility of advancing the queenside pawns will make it easier to play Black in a practical game.

B3) 14.♗e2!?



This looks very sensible; White is preparing to put a rook on d1 and keeping an eye on his weak spots.

14...♝b8!

The most logical use of the pieces.

14...♝b6 was perhaps suggested to Black by a computer in Witzschel – Overgaard, e-mail 2007. It looks pointless to us.

On the other hand, some charm can be found in:

14...♝a5?!N 15.e4

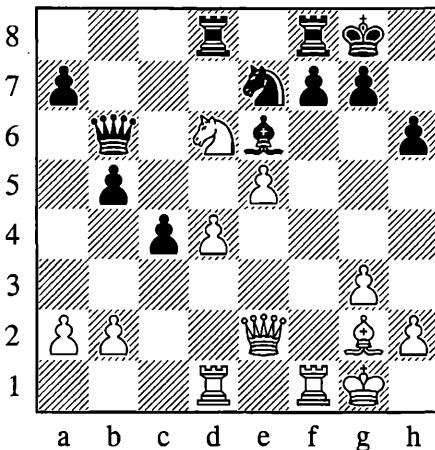
White needs to play forcefully to have any chance of proving an advantage.

15...♜ad8 16.♜ad1 dxе4

Black should be very careful to avoid anything like 16...♜xe5 17.fxe5 b5?, when White has: 18.♗xd5 ♗xd5 19.exd5 ♜xd5 20.♕xd5 ♜xd5 21.e6!±

17.♗xe4 ♜xe5 18.fxe5 b5 19.♗d6 ♜b6

The big question here is whether Black has equalized or not. Our guess is: probably...



20.Qf2

20.a4 bxa4! does not achieve anything.

20...Qc6 21.Qe4 f6!

Black initiates necessary tactics.

22.Qxc6 Wxc6 23.d5! Qxd5 24.Qf5 Qd7
25.exf6 Qxf6 26.Qe7† Qxe7 27.Wxe7 Wb6

By now it is clear that Black has indeed equalized.

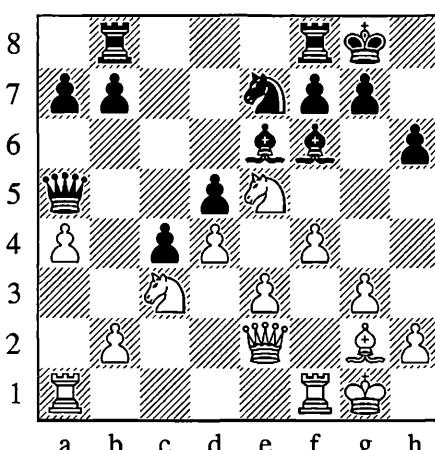
28.We8† Qh7 29.We2 Qb7!

With fantastic compensation for the exchange.

15.Qad1

It is interesting for White to try to hinder Black's queenside ambitions:

15.a4 Wa5



This response promises Black decent play.

16.Qad1

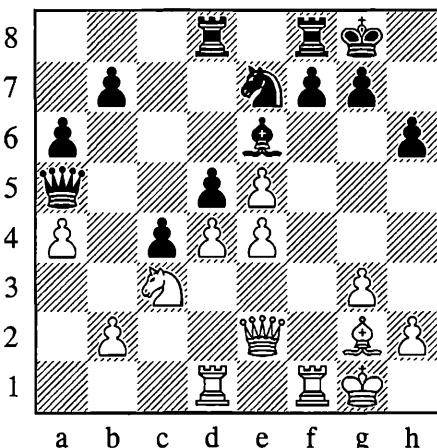
We also looked at a couple of other moves:

16.g4 Qbd8 17.Qf2 Qxe5 18.fxe5 Qc6

19.h3 Qb4=

16.Wc2 Qxe5 17.fxe5 Qc6 18.Qb5 Wd8

19.Qad1 a6 20.Qd6 f6 21.Wg6 Qe7 22.Wc2 Qc6=
16...Qbd8 17.e4 Qxe5 18.fxe5 a6



19.Qf2

19.We1 Qh8 20.Qf2 (20.exd5 Qxd5
21.Qxd5 Wxe1 22.Qfxe1 Qxd5=) 20...b5=

19...Qh8!

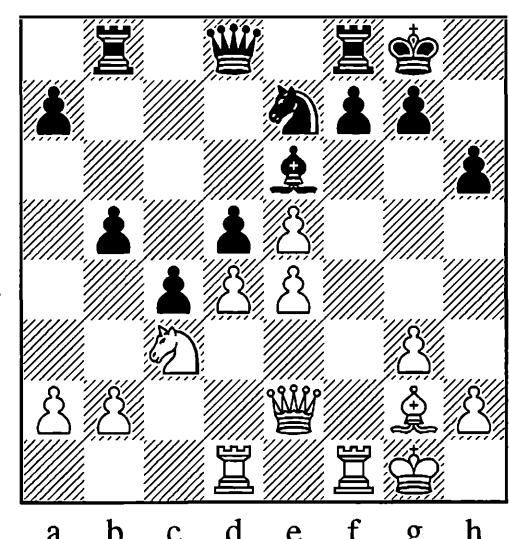
This is a necessary preparation for ...b5, as demonstrated by the line: 19...b5? 20.exd5 Qxd5 21.Qxd5 Qxd5? (21...Qxd5!=
22.Qxd5 Qxd5 23.e6=

20.Qd2 b5

Black has good counterplay on the queenside.

15...b5 16.e4 Qxe5 17.fxe5

17.dxe5 d4 18.f5 d3 should favour Black.



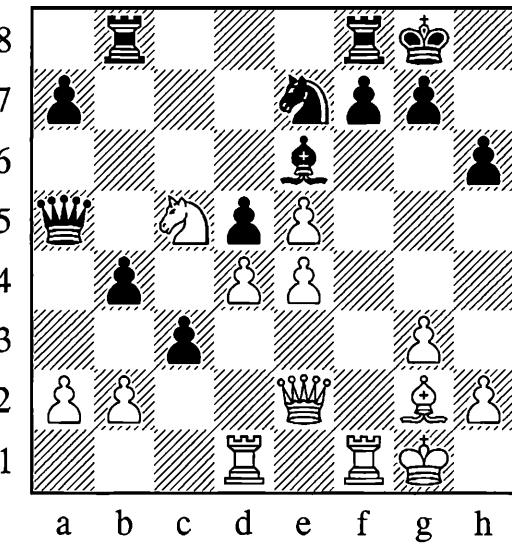
17...b4!N

Black should not hesitate. This improves upon 17...Wd7?! 18.exd5 Qxd5 (18...Qxd5N

19. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \mathbb{W}c6$ also does not fully equalize in our opinion) 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \mathbb{W}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f6!!$ with a strong attack in Mellado Trivino – Tallo Dominguez, La Pobla de Lillet 2006.

18. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{W}a5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5 c3$

We could easily stop the line here and say that Black has a decent game; but it makes sense to show you some of the analysis we made to reach this conclusion.



20. $bxc3$

This is one of the most obvious moves. We also had a look at:

20. $\mathbb{Q}a1 \mathbb{Q}bc8$ 21. $bxc3 \mathbb{Q}xc5!!$ (the less aggressive option is of course 21... $bxc3$ 22. $exd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5=$) 22. $dxc5$ $bxc3$ with complicated and interesting play.

20. $exd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}a1$

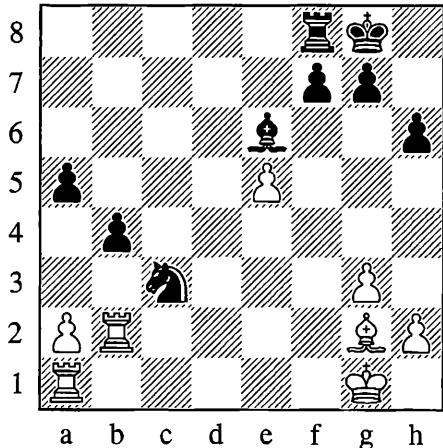
21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is positionally hopeless. After 22... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8 \mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}b7\#$ Black has fantastic compensation for the exchange.

21... $\mathbb{Q}bc8!$ 22. $bxc3$

22. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}xc5$ 23. $dxc5 \mathbb{W}xc5=\bar{}$

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 23. $dxc5 \mathbb{W}xc5\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{W}xf2\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf2 \mathbb{Q}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b2 a5\bar{}$

Even in the ending Black has good chances to fight for the initiative.



20... $bxc3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ looks better, but after 21... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Black still has good play.

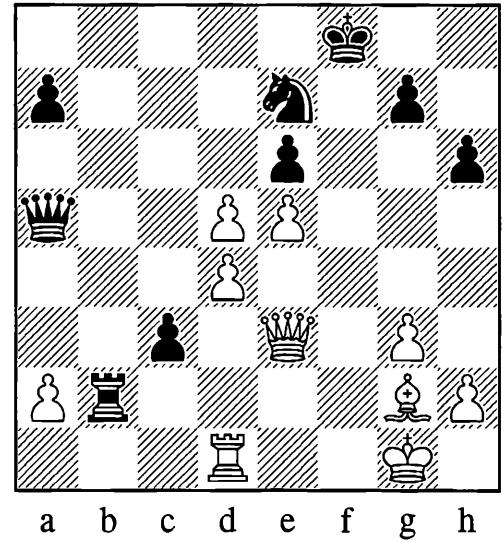
21... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6?$

This sequence of exchanges is the first choice of the machines, but it turns out to be flawed.

22. $a4!!$ is better. The chances are about level, but we like the look of Black's position.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. $exd5$

White is also in trouble after 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $c2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{Q}e8!!$. For example: 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{W}a4!+$



24... $\mathbb{Q}f5!!$

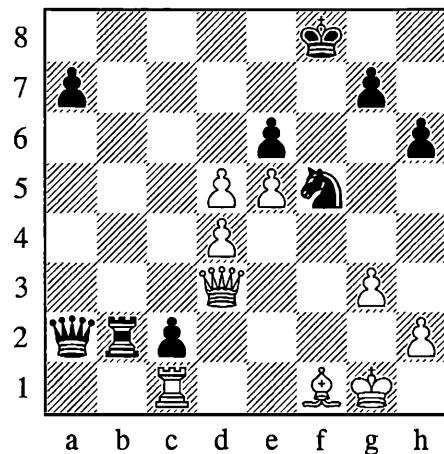
The big surprise. 24... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is less clear, and seems to lead to even chances.

25.♗f1

Even worse is:

25.♗d3 ♗xa2 26.♗f1 c2! 27.♗c1

27.dxe6 g6!– does not change anything.



27...♗a4

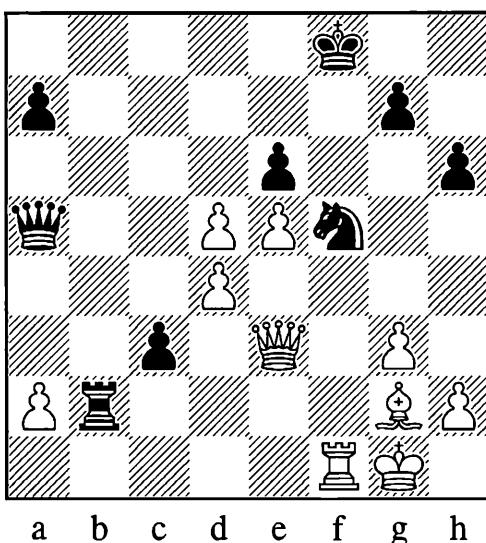
27...♗b1 is also strong, but the ending after 28.♗c3 ♗xd5 29.♗xc2 ♗xd4† is not entirely over.

28.dxe6! ♗xd4† 29.♗g2

This is still a bit complicated, but White cannot save his position.

29...g6! 30.♗e2 ♔e7

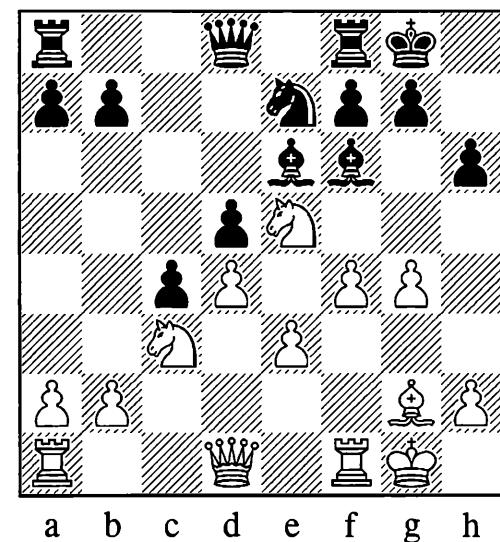
Black has a winning position, albeit not a simple one.



25...♗b1! 26.♗f3 ♗xf1† 27.♗xf1 ♗xd5

28.♗xc3 ♗xd4††

White is facing a very difficult endgame.

B4) 14.g4

White is fighting for the d5-square by preparing the f4-f5 advance. It looks very aggressive, but it is also very committal if it does not pay off. As it turns out, the strengths and weaknesses of this move are quite well balanced.

14...b5!N

This is a strong improvement over Khalifman's analysis. Essentially, if Black can play this move, his position is tenable. The only question is whether White can refute it by force. This turns out not to be the case.

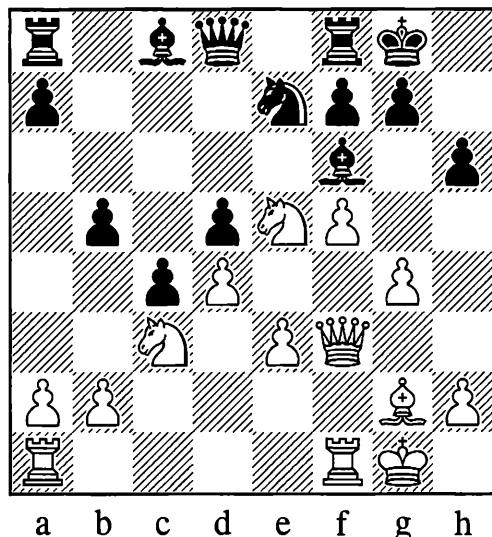
15.f5

This is clearly critical, and also appears to be best. The alternatives are:

15.a3?! ♗b8 In general the inclusion of these two moves favours Black. White has lost some momentum, and after something like 16.h3 a5 17.a4 b4 18.♗b5 ♔c8! 19.e4 ♔a6 Black already has the better chances.

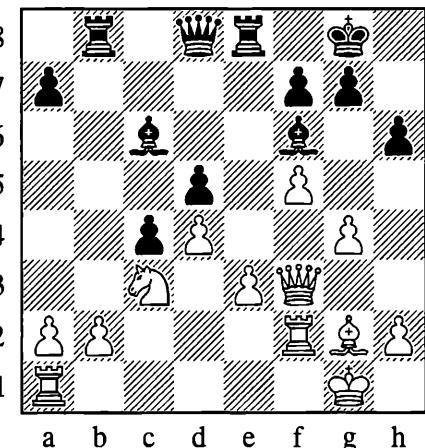
15.♗d2 ♗b8 16.h3 b4 17.♗a4 h5 18.gxh5 ♗f5 19.♗c5 ♔xe5 20.fxe5 ♗g5†

15...♔c8 16.♗f3



16... $\mathbb{B}b8!$

This is the most natural move and is certainly our recommendation. However, we would do you a disservice if we did not mention 16.... $\mathbb{B}b7!?$. This bizarre-looking move is recommended rather warmly by the engines. Play may continue: 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}e8\infty$

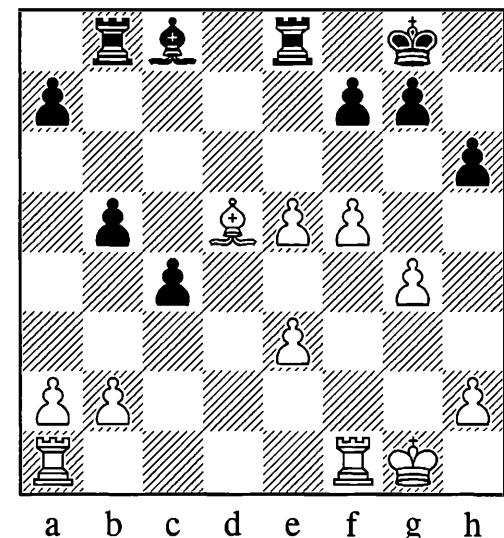


The claim is that Black has good play down the two semi-open files. White is indeed weak on the dark squares, and e3 and b2 are soft spots. The computer evaluates the position as just a pinch better for Black, but this is probably too optimistic. Equal is a more reasonable evaluation, but with a bit more colour than our main line. However, it is not to everybody's taste to give up a pawn in this way, so we just mention this option and move on.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

This leads to a long forced sequence which does not, in the end, offer White any advantage. But everything else is worse. If White does not take the pawn, Black will play ... $\mathbb{B}e8$ and be even better prepared for when the capture on d5 comes.

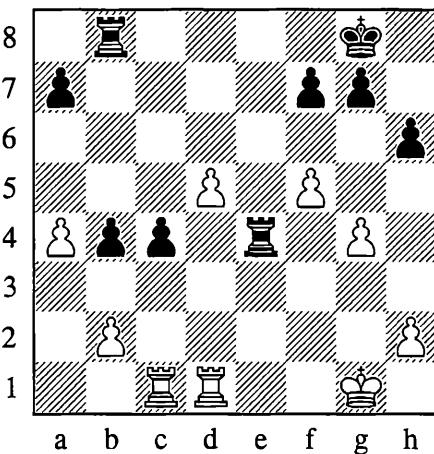
17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
20. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{B}e8$



Black regains his pawn without any problems. Although White's bishop looks strong, he cannot achieve anything before it too is removed.

21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$

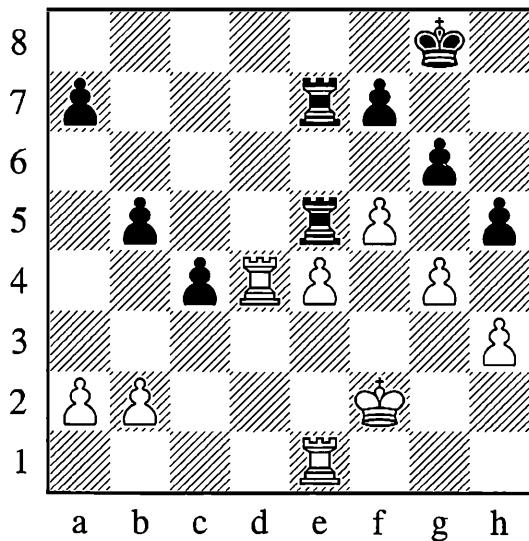
White also needs to be a little bit careful. For example, 21. a4?! $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 22. e4 $\mathbb{B}b7!$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ b4 24. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $exd5$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ and White is already worse.



21... $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7=$

The remaining analysis simply shows some likely moves, not in any way a forced sequence.

**23. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{E}be7$ 25. $\mathbb{E}e1$ h5
26.h3 g6 27.e4**



27... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28. $\mathbb{E}e3$ a5 29. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h6!?$

Although the ending should be a draw, there is still a bit of play left.

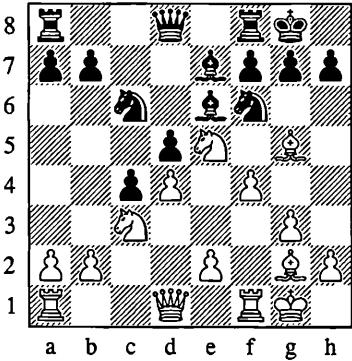
Conclusion

11.e3 does not look like the sort of move that should cause Black grave concerns. However, White does have the interesting idea of advancing his kingside pawns, putting d5 under pressure. Because of a tactical nuance it is possible for Black to regain this pawn and equalize the game.

Obviously White has various other options along the way, many of them leading to sharp and unique positions. But none of them seem excessively dangerous for Black, who should have his share of the fun.

Chapter 5

9.Bg5



11.f4

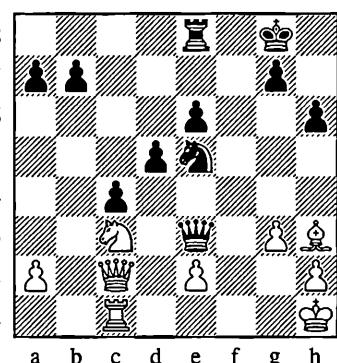
Variation Index

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.g3 Qf6 7.Bg2 Be7
8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 c4 10.Qe5 Be6 11.f4**

11...h6!

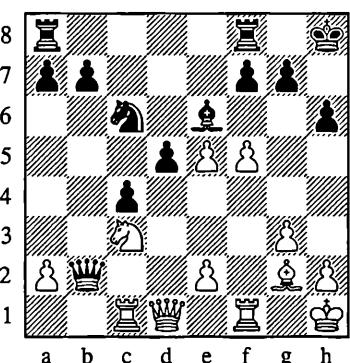
A) 12.Bxf6 Bxf6 13.f5 Bxe5! 14.dxe5 Wb6† 15.Qh1 Wxb2!	75
A1) 16.fxe6 fxe6	78
A11) 17.Qa4?	78
A12) 17.Qxd5	78
A13) 17.Bc1	79
A14) 17.Wc1	79
A2) 16.Bc1	81
A21) 16...Bae8N	82
A22) 16...Qh8!N	83
B) 12.Bh4	85

A13) after 22.Wc2



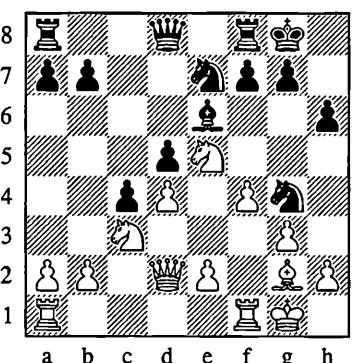
22...a6!N

A2) after 16.Bc1



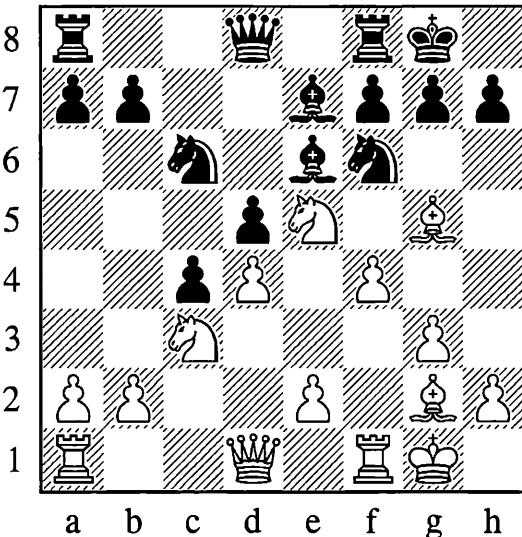
16...Qh8!N

B) after 14.Wd2

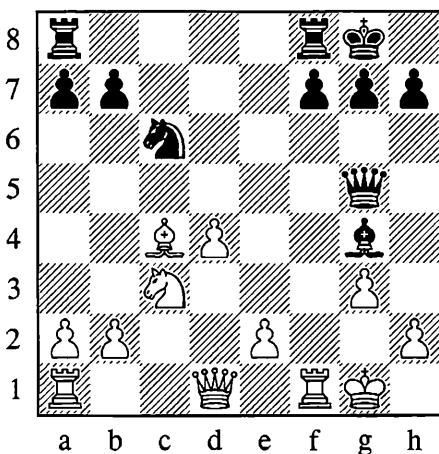


14...Qxe5!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♗f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♗f6 7.♗g2 ♕e7 8.0-0 0-0
 9.♕g5 c4 10.♗e5 ♕e6 11.f4



This is Rubinstein's idea! Once Black has played ...c4 and removed the tension from the centre, White is able to start a direct assault on the kingside, attempting to undermine the defence of the d-pawn in the process. We have discovered that the recommended theoretical continuation with 11...♗g4 does not equalize, or at least looks very shaky. After the further moves 12.♗xg4 ♕xg4 13.♖xd5 ♕xg5 14.fxg5 ♖xg5, White has the interesting novelty 15.♕xc4!?N.



Without going into too great detail, our analysis continues: 15...♖e3† 16.♔g2 ♖xd4 (16...♗xd4? 17.♗f4) 17.♖xd4 ♗xd4 18.♖ad1 ♘c2 (18...♗c6 19.♗f4 ♕e6 20.♖xe6

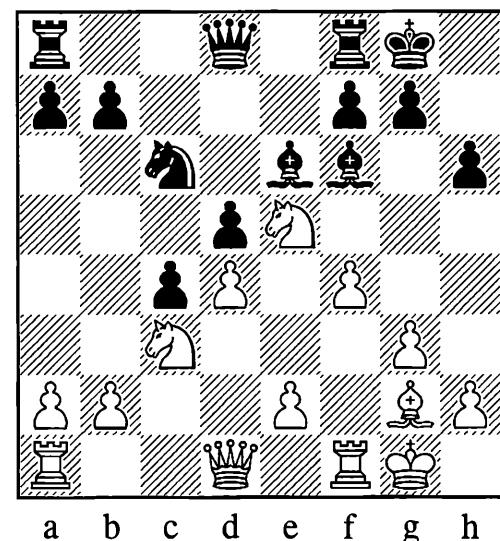
fxe6 21.♗d7†) 19.♗d5 ♕e6 20.♔f2 ♘b4 (20...♗ae8 21.e4 ♘b4 22.♔b5 ♘c6 23.♔xc6 bxc6 24.♗c7 ♕e7 25.♗xe6 ♕xe6 26.♔e3 ♕fe8 27.♗d4†) 21.♗e7†! ♔h8 22.♔xe6 fxe6† 23.♔e3 ♕xf1 24.♔xf1 ♘xa2 25.♔e4† and the ending is unpleasant for Black.

For this reason we quickly turned to our favourite move with the h-pawn, even though it has been played only 11 times out of 235 opportunities in our database, and is the fourth most popular move. However, it is also the only move with a good score for Black. (Although one should remember that nine out of ten statistical surveys are misleading...)

11...h6!

Obviously White can play A) 12.♗xf6 here and follow up with f4-f5, asking Black what he is going to do about the d5-pawn. However, the big point behind 11...h6 is only revealed after B) 12.♔h4, when Black may have the chance to trap the bishop with ...g5! later on. Compared to the old lines with 11...♗g4, this makes all the difference.

A) 12.♗xf6 ♕xf6



13.f5

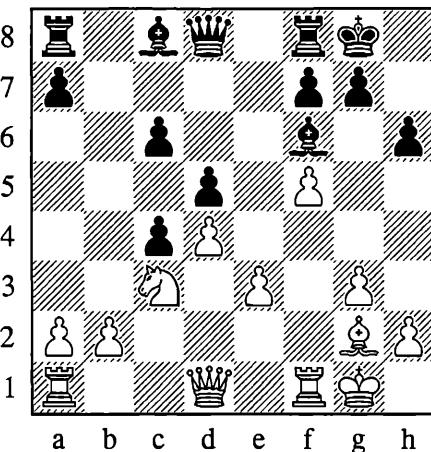
13.e3 transposes to line B of Chapter 4.

13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.f5

This looks very odd indeed. Why you would want to chase the bishop *after* making sure the d5-pawn is supported is beyond us. However, it has been played a few times, so we might as well take a peek.

14...♗c8 15.e3

15.♗d2 ♜e8 16.♗ad1 was played in J. Berry – Kiriakov, Internet 2004. Now 16...♗g5!N 17.♗c2 ♜e3† 18.♔h1 ♜b8 is obviously much better for Black. With more than a few minutes for the whole game, Kiriakov would surely have opted for this.



So far we have been following Geilen – Bohme, corr. 1998. For some reason Black decided to advance his g-pawn here. Although not directly bad, it does take the g5-square away from the bishop and therefore makes the e3-pawn far less of a target. The simplest continuation is probably also the best:

15...♗e8?N 16.♗d2 ♜b8 17.♗ae1 ♜b6 18.♗f2 ♜b7! 19.♗ee2 ♜be7†

White is in a passive position and will have to fight for a draw.

13...♗xe5!

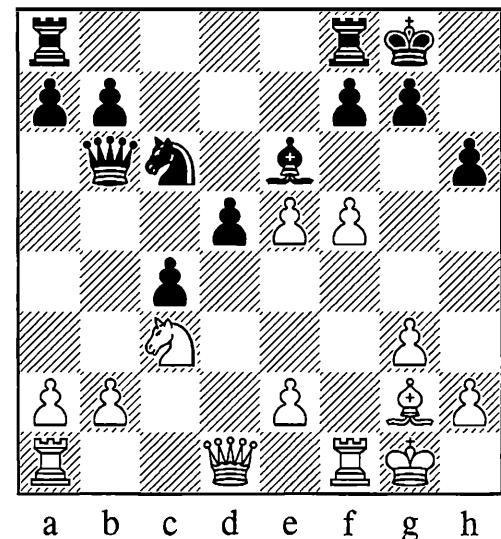
Black has to let both bishops go.

The attempt to be clever with 13...♗c8?! fails to active play: 14.♗xd5! (14.e3 is also not without virtues) 14...♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♜xe5 16.♗c2 ♜g5

17.♗xc4 ♜xb2 18.♗ad1 White had excellent activity in Samraoui – Baumbach, corr. 2007.

14.dxe5 ♜b6†

This is the point. Although Black has to give up the e6-bishop, he gets three pawns for it.



15.♔h1

The most natural move. White does not want his king to be a target.

15.e3

This is not a dangerous try. Black can play in similar fashion to the main line and obtain good play:

15...♗xb2

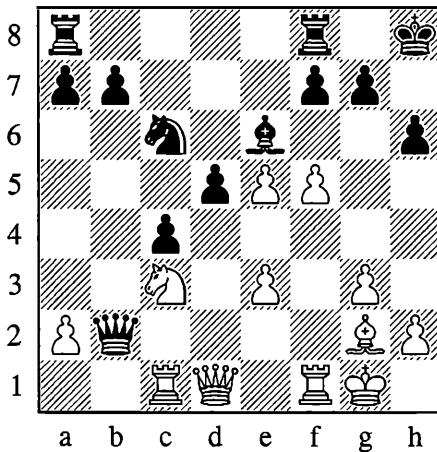
However, 15...♗xe3†? is a blunder. 16.♔h1 ♜c8 17.e6! d4 18.exf7† ♔h8 19.♗d5 ♜e5 20.♗g4† leads to an overwhelming position for White.

16.♗c1

16.♗c1 does not cause Black any real bother. This time it makes sense to save the bishop. 16...♗xc1 17.♗axc1 ♜d7 18.♗xd5 ♜xe5 19.♗xb7 ♜ab8∞ White is aiming for equality. The c-pawn and the knight on e5 give Black an easy ride.

16...♔h8

This is usually a good idea, avoiding potential checks.



17.e4?!

White goes all in.

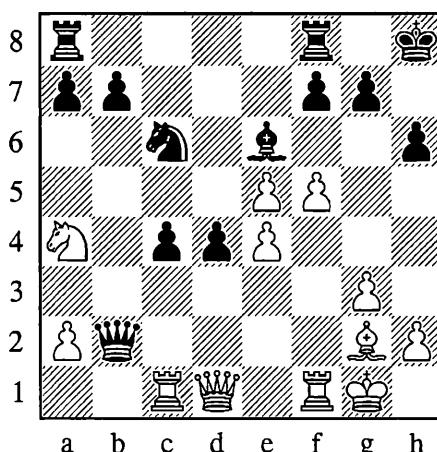
Also after 17.♕xd5 ♕xd5 18.♗xd5 ♜ad8†

White's position would have been unpleasant. But playable is 17.♘f2 ♜a3 18.fxe6 fxe6, when the chances should be about level.

The position after 17.fxe6 fxe6 would be almost identical to one that can arise in line A22, but here with the less useful 15.e3 in place of 15.♔h1.

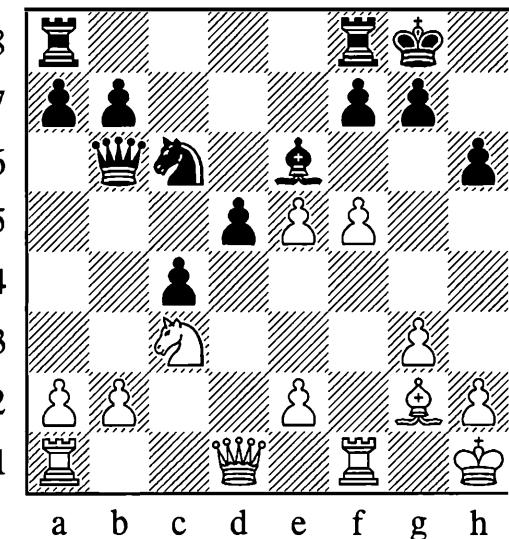
17...d4 18.♗a4

So far we have been following Wurschner – Cipka, corr. 2004. Although Black was fine after 18...♝b4 in that game, he would have been even better off playing:



18...♝a3!N 19.fxe6 fxe6 20.♖xc4 ♛xe5†

With a strong initiative. Note that White cannot play 21.♖xd4? ♜e3† 22.♔h1 ♜xf1† 23.♖xf1 ♛f3–+.



15...♝xb2!

This is a fantastic resource. In our opinion Black has already equalized, and White has to look elsewhere for an advantage. The two main lines here are also the most natural moves; taking the piece with A1) 16.fxe6, and defending the knight with A2) 16.♖c1. However, a couple of other moves deserve a brief mention.

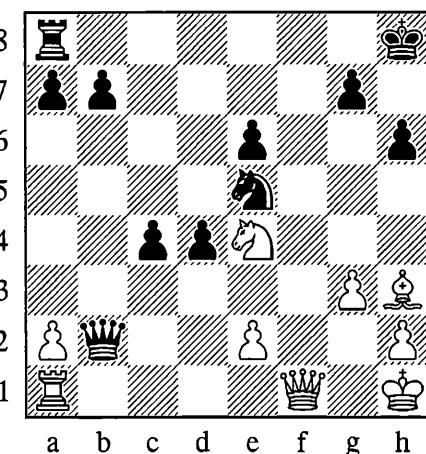
Black is fine after:

16.♗e1 d4!

16...♜d7 17.f6!→ may be playable, but it makes little sense to us from a practical viewpoint.

17.fxe6 fxe6 18.♗e4 ♜xf1† 19.♗xf1 ♛xe5
19...c3 20.♔h3 ♜e8 21.♗b1! seems to give Black slight problems.

20.♔h3 ♔h8!



With even chances. One example of how this could work out in practice is:

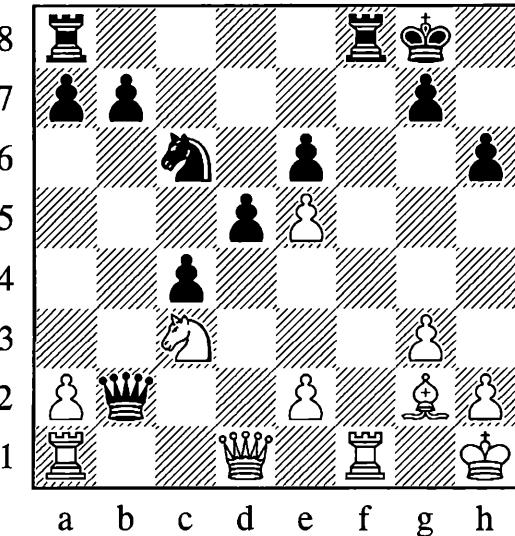
21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ d3! 22. exd3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xf3$

The alternative 23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b1$! leads to a drawn ending.

23... $\mathbb{W}xa1\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c3 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ c2 26. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ =

16. $\mathbb{W}c1$ is utterly harmless. After 16... $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 17. $\mathbb{E}axc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ the position is similar to the one that arose from 15. e3 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c1$ above, and again White is fighting for a draw.

A1) 16. fxe6 fxe6



Originally we had just one main line here, but it makes it easier to follow the analysis if we split it up into A11) 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4?$, A12) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, A13) 17. $\mathbb{E}c1$ and A14) 17. $\mathbb{W}c1$.

A11) 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4?$

The most ambitious move, but it is far from sound.

17... $\mathbb{E}xf1\#$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf1$

18. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}xe5\#$ is no improvement.

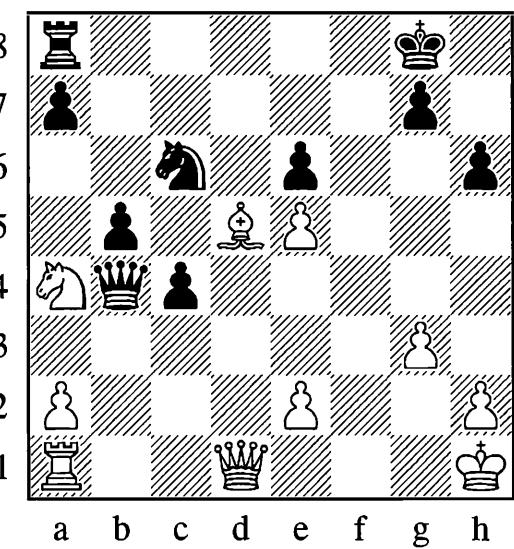
18... $\mathbb{W}b4$

We believe this is the most natural move, and hence the one we want to recommend. However, Black can also play 18... $\mathbb{W}xe5\#$ with a good game.

19. $\mathbb{W}d1$ b5

Black has a big advantage. One possible line goes:

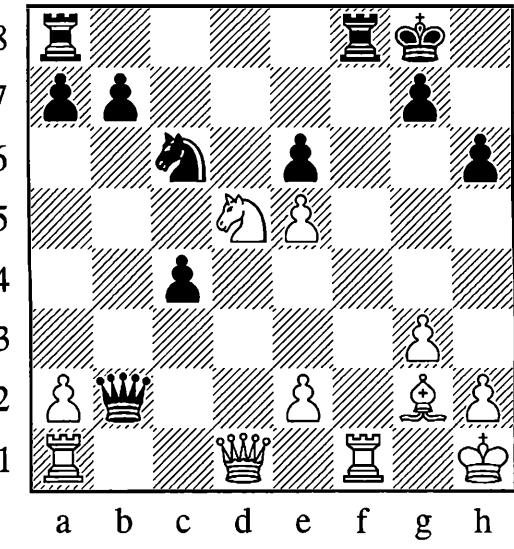
20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



20... $\mathbb{E}d8!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$
23. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}a6\#$

The game is still complicated, but his control over the dark squares should give Black excellent winning chances.

A12) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



This is White's safest choice, but it does not challenge Black at all.

17... $\mathbb{B}xf1\uparrow$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ exd5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20.e6!?

The only attempt. 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ is clearly equal; the bishop is good, but so is the e5-square.

20... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 21.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\uparrow$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d4\uparrow$

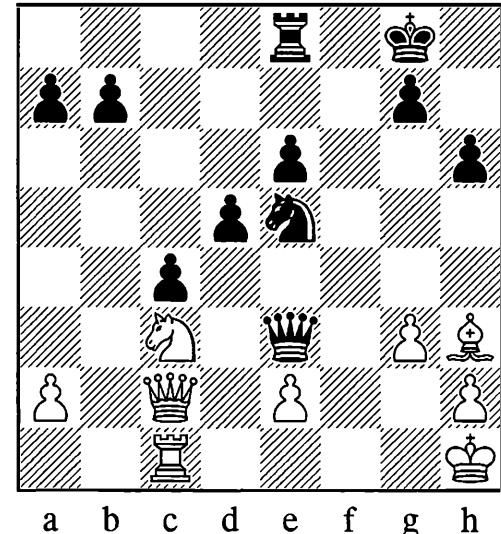
With a draw by perpetual check.

A13) 17. $\mathbb{B}c1$

This is answered with simple moves:

17... $\mathbb{B}xf1\uparrow$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}e3$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$

This position arose in Polatel – Federman, corr. 2003. Black has several moves which lead to a good position here, but our favourite is:



22...a6!N

For example:

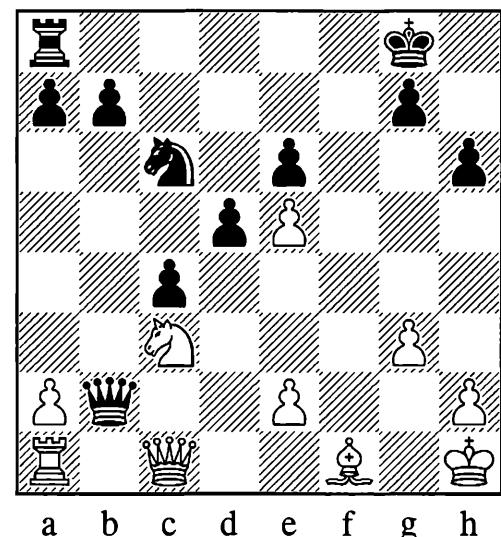
23. $\mathbb{B}b1$

White's idea is 23...b5?! 24.a4! with good play.

23... $\mathbb{B}e7\uparrow$

Black has a pleasant position (especially on the dark squares). He can consider playing ...b5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ -d6(or -g5) with good chances.

A14) 17. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{B}xf1\uparrow$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$



18... $\mathbb{W}xc1!$

Jacob reached the diagram position in a Glasgow League game, with a semi-rapid time control. He played awfully, but won:

18... $\mathbb{W}b6?!$ 19. $\mathbb{B}b1$

19.e4!±

19... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b2?!$

Here White should have punished Black for his stupid play with: 20.e4! d4 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ dxc3 22. $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$

20... $\mathbb{B}f8?$

20...d4!?

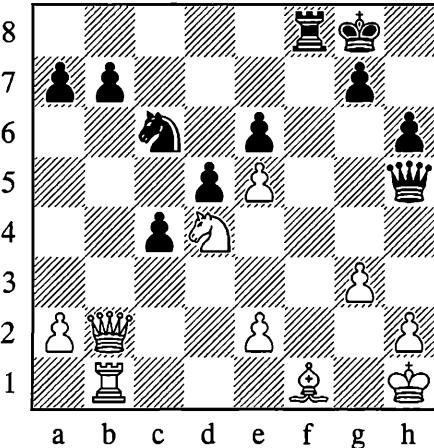
21. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

22.e4!↑

22... $\mathbb{W}h5?$

Black is playing for tactics that just don't work.

22... $\mathbb{W}g6\pm$



23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6?$

The critical try was 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$, when Jacob had intended 23... $\mathbb{E}f2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}xe2$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$. Unfortunately this is entirely bonkers! 26. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ and White is winning in many ways...

23... $\mathbb{B}xc6\infty$

Black is back.

24. $\mathbb{W}d4$ c5! 25. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 26. $\mathbb{E}d1$ c3?! 27. e3?!

27. $\mathbb{E}c1\pm$

27... $\mathbb{E}f2$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d4??$

28. $\mathbb{Q}g1=$

28... $\mathbb{W}h5$

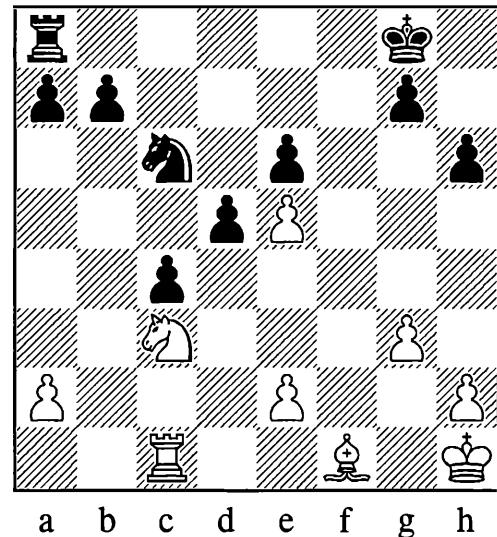
Black could win directly with the elegant 28... c2 29. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 30. exd4 $\mathbb{E}d2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$, and White cannot move.

29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c2 30. $\mathbb{E}c1?$

The last chance was: 30. $\mathbb{E}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e5!$ (31. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{E}xd2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e5+) 31... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{E}f6\#$

30... $\mathbb{W}e2$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d1\#$

0–1 Muir – Aagaard, Glasgow 2011.

19. $\mathbb{E}xc1$ 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!?$

The most entertaining move, and fully viable. The position should be just equal, but we cannot help dreaming of a black victory.

A simpler option is 19... $\mathbb{E}e8$, with the point that after 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ Black is fully defended

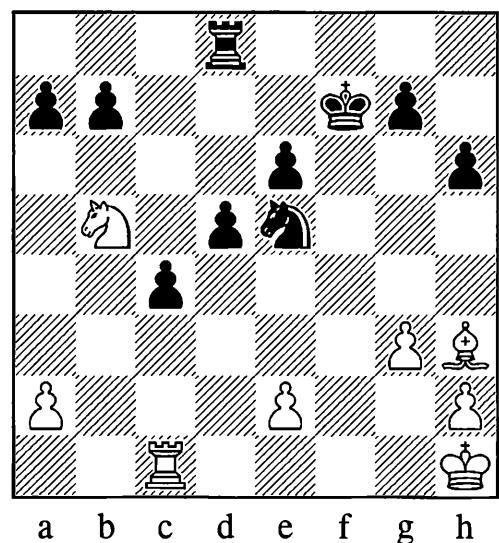
against any ideas with $\mathbb{E}b1$ and $\mathbb{Q}b5$; meanwhile he is planning to play ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and ... $\mathbb{g}5-g4$, shutting out the white bishop. It is likely that White will simply play 21. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}d6-c8-d6$ with a draw.

20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is just a transposition.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{E}d8!$

Black should avoid 21... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c7$, even though he keeps some chances after: 22... $\mathbb{E}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ g5 24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b1\pm$

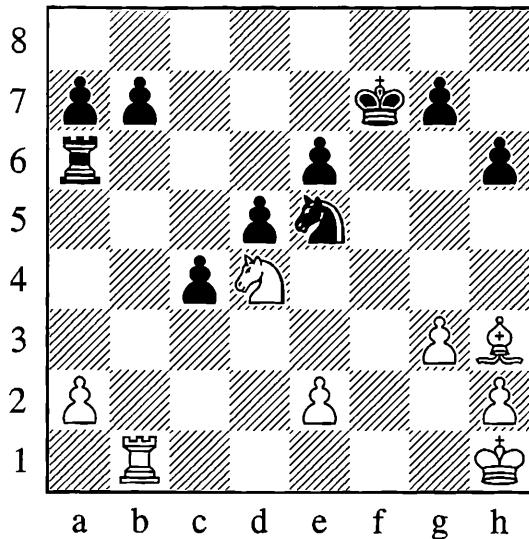
22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

22. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is somewhat risky. White cannot really avoid the following line, which looks a bit dodgy: 22... $\mathbb{E}d6$ 23. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b1$ The rook has to keep an eye on the c-pawn. 25... a6 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a8$ Black obviously has good compensation for the piece, with the white knight stuck in such a stupid place. But the position has its dangers for Black too.

22... $\mathbb{E}d6$ 23. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}a6!?$

The most dynamic continuation.

23... b6 is of course playable. White is probably forced to continue 24. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with a draw; otherwise he will be worse.

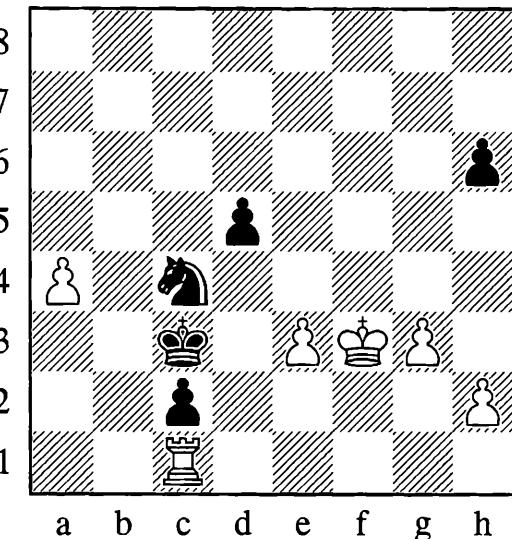


24.♗xb7† ♕f6

Now the correct end to the game would be:
25.♕c7 g5! 26.♗xe6 ♗xe6 27.♗xe6 ♔xe6
28.♗g2 ♔d6 29.♗c8 ♔d7 30.♗c5 ♔d6=

But we want to show that Black has chances to win here in practical play. So we shall allow White to make a single mistake (as the computer did in our first version of this analysis!):

25.♗xe6? ♗xe6 26.♗xe6 ♔xe6 27.e3 ♔d6
28.♗xa7 ♔c5 29.♗c7† ♗c6 30.♗xg7 c3
31.♗f7 c2 32.♗f1 ♔b4 33.♗g2 ♗e5 34.♗c1
♔c3 35.a4 ♗c4 36.♗f3



36...♗xe3!!

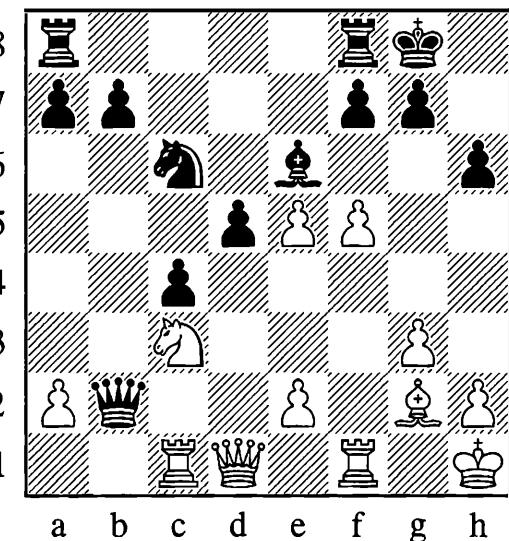
A stunning tactic.

36...♗b2 37.♗e1 c1=威 38.♗xc1 ♔xc1
39.h4 ♔d2 40.g4 gives White enough counterplay to make a draw with his passed pawns on both flanks – the so-called “trousers” phenomenon.

37.♗xe3 d4†

Black wins.

A2) 16.♗c1



This move has only been played once; nevertheless we consider it the main line. Black is likely to want to do something active down the f-file, so it makes sense for White to play a waiting move and delay opening the file. After analysing the position extensively we have come to the conclusion that Black has three good moves in this position, which merge into two distinct lines. Since 16...♗ad8N 17.fxe6 fxe6 18.♗xf8† ♗xf8 transposes to 16...♗ae8, we shall give only A21) 16...♗ae8 and A22) 16...♔h8!.

16...♗d7

In the one practical example in this line, this move turned out okay, but it does not seem very logical to us. Still, we shall take a quick look.

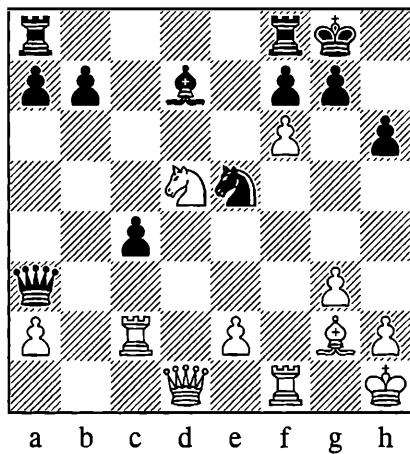
17.♗c2

17.♗xd5 ♘ad8! (17...♘xe5?! 18.♗xc4 ♘fd8 19.♗c5!± is not good for Black. The key point becomes apparent after 19...♗xf5?, when White plays: 20.♗c1!! ♘e6 21.♗c7±) 18.♗xc4 ♔h7! 19.f6 g6 20.♗b1 ♘xb1 21.♗xb1 ♘fe8 22.♗c2 ♘c8=

17...♘a3 18.♗xd5 ♘xe5

18...♗ae8 19.f6 ♘xe5 20.fxg7 ♔xg7 21.♗xc4±

19.f6



19...♘c5!N

19...♘e6 was played in Talmaci – Frank, e-mail 2004. At this point White should have tried 20.♗d4!N ♘xd5 21.♗xd5 ♘d6 22.fxg7 ♔xg7 23.♗xc4 ♘ad8 24.e4 f5 25.♗c2 fxe4 26.♗xf8 ♘xf8 27.♘xe4± with a lasting advantage, which even in an e-mail game might prove impossible to defend for Black.

20.♗d2

Other moves pose no danger, for example:

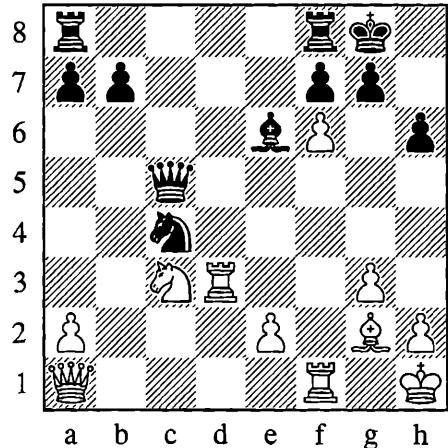
20.fxg7 ♔xg7 21.♗f6 ♘c6=

20.♘e6 21.♗a1 c3! 22.♗xc3

22.♗c1 is risky. Black has interesting tries in 22...♗f2 and 22...♗fd8, as well as an immediate draw by 22...♗g4 23.♗xc3 ♗f2† 24.♔g1 ♗h3†.

22...♗c4! 23.♗d3!

The most dangerous move. Both 23.fxg7 ♗xd2= and 23.♗e4 ♘e5 24.fxg7 ♘fd8! 25.♗xd8† ♘xd8 26.♗f6† ♔xg7 27.♗xb7 ♘d2† are okay for Black.

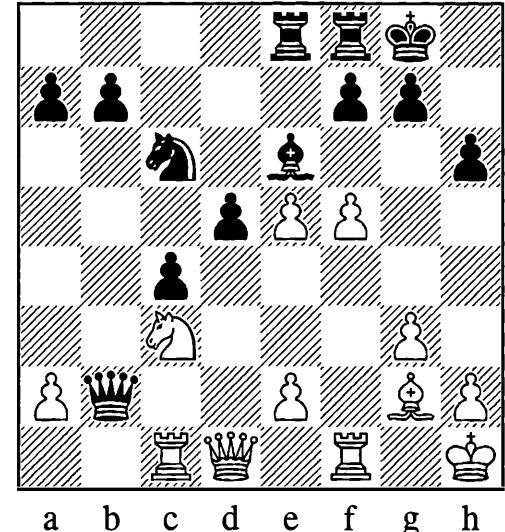


23...g5!∞

White now has various ideas, such as 24.h4!? and 24.♗d5, although Black seems to be all right.

But even if this line is playable for Black, we think it looks a bit risky and therefore don't recommend it.

A21) 16...♗ae8N



17.♗xe6

This is the only dangerous move. Black equalizes easily after: 17.♗c2 ♘b4 18.fxg7 fxg7 19.♗xd5 ♘xf1† 20.♘xf1 exd5 21.♗xd5† ♔h8 22.♗xc4 ♘b5=

17...fxe6 18.♗xf8† ♘xf8

The critical position. We think Black is fine here, but it makes sense to check the details.

19.♗xd5

We should also be prepared for the alternatives:

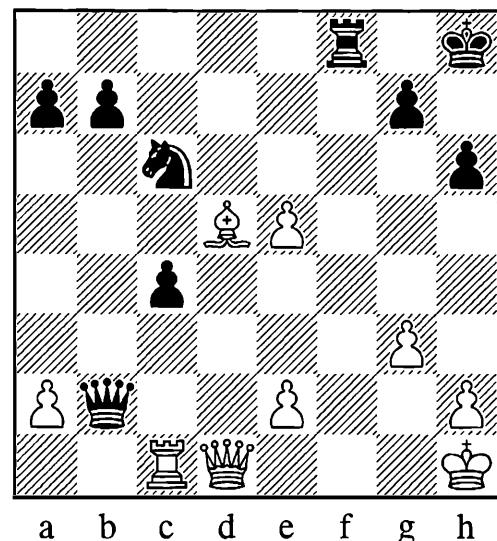
19. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{B}e8$ does not achieve much for White; he has no logical follow-up. 20. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{W}b6$ more or less forces him to play 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 exd5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd5\# \mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{Q}xe5$, when Black is comfortably equal.

19. $\mathbb{B}c2$ is well met by: 19... $\mathbb{W}b6!$ (but not 19... $\mathbb{W}a3?!$) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{B}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}d2\pm$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{Q}xe5\mp$) 20... $\mathbb{B}d8!$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xc4 exd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\# \mathbb{Q}h8=$

19...exd5

19... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e7\# \mathbb{Q}f7!$ also equalizes, but is unnecessarily complicated.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\# \mathbb{Q}h8$

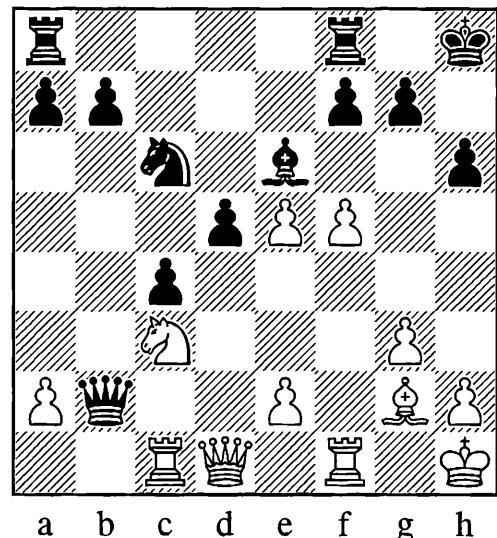


Black is completely safe. The only tricky line is 21. $e6?!$, but provided Black replies 21... $c3!$ he is okay: 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6 bxc6$ 23. $e7 \mathbb{B}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{W}b4=$

A22) 16... $\mathbb{Q}h8!N$

Anticipating that in most lines White will soon exchange rooks on the f-file, Black avoids first moving his queen's rook to the centre and then recapturing on f8, preferring to use the tempo to move the king away from potential checks. As the white rook is now on c1, the

game is less likely to go directly into an ending (as after 16. $fxe6 fxe6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c1$), and so the king does not need to be able to support the e6-pawn quickly.



17. $\mathbb{B}f3?!$

A few other continuations deserve to be analysed:

17. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{W}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c1 \mathbb{W}c7$ 19. $fxe6 fxe6\#$ Black will collect a third pawn for the piece, securing comfortable equality.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$

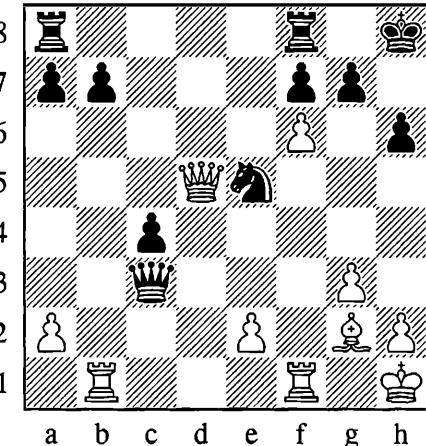
17... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xc4 \mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ is roughly equal.

18. $\mathbb{W}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$

Taking the a-pawn can lead to a level endgame: 18... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{W}xc4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xc4 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{B}c7 a5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xb7 f6=$

19. $\mathbb{B}b1 \mathbb{W}c3$ 20. $f6$

20. $\mathbb{B}xb7 f6\mp$



20... $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e4$ b6 22. $\mathbb{F}xg7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$

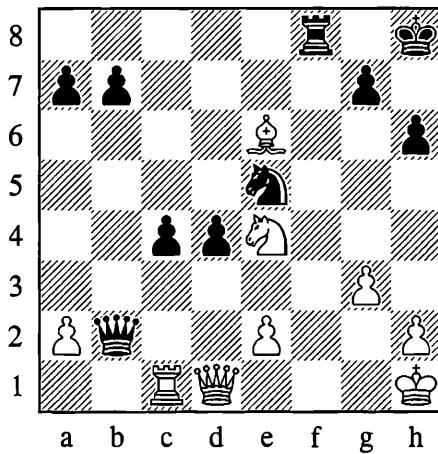
Although the exposed black king offers some play for the pawn, we prefer Black here.

17. $fxe6$ $fxe6$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xf8\#$ $\mathbb{E}xf8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$!

The computer likes 19... $\mathbb{E}e8\#$, but our main line is simpler and possibly stronger too.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ d4 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

21. $\mathbb{Q}a4?$ $\mathbb{W}a3!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}c8+$



21... $\mathbb{W}a3\#$!

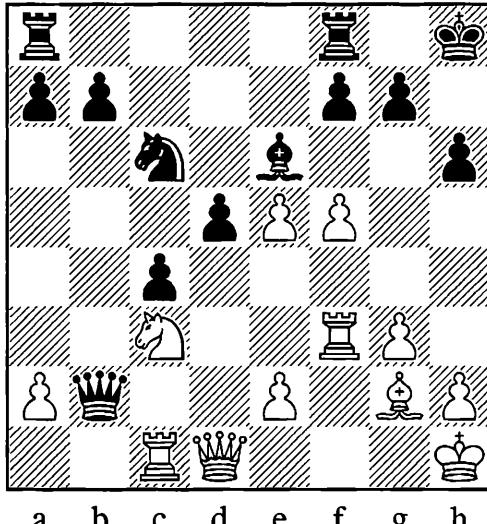
Once you see this resource it becomes obvious that White is in trouble. Black has various ideas, such as ... $\mathbb{W}e3$, ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and ... $c3$, which give White real concerns. Here are some sample lines:

22. $\mathbb{W}d2$

22. $\mathbb{Q}g2?!$ $\mathbb{W}e3!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ b5# and Black intends ...h5-h4 with an attack.

22. $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{W}a3\#$

22... $c3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $dxc3$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c1$ b5#



17... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

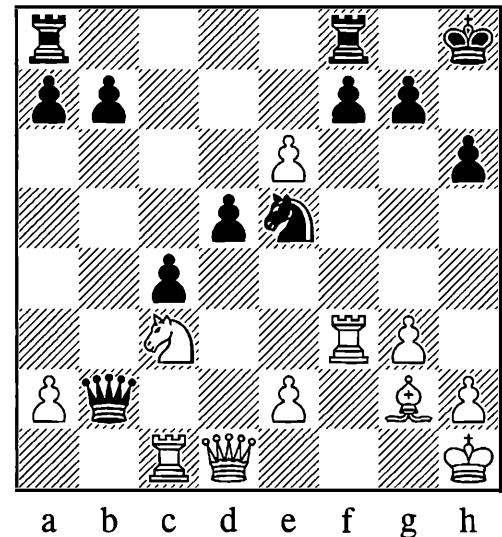
Not the only way to play the position. We also analysed:

17... $\mathbb{Q}c8?!$ 18. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5!$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 20. $f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $fxg7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 22. $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$) 19... $a6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}bf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xf7\pm$ and Black's weak king causes him some problems.

17... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $fxe6$ $fxe6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{E}xf3$ 21. $exf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ b6∞

17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19. $fxe6$ $fxe6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d2$ (20. $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{E}xf3$ 21. $exf3$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ d4 23. $f4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{E}b8\infty$) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 23. $e4!?$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$ 24. $gxf4$ $\mathbb{E}d8=$

18. $fxe6$

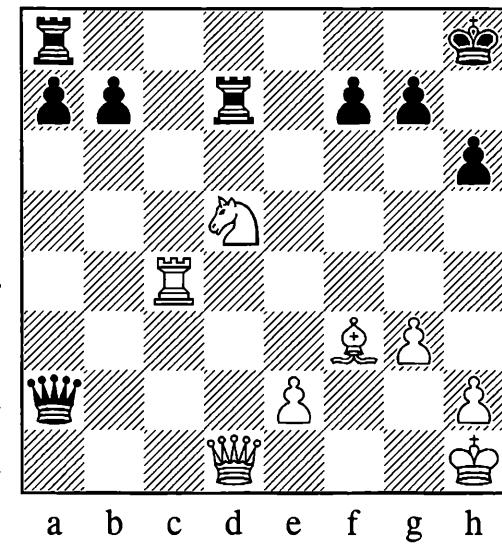


18... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?!$

We like the material imbalance resulting from this move. The position should be good for rooks once the centre evaporates.

Black can equalize less dramatically with 18... $fxe6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xf8\#$ $\mathbb{E}xf8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a7=$.

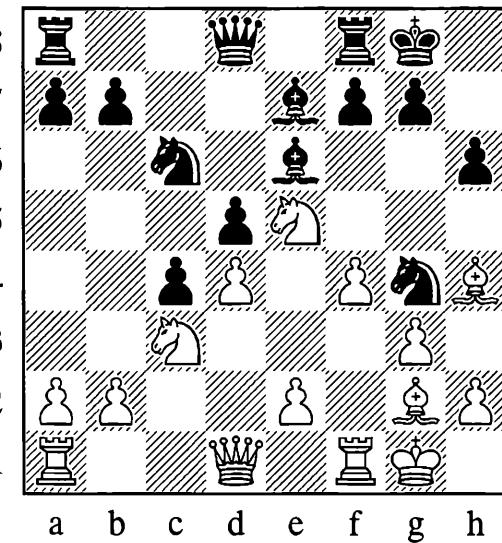
19.e7 ♜fe8 20.♕xf3 ♜xe7 21.♗xd5 ♜d7
22.♖xc4 ♜xa2∞



White is active and has a strong knight on d5; Black has two passed pawns and a rook against two minor pieces. In practice anything can happen, which is a fun sort of equality.

B) 12.♕h4 ♛g4

Because he has inserted 11...h6, Black has the option of winning a piece with ...g5 in some critical variations, which is enough to make this line viable.



13.♕xe7

The alternatives are less critical:

13.♗xc6?!

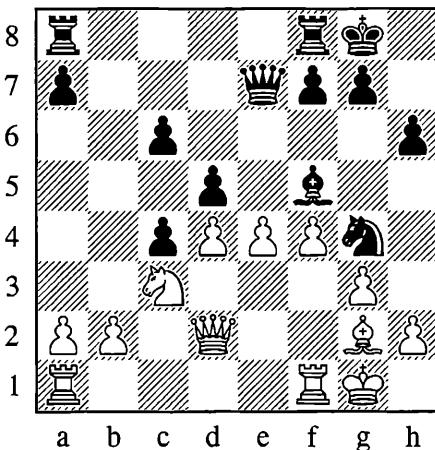
As is often the case, this exchange does not make a lot of sense when a quick b2-b3 is not available.

13...bxc6 14.♕xe7 ♜xe7 15.♗d2 ♜f5

Black has pleasant control over the centre. White cannot make use of his strongpoint on e5.

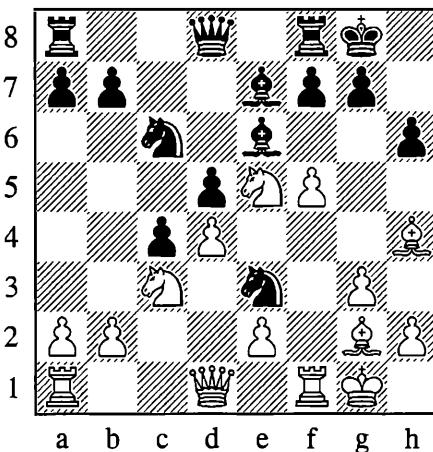
16.e4?!

This active move does not work.



16...dxe4 17.h3 e3!†

13.f5 does not really work either. 13...♗e3! This shows another benefit of inserting ...h6!. Here only one white try makes any sense:



14.fxe6?!! ♗xd1 15.exf7† ♔h7 16.♕xe7 ♗xe7 17.♖axd1 ♜d6 18.e4 ♗g6 19.♗g4 dxe4 20.♕xe4 ♔h8† This line is not clear at all – but the queen is a very strong piece, and in the long run we think Black will get excellent winning chances.

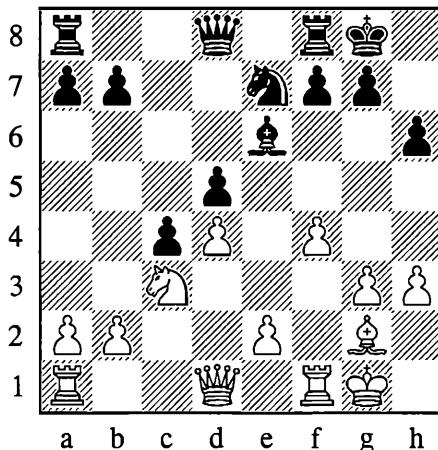
13. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

Without the insertion of ...h6 and $\mathbb{Q}h4$, the critical line would be 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$, but now that would be highly dubious because of 14...g5 ...as we warned might happen.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 15. h3

15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ does not achieve much: 15... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ (16. e4 dxe4 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8\bar{f}$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 17. e4 dxe4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19. d5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 21. $\mathbb{Q}ee1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5\infty$

15.... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

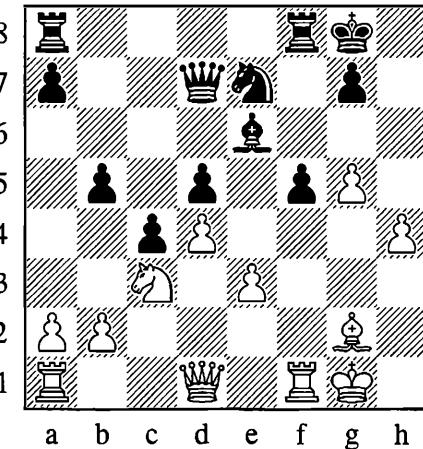


Black has a fine position. White can play something like 16.e3 and probably maintain equality, but only one move is at all testing.

16.g4!? f5! 17. e3 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. g5 hxg5 19. fxg5 b5 ∞

Both players have their chances here. Probably White ought to continue with 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4=$, rather than being tempted by:

20. h4?!



20... f4!!

Black goes onto the offensive.

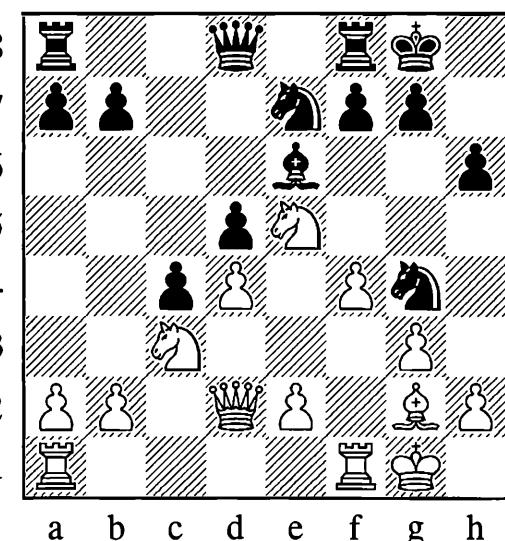
21. exf4

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 23. exf4 b4 24. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8\bar{f}$) 24... $\mathbb{W}f5\bar{f}$ Black will quickly get his knight to g6 and his rook to e8 or f8 with a powerful attack.

21.... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ b4 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5\bar{f}$

Black will follow up with $\mathbb{Q}ae8$, with excellent play for the pawn.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d2$



14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!N$

An improvement over 14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ as in Pellicer Cemeli – Valiente Roy, Spain 2004, when 15. b3 would be the critical move. Although the text is a novelty, we transpose back into known waters later on.

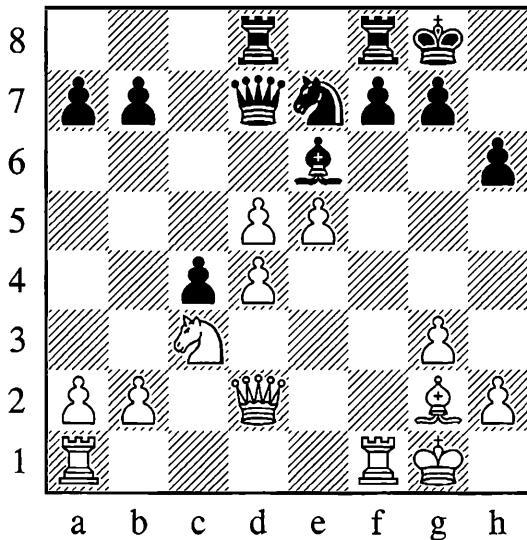
15. fxe5

15. dxe5 should not be a worry. Black can obtain decent play with 15... $\mathbb{W}b6\bar{f}$ or 15... $\mathbb{W}d7$, or go for the tactical line: 15... d4!? 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (17. g4? $\mathbb{Q}e3\bar{f}$) 17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ d3 \bar{f} 19. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 21. exd3 cxd3=) 20... dxe2 21. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 22. f5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. f6 g6=

15... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16. e4

The only active plans for White involve this break.

16...♝ad8 17.exd5



17...♞xd5!

Black should not be afraid to give up the bishop for the knight. Instead 17...♝xd5 18.♛e4! would be a bit awkward for him.

18.♝xd5

The alternative capture is not an improvement:

18.♜xd5 ♜xd5 19.♛e4

Now Black can put the queen on an excellent square (although 19...b5!? is not bad either).

19...♝c6!?

The following analysis is by no means forced, but it demonstrates some of Black's opportunities:

20.♝ac1

20.♞d6 f6 is okay for Black. The knight on d6 has no targets.

20...b5 21.b3 f5!? 22.♞d6 c3

22...♝xd6!?

23.exd6 c3

23.♛e2 f4 24.♝xb5 fxg3 25.hxg3 ♞xf1†

26.♛xf1 ♛g6 27.♝f3 ♛g5 28.♝c2 ♛g6

29.♝c1 ♛g5=

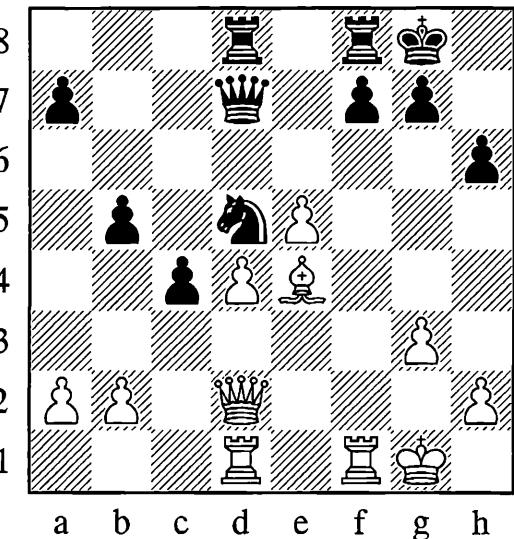
18...♞xd5

Black is fine here; his knight is strong and his pawn structure is superior in the long term. On the other hand White has the active plan of bringing his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal and playing for a kingside attack on the light squares. But Black should be able to withstand this attack, and can hope eventually to obtain good prospects in the endgame.

19.♝ad1

White has other options, such as 19.♝ael and 19.♝f2, but Black does not seem to be worse.

19...b5 20.♝e4



20...♞fe8!N

Part of a nice defensive manoeuvre.

20...♝e6 21.♝f2 f5 was not necessarily bad for Black in Coleby – Gray, e-mail 2008, but White eventually won by executing a g3-g4! break.

21.♝f2

21.♝b1 b4 22.♝c2 g6 does not achieve much.

21...♝e7!

The point; f7 is not a major weakness anymore. Black has at least equalized.

Conclusion

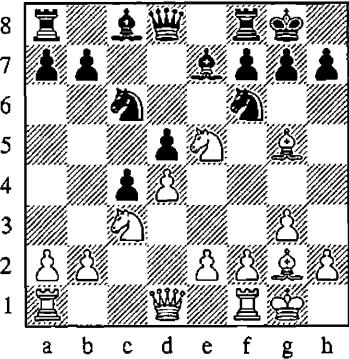
11.f4 is a very aggressive move, which is as much an attempt to undermine the black centre as it is an attack on the kingside. We fear that 11...♝g4 does not totally equalize. However, because of the piece sacrifice associated with 11...h6!, we think Black can equalize quite easily. The positions remain vibrant and interesting, with chances for both sides, but as so often in chess, White can choose to play for a draw by returning the piece. This is not something you can always avoid if you play for equality with Black; but it is interesting that in practice no one has yet taken this option.

Should White choose to retreat the bishop, Black can play 12...♝g4! with good play. Because of the extra possibility of 14...g5, Black does not experience the same problems as after 11...♝g4.

All in all, we think this line is not a problem for Black. We will be rather surprised if in future this becomes one of the battlegrounds where Black has to fight to achieve equality.

Chapter 6

9. Bg5



11. Nxc6 and 11. $b3$

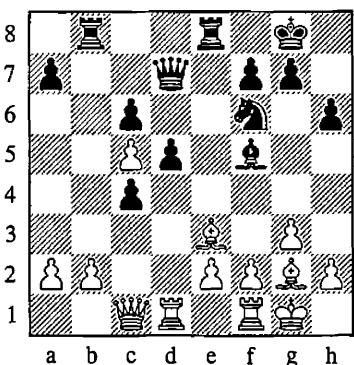
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.g3 Ngf6 7.Qg2 Qe7
8.0-0 0-0 9.Bg5 c4 10.Ne5

10...Qe6

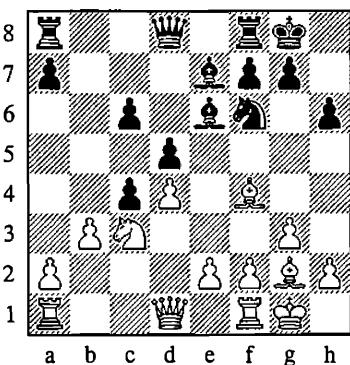
A) 11. Nxc6 bxc6	90
A1) 12. Na4	90
A2) 12. Wc2	90
A3) 12. Qf4	91
B) 11. $b3$ h6! 12. Nxc6 bxc6	92
B1) 13. Qf4	93
B2) 13. Qxf6 Qxf6	94
B21) 14. Na4	94
B22) 14. bxc4	96

A2) after 18. dxc5



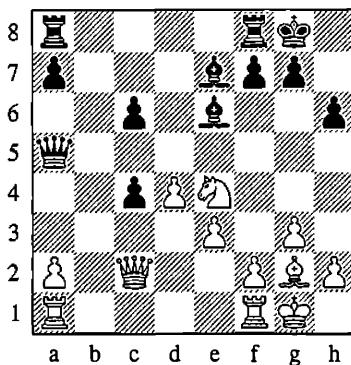
18... $\text{Qh3}!N$

B1) 13. Qf4



13... $\text{cxgb3}!N$

B22) after 17. Wc2

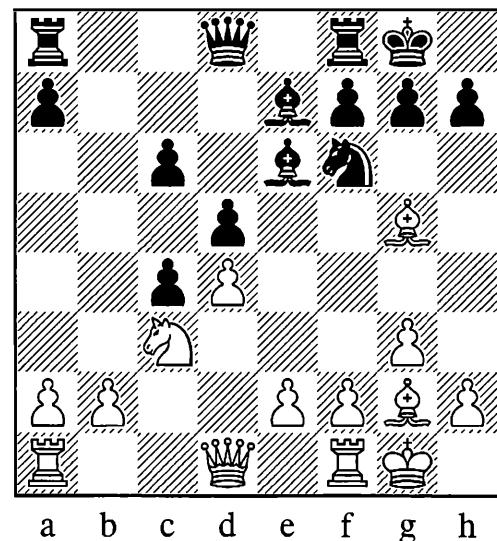


17... $\text{Ba3}!!$

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4. cx d5 exd5
 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. 0-0 0-0
 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

In this chapter we shall consider two types of positions, according to whether White plays b2-b3 or not. We look first at lines starting with A) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ where White follows up with something other than 12.b3, and then turn to B) 11.b3.

A) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6



Besides the most logical move, 12.b3, which will transpose into line B, White has the following noteworthy options: A1) 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$, A2) 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ and A3) 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

12.e4? is well met by 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$! 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$. Play has transposed to line A of Chapter 2, with Black standing clearly better.

A1) 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

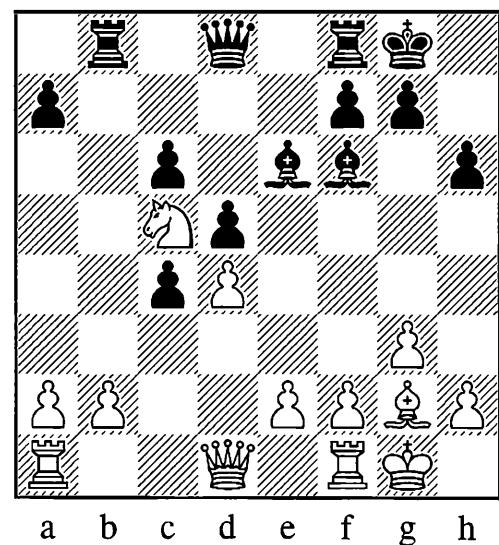
This move looks quite sensible, but it is hardly dangerous for Black.

12...h6!N 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Black has many good ways to play here. Take your pick.

14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$

14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ = is clearly fine too; White does not have any active options. And 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!? is also reasonable.



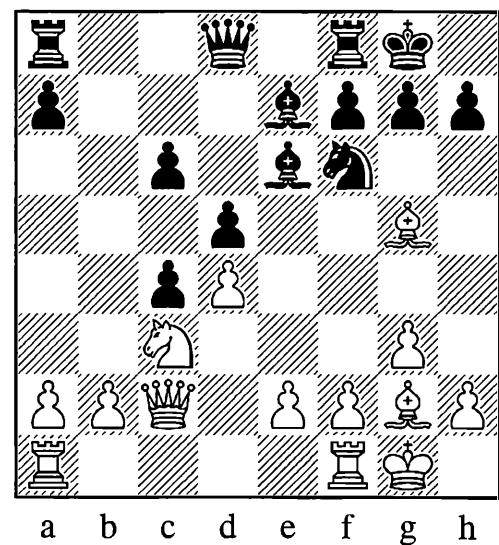
15.b3

15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$?! does not work this time around:
 15...fxe6 16.b3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17.e3 c5=

15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!

We have transposed to the note on 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ in variation B21 (see page 94).

A2) 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$



This sort of innocuous move can of course be played. But Black's position is pleasant and it is no coincidence that he has scored more than 70% here. It is easy for Black to play, and

White has to find a number of good moves before he can say that he is not worse.

12... $\mathbb{B}b8$

12...h6 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ has also scored well.

13. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ h6 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$?

This looks highly artificial. After the more natural 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$, Black can play something speculative, such as 14... $\mathbb{B}b7$ or 14... $\mathbb{B}b4$. However, the safest is probably 14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$. There is no way that White can be better here, with his remaining bishop lacking prospects. One plausible line is: 16.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ f5 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ f4? White has to be careful, but the position should be just equal.

14... $\mathbb{W}d7$

14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$!N makes a lot of sense too, not allowing the white bishop to change its mind and go to f4.

15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

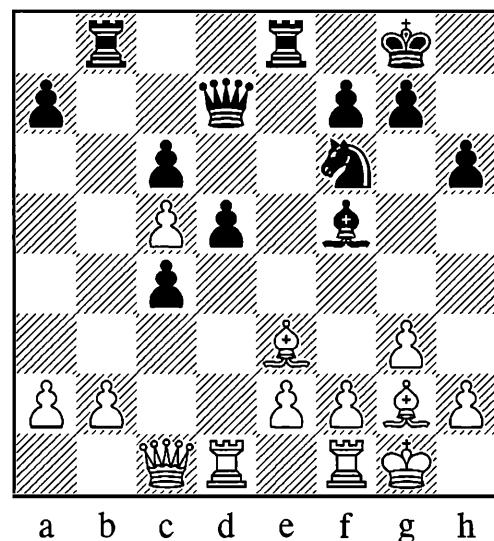
15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ was still best.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}b4$?

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $dxc5$

This was played in Eustache – Mozny, Clichy 1991. Now Black could have continued forcefully with:



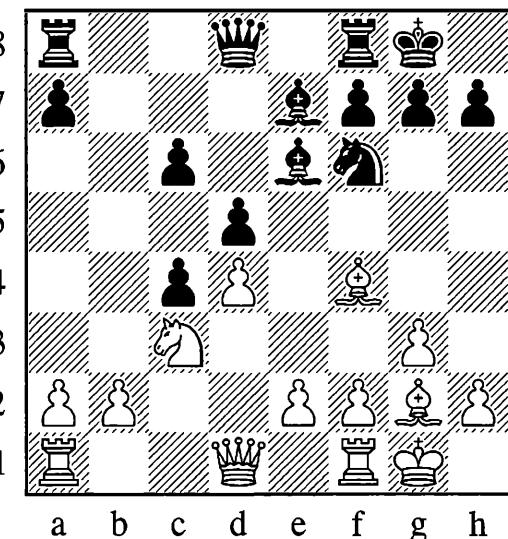
18... $\mathbb{Q}h3$!N 19. $\mathbb{W}c2$

White is much worse after 19. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$?. There is no good defence to ... $\mathbb{Q}e4xc5$.

19... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{B}b5$?

Black has pressure in the centre and on the queenside. In the long term the white king may be in danger. We would like to say that Black has a clear advantage, but perhaps this would be too much; however, Black is certainly a bit better.

A3) 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



Apart from taking the b8-square away from Black, this move makes no sense at all. Humorously, the computer even suggests that Black should reply 12...h6 here!

12... $\mathbb{W}a5$

Black has many ways to equalize. Another is: 12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ g6 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ = Schreck – Hurst, Waldshut 1981.

13.e4

This is really White's only active plan. The more restrained 13. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ is roughly equal, although Black eventually won in Brondum – T. Sorensen, Copenhagen 1989.

13...dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♕d5

Also quite reasonable is: 14...♘d5?! N 15.♕g5 f6 (or 15...♗b5?! 16.♘xe7 ♘xe7 17.♗c2 ♜ab8 18.♗ab1 ♜fd8 19.♗fd1 h6=) 16.♘d2 ♗b6 17.♘e1 ♜f7 18.♘c3= The position is complex and interesting, and in no way worse for Black.

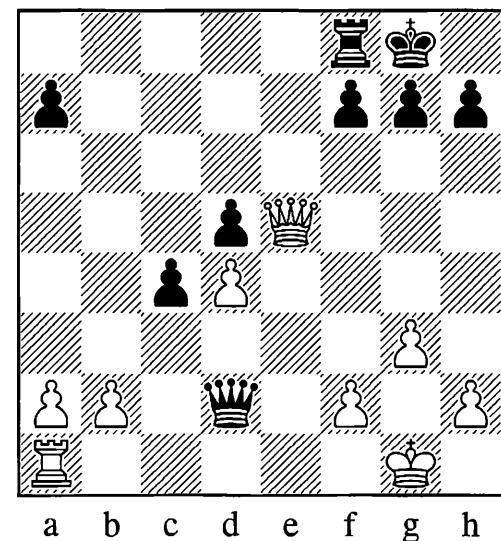
15.♗e1 ♘xe4 16.♕xe4 ♜f6 17.♕e5 ♜xe5

18.♕xd5

18.dxe5 ♜fe8 19.♕xd5 cxd5 20.♗d4 ♜ad8=

18...cxd5 19.♕xe5 ♜ae8 20.♗e2 ♜xe5

21.♗xe5 ♜d2!



A draw was now agreed in Stuemer – Schulte, Goch 2006. White is the one who must be careful. Here is how the game could have continued, had the players wanted it to:

22.♗xd5 ♜xb2 23.♗e1 c3 24.♗c6 c2 25.d5 h5!

For practical purposes, it is fair to say that Black is a bit better here.

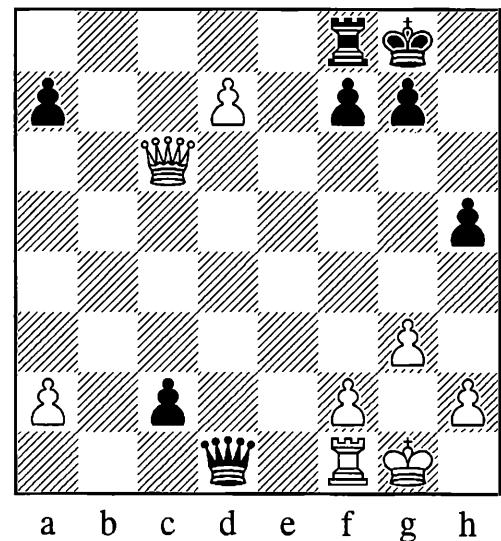
26.d6 ♜b1

26...h4 27.gxh4 ♜b4 28.♔f1!=

27.♔f1 ♜d1 28.d7?

To demonstrate the possibilities in the position, we allow White to make a plausible mistake.

28.♗c7! is correct, because ...♗d8 must be prevented. 28...h4 29.gxh4! ♜g4† 30.♔h1 ♜f3† 31.♔g1 ♜e4 The position remains complicated. 32.h3 ♜xh4 33.♗xc2 ♜g5† 34.♗h2 ♜e5† 35.♔g1 ♜xd6 The endgame is drawn, of course, but Black retains some practical chances.

**28...h4!**

A tricky move. The h-pawn is threatening to come to h3, followed by ...c1=♛! and then ...♜f3, leading to mate. So White's reply is forced.

29.h3 ♜d8 30.♗c8!

The only move to prevent ...♗xd7.

30...♗xd7 31.♗xc2 ♜xh3†

Black is a pawn up, with good chances of mating his opponent.

B) 11.b3 h6!

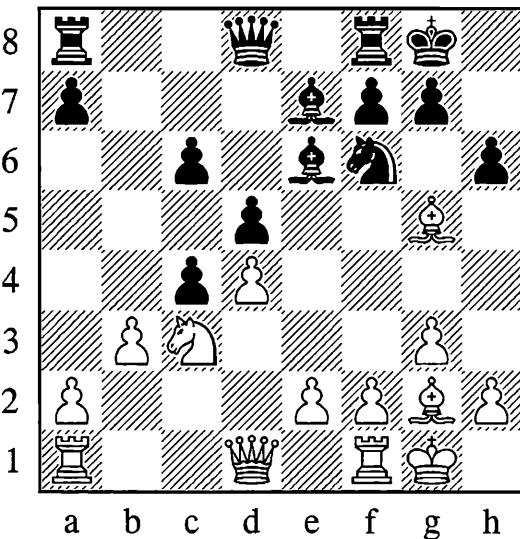
The classical reply here is 11...♝a5, but extensive analysis has convinced us that the text is the best move, giving Black an active position with good expectations of equalizing.

12.♘xc6

It generally makes no difference whether White exchanges first on f6 or on c6. We have

gone with this move order because it allows us to cover the extra option where White avoids the exchange on f6. The common sequence of 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ transposes to line B2 below.

12... $bxc6$



White can avoid the further exchange with **B1) 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$** , although this is of much less significance than **B2) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$** .

B1) 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

It is no surprise that this retreat holds no dangers for Black.

13... $cxb3!N$

We propose this as a simple solution! The Carlsbad structure is not favourable for White when his bishop is on f4. The bishop may well turn out to be a target for Black's kingside aspirations.

13... $\mathbb{W}a5$

This is the traditional move, but it is not without some problems.

14. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$

We think this is the only way to put any pressure on Black.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is less intimidating: 14... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (14... $\mathbb{W}a6!N$ is also okay) 15. $bxc4$ $dxc4$

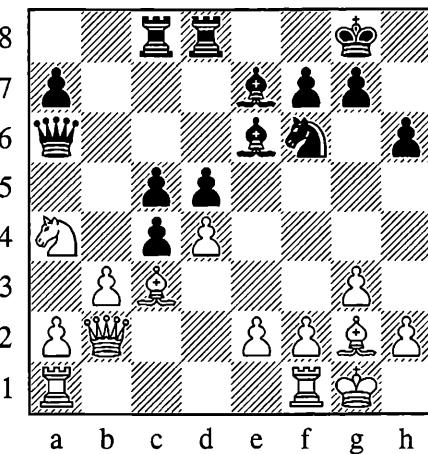
16. $e3$ Galianina Ryjanova – Bezgodova, Kolontaev 1998. 16... $\mathbb{E}ab8!N$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ (17. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$) 17... $\mathbb{W}b2$ 18. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ Black has equalized, as after 20. $\mathbb{W}xc6?$ $\mathbb{E}fc8\#$ White would have to sacrifice the queen.

14... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$

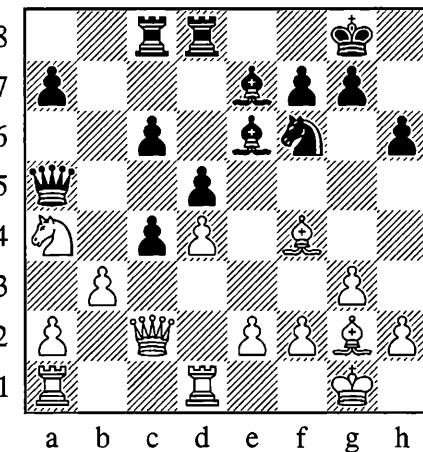
A typical Tarrasch position. Black is preparing the ... $c5$ advance.

16. $\mathbb{E}fd1$

16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $c5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b2$ was tried in S. Guliev – Meric, Turkey 2005. A decent novelty here is:



18... $cxd4!N$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ and Black has the initiative. 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7?$ does not work because of: 20... $c3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}a5+-$



16... $\mathbb{W}b5!N$

16... $c5$ 17. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ was played in Rychagov

– Egin, Moscow 1997 and now White can improve with: 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa7!N$ cxb3 22. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$

17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a6\infty$

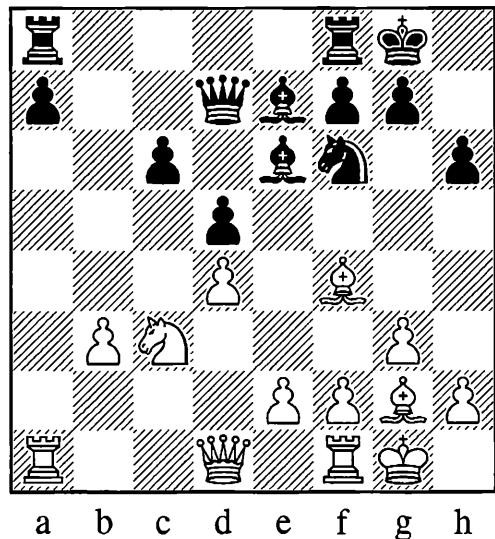
Although Black is probably fine here, it is a bit less clear-cut than our main line.

14. axb3

The most troublesome move – but not really troublesome.

14. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ is fine for Black; he may continue with ...g5 and then ... $\mathbb{E}ab8$.

14... $\mathbb{W}d7$



Black is contemplating action on the kingside. The first step is to prepare the exchange of light-squared bishops.

15. $\mathbb{E}a6$

The potential of the black position is clearly shown by the following illustrative lines:

15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 16. $\mathbb{E}c1$ g5 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{E}ae8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}a5$ $\mathbb{E}8e7\mp$

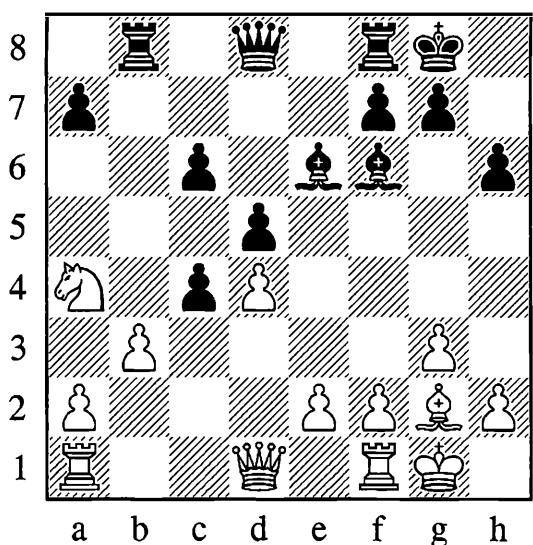
15. $\mathbb{W}d3$ g5 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{E}ab8\infty$

15... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$

B2) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

White now has a reasonable option in B21) 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$, although the natural B22) 14. $bxc4$ is clearly the main line.

B21) 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$



15. $bxc4$

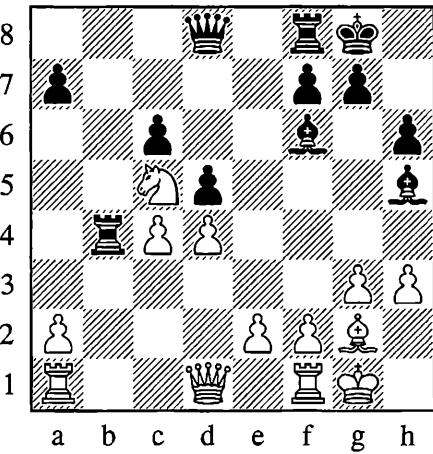
White has a couple of alternatives:

15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 16. $h3$

After 16. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{E}b2!$ Black has the initiative, based on the fact that 17. $f3$ $dxc4!$ exposes weaknesses in the white position.

By inserting 16. $h3$ White ensures that he can block off the black bishop with $g3-g4$ if required.

16... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 17. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{E}b4!$



This leads to a satisfactory position.

18. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ dxc4 20. g4 $\mathbb{W}xd4!$

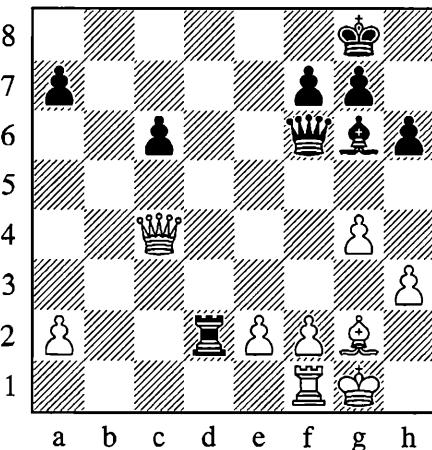
20... $\mathbb{E}g6$ 21. e3 $\mathbb{E}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$

21. $\mathbb{Q}d7$

21. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 22. gxh5 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1=$

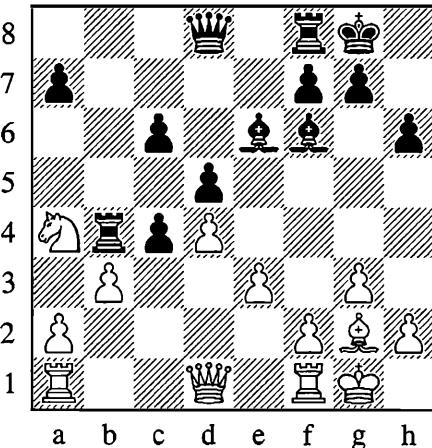
21... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{E}g6$

24. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}d2\rightleftharpoons$



We don't think Black is any worse here.

15. e3 $\mathbb{E}b4$



16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Black is also fine after: 16. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ (16... $\mathbb{E}xa4$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}a5\infty$ is interesting, but maybe a bit unnecessary) 17. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ dxc4 19. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}a5\infty$

16... $\mathbb{E}f5$ 17. a3!

17. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}c1$ looks a bit dubious. The two bishops come into their own. 18... $\mathbb{E}xc1$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ (22... a5 and 22... $\mathbb{E}e7$ are both

decent alternatives) 23. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}e7\bar{F}$

17... $\mathbb{E}b5$

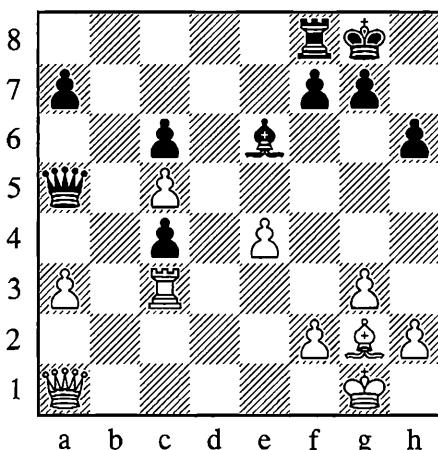
Black is equal.

18. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{D}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xa1$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ dxc4

21. e4?!

21. $\mathbb{W}c3=$

21... $\mathbb{E}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c3?$

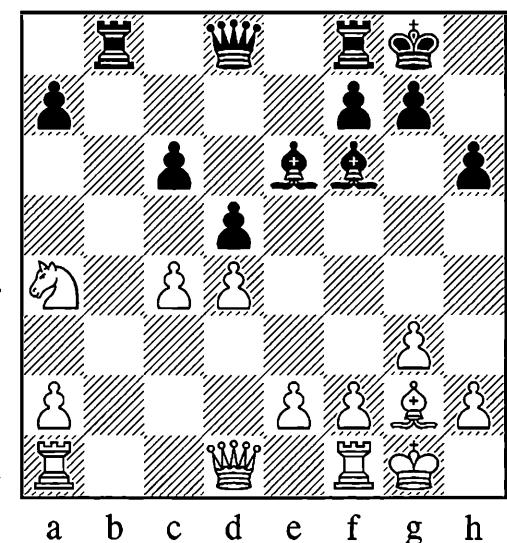


23... $\mathbb{E}d8\uparrow$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$

24... $\mathbb{E}d1!+$

25. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f4?!$ $\mathbb{E}d1-+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e3$ c5 29. h4 $\mathbb{E}d2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{E}b2$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}b1\uparrow$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}d1$

0–1 F. Zhang – Strohhaeker, Berlin 2005.



15... $\mathbb{D}xc4!$

15... $\mathbb{E}b4$ is definitely a computer move. We don't think it is a practical way to play the position: 16. $\mathbb{C}xd5!$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{D}xe6!$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$

18.♗axd1 ♕a5 19.exf7† ♗xf7 20.♗xc6± The computer insists on equality, but in a game between humans, the suffering on the light squares is likely to be very real.

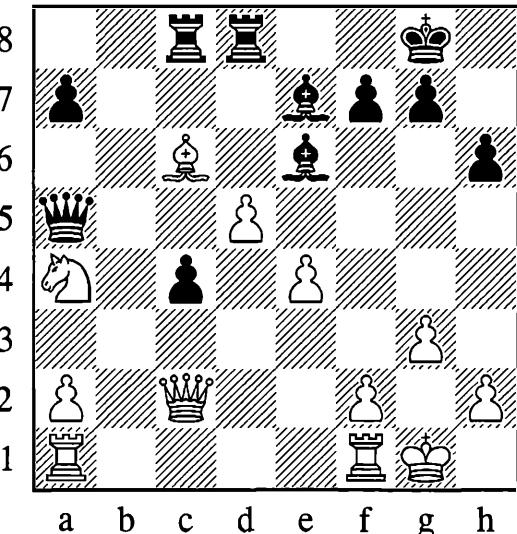
16.e3 ♗e7 17.♗xc6

Without this move White's play would make no sense. However, Black is now able to fight for the initiative and manages to equalize easily.

17...♕a5 18.d5

White has to be careful: 18.♗c2?! ♗fc8† 19.♗g2?! c3! 20.♗fc1 ♗c4†

18...♗fd8 19.e4 ♗bc8 20.♗c2



22...♗xc6! 21.dxc6 ♗d2 22.♗c1 ♗d6=

Black has decent compensation.

23.♗c3

White's most practical option is probably to play 23.♗c2 with a repetition, although 23.♗b2 may also be okay.

23...♗f6 24.♗d5 ♗xa1!

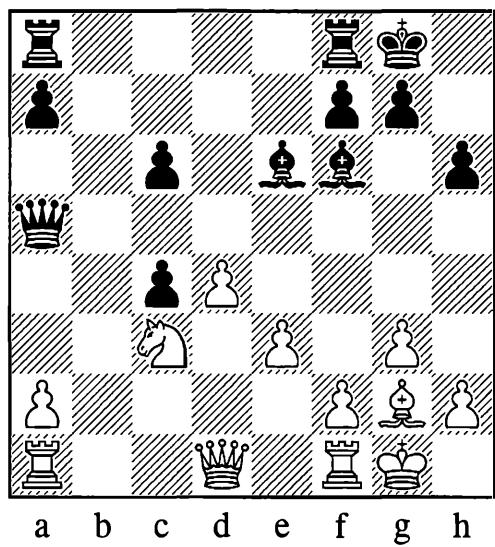
This leads to a completely equal position. Black should of course avoid 24...♗xd5?!, 25.♗f4!±.

25.♗xc4 ♗xd5 26.exd5 ♗xd5 27.♗xd5 ♗xd5 28.♗xa1 ♗c5=

B22) 14.bxc4 dxc4 15.e3

A big tabiya in the Modern lines of the Tarrasch Defence. White has an impeccable pawn structure and a strong bishop on g2; Black has the two bishops, a passed pawn on c4 and the hope of breaking in the centre with ...c5. The static features of the position suggest that White should be better, but Black has excellent dynamic possibilities at his disposal.

15...♕a5!



This obvious active move generally leads to our two main lines, 16.♗c1! and 16.♗c2, which are covered in the next two chapters. Before we move on, we should take a quick look at the two other black options in this position.

15...c5

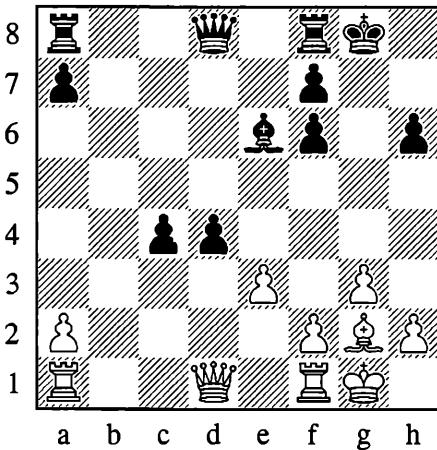
This is an interesting idea, which might look tempting to a certain type of attacking player. But White does not have to take on a8, and Black finds himself facing a good deal of suffering after:

16.♗e4! cxd4

It is natural to consider 16...♗xd4?!, but it does not work here: 17.exd4 cxd4 18.♗c5! ♗c8 19.♗xe6 fxe6 20.♗h3± The light squares are too weak, and Black will have a dreadful time trying to defend this endgame.

17.♗xf6† gxf6

17... $\mathbb{W}xf6?$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4\pm$ is nearly hopeless for Black. An important point is: 19... $\mathbb{W}f3$ 20. $\mathbb{B}fd1!$ $\mathbb{Q}h3?$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d5+$



18.exd4!

18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 20.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ $\mathbb{E}e8!=$ transposes to the note to White's 16th move in line A of Chapter 4 (see page 64).

18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$
21. $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

White is better, with several options at his disposal here. It may be wrong to say that Black cannot defend this position, but it would certainly not be much fun...

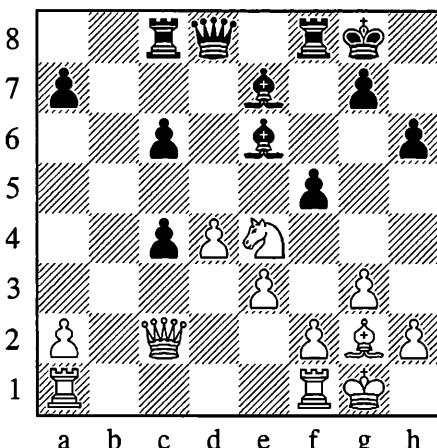
15... $\mathbb{B}c8$

This is a less dynamic idea, and therefore intuitively incorrect.

16. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ transposes to line A of Chapter 8.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ f5

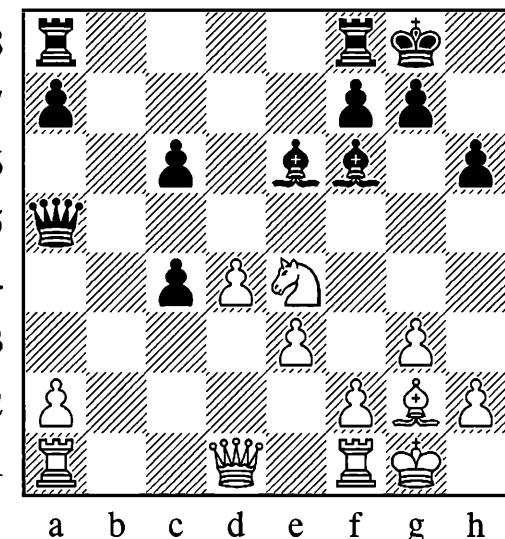


This was Nikos's original idea here, suggesting with the aid of the computer that the following ending may not be too bad:

18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c5 19.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$

However, Jacob's evaluation is that the black position is a disaster. The bishop has no good squares, the white knight is very well placed on c4 and the black f-pawn really, really wishes it was still on f7.

16. $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ N



This natural move is so far untested. The idea is to transpose to a favourable line after 16... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2!$ (see line A of Chapter 8). For this reason Black has to come up with a different way of playing the position.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Another idea is:

17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

But this is simply too slow to bother Black.

18... $\mathbb{Q}c3$

18...f6!?

19. $\mathbb{B}b1$ c5!

Black has equalized, but the battle is by no means over. A possible continuation is:

20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

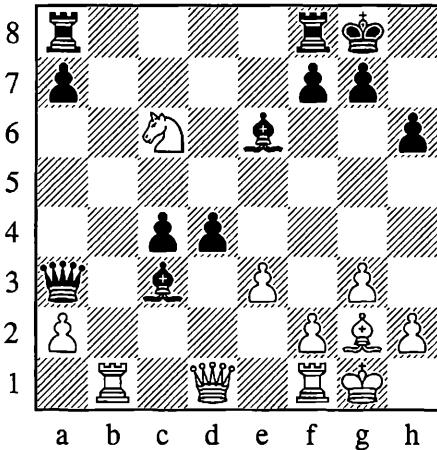
20.dxc5?! $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 21. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$

20...cxd4! 21. $\mathbb{Q}c6$

21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 22. $exd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}c5\mp$
might be an exchange up for White, but it is no picnic...

21... $\mathbb{W}a3$

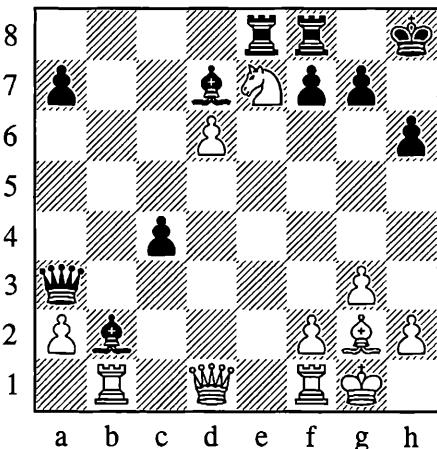
Black is playing very forcefully. White has to find a long series of only moves to keep the balance.



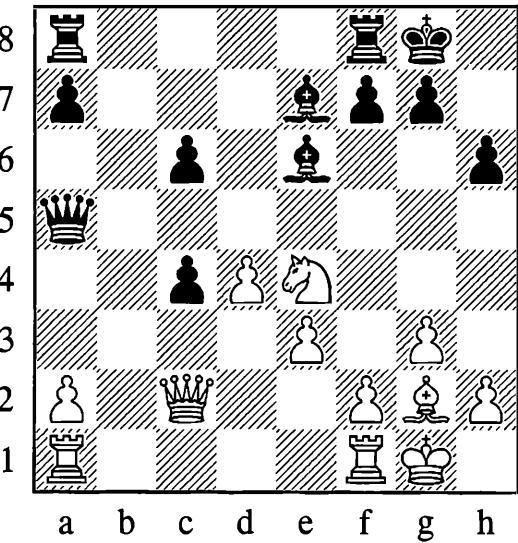
22. $exd4$!

22. $\mathbb{W}c1?$ leads White into trouble: 22... $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fxc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ (25. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ is weaker, as White has not managed to reduce the black control over the f6-square. 25... $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 26. $exd4$ c3 \mp 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2?!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ 28. $\mathbb{B}b7?$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!-\rightarrow$) 25... g6 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 27. $exd4$ c3 28. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d5!\pm$) 30. f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. d5 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 32. d6 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 33. d7 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $cxd2$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$

22... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 23. d5! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. d6 $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$



26. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xc4=$



17... $\mathbb{Q}a3!!$

This interesting move is our suggestion. We have analysed it deeply and think it offers Black full equality. The idea is to control the c1-square and in this way solve any problems posed by $\mathbb{Q}e4-d2$.

17... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ is the other option here. Grivas suggested in *ChessBase Magazine* 120 that 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ leads to a slight advantage for White. Black should of course play 18... $\mathbb{W}a6$, but the weaknesses in his pawn structure are obvious, whereas his counterplay is not. However, Black retains some chances, since White's usual trick of playing $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and $d4-d5$ to get a good knight versus bishop position does not work here: 19. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ is probably better) 20... c5! 21. d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ with counterplay, based on 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4??$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2-\rightarrow$.

18. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

Clearly the critical move.

One of the deeper points of Black's 17th move is that 18. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ is met with 18... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$. This prevents $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and, because the rook is not on a1, the pawn push is less dangerous: 19. a3!? (19. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8!\mp$) 19... $\mathbb{W}xa3!$

20. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$
 23. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ a5 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a4 \Rightarrow

18. $\mathbb{B}fb1$ $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c3 20. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$
 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $cx b2$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ is roughly equal. The black rooks have excellent files at their disposal and the a2-pawn can quickly become a weakness..

18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ does not repeat the position, of course. Black can take the chance to play 18... $\mathbb{B}ab8$, with the idea 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6??$ $\mathbb{B}b2!$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{B}b6+$.

18...c3 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

19. $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ $\mathbb{Q}b2\bar{=}$ makes no sense.

19... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$

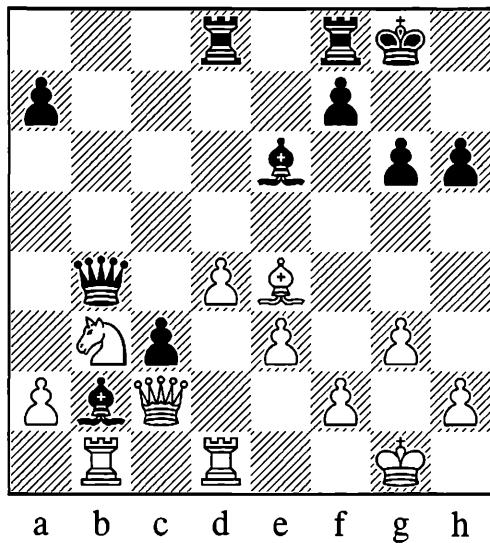
Otherwise White plays d4-d5.

21. $\mathbb{B}ab1$

21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 22. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ transposes.

21... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 22. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ g6 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

The best move. Neither 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}e7!=$ nor 23. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ should worry Black.



23... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

Forced, in order to meet White's threats of d4-d5 and $\mathbb{Q}xg6$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}c5?!$

This is the only move we can find that puts Black under any pressure.

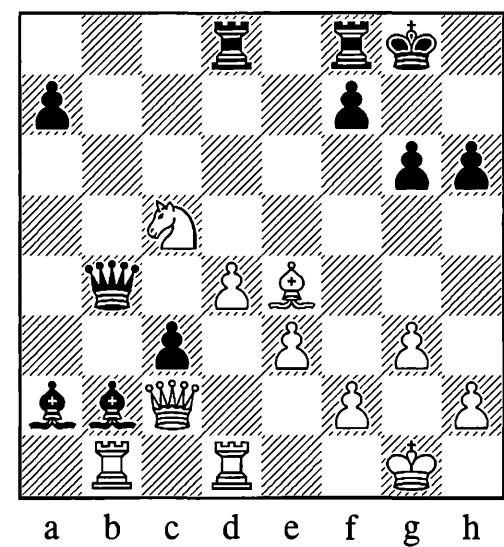
24. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $cxb2$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$
 27. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8=$ Black should not have any problems drawing this ending. The rooks are good on the open files.

An important line goes 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $fxg6$
 25. $\mathbb{W}xg6\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xh6\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g6\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ and White has nothing better than perpetual check: 28. d5?! $\mathbb{W}e7!$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 30. axb3 $\mathbb{W}h7!\bar{t}$ 31. $\mathbb{B}h4?$ $\mathbb{W}xh4!-+$

24. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a3!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26. e4 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ should be okay for Black. Now 27. d5 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ is no good, so White has to try something like 27. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{B}xd4=$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xa2!$

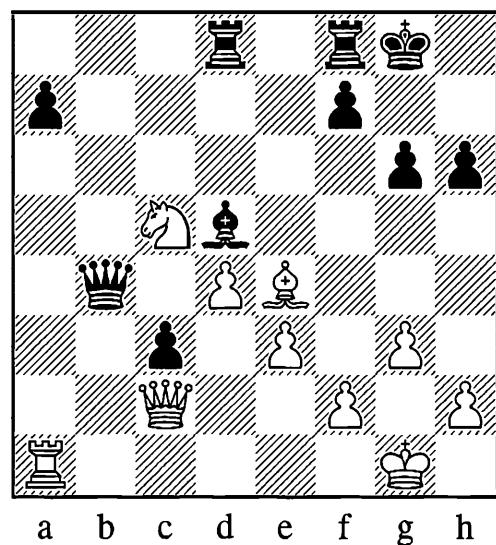
24... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ (26... $\mathbb{W}a3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$) 27. d5 $\mathbb{W}a3$ 28. e4± feels a bit uncomfortable, even if Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn.



25. $\mathbb{B}a1?!$

White is taking chances, but in a theory book he can! Maybe this is the point where the balance tips in Black's favour, as 25. $\mathbb{B}xg6$ still draws here.

25... $\mathbb{Q}xal$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xal$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$



The bishop turns out to be excellently placed here.

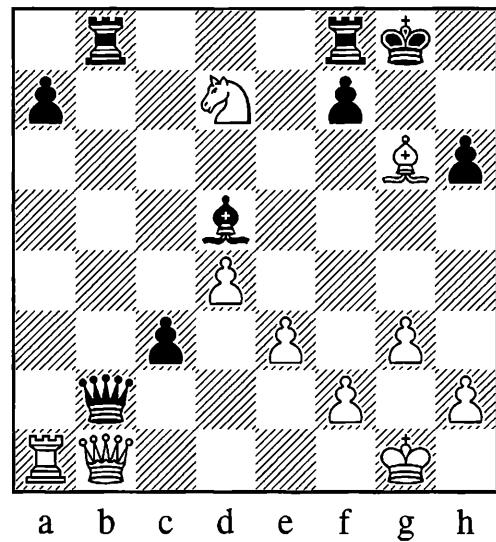
27. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d7$

28. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ is more circumspect, but after 28... $\mathbb{W}b2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ Black has better chances in the endgame: 32. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8! \mp$

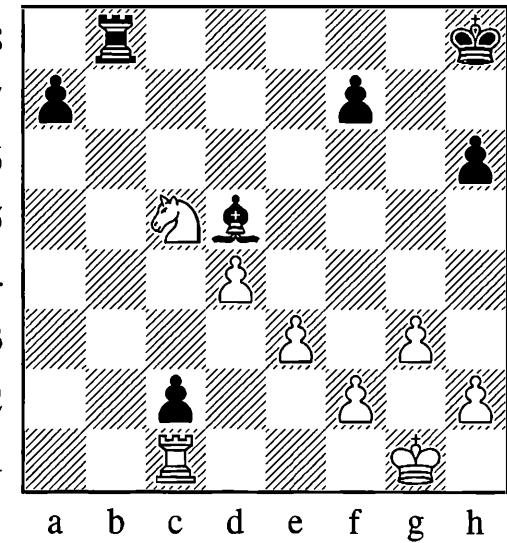
28... $\mathbb{W}b2 \mp$

Black has real winning chances. White should play something like 29. $\mathbb{Q}c1$, as the computer's initial suggestion does not work:

29. $\mathbb{W}b1?$



29... $\mathbb{Q}h8!!$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xb1 \dagger$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1 \dagger$
32. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8! 33. \mathbb{Q}c5 c2 34. \mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{Q}b8! \mp$



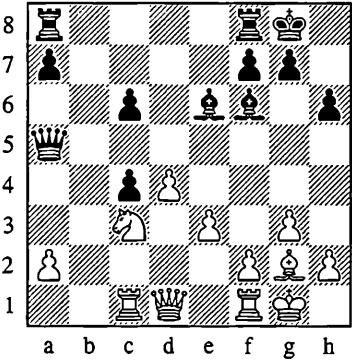
Conclusion

After 11. $b3$ $h6!$, with the exchange on $c6$ occurring either first (or later), White does not have any major alternatives to the main line as presented in the next two chapters. Black should be well-prepared, which is not to everyone's liking of course, but if he is, then he will have a fairly easy ride in these sidelines.

The most dangerous idea is the untested 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4!?\mathbb{N}$, but with accurate play Black will neutralize White's pressure.

Chapter 1

9. $\text{g}5$



16. Bc1!

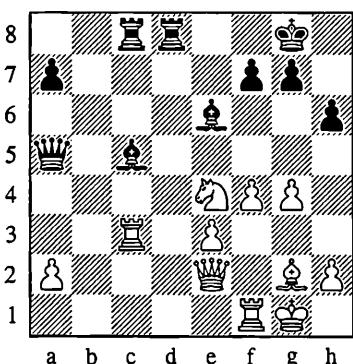
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. Bc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. Bf3 Bc6 6.g3 Bf6 7. Bg2 Be7
 8.0-0 0-0 9. Bg5 c4 10. Be5 Be6 11.b3 h6! 12. Bxf6 Bxf6
 13. Bxc6 bxc6 14.bxc4 dxc4 15.e3 Ba5 16. Bc1!

16... Bac8

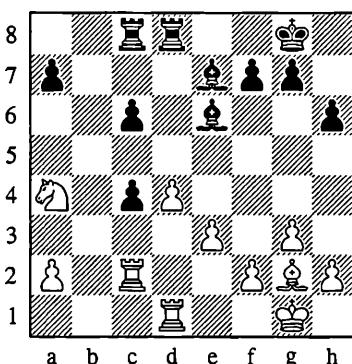
A) 17. We2 Bfd8	102
A1) 18. Be4N	103
A2) 18. Bfd1	104
B) 17. Wa4! Wxa4 18. Bxa4 Be7	104
B1) 19. Bc2N	106
B2) 19. Bb2! Ba3 20. Bc2 Bxb2 21. Bxb2 Bc7!	109
B21) 22. Bcl	112
B22) 22. Bd1!	114

A1) after 23 Bxc3



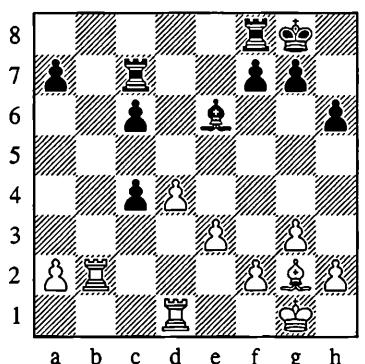
23... Bb6!#

B) note after 18... Be7



20... Bg4!N

B22) after 22 Bd1!



22... g5!!

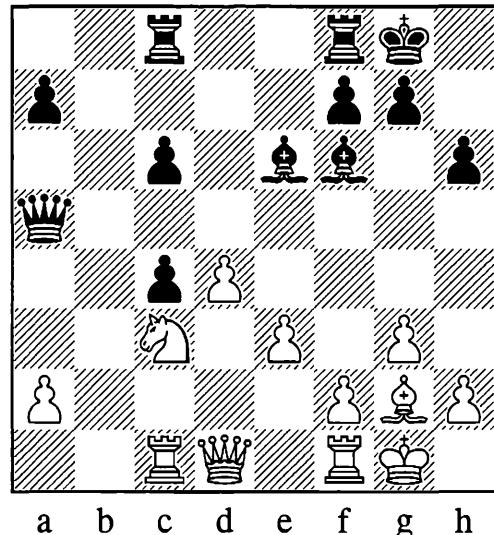
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4. cxd5 exd5
 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. 0-0 0-0
 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. b3 h6! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14. bxc4 dxc4 15. e3 $\mathbb{W}a5$
 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$!

This is not the most popular move, but it is the one we had to work most to neutralize. Eventually we (and independently a Danish correspondence player) found a good way to neutralize the pressure and secure a draw in a not very exciting, but quite reliable way.

16... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$

As the main strategic plan is to carry out the ...c5 break, the rooks belong on c8 and d8 in this line.

By the way, 16...c5? does not work now, as 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ cxd4 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$ is disastrous for Black.



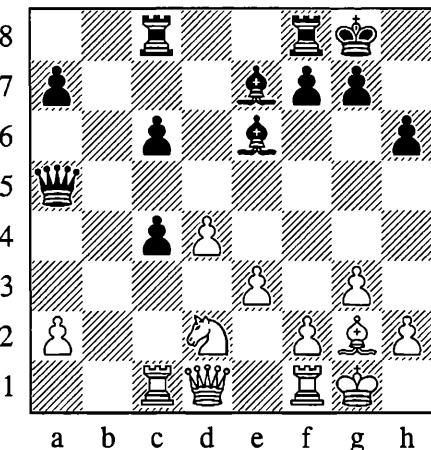
White has a number of moves to consider here. We shall examine A) 17. $\mathbb{W}e2$ first, but the only move we are nervous about is B) 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$!, because the dynamic potential of the black position decreases in the ending. On the other hand, the amount of material on the board is reduced, so a draw is within reach.

A) 17. $\mathbb{W}e2$

There are two other options we looked at:

17. $\mathbb{Q}e4N$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

This typical manoeuvre is not dangerous here.



18... c3!!

Our preferred choice, but not the only move. Black is okay after 18... $\mathbb{W}xa2=$.

Also acceptable is 18... $\mathbb{W}a6$!? 19. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ c5 21. d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}cd8=$. This is a typical position which we try to avoid in this repertoire; but the reader should know that it is actually fully playable as well. Black will be able to maintain continuous pressure on the c4-knight, at the same time creating counterplay on the kingside. We have played against computers, and also against each other with the help of computers, and ended up with even chances and draws all the time.

19. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4\bar{=}$ does not offer White enough for the exchange.

19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$?! $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\bar{=}$ looks even worse.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

The position is fine for Black.

24... c5

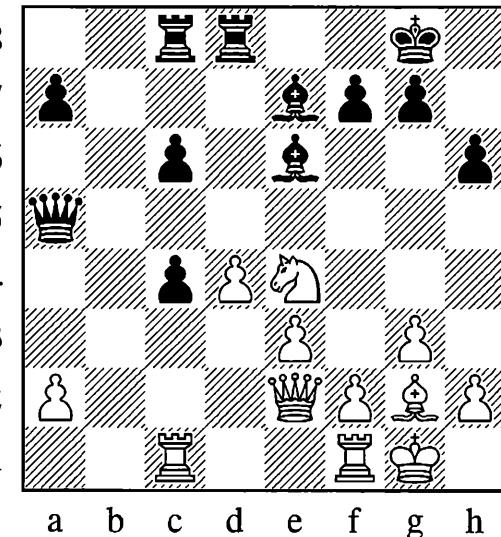
This gives Black active equality, while simply repeating with 24... $\mathbb{W}b5=$ is of course also possible.

17.♗e1 is not really threatening. 17...♝a6 is fine for Black, and 17...♝a3!? should be okay too.

17...♝fd8

At this point we want to consider A1) 18.♕e4N and A2) 18.♝fd1.

A1) 18.♕e4N ♜e7



19.f4

This is the only active move we could think of.

19.♕d2 c3 20.♕b1 is not dangerous. The simplest is 20...♝xa2 21.♕xc3 ♘xe2 22.♕xe2 c5, when a draw is on its way – unless White allows the a-pawn to become too strong.

19.♝fd1 gives Black a chance to activate the rook: 19...♝b8! 20.♝c2 c5 21.d5? ♖xd5 22.♕c3 ♘e6 23.♕d5 ♖f8 24.♖xc4 ♖d7 White has managed to take control of the d5-square, but this does not mean he has an edge. It is hard for him to keep control over the c4-square, and the black rooks are beautifully active.

19...♝b4 20.♝c2

Obviously a critical alternative is:

20.f5 ♖d5

20...♝xf5 is met with 21.♕c5, and the c4-pawn drops.

21.f6 ♜e8 22.♗g4

22.♗f4 may be a slight improvement, but White is still worse.

22...g6

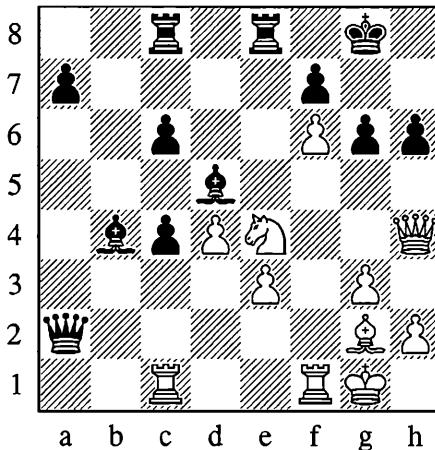
This looks a bit scary, but with the bishop able to drop back to f8, the attack is probably just an illusion.

23.♗h4

23.♗f4 is no better: 23...♝xa2 24.♗h1 (a pathetic move to have to play, but 24.♗f2 ♘e2 intending ...♝h5, looks even worse for White) 24...♝e2 25.♗xh6 ♖f8 26.♗f4 ♘d3 27.♕c3 ♖xh1 28.♗xh1 ♜xe3†

23...♝xa2!?

23...h5 and 23...♝f8 are also strong, but this looks best.



Black now threatens to win material with 24...♝xg2† 25.♗xg2 ♜xe4.

24.♗xh6?!

24.♗f3 h5†

24...♝f8 25.♗h3 ♜xe4! 26.♗xc8 ♜xg2†!–+

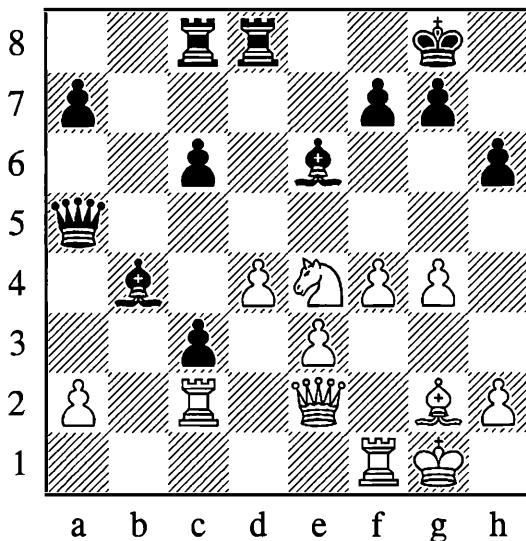
20...c3 21.g4

This does not work; but then again, nothing really does:

21.♗a1 f5 22.♗f2 ♘a4 (also after 22...♝b5 we don't see anything for White) 23.♗d1 c5 24.♗xc3 ♘xc3 25.♗xc3 cxd4=

21.♗fc1 ♘a3 22.♗d1 ♘b2†

21.♗b1 ♗b8†

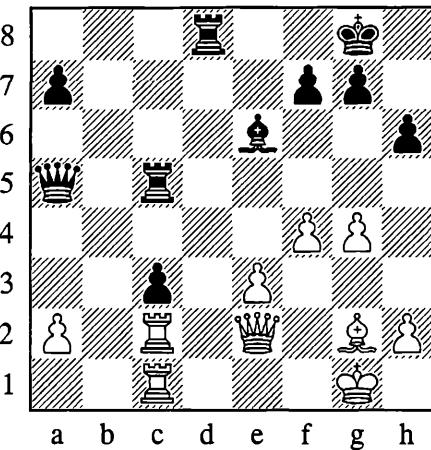


21...c5! 22.dxc5

22.f5 cxd4 23.fxe6 d3=+

22...♗xc5 23.♗xc3

23.♕xc5 ♗xc5 24.♗fc1 is refuted by the brilliant:



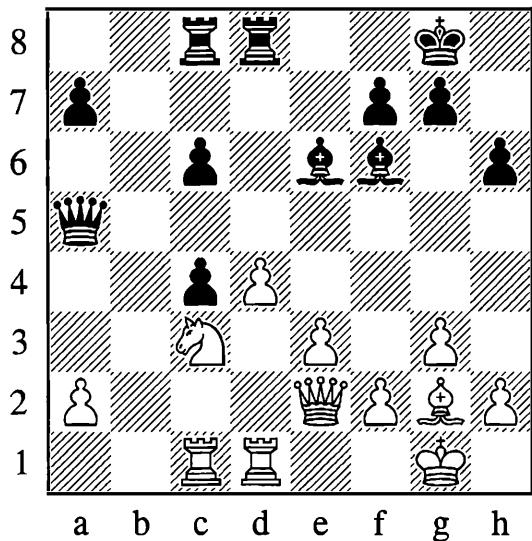
24...♗d7!!+– 25.♗e1 ♗a4 26.♗xc3 ♗d1!
27.♗xd1 ♗xd1 and Black wins the exchange.

23...♗b6!†

White is a pawn up, but his position is in pieces.

A2) 18.♗fd1

White's set-up is very natural, but also entirely inoffensive; Black equalizes with ease.



18...♗e7 19.♗c2 ♗b4 20.♗b1 g6 21.a3 ♗f8
22.♗d2

Black is also comfortable after: 22.♗d2 c5
23.♗xc4 ♗xc4 24.♗xc4 cxd4 25.♗cxd4 ♗xd4
26.exd4 ♗xa3=

22...♗c7 23.♗e1 ♗b8

Black is fine here. Only one game in our database reached this position, and it continued:

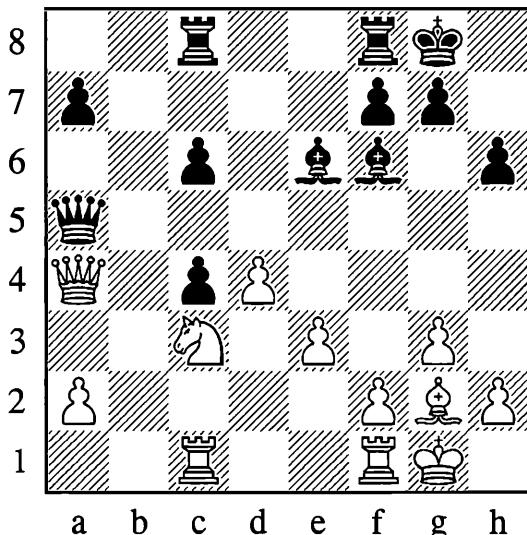
24.♗f1?! c5! 25.d5 ♗xd5 26.♗xc4 ♗e4
27.♗cc1 ♗g7 28.♗xd8† ♗xd8 29.♗d2 ♗c6
30.♗d1

Black was clearly better in Ignacz – Banusz, Hungary 2003, but missed the decisive pinning move:

30...♗c3!N=+

B) 17.♗a4!

The most forcing continuation. The exchange of queens is to White's advantage, as it sucks a great deal of dynamism out of the position. Also, White has the option of bringing his king into the game in the endgame, as well as taking advantage of Black's inferior structure. On the other hand, many pieces are leaving the board, and with good preparation Black should be able to equalize.



17...♝xa4 18.♗xa4

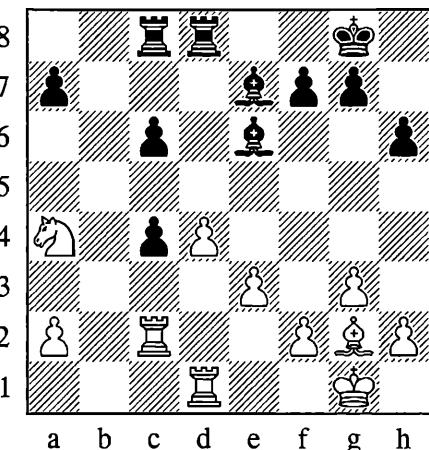
Let's be honest about one thing. There are few openings in which it is easy to prove equality for Black. And the Tarrasch Defence is not known as one of them! Black has to work hard for equality, and in this particular variation, he needs to be well prepared and aware of some of the nuances of the position. But our analysis shows that if he is well prepared, his chances are by no means worse.

18...♜e7

At this point there are two moves that we have analysed in detail: **B1) 19.♝c2N** and **B2) 19.♗b2!**.

A third option is:

19.♜fd1 ♜fd8 20.♝c2



This was played in Kempinski – Bach,

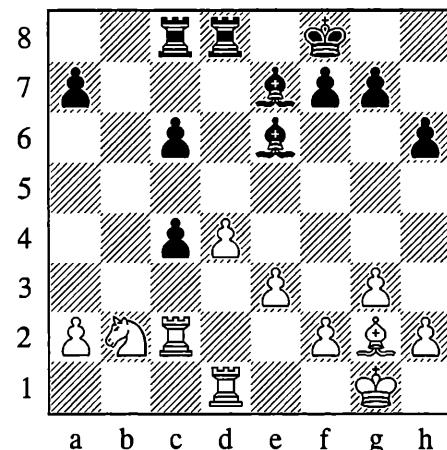
Hamburg 1999. Our improvement on that game is:

20...♝g4!N

The correct bishop lunge.

20...♜a3N would not work out. 21.♗b2 ♜xb2 22.♝xb2 ♜c7 transposes to the note to Black's 21st move in line B2, and cannot be recommended.

However, it is not obvious to us that Black cannot play 20...♚f8!N, based on the point that 21.♗b2 is strongly met with:



21...♝g4! 22.f3 (22.♝dc1 ♜a3 23.♝e1 ♜f5 24.e4 ♜xb2=) 22...♝f5 23.e4 ♜e6 24.♗xc4 ♜xd4 25.♗xd4 ♜c5= Obviously White has many other moves, but in general the king move should improve Black's position.

21.f3

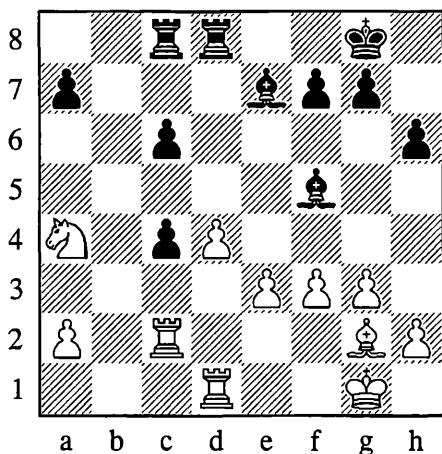
The only test, but not a move White really wants to play.

After 21.♝e1 ♜e6! White doesn't have anything better than returning with the rook to d1, since 22.♗f1 c5= is not a problem for Black.

21.♝dc1 ♜a3! White should not be allowed to get fully coordinated. (21...♜e6 is also possible here, but on c1 the white rook is better placed than on e1. 22.♗f1 [22.♗c5 ♜xc5 23.dxc5 ♜d3 24.♗f1 ♜a3= is harmless] 22...c5 23.d5 ♜xd5 24.♗xd5 ♜xd5 25.♗xc4 f5! Preventing e3-e4. 26.♗c3 ♜d6 27.♝a4 a6 28.e4 fxe4 29.♗xe4 ♜b6 White's advantage is minimal, but it may still cause a bit of

discomfort.) 22. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ (23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $a5=$) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $c3$ 25. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $c5=$

21... $\mathbb{Q}f5$



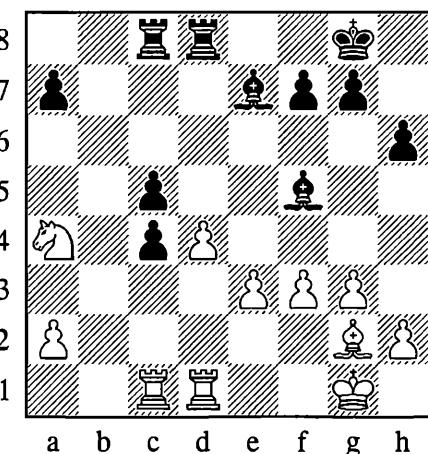
22. $e4$

After A comes B.

White can try taking the pawn with 22. $\mathbb{B}xc4$, but the black bishops come to life and take advantage of the recent weakening of the dark squares. Black replies 22... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and now:

a) 23. $\mathbb{B}c2?!$ The rook is a bit uncomfortable here. 23... $c5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1?!$ (24. $\mathbb{B}cd2?$ $cx d4$ 25. $exd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e2$ and White's extra pawn falls to 26... $\mathbb{B}c4\#$; White's best may be 24. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$, but this is no joy either) 24... $cx d4$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}c1\#$ White will lose the a2-pawn and then try desperately to cling on in a probably lost ending.

b) 23. $\mathbb{B}cc1!$ $c5!$ The thematic break.



24. $dx c5$ $\mathbb{B}xd1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 27. $a4$ (27. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5=$) 27... $a5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 29. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $g6$ White will draw this without too much trouble, unless he plays a few careless moves...

22. $\mathbb{B}cc1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $f4$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ The typical organizing move. The whole thing looks harmless, as long as Black does not fall into the trap of playing ... $f5$ in a position where White can play $\mathbb{Q}f1$, meeting ... $c5$ with $d4-d5$, then giving up the exchange on $d5$ and finally establishing a pin from $c4$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

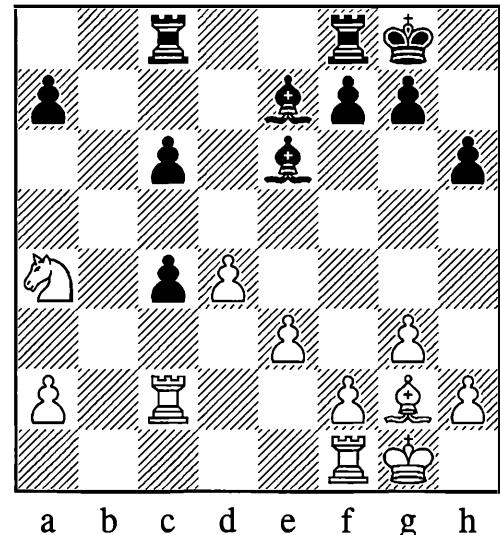
23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6=$

23... $\mathbb{B}b8!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

25. $\mathbb{Q}b2?!$ $c3\#$

25... $\mathbb{B}db8\#$

B1) 19. $\mathbb{B}c2N$



19... $\mathbb{B}fd8$

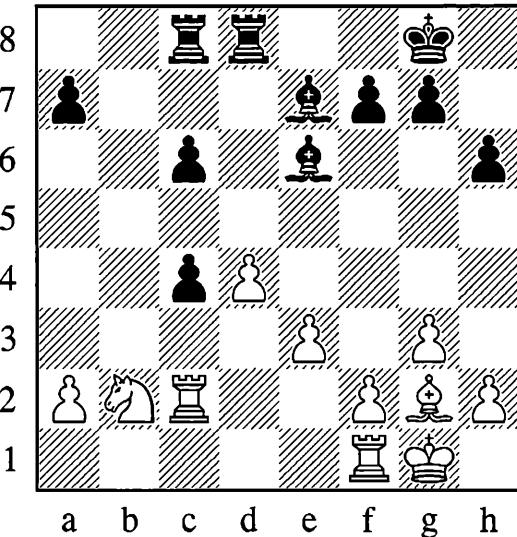
19... $\mathbb{Q}f5?!$ would be an understandable mistake, but a mistake nonetheless. 20. $\mathbb{B}xc4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc4\pm$ The $c6$ -pawn will fall, leaving White with two pawns for the exchange. Black can probably hold, but we prefer to avoid such endings.

20. $\mathbb{Q}b2$

There are no other moves that trouble Black:

20.f4 c5 21.f5 ♕d7 22.♕xc5 ♕xc5 23.dxc5
♗xc5 offers easy equality.

Finally, 20.♗b1 ♕f5 21.e4 ♕e6 22.♕c5 ♕xc5 23.dxc5 ♘d4 24.♗bc1 ♘cd8 is equal but a bit easier for Black to play.



20...♞f5!

A very important move. At this point Black both needs to, and can, take the exchange. The knight is poorly placed on b2 and Black gains a couple of moves on the line with 19...♞f5?! above.

20...c5? would be a horrible positional mistake. Compared to the positions with the queens on the board, the knight is really powerful on c4. The technical advantage after 21.d5 ♕xd5 22.♕xd5 ♘xd5 23.♕xc4± will make Black's defensive task joyless. Computers tend to misevaluate this position (close to equal), whereas playing such a position against a strong positional player will be nothing less than torture!

21.♗xc4

21.♗c3? is pointless: 21...c5 22.♗xc4 ♘b8!†

21.e4 ♕e6 22.♗d1 c3

Not the only move, but it solves all of Black's problems in a heartbeat.

23.♗xc3

23.♕a4 ♕f6 24.♗xc3 ♕xd4 is at least equal.

23...♕xa2 24.♗a1

24.e5?! ♘b8 25.♗c4 ♘b4 26.♗cc1 ♘b3
27.♗d3 ♘a4!†

24...♕e6 25.♗xa7 ♘b8 26.♗xe7 ♘xb2 27.♗f1
♘xd4=

21...♞a3 22.♕a4 ♘d3 23.♗c3

The correct way to give up the exchange.

23.♗fc1 ♕xc4 24.♗xc4 c5 25.dxc5

25.♕h3 ♘c7 26.♗xc5 (26.dxc5 ♘d2!†)
26...♗d6!† allows Black to activate the rook via b6, with grave consequences.

25...♗d1†

This offers Black fine counterplay.

26.♗f1 ♘f8

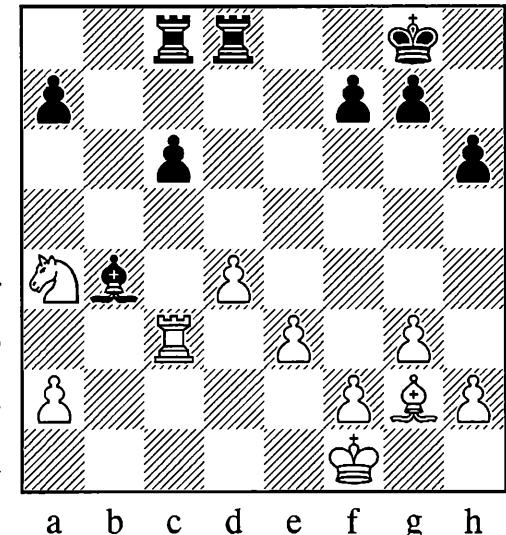
As a reserve plan, Black has 26...♗a1 27.c6 ♘xa2 28.♗c3 ♘c2 29.c7 ♘d6 30.♗d5 ♘xc4 31.♗xc4 ♘f8 32.♗a6 ♘xc7, resulting in a dead draw.

27.♗c3 ♘b4 28.♗c4 ♘e1!? 29.c6 ♘d2 30.♕h3
♘xf2† 31.♗f1 ♘c7 32.♗d7 g6!†

23...♞xf1 24.♗xf1

24.♗xa3 ♘c4!†

24...♞b4



White has a lot of options at this juncture,

but none of them offers the dream ending where Black is without counterplay. The main factor is that the rooks are likely to come off.

25. $\mathbb{B}c4$

Here are a few other relevant lines:

25. $\mathbb{B}xc6 \mathbb{B}xc6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{Q}f8=$

25. $\mathbb{B}b3 \mathbb{Q}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}c3$

What else should White play?

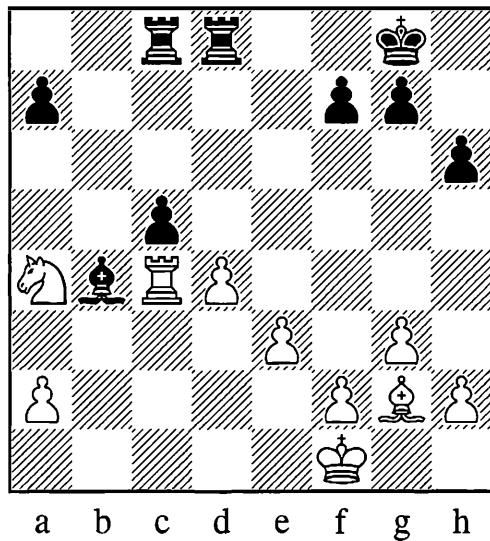
26. $\mathbb{Q}b2? c5\bar{=}$

26. $\mathbb{B}b7? g6!$ (stronger than 26... $\mathbb{B}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xc7$ [not 27. $\mathbb{Q}c5 \mathbb{B}e7!$] 27... $\mathbb{B}xc7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc6=$)
27. $\mathbb{B}xa7 c5\bar{=}$ White is struggling with a weak first rank.

26... $\mathbb{B}b4=$

25. $\mathbb{B}c2 c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5 \mathbb{B}c7!$ 27. $\mathbb{B}c1$ (27. $\mathbb{B}c4 a5\bar{=}$) 27... $a5$ Black is not worse in this kind of position; a draw seems likely.

25... $c5$



26. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

This seems to be most dangerous for Black. The following long list of alternatives should make this clear:

26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5 a5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e2 \mathbb{B}c7!$ This multipurpose move is often very useful for Black. 28. $h4 \mathbb{B}b8=$

26. $d5 \mathbb{B}d6!$ gives Black active play, and demands an accurate response from White:
27. $e4!$ (27. $\mathbb{Q}b2 \mathbb{B}a6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{B}d8\bar{=}$) 27... $\mathbb{B}a6$
28. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{B}c7$ 29. $e5!$ White needs this stunning idea to stay alive. 29... $\mathbb{B}e7$ 30. $f4 \mathbb{B}xa4$ 31. $d6 \mathbb{Q}f8!$ 32. $dxe7\bar{=}$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 33. $\mathbb{B}c2\bar{=}$ White should draw, but real life might not be so generous.

26. $\mathbb{B}xc5 \mathbb{B}d1\bar{=}$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e2 \mathbb{B}d2\bar{=}$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f1 \mathbb{Q}a5!\bar{=}$

26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $cxd4$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xc5 \mathbb{B}d1\bar{=}$
28. $\mathbb{Q}g2\pm$) 27. $\mathbb{B}xb4 dxe3$ 28. $fxe3 \mathbb{B}d2=$

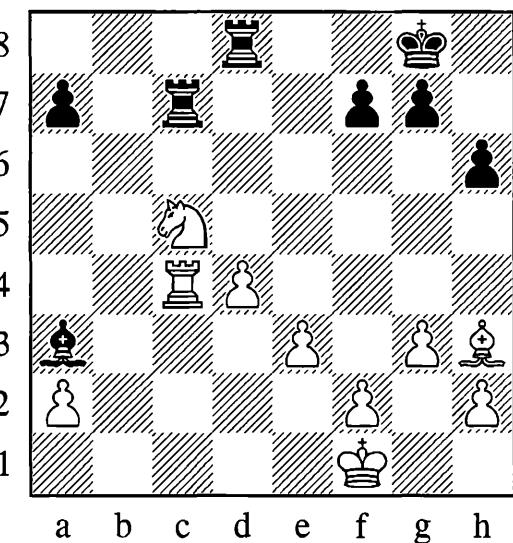
26. $\mathbb{B}e2 cxd4!$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xb4 d3\bar{=}$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d1 \mathbb{B}c2\bar{=}$

26... $\mathbb{B}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

27. $\mathbb{B}xc5 \mathbb{B}d1\bar{=}$ 28. $\mathbb{B}e2$ (28. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e1!$ gives Black active counterplay.) 28... $\mathbb{B}d2\bar{=}$ 29. $\mathbb{B}f1 \mathbb{Q}a3$ 30. $c6 g6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d7 \mathbb{B}xa2\bar{=}$

27... $\mathbb{Q}a3!$

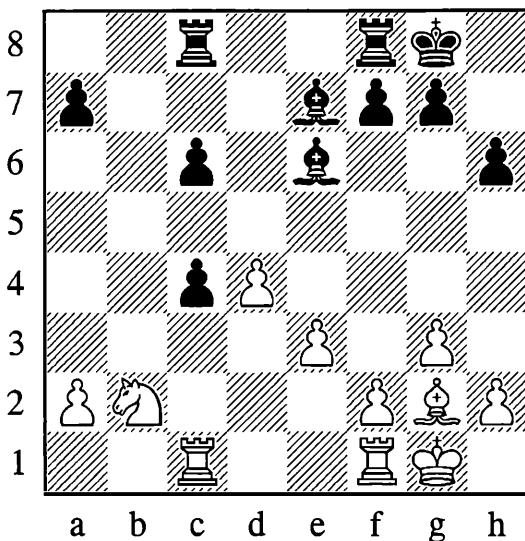
Inducing White to put his rook on a slightly worse square.



28. $\mathbb{B}c3 \mathbb{Q}xc5!?$

28... $\mathbb{Q}b4=$ is also okay, of course. White does not benefit from avoiding the repetition:
29. $\mathbb{B}c2? g6\bar{=}$

29. $\mathbb{B}xc5 \mathbb{B}d2$ 30. $a4 \mathbb{B}b2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f5 \mathbb{B}b4$ 32. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{B}b8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \mathbb{B}b4=$

B2) 19. $\mathbb{Q}b2!$ 

This move scared us at first. Initially we believed that White could secure a slight technical advantage in the ending, but after lots of analysis, we have concluded that Black has enough resources to equalize, provided he knows what he is doing.

19... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xb2$

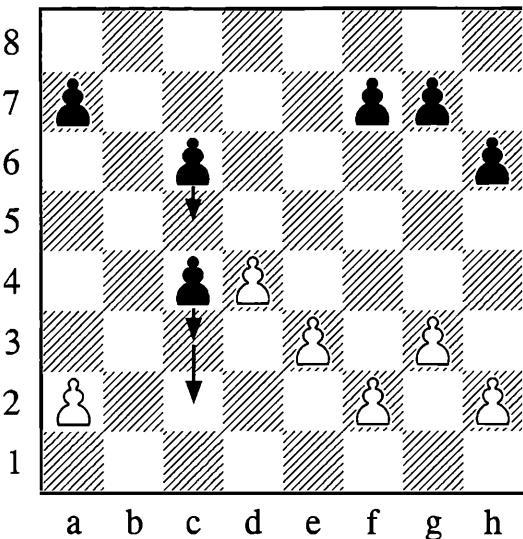
Black has lost his pride and joy, the advantage of the two bishops. But the exchange was not in any way unfavourable for him. White's best piece was the knight, and it would have matched the black bishops, had it made it to c4.

21... $\mathbb{B}c7!$

This artificial-looking move is in fact the dream move: a deep, multipurpose move that coordinates all of the black pieces, in order to deal with the many problems facing him.

At first we rejected this move as an idiotic computer move, simply reacting to the idea of 22. $\mathbb{B}b7$. However, this is not why Black should play 21... $\mathbb{B}c7!$. To appreciate why, we need to first understand the various ideas in this endgame.

Although the white pawn structure is more solid, it does not hold a lot of dynamic potential.



The black pawns have both the weakness of a solitary existence and the freedom of no one relying on them. It is surely a blessing and a curse at the same time. The front c-pawn is passed, and though hard to support, you can easily imagine a situation where it moves one square forward and forces White to rapidly retrace his steps to control the first rank. Likewise with the pawn on c6; weak certainly, but also able to break up the white centre with ...c5 at some point – but only if the d5-square is under control. White would love to answer d4-d5 and get his own passed pawn.

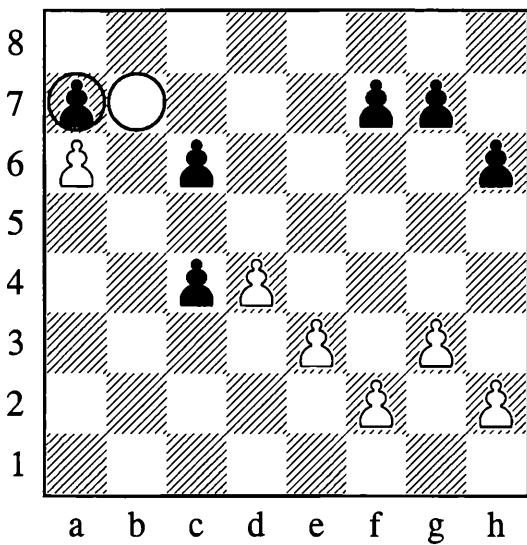
White does not have similar freedom. At the moment the pawns on f2 and h2 offer full protection for the entire family, but this is also a limitation. If White plays e3-e4, the most obvious active pawn move, the d4-pawn becomes an immediate target. This is very relevant, as Black will often try to play ... $\mathbb{B}d5$ in order to provoke this advance.

Black can challenge the soundness of this structure in the long term with ...f5, ...g5 and ...f4, but the time this takes must be taken into consideration. This type of long-term plan requires a rather solid foundation in the centre and good coordination to achieve.

A final idea for Black is to activate the rook

from f8 via b8; from here it may go to b6 or b4 (or maybe even b2) and then switch to the a-file. This is seen over and over again, and is in line with the endgame principle of *activating your strongest pieces first*, (the rooks being stronger than the king, whose value in the ending is generally rated as 4 points).

White does have one pawn advance that makes sense. If he manages to advance his a-pawn to the 6th rank, it can be used in a future invasion of the 7th:



White's advantage is of a static nature, long term and based on the quality of his pawn structure. He wants to neutralize the black activity based on the c-pawns, and advance his central pawns once all counterplay has been neutralized.

White's two main plans are:

- A direct attack on the c4-pawn. This involves playing $\mathbb{Q}f1$, giving up control of the d5-square. Often Black can reply with ...c5. Also, if White plays $\mathbb{B}b2-c2$, Black can get control of the b-file. On the other hand, White may be able to win a pawn!
- The most logical plan is to transfer the king to c3. From here the king will both support

the d4-pawn and attack the c4-pawn. White will put his rooks on d1 and b2, keeping the position under control. Only then he will think about things such as a4-a5-a6, $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and/or $\mathbb{B}b4$ to put pressure on the c4-pawn. By using his pieces to the maximum in this way, this plan can become very dangerous for Black.

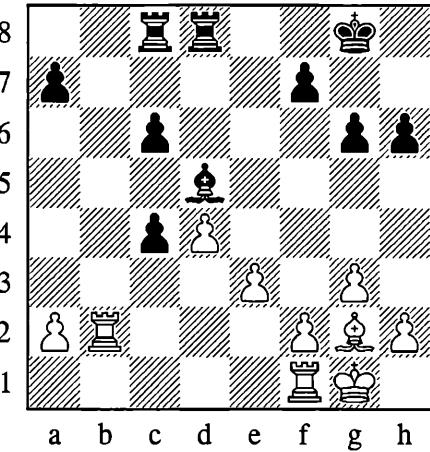
Black will meet this plan with ... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$, taking advantage of the g2-bishop being unprotected. This can make White play $\mathbb{Q}f1$ too soon, or weaken his pawn structure with f2-f3. Whichever he does, it is clear that Black takes control over the d5-square. This makes it easier for Black to play ...c5 or even ...f5-f4.

Black has several useful moves to make too. The king may come to f6, the rook on f8 may find a better square, and so on.

Finally, we want to show why 21... $\mathbb{B}c7$ is such an important move:

21... $\mathbb{B}fd8$

This is met by:



22. $\mathbb{B}d1!$ $\mathbb{B}c7$

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is a nice idea, but unfortunately it doesn't work. After 23. $\mathbb{B}b7!$ $\mathbb{B}b8$, White ought to avoid 24. $\mathbb{B}xb8?!$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$, when Black has excellent play for the pawn, but instead 24. $\mathbb{B}c7! \pm$ offers White an edge.

23.♗f1 g6 24.♗e1 ♖d5

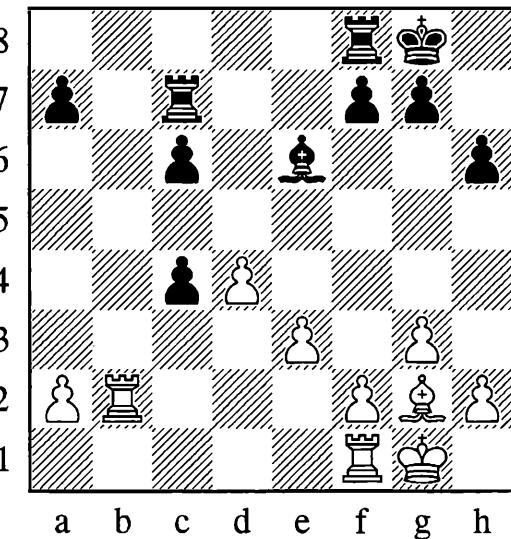
This is similar to our main line, but with the rook poorly placed on d8!

25.♗f1 c5

The typical break, but...

26.dxc5 ♕xc5 27.♗g2!±

The pin down the d-file gives White a nice position. This tactical nuance is the main reason why 21...♗c7 is necessary.



At this point the main options to investigate are **B21) 22.♗c1** and **B22) 22.♗d1!**. Besides these, we have also analysed the following alternatives:

22.♗d2 blocks the king's principal path of g1-f1-e1-d2-c3. Moreover it leaves the b-file at Black's disposal: 22...♗b8 23.♗c1 ♗b4!?

22.♗c2

Another way to attack the c4-pawn.

22...g6

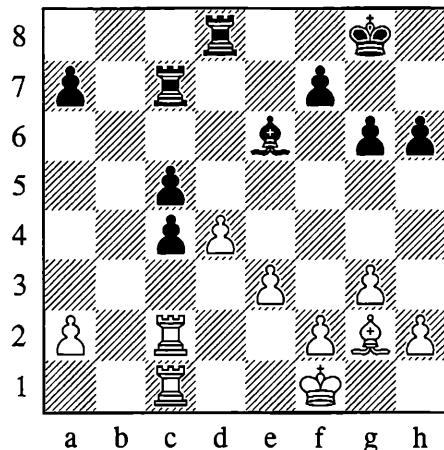
22...♗b8?! is poor, as after 23.♗fc1 White will attack the c4-pawn too quickly.

22...g5 is less likely to be a good idea while the white rook is still on f1 and White has the option of f2-f4.

23.♗fc1 ♗d8!

Black is preparing the typical ...c5-break.

24.♗f1 c5!?



Black has adequate play.

22.♗fb1

White has no prospects of achieving anything on the b-file. If White is not careful, the c-pawn will be able to play a starring role:

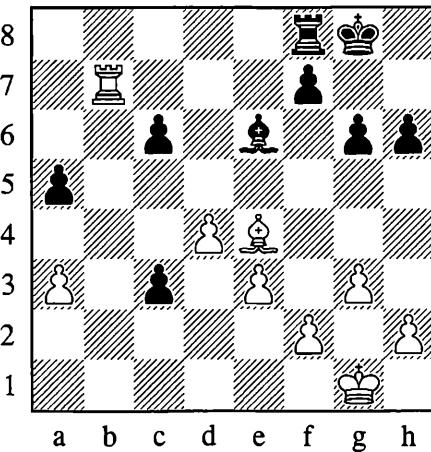
22...g6 23.♗b7 ♕xb7 24.♗xb7 c3 25.♗e4 a5!

This sets up a big trap.

26.a3?!

26.♗c7 f5! 27.♗d3 ♕c8!?

The careful 26.♗b1!= is correct.



26...c5!± 27.dxc5? ♕d5!!—+

22.a4

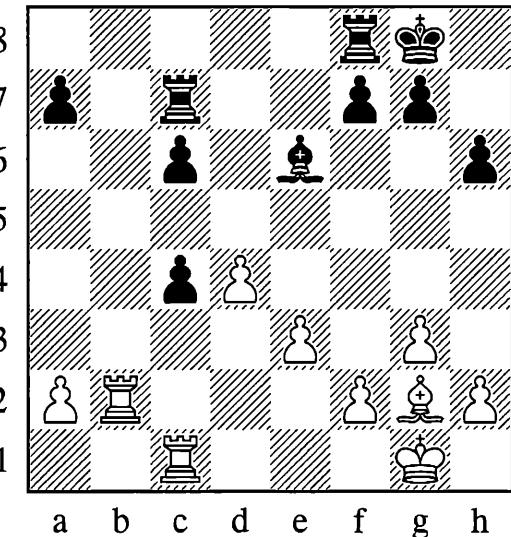
This is too slow to truly trouble Black. Once again we prepare ...c5!.

22...♗d8 23.♗c1

23.♗d1 is met with the typical 23...c3!. For example, 24.♗e2 ♗c4 25.♗ee1 c5 26.d5 c2 27.♗c1 ♕d3 and Black has excellent chances! A sample continuation is: 28.e4 ♕b7 29.f4

♗b4 30.a5 ♗a4 31.e5 ♗xa5 32.d6 ♗a4
 33.♔f2 ♗d4 34.♔f1 ♔f5↑
 23...c5 24.d5 ♔xd5 25.♔xd5 ♗xd5 26.♗xc4 f5
 Black has prepared ...♔f7-e6, equalizing.

B21) 22.♗c1



22...g6

Black improves his position, awaiting the right moment to strike back!

22...♗d8?!

This threatens ...c5, but it has a clear downside as well. In general it is better to keep options open and prepare something useful like ...♔g7.

23.f4!

Giving Black specific problems to solve!

23...g6 24.g4 f6 25.f5 gxf5 26.gxf5 ♔f7
 27.♗d2±

White is preparing e3-e4 and ♔f2 with a pleasant advantage.

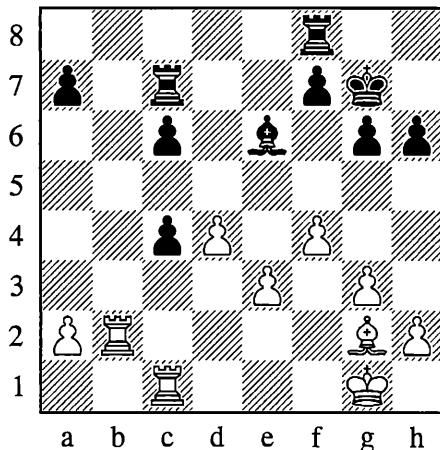
23.♔f1

White can try many things in this ending, but there is no advantage anywhere, as far as we could see. We also analysed these lines:

23.a4 ♗d8 24.a5 c5 25.d5 ♔xd5 26.♔xd5
 ♗xd5 27.♗xc4 ♔f8 28.♔f1 ♔e7 29.♔e2 f5=

23.f4 ♔g7!

23...f5? 24.♔f1!±



24.♔f2

24.e4 is, as we know, not good when the king is still on g1. The d4-pawn simply cannot be defended in a economical way (meaning with the king). 24...♗d7 25.f5 (25.♗d2 ♗fd8 26.♗cd1?) is met with 26...c3!, reminding White that he should not underestimate the potential of this pawn!) 25...gxf5 26.exf5 ♗xf5 27.♗xc4 ♗fd8=

24.g4 is met with 24...f5!. It is because Black has included ...♔g7 that this is possible. White cannot now play 25.♔f1 c5 26.♔xc4? because of 26...cxd4+, and there is no check when taking on e6. Thus White has to settle for 25.gxf5 gxf5 with equality.

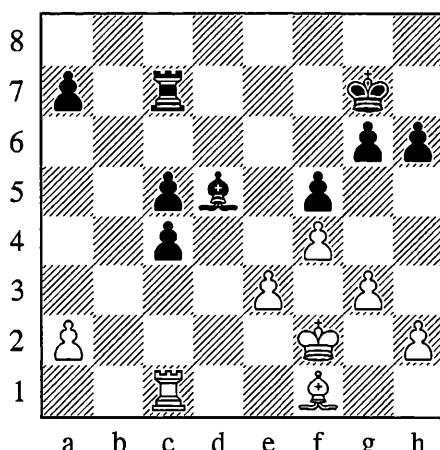
24...♗d8

24...f5 is also possible. The f8-rook may go to either e8 or c8.

25.♗d2

25.g4 is well met with 25...f5.

25...f5 26.♔f1 c5 27.d5 ♗xd5 28.♗xd5 ♗xd5



29. $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{Q}e4=$

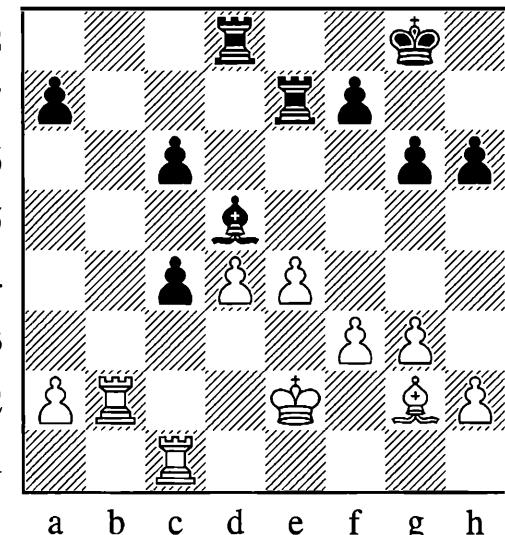
This is the easiest way to secure equality. Note that 29... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is a potentially bad “Rubinstein” ending, where White has the possible manoeuvre $\mathbb{E}c4-a4-a6$. Black can defend, but the job is unnecessarily complicated: 30. $\mathbb{E}xc4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{E}a4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 32. $\mathbb{E}a6\uparrow \mathbb{Q}d5$ Activity is key in such positions. 33. $\mathbb{E}xg6$ c4 34. $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{E}b7!$ 35. $\mathbb{E}xh6$ $\mathbb{E}b2$ 36. a4 c3 37. $\mathbb{Q}d1 \mathbb{Q}c4$ 38. $\mathbb{E}h7$ $\mathbb{E}d2\uparrow$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{E}g2=$

23... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ is met with: 24... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (25. e4 makes a target of the d4-pawn after 25... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{E}d2 \mathbb{E}cd7=$) 25... c5 with equality.

24... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. e4

The only attempt to cause Black any concerns. On everything else a quick ... c5 is possible. For example: 25. f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (25... f5 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}f7$ should also be okay) 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c5=

25... $\mathbb{E}e7$ 26. f3

26... f5

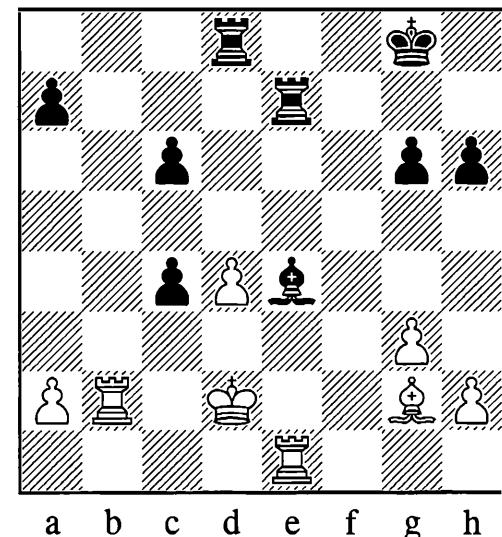
Absolutely typical counterplay for Black, which we will meet again in the main line. Here Black has a favourable version of it.

27. $\mathbb{Q}d2!!$

White can try to cause more long-term

problems with 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$, but the ending after 27... fxe4 28. fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ does not cause Black great concerns.

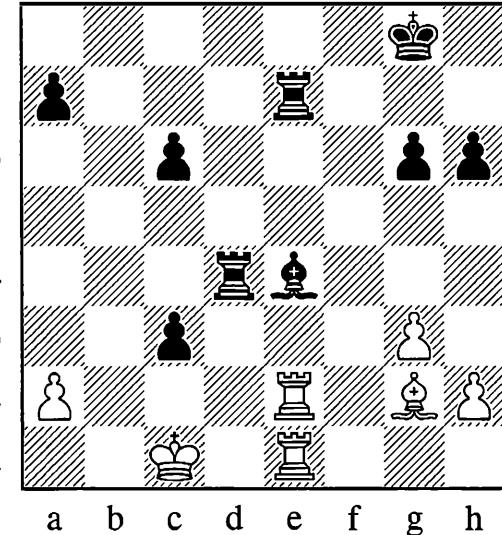
After the text move the situation is very tactical and Black has to solve bigger and more immediate problems.

27... fxe4 28. fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 29. $\mathbb{E}e1$ 29... $\mathbb{E}xd4\uparrow!!$

Black would suffer in the ending after 29... $\mathbb{E}de8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{E}e1$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}c1\uparrow$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$.

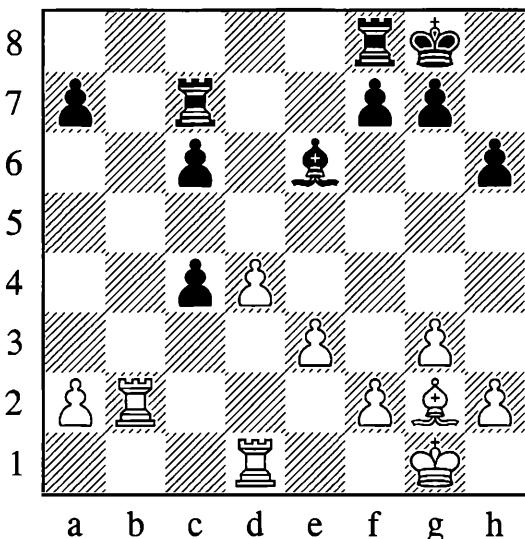
30. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ c3 31. $\mathbb{E}be2$

The pin might appear to be lethal, but Black does not need the e7-rook to create a potent threat.



31... $\mathbb{Q}d3!!$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xe7$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 33. $\mathbb{B}e8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 34. $\mathbb{B}1e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 35. $\mathbb{B}e6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7=$

B22) 22. $\mathbb{B}d1!$



22...g5!!

This is probably the deepest move in this book, and to our great frustration it was not found by us (although we eventually came to understand it).

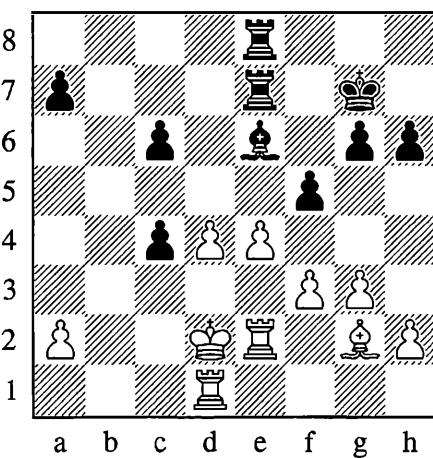
It was our original intention to recommend:

22...g6

However, we found that the difference is quite profound if White executes his main plan.

23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. e4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}ce7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f5 28. f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

So far, so good, was our thinking. But it becomes apparent that Black needs the possibility of ...g4! to undermine the white pawn structure.



29. $\mathbb{B}b1!$ c5

This seems necessary.

30. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 31. $\mathbb{B}b5$ $fxe4$ 32. $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}exc5$ 35. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 36. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}a5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f1\pm$

The objective evaluation of this ending is not easy, but there will be a lot of black suffering involved for sure!

23. $\mathbb{B}c2$

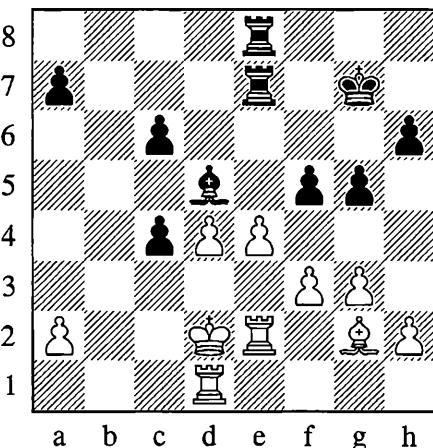
White has a couple of other options:

23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$
 27. $\mathbb{B}xh1$ c5 leads nowhere. Black is fine after both 28. $\mathbb{Q}c3=$ and 28. d5 $\mathbb{B}xd5\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}d3\#$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}a3=$.

24. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}dc1$ a6 (of course while the bishop remains on g2, Black cannot play 26...c5? 27. d5) 27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}a4\rightleftarrows$

24... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. e4 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f5 28. f3

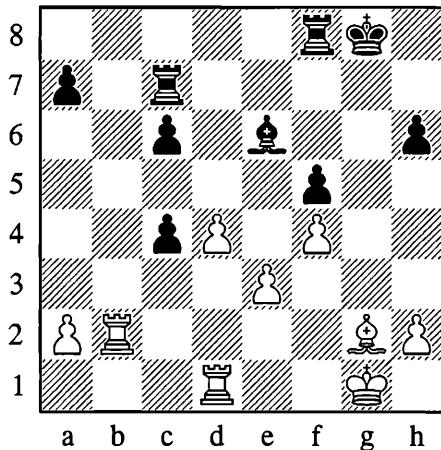


28...g4!

Compare this to 22...g6 above! This resource gives Black excellent play.

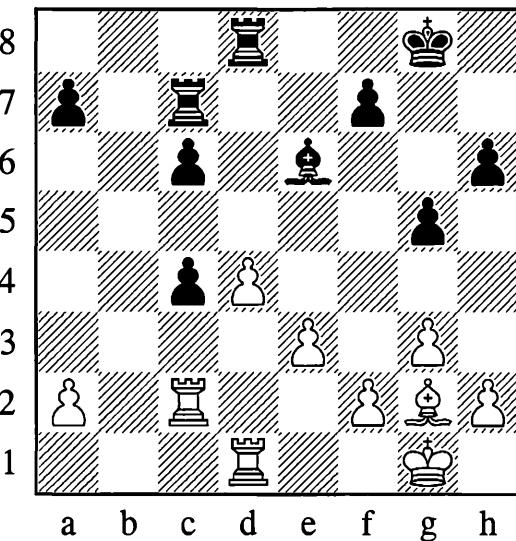
29. $fxg4$ $fxe4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}b8=$

23. f4 is the only way White can attempt to take advantage of the black pawn being on g5. It leads to an interesting and unclear position after: 23...gxf4 24. gxf4 (24. exf4 $\mathbb{B}d8=$) 24...f5



25.♗f1 ♖h7!?

23...♝d8



24.h3

White does not have any real edge here:

24.♗f1 ♖g7 25.♗e1 ♜b8 (25...♜d6 26.♗d2
♗d5 27.♗h1 ♜b7 28.♗c3=) 26.♗f1 ♜b4
27.♗dc1 c5=

24.♗dd2 ♜b8 25.♗c1 ♜b4 26.♗f1 ♜f8 27.f3
♗e7 28.♗f2=

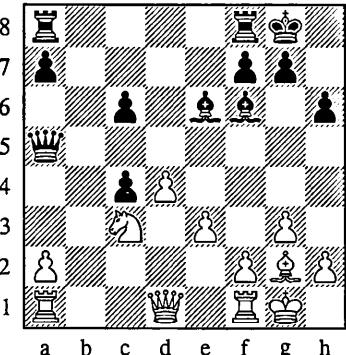
24...♜g7 25.g4 ♜f6 26.♗h2 ♜e7 27.♗g3
f6 28.♗c3 ♜g8 29.♗d2 ♜b8 30.♗f1 ♜b4
31.♗c1 ♜e6 32.e4 ♜d7 33.♗c3 ♜f7 34.f3
♗d8 35.h4 ♜g8 36.♗e2 ♜a4 37.♗g2 ♜f7
38.♗d1 ♜a5 39.hxg5 hxg5
½–½

Conclusion

In our opinion 16.♗c1! is the most dangerous move for Black in the entire 9.♗g5 complex. The endgame that White may enter by force can be a little scary for Black, but through accurate play with 21...♝c7! and 22...g5!! Black is able to neutralize the pressure. This gradual equalization is more typical of the QGD, and so for once we have a Tarrasch line that has something in common with the QGD.



9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$



16. $\mathbb{W}c2$

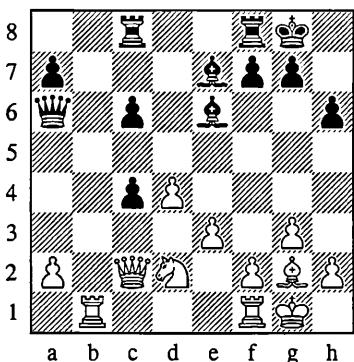
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8.0–0 0–0 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11.b3 h6!
 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14.bxc4 dxc4 15.e3 $\mathbb{W}a5$

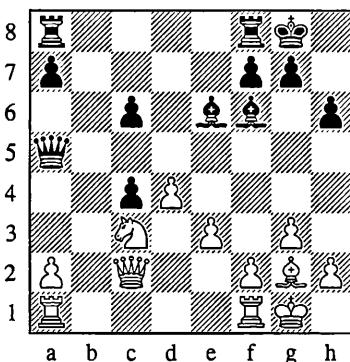
16. $\mathbb{W}c2$

A) 16... $\mathbb{B}ac8!?$	117
B) 16... c5!!N	120
B1) 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$	121
B2) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ cxd4	126
B21) 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$	126
B22) 18. exd4	128

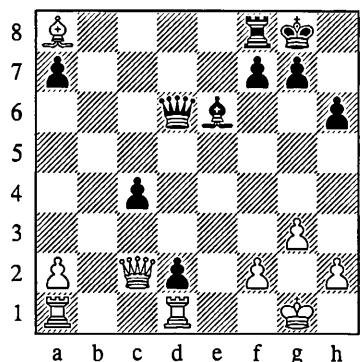
A) after 19. $\mathbb{B}ab1$



B) after 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$



B1) after 23. $\mathbb{B}fd1$

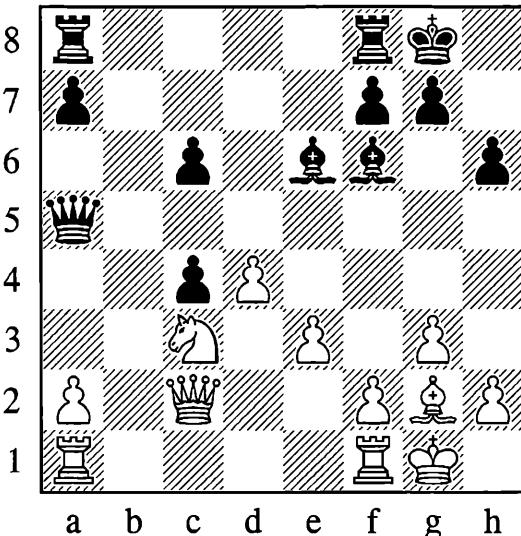


19... $\mathbb{B}b8!?$ N

16... c5!!N

23... $\mathbb{B}d8!!$

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8.0-0 0-0
 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11.b3 h6! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14.bxc4 dxc4 15.e3 $\mathbb{W}a5$
 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$



This is the most natural move in the position, so it is not surprising that it has been considered the main line. We have analysed this position extensively and come to the conclusion that White does not have real chances of an advantage here. It is for this reason that we consider the endgame after 16. $\mathbb{E}c1$ (see the previous chapter) to be more annoying. After 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ we discovered the strong novelty 16...c5!!.. We have both played this exchange sacrifice in many blitz and rapid games, some of them using this as an agreed starting position, and we have absolute confidence in the black position. So, although A) 16... $\mathbb{E}ac8?!$ is playable and we eventually decided to include our analysis in the book, it is B) 16...c5!!N which is our recommendation.

A) 16... $\mathbb{E}ac8?!$

The following line is very interesting when compared to line B22 of Chapter 6 with 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (see page 96).

17. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

White may also consider:

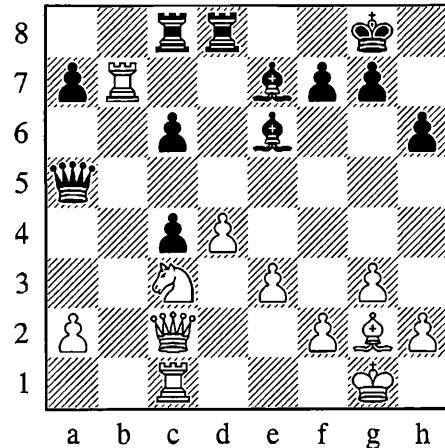
17. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$

This position has arisen a few times by transposition. One game was agreed a draw here, when a strong GM did not feel competitive. Another went:

18. $\mathbb{E}ab1$

18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is less dangerous here: 18... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ (19...c5 makes life unnecessarily complicated. The position after 20.d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is tenable, but really we would rather avoid it.) 20. $\mathbb{E}cb1$ c3 21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ and Black has no problems and lots of joys.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}b7$



19... $\mathbb{E}d7?!$

This passive move does not appeal to us.

19... $\mathbb{Q}b4!N$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ looks playable. For example: 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ c5!=

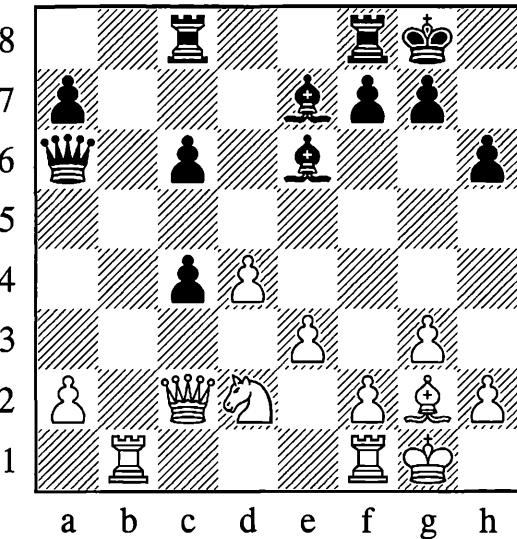
20. $\mathbb{E}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$

Clark – Kanios, e-mail 2008.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ab1$

Grivas writes: "If Black succeeds in advancing ...c5, White will continue with d5, exchanging his d-pawn for Black's c4-pawn. Then he will place his knight on c4 (capturing the enemy c4-pawn) with a slight but permanent advantage." This is true in theory, but Black can try another, more

effective plan than trying to organize the ...c5-break. If he exchanges the strong d2-knight then he will achieve an equal position. One of the advantages of the bishop pair is that it is easier to exchange one of them!



19... $\mathbb{E}b8!?$ N

We think this is a slight improvement upon previous praxis. The idea is that there is no reason to put a rook on d8, when it is really the fight for the b-file which is interesting at the moment.

19... $\mathbb{E}fd8$

This is the move that has been played before. Here White should play a typical, yet stunning idea:

20.a3! N

White wants to play either $\mathbb{E}fc1$ or $\mathbb{E}fd1$, without the bishop being able to go to a3 or b4, and White will then continue with $\mathbb{E}f1$. The a-pawn is obviously endangered by advancing, but the benefits cannot be ignored.

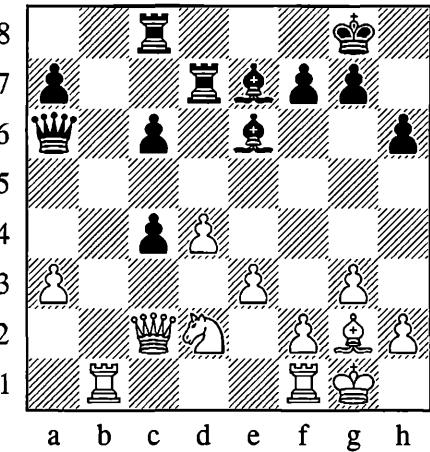
20. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathbb{A}a3$ 21. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ was not worrying for Black in Eriksson – E. Lie, Stockholm 2005.

20... $\mathbb{E}d7$

Probably the best move.

20... $\mathbb{E}xa3!?$ 21. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}fb1$ followed by 23. $\mathbb{E}f1$ is very poor for Black. He cannot

play the standard ...c5 break, as the knight would arrive on c4 with devastating power.



21. $\mathbb{E}fd1!$

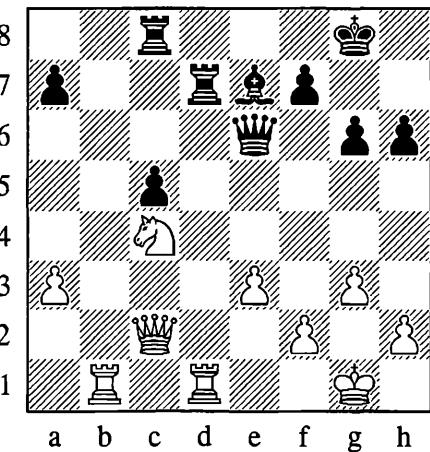
21. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ is less impressive. After 21...c5 22. d5 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}cd8$, Black has control over the d-file and should not stand badly.

21... $\mathbb{E}g6$

A useful waiting move.

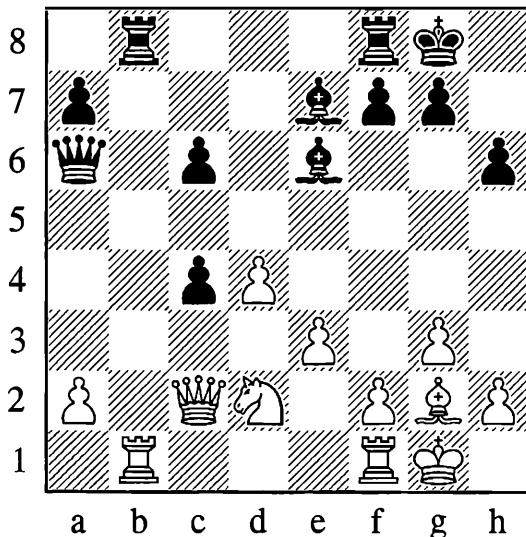
21... $\mathbb{E}cd8?$ 22. $\mathbb{E}f1$ c5 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ would be quite unpleasant for Black.

22. $\mathbb{E}f1$ c5 23. d5 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{E}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}xe6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



Is White better? That is the eternal question in these positions. Our feeling is that it is more pleasant for White to play, but the knight on c4 lacks stability, and Black has possible counterplay on the kingside with ...h5, so probably Black can claim just slightly unpleasant equality after:

26... $\mathbb{E}xd1\#$ 27. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}d8=$



This is a typical position of the “b2-b3” strategy by White. Black has the bishop pair, which is generally a good thing to have, but in this kind of position it doesn’t seem that it offers a concrete advantage. The dark-squared bishop is well restricted by White’s bullet-proof pawn structure, and the light-squared bishop seems at present to have only the defensive role of guarding the fragile c4-pawn. So, if we apply the “comparison method” (see *Excelling at Positional Chess*) we can see that both White’s minor pieces are better than Black’s. The white knight is perfectly placed, attacking the c4-pawn, and a probable exchange of light-squared bishops will produce a “good knight vs. bad bishop” scenario. I consider this position to be very slightly better for White, but only if he is wise enough to prevent Black’s plan.

20.a3!

Again this is the best move.

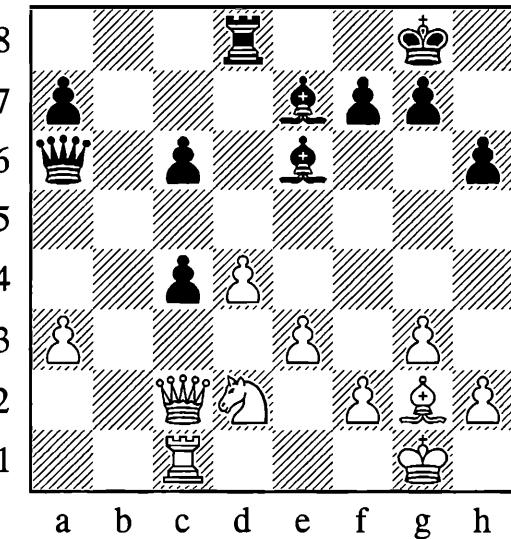
20. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ is met strongly by 20... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$. The ensuing ending with queens (or is that what a middlegame is!?) should not be dangerous for Black.

20... $\mathbb{E}xb1$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xb1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$

White cannot make much use of the b-file.

22. $\mathbb{E}c1$

22. $\mathbb{E}f1$ is what Black’s last move was aimed against. After 22...c5! 23. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ (23. d5 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa3\rightarrow$) 23... $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ cxd4 25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}f6$ 26. exd4 $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 27. dxе5 $\mathbb{W}xa3=$ Black has no big problems in the ending.



22...c5!

Black has to act immediately. We don’t like the look of:

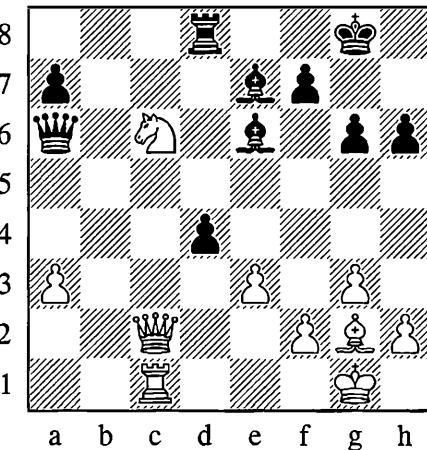
22...g6?! 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ c5

Trying to solve the problems with tactics.

24. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

This is a very interesting alternative to the typical 24. d5.

24... cxd4 25. $\mathbb{Q}c6$



25... dxе3!

A necessary piece sacrifice.

25... $\mathbb{E}e8?$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{E}xe7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}c5\pm$

26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$

27... $f5?$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ is not to be recommended.

28. $\mathbb{Q}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$! $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe3\#$

It might be possible for both computers and humans to hold this ending, but it looks like torture.

23.d5

The standard reply in these positions, but we should also have a look at:

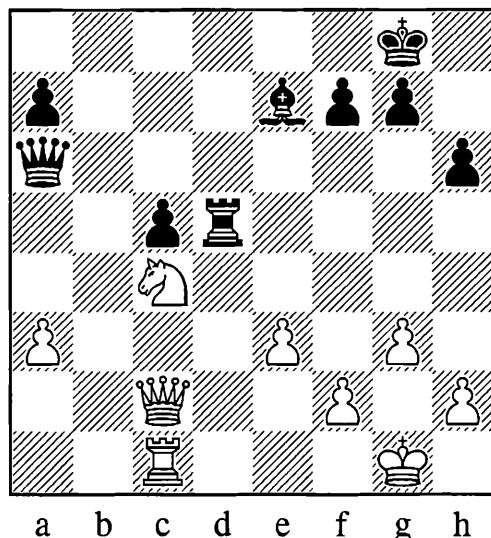
23. $dxc5? \mathbb{Q}xc5$

A “Marshall-style” alternative is the following: 23... $\mathbb{W}b5?$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (25... $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b1\#$) 26. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ Black is a pawn down, although he certainly has well placed pieces. According to our computer the position is equal, which seems a fair assessment.

24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

White’s advantage is marginal. It is hard to see how he will be able to cause any problems if Black plays ... $\mathbb{W}d6$, ... $g6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



The archetypical ending. With queens on, Black should be okay; without queens, he would be in a bit of bother. The important point is for Black to achieve counterplay against the king.

25... $\mathbb{W}c6$

25... $\mathbb{W}e6?$ is also interesting.

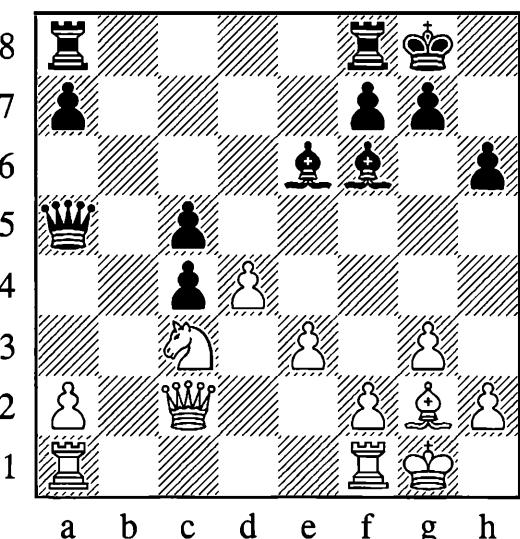
26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

After 26. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $g6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $h5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$, Black seems to be safe enough.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xd1\#$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}e4$

The black queen has occupied a dominating central square, securing him even chances.

B) 16... $c5!!N$



This sacrifice of the exchange (or even a whole rook in some lines) is the direct and brutal way to solve all the problems. The power of the dark-squared bishop, combined with the c-pawn, offers Black comfortable equality, albeit after great complications. White has the following options to consider: B1) 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and B2) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$.

The speed of the ... $c5$ break prevents White creating stability in the centre:

17. $d5$

This standard move does not lead to anything special this time around.

17... $\mathbb{W}xc3$

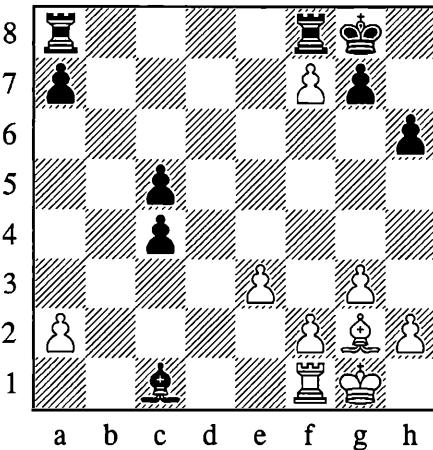
Transposing to a level ending.

18. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 20. $dxe6$

20. $\mathbb{B}c2$ c3 21. dxe6 $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 22. exf7† $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$
looks very risky for White.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 21. exf7†

21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 22. exf7† $\mathbb{B}xf7!$ transposes.



21... $\mathbb{B}xf7!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b1$

23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ c3 24. $\mathbb{B}b1$ g5! is similar to the lines that follow. White has to cover the c2-square quickly, or he will be in danger.

23... g5 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

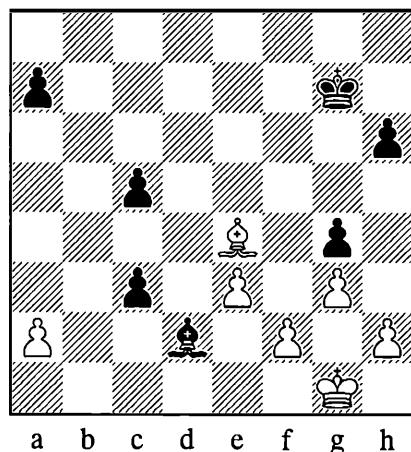
24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c3 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ would be promising if Black did not have a small trick: 25... $\mathbb{B}xf2†!$

26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ c2=

24... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}b7$!?

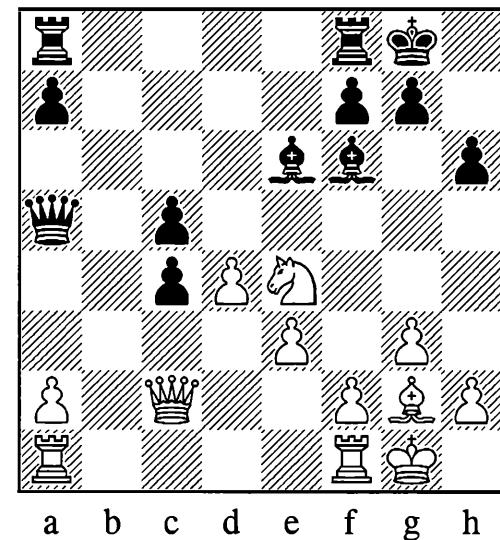
How else can White play for a win? The king cannot get to f1 in any sensible way.

25... $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ c3 27. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ g4!



White will never get two connected passed pawns. We cannot dream up any winning plans for him.

B1) 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$



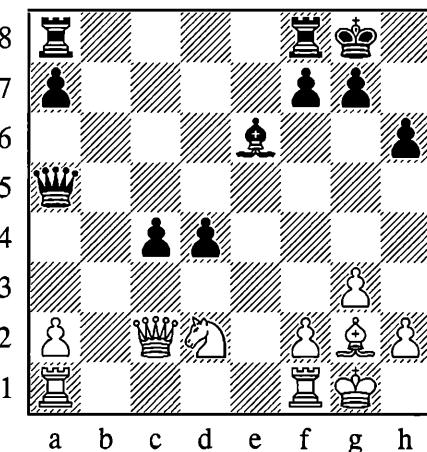
17... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$!

17... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6†$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ is playable as well. We have quite a bit of analysis on this too, but we find the main line infinitely more pleasing and interesting, so we are not going to waste any time on such a defensive approach.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

This seems to be the most challenging try.

19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$



19... d3

This does not give White a choice. He has to play:

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$!

20... $\mathbb{W}c5$?! 21. $\mathbb{W}a4$ would give White some

chances with the extra exchange, even though Black has a lot of counterplay.

21. $\mathbb{W}d2$

21. $\mathbb{W}c3?$ $\mathbb{B}ac8!$

21... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{B}ac1!$

22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ is another typical position in which White will struggle to make any progress: 23. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d5\infty$

22... $\mathbb{W}d4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd4$

$\mathbb{B}xd4$ 26. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 27. $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

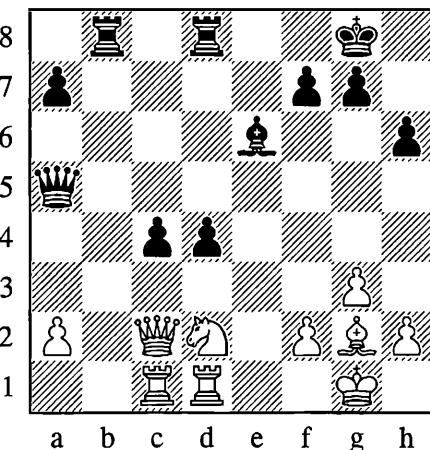
29. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $a6$

The ending looks safe to us.

19. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{B}ab8!$ 20. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$

Black does not have any problems; indeed it is White who needs to play accurately now.

21. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$



21... $d3$

Black can consider 21... $\mathbb{B}b4!\infty$ as well.

22. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$

22... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{B}dc8=$ looks okay too, but it seems less natural to exchange queens when a piece down without some obvious gain.

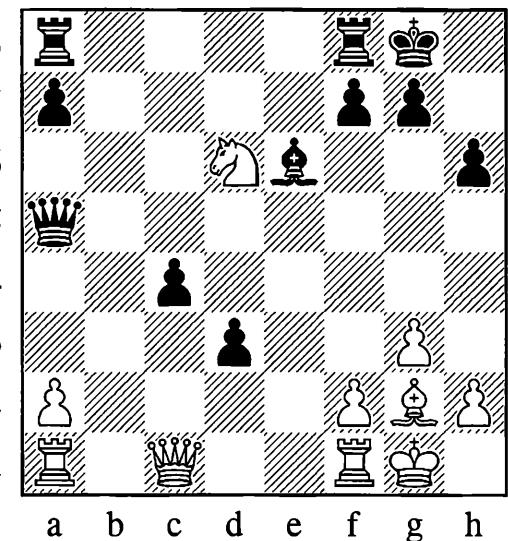
23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}dc8\infty$

19... $d3$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c1$

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ transposes to 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ in the previous note.

20. $\mathbb{Q}b7!?$ leads to suffering: 20... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d1$ ($21. \mathbb{W}b1 \mathbb{W}c3\bar{f}$) 21... $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c3!$

Keeping the important squares under control.
23. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{B}fc8$ What is the $b7$ -knight doing? 25. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{B}b2\bar{f}$



20... $\mathbb{W}b4!?$

We prefer this move because it is lively and gives White (and to be fair, Black too) more chances to err.

20... $d2$

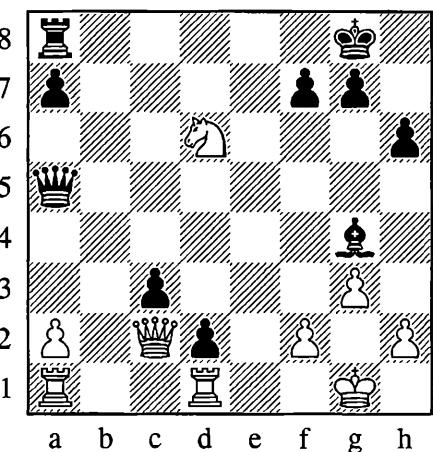
This leads to a fairly simple equality:

21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $c3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fd1$

23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}c8=$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc3?$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd2?$

$\mathbb{B}xg3\bar{f}+$

23... $\mathbb{Q}g4$



24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

After 24. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e5\infty$ Black is by no means worse.

24... $\mathbb{W}f5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$
 27. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $gxf6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 30. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3=$

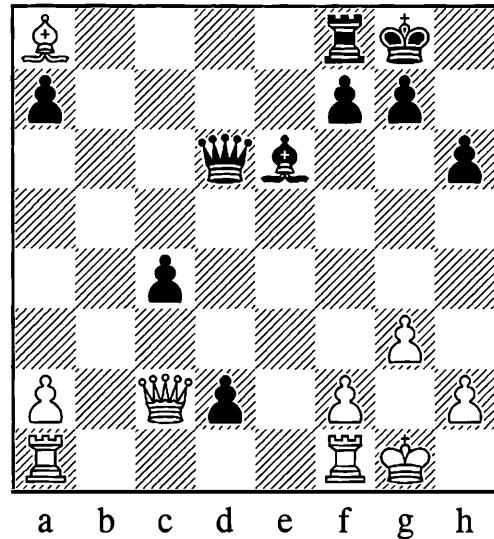
21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$

21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$?! might seem active, but the knight is not that great, and White will struggle to keep his head above water: 21... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}a5!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $f5!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $g5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6+$) 22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fb1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $c3+$ In some other lines the black pawns are worth a rook; here they are certainly worth more than a knight on the rim.

21... $d2$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$

There are many variations on the same theme, with the two pawns balancing a rook. For example: 22. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d4\infty$

22... $\mathbb{W}xd6$



23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

White has other moves, of course.

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}f6!$ followed by ... $c3$ looks absolutely fine for Black.

23. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

This is met strongly with a very nice idea:

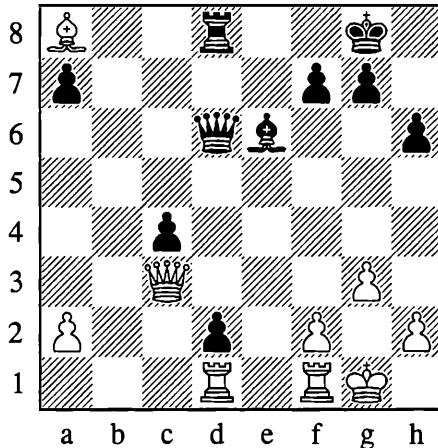
23... $\mathbb{Q}d8!!$

It is more important to protect the d-pawn

than to collect irrelevant material. White is the one that has to be careful here.

24. $\mathbb{W}c3$

24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$?! looks natural, but after 24... $\mathbb{W}d4+$ followed by ... $c3$, Black is on his way to victory.



24... $\mathbb{W}d4!$

Entering the endgame a rook down!

25. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

The only move.

26... $c3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

White may think he has a blockade, but...

27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$!?

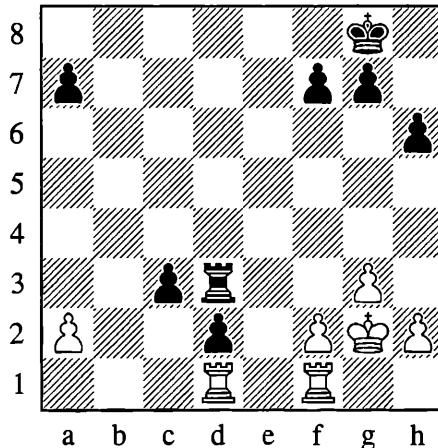
The most optimistic.

27... $g6$ delivers equal chances.

28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd3!$

29. $\mathbb{Q}b3$? $a5+$

29... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$



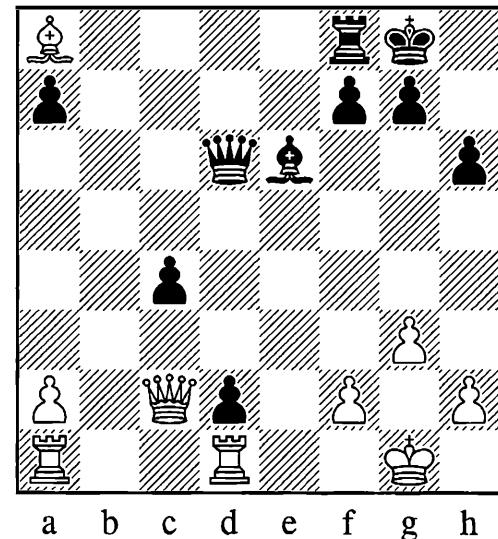
30. $\mathbb{Q}h1!$

White is forced to try something like this.

The seemingly desirable 30.h4?! can be met strongly with either 30...f5!? or the more direct 30...c2 when things can quickly go from bad to worse: 31. $\mathbb{E}h1$! g5! 32.hxg5 hxg5 33. $\mathbb{E}hf1$ g4!–+

30...a5 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c2 32. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c1= \mathbb{W} 33. $\mathbb{E}xc1$ dxc1= \mathbb{W} 34. $\mathbb{E}xc1$ $\mathbb{E}a3$ 35. $\mathbb{E}c2$ g5 \bar{F}

Of course this endgame is drawn, but White can still lose it with inaccurate play. At least he will sweat a lot!



23... $\mathbb{E}d8!!$

We have already seen this idea, but this does not lessen the impact. Black's pawns are worth a rook.

24. $\mathbb{Q}e4!!$

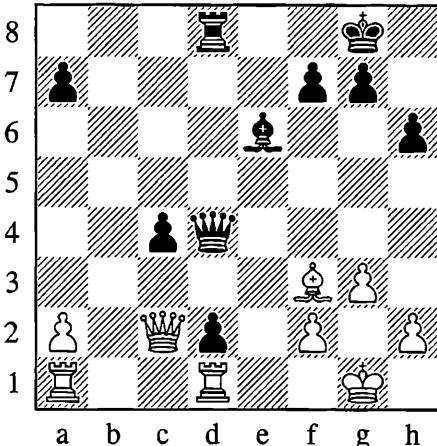
Other options are:

24. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$! leads to quite simple equality.
 25. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ c3 (26... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is inaccurate. After 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c3 28. $\mathbb{E}db1$! g6 29. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ gxf5 31. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ d1= \mathbb{W} † 32. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$ † 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ ± Black will have to suffer a bit in the ending.) 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g6 28. f3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ gxf5 30. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ c2 31. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ cxd1= \mathbb{W} 32. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}a4$ 33. $\mathbb{E}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and the ending is a draw.

24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This is met strongly with:

24... $\mathbb{W}d4$!



Taking control over the c3-square. White's task is already very difficult, as we can see from the following lines:

a) 25. $\mathbb{E}ab1$! c3 26. $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{E}e8$!

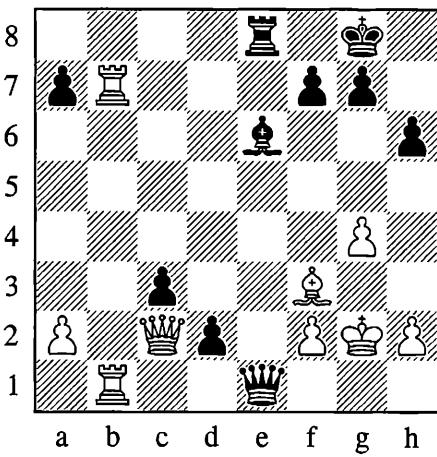
Eyeing the e1-square.

27. $\mathbb{E}db1$

27. h4? $\mathbb{Q}c4$ –+

27. $\mathbb{W}b1$? $\mathbb{Q}c4$! 28. $\mathbb{E}b8$ (28. h4 c2! 29. $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ †–+ leads to a mating attack) 28... $\mathbb{E}xb8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xb8$ † $\mathbb{Q}h7$ –+ The extra rook will not help White. The pawns are too strong.

27... $\mathbb{W}e5$! 28. g4 $\mathbb{W}e1$ † 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$



29... $\mathbb{Q}c4$!! 30. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f1$ †! 31. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ d1= \mathbb{W} !

32. $\mathbb{W}xe1$?

32. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 33. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ –+

32... $\mathbb{W}d6$ †

White is quickly mated.

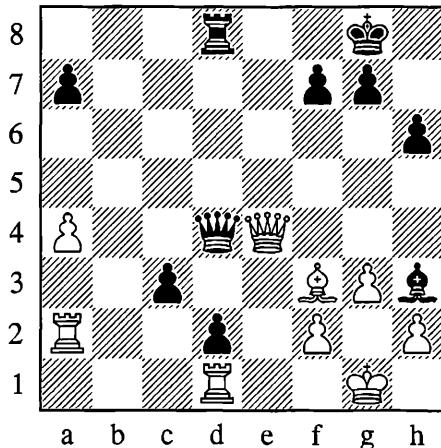
b) 25. a4!

This seems to be absolutely necessary.

25... $\mathbb{Q}h3$

25...c3 26. $\mathbb{R}a3$ $\mathbb{R}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (27.a5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{R}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ c2 shows Black's rich possibilities, as the passed pawns give him the win) 27...g6 It is time for White to apply the brakes. 28. $\mathbb{R}xc3!$ $\mathbb{R}xc3$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xd2=$

26. $\mathbb{W}e4$ c3 27. $\mathbb{R}a2!$

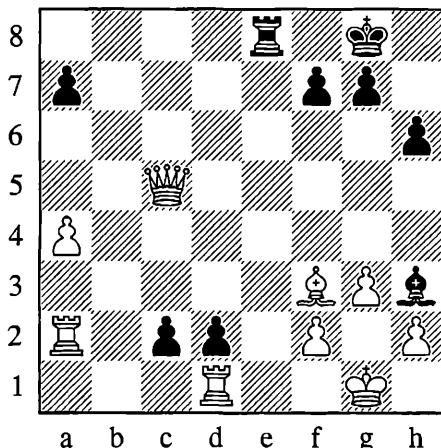


27... $\mathbb{W}c5!!$

Making things a bit more exciting.

27... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 29. $\mathbb{R}axd2=$ is a plausible route to a draw.

28. $\mathbb{W}e3$ c2! 29. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{R}e8!!$



A remarkable position. White is a rook and a queen up, but has to find only moves to survive.

30. $\mathbb{R}f1!$

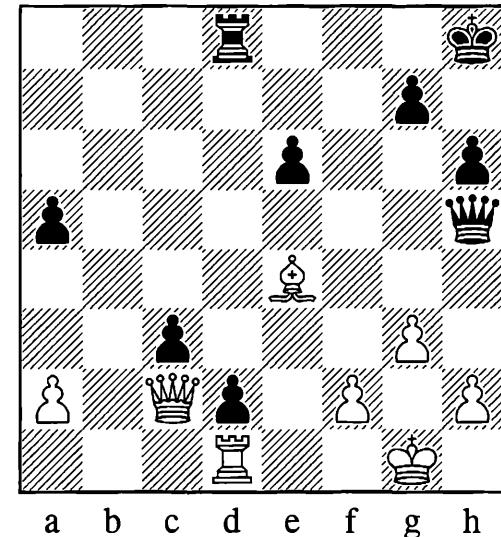
30. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{R}xe3$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xe3$ c1= \mathbb{W} 32. $\mathbb{R}axd2$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xa4\#$ would offer Black definite chances.

30... $\mathbb{R}e1$ 31. $\mathbb{R}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xe1$ $dxe1=$ \mathbb{W} 33. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f5\#$

24... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{R}ab1$ c3 26. $\mathbb{R}b4$ a5 27. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$

Black has no problems after: 27. $\mathbb{R}a4$ $\mathbb{R}b5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29. $\mathbb{R}e4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 30. $\mathbb{R}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e5=$

27... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{R}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 29. $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $fxe6$ 30. $\mathbb{R}e4$



30... $\mathbb{R}b8$

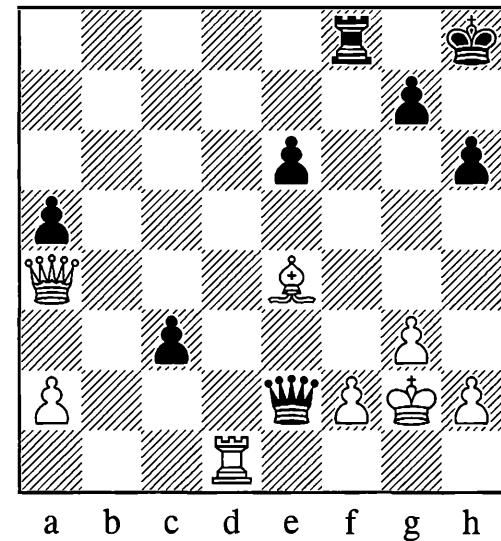
Black has enough compensation; anything is possible, but a draw is the most likely outcome.

Another possible end to the game is: 30... $\mathbb{W}e2$ 31. $\mathbb{R}a4$ $\mathbb{W}e1\#$ Black prevents $\mathbb{R}f1$ before attacking the f-pawn. 32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e5 34. h4 $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ e4# 36. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e2\#$ and White is unable to improve his position.

31. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ 32. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ 33. $\mathbb{R}f1$ d1= $\mathbb{W}\#$?

33... $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ looks fine as well, but this tactical finish is pleasant to the eye.

34. $\mathbb{R}xd1$

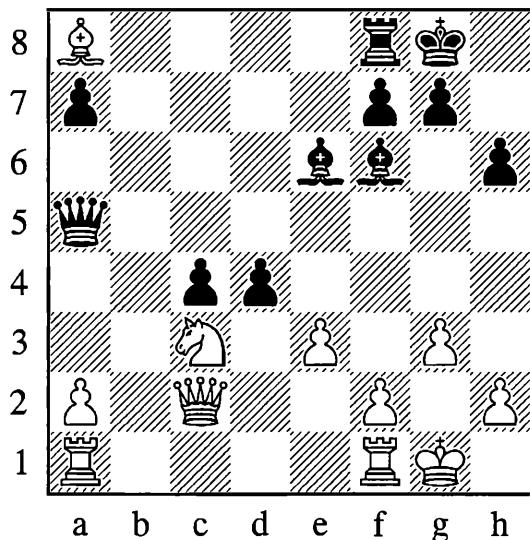


34...c2!!

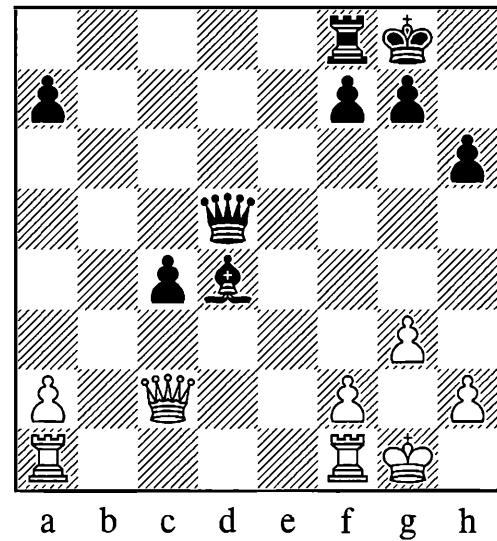
A very important move. 34...♝xf2†? 35.♔g1 leaves Black with nothing better than retreat.

35.♛xc2 ♘xf2† 36.♝g1 ♘g2†!=

The game ends with perpetual check.

B2) 17.♜xa8 cxd4

At this point it is relevant to consider **B21) 18.♝d5** and **B22) 18.exd4**. Both moves should lead to equality, despite the material imbalance.

**B21) 18.♝d5 ♜xd5 19.♝xd5 ♛xd5
20.exd4 ♜xd4**

We have reached a position which is characterized by queens, rooks and passed pawns. This type of position is sometimes called the fourth phase (a term coined by Romanovsky, we believe); there are endgame characteristics, in particular passed pawns, as well as middlegame characteristics, such as an attack on the king. Here one of Black's rooks is replaced with a bishop, but its ability to control c3 and maybe later c1, as well as put pressure on f2 (and g1) makes it a very powerful piece. We do not think that either side should expect to win here, but by trying too hard it is possible to lose.

21.♜ae1

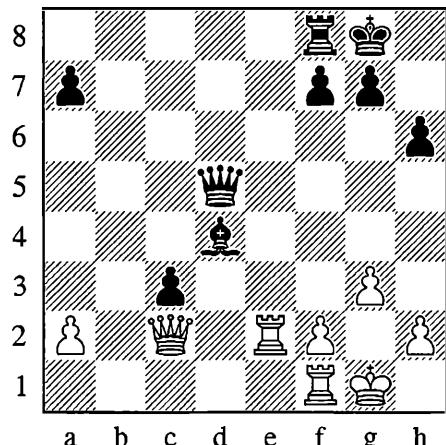
This looks more ambitious than: 21.♜ac1 c3 22.♜fe1 (After 22.♜fd1 ♜d8 23.♛e2 g6 24.h4 h5, how is White going to make any progress?) 22...♜d8! Prophylaxis. White cannot now play ♛e4 without losing the a-pawn. 23.♜e2 ♜f6 24.♜ce1 ♜d7 25.♛e4 (25.♝g2 g6 26.♛e4 ♜g7=) 25...g6 26.♜b1 ♜c8=

21...c3

White now has a number of attractive ideas, but the lack of real targets will remain an issue.

22.♛e4!

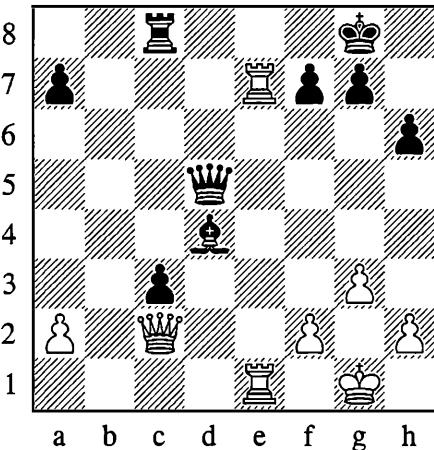
This looks like the most challenging option.

22.♜e2

22... $\mathbb{E}d8$! Black should seek an ideal set-up straight away; the rook belongs here, where it can both support the bishop and dream of landing on d2. The following moves seem reasonable, although many other equally good possibilities are available. 23. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ g6 24. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 27. $\mathbb{B}be1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}c5=$

22. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fe1$

23. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe4$ c2 is an immediate draw.



23...g6

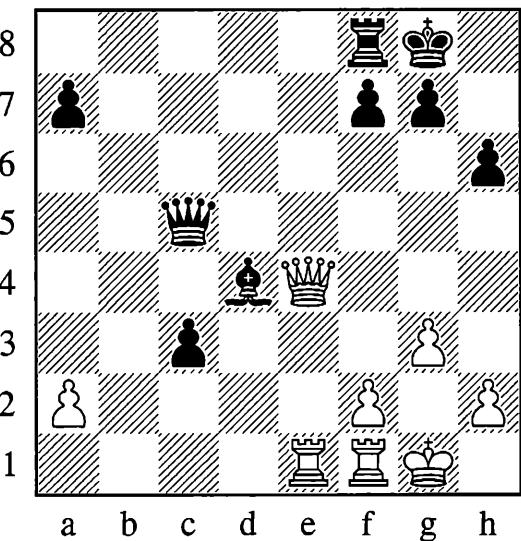
Nikos is the optimistic type and thus loves the look of 23...g5?!, based on 24. $\mathbb{B}e8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e1$ (26. h4 $\mathbb{W}f3$ 27. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{gxh}4$ 28. $\mathbb{gxh}4$ h5 29. $\mathbb{B}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 30. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Wh}1\#$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ c2 32. $\mathbb{B}g4\#$) 26...h5. Jacob is less sure that Black can play for a win here without taking too many chances.

24. $\mathbb{B}e8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

It is not easy for White to achieve anything; for example, if he pushes his kingside pawns he risks losing. It is also difficult for Black to make progress, although perhaps he can push the pawn all the way to a3 and then try ...h5-h4.

22... $\mathbb{W}c5$!

22... $\mathbb{W}d6$ risks letting the position slip a bit: 23. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}g2\pm$ White is now threatening $\mathbb{B}d3$, which could be a real annoyance for Black.

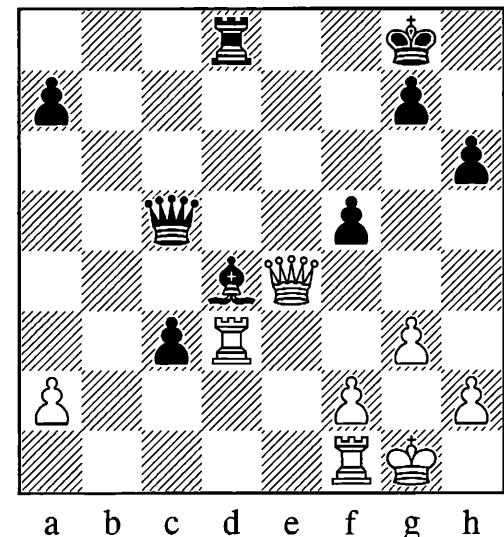


23. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d3$!

This is White's most dangerous idea. Black must do something quickly.

24...f5!

If Black allows the white queen to remain centralized, he might experience some difficulties: 24... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{B}g2$ g6 (25...f5! 26. $\mathbb{W}f4\pm$) 26. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 28. f3! $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{B}d4\pm$



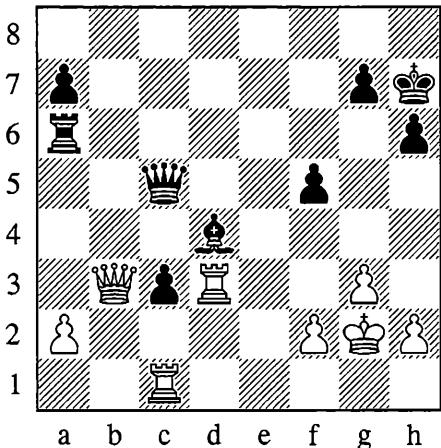
25. $\mathbb{W}e2$

White only has three legal moves that do not lose to ... $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$. Besides the main line, the other two are:

25. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}g2$ (Black did not have to rush to the b-file; White would lose after

26. $\mathbb{B}b1?? \mathbb{Q}xf2! 27. \mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{B}xd3 28. \mathbb{W}xd3 \mathbb{Q}e3!$) 26... $\mathbb{B}b8\bar{m}$ Black is not worse here. For example: 27. $\mathbb{B}fd1 c2 28. \mathbb{B}c1 \mathbb{B}b1 29. \mathbb{B}xc2 \mathbb{W}xc2 30. \mathbb{B}xd4 \mathbb{B}b2=$

25. $\mathbb{W}e6! \mathbb{Q}h7 26. \mathbb{Q}g2$ looks a bit more active, but the black rook will actually be well placed on the 6th rank, so he is happy to play: 26... $\mathbb{B}d6 27. \mathbb{B}b3 \mathbb{B}a6 28. \mathbb{B}c1$



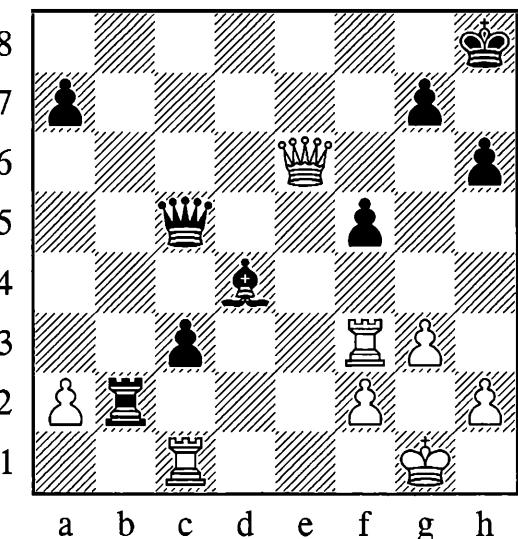
28... $\mathbb{W}c6! 29. \mathbb{Q}g1 \mathbb{Q}f6=$

25... $\mathbb{B}b8 26. \mathbb{B}c1 \mathbb{B}b2 27. \mathbb{W}e6!$

27. $\mathbb{B}dxc3$ is an immediate draw.

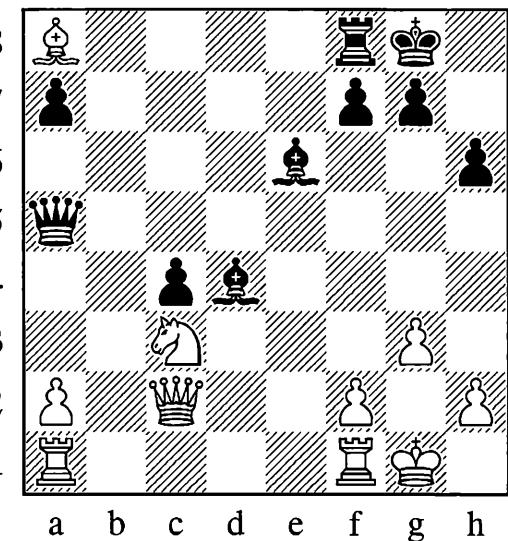
27... $\mathbb{Q}h8 28. \mathbb{B}f3$

White is still trying in this imaginary game. Another immediate draw was possible: 28. $\mathbb{B}xd4 \mathbb{W}xd4 29. \mathbb{W}c8! \mathbb{Q}h7 30. \mathbb{W}xf5! \mathbb{Q}g8=$



28... $\mathbb{B}xf2! 29. \mathbb{B}xf2 \mathbb{Q}xf2! 30. \mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e3 31. \mathbb{B}b1! \mathbb{Q}h7 32. \mathbb{B}b8 c2 33. \mathbb{W}g8! \mathbb{Q}g6 34. \mathbb{W}e6! \mathbb{Q}h7=$

B22) 18. $\mathbb{B}xd4 \mathbb{W}xd4$



19. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

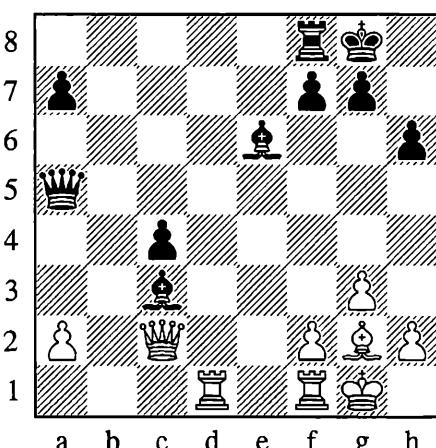
The bishop belongs on this diagonal, where it takes the breathing space h7 from the black king, as well as controlling the vital c2-square.

19. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{W}xc3 20. \mathbb{B}ad1 \mathbb{Q}f6=$ Black is by no means worse here.

19. $\mathbb{B}ad1 \mathbb{W}xc3 20. \mathbb{Q}c6$

With the idea of $\mathbb{Q}c6-d7$.

20... $\mathbb{Q}h3 21. \mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e6$



Black can claim that White has not made great progress (and that the bishop belongs on e4 anyway). The only significant try is:

22. $\mathbb{B}d6 \mathbb{E}e8! \infty$

22... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is too early because of 23. $\mathbb{B}xe6 \pm$.

23. $\mathbb{B}fd1 \mathbb{Q}b4$

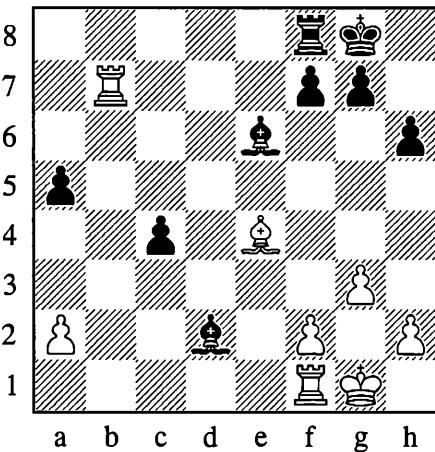
23... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c6 \mathbb{B}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe6 \pm$

24. $\mathbb{B}6d4 \mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e4 \mathbb{B}c8=$

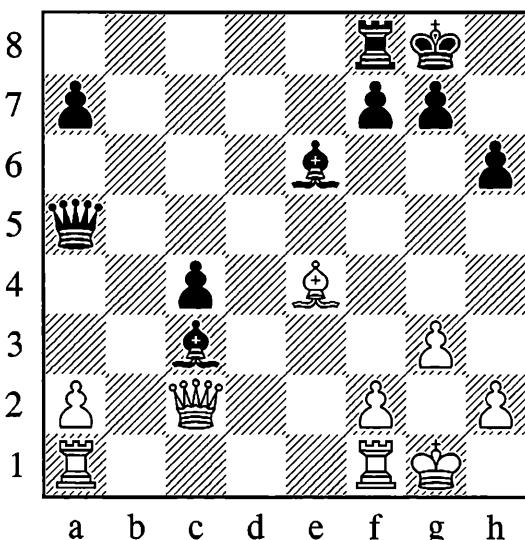
The black pieces are well placed. We do not see any reason why White should be better.

19... $\mathbb{W}xc3$

It is counter-intuitive to exchange queens. After 19... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 21. $\mathbb{B}ab1$ Grivas is right to claim a slight edge for White. 21... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 22. $\mathbb{B}b7$ a5



Black has a fair amount of compensation, but his position lacks dynamism, and he may have to make many good moves should White quietly improve his position.



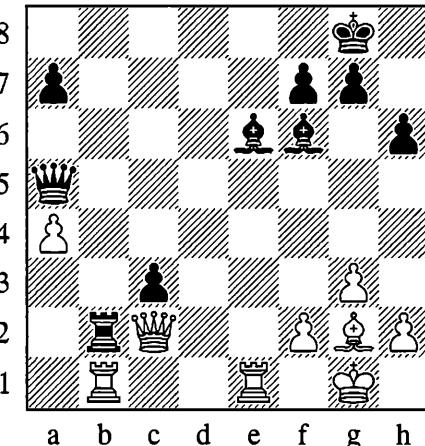
20. $\mathbb{B}ab1$

A three-minute Internet blitz game continued:

20. $\mathbb{B}ac1 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fe1?!$ c3 22. a4 $\mathbb{B}b8!$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b1?!$

23. $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$ $\mathbb{B}b2\bar{T}$

23... $\mathbb{B}b2\bar{T}$



24. $\mathbb{W}e4 \mathbb{W}c5!$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e3 \mathbb{W}xe3?$

25... $\mathbb{Q}d4!+$

26. $f \times e3$ c2 27. $\mathbb{B}bc1 \mathbb{Q}c4$

27... $\mathbb{Q}f5! \bar{T}$

28. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \mathbb{Q}c3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

29. $\mathbb{B}f1 \mathbb{Q}d2$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xc2 \mathbb{Q}xe3\bar{T}$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}xf1\bar{T}$

32. $\mathbb{Q}xf1\bar{T}$

32... $\mathbb{Q}xe1\bar{T}$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe1 \mathbb{Q}b3$ 31. a5 $\mathbb{B}a2-+$ 32. a6 $\mathbb{B}xa6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xc2 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{B}a3$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d2 g5$ 36. h4 gxh4 37. gxh4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 38. $\mathbb{B}c7 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{B}a3\bar{T}$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d4 a5$ 41. e4 $\mathbb{B}a1$ 42. $\mathbb{B}a7 a4$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e5 a3$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}b5 a2$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e8 \mathbb{Q}e1$

And Black won after another 20 moves in ‘Boso’ – Aagaard, Internet (blitz) 2011.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$

Black has comfortable play here. White does not have pressure on the e6-bishop, and Black will have enough counterplay with his two solidly placed bishops and mighty passed pawn. We predict a draw.

21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$

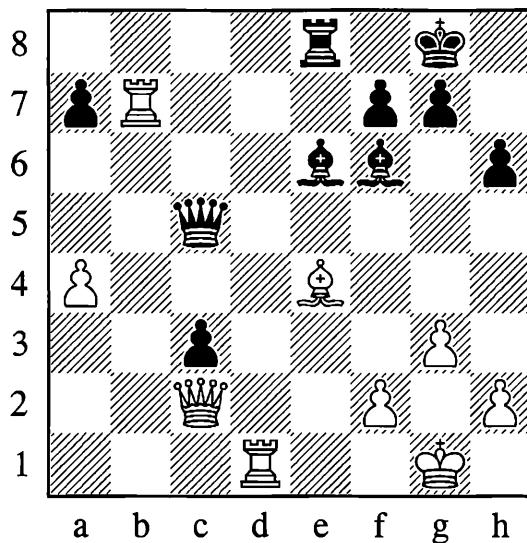
21. a4 a6 will generally transpose.

21... c3 22. a4

22. $\mathbb{B}b7 a6$ 23. a4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}db1 \mathbb{W}e5$ is similar to our main line.

22... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{W}c5\#$

It is hard for us to imagine that White is better here. For example:



25. $\mathbb{B}db1$ $g5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

26... $\mathbb{Q}g7??$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g6\#!$

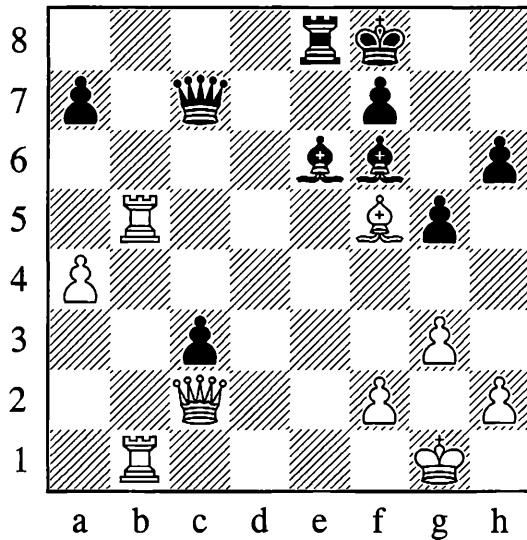
27. $\mathbb{B}7b5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

27... $\mathbb{W}d6!?\#$ is a good move too.

And let's now imagine that White makes a plausible but misguided move.

28. $\mathbb{Q}f5?$

28. $\mathbb{B}b7=$



28... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ 29. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7!$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}e1\#$

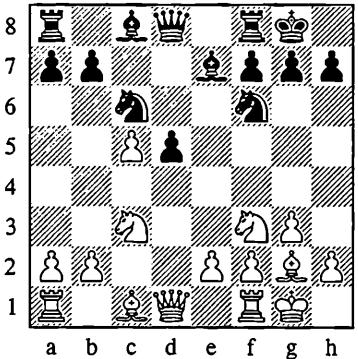
31. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#!$

Conclusion

In our rapid and blitz games when we have been fortunate enough to reach the position after White's 16th move, we have scored very well indeed, but still we need the big test of grandmaster over-the-board play to confirm the value of 16...c5. For now we are claiming that this discovery is worthy of the '!!' we have attached to it. If you don't think so, come and find us – we are ready for you. Grr!



9.dxc5



Minor 10th Moves

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. \mathbb{Q} c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} c6 6.g3 \mathbb{Q} f6 7. \mathbb{Q} g2 \mathbb{Q} e7
8.0–0 0–0 9.dxc5

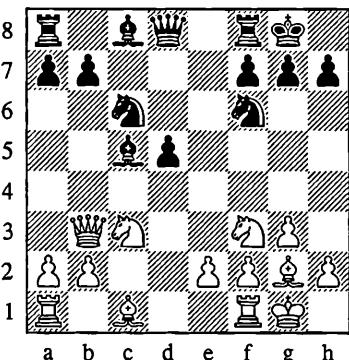
9... \mathbb{Q} xc5

A) 10. \mathbb{W} b3	132
B) 10. \mathbb{Q} e1	133
C) 10. \mathbb{Q} f4!?	133
C1) 11. \mathbb{Q} a4	134
C2) 11. \mathbb{B} c1	136
D) 10.a3! \mathbb{Q} e4!?	137
D1) 11. \mathbb{W} xd5	139
D2) 11. \mathbb{Q} xd5!	141

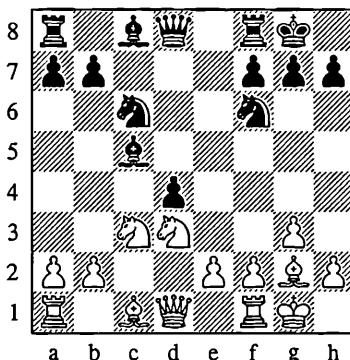
A) after 10. \mathbb{W} b3

B) after 11. \mathbb{Q} d3

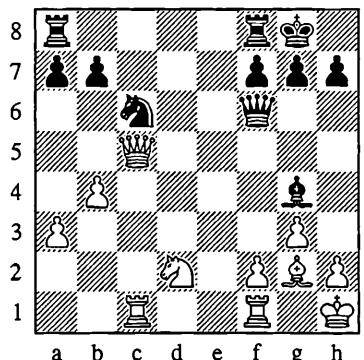
D1) after 16. \mathbb{Q} d2!?



10...h6!N



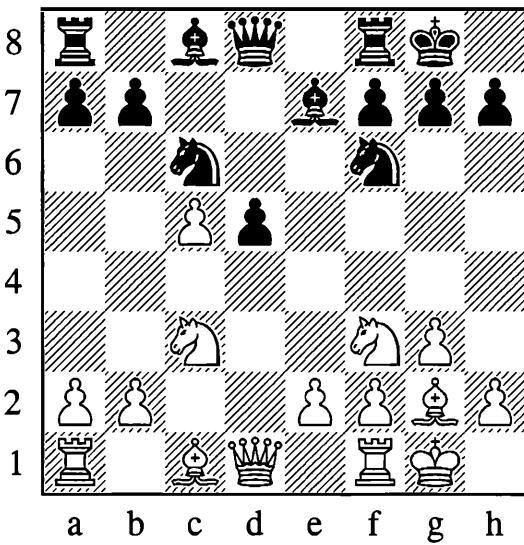
11...Qe7!N



16...Bad8!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0
9.dxc5

Together with 9.♗g5 this is the big main move. The most important lines after this exchange are of course the Timman Variation covered in Chapters 12 and 13, and the line recently recommended by Boris Avrukh, which is covered in Chapter 10. But there are many other lines that have to be met with care, as can be seen in this chapter and Chapter 11.



9...♗xc5

Nowadays this is almost exclusively played. Rather than recapturing the pawn, Tarrasch envisaged a gambit with:

9...d4? 10.♘a4 ♗f5

But today we know the refutation:

11.♗f4! ♗e4 12.♗c1!

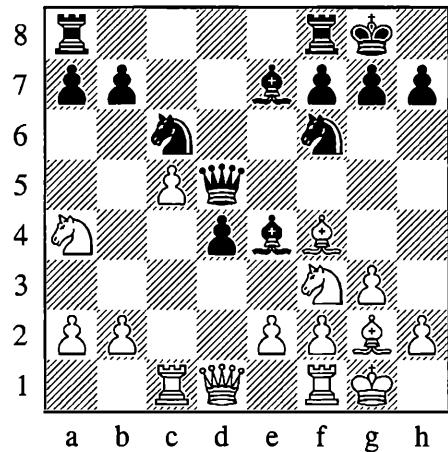
Preparing to play e2-e3, when White will just be a pawn up. He cannot do this immediately because of 12.e3 dxе3 13.♗xe3 ♗xd1 14.♗fxd1 ♗c2+ and Black wins the exchange.

12...♗d5

No other moves work:

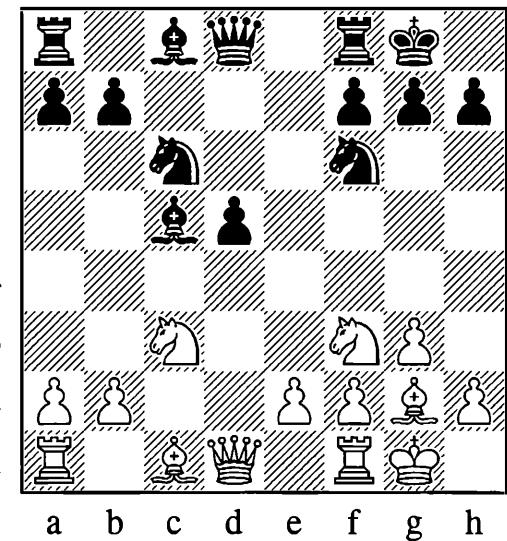
12...h6 13.b4! ♘xb4 14.♗b3 gives White the initiative.

12...♗d7 13.e3!N leaves White much better by simple means.



13.♗b3! ♘h5 14.♗xb7 d3 15.♗fe1+

Black's position is close to disintegration, Fridman – Halkias, Novi Sad 2009.



At this point White has tried a lot of options, which we shall consider over the next few chapters. In this chapter we shall look at the following: A) 10.♗b3, B) 10.♗e1, C) 10.♗f4!? and the treacherous D) 10.a3!.

10.b3 ♗g4 11.♗b2 ♗e8 transposes to 9.b3, which can be found on page 229.

A) 10.♗b3

This has been played a few times. The idea is simple: ♗d1 and ♗g5, in order to undermine the d-pawn. Black has a very simple solution.

10...h6!N

This prevents the main idea.

10... $\mathbb{E}e8N$ is also possible. After 11. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $axb6$ the endgame is not likely to appeal to everyone, but should not be much worse for Black, if at all.

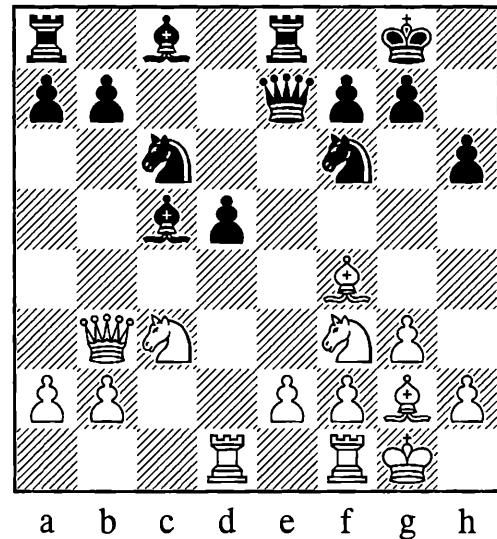
11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

11. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ is well met by: 11... $\mathbb{W}e7!$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (White cannot play 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd5$, because after 13... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $b5$ 17. $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{E}d1\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ he is quickly mated.) 12... $b6!?$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$

11... $\mathbb{E}e8$

11... $g5?!$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xg5!$ looks a bit risky for Black.

12. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$



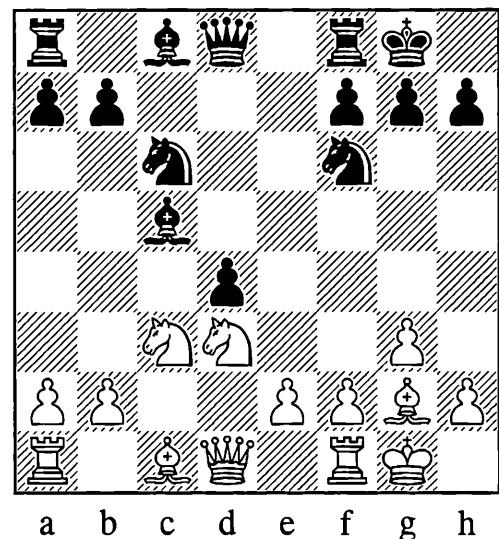
Black has solved all his opening problems. For example:

13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2=$

B) 10. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

This idea is a bit slow and cannot be justified in this exact position. The problem is that the position is not yet devoid of dynamics. If Black quietly plays ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, then $\mathbb{Q}e1-d3-f4$ may be promising. But as it is, Black has good play:

10... $d4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



11... $\mathbb{Q}e7!N$

Only 11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ has been played. After 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}g5$ White may have some chances.

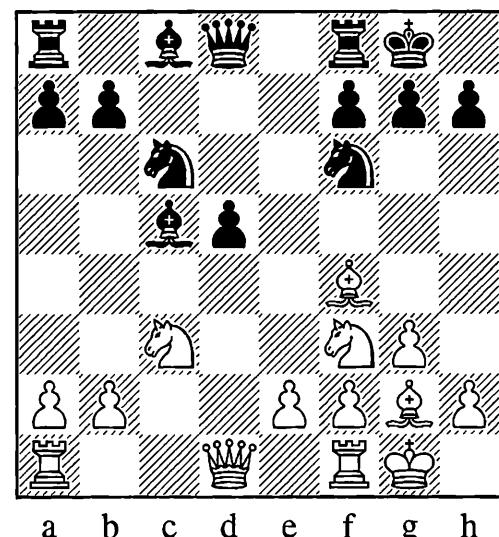
12. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Black has fully equalized. The main point is that White has no good squares for his knight. For example:

13. $\mathbb{Q}ec5?!$ $\mathbb{W}b6\#$

13... $b6?!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxz5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ should also be okay for Black, but there is no need for such extreme measures.

C) 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4!?$



This poisonous move is underestimated by modern theory. White has a simple, yet effective, scheme of development in mind. He wants to play $\mathbb{E}c1$ and put his knights on e5 and c5, followed by continued pressure on Black's position with $\mathbb{W}d3$ and $\mathbb{E}fd1$. That's a lot of moves by White, but Black already has to be careful. After a lot of analysis we have decided that only a novelty can give Black a decent game.

10...h6!

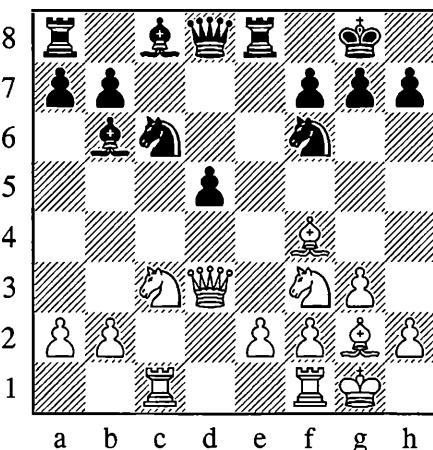
Black has to react to both $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and $\mathbb{Q}g5$ ideas. This is the simplest way of dealing with these. We are a bit pessimistic about the position after other approaches:

10... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 11. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

11... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12. $\mathbb{W}d3\pm$ Simeonidis – Kapnisis, Chalkis 2010.

12. $\mathbb{W}d3!$

Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$.



12...h6

12...d4 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4\pm$ Mosquera – Cranbourne, Buenos Aires 1981.

12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13.h3! $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14. $\mathbb{E}fd1!\pm$ and as far as we can see, White is just better here. On 14... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ he has 15. $\mathbb{W}b5$, and the rook puts real pressure on the black centre.

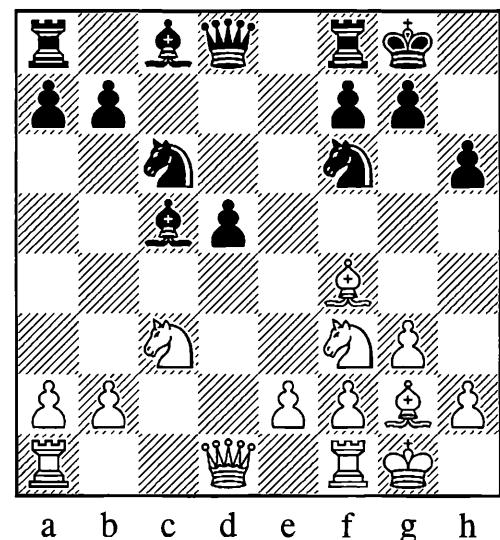
13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

13. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14.e3 $g5\bar{f}$

13... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16.e3 $\mathbb{E}ac8$

The position is close to equal, but White retains a little pressure.

10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is the traditional approach, but it seems a bit risky: 11. $\mathbb{E}c1$ a6!? 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5!N$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ is similar to positions that can arise from 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ cxd4; Black does not benefit from having the moves ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and ...a6 included.) 13.b3 White is preparing to take on f6, and Black has no easy way to deal with it. For example, 13... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14.e3 \pm and it looks more and more as if Black will have to accept an inconvenient doubling of his pawns.



Here we have analysed two options, C1) 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and C2) 11. $\mathbb{E}c1$.

C1) 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

Usually we are not too eager to exchange the dark-squared bishops, but this position is a minor exception. Black is less likely to get weaknesses on the dark squares, and the queen will be well placed on d6. As long as the rest of the pieces prosper, as they will here, such moves are acceptable.

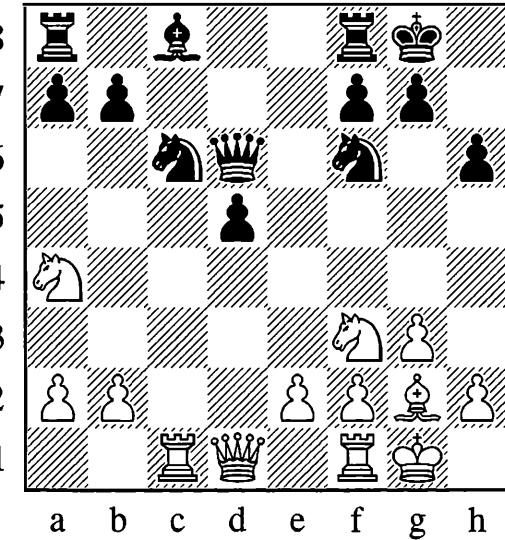
A more passive approach is not advisable: 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}g4?!$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ and 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ are no better) 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ Black has kept the bishops on, but his coordination has suffered.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ does not make sense. Black gains a tempo on the 10. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ line discussed in Chapter 10, and can use this to get his initiative going: 12... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$! Making use of the fact that the bishop is on d6 rather than e7. 14. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4\bar{\bar}$

12... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 13. $\mathbb{E}c1$

A serious alternative is: 13.e3!? $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d4 also looks fine for Black) 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 15. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ If White has any advantage here, it is minimal. The computer tends to prefer White, based on 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (19...h5!?) 20. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xa2$ 25. $\mathbb{E}d7$, but even if Black were to lose the a-pawn, the ensuing rook ending is still drawn.



13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!

Probably this is the best move order.

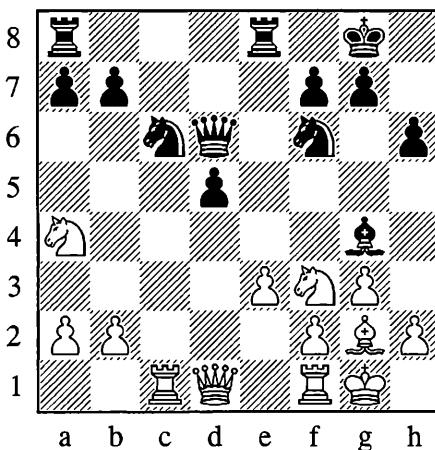
We also analysed the following option in depth:
13... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14.e3

White's idea is to play $\mathbb{Q}d4$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ b6 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ looks fine for Black.
14. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ should also be okay for Black.

14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!

We prefer this to 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, when we reckon that White would play 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ b6 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 20. $\mathbb{E}fd1$. Black can hold this position without too much effort, but you will never win, and you must not be the type of person that loses concentration through boredom. Many players will take this kind of position with White and enjoy their +1=9–0 score immensely.



15.h3!

White needs to prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

After 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$?! $\mathbb{E}ac8$! 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18.b4 a5 19.a3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$! White is struggling a bit: 20.h3 The only move. 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$! 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2\bar{\bar}$

15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xf3$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ transposes to our main line.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

The most flexible. Black does not yet want to decide between c8 and d8 for the queen's rook.

16...d4?! looks premature after 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$.

We don't like Black's position after 16... $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f4$! $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 19. $gxf4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{E}ed8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2\pm$.

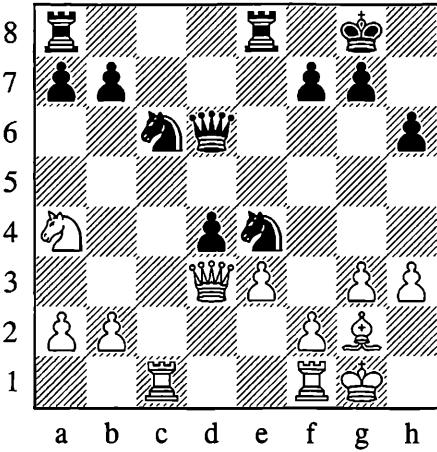
17. $\mathbb{W}e2$

17. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18.b3 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e2$ d4!=

17. $\mathbb{W}f4$! is the move we are a bit worried about: 17... $\mathbb{W}xf4$ (17... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 20.a3±) 18. $exf4$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ What

is the accurate evaluation here? Many would prefer White, but maybe Black is okay.

17...d4 18.♗d3!?



The critical move according to the PC, but...

18...♝xf2!!

A wonderful shot. White does not seem to have any advantage here.

19.♜xf2 ♜xg3 20.♜f3

White has to be very careful. After 20.♗f5?! dxе3 21.♗xf7† ♔h8 22.♜f3 ♜d6 23.♗f4 ♜d2 24.♜ff1 ♜ad8† his position is falling apart.

20...♜g5 21.♗f5 ♜e5 22.♜ff1 ♜xe3† 23.♔h2 d3

Black has strong compensation for the bishop. Around here the position is probably balanced, but White can go astray if he is greedy:

24.♜xb7 ♜ad8 25.♗f4 ♜xf4† 26.♜xf4 d2 27.♜d1 ♜d3 28.♜ff1 ♜e2† 29.♔g3 ♜d4 30.b3 h5

Black's initiative is dangerous.

14.h3

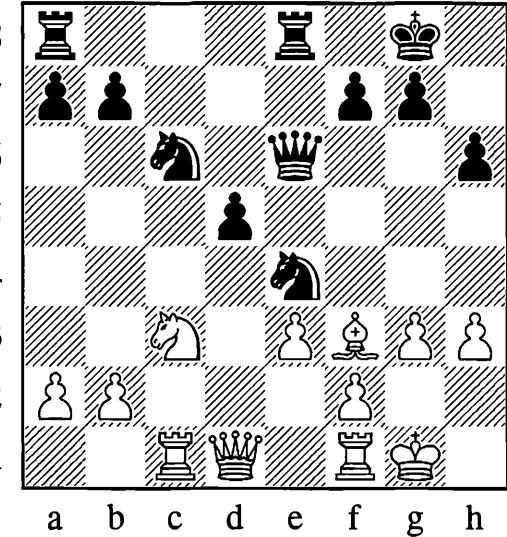
14.e3 ♜e5† would be inconvenient for White; he has to play 15.h3 and give up a pawn to free himself.

14...♜xf3 15.♜xf3 ♜fe8 16.e3 ♜e4

16...♜ad8 17.♕c3 (17.♗b3 is also possible)

17...d4 18.♜xc6 ♜xc6 19.exd4 ♜b6=

17.♕c3 ♜e6



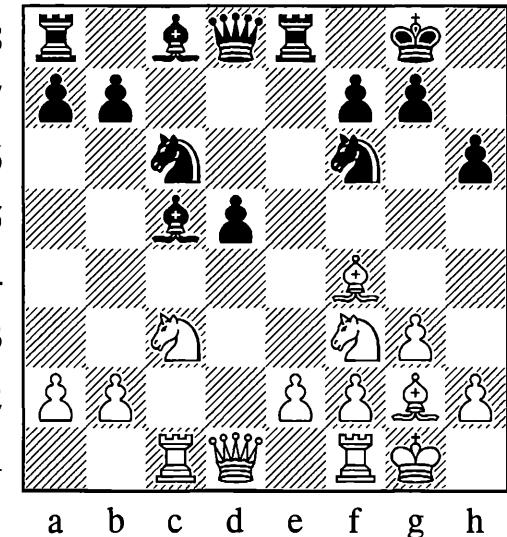
18.♗xd5!?

Otherwise Black equalizes easily. For example, 18.♔h2 ♜ad8 and Black will eventually push ...d4.

18...♜xd5 19.♗xd5 ♜d2 20.♗c7 ♜xf3†
21.♔g2 ♜g5 22.♜fd1 ♜e6 23.♗xa8 ♜xa8
24.♜d7 ♜b8∞

This endgame could go either way.

C2) 11.♜c1 ♜e8!



This seems to be the most flexible approach. We also analysed several other moves, but since Black always puts his rook on e8, it makes sense to do so straight away and keep his options open.

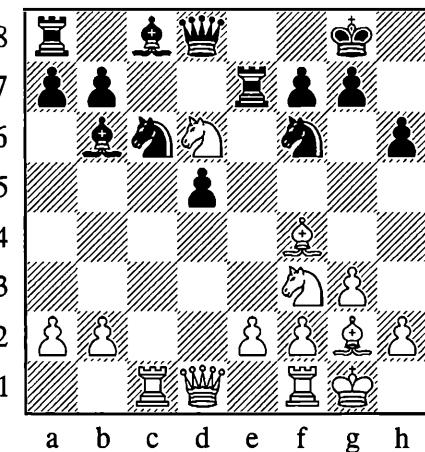
12.♘a4

12.♗d3 gives Black time to play: 12...a6 13.♗fd1 ♜a7 With control over d4, Black can anticipate a decent middlegame. 14.e3 ♜e6 and Black is not worse. If White tries 15.♘e2, Black can reply 15...♗g4! followed by ...♗d7 and ...♗ad8.

12.♘b5

This looks tempting, but the knight achieves little:

12...♗b6 13.♗d6 ♜e7



Black is intending ...♘e4, and in some cases even ...g5!?

14.♗d3

14.a3 leads to similar play: 14...♘e4 15.♘xc8 ♗xc8 (15...♗xc8 is also fine) 16.♘e5 (16.♗xd5? ♘xf2! 17.♗xf2 ♗xe2+) 16...♗e8! (or 16...♗e6!?) 17.♗xe4 dxe4 18.♘xc6 bxc6= 14...♘e4

14...g5!? 15.♘xc8 ♗xc8 16.♗d2 ♘e4 is a bit too flirtatious for our taste, but the engines give it the thumbs up.

15.♘xc8 ♗xc8!?

Heading for e6.

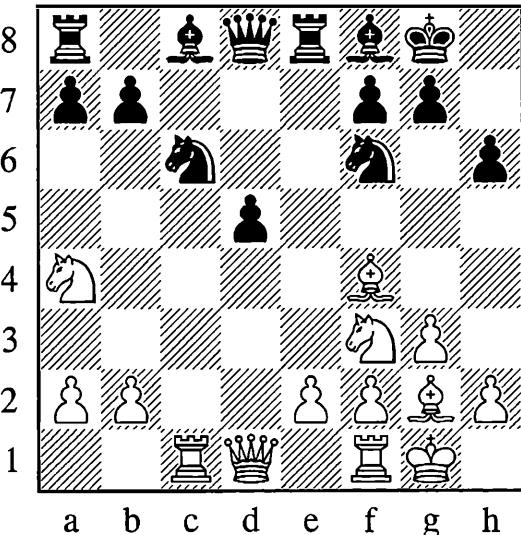
16.♘e5

16.♗xd5? ♘xf2! 17.♗xf2 ♗xe2 18.♗cf1 ♗xb2 19.♗d2 ♗e8 is promising for Black.

16...♗e8 17.♘xc6 bxc6=

12...♗f8!

Black has an active position with even chances. Some possible lines are:

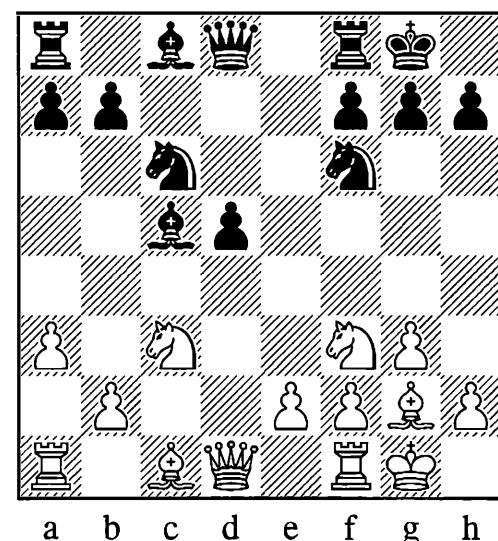
**13.♘d4**

13.♗d3 ♜g4 (intending ...♗d7 and ...♗ad8) 14.h3 ♜h5 15.♗fd1 ♜g6 16.♗b3 ♗d7 Chances are level. If White continues 17.♗c3?! then 17...♘a5! forces him to sacrifice the e-pawn.

13.♘c5 ♜xc5 14.♗xc5 ♗b6 is a typical sequence. After 15.♗c2 ♜f5 16.♗d2 ♗ad8+ Black has an active and attractive game. For example, 17.♗e3 ♗xe3! 18.fxe3 ♗xe3† 19.♔h1 ♜e4 and Black has excellent compensation for the exchange.

13...♗g4 14.♗e1 ♗c8

White has no advantage. Black's position is full of resources.

D) 10.a3!

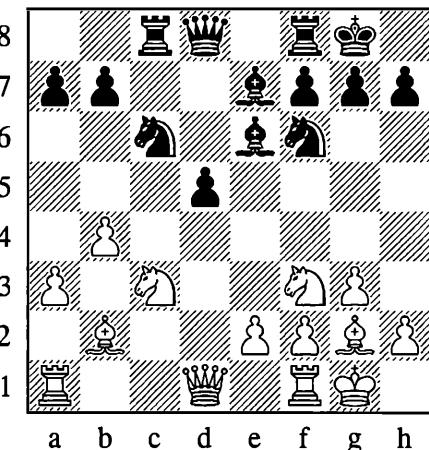
This is a very dangerous system, which we would warmly recommend to White as a surprise weapon. Black needs to meet it accurately, and as far as we can see he has only one way of fighting for equality.

10... $\mathbb{Q}e4!!$

This pawn sacrifice is the right way to proceed. Our analysis of other lines (quickly summarized) goes like this:

10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 13.b5! $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ was Massimini Gerbino – Blauert, e-mail 2006. Here White should probably have tried 16. $\mathbb{W}d3!$ N intending 17. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$, and he is a bit better, with ideas such as $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ followed by e2-e4.



Black's moves have looked natural, but after White's surprising response it becomes evident that things have gone wrong.

13. $\mathbb{W}b1!!$

Nikos found this idea and suddenly realized that this line is a real headache for Black. We later discovered that it had been played once, and Black collapsed as quickly as we would have anticipated.

13. $\mathbb{Q}d4?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ a5! was fine for Black in Rubinstein – Teichmann, San Sebastian 1911.

13... $\mathbb{W}d7$

13...h6 14. $\mathbb{Q}d1\pm$

14. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

This is gruesome enough for Black, but 15.e4!N is even stronger: 15...d4 16.b5 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$ 15...d4 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a2$

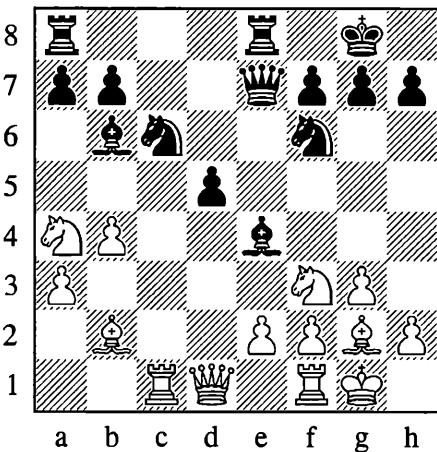
White wins a pawn. Black's best defence is now 17... $\mathbb{W}e8$, but he did not find it and was quickly overrun.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5?!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xd5+-$

Wieczorek – Olenderek, Suwalki 1999.

Creating a retreat for the bishop with 10...a6 11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ looks quite desirable, but 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5\pm$ is just unpleasant.

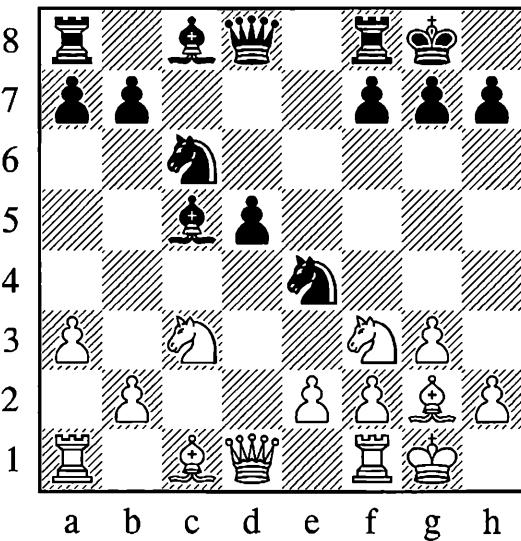
10... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (11... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13.h3! confronts Black with a dilemma – if the bishop retreats to h5 it can no longer protect d5, but if it goes to e6 it will lack dynamism) 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ In two games White has nudged the e-pawn one step forward here. Instead we would prefer:



15. $\mathbb{Q}xb6!$ N axb6 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ White is better here; the b2-bishop is great.

10...a5?! gives White a pleasant choice. 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ was analysed by Mihail Marin in Chapter 14 of *Grandmaster Repertoire 5*, and offers White some advantage, as does 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d4 12. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c1!$.

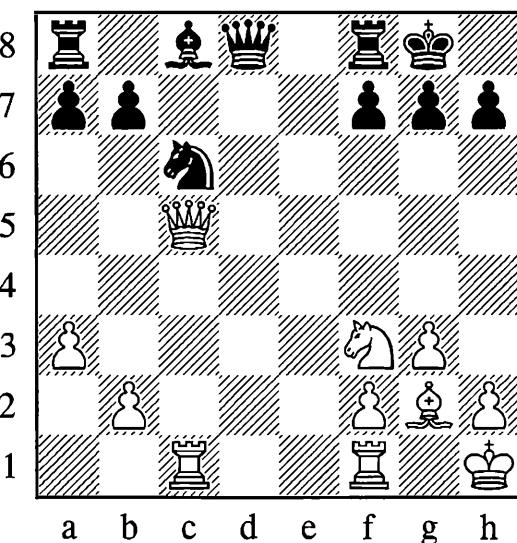
10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ looks a bit better for White as well.



At this point we should look into both captures on d5. **D1) 11. $\mathbb{W}xd5$** is the only move tried in practice, but the alternative **D2) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$** is probably more testing.

11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$, with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and ...d4, gives Black a good game.

**D1) 11. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#$
13. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 14. $\mathbb{R}axc1$**



14... $\mathbb{W}f6$

After much analysis, we have concluded that this is not the only move to offer good chances of equality.

14... $\mathbb{W}e8!?$ N 15. $\mathbb{R}fe1$

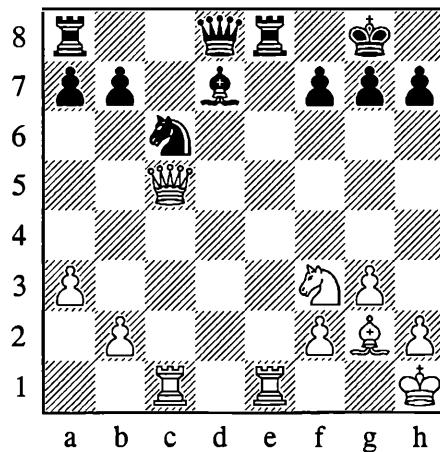
15.b4 h6 16.b5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ is not anything for Black to fear.

15. $\mathbb{R}cd1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ is a much improved version of the main line, so we can stop the analysis here.

15... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$

15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16.h3! is not what we want; the h3-move is likely to prove very useful in almost all lines.

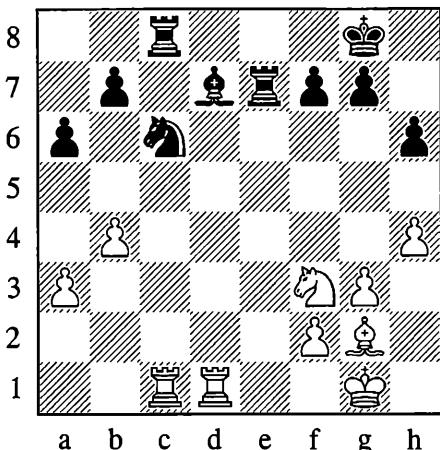
However, 15... $\mathbb{R}xe1\#$ 16. $\mathbb{R}xe1$ h6 looks okay. The main point is that the ending after 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 19. $\mathbb{R}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20. $\mathbb{R}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ should not be a problem for Black.



16. $\mathbb{R}ed1!?$

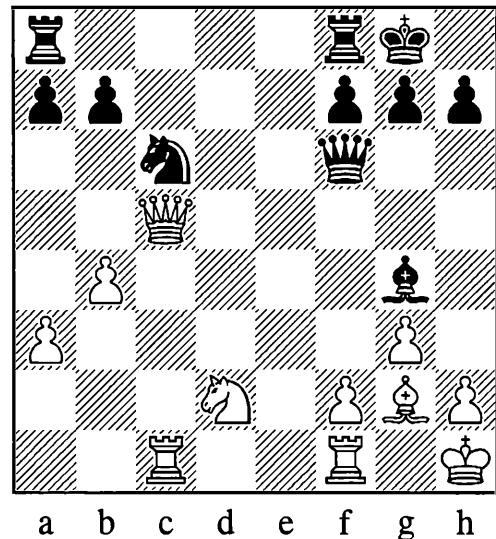
We don't think that exchanging rooks is especially dangerous: 16. $\mathbb{R}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 17.b4 (17. $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ h6=) 17...h6 18. $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c3$ (19. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$) 19... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (20.b5 $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$) 20... $\mathbb{R}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{R}e3$ b6 23. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}e1\#$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe1$ $\mathbb{R}xe1\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{R}xf1\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{R}c1=$ 16... $\mathbb{W}e7!$

Here our original analysis was suddenly ambushed by a very nice tactical idea: 16...h6 17.b4 $\mathbb{R}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ a6 19.h4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e3\#$) 20. $\mathbb{W}xe7!$ (our idea had been 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$! 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{R}e6$, with no problems at all) 20... $\mathbb{R}xe7$



15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2!!$

16. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $h6$
looks quite secure for Black. For example:
19.b5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}ab8=$



16... $\mathbb{B}ad8!$

This is an important resource. Black needs to be in control of the d4-square.

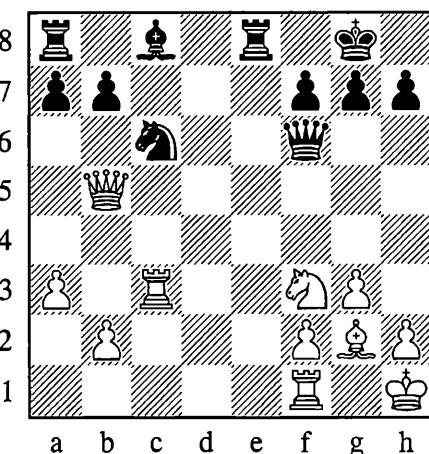
16... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ is weaker. White plays 18. $\mathbb{W}d6!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 21. $gxf4\pm$ and enjoys a superior ending.

17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d4$

We do not think Black has serious problems here. For example:

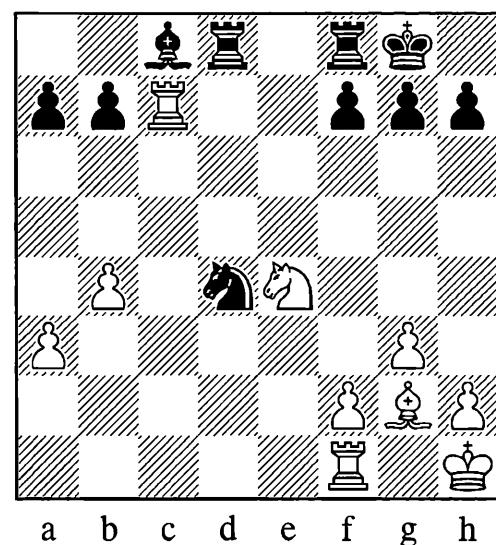
18. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

The rook cannot maintain its strong 7th rank position, so Black quickly gets back in the game.



16... $h6!N$ It is useful to prevent $\mathbb{W}g5$.
17. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}b8!=$ A standard move, enabling the development of the bishop.

15. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 16. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$ is not a problem for Black at all.



21.h4

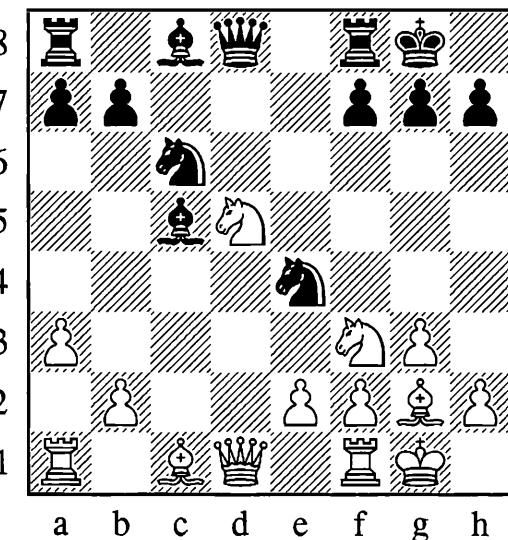
A little trick plays an important part:
 21.♕fc1 ♔b5 22.♕c7c5 (22.♕e7 is equal)
 22...♔xa3! 23.♔a1?! b6! 24.♕c6 ♔b5 25.♔f1
 ♕d4 26.♔xb5 ♕xe4 27.♔xa7 ♕e6# White
 should of course draw, but he has a bit of work
 to do.

21...♔b5 22.♕c5 a6

22...♔xa3 23.♔a1 b6 24.♕xc8!±

23.a4 ♔d4 24.♔c3 b6 25.♔c7 ♕e6=

D2) 11.♔xd5!



Objectively, this seems to be the biggest test, as the position can easily become quite uncomfortable for Black.

11...♕e6 12.♔c3

12.♔e3 f5! cements the knight on e4 and gives Black excellent compensation.

12...♔xc3

We have also analysed exchanging queens immediately, but it does not solve all of the problems:

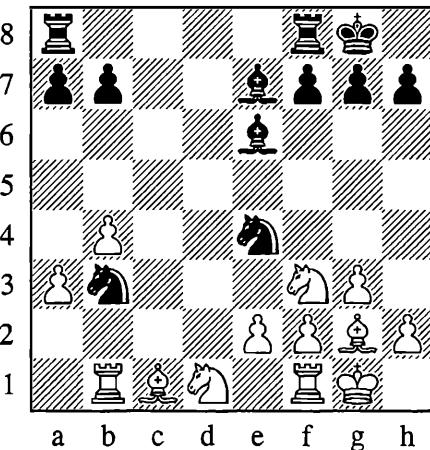
12...♛xd1!? 13.♔xd1 ♔a5 14.b4

14.♔g5 ♔xg5 15.♔xg5 ♔b3 16.♔b1 h6
 17.♔c1 ♔ad8 18.♔e1 (18.♔xb7 ♔f5 19.e4
 ♔h3 20.♔e1 ♔d4#) 18...b6 19.♔e3 ♔fe8

20.♔xc5 ♔xc5 21.♔c3 ♔b3 and Black has decent compensation for the pawn.

14...♔b3 15.♔b1 ♔e7

15...♔b6 16.♔e1±



16.♔xb3

16.♔f4 g5 17.♔e3 f5 18.♔xb3 ♔xb3 19.♔d4
 ♔d5 20.f4 ♔ad8∞

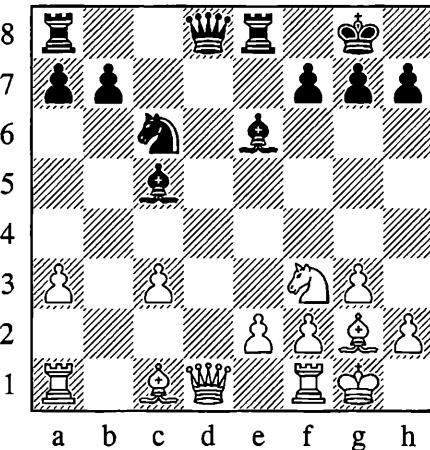
16...♔xb3 17.♔d4 ♔xd1 18.♔xe4 ♔a4
 19.♔xb7 ♔ad8 20.♔c6 ♔xd4 21.♔xa4 a5
 22.♔e3 ♔e4 23.♔c2 ♔xe3 24.♔xe3 axb4 25.a4
 g6 26.♔b3 ♔g7 27.a5 f5 28.a6 ♔a8 29.♔c4±

13.bxc3 ♔xd1

This is the simplest solution, though not the only option.

13...♔e8

This also makes a lot of sense. Black wants to play ...♔c4.



14.♔d3

This is critical.

14.♗e1?! ♗xd1 15.♗xd1 ♘ad8 is an improved version of 13...♗xd1. This line was used by Nikos to convince Jacob that Black had enough counterplay in a Glasgow blitz game. Jacob won, but did not like his position on the way. His comment was: "It is obvious that Black has good compensation in this line. I just won because you are a lousy blitz player!"

14...h6 15.♗f4

What else should White play?

15.♗b1!? ♗f6! 16.♗xb7 ♖a5∞ looks okay for Black too. One computer line goes: 17.♗b2 ♘c4 18.♗d1 ♘xa3 19.♗c2 ♘xc1 20.♗xc1 ♖b3 21.♗a3 ♗xe2 22.♗xe2 ♖xe2 23.♗d4 ♖xd4 24.♗xa8 ♖f3† 25.♗xf3 ♖xf1=

15...g5 16.♗c1 ♖a5

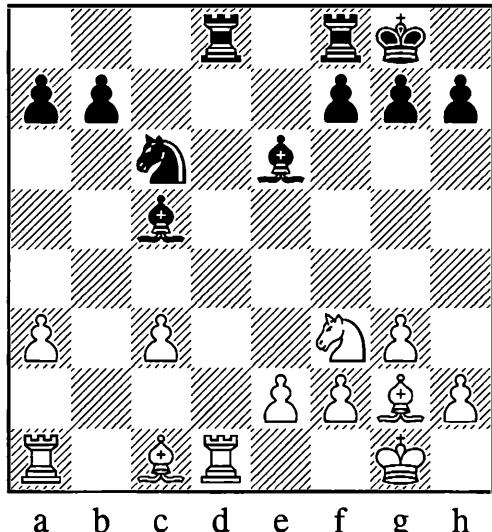
Black is very active; White has problems finding squares for his pieces.

17.♗d4 ♘c4 18.♗f5 ♗xd4 19.cxd4 ♖b3
20.♗e3

Nothing else makes sense.

20...♗xa1 21.♗xa1 ♗c8 22.♗f3 ♗d7∞

14.♗xd1 ♘ad8



15.♗b2

White does not have a clear path to an advantage, although the position is still quite interesting. We have also analysed these alternatives:

15.♗e1 ♗fe8 transposes to Aagaard – Ntirlis, Glasgow (blitz) 2011. A possible continuation is: 16.e3 ♘d5 17.a4 b6∞

15.♗f4 gives the pawn back immediately: 15...♗xd1† 16.♗xd1 ♘xa3 17.♗b1 b6 18.♗g5 ♗c8∞

15.♗xd8 ♗xd8 16.♗f4 is a logical try: 16...f6 Black stops the white knight coming to e5 and has the bonus idea of ...g5 at the right moment. 17.h4 ♘c4 18.♗b1 ♘b6 19.e3 ♘e7 20.♗d4 ♘d5 Black has adequate compensation.

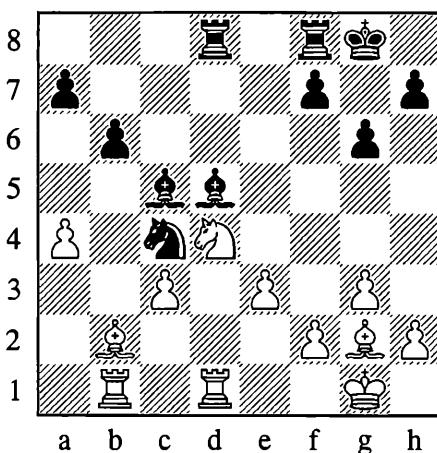
15...♗a5 16.♗d4

16.♗d3 ♘c4 17.♗xd8 ♗xd8 18.♗e1 ♘a6∞

16...♘b3?!

A somewhat radical idea.

Our other main investigation was into: 16...♘d5 17.e3 ♘c4 18.♗ab1 g6 19.a4 b6∞



Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn. White cannot advance his pawns without creating weaknesses, and he cannot dislodge the knight from c4 without giving Black the two bishops. The strength of Black's compensation is underlined by the fact that our PC recommends 20.♗a1 here, which looks entirely mind-boggling to us.

17.♗xb3

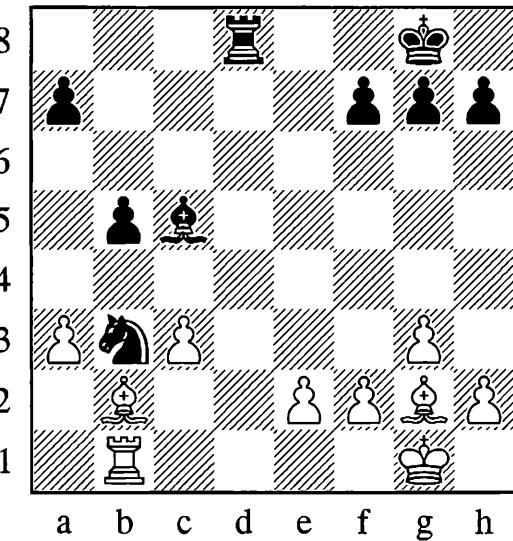
Otherwise Black will put the bishop on a4, fixing the a3-pawn and controlling the d1-square.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xd8$

18. $\mathbb{E}ab1$?! $\mathbb{Q}d2$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ favours Black.

18... $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}b1$ b5

Black has a lot of compensation and is about to violate the serenity of the white position with ... $\mathbb{E}d2$. The most testing move is probably:



20. $\mathbb{Q}c6$

But Black has good counterplay if he reacts energetically.

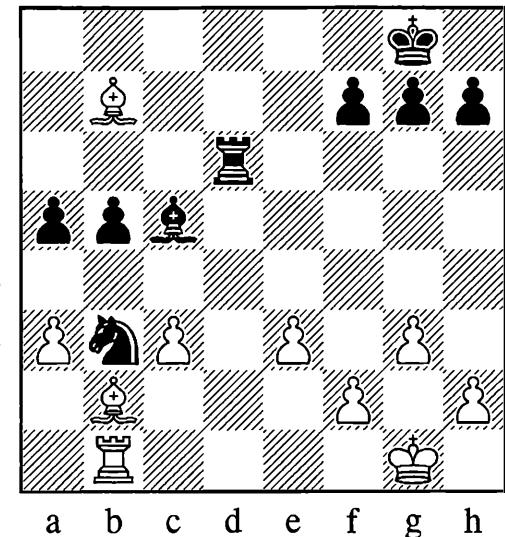
20...a6!

This is probably most accurate, but it is not the only sensible move. Also good is: 20... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 21. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xb5$ a6 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}xf2\infty$

21.e3

Black is also okay after: 21.a4 $\mathbb{Q}d2$! 22. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{B}xa4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 24. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 26.e3 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{B}b1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8=$

21... $\mathbb{E}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ a5 ∞



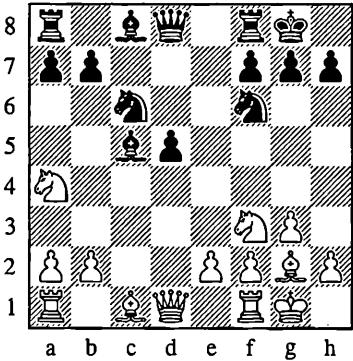
Black is by no means worse.

Conclusion

After 9.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ White has a variety of options which, although they don't objectively lead to an advantage, can nevertheless cause the unprepared player a lot of difficulties over the board. We strongly recommend studying these variations carefully and learning the most important points by heart, so that you are not caught unprepared in something troublesome, such as the 10.a3! variation. It took us long enough with the aid of computers to find a solution we could trust. Left to your own devices, you might find this task impossible.

Chapter 10

9.dxc5



Reti Variation

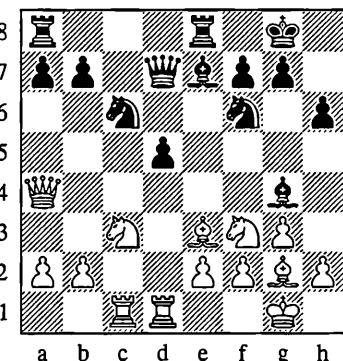
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♕e7
8.0-0 0-0 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.♘a4

10...♕e7!

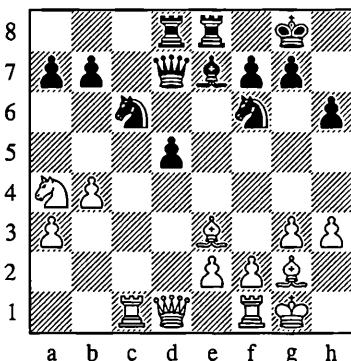
A) 11.♘d4	145
B) 11.b3	147
C) 11.♗e3 ♗g4!	149
C1) 12.♗c5	150
C2) 12.♗c1 ♗e8	151
C21) 13.♘d4	151
C22) 13.♘c3	153
C23) 13.♗e1	154
C24) 13.h3	156
C25) 13.♘c5	158

C22) after 15.♗fd1



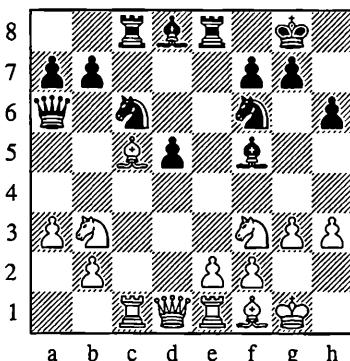
15...♗b4!N

C24) after 17.b4



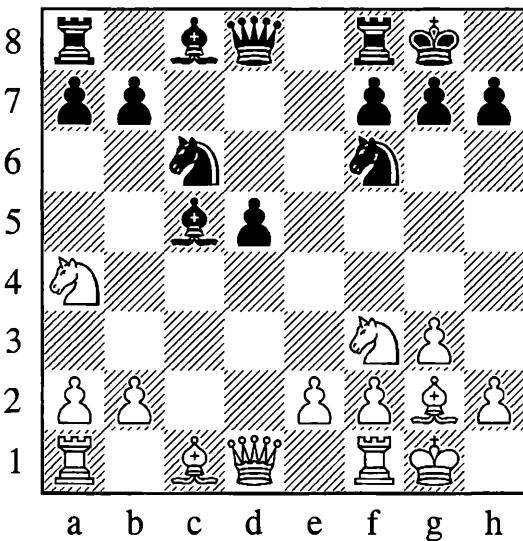
17...d4!N

C25) after 19.♗f1



19...b6!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.g3 Qf6 7.Qg2 Qe7 8.0-0 0-0
 9.dxc5 Qxc5 10.Qa4



This was first played in Reti – Euwe, Amsterdam 1920. More recently, in 2008 it was Boris Avrukh's recommendation against the Tarrasch in his hugely successful book, *Grandmaster Repertoire 1 – 1.d4 Volume One*. You are therefore very likely to meet this line in practice; but don't worry, we think we have got you covered on this one.

10...Qe7!

Just like Avrukh, we have found that this is the best move for Black. Now White has a wide range of options, which we have analysed. Not all of them were easy to deal with, but eventually we came up with what we think are strong solutions to everything.

White's main options are: A) 11.Qd4, B) 11.b3 and the main line (and Reti's original idea) C) 11.Qe3.

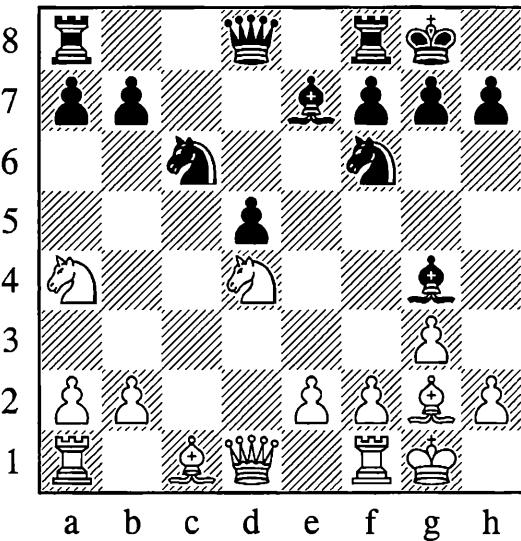
11.Qf4 has yet to be tried in practice, and could be met by 11...Qe8 12.Qc1 Qg4, when 13.h3 Qxf3 14.Qxf3 Qd7 15.Qh2 Qad8 is typically good for Black.

11.Qb3 is another untried possibility that

can be met simply by 11...b6!? with the idea of ...Qe6 and ...Qc8, or by 11...Qa5 12.Qd3 b5!? 13.Qc3 (13.Qxb5? Qd7 14.Qa6 Qe4!+) 15.Qc3?! Qc5!–) 13...b4 14.Qb5 Qa6 15.a4 bxa3 16.bxa3 Qe4 with typical Tarrasch counterplay.

A) 11.Qd4 Qg4

11...Qe8 12.Qe3 is very similar to the variation with 9.Qg5 cxd4, and is probably a bit better for White.



12.h3

This has been played only once, but otherwise Black will play ...Qd7 with fine play:

12.Qe3 Qd7 13.Qxc6 bxc6 14.Qc1

14.Qe1 is well met by Qb4!.

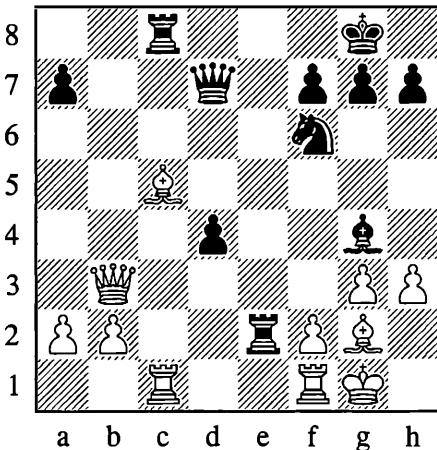
14...Qfe8

14...Qh3N 15.Qc5 Qxc5 16.Qxc5 Qfe8
 17.f3 Qxg2 18.Qxg2 Qb7 19.Qd4 Qd7
 20.e3 Qe6 offers an interesting middlegame with pluses for both sides.

15.Qc2 Qac8 16.Qd4

16.Qfd1 was tried in Teplitsky – Cooper, Sunningdale 2008. Probably the most natural reply is 16...h5!N with play on the kingside.

16...c5 17.Qxc5 Qxc5 18.Qxc5 Qxe2 19.Qb3 d4 20.h3



20... $\mathbb{Q}xh3!?$ N

20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d3!$ N (21. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $d3\bar{=}$ Novikov – Ehlvest, USSR 1983) 21... $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc8\uparrow$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b1\bar{=}$ would give Black a bit of defending to do, with no hope of actually winning the game.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ N 21. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ also seems to equalize, but with more play left in the game.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}ce8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$

24. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $a5$

25... $\mathbb{B}8e3!?$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 27. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ should also draw pretty easily.

26. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}e1$ 27. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}1e6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$

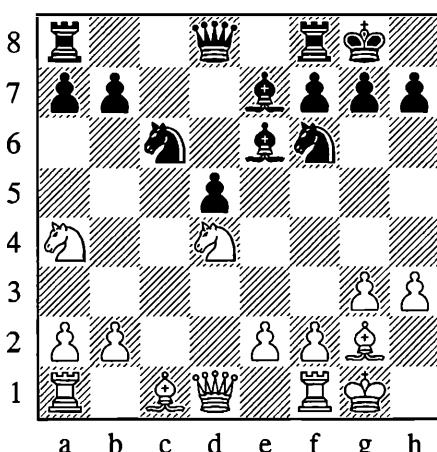
29. $gxh4$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ 30. $f4$ $\mathbb{B}a4$ 31. $a3$ $\mathbb{B}e2$ 32. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}xf2$

33. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{B}xf4\uparrow$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{B}d4=$

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$ N

We are not entirely sure about the chances of equalizing in positions where White has the option of playing $\mathbb{Q}xe6$, therefore we prefer to put the bishop on d7.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$



13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $h5\infty$ is a decent version of this type of position. After the thematic 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ Black can play 16... $h4!$, based on 17. $g4?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d6\uparrow-$.

13... $\mathbb{W}d7!?$ N

13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ Ulko – Potkin, St Petersburg 1998.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

This seems to be the only way for White to try to achieve anything.

14... $fxe6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

15... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$

Those in love with the two bishops will strive for White in this position. But not all would agree, and probably there are those out there that think Black's position looks fine.

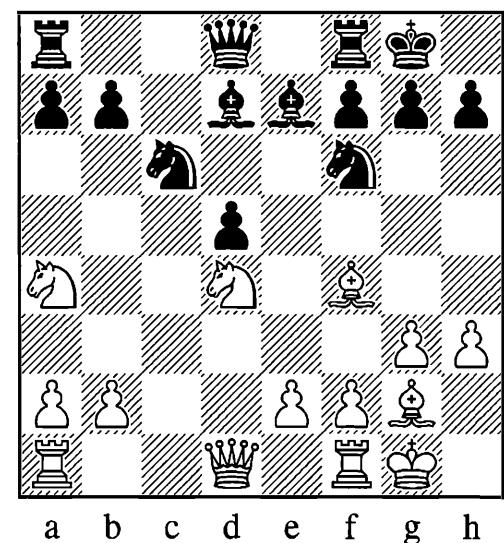
13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Other White options are:

13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (or 13... $\mathbb{Q}a5$) gives Black fine play because there is no $\mathbb{Q}xe6$.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ and Black has great play which is typical for those positions. For example, 18. $\mathbb{B}c1$ can be well met by any of 18... $h5$, 18... $\mathbb{Q}e4$, 18... $\mathbb{W}e6$ or 18... $\mathbb{W}a6$.

13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is answered with 13... $h6$ or 13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$.



13...♝c8 14.♝c1 ♝e8 15.♝c5

A very sharp position arises after:

15.♛h2 ♜h5? 16.♝e3 ♜d6

White has to play very accurately not to be worse.

17.♝b3! ♝e7

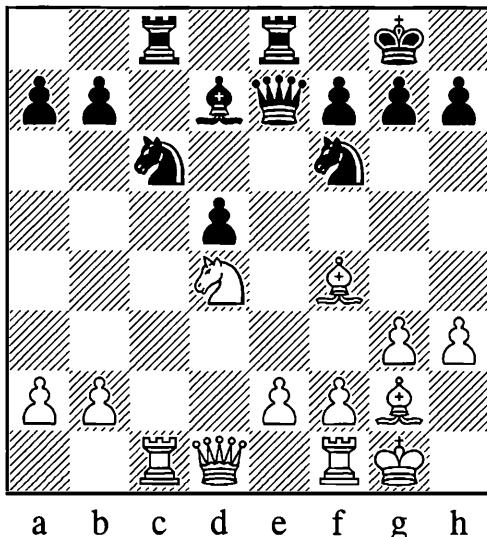
Another forcing line in which both sides must find a lot of only moves is: 17...♝h4?!

18.♝xd5 ♜xg3† 19.fxg3 ♝xg3† 20.♛h1 ♜xh3 21.♝f5 ♜g4 22.♛h2 ♜xg2 23.♝xg2 ♝xa4 24.♝xg7† ♜xg7 25.♝h6†=

If Black wants to keep the position alive, then 17...♝e5?! is worth considering.

18.♝b5 d4 19.♛g5! ♜xg3† 20.fxg3 ♝xg5 21.♝xf7† ♜h8 22.♝xd7 ♝xg3† 23.♛h1 ♜e5 24.♝d6! ♜g3† 25.♛g1 ♜xe2† 26.♛h1 ♜g3†=

15...♜xc5 16.♝xc5 ♝e7 17.♝c1



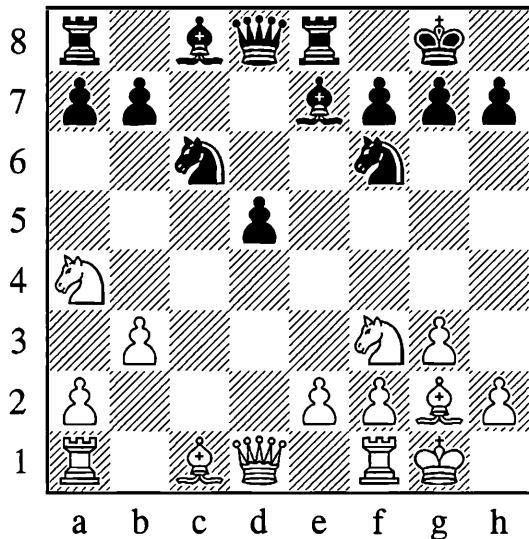
17...♝xd4 18.♝xd4 ♝xe2 19.♝e3 b6∞

White will have to play very energetically in order to prove that he has enough compensation for the pawn.

B) 11.b3

“Interesting” according to Boris Avrukh, but not a great problem according to us!

11...♝e8!



The start of the “master plan”. The e-file may look closed for now, but it can be opened at any time. For this reason, the c8-bishop should go to g4 and not e6. This is possible because the knight is not on c3, and so there is no need to defend d5, for now at least.

12.♝b2 ♜g4 13.♝c1

13.h3 ♜xf3! Exchanging and gaining time is the typical and strong idea in this position. (However, 13...♝e6 14.♝d4 ♜d7 15.♛h2 ♜ac8, with the idea of ...h5, also looks decent.)
14.♝xf3 ♜d7 15.♛h2 ♜ad8 16.♝c1 ♜e4=

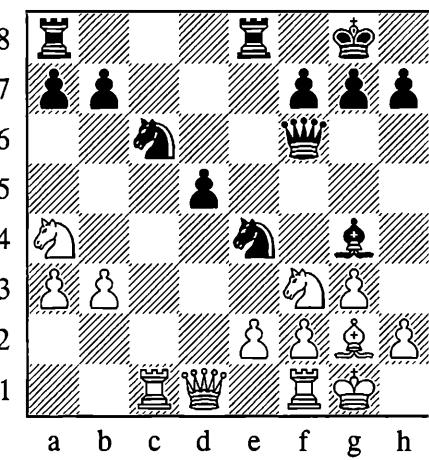
13...♝c8

Also worthy of consideration is:

13...♝e4 14.a3

14.♝d4 ♜xd4 15.♝xd4 ♜f5!=

14...♜f6 15.♝xf6 ♜xf6=

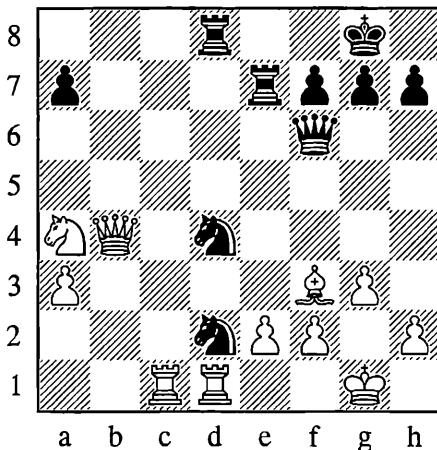


Van Seters – Medina Garcia, Las Palmas 1973. Now White has to be careful not to become greedy:

16.♕xd5? ♜ad8 17.♕b5 ♜xf3 18.♕xf3 ♜d4
19.♕xb7 ♜d2 20.♕fd1 ♜2xb3 21.♕b1 ♜d2

Black wins the exchange because of the threat of ...♜e7! forcing the white queen to a poor square. For example:

22.♖bc1?! ♜e7 23.♗b4



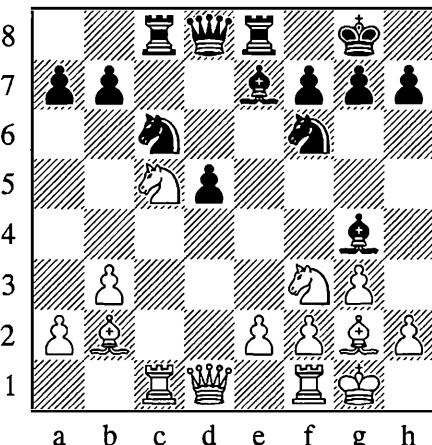
23...♜xe2!! 24.♕xe2 ♜xe2† 25.♔g2 ♜f3†
26.♔h3 ♜xc1 27.♜xc1 ♜e4+–

14.a3

We have also analysed the following options:

14.♗c5?!

This is best met with:



14...♝e4!N

A strong improvement, even if Black had a pleasant enough ride after 14...♝a5 15.♗d3

♝e4 16.a3 ♜b6 17.♗f4 ♜c5 18.♗d3 ♜d6
19.b4 a5– in Giffard – Nunn, Ostend 1975.

15.♗xb7

It is hard to make sense of the white position without this move.

15...♝d7 16.♗a5?!

This is the tactic White was relying on, but Black can effectively counter it.

16...♝xa5 17.♗e5 ♜xc1 18.♗xc1 ♜e6
19.♗xg4 ♜c3 20.♗d2 ♜b4 21.♗g5 d4=

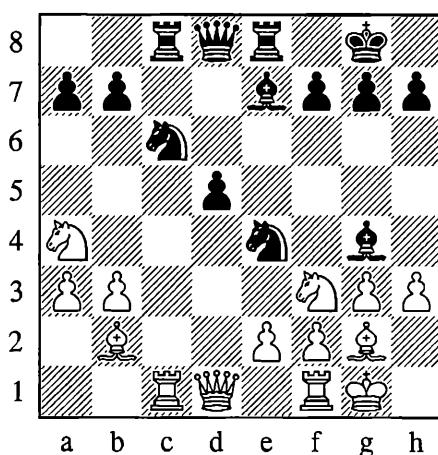
Black's advantage might be small, but White's inconvenience is great!

14.h3 ♜f5 15.♗d4 ♜g6= transposes to 9.b3, see page 229.

14.♗d4?! ♜xd4 15.♕xd4 ♜xe2 did not give Black any problems in Fuka – Vyskocil, corr. 1998.

14...♝e4 15.♗d3

15.h3 is also relevant.



Here we have analysed two good options for Black:

a) 15...♔h5 16.b4 a6 17.♔a1 ♔f8

Black is okay around here, but so is White. For the next little while though, it turns out that Black plays the better moves.

18.♜e1 ♔g6 19.♗h4 ♔h5 20.♗f3 h6 21.♗b3
b5! 22.♗c3

22.♗b2 was played in Todorovic – Dabetic,

Cetinje 1993. Now Black should simply play: 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$ N 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (after 23. $exf3?$ Black wins with 23... $\mathbb{Q}xg3!!$ 24. $fxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{W}e6\uparrow$ followed by a deadly check on e2) 23... $\mathbb{Q}d2\bar{f}$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3\uparrow$ 25. $exf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ a5 \bar{f} with a nice initiative.

22... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

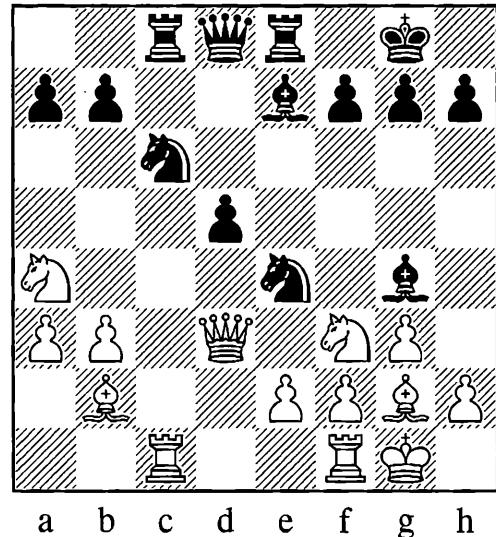
Otherwise Black is just better.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Black has good play.

b) 15... $\mathbb{Q}f5!?$ N In our opinion this is the better retreat square; Black should keep the h3-pawn under attack. 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ This is the most natural, but Black has a good reply. 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ Black is at least equal.

15.b4 b5 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ and a draw was agreed in Kalinitchew – Novik, Novosibirsk 1989. 17.bxc5 a6, with ideas such as ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, seems level indeed.



15... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$

This is a good move, but also interesting is: 15... $\mathbb{W}a5!?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 18.e3 $\mathbb{Q}ed8=$

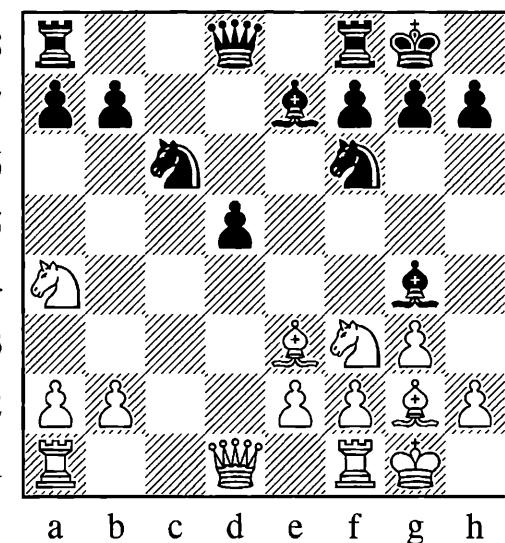
16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 17.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 18.g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$
19. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}cd8\bar{w}$

A typical case of excellent black compensation for the d5-pawn. A game between two well known players continued:

20. $\mathbb{W}c4$ h5 21. $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $hxg4$
23. $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$

Black had an excellent position in Uhlmann – Nunn, Hastings 1976.

C) 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$



This introduces a variation of great instructional value, frequently seen in games at club level. The two main lines here are C1) 12. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and C2) 12. $\mathbb{Q}c1$. Let's have a cursory look at the other moves:

12.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$

This is how we usually react to h2-h3 in this line. Black gains a tempo by attacking the h3-pawn and uses this to quickly get the rook to d8. Then he can either push the d-pawn or keep it on d5 and play for a kingside attack with the help of moves such as ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$, ...h5-h4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-e6$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$

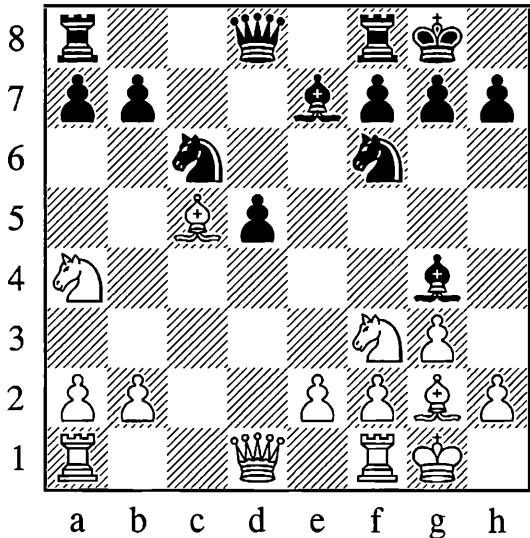
Black is more than fine. He will play ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and ... $\mathbb{W}f5$ with play against the king, while White lacks any real targets.

12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ can be met either with 12... $\mathbb{Q}e5=$

intending ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, or simply with 12... $\mathbb{W}d7$, transposing to the note to White's 12th move in line A.

12. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ gives Black even chances.

C1) 12. $\mathbb{Q}c5$



12... $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$

Usually we don't want to play this exchange, but this time we gain a useful tempo on the knight.

We also analysed the following line, but don't think it offers even chances: 12... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16.exf3! (16. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ is okay for Black) 16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17.f4± Reshevsky – Ivkov, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

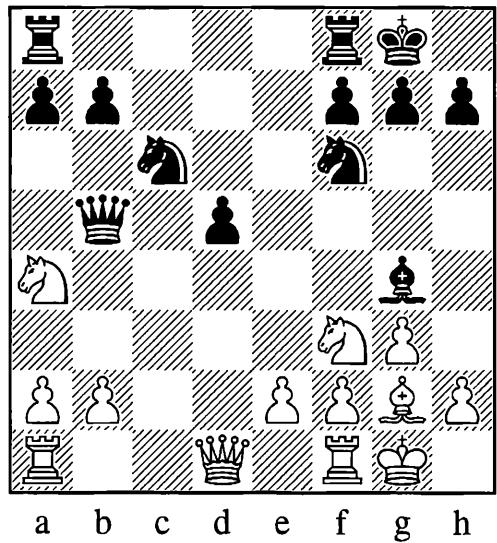
The only move tried in practice.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d3N$ does not promise White anything: 14... $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$!?) 16.b3 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ offers Black good play, for example, 17. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$! 15... $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ Black is at least equal here.

14. $\mathbb{Q}b3N$ a5! seems good for Black as well.

14... $\mathbb{W}b5$

Black has even chances. For example:



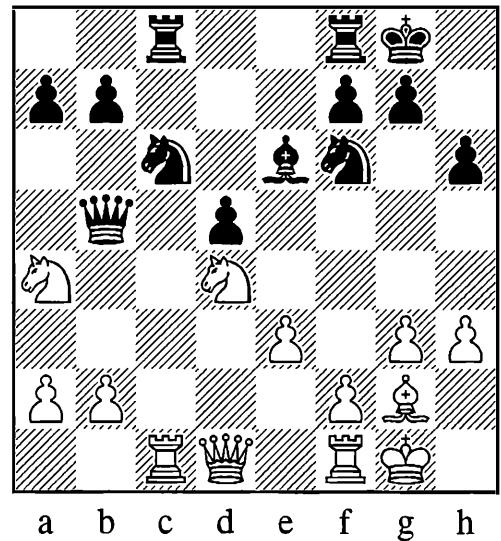
15. $\mathbb{Q}c1N$

15.h3N $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ (16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c4$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ = gives White the task of winning his pawn back) 16...d4! 17.b3 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ Black is at least equal, based on: 18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ d3! 19.exd3 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 20.g4? $\mathbb{Q}xg4$! 21.hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ +

15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$!?) also offers Black good play) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ ½–½ Lengyel – Cobo Arteaga, Odzaci 1978. Black is of course not worse.

15... $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17.e3 h6 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

18.b3 $\mathbb{W}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d2$ d4=



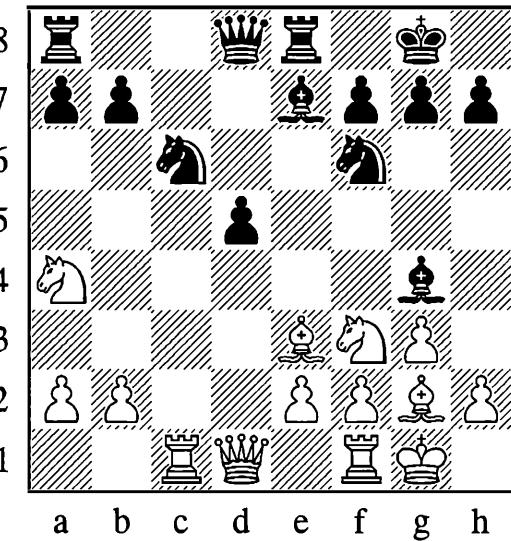
18...Qxd4 19.Qxd4 Qe4 20.Qc3 Qxc3

Black can also get away with the more exotic: 20...Wxb2 21.Qxd5 Wxc1 22.Qe7† Qh8 23.Qxe4 (23.Qxc1 Qxc1† 24.Qh2 Qc4†) 23...Wc4 24.Qxc8 Qxc8 25.Qxb7 Qxh3=

21.Qxc3 Qxc3 22.Qxc3 Wa4 23.a3 Qc8

This is fine for Black.

C2) 12.Qc1 Qe8



After a long investigation, we have concluded that this somewhat counterintuitive move is the only good move in this position. The offer to give up the bishop for the knight is justified by the lifting of the blockade of the d4-square, and the recent weakening of the dark squares in the white position.

None of the alternatives can be recommended:

14... $\mathbb{Q}h3$?N 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$! (15. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ = is a nice line, but it is not going to happen) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$! $\mathbb{W}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ ±

14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ N 15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ ±

14... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!

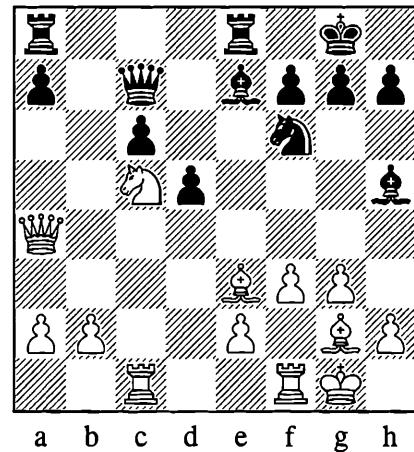
15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a4$ and a draw was agreed in Markus – Halkias, Vrnjacka Banja 2010. 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$! seems fine for Black.

15... $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ N

16... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ ±

Yeremenko – Jakymov, Simferopol 2000.

17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ ±



The main point is that Black cannot play:

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$!±

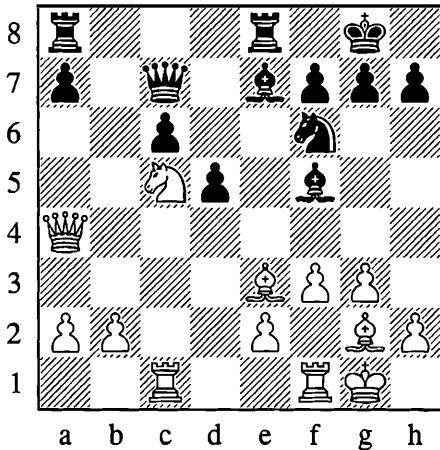
15. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$

Of course this is not forced, but it is indeed very tempting.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 17.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ = looks fully playable for Black.

16... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$



This is far less effective here than after 14... $\mathbb{Q}h5$. Black can play:

17... $\mathbb{Q}d6$!

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ = is also viable, although we prefer not to take on such a passive position.

18. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

With a fine game for Black. White's best might be:

21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $c5$ ∞

15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

15... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$? is likely to transpose.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$

17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $b5$ ∞

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $b5$ 19.a3 a5∞

A draw seems to be the likely result. White will either have to retreat, or go for:

20.e3 b4 21.axb4 axb4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26.f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$ †=

15... $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

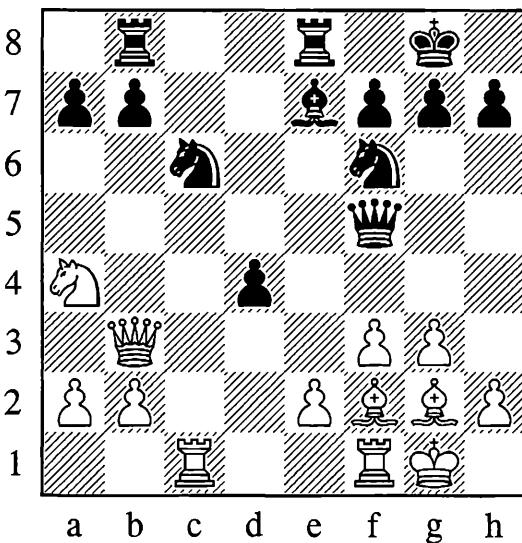
16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ d4 17. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ transposes.

16...d4

16... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$? 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$

19. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $d4\rightleftarrows$ is also viable. Both players have plenty of chances.

17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$



18. $e4!$

This is probably best, solving the issue of the e3-square in a direct way. Obviously, it also solves Black's problem of having an isolated pawn.

18. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

This is innocuous and allows Black some active options.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

Black seizes the initiative.

It might also be interesting to play 19... $\mathbb{E}e6!?$, preparing ...b5.

20. $e4!$

White has nothing better

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ gives Black good compensation. His plan is ...b5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. White can easily get into trouble: 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}hxg3$ $\mathbb{W}xg3\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}ec8!$ (threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$) 27. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $a6!?$ Preventing the white queen from coming to b5. 29. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}f2\uparrow$

20... $dxe3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exf2\uparrow$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$

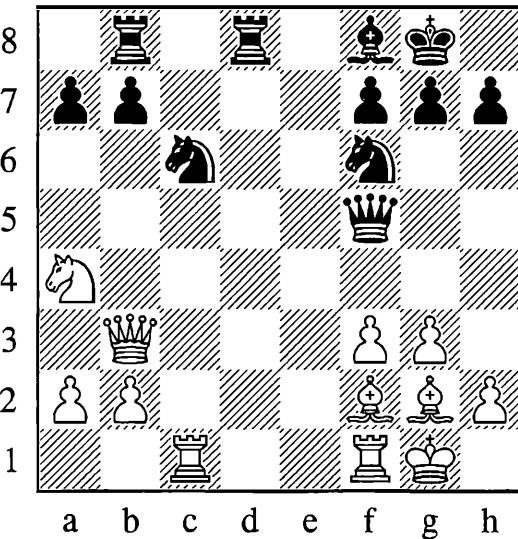
Black's position is more pleasant, but not significantly better.

18... $dxe3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

20. $\mathbb{Q}fe1!?$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\uparrow$ exposes many weak squares in the white position.

20... $\mathbb{Q}ed8=$

The two bishops don't give White anything on this occasion. For example:

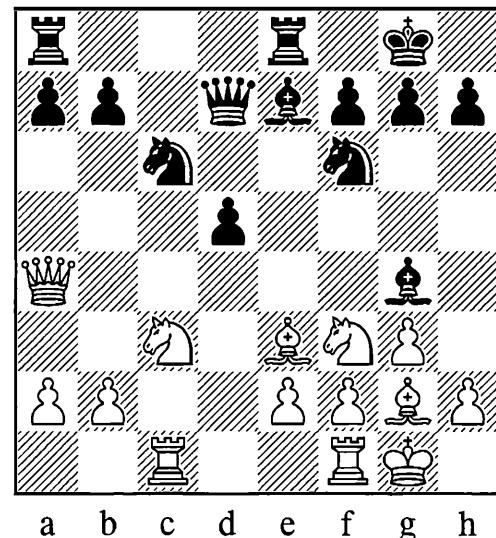


21. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1\uparrow$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $b5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c3!$

23. $\mathbb{Q}c3?$ $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ traps the queen.

23... $bxa4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $h5\infty$

C22) 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}a4$

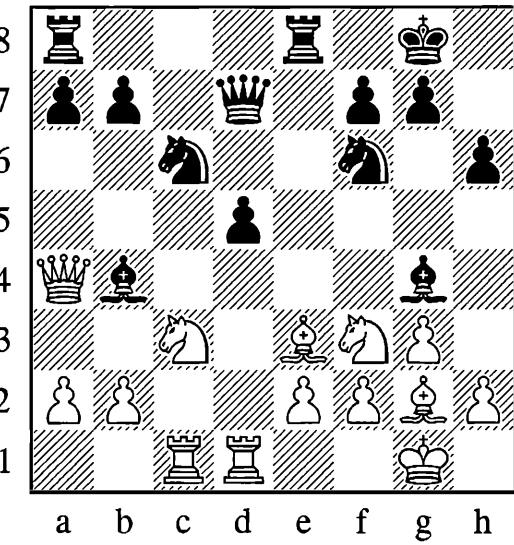


This seems to be a critical continuation, but we have found a solution.

14...h6 15.♗fd1 ♘b4!N

This is quite a thematic novelty. The bishop will be exchanged for the knight, leaving the d5-pawn less vulnerable, while Black is able to continue his counterplay on the kingside.

15...♗f8 might not be fully satisfactory for Black after 16.♕e1!N, when White looks better. Instead, 16.♗d4 ♘ac8 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♘xa7 ♗f5 19.♗a4 ♘xe3!∞ was glorious for Black in Tregubov – Akopian, Khanty-Mansiysk (1.8) 2009.

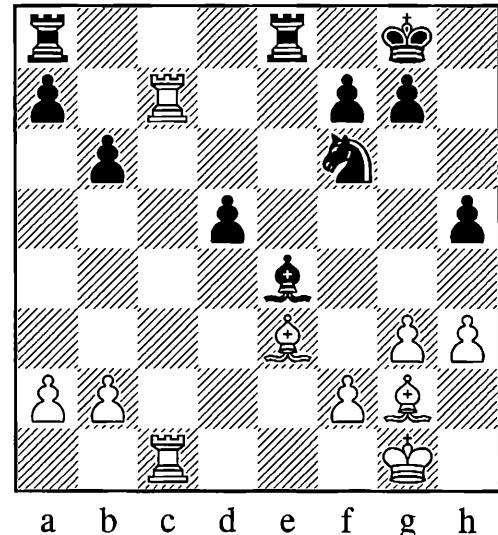
**16.♗d4**

16.♗b5 ♘ad8∞ leaves Black ready for the typical ...d4 push. The following may not be the best moves, but they are quite plausible: 17.a3 ♘xc3 18.♗xc3 d4 19.♗cc1 ♘d5 20.♗d2 a6 21.♗c5 d3!→

16...♘xc3 17.♗xc3

17.bxc3 leads straight to a draw, if Black wants it: 17...♗xd4 (17...a6! may be even better) 18.♗xd4 ♘xa4 19.♗xa4 ♘xe2 20.♗xa7 ♘xa7 21.♗xa7 ♘a8 22.♗d4 ♘c4 23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.♗d1 ♘xa2 25.♗xd5 ♘xd5 26.♗xd5 ♘c2=

17...♗xd4 18.♗xd4 ♘xe2 19.♗d1 ♘f5 20.h3 h5 21.♗c7 b6 22.♗f4 ♘xf4 23.♗xf4 ♘d3 24.♗e3 ♘e4=



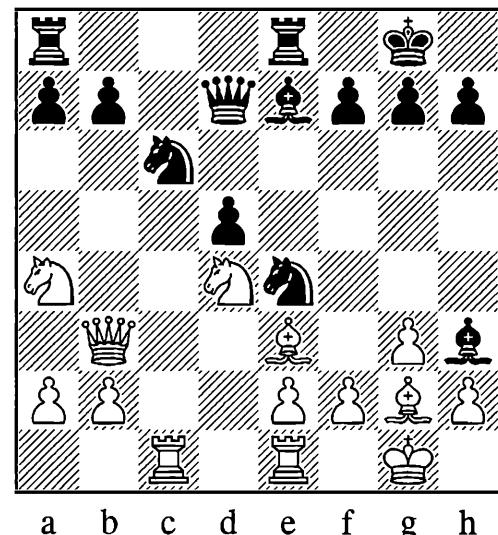
White has enough compensation, but Black is not in any danger.

C23) 13.♗e1

This prophylactic move does not cause any great concern.

13...♗e4

Black also did fine with 13...♘b4 14.♗d2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 ♘e5 16.♗f3 ♘xf3† 17.exf3 ♘xe1† 18.♗xe1 ♘f5 19.♗d2 ♘c8 20.♗xc8 ♘xc8= in Verduyn – Kuijpers, Vlissingen 2010.

14.♗b3 ♘d7 15.♗d4 ♘h3!

A very important idea. The kingside is more important than the queenside – because that is where the kings are!

16.♕xh3

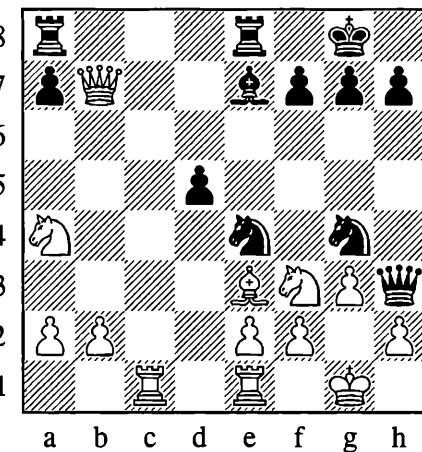
An equally sharp situation would arise after:
 16.♕xe4 dxe4 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗ed1 ♖g4
 19.♗c2 h6 20.♗d4 ♗g5 21.♗xg5 ♖xg5∞
 White's king is not too comfortable.

16...♗xh3 17.♗xc6

Grabbing the b-pawn also gives Black enough counterplay:

17.♗xb7 ♗e5 18.♗f3 ♗g4

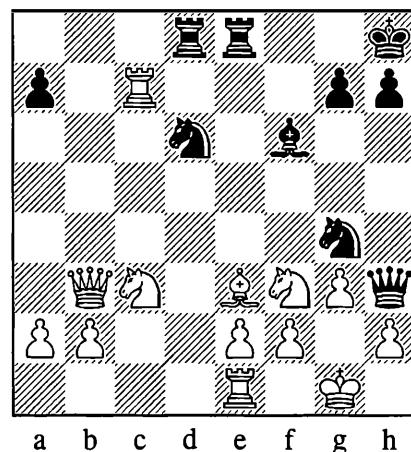
The position is actually rather dangerous for White.



19.♗c3!

This is best.

19.♗c7?! ♗f6! is clearly better for Black. For example: 20.♗xd5 ♕ad8 21.♗xf7† ♗h8† 22.♗c3?! ♗d6! 23.♗b3



23...♗xe3!! 24.fxe3 ♗f5 and with threats such as ...♗xe3 and ...♗xh2, Black is winning.

Also weak is 19.♗xd5 ♕d6 and now:

a) 20.♗d4 ♕ad8 21.♗c6 (21.♗b7 ♗xh2 22.♗xh2 ♕xg3 23.♗xg3 ♕xg3† 24.♗h1 ♕xd4 25.♗f1 ♕g6†) 21...♗xh2!! 22.♗xh2 ♕e6 White is forced to play: 23.♗e5 ♕xe5 24.♗xe4 ♕xg3 25.♗g2 ♕xh2† 26.♗xh2 ♕g4† 27.♗f1 ♕xa4† with an unhappy life in the 4th phase.

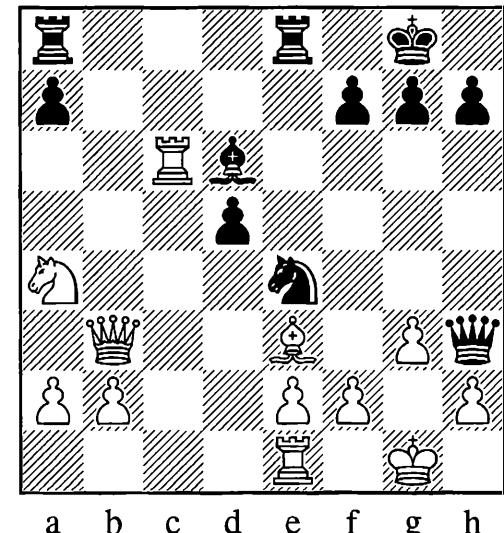
b) 20.♗c5 ♕xc5 21.♗xc5 ♗exf2∞ and Black has fantastic play for the pawn.

19...♗xe3 20.fxe3 ♕xc3?!

20...♗xg3=

21.♗xc3 ♕ab8 22.♗xa7 ♕b4 23.♗b3 ♕a8 24.♗xa8 ♕xa8 25.♗xb4 h6=

17...bxc6 18.♗xc6 ♕d6!



With compensation, according to Kasparov. Besides the possibility of securing a draw by sacrificing his minor pieces on g3, Black can also consider ...♗ad8 and ...♗f6-g4 with active play. A logical continuation is:

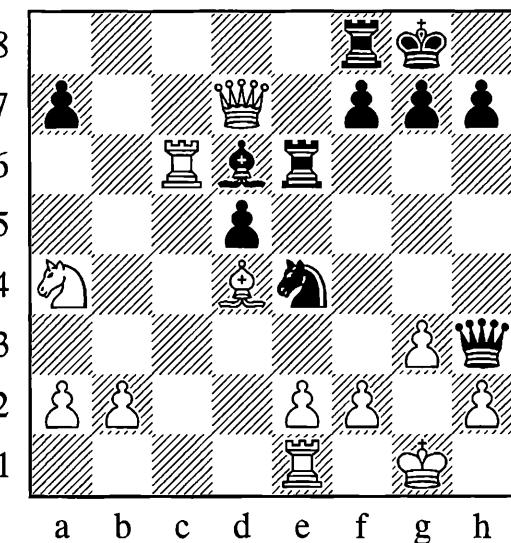
19.♗d4?! ♕e6!

Bringing the idea of ...♗h6 into play.

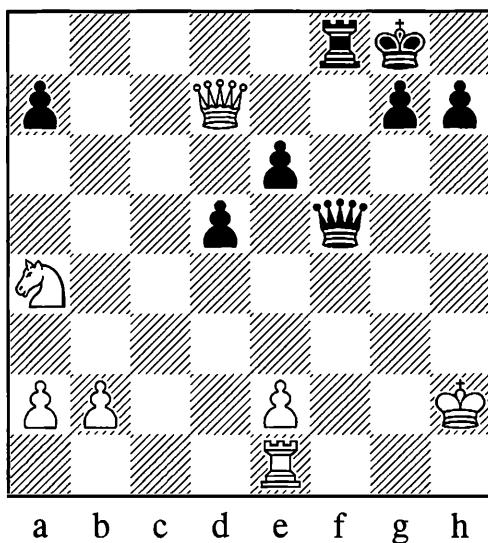
20.♗b7

20.♗xd6† is a better defence.

20... $\mathbb{E}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d7$



21... $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$ 22.hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 23.fxg3 $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$
 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h3\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}g4\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e4\#$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}f2\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}f5\#$
 30. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $f\times e6$



Black has a decisive attack.

C24) 13.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$

This seems to be the best answer. Black either gets a strong passed pawn, or wins some valuable time.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

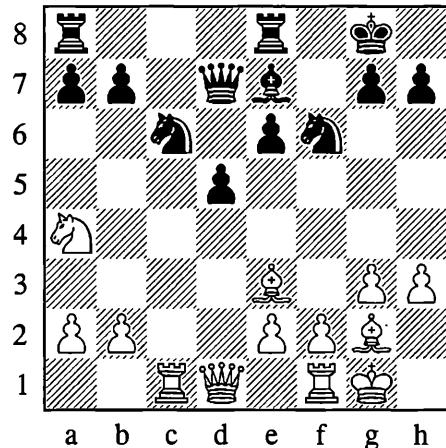
This seems to leave Black struggling to equalize:

14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

To us this seems principled.

Also possible is: 15. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!?$ N
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$, with the idea of ...b5, looks
 a better try) 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ b6
 Gelfand – Illescas, Wijk aan Zee 1993. Now
 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!?$ N $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d4\pm$
 does not look like fun for Black.

15...fxe6



16. $\mathbb{Q}c5!N$

16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ offered White little after 16... $\mathbb{E}ad8$
 17.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6=$ Anikaev –
 Lputian, USSR 1984.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

To us it is difficult to suggest that Black is fully okay here, although of course there will be those who like having two horses for their cart, rather than two bishops preaching from the rooftops...

13... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 (15... $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ Marovic – Keres,
 Dortmund 1973) 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ Flesch – Kavalek,
 Szombathely 1966.

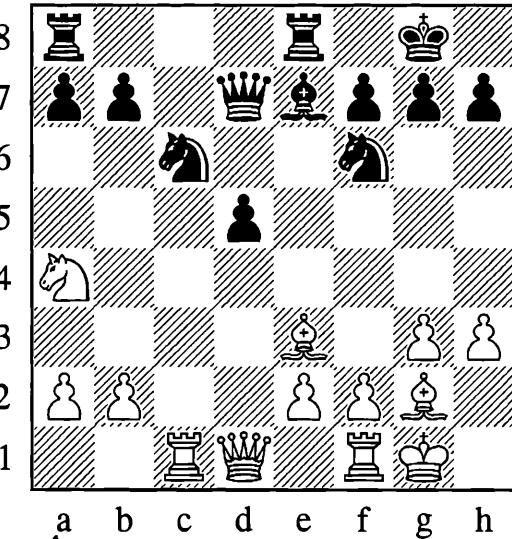
14. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$

Winning an important tempo for the realization of ...d5-d4.

15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

White has also tried: 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ Kurajica –

Marjanovic, Novi Sad 1984. Now Black can play 18... $\mathbb{W}e6!N$ with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$, with fine counterplay.



15... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$

We think it is best to mobilize all the pieces before starting to do something active. But it is also possible to push the pawn immediately:

15...d4 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6?$ is unwise: 16... $bxc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (otherwise Black has ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and with ...h5-h4 coming, Black has a dangerous attack, Brockbank – Kullamaa, corr. 1986.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\rightleftarrows$

17... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$

White can force an ending with a very slight pull:

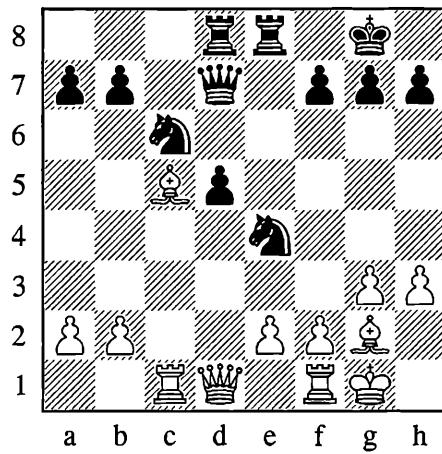
19. $\mathbb{W}xe4N$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

There are those who would consider the position essentially equal, and those who might think White is a bit better. Let them battle it out and leave us poor authors out of it. At least, we would be poor if we had to spend hours working out such questions!

16.a3

Another relevant line is:

16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$



18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

18.e3 $\mathbb{W}f5$ gives a few options:

a) 19.b3 was Paz Latorre – Real Naranjo, corr. 1997. A typical response would be 19...h5N with fine play.

b) 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$, and now 20. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d4= was harmless in Polugaevsky – Lein, Alma-Ata 1968. Instead, 20.g4 was Eiselt – Glasewald, corr. 1982, and it should be met with 20... $\mathbb{W}g6!N$, when Black can continue either ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ or ... $\mathbb{W}h6$. Such things as 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ are obviously comfortable for Black.

c) 19. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}f6!$ is fine for Black.

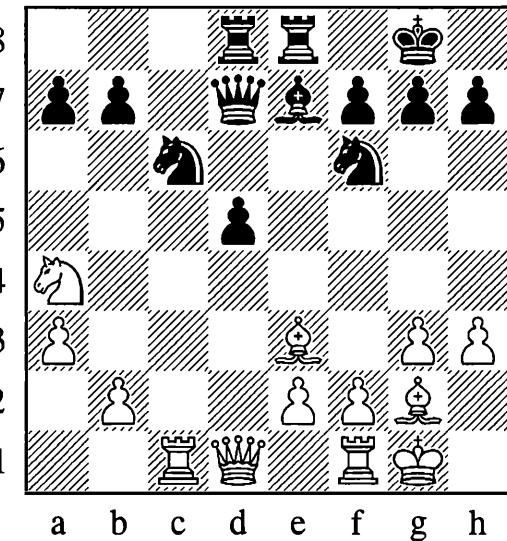
18... $\mathbb{W}f5$

18...h5 seems logical too, as does 18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19.h4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ d4 21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\rightleftarrows$.

19.h4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

This was Fominyh – Malyshева, Halkidiki 2003. Black is fine here; the pair of bishops is of no importance.

16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is solidly met by: 16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ is not dangerous for Black, for example 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ [or 18...h5!?] 19. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7=$) 17... $\mathbb{W}e6$ Black has various ideas, such as ...h5-h4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ with good control of the centre. The knight on e4 does not feel worse than the bishops on g2.



16...h6

16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$?! does not really work here:
 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 21. $g4$ $g6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ ± Gonzalez Garcia – Genba, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010. Black may be able to hold the draw eventually, but it is not what we want.

16...d4!N 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

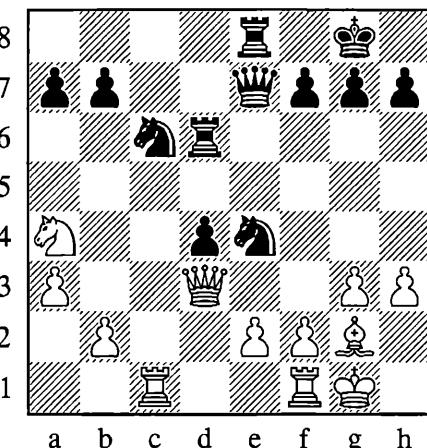
This seems quite playable.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d3$

Black has good counterplay here.

19... $\mathbb{B}d6$!

This is the simplest route to equal chances.



20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$

20. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ =

20.b4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $dxc3$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ =

20... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$!

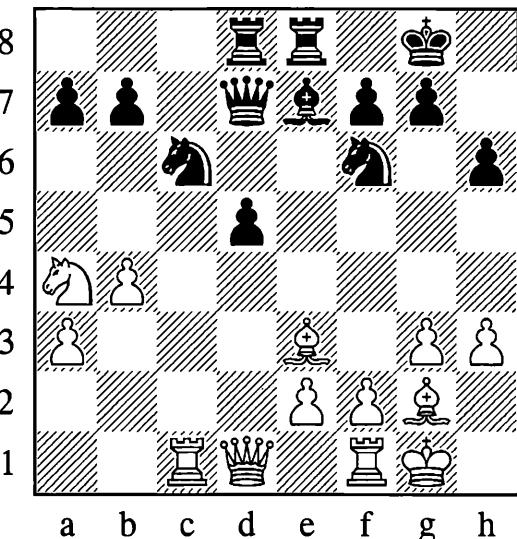
This is an important difference compared with the variation given above after 15...d4.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}f6$

Black's position is fine.

17.b4

So far we have been following Yarovik – Bezgodov, Pskov 1998. At this point Black has a serious improvement:



17...d4!N

Since White cannot play $\mathbb{Q}g5$, the bishop is struggling for squares.

18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ looks fully okay for Black. The direct threat of ...b5 forces White's hand: 20.b5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 22.axb4 $\mathbb{W}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}f1$ Black must now avoid 23... $\mathbb{W}xb5$? 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ ±, but instead 23... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ offers him even chances.

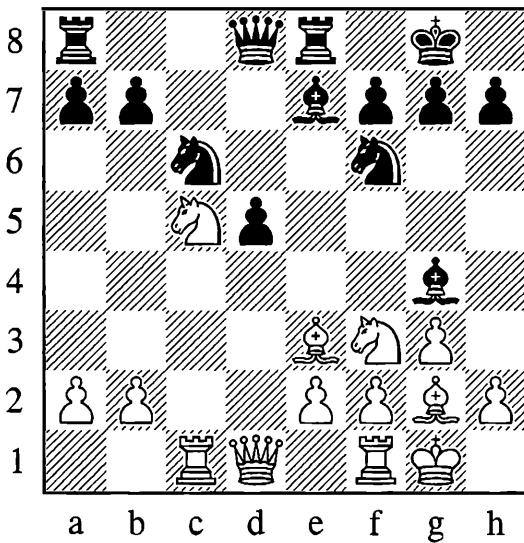
18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e6$

Black has good play and is currently threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}e3$!.

C25) 13. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

This was the recommendation of Boris Avrukh in *Grandmaster Repertoire 1 – 1.d4 Volume One*. As one of us was the editor of this

book, it is a bit awkward to come up with a convincing counterstroke to that repertoire. But the reality is that chess theory moves forward and improvements are always found, for both sides. And besides, it was clearly more awkward for Avrukh to give recommendations for Black in the Grünfeld Defence, where he had to meet his own recommendation from *Grandmaster Repertoire 2 – 1.d4 Volume Two* head on...

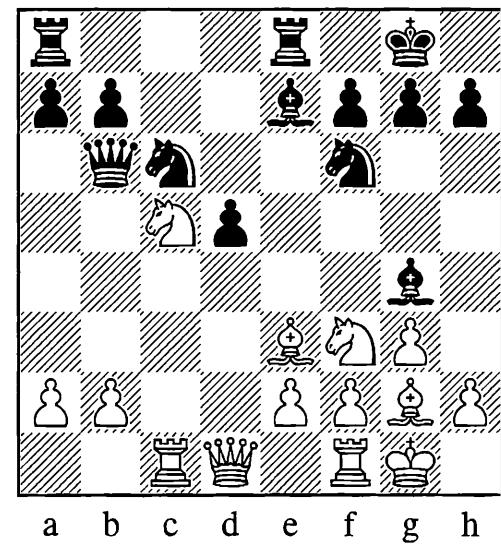


Here a fresh new idea is:

13... $\mathbb{W}b6!$

This was supposed to have a big fat ‘N’ attached to it. Nikos played this scary looking move in a blitz game, when he could not remember the theory. At first he had not fully taken in that he had moved into an ambush. While the clock was ticking and his opponent was trying to find the punishment, it dawned on him that there was none. Eventually White moved the knight and Nikos placed his queen on the ideal a6-square, from where it attacked a2 and e2, as well as defending b7. On top of this, the d8-square is vacated for either rook or bishop. Not surprisingly, Nikos won this game on time. Just before we finished the book, our friend GM Elshan Moradiabadi asked for advice before his game against the well known Bulgarian grandmaster Delchev. When we

realized he played the “Avrukh line” against the Tarrasch, we could not resist seeing our idea tried out in practice! As it was, Elshan gained an effortless draw. If only all novelties had this success rate!



14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

Delchev’s and Rybka’s choice.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d7?!$ is simply met by 14... $\mathbb{W}xb2\#$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

This invites Black to repeat the position by retreating to d8, but he does not have to:

14... $\mathbb{W}a6$

14... $\mathbb{W}b5?!$ is also possible.

15.h3

15. $\mathbb{E}e1?!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ The most aggressive. 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3?$ (16. $\mathbb{E}f1 \mathbb{E}ad8\#$ is excellent for Black; while 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ loses material to 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b3$ d4 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 20. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ dxe3 21.fxe3 $\mathbb{E}xe3$ Black is at least equal.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$

Black advances the d-pawn with reasonable counterplay.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ leads to an immediate draw: 14... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

14.♕d3 is met well by either 14...d4 or 14...♛a6.

14.b3 appears very logical, until you start looking at the details: 14...♚xc5! 15.♚xc5 (15.♚xc5?? ♜xe3) 15...♛a6 This is of course fine for Black; White is the only one with real weaknesses.

14...♛a6 15.a3

A modest move, but after all, the pawn was attacked.

15...♜ac8 16.♜e1

16.♕bd4 was also possible, but almost all standard replies offer equality. The quirkiest is probably: 16...♚d8!? 17.h3 ♚d7 18.♛d3 ♛xd3 19.exd3 ♚b6=

16...h6 17.♕c5

White has other options here, but nothing too worrying. For example, 17.♛d3 ♛xd3 18.exd3 ♚d6 19.♕fd4 ♜e5 looks about equal.

17...♚xc5N

This is the most obvious move.

18.♕xc5 ♛b6 19.♕a4

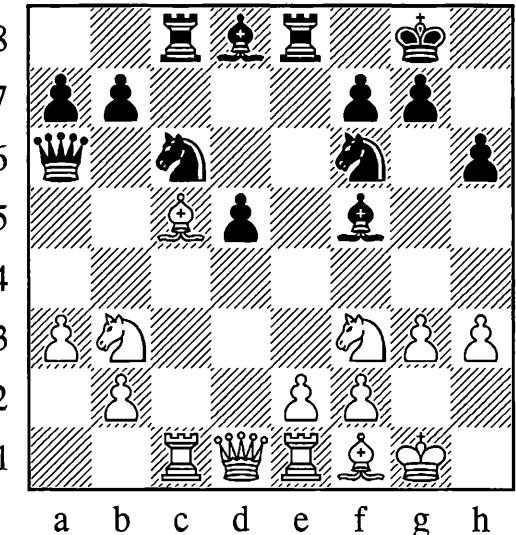
White has no way to prove an edge:

19.♛b3 ♜a5! 20.♜xb6 axb6 21.♕a4 ♜xc1
22.♜xc1 ♜xe2 23.♕f1 ♜e6∞
19.b4 a5 20.♕a4 ♛a6 21.♕c5 ♛b6=
19...♛b5 20.♜c5 ♛a6 21.h3 (21.♜c1 ♜e4!?)
21...♚xf3 22.♚xf3 b6 23.♜c1 ♜e5 24.♜xc8
♜xf3† 25.exf3 ♜xc8=

A draw is very likely in this equal ending.

18.h3 ♜f5 19.♕f1

Played with the rather obvious threat of e2-e4!



19...b6!N

This novelty gives excellent play.

In the game we have referred to, Black did not play the best option:

19...♚e4 20.e3 ♛a4 21.♕bd4

Stronger is 21.♕fd4!N ♛xd4 22.♕xd4±

21...♛xd1 22.♜exd1

White has good control over d4 but no pressure on d5, Black's only weakness.

22...a6

22...♕d7N 23.♕d6 ♜f6 is a clearer route to equality. In any event, the two opponents soon agreed to the draw in Delchev – Moradiabadi, Ravenna 2011.

17...♕d8

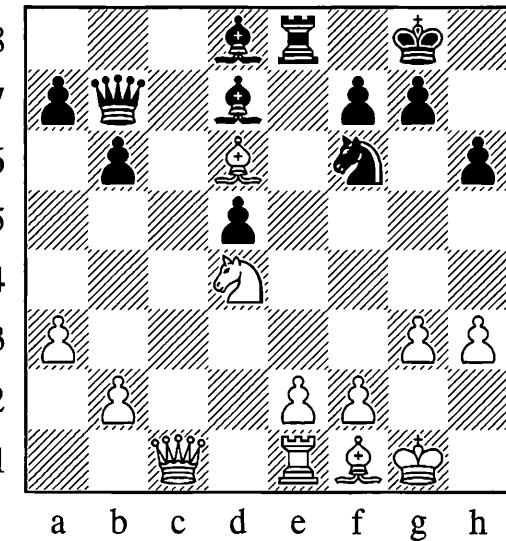
Moradiabadi's move is fine, but it is not the only good option.

17...♕a5!? leads to some simplifications and is also okay for Black.

20.♕d6

20.e4?! looks tempting, but leads to various problems: 20...♝b7 21.exf5 ♜xe1 22.♗xe1 bxc5 23.♗xc5 ♔e4 24.♗xd5 What else should White do? (24.♗c1?! ♘b6† reveals big problems in the White position; and 24.♘xd5 ♗xc5 25.♗xc5 ♝e7 26.♗ed3 ♕b6† does not look comfortable either) 24...♜b6 25.♗d3 ♘c7 26.♗g2 ♔f6 27.♗b5 a6†

**20...♝b7 21.♗bd4 ♗xd4 22.♗xd4 ♜xc1
23.♘xc1 ♕d7∞**



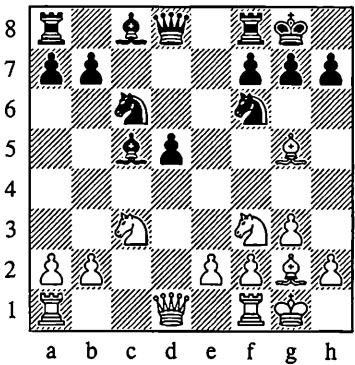
Black is well placed. He aims to play ...♗e4 and ...♔f6. And against 24.f3 he can reply 24...♗h7 25.h4 ♗f8, with roughly even chances.

Conclusion

The Reti Variation with 9.dxc5 and 10.♗a4 is a serious attempt for an advantage. The logical development of the queenside with ♜e3 and ♜c1, aiming at the less controlled dark squares, makes a lot of strategic sense. Luckily Black is not without resources of his own, such as the “spoiled novelty” 13...♝b6! in line C25. We think this variation will develop further in the years to come and that White will find new ways of harassing us. This is the eternal arms race of chess theory...



9.dxc5



10.♕g5

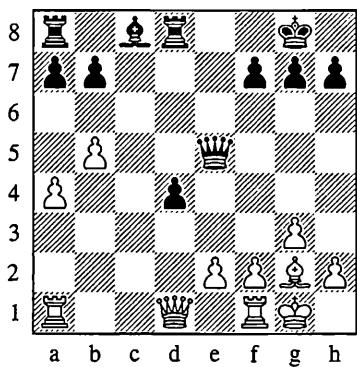
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♕g2 ♕e7
8.0-0 0-0 9.dxc5 ♘xc5 10.♕g5

10...d4

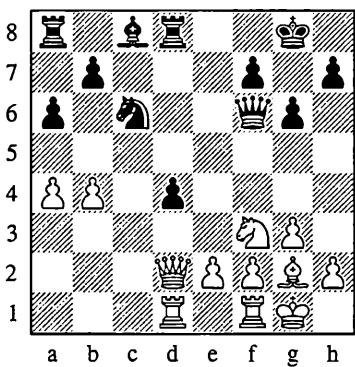
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B1) 13.♗d2	167
B2) 13.♗c1	169
B3) 13.b4! ♘xb4 14.♘xf6† ♗xf6	171
B31) 15.♗xd4 ♗e7	171
B311) 16.♗e5	171
B312) 16.♗b2	173
B32) 15.♘xd4 ♘d8	174
B321) 16.e3	174
B322) 16.♗a4!!N	177

B) note to 13.♘xf6†



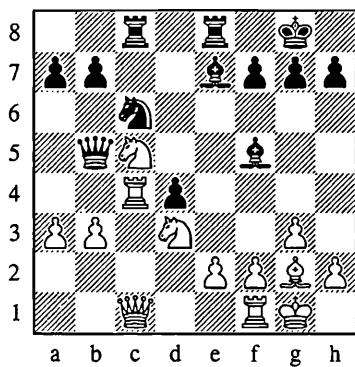
17...♗b8!N

B1) after 17.♗ad1



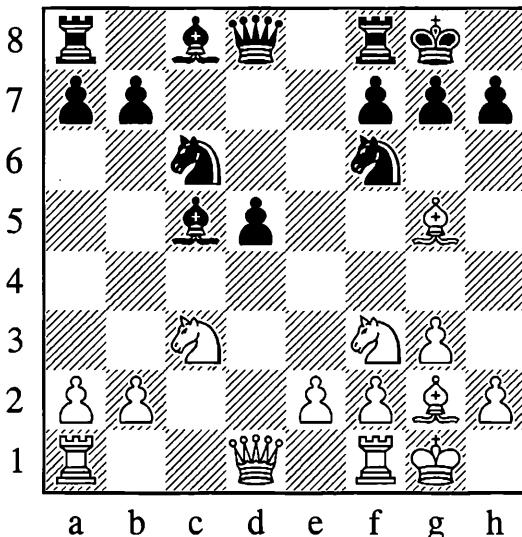
17...d3!N

B2) note to 16.♘xb7!!?



20...♗e5!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♘e7 8.0-0 0-0
 9.dxc5 ♘xc5 10.♗g5



Usually this is played with the Timman Variation in mind (as covered in the following two chapters), but this time around we are going to look at some other dangerous ideas. We have a defence against everything, but only after a week in the bunker without food, water or Internet blitz.

10...d4

The alternative is:

10...♗e6?!

This has been played, even at a high level, though the best prospect for Black is a difficult (but possible) defence. We would never recommend such a dismal line, as the practical implications are harrowing, but we do have a minor thing to say about it:

11.♗e1!?

This was an idea of Akiba Rubinstein's. The Polish genius is the inventor of most of the pervasive ideas against the Tarrasch Defence, including popularizing the fianchetto of the bishop. If no one had followed in his footsteps, the Tarrasch would probably be the most popular opening against 1.d4 these days.

11.♗c1 is also slightly better for White

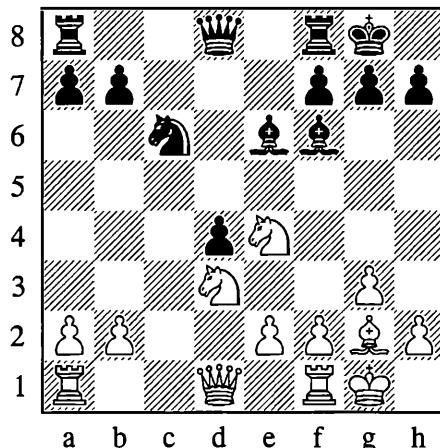
according to present practice.

Many people prefer to play 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xd5 ♗xb2 13.♗c7 ♕ad8 14.♗c1!. This was Petrosian's move, played against Spassky in their 1969 World Championship match. The endgame after 14...♗xc1 15.♗axc1 b6 16.♗xe6 fxe6± is defendable, but White has won many brilliant victories from this position.

11...d4

The attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of this sinking ship with 11...d4 is met with a very nice prophylactic move, 12.♗b1!±. This defends the b2-pawn, thus threatening ♗xf6, and also prepares ♗c2 leading to a quick attack on b7 after Black exchanges on c3.

12.♗e4! ♘e7 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.♗d3±



This is a typical Tarrasch position where White is very well placed.

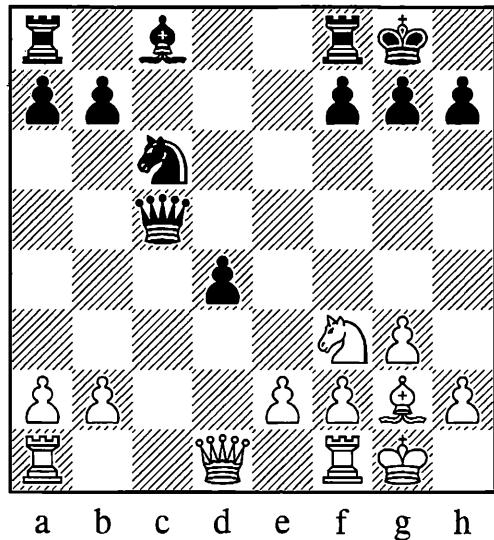
14...♗e7 15.♗ec5 ♘xc5 16.♗xc5 ♗e7
 17.♗xe6 ♗xe6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♗xd4 ♗xe2
 20.♗fe1 ♗b5 21.♗e5 ♗b6 22.♗c3 ♗ae8
 23.♗ae1 ♗xe5 24.♗xe5

In P. Varga – Espig, Saarlouis 2002, Black eventually managed to save half a point in a rook ending a pawn down. A success, but not a path to follow.

A) 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗e4

12.♗d5 is covered in the next chapter.

12... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$



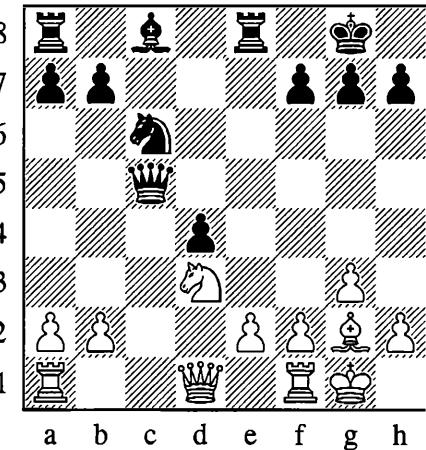
Black does not have any problems here. Nevertheless, the position occurs in practice quite frequently.

14. $\mathbb{W}d2$

This flexible move seems to be the only one with a bit of sting.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ should not worry Black: 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ (16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$? $\mathbb{B}xc6$ is double-edged; notice that White cannot play 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4??$ because of 17... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}e4-$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ This typical move equalizes. 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8=$ Aleksandrov – G. Giorgadze, Pula 1990.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



This seems rather harmless. Such a blockade of the d4-pawn can be a serious problem for Black if he is left with the dark-squared bishop, but here his position is fine.

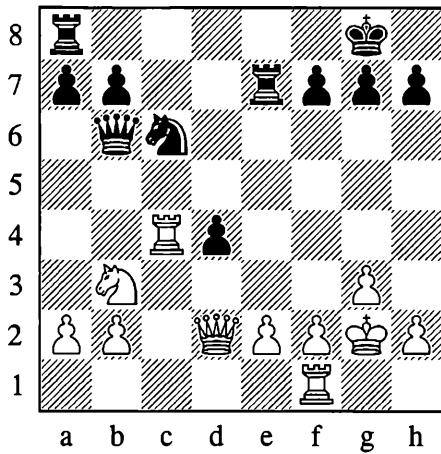
15... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

The standard operation.

18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

Black has equalized.

20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$



21... $\mathbb{Q}ae8!N$

Simplest.

21... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ was Akopov – Nadanian, Armenia 1998. Now 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ is equal according to Nadanian, but 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7\pm$ might still offer White a bit of play.

22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

White has nothing else.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$

This is definitely equal!

14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

The most frequently played move, but Black is quite happy retreating to the b6-square, so it is a bit toothless.

14... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$

15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $h6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d1$ Berkes – Graf, Leipzig 2002. After 19... $\mathbb{Q}fe8N$ Black is no worse.

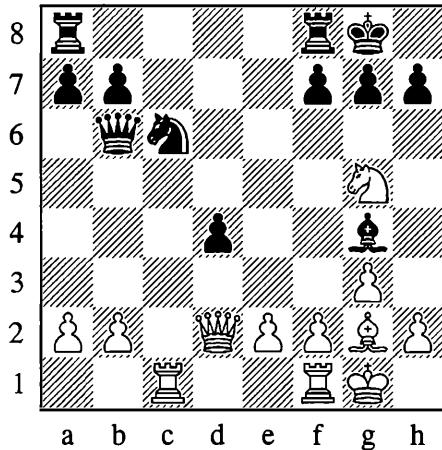
15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is equally good: 16. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

15.♗ad8 18.♗b2 Udovcic – Parma, Rovinj/Zagreb 1970, and now 18...♗fe8!N 19.♗d2 ♗e4 is equal.

16.♗g5

16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♗e5 18.♗e4 ♗ad8? Dzindzichashvili – Lein, USSR 1971.

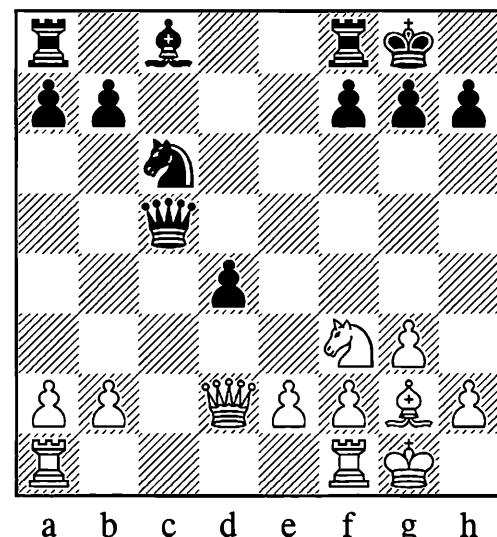


16...♗ad8!?

16...h6 17.♗e4 ♗fe8= was also fine in Melnik – Yangel, Moscow 1998.

17.♗f4 ♗h5 18.♗h4 ♗g6 19.♗e4 ♗e5 20.♗xh7 ♗fe8 21.♗g5 d3! 22.exd3! f5 23.♗g2 ♗d4 24.♗h3 ♗xd3=

Ivkov – Keres, USSR vs. Rest of the World 1970.



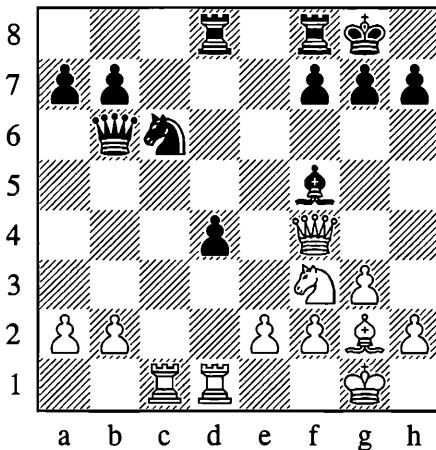
14...♗g4

Black has another reasonable strategy at this point:

14...♗f5 15.♗ac1

15.♗g5 f6 does not cause any real concerns for Black; the move of the f-pawn has its pluses as well as its minuses.

15...♗b6 16.♗fd1 ♗ad8 17.♗f4



This has been played in a number of games. The road to equality is not so easy, but probably Black should consider:

17...♗e6!N

17...♗g6 18.♗d2 ♗fe8 19.♗h4 has been played a few times. Then 19...♗e6!? looks to be Black's best try, but his position still feels a bit worse after 20.♗xg6 hxg6 21.♗cd1 as in J. Hernandez – Salazar Jacob, Santiago de Chile 1992.

18.b3 h6

This is the natural way to prevent ♗g5, but 18...f6!? is also worth a thought.

19.♗e5

The only try for an advantage.

19...♗xe5 20.♗xe5 ♗fe8

This seems to be the most accurate.

20...♗g4 21.♗e4±

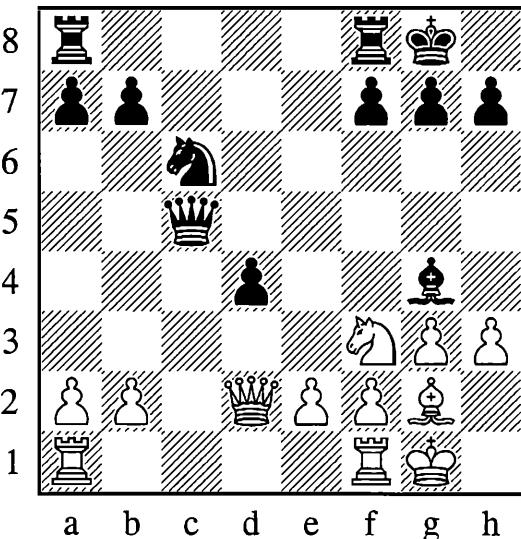
21.♗f4 ♗a5! 22.♗xb7

22.♗d2 ♗a6 23.♗c7 ♗g4 24.♗f4 ♗e6=

22...♗xa2 23.♗c6 ♗f8 24.b4 ♗xe2 25.♗xd4 ♗xd4 26.♗xd4 ♗h3=

15.h3

15.♗fd1 ♗ad8 16.♗f4 was Wexler – Keres, Buenos Aires 1964, and now 16...♗e6N, or even 16...♗f5N, is fine for Black.

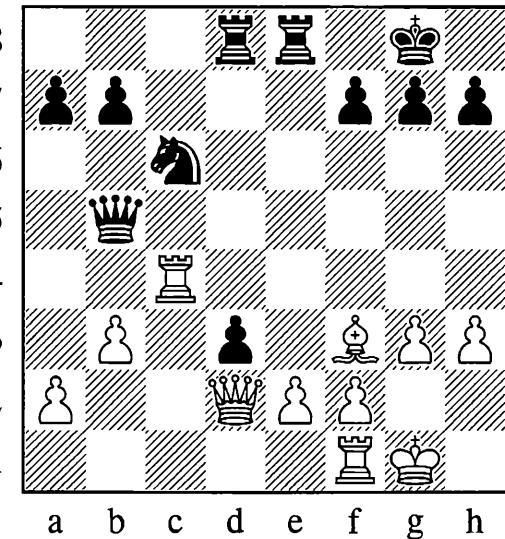


15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!!$

An interesting positional idea.

Black also equalizes with: 15... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ (16.b4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ = Speelman – Hodgson, England 1979) 16... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 18.b3 $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c5$ Kanep – Boricsev, Alushta 2003. Now after 21... $\mathbb{W}xc5N$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ f6= the black king enters the game and any problems evaporate.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}fe8!$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}b5!!$ 18.b3 $\mathbb{E}ad8$
19. $\mathbb{E}c4$ d3!=



We don't know if White could have improved somewhere, but Black's idea is very interesting no matter what. It is hard to believe that Black should not be able to equalize.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{dxe2}$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe2N$

A fairly obvious improvement over 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb5?$ $\mathbb{E}xd2$ 22. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}d1$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}xe1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{E}g1\#$ 0–1 Uogele – Goldenberg, corr. 1984.

21... $\mathbb{W}xc6!$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{E}xe2$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}xa2$
24. $\mathbb{E}e1$ a5 25. $\mathbb{E}ee7$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ a4=

B) 11. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

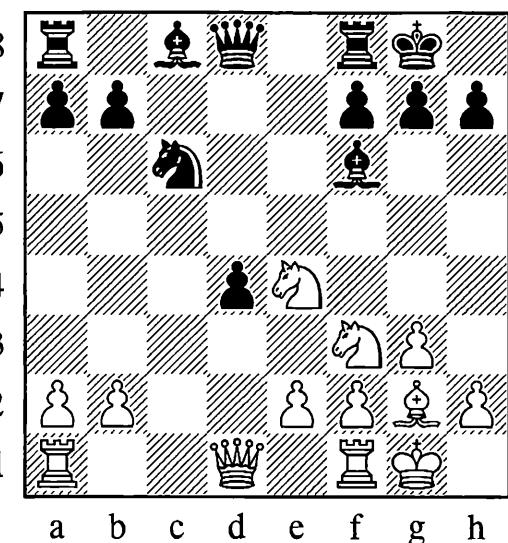
This is generally considered to be harmless, but some players have developed their own systems here with considerable success.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

Only this makes real sense.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d2$ is inferior: 13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{E}fe1$ d3 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$ Capablanca – Euwe, Amsterdam (5) 1931.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



At this point White has a number of interesting tries: B1) 13. $\mathbb{W}d2$, B2) 13. $\mathbb{E}c1$ and B3) 13.b4!. We are not afraid of anything else:

13. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ makes a fool out of the e4-knight. Black had good play in the

following game: 15.♗d2 ♕f5 16.♗c4 ♘a6 17.b3 ♜ac8 18.♗d2 b5= T. Bergmann – Chandler, Reykjavik 1984.

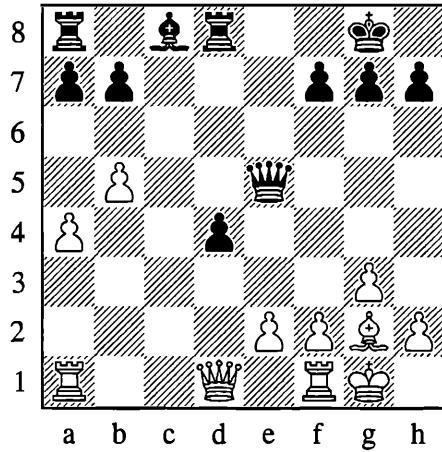
13.♗xf6† ♘xf6 14.b4

At least there is an idea behind this move, although it is an inferior version of line B3.

14...♝d8!?

Black can also take on b4, transposing to variation B3 on page 171.

15.b5 ♗e5 16.♗xe5 ♘xe5 17.a4



This position was reached in Reti – Euwe, Amsterdam (4) 1920.

17...♝b8!N

This simple move solves all of Black's problems. Black is ready to develop the c8-bishop with good chances.

B1) 13.♘d2

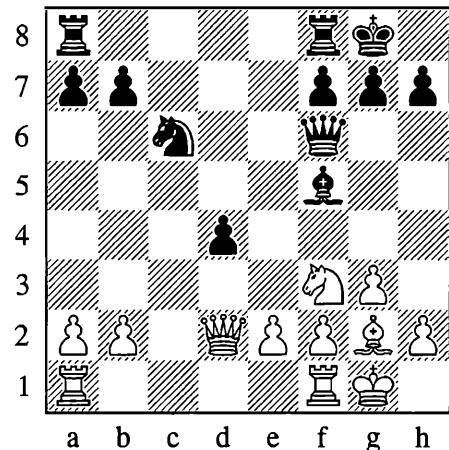
This move could pose some practical difficulties for the unprepared player.

13...g6!

The idea behind this move is ...♝g7 followed by ...♞f5, when the knight would be poorly placed on e4.

13...♞f5?! 14.♗xf6† ♘xf6

This leads to an ending that some people might not like.

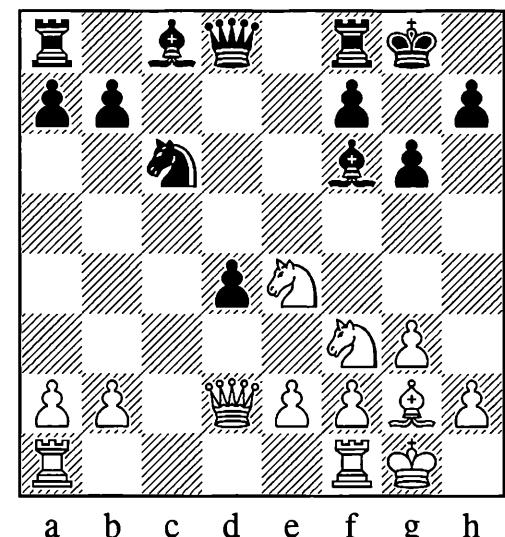


15.♗f4!

This is stronger than: 15.♗h4 ♛d7 16.♗fd1 ♜ad8 17.b4 Stroganov – Kharlamov, St Petersburg 2008. Here Black has a serious improvement in 17...d3!N 18.♗xd3 ♞e6, with good counterplay. A likely continuation is 19.♗f3 ♘xf3 20.♗xf3 ♗xb4 21.a4 b6=.

15...♜fe8 16.♗h4 ♛e4 17.♗xf6 gxsf6 18.♗f3±

Beeke – Van Vliet, Dieren 2008. The computer says that Black is equal after 18...♜ad8, but in practice it might be a bit unpleasant to have the weak f5-square along with the weak pawns on the kingside. We are not saying that this is anything serious, just that in practice it is a good deal easier to lose this position than to win it.



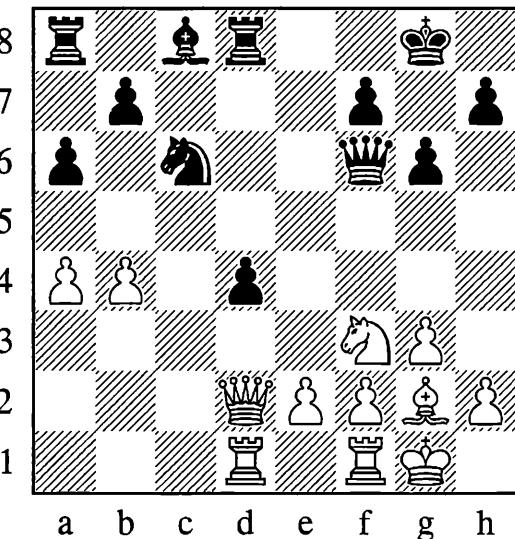
14.♗xf6†

14.b4 ♛g7 15.b5 ♗e7 does not look dangerous for Black. He can prop up the d4-

pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, as well as play ...a6 and ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ to improve his position. Finally, the c8-bishop has many decent squares at its disposal.

14... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 15.b4 a6 16.a4 $\mathbb{E}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ad1$

Black does not really look worse after: 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 $\mathbb{E}xa1$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xa1$ d3 (19... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is also playable, and after 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b2$ b6 22. $\mathbb{E}a8$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ any white advantage is minimal) 20. $\mathbb{E}d1$ dxe2 21. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 22.h4 $\mathbb{E}xd1\#$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ White's pressure is fizzling out.



17...d3!N

Whenever Black gets this move in, he should be happy.

Black is also fine after: 17... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b2$ (18.b5 axb5 19.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}a5=$) 18...b5!? Gerchikov – Bezgodov, St Petersburg 1998. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ N $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (Bezgodov believes Black has enough compensation after 20...bxa4 21. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a3, which seems correct. But White might still be able to ask some pertinent questions.) 21. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{E}xa8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}a2$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ and a draw is imminent.

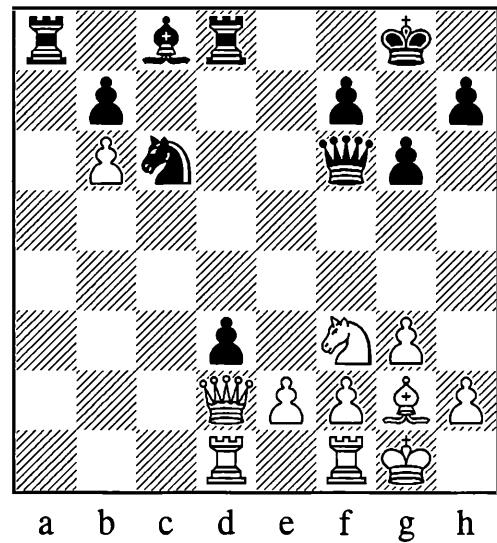
18.b5

No other moves make sense:

18.exd3 $\mathbb{Q}g4\#$

18.h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ seems to help Black rather than White: 19.exd3 (19.b5 axb5 20.axb5 $\mathbb{E}a2\#$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 20. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ and White is struggling. For example, 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}d4!$ and the queenside pawns are targets: 23.b5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24.bxa6 $\mathbb{E}xa6\#$

18...axb5 19.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 20.b6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$



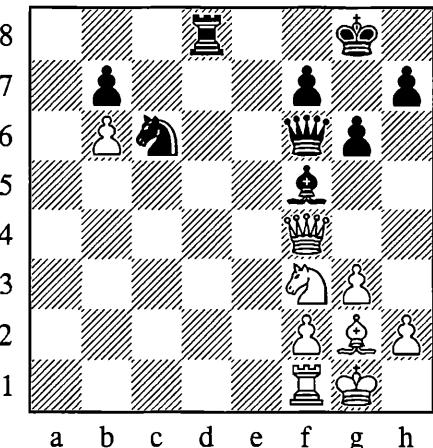
21. $\mathbb{W}e3!$

21.exd3 lands White in trouble: 21... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 23.gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$ The ending after 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}xb6$ 28.f5 is of course rather drawish, but White still has some minor issues to deal with.

21...dxe2 22. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$

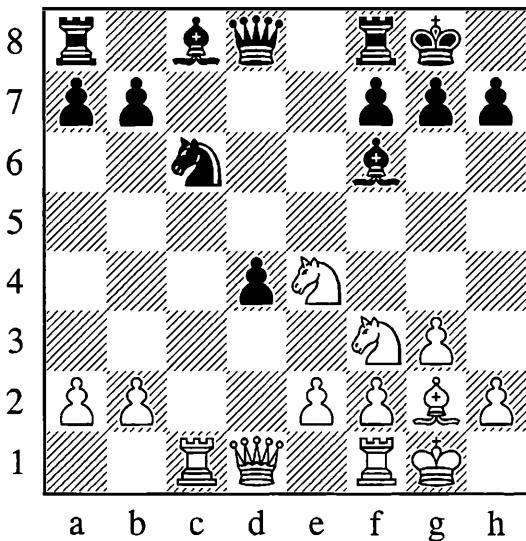
White needs to avoid 23. $\mathbb{W}e4?$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5-+$.

23... $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}f4=$



White is the one with issues to solve, although he should be able to do so with one or two good moves.

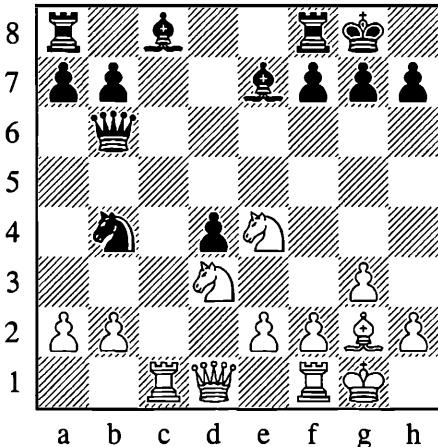
B2) 13.♘c1



13...♝e8

We have found an alternative solution here, which also seems logical:

13...♝e7 14.♗e1 ♜b6 15.♗d3 ♜b4!



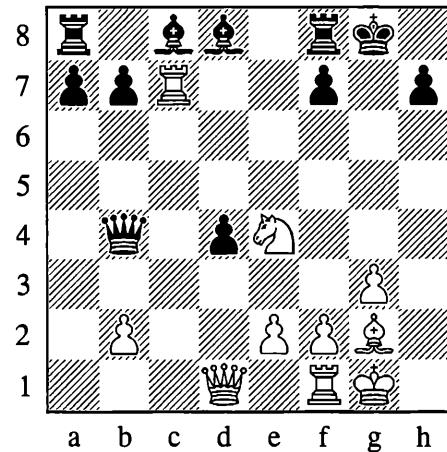
Black harasses the strong knight on d3.

16.♗f4N

This looks more challenging than: 16.♗xb4 ♜xb4 17.b3 (17.♘c7 ♜d8 18.♘c2 ♜b6 19.♗d2 ♜xd2 20.♗xd2 ♜e6=) 17...♜e6 18.♘c7 ♜ab8= Black is only equal, but things could develop later on, Von Herman – Keilhack, Altenkirchen 2001.

16...♝d8!

16...♝g5?! is a typical computer move. The horizon is too short: 17.a3! gxf4 18.axb4 fxe3? (18...♝xb4 is better, but after 19.gxf4 White still has the more pleasant existence, if not an outright advantage) 19.hxg3 ♜xb4 20.♘c7 ♜d8



21.♗c1!! Not surprisingly, Black is haemorrhaging on the dark squares.

21...♜xc7 22.♗f6† ♜h8 23.♗e4! ♜f5! 24.♗xf5 ♜a5 25.♗d3 ♜g7 26.b4! ♜e5 27.♗d7±

17.a3 ♜c6 18.♗c2

18.♗d3 ♜f5 looks not bad for Black.

18...g6 19.♗d2 d3 20.♗xd3

20.exd3 ♜d4 21.♗d1 ♜g5≈

20...♗d4 21.♗d1 ♜g4 22.♗f3 ♜xf3† 23.♗xf3 ♜xf3 24.exf3 ♜a6 25.♗e1 ♜xa3 26.♗b4 ♜xb4 27.♗xb4 ♜ac8=

14.♗e1 ♜f5

Retreating the f6-bishop is unnecessary, as it is not likely White wants to take it. Nevertheless, 14...♝e7 15.♗d3 ♜b6 16.a3 ♜g4 17.♗e1 ♜ac8 18.♗d2 ♜g5 was fine for Black in Schussler – Petursson, Neskaupstadur 1984.

15.♗c5

15.♗xf6† ♜xf6 16.♗d3 ♜e4 offers Black standard equality.

15...♜b6!

This is an important resource. Black should not be scared of complications.

15... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$ was met by 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18.a3 $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ in Lasker – Tarrasch, Berlin 1918.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xb7?!$

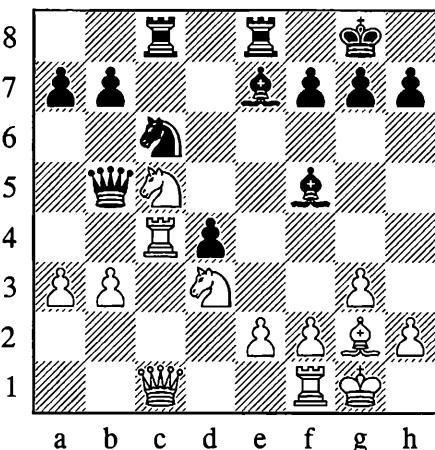
It is obvious that this is highly critical.

16. $\mathbb{Q}ed3$

In contrast, this is entirely harmless.

16... $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}e1$

17.a3 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ White is struggling to find good places for his pieces. 18... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 19.b3 (19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a5?) 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (19...a5?) 20. $\mathbb{W}c1$

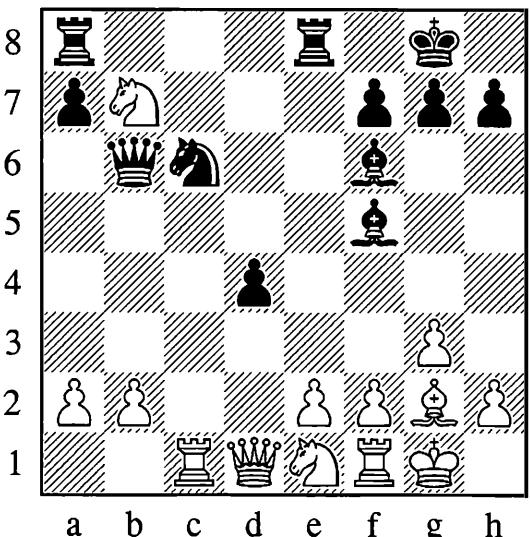


20... $\mathbb{Q}e5!N$ A suggestion by Ftacnik. Black is already a bit better. (20... $\mathbb{Q}a5?!$ was “only” okay for Black in Nikolic – Grischuk, France 2003) 21.a4 (21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 23.bxc4 $\mathbb{W}c5\mp$) 21... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ Black is doing well; the bishop pair is a nice asset to have for later on.

17...h5

Here too, Black can harass the rook with 17... $\mathbb{Q}g5?!$ Lopushnay – Shaposhnikov, St Petersburg 1999.

18.h4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ g6= Smejkal – Chandler, West Germany 1984.



16... $\mathbb{Q}b4!?$

This promises Black good counterplay.

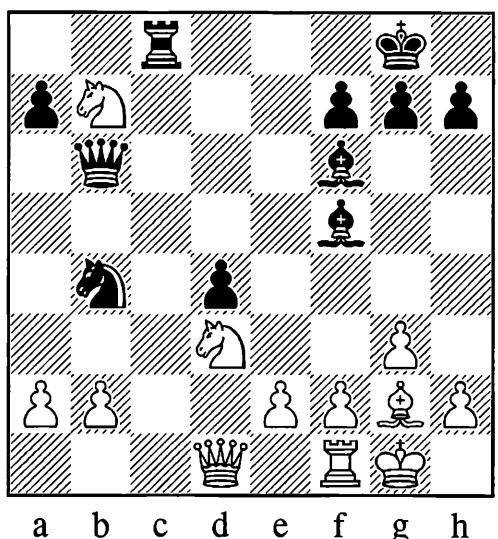
17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{E}ac8!$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}xa2?!$ loses too much dynamism, and after 18. $\mathbb{E}c6!$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg2\pm$ it is Black’s knight which is misplaced) 18.a3 $\mathbb{E}xc1$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}xb7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\infty$

17... $\mathbb{E}ac8!$

The fight for the c-file is crucial.

18. $\mathbb{E}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$



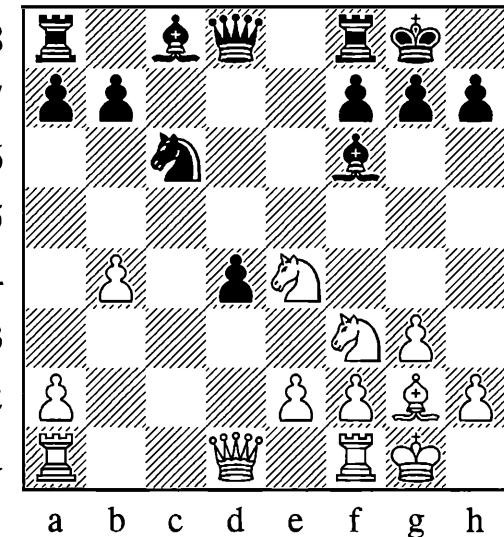
19. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$

A horrible blunder. White must play:
 19.♕bc5! ♕xc5 20.♔a4! The saving trick.
 20...♔f8 21.♕xb4 ♕xb4 22.♕xb4 ♕b5
 23.♕d3 ♕xd3 24.exd3 ♕xb2 25.♕d5=

19...g5 20.♕d3 ♕c7†

Gofshtein – Graf, Manila (ol) 1992.

B3) 13.b4!



This move is quite venomous and if Black does not know what to do, he can get into trouble very quickly. It is no coincidence that the Greek grandmaster Stellios Halkias has used this variation as White.

13...♗xb4

This is closed to being forced. The alternatives look poor:

13...d3?! 14.♗xf6† ♕xf6 is countered with 15.b5! dxе2 16.♕xe2, followed by ♔fe1 and ♔e5, with a slight but enduring plus.

13...a6 14.a4± helps White; the black b-pawn has just become weaker.

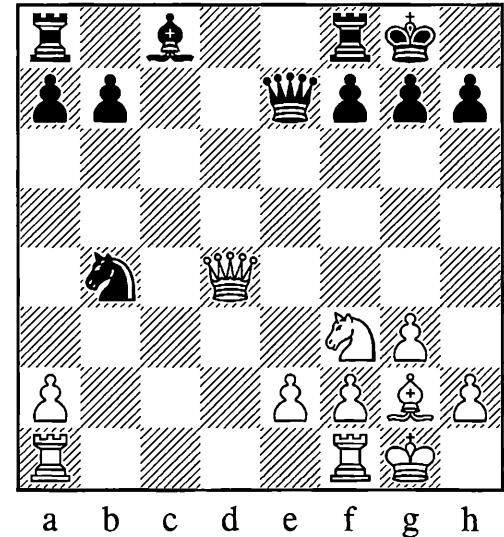
14.♗xf6† ♕xf6

At this point White has a choice between two very obvious moves, **B31) 15.♕xd4** and **B32) 15.♗xd4**.

B31) 15.♕xd4

This is the main line here, but it seems less dangerous to us than the alternative.

15...♔e7

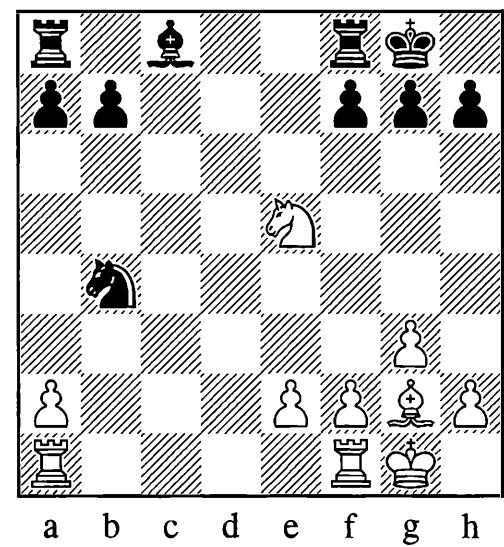


Here White has tried both **B311) 16.♕e5** and **B312) 16.♕b2**.

B311) 16.♕e5

The endgame holds nothing for White.

16...♕xe5 17.♗xe5



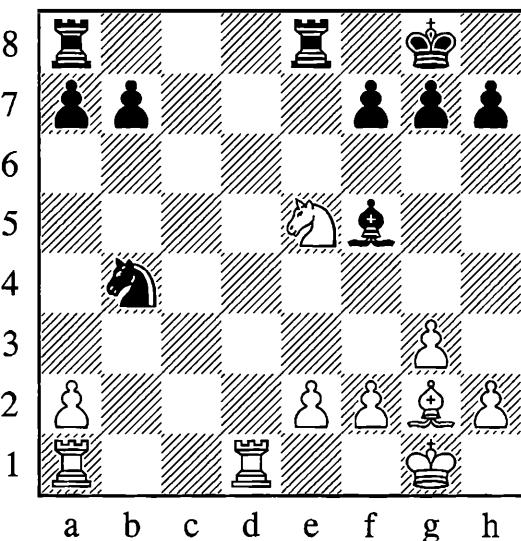
17...♔e8!

This is the accurate move.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e6$?! 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3\pm$ is an obvious disaster, and a good example of how these positions risk going wrong. Black could maybe have defended better, but it was always going to be an uphill battle: 19... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fb1$ $\mathbb{Q}fb8$ 21.a3 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ g5 24. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 36.e4# $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 38.h4 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 39.h5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 40.f4# $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xf4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 42.e5# $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 43.f5 a5 44.e6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ a4 46.e7 1-0 Hammer – Akopian, Lubbock 2009.

17...f6 18.a3! $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20.e3± is also very unpleasant for Black.

18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

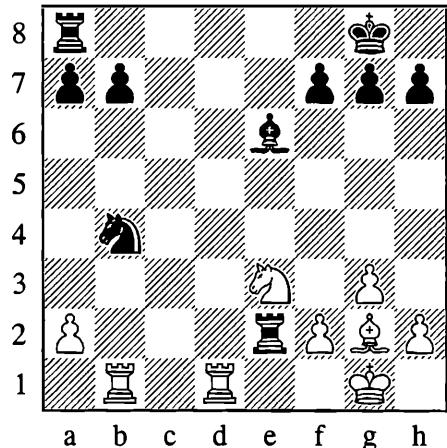


19.e4?!

This seems to be a bad decision, as the g2-bishop becomes ineffectual. But in any case, White has no advantage:

19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, intending $\mathbb{Q}d4$, is comfortably met with 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6\!=$.

19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ is more venomous than it looks at first glance.



The black knight would be in bad trouble if it took on a2, while after 21... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ White has 22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$. So Black has to find: 21...a5! 22.a3 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8=$

19. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ looks like a nice tactical idea. However, Black can simply take his pawn back: 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe2=$

19.g4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ looks entirely drawn.

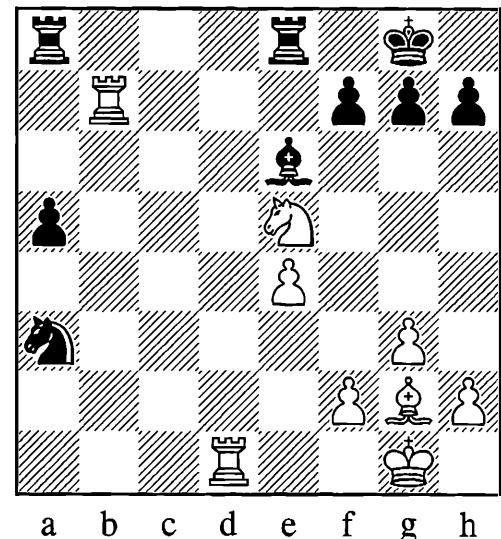
19... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20.a3

20. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ a5 is equal.

20... $\mathbb{Q}c2$

20... $\mathbb{Q}a2\!?\mathbb{N}$ 21.f4 f6 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ is also fine for Black.

21. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$! $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ a5



Black has a better version of Hammer – Akopian. Still, White should not struggle too much to equalize.

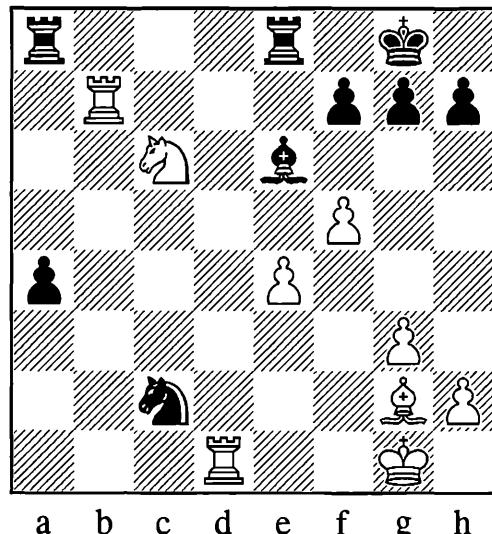
23.♘c6

23.f4 a4 24.♕f1 ♘c2!?

23...a4 24.f4?

White overestimates his chances. There were a few ways to make a draw. For example: 24.e5 ♘c4 (24...♘c2? 25.♕e4±) 25.♕c7 ♕a6 26.♕d4 ♘xe5 27.♕xe6 ♕axe6! (27...fxe6 28.♕f1 ♕a5 29.f4→) 28.♕a7=

24...♘c2 25.f5



25...♗c4!N

Kopylov's proposal from *Chess Informant* 79. However, his position was also great after: 25...♗b3?! 26.e5 ♘e3 27.♗e7†? (27.♗d2?) 27...♗f8 28.♗dd7 a3! (28...♗eb8?) 29.♗xf5! 30.♗xf7† ♗g8 31.♗a7 a2+ Rogozenco – Kopylov, Hamburg 2000.

Black is much better. For example:

26.♗e7† ♗f8 27.♗dd7 ♕xe7 28.♗xe7 a3
29.♗a7 ♕xa7 30.♗xa7 a2

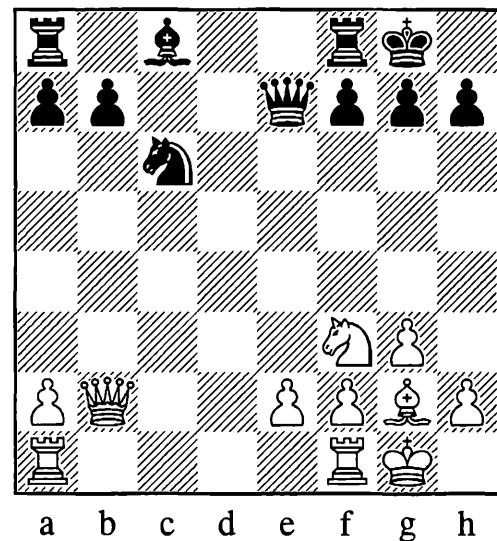
Black should win with his extra piece.

B312) 16.♗b2

This is trickier in practice, but a solution exists.

16...♘c6

One early game went: 16...♗g4 17.♗ab1 a5 18.a3± ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♘a6? 20.♗xb7 ♗xa3 21.♗b6 1–0 Wohl – Caruso, Verona 1998.



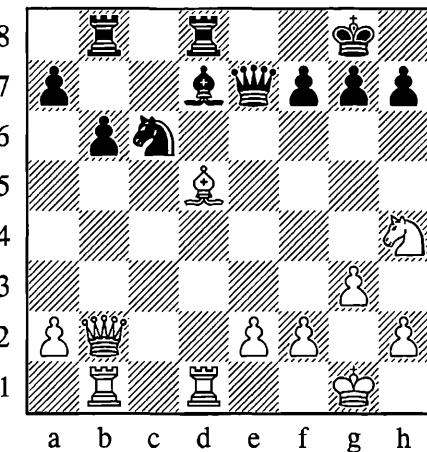
17.♗fd1

White would like to maintain slight pressure down the long diagonal, but in reality there is nothing. Black has one medicine and it cures all:

17.♗ad1 ♗b8! 18.♗d4 ♘xd4 19.♗xd4 ♕e6 20.♗fd1 b6 21.♗d2 ♗bc8 22.♗e4 ♗c5= Kushch – Ginsburg, Kherson 1990.

17.♗ab1 ♗b8 18.♗h4 ♗d7!

The simplest. White has no targets to attack.
19.♗fd1 ♗fd8 20.♗d5 b6!



All the structural issues have been solved.

21.Qxc6!?

The only try for an advantage.

21...Qxc6 22.Qf5 Wg5 23.Wc2 g6!

A nice little resource. Black enters an even ending.

24.Wxc6 Wxf5 25.Wc7 Qxd1† 26.Qxd1 We8
27.e3 Wa5 28.Wd7 We6=

If Black obtains any real chances to create a passed pawn, a perpetual check will quickly happen on the kingside. On the other hand, White has no way at all to play for a win.

19.e3 Qfd8 20.Qd4 Qxd4 21.exd4 is the attempt by Rybka, but after either 21...Wd6 or 21...Wf6, it is hard to be concerned.

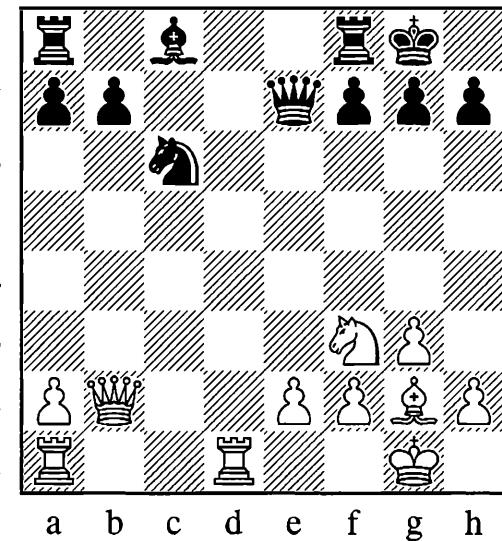
19...h6 20.Qd2 Qfd8 21.Qcd1 Qxd2 22.Qxd2
Wb4 23.Wxb4 Qxb4 24.Qd4 Qxa2 25.Qb2
a5 26.Qc2 Qc4 27.Qxb4 axb4 28.Qxb4 b5
½-½ C. Foisor – Berzinsh, Balaguer 2003.

B32) 15.Qxd4

When we started this project, this had not yet been played, and we did not understand why. However, it seems that if Black can find the correct moves, then he will get good play.

15...Qd8

15...Qg4 16.Qb1 a5 17.Wd2± does not look great.



17...Qb8!=

This is the key move, which is very important to remember. The rest should not be too difficult.

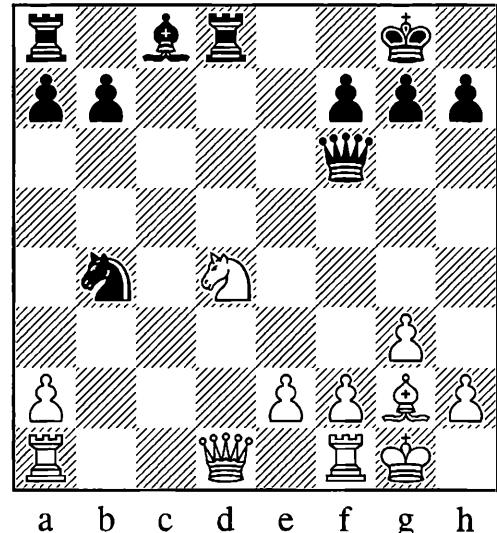
18.Qac1

18.Qd4 Qxd4 19.Wxd4 b6 is of no concern.

18.Qd2 is the only other move that has been played here. Black's easiest route to equality is:

18...Qd8!N 19.Qad1 (19.Qxd8† Wxd8 20.e3 Qe6=) 19...Qxd2 20.Qxd2 Qe6 Black has no more problems than people in cemeteries – but he has the tremendous advantage of being fully alive.

18...Qe6 19.h4



At this point White has two moves at his disposal, the timid B321) 16.e3 and the dangerous B322) 16.Wa4!!N.

B321) 16.e3

This is a logical continuation, but White's position does not look especially attractive after:

16...Qc6! 17.Qxc6

If White does not do this, Black will play ...♝d7 with absolute equality. For example, 17.♗e1 ♘d7 offers Black no problems.

17...bxcc6

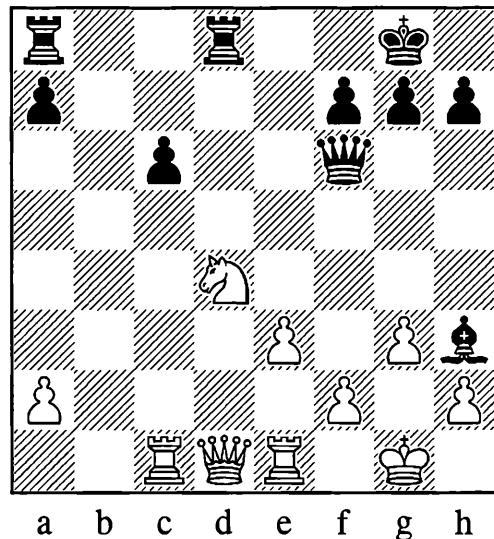
This position is reminiscent of the final game in the 2010 World Championship match between Topalov and Anand. Although it is not unreasonable for White to play for an advantage, Black should be okay. The weakness of the c-pawn is not the only factor in the position; there are also the weak light squares around the white king to consider.

18.♗c1

The only move to trouble Black.

After 18.♗c2?! ♘h3 19.♗fc1 ♜ac8†, Black has the serious threat of either ...c5 or ...♗xd4, followed by ...♘f3.

18...♘h3 19.♗e1



19...♗d5!

A great resource! The rook is eyeing the kingside as well as controlling the c5-square. Furthermore, the bishop can return to d7 without being in the way.

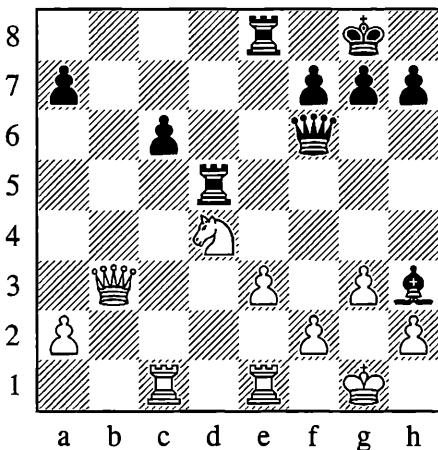
19...♗ab8!N 20.♗e2 ♗b6 is also possible.

20.♗e2

We also analysed some other options:

20.♗a4 c5 21.♗c6 (21.♗e2 g5 22.f4 ♘ad8†) 21...♗xc6 22.♗xc6 ♘f8= Black has enough counterplay to secure even chances in this ending. The bishop is actually quite good and the white knight is not great.

20.♗b3 ♗e8



21.♗a4

21.♗xc6 ♘d2† and 21.♗xc6 ♗xd4!+ are both inadvisable.

21...♘d7 22.♗xa7?!

The only ambitious try.

Something like 22.♗c4 h6 does not trouble Black.

22...c5 23.♗a5

23.♗b7 ♘d6 24.♗b3 ♘c6 25.♗a6 g5† 26.♗e2 (26.♗xc5 ♘a8 27.♗e2 ♘f3† is an important point. The idea is that after 28.♗c2? ♘h6† White is suddenly reduced to a frightening defence.) 26...c4 27.♗a5 ♘f3 28.♗xc4 ♘e4 29.♗e2 ♘d2! 30.♗xd2 ♘f3 31.♗f1 ♘g2† 32.♗e2 ♘f3† 33.♗d3 ♘d8† Black looks like a very likely winner. 23.h4?! is actually possible, setting the trap 23...cxsd4?! 24.e4! and White regains the piece. Instead Black should play 23...h6†, removing the possibility of a back-rank mate and thus making the threat to the knight real.

23... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $g5!$ 26.f3 $\mathbb{W}b4!$
27. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ cxb4 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\bar{\infty}$ gives Black at least even chances.

24... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black has great compensation for the pawn. White has to be very careful, as any slip can be fatal.

25. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

Threatening ... $\mathbb{E}d1!!$.

26. $\mathbb{E}cc1?!$

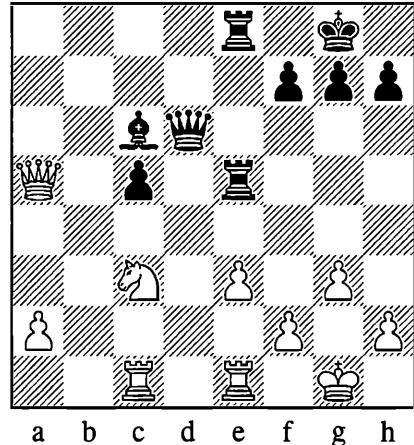
This heads straight into a big surprise.

26. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ is better, with following plausible continuation: 26... $\mathbb{E}h5$ 27.h4 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}f4$ (28. $\mathbb{E}xc5?$ $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ leaves White helpless) 28... $\mathbb{W}e5$ (28...g5? 29. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ is no good, but Black is now threatening ...g5, so a repetition is White's best option) 29. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e6=$

26... $\mathbb{E}de5!$

With the idea of ... $\mathbb{W}d5$. And if White plays:

27. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



Black has:

27... $\mathbb{E}xe3!!$ 28.fxe3

28. $\mathbb{E}xe3$ $\mathbb{E}xe3$ 29.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}d2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g2\ddagger!$
31. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2\ddagger!$ also wins the queen.

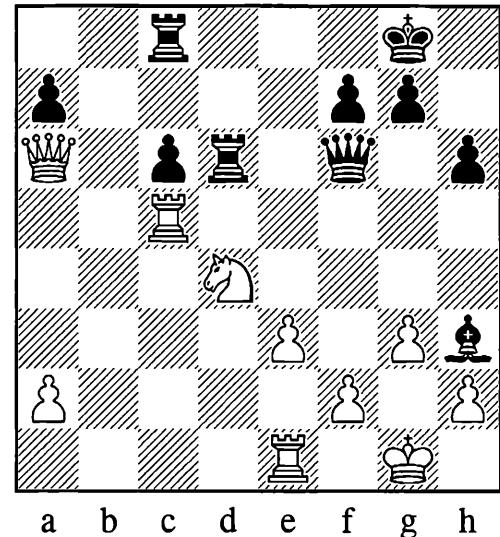
28... $\mathbb{W}d2$ 29.e4 $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$

Black is better. The white king is not safe, and whether he can save the game, only time will tell.

20... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a6$

21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}cd8\bar{\infty}$ is also fine for Black. For example, after 22. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ h5! he has good attacking chances.

21... $\mathbb{E}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}c5$ h6=



In our notes we had evaluated this position as roughly balanced. Our conclusion was subsequently validated by the course of the following game:

23. $\mathbb{W}e2$

23. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{E}d5!?$ (23... $\mathbb{W}f3=$ is also acceptable)
24. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ cxd5 26. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ Black has obtained dynamic equality.

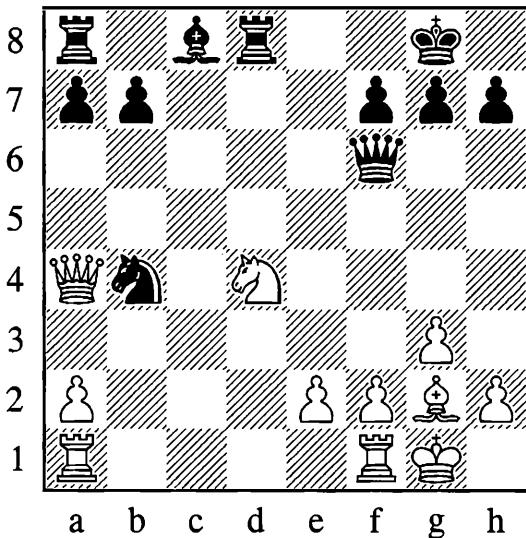
23. $\mathbb{E}e1??$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 24.exd4 $\mathbb{W}f3\bar{\infty}$

23... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25.f3 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ c5!?

Surprisingly, also the recommendation of Rybka 4.

27. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 29.axb3 $\mathbb{E}ed8\bar{\infty}$
30. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}d3$ 31.b4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 32. $\mathbb{E}b2$ h5 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$
a6 34. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{E}c3$ 36.f4 h4 37. $\mathbb{W}f3$
 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 39. $\mathbb{E}ee2$ $\mathbb{E}d3$ 40. $\mathbb{E}bc2$
 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 41. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{E}ed8$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 43. $\mathbb{W}c6$
 $\mathbb{E}d1$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}1d6$ 45. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 46. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{E}d5$
47. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ 48. $\mathbb{W}e1$

½–½ Budzyn – Stengelin, e-mail 2010.

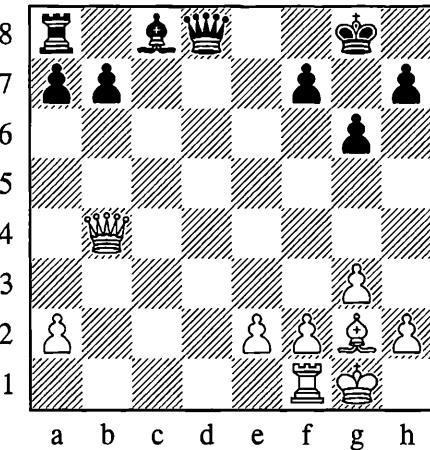
B322) 16.♔a4!!N

Originally we had expected 15.♕xd4 to be a novelty, but this real point is what we feared, and this still has not been played.

16...a5!

We have spent a number of days analysing this line and found that Black can equalize, but not as comfortably as almost everywhere else in the book.

16...♗xd4 17.♗ad1! (17.♗fd1?! ♔d3!=)
17...♗b6 18.♗xd8† ♗xd8 19.♗xb4 g6



This was Nikos's original suggestion for a solution when he handed in the files, and it did have some nice ideas, such as 20.♗b3 ♗b6 21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♔d5 ♔e6! and the many weak pawns are not important in the rook

ending; Black draws without major obstacles.

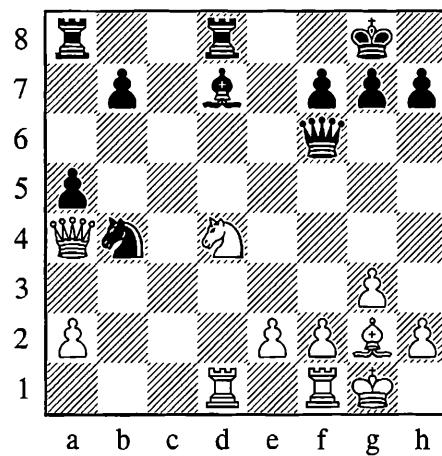
However, eventually we found that 20.h4!!± does not offer Black a way to solve his problems. White wants to play h4-h5-h6 and combine threats to the kingside and queenside in a classical way. And after 20...h5 21.♗b1!, Black's previous way of defending with 21...a5 22.♗f4 ♔e6 23.a3 ♘b8 no longer makes sense, as the king has an air-hole on h2. We have analysed other options, but have not come close to a position we can recommend.

17.e3

White has two serious alternatives to this move:

17.♗ad1 ♔d7!

This is an important little tempo move; the white queen is very well placed on a4.
Neither 17...♔g4?! 18.♗f3! ♘db8 19.♗d2± nor 17...♗xa2?! 18.♗b5!→ can be recommended.

**18.♗b3!**

The most dangerous move.

18.♗a3 does not work very well. Black can now play: 18...♔g4! 19.♗e3 (19.♗f3 b6 does not give Black any problems. On the contrary, it is time for White to consider how to keep the balance.) 19...♔e8 20.♗b3! ♘ad8 21.♗a4 ♔xe2 22.♗xe2 ♘xe2 23.♗xd8† ♗xd8 White wins his pawn back and keeps the balance.

18... $\mathbb{Q}ab8!$

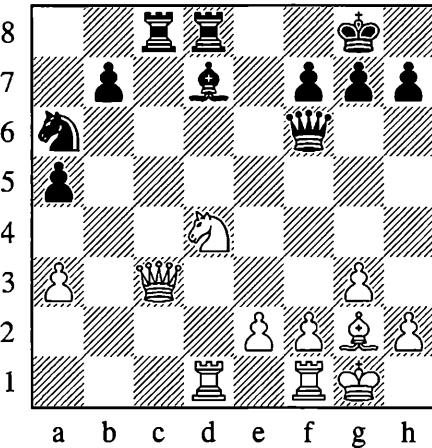
Showing one of the reasons why it is important to get the queen away from the a4-square.

Black would be worse after 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ b5!? (19... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b6\pm$ is not pleasant either) 20. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ due to the following nice combination: 20... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ g6 27. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b8\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b7\#$! $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32.a3± and Black will have to hold an unpleasant, though probably drawable ending.

19.a3

After 19.e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $gxf6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ b5= the rook ending is held easily. Even if White by some miracle were to win a pawn on the queenside and gain a four against three majority on the kingside, this is the least impressive of them all – Black still draws.

19... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bc8!$



Black has equalized. White should now enter an equal, but not entirely dead ending after:

21. $\mathbb{W}f3$

The alternative is to lose the exchange with 21. $\mathbb{W}xa5?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4\#$. There is of course some compensation, but all the winning chances are with Black.

17. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

This is well met with:

17... $\mathbb{W}e5!$

Dominating the knight. White has only one playable move:

18.a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

An interesting idea is 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 19.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}a3$ a4 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 and Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn, but this may not be to everyone's taste.

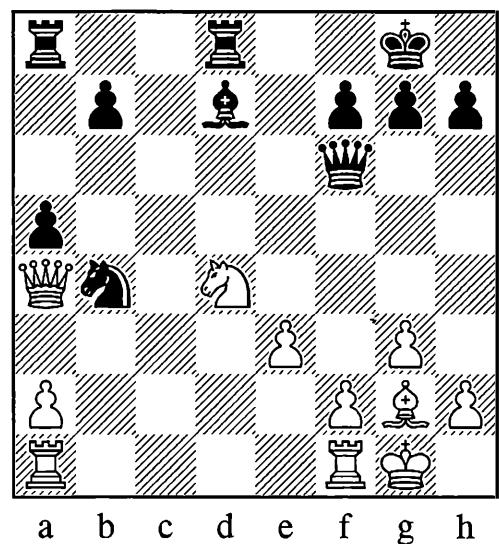
19. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Black has solved his opening problems. One line we looked at was:

20.e3 $\mathbb{W}b2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2!$
23. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 24.h4 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Here it is White who has to be careful.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



18. $\mathbb{W}a3$

The other big move is of course:

18. $\mathbb{W}b3$

Once again this makes it possible for Black to play:

18... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$

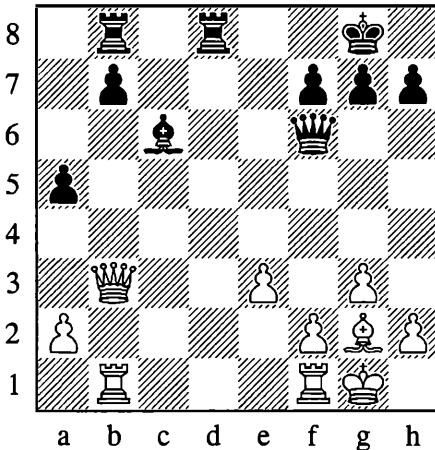
With this move, most problems have a tendency to disappear.

19. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$

19. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ h6 is less of a problem it seems. For example: 20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (21. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 22. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b6$

♖xg2 23.♗xf6 gxf6 24.♔xg2 b5= We have this drawn ending again. 25.♗xd8† ♕xd8 26.♗c5 ♘d2 The computer says +0.78, but actually we can give away the a-pawn and still make the draw comfortably.

19...♝c6! 20.♝xc6 ♕xc6



21.♗b6!

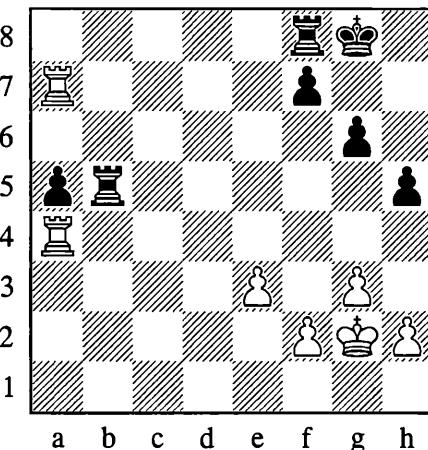
21.♗xc6 ♕xc6=

21...♝xg2 22.♔xg2 ♕xb6

Black should also be able to draw with:

22...♝c6† 23.♗xc6 bxc6 24.♗fd1 ♔f8
25.♗xd8† ♕xd8 26.a4 ♘d2 27.♗b8† ♔e7
28.♗a8 ♘d5=

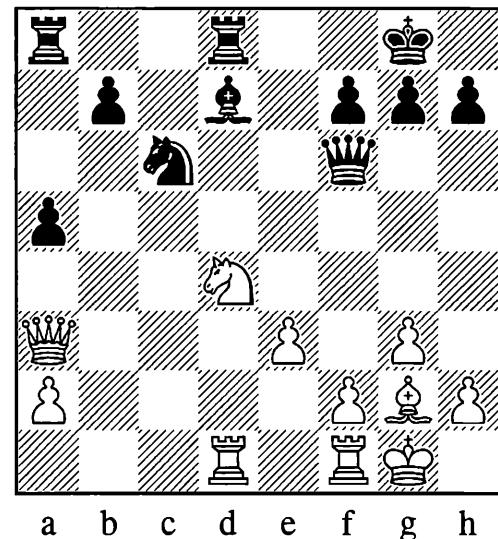
23.♗xb6 ♘d2 24.a4 ♘a2 25.♗d1 ♘xa4 26.♗xb7
♗b4 27.♗a7 ♘4b5 28.♗dd7 ♘f8 29.♗d4 h5
30.♗a4 g6



We have reached a theoretically drawn ending. We really recommend that you study this carefully; it is not too hard to hold if you know what to avoid, but not everyone does so. Kasparov once lost this ending to Piket...

18...♝c6 19.♗ad1

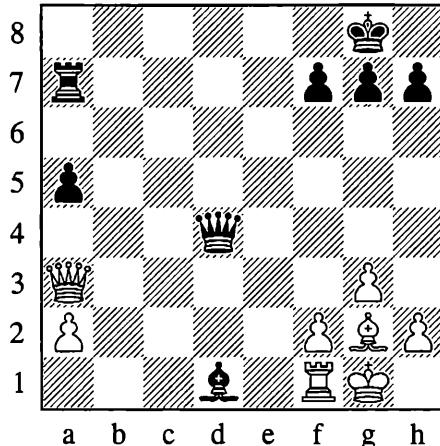
19.♗xc6 ♕xc6 20.♝xc6 ♕xc6= is not dangerous for Black.



19...b6

Black has played a number of the moves he really wants to play, but there are still a few to go before he is out of the woods.

A very serious alternative, that we might rate just as highly as the text – not least because there is less to remember – is 19...♝g4!?. Either Black equalizes on the spot, or White tries for an advantage in the following forcing line: 20.♗xc6! ♕xd1 21.♗xb7 ♘a7 22.♗g2 ♘xd4 23.exd4 ♕xd4



Although Black's pieces are misplaced and disgracefully uncoordinated, we have not found a way for White to achieve any more than a

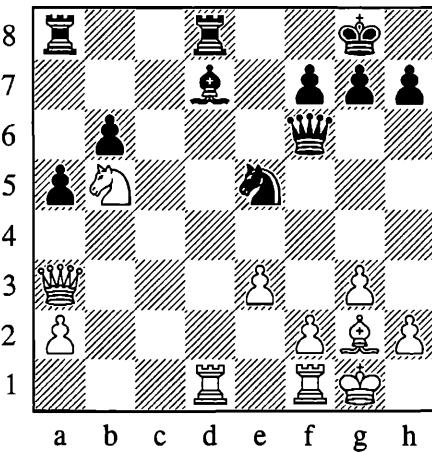
minor initiative that eventually will fizzle out. Obviously it is possible to lose with Black, but you will have to play some bad moves to do so, as always. Following the computer's analysis lead us to a rook ending: 24. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 25.h4 h5 26. $\mathbb{E}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d1\uparrow$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d4!$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ g6 and this ending is relatively easily drawable.

20. $\mathbb{W}b3$!

This is the most dangerous line, but we have the solution ready.

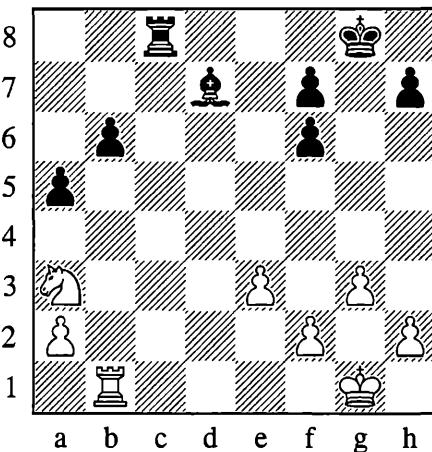
20. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}ac8=$ is comfortable for Black.

20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is answered with 20... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ and here White has the following options:



a) 21. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 22. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3\uparrow$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$

b) 21. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $gx6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{E}xa8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$



Simplest, although some other moves (such as 25... $\mathbb{Q}h3!?$) also draw. 26. $\mathbb{E}xb6$ $\mathbb{E}c3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (27. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{E}xb3$ 28. $\mathbb{axb3}$ $\mathbb{Q}e6=$) 27... $\mathbb{E}c1\uparrow$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6\uparrow$ 29.f3 $\mathbb{E}c2\uparrow$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xb5$ $\mathbb{E}xa2=$ And no, dear Rybka, White does not have a +0.76 advantage here. Be careful you don't get yourself recycled!

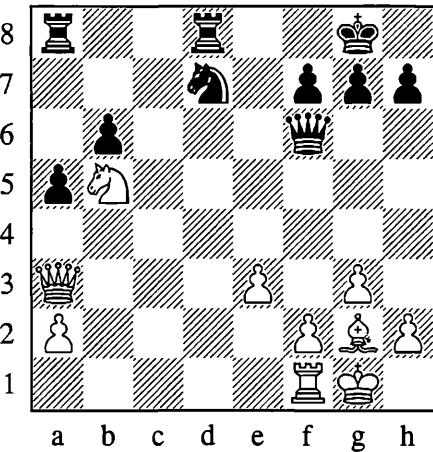
c) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5=$

d) 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3\uparrow$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}xd8\uparrow$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$

e) 21. $\mathbb{E}xd7!$

As we have seen, everything else gives White nothing.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$



22. $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Probably the most persistent move.

22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{E}xa8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $g6$ does not worry us. The ending seems to be just equal. For example: 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}b1$ h5 27.e4 (27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}c8!=$ immediately solves all problems) 27... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with the idea 29.e5 f6= and White cannot keep the strong knight position on d6.

22... $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{E}xb8$ 27. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}d8$

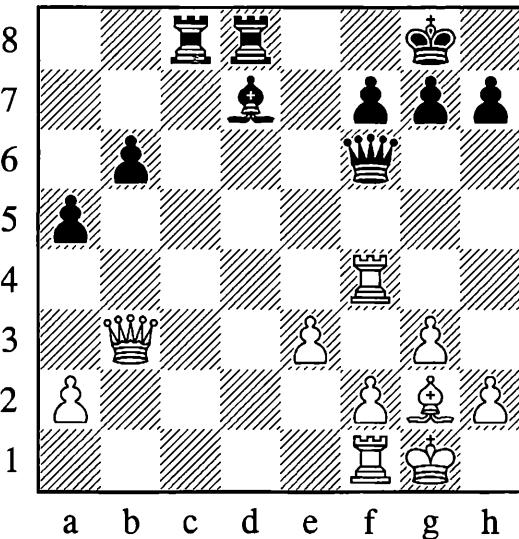
Black has solved most of his problems. This is not a certain draw, but it is very close. And this is against maybe the most dangerous line in the Tarrasch. You have to suffer similar

almost equal but not dead-drawn positions in any opening. The way to handle them is to know what is going on and be well prepared. People who really want to beat you will avoid them and go for a full-on battle.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}f4$

After 22. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ Black seems fine. 23. $\mathbb{B}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}c7=$ is harmless.

Also in this line 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ can be met by 23... $\mathbb{B}d7!$, when White lacks a convincing continuation: 24. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $g5!$ (24... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xd7?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xd7\#$) 25. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{B}dc7=$



22...a4! 23. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $b5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}f4!$?

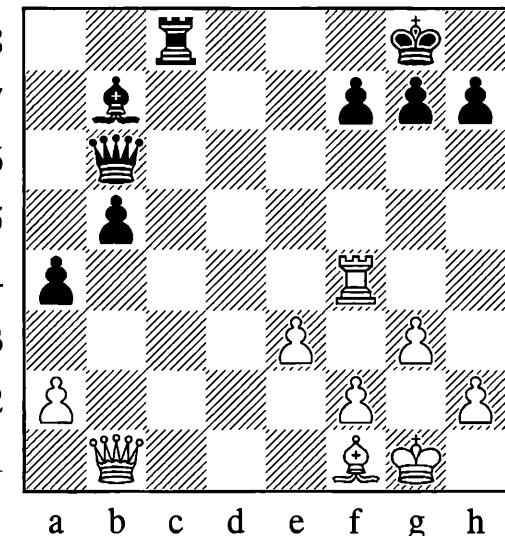
This is the more ambitious try, but maybe not the objectively preferable move.

26. $\mathbb{B}bd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is possible, but to call this an advantage after 27... $g6$ would be overoptimistic. Yes, Black is a bit passive, but his coordination is fine and he does not suffer from any real weaknesses.

26... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

Trying to win the b-pawn, but Black has a defence.

27... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7!$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$



Black has equalized. White cannot achieve anything, for example: 30. $\mathbb{W}xb5?!$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}c1\#$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 33. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$ or 30. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c6!$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 32. $f3$ $\mathbb{B}d8!$ and Black has lots of counterplay against the white king on the first two ranks. The position is probably balanced (as the engines claim), but in practice it looks dangerous for White.

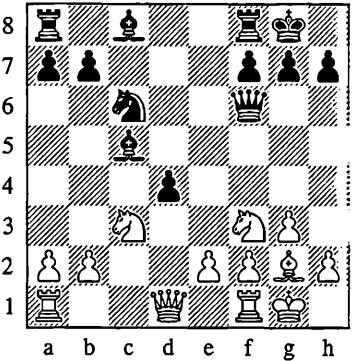
White should not go overboard in this manner, but as far as we can see the position is fully playable for Black.

Conclusion

There are several lines in this chapter which should not be of any great concern; learn a few minor points and you will be fine. But line B3 beginning with 13. $b4!$ is just as dangerous now as when it was first conceived. Based on sound positional ideas of a lead in development, as well as a nice tactic, 16. $\mathbb{W}a4!!N$ will sweep any unprepared soul overboard. The variations which are required to deal with this move are not uncomplicated, but they do work.

Chapter 12

9.dxc5



Timman Variation – Introduction

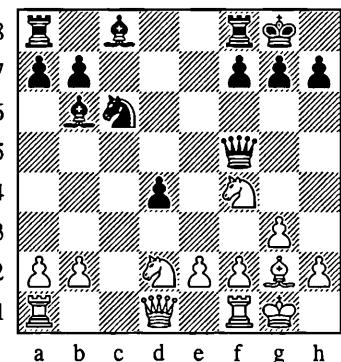
Variation Index

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6
7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♗g5 d4 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6**

12.♗d5

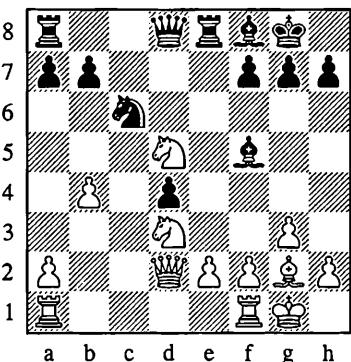
A) 12...♗f5!?	183
A1) 13.♗f4	184
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B) 12...♗d8	186
B1) 13.♗e1	186
B2) 13.♗f4	188
B3) 13.♗d2 a6!?	189
B31) 14.♗e4	189
B32) 14.♗b3	191
B33) 14.♗c1!	192

A1) after 14.♗d2



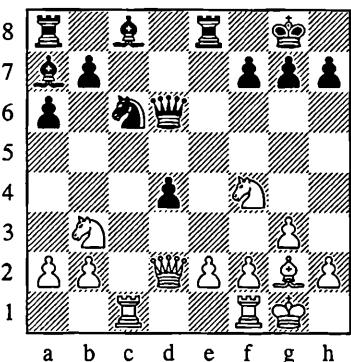
14...♗b5!N

B1) after 16.b4



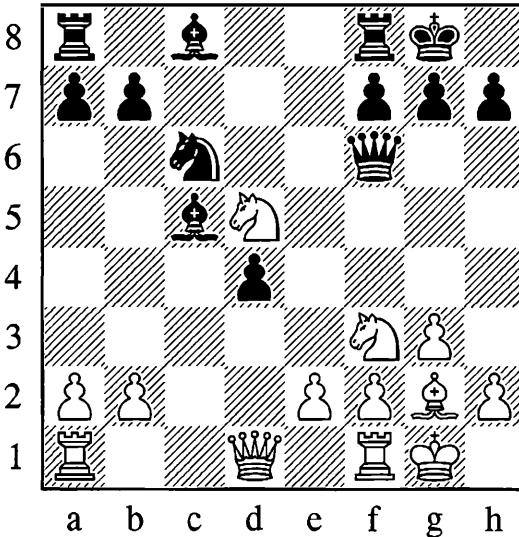
16...♗e4!N

B32) after 17.♗d2



17...♗g4!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3
 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♖e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.dxc5
 ♖xc5 10.♗g5 d4 11.♗xf6 ♜xf6 12.♘d5



This variation is the second big main line of the Tarrasch Defence. It was invented by Jan Timman in 1977, back when novelties were new strategies and not refinements of existing variations.

White has a strong light-square strategy, where his knights aim to be well placed and dominate the black bishop, which is meant to be limited by the d-pawn.

This is certainly what can happen if Black is poorly prepared or plays recklessly. Jacob's only loss in the Tarrasch happened in this line and was a typical loss for him (meaning that he was sloppy in his preparation, played in an uninspired way and eventually blundered).

However, if Black is on top of it all he will achieve no less than even chances in this highly complex middlegame. Moreover, he has a wide range of possible lines to choose from. There is A) 12...♝f5!?, which is a nice alternative to the more theoretically heavy lines, and B) 12...♝d8, followed either by 13.♘d2 a6!?, which was recommended back in the day by Esben Lund, or by 13.♘d2 ♕e8, which is our main recommendation and is to be found in the next chapter.

A) 12...♝f5!?

This idea of Narciso Dublan is a good practical choice, especially if you don't want to consume too much theory straight out. A1) 13.♘f4 and A2) 13.♘d2 are the main moves, but there is also:

13.♘h4 ♜e5

This looks a bit shaky, but holds up.

13...♝h5!?N 14.♘f4 ♜h6 15.♖c1 ♕e7
 16.♘f3 ♜d8= is an alternative.

14.♖c1 ♕b6 15.♗xb6 axb6 16.♗f3!?

This is scarier than 16.a3 Moiseenko – Patuzzo, Rotterdam 1998, which could have been met with 16...d3=.

16...♝f6 17.a3 d3!

Here too, this move is okay for Black.

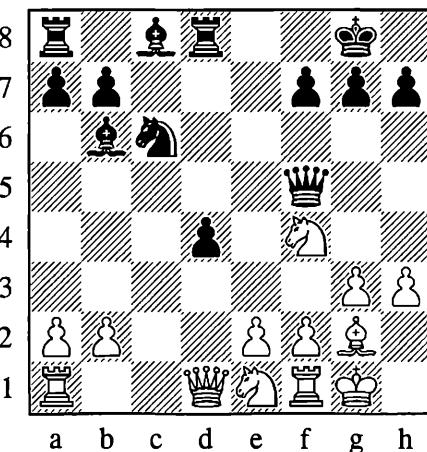
18.♗xd3 ♜xb2 19.♗g5 g6 20.♕xc6 bxc6
 21.♖xc6 ♕a6 22.♗e4 ♜ae8 23.♗h4 h5

Black has enough counterplay.

13.♘e1

This does not scare us.

13...♜d8 14.♘f4 ♕b6 15.h3



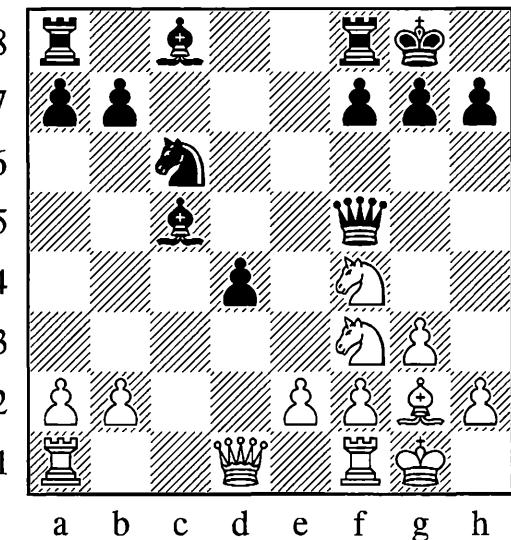
15...g5!?

More ambitious than 15...♕e6 16.♘xe6 ♜xe6 17.♗d3 ♜d6 18.a3 ♜e8= Djukic – Zdravkovic, Belgrade 2008; the counterplay against e2 secures equality.

16.♗fd3 ♜e6∞

This is not too risky. How can White take advantage of the weakening of the kingside?

A1) 13.♘f4



13...♝b6!

This is a key move in this line. Black will follow up with ...♝b5.

13...♝d8?! 14.♗c1 ♘b6?! did not work out for Jacob. (14...♝f8N was Nikos's recommendation, but at the board Jacob decided not to follow it without having a real idea why. Black wants to play ...g6 and ...♝h6 with counterplay, but Pedersen correctly pointed out that White is better after 15.♗b3! with the idea of ♘fd1.) 15.♘d2 ♘c7 16.♘d3 ♘b8 17.♘b3 ♘e6 18.♘bc5 ♘d5 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.♗a4± This was the course of the game St. Pedersen – Aagaard, Danish Ch. 2011. Black quickly lost after 20...♞a5? 21.♘a6!+–.

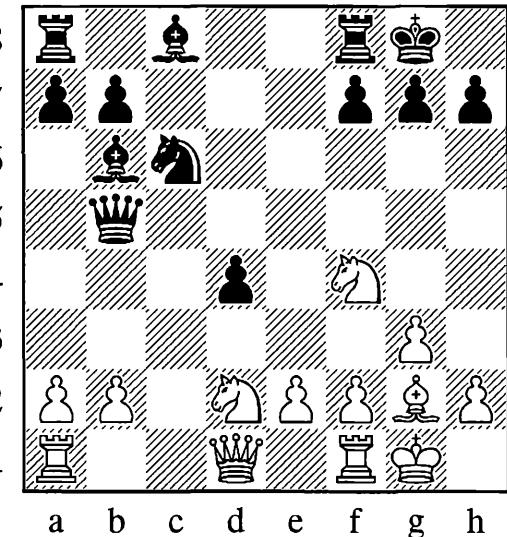
14.♘d2

14.♗c1 ♘b5 15.b3 requires a bit of knowledge. Here the right move is: 15...♝b8! (15...♝d8 would be inaccurate because of 16.a4! ♘f5 17.♘d2 ♘b4 18.♘c4 ♘c5 19.♘e3!±) 16.a4 ♘f5 17.♘d2 ♘e8–

14...♝b5!N

14...♝d8 15.♗c1 ♘b5 (15...♝c7?! would return to Pedersen – Aagaard above) 16.a4!N

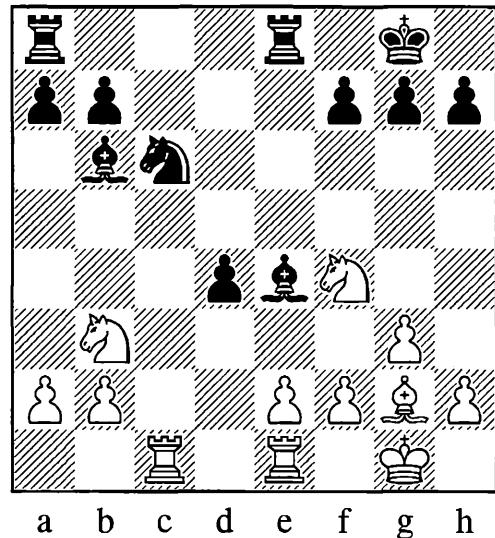
(White was also better after 16.♗b3 ♘xb3 17.♘xb3 g5 18.♘d3 ♘g4 19.♗fe1 St. Pedersen – Carlstedt, Copenhagen 2009, but our move is stronger.) 16...♝xb2 Other moves are not significantly better. 17.♘c4 ♘b4 18.♘d5 ♘f8 19.♘dxb6 axb6 20.♘xb6±



15.♗b3

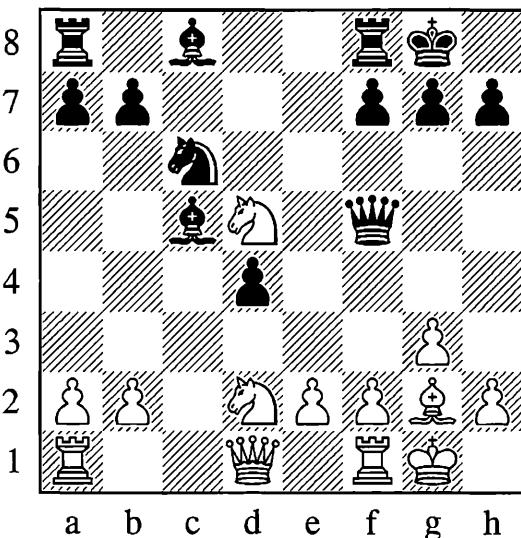
15.b3 ♘d8 16.♗c1 ♘b4! gives Black enough counter-chances.

15...♝xb3 16.♘xb3 ♘e8 17.♗fe1 ♘f5 18.♗ac1 ♘e4=



The ending is such a tiny amount better for White that we think equal is a more accurate evaluation.

A2) 13.♘d2



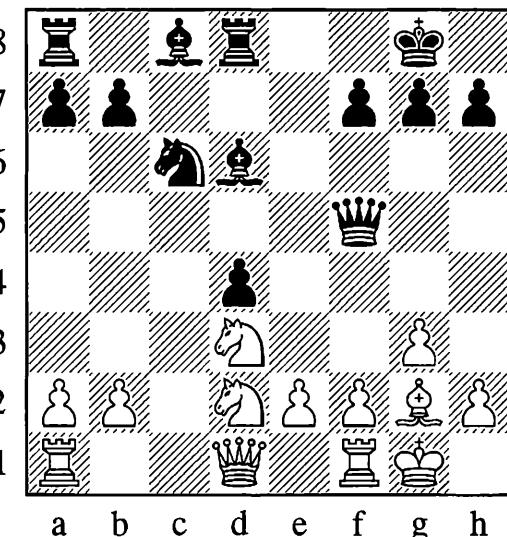
13...♗d8

13...♗e6?! 14.♘f4! is unfortunate. White has a strong threat in ♘h3!.

14.♘f4

14.♘b3 is not good: 14...♗xd5 15.e4 dxe3 16.♗xd5 exf2† 17.♔h1 ♗b6† Sayed – Narciso Dublan, Dos Hermanas 2003.

14...♗d6 15.♘d3



15...♗e6!

This is the solid and positional solution. As far as we can see Black is no worse.

15...h5?!

This has also been tried, but it looks a bit too optimistic to us.

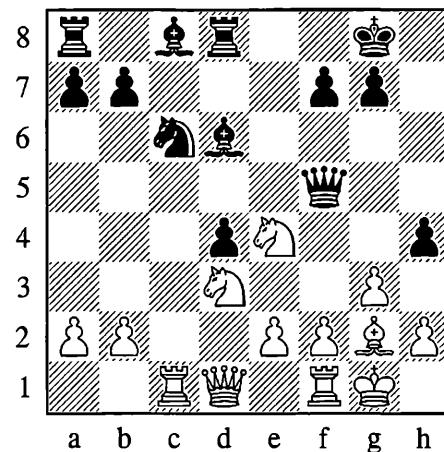
16.♗c1

White should react without showing too much respect.

16.♘f3 stops ...h4 but the knight is not well placed on f3. Black might play 16...♗f6!? to let the light-squared bishop into the game.

16.h4 weakens the light squares around White's king. After 16...♗e6 Black has an improved version of the main line.

16...h4 17.♘e4



17...♔f8

It is very hard to evaluate the consequences of 17...h3!?N 18.♔h1 ♔f8. How limiting for White is the h3-pawn?

18.♕ec5 ♘d6

Black is playing a type of caveman chess here.

19.♗d2

White can win a pawn with 19.♗a4 ♘h6 20.♗xc6 ♘xc6 21.♗xd4, but Black has great compensation on the light squares after 21...b6.

19...♗h6∞

The position remains in a sort of balance.

20.h3 hxg3 21.fxg3 ♘h5 22.♗e4 ♘d7 23.♗f4 ♘g6 24.♗f2 ♘e8 25.♗f4 ♘f5 26.g4 ♘e5 27.♗d3 ♘b8 28.♗f4 ♘xf4 29.♗xf4

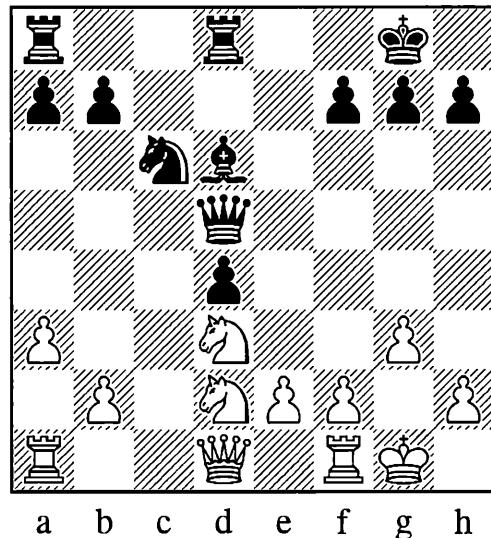
Black had a good ending and went on to win in 79 moves in Gonzalez Zamora – Graf, Merida 2006.

16.a3

16.♘a4 ♘d7! does not offer White anything special. The queen will have to retreat soon enough, and Black can get to the e-file with decent counterplay.

16...♞d5 17.♕xd5 ♘xd5

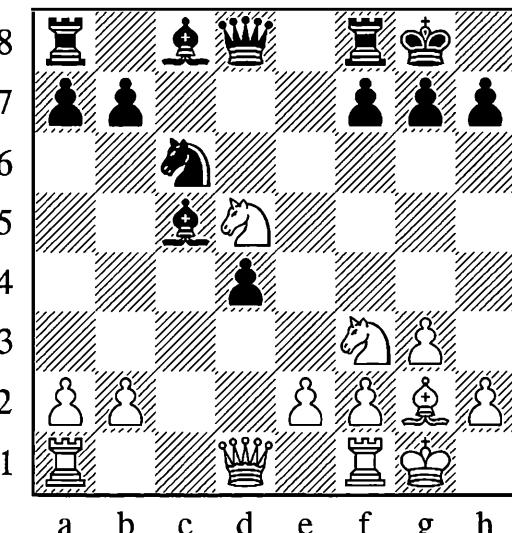
Black has equalized.

**18.♗b3 ♗h5**

18...♗xb3 19.♗xb3 ♘d7, followed by ...♝e8, should also be okay for Black.

19.♗f3 ♘d7

This move ensures the good coordination of the black pieces. Black is no worse and won a good game in Marin – Narciso Dublan, Andorra 2002.

B) 12...♗d8

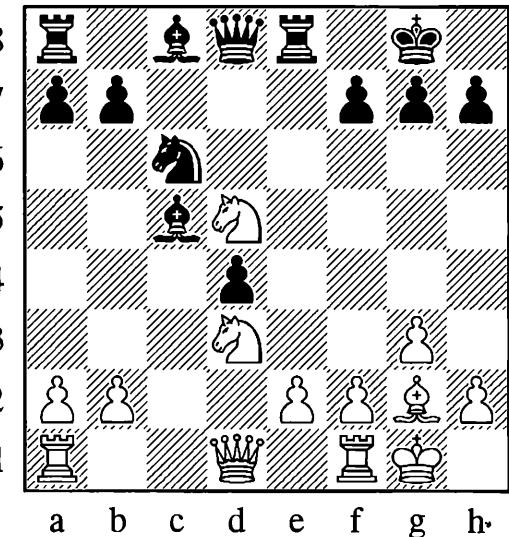
The established main line and still the big boy on the block. White needs to deal with the threat to the knight, so his main moves are **B1) 13.♗e1, B2) 13.♗f4 and B3) 13.♗d2.**

B1) 13.♗e1

This manoeuvre does not inspire great confidence.

13...♝e8

13...a6 14.♗d3 ♘a7 is also possible.

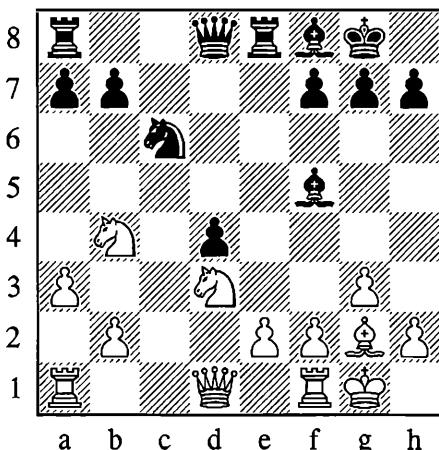
14.♗d3**14...♝f8!**

14...♗b6 15.b4 ♘f5 16.a4 ♘e4 17.♗xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗b3!± was Drasko – Kosic, Yugoslavia 1997. White's point is that 18...♝e2 19.♗fe1 ♘xe1† 20.♗xe1∞ offers him a strong initiative. For example: 20...♝c7 21.♗c4 ♘d6 22.b5 ♘e7 23.♗xe7† ♘xe7 24.♗e5 ♘f8 25.♗d7 ♘e8 26.♗xd4±

15.♗d2

White has two minor alternatives here:

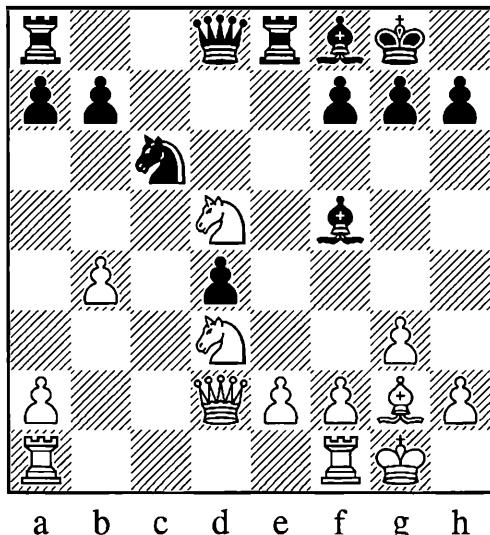
15.a3 ♘f5 (15...♝g4!N is also fine, intending 16.♗e1 h5!? with roughly equal chances) 16.♗b4 After the exchange of pieces on b4, a draw was agreed in Speelman – King, Bunratty 1997.



Instead, Black could try 16... $\mathbb{E}c8!?$ N 17. $\mathbb{E}e1$ g6 with a good game. For example: 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 19.b4 a5 \bar{z}

15. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16. $\mathbb{E}c1$ (16.b4 S. Popov – Jovancic, Sombor 2004, is well met with 16... $\mathbb{E}e4!$ N 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b3$ a5!=, based on the tactic 19.b5?! a4!) 16... $\mathbb{E}e4!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 19.a3 Porfiriadis – Haritakis, Greece 1996. Black is obviously okay here, and could try for more than equality with 19...g5!N.) 17... $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}ae8=$ Black has no problems whatsoever and won a nice game in Vooremaa – Kiik, Tampere 1997.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16.b4



16... $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ N

Although a novelty, this is the standard move in this type of position.

16... $\mathbb{E}xd3$ 17.exd3

17. $\mathbb{W}xd3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ab1$ should be equal, but Black will still have to play a few precise moves.

17... $\mathbb{E}e5$ 18.b5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}xb5$ 20.a4 $\mathbb{E}b3$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ab1$

A drawn was agreed at this point in Gleizerov – Kupreichik, Koszalin 1999. White certainly has compensation for the pawn, but Black could keep the fight going: 21... $\mathbb{E}xb1$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xb1$ $\mathbb{E}b8$

Black is at least not worse. For example:

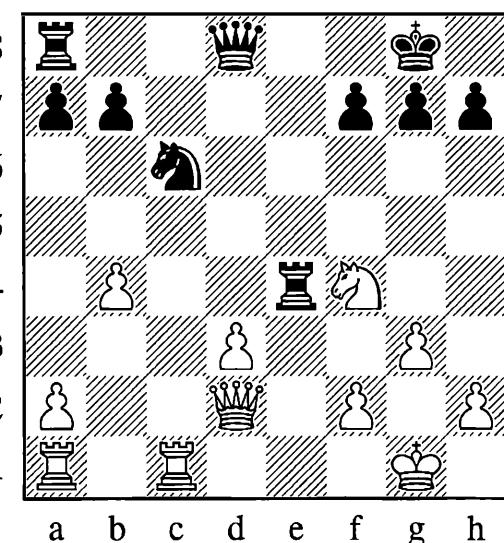
23. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 27.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 28.gxf4 f5=

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$

Black is obviously okay after 19...a6 or 19... $\mathbb{W}g5$, but we like the following tactical line a lot.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ d3? 21.exd3

21. $\mathbb{W}xd3=$



21...g5! 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3!?$

A fabulous idea, which unfortunately does not lead to an advantage.

24. $\mathbb{W}d1!$

Safer than either 24. $\mathbb{W}c3!?$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 25.d4 $\mathbb{Q}xh2\bar{z}$ or 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xg5\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 26.dxe4=.

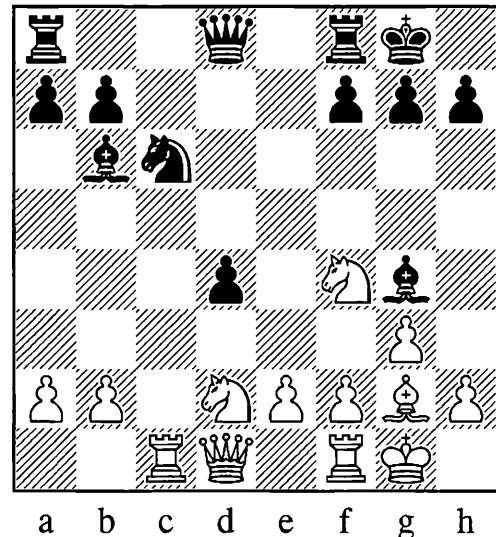
24... $\mathbb{E}e5$ 25.d4 $\mathbb{E}f5$ 26. $\mathbb{E}c5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 27.bxc5
 $\mathbb{W}d5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ gxf4 30. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$
 $\mathbb{E}e8=$

B2) 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Black is generally doing okay around here. For example: 13... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14.a3 a6 15. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$ Lerner – Vera, Bratislava 1983.

14. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

15.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ was at least equal for Black in Shalimov – Jakymov, Simferopol 2003.



15... $\mathbb{E}e8$

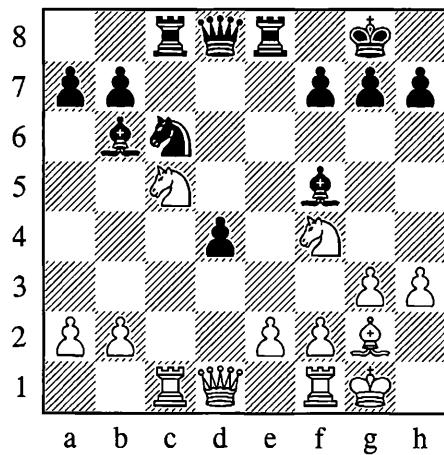
Black has nothing to fear in this sort of position, and moreover it is not too hard to play. For example: 15... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (16.h3!?) 16... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 19.a3 $\mathbb{E}c7$! 20. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ce7$ and Black was equal in Donchev – Lukov, Pernik 1983.

16.h3

16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e6=$ Sturua – Halkias, Yerevan 2000) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7N$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ Otherwise Black is doing extremely well. 19... $\mathbb{Q}b6$! (Also possible is 19... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xc6$

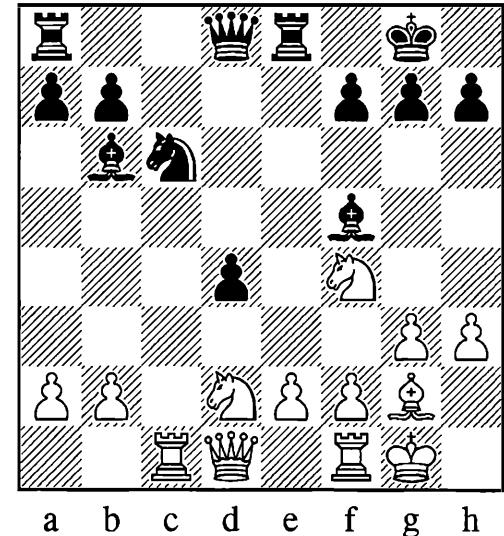
$\mathbb{W}xb7$ 22. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$. If anyone is better here it is Black – although probably the position is just dead equal.) 20.e4 $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xb7\infty$

16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 17.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ was Petzold – Romanelli, Kallithea 2008, and now Black should play:



18... $\mathbb{Q}a5!N$ 19.b4 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 21.bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}e4=$

16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$



17. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

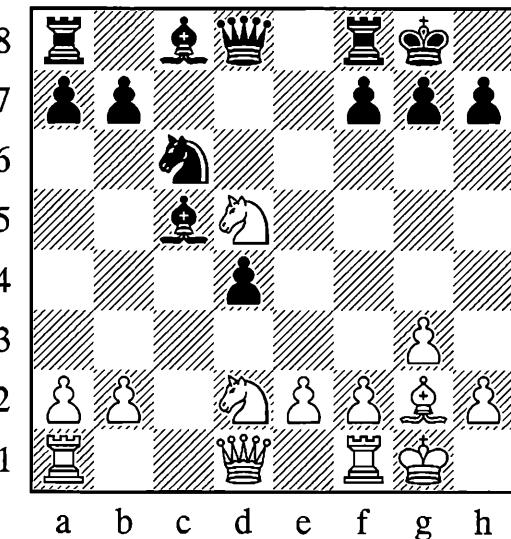
17. $\mathbb{W}b3N$ g5! 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\bar{F}$ forces White into a nasty pin. The following computer line would take some time to explain, but essentially White is struggling not to lose material, with both the e2-pawn and d5-knight in danger.

You don't have to remember such odd lines to be successful in this game, luckily! 19.♕fd1 ♔g7 20.♔f1 g4!? 21.h4 ♔e7 22.e4 ♕c8 23.♔g1 ♕xc1 24.♕xc1 ♕xd5 25.exd5 ♔f5±

17...♔e4 18.♕xe4 ♕xe4 19.♕d3 ♕e5=

Seirawan – Frey Beckman, Malta (ol) 1980.

B3) 13.♘d2



13...a6!?

This was the line Esben Lund recommended in 2002. Although we don't think it is quite as viable as the earlier 12...♕f5!? or the main line 13...♕e8 (covered in the next chapter), it is by no means stupid.

13...♔g4 14.♕c1 ♔b6 15.♘c4 ♕e8 16.♕el is a big main line with generally poor results for Black. It is possible to play 16...♔c5, and many have done, but life is never going to be as joyful as in the 13...♕e8 line, despite the similarities. And after the most commonly played 16...♔a5, White has 17.♘xa5 ♕xa5 18.b4!, forcing 18...♕xb4 19.♕xd4 ♘xd5 20.♕xg4±, when Black has ended up playing a horrible ending in several games.

13...♔h3?! is considered dubious because of: 14.♕xh3 ♕xd5 15.♕b3! ♕h5 (15...♕xb3 16.♘xb3 ♔b6 17.♕fd1 ♕fe8 18.♔f1±

Ivanchuk) 16.♕xb7 ♔e5 17.♕e4 ♕ae8 18.♔g2± Ivanchuk – Marjanovic, Yerevan 1989.

13...♔e6 14.♘f4 ♔f5 15.♕b3!N is slightly uncomfortable for Black.

At this point White has three options, of which only the last seems to promise any real chance for an advantage. They are B31) 14.♘e4, B32) 14.♘b3 and B33) 14.♕c1!.

B31) 14.♘e4 ♔a7 15.♕c1

15.♕d2?

This is a clear mistake, as White's play is on the light squares. Still, it is instructive to see how Black meets it.

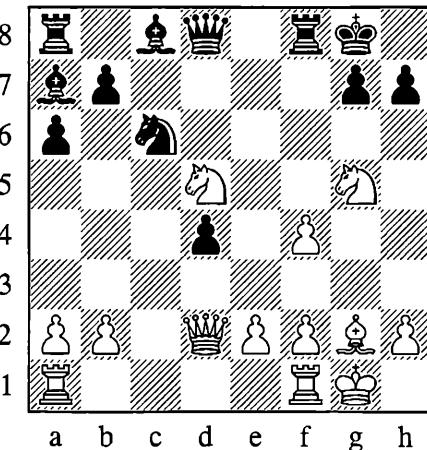
15...f5! 16.♘g5 f4!

This continuation was demonstrated by Lund. The point is that White can have trouble with the d5-knight.

17.gxf4?!

17.♘e4 f3–+

17.h4 h6 18.♘xf4 hxg5 19.♔d5†± is “best”.



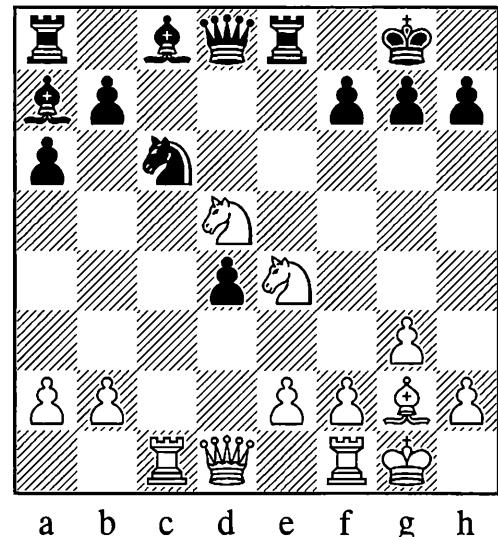
17...h6 18.♘e4 a5!!

Black threatens ...♔e6 trapping the knight. The only chance is:

19.b4 ♔e6 20.b5 ♕xd5 21.bxc6 bxc6±

15...♕e8

15...f5?! is futile because of 16.♘c5.

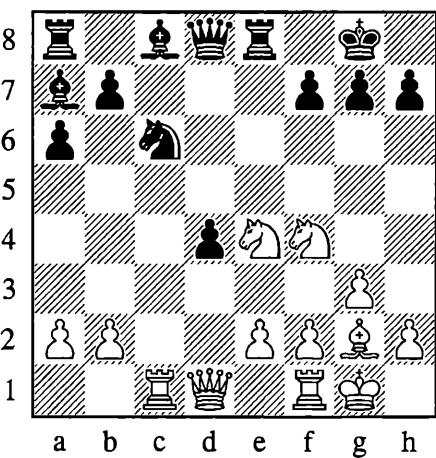


16.♕c5

16.♗d2?! was tried in Jonasson – Chandler, Reykjavik 1984. Here Black missed the strong option 16...♖h3!!N, as pointed out by Lund. White either has to play 17.♗xh3 ♖xd5 18.f3 with a poor position, or 17.♗ef6† gxf6 18.♗h6 ♖xg2 19.♗xf6† ♖xf6 20.♗xf6 ♕e6=, which is more interesting, but still good for Black. White's best may be to return the queen, which is obviously no fun.

16.♗f4

This is best met with:



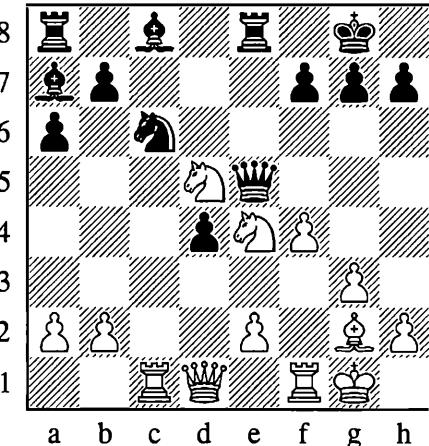
16...♗e7!N

An improvement over 16...♗f5?! 17.♗c5 ♖xc5, when 18.♗xc5 ♗e4 was equal in Ioseliani – S. Lalic, Germany 2001, but Black could have struggled a bit had White played: 18.♗xc6!N bxc6 19.♗xc5±

17.♗d5 ♗e5?!

17...♗d8 repeats, of course.

18.f4



18...♗xd5! 19.♗f6† gxf6 20.♗xd5 d3† 21.e3! ♖xe3† 22.♔g2 ♖xc1 23.♗xc1

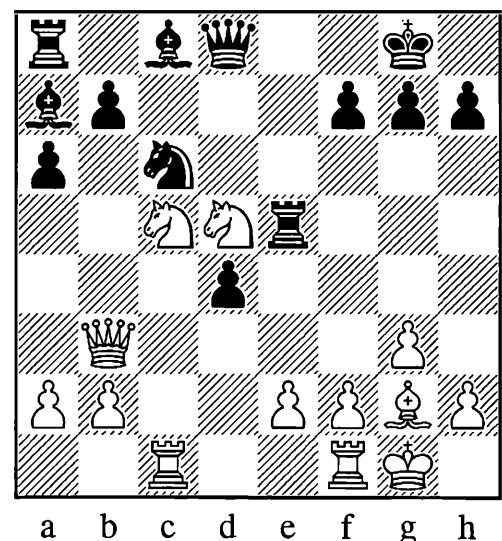
23.♗xd3 ♖xb2†

23...♗e2† 24.♔g1!

24.♔h1 ♖h3 25.♗d1 ♗ae8 gives Black a mating attack.

24...♗h3 25.♗d1 ♗ae8= 26.♗c3 d2 27.♗f3 ♗e2e3 28.♗xf6 ♗xf3 29.♗g5† ♔f8 30.♗h6† ♔g8=

16...♗e5 17.♗b3



17...♗b8!N

This was Lund's suggestion, and indeed it seems to be the best move. White is the one who has to worry about keeping his bits together here.

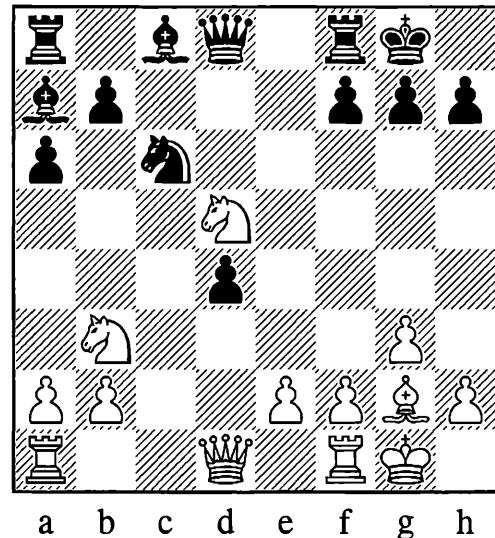
17.... $\mathbb{Q}xc5!?$ N 18. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}e7=$

17... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}f4$ was played in Ladeira – Eugenio, Brazil 1997, and now 21... $f6!$ N is best, though White has interesting play after: 22. $\mathbb{B}xc6!$ $bxc6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b4\infty$

18. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 21. $b4$ $\mathbb{B}be8\uparrow$

The position looks more fun for Black than White.

B32) 14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$



15. $\mathbb{B}c1$

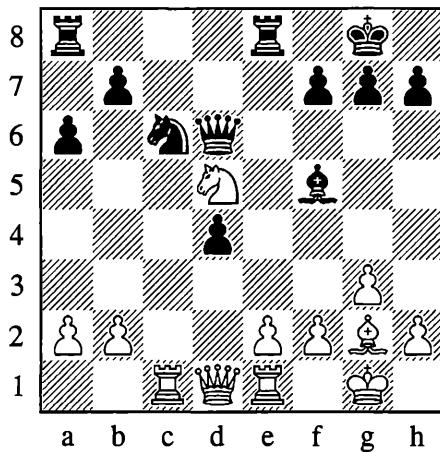
15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ is best met with: 15... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ N (in Szymanski – Frolik, Trinec 2003, Black played typically, but incorrectly with 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 17. $axb3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}fc1\pm$) 16. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d6=$

15... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

16. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

16... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is also possible, but after 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ D. Cramling – Strauss, Gausdal 1980, Black finds it hard to fully equalize. For example: 17... $\mathbb{W}d6$ N 18. $\mathbb{W}f4!$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 20. $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $b6!$ (24... $hxg6$ 25. $f4\pm$) 25. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $b5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}cc1$ $hxg6$ 27. $f4\pm$

17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{B}c1$

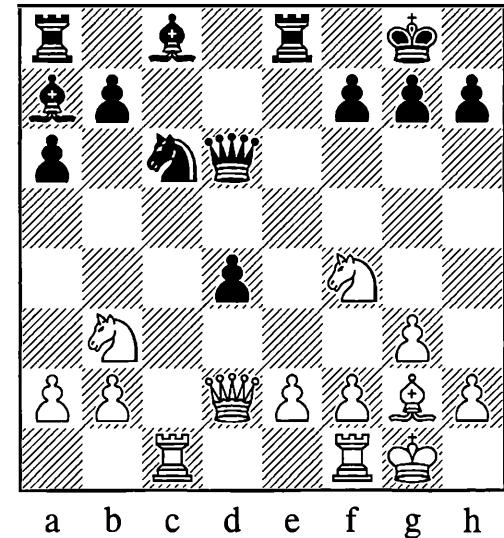


19... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ N

An obvious novelty.

19... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ turned out okay in Ronsted – Otland, Amager 1999, but maybe White could have played for an edge with 20. $e4!?$ N. 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}ae8=$

16... $\mathbb{W}d6!$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$



17... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ N

A significant novelty and an important position to understand strategically.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ occurred in Plachetka – Nunn, Skara 1980. Here we don't like the look of: 21. $\mathbb{W}f5!?$ N $\mathbb{Q}ee8$ (21... $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}c8$ $\mathbb{B}4e5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fc1\pm$) 22. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $g6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}fc1\pm$

White will play $\mathbb{Q}f1$, and probably later $\mathbb{R}c8$ to relieve the pressure by exchanging a pair of rooks. Black may well find himself suffering in the endgame as though he had a nagging itch.

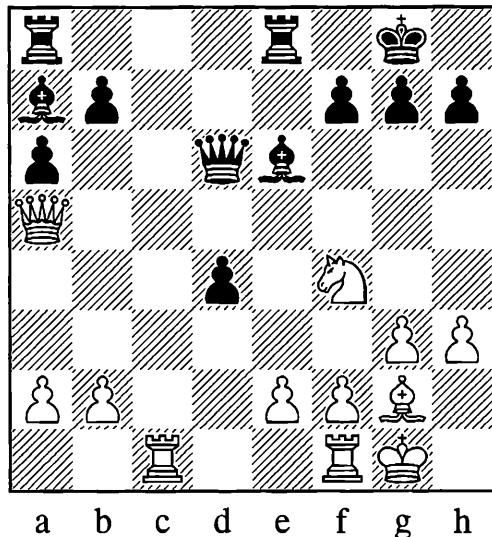
18.h3

This is probably White's best. Black's key idea is that 18. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is met with 18... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{R}ae8$ with even chances.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a5$

Neither 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}xe6=$ nor 19. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{R}ad8=$ scares us.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa5$



20... $\mathbb{R}ab8!$

Black wants to play ... $\mathbb{R}b6$ followed by ... $\mathbb{R}f5$. White's pressure is quickly fading.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{R}bd8=$

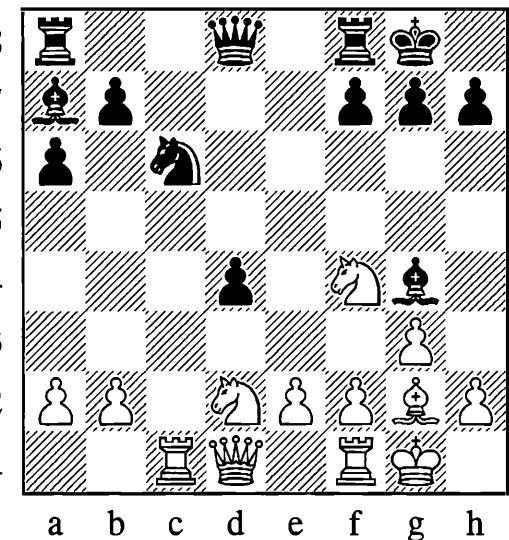
Although we consider this position equal, it is slightly easier to play for White. But many people would surely take up the Tarrasch, if this is the worst they could encounter!

B33) 14. $\mathbb{E}c1!$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

15. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ transposes to B31, while 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ transposes to B32.

15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

This was the main line recommended by Lund in 2002, and it still seems to hold up today.



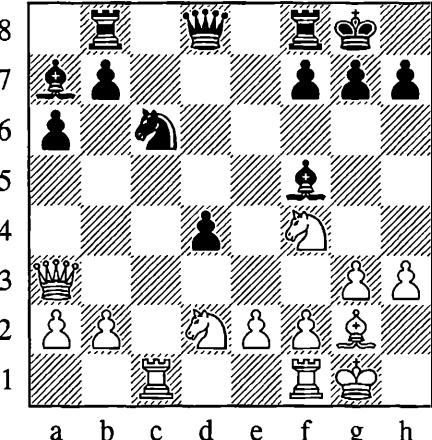
16. $\mathbb{E}e1$

16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{R}b8!$

This is slightly better than 17... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{R}fe8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 21. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{E}e4$ Ftacnik – Bluvshstein, Montreal 2002, although here too, Black is very close to equality.

18. $\mathbb{W}a3$

18. $\mathbb{g}4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{R}fd8=$) 20...fxe6 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{R}f4=$ Kasimdzhanov – Mallahi, Teheran 1998.



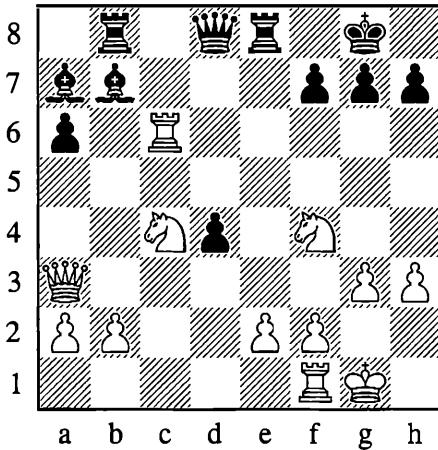
18... $\mathbb{R}c8!N$

This is an improvement upon 18... $\mathbb{Q}e5$!?

Brodowski – Chlost, Olomouc 2010. White can secure a slight edge with 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$!N $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ ±.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e8$!N should also be considered, and now:

- a) 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ g5 looks good enough for Black: 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{gxf4}$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Wd7}$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{bxc6}$ 23.g4 $\mathbb{Qxe2}$ 24. $\mathbb{Wxa6}$ d3∞) 20... $\mathbb{Qxe2}$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Qxd3}$ (21... $\mathbb{Wf6}$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Wxf5}$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{bxc6}$ 24. $\mathbb{Wxa6}$ $\mathbb{Qb5}$ 25.a4 $\mathbb{Qa5}$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Wf3}$ also looks fine) 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Qxb2}$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}8xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}7b6$ =
- b) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{bxc6}$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Qc8}$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (21.h4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ ∞) 21... $\mathbb{Q}b7$



22. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Qxc6}$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Wd7}$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Qxb8}$ 25. $\mathbb{Wd3}$ $\mathbb{Qxf4}$ 26. $\mathbb{gxf4}$ h6 27. $\mathbb{Qd1}$ $\mathbb{Wc6}$ 28. $\mathbb{Qd2}$ $\mathbb{Qe4}$ 29.f5 $\mathbb{Qf4}$ 30. $\mathbb{Qc2}$ $\mathbb{Wf6}$ 31. $\mathbb{Qc5}$ $\mathbb{Wb6}$ 32. $\mathbb{Wd2}$ $\mathbb{Wxc5}$ 33. $\mathbb{Wxf4}$ $\mathbb{Wb4}$ 34. $\mathbb{Wc1}$ $\mathbb{Wa5}$ = So Black draws provided he has learned a lot of moves. This is quite common in modern chess. The thing to remember is that White will have his chances to go wrong as well.

19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

After 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{bxc6}$ 20. $\mathbb{Wxa6}$ $\mathbb{Qb8}$ Black has a dangerous kingside attack.

19... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Qe6}$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}cb6$ $\mathbb{Qd6}$ 22. $\mathbb{Wd3}$ $\mathbb{Qb8}$ 23. $\mathbb{Qfd1}$ $\mathbb{Qe8}$ =

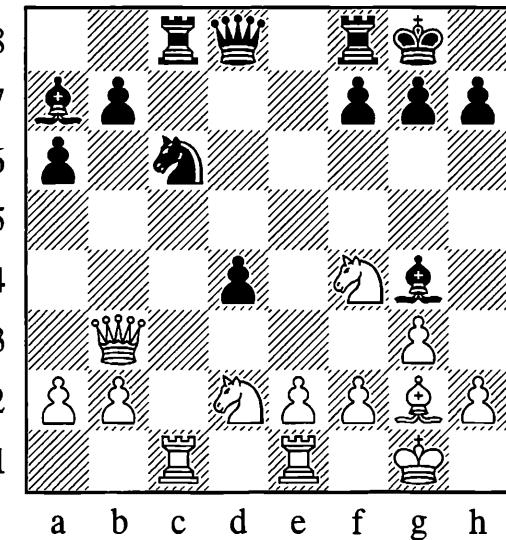
White might be marginally more active, but Black is solid, and after ...g6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ his bishop will be well placed after all.

16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

We have also analysed: 16... $\mathbb{Wd7}$!N 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$! (17. $\mathbb{Wb3}$ $\mathbb{Qfe8}$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Qf5}$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ 20. $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ $\mathbb{Qe4}$ 21. $\mathbb{Qec1}$ $\mathbb{Qxg2}$ 22. $\mathbb{Qxg2}$ $\mathbb{Qe4}=$) 17... $\mathbb{Qfe8}$ (17... $\mathbb{Qac8}$ 18. $\mathbb{Wb3}$! transposes to the note to Black's 17th move below) 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ ±

17. $\mathbb{Wb3}$!

17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ was played in Epishin – Schnur, Werther 2000. We would suggest either 17... $\mathbb{Q}b8$!N or 17... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ N 18.h3 $\mathbb{Qf5}$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Qb4}$!? (19... $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ 20. $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ $\mathbb{Qe4}=$ 21.f3? $\mathbb{Wb6}$! 22. $\mathbb{Wc1}$ $\mathbb{Qe7}$!) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Qxc1}$ 21. $\mathbb{Qxc1}$ $\mathbb{Wb6}$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Qxa2}$ 23. $\mathbb{Wd2}$ g6=.



17... $\mathbb{Wc7}$!N

Deep analysis shows that this uncharacteristic move is the only shot at equality.

17... $\mathbb{Wd7}$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

18... $\mathbb{Qfe8}$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$! (19. $\mathbb{Q}d5$?! $\mathbb{Qe6}$! 20. $\mathbb{Qdf6}$! $\mathbb{gxf6}$ 21. $\mathbb{Qxf6}$! $\mathbb{Qg7}$ 22. $\mathbb{Qxd7}$ $\mathbb{Qxb3}$ 23. $\mathbb{axb3}$ d3! 24. $\mathbb{exd3}$ $\mathbb{Qd4}$ ∞) 19... $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ 20. $\mathbb{Qxc5}$ ± This is a bit worse than usual, as after 20... $\mathbb{Qf5}$? White wins with 21. $\mathbb{Qd5}$!.

19.h3 $\mathbb{Qe6}$

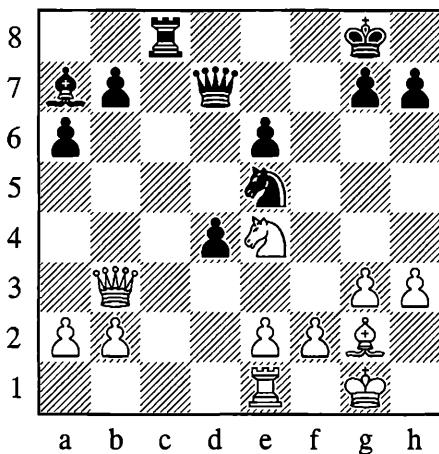
This looks like a bad exchange, but Black hopes to be quick with ...b5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, with counterplay.

20. $\mathbb{Qxe6}$ $\mathbb{fxe6}$ 21. $\mathbb{Qxc8}$

21. $\mathbb{Qh2}$ b5∞

21.f4 d3† 22.Qh2 d2 23.Qxd2 Qxc1!
 24.Qxc1 Wxd2 25.Qd1 (After 25.Wxe6† Qf7
 26.Qc7 Wd6 27.Wxd6 Qxd6 28.Qd5† Qh8
 29.Qd7 Qc5 30.a3 a5 White might have
 enough compensation to draw, but no more.
 Two pawns is not enough...) 25...Wxe2
 26.fxe5 Wxe5 27.Wxb7 Qd4 Black has
 equalized, as after 28.b4 he can force a draw
 if he wants to: 28...Wxg3†? 29.Qxg3 Qe5†
 30.Qg4 Ef4†=

21...Qxc8



22.Qd1!N

22.Qg5 d3! 23.exd3 Qxf2† 24.Qxf2 Qxd3†
 25.Qe2 Qxe1 26.Qxe1 Qc1† 27.Qe2 Qc5=

Tait – Donnelly, e-mail 2006.

22...b5 23.Wa3 Qc6 24.Qg5 Qd6 25.Qe4 h6
 26.Qf3 Qxf3† 27.Wxf3±

White's advantage is not great, but the weakness of the light squares is very likely to build over time.

18.Qd5

18.Qe4 Qfe8 19.h3 Qf5 20.Qc5 Qxc5
 21.Qxc5 Qe4 is fine for Black, as usual.

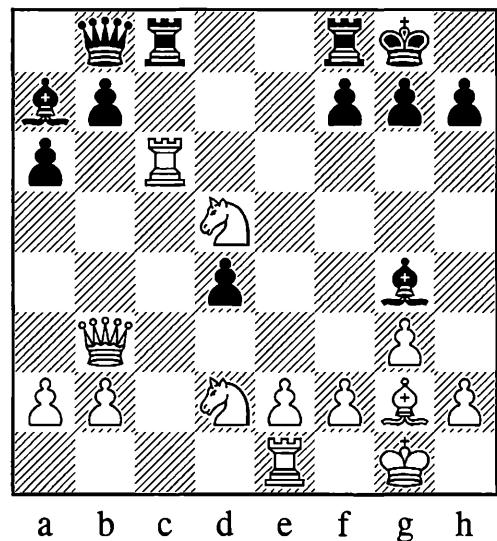
18...Wb8

18...Wd7?! 19.Qe4 Qh8 20.Qb6±

19.Qxc6!

This is the most dangerous try.

19.Qf3 Qe6 20.Wa3 Qfe8 21.Qf4 Qd7 looks okay for Black, as after 22.Qc4 he has the get-out 22...b5!.



19...bxc6 20.Qe7† Qh8 21.Qxc8 Wxc8
 21...Qxc8 22.Wxf7 Wb4 23.Wf4 Qe6
 24.Qe4!±

22.Qc1 c5 23.Qf3 Qf5

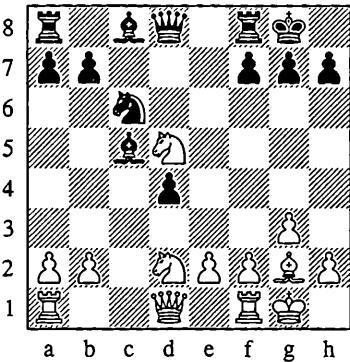
White's advantage looks absolutely minimal to us.

Conclusion

The Timman Variation with 12.Qd5 and 13.Qd2 still offers White a fascinating light-squared strategy with an interesting middlegame ensuing. However, a lot has happened since 1977 and today we are able to face this strategy successfully in several ways. In this book we have given three ways, two in this chapter and one in the next. Of these, probably 13...a6 is the weakest, but we still wanted to include it, as it is certainly playable and because many still like this line after Esben Lund gave it in his and Jacob's book back in 2002.

Chapter 13

9.dxc5



Timman Variation – Main Line

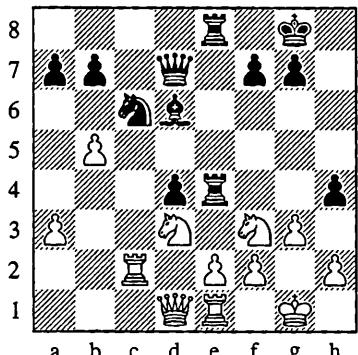
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7
 8.0–0 0–0 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♗g5 d4 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘d5 ♗d8 13.♘d2

13...♗e8

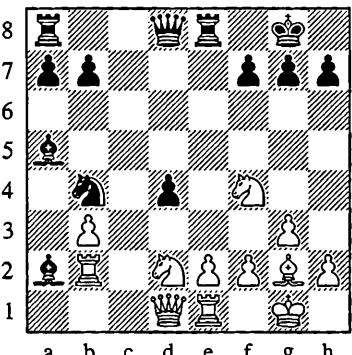
A) 14.♗e1	197
A1) 14...a6!?	197
A2) 14...♗g4	198
B) 14.♗c1	202
B1) 14...♗f8	202
B11) 15.♗e1	203
B12) 15.♘b3	204
B13) 15.♘f4	205
B2) 14...♗b6	207
B21) 15.♘b3	207
B22) 15.♗e1	208
B23) 15.♘f4	209
B24) 15.♘c4 ♗g4 16.♗e1 ♗c5! 17.a3	210
B241) 17...♗c8	211
B242) 17...a6	213

B13) after 23.b5



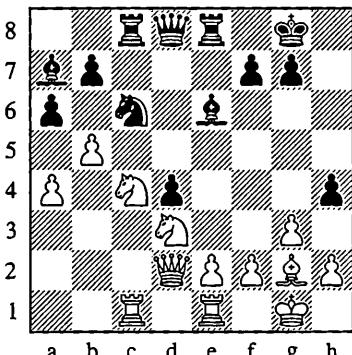
23...♗e7!N

B22) after 19.♗b2



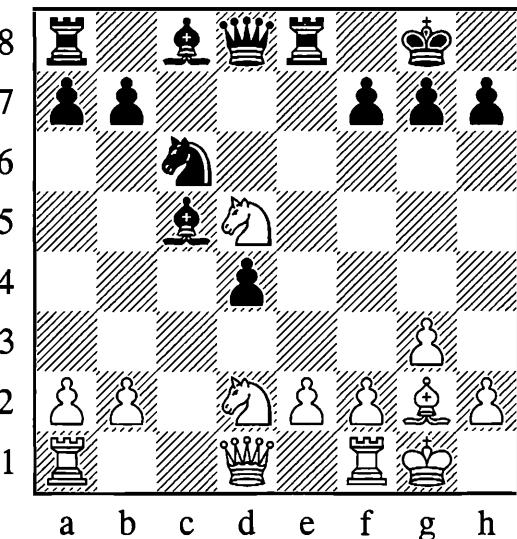
19...d3!N

B242) after 23.b5



23...♗e7!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.g3 Qf6 7.Qg2 Qe7 8.0-0 0-0 9.dxc5 Qxc5 10.Qg5 d4 11.Qxf6 Wxf6 12.Qd5 Wd8 13.Qd2 We8



The big main line. White has a number of options here, but as far as we can see, this is just because the position is relatively unforcing by nature, and not because White is living a life of luxury.

White's two principal moves in this position are A) 14.Qe1 and B) 14.Qc1. There are some alternatives that have been tried, but they have not challenged anybody.

14.Qb3 Qb6! 15.Qe1

15.Qxb6 Wxb6 16.Qc1 White has to play slowly. (16.Qxc6 bxc6 17.Wxd4 Qxe2 18.Qae1 Qxe1 19.Qxe1 Qh3? does not worry us; the placing of the bishop is quite uncomfortable for White.) 16...Qg4! 17.Qxc6 Qxe2 18.Wxd4 bxc6 19.Qfe1 Qf3 It is quite obvious that Black is not worse here, which is why White quickly looked to the exit. 20.Qxe8† Qxe8 21.Wxb6 axb6 22.Qd4 Qd5 23.Qxc6 Qxa2= Li Zunian – Chandler, Chicago 1983.

15...Qe6 16.Qf4 Qf5 17.Qc1 Qe4

The standard manoeuvre.

18.Qxe4 Qxe4 19.Qd3 Qe7 20.Qf3 Qd6

21.Qd2 Wa8 22.Qc4 Wd8= Bukic – Petursson, Ljubljana 1981.

14.Qf4 Qg4

Provoking White to weaken his kingside ever so slightly.

15.h3 Qf5 16.Qc1 Qd6

Black gains a handy tempo with this retreat.

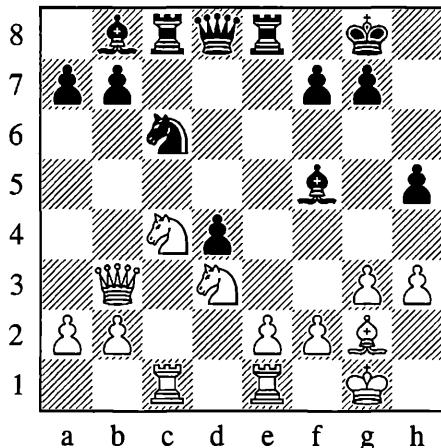
17.Qd3 Qc8 18.Qc4 Qb8 19.Qe1 h5!?

This typical idea once again.

20.Qb3

20.h4 is of course possible; after 20...b5 21.Qa3 Wb6 Black is fine. For example:

22.Qc5 Qxd3 23.Qxc6 Qxc6 24.Qxc6 Qxe2 25.Qxe2 Wxc6 26.Qxe8† Wxe8 27.Qxd4 g6=



So far we have been following Lerner – Novik, USSR (ch) 1991. Now we think Black should play:

20...Wd7?!N 21.Qc5

21.h4 b6∞

21...We7 22.e4

Other moves are nothing to fear.

22.Qh7

Also possible is 22...Wxc5 23.exf5 Qxe1† 24.Qxe1 b5 25.Qd2 h4∞ with counterplay on the dark squares.

23.Qd3 h4 24.g4 Qd8?!

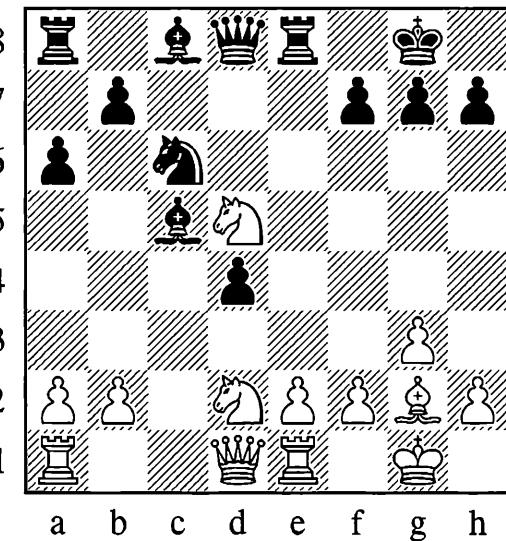
Black has good play on the dark squares. It is hard to see who is better, which probably means that the position is balanced.

14.Qe4?! Qf8 15.Qc1 Qh3! transposes to the note on 15.Qe4?! in line B11.

A) 14.♗e1

At this point we offer the reader a choice between A1) 14...a6!? and A2) 14...♗g4, both fully viable options.

14...♗f8 is liable to transpose to B1) 14.♗c1 ♗f8 sooner or later, unless one of the players does something foolish.

A1) 14...a6!?**15.♗b3**

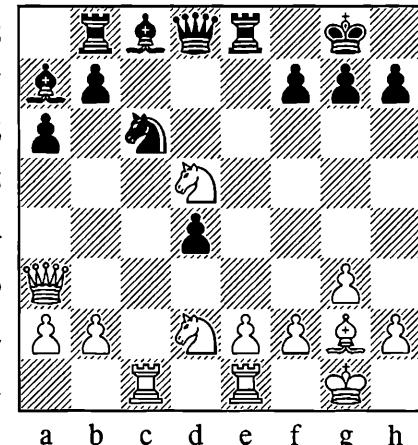
Black also has a good position after:

15.♗c1 ♗a7 16.♗b3

16.♗c4 ♗e6 17.♗f4 ♗f5, with the idea of ...♗e4, equalizes according to Kasparov, while 16.♗b3 transposes to our main line.

16...♗b8 17.♗f4

17.♗a3 allows Black to equalize in quite an active way:



17...♗e5! 18.♗f4 ♗a5 19.♗b3 ♗b5 20.♗c2 ♗f5 21.♗e4 ♗xe4= Miles – Chandler, West Germany 1984.

17...♗e5 18.♗c4

18.♗d3N is our attempt to improve over the old theory, but it should not really worry Black: 18...♗b5 19.♗d1 ♗e5 20.a4 ♗xd3 21.exd3 ♗c5 22.♗c4 ♗e6 23.b4 ♗c7 24.a5 ♗bc8=

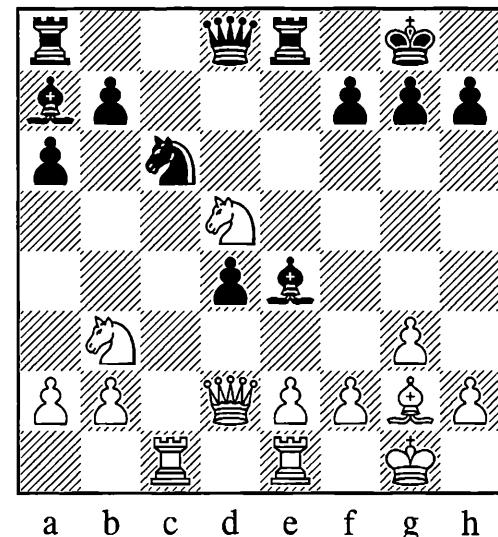
18...♗b5 19.♗a3 ♗b4!=

Black had enough counterplay in Miles – Hjorth, Britain (ch) 1984.

15...♗a7 16.♗c1 ♗f5!

Standard play.

17.♗d2 ♗e4



Black is fully equal. The d4-pawn is not at all weak and after the exchange of the bishops White's kingside lacks defenders.

18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♗b4

White is hoping to have a good knight vs. bad bishop ending at some point. But this is far into the future and Black will be able to become quite active in the meantime.

19.♗f4 ♗e7 is also equal according to Petursson.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}4e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h6 24. $\mathbb{B}cd1$ b5
 25. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}e4$

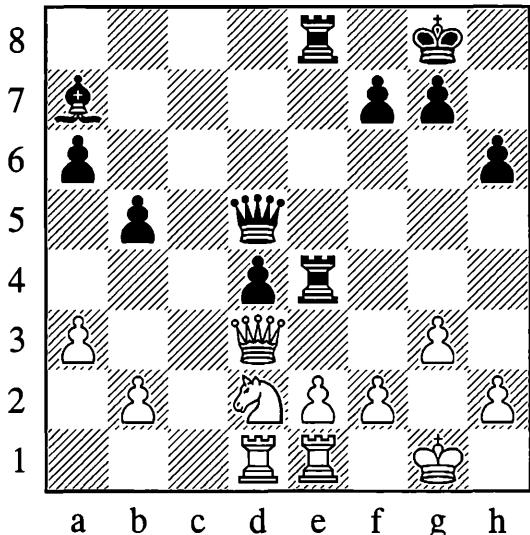
White has not made any substantial progress, and he should probably look to secure a draw now, before it is too late.

26.a3 $\mathbb{W}d5$

Preparing to advance the kingside pawns.

27. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$

A blunder leading to a lot of practical problems. Better was 27. $\mathbb{B}cl$, when White is still okay.



27... $\mathbb{B}e3!!$

Bang! A sacrifice that White is forced to accept.

28.fxe3 $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 29. $\mathbb{B}c1?$!

After 29. $\mathbb{W}b1?$ d3 the discovered check will lead to a rapid mate.

But White could have played 29. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{B}xd3$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}a2$ 31.b4 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 32. $\mathbb{B}f2$ with a defensible position.

29... $\mathbb{B}xd3$

29...f5!? was an interesting intermediate move, but Black chooses not to complicate things.

30.exd3 $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ 31. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}d6$
 33. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 34.g4?!

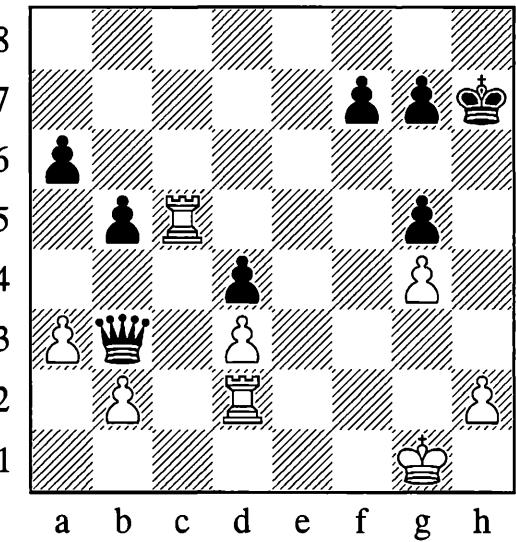
34. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 35. $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ was a better defence.

34... $\mathbb{B}g5?!$

34... $\mathbb{W}b3$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}g5\#$ was also strong.

35. $\mathbb{B}c5$ $\mathbb{W}b3!$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xg5\#$ $\mathbb{B}h5$ 37. $\mathbb{B}d2?$

White misses the last chance to keep the game going: 37. $\mathbb{B}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 38. $\mathbb{B}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 39. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{W}d1\#$

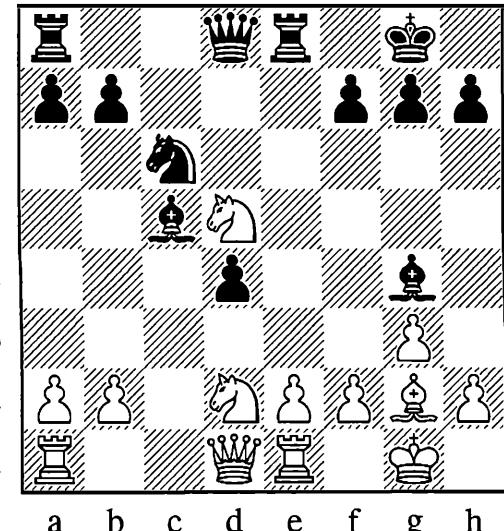


37... $\mathbb{W}e6!$ 38. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xg4\#$ 39. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d1\#$
 40. $\mathbb{B}g2$ f6 41. $\mathbb{B}cf5$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 42. $\mathbb{B}5f3$ $\mathbb{W}e4$
 43. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 44. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e1\#$ 45. $\mathbb{B}df2$ d3

0–1

Ogaard – Petursson, Gausdal 1984. A great game!

A2) 14... $\mathbb{B}g4$



This is an invitation to transpose to line B24 below. White can of course avoid the transposition, but we don't think this offers him any tangible advantage.

15.♕b3

15.♕c1 ♕b6 (15...♕f8 is playable and transposes to line B11) 16.♕c4 is the transposition to B24 mentioned above.

15...♕b6 16.♗d2

White can play for the win of a pawn:

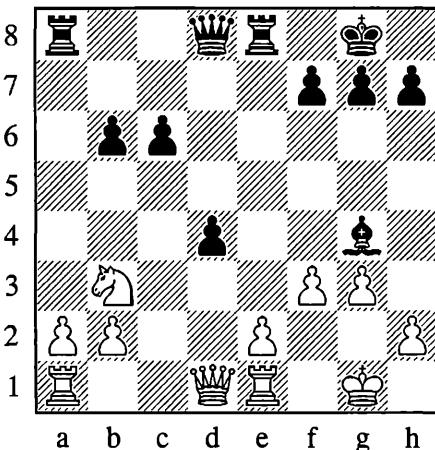
16.♕xb6 axb6!?

16...♗xb6?! 17.♕xc6 bxc6 18.♗xd4 ♘xe2 19.♗xe2 ♘xe2 20.♗e4!± Timman – Hernandez Onna, Las Palmas 1977.

17.♕xc6

17.a3 ♘e6 18.♕xc6 ♘xb3=

17...bxc6 18.f3



However, we doubt whether this position is objectively better for White; indeed it is quite unpleasant to play in practice.

18...♕d7!N

An improvement on 18...♕e6? 19.♗xd4 ♘xa2 20.♗xc6± Wiechert – Treffert, Germany 1995.

19.♗xd4 c5 20.♗c3 h5=

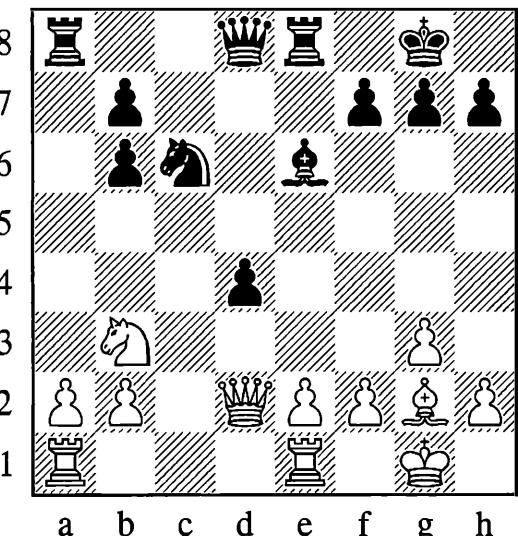
The extra pawn can only be of use far into the future, and meanwhile White's king is very tender.

16...♕e6 17.♕xb6

This is forced. 17.♕f4? loses the exchange to 17...♗xb3 18.axb3 ♘a5+.

17...axb6!

Preparing ...♘d5.



18.♕xc6

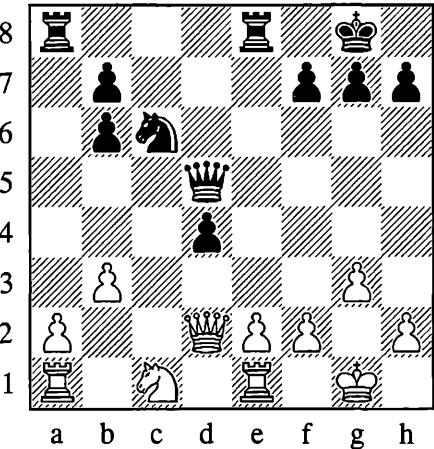
This is the only try for an advantage, although it is not much of a try.

18.♕c1 ♘d5

This offers Black complete equality.

19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.b3!?

20.a3= was better.



20...d3!N

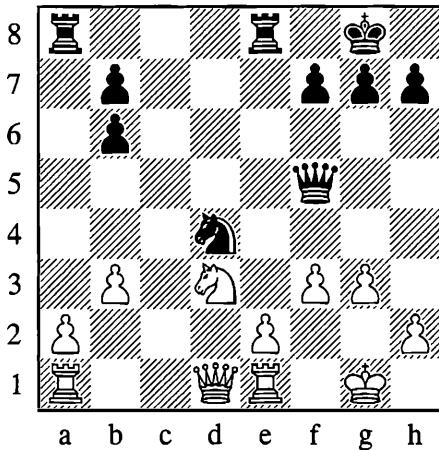
20...♗a3 21.♗b1 h5 22.h4 was Timoshenko – Gokhale, Dubai 2000. Black is fine here and can try the brutal idea of ...f6 and ...g5, or play it safe with ...♗a5.

21.♕xd3!

The best defence.

21.♕xd3 allows Black to come up with a lot of threats: 21...♔e5 22.♗b1 ♘ad8 23.♗c4 ♗d4† Black clearly has the initiative. For a start he is threatening to win material with both ...♗f3† and ...b5. The following line includes several only moves for White, but still might not be entirely forced. 24.♗d3 ♗xe2† 25.♔g2 ♗f5 26.♗bd1 b5 27.♗c5 ♘d5 28.♗c2 ♘de5 29.♗c7 ♘e7 30.♗d6 h5 31.h4 ♔h7† White is struggling to find good moves and will soon face the loss of material unless he finds a miracle save.

21...♗d4 22.♗d1 ♔e4 23.f3! ♗f5

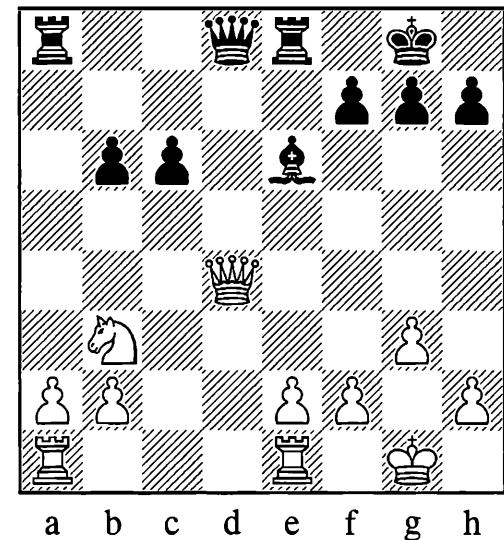


Black has fantastic compensation for the pawn. He will continue with ...♘ad8 and ...♗e3 and will surely win his pawn back in the near future. Whether it is enough for a significant advantage is, however, less certain. The computer suggests that White can hold the position.

18.♗d3 is harmless. The most interesting reply is 18...♗d5?!, when White can accept the challenge and enter a double-edged position with either 19.e4?! or 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.e4 ♗d7 21.f4. In the latter line, Black may continue with 21...g5?!, which seems likely to lead to perpetual check: 22.♗b5 gxf4 23.♗g5† ♔h8 24.♗f6† ♔g8=

18...bx_c6 19.♗xd4

19.♗xd4 c5 20.♗b3 ♗xd2 21.♗xd2 ♘ed8 22.♗e4 ♘xa2 is marginally better for Black, but probably drawn.

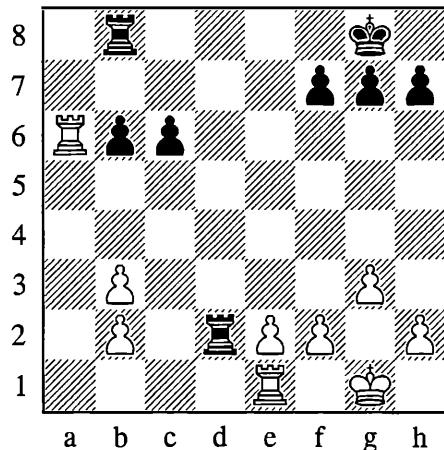


19...c5?!

This is the most ambitious choice. Black can fight for an advantage here, although the chances are probably about even.

Black may also go for a safe draw with:

19...♗xb3 20.♗xd8 ♘axd8 21.axb3 ♘d2 22.♗a6 ♘b8



23.♗a2

This endgame is evaluated as '±' by some sources, but to us it is clear that Black is in no trouble at all.

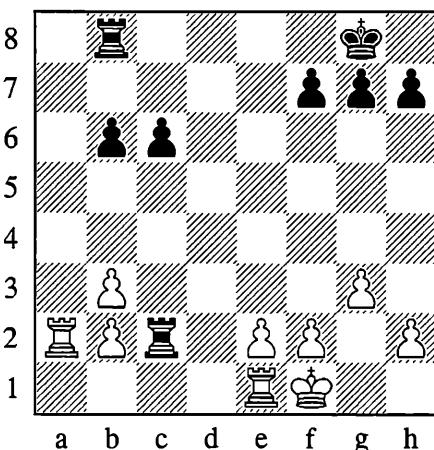
23.♗c1N c5 24.b4 is the most dangerous suggestion by the computer. But after

24... $\mathbb{E}xe2!$ 25.bxc5 bxc5 26. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xb2=$
any advantage claimed by the computer is of course ridiculous.

23... $\mathbb{E}c2$

The most accurate, although Black also drew after 23...g6 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c5 25. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 26.e3 $\mathbb{E}e6=$ Vaisser – Groszpeter, Trnava 1983. Apart from the optical inconvenience of being a pawn down, Black has little to fear.

24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$



This was Kotenko – Lutovinov, corr. 1984.

Here Black can improve with:

24...g5!N 25.e4?!

25. $\mathbb{E}aa1$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 26. $\mathbb{E}eb1=$ is more circumspect.

25... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}dd2$ 27. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7+$

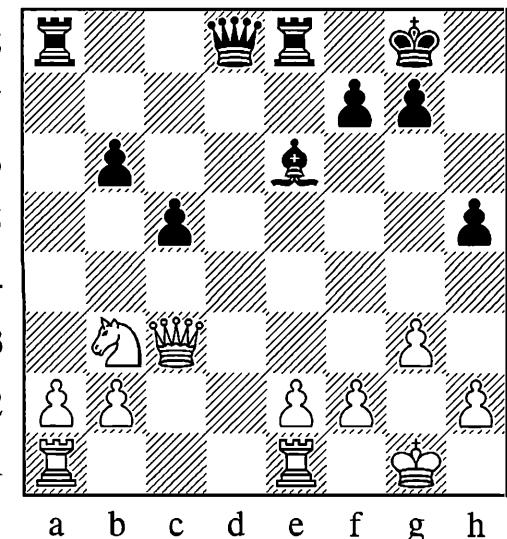
White is struggling to find a move.

20. $\mathbb{W}c3$

Another game continued: 20. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ed1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1\uparrow$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}f8!?$ N is a bit more ambitious; after 22. $\mathbb{E}xd8\uparrow$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ c4 24.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e7\bar{\infty}$ White's position is unpleasant, although he should be able to hold it.) 22. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ Poecksteiner – Klinger, Trnava 1985. Here Black should play 22...g6!N 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 24. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ b5, when his position is quite pleasant to play.

20...h5

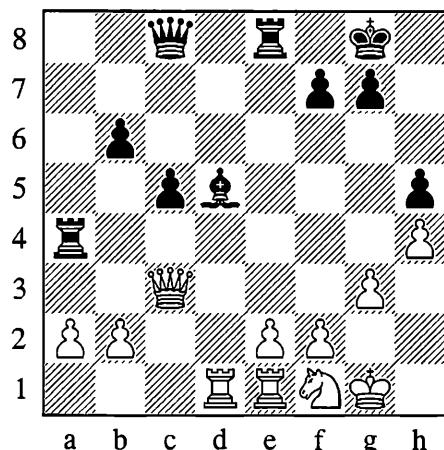
20... $\mathbb{W}d7!?$ N takes control of some light squares. Black can claim good compensation for his pawn. For example: 21. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{E}xa2$ 24. $\mathbb{E}d2=$



21.a3

Other options are:

21.h4 $\mathbb{E}a4$ (21... $\mathbb{W}d7!?\bar{\infty}$) 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ was Volkov – Egin, Sochi 1997. Taking on a2 now is fine and gives equal chances, but Black can play more ambitiously:



24... $\mathbb{W}e6$ N 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26.a3 $\mathbb{W}e4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{E}d4!\bar{t}$ Black is preparing to double on the d-file and put White under a lot of pressure.

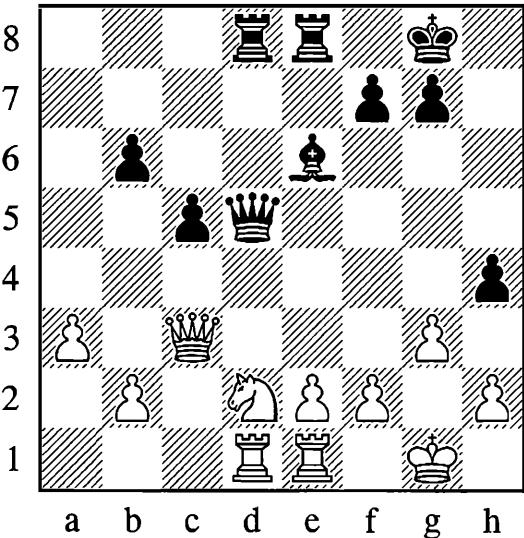
21. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ (21... $\mathbb{W}f6$ goes into an ending in which Black wins back the pawn, but if Black wanted to play such an ending it would have been better to go for 19... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$, as given above.) 22.a3 h4 In our opinion Black has sufficient play for the pawn; the game will be won by the better player on the day.

21... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}ad8!?$ N

This is just a small refinement. 22...h4 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h x g3 24.h x g3 $\mathbb{W}h5\infty$ was played in Miles – Klinger, Biel 1986, and was also fine.

23. $\mathbb{E}ad1$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$, with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$, gives Black good play.

23...h4**24.gxh4!?**

The most combative.

One minor point (unless it were actually to occur, in which case “major” does not cover it fully) is that White cannot play 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3??$ due to 24... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 25. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ h3#!

24. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}h5\infty$ **24... $\mathbb{W}h5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g3$**

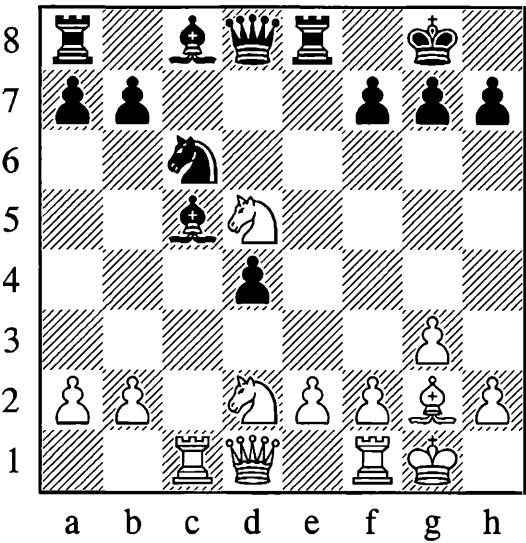
25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}g4\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}xh4\infty$

25... $\mathbb{E}d4$ 26.f3 f5 27.e4

Or 27.e3 $\mathbb{E}xh4$ 28. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{E}g2$ $\mathbb{W}h6\infty$.

27... $\mathbb{E}ed8$ 28.exf5 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 29. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{W}f7$
30. $\mathbb{E}de1$ $\mathbb{E}xd2$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 32. $\mathbb{E}e7$ $\mathbb{W}f6$
33. $\mathbb{E}7e6$ $\mathbb{W}f7=$

Neither side can profitably avoid the repetition.

B) 14. $\mathbb{E}cl$ 

At this point we have analysed **B1) 14... $\mathbb{Q}f8$** and **B2) 14... $\mathbb{Q}b6$** , and we find them both satisfactory.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is a poor move. What is the bishop doing here? 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}fd1\pm$ Ayas Fernandez – Codina, Barcelona 1996.

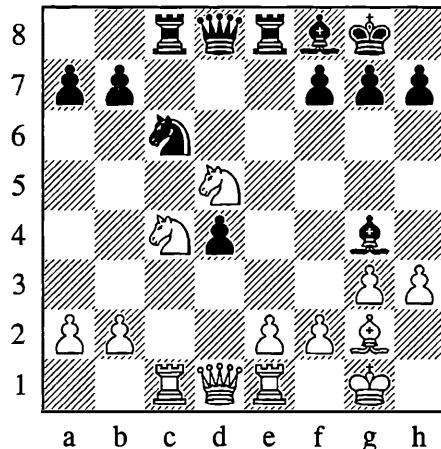
B1) 14... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

This move was favoured by Nikos’s coach, FM Karapanos, and it is hard to ignore the endorsement of your mentor. From f8 the bishop is romantically linked with the h6-square.

White’s main options here are **B11) 15. $\mathbb{E}e1$** , **B12) 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$** and **B13) 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$** . The following minor options needs to be investigated as well:

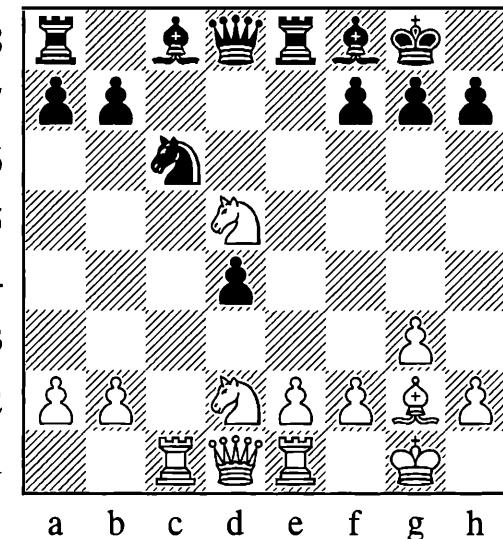
15. $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ is one of the cases where Black should play: 15... $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}ad8!N$ (17... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ was also good for Black in Pozin – Glodeanu, Techirghiol 1998, although a premature draw was soon agreed in that game) 18.a3 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ The only debate is about the size of Black’s advantage. As far as we are concerned, he is a clear pawn up.

15. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (16... $g6!$? 17. $h3$? occurred in Shuraev – Genba, Sochi 2008, but sadly Black missed 17... $\mathbb{Q}xh3!$) 17. $h3$ This was Ivakhinova – Bezgodova, Smolensk 2007, and now a significant improvement is:



17.... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ N 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$?! (White is already worse, for example 18. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b8!$ \mp) 18... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$! and Black had a significant advantage in an online game by Nikos.

B11) 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$



15.... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

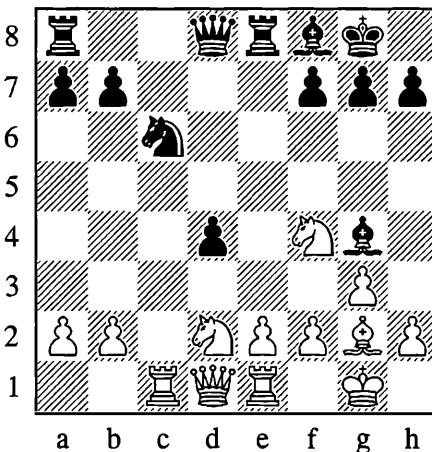
We believe that Black can play 15.... $g4$ here, although in general we don't recommend this idea. 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 17. $a3$ (17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ is poor because of 17... $\mathbb{W}xb3!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$, when White has to find a few only moves to stay in the game: 19. $\mathbb{Q}ed1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

21. $\mathbb{Q}g2$!=) So far we have followed Slipak – Rosito, Mar del Plata 1994. Black can now improve with: 17... $\mathbb{Q}ad8N$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ A bit dull, but a convincing route to equality. 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7=$

16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

16. $h3$? is just a blunder: 16... $\mathbb{Q}xh3!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5\mp$ Van Wely – Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



This was met by 16... $\mathbb{W}d7$ in Van Wely – Grischuk, Monte Carlo (blindfold) 2006. Instead, we prefer 16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$!N. The rook move is a bit more flexible, as it is likely to be played at some point anyway. After 17. $a3$ $g6$ the position is balanced.

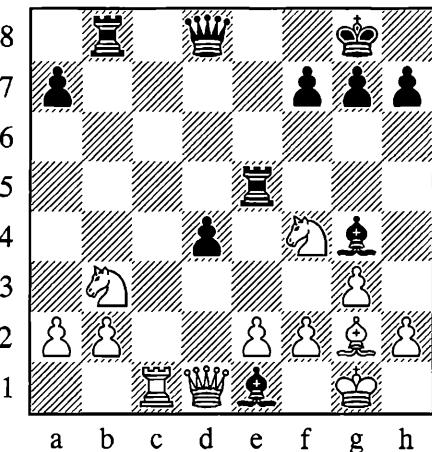
16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

The lines after 16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$ do not equalize fully.

17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

The tactical try 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe1$ is not a problem for Black, because of: 20... $d3!$ 21. $f4$ $\mathbb{W}b6\mp$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1??$ (it was necessary to go for 22. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $d2!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8=$) 22... $dxe2$ 23. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3\mp$ 0–1 Molinaroli – Schlehofer, Dortmund 1987.

18.♕xc6!? ♕xe1 19.♕xb7 ♜b8 20.♕g2



20...d3!

This is the beginning of a lovely combination.
No ♜b3xd4-c6 today, thank you.

21.♗xd3 ♔xf2† 22.♔xf2 ♜xe2† 23.♔g1 ♜xb2
24.h3 ♜b6† 25.♔h2 g5!

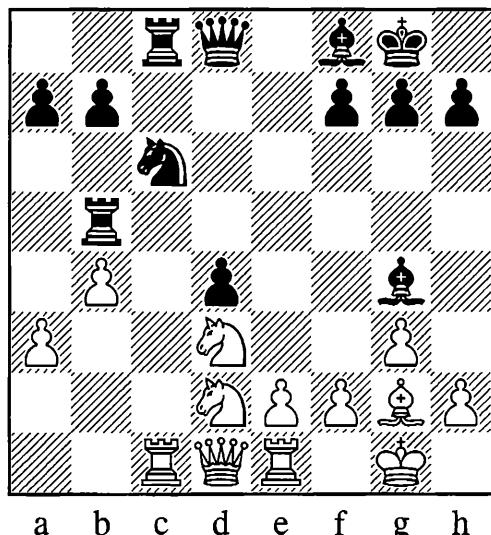
An important move; the bishop should not be sidelined.

26.♗d5

26.hxg4 gxf4 28.♗c5 ♜f6 29.gxf4 ♜xf4†
30.♗g3=

26...♜f2 27.♗g1 ♔f3 28.♗e7† ♔f8 29.♗f5
♜xg2†=

18...♜c8 19.♗d3 ♜b5 20.a3 ♔f8 21.b4



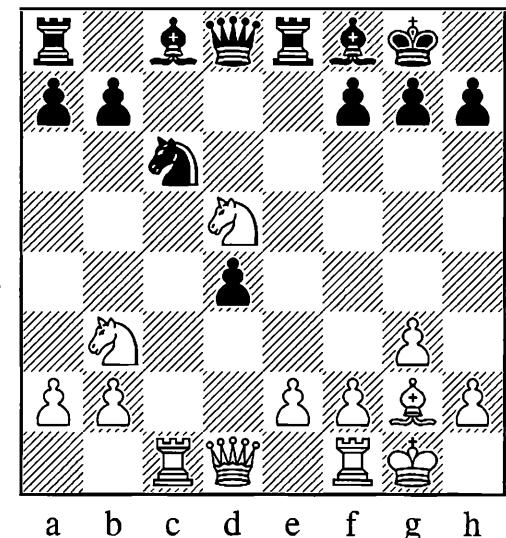
This was Legky – Jedynak, France 2009.
Black can now obtain equal chances after an obvious improvement:

21...a5!N 22.♗a4 ♜b6

A bizarre, but not too relevant line goes:
22...♜h5 23.♗c5 axb4 24.♗xb7 ♜g5 25.♗e4!
(25.♗b3 ♜e5!→) 25...♜h6 26.♗ed6 ♔xd6
27.♗xc6 ♜xc6 28.♗xd6 ♜xd6 29.♗xc6 bxa3
30.♗d1 g6 31.♗xd4 ♜c7±

23.♗c4 ♜a6 24.♗xa5 ♜xa5 25.♗xc8 ♔xc8
26.bxa5 ♜xa5 27.♗xd4 ♜xa3=

B12) 15.♗b3



15...♔e6!

This is the accurate move.

Black is worse after: 15...♔f5?! 16.♗xd4 (16.♗f4 ♔e4= Grooten – Vladimirov, Eindhoven 1986, is of course the dream, but you will not get such favours often enough that you should rely on them.) 16...♗xd4 17.♗xd4 ♜xe2 18.♗f3 ♜e8 (18...♜e6± is a slight improvement, but still...) 19.♗fd1+ Ibrahimov – Larino Nieto, Pamplona 2009.

16.♗f4 ♜b6!

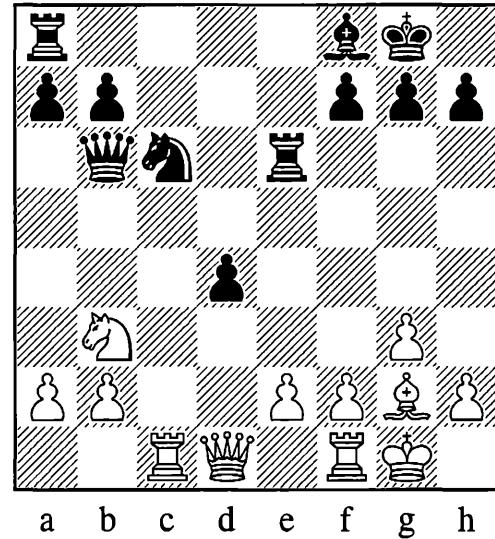
The counterplay against e2 will secure Black even chances.

17.♗xe6

Black is also okay after 17.♔xc6 ♔xb3
18.♗xb3 ♜xb3 19.axb3 bxc6 20.♗c2 c5

21. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{B}ab8=$ Medvegy – Dinstuhl, Germany 2007.

17... $\mathbb{B}xe6$



We have not found any problems for Black here.

18. $\mathbb{B}c2$

18. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $bxc6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{B}d8\bar{f}$

18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ was played in Reinderman – Witt, Bossum 2010. We suggest: 18... $\mathbb{B}e5!?$ N 19. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{B}d8$ is fine for Black) 19... $bxc6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{B}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a4 \mathbb{W}xb2$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc6 \mathbb{B}ad8=$

18... $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

The most “dangerous” move.

19. $\mathbb{B}d2 \mathbb{B}b4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{B}f8$ is level, of course.

19. $h3$ invites Black to play 19... $d3!$ 20. $exd3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\rightleftarrows$.

19... $d3$

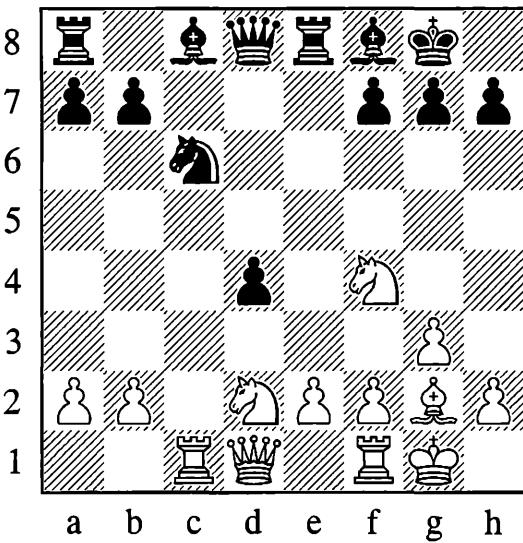
19... $h5!?$ is also about even.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3 \mathbb{Q}d4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}xc2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{W}xe6$
23. $\mathbb{W}xc2 \mathbb{W}xe2$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b3$

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Siger – Salas Romero, Internet 2009.

B13) 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

15... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

This is also a sound option, and probably just as strong.

16. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

16. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ looks a bit risky: 16... $bxc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8 \mathbb{W}xa8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}h3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3 h6\bar{f}$ is also interesting) 18. $f3$ (White should avoid 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe8!?$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1 \mathbb{Q}xf4$ 20. $gxf4 \mathbb{B}d8\bar{f}$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19. $fxg4 \mathbb{Q}e3\uparrow$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{B}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8 \mathbb{W}xa8\uparrow$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (White can stray into trouble with 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{W}d5$ 23. $b3!?$ $d3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c4 d2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe3 \mathbb{B}xe3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{B}xf3\uparrow$ 27. $exf3 \mathbb{W}d3$). The ending may well be a draw, but we would not want to be White and have to just sit and wait.) 22... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a4 \mathbb{W}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa7 \mathbb{W}e4=$ Black has enough for the pawn, if not more.

16... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17. $\mathbb{B}e1 \mathbb{B}c8$

Black seems fine to us.

18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

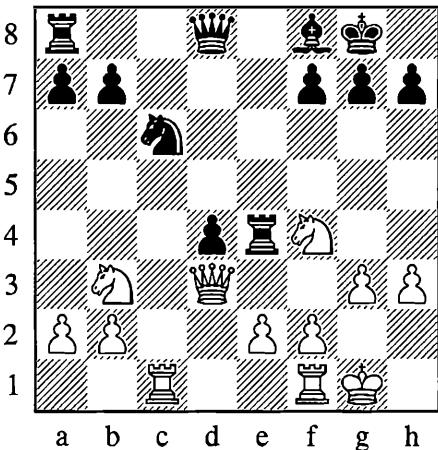
18. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $a3 \mathbb{Q}f5=$

18... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

With approximately even chances, Mayer – Seidel, Germany 2008.

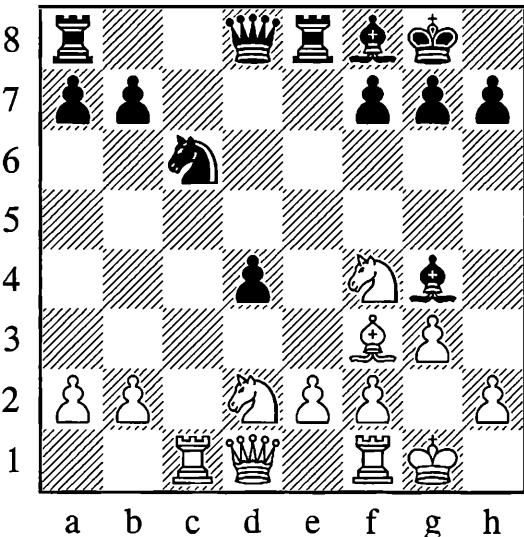
16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

16. $h3 \mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}e4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4 \mathbb{W}xe4$
19. $\mathbb{W}d3$



19... $\mathbb{E}e8!?$ N (a minor improvement over 19... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}h5$ $g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $gxh5=$ Najer – Eljanov, Polanica 1999) 20. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (20... $\mathbb{B}c8$ looks fine too) 21. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b6=$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ is not too impressive: 16... $bxc6$ 17. $f3$ (even worse is 17. $\mathbb{B}xc6?$ $g5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ and Black wins) 17... $\mathbb{Q}f5!?$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ also looks fine) 18. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (19.a3? $\mathbb{W}b5=$ and 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 21.e4 $\mathbb{W}xb2!$ 22. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7=$ are not worrying either) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $fxe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{B}ae8=$



16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$

16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is not stupid either, but the text move fits in with Black's plan.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Of course not 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 20. $\mathbb{B}cxsd1$ $bxc6$ 21. $gxf4$ $\mathbb{B}xe2=$.

18... $\mathbb{B}e4$

A standard move, though 18... $\mathbb{W}b6!?$ also looks good.

19.a3

White has no advantage. For example: 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$

19... $\mathbb{W}d7$

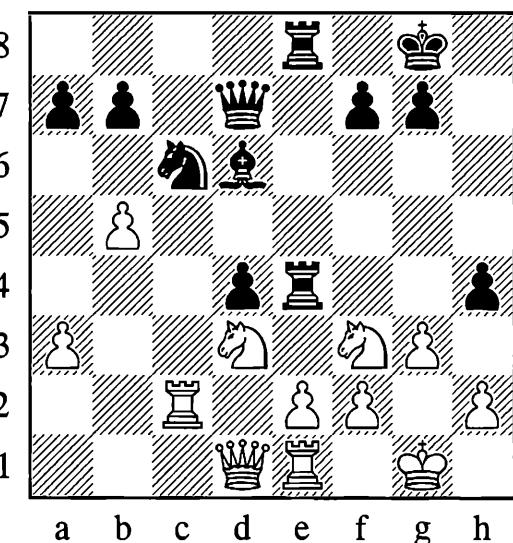
19... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b3=$ was another option. Neither player can seriously improve his position.

20. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $h5!$

We like the intentions of this move, although 21...a5N is also interesting.

22.b4 h4 23.b5

This may not be best, but White's position is not so easy to move forward.



23... $\mathbb{Q}e7!N$

An improvement upon 23... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24.a4 $hxg3$ 25. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (25... $\mathbb{W}h3??$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5$) 26. $\mathbb{Q}g2$. Here 26... $\mathbb{Q}c7!?$ was played in Miles – Lautier, Biel 1992, giving White an opportunity to be better with 27.e3!. Instead Black should have preferred 26...b6N=.

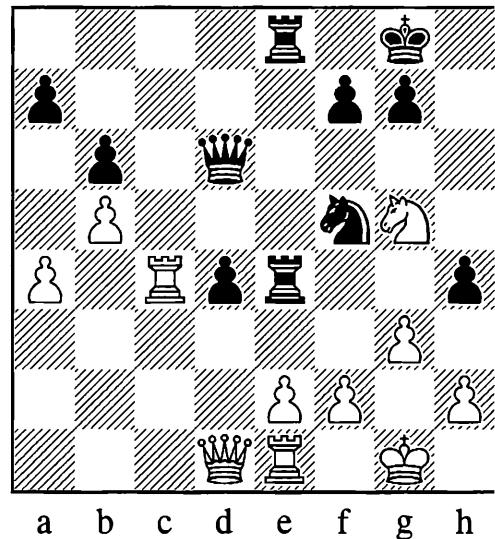
24.♕c5!

This seems to be necessary. After 24.a4 b6! White is very passive and Black is ready to play ...d5-c3.

24...♗xc5 25.♗xc5 b6 26.♗c4 ♕f5 27.a4 ♘d6!

White's king is likely to become a target. A sharp line goes:

28.♗g5



28...hxg3! 29.♗xe4 gxf2† 30.♗xf2 ♔e3 31.♘xd4 ♘g6† 32.♗g4! ♘xc4 33.♘xc4 ♔e4 34.♘c8† ♔h7 35.♔h3 f5 36.♔f2! ♘f4† 37.♗g3 ♘d6 38.♗g2 fxe4 39.hxg4 ♘d5† 40.♗g3 ♘e5 41.♔h1† ♔g6 42.♘c2† ♔f7 43.♔h3 ♘f2

Black has continuing threats. In order to survive, White has had to find only moves again and again.

B2) 14...♝b6

White has a lot of options here (which is one reason why we have included the less frequent 14...♝f8 in our recommendations). The main lines are: **B21) 15.♗b3**, **B22) 15.♗e1**, **B23) 15.♗f4** and **B24) 15.♗c4**.

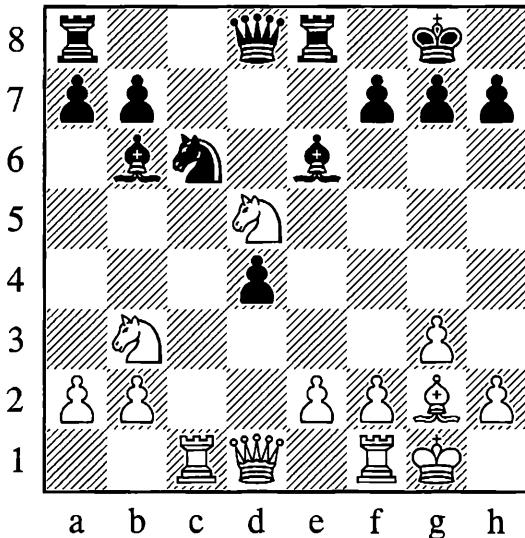
15.♗xb6 is not a serious alternative. 15...axb6 16.a3 ♘g4 gives Black active play.

15.♗e4?! is met by 15...♗h3!. This typical idea is not always good, but here it is. 16.♗xh3 ♘xd5 17.♗d2 ♘ad8 and Black has a strong position.

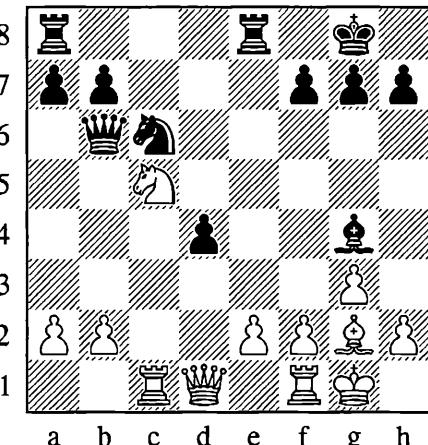
B21) 15.♗b3 ♘e6!

As usual, this is the most exact move.

15...♗f5 may lead to a very slight edge for White: 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♗xc6!N (17.a3 ♘e4 18.♗xe4 ♘xe4 19.♗d2 ♘e6= Hort – Petursson, Reykjavik 1985) 17...bcx6 18.♗xd4 ♘h3 19.♗xc6! ♘f6 20.♗e1 ♘xa2 21.♗b4! ♘xb2 22.♗d5 ♘d6 23.e4 Black is on the defensive, although he should probably hold easily enough.

**16.♗f4**

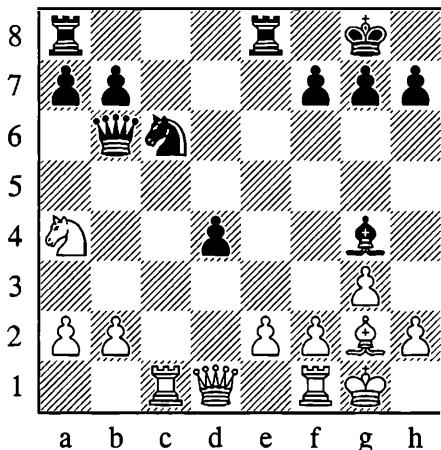
Another line worthy of analysis is: 16.♗xb6 ♘xb6 17.♗c5 ♘g4!



After this, it is White who must take care to keep the balance.

18.♕e1

18.♕a4 is not very good. Black has a choice of squares for his queen:



a) 18...♛b4 19.a3 ♛e7 20.♕xc6 bxc6 was fine for Black in Palatnik – Legky, USSR 1981. After 21.♕xd4 ♛xe2! 22.♕fe1 ♛f3 (22...♛xe1†? is interesting too) 23.♕e3 ♛xe3 24.♕xe3 ♜d8 Black is at least equal.
b) 18...♛d8N is also playable.

c) 18...♛a5!N may be best: 19.♕xc6 This seems forced. 19...♛xe2 20.♕xd4 bxc6 21.♕fe1 ♜ad8 22.♕f4 g5!? 23.b4 gxf4 24.bxa5 ♛f3 25.♕xe8† ♛xe8† The endgame holds no joy for White.

18...♛xb2 19.♕b1

This looks very active for White, but the black queen also remains active.

19.♕c2!? keeps the balance in a less complicated way: 19...♛b4 20.♕a1 ♛xe2 21.♕cxe2 ♛xe2 22.♕xb7 ♛xb7 23.♕xe2 ♜b8 24.♕e1!= and White will round up the d-pawn very soon.

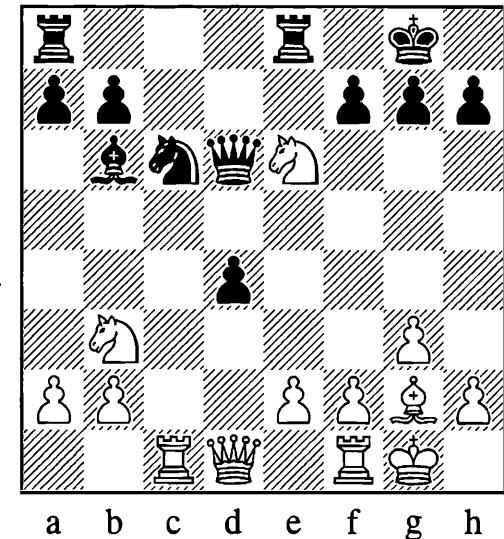
19...♛xa2 20.♕xb7

20.♕xb7?! is worse: 20...♛xe2 21.♕c1 d3! 22.♕b2 ♛a3 23.♕xc6 ♜ec8 24.♕a5! ♛xa5 25.♕xa8 ♜xa8†

20...♜ac8 21.♕xc6 ♜xc6 22.♕xd4 h5

Black is no worse; a draw is likely.

16...♛d6 17.♕xe6



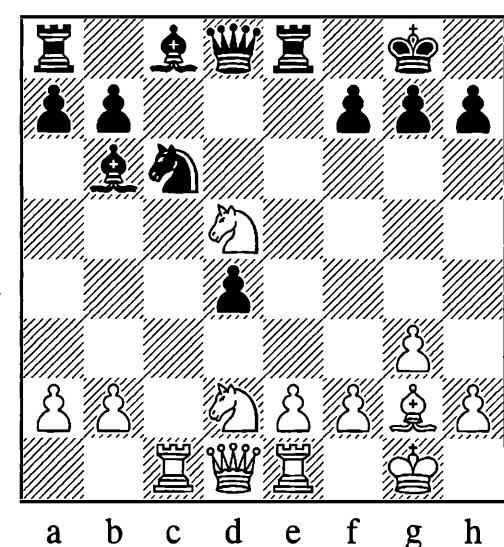
17...♜xe6!N

17...♜xe6 as in Knaak – Lputian, Berlin 1982, is not to our taste because of 18.♕xc6!N bxc6 19.♕xd4 ♛xd4 20.♕xd4 ♛xa2 21.e3±, and Black's pawns are marginally weaker.

18.♕e1 ♜ae8

Black is no worse.

B22) 15.♕e1

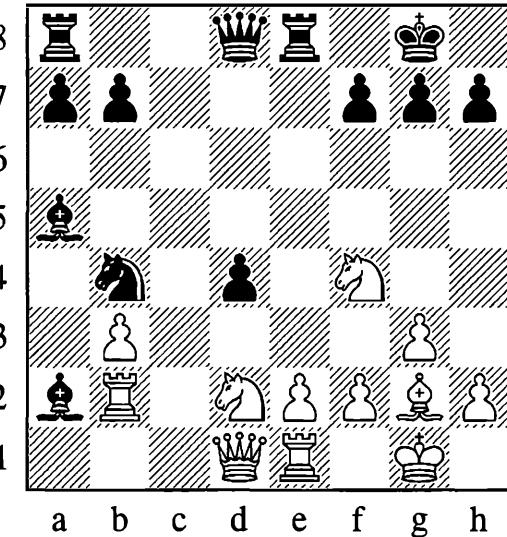


15...♕e6!?

15...♕g4 usually transposes to line B24. If White opts for 16.h3 ♜f5 then the insertion of h2-h3 is in Black's favour. After 17.♕c4 ♜c5 Black will later play ...♛d7 with tempo, and have a good position.

16. $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}xa2!$

Taking up the challenge. You should only play this if you are on top of your preparation.

17. $b3 \mathbb{Q}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{E}c2 \mathbb{Q}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}b2$ **19...d3!N**

This is essential. 19... $\mathbb{E}c8?$ was played in Dumitache – A. Vajda, Eger 1993, and here White missed the chance to play 20. $\mathbb{E}f1!!\pm$, when Black suffers from the awkward constellation of his pieces, without the benefit of a pin from a5 to e1.

The position is now very complicated, but entirely satisfactory for Black. And remember that your opponents can make mistakes too...

20. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$

The alternatives do not offer White any advantage either:

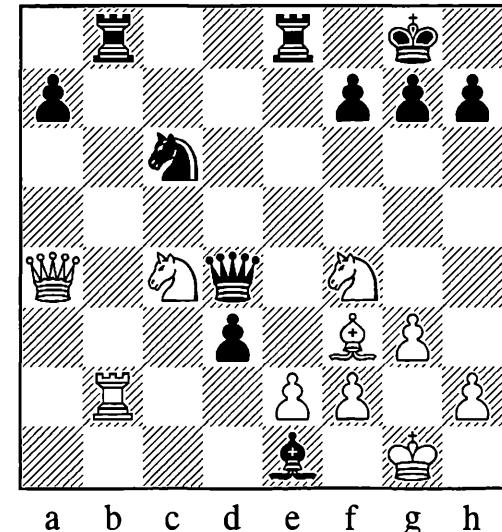
20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3 \mathbb{W}f6!$ 21. $\mathbb{E}f1!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xa2 \mathbb{Q}xf2$
 23. $\mathbb{E}xf2 \mathbb{Q}b6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f1$ (24. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{E}ad8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e3!$ [25... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2 \mathbb{E}e6\infty$] 26. $\mathbb{E}f1$ [26. $\mathbb{W}e1 \mathbb{W}c3\mp$] 26... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}b1 \mathbb{Q}xd2$ 28. $\mathbb{E}d1 \mathbb{W}b4$ 29. $\mathbb{E}xa7 \mathbb{W}b6=)$ 24... $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}xf2\mp$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf2 \mathbb{W}c3\infty$

20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $dxe2$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xe2 \mathbb{W}d4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}a1 \mathbb{Q}b6$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4 f5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{W}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7 \mathbb{E}xe2$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xe2 \mathbb{E}b8$ 27. $\mathbb{E}xa2 \mathbb{E}xb7$ 28. $\mathbb{E}e2 \mathbb{E}e7=$

20... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

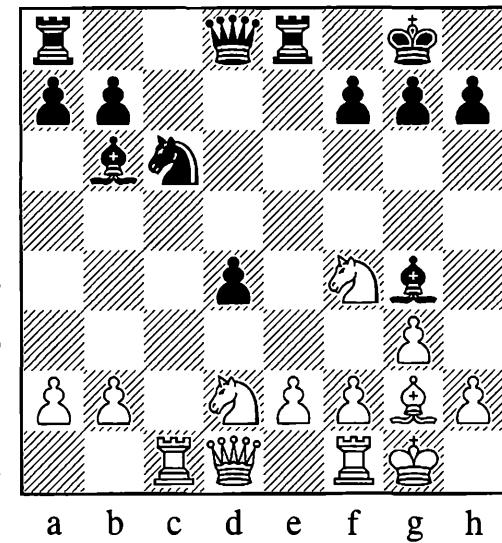
21. $\mathbb{Q}g2?$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}xb3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb3 \mathbb{Q}c6$
 24. $\mathbb{W}a4 \mathbb{Q}xe1$ 25. $e3 \mathbb{Q}xf2\mp$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xf2 \mathbb{E}xe3$
 27. $\mathbb{W}xc6 \mathbb{E}e2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd3 \mathbb{E}c2$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c7 \mathbb{E}f8$
 30. $\mathbb{W}d6 \mathbb{W}xc4\mp$

21... $\mathbb{W}d4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}xb3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb3 \mathbb{Q}c6$
 24. $\mathbb{W}a4 \mathbb{Q}xe1$



25. $e3 \mathbb{W}c3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{E}xb2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe8 \mathbb{Q}xf2\mp$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}xe3\mp$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{Q}xf4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xb2 \mathbb{W}xb2$
 31. $\mathbb{W}xf4 \mathbb{W}b3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{W}e6\mp$ 33. $\mathbb{W}g4 \mathbb{W}h6\mp$
 34. $\mathbb{W}h4 \mathbb{W}e6\mp$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{W}a2\mp$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{W}e6\mp$

With a draw.

B23) 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}g4$ 

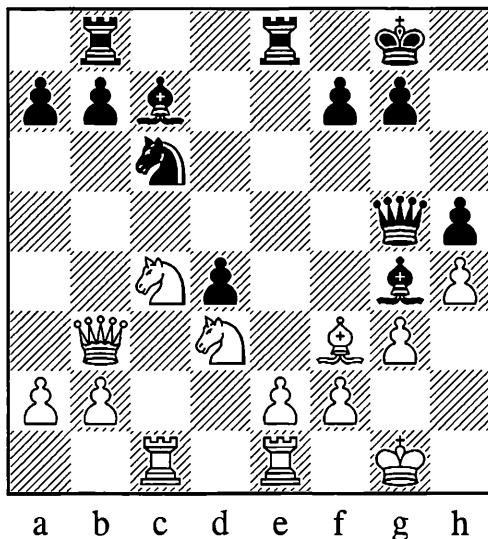
16.Ke1

16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is good for Black, as always.
 17.Qc4 Qc7 18.Qd3 Wc8 19.h4 Qe4! 20.Ke1
 (20.Qxe4 Qxe4 21.Qc5? Qxh4!—+) 20...Qxg2
 21.Qxg2 Wf5±

16.Qf3 was strongly met by Halkias: 16...Qe5!
 17.Qxg4 (17.Qxb7 d3! would put White in a
 very difficult position) 17...Qxg4 18.Qf3 We7
 19.Qc2 Qad8 20.Qd3 We6= Sturua – Halkias,
 Yerevan 2000.

16...Qc8 17.Qc4 Qc7 18.Qd3 Wg5

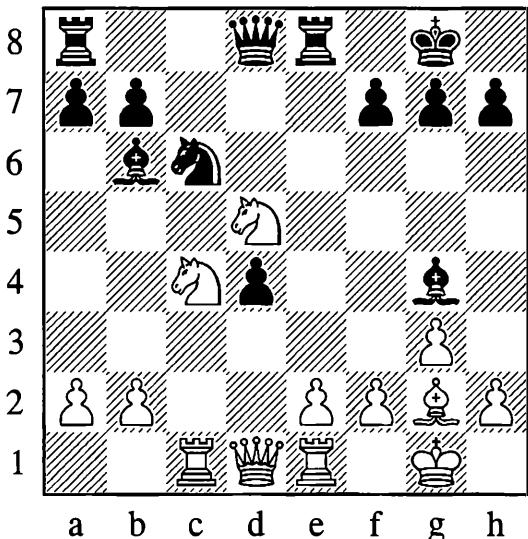
Preventing Qc5 and preparing ...h5-h4 with
 active play.

19.Qf3 h5 20.Wb3 Qb8 21.h4**21...Wg6?!N**

A small refinement. 21...Wf5 22.Qd2 Qd6 was the course of the high-level game Shirov – Illescas Cordoba, Buenos Aires 1993. Black has no problems here either.

22.Qg2 Qe7 23.Qd2 Qf5!

This is the point of our novelty; Black has good counterplay. Instead 23...Qbe8? 24.Wxb7! Qa5 25.Wb5 Qb8 26.Wxc6 Qxd2 27.Wxg6 fxg6 28.Qxg4 hxg4 29.Qf1 Qxc1 30.Qxc1 should be okay for White, as it is hard for Black to make any progress.

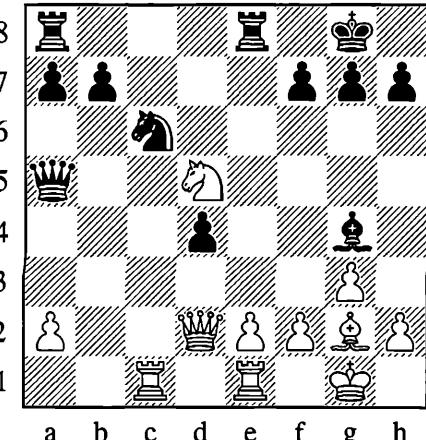
B24) 15.Qc4 Qg4 16.Ke1**16...Qc5!**

The correct move. In the past Black played:
 16...Qa5?

This was the old main line, but White found a route to an advantage almost a decade ago. We shall not give you all the details here, just the key variation:

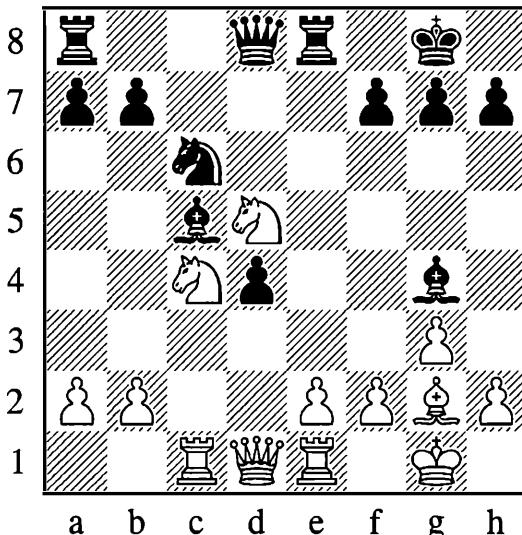
17.Qxa5 Wxa5 18.b4! Qxb4

Black cannot escape with the trick 18...Wxa2 19.Qc7 d3??. White wins after 20.Wxd3 Qad8 21.Qd5 Qxe2 22.h3! Qxe1† 23.Qxe1 Qe6 24.We4! and Black's position collapses because of 24...Qxd5 25.We8† Qxe8 26.Qxe8#.

19.Wd2! Qc6

20.Wg5!! d3 21.Qf6† Qh8 22.Wxa5 Qxa5 23.Qxe8 d2 24.Qd6±

Hoerstmann – Blauert, Germany 2004.

**17.a3**

In the 27 games in our database, this is the only move to have been played. We assume that if you reach such a theoretical position, you are very likely to continue down the trodden path. We have briefly analysed some alternatives just to be thorough:

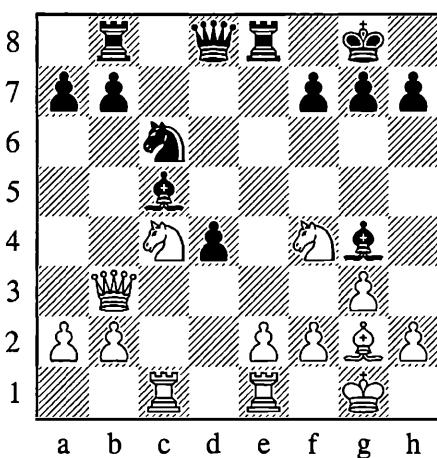
17.Qd2 Qf8 transposes to line B11, both sides having lost two tempos with their minor pieces.

17.Wb3 Eb8

This does not look dangerous for Black at all. It is White who needs to be careful.

18.Qf4

White can get into trouble with **18.Wb5?!** **Qf8** **19.Qf4** **Qb4** **20.Qed1** **a6** **21.Wd5** **Wf6=** and the queen is in a spot of bother.

**18...Qb4**

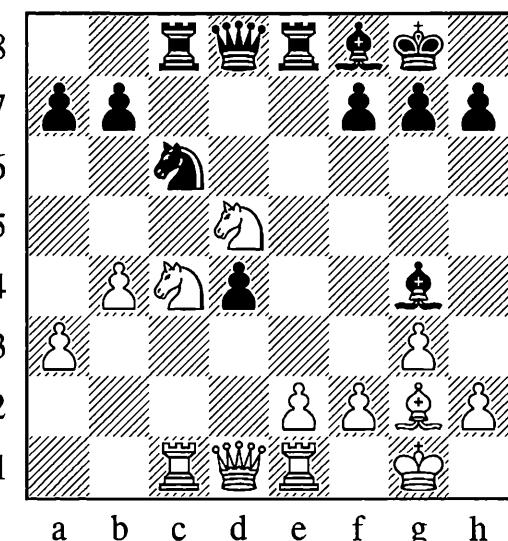
18...Qf8?! with the idea of ...g6 and ...Qh6 is also interesting.

19.Qed1 Qxe2 **20.Qxe2** **Qxe2** **21.a3**

21.Wd3 Qe6 **22.a3** **Qf8** is slightly better for Black, because of **23.Qxc6?!** **bcx6** **24.Wxd4?** **Qe1†=**.

21...Qf8 **22.Wf3** **Qe6** **23.Wg4** **g6=**

After **17.a3** Black has two decent moves, **B241) 17...Qc8** and **B242) 17...a6**, both leading to perfectly fine positions.

B241) 17...Qc8 18.b4 Qf8

This is very solid and should be fine for Black.

19.Wd2

White has two serious alternatives that have to be investigated.

19.Wd3 has been played in some correspondence games. We like: **19...h5?!** **N** **20.h4** **g6** **21.b5** **Qf5** **22.Wd2** **Qe4** **23.Qf4** **Qxg2** **Qxg2** **Qe7=**

19.Qf4

This does not scare us either.

19...b5

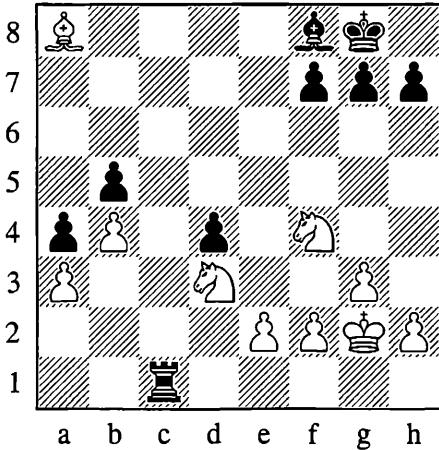
19...h5 and **19...g6** also look logical.

20.♕b2 ♔e5 21.♔xc8 ♔xc8 22.♕d5 ♔c6
23.♗d3 a6 24.♗c1 ♔b7

Black is fine here.

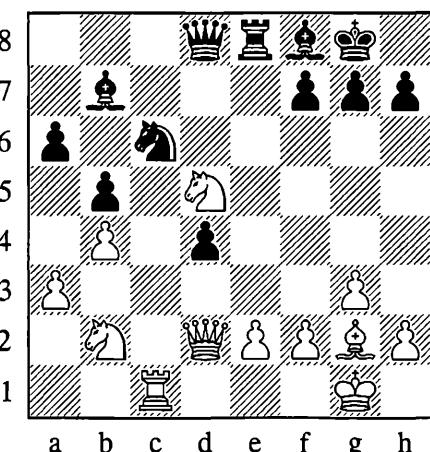
25.♗d2?!

25.♗c2 is the critical move, but Black is okay here too: 25...a5! 26.♕f4 (26.♕d3 ♔xb4!
27.axb4 ♔xd5 28.♔xd5 ♗xd5 29.bxa5 b4
30.♔a1 b3 and Black is no worse. A draw is likely to arise quite soon.) 26...♗a8!
(26...♗b8 27.♔xc6 ♕c8 28.♗d2!± does not work; but possible is 26...axb4!? 27.♔xc6
♔xc6 28.♗xc6 bxa3 29.♕bd3 b4 30.♗c4
♗b8 31.♗b3 h6) 27.♔xc6 ♕c8 28.♔xb7
♔xc2 29.♔xa8 ♔xc1† 30.♕g2 a4 31.♕bd3



31...♔a1 The endgame should be okay for Black. 32.♕d5 ♔xa3 33.♕c7 ♔a2 34.♕f3
a3 35.♕d5 ♕d2 36.♕xb5 a2 37.♔xa2 ♕xa2
38.♕xd4 The ending is drawn, although a bit of play remains.

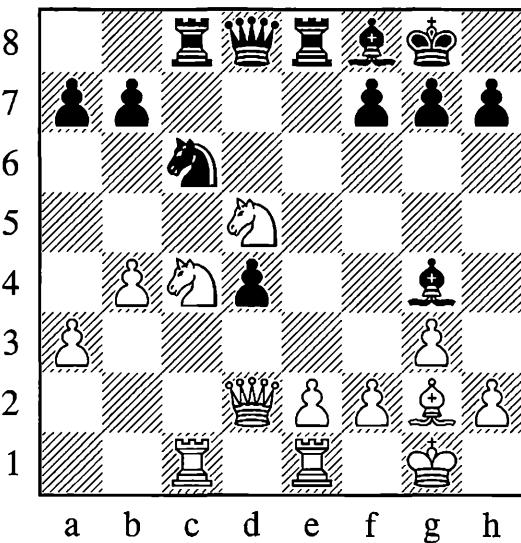
Now in Burtman – B. Thipsay, Kishinev 1995, Black missed a strong option:



25...♔a5!N 26.bxa5 ♕xd5 27.♗xd4 ♕e6!

This poses White a few more problems than just taking on g2 with a quick draw.

28.♗xd8 ♕xd8 29.♕d3! ♕xa3 30.♔c6 ♕d6
31.♔xd6 ♕xd6 32.♔b7 ♕c7 33.♔xa6 ♕c4
34.♔f1 ♕xd3! 35.exd3 b4=



19...♔e6?!N

19...b5 20.♕b2 a5 21.♕d3 axb4 22.axb4
♔f5 23.♕f4 was Paunovic – Larino Nieto,
Pamplona 2009. Now it seems that 23...♗f6N
is a logical improvement, and Black is not worse.

20.e4

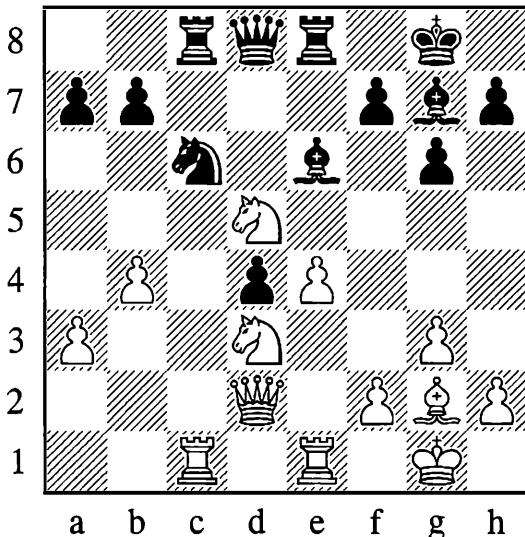
20.♕f4 ♔f5 21.♗ed1 can be cleverly answered with: 21...g6!? 22.b5 ♔e5 23.♕xe5
♗xe5 24.a4 ♕xc1 25.♕xc1 ♘d7 and Black has no problems in the endgame.

20...g6!

The accurate move. Black would be a bit worse after either 20...dxe3 21.♕cxe3 g6
22.♗g4 ♔g7 23.♗f4 ♔xg4 24.♗xg4 ♕xe1†
25.♕xe1 a6 26.a4 b5 27.axb5 axb5 28.♗f4± or
20...b5 21.♕b2 a5 22.♕d3 h6 23.♗c2±.

21.♕b2 ♔g7 22.♕d3

Now Black can play 22...♔xd5 23.exd5 ♔e5 with a very drawish position, or keep a bit more life in the game with:

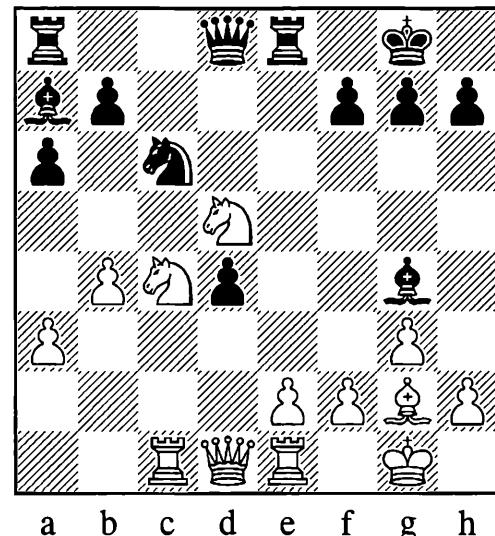


22...a6!?=

B242) 17...a6

This is the more active choice.

18.b4 ♜a7



19.♗d2

White's other options don't seem too challenging:

19.♗f4 ♜c8 20.♗b3 ♜b8 21.♗d5 ♜xe2
22.♗cb6 d3 23.♗a2 ♜c7 24.♗xc7 ♜xc7
25.♗d5 ♜b8 was an imaginative exchange sacrifice which led to a black win in Smirin – Grischuk, New Delhi (3.2) 2000, although the position is only about equal at this point.

19.♗b2 ♜c8

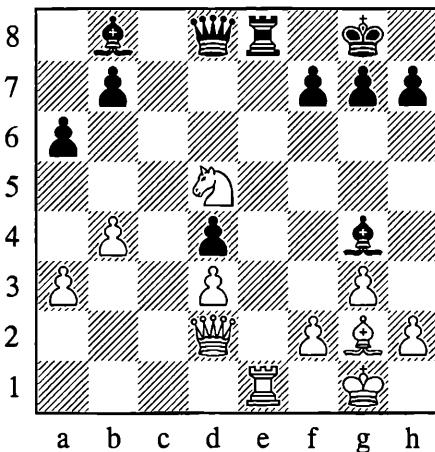
The most flexible option.

19...♜f5 20.♗f4 ♜e4 21.♗xe4 ♜xe4
22.♗d3 ♜e7 23.♗f3 was Milov – Grischuk, Biel 1999, which is evaluated as "slightly better for White" in ECO, although Black seems completely fine to us. For example:
23...♝e5!?N 24.♗b3 b5=

20.♗d2 ♜e5
20...h5!?

21.♗xc8 ♜xc8 22.♗c1 ♜g4 23.♗d3 ♜xd3
23...♝c6 was also equal.

24.exd3 ♜b8 25.♗e1



This was Yevseev – Markevich, St Petersburg 2010. Now, instead of exchanging on e1, we suggest that Black keep the tension with:

25...h6!?N

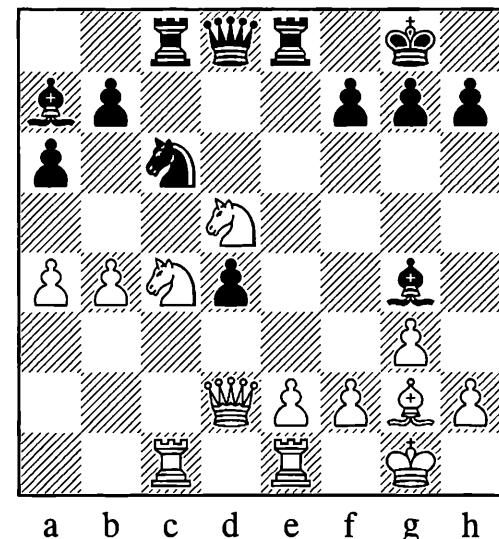
With the point that Black is fine after:

26.♗xe8† ♜xe8 27.♗c1 ♜f5=

19...♜c8 20.a4

20.h3 as played in Lalic – Conquest, Liverpool 2008, can be answered with 20...♜f5N, which equalizes in the usual way:
21.e4 The only ambitious move. 21...dxe3 (or 21...♜e6=) 22.♗cxe3 ♜e6 23.♗cd1 ♜d4 and the position looks about even.

20.♗f4 is well met with 20...♜e6! 21.♗d6!
♜b8! (or 21...♜g4=) 22.♗xd8 ♜cxd8 with an equal position, Browne – Chandler, Bath 1983.



20...h5!

The recent trend.

More pessimistic was 20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c2$, when Black did not fully equalize in Van Wely – Grischuk, Enghien-les-Bains 2001.

21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

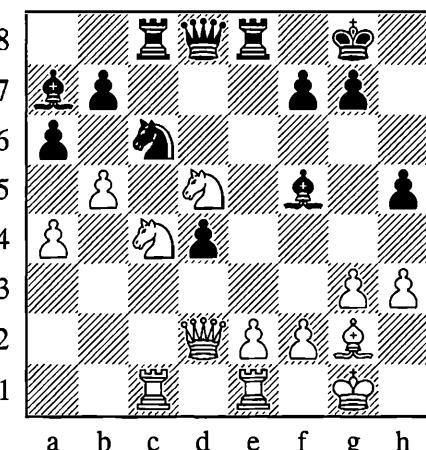
White has also tried pushing the black bishop away with:

21.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

This leads to a draw by force, but it is not the only good move in the position.

21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$?N is an interesting novelty. Our analysis goes: 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ h4! (22... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ ± cannot be recommended) 23.g4 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 25.b5 axb5 26.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$! 27.b6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ = with even chances.

22.b5



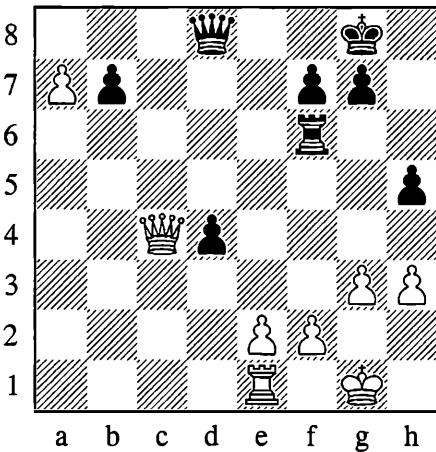
22... $\mathbb{Q}e4$!

An important point. Because of the nature of correspondence chess, it is possible for Black to “calculate” everything to the end. The computer says White is much, much better, but at the end of the day the advantage is only optical.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ axb5 25.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Here a draw was agreed in Alfredsson – Donnelly, e-mail 2007. Both players apparently managed to analyse the following continuation:

26.b6 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}xf4$ 28.bxa7 $\mathbb{B}f6$
29. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xc4$



30... $\mathbb{W}a5$! 31. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 32. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$
33. $\mathbb{W}xb7$

33. $\mathbb{B}xb7$? $\mathbb{W}a1\#$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$

33... $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 34. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 35. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ d3 36.exd3 $\mathbb{B}xd3$

With an elementary draw, despite White's extra pawn.

21.b5N

This gives Black no worries.

21...axb5

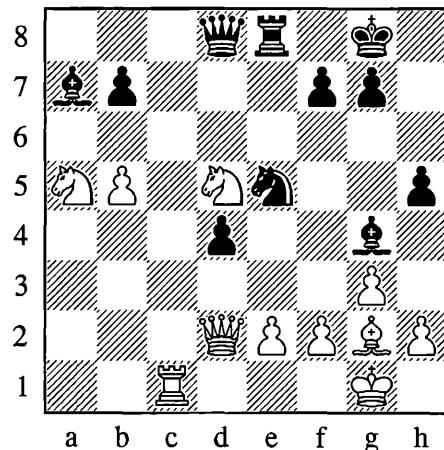
The easiest, but not the only way to equalize.

21... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ gives a few worries after 22. $\mathbb{Q}a5$!
(22. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ =) 22... $\mathbb{B}xc1$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc1$. But Black can save himself with: 23...d3! 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 25.exd3 axb5 26.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 27.d4 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 28.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 30.b6 $\mathbb{B}xd5$

31.♕c7! ♕xd2† 32.♕xb7 ♕xb6 33.♕xb6= 22.axb5 ♔e5 23.♔a5

23.♔xe5 ♕xc1 24.♕xc1 ♕xe5 gives at least equality for Black: 25.♔a2 ♕b8 26.e4 dxe3 27.♔xe3 ♕e6 28.♔a4 ♕e8 29.♔xb7 ♕xb7 with a draw.

23...♕xc1 24.♕xc1



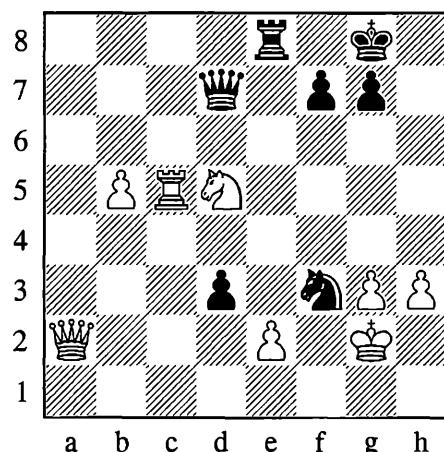
24....♔f3!

Extremely tricky.

25.♔a2!

25.♔c7? ♕xg2 26.♔xe8 ♕h3 27.♔c7 d3! gives Black a decisive attack.

25....♕xg2 26.♕xg2 d3 27.♕xb7 ♕d7 28.♕c5 ♕xc5 29.♕xc5 h4 30.h3! hxg3 31.fxg3 ♔f3?!

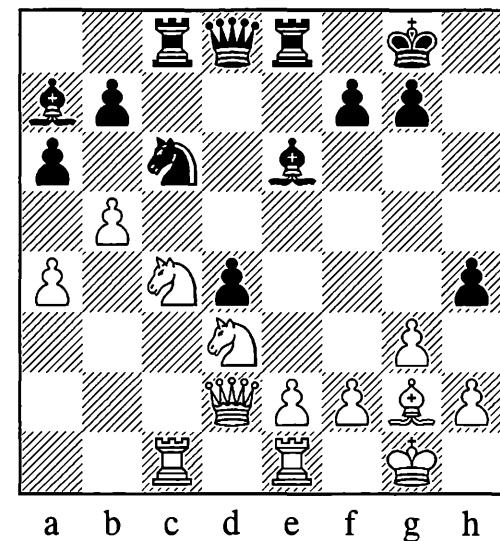


32.exd3! ♔e1† 33.♔h2

Black can either take an immediate perpetual, or delay it for a few moves to give White the chance to go wrong.

21...h4 22.♔d3 ♕e6 23.b5

Here we propose an interesting novelty.



23...♔e7!N

This idea is less common than it should be in this line. Black wants to play ...♔d5-c3 with an advantage.

23...axb5 24.axb5 ♕xc4 25.♕xc4 ♔e5 was Yevseev – Yemelin, St Petersburg 2006, and White should now play: 26.♔a4N ♔xd3 (26...♕b6 27.♔f4±) 27.♔xd3 ♕b6 28.♔d5±

24.♔b4

White has some other interesting moves here:

24.♔ce5 ♕xc1! 25.♕xc1 axb5 26.axb5 ♔d5 gives Black excellent counterplay.

24.b6

This is a far more forcing line. Black can take on b6, but stronger is:

24....♔b8! 25.♔a5 ♕xc1 26.♕xc1 ♕xb6 27.♔xb7!

White should not fall for: 27.♔c5?! ♕d5 28.♔xd5 ♔xd5 29.♕xd4 hxg3! The only continuation to give an edge. 30.hxg3 ♔f4!! 31.gxf4 ♕g6† 32.♔f1 ♕h5 33.f3 (33.♔g1 ♕g4†→) 33...♕h3† 34.♔e1 b6† Black has every chance of being successful in the attack.

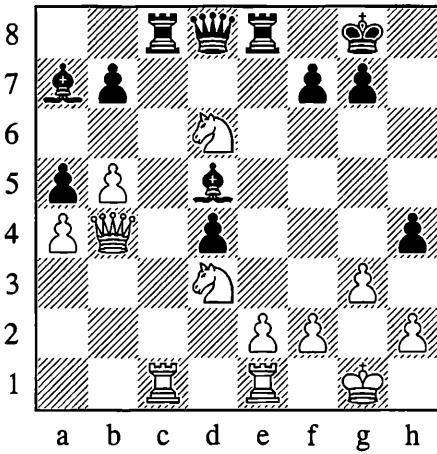
27...♔d5 28.♔bc5 ♔c3 29.♔xe6 ♕xe6

White should be able to keep the balance with accurate play.

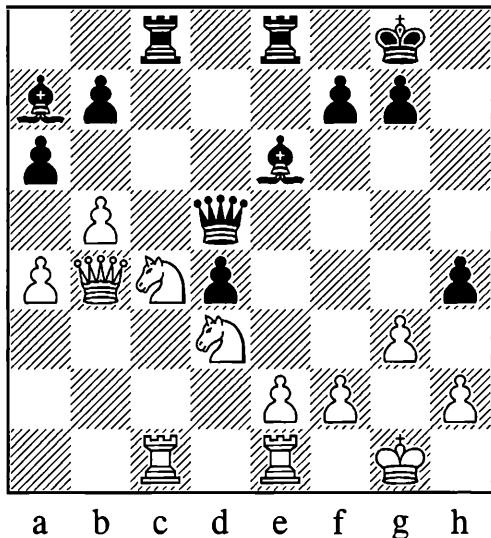
24. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ and Black has equalized. Here is a possible continuation: 26. $\mathbb{Q}bc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $axb5$ 28. $axb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 31. $f3=$

24... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$

The following interesting line also leads to approximate equality: 25... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $a5!$



27. $\mathbb{E}xc8!$ (27. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 29. $\mathbb{E}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ This line shows why it is important not to take on g3 too early; with the h-file open, the possibility of bringing his rook to h1 would give White good play.) 27... $axb4$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xd8$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $hxg3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $gxf2\#$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 33. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 34. $\mathbb{E}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ The computer thinks Black is marginally better here, but we don't believe it.

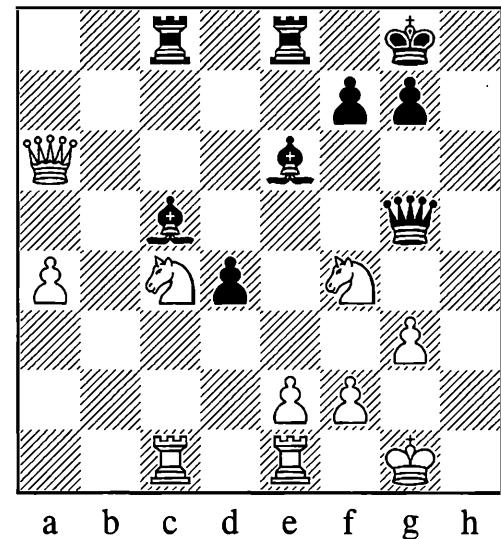


26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}a5$

Safer is: 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 29. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 30. $bx a6$ $bx a6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (another draw arises after 31. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $hxg3$ 32. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{E}xe2$ 33. $\mathbb{E}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) 31... $hxg3$ 32. $hxg3$ $a5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ There is no real way to play for a win, so taking the draw is sensible. 34. $exd3$ $\mathbb{E}xe1\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $f5=$

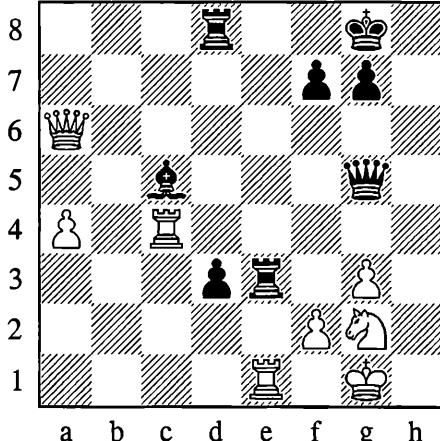
We now give a long computer line, showing Black's initiative in action. Obviously there may be improvements, but the general direction is interesting to observe.

27... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 28. $bx a6$ $bx a6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $hxg3$ 30. $hxg3$



30... $d3!$ 31. $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 32. $\mathbb{E}cd8$ 33. $\mathbb{W}a5!$

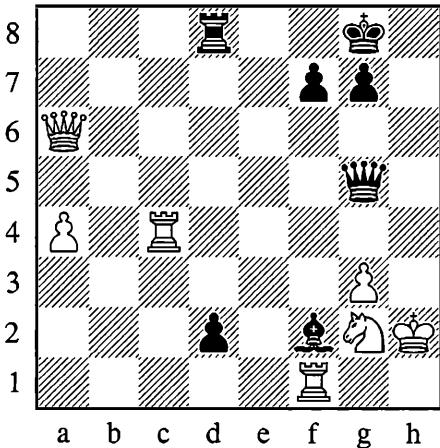
33. $\mathbb{Q}g2?!$ is also met with 33... $\mathbb{E}xe3!!$ keeping the initiative.



34. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ (34. $f \times e3$ d2 35. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h2$
 $\mathbb{Q}f2!!$ is the big point of the combination.

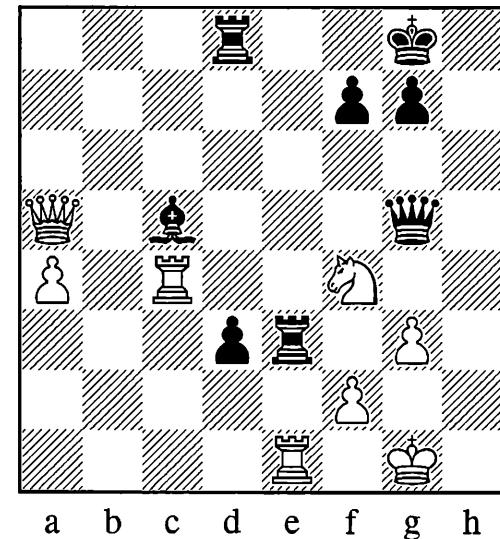
Conclusion

Black is definitely okay in the main line given in this chapter. At most important branching points there are several ways for Black to play, and as this is one of the most popular lines, we have offered these alternatives as well, so that you are not a complete sitting duck, but rather a fox with many escape routes.



After 37. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ Black wins.) 34... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ d2 37. $\mathbb{E}g1$ d1= \mathbb{W}
38. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 39. $\mathbb{W}a8\#$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 40. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h6\#$

33... $\mathbb{E}xe3!$



34. $\mathbb{E}xe3!!$

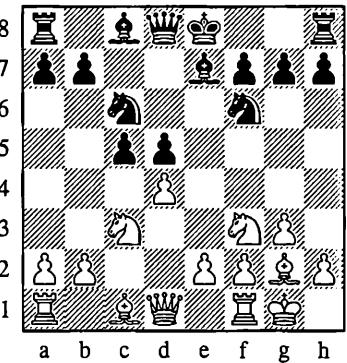
The only defence.

34... d2 35. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ d1= $\mathbb{W}\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}h6$
37. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$

With even chances in this offbeat position.



Main Line



9th Move Alternatives

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♖e7 8.0–0

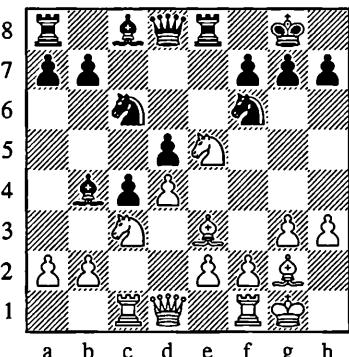
8...0–0

A) 9.a3	219
B) 9.h3	220
C) 9.♗f4	221
D) 9.♗e3	225
E) 9.b3	229

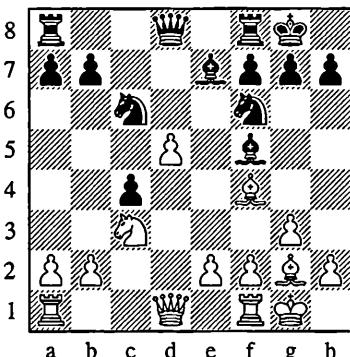
B) after 12.♗c1

C) note to 11.♗c1

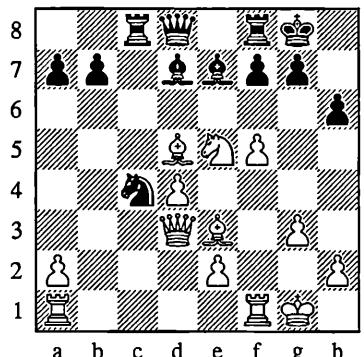
D) after 18.♗xd5



12...♗xc3N

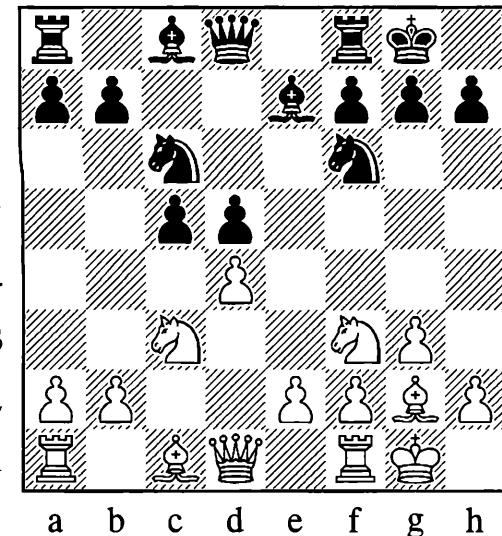


12...g5!!N



18...♗xf5!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0

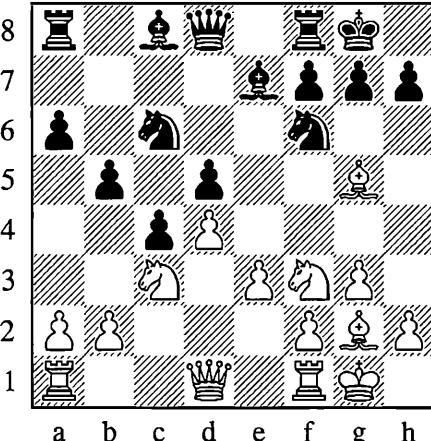


Up to this point our focus has been on the two main lines of 9.♗g5 and 9.dxc5, and with good reason. However, we should not forget that a number of other options exist, and in the present chapter we will turn our attention to A) 9.a3, B) 9.h3, C) 9.♗f4, D) 9.♗e3 and E) 9.b3.

Here are a couple of rare and harmless lines that can be dealt with briefly:

9.e3 ♗e6 10.b3 ♗a5 11.♗d2 ♗a6 12.♗e5 cxd4 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.exd4 ♗a3 15.♗c1 ♗b4 16.♗b2 ♗f5= Vidmar – Spielmann, Prague 1908.

9.♗a4 c4!? 10.♗g5 a6 11.e3 b5 12.♗d1 12.♗xb5? axb5 13.♗xa8 ♗b6†



The present position was reached in Sanchez Romero – Arizmendi Martinez, Mislata 2008. Here it looks good for Black to play:

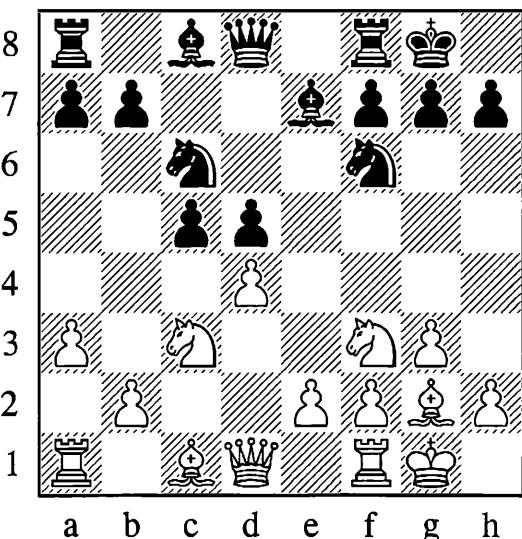
12...♗e6N

Developing and fortifying the centre.

13.♗e5 ♗c8 14.a3 h6 15.♘xc6
15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♘xc6 (16.f4 ♗e7)
16...♗xc6 17.f4 ♗d6†
15...♗xc6 16.♗f4 ♗d7 17.♗e5 ♗d8 18.♗e2 ♗e8

Black's strong queenside majority makes his position slightly more pleasant.

A) 9.a3



Hoping to play dxc5 and b4, but if White wants to go for this plan he would be much better off opting for 9.dxc5 followed by 10.a3, as detailed in variation D of Chapter 9.

9...c4

Nipping White's plan in the bud. 9...♘e4!? is another solution, and something of a standard reaction to a2-a3, as evidenced by Chapters 9 and 15.

9...♗e6?! would be a mistake, as after 10.dxc5! ♗xc5 11.b4 we reach a position that favours White. (See Chapter 9 for further details of this and related positions where White manages to play a3 and b4.)

10.b3

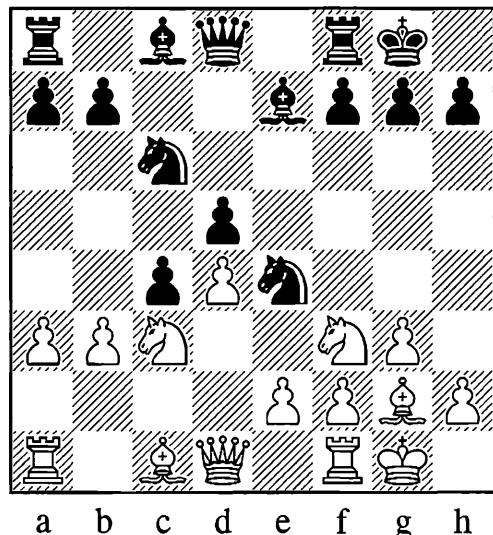
10.♕e5 ♔a5!? (10...♔e6 is also fine) highlighted the downside of White's ninth move and gave Black promising play in Romanishin – Chandler, Plovdiv 1983.

10.♗g5 has been played, but if this move concerns you then allow us to refer you to Chapter 1 (9.♗g5 c4!) in which the move 10.a3 makes no sense whatsoever and was not even worthy of our consideration. The most logical reply looks to be 10...♔e6 which is useful in virtually all variations, and will effectively give Black an extra tempo over most normal lines as it is hard to think of a way for White to use a2-a3 constructively.

10...♔e4!!

Black is effectively a tempo up on standard positions, so it makes sense for him to play dynamically in an effort to exploit it.

10...cxb3 is a perfectly valid alternative, and after 11.♗xb3 b6 12.♕e5 ♔a5 13.♗a2 ♔e6 14.♗g5 ♜c8 15.♗ac1 ♔c4 16.♗xc4 ♜xc4 the position was balanced in A. Iljin – Prizant, Russia 2002.

**11.♗b2**

11.♗xe4?! dxe4 12.♗e5 (12.♗e1? occurred in Winkler – Kreie, Oberstdorf 2005, and

now 12...♗xd4N is just winning for Black.) 12...♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♜xd1 14.♗xd1 cxb3 15.♗xe4 ♔e6 16.♗b2 ♜ac8+ It is obvious whose pawn majority is the more dangerous, Ciszak – Olenderek, Warsaw 1999.

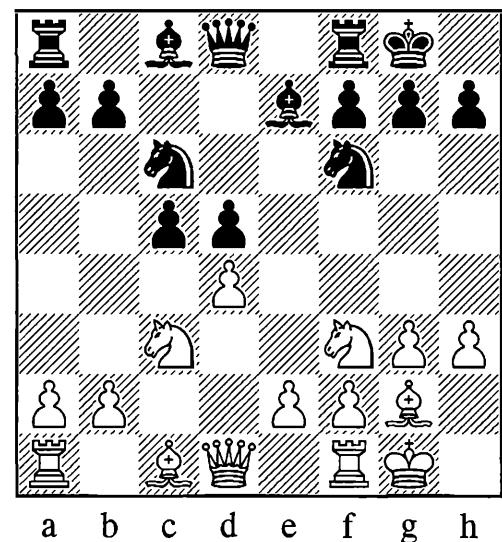
11...cxb3 12.♗xb3 ♔e6 13.♗fd1 ♔a5

14.♗a2 ♔c4

14...♗xc3 15.♗xc3 ♔c4=

15.♗e5 ♔xc3 16.♗xc3 ♜c8

Black is at least equal.

B) 9.h3**9...♗e8**

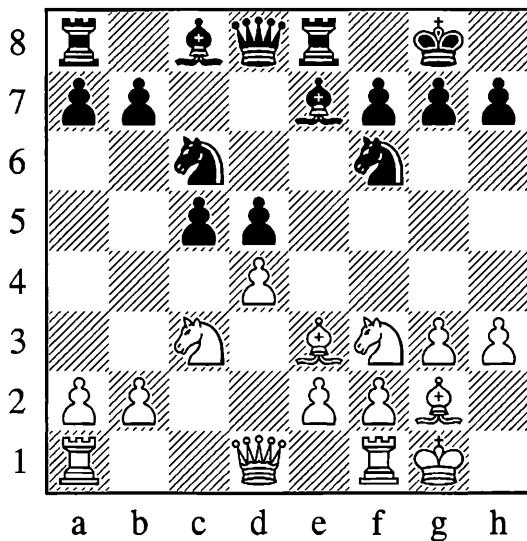
This developing move keeps all of Black's options open while asking the question of how exactly White plans to put his last move to use.

10.♗e3

This is White's usual response, placing the bishop in the centre without fear of harassment from a knight on g4. Alternatives are certainly nothing special.

10.♗f4 cxd4 11.♗b5?! (11.♗xd4 was better but after 11...♗b6 Black is fine) 11...♗h5! 12.♗c7 ♜d7 13.♗a4 a6 14.♗b6 ♔a7! 15.♗xa7 ♜xa7 16.♗fxd4 ♔xg3! 17.fxg3 ♜c5 18.♗c2 ♜xb5 White was already much worse in Piasetski – Nunn, Haifa (ol) 1976.

10.b3 ♜e4 gives Black an improved version of the 9.b3 ♜e4 variation, which is referred to briefly on page 229, as ...♜e8 is evidently more useful than h3. One notable game continued 11.♗b2 ♜f6 12.e3 (12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♗d2 ♜f5†; 12.♗a4 is well met by 12...b6! intending ...♗a6) 12...cxd4 13.exd4 ♜f5 14.♗h2 ♜xc3 15.♗xc3 ♜e4† Nakamura – T. Petrosian, Internet 2007.



10...c4

10...cxd4 is also possible, for instance: 11.♗xd4 ♜d6 12.♗xc6 (12.♗xd5 is met by 12...♗xd5 13.♗xd5 ♜xe3! 14.fxe3 ♜g5 with sufficient counterplay) 12...bxc6 13.♗d4 ♜f5 14.♗c1 ♜b8 15.♗a4 ♜d7 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♗h2 ♜b4↑ L. Marin – Narciso Dublan, La Pobla de Lillet 1997.

11.♗e5

11.b3 ♜b4 12.♗c2 ♜xc3 13.♗xc3 ♜e4 14.♗c1 occurred in Pasalic – Ljubicic, Senj 2008, and now both 14...b5N and the even more ambitious 14...c3?!N look promising for Black.

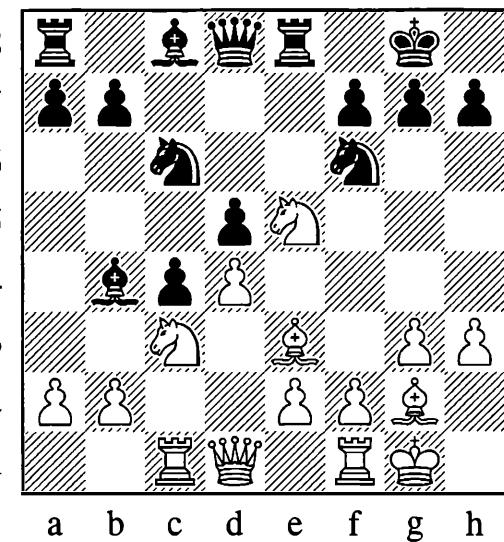
11...♜b4

11...h6 transposes to 11.h3 ♜e8 in the note to White's 11th move in line D. Black should be fine in that position, too, but via the present move order there is no real need to put the pawn on h6.

12.♗c1

12.f4 ♜xc3 13.bxc3 ♜f5 gives Black good play on the light squares.

The present position was reached in Goy – Ljubarskij, Essen 2005. At this point Black could have virtually forced an equal ending with the following sequence:

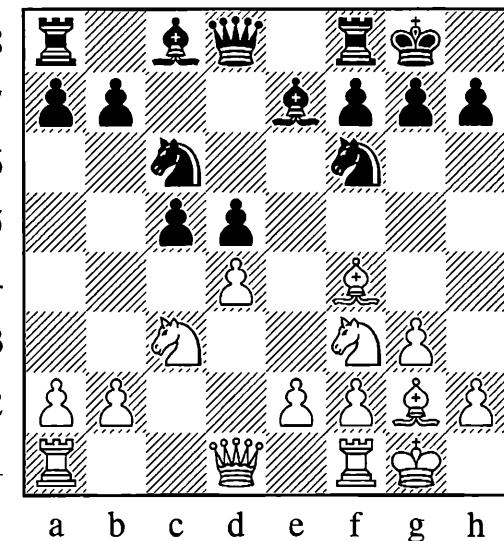


12...♜xc3N

Alternatively 12...♝a5N is a good way to keep the position more complex.

13.♗xc3 ♜xe5 14.dxe5 ♜xe5 15.♗d4 ♜e8
16.♗xf6 ♜xf6 17.♗xd5 ♜e6 18.♗xc4 ♜xc4
19.♗xc4 ♜xb2=

C) 9.♗f4



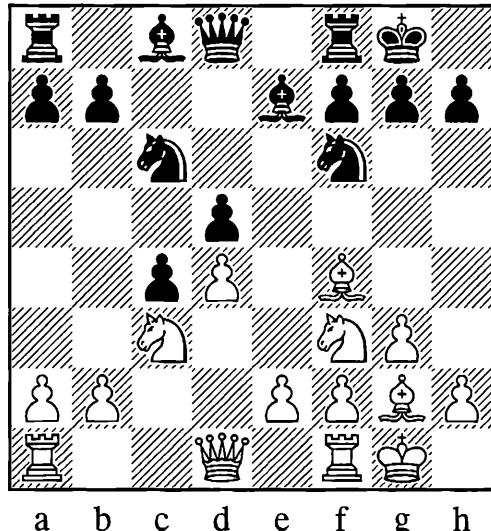
This move fails to put Black's centre under any pressure and thus gives him more freedom than in the main lines.

9...c4!

At first this may seem a little surprising, as Black was under no obligation to release the central tension. Gaining space on the queenside is nevertheless an attractive plan, and the present position amounts to an improved version of the 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4! chapters at the start of the book.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is a classical approach but not the best one in our view. There is no pressure on d5, and in some positions the bishop could prove more useful on f5 or g4, where it would also keep the e-file clear. Furthermore, after 10.dxc5! $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ we have transposed to variation C of Chapter 9 (9.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4!?$) in which we concluded that 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was insufficient to equalize.

It is also worth mentioning that 9...cxsd4 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ is well met by 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 15. $\mathbb{W}c1$ with an edge to White.



10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White can also try undermining the queenside immediately:

10.b3 $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ N

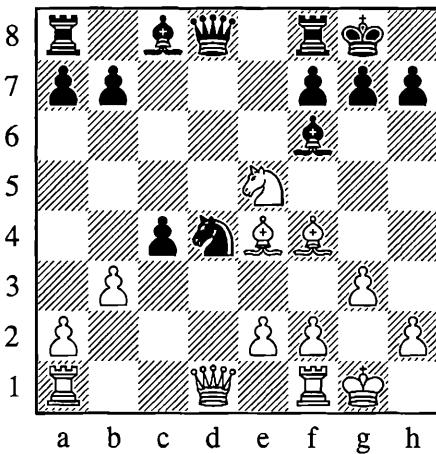
Black can also play 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$ when 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ transposes to variation D24 of Chapter 1 (9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 10.b3 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$). In case the reader needs a reminder, our recommendation there was 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ when Black is fine in all variations.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

11. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ b5 is at least equal for Black.

11...dxe4 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

This lively position holds roughly even chances for both sides.



14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ cxb3 15.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}e8=$

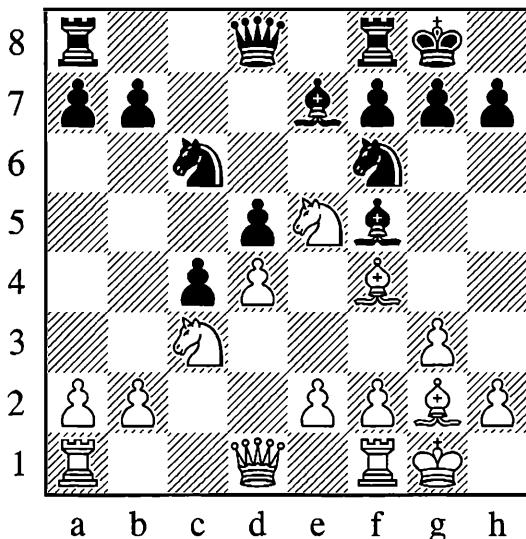
14.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\bar{f}$) 15...g5!?
(15...cxb3 16.axb3 $\mathbb{W}e7=$) 16. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$
17. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ bxc6 18. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
20. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8\infty$

14... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Black has fair compensation for a pawn. The plan is ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$, when all his pieces are in play.

10... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

Due to the lack of pressure on d5, Black can afford to develop his bishop on a more active square than e6. Besides, 10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ allows the thematic tactical trick 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ dxc4 12.d5 when White stands better and the bishop on f4 even improves his chances compared with some other lines.



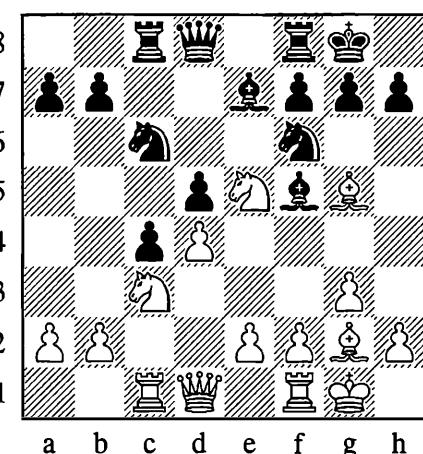
11.♘c1

Several other moves have been tried, but Black is holding his own in all cases.

11.h3 is not dangerous. 11...♝c8 (11...h6 12.g4 ♜h7 is met by the familiar 13.♗xc4! with an edge to White) 12.g4 ♜e4 13.f3 ♜g6 14.♕e3 b5– Maric – Grujic, Pancevo 2007.

It is worth mentioning that after 11.e3N the move 11...h6 becomes more tempting, as 12.g4 ♜h7 13.♗xc4?! is met by: 13...dxc4 14.d5 ♘b4! 15.d6 ♜d3†

11.♕g5 gives Black the option of 11...♜e6 transposing to Chapter 1, but Black can also try to make use of his extra tempo with 11...♝c8 (11...♝e8?N is also possible). Then 12.♘c1 was played in Potapov – Laptos, Katowice 1993, at which point we found an interesting idea:



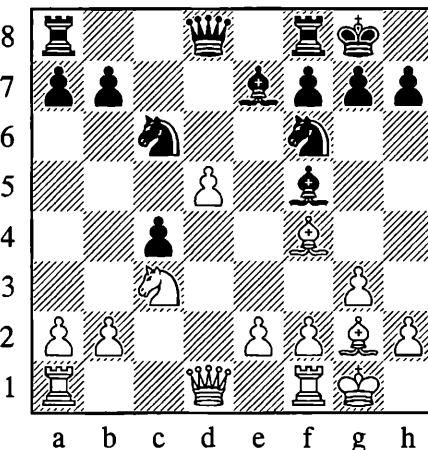
12...♝e8?N (12...h6? 13.♖xf6 ♜xf6 14.♗xd5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♜xe5 should also be fine for Black) 13.♕xe7 ♜xe7 Black has a harmonious position and will continue with ...f6 followed by ...♗d6 (or ...♗c7) and ...b5 with promising queenside play.

11.♗xc6N bxc6 gives Black an improved version of the equivalent 9.♕g5 c4! line. Play might continue: 12.b3 ♜a5 13.♕d2 (13.♗a4 ♜ad8 is fine for Black, as White cannot play ♜c2) 13...♜a6 14.bxc4 ♜xc4 15.♕a4 ♜xa4 16.♗xa4 ♜ab8 17.♗fc1 ♜fc8 18.♗c5 ♜b2 19.♗b3 ♜e4 20.♕xe4 ♜xe4 21.♔f1 ♜a3= Black is fine thanks to his bishop pair and control over the b1-square.

11.♗xc4!?

This is certainly a critical test, but Black can meet the challenge head-on.

11...dxc4 12.d5



12...g5!!N

12...♗a5?! 13.d6 justified White's play and gave him some advantage in Lida Garcia – Duarte, Buenos Aires 1991.

13.♘c1!

13.♕xg5? ♘xd5†

13.♗e3 ♘a5†

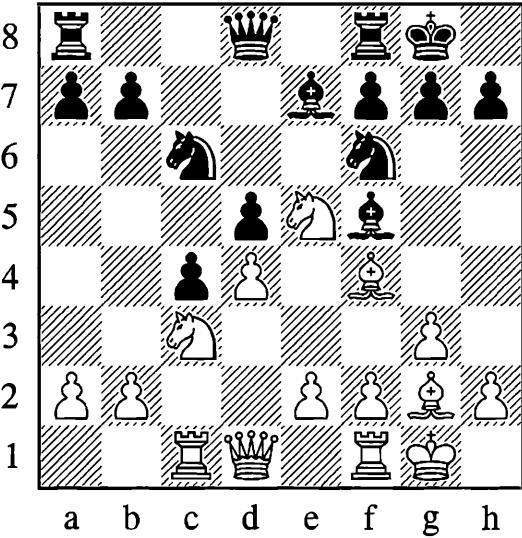
13.dxc6 gxf4 14.cxb7 ♜b8 15.♕a4 ♜c7

16.♕a6 ♜e6†

13...♝e5 14.♕xg5 ♜b6!?

The position is extremely double-edged and

unclear. It is hard to give a definitive verdict, but our general impression is that White's compensation should be enough to give him equality at best.



11...♜c8

With the bishop on f4 the rook can hardly contemplate going to b8, so c8 is clearly the right square for it. It is also worth mentioning that 11...h6 is a sensible move which prevents ♜g5 while securing the future of the bishop on the h7-b1 diagonal.

12.♗xc6 bxc6!?

A dynamic and slightly surprising choice.

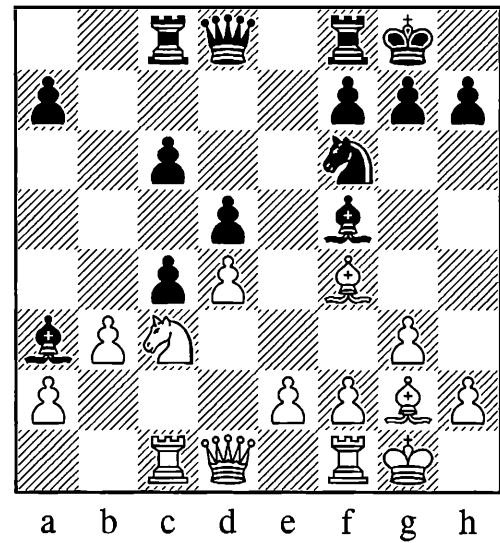
12...♝xc6 is also perfectly alright. White's desired reaction to this move would be ♜xf6 followed by e4, but in the present position White is missing the bishop on g5, so Black is fine here too.

13.b3

13.♝e1 can be met in a variety of ways, 13...♞b4 being perhaps the most solid.

13.♞a4 runs into a strong reply in 13...♛a5 14.b3 ♜a3# when White suffers from having his bishop on f4 instead of g5: he is missing the option of ♜xf6, and the black knight can jump in to e4 at any moment.

13...♞a3



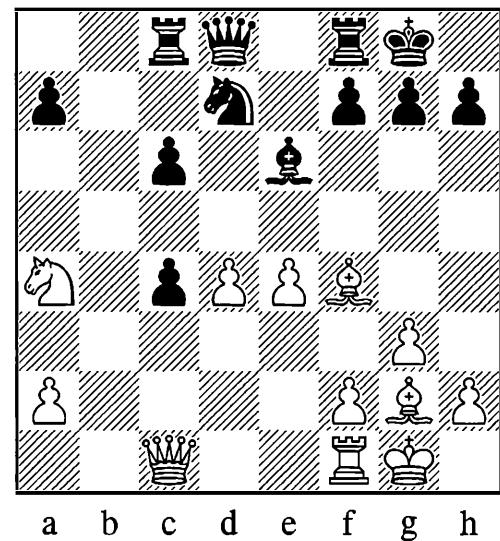
14.bxc4!?

This interesting exchange sac seems to be White's best, although it does not bring him any more than equality.

14...♜xc1 15.♛xc1N

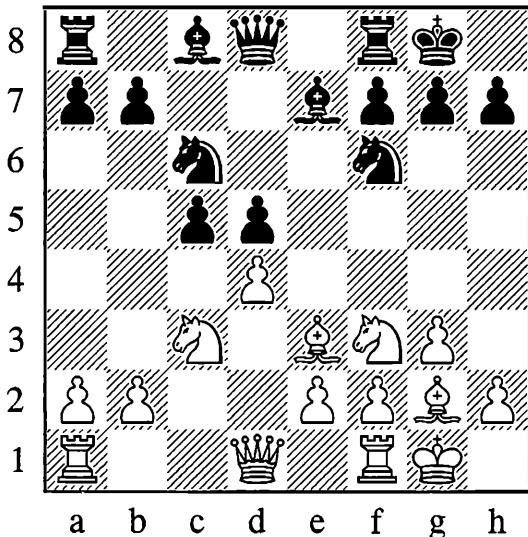
The less accurate 15.♛xc1?! was played in the following game: 15...♝e8 16.c5 ♛a5 17.♝d2 ♛a6 18.f3 ♜e7 19.♝e1 ♜ce8 20.♝f1 ♜c8 21.g4 ♜g6 22.♝f4 h6 23.♝g3 Cerny – Mozny, Czech Republic 2001, and now 23...♝b7N maintains a slight advantage for Black.

15...dxc4 16.e4 ♜e6 17.♞a4 ♜d7∞



White has just about enough compensation to claim equality, but Black should not be in any danger. (But note that he should refrain from 17... $\mathbb{W}xd4??$ which loses the queen after 18. $\mathbb{B}d1$.)

D) 9. $\mathbb{A}e3$



This move has been recommended by both Donaldson and Dzindzichashvili in their respective repertoire works in book and DVD format.

9...c4!

Once again we favour this space-gaining move which gives Black an improved version of the 9. $\mathbb{A}g5$ c4! main line.

10. $\mathbb{A}e5$

10.b3 cxb3 11.axb3 $\mathbb{A}f5$ is less challenging, for instance 12. $\mathbb{A}h4$ $\mathbb{A}e6=$ 13. $\mathbb{A}h1!?$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{A}g2$ $\mathbb{A}h3$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{A}g4\#$ Granda Zuniga – Illescas, Leon 1990.

10...h6!

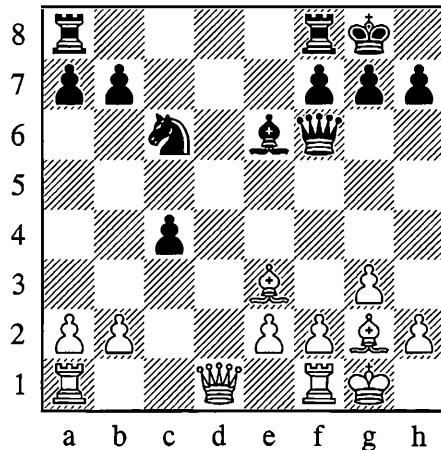
Preventing ... $\mathbb{A}g5$ and preparing to put the bishop on f5, just as in line C above.

10... $\mathbb{A}e6$

This has been the main line, but it suffers from a drawback which was highlighted by

one of the authors in the following game.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ dxc4 12.d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}f6$
- 13... $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{fxe6}$
16. $\mathbb{W}a4! \pm$ Polugaevsky.
14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$



15. $\mathbb{W}c1!$

15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 16. $\mathbb{W}d4$ gave White a stable edge in Miles – Petursson, Reykjavik 1980, but the opposite-coloured bishops give Black good chances to hold.

- 15...h6 16. $\mathbb{W}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 17.bxc3 $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 18. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ a6!

Otherwise White may be tempted to exchange on d8 and c6, winning the a-pawn with a more favourable opposite bishop scenario.

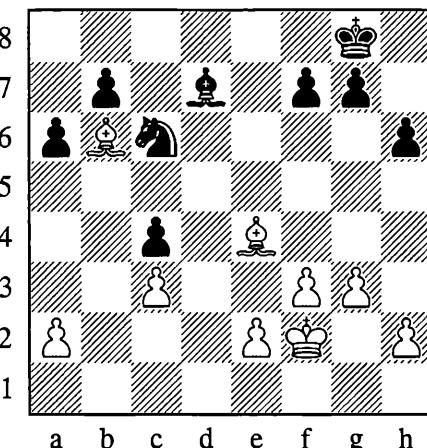
19. $\mathbb{A}b6$ $\mathbb{E}xd1\#$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$

Preparing to cover the seventh rank.

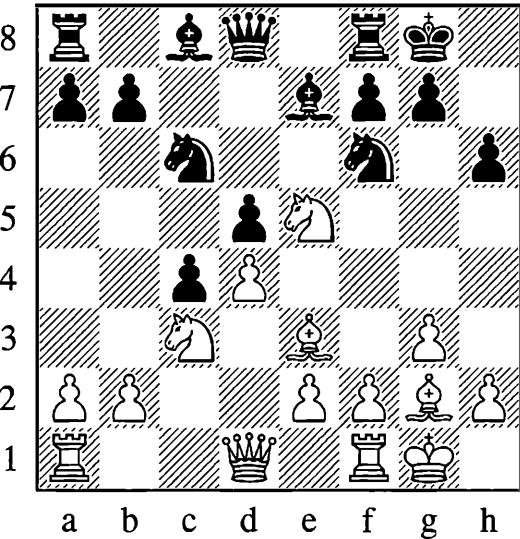
21. $\mathbb{A}e4$

Preparing to activate the king without blocking the bishop.

21... $\mathbb{E}e7$ 22.f3 $\mathbb{E}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xd7$ $\mathbb{A}xd7$ 24. $\mathbb{A}f2$



We have been following the game Ntirlis – Katsikaros, Katerini 2008. Black eventually managed to hold this endgame, but his task is unpleasant and we would not advise the readers to follow this path.



11.b3

This seems best, although White has tried numerous other moves too. The following are the most important ones.

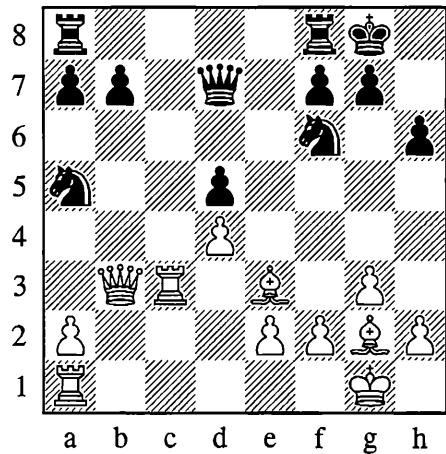
11. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{W}a4$ a6N (The bizarre 12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$! 13.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$? 14.b3 was rotten for Black in Schlamp – Schuster, Germany 1994.) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{B}a8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{B}b8=$

11. $\mathbb{W}a4$

Black's reaction to this move will depend on his willingness to allow a quick draw.

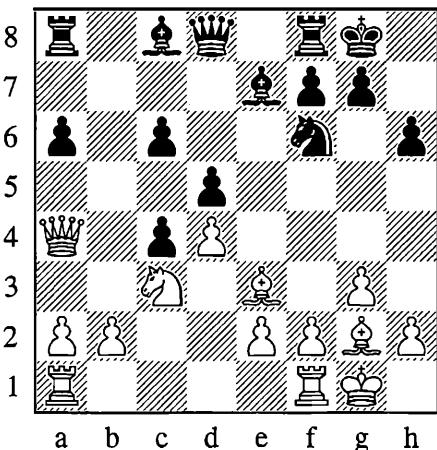
11...a6

11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! is an interesting way to avoid the forced draw that may occur in the main line. 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 13.b3 was the continuation of Coutton – De Lagontrie, Cannes 1996, and here the right way for Black would have been: 13... $\mathbb{Q}b4$!N 14. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ cxb3 15. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ Black's knights can hold their own against the white bishops, as the centre is stable and the knights can settle on solid outpost squares such as c4.



17. $\mathbb{W}b4$ b6 18. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}e8$! The endgame is equal.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6



13.b3

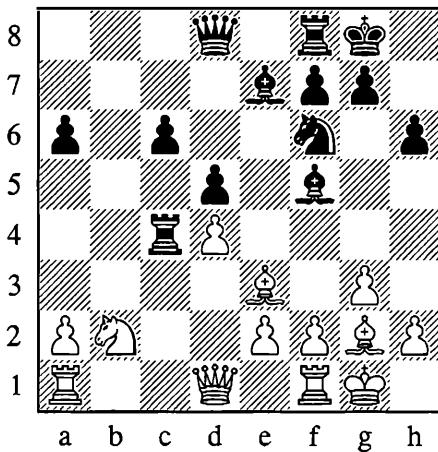
The aforementioned drawing line is 13. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ with neither side can realistically avoid a move repetition.

13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14.b3 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16.bxc4 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ dxc4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ occurred in Damljanovic – Tadic, Zlatibor 2008. The resulting position is double-edged, and it remains to be seen if the passed c-pawn will be strong or weak. Our assessment is that the position should be dynamically balanced, and the strong technician might win with either colour.

13... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 14.bxc4 $\mathbb{B}b4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b2$

We have been following Larsen – Kasparov,

Brussels 1987. Now the simplest solution for Black would have been:



17... $\mathbb{Q}c2N$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$
Black is fine.

11.h3 $\mathbb{E}e8!?$

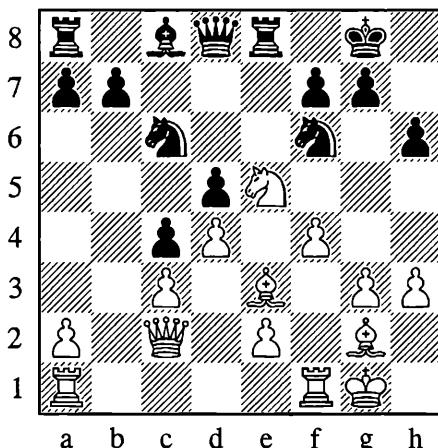
11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ has been played by Kasparov and should also be fine for Black. However, the text move is more flexible, and in particular Black is waiting for f4 before playing ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

12.f4

12. $\mathbb{W}a4$ can be met by 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ or 12...a6, just as above.

12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14.bxc3

Mohr – Brunner, Altensteig 1989. Now it looks interesting to try:



14...h5!N

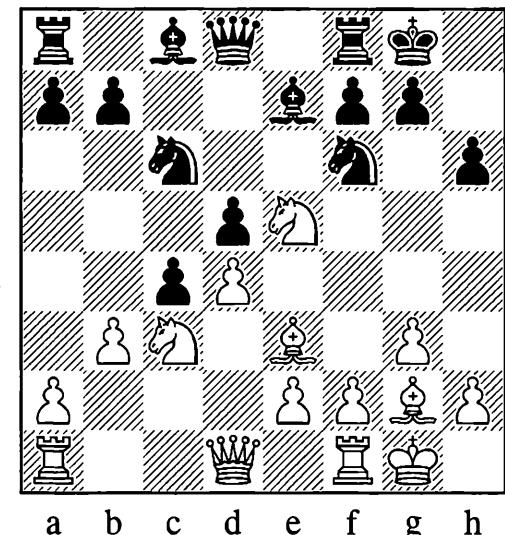
Fighting for the light squares.

15. $\mathbb{B}ab1$

Otherwise the plan is ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and ... $\mathbb{W}c8$.

15... $\mathbb{W}c7$

Intending ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, ... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ and ... $\mathbb{W}c8$ with a good game.



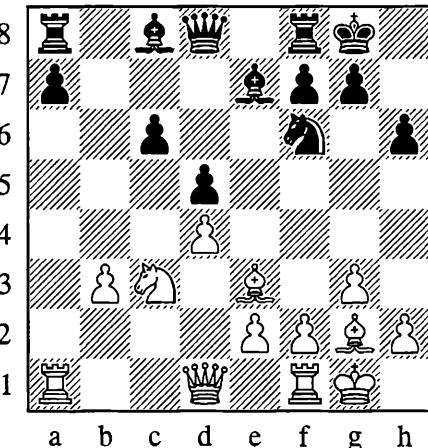
11... $\mathbb{C}xb3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb3$

12.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}fc1$ occurred in Meskovs – De Andres Gonalons, Gibraltar 2010, and now 14...a5N= would have given Black solid equality.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 13.axb3

13. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ is well met by 13... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}b6=$ when Black's control over the b1-square ensures him of a good game.

The text move occurred in Jukic – Labarthe, Geneva 1991, and here Black could have obtained a pleasant position with:



13... $\mathbb{Q}f5!N$

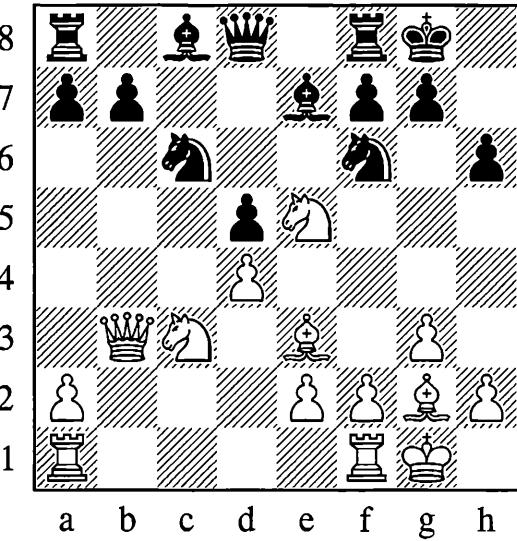
There was nothing wrong with the game continuation of 13...a5, intending to put the bishop on a6 and b5. But the h7-b1 diagonal also has its appeal, and it turns out that Black has no need to fear the occupation of a6.

14.♗a6

14.♗a4 ♘b8 15.♗c5 a5 is comfortable for Black.

14...♘c7 15.♔f4 ♘b7 16.♔a1 ♘b4 17.♗c1 ♘fe8 18.♗a2 ♘c8 19.♗a4 a5∞

In this complex position Black's chances are not worse.



12...♝a5 13.♗c2

Several other moves have been tried, but Black is holding his own in all cases.

13.♗b5 a6 14.♗d3 b5= Khusnutdinova – Korbut, Vladimir 2002.

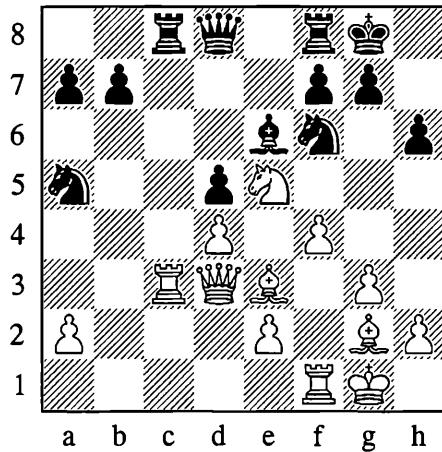
13.♗b2 occurred in Gesos – Sklavounos, Athens 1997, and now 13...a6!N 14.a4 ♘e6 15.♗a1 ♘c8= is pleasant for Black.

13.♗d1 was played in L. B. Hansen – Sorensen, Denmark 1988, and now 13...♔f5!N would have been the simplest way for Black to obtain a fully acceptable game.

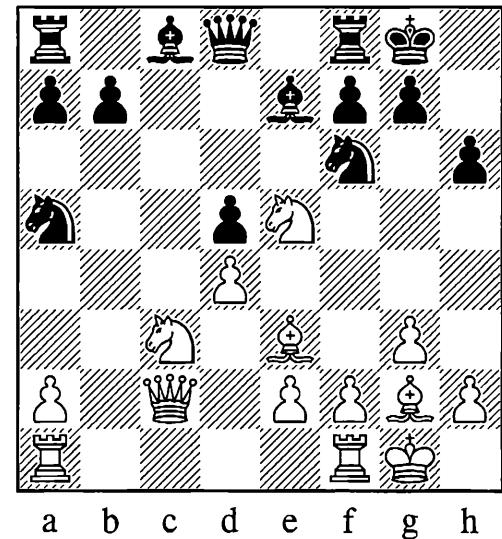
13.♗a4 a6! 14.♔d2 b5 15.♗c2 ♘e6 is already a bit more comfortable for Black, and after

16.a4?! b4 17.♗a2 ♘b8 White's position was becoming more unpleasant by the move in Acebal Muniz – Fernandez Martin, Asturias 1996.

13.♗b1 ♘e6 14.f4 ♘c8 15.♗d3 ♘b4 16.♗a1 ♘xc3 17.♗xc3



This was Wells – House, Edinburgh 1989, and now 17...♔f5!N 18.♗xc8 ♘xc8 19.♗b5 ♘c4 would have given Black the upper hand.



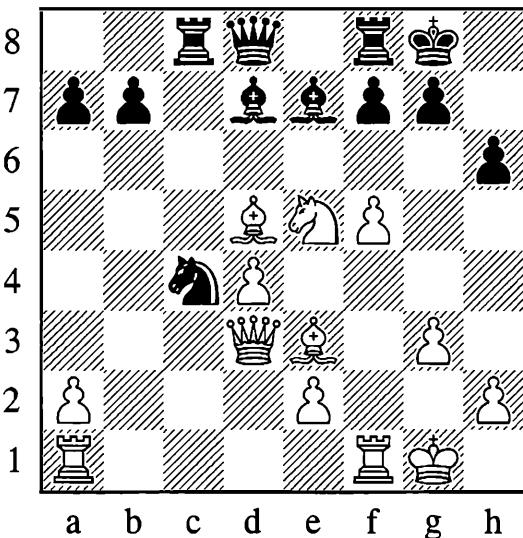
13...♔e6 14.f4!?

White gets nowhere with quieter moves:

14.♗d3 ♘c4 15.♗ab1 ♘d6= Mihajlovskij – Cousigne, Creon 2004.

14.♗ab1 ♘c8 15.♗d3 b6 16.♗fc1 ♘d6 was decent for Black in Faiss – Shishmarev, St Petersburg 1992.

14... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 15. $f5$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



18... $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ N

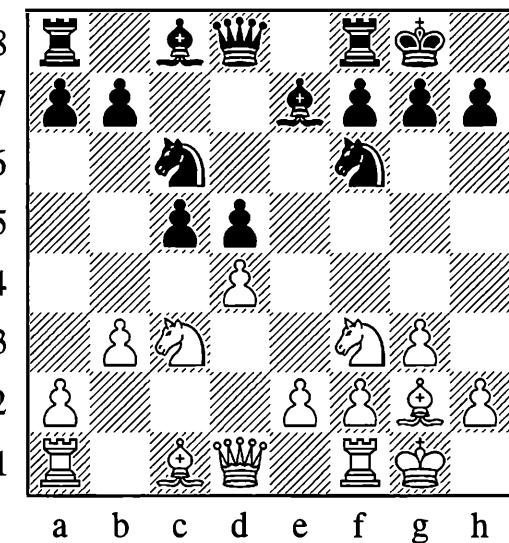
18... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g6??$ (20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 21. $\mathbb{E}ad1\pm$) 20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0–1 Clarac – Danet, France 2005.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\text{!}?$

19. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{E}af1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ is comfortable for Black.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xf5$ $\mathbb{E}xf5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
22. $\mathbb{W}e6\text{!} \mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g6\text{!} \mathbb{Q}g8=$

E) 9.b3

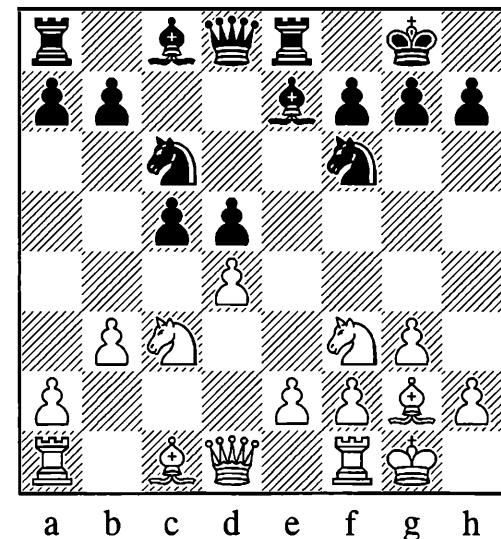


This move was recommended by Ippolito and Hilton in *Wojo's Weapons*, and is the most popular of the five options featured in the present chapter.

9... $\mathbb{E}e8\text{!}?$

By far the most popular continuation has been 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$. We analysed this in detail and concluded that it was satisfactory for Black, but at the same time it is not an ideal repertoire choice because White can avoid it by playing 9.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ and only then 10.b3, when Black must come up with something different.

Further to that, we may note the following continuations: 9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$; 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$; and even 9... $b6\text{?}$, all of which give Black reasonable chances. But we only need one good line, and the text move is the one we like most of all.



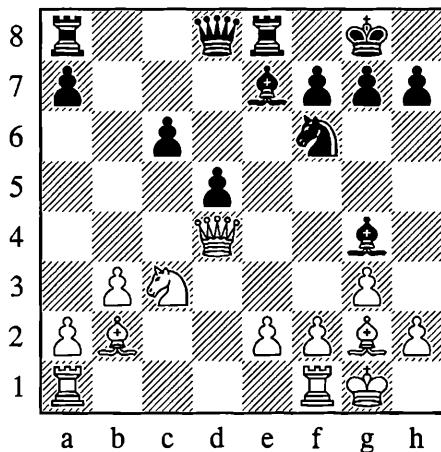
10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$

White has opted not to create any pressure against d5, so Black begins to take aim at d4. His scheme of development involving ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is the same as in some of the 9.dxc5 variations, especially those where White exerts no immediate pressure against d5.

11.dxc5

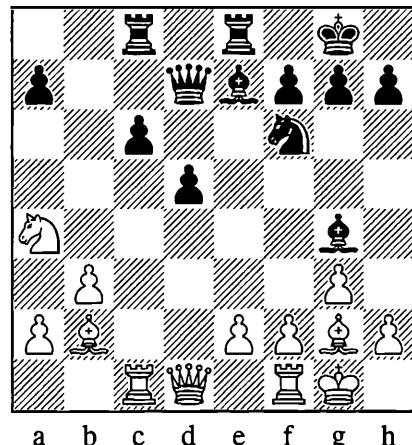
11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ cxd4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ was equal in Steiner – Filip, Austria 2006.

11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ cxd4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 13. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ gives Black a choice of solid continuations, one example being



13... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14. $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5=$ as in Seitz – Burkart, Germany 1992.

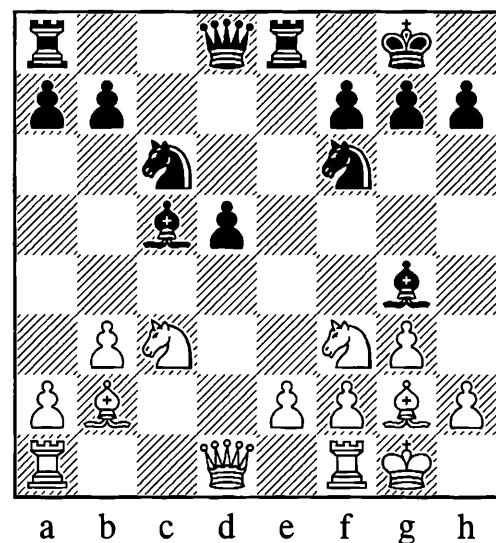
11. $\mathbb{E}c1$ can be met by 11... cxd4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$. When Black achieves the ... $\mathbb{Q}g4/...$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ battery it is usually a good sign, as apart from the possibility of ... $\mathbb{Q}h3$, Black also prevents h3 and thus ensures that his bishop will exert pressure against the e2-pawn for some time into the future. 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$



15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ (15. $\mathbb{E}e1$ gives Black the option of practically forcing a draw immediately with 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$, and indeed after 17. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ the players called it a day in Mgeladze – Mchedlishvili, Tbilisi

2000.) 15... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ Exchanging these bishops is generally a positive step for Black. 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 18. $e3$ $h5\rightleftarrows$ Black was doing fine in Lamprecht – Obodchuk, Nikea 2005.

11... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$



12. $\mathbb{E}c1$

12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ reaches the note to White's 13th move in the main line below.

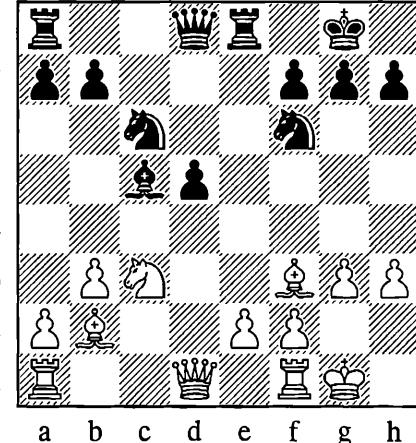
12. $h3$

This is a natural move, putting the question to the bishop before Black has time to prevent it with ... $\mathbb{W}d7$.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!?$

The more popular 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is fine, but we thought it would be interesting to show how Black can obtain a good game without this bishop.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$



13... $\mathbb{W}d7N$

An obvious improvement, gaining a tempo by attacking h3.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ was just bad for Black in Kosic – Hugony, San Benedetto 1990.

14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

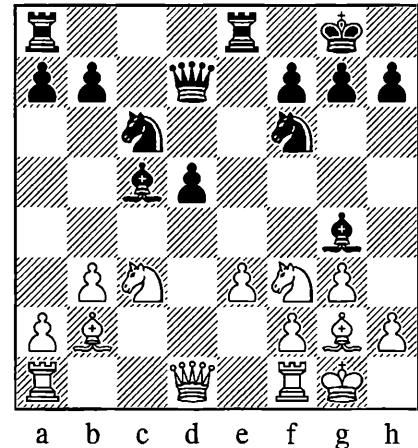
14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$) 15... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$ is comfortable for Black, and shows the value of the earlier ... $\mathbb{B}e8!$.

14... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 15.e3 $\mathbb{W}e7!$

Black has a good position. His pieces are nicely centralized, ...d4 is a constant worry for White, and there is also the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ to exchange half of the opponent's bishop pair. (It should be noted that the immediate 15...d4?! is premature, as 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17.exd4 gives Black some trouble regaining his pawn.)

12.e3 $\mathbb{W}d7$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ is playable but the text move is the most natural. Here we found an interesting new idea for White:



13.h3!N

13. $\mathbb{B}c1$ was Gerland – Krause, Germany 1995, and now the simple 13... $\mathbb{B}ad8N$ gives Black a comfortable game.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

This is the point behind the last move.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd5$

White is close to obtaining some advantage, but Black can maintain the balance with an accurate move:

16... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

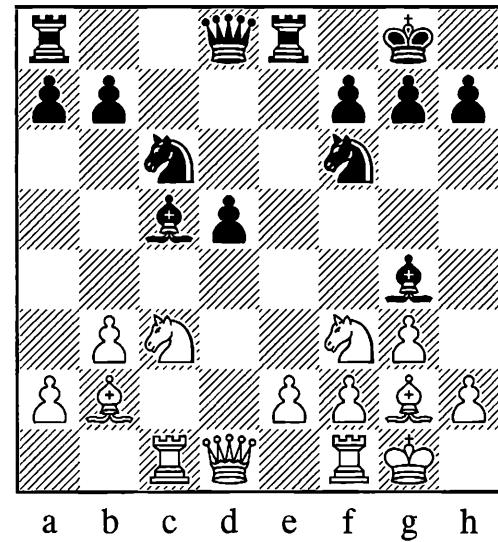
Preventing the pseudo-sacrifice on f7 followed by a check on g5.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$ is interesting but ultimately wrong, as after 17.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ (19... $\mathbb{B}h6??$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xh6+-$) 20. $\mathbb{W}h2$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 21. $\mathbb{B}f2$ Black does not quite have enough for a piece.

16... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ is also not ideal due to 17. $\mathbb{W}g5!$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f6$ (18.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}xe3\#$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ is a draw) 18... $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ 19.fxg3 $\mathbb{B}xf3\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ when Black has two pawns for the exchange, but is nonetheless fighting for a draw due to White's superior pieces.

17. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}f5$

The position is equal.



12... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

Definitely the most reliable move.

12... $\mathbb{B}c8$ has been played in some games, but 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!\pm$ leads practically by force to an unpleasant endgame. Our main line continues: 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{B}xc1\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 19. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $h5$ Akopian – Dreev, USSR 1989. Now after 21.h3!N $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}ge5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2\pm$) 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g2\pm$ Black will have to suffer for a draw, and even that is far from guaranteed.

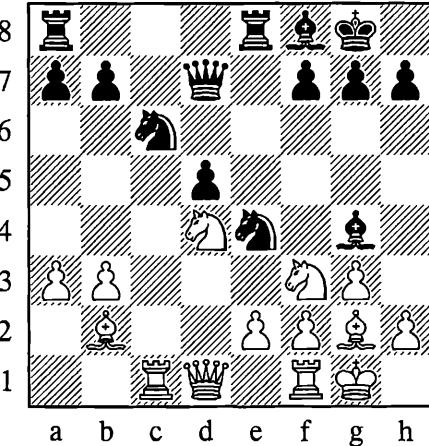
13.h3

Challenging the bishop before Black has time for ... $\mathbb{W}d7$. Here are some other examples of how the play may develop:

13. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xc1$
16. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$ Markland – Unzicker, Hastings 1971.

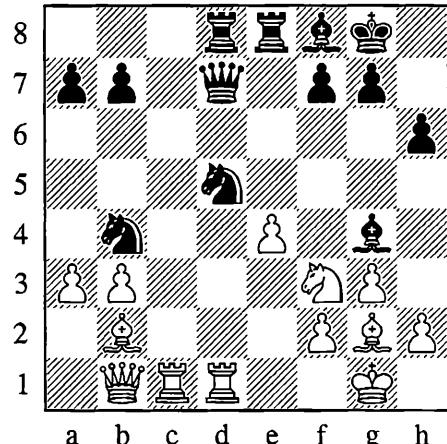
13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14.a3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 15.b4 $\mathbb{W}d7!?$ N (Also after 15...b5 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ a5 Black was fine in Inkiov – Liverios, Plovdiv 1982.) 16.b5 (16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{B}cd8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ d4 \rightarrow) 16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with equal chances.

13.a3 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ occurred in Hess – Messa, Reggio Emilia 1978. White's last move set up the idea of $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}e5$, and for this reason it would have made sense to consider the otherwise odd-looking move:

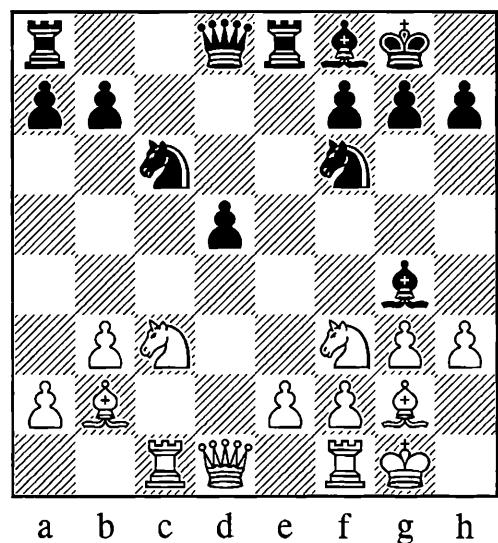


15...f6!?N Covering e5, when Black's position is decent enough. (Another solution is 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ N, meeting 16. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ with 16... $\mathbb{W}b5$ and 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ with 16... $\mathbb{Q}h3$.)

Finally, another game continued: 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b1$ h6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17.e4 $\mathbb{Q}cb4$ 18.a3 and at this point the players agreed a draw in Schlosser – Lukacs, Budapest 1990.



Indeed after 18... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ Black is fine, and it is worth noting the trick 19. $\mathbb{Q}h1?!$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ when White loses.



13... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

The bishop has more commonly retreated to h5, but we prefer to keep it centralized. 13... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14.e3 favours White, who plans $\mathbb{Q}e2-f4$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Black is doing fine here, as the following lines illustrate.

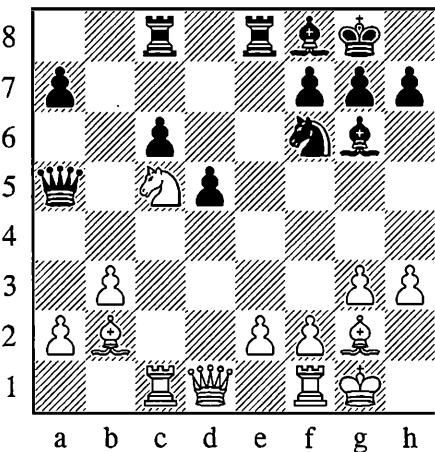
15.e3

15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ is fine for Black.

17.e3 can be met by 17... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ or even 17... $\mathbb{W}a5!?$, as 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{G}xf6$ is nothing to worry about.

17... $\mathbb{W}a5$



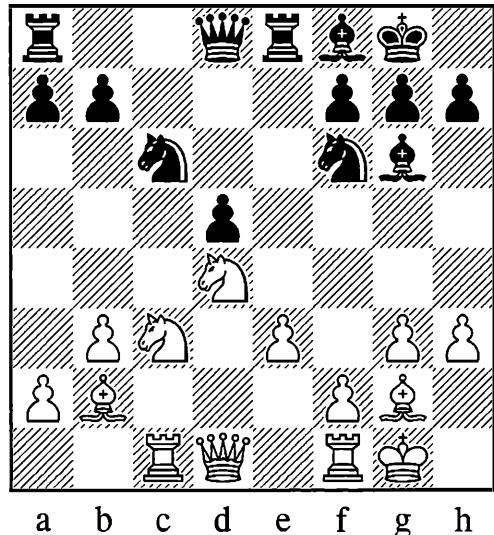
18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is equal.

Now in Lezcano Jaen – Ugalde Ezcurra, Ponferrada 1997, Black's most logical continuation would have been:

18... $\mathbb{Q}e4N\uparrow$

Black's active pieces give him the slightly easier position.



15... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$

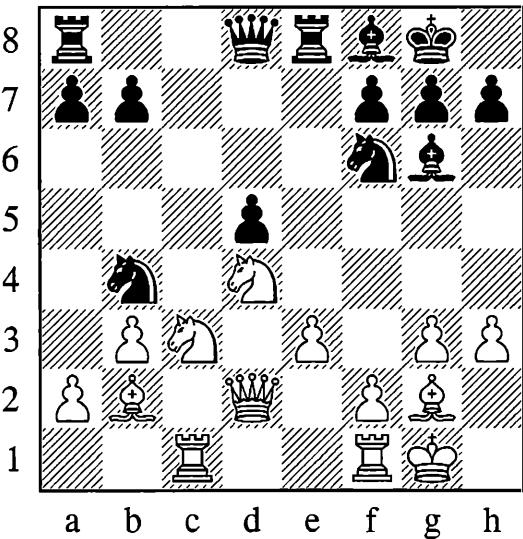
This rather crude-looking lunge with the knight is surprisingly annoying for White.

16. $\mathbb{W}d2$

Perhaps White should prefer 16. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ as in Goletiani – Kraai, San Diego 2006, although after 16... $\mathbb{E}c8N$ Black is at least equal.

The text move occurred in Hjartarson – Liverios, Lucerne (ol) 1982. The Greek player

This means Liverios is a Tarrasch specialist, and here he missed a good opportunity with:



16... $\mathbb{Q}d3!N$ 17. $\mathbb{E}cd1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$

18. $\mathbb{Q}a1?!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\uparrow$ is awkward.

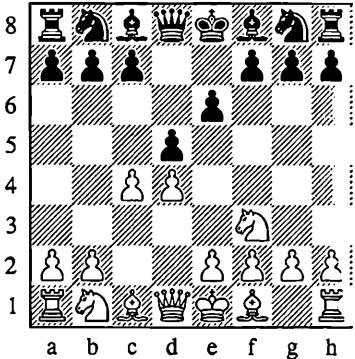
18... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{W}a5\mp$

Black has two bishops and annoying pressure on the dark squares.

Conclusion

Black should be happy to see A) 9.a3, as the reply 9...c4! practically gives him an extra tempo over the critical 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4! lines from the first part of the book. B) 9.h3 is flexible, but after 9... $\mathbb{E}e8$ White must decide on a plan, and it is hard to believe that the inclusion of the last two moves can be to his favour. C) 9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and D) 9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ are a bit more challenging, but in both cases 9...c4! once again gives the impression that White's bishop is on a worse square than g5. Finally E) 9.b3 is arguably the most logical of the lines examined here, but it fails to put the enemy position under any immediate pressure and Black can develop smoothly. The resulting positions are balanced and the final outcome will be decided by who plays better, and we cannot ask for more than that when playing with the black pieces!

Chapter 15



Early Deviations

Set-ups without $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

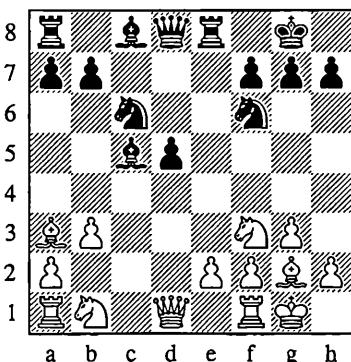
3...c5

A) 4.g3	235
B) 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$	239
B1) 8.b3	240
B2) 8. $\mathbb{Q}e3$	240
B3) 8.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$	246
B31) 9. $\mathbb{W}c2$	247
B32) 9.a3	249
B33) 9. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$	252

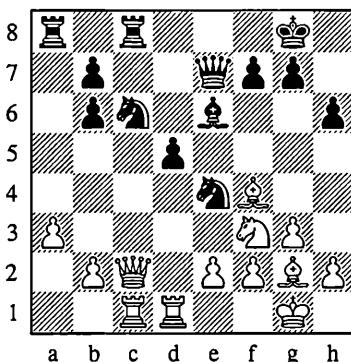
B1) after 11. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

B31) after 17. $\mathbb{Q}acl$

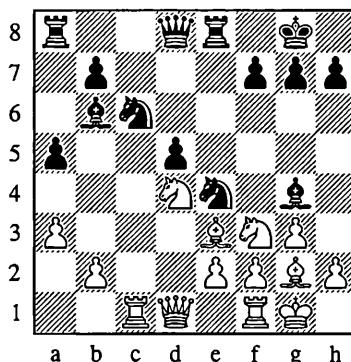
B33) note to 10. $\mathbb{Q}b3$



11... $\mathbb{W}b6!N$

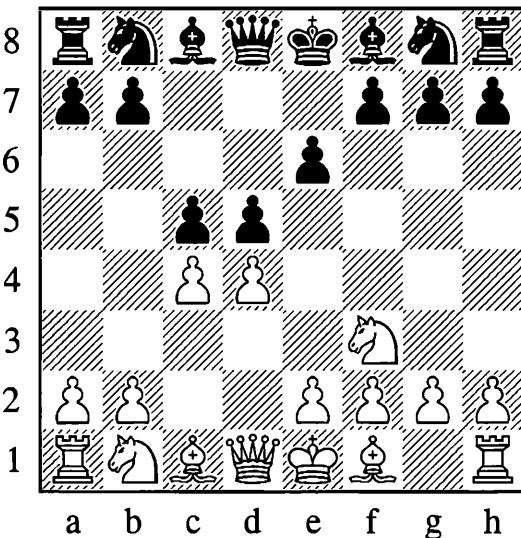


17... $\mathbb{W}c5!N$



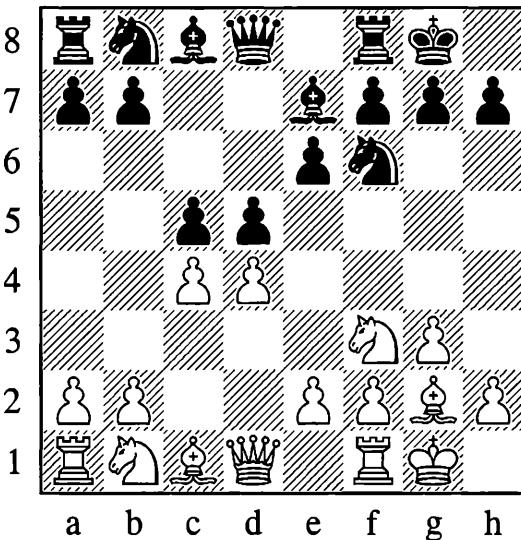
15... $\mathbb{Q}c8!N$

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5



In this chapter we will consider the various ways in which White may attempt to profit from either delaying the move $\mathbb{Q}c3$, or omitting it altogether. We will begin by analysing A) 4.g3 (*omitting cxd5*) before moving on to B) 4.cxd5.

A) 4.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6.0–0 0–0



7.dxc5?!

This line should be taken seriously, especially as it was recommended by Mihail Marin in the third of his *Grandmaster Repertoire* volumes on the English.

The most popular move is of course 7.cxd5 when 7...exd5 takes us back to familiar territory.

7. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Black need not fear this move, which transposes to a harmless variation of the Catalan.

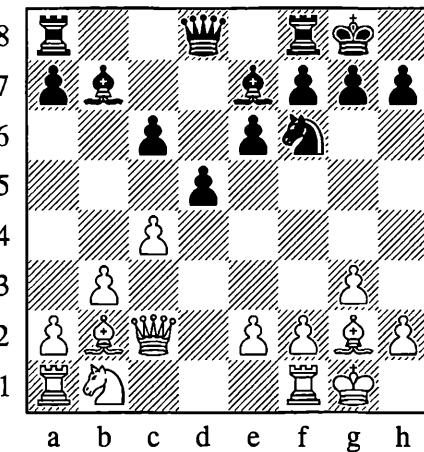
7...cxd4 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

8...e5! is a reasonable alternative which leads to a different type of game, and after 9. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ d4 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ the position is roughly equal.

9. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 10.b3

Black has a few possible plans here, but we especially like the set-up seen in the following game:

10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}b2$



11... $\mathbb{W}b8!$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a5?

12... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ d4

13...a5?! is not good against a knight on c3, and after 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ White is better.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ c5 15.e3 e5 16. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ g6 18.exd4 exd4 19. $\mathbb{Q}el$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$ a5#

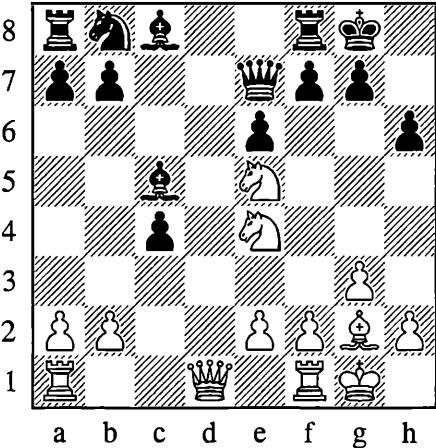
Sebenik – Beliavsky, Murska Sobota 2007.

7... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 8.a3

Marin's recommendation, which has been White's most popular choice.

8. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (9.cxd5 exd5) 9...d4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ gives Black no particular problems.

8.♕g5 h6 9.♕xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘c3 dxc4 11.♘e4
(Or 11.♔a4 ♘c6 12.♘e4 Goschin – Bastians, Germany 2007, 12...♕e7N 13.♕xc4 ♔b6 and Black has no problems.) 11...♕e7 12.♘e5 occurred in Wells – Meinhardt, Bad Zwesten 2005. Here the right continuation was:



12...♘c6!N 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♔a4 ♔d4 Black is fine.

Finally, White can try:

8.♕c2 d4 9.♘e5

9.♘bd2 led to interesting complications in the following high-level game: 9...♘c6 10.♘b3 ♔e7 11.♔d1 e5 12.e3 ♔g4 (Black's best continuation looks to be 12...a5!N when 13.a4 ♘b4 14.♕b1 ♔g4 gives him a much improved version of the game.) 13.exd4 e4 14.♘g5 (14.d5? ♘b4+ Dolezal – Wians, Luxembourg 1990) 14...♔xd1 15.♕xd1 a5 16.a4 ♔e8 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♔xe4 ♔f6 19.♔d5 ♔c8 The position was roughly balanced in Topalov – Carlsen, Nice (rapid) 2008.

9...♔d6 10.♘d3 e5 11.e4

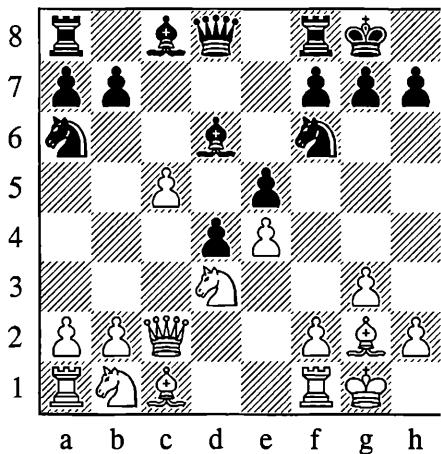
Bancod – Ismail, Vung Tau 2000. At this point it would have been good for Black to play:

11...♔a6!N

Directed against White's intended queenside expansion.

12.c5

12.♘d2 ♘c5 13.♘xc5 ♔xc5†



12...♘c5!

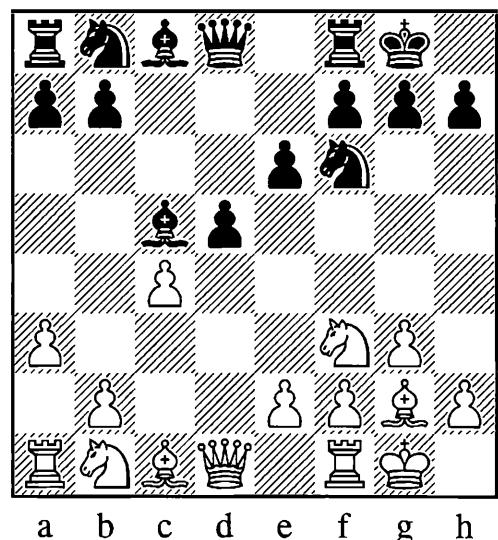
12...♘c5 is less ambitious, but still quite playable: 13.♘xc5 ♕c7 14.b4 b6 15.♘a3 bxc5 16.♘b5 ♕b6 17.♘xd6 ♕xd6 18.♕xc5 (18.bxc5 ♕c6 19.♔a3 ♔a6†) 18...♕xc5 19.bxc5 ♔a6 20.♔d1 ♔fc8 21.♔a3 ♔ab8 Black is certainly not worse here, but White should be okay too.

13.♘xe5

13.♘xc5 ♕c7†

13...♔e6 14.♘d3 ♔c8↑

Black is building a considerable lead in development.



8...dxc4

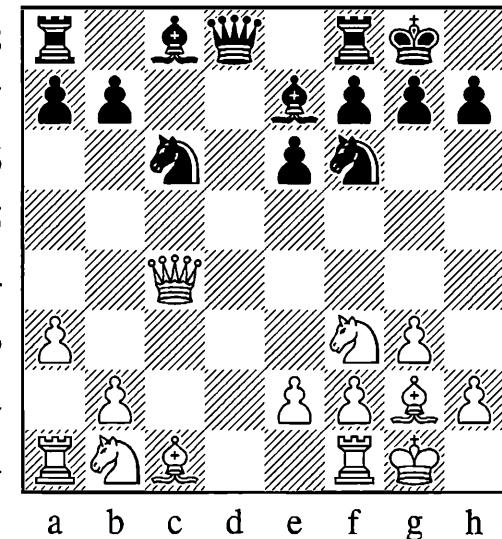
Since White has not yet taken the opportunity to instigate an IQP position, we may as well prevent the possibility altogether.

8...♘c6 is of course playable, and was tried

by one of the authors: 9.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 12.cxd5 (12. $\mathbb{W}c2!$ is Marin's main line, which is more challenging for Black.) 12...exd5 13. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14.b5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d4$ f6 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7=$ The position is level and a draw was soon agreed in Schandorff – Aagaard, Odense 2011.

9. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

10... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ has been more popular, but we prefer to keep the bishop centralized and aiming at the queenside.



11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Marin's recommendation. Alternatives are harmless:

11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ N can be met by 11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ intending 12.h3 e5! 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ when Black is at least equal.

11.b4 e5 12.b5?! (12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ e4 14. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{E}axd8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$) 12... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d1$ f6 Black had great control over the centre and queenside in De Blois Figueredo – Hernandez Irache, corr. 2006.

11...e5 12. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}b5$

When this book was almost on its way to the printer, Jacob left to play for Denmark in the European Team Championship in Halkidiki,

Greece. In the very first round our Tarrasch repertoire received a 2700+ test. GM Ferenc Berkes of Hungary played:

13. $\mathbb{E}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 14. $\mathbb{E}xa8$ $\mathbb{E}xa8$ 15.b4 $\mathbb{E}d8$

Black had equalized easily, and soon had even more.

16. $\mathbb{Q}b2$??

A solid move such as 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ would hold the balance.

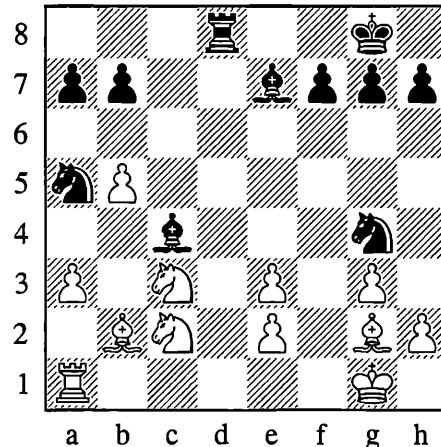
16...e4 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ e3!

Berkes had missed this damaging move.

18.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 19.b5?!

After this loosening lunge White is in trouble.

19... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$



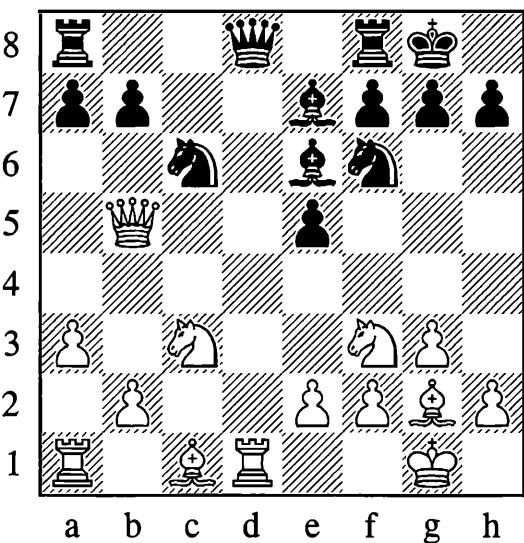
20... $\mathbb{Q}b3$??

Letting White off the hook. Black had a range of good options. Just one example: 20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$!!? 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (21.e4? $\mathbb{E}d2$ wins, as White no longer has a $\mathbb{Q}e4$ defence) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3\#$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g2\#$ White has the weaker structure and less active pieces.

21. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{E}xd1\#$

Draw agreed, Berkes – Aagaard, European Team Championship 2011. A successful test for the opening, but it could have been even better in the middlegame. One additional point is that the game started 1.g3 d5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c5, before transposing into our repertoire, illustrating the flexibility a Tarrasch player has against flank openings.

13. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ is harmless, for example: 13... $bxc6$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6=$



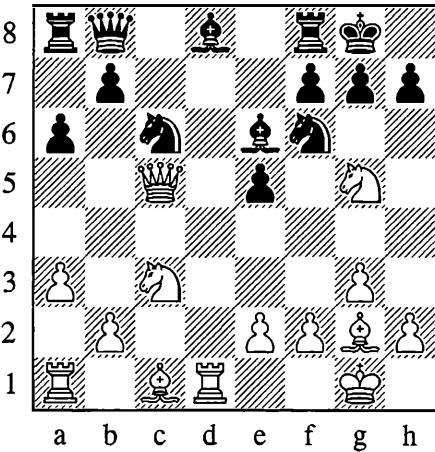
13... $\mathbb{W}b8!N$

This move was mentioned by FM Dennis Monokroussos in his blog *The Chess Mind* while reviewing Marin's third volume on the English. Its main purpose is to prepare ...a6 with a view to meeting $\mathbb{W}b6$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

Although the text move is the strongest, it is worth pointing out that 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ is not bad either. 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ was the game Lysyj – Kachar, Voronezh 2004, as cited by Marin, but here Black can improve with 14...h6!N, preventing $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and maintaining approximate equality.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

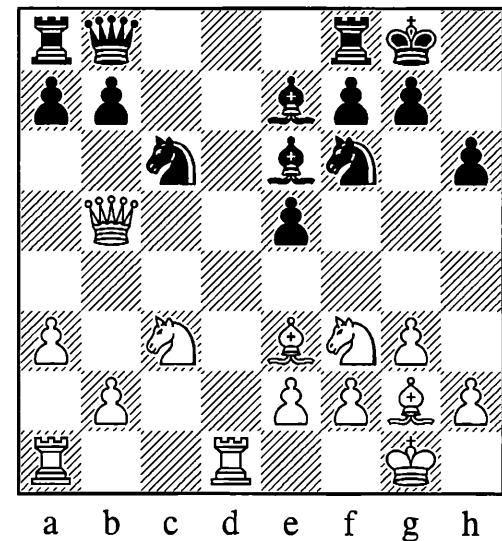
14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ a6 15. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c5$ is harmless.



From here Black has the simple option of 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ with a draw by repetition, as pointed out by Monokroussos. He can also keep the game going with 16... $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ h6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ when his position is just a tad more pleasant, although White should be okay.

14...h6

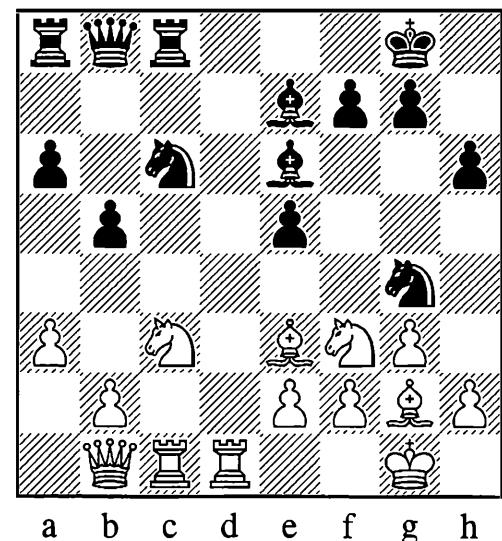
It is always useful to cover the g5-square in such positions.

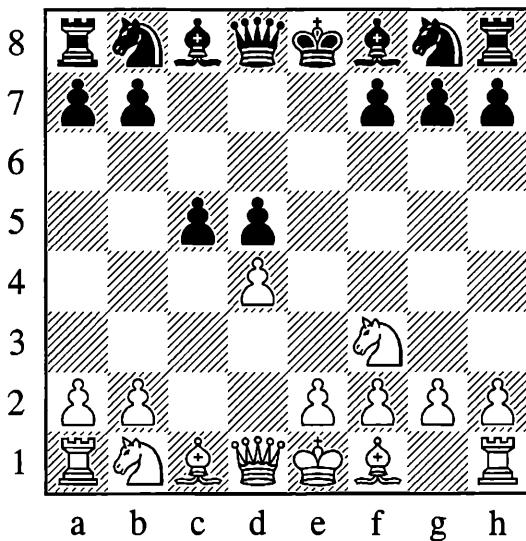


15. $\mathbb{B}ac1$

15. $h3$ a6 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ (16. $\mathbb{W}b6?$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$) 16... $\mathbb{W}c7$
17. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{B}fd8=$

15...a6 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ b5 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b1$
 $\mathbb{Q}g4=$



B) 4.cxd5 exd5**5.g3**

Other moves can be found elsewhere in the book. Here we will focus on White's attempts to employ a classical set-up while attempting to derive some benefit from the absence of the knight on c3.

5... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7.0–0

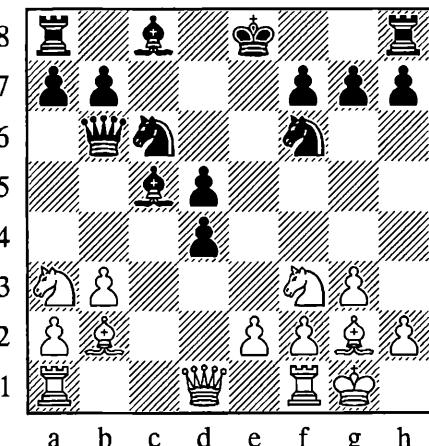
7.b3?!

This move is inaccurate before castling.

7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$!

Also not bad is 7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 0–0 11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e8\#$ R. Rodriguez – Geller, Moscow 1982.

8.0–0 cxd4 9. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

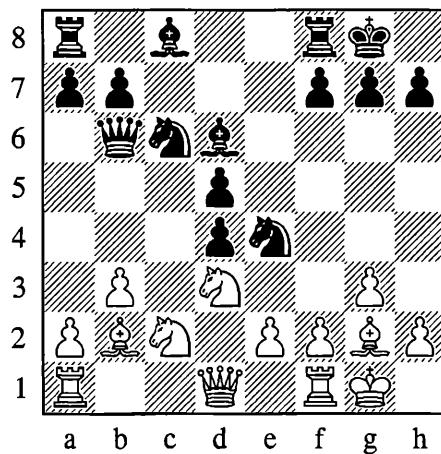


10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$?

is also promising, for instance

11. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 0–0 13.a3 a5 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$? $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and White resigned in Bluemich – Ahues, Duisburg 1929. The final position can be found in some combination books, with the possible finish being 19. $\mathbb{W}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$. 11. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 0–0 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

This was the course of the game Euwe – J. Davidson, Amsterdam 1929. Euwe was a Tarrasch Defense supporter and on this occasion he got into trouble playing against it. He eventually won the game, but things could have been different had Black played:

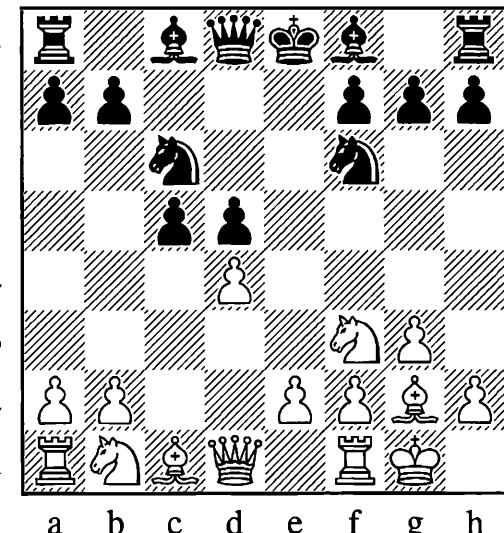


13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!N 14. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

14.f3 is met by 14... $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

14... $\mathbb{Q}ac8\#$

White's position is nasty.

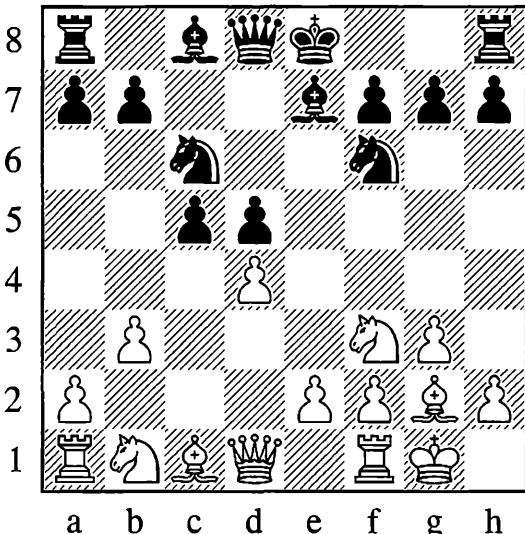


7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black continues with his normal development. Obviously he should keep in mind that White can transpose to a main line by playing $\mathbb{Q}c3$ at any moment. From here we will consider B1) 8.b3, B2) 8. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and B3) 8.dxc5.

B1) 8.b3

This move was recommended by Sam Collins in his ChessBase DVD. The Irish IM suggested that White may benefit from delaying the development of his queen's knight, but we have not found a convincing way for him to do so.



8...0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

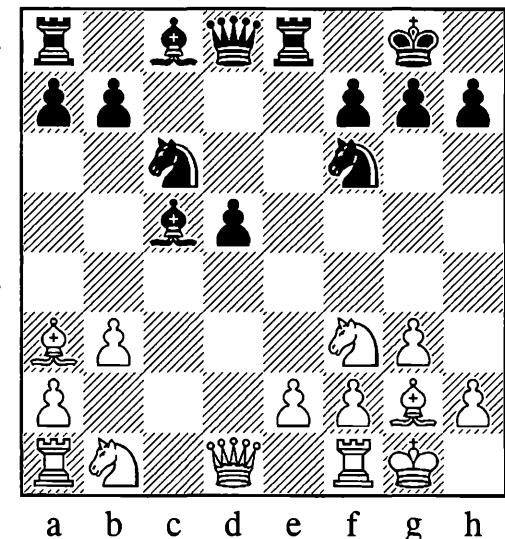
From this position White has nothing better than playing $\mathbb{Q}c3$ on the next move or two, which will transpose directly to Chapter 14 (9th move alternatives).

10.dxc5

10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ reaches line E of the aforementioned chapter.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

This seems to be the only significant move to have any independent value. Now in the game Markland – Gligoric, Hastings 1971, Black could have obtained a fine position with:



11... $\mathbb{W}b6!N$ 12.e3

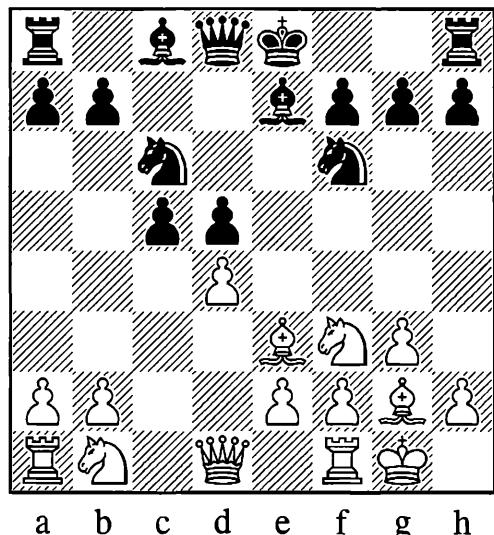
12. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e1$
(14. $\mathbb{W}c1?$ $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}fxc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1?!$ $\mathbb{W}a3$)
14... $\mathbb{Q}b4!↑$

12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d4 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}h5↑$

Black clearly has the initiative.

B2) 8. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

This move is an invention of Mark Taimanov, who played it three times in the seventies and conceded just one draw.



8...c4!

Once again we favour this space-gaining move.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White can also try undermining the queenside immediately:

9.b3 0–0!

Black should not be afraid of an imbalance in the pawn structure.

10.bxc4

10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ cxb3 is considered under the 9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ move order.

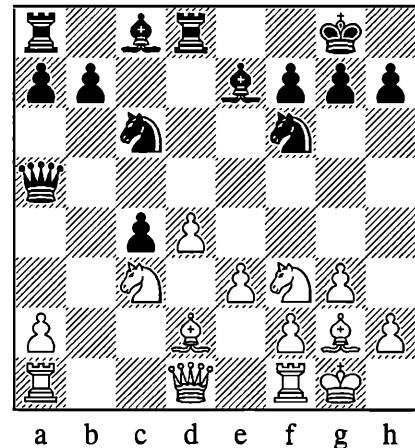
10...dxc4 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

Black has promising play, as shown by the following illustrative lines.

12.d5?!

A principled move, although the complications turn out to be more dangerous for White than for Black.

12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is safer. 12... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 13.e3 occurred in Chetverik – P. Horvath, Harkany 1999, and now it would have been interesting for Black to try:



13... $\mathbb{Q}f5!?$ N 14.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15.d5 (15. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d7\#$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ In this murky position Black's queenside pawns are just as strong as White's central ones.

12... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5!?$ N

13... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 14.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a3\#$ was also quite reasonable for Black in Lobron – Lautier, Baden-Baden 1992.

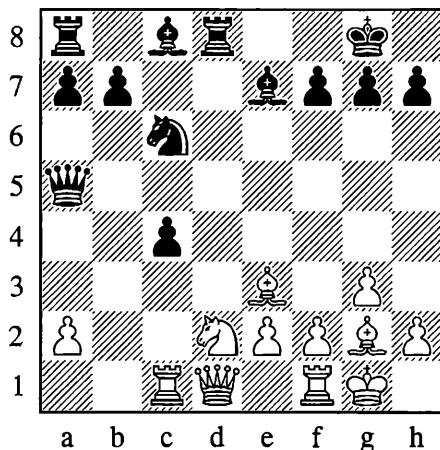
14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xc3\#$

14... $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ gives Black excellent compensation.

15... $\mathbb{E}d8$

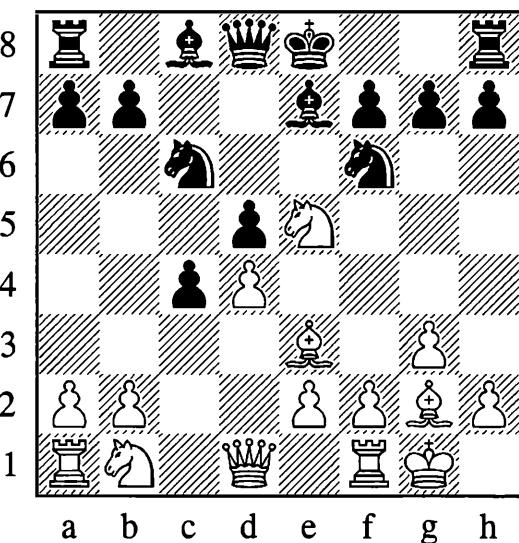


16. $\mathbb{W}c2$

16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa2\#$

16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6\#$

Black's active pieces and bishop pair are more significant than his weak c-pawn.



9...0–0

Tsesarsky has remarked that Black cannot equalize in this variation, but we do not believe this statement to be accurate.

10.b3

10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ h6 reaches variation D in Chapter 14.

10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!?$

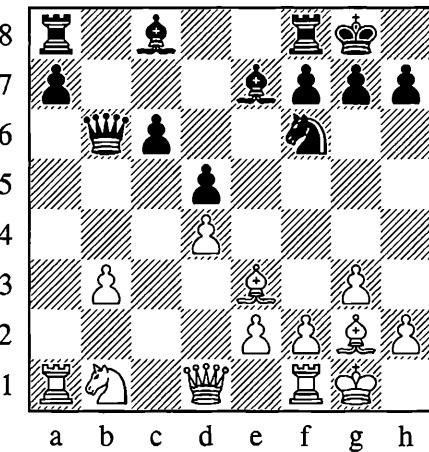
This is an important alternative.

10... $\mathbb{W}bc6$ 11.b3 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 12.axb3

So far nobody has tried 12. $\mathbb{W}xb3N$, after which Black obtains decent play with 12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d7\rightleftharpoons$.

12... $\mathbb{W}b6$

12... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a5= was recommended by Taimanov, and looks perfectly alright. Generally speaking, the mutual pawn weaknesses on the queenside should roughly balance each other out.



13. $\mathbb{W}d3$

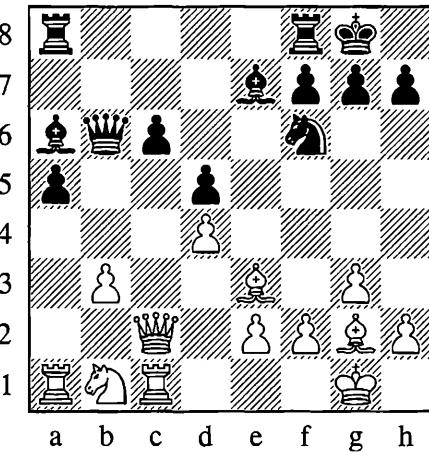
13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ was played in Kilgus – J. Ferrari, Austria 2002, and here Black should have played 13... $\mathbb{Q}f5N$ before deciding where to place his rooks.

13...a5 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$

14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$! is another idea.

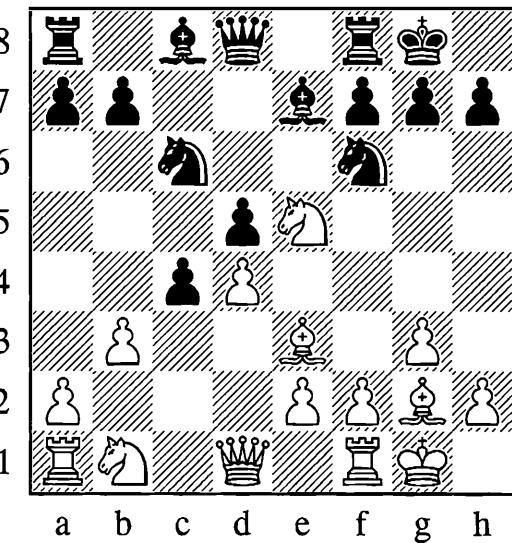
15. $\mathbb{W}c2$

We have been following the game Taimanov – Marjanovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1977. Here Black should have played the simple move:



15... $\mathbb{Q}fc8N=$

Intending ... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ next. Instead the game saw 15... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 18.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 20.e4 dxe4 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa5\pm$ and White converted his advantage.



10... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

10... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ gave White a great position in Nikolaidis – Skembiris, Athens 1998.

11. $\mathbb{W}xb3$

NCO claims a slight advantage to White here, but we believe Black can hold the balance without much trouble.

White can also play:

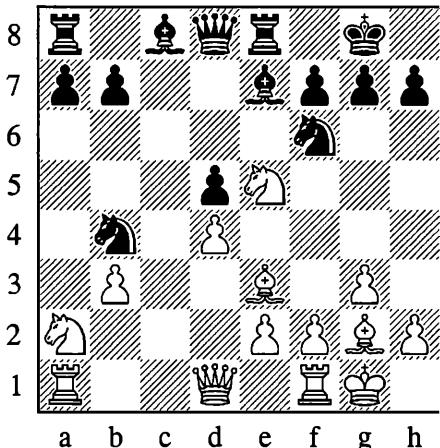
11.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$

11... $\mathbb{W}b6$! 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ was more pleasant for White in Geveke – Hoensch, Germany 1989. However, 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$! 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ gave Black slightly the more pleasant position in Glud – Brynell, Denmark 2010.

12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

12... $\mathbb{Q}f5$!N 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ should also be fine.

13. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

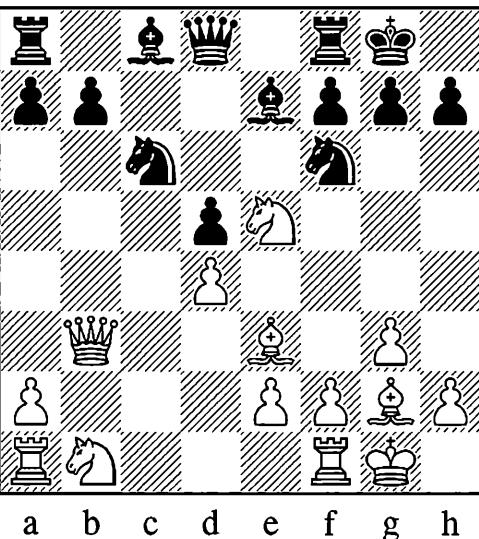


13... $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$

The safe and simple 13... $\mathbb{Q}xa2N$ 14. $\mathbb{R}xa2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ looks pleasant for Black.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
17. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $d4\rightleftarrows$

The position remained dynamically balanced in Velikov – Lputian, St John 1988.



11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

This is our preference, but it is worth examining a few alternatives.

11... $\mathbb{W}b6!?$ allows White to keep an edge:
12. $\mathbb{R}c1!$ (12. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $axb6$ 13. $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}fc8\pm$ is mentioned by Kasparov) 12... $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 13. $axb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\pm$ Korchnoi – Kasparov, London (6) 1983.

11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

This is considered a bit better for White

by some sources and equal by others. We slightly prefer the main line for Black, but it doesn't hurt to have a second option in your repertoire so we will present a summary of our findings here too.

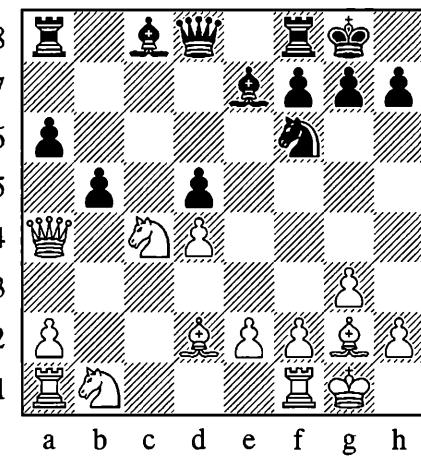
12. $\mathbb{W}a4$

12. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ (13... $a6$ 14. $g4!?$ Tiviakov – Lputian, Rostov 1993) looks okay for Black, for example 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15. $\mathbb{E}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16. $\mathbb{E}bc1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Kruppa – Potkin, Kiev 2001.

12... $a6!?$

12... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is also quite reliable. 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb7!?$ (15. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b6=$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $g6\rightleftarrows$) 15... $\mathbb{E}b8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c5\mp$ Gallardo Garcia – Garcia Ruido, Madrid 2010.

13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $b5$



15. $\mathbb{W}a5$

15. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $bxc4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $e4$ $dxe4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $dxc5$ occurred in Brestian – Lendwai, Austria 1991, and now 21... $\mathbb{W}c8!N=$ would have maintained the balance.

15... $bxc4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8!?$

This move was recommended by the great Bent Larsen.

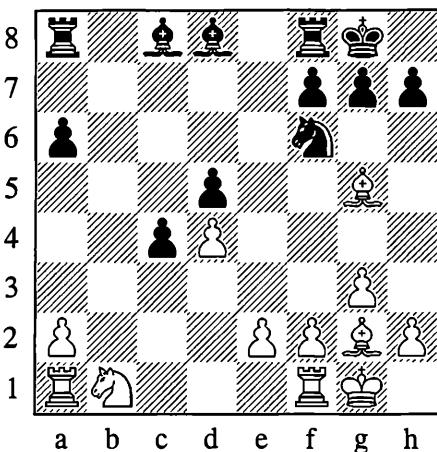
16... $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ was evaluated as slightly better for White by Kasparov in ECO, but after 17... $\mathbb{E}e8$ (17... $\mathbb{E}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ab1\pm$) 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{E}fb1$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$

20.♕c7 ♜b4 Black was okay in Brunner – Novik, Dortmund 1993.

17.♕g5

17.♕c3 was seen in S. Ivanov – Byklum, Stockholm 2010, and here the right path for Black would have been 17...♛e6N 18.♗ab1 (or 18.e4 ♛a5 19.exd5 ♛xc3 20.♕xc3 ♜xd5=) 18...♛a5 19.♗b2 ♜fb8 20.♗fb1 ♜xb2 21.♗xb2 ♛f8 with equal chances.

The present position was reached in Novik – Schmittdiel, Dortmund 1993, and here we suggest a modest improvement:

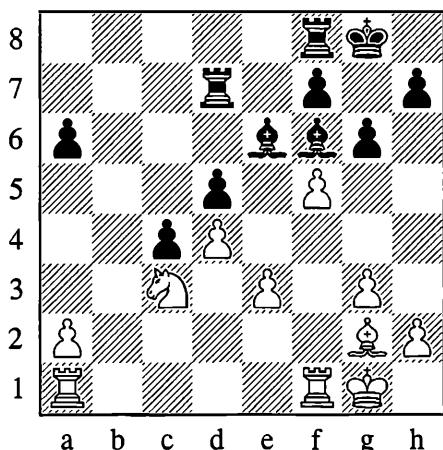


17...♛e6N 18.♕c3 ♜a7 19.♕xf6 ♛xf6 20.e3 ♜d7

Intending ...♛d8-a5. The following sample line contains some interesting points.

21.f4? g6 22.f5

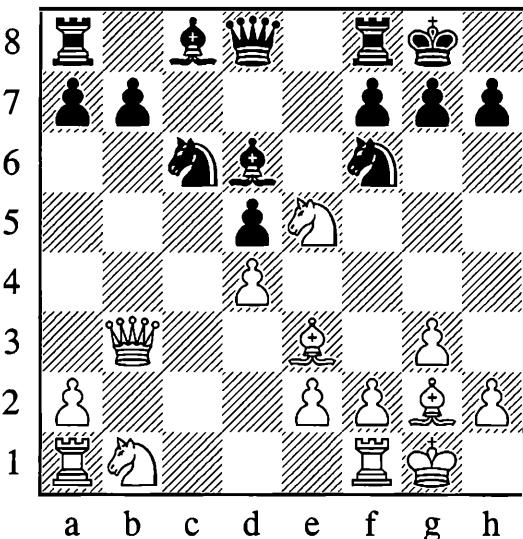
An interesting attempt to disrupt the position, but Black has sufficient resources.



22...gxf5 23.♕xd5! ♛g7 24.♕f3 ♜xd4! 25.exd4

♕xd4† 26.♔g2 ♜xc3 27.♗ad1 ♛b2

The strong c-pawn gives Black a full share of the chances. Summing up, 11...♝a5 seems quite playable for Black so the reader can make his own choice between that and the main line below.



12.♕xc6

After 12.♕c3 ♜xe5 13.dxe5 ♛xe5 14.♗ad1 ♜xc3N (14...d4 15.♕xd4! ♜xd4 16.e3 ♛e6 17.♗a3± Toshkov – Flueckiger, Geneva 1989.) 15.♗xc3 ♛e6 16.♕d4 b6 White's two bishops and active pieces allow him to regain his pawn at any time, but not to claim any advantage.

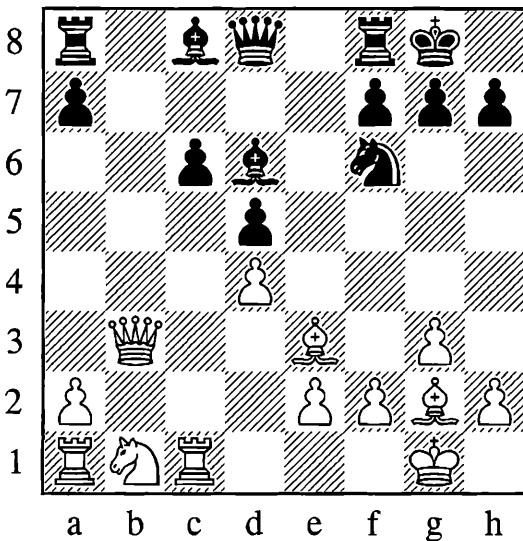
12.f4 ♜a5 13.♗d3 was seen in Klimov – Lastin, St Petersburg 2003, and here Black should have played 13...g6!N intending ...♛f5.

12...bxc6 13.♗c1N

13.♕g5 h6 14.♕xf6 ♛xf6 15.e3 ♛a6 16.♗d1 ♛f5 17.♗d2 ♜ab8 18.♗c3 occurred in A. Petrosian – Jelen, Ptuj 1993, and now Petrosian suggests 18...♗fc8N when Black is doing fine.

13.♕c3 was seen in Rajkovic – Estremera Panos, Leon 1988, and here 13...♗b8N 14.♗a4 ♛c7 15.♗fc1 ♜b4 followed by ...♛e7 should be comfortable enough for Black.

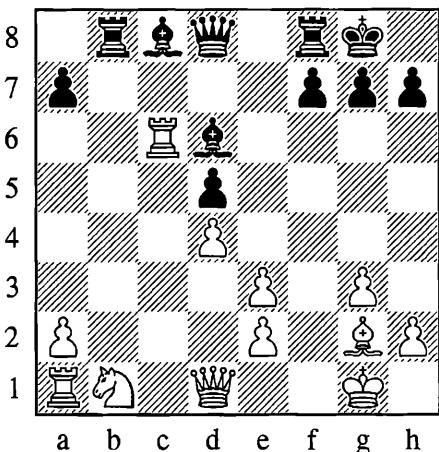
The text move was recommended by Tsesarsky. It seems logical enough, so we decided to consider it as our main line. The Israeli grandmaster likes White, but according to our analysis Black has excellent prospects for counterplay.



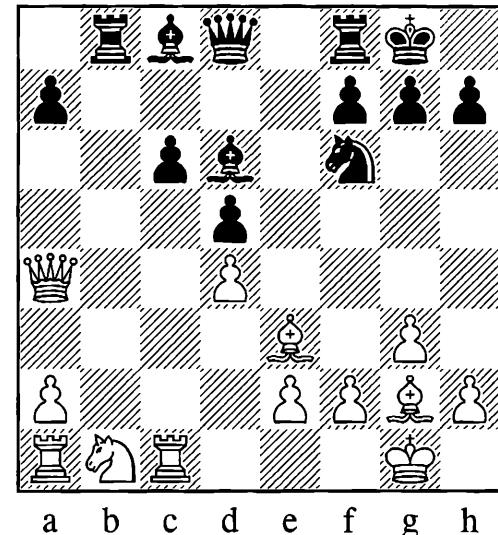
13... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}a4$

14. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$
17. $\mathbb{G}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}f6\rightarrow$

14. $\mathbb{W}d1$ runs into a powerful reply: 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and 14... $\mathbb{B}b6$ are both equal, but Black can and should aim higher.) After this strong move White faces an unpleasant choice: 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}e8\mp$; 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 16. $\mathbb{W}f1$ [16. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}f6\ddagger$] 16... $\mathbb{W}b6?$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}b2\rightarrow$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 16. $fxe3$



16... $h5!$ Black has excellent attacking prospects.



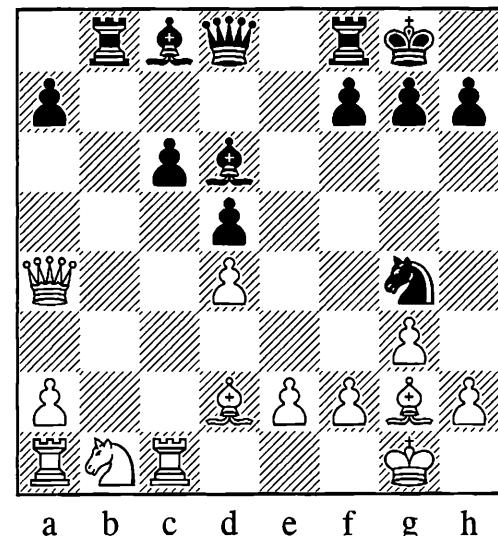
14... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White has problems everywhere, as revealed by the following lines:

15. $\mathbb{W}xc6?$ $\mathbb{W}e8!$ leaves White in trouble.

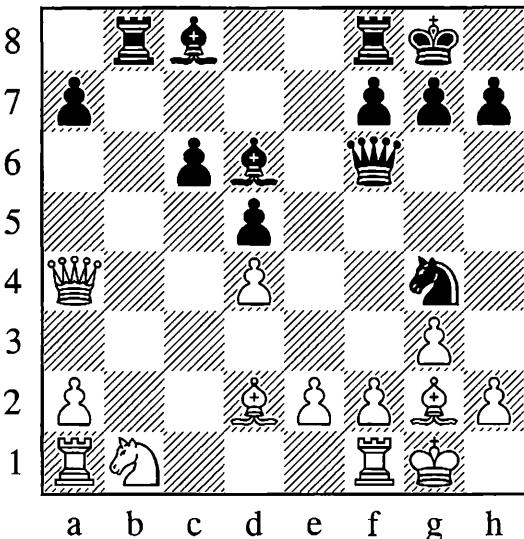
15. $\mathbb{W}xc6?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 16. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}e7\mp$ is not much fun for him either.

Finally, 15. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ is well met by 16... $\mathbb{B}b4!$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ when the exchange of a- for d-pawn clearly favours Black.



15... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

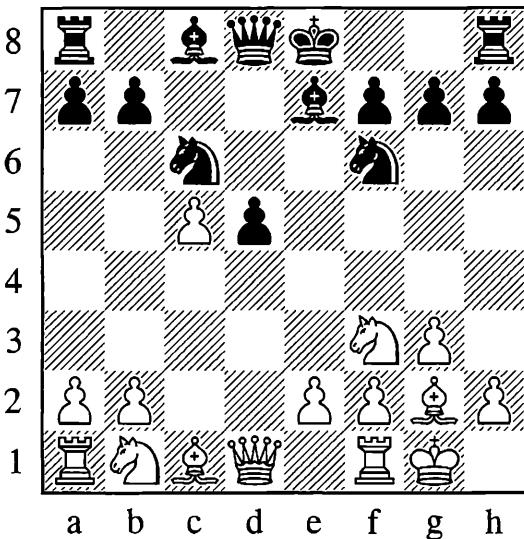
16. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1\Box$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (18. $\mathbb{Q}xh2??$ $\mathbb{W}h6\ddagger$) 18... $\mathbb{W}h6$ is clearly better for Black, despite the awkwardly placed knight. 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 17. $h3$ $\mathbb{E}a6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ also gives White problems, as the d4-pawn is weak.



16...Bg6 17.h3 Qh6 18.Qc3 Ba6!

Black has the upper hand, as the white queen must abandon the defence of the d4-pawn.

B3) 8.dxc5



This fairly venomous continuation has been championed by grandmasters Atalik and especially Malaniuk. It was also the recommendation given in Kosten's famous book *The Dynamic English*.

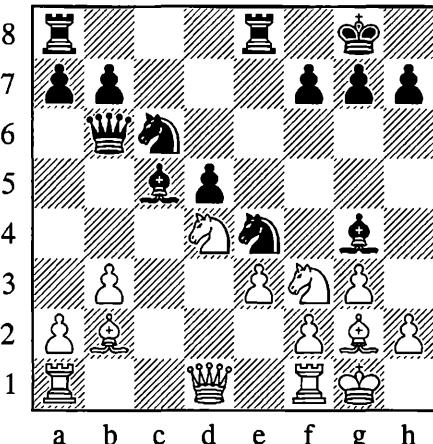
8...Bxc5

From here White has three main ideas. He can hit the bishop with B31) 9.Wc2, prepare queenside expansion with B32) 9.a3 or prepare to deploy a knight in the centre with B33) 9.Qbd2.

There are three other moves that deserve a brief mention.

9.Qe1 has seldom been played, but the knight manoeuvre to d3 is a typical idea that we have encountered in numerous variations. 9...0-0 10.Qd3 Bb6 (10...Be7 is a decent alternative and 11.Qf4 d4 12.Qd2 Bf5 13.a3 [13.Qb3 Be4=] 13...Wd7 was pleasant for Black in Donner – Olafsson, Amsterdam 1954.) 11.Qg5 d4 12.Qd2 h6 13.Qxf6 Wxf6 14.Qc1 Be8 15.a3 Qg4 16.Qe1 Qad8 The position was balanced in Gutman – Breutigam, Germany 2008.

9.b3 0-0 10.Qb2 (10.Qa3 b6? was pleasant for Black in Erkens – Jelic, e-mail 2001) 10...Be8 11.Qa3?! (White would do better to play 11.Qc3 Qg4, transposing to variation E of Chapter 14) 11...Qe4 12.Qb5 Qg4 13.Qbd4 Wb6 14.e3



Now in Tillmann – Hummel, Internet (blitz) 2004, Black should have continued 14...Qxd4N 15.Qxd4 Qxf3 16.Qxf3 Qxd4 17.exd4 Rac8 when White faces an unpleasant defence.

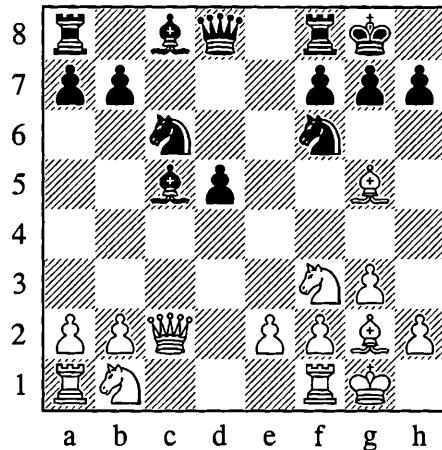
9.Qg5

This has been the most popular move, but it will almost always transpose to one of the lines considered elsewhere.

9...0-0 10.Wc2

This is the particular move order

recommended by Kosten. Compared with the immediate 9... $\mathbb{W}c2$ it reduces Black's options in one type of position, but takes away White's strongest plan in another. By far the most popular continuation has been 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d4 transposing to Chapters 11 to 13



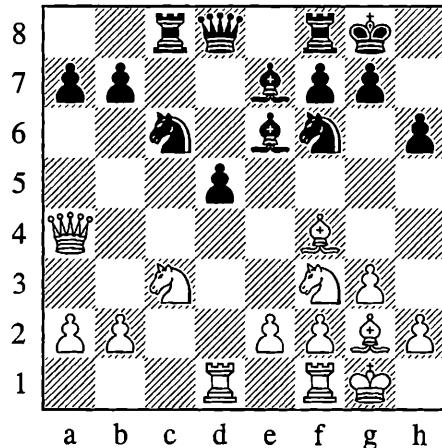
10... $\mathbb{Q}e7!?$

This highlights the minor downside of Kosten's move order: Black obtains a slightly improved version of the analogous line beginning with 9... $\mathbb{W}c2$.

Black can of course play 10... $\mathbb{B}b6$ when 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ reaches line B31 below.

11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ h6 12. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}a4$

So far we have been following Kosten's analysis, but now it is time to depart.



14... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

The bishop no longer has to guard against the pin on the f6-knight, so it returns to

an active spot where it controls the key d4-square.

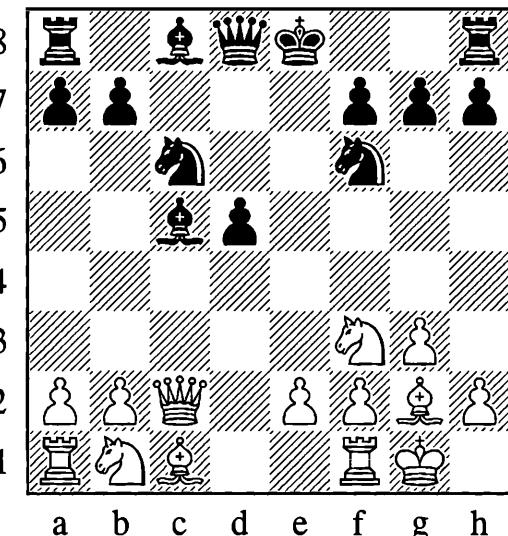
15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

15. $\mathbb{W}b5$ b6!? 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ gives Black a healthy hanging pawn position, with ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ coming next.

15... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black had a pleasant position in Kuhn – Lannaioli, e-mail 2004.

B31) 9. $\mathbb{W}c2$



White's plan from this point will depend on where the bishop retreats. If it drops back to b6 then White's bishop will go to g5, and his knight to c3 and a4. If the bishop retreats to e7, then centralizing with $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is the plan. Along the way White will usually play $\mathbb{Q}c3$, taking advantage of the fact that ...d4 can now be met by $\mathbb{B}d1$, unlike in Chapters 11-13.

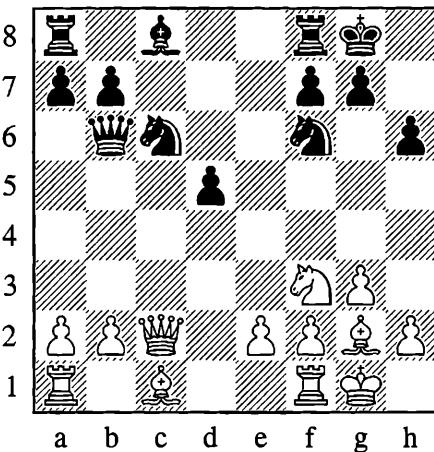
9... $\mathbb{B}b6!$

Having examined both options, we consider this to be the stronger. 9... $\mathbb{B}b6$ is well met by 10. $\mathbb{B}d1!$ 0–0 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (12. $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$ looks like a second promising line, as 12... $\mathbb{B}c8$ runs into 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xd5!)$ as recommended by Atalik. White has scored well from here and we were unable to find a path to equality, for instance 12... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 13.a3 and Black is slightly worse.

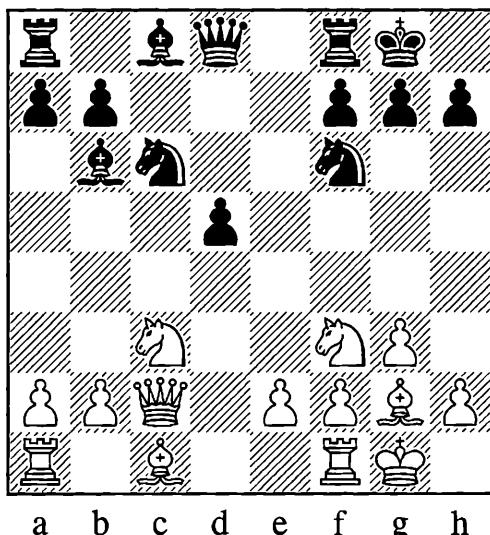
10.♕c3 0–0

10...d4 can be met by 11.♖d1, and 11.♕a4 is not bad either.

10...h6?! is an extra option which is not available to Black against the 9.♗g5 0–0 10.♘c2 move order recommended by Kosten. Play may continue: 11.♕a4 0–0 12.♗xb6 ♘xb6



13.♖d1 (There is also 13.b3 as in Lazarev – Petrosian, Lausanne 2005, and now after 13...♗e8N 14.♗b2 ♔e4 15.♖ad1 ♔f5 Black is doing fine.) 13...♗e8 14.h3 (14.♗e3? ♖xe3) Bewersdorff – Legky, Bad Zwesten 1997. At this point 14...♗d7N intending ...♗ac8 gives Black a decent enough position.

**11.♗g5 ♗e6 12.♕a4**

After 12.♖ad1 h6 13.♗f4 ♖c8 (Black can

also play 13...♗e7 14.♗a4 ♗g4 15.♗xb6 axb6 when his active pieces made up for his pawn weaknesses in Kwasnik – Dorn, corr. 1984) 14.♗a4 ♗e7 Black's excellent piece coordination gave him at least equal chances in Llanos – Blauert, Budapest 1999.

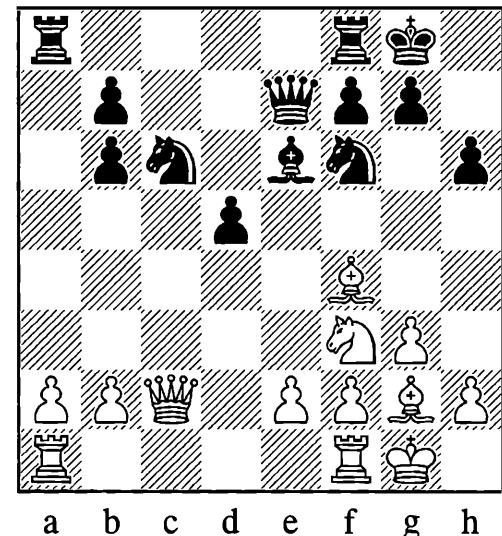
The text move gives White an edge according to Atalik, but we see no problems for Black.

12...h6

12...d4 13.♗xb6 axb6 is playable, but we prefer the main line.

13.♗xb6 axb6 14.♗f4

14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗b3 ♗a6 16.♗fd1 was seen in Kallai – Fogarasi, Balatonbereny 1986, and now 16...d4N 17.♗d3 ♗d8= looks logical.

14...♗e7**15.♗fd1**

Although the moves make absolutely no sense from this position, we cannot resist pointing out that 15.♗d1 ♗d8 16.♗d4 ♗d7 would transpose to the well-known game Tal – Keres, Yugoslavia 1959, which was won by Black in impressive style.

15...♗fc8 16.a3

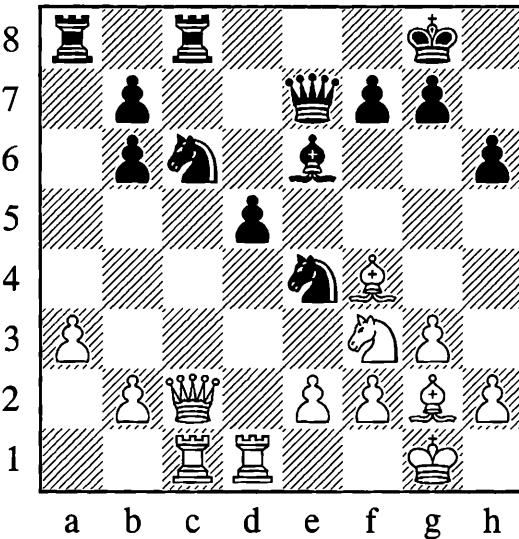
16. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $bxcc5$ is comfortable for Black.

It is also worth mentioning that 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ d4! 17. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19. $gxf4$ offers Black full compensation after 19... $\mathbb{W}f6$ or 19... $\mathbb{E}a5$.

The text move has occurred in three different games of Malaniuk, the foremost exponent of White's system. He won the first, drew the second and lost the third. We will follow the last of them for a brief few moves.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$

Malaniuk – Potkin, St Petersburg 2000.



17... $\mathbb{W}c5!$?N

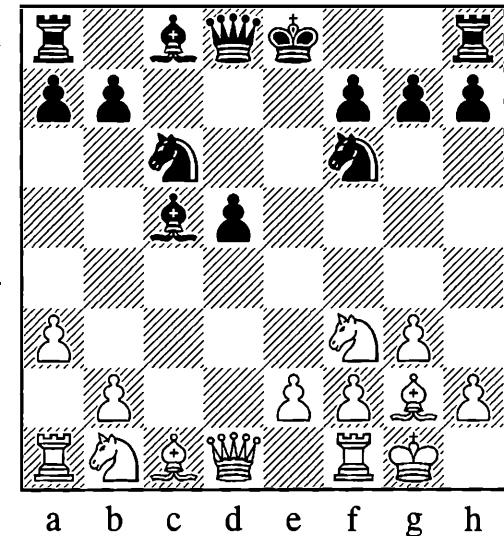
This seems simplest, although the game continuation of 17... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a1$ (21. $\mathbb{W}d3$?N is more testing, and 21... $\mathbb{W}e5$ looks like the right response.) 21...d4 resulted in an equal position.

17... $b5$?N also deserves consideration.

18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b5=$

Black's light-squared strategy gives him enough activity to maintain the balance.

B22) 9.a3



Less than a week before the book went to print, Andrew pointed out that we had not considered this little move. As we have said many times throughout the book, we have not attempted to analyse every legal move at White's disposal, so when we carried out our analysis for the present chapter we must have decided not to cover the text move in detail. It was only at a later stage that we came to understand that in the main line with the knight on c3, the variation 9. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 10. a3! was actually one of the most critical tests of Black's whole opening! (See line D in Chapter 9 for full details.)

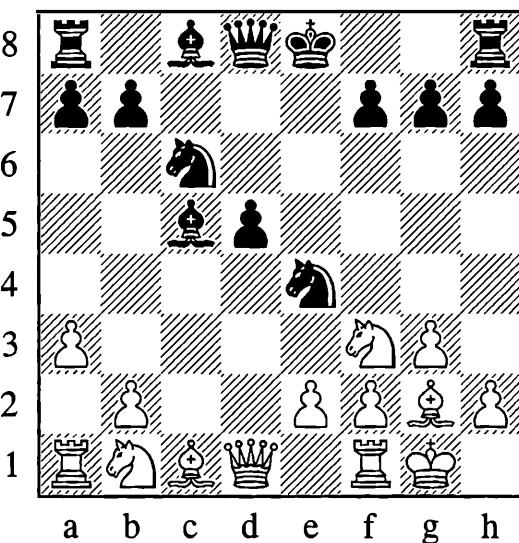
In light of what we now know about that line, it is obvious that 9.a3 in the present position should be taken seriously. Black must take particular care not to stumble into an unfavourable line with the knight coming to c3 in the near future.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$!

Just as in Chapter 9, this knight jump is the right reaction to a2-a3. We checked some other moves, but none of them appear sufficient to equalize.

To take one such example, 9...a6 is a somewhat logical move, but we found it unsatisfactory:

10.b4 (also 10.♗g5!? has yielded fantastic practical results for White) 10...♜a7 11.♗c3 (11.♗g5? is premature, since after 11...h6 12.♗xf6 ♜xf6 the d5-pawn is untouchable as the rook on a1 hangs) 11...h6 (11...0–0?! is met by 12.♗g5! when Black has a hard time dealing with the pin) 12.♗b2 0–0 13.♗c1 We have reached a similar type of position as was discussed in the 9.dxc5 ♜xc5 10.a3! line. Black does not have sufficient activity to offset his weaknesses, and his position is a bit unpleasant.



10.♗fd2!?

This move seems the most problematic for Black, although it has never been played thus far. Surprisingly the database contains a mere four games from this position, so we are creating our own theory as we go. Here are some other possibilities:

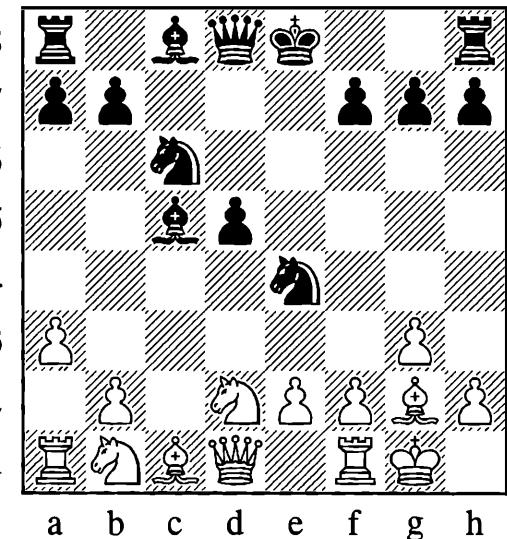
10.♗d3N 0–0 11.♗c3 ♜xc3 12.♗xc3 ♜e7! transposes to the 11.♗c2 line noted on page 139

So far 10.b4 is the only move to have been tested, but after 10...♜e7 11.♗b2 ♜f6 Black has no problems, for instance 12.♗xf6 ♜xf6 13.♗a2 0–0 14.♗c2 ♜d8 with a healthy position, Kruppa – Potkin, St Petersburg 2000.

10.♗c3! N ♜xc3 (Black can also consider 10...0–0?! transposing to page 138) 11.bxc3

0–0 appears harmless at first sight, but White's plan of attacking on the b- and d-files, utilizing the power of the bishop on g2, is far from stupid. 12.♗d4 is a natural continuation, and here we would suggest changing the structure with 12...♜xd4!?. 13.cxd4 ♜f5. From here Black can aim to exchange the light-squared bishops, and overall his pieces are in harmony and his position is promising.

We could go on and on of course, but the overall impression is that Black's chances are fine in all variations. Let us return to the main line, and the move we consider the most troublesome for Black.



10...f5!

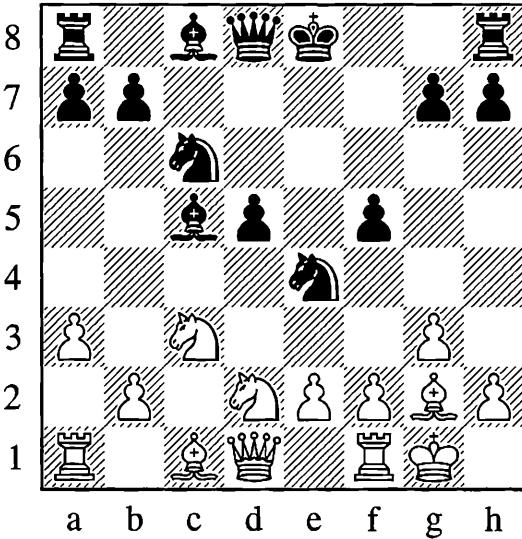
This 'coffeehouse' move is the only satisfactory continuation! White's last move forfeited his control over the central dark squares, which justifies Black's radical method of supporting his knight. We will spare you the full rundown of the alternatives, but trust us – Black is worse everywhere.

11.♗c3

11.♗xe4 dxe4 12.♗xd8† ♜xd8 is equal, and 11.♗b3 ♜b6 12.♗c3 ♜e6 transposes to the main line below.

11.♗f3!? is a sensible idea, but the loss of time

enables Black to obtain a satisfactory game:
 11...0–0 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (12.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ f4?)
 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ h6 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ g5?)
 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ d4 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d5=$



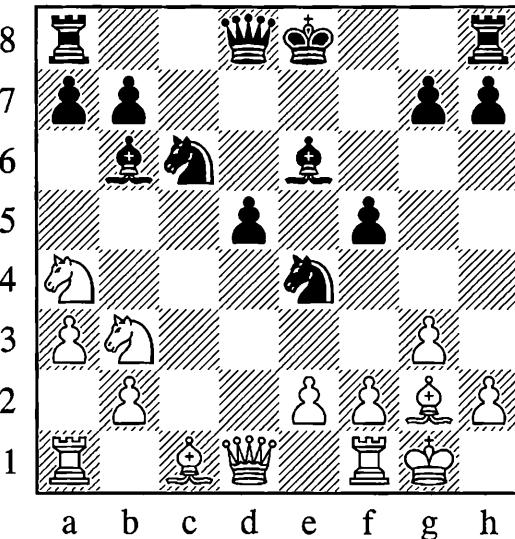
11... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$?! is less logical, as Black loses control over the central dark squares.

13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

There is no better way for White to play, for instance 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5$?! d4! and White fails to arrange the desired blockade on d4.

White could try 13.e3 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ with the idea of blockading on d4, but after 14... $\mathbb{W}f6$ Black has a healthy position with excellent development.



13... $\mathbb{Q}d4$!

This great positional idea enables Black to solve his problems with ease. The idea is to prevent any blockade on d4 while preparing to exchange bishops with ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

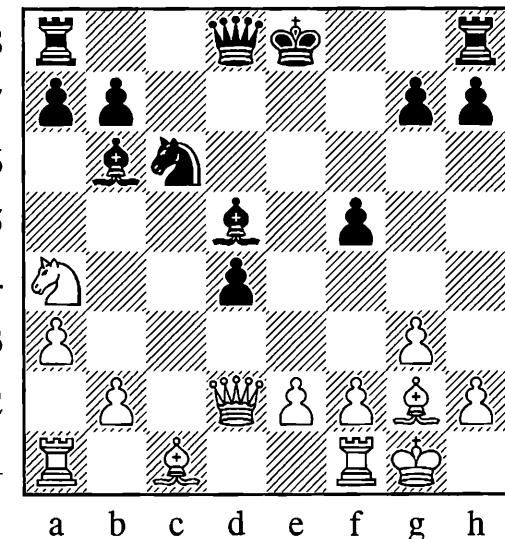
We also analysed 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 0–0–0 19. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}he8$ when Black's lead in development is worth at least as much as White's bishop pair.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xd2$

15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 0–0 gives Black no particular problems.

15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

15...0–0 16. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ † $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ h6 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8=$ is another illustrative line demonstrating that Black is fine.

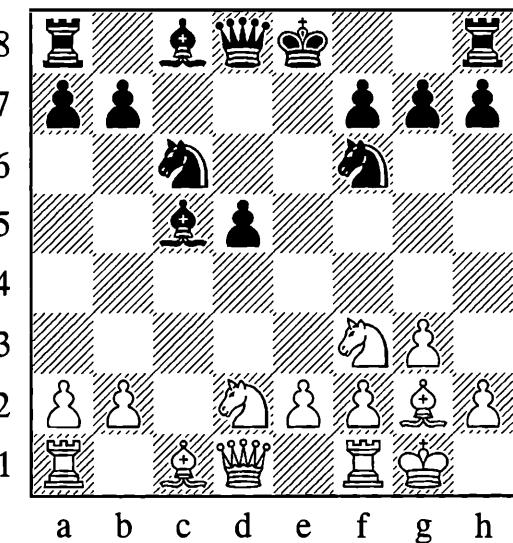


16. $\mathbb{W}g5$!?

This is the computer's first choice, but Black has no reason to fear the endgame.

16... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ h6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

Black has comfortable equality.

B33) 9.♗bd2

The knight plans to settle on the blockading square d4, after having molested the enemy bishop from b3. Historically minded readers may be interested to know that this move was first played by Lasker in 1914, against none other than Dr Tarrasch himself.

9...0–0

The stem game continued 9...d4 10.♗b3 ♕b6 11.♕d3 ♔e6 12.♗d1 ♕xb3 13.♕xb3 with an edge to White, who eventually went on to win in Lasker – Tarrasch, St Petersburg 1914.

9...h6!?

Preventing ♕g5 is another decent solution.

10.♗b3 ♕b6

Now White has a few different ideas.

11.♕d3?!N

Exchanging the dark-squared bishops is a natural yet harmless plan.

11.♗bd4 0–0 12.b3 ♕e8 13.♗b2 ♕e4 14.♕c1 ♕d7 15.e3 ♕c8 16.♕d3 ♗b4 17.♕b1 ♕xc1 18.♕xc1 ♕e7= Wilde – Arnold, Germany 1994.

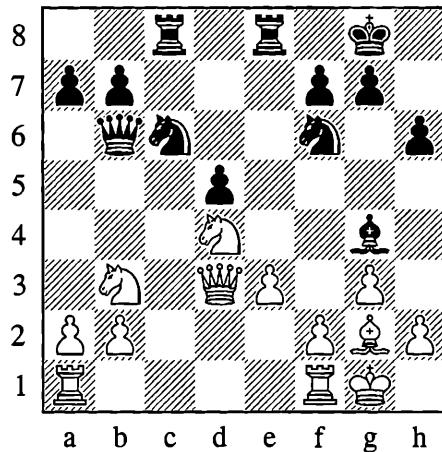
11.♗f4 is a sensible move. In both games so far Black has responded with 11...♕e7, but after 12.a4!? White had chances to develop some pressure in Bilo – Bücker, Detmold 1983. Instead Black should proceed with

the more flexible 11...0–0N, as 12.♗e5 ♕e8 13.♗xc6 bxc6 is nothing for him to worry about.

11...0–0 12.♗e3 ♕xe3 13.♕xe3 ♕e8 14.♕d3 ♕b6

Black has a safe and sound position. If we add a couple of natural moves on both sides, we arrive at a most unlikely near-transposition.

15.e3 ♕g4 16.♗fd4 ♕ac8



We have reached an almost identical position to that which occurred in the games Hübner – Mueller, Altenkirchen 1999, and Haba – Khenkin, Germany 2003, both of which began with the Slav Defence! In those games Black had comfortable equality and here he benefits from the useful extra tempo ...h7-h6, so he is in excellent shape. (In case the reader is curious, the Slav move order is 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 e6 4.♗bd2 ♗f6 5.g3 c5 6.♗g2 ♗c6 7.0–0 ♕e7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.♗b3 ♕b6 11.♕d3 0–0 12.♗e3 ♕xe3 13.♕xe3 ♕e8 14.♕d3 ♕b6 15.e3 ♕g4 16.♗fd4 ♕ac8.)

10.♗b3

Certainly the most natural, although White has occasionally deviated.

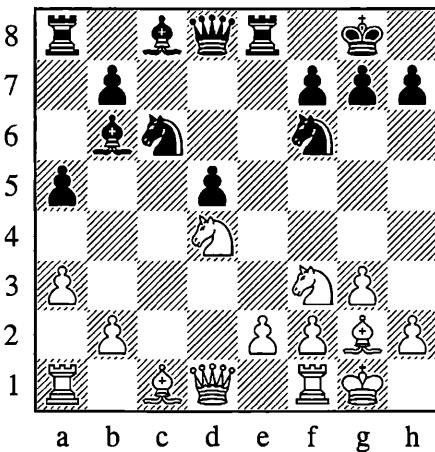
10.♗e1 is rather slow. Here is one example: 10...♕e8 11.♗d3 ♕b6 12.♗f4 ♕f5 13.h3 ♗d4 14.♗f3 ♕c2 15.♕e1 ♗f5 16.♗h2 ♗e4 17.g4 ♕e7 18.♗d2 ♕a5 19.f3 ♗f6 20.♗h1 g5+ Dieks – Nunn, Amsterdam 1975.

10.a3

This move can be met in a few different ways, but we like the idea of preventing the queenside expansion with:

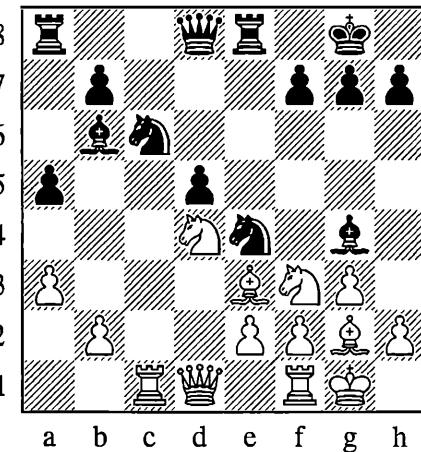
10...a5

Note that this move works best when the white knight has already gone to d2, as it is now three moves away from the outpost on b5.

11. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{E}f4$

13.b3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ is similar to the main line below; the moves a2-a3 and ...a7-a5 do not have much impact on the evaluation.

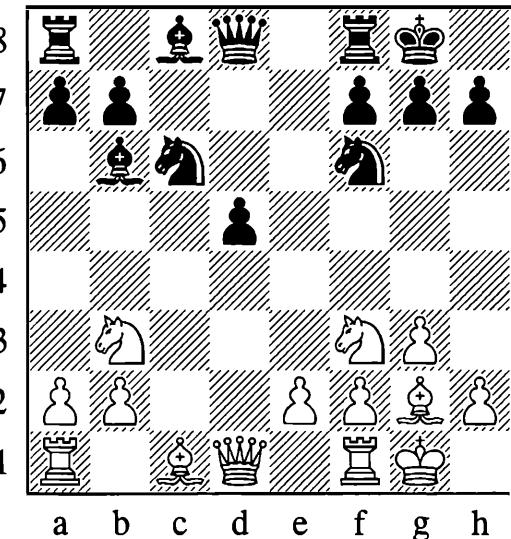
13. $\mathbb{E}e3$ rather invites 13... $\mathbb{E}xe3?$ (Black can of course play more solidly with 13...a4 14. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d3$ h6 16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}e4=$ as in Platonov – Dementiev, Riga 1970.) 14.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ with promising compensation for Black, Raetsky – Tukmakov, Biel 1994.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. $\mathbb{E}c1$ 15... $\mathbb{E}c8!N$

The soundest move. 15... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17.fxe3 bxc6 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ led to an eventual success for Black in Wu Wenjin – Xiu, Lishui 2009, but at this point 20. $\mathbb{W}d2!N$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ff1$ would have given White the better chances.

16. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 17. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is fine for Black.17... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5!?\infty$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c2$ is met by $\mathbb{E}cd8$.19... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$
22. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}c3=$

The small tactical skirmish has petered out to equality.

10... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$

Several alternatives have been tried here. White's set-up is not at all threatening and we see little value in dissecting every move, so we will just mention a couple of other ideas:

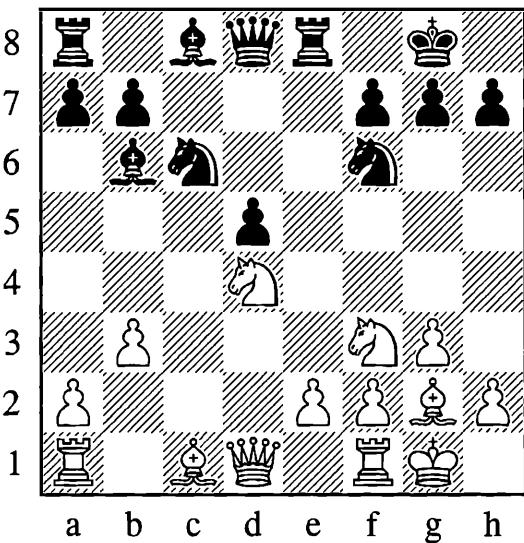
11. $\mathbb{W}d3$ should be met by 11... $\mathbb{E}e8$ preventing $\mathbb{E}e3$.11. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14.g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$
15. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ h5 \rightarrow Harikrishna – Ki. Georgiev, Bled 2002.

11...♝e8 12.b3

Again, here are just a couple of alternative lines:

12.♗e3 is well met by 12...♝xe3! 13.fxe3 ♜g4 with full compensation.

12.♘xc6?! bxc6 improves Black's structure, and after 13.♗c2 ♜a6! he has the initiative.

**12...♞xd4!?**

Slightly unusual, but not bad. The more typical continuations would be 12...♞e4 and 12...♜g4, both of which promise Black at least equal chances.

13.♞xd4 ♜g4

13...♞xd4?! 14.♗xd4 ♜xe2 15.♗g5 gives White some initiative.

14.♗e1 ♜e4 15.♗b2 ♜g5 16.♗d3 h5!?

Black had interesting counterplay and eventually won in Bondarevsky – Keres, Parnu 1951.

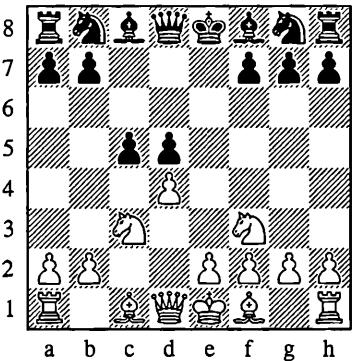
Conclusion

There are plenty of ways in which White may try to deviate from the classical set-up involving a knight on c3. We began by considering set-ups without cxd5, with particular focus on the plan recommended by Mihail Marin in *Grandmaster Repertoire 5 – The English Opening, Volume 3*. Fortunately Black has some key improvements which render his opponent's set-up harmless.

More interesting is the traditional 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g3, followed by normal development on the kingside. Here Black must react precisely while constantly keeping in mind the possibility of his opponent transposing to standard positions with ♘c3 at any moment. All three branches of variation B3 present their own challenges, but in each case our analysis shows that Black can maintain a healthy position with active prospects.

Chapter 16

Early Deviations



Various 6th Moves

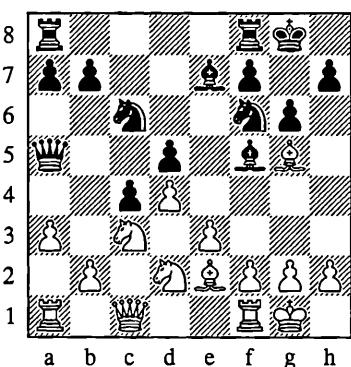
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3

5...♘c6

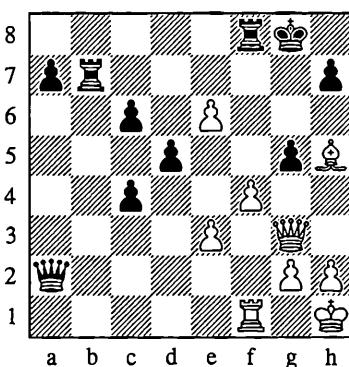
A) 6.e3	256
A1) 6...c4!?	256
A2) 6...♗f6	258
A21) 7.♔b5	258
A22) 7.♔e2	260
B) 6.♗f4!?	262
C) 6.♗g5 ♔e7 7.♔xe7 ♘gxe7	264
C1) 8.e3	265
C2) 8.dxc5	266
C21) 8...♕a5	266
C22) 8...d4	267

B) note to 9.0–0



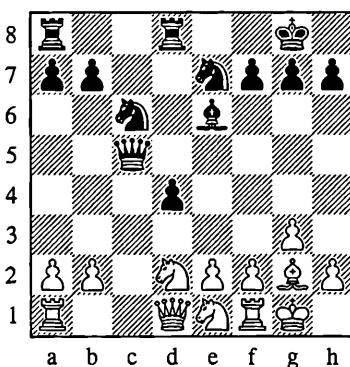
14...♝fd8!N

B) after 25.♔xf1



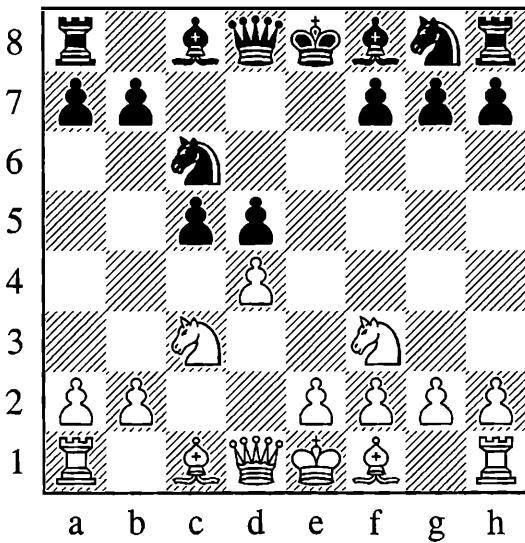
25...♝h8!N

C22) after 14.♘e1



14...♛b6N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
5.♘f3 ♘c6

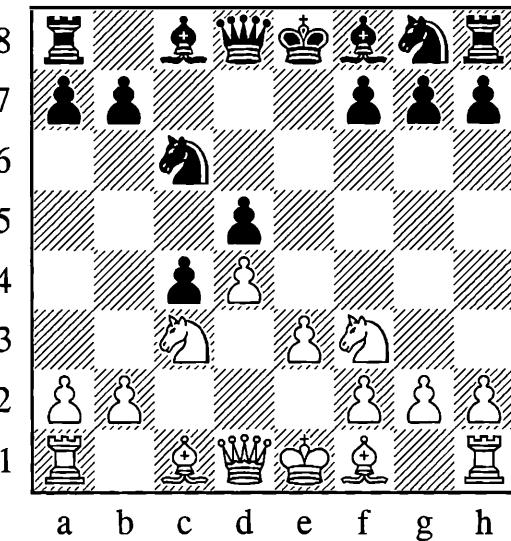


In this chapter we will consider three quite respectable sidelines: A) 6.e3, B) 6.♗f4?!? and C) 6.♗g5.

A) 6.e3

This move looks a bit old-fashioned, and blocking in the bishop is hardly the most inspiring way to conduct the opening. Compared with the more critical lines Black has more choices available, and we will illustrate this by analysing A1) 6...c4?!? before moving on to the more classical A2) 6...♗f6.

A1) 6...c4?!?

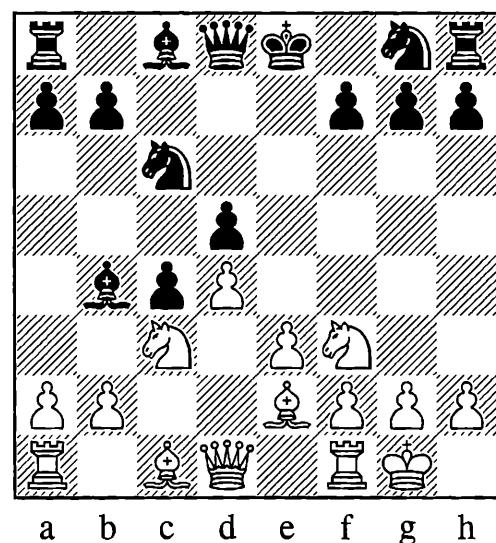


This move is rare but we have not found anything wrong with it. On the contrary, it seems to be an excellent practical choice which avoids excessive amounts of theory while establishing a space advantage and fine long-term prospects on the queenside.

7.♗e2

7.b3 was played in Ellison – Wood, York 1959, and a few other games. Surprisingly no one has come up with the strongest reply: 7...b5!N Now the thematic 8.a4? is a serious mistake due to 8...♗b4! (8...b4 is less clear due to 9.♘xd5! ♗xd5 10.♗xc4∞) 9.♗d2 ♗xc3 10.♗xc3 b4 and White is already in a mess.

7...♗b4 8.0–0

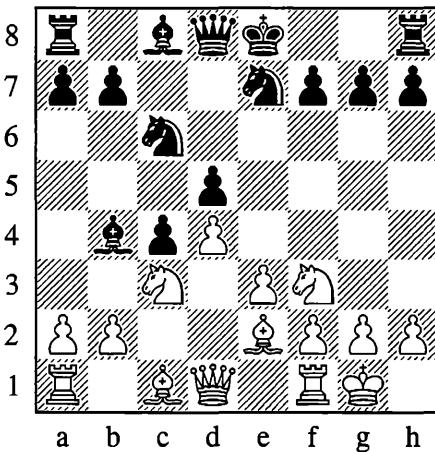


8...♗f6!

It is important to control the e4-square. This point can be illustrated by a brief look at the history of this structure.

8...♗ge7 brings about what is known as the Swedish System. In the 1936 Olympiad at Folkestone the 'Three Swedish Musketeers' of Stahlberg, Stoltz and Lundin introduced a dangerous weapon against the "Rubinstein-Schlechter Variation" (6.g3) by playing ...c4, ...♗b4 and ...♗ge7. They scored well with it and the system became popular, but later

White found ways to counter it by going for a quick e4 break. Funnily enough this break seems to be more effective when White has played e3 rather than g3. The following classic game is a case in point:



9.e4! dx_e4 (perhaps Black should have considered 9...0–0!?) 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 0–0 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}ef5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ h6 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 25. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}f1$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 1–0 Botvinnik – Stahlberg, Moscow 1935.

The above gives a good indication as to why we advocate putting the knight on f6 instead of e7 in this particular variation. Still, there is another intriguing option in 8... $\mathbb{Q}f5\?N$ to take control over e4 before playing ... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$, which is very much in the spirit of the Swedish System. Black's position is quite acceptable here, but we have chosen to concentrate on the text move which we prefer slightly.

9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

9.a3 is rather optimistic, and after 9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{W}b2$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}a5\?N$) 15.f3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\mp$ Black

had an excellent position in Tobella Torras – Santamaria Navarro, e-mail 2008.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 0–0 10.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is also decent enough for Black.

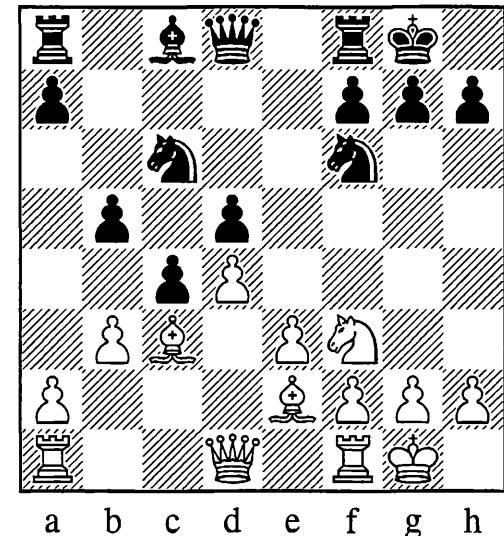
9...0–0

9... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ has been played, but after 10.b3 cxb3 11. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ we don't like Black's position.

10.b3

10. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4=$

10... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ b5



12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White has a couple of alternatives:

12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 13.bxc4 bxc4 14. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ was pleasant for Black in R. Mueller – Savchenko, Willingen 2004.

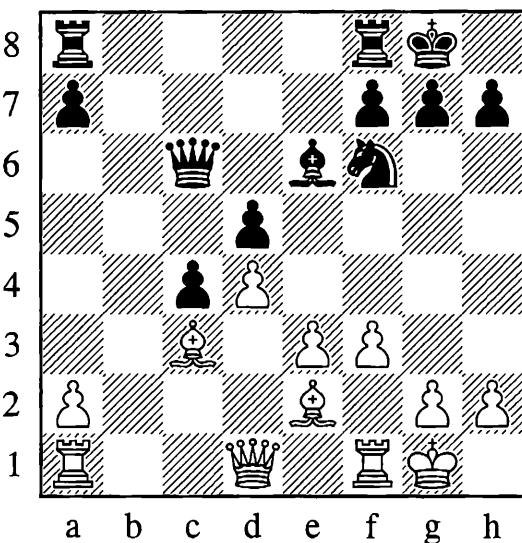
12.bxc4 bxc4 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ was seen in Jarvenpaa – Sarkilahti, Tampere 2007, and now 13... $\mathbb{W}c7\?N$ reaches the main line below.

12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13.bxc4

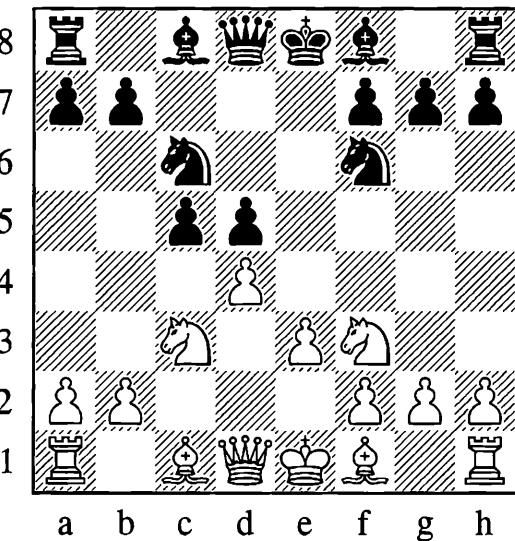
13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 14.a4 a6 15.axb5 axb5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ was balanced in Koolsbergen – Stilman, e-mail 2006.

13...bxc4

13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$? is also possible.

14.f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 

Black has a pleasant position, Do Ngoc My – Le Phu Nguyen, Can Tho 2001.

A2) 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 

Although 6...c4 seems absolutely fine for Black, it would seem strange not to consider the more traditional Tarrasch continuation as well, especially considering that the thematic IQP positions are closely related to other variations found elsewhere in the book.

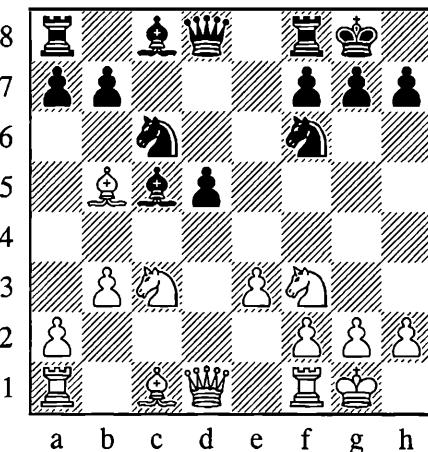
The present position is a mirror image of a

Panov Caro-Kann, with White having a full extra tempo. Just as in many other reversed openings, this benefits him to some degree, but not to the extent that he can claim an opening advantage. We will analyse A21) 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and A22) 7. $\mathbb{Q}e2$.

A21) 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $cxd4$

We consider the text move to be slightly more reliable than the usual main line, which can be summarized as follows:

7... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 8.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9.0–0 0–0 10.b3



10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

This natural move is a slight inaccuracy as it provokes exchanges that are in White's favour.

10...a6 seems best: 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ is similar to line B22 in Chapter 20, and is quite alright for Black) 11...bxc6 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ Black's bishops provide enough compensation for his queenside weaknesses, Wirthensohn – Fuchs, Germany 1997.

11. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ a6 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$!

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ transposes to the previous note.

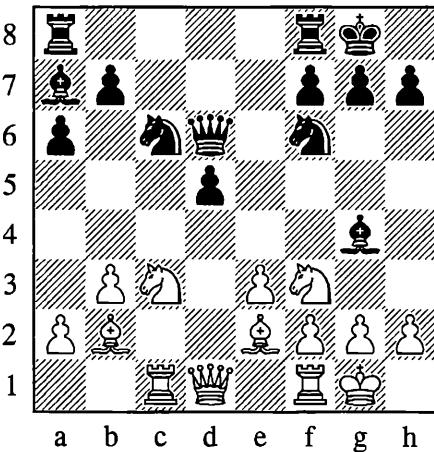
12... $\mathbb{Q}a7$

Otherwise $\mathbb{Q}a4$ will come with tempo, and $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ will become a serious idea.

13. $\mathbb{E}c1$

Now Black must consider the plan of $\mathbb{E}c2-d2$.
13... $\mathbb{W}d6$

13... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h4$!±



14.h3! ♖e6

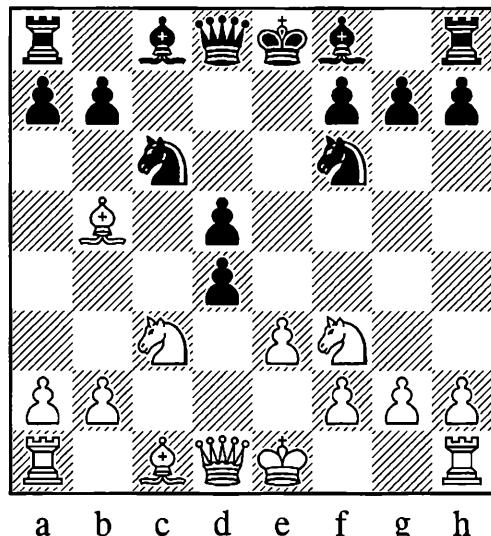
14...♗h5 15.♗h4!± shows why ...♗g4 was premature.

15.♗d3! ♗e5?!N

15...♝ad8 is met by 16.♗e2± with ♗ed4 to follow, Portisch – Ligterink, Wijk aan Zee 1985.

16.♗xe5 ♜xe5 17.♗e2 ♜g5

This position is assessed as equal by Rizzitano but after 18.♗f3! intending ♗e2 we prefer White.



8.♗xd4

Less dangerous is:

8.exd4

White's extra tempo is not worth much in this symmetrical structure.

8...♝d6 9.0–0 0–0 10.♗g5

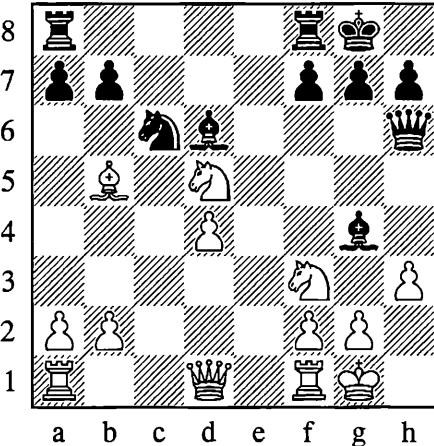
10.h3 h6=

10...♗g4!

Black is fine. One game continued:

11.♗xf6 ♜xf6 12.♗xd5 ♜h6 13.h3

Now in M. Mueller – Liedtke, Kassel 1999, Black missed an excellent opportunity:



13...♗xh3!N

The game continued 13...♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♗xd4 with equality.

14.gxh3 ♜g6† 15.♔h1 ♜f5 16.♗c3

16.♗e3 would leave the bishop on b5 hanging.

16...♗xh3† 17.♔g1 ♜ae8 18.♗e1

18.♗c4 ♜e6! 19.♗xe6 fxe6+–

18...♜xe1† 19.♗xe1

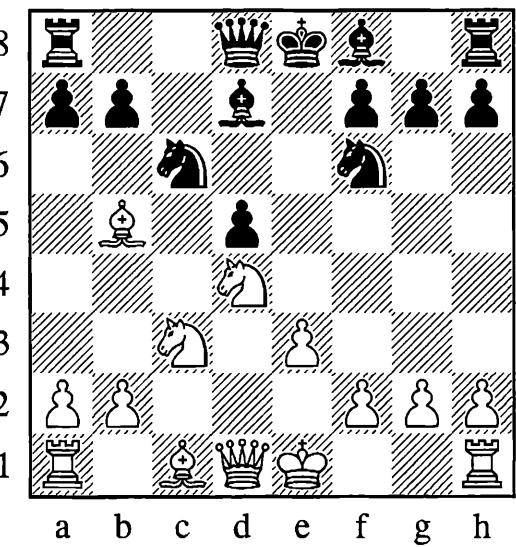
19.♗xe1 allows mate in four.

19...♗xf3+–

White is busted.

8...♗d7

8...♗b6?! 9.♗b3! is a bit awkward.



9.0-0

A couple of other moves should also be considered:

9. $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ was unimpressive in Korchnoi – Karpov, Skelleftea 1989, as of course Black could have repeated the position with 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. (In the game he went for the more ambitious 10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ but the game was drawn anyway after some complications.)

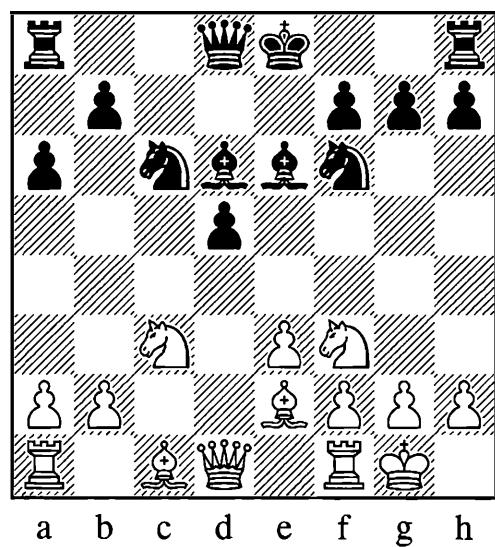
9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (9... $a6$ is also fine) 10. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11. 0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. e4 dxe4 (12... 0–0! N 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is also interesting) 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 0–0 15. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ was equal in Speelman – Larsen, Hastings 1987.

9... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

This position has been reached in quite a few games. The ensuing play will be quite characteristic of IQP positions, so rather than scrutinizing every possible move we will just follow one particularly noteworthy encounter.

10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Kramnik refrains from ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ which would only encourage exchanges. Generally speaking the bishop should only go to g4 in positions in which Black already has a queen and bishop lined up against h2, or some other tactical motif in his favour.

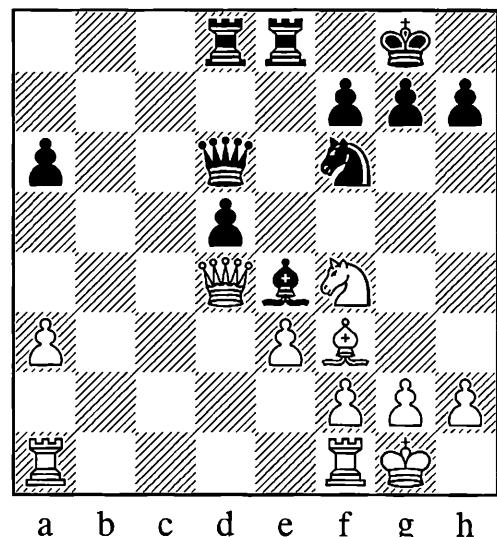
**12.a3**

12. b3 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is also fine) 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8=$

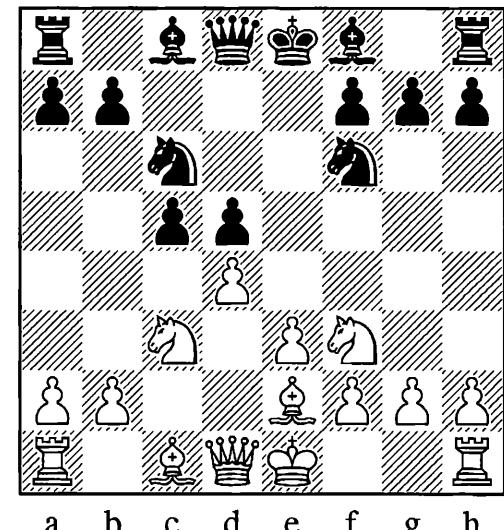
12... 0–0 13. b4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ c5

18... a5! N also deserves attention.

19. bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$



Black had no problems in Kasparov – Kramnik, Moscow (rapid) 1996, and he even managed to win after White became too ambitious.

A22) 7. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 

7...cxd4

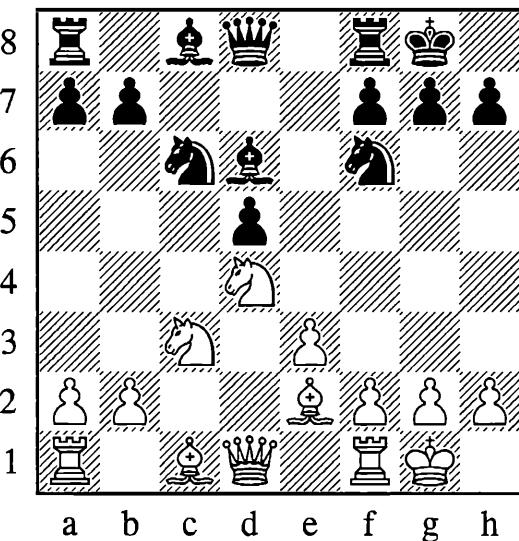
Black can just as easily play 7...a6, transposing to line B2 in Chapter 20. We decided to analyse a different continuation anyway, just to show that Black has nothing to fear here either.

8.♕xd4

Obviously 8.exd4 ♕d6 is nothing for White.

8...♕d6 9.0–0 0–0

This position has been reached in over 300 games. Since the whole line is hardly a critical test of our repertoire, we will keep the analysis brief and focus on one particularly inspiring game.

**10.♕xc6?!**

The immediate exchange is slightly inaccurate, for reasons that will become clear.

10.♕f3 ♕e5 11.♕ce2 ♕e4 is pleasant for Black.

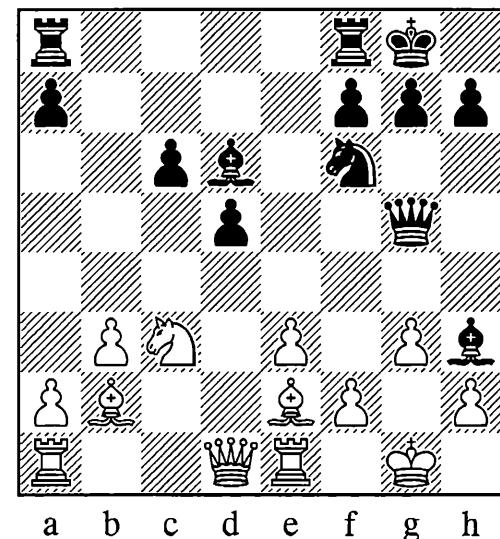
The most popular move has been 10.b3, when 10...♕e5 11.♕xc6 bxc6 12.♕b2 c5?! reaches a typical hanging pawn position with chances for both sides.

10...bxc6 11.b3 ♕e7!

11...♕e5 transposes to the previous note, but in the present position Black can play more ambitiously.

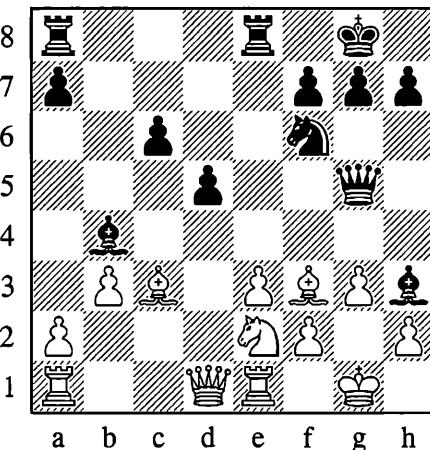
12.♕b2 ♕e5 13.g3 ♕h3 14.♕e1 ♕g5

Objectively White should still be okay here, but Black's position is easier to handle and this has been reflected in his perfect 3/3 score in practical play.

**15.♕c1**

Another possibility is:

15.♕f3 ♕fe8 16.♕e2 ♕b4 17.♕c3



This should be met by:

17...♕xc3N

Unfortunately 17...♕xe3?! is too good to be true: 18.♕xb4 ♕xf3 19.♕d4 ♕xf2 20.♕xf2 ♕e4† 21.♕xe4 dxe4 22.♕d2 ♕f6† 23.♕g1 ♕d8 24.♕c5 ♕d5 So far White has reacted correctly, and after the correct 25.b4 he should be winning. Instead he made a horrific blunder with 25.♕c1??, allowing 25...♕xc5 when Black soon won in Danner – Luther, Graz 2004.

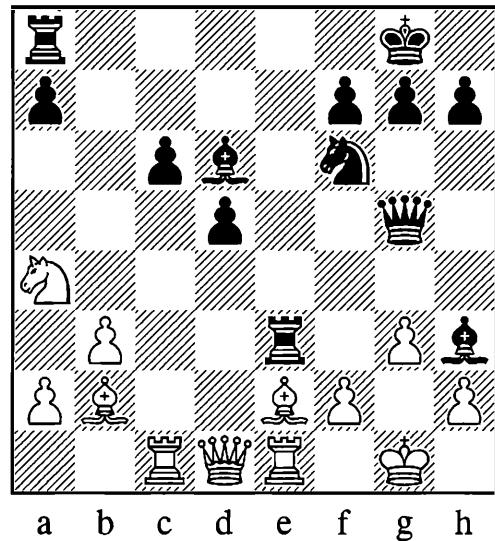
18.♕xc3

And now both 18...♝e6 and 18...♝g4 should be fine for Black.

15...♝fe8 16.♛a4

In the following game White failed to solve his problems and then blundered horribly:
 16.♕f3 ♜g4 17.♕b1 ♜e6 18.♕d2 ♜ae8
 19.♕f1 ♜e5 20.♕xe5 ♜xe5 21.♕e2 ♜f5†
 22.f4?? ♜e4 0–1 Dambrauskas – Dizdar,
 Kemer 2007.

16...♝xe3!



17.♕d3??

Losing immediately, as would 17.fxe3? ♜xg3+.

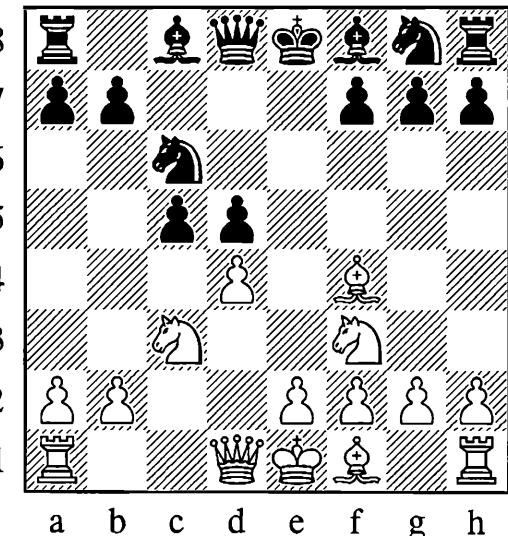
After the correct 17.♕xf6! gxf6 18.♜xc6! ♜b4!
 19.fxe3 ♜xe3† 20.♔h1 ♜xe1 21.♕g4 ♜e4†
 (21...♜xg4 22.♜xg4† ♜g5 23.♜xg5† fxg5
 24.♖d6=) 22.♕f3 ♜f5 Black's chances are higher, but the fight continues.

17...♜xg3! 18.hxg3 ♜xg3† 19.♔h2 ♜g4†
 20.♔xg3 ♜e3† 21.♔xh3 ♜g2† 22.♔h4
 ♜h2†

0–1

White resigned one move before mate in Alvarez Pedraza – Pozo Vera, Ourense 2009.

B) 6.♕f4!!



This interesting and quite challenging continuation was recommended by Flear in *Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit*.

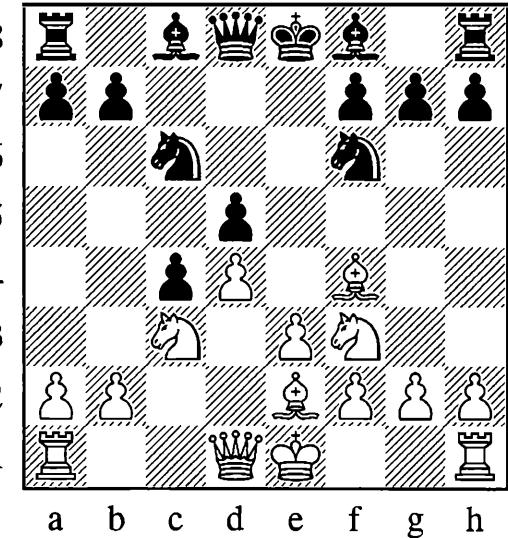
6...♞f6

The immediate 6...c4 is also possible, although in that case White might be tempted to go for 7.e4!?

7.e3 c4

7...cxsd4 8.♞xd4 ♜b4 9.♕b5 is the other main line, but the Swedish set-up works well.

8.♕e2



8...♝b4!

The best square for the bishop. From here it prepares to eliminate the knight on c3, allowing a ...♝e4 jump.

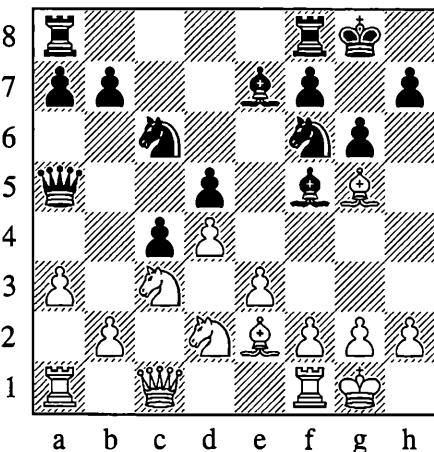
9.0–0

Natural, although a few other moves have been tried.

9.♝e5 ♝e4 10.♝xc6 bxc6 11.♔a4 ♜b6 12.♕c1 ♜b5 13.♕xb5 cxb5 14.♗f3 ♜b7 (there is also 14...♞e7N 15.♔e2 ♜xc3 16.bxc3 a5=) 15.a4 bxa4 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.0–0 ♜xc3 18.♕xc3 ♜a6 led to an equal position in V. Georgiev – Petrosian, Chicago 2009.

9.♗d2 ♜a5 10.♕c2 0–0 11.0–0 g6 12.♗g5 ♜f5 13.♕c1 ♜e7 14.a3

So far this is Harikrishna – I. Sokolov, Sarajevo 2009.

**14...♝fd8!N**

The game continuation of 14...♝fd8 15.♗f3 ♜e6 16.b3 cxb3 (16...b5? 17.♗xf6 ♜xf6 18.♗xd5) 17.♗xb3 ♜d8 18.♕b2 gave White a slight advantage.

The value of the text move will become apparent after Black's next.

15.b3 b5

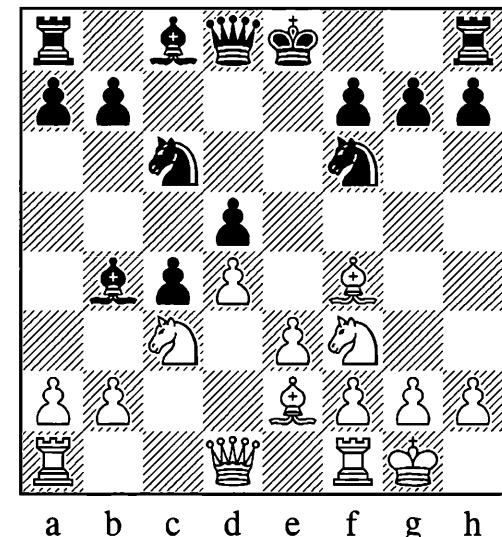
With his rook on d8 Black has no problem playing this standard move to maintain his queenside pawn wedge. His position is quite pleasant, and if White tries to become active in the centre he achieves nothing.

16.f3?!

Black is well placed to meet this plan.

16...♝d7! 17.♗h4 ♜e8 18.♗f2 ♜f8

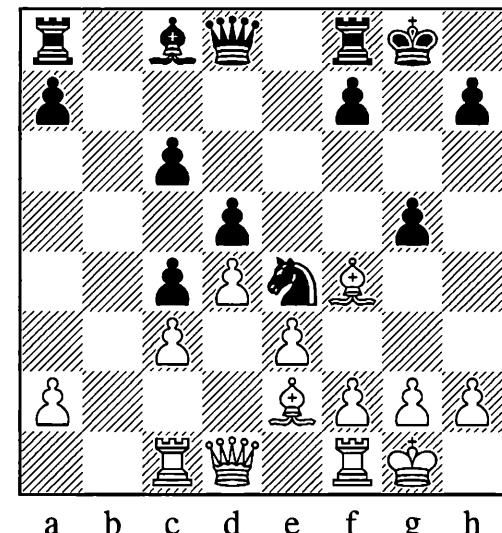
White is under pressure.

**9...0–0 10.♝e5**

This is Flear's main line. The English GM also mentions 10.♕c2 but after 10...♝e7!N intending ...♜f5 Black is doing fine. Possible continuations include 11.♔a4 ♜xc3 12.bxc3 ♜g6, or 11.b3 ♜f5 11.♗b5 ♜d7 11.♗e5 ♜f5 12.♕c1 h6 11.e4 ♜xc3, with good play for Black in either case.

10...♝xc3

10...♜f5 is another logical move.

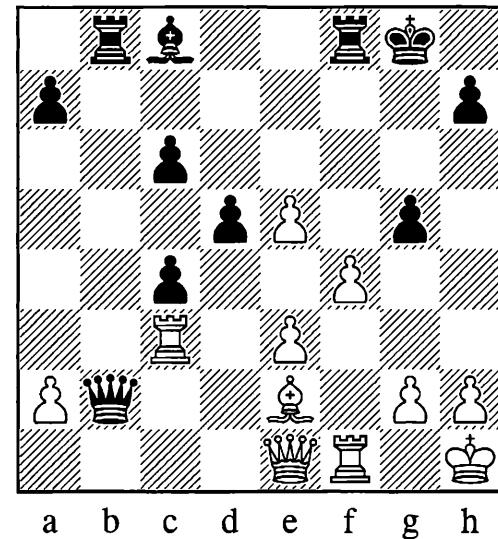
11.bxc3 ♜e4 12.♝xc6 bxc6 13.♕c1 g5!

14.♕e5 f6 15.f3!!

15.♗g3 ♕f5 is pleasant for Black, so White goes for complications.

15...♝xc3 16.♝xc3 fxe5 17.dxe5 ♜b6

17...♝b8 18.f4 ♕f5 is also slightly better for Black.

18.♛e1 ♜b8 19.♔h1 ♜b2 20.f4

Flear cuts off his analysis here, pointing out that White has the safer king. In a way he is right, and Black should certainly proceed with a degree of caution. Nevertheless, according to our analysis Black's position is objectively much better.

20...♝f5 21.♝c1 ♜xa2

Why not take another pawn?

22.♕h5

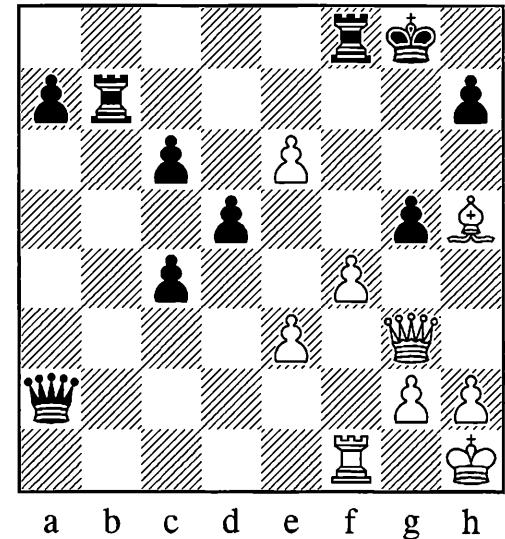
22.♝a1 ♜b2 23.♝xa7 c3 is bad for White.

22...♝b7!

An excellent defensive move.

23.♝g3 ♕d3 24.e6

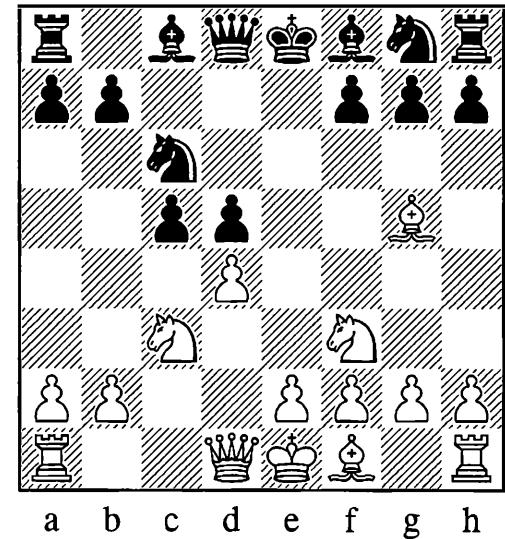
The computer recommends 24.♝g1, but if White has to resort to this...

24...♝xf1 25.♝xf1

So far we have been following Tkachiev – Yemelin, Sochi 2006.

25...♔h8!N

After this simple move Black is just winning.

C) 6.♗g5

This time White brings the bishop a square further and forces Black to decide how best to meet the attack on the queen.

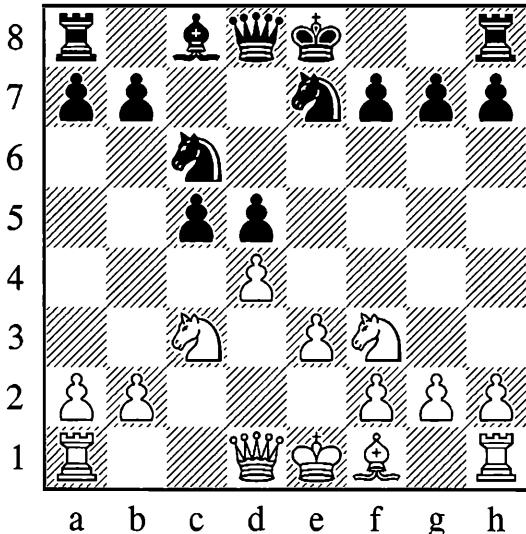
6...♝e7

The most reliable answer, accelerating Black's development.

7.♔xe7 ♛gxe7

Here White can choose between C1) 8.e3 and C2) 8.dxc5.

C1) 8.e3



8...c4!

This space-gaining move gives Black a comfortable game, with excellent long-term prospects on the queenside.

9.♕e2

A few other moves have also been tried.

9.b3 b5 10.bxc4 (10.♗c1 ♜b8 11.a4 ♜a5 and 10.♗c1 ♜b8 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.e4 0–0 are both pleasant for Black) 10...bxc4 11.♕e2 0–0 12.0–0 ♜a5 13.♗c1 ♜f5† Cvetkovic – Miljanic, Kladovo 1991.

9.e4 dxe4 (9...♕e6!N is interesting) 10.♗xe4 ♜f5 11.♗c3 This position was reached in Sabolik – Velchev, Sunny Beach 2006, and now after 11...♕e6!N 12.♕e2 ♜a5 13.0–0 ♜d8 Black has strong pressure against the d-pawn.

Finally the fianchetto development is not dangerous, especially with e2-e3 already having been played:

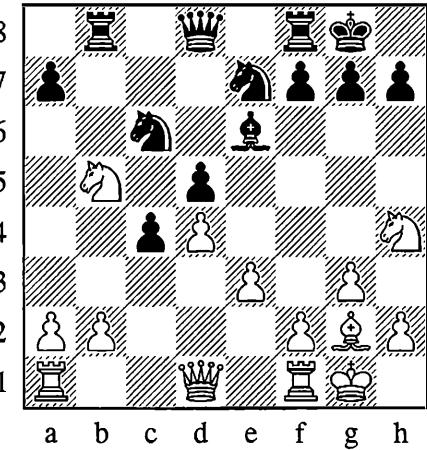
9.g3 ♜f5 10.♗h4

10.♗g2 ♜d3 11.♗e2 ♜a5† 12.♗d2 ♜xe2 13.♗xa5 ♜xf3 14.♗b5 ♜xg2†

10...♕e6 11.♗g2 0–0 12.0–0 b5!?

The preliminary 12...♝b8 was also quite playable of course.

13.♗xb5 ♜b8

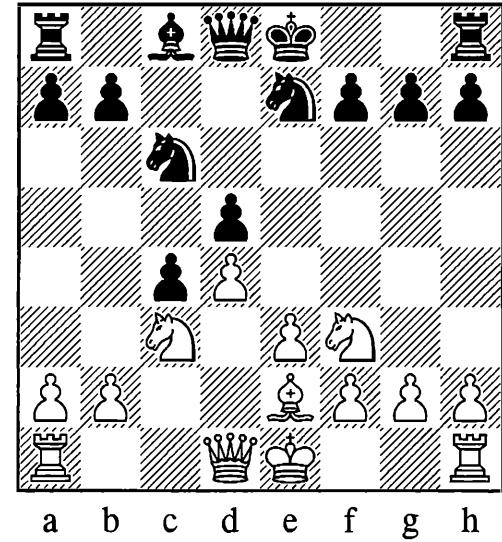


14.♗c3

Perhaps White should have considered 14.♗a4!? when 14...♝a5 15.♗xa5 ♜xa5 16.♗c3 ♜xb2 17.♗fb1 ♜fb8 18.♗xb2 ♜xb2 19.e4 dxe4 20.♗xe4 results in equality.

14...♜xb2 15.♗b1 ♜xb1 16.♗xb1 ♜a5†

Kratochvil – Mindegua Guruceaga, Brno 2005.



9...0–0

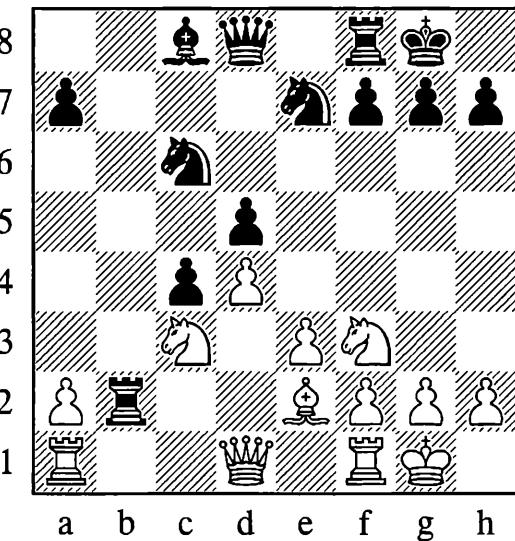
9...♝b8 is also fine, for instance 10.0–0 b5 11.♗e5 0–0 12.♗f3 ♜xe5 13.dxe5 ♜e6 14.a3 a5 15.♗d2 b4 16.axb4 axb4 17.♗e2 ♜c7† Gomez Esteban – Narciso Dublan, Burgos 2003.

10.0–0 b5!?

This pseudo-sacrifice offers Black good chances, and was played by one of the authors just weeks before the book went to print.

11.♘xb5!?

11.♘e5 looks better. 11...♝xe5 12.dxe5 occurred in Sveshnikov – Nunn, Hastings 1977, and here an interesting idea is 12...a6!N to prevent any possibility of a knight jump to b5. Play might continue 13.♗d2 (or 13.a3 ♜e6) 13...b4 14.♘d1 a5 and Black's position is already slightly easier.

11...♝b8 12.♘c3 ♜xb2**13.♘a4N**

Two other recent games continued 13.♘e5 ♜a5 14.♘xc6 ♘xc6! Buhmann – Carlstedt, Deizisau 2010, and 13.♗c1 ♜b4 14.♗d1 ♜f5! Milov – Carlstedt, Odense 2011. The German FM ‘only’ drew with the first grandmaster, but he beat the second.

13...♝b4 14.♘c5 h6

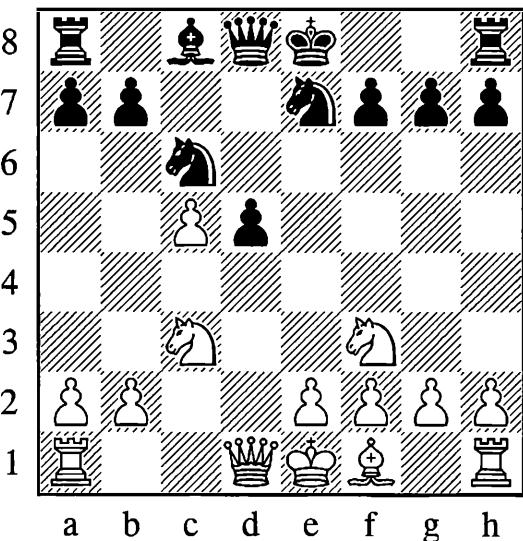
14...♞f5 15.♘h4! is irritating, and Black has time to make an escape square.

15.h3!?

Too timid, although White's position was worse anyway. I was expecting 15.e4 when 15...♝g4 secures a slight edge.

15...♞f5 16.♗c1 ♜a5

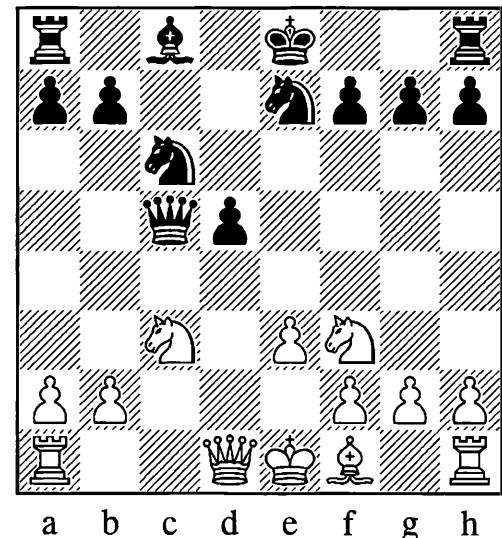
Black had a clear advantage and went on to win in Rewitz – Aagaard, Denmark 2011.

C2) 8.dxc5

Now Black can choose between the solid C21) 8...♜a5 and the more dynamic C22) 8...d4.

C21) 8...♜a5 9.e3

9.g3 0–0 10.♗g2 ♜xc5 11.0–0 ♜d8 was harmless for Black in Hopf – Ranson, e-mail 1999.

9...♜xc5

An almost identical position can be reached via the following move order, featured in Chapter 19: 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.♗xe7 ♗xe7 7.dxc5 0–0 8.e3 ♕a5† 9.♗c3 ♕xc5 (see page 318). The two lines will almost certainly transpose on the very next move, as Black has no more useful moves available than ...0–0 and ...♗bc6 respectively.

10.♗e2

10.♗c1 0–0 does not change much.

10...0–0 11.0–0

White has a nominal advantage thanks to the IQP, but Black's position is harmonious enough and he should be able to stay out of trouble.

11...♗e6

The bishop comes to a modest square in order to avoid too many exchanges.

11...♗g4 12.♗d4 ♗xe2 13.♗cxe2 ♕b6 eventually led to a draw in Polgar – Spassky, Monte Carlo 1994, but Black's position is slightly unpleasant and he has no real compensation for the IQP.

11...♗d8!? is possible, with the idea of forcing through ...d4. The resulting simplified positions should be tenable for Black, but still it is not ideal to give the opponent multiple routes to a slight edge.

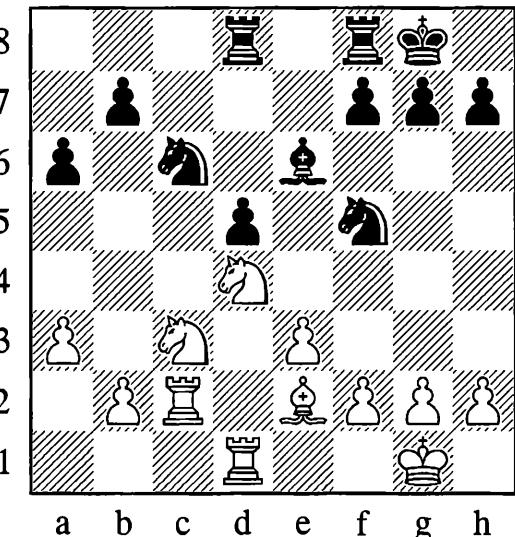
12.♗c1 ♕b4 13.♗d2 ♕ad8 14.♗fd1 a6 15.a3

15.♗d4 ♗xd4 16.♗xd4 ♕xd4 17.exd4 ♘c8 gave White no more than a small symbolic edge in Markos – Akopian, Litohoto 1999.

15...♕b3 16.♗c2 ♕xc2 17.♗xc2 ♘f5

Now ...d4 is quite a powerful threat which would release the potential in Black's position, so White's next move is more or less forced.

18.♗d4



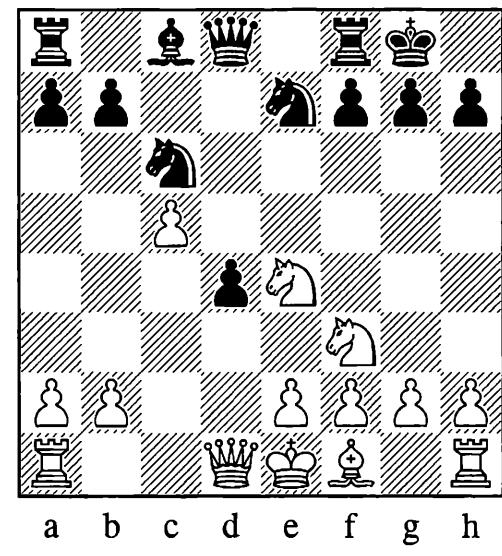
In this position a draw was agreed in Murugan – Magomedov, Dubai 1996, as the soon-to-be symmetrical pawn structure promises White no advantage.

C22) 8...d4

This is a bit more enterprising than 8...♕a5. Instead of playing for equality in a slightly worse and relatively dull position, Black offers a (usually temporary) gambit and forces his opponent to make some tough decisions.

9.♗e4 0–0

White has tried several plans from here, but Black has promising compensation everywhere and in most variations he regains his pawn within a few moves.



10.g3

The most popular. Here is a summary of the alternatives.

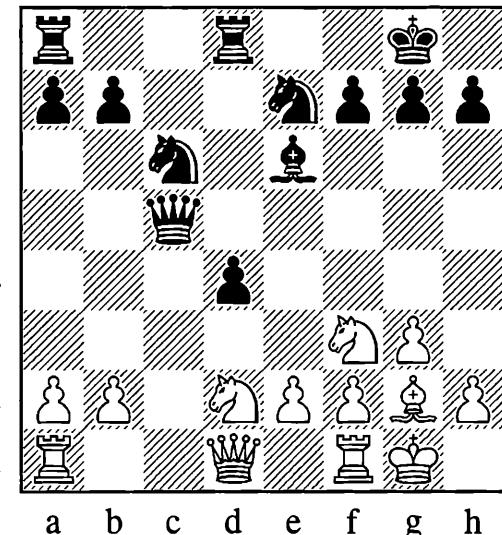
10.♗d2 ♗d5 11.♗g3 (11.♗d6 ♗xc5 12.♗xc8 ♗axc8† Thorbergssø – Baumbach, Bucharest 1962) 11...♗xc5 12.♗c1 ♗d5 (12...♗b6!?) 13.e4 dxe3 14.♗xe3 W. Gibson – H. Atkins, Oxford 1910, and now the simplest route to a big advantage would have been 14...♗xa2N.

10.♗ed2 ♗d5 11.♗b3 ♗d8 12.g3 a5 13.♗c1 ♗xc5 14.♗d3 ♗b5 15.♗g2 ♕f5 with comfortable equality for Black, Lputian – Xu Jun, Beijing 1991.

10.♗fd2 ♕e6 11.a3 a5 (11...f5!? 12.♗g5 ♕d5=) 12.♗c2 (12.e3?! dxe3 13.fxe3 ♗f5† Forgacs – Perlis, Ostend 1907) 12...♗d5= Marshall – Leonhardt, Hamburg 1910.

10.a3 ♗d5 11.♗fd2 ♕f5 12.♗d6 (12.♗c2 ♕g6 13.♗c1 ♕ae8=) 12...♗xc5 13.♗xf5 (13.♗xb7 ♗b6 14.♗b3 ♗c7†) 13...♗xf5 14.♗c1 ♗a5 White's opening had been an abject failure in Fauland Borek – Zagema, Leeuwarden 1993.

**10...♗d5 11.♗ed2 ♗xc5 12.♗g2 ♕e6
13.0–0 ♗fd8**

**14.♗e1**

Instead 14.♗e4 was J. Moller – Loman, Stockholm 1906, and now after 14...♗b6N 15.♗d2 h6 Black is at least equal.

The text move was played in Muffang – Enevoldsen, Warsaw 1935, and now the simplest continuation would have been:

14...♗b6N 15.♗d3 ♗b4!

Eliminating the powerful knight. Black is fine.

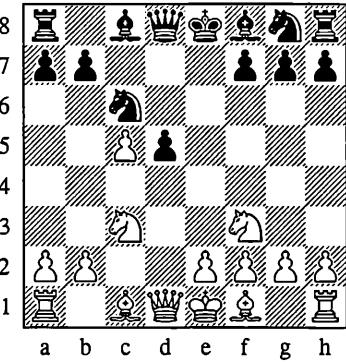
Conclusion

The three variations examined here all present their own challenges. A) 6.e3 is not too threatening, and A1) 6...c4! is an ambitious reply which gives Black good chances, not only of equalizing but also of taking over the initiative later in the game. The more traditional A2) 6...♗f6 is also fine.

B) 6.♗f4!? is a slightly tricky option which should not be underestimated. The resulting positions are complex but theoretically quite alright for Black, and well-prepared players should have nothing to fear.

Finally, C) 6.♗g5 ♕e7 7.♗xe7 ♗gxe7 holds no significant dangers for Black. C1) 8.e3 c4! gives him a pleasant position, so C2) 8.dxc5 is the only critical line. C21) 8...♗a5 is solid, and even if the reader intends to play the alternative, he should still learn this line as it might also arise from the more order seen in variation C of Chapter 19. However, if the reader encounters the move order of the present chapter, he may prefer C22) 8...d4 which seems theoretically fine but also gives White more chances to go wrong.

Chapter 11



Early Deviations

6.dxc5! – Introduction and 9.♗d2

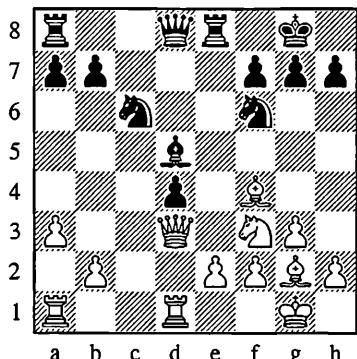
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.dxc5!

6...d4

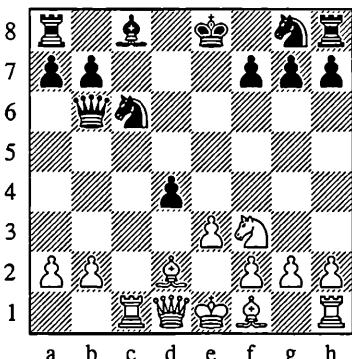
A) 7.♘e4	270
B) 7.♘a4! ♕xc5 8.♘xc5 ♖a5† 9.♗d2 ♖xc5	273
B1) 10.e3	274
B2) 10.♖c1! ♖b6 11.e3! ♘f6!	276
B21) 12.♖a4	277
B22) 12.♗c4	281

A) after 16.♖fd1



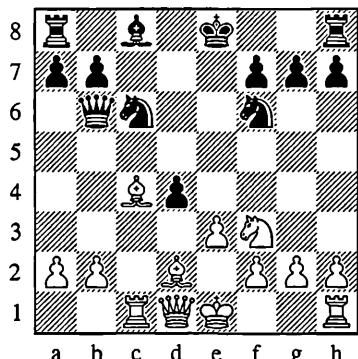
16...♗e4!N

B2) after 11.e3!



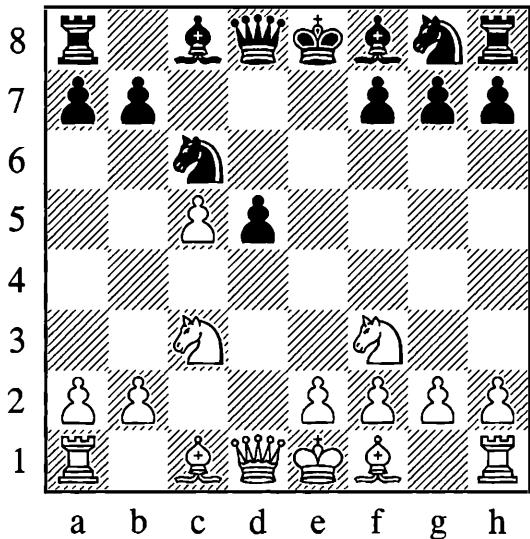
11...♘f6!

B22) 12.♗c4!



12...dxe3?!N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.dxc5!

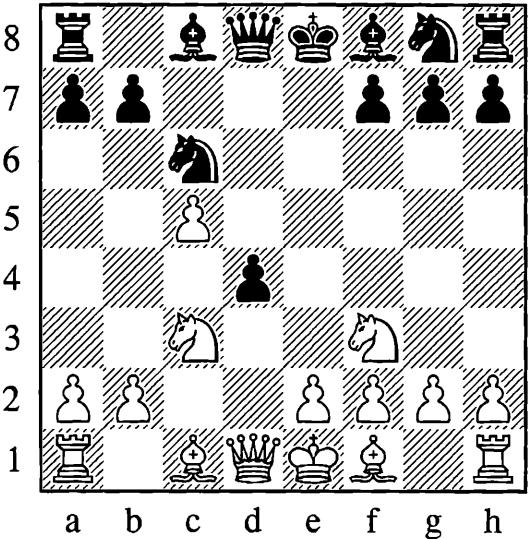


This move was not considered to be a critical continuation by past theoretical works on the Tarrasch. Whether this caused its unpopularity is hard to say. But what we can say is that not only 6.g3, but also 6.e3, 6.♗g5 and 6.♗f4 are played more often than 6.dxc5, although these latter three moves are all very tame.

Keilhack in his masterpiece *Die Tarrasch-Verteidigung* calls this “the delayed Tarrasch Gambit” because of the similarity with the 5.dxc5 variation, the real “Tarrasch Gambit”. After examining existing theory we discovered that there was no easy way to equalize available. In addition we discovered some dangerous ideas that seriously questioned the soundness of the entire opening. This has resulted in two important chapters (this one and the next) where we look at the traditional 6...d4.

6...d4

The most reliable continuation and of course Tarrasch’s original idea. 6...♘f6 does not work because of 7.♗e3 ♗e7 (7...♗a5 8.♗d4 ♗g4 9.♗b3±) 8.g3! 0–0 9.♗g2 and even if Black should win his pawn back (which is quite difficult to achieve in the first place) he would find himself in a slightly inferior position with a long and painful defence as the only option.



At this point White has a limited choice:
A) 7.♗e4 and B) 7.♗a4!.

A) 7.♗e4 ♗d5

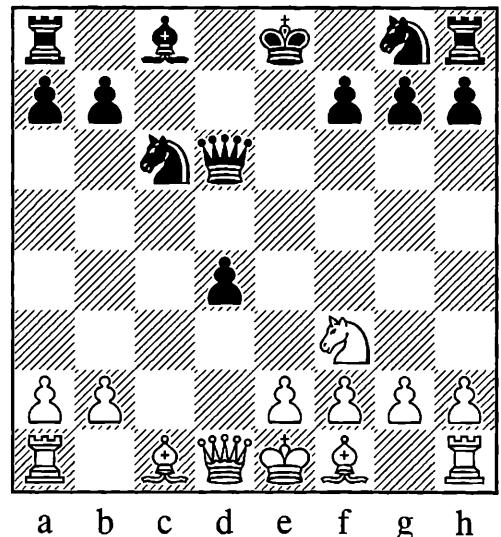
Although Black can of course transpose to line B with 7...♗xc5, the text move is the one to play.

8.♗d6†

No other moves make sense.

8...♗xd6 9.cxd6 ♗xd6

White has the two bishops, but the d4-pawn is cramping White’s position. Practice has shown that Black has nothing to fear.



10.g3

A few other moves have been played:

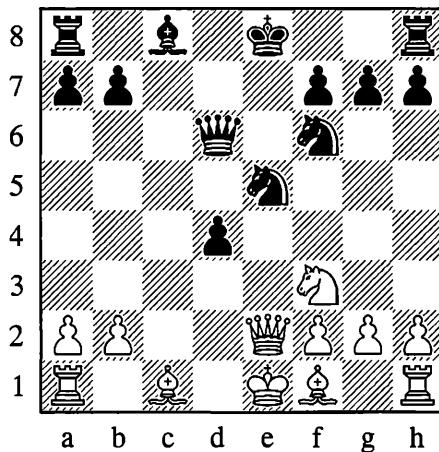
10.e4 Qf6

Also interesting is 10...Qg4! N 11.Qe2 Qxf3 12.Qxf3 Qf6 when we find the position quite promising. The bishops have no scope and the passed pawn is an asset.

Here White has two interesting moves worth analysing.

11.Qd3

11.e5?! Qxe5 12.Qe2



This looks tricky, but Black can give up a piece for the attack: 12...0–0!! (12...Qfg4 13.Qxe5 Qxe5= of course exists) 13.Qxe5 Qf5! 14.f4 d3 15.Qd2 Qfe8 White has only given a pawn for the extra piece, but already he is unable to restore his position by giving it back. Black is planning ...Qg4 and ...Qxe5†, both with a winning attack. The engine recommends the following line for White: 16.Qe2 Qd7 17.0–0 Qc5† 18.Qh1 dxe2 19.Qxe2 Qxe5 20.fxe5 Qxe5† Obviously this is not much of a recommendation.

11...Qg4! 12.0–0 0–0 13.Qe1

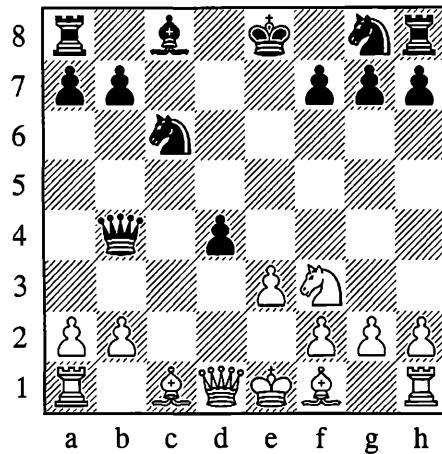
After 13.h3 Qh5 14.Qe1 Qfe8 we quite like Black.

This was played in E. Miles – W. Mason, Napier 1912. For some reason Black did not play:

13...Qe5!†

It is not obvious what White is supposed to do.

10.e3 Qb4†!



11.Qd2

11.Qd2 looks poor. 11...dxe3! 12.fxe3 (12.Qxb4 Qxb4 13.Qd4 exf2† 14.Qxf2 is “equal” according to the computer. We like equal endings with extra pawns.) 12...Qf6 Black is obviously okay here, but is of course not better. But the way White played, he soon was: 13.a3 Qe7 14.Qd3 0–0 15.Qc2 Qg4† Havlickova – Pokorna, Ziar nad Hronom 1996.

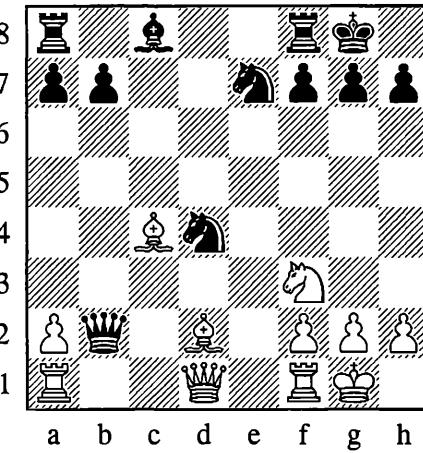
11...Qxb2 12.exd4

12.Qxd4 Qxd4 13.exd4 Qe7=

12...Qge7

12...Qf6 is also possible.

13.Qc4 Qxd4 14.0–0 0–0



White has compensation for the pawn, but he lacks the reach needed to cause serious problems on the kingside. For example:

15.Qe3

Black can absorb White's compensation with:
15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}c2!$

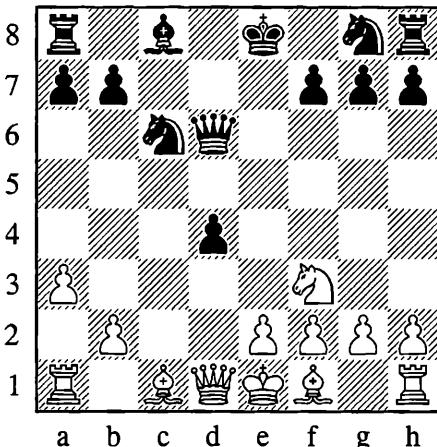
Based on the line:

17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

The position is just equal, despite the difference in material.

10.a3

This does not do a lot for White's position.



10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

The most natural move.

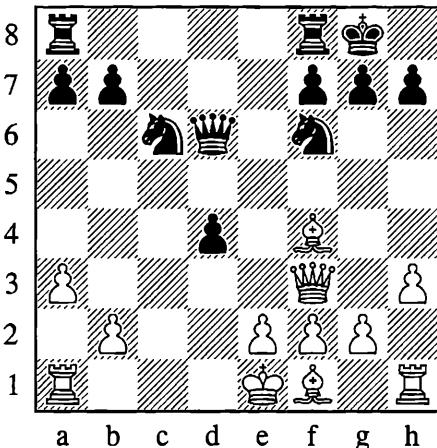
Also fine is 10... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 11.e3 $\mathbb{Q}g4$, but we are not always so lucky that our opponents play moves like 12.exd4? (12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}d8=$ is more natural) when 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ gave Black a big advantage in Erler – Paulsen, Schloss Schney 2005.

11. $\mathbb{W}b3?$!

White needs to focus on development, so 11.g3= was the move.

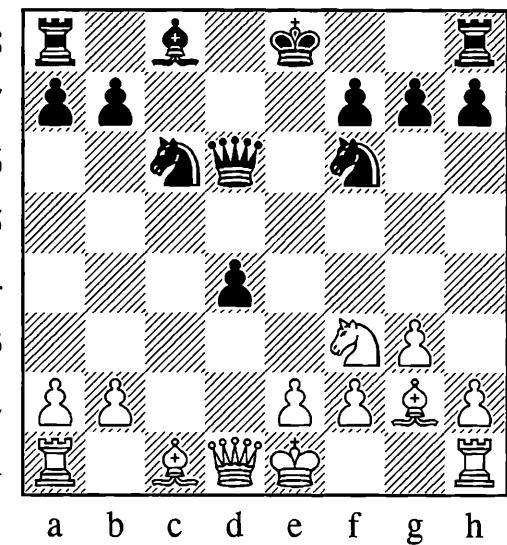
11... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 12.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

This is Gal – Kovacs, Hungary 2002.



14... $\mathbb{Q}e5!?$ N 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 16.g3 $\mathbb{E}ad8$
17. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d3#

10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g2$



11...0–0

A couple of other moves deserve a quick look:

11... $\mathbb{W}b4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!?$

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6!=$ with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ was the simplest of course.

14.0–0 0–0 15.a3

So far this is Robison – Kung, Lansing 1987.

15... $\mathbb{Q}c2!?$ N 16. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$
18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8\infty$

Black does not appear to be worse.

After 11... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ White eventually prevailed in I. Ivanisevic – Todorovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2005. This was the suggested line by Rizzitano, but maybe White has a small advantage here.

12.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

A simple solution. The idea is ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ as always; White's bishop should be neutralized.

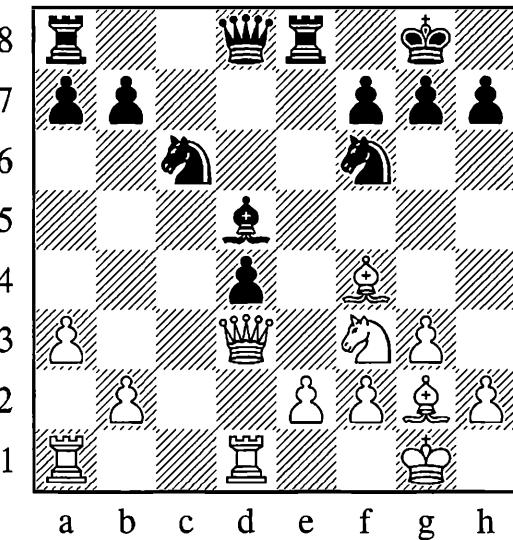
13.a3

13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ looks sharper, but everything is simply exchanged with correct

play: 14...Qxb2 15.Qb1 Qxa2 16.Qxc6 bxc6
17.Qxd4 Qxe2 18.Qxc6 Qad8=

13...Qfe8 14.Qf4 Qd8 15.Qd3 Qd5 16.Qfd1

So far this is Dusold – Salinger, Hamburg 1910. Here the easy way to equalize is:



16...Qe4!N 17.Qc4

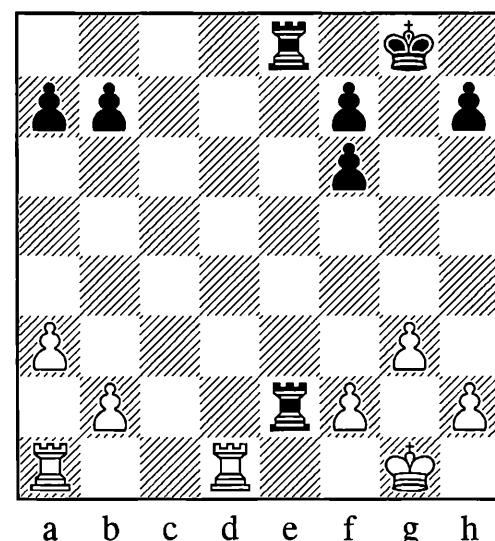
17.Qb5 is also possible, but after 17...Qd5 18.Qg5 Qc7 Black has no problems.

17...Qd5 18.Qa4 Qb6!?

Black also looks fine after: 18...Qxe2 19.Qxd4 Qxb2 20.Qf5 Qc8 21.Qxd5 Qxf5 22.Qxc6 bxc6 23.Qxa7 Qe8??

19.Qxd4 Qxg2 20.Qxg2 Qxd4 21.Qxd4 Qc6† 22.Qg1 Qxe2 23.Qg5 Qae8 24.Qxf6 Qxf6 25.Qxf6 gxf6

White has no advantage in this ending.



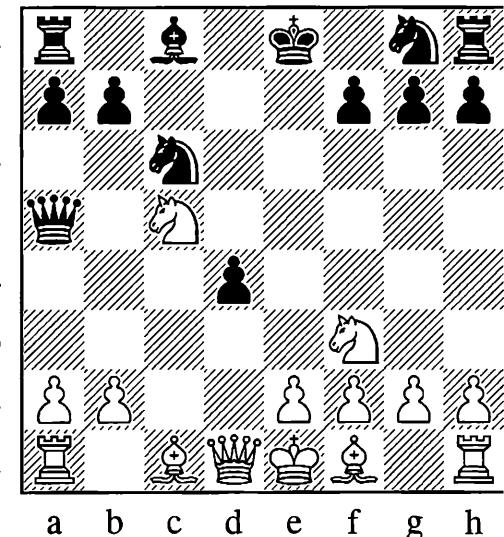
B) 7.Qa4!

White forces his opponent to give up the bishop, and also hopes for 7...b5?! – an idea which simply does not work with the inclusion of Qf3 and ...Qc6.

7...Qxc5

This is the only reliable move for Black. It is not the most interesting move in the world, but the excitement is limited for both players and as Black we sometimes have to suffer the boredom of our less imaginative opponent's choices.

8.Qxc5 Qa5†



This check can be blocked in two ways. Blocking with the bishop, 9.Qd2, starts a plan based on quick development. Played in the right way, this is a very dangerous system. White also has another plan, to attack the d4-pawn, which can only be done if the bishop is placed on b2. This is the main idea in the next chapter, which covers 9.Qd2.

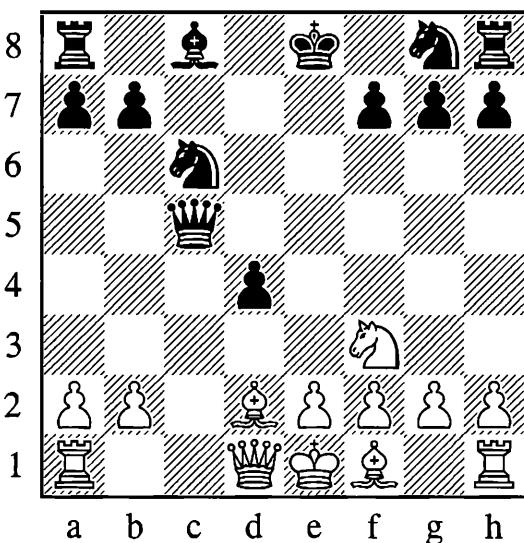
9.Qd2 Qxc5

When does the bishop pair *not* bring an advantage? John Watson has three basic situations in *Secrets of Chess Strategy*:

- 1) When the opposing side has a lead in development.

- 2) When the opposing side has good central control.
- 3) When the opposing side has a better pawn structure.

In this position Black generally seeks central control, which means that it will be difficult for White to maintain the bishop pair for long; he will either have to exchange one of the bishops, or he will risk facing an attack.

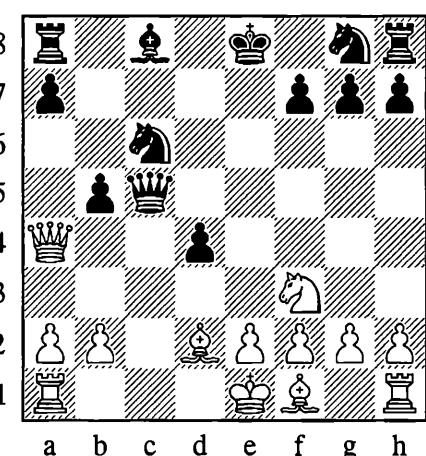


White has two main options here, **B1) 10.e3** and **B2) 10.♗c1!**.

Also worth considering is:

10.♕a4!?

This move has only been tested in all-computer clashes. Black should think twice before allowing White to carry out his simplistic plan of b4-b5, winning the d4-pawn. The correct response thus seems to be: **10...b5!**



11.b4!?

11.♗d1 ♜f6 12.♗c1 ♜b6 looks okay: **13.e3 0-0!?**

11...♜f5 12.♗d1 ♜f6

Black needs to be careful. For example, **12...♝ge7?!** **13.a4 bxa4?!** **14.♕xa4±** and the d-pawn falls.

13.a4 0-0!=

Black has a good position. White should start thinking about developing his pieces, or things could go wrong:

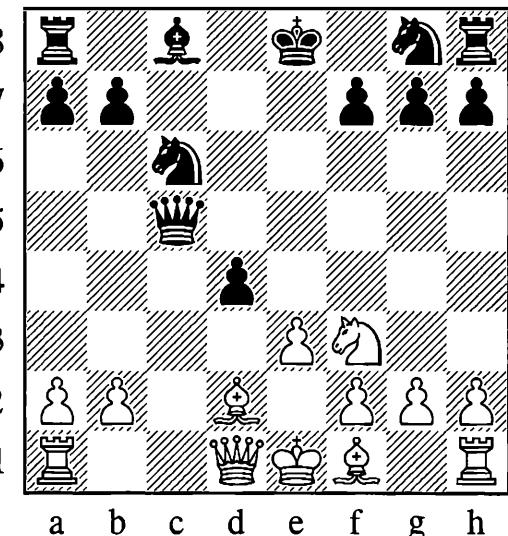
14.♗c1?!

14.axb5 ♜xb5 15.e3 ♜f5=

14...♝b7! 15.♗c5 ♜d7 16.axb5 ♜d8??

White has missed the bus stop and will soon be in a lot of trouble. It is time to pull the emergency brake, but it is not so easy to locate.

B1) 10.e3



10...dxe3!

This is the move Black should play, not the move he wants to play.

10...♝g4

This is far more interesting to play, but there seem to be unpleasant times ahead if White plays the most natural developing moves:

11.♗c1!

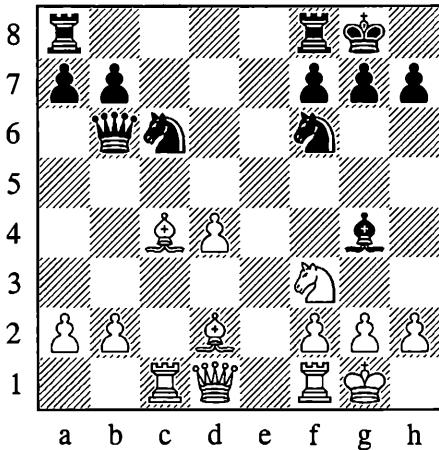
If White takes on d4 then all Black's pieces spring into life – which would be the hope behind **10...♝g4**.

11...Wb6 12.Qc4!

Black is not about to take on b2 with his fourth queen move now that White is fully developed. Even if there was no Qxf7† to worry about.

12.Qf6 13.0–0 0–0 14.exd4

Black does not have enough counterplay. White will quickly return the pawn, but not give up the power of the two bishops.



14...Qac8

Other options don't equalize either.

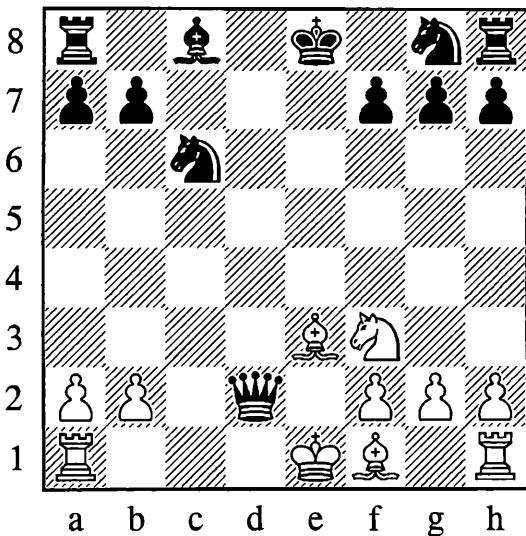
14...Qxd4 15.Qe3 Qxf3 16.Wxd4±
 14...Qad8 15.Qc3! Qxf3 (15...Qe8 16.Qe1
 Qxe1† 17.Qxe1 Qxf3 18.gxf3 Qxd4
 19.Qxd4 Wxd4 20.Qe7 also does not allow
 Black to equalize) 16.Qxf3 Qxd4 17.Qf4!
 Qc5 18.Qfd1! Wxc4 19.Qxd4 Wa4 20.h3±
 15.Qe1 Qxf3 16.Qxf3 Wxd4 17.Qf4 Wxf4
 18.Qxf4±

11.Qxe3 Wb4† 12.Qd2

12.Qd2N has not been tried yet. Even if there is enough compensation after 12...Wxb2 13.Qd3, which we are happy to believe there might be, we just cannot believe that this is a way to fight for an actual advantage.

12...Wxd2†=

Despite White's bishop pair, practice has shown that Black has nothing to fear. His pieces will stand excellently in the centre.

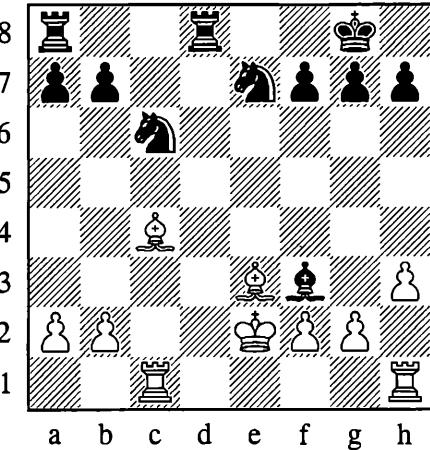


13.Qxd2

The other two recaptures are even less threatening:

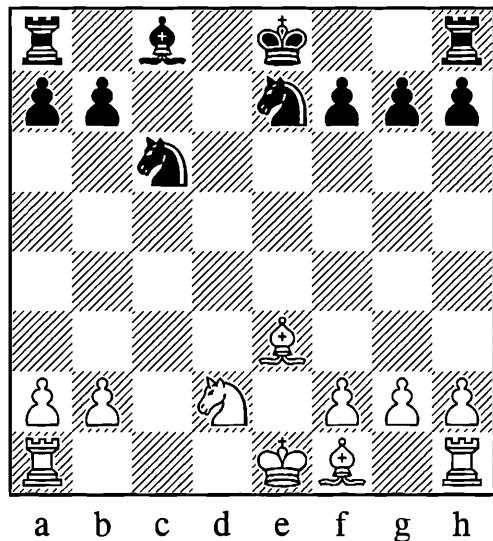
13.Qxd2 Qge7 14.Qc3 0–0 15.Qc4 Qg4
 16.0–0–0 Rac8 17.Qb1 Rfd8 (17...Qg6=)
 18.a3 Qxf3 19.gxf3 Qf5 Black's better pawn
 structure compensates for the bishop pair.

13.Qxd2 is also harmless: 13...Qge7 14.Qc4
 0–0 15.Qac1 Rfd8† 16.Qe2 Qg4 17.h3 Qxf3†



18.Qxf3 (after 18.gxf3 Qd4† either a pawn or the bishop pair must go) 18...Qe5† White loses the bishop pair. 19.Qf4 Qxc4 20.Rxc4 Qd5† 21.Qf3 Qxe3 22.fxe3 A draw was agreed in 'BDG_Girl' – 'Ktln2001', Internet 2005.

13...Qge7



14...Qc4

White has no hope of a real edge here; the two bishops are just for show.

14.Qe4 0–0 15.0–0–0 Qe6 16.Qb1 Qfd8 17.Qb5 a6 18.Qe2 Qd5 19.Qg5 f6 This has ended with a draw in a number of high-level computer games. White has not been successful in finding real scope for his bishops.

14.Qb5 0–0 15.0–0 Qf5 16.Qb3 Qfd8 17.Qfd1 Qc2 18.Qxd8† Qxd8 19.Qc5 b6 20.Qc1 Grünfeld – Tarrasch, Teplitz-Schoenau 1922. After 20...Qg6 21.Qb3 Qb4 Black is not worse, for example: 22.a3 Qd3!=

14...0–0 15.0–0 Qf5!

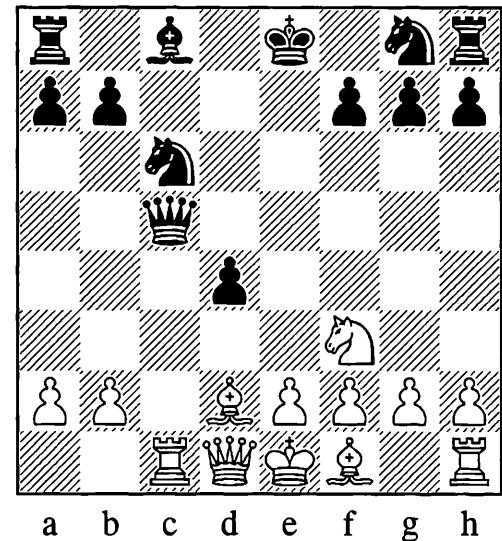
Clarifying everything immediately.

16.Qc5 Qd8 17.Qf3 b6 18.Qa3 Qfd4

A draw was agreed in Bousios – Pandavos, Greece 2000. Bousios is a specialist in this variation, but he got nothing from the opening.

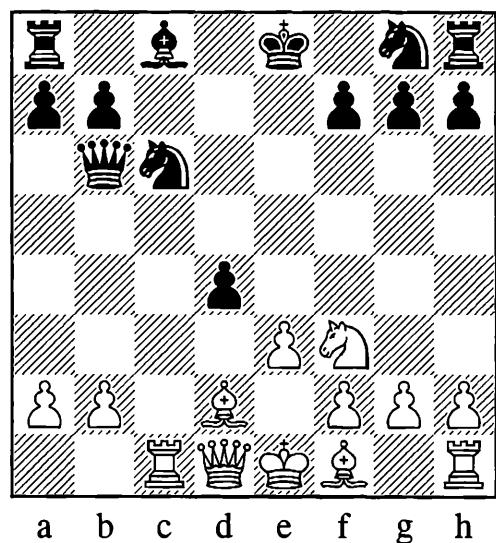
B2) 10.Qc1!

Rizzitano's suggestion. It is quite obvious that this is the critical move. Now if Black does not retreat to b6, he loses the d-pawn. For example: 10...Qd5 11.Qc3! as in Maruejols – Roubert, Naujac sur Mer 2008.



10...Qb6 11.e3!

White needs to keep the pressure on. After 11.Qc2 Qf6 12.g3 0–0 13.Qg2 in Arbil – Buergin, Luzern 1982, Black for some reason abstained from 13...Qe8!N when White has big problems with his e-pawn and already should spend his time checking the timetables, so as not to miss the next bus home...

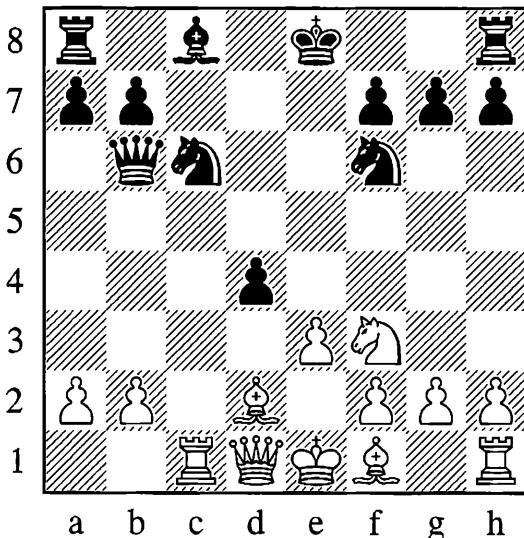


11...Qf6!

An important move, although not really a difficult one. Black develops his kingside and prepares to play for the centre with all his pieces.

11...Qg4 12.Qc4! transposes to 10.e3 Qg4 above and thus cannot be recommended.

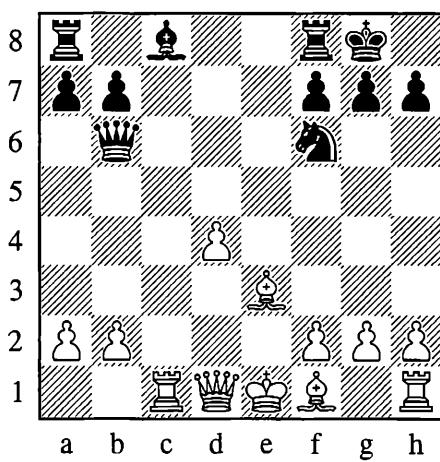
11...dxe3 is a tempo worse and after 12.Qxe3 Wxb2 (12...Wb4†? 13.Qd2! Wxb2? 14.Qc3+– is a point, of course, but even without this White would have a real initiative) 13.Qc4!– we don't fancy Black's chances.



We wanted to confirm that Black's position is fully okay here and have analysed both **B21) 12.Wa4** and **B22) 12.Qc4** to be absolutely sure.

We also had a quick check of the following lines:

12.Qxd4 Qxd4 13.exd4 0–0 is unpleasant for White. His best way forward could be: 14.Qe3! (14.Qc4 Be8† 15.Qe3 is easily neutralized with: 15...Qe6! 16.Qxe6 Bxe6 17.0–0 Wxb2 It is obvious that only Black can be better.)



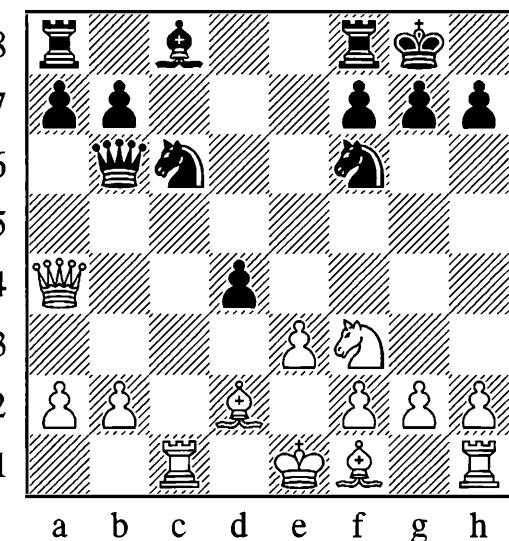
So far this is 'SmarThink' – 'Tornado', Trier 2011, and now: 14...Be6!N 15.Qd3 Wxb2 16.0–0 Both 16...Bfc8! and the more adventurous 16...Wxa2?! 17.Qg5 Qd5 18.Ba1 Wb2 19.Bb1 Wc3 20.Bxb7 a5 look fully okay for Black.

12.exd4 0–0 is similar in many ways. Black has serious play against d4. 13.Qc4 The only ambitious try. (13.Qe2 gives Black more options that we have space for in such a small book as this!) 13...Be8† (13...Qxd4 14.0–0 is dangerous. For example: 14...Qg4 15.Qe3! Qxf3 16.Wxd4±) 14.Qe3 Qg4 15.0–0 Bfd8 16.d5!? The only try. 16...Wxb2 17.Bb1 Wa3 18.Wc1 Wxc1 19.Bfxc1 Qxd5 20.Bxb7 Qc8! The coming exchanges will lead straight to a draw.

B21) 12.Wa4

The idea is to provoke Black into taking on e3. Obviously we should care more about development.

12...0–0!



13.Qxd4

White has one other significant option: 13.Qb5 Be4!

This offers Black enough counterplay.

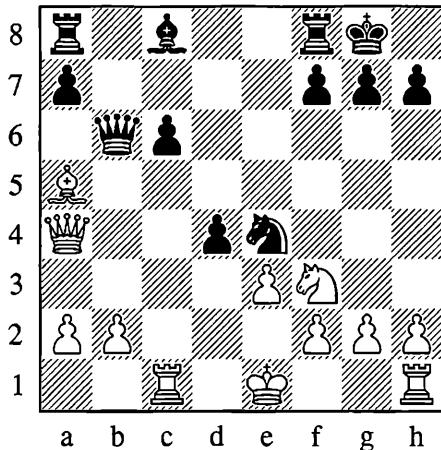
14.♘xc6

After 14.0–0?! ♘xd2 15.♘xd2 dxe3 16.♘c4 exf2† 17.♗xf2 ♖d4 it would be White struggling for equality. Structure matters.

14...bxc6 15.♕a5!?

This gives Black two good options.

15.♖xd4 ♕e8 is simply okay for Black.

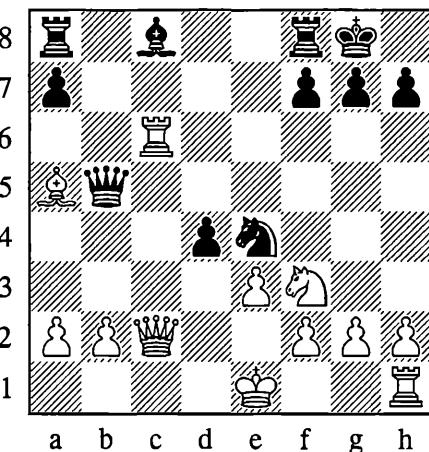


15...♖a6!?

15...♖xb2 16.0–0 ♕a6 17.♗b1 is also fine, as long as Black finds 17...♗b5! 18.♖xb2 ♖xa4 19.♘xd4 ♕fb8=.

16.♘xd4

16.♗xc6? is too greedy. Black gets a fantastic attack after: 16...♖d3! 17.♗c2 ♕b5!



18.b4 (18.♗d2 dxe3 19.♗xe3 ♕b7 20.♗c4 ♕ac8 21.b3 ♘d6 22.♗c5 ♕fe8!!—+) 18...dxe3 19.♗xe4 ♕b7 20.♗d4 ♘xc6 21.♘xc6 ♕fe8 22.♗c2 ♕a6! (22...♗ac8? 23.♗e7†) 23.fxe3 ♕ac8 Black is close to winning.

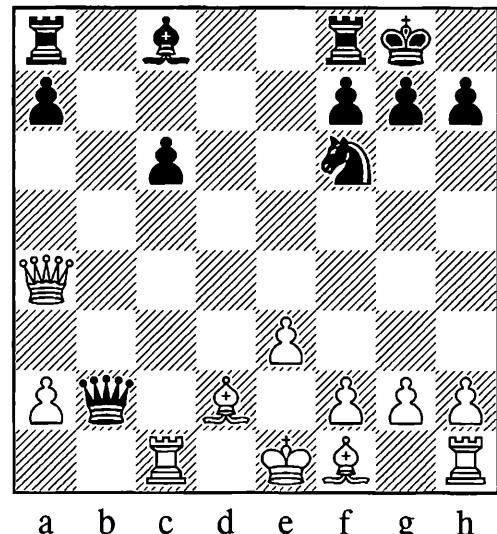
16...c5 17.♗e2 ♕b8 18.♗a3 ♕b5 19.b4 ♕e6

20.0–0 ♕xa5 21.♗xa5 ♕xe2 22.bxc5 ♘h3! 23.gxh3 ♘g5 24.f3! ♘xh3† 25.♗h1 ♘f2† 26.♗g1 ♘h3†=

13...♕xb2 14.♗xc6

14.♗b3 is harmless. The two bishops are not enough to claim an advantage when the black knights are as good as they are here. 14...♕xb3 15.♗xb3 (White must be careful: 15.axb3 ♘xd4 16.exd4 ♕e8† 17.♗e3 ♕e6 18.♗c4 ♘d5†) 15...♗e4 16.♗b5 ♕e6! (16...♗xd2 17.♗xd2 ♘e5 also looks playable) 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗xc6 ♕fb8 With a draw coming soon.

14...bxc6



15.♘c4

There are a few moves to consider:

15.♗b3 ♕b8 is fine for Black.

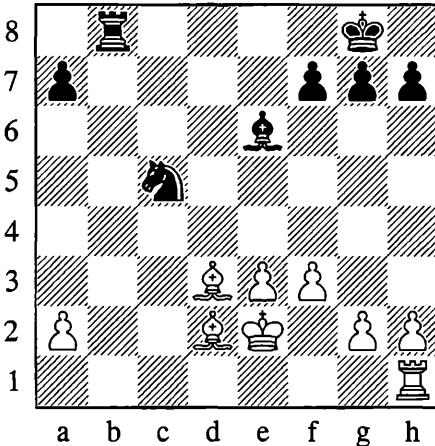
15.♗c2 ♕b8 16.♘c4 transposes to the main line.

15.f3 ♕e6 16.e4 ♕fb8 17.♗a5 ♘d7! More interesting than exchanging queens – which is of course also possible. 18.♗xc6 ♘e5 19.♗d6 ♕c8!—+ Black has good play. The main idea is ...♘c4 to get a good square for the knight.

15.♗xc6 ♕b8 16.f3 ♕e6 17.♗c2 ♕a3 18.♗b1

Black has easy equality here. The simplest way is:

- 18...Bxb1† 19.Qxb1 Qd7 20.Qe2 Bb8
21.Wd3 Wxd3 22.Qxd3 Qc5! 23.Qe2



23...Bd8

23...Qxd3 is of course also a draw, but why tempt fate?

24.Qb1

24.Qb5 a6 25.Qc1 axb5 26.Bxc5 Qxa2=

24...Qc4† 25.Qd1 Bb8

Black has adequate counterplay. For example:

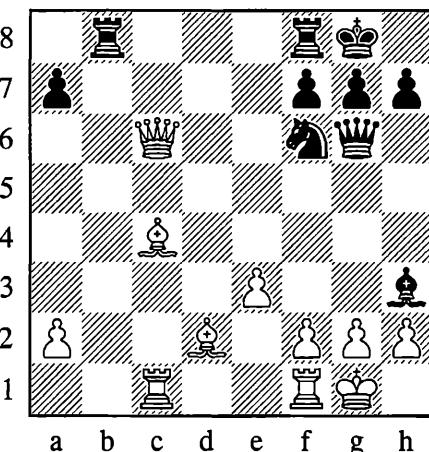
26.Qc2 Bb2 27.Qc1 Bxa2 28.Qb1 Ba6

29.Qb2 Qd3† 30.Qc3 Qb5 31.Qxd3 Ba3†

32.Qb4 Bxd3 33.Qc1 f6=

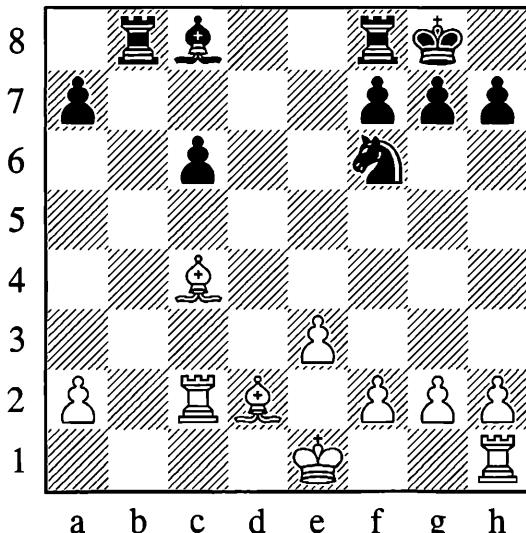
15...Bb8 16.Wc2

16.Qc2?! Bb1† 17.Qc1 does not lead straight to a draw by repetition. Black can play for more with an excellent attacking plan on the kingside: 17...Wg6! 18.0–0 Qh3 19.Wxc6



19...Wg4!! The difficult key move. Black is preparing to play ...Qe4 and ...Bb6. White has to find only moves to stay respectable. 20.Qh1!
Qe4 21.gxh3 Wf3† 22.Qg1 Bb6 23.Qe2! Wxe2 24.Wxe4 Wxd2 Black has at least enough for the pawn, if not a bit to spare.

16...Wxc2 17.Qxc2



17...Qf5

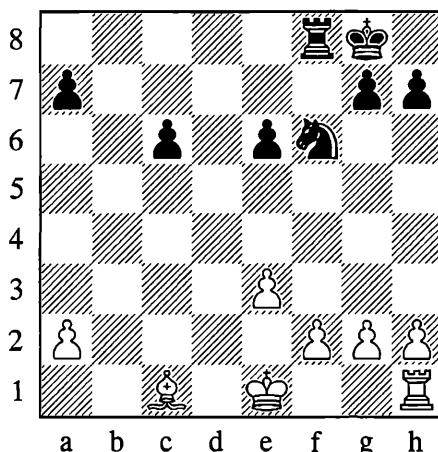
One other move is worth a look, even though it is not part of our repertoire:

17...Bb1† 18.Qc1 Bxc1† 19.Qxc1 Qe6

We would not recommend this, even though it looks playable.

20.Qxe6 fxe6

Black has a slight lead in development, but as mate is not on the table, this will not lead very far. The main thing he can achieve is activity on the b-file and then aim to eliminate the queenside or enter a rook ending.



Our main line goes:

21.f3! ♖d5 22.♖d2 ♕b8 23.e4 ♖b4 24.a3
♖a2 25.♖c2 ♖xc1 26.♖xc1 ♖f7

It looks to us as if White has a very slight edge in this rook ending, but it is not so easy to prove in practice. Black will play ...e5 and ...g5 if allowed and will be able to hold the kingside quite well. Also, if White plays:

27.♖d3

Black can go active with:

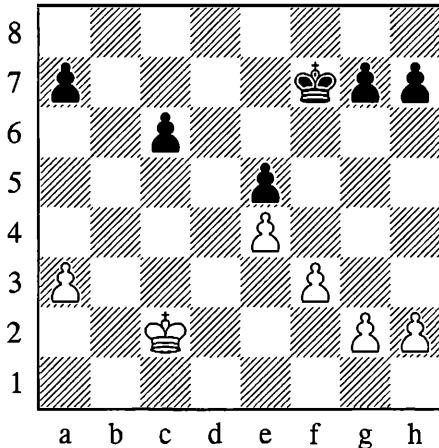
27...♗b2!

White has no advantage. The main reason is of course that the pawn endings are easily drawn.

28.♖c2

28.g4 ♕b3† 29.♔e2 ♕xa3 30.♕xc6 g5
31.♕c7† ♔g6 32.♕e7 ♔f6 33.♕xh7 ♔e5
34.♔f2 ♕a1! does not lead to an advantage either, despite the extra pawn.

28...♕xc2 29.♕xc2 e5!



30.h4

30.♔c3 g5 31.♔c4 ♔e6 32.♔c5 ♔d7 is an easy draw as well.

30...g5 31.hxg5

31.h5?! g4!

31...♔g6 32.g3 ♔xg5 33.♔c3 h5 34.♔c4 h4
35.gxh4† ♔xh4 36.♔c5 ♔g3 37.♔d6 ♔f4
38.a4 a5 39.♔xc6 ♔xf3 40.♔b5 ♔xe4=

18.♕c1 ♖e4 19.♔a5

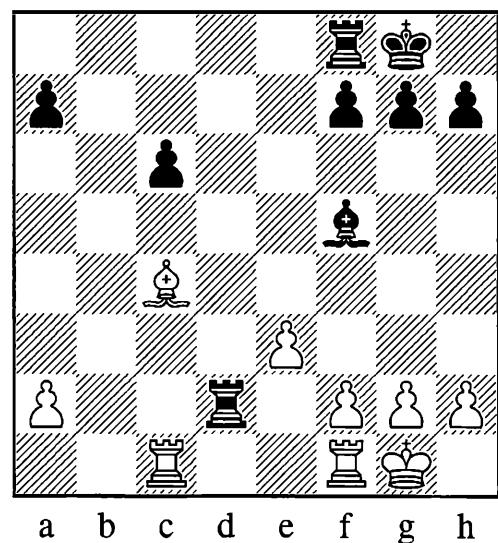
There is no other way for White to play for the advantage.

19...♗b2 20.0-0 ♔d2

20...♔e6 21.a4!±

21.♕xd2 ♕xd2

At first sight White has a slight edge, but if we look deeper we will see that the active rook on the second rank is enough for Black to gain a draw. The manoeuvre ...♗b8-b2 is his main asset.



22.♔b3

Best; this move blocks the b-file and opens up the c1-rook. After other moves Black doesn't have to worry.

22.♕fd1 ♕xd1† 23.♕xd1 ♕b8

If Black gets to put his king on e7 there is no reason to say he is worse.

24.♔f1

24.f3 ♔f8 25.g4 ♕b1! 26.♕xb1 ♕xb1
27.h4 ♔e7 28.♔f2 f6 29.e4 (29.g5 ♔d6=)
29...g5! 30.hxg5 fxg5 31.♔e3 ♕c2 32.f4
gxh4† 33.♔xf4 h6=

24...♔f8 25.♕d6 c5

Many other moves are possible here, but this seems to be the easiest.

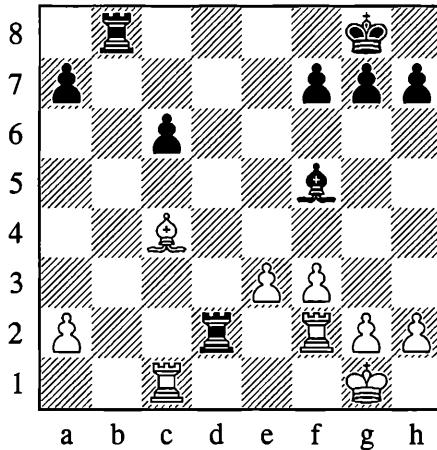
26.♕d5 ♕b1† 27.♔e2 ♕e6 28.♕xc5 ♕b2†
29.♔d3 ♕xc4† 30.♕xc4 ♕xa2

With a slight advantage to Black in the ending if anything.

22.f3 Qb8 23.Qf2

23.Qb3 Qe6 24.Qf2 Qxf2 25.Qxf2 Qxb3

26.axb3 Qxb3 27.Qxc6 h5 This typical move prepares the easily drawing scheme for 4-3 endings of h5-g6-f7 (27...Qb8 is also obviously equal). 28.Qc8† Qh7 29.Qc7 Qg8 30.Qxa7 g6 Black draws quite easily.



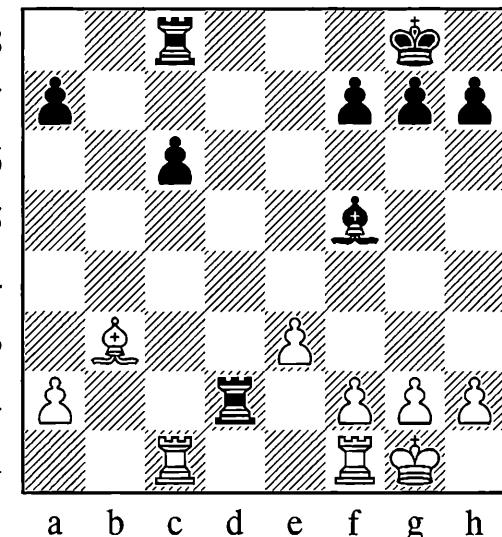
23...Qxf2

Black should avoid 23...Qbb2 24.Qxd2 Qxd2 25.Qb3! when the activity is superficial and he has to backtrack with 25...Qd7 26.Qc5 Qe8± just to avoid losing the a-pawn.

24.Qxf2 Qf8 25.Qb3 Qd7

White's advantage is minimal if there at all.

22...Qc8



23.Qc5

White has a couple of alternatives:

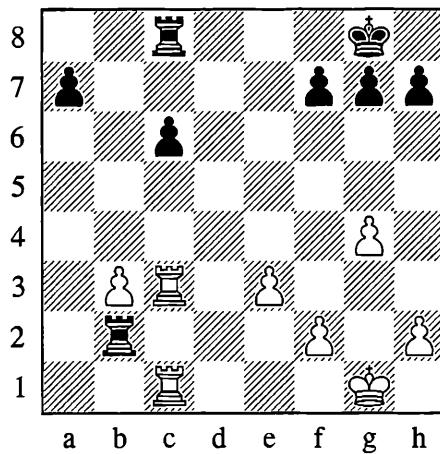
23.Qfd1 Qxd1† 24.Qxd1 Qf8=

23.Qc3 Qe6 24.Qfc1

24.Qxe6 fxe6 25.a4 Qa2 26.Qc4 c5 27.Qb1 Qc7 should not be a problem for Black either.

24...Qxb3 25.axb3 Qb2 26.g4

This is a typical idea preparing for the four versus three ending but it doesn't work here. As mentioned above, if Black can play ...h5 in such endgames then it is almost impossible to lose.



26...g6

Nikos is keen about studying a complex defence with: 26...a5!? 27.Qxc6 Qxc6 28.Qxc6 h5!± Black is a pawn down in the ending, but it's definitely holdable. Still, this is a bit unnecessary.

27.Qxc6 Qxc6 28.Qxc6 Qxb3 29.Qa6 Qb7

Any advantage claimed by the computer is simply ridiculous.

23...Qe6 24.Qxe6

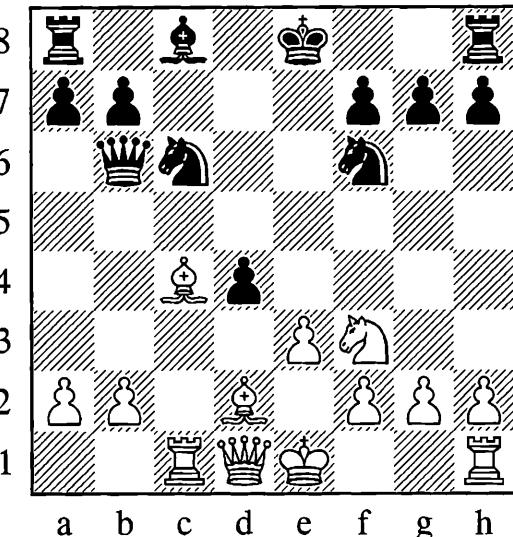
24.Qfc1 Qxb3 25.axb3 Qb2=

24...fxe6 25.a4 Qa2 26.a5 Qf7 27.g4 Qe7=

Black has many ways to stay active and hold this ending easily.

B22) 12.Qc4!

This leads to a critical position for which Black should prepare especially carefully.



12...dxe3!?

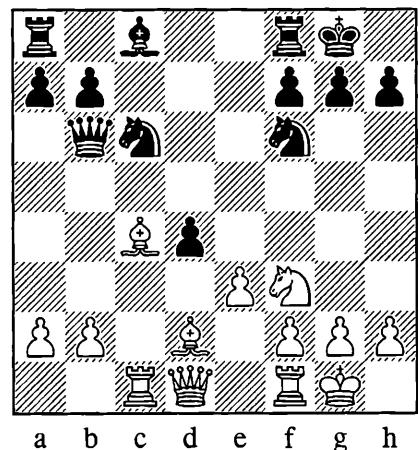
It is important to play this quickly.

12...0–0

This is the only move played so far, but White's play looks easier.

13.0–0!

13.exd4 transposes to 12.exd4 above.



13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

This seems to be the best try.

13...dxe3? 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ is a catastrophe. After 15. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c5!?$ White is close to winning.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14.exd4 $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c3!?$ is also not to be recommended. Black can take on f5 and d4, but White still has the two bishops. 15... $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 16. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{B}xe1\#$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e7\pm$ is an important point.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 15.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}e1$

17. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{B}fc8$ 20.f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5=$ Rybka – Stockfish, Trier 2010.

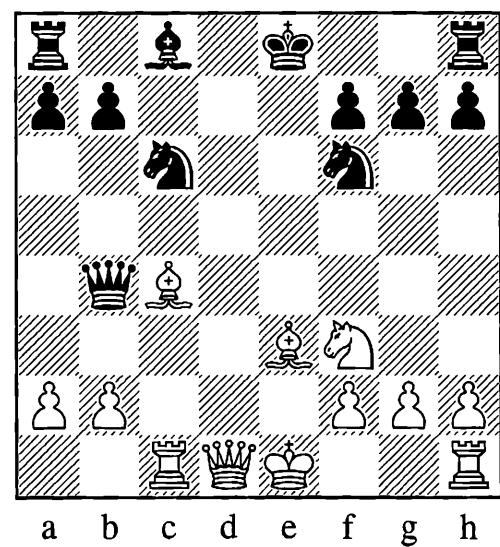
17... $\mathbb{B}f7$

17... $\mathbb{W}d5!?$ N 18.a3 $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e2$ is similar.

18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 20.a3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Rybka – Hannibal, Trier 2011. Is White better at this point? We are not sure. One machine managed to outplay a supposedly inferior machine, but surely there were fine options for Black along the way.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}b4\#$



14. $\mathbb{W}d2!$

The other options are less threatening:

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7\#$ 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0–0 16.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 16.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ both look okay to us) 15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 17.0–0 $\mathbb{B}hd8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}fe1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20.gxf3 $\mathbb{B}ac8\rightleftarrows$

14. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4!$ The simplest move. (16... $\mathbb{W}a5!?$ is interesting too. The critical line is 17. $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 18.g3 when Black can go crazy with 18...0–0–0 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ with unclear play, or be sensible with

18...h6! 19.♔g2 ♔f7 when we seriously doubt White has any advantage.) 17.♕c5 ♕d8 18.b4 ♘d5 Black has enough counterplay.

14.♗d2?! ♖xb2

This is not dangerous. Black is about to castle, and if White prevents this with:

15.♕c5

Black has a strong move in:

15...♗g4!

15...♗f5!? 16.♗e2† (16.0–0 0–0–0 17.♔e3 ♘he8†) 16...♗e4 17.♗d1 0–0–0 18.♗xe4 ♖xe2† 19.♗xe2 ♗xe4 20.f3 ♗g6 This also secures equality.

16.♔e2

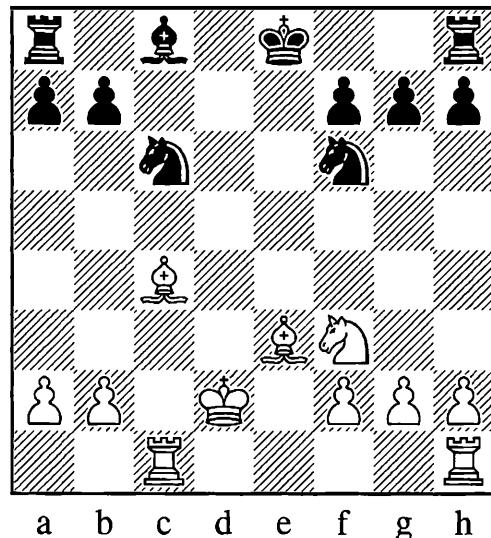
16.f3? 0–0–0†

16...♗xe2 17.♗xe2† ♖e5†

With an extra pawn. White has compensation, but is still fighting for equality.

14...♖xd2† 15.♗xd2

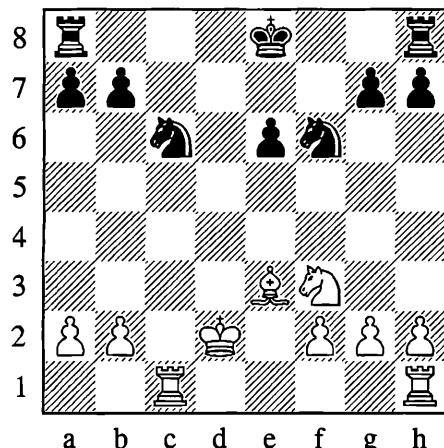
15.♗xd2 0–0 16.0–0 does not make a lot of sense. Black can play either 16...♗g4!? or 16...♗e8 17.♗fe1 ♗e6=.



15...0–0

This is the timid move.

After 15...♗e6!? 16.♗xe6 fxe6 we have another critical position.



We think Black looks okay, but things are never that easy of course. In our opinion Black has improved chances in the ending when a set of knights has not yet been exchanged, so that the bishop is less able to roam the board uncontested. 17.♗e2 ♘d5 18.♗hd1 ♘xe3 19.♗xe3 ♘e7 The endgame is ever so slightly better for White, but to call it a significant advantage is maybe a bit much. As so often in the Tarrasch, Black is comfortably within the drawing zone in the ending. People take on less attractive positions in the Petroff, Berlin, Queen's Gambit Declined and other openings on a daily basis. If you are a technical player, this is possibly something you want to consider as part of your repertoire against weaker players, but probably not against your peers.

16.♗hd1

16.♗e2 looks a bit inaccurate. We think Black is fine after 16...♗g4! to eliminate the bishop. For example, 17.♗hd1 ♗e8 18.♗b5 ♗e6 19.b3 ♘xe3 20.fxe3 ♗ac8 looks okay for Black.

16.h3 does not protect the e3-bishop as intended. Black has a brilliant equalizer in 16...♗d5!=. Black might not take on e3 at once, but instead quickly play ...♗e6 and put the rooks in the centre.

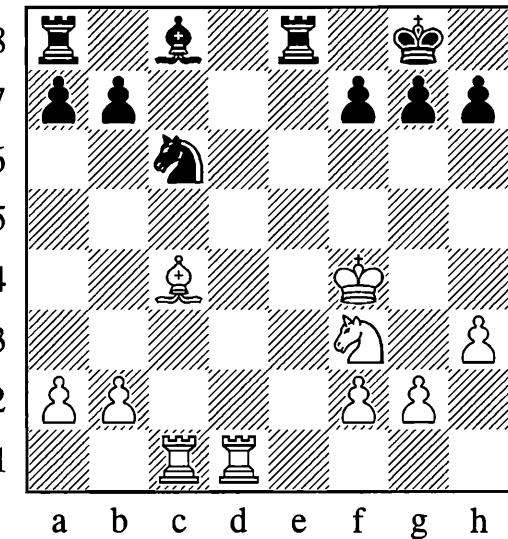
16...♗g4!!?

16...h6 17.Qd4 Qd7 18.f3 is a bit better for White. It is not much and can be defended; but we cannot escape that it is a bit dull.

17.h3

17.Qc5 Be8 18.Qg5 Qge5 is not dangerous at all.

17...Qxe3 18.Qxe3 Be8† 19.Qf4



19...Be7

19...Qe6!? 20.Qxe6 Bxe6 21.Qd7 b6 22.a3 h6 is also a bit more active for White, but can be held by Black; especially as there will be counterplay against the white king.

20.Bd6 Qd7

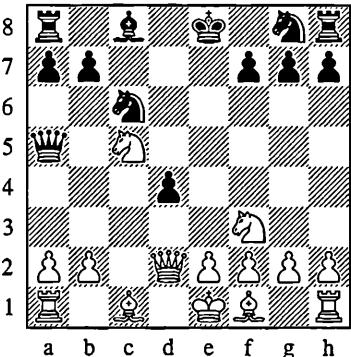
White has a little pressure by being more active and occupying the d-file, but Black has no obvious weaknesses and his position is defensible.

Conclusion

The first point to note is that 6.dxc5 is far more threatening than previously assumed. (There were moments when we thought the Tarrasch was in real trouble.) After 6...d4 the main problem is not line A) 7.Qe4 as 7...Wd5 is a convincing solution. The real challenge is line B) 7.Qa4! when after 7...Qxc5 8.Qxc5 Wa5† we considered 9.Qd2 in this chapter (9.Wd2 is covered in the next chapter). Most of our analysis is original and it does provide Black with a reliable equalizing weapon. The downside is that many of the positions fizzle out to dull draws. This is disappointing for fighters, but we have the black pieces and in this chapter White plays good moves.

Chapter 18

Early Deviations



6.dxc5! – 9.Wd2

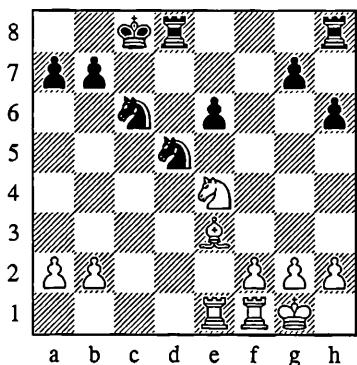
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.dxc5! d4 7.Qa4 Qxc5
8.Qxc5 Wa5+ 9.Wd2

9...Wxc5

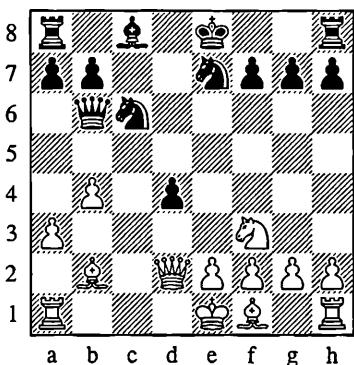
A) 10.e3	286
B) 10.a3! Qge7! 11.b4 Wb6 12.Qb2 0–0! 13.Qxd4 Qxd4 14.Wxd4 Qc6	288
B1) 15.Wc5	292
B2) 15.Wb2 16.b5 a4! 17.e3 Qa5!	294
B21) 18.Qe2	296
B22) 18.Wd4	297
B23) 18.Qd4 Ed8	300
B231) 19.Qe2	301
B232) 19.Ed1	302

A) after 18.Qe4



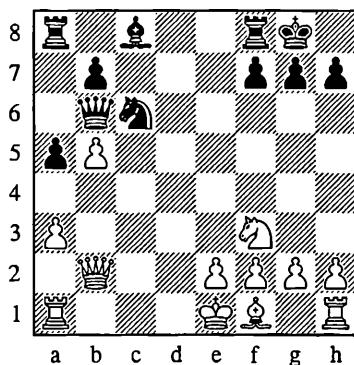
18...e5?!N

B) after 12.Qb2



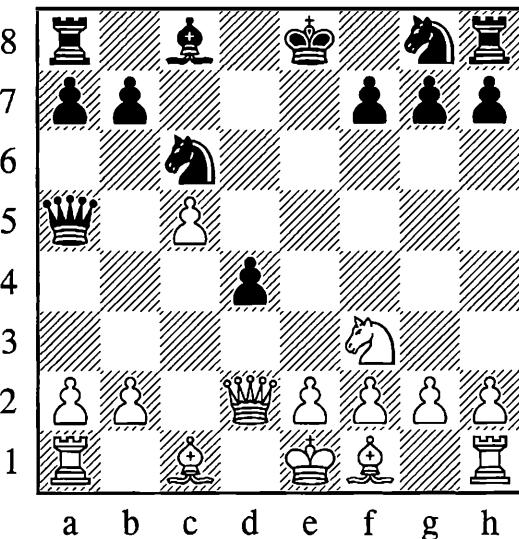
12...0–0!N

B2) after 16.b5



16...a4!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f3
 ♘c6 6.dxc5! d4 7.♗a4 ♗xc5 8.♗xc5 ♗a5†
 9.♗d2

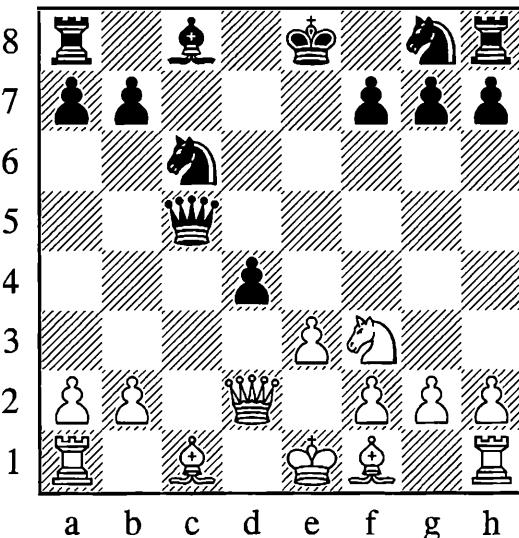


We know from the previous chapter what White's main idea is in blocking with the queen – b2-b4 is the most threatening plan followed by ♗b2.

9...♗xc5

At this moment White needs to make a pawn move; and it should be one that does not bring misery after 10...♗b4. Therefore there are only two real attempts: A) 10.e3 and the challenging B) 10.a3!.

A) 10.e3

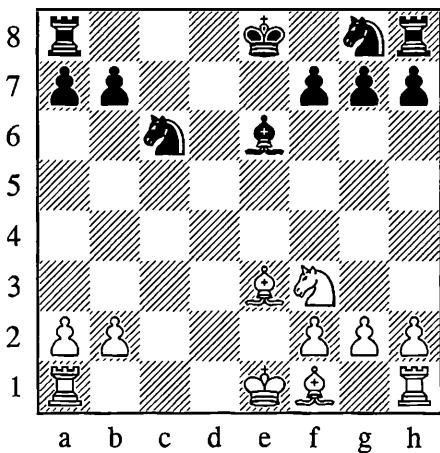


For a long time this line was considered to favour White, however over the last five years practice has proven this not to be so. Still, there will be those who will gravitate towards this line simply because it vacuums the board.

10...dxe3 11.♗xe3† ♗xe3† 12.♗xe3 ♗ge7

A year after our main game Grischuk instead chose to play:

12...♗e6!?



13.♗d4

This is the more dangerous move, but still it's not much.

Ivanchuk played 13.♗b5 ♗ge7 14.♗d4 ♗d5 15.0–0 0–0 16.♗fd1 ♗fd8 17.h3 h6=, but was not able to claim a serious edge, Ivanchuk – Grischuk, Monaco (blindfold) 2006. The bishop on d5 is too good.

13...♗xd4

Not 13...♗d5? 14.♗b5!±.

14.♗xd4 14...f6!

14...♗f6 15.♗b5† ♗d7 16.♗xd7† (16.♗d3!?) 16...♗xd7 17.0–0–0 f6 18.♗b1 b6 19.♗c3 0–0–0 20.♗he1 ♗he8= In Pavlidis – Pambalos, Kalamata 2008, White won this ending, but at this point the knight is good enough to match the bishop, even if White's winning are greater than Black's in practical play.

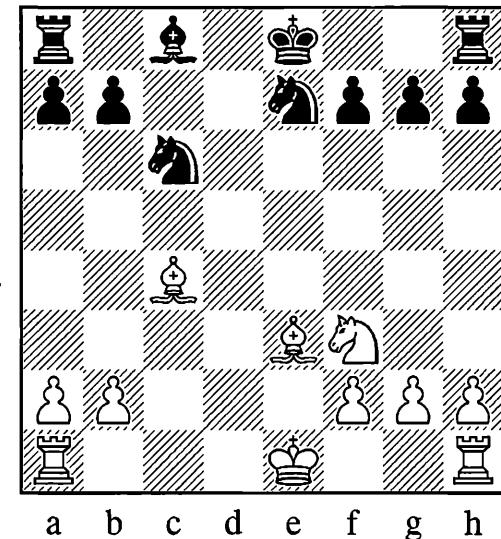
15.♗b5† ♗f7 16.0–0 ♗e7 17.b3 ♗hd8 18.♗fd1 a6 19.♗e2 ♗ac8 20.♗b2 ♗xd1† 21.♗xd1 ♗d5 22.♗f1 b5=

Husari – N. Adams, Budapest 2009.

White has the two bishops, but all the other advantages are with Black – active pieces and better structure. A draw is very likely and was indeed the result of this game.

13.♕c4

Black also has nothing to fear after 13.♕b5 0–0 14.0–0 ♔e6, when play could go something like: 15.♗d4 ♖xd4 16.♗xd4 ♖c6 (Also okay is 16...♖fd8N). Black has fine central control, so White's bishop pair is not a very significant factor. For example: 17.♗fd1 a6 18.♔e2 ♕ac8 19.♔b6 ♕xd1† 20.♔xd1 f6=) 17.♔xc6 (17.♔c3 ♕ad8=) 17...bxc6 A draw was agreed in Alekhine – Rubinstein, Hastings 1922.



13...h6!?

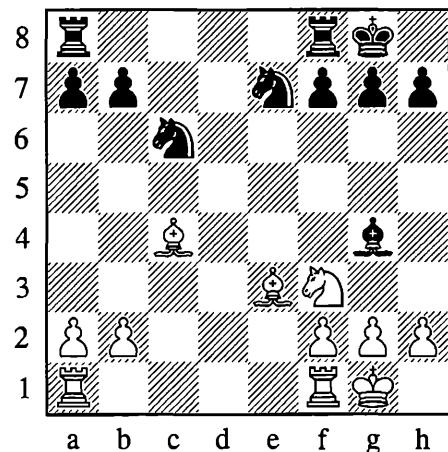
An interesting move that prevents White from playing ♗f3-g5.

13...♔e6?! is the reason Black's position has a bad reputation: 14.♔xe6 fxe6 15.♗g5± Knaak – Petursson, Novi Sad (ol) 1990.

13...0–0

This is fully playable as well, but requires a bit more preparation. We shall have a look at this secondary option as the lines are instructive.

14.0–0 ♔g4



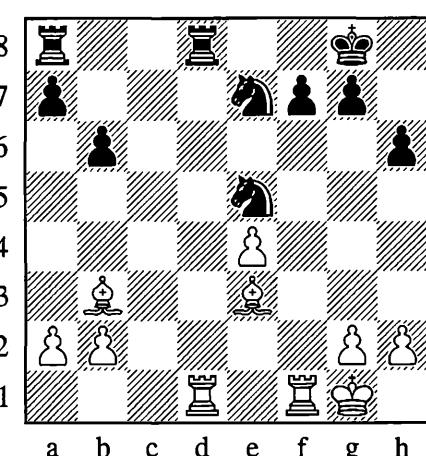
15.♗g5!

The only dangerous option.

15.♗d4 ♖xd4 16.♗xd4 ♕fd8 17.♗e3 was played in Marcos Rodrigo – Lo Conte, corr. 2007. Here Black equalized with the standard (for us) 17...♔e6, but he could also get a decent game from: 17...♗d5!N 18.♔g5 f6 19.♔d2 ♕ac8 20.b3 ♔e6= 15.♔c5 ♕xf3N An improvement on Kunitson – Velchev, Herceg Novi 2005 (where after 15...♗fe8 White could have kept the initiative with 16.♗g5N). 16.gxf3 ♕fd8 17.♔fd1 ♘f5↔

15...h6 16.f3

16.♗e4 ♘a5 17.♔b5 a6 18.♔a4 ♘d5!N (18...b5 19.♔d1 ♕xd1 20.♔fxd1± Gerard – Szylar, St Chely d'Aubrac 2002) 19.♔d4 ♕fd8 20.f3 ♘f5 21.♔ad1 ♕ac8= 16...♗f5 17.♗e4 ♘e5 18.♔b3 ♕fd8 19.♔ad1 ♕xe4 20.fxe4 b6



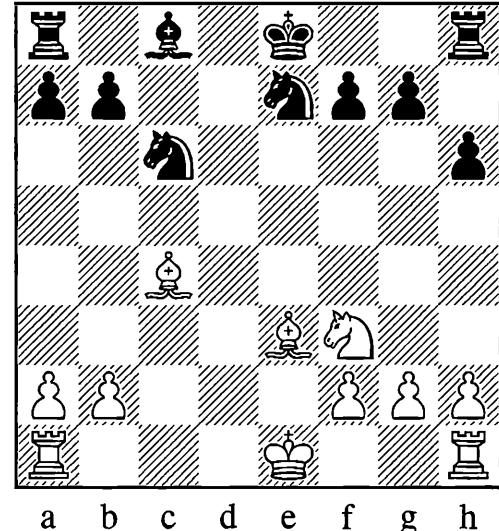
Black has an acceptable position in this

ending. He has no weaknesses and his knights are well placed. On the other hand it is hard to imagine that he will be able to play for a win. Here is a practical example from correspondence chess:

21.♕d4 ♔c6 22.♕d5 ♕ac8 23.♕c3 ♔h7
 24.h4 f6 25.♕e6 ♕xd1 26.♕xd1 ♕d8 27.♕d5
 g6 28.g4 ♔g7 29.g5 hxg5 30.hxg5 ♕xd5
 31.gxf6† ♔xf6 32.exd5 ♔d8 33.♔h3 ♔df7
 34.♔f1 ♔d6 35.b3 g5 36.♔e2 ♔f5 37.a4
 ½-½

Gessat – Stettler, corr. 1999. All the way the engines claim that White is better, but what he can make of that is harder to say...

Also reasonable is: 13...♗g4 14.♕d1 0–0
 15.0–0 ♕fd8 (15...♕xf3 16.gxf3 probably favours White) 16.♕fe1 ♔f5 17.♕g5 ♕xd1= Roenisch – Espi Gimeno, corr. 1990.



14.0–0

14.♔e2 ♕e6 15.♕xe6 fxe6 16.♕hd1 ♔d5 is very similar.

14...♕e6!

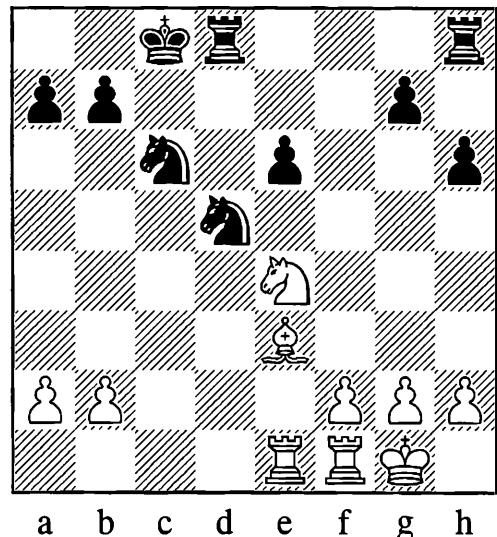
Black exchanges the powerful white bishop. The e-pawn is not seriously weak and Black equalizes easily.

15.♕xe6 fxe6 16.♗d2 ♔d5

16...♗f5!? 17.♕ael ♕d8 18.♗e4 ♔f7 is also

fine. The d5-square will be used by the rook instead of the knight.

17.♕ael 0–0–0 18.♗e4



18...e5!?

We do not see a great reason to take on e3 at the moment, even though 18...♗xe3 19.♕xe3 e5 should not be a problem for Black either, Narciso Dublan – Moskalenko, Barbera del Valles 2005.

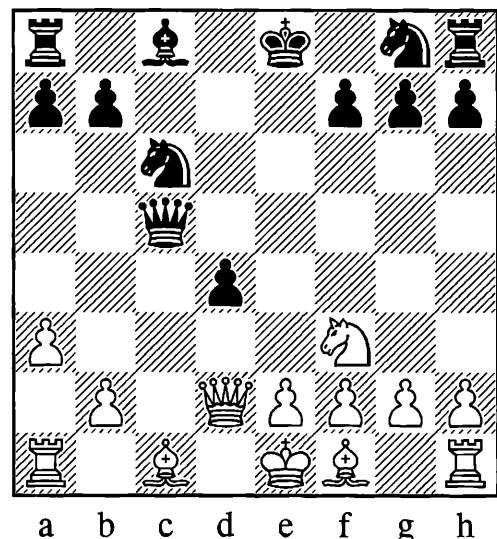
19.♕c1 ♔c7 20.♕c4

20.♕xa7? b6†

20...♗he8

Black has decent counter-chances.

B) 10.a3!

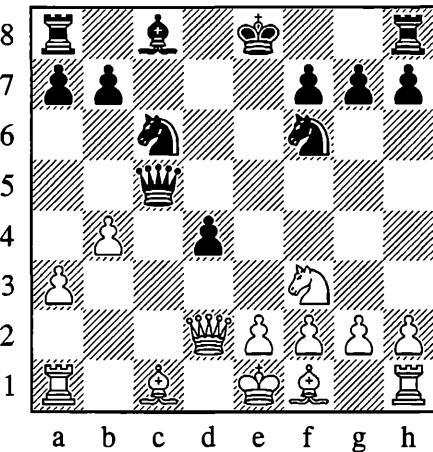


This dangerous move was proposed by Christoph Tiemann at the ChessPublishing forum (in this book we have seen too many threatening 10.a3 moves!). Nikos tried for a very long time to find something playable against this idea, but had to see one move after another rejected as insufficient by Jacob. Finally he hit upon a solid solution that equalizes, but imagine having to play against 10.a3 for the first time, without having months in advance to analyse it.

10...Qge7!

This is basically forced. It is worth understanding what is wrong with the alternatives:

10...Qf6 11.b4



11...Wb6

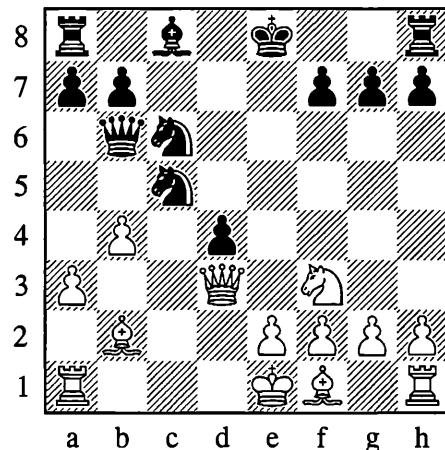
11...Wd5 12.Qb2 Qe4 13.Wd3 0–0 14.Qxd4! White has to show courage otherwise he will be hurt by Black's better development. 14...Qe5 (14...Qe8 15.f3 Qd6 16.Qd1 Qe5 17.Wb3±) 15.Wc2 Qc4 16.e3 Qxb2 17.Wxb2 Qf6 18.Wb3 We4 19.f3 Wh4† 20.g3 Wh6± The white king will find a safe place on f2.

11...Wf5 12.Qxd4 Qxd4 13.Qxd4† did not give Black anything in Komodo – Hiarcs, Trier 2010. It is always reassuring when computers make brain-dead moves.

12.Qb2 Qe4 13.Wd3

13.Wf4! N f5 14.Qd1 0–0 15.Qxd4 Qxb4! 16.axb4 Wxb4† 17.Qd2 Qe6 18.g3 Qfd8 19.Qg2 Qxd2 20.Wxd2 Wxd2† 21.Qxd2± So far we have followed Wochnik – Vassiakin, corr. 1990. Here Black can improve with:

13...Qc5!N



14.Wc4 Qe6 15.g3!

15.Qd1 0–0 16.Qxd4 Qd8 would leave the white king stuck in the centre.

15...0–0 16.Qg2 Qd7 17.Qc1±

Black has not yet lost the d4-pawn, but he is passive and has the worse pieces. Our main line is stronger than this, but even so this sideline is just about playable.

10...a5

This does not stop b4.

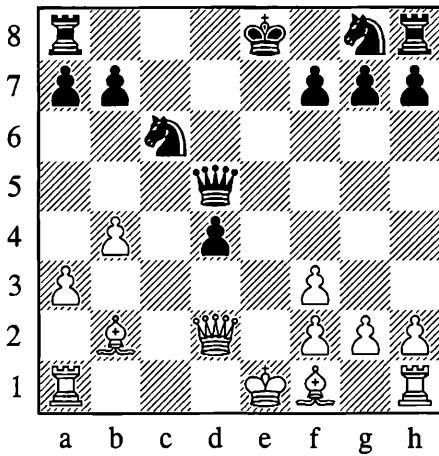
11.b4 Wb6?!

Early on we looked at 11...Wd5 12.Qb2 axb4 13.axb4 Qxa1† 14.Qxa1 We4, but after 15.Qb2 Qf6 16.b5 Qe5 17.Qxe5 Wxe5 18.Wxd4! White keeps an edge with 18...Wxb5 19.f3!±. The two bishops really count here.

12.Wg5!± Qge7?! 13.b5 h6 14.Wxg7 Qg8 15.Wf6+–

S. Buckley – Milovanovic, Hinckley Island 2011.

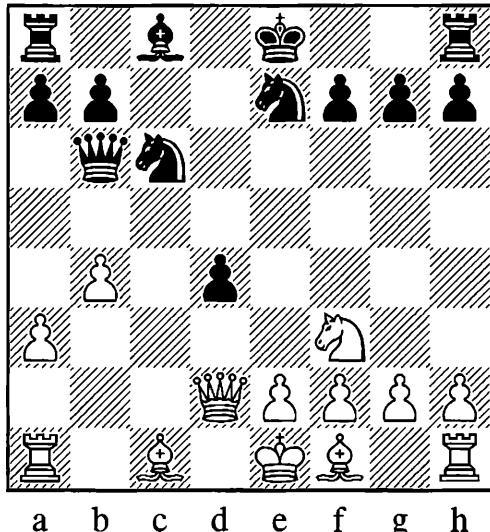
10...Qg4 was tried in Ponfilenok – Vunder, St Petersburg 2011. White is better after simple play: 11.b4!N Wd5 12.Qb2 Qxf3 13.exf3



Now one desperate attempt for Black is:
 13...Qf6 (the calm 13...a6 would accept that Black is worse) 14.b5 0–0 15.bxc6
 $\mathbb{E}fe8\#$ 16.Qd1 bxc6 This gives Black some compensation for the piece, but nothing like enough. For example, 17.Qd3 c5 18.Ec1± and the pawns are blockaded.

10...a6 seems to miss the point. 11.b4 Wd5
 12.Qb2 Qg4 13.Qxd4+– Sarkar – Jiang, Orlando 2011.

11.b4 Wb6



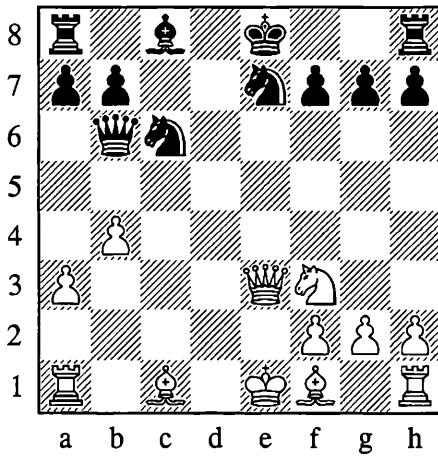
12.Qb2

Another option is:

12.e3

This version of the e2-e3 variation seems a good deal less dangerous.

12...dxe3 13.Wxe3



13...0–0

The main idea, but two other moves are also interesting:

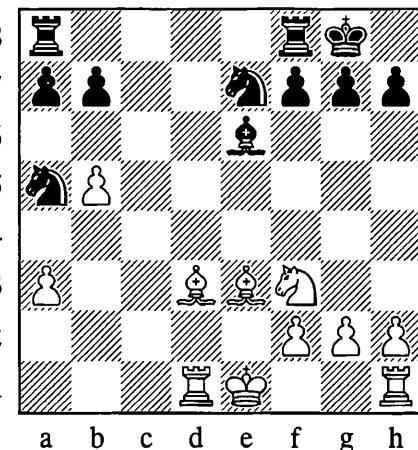
13...Wxe3# 14.Qxe3 0–0 looks playable. Maybe 15.0–0–0 is best, but Black is okay. In general Black wants to play ...Qg4 and inflict doubled pawns on White.

13...Qg4 also worked out well in a computer game: 14.Qe2 (14.Qb2 is a better try according to Rybka [computers do disagree]. Here both 14...0–0–0 and 14...Wxe3# 15.fxe3 0–0 should be okay.) 14...0–0 15.Wxb6 axb6 16.Qb2 Qg6 17.0–0 Qf4 18.Qc4 Qxf3 19.gxf3= Eventually Komodo – Gaviota, Trier 2010, was drawn.

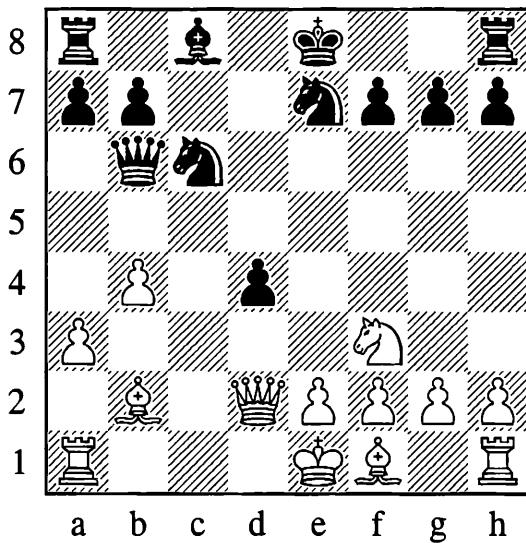
14.b5

14.Wxb6 axb6 15.Qb2 Qg4= 14.Qc4 Qg4 15.Qb2 Qf5 16.Wxb6 axb6 17.0–0 Qxf3 18.gxf3 Qfd8= Komodo – Rybka, Trier 2010.

14...Wxe3# 15.Qxe3 Qa5 16.Qd1 Qe6 17.Qd3 Black also has a good game after 17.Qe2 Efc8 18.0–0 Qd5 19.Qd2 Qb3.



17...♝fd8 18.0–0 ♜b3 19.♝d2 ♜c4= Struzka – Mindl, corr. 2007.



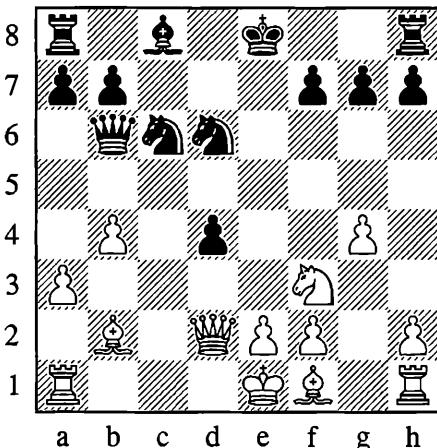
12...0–0!N

An important novelty; Black gives up a pawn for development. For any strong player analysing this position at home it is obvious that this has to be played, but it is very difficult to find the correct continuation subsequently, and over the board it can very be unpleasant to give up a pawn and then exchange queens.

12...♝f5

This runs into trouble:

13.g4 ♜d6



14.♗f4!N

This move should eventually kill the argument.

14.♗xd4!? ♜xd4 15.♗xd4 ♜xd4 16.♗xd4

♝xg4 17.♗g1 ♜h5! was played in Ntirlis – Hadjimanolis, Patras (training game) 2010. White should now have continued with 18.♗g5 g6 19.♗e5† ♜f8 20.♗c1± with a dangerous initiative.

14.♗c1?! 0–0 15.♗xd4 ♜e5 16.♗f5± was Lelgemann – Schwertel, corr. 2004, and later Tonoian – Okara, Moscow 2009. White has many pluses, but Black is still fighting.

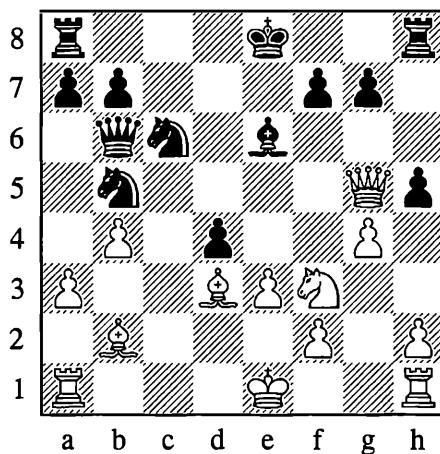
14...♝b5

14...♝c4 15.♗xd4 ♜xd4 16.♗xd4 ♜xd4 17.♗xd4 also gives an ending with a simple extra pawn. The point is that 17...♝xg4 18.♗g1 ♜h5 is even worse now. White wins practically by force with 19.♗c1 ♜d6 20.♗g5 ♜g6 21.♗e5† ♜f8 22.♗d5! ♜e8 23.♗g2+– and it might be even material in the ending, but Black's position is impossible to defend.

15.e3 ♜e6 16.♗d3±

White has a big advantage, but the position is of course still wildly complicated. At least this is Black's only hope, so he has to try:

16...h5!? 17.♗g5



17...dxe3!?

17...a6 18.exd4! ♜bx d4 (Black's chances look equally dim after 18...hxg4 19.d5 ♜xd5 20.♗xd5 gxf3 21.0–0–0 ♜e7 22.♗xf3±) 19.♗xd4 ♜xd4 20.♗e4! hxg4 21.♗d1 ♜b5 22.♗xb5† ♜xb5 23.a4 ♜c7 24.♗xb7 ♜b8 25.♗c6† ♜e7 26.♗e5 This endgame is pure suffering.

18.♗xb5 ♜xb5

18...exf2† 19.♔e2 hxg4 20.♕e5 ♕xb5
 21.♔xb5 ♔f8 22.♔xc6 ♔d5 23.♔e5! ♔xh1
 24.♔xh1 g3 25.♔f3 ♔xh2 26.♔b1! and
 White wins.

19.♔xb5 ♔d5 20.♔e2 hxg4 21.♔e5 ♔xh1
 22.♔xh1 exf2 23.♔xc6 a6 24.♔a4 ♔f8
 25.♔e5?! g3 26.♔d1 ♔xh2 27.♔d4±

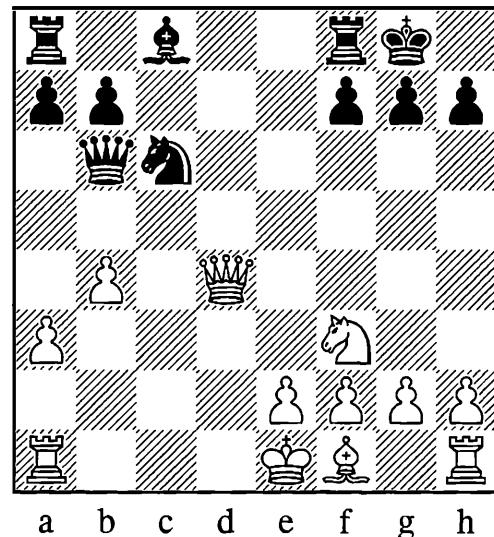
White has three pieces against a rook and four pawns, but the position remains terribly complicated. The question is if anyone would want this as part of their opening repertoire with Black – especially when there are other ways for White to gain an edge. For us the answer is “no”.

13.♗xd4

If you don't take free pawns against the Tarrasch, your chances of success will be very limited indeed.

13...♗xd4 14.♕xd4 ♗c6

14...♗d8?! makes less sense. After 15.♕xb6 axb6 16.e3 ♗c6 17.♔c4 ♗xb4 18.0-0!± White has returned the pawn, but Black is really struggling with the f7- and b6-pawns and is in for a bad experience.



is maybe more appropriate) 16...♗b4= Black will win back the pawn and keep a slight initiative. White needs to be careful.

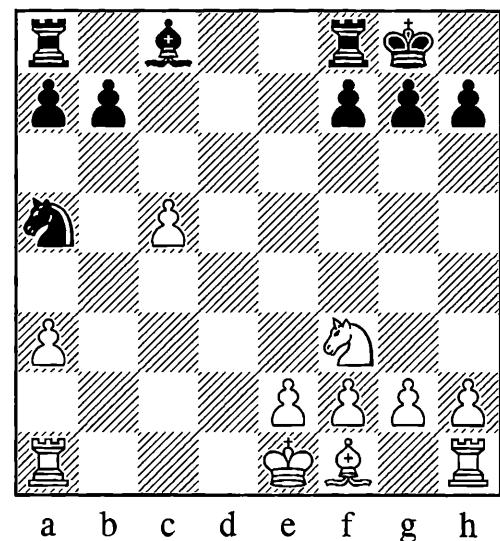
B1) 15.♕c5 ♕xc5

This natural move works out well. But other moves are also playable:

15...♔g4?! 16.e3 (16.♕xb6?! axb6 17.b5 ♗b4) 16...♔xf3 17.gxf3 ♕xc5 18.bxc5 ♘ac8 19.♔h3 ♘c7= This might also be okay for Black. The c5-pawn will fall and Black will have a better pawn structure. At least that is the plan, however it is a bit risky.

Effortlessly okay is 15...♔e6 16.e3 ♕xc5 17.bxc5 ♘ac8 18.♔c1 ♘fd8 19.♔e2 ♗a5 20.♔d4 ♘d5 with about even chances. So that is a simple solution, but the text move allows Black to hope for more.

16.bxc5 ♗a5



17.♔b1

This is a bit too ambitious for our taste; it is White who should be careful here. Such careful moves include:

17.♔d4 ♔d7 18.♔c1 (18.e3 ♘ac8 19.♔c1 b6 20.♔a6 ♘xc5 21.♔e2=) 18...♘ac8 19.♔d2?

White has two serious options here:

B1) 15.♕c5 and B2) 15.♕b2.

We should probably mention that after 15.♕xb6 axb6 16.b5 (16.e3 ♘ac8 17.♔c1 b6 20.♔a6 ♘xc5 21.♔e2=) 18...♘ac8 19.♔d2?

The ambitious try (19.e3 b6 20.Qa6 Bxc5 21.Qe2= is safer). 19...Bfd8 20.e3 Qf5! Preventing White's preferred Qd3. After 21.Qe2 Bd5 Black has no problems.

17.Bc1 Qd7 18.Qd4 Bfc8 19.e3 b6=

17...Qd7

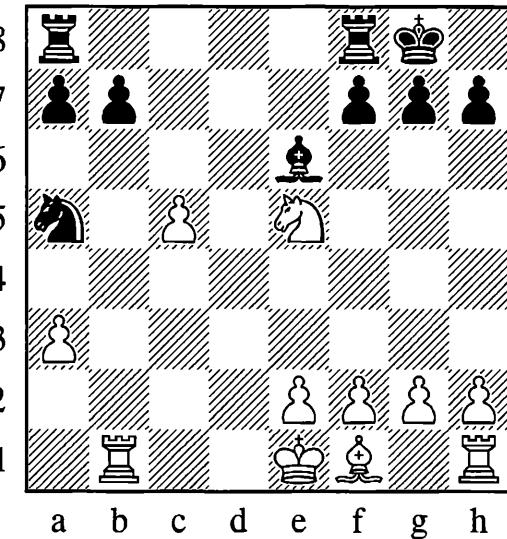
With the simple idea of ...Bac8 and then perhaps ...Qb3 capturing the c5-pawn.

18.Qe5

Both 18.g3 Bac8 and 18.e3 Bfc8 are not a problem either.

18...Qe6

Black has great compensation. White should not lose, but life has become a bit more difficult for him.



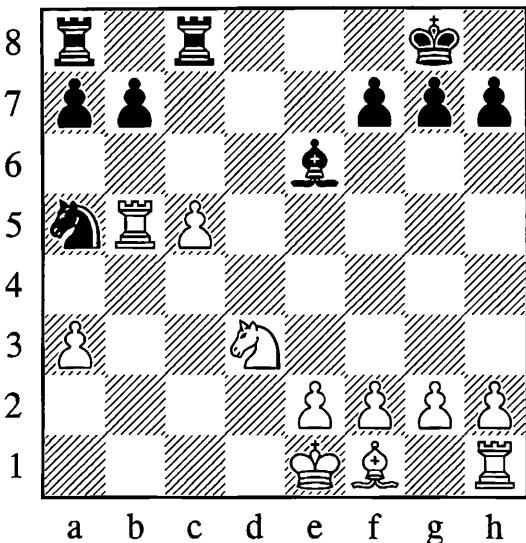
19.Qd3

19.Bb5 Qb3 20.Bxb7 is a very risky operation. After 20...Qxc5 21.Bb4 a5= the a3-pawn is vulnerable and White's prospects are unappealing.

Also positions such as the one reached after 19.e3 Bfc8 20.Bb5 Qb3 are fully okay for Black. For example: 21.Qd3 Bc7

19...Bfc8 20.Bb5

20.e3 can be met by 20...Qb3 21.f3 Qxc5!.

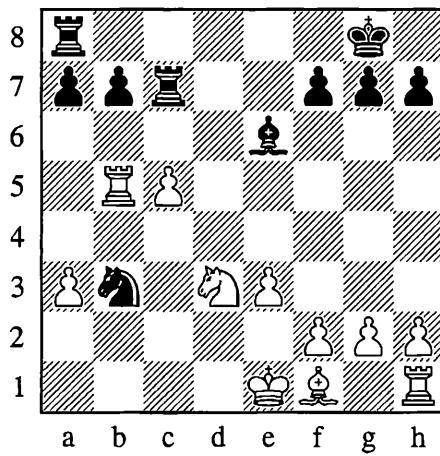


20...Qb3!

20...b6 *only* equalizes. White would be thankful if all the queenside pawns disappeared.

21.Bxb7

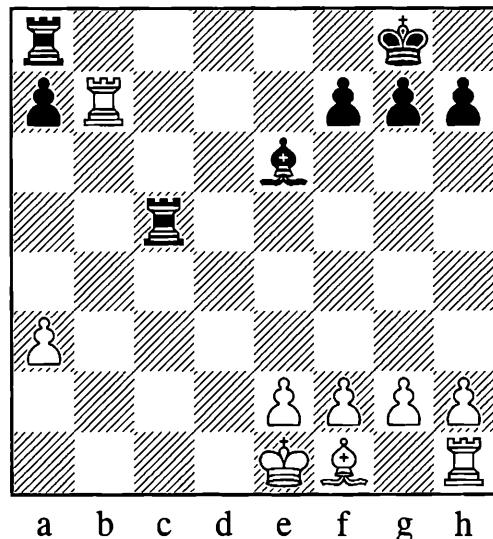
After 21.e3 Bc7! White would have an impossible mission over the board to find the correct way to keep the balance.



22.f4! Bd8 23.Bg1!! The point is that after a check on the first rank, Qf2 would defend the rook; this is important in some lines. Black has good play after 23...Qf8=, but probably not a real advantage yet.

21...Qxc5 22.Qxc5 Bxc5

The chances are about even, but if anyone might be better it would be Black, despite his pawn deficit. In the long run it is not really possible for White to hold onto the a-pawn.

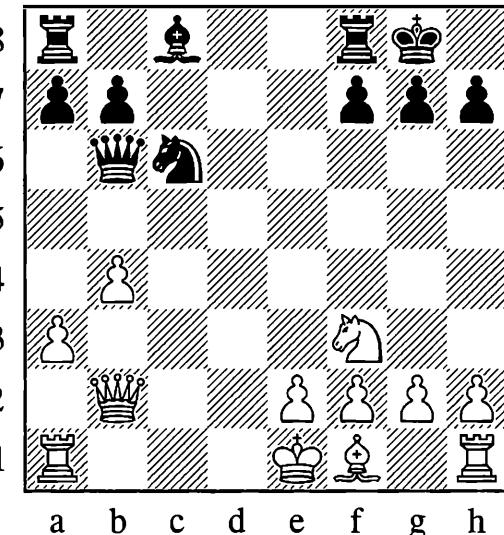


For example:

23.♗b1 ♘ac8 24.g3 ♘a5 25.♗a1 ♘c3 26.♕g2
♖cxa3 27.♗xa3 ♘xa3†

Winning this ending would of course be difficult, but it is not so easy to draw it as White either.

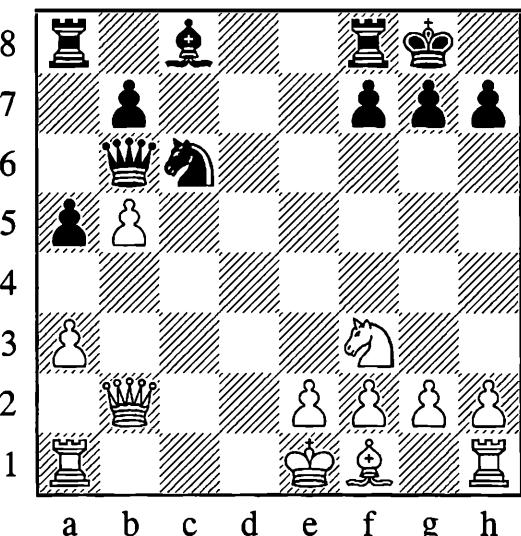
B2) 15.♗b2



Computers love this position for White! But it is no coincidence that this logical continuation has escaped the attention of the theorists until now. We humans, with an organic and not an electronic brain, can see that Black has a large lead in development and the chance to attack White's queenside pawns,

while White needs three tempos to get castled. Why should White's extra pawn outweigh all these factors? Computers answer this question by analysing all the moves using brute-force algorithms. But many times they are wrong! Let's find out if this is the case here.

15...a5 16.b5



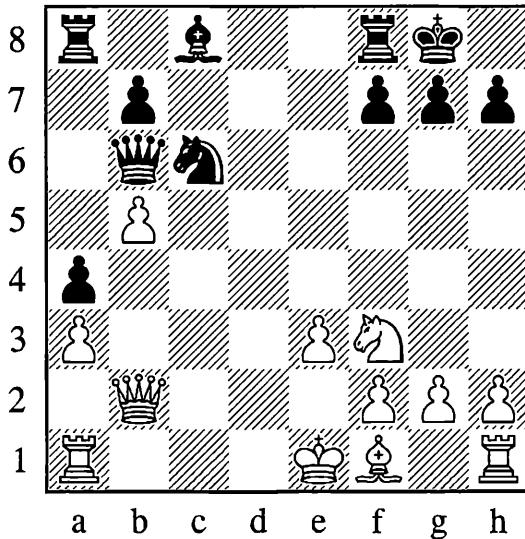
16...a4!

This move has two important points. It disconnects the white pawns from each other, so they will both be targets, and it frees the a5-square, which is very useful in many lines, especially with the knight going to b3.

We also looked at 16...♕g4 17.e3 ♖xf3 18.gxf3 ♔e7 to play for compensation on the dark squares. Our main line was 19.♔e2 ♘ac8 20.♗g1 g6 21.♗e5 ♘c5 22.♗xc5 ♘xc5 23.♗g4 ♔d5 24.♗d4 ♘fc8 with almost enough for the pawn, but Jacob was not satisfied, so Nikos went away and came up with a cracking solution.

17.e3

It is not easy to recommend something else for White. After 17.♗d1 ♔a5 18.♗d4 White has not prevented 18...♗b3! because after 19.♗xb3 ♘xb5 White is already in a bit of a bother.



17...♞a5!

The only move that works. Here are the refutations of the main alternatives (including funky h-pawn moves).

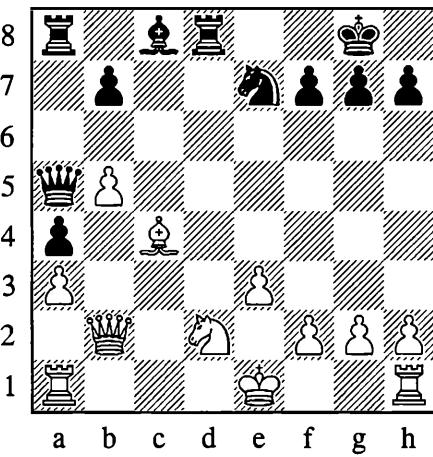
17...♝a5† 18.♗d2!

We found some ideas in the ending, but they are irrelevant because of this move.

18...♞e7 19.♗c4

Preventing ...♝e6.

19...♝d8



Black looks as if he has counterplay here, but we managed to bury Black's position with a very deep move:

20.h3!!

20.♗c1 ♜f5 21.♗e2 ♜c8= gives some counterplay, which is no longer available. The point is:

20...♝f5

20...♝e6 21.♗xe6 fxe6 22.♗a2!±
21.♗e2 ♜c8 22.g4!

The idea is that after:

22...♝d7 23.♗e4

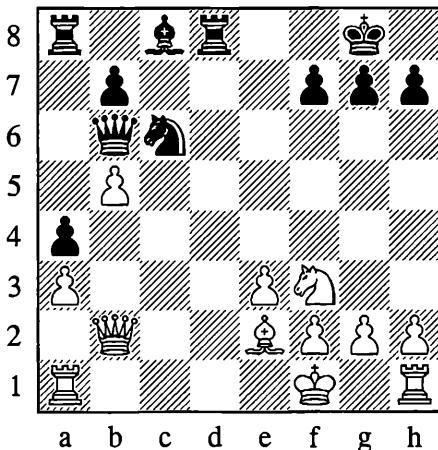
White has taken control over d6 and c5; the knight cannot be dislodged easily. Obviously White's king looks vulnerable on e2, but there is no way to organize an attack against it, therefore White's chances are much preferable.

The other line starts with:

17...♝d8 18.♗e2 ♜a5† 19.♗f1!

White is obviously behind in development, but other things matter as well.

19...♝b6!?



A typical idea. Black wants to put the knight on a good square now that White cannot easily develop. However, White has a strong move to counter this:

20.h4!!

This is uniquely unpleasant.

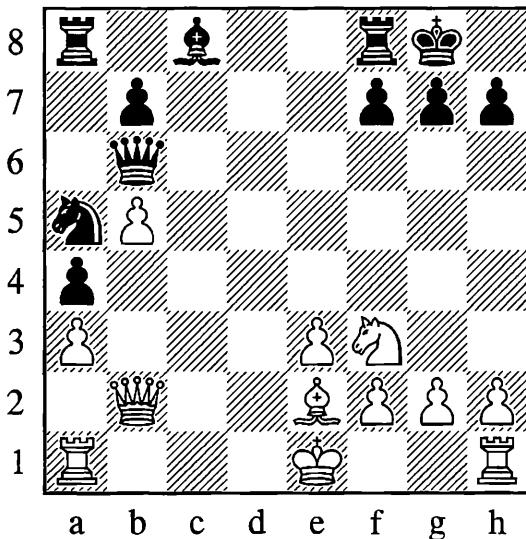
20...♞a5 21.h5! h6

21...♝b3 22.h6 gxh6 23.♗e1 is not recommended.

22.♗h4 ♜b3 23.♗e1 ♜e6 24.♗g1±

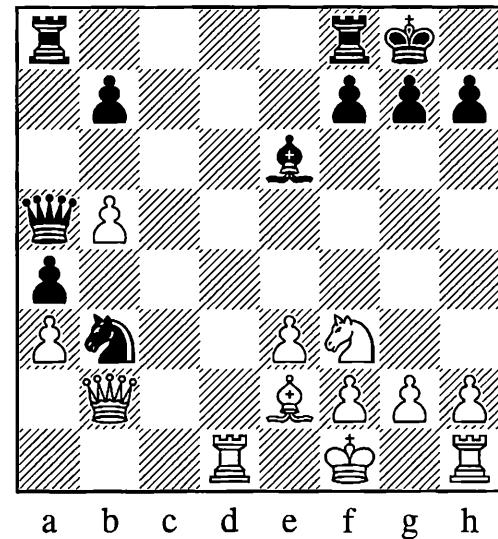
White's advantage is not in doubt.

Now White can present three major challenges: B21) 18.♗e2, B22) 18.♗d4 and B23) 18.♗d4.

B21) 18.♕e2

The next few moves are essentially forced:

18...♝b3 19.♗d1 ♜a5† 20.♔f1 ♜e6

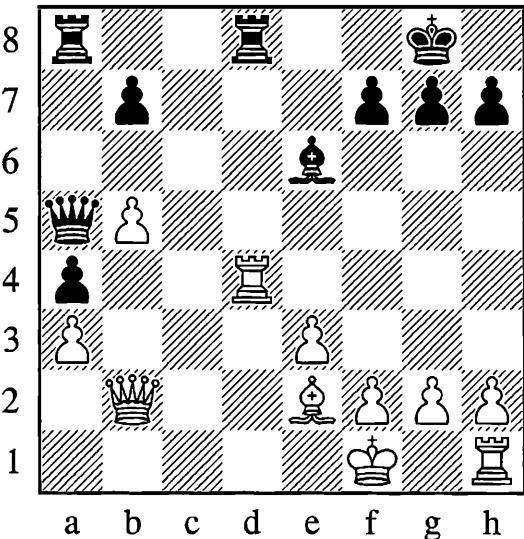


21.♘d4

After 21.♘g5 ♘fd8 22.♗xd8† ♘xd8 23.♗c2 ♘d2† 24.♔g1 ♘e4! 25.h4 ♘xg5 26.hxg5 ♗e1† 27.♗f1 h6 28.♗xa4 (28.gxh6 ♘d2) 28...hxg5= Black is not worse.

21...♝xd4 22.♗xd4 ♘fd8

White has a misplaced king. This provides Black with the desired compensation for the pawn.



23.f3

Planning to put the king on f2.

White has to be careful around here; the position is probably harder for him to play. For example, 23.g4?! ♘xd4 24.♗xd4 ♘d8 25.♗f4 runs into problems after 25...h5! 26.h3 ♗c3. White can try to solve them with 27.♔g2 (27.gxh5 ♗xa3 28.h6 ♗b2=) 27...♗xa3 28.♔f3, although we prefer Black after 28...h4!=.

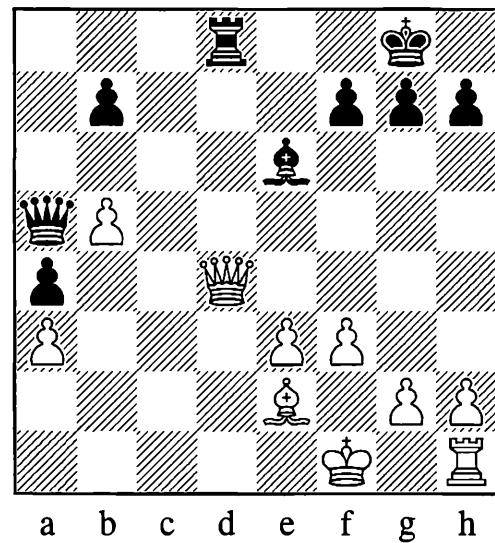
23.f4 is based on the same idea, but makes White's position more exposed. 23...♘xd4 24.♗xd4 (24.exd4? ♗c7!=) 24...♘d8 25.♗e4 (25.♗e5 g6 26.♔f2 ♘d2= is similar) 25...♗c3 26.♔f2 ♗xa3 27.♗xb7 g6 With even chances. White has an extra pawn, but his king is quite insecure – these considerations balance each other out.

23...♘xd4 24.♗xd4

This keeps the pawn structure more compact but exposes the queen.

24.exd4 ♘d8 25.♔f2 ♗b6 26.♗d1 ♘b3 27.♗d2 ♗h6 28.h3 ♗h4† 29.♔g1 g6= gives Black at least enough play. Probably there is no easy way to play for an edge for either side, but on principle we prefer activity over material in equal positions.

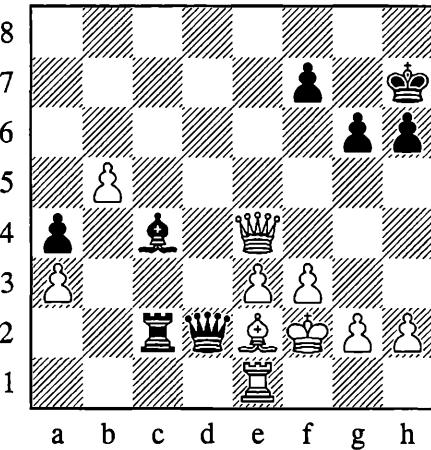
24...♝d8



25.♗e4

There are a couple of alternatives to consider:

25.♗c5 ♜c8 26.♗e7 h6 27.♔f2 ♜c2∞ is obviously okay for Black. White is passive and threatened with ...♜xb5. 28.♜xb7 ♜d2 29.♜e1 ♜c4 30.♜a8† ♜h7 31.♗e4† g6



32.♗d4! (32.♗f4?! ♜d3! wins a piece. The game is not over, but this is certainly not something White wants.) 32...♜xb5 33.♗xd2 ♜xd2 34.e4 ♜a2 This ending is of course drawn, but White is the one who has to hold it.

25.♗e5 g6! 26.♔f2 ♜d2 27.♗c1 ♜a2 28.♗c3 h5 29.h4 ♜h7∞ White's position is unpleasant. Black wants to play ...♔b3 to threaten the a-pawn and ...♔d1.

25...♜c3 26.♔f2 ♜xa3 27.♜xb7 g6 28.b6 ♜b2 29.♜a6 ♜d2 30.♗e1 ♜g7 31.b7 ♜b4

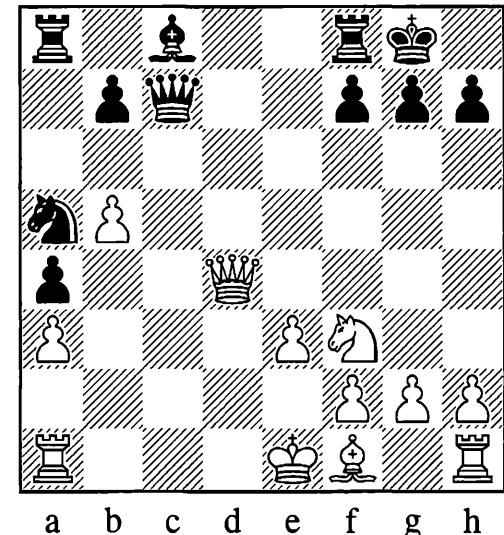
The game should end in a draw. Black is about to play ...♜b2 to control the b-pawn.

B22) 18.♗d4

This was the move that originally made Nikos ignore 17...♝a5, but with little left to analyse, he had to go for this.

18...♜c7!

Obviously Black does not want to exchange queens now.



19.b6

In this important position we should study a few moves:

19.♗e5 ♜c2!

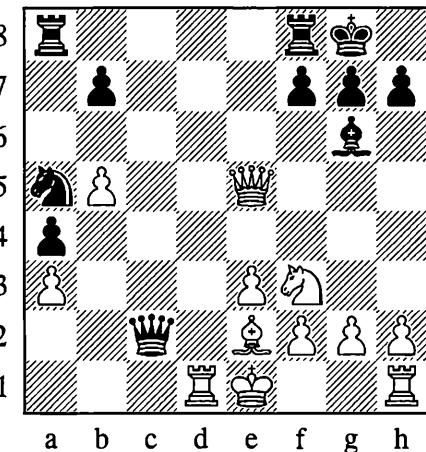
19...♜xe5 20.♝xe5 ♜e6 21.♔e2 ♜ac8 probably also provides enough compensation, but there is no reason to exchange queens right now.

20.♗d1

20.♔e2 ♜d8 21.♔d1! ♜d3 22.♔e2 ♜c2 is a draw by repetition.

20...♝f5 21.♔e2 ♜g6∞

White is unable to complete his development. For example:



22.h4 $\mathbb{B}fe8$

Black wins the a-pawn, in view of:

23. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{R}ad8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$

This is deeply unpleasant for White.

19. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 21. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{R}xd1\#$

22. $\mathbb{R}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}a5!$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xa5$

23.0-0? $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 24. $axb4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6-$ + is bonkers.

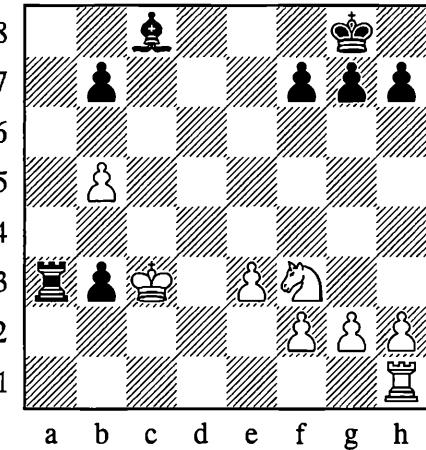
23... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25. $exd4$ $\mathbb{R}xb5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{R}b1\#$

27. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{R}a1=$

24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25.b6 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and Black will win a pawn back with equality.

24... $axb3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{R}xa3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



26... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$

After this important move Black is okay.

Life is a bit more difficult after: 26... $\mathbb{R}a2?$!

27. $\mathbb{R}d1!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb3!$ (28. $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

29. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is of course okay for Black. It is not so easy for White to get rid of the passed pawn.) 28... $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{R}xf2$ 30. $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{R}f1$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$

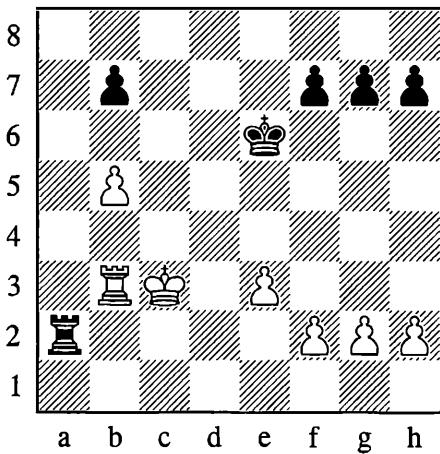
27. $\mathbb{R}b1$

27. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{R}a2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (28. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{R}xf2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ b6 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ fxe6 32. $\mathbb{R}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $\mathbb{R}xg2$ 34.h4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with a draw) 28...fxe6 29. $\mathbb{R}f1$ $\mathbb{R}a5$ 30. $\mathbb{R}b1$ $\mathbb{R}xb5$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 Black should draw this pretty easily.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

Black of course needs to activate the king. This ending is okay for Black and it is possible for White to over-press. For example:

28. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 30. $\mathbb{R}xb3$ $\mathbb{R}a2!=$



31. $\mathbb{R}b2?$

It is time to be cautious with 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 32.e4 $\mathbb{R}xf2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g3=$.

31... $\mathbb{R}xb2!$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ b6

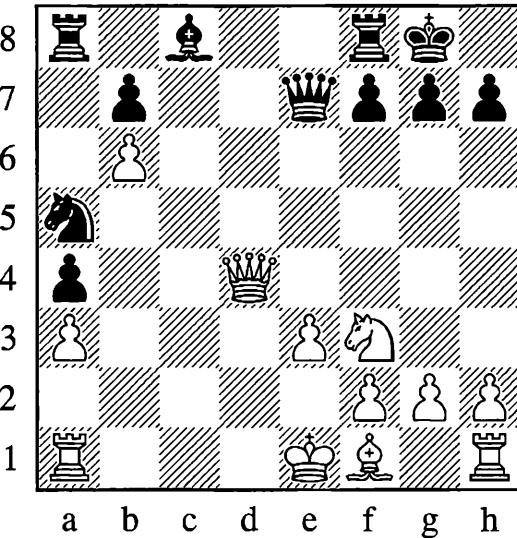
White is a pawn up, but his position should be lost. He will either have to give up the b-pawn, or advance his pawns on the kingside, allowing Black to attack them from the side.

19. $\mathbb{R}d1$ quickly proves counterproductive after: 19... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 21. $\mathbb{R}a1$ (after 21. $\mathbb{R}b1$ Black has a pleasant choice between 21... $\mathbb{R}a2!$ 22. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3=$ and 21... $\mathbb{R}fd8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e5!$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{R}ac8\#$ If anyone is better, it is probably Black.

19... $\mathbb{W}e7!$

Black gives up a second pawn to keep his lead in development intact.

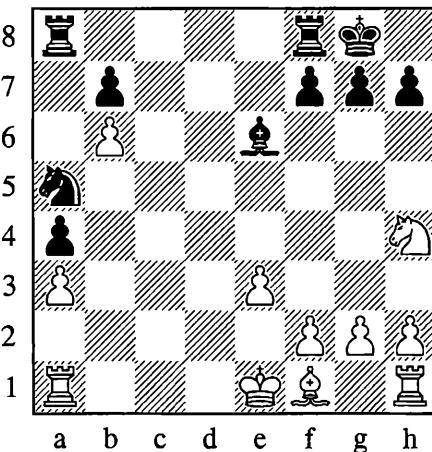
19...Wc6 is probably just as good, but putting the queen on e7 gives Black an extra option, as it is shooting at a3.



20.Wxa4

White is taking up the challenge, which in many ways is a sensible approach to life.

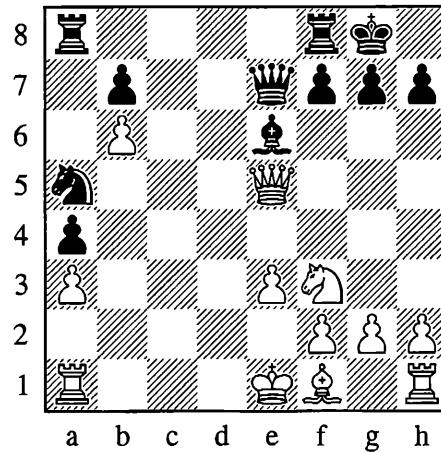
However, the safe option is perhaps also the sanest: 20.Wh4 Wxh4 21.Qxh4 Ke6 (also 21...Bd8 22.Qb5 Qb3 23.Bd1 Bxd1† 24.Qxd1 Ba5 25.Qd3 Bc5 26.Qe2 Qc1† 27.Qd2 Qb3† is a draw)



22.Qb5 Bd8 23.0–0 (23.Bxa4 Qc4=)
23...Qb3 24.Bad1 Qd2 25.Bfe1 Bd6=

20.We5 Ke6

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn. The threat is ...Qb3, when the a3-pawn is in trouble.



21.Wc7!

This seems forced.

21.We4?! g6 leaves White with no alternative to 22.Wh4 Wc5! 23.Wd4 Wc6=.

21...Wf6 22.We5 Wxe5 23.Qxe5 Bfd8 24.Qe2 Qb3 25.Bb1 Bac8=

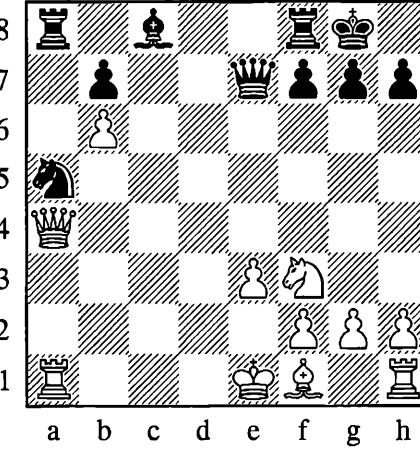
Black is fighting for the full point while White is simply fighting to castle without losing material.

20.Bd1? Wxa3= 21.Ba1

This tricky idea simply does not work.

21...We7! 22.Wxa4
22.Bxa4 Qb3 23.Wb4 Wxb4† 24.Bxb4 Ba1†
25.Qe2 Bb1+– is also hopeless.

Black now has a nice shot in:



22...Qb3!! 23.Wxa8 Wb4† 24.Qd1

No better is 24.Qe2 Wc4† 25.Qe1 Wc3†
26.Qe2 Qxa1.

24...Bd8† 25.Qd3 Wc3!–+

20...♝e6!

It is not a great problem to be two pawns down here.

21.♗h4

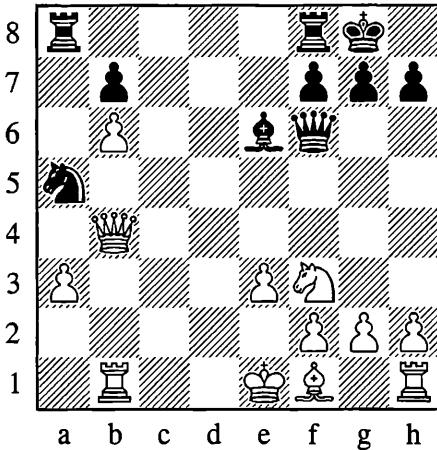
White can also head straight for a draw by allowing a repetition with:

21.♗b4 ♘f6

And now 22.♗d4 ♘e7 just repeats. Instead after:

22.♗b1

Black can play for more with:



22...♞c6!

22...♜a2 23.♝d1 ♜b3 24.♝b1=

23.♗b2 ♘xb2 24.♗xb2 ♜xa3 25.♞d2 ♜c8

26.♔e2 ♜a1† 27.♔d1 ♜e5 28.0-0

28.♔e2?! ♜d8# and then ...♞c4 or ...♞d7 is unpleasant for White.

28...♜cc1 29.♔e2 ♜c4! 30.♗b1! ♜xf1† 31.♔xf1

♜xb1 32.♗xb1 ♜xb6

Though it is not too likely that the ending holds real winning chances.

21...♝xh4 22.♝xh4 ♜b3 23.♝d1

The rook belongs on d1, as now there are no ...♞d2 issues, and in some lines the spectre of ♜d8# limits Black's choices.

23...♜xa3 24.♞f3 ♜c8 25.♞b5 g6 26.0-0

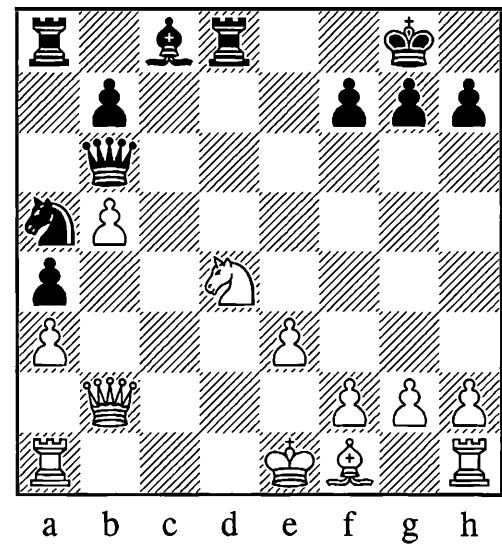
♞c5 27.♞d3 ♜c6

With a likely draw in the ending.

B23) 18.♞d4

This is the most natural move. The knight is well anchored in the centre and from here it controls b3.

18...♜d8

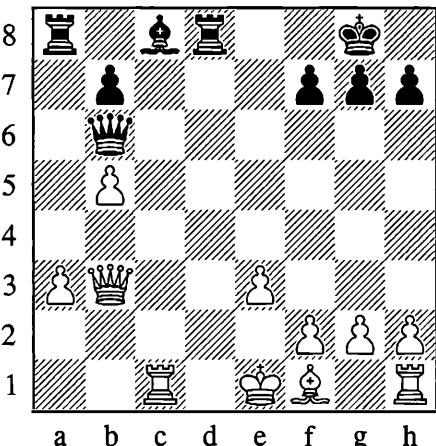


The most significant options are **B231) 19.♞e2** and **B232) 19.♜d1**. We will also consider three minor lines:

19.♜c1?!

This does not put the rook on an especially challenging square. Black can act immediately.

19...♞b3! 20.♞xb3 axb3 21.♝xb3



21...♝d6!

This is the important move to remember.

21...♝e6 gives White a chance to play for an edge with 22.♗b4!

22.♗b4

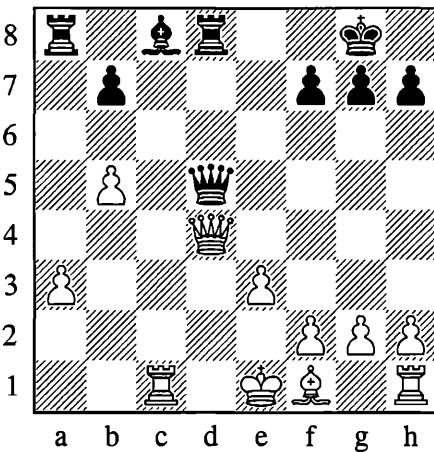
22.♗d1 leads directly to a draw as well.

22...♝xd1† 23.♝xd1 ♜xd1† 24.♝xd1 ♜xa3
25.♔d2 ♜a1!=

22...♝d5 23.♝d4

23.f3 allows Black to be active: 23...♝a4!

24.♗b2 ♜xa3 White now has to be careful.
The safest is 25.♝xc8! forcing a draw after:
25...♜xe3† 26.♔f2 ♜xc8 27.♔xe3 ♜e8†
28.♔f2 ♜c5† 29.♔g3 ♜g5†=



23...♝xd4!

Not 23...♝g5? 24.h4!.

24.exd4 ♜xa3 25.♔e2 ♜a2 26.♔f3 ♔d7 27.0–0
♜xb5 28.♔fe1 g6 29.♔xb7 ♜xd4

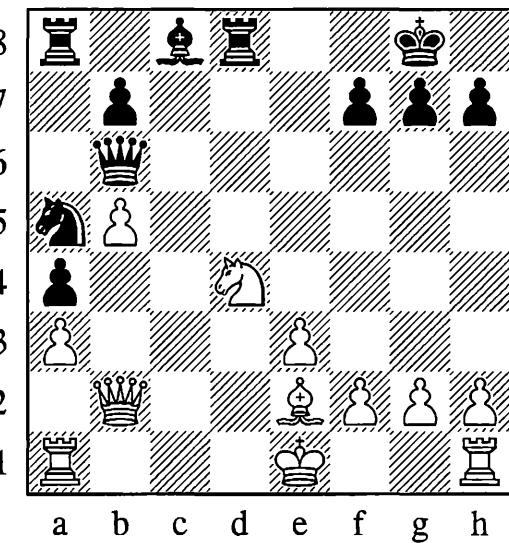
With a draw.

19.f3 ♜b3! 20.♗d1 does not look right.
After 20...♜xd4 21.♗xd4 ♔f5 22.♔f2 ♜xd4
23.♗xd4 ♜xd4 24.exd4 ♜c8 25.♔e2 ♜c2
26.♔e3 ♔f8 Black has enough compensation
to draw easily. Maybe there is something
better, but we cannot analyse everything till
move 40, and sometimes it must be enough
to discount an option as less important, rather
than refute it.

19.♔d3 allows Black to equalize quickly with:
19...♜b3 20.♗xb3 ♜xd3 (or should he chose
so, to draw with 20...axb3 21.♗xb3 ♔e6
22.♔c4 ♜a5† 23.♔f1 ♔xc4† 24.♔xc4 ♜ac8

25.♗b4 ♜xb4 26.axb4 ♔d5) 21.♔d4 ♜g6
22.0–0 ♔h3 23.f3 ♜xe3=

B231) 19.♔e2



This is best met with:

19...♜b3!

The main line goes like this:

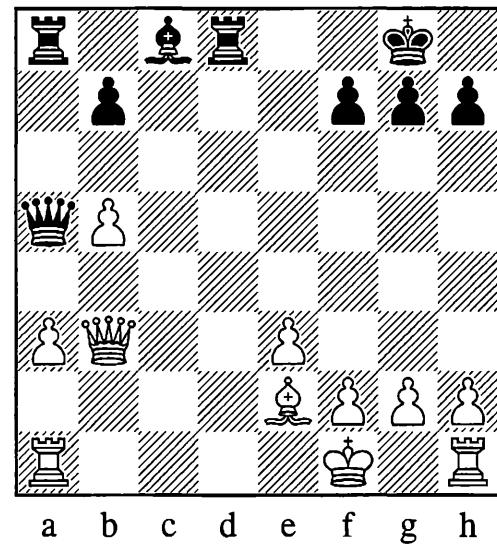
20.♗xb3

20.♗d1 ♜a5† 21.♔f1 ♜xd4 22.♗xd4 ♔e6
transposes to line B21.

20...axb3 21.♗xb3

21.0–0 ♔e6 is not a problem.

21...♜a5† 22.♔f1



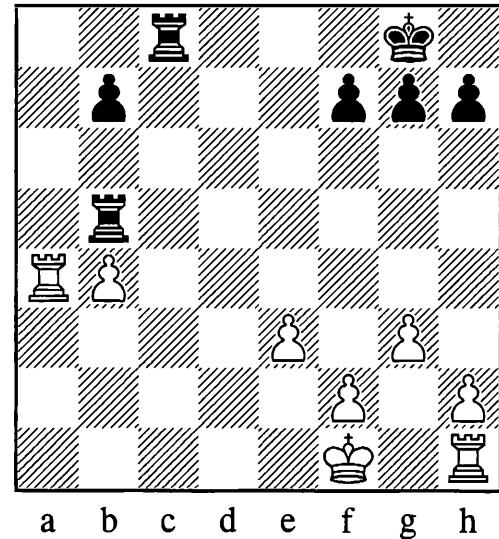
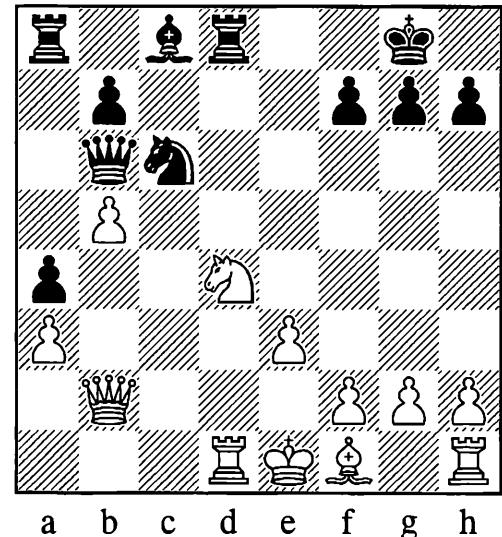
22...♝e6!

It is best to play this move while there is still a tempo to be had with ...♝ac8. Therefore 22...♝d2 23.h4! is probably a bit better for White.

23.♛c4 ♛xc4† 24.♚xc4 ♜ac8 25.♚b4!

The only square. Now 25...♚b6 is probably too risky, so Black should play:

**25...♚xb4! 26.axb4 ♜d5 27.g3 ♜xb5
28.♜a4**

**28...g6!**

Safest. After 28...h5 there are some ♜a5! issues in various positions.

29.♝g2 ♜c2!=

This is an easy draw. For example:

30.♜b1 ♜f5 31.♜f1 ♜b2

The rook ending is drawn.

B232) 19.♜d1 ♜c6!

19...♝b3 is inferior because of: 20.♝c4! ♜a5† (20...♝g4 21.♝xb3± is the main difference from the main line) 21.♝e2 ♜g4† 22.f3 ♜xd4† 23.♜xd4 ♜xd4 24.♜xd4 ♜d8 25.♚b2 ♜c7 26.♜a2!± Black's compensation slowly evaporates.

20.♝e2

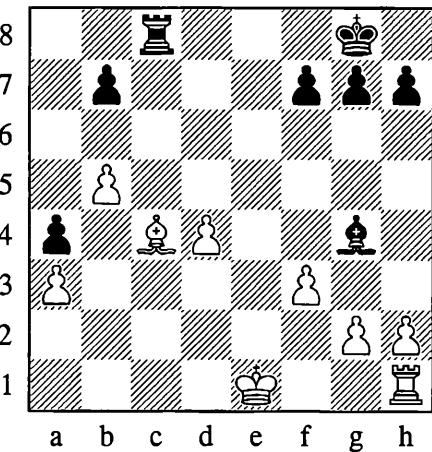
White's alternatives are less impressive.

20.♝xc6 ♜xd1† 21.♝xd1 bxc6∞ is not something to worry about. One fun line goes: 22.♝d3 ♜g4† (22...cxib5! is certainly also fine) 23.f3 ♜xe3 24.♝e2 ♜d4! 25.♝e4! ♜a1† 26.♝d2 ♜xh1 27.♝xh7† ♜f8 28.♝h8† ♜e7 29.♝xa8 ♜xg2† 30.♝c3 ♜xf3 31.♝a7† ♜e8 32.♝b8† ♜d7 33.♝a7† ♜e8=

20.♝c4

This can now be met with:

20...♝g4! 21.f3 ♜xd4 22.♜xd4 ♜xd4 23.♜xd4 ♜xd4 24.exd4 ♜c8!

**25.fxg4**

The most threatening, but not actually threatening, if that makes any sense.

25.♝e2 ♜f5∞ provides Black with plenty

of counterplay. For example: 26.g4 ♜c1† 27.♕d1 ♜d7 28.♕d2 ♜a1 29.♕e1 ♜f8 30.♕e3 ♜xb5 31.d5 f5=

25...♝xc4 26.♔e2 ♜xd4 27.♝c1 ♜f8!

Simplest.

28.g5

28.♝c8† ♜e7 29.♝c7† ♜d7=

28.♝c7 b6 29.♝c6 ♜xg4 30.♔f3 ♜g6 and now White has to be brave and find 31.♝xg6! hxg6 32.♔e4 ♜e7 33.♔d5 ♜d7 34.h4! with a draw.

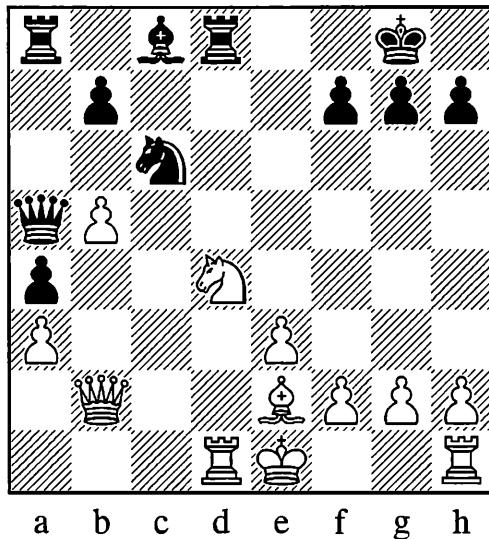
28...♝g4

Many other moves exist.

29.♝c8† ♜e7 30.♔f3 ♜xg5 31.♝c7† ♜e6 32.♝xb7 ♜c5 33.♔e4 ♜c3

With a drawn ending.

20...♛a5†!



21.♝d2

This is the serious move. White is of course happier to be in a position without queens.

21.♝d2 ♜xd4 22.exd4 ♜e6 23.0–0

23.h4 ♜ac8 24.0–0 (24.h5?! ♜c3 25.0–0 ♜xa3=) 24...♜c3=

23...♜ac8

White cannot make progress while his a3-, b5- and d4-pawns are very weak.

24.♝fd1

24.♝c1 ♜xc1† 25.♛xc1 g6 26.h4 h5=

24...♜b3 25.♝c1 ♜b6 26.g3 g6 27.♝f1 ♜xc1 28.♛xc1 ♜g7 29.h4 ♜d5=

The queen can come to d6 eyeing the a3- and d4-pawns while b5 also remains a problem for White.

21.♝f1 ♜xd4 22.♝xd4 (22.exd4 ♜e6=)

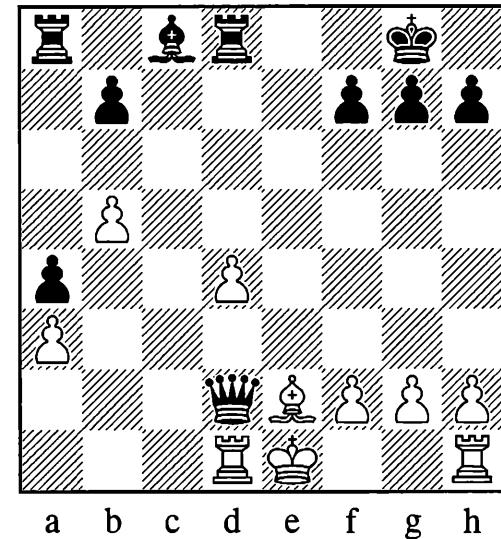
22...♜e6 transposes to line B21 where Black has full compensation.

21...♜xd4 22.exd4

After 22.♛xa5 ♜c2† 23.♝f1 ♜xd1† 24.♝xd1 ♜xa5 25.♝xc2 ♜xb5 26.♝e2 ♜b2= Black has a slight initiative.

22...♛xd2†

22...♛b6?! also exists, but maybe White is better after 23.0–0 ♜e6 24.♛b4!.



23.♝xd2

A more combative try is:

23.♝xd2?!

On the one hand the king is active; on the other it has a tendency to become a target.

23...♜e6

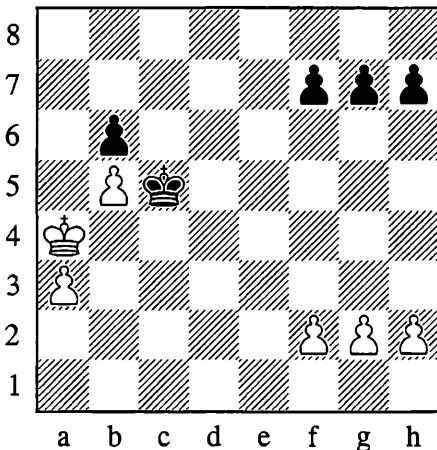
23...♝xd4†? 24.♝c3± is of course not happening.

24.♝d3

24.♝e3 ♜d6= 25.♝f3 ♜c4 26.d5 (26.♝he1 ♜xb5 27.♝xb7 ♜e8† 28.♝f4 ♜f6†=) 26...♜ad8 27.♝d4 ♜xd5 28.♝hd1 ♜e8†

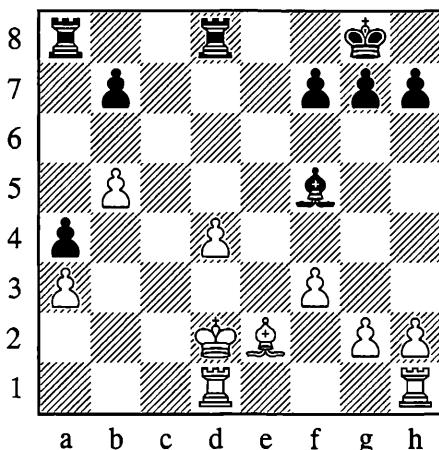
29.♔d2 ♕xf3 30.♕xd6 ♕xd1 31.♔xd1 ♔f8=

The main point is a recurring one in this ending. White is not winning after 32.♕d7 ♕e7 33.♕d8† ♕e8 34.♕xe8† ♕xe8 35.♔d2 ♔d7 36.♔c3 b6 37.♔b4 ♔d6 38.♔xa4 ♔c5



In fact White will have to take care to avoid getting into trouble. On this occasion his issues are minor and the draw is still easy, but in general it is wise to keep this theme in mind.

24...♕f5†! 25.♔e3 ♕e8† 26.♔d2 ♕ed8 27.f3!



The most dangerous move, but Black is still fine.

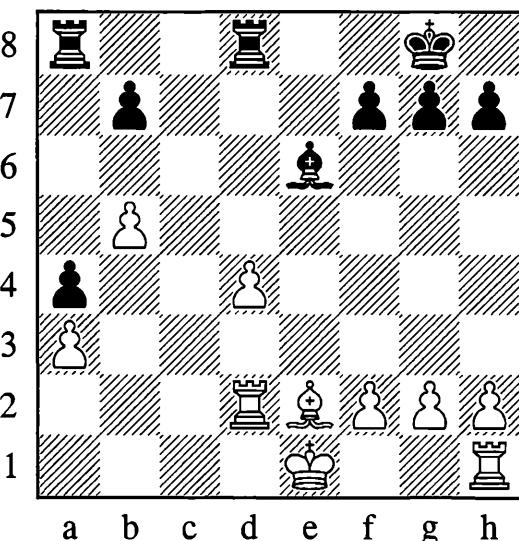
27.♔f3 ♕g4! 28.♔e3 (28.♕xb7 ♕ab8 29.f3 ♕xb7 30.fxg4 ♕xb5 31.♔b1 ♕xd4† 32.♔e3 ♕dd5=) 28...♕xf3 29.♔xf3 ♕d5= Black has solved his problems with activity.

27...♕e6 28.♔e3 ♕b3 29.♔c1 ♕d7 30.♔c3 ♕e8† 31.♔d3 ♕ed8

With a dynamic ending that is more or less equal, but still contested.

23...♕e6

The basic idea in this ending is that White has too many weaknesses to play for an advantage. He cannot activate his rooks in any impressive way and Black has sustained counterplay down the c-file and against the d-pawn.



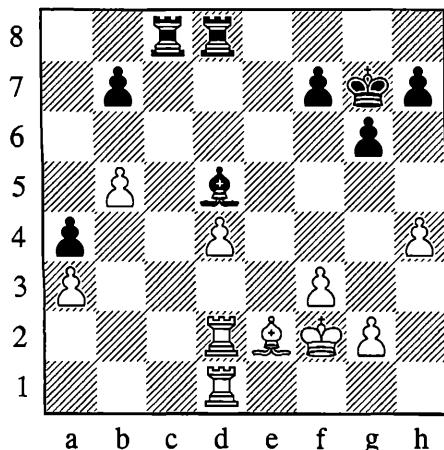
24.f4!!?

The most dangerous idea. White just wants to activate his king and keep the idea of ♔f3 available.

24.f3 ♕ac8 25.♔f2 ♔f8 26.♕hd1 ♕d5 (26...♕b3 27.♔a1 ♕c3=) 27.h4 g6 28.g4 ♕e8=

24.0–0 ♕ac8 25.♕fd1 ♕d5

In our view this is simply equal. For example: 26.f3 g6 27.♔f2 ♕g7 28.h4



28...b6

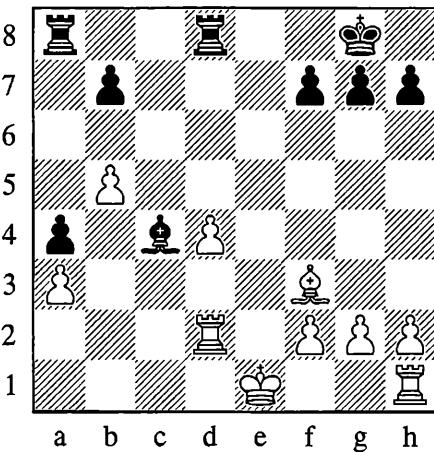
28...h5 29.g4 ♘h8 30.g5 ♘he8 31.♗d3 (to stop ...♘c3) 31...♘c2 (31...♘c4 32.♗d2 ♘d5 repeats) 32.♗d2 ♘c1 33.♗f1 (33.♗g2? ♘c4) And now 33...♗f8 or 33...b6 are both equal of course.

29.g4 ♘e8 30.♗d3 ♗f8=

This can easily go wrong for White. For example:

31.♗e3?! ♘c2! 32.♗xe8† ♗xe8 33.♗e1 ♘a2 34.♗d3 ♘b3=

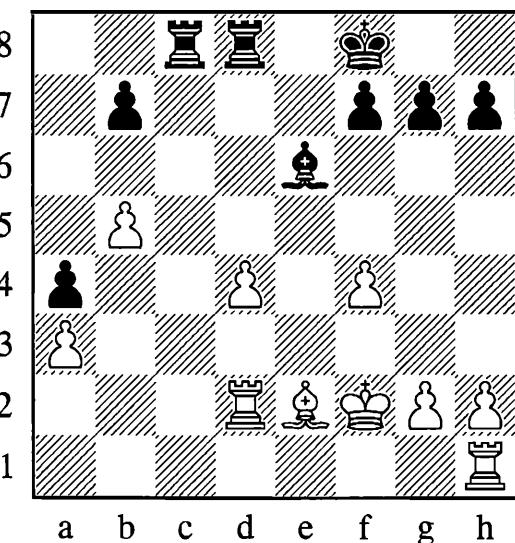
24.♗f3 ♘c4!



25.♗xb7 (25.♗e2 ♘e8 26.♗d1 ♘d5=) 25...♗ab8 26.♗c6 ♘xb5 27.♗xb5 ♘xb5 28.0–0 ♗f8 29.g3 ♘b3 30.♗a1 ♘d5 31.h4 h5= The activity of the black rook is the key.

24...♗ac8 25.♗f2 ♗f8

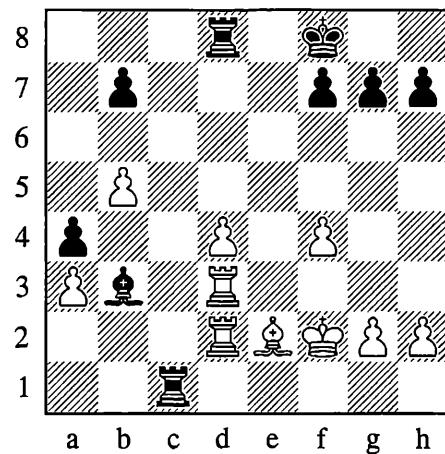
We cannot see where White's advantage is supposed to come from.



26.♗f3

If 26.♗e1 then 26...g6!? as in the main line. White has three weak pawns: a3, b5 and d4. Black doesn't need to rush matters. For example, 27.♗f3 ♘d5= and Black is fine in every line.

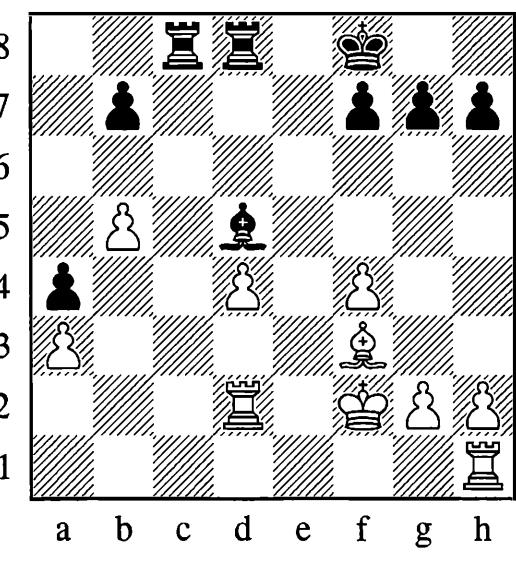
26.♗hd1 ♘d5 27.♗d3 (preventing ...♘c3) 27...♗b3 28.♗1d2 ♘c1 With the idea ...♗a1 and ...♗xa3 with equal chances because the passed d-pawn does not seem so threatening. For example:



29.d5 ♘a1 30.d6 ♘xa3 31.♗d1 b6 32.f5 f6 33.h4 ♗e8 34.d7† ♗f8 35.♗d6 ♗e7=

26...♘d5!

The exchange of bishops does not favour White; as the b5-pawn would suffer.

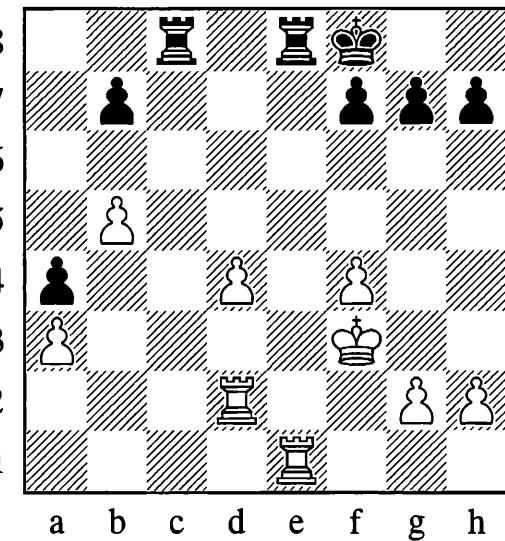


27.♗e1

27.♗d1 ♗b3 28.♗g4 ♗c4 is just a draw.
Black keeps his active pieces on the board.

27...♗xf3 28.♗xf3 ♜e8!

Another surprise. Black gets his king into the game, even if it means more exchanges. This really shows how vulnerable the white pawns are. For example:

**29.♗xe8† ♔xe8 30.♗d3 ♗c2!**

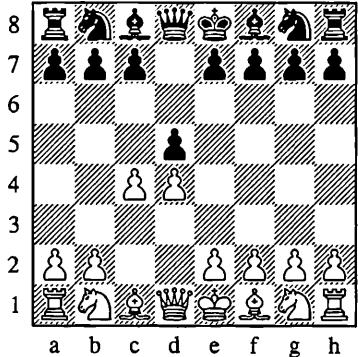
Black's counterplay against the b-pawn leaves White dreaming of an instant draw, rather than a prolonged and unpleasant draw.

Conclusion

After 9.♗d2 ♗xc5 we considered two moves. Line A) 10.e3 only required a brief look as Black can equalize without much drama. Line B) 10.a3! is a very different story. It required weeks of analysis and many missteps before we found the solution detailed above. Currently 10.a3 is a rare move, but we found it to be one of the most threatening replies to the Tarrasch – absolute precision is required by Black to stay out of trouble.

This chapter and the previous one covered 6.dxc5. We predict that this will become the main line against the Tarrasch. If you happen to have the white pieces against a Tarrasch player who is unfamiliar with this book, then the previous two chapters will provide the basis of a highly effective white repertoire.

Chapter 19



Early Deviations

Various 5th Moves

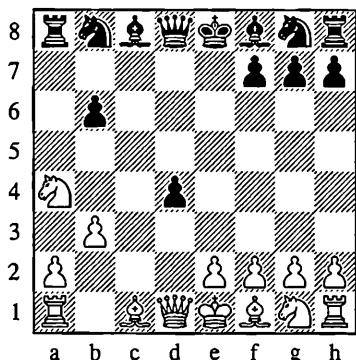
Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4

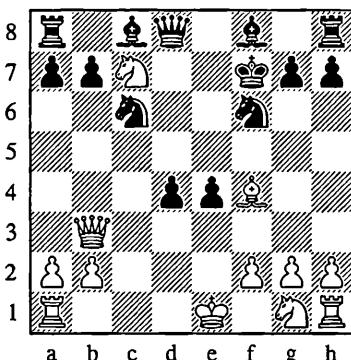
2...e6

A) 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.dxc5	308
B) 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.e4 dxe4	312
B1) 6.d5	312
B2) 6.♗c4	314
C) 3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5	316

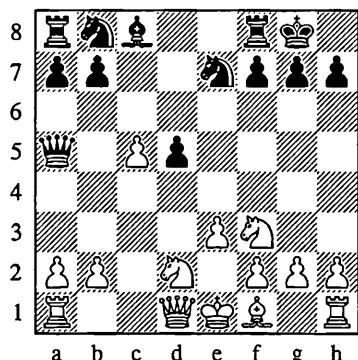
A) after 8.b3



B2) note to 10.♗c4



C) after 9.♘bd2



8...b5!?

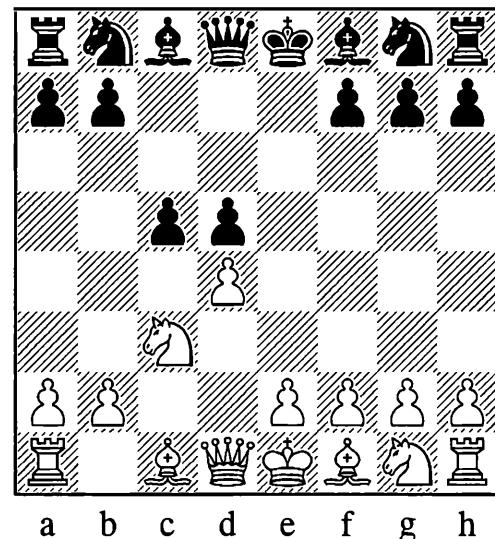
11...♘d5!N

9...♗g4N

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

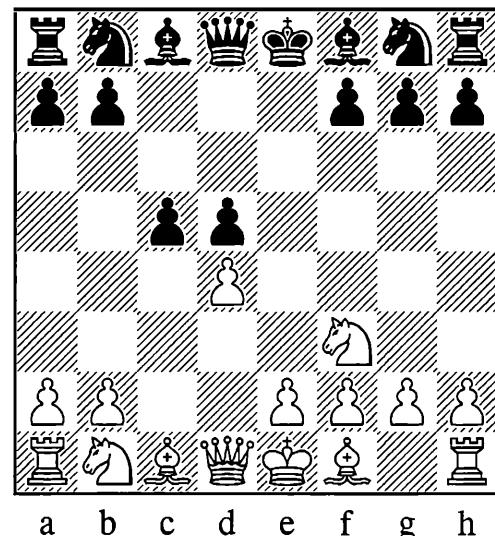
In this chapter we cover White's rare fifth moves. They are not critical, but can be tricky if Black is surprised.

Starting with the **3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5** move order:



We shall look at A) **5.dxc5** and the wild B) **5.e4**.

Then from the **3.♘f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5** move order:



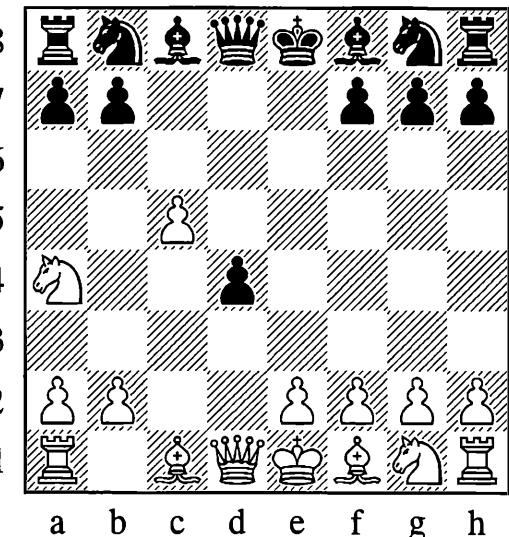
We must consider C) **5.♗g5**.

A) 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.dxc5

5.e3 ♘f6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 transposes to line A2 of Chapter 16

5...d4 6.♘a4

White has taken a pawn and he really wants to keep it. 6.♘e4 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♖d5 transposes to line A of Chapter 17.

**6...b5!**

The bold way to challenge White's sideline.

Another possible continuation is 6...♘c6 when 7.♘f3 transposes to line B of Chapter 17. We don't believe this is a good idea, because we have seen that White can fight for an opening advantage in that line, while 5.dxc5 is much weaker from a theoretical perspective. The other problem is that White doesn't have to play 7.♘f3. Instead 7.a3, 7.♗d2 and 7.e3 can each pose specific problems and we are not convinced Black can equalize against all of them. As an example consider the following game: 7.a3 ♘f6 8.♘f3 ♗g4 9.h3 ♗h5 10.b4 White is a solid pawn up; Black now tries to make something happen, but it backfires nastily. 10...♖d5 11.g4 ♗g6 12.♗g2 ♗e4 13.0-0 ♘e5 14.♘xd4 ♗xg2 15.♘c3 ♖c4 16.♗xg2+– In Komarov – Gokhale, Calcutta 2001, White was winning, especially as 16...♖xc3 would lose instantly to 17.♘b5.

7.cxb6 axb6

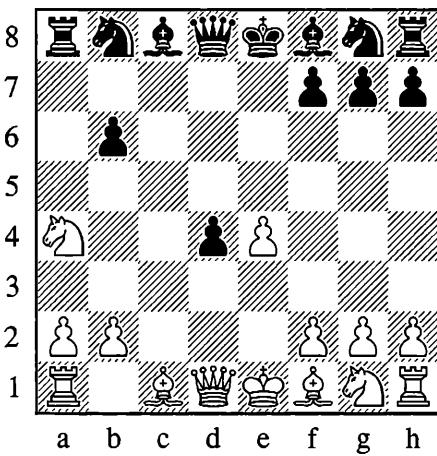
Black wants to play ...b5 again.

8.b3

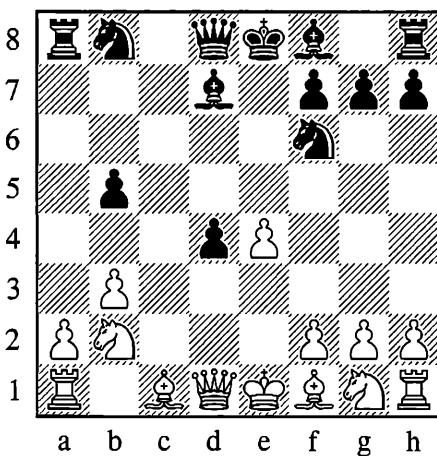
By far the main move, but one other option deserves our attention.

8.e4

This is rare but not ridiculous. White opens a path for his f1-bishop at a point when the line-opening ...dxe3 is unattractive. As we shall see in many lines below, White has plenty to fear from an open centre.

**8...♗d7**

8...♗b4†?! leads to a few tactics before quietening rapidly: 9.♗d2 ♗xd2† 10.♕xd2 ♜xa4 11.♗b5† ♗d7 12.♗xa4 ♗xa4 13.♗f3 The d-pawn will drop, making the material count rook and two pawns against two minor pieces. It's not a disaster, but we prefer White. For example: 13...d3 14.0–0 ♗e7 15.b3 ♗c6 16.♗fe1 0–0 17.♗ad1±

9.b3 b5 10.♗b2 ♗f6∞

White will stay a pawn up, but we are happy with Black's compensation. He has a passed pawn and easy development; even the unmoved rook on a8 is working. A few sample lines will show typical play:

11.f3

11.♗d3 ♗b4† 12.♗d2 ♗a3∞

11...♗b4† 12.♗d2 ♗c3?! 13.♗c2 b4∞

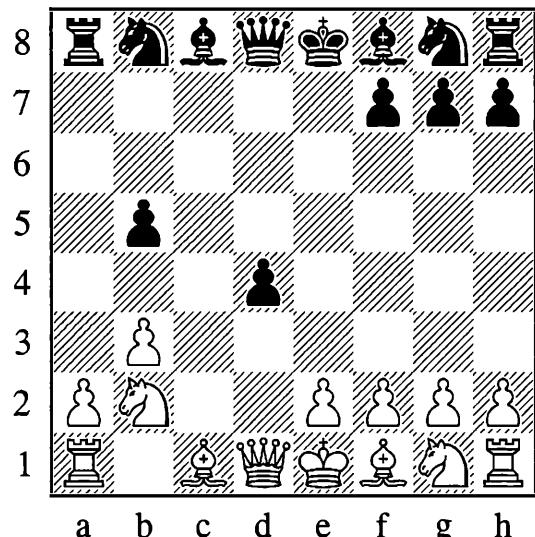
A curious and powerful outpost.

8...b5?!

Amazingly this has rarely been tried. 8...♗f6 is the usual move, but there is no need to go for that, as it gives White more options. For example, 9.e3 leaves Black needing to prepare ...b5 with 9...♗d7. In fact, Black also seems OK here, but why follow a well-worn path when the fresh territory looks even better?

9.♗b2

9.♗d3? has not been tried in practice because of: 9...♗b4† (9...bx a4? 10.♗e4† is White's idea) 10.♗d1 Otherwise White loses a piece. 10...♗c6 Black has obvious compensation.

**9...♗f6**

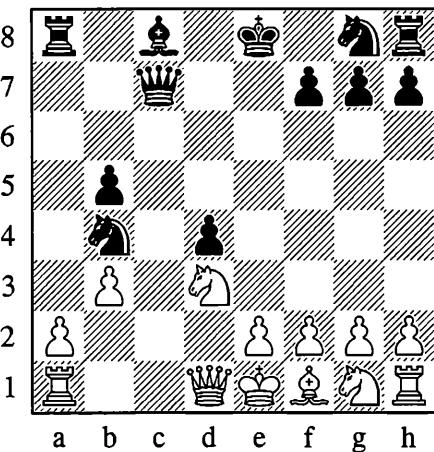
Black has another promising option in this almost unexplored position: 9...♗b4†?N 10.♗d2 ♗c6 It's too early in the game to give exhaustive analysis, but the following two sample lines give a flavour:

a) 11.♕xb4 ♕xb4 12.♗d3

Or 12.♗d2 ♖a5! 13.♗c1 ♔f6 14.♗d3 ♕xd3† 15.exd3 and now 15...0–0† is more promising than the simpler 15...♖xd2† 16.♔xd2 ♖xa2† 17.♗c2 ♖xc2† 18.♔xc2 when White should hold the draw.

12...♗c7?!

This kicks off an entertaining flurry of action:



13.♗c1

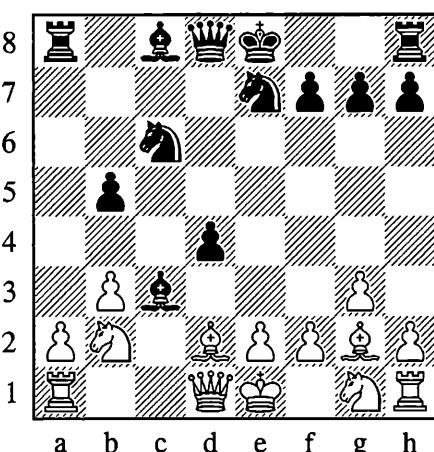
13.♗c1 ♕xd3† 14.exd3 ♖a5† 15.♗d2 ♖xd2† 16.♔xd2 ♖xa2† 17.♗c2 ♖xc2† 18.♔xc2 ♕e7† Probably it's a draw, but Black is the one who can try for more.

13...♗c2† 14.♔d1 ♖c3 15.♗b1 ♖xa2 16.♗b2 ♖xb2 17.♗xb2 ♖xb2 18.♗xb2 ♕a1 19.♗f3 ♕xb3 20.e3 dxe3 21.♗xb5† ♕e7 22.♗e1 ♕e6 23.♗xe3

After all those fun moves, it's just a draw.

b) 11.g3 ♕ge7 12.♗g2 ♔c3?!

The same idea we saw above.



13.♗c1

13.♗xc3 dxc3 14.♗xd8† ♕xd8 15.♗d3 ♕a3∞

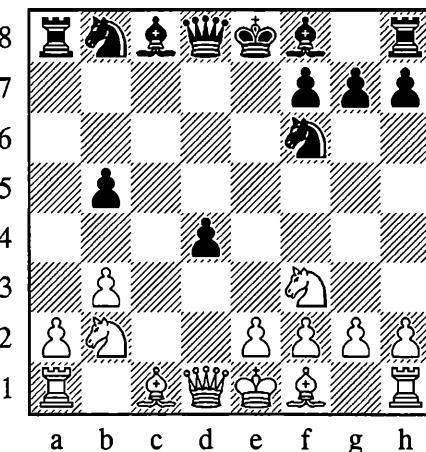
13...♗d5 14.♗d3 b4∞

White has a tough choice: tolerate a monster piece on c3 or create a passed pawn on the sixth. We modestly claim "unclear" but would rather play the black side.

10.e3

Opening the centre is highly risky, but of course White needs to develop somehow.

10.♗f3



10...♗c6

This simple developing move is fine. For White, developing the f1-bishop will involve a weakening pawn move.

Also possible is: 10...♗e4 11.♗d2 (11.♗d3?∞) 11...♕a3 This was suggested by GM Davies in his Tarrasch DVD and seems good for Black. For example: 12.♗d3 0–0 13.g3 Black has adequate compensation after 13...♗b7 or 13...♗e8.

Black's position is so easy to play that even the simple 10...♗b4† 11.♗d2 ♕xd2† looks promising. 12.♗xd2 (or 12.♗xd2 ♗c6 and ...♗e4 is on the way) 12...0–0 Followed by a quick ...♗e8.

We mention these options to show that Black is not relying on one tactical line to work. Instead his position is so strong that appealing lines sprout everywhere.

11. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. e3

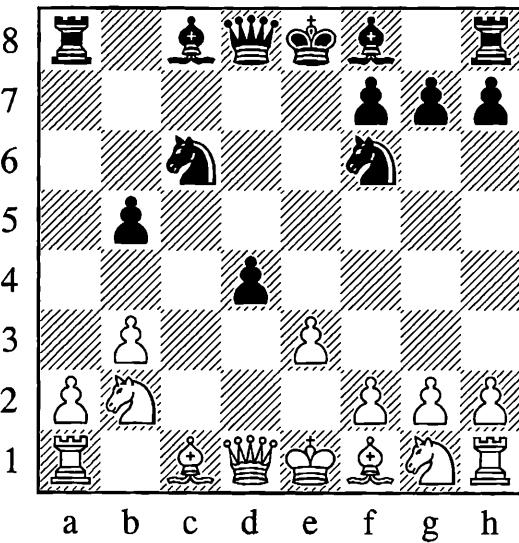
12. g3?! $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}xd3$ 14. exd3 0–0–0

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$

10. e4 may be the best try to keep the centre closed; after 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ we transpose to the 8.e4 line analysed above.

10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black's initiative is remarkably powerful.



11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This natural move runs into trouble, which shows how tough White's position is to play.

11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ at least creates an escape square on f1, but of course that is no fun for White. For example: 11... $\mathbb{Q}d5\?$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}c3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0–0→

11... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd2$

13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2\?$ dx e3 14. fxe3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ is horrible.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$

Followed by ... $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ with a dangerous initiative.

14. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Similarly painful is:

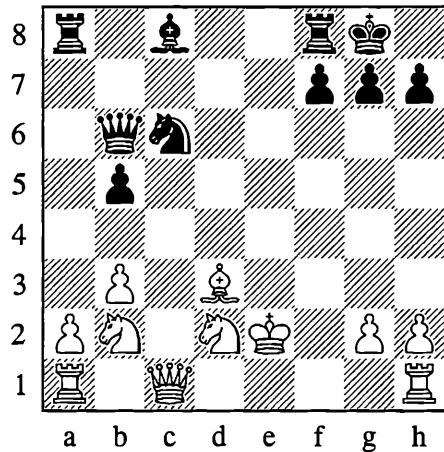
14. $\mathbb{W}c1 \mathbb{W}a5\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0–0 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}xf2\!$

The white king is forced into the open.

Without this vital move White might be almost OK!

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ dx e3 $\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe3 \mathbb{W}b6\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is crushed by 19... $\mathbb{Q}b7\#$.



In this position it is worth noting that Black has more than one way to skin this cat.

19... $\mathbb{Q}e8\#$

19... $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$? 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{W}f6\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g1 \mathbb{W}e8$
22. $\mathbb{W}f1 \mathbb{Q}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}xa2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4 \mathbb{W}d4\#$
25. $\mathbb{W}f2 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}xb1\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}xd4$
28. $\mathbb{Q}xb1 \mathbb{Q}f5\#$ Black is simply a pawn up.

20. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}e5$

Obviously White is in trouble.

21. $\mathbb{W}e1 \mathbb{Q}b7\#$?

21... $\mathbb{W}d8\#$? would also get the job done.

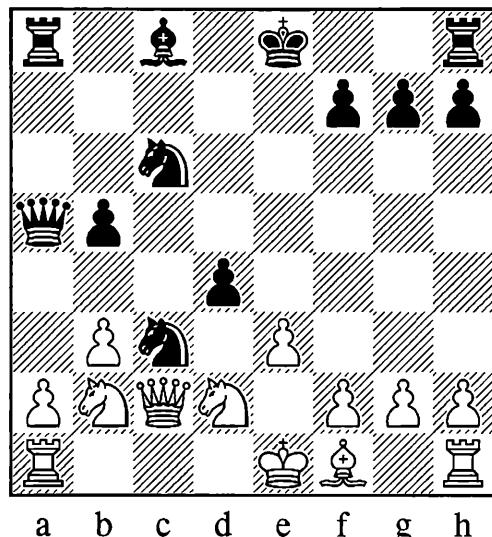
22. $\mathbb{W}f2 \mathbb{W}h6$

Black has unbearable pressure. Just for the moment White has an extra knight, but his king is in trouble with the h1-rook a spectator.

14. $\mathbb{W}d1$ is even worse after 14... $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}g4$ when Black has been gifted a free tempo.

14... $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}c3\!$

This is certainly best. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ dx e3 17. fxe3 puts White under far less pressure. For example: 17... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0 19. 0–0 was Caselli – Sbarra, Robecchetto 2004, and now Black could play 19... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{Q}xd3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ b4 which would be enough for equality, but that is uninspired compared to 15... $\mathbb{Q}c3$.



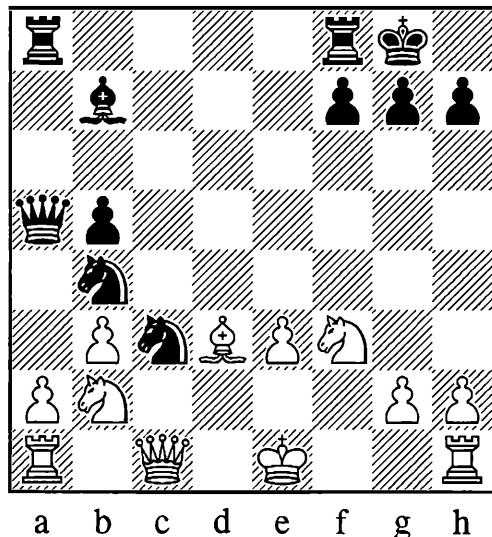
16.Qd3 Qb4 17.Wc1 0-0-+

White is unable to castle due to a later fork on e2, so his king must wait in the centre for the impending disaster.

18.Qf3

Of course 18.a3 threatens nothing.

18...dxe3 19.fxe3 Wb7



20.Wd2

After 20.Wxc3 Qxd3† 21.Qd2 b4! 22.Wxd3 Wxf3+ White is dead as 23.gxf3 allows 23...Wfd8.

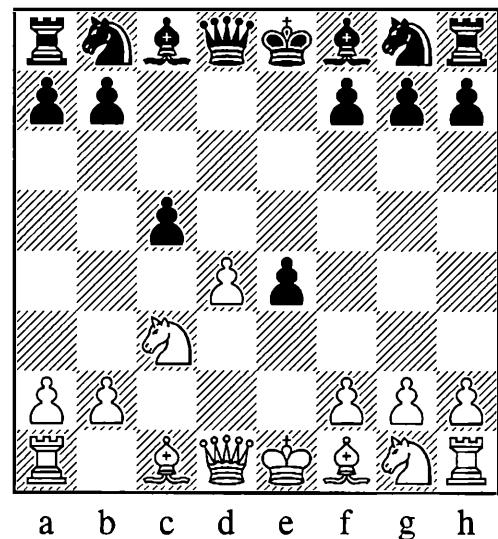
20...Wxf3 21.gxf3 Qxd3† 22.Qxd3 Wfd8 23.0-0 b4 24.Wc2 Wg5† 25.Qh1 We3+–

Material is level, but White's position is an unfunny joke. Just note that 26.Qae1 should be met by 26...Wd4 and not 26...Wxd3? 27.Qe8† when Black's queen blunder may cost him half a point! 27...Wxe8 28.Wxd3 Wxa2=

B) 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.e4

This move was analysed by GM Glenn Flear in the book *Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit* where he called it the Mamedyarov Gambit. Flear was very honest and accurate in stating he thought the gambit was unsound. He also showed it can lead to wild play, so Black needs to do his homework.

5...dxe4



Decision time for White. The main lines are **B1) 6.d5** and **B2) 6.Qc4**.

B1) 6.d5 Qf6

6...f5 is the main line in many of the sources. It also looks promising but we will go our own way and develop a piece.

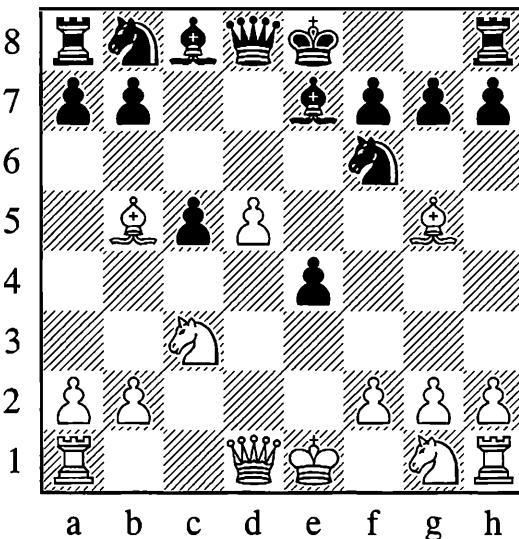
7.Qg5

After 7.Qf4 Qd6 8.Qb5† Qf8 White will soon lose even more time than Black. One fine old game continued: 9.Qg5 a6 10.Qa4

$\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$ g5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 In Van der Lijn – Wade, Amsterdam 1964, Black was a pawn up with the better position: the black king will find a safe home on g7.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

White stays a pawn down, as 8. $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$ loses a piece: 8... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}a4\#$ This has been played once; no doubt White was anticipating a block on d7 when he takes on e4 pinning the bishop. He must have been disappointed by 9... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$.



8... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$

This “looks promising for Black” – Flear. Indeed, now Black has fantastic results in practice. Instead 8... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is the most common move, but is an unnecessary concession. Black can fix his king position but it takes enough time to leave Black looking only for equality. Against White’s inferior line we can be more ambitious.

9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

White has nothing better:

9. $\mathbb{Q}e3?!$ 0–0 10. d6 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 12. fxe3 a6 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4!\#$ Knaak – Padevsky, Pula 1975.

9. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 10. d6

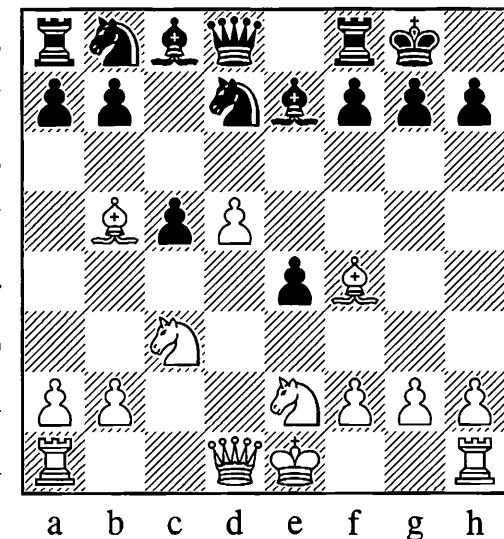
10. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ was given as equal in *ECO* by Padevsky, but actually after: 10... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 11. d6 (11.0–0 0–0 12. $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ b5 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ f5 should also be better for Black) 11... a6 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 0–0–0 \mp Black is better.

10... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d5$ 0–0 12. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ b6

A draw was agreed in Yuneev – Kuzovkin, Yerevan 1983, but Black is slightly for choice because the advanced d-pawn is not so strong when the queens are no longer on the board; Black can easily blockade it.

9... 0–0 10. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$

10. $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ was played in Knaak – Baumbach, Frankfurt 1977. Now the simple 11... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12. d6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ favours Black.



10... $\mathbb{Q}g5! \infty$

As proposed by Kasparov in *ECO*. It looks a good move although it has yet to be tried in practice. Black’s queenside will soon wake up; and remember he is a pawn up.

Also OK is 10... a6 11. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ as in Uchitel – A. Potkin, St Petersburg 1998, and now 11... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is fine for Black.

B2) 6.♕c4 cxd4

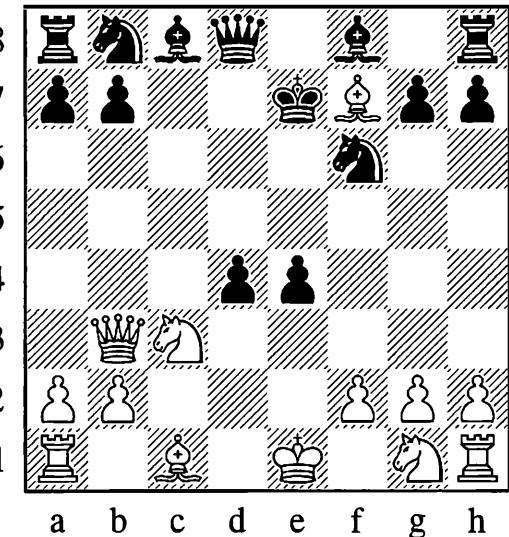
6...♝f6 also looks good, but against this rare line we will settle for one strong reply.

7.♗b3

Objectively White should prefer the untested 7.♕xe4N but that is not his plan at all. After 7...♝f6, for example, Black is a pawn up for very little.

7...♝f6

Flear considered this a good equalizing try. We have tried to strengthen this line into a complete refutation.

8.♕xf7† ♛e7

It's certainly an odd position with the black king uncomfortably placed. But Black is a pawn up with a massive centre. That sums up the themes of the next few moves: if Black avoids the punches White is throwing, he will take over the game later. Short-term danger, long-term joy.

9.♕f4

This wild move is White's most confusing, and therefore best, try.

9.♕d5† ♛xf7 10.♕c7† ♛g6 11.♕xa8 ♕c6†

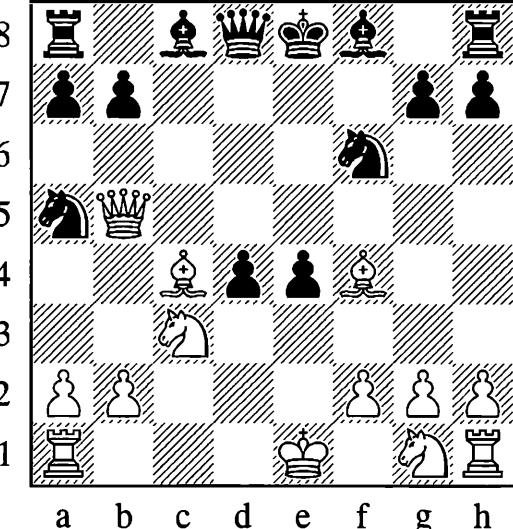
is given in *NCO*. A good line, but winning appears to be a more accurate assessment. 11...♛a6 is also fine as in Nadanian – Godena, Saint Vincent 2000, which Black won comfortably.

9.♕b5 ♜c6 10.♕d2 a6! (10...♝b6 11.♕e2 is given by Flear as unclear) 11.♕a3 d3N The idea of ...♝d4 gives Black a crushing advantage. 11...a5 was also good enough to win in Mamedyarov – Genba, Pardubice 2008, and that was despite a 300-point rating gap in White's favour.

The wild 9.♕f3?! was mentioned by Craig Evans on *ChessPublishing*. Forum regulars (and our engines) also supplied a refutation: 9...dxc3 10.bxc3 ♜b6 Creating an escape square for the king: 11.♕a3† ♛d8+ A nice idea for White, but unsound.

9...♝c6 10.♕c4

After 10.♕d5† ♛xf7 11.♕c7† instead of playing in similar style to the line above with 11...♛g6, Black has the even stronger: 11...♝d5!N 12.♕xa8 (12.♕xd5† ♜xd5 13.♕xd5 ♛f5–+) 12...♛b4† 13.♕f1 ♛e6–+

10...♝a5 11.♕b4† ♛e8 12.♕b5†**12...♝c6!N**

This novelty was mentioned by GM Simon Williams.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
15. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$

This may at first look to favour White, however Black can play:

16... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 18.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b5\#$
19. $\mathbb{W}c2!?$

19... $\mathbb{W}xb5!$

White's risky play was rewarded in Williams – Williamson, Liverpool 2007, after 19... $\mathbb{Q}f7?!$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $bxa6\pm$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

Black seems fine after either 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}c2$ or 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}c2$.

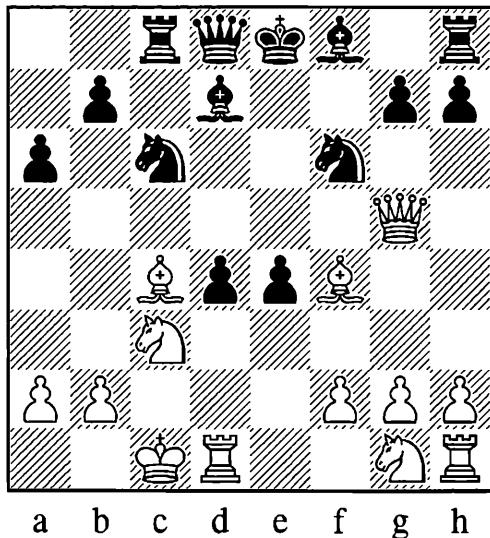
13.0–0–0

"Black is probably better but the position is still a mess" – Williams. We agree. Black will have to step carefully but if he does then he has a big advantage. Let's see some lines with the engines as helpers:

13... $a6$

13... $\mathbb{Q}d7?!$ also looks good.

14. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$



15. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

15. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $dxc3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ would feel scary

over the board, but Black's extra piece should prevail. For example: 16... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c5\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ $\mathbb{B}f7\#$ — The attack is gradually running out of steam.

15... $\mathbb{B}c8\#$

With a clear advantage for Black; preventing $\mathbb{Q}c7$ and creating threats down the c-file is just the sort of double action Black needs to save the day and win the point.

16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

None of the alternatives will save White either:

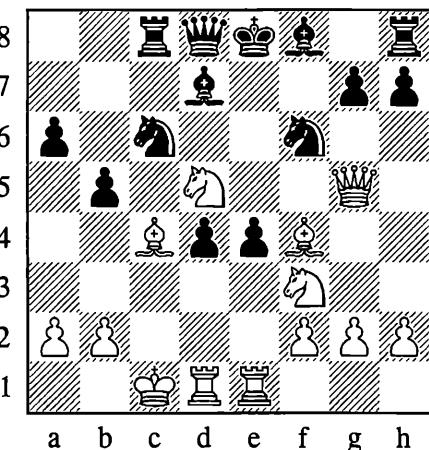
16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $gxf6\#$ White cannot be proud of his position.

16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $b5$

16... $exf3?!$ 17. $\mathbb{B}he1\#$ —

17. $\mathbb{B}he1$

17. $\mathbb{Q}b3? \mathbb{Q}xd5$ —



It may feel as though Black is about to lose a miniature, but it's not so:

17... $bxc4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7?!$

A safe solution, returning some of the extra material to reach an ending.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$
22. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xe4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$

With knight against two pawns it will take some work to force resignation, but of course White's task is even less attractive.

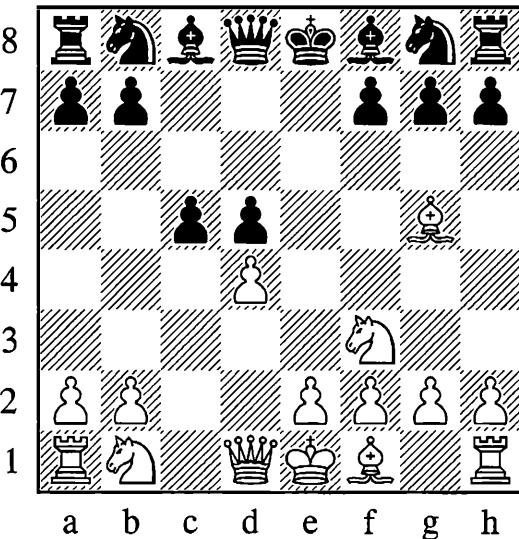
16...♝g4!

Chopping the queens is a relief.

17.♝h3 ♜xg5 18.♝xg5 ♜f5

Black is on his way to victory.

C) 3.♝f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♝g5



White tweaks his move order to avoid most of the theory.

5...♞e7

5...♝f6?! is of course an error, as after 6.♞c3 White reaches a position we should not allow.

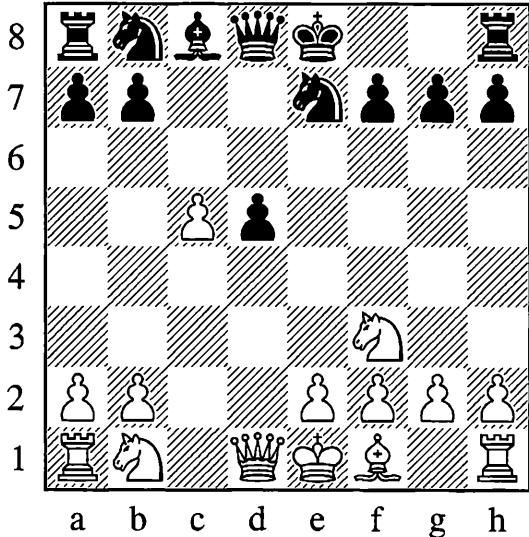
6.♝xe7 ♜xe7

Now there are some important differences compared to the line 3.♝c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♝f3 ♜c6 6.♝g5 ♜e7, because in this new case the queen's knights have not developed yet. Black must be careful to avoid being tricked into a prospectless ending.

7.dxc5

7.e3 c4 8.♝c3 ♜c6 would transpose to line C1 of Chapter 16.

After the text move what do we have? An IQP position with the dark-squared bishops gone and White a pawn up. So far, it sounds bad, but Black has one trump – a lead in development.



7...0–0!

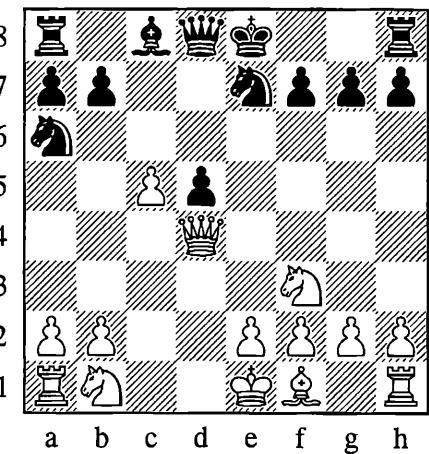
This move order is essential as a close look at the alternatives will explain.

7...♜a5† is not as good due to 8.♝d2! ♜xc5 9.♝c3± as given in *NCO*. White has had fantastic results in practice; this is one of the queen exchanges we need to avoid.

7...♝a6

This is supposed to be the correct solution but White has scored fantastically with:

8.♝d4!



8...♝f5

8...0–0 9.e3 ♜c6 10.♝c3 ♜g4 11.♝d4 ♜ab4 12.♝a3± P. Nikolic – Illescas Cordoba, Barcelona 1989.

8...♜a5† 9.♝c3 0–0 10.e3 ♜e6 11.♝xa6 ♜xa6 12.♝a4 ♜fc8 13.♝xa6 bxa6 14.♝d4

$\mathbb{B}xc5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$ In Hebden – Summerscale, Britain (ch) 2011, Black eventually held the draw, but this ending is exactly the sort we wish to avoid.

9. $\mathbb{W}e5\# \mathbb{Q}e6$

Now in Rychagov – Bezgodov, Voronezh 2002, the best line was:

10. $g4 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xg7 \mathbb{B}g8$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c3 \mathbb{Q}xg4$
13. $\mathbb{Q}bd2\pm$

8.e3

This simple move is safest.

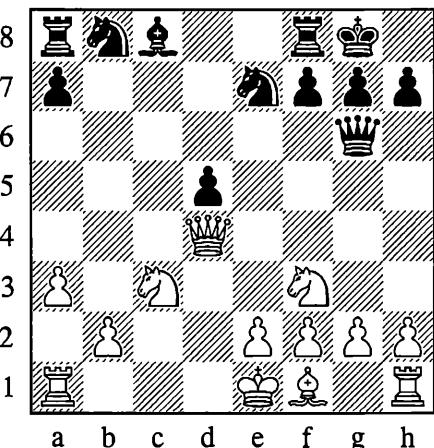
8.a3N

Trying to hold on to the pawn is excessively greedy with the white king loitering in the centre.

8...b6!

Black is so far ahead in development that this crude measure is effective. For example:

9. $cxb6 \mathbb{W}xb6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{W}g6\infty$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



Black has at least a couple of good continuations; the key is to be fast and aggressive:

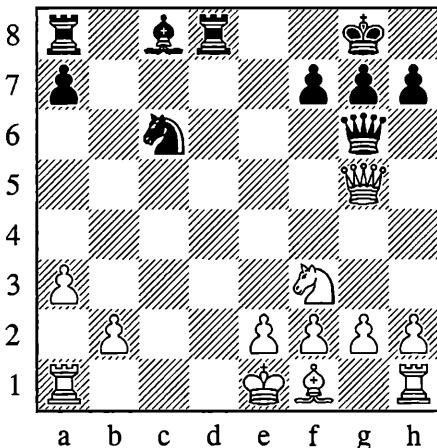
11... $\mathbb{Q}bc6!?$

Also fine is 11... $\mathbb{B}d8$. For example: 12. e3 $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c5 \mathbb{Q}g4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (perhaps 14. $0-0-\infty$ is better as it covers d4, but the long-term safety of White's king is uncertain)
14... $d4$ Black has a huge initiative.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd5 \mathbb{B}d8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}g5$

Of course keeping the queens on with 14... $\mathbb{W}e4!\uparrow$ is the way to play for a win, and

the best idea. However, just to illustrate the power of the initiative, note that Black can illogically accept an ending two pawns down and still be fine:



14... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg5 \mathbb{B}b8$ 16. $b4 a5!$ 17. $\mathbb{B}c1$
17. $bxa5?$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 18. $0-0-0 \mathbb{Q}a6+$

17... $a5$ 18. $a5 \mathbb{B}xb4$ 19. $f3 \mathbb{Q}e5=$

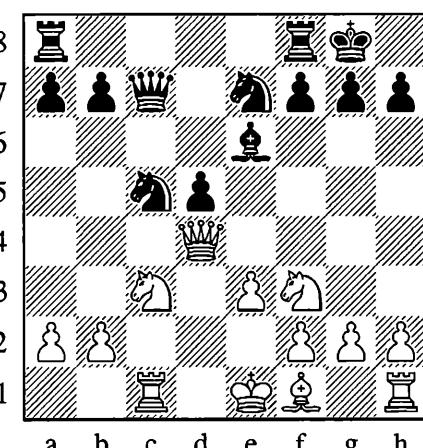
Despite White's extra pawn he has no winning chances; Black will soon play ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ adding to the pressure. If White avoids numerous tricks it will be a draw; a curious situation considering White has 4 vs. 3 pawns with all the action on one side of the board!

8. $\mathbb{Q}bd2 \mathbb{W}a5$ 9. e3 transposes below.

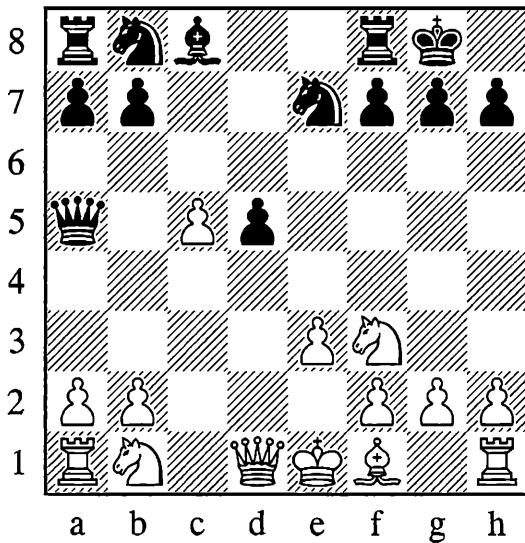
8... $\mathbb{W}a5\#$

Now after our precise move order this check is fine.

We also looked at the novelty 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ but it is less reliable. For example: 9. $\mathbb{W}d4$ (9. $\mathbb{W}c2!?$)
9... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}xc5$ 11. $\mathbb{B}c1 \mathbb{Q}e6$



12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
 15. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{E}ac8!$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xb6$
 $\mathbb{E}c1\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}c2\#$ This is a fun draw, but
 unfortunately White can play better with
 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 13.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b4!$ with a
 slight but enduring pull.



We have a split depending on how White blocks the check:

9. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

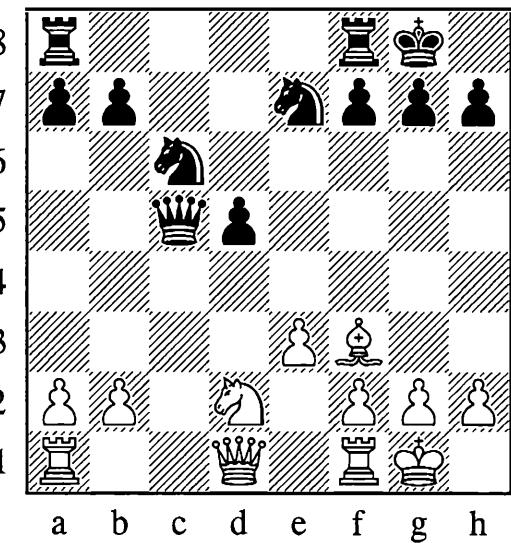
9. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 10. $\mathbb{W}c3$ can now be met by 10... $\mathbb{W}b6!=$ because g7 is not hanging. Black has a good game; he will develop rapidly and the white queen will certainly have to move again. It is clear now why Black must castle on move 7.

9. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ And after Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ we will transpose to line C21 of Chapter 16.

9... $\mathbb{Q}g4N$

Fighting for control of d4. Instead 9... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ was Rychagov – Heinrich, Internet (blitz) 2004, where White had a grip on d4. If Black had played 13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ he would have had decent activity, but our novelty is more to the point.

10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 12.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}bc6=$



Some would claim White has an edge, but after Black centralizes his rooks (most likely c8 and d8) and plays ...d5-d4 it will be what authors call a “nominal” edge. After just a dozen moves with Black, we can’t complain.

Conclusion

In line A) 5. $dxc5$ Black can exploit the omission of $\mathbb{Q}c3$ with 6... $b5!$ and then the rare but powerful 8... $b5$. Black sacrifices a pawn for tremendous compensation. This line is easy for Black to remember – just keep playing ... $b5!$

B) 5. $e4$ is known as the Mamedyarov Gambit. It is unsound, but Black must be familiar with the details and even then a cool head is required, in particular in the craziness of B2) 6. $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

In contrast, C) 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is a quiet attempt to achieve a dull endgame edge. Black can avoid the danger with the accurate 7...0–0! when the queens usually stay on the board and Black equalizes.



Early Deviations

Various 4th Moves

Variation Index

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3

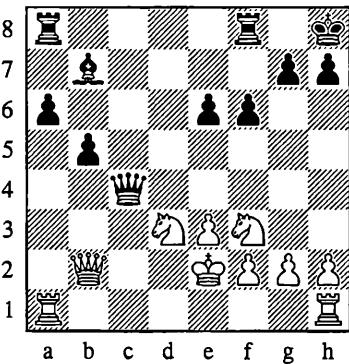
3...c5

A) 4.dxc5!?	320
B) 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 a6	322
B1) 6.dxc5	324
B2) 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗e2 ♘c6 8.0–0 ♔d6 9.dxc5 ♔xc5	325
B21) 10.a3	327
B22) 10.b3	328
C) 4.♘f3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6	333
C1) 6.g3	333
C2) 6.♗f4	335
C3) 6.♗g5	336
C4) 6.cxd5	338

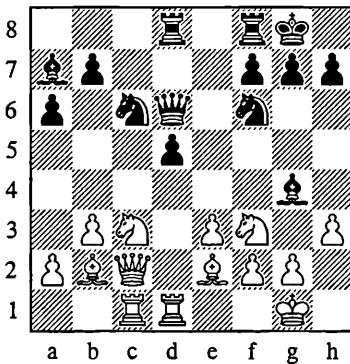
B1) after 21.♘d3

B22) after 15.h3

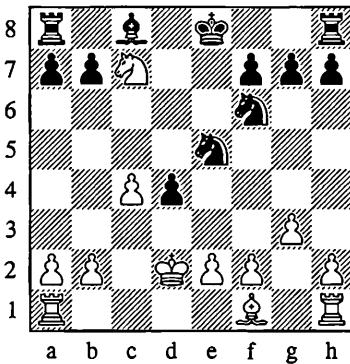
C1) after 14.♘c7†



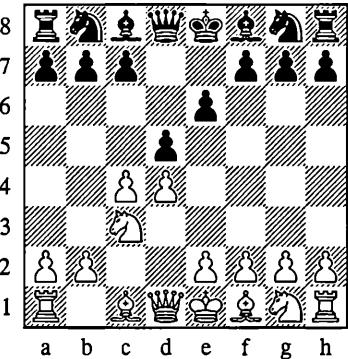
21...♗fd8!N



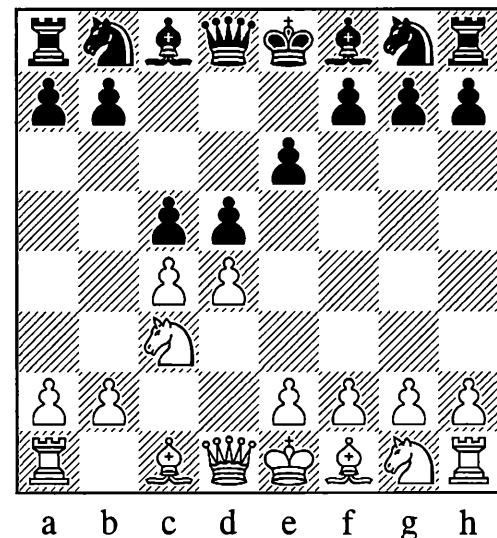
15...♗h5!N



14...♗e7!N



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5

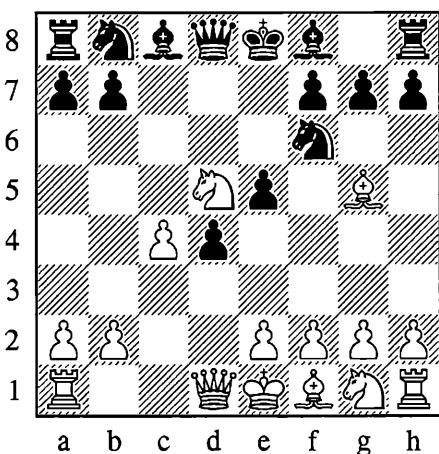


In this chapter we will look at White's various alternatives to 4.cxd5, namely **A) 4.dxc5!?**, **B) 4.e3** and **C) 4.♘f3**. Other moves are dodgy, and can be dealt with quickly.

4.e4? cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♘c6 is just bad for White.

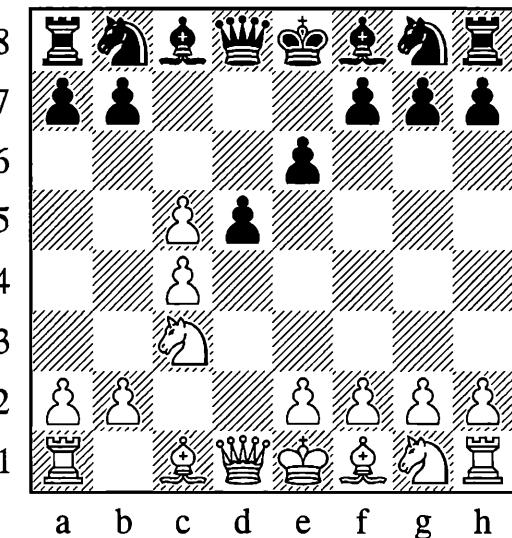
4.♗f4? cxd4 5.♘b5 (**5.♗xd4 ♘c6†**) **5...a6!?** (**5...♗b4†** is also strong of course) **6.♘c7†** (**6.♘xd4 e5!–+**) **6...♗xc7 7.♗xc7 ♗b4† 8.♗d2 ♗xd2† 9.♗xd2 dxc4†**

4.♗e3?! e5! 5.♘xd5 cxd4 6.♗d2 ♘f6 7.♗g5



7...♘xd5! **8.♗xd8 ♗b4† 9.♗d2 ♗xd2† 10.♗xd2 0–0** Black had the initiative and went on to win in Romanishin – Lputian, Soviet Union 1984.

A) 4.dxc5!?



This move is rare but not bad, and should lead to an interesting fight.

4...d4

Definitely the critical reaction.

4...♘xc5 5.cxd5 ♘f6 6.dxe6 ♗xd1† 7.♗xd1 ♗xe6 might be good for blitz, but objectively Black's compensation is insufficient.

4...♘f6 is possible, but **5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗e3!?** gives Black some problems regaining his pawn.

5.♘e4

Two other moves can be considered.

5.♘a4 ♗d7!?

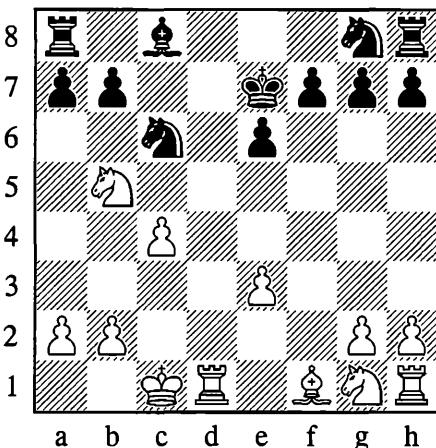
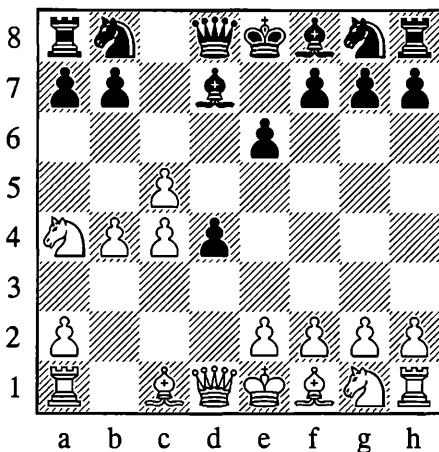
The point of this cheeky move is to threaten ...♗a5† winning the knight.

The alternative is **5...♘c6** intending ...e5, when Black has reasonable play for a pawn although it is hard to give a definite evaluation.

6.b4

The alternative is **6.♗d2N**, when **6...♘f6 7.b4 ♘e4∞** looks like the right response.

The present position was reached in Thallinger – Voegel, Austria 1998, and here Black has a nice idea:



6...Qxa4!N 7.Qxa4+ Qd7

The point is that ...a5 is coming next, and White has no way to keep his queenside pawns together.

8.Qf3

8.Qb2 a5 9.Qxd4 can be met by 9...axb4 10.Qxb4 Qe7, or even the immediate 9...Qe7!? as White has no good way to avoid ...axb4.

8...a5 9.Qxd4 axb4 10.Qxb4

10.Qb5!? Qxc5 11.Qb2 Qgf6 12.Qb3 Qb6∞

10...Qxc5 11.Qb2 Qgf6∞

Black has promising compensation; his ideas include ...Qe4 followed by a check on a5, or simply ...Qa3 when Black should have little trouble regaining his pawn.

5.Qb5

This is the computer's top choice, but Black should be fine.

5...Qxc5 6.e3

6.Qf3? occurred in B. Rogers – Jirjis, Detroit 1990, and now 6...a6!N 7.Qbx d4 e5! would have won a piece as knight retreats allow ...Qxf2† winning the queen.

6...dxe3 7.Qxd8† Qxd8 8.Qxe3 Qxe3 9.fxe3 Qc6 10.0–0–0† Qe7

White has a slight lead in development and an edge on the queenside, but Black benefits from a better pawn structure and well-placed king. Computers will tell you White is better, but we consider the position to be equal. One game continued:

11.Qd6?!

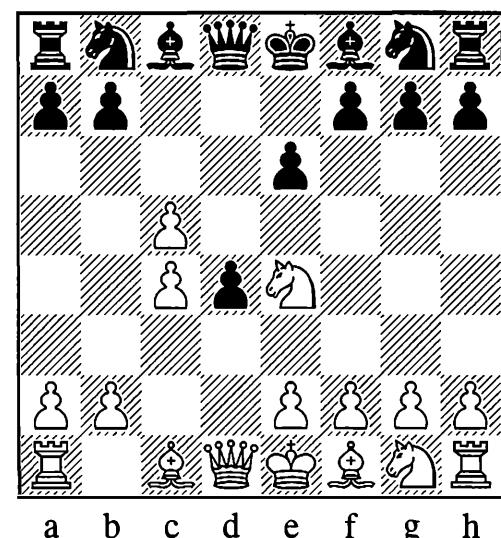
White should have gone for 11.Qf3N Qf6 with mutual chances.

11...Qf6 12.Qe2

Klimsa – Antoshik, Czech Republic 1995.

12...Qd8N

Black already stands better.



5...Qf6 6.Qg5

6.Qxf6† Qxf6 is already a little more comfortable for Black.

6.Qd6† is harmless, and after 6...Qxd6 7.cxd6 Qxd6 Black's superior development and strong centre are just as relevant as White's bishop pair. 8.e3 Qc6 9.exd4 (9.a3 0–0 10.Qf3 e5 was promising for Black in Crossen – Meisel, USA 1972.) This was Kalies – Wellna, Germany 1993, and now 9...Qxd4N 10.Qd3 e5 11.Qe2 Qc6!? would have left Black at least equal.

6...♝a6!?

Attempting to regain the c5-pawn without giving up the dark-squared bishop.

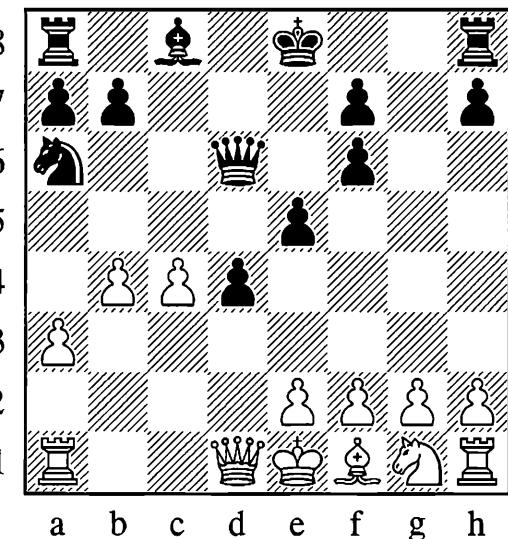
6...♛xc5 7.♝xc5 ♜a5† 8.♝d2 ♜xc5 9.♝xf6 gxf6 10.g3 was perhaps a tad better for White in Carls – Wagner, Hamburg 1921.

7.♝xf6 gxf6 8.♝d6†

If Black gets to play ...♝xc5 then his position will just be better, so White should take the fleeting opportunity to eliminate the valuable bishop.

8...♜xd6 9.cxd6 ♜xd6 10.a3 e5 11.b4

White aims to restrict the knight on a6.

**11...♞c7!?**

Improving the knight immediately, while preparing to strike on the queenside. 11...♞f5 12.♝f3 0–0–0∞ is also playable and led to highly unclear play in Varga – Feher, Eger 1992.

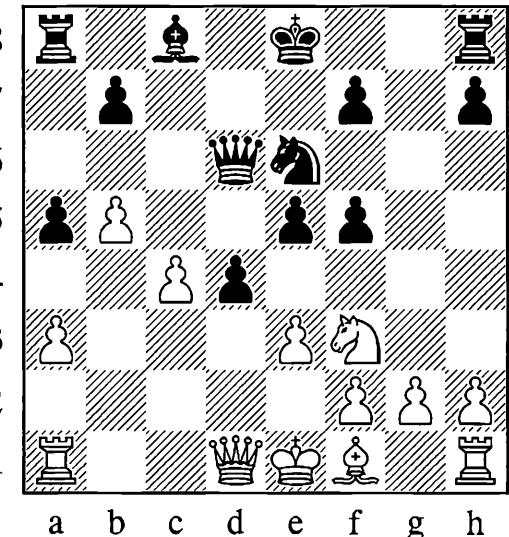
12.e3

12.♝f3 a5! is promising for Black.

12...a5 13.b5 ♜e6 14.♝f3 f5!?

14...0–0!? is also possible.

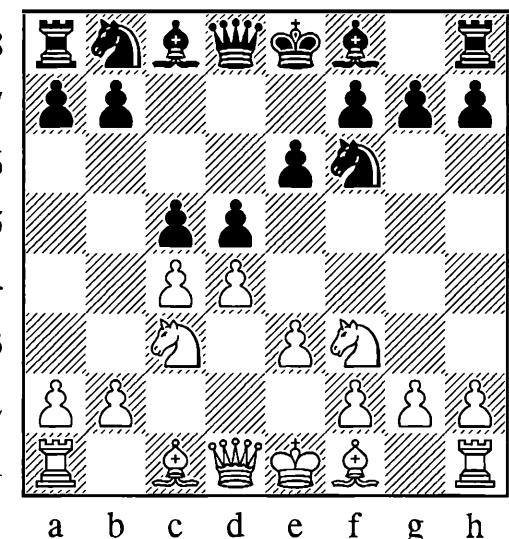
After the text move, the following line looks logical:

**15.exd4 e4 16.♝g1**

16.c5 ♜d5 17.♝g1 ♜xd4 18.♝xd4 ♜xd4 is fine; the c-pawn might even become weak.

16...♜xd4 17.♜xd4 ♜xd4 18.0–0–0 ♜b3† 19.♚c2 ♜c5 20.♝h3 ♜e6 21.♚e2 ♜e7=

Both sides have certain positional pluses and minuses, but overall the position is balanced.

B) 4.e3 ♜f6 5.♝f3

6.b3

This move is unimpressive, as we have actually transposed to a variation of the Semi-Slav with a full extra tempo for Black. (The move order might be 3...c6 4.e3 ♜f6 5.♘f3 a6 6.b3 c5, when Black has lost a tempo with the c-pawn but still has good chances to equalize.)

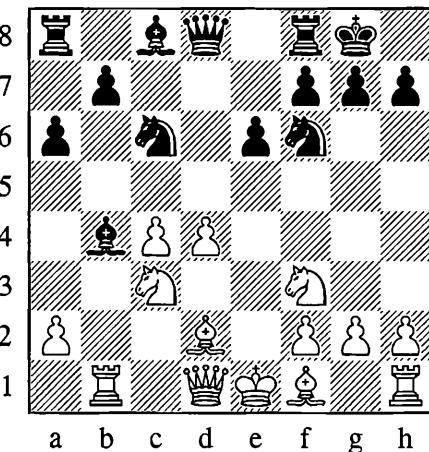
6...cxd4 7.exd4 ♜b4!?

The most energetic way of putting pressure on the enemy position, although Black could of course have obtained a good game with any sensible set-up.

8.♗d2

8.♗b2 ♜a5 9.♗c2 ♜e4 10.♗c1 ♜xa2 is a safe extra pawn for Black.

8...dxc4 9.bxc4 ♜c6 10.♗b1 0–0



11.♗a4?

11.♗e2 would have been the lesser evil, although 11...♗a5! still poses awkward problems, for instance 12.♗c2 ♜xd4 13.♗xd4 ♜xd4 14.0–0 b6 when White's compensation is insufficient.

11...♗xd2† 12.♗xd2

12.♗xd2 ♜e4 13.♗c2 ♜a5† 14.♗e2 ♜xa4+ 12...♗xd4—

Vass – Havlicek, Slovakia 2005.

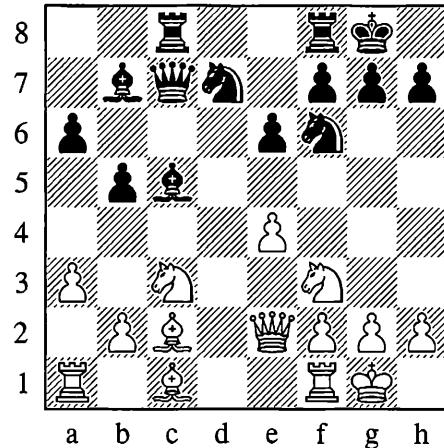
6.a3

In view of Black's strong reply, this cannot be considered a serious option for White.

6...dxc4! 7.♗xc4 b5

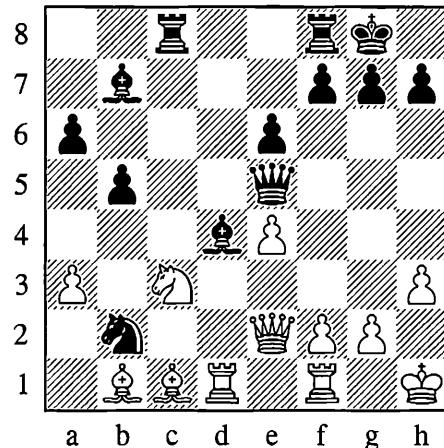
Black has a great version of a Queen's Gambit Accepted where the white knight has gone to c3 prematurely. Here is one example which resulted in a splendid win for Black:

8.♗d3 ♜bd7 9.0–0 ♜b7 10.♗c2 ♜c8 11.dxc5 ♜xc5 12.e4 ♜c7 13.♗e2 0–0



14.♗d2

14.e5? just loses a pawn after 14...♗xf3.
14...♗g4! 15.h3 ♜ge5 16.♗xe5 ♜xe5
17.♗ad1 ♜d4 18.♗b1 ♜c4 19.♗c1 ♜e5
20.♗h1 ♜xb2!

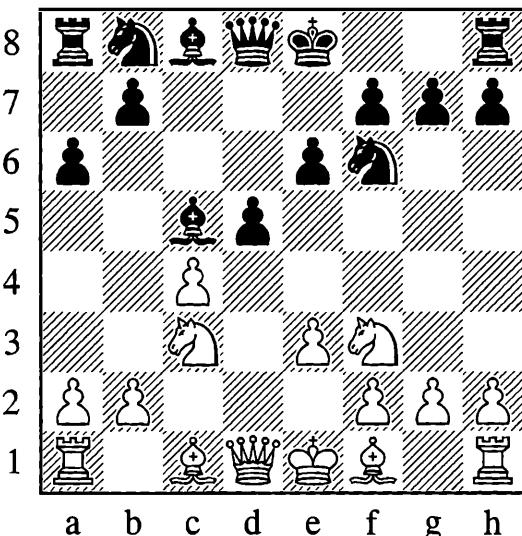


21.f4?

Accelerating White's downfall, but after other moves he would just be a pawn down for nothing.

21...♗xd1 22.fxe5 ♜xc3 23.♗d3 ♜c4 24.♗e1 ♜f2 25.♗f1 ♜xb1 26.♗xb1 ♜xe4 27.♗b3 ♜c2 28.♗d1 ♜c5 29.♗d2 ♜d8 30.♗e1 ♜d3

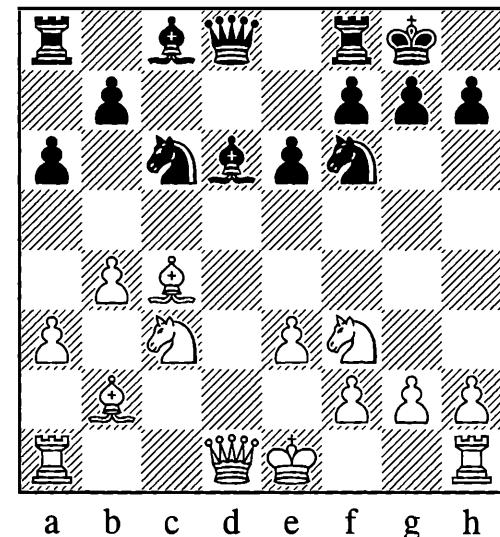
0–1 Franco Ocampos – Seirawan, Amsterdam 1983.

B1) 6.dxc5 ♜xc5**7.a3**

Nothing else would make sense of White's last move. 7.cxd5?! exd5 would soon lead to a tempo-down version of line B2.

7...♝c6 8.b4 ♜d6 9.♝b2 dxc4!

A practical choice! 9...0–0 is playable, but in the resulting position Black needs to be ready for a variety of possible continuations. The text move reduces White's options while still giving Black a sound position with chances to provoke complications.

10.♜xc4 0–0**11.♛c2**

White's most challenging plan involves delaying castling, with the idea of using his extra tempo to start an attack. 11.0–0 is less dangerous, and after 11...b5 12.♝d3 ♜b7 White has no convincing way to make use of his extra tempo, for instance: 13.♝e2 ♜e7 (13...♝e5!?) 14.♝ac1 ♜ac8 15.♝b1 ♜e5=

11...b5 12.♝d3

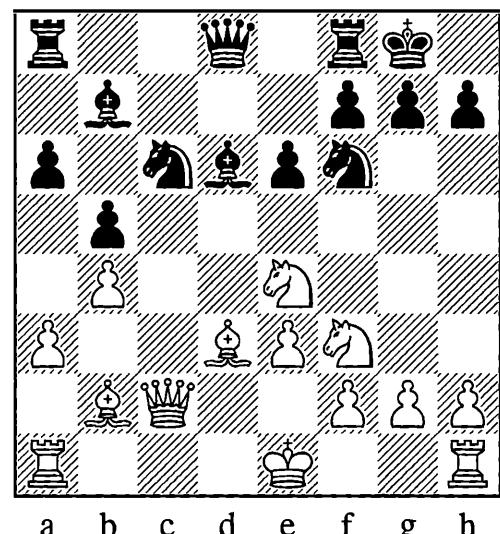
Taking aim at the kingside. 12.♝b3 ♜b7 13.♝d1 ♜e7 is no problem for Black.

12...♜b7

12...♜xb4? 13.♝d1! is too dangerous.

13.♝e4!?

Initiating a forced line. 13.♝d1 ♜c8 14.♝b1 ♜e7 gives Black a safe position.

**13...♜xb4†! 14.axb4**

White can also decline the offer with 14.♝e2!? ♜e7 15.♝xf6† ♜xf6 16.♝xh7† (16.♝hd1 and 16.♝ad1 are both met by 16...♜e7) 16...♝h8 17.♝hd1 ♜e7 when the position is equal.

14...♝xb4 15.♝xf6† ♜h8!

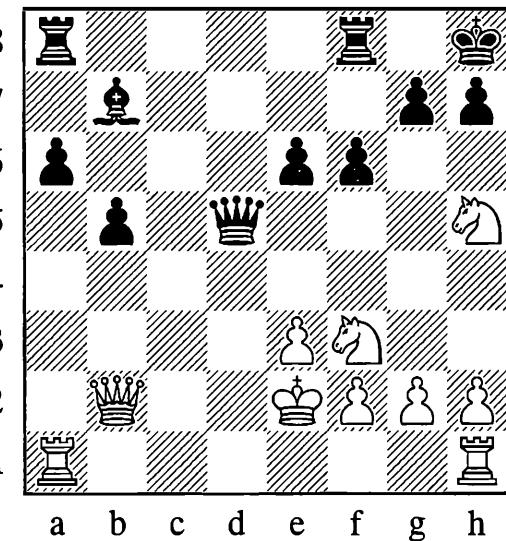
Black must not give his opponent time to take on h7 with check.

16.♕c3

The queen has to choose this square in order to threaten mate on move 18.

**16...♝xd3† 17.♔e2 ♝xb2 18.♝h5 f6
19.♗xb2 ♜d5=**

With two pawns and a promising initiative for the piece, Black has bright prospects. This position has occurred in practice, so we will dig a little deeper.

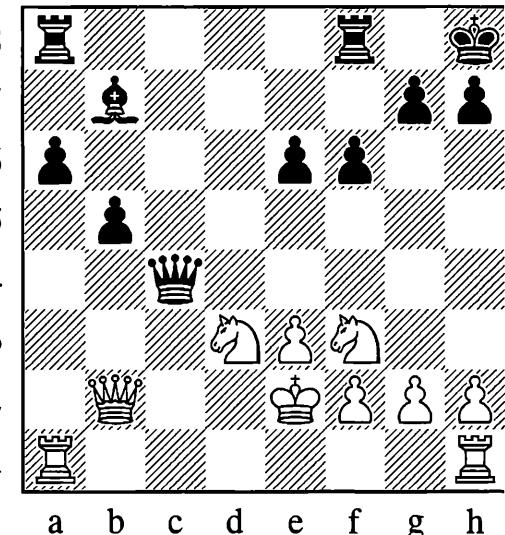
**20.♝f4**

The most ambitious move, keeping the way clear for the h1-rook to join the action. The problem is that White's knights will be awkwardly placed.

20.♝g3 is playable, but after 20...♜c4† 21.♚e1 the rook on h1 has trouble getting into the game. Play may continue: 21...♜ac8 22.h4 ♜fd8 23.h5 ♜xf3! 24.gxf3 ♜d3 Threatening a rook invasion on c2. 25.♜c1 h6 26.♝e2 e5 Keeping the knight restrained. 27.f4 a5! The pawns start rolling and White has definite problems.

20...♜c4† 21.♝d3

We have been following the game Utasi – J. Klinger, Havana 1986. At this point Black's most accurate continuation would have been:

**21...♜fd8!N**

The game continued as follows: 21...e5?! 22.♜hc1! ♜g4 23.♜c7 ♜c8 (23...e4 does not work here; see the note to Black's 24th move in the main line below. However, Black could still have maintained dynamic equality with 23...♝d5! when the g2-pawn is genuinely hanging.) 24.h3! ♜xg2 At this point the simple 25.♜g1!N ♜xh3 26.♜cxg7 would have given White a winning position.

22.♜hd1 e5

Playing this move with the white rook already committed to the d1-square is a major improvement, for reasons that will soon become apparent.

23.♜ac1 ♜g4 24.♝f1

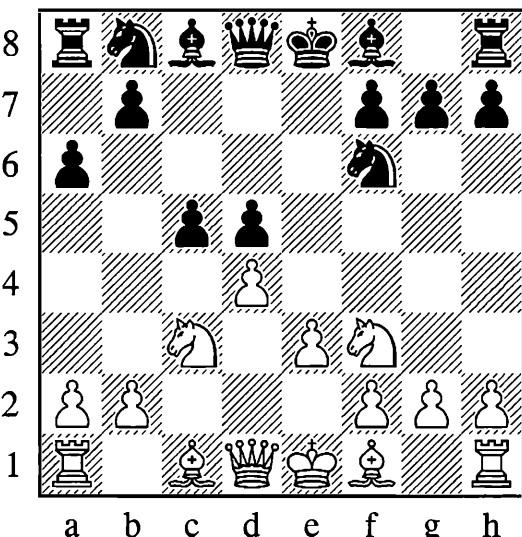
Now 24.♜c7? is no good due to 24...e4! 25.♜xb7 ♜xg2! 26.♝de1 exf3†+ when the hanging rook on d1 makes all the difference.

24...♝xf3 25.gxf3 ♜xf3

Black picks up a third pawn for the piece, and this combined with his safer king enables him to claim the better chances.

B2) 6.cxd5 exd5

The position resembles what we have seen in variation A of Chapter 16.



7. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

White should of course refrain from exchanging on $c5$ until after the $f8$ -bishop has moved.

Once again, the queenside fianchetto is harmless: 7. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $cxd4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ This position has been reached in numerous games with White to play, which is obviously an encouraging sign for Black. (Generally the tempo loss has occurred due to the Semi-Slav move order involving ... $c6$ followed by ... $c5$, as mentioned in the notes to 6. $b3$ on page 323) 10...0–0 11.0–0 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$!? Another typical set-up for Black. 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 15. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ The bishop switches to a more active diagonal. 16. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $c5\infty$ Bisguier – Kaplan, Lone Pine 1980.

7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Just as in several other variations, Black can consider gaining space on the queenside.

7... $c4$!?

This could be an attractive option for players aiming for a complex position without too much theory.

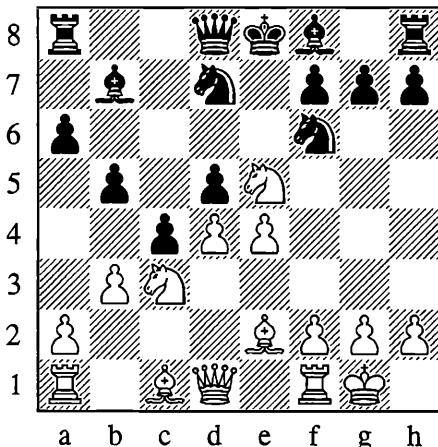
8.0–0

8. $b3$ $b5$ 9. $bxc4$ $dxc4$! 10. 0–0 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0–0 12. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13. $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $axb5$

15. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{E}fb1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ led to double-edged play in Sunye Neto – Nogueiras Santiago, Thessaloniki (ol) 1984.

8... $b5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11. $e4$!?

This is not White's only move, but it is obviously the only serious way to challenge Black's set-up, and it was played in Adianto – Ghaem Maghami, Macau 2007. Here we found an interesting idea for Black.

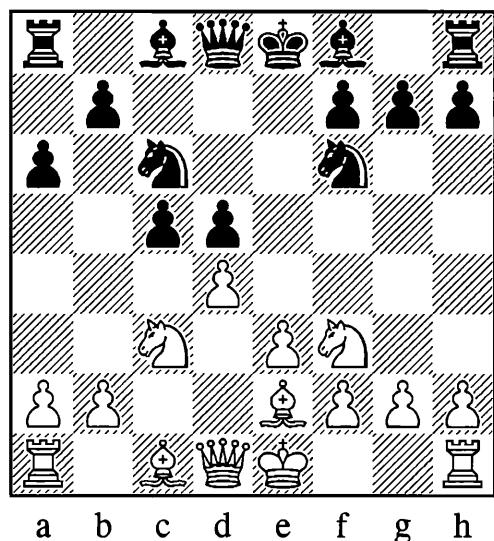


11... $\mathbb{Q}xe5N$ 12. $dxe5$ $d4$!?

12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14. $exd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $bxc4\infty$

13. $exf6$ $dxc3$ 14. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 15. $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $b4\infty$

Black's queenside pawns offer him fine compensation for a mere pawn.



8.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

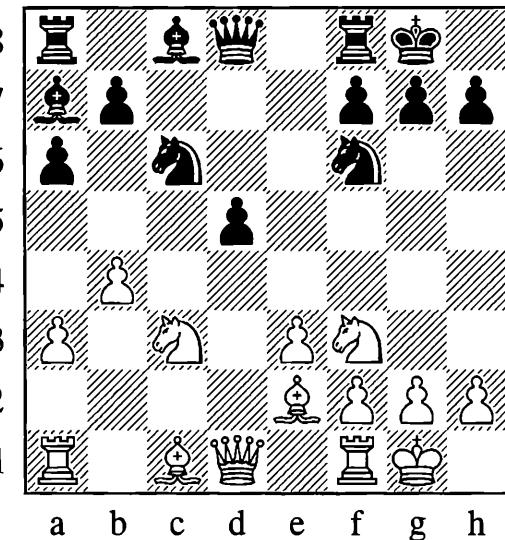
Allowing White to take on $c5$ with gain of tempo, but this is no big deal.

8...cxd4 9.♕xd4 ♕d6 can be compared with line A22 of Chapter 16. Black generally does not hurry with ...a6 there, but still his position is still playable, for instance: 10.♗f3 0–0 11.b3 ♘e6 (Black can also consider 11...♝e8 intending ...♝b8, with similar play to the Bisguier – Kaplan game noted above.) 12.♕b2 ♜e7 The position can be compared with the 1996 Kasparov – Kramnik game as referenced on page 260.

9.dxc5 ♘xc5

From this position White sometimes tries an extended fianchetto with **B21) 10.a3**, but the main line is the more reserved **B22) 10.b3**.

B21) 10.a3 0–0 11.b4 ♘a7



12.♗b2

White can also press ahead on the queenside: 12.b5 ♘a5!?

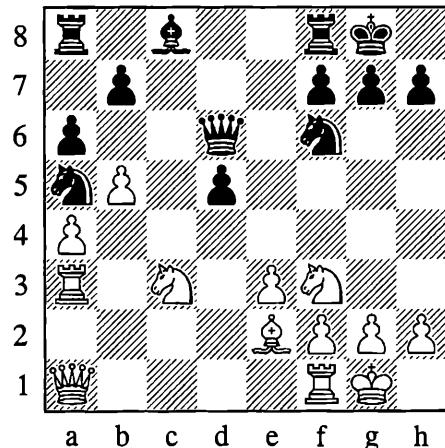
12...axb5 is playable, although after 13.♘xb5 ♘b8 14.♗b2 ♘e4 15.♗b3 (15.♗c1 ♘e8= Kaptisan – Gentes, Winnipeg 1999) 15...♘e6 16.♗fd1 White's position was a shade more comfortable in Alcazar Jimenez – Pascual Genoves, Formigal 2002.

13.a4 ♘c5!

The bishop returns to reclaim what is now a decent outpost on the queenside.

14.♗a3 ♘xa3 15.♗xa3 ♜d6 16.♗a1

Kljako – Bukal, Rijeka 2001.



16...♝f5N

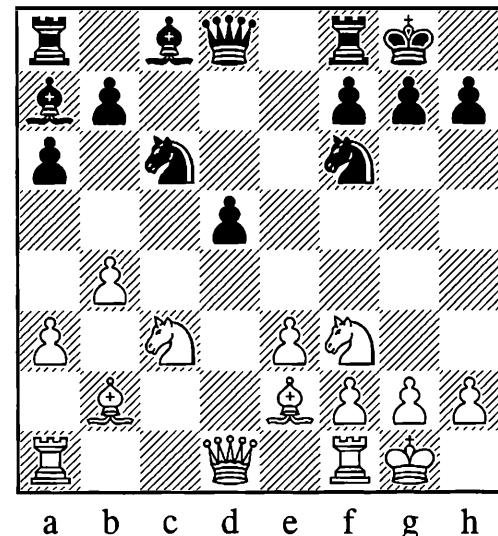
In the game Black preferred 16...♝g4 but from f5 the bishop controls some important queenside squares.

17.♗d1

17.♗d4 ♘g6 does not change much.

17...♝ac8

Black has a good position, as White has some holes on the queenside.



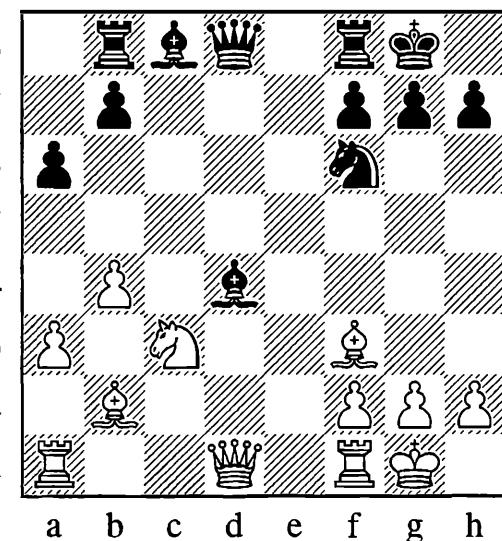
12...d4!?

Aiming to equalize by liquidating the centre. If Black wishes to keep more tension in the position then 12...♝e8 looks like the most logical way to do it.

13.exd4

13.♗xd4 was played in Krajina – Netusil, Czech Republic 1997, and here Black should have gone for the simple 13...♗xd4N 14.exd4 ♘xd4 transposing to the main line.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}b8$



16. $\mathbb{W}d2$

We also checked 16. $\mathbb{E}e1N$ but after 16...b5 17. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ intending ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, White's edge is so minimal it is almost non-existent.

16... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 18.h3

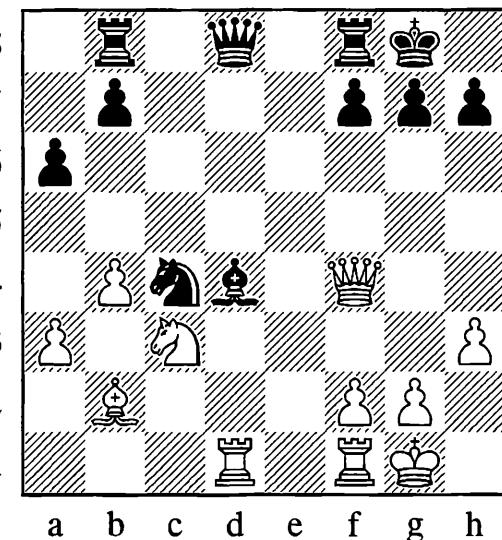
18. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ was agreed drawn in Gulko – Speelman, Oropesa del Mar 1996.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Black's minor pieces are slightly unstable in the centre, but ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is a useful option and in the following game Black maintained the balance with the help of a few precise moves.

19. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4!$

20. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ is equal.



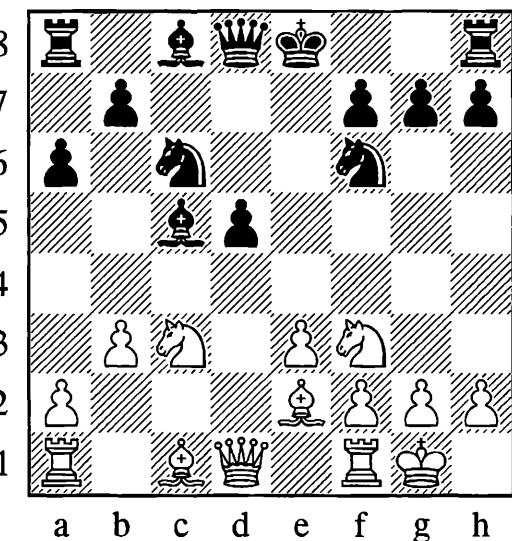
20... $\mathbb{W}f6!$

Without this Black would have been in some trouble.

21. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$
24. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{E}c4!$ 25. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4=$

A draw was soon agreed in Bisguier – De Castro, Skopje (ol) 1972.

B22) 10.b3



10...0–0 11. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$

It is worth taking a moment to compare the present position with that reached in variation A21 of Chapter 16 (4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ etc). In the present line White has a full extra tempo (due to having played $\mathbb{E}e2$ in one move rather than going to b5 first) but ironically this does not harm Black, and if anything the lack of the move ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ may even work in his favour as it reduces White's possibilities for exchanging pieces.

12. $\mathbb{E}c1$

This natural move has been the most popular choice by far. Just as in some other parts of the book, we preferred not to scrutinize every move available, and instead deciding to explore a single alternative in detail.

12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

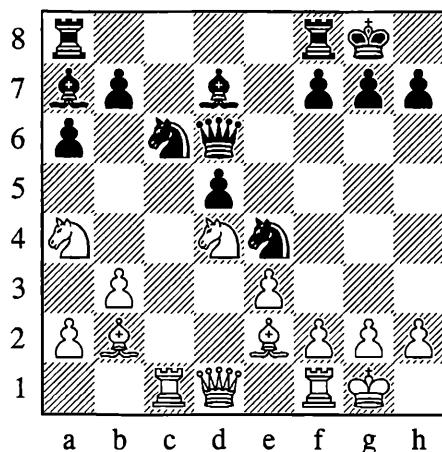
This decentralizing move should not be too dangerous.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

There is also 12... $\mathbb{W}d6$!? when 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$!?

$\mathbb{W}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ b5 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ backfired for White in Deze – Gligoric, Novi Sad 1979.

13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$



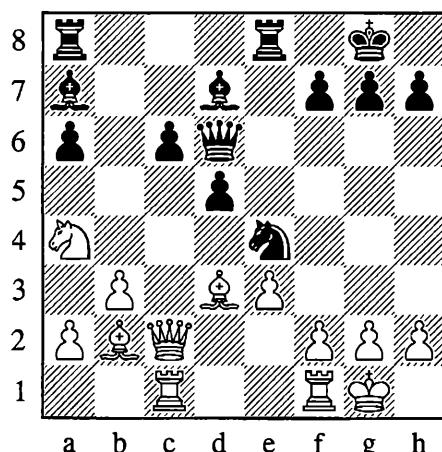
15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 18.g3 $\mathbb{W}h6$ gave Black a promising initiative in Murshed – King, Oakham 1984, the point being that 19.h4 is met by 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$!.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$

After 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 20.a3 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23.f3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ White had some compensation for the pawn, but no advantage in Illescas Cordoba – Arizmendi Martinez, Leon 2006.

16... $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



We have been following the game Zaichik – Egin, Tallinn 1988. At this point Black should go for a bishop shuffle:

17... $\mathbb{Q}b8N$ 18.g3 $\mathbb{Q}a7$!

The bishop returns to its best square, having provoked some light-square weaknesses.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$! is promising for Black.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

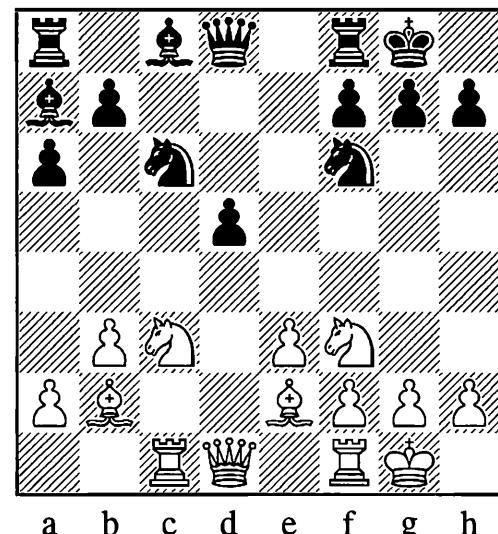
After 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?! 20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ Black's poor coordination prevents him from organizing an effective attack on the light squares.

20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8\#$

20... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

With ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and possibly ...a5 coming, Black should hold the opposite-coloured bishop endgame without much trouble.



12... $\mathbb{W}d6$

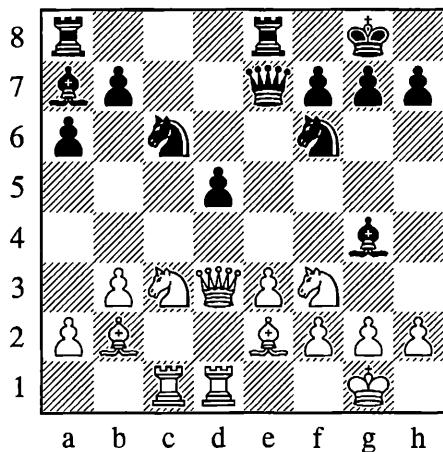
A good multi-purpose move. The queen vacates the d8-square for one of the rooks, while setting up the potential attacking plan of ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ and ... $\mathbb{W}h6$.

In light of the comments to Black's eleventh move, it should be obvious that 12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! is the wrong idea. White obtains an edge with 13.h3!, intending to meet 13... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with 14. $\mathbb{Q}h4\pm$, a thematic idea which can also be found in variation A21 of Chapter 16.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$?

This is a good alternative which was tested by one of the authors.

13. $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}g4$ 14. $\mathbb{B}fd1 \mathbb{W}e7!$



15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$?

Also 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xe3!$ would be a disaster for White.

The correct continuation was 15. $h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ with approximate equality, as occurred in Nowak – Pytel, Gdynia 1985.

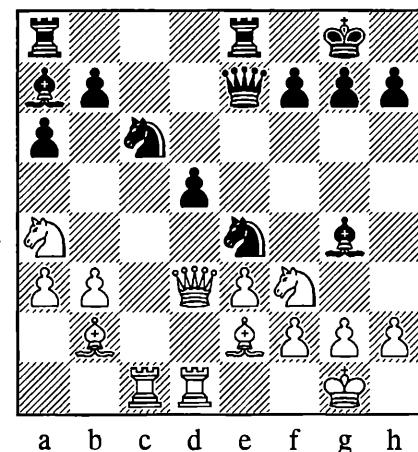
15... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b1 \mathbb{Q}xe3!$ was crushing, but the text is also good enough.

16.a3?!

16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ is met by 16... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b1 \mathbb{Q}xf2$ and it is all over.

It is a measure of White's disadvantage that the computer already recommends 16. $\mathbb{B}xc6!?$ $bxc6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ as his best chance to survive, even though he is just an exchange down for nothing here.

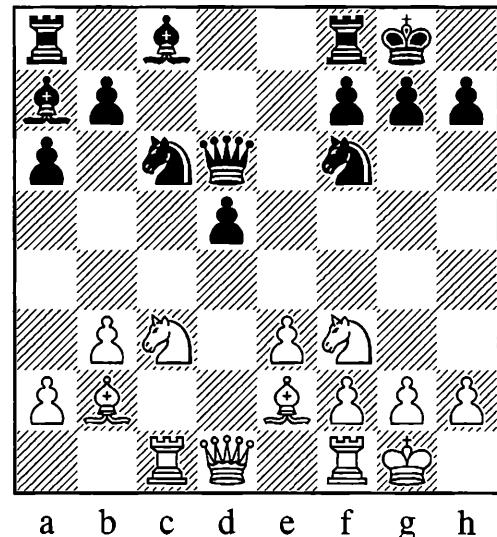


16... $\mathbb{Q}xf2!$

The attack on the dark squares is irresistible.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf2 \mathbb{Q}xe3\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}xf3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf3 \mathbb{W}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{W}xh2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}d4\#$

0–1 K. Rasmussen – Aagaard, Denmark 2011.



13. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Here are some other moves to have been tried:

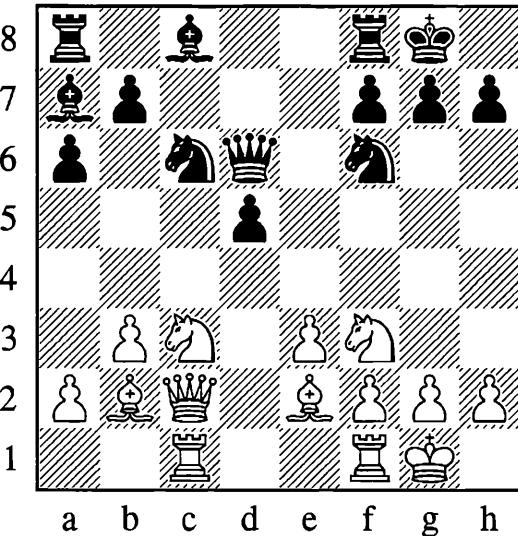
13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ transposes to 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ above.

13. $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}g4$ 14. $\mathbb{B}fd1 \mathbb{B}ad8=$ Averkin – Smyslov, USSR 1973.

13. $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{B}d8$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}g4?!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{W}xf6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xd5 \mathbb{B}fd8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c4\pm$) 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa7 \mathbb{B}xa7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{B}b7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}c3?!$ $c5\#\mathbb{Z}$) 19... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{B}a8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ Now in Averbakh – Kochyev, Moscow 1981, Black could have played 21... $\mathbb{W}xd4N$ 22. $exd4$ $a4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd7 \mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $axb3$ 25. $AXB3 \mathbb{B}b4$ with equality.

13. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is a typical manoeuvre to attack the d5-pawn, but Black has sufficient resources. 14... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b1$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $e4$ was seen in Biebinger – Goetz, Germany 1991, and now 16... $\mathbb{W}c5?N$ 17. $exd5 \mathbb{B}xd5$ would have given Black slightly the more

comfortable side of equality.) 15...h6 16.♕fd1 ♘e7 17.♔a1 ♘d7 18.♗b2 ♘fd8 19.♗b1 This was Prusikin – Yakovich, Fuerth 1999, and now 19...d4!† would have given Black the upper hand.



13...♝g4!!

Since the ♘h4 plan no longer brings White any advantage (see the next note, along with the main line, for details) there is no reason not to bring the bishop to this active square. 13...♝d8 14.♕fd1 ♘g4 is possible, but we prefer to put the queen's rook on d8 in order to keep the other one for the e-file.

Of course we should not forget that 13...♛e6 followed by ...♝ad8 is absolutely playable, and probably just as good as the text move. However, we found it more interesting to analyse the latter, which can lead to tricky complications with plenty of challenges for both sides.

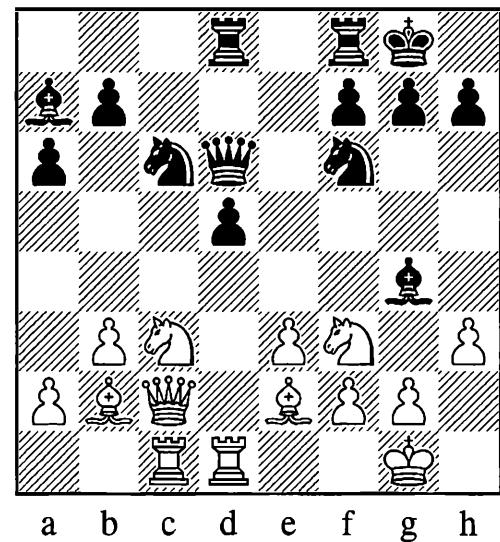
14.♕fd1

14.h3 ♘h5 15.♘h4 d4! is not unfavourable to Black, and can be compared with the main line below.

14...♝ad8 15.h3

This position was reached in Smyslov – Illescas Cordoba, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

Here Black should have played:



15...♝h5!N

The game continuation of 15...♝xf3? 16.♔xf3 ♛e6 17.♘e2! was excellent for White.

16.♘h4!

This thematic move is the only critical test. Instead 16.♘d4?! ♘g6 17.♗d2 ♘xd4 18.exd4 ♜fe8† favours Black.

16...d4!

This move is a key resource against the ♘h4 plan.

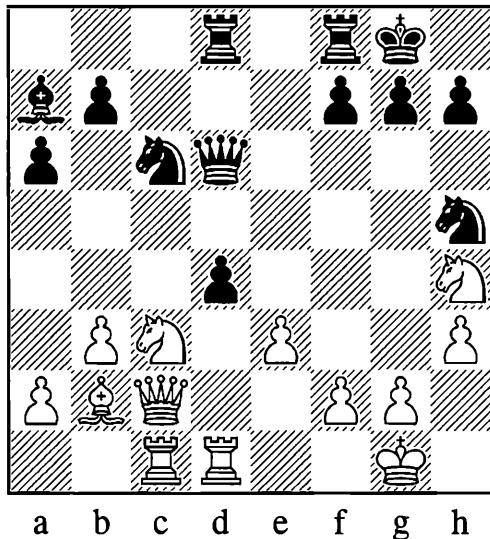
17.♘xh5

Other moves are not dangerous:

17.exd4 ♘b8!? (17...♘xd4 18.♘f5! ♛e5 19.♘xd4 ♘xd4=) 18.g3 ♘xe2 19.♘xe2 ♛e6↑

17.♘f5 ♛e6! 18.♘xh5 ♘xh5 reaches 18.♘f5 in the next note, but Black might do even better with 18...dxc3!? when 19.♘h6† gxh6 20.♗xc3 ♘g7 (20...♝e5 21.♔f3!≈) 21.♔g4 ♛e7 leaves White without full compensation for the missing piece.

17...♝xh5



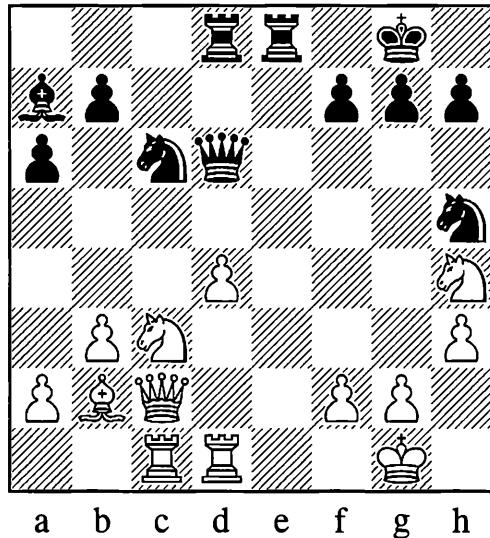
18.exd4

18.♘f5 ♕e6 19.exd4 can be met by 19...♘f4 (also 19...♗xd4 20.♗xd4 ♗xd4 is equal) 20.d5 ♕g6 21.g3 ♘xh3† 22.♔f1 ♘xf2 23.dxc6 ♕h5 24.♕e7† ♔h8 when Black's attack is not mating, but it is good enough for a perpetual.

The safest reply to 18.♕e4 is 18...♕e6 with equal chances. We also checked the more complex 18...♗d5, but after detailed analysis of 19.♔a3 we were eventually forced to conclude that White has the upper hand.

18...♝fe8!?

Black does not have to hurry to regain his pawn. His pieces enjoy excellent coordination and he can choose the right moment to take on d4.



19.♘f3

19.d5?! ♘d4 is too dangerous for White, as 20.♘f5 ♘xf5 21.♗xf5 is met by 21...♗b8!.

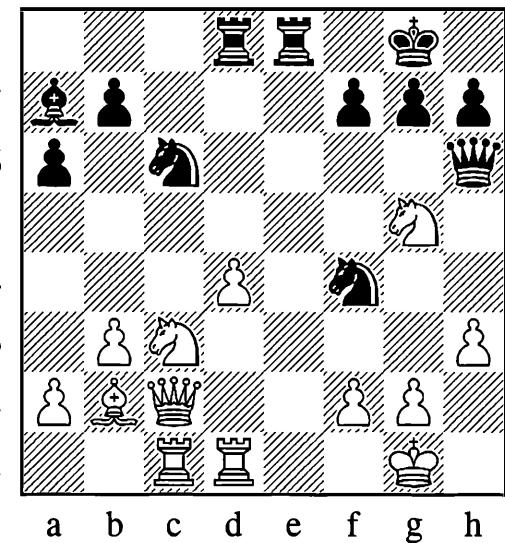
After 19.♘f5 ♕f4 20.♗e1 ♕xe1† 21.♗xe1 g6! 22.♗e7† ♘xe7 23.♗xe7 ♗xd4 24.♗e4 ♕c7 Black has marginally the more comfortable side of equality, but the game is likely to end in a draw.

19...♘f4 20.♗g5

20.g3 ♘xh3† 21.♔g2 ♕f6! 22.♔e4 ♕g6 23.♔xh3 ♘b4 (23...♗xe4?! 24.♗g2±) 24.♗c4 ♕xe4 25.♗g2 ♘d5 26.♗e1 ♕f5 is at least equal for Black.

20...♕h6

There is also 20...♘g6, when it is hard to see anything better than 21.♘f3 ♘f4 with a repetition.

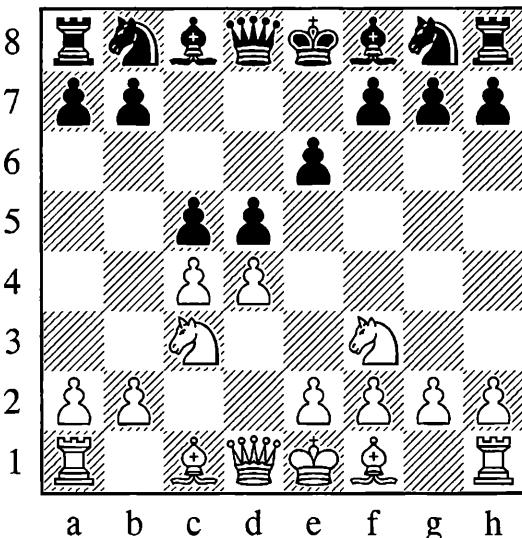


21.♕f5! f6! 22.d5

22.♗xf4 fxg5 23.♗g4 ♗xd4 24.♗xd4 ♗xd4=

22...♕h4 23.♗ge4 ♘e7 24.♗g4 ♕xg4 25.hxg4 ♘exd5=

We have witnessed a familiar story: a long series of accurate moves sees a tension-filled, tactical middlegame fizzle out to a dry and equal position, although there is still plenty of play left...

C) 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 

By comparison with 4.e3 White develops a piece, but neglects to support his centre with a pawn.

4... $\mathbb{c}xd4$

The most principled reply, eliminating White's central pawn. 4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5.e3 would give us less choice, as 5...a6? allows 6.cxd5 exd5 7.dxc5 when the d5-pawn is hanging.

Instead Black can of course play 5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and return to normal lines. The position after 6.cxd5 exd5 is covered in line A2 of Chapter 16.

5. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

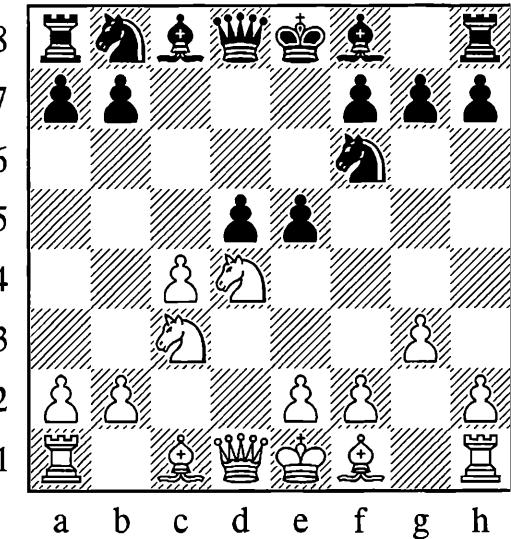
The present position can also be reached via the English Opening, for instance after 1.c4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 4.d4 cxd4 5. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5.

From here it is worth considering C1) 6.g3, C2) 6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$, C3) 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and C4) 6.cxd5.

6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7.cxd5 exd5 will transpose to Chapter 16; 8. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is line A21, while 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is A22.

C1) 6.g3 e5!

There is no reason for Black to hold back!

7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

7. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ has been played in a few games, but after 7...d4 8. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (or 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?) it is already White who is struggling to equalize.

Even worse is:

7. $\mathbb{Q}db5?$ d4

Forcing White to make a difficult choice.

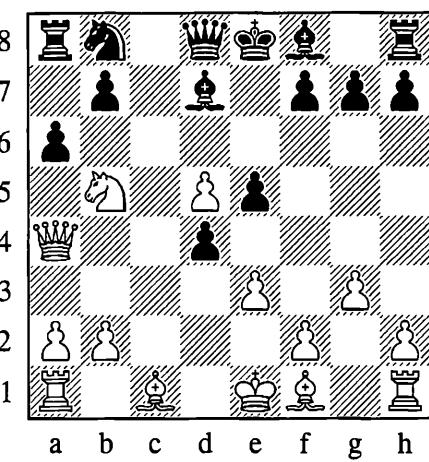
8. $\mathbb{W}a4?$

Consistent, but it only compounds White's troubles.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d5??$ loses quickly: 8... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9. $\mathbb{W}a4$ (9.cxd5 $\mathbb{W}a5\#$) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ The least of the evils is 8. $\mathbb{Q}b1$, but after 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ or 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$? 9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, Black is obviously in the driving seat.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a6! leaves White in a mess.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10.cxd5 a6 11.e3

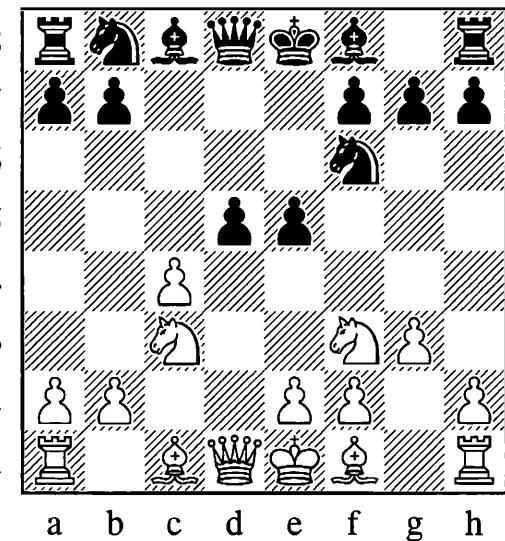
11... $\mathbb{W}b6$

11... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$? is also excellent for Black.

12.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\#$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xb5\#$
 $axb5$ 15.dxe5

This position occurred in Beil – Neukirch, Leipzig 1972. White has insufficient compensation for the piece, a fact which could have been highlighted by the following accurate continuation:

15... $\mathbb{Q}d7N$ 16.0–0 f6!–+



7...d4 8. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$

This is the only way in which White can even attempt to justify his opening play. Retreating the c3-knight would be an admission of failure.

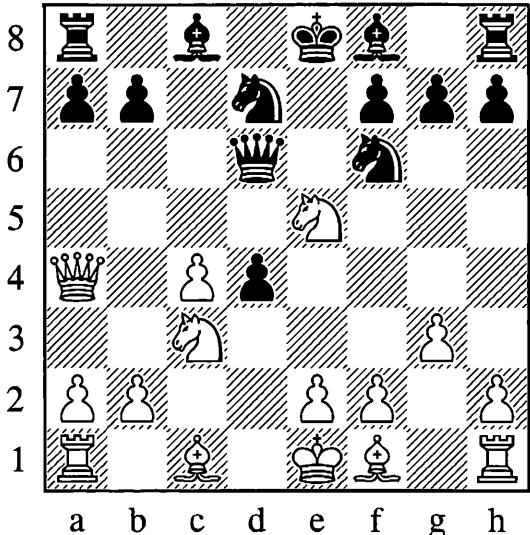
8... $\mathbb{W}d6!$

Leading to a sharp sequence which ends up in Black's favour.

8...dxc3 9. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
11. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12.b3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ led to an unclear endgame in Lieb – Soltau, Germany 1984.

9. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7!$

9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xc6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g1$
 $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ favours Black slightly, but the text is even stronger.



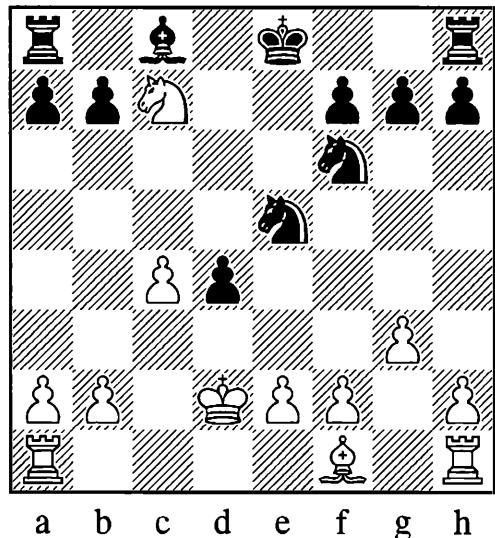
10. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Alternatives are no better:

10. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ dxc3 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (11.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}a3$ –+) 11... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ Lauff – Womacka, corr. 1988. 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxb2–+

10. $\mathbb{Q}xd7?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ also promises White nothing but misery: 11. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ a6 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (13. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ –+ Govciyan – Salaun, Coubertin 2009) 13... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ axb5 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ bxc6–+ Held – Cushnirsky, Mar del Plata 1972.

10... $\mathbb{W}b4\#$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$
13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$



This position was reached in Morral Llorens – Salinero de Prado, corr. 1993, and one subsequent game. At this point Black has a nice improvement.

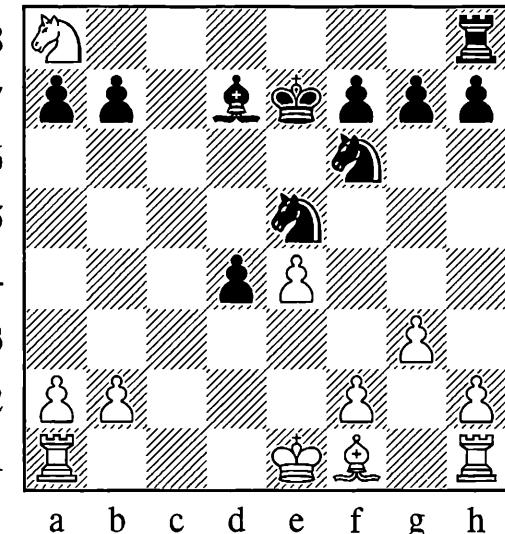
14... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ N

In the aforementioned game Black preferred 14... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ but after 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16.b3 $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1\infty$ the endgame was rather messy. The point of the text move is that instead of trying to trap the knight on a8, Black does better to leave it alone and instead focus on activating his pieces as quickly as possible.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4\#$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 17.e4

17. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18.e4 gives Black the options of 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc7?$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b5 20.b3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 18...d3?!, in addition to 18... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ which reaches the main line below.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e5$



18. $\mathbb{Q}c7$

18.f4 $\mathbb{Q}eg4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$

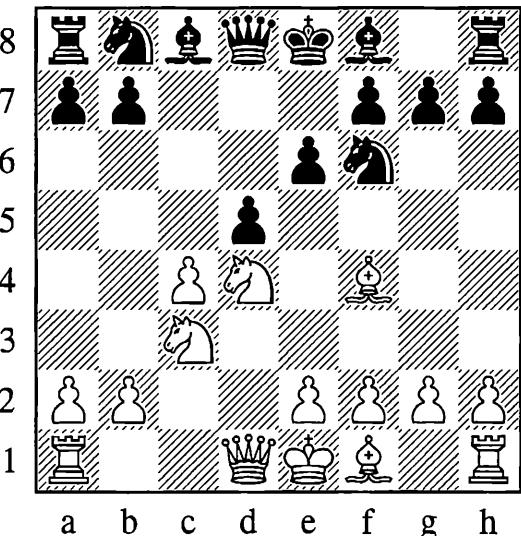
18... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

19. $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ is a disaster for White.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20.f4 $\mathbb{Q}eg4\#$

After picking up the knight Black will have excellent winning chances.

C2) 6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7?$!

Black wastes no time in questioning the position of the bishop.

7. $\mathbb{W}a4$

7. $\mathbb{Q}db5?$! turns out badly for White: 7...e5 8. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ d4 9. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$! 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$ (11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$? $dxc3\rightarrow$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 13.cxd5 This was Gros – Hohmeister, Frankfurt 2000, and now after 13... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ the d-pawn's days are numbered.

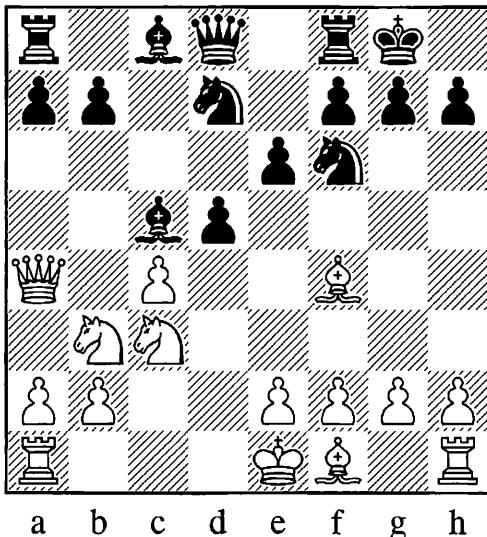
7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 9.bxc3 (9. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ is possible, although 9...0–0 10.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}a3$ e5? gives Black interesting play.) 9...0–0 10.e3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}b2$ occurred in Spielmann – Van den Bosch, Amsterdam 1936, and now after the simple 13... $\mathbb{Q}c8N$ Black has an obvious advantage.

7... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

8. $\mathbb{Q}db5?$! 0–0 just left White's pieces looking stupid on the queenside in S. Smith – J. Lewis, Oxford 1910.

8...0–0?!

Black can accelerate his development without worrying about the bishop pair.

**9.cxd5**

Technically this move has never been played in the position, although it immediately transposes to a couple of other games. However, Black's reply is a genuine if obvious novelty. Before looking at that, let's briefly check a few alternatives:

9.♘xc5 ♘xc5 10.♗a3 (10.♗c2?! dxс4) 10...b6 gives Black a comfortable position.

The timid 9.e3 was seen in Lippstreu – Merilo, corr. 1991. At this point Black has a couple of promising ideas. The simple 9...♕e7N gives him a comfortable game, and indeed the threat of ...♗b6 is a bit unpleasant. Alternatively the more lively 9...e5!N 10.♗g5 d4 also looks quite appealing.

9...♗xd5N

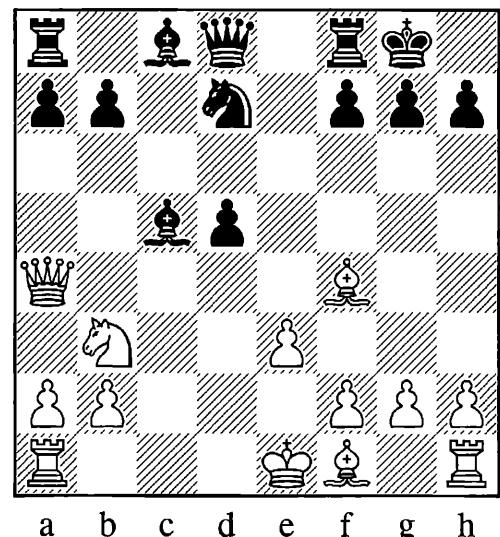
9...♗b6 10.♗a5 ♗bxд5 11.♗xc5 ♗xf4 was also quite acceptable for Black in V. Popov – Sharafieva, Ulan Ude 2009, but the text move is a bit more enterprising.

10.♗xd5 exd5

The IQP position promises Black at least a fair share of the chances, for instance:

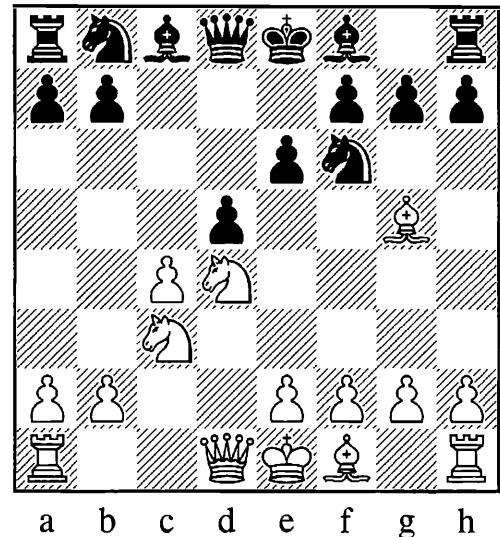
11.e3

11.♗xc5 ♘xc5 12.♗a3 ♗e6 is promising for Black.



11...♗b6 12.♗b5 ♕e7 13.♗e2 ♕d7 14.♗a5 ♕f6↑

White has problems on the queenside.

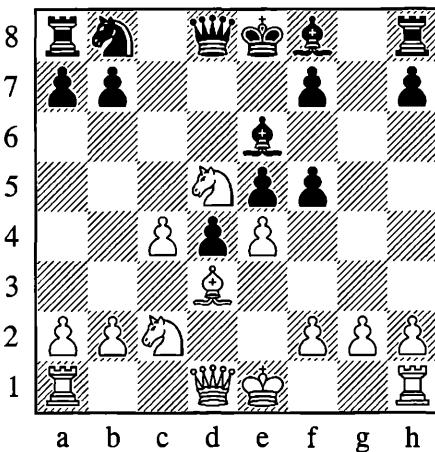
C3) 6.♗g5**6...e5!**

Other moves are possible, but this is certainly the most principled.

7.♘c2

A couple of other moves are worth considering.

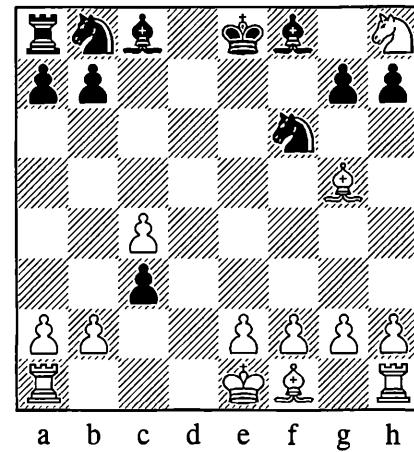
7.♘xf6 gxf6 8.♘c2 d4 9.♘d5 ♕e6 (9...♘d7!?) 10.e4 f5 11.♘d3 occurred in A. Hodges – J. Rosenthal, New York 1916. At this point we would suggest:



11...fxe4N (The game continued 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and Black eventually won, but here White can consider 12.exd5!N e4 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$?, sacrificing a piece for promising compensation.) 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\infty$ Black has a fair share of the chances in this murky position.

7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d4 8. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

8. $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ turns out badly: 8...dxc3 9. $\mathbb{W}xd8t$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf7t$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$



This was Manicke – Zugehoer, corr. 1983, and now after 11... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ N White is in trouble.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

9. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 10.e3 dxe3 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6=$ Wade – Pachman, Marianske Lazne 1956.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 10.g3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}b3$

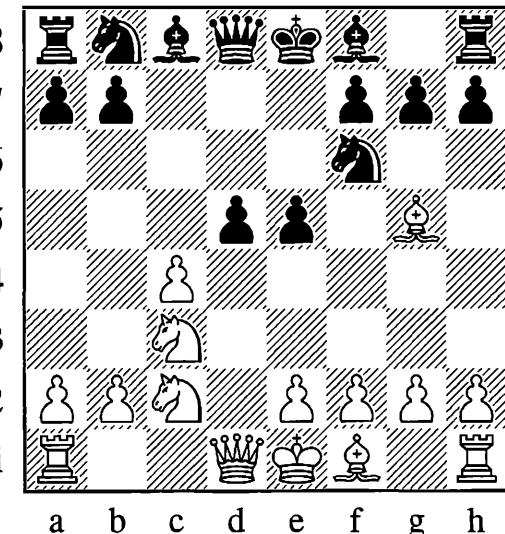
This position occurred in Ki. Georgiev – D. Gurevich, Saint John 1988. At this point Black can happily sacrifice a pawn:

11...0–0!N 12. $\mathbb{W}xb7$

12. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ is also met by 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7\infty$

With a strong centre, two bishops and a lead in development, Black has fine compensation.

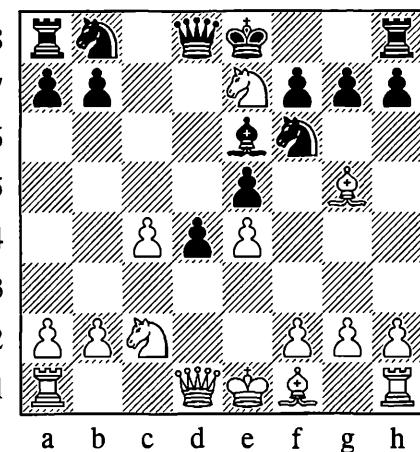


7...d4 8. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9.e4

9. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 transposes to 7. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ above.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

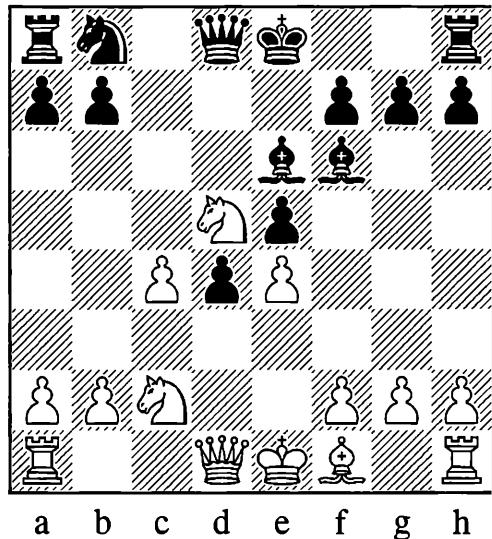
10. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$?! allows a powerful retort:



10... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (11. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}e2$ d3 14. $\mathbb{W}e3$ dxc2 \bar{t}) 11...g5 12. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f5 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ 0–0–0 \bar{t} Peschardt – Flores Gutierrez, corr. 2009.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

White's knight looks impressive on d5, but Black has enough space to play around it, and his two bishops and strong centre are important assets. In short, his position is not at all bad.

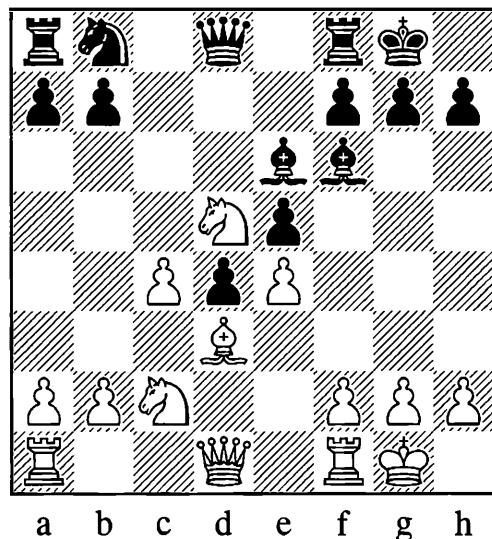


11.Qd3

11.Qe2 was played in Nikolac – Koenig, Bayern 1998. White's idea is to save the d3-square for the knight, but Black could have called that idea into question with: 11...Qd7!N (Better than the game's 11...Qc6, for reasons that will soon become clear.) 12.0–0 0–0 13.Qe1 Bc8! Preventing the knight's intended jump to d3, which would now lose the c4-pawn. It is not easy for White to solve this problem, for instance: 14.Bc1 (or 14.b3 b5!) 14...Qg5 15.Bc2 f5!↑

11...0–0 12.0–0

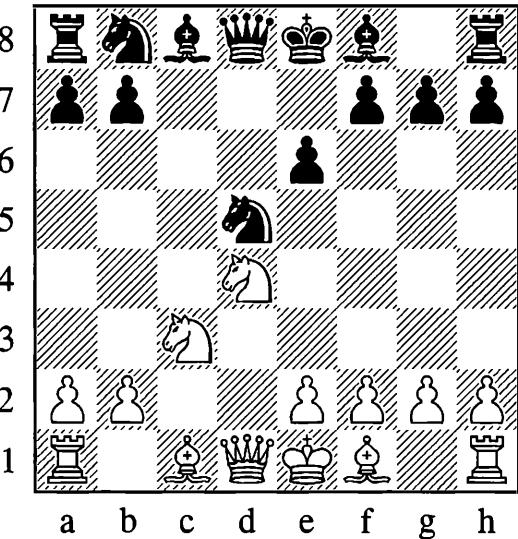
Gulko – Renet, Cannes 1987. Compared with the Nikolac – Koenig game, White's decision to leave his knight on c2 suggests that he may wish to play on the queenside. With that in mind, we suggest the following plan:



12...a5!N

Intending ...Qa6–c5, with a double-edged position in which Black's chances are not worse.

C4) 6.cxd5 Qxd5



This position has been reached in a few hundred games. There is little for Black to fear here, so we will merely provide brief coverage of a few significant lines in order to demonstrate how Black can equalize with minimal fuss.

7.Qd2

Just about every legal move has been tried at some point, but the text has been by far the most popular. Of the numerous alternatives, the one that stands out in terms of statistical success for White is:

7.Qdb5!?

However, it turns out that Black can obtain a good position easily enough.

7...a6 8.e4!?

8.Qxd5 is nothing special. 8...axb5 9.Qc3 Wxd1† 10.Qxd1 Qd7 11.e4 b4 12.Qb5 Qa5 13.Qd4 This was Panchenko – Kopta, Prague 1996, and now 13...g6!N intending ...Qg7 looks nice for Black.

8...Qb4 9.Wxd8†

9.Qg5? f6! 10.Qxf6 Wxd1† 11.Qxd1 axb5† Pruess – Bhat, San Francisco 2005.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Also 10... $b5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13.0–0 (13. $\mathbb{Q}d1\infty$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c5\bar{f}$ was a touch more pleasant for Black in Stanke – Michaelsen, Hamburg 1992.

11. $\mathbb{Q}g5\bar{f}??$

This tempting move is a slight mistake, as Black's next move improves his position slightly.

11. $\mathbb{Q}a4!?$ N is more interesting although 11... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $b5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}8c6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7=$ maintains the balance.

11... $f6$ 12.0–0–0 \bar{t}

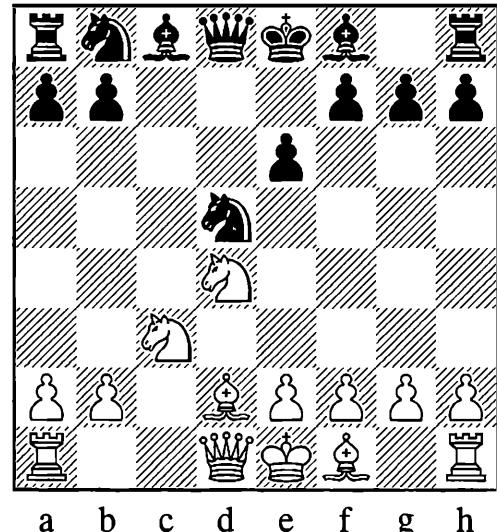
It is by no means clear that the white king belongs on c1 meanwhile driving the black king to e7 is hardly a great achievement for White.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $b5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

14. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\bar{f}$ Hetey – Loeffler, Germany 1997.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6\bar{f}$

Eslon – Izeta Txabarri, Benidorm 1992.



7... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

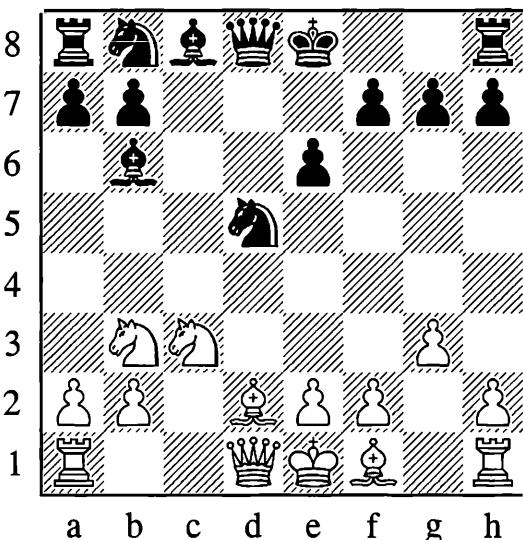
8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is playable, but after 9.g3 White tends to keep a tiny edge. Here is one logical continuation we examined: 9... $b6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd8\bar{t}$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ Dmitry Gurevich held this position with Black against Chow twice in 1988, but it is clearly a 'two results' situation

with White having a slight plus. Some players will be happy to defend this position with a high probability of drawing, but we think most readers will prefer to keep the game more interesting where possible.

9.g3

9.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 0–0 11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $e5$ was fine for Black in Arencibia Rodriguez – Morovic Fernandez, Cienfuegos 1996.

9. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1\bar{t}$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $f6$ was nothing much for White in Bykhovsky – Arbakov, Irkutsk 1983.

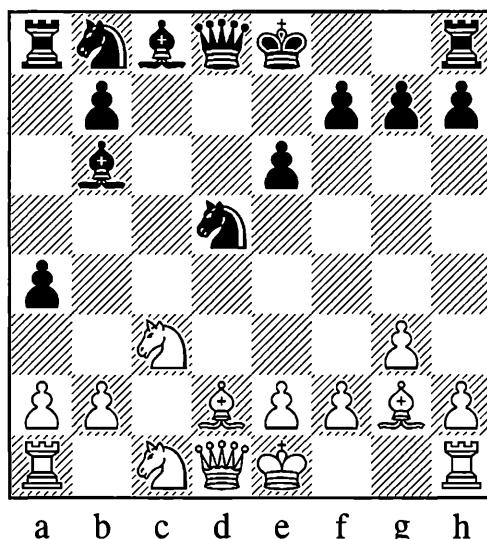


9... $a5!?$

This interesting attempt to shake up the queenside is an invention of Elmar Magerramov, an Azeri grandmaster who was a childhood sparring partner of Kasparov, as detailed in Chapter 9 of Tibor Karolyi's *Genius in the Background*. Black can of course play more conventionally with 9...0–0 10. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, when White has nothing special.

10. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $a4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 0–0 13.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}el$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ gave Black a healthy, active position in Janjava – Magerramov, Pavlodar 1987.

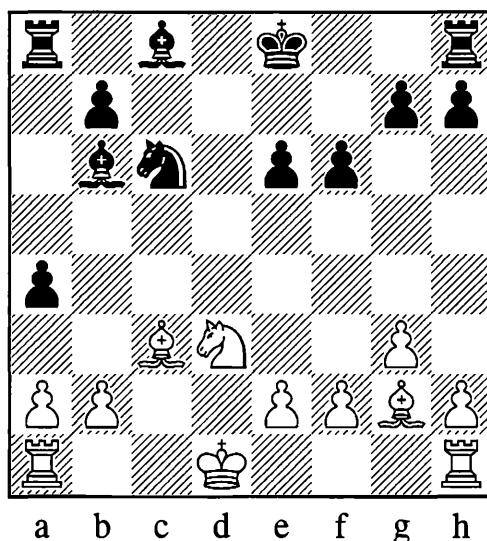


The present position occurred three years later in Piesina – Magerramov, Budapest 1990. At this point we suggest a slight improvement for Black:

11... $\mathbb{Q}xc3N$

In the game Black preferred the consistent 11...a3, but after 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ axb2 13. $\mathbb{B}b1$ 0–0 14.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 16. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ White's position was slightly preferable.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ f6 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6=$



Unlike the endgame occurring in the note to move 8, Black is not worse and has as much chance to play for a win as White.

Conclusion

The lines examined here are not especially threatening, but they all require accurate handling. Take line A with 4.dxc5; this rare move is not even considered by most theoretical sources, but it leads to complex positions which demand a high level of resourcefulness from both players.

In line B1 with 6.dxc5, we saw Black sacrificing a piece for ongoing compensation, while B2) 6.cxd5 exd5 resulted in a thematic IQP structure. The theoretical picture here is fine for Black, although the complex middlegame positions demand a great deal of positional and tactical awareness from both players.

Variation C with 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is not particularly challenging, as White immediately allows the liquidation of the d4-pawn. Where permitted, Black will follow up with a quick ...e5 leading to active play in the centre. In line C4 we saw White put a stop to that plan with 6.cxd5, but the simplified centre holds few dangers for Black and the second player equalizes without much trouble.

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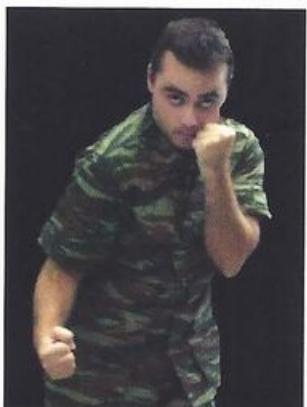
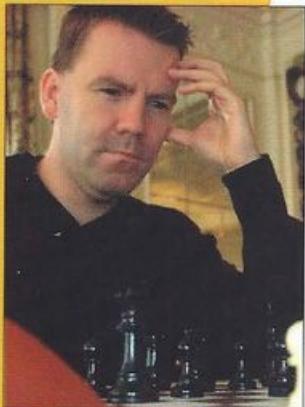
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