

A Practical Black Repertoire with d5, c6

2

The Caro-Kann and Other Defences



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The Caro-Kann Defence

1.e4 c6

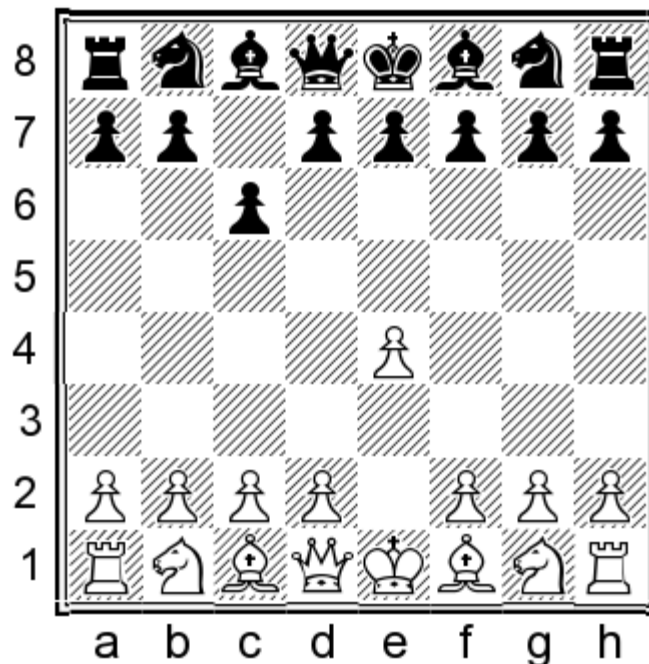
In Parts 1-3 we will analyse an opening set-up for Black after 1.e4. The most popular responses for him in answer to White's first move with his king's pawn are the Sicilian Defence and 1...e5, but there has been amassed so much theory after them that we have made a choice to deal with the Caro-Kann Defence.

The Caro-Kann Defence has been named after its inventor – the Vienna chess player Marcus Kann and the English chess player and theoretician Horatio Caro who published an analysis of some variations of this opening back in the year 1886. At first it was used mostly by players with a positional style and gradually it acquired the image of a rather dull opening in which there arose a slow manoeuvring game. Still, little by little, the Caro-Kann Defence was enriched with new ideas. Nowadays there often happen variations including pawn-sacrifices like (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5, or 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♙b3 ♕g7) as well as positions with opposite sides castling (see the Classical system, Chapters 17-18), therefore presently it is used by players with quite different style.

After playing 1...c6, Black is ready to attack White's central e4-pawn with the move d7-d5. Therefore the Caro-Kann Defence is a bit similar in its strategical ideas to the French Defence, but there is an important difference too. This is the situation of the Black's bishop on c8. In the Caro-Kann Defence it can join in the actions quickly via the f5, or the g4-squares, while in the French Defence it might remain closed for a long time on the c8-square. Still, there are some dark spots on the sun as well... One of the drawbacks of the Caro-Kann Defence is the fact that the undermining of White's centre (c6-c5) will have to be accomplished with a loss of a tempo and also the knight on b8 will often have to occupy a rather modest position on the d7-square, instead of the much more active placement on c6.

Part 1

1.e4 c6



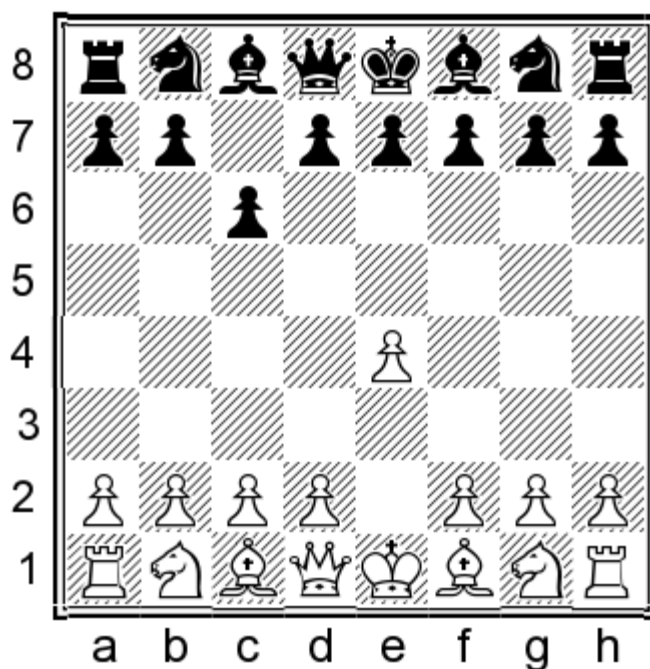
White's basic and strongest move (2.d4) will be analysed in Parts 2 and 3, while here we will deal with White's moves with which he refrains from the immediate occupation of the centre with his d-pawn.

In Chapter 1 we will analyse some of his seldom played moves like: 2.b3, 2.f4 and 2.♘f3. The two knights system (2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3) will be dealt with in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 the readers will be acquainted with the best reaction for Black against the move 2.d3, with which White usually tries to transpose to King's Indian set-ups with colours reversed, while in Chapter 4 we will deal with the Steiner attack (2.c4).

Chapter 1

1.e4 c6

- A) 2.b3
- B) 2.f4
- C) 2.♘f3



In this chapter we will analyse variations in which White avoids the most popular theoretical lines: **A) 2.b3**, **B) 2.f4** and **C) 2.♘f3**.

About 2.♞e2 d5 3.d3 (3.♘c3 d4 – see Chapter 2, variation **A**) 3...dxe4 – see Chapter 3.

Or 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6, or 4.c3 ♘c6 5.d4 ♗g4 – see Chapter 6.

2.g3 d5 3.♗g2 (3.♘c3 dxe4 – see Chapter 2) 3...dxe4. With this exchange Black provokes his opponent's bishop to occupy the e4-square in order to win a tempo by attacking it with his knight. 4.♗xe4 ♘f6 5.♗g2 e5 6.d3 ♗c5 7.♘e2 0-0= Mruskovic – Banas, Bratislava 1998.

2.♗e2. This move seems rather timid. 2...d5 3.e5 c5. Black prepares the development of his knight to the c6-square. 4.f4 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.0-0 (6.d3 e6 7.0-0 ♘ge7 – see 6.0-0) 6...e6 7.d3 ♘ge7. This knight can go to the f5-square from here and it will occupy a powerful position there not standing in the way of the development of his kingside pieces. 8.c3 (8.♗e3 ♘f5 9.♗f2 h5 10.♘bd2, Kovalev – Postny, Gjakova 2016, 10...h4!?∞) 8...♘f5 9.♘a3 ♗e7 10.♘c2 0-0 11.♖h1, Jobava – Tari, Izmir 2016, 11...b5!?∞, Black begins immediate active actions on the queenside.

2.♗c4. This is hardly the best square for White's bishop, because it will be attacked by Black's pawn and will be forced to lose time for a retreat. The only plus of the move 2.♗c4 is the fact that the World Champion Magnus Carlsen played once like this in a blitz game... 2...d5 3.♗b3 dxe4 4.♞h5. This move is at least consequent. 4...e6. Now Black's bishop

5.♖e2 ♘f5 6.h3 h5 7.g3 ♗a6. He transfers his knight to the c5-square, impeding White to regain his pawn. 8.♙g2 ♗c5
 Tu Hoang Thong – Hoang, Da Lat 2014.

5.h3 ♘f5 6.g4 ♙g6 7.♙g2, Tu Hoang Thong – Pitra, Vietnam 2016, 7...♗a5!? 8.♖e2 ♗bd7∞

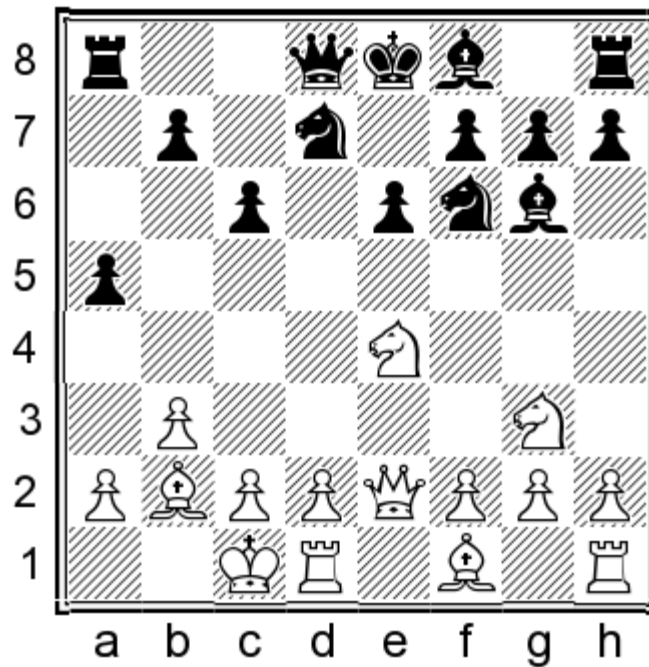
5...♘f5 6.♗g3 e6 7.♖e2 ♗bd7 8.♗cxe4

8.♗gxe4, Reprintsev – Dreev, Dos Hermanas, 2003, 8...♗a5!?, followed by ♙a3.

8...♙g6 9.0-0-0

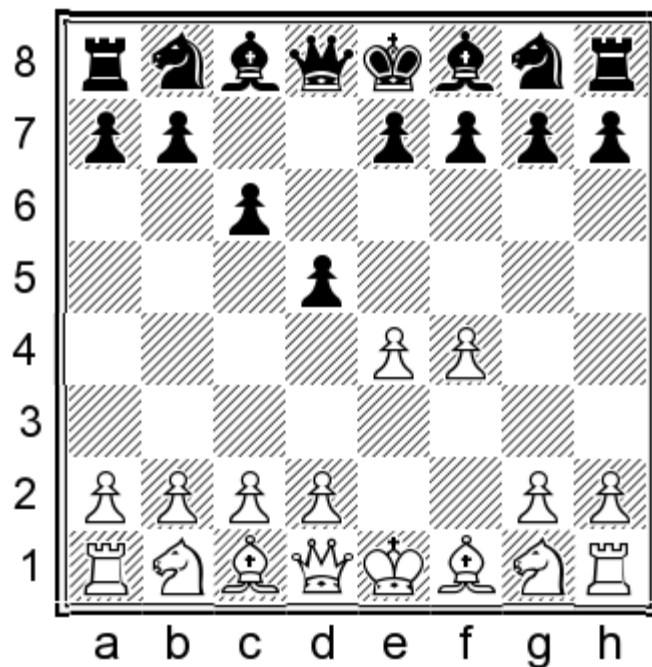
The inclusion of the moves 9.h4 h6, would not change the character of the fight. 10.0-0-0 a5 De Filippis – Rogetzer, ICCF 2011.

9...a5!



Now, White is faced with a rather unpleasant choice. He must either allow a5-a4, or play **10.a4**, enabling his opponent to begin an attack against the enemy king in the middle game with the move b7-b5. **10...♙e7 11.h4 h6 12.f4 0-0 13.♖f3 b5!** De Filippis – Gierth, ICCF 2010. Black is obviously ahead of his opponent in a position with attacks on the opposite sides of the board.

B) 2.f4 d5



3.e5

White occupies space and deprives the enemy knight of the f6-square. He weakens however his control over the f5-square and Black's bishop exploits this immediately.

About 3.♘c3 dxe4 – see Chapter 2.

3.d3 dxe4 – see Chapter 3.

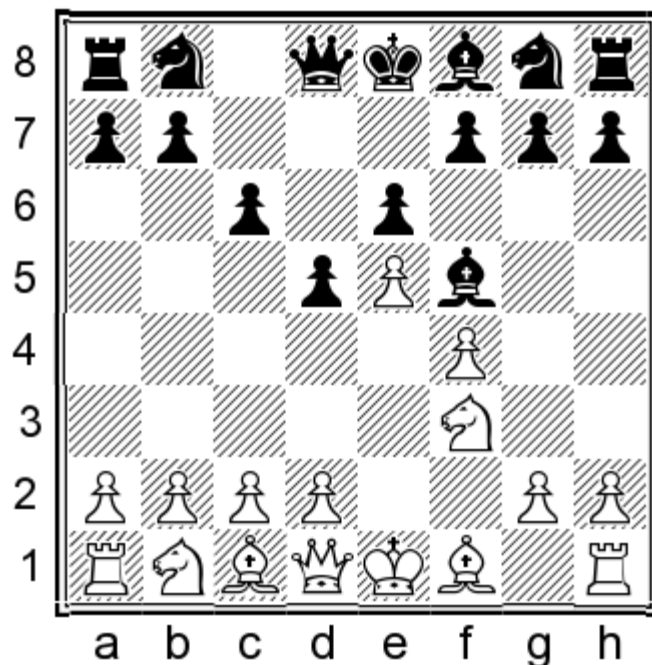
After 3.♘f3 dxe4 4.♘g5, Black can play 4...e5!?, without being afraid of the weakening of the a2-g8 diagonal. 5.♙c4 (Following 5.d3 exd3!? 6.♙xd3 ♘f6 7.♙e2 ♙g4 8.♙xe5+, White regains his pawn, but Black wins a tempo for the development of his knight thanks to the exposed placement of the enemy queen. 8...♙e7 9.h3 ♙c8 10.♘c3 ♘bd7 11.♙e2 ♘c5) 5...♘h6 6.♘xe4 exf4 7.♙f3, Krol – Sokolik, ICCF 2006, 7...♙e7!? 8.d3 b5 9.♙b3 a5 10.a4 ♘f5. Black forces the retreat of the enemy bishop to b3 and provokes the move a2-a4, transferring his knight to the d4-square. 11.♙xf4 0-0 He accomplishes the last preparation for the move ♘d4. After his knight occupies the central square, his threat to capture on b3 will be very unpleasant for White.

3...♙f5 4.♘f3

4.d4 e6 5.♘f3 h5 – see 4.♘f3.

4.g4. This pawn-move weakens the e1-h4 diagonal. 4...♙e4 5.♘f3 e6 6.♘c3, Ovetchkin – Galkin, Moscow 2002, 6...♙e7!?!∞

4...e6



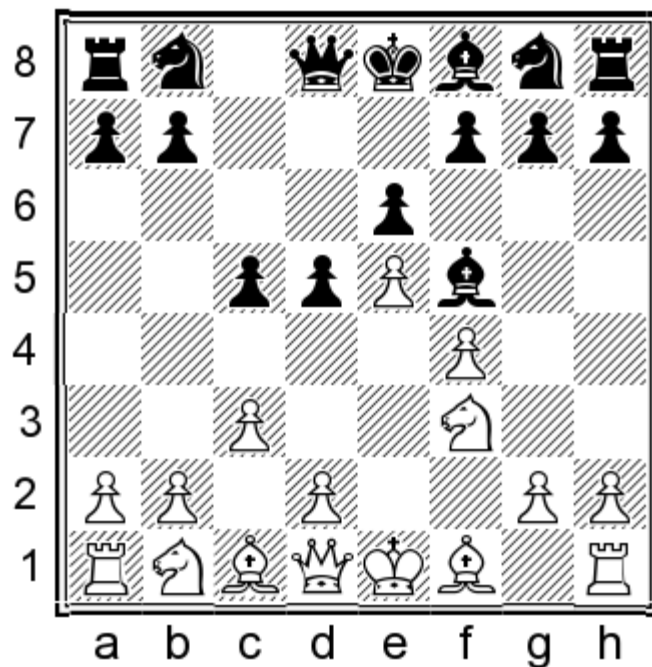
5.c3

5.♙e2 c5 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.d3 (7.c3 h5!?) 7...h5 8.c4, Heick – Kandic, Lemgo Matorf 1995, 8...♘h6

5.g3 h5. Now, White must be constantly on the alert about the possible sacrifice h5-h4. 6.h3 c5 7.d3 ♘c6 N.Georgiev – D.Andreev, Sofia 2016.

After 5.d4, Black will have an excellent game with the plan, connected with h7-h5, ♘h6, ♙g6, ♘f5. 5...h5 6.♙e3 ♗b6 7.♗c1 ♘h6 8.a4 (8.c4 ♘d7 9.♘bd2, Morozevich – Svidler, Monte Carlo 2005. He can make an intermediate exchange here on c4 – 9...dxc4!? 10.♙xc4 and transfer his knight to d5. 10...♗d8, followed by ♘b6-d5.) 8...a5. Black's queen will be very well placed on b6, so he should not allow a4-a5. 9.♘bd2 ♙e7 10.h3 ♙g6 11.♙f2 ♘f5 12.♙d3 h4. After this move White can hardly develop any active actions on the kingside. 13.0-0 ♘a6 Conde Poderoso – Squires, ICCF 2016.

5...c5



6.d3

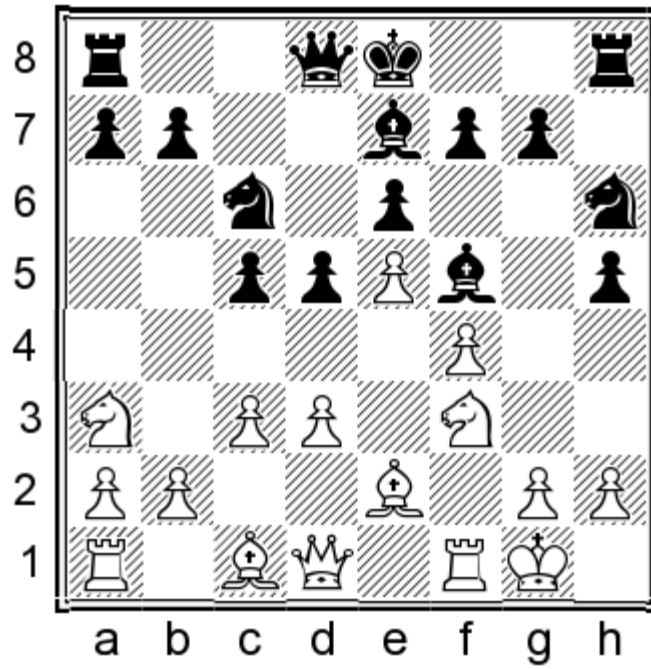
6.♘a3 ♘c6 7.♙e2, Rodriguez Vila – Pucill, Villa Martelli 2010, 7...h5!?∞

6.d4. After this move the pawn on d4 will be an excellent target for attack of Black's pieces. 6...♘c6 7.♙e3 ♖b6 8.♚c1 cxd4 9.♘xd4 (9.cxd4?! ♘b4!?) 9...♘xd4 10.♙xd4. White must forget about all his ambitious plans and begin a fight for equality. 10...♙c5 11.♙xc5 (11.♚d2 ♘e7= Voss – Moors, Koblenz 2006) 11...♚xc5= White lags in development, so he cannot afford playing precarious pawn-moves of the type: 12.b4?! ♚b6 13.a4, Zvjaginsev – Khairullin, Moscow 2010. Here, Black could have even obtained an advantage with the line: 13...♘e7!? 14.a5 ♚c6 15.♙e2 ♖c8+ White is incapable of parrying simultaneously the threats ♙xb1 and d5-d4.

6...♘c6 7.♘a3

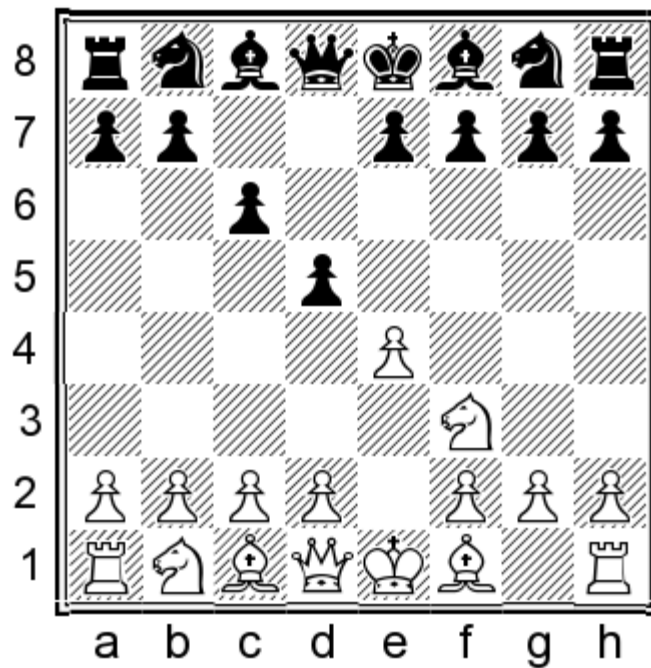
7.♙e2 h5 8.0-0 ♘h6 9.♘a3 ♙e7 – see 7.♘a3.

7...h5 8.♙e2 ♘h6 9.0-0 ♙e7



10. ♖c2, Movsesian – Eljanov, Moscow 2010, 10...h4!? 11. ♗e3 ♗g6∞, followed by ♗f5. Black has a wonderful position, but it would be still too early for him to claim an advantage, since White has no pawn-weaknesses in his position.

C) 2. ♗f3 d5



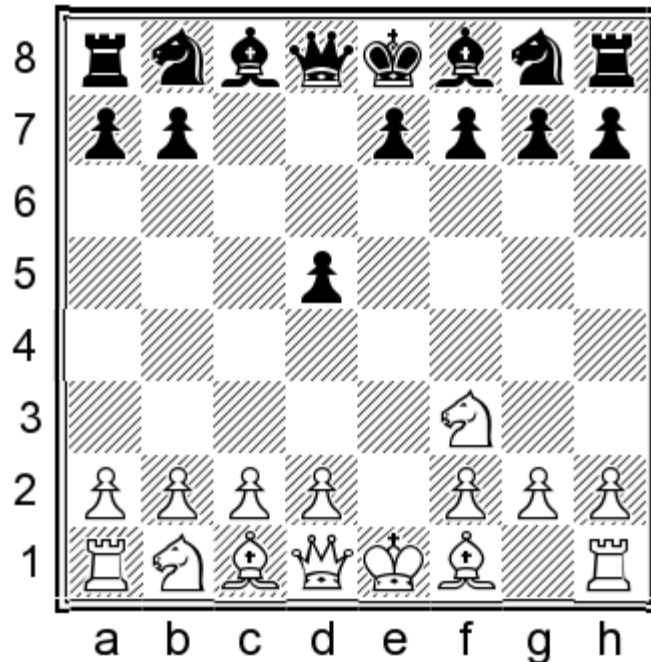
3.exd5

About 3.d3 dxe4 – see Chapter 3.

3. ♗c3 ♗f6 – see Chapter 2, variation B.

3.e5 c5 4.d4 cxd4 – see Chapter 6.

3...cxd5



4.♞e5

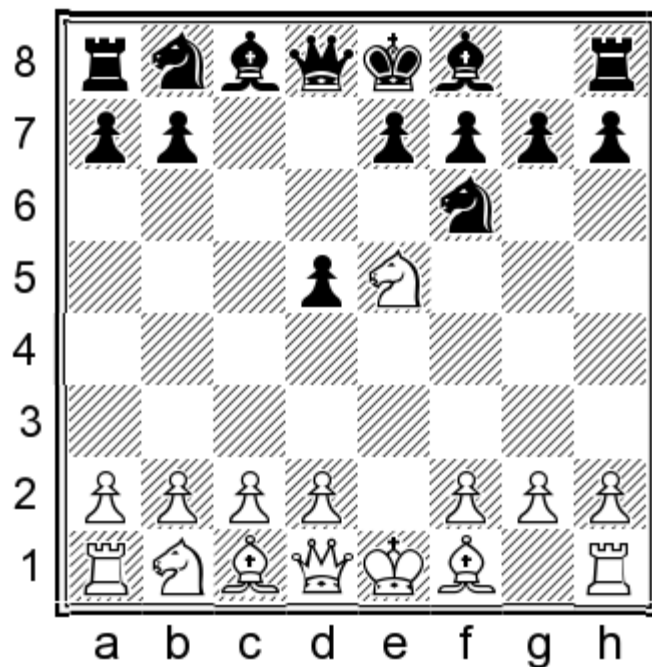
White prepares the development of his bishop to the b5-square. This plan used to be considered “tricky” and applicable only in blitz games, but it turned out that Black’s task to equalise was not so easy at all.

About 4.d4 ♞f6 – see Chapter 8.

4.c4 ♞f6 5.d4 (5.cxd5 ♞xd5 – see Chapter 4) 5...g6 – see Chapter 9

4.♙b5+. This move is not so effective without the preliminary move ♞e5, because Black can reply simply with 4...♙d7, without being afraid of presenting his opponent with the two-bishop advantage. 5.♙xd7+ (5.a4 a6 6.♙xd7+ ♞xd7= Berger – Haymore, Email 1994) 5...♞xd7 6.0-0 (6.d4 ♞gf6 7.♙g5 e6 8.♙xf6 ♞xf6 9.♞bd2 ♙e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c3 b5=, Black begins the pawn-minority attack, Holly – Bartak, Bratislava 1995) 6...e6 7.d4 ♞c7 8.♞c3 ♞gf6 9.♞e5 ♞xe5 10.♙f4 ♞fd7 11.dxe5, Krapivin – Gorozhanin, St Petersburg 2014, 11...a6!?

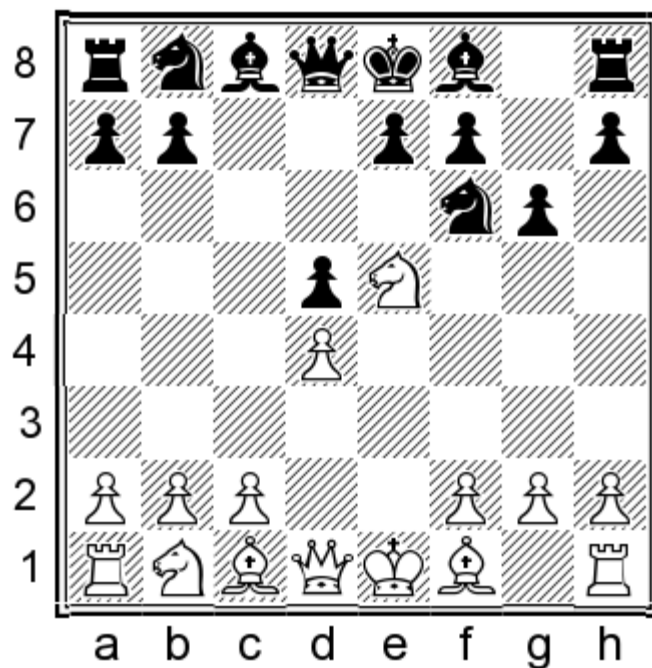
4...♞f6



5.d4

The move 5.♘b5+ is premature. 5...♙d7 6.♗xd7 ♘bxd7 7.0-0 e6 8.d4 ♘d6 9.c3, Kaphle – Zhang, Kemer 2009. White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but it would be hardly very useful in a position with a Carlsbad pawn-structure. 9...♚c7. This is Black's most precise move. He must attack the pawn on h2, before White has played ♗d2, followed by ♘f3. 10.h3 0-0= In this middle game Black has two plans which are of approximately equal value: 1) a7-a6, followed by the pawn-minority attack b7-b5-b4; 2) ♗e4 and f7-f5, beginning active actions in the centre and on the kingside.

5...g6



6.♘b5+

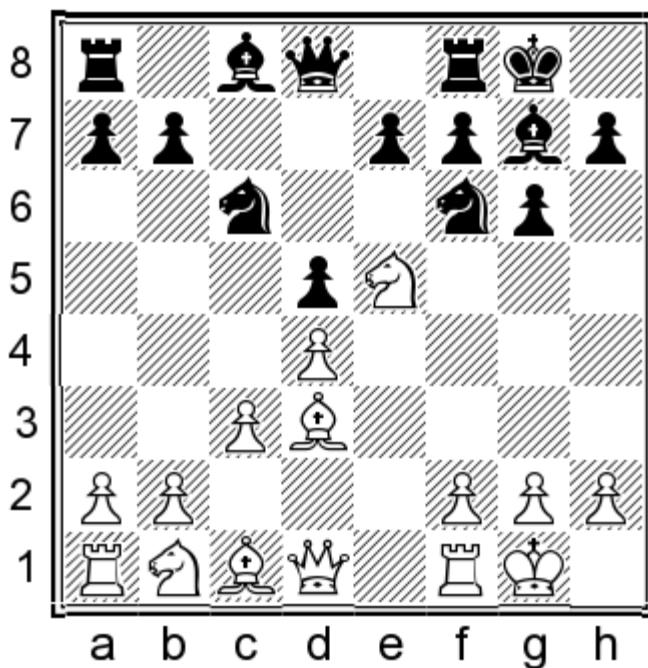
The idea behind this check is to force Black's knight to occupy the d7-square, where it would be much less active than on c6.

6.h4. This move is too risky. 6...♔g7 7.h5 ♖xh5 8.♗xh5?! The exchange-sacrifice is obviously not well prepared. 8...gxh5 9.♗xh5 ♕xe5 10.♗xe5 ♖g8 ♠ Van der Wiel – Willemze, Hoogeveen 2006.

6.♕e2 ♔g7 7.c3 0-0= Hamidullin – Jusupov, Kazan 2008.

6.c3 ♔g7 7.♕d3 (7.♕b5+ ♖bd7 – see 6.♕b5) 7...0-0 – see 6.♕d3.

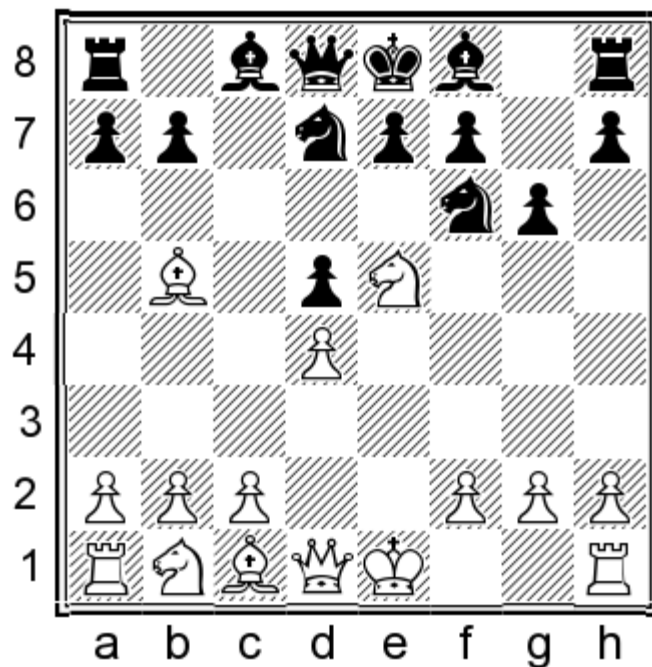
6.♕d3 ♔g7 7.c3 (7.0-0 0-0 8.c3 ♖c6 – see 7.c3) 7...0-0. Black has no problems whatsoever 8.0-0 (Following 8.♖d2 ♖c6 9.♖xc6 bxc6 10.0-0 ♖d7 11.♖b3 a5 ♠, White will be forced to either comply with the move a5-a4, or to deprive his knight on b3 of its pawn-base, Grimberg – Zelcic, Schwarzach 2010.) 8...♖c6



9.♗e2. This move allows the exchange on e5. 9...♖xe5 10.dxe5 ♖d7 11.f4 (11.♕f4 ♖c5 12.♕c2 ♗b6 ♠ Janda – Jandourek, Czech Republic 2009) 11...♖c5 12.♕c2 b6. Black is preparing the development of his bishop to the a6-square. 13.♗d1 ♕a6 14.♗e3 e6 15.♖d2, Rendle – Winfridsson, England 2010, 15...f6!?= The pawn on e5 cramps Black's position so he should better undermine it immediately.

9.f4. Now, after an exchange on e5 White will be able to capture with his f-pawn, but his e4-square will be seriously weakened. 9...♖e8! Black is preparing f7-f6 and his knight on e8 will manage to occupy the excellent d6-square (He can also equalise with the move 9...♕f5=). 10.♖d2 ♗c7 11.♖xc6 (After 11.♗f3 e6 12.♗g3, Soelter – Becker, Detmold 1976, Black can obtain a very good position with the move 12...♖e7!?, followed by f7-f6 and ♖d6.) 11...bxc6 12.♖b3. White is in a hurry to occupy the c5-square with his knight. 12...♖d6 13.♖c5 a5 14.b3 ♗e8 15.♗f3 h5 16.♕a3 ♕f5. The weaknesses of the c5 and e4-squares practically balance each other. 17.♗ae1 ♕f8 18.♖a4 e6 19.♕c5 ♕e7= Betker – Van Unen, ICCF 2012.

6...♖bd7



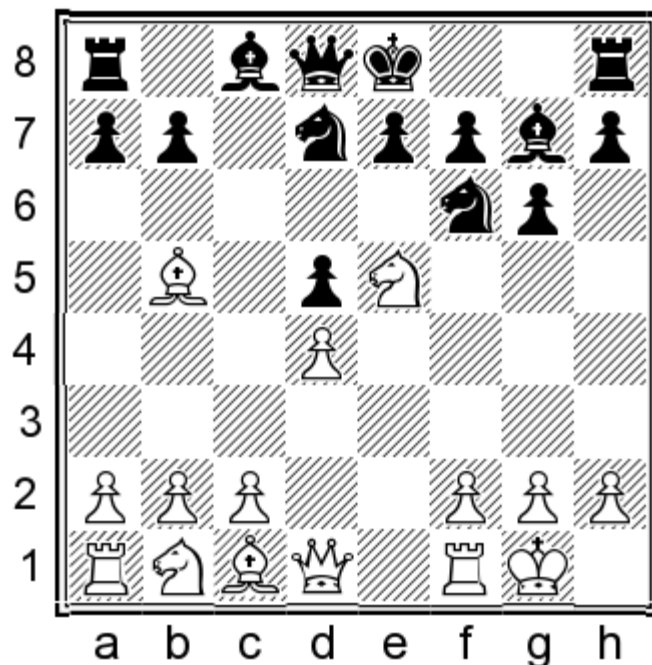
7.0-0

About 7.♖e2 ♘g7 8.♗d2 0-0 9.0-0 ♗xe5 – see 7.0-0.

7.c4. This is the beginning of a rather dubious plan. Black is very well developed, so the transfer into a standard position with an isolated queen-pawn would be definitely in his favour. 7...♘g7 8.cxd5 0-0 9.♘xd7, Cicak – Zelcic, Turin 2006, 9...♘xd7!? 10.♗c3 ♘f5 11.♖b3 ♖b6 12.♙e3 ♗fd8. Black regains the sacrificed pawn and will maintain an edge thanks to his two powerful bishops.

7.c3 ♘g7 8.f4 (8.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0) 8...0-0 9.♗d2 ♗e8!? Now, in order to exploit the vulnerability of the e4-square, Black wishes to continue with ♗d6 and ♗f6. 10.0-0 ♗d6 11.♘d3 ♗f6. Delgado Ramirez – Mendez Ataria, Paraguay 2012.

7...♘g7



8.♖e1

This is the best move for White. He places his rook to an active position and ensures at the same time a square for his bishop on b5 to retreat to.

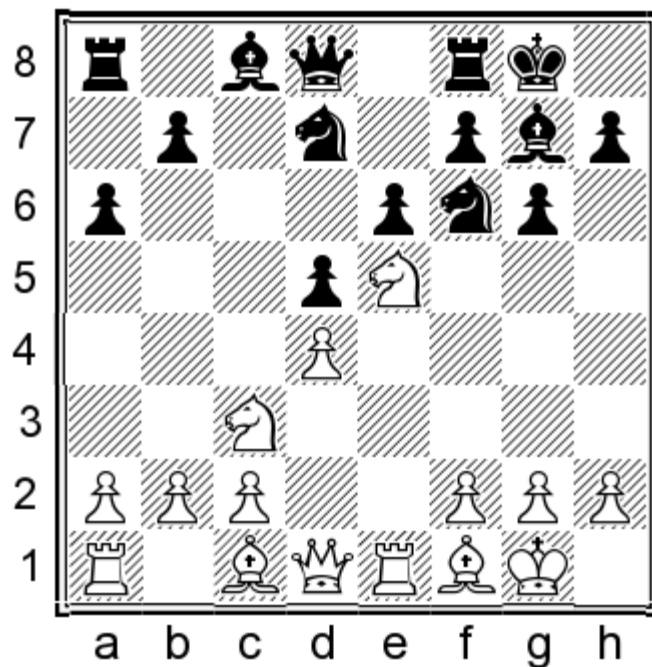
8.♖f3 0-0 9.♘c3, Carlsen – Morozevich, Nice 2008, 9...♗b6!? 10.♙d3 ♙g4 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.♚xf3 ♜c8=

8.♚e2 0-0 9.♘d2 ♗xe5. The exchange of the knights is Black's simplest road to equality. 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.♘f3 ♚c7= Heaton – Kunz, ICCF 2007.

Following 8.♘d2 ♚b6 9.♙xd7+ ♗xd7 10.♘ef3 0-0=, White must play very precisely; otherwise, Black's two-bishop advantage might become a very important factor. For example, it would be bad for White to opt for 11.♘b3?!, in view of 11...a5= Hansen – Fridman, Germany 2008.

8.c3 0-0 9.♚e2 (9.♘f3 ♗b6= Yudin – Harikrishna, Dubai 2014; 9.f4 ♗e4= Bles – Van Rosmalen, Dieren 2005) 9...♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♗e4 11.♘d2 ♙xe5. This move leads to simplifications. 12.♗xe4 dxe4 13.♙h6 ♙g7 14.♙xg7 ♗xg7 15.♚xe4 ♚c7. White's queenside pawn-majority is not important, because Black can advance quickly his pawns in the centre and on the kingside. 16.♜fd1 ♙f5 17.♚e3 ♜fd8= Hujbert – Franco Alonso, Budapest 2013.

8...0-0 9.♘c3 a6 10.♙f1 e6



11.a4

11. ♖d3 b6= Yu Shaoteng – Adianto, Cebu 2007.

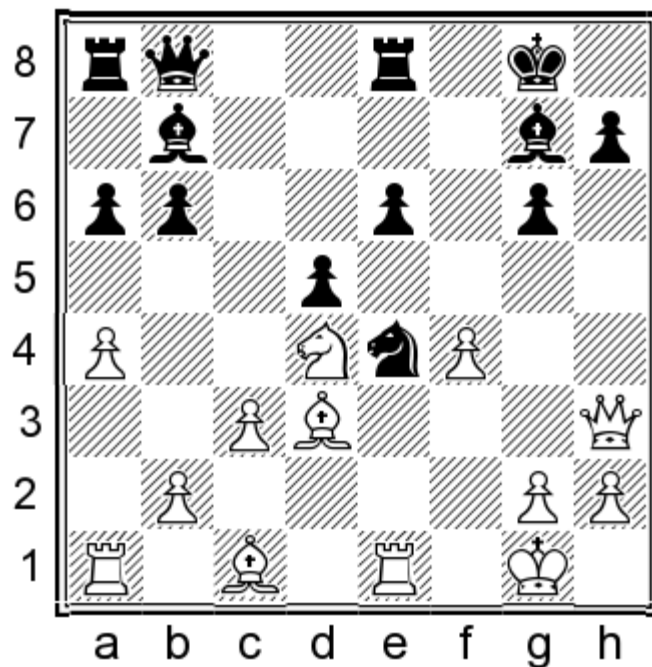
11... ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.f4 b6 14. ♖e2 ♙b7 15.c3 f6!?

White has a bit freer game, so Black wishes to undermine the pawn on e5, which cramps his position.

16. ♖d4 ♙e8 17. ♗g4 ♗b8 18.exf6 ♘xf6 19. ♗h3 ♘e4

The activity of Black's pieces compensates the slight vulnerability of his pawn on e6.

20. ♙d3



20...♙xd4!?

This is a rather non-standard decision. Black exchanges his powerful bishop for the enemy knight in order to manage to transfer his queen to the b4-square. From there it would exert powerful pressure against the d4 and b2-squares.

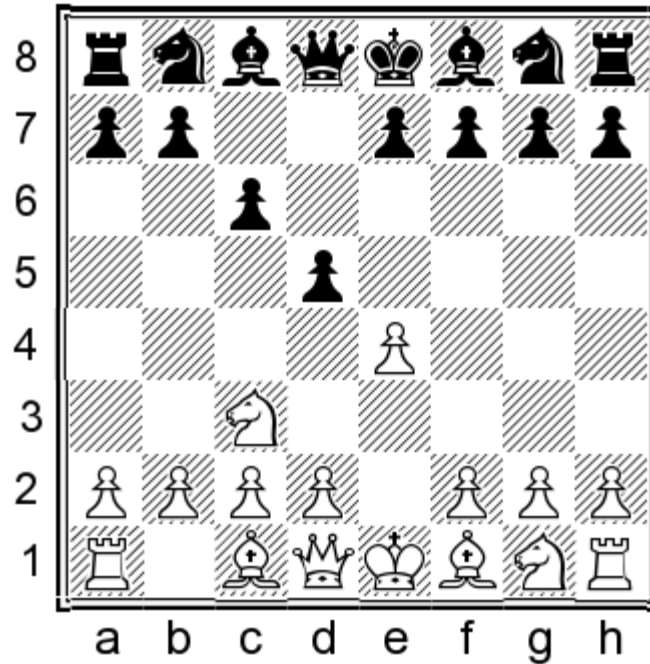
21.cxd4 ♖d6 22.♙e3 ♗b4 23.♞d1 a5 24.♙d2

This is the only way for White to complete the development of his queenside.

24...♘xd2 25.♞xd2 ♙c6 26.♙c2 ♙d7= Black's bishop exerts pressure from this square against the enemy pawn on a4 and protects at the same time the weakness on e6, Terreaux – Remis Fernandez, ICCF 2015.

Chapter 2

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5



Now, we will deal in details with **A) 3.♙e2** and **B) 3.♘f3**.

About 3.d4 dxe4 – see Part 3.

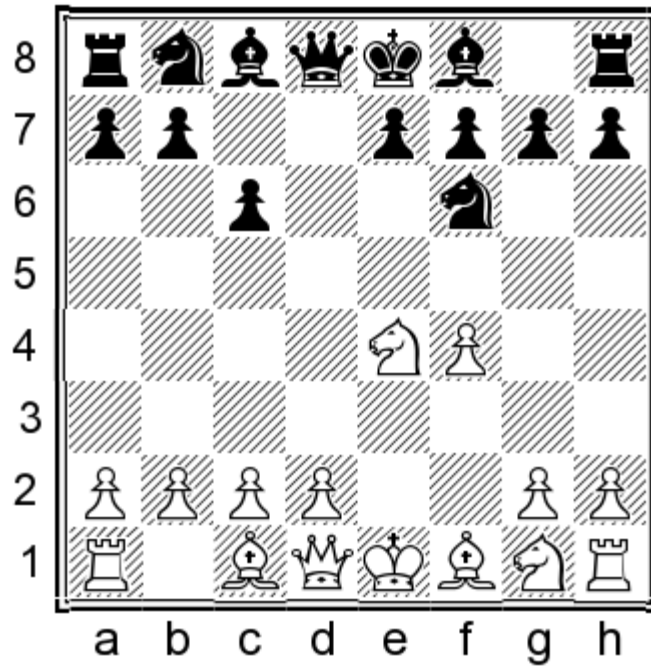
3.d3 dxe4 – see Chapter 3.

3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 ♘c6 – see Chapter 8.

3.e5. This move does not combine well with White's previous move. 3...d4 4.♘ce2 c5 5.♘f4 ♛c7 6.♙b5+, Mestrovic – Wells, Budapest 1999, 6...♘c6!? White's e5-pawn is away from the rest of his forces and would need protection.

He would not obtain much with 3.g3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♙f5 5.♙g2 e6 6.d4 ♙e7 7.c3 ♘f6 8.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0 ♘d7= Kokarev – Lintchevski, Kazan 2017. Black has a solid position without any pawn-weaknesses.

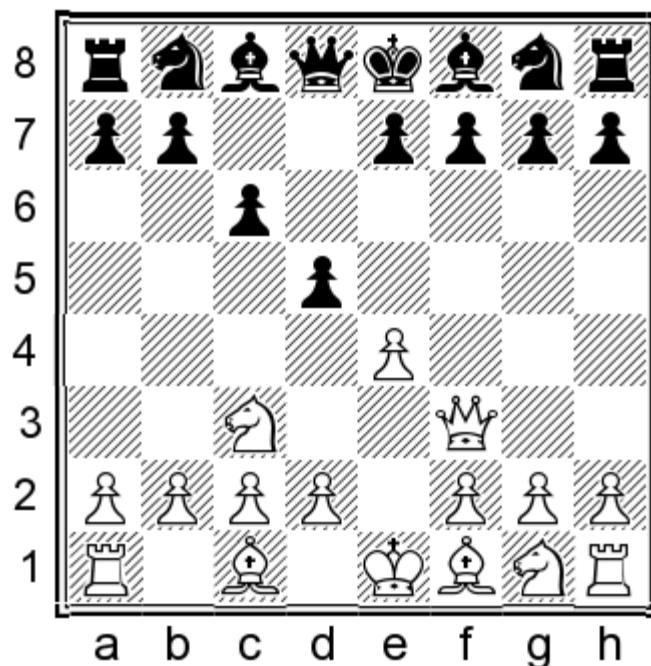
Following 3.f4 dxe4 4.♘xe4, Black can play 4...♘f6, without being afraid of the doubling of his pawns.



After 5. Nxf6+ exf6 6. d4 Qd6 7. Qd3 0-0 8. Wf3 , Tiviakov – L’Ami, Dieren 2003, 8... $\text{Re8+!?$ 9. Ne2 f5! , Black can exploit the vulnerability of the e4-square with Qe6 , Nd7-f6 and Qd5 .

5. Nf2 g6 . The plan, connected with Qf5 and e7-e6 seems rather risky, because Black must be constantly on the alert about the possible threat g2-g4 . 6. Nf3 Qg7 7. g3 (After 7. Qc4 , White’s bishop is not so active here as on the long diagonal. 7... c5 8. 0-0 0-0 9. d3 Nc6 10. a3 Wc7 Mondry – Efremov, ICCF 2009.) 7... 0-0 8. Qg2 c5 9. 0-0 Nc6 = Black’s prospects are not worse at all. He can even seize the initiative at some moment, for example: 10. $\text{Re1!?$ Ng4 11. Nxc4 Qxg4 12. h3 Qe6 13. d3 , Tazbir – Vavra, Litomysl 2009, 13... $\text{Wd7!?$ 14. Ch2 Qd5

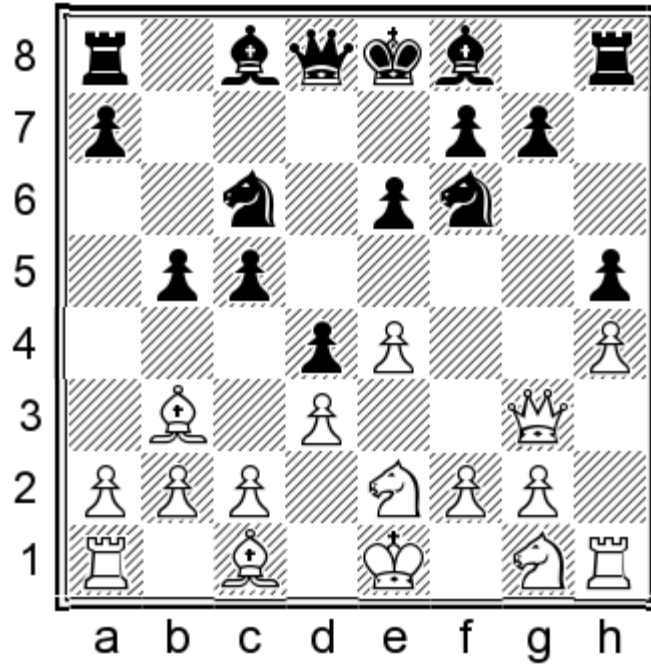
3. Wf3 . This is the Spielmann attack. White impedes the development of the enemy bishop on c8, but deprives his own knight of the possibility to be developed to the f3-square, moreover that it is well known that it is usually risky to develop the queen so early in the game, since it can become a target for the enemy pieces.



3... d4 . This is the simplest for Black. He is not afraid of White’s next move. 4. Qc4 e6 5. Nce2 c5 6. d3 (6. Wg3 Nc6 7. d3

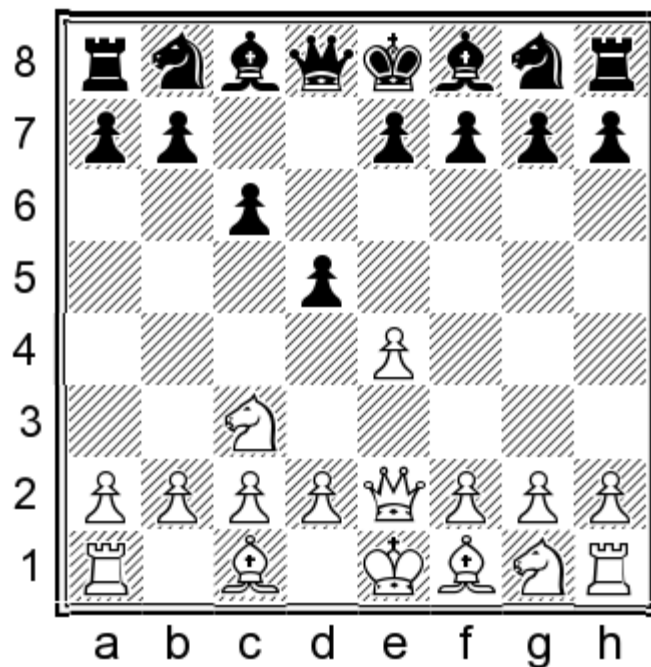
h5 – see 6.d3) 6...♖c6 7.♔g3 h5! Black wishes to provoke a weakening of the g4-square. 8.h4 b5. He exploits the fact that capturing on b5 would lead to material losses for White, so Black occupies space on the queenside with tempo.

9.♙b3 ♖f6



10.♗f3 (After 10.a4, it seems very good for Black to continue with 10...c4! 11.axb5 ♖b4. He has seized completely the initiative. 12.♙a4 cxd3 13.cxd3 ♙d6 14.f4 ♔a5 15.♙d2 ♗g4 16.♖f1 ♙d7 17.♗h3 a6 18.♞a3 ♙xb5 ♠ Sutton – Ellis, ICCF 2015.) 10...c4 11.dxc4 bxc4 12.♙a4 ♙d7 13.0-0 ♞c8∞ White's game is not easy at all. For example, he would end up in a very difficult position after 14.e5 ♗xe5 15.♙xd7+ ♗exd7 16.♗fxd4 ♔b6 17.a4 ♙d6 18.♔h3 0-0 ♠ Sutton – Grayland, ICCF 2015.

A) 3.♔e2



This move leads to a complicated game and it is often used by grandmaster Semen Dvojris. Now, after d5-d4, White's

knight may retreat to the d1-square.

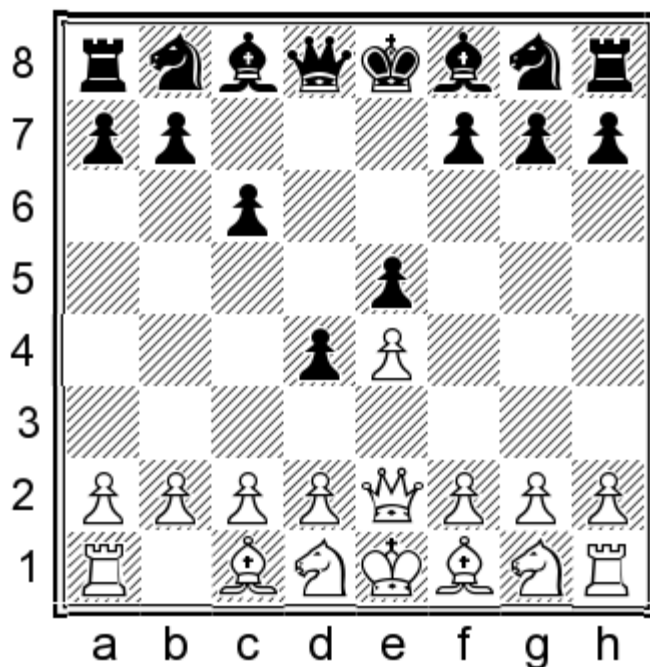
3...d4

This is a principled move. Black occupies space.

His attempt to obtain a position, which would be more typical for the Caro-Kann Defence would enable White to seize the initiative: 3...dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♙f5 5.d3 e6 6.g4↑

4.♘d1 e5

Black's main idea in this position is to wait for the move d2-d3 and to give a check with his bishop on b4 in order to either trade favourably the dark-squared bishops, or to provoke the pawn-advance c2-c3, after which White's plan to attack on the kingside would not be so effective as Black's counter attack in the centre and on the queenside.



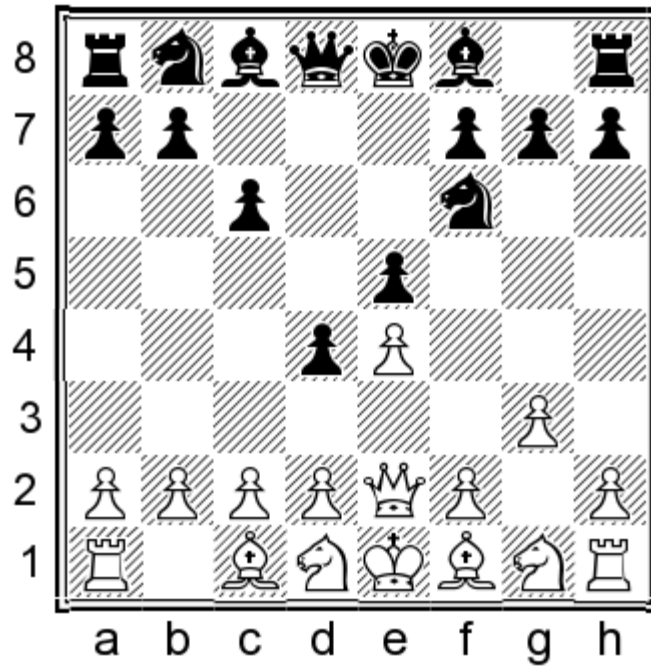
5.g3

It is premature for White to choose here 5.f4 exf4 6.d3 ♘e7 7.h4 h5 8.♙xf4 ♘g6 9.♙g5, Lu – Riazantsev, Beijing 2012, 9...f6!? 10.♙d2 ♙d6. The vulnerability of the g3-square hurts White.

5.♘f3. This move contradicts the main idea of the move 3.♙e2 – to play at first f2-f4 and to develop the knight on f3 only later. 5...♙d6 6.g3 c5 7.♙g2 ♘c6 8.0-0, Tissir – Ovetchkin, Cappelle-la-Grande 2006, 8...♙g4!? 9.h3 ♙h5. Black has more space and White will have difficulties to advance f2-f4. He will be incapable of obtaining counterplay without this move.

5.d3 ♙b4+!? 6.c3 ♙a5. Skoberne – Maciejka, Porto Carras 2011.

5...♘f6

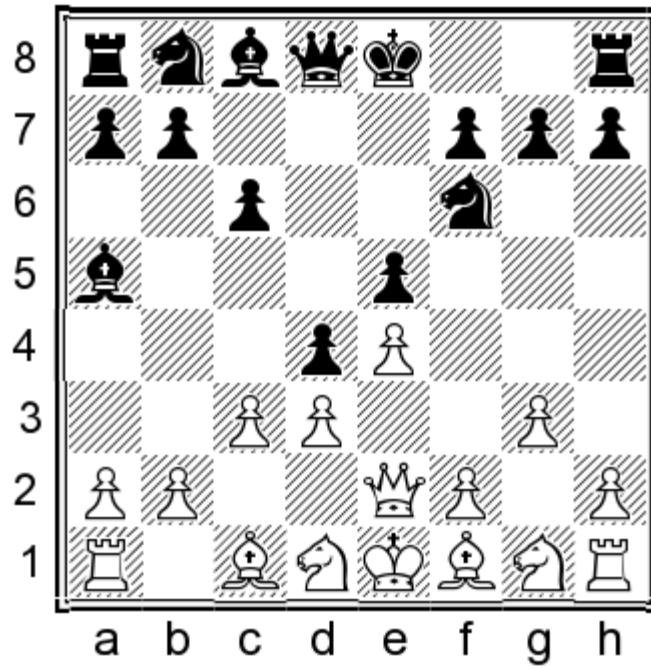


6.d3

6.f4. Now, just like on the previous move, this pawn-advance is not good for White. Black is better developed and the opening of the position would be in his favour. 6...g4 7.f3 exf4 8.gxf4, Bivol – Belenkaya, Kaliningrad 2015, 8...d3! With this cramping pawn-sacrifice Black prevents the development of White's queenside pieces. 9.cxd3 h4. Black's knight is headed for the b4-square and in order to prevent its penetration to c2 White will have to play d1, losing his castling rights. 10.f2 h5 11.d4 b4 12.d1 b6 13.a3 xa2! This exquisite move consolidates Black's advantage. 14.d3 xc1 15.dxc1 d8, followed by xf3, xd4, regaining the pawn and planning to begin an attack against the enemy king after the completion of the development of the kingside.

After 6.g2, it is good for Black to play 6...h4! and White cannot cover the b4-square against the penetration of Black's pieces, because after 7.a3?!, Black would have the line: 7...d3! 8.xd3 xd3 9.cxd3 c5 10.f1 b3 11.b1 d6 Ugrinovskiy – Kogeler, ICCF 2014. He has an overwhelming advantage for the sacrificed pawn.

6...h4+ 7.c3 h5



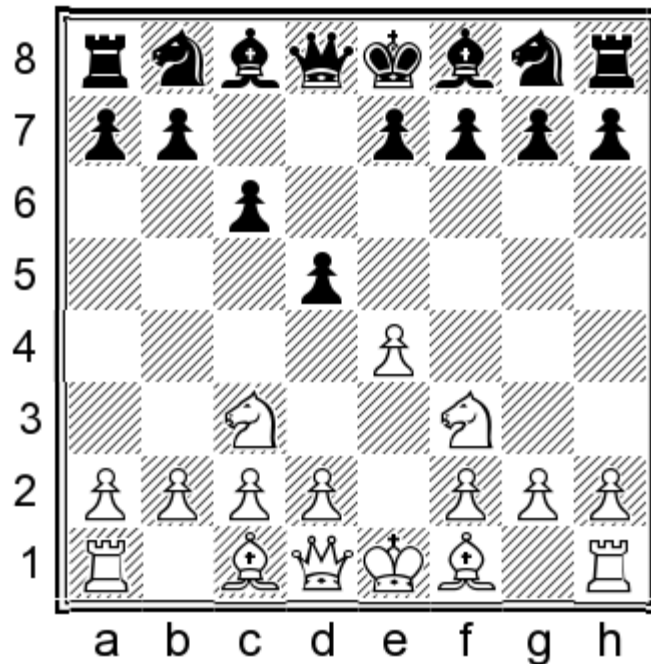
8.f4

White cannot equalise with 8.♘d2 0-0 Efanov – Riazantsev, Minsk 2015.

8...exf4 9.gxf4 ♘g4 10.♘f3, Pridorozhni – Riazantsev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2015, **10...♗bd7!?** The opening of the game has turned out to be in favour of Black. White must begin a fight for equality.

B) 3.♘f3

White develops his second knight, so this opening set-up has been named the two knights system.



Its main idea is to deprive Black of the possibility to play the Classical system: 3...dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f5?! 5.♗g3 ♘g6 6.h4

h6 7.♘e5! This is the point. White has saved a tempo for the move d2-d4 and begins an immediate attack against the f7-square. 7...♙h7 8.♖h5 g6. Black defends against the checkmate, but now, the situation of his bishop on h7 is just pathetic. 9.♗f3 ♘f6 10.♗b3. This double attack decides the outcome of the game. 10...♗d5 11.♗xb7 ♗xe5+ 12.♙e2+– Bogoljubow – Antze, Bremen 1927. White is threatening the capture the enemy rook as well as to checkmate on c8.

3...♘f6!?

This move used to be considered as risky, but very good lines for Black to obtain counterplay were found in the last several years. The main advantage of the move 3...♘f6 is that Black is trying to seize early the initiative. The readers must know very well the theory of this move, however. This chapter is their best chance of doing this.

After the most popular line: 3...♙g4 4.h3 ♙xf3 5.♗xf3, Black obtains a solid, but somewhat passive position. In addition, White's two-bishop advantage should not be forgotten and underestimated...

4.e5

This is White's most principled reply. He occupies space with tempo.

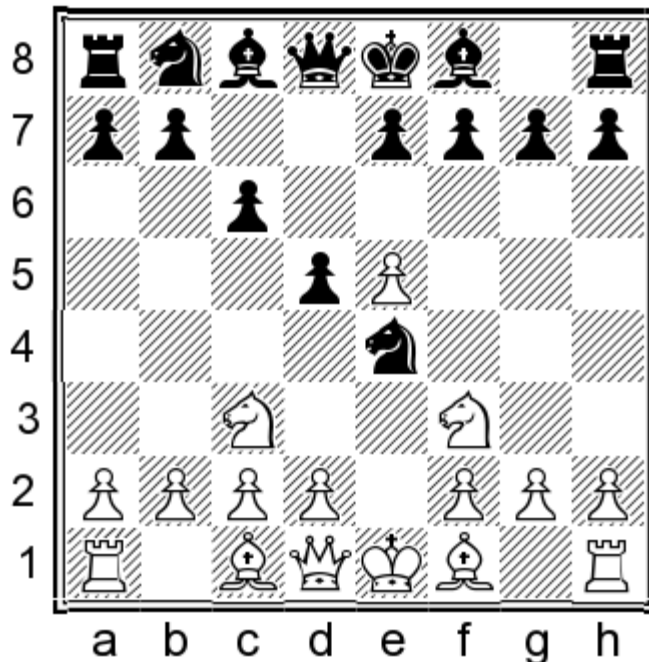
About 4.exd5 cxd5 5.d4 ♘c6 – see Chapter 8.

After White's alternatives Black has no problems at all.

4.♗e2 ♙g4 5.exd5 (5.d3 e6 6.h3 ♙xf3 7.♗xf3 ♙b4= Li Ruifeng – Proleiko, Indianapolis 2016) 5...♙xf3 6.♗xf3 cxd5 7.d4 ♘c6 8.♘e2, Lu Shanglei – Ni Hua, China 2014, 8...e6!? 9.c3 ♙d6 10.♘g3 0-0. Black has obtained a position with a Carlsbad pawn-structure in a very good version. 11.♙g5 ♙e7 12.♙e2 (12.♙d3 e5=) 12...♘d7 13.♙xe7 ♗xe7 14.0-0 ♗d6=

After 4.d3, Black can enter an approximately equal endgame. 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘xe4 6.dxe4 ♗xd1+ 7.♘xd1 ♘d7 8.♙f4. Now, he only needs to develop his bishop on f8 to c5 in order to equalise completely. 8...f6 9.♙c4 e5 10.♙e3 ♙c5= Lu Shanglei – Tabatabaei, Chengdu 2017.

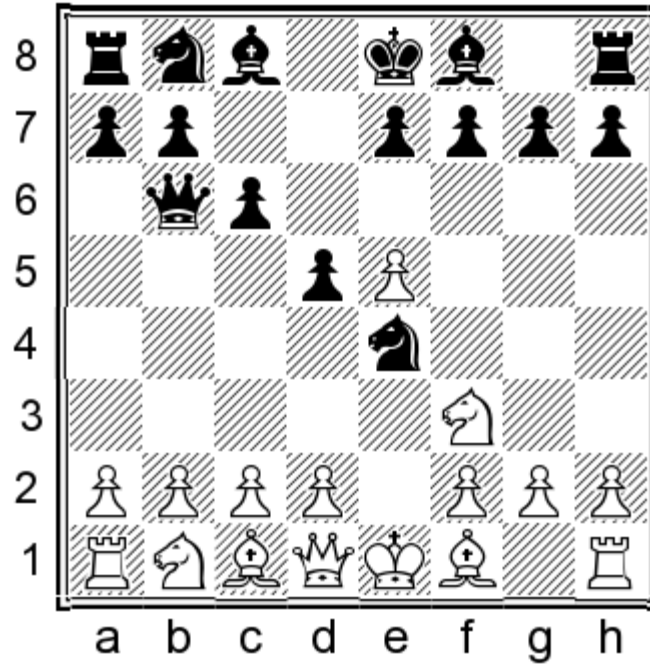
4...♘e4



5.♘e2!?

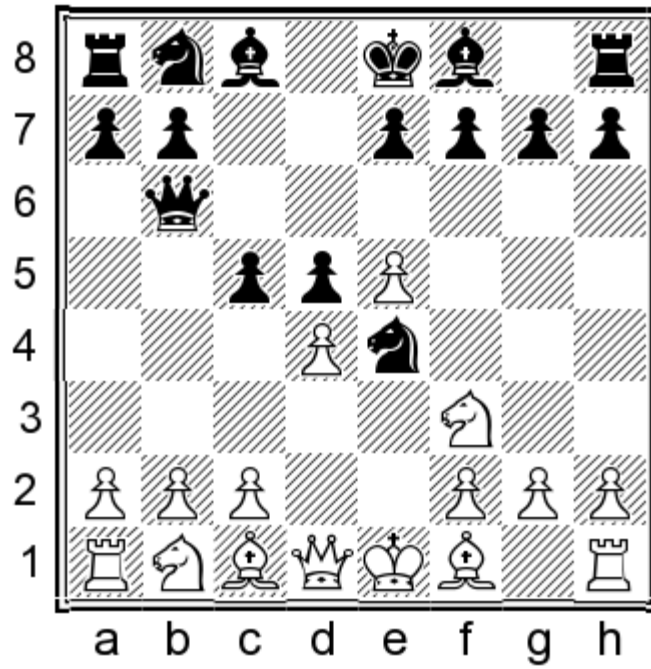
This particular move forced Black to give up the idea of playing 3...♞f6 for a long time. White avoids the exchange of the knights and wishes to fortify his centre (d2-d4) and then to try to trap the enemy knight on e4 (♞fg1, f2-f3).

It is also interesting for White to try here the other possible retreat of his knight – 5.♞b1!? This move was played by Mark Taimanov and Rashid Nezhmetdinov back in the 40ies of the past century. 5...♞b6



It is not good for White to choose here 6.♞e2 – his queen only impedes the development of his kingside pieces on this square. 6...♞g4 7.d3 ♞g5 8.♞bd2 (The exchange-sacrifice 8.♞xg5 ♞xb2 9.c3 ♞xa1 10.♞c2, enables Black to obtain an edge with a precise play. 10...♞xf3 11.gxf3, Sancho Sanchez – Garcia Albarracin, Valencia 1990, 11...e6!? 12.♞g2 ♞a6. Black must be in a hurry; otherwise, his queen might perish inside the enemy camp. With his last move he prepares the sacrifice of his knight on the b4-square. 13.0-0 ♞b4! 14.cxb4 ♞xe5 15.f4 ♞c7 16.f5 ♞d6♣ Black has obtained a rook and a couple of pawns for two minor pieces, but what is most important is that White's pawn-structure has been seriously compromised.) 8...♞xf3+ 9.♞xf3 e6♣ Saenz Narciso – Laliena Solanes, Mislata 2013.

6.d4 c5!? (6...e6 7.♞d3 c5 8.c3 ♞c6 9.0-0± Lagno – Charochkina, Doha 2016. White's space advantage provides him with a stable edge.)



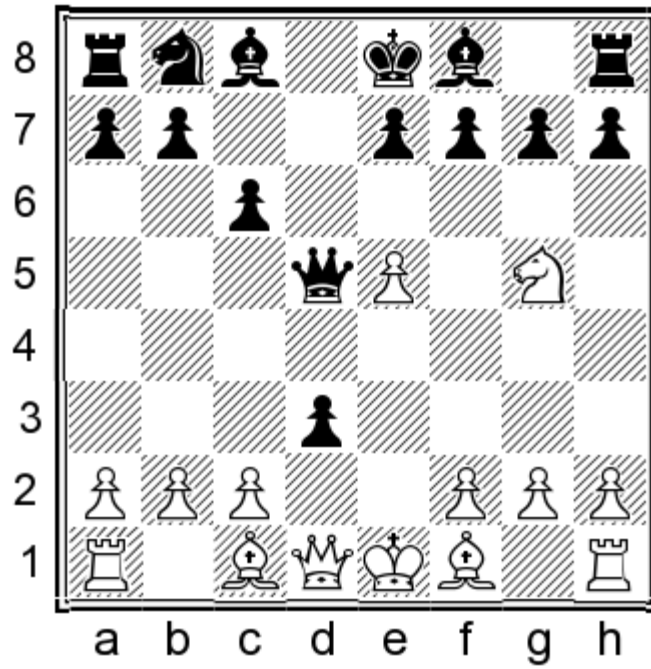
7.dxc5 ♖xc5 8.♙e3 ♜b4+ 9.♘bd2 ♘c6. It would be too risky for Black to accept the pawn-sacrifice. 10.♙d3 ♙g4 11.0-0 ♘xd2 12.♙xd2 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♜h4 14.f4 e6∞ White has the two-bishop advantage, but his kingside pawn-structure has been weakened.

There arise interesting complications after 7.c4 e6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♘c3 cxd4 10.♙b5+ ♙d7 11.♘xd5 ♙b4+! Black must simplify the position, because White's pieces are very active. 12.♘xb4 ♜xb5 13.♜xd4. He has managed to win a pawn, but now Black seizes the initiative. 13...♘c5. He is threatening to capture on b4. 14.♘d5 ♘e6 15.♜d2 ♙c6 16.♘c3 ♜a6 17.♜e2. After this move there arises an approximately equal endgame. 17...♜xe2+ 18.♙xe2 ♘d7. White's extra pawn is not important, because Black might regain it at any moment, exchanging on f3. In fact he does not even need to be in a hurry to exchange his bishop for the enemy knight. 19.♙e3 0-0 20.♜hd1 ♜fd8 21.♜ac1 ♙xf3+ 22.♙xf3 ♘xe5+ 23.♙e2 ♘c6=

It is not good for White to choose here 5.d3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3, because later he will have to advance d2-d4 only after losing a tempo. 6...♙g4 7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♜xf3 e6 9.d4, Chernyshov – Flumbort, Budapest 2014, 9...a6!? Before playing c6-c5, Black takes care about the possible enemy bishop-sortie ♙b5. 10.♙e2 c5 11.0-0 ♘c6∞

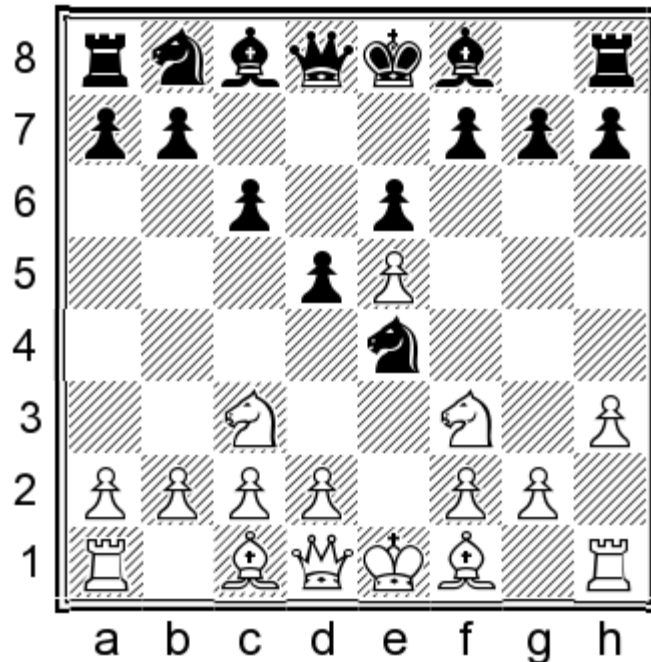
5.♜e2 ♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♙g4 7.h3 ♙xf3 (Black fails to preserve his light-squared bishop: 7...♙h5?! 8.g4 ♙g6 9.e6±) 8.♜xf3 e6 9.♙f4 (Following 9.♜g3 ♘d7 10.♙e3 h5 11.h4, Black must continue with 11...g6, freeing his bishop from the protection of his g-pawn. 12.♙d3 ♙c5 13.♙xc5 ♘xc5∞ Jakubiec – Khenkin, Germany 2011. Black has a superior pawn-structure, therefore his prospects are not inferior in the forthcoming fight.) 9...♘d7 10.0-0 b5!? This is an energetic move for Black (It would be sufficient for him to play 10...♜c7= in order to equalise.) 11.h4, Nepomniachtchi – Karpov, Moscow 2013, 11...a5!?! White's c3-pawn is an excellent target for Black's queenside pawn-offensive.

After 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.♘g5 ♜d5, White will have problems with the protection of his e5-pawn. 7.d4. He sacrifices a pawn for initiative (Following 7.♜e2 ♙f5 8.g4 ♙g6 9.♙g2 ♜xe5 10.♘xe4 h5 11.g5 h4↗, White succeeds in preserving the material balance, but his compromised kingside might become a telling factor later.). 7...exd3



8. ♕xd3 (8. ♖xd3 ♜xe5+ 9. ♗e2 ♞f5= Isonzo – Dautov, Porto San Giorgio 1997) 8...h6!? (It is less precise for Black to opt here for 8...♜xe5+ 9. ♗e3 h6 10. ♘f3 ♞xb2 11. 0-0 ♞ White has powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawns.) 9. ♘e4 ♗f5 10. ♞e2 ♞xe5 11. ♗d2, Forsaa – Stokke, Sandefjord 2012, 11...♘d7!? 12. 0-0-0 0-0-0. Black has no time to prepare castling kingside. He must evacuate his king away from the centre as quickly as possible. 13. ♗c3 ♞c7 14. ♘c5 ♗xd3 15. ♘xd3 e6 16. ♞f3 ♘f6 17. ♗e5 ♞a5 18. ♗xf6 gxf6 19. ♞xf6 ♞g5+ 20. ♞xg5 hxg5= White has managed to regain the sacrificed pawn, but Black's prospects are not inferior in the forthcoming endgame. Later, the superiority of his long-range bishop over the enemy knight might tell in actions on both sides of the board.

5.h3. Now, White would not need to worry about the enemy bishop-sortie ♗g4, but the move h2-h3 does not look so useful and may turn out to be a loss of a tempo. 5...e6



6.d4 c5 7. ♗d3 ♘xc3 8. bxc3 c4 9. ♗e2 ♗e7= Bologan – Mchedlishvili, Plovdiv 2012. White's queenside pawn-structure has been seriously compromised.

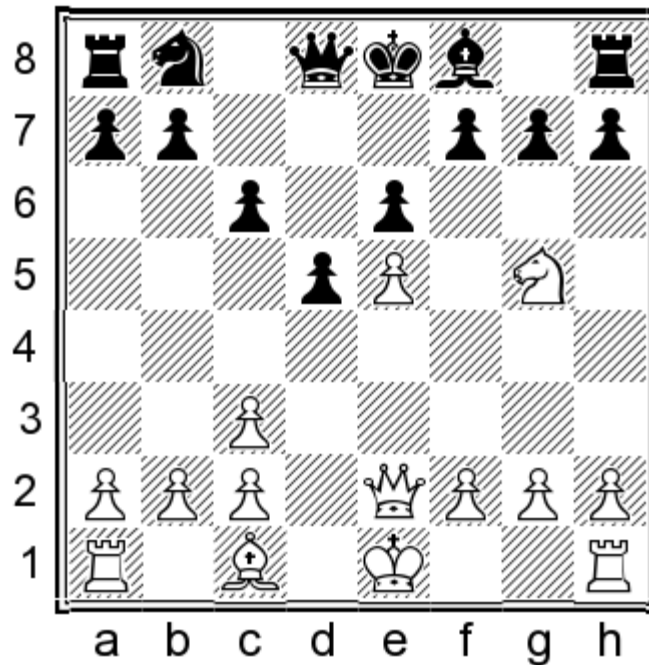
6.♔d3 ♖c5 7.♙e2 d4. Black should not allow the pawn-advance d2-d4. 8.♗b1 d3. This move thwarts the development of White's queenside. 9.♙f1 a5 ♣ Mrva – Michalik, Banska Stiavnica 2015.

6.♗h2. This is an original idea. White wishes to have the h2-square for the retreat of his knight. 6...dxe4 7.♗h2 ♗d7 8.♙g4 ♗xe5 9.♙xe4 ♙d5= Bartel – Berkes, Germany 2012.

6.♙e2 ♗xc3 7.dxc3 c5. White has a somewhat freer game, but Black's pawn-structure is superior. 8.♙g5 ♙c7 9.g4 ♗c6 10.c4 dxc4 11.♙g2. White sacrifices a pawn for initiative. 11...b5. Black not only protects his pawn, but prepares the development of his bishop to the b7-square. 12.a4 ♙b7! Now, it would not work for White to play here 13.axb5?!, because of 13...♗d4 14.♙d1 h6 15.♙d2 ♙e4! ♣ Lu Shanglei – Ding Liren, Danzhou 2013.

5.♔d3. After this move Black can at first activate his knight with tempo – 5...♗c5 6.♙e2 and then advance his d-pawn 6...d4. White should not allow d4-d3, so he is forced to enter complications. 7.b4 dxc3 8.bxc5 cxd2+ 9.♙xd2 e6 10.0-0, Pap – Arat, Graz 2016, 10...♗d7!?∞ It is only a matter of time for Black to win the pawn on c5. After this White's lead in development would compensate his minimal material deficit, but not more than that.

5.♙e2. White wishes to complete the development of his kingside pieces as quickly as possible and to castle. 5...♗xc3 6.dxc3 (Capturing with the other pawn seems inferior. 6.bxc3 c5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.♙e1 e6 9.a4 ♙e7 10.d4 c4 11.♙d2 ♙d7 ♣ Fedorchuk – Eljanov, Kiev 2012. White has no compensation for his weakened queenside pawns.) 6...♙g4. Before playing e7-e6, Black develops his knight to an active position. 7.♗g5. White wishes to preserve his knight, hoping that it would not be inferior to the enemy light-squared bishop in this closed position. (7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♙xf3 e6 9.♙f4 ♗d7 10.0-0 ♙c5 11.a4 a5 12.♙e2 0-0= Zawadka – Dziedzic, ICCF 2017.) 7...♙xe2 8.♙xe2 e6

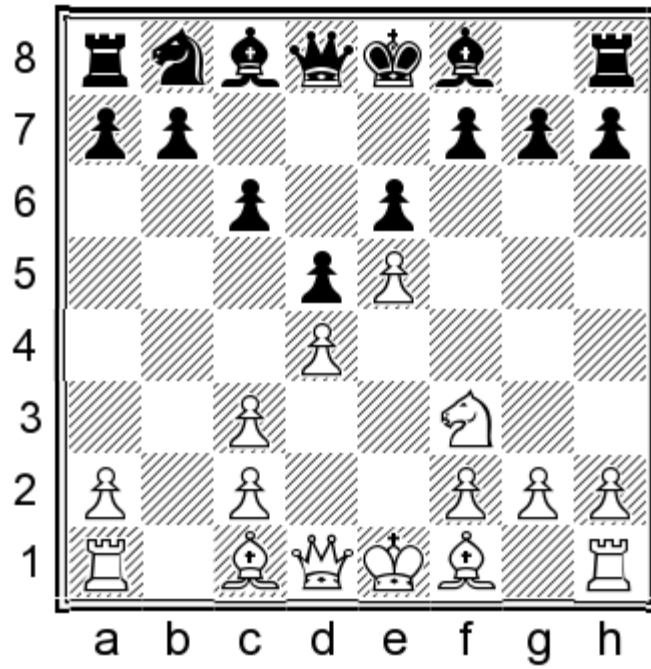


White would not achieve much with 9.♙h5, because Black can easily protect the f7-square. 9...g6= Naglic – Livaic, Zagreb 2009.

Following 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♙h5, Oparin – Riazantsev, Moscow 2015, White will hardly manage to avoid the repetition of the moves. 10...g6!? 11.♙h6 ♙f8 12.♙h3 ♗d7 13.♙e1 ♙e7 14.♙h6 ♙f8=

After 9.♙f4 ♗d7 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♙h5 g6 12.♙h6 ♙f8 13.♙h3, Short – Lei, Bangkok 2017, 13...h6!?∞, White has more space, but his bishop is severely restricted by his own pawn on e5.

5.d4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 e6



7.h4 c5∞ Giron – Duran Vega, Managua 2014.

7.♞e2 c5 8.dxc5 ♞xc5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♞d3 ♞d7 11.♞e2 h6 12.♞b1 ♞c7= Zvjaginsev – Riazantsev, Minsk 2015. White's pieces are more active, but Black's pawn-structure is preferable.

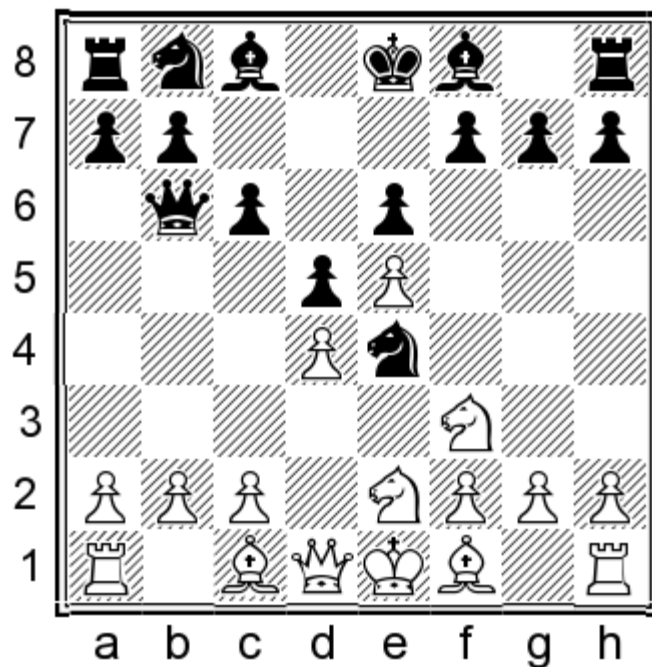
7.c4. White wishes to exchange immediately his doubled pawn. 7...c5 8.c3 ♘c6 9.♞e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 dxc4 11.♞xc4 ♞b4+ 12.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 13.♞xd2 ♞a5= The trade of the queens is Black's simplest road to equality, Dvoirys – Kostin, Kazan 2014.

7.♞d3 c5. This position resembles very much the French Defence, but there is also an important difference. Black has exchanged on c3 not his bishop, but his knight and now, contrary to the French defence, the dark squares in his camp are reliably protected by his dark-squared bishop on f8. 8.0-0 c4. Black fixes the enemy weakness on c3 and deprives White of the possibility to exploit his lead in development by opening the position. 9.♞e2 ♞e7 10.h3 ♘d7 11.♘h2 ♞a5 12.♞d2 ♘b6∞, followed by ♘a4, Castro Rojas – Taoubi, Moscow 1994.

5...♞b6 6.d4

Now, White cannot oust the enemy knight with the move d2-d3.

6...e6



7. ♖fg1!?

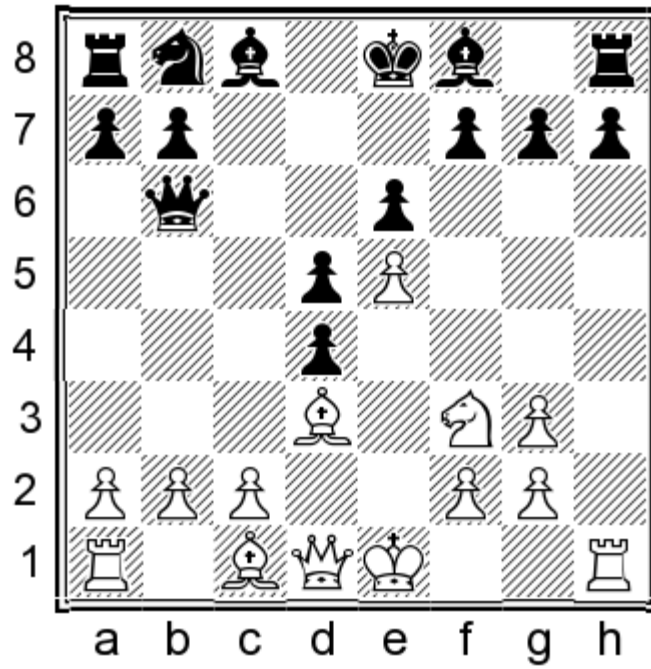
Naturally, you can only seldom see a situation in which an already developed knight retreats to its initial position, but here this has its concrete justification. White creates the threat f2-f3.

About 7.c3 c5 8. ♖g3 ♕d7 – see 7. ♖g3.

7.g3 c5 8. ♕g2 ♖c6 9.0-0 cxd4 10. ♖exd4 ♕c5 11.c3 0-0= Dvoirys – Shimanov, Ekaterinburg 2013.

7. ♖f4. White weakens his control over the important central d4-square. 7...c5 8. ♕d3 cxd4 9.0-0 ♖c6 10. ♖h5 ♕d7 11. ♖e1 (After the rather slow line: 11.a3 0-0-0∞, White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient, Antal – Pechac, Slovakia 2017.) 11...♖c5= Now, Black can exchange the powerful enemy bishop on d3 if this becomes necessary, B.Savchenko – Sadhwani, Voronezh 2017.

7. ♖g3. White prepares the development of his bishop to d3, but Black does not need to worry about the fate of his knight on e4. He can always exchange it on g3. 7...c5 8. ♕d3 (8.c3 ♕d7. Black prepares immediate counterplay on the c-file. 9. ♕d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♖xg3 11.hxg3 h6 12.g4 ♖c6 13. ♖f1. White wishes to preserve his active rook on the h-file, so he does not castle. 13...♖b4 14. ♕b1 ♖c8∞ Kuzubov – Solak, Dubai 2015.) 8...♖xg3 9.hxg3 cxd4



10. ♖xd4, Moussard – Fridman, Paris 2017, 10... ♙c5!?

10.g4 ♗c6 11.a3 ♙d7, followed by 0-0-0 and f7-f6, Carlsen – Grischuk, ICC 2016.

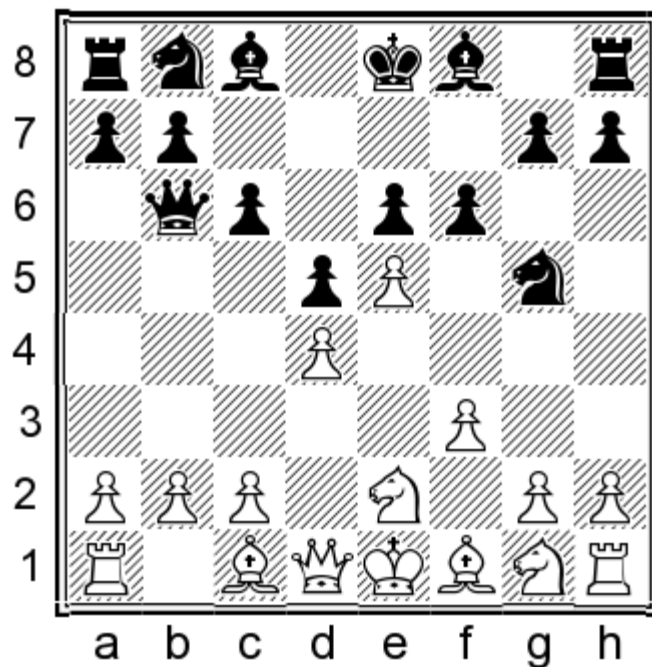
10.a3. White is preparing b2-b4. 10... ♗c6 11.b4 ♙d7 12. ♙f4 (12. ♖f1 ♙e7 Perez Candelario – Landa, Linares 2015; 12. ♗e2, Maximov – Battey, Budapest 2011, 12...a6!?) 12...h6 13.g4 0-0-0 Solak – Eljanov, Kocaeli 2014. White must still prove his compensation for the sacrificed pawn is sufficient.

10. ♗g5. This is the strongest move for White. He wishes simply to capture the pawn on h7. 10... ♗c6 11. ♗xh7 ♙d7. Now, Black is forced to sacrifice the exchange in order to complete his development. 12. ♗f6+ gxf6 13. ♗xh8 0-0-0 14. ♖f1 (14. ♗h5 fxe5 Ponkratov – Shimanov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2012) 14...fxe5 15. ♙g5 ♙e7 16. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 17. ♙xe7+ ♗xe7 18. ♙e2 e4 19. ♗b1 e5 Demchenko – Sunilduth, Philippines 2015. There has arisen a very complicated position. Black has only a pawn for the exchange, but four of his pawns have occupied the centre and White's game is very difficult.

7...f6

Black parries his opponent's threat.

8.f3 ♗g5



9.exf6

White's alternatives do not promise him much either.

9.f4 ♖e4 10.exf6 gxf6 – see 9.exf6.

9.♗g3 c5= Bartel – Salgado Lopez, Wroclaw 2014.

9.c3 c5 10.exf6 gxf6= Forcen Esteban – Sos Andreu, Linares 2014.

9...gxf6 10.f4 ♖e4 11.♗g3 ♕d7

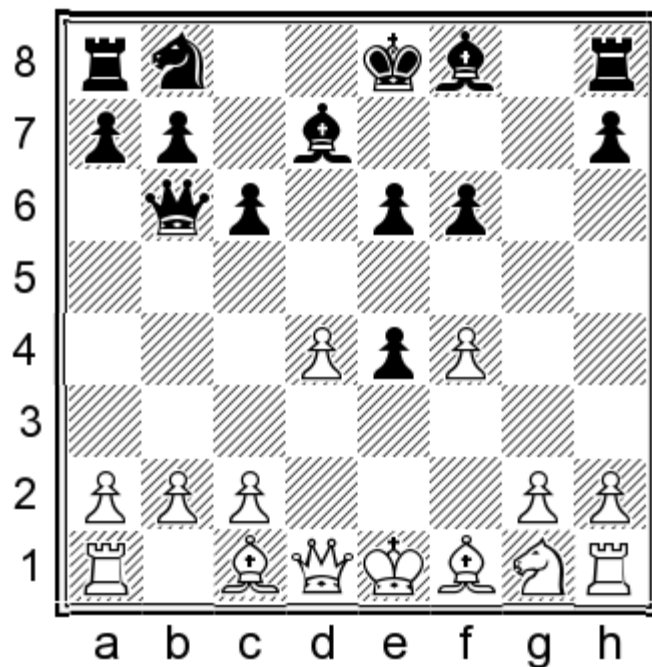
Black is not afraid of the check on h5.

12.♗xe4

12.♗f3 ♖xg3 13.hxg3 c5∞ Lu Shanglei – Xu Yi, Vietnam 2017.

12.♞h5+ ♔d8 13.♗f3 c5∞ Lukasova – Balta, ICCF 2013. White can hardly create any meaningful threats against the enemy king. Meanwhile, Black exerts powerful pressure against White's centre.

12...dxe4



13.c3

13. ♖h5+ ♔d8 14. c3 c5= Ghaziolsharif – Tabatabaei, Teheran 2016.

There arises an interesting double-edged fight after the line: 13. a4 c5 14. a5 ♕d6 15. ♖h5+ ♔d8 16. dxc5 ♕xc5 17. ♖e2 ♕c6 18. ♗e3 ♖a6 19. ♖d2 ♗b4. Black prepares a transfer of his knight to the centre of the board and it will be very powerful there. 20. c3 ♗d5=

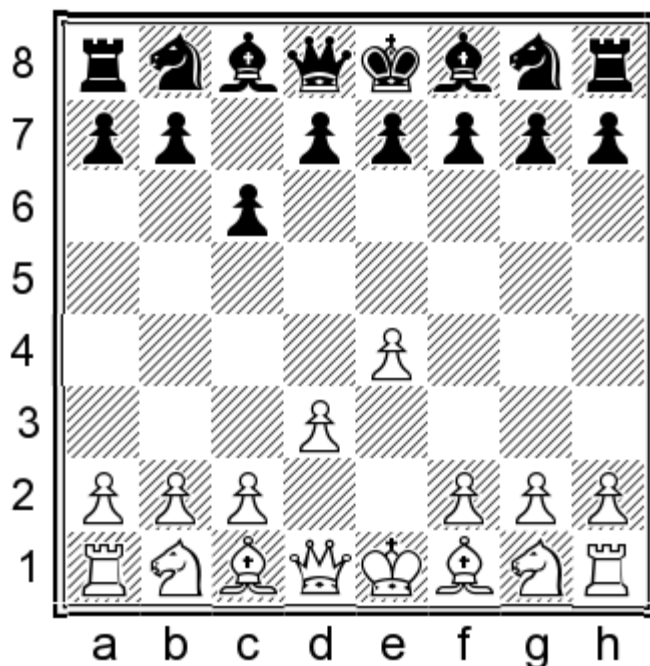
13...c5

It seems less precise for Black to play here 13... ♗a6 14. ♖h5+ ♔d8 15. ♗c4± Vachier Lagrave – Anand, Saint Louis 2016.

14.d5 exd5 15. ♕xd5 ♗c6 16. ♖h5+ (16. ♕xe4+ ♗e7) **16... ♔d8** Gokerkan – Basso, Izmir 2017. Black's king is quite safe at the centre of the board. Meanwhile, White lags in development, having lost too much time on manoeuvres with his knights.

Chapter 3

1.e4 c6 2.d3



White chooses this move when he is reluctant to enter theoretical discussions in the main lines of the Caro-Kann Defence and wishes to focus on the fight in the middle game.

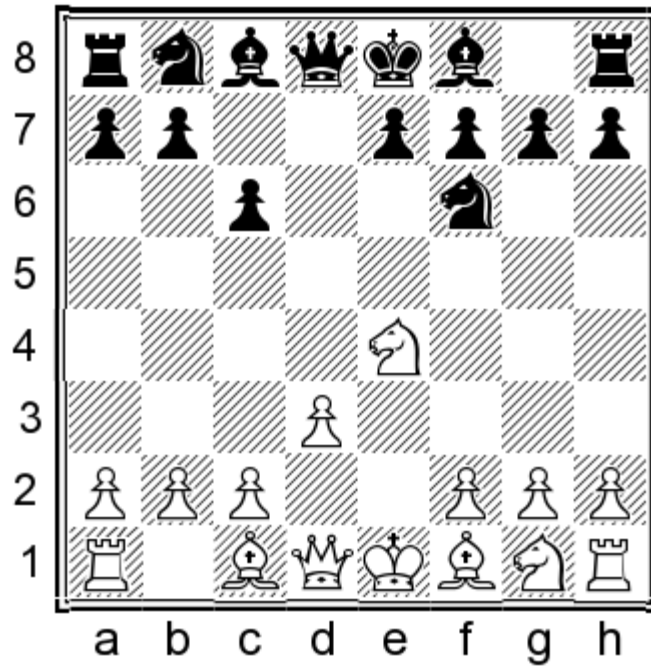
2...d5 3.♘d2

Without this move, Black can exchange on e4 and enter an approximately equal endgame.

3.f4 dxe4 4.dxe4 ♖xd1+ 5.♔xd1 ♗f6 6.♘c3 e5. Black prevents his opponent from occupying additional space with the move e4-e5. 7.♗f3 ♗bd7 8.♙d3 ♙d6 9.f5, Tiller – Erdos, Davos 2007, 9...b5!??

3.♗f3 dxe4 4.dxe4 ♖xd1+ 5.♔xd1 ♗f6 6.♘c3 ♗bd7=, followed by e7-e5, ♙d6, ♗c5, Zakharova – Focsa, Ilichevsk 2007.

3.♘c3 dxe4!? 4.♗xe4. White avoids entering an endgame, but now, there arises a position, similar to the main lines of the Caro-Kann Defence, except that instead of d2-d4, White has played the less useful move d3. (4.dxe4 ♖xd1+ 5.♘xd1 e5 6.♗f3 f6 7.a4, Lobron – Dreev, playchess.com 2004, 7...♙e6!?) 4...♗f6. It is understandable that it is less sensible for Black to continue in the spirit of the Classical System (analysed in Part 3) 4...♙f5, because White's knight on e4 is protected by his pawn on d3 and is not forced to retreat away from the centre.



About 5.♘f3 ♘xe4 – see Chapter 2, variation **B**.

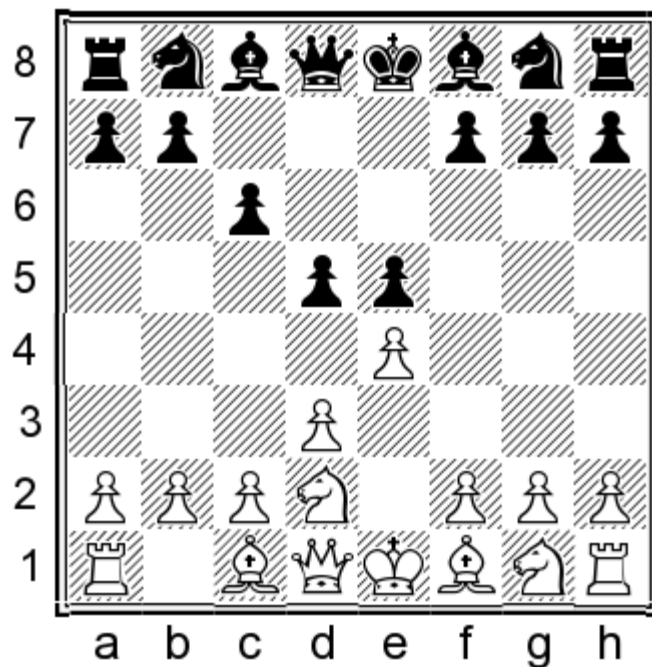
5.♙e2 ♘xe4 6.dxe4 e5 7.♘f3, Jovanovic – Manea, Vienna 2012, 7...♙e7!?=

After 5.♘xf6+ exf6, Black completes quickly his development and evacuates his king away from the centre. 6.g3 ♙d6 7.♙g2 0-0 8.♘e2 ♜e8 9.h3, Kashtanov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2013, 9...♘d7!? 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.♙f4 ♘g6 12.♙xd6 ♙xd6 13.♙d2 ♙e6=

5.♙f3 ♘bd7 6.♘e2 (6.♙d2 White's attempt to find a safe haven for his king on the queenside only increases his difficulties, because it will be less safe there than on the kingside. 6...g6 7.♙c3 ♙g7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.h4 h5 10.♘e2, Jovanovic – Muse, Bol 2014, 10...♘b6!?) 6...g6 7.♘2c3 ♙g7= The bishop will exert powerful pressure against White's position from this square, moreover that Black leads in development, Short – Roiz, Porto Carras 2011.

3.♙e2. White determines too early the placement of his queen and thus reduces his further options. 3...dxe4 4.dxe4 e5 5.♘f3 (5.g3 ♘f6 6.♘f3 ♙e7 – see 5.♘f3) 5...♘f6. Capturing of the pawn ♘xe5 leads to the loss of a piece for White, so Black does not need to protect it with the move ♙d6 and can develop this bishop to e7, where it would not stand in the way of his major pieces to fight for the open d-file. 6.g3 (6.♘bd2 ♙c7 7.g3 ♙e7 – see 6.g3; 6.♘c3 ♙c7= Bauer – Fontaine, Vichy 2000) 6...♙e7 7.♙g2 (7.♘bd2 ♙c7 8.♙g2 0-0 9.0-0 ♜e8= Mora – Hort, Tel Aviv 1964) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♙c7 9.b3, Andeer – Evans, ICCF 2010, 9...a5!?= White is faced with a rather unpleasant choice. He must either allow a5-a4, or weaken his queenside with the pawn-advance a2-a4.

3...e5

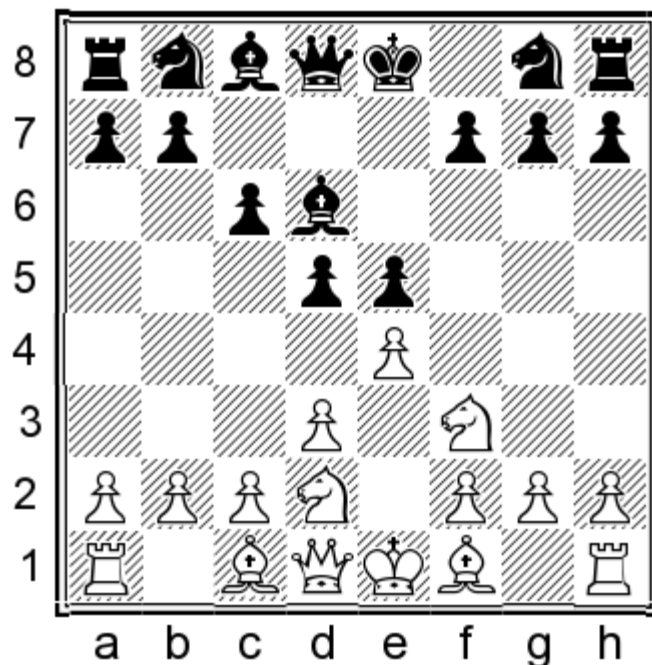


4. ♘gf3

About 4. ♖e2 ♙d6 5. ♘gf3 ♜f6 – see 4. ♘gf3.

If White refrains from the natural development of his knight to the f3-square, then he might end up in an inferior position. 4. g3 ♜f6 5. ♙g2 (5. ♘gf3 ♙d6 – see variation **B**) 5... ♙d6 6. ♜e2 (6. ♘gf3 0-0 – see variation **B**; 6. ♜h3 0-0 7. 0-0 ♞ White's knight, placed at the edge of the board, does not beautify his position at all.) 6... 0-0 7. 0-0 dxe4 8. dxe4 ♞e7 9. h3 ♞d8∞ Hasan Md – Nayan Kumar, Dhaka 2016.

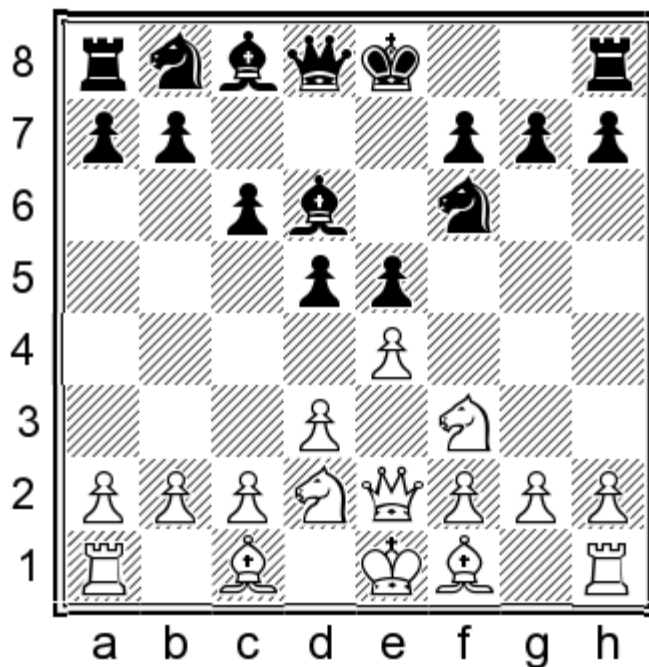
4... ♙d6



Now, White must make up his mind what he will do later. He can play in the spirit of the King's Indian set-up **B**) 5.g3,

or choose a more open position with the move **A) 5.d4**.

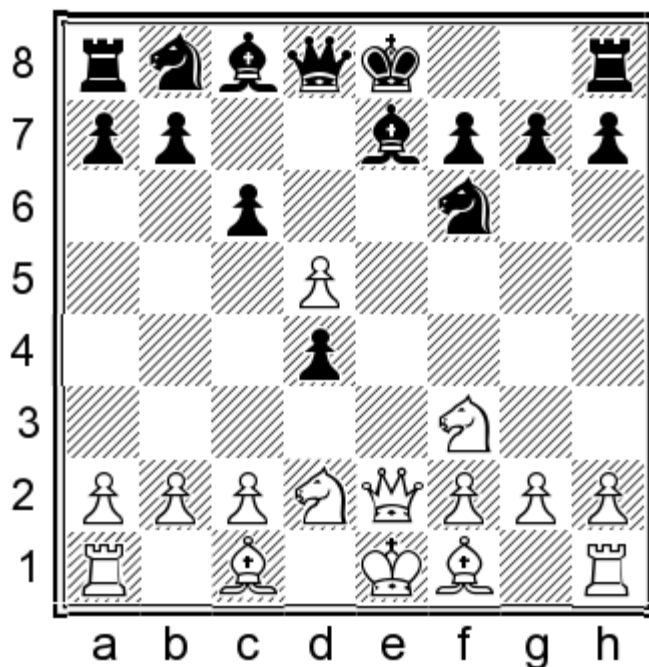
After 5.♖e2, Black can avoid losing time for the protection of his e5-pawn – 5...♘f6!



About 6.g3 0-0 – see 5.g3.

White may have great difficulties if he tries to win material 6.exd5?! cxd5 7.♘xe5 0-0 8.d4, Carmaciu – Jarmula, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014, 8...♘c6!? 9.♘df3 ♘xd4! Now, White's king and queen are on a same file and this is a motif for this simple tactical strike. 10.♘xd4 ♕xe5

6.d4 exd4 7.exd5+ (7.e5? 0-0 8.♖d1 ♜e8 9.♗e2 ♗xe5+) 7...♗e7



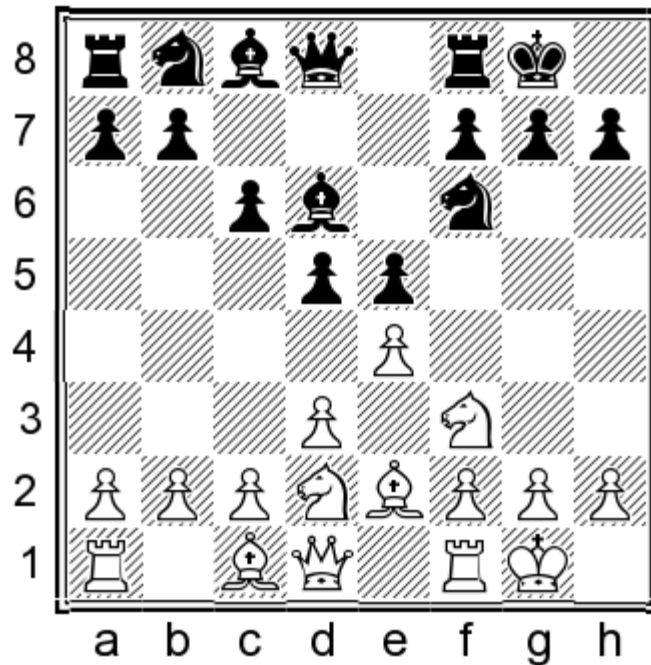
8.♘b3?! c5+ Ye Jiangchuan – Magem Badals, Beijing 1998. Black has protected reliably his d4-pawn, while White will fail to save his pawn on d5, which is hopelessly isolated from the rest of his forces.

8.♘xd4?! After this move White lags horribly in development. 8...0-0 9.♖f3 ♗g4 10.♖b3 ♜e8+ White's king has

remained at the middle of the board and is an excellent target for the attack of Black's pieces. 11. ♖xb7? Poobalasingam – Houska, Brentwood 2008. White loses immediately if he captures the pawn: 11... ♗c5+!? 12. ♘e2 ♘xd5 13. ♖xa8 ♘b4 14. ♙d1 ♗f5+ Black is threatening a checkmate in two ♗xc2 and ♘d3#

8. dxc6 ♘xc6 9. ♖d1, Roeder – Claesen, Paks 1997, 9... 0-0!?! Black has an excellent development and his pieces can occupy active positions, so this compensates with an interest the slight vulnerability of his isolated d4-pawn.

5. ♗e2. White develops his pieces in the spirit of the Philidor Defence, but his bishop will not be so active on e2 as on the g2-square. 5... ♘f6 6. 0-0 (6.c3 0-0 7. 0-0 ♘bd7 – see 6. 0-0. It is possible that White had to think already about equalising and to try to simplify the position by exchanging pieces. 6.d4!? dxe4 7.dxe5 exf3 8. ♘xf3, Reina Guerra – Jurado Perez, ICCF 2007, 8... ♗c7!? 9. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 10.exf6 ♗xf6=) 6... 0-0

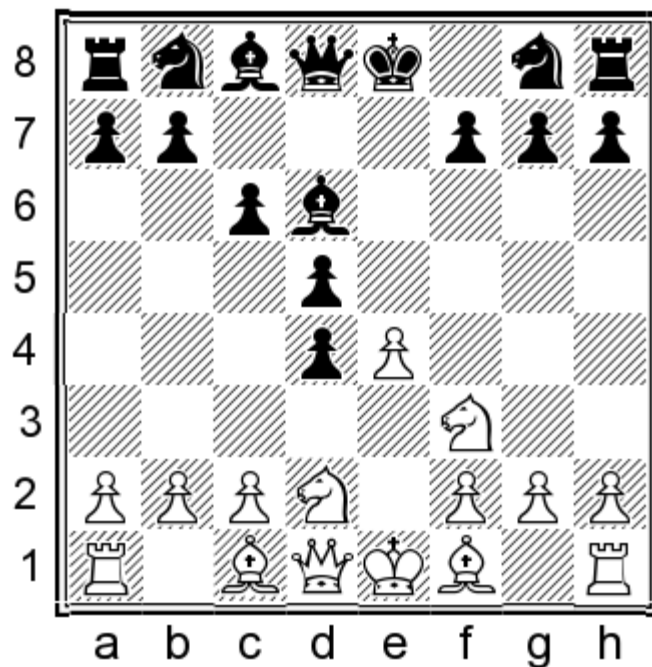


About 7. ♖e1 ♘bd7 8.c3 – see 7.c3.

There arises a complicated positional battle after 7.b3 ♖e8 8. ♗b2 a5 9.a3 ♘bd7 10. ♖e1 ♖c7∞ Amgalanbaatar – Tari, Caleta 2015.

7.c3 ♘bd7 8. ♖e1 (8. ♖c2 ♖e8 9. ♖e1 a5 – see 8. ♖e1) 8... ♖e8. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to the g6-square from where it would protect the e5-pawn (just like from d7), but would not stand in the way of the scope of action of the bishop on c8. 9. ♖c2 (9. ♗f1 a5. Black occupies space on the queenside. 10.g3 a4 Ljubojevic – Seirawan, Niksic 1983) 9... a5 10.a4 (10. ♘f1 a4 11. ♗g5 h6 12. ♗h4, Chelushkina – Maric, Belgrade 2000, 12... b5∞) 10... ♘f8 11. ♗f1 (11. ♘f1 ♘g6!?!?) 11... ♘g6 12.g3 h6 13. ♗g2 ♗e6∞ Tiviakov – Adianto, Gausdal 1992. Black maintains a slight but stable advantage thanks to his powerful pawn-centre.

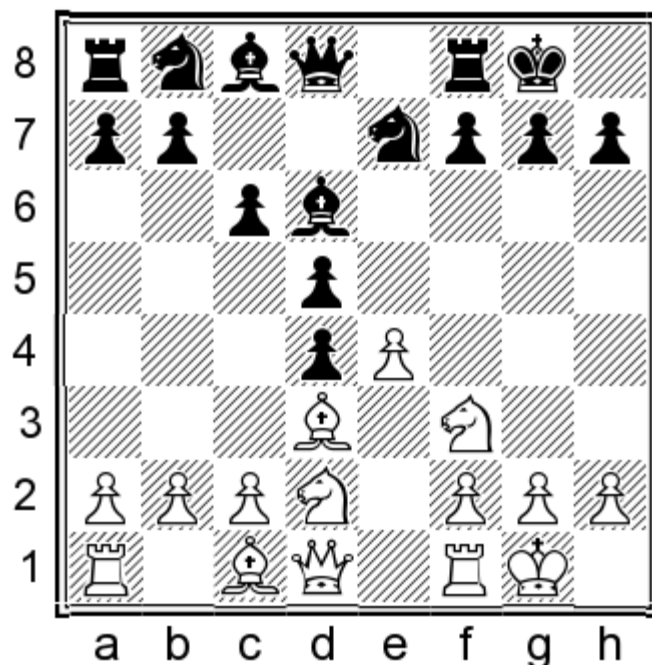
A) 5.d4 exd4



6.exd5

6.♘xd4 ♘f6 7.exd5 ♘xd5 – see 6.exd5.

The move 6.♙d3 leads to a calm position with approximately equal chances. 6...♘e7 7.0-0 0-0



8.e5. White is trying to sharpen the game with this move. 8...♙c7 9.♘b3 h6 10.♖e1 ♘d7 11.♘bxd4 ♘c5 12.♙f4 ♘xd3. Black's position is a bit cramped, so exchanges would be in his favour. 13.♗xd3 c5 14.♘b5 ♙e6 15.♘xc7 ♗xc7 16.c3 ♖fd8= Catt – Vlasveld, ICCF 2009. Black has completely neutralised the activity of his opponent's pieces with an accurate play.

8.♘xd4 ♘d7 9.exd5 ♘xd5 10.♘e4, Bachler – Maia, ICCF 2012, 10...♘e5!? Black is trying to organise immediate active actions and does not lose time for the retreat of his bishop on d6. 11.♘xd6 ♗xd6 12.♙e2. White wishes to preserve his

two-bishop advantage. 12...♖f6 13.c3 ♜e8 14.f4. He defends against ♘f4, but weakens the e4-square. 14...♗d7∞, followed by ♗c5-e4.

6...♗f6!?

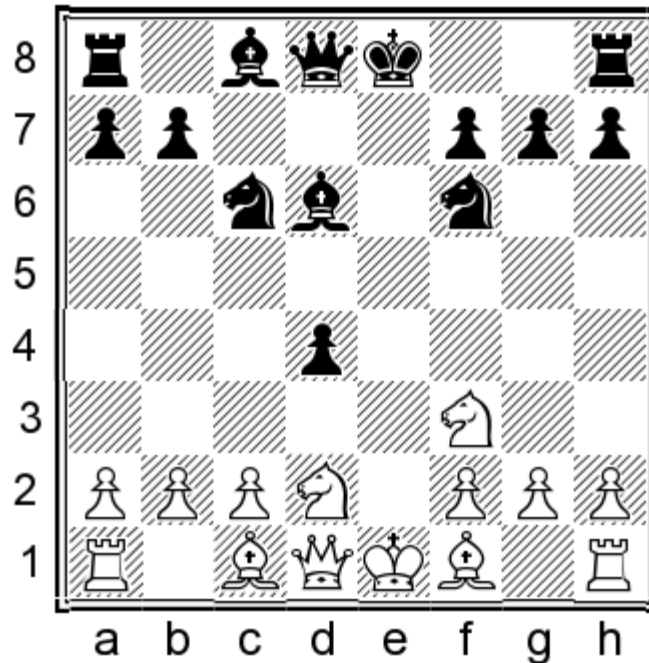
This is an energetic move. Black is fighting for the initiative early in the opening.

7.dxc6

White would not achieve much with 7.♗xd4 ♗xd5 8.♗c4 (8.♗e4?! Popilski – Pagan, Cleveland 2015, 8...♖e7!?) The pin of the knight would be very unpleasant for White. 9.♗d3 ♗e5 10.♗e2 ♗f5 11.0-0 ♗xe4. Black wins the h2-pawn with this simple combination. 12.♗xe4 ♗xh2+ 13.♗xh2 ♖xe4 14.♗g3 ♖h4+ 15.♗g1 0-0♞ 8...0-0 9.♗xd6 (9.♗e2 ♗c7∞ Strikovic – Dziuba, Belgrade 2009) 9...♖xd6 10.♗e2 ♗d8!?) (10...♗f4 11.♗f3 ♗e8+ 12.♗e3 ♗d5= Heika – Krug, Bayern 2000) 11.♗g5 ♖b4+ 12.♖d2 ♖xb2 13.0-0 f6 14.c4 ♖xd2 15.♗xd2 ♗e7♞ White has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but it does not compensate fully the sacrificed pawn.

7...♗xc6

There has arisen a rather rare version of a position with an isolated pawn. Black's pawn is usually situated on d5 and not on d4.



8.♗e2

It seems worse for White to play here 8.♗b5, because after 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♗g4, he will need to compromise the position of his king in order to get rid of the unpleasant pin of his knight. 10.h3 ♗h5 11.g4 ♗g6∞ Here it would be tremendously risky for him to accept the pawn-sacrifice. 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♗xd4 ♗c7 14.♗4f3, Cardarelli – Bonagura, Fano 2013, 14...♖c8!?) 15.♗h4 h5 16.♗xg6 fxg6♞ White has not completed yet the development of his pieces, therefore he would hardly manage to parry the threats against his king.

8.♗b3 0-0 9.♗fxd4?! (It is better for White to play here 9.♗e2 ♖c7 – see 8.♗e2.) 9...♗g4 10.♗e2 ♗xe2 11.♖xe2 ♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗xd4 13.♗xd4 ♖xd4 14.0-0 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♖xc3 16.♗b2 ♖c6♞

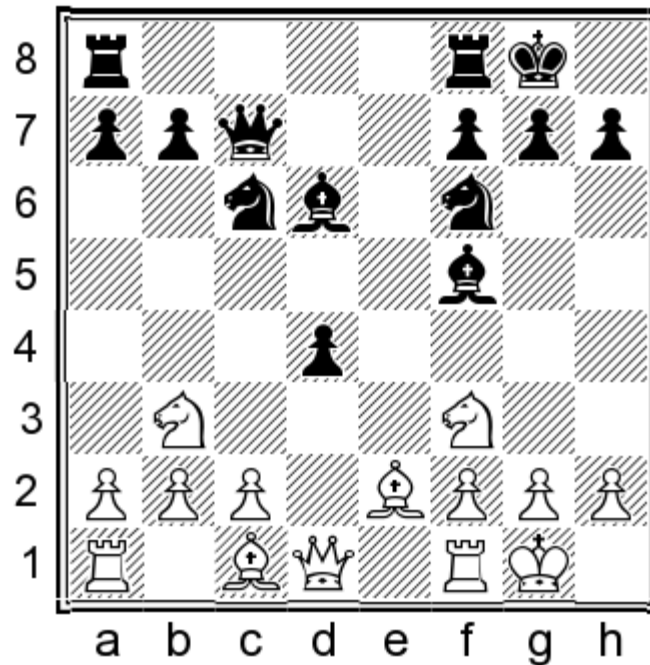
8...0-0 9.0-0

About 9.♘b3 ♚c7 10.0-0 ♗f5 – see 9.0-0.

9...♗f5

Black's bishop is developed to an active position in order to attack the enemy c2-pawn. White will have difficulties protecting it, since he is deprived of the possibility c2-c3.

10.♘b3 ♚c7



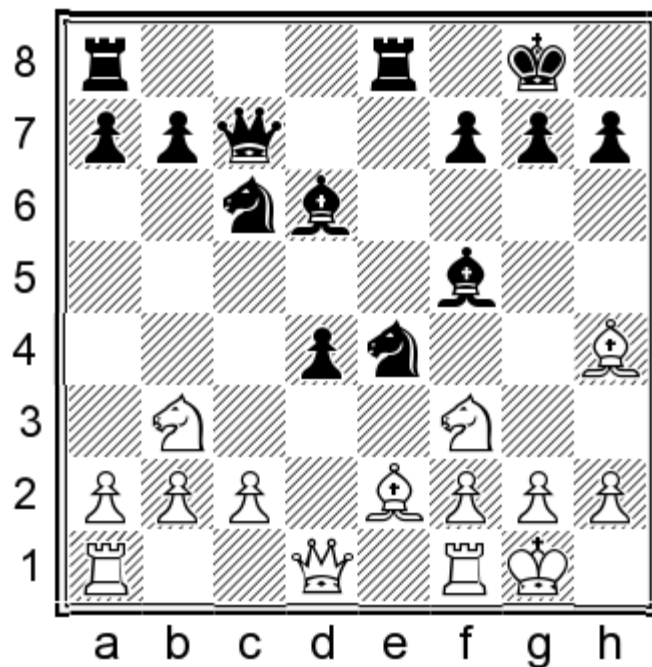
11.♗g5

11.a3, Edeling – Riedel, Vlissingen 2004, 11...♞ae8!?∞

The capturing of the pawn 11.♘bd4 would lead to the simplification of the position: 11...♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♗xc2= Emmerich – Kierzek, Germany 2011.

After 11.h3, Black can continue with 11...♘b4 forcing the exchange of the pawn on d4 for the enemy pawn on c2. 12.♘bd4 ♗xc2 13.♘xc2 ♘xc2 14.♞b1. Black's pieces are very active, so White's two-bishop advantage is practically immaterial. 14...♞fd8 15.♗d2 ♘e4= Here, White loses after 16.♞c1?, because of 16...♗h2+! 17.♙h1 ♞ac8+ De Jong – Prohaszka, Groningen 2010. The pin along the d-file is obviously more dangerous than the pin of the knight on c2.

11...♘e4 12.♗h4 ♞fe8



13. ♖d3

This is the most reliable move for White. He deprives his opponent of all the tactical motives, connected with the c2-pawn.

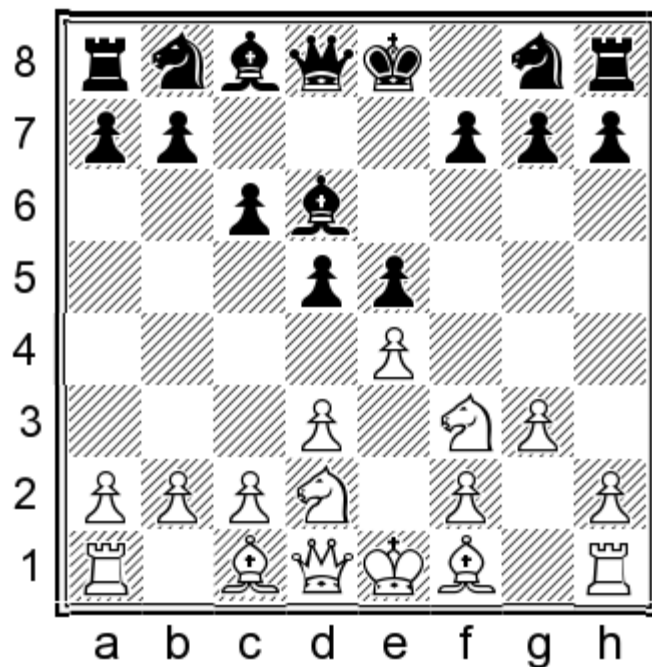
It would not work for White to play here 13. ♖bxd4?! ♜xd4 and he will have to part with his h2-pawn, because the attempt to preserve the material advantage with the move 14. ♙xd4?, would lose immediately after 14...g5! → Iermito – Labollita, Buenos Aires 2013.

Following 13. ♖b5, Dambacher – Ducarmon, Netherlands 2012, Black can simply pin the enemy knight 13... ♜g4!?=

The move 13. ♖g3 leads to simplifications. 13... ♜xg3 14. hxg3 ♜ad8 15. ♖d3 ♜xd3. This move is sufficient for Black to equalise (There arises a much more complicated position after (15... ♜c8!?, preserving the bishop-pair) 16. cxd3 ♙b6= Rahman – Swapnil, New Delhi 2015.

13... ♙b6 14. ♜e1 h6 15. ♜e2, Klewe – Morelli, ICCF 2012, **15... a5!?** The threat a5-a4 forces White to weaken the b4-square. **16. a4 ♜b4** ∞ Black's piece-activity compensates fully the slight vulnerability of his d4-pawn.

B) 5.g3



White wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to castle and decide only later what his future plans would be.

5...♘f6 6.♗g2

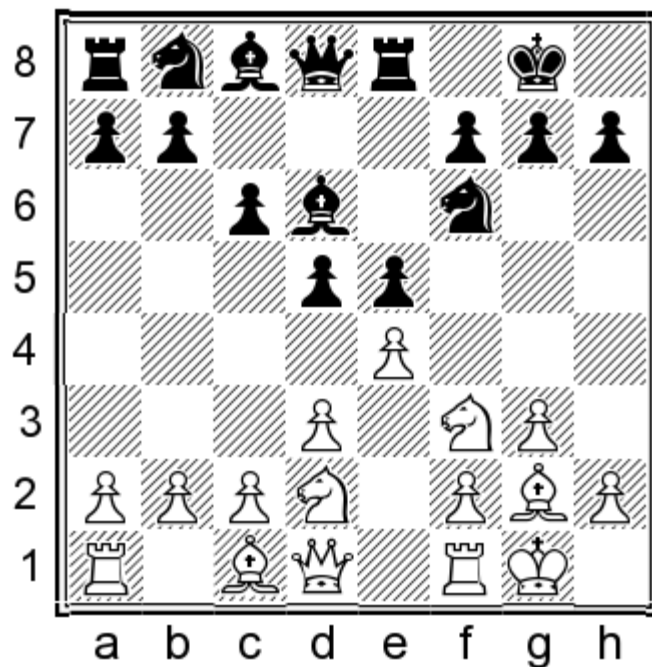
About 6.c3 0-0 7.♗g2 ♜e8, or 6.♞e2 0-0 7.♗g2 ♜e8 8.0-0 a5 – see 6.♗g2.

6...0-0 7.0-0

7.c3 ♜e8 8.0-0 ♘bd7, or 7.h3 ♜e8 8.0-0 a5 – see 7.0-0.

7...♞e8

Black not only provides additional defence of the important central e5-square, but also prepares a place for his bishop to retreat if White plays ♘h4-f5.



8.♞e1

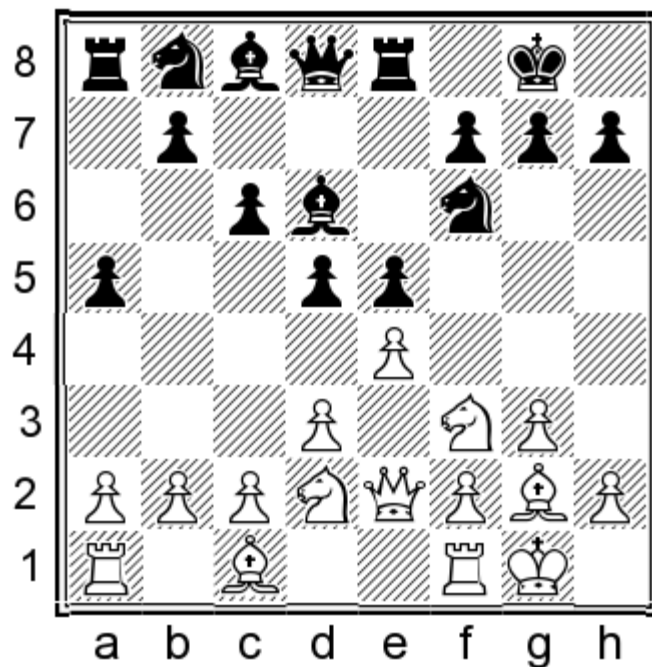
About 8.a4 a5 9.b3 ♘a6 – see 8.b3.

8.♞e1 a5 9.a3, Vovk – Svane, Stroebeck 2015, 9...a4!?♞, occupying space. White has problems with the development of his queenside pieces. His knight on d2 is severely restricted by his own pawns on d5 and a4, while the advance of his b-pawn would weaken his pawn-structure.

After 8.♘h4, the best response for Black would be 8...♘a6=, so that if the enemy knight comes to the f5-square, he could capture it with his bishop. 9.♘b1?! Aronian – Podgaets, Ohrid 2001. This is an original move, but is hardly the best. 9...h6!?♞ This is Black's simplest reaction. Now, White's bishop cannot go to g5 in order to increase the pressure against Black's pawn-centre.

After 8.c3, the d3-square is weakened. 8...♘bd7 9.♞e2 (9.♞e1 a5, or 9.a4 a5 10.♞e1 ♘c5, or 10.♞c2 ♘c5 11.♞e1 dxe4 – see 8.♞e1) 9...a5. Now, following ♘c5, White cannot oust the enemy knight with the move b2-b4. 10.♞d1, Tazbir – Hernandez Carmenates, Las Vegas 2015, 10...♘c5!?♞

8.♞e2 a5

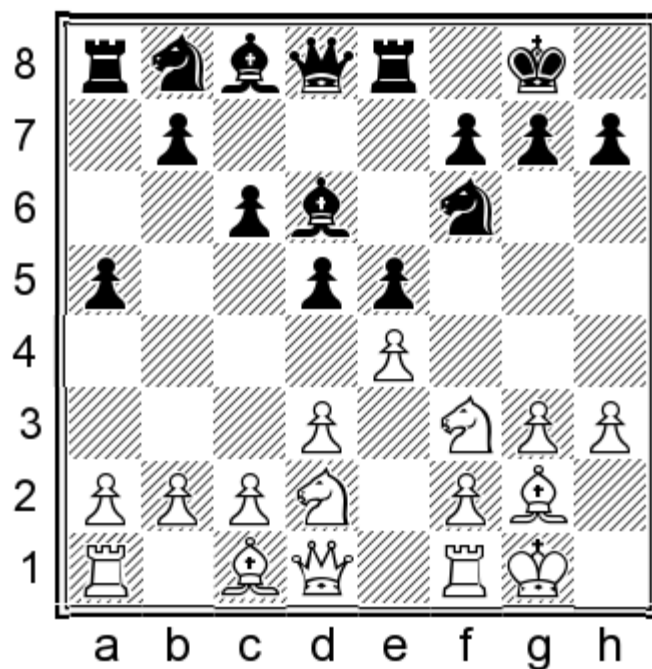


Following 9.a3 a4 10.b4 axb3 11.cxb3, there appears a weakness on d3 in White's camp. 11...♔g4 12.♕b2 ♖bd7 13.h3 ♕h5 ♞ Ljubojevic – Karpov, Linares 1992. Black has a powerful pawn-centre and a superior pawn-structure.

9.♞e1 a4 10.♚f1?! Godena – Magem Badals, Horgen 1994. This move looks very awkward. 10...b6! ♞ Black is preparing the development of his bishop on a6 and from there it would emphasize the misplacement of White's queen on the f1-a6 diagonal.

9.a4 ♖a6 ♞ Smirin – Iordachescu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010. Now, White must be constantly on the alert about the possible enemy knight-sortie ♖b4. The move c2-c3 would weaken the d3-square.

8.h3. This move looks a bit too slow. 8...a5



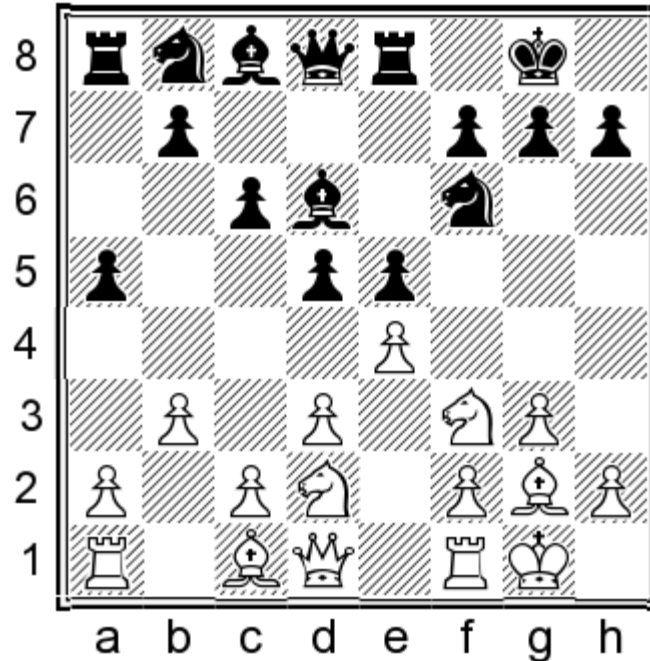
9.♞e1 ♖bd7 – cm. 9.♞e1.

9.♖h2. This is an attempt to trade the knight on f6 and thus to increase the pressure against the d5-square, but it is

parried easily by Black. 9...♖a6 10.♗g4 ♗xg4 11.hxg4 ♕e6 Catalan Escala – Magem Badals, Manresa 1996. If necessary, Black will manage to protect his pawn on d5 with his knight from c7.

After 9.a4 ♗a6 10.b3 ♗b4∞ Movsziszian – Lopez Martinez, Navalmoral 2004, Black's knight on b4 is very powerful, so his prospects are not worse.

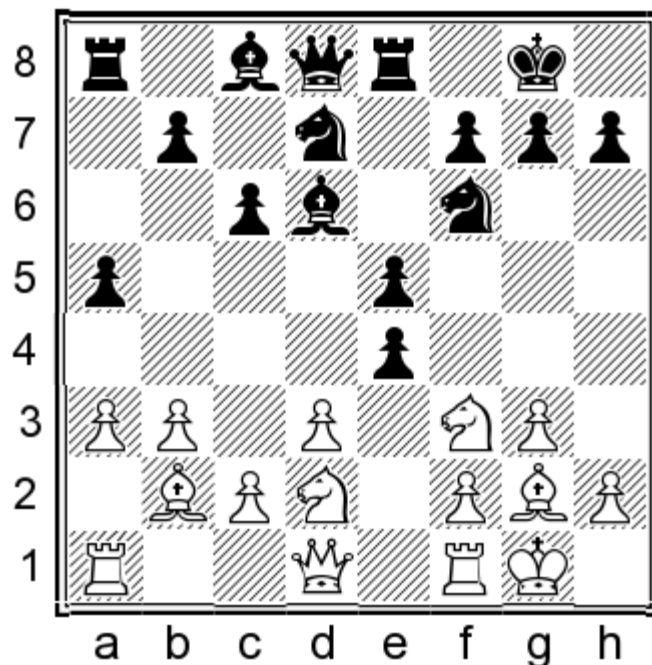
8.b3 a5



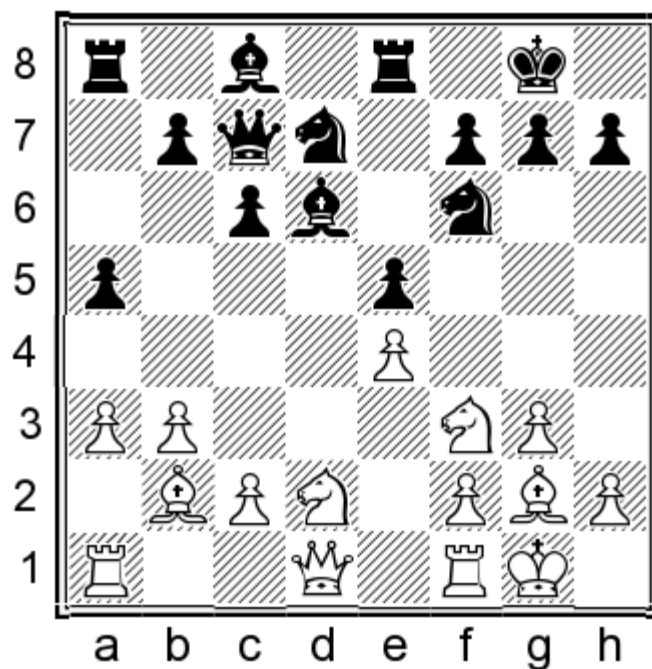
9.a4. White prevents mechanically the pawn-advance a5-a4, but weakens the b4-square. 9...♗a6 10.♕b2 ♗b4 11.♞e1 d4∞ Touzane – Tregubov, Montpellier 2015.

It seems less reliable for White to play here 9.♕b2 a4 10.a3 axb3 11.cxb3, Maiwald – Lesiege, Bermuda 1997. His pawn-structure has been compromised and after 11...d4!?, Black can restrict his bishop on b2. 12.♗c4 ♕c7 13.a4 b5. He wishes to open the game on the queenside. 14.axb5 ♞xa1 15.♞xa1 cxb5 16.♗a3 ♕d7 17.♗c2 ♗c6∞ Black has more space, while White's pawns on d3 and b3 will be excellent targets for the attack of Black's pieces.

9.a3. This move is played with the idea after a5-a4, White to be able to counter that with b3-b4. 9...♗bd7 10.♕b2 (10.♞e1 d4 – see 8.♞e1) 10...dxe4



All this is quite typical for the opening set-up that we are analysing. Black often exchanges on e4 in order to diminish his opponent's active possibilities and usually organises active actions on the queenside. 11.dxe4 ♖c7



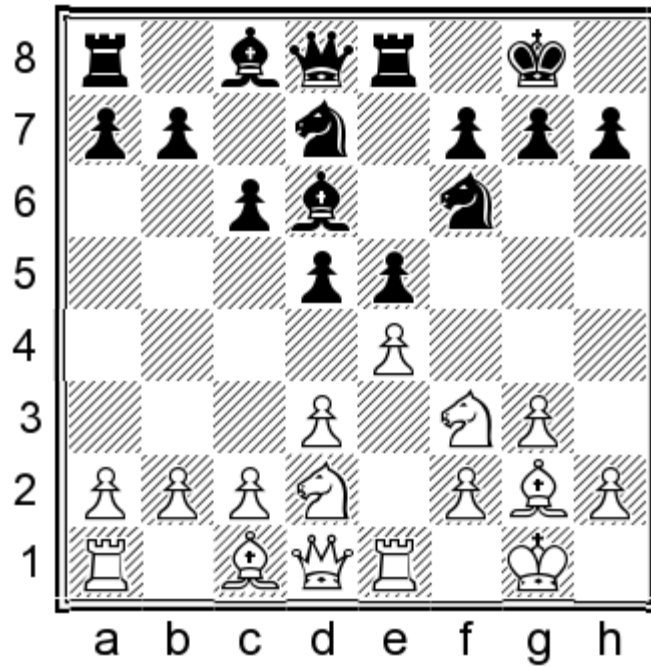
12.♞e1 b5 13.♘h4 ♕f8 ♞ Hickl – Rasmussen, Germany 2004.

12.♞e2 b5 ∞ Black restricts the enemy knight on d2 and occupies space on the queenside, Hickl – Dann, Germany 2009.

12.♘h4. The transfer of the knight to f5 would not increase much White's attacking possibilities. 12...b5 13.♘f5 ♕f8 ♞ Gabrielian – Riazantsev, Vladivostok 2014.

12.♘c4 ♕f8 13.♘fd2 b5 14.♘e3 ♘c5 15.♙h1 ♕a6 ∞ Arencibia Rodriguez – Morovic Fernandez, Havana 1999. Black's kingside position has no weaknesses and White will hardly manage to organise a meaningful attack, while Black has seized completely the initiative on the queenside.

8...♘bd7



9.c3

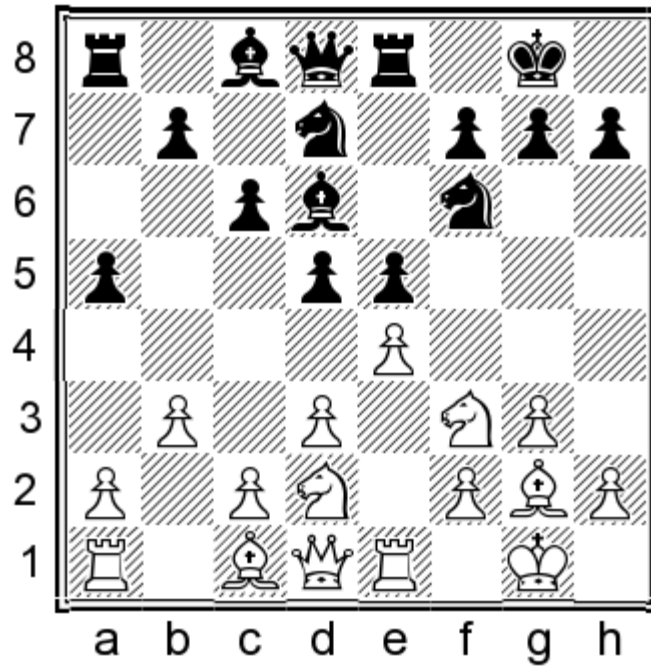
9.a3 a5 10.b3 d4 – see 9.b3.

9.♞e2. White determines the placement of his queen a bit too early. 9...a5 10.♘f1 (10.a4, Mchedlishvili – Bareev, Ajaccio 2007, 10...b6!? 10...b6∞, followed by ♙a6, creating the threat to capture on e4, Sanikidze – Rosner, Deizisau 2012.

9.a4 a5 10.exd5. White gives up voluntarily his position in the centre and this does not seem good for him. (10.b3 d4 – см. 9.b3; 10.c3 ♘c5 – see 9.c3) 10...cxd5 11.♘b1 h6 12.♘c3 ♙b4 13.♙d2 e4↑ Planinec – Langeweg, Skopje 1971.

9.h3 a5 10.a4 (White should not allow his opponent to occupy additional space on the queenside: 10.♘f1?! a4 11.a3 d4 12.♙d2 ♘c5= Rubio Doblas – Marquez Abreu, ICCF 2012) 10...♞c7 11.c3 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♙f8= Kalaitzakis – Logothetis, Kavala 1999.

9.b3 a5

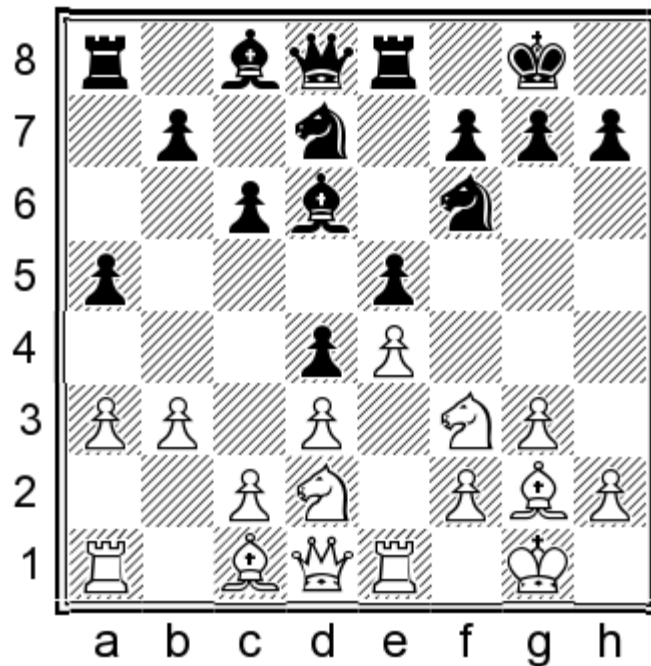


10. ♖b2 a4∞ Vaindl – Chytilek, ICCF 2007.

After 10.a4, Black can play immediately 10...d4!? He occupies space and makes the development of White's bishop on b2 senseless. 11. ♘c4 ♙c7 12. ♗h4 b5 13. ♗b2. White's knight has occupied a passive defensive position. 13... ♗f8

Suttles – Huebner, Sukhumi 1972.

10.a3 d4!?



This pawn-advance is particularly effective when White's rook is on e1, because now, in order for him to prepare f2-f4, he must lose a tempo to go back with his rook to the f1-square.

11. ♖f1, Andriasian – Motylev, Tallinn 2016, 11...b5!?

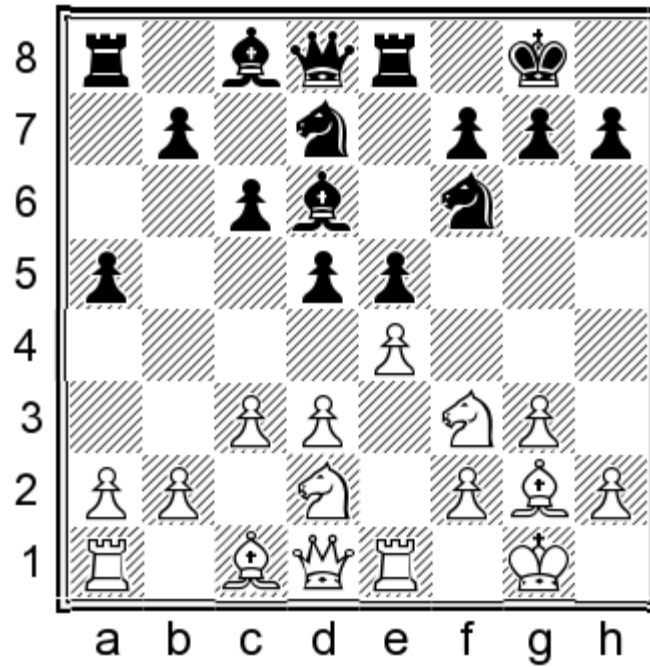
11. ♗h4 g6!? 12. ♖f1 ♗f8

Kristiansen – Brunello, Denmark 2010.

11. ♖b2 ♙c7 12. ♖c1. White wishes to activate his pieces after c2-c3, but Black can counter this simply with 12... ♗c5

exerting pressure against the d3-square and impeding White's plans. 13.h3 b5 14.♖f1 ♔a6 15.♗1h2 ♗fd7 16.h4 ♗e6
Di Marino – Homont, ICCF 2015.

9...a5



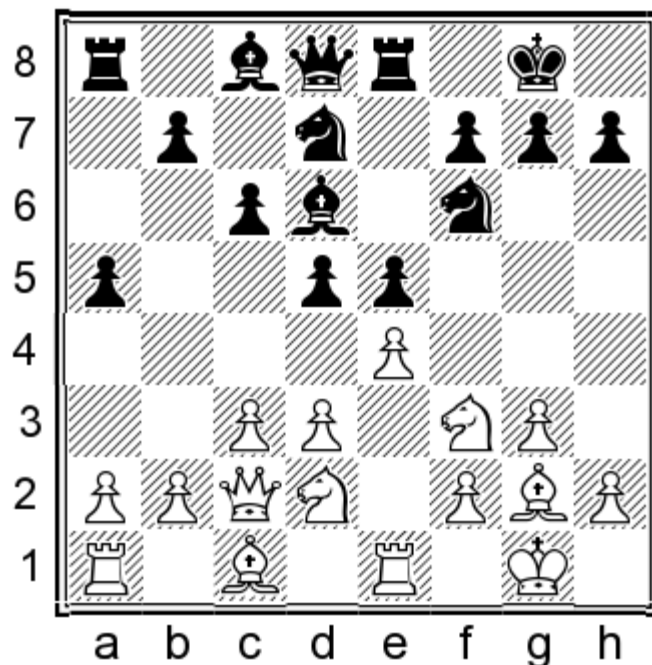
10.♖c2

10.h3, Krstic – Medic, Croatia 2015, 10...a4!?

10.♗f1. White weakens his control over the e4-square with this move. 10...dxe4 11.dxe4 ♗c5 Rotstein – Khanukov, Beverungen 2003.

10.d4 exd4. Black is well prepared for the opening of the game in the centre. 11.♗xd4 ♗e5!?. He is threatening the rather unpleasant penetration of his knight to the d3-outpost. 12.exd5 ♗xd5 13.f4. This move weakens the e3 and e4-squares, so Black's knight changes its route. 13...♗g4 14.♖xe8+ ♗xe8 15.♗c4 ♔c5 16.h3 ♗gf6 Cosentino – Cortigiani, ICCF 2016.

10.a4 ♗c5. Black's prospects are already not worse at all. 11.♖c2 dxe4 12.dxe4 b5. Now, White must play accurately in order to maintain the balance. 13.axb5 cxb5 14.b4 ♗b7 15.♔f1 ♔d7 = Conterno – Coyne, ICCF 2014.



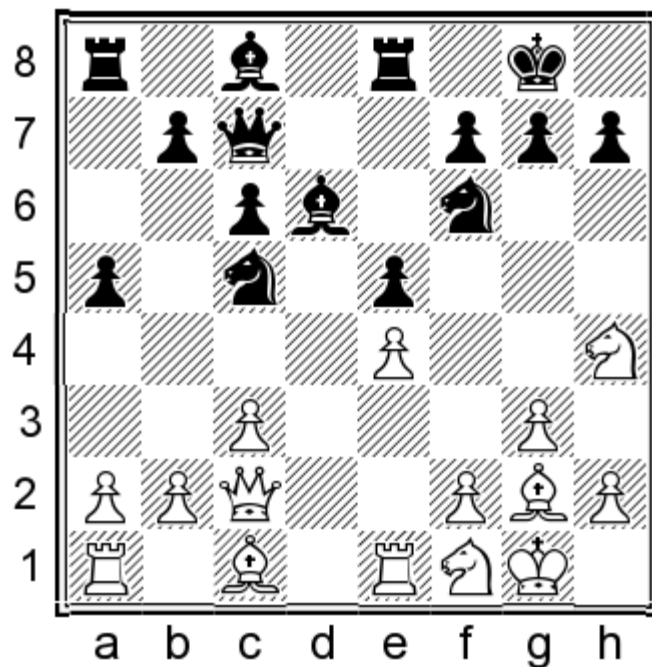
10...♞c7

It also seems good for Black to occupy immediately space on the queenside 10...a4!?, but White can still keep the equality with a precise defence. 11.♞b1 ♞c7 12.b4 axb3 13.axb3 b5 14.♙b2 dxe4 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♞xe4 ♘c5 17.♞e3 ♙f5= Klewe – Cartaya Verdecia, ICCF 2016. White's d3-pawn is weak, but he has counterplay against the e5-square.

11.♘f1

After 11.a4, the simplest for Black would be to reply with 11...dxe4!?, depriving his opponent of the possibility d3-d4. 12.♘xe4 (12.dxe4?! ♙f8 13.♘f1 ♘c5 14.♙g5 ♘fd7 15.♙d2 ♘b6= Lauterbach – Zimina, Istanbul 2003) 12...♘xe4 13.dxe4 ♘c5 14.♙e3 ♙e6 15.♘d2, Lapenna – Roberson, Budva 2003. White covers the b3-square against the penetration of the enemy pieces. 15...b5!?=

11...dxe4 12.dxe4 ♘c5 13.♘h4



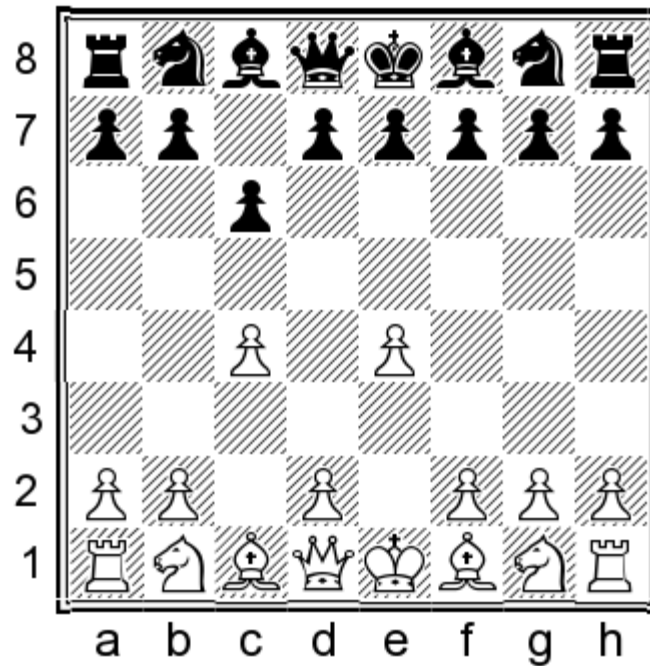
13...♙e6!?

It would not be so precise for Black to choose here 13...g6= Conterno – Rawlings, ICCF 2014. He has prevented radically the possibility ♘f5 indeed, but has weakened the shelter of his king.

14.♘f5 ♙f8 15.♙g5 ♘fd7 It is practically inconceivable how White can develop later his initiative on the kingside. Black's pieces are very actively deployed. His knight on c5 and his bishop on e6 are particularly strong, because they exert pressure against the pawn on a2, so White's rook is incapable of taking part in the fight for the d-file.

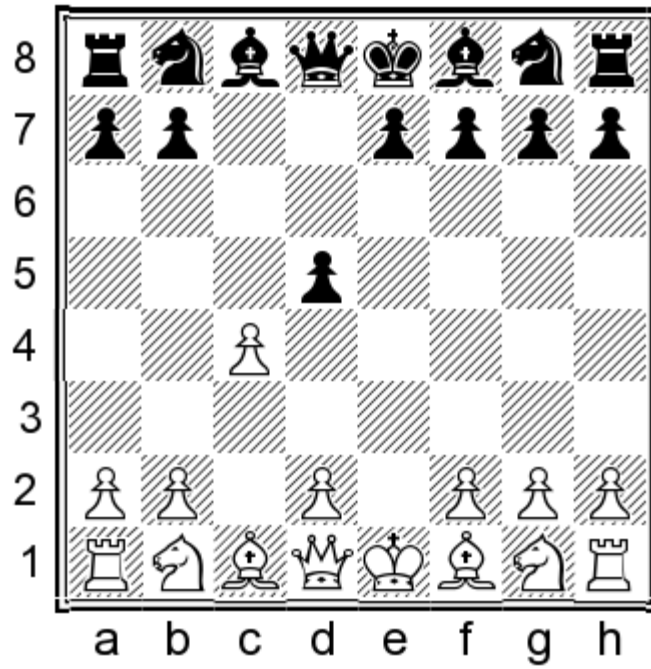
Chapter 4

1.e4 c6 2.c4



The first analyses of this move were published during the 30ies of the past century by the Hungarian chess player Lajos Steiner. At first the move 2.c4 was considered to be nearly a refutation of the Caro-Kann Defence, but gradually reliable defensive methods for Black were found. The Steiner system is very close in its ideas to the Panov Attack, which we will analyse in the next part of our book, but there is an important difference as well. White has saved a tempo for the move 2.d4 and can use it in order to attack the enemy d5-pawn. In numerous variations Black remains a pawn down for a long time and only gradually regains it with precise moves. Therefore, in this variation he must be very well acquainted with the theoretical lines; otherwise, he will end up with a material deficit.

2...d5



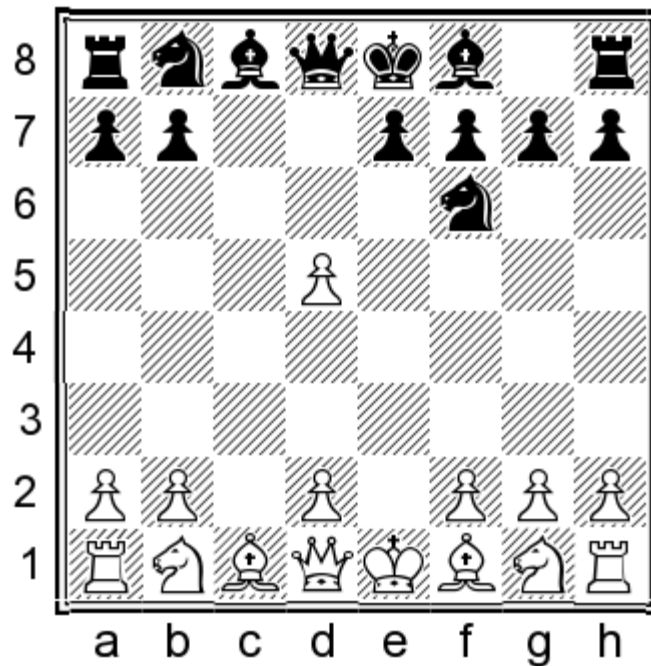
4.cxd5

About 4.d4 ♞f6 – see Chapters 9-11.

4.♞f3 ♞f6 5.cxd5 (5.d4 g6 – see Chapter 9) 5...♞xd5 – see 4.cxd5.

4...♞f6

Black wishes to regain the pawn on d5 quite comfortably. Capturing with the queen on d5 would lose tempi for him.



We will analyse now: **A) 5.♙b5+** and **B) 5.♞a4+**.

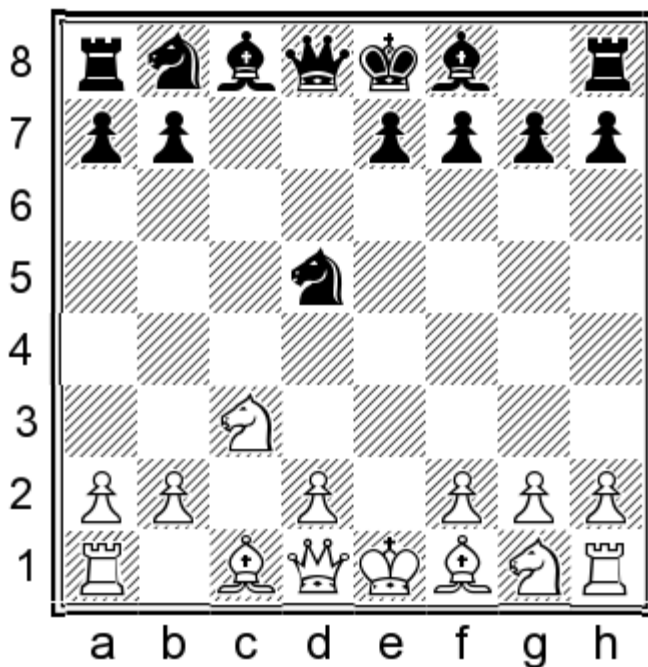
5.d4 ♞xd5 – see Chapter 9.

5.♙c4 ♜xd5 6.♜c3 (6.♜f3 ♜b6 – see 5.♜f3) 6...♜b6 – see 5.♜c3.

White's alternatives are not in the spirit of the Steiner system, because Black restores immediately the material balance.

5.♜f3 ♜xd5 6.♙c4 (6.d4 g6 – see chapter 9; 6.♜c3 g6 – see 5.♜c3) 6...♜b6 7.♙b3 g6 8.♜e5. Black can parry easily the threats against the f7-square. 8...e6 9.0-0 ♙g7 10.d4 0-0 11.♜c3 ♜c6= A.Mastrovasilis – Sakaev, Budva 2009. Black has succeeded in the completion of the development of his kingside pieces and in evacuating his king away from the centre.

5.♜c3 ♜xd5



About 6.d4 g6 – see Chapter 10.

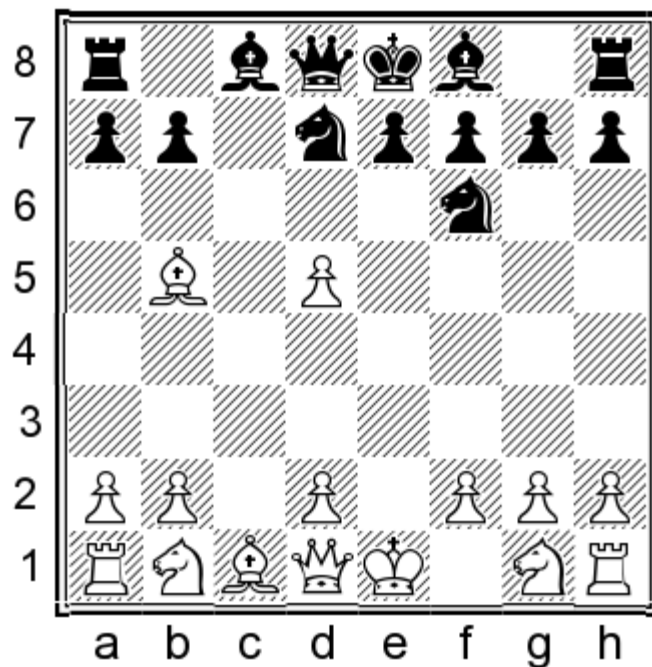
6.♙b5+ ♙d7 7.♙c4 ♜b6 8.♙b3, Lenic – Brunello, Civitanova Marche 2015, 8...g6!?!=

6.♙b3. White's queen will be misplaced on this square, because later Black will win a tempo by attacking it with his bishop on c8. 6...♜b6 7.♜f3 (7.a4 ♜c6 8.♜f3 ♙e6= Kirov – Huebner, Sukhumi 1972.) 7...♙e6 8.♙b5+ ♜c6 9.♙c2, Garcia Jimenez – Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2016, 9...♙c8!?! Black avoids the weakening of his pawn-structure. 10.♙e4 ♙d5 11.♜xd5 ♙xd5 12.♙xd5 ♜xd5= White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but Black's prospects are not worse, because the vulnerability of White's isolated pawn might become a telling factor in the endgame.

6.♙c4. White develops his bishop to an active position with tempo, but after 6...♜b6 7.♙b3, Black can reply with 7...g6 and White fails to create any threats against the f7-square. 8.d4 ♙g7, or 8.♜f3 ♙g7 9.d4 0-0, or 9.0-0 0-0 10.d4 ♜c6 – see Chapter 10.

6.♜f3 g6 7.♙b3 (7.d4 ♙g7 – see Chapter 10; 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♙b3 ♜b6 – see 7.♙b3; 7.♙c4 ♜b6 8.♙b3 ♙g7 – see 6.♙c4) 7...♜b6 8.♙b5+ (8.d4 ♙g7 – see Chapter 10) 8...♙d7 9.♜e5 e6. White's pieces have been actively deployed indeed, but he cannot create any meaningful threats. 10.♜e4. He impedes the development of the enemy bishop to g7, but it will be quite well placed on e7 too. (10.d4 ♜c6 11.♜e4 ♙e7 – see 10.♜e4) 10...♙e7 11.d4 ♜c6 12.♜xd7 ♙xd7= Miljanic – Todorovic, Niksic 1991. White's two-bishop advantage is balanced by the vulnerability of his d4-pawn.

A) 5.♙b5+ ♜bd7



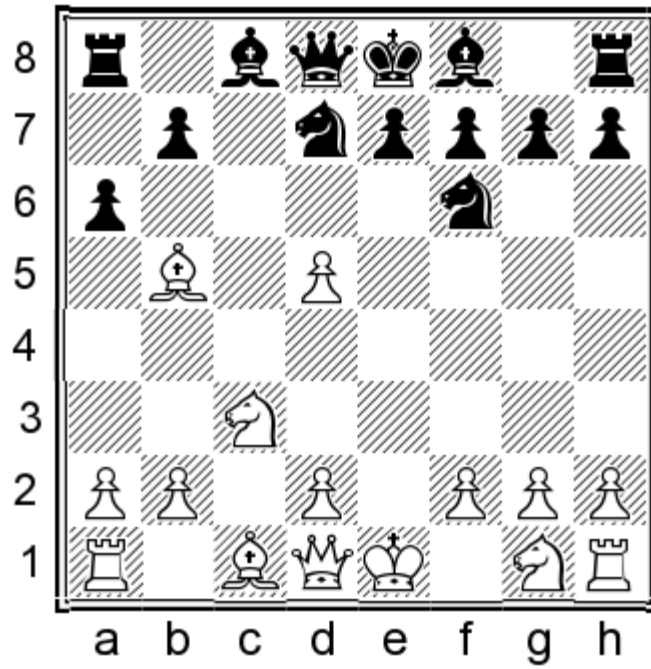
6.♘c3

After White's alternatives Black regains effortlessly his pawn and obtains at least equality. For example:

6.d4 a6 7.♙d3 (7.♙e2 ♘b6 8.♘c3 ♘bxd5 – see 6.♘c3) 7...♘b6 8.♘f3 g6 9.0-0 ♙g7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♞e1 ♘bxd5 12.♙g5 ♞d6= Soltau – Papenin, ICCF 2010. There has arisen a typical position with an isolated pawn. White's pieces are actively placed, but his isolated pawn might turn out to be weak later.

6.♘f3 a6. Black wishes to get rid of the pin of his knight as quickly as possible. 7.♙a4 b5 8.♙b3 ♙b7 9.0-0 ♘xd5 10.d4 e6 11.♘bd2 ♙e7 12.♞e1 0-0 13.♘e4 ♘7f6 14.♘g3 ♞b6= Artemiev – Wojtaszek, Baku 2015. Black has completed his development and has deployed quite actively his pieces. White has no compensation for the weakness of his d4-pawn.

6...a6



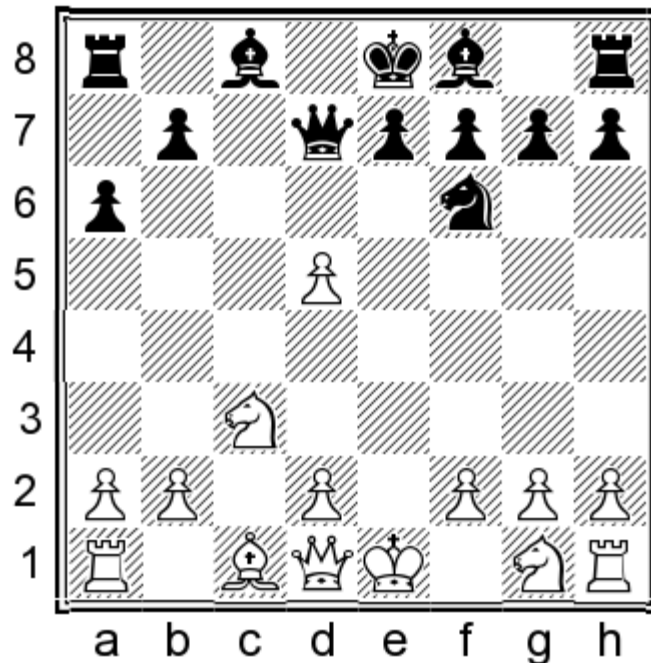
7. ♖a4

White maintains the pin of the enemy knight.

7. ♖c4 b5 8. ♖b3 ♖b7 – see 7. ♖a4.

Following 7. ♖a4 b5 8. ♖b3 ♖b7 9. ♘f3 (9. d4 b4 10. ♘a4, Tregubov – Filipenko, Voronezh 1991, 10... ♖xd5!?) 9... b4 10. ♘a4 (10. ♘e2 ♖xd5 11. ♖xd5 ♘xd5 12. d4 e6 ♞ Hermann – Miles, Germany 1984) 10... ♖xd5, Black regains quickly his pawn and obtains an edge. 11. 0-0 e6 12. d4 ♖e7 ♞ Foygel – Stripunsky, Seattle 2003.

7. ♖xd7+. This exchange seems to be premature. 7... ♞xd7



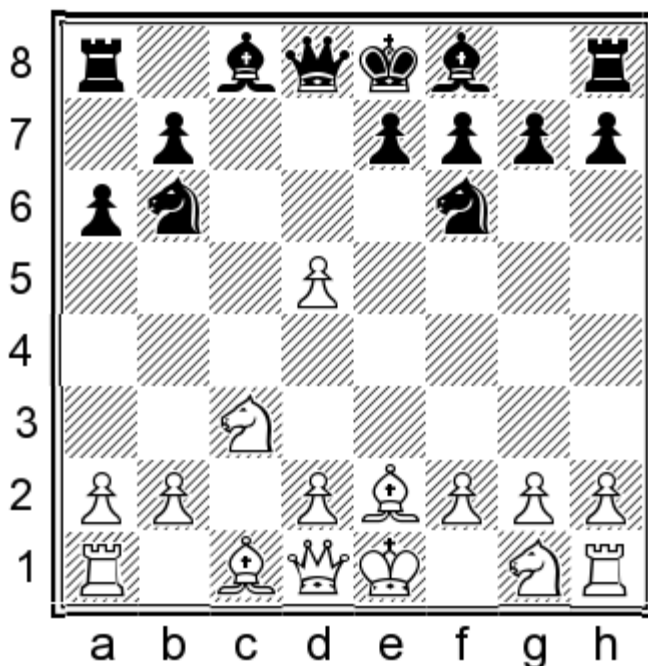
8. ♞f3. White's attempt to postpone giving back the pawn only worsens his position. 8... b5 9. ♘ge2 ♖b7 10. ♘f4, Smerdon – Rasmussen, Beijing 2008, 10... b4!? 11. ♘e4 ♘xd5 12. ♘c5. White has lost the positional battle and enters

tactical complications, but they last only for a short time. 12...♖xf4 13.♗xb7 ♕d3+ 14.♔e2 ♜c8 15.♞xd3 ♞xb7 16.♞d1 g6 17.♔f1 ♕g7. Black's bishop will exert powerful pressure against White's queenside from this square. 18.♞b3 ♞b5+ 19.d3 0-0 Black has managed to complete his development and to evacuate his king away from the centre, preserving all his positional pluses.

After 8.♞b3, Black has the powerful resource 8...♞g4! Suddenly, White has problems to protect his pawn on g2. The move g2-g3 would lead to a serious weakening of his kingside, so he is practically forced to continue with 9.♔f1, losing his castling rights. 9...b5 10.♗f3 e6 11.d4. With a king on f1 it would be tremendously risky for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice, since it would only enhance dangerously Black's development. 11...♞f5 12.♕g5 ♗xd5 13.♗xd5 ♞xd5 14.♞xd5 exd5 Stolz – Wigger, Germany 2011. Black maintains a stable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair.

8.♗f3 ♗xd5 9.0-0 e6 10.♗e5 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♞c7 12.d4 ♕d6 13.♕a3. Now, White should better forget about his ambitious plans and concentrate on his fight for equality. The best way of doing this would be to exchange pieces. 13...♕xa3 14.♞a4+ b5 15.♞xa3 ♕b7 16.♞fe1 (16.c4?! f6 Pranas – S.Kasparov, Mumbai 2010) 16...♕d5=, followed by ♞e7, Schuster – Dolgov, ICCF 2008.

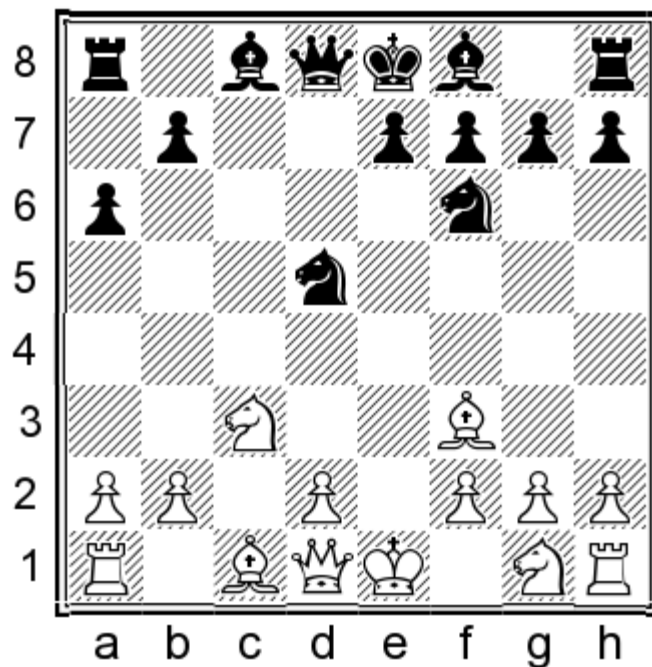
7.♕e2. After this modest retreat of the bishop, Black has no problems whatsoever. 7...♗b6



About 8.d4 ♗bxd5 9.♗f3 e6 – see 8.♗f3.

8.♗f3 ♗bxd5 9.d4 (9.0-0 e6 10.d4 ♕d6 – see 9.d4) 9...e6. Black has restored the material balance and has obtained a good version of a standard position with an isolated queen's pawn. 10.0-0 ♕d6 11.♕g5 (11.♗e5 0-0 12.♞e1 ♞c7 13.♕d3 b5 14.♕d2 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♕b7= The vulnerability of White's pawns on d4 and c3 might hurt him in the future, Galanov – Dolgov, ICCF 2011.) 11...h6 12.♕h4 (12.♗xd5 hxg5 13.♗e3 ♗d5 14.♗xd5 exd5 15.g3 ♕e6= Varga – Fontaine, Kastav 2002. Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his two powerful bishops.) 12...0-0 13.♗xd5 exd5 14.♞b3 ♞e8 15.♕d3 ♕g4 16.♗e5. This move leads to simplifications. 16...♕xe5 17.dxe5 ♞xe5 18.♞xb7 ♞e6 19.♞fe1 ♞b6 20.♕xf6, Hagen – Mrkvicka, ICCF 2014, 20...♞xb7!? 21.♕xd8 ♞xd8 22.b3 a5= The position has been simplified to a dead draw.

8.♕f3 ♗bxd5



It seems bad for White to choose here 9. ♖b3, Kveinys – Kaunas, Goch 1992, 9... ♗e6!?! and it would be too precarious for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice: 10. ♖xb7 ♖b8 11. ♗a7 ♗b4 12. ♕f1 ♗f5

9. ♗xd5. This calm move leads to an approximately equal position. 9... ♗xd5 10. ♗e2 e6 11. 0-0 (11. ♗c3, Vaulin – Kuporosov, Budapest 1991, 11... ♗e7!?) 11... b5 12. ♗c3 ♗b7= Vaulin – Stummer, Kecskemet 1993.

9. ♗ge2 e6 10. 0-0 (10. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 – see 9. ♗xd5) 10... b5. Black is preparing the development of his bishop to the b7-square in order to increase his control over the strategically important d5-square. 11. d4 ♗b7 12. ♗g5 ♗e7 13. ♗f4 ♗xc3 14. bxc3 ♗xf3 15. ♖xf3 0-0= Szymanski – Lehtosaari, ICCF 2010.

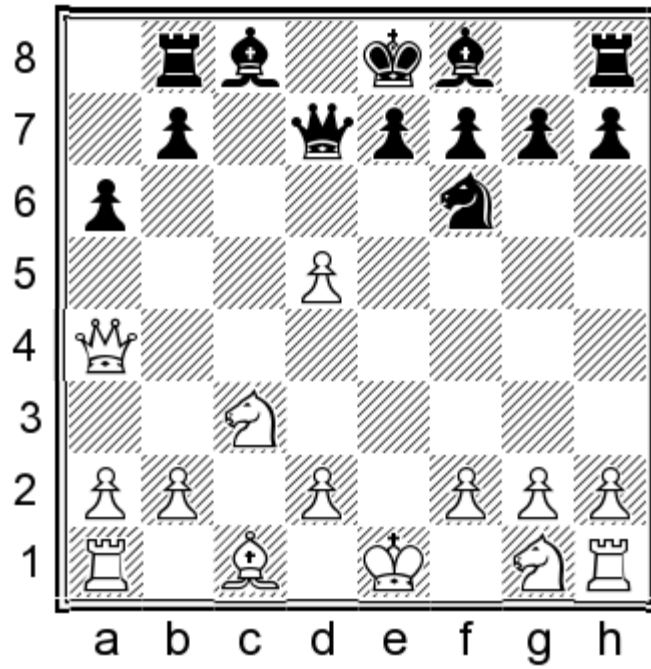
7... ♖b8

Black is threatening once again to capture the enemy bishop.

8. ♗xd7+

White should better refrain from 8. ♗e2, because after 8... b5, he will have to lose a tempo for the retreat of his queen. 9. ♖d4 (9. ♖h4 b4 10. ♗d1 ♗xd5 11. ♗e3 ♗b7= Pareschi – Sarak, ICCF 2007.) 9... g6!?! followed by ♗g7, 0-0, b5-b4, Schelfhout – Euwe, Amsterdam 1933. White's queen is horribly misplaced at the centre of the board.

8... ♖xd7



9. ♖xd7+

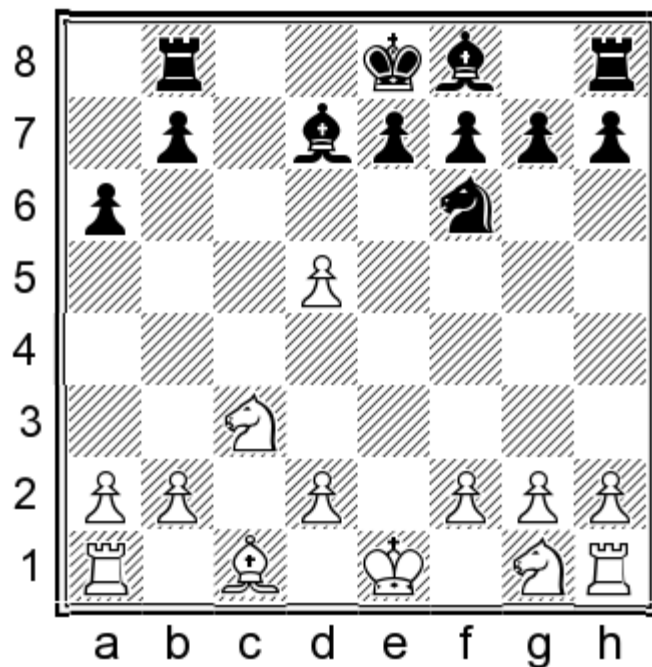
If White avoids the trade of the queens, he might even fail to equalise. For example:

9. ♖b3 ♗g4 10. ♘ge2 ♗xg2 11. ♖g1, Miezis – Van den Bersselaar, Leinzell 2011, 11... ♗xh2!? 12. d3 ♘h5 13. ♕e3 g6 14. 0-0-0 ♕g7, White's lead in development does not compensate the sacrificed pawn.

9. ♖f4. White wins a tempo for his development by attacking the enemy rook, but this is still insufficient for equality. 9... ♖a8 10. ♘f3 (10. ♖f3 b5 – see 7. ♕xd7.) 10... ♘xd5 11. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 12. 0-0 f6!? This is Black's most precise move. He prevents the manoeuvre ♘e5-c4-b6. 13. ♖e1 e6 14. ♗g3 (14. d3 ♕d6 15. ♖e4 ♗xe4 16. dxe4 e5 17. ♕e3 ♕e6, with the two-bishop advantage for Black.) 14... ♖f7 15. d4 ♕d7 16. ♕d2, Arribas Robaina – S.Lalic, Istanbul 2000, 16... ♖d8!? 17. h4 ♕c6 White cannot exploit the relatively unsafe position of Black's king, so his prospects are worse, because his d4-pawn is weak and Black's bishops are tremendously active.

9... ♕xd7

It is an endgame indeed, but the position is still sharp. White has an extra pawn, but if Black succeeds in capturing the d5-pawn, he will maintain an advantage thanks to his bishop-pair.



10.d4

10.♘ge2 ♜d8 11.d4 b5!? 12.a3 ♙c8=, followed by ♙b7, Pachmann – Sergeev, Czech Republic 1997.

After 10.d3 ♙f5 11.♙g5 ♜d8 12.♙xf6 exf6, Black has very good compensation for his minimal material deficit. 13.0-0-0 ♙c5 14.d4 ♙d6 15.♘ge2, Lerner – Dreev, Rostov on Don 1993, 15...b5!? 16.f3 b4. Black ousts the enemy knight from the c3-square and restores the material balance. 17.♘e4 ♙b8 18.♔d2 ♜xd5∞

10.♘f3. This routine development of the knight does not prevent Black's plans. 10...♜d8 11.d4 ♙f5 12.♙f4 ♘xd5 13.♘xd5 ♜xd5. White has no compensation for Black's powerful bishop-pair. His only chance of equalising is to activate his rook. 14.♜c1 f6 15.♜c7 (15.h4, Bergez – Kacheishvili, Cappelle-la-Grande 2001, 15...♙d7!?⚡, followed by ♙c6, defending reliably the pawn on b7.) 15...g5 16.♙e3 ♜d7 17.♜c8+ ♔f7 18.0-0 ♙g7 19.♜xh8 ♙xh8 20.♜c1, Stavrakakis – Saltaev, Aghios Kirykos 2007, 20...g4!? 21.♘e1 h5 22.f3 ♙g7⚡ Black has managed to exchange the active enemy rook and has thus reduced White's pressure on the c-file. Black maintains a stable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair.

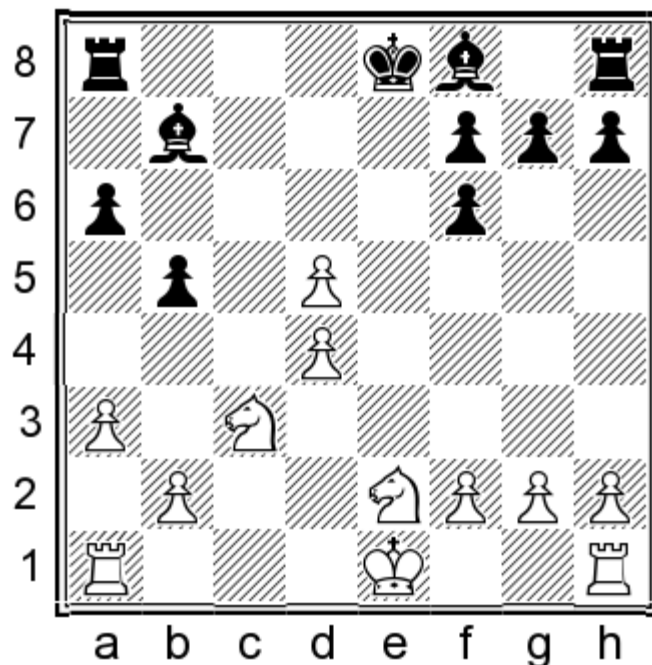
10...b5

Black plans to increase the pressure against the d5-pawn with the move ♙c8-b7.

11.a3 ♙c8!? 12.♙f4

There arises a complicated double-edged position after the line: 12.♙g5 ♙b7 13.♙xf6 exf6⚡ Bernad Suarez – Landero Luna, ICCF 2010.

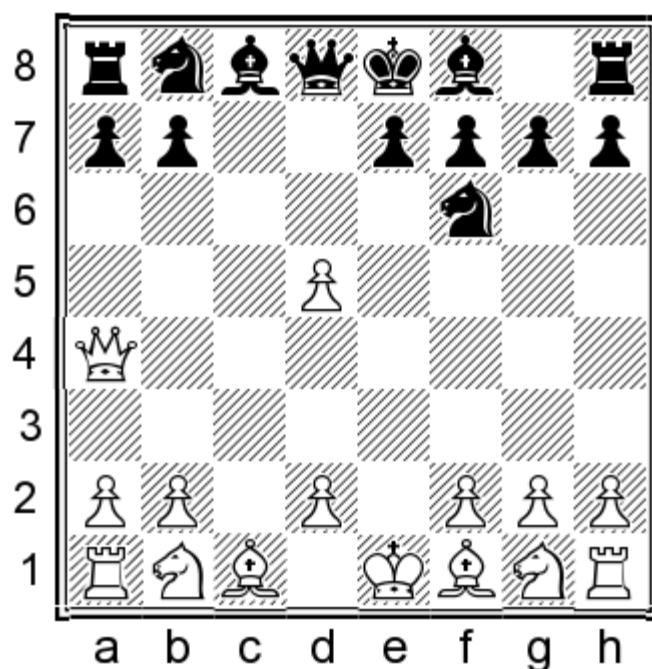
12...♜a8 13.♙e5 ♙b7 14.♙xf6 exf6 15.♘ge2



Black can reach here a very good position in numerous ways. He can play 15...g6!?, or 15...f5!?, preparing the transfer of his bishop ♗e7-f6.

I can recommend to players who would like to avoid any risk the move **15...b4**. This is Black's most reliable response. **16.axb4 ♗xb4 17.0-0 0-0 18.♖fc1 a5 19.♘f4 ♖fd8=** He restores gradually the material balance (♖ac8-c4, g7-g5). It is also possible for him to choose **15...♔d7 16.0-0 ♗e7** Magem Badals – Adams, Dos Hermanas 1993. Black has quite sufficient compensation for the pawn thanks to his two powerful bishops.

B) 5.♙a4+



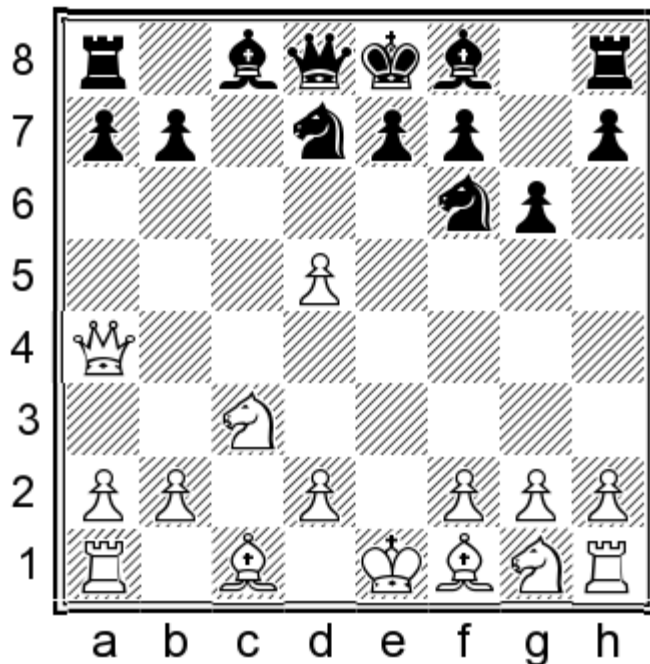
Now, just like after 5.♗b5+, White wishes to provoke the enemy queen to occupy the d7-square in order to impede Black to regain easily his pawn. Still, this queen-sortie might not be so good for White at such an early stage of the

game, because later he might lose tempi for its retreat.

5...♖bd7 6.♗c3

6.♙c4 g6 7.♗c3 ♙g7 – see 6.♗c3.

6...g6



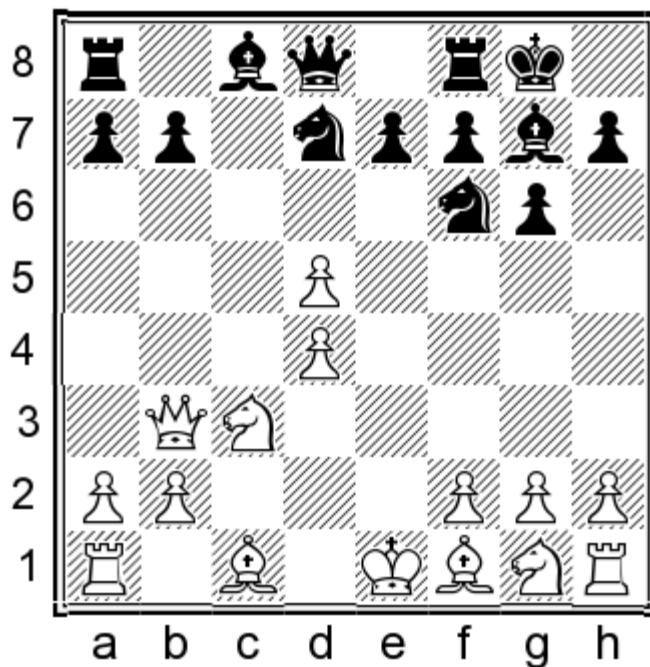
7.♗f3

About 7.♗b3 ♙g7 8.♙c4 (8.♗f3 0-0 – see 7.♗f3) 8...0-0 – see 7.♙c4.

7.h4. This flank pawn-advance seems rather risky in a position in which White has not completed his development yet. 7...♙g7 8.h5 (He had possibly to refrain from the further advance of that pawn: 8.♙e2 h5 9.♗h3 0-0 10.♗f4, Mieziš – Hartikainen, Finland 2011, 10...♗b6 11.♗b3 a5 12.a4 ♗d6∞) 8...♗xh5 9.g4 ♗hf6 10.g5 (10.♙e2?! Tadic – Scekic, Senta 2002, 10...♗f8!?±, followed by ♗b6) 10...♗h5 11.♙e2 0-0 12.♙xh5 gxh5 13.♗xh5. White has succeeded in restoring the material balance, but he had to exchange his powerful bishop. 13...♗b6. Black wishes to transfer his queen to the kingside in order to defend the position of his king. 14.♗e4 ♗g6± Tadic – Scekic, Senta 2002.

After 7.g4, the simplest reply for Black would be 7...h6!?, preventing g4-g5. 8.♙g2 ♙g7 9.♗ge2 0-0 10.h3 ♗b6 11.♗b3 e6! 12.dxe6 ♙xe6 13.♗d1 ♗d7 14.0-0 h5± This move emphasizes the vulnerability of White's kingside. 15.g5 ♗fd5 16.♗h2, Mazzilli – Zimina, Campobasso 2004, 16...♗d6+ 17.f4 ♗ad8± Black's pieces are so active that White's extra pawn is absolutely immaterial.

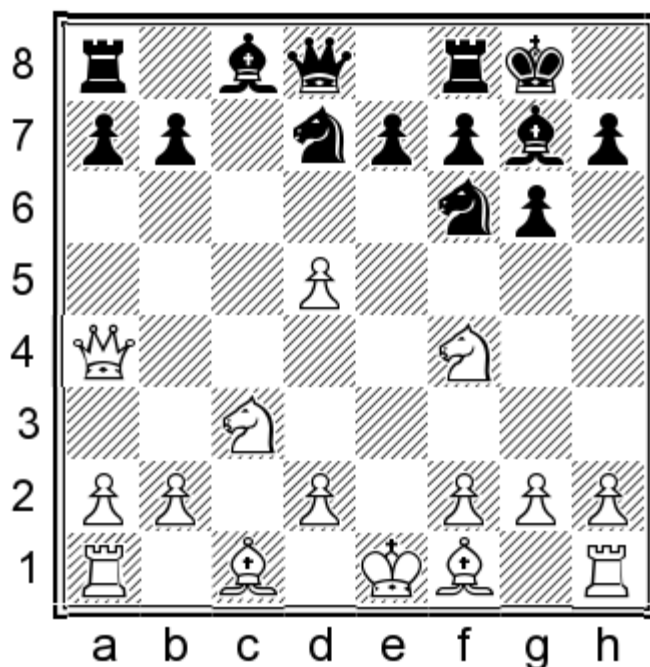
It seems bad for White to opt here for 7.d4, because after 7...♙g7 8.♗b3, there arises a position from the Panov Attack, but with an extra tempo for Black, since White has lost a tempo for the move ♗a4. (8.g3 0-0 – see 7.g3; 8.♙e2 0-0 9.♙f3 ♗b6 10.♗b3 – see 8.♗b3) 8...0-0



9. ♖e2 ♜b6 10. ♙f3 ♙f5. Black prepares the transfer of his bishop to the d3-square. 11. ♞ge2 ♙d3 12. d6, Kuenzler – Mittelman, Berlin 1998, 12... ♜xd6!? 13. ♙xb7 ♙c4 14. ♜c2 ♞ae8. He has very good compensation for the pawn. 15. 0-0 (15. ♙f4 ♜d7 16. ♙f3 ♞fd5 17. ♙xd5 ♞xd5 18. ♞xd5 ♜xd5) 15... ♞g4 16. ♙f4 e5 17. h3 exf4 18. hxg4 ♜c7 19. ♙f3 ♙xe2 20. ♙xe2 ♙xd4=

9. ♙g5. White wishes to trade the enemy knight, which attacks the pawn on d5, but Black's bishops will become very powerful after that. 9... ♞b6 10. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11. ♞f3 e6! He wishes to open the position for his bishops. 12. d6 (following 12. dxe6 ♙xe6 13. ♜d1, Doornbos – Lyrberg, Guarapuava 1991, 13... ♞c4, Black's pieces are very active) 12... ♞d5!? 13. ♞e4 (13. ♞xd5 exd5 14. ♜xd5 ♙e6) 13... ♜a5+ 14. ♞ed2 ♞d8 15. ♙d3 ♞xd6 Tischbierek – Boehmisch, Leipzig 1979. Black has restored the material balance, while White's d4-pawn is still very weak.

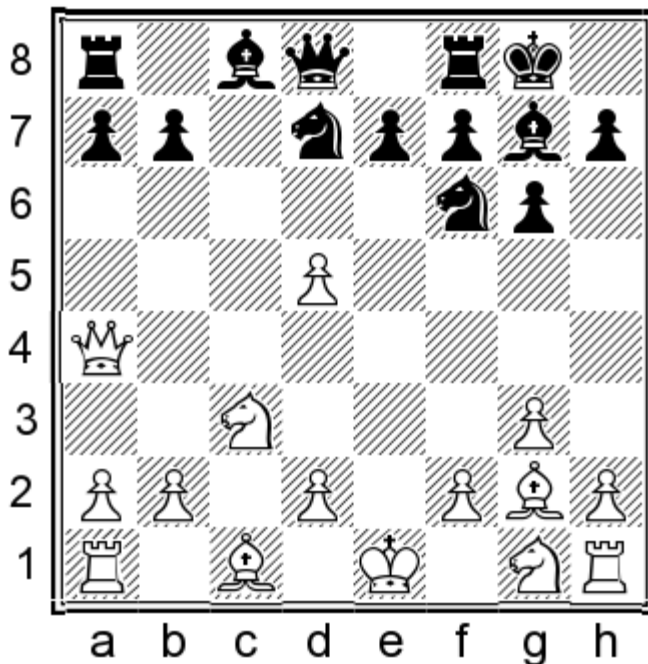
7. ♞ge2. White wishes to deploy his knight on f4, but it would be rather unstable there, because Black can always oust it with the move g6-g5. 7... ♙g7 8. ♞f4 0-0



9.d4 ♖b6 10.♖b3, Huss – Seret, Luzern 1982, 10...g5!? 11.♗d3 ♗fxd5 12.♙xg5 ♙xd4 13.♙e2 ♙e6. Black's centralised pieces compensate the slight vulnerability of his king. 14.♗xd5 ♖xd5. The bishop on g5 is defenceless, so White cannot avoid the exchange of the queens. 15.♖xd5 ♗xd5∞

9.♙e2 ♗b6 10.♖b3, Groszpeter – Nguyen, Budapest 1999, 10...a5!? Black wishes either to oust the enemy queen, or to provoke the move a2-a4, which would lead to the weakening of the b4-square. 11.a4 (Black obtains good compensation for the pawn after 11.0-0 a4 12.♖b5 ♙d7 13.♖b4 ♙f5 14.d4 ♗fxd5 15.♗fxd5 ♗xd5 16.♖xb7 ♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♖a5∞) 11...♖d6. Black's queen is headed for the b4-square. 12.d4 ♖b4 13.♙a3 ♙d8 14.0-0 ♖xb3 15.♙xb3 ♗fxd5. He restores the material balance. 16.♗fxd5 ♗xd5∞

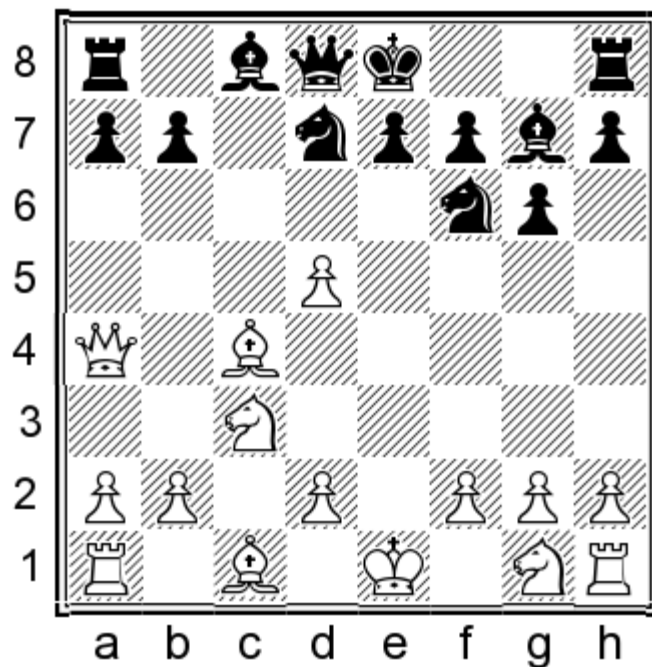
7.g3. White prepares the development of his bishop to g2 and it will protect his d5-pawn from there. 7...♙g7 8.♙g2 (8.d4 0-0 9.♙g2 ♗b6 – see 8.♙g2) 8...0-0



After 9.♗ge2, Black can try the interesting pawn-sacrifice 9...e6!? with the idea to exploit the vulnerability of the d3-square. 10.0-0 (10.dxe6? ♗c5 11.♖d4 ♗d3+ 12.♗f1, Blahacek – Brezmen, Czech Republic 2007, 12...♖xd4!? 13.♗xd4 ♗g4 14.♗c2 ♗gxf2+) 10...♗b6 11.♖a5 ♗bxd5 12.♖xd8 ♙xd8∞ Laylo – Barbosa, Bangkok 2014. Black maintains a slight but stable edge thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

9.d4 ♗b6 10.♖b3 ♙f5 11.♗ge2 ♙d3 12.0-0 (12.d6 ♖xd6 13.♙f4 ♖d7∞ Potapov – Batherikov, Salekhard 2003) 12...♙c4 13.♖a3 ♗bxd5∞ Zulfugarli – Ponomariov, Zagan 1997. Black regains the sacrificed pawn and preserves all the pluses of his position.

7.♙c4 ♙g7

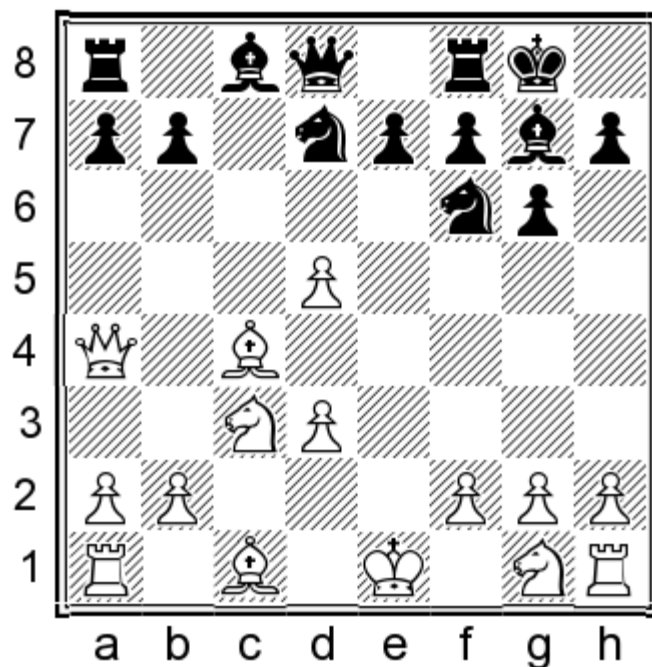


8. ♖f3 0-0 – see 7. ♖f3.

8. ♖ge2 0-0 9. d3 a6 – see 8.d3.

8. ♜b3 0-0 9. ♖f3 (9. d3 b5 – see 8.d3) 9...a6 – see 7. ♖f3.

8.d3 0-0

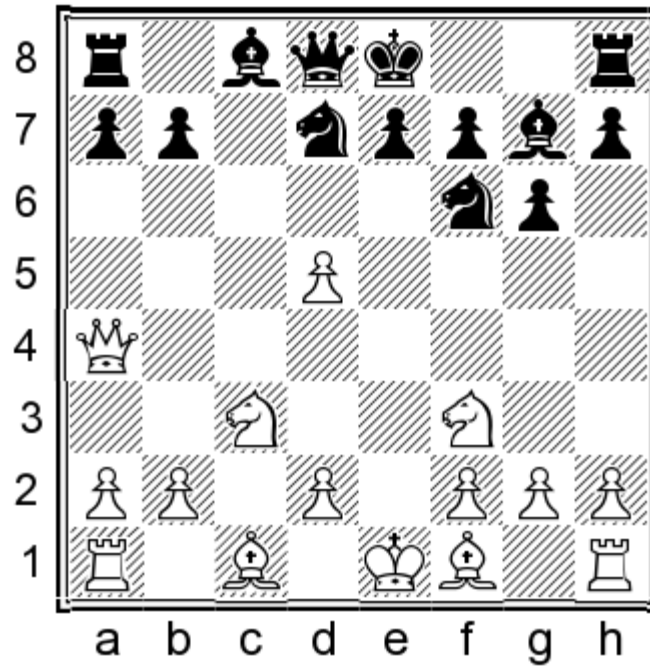


9. ♖f3 a6 – see 7. ♖f3.

It is bad for White to play here 9. ♜b3?!, because of 9...b5! 10. ♖xb5, Koch – Bricard, Bischwiller 1999, 10...♞b8!? 11. ♜a3 ♖e5 12. ♙f4 ♖xd5

9. ♖ge2. White's knight will be less active here than on the f3-square. 9...a6 10. ♜a3 b6 11. 0-0 ♙b7 12. ♙g5 b5 13. ♙b3, Cook – Johnson, Adelaide 1971, 13...♞e8 14. ♞ac1 ♖b6 Black's pieces have been very actively and harmoniously deployed and White will fail to preserve his extra pawn.

7...♙g7



8.♙c4

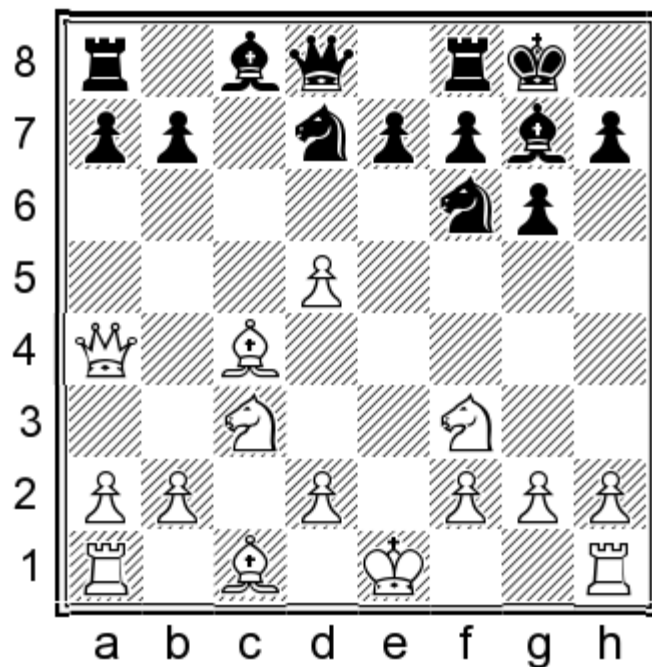
8.♚b3 0-0 9.♙c4 a6 – see 8.♙c4.

8.♚h4, Mieziš – Blomqvist, Stockholm 2009, 8...h6!?∞

After 8.♘e5 0-0 9.♘xd7 ♙xd7 10.♚b3, Black can exploit his lead in development with the line: 10...e6! 11.♙e2, G.Kuzmin – Razuvaev, Vilnius 1980, 11...♘xd5!? 12.♘xd5 exd5 and White cannot play 13.♚xd5?, because after 13...♙e8+, the pin of his bishop will be decisive for the outcome of the game.

8.♙e2 0-0 9.♚h4. White refrains from the plans, connected with keeping the extra pawn and will focus on the attack against the enemy king. Still, this would be far from simple, because Black has an excellent development and a solid position. 9...♘b6 10.d4 ♘bxd5 11.0-0 ♙f5 12.♙h6 ♚c8 Brestian – Zurek, Trnava 1988.

8...0-0



9.d3

After 9.0-0?!, Black will gradually regain his pawn on d5 and will maintain an advantage. 9...♘b6 10.♙b3 ♘xc4 11.♚xc4 b6 12.♗e5 ♘b7 13.♗c6, Muhutdinov – Seirawan, Cetinje 1992, 13...♚d6!? 14.d3 ♜fc8 15.♙f4 ♚d7 16.♙e5 ♘xd5!? 17.♚xd5 ♚xc6 18.♙xg7 ♚xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xg7 20.♗e3 ♜d8

9.♙b3 a6 (It seems also very interesting for Black to try here a sacrifice of a second pawn: 9...b5!? 10.♙xb5 ♜b8 11.♗d4?! ♗e5 Boidman – Bertrem, Belgium 2006) 10.a4 ♚a5 11.♜a3. White defends against b7-b5. 11...♗b6 12.0-0 ♘xc4 13.♚xc4 ♙f5 14.♗d4 ♜ac8 15.♚e2, Reuss – Grund, Bad Wiessee 2000, 15...♙d7!?∞ It would be rather difficult for White to coordinate his pieces here. 16.♚xe7 ♚b6 17.♗c2 ♜fe8 18.♚b4 ♚xb4 19.♗xb4 ♙f5 20.a5 ♙f8 21.♜b3 ♜c4 22.d6 ♜d4 23.d3 ♜xd6 He has an extra pawn, but must fight for equality, because Black's pieces are tremendously active and well coordinated.

9...a6

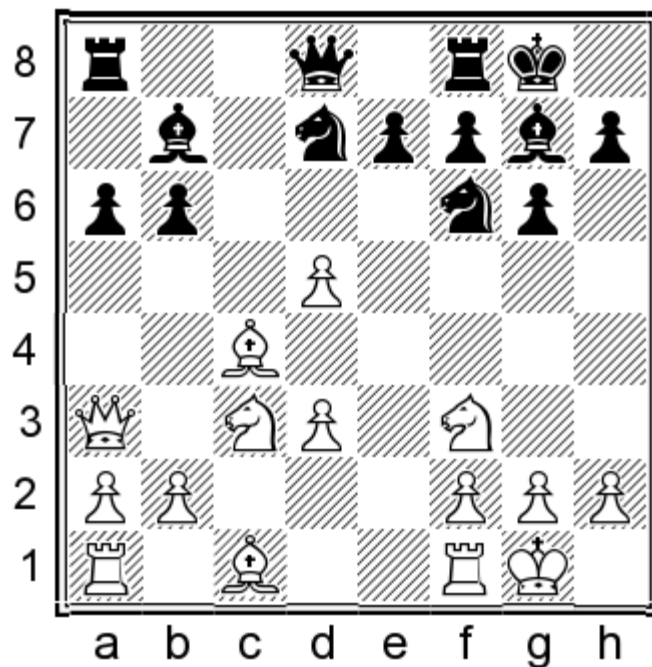
Black is threatening to win a piece.

10.♚a3

10.0-0? b5 11.♗xb5 ♗b6+

There arises an interesting double-edged fight after 10.♙e3 ♗g4 11.♚d1 b5 12.♙b3 ♙b7 13.0-0 ♜c8 14.♚d2 ♗df6∞ Szczepanski – Bezemer, FICGS 2010.

10...b6 11.0-0 ♙b7



12.♖e1

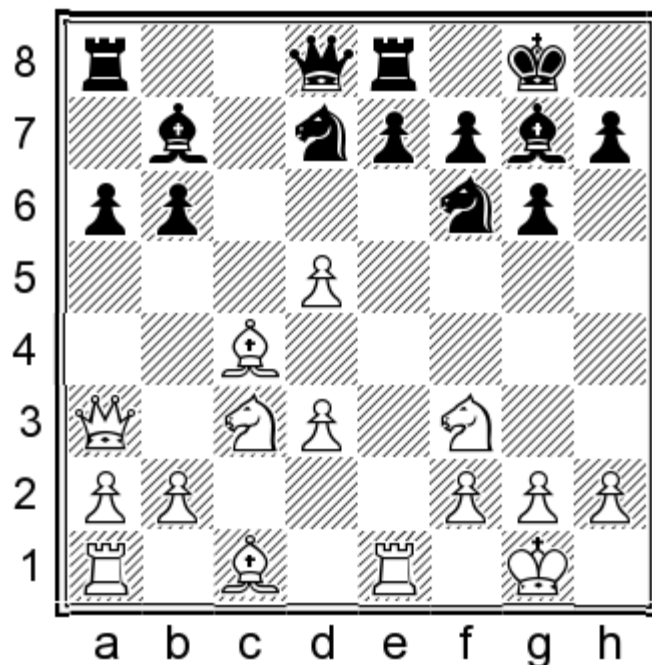
White increases his pressure against the pawn on e7.

12.♙f4. His plan, connected with the pawn-advance d5-d6, would lead to difficulties for him, since Black's bishop on b7 will be activated. 12...♞c8∞ 13.d6?! e6 14.♘d2 b5 15.♙b3 ♘c5 16.♗ce4 ♗fxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xd3 18.♙g5 ♞d7⚡ Kacheishvili – Bhat, Berkeley 2008. White's queen is obviously misplaced being away from the focus of the actions.

Following 12.♙e3 b5 13.♙b3, Black can sacrifice his pawn on e7. 13...♗b6!? 14.♙xb6 ♞xb6 15.♞xe7 a5 16.♞e3 ♞xe3 17.fxe3 a4 18.♙d1, Jobava – Grischuk, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009, 18...a3!⚡ Now, before capturing on d5, Black increases his pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal. White's defence is difficult, because Black's bishop-pair is very powerful.

12...♞e8

There has arisen the basic position of the variation with 5.♞a4 and in fact of the Steiner system in general. White has tried numerous moves here, but neither of them proved sufficient for him to maintain an edge.



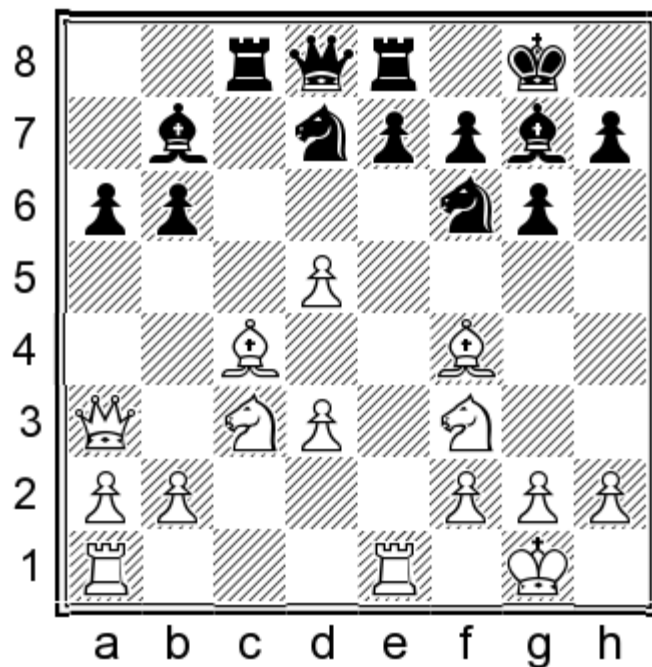
13. ♖g5

It is possible that White should better refrain from too risky active moves and just complete his development. He will not obtain an advantage then, but would not be worse either 13. ♕d2 b5 14. ♕b3 ♘b6 15. d6 (15. ♘e4 ♕xd5 16. ♕a5 ♕xb3 17. ♖xb3 ♘xe4 18. dxe4 ♖b8 19. ♖ad1 ♖b7= Zherebukh – Eljanov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011. The position has been simplified and the game is approximately equal.) 15... ♕xf3. Black weakens his opponent's kingside pawn-structure. 16. gxf3 exd6 17. ♕g5 d5 18. ♖g2 ♖xe1 19. ♖xe1 ♕f8 20. ♖a5 ♖d6 21. a4 bxa4 22. ♘xa4 ♘bd7= Girling – Coyne, ICCF 2015. White's two-bishop advantage compensates the defects of his pawn-structure.

13. ♕g5 b5 14. ♕b3 ♘b6 15. d6 (15. ♖ac1, Sanchez – Fargere, Marseille 2007, 15... ♘fxd5!?) 15... ♖xd6. Black's prospects are not worse and White's attempt to increase his piece-pressure against the f7-square 16. ♘e5?! would lead to difficulties for him. 16... ♘fd5 17. ♘xd5 ♖xa3 18. bxa3, Duman – Okay, Konya 2017, 18... ♕xd5!?) White has no compensation for his multiple pawn-weaknesses.

13. ♕e3 b5 14. ♕b3 ♘b6 15. ♕xb6. He preserves his extra pawn at the price of exchanging his powerful dark-squared bishop (15. d6 ♕xf3 16. gxf3 exd6= Panarin – Riazantsev, Sochi 2012). 15... ♖xb6 16. ♖b4 ♖d8 17. a4 (17. ♖e5 ♘d7 18. ♖g5, Bortnyk – Kononenko, Tallinn 2016. White's rook is obviously misplaced on the g5-square: 18... ♖c8!?) 17... ♘xd5 18. ♕xd5 ♕xd5 19. axb5 axb5 20. ♖xb5 ♕xf3 21. gxf3 ♖b8=, Black regains the pawn, Bortnyk – Grischuk, ICC 2016. White can hardly protect the numerous pawn-weaknesses in his pawn-structure.

13. ♕f4 ♖c8

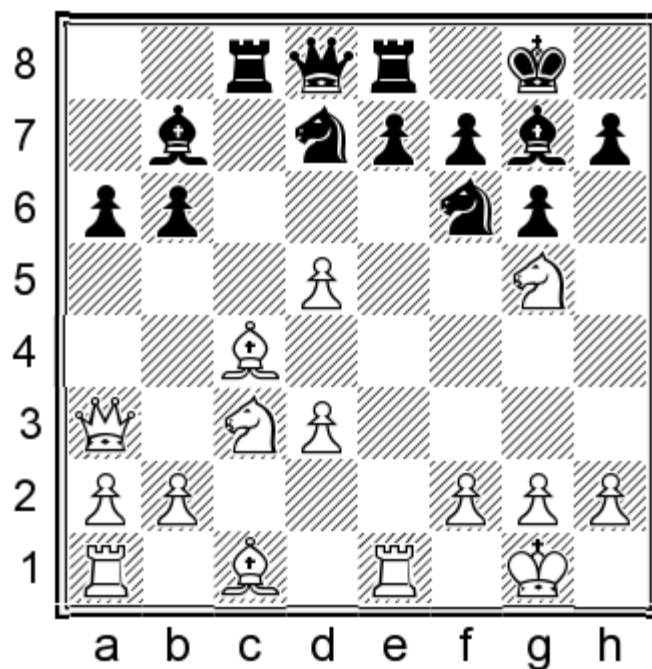


14.d6 e6 15.♙b3 ♘c5 ♞ Serner – Rydholm, ICCF 2009.

White must play very carefully here. For example after: 14.♘d4? b5 15.♙b3, V.Popov – Rodshtein, Dresden 2007, 15...♙f8!?!-+, he would be helpless against the threat e7-e5. In general, the misplacement of White's queen on the a3-square often hurts him in this variation.

14.♞ad1 b5 15.♙b3 ♘c5 16.♙e5 ♘xb3 17.♚xb3 ♘xd5 ♞ Najer – Kacheishvili, Philadelphia 2009. Black's superior pawn-structure provides him with a stable advantage.

13...♞c8



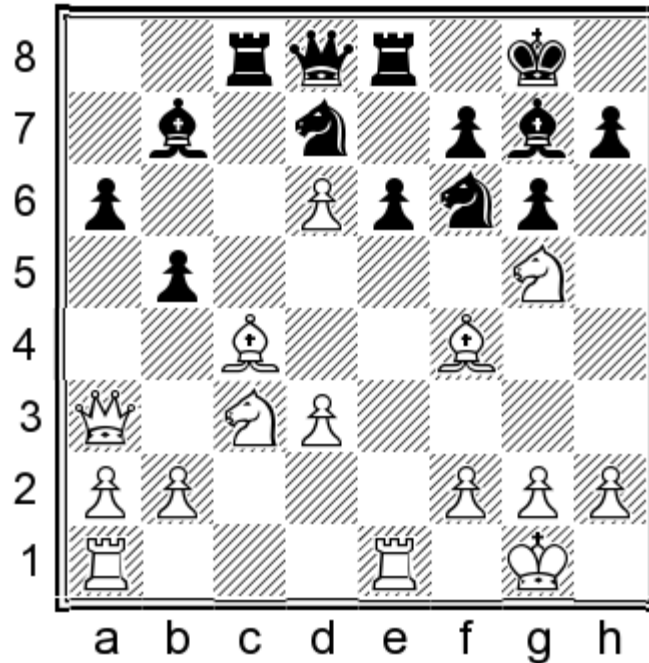
14.d6

Following 14.♔e3, Black's knight gains access to the e5-square. 14...♞e5 15.♞ad1 b5 16.♙b3 ♞xd5 17.♞xd5 ♙xd5 18.♞xa6 ♙xb3 19.axb3 ♞d5 20.d4 ♞g4 21.♞f3 ♞c2 22.♞a1 ♞a8 23.♞b1 ♞xb3. Owen – Noble, ICCF 2011. White's defence would be difficult, because Black's pieces have been deployed obviously more actively.

14...e6 15.♙f4

15.♞ge4?! ♞xe4 16.♞xe4 ♙xe4 17.♞xe4 b5 18.♙b3 ♞c5 19.♙e3 ♞xd6 20.♙xc5 ♞xc5. Demuth – Kreisl, Merlimont 2011. Black's bishop on g7 is evidently more active than its counterpart.

15...b5



16.♙b3

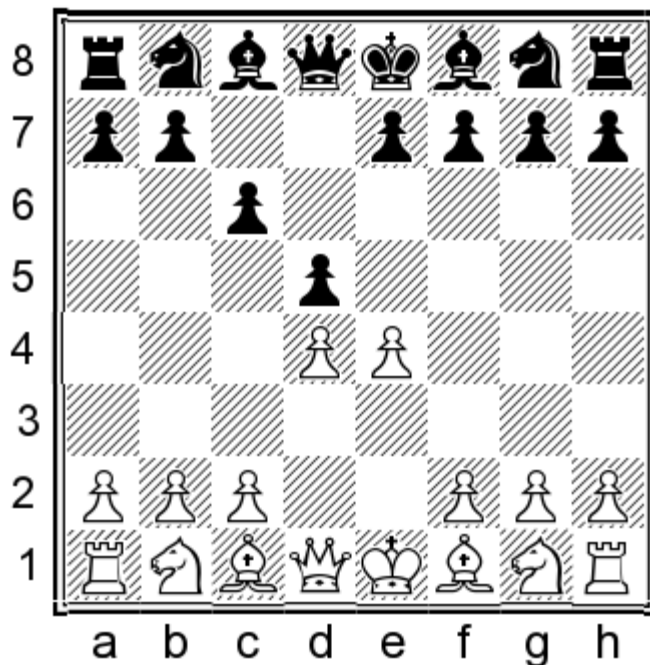
The seemingly attractive sacrifice on e6 leads to a very difficult position for White: 16.♙xe6?! fxe6 17.♞xe6 ♞b6 18.♞b3 ♞h8 19.♞xg7 ♞xg7. Snape – Radovanovic, Coulsdon 2007.

16...h6!? This is Black's simplest move. He ousts the enemy knight from its active placement. **17.♞ge4 ♞g4.** Black prepares a transfer of his knight to the centre of the board. **18.h3 ♞ge5 19.♙xe5 ♙xe5 20.♞ad1 ♞b6 21.♞b4,** Graziani – Schwarz, ICCF 2015, Black has good compensation for the pawn. **21...♙c6!?** The threat a6-a5 is very unpleasant for White. **22.d4 a5 23.♞a4 bxa4 24.♞xb6 ♞xb6 25.dxe5 ♙xe4 26.♙xa4 ♞xa4 27.d7 ♙d5 28.♞c1 ♞a8 29.dxe8=♞+ ♞xe8 30.b3 ♞b6.** Black's two minor pieces are stronger than White's rook and two pawns.

Part 2

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5

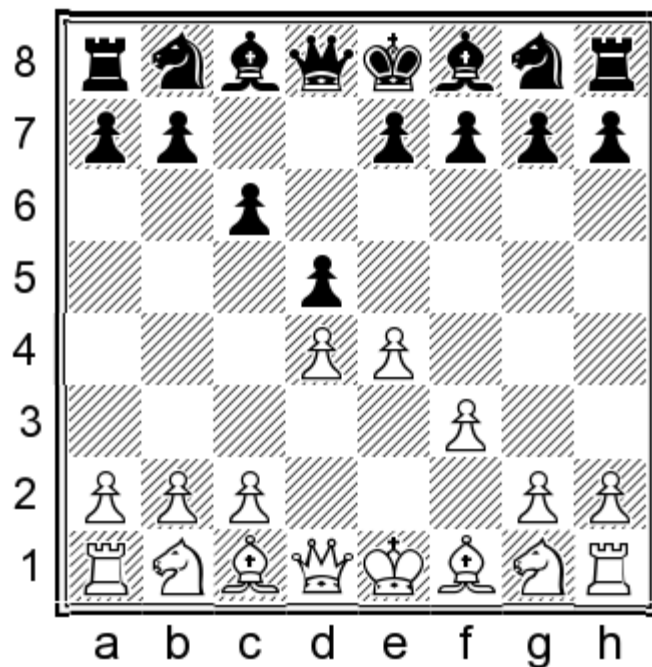
In this part of the book we will analyse the systems for White in which he plays 2.d4, but then, in response to 2...d5, refrains from the most popular move 3.♘c3.



At first, we will deal with the gambit system – Chapter 5 (3.f3). Chapters 6 and 7 will be devoted to one of the most dangerous lines for Black 3.e5 (The closed system), in which White occupies space and does not allow his opponent to simplify the position. In Chapter 8 we will analyse the exchange system – 3.exd5 cxd5 (without 4.c4). If White plays c4, there arises the Panov Attack and it will be dealt with in Chapters 9-11.

Chapter 5

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3

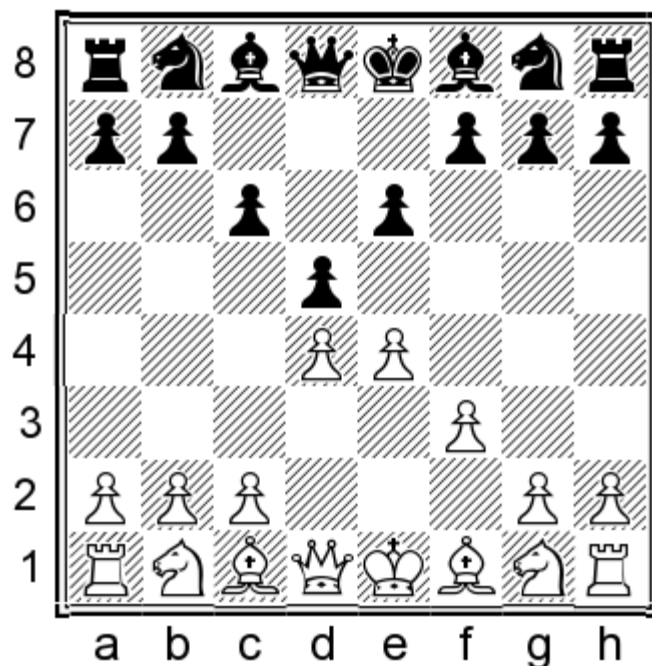


This rather old move was not enjoying good reputation for a long time, because it was considered that White's pawn on f3 was misplaced impeding the development of his knight on g1. Still, in the 21st century, Alexander Morozevich, Vasily Ivanchuk, Vadim Zvjaginsev and some other strong grandmasters began to play like this and the system with the move 3.f3 was enriched with numerous new ideas.

Black must play very accurately in this tremendously sharp system.

3...e6

This is a solid move. Black is waiting for the appearance of White's knight on c3 in order to play ♘b4 and is also threatening 4...dxe4 and 5...♝h4+.



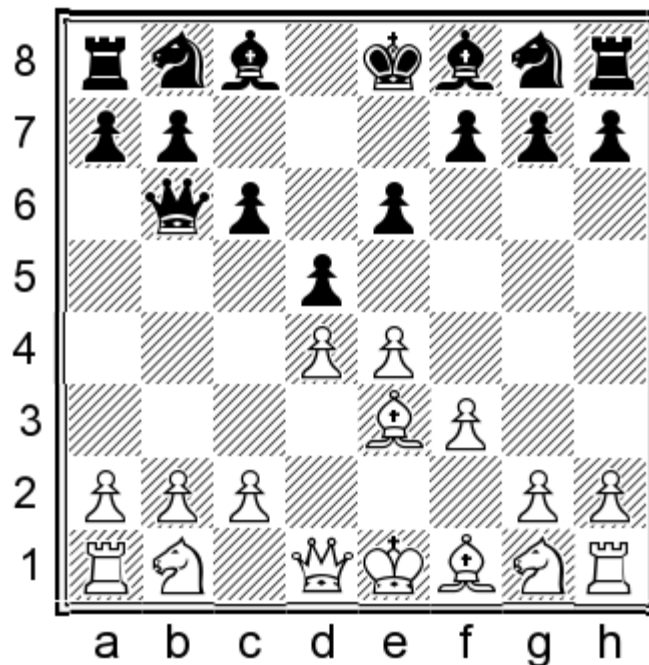
4.♘c3

This is White's most natural move. He develops a piece and parries the threat of capturing on e4 in the process.

4.a3!? This move has not been analysed sufficiently yet. White deprives his opponent of the possibility ♕b4, but later the move a2-a3 would hardly be so useful. Here, Black can simply capture a pawn: 4...dxe4 5.♗c3, Rozentalis – Urban, Warsaw 2012, 5...exf3!? 6.♗xf3 ♗f6∞ and White would still need to prove that he has sufficient compensation for it.

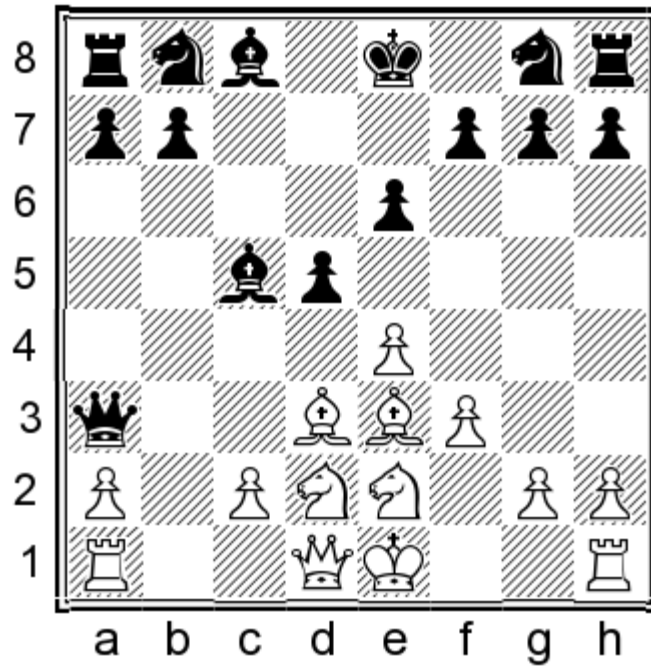
It is obviously bad for White to choose here 4.e5?!, because after 4...c5 there arises a position from the French Defence with an extra tempo for him, but a harmful move – f2-f3. 5.f4. He prepares the development of his knight to f3, but his pawn there would restrict the scope of action of his bishop on c1 (about 5.c3 ♗c6 6.f4 ♖b6 – see 5.f4). 5...♗c6 6.c3 ♖b6 7.♗f3 ♗h6! Black's knight is headed for f5 with the idea to increase the pressure against the d4-square. 8.♗d3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗d7 10.♗c2 ♗b4. White has more space, so Black should strive to exchange pieces. 11.0-0 ♗xc2 12.♖xc2 ♗f5 13.♖f2 h5 14.♗c3 ♖c8⚡ Shankovsky – Iakymov, Chervonograd 2009. Black's two powerful bishops promise him better prospects.

After 4.♗e3, Black's most reliable move is 4...♖b6!? (He does not need to accept the sacrifice of his opponent's central pawn, since following 4...dxe4 5.♗d2 exf3 6.♗gxf3 ♗f6∞, he will need to defend long and hard this position.)



About 5.♗d3 ♖xb2 6.♗d2 ♖a3 – see 5.♗d2.

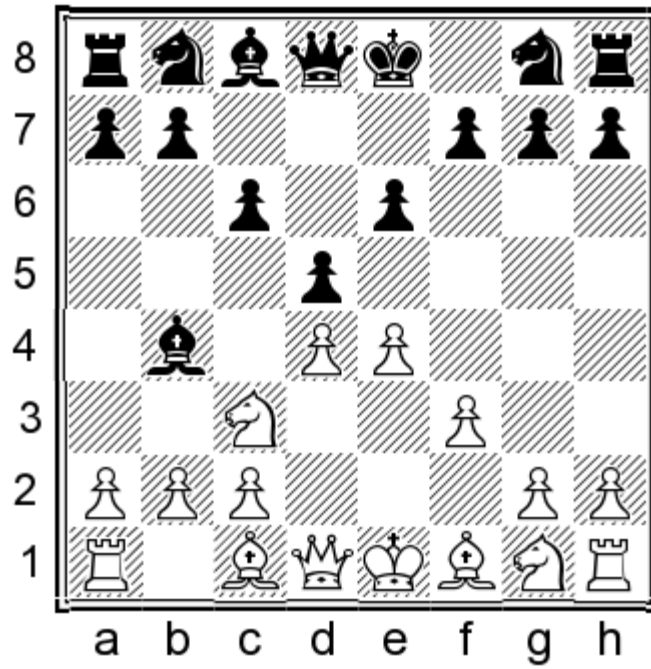
5.♗d2 ♖xb2. With this move Black not only wins a pawn, but also weakens his opponent's queenside. 6.♗d3 ♖a3. The placement of his queen on b2 however might become dangerous, so he should better think immediately about going with it to his own camp. In addition, from the a3-square the queen will support the pawn-advance c6-c5. 7.♗e2 (7.♗h3, Ivanisevic – Parligras, Kozloduy 2012, 7...♗f6!?) 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♗xc5



9.♘d4. White should better preserve the dark-squared bishops, because his attacking chances diminish with every exchange of a piece. 9...♙d7 10.exd5 exd5 11.♞2b3 ♜b6 12.0-0 ♞e7. Now, White must play very energetically; otherwise, he would not have compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 13.f4!? White is preparing a queen-sortie to the h5-square (13.♞e2 0-0). 13...0-0 14.♞h5! Now, in order to defend against the checkmate, Black must weaken his position. 14...f5 15.♞f3. Having provoked the weakening of the e5 and e6-squares, White's queen returns to his own camp. 15...♞a6 16.♞fe1 ♞ac8 17.♞e6! White continues to increase the pressure. 17...♞f6 18.♙xb6 axb6 19.♞ed4 ♞f7 20.♞e3 ♞g6 21.♞f3 ♞d6 22.g3 ♞c5. Cook – Grayland, ICCF 2015. White dominates over the d4 and e5-squares. Black's pawn-structure has been compromised, so White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

4...♙b4

As a rule, the move 4...♞f6 is played by Black only by those who use the French Defence, besides the Caro-Kann Defence, because after 5.e5 ♞fd7 6.f4 c5 7.♞f3, there arises transposition.



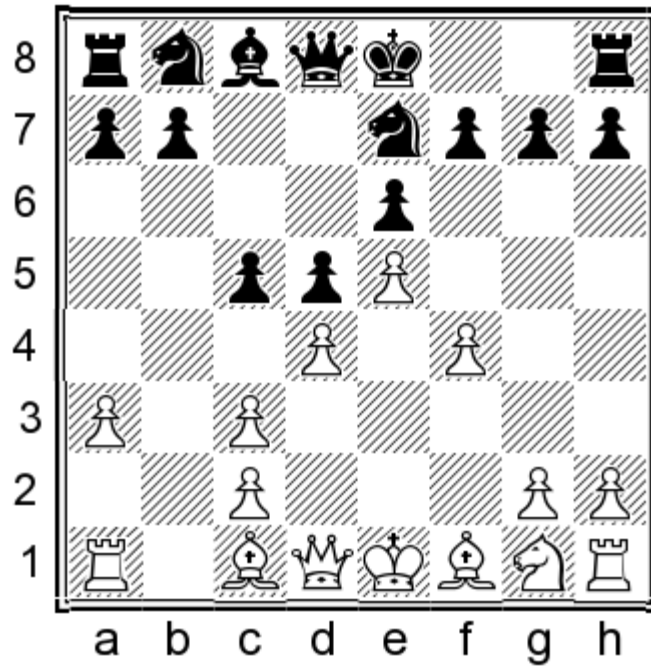
5. ♕f4

This is White's most popular move. He plans after ♖d3 to castle queenside.

After 5. ♕d3 dxe4 6. fxe4 ♜xd4 7. ♘f3, M.Zaitsev – Klamp, Solingen 2010, 7... ♕xc3+!? 8. bxc3 ♜xc3+ 9. ♕d2 ♜c5+, White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient.

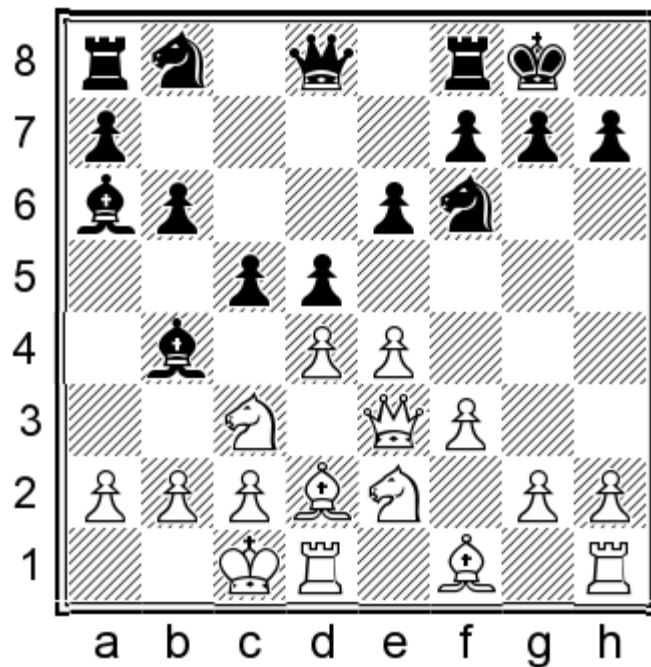
5. ♕e3 dxe4 6. a3 (6. fxe4 ♜h4+) 6... ♕xc3+ 7. bxc3 ♘d7 8. fxe4 ♜h4+ 9. ♕d2 ♜xe4+ Klip – Douven, Groningen 1993. If White had not lost his castling rights he would have sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit. Now, he would need to lose time to improve the placement of his king.

Following 5. e5 c5 6. a3 ♕xc3+ 7. bxc3, there arises transposition to the Winawer variation of the French Defence, except that White's pawn is on f3 and not on f2. This is obviously in favour of Black, since White can neither play ♜g4, nor develop his knight to the f3-square. 7... ♘e7 8. f4



White still wishes to develop his knight on f3, but now his bishop on c1 will be restricted not only by the pawn on a3, but also by the pawn on f4. The pawns on c3 and d4 are deployed on dark squares as well, so this bishop will have no good prospects in the middlegame. His other bishop is active, so Black should better think about exchanging it. 8...b6!? 9.♘f3 ♙a6 10.♙xa6 ♜xa6 11.0-0 ♝c8 12.♞d3 ♞b8= Wolfram – Sprenger, Feldkirchen 1998.

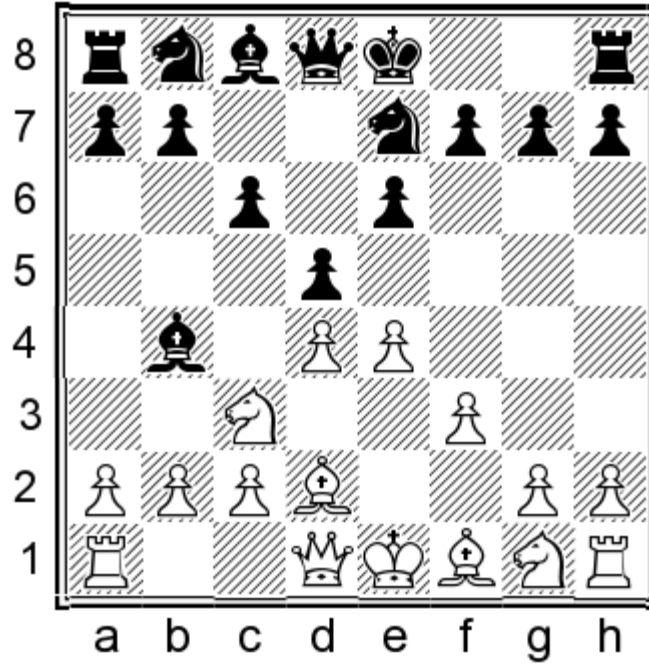
5.♞d3. It is a bit too early to determine the placement of the queen. 5...b6 6.♞ge2. White avoids the trade of the light-squared bishops. 6...♙a6 7.♞e3 ♞f6 8.♙d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 c5



Now, Black's knight can be developed to the c6-square. 10.a3, Nguyen Anh Dung – Le Quang Liem, Ho Chi Minh City 2010, 10...♙xe2!? Black exchanges an important defender of the d4-square. 11.♙xe2 ♙a5 12.♞f2 ♞c6 13.exd5 exd5 14.dxc5 d4 15.♞a4 ♙xd2+ 16.♞xd2 ♞d5 17.c4. White parries the threat ♞a2. 17...♞e6 18.cxb6 axb6 19.♞xb6. Black has sacrificed two pawns in his fight for the initiative. The active placement of his pieces however, compensates this fully. 19...♞a7 20.♙d1 (20.♙d3 ♞a5 21.♞d5 ♞xd5 22.cxd5 ♞b3+ 23.♙d1 ♞xd5 24.♞c2 ♞c5 25.♙c4 ♞f5= Black's

active pieces and the unsafe situation of his opponent's king compensate completely the sacrificed pawn.) 20...♖b8
 21.♗e1 ♜d6 22.♘a4 ♝ba8 23.♙b6 ♝b8= Here, White has nothing better than to repeat the moves, because after 24.♘d5?
 ♘xd5 25.cxd5, Black can sacrifice a rook, destroying the shelter of his opponent's king and beginning a decisive attack.
 25...♝xa3!→

5.♗d2. Now, Black cannot compromise White's queenside pawn-structure, but the bishop is not so actively placed on
 the d2-square. 5...♘e7

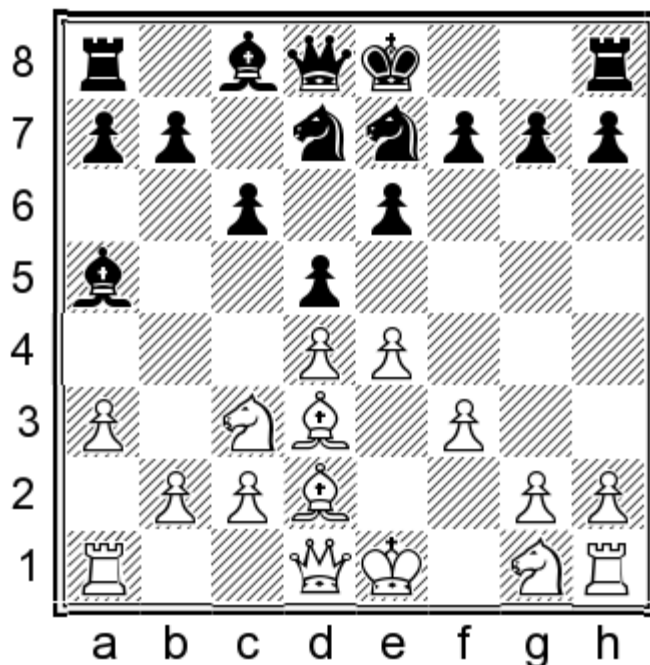


6.♞e2. White prepares castling queenside. 6...0-0 7.0-0-0, David – Magem Badals, France 1999, 7...b6!?∞, preparing
 ♗a6 and c6-c5. White will have problems to complete the development of his kingside pieces.

6.♗d3. The bishop on c8 is obviously less active than this bishop, so Black should better think immediately about
 exchanging it. 6...b6!? 7.♞e2 (7.f4, Cornette – Le Roux, Nimes 2009, 7...dxe4!? 8.♗xe4 ♜xd4∞) 7...a5 8.♘h3 ♗a6
 9.♘f2 0-0 10.a3 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♗xd3 12.♘xd3 ♘d7= Paichadze – Harutjunyan, Poti 2013.

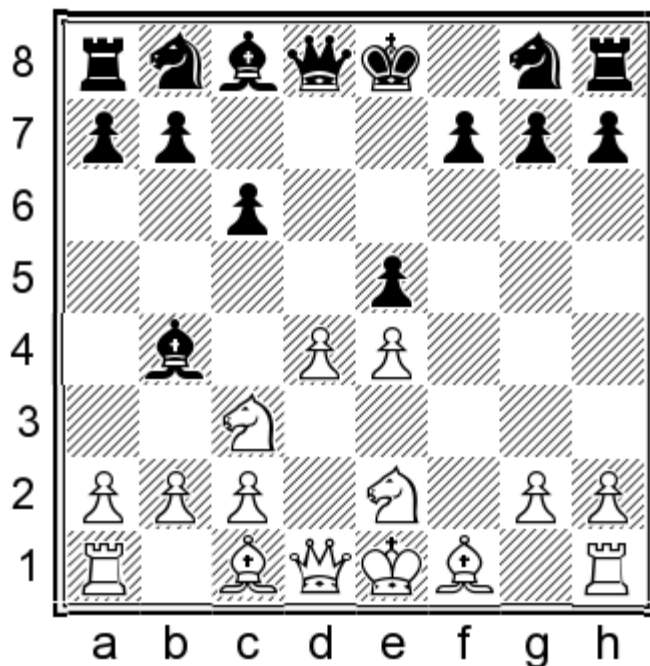
6.♘ce2. This move does not contribute to the development of White's pieces, but helps him to trade advantageously the
 dark-squared bishops. 6...♗xd2+ 7.♞xd2 ♘d7 8.e5, Nabaty – Gruenfeld, Haifa 2010. Black must try to solve
 immediately the problem with the development of his "bad" bishop. 8...b5!? He advances his queenside pawns,
 occupying space and preventing his opponent's castling queenside. 9.f4 a5 10.♘f3 ♞b6 11.♘g3 b4∞, followed by ♗a6.

With 6.a3 ♗a5, White can deprive his opponent of the possibility to play b7-b6, since that would lose a piece for him.
 Black has however another very good plan for actions, connected with the pawn-advances c6-c5, or e6-e5. 7.♗d3 ♘d7



8. ♖ge2 (Following 8.f4 c5 9.e5, Black's pieces can exert powerful pressure against the d4-square. 9...c4 10. ♗e2 ♘f5 11. ♘f3 ♗b6 12. ♗c1, Wilmes – Schneider, Germany 2013, 12...f6!?) 8...0-0 9.b4 (After 9.0-0 e5, it becomes evident that Black is very well prepared for the opening of the position in the centre. 10.exd5 exd4 11. ♘xd4 ♘e5 12. ♗e2 ♘xd3 13. ♗xd3 ♗b6 14. ♗h1 ♘xd5= Marcinkiewicz – Raykin, ICCF 2010. Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his bishop-pair.) 9...♗b6 10. ♘a4. White has impeded his opponent's pawn-advance c6-c5, but Black can inflict a strike against White's pawn-centre from the other side of the board 10...e5 11.c3 ♗c7 12.0-0 ♘g6 13. ♗c2, Timofeev – Deviatkin, Irkutsk 2010, 13...♘f6!?)

After 5. ♘ge2, Black can push e6-e5, but he would have to exchange in advance on e4. 5...dxe4!? 6.fxe4 (6.a3 ♗a5 7.fxe4 e5 – see 6.fxe4) 6...e5



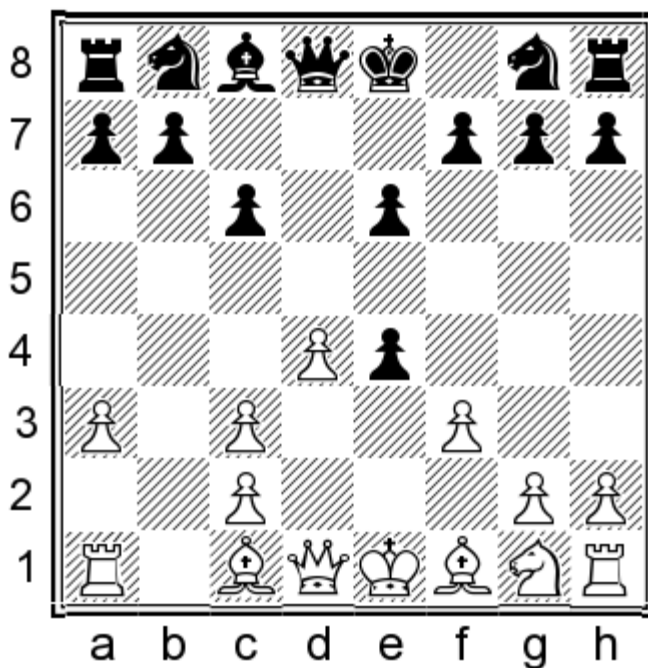
Black's plans include an exchange on d4 after which there would appear an isolated pawn in White's position and Black would obtain the excellent e5-square for his pieces.

7.♖d3, Nepomniachtchi – Dreev, Dagomys 2009, 7...exd4!? 8.♟xd4 ♟f6∞

7.♙e3 ♟f6 8.♞d3 0-0 9.0-0-0 ♟g4 10.♙g1 ♞g5+. This is a very useful check after which Black's queen will take part in the fight for the e5-square. 11.♜b1 exd4 12.♞xd4 ♙a5. This bishop is headed for the c7-square. 13.♞a4 ♙c7∞ Harreth – Bensaid, Budapest 2016.

7.a3 ♙a5 8.♙e3 (Following 8.♞d3 ♟d7 9.♙e3 ♟gf6 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.d5, Smagin – Brunner, Dortmund 1993, Black must continue with 11...♜b6!?) with an excellent game on the dark squares. 12.♙g5 h6 13.♙h4 ♟c5 14.♞c4 ♞d6=) 8...♟f6 9.♞d3 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♟g4 11.♙g1 exd4 12.♟xd4 ♞g5+ 13.♜b1 ♟e5. Black has realised completely his plan and White must try to equalise by exchanging pieces. 14.♟f3 ♟xd3 15.♟xg5 ♟e5 16.♙d4 ♟bd7∞ Kalezic – Motylev, Budva 2009.

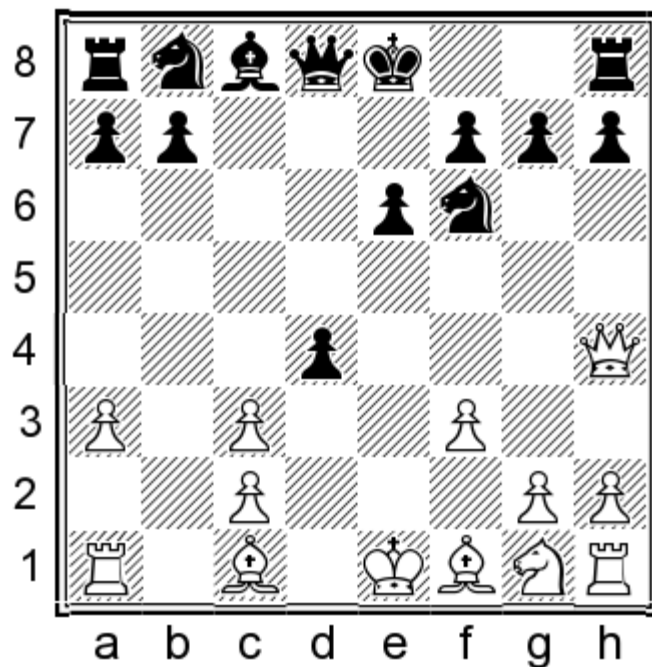
5.a3. This is White's sharpest move. He insists on sacrificing a pawn, but his compensation for it would hardly be sufficient. 5...♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 dxe4. This is the only move for Black; otherwise, he would be just worse.



7.♙e2 ♟f6 8.fxe4 ♟xe4 9.♞d3 ♞a5 10.♙b2, Ratkovitch – Bruedigam, Willingen 2003. Black has an extra pawn. In addition, he is not forced to remove his knight from the centre of the board: 10...f5!?, followed by ♟d7-f6.

7.♟h3. White is preparing ♟g5. Still, the manoeuvres with his knight take too much time. 7...♞a5 8.♙b2 c5 9.♟g5 exf3 10.♟e4 f2+! This is the most unpleasant move for White. Now, he must either lose his castling rights, or remove his knight away from the d6-square. 11.♜xf2 ♟d7 12.♞g4 cxd4 13.♙d3 ♞e5 14.cxd4 ♟gf6! With this precise move Black manages to simplify advantageously the position. 15.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 16.♞h4 ♞h5 17.♞xh5 ♟xh5 18.♙e2 ♟f6∞ Flude – Krimbacher, ICCF 2015. White has two powerful bishops in this endgame indeed, but this does not compensate fully the sacrificed pawn.

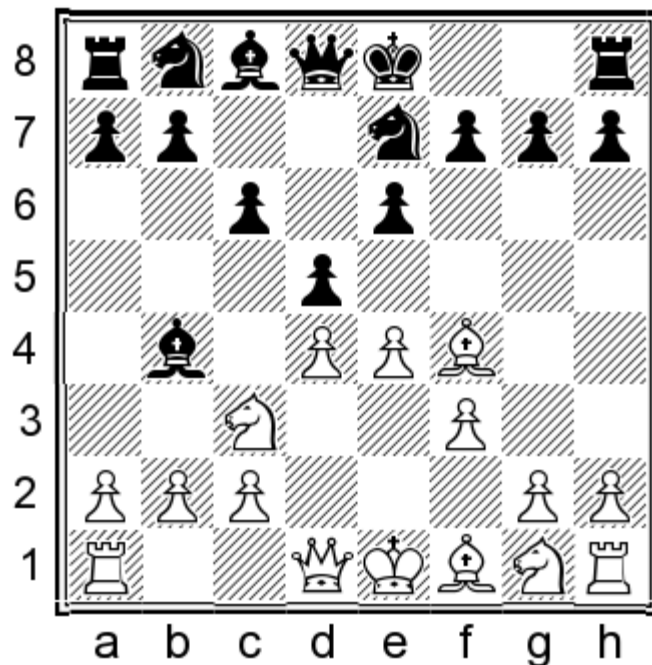
7.♞e2. White is waiting for the exchange on f3 in order to develop his knight on g1. 7...c5! Black does not hold on to his material advantage and wishes to organise quickly active counterplay. 8.♞xe4. White's queen will be attacked with tempo on this square. (8.♞e3 ♟c6 9.dxc5 ♞a5 10.♙d2 ♟f6 11.fxe4 0-0. Now, White has extra material, but his pawn-structure has been seriously compromised. 12.h3 ♟d7 13.♟f3 ♞xc5∞ Aharon – Lintchevski, St Petersburg 2013. Black has restored the material balance preserving all the pluses of his position.) 8...♟f6 9.♞h4 cxd4



10.cxd4 (After 10.♔d3, Bosiocic – David, Trieste 2015, 10...dxc3!? 11.♖e2, it would be very risky for Black to castle, since White's pieces exert powerful pressure against the h7-square. Therefore, he must play 11...♗bd7 12.♘xc3 ♖e5, either exchanging the enemy bishop on d3, or forcing it to go away from the b1-h7 diagonal.) 10...♗c6 11.c3 (11.♖e2 0-0) 11...e5. Black wishes to exploit his lead in development, so he opens the game. 12.♖e2 exd4 13.♗xd4, Ward – Steiger, ICCF 2007, 13...♔a5!? 14.♔d2 0-0 15.♔e2 ♖e8. Black's pieces are very active and White cannot evacuate his king away from the centre due to the insufficient protection of his bishop on e2.

5...♖e7

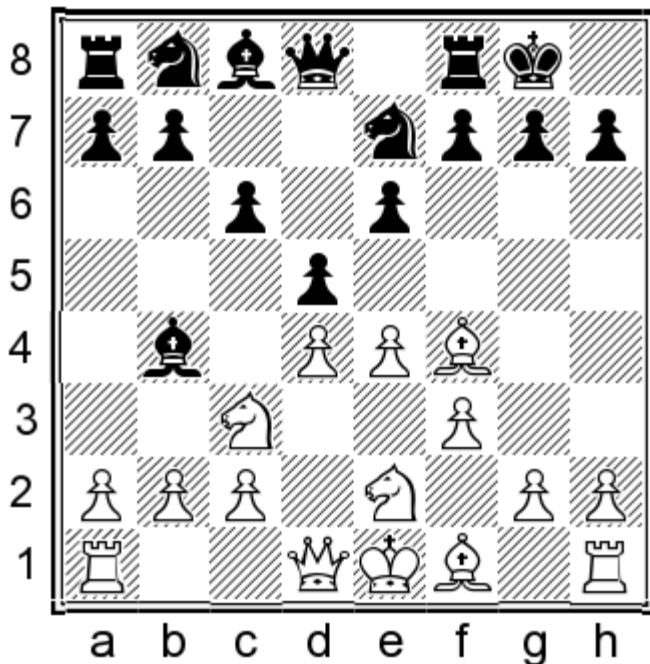
Black's knight will not be so active on this square as on f6, but White will not manage to advance e4-e5 with tempo.



6.♗d3

About 6.♖d2 0-0 7.♗ge2 ♗d7 – see 6.♗ge2.

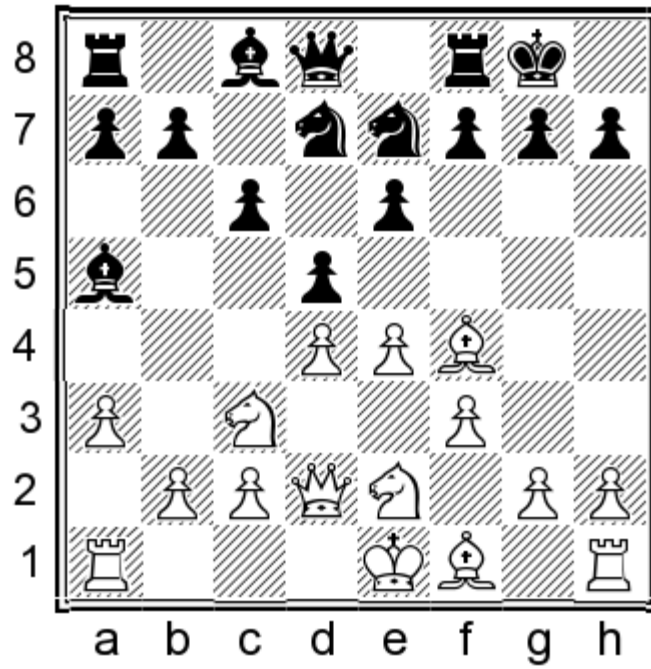
Following 6.a3, White obtains the two-bishop advantage indeed, but weakens considerably his pawn-structure. 6...♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 0-0 8.♙d3, Mas – Antonio, Yangon 1998, 8...♗d7!? Black is preparing c6-c5. 9.♗e2 c5 10.exd5 exd5 11.dxc5. Without this move, Black will simply trap the enemy bishop with the move c5-c4. 11...♗xc5 12.0-0 ♙f5!?∞ 6.♗ge2 0-0



About 7.♖d3 b6 8.0-0-0 ♙a6 9.♖e3 c5 – see 6.♖d3.

After 7.a3 ♙a5, Black's plan, connected with b6+♙a6, becomes impossible, but the pawn-advance a2-a3, enables Black to develop his initiative on the queenside with b7-b5-b4. 8.♖d3 (8.♖d2 ♗d7 – see 7.♖d2) 8...♗d7 9.0-0-0 (9.♙d6, Murey – Kharitonov, Moscow 1989, 9...b5!?) 9...b5 10.h4 (10.♗a2. White's knight will be very passive at the edge of the board. 10...♙c7 11.♗b1 a5± Kotronias – Aggeletos, Anogia 2014.) 10...b4 11.axb4 ♙xb4 12.♗a2, Beshukov – Adianto, Biel 2003, 12...a5!?) Black is not afraid of 13.c3, because he can counter it with 13...♙a6! 14.♖c2 c5! 15.cxb4 axb4+ White's king is horribly weak and his knight is absolutely misplaced at the edge of the board, so his position is hopeless.

7.♖d2 ♗d7 8.a3 (8.♙g3. The transfer of this bishop to the h4-square seems rather slow. 8...b5 9.♙h4 ♗b6 10.b3, Andreikin – Menkinovski, Struga 2012, 10...f6!?) 8...♙a5

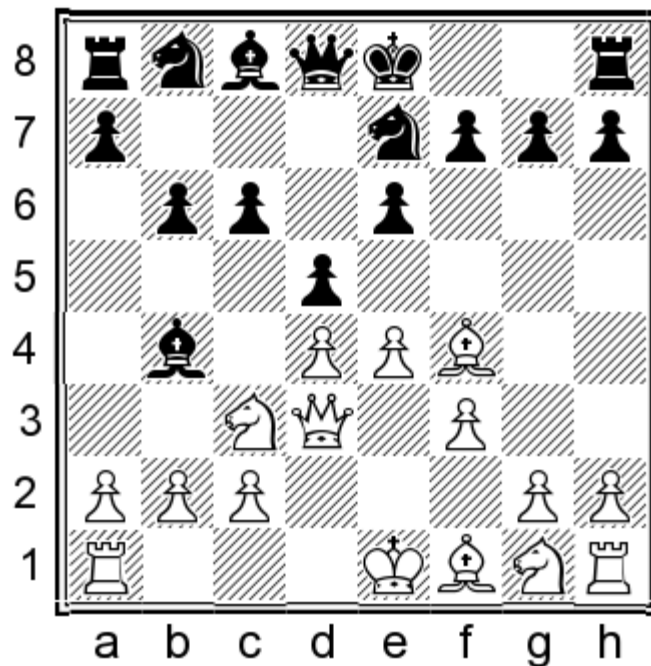


Following 9.e5 c5 10.dxc5, White will fail to hold on to his central e5-pawn. 10...♙c7 11.♘d4 ♙xe5 12.♙xe5 ♘xe5 ♞ Gallagher – Khenkin, Geneve 1995.

9.g3 c5= Watson – Sigfusson, Reykjavik 1989.

9.♙g3 b5. Now, if White castles queenside, Black will manage to attack immediately with the move b5-b4. 10.h4 (10.♘c1 ♙b6 11.b4. White has prevented reliably the pawn-break c6-c5, but has lost too much time for that and after 11...a5 12.♘b3 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1+ 14.♘xa1, Minasian – Asrian, Yerevan 2001, 14...e5!?, it turns out that he is not well prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.) 10...b4 11.axb4 ♙xb4 ♞ Pancevski – Bogdanovski, Skopje 2010.

6...b6



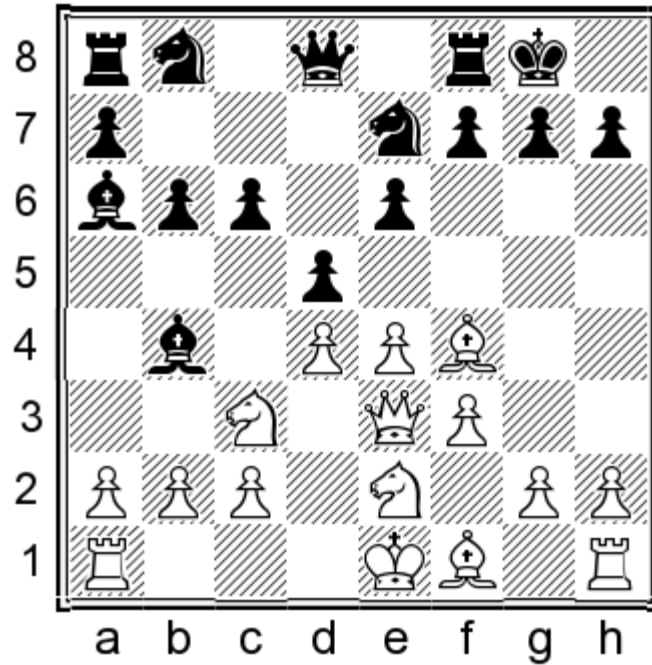
7.♘ge2

7. ♕e3. White removes his queen in advance against the possible attack by the enemy bishop, but this move does not contribute to the development of his pieces and is a loss of time. 7...0-0 8.0-0-0, Priyadharshan – Thejkumar, Mumbai 2011, 8...c5!?

7... ♗a6

Black develops his bishop with tempo.

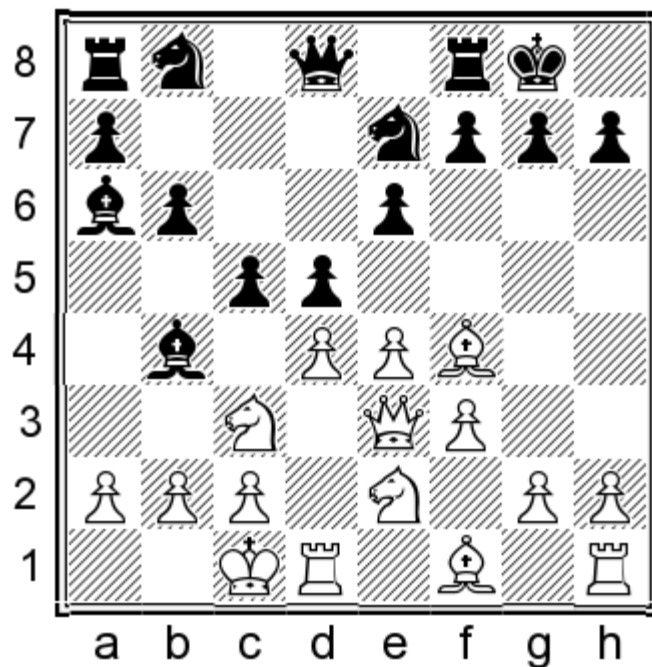
8. ♕e3 0-0



9.0-0-0

Following 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10. ♖xc3 ♗xf1 11. ♖xf1 c5, it is only White who might have problems, since he is not likely to hold on to the d4-square. 12. ♗e2 ♗bc6 13.0-0-0 cxd4 14. ♗xd4 e5 15. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 16. ♗g3 d4 17. ♕d3 ♕e7∞ Yu Yangyi – Parligras, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011. Black has more space and he can prepare the doubling of his rooks on the c-file. So, in order not to end up in an inferior position, White must try to prepare the pawn-break f3-f4.

9...c5



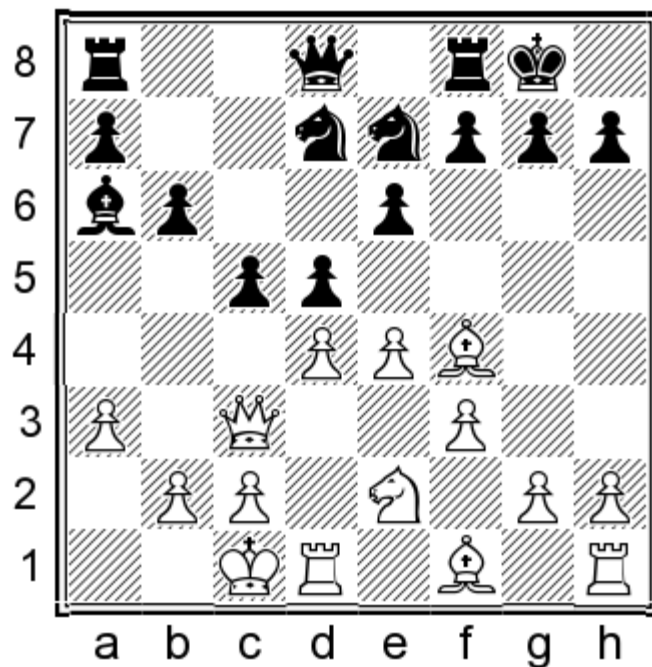
10.a3

After 10.exd5 ♖xe2 11.♗xe2 ♖xc3 12.♚xc3 ♘xd5, Black's powerful centralised knight compensates White's two-bishop advantage. 13.♚d2 ♘c6. Black exerts pressure against the d4-pawn and forces an exchange on c5, after which he obtains good attacking prospects against the enemy king. 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♗c4 (15.♗g3 ♚b6∞) 15...♚b6 16.c3 ♜fd8 17.♗g3, Hynes – Krebs, ICCF 2008, 17...♘a5!? 18.♗d3 c4 19.♗e4 ♚b5 20.♞he1 ♘c6= If White's bishop did not control the b8-square, Black could have played ♞ab8, maintaining an advantage. Now, the position is approximately equal.

10...♗xc3 11.♚xc3

About 11.♘xc3 ♗xf1 12.♞hxf1 ♘bc6 13.♘e2 cxd4 – see 9.a3.

11...♘d7



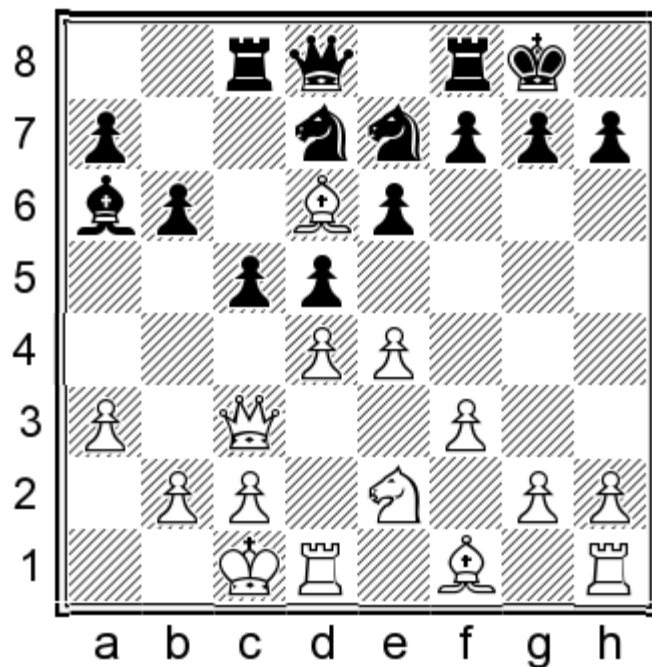
12. ♘d6

This move might look dangerous at first sight, but it does not contribute to the development of White's pieces and might lead to difficulties for him.

After the prophylactic move 12. ♖b1, Nepomniachtchi – Andreikin, Dagomys 2010, it seems very good for Black to continue with 12... cxd4!? 13. ♗xd4 ♘xf1 14. ♖hx1 e5 15. ♗c6 ♗xc6 16. ♗xc6 d4 17. ♘g3 ♖c8 18. ♗b5 ♗e8=

Following 12. ♘g3, Black may refrain from waiting until White's knight is removed from the e2-square and transfer his bishop to b7 in order to increase his control over the central squares. 12... ♗b7!? 13. ♗e3 ♖c8 14. h4 a6 15. h5 cxd4 16. ♗xd4 e5 17. ♗d2 h6. Black should not allow h5-h6, because this would lead to a considerable weakening of his king when his dark-squared bishop is absent from the board. 18. ♖b1 b5 19. ♗c1 ♗c7 20. exd5 ♗xd5 21. ♘d3 ♗7b6∞, followed by ♗c4, Polsterer – Napalkov, ICCF 2013. The activity of Black's minor pieces compensates White's two-bishop advantage.

12... ♖c8

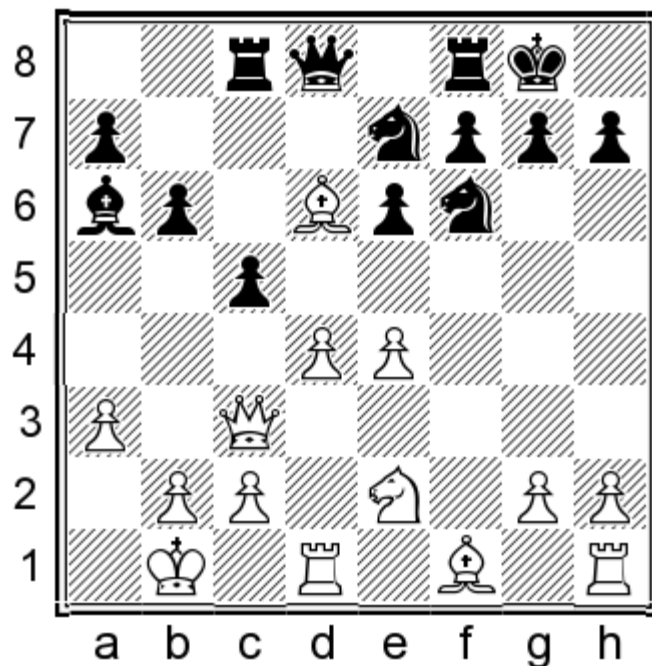


13.♠b1

White should possibly think already about equality exchanging pieces and simplifying the position: 13.♠xe7!? ♜xe7 14.exd5 ♠xe2 15.♠xe2 exd5= Drachev – Lugovskoy, Kazan 2013.

After 13.♘f4 ♠xf1 14.♙hxg1 cxd4 15.♚xd4 ♘c5, the threat ♘b3 would be very unpleasant for White. His attempt to exchange the knight immediately 16.♠xc5?! would only increase his difficulties, because Black would advance his pawns quickly occupying additional space. 16...bxc5 17.♚a4 d4 18.♚xa7, Nepomniachtchi – Shimanov, Dagomys 2010, 18...♚d6!? 19.♘d3 c4 20.♘b4 e5 21.♚a6 ♚c5

13...dxe4 14.fxe4 ♘f6



You can see now the negative consequences of White's move 11. His bishop on d6 and pawn on e4 are hanging.

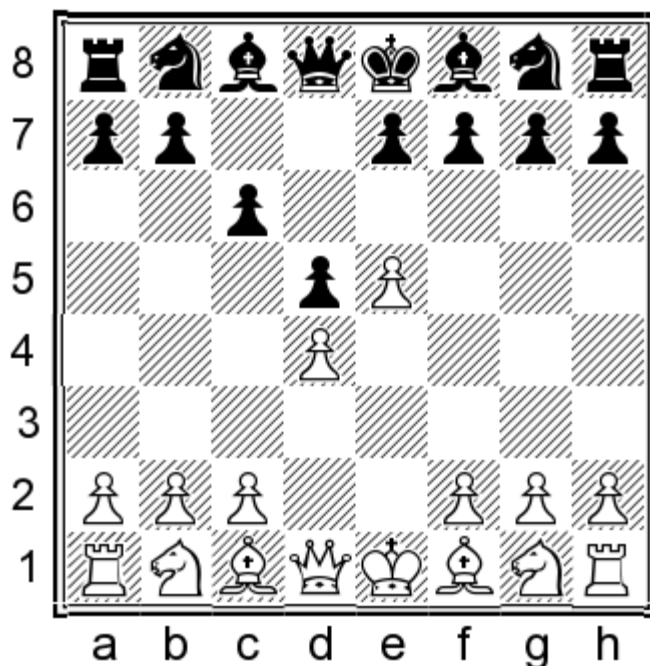
15. ♖g3

15. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 16. ♞e3 ♞fd8 ♞ Rusche – Gledura, Graz 2015.

15... ♖xf1 16. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 17. ♞hxf1 cxd4 18. ♞xd4 ♞c7 ♞ Eryshkanova – Schepetkova, Moscow 2016. Black's superior pawn-structure provides him with a stable advantage.

Chapter 6

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5



White occupies space with this move and impedes the natural development of Black's pieces and particularly of his knight to f6. Besides that, White avoids exchanges. Therefore, the move 3.e5 is often chosen when he is playing for a win.

There is an interesting story to tell about the Closed system. It was very popular at the beginning of the past century, but White did not play it in the best possible way. The point is that having a space advantage, White should avoid exchanges of pieces. Therefore, the variation, which was popular then – 3...♟f5 4.♞d3 ♟xd3 5.♞xd3, seemed rather anti-positional. Black found quickly reliable ways of equalising. We have to mention here the manoeuvre, introduced into the tournament practice by Aron Nimzowitsch – ♞d8-a5(b6)-a6. After this the Closed system lost its adherents and was considered to be unattractive for White. Later however, starting in the 90ies of the last century, mostly thanks to the efforts of Nigel Short, White found interesting ideas to fight for the advantage, mostly connected with not exchanging the light-squared bishops, but the fastest possible development of the kingside with ♜f3, ♞e2, 0-0.

3...c5!?

This is an interesting move. Black sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. What is even more important, he avoids the main line 3...♟f5, against which White has more than ten 10(!) different responses. In fact the players with Black should have excellent memory in order to learn all these variations.

We will analyse now A) 4.c4, B) 4.♞f3 and C) 4.c3.

Accepting the pawn-sacrifice 4.dxc5 will be dealt with in the next chapter.

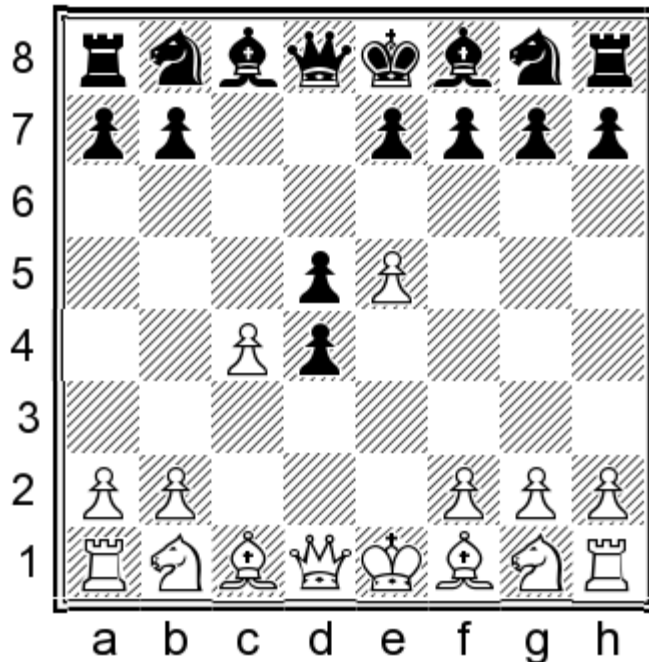
4.♞e2 cxd4 5.♞xd4 ♞c6 – see 4.♞f3.

A) 4.c4

White is trying to open the game in the centre, but all his first four moves were made with pawns, so he has no lead in

development.

4...cxd4



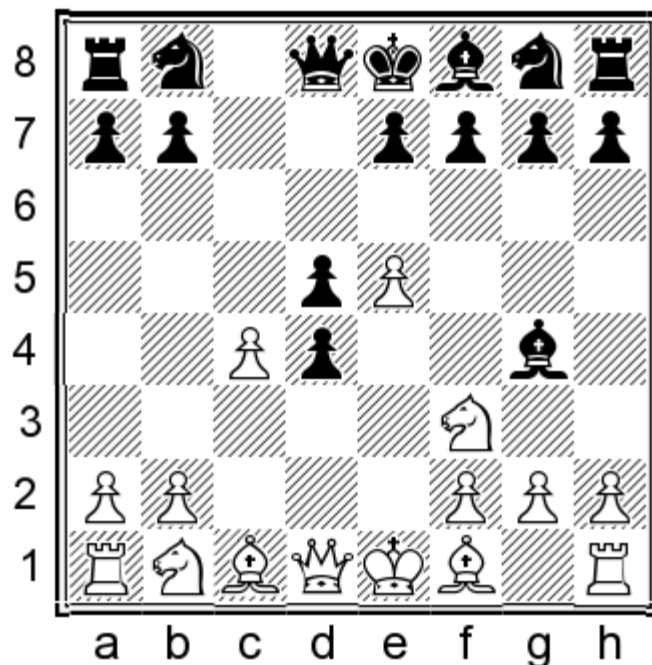
5.♘f3

5.♘e2 e6 6.♗xd4 ♗c6 – see 4.♗f3.

Following 5.♗xd4, White's queen is rather unstable at the centre of the board. 5...e6 6.cxd5 ♗c6 7.♙b5 (After 7.♗a4 exd5 8.♙b5, Black parries easily White's pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal. 8...♙d7 9.♗f3 a6 10.♙xc6 bxc6 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗c3 ♗g6∞ Black has the two-bishop advantage and in order to complete his development he only needs to make two more moves: ♙d7 and 0-0, Cuccumini – Sanchez Fernandez, ICCF 2016.) 7...♗xd5 8.♗xd5 exd5 9.♗f3 a6 10.♙a4 ♙g4 11.0-0 ♙c5. The endgame seems to be approximately equal, because Black has no problems with the development of his pieces and his only weak d5-pawn is protected easily. There might follow: 12.♗bd2 ♗ge7 13.h3 ♙h5 14.♗b3 ♙a7 15.♗bd4 0-0 16.♙e3 b5 17.♙d1. Here, in the game Milde – Khan, LSS 2013, Black could have obtained quickly complete equality by exchanging some pieces 17...♙xf3!? 18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 19.♙xf3 ♗xe5 20.♙xd5 ♗ad8 21.♙xa7 ♗xd5 22.♗fd1 ♗fd8 23.♗xd5 ♗xd5 24.b3 ♗d3 25.♙e3 f5 26.g3 ♗b4=

5...♙g4

Black develops his bishop to an active position and deprives his opponent of the possibility ♗d4.



6.cxd5

The cramping pawn-sacrifice 6.e6, Nijboer – Zelcic, Turin 2006, cannot create any serious problems for Black. In addition, White must play very precisely not to end up in a very bad position. 6...fxe6!? 7.♖a4+ ♘c6 8.♗xd4 ♜b6 9.♙e3 e5 10.cxd5 exd4 11.dxc6 0-0-0. Black evacuates his king away from the centre. 12.♙d2 ♜xc6 13.♜xc6+. White lags in development and his king is still in the centre, so he cannot continue his attack and is forced to enter an endgame. 13...bxc6 14.♙a6+ ♗d7 15.♙f4 ♗h6 16.♗d2 (It is worse for White to play here 16.♙e5?!, because of 16...♗f7 17.♙xd4 ♗c7+ and the removal of the bishop from the d-file would lead to a checkmate.) 16...♗f7 17.♗c4 e5. Black gives back his extra pawn, but completes the development of his kingside. 18.♗xe5+ ♗xe5 19.♙xe5 ♞e8 20.f4 ♙d6 21.0-0 ♙xe5 22.fxe5 ♞xe5 23.♞f4 ♙e6 24.♞xd4+ ♗c7=

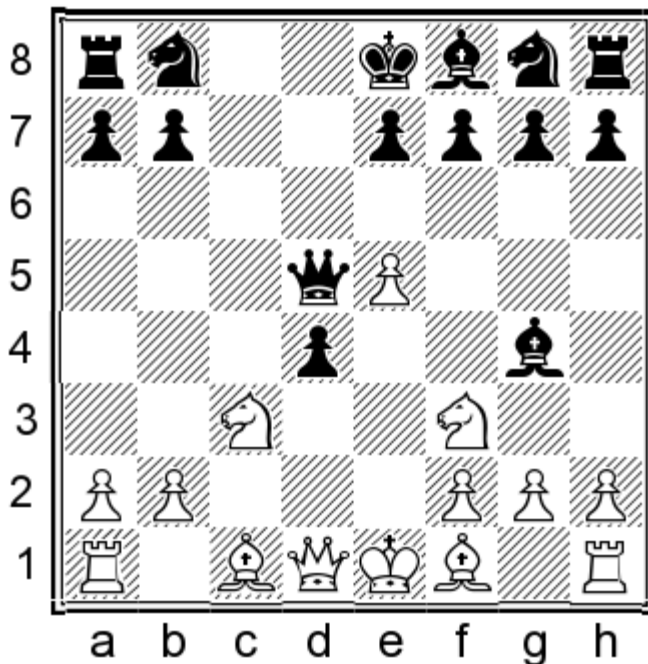
6.♜b3. White is threatening to capture on b7. It is not recommended to develop the queen so early in the game and quite deservedly so. 6...♙xf3 7.♜xb7 (7.gxf3, Bodnaruk – Schepetkova, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, 7...♜c7!?=) 7...♗d7 8.gxf3 e6 9.cxd5 ♞b8 10.♜xa7 ♙b4+ 11.♙d2 ♗xe5∞ The position is still within equality, objectively speaking, but White's game is much more difficult, because his kingside pawn-structure has been compromised and he can hardly find a safe haven for his king. 12.♙e2 ♗e7 13.♜xd4 ♗7c6 14.♜e3 ♙xd2+ 15.♜xd2 exd5 16.f4 ♗g6 17.f5 ♗h4+ Lahdenmaeki – Huuskonen, ICCF 2010. White has lost too much time on moves with his queen. He has an extra pawn indeed, but is faced with a very difficult defence.

The move 6.♜xd4 enables Black to weaken his opponent's pawn-structure. 6...♙xf3 7.gxf3 ♗c6. He sacrifices his central pawn for the initiative. (Black obtains a very good position too with the line: 7...e6!? 8.cxd5 ♗c6 9.♙b5 ♜xd5 10.♜xd5 exd5 11.♗c3, Patil – Povill Claros, Barbera del Valles 2016, 11...0-0-0!?)∞ In this endgame White's two-bishop advantage is compensated by Black's more elastic pawn-structure.) 8.♜xd5 ♜c7 (8...♗d4!?)=) 9.f4 e6 10.♜e4 0-0-0∞ White has an extra pawn, but his game is difficult, since his king is stranded at the centre of the board and he must be constantly on the alert about the possible enemy knight-sortie on d4. For example: 11.♗c3?! f5! 12.♜b1. Capturing on f6 would enable Black to develop his knight on g8 with tempo, but now, the weakening of the h1–a8 diagonal becomes a telling factor. 12...♗d4 13.♙e3, Najer – Fridman, Netanya 2009, 13...♗f3+!? 14.♗e2 ♗h4+ White cannot parry simultaneously the threats ♜xc4 and ♜c6-f3.

6.♜a4+ ♙d7 7.♜b3 dxc4 8.♙xc4 e6 9.♗xd4 ♗c6 10.♗xc6 ♙xc6 11.♙b5 (Following 11.0-0 ♜a5 12.♙f4 ♗e7, the pressure against the e5-pawn, combined with the excellently placed bishop on c6 make already Black's position slightly

preferable. 13.♖d1 ♗g6 14.♙g3 ♙e7 15.♘c3 0-0= Versili – Benassi, ICCF 2009.) 11...♙c5. Black wishes to complete his development as quickly as possible. 12.♙xc6+ bxc6 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♘d2 0-0 15.♘f3 ♖b6∞ The active placement of Black's pieces compensates the slight weakness of his queenside pawns, Khairullin – Landa, Sochi 2007.

6...♖xd5 7.♘c3



7...♖a5!?

This move seems more reliable for Black than 7...♙xf3. Now, he must find numerous good moves in order to equalise. 8.♘xd5 ♙xd1 9.♘c7+ ♗d7 10.♘xa8 ♙c2 11.♙d2 ♘c6 12.♖c1 d3 13.h4! White wishes to play ♖h3 and ♙xd3, in order to capture the cramping enemy pawn. 13...e6 14.♖h3 ♗ge7 15.♙xd3 ♙xd3 16.♖xd3+ ♘d5 17.b4! White must be in a hurry, otherwise, Black will capture the enemy knight on a8, which is roaming inside his camp and will obtain an advantage. 17...b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.b5 ♘xe5 20.♖c7+ ♗d8. White's pieces are so active that Black can hold the position with practically only moves. 21.♖xd5+ (There arises a much more complicated position after 21.♖d4 ♙d6 22.♖xa7 ♙c5 23.♙a5+ ♗c8 24.♖xd5 exd5 25.♘b6+ ♙xb6 26.♙xb6 ♖e8 27.♗d1 ♘c4 28.♙d4∞ Black's powerful passed a-pawn, which is also an extra pawn, should compensate White's active rook, deployed on the penultimate rank, Kosteniuk – Girya, Geneve 2013.) 21...exd5 22.♖xa7 ♘c4 23.♘b6 ♘xb6 24.♙a5 ♗c8 25.♙xb6 ♙b4+ 26.♗d1 a3. Now, once again, Black should base his hopes on his powerful passed a-pawn. 27.♖a8+ ♗b7 28.♖xh8 ♙c3 29.♙a5 ♙f6 30.♖f8 a2. Black's pawn is now just a step away from promotion, so White must force a draw by a perpetual check. 31.♖xf7+ ♗b8 32.♖f8+ ♗b7 33.♖f7+ ♗b8 34.♖f8+ ♗b7= Najer – Khairullin, Loo 2014.

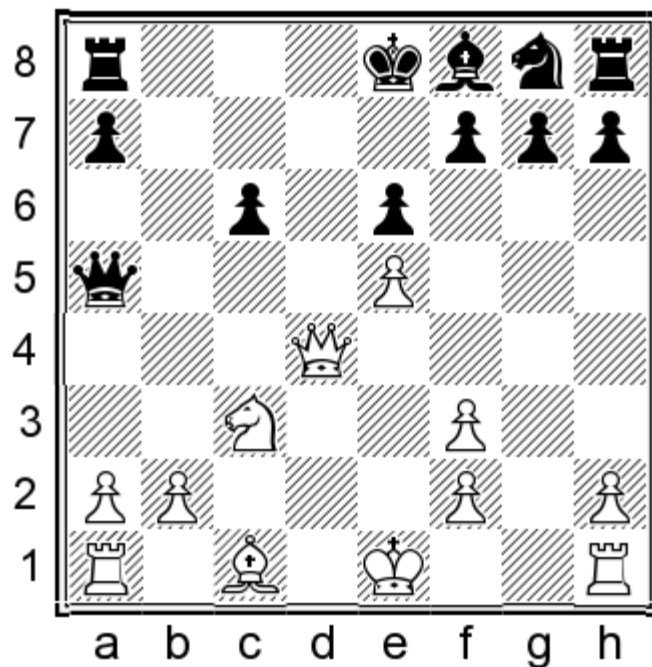
8.♙b5+

8.♖d4 ♙xf3 9.gxf3 ♘c6 10.♙b5 ♖xb5 11.♘xb5 ♘xd4 12.♘d4 a6 13.♙e3 e6= Bak – Tyton, England 2012.

8...♘c6 9.♙xc6+

9.♖xd4 ♙xf3 10.gxf3 ♖xb5 – see 8.♖xd4.

9...bxc6 10.♖xd4 ♙xf3 11.gxf3 e6



White has compromised his enemy pawn-structure on the queenside, but Black will do the same to his opponent on the kingside.

12.♙e3

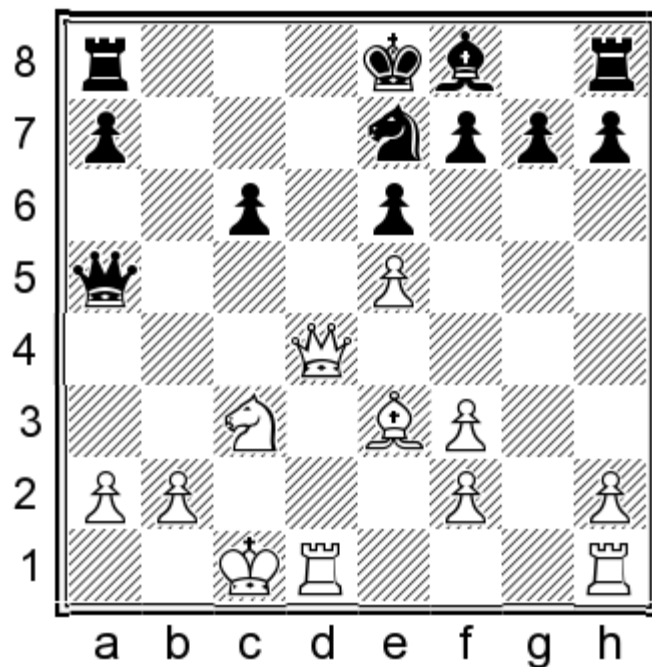
Following 12.♙g5, Black obtains a good position after a transfer of his knight to the f5-square. 12...♞e7 13.0-0 ♞f5 14.♚e4 ♜c8 15.♞fd1 ♙e7 16.♙xe7 ♞xe7 17.b4 ♚c7∞ Chigaev – Bernadskiy, Yerevan 2015.

12.♙d2, Zhang Zhong – Megaranto, Jakarta 2011, 12...♞d8! 13.♞e4. There arises an endgame in which Black's prospects would not be worse. 13...♞xd4 14.♙xa5 ♞d5 15.♙c3 ♞h6=, followed by ♞f5, ♙e7, ♞d7.

12.0-0 ♞e7 13.♞d1 ♞d8 14.♚xd8+ ♚xd8 15.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 16.♙e3, Iordachescu – Zelcic, Dresden 2003, 16...♞c7! Black sacrifices his weak a7-pawn and creates good counter chances against the enemy pawn on e5. 17.♙xa7 ♞g6 18.♞e1 ♙b4 19.a3 ♙xc3 20.bxc3 ♞d8∞ Now, due to the threats ♞d3 and ♞d5-a5, White will be incapable of holding on to his extra pawn.

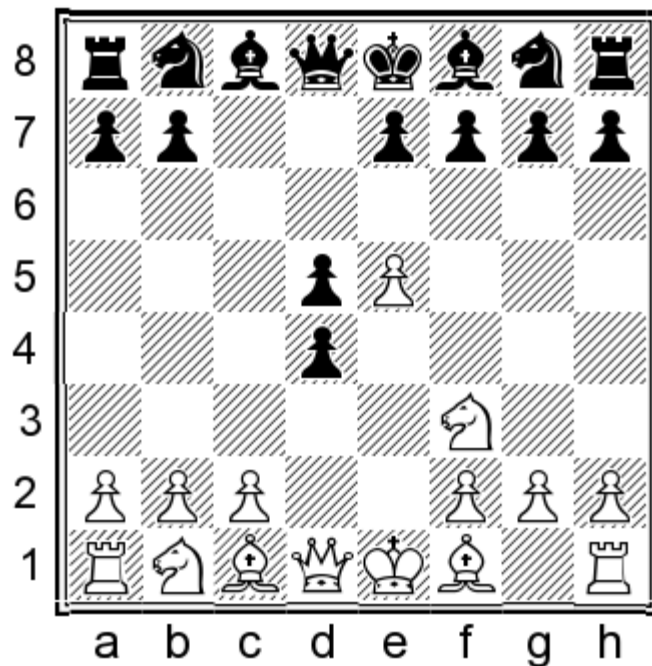
12...♞e7 13.0-0-0

13.0-0 ♞f5 14.♚c4 ♜c8 15.f4 ♙e7= Ni Hua – Kazhgaleyev, Sydney 2015.



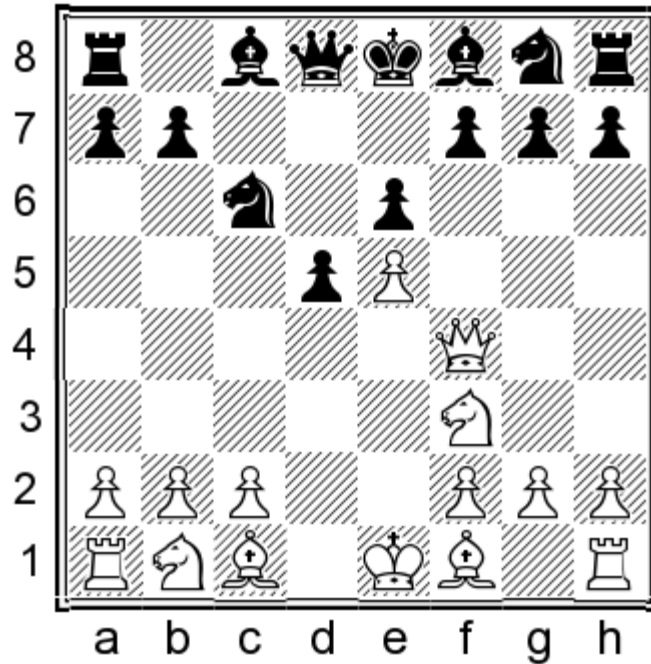
13...d5 14.c4 c8 15.dxd5 exd5 16.g4 b8 17.e6 f6. White's pawn on e6 seems very powerful, but Black can gradually equalise after an accurate play. 18.c2 d6 19.d2 (19.c3xg7 b2+ 20.c2xb2 b4= White's king cannot avoid the perpetual check.) 19...b7 20.c1 c5 21.f4 0-0 22.e2 cxe2 23.cxe2 c7 24.f5 c5 25.h4 f8 26.c2 h5 27.c3 a5 28.f4 a4 29.d1 d8 30.c1 f8= Belka – Gburek, ICCF 2016. White obviously cannot improve his position.

B) 4.f3 cxd4



5.cxd4

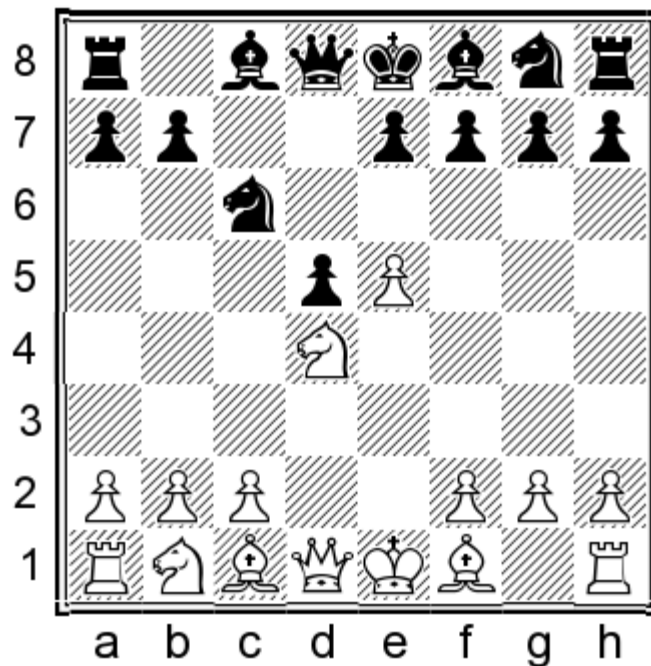
After 5.cxd4, Black wins a tempo for the development of his knight 5...c6 6.f4 e6



The move 7.a3 looks rather passive. 7...♖ge7 8.♙d3 ♗g6. White has already difficulties with the protection of his e5-pawn and after 9.♙xg6 hxg6, Black obtains the two-bishop advantage, Kroes – Salas Romero, LSS 2009.

7.♙d3 ♗b4!? Black wishes to trade the powerful enemy bishop. He has to lose plenty of time on manoeuvres with his knight indeed, but this is not so important, because the position is closed. 8.0-0 ♗xd3 9.cxd3 ♙d7 10.♗c3 ♗e7. Black prepares a transfer of his knight to f5. 11.♗g5 ♗f5 12.g4. White ousts the enemy knight from its active position, but weakens his king's shelter. 12...♗h6 13.♙e3 ♙e7 14.♗f3 0-0 15.♖g3 ♜c8 16.♖h3 f6. Black sacrifices a pawn and opens the position for his bishops. 17.♙xh6 gxh6 18.♖xh6 fxh6 19.♗xe5 ♙g5 20.♖h3 ♙e8 21.♗f3 ♜c7, preparing the transfer of his rook to the g7-square, Fritsche – Tyulenko, ICCF 2012.

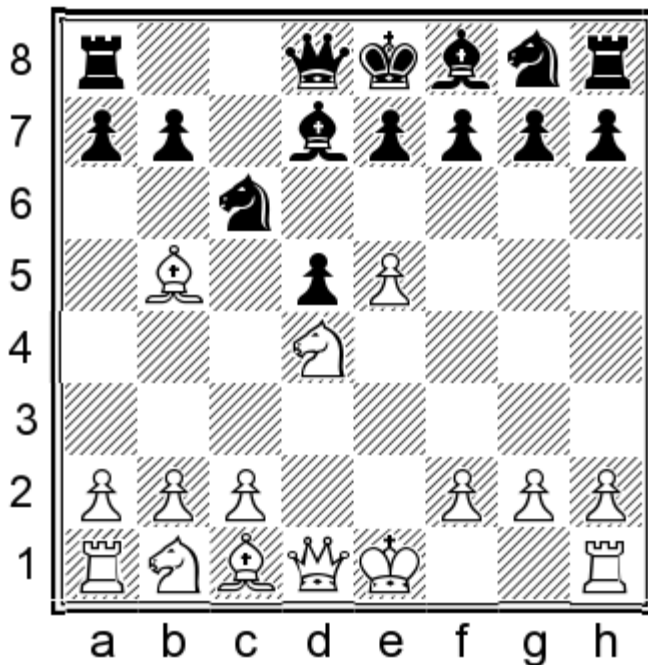
5...♗c6



6.c4

Following 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♙d3, Black must combine the development of his kingside pieces with active actions on the queenside. 7...e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.c4 ♗g6 10.♖e2, Karjakin – Short, Kiev 2008 (10.f4, Nisipeanu – Kiik, Fuegen 2006, 10...♙e7!?) 10...♙a6!? 11.♗c3 ♖b8. Black is waiting for 12.f4, in order to develop his bishop with tempo. 12...♙c5+ 13.♙h1 0-0=

6.♙b5 ♙d7



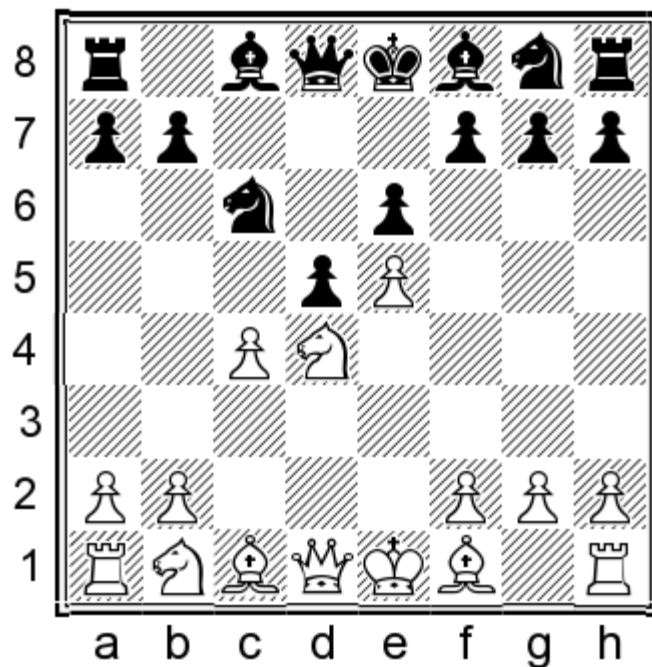
7.♗c3 e6 8.0-0 ♗ge7!∞ Allemant – Hadet, Avoine 2009.

7.e6. This pawn-sacrifice seems too risky. 7...fxe6 8.♙xc6 bxc6 9.0-0 ♖c7 10.f4 c5 11.♗f3, Conquest – Arkell, North Shields 2012, 11...g6!?! The dominance over the e5-square does not compensate the sacrificed pawn for White.

7.♗xc6 ♙xc6 8.♙xc6+ bxc6 9.0-0 e6. Two couples of minor pieces have been exchanged, so White's space advantage is not important anymore. Black only needs to complete his development in order to equalise. 10.c4 ♗e7 11.♖a4 ♖d7 12.♗d2 ♖b8 13.b3 ♗c8 14.♙a3 (14.♖d1 ♗b6 15.♖a5 dxc4 16.♙b2 cxb3 17.axb3 ♗d5 18.♗e4 ♙e7 19.♖d3, Sutovsky – Speelman, Esbjerg 2001 and here the simplest way for Black to solve his defensive problems would be the move 19...♙b4!?) Black gives back the extra pawn and transfers into an endgame. 20.♖xa7 ♖xa7 21.♖xa7 0-0=) 14...♗b6 15.♖a5 ♙xa3 16.♖xa3 ♖e7. Now, Black will manage to castle. 17.♖a5 0-0 18.♖ac1 ♖bc8 19.b4 c5!. He sacrifices a pawn and activates considerably his knight on b6. 20.cxd5 ♗xd5 21.bxc5 ♗f4 22.♖c2 ♖g5 23.g3 ♗e2+ 24.♙g2 ♖xe5. Black restores the material balance. 25.♗f3 ♖e4 26.♖d2 g5! He exploits the pin of the enemy knight and equalises easily. 27.c6 f6 28.♖a6, Siigur – Dolgov, ICCF 2008. Here, the simplest decision for Black would be 28...g4!?, forcing a transfer into a drawish endgame with four rooks on the board. 29.♖xe2 ♖xe2 30.♖xe2 gxf3+ 31.♙xf3 ♖xc6=

6...e6

Black protects his central pawn and prepares ♙b4 and ♗ge7.

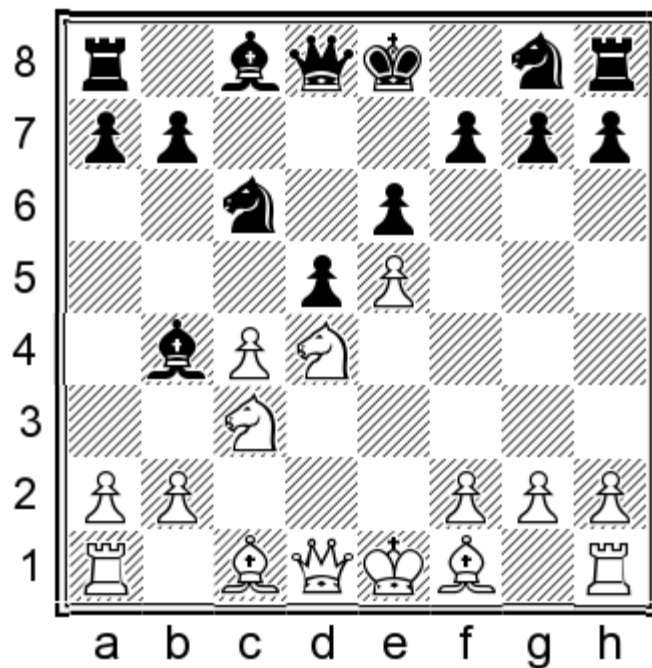


7. dxc3

7. cxd5 Wxd5 8. dxc6 bxc6 9. We2 , Kharchenko – Ijin, Alushta 2009, 9... de7!?

7. dxc6 bxc6 8. dxc3 (It is better for White to play here 8. cxd5 Wxd5 – see 7. cxd5 ; following 8. d3 , he does not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn. 8... dxc4 9. dxc4 Wa5+ 10. dxc3 Wxe5+ 11. e3 d5 . Black not only prepares castling kingside, but also wishes to trade his opponent's powerful dark-squared bishop. 12. Wa4 de7 13. Wa5 d4 14. Wxe5 dxe5 Tomazini – Aschenbrenner, Graz 2009. White has no compensation for the pawn.

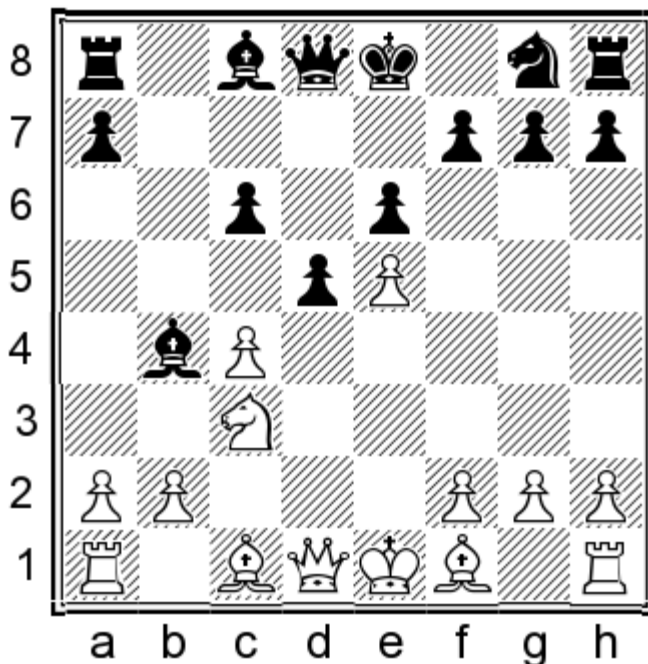
7... d3



8. ♖xc6

8.cxd5 ♖xd5 9. ♖xc6 bxc6 10. ♗e2 (The move 10. ♗xd5 would only improve Black's pawn-structure. 10...exd5 11. ♕d3 ♜e7= Ferrari – Ellis, ICCF 2015.) 10...♜e7 11. ♕d2 ♗c5 12.a3 (12. ♖d1 0-0= Priepke – Gburek, ICCF 2016) 12...♕xc3 13. ♕xc3 ♜d5. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but Black's knight has occupied a powerful outpost at the middle of the board. Therefore, White must exchange his bishop on c3. 14. ♖c1 (The move 14. ♗c4 would weaken White's queenside pawn-structure. 14...♗xc4 15. ♕xc4 ♜xc3 16.bxc3 ♜e7= Clough – Wilson, ICCF 2015.) 14...0-0 15. ♗d2 ♜xc3 16. ♗xc3 ♗d5 17.f3 ♖b8 18. ♕c4 ♗d8 19. ♕d3 g6= Vlasveld – Gburek, ICCF 2016.

8...bxc6



9. ♗a4

9.cxd5 ♗xd5 – see 8. cxd5.

9. ♗g4 d4 10.a3 ♕f8 11. ♜e2 c5∞

After 9. ♕d3 ♜e7 10.0-0, Black can play 10...♕a6!?, solving the problem with his “bad” light-squared bishop. 11.cxd5 ♕xd3 12. ♗xd3 ♕xc3 13.bxc3 cxd5 14. ♕a3 0-0 15.c4. White must get rid of his weak pawn as quickly as possible; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position. 15...♖e8= Schoen – Mayer, DESC 2011.

9...a5 10.cxd5

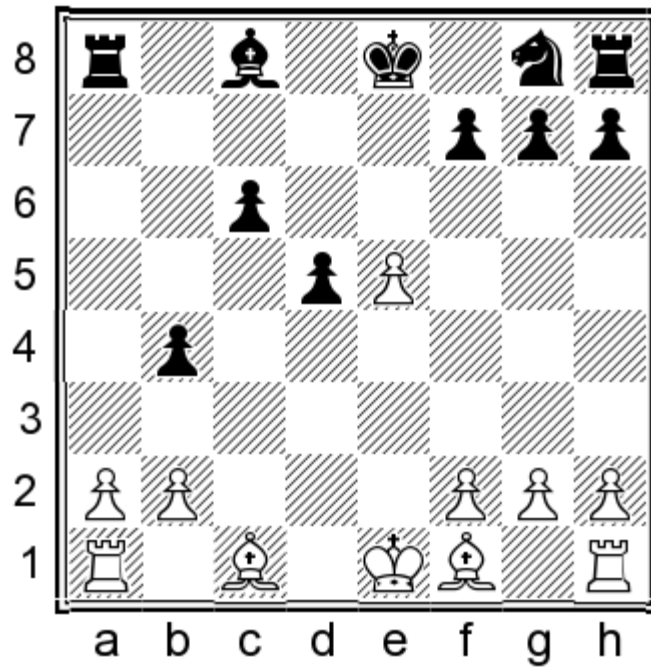
It does not seem so logical for White to play here 10.a3, since he only forces his opponent to compromise his pawn-structure. 10...♕xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♜e7 12. ♕d3 ♕a6= Sanchez – Valsecchi, Milan 2012.

10...♗xd5 11. ♗xb4

Now, there arises an approximately equal endgame on the board.

After 11.f4, Black's simplest reaction would be 11...♜e7!?, followed by ♗d7 and ♜d5.

11...axb4 12. ♜xd5 exd5



13.♔e3

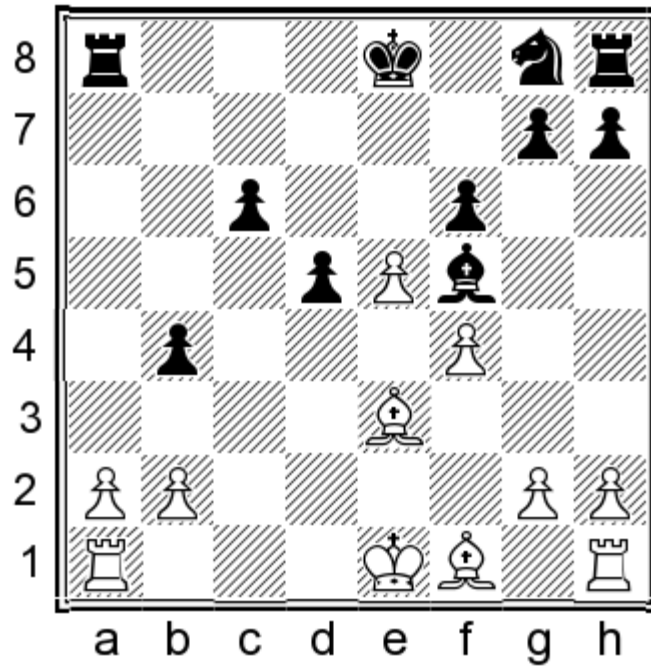
White prevents c6-c5.

After 13.♔d2 c5 14.b3 ♘e7 15.♖c1, Black can try an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 15...0-0 16.♗xc5 ♗xa2 17.♔xb4 ♔f5. White lags in development. 18.♗c7 ♗c8. Black exchanges the active enemy rook. 19.♗xc8+ ♘xc8 20.♔c5 ♘a7. He improves the placement of his knight. 21.b4 ♘c6 22.f4 ♗b2 23.b5 ♘d8 24.♗g1 ♘e6, draw, Zavrzhnov – Morozov, ICCF 2016. There might follow 25.♔a3 ♗b3 26.g4 ♔e4 27.♗g3. White has managed to activate his rook at the price of the f4-pawn. 27...♗b1+ 28.♕f2 ♘xf4 29.♗e3 ♘g6 30.♗e1 ♗b3 31.♗e3 ♗b1=

13...f6

White's e5-pawn cramps Black's position, so he wishes to exchange it.

14.f4 ♔f5

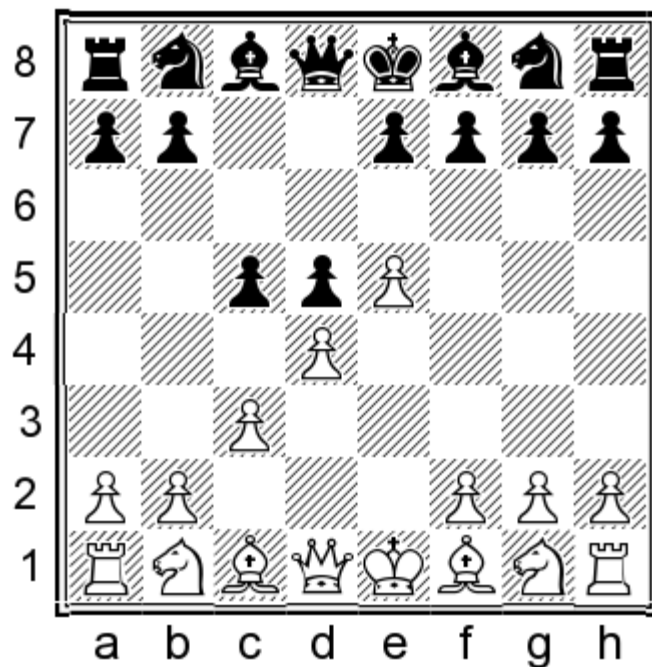


15. ♖e2

15. ♖c5. White's attempt to win the b4-pawn would take too much time. Black succeeds in creating pressure against the e5-pawn and will manage later to capture it. 15... ♔d7 16. ♖xb4 (16. ♖e2 fxe5 – see 15. ♖e2) 16... fxe5 17. fxe5 ♘h6 18. ♖e2 ♜hb8 19. ♖c3 c5 20. e6+. Without this move, Black would have played d5-d4. Still, the win of the g7-pawn would not bring anything to White. 20... ♖xe6 21. ♖xg7 ♘g4 22. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 23. 0-0 d4 24. b3 ♖e6 25. g3 ♜b7 26. ♜fe1 ♖h3 27. ♖f6 ♔d6 28. ♜ac1 ♜xa2 29. ♖e5+ ♔d5= Grabove – Lackey, ICCF 2014.

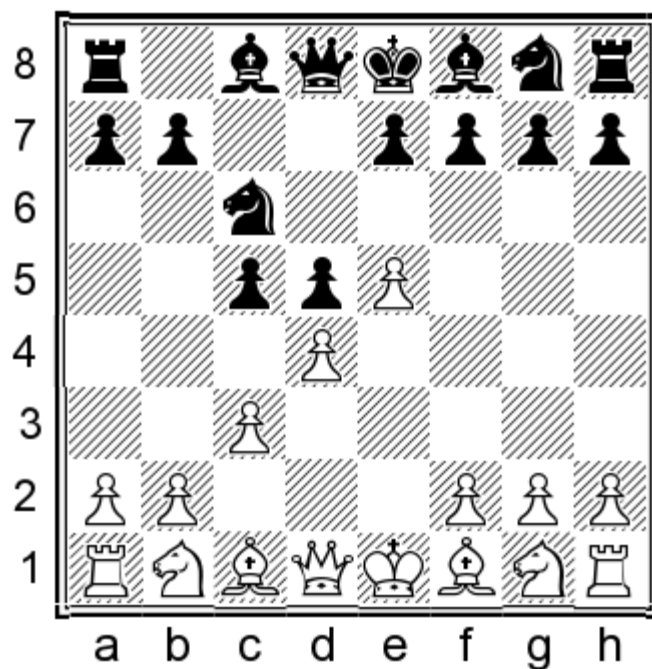
15... ♔d7 16. ♖c5 fxe5 17. fxe5 ♘h6 18. 0-0 ♜he8 19. ♖xb4 ♜xe5. White has the two-bishop advantage, but there is just a few material left on the board. In addition, Black's pieces are very active. 20. ♖f3 ♖d3. Black's bishop will be very active on this diagonal, preventing the promotion of the enemy a-pawn. 21. ♜f2 ♘f5 22. a4 g6 23. a5 h5 24. h3 ♔c7 25. ♖c5 ♜ae8 26. ♔h2 ♜e1 27. ♜xe1 ♜xe1 28. g4 hxg4 29. hxg4 ♘e3. The position has been simplified even more. 30. b4 ♔b7 31. ♔g3 ♔a6= Habermehl – Gburek, ICCF 2016. White's passed pawn has been reliably blocked.

C) 4.c3



This move is a bit passive. Instead of fighting for the initiative White begins defending and protects his d4-pawn. He has no chances of obtaining an advantage in the opening playing like this.

4... ♖c6



5. ♕e2!?

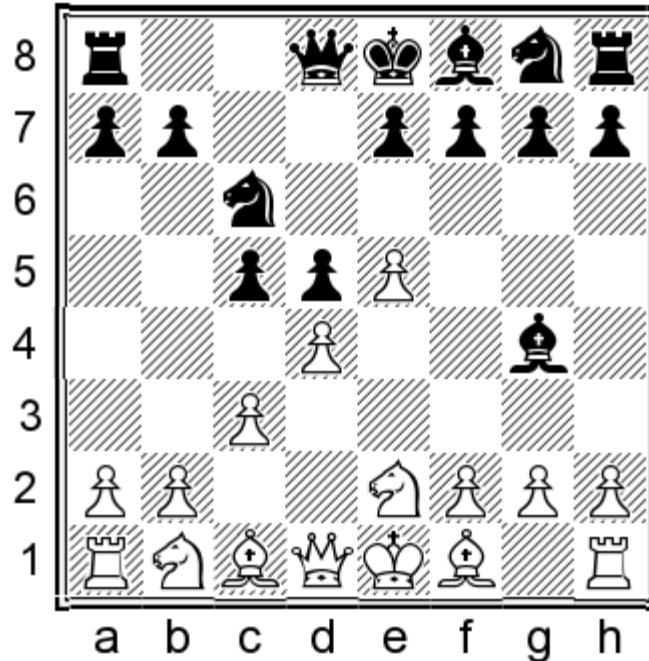
White is not in a hurry to develop his knight on f3, in order not to allow the enemy bishop-sortie ♗g4.

5. ♖a3. White continues to play rather patiently. He wishes to try ♖c2, increasing the protection of the strategically important d4-square. 5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♕f5 7. ♕d3 ♕xd3 8. ♖xd3 e6 9. ♖e2 ♕b4+ 10. ♕d2 ♖ge7 11.0-0 0-0 12. ♖c2 ♕xd2 13. ♖xd2 ♖c8= Xie Jun – Karpov, Monte Carlo 1996.

5.h3. White wants to play h3 , without being afraid of g4 . This move however, may turn out to be a loss of a tempo later. $5... \text{cxd4}$ $6. \text{cxd4}$ f5 $7. \text{h3}$ e6 $8. \text{c3}$ b4 $9. \text{d3}$ ge7 = Welz – Weyers, Berlin 2010.

$5. \text{f4}$ cxd4 $6. \text{cxd4}$ h6 $7. \text{c3}$ g4 $8. \text{e2}$ e6 $9. \text{fxg4}$ h4+ . Black regains his piece and obtains a very good position. $10. \text{g3}$ fxg4 $11. \text{fxg4}$ hxg4 = Olofsson – Hofstetter, Switzerland 2002.

$5. \text{h2}$. The knight will impede the development of White's kingside pieces on this square $5... \text{g4}$.



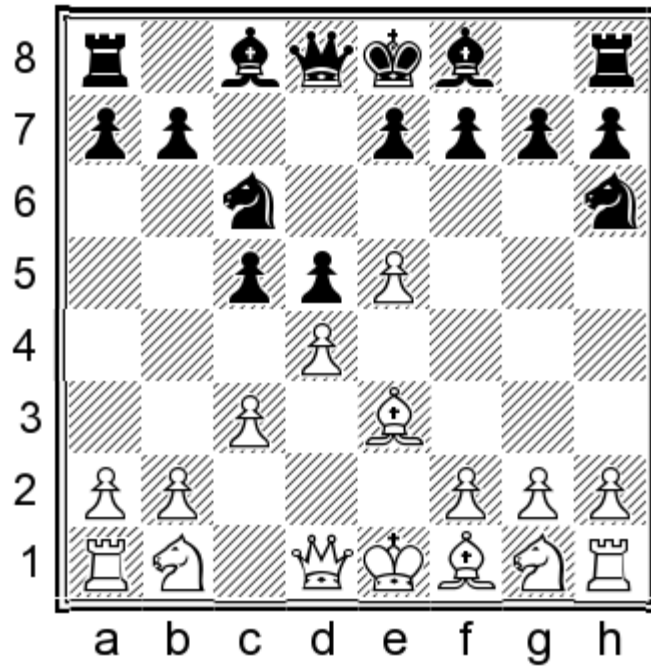
$6. \text{f3}$. White gets rid of the pin immediately. $6... \text{d7}$ $7. \text{f4}$ e6 $8. \text{d2}$. He prepares the move h3 , in order to protect reliably the d4-square. Black must increase his pressure against it with the moves h6-f5 and b6 . $8... \text{h6}$ $9. \text{h3}$ b6 = Thole – Kuhn, Frankfurt 2014.

Following $6. \text{b3}$, Black can protect easily the b7-pawn. $6... \text{d7}$ = Simmons – Hopkins, England 2011.

$6. \text{h3}$ xe2 $7. \text{xe2}$. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but the move h2-h3 will hardly be so useful for him in the future. $7... \text{e6}$ $8. \text{0-0}$ cxd4 $9. \text{cxd4}$ ge7 =, followed by h3 , e7 .

$6. \text{e3}$ e6 $7. \text{d2}$ ($7. \text{a3}$. White is preparing b2-b4 . After this however, if Black's knight comes to the c4-square, White will not be able to oust it from there with the move b2-b3 . $7... \text{ge7}$ $8. \text{f3}$ f5 $9. \text{b4}$ cxd4 $10. \text{cxd4}$ c8 $11. \text{g4}$ g6 $12. \text{g2}$ b6 = Short – Izzat, Ballarat 2016) $7... \text{ge7}$ $8. \text{f3}$ f5 $9. \text{g4}$ xb1 . Black has less space, so it would be favourable for him to exchange pieces. $10. \text{xb1}$, Short – Granda Zuniga, Lima 2012, $10... \text{cxd4}!$? $11. \text{cxd4}$ g6

After $5. \text{e3}$, it seems very good for Black to opt for $5... \text{h6}!$?, threatening to attack the enemy bishop with h5 , or g4 .

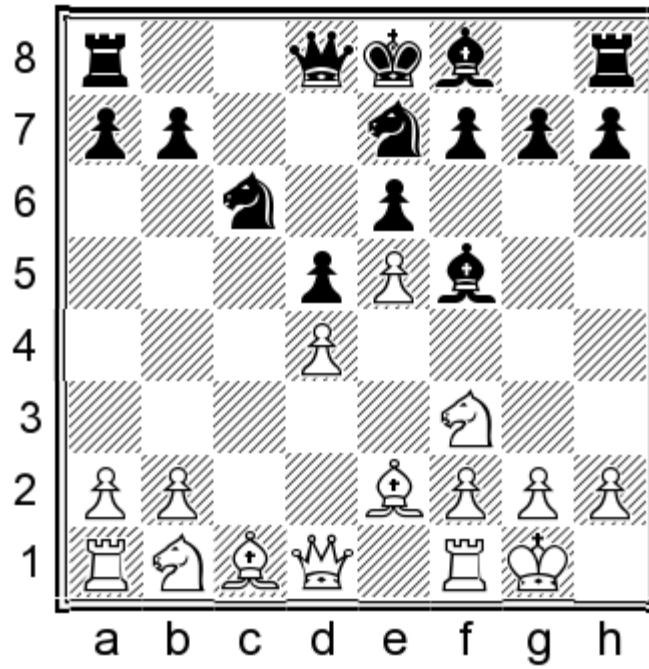


6. ♖xh6. White presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but destroys his kingside pawn-structure. 6...gxh6 7. ♘f3 ♜b6 8. ♝d2, Vetter – Jung, DESC 2008, 8...♙g7∞, followed by 0-0 and f6, beginning to open the position for his bishops.

After White's alternatives, he might even fail to equalise: 6.h3 ♘f5 Le Quang – Khenkin, Antwerp 1995, or 6.dxc5 ♘g4 7. ♘f3, Ansell – Dean, Las Vegas 2011, 7...♞xe3!? 8.fxe3 e6 9.b4 a6. Black does not allow b4-b5. White's material advantage is practically not important at all, since his pawn-structure is seriously compromised. Later, Black will fianchetto his dark-squared bishop in order to increase his pressure against the enemy e5-pawn. 10. ♞bd2 g6! 11. ♙d3 ♙g7

5. ♘f3 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♙g4. Now, White must play very accurately not to end up in an inferior position. On the other hand, Black's game is quite simple. He must complete the development of his kingside and increase his pressure against the d4-pawn (e6, ♞e7-f5, ♙e7 and 0-0). 7. ♙e2 e6 8.0-0 ♞ge7 9. ♞bd2 ♜b6 10.h3 (It would be worse for White to play here 10. ♞b3, because the knight will be unstable on this square. 10...♞f5 11. ♙e3 a5. Now, White must either allow a5-a4, or after 12.a4, weaken the b4-square: 12...♙e7!?) Fernandez Muixi – Roca Diaz, Spain 2014.) 10...♙xf3 11. ♞xf3 ♞f5 12. ♙e3 ♞xe3 13.fxe3 ♙e7 14. ♝d2 0-0= Reimer – Muehlbach, Bad Homburg 2009.

5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♙f5 7. ♘f3 e6 8.0-0 ♞ge7



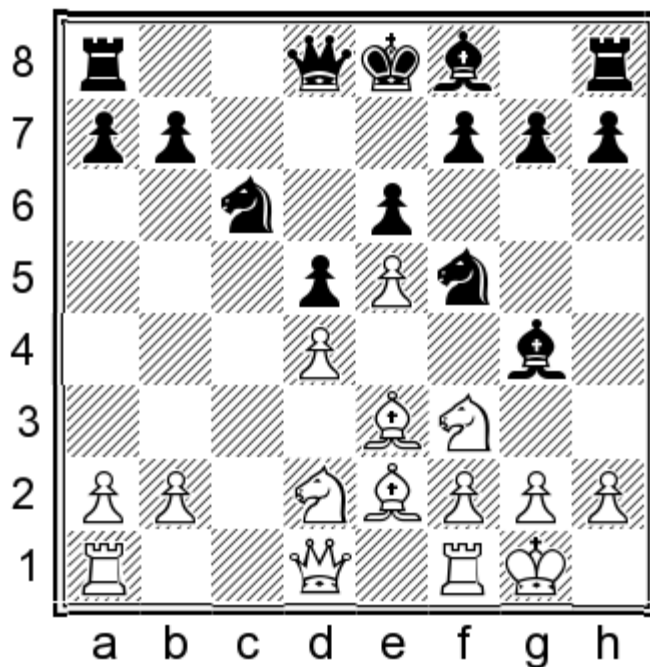
White's pawn on e5 deprives Black's knight of the f6-square, so he has only one square (e7) for the development of two of his minor pieces. Later, Black must try to transfer his knight to f5 after playing ♙g4 , or ♙e4 , freeing the e7-square for his bishop.

9.♘c3

9.h3, Andriasian – Ni Hua, Ohrid 2009, 9...♙e4!? 10.♘bd2 ♘f5 11.♙b5 ♚b6=

9.b3. White is preparing ♙b2 . His bishop will protect the d6-pawn from there, but will hardly be so active. 9...♙e4 10.♘bd2 ♘f5 11.♙b2 ♙b4 12.g4 ♘h4 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♘xh4 ♚xh4. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but his king's shelter has been compromised. 15.♚c2 h5 16.♚xe4 hxg4 17.♚g2, Short – Seirawan, Amsterdam 1992, 17...f5!?! 18.exf6 gxf6 19.d5. White has a bishop-pair, so he should strive to open the position. 19...exd5 20.♙xg4 ♖g8 21.h3 f5. After this move there arise interesting complications. They are quickly over however, and it all ends in a prosaic drawish endgame. 22.♚xd5 ♘e7 23.♖ae1 ♖xg4+ 24.hxg4 ♚xg4+ 25.♚g2 ♚xg2+ 26.♙xg2 ♙xe1 27.♖xe1 ♙f7=

9.♙e3 ♙g4 10.♘bd2 (10.♘c3 ♘f5 – see 9.♘c3) 10...♘f5. You can now see the defects of the placement of White's bishop on e3. Black can exchange it at any moment with his knight on f5.

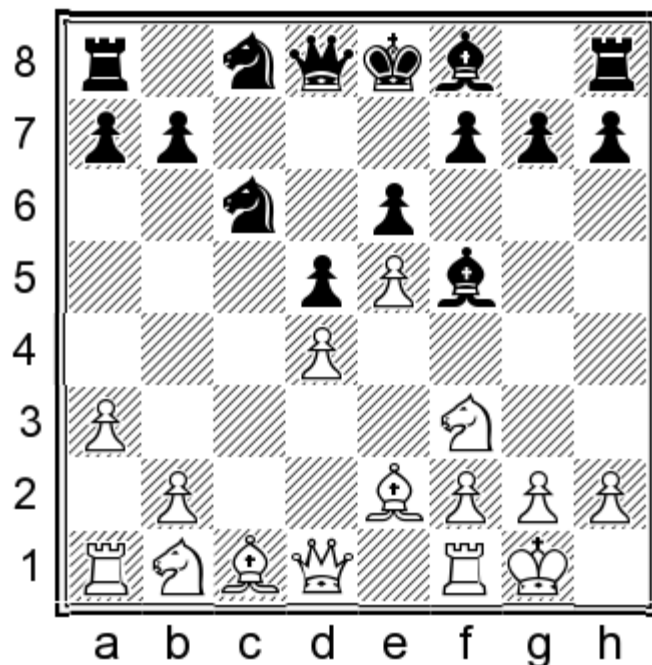


11.a3 ♕e7 12.b4 0-0 13.♘b3, Sisniega – Campora, Bogota 1991, 13...a5!?∞

11.♘b5 ♖b6 12.♗a4. White would not achieve much with his pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal. 12...♕e7 13.♖a1 0-0 14.♕xc6 bxc6 15.♗xc6 ♗xb2. The trade of the b-pawns has led to simplifications. White has slight initiative indeed, but Black can gradually neutralise it with the help of exchanges. 16.♗b1 ♗a3 17.♗xa3 ♕xa3 18.♖a6 ♕xf3 19.gxf3 ♕e7 20.♗b7 ♖ac8 21.♖axa7 ♖c2 22.♗xe7 ♘xe3 23.fxe3 ♖xd2. White has succeeded in winning a pawn, but thanks to the checkmating threats (♖c8-c1, or ♗b8-b1) Black restores the material balance. 24.a4 g5 25.a5 ♖a2, Short – Stohl, Olomouc 1996, 26.f4 gxf4 27.exf4 ♖c8 28.♖ec7 ♖xc7 29.♖xc7 ♖xa5=

11.h3 ♘xe3 12.fxe3 ♕f5 13.♗b3 (13.♖c1 ♕e7=) 13...♗b8 14.♖a1. Black lags a bit in development, but White cannot open the centre. Therefore, Black will prepare castling kingside without any problems. (14.♕d3 ♕xd3 15.♗xd3 ♕e7 16.a3 0-0= Krakovsky – Valovic, Slovakia 2005) 14...♕e7 15.♕d3 ♕g6 16.♕xg6 hxg6 17.a3 0-0 18.♗d3 ♖c8= Kashlyak – Scheiba, ICCF 2015.

9.a3. White intends to advance b2-b4. Now, Black can change his plan a bit and prepare the transfer of his knight not to f5, but to b6. From there, after b2-b4, it can participate in the fight for the weakened c4 and a4-squares. 9...♘c8!?



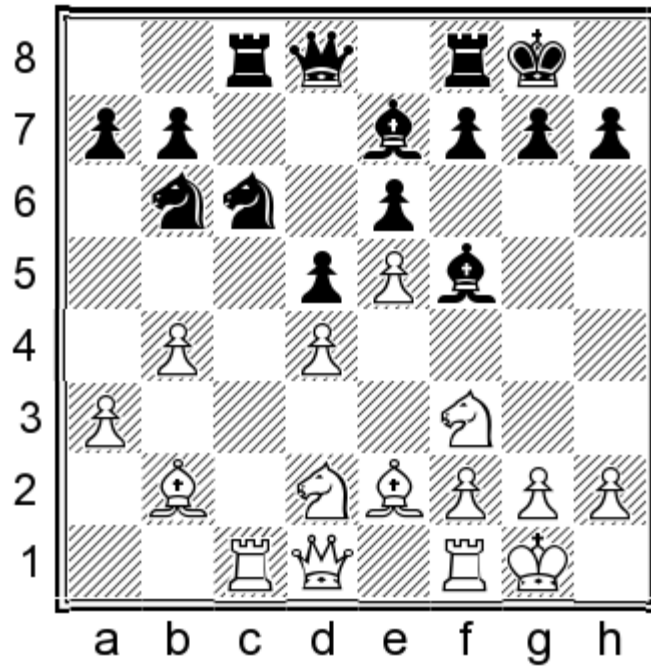
10.♔g5 ♕e7. Black has less space, so he should not avoid exchanges. 11.♕xe7 ♖8xe7 12.b4 0-0 13.♗bd2 ♚b6 14.♗b3, Yermolinsky – Khalifman, Rakvere 1993, 14...♞fc8 15.♗c5 a5 16.♞d2 ♕e4

10.♗bd2 ♕e7 11.b3. White is reluctant to weaken his position (11.b4 ♗b6 – see 10.b4). 11...a5. With a white pawn on b3 the transfer of Black's knight to the b6-square would not be so effective, so he frees the a7-square for it, from where, in the middlegame, it might go (naturally, after the preliminary move ♚b6) to the b5-square, in order to squeeze the enemy rook on a1 to the protection of the pawn on a3. Then, White will have problems to fight for the c-file. 12.♕b2 ♗8a7 13.♞e1 0-0 14.♗f1 ♞c8 15.♗g3 ♕g6 16.♞d2 ♚b6 17.♕d1 ♞c7 Shirov – Karpov, Las Palmas 1994.

10.♕e3 ♕e7 11.♗bd2 (11.♗c3 ♗b6 – see 10.♗c3) 11...♗b6 12.♞e1 0-0 13.♞c1 ♞c8= Mrazik – Sivenkov, ICCF 2005.

10.♗c3 ♕e7 11.♕e3 (11.b4?! ♗b6 Wu Wenjin – Liang Chong, Suzhou 2006) 11...♗b6 12.♗e1, Gallagher – Polak, Bern 1993, 12...0-0!?

10.b4 ♕e7 11.♗bd2 ♗b6 12.♕b2 0-0 13.♞c1 ♞c8

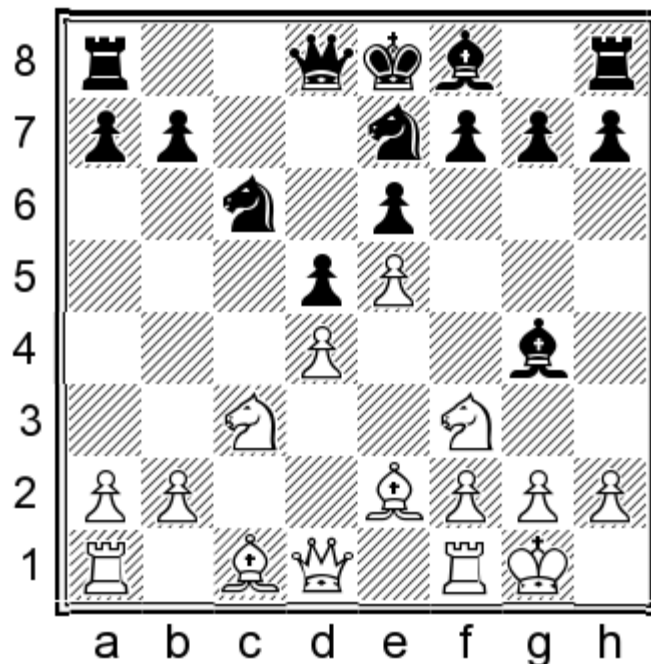


14.♖b3?! White weakens his control over the c4-square and Black exploits this immediately. 14...♖c4 15.♙xc4 dxc4 16.♞xc4 ♜xb4! Black restores the material balance with this simple tactical strike. 17.♞xc8 ♝xc8 18.axb4 ♙c2 19.♝a1 ♙xb3 20.♝xa7 ♙d5 21.b5 ♝c4 22.♙a3 ♙xa3 23.♝xa3 ♝xb5. Fuhrwerk – Nilsson, ICCF 2009. The pawn on d4 has been reliably blocked by Black's bishop on d5 and the b7-pawn is exceptionally strong.

14.♙c3 a6 15.♝b3, Smirin – De Boer, Hoogovens 1993, 15...♙g4=

14.♞e1. White is preparing a transfer of his knight to e3. 14...a5 15.b5 ♜a7 16.♜f1 ♞xc1 17.♙xc1 a4 18.♜e3 ♙e4 19.♝d2 ♙xf3. Black exploits the insufficient protection of the pawn on b5 and weakens his opponent's kingside pawn-structure. 20.gxf3, Van Kempen – Berdichesky, Argentina 1997, 20...♝d7!? Black is not afraid of 21.♝a5, because after 21...♞a8∞, White would lose his queen if he captures the enemy knight.

9...♙g4



10.♙e3

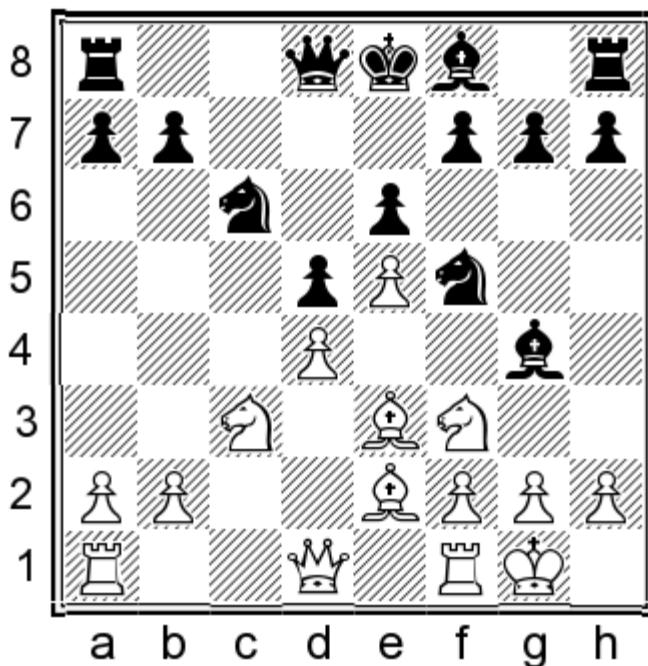
About 10.h3 ♘xf3 11.♘xf3 ♖f5 12.♙e3 ♙e7 – see 10.♙e3.

10.♖h4. White wishes to preserve his knight from an exchange, so that later it might take part in the protection of his pawn on d4. Still, the manoeuvre ♖f3-h4-f3 loses plenty of time and Black succeeds in the developing his pieces.

10...♙xe2 11.♖xe2 ♖g6 12.♖f3 ♙e7 13.g3 0-0 14.h4 f6= Kun – Alon, Balatonbereny 1997.

10.♖e1. This move is played with the same ideas as 10.♖h4. 10...♙xe2 11.♖xe2 ♖f5 12.a3 ♚b6 13.♖f3 ♙e7 14.b4 0-0 15.♚d3 a6= Tesic – Krajnc, ICCF 2004.

10...♖f5



11.h3

11.♖d2 ♙xe2 12.♖xe2 ♙e7 13.♖b3 0-0= Xu – Lutz, Cap d'Agde 1994.

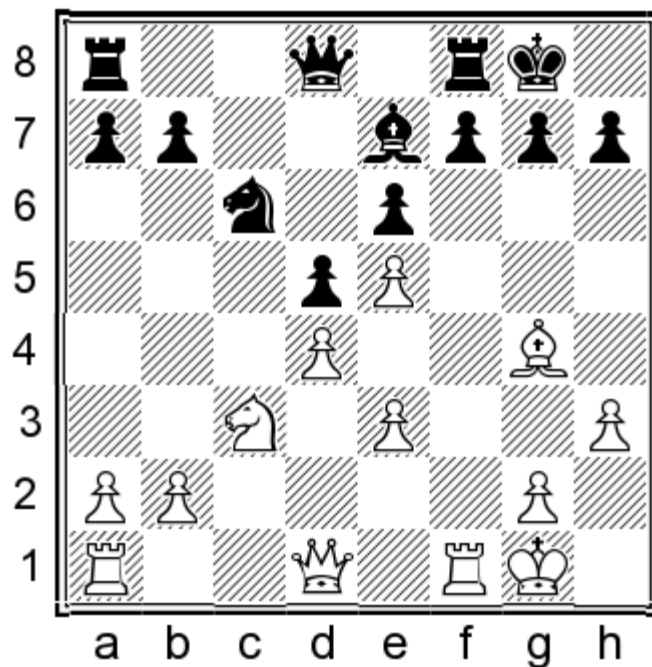
11.♚d2 ♙e7 12.h3 ♘xf3 13.♘xf3 0-0 14.♙g4 ♖xe3 15.fxe3 ♜c8= Kalmar – Harmatosi, Hungary 1997.

11...♙xf3 12.♘xf3 ♙e7 13.♙g4 ♖xe3

Black deprives his opponent of his two-bishop advantage.

14.fxe3 0-0

He has completed his development and his prospects are not worse thanks to his more elastic pawn-structure.



15.♙d3

15.♙f3 ♜b6=

15.♘e2 ♜b6= Cherniaev – Dyachkov, Podolsk 1992.

15...♙d7 16.♞ad1 ♞ad8

Black impedes White's pawn-advance e3-e4.

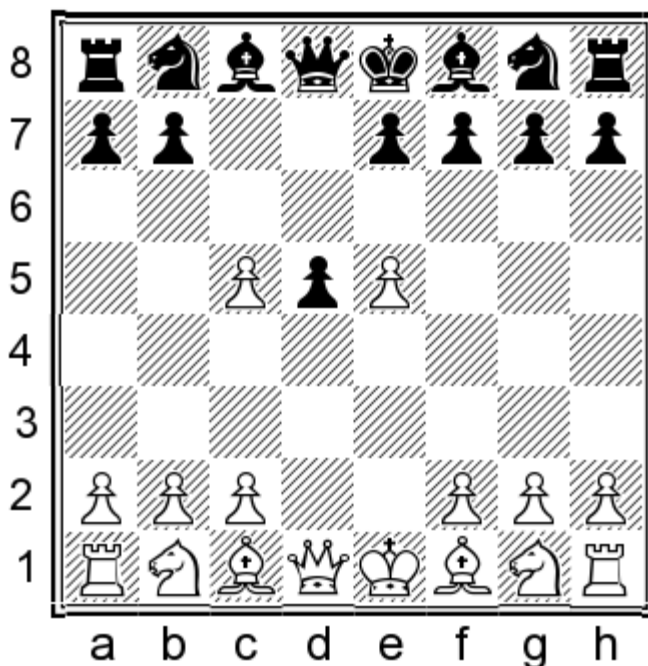
17.♞h5

Following 17.♔h1 ♔h8 18.♞c1, Black can get rid of the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps his position. 18...f6 19.exf6 gxf6!? He is not happy anymore with just equality and is trying to obtain an advantage. Black's plan includes f6-f5, in order to fix the weak enemy pawn on e3. 20.♘e2 f5 21.♞f3, Eichhorn – Krimbacher, ICCF 2014, 21...♞d6!?

17...f6 18.exf6 ♞xf6 19.♞g4 ♜e7 20.a3 ♔h8= Stepan – Sykora, ICCF 2015.

Chapter 7

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5



This is White's most logical move. Indeed, if Black sacrifices a pawn – why not capture it...?

4...e6!?

Black attacks immediately the pawn on c5, but now, his bishop on c8 will not be developed to g4, or f5.

He has an alternative here 4...♘c6, with which the bishop on c8 will not remain closed inside his camp, but later he will have problems to restore the material balance.

White has a choice now: **A) 5.♘f3**, after which he is not interested in keeping the extra pawn, or **B) 5.♙e3**, where he is not in a hurry to part with the extra material.

5.♙f4. This defence of the e5-pawn seems less adequate. 5...♙xc5 6.♙g4?! White's attempt to exploit the defencelessness of the pawn on g7 will lead to difficulties for him (after 6.♙d3 ♖b6, thanks to the double attack, Black wins a pawn and obtains an advantage: 7.♘h3 ♗xb2 ♠ Schenning – Nichols, LSS 2012). 6...♘e7 7.♘d2, Hamdouchi – Khenkin, Brussels 1998 (7.♗xg7?! ♜g8 8.♗xh7 ♗b6+) 7...♗b6!? 8.0-0-0 ♘g6 ♠

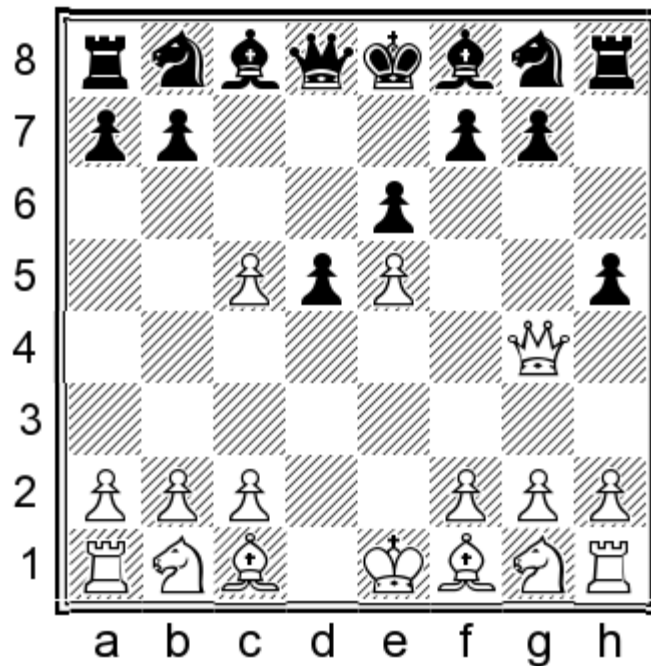
5.b4. White should better not protect his pawn in that fashion. 5...a5 6.c3 axb4 7.cxb4 b6 8.♙e3 bxc5 9.bxc5 ♘d7! ♠ Black restores the material balance and remains with a more elastic pawn-structure (but not 9...♙xc5?? 10.♙xc5 ♗a5+ 11.♘d2 ♗xc5 12.♞c1 1-0 Medunova – Urban, Bayerisch Eisenstein 2012).

5.c4. The pressure against the d5-square does not promise anything to White. 5...♙xc5 6.♘c3 (The queen-sortie is again bad for White 6.♙g4?! Smirin – Guliev, Baku 2011, 6...♘e7! 7.♗xg7 ♜g8 8.♗xh7 ♗a5+ 9.♘d2 ♘bc6 ♠ He has two extra pawns, but his lag in development is horrible.) 6...♘e7 7.♘f3, Fedorchuk – Aranaz Portugues, Jaen 2011, 7...♘bc6! ?=

5.♙d3 ♘c6 6.♙f4 (6.♘f3 ♙xc5 – see variation **A2**) 6...♙xc5 7.♙g4. The readers have already noticed that in this variation the chase after the g7-pawn very often leads to great problems for White (It is better for him to play 7.♘f3 – see variation **A2**). 7...♘ge7 8.♘f3 (8.♗xg7?! ♜g8 9.♗xh7 ♗b6 ♠ Malisauskas – Urban, Police 2009) 8...♘g6 9.0-0 ♘xf4

10. ♖xf4. Black has the two-bishop advantage, but White's e5-pawn cramps his position. Therefore, Black should better try to exchange is as quickly as possible. 10...f6 11. ♖h4, Kalugin – Kornev, Tula 2004. Here, Black should have played 11... ♖e7!?, without being afraid of 12. ♗xh7?, because after 12... ♔d7! 13. ♕c3 g6+, White would lose a piece due to the pin of his bishop.

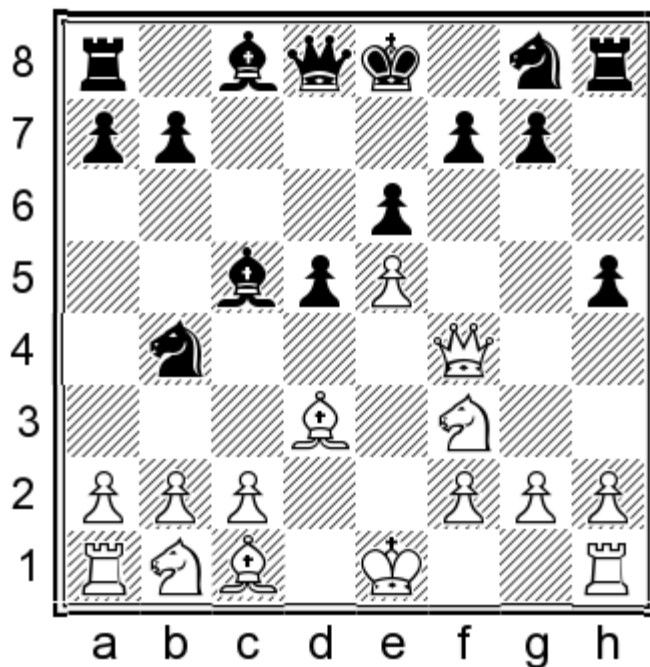
After 5.a3, Black's simplest response is 5... ♕c6!?. Before capturing on c5 he wishes to force his opponent to play ♕f3, in order to deprive him of the possibility ♖g4. 6. ♗f4 (6. ♕d2 ♗xc5 7. ♖g4 ♕xe5 8. ♖xg7, Van den Doel – Hansen, Maastricht 2014, 8... ♖f6!? 9. ♖xf6 ♕xf6+ The exchange of a central pawn for a flank pawn has turned out to be in favour of Black; White should better prefer 6. ♕f3 ♗xc5 – see variation A1.) 6... ♗xc5. After White's bishop has been developed to f4, Black should not be afraid of 7. ♖g4?! Morozevich – Swiercz, Berlin 2015, since following 7... ♕ge7!? 8. ♖xg7? ♖g8 9. ♖xh7, he can exploit the defencelessness of White's pawns on f2 and b2 with the move 9... ♖b6+ 5. ♖g4. White impedes the development of the enemy bishop on f8. 5...h5. Black advances his rook-pawn in an attempt to oust the enemy queen from the g-file.



The move 6. ♗b5+ enables Black to get rid of his “bad” bishop. 6... ♗d7 7. ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8. ♖e2 ♗xc5 9. ♕f3 ♕e7 10.0-0 ♖c7∞ Kindermann – Dautov, Bad Homburg 1997.

6. ♖g3 ♕c6 7. ♕f3 h4 8. ♖f4 ♗xc5 9. ♗d3 f5 10.g4. White wishes to organise an attack against the enemy king, but Black's defensive resources are quite sufficient. 10... ♕ge7 11.gxf5 ♕xf5 12. ♖g4 0-0 13.0-0 ♖c7∞, followed by ♖f7, Anokhin – Homont, ICCF 2015. Black wishes to bring his queen closer to his king. It can be useful not only for the defence, but also for a counter attack on the f-file. White's pawn on e5 is not well protected, so he cannot play ♕g5.

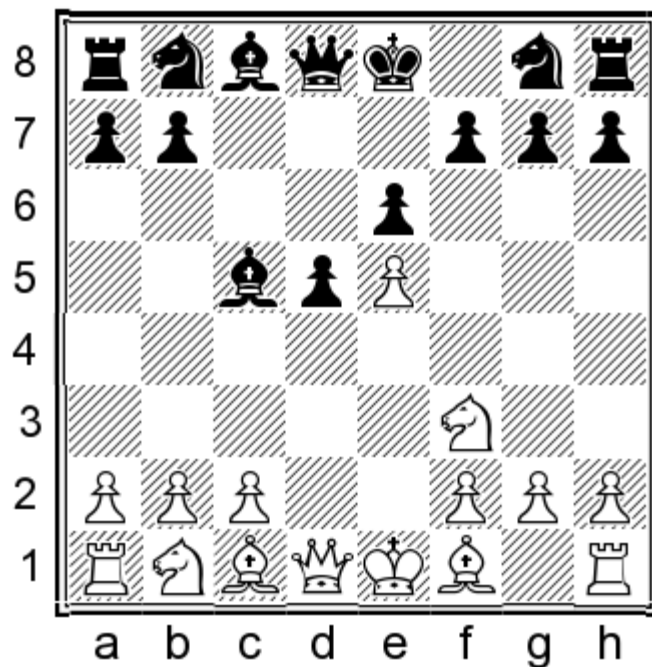
6. ♖f4 ♗xc5 7. ♗d3 ♕c6 8. ♕f3 ♕b4. Black wishes to trade the powerful enemy bishop even at the price of a loss of time.



9. e3 xd3+ 10. cxd3 xe3 11. fxe3 b6 12. d4 xd4 . Black's kingside has been weakened after the move h7-h5 , so he would not mind entering an endgame. 13. xd4 d7 . This bishop is not particularly active, so Black should strive to exert pressure against the enemy e5 -pawn (e7-g6 and f7-f6) and to provoke an exchange on f6 , so that after gxf6 to be able to play e6-e5 , after which he will not have any bad pieces. 14. d2 e7 15. c1 g6 16. 2f3 f6 17. exf6 gxf6 18. c7 . The penetration to the penultimate rank would not provide White with much, since Black can protect easily his b7 -pawn and White's rook on c7 has no other objects to attack. 18... b8 19. d2 e7 Mezera – Baumgartner, ICCF 2015.

9.0-0 xd3 10. cxd3 e7 11. d4 (11. e3 g6 12. a4+ d7 13. b3 xe3 14. fxe3 a5! ? Black wishes to activate his rook on a8 with a6-b6 . 15. c3 0-0 16. a4 a6= Khokhlov – Homont, ICCF 2017.) 11... b6 12. e1 d7 13. c3 c7 . The absence of the bishop on d3 has led to the weakening of the light squares and Black can exploit this by transferring his queen to the c4 -square. 14. g5 c4! ? He sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. 15. xg7 0-0-0 16. e2 f5 17. g5 b8 18. d2 c8 19. d1 c2 20. c3 xd1 21. xd1 c4 22. e3 hc8 Marrero Rodriguez – Johnston, ICCF 2016. Black has a bishop-pair and actively deployed pieces as compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

A) 5. f3 xc5



We will analyse now **A1) 6.a3** and **A2) 6.♙d3**.

About 6.♘c3 ♘c6 7.♙d3 – see 6.♙d3.

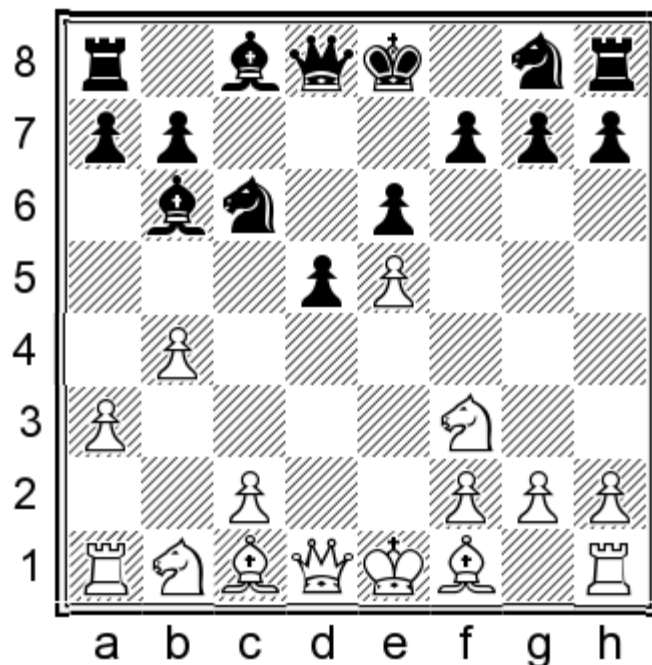
A1) 6.a3

White wishes to advance with tempo b2–b4 and to develop his bishop on b2, from where it would protect reliably the pawn on c3.

6...♘c6 7.b4

7.♙d3 ♘ge7 8.0-0 (8.b4 ♙b6 – see 7.b4) 8...♘g6 9.♖e1 (9.b4 ♙b6 – see 7.b4) 9...♚b6 10.♚d2, Lane – Prasad, Nadi 2013, 10...♙e7!? 11.b4 a5 12.b5 ♘d4 13.♘xd4 ♚xd4 14.c3 ♚g4 15.h3 ♚h5 16.♚e3 f6=

7...♙b6



8.♘b2

The move 8.b5 only creates a target for Black to create counterplay on the queenside and weakens the c5-square.

8...♗b8 9.♘d3, Glek – Dautov, Germany 2005, 9...♗e7!? 10.0-0 a6=

8.♘d3. White is not in a hurry to play ♘b2, in order to save this tempo to develop his kingside as quickly as possible and to castle there. 8...♗ge7 9.0-0 (9.♘b2 ♗g6 – see 8.♘b2) 9...♗g6 10.♞e1 (10.♘b2 ♗f4 – see 8.♘b2) 10...f6. With a white bishop on c1, Black does not have the possibility ♗f4, but now he can organise counterplay against the enemy e5-pawn.

11.exf6 (The move 11.♘xg6+ opens the h-file for Black's rook and presents him with the two-bishop advantage.

11...hxg6 12.♘b2, Movsesian – Yevseev, Moscow 2006, 12...fxe5!? 13.♗xe5 0-0 14.♗d3 ♞h4∞ Black's pressure against the f2-square compensates for him the slight vulnerability of his pawn-structure.) 11...♞xf6 12.♘xg6+ (The move 12.♞a2 is too slow. 12...♗h4 13.♗bd2 0-0= Beshukov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2001.) 12...hxg6 13.c3 0-0 14.♘e3, Baydashkin – Jansen, ICCF 2017, 14...♗e5 15.♗xe5 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♞xe5 17.♞d4 ♞g5 18.♗d2 b6 19.e4 ♘b7 20.♞e3 ♞xe3+ 21.♞xe3 ♞ac8=

8...♗ge7 9.♘d3

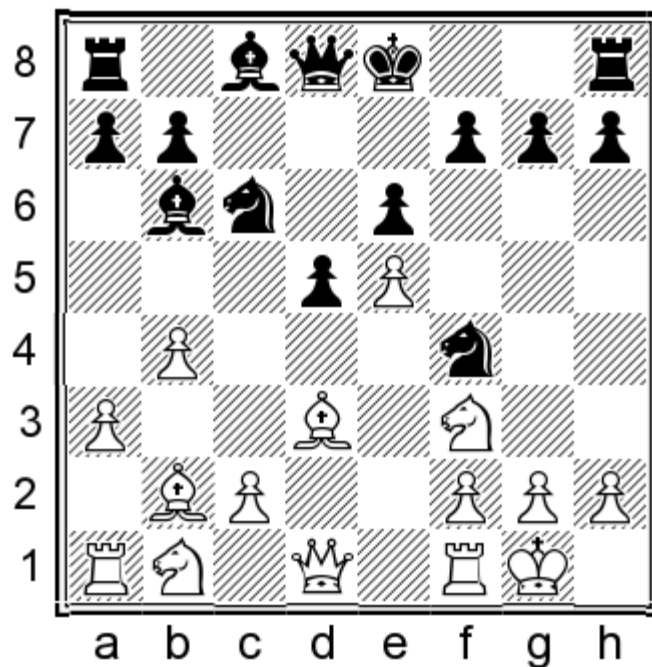
After 9.♗bd2, just like in the main line, Black obtains a good position by transferring his knight to the f4-square. 9...0-0 10.♘d3 ♗g6 11.0-0 ♗f4= Thumulka – Schreiner, Rotenburg 2012.

9...♗g6 10.0-0

10.g3. White covers the f4-square against the penetration of the enemy knight, but weakens his kingside in the process. 10...0-0 11.0-0 d4. Black restricts the bishop on b2 and prepares the move ♞d5. 12.♞e2 f6 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.♗bd2 ♞d5 15.♞ae1 ♘d7= Mingarro Carceller – Nabaty, Benasque 2012. Now, thanks to his two powerful bishops, Black's prospects are not worse.

10...♗f4

Black wishes to exchange the powerful enemy bishop.



11.c4

White begins immediate active actions in the centre.

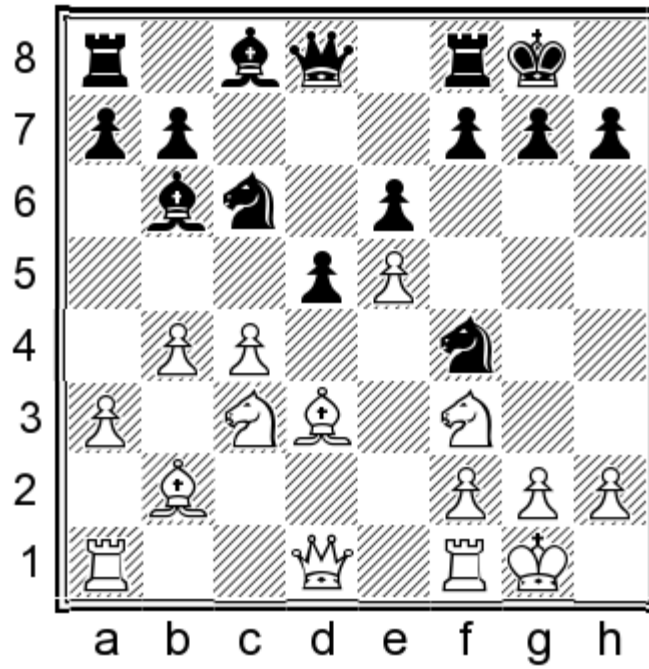
11.♘b5, Ganguly – Arun Prasad, New Delhi 2007, 11...a5!?!=

The move 11.♘c3, Schroeder – Palozza, Helsingor 2016, does not seem logical, because White would not have the possibility c2-c4 anymore and his pawn on c2 might turn out to be weak in the middlegame 11...0-0=

11.♞e1 ♜xd3. Black should better play this move immediately; otherwise, this bishop might retreat to f1. 12.♞xd3 0-0
 13.♞bd2 ♜e7. He wishes to activate his bishop on c8 with ♞e8, ♘d7-b5 (a4). 14.a4, Llaneza Vega – Dittmar, Arco 2008, 14...♘d7!?! 15.♞b3 ♞e8 16.b5 a6=, with good counterplay on the queenside.

11...0-0 12.♞c3

12.♞d2 ♜xd3 13.♞xd3 dxc4 14.♞xc4, Fedorov – Dudukin, Vladimir 2009, 14...♞d5, trying to exchange the queens.
 15.♞e2 ♞d8 16.♞c3 ♞d3. Black continues to realise his plan. 17.♞xd3 ♞xd3 18.♞fd1 ♞xd1+ 19.♞xd1 h6=



12...a6!

This is Black's most precise move. It is essential for him to take the b5-square under control. White's game is a bit freer indeed, but Black's position is quite solid. Later, he can either exchange on d3, obtaining the two-bishop advantage, or trade on c4, trying to enter an endgame.

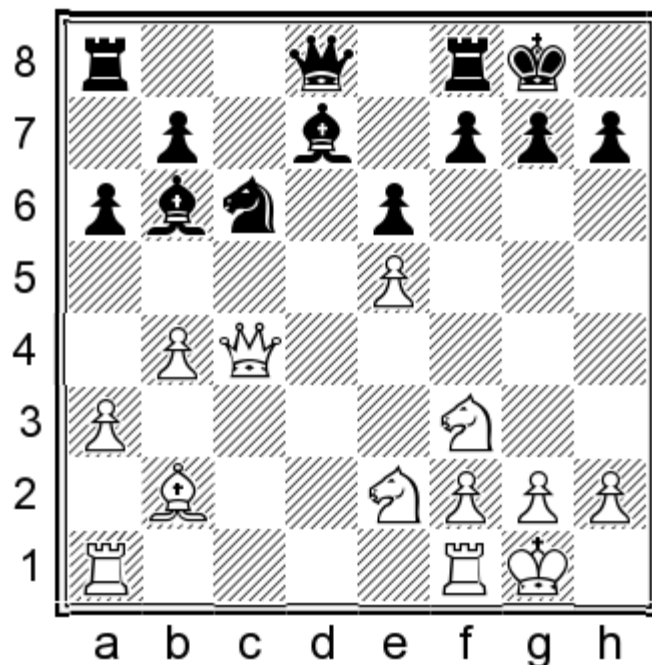
Alexey Dreev published a book recently "Attacking the Caro-Kann" and in it he was analysing only 12...♞e7 13.c5 ♙c7 14.♞b5 b6 15.♞xc7 ♜xc7 16.♞c1±

13.♞e2

13.♞c1 dxc4!? 14.♙xc4 ♙c7 15.♞e4 b5 16.♙b3 ♜xd1 17.♙xd1 ♙d7 18.♞c5 ♙e8. White's knight on c5 seems to be very powerful, but he has no concrete threats at all. With his next moves Black will transfer his knight to d5 and will fortify it there with the move ♞ce7, after which he will prepare exchanges of pawns on the queenside with a6-a5. 19.g3 ♞d5 20.♙b3 ♞de7 21.♞b7 a5=

The move 13.♞c2 leads to interesting complications. 13...♞d4. Black sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. 14.♙xh7+ ♔h8 15.♞d1 dxc4 16.♙e4 f5 17.exf6 ♜xf6 18.♞d2 e5 19.♞xc4 ♞g5! Now, he sacrifices a piece too. 20.♞xb6 ♙f5! Black must exchange an important defender of the enemy king. 21.g3 ♞de2+, Duchardt – Tornow, ICCF 2015, 22.♞xe2 ♞h3+ 23.♔g2 ♙xe4+ 24.f3 ♞xf3 25.♞xf3 ♙xf3+ 26.♔xf3 ♞f8+ 27.♔g2 ♞f2+ 28.♔h1 ♞f5 29.♞d8+ ♔h7 30.♞h4+ ♔g6 31.♞g1 ♞xg1 32.♔xg1 ♞f3. White has temporarily two extra pieces, but his king cannot avoid the perpetual check. 33.♞h3 ♞xb2 34.a4 ♞e3+ 35.♔h1 ♞f3=

13...♞xd3 14.♞xd3 dxc4 15.♞xc4 ♙d7

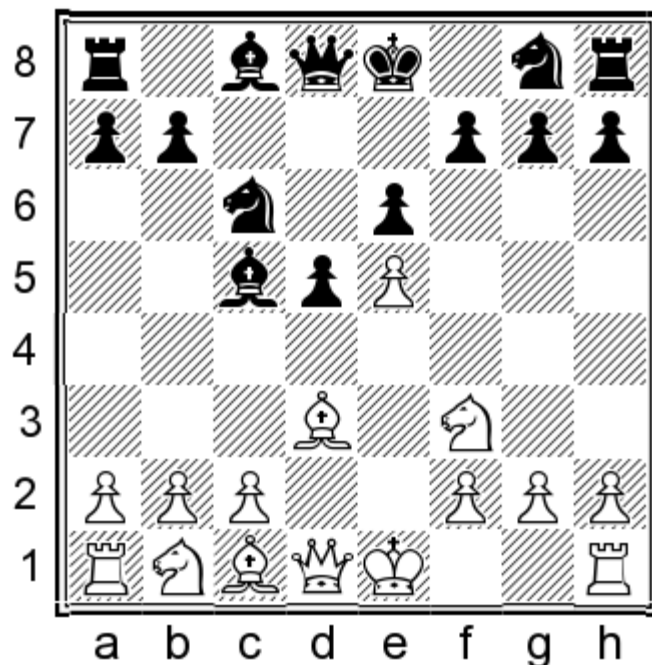


The e5-pawn cramps Black's position, but he can exchange some pieces and manage to neutralise White's slight initiative. **16. ♖fd1 ♗e7**. Black must at first activate his light-squared bishop. **17. ♘g3 ♜c8 18. ♚g4 ♙c6 19. ♗d2 ♞d8 20. ♗c4 ♞xd1+ 21. ♞xd1 ♙c7 22. ♗e4 ♞f8**. The penetration of the enemy knight to f6 is harmless for Black. **23. ♗f6+ ♘h8 24. ♗d7 ♞g8 25. ♗c5 ♞d8**. Black continues with his strategy of simplifications. **26. ♗d6 ♙xd6 27. exd6 ♗d5 28. d7 f6!** He neutralises the pressure of the enemy pieces against the g7-square. White has nothing better than to exchange the d7-pawn for the e6-pawn after which the position becomes completely equal. **29. ♗xe6 ♞xd7 30. ♗d4 ♙a4=** Belka – Brodda, ICCF 2015.

A2) 6. ♙d3

White wishes to evacuate his king away from the centre as quickly as possible, but contrary to variation **A1**, he cannot protect his pawn with his bishop from b2, so Black's plan, connected with f7- f6, would be even more effective.

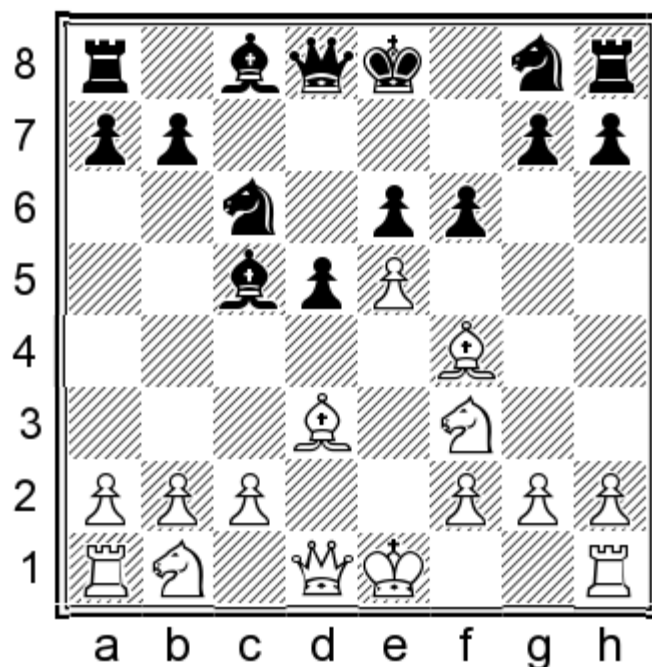
6... ♗c6



7.0-0

7.a3 ♖ge7 – see 6.a3.

Black's plans would remain more or less the same after 7.♘f4. In addition, with a white bishop on f4, he would have the possibility g7-g5-g4. 7...f6!? (It is less reliable for Black to play here 7...♙b6, because after 8.0-0 ♙xb2 9.♘bd2, he wins a pawn indeed, but lags in development. 9...♙a3 10.♘b3 ♘b6∞ Lazard – O'Hanlon, Paris 1924.)



Following 8.♘bd2, Shirov – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2001, Black can exchange advantageously a flank pawn for the enemy central pawn. 8...g5!? 9.♘g3 g4 10.♘g1 fxe5 11.♙xg4 ♘f6

8.0-0 g5!? 9.♘g3 g4 10.♘fd2, Kortenbusch – Khenkin, Senden 2001 (It is possible that White had better choose here the other retreat of his knight 10.♘e1!?, but even then after 10...fxe5∞, Black's prospects would not be worse.)

10...♖xe5!?!=

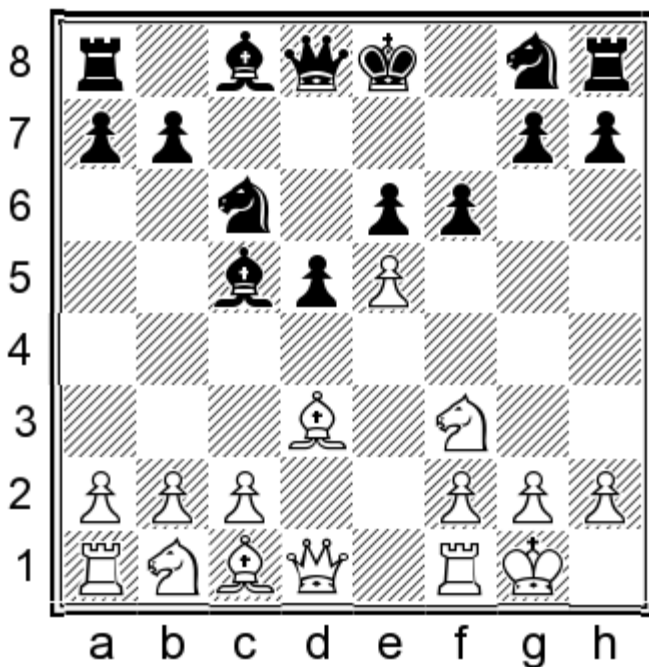
8.♙g3 f5= Dzhumaev – Fridman, Baku 2008.

7.♗c3 a6!?! Black is preparing ♖c7 and deprives his opponent of the possibility ♗b5-d6. 8.0-0 ♗ge7 9.♙f4 ♖c7 10.♙g3 ♙d7 11.a3, Tate – Thorgeirsson, Reykjavik 2007, 11...♗d4!?!=

7.♖e2 f6 8.♙e3 (8.0-0 fxe5 – see 7.0-0) 8...♙xe3 9.♖xe3, Giaccio – Garbarino, Villa Martelli 2001, 9...♗h6!?!=, Black is preparing to castle and is also threatening to win a pawn after ♗g4.

7.c3. White prepares b4-b5. 7...f6 8.b4 ♙b6 9.b5 (The exchange 9.exf6 only enhances the development of Black's pieces. 9...♗xf6 10.b5 ♗e7 11.0-0, Shirov – Licznarski, Warsaw 2012, 11...♖c7!?!= The vulnerability of the e6-pawn and the weakness of White's queenside pawns balance each other.) 9...♗xe5 10.♗xe5 fxe5 11.♖h5+, Chadaev – Tsybulnik, Kaluga 2003, 11...♗f8!?! White has managed to deprive his opponent of his castling rights, but regaining the e5-pawn would take too much time. 12.♖xe5 (12.♙a3+ ♗e7 13.♖xe5 ♗g8 14.♗d2 ♗g6 15.♖g3 e5∞) 12...♗f6 13.0-0. White's queen is at the centre of the board and this enables Black to play 13...♙c7 and to advance e6-e5, after which his prospects would not be worse thanks to his powerful pawn-centre. 14.♖g5 e5∞

7...f6!?!



8.♖e2

White is trying to hold on to the e5-square.

8.♙f4 g5 – see 7.♙f4.

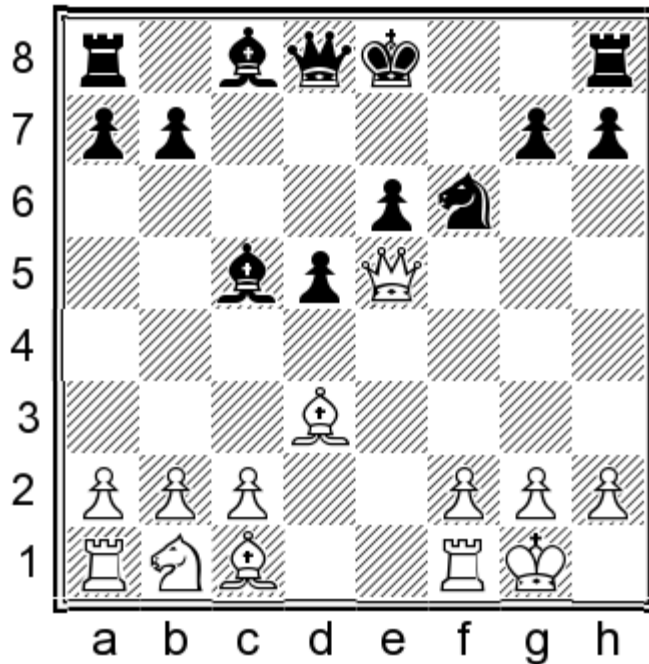
8.♙b5 a6!?! 9.♙xc6+ bxc6. Black has obtained the two-bishop advantage at the price of some delay of his development. 10.♗c3 fxe5 11.♗xe5 ♗f6 12.♙f4 0-0 13.♗xc6 ♖b6. White will be incapable of preserving his extra pawn. 14.♗e5 ♖xb2. Black not only restores the material balance, but also destroys White's pawn-chain on the queenside. 15.♗a4 ♖d4 16.♗xc5 ♖xf4 17.♙e1 ♗e4 18.♖d4 ♗xf2 19.♖xf4 ♙xf4. White's knight are perfectly placed on e5 and c5, but this only compensates the sacrificed pawn and not more than that. 20.h3. He prevents ♗g4. 20...g5 21.♙e2 ♗e4 22.♗xe4 dxe4 23.g3 ♙f5 24.♙xe4 ♙b7= Bachmann – Tyulenko, ICCF 2012. White has restored the material balance indeed, but Black has managed to solve the problem with his bad bishop on c8.

8.exf6. This is a straightforward move. Now, White will not have problems with the protection of his e5-pawn, but Black will manage to complete quickly the development of his kingside pieces. 8...♖xf6 9.c4 0-0 10.♗c3 ♔d6 11.♙g5 (11.h3, Rasulov – Salgado Lopez, Jerusalem 2015, 11...♗e5!?) 11...♗g4∞ White's knight on g4 is active indeed, but he should not play 12.h3?, because after 12...♗d4! he loses quickly. 13.hxg4 ♗xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♔g3+ 15.♗h1 ♔h3+ 16.♗g1 ♖xf3. Black's rook joins into the attack with a decisive effect, 0–1 Erenburg – Yevseev, Alushta 2002.

8...fxe5

Black frees the f6-square for the development of his knight on g8.

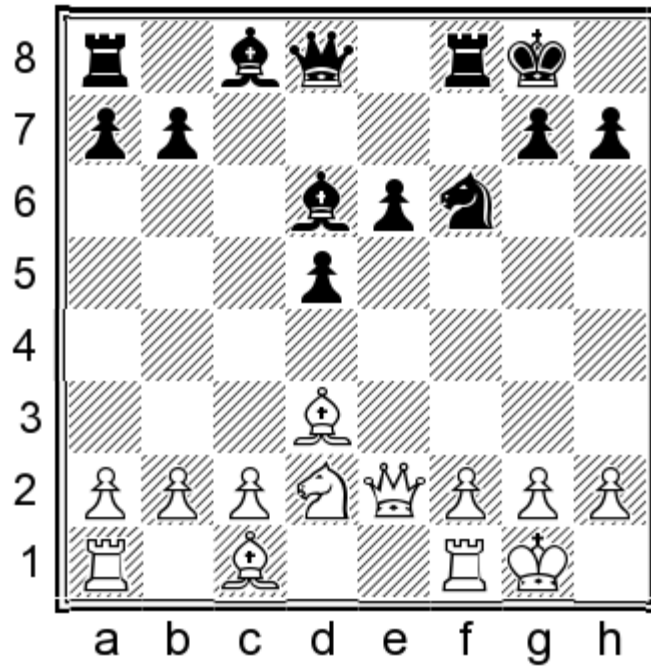
9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.♔xe5 ♗f6



11.♙b5+

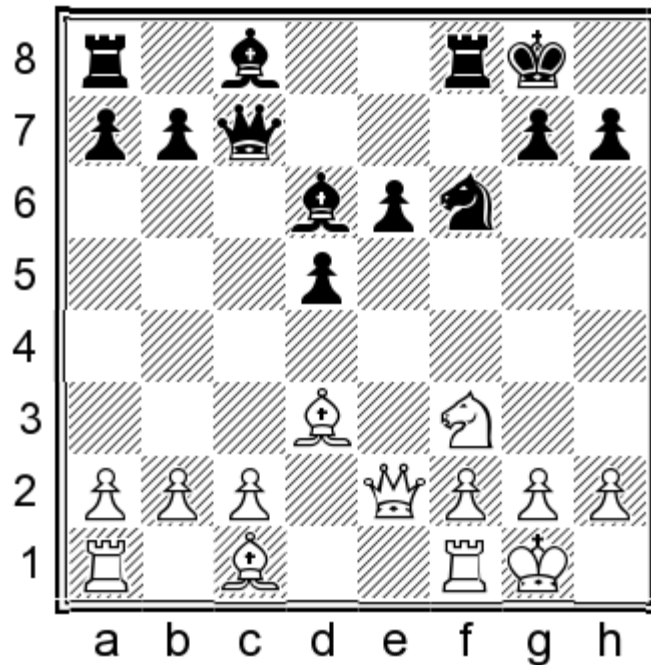
11.c4 0-0 12.♗c3 ♔b6, Black is threatening sacrifices on f2, followed by ♗g4. 13.♙e3. White exchanges the powerful enemy bishop, but weakens his pawn-structure. (13.♔e2 ♗d7= Strugnell – Kozhuharov, Paracin 2015) 13...♙xe3 14.fxe3 ♗d7 15.♖f4. White is parrying the threat ♗g4. 15...♖ac8 16.♖b1 dxc4 17.♙xc4. The pawn-weaknesses on e3 and e6 balance each other. There might follow 17...♗h8 18.b3 ♖c5 19.♔d4 e5. After this move there arise tactical complications. They will lead soon to simplification of the position. 20.♖xf6 gxf6 21.♔xd7 ♖xc4 22.bxc4 ♔xe3+ 23.♗h1 ♔xc3 24.♔e7 ♗g8= Now, White has nothing better than to repeat the position. 25.♔e6+, draw, Roques – Baumgartner, ICCF 2014.

11.♗d2. White wishes to play ♗f3 either immediately, or after the preliminary move f2-f4, in order to increase his control over the strategically important e5-square. Here, Black must play very accurately in order to avoid coming under a positional bind. 11...♙d6!/? He begins an immediate fight for the e5-square. 12.♔e2 0-0



13.f4 Qc7. Now, it becomes evident why Black was in a hurry to play Qd6 and Qc7. He exerts pressure against the f4-pawn and impedes the move Nf3. White will have to sacrifice a pawn. 14.Nf3 Qxf4 15.Qxf4 Qxf4 16.Ne5 Qb4 17.Rf2 Qe7 18.Raf1 Qd7 19.Qe3. His pieces are very active indeed, but he is still a pawn down. Black's only problem is his "bad" bishop on d7, therefore, he must play 19...a6, preparing Qb5. 20.Qxh7+!? This is White's last attempt to complicate the issue, but it leads only to a perpetual check if Black reacts correctly. 20...Nhx7 21.Ng6 Qd6 22.Qe5 Qc5 23.Qc7!? Qxc7 24.Ne7= Ivanovic – Ruefenacht, ICCF 2012.

13.Nf3 Qc7!?



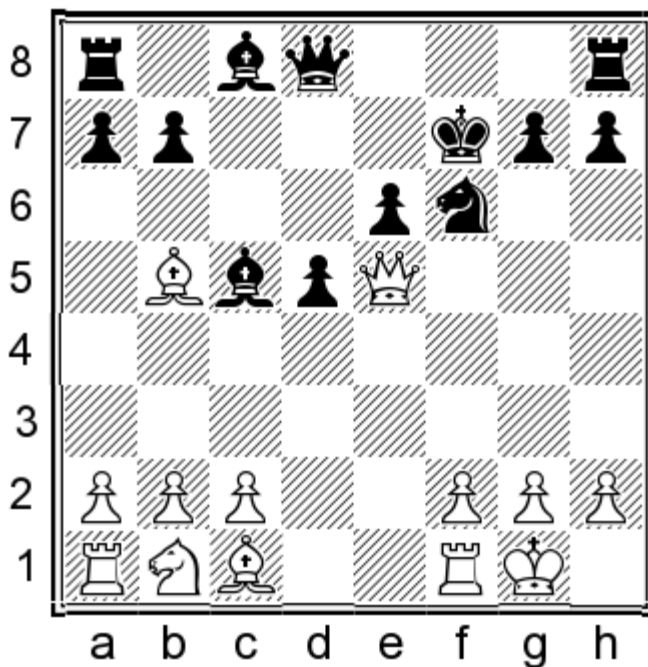
Following 14.c4 Qd7, White refrains from his basic strategy, connected with the occupation of the e5-square. 15.Qg5 Rae8 16.Rac1 Qb8 17.Qc2 h6 18.Qh4 Qc6 19.Qg6 Rc8 20.Qg3 e5. He has provoked a weakening of Black's kingside (h7-h6), but now White must play very carefully, because Black has advanced his pawn-centre. 21.Nh4. White is preparing Nf5, followed by Nxd6. In order to avoid to present his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, Black must

play 21...e4 22.♟f5 ♞xg3 23.hxg3 ♞e5 24.♞c3 ♞e6. In the game Van der Laan – Ruiz, France 2003, White decided to repeat the moves: 25.♞d4 ♞d6 26.♟f5 ♞e6 27.♞d4 ♞d6, draw.

14.♞e1 e5! This is the point. Black sacrifices a pawn and breaks at the seemingly best protected square. 15.♟xe5 ♞e8 16.f4. White cannot continue the game without this move, but now the g1-a7 diagonal is weakened. 16...♟g4 17.h3 (17.♞f1, Yagupov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2002, 17...♞d7!? 18.♞f3 ♞xe5 19.fxe5 ♞c5+ 20.♟h1 ♟xe5 21.♞g3 ♟xd3 22.cxd3 ♞e6 23.♞d2 d4=) 17...♞xe5 18.♟h1 ♞b6 19.♞e3 ♞xb2. After this move, the complications are quickly over and there arises a rather prosaic endgame on the board. 20.♞xb6 ♞xe2 21.♞xe2 ♞xa1 22.♞xa1 axb6 23.hxg4 ♞a4 24.g3 g5= Both sides have pawn-weaknesses and they compensate each other. Neither side has chances of claiming an advantage.

11...♟f7

The move ♞d7 is impossible due to the loss of the e6-pawn, so Black must lose his castling rights. Still, this is only temporary. It would be enough for him to play ♞f8 and ♟g8 in order to ensure the safety of his king.



12.♞f4

White would not achieve much with 12.♟d2 ♞d6 13.♞e2 ♞c7 14.♟h1 ♞f8=, while following 12.c4 a6 13.♞a4 ♞d6 14.♞e2 dxc4 15.♟c3 ♞c7=, he will simply end up with a pawn down, Koch – Riediger, Pfarrkirchen 2002.

12...♞f8 13.♟d2

13.♟c3 ♟g8∞ Hoy – Arnaudov, Bayern 2009.

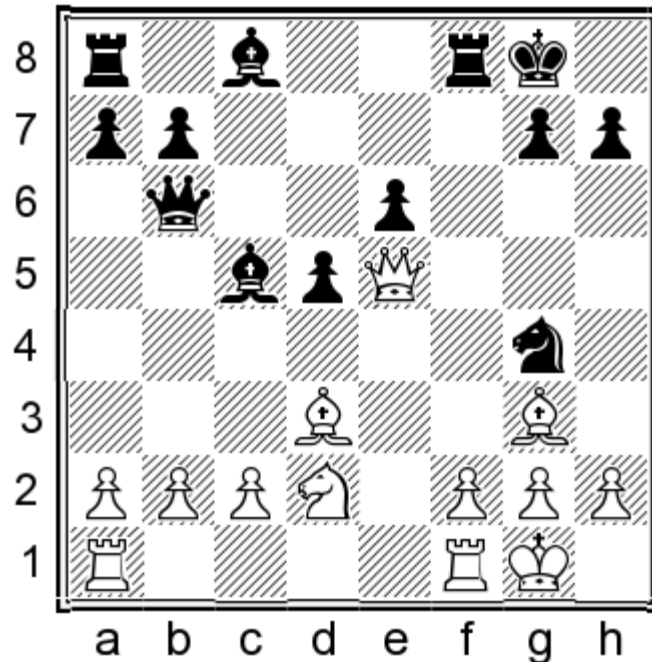
13...♟g8

Black has accomplished an artificial castling. The move ♞d6 is impossible, so his further plans are connected with exerting pressure against the enemy f2-pawn: ♞b6, ♟g4.

14.♞g3

The move 14.♞c7 seems to be an attempt to play for a draw. 14...♞xc7 15.♞xc7 ♞d7 16.♞d3 ♞ac8 17.♞g3 ♟h5=

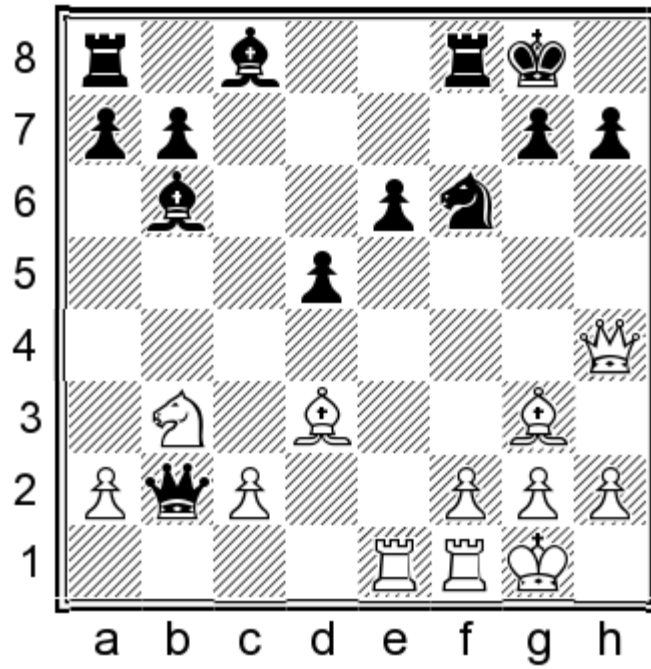
14...♖b6 15.♙d3 ♘g4



16.♗h5

After 16.♗e2, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 16...e5 17.h3 e4 18.♘xe4 dxe4 19.♙c4+ ♔h8 20.hxg4 e3. It is essential for him to open the g1-a7 diagonal in order to organise an attack against the enemy king. 21.fxe3 ♙xe3+ 22.♔h1 ♙d7 23.♙h2 ♗h6 24.♙b5, Eschert – Packroff, Germany 2011, 24...♙f2!? This is Black's simplest road to equality. 25.♖xf2 (otherwise, Black would play ♙g3) 25...♖xf2 26.♗xf2 ♙xb5 27.♗f7 ♖e8 28.c4 ♙c6 29.♖f1 ♖g8. He defends reliably against the checkmating threats on the last rank. 30.♗f4 ♗xf4 31.♙xf4 ♖e8. Black activates his pieces and forces the trade of the rooks after which there arises a dead drawish endgame with bishops of opposite colours. 32.♙d2 h6 33.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 34.♙xe1 ♙d7 35.g5 hxg5=

16...♘f6 17.♗h4 ♗xb2 18.♘b3 ♙b6 19.♖ae1

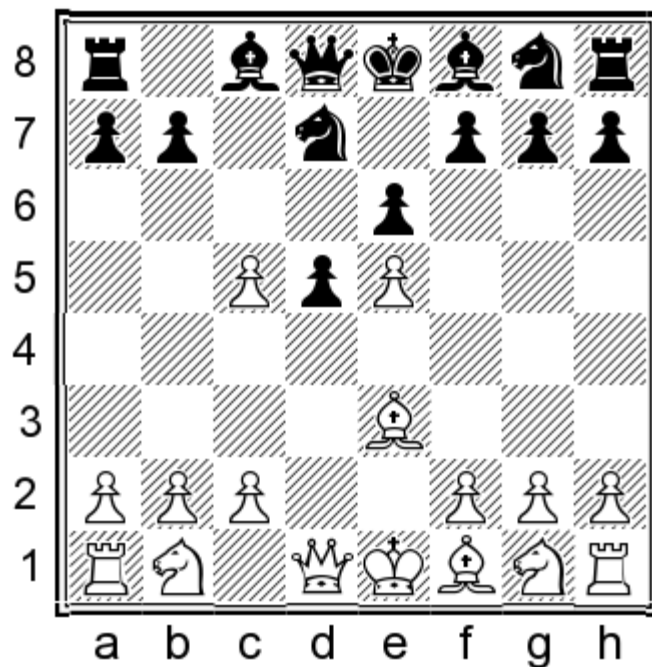


White has sacrificed a pawn for the initiative and Black should better give up voluntarily the extra material in order to neutralise the activity of the enemy pieces.

19...♖e4 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♚xe4. White is threatening ♗e5, beginning an attack against the g7-square. **21...♛c3.** Black's queen is coming back to his own camp in order to protect his g7-pawn. **22.♗e5 ♛c6 23.♛d3 ♛d7 24.♛g3 ♖f7 25.c4 ♗c7.** White's bishop is too active at the centre of the board, so Black must exchange it. **26.♞d1 ♗xe5 27.♛xe5 ♛c7 28.♞d6 ♗d7=** Sgherri – Homont, ICCF 2016. Black has neutralised White's initiative by exchanges and has completed the development of his pieces. The vulnerability of the e6-pawn is compensated by the weakness of the pawns on c4 and a2.

B) 5.♗e3 ♖d7!?

This move is not so popular as 5...♖h6, but is not bad at all.



6. ♖b5

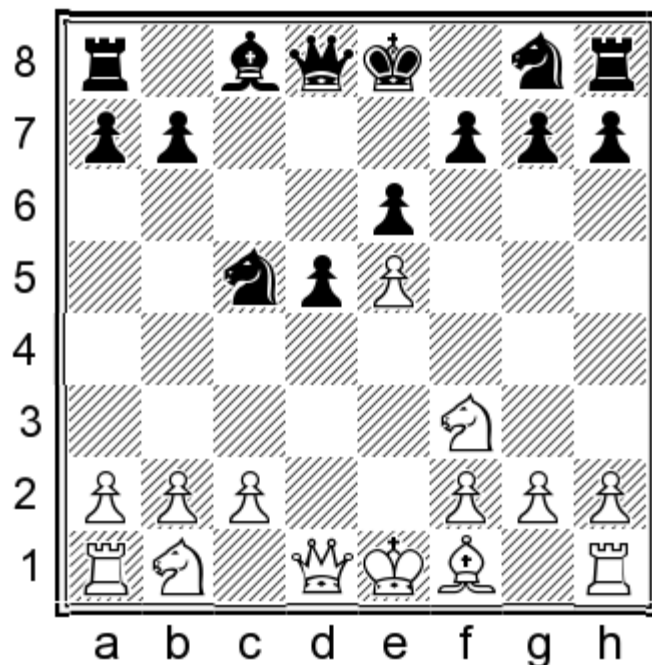
Two of White's pawns are hanging, so he is trying to preserve his material advantage.

After his alternatives, Black restores the material balance and obtains a good position.

6.f4 ♙xc5 7. ♙xc5 ♘xc5 8. ♗c3 ♗e7= Stukopin – Popov, Moscow 2012.

6.c4 ♙xc5 7. ♙xc5 ♘xc5 8.cxd5 exd5 9. ♖d4 ♖a5+ 10.b4 ♗e6 11. ♖d2 ♖b6. The slight weakness of the isolated d5-pawn is compensated by the good development of Black's pieces and the exposed placement of White's b4-pawn enables Black after a7-a5 to create counterplay on the queenside. 12. ♗f3 ♙d7 13.a4 a5 14.b5 ♗e7 15. ♙e2 ♖c8 16.0-0 ♖c7. Black dominates on the c-file, so White must play accurately. 17. ♖a3 0-0 18. ♙d3 ♗c5 19.h3 h6∞ Gorokhovskiy – Holroyd, ICCF 2015.

6. ♗f3 ♙xc5 7. ♙xc5 ♘xc5



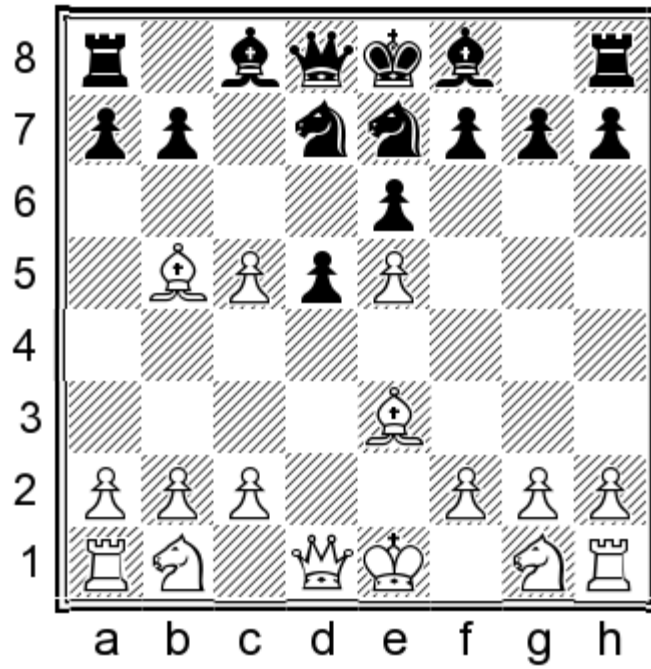
Black has a solid position. Later, he will either prepare the trade of his “bad” bishop on c8 via the b5-square, or will undermine the pawn on e5 with f7-f6.

8.♘bd2 ♘e7 9.♘b3 ♙d7 10.♘xc5 ♚a5+ 11.♚d2 ♚xc5 12.0-0-0 ♙b5! 13.♙xb5+ ♚xb5= Nekhaev – Tofan, ICCF 2016.

8.♚d4 ♚b6 9.♘bd2 (9.a4. White begins immediate active actions on the queenside. 9...♘e7 10.a5 ♚c7 11.♘a3 0-0. It becomes clear now that White would not achieve anything after the penetration of his knight to the b5-square. 12.♘b5 ♚c6 13.♙a3 b6 14.♚c3 ♙d7. Black has completed the development of his pieces. Now, he is as well prepared for actions on the queenside as his opponent. 15.♙e2 ♘e4 16.♚xc6 ♘xc6= Wharrier – Teipel, ICCF 2016) 9...♘e7 10.♘b3 ♘xb3 11.axb3 ♚xd4 12.♘xd4. It might seem that White has a slight edge, because his bishop is much more active than its counterpart. Still, after 12...♘g6 13.♘f3 f6!?, it becomes obvious that he will be unable to hold on to the e5-square. 14.exf6 gxf6 15.g3 e5 16.♙g2 ♙e6= Panyushkin – Rolle, ICCF 2015.

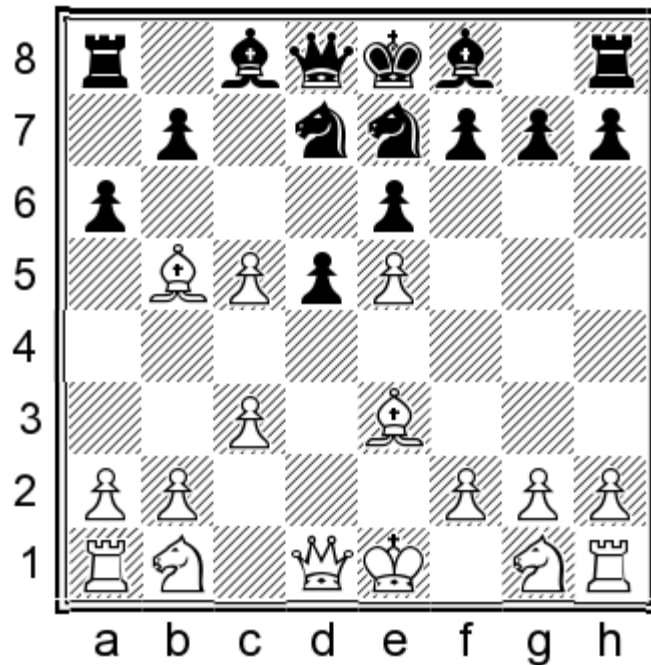
6...♘e7!?

From here, Black’s knight may go to c6, freeing the other knight from the pin, as well as to f5, threatening ♘xe3.



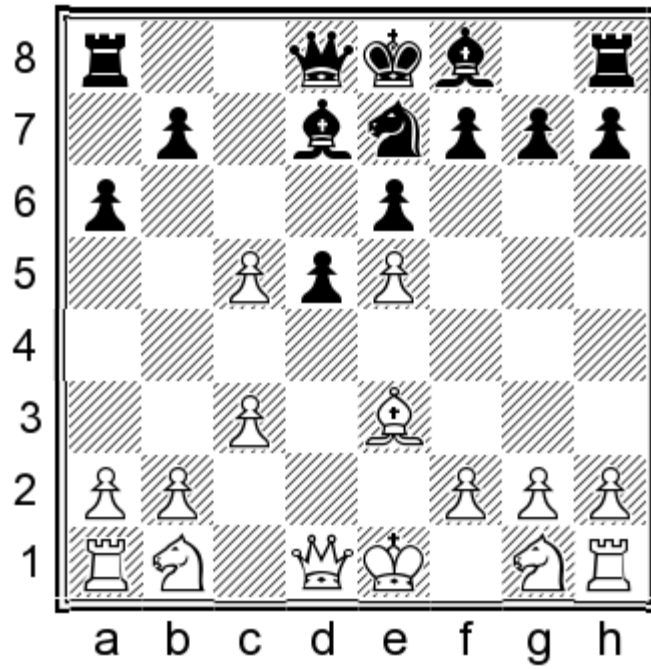
7. ♖f3

After 7.c3, Black should better play immediately 7...a6!?, clarifying the intentions of White's bishop.



Following 8. ♗a4 ♘c6 9. b4 ♗dxе5, Black restores the material balance. 10. ♗a3 ♗e7 11. f4 ♗g6 12. ♗f3 0-0 13. ♗c2 a5. He wishes to undermine the base under the enemy pawn on c5. 14. b5 ♗b8 15. 0-0 ♗d7 16. c6 bxc6 17. bxc6 ♗c5 18. ♗b5 ♗e4 19. ♗cd4 ♗d6 20. ♗c1 ♗c7 21. g3 ♗e8 22. a4 ♗c5∞, followed by e6-e5, opening the diagonal for his bishop on c8, Khanas – Tkachenko, ICCF 2017.

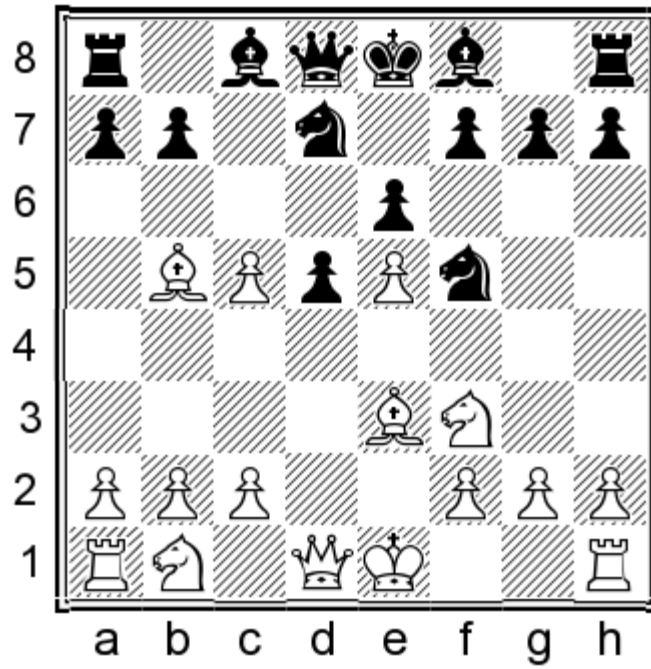
8. ♗xd7+ ♗xd7



9.♘e2 ♘f5 10.♙d4 ♘xd4 11.cxd4 b6 12.cxb6 ♖xb6 13.♗b3 ♗xb3 14.axb3. Black has two powerful bishops for the sacrificed pawn and good attacking prospects against the weak enemy pawns on the b-file. 14...♙e7 15.f4 0-0 16.♙f2 f6. He wishes to open the position in order to exploit the power of his bishop-pair. 17.♖c1 ♙a7 18.♙e3 ♖b8 19.♘d2 g5 ♞
Telepnev – Holroyd, ICCF 2015.

9.♘f3 ♘f5 10.♙d4 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 (Following 11.cxd4 b6 12.c6 ♙xc6, Black will gradually complete his development 13.♘c3 ♙e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗d3, Lavrov – Khairullin, St Petersburg 2012, 15...b5! ♞ and will try to prove the power of his bishops in the middlegame.) 11...♖c8. Now, in order to defend his pawn on c5, White must weaken his queenside. 12.b4 b6 13.cxb6 (13.c6, Dubiel – Khenkin, Germany 2011. This move contradicts White's intentions to hold on to the pawn. 13...♖xc6! ♞ Black has a bishop-pair and his prospects are preferable.) 13...♖c4 14.♗d1 ♗xb6 15.0-0 a5 16.a3 ♙e7 17.♗c1. White is preparing the development of his knight on b1. 17...0-0 18.♘bd2 ♖cc8 19.♗b2 f6 20.♘b3 ♗c7 21.exf6 ♖xf6 ♞
Firnhaber – Holroyd, ICCF 2015. Black has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. White must consider not only ♗xc3, but also the exchange-sacrifice on f3.

7...♘f5

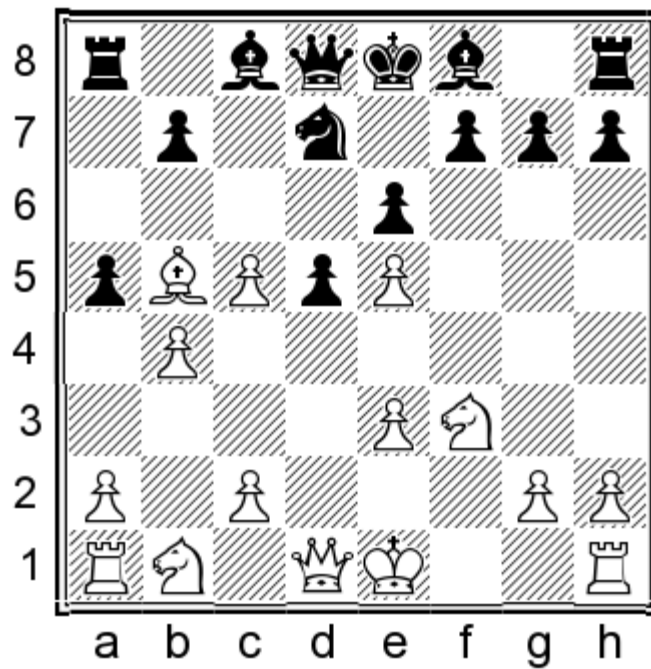


8.b4

This is a principled move. White is holding on to his extra pawn.

After 8.♙d4 ♚a5+, Black restores effortlessly the material balance. 9.♘c3 a6 10.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 11.0-0 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♚xc5 ∞ Petenyi – Cheparinov, Jerusalem 2015.

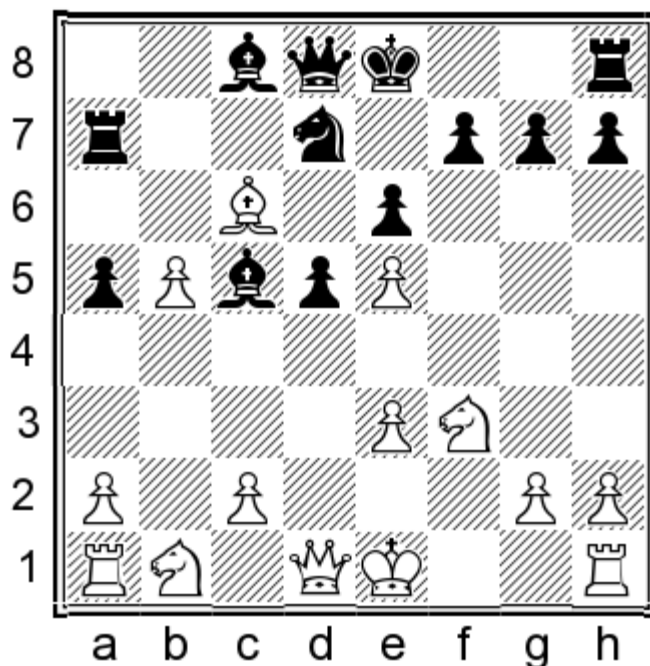
8...♘c3 9.fxex3 a5



10.c3

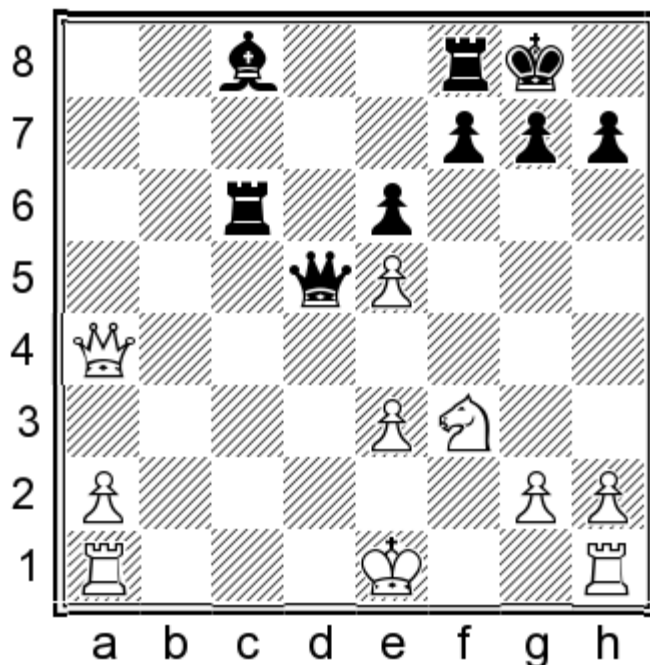
White has a good alternative here – 10.c6, getting rid immediately of his doubled pawn. 10...bxc6 11.♙xc6 ♚a7 12.b5

♙c5. From this square, Black's bishop will not only attack the weak enemy pawn on e3, but will also prevent b5-b6.



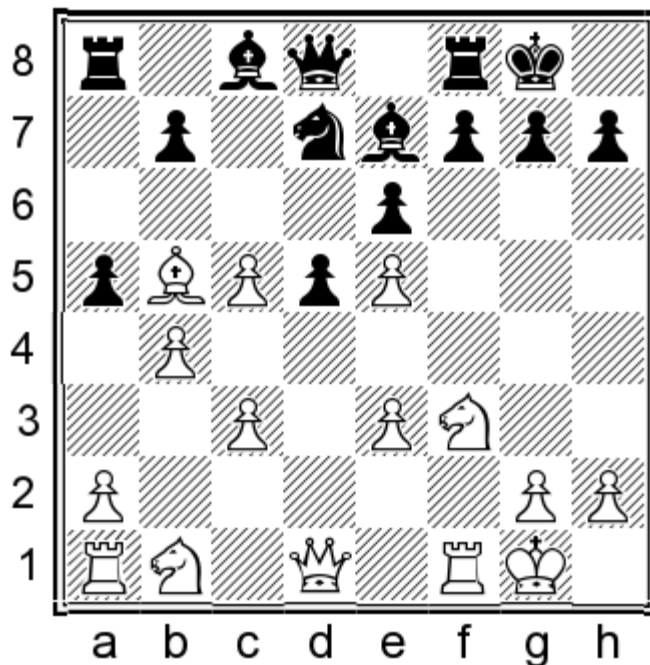
13.c4 0-0 14.♘c3 ♘xe5. He sacrifices temporarily a piece and has no problems whatsoever. 15.♘xe5 ♜f6 16.♘d3 ♙b4 17.♘xb4 ♜xc3+ 18.♙f2 axb4 19.cxd5 ♜b2+ 20.♜e2 ♜f6+ 21.♜f3 ♜b2= Hudak – Andeer, ICCF 2014.

13.♜d3 0-0 14.♘bd2 a4 15.c4 ♘b8 16.♘d4. White is trying to hold on to the c6-outpost by all means. 16...dxc4 17.♜xc4 ♙xd4 18.♜xd4 ♘xc6 19.bxc6 ♝c7 20.♜xa4 ♜d5 21.♘f3 ♝xc6=



White still has an extra pawn, but his pawn-structure has been seriously compromised. 22.0-0 ♝c4 23.♜a7 ♙b7 24.♝ab1 ♝c7 25.a4 h6 26.♝b4 ♝fc8 27.h3 ♜d7 28.♜d4 ♙d5 29.a5, Moreno Carretero – Woodard, ICCF 2016, 29...♝c4 30.♝xc4 ♝xc4 31.♜b6 ♝c2 32.♝f2 ♝c6 33.♜d4 ♝c1+ 34.♙h2 ♜c8 35.♝b2 ♙xf3 36.gxf3 ♝a1. White will be incapable of preserving his material advantage due to his vulnerable king. 37.♜d2 ♜c4 38.♝c2 ♜f1 39.♜g2 ♜xg2+ 40.♙xg2 ♝xa5 41.f4 g5=

10...♙e7 11.0-0 0-0

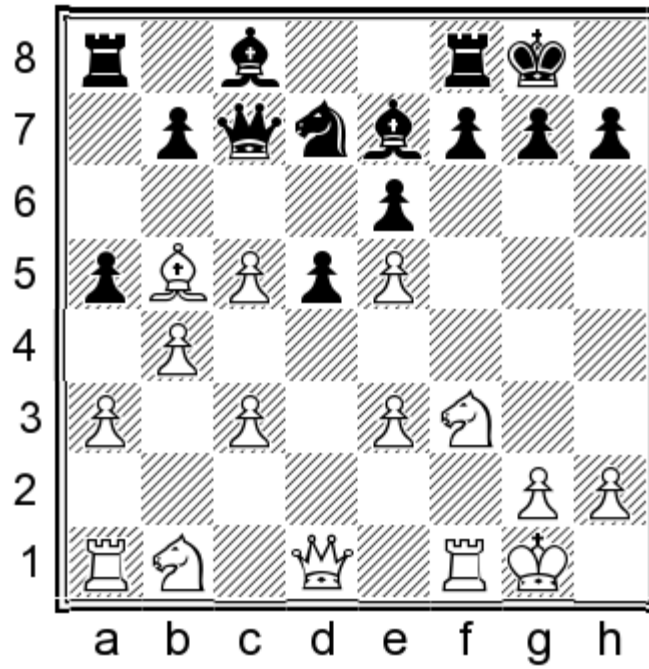


12.a3

After 12.a4 ♖c7 13.♗d4 f6, White can hold on to the e5-square only at the price of the loss of his c5-pawn. 14.♘bd2 fxe5 15.♗g4 ♘f6 16.♗g3 b6 17.♗xe5 ♖xe5 18.♘xe5 bxc5 19.♙c6 ♜a7 20.b5 ♙d6 21.♘df3 c4∞ Staroske – Brodda, ICCF 2015.

12.♗d3 ♖c7 13.♘bd2 ♘xe5. Black has restored the material balance and his prospects are not worse. 14.♘xe5 ♖xe5 15.a4 f5. He is preventing e3-e4. 16.♘b3 ♖c7 17.♘xa5 ♙xc5 18.♘xb7, Evtushenko – Brodda, ICCF 2015, 18...♙xb7 19.bxc5 ♖xc5 20.a5 f4= Black exploits the fact that the e3-pawn is pinned and simplifies the position even more.

12...♖c7

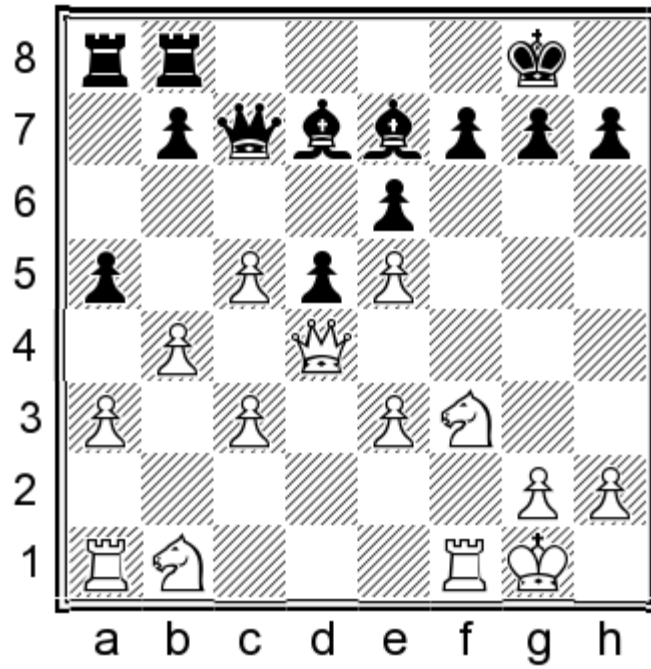


13. ♕xd7

White eliminates the enemy attack against his e5-pawn, but exchanges his powerful bishop and helps the development of Black's queenside.

13. ♖d4 f6 14. ♕xd7 fxe5 15. ♗xe5 ♖xd7 16. ♗g3 ♗b5. Now, thanks to his bishop-pair and the vulnerability of White's queenside pawns, Black obtains counterplay, which is sufficient for him to maintain the balance. 17. ♖a2 axb4 18. cxb4 b6 19. ♗c7 ♕d8 20. ♗d6 bxc5 21. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 22. bxc5 ♕f6 23. c6. White has numerous weaknesses in his position, so his extra pawn is practically immaterial. 23... ♕a6 24. ♖c1 ♕b5 25. c7 ♖fc8 26. ♗d4 ♕g5 27. ♖c3 ♕d7 28. ♗d2 ♖a7 29. ♖ac2. White's rooks are squeezed with the protection of his pawns. 29... ♔f8. Black plans to transfer his king to the d6-square in order to increase the pressure against the enemy pawn on c7. 30. ♗2f3 ♕f6 31. ♔f2 e5 32. ♗e2 ♔e7 33. ♗g3 ♔d6∞
Pereira – Markus, ICCF 2015.

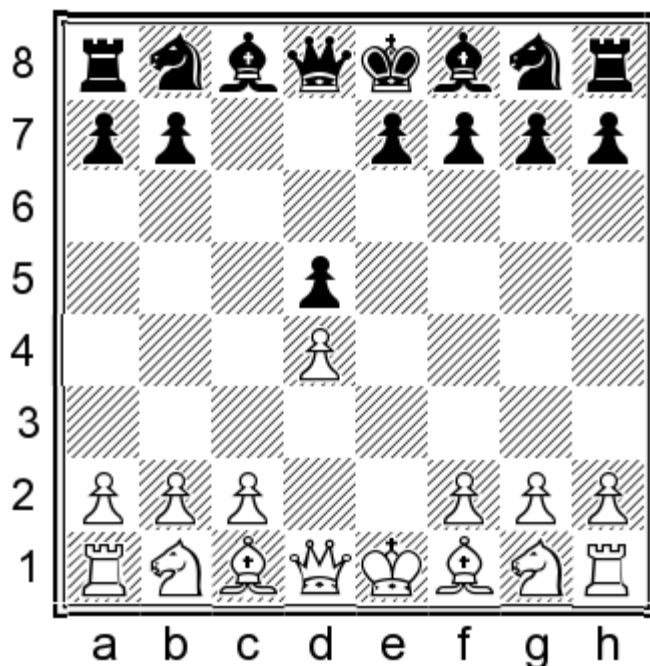
13... ♕xd7 14. ♗d4 ♖fb8



Black will fail to regain the c5-pawn anyway, so he plans to prepare b7-b6, opening files on the queenside. **15. ♖bd2 b6 16. cxb6 ♜xb6 17. ♜fc1 ♙a4 18. c4 dxc4 19. ♜xc4 ♜c6 20. ♜ac1 ♜aa6 21. ♗e4 ♙b5 22. ♜4c3 axb4 23. axb4 ♜xc3 24. ♜xc3 ♜c6 25. ♗c5 ♜b6.** Black plans to remove his bishop to e8, after which White will hardly manage to protect his pawns on b4, e5 and e3. **26. ♗d4 ♙e8 27. ♗d3.** Now, White complies with the fact that he has no advantage and gives back the extra material. **27... ♜xc3 28. ♜xc3 ♙xb4 29. ♗xb4 ♜xb4 30. h4 ♜f8=** Poljak – Holroyd, ICCF 2015.

Chapter 8

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5



In this chapter we will analyse only the lines for White, in which he refrains from the pawn-advance c2-c4 and pushes only c2-c3, after which there arises a Carlsbad pawn-structure on the board. In fact he plays the exchange variation of the Queen's Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.cxd5 exd5), but with colours reversed and an extra tempo. This additional move will hardly be so useful for him, because the pieces of both sides are not developed yet and are not in direct contact. Later, as a rule, White concentrates on actions in the centre and on the kingside, while Black usually prepares the standard pawn-minority attack, for the Carlsbad pawn-structure, (the pawn-advance b7-b5-b4). The popularity of the exchange system has increased considerably in the last years, since there often arises transposition to it from the London system, for example after: 1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 cxd4 4. exd4, or 1.d4 d5 2.♘f4 c5 3.e3 ♖c6 4.c3 cxd4 5.exd4.

If we do not count the Panov Attack (4.c4 – see Chapters 9-11), White usually prefers in this position the move **C) 4.♘d3**. Sometimes he chooses however **A) 4.c3** and **B) 4.♗f3**, and plenty of theory has been amassed in these lines as well.

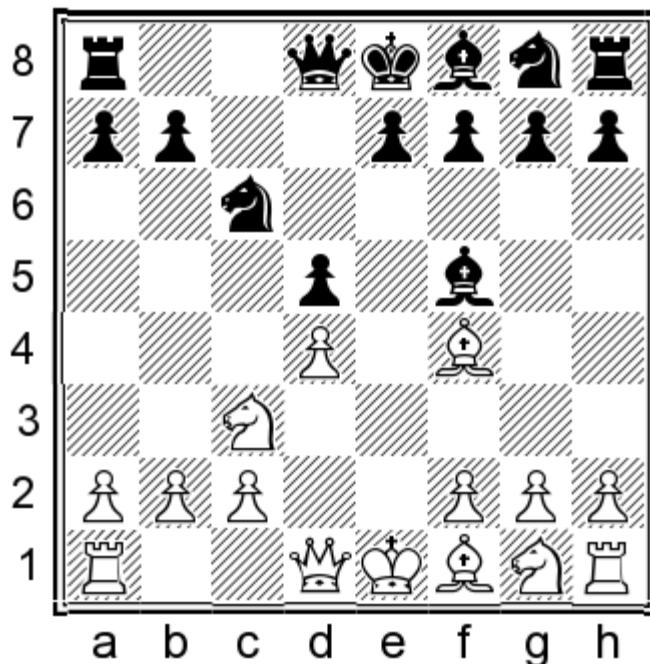
4.♘f4 ♖c6 5.c3 (5.♗c3 ♘f5 – see 4.♗c3; 5.♗f3 ♗f6 – see variation **B2)** 5...♘f5 – see variation **A**.

4.h3. This move is too modest. Now, after ♗f3, Black's bishop will not be able to come to g4, but this is hardly justifying the lost tempo by White. The point is that Black's bishop has another good square – f5. 4...♘f5 5.♘d3 ♘xd3 6.♙xd3 ♗c6 7.c3 ♗f6 8.♗f3 e6 9.♘f4 ♘d6 10.♘xd6 ♙xd6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗bd2 ♖ab8 13.a4 ♖fc8= Lopukhin – Napalkov, Russia 2002. Black has reached a very good version of the Carlsbad pawn-structure. White can hardly find an active plan for his actions. On the contrary, Black's intentions are quite clear. He plans the pawn-minority attack: ♙c7 (so that after a7-a6, White would not have the possibility a4-a5), a7-a6 and b7-b5.

4.♘b5+ ♘d7 5.♘xd7+. This exchange cannot be approved, because Black is usually trying to trade himself the light-squared bishops in similar positions. 5...♗xd7 6.♗f3 ♗gf6 7.♘g5 e6 8.0-0 (8.♘xf6 ♗xf6 9.♗bd2, Holly – Bartak, Bratislava 1995, 9...♘d6!?) 8...♘d6 9.♖e1 ♙c7 10.♗bd2 0-0 11.c3 b5 ♣ Prpic – Franciskovic, Rijeka 2013. White's position is solid but passive.

4.♗c3. White's knight is not well placed here, because his c2-pawn is blocked and Black can parry easily the threat

♙f4+♜b5. 4...♞c6 5.♙f4 (5.♞f3 ♞f6 – see variation **B**) 5...♙f5. Black wishes to be able to counter ♞b5 with ♞c8.



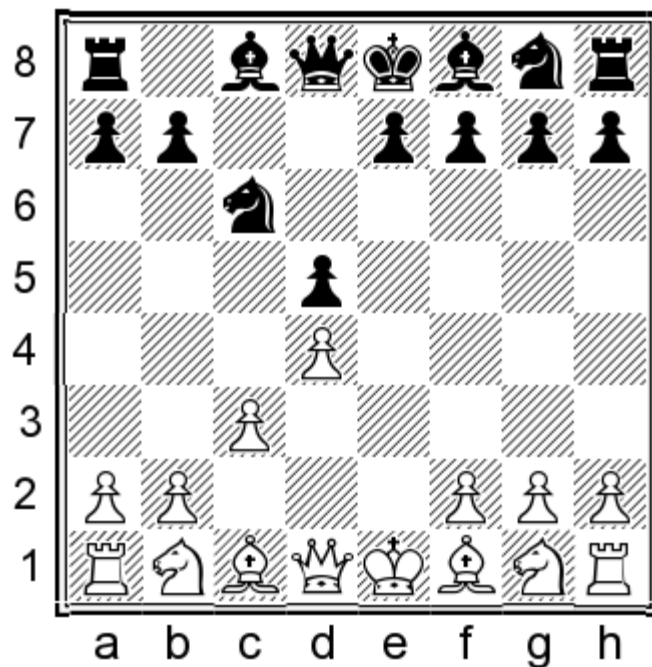
It is possible that White should already think about equality, because his attempt to play too actively might lead him to an inferior position. 6.♙d3 ♙xd3 7.♞xd3 e6 8.♞f3 a6!? Black covers the b5-square from the possible sorties of White's queen, or knight. The move a7-a6 is not a loss of a tempo, because later it would be useful for Black as preparation for the pawn-minority attack. 9.0-0 ♙d6 10.♙xd6 ♞xd6 11.♞a4. Now, Black must be careful about the pawn-advance b7-b5, because it would lead to the weakening of the c5-square. 11...♞ge7. In this position this move seems more flexible than ♞f6, because later Black might begin active actions in the centre with f7-f6, e6-e5. 12.c3 0-0 13.♞fe1 h6. This is a leeway for the king and also protection against the possible enemy knight-sortie ♞g5. 14.♞c5 ♞c7. Black prevents a4-a5. 15.a4 ♞fc8= Bergner – Nyberg, ICCF 2014. The move b7-b6 is not possible yet, but Black can prepare it with ♞a5-c4, or ♞f5-d6-c4.

6.♞f3 e6 7.♞e5 (7.♙b5 ♞ge7 8.0-0 a6= Blondel – Chromczak, ICCF 2016) 7...♙d6 8.g4 ♙g6∞. Here, White should better stop his attacking attempts and refrain from the further chase after the enemy bishop on g6, because after 9.h4 ♙xe5 10.♙xe5 ♞xe5 11.dxe5 h5 12.g5 ♞e7 13.♙b5+ ♞c6=, it would become clear that the advance of his g and h-pawns has only weakened his kingside, Aymard – Mut Company, ICCF 2010.

A) 4.c3

White protects his d4-pawn. Now, he will be able to develop his bishop on f4 without being afraid after ♞c6 of the double attack ♞b6.

4...♞c6



5. ♖f4

5. ♘f3 ♘f6 – see variation B.

5. ♙d3 ♚c7 – see variation C.

5... ♗f5

Black exploits the delay of development of White's bishop on f1.

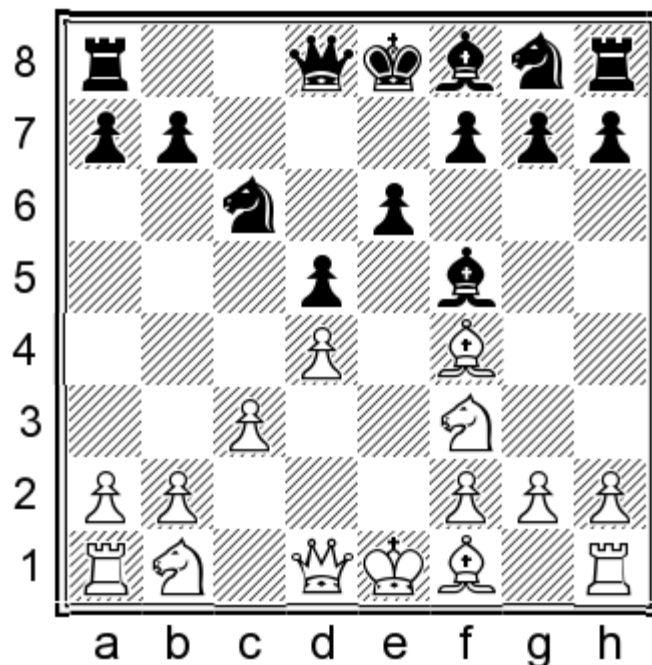
6. ♘f3

About 6. ♘d2 e6 7. ♚b3 (7. ♘gf3 ♙d6 – see 6. ♘f3) 7... ♚d7 – see 6. ♚b3.

6. ♚b3 ♚d7 7. ♘f3 (7. ♘d2 e6 8. ♘gf3 ♘ge7 – see 6. ♘f3). Here, Black has an interesting idea: 7...f6!?, taking the e5-square under control and also threatening to chase the enemy bishop on f4 with g7-g5, h7-h5. 8. ♙e2 g5 9. ♙g3 h5 10. h4 g4 11. ♘fd2, Kreindl – Balinov, Austria 2007, 11... ♙g6!?, followed by ♘h6-f5. Black has seized completely the initiative.

It seems harmless for Black if White chooses here 6. ♙d3 ♙xd3 7. ♚xd3 e6 8. ♘f3 ♙d6 9. ♙xd6 ♚xd6. Following the trade of the bishops the position has been simplified considerably. 10. 0-0 ♘ge7 11. ♘bd2 (11. ♚e1 0-0= J.Geller – Kokarev, Irkutsk 2010) 11...h6 12. a4 0-0= Sermek – Mikhalchishin, Murska Sobota 2006.

6...e6



7. ♖b3

White exerts pressure against the pawn on b7 in an attempt to impede Black's development.

7. ♘d3 ♘xd3 8. ♙xd3 ♘d6 – see 6. ♘d3.

Following 7. ♗bd2 ♘d6 8. ♘xd6 ♙xd6, Black has no problems at all. 9. ♙e2 ♗f6 10. 0-0 h6!? This is the simplest for Black. Now, after ♗h4, his bishop will be able to retreat to the h7-square. 11. ♖e1 0-0 12. ♗f1 ♖ab8 13. ♗g3 ♘h7 14. a4 ♖fc8= Vu Phuong Thao – Huynh Mai Phuong, Dong Thap 2004.

7... ♙d7 8. ♗bd2

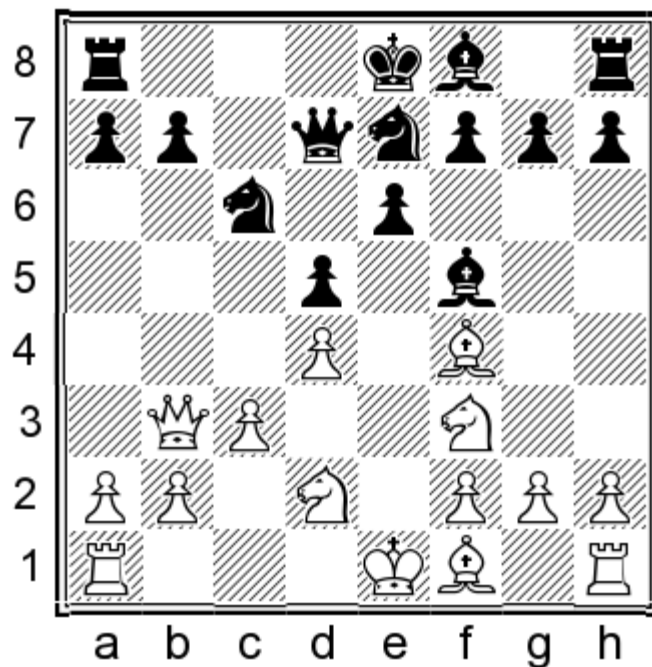
About 8. ♗e5 ♗xe5 9. ♘xe5 ♗e7 10. ♗d2 – see 8. ♗bd2.

After 8. ♘b5, Black has a choice. He can play the calm move 8... ♘d6, or try 8... f6!?∞, with the idea to seize the initiative later with g7-g5, h7-h5. 9. ♘xd6 (Or 9. ♗e5 ♙c7 10. ♘g3 ♗ge7. Black has defended reliably the c6-square and intends to castle. 11. 0-0 0-0= Nadj Hedjesi – Mihok, Kecskemet 2016.) 9... ♙xd6 10. ♗bd2, Szabolcsi – Mihok, Budapest 2012, 10... h6!? 11. 0-0 ♗ge7 12. a4 0-0=

8... ♗ge7

Black is preparing ♗g6.

When White's queen is on b3, Black cannot play 8... ♘d6, because then the eventual exchange of the b-pawns would be in White's favour, because of his better development.



9.♙e2

9.h3 ♖g6 10.♙h2 h5=

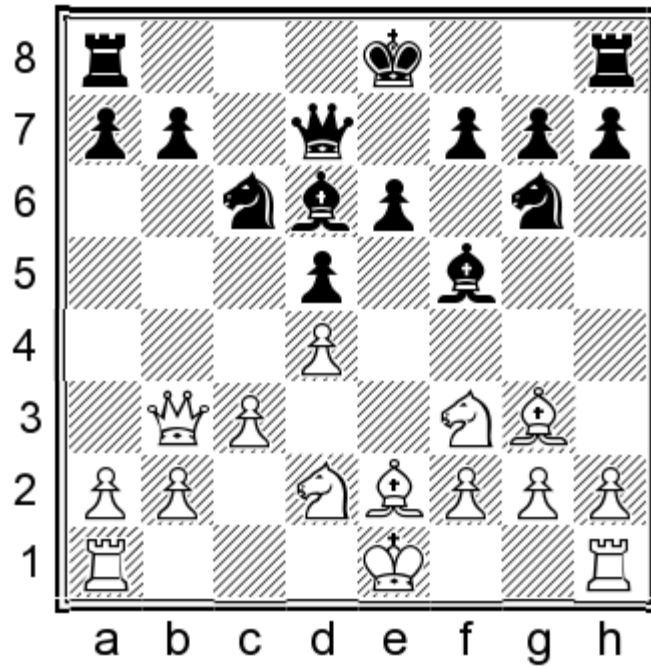
9.♘h4, Kollars – Timman, Helsingor 2017, 9...♘g6!?=

9.♙b5. Black parries easily the threats on the a4-e8 diagonal. 9...a6 10.♘e5 (10.♙e2 ♖g6 11.♙g3 h5∞ Beukema – L’Ami, Dieren 2017) 10...♖c8 11.♙e2 ♘xe5 12.♙xe5 ♘c6= Torre – Mohota, Bangkok 2014.

9.♘e5. This move does not seem so logical, because after the exchange on c6, its place would be taken by Black’s other knight. 9...♘xe5 10.♙xe5 ♘c6 11.♘f3 (11.♙g3 ♙d6 12.♙xd6 ♖xd6 13.♙e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♖c7= Sveshnikov – Macieja, Warsaw 2010) 11...f6 12.♙g3 g5! Black exploits his opponent’s slow play and suddenly seizes the initiative. The advance of the g and h-pawns is very unpleasant for White. 13.♙e2 h5 14.h4 g4 15.♘h2 ♖g8 16.0-0 ♙h6 17.♖ad1 ♙e4 18.♖fe1 f5! ♣ Wohl – Sasikiran, Torquay 2002. The f-pawn had joined into the attack and White’s problems increase with every move.

9...♘g6 10.♙g3 ♙d6

Now, with a knight on g6, this move has become possible, because after the exchange of the bishops, the knight-sortie to the f4-square would be very dangerous for White.



11. ♖f1

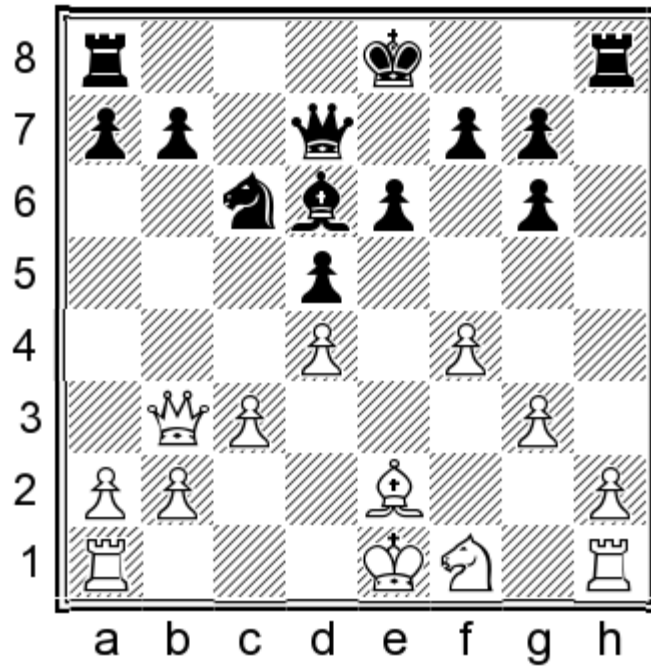
Following 11.0-0 0-0 12.c4, Larsen – Valerga, Buenos Aires 2002, Black can enter a very favourable for him version of a position with an isolated queen’s pawn. 12... ♗xg3!? 13.hxg3 dxc4 14. ♖xc4 ♕e4!?. His bishop is transferred to the strategically important d5-square. 15. ♖e3 ♕d5

11. ♕xd6 ♖xd6 12. ♖xb7 ♜b8 13. ♖a6, Sveshnikov – Gavrilov, Sochi 2005, 13...0-0!?. Black is not in a hurry to regain his pawn. 14.g3 (14.b4?! White’s attempt to preserve his material advantage lead to a difficult position for him. 14... ♖f4) 14... ♖xb2 15. ♕b5 ♖ge7 Now, in order to evaluate the position correctly, it would be sufficient to count the pawn-islands. White has one more.

11... ♖f4 12. ♕xf4 ♕xf4 13.g3 ♕d6

It also seems interesting for Black to retreat his bishop on the other diagonal – 13... ♕h6!?

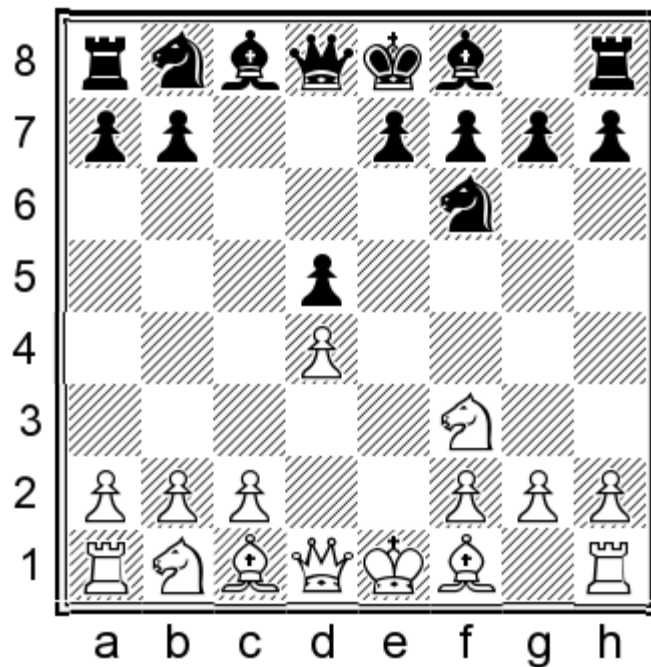
14. ♖h4 ♕e4 15.f3 ♕g6 16. ♖xg6 hxg6 17.f4



This position was reached in the game Kryakvin – Gavrilov, Voronezh 2017. Black should better avoid castling kingside, because after h4-h5, his king might come under attack, so the correct plan for him would be to prepare castling queenside. 17...♖c7!? 18.♗b5 0-0-0 19.0-0-0 ♠a5 20.♙b1 a6 21.♘d3 b5!?∞, followed by ♜c4.

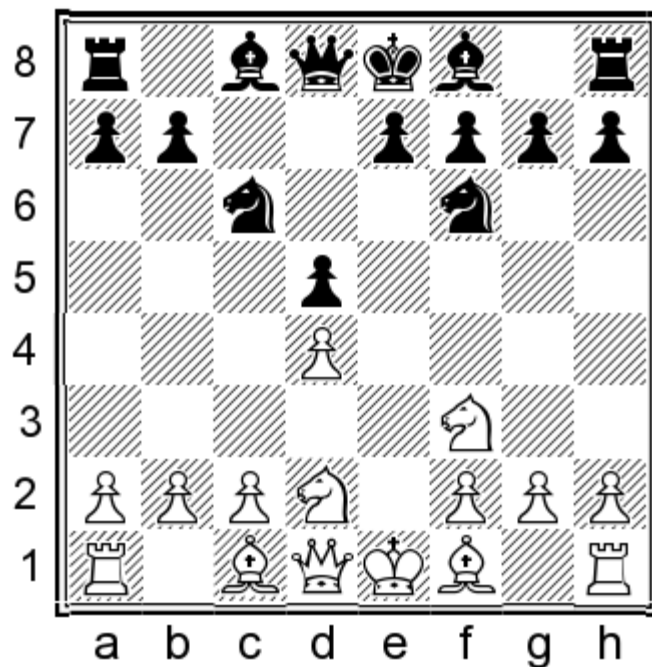
B) 4.♘f3 ♜f6

Black must play accurately now, because after the straightforward move 4...♜c6 5.c4 ♜f6 6.♜c3, there arises a variation of the Panov Attack, which we do not analyse in this book.



We will deal in details now with **B1) 5.♙d3** and **B2) 5.♙f4**.

About 5.c4 g6 – see Chapter 9.



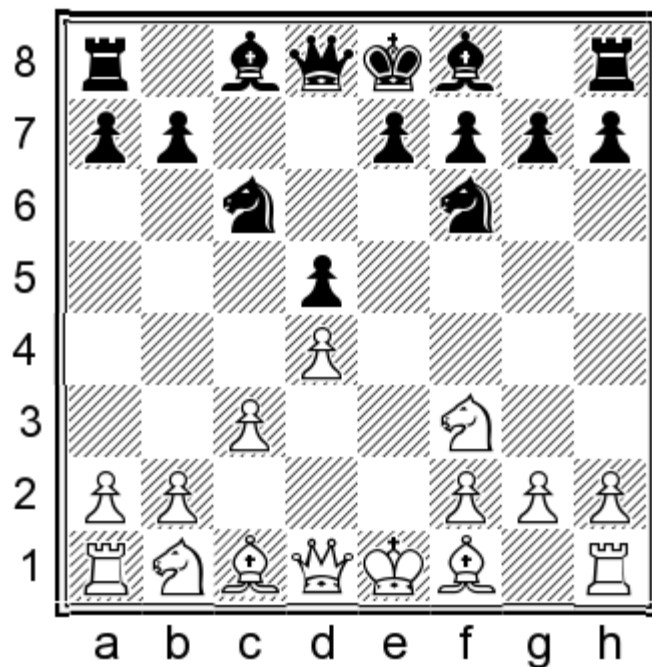
About 6.c3 ♘g4 – see 5.c3.

6.♘d3 ♘g4 – see variation **B1**.

6.♗b3 ♘f5 7.♘d3 ♘xd3 8.♙xd3 e6= Bogdanovich – Kuzubov, Lvov 2017.

6.♘b5 ♘f5 7.0-0 (7.c4, Kovacevic – Cepon, Bled 1992. Here, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 7...g6!? 8.♗e5 ♜c8 9.♙a4 ♘g7! 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♘xc6+ ♘d7 12.♘xd7+ ♙xd7 13.♙xd7+ ♗xd7 14.cxd5 ♘xd4. The activity of his pieces compensates his minimal material deficit. 15.♗f3 ♘f6 16.0-0 0-0 17.♞b1 ♗b6 18.♞d1 ♞fd8= Black will restore the material balance on his next move and will obtain a very good position.) 7...e6 8.c4 ♘e7 9.♗e5 ♙c7 10.♙a4 ♞c8 11.♙xa7 ♗d7 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♙xc7 ♞xc7. White has managed to win a pawn, but Black maintains the balance thanks to his bishop-pair. 14.♗xd7 ♗xd7 15.c5 ♞b7 16.b3 ♞a8 17.♘b2 g5 18.a3 g4 19.b4 ♘g5 20.f4 ♘h4 21.g3 ♘e7 22.h4 h5 23.♞f2 ♘f8 24.♗f1 ♘e4 25.♗d2 ♘f5 26.♗f1 ♘e4= Marin – Solodovnichenko, La Massana 2012. It is not easy to see how White can break his opponent's defence.

5.c3 ♗c6



About 6.♘e2 ♘g4 – see 5.♘e2.

6.♘f4 ♘f5 – see variation **B2**.

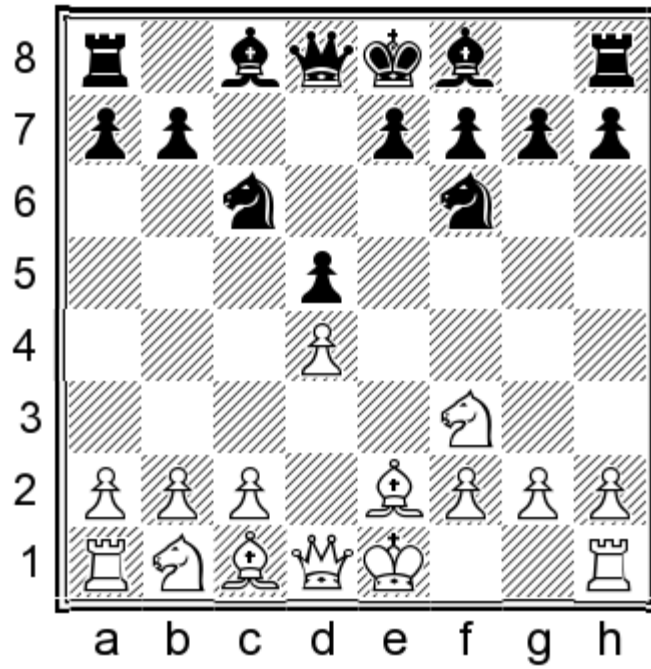
6.♘d3 ♘g4 or 6.♗bd2 ♘g4 7.♘d3 e6 – see variation **B1**.

6.h3 ♘f5=

6.♗e5 ♘f5 7.g4, Petrosian – Macieja, Martuni 2007 (7.♘b5 ♗b6 8.♗a4 ♖c8. Black holds on to the c6-square. 9.0-0 e6 10.♗d2, Cording – Armbrrecht, Germany 1990, 10...♘e7!?) 7...♘e6∞ This is his most precise move. Now, White cannot chase the enemy bishop with his h-pawn. Black will complete the development of his kingside pieces with g7-g6, ♘g7 and will obtain a quite acceptable position.

White would not achieve much with 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♘b5. The placement of this bishop here only helps Black to organise the pawn-minority attack, since he will chase it with a7-a6. (6.♘f4 ♘g4 – see variation **B2**) 6...♘g4 7.0-0 e6 8.h3 ♘xf3 9.♗xf3 ♘e7 10.♗e2 a6 11.♘d3 ♗b4 12.♘g5 0-0 13.♗f4 h6 14.♘xf6 ♘xf6 15.c3 ♗xd3 16.♗xd3 ♘e7= Vallejo Pons – Navara, Tallinn 2016.

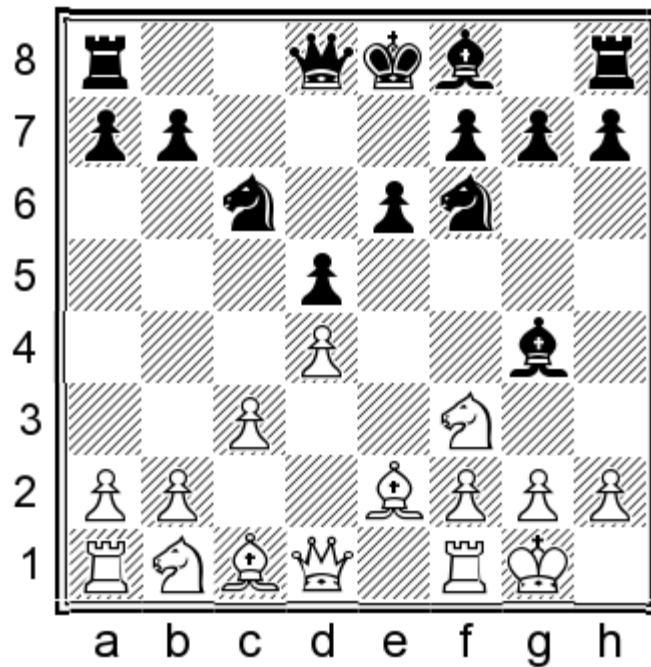
5.♘e2. This is a quiet development of White's bishop. He is preparing in advance against the pin of his knight on f3.
5...♗c6



6.c3 ♖g4 7.♙f4 (7.0-0 e6 – see 6.0-0) 7...e6 8.♚b3, Mirzoev – Mihailovs, Pamplona 2009. After the pawn-sacrifice 8...♙d6!? 9.♚xb7 0-0!♚, Black completes his development and seizes firmly the initiative.

6.♘c3. Now, White would not be able to protect his d4-pawn with the move c2-c3. 6...♙g4 7.0-0 e6 8.♙g5 (8.♙f4 ♙d6 – see variation **B2**) 8...♙e7 9.h3 ♙xf3 10.♙xf3 ♚b6. You can see now the defects of White's move six. 11.♘e2 ♚xb2♚ Ritscher – Bondarev, Germany 2005.

6.0-0 ♙g4 7.c3 e6



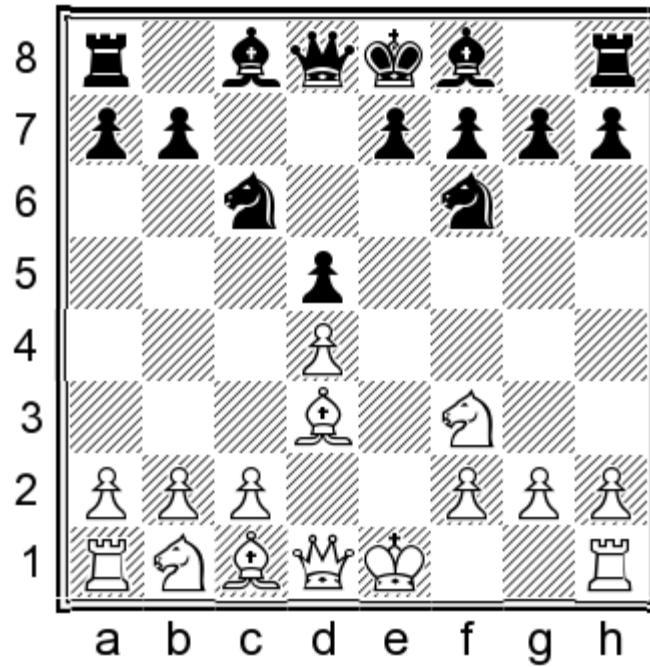
8.♙g5 ♙d6 9.♘bd2 ♚c7!?. 10.h3 ♙h5= Lajarige – Petenati, France 2007.

8.♙f4 ♙d6 9.♙xd6 ♚xd6 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♙e1 ♚ab8 12.a4 a6= Esterluss – Blum, Passau 1997.

8.♘bd2 ♙d6 9.♙e1 ♚c7 10.♘f1. Now, there has arisen on the board one of the basic positions of the exchange variation of the Queen's Gambit with colours reversed. White's extra tempo is insufficient for him to obtain an advantage in the

opening. 10...0-0 11.♘g3 ♜ab8 12.a4 a6 13.♙d3 h6. Black prevents ♙g5. 14.h3, Ratkovic – Radovanovic, Belgrade 2014, 14...♙xf3 15.♚xf3 e5= Black is well prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.

B1) 5.♙d3 ♘c6



6.c3

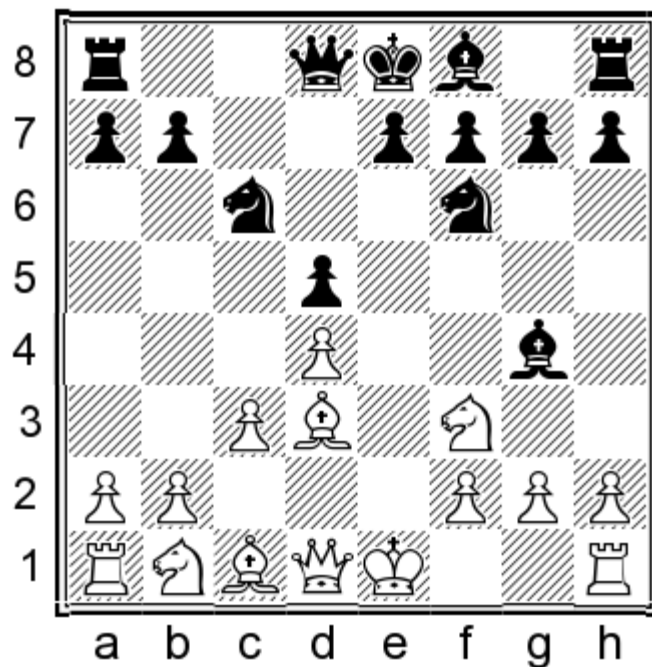
About 6.b3 ♙g4 – see 5.b3.

6.♙f4 ♙g4 – see variation **B2**.

6.♘bd2 ♙g4 7.c3 e6, or 6.0-0 ♙g4 7.c3 e6 – see 6.c3.

6.h3. Black can exploit now his opponent's somewhat slow play and can try 6...♘b4!? – exchanging advantageously the light-squared bishops at the price of a tempo. 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 9.c3 ♘c6 10.0-0 e6 11.♙f4 ♙d6 12.♙xd6 ♚xd6 13.♞e1 0-0= Popovic – Vadasz, Budapest 1996.

6...♙g4



7.0-0

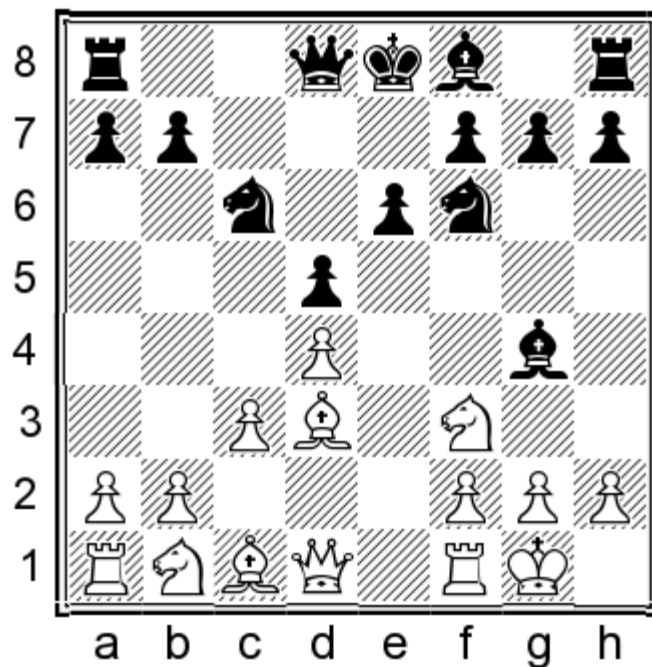
Sometimes White is not in a hurry to castle with the idea to exploit the f1-square for a manoeuvre of his knight.

7.♔f4 e6 – see variation **B2**.

7.h3 ♔h5 8.0-0 e6 – see 7.0-0.

7.♘bd2 e6 8.♗f1 (8.♚a4. Black can parry easily the threat ♗e5. 8...♘d7 9.♗e5 ♗dxe5 10.dxe5 ♔h5 11.0-0 ♔e7 12.f4 ♔g6 13.♔xg6 hxg6= Cifuentes Parada – Mirzoev, Zaragoza 2012.) 8...♔d6 9.♗g3 0-0 10.0-0 ♚c7 11.h3 (After 11.♔e3, Black can deploy advantageously his knight in the centre. 11...♗e4, followed by f7-f5, Lein – Dzindzichashvili, Chicago 1982.) 11...♔xf3 12.♚xf3 e5= This pawn-break in the centre leads to equality.

7...e6

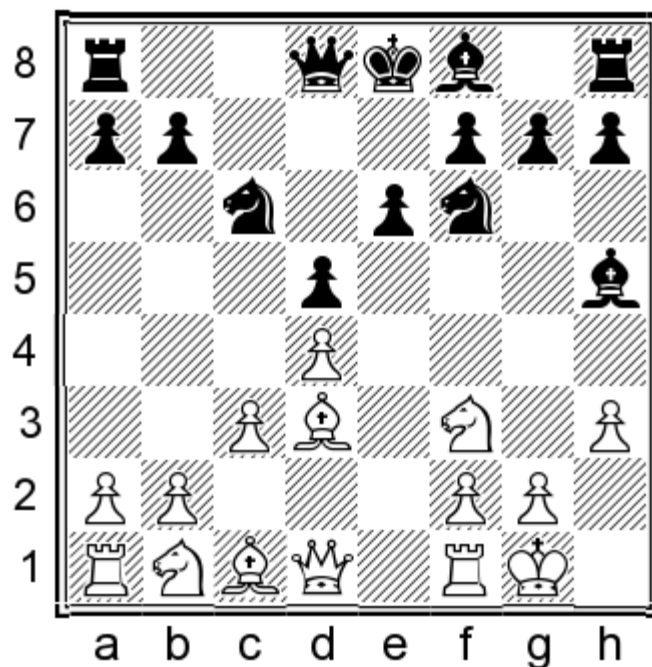


8. ♖g5

8. ♖f4 ♘d6 – see variation **B2**.

8. ♚b3. The threat against the b7-pawn can be best neutralised by Black with 8...a6!? 9. ♘e5 ♘xe5 10. dxe5 ♘d7 11. ♚a4 ♘h5= Kaltschmidt – Peschke, ICCF 2013.

The move 8.h3 only chases Black's bishop to the g6-square. 8...♘h5

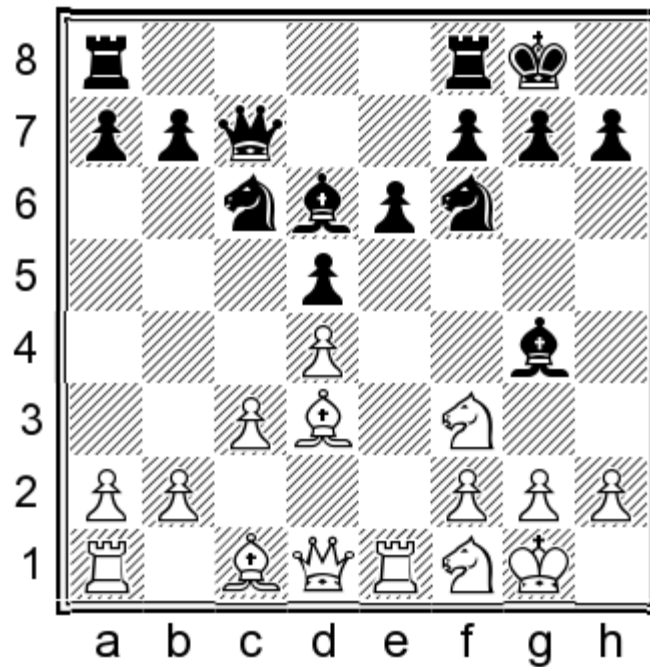


9. ♖f4 ♘d6 10. ♖xd6 (10. ♖g5?! Ju. Polgar – Karpov, Alma-Ata 1995, 10... ♚b6!? ♞) 10... ♚xd6 11. ♘bd2 0-0 12. ♞e1 ♞ac8 13. ♚b1 ♖g6 14. ♖xg6 hxg6 15. ♚d3 ♘d7 16. ♞e2 ♚c7 17. ♘g5 b5= Karasova – Tazelaar, ICCF 2017.

9. ♘bd2 ♘d6 10. ♞e1 ♚c7 11. ♘f1 ♖g6 12. ♖xg6 hxg6 13. ♚e2, Lopez Rodriguez – Lorenzini, Ferrol 2001, 13...0-0= Now, Black is perfectly prepared for his pawn-minority attack ♞ab8, b7-b5.

9.♔g5 ♕d6 10.♖bd2 ♜c7 11.♞e1 ♔g6 12.♙xg6 hxg6 13.c4. White changes the type of the pawn-structure, but Black parries easily the threats against his d5-pawn. 13...0-0 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♖b3, Alekseev – S.Kasparov, Guben 2003, 16...♞fe8!?!=

8.♖bd2 ♕d6 9.♞e1 (9.h3 ♔h5 – see 8.h3) 9...♜c7 10.♖f1 (10.h3 ♔h5 – see 8.h3) 10...0-0

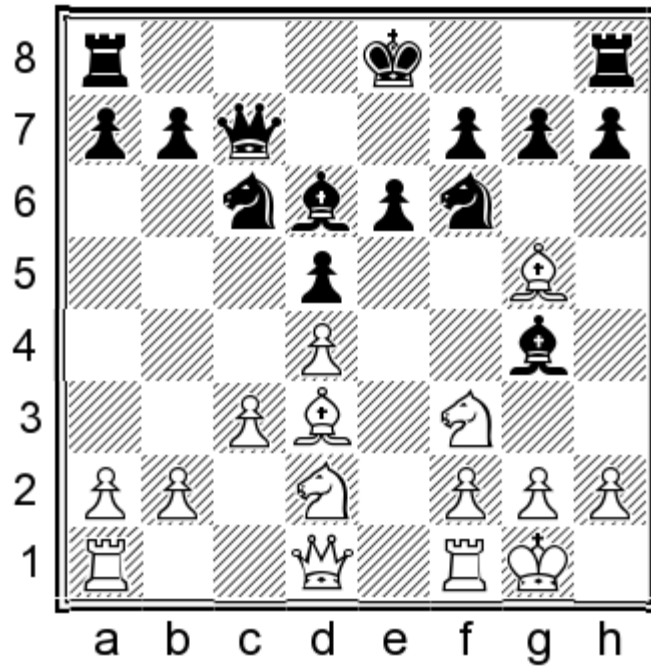


11.h3 ♔h5 12.♔g5 ♖d7 13.♔h4 ♞ab8. Black is not afraid of the bishop-sacrifice on h7. 14.♔g3 (14.♙xh7+? ♖xh7 15.♖g5+ ♖h6 16.♞d3 ♔g6 17.♞d2 ♔f4+ Bacrot – Ivanisevic, Berlin 2015) 14...♙xg3 15.♖xg3 ♔g6 16.♙xg6 hxg6= Subbotin – Svetlov, Moscow 2008.

11.♖g3. This manoeuvre of the knight is often encountered in the exchange variation of the Queen's Gambit. White has deprived the enemy bishop of the h5-square and now wishes to play h2-h3. In order to equalise Black should prepare the pawn-break in the centre e6-e5. 11...♞ae8!?! 12.♔g5, Ristic – Meszaros, Dortmund 1988 (12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♞xf3 e5) 12...♖h5!?!∞

11.♔g5 ♖d7 12.♔h4 ♔h5! Both sides are trying to exchange their opponent's active bishops. 13.♔g3 (The standard bishop-sacrifice would not work here: 13.♙xh7+?! ♖xh7 14.♖g5+ ♖h6 McEwan – Grant, Scotland 1992) 13...♔g6 14.♙xg6 hxg6 15.♙xd6 ♞xd6 16.♖g3 b5= Gheng – Botezatu, Eforie Nord 1999.

8...♕d6 9.♖bd2 ♜c7

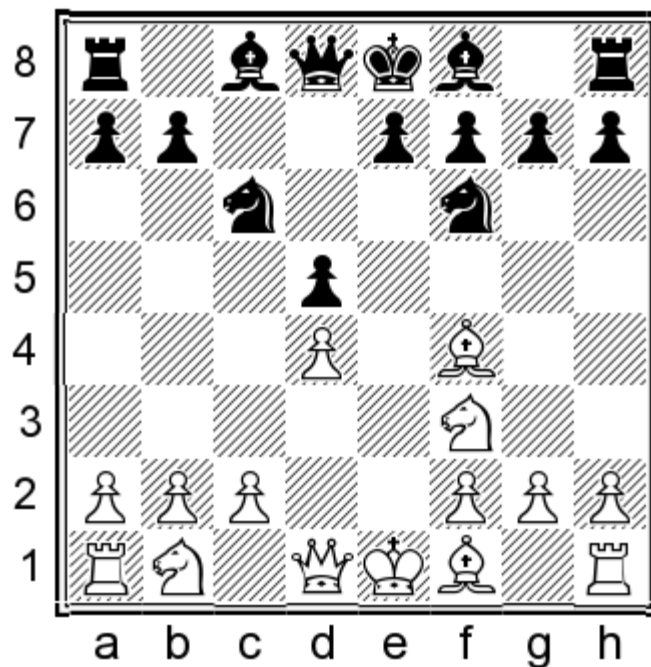


10.♖c2. Without this move, White would end up a pawn down after ♕xh2. 10...h6 11.♕h4 ♜h5 12.♞fe1 ♝f4 13.♕g3 0-0-0!? It has become clear now why Black was not in a hurry to castle kingside. Here, he can begin an attack against the enemy king with g7-g5. 14.♕xf4 (14.b4 h5 15.b5 ♜a5=) 14...♕xf4 15.h3 ♕xf3 16.♜xf3 g5∞ Genocchio – Svetushkin, Cutro 2009. The weakening of White’s king h2-h3 might hurt him in the future, since it would be easier for Black to open files on the kingside.

B2) 5.♕f4

White develops immediately his bishop to an active position.

5...♜c6



6.c3

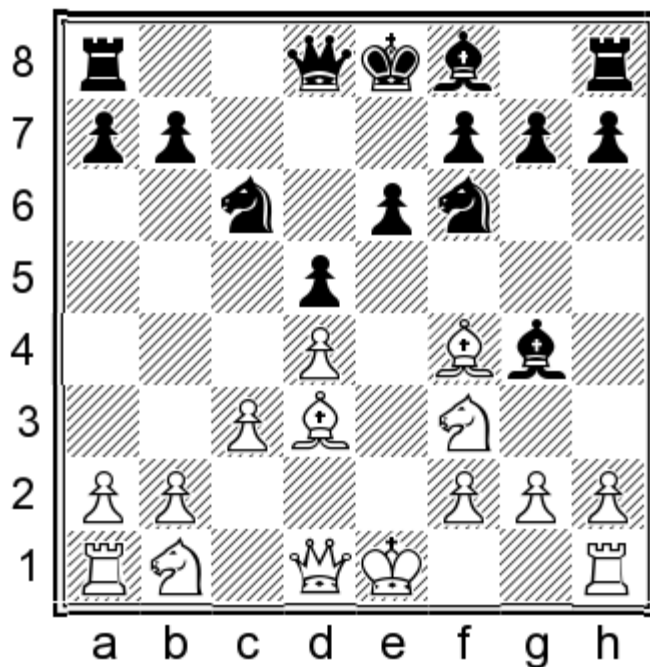
Now, White does not need to be afraid of the enemy queen-sortie to the b6-square. In addition, he can play ♖b3 himself.

6.♘bd2 ♕f5 7.♗b5, Van Foreest – Wirig, Chartres 2017 (7.c3 e6 – see 7.c3) 7...♞c8=

Following 6.♗b5, Black can force the enemy knight to be placed in front of his c-pawn. 6...♞a5+!? (He equalises too after the simple move 6...♞b6=) 7.♘c3 ♕g4 8.0-0 e6 9.h3 ♕xf3 10.♞xf3 ♞c8 11.♞fd1 ♕e7 12.♕f1 0-0 13.♘e2 b5 14.c3 b4= Kamsky – Gelfand, Elista 2007. Black has managed to advance quickly his b-pawn.

6.♘c3. This is not the best square for White's knight. Later, he will have to lose time to remove it from there and to push c2-c3. 6...♕g4 7.♕e2 e6 8.0-0 ♕d6 9.♕xd6 ♞xd6 10.♘b5 ♞b8 11.c3 a6 12.♘a3 0-0 13.♘c2 ♕xf3 14.♕xf3 b5= Miladinovic – Pikula, Vrnjacka Banja 2010.

6.♕d3 ♕g4 7.c3 e6

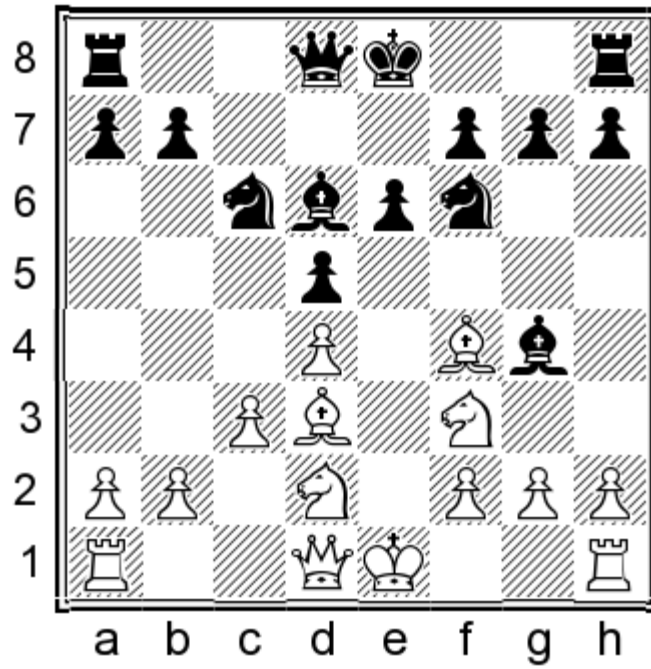


8.0-0 ♕d6 9.♕xd6 (9.♕g3 0-0 10.♘bd2 ♕xg3 – see 8.♘bd2) 9...♞xd6 10.♘bd2 0-0 – see 8.♘bd2.

8.h3 ♕xf3 9.♞xf3 ♕d6=

Following 8.♞b3, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 8...♕d6!? 9.♞xb7 0-0! 10.♕g3 ♕xf3 11.gxf3 ♞c8. He has a superior pawn-structure for the sacrificed pawn. In addition, White lags in development. 12.♘d2 e5. Black opens the game in the centre and wishes to organise an attack against White's monarch, which has not castled yet. 13.♗b5 ♞c7 14.♞a6 ♘b8 15.♞a4 exd4 16.cxd4 ♘h5! Black's knight is headed for the f4-square. 17.0-0 a6 18.♕e2, Nett – Garcia, IECC 2007, 18...♘f4!??

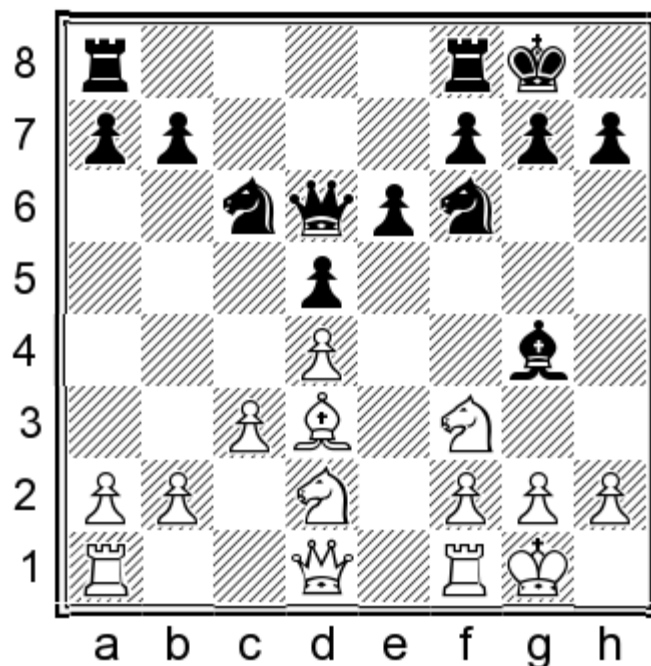
8.♘bd2 ♕d6



It is not good for White to choose here 9.♙g5, because of 9...♙h5. Black usually plays this move with the idea ♙g6, but here he also prepares ♖c7, ♜g4. 10.0-0 ♖c7 11.♗a4 ♜g4 12.h3 ♜h2 13.♞xh2 ♙xh2+ 14.♙h1 ♙d6 15.♞fe1 0-0= Carrillo Carrillo – Alascio Ruiz, ICCF 2016.

Following 9.♙g3 0-0 10.0-0, Black can refrain from the pawn-minority attack in favour of the pawn-break in the centre. 10...♙xg3 11.hxg3 e5!? 12.dxe5 ♜xe5 13.♙e2 ♜c6. Black's actively deployed pieces compensate the presence of an isolated pawn in his position. 14.♞e1 ♞e8 15.♗a4 a6 16.♙d3 ♖b6 17.♗b3 ♖c7 18.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 19.♞e1 ♞xe1+ 20.♜xe1, Gerard – Coyne, ICCF 2012. White has weakened his control over the d4-square, so Black can advance his isolated pawn forward: 20...d4!?=

9.♙xd6 ♗xd6 10.0-0 (10.h3 ♙h5 11.♗e2 a6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗e3 ♙xf3 14.♜xf3 ♜d7= Spielmann – Capablanca, Moscow 1925) 10...0-0



11.♞e1 ♜e7=, Black is preparing ♜g6-f4, Agacinski – Knap, Wroclaw 2011.

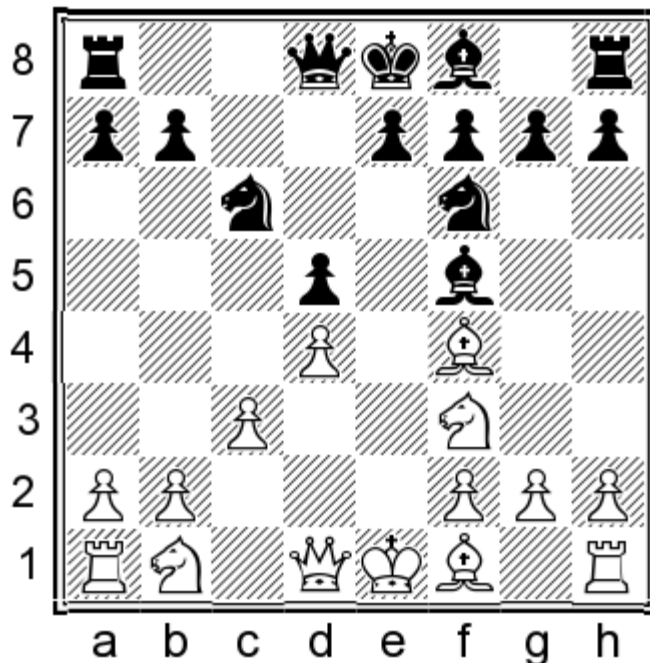
11.♖e1 ♜f5 12.♜xf5 exf5 13.♞h4 g6 14.g3 ♜fe8 15.♞d1, Matlakov – Uljanin, Serpukhov 2001, 15...b5!?!=

After 11.♞e2, it seems good for Black to opt for 11...♜fe8!?, preparing e6-e5, while following 12.♞e3, he can set a trap for his opponent in which White really fell into in the game Rozentalis – Oll, Uzhgorod 1987: 12...♜f5!= 13.♞e5?! ♞xe5 14.dxe5 ♞g4

6...♜f5!?

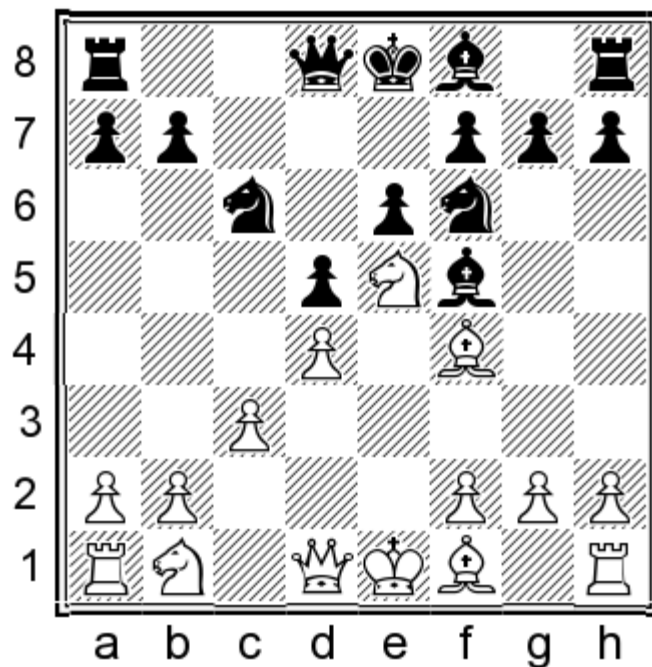
This is Black's most reliable move.

After 6...♜g4, White has the line: 7.♞b3!?! ♞a5 8.♞a4+, forcing the enemy bishop to retreat to a less active position. 8...♜d7 9.♞c2 Anand – Santos Latasa, Leon 2017. White does not have an advantage yet, but has some initiative indeed.



7.♞bd2

7.♞e5. With this move White wishes to seize immediately the initiative, but Black's defensive resources are quite sufficient. 7...e6



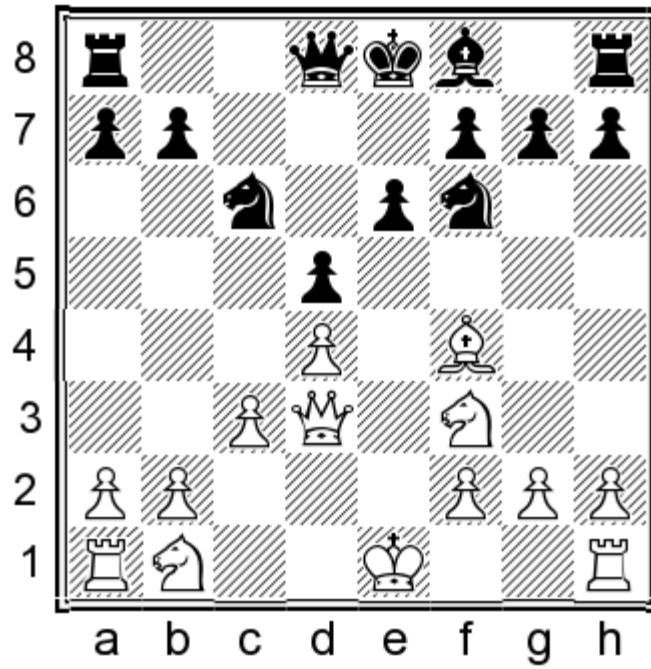
About 8.♘d2 ♕d6 – see 7.♘bd2.

After 8.g4, Black's simplest reaction would be 8...♙xb1=, depriving his opponent of the possibility to continue his active actions on the kingside by chasing the enemy bishop with h4-h5.

8.♙b5 ♖b6 9.♗b3 ♕d6! This is the point! The defencelessness of the bishop on f4 hurts White badly. 10.♘d2 (10.♘xc6 ♕xf4 and he is incapable of achieving anything out of the discovered check. 11.♘e5+ ♖f8♣) 10...0-0 11.♘xc6 ♕xf4 12.♘e7+. Without this move Black's bishop would be very dangerous. 12...♖h8 13.♘xf5 exf5 14.♘f3 ♗e6+. White lacked just one tempo to evacuate his king away from the centre. Now, Black seizes firmly the initiative. 15.♖f1 g5!♣ Bocanegra Moreno – Nasybullin, ICCF 2007.

7.♗b3 ♖c8 8.♘a3 (8.♘bd2 e6 – see 7.♘bd2) 8...a6. Naturally, Black should not allow ♘b5. 9.♕e2 (9.♘h4, Harikrishna – Topalov, Stavanger 2016, 9...b5!?!∞) 9...e6 10.0-0 ♕e7 11.♘c2 ♘h5 12.♕e3 ♗c7= Vachtfeidl – Rooms, ICCF 2011.

7.♕d3. White usually plays this move when he would not mind a draw according to his tournament situation. 7...♕xd3 8.♗xd3 e6



About 9.0-0 ♙d6 10. ♙xd6 ♚xd6 11. ♜bd2 0-0 – see 9. ♜bd2 .

9. h3 ♚b6 10. ♗e2 ♙e7 11. 0-0 0-0= J.Geller – Andreikin, Moscow 2012.

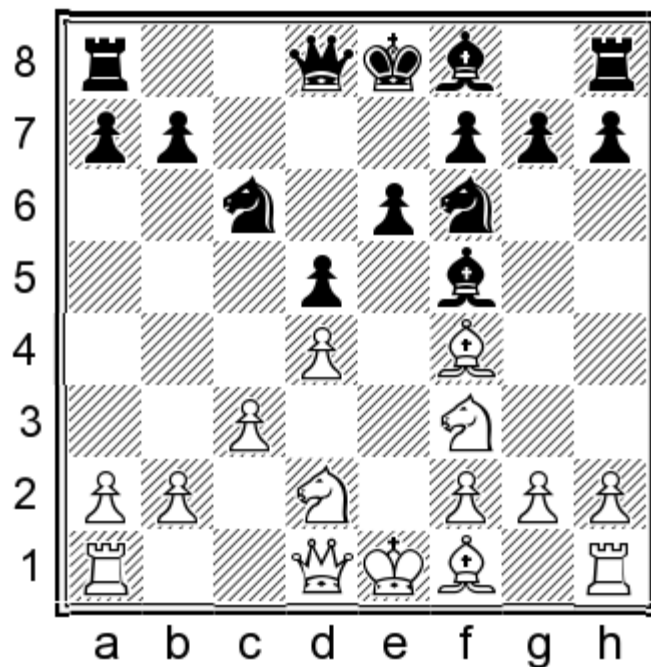
9. ♜bd2 ♙d6 10. ♙xd6 ♚xd6 11. 0-0 0-0 12. ♞ae1 (The move 12. ♞fe1 would not change the character of the fight.

12... ♚c7 13. ♜e5 ♜xe5 14. dxe5 ♜d7 = Froewis – Sadykov, Bilbao 2014.) 12... ♚c7 . Black plays this move so that after

13. ♜e5 , he would have the possibility to trade the knights. 13... ♜xe5 14. ♞xe5 ♞fc8 15. f4 b5 = Steiner – Reti, Vienna

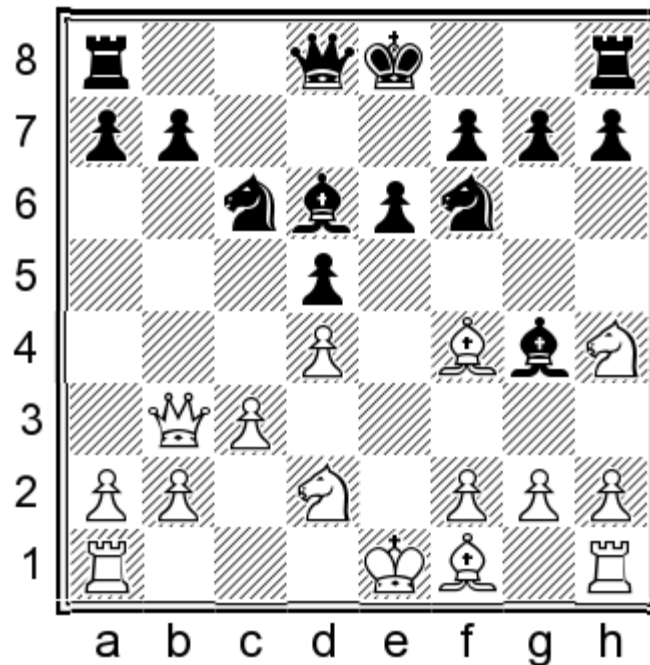
1923. He continues now with the standard minority attack for similar positions.

7...e6



8. ♚b3

White wishes to squeeze the opponent with the defence of the b7-pawn before he has completed his development. The intermediate move 8. ♖h4 ♗g4 only enlarges Black's choice of alternatives. 9. ♜b3. Now, he is not obliged to protect his b7-pawn and can continue with 9... ♗d6!



10. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 11. h3 ♗h5 = Baklanov – Horvath, ICCF 2003.

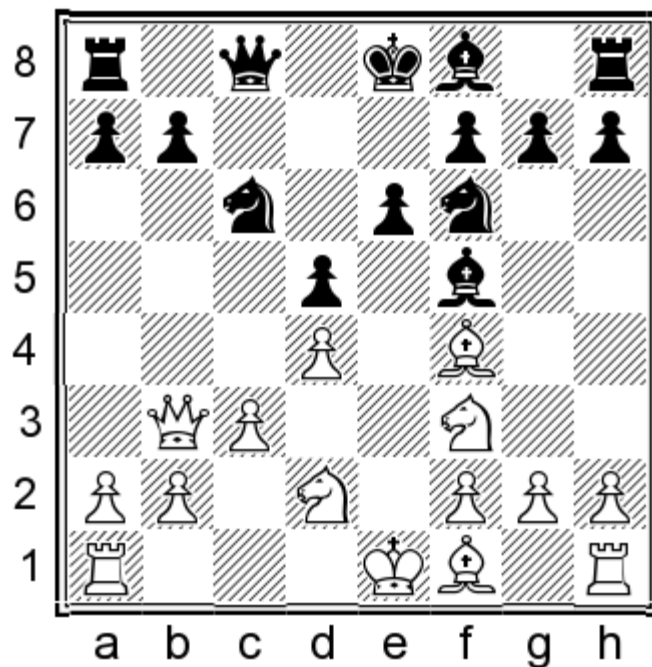
Following 10. ♜xb7 ♖xd4 11. ♗b5+ ♖xb5 12. ♜xb5+ ♔f8 13. ♗xd6+ ♜xd6∞, Black has lost his castling rights indeed, but his pawn-majority in the centre would be an important factor in the middlegame.

8. ♗b5. This pin of the knight is not dangerous for Black. 8... ♗d6 9. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 10. ♖e5 (10.0-0 0-0 11. h3 ♜fc8 = Lazard – Renaud, Strasbourg 1924) 10...0-0 11. ♜e2, Van den Doel – E.L' Ami, Amsterdam 2017, 11... ♖d7! = White's knight is very powerful in the centre, so Black wishes either to exchange it, or to oust it with the move f7-f6.

8. ♖e5 ♗d6 9. ♗b5 ♜c8. White does not have sufficient forces to achieve anything meaningful out of his pressure against the c6-square. 10. ♗g3 0-0 11.0-0 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♖d7 13. ♜e2 ♜b6, followed by a7-a6, Vorotnikov – Yevseev, Moscow 1999.

8. ♗e2. White's bishop will not be very active on this square. 8... ♗d6 9. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 10.0-0 h6!? This is a prophylactic move against ♖h4. 11. ♜e1 0-0 12. ♖f1 a6 13. ♖g3 ♗h7 14. ♗d3 ♗xd3 15. ♜xd3 ♖d7 = Nguyen – Gomez, Ho Chi Minh City 2012.

8... ♜c8



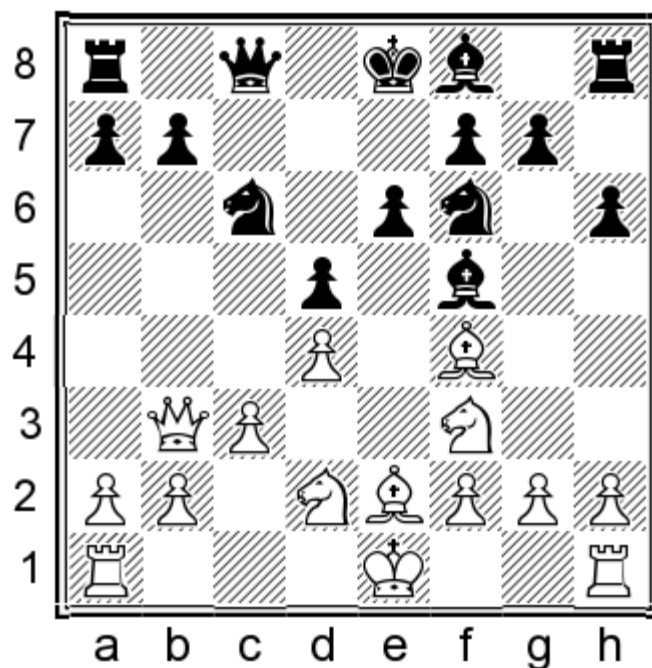
9. ♖h4

White wishes to obtain the two-bishop advantage, but in order to achieve that he would have to send his knight to the edge of the board and it will not be placed well there.

9. h3 h6 10. ♕e2 ♕e7 – see 9. ♕e2.

9. ♖e5, Eljanov – Motylev, Berlin 2015, 9... ♕d6!?!=

After 9. ♕e2 h6, White would not have the plan, connected with ♖h4.

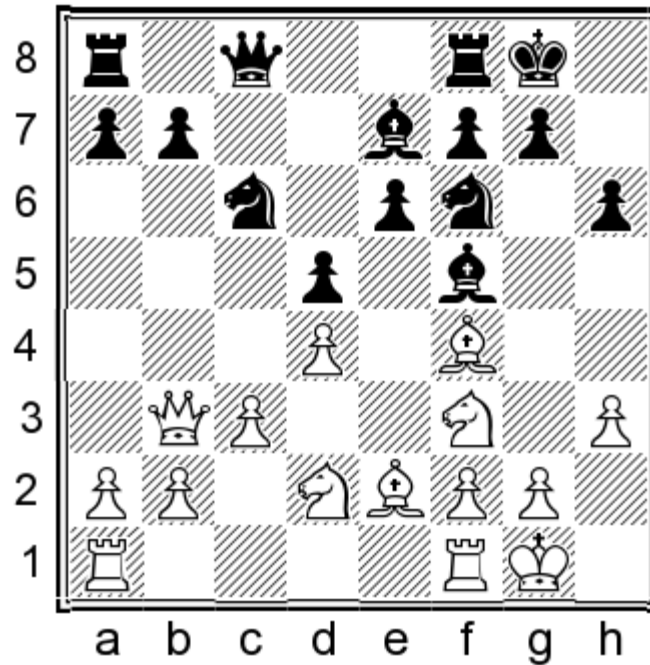


10. ♖e5, Kamsky – Fressinet, Beijing 2012, 10... ♕d6!?!∞

After 10.0-0 ♕e7 11.c4 (11.h3 0-0 – see 10.h3) 11...0-0 12.c5, Sveshnikov – Alvarez Marquez, Dresden 2008, White

occupies space on the queenside indeed, but his d4-pawn becomes weak. In addition, after 12...g5!? 13.♙e3 ♖g4, Black can obtain the two-bishop advantage.

10.h3 ♙e7 11.0-0 0-0



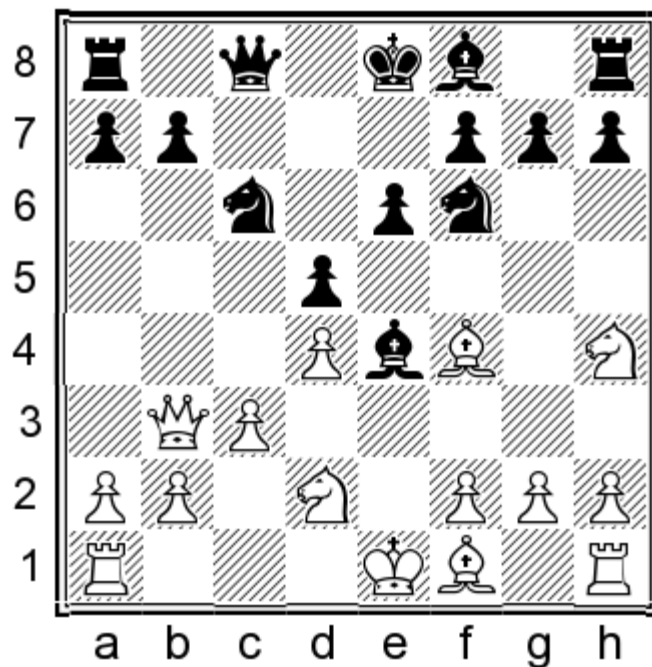
12.♖e5 ♖d7=

The character of the fight would not be changed after 12.a4 ♖e4 13.♖xe4 ♙xe4 14.♖d2 ♙g6= S.Hansen – Schandorff, Copenhagen 2010.

After 12.♞ac1 a6 13.c4, Black should better not wait for c4-c5, but play instead 13...♖a5 14.♞d1 dxc4 15.♖xc4 ♖xc4 16.♙xc4 ♞d8=, obtaining very good possibilities against the enemy isolated pawn, Mezera – Crabb, ICCF 2014. White can hardly find an active plan for his actions, while Black can simply increase his control over the d5-square by transferring his bishop ♙e4-d5.

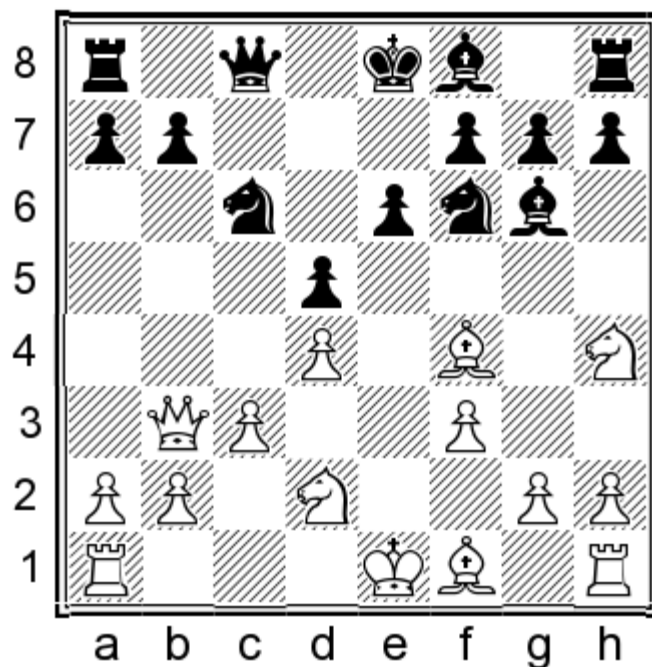
12.♞fe1 ♙d8!? The bishop on f4 exerts powerful pressure against Black's queenside and impedes the preparation of b7-b5 with ♞b8. Therefore he wishes to play ♙c7. 13.a4 ♙c7= Grachev – Motylev, St Petersburg 2015.

9...♙e4



10. Nxe4

White should better capture the enemy bishop immediately, because after 10.f3 ♖g6, he would weaken his kingside, moreover that capturing on g6 would lead to the opening of the h-file for Black's rook.



11.g4 ♜d7 12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♙b5 ♙d6 15.♙xd6 ♜xd6= Arnaudov – Dimitrov, Albena 2017.

Following 11.Nxg6 hxg6 12.♙d3, Black can exploit the defencelessness of the enemy rook on h1 with the move ♖h5-g3. 12...♖h5 13.♙e3, Gupta – Holm, chess.com 2017, 13...♖g3!? 14.♜g1 ♖f5 15.♙f2 ♜xh2 ♞ White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient.

11.g3 ♙e7 12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.♙g2 0-0 14.0-0. The knight on f6 is severely restricted by the pawn on f3, so Black must transfer it to d6 and from there later it can go f5, or c4, after the preliminary move b7-b5. 14...♖e8 15.♜ae1, Pospisil –

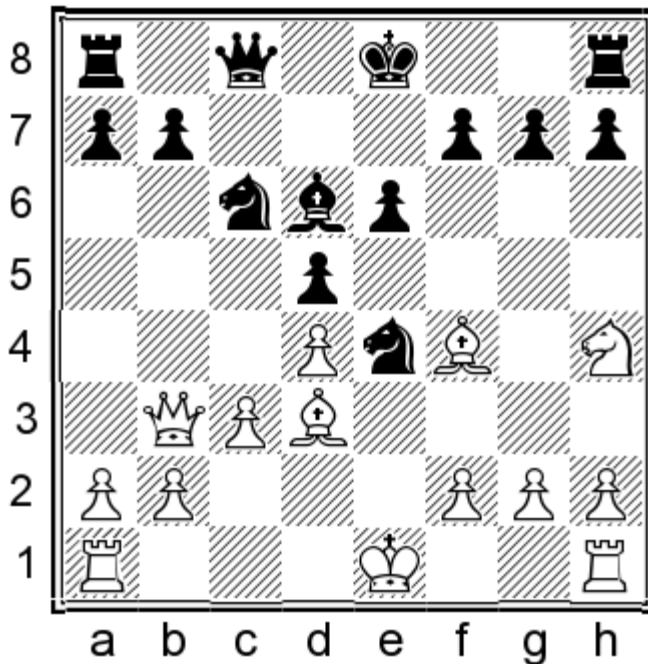
Chaika, ICCF 2009, 15...♗d6!?=

10...♗xe4 11.♘d3

11.♙e3 ♘e7= Golubov – Prithu, Warsaw 2017.

11.♗f3 ♘d6. The exchange of the bishops is Black's simplest road to equality. 12.♘xd6 (After 12.♘g3, Black can give up his bishop for the enemy knight: 12...♗xg3 13.hxg3 ♖c7= Kamsky – Wojtaszek, Sochi 2015.) 12...♗xd6 13.♘d3 0-0 14.♖c2 h6= Tang – Nikolov, Kavala 2016.

11...♘d6



12.♘xd6

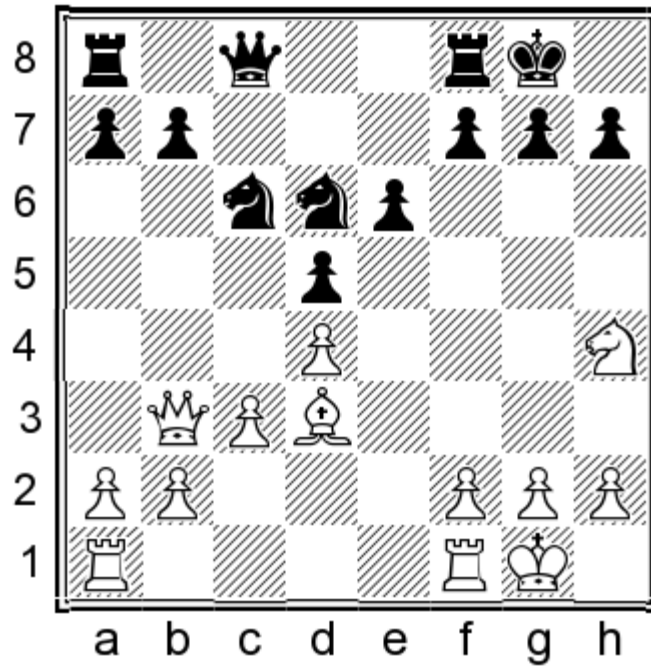
In the variation 12.♙e3, Black can organise good counterplay by preparing f7-f5 and b7-b5. 12...0-0 13.0-0 ♙e7 14.♗f3 f5 15.g3 a6 16.♖d1 ♖d7 17.♙c2 b5 18.♔g2 ♘d6 19.♖e2 ♝ae8

After 12.♘xe4 ♘xf4 13.♘d3, Black can try to seize the initiative by advancing his kingside pawns. 13...g5 14.♗f3 g4 15.♗g1 h5 16.♗e2 ♘h6 17.♘b5 (17.h4 ♖c7 18.♘b5 0-0-0) 17...a6= Kamsky – Onischuk, Saint Louis 2016.

12...♗xd6 13.0-0

13.♖c2 ♖c7 14.♗f3 h6 15.♖e2 (15.0-0 0-0=) 15...♝b8 16.a4 a6 17.0-0 0-0= Agrest – Blomqvist, Sweden 2017.

13...0-0

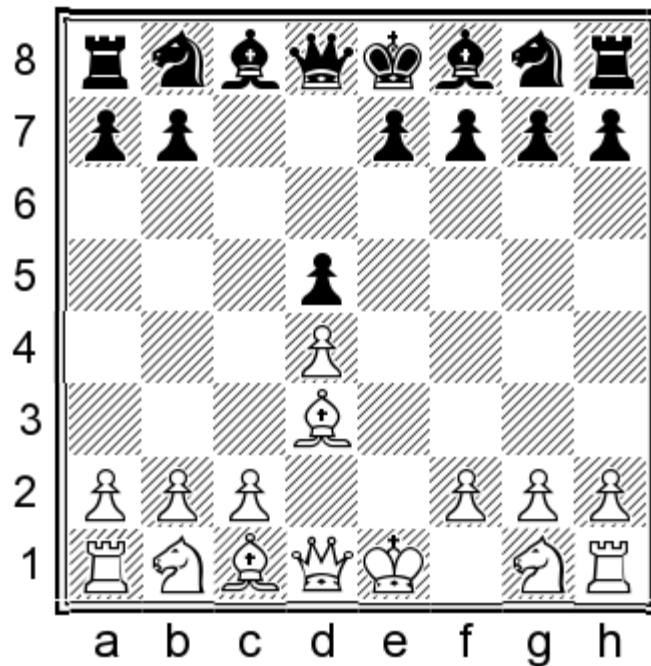


14. ♘f3

14. ♖ae1 ♔d8 15. ♘f3 ♚c7 16. ♚c2 h6 17. ♘e5 ♜ac8 18. ♘xc6. Here, instead of the usual pawn-minority attack, Black may prefer to undermine his opponent's centre with the line: 18...bxc6 19. ♞e3 c5 20. dxc5 ♚xc5=

14...b5 15. ♚c2 h6 16. ♚e2 b4= Black has managed to advance quickly b5-b4 and his prospects are not worse.

C) 4. ♔d3



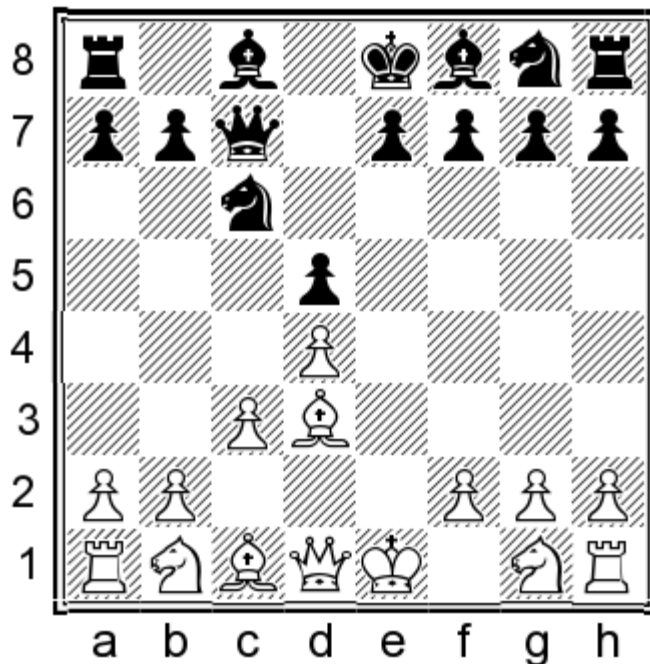
White develops his bishop to an active position and prevents at the same time Black's move ♔f5.

4... ♘c6 5. c3

About 5.♘f3 ♕g4 6.c3 ♖c7 – see 5.c3.

5...♖c7!?

This move is becoming much more popular lately and is preferred in the tournament practice instead of the classical line 5...♘f6, after which Black prepares ♕g4, but does not prevent 6.♕f4.



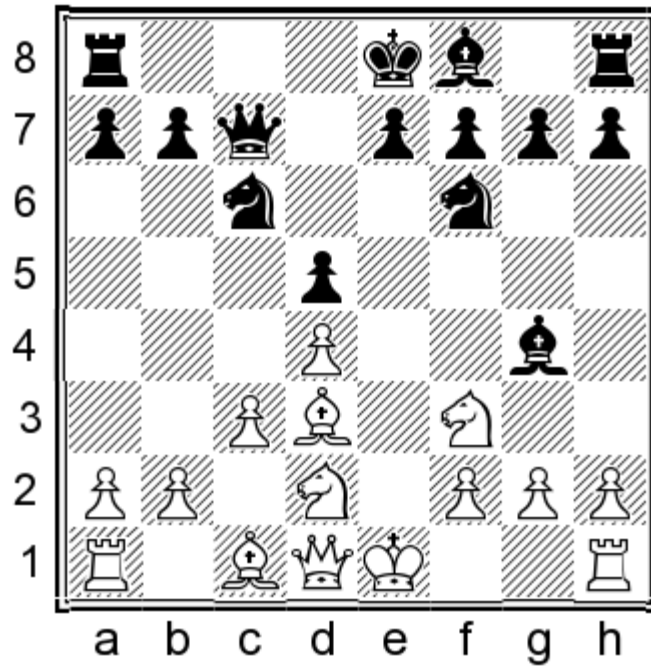
We will analyse now **C1) 6.h3** and **C2) 6.♘e2**.

The move 6.♖b3?! leaves the bishop on c1 without protection. 6...♘xd4 7.♖xd5 e5! 8.♕f4 ♘c6 9.♕e3 ♘f6 10.♖b3 ♘g4 ♣ Kubicki – Cyborowski, Chojnice 2006.

The pawn-move 6.f4?! seems anti-positional, because White restricts his own bishop on c1 and weakens the e4-square. 6...g6 7.♘e2 ♕f5 8.0-0 ♘f6 ♣ Pallardo Lozoya – Nisipeanu, Benidorm 2005.

Following 6.g3, Black can enter a good version of a position with an isolated pawn. 6...e5 7.dxe5 ♖xe5+ 8.♖e2, M.Novikov – Kuzin, Tula 2006, 8...♘f6!?=

6.♘d2 ♘f6 7.♘gf3 (7.h3 e5 – see variation **C1)** 7...♕g4

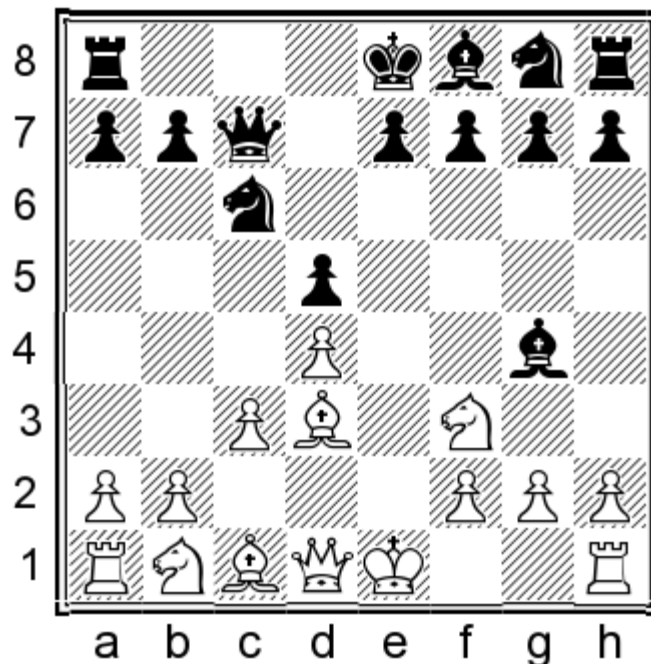


About 8.0-0 e6 9.♖e1 ♕d6 – see variation **B1**.

After 8.♗a4, Black can prevent ♘e5 with 8...♘d7!?, for example: 9.0-0 e6 10.h3 ♕h5 11.♖e1 ♕d6 12.♗c2, Colle – Nimzowitsch, San Remo 1930, 12...♖c8=

After 6.♗g5, Black can open advantageously the game in the centre, because after that the defencelessness of the bishop on g5 will hurt White. 6...e5!? 7.dxe5 ♗xe5+ 8.♗e3 (8.♗e2 ♗g4= Degraeve – Hill, Mamaia 1991) 8...♗c5 9.♘f3 ♗e7. White has managed to prevent ♗xe3, but after 10.♘d4 ♘f6 11.0-0 0-0 12.h3 ♗e6, Black completes his development and obtains a very good position. 13.♖e1 ♖fe8 14.♘xe6 ♗xe6 15.♘a3 ♗xe3 16.♖xe3 ♗d6 17.♘c4 ♗d7 18.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 19.♘e3 d4=, getting rid of the weak pawn.

The move 6.♘f3 enables Black to play 6...♗g4.

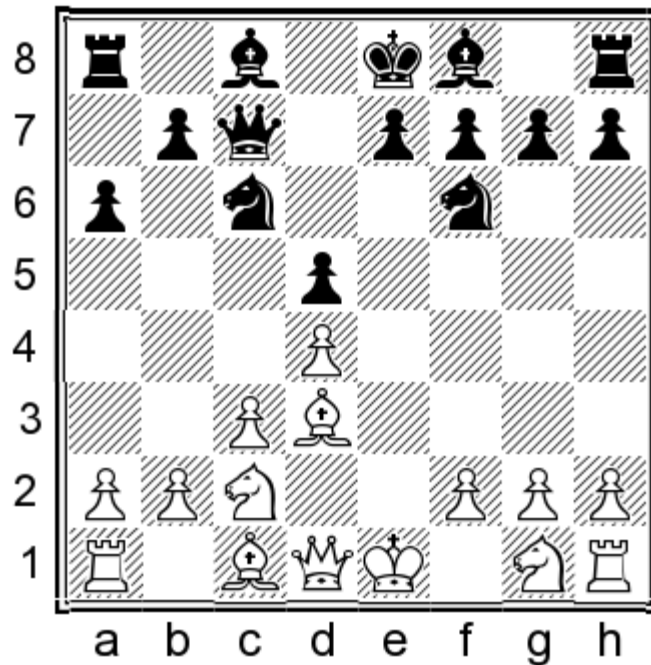


About 7.♘bd2 ♘f6 – see 6.♘d2.

7.0-0 e6 8.♞e1 ♕d6 9.h3 ♕h5 10.♖bd2 ♗ge7 (10...♗f6 – see variation **B1**) 11.♗f1 h6∞ Guliev – Durarbayli, Baku 2013.

7.h3 ♕h5 8.♕e3. Now, before playing ♗bd2, White develops his bishop. 8...e6 9.♗bd2 ♕d6 10.♞c2 ♕g6 11.♕xg6 hxg6 12.0-0 ♗f6= Mamedov – Ragger, Aix les Bains 2011. Later, Black can castle queenside and try to exploit the h-file in order to organise an attack, or after 0-0, he can prepare the standard pawn-minority attack.

6.♗a3!? This interesting move has been encountered already in the tournament practice. Not very often though, but at the highest possible level... In the years 2016 and 2017 it was tested by Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik. White is threatening ♗b5, wishes to provoke a7-a6 and after that the knight will be transferred to c2 from where in the middlegame it will prevent Black's pawn-advance b7-b5-b4. 6...a6 7.♗c2 ♗f6



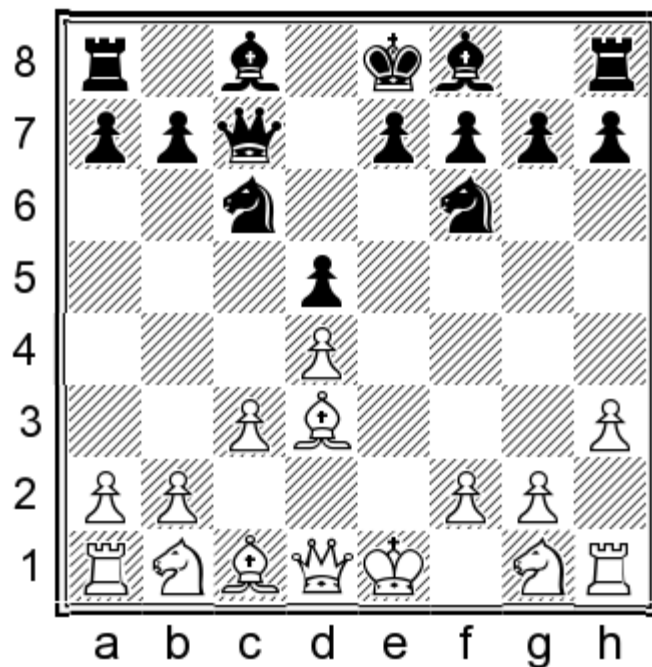
8.♗e2 ♕g4 9.f3 (9.0-0 e6 10.♞e1, Priyadharshan – Boor, Dayton 2017, 10...♕h5!?, followed by ♕g6. Black should better play this move immediately; otherwise White will reply with ♗g3.) 9...♕d7 10.♕f4 e5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.0-0 ♕d6 13.♖h1 0-0. Black has reached a nice version of a position with an isolated pawn. 14.♗e3 ♞fe8 15.♗d4 ♗c4. From this square his knight will exert powerful pressure against his opponent's queenside. Capturing on c4 would lead to the improvement of Black's pawn-structure. 16.♕xd6 ♗xd6 17.♞d2 ♗c4 18.♕xc4 dxc4 19.♞ae1 ♞ad8= Zinchenko – Hawkins, London 2016.

8.h3. White prevents ♕g4. 8...e6!?. Black refrains from the plan, connected with the development of his bishop to f5, and considers that after b7-b5, it will be well placed on b7. 9.♗f3 b5 10.0-0 ♕b7 11.♞e1 ♕d6∞ Kramnik – Fedoseev, Dortmund 2017.

C1) 6.h3

White wishes to play ♗f3, without being afraid of ♕g4, but the move 6.h3 does not contribute to the development of his pieces.

6...♗f6



7.♘f3

Black can counter the rather slow move 7.♘d2 with a pawn-break in the centre. 7...e5 8.dxe5 ♘xe5 9.♗c2 ♗c5. The activity of his pieces compensates the weakness of his isolated pawn. 10.♘b3 ♗b6 11.♘e2 0-0 12.♗f4 ♖e8 13.0-0, Jakubowski – Shimanov, Warsaw 2014, 13...♗d8!?=

After 7.♘e2, Black can play 7...e5 8.dxe5 ♘xe5. The e2-square is not the best place for White's knight in a position with an isolated pawn. It would have been much better placed on f3. 9.♗b5+ (9.♗f4 ♗d6 10.♗xe5. White exchanges the powerful enemy knight, but now, Black obtains the two-bishop advantage. 10...♗xe5 11.♘d2 0-0 12.0-0 ♗h2+. It is useful for Black to oust the enemy king farther from the centre. 13.♔h1 ♗d6 14.♘d4 a6 15.♖e1 ♗d7= Krivoborodov – Jobava, Moscow 2008.) 9...♗d7 10.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 11.0-0 ♗c5 12.♗f4 ♘g6 13.♘d2 h6 14.♘f3 ♘xf4 15.♘xf4 0-0 16.♘d3 ♗b6= Looshnikov – Kryakvin, Tyumen 2014. White is incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the isolated enemy d5-pawn, because Black's pieces have been very actively deployed.

7...g6!?

He plans to trade the light-squared bishops with ♗f5.

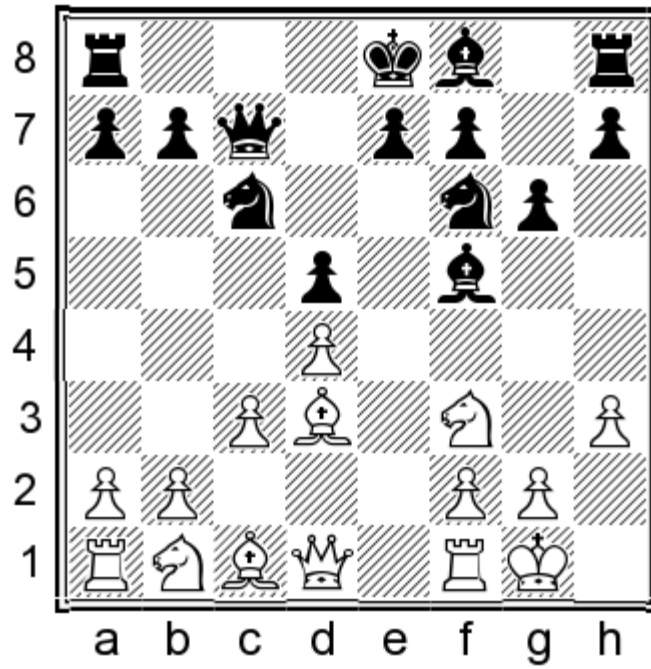
8.0-0

8.♘a3 a6 9.♗e2 ♗f5= Fedoseev – Bacallao Alonso, Tbilisi 2017.

8.♘bd2 ♗f5 9.♘b3 ♗xd3 10.♗xd3 ♗g7= Ivanchuk – Kovchan, Dagomys 2010.

8.♗c2. White prevents ♗f5, but now Black can transfer advantageously his knight to the f4-square. 8...♘h5!? 9.♗e3, Azimova – Belenkaya, St Petersburg 2015, 9...a6!= This is the most precise move for Black. He takes the b5-square under control and deprives his opponent of the possibilities ♗b5 and ♘a3-b5.

8...♗f5



9. ♔xf5

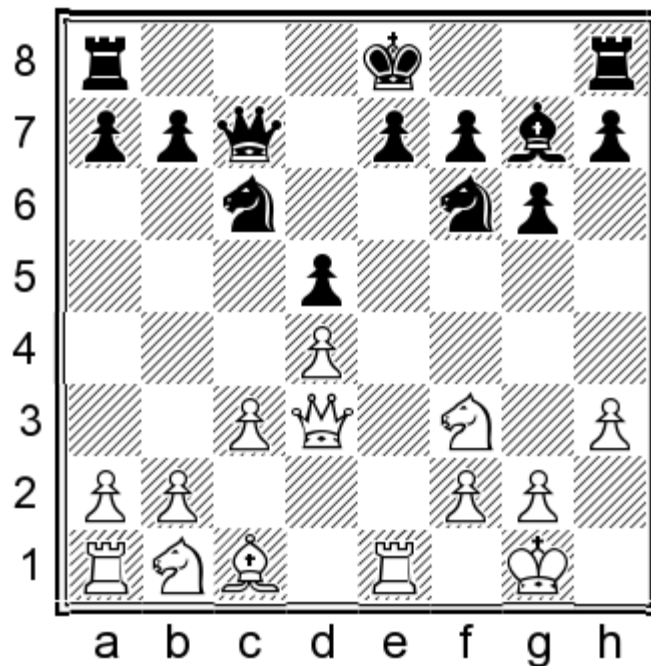
White weakens his opponent's pawn-structure, but opens the g-file and increases Black's control over the important central e4-square.

Meanwhile, the reluctance to exchange on f5 would not bring White anything positive.

9. ♘e1, Hammer – Dishman, Helsingor 2017, 9...h5!?!=

9. ♘a3 ♕xd3 10. ♖xd3 a6= Zapata – Maciejka, Greensboro 2014.

9. ♖e1 ♕xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♕g7



Black has solved the problem with the development of his bishop on c8 and can be very optimistic about the future.

11.♖e5 ♗d7 12.♗xd7 ♜xd7 13.♙f4 0-0 14.♗d2 e6= Abramovic – Drozdov, Noyabrsk 1995.

The move 11.♗a3 prepares the transfer of this knight to the e3-square. 11...0-0 12.♗c2 e6 13.♗e3 ♜ab8= Artemiev – Riazantsev, Doha 2016. Black is perfectly ready to begin the pawn-minority attack.

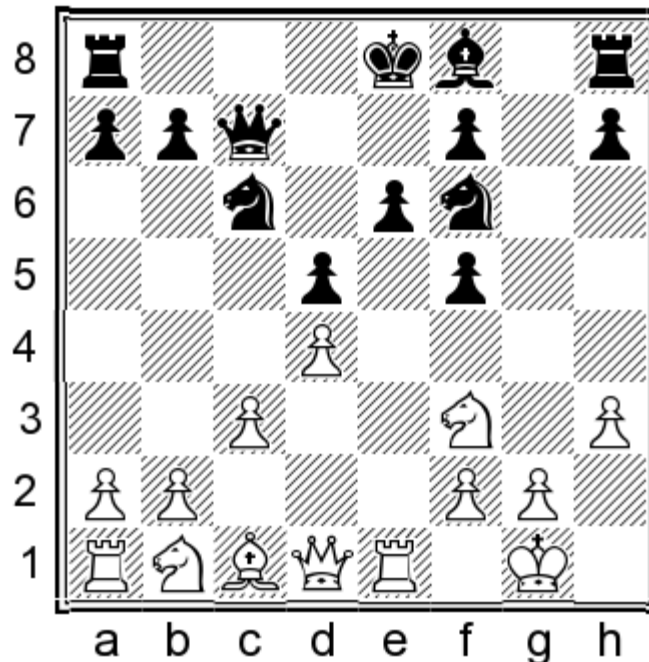
11.♗bd2 0-0 12.♗b3. White is eyeing in advance the c5-square, but Black does not need to be in a hurry to advance b7-b5. 12...e6 13.♙e3 (13.♞e2 ♜ac8=; 13.a4 ♞fe8 14.g3 ♗e4= Ponomariov – Le Quang Liem, Dortmund 2010) 13...♗e4= From this square Black's knight will exert powerful pressure against the enemy position and will prevent the penetration of White's knight to the c5-square, Zvjaginsev – Aronian, Berlin 2015.

9...gxf5 10.♞e1

Now, White must play very accurately in order not to end up in an inferior position. For example: 10.♗e5 e6 11.♙f4 ♙d6 12.♞e1, Chokhnelidze – Samniashvili, Tbilisi 2002, 12...♗e4!??

10.c4 dxc4 11.♗c3 0-0-0 12.♞a4 ♗d5 13.♞xc4 (13.♗b5 ♞b6 14.♞xc4 ♙g7= Averchenko – Girya, Pushchino 2012) 13...e6=

10...e6



11.c4

White begins immediate active actions in the centre and on the queenside in order to deflect Black from an attack against his king.

After 11.♗e5 ♙d6 12.♗xc6 ♞xc6 13.♗d2, Sorm – Lalic, Calvia 2014, 13...0-0-0!??, White fails to advance c3-c4, so Black seizes completely the initiative.

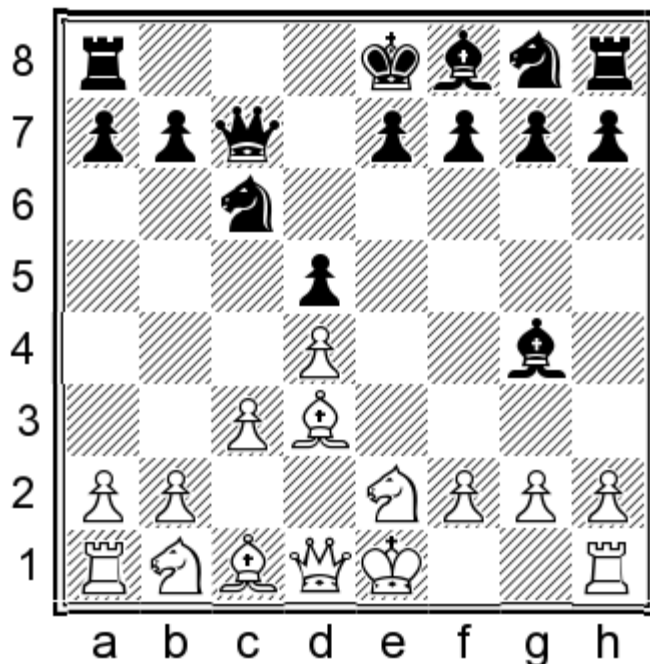
11...dxc4 12.♗c3 0-0-0 13.♞a4 ♗d5 14.♞xc4, Ehlvest – Harikrishna, Merida 2008 (14.♙g5 ♙e7= Rabiega – Kreisl, Austria 2014) 14...♙g7!? 15.♙g5 ♞d7 16.♗xd5 ♞xd5=. White must play very precisely in order to compensate the defects of his isolated pawn.

C2) 6.♗e2

He is preparing ♖f4.

6...♗g4

Black prevents his opponent's plan.



7.f3

White solves radically the problem with the pin of his knight, but weakens the e3-square.

7.♘d2, Rozentalis – Lyell, St Clement Bay 2013, 7...e6!?!=, followed by ♗d6.

7.♙a4. This queen-sortie is not dangerous for Black. 7...♞f6. He allows his opponent to play ♖f4, because later, he plans to trade this bishop with e6, ♗d6. 8.♗f4 ♞d7 9.♘d2 e6 10.0-0, Yudasin – Benjamin, New York 2005, 10...♗d6!?
11.♗xd6 ♞xd6=

After 7.♗f4, there arises an approximately equal endgame. 7...♞xf4 8.♞xf4 ♗xd1 9.♞xd1 e6 10.♘d2 (Following 10.♗b5, M.Novikov – Riazantsev, Kolomna 2016, Black's simplest reaction would be 10...♞c8!?, avoiding the weakening of his pawn-structure. 11.♘d3 ♗d6=) 10...♗d6 11.♞e2 ♞f6 12.♞f3 a6 13.a4 ♞c8 14.♞g3 ♞e7 15.♞e1 g6= Yudasin – Erenburg, USA 2017.

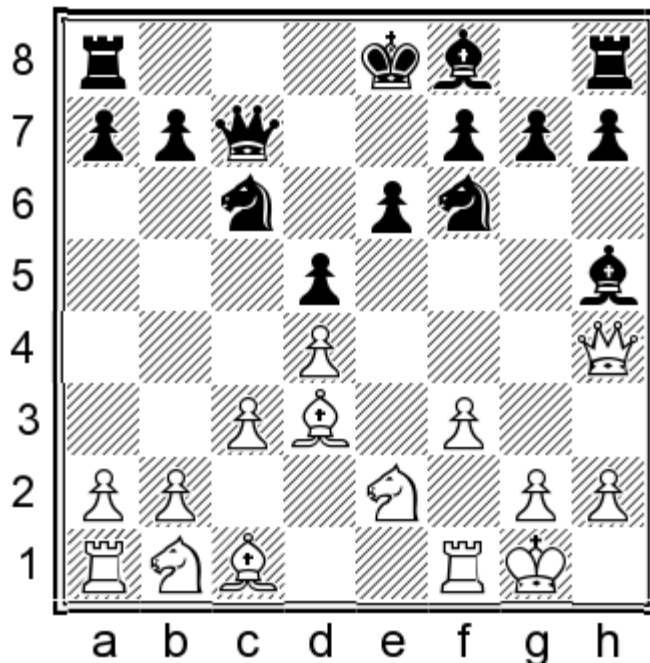
7.♞a3. The transfer of the knight to c2 is not dangerous for Black. 7...a6 8.♞c2 e6 9.♞d2 ♗h5 10.♞f4 ♗g6 11.♞xg6 hxg6 12.g3 ♗d6 13.♞e2, Jacobson – Li Ruifeng, Philadelphia 2017 and here, Black can evacuate his king to the queenside 13...0-0-0!?!=, keeping his king's rook on the semi-open h-file.

The move 7.h3 only helps Black's bishop to go to g6, as it is usually going there in this variation. 7...♗h5 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♗f4 ♞b6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.♞b3 ♞f6= Chkhikvishvili – Khotenashvili, Ureki 2014.

The move 7.♞b3 leads to interesting complications. 7...♗xe2 8.♗xe2 (After 8.♞xe2, White parries the threat ♞xd4, but loses his castling rights. 8...0-0-0 Voskanyan – Humphreys, Montreal 2012.) 8...♞xd4 9.♞xd5 ♞d8 10.♗b5+ ♞xb5 11.♞xb5+ ♞d7 12.0-0 e6 13.♘d2, Proschmann – Dittmar, Bad Wiessee 1999, 13...♗d6!?! Black develops his bishop with tempo. 14.♞f3 ♞e7=, followed by 0-0. White is unlikely to achieve anything meaningful out of his queenside pawn-majority.

After 7.0-0 e6 8.♞e1!?, Black must play accurately. 8...♞f6!?! (The straightforward move 8...♗xe2 would not enable him

to equalise, because following 9.♖xe2 ♘d6 10.g3 ♗f6 11.♗d2 0-0 12.♗f3±, he would not have compensation for White's bishop-pair, Jarmula – Svane, Germany 2016.) 9.f3 ♘h5 10.♖h4

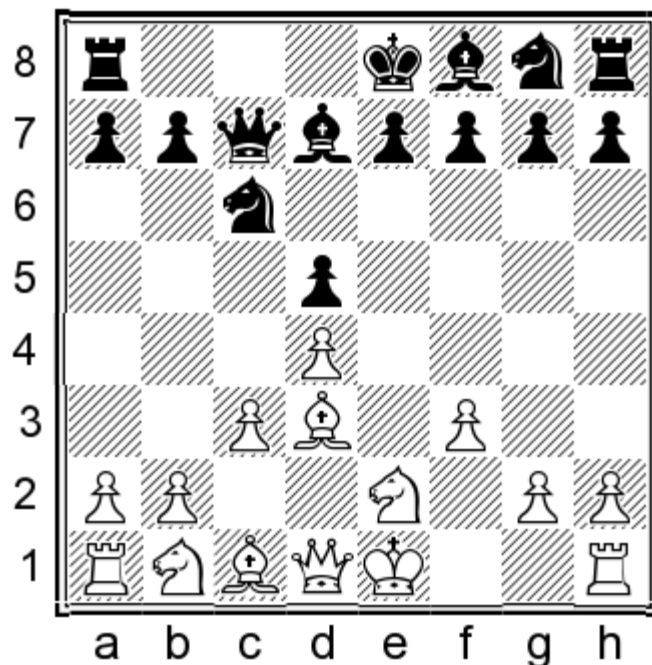


White's idea is becoming clear. Now, after the retreat of Black's bishop to g6 and ♗xg6, he will not be able to recapture with his h-pawn and will have to weaken considerably his pawn-structure. Still, his defensive resources are good enough. 10...h6 11.♖h3 (11.♗g3 ♘g6 12.♗xg6 fxg6 13.♖h3, Rakhmangulova – Gutsko, Lvov 2015, 13...e5!? 14.dxe5 ♗c5+ 15.♗h1 ♖xe5± The activity of Black's pieces compensates with an interest the vulnerability of his pawn-structure.) 11...e5 12.dxe5 (12.♞e1 ♗e7 13.♖g3 0-0-0=; 13.b4 e4=) 12...♗xe5 13.♗b5+, Lobanov – Usmanov, St Petersburg 2017, 13...♗c6!? 14.♞e1 ♗c5+ 15.♗d4+ ♗f8. White has managed to deprive his opponent of his castling rights, but in the middlegame Black plans to coordinate his rooks after ♗g8-h7. 16.♗e3 ♗g8 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗d2 ♗f8 19.b4 c5. Now, Black should better get rid immediately of his weak pawn. 20.bxc5 ♗xc5 21.♗2b3 ♗b6∞

7...♗d7

This is his most popular move. Having provoked the weakening f2-f3, Black changes his plan and focuses in the pawn-break in the centre e7-e5.

It is still quite possible for him to opt for 7...♗h5, after which Black equalises with an accurate play. 8.♗f4 ♖d7 9.♗d2 e6 10.♗b3 ♗g6 11.♗g3 b6. He restricts the enemy knight on b3. 12.♖e2 ♗xd3 13.♖xd3 ♗d6 14.♗xd6 ♖xd6 15.♖e3 ♗ge7= Antonica – Kharitonov, Eforie Nord 2017.



8. ♘f4

White develops his bishop with tempo to an active position.

8. ♖b3 ♗f6 9. ♘a3 a6 10. ♘f4, Plaskett – Agrest, Benidorm 2009, 10...e5!? 11.dxe5 ♗xe5. Here, White should better refrain from winning a pawn with 12. ♘xe5?! (It is better for him to opt here for 12.0-0-0 ♘d6=) 12...♗xe5 13. ♗xb7 ♖b8 14. ♗xa6 ♘c5! 15. ♗a5 (White's situation would be even worse after 15.0-0-0? 0-0! 16. ♗c2 ♖a8+) 15...♗e3+ The dark squares in White's camp are horribly weakened and his pieces are discoordinated.

8.f4. White weakens the e4-square, but prevents e7-e5. 8...g6 9. ♗d2 ♘f5= Renner – Gyimesi, Germany 2002.

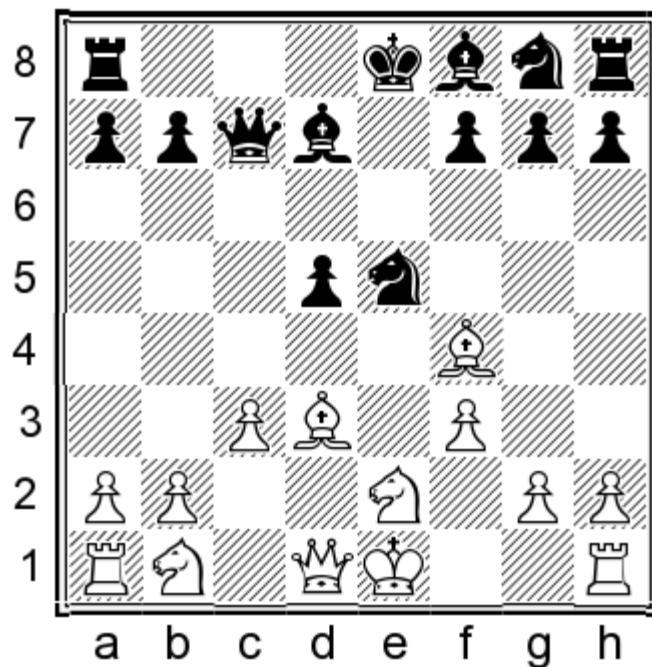
8. ♗a3 a6 9. ♗c2 e5 10.dxe5 ♗xe5 11. ♗cd4, Nun – Mista, Czech Republic 2004, 11...♘d6 12. ♘c2 ♗f6=

8.0-0 e5 9.dxe5 (The move 9. ♗a3 only weakens unnecessarily White's queenside. 9...♘xa3 10.bxa3 ♗ge7 11. ♗c2 h6 12. ♘e3 ♖c8∞ Slizhevsky – Kornev, St Petersburg 2006.) 9...♗xe5 10. ♗d4 (It is preferable for White to choose here 10. ♘f4 ♘d6 – see 8. ♘f4.) 10...♗xd3 11. ♗xd3 ♘d6 12.f4 0-0-0. Black has the two-bishop advantage, while White has a weakness on e4. 13. ♘e3 ♗f6 14. ♗d2 ♖he8 15. ♖ae1, Krapivin – Kornev, Moscow 2007, 15...♗g4!? Black creates tactical threats. 16. ♗f5 ♗xe3 17. ♗xd6+ ♗xd6 18. ♖xe3 ♗b6 19. ♖fe1 ♖xe3 20. ♗xe3 ♗xb2+ White has no compensation for the pawn.

8...e5 9.dxe5

After 9. ♘g3, Black can continue the chase after the enemy bishop with the move h7-h5. 9...♘d6 10. ♗a3 a6 11. ♗c2 ♗ge7 12.0-0 h5!? 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.f4 ♘d6 16. ♗cd4 h4 17. ♖h1, Gonzalez Acosta – Sasikiran, Mallorca 2004. Black's knight is not so active on e7, so he should better transfer it to the f6-square: 17...♗g8!?

9... ♗xe5



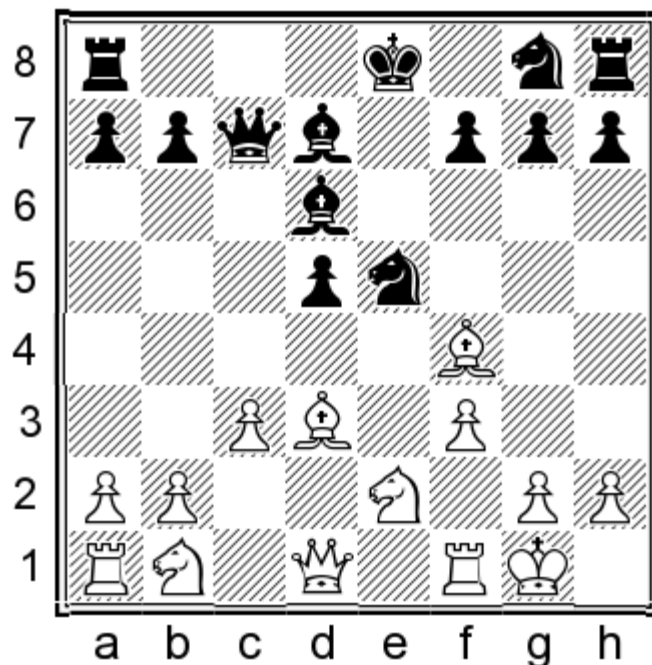
10.0-0

It is not good for White to play here 10.♘xe5?!, exchanging his powerful bishop and presenting his opponent with the two-bishop advantage. 10...♙xe5 11.0-0 ♘d6 12.f4 ♚e3+ 13.♙h1 ♘f6 14.♘d4 0-0 Escudero Manzano – Santos Latasa, Linares 2010.

10.♘c2 ♘f6 11.0-0 (11.♘a4 b5) 11...♘c5+ 12.♙h1 0-0 13.a4 a6= Windheim – Antonov, LSS 2012.

10...♘d6

Later, depending on circumstances, Black will develop his knight on e7, or to f6 and will castle. If White's pawn had been on f2, his chances would have been equal, but here, he would have to fight for equality, because his position had been weakened.



11. d4

White's knight occupies a blocking square in front of the isolated pawn.

His attempt to exploit the pin of the enemy knight would not equalise. 11. e1 f6 12. e5 e5 13. f4 d6 14. d4+ f8. White has managed to deprive his opponent of his castling rights, but Black will easily correct this defect of his position with g7-g6, g7. 15. g3 h5 16. h4, Perelshteyn – Shmeliiov, Manchester 2016, 16...g6!? 17. d2 g7. The pawn-shelter of White's king seems unreliable, moreover that Black has the two-bishop advantage.

11. h1 f6 12. a3 0-0=

11. a3 a6 12. c2 (White should better refrain from the pawn-advance 12. c4?!, since he would lose material after it. 12...dxc4 13. e5 e5 14. dxc4, Ragger – Rasmussen, Beijing 2008, 14...xh2+!? 15. h1 b5) 12...e7 13. ed4 0-0 – see 11. d4.

11... e7

Black obtains a good position after the other development of his knight too. 11...f6!? 12. a3 0-0 13. h1 (It is possible, White should already think about equality after 13. ab5 xb5 14. xb5 h5 15. c1 c4) 13...xa3 14. bxa3, Gusain – Warakomski, Warsaw 2017, 14...fe8!?, followed by h5, getting rid of the pin of the knight and preserving an edge thanks to his more elastic pawn-centre.

12. a3

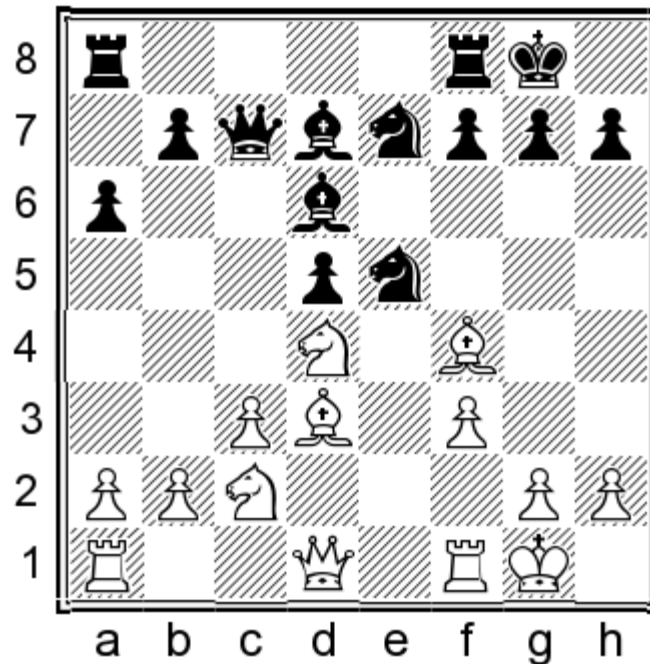
12. h1 0-0 13. a3 a6 14. ac2 ac8 – see 12. a3.

12. c2, Brynell – Luther, Plovdiv 2003, 12...0-0-0!.

12...a6 13. ac2 0-0

Black can continue here in a sharper way. 13...0-0-0!? 14. e3 g6 15. c2 h6 16. b3 g5 17. g3 h5. White has problems to neutralise his opponent's pressure, because it increases with every move. For example after: 18. xd5?! xd5 19. xd5 h4 20. xe5 e5 21. h3 xh3 22. xb7+ xb7 23. gxh3 xd4+ 24. cxd4 g3+ 25. h1 xh3, Black

can force a draw by a perpetual check and can also try to play for a win, Pajak – Borowiec, ICCF 2015.



14.♔h1

14.♖e1 ♜ae8∞ Stella – V.Popov, Biel 2009.

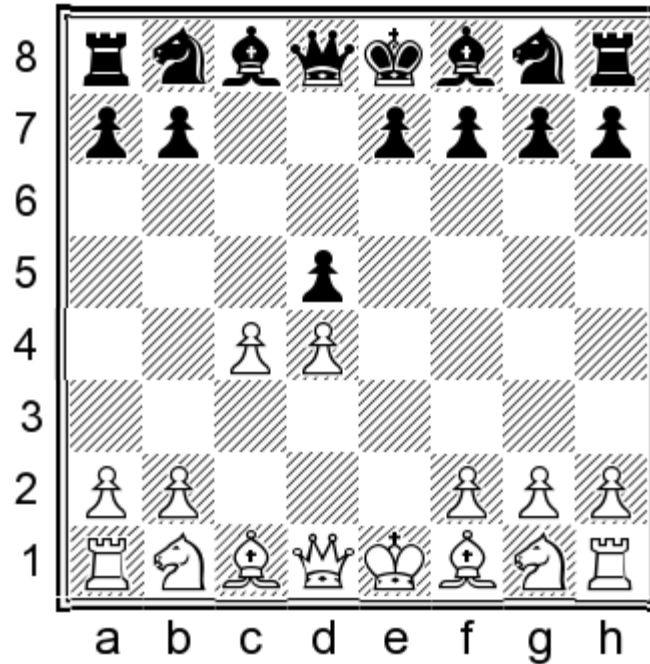
14.♘e3 ♜fe8 15.♚e2 ♚b6=

14.♚d2 ♘7c6 15.♙f5 ♘c4 16.♙xd6 ♚xd6 17.♚c1 ♙xf5 18.♘xf5 ♚e5 19.♘fd4 ♘xd4 20.♘xd4 ♜ae8= Moret – Fernandez, ICCF 2012. The powerful position of Black's knight on c4 compensates for him the vulnerability of his d5-pawn. 14...♜ac8 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 16.f4 ♙f6= Buchal – Fridman, Bad Wiessee 2010. He should try to transfer his knight to d6, from where it can go to c4, or to e4.

14...♜ac8= The position is still within equality, but Black's game is much simpler. For example, after White's careless move **15.♘e3?!**, he will have immediate difficulties: **15...♘xd3 16.♙xd6 ♘xb2! 17.♚b3 ♚xd6 18.♚xb2 ♚b5** † Semeniuk – Dreev, St Petersburg 1999.

Chapter 9

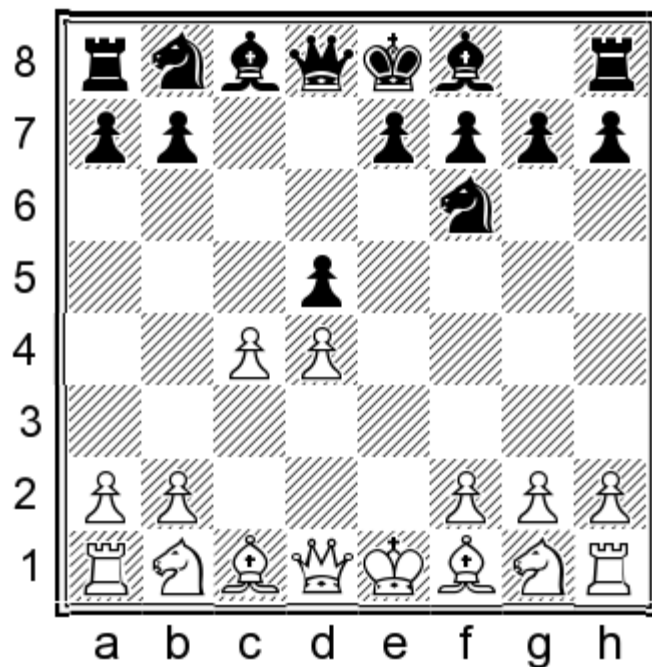
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4



This opening set-up has been named after the Soviet master Vasily Panov, who published an analysis of this system back in the year 1930. It soon became a part of the opening repertoire of the great players of those times Aleksander Alekhine and Mikhail Botvinnik.

In the Panov Attack there often arise positions with an isolated queen's pawn, or with hanging pawns on d4 and c4, as well as with a couple of pawns on d4 and c3. Therefore, it is very close, from the strategical point of view, to the Tarrasch Defence, the Queen's Gambit Accepted and the Sicilian Defence, the line with 2.c3.

4...♘f6

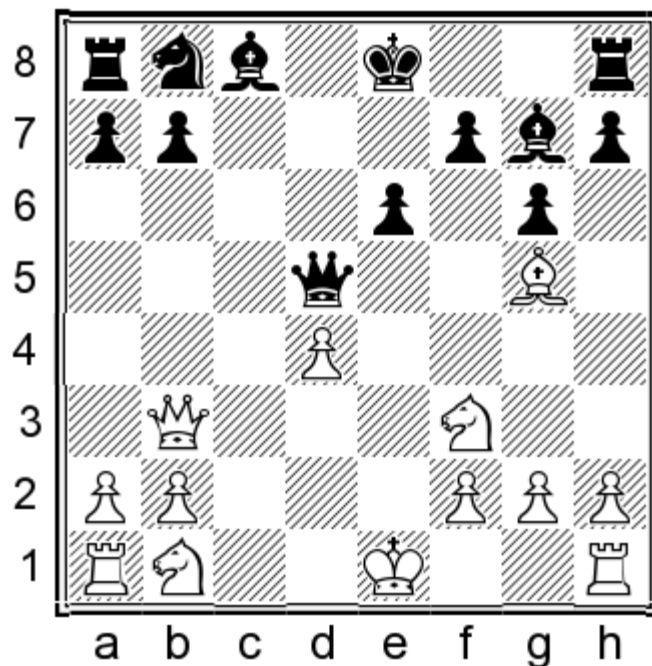


5. d3

This is White's most purposeful move – he increases the pressure against the d5-square.

About 5. cxd5 dxd5 6. d3 f3 (6. d3 g7 – see Chapter 10) 6...g6 – see 5. d3.

5. d3 g6 6. cxd5 (6. d3 g7 – see 5. d3) 6...dxd5 7. b3 (7. d3 g7 – see 5. d3) 7...g7 8. c4 e6 9. g5 (Following 9. d3 dxc3 10. bxc3, Black evacuates at first his king away from the centre 10...0-0 11. f4, and then emphasizes the misplacement of White's queen on b3 and the bishop on c4 with the move 11...d6= Jaulneau – Povchanic, ICCF 2010.) 9...d6 (It would be sufficient for Black to equalise with 9...b6!? 10. gxd5 exd5 11. d3 c6= Kornev – Voitsekhovskiy, Voronezh 2006.) 10. gxd5 bxd5



11. a3. White wishes to impede his opponent's castling kingside, but after 11...e4+ 12. e3 b6 13. d3, Black can

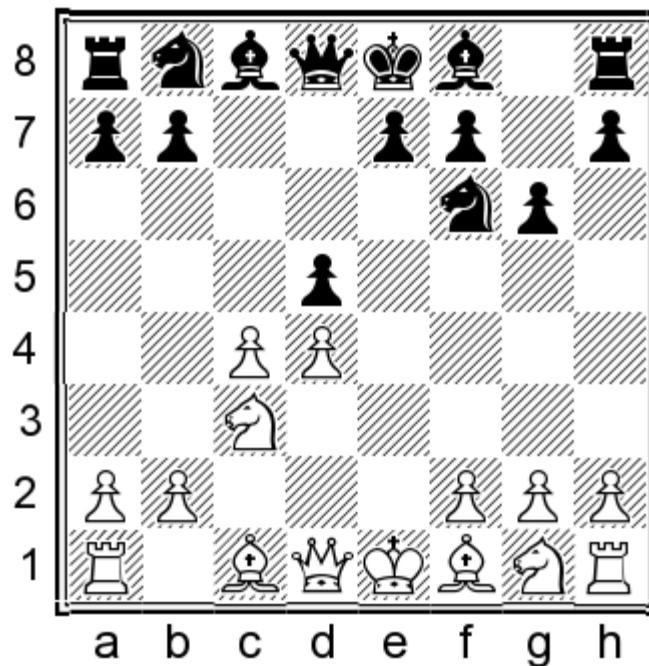
begin a chase after the enemy queen. Its idea is to oust it from the a3-f8 diagonal. 13...♖a6. Now, Black, in his turn thwarts White's castling kingside. 14.♗c5 ♘d7 15.♞b4 ♘b6 16.♞c1 ♙f8 17.♞b3 ♙d7 18.♘e5 ♞c8 19.d5. Black is very well prepared for this pawn-advance. 19...♙g7 20.♘xd7 ♘xd7 21.♘b5 ♞xc1+ 22.♙xc1 0-0. This is his simplest move. Black complies with the weakening of his e6-pawn, but completes his development. 23.dxe6 ♞xe6+ 24.♞xe6 fxe6. Black lags slightly in development, so he cannot exploit the weaknesses of White's pawn-structure. 25.0-0 ♞c8 26.♞d1 ♘b6 27.♘xa7 ♞c2 28.♘b5 ♙xb2= Schoen – Vayser, ICCF 2010.

5...g6!?

I believe this move is mist applicable from the practical point of view. Black develops his pieces in the spirit of the Schlechter-Rubinstein system (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3) in the Tarrasch Defence, but naturally with a loss of a tempo. White can use the extra move in order to attack the pawn on d5, but Black often counters this with a positional sacrifice.

His alternatives have obvious defects. For example: 5...♘c6 is not a good move against weak players, because White can simplify considerably the position by exchanging pieces and there would arise an endgame in which it would be practically impossible for Black to play for a win. 6.♘f3 ♙g4 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♞b3 ♙xf3 9.gxf3 e6 10.♞xb7 ♘xd4 11.♙b5+ ♘xb5 12.♞c6+ ♘e7 13.♞xb5 ♞d7 14.♘xd5+ ♞xd5 15.♞xd5 exd5=

After 5...e6, there arises a position in which White has the initiative for a long time and even small imprecisions from Black might lead to a quick crush for him. As an example of developments of this type, I would like to quote the game Andreikin – Dreev, Baku 2011, in which the Black player was not only a very strong grandmaster, but also a renowned expert of the Caro-Kann Defence. 6.♘f3 ♙b4 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♞c2 ♘c6 9.a3 ♙a5 10.♙d3 h6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞d1 ♘ce7 13.♘e5 ♙d7 14.♘e4 ♙c7 15.♞e2 ♙a4 16.♞e1 ♘f5 17.♘c5. White sacrifices a pawn and begins an attack. 17...♘xd4 18.♞g4 ♘f6 19.♞g3 ♙c2 20.♙xh6. Black's king is already seriously endangered. 20...♘h5 21.♞g4 ♙xe5 22.♙xc2 ♘xc2 23.♞xe5 ♘xa1 24.♞xh5 ♞f6 25.♙xg7 ♞g6 26.♙f6 1-0

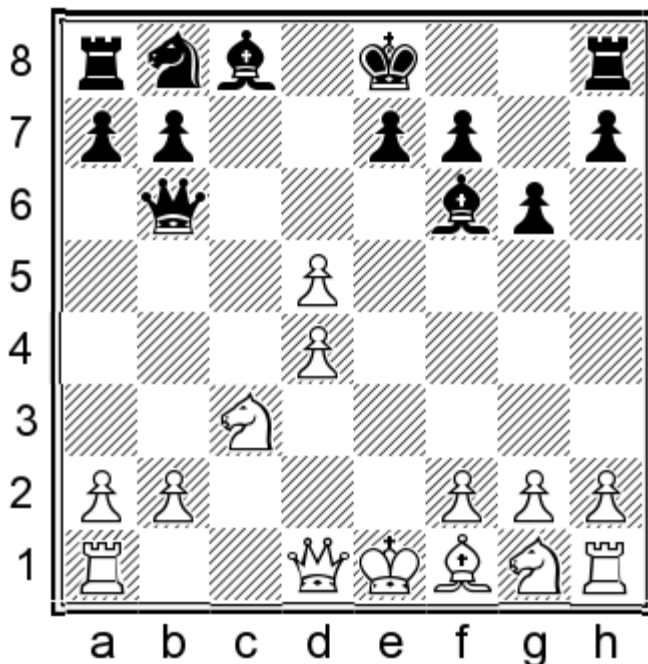


6.♘f3

This is a quiet move with which White is not in a hurry to force the issue and wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside. Still, playing like this, he refrains from the fight for the opening advantage. In addition, he often ends up being worse in the middlegame.

White's main lines here 6.cxd5 and 6.♖b3 will be analysed in Chapters 10 and 11.

After 6.♙g5, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 6...♙g7!? 7.♙xf6 (7.♘f3 0-0 – see 6.♘f3) 7...♙xf6 8.cxd5 (It is worse for White to play here 8.♘xd5?!, because of 8...♙g7 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0 ♙g4 Karagiannis – Nikolaidis, Nikaia 2017. He cannot avoid the loss of his d4-pawn, after which Black's prospects will be preferable due to the more active deployment of his pieces.) 8...♖b6

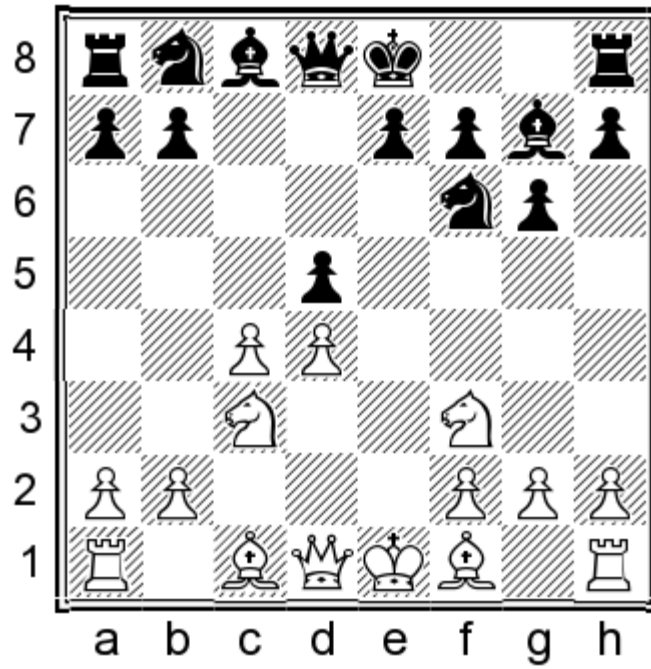


White's pawn on d4 and b2 are hanging.

9.♘ge2. White gives back immediately his extra pawn. 9...♖xb2 10.♗b1 ♖a3 11.g3 0-0 12.♙g2 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♘b6∞ Moiseenko – Zhigalko, Warsaw 2006. Now, thanks to his two powerful bishops and the more elastic pawn-structure, Black's chances are not worse.

9.♙b5+ ♙d7 10.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 11.♘ge2 0-0 12.0-0 ♗fd8 13.♖d3 ♗ac8 14.a4 ♙g7 15.a5 ♖a6=, followed by ♘f6-d5, Smyslov – Bronstein, Tbilisi 1966. Black will gradually restore the material balance and will obtain a good position.

6...♙g7



Now, as main lines for White in this position we will analyse: **A) 7.♙e2** and **B) 7.cxd5**.

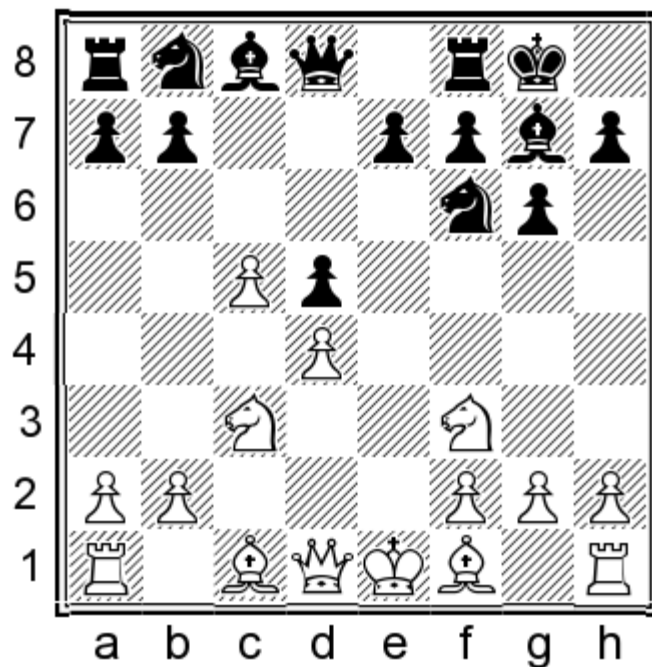
About 7.♖b3 0-0 8.cxd5 ♘bd7 – see Chapter 11.

7.♘e5 0-0 8.♙e2 ♙e6 – see variation **A**.

7.♙e3 0-0 8.c5 (8.♙e2 ♘c6 – see variation **A**) 8...♘c6 – see 7.c5.

7.♗a4+?! This check only weakens White's control over the strategically important d4-square. 7...♘c6 8.c5 0-0 9.♙b5, Zubarev – Yankelevich, Schwaebisch Gmuend 2016, 9...♙g4!?. Black sacrifices a pawn and seizes firmly the initiative. 10.♙xc6 ♙xf3 11.gxf3 bxc6 12.♗xc6 ♖c8 13.♗b5 e5!. He opens files for his pieces. 14.dxe5 ♗e8 15.♙e3 ♗xe5 16.0-0-0 ♘d7 17.♙d4 ♗e6 18.♙b1 ♙xd4 19.♗xd4 ♗xc5 20.♗a4 ♘f6. The tactical complications are over. Black has restored the material balance and due to his superior pawn-structure and safer king can rely on having an edge. 21.♗hd1 ♗b6 22.♗b4 ♗b8 23.♗xb6 axb6 24.♗d4 ♙g7

7.c5. This occupation of space would have been much better with a black pawn on e6. Here, Black's bishop can go to g4, pinning the important defender of the pawn on d4. 7...0-0

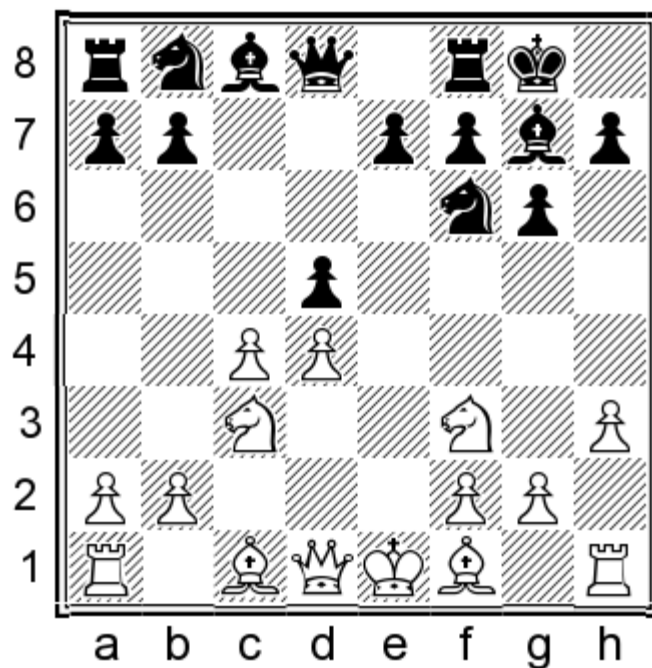


8.h3 ♖e4 – see 7.h3.

8.♙e2 ♜c6 – see variation A.

8.♙e3 ♜c6 9.♙b5 ♙g4 10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♚xf3 e5. After this move White cannot hold the centre. 12.dxe5 ♜xe5 13.♚d1 a6 14.♙e2 ♜c6 ♞ Wheeler – D’Costa, England 2014.

7.h3. White defends against ♙g4, but the move h2-h3 is hardly so necessary. 7...0-0



8.♙g5 ♙e6 – see 7.♙g5.

8.♙e2 ♜c6, or 8.♙d3 dxc4 9.♙xc4 ♜c6 10.0-0 ♜a5 – see variation A.

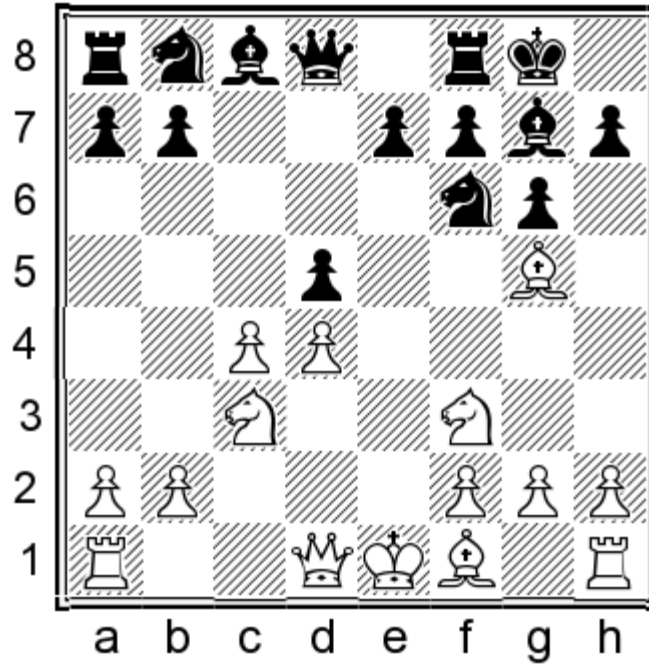
8.♙f4 ♜c6 9.♙e2 dxc4 10.♙xc4 a6 11.a4 ♙f5 12.0-0 ♞c8 ♞ Chandran – Kruger, ICCF 2014.

After 8.c5, Black can obtain better prospects attacking the enemy pawn on c5 with b7-b6. 8...♜e4 9.♙d3 ♜xc3 10.bxc3

b6 11.cxb6, Duratti – Bur, Geneve 2002, 11...axb6!? 12.0-0 ♔a6 13.♙xa6 ♖xa6, followed by ♜c6-a5, taking the c4-square under control. White's pawn-weaknesses doom him to a long and difficult defence.

8.♙e3 b6. Black prepares the fianchetto of his second bishop. 9.♖c1 ♙b7 10.b3 ♜c6 11.♙e2, Pinter – Gledura, Hungary 2014, 11...e6!? 12.0-0 ♜e4 13.cxd5 ♜xc3 14.♖xc3 ♗xd5. White has no compensation for the vulnerability of his isolated d4-pawn. 15.♗d2 ♖fd8 16.♖fc1 ♖ac8

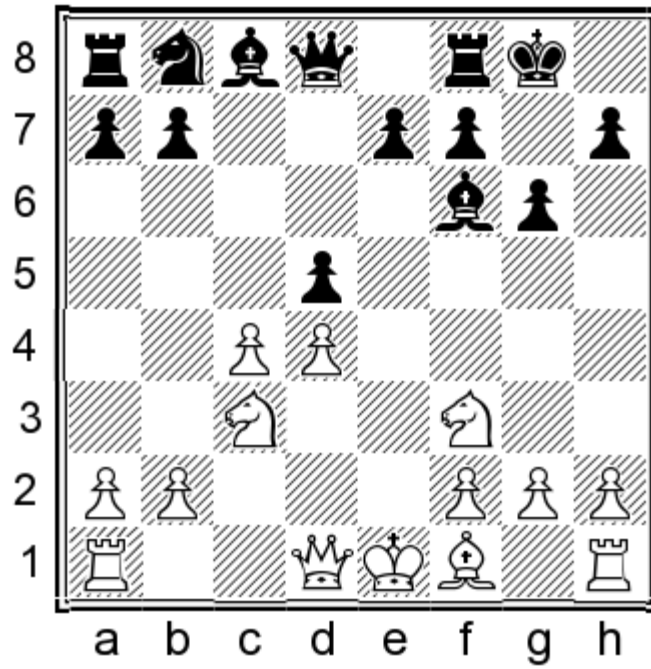
7.♙g5 0-0!? This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice for the initiative.



White's reluctance to capture some material does not promise anything to him. 8.♖c1 ♙e6=, or 8.h3 ♙e6 9.cxd5 ♜xd5 10.♙e2 ♜c6 11.0-0 h6 12.♙e3 ♖c8 Babikov – I.Popov, Sochi 2016.

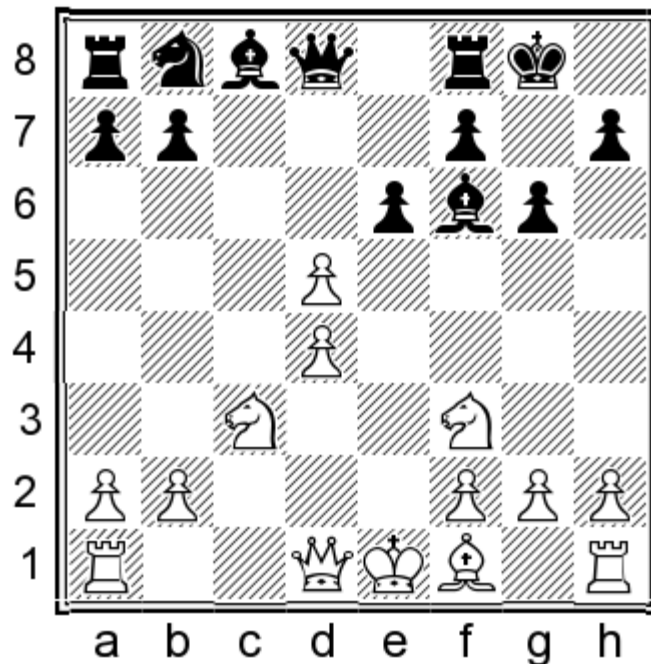
8.cxd5 ♜xd5 9.♗d2 (9.♗b3 ♜xc3 10.bxc3 ♗a5) 9...♜c6 10.♙e2 ♗a5 Milenkovic – Nikolic, Serbia 2006. The weak pawn on d4 can hurt White very much in this middlegame.

8.♙xf6 ♙xf6



9. dxd5 g7 10. dxc3 g4 11. e2 d6 . Black's pieces exert powerful pressure against the enemy position. 12. d5 xf3 13. xf3 a5 14. e2 . White will hardly manage to preserve his pawn; nevertheless, he must try to hold on to it for as long as possible. (14. $\text{c5}?!$ xc3+ 15. bxc3 c8 16. c6 bxc6 17. dxc6 xc6 Skembris – Kotronias, Karditsa 1996) 14... c8 15. a4 xc3+ . Black exchanges his powerful bishop, but compromised his opponent's pawn-structure. 16. bxc3 c5 17. 0-0 c7 18. ab1 b6 19. b5 , Pachman – Andersson, Geneve 1977, 19... $\text{xb5}?!?$ 20. xb5 e5 . Black restores the material balance with the help of this double attack. 21. c5 . White must try to simplify the position; otherwise, he would end up worse. 21... xd5 22. cxb6 xb5 23. xb5 axb6 = Black has less pawn-weaknesses, but there is just a few material left on the board in order to play for a win.

9. cxd5 $\text{e6}?!?$ He opens the position for his bishops.



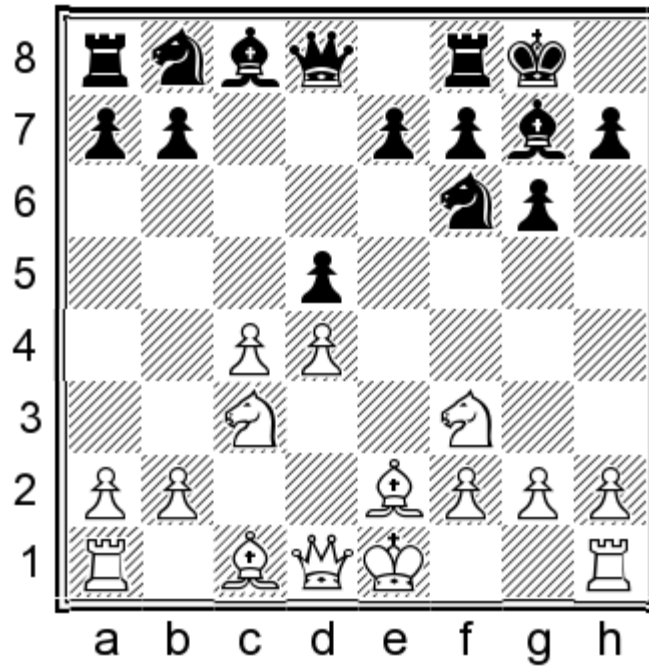
The move 10. $\text{dxe6}?!?$ only enhances the development of Black's pieces. 10... xe6 11. e2 d6 . White cannot hold on to his extra pawn, since Black's pieces are very active. 12. d5 xc3+ 13. bxc3 , Zaitseva – Dworakowska, France 1996.

13...♙xd5!?, with a better pawn-structure for Black.

10.♙b5 exd5 11.0-0 ♙e6= Klima – Spacek, Czech Republic 2001.

10.♙c4 exd5 11.♘xd5 (11.♙xd5 ♞e8+ 12.♙f1 ♘c6 Korobov – Kovchan, Kiev 1999) 11...♙g7 12.0-0 (Following 12.♘e3 ♘c6 13.d5 ♘a5, White evacuates his king from the centre, but gives back his extra pawn. 14.0-0 ♙xb2= Jakubowski – Szelag, Trzebinia 1999.) 12...♘c6 13.♞c1 ♙g4. Unfortunately for White, he cannot preserve his extra material. 14.♘e3 ♙xf3 15.♞xf3 ♞xd4= Shaposhnikov – Gareev, Kaluga 2003.

A) 7.♙e2 0-0



8.0-0

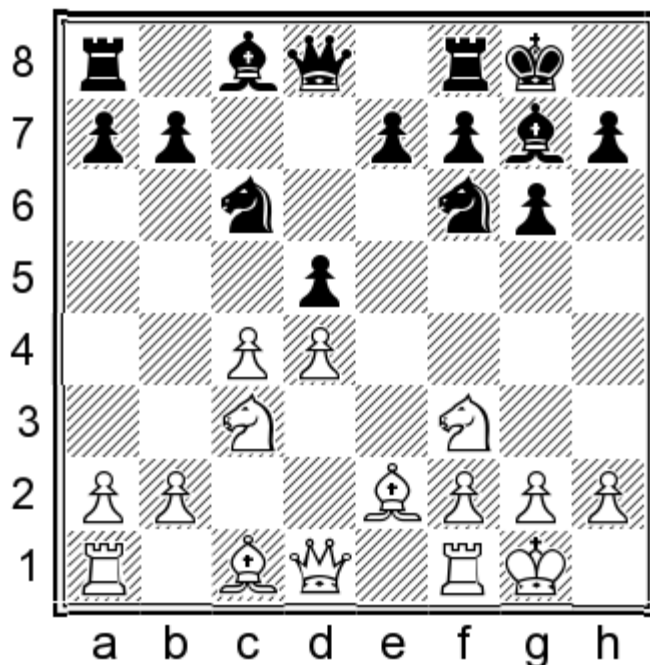
About 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 – see variation B.

8.♘e5 ♙e6 9.♙f3 ♘c6 Petkevich – Rytov, Moscow 1979.

8.♙e3 ♘c6 9.0-0 dxc4, or 8.h3 ♘c6 9.0-0 dxc4, or 8.c5 ♘c6 9.0-0 ♘e4 – see 8.0-0.

8...♘c6

White has a choice here between numerous possibilities, but the maximum he can achieve is just equality.



9.h3

White prevents the development of the enemy bishop to g4.

9.cxd5 ♖xd5 – see variation **B**.

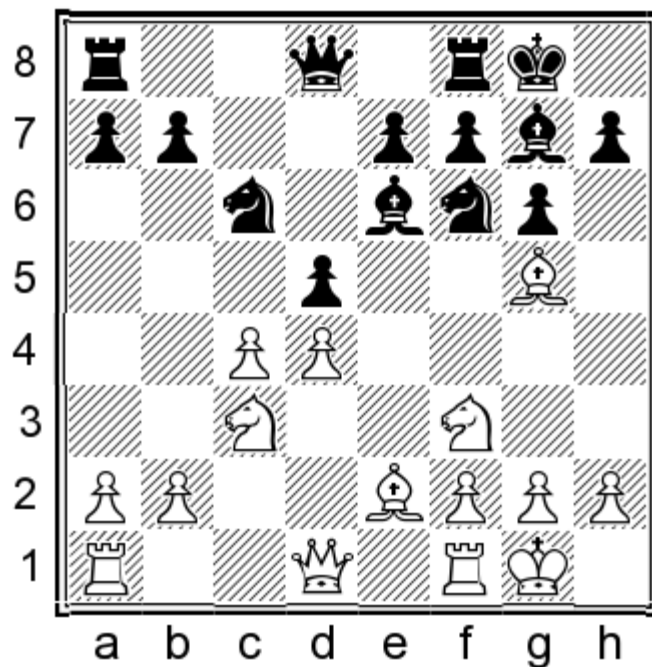
9.♞e1 ♕g4 10.c5 (10.cxd5 ♖xd5 – see variation **B**) 10...♗e4 11.♙e3 ♗xc3 – see 9.c5.

After 9.♗e5 dxc4 10.♗xc6 bxc6, the vulnerability of the d4-pawn is more important than the weakness of the c6-pawn. 11.♙xc4 ♗e8!?, followed by ♗d6-f5, increasing the pressure against the d4-pawn, Ruckschloss – Kukel, Slovakia 2000.

9.b3. White is preparing the development of his bishop to b3, but it would not be so active there. 9...♙f5 10.♙b2 dxc4 11.bxc4 ♗e4 12.♗d5, Marret – Clark, Uxbridge 2010, 12...b5!?, undermining the base under the knight on d5.

9.♙f4 ♕g4 10.h3 (10.c5 ♗e4 – see 9.c5) 10...♙xf3 11.♙xf3 dxc4 12.d5 ♗b4= White's two strong bishops compensate for him the absence of a pawn, but not more than that. 13.d6 (13.♙g3, Flohr – Van den Bosch, The Hague 1932, 13...♗d3) 13...e6 14.d7?! After this too active move, Black obtains better chances. 14...♗d3 15.♙d6, Materniak – Slawinski, corr. 1999, 15...♗xd7!? 16.♙xf8 ♗xf8. Black has two pawns for the exchange and his knight on d3 and bishop on g7 exert powerful pressure against the enemy position.

9.♙g5 ♙e6



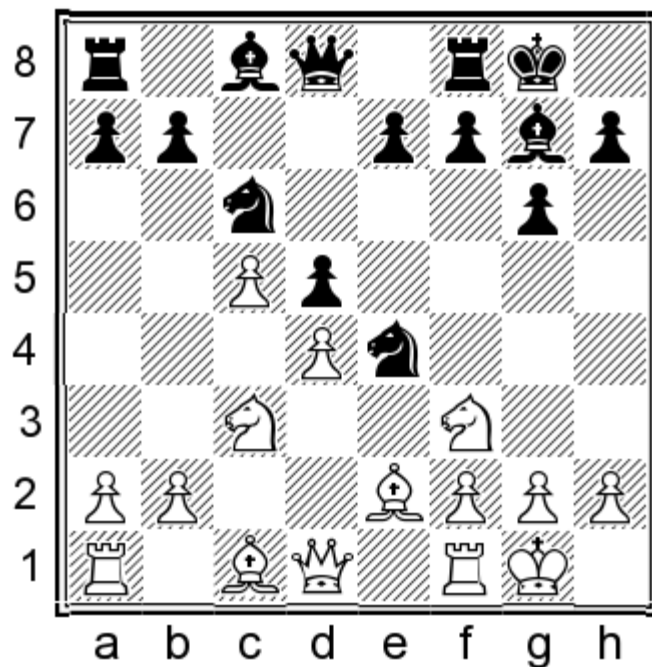
10.h3 ♖a5∞ Hebden – Cavendish, Eastbourne 1990.

The move 10.♖c1 leads by force to an inferior endgame for White. 10...dxc4 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.d5 ♙xc3 13.dxe6 ♙xb2 14.exf7+ ♔g7 15.♖xc4 ♜xd1 16.♖xd1 ♙f6 17.♖b1 ♖xf7 ♞ Kepinski – Mercadal, ICCF 2011. He cannot regain his pawn, because of the loss of the exchange: 18.♖xb7? ♗a5--+

After 10.cxd5, Black can capture with his bishop. 10...♙xd5!? 11.♗xd5 ♜xd5 12.♜a4, Vaganian – Gufeld, Vilnius 1975, 12...a6!?! ♞. White's two-bishop advantage cannot compensate the vulnerability of the d4-pawn.

10.c5 ♗e4 11.♙e3 ♗xc5!. With this simple combination Black obtains an advantage. 12.dxc5 d4 13.♗xd4 ♗xd4 14.♖c1, Dietze – Meissner, Stralsund 1975 (14.♙f3?! ♖c8 15.♙xb7 ♖xc5 ♞ Prieto Aranguren – Pavlovic, La Massana 2010. Black's pieces are very active.) 14...♗f5!?! 15.♜xd8 ♖fxd8 ♞ His pieces exert powerful pressure against White's queenside.

9.c5. White reduces the pressure against the d5-pawn, enables Black's knight to occupy a strong position at the centre of the board and creates a target for him to attack – the c5-pawn. 9...♗e4



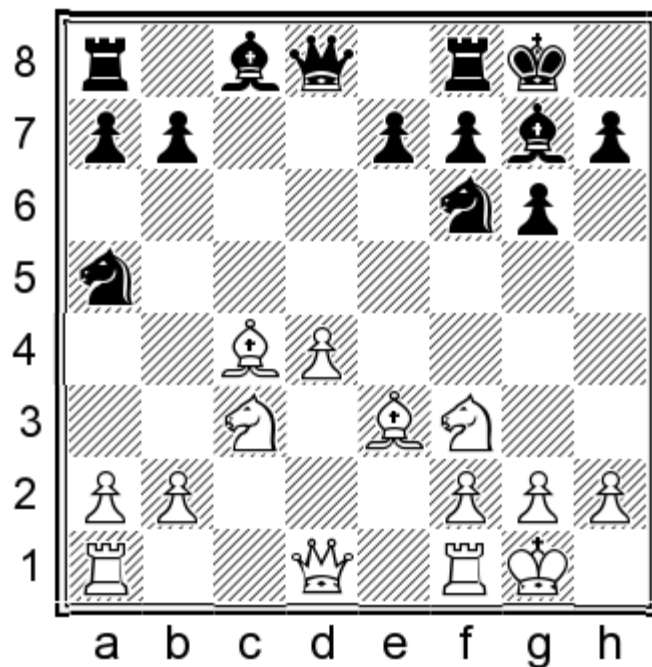
10.h3 b6 11.♙b5 ♖a5 ♞ Kaganskiy – Lovkov, St Petersburg 2016.

The move 10.♙f4 does not seem so logical, since after 10...♙g4, the bishop will have to go back to e3 in order to protect the d4-pawn. 11.♙e3 ♖xc3 12.bxc3 b6 13.♞a4, Huang – Krush, Khanty-Mansiysk 2012, 13...♞d7!? 14.♞a3 ♖a5 ♞

10.♙e3 b6 11.♞a4. White wishes to create pressure against the knight on c6 and to organise counterplay on the queenside. 11...♙d7 12.♙b5 ♖xc3 13.bxc3 ♞c7 14.c4 a6. This move forces White to part with his powerful light-squared bishop. 15.♙xc6 ♙xc6 16.cxb6 ♞b7 17.♞b4, Musalov – Prizant, Yerevan 2014, 17...a5!? 18.♞c3 dxc4 ♞ The position has been opened and Black's two-bishop advantage has become very important.

Following 10.♞e1 ♙g4 11.♙e3 ♖xc3 12.bxc3, there has appeared a weakness in White's camp – the c3-pawn. 12...b6 13.♞a4, Ernst – L'Ami, Netherlands 2006, 13...♞d7 14.♞a3 ♖a5 ♞

9.♙e3 dxc4 10.♙xc4. White should better restore immediately the material balance (After 10.d5 ♖a5, he might fail altogether to regain his pawn: 11.♞d2, Darga – Hort, Germany 1982, 11...♙d7!? ♞, preparing b7-b5.) 10...♖a5 (Black obtains a good position too after 10...♖g4!? ♞, eyeing the powerful enemy bishop.)



Following 11.♙d3, White will fail to preserve his light-squared bishop from an exchange. 11...♙e6 12.♚e2 ♜c8 13.♞fe1 ♙c4 14.♞ad1 ♘d5 15.♙g5 ♞e8 16.♙xc4 ♘xc4 ♞ Teske – Shanava, Navalmoral 2011.

11.♙e2 ♙e6 12.b3. White takes the c4-square under control, but weakens the c3-square. (He should possibly chose here the simpler line: 12.♚d2 ♘c4 13.♙xc4 ♙xc4 14.♞fe1, Frey Beckman – Tarjan, Bogota 1979, 14...♞c8= Black has the two-bishop advantage indeed, but White's position is still quite defensible.) 12...♘d5 13.♘xd5 ♙xd5. The vulnerability of the isolated d4-pawn becomes even more obvious with every exchange of a piece. 14.♘e5 ♞c8 15.♚d2 ♘c6 16.♞ad1 e6 17.♙g5 ♚c7 18.♘xc6 ♚xc6 19.♞c1 ♚d7 ♞ Van Scheltinga – Adorjan, Wijk aan Zee 1971. White is doomed to a long defence of a slightly inferior position.

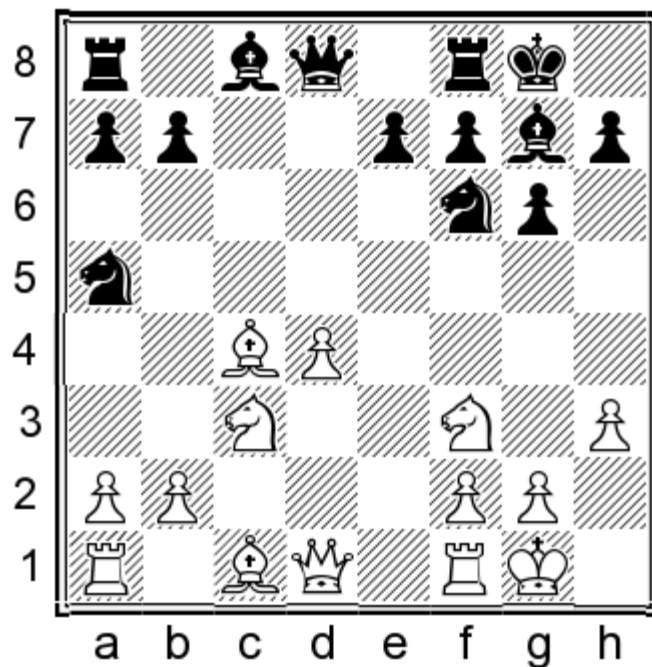
9...dxc4

This is an interesting plan. Black forces his opponent to capture on c4 after which he attacks White's bishop in order to increase his control over this square.

10.♙xc4

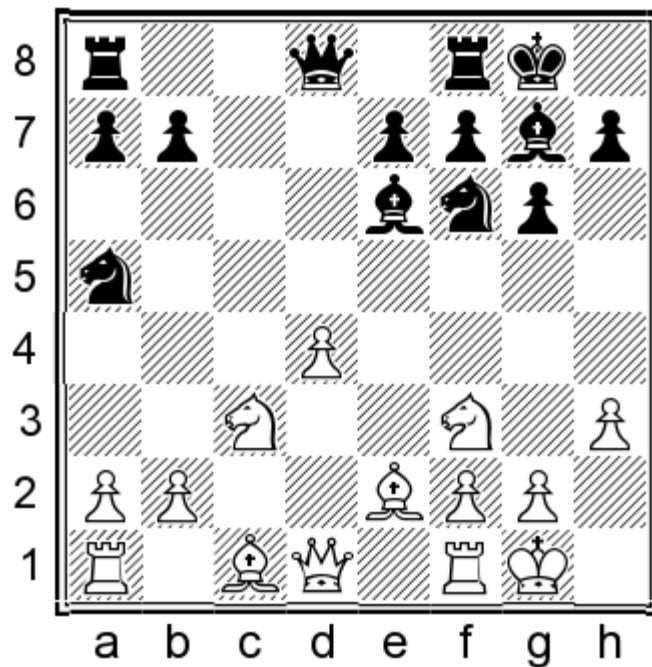
10.d5 ♘a5 11.♙f4 ♙d7 ♞ Marjanovic – Rukavina, Pucarevo 1987. White must still prove that he has sufficient compensation for the pawn.

10...♘a5



11.♙d3

The other retreats are not any better for White. 11.♙e2 ♘e6



12.♙f4 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 ♙xd5 14.♞c1 ♘c6 Carro – Benko, Caracas 1970.

12.♙g5 ♞c8 13.♞c1 ♘c4 Krainski – Maksimenko, Jastrzebia Gora 2015.

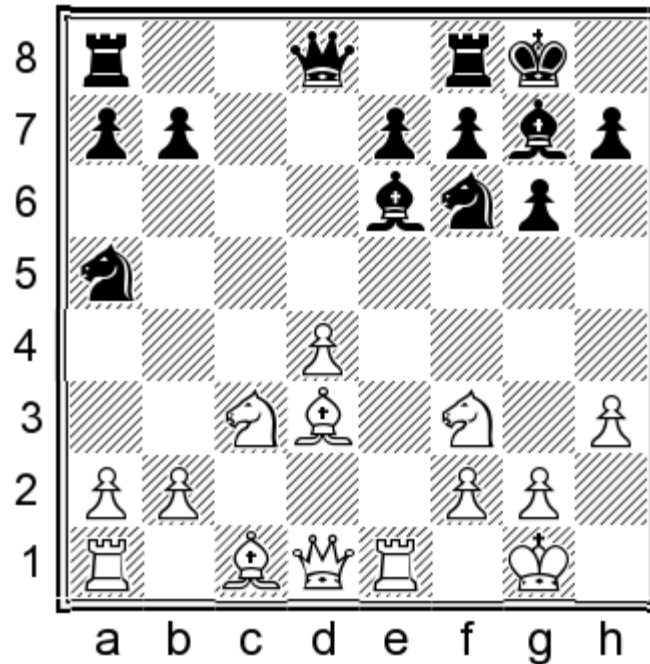
Following 12.♞e1 ♞c8 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙h4 ♘c4↑, Black's pieces become tremendously active, Horvath – Bernasek, Austria 2012.

12.♘e5 ♞c8 13.♙e3 (13.♙f3 ♘d5 14.♘e4 ♘b4 Heberla – Vehi Bach, Plovdiv 2008) 13...♘d5 14.♘xd5 ♙xd5 15.♞a4 a6, followed by b7-b5, Nei – Cramling, Osterskars 1995. White has no compensation for the weakness of his d4-pawn and will soon have to defend only passively.

11...♙e6 12.♞e1

12.b3. White covers the c4-square against the penetration of the enemy pieces, but weakens his queenside. 12...♞c8
13.♙b2 ♘d5 14.♘xd5 ♙xd5 ♜ Feoktistov – Borisenko, Arta 2004.

It is possible that White should better try to equalise with 12.♞e2 ♘c6!?. Black exploits the defencelessness of the d4-pawn and changes the route of his knight. Now, it is eyeing the d5-square. 13.♞d1 ♘b4 14.♙c4 ♙xc4 15.♞xc4 ♘bd5∞
Ilinsky – Dorfman, Moscow 1979.



12...♞d6!?

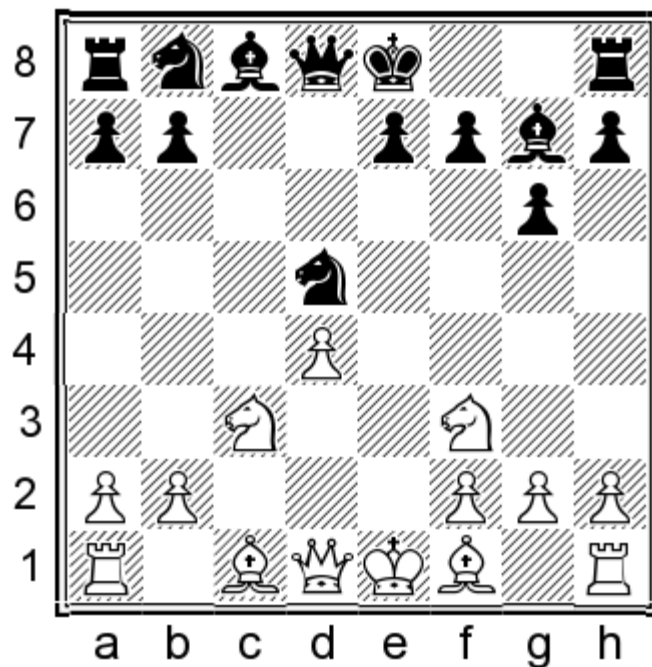
This is the simplest decision for Black. He does not need to allow the exchange-sacrifice on e6 (12...♞c8 13.♞xe6!?∞
Lputian – Magerramov, Daugavpils 1978), which would lead to a tremendously complicated position.

13.♙g5 ♘c6 14.♘b5 ♞d7 15.♘e5 ♞d8 16.♙f1 ♞b6 17.♘c3 ♞fd8 ♜ Pares Vives – Zemlyanov, ICCF 2012. Black has parried the aggressive sorties of the enemy pieces with a precise play and has organised powerful pressure against White's d4-pawn.

B) 7.cxd5

He clarifies immediately the situation in the centre.

7...♘xd5



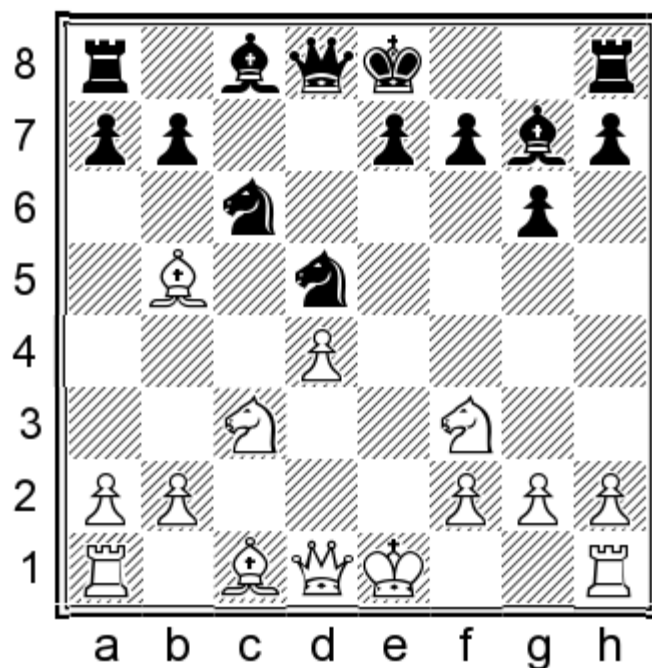
8.♙e2

8.♙d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♙e4 ♙e6 11.♞e1 ♞c8= Solin – Filip, Prague 1954.

8.♙c4. This is not a very good move for White, since his bishop will be unstable on this square. 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♚c7!? 10.♚b3 (After 10.♚e2, Black can reply with 10...♙e6!?, exploiting the insufficient protection of the pawn on c3.

11.♙b5+ ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0= Lugovoi – S.Ivanov, St Petersburg 2000) 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♘c6. The threat ♘a5 forces White to lose a tempo for the retreat of his bishop. 12.♙e2 ♙e6 13.♚a3 ♞ac8= Hebden – Anand, London 2014. The vulnerability of the pawn-tandem on c3 and d4 provides a stable advantage for Black.

8.♙b5+ ♘c6

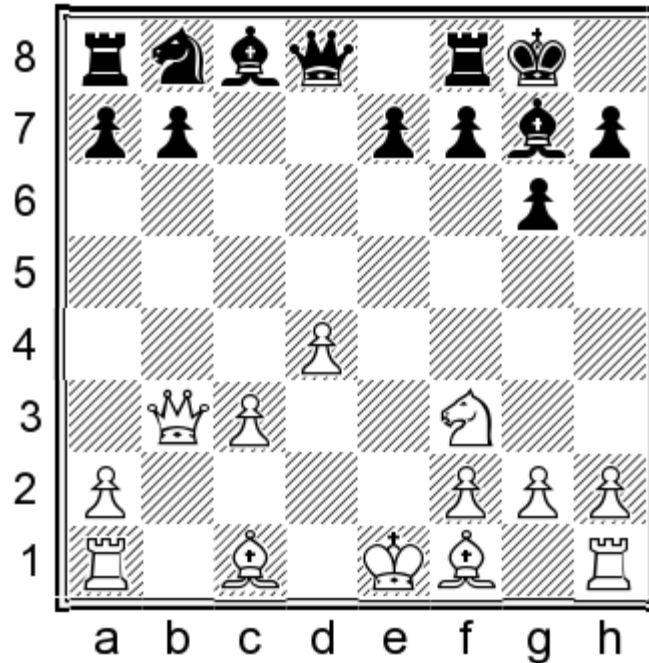


After 9.♘e5, Black can force a transition into a slightly better endgame. 9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♙xe5 11.dxe5 ♚xd1+

12.♔xd1 ♕d7 ♖ Vecchia – Dragojlovic, Lodi 2007. White's two-bishop advantage cannot compensate the weaknesses in his pawn-structure.

9.0-0 0-0 10.h3 ♕f5 11.♕g5, Chassy – Heimsoth, Dos Hermanas 2004, 11...♖c8!?

9.♖a4. This attempt to create threats on the a4-e8 diagonal is parried easily by Black. 9...0-0! He sacrifices a pawn and wishes to seize immediately the initiative. 10.♕xc6 bxc6. In this complicated position White should better refrain from accepting the pawn-sacrifice, because after 11.♖xc6?! Snoeks – Thienpondt, Blankenberge 2014, 11...♗xc3!? 12.bxc3 (12.♖xa8? ♖c7+ followed by ♕a6) 12...♕e6 13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♖a4 ♖xc3, Black restores the material balance and obtains an advantage thanks to his two-powerful bishops. His a7-pawn is untouchable. 15.♖xa7? ♖xf3! 16.gxf3 ♕xd4+ 8.♖b3. White's queen will come later under attack after ♗c6-a5 on this square. 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 0-0



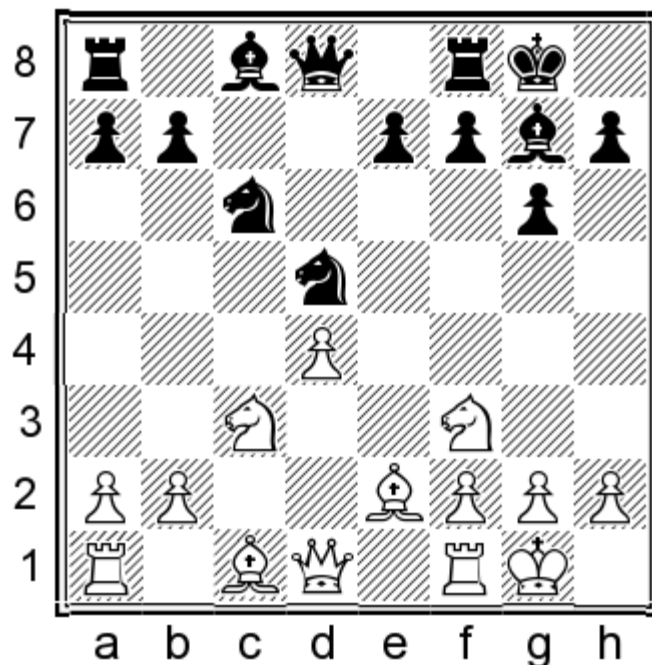
10.h4?! This flank attack is not well prepared. 10...♗c6 11.♕a3, Nakamura – Giri, Leuven 2016 (11.h5 ♕e6) 11...♕e6!? Black sacrifices a pawn and begins an attack himself. 12.♖xb7 ♖a5 13.♕b4 ♖d5 14.♖b5. Now, in order to neutralise the pressure of his opponent's pieces White must try to trade the queens. But in the endgame, arising after 14...♗xb4 15.cxb4 ♖ab8 16.♖xd5 ♕xd5 17.a3 ♕xf3 18.gxf3 ♕xd4 19.♖a2 ♖fc8, Black maintains a stable advantage.

10.♕e2 ♖c7. Black is eyeing the enemy weakness on c3. 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.♕e3, Tologontegin – Idani, Mashhad 2017, 12...♖d8, followed by ♕e6, ♗a5.

8...0-0 9.0-0

About 9.♖b3 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♖c7 – see 8.♖b3.

9...♗c6



10.♞e1

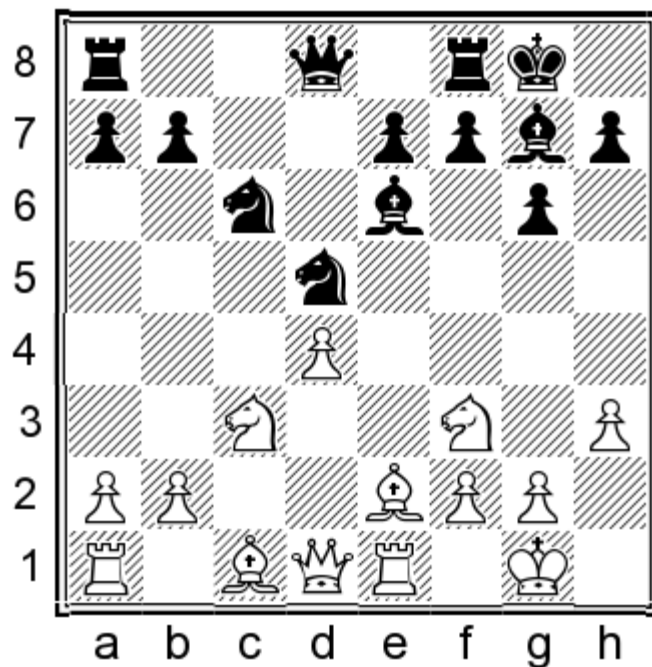
The move 10.♞b3?! can be countered by Black with the line: 10...♙e6! 11.♞xb7 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♙xd4. The exchange of a flank pawn for a central pawn is definitely in favour of Black. In addition, his pieces have become much more active. 13.♞d1. White's attempt to exploit the pin on the d-file is parried easily by Black. 13...♞b8 14.♞a6 ♘b4 15.♞a4 ♞b6 ♠ Gonzalez – Goldenberg, Mar del Plata 1961.

After 10.♙g5, Black has an interesting argument 10...♞a5!?, creating a threat against the enemy bishop on g5. 11.♞d2, Milenkovic – Nikolic, Serbia 2006, 11...♘xd4!? Black obtains an advantage with this concealed tactical strike. 12.♘xd4 ♙xd4 13.b4. Without this move Black would have played ♘xc3. 13...♙xc3 14.bxa5 ♙xd2 15.♙xd2 ♙d7 ♠ White's two powerful bishops are insufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn.

After 10.♙e3, Black's simplest answer would be 10...♘xe3!?, obtaining the two-bishop advantage. 11.fxe3 ♙h6 12.♞d3 ♘b4 13.♞d2 ♙e6 14.a3 ♘d5 15.♘xd5 ♙xd5 ♠ Ambarcumova – Burmakin, Benasque 2012.

After the rather patient move 10.h3, Black obtains a good game with a plan, connected with the fianchetto of his bishop on c8. 10...b6!? 11.♞e1 ♙b7 12.♙f1, Epishin – Zvjaginsev, St Petersburg 2009, 12...♞c8! ♠

10...♙g4 11.h3 ♙e6



12. ♖f1

Following 12. ♖g5 h6 13. ♖e3 ♜a5, Black not only increases his pressure against the knight on c3, but also frees the d8-square for his rook. 14. ♖d2. White should better preserve his bishop from an exchange (14. ♜d2 ♘xe3 15. fxe3 ♜ad8 ♞Kindl – Milos, Groningen 1994) 14... ♜ad8 15. ♜c1 ♔h7=

12... ♜c8 13. ♖g5 h6 14. ♖e3 ♘xe3 15. fxe3 f5!?

Black frees the f7-square for his bishop.

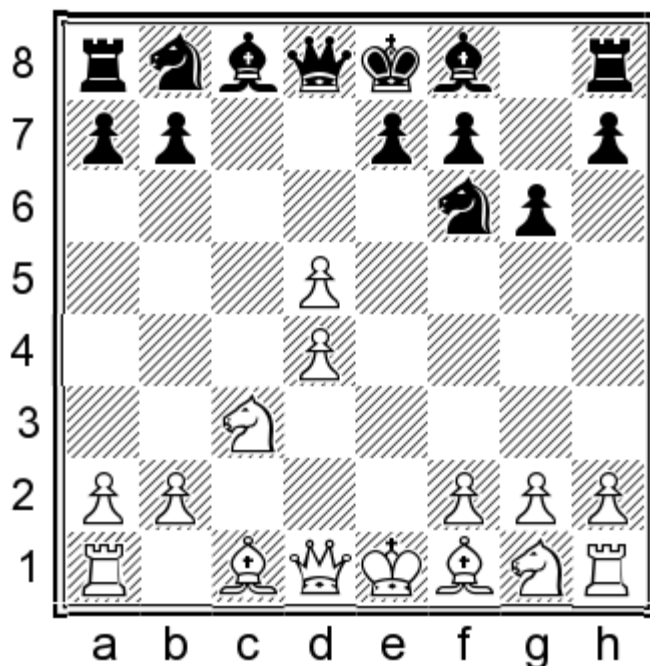
16. ♜d2

It would be less precise for White to play here 16. ♜a4, preparing the exchange of the bishops, because Black can easily avoid it. 16... ♖f7 17. ♖c4, Novkovic – Lugovoi, Panormo 2001, 17... e6!??

16... ♖f7 17. ♜ad1, L.Hansen – Mortensen, Aarhus 1999, 17... ♜b6!?? ∞ Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his bishop-pair.

Chapter 10

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 g6 6.cxd5



6...♗xd5

Black should better regain the pawn immediately, because after 6...♗g7 7.♗c4, he would have problems to do that.

We will analyse now **A) 7.♗b3** and **B) 7.♗c4**.

About 7.♗f3 ♗g7 – see Chapter 9, variation **B**.

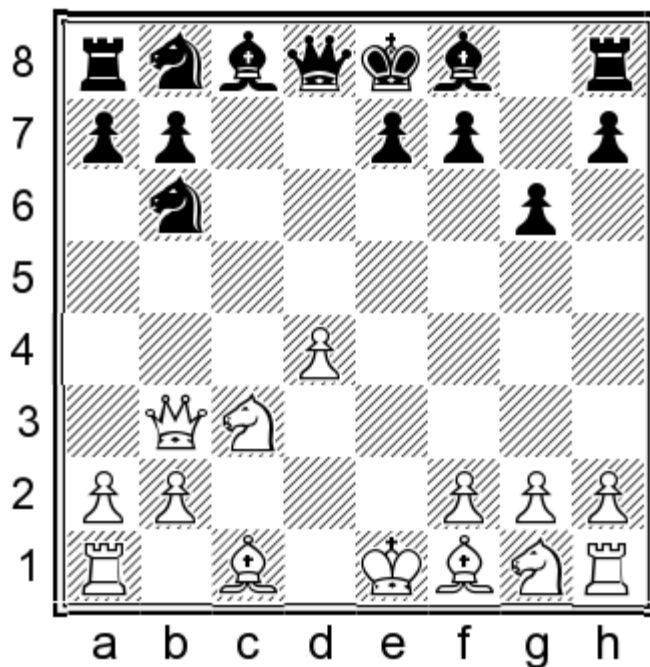
7.♗b5+. White's attempt to exploit his slight lead in development with the idea to create pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal would not bring him any dividends. 7...♗c6 8.♗a4 (8.♗f3 ♗g7 – see Chapter 9, variation **B**) 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 (9.♗xc6+ bxc6 10.♗xc6+ ♗d7 11.♗xc3 ♗g7= Richards – Beaumont, Torquay 1998. Black's two powerful bishops compensate the sacrificed pawn. White lags in development, because of his desire to win material.) 9...♗d7 10.♗f3 ♗g7=, followed by a7-a6, Mueller Boge – Kreutzkamp, Germany 1991.

A) 7.♗b3

White increases his pressure against the d5-square. His later plan, after the retreat of the enemy knight, includes the move d4-d5. Still, the recommendation not to develop the queen so early in the game has its justification and not in vain. Later, Black can exploit the exposed placement of the enemy queen with ♗a6-c5, or ♗e6 (if White refrains from d4-d5).

7...♗b6

Black will have to lose a tempo for the retreat of his knight, because after 7...♗xc3, White has the rather unpleasant intermediate move 8.♗c4! and Black would need to lose another tempo for the protection of the f7-square: 8...e6 9.bxc3±



We will deal now with **A1) 8.♙b5+** and **A2) 8.d5**.

About 8.♙e3 ♘g7 9.d5 0-0, or 9.♞d1 0-0 10.♙e2 ♘a6 11.d5 ♞d6 – see variation **A2**.

Following 8.a4, Vajda – Erenburg, Budapest 2002, Black must play very energetically in order to prevent his opponent to advance a4-a5 under the most favourable circumstances 8...♙e6!? 9.♞b5+ ♘8d7

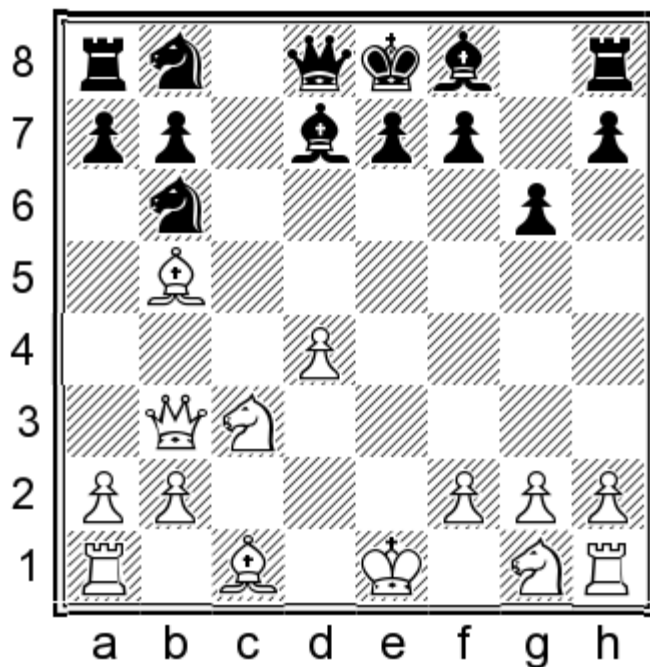
After 8.♘f3, Black can exploit immediately the misplacement of the enemy queen. 8...♙e6!? 9.♙b5+ ♘c6 10.♞d1 (10.♞b4 ♙g7∞ Korneev – Graf, Sanxenxo 2004) 10...♞c8 11.0-0 ♙g7 12.♘e5 0-0 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.♙e3, N.Kosintseva – Rambaldi, Dallas 2015, 14...♘d5!?

The vulnerability of the pawns on c6 and d4 is about balanced, so White has no compensation for Black's bishop-pair.

A1) 8.♙b5+

White wishes to begin active actions, before Black has completed his development. On the other hand the trade of the light-squared bishops would be in favour of Black, because he would be playing against his opponent's isolated pawn.

8...♙d7



9. ♖f3

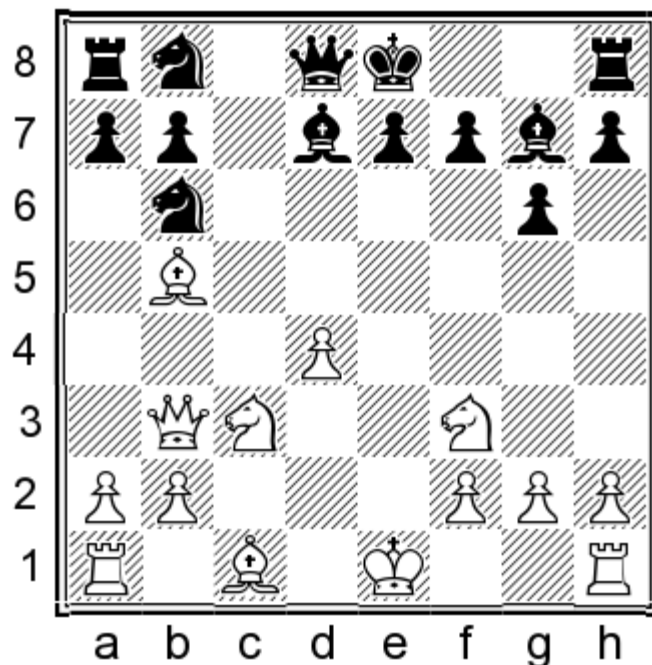
About 9. ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 10. ♗f3 ♕g7 – see 9. ♗f3.

9. ♗ge2. White's knight will not be so active here as on f3. 9... ♕g7 10. a4. After Black has played ♕d7, this pawn-advance is senseless, since with the move a4-a5 White only sends the enemy knight to the best d6-square for it. 10... 0-0 11. ♕xd7 ♜xd7 12. a5 ♖c8 ♞ Damljanovic – Vuckovic, Sombor 2009.

9. ♕f4 ♕g7 10. ♕e5, Vajda – Negulescu, Bucharest 1998. The exchange of the bishop on g7 would lead to some weakening of Black's king shelter, but it is hardly worth the two tempi White has lost to accomplish it. 10... ♕xe5!? 11. dxe5 0-0 12. ♗f3 ♕g4 ♞

9. a4 ♖c6. Black exploits the fact that the enemy pawn on d4 is not protected and transfers his knight to a5 from where it will exert powerful pressure against the c4 and b3-squares. 10. ♗f3 (10. ♕e3 a6 ♞ Guseinov – Seliverstov, Moscow 2013) 10... ♖a5 11. ♜a2 (11. ♜b4. White cannot use the defencelessness of the enemy knight on a5, since Black has the line: 11... a6!? 12. ♕xd7+ ♗xd7 ♞) 11... ♕xb5 12. axb5 ♖ac4 13. 0-0 ♕g7 14. ♞e1 0-0= Velimirovic – Giplis, Amsterdam 1976. Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

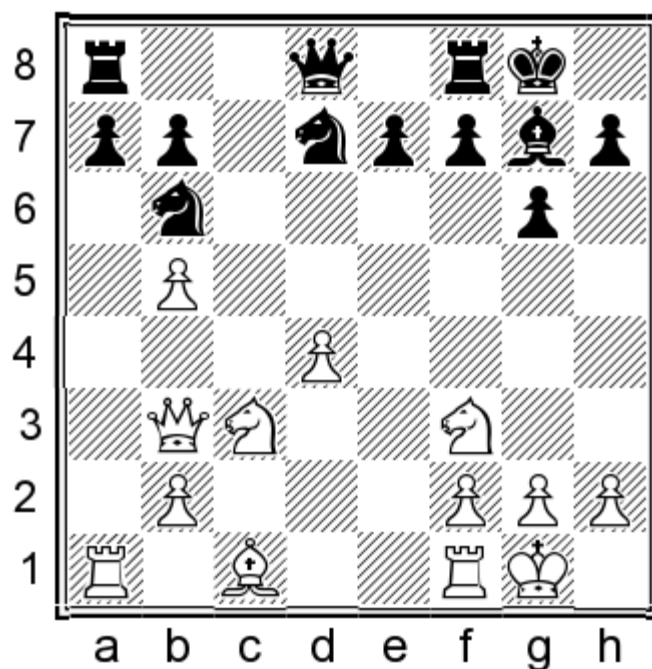
9... ♕g7



10. Nxe5

10. ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 11. ♞e5 ♞f5. Black defends the f7-square. White's pieces are active, but Black needs to make just one more move in order to evacuate his king away from the centre. Later, he will always manage to trade the active enemy knight on e5. 12. ♙e3 0-0 13. ♞d5 ♞xd5 14. ♜xd5 ♙xe5 15. ♞xe5 ♞c6 16. ♞xf5 gxf5= Riha – Voveris, FICGS 2010. In this endgame it is White who must play accurately, because after an imprecise play the weakness of his isolated pawn might hurt him seriously.

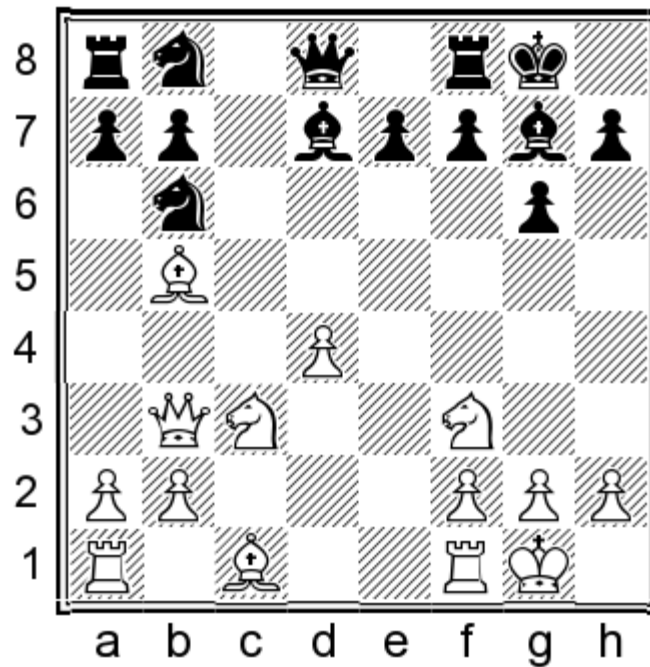
10.a4 ♙xb5 11.axb5 (Following 11. ♞xb5+ ♜d7 12. ♞b3, Nureev – Yevseev, Tula 1999, the simplest response for Black would be 12...e6!?∞, so that after a4-a5, he would not need to transfer his knight to d6, but would occupy immediately a central square with it.) 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♞8d7



Black has managed to complete his development, preserving the elasticity of his pawn-structure. On his next move he

will play Nf6 , increasing his control over the strategically important d5-square. His prospects in the forthcoming fight seem preferable, because the activity of White's pieces does not compensate the defects of his pawn-structure. 13. Ne4 Nf6 14. Nc5 Qd5 15. Qb4 e6 Sengupta – Guseinov, Kolkata 2009.

10.0-0 0-0



11. Qe3 Qe6 12. Qc2 a6 13. Qe2 Nc6 Klabis – Baskara, Al Ain 2013.

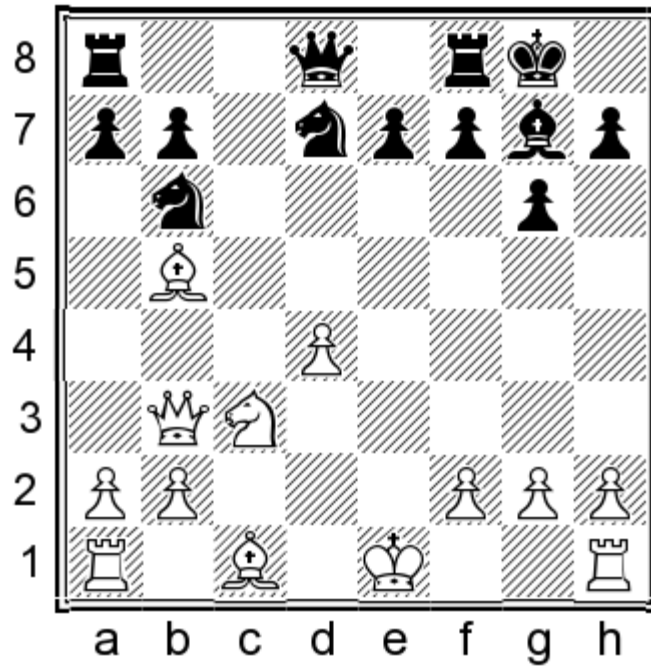
11. Qxd7 . Black has evacuated his king from the centre and White should better trade the bishops; otherwise, Black would play Qe6 , or Qg4 . 11... Qxd7 12. a4 Rd8 . Black is preparing Nd5 . 13. Re1 (13. a5 Nd5) 13... Nc6 14. Qg5 h6 15. Qh4 g5 16. Qg3 , Banas – Hajnal, Hungary 2010, 16... $\text{Qf5}!$? The vulnerability of White's d4-pawn makes us evaluate this position in favour of Black.

11. Qg5 h6 12. Qh4 , Vaishali – Ivannikau, Poprad 2016, 12... Qg4

10...0-0 11. Nxd7

White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but as a rule bishops are not so effective in positions with an isolated pawn.

11... N8xd7

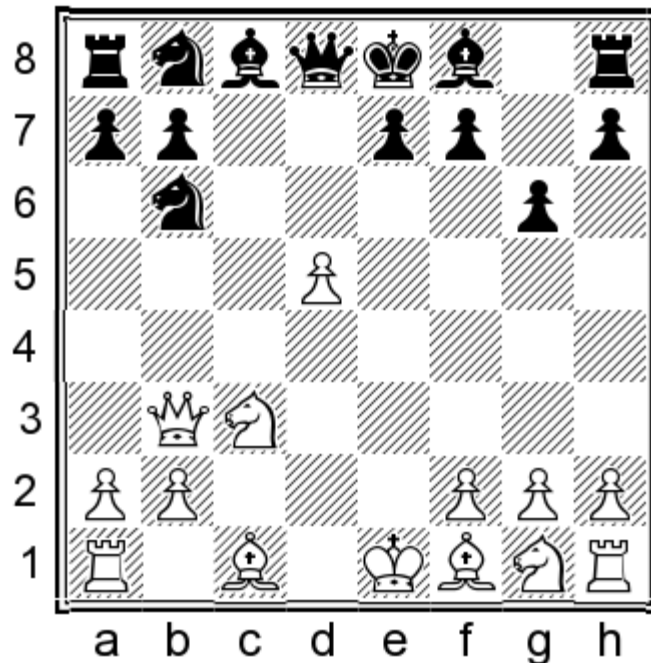


12.0-0

12. e3 d6 13. 0-0 dbd5 14. c4 dx3 15. fxe3 c8∞ Ludwig – Kacheishvili, Dallas 2009.

12... d6 13. Bd1 e6 14. g5 (14. f4 d5= Ionov – Fernandez Alonso, Osuna 1992) 14... dbd5 15. e2 Bb8 16. f3, Woodhouse – Harman, ICCF 2015, 16... d7!?= Black has succeeded in blocking the d4-pawn. White can hardly find an active plan for his actions, because the exchanges on f6 and d5 would lead to simplifications.

A2) 8.d5



8... g7 9. e3 0-0 10. Bd1 a6

This knight is headed for the c5-square.

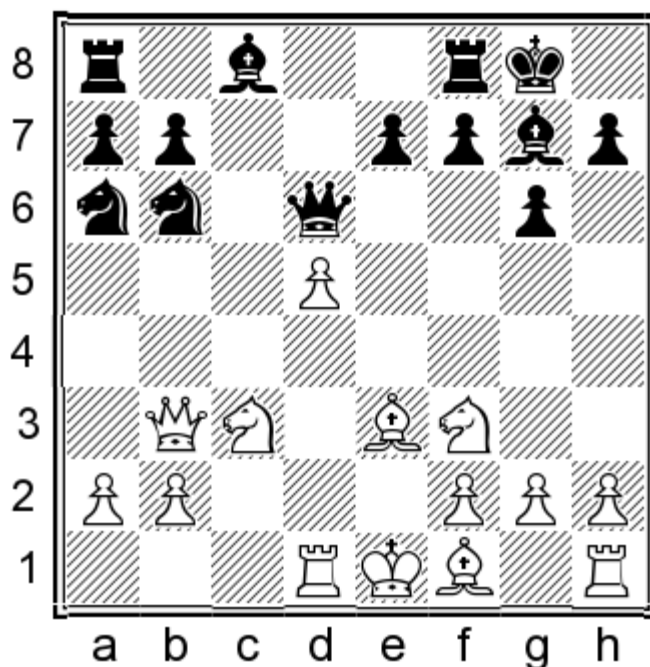
11. ♖f3

About 11. ♙e2 ♚d6 12. ♖f3 ♘c5 – see 11. ♖f3.

11. ♙xa6. This move presents Black with the two-bishop advantage. White will hardly manage to exploit the weakness of Black's queenside pawn-structure. 11... bxa6 12. ♖ge2 ♙b7 13. 0-0 ♚c7 14. ♖c1 ♚c4 15. ♚xc4 ♘xc4 16. ♙c5 ♜fe8
M. Zaitsev – Balduan, Germany 2001.

11... ♚d6

Black is preparing ♘c5.

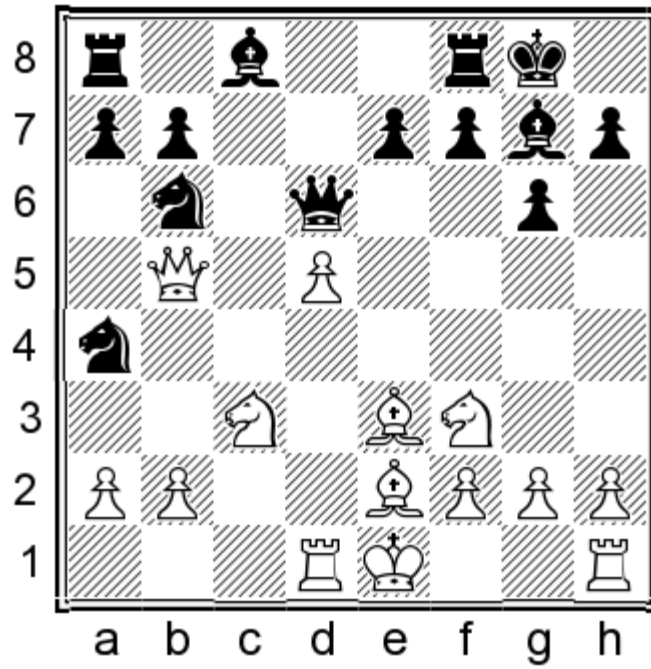


12. ♙xa6

The penetration of the enemy knight to the c5-square would be so unpleasant for White that he is forced to exchange his powerful bishop.

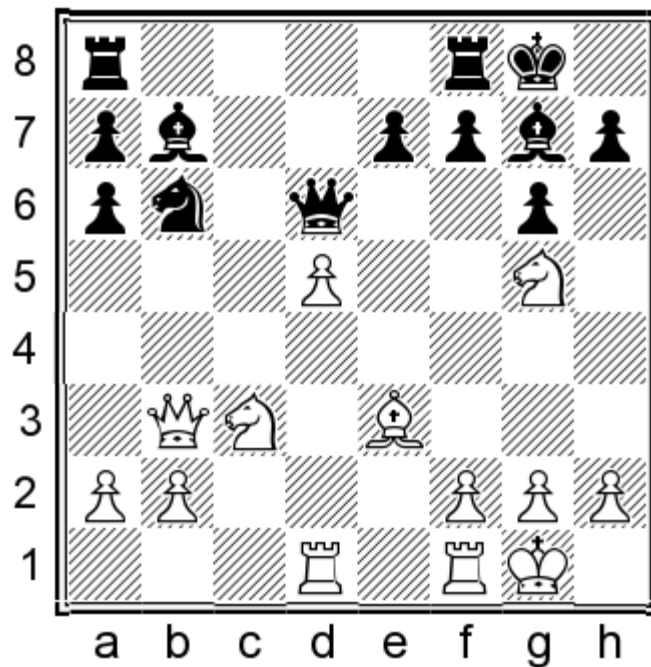
After White's alternatives Black seizes firmly the initiative, for example: 12. a3 ♘c5 13. ♚b4 (13. ♚b5 ♘ca4 – Barle – Adorjan, Reykjavik 1988) 13... ♘ca4! 14. ♘xa4 ♚xb4+ 15. axb4 ♘xa4 – Bojkovic – Zimina, Istanbul 2003. White's queenside is hopelessly weak.

12. ♙e2 ♘c5 13. ♚b5 ♘ca4

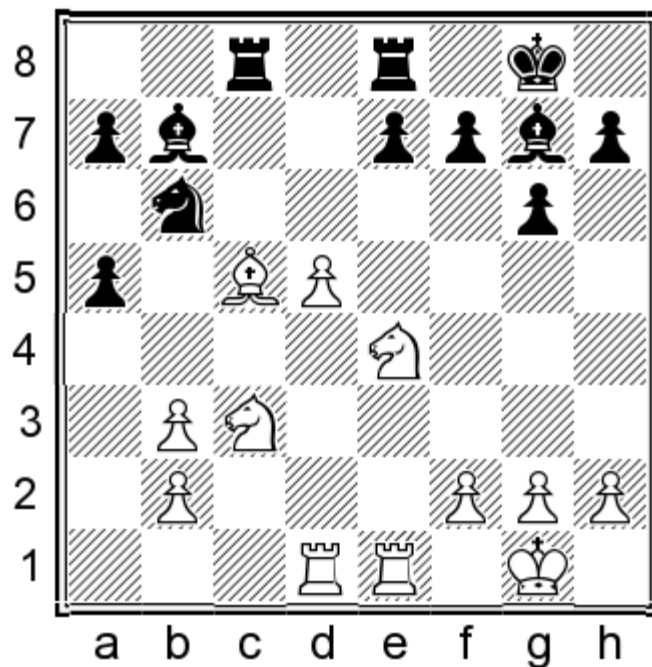


This is a standard manoeuvre for similar positions. Black increases the pressure against his opponent's queenside, having in mind that after the capturing of the knight, he would have the move ♙d7 . 14. ♘e4 ♚c7 15. ♞c1 (15.0-0 ♚c2) 15... ♚d8 16. b3 ♜f5 17. ♜fd2 ♞b2 Baeckstroem – Stigar, ICCF 2010. Black's knight has penetrated into the enemy camp among a cluster of pieces and pawns. The vulnerability of the d5-pawn forces White to begin defending.

12... bxa6 13.0-0 ♙b7 14. ♘g5



This is with the idea to play ♞ge4 and to remove the blockade against the d6-pawn. 14... a5 . Black prepares in advance the retreat of his queen to b4. 15. ♞ge4 ♚b4 16. ♙c5 ♚xb3 17. axb3 ♞fe8 18. ♞fe1 ♞ac8

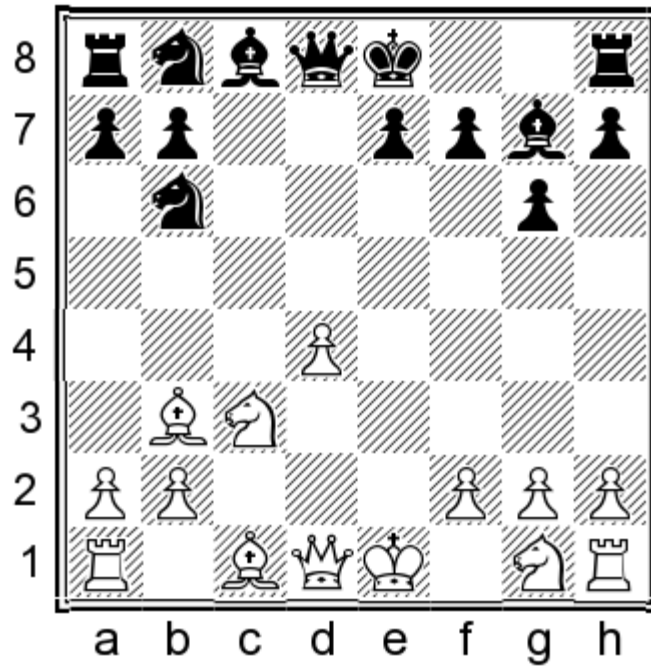


The activity of White's pieces compensates Black's bishop-pair. **19.h4 f5 20.♙xb6 axb6**. It may look like White's knight must abandon the centre, but he has the energetic response **21.d6**, which leads to interesting tactical complications. Meanwhile, they will be soon over and there will arise on the board a rather prosaic endgame. **21...♙c6 22.d7 ♙xd7 23.♞xd7 fxe4 24.♜d5 ♞cd8 25.♜xb6 ♞xd7 26.♜xd7 ♞d8 27.♜c5 ♞d2 28.♜xe4 ♞xb2 29.♞e3 ♙d4 30.♞d3 e5**= Soler Nadal – Tobella Torras, ICCF 2011. Black's bishop is stronger than White's knight in actions on both flanks on the board, but there is just a few material left on the board.

B) 7.♙c4 ♜b6 8.♙b3

It is not good for White to opt here for **8.♙b5+**, because after **8...♙d7 9.♙e2 ♙g7 10.♜f3 0-0 11.0-0 ♜c6 12.d5 ♜a5** L.Barczay – Sikora Lerch, Trencianske Teplice 1979, he loses his initiative, due to his rather slow play and has no compensation for the vulnerability of his isolated pawn.

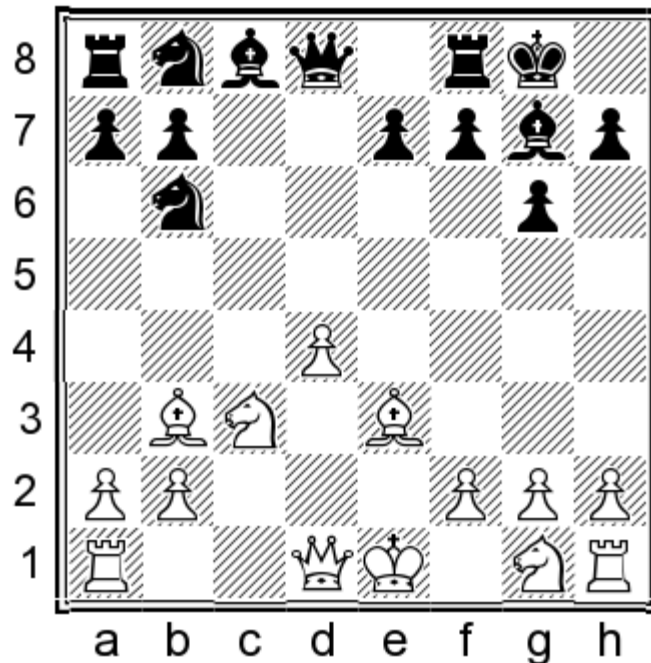
8...♙g7



9. f3

About 9.d5 0-0 10. f3 (10. e3 a5 – see 9. e3; 10. ge2 e6 – see 9. ge2) 10... g4 – see 9. f3.

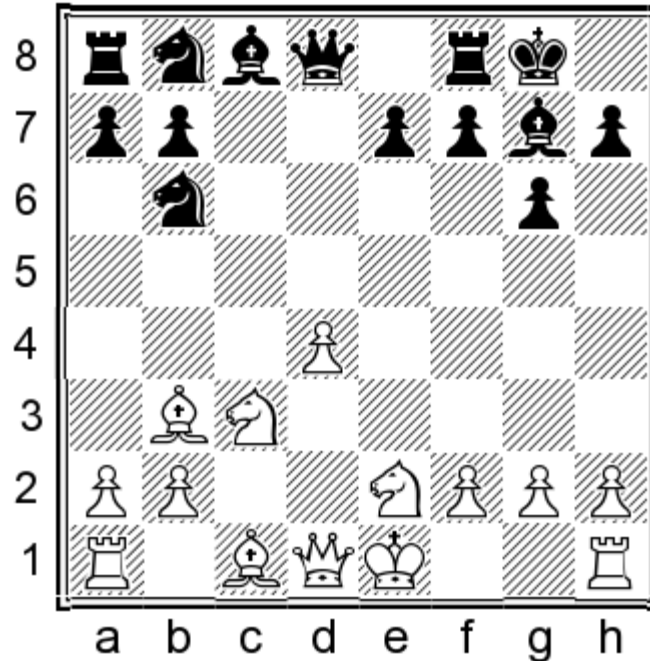
9. e3 0-0



10.h4?! This attack is too risky for White, since he has not completed the development of his pieces. 10... c6 11.d5 (Following 11. ge2 a5 12.h5, Black manages to exchange his opponent's powerful bishop, after which White can hardly organise an effective attack. 12... xb3 13.axb3 d5 Kratochvil – Bradac, Czech Republic 2011.) 11... a5 12. d4 (12.h5, Liss – Bykhovsky, Israel 2011, 12... bc4!?) 12... e5! Black is following the classical principles. He counters the enemy flank attack with actions in the centre. 13. c5 e8 14.h5 d7 15.hxg6 hxg6 16. e4 c8 17. b4 xb3 18.axb3 f5 19. c3. Black has ousted the enemy pieces from their active positions and begins a decisive counterattack. 19... e4+ Liss – Postny, Israel 2012.

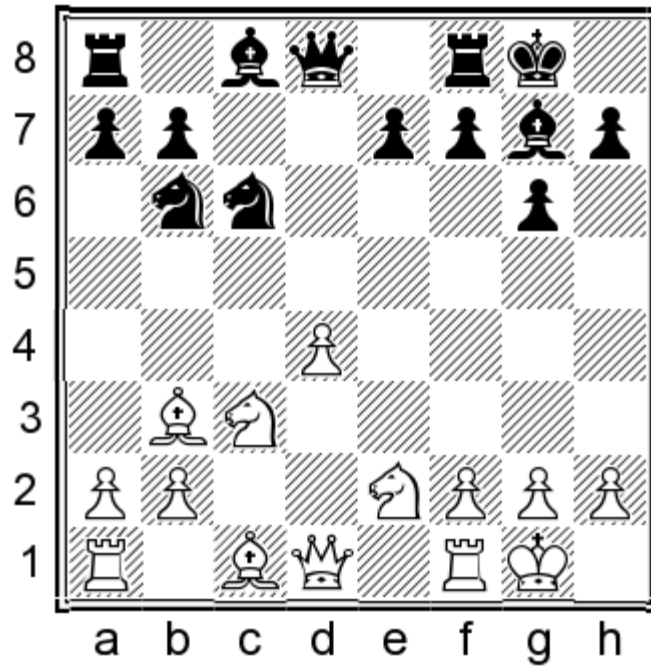
After 10.d5, Black obtains a very good position with a counter sacrifice of his a-pawn. 10...a5 11.♘ge2, Boudre – Flouzat, Saint Affrique 2005, 11...a4!? 12.♙xa4 ♘xa4 13.♘xa4 ♚a5+ 14.♘ac3 b5, followed by b5-b4. Black's two powerful bishops compensate fully his minimal material deficit.

9.♘ge2. Here, White's knight will be less active than on f3, but on the other hand Black will be incapable of pinning it. 9...0-0



After 10.d5, Black can simplify considerably the position with the line: 10...e6!? 11.dxe6 ♚xd1+ 12.♘xd1 ♙xe6 13.♙xe6 fxe6. White lags in development and cannot exploit the slight weakness of the enemy e6-pawn. 14.♙d2 (14.♘dc3 ♘c6= Sermek – Solak, Sibenik 2005) 14...♘c6 15.♙c3 e5. Black ensures an outpost for his knight at the middle of the board. 16.♘e3 ♘d4 17.♚d1 ♜fd8 18.♙a5 ♜d6 19.♘c3 ♜c6 20.♙xb6 ♜xb6= M.Zaitsev – Zelcic, Germany 2013. The powerful placement of Black's knight in the centre compensates the vulnerability of his isolated pawn.

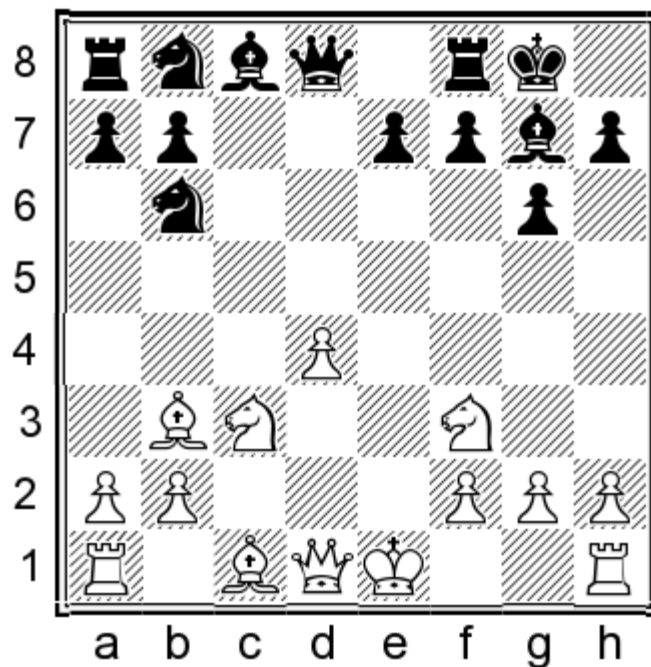
10.0-0 ♘c6



11. d5 ♖a5 12. ♗e3, Sveshnikov – Iskov, Copenhagen 1984, 12... ♔d6!? This is Black's simplest reaction. He combines at first his rooks and then begins to exchange pieces. 13. ♖e1 ♗d7 14. ♗d4 ♖xb3 15. axb3 ♗h6. He is ready to exchange the bishops, but only on the e3-square, in order to weaken his opponent's pawn-structure. 16. ♗e3 ♗xe3 17. fxe3 ♗g4

11. ♗e3 ♖a5 12. ♗c2 (12. d5 ♔d6 – see 11. d5) 12... ♖ac4. From here Black's knight will exert powerful pressure against White's queenside. 13. ♗c1. He protects his b2-pawn and saves his bishop from an exchange, but reduces the protection of his d4-pawn, which Black can exploit immediately by transferring his knight to the f5-square. 13... ♖d6!? 14. ♗f4 ♖f5 15. d5, Snyder – Blohm, San Francisco 2000, 15... ♖e8!? Black is preparing e7-e5. 16. b3 e5 17. dxe6 ♗xe6 18. ♔xd8 ♗axd8=

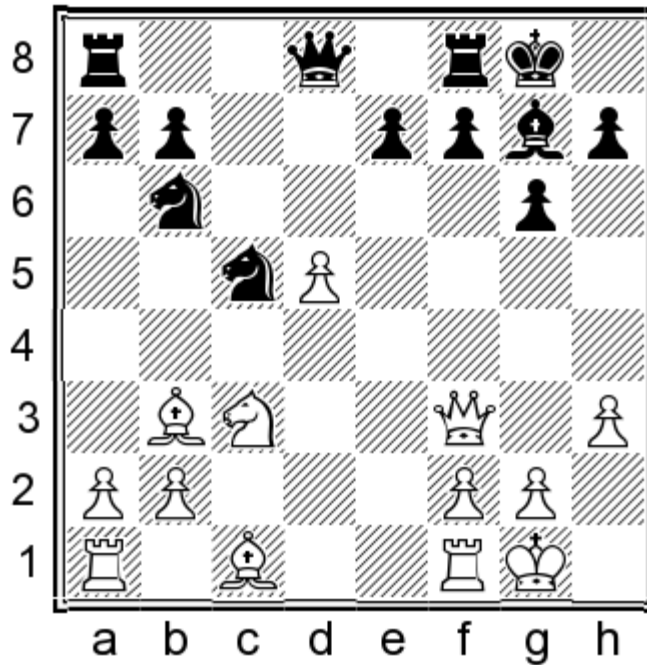
9...0-0



10.0-0

10.♔e3 ♖c6 11.d5 (11.0-0 ♗a5 – see 10.0-0; 11.h3 ♗a5 – see 10.h3) 11...♗a5 12.♔d4 (12.0-0 ♔g4 – see 10.0-0) 12...e5!?. This is Black's simplest road to equality. 13.dxe6 (White should better exchange the enemy e5-pawn, because after 13.♔c5 ♖e8, it could have been advanced. 14.0-0 e4 ♞ Hase – Garcia Palermo, Mar del Plata 1976.) 13...♗xb3 14.axb3 (It would be too risky for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice: 14.exf7+ ♖xf7 15.axb3 ♖d7 16.♗e2 ♖d6 17.0-0 ♔g4 18.♔xb6 ♗xb6 ♞ Black's bishops control the entire board.) 14...♔xe6=

10.d5. White impedes the development of Black's knight to c6, but weakens the e5 and c5-squares. 10...♔g4 11.0-0 (11.h3 ♔xf3 12.♗xf3 ♗8d7 13.0-0 ♗c5 – see 11.0-0) 11...♗8d7 12.h3 ♔xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗c5



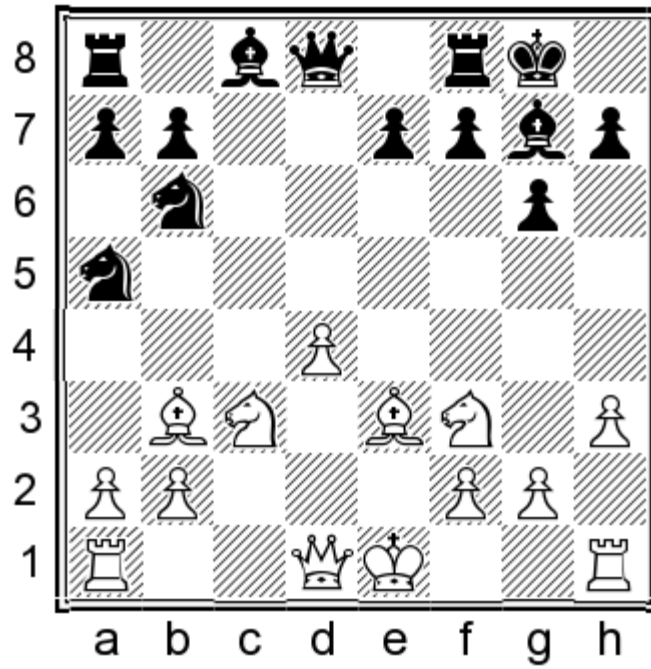
After 14.♖e1, Levin – Malakhov, St Petersburg 2014, Black's simplest reply would be 14...♖e8!?=

14.♔c2, Charbonneau – Erenburg, chess.com 2017, 14...♖c8!?=

14.♖d1. White protects his d5-pawn. 14...♗xb3 15.axb3 ♗c8 16.♔e3 (16.♔g5 ♗d6 17.♗e3 ♗f5 18.♗c5 h6 19.♔f4 ♗c8= Mochalov – Litvinov, Minsk 1980) 16...a6 17.♗a4. This knight is headed for the weakened b6-square. (He would not achieve much with 17.b4 ♗d6= Li Chao – Ipatov, Doha 2015.) 17...♗d6 18.♗b6 ♖b8. White's pieces have occupied active positions indeed, but Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp. 19.♗e2, Ugalde Garcia – Bermudez Vives, Costa Rica 1997, 19...♖e8 20.♖ac1 ♗c8 21.♗c4 ♗d6=

The seemingly active move 14.♔g5 would not bring anything to White, because after 14...♗xb3 15.axb3, Black can oust it from there with 15...h6 16.♔e3 ♗c8. Black wishes to transfer his knight to the blocking d6-square even at the price of sacrificing his a7-pawn. 17.♖fd1 ♗d6 18.♖xa7 ♖xa7 19.♔xa7 ♗a5 20.♔d4 ♔xd4 21.♖xd4 ♗a1+ 22.♖d1 ♗xb2= Frolyanov – Tomashevsky, Loo 2013.

10.h3. White defends against ♔g4. In the future the move h2-h3 may turn out to be a loss of a tempo, since it does not contribute to the development of his pieces. 10...♗c6 11.♔e3 ♗a5

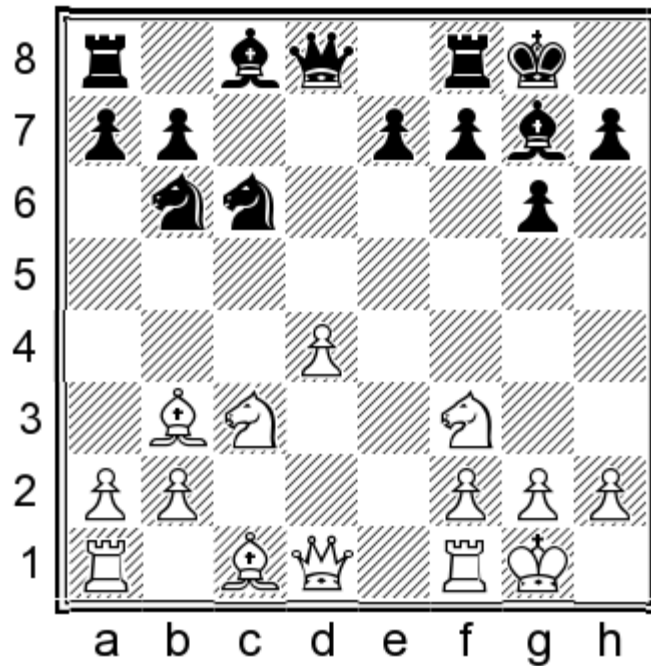


Now, White is faced with a difficult choice. He must either allow the exchange on b3, presenting his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, or retreat with the bishop from b3, losing valuable time.

12.0-0 ♖xb3 – see 10.0-0.

12.♙c2 ♘e6. Black increases his control over the d5-square. 13.0-0 (13.♘g5, Sulskis – Iordachescu, Kusadasi 2006, 13...♙d5!? 14.0-0 ♜c8) 13...♜c8 14.♘g5 ♙c4 15.♞e1 ♘d5 Luckis – Pleci, Mar del Plata 1972.

10...♘c6

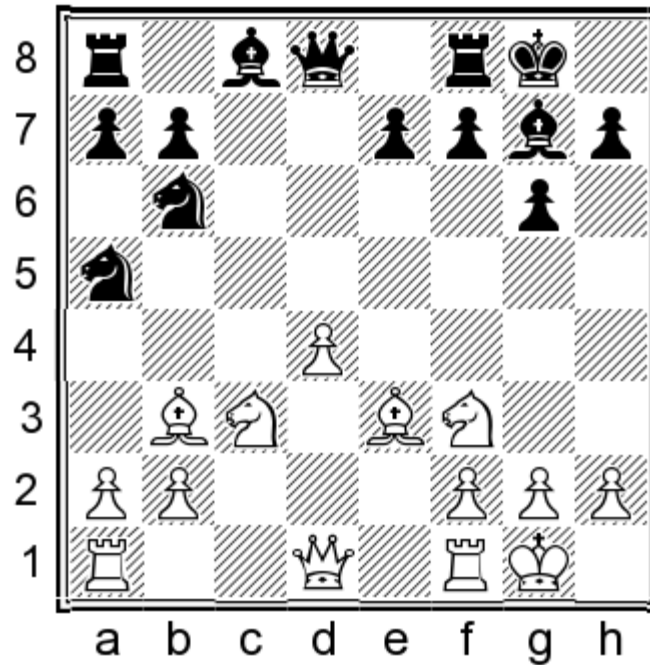


11.d5

It is best for White to remove immediately his pawn from the attack of his opponent's pieces. chesstouring.com

11.♞e1 ♘g4 12.♙e3 ♗a5 13.h3 ♗xb3 14.axb3 ♙e6 15.♙f4 ♗d5 ♞ Kuzmin – Grigorian, Moscow 1973. White has no compensation for the weaknesses in his pawn-structure and Black's bishop-pair.

11.♙e3 ♗a5



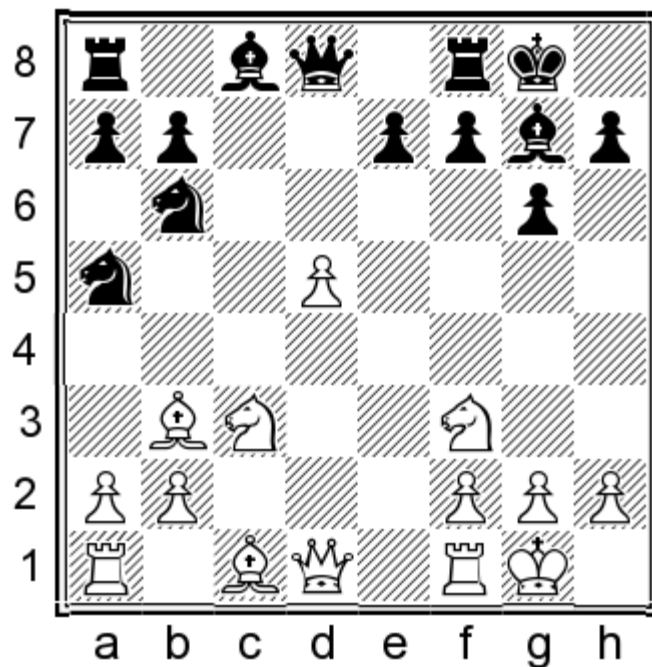
About 12.d5 ♘g4 – see 11.d5.

12.♞e1 ♘g4 – see 11.♞e1.

12.h3 ♗xb3 13.♚xb3 (13.axb3 ♙e6 ♞) 13...♙e6 14.♚d1 ♞c8 15.♞e1 ♗d5 ♞ Roy Chowdhury – Astaneh Lopez, London 2010.

12.♙c2 ♗ac4. White has problems to neutralise the pressure of his opponent's pieces. 13.♚e2 (13.♙g5 ♘g4 ♞) 13...♙g4 14.♙b3 (In the variation 14.♙e4, Black can simply exchange on e3, obtaining the two-bishop advantage. 14...♗xe3 15.fxe3 e5 ♞ Granz – Cuccumini, ICCF 2012) 14...♗a5!? It is important for Black to oust the enemy bishop on b3 from its active placement, while the c4-square may be occupied by his other knight. 15.♙c2 ♗bc4 16.♙e4 ♞c8 17.h3 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♗xe3 19.fxe3. This move weakens White's pawn-structure. 19...♗c4 20.♞f2 ♚b6 21.♗d5 ♚d6 22.♞d1 e6 23.♗c3 ♙h6 ♞, eyeing the weakness on e3, Granz – Wiesinger, ICCF 2012.

11...♗a5

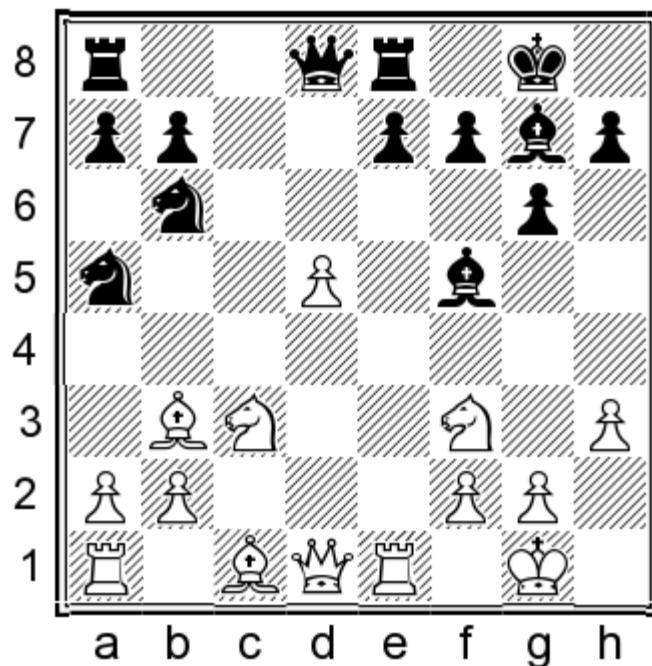


12. Re1

White increases his pressure against the e7-square.

He must play very carefully now, because he must take care about the possible captures on b2 and c3, after which he might obtain only insufficient compensation for the pawn. For example: 12. Re3 Rg4 13. h3 (13. Re1 Nbc4) 13... Rxf3 14. Wxf3 Rxc3!? 15. bxc3 Nxb3 16. Rxb6. This is the only way for White to preserve the material balance, but even here, after 16... Nd2 17. Wd3 Wxb6 18. Wxd2 Rc5 19. Rab1 b5 Alekxandrov – Riazantsev, Plovdiv 2012, he will have to defend due to his pawn-weaknesses.

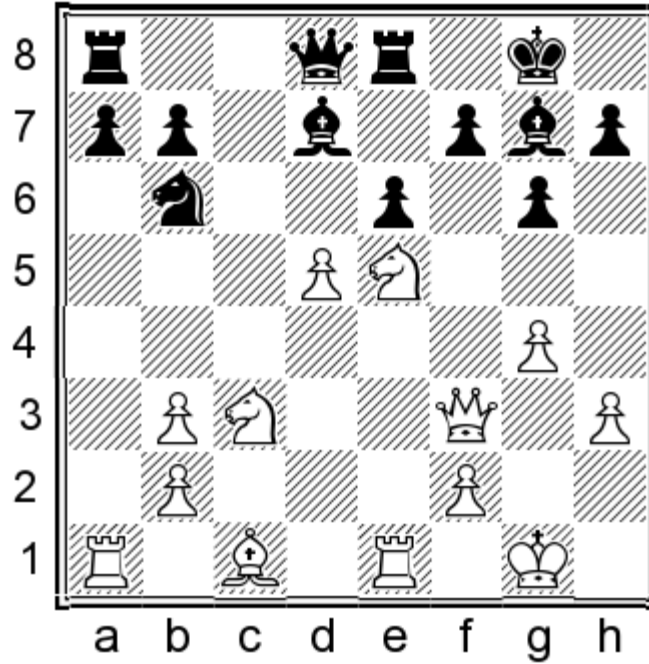
12. h3 Rf5 13. Re1 Re8



The move 14. Rg5 leads to simplifications. 14... Rxc3 15. bxc3 Nxb3 16. axb3 Wxd5 17. Wxd5 Nxd5 18. c4, Mons

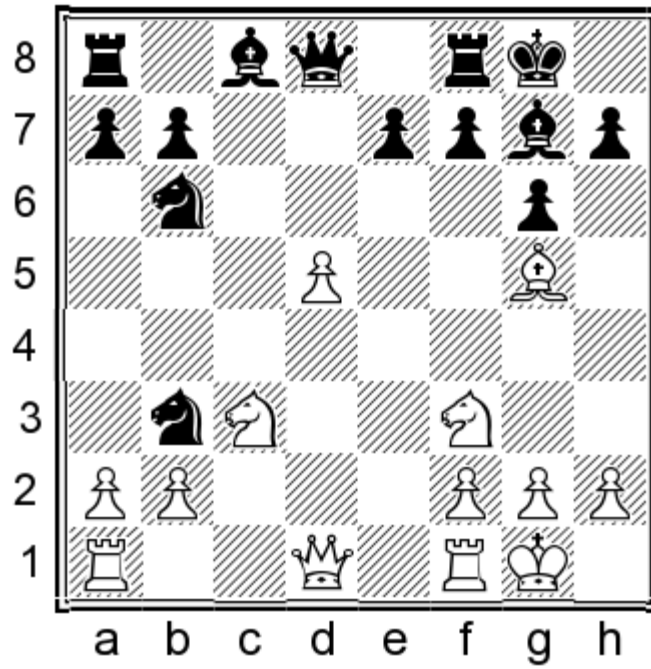
Ragger, Germany 2016. Black cannot hold on to his extra pawn, but still equalises easily. 18...♖b4!? This is his most precise move. The knight is headed for the c6-square. 19.♞xe7 ♞xe7 20.♙xe7 ♞c6 21.♙f6 a5= Black can neutralise the slight vulnerability of the dark squares on his kingside with h7-h6, g6-g5, ♜h7-g6.

14.g4. This move ousts the enemy bishop from its active placement, but weakens the king. 14...♙d7 15.♞e5 ♞xb3 16.axb3 (16.♞xb3 e6. The pawn on d5 cramps Black's position, so he should exchange it. 17.♞xd7 ♞xd7 18.dxe6 ♞xe6 19.♙f4 ♞c8= Jaulneau – Gutsche, ICCF 2008.) 16...e6 17.♞f3



17...♙xe5. Black is reluctant to lose time for the protection of the f7-square and exchanges his powerful bishop. Naturally, this weakens the complex of the dark squares on his kingside. White however, is incapable of exploiting this circumstance. 18.♞xe5 exd5 19.♞xe8+ ♙xe8 20.♙e3 ♙c6 21.♙d4 ♞d7. Black's position is solid enough. 22.b4. White begins active actions on the queenside with the idea to deflect the enemy queen from the field of the main events. 22...a6 23.b5 axb5 24.♞xa8 ♞xa8 25.♞xd5 ♞e8 26.♞f6+ ♞xf6 27.♞xf6 ♜f8= There have remained just a few pieces left on the board and White's seemingly powerful battery on the long diagonal does not provide him with anything meaningful. 28.♙c5+ ♜g8 29.♙d4 ♜f8= Doppelhammer – Bellegotti, ICCF 2013.

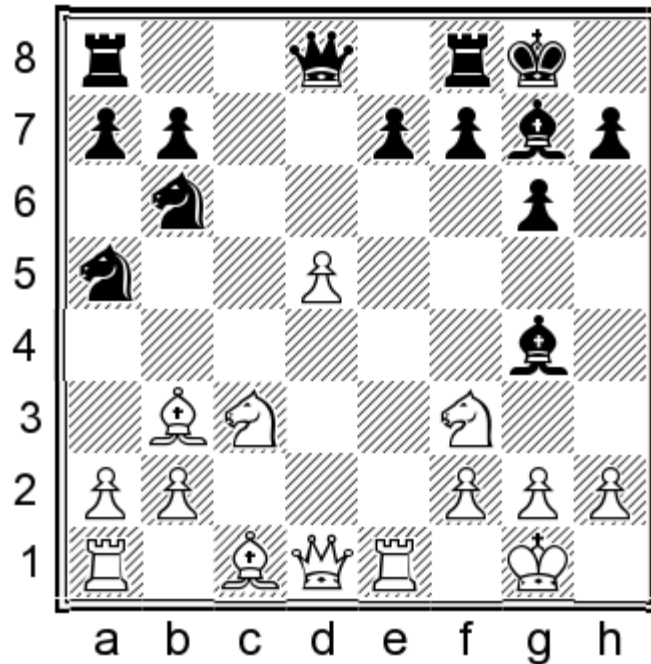
12.♙g5 ♞xb3



13. axb3 ♖e8 14. ♖e1 ♕g4 15. h3 ♕xc3 16. bxc3 ♕xf3 17. ♗xf3 ♗xd5 – see 12. ♖e1.

13. ♗xb3, Legenko – Vinokur, Sochi 2017, 13... ♕xc3 14. bxc3 ♗xd5 15. ♕xe7 ♖e8. White is incapable of exploiting the weakening of the dark squares in his opponent's camp. 16. ♖fe1 ♕e6 17. ♗b4 ♗c4. The queen must protect the bishop, so White cannot avoid the trade of the queens. 18. ♕g5 ♗xb4 19. cxb4 ♘d5= The slight weakness of the dark squares for Black is absolutely immaterial in this endgame.

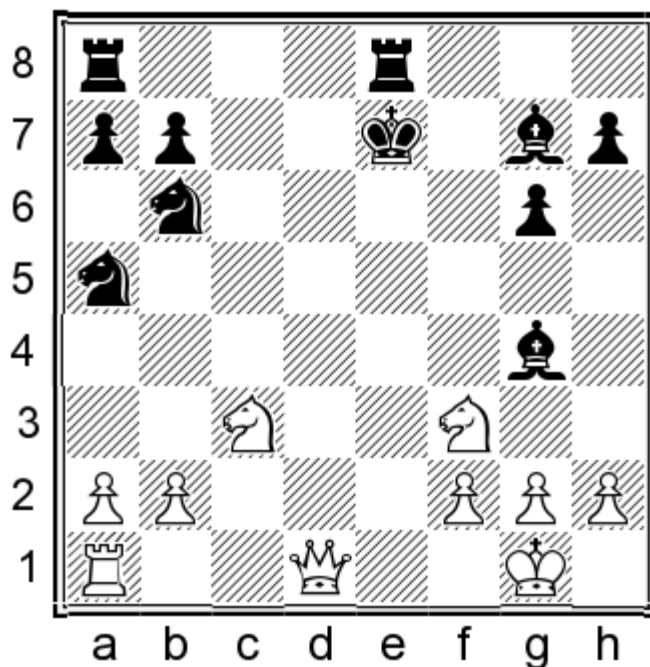
12... ♕g4



13. h3

13. ♕e3?! ♘bc4= Niemela – Maki, Finland 2011.

13.♙g5 ♖e8 14.d6!? This is an interesting possibility for White to fight for the initiative, but Black can neutralise the activity of his opponent's pieces with a precise play. (14.h3 ♙xf3 15.♗xf3 ♜xb3 – see 13.h3) 14...♗xd6 15.♙xf7+ ♕xf7 16.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 17.♙xe7 ♕xe7



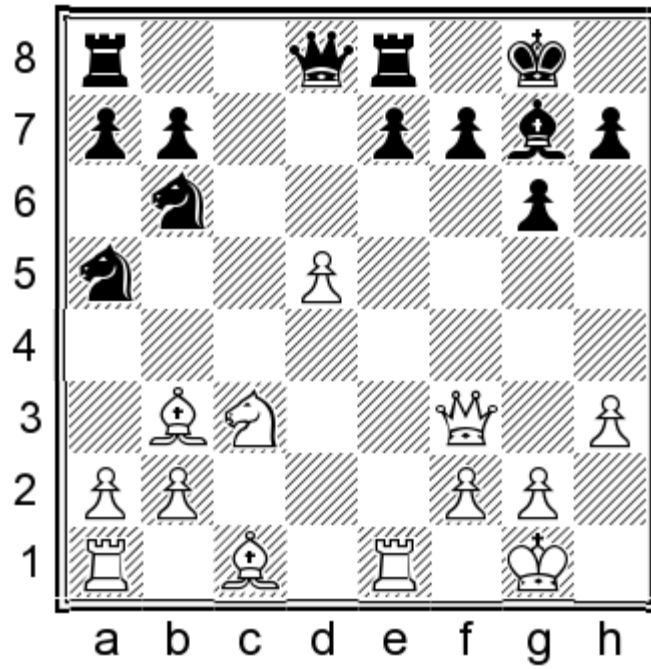
Black has more than sufficient material compensation for the queen, but must play very precisely in order to evacuate his king to a safe place.

18.♜b5?! ♕f8 19.♗d6+ ♕g8 20.♜c7 ♖ed8 21.♗b4 ♖ac8 22.♗xg4 ♖xc7 Tregubov – Kurnosov, Moscow 2008. He has managed to coordinate his pieces.

18.♜d5+ ♕f8 19.♗d2, Lizorkina – Laczay, LSS 2011, 19...♙xf3!? 20.♜c7 ♙c6 21.♗xa5 ♕g8 22.♜xa8 ♖xa8∞ There has arisen a very complicated position with a non-standard material ratio in which Black's three minor pieces can fight successfully against White's queen and a pawn.

13...♙xf3 14.♗xf3 ♖e8

These are the last preparations for Black before capturing on c3.

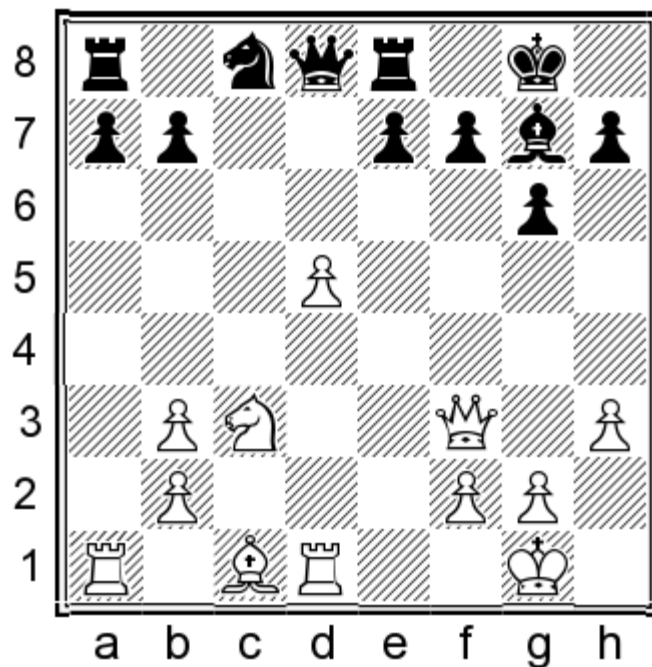


15. ♕e3

15.d6. The trade of the d-pawn for the b-pawn would not change the evaluation of the position. 15... ♖xb3 16.axb3 ♜xd6 17. ♝xb7, Bergstrom – Sveshnikov, Roskilde 1998, 17... ♜b4!?=

15. ♕g5 ♖xb3 16.axb3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♜xd5 18. ♝xd5 (18. ♜xe7?! ♜xe7 19. ♕xe7 ♜xf3 20.gxf3 ♖d5 21. ♕c5 ♖xc3 22. ♜xa7 ♜xa7 23. ♕xa7, El Debs – Lenderman, Campinas 2013, 23... ♖f8!?) The vulnerability of White's kingside pawn-structure dooms him to a long and laborious defence.) 18... ♖xd5 19.c4 f6 20.cxd5 fxg5. Black has an extra pawn, but his pawn-structure has been seriously compromised. In addition, White's rook manages to penetrate to the penultimate rank. 21. ♜ac1 a5 22. ♜c7 b5=, followed by a5-a4, Gavrikov – Rytov, Daugavpils 1978. Black's passed a-pawn is a remedy for him against any problems.

15. ♜d1. White protects his d5-pawn, but reduces the pressure against the e7-square. 15... ♖xb3 16.axb3 ♖c8. Black transfers his knight to c8 and prevents the possible enemy pawn-break d5-d6.



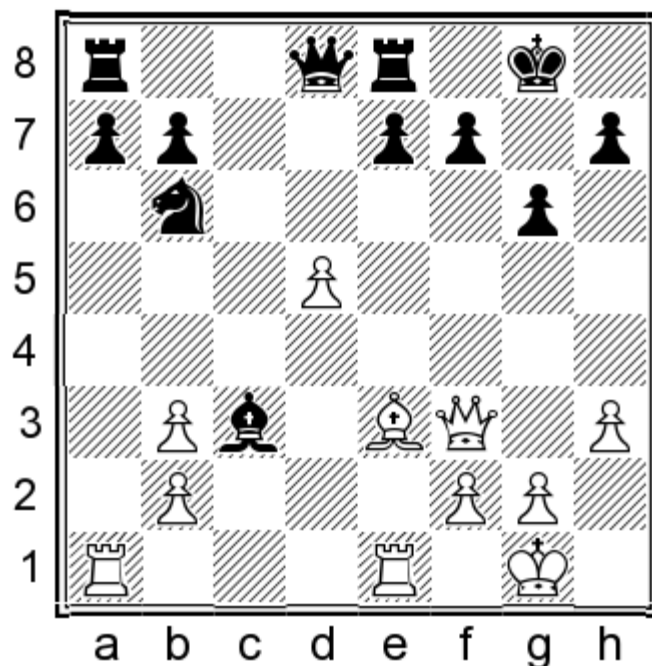
17.h4. The advance of this rook- pawn is harmless for Black, because in the meantime he manages to seize the initiative on the queenside. 17...♞d6 18.h5 ♖b6 Mamedyarov – Kamsky, Baku 2008.

17.♙e3 a6 18.♙d4 ♞d6 19.♙xg7 ♜xg7 20.♚e3 ♝c8 Esen – Soysal, Kocaeli 2017.

15...♞xb3

Now, Black is perfectly prepared for the exchange operation.

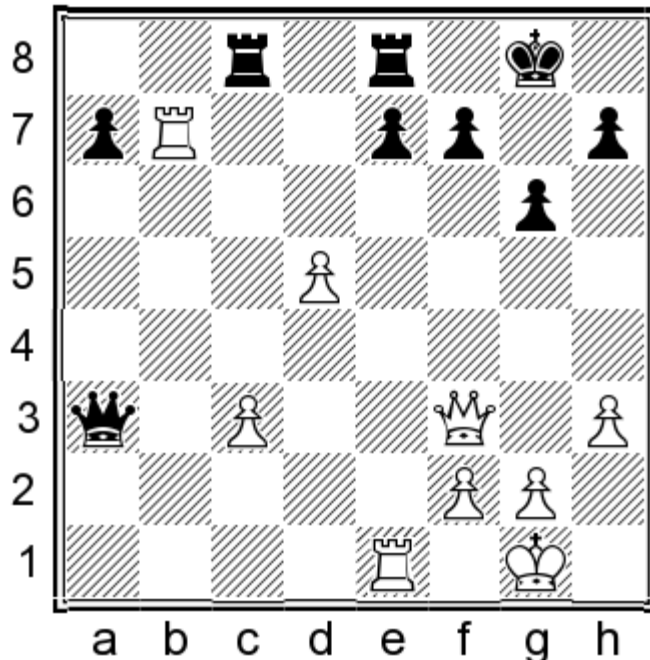
16.axb3 ♙xc3



17.♙xb6

White must comply with the exchange of his powerful bishop; otherwise, he would lose his d5-pawn.

17...♖xb6 18.bxc3 ♗xb3 19.♞ab1 ♕a3 20.♞xb7 ♞ac8



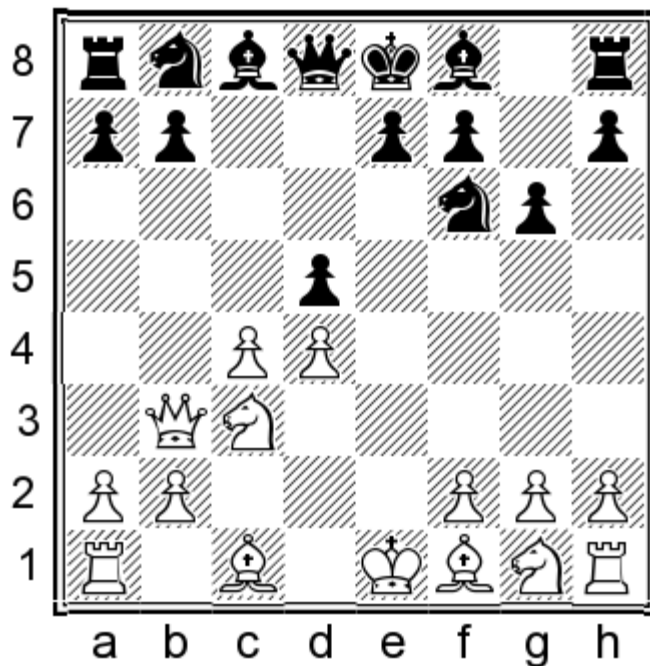
21.♞e3

21.♞d7 ♞xc3 22.♗f4 ♕a5. Black wishes to exploit the defencelessness of the enemy rook on e1. 23.d6 ♞xh3 24.♗e4 ♞h4!?. He deflects the enemy queen from its defensive functions. 25.♞xe7 ♞xe4 26.♞xe8+ ♔g7 27.♞8xe4 ♗d5. The tactical complications are over. After the loss of the pawn on d6, White will have no chances of winning the game. Black would not have many either... 28.♞e7 a5 29.♞a7, Bultman – Nora, ICCF 2012, 29...♗xd6=

21...♗c5 22.♞d7 ♞c7. Black exchanges the active enemy rook. 23.♗g4 ♞xd7 24.♗xd7 ♔f8 25.d6 ♗xd6 26.♗xa7, Ehlvest – Kamsky, Philadelphia 2010, 26...♞c8= There is just a few material left on the board, so Black would be incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the enemy pawn on c3.

Chapter 11

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 g6 6.♙b3



This is White's strongest and most principled move and it forces Black to sacrifice a pawn.

6...♗g7 7.cxd5

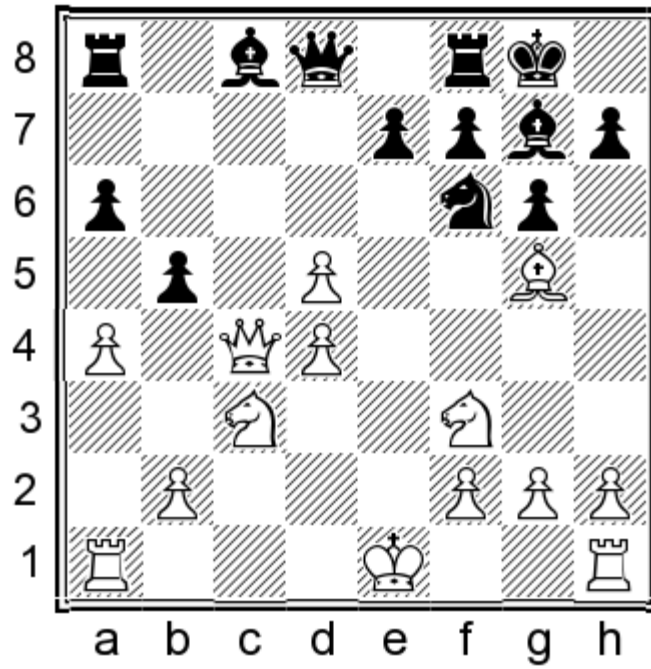
About 7.♗f3 0-0 8.cxd5 – see 7.cxd5.

7...0-0 8.♗e2

This is a popular move. White plans to continue with ♗f3, in order to protect his weak d5-pawn.

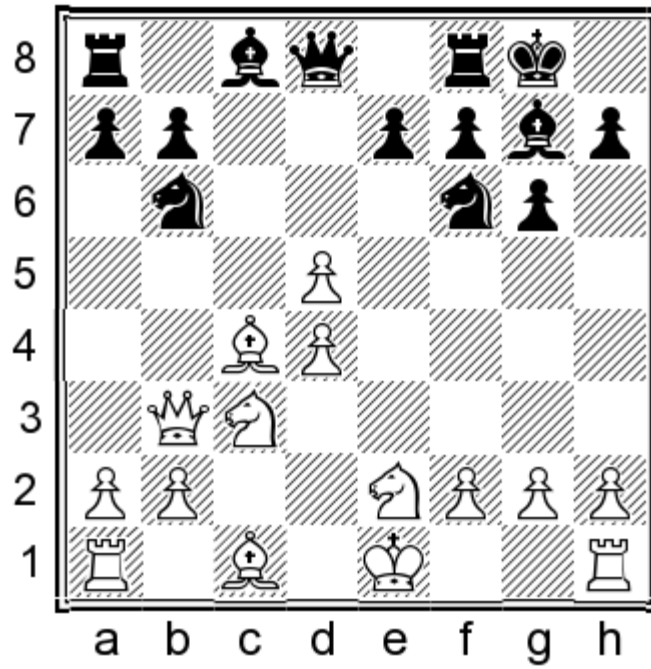
About 8.♗f4 ♗bd7 9.♗e2 ♗b6 – see 8.♗e2.

8.♗g5 ♗bd7 9.♗c4 (9.♗e2 ♗b6 – see 8.♗e2; 9.♗f3 ♗b6 – see 8.♗f3). From this square, just like from f3, the bishop will protect the d5-pawn. Still, here it is not so reliably placed, because after ♗b6, Black will manage to exchange it with his knight. 9...a6!? 10.a4 ♗b6 11.♗f3 ♗xc4 12.♙xc4 b5



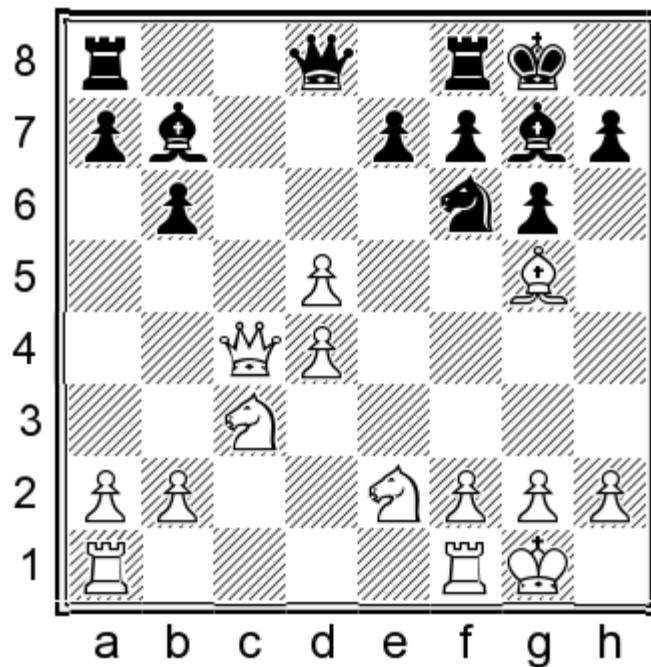
Black exploits the defencelessness of the rook on a1 and seizes the initiative on the queenside. 13. ♖c5 b4. He sacrifices a second pawn in order to open the f1-a6 for his bishop. 14. ♗xb4 a5 15. ♗b3 ♕a6. White has two extra pawns, but his game is difficult, because he cannot castle kingside and on the queenside his monarch would not be safe either, since Black's major pieces would occupy the b and c-files and parrying their threats would be very hard. 16. ♘e5 ♜e8 17. 0-0-0 ♝b8 18. ♗a2. White's queen is miserably placed on this square, but it still protects the d5-pawn. 18... ♗c7 19. ♞he1 ♝b4 20. ♞d2 ♝c8 21. ♝c2 ♕c4 22. ♘b5. The initiative of Black's pieces increases with every move and White must try to neutralise it by exchanges. 22... ♕xa2 23. ♘xc7 ♘xd5 24. ♘xd5 ♝xc2+ 25. ♙xc2 ♕xd5 26. ♕xe7 ♝xd4 27. ♕c5 ♕e4+ 28. ♙c3 ♞d5 29. ♝xe4 ♝xc5+ 30. ♙d4 ♝c2 31. ♙e3 ♝xb2= Black has restored the material balance. His bishop is stronger than the enemy knight in a fight on both sides of the board, but there is just a few material left, moreover that White's pieces are well coordinated.

8. ♕c4 ♘bd7 9. ♘ge2. White's knight would be more active on f3, but from e2 it might go to f4, protecting the pawn on d5. (9. ♕g5 a6 – see 8. ♕g5; 9. ♘f3 ♘b6 – see 8. ♘f3) 9... ♘b6



Following 10.♔g5 ♕f5 11.♖g3 ♗xc4 12.♜xc4 ♝c8 13.♜e2 ♖xd5, Black restores the material balance and the activity of his pieces enable him not only to equalise, but also to fight for the advantage. 14.♗xf5 gxf5 15.0-0 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 ♝xc3 17.♔xe7 ♝e8 18.♔xd8 ♝xe2 19.♞ad1 ♔f8. Black's pieces are very active, but before attacking the weak pawn on a2, he must stop the enemy d-pawn. His king will do the job perfectly. 20.♔g5, Grigoryan – Li Chao, Barcelona 2014, 20...♞a3!? 21.d5 ♔e8 22.d6 ♔d7

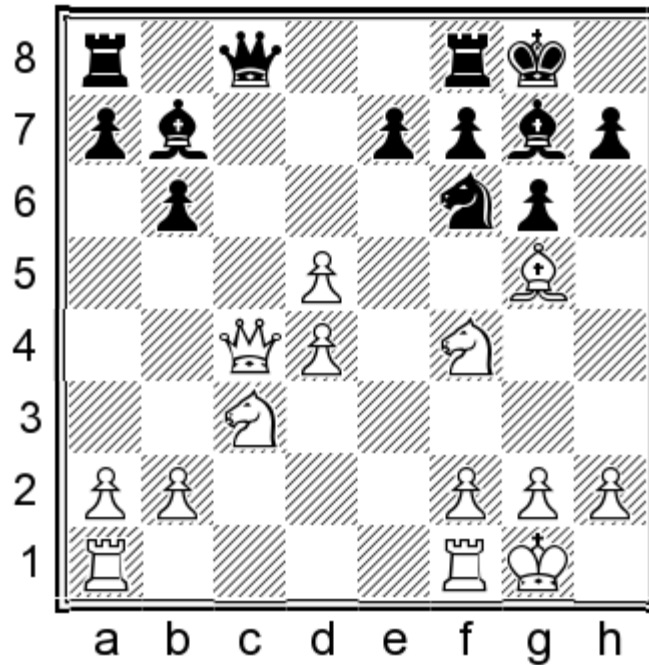
10.0-0 ♗xc4. Black not only obtains the two-bishop advantage, but also frees the b6-square, since the pawn-advance b7-b6 is necessary for him in order to develop his bishop on b7. 11.♜xc4 b6 12.♔g5 ♕b7. This move squeezes White's pieces even more with the protection of the pawn on d5.



Following 13.♔xf6, Vaszquez Schroder – Kamsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, Black should better capture with his pawn 13...exf6!?, removing his e7-pawn from the possible pressure on the e-file. 14.♝fe1 f5 15.♗f4 ♝c8 16.♜d3 ♜d6 17.g3 a6 18.♞ad1 b5. Black occupies space on the queenside and prepares ♝c4, after which White will have to protect not only

his d5-pawn, but also his d4-pawn. 19.a3 ♖c4 20.♞e3 ♟f6 21.♞d2 ♜fc8. Later, Black will be able to break White's defence with the move b5-b4. He will have to defend despite having an extra pawn.

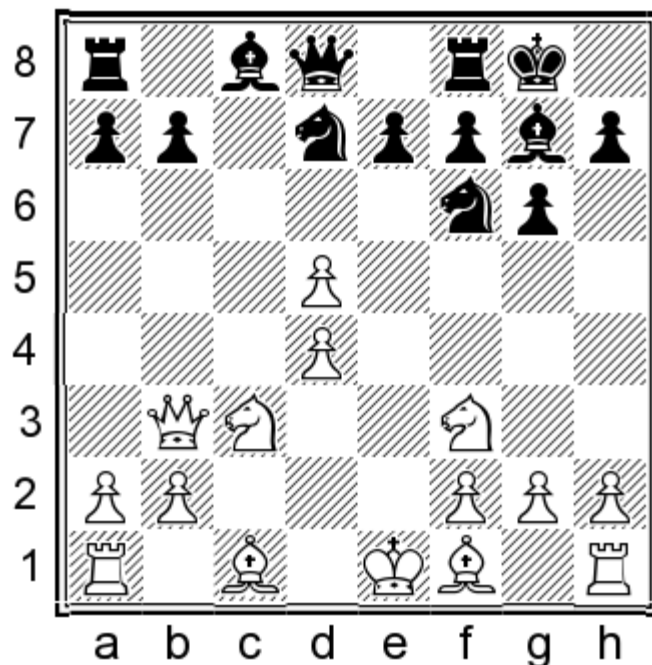
13.♟f4, Alekhine – Euwe, Bern 1932, 13...♞c8!? Now, White is forced either to exchange the queens, or to let the enemy queen to occupy the f5-square, where it would be very active, attacking two of White's minor pieces as well as the pawn on d5.



14.♞xc8 ♜axc8 15.♜ac1 ♜fd8 16.g3 h6. Now, White is forced to exchange his second bishop in order not to lose a piece. 17.♟xf6 ♟xf6 18.♞fd1 ♟g5. It is well known that one of the advantages of having two bishops is that sometimes it is useful to exchange one of them for an enemy knight. 19.♟g2 ♟xf4 20.gxf4 ♟g7. Black does not need to be in a hurry to regain the pawn on d5 and can do that under the most favourable circumstances. 21.♟f3 e6 22.♟e3 ♟xd5. White is doomed here to a long and passive defence due to his numerous pawn-weaknesses.

14.♞b4 ♞f5 15.♟xf6 ♟xf6 16.g3. He is reluctant to retreat his knight from f4, but Black will manage to oust it from there anyway with the move g6-g5. 16...♜ad8 17.♞fe1 g5 18.♟h5 ♟xd5 19.♟xf6+ exf6 20.♞b5 ♜d7 21.♞e3 ♟g7 22.♞d1 ♜fd8 23.♞d3. White's passed pawn has been reliably blocked and the position of his king has been weakened. Therefore, Black can try to play for a win. 23...♞g4!? 24.f3 ♞h5 25.♟xd5 ♜xd5 26.♞e4 ♞g6. White's major pieces are squeezed with the protection of his d4-pawn.

8.♟f3 ♟bd7



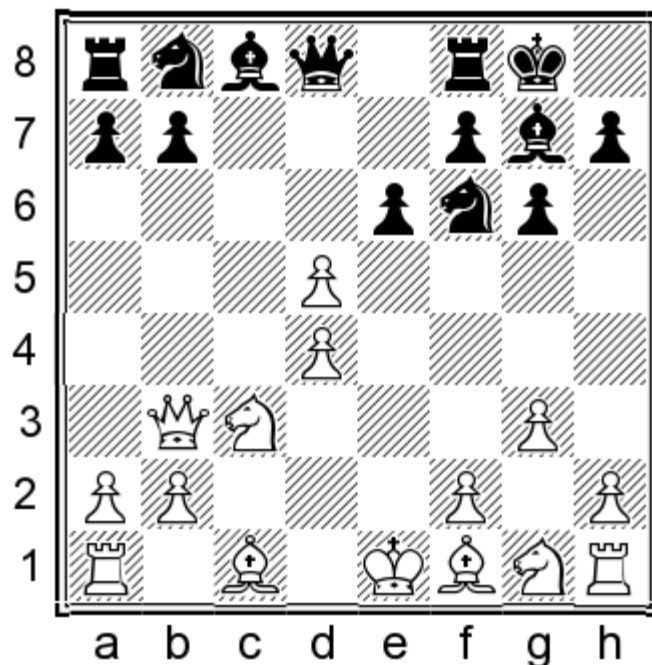
The move 9.d6 contradicts the idea of 6.♖b3. If White does not wish to hold on to his extra pawn, why did he win it in the first place? 9...exd6 10.♙e2 ♜b6 11.0-0 ♙e6. Black emphasizes the defects of his opponent's too early queen-sortie. 12.♚d1 ♜fd5 13.♙g5 ♜xc3. He creates a weakness on c3 for his opponent. 14.bxc3 ♚c7 Hoellrigl – Kratochwil, Austria 2002.

9.♙g5 ♜b6 10.♙xf6 (10.♙c4 ♜xc4 – see 9.♙c4) 10...exf6 11.♙e2 (The move 11.h3?! is a loss of a tempo. 11...a5 12.♙b5 a4! Black has seized firmly the initiative. The move 13.♙xa4? loses a piece. 13...♜xa4 14.♜xa4 ♚e8 – Balashov – Botvinnik, Moscow 1970.) 11...a5 12.a4. White prevents a5-a4 at the price of weakening the b4-square. 12...♚d6 13.0-0 ♚d8 14.♚fe1, Melnikov – Orlov, St Petersburg 2005, 14...♙f5!?

After 9.a4, the simplest response for Black would be 9...a5!?, preventing the advance of the enemy pawn. 10.♙e2 ♜b6 11.0-0 ♜fxd5 12.♜xd5 ♜xd5= Zwirs – Xiang, Groningen 2016.

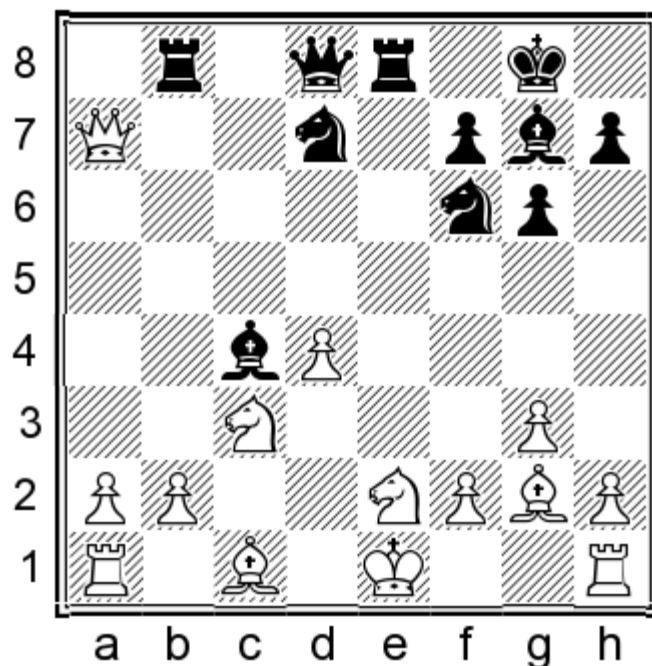
9.♙c4 ♜b6 10.0-0 (10.♙g5 ♜xc4 11.♚xc4 b6 12.0-0 ♙b7 – see 10.0-0) 10...♜xc4 11.♚xc4 b6 12.♙g5 ♙b7 13.♙xf6 exf6, followed by ♚d6, f6-f5, ♚ad8, ♙xd5, restoring the material balance and obtaining a slight edge, Bernardi – Roesch, Ortisei 2012.

8.g3. Black can counter White's attempt to fianchetto the bishop with the energetic move 8...e6!



After 9.♔g2 ♖xd5 10.♜ge2 ♜c6 11.0-0, Black can compromise his opponent's pawn-structure obtaining an advantage. 11...♜xc3 12.bxc3 ♜a5 13.♚d1 ♔d7 Delemarre – Armas, Wijk aan Zee 1995.

9.dxe6 ♔xe6 10.♚xb7 ♜e8. White has two extra pawns, but lags in development and the placement of his king at the middle of the board is very precarious for him. 11.♜ge2 ♜bd7 12.♔g2 ♜b8 13.♚xa7. White captures a third pawn, but after 13...♔c4, he will have difficulties to get rid of the pin of his knight.

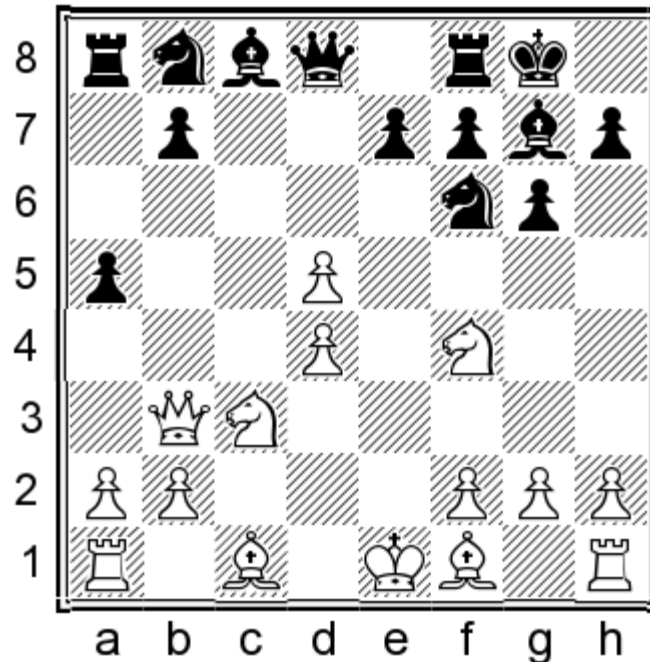


14.b3 ♜d5 15.0-0 ♜xc3 16.♜xc3 ♔xf1 17.♚xf1. The position has been opened and Black's rook has a very large scope of action. White has three pawns for the exchange, but his game is very difficult. 17...♜c8 18.♜d5 ♜c2 19.♔e3 ♜f6. White's knight is too powerful at the middle of the board, so Black exchanges it. 20.♜xf6+ ♚xf6 21.♚g1 ♔h6! Blake – Kappe, ICCF 2010.

14.♔f3 ♜d5 15.0-0 (White loses after 15.♚a4?, in view of 15...♜7b6 16.♚c2. He has lost too much time to come back with his queen into his own camp. 16...♚f6 17.♔xd5 ♜xd5 18.♜xd5 ♔xd5. Unfortunately for White he cannot castle

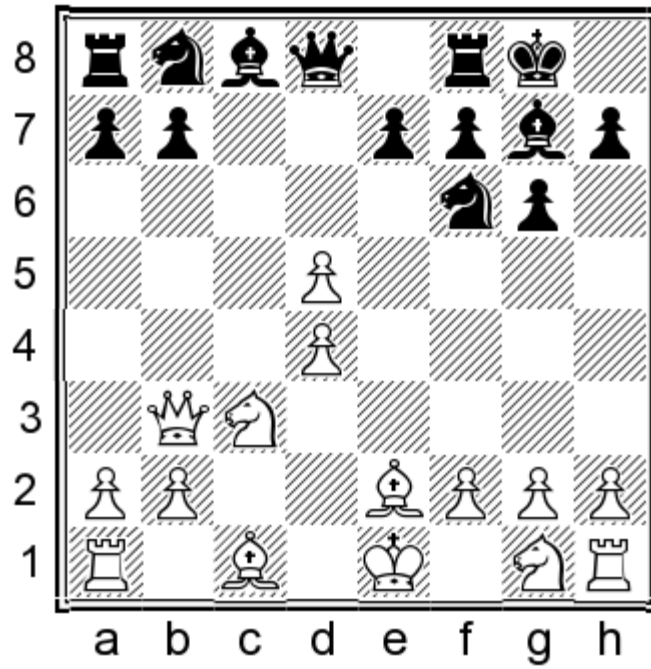
kingside due to the checkmate on the long diagonal. 19.♖f1 ♜xd4+ Oim – Shereshevski, Kharkov 1967.) 15...♗xc3. This move leads to a complicated game (Black can force repetition of moves if he so wishes: 15...♞a8 16.♜b7 ♞b8=). 16.♗xc3 ♙xf1 17.♙xf1 ♗f8 18.♗d5 ♗e6 19.♙e3 ♞xb2∞ Hagesaether – Yevseev, Norway 1998. White's two extra pawns compensate his sacrificed exchange, but not more than that.

8.♗ge2 a5!? Black wishes to advance further this pawn and to cause disharmony in the set-up of White's pieces. 9.♗f4



It seems good for Black to play here 9...g5!?, removing in advance the enemy knight from the protection of the pawn on d5. 10.♗fe2 a4 11.♗xa4 ♗xd5 Black has very good compensation for the minimal material deficit. White should better try to complete his development, because his attempt to win a second pawn might end in a disaster for him. 12.♙xg5?! ♗c6 13.♗ac3 ♗db4 14.♞d1 ♙f5. White cannot defend simultaneously against the penetration of the enemy knight to c2, or d3. 15.♞d2 ♗d3+ 16.♞xd3 ♙xd3+ Klocker – Zelcic, Oberwart 2010.

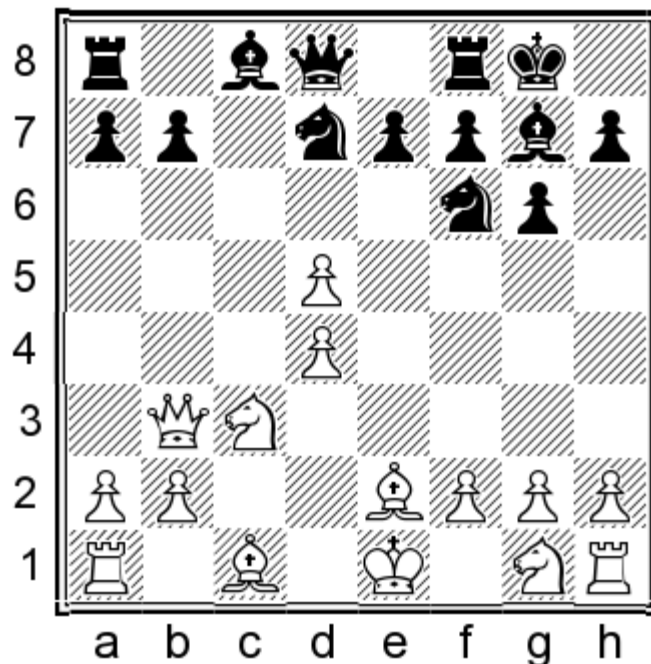
9...a4 10.♗xa4 (10.♜d1 ♗bd7 11.♗xa4, Petrelli – Sazon, ICCF 2010, 11...g5!? 12.♗d3 ♗xd5 13.♗c3 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 e5 White is not well prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.) 10...g5 11.♗d3 (11.♗e2 ♗xd5 – see 9...g5) 11...♗xd5 12.♗c3 e6 13.♗e5 (13.♙e2?! ♗c6 14.♙e3, Kobalia – Evdokimov, Taganrog 2011, 14...f5!?! Black has seized the initiative.) 13...♗c6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♙c4 ♙xd4 16.0-0 ♙g7= Frolyanov – Sjugirov, Tyumen 2012. White has given back his extra pawn, but has succeeded in evacuating his king away from the centre.



8...Nbd7!?

Black prepares the transfer of his knight to b6 in order to increase his pressure against the pawn on d5.

It is also good for Black to play here 8...Na6, but in this case after 9.♙f3, the game is simplified almost by force to an endgame in which it would be very difficult for him to play for a win even against an opponent, who is considerably weaker than him. 9...♚b6 10.♚xb6 axb6 11.♘ge2 ♘b4 12.0-0 ♜d8 13.d6. White gives back the pawn, since he will fail to protect it anyway. 13...♞xd6 14.♙f4 ♜d7. Black cannot retreat his rook to d8, because of ♙c7. 15.♞fd1 ♘fd5 16.♙g3 ♘xc3 17.bxc3 ♘c6 18.♘f4 ♞a5 19.♘d3. Without this move, Black would have advanced e7-e5, opening advantageously the game in the centre. 19...♞a3 20.♞ac1 ♘a5 21.♞c2 ♘c4 22.♞e1 h5 23.h3 ♙f6 24.♘b4 ♞a5. Black defends against ♘d5. 25.♞ce2 h4 26.♙f4 ♙g7 27.♙b8 ♞a8= Van der Houwen – Dolgov, ICCF 2007. Neither side can play for a win here, due to the numerous pawn-weaknesses in both camps.

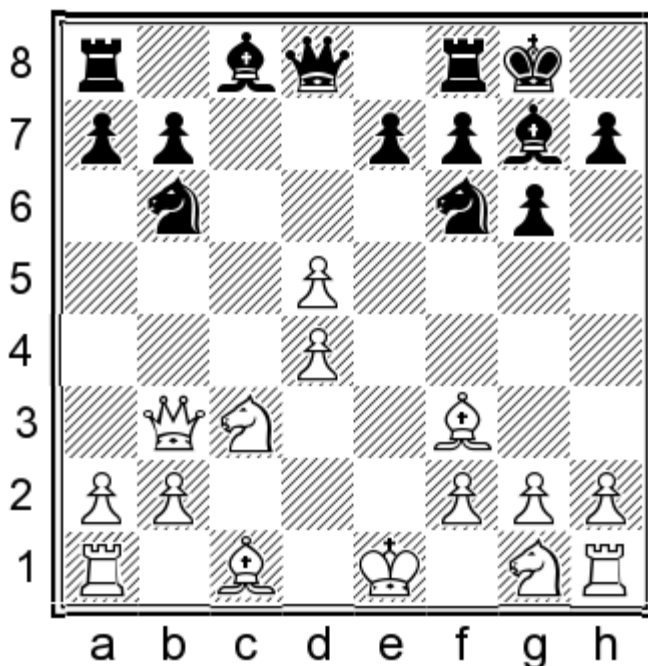


9.♔f3

9.♔f4 ♖b6 10.♔f3 ♜e8, or 9.♔g5 ♖b6 10.♔f3 ♔f5 – see 9.♔f3.

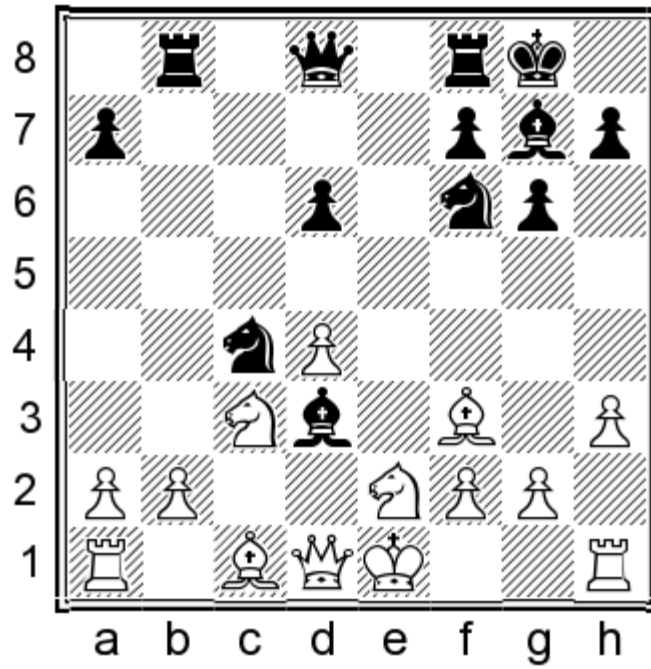
9.♖h3. This knight is headed for the f4-square in order to protect the d5-pawn. 9...♜b6. Black exploits the defencelessness of the enemy pawn on d4 in order to create counterplay sufficient to maintain the balance. 10.♖f4, Bade – Potthammel, DDR 1975, 10...♖e8!? Black increases his pressure against the enemy d4-pawn. Later, this knight can go to the blocking d6-square, or go back to f6. 11.♜xb6 ♖xb6 12.♔e3 ♖f6. Black wishes to play ♜d8, to oust the enemy knight from the f4-square with the move g6-g5 and to restore the material balance by capturing on d5. 13.♞c1 ♜d8 14.♔f3 g5 15.♖h5 ♖xh5 16.♔xh5 ♖xd5 17.♖xd5 ♜xd5 18.♔f3 ♜d6 19.♔xg5 ♔xd4= The powerful position of the bishop on the long diagonal compensates for Black the slight weakness of his pawn on h7.

9...♖b6



10.♖ge2

The move 10.h3 is too slow. 10...♔f5 11.♖ge2 (11.♔g5 ♔d3 12.♔xf6, Rozentalis – Rogers, Germany 1996, 12...exf6!? 13.♖ge2 f5 14.0-0 ♜e8. Black's pieces are very active and he will soon regain the pawn on d5. 15.♞fe1 ♔c4 16.♜d1 ♖xd5) 11...♔d3 12.d6. White exploits the possibility to exchange his d5-pawn and not to give it up just for nothing. 12...exd6 13.♔xb7 ♜b8 14.♔f3 ♖c4 15.♜d1



15...♖xb2. Black restores the material balance. His prospects now are preferable thanks to his more active pieces.
 16.♗d2, Koziak – Jakubiec, Lubniewice 2003 (16.♗xb2 ♗xe2 17.♗xe2 ♗e8+) 16...♗xe2!? 17.♗xe2 ♖a4! Black evacuates his knight from the danger zone due to a nice tactical possibility. 18.♖xa4?! It would be tremendously risky for White to accept this sacrifice. 18...♖e4 19.♗c2 ♗a5+ 20.♗d2. He should better give back the knight immediately. (The move 20.♖f1 would lead quickly to a hopeless position for White. 20...♗xd4 21.♗b2 ♗e5 22.♗f3 ♖xf2 23.♗xd4 ♗xd4. Both his rooks are hanging and he is incapable of protecting them simultaneously. 24.♗c3 ♗xc3 25.♖xc3 ♖xh1 26.g4 f5 27.♗h1 fxg4+ 28.♖g1 gxh3 29.♖h2 ♗b2+ 30.♖xh3 ♗d2+) 20...♖xd2 21.♗xd2 ♗xa4 22.0-0 ♗xd4

The move 10.a4 does not contribute to the development of White's pieces. 10...e6!? With this energetic pawn-break in the centre Black emphasizes the defects of his opponent's previous move. 11.dxe6 ♗xe6 12.♗d1, Istratescu – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2002, 12...♖c4!? 13.♖ge2 ♗b6 14.0-0 ♗fd8

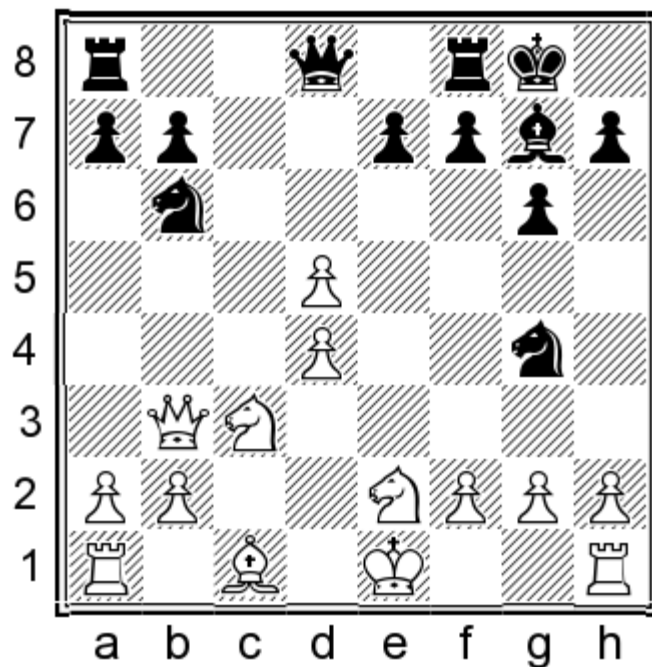
The move 10.♗f4 has some venom. 10...♗e8!? Black is waiting until his opponent's knight occupies the e2-square; otherwise, the plan with ♗g4 will turn out to be useless. 11.♖ge2 ♗g4 12.♗xg4 ♖xg4 13.a4 ♖f6 14.d6 ♖h5 15.♗e3 ♗xd6 16.a5, Almeida – Morihama, ICCF 2015. Black obtains a quite acceptable position by improving the placement of his knight on b6: 16...♖c8 17.0-0 ♗d7∞, followed by ♖d6.

10.♗g5 ♗f5 11.♗d1. White defends against the penetration of the enemy bishop on the d3-square. (Following 11.♖ge2, Black restores quickly the material balance. 11...♗d3 12.♗d1 ♗c4 13.b3, Delgado Ramirez – Harikrishna, Merida 2008, 13...♗a6!? 14.♗d2 ♖bxd5) 11...a5. Advancing his a-pawn, Black wishes to exploit the somewhat exposed placement of the enemy queen on b3. 12.♖ge2 a4 13.♗b5 h6 14.♗xf6 exf6 15.0-0 ♗e8 16.d6, Potkin – S.Kasparov, Kiev 2001. Here, Black can simply force a draw by repetition of moves: 16...♗d7!? 17.♗d3 ♗f5 18.♗b5 ♗d7=

10...♗g4

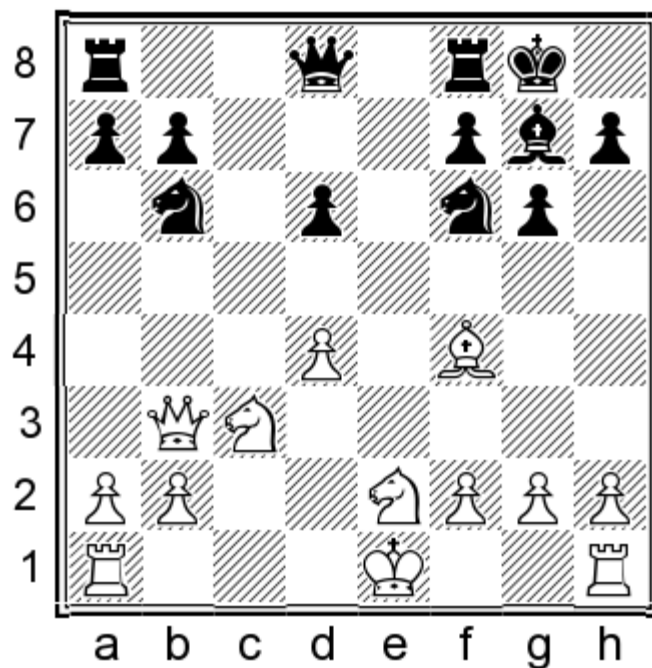
This is Black's most reliable move. He exchanges the defender of the pawn on d5.

11.♗xg4 ♖xg4



12.a4

With the threat a4-a5, White wishes to provoke the move a7-a5, which would lead to the weakening of the b5-square. After White's alternatives, Black equalises effortlessly. For example; 12.♙f4. White plans to give back the pawn with the move d5-d6. 12...♞f6 13.d6 exd6

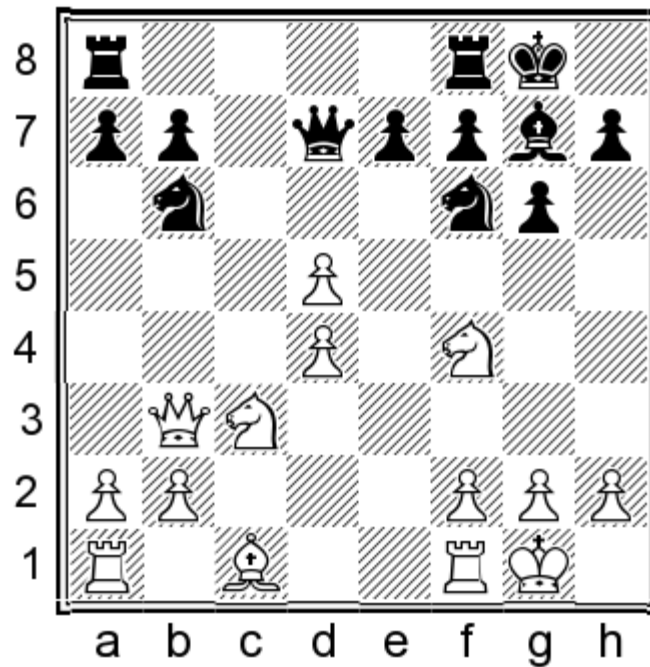


Following 14.a4, Black can oust immediately the enemy bishop from its active position. 14...♞h5 15.♙e3 d5. Now, White must consider permanently the possibility ♞c4. 16.0-0 ♛d7 17.♜fc1 ♜fc8 18.♞b5 ♜c6=, preparing not only the doubling of the rooks on the c-file, but also the ousting of the enemy queen from its active placement with the move a7-a6, Kornev – Grishchenko, Tula 2004.

14.0-0 ♜e8 15.♜fe1 (15.♞g3 ♛d7 16.♜fd1, Chandler – Smith, Auckland 2008, 16...♜ac8!?) 15...♞h5 16.♙e3 d5

17.♖a1, Bogdanov – Shukh, Oktjabrsky 2004, 17...♞c8! Black's prospects are not worse, because in the forthcoming fight his bishop will be noticeably more active than its counterpart, restricted by his own pawn on d4.

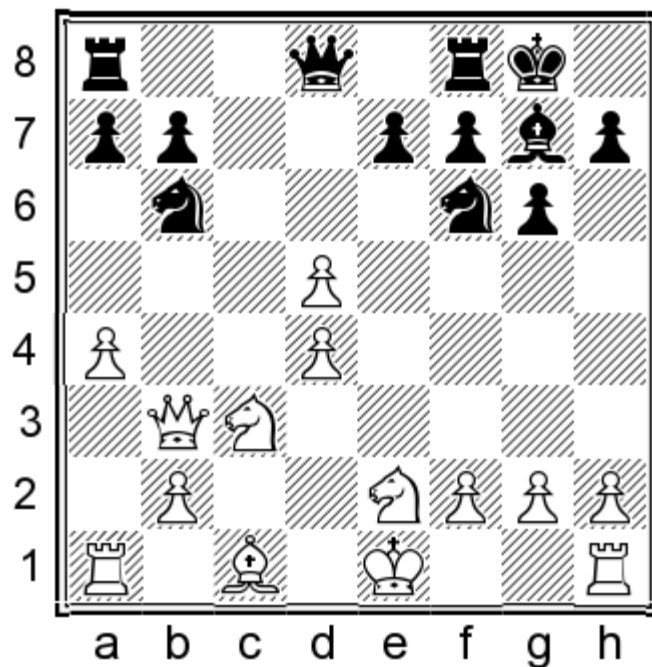
12.0-0 ♖f6 13.♗f4 (13.a4 ♖bxd5 – see 12.a4) 13...♞d7. Black is preparing ♞fd8, in order to increase his pressure against the pawn on d5.



Following 14.a4 ♞fd8 15.♗d3 ♖bxd5 16.♗e5, Paichadze – Demircioglu, Izmir 2016, 16...♞e6!? 17.♞xb7 ♞db8 18.♞c6 ♞xc6 19.♗xc6 ♞c8 20.♗xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗e5 ♞ab8, the activity of Black's pieces compensates his minimal material deficit.

14.♞e1 ♞fd8 15.h3 ♗fxd5. The position is quickly simplified after this move. 16.♗cxd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♞xd5 18.♞xe7 ♞xb3 19.axb3 ♗xd4 20.♞xb7 ♞ac8 21.♗g5, Rade – Zelcic, Sibenik 2007, 21...♞b8!? 22.♞xb8 ♞xb8. White is incapable of holding on to his doubled extra pawn. 23.♞a4 ♗xb2 24.♞xa7 h5 25.♗f1 ♞xb3=

12...♗f6



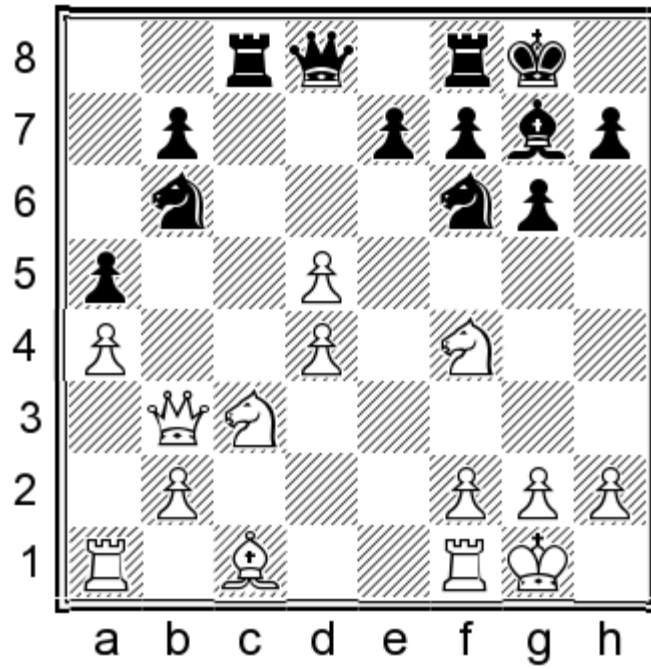
13. ♖f4

After 13.0-0, Bashkov – Radoja, Cheliabinsk 1990, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 13... ♗bxd5!? 14. ♕xb7 ♖d6 15. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 16. ♗b3 ♞ab8 17. ♗f3 ♞fd8

It would not be good for White to opt here for 13.a5 ♗bxd5 14. ♕xb7 ♖d6. Now, he must lose several tempi in order to remove his queen to a safe place. 15. ♗b3 ♞ab8 16. ♖d1 ♞fc8 17.0-0 ♖a6 18. ♞e1 (18. ♖d2 e6∞ Sabjanov – Burmakin, Kstovo 1997) 18...e6. White has an extra pawn, but his game is difficult, since Black's pieces exert powerful pressure. 19. ♖c2 ♗b4 20. ♖b1 ♘d3 21. ♞d1 ♗xc1 22. ♞xc1, Sanal – Tomashevsky, Doha 2015, 22... ♗e8!?, followed by ♘d6. The activity of Black's pieces compensates his minimal material loss.

13...a5 14.0-0 ♞c8!?

This move seems more precise than 14... ♖d6 15. ♗b5 ♖d7 16.d6 exd6 and Black will have a hard time equalising.



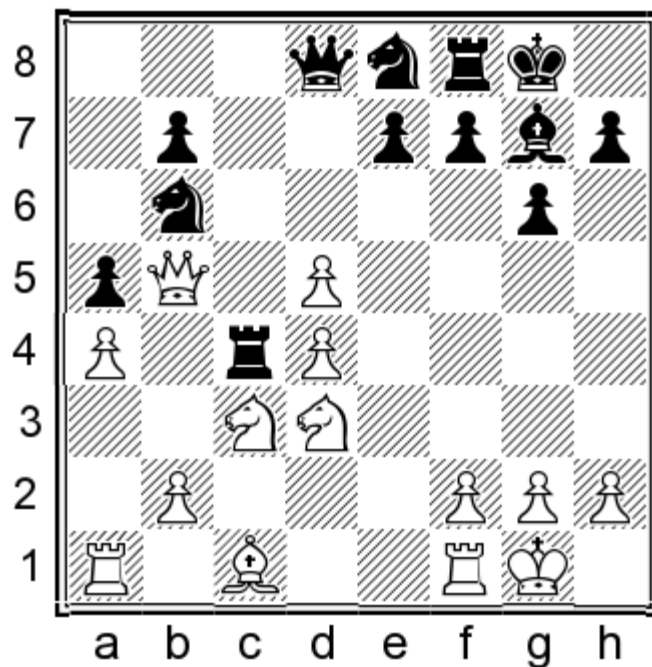
15. ♖b5

White wishes to exploit the weakness of the a5-square. Later however, his queen will come under attack after ♜e8-d6.

15. ♕e3 g5 16. ♜d3 ♜bxd5 17. ♖ae1 (17. ♗xb7 ♜xc3 18. bxc3 ♜d5 19. ♕xg5 ♖b8 20. ♗a7 ♖a8 21. ♗c5 ♖c8= White cannot avoid the repetition of moves: 22. ♗a3?? ♖xc3--+) 17...h6 18. ♕d2 e6 19. ♗xb7 ♖b8 20. ♗a6 ♜b4 21. ♜xb4 ♖xb4∞ Cross – Zaas, ICCF 2012.

15. ♖e1 ♖c4. This move is played with the idea ♖b4. 16. ♕e3 (After 16.d6 ♗xd6 17. ♜b5 ♗d7, White can cover the b4-square with the move 18. ♜d3. The material is already equal on the board and Black's prospects are not worse at all. 18...♜fd5 19. ♕d2. Black parries easily the threat against his pawn on a5. 19...♖a8 20. ♖ac1 ♖xc1 21. ♖xc1 e6= Davis – Lautenbach, ICCF 2012.) 16...♖b4 17. ♗a2 ♖c4 18. ♖ac1 ♗d7 19. b3 ♖cc8 20. d6 ♗xd6 21. ♜b5 ♗d7 22. ♗d2. Now, White's only hope is connected with the vulnerability of the enemy a5-pawn. Black can simply sacrifice it, though... 22...♜bd5 23. ♗xa5 ♖xc1 24. ♖xc1 ♜xf4 25. ♕xf4 ♗e6. Now, it turns out that White cannot protect his b3-pawn with the move 26. ♗c3?!, because after 26...♜d5, Black will capture it anyway. 27. ♗f3 ♜xf4 28. ♗xf4 ♗xb3†. 26. ♗a7 ♗xb3 27. ♗xb7 ♗xa4= Jones – Zaas, ICCF 2014.

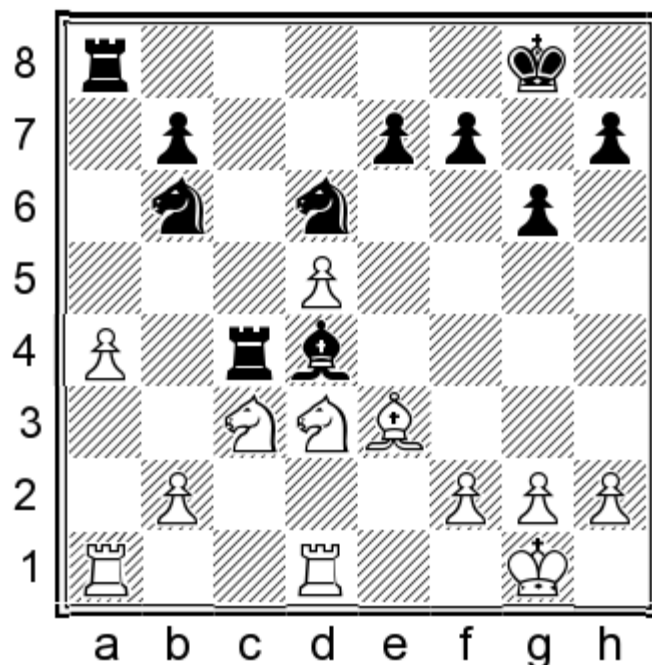
15... ♖c4 16. ♜d3 ♜e8



17. Rxd1

Accepting the sacrifice of the second pawn is not good for White, since after 17. ♖xa5, Tukmakov – Lazarev, Kiev 1963, 17... ♗d6!? 18. ♗e2 ♗f5, Black regains rapidly both pawns on d4 and d5. 19. ♗b5 ♗xd4 20. ♖d1 ♗xd5 21. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 22. g4 ♗g7 23. b3. White is trying to exploit the somewhat hanging position of Black's pieces. 23... ♗c3 24. bxc4 ♗xe2+ 25. ♖f1 ♗xa1 26. ♗e3 ♗d4 27. ♖xa1 ♗ge6= The weakness of the pawn on b7 is compensated by the vulnerability of the pawns on c4 and a4.

17... ♗d6 18. ♖xa5 ♗xd4 19. ♗e3 ♗a8 20. ♖xa8 ♖xa8



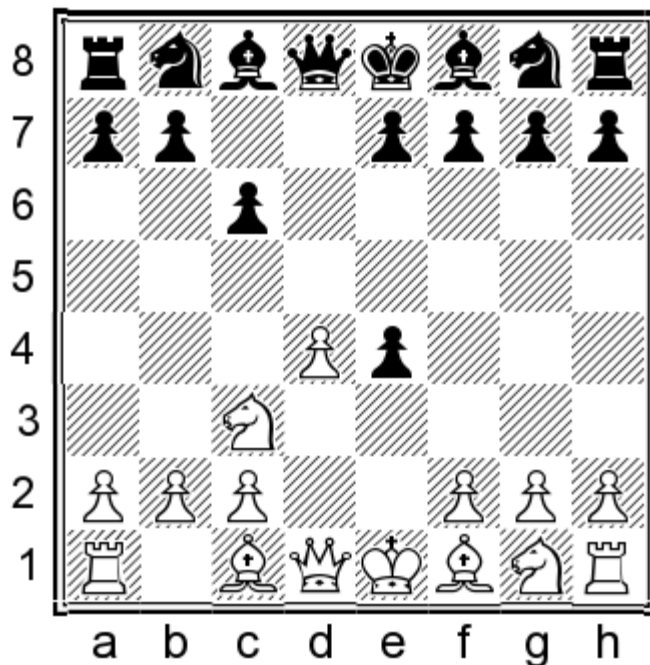
Black has good compensation for the pawn. 21. a5 ♗d7 22. ♗xd4 ♖xd4 23. f3 ♗f6 24. b4 ♖c8. He combines the threat

against the pawn on d5 with the possibility to penetrate with his rooks on the c-file. **25. ♖e2 ♜dc4 26. ♕f2**, Compagnone – Krzyzanowski, ICCF 2013, **26... ♕f8!?** **27. g3 ♝c2 28. ♗c5 ♝b2 29. ♗d3 ♝bc2**. Now, White must either comply with the repetition of moves, or give back his extra pawn. **30. ♝ac1 ♝xc1 31. ♝xc1 ♝xc1 32. ♗dxc1 ♗xd5=**

Part 3

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4

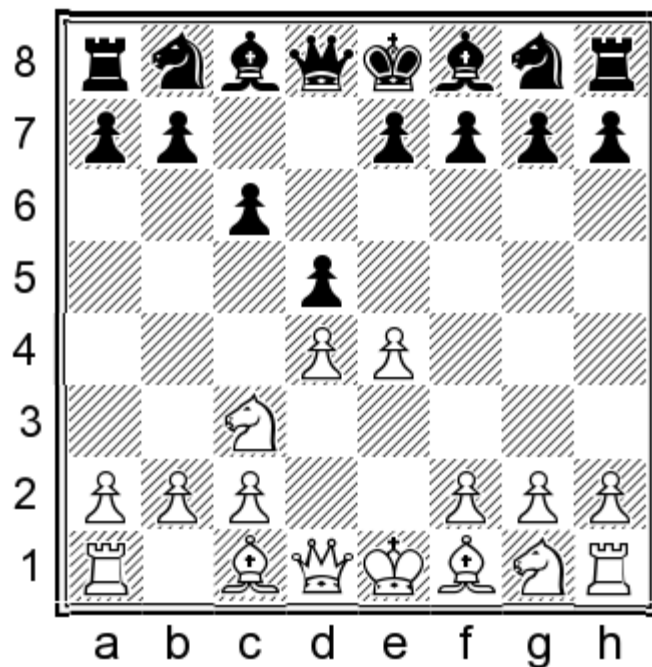
In the third part of our book we will analyse White's most popular move against the Caro-Kann Defence – 3.♘c3. We have chosen as the main weapon for Black the reliable Classical system 3...dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♙f5.



In Chapter 12 we will deal with White's attempts to avoid the main variations – the pawn-sacrifice 3...dxe4 4.f3 and the move introduced into the tournament practice by D.Bronstein – 5.♘c5. If White refrains from 6.h4 (after 4.♘xe4 ♙f5 5.♘g3 ♙g6), these lines will be analysed in Chapters 13-15. In Chapter 13 we will deal with 6.♘f3, in Chapter 14 with 6.♘1e2 and in Chapter 15 with 6.♙c4. Beginning with Chapter 16, we will analyse 6.h4. In Chapter 16 we will also have a look at White's attempts to avoid the main theoretical variations. Finally, in Chapters 17-18, we will analyse the main lines of the Classical system: 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♙h7 9.♙d3 ♙xd3 10.♙xd3 e6 11.♙f4 (Chapter 17) and 11.♙d2 (Chapter 18).

Chapter 12

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3



White develops his knight to an active position and preserves the tension in the centre. The move 3.♘c3 was considered to be the strongest for White for a long time, but with the development of theory, it became more and more difficult for him to create problems in the opening for Black. Recently White usually prefers 3.e5 (see Chapter 6), after which he not only occupies space, but also prevents simplifications.

3...dxe4

Black can hardly find here any other useful move, so he is forced to exchange. On the other hand, he plans to attack the enemy knight on e4 with his bishop on his next move and to oust it from the centre.

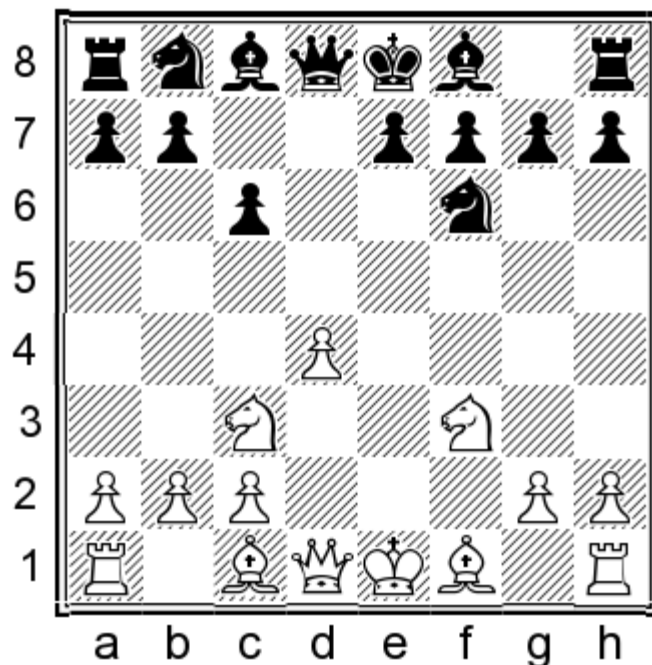
White's most natural move here is **B) 4.♘xe4**, but before that we will have a look at the gambit line: **A) 4.f3**.

About 4.♙c4 ♘f6 5.f3 exf3 6.♘xf3 ♙f5 – see 4.f3.

A) 4.f3

This pawn-sacrifice is very dubious. Black's position is quite solid, he has no pawn-weaknesses and as a rule, White does not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn.

4...exf3 5.♘xf3 ♘f6



This position can be also reached after the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, which we analyse in volume 1 (Chapter 23, variation **D**) (1.d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3 exf3 5.♗xf3 c6).

6.♗c4

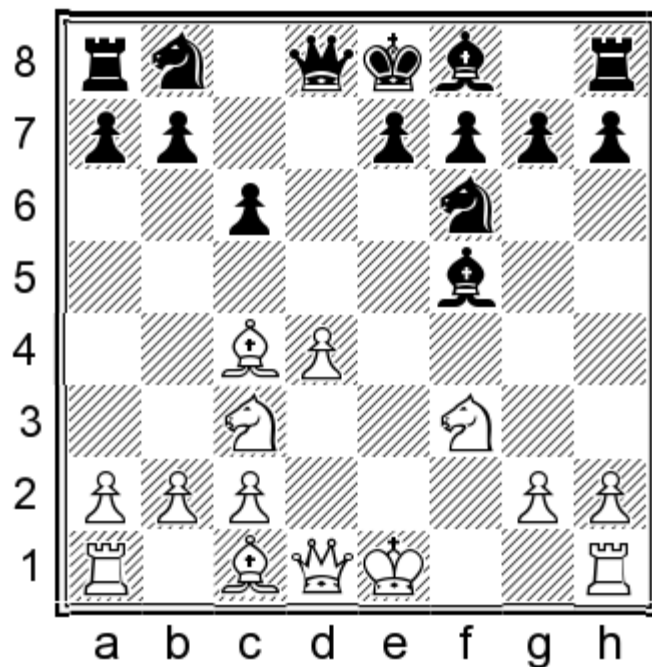
White's bishop will be active on this square.

After 6.♗e5, Black can cover reliably the a2-g8 diagonal with the move 6...♗e6!, for example: 7.♗e2 ♗bd7 8.♗d3 ♗f5. After the move ♗c4 has become impossible, the bishop can occupy a more natural position, in order not to impede the pawn-advance e7-e6. 9.g4 ♗g6 10.g5 ♗d5♣ Beaumont – Rocca, ICCF 2002.

6.♗d3 ♗g4 7.♗e3 e6 8.h3 ♗h5 9.♗f2 ♗b4 10.0-0 ♗bd7. Black is not in a hurry to castle kingside. 11.♗f2 ♗g6 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.♗f4. If he had castled, White would have had a clear-cut plan for an attack – ♗g5, ♗h4... 13...♗a5♣ Leisebein – Kuna, Remote 2013. Now, White has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

6...♗f5

Naturally, Black cannot develop his bishop to g4 due to the standard sacrifice on f7.

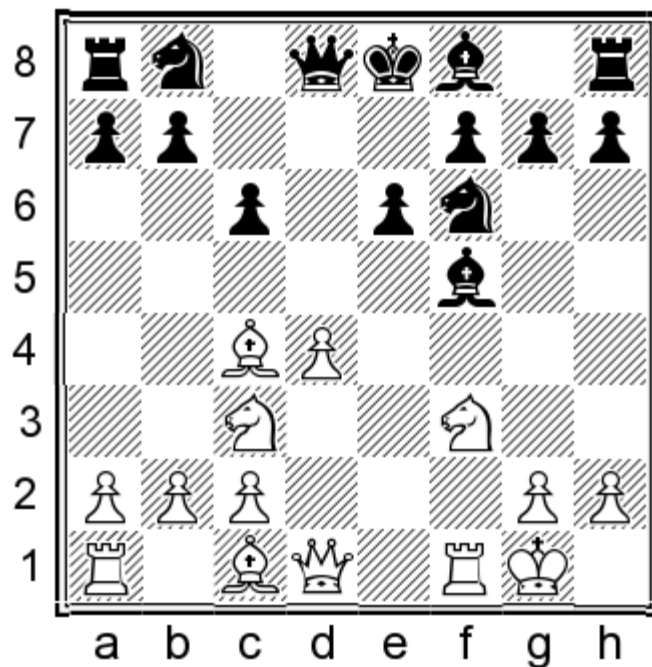


7.0-0

It was possibly best for White here to choose 7.♔g5 e6 and now 8.♘h4, Nguyen – Smith, Email 1997 (8.0-0 ♔e7 – see 7.0-0; 8.♚e2?! ♙b4 9.0-0, Stamer – Risch, corr. 1980, 9...♙e7!?♠, depriving White of the possible pawn-break in the centre – ♙xf6 and d4-d5.) 8...♙g6!? 9.♘xg6 hxg6 10.♚d3 ♘bd7 11.0-0-0 ♙b4 12.h4 ♚a5♠ White is a pawn down indeed, but he has the two-bishop advantage in an open position and has chances of equalising.

7.♘e5. White is preparing g2-g4, but after this pawn-advance his king may be rather unsafe at the middle of the board. 7...e6 8.g4 (8.0-0 ♙g6 – see 7.0-0) 8...♘fd7!? 9.gxf5 (The move 9.♙f4? loses a second pawn for White. 9...♘xe5 10.♙xe5 ♚h4+ 11.♙g3 ♚xg4+ Gareev – Vazquez, chess.com 2017.) 9...♚h4+ 10.♙f1 ♘xe5 11.♙e2 ♚h3+ 12.♙g1 (White's position would not be any better after 12.♙e1 ♙e7!♠ Black may delay removing his knight away from the centre. 13.dxe5? After this move White loses immediately. 13...♚g2 14.♙f1 ♙h4+ 15.♙d2 ♘a6. Now, due to his lag in development, White is incapable of defending his king. 16.♙e3 ♙g5+ 17.♙f4 ♙xf4+ 18.♙xf4, Zilliox – Maciulewicz, Canada 1988, 18...♚f2+!? 19.♙g4 ♙d8+ 12...exf5 13.♙f1 ♚g4+ 14.♚xg4 ♘xg4 15.♙f4 ♙d7 16.h3 ♘f6♠ Schuster – Romanov, ICCF 2013. The result of the tactical complications seems rather sad for White. He has remained two pawns down in an endgame.

7...e6



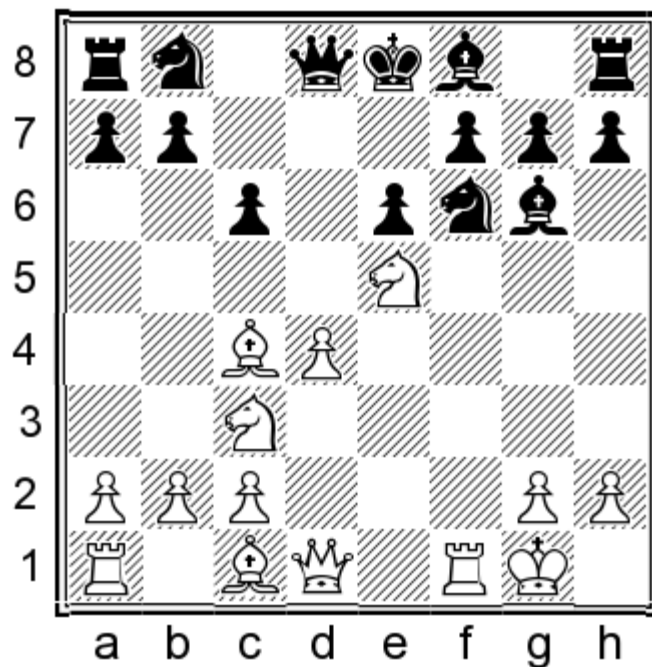
8. ♖e5

8. ♖g5 ♗e7 9. ♜e2 0-0 10. ♜ad1 ♘bd7 11. ♔h1 ♞c7 ♠ Just – Jensen, USA 1990.

8. ♘g5. White plans to transfer his other knight to f4 and thus to increase his pressure against the e6-square. 8... ♗g6 9. ♘e2 ♗d6 10. ♘f4 ♗xf4. This is Black's simplest decision. Now, he does not need to worry about the possible sacrifices on e6. 11. ♗xf4 0-0 12. c3 ♘d5 13. ♞g4 ♘d7 14. ♞g3 ♘7f6 15. ♞h4 ♞b6 16. ♞f2 ♘xf4 17. ♞xf4, Cook – Halliwell, ICCF 2013, 17...c5! ♠ Black has completed his development and evacuated his king away from the centre. In addition, after the exchange of two couples of minor pieces, White's attacking potential has been diminished considerably.

8... ♗g6

White was threatening ♞xf5.



9. ♖g5

9. ♖xg6. White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but exchanges of pieces are in favour of Black. 9... hxg6 10. h3 ♘bd7 11. ♙f4 ♘b6 12. ♙e2 ♙d6 13. ♙g5 ♙e7 14. ♚d3 0-0. White can hardly find any meaningful objects to attack. 15. ♜ad1 ♚c7 16. ♙f4 ♙d6 17. ♙g5 ♘h7 18. ♙c1 f5 19. ♙f3 ♘f6 ♣ Kruger – Podvoysky, ICCF 2016.

9.g4. He is trying to organise an attack against the f7-square, but weakens the shelter of his king. 9... ♘bd7 10. ♖xg6 hxg6 11.g5 ♘b6 12. ♙xe6 (12. ♙b3 ♘fd5. Black has an extra pawn and good attacking prospects on the h-file. 13. ♚f3 ♚c7 14. ♜f2 ♙d6 – Corbacho – Belanoff, Email 2013.) 12... fxe6 13. gxf6 gxf6 14. ♚g4 f5 15. ♚xg6+ ♙d7 16. ♜f2 ♙d6 17. ♚f7+ ♚e7 18. ♚xe7+ ♙xe7 ♣ White has restored the material balance, but must fight long and hard for a draw in this endgame.

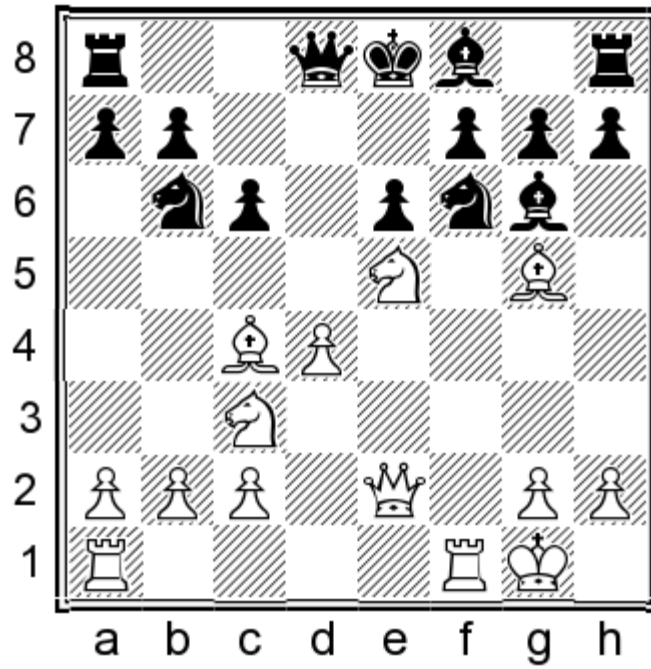
9... ♘bd7

Black wishes either to exchange the enemy knight on e5, or after ♘b6-d5 to reduce the pressure against the e6-square.

10. ♚e2

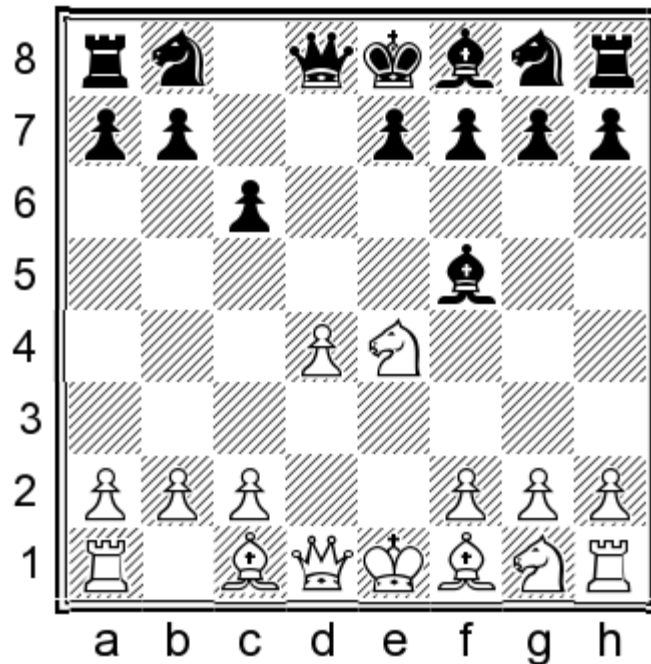
10. ♖xg6 hxg6 11. h3, Leisebein – Heinrich, Remote 2013, 11... ♚a5! ♣

10... ♘b6! ♣



White has no compensation for the pawn and the knight-sacrifice **11. ♖xf7** loses if Black defends correctly. **11... ♗xf7 12. ♕xe6 ♕xe6 13. ♖xe6+ ♖e7 14. ♗f5 ♗f7 15. ♖ae1+ ♕e7 16. ♗e5 ♖bd7 17. ♗e3 ♗d8 18. ♗d2 ♖e8**—+ Graber – Gromotka, ICCF 2016. Black’s king is at the middle of the board indeed, but White has only a pawn for the sacrificed piece.

B) 4. ♖xe4 ♕f5



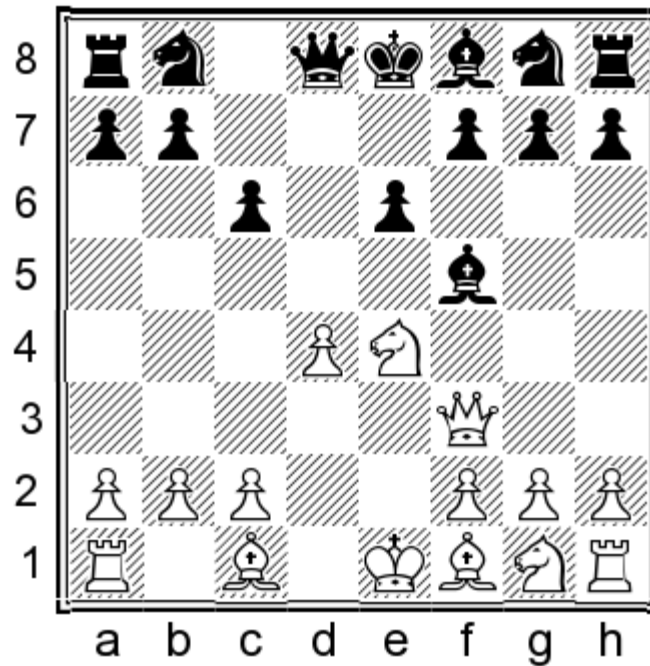
After this move there arises the Classical system on the board. One of its main pluses is that Black solves immediately the problem with the development of his light-squared bishop.

5. ♖c5

This move was played, beginning with the 60ies of the past century, by Robert Fischer and David Bronstein. White exerts pressure against the enemy pawn on b7 and wishes to provoke a weakening of Black's queenside.

About 5.♘g3 – see Chapters 13-18.

5.♞f3. White's attempt to preserve his knight in the centre would not achieve anything for him 5...e6.



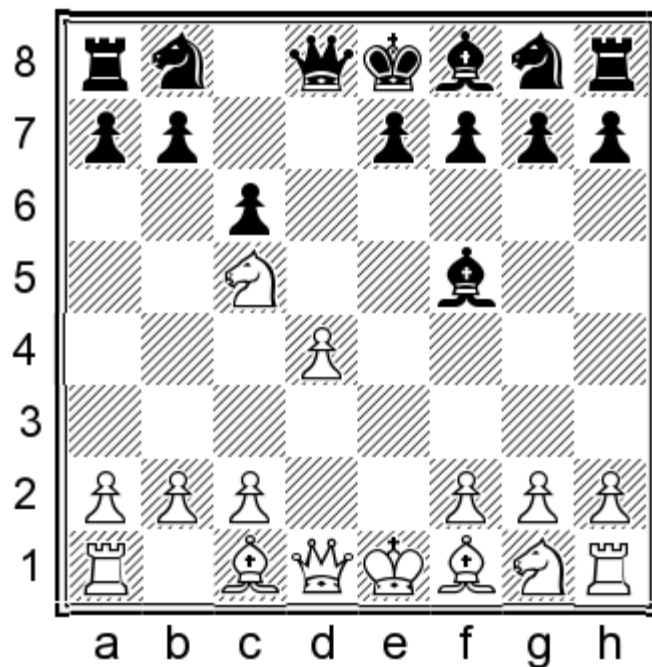
6.♙d3?! This sacrifice of the central pawn seems too risky. 6...♞xd4 7.♗e2 ♙xe4 8.♙xe4 ♞b6 9.♞g3 ♗f6 10.♙f3 ♗bd7 11.0-0 0-0-0 ♣ Plenkovic – Hera, Split 2010.

6.♗e2 ♙xe4 7.♞xe4 ♗f6 8.♞f3 ♞b6!? Black wishes to play c6-c5, in order to develop his knight not to d7, but to the more active position – the c6-square. 9.g3 c5 10.♙g2 ♗c6 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.0-0 0-0= Demchenko – Tomashevsky, Minsk 2017.

6.c3 ♗d7 7.♙d3 ♙g6 8.♗e2 (8.♞h3 ♗gf6 9.f3?! This move does not seem so harmonious. White preserves one of his knights in the centre, but impedes the development of his other knight. 9...c5 ♣ Zapata – Milos, Santos 2003.) 8...♗gf6 9.♙f4 (9.♙g5 ♙e7= Visser – Ernst, Netherlands 2007) 9...♗xe4. Simplifying the position is Black's simplest way of equalising completely. 10.♙xe4 ♙xe4 11.♞xe4 ♗f6 12.♞f3 ♞d5 13.♞xd5 cxd5 14.a4 ♙e7= Kupreichik – Guliev, Kish 2003.

5.♗c3 Now, contrary to the other retreat from the centre – 5.♗g3, White does not attack the enemy bishop on f5 and Black equalises easily. 5...♗f6 6.♗f3 e6 7.♙d3 ♙xd3 8.♞xd3 ♙d6 9.♙g5 ♗bd7 10.0-0-0 h6 11.♗e4 ♙e7 12.♙xf6 ♗xf6 13.♗b1 ♗xe4 14.♞xe4 ♞d5 15.♞he1 0-0= Ochoa Ramirez – Zuccotti, ICCF 2013.

Following 5.♙d3 ♞xd4, White will have great problems to prove that he has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed central pawn. 6.♗f3 (6.♞f3 e6 – see 5.♞f3) 6...♞d8 7.♞e2 (7.0-0 ♙xe4 8.♙xe4 ♞xd1 9.♞xd1 ♗f6 10.♙d3 e6 ♣ Turner – Hooker, Email 1994) 7...♙xe4 8.♞xe4 ♗f6 9.♞h4, Nadanian – Izoria, Yerevan 2004, 9...e6!? 10.0-0 ♗bd7 11.♞e1 ♙d6! ♣ Black has an extra pawn and a solid position.



5...b6!?

Black wishes to preserve more pieces on the board, which would enable him to play for a win against a weaker opponent. Later, he must watch carefully about his queenside, because if he plays imprecisely its weakening might hurt him in the future.

Following 5...e5 6.♘xb7 ♚b6 7.♘c5 exd4, it would be easy for Black to equalise, but the attempt to seize the initiative might be harder to realise.

6.♘b3

6.♘a6?! Robert Fischer played like this several times in simultaneous displays, though...Still, after the line: 6...♘xa6 7.♙xa6 ♚d5! was found, there were no players wishing to enter this position. Here, possibly the worst of evils for White would be to play 8.♙f1!?, defending at the same time the g2-pawn and parrying the threat ♚a5+, Vyzharov – Do Amaral, Email 2006, but even then, after the simple move 8...e6!?, White will have to fight for equality due to the loss of his castling rights.

6...e6

Black postpones the development of his knight on g8, because later, he can deploy it on e7, or on f6.

7.♘f3

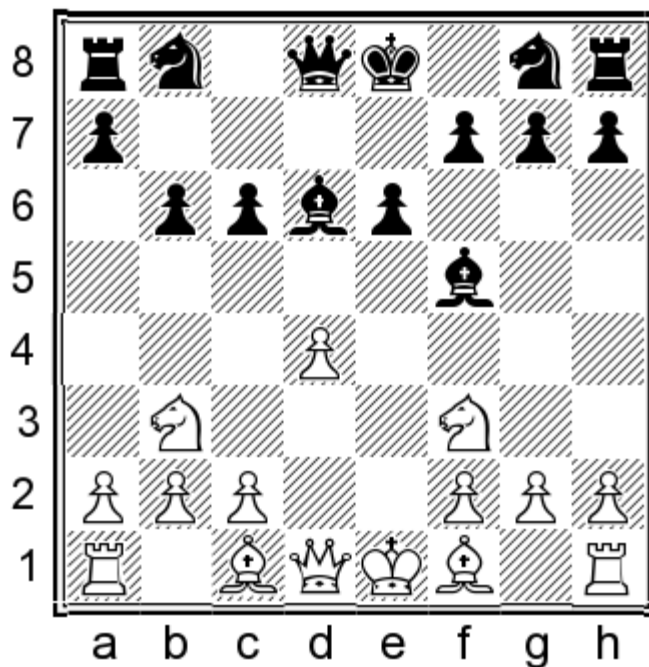
7.♘e2. The transfer of the knight to the g3-square seems rather slow. 7...♘f6 8.♘g3 ♙g6 9.♙e2, Fomichenko – Piankov, La Fere 2010, 9...♙d6!?

Naturally, White would like to develop his bishop on g2, since it would exert from there powerful pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal, but the straightforward move 7.g3 would be countered by Black with 7...♚d5 8.f3 (without this move, Black would play ♚e4+) 8...♘f6∞ Pokhlebin – Napalkov, Voronezh 2016.

7.♙d3. The exchange of the light-squared bishops will facilitate Black's defence. 7...♙xd3 8.♚xd3 ♙d6 9.♘f3 ♘f6 10.♙g5 (10.0-0 0-0 11.♙g5 ♘bd7 – see 10.♙g5) 10...♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘bd2. White's knight was misplaced on b3. (12.♙fe1 h6 13.♙h4 ♚c7= Rozentals – Rausis, Vilnius 2010) 12...♚c7 13.♘e4 (13.♘c4 ♙f4 14.♙xf4 ♚xf4 – Golubev –

Bulanov, Odessa 2010) 13...♖xe4 14.♗xe4 c5= Golubev – Tukmakov, Odessa 2010.

7...♕d6



8.g3

8.♕d3 ♕xd3 9.♗xd3 ♖f6 – see 7.♕d3.

8.♕g5, Rozenalis – Postny, Israel 2008, 8...♖f6!?=

8...♖e7 9.♕g2 h6

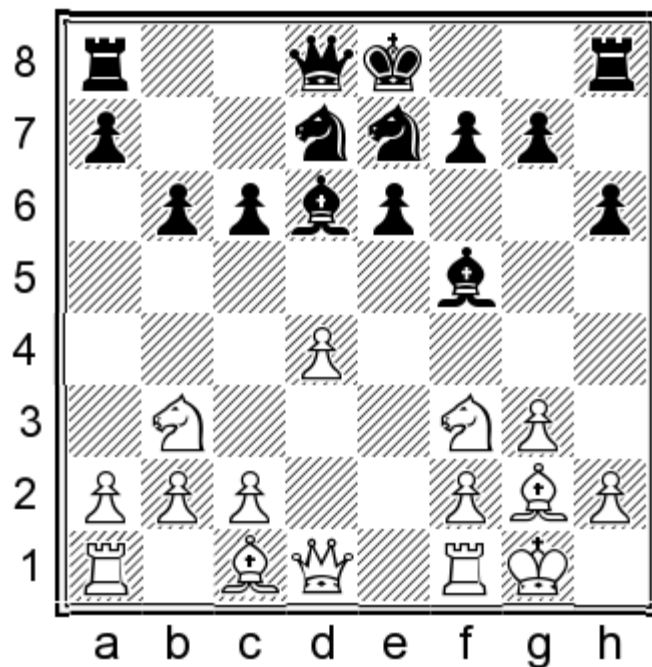
Before White had played ♕g2, the threat ♖h4 was not so dangerous for Black, because he would have countered that with ♕e4. Now, he has to take some measures against it.

10.0-0

About 10.♗e2 ♖d7 11.0-0 0-0, or 11.♖e5 ♗c8 12.0-0 0-0 – see 10.0-0.

10.♖bd2. This is the beginning of a long manoeuvre with White's knight. 10...♖d7 11.♖c4 ♕c7 12.0-0 (Following 12.♖fe5?! ♖xe5 13.♖xe5, Black can force a transfer into a better endgame. 13...♕xe5 14.dxe5 ♗xd1+ 15.♖xd1 0-0-0+ 16.♕d2 ♗d7. Black is preparing the doubling of his rooks on the d-file. It is an endgame indeed, but he has a considerable lead in development. On the contrary, White's two-bishop advantage is practically immaterial. 17.♖c1 ♗hd8 18.♕c3 ♖d5= Petrov – Kornev, Vladimir 2009.) 12...0-0 13.♗e2 b5 14.♖e3 ♕e4. Black neutralises the pressure of the enemy bishop on the long diagonal. 15.♗d1 Narciso Dublan – San Segundo, Lanzarote 2003, 15...a5!?∞

10...♖d7



11.♞e2

11.♞e1 0-0 12.♖bd2 ♜c8 13.b3 (13.♗e4 ♘b8 14.c4 c5= Krejci – Seger, Pardubice 2014.) 13...♗f6 14.♙b2 c5= Burri – Sisak, ICCF 2017.

After 11.♖bd2 0-0 12.b3, Zvjaginsev – Shimanov, Sochi 2017, Black can exploit the placement of the enemy pawn on b3 in order to create counterplay on the queenside: 12...a5!?=

11...0-0 12.♗e5

This knight-sortie is not dangerous for Black. White's alternatives would not provide him with an edge either.

12.c3 ♜c8= Bronstein – Petrosian, USSR 1966.

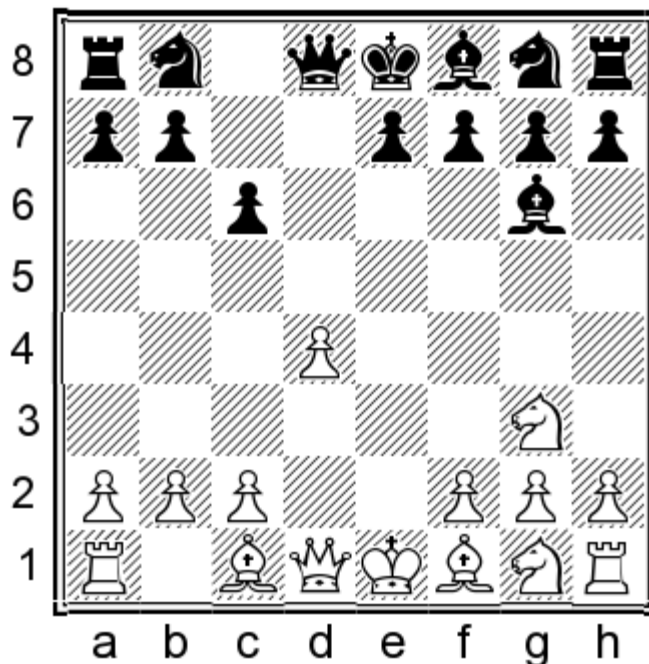
12.♖bd2 ♜c8. Now, Black's bishop on d6 would be able to retreat to b8. 13.♗c4 ♘b8 14.b3 ♗d5 15.♙b2 b5 16.♗ce5, Solak – Willemze, Sarajevo 2010, 16...♗xe5!? 17.dxe5 ♞b6∞ White has extra space, but his pawn on e5 restricts the bishop on b2, while Black's knight has occupied a powerful position at the centre of the board.

After 12.c4, Black obtains good counterplay by advancing his rook-pawn. 12...a5!? 13.♙e3 a4 14.♖bd2 ♘h7 15.♞ac1, Marjanovic – Iordachescu, Kraljevo 2014, 15...♞b8!?!∞

12...♞c8 13.♞d1 ♘b8 14.c4, Rublevsky – Spraggett, Groningen 1997. 14...♗xe5!? The exchange of the knights is Black's simplest way of equalising. 15.dxe5 ♞c7 16.f4 c5=

Chapter 13

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♖g6



In this chapter we will analyse only seldom played lines for White.

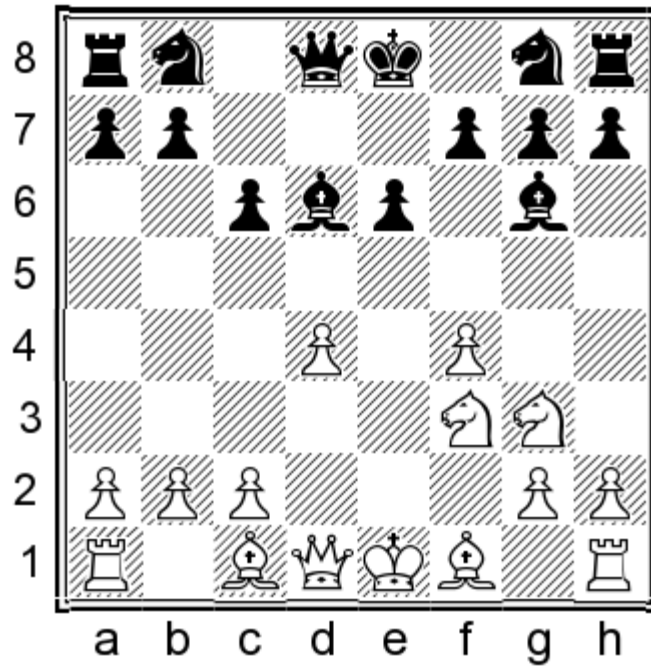
6.♗f3

Now, after the development of White's king's knight, we will deal only with the variations in which he refrains from the plan, connected with h2-h4.

About 6.c3 ♗f6 7.♗h3 e6 8.♗f4 ♕d6 – see Chapter 14.

6.♗3e2. This original move is often played by grandmaster Boris Savchenko. 6...♗f6 7.♗f4 e5 8.♗xg6 hxg6. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but has lost too much time on manoeuvres with his knight. 9.♗f3 exd4 10.♗xd4 ♕c5. Black develops his bishop with tempo. 11.♚e2+ ♔f8. The loss of Black's castling rights is not so important here, because he can develop his rook on h8 via h5, or h4. 12.♗b3, Savchenko – Vuckovic, Moscow 2009, 12...♗a6!? This is Black's simplest road to equality. 13.♗xc5 ♗xc5 14.♕d2. White is preparing to castle, but here, after 14...♗ce4 15.0-0-0 ♗xd2, Black exchanges the powerful enemy bishop. 16.♚xd2 ♚xd2+ 17.♝xd2 a5 18.h3 g5=

6.f4. Now, before playing ♗f3, White advances his pawn and increases his control over the e5-square, but weakens the g4 and e4-squares. 6...e6 7.♗f3 (After 7.h4, it seems very good for Black to play 7...h5!?, fixing the weakness on g4, moreover that White's h4-pawn may come under attack later after ♕e7. 8.♗f3 ♗d7 9.♕c4 ♗h6 10.♚e2, Mamedyarov – Karpov, Moscow 2009, 10...♕e7!? 7...♕d6



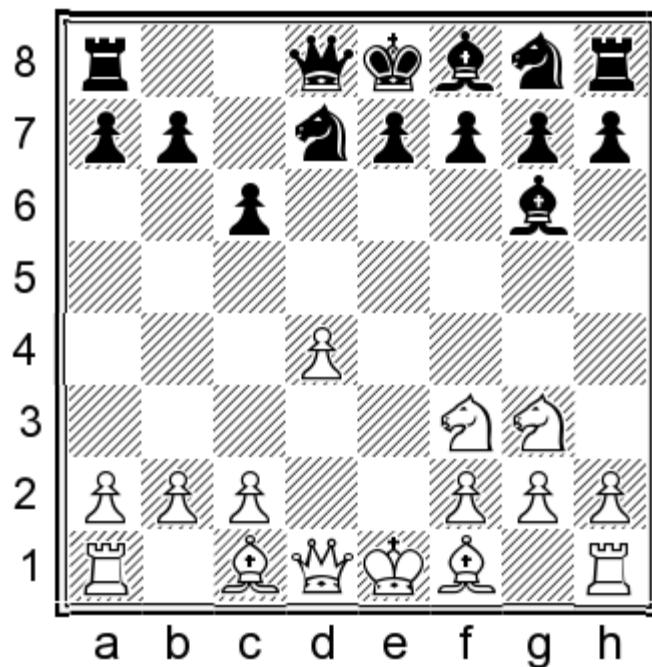
8.♙c4 ♘e7 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♗e5 0-0∞ Sandmann – Karnbach, Ellwangen 2001.

Following 8.♙e2 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♖c7 10.♗e5, Black should better refrain from the routine development of his knight on f6 and choose instead 10...♗e7, preventing the pawn-advance f4-f5 with the help of which White wishes to seize the initiative on the kingside. 11.♙f3, Cornaggia – Reif, Porto San Giorgio 2011, 11...♞d8!?

8.♙d3 ♖c7 9.♗e5 ♗f6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗xg6. White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but exchanges his powerful knight and loses his chance of advancing f4-f5. (After 11.c3, Black has a reliable way of equalising: 11...♙xd3 12.♖xd3 c5 13.♙e3 ♞d8 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♖xe4 ♘d7= Kurpnieks – Sandehn, chessfriend.com 2005.) 11...hxg6 12.♗e4 ♗xe4 13.♙xe4 ♘d7 14.♖f3. White's bishop-pair is not so important here, because his pawn on f4 precludes his bishop on c1 from occupying an active position. 14...♗f6 15.♙d3 ♖b6. Black exerts pressure against the b2-pawn and impedes the development of his opponent's queenside. 16.c3 c5 17.dxc5 ♙xc5+ 18.♙h1 a5 19.♞b1 ♞fd8 20.♙c2, Cappon – Burmakin, Lille 2011, 20...♞d7!? White has problems with the development of his bishop on c1.

6.♗h3. Now, just like after 6.♗ge2, White's knight is headed for the f4-square. As a rule, this move transposes to positions from Chapters 14, or 15. 6...e6 7.♙c4 (7.♗f4 ♙d6, or 7.c3 ♙d6 8.♗f4 ♗f6 – see Chapter 14) 7...♙d6 8.0-0 (8.♗f4 ♗f6 – see Chapter 15) 8...♗f6 9.f4 (9.♗f4 ♖c7 – see Chapter 15) 9...♖c7 10.♙h1 0-0 11.f5 exf5 12.♗xf5 ♗bd7 13.♗xd6 ♖xd6. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but his knight is misplaced at the edge of the board. 14.♙f4 ♖b4. Black is trying to organise counterplay on the queenside. 15.♙b3 a5 16.c3 (The move 16.a4, Robson – Lenderman, Wheeling 2013, prevents radically a5-a4, but weakens the b4-square. 16...♞ac8) 16...♖b6 17.♙d6 ♞fe8= Rozentalis – Prohaszka, Austria 2015.

6...♗d7



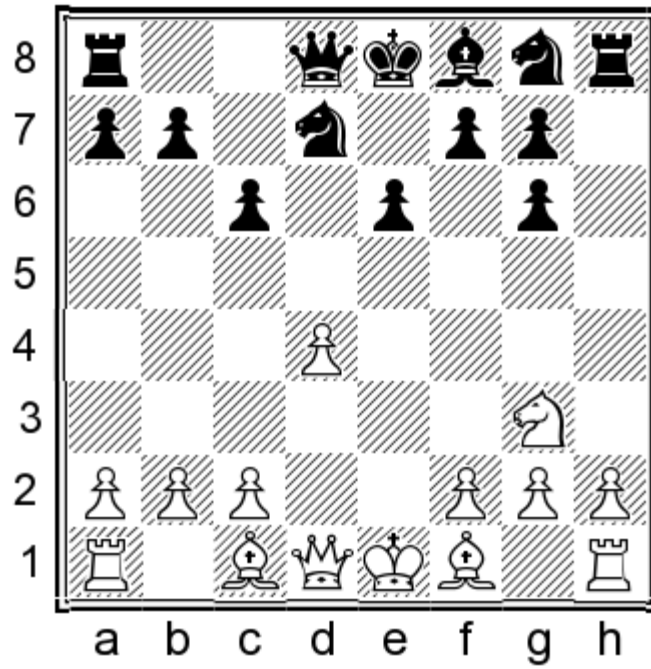
7.♙d3

About 7.h4 h6 – see Chapters 16-18.

7.c3. This is a very modest move after which Black equalises effortlessly. White protects safely his d4-pawn, but can hardly rely on obtaining an advantage by playing defensively. 7...e6 8.♙d3 (8.♙e2 ♖gf6 – see 7.♙e2) 8...♙xd3 9.♗xd3 ♗gf6 10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♙g5 ♗c7 12.♞fe1 0-0 13.♞ad1 h6 14.♙d2 ♞fd8 15.♗e2 ♗a5. This queen-sortie is standard for similar positions. 16.a3 ♗b5! Black exploits the defencelessness of White's b2-pawn and forces a transition into an approximately equal endgame. 17.♙c1 ♗xe2 18.♗xe2 ♞ac8= Beckett – Sherwood, ICCF 2016.

With the move 7.♗h4, White wishes to obtain the two-bishop advantage even at the cost of a lag in development. Still, this manoeuvre would be more reasonable if Black has already castled kingside and his rook had abandoned the h-file.

7...e6 8.♗xg6 hxg6

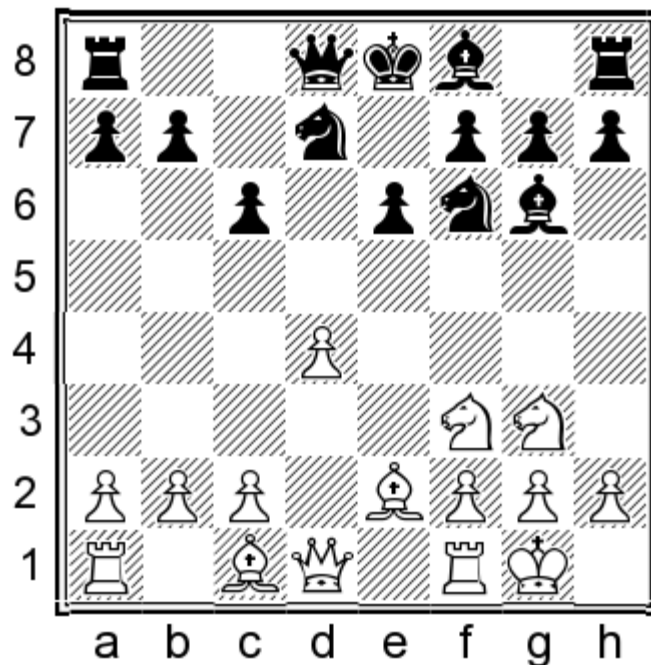


Black should not be afraid of 9. $\text{e}2$ $\text{d}gf6\infty$, while after 10.g3?! Savchenko – Gunina, Almaty 2016, he can even seize the initiative with the line: 10... $\text{a}5+!$? 11. $\text{c}3$ (otherwise, White would play $\text{d}5$) 11... $\text{e}4$ 12. $\text{d}2$ $\text{f}5$ 13. $\text{e}2$ $\text{d}x2$ 14. $\text{d}2$ $\text{f}3$ 15. $\text{g}1$ $\text{h}2\text{F}$

9. $\text{d}3$ $\text{d}gf6$ 10.c3 $\text{d}6$ 11. $\text{e}4$ $\text{d}xe4$ 12. $\text{xe}4$ $\text{d}f6$ 13. $\text{f}3$ $\text{a}5$ 14. $\text{e}3$ 0-0-0= Lebermann – Kuhn, Bad Homburg 2012.

9. $\text{e}4$ $\text{d}gf6$ 10. $\text{d}g5$ (After 10. $\text{d}xf6+$, Black can capture with his pawn 10... $\text{gxf6}\infty$, followed by f6-f5 , $\text{d}f6$, Panarin – I.Popov, St Petersburg 2015.) 10...c5 11.c3, A. Vovk – Margvelashvili, Lvov 2008, 11... $\text{c}7!$? F , attacking the h2-pawn and preparing at the same time castling queenside.

7. $\text{e}2$. White refrains from the plan, connected with the trade of the light-squared bishops, but now, Black's bishop on g6 will be more active than its counterpart, since it exerts pressure against White's queenside on the b1-h7 diagonal. 7...e6 8.0-0 (8.c3 $\text{d}6$ 9.0-0 $\text{d}gf6$ – see 8.0-0) 8... $\text{d}gf6$

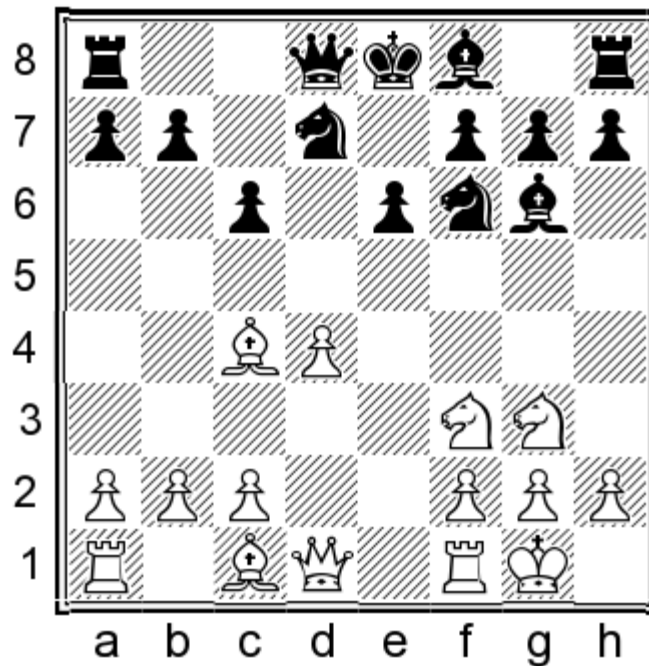


9.c4 ♔d6 10.♗h4 ♚c7∞ Mueller – Nazarenus, Willingen 2001.

After 9.c3 ♔d6 10.♚e1 the simplest for Black would be to play 10...h6!?, preparing a square for his bishop to retreat if White plays ♗h4. 11.♔d3. This move leads to simplification of the position, but White had nothing better anyway. 11...♔xd3 12.♚xd3 0-0 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♚xe4 ♗f6 15.♚h4 ♚c8=, preparing the pawn-advance c6-c5, while the bishop-sacrifice on h6 is not dangerous for Black, Gaboleiro – Manzo, ICCF 2012.

9.b3 ♔d6 10.♔b2 ♚c7 11.c4 0-0. This is a quiet move. (We can recommend to the fans of sharper positions the move 11...h5!?, followed by castling queenside, Uzonyi – Galgovics, Hungary 2008.) 12.♗h4 ♚ad8 13.♗xg6 (13.♔f3, A.Ivanov – Hertan, Lowell 1993, 13...♚fe8!?) 13...hxc6 14.♚c2, Hamilton – Leveille, Hamilton 1994, 14...♔f4!? White develops his bishop to an active position. 15.♚ad1 e5. In general, it is not recommended to open the position when the opponent has the two-bishop advantage, but here this has the justification that White's knight does not control the central d4 and e5-squares, so Black can begin to fight for them. 16.♚fe1 exd4 17.♔xd4 ♚fe8 18.♗f1 ♔e5 19.♔e3 ♗f8=, followed by ♗e6-d4.

7.♔c4. This development of the bishop does not combine well with the move 6.♗f3, since now, contrary to Chapter 15, White cannot increase his pressure against the e6-square with ♗g1-e2-f4. 7...e6 8.0-0 (8.♚e2 ♗gf6 9.0-0 ♚c7 – see 8.0-0) 8...♗g6

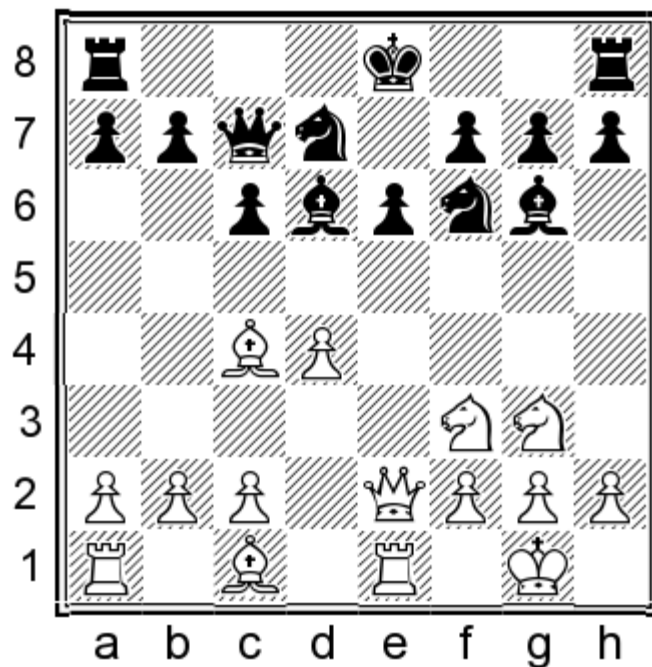


9.♗g5. This knight-sortie is not dangerous for Black, because White's sacrifice on e6 is obviously not well prepared. 9...♔d6 10.♚e1 0-0= 11.♔xe6?! fxe6 12.♗xe6 ♚a5 13.♗xf8 ♚xf8 Ackermann – Sheremet, Mittelfranken 2009. Black's two minor pieces will be stronger than White's rook and two pawns in this middlegame.

9.♔b3 ♔d6 10.♚e2 ♚c7 11.♚e1 0-0 12.♗e5, Torre – Vukic, Biel 1977, 12...♔xe5 13.dxe5 ♗d5∞ The powerful placement of Black's knight at the middle of the board compensates White's two-bishop advantage.

9.♚e1 ♔d6 10.♗h4 (10.♗e5 ♚c7 11.♚e2 0-0 – see 9.♚e2) 10...♚c7 11.♗xg6 hxg6 12.♚f3 0-0. Black has a very solid position and White's bishop-pair is not threatening. 13.♔g5 c5 14.dxc5 ♚xc5 15.♔xf6 ♗xf6∞ Miton – Ding, Doha 2014.

9.♚e2 ♚c7 10.♚e1 ♔d6



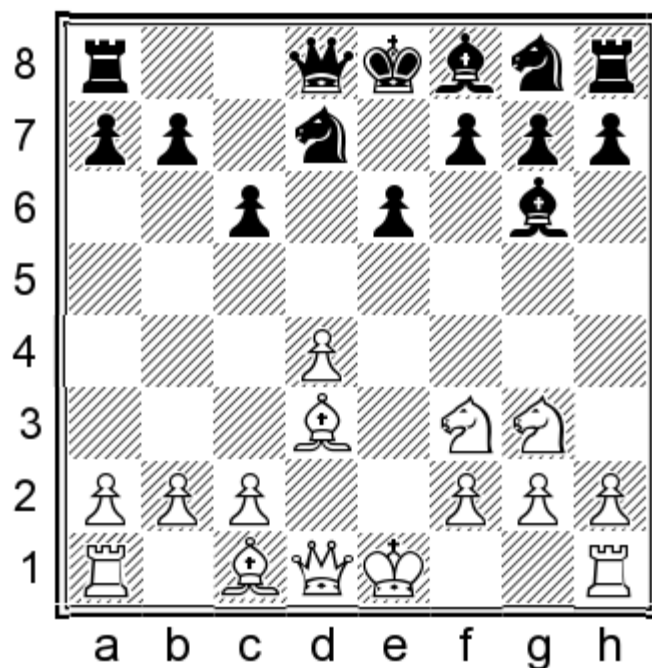
11. ♖b3 0-0 – see 9. ♖b3.

Following 11. ♘e5 0-0 12. h4, Kovchan – Malikentzos, Porto Rio 2015, Black can neutralise the threat h4-h5 in a tactical fashion. 12... b5!? 13. ♖b3 c5! 14. h5 ♗xh5 15. ♘h5 c4=, regaining the piece and obtaining a very good game.

11. c3 0-0 12. ♗h4 (After 12. ♘e5 ♗xe5 13. dxe5 ♗d5 14. f4, Irimia – Mueller, Weymouth 1968, Black can play 14... ♗c5!?∞ in an attempt to exploit the vulnerability of the d3-square.) 12... c5 13. ♗xg6 hxg6 14. dxc5 ♗xc5 15. ♖e3, Vertongen – Markus, Email 2010, 15... a6!?= Black has a very solid position and White can hardly find an active plan for his actions.

7...e6

Black does not need to be in a hurry to exchange, because he should not be afraid of the capturing on g6.



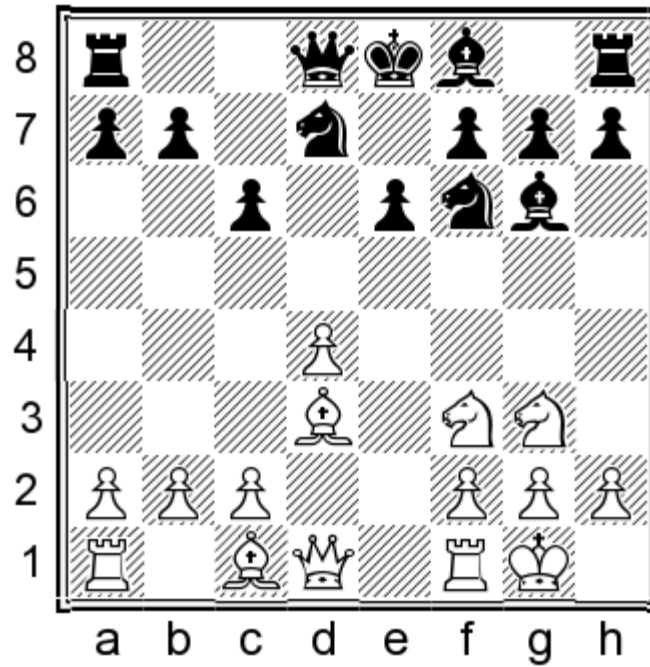
8.0-0

8.c3 ♟xd3 – see 7.c3.

8.♟f4 ♘gf6 9.♟xg6 (9.0-0 ♘d5 – see 8.0-0) 9...hxg6 – see 8.♟xg6.

8.♟xg6 hxg6 9.♘e4 (9.0-0 ♘gf6, or 9.♟f4 ♘gf6 10.0-0 c5 – see 8.0-0) 9...♘gf6 10.♘eg5 ♚a5+ 11.c3, Spain – Jones, Auckland 2003, 11...♚a6!?=, impeding White's castling kingside.

8...♘gf6



9.c4

White takes the d5-square under control.

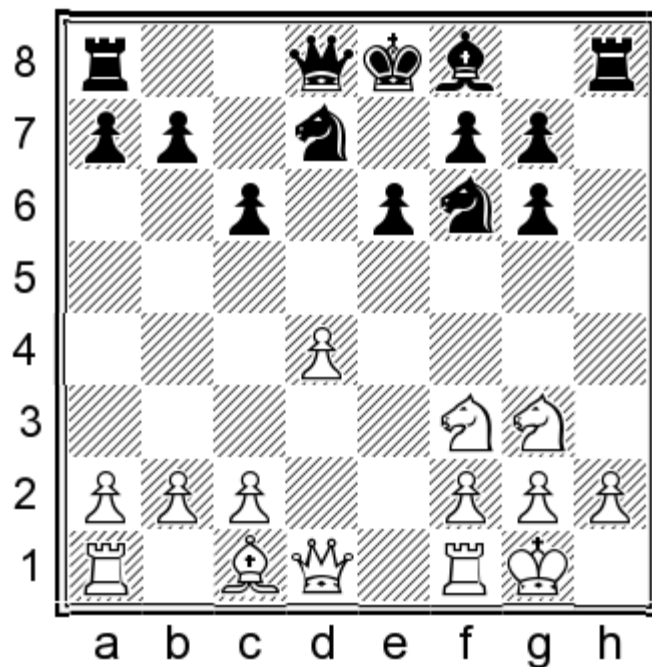
9.c3 ♟xd3 10.♚xd3 ♟d6 – see 7.c3.

9.b3 ♟d6 10.c4 0-0, or 10.♟b2 0-0 11.c4 ♚c7, or 11.♞e1 ♚c7 12.♟xg6 hxg6 13.c4 ♞fd8 – see 9.c4.

9.♟g5. This bishop-sortie is harmless for Black, because he can always get rid of the pin of his knight with the move ♟e7. 9...♟xd3 10.♚xd3 ♟d6 11.♘e4 ♟e7 12.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13.♞ad1 0-0 14.c3 ♚c7 15.♞fe1 ♞ad8= Li Shilong – Yu Shaoteng, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

9.♟f4. White does not control the d5-square, so this move is a bit senseless, since Black can oust immediately the enemy bishop from the f4-square. 9...♘d5 10.♟g5 ♟e7 11.♟xe7 (11.♟xg6 ♟xg5 12.♟d3 ♟e7 13.c4 ♘5f6 14.♞e1 0-0 15.♚b3 ♚b6= Staniszewski – Hauenstein, ICCF 2012) 11...♘xe7 12.♞e1 0-0 13.♟xg6 ♘xg6. After the exchange of the bishops, the position has been considerably simplified. Neither side has any pawn-weaknesses, so the chances should be equal. 14.c4 ♘f6 15.♚c2 ♚a5= Bures – Forsloef, ICCF 2010.

9.♟xg6 hxg6

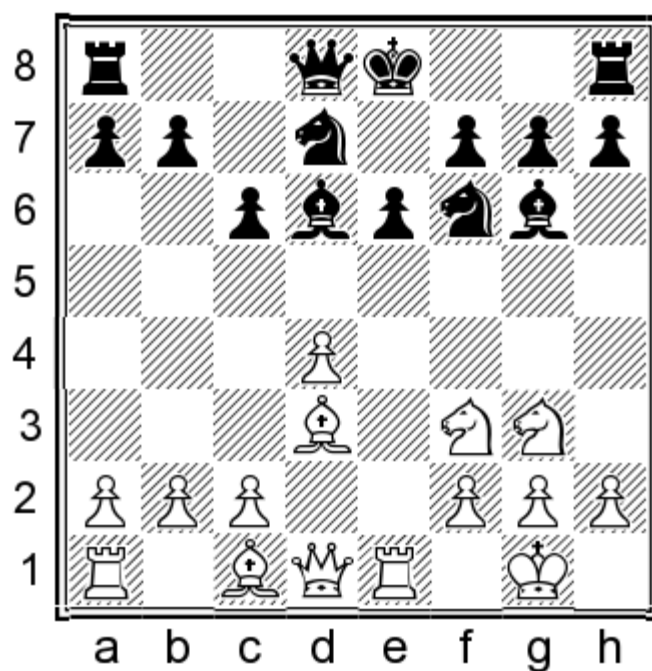


10.c4 ♔d6, or 10.♞e1 ♔d6 11.c4 0-0 – see 9.c4.

10.♙g5 ♜b6 11.♞e2 c5. Black lags in development and should better refrain from capturing the b2-pawn. 12.c3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♙c5 14.♞ad1 0-0= Kovanova – Guseva, Kaliningrad 2015.

10.♙f4 c5. Black attacks immediately his opponent's central pawn. 11.c4 cxd4 12.♘xd4, Sutovsky – Grischuk, Rhodes 2013 (There arises an approximately equal endgame after 12.♞xd4 ♜b6 13.♞xb6 ♘xb6= V.Ivanov – Lizorkina, LSS 2012.) 12...♙e7 13.♘f3 ♞a5. From this square Black's queen will exert pressure against the a2-pawn and will impede the enemy rook to take part in the fight for the open d-file. 14.♞e2 0-0 15.♞fd1 ♘c5 16.b3 ♞fd8=

9.♞e1 ♔d6



10.c4 0-0 – see 9.c4.

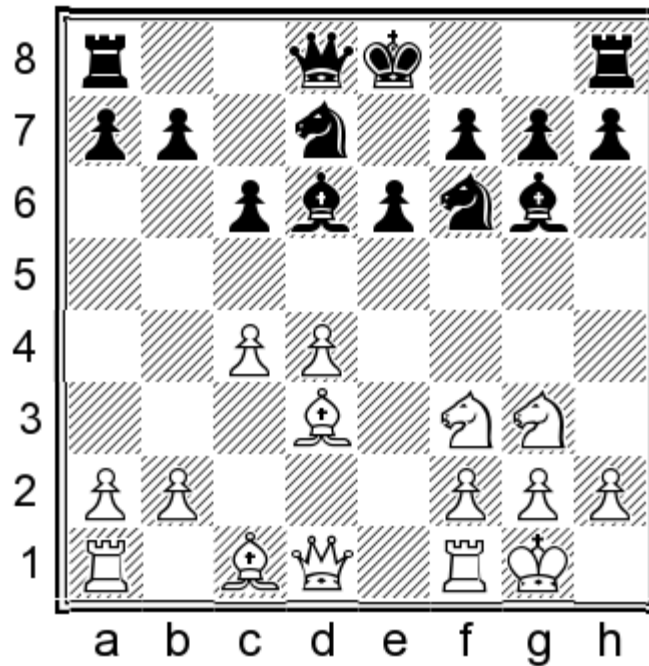
10.♙g5 ♙xd3 11.♞xd3 0-0 12.♘e4 ♙e7 13.♙f4 c5 14.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 15.c4 cxd4 16.♙e5 ♞a5 17.♙xd4 ♞fd8 18.♞e2

♠ac8= Valutanu – Pauwels, ICCF 2011.

10.♘f5 ♙xf5 11.♙xf5 0-0 12.♙d3 ♚c7 13.c3 c5 14.h3 cxd4 15.♘xd4 a6 16.♗e2 ♜ad8 17.♙c2, Rabięga – Ragger, Germany 2012, 17...♞fe8!? Black protects reliably his e6-pawn and thus prevents White's tactical threats, connected with the possibility ♘xe6. 18.♙e3 ♙h2+. Black's plan includes the move ♙f4, in order to deprive White of his two-bishop advantage. Before that however, it would be useful to give a check to White's king. 19.♚h1. Now, it will be farther from the centre. This will be in favour of Black if there arises a transfer into an endgame. 19...♙f4 20.♙xf4 ♗xf4=

9...♙d6

Black prevents the move ♙f4.

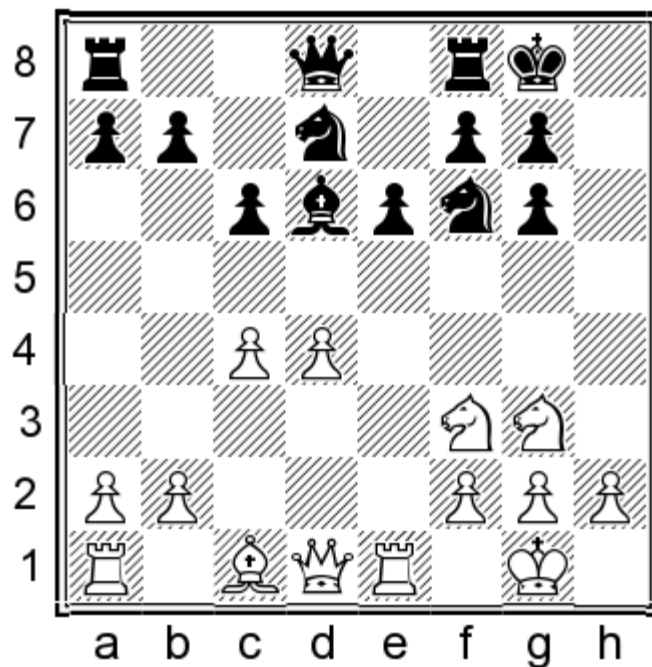


10.b3

White wishes to develop his bishop on b2.

About 10.♙xg6 hxg6 11.♙g5 ♚c7 12.♞e1 0-0 – see 10.♞e1.

10.♞e1 0-0 11.♙xg6 hxg6



12.b3 b5∞ Bodirola – Epishin, Nova Gorica 2016.

After 12.♖e4 ♜xe4 13.♞xe4, Van der Wiel – Korchnoi, Amsterdam 1989, the simplest for Black would be to choose 13...♙e7!?, preventing White's rook from occupying the h-file, from where it might participate in an attack against the enemy king. 14.♞e2 ♞e8 15.b3 c5 16.♙b2 ♙f6=

12.♙g5 ♞c7 13.♖e4 (13.♞c2 c5=; 13.a3 ♞fe8= A.Muzychuk – Gunina, Chengdu 2015) 13...♜xe4 14.♞xe4 c5 15.♞d2 (15.dxc5 ♙xc5 16.a3 a5. Black prevents b2-b4. 17.♞c2 e5 18.♞e2 f5 19.♞d1 e4 20.♜d4 ♙xd4 21.♞xd4 ♜c5∞ Van Tricht – Woodard, ICCF 2013) 15...♞fe8 16.dxc5 ♙xc5. White's pawn-majority on the queenside is not so important, because Black can advance quickly his pawns f7-f6 and e6-e5, after which his prospects would not be worse. 17.♞ee1 a5 18.♞ad1 ♜f8 19.♞e2 f6=, followed by e6-e5, ♜e6, Rotaru – Tofan, ICCF 2016.

10...0-0 11.♙b2

11.♙xg6 hxg6 12.♙b2 b5= Fogarasi – Ringoir, Kecskemet 2010. This is a standard resource for similar positions. Black attacks the c4-pawn, hoping to provoke the pawn-advance c4-c5, which would weaken the control over the d5-square and his knight on f6 would be immediately headed there.

11...♞c7 12.♙xg6

12.♞c2 ♙xd3 13.♞xd3 ♞fe8= Wemhoener – Tritt, ICCF 2008.

12...hxg6 13.♞e2

13.♞e1 ♞fd8 14.♞c2, E.Hansen – Erenburg, Las Vegas 2008, 14...c5!?=

13...♞fe8

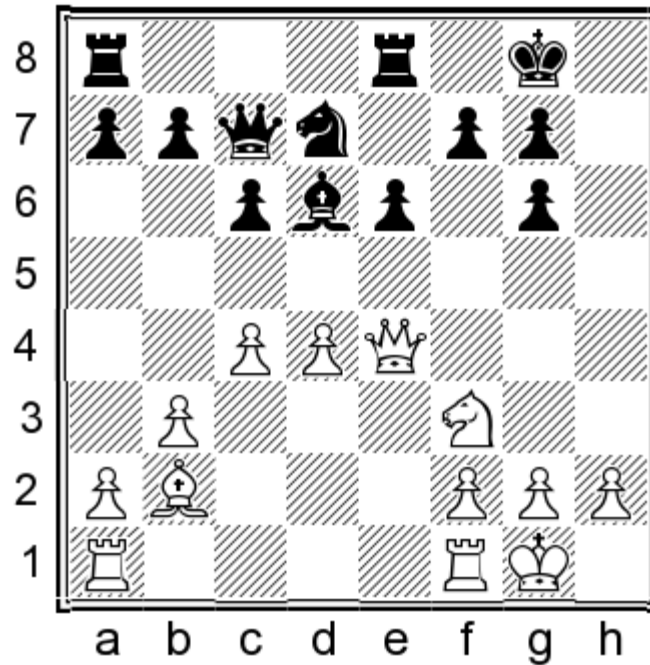
Now, White must consider not only the freeing pawn-break c6-c5, but also e6-e5.

14.♜e4

14.♞fe1 a5=

14.♠ad1 e5= Spangenberg – Dautov, Yerevan 1996.

14...♗xe4 15.♙xe4



15...♗e7

This is a prophylactic move against ♖g5, followed by ♗h4.

Besides 15...♗e7, Black can equalise in some other ways too.

15...e5!? This is his simplest decision. The game in the centre is opened and the position becomes completely equal.

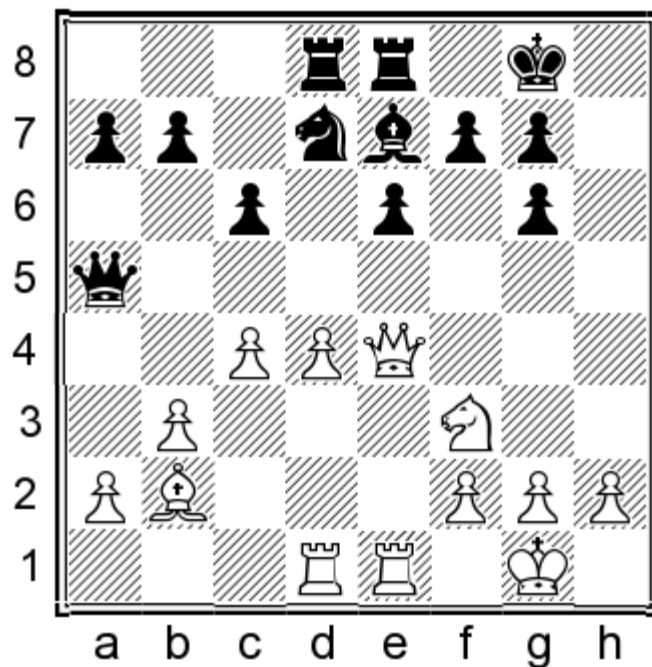
16.♗h4 exd4 17.♗xd4 ♗e7 18.♙g3 ♙xg3 19.hxg3 ♗f6= Gomez Esteban – Magem Badals, Pamplona 1996.

15...a5!? Black must play this move only if his tournament situation requires a fight for a win. He is trying to open the a-file in order to organise counterplay on the queenside. 16.♠ad1 a4 17.♗h4 ♗e7 18.♖g5 ♗xg5 19.♙xg5 axb3 20.axb3 ♠a2 21.♗c1 ♖f6 22.♠d3 (22.♗f4 ♙a5 23.♗e5 ♖d7∞ Senff – Schandorff, Germany 2006) 22...♙a5 23.♙xa5 ♠xa5∞ Zhuravlev – Chukanov, ICCF 2010. Now, White must take care constantly about the protection of his pawns on d4 and b3.

16.♠ad1 ♠ad8

It also seems good for Black here to transfer immediately his queen to the f5-square: 16...♙a5!? 17.a3 ♙f5= Efimov – Istomin, ICCF 2013.

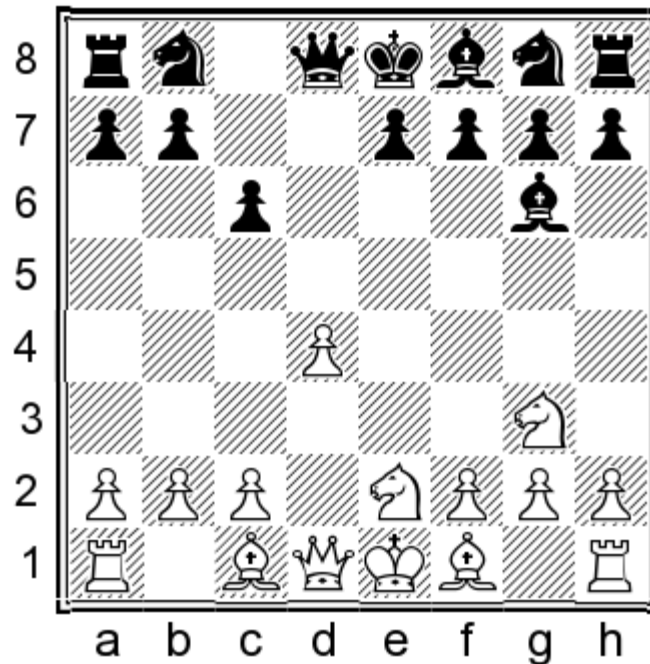
17.♠fe1 ♙a5



This is a standard resource in positions of this type. Black's queen is less active than its counterpart, so he transfers it to f5, in order to try to enter an endgame, or to oust the enemy queen away from the centre of the board. **18.a3 ♕f5 19.♖e2 g5 20.h3 g4**. Black gets rid of his doubled pawn and the position becomes completely equal. **21.hxg4 ♕xg4=** Spassky – Karpov, Leningrad 1974.

Chapter 14

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♖g6 6.♗1e2



This plan for White has venom. He wishes to transfer his knight to f4 and then either to exchange on g6, obtaining the two-bishop advantage, or to play h2–h4, creating the threat h4–h5. Black must play very accurately; otherwise, he would end up in an inferior position.

6...e6

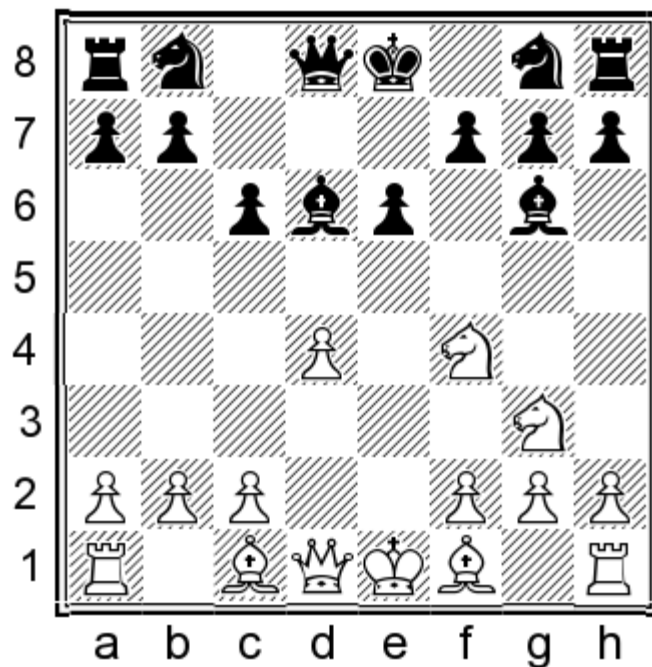
This is his most precise move. He wishes to play ♕d6 as quickly as possible in order to take control over the f4-square.

7.♗f4

About 7.h4 h6 – see Chapter 16.

7.c3 ♕d6 8.♗f4 ♗f6 – see 7.♗f4.

7...♕d6



8.c3

This is a prophylactic move. White removes in advance his pawn from the attack of the enemy bishop, so that later, after Black plays ♖c7, to be able to protect his knight with the queen.

About 8.♙c4 ♜f6 – see Chapter 15.

White's alternatives do not promise him chances of obtaining an advantage in the opening.

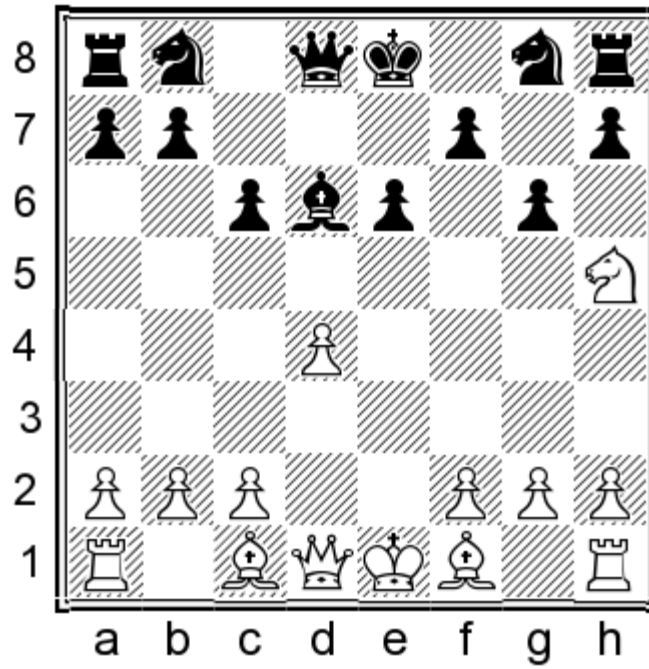
8.♙e3. This is not the best place for his bishop, because Black can attack it after transferring his knight to the d5-square.

8...♞e7 9.♚d2 ♞d5 10.♞xg6 hxg6 11.♞e4 ♞xe3 12.♚xe3, Kalinina – Konovalova, Poltava 2010, 12...♙e7!?=

8.♞fh5 ♜f8!?! (8...♙xh5 9.♞xh5 g6 – see 8.♞gh5) 9.♙e2 ♞d7 10.0-0, J.Geller – Matlakov, Moscow 2014, 10...♚c7!?=

8.♞gh5. This is an attempt to seize the initiative by exerting pressure against the g7-square. 8...♙xh5. Black wishes to remove the enemy knight from h5 as quickly as possible, but has to present his opponent with the two-bishop advantage.

9.♞xh5 g6

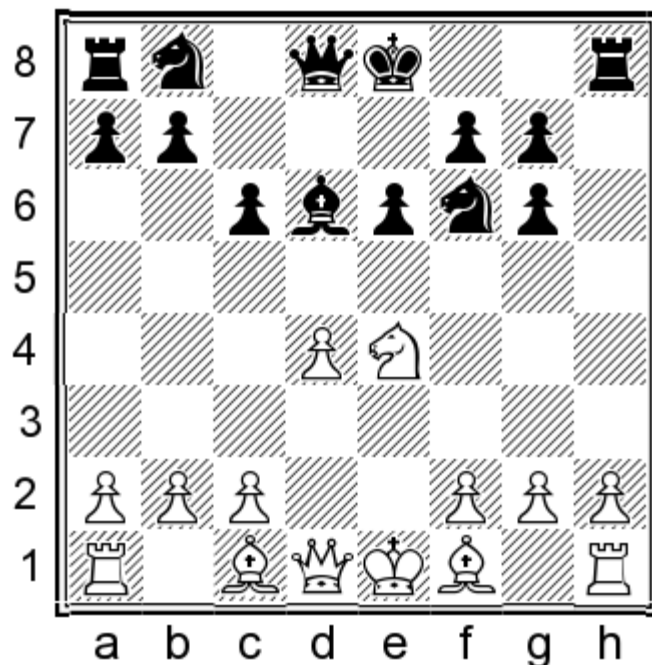


After 10.♘f4, Black completes at first his development and then advances e6-e5 equalising completely. 10...♘d7 11.g3 ♘gf6 12.♙g2 0-0 13.0-0 ♚e8 14.♘d3 e5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♙g5. This pin of the knight is not dangerous for Black. 16...♔g7 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5 18.c3 h6 19.♙e3, Moen – Hole, Lillehammer 2013, 19...♙c7!?, followed by ♙b6.

10.♘g3 ♚h4!? White will have problems to oust the enemy queen from this square. 11.♙e3 (11.c3 ♘d7 12.♚f3, Tiviakov – Chigaev, Groningen 2016, 12...f5!?, preventing ♘e4.) 11...♙f4. The trade of the dark-squared bishops is Black's simplest way of equalising. 12.♚f3 ♙xe3 13.fxe3 ♘d7 14.0-0-0 ♚f6 15.♙d3 ♚xf3 16.gxf3 ♘gf6 17.c4 0-0-0 18.♔c2 e5= Cunha – Reichelt, ICCF 2016.

8.♙e2. This move does not seem to be very ambitious. White wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to castle. Still, after an exchange on g6, Black's rook on h8 might take part in an attack against the enemy king. 8...♘f6 9.0-0 ♚c7 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.c4 (11.♙f3 ♘bd7 12.c4 0-0-0 – see 11.c4) 11...♘bd7 12.♙e3 (There arise interesting complications after 12.♙f3 0-0-0!? 13.♚a4 ♘b6 14.♚xa7 ♘xc4∞ Valenta – Horvath, Heviz 2008. White can hardly organise an effective attack against the enemy king, while the vulnerability of his isolated d4-pawn might hurt him later.) 12...♙f4!?= Browne – Saidy, Chicago 1974. Black wishes to deprive his opponent of the two-bishop advantage and will think about where to evacuate his king only later.

8.♘xg6. This move is too straightforward. White obtains immediately the two-bishop advantage, but now Black does not need to worry about the threat h4-h5. 8...hxg6 9.♘e4 ♘f6. He is reluctant to lose a tempo for the retreat of his bishop.



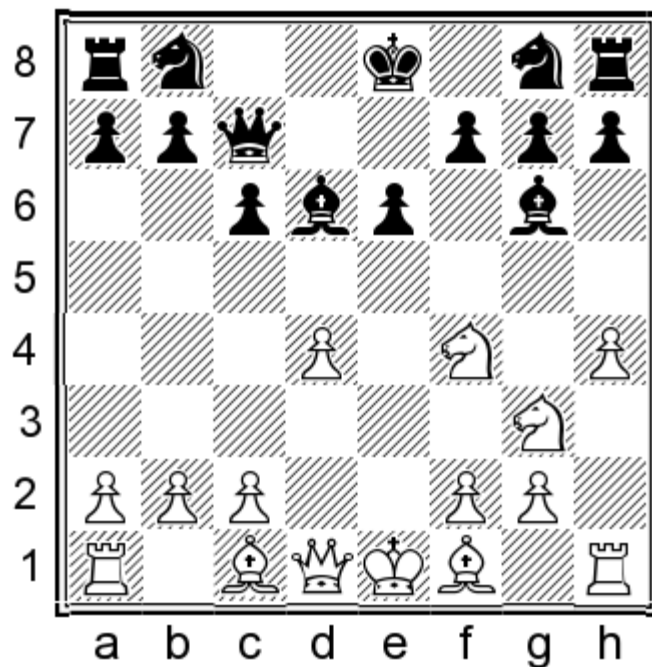
10.♔d3 ♖xe4 11.♕xe4, Pillsbury – Von Popiel, Munich 1900, 11...f5!? 12.♔d3 ♖d7 13.♚e2 ♜f6=, followed by 0-0-0 and e6-e5.

After 10.♖g5, Godena – Rombaldoni, Senigallia 2009, it seems good for Black to continue with 10...♚b6!?, impeding the development of the enemy bishop on c1.

10.♖xf6+ gxf6 11.c3 ♖d7 12.g3, Lalic – Houska, Hastings 2007, 12...f5!?! Later, Black plans to use his f-pawn in order to break his opponent's position (f5-f4), or to prepare the pawn-advance g6-g5-g4, fixing the enemy weakness on h2.

10.♖xd6+ ♚xd6 11.h3 ♖bd7. White has lost too much time on manoeuvres with his knights and lags in development, so now, he is incapable of preventing the pawn-break e6-e5. 12.c3 (12.♕e2 e5= Collutiis – Epishin, Positano 2009) 12...e5!? 13.dxe5, Leroy – Rausis, Evry 2002, 13...♚xe5+ 14.♚e2 ♖e4 15.♕e3 0-0-0

8.h4. This move seems premature 8...♚c7.



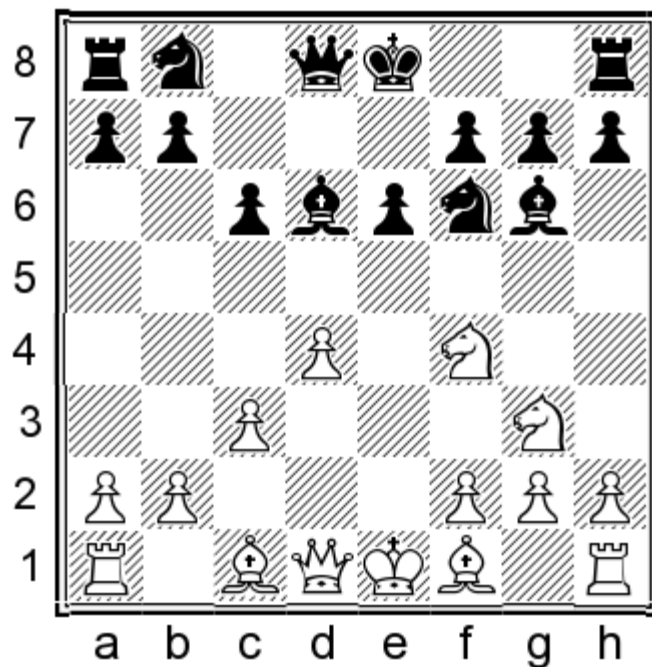
Now, it does not work for White to play 9.h5?!, because of 9...♙xc2 10.♚g4?! Grawe – Christensen, corr. 1963, 10...♗d7!? 11.♚xg7 0-0-0 12.♚xh8 ♗gf6 13.♚g7 ♚a5+ 14.♙d2 ♙b4+

9.♚f3. After this pawn-sacrifice, White cannot even equalise. 9...♙xc2 10.♗gh5 ♙f8!? 11.♙d2, Duchrow – Piotraschke, Germany 2010, 11...g6!??

9.♗ge2, Rozentalis – Bergez, Drancy 2016, 9...♗e7!?=

9.♗xg6. If White intended to exchange on g6, he did not need to play h2-h4. 9...hxg6 10.♗e4 ♗f6 11.♗xd6+ (11.♚f3 ♗xe4 12.♚xe4 ♗d7 13.♙d2 ♗f6 14.♚f3, Nataf – Riazantsev, France 2007, 14...0-0-0!?) 11...♚xd6 12.c3 (White fails to develop his bishop on g2: 12.g3 ♚d5=) 12...♗bd7 13.♙g5 e5 14.♚e2 0-0 15.0-0-0 ♗fe8 16.dxe5 ♚xe5 17.♚xe5 ♗xe5= Antoniewski – Lupulescu, Germany 2013.

8...♗f6



9.h4

This move is at least principled.

About 9.♙c4 ♚c7 – see Chapter 15.

White's alternatives lead to calmer positions.

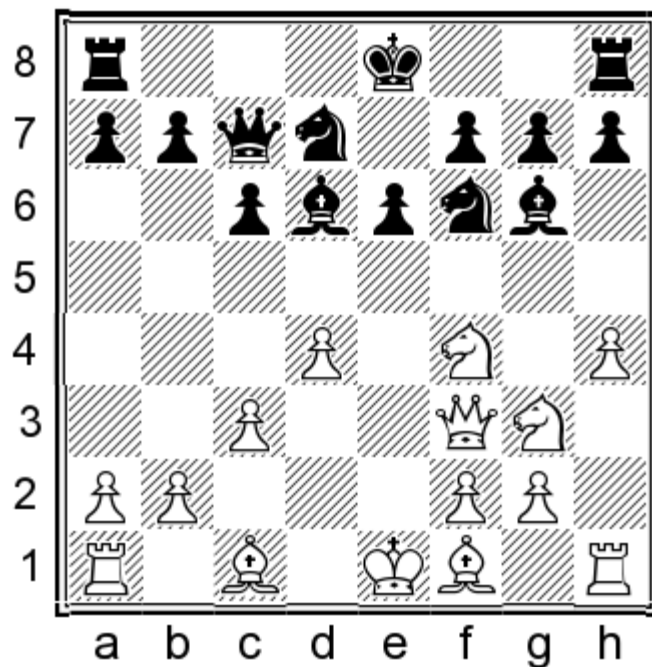
9.♙e2 ♚c7 10.♘fh5 ♘h5 11.♘xh5, Borisek – Lenic, Murska Sobota 2008, 11...0-0!?!=

9.♚f3 ♘bd7 10.♘xg6 (10.h4 ♚c7 – see 9.h4; 10.♙c4 ♚c7 – see Chapter 15) 10...hxg6 11.♙d3, Tiviakov – Houska, Guernsey 2013, 11...e5!?! This pawn-break in the centre equalises immediately. 12.♙e3 exd4 13.♙xd4 ♚e7+ 14.♚e2 ♙e5 15.♙xe5 ♚xe5 16.0-0 ♚xe2=

9...♚c7 10.♚f3

10.h5. White would not achieve much with this pawn-sacrifice. 10...♙xf4 11.♙xf4 ♚xf4 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.♙c4 (13.♚d2 ♚xd2+ 14.♙xd2 ♘bd7= Boleslavsky – Petrosian, Zuerich 1953. The vulnerability of Black's pawn-structure will preclude him from realising his material advantage.) 13...♘bd7. Black does not hold on to his extra material and wishes to complete his development as quickly as possible and to evacuate his king away from the centre. 14.♙xe6 0-0-0 15.0-0 ♙b8 16.♙e1 ♙he8 17.♚c2 ♚d6 18.♙h3 ♚d5 19.♘f1. This is another pawn-sacrifice, but Black's position is so solid that White is unlikely to manage to break it. 19...♙xe1 20.♙xe1 ♚xa2 21.♙e7 ♚g8 22.♚e2 ♚f8. Black gradually ousts the enemy rook from the penultimate rank. 23.♘d2 ♘b6 24.g3 ♙e8 25.♙e5 ♙c7 26.b4 ♘bd7= Tsang – Gonzalez Rabago, ICCF 2016.

10...♘bd7



11.h5

About 11.♔c4 c5 – see Chapter 15.

11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♕g5, Tseshkovsky – Groszpeter, Minsk 1982, 12...c5!∞

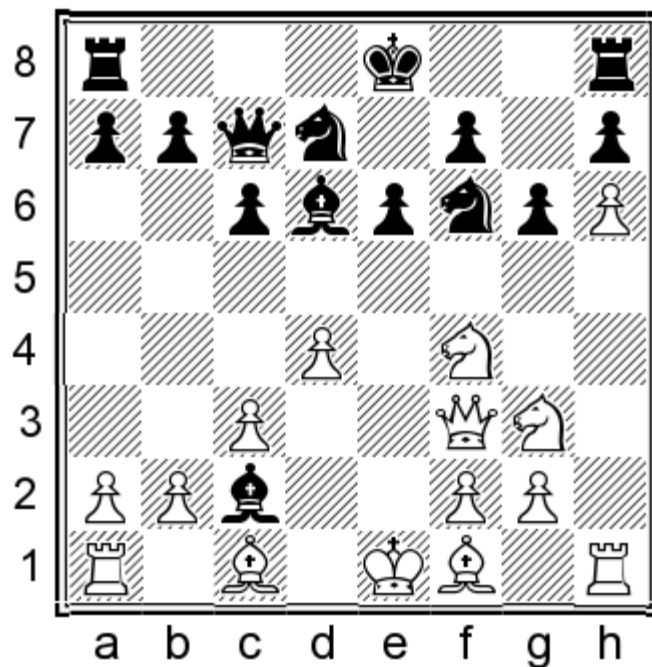
11...♕c2

White has realised his plan, but it turns out that Black's bishop is completely safe inside the enemy camp!

12.h6

Following 12.♕d3 ♕xd3 13.♘xd3, Black can prevent the pawn-advance h5-h6: 13...h6 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♙xe4 0-0-0= Erturan – Solak, Plovdiv 2010.

12...g6



13. ♖d3

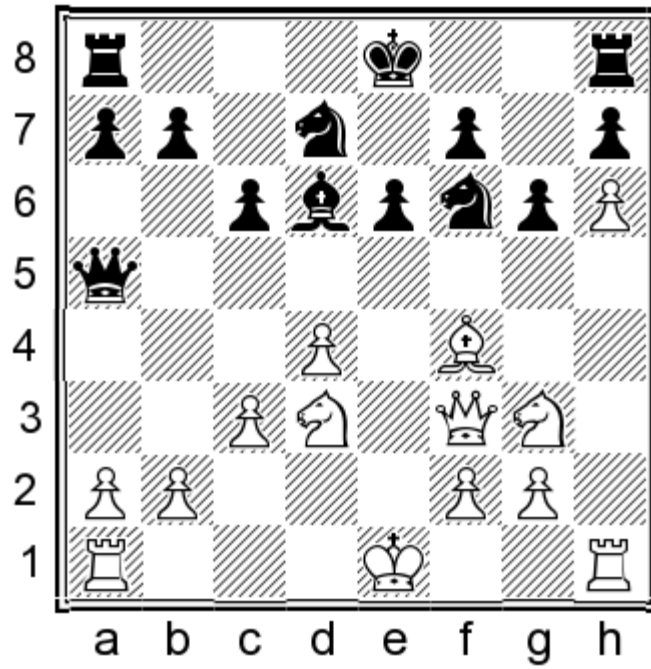
The move 13. ♖d3 seems too slow. 13...0-0 14. ♕g5 ♘d5 15. ♖e2 (15.c4 ♕xd3!? 16. ♕xd3 ♘f4) 15... ♕xd3 16. ♖xd3. Black leads in development, so he should strive to open the position. 16...e5 Womacka – Khenkin, Germany 1999.

13... ♕xd3 14. ♘xd3 ♖a5

Black prepares the transfer of his queen to the d5-square.

15. ♕f4

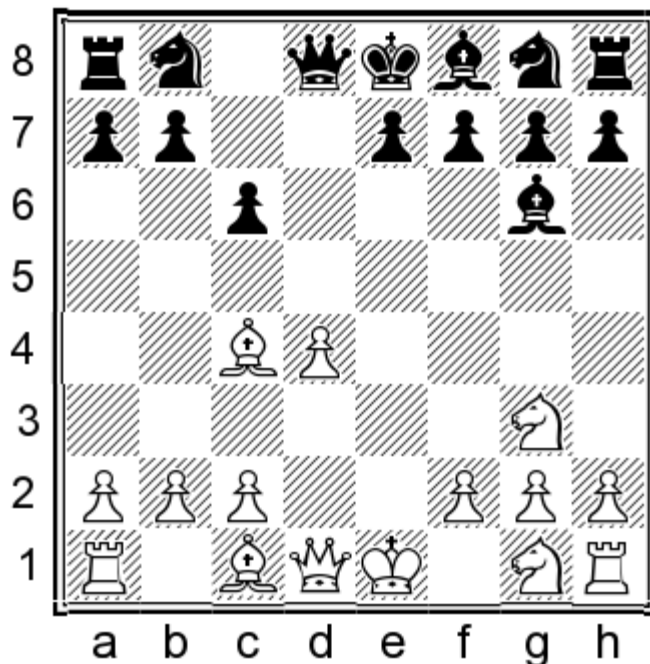
Following 15.0-0 ♖d5 16. ♖e2, David – Saada, Saint Quentin 2016, Black should take the f4-square under control. 16...g5!? 17. ♘e5. This move leads to simplifications, but White has nothing better. 17... ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖xe5 ♕xe5 20. ♕xg5 ♖g8 21.f4 ♕c7 22. ♕xf6 ♖xg3=



15...♔xf4 16.♖xf4 ♜g8 17.a4 (17.a3 g5 18.♗e3, Landa – Ankit, Vlissingen 2015, 18...♘d5 19.♗d2 0-0-0=) 17...g5 18.♗d6 0-0-0 19.b4 ♖d5 20.♗xd5 cxd5= Garcia Ramirez – Polezhaev, ICCF 2010. The vulnerability of White's c3-pawn might become a telling factor later in this endgame.

Chapter 15

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♖g6 6.♖c4



White develops his bishop to an active position before playing ♗1e2.

6...e6 7.♗1e2

This move is played with the idea to increase the pressure against the e6-square after ♗f4.

About 7.♗h3 ♕d6, or 7.♗f3 ♗d7 – see Chapter 13.

7.h4 h6 – see Chapter 16, variation **B**.

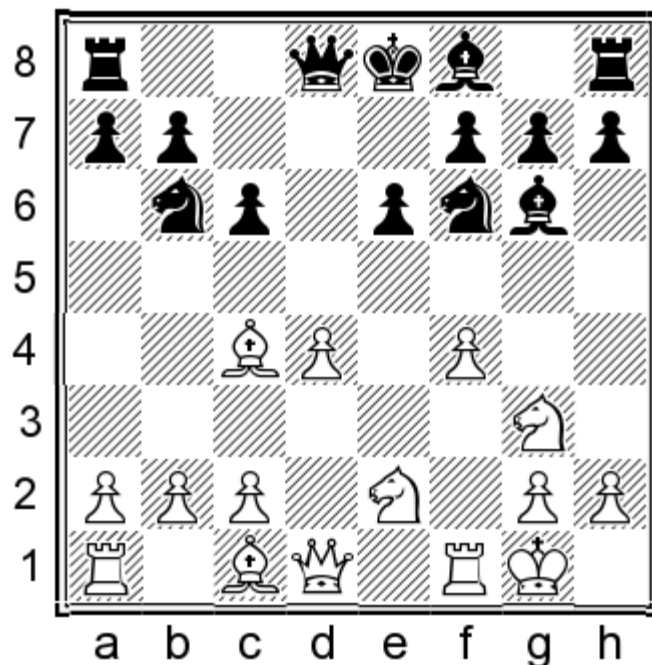
7...♗f6 8.♗f4

8.♖b3 ♕d6 9.♗f4 ♖c7 – see 8.♗f4.

8.c3 ♕d6 9.♗f4 (9.h4 h6 10.♗f4 ♕h7 – see Chapter 16, variation **B**) 9...♖c7 – see 8.♗f4.

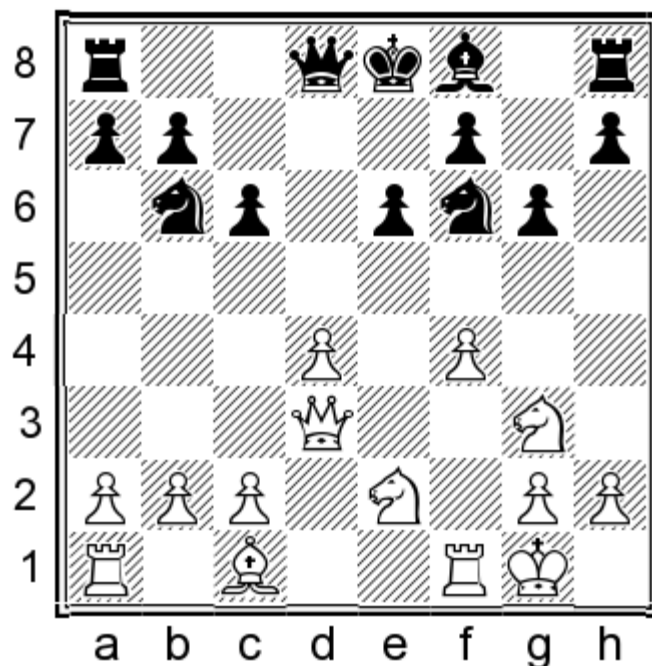
8.h4 h6 – see Chapter 16, variation **B**.

White often tries in practice the plan connected with the preparation of the pawn-advance f2- f4-f5. 8.0-0 ♗bd7 9.f4 (9.♖b3 ♕d6 10.♗f4 ♖c7 11.♖f3 0-0-0 – see 8.♗f4; 9.♗f4 ♗d5 10.♖e1 ♗xf4 11.♖xf4 ♕e7 12.c3 0-0= Liascovich – Sorin, Buenos Aires 2014) 9...♗b6. Black's knight frees a square for his queen with tempo.



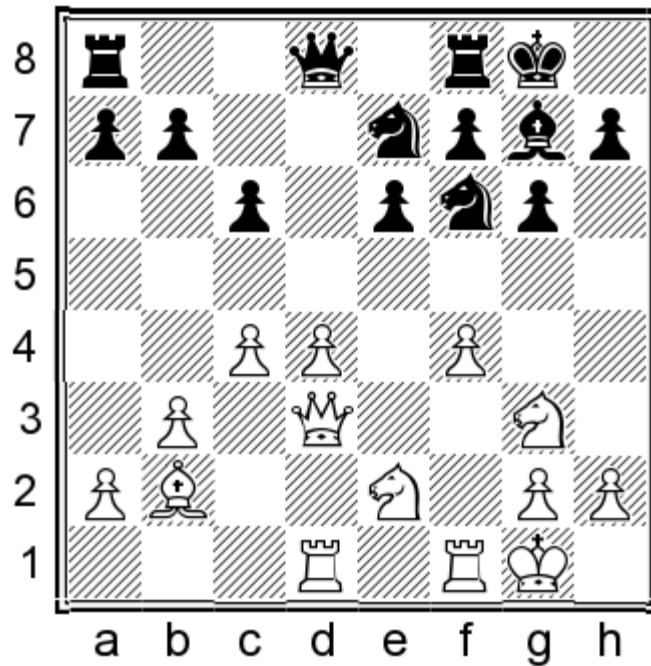
The essence of Black's defensive idea can be best seen after 10.♔b3 ♚d7. Now, the pawn-break f4-f5 has become impossible, so White's pawn on f4 will only restrict his own minor pieces – the knight on e2 and the bishop on c1. 11.c3, Otikova – Dreev, Warsaw 2013, 11...♘bd5!?

10.♔d3 ♔xd3 11.♚xd3 g6. This move is forced; otherwise, White will follow with f4-f5. Black's move is very good, though...



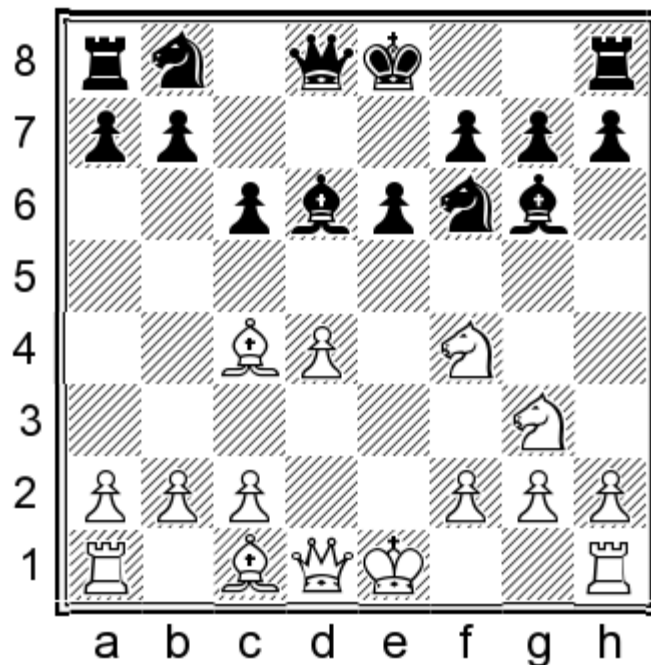
12.f5!? White is preparing an interesting piece-sacrifice. 12...gxf5 13.♘xf5 (13.♔f4 ♚g8∞). Now, Black can hold approximate equality with a precise play. 13...exf5 14.♚xf5 (14.♘g3 ♚g8∞) 14...♔e7 15.♔g5 ♘bd5 16.♘c3 ♚g8 17.♚ae1 ♚g6∞ Huerga Leache – Gomez Esteban, Elgoibar 2007.

12.b3 ♘bd5 13.c4 ♘e7!? Black lags a bit in development, but his prospects are better, because of the horribly misplaced enemy pawn on f4. He only needs to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to evacuate his king away from the centre. 14.♔b2 (14.♔a3 ♔g7!?)



16.♘c3 (White's alternatives would not change the character of the fight. He will fail to advance f4-f5 anyway. For example: 16.♕h1 h5!?; or 16.♘e4 ♘xe4 17.♚xe4, Westerinen – Rasmussen, Malaga 2003, 17...h5!?; 16...♚a5 17.♚d2 (17.a3 ♖ad8; Garcia Fernandez – Magem Badals, Pamplona 2003). Here, Black can comply with the doubling of his pawn for the sake of increasing his control over the e4-square: 17...♘f5 18.♘xf5 exf5; Daroczy – Evans, ICCF 2012.

8...♗d6



9.♗b3

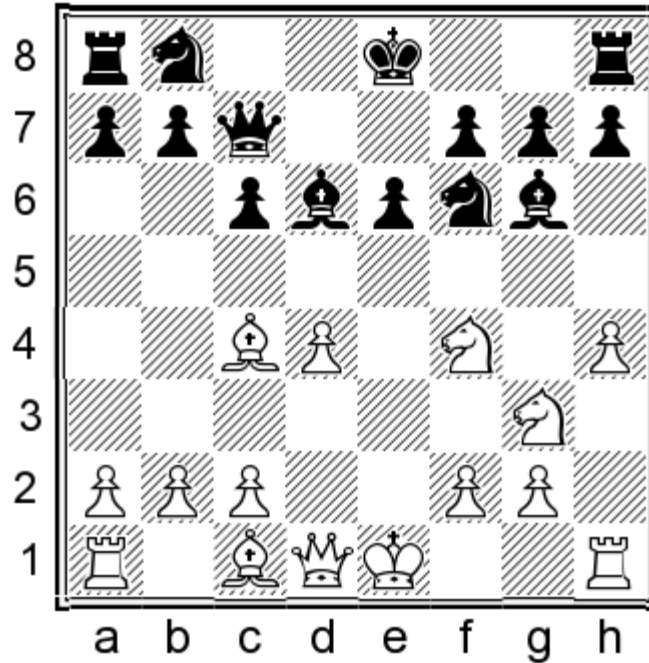
Now, White's queen will manage to go to f3, since it would not need to protect the c2-pawn.

9. ♖xg6 hxg6 10. ♕g5 (10.0-0 ♖c7 – see 9.0-0) 10... ♖bd7 11.0-0 ♖a5 12.f4?! This move only weakens White's position, because he will not manage to advance f4-f5 anyway. 12...0-0-0 Tal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1960.

9. ♕e3 ♖d5 10. ♖xg6 hxg6 11. ♖f3 ♖f6= Votava – Dautov, Germany 1996.

9. ♖e2. White sacrifices his central pawn and naturally Black accept it. 9... ♕xf4 10. ♕xf4 ♖xd4∞ Farkas – Pasztor, Hungary 2013.

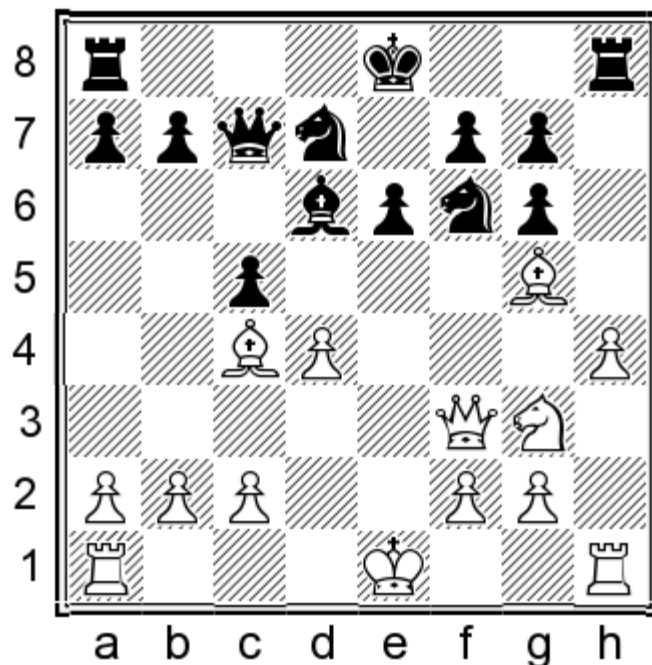
9.h4. This move is premature, because after 9... ♖c7, White will have problems with the protection of his knight on f4.



10. ♖ge2 ♕f5 11. ♕d3 ♕xd3 12. ♖xd3 ♖bd7+ Matikozian – Kudryavtsev, Los Angeles 2011. Black is perfectly ready for the pawn-break e6-e5.

10.h5. After this move there arises by force an inferior endgame for White. 10... ♕xc2 11. ♖xe6 fxe6 12. ♖xc2 ♕xg3 13. fxg3 ♖xg3+ 14. ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 15. ♕xf2 ♖d5+ Simon – Murden, ICCF 2010. White's two-bishop advantage does not compensate fully his sacrificed pawn.

10. ♖xg6. After this, White's previous move turns out to be senseless. 10...hxg6 11. ♖f3 ♖bd7 12. ♕g5 c5

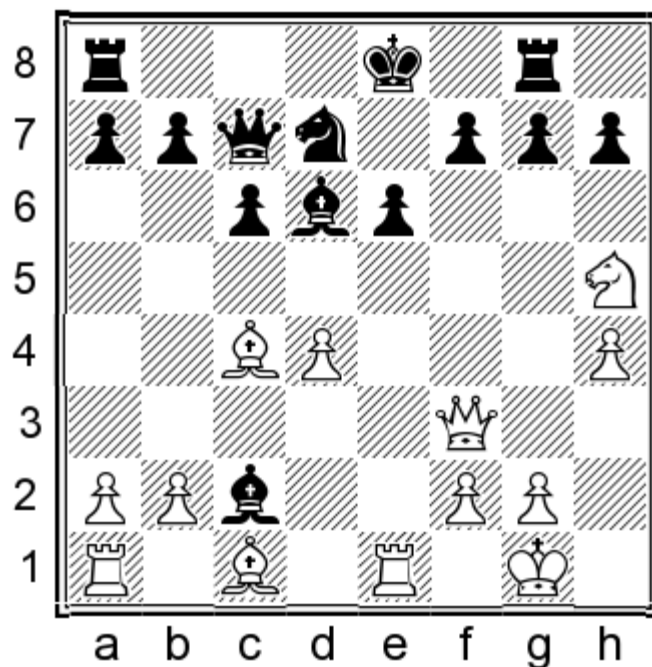


This opening of the position is in fact rather unpleasant for White. Now, the defencelessness of his bishop on c4 will be a telling factor in all the variations.

13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♗b3, Andriasian – Mchedlishvili, Warsaw 2010 (14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 ♠ Tiviakov – Dreev, Ubeda 1999) 14...a5!? ♠

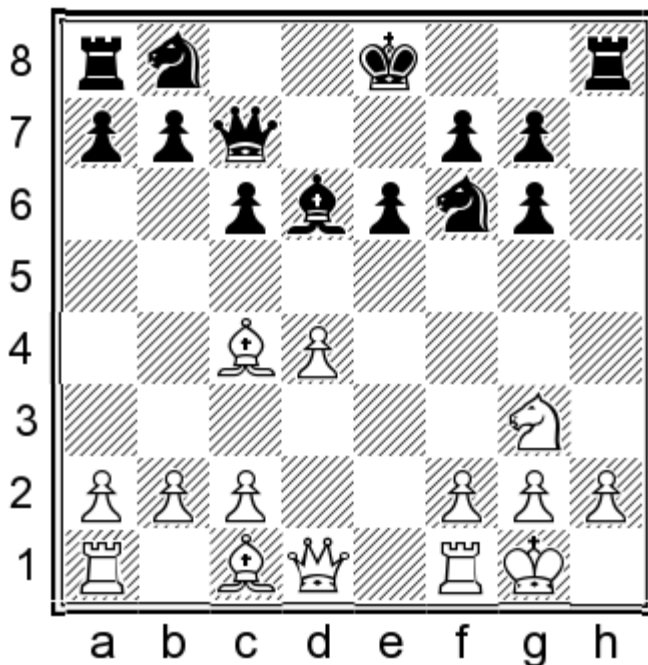
13.0-0-0 cxd4 14.♗b5. Now, White must lose a tempo for the retreat of his bishop (His position would be even worse in the line: 14.♗b3 ♘e5 15.♗a4+ ♔f8 ♠ Baramidze – Gyimesi, Austria 2009.). 14...♖c8 15.♗e2 a6 16.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 17.♗xd4 ♗e5 18.♗dd1, Ter Sahakyan – Prohaszka, Herceg Novi 2008, 18...♗c4!? ♠ In this middlegame, if Black castles kingside, he will need to consider the pawn-advance h4-h5. Therefore, the transfer into an endgame would be his most reliable decision.

10.♗f3. It is possible that pawn-sacrifice to be White's best chance in this position. At least, he would not be worse after it. 10...♗xc2 11.♘fh5 ♘xh5 12.♘xh5 ♗g8 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♗e1



14...0-0-0. Black does not hold on to his extra material and wishes to evacuate his king away from the centre. 15.♖xf7 ♕g6 16.♗f3, Kulaots – Ekstroem, Elista 1998, 16...♜gf8!? 17.♗e2 ♖b6 18.♙xe6+ ♔b8 19.♙g5 ♜de8 20.♗g4 ♙h2+ 21.♔h1 ♙d6 22.♔g1 ♙h2+ 23.♔h1 ♙d6= Here, neither side has any serious reasons to avoid the repetition of moves.

9.0-0 This is a quiet move. White refrains from the plans, connected with the pawn-advance h2-h4-h5. 9...♗c7 10.♖xg6 (10.♗f3 ♖bd7!? 11.c3 c5 – see 9.c3; 11.♙b3 0-0-0 – see 9.♙b3; 11.♙xe6 fxe6 12.♖xe6 ♗a5 13.♖xg7+ ♔f7∞ Westerinen – Larsen, Helsinki 1969) 10...hxg6

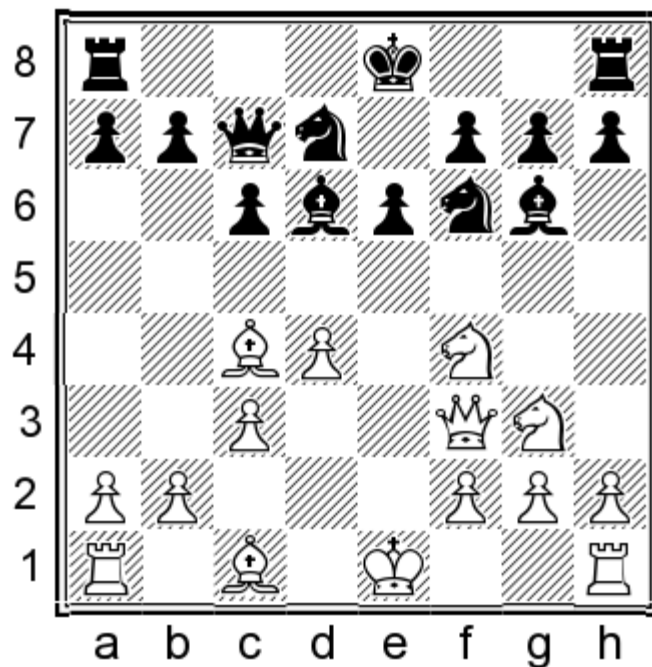


11.♗e2 ♖bd7 12.c3 0-0-0∞ Efimov – Rasmussen, Saint Vincent 2000.

After 11.a4 ♖bd7 12.c3, it seems very good for Black to choose 12...♙f4!?, depriving his opponent of his two-bishop advantage, Movsesian – Leko, Las Vegas 1999.

11.♗f3 ♖bd7. Black is not in a hurry to determine the placement of his king. 12.c3 (Following 12.♞e1, Black can prepare the trade of the dark-squared bishops with 12...♞h4!? 13.c3 ♙f4 14.h3 0-0-0= Fogarasi – Stohl, Hungary 2003.) 12...c5!? Black begins active actions on the queenside. The position will be opened, but White can hardly exploit effectively the power of his bishops. 13.♙b3 0-0 14.dxc5 (14.♙g5 a5= Tiviakov – Turov, Wijk aan Zee 2013) 14...♖xc5 15.♙c2 ♜ab8 16.a4. White prevents b7-b5, but Black can play like this anyway. 16...b5 17.axb5 ♜xb5. The slight vulnerability of Black's pawn on a7 is compensated by his pressure against the b2-square. 18.♞d1 ♜fb8 19.♖f1 a5 20.h3 ♖b3 21.♙xb3 ♜xb3= Schneider – Pleijsier, ICCF 2016.

9.c3. This move is in principle with the same idea as 9.♙b3, except that White does not protect his c2-pawn, but simply removes it from the attack of the enemy bishop. 9...♗c7 10.♗f3 ♖bd7



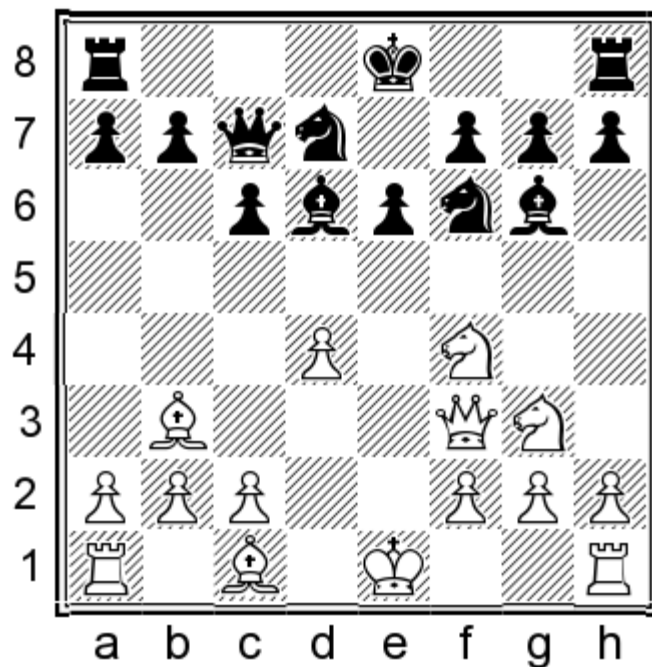
About 11.♘b3 0-0-0 12.0-0 e5 – see 9.♘b3.

11.0-0 c5!? 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♘b3 0-0-0 14.♞xg6 hxg6. White can hardly parry Black's threats in this position. For example, after 15.♘f4 e5 16.♘e3 e4!±, Black has a considerable advantage, while after 17.♞e2?! Zherebukh – Nakamura, Saint Louis 2017, White even loses: 17...♞xh2! With this simple tactical strike Black destroys the shelter of the enemy king. 18.♞xh2 ♘xe3 19.fxe3 ♞h8+ 20.♞g1 ♞xg3—+

Black should not be afraid of 11.h4, because after 11...c5!?, he manages to transfer his light-squared bishop from the kingside to the queenside. 12.dxc5, Harikrishna – Navara, Huaian 2016, 12...♘xc5!? 13.h5 ♘c2 14.♞e2 ♘a4∞

11.♞xg6 hxg6 12.♘g5 (12.0-0 c5 – see 9.0-0; 12.♘d2 c5 13.♘b3, Eidelson – Charochkina, Vladimir 2007, 13...a5!?) 12...c5. This undermining move is standard for this variation. White has no chances of obtaining an edge, due to the defencelessness of his bishop on c4. 13.♘b5 0-0 14.♘xd7 ♞xd7 15.dxc5 ♞xc5 16.0-0 ♘e7= Psakhis – Korchnoi, Moscow 2001.

9...♞c7 10.♞f3 ♞bd7



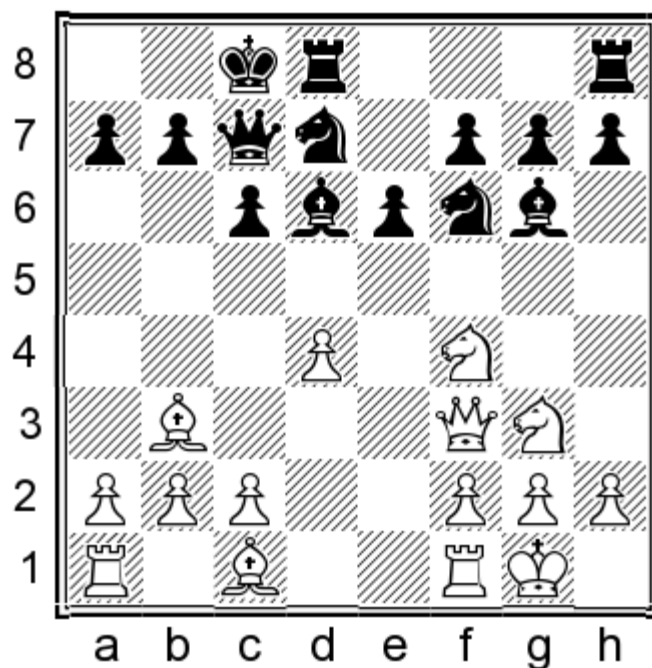
11.0-0

11.♔e3, Kupreichik – Chandler, Hastings 1981, 11...a5!?⚡

After 11.h4, Black can achieve at least equality with a pawn-break in the centre. 11...e5 12.♖xg6 hxg6 13.♔g5 exd4 14.0-0-0, Fedorchuk – Postny, Sibenik 2016, 14...♗e5!?! 15.♙e2 0-0-0=

11...0-0-0

Black's king will be quite safe on the queenside. He is ready to push e6-e5.

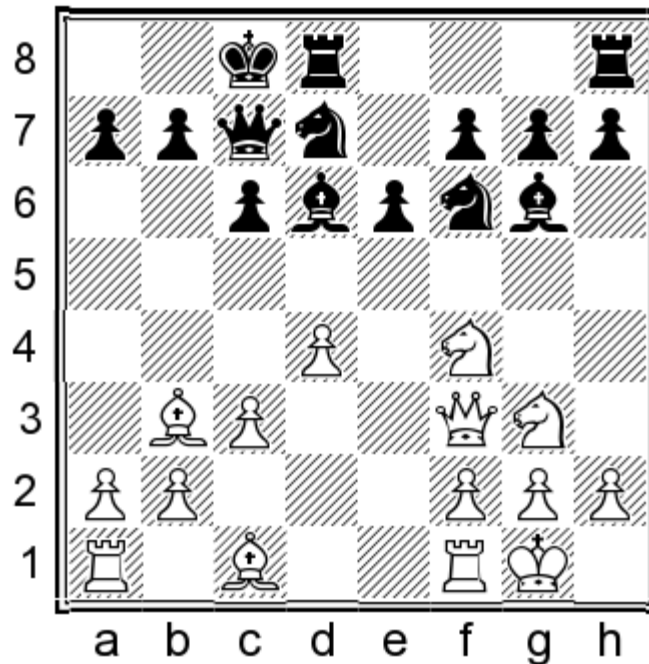


12.c3

12.♞e1 e5 13.♜xg6 fxg6 14.c3 ♖b8. It is useful to remove the king away from the h3-c8 diagonal. 15.♙g5 h6 16.♙d2 ♜hf8. Black's pieces have been deployed quite harmoniously and his prospects are not worse, despite White's two-bishop advantage. 17.♞ad1 exd4 18.cxd4 g5 19.♞f1 ♞d5 20.♞d3 ♞7f6 ♞ Jirku – Korogodski, ICCF 2015. White has no compensation for the vulnerability of the d4-pawn.

Following 12.♙e3, Simagin – Zlotnik, Tallinn 1964, it seems very good for Black to undermine the enemy centre with his other pawn: 12...c5!? 13.dxc5 ♙xc5=

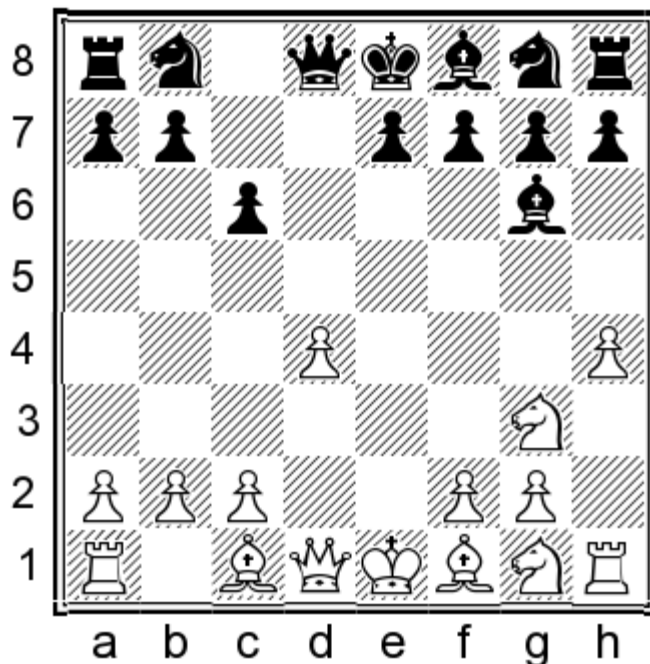
12.♜xg6. This move will activate the rook on h8 if Black castles queenside. 12...hxg6 13.h3 (After 13.c3, the simplest road to equality for Black would be 13...♞h4. White must either comply with the trade of the dark-squared bishops after ♙f4, or repeat the position. 14.♙g5 ♞g4 15.♙e3, Gomez Baillo – Slipak, Buenos Aires 1998, 15...♞h4!?=) 13...♞h4 14.c3 (Following 14.♙g5?! ♙xg3 15.fxg3 ♞xd4 ♞, White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn would be insufficient, Lagno – Minasian, Moscow 2007.) 14...♙f4= Dietrich – Doderer, Remote 2012.



12...e5 13.♜xg6 fxg6 14.h3 exd4 15.cxd4, Gritsayeva – Schepetkova, Vladivostok 2014, 15...♞hf8!?!∞ White has a bishop-pair indeed, but his isolated d4-pawn is weak and his knight on g3 is rather passive.

Chapter 16

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4



This is White's most popular move in the Classical System. He advances his rook-pawn in order to seize space on the kingside. In this chapter however, we will analyse only the lines in which he refrains later from the most logical continuation of his plan – the pawn-advance h4-h5.

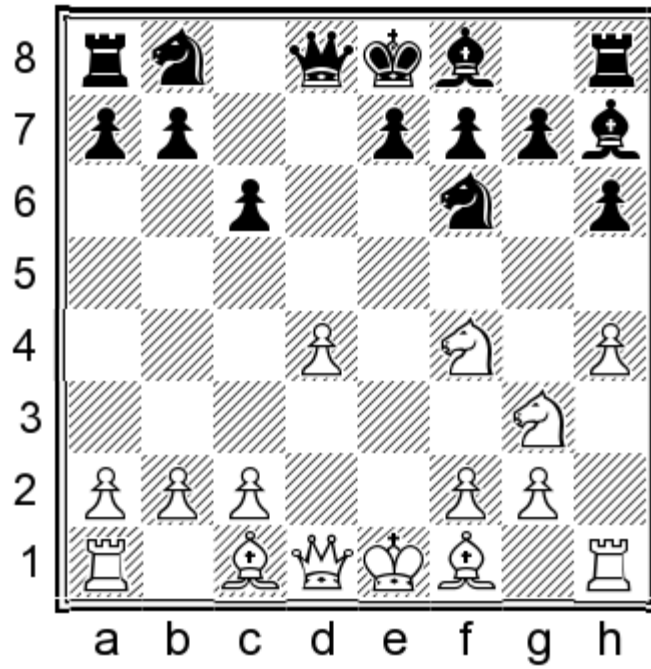
6...h6

We will deal now with: **A) 7.f4**, **B) 7.♕c4** and **C) 7.♗f3**.

About 7.♗1e2 ♗f6 8.♗f4 ♕h7 – see 7.♗h3.

After 7.♕d3, Black can capture his opponent's central pawn 7...♖xd4! and White must still prove that he has sufficient compensation for it. 8.♗f3 ♖g4 9.♕e3 ♗d7 10.♕xg6 ♖xg6∞ Gutierrez Dopino – Canizares Cuadra, ICCF 2011.

The move 7.♗h3, as a rule, leads by transposition to variation **B**. 7...♗f6 8.♗f4 (8.♕c4 e6 9.♗f4 ♕h7 – see 7.♕c4) 8...♕h7



9.♔c4 e6 – see variation **B**.

If White refrains from the most natural development of his bishop – to the c4-square, he would not achieve much. For example: 9.♔e3 e6 10.♔d3 (10.♔c4 ♖bd7 – see variation **B**) 10...♔xd3 11.♚xd3 ♚a5+ 12.♔d2 ♔b4 13.c3 ♔d6 14.b4, Efimenko – Navara, Wroclaw 2014, 14...♚a6!??

9.c3 e6 10.♔d3 (10.♔c4 ♔d6, or 10.♖fh5 ♖bd7 11.♔c4 ♖xh5 – see variation **B**) 10...♔xd3 11.♚xd3 (11.♖xd3 ♚a5=) 11...♖bd7 12.♔d2 (The position is simplified even more after 12.♖e4 ♖xe4 13.♚xe4 ♖f6= Ljubojevic – Karpov, Valetta 1980; 12.♖fh5. White’s attempt to exert pressure against the g7-pawn and thus to thwart the development of the enemy bishop on f8 can be parried by Black with 12...♚a5 13.♖xf6+ ♖xf6 14.♖e4 ♖xe4= Simonian – Burmakin, St Petersburg 2009.) 12...♚a5. This is a typical resource for Black in the Classical System. He exerts pressure against the a2-pawn in order to impede his opponent to castle queenside. 13.♚f3 0-0-0= Rasulov – Bulanov, Fermo 2009.

7.h5. Without the preliminary moves 7.♖f3 ♖d7, this move is considered to be a slight imprecision, because after 7...♔h7 8.♖f3, Black is not obliged to play 8...♖d7 (see Chapter 17) and can try to develop his knight to c6, preparing and advancing at first c6-c5. Plenty of theory has been amassed in this line, but Black cannot obtain more than equality anyway. Therefore, from the practical point of view, it would be simpler for him to enter the main lines of the Classical System, instead of studying variations, which White can avoid after his “correct” order of moves.

The sacrifice of the central pawn – 8.♔d3?! (after 7.h5 ♔h7) does not seem convincing: 8...♚xd4 9.♖f3 ♚d8 10.♔xh7 ♚xd1+ 11.♔xd1 ♚xh7= Mueller – Keim, Mainz 1987.

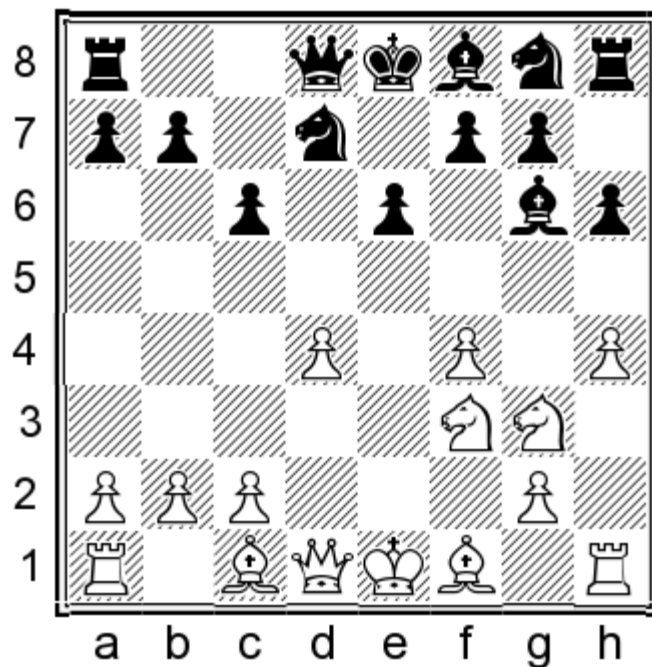
A) 7.f4

White increases his control over the e5-square, but restricts his bishop on c1 and weakens the g4-square.

7...e6 8.♖f3

8.h5 ♔h7 9.♖f3 ♖d7 – see 8.♖f3.

8...♖d7



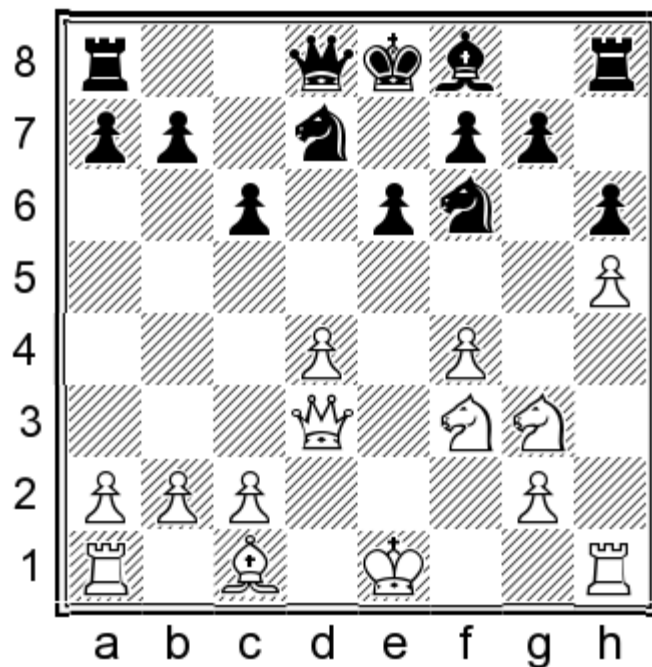
9.h5

Now, before exchanging the bishops, it would be useful for White to fix the enemy pawns on the kingside on dark squares. This might be advantageous in an endgame.

Following 9.♘c4 ♘d6 10.♞e5, Black should better refrain from developing his knight on f6 and play instead 10...♞e7, increasing his control over the d5 and the f5-squares, Czegledi – Csiszar, Hungary 1998.

9.♘d3 ♘xd3 10.♝xd3 ♞gf6 11.♘d2 ♞c7. Black prepares castling queenside, since his monarch would be much safer there than on the kingside. 12.♞e5 (12.0-0-0 c5= This is a standard undermining move against White's centre in the Classical System.) 12...c5. Black has solved completely his problems in the opening and it would be White who must think about equality. For example after: 13.0-0-0 cxd4 14.♝xd4 ♘c5 15.♝c4, Mortensen – Danielsen, Valby 1994, 15...♞xe5!? 16.fxe5 ♝xe5, Black has already an edge.

9...♘h7 10.♘d3 ♘xd3 11.♝xd3 ♞gf6



12. ♖d2

It is less precise for White to play here 12. ♖e3, because after 12... ♗a5+!? 13. ♖d2 ♖b4 14. c3 ♖d6∞, he will have problems to castle queenside, Piskun – Paichadze, Pardubice 2008.

After 12. ♗e5, Black has the good response 12... ♗b6!∞, impeding the development of the enemy bishop on c1 by exerting pressure against the b2-pawn.

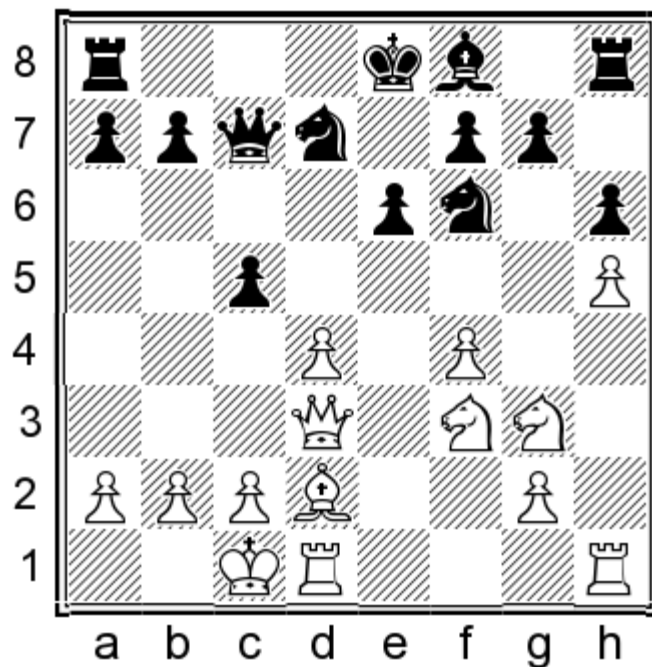
12... ♗c7 13.0-0-0

13. ♗e5 c5 14.0-0-0 cxd4 – see 13.0-0-0.

The postponement of White's castling would not promise him anything: 13. ♗e2 c5 14.dxc5 (14.0-0-0 ♖e7 – see 13.0-0-0) 14... ♖xc5∞ Marjanovic – Douven, Amsterdam 1986.

13...c5

Black attacks immediately his opponent's centre without determining yet the placement of his king. Later, depending on circumstances, he can castle on either side of the board.



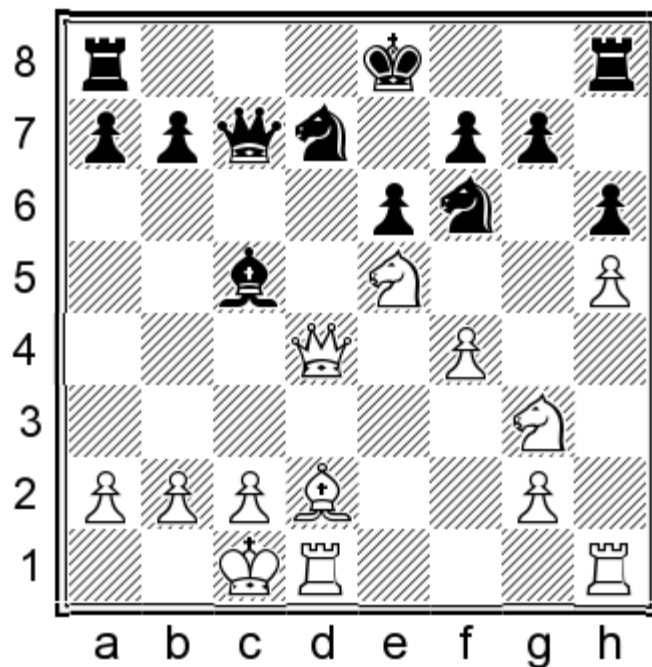
14. ♖e5

14. dxc5?! This move enables Black to develop quickly his kingside pieces. 14... ♗xc5 15. ♕e2 (15. ♘e4 0-0 16. ♖b1 ♜fd8 17. ♗c3 ♘d5 ♠ Ninov – Gouw, ICCF 2009) 15... 0-0 ♠ Mamedyarov – Topalov, Nice 2008. White's king is less reliably placed than its black counterpart.

14. ♘e4 0-0-0= Martin Del Campo – Volzhin, Merida 2000.

14. ♕e2 ♗e7. Now, Black must play carefully not to allow the appearance of White's knight on the f5-square. (14... ♗d6?! 15. ♘f5!± Sax – Douven, Wijk aan Zee 1989) 15. ♘e4 ♘xe4 16. ♕xe4 ♘f6 17. ♕e2, Demuth – Genser, Finkenstein 1999, 17... cxd4!?=

14... cxd4 15. ♕xd4 ♗c5



16. ♖c4

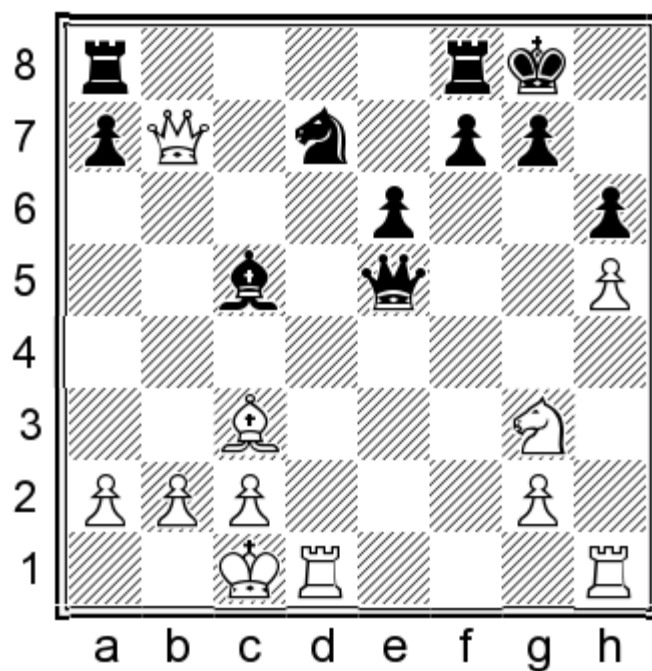
White must enter complications now in order to maintain the balance.

Or 16. ♖a4 0-0 17. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 18. ♗e4 ♗b6 19. ♖b3, B.Socko – Doroshenko, Szeged 1994, 19... ♗e7!?

16... ♗xe5 17. fxe5 ♖xe5 18. ♖b5+ ♗d7 19. ♖xb7 0-0 20. ♗c3

White must try to exchange pieces and to enter an endgame with the idea to exploit his pawn-majority on the queenside.

In the middlegame White's king might come under an attack: 20. ♖xd7?! ♗ab8 21. ♗c3 ♗e3+ 22. ♗b1 ♖xc3; 20. ♖f3? ♗ab8 21. c3 ♗a3! → Brynell – Mittelman, Berlin 1998, 22. bxa3 ♖b5.



20...♖xg3 21.♗xd7 ♜ad8 22.♗xd8 ♜xd8 23.♞f3 ♕e3+ 24.♔b1 ♞xf3 25.gxf3

The position is still sharp, despite the transfer into an endgame.

25...g5

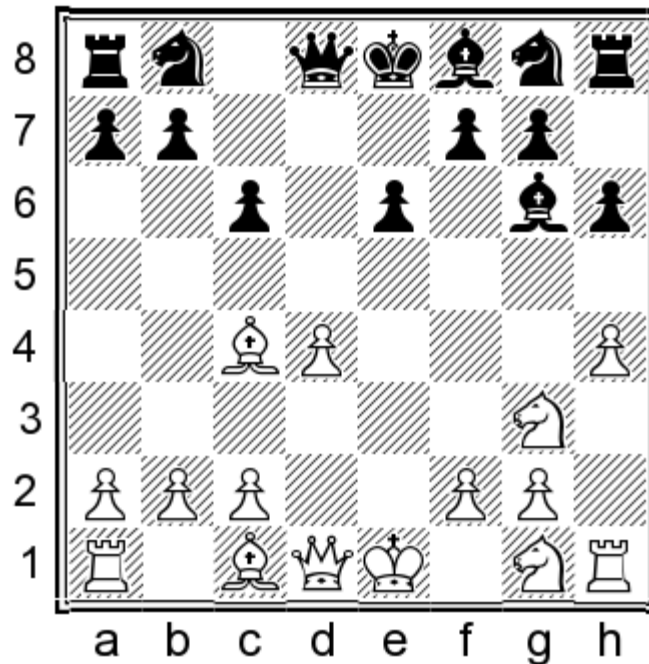
Black must advance his kingside pawns as quickly as possible.

26.hxg6 fxg6 27.b4

27.♗b4 ♔f7=

27...h5∞ Kuerten – Chukanov, ICCF 2010. The position is still within equality, objectively speaking, but in a practical game anything can happen, because in pawn-races on different sides of the board it would be easy to miscalculate...

B) 7.♗c4 e6



8.♘1e2

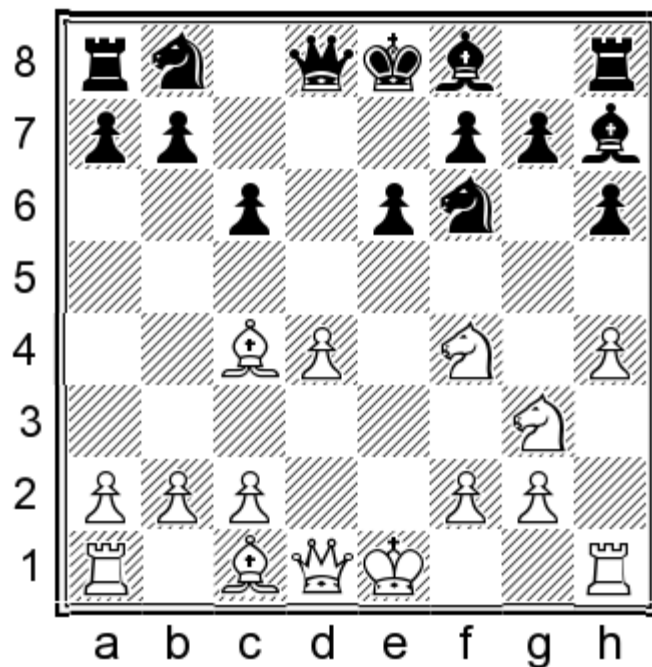
8.♘f3 ♘d7 – see variation C.

8.♘h3 ♘f6 9.♘f4 ♕h7 – see 8.♘1e2.

8...♘f6 9.♘f4

The main idea of the variation with 7.♗c4 is to create pressure against the e6-square. Now, Black must play tremendously precisely, because White might sacrifice his bishop on e6 at any moment.

9...♕h7



10.0-0

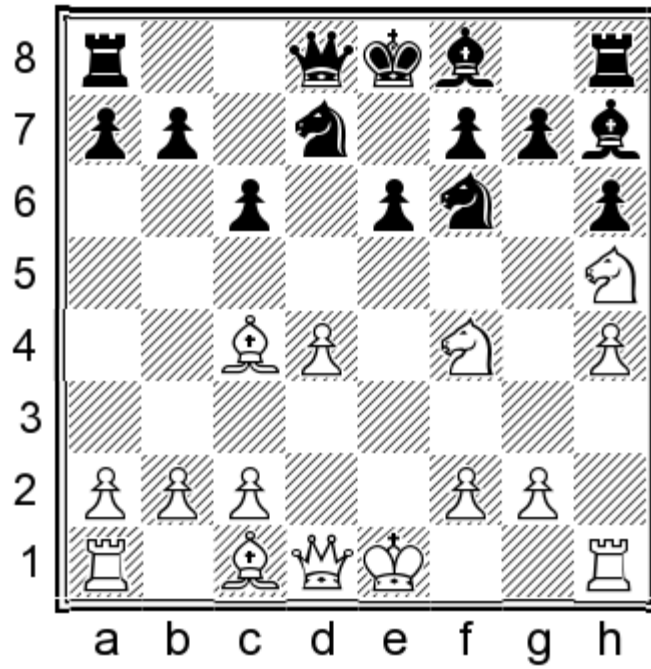
Here, the move 10.♙xe6? is obviously premature. 10...fxe6 11.♘xe6 ♖d7 12.0-0 ♗f7 13.♞e1 ♜a6 14.f4 ♞e8--+

The patient move 10.♙b3 cannot create problems for Black. 10...♙d6 11.♙e3 0-0∞ Pridorozhni – Petrisor, Aix les Bains 2011.

10.♙e3. White protects his d4-pawn and prepares ♖e2, but his bishop on e3 will impede his possibility to increase his pressure against the e6-pawn on the e-file. 10...♜bd7 11.♞e2 ♜b6 12.♙b3 a5 13.c4 ♙b4+. This is a very unpleasant check. Now, in order not to lose his d4-pawn, White will have to play 14.♙f1, losing his castling rights. 14...a4 15.♙c2 ♙xc2 16.♞xc2, Cubas – El Debs, Osasco 2012, 16...♜g4!??

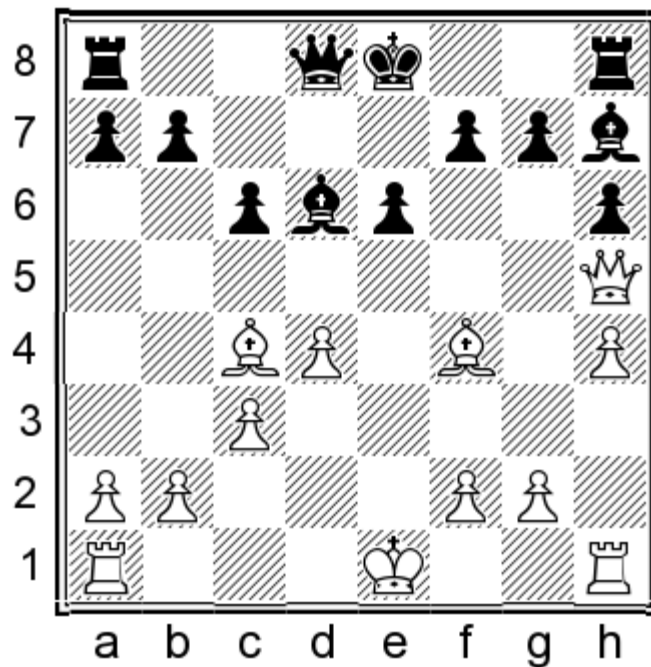
10.♜fh5 ♜bd7 11.c3 (11.♙f4 ♜d5? Cajbel – Krawczyk, Warsaw 2015) 11...♜xh5 12.♜xh5 ♜f6 – see 10.♜gh5.

10.♜gh5. This is a quiet plan. White forgets about the possible future sacrifices on e6 and wishes to impede his opponent's development by exerting pressure against the g7-pawn. 10...♜bd7



11.0-0. Now, the pawn on h4 is left without protection. Black can exploit this immediately. 11...Nc3 12.Qxh5. White is forced to play like this; otherwise, he would lose a pawn. 12...Nf6 Reinert – Berg, Copenhagen 1981. 13.Qe2?! The attempt to prepare a sacrifice on e6 leads to further worsening of White's position. 13...Qxd4!? and it would not work for him to play 14.Nxe6?, because after 14...fxe6 15.Qxe6+ Qd8 16.Qxh6 Qxc2+, Black parries easily his opponent's threats and remains with extra material.

11.c3 Nc3. Black wishes to exchange all the knights, in order to eliminate the unpleasant pressure against his g7-pawn (It is also good for him to play here 11...Qc7!?∞, preparing 0-0-0, Guthi – Khenkin, New York 2000.) 12.Nc3 Nf6 13.Qf4 Nc3 14.Qxh5 Qd6. White's attack is likely to ebb away with every exchange of a piece.



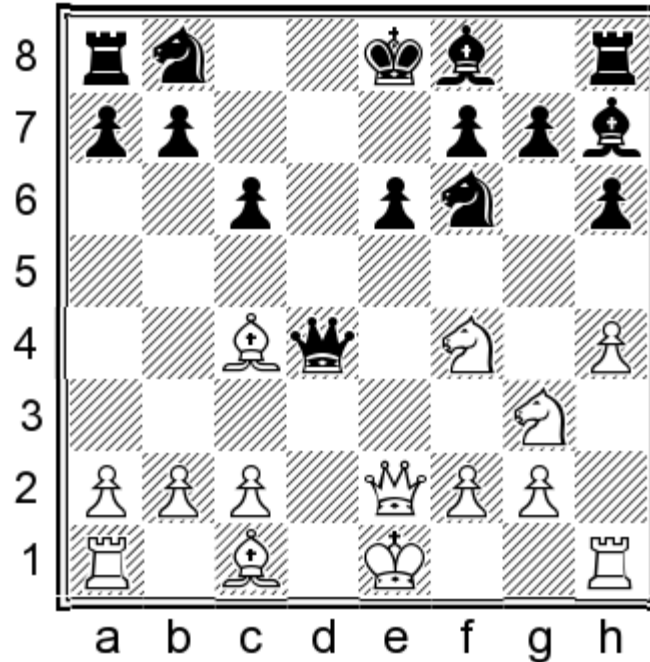
15.Qe3 Qf6= Zelic – Dreev, Neum 2000.

15.Qg4 Qxf4 16.Qxf4 0-0 17.0-0-0. White's king will not be safe on the queenside. 17...b5 18.Qd3 Qd5 19.Qb1 b4 Hermann – Schiefelbusch, Dortmund 2003.

Following 15.♔e5, Sax – Golubovic, Pula 1998, 15...0-0!?, White has nothing better in sight than 16.♕xd6 ♖xd6 17.♗e5 ♗xe5+ 18.dxe5 ♖fd8=

15.♕xd6 ♖xd6 16.0-0 0-0 17.♖fe1 b5. Black prepares an attack against the enemy c3-pawn with tempo. 18.♕f1 b4 19.♗a5, Korneev – Riazantsev, Evora 2007, 19...♖fb8!?=

It is amazing, but after 10.♗e2, Black has played very rarely in practice the strongest move – 10...♗xd4!?

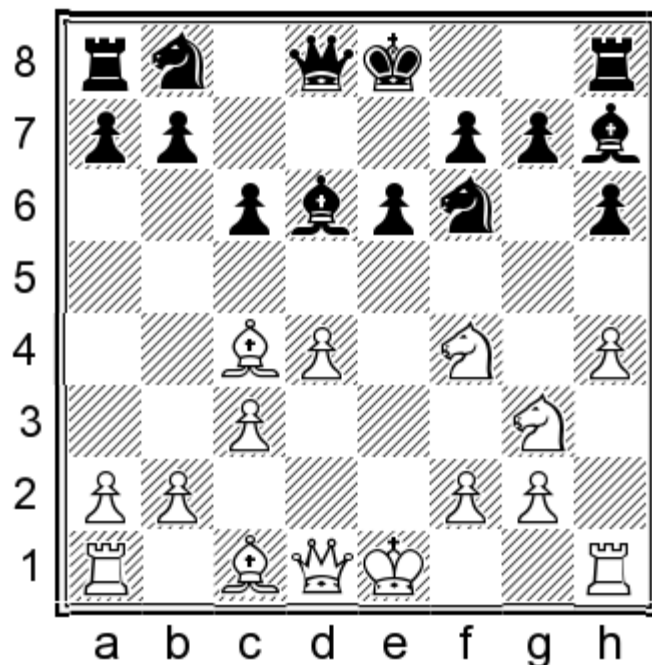


It is possible that Black usually overestimates the bishop-sacrifice 11.♕xe6 fxe6 12.♖xe6 ♗g4. This is the point. It turns out that all the moves of White's knight are not so dangerous for Black. 13.♖c7+, Niemann – Askin, San Francisco 2014, 13...♕f7!? 14.♖xa8. White has already an extra exchange and a pawn, but his knight is doomed on the a8-square. 14...♕d6 15.♕e3 ♖a6+

Following 11.0-0, Black will gradually complete the development of his pieces and will preserve his extra material. 11...♖bd7 12.♖d1 ♗e5 13.♕e3 ♕c5 14.♖d3 ♕xd3 15.♖xd3 ♗xb2 16.♖ad1 ♕xe3 17.♖xe3 0-0-0+ Roe – Mamrukov, FICGS 2011.

11.♕e3. The sacrifice of two more pawns only increases White's difficulties. 11...♗xb2 12.0-0 ♗xc2 13.♕d2 ♖bd7 14.♖xe6. Without this move he will simply remain three pawns down. Black parries easily however the piece-sacrifice. 14...fxe6 15.♗xe6+ ♖d8 16.♖fd1 ♕c5+ Sosa – Garcia Palermo, Buenos Aires 2017.

10.c3. Now, just like after 10.♕e3, White protects his d4-pawn, but does not cover the e-file. 10...♕d6



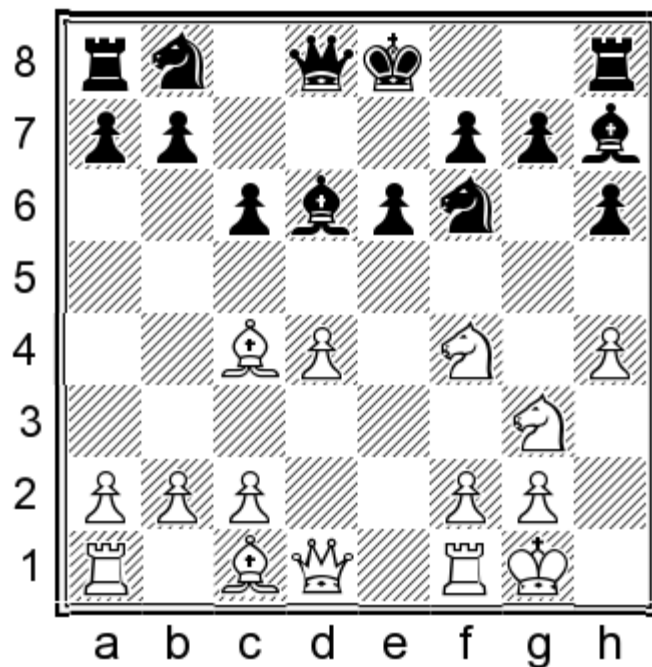
11.0-0 0-0 – see 10.0-0.

11. ♖e2 ♗bd7. Black is not afraid of the sacrifice on e6. 12. ♕xe6 fxe6 13. ♗xe6 ♖e7 14. ♗f5 ♕xf5 15. ♗xg7+ ♖f7 16. ♗xf5 ♖xe2+ 17. ♖xe2 ♕f8 18. h5, Mariotti – Grinza, Castelvechio Pascoli 1974. White can hardly advance his kingside pawns. 18... ♖e6!? 19. ♗e3 c5

11. ♗gh5. White frees the way forward of his g-pawn, but his attack, with a king in the centre and undeveloped queenside, seems obviously premature. 11...0-0 12. g4 (12. ♖e2 ♗bd7 13. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14. ♕d2 ♖c7 M. Zelcic – Rombaldoni, Bergamo 2009) 12... ♕xf4!? This is a concrete decision in the position. 13. ♕xf4 (Following 13. ♗xf4, Black can exploit the insufficient protection of the pawn on g4 and advance 13...e5) 13... ♗xh5 14. gxh5 ♗d7. He has a much better pawn-structure, while White's attack on the g-file can be parried easily by a transfer of the rook to the g8-square. 15. ♖g1 ♖h8 16. ♖g4 ♖g8 M. Mkrtychyan – Hovhannisyanyan, Yerevan 2015.

11. ♗fh5. White is preparing ♕g5 in reply to Black's castling. 11...0-0 12. ♕g5 (After the quiet line: 12. ♖f3 ♗bd7 13. ♕e3, Barczay – Stanka, Graz 1994, 13... ♗d5!?, Black's prospects are preferable thanks to his more harmoniously developed pieces.) 12... ♗bd7. He does not accept the bishop-sacrifice, because White's attack would be crushing on the opened h-file. 13. ♗xf6+ (After 13. ♖f3? however, Black can capture the bishop. 13...hxg5! 14. hxg5 ♗d5 15. ♖g4, Hofstetter – Plauth Herr, Germany 1990, 15... ♖e7!? 16. ♖h4 f6 17. ♗f4 g6+, He has succeeded in protecting his bishop on h7 just in time.) 13... ♗xf6 14. ♖f3 b5 15. ♕b3, Vaculik – Khenkin, Bad Wiessee 2001, 15...a5!?

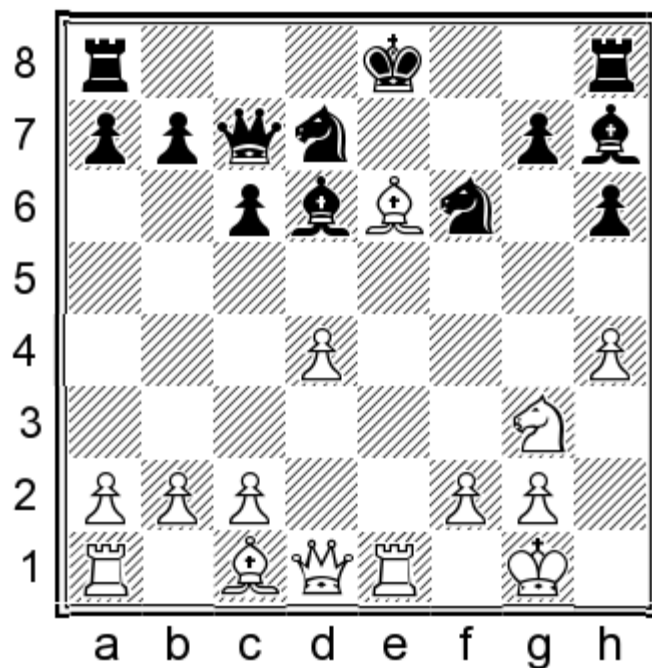
10... ♕d6



11. Re1

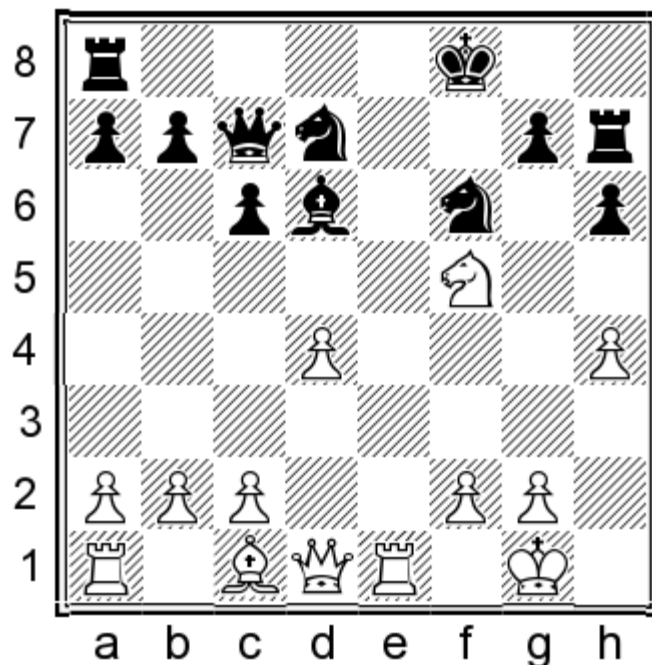
About 11.c3 0-0 12.Re1 Re8 – see 11.Re1.

11. Nxe6?! This not quite correct piece-sacrifice was tested in the famous game Tal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1960.
 11...fxe6 12. Qxe6 Nbd7 13. Re1 Qc7



Following 14. Nf5, Black's king manages to find a safe haven on the queenside. 14...0-0-0 15. Nxc7 Qb8 16. Qh3 Nc5 17. Nf5 Qh2+ 18. Qh1 Qxf5 19. Qxf5 Qf4+ Lalic – Schlemmer, Berlin 1998. Black's minor piece will be stronger than White's three pawns in the middlegame.

14. Qg8+ Qf8 15. Qxh7 Rxc7 16. Nf5. Black has numerous attractive possibilities in this position.



16...g6. This is his most reliable move. Black simplifies the position with a not obligatory pawn-sacrifice, but loses a part of his advantage. 17.♙xh6+ ♜g8 18.♞xd6 ♚xd6 Tal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1960.

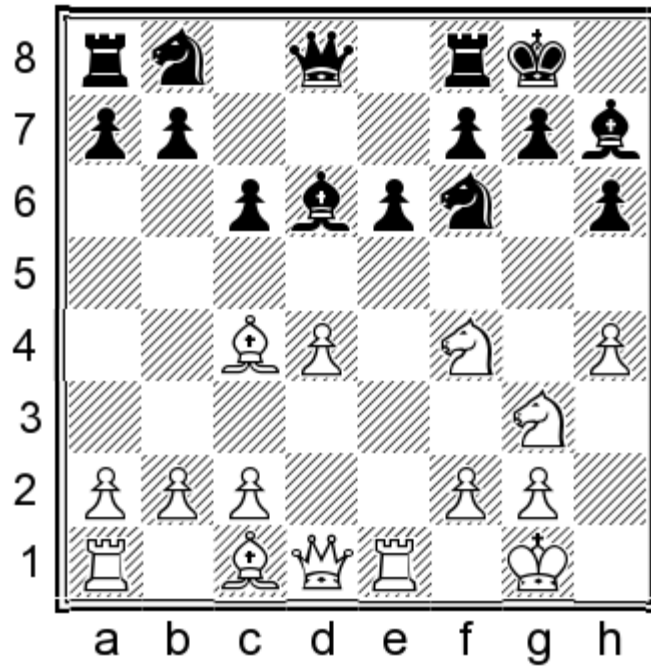
16...♜g8. This move is simple and strong. Black frees a square for the retreat of his bishop on d6. 17.♚e2 ♙f8 Langschmidt – Scheiba, Email 2013.

Black's most ambitious line is: 16...♙h2+ 17.♜h1. White's king will not be safe here if the h-file is opened, but the retreat to the f1-square has its minuses as well. 17...♙f4 18.♞e7 ♙d6 19.♞g6+ (Black's idea can be best seen in the variation 19.♞f5 g6 20.♙xh6+ ♜g8 21.♞xd6 ♚xh6+) 19...♜f7 20.♚d3 ♞f8 21.♞e5+ ♜g8. White's two pawns do not compensate the sacrificed material, while Black will gradually coordinate his forces. 22.f4 ♚e8 23.♙d2 ♙xe5 24.fxe5 ♞g4 25.♜g1 g6+ Axelsson – Eberg, ICCF 2015.

11.♞fh5 0-0 12.♚e1 ♞bd7

White would not achieve much with 11.♞gh5 0-0 12.♞xf6+ (12.♚e1 ♞xh5 – see 11.♚e1) 12...♚xf6. His knight and the h4-pawn are hanging, so he has to lose time for 13.g3 ♙f5 14.♙d3. After the trade of the light-squared bishops the position will be simplified even more. 14...♞d7 15.♙xf5 ♚xf5 16.♚d3 ♚xd3= Zelic – Epishin, Ohrid 2001.

11...0-0



12.c3

12.♘fh5 ♘xh5 – see 11.♘fh5.

After 12.♘gh5, Black's simplest response would be 12...♘xh5 13.♘xh5 ♔g6!?. After this move it becomes clear that White will remain a pawn down. 14.♘f4 (14.g3 ♚a5 15.♘f4 ♔xc2+ Litwak – Ducarmon, Belgium 2013) 14...♔xf4 15.♔xf4 ♚xh4 16.♔g3 ♚e7+ L.Hansen – Salzmann, ICCF 2014. White's bishops are powerful indeed, but are insufficient to compensate completely the missing pawn.

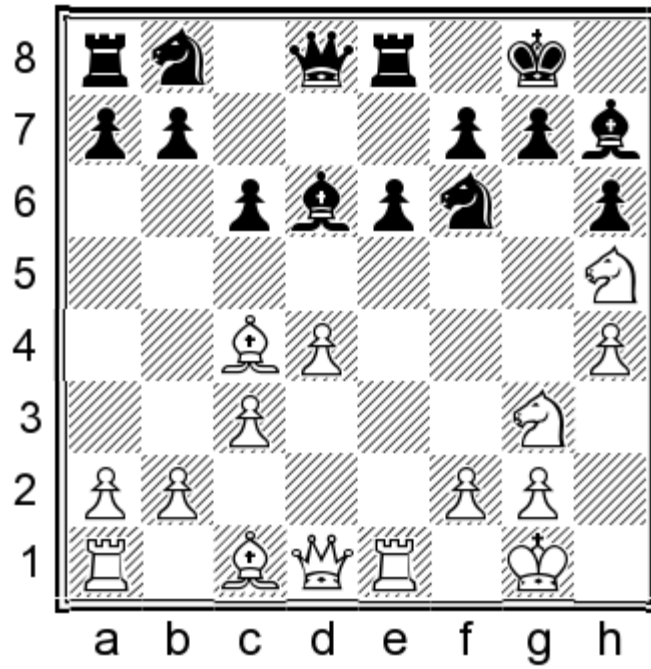
12...♚e8

Black provides additional protection of his pawn on e6.

13.♘fh5

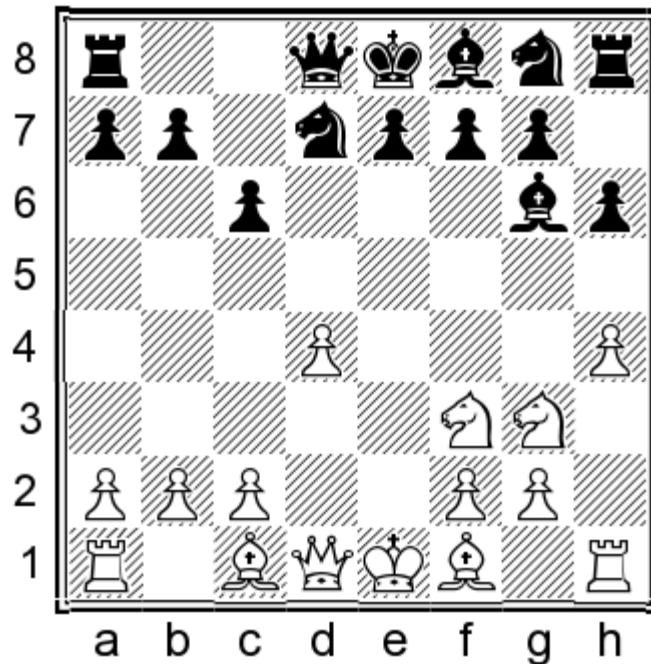
13.♘d3. White's plan, connected with the transfer of his knight to the e5-square seems rather slow. 13...♘bd7 14.♘e5 ♔c7 15.♔f4 ♘d5 16.♔xd5. This exchange is obligatory if he wishes to preserve his bishop on f4. 16...exd5 17.♚g4 ♘f6 18.♚f3 ♔e4 19.♚e2 ♚e6 20.♘xe4 dxe4 21.♔g3 ♚e7 22.♚ad1 ♚e8+ Szymanski – Brewer, ICCF 2013. Black's pieces are more actively deployed.

13.♚f3 ♘bd7 14.♔d3, Glidzhain – Yevseev, Minsk 2008, 14...a5=



13...♖bd7 14.♙f4 (14.♘xf6 ♘xf6 15.♚f3, Lagarde – Tsatsalashvili, Marseille 2016, 15...♘d5!?)= 14...♙xf4 15.♘xf4 ♚b6 16.♚b3 (The move 16.b4 weakens White's queenside. 16...a5) 16...♚xb3 17.axb3, Lukas – Balta, ICCF 2015, 17...a5!?)=, preventing b3-b4.

C) 7.♘f3 ♘d7



8.♙d3

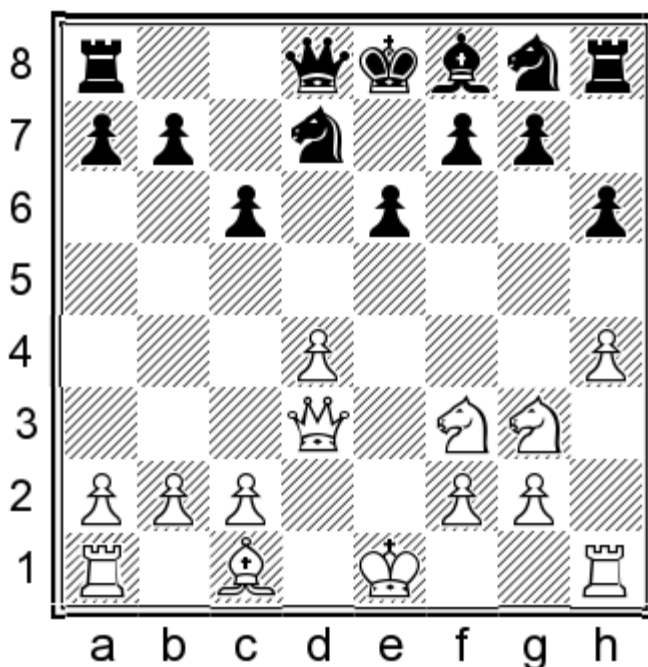
It would be difficult to understand this now, but for a long time (almost until the 60ies of the past century), this was considered to be White's main line. He refrained from the natural and logical move h4-h5, because he was afraid that the pawn on h5 might need permanent protection in the middle game. Gradually, Black found reliable methods of defence and the move 8.h5 became the usual choice for White in almost every game, instead of 8.♙d3.

About 8.h5 ♔h7 – see Chapters 17-18.

8.♟f4 e6 9.♟d3 (9.h5 ♔h7 10.♟d3 ♟xd3 11.♞xd3 ♞a5 – see Chapter 17) 9...♟xd3 10.♞xd3 ♞a5 – see 8.♟d3.

8.♟c4. The attempt to preserve the light-squared bishop would not bring anything to White. 8...e6 9.♞e2 ♘gf6 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘d5 12.h5 ♔h7. His game is a bit freer, but Black's knight is very powerful at the centre of the board and his bishop on h7 exerts rather unpleasant pressure against the enemy pawn on c2. 13.0-0 ♞c7 14.♞e1 ♟e7 15.c3 0-0 16.♞g4 ♘h8 Sippl – Luther, Bechhofen 2008.

8...♟xd3 9.♞xd3 e6



10.♟d2

10.0-0. Here, this move is more justified than in the variations with the inclusion of the moves h5 – ♔h7, since White would not need to protect additionally his h-pawn. Still, he cannot claim an advantage by playing in this way. 10...♘gf6 11.♟f4 (11.♞e1 ♟e7 12.c4 0-0 13.♟f4 ♞e8 – see 11.♟f4) 11...♟e7 12.c4 0-0 13.♞fe1 ♞e8. Here, before playing ♞b6, or ♞a5, Black must take care about the possible enemy knight-sortie ♘f5. 14.♞ab1 (14.♞ad1 ♞b6 15.♞c2 c5= Bar Ziv – Kratochvil, ICCF 2011.) 14...♞a5 15.a3, Gil – Jacot, ICCF 2010, 15...b5!?∞ After White has played a2-a3, this move is even stronger, because he cannot protect his c4-pawn with the move b2-b3.

10.♟f4. As a rule, this leads to transposition of moves. 10...♞a5+ 11.♟d2 (After 11.c3 ♘gf6, White would lose his a2-pawn if he castles queenside, so he would need to evacuate his king to the other side of the board. 12.0-0 ♟e7 13.♞fe1 ♞d8 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♞xe4 ♘f6 16.♞c2 0-0= Vaitzel – Dhanish, ICCF 2010.) 11...♞c7 (12.0-0 ♘gf6, or 12.♞e2 ♘gf6 13.0-0 ♟d6, or 12.♘e4 ♘gf6 13.0-0 0-0 – see 10.♟d2) 12.c4 ♘gf6 13.b4. White occupies space on the queenside, but now must watch carefully about Black's undermining pawn-moves a7-a5 and b7-b5. (13.0-0 ♟e7 – see 10.♟d2) 13...♟d6 14.♘e4 ♘xe4 15.♞xe4 ♘f6 16.♞e2 0-0= G.Kuzmin – Shovunov, Krasnodar 1998.

10...♘gf6 11.0-0-0

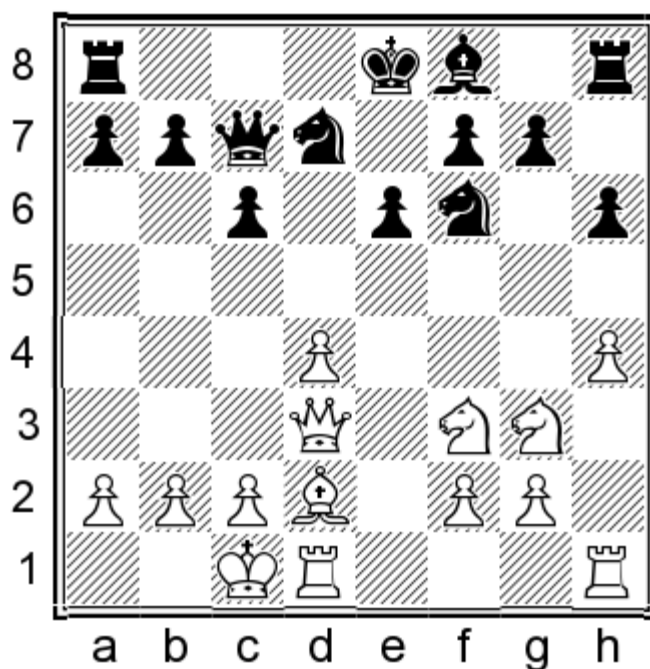
About 11.♞e2 ♞c7 12.0-0-0 ♟d6, or 11.♘e4 ♞c7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 – see 11.0-0-0.

Following 11.c4, Black should better forget about his plan, connected with castling queenside, because White has already shown that he intends to advance his pawns there, and choose instead 11...♟e7!? 12.b4 0-0 13.0-0 ♞c7 14.♞fe1

♖fe8 15. ♖c2 ♗ad8= G.Kuzmin – Kornev, Sochi 2007. Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his position and White will hardly manage to break it.

11... ♖c7

Now, contrary to the variations, which we will analyse in the next two chapters, Black should better adhere to the plan with castling queenside, since he equalises easily with a white pawn on h4. His opponent will miss badly the move h4-h5, because with it he would have not only occupied space on the kingside, but would have fixed the enemy pawns g7 and h6 there on squares with the same colour as Black's bishop. This might be tremendously important if there arises a transfer into a bishop and pawn ending.

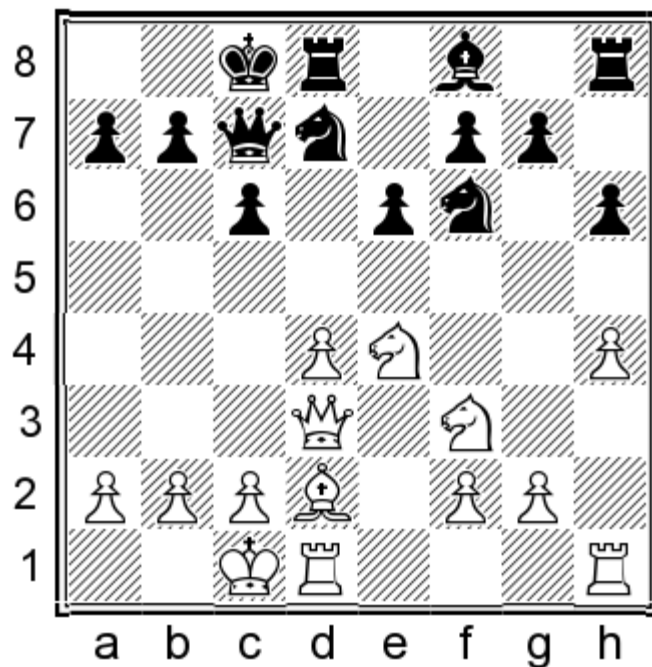


12. ♖b1

After 12. ♖e2, Black can force an advantageous exchange of the dark-squared bishops. 12... ♗d6 13. ♘f5, Hania – Besseling, Netherlands 1996, 13... ♗f4!?=

12.c4. This move seems premature before Black has castled queenside, because now he can seize the initiative with the move b7-b5. 12... ♗e7 13. ♗c3?! b5! ♞ Hung – Proleiko, Irving 2017.

12. ♘e4 This is a calm move. White improves immediately the placement of his knight on g3, which was not placed so actively. 12... 0-0-0

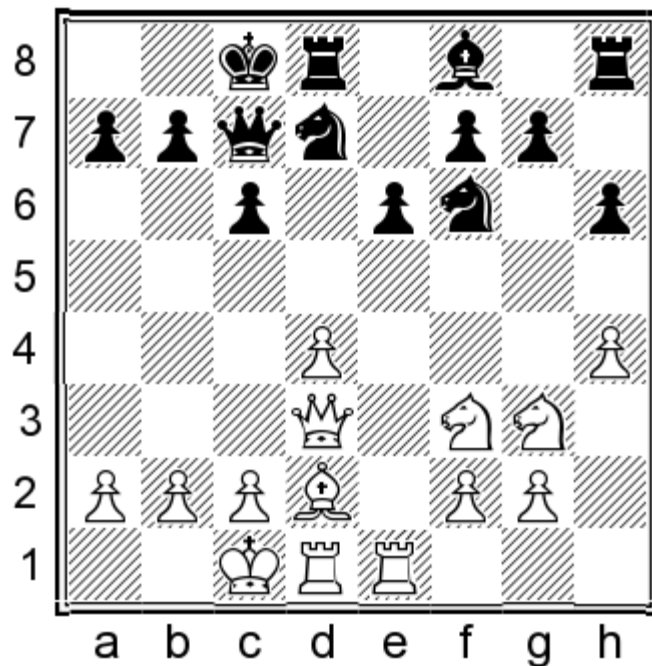


About 13.♔b1 c5 – see 12.♔b1.

13.g3 ♘c5 14.♗xc5 ♙xc5 15.c4 (15.♔b1 ♖he8= Stellwagen – Izoria, Hoogeveen 2003) 15...♗e7 16.♖he1 ♗g4 17.♗e2, I.Popov – Khairullin, Dagomys 2010, 17...♗he8!?=

13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♗e2 (14.g3 ♙d6 15.♗e2 ♖he8= Huzita – Krzyzanowski, ICCF 2017) 14...c5. The position has become completely equal. 15.dxc5 (15.♙e3 ♗d5= Kuderinov – Lintchevski, Kazan 2014) 15...♙xc5 16.♙e3. After this move there arise further simplifications. 16...♗xd1+ 17.♗xd1 ♖d8= Ljubicic – Armanda, Zadar 2006.

12.♖he1 0-0-0

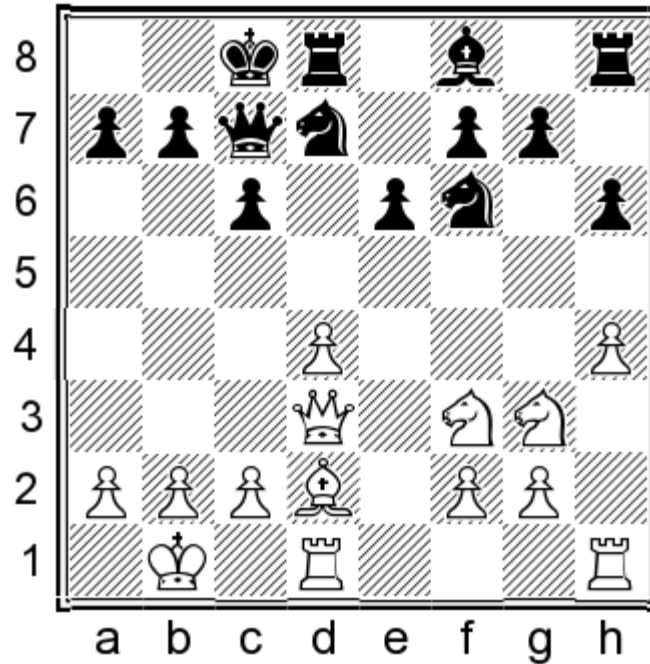


The move 13.♗b3, was tested back in the old game Em.Lasker – Lee, London 1899 and Black's simplest reaction would be the immediate counter attack against the enemy f2-pawn 13...♗g4!?∞

13.♗e2 c5 14.♗e5 (14.♔b1 ♙d6 – see 12.♔b1) 14...♗b6. Black not only defends his f7-pawn, but also prepares a

counter attack on the queenside with ♖a4. 15.dxc5 ♙xc5 16.♗b1 ♖a4!? 17.b3?! Arakhamia Grant – Kachiani Gersinska, Leon 2001 (It is better for White to play here 17.♗d3 ♗d7=) 17...♗xd2! Black sacrifices the exchange and begins an attack against the enemy king. 18.♗xd2 ♗d5. Now, he sacrifices a knight as well. 19.bxa4 ♙b4 20.♗d3 ♗c3+ 21.♗b2 ♗xd1+ 22.♗xd1. Here, White must give back his extra material (He loses after 22.♗xd1? in view of 22...♗c3+ 23.♗b1 ♗xe1→) 22...♗xe5= White's queenside pawn-structure has been seriously compromised.

12...0-0-0



13.c4

13.♗he1 c5 14.♗e2 ♙d6 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.♗e5, Vasiukov – Petrosian, Kiev 1957, 16...♙xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♗xe5 b6=

The move 13.♙c1 is too passive. 13...♙d6 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗f6 16.♗e2 ♗he8= Karisik – Franciskovic, Budva 2009.

13.♗e2 ♙d6 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗he8 16.♗he1 ♗b8 17.♗e5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♙c5= Reinecker – Doettling, Germany 2005. White's game is a bit freer, but Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp.

13.♗e4 c5 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗a3. Black can parry easily the attack against his a7-pawn. 15...♗b8= Spoelman – Pavlovic, Hilversum 2009.

13...c5 14.♙c3

Following 14.♗e2 ♙d6 15.♗e4 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4, before capturing on d4, Black must play at first 16...a6!?, protecting the b5-square against the possible penetration of the enemy knight after ♗xd4-b5. 17.♙c3 (17.♗c1 ♗f6 18.♗e2, Matulovic – Susic, Titograd 1965, 18...♙f4!?) 17...♗f6 18.♗e2 cxd4 19.♙xd4 ♙c5 20.♙xc5 ♗xc5 21.♗e5 ♗d7!? Black exploits the fact that capturing on f7 is impossible and trades the powerful enemy knight. 22.♗xd7 ♗xd7 23.♗xd7 ♗xd7 24.♗d1+, Ivkov – Matulovic, Vinkovci 1968, 24...♗e7!?= Here, Black's king would be safer than on the queenside.

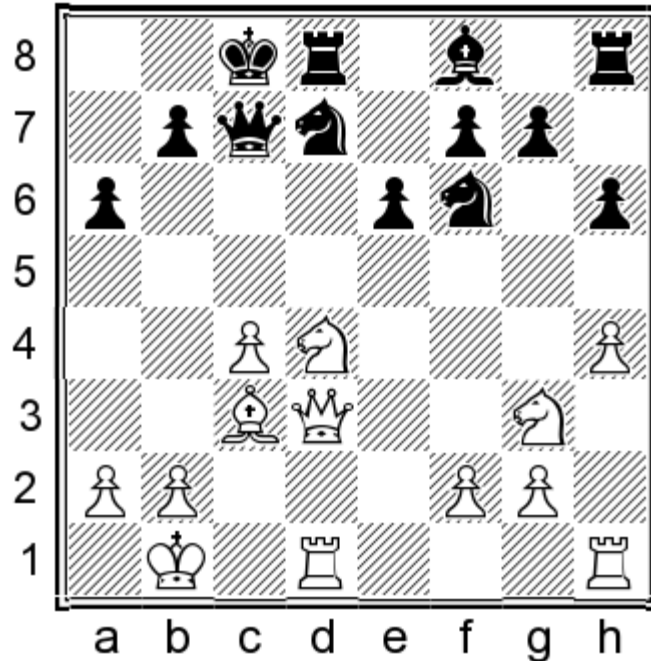
14...cxd4 15.♗xd4

15.♙xd4 ♙c5. Black prepares the exchange of his opponent's active bishop. 16.♗e2 ♙xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗b8!?. The d7-

square is not the best place for the knight, so Black transfers it to c6. 18.♞hd1 ♘c6 19.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 20.♞xd8+ ♞xd8= Pogats – Portisch, Budapest 1961.

15...a6

Black defends against ♘b5.



16.♘f3

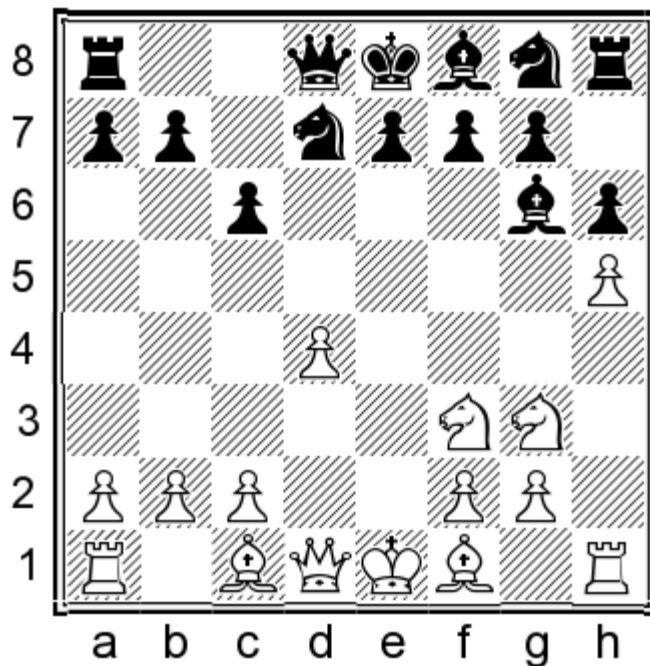
The move 16.♘b3 does not promise much to White. 16...♘c5 17.♞f3 ♙e7. There might follow 18.♙a5 ♞xd1+ 19.♞xd1 ♞e5 20.♙c3 ♞c7= Spassky – Portisch, Budapest 1961.

After 16.♞e2, it seems very good for Black to reply 16...♘c5 with the rather unpleasant threat ♘a4. 17.♘b3 (17.♞c2 ♙d6= Rudakovsky – Makogonov, Moscow 1940) 17...♙e7 18.♙e5 ♞b6= Aronin – Olafsson, Moscow 1961.

16...♙c5 17.♞e2 ♞he8 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.♙xe5 ♞b6 20.f4, Haag – Flesch, Budapest 1966, 20...♞c6!?= The rooks will be soon exchanged on the only open d-file and the position would be simplified even more.

Chapter 17

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♖g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5



This is White's most consequent move. He not only occupies space on the kingside, but also fixes the enemy h6 and g7-pawns on dark squares. This might be very useful in the endgame, but as Saviely Tartakower remarked once rather wittily "Before creating the endgame, Gods created the middlegame..."

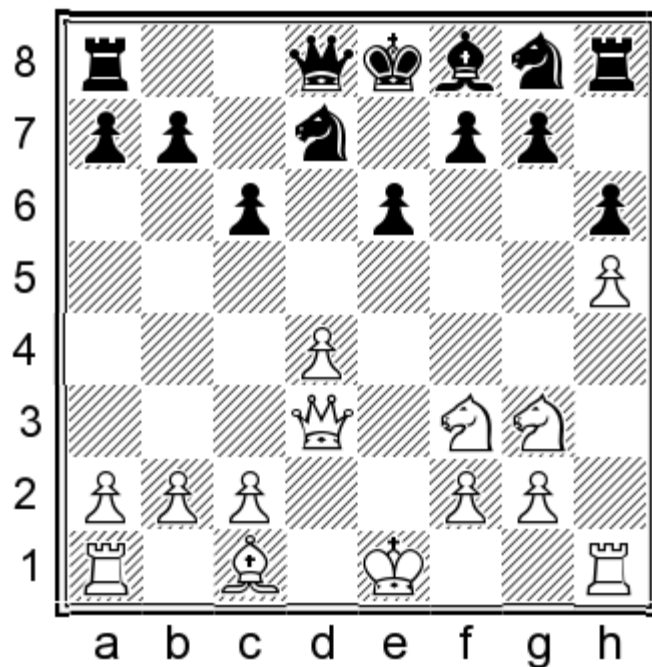
8...♗h7 9.♗d3

About 9.♗f4 e6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♖xd3 ♖a5 – see 9.♗d3.

9.♗c4. White's reluctance to trade the light-squared bishops would not bring him anything. 9...e6 10.♖e2 ♖c7 11.♗e5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♗c5 13.0-0 ♗e7∞, followed by ♗d5, Annaberdiyev – Akin, Antalya 2013.

9...♗xd3 10.♖xd3 e6

Now, White is faced with a choice – where to develop his bishop on c1. The subsequent character of the fight largely depends on this.



11. ♕f4

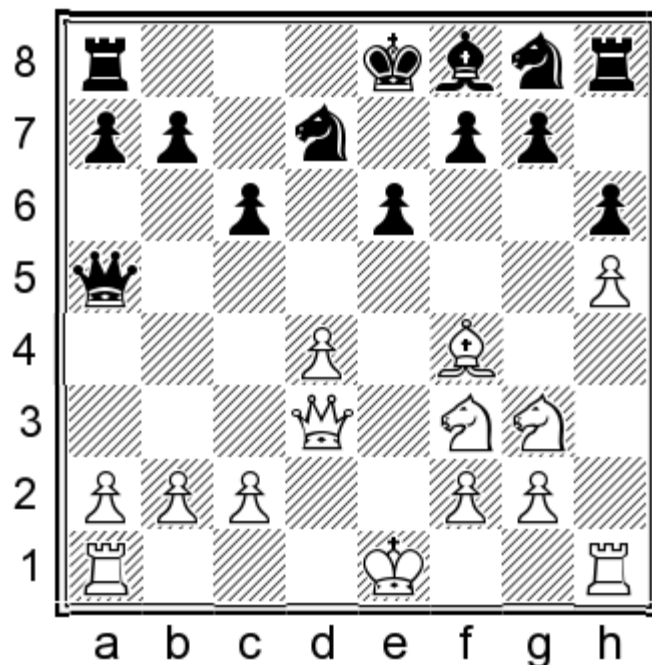
11. ♕d2 – see Chapter 18.

11. ♕e3 ♜a5+ 12. ♕d2 ♕b4 – see 11. ♕f4.

11.c3. This is not the most useful move for White. 11... ♘gf6 12. ♕f4 ♕e7 13. 0-0 0-0 14. ♗fe1, Boyron – Boulais, Guingamp 1999, 14... ♖e8!?? This is prophylactic against ♘f5. Now, Black's queen is not obliged to protect his bishop on e7 and can go to b6, or a5.

11... ♜a5+

This is a rather unpleasant check for White. From this square Black's queen impedes White's castling queenside (pressure against the a2-pawn) as well as his castling kingside (after ♘gf6, the pawn on h5 would need additional protection).



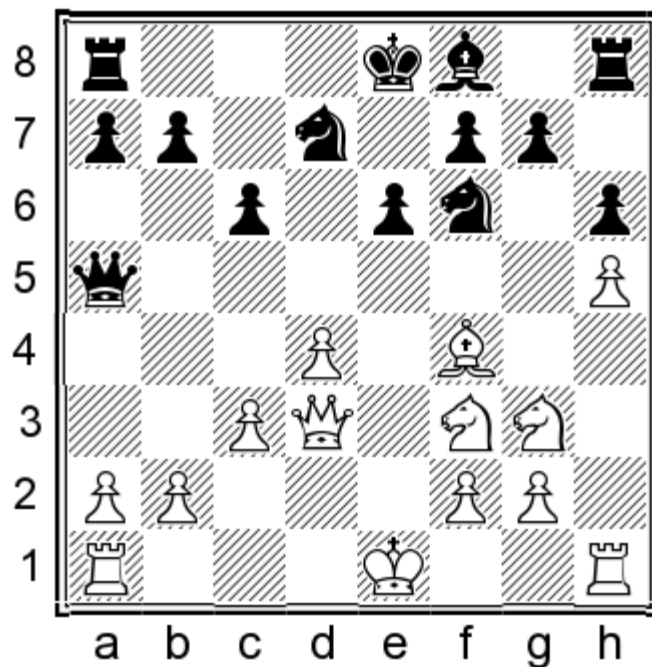
12. ♖d2

White is forced to remove his bishop to a less active position if he wishes to fight for the opening advantage. After his alternatives Black has no problems at all.

12. ♖d2. White's knight is placed worse here than on f3. 12... ♗gf6 13. c4. He covers the d5-square against the penetration of the enemy knight. (13. ♖e2 ♗d5 14. ♕e3, Hector – Swinkels, Germany 2010, 14... ♖d8!?) 13... ♕e7 14. ♖e2 (After 14. ♖f3, Hector – Schandorff, Denmark 2009, it seems very good for Black to play 14... ♖b6!?, with a double attack against the pawns on d4 and b2.) 14... 0-0 15. 0-0 ♖fe8 16. a3. White is preparing the move b2-b4 with the idea to occupy space on the queenside. (16. ♖fd1 c5) 16... ♖b6. White is forced to lose a tempo to protect his pawn on d4, so Black manages to play a7-a5. 17. ♗f3 a5 18. ♖ad1 (18. c5. This move weakens the d5-square. 18... ♖a6 19. ♖fe1, Karlsson – Jacobsen, Copenhagen 2015, 19... b6!? 20. cxb6 ♖xb6) 18... c5 19. dxc5, C. Balogh – Dautov, Warsaw 2005, 19... ♖xc5!? 20. ♗e5 ♗xe5 21. ♕xe5 ♖c6) The g3-square is not the best place for White's knight. In addition, he cannot protect his c4-pawn with the move b2-b3, because he would lose his pawn on a3.

12. ♖d2 ♕b4 13. c3 ♕e7. White would lose his queen after the move c3-c4, so he must give up the idea to oust the enemy queen from the a5-square. 14. 0-0 ♗gf6 15. ♗e5 ♖d8 16. ♖fe1 ♖a6 17. ♖d3 ♖xd3 18. ♗xd3 0-0 ∞ Schneider – Svrsek, Remote 2013. Black's prospects in this endgame are obviously not worse, since White's knight on g3 is forced to defend his h5-pawn and is evidently not so active as its counterpart on f6.

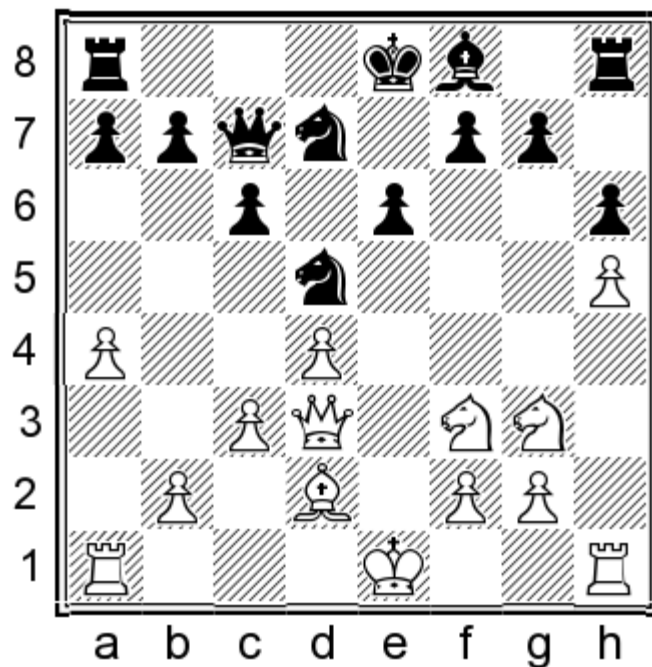
12. c3 ♗gf6



The straightforward move 13.b4 leads to the weakening of the c3-pawn. 13...♞b5!? Black is not afraid of the doubling of his pawns on the c-file. 14.♞xb5 cxb5 15.a4 bxa4 16.♞xa4 a6 17.♔e2, Nazarevich – Grinev, Kiev 2006, 17...♞c8!? He must not allow White to play c3-c4. 18.♞c1 ♕e7 19.♞a5 ♖b6

13.♗e5 ♗xe5 14.♕xe5 (14.dxe5 ♗d5 15.♞f3, Kupreichik – Dorfman, Lvov 1988, 15...♗xf4!? 16.♞xf4 ♞d8) 14...0-0-0 15.♞f3. Here, Black has an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 15...♕d6!? (He can equalise easily with the simple line: 15...♗d7 16.♕f4 ♗f6 and White has nothing better than to comply with the repetition of the position. 17.♕e5 ♗d7=) 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♞xf6, Radhey Derling – Pinho, ICCF 2012, 17...♕xg3 18.fxg3 ♞h7 19.a3 ♞g8 Black is a pawn down, but his prospects are not worse at all. White can hardly manage to defend his weaknesses on the g-file and must also lose valuable tempi to evacuate his king away from the centre.

13.a4 ♗d5 14.♕d2. White had to retreat with his bishop to d2 after all... (14.♗e2. This move is too slow. 14...♗xf4 15.♗xf4. Now, Black can develop his bishop with tempo. 15...♕d6 16.♞e3, B.Savchenko – Tsybulnik, St Petersburg 2003, 16...0-0 White still cannot castle, because he would lose one of his rook-pawns.) 14...♞c7



15. ♖e2 ♕e7∞ Goc – Kupka, Czech Republic 1996.

15. ♖h4. The transfer of White's rook to g4, in order to create pressure against the g7-pawn, seems rather artificial. 15... ♕e7 16. ♗g4, Dvoirys – Tal, Moscow 1990, 16... ♘5f6!?. If he captures the pawn on g7, his rook will be doomed there, so White must retreat. 17. ♖h4 0-0 18. ♔f1 c5∞

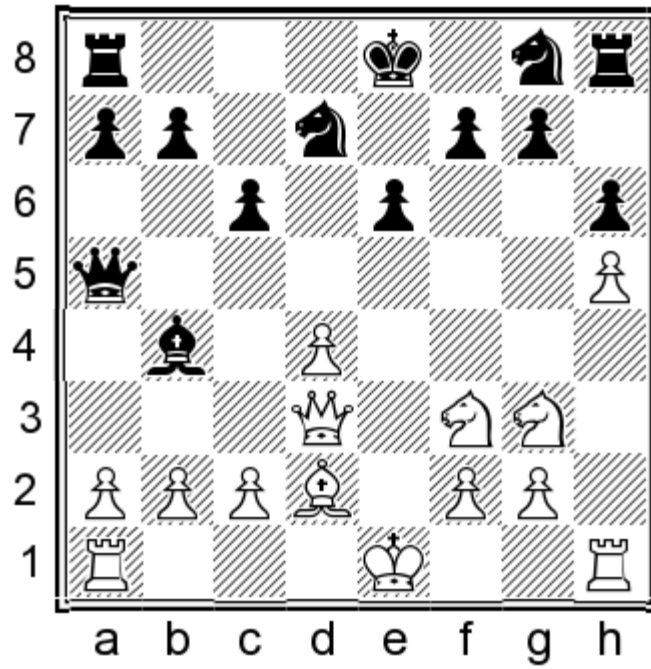
15. a5. White insists on acquiring as much space as possible. 15... ♕e7 16. 0-0 0-0 17. c4. He ousts the enemy knight from the centre, but it would be no less dangerous for White on f6, since it would attack the h5-pawn. 17... ♘5f6 18. b4 ♕d6 19. ♗e4 ♗xh5∞ Bryzgalin – Ovetchkin, playchess.com 2007. White's pieces are very active indeed, but still, his compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

15. ♔f1. White decides not to castle. Now, he will not have problems with the protection of his h5-pawn, but if the d-file is opened, his rook on h1 would be incapable of participating in the fight for it. 15... ♕e7 16. c4 ♘5f6 17. ♖h4 0-0 18. ♖e1 ♗fd8 19. ♖c2 ♕f8 20. b3 c5 21. ♕c3 cxd4 22. ♗xd4 a6 23. ♔g1 ♗ac8∞ Cantelli – Gatto, ICCF 2016. Black's pieces have been more harmoniously deployed.

15. 0-0 ♕d6. Black's plan is quite simple. He exerts pressure against the enemy knight forcing it to retreat to g3 and then he wishes simply to gobble the pawn on h5. 16. ♗e4 ♗5f6 17. ♗xd6+ ♖xd6 18. ♖fe1 0-0!? 19. ♖e2 ♗xh5 20. ♗e5 ♗hf6∞ Rodriguez Guerrero – Ravi, Linares 2000.

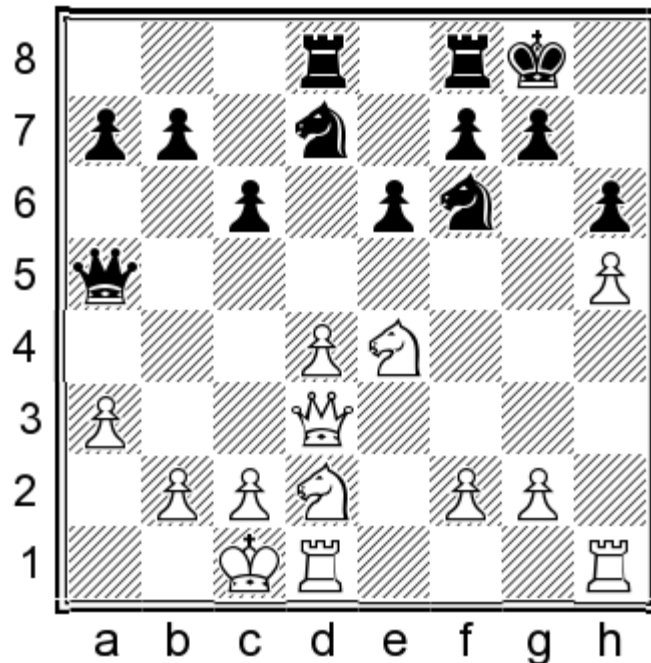
12... ♕b4!?

This move has become very modern lately. Black is reluctant to remove his queen from a5, since it impedes White's castling queenside.



We will analyse now: **A) 13.♘e4** and **B) 13.c3**.

The move 13.a3 is not so often played by White. Black wishes to trade the bishops anyway, so White does not need to force him to do it. 13...♙xd2+ 14.♘xd2. The essence of White's idea is after castling to exploit the vulnerability of the d6-square with ♘c4, or ♘e4. (The move 14.♚xd2 seems less logical, because after 14...♚c7, White's knight on f3 will have difficulties to go to c4, or to e4. 15.0-0-0 ♘gf6 16.♚e2 0-0 17.♘e5 ♖ad8 18.♙b1 c5. Black plays energetically in the centre and does not give his opponent time to organise a kingside attack. 19.♘xd7 ♗xd7 20.dxc5 ♗xd1+ 21.♗xd1 ♚xc5= Shchukin – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2008.) 14...♘gf6 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.♘ge4 ♗ad8



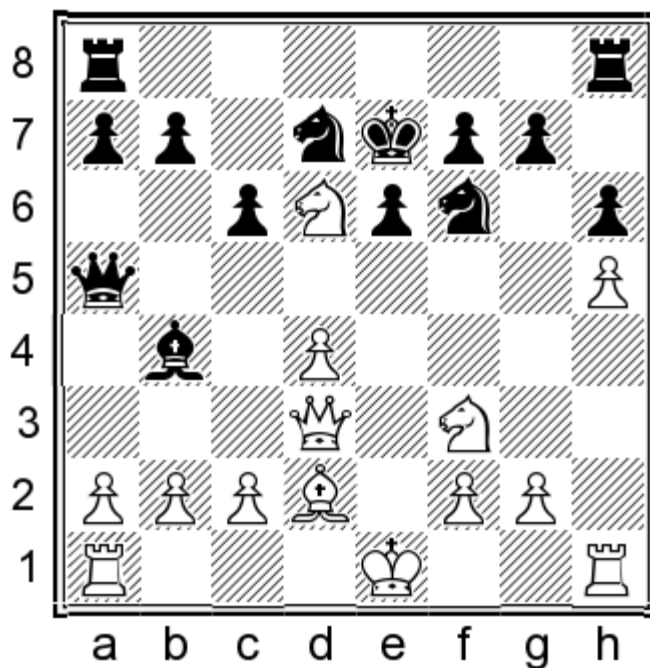
17.♙b1 ♚c7 18.♚f3 e5. Black equalises completely with this pawn-break in the centre. 19.♚g3 ♗fe8 20.dxe5 ♚xe5 21.♘d6. After this move White manages to capture the pawn on b7 and later also the c6-pawn, but in the meantime Black's rook will consume White's kingside pawns. 21...♚xg3 22.fxg3 ♖e3 23.♘xb7 ♗b8 24.♘a5 ♗xg3 25.♘xc6 ♖b7 26.♘e7+ ♙f8 27.♘f5 ♗xg2 28.♘d6 ♖c7= Bolignano – McKenzie, ICCF 2014.

Following 17.g4, Black should better refrain from capturing this pawn, since that would lead to a crushing attack against his king, and play instead 17...♞xe4 18.♞xe4 f5. He bring his queen into the defence and also activates his rook on f8 at the price of the weakening of his e6-pawn. 19.gxf5 ♜xf5 20.♜e3 ♞f6 21.♞c5 ♞g4. The exchange of the weak pawns on f2 and e6 is unavoidable. The position still remains relatively sharp, but the most likely outcome of the game is a draw if both sides play correctly. 22.♜xe6+ ♜xe6 23.♞xe6 ♞xf2 24.♞hg1 ♞xd1 25.♞xg7+ ♜h8 26.♞xf8 ♞xf8 27.♞xb7. White has obtained three pawns for the piece, but the enemy knight, which escaped seemingly unavoidable doom, suddenly shows unbelievable mobility. 27...♞e3 28.♞xa7 ♞f2 29.c3 ♞c4 30.♞b7 ♞h2 31.a4 ♞xh5 32.b3 ♞h1+ 33.♜c2 ♞a5 34.♞b6 h5 35.b4 ♞c4 36.♞xc6 ♞h2+ 37.♜d3 ♞b2+ 38.♜e4 ♞xa4 39.c4 h4 40.♜f5 h3= Tsonev – Squires, ICCF 2015. Black will exchange easily his far-advanced passed pawn for one of his opponent's queenside pawns and the draw will become quite obvious.

A) 13.♞e4 ♞gf6

It becomes clear now that the loss of castling rights is not so dangerous for Black.

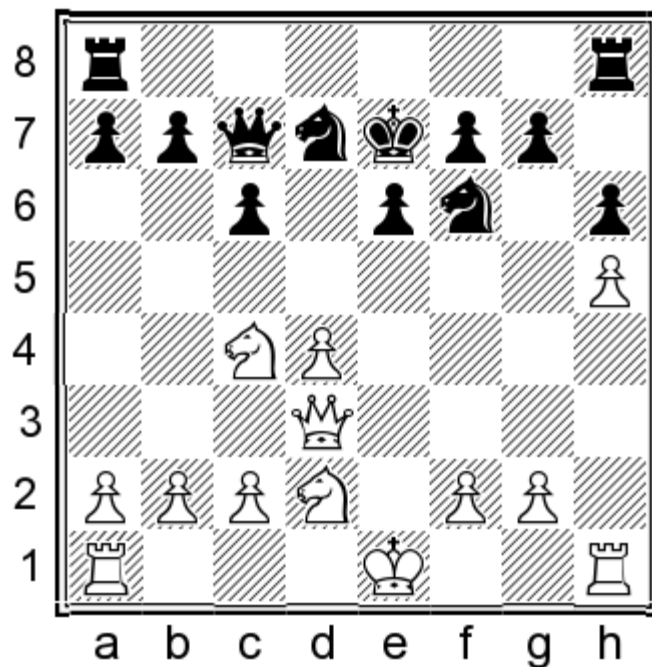
14.♞d6+ ♜e7



15.♞xb7

White destroys his opponent's queenside pawn-structure.

If he refrains from capturing, he might not even equalise. 15.♞c4 ♞xd2+ 16.♞fxd2 (Following 16.♜xd2 ♜xd2+ 17.♞cxd2, it is far from clear why White has lost so many tempi on manoeuvres with his knight. 17...c5= Kim – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2006.) 16...♜c7



17. ♖e3 ♜hd8∞ Jenni – Riazantsev, Biel 2004.

17. ♜a3+. Black's development is not inferior to that of his opponent and he parries easily the threats on the a3-f8 diagonal. 17...c5 18. ♖b3 b5 19. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20. ♖e5 ♜hc8 21. ♖d3 ♖fe4 22. dxc5 ♖xc5 23. 0-0 a5 24. c3. Without this move, Black would have played b5-b4. 24...♗f6. He gets rid of the pin of the knight. White cannot exploit the exposed placement of the enemy king, since his queen is too passive on the a3-square. 25. ♜ad1 ♖xd3 26. ♜xd3 ♜c5+ Maurizio – Jean, ICCFI 2014.

17. ♖e4. The position is quickly simplified after this move. 17...♖xe4 18. ♜xe4 b5 19. ♖e5 ♖xe5 20. ♜xe5 ♜xe5+ 21. dxe5, Vlasveld – Rufenacht, ICCF 2014, 21...♜hd8=

17. 0-0 b5!? Black should better oust immediately the enemy knight from its active position. 18. ♖e3 (18. ♜a3+ c5 19. dxc5 ♜xc5 20. ♜xc5+ ♖xc5 21. ♖e5 ♜hc8+ Revesz – Al Sayed, Gibraltar 2008) 18...a5!? Black begins an immediate pawn-offensive on the queenside. He does not need to lose time for ♗f8-g8, because his king is safe enough at the middle of the board. 19. a4 (19. ♜a3+ b4 20. ♜d3 ♜hd8 21. ♜h4 ♗f8 22. ♖ec4 c5+ Tropf – Bondars, ICCF 2014) 19...♜hb8 20. g4. This move would have been much more dangerous for Black had his king been on the g8-square. 20...bxa4 21. ♜a3+ c5∞ Lukas – Bondars, ICCF 2014.

15... ♗xd2+ 16. ♖xd2

White's attempt to preserve the extra pawn 16. ♜xd2 ♜b5 17. ♖a5?, would lead to a loss of a piece for him 17...♖e4 18. c4 ♜b6+ Kantsler – Rodshtein, Haifa 2008.

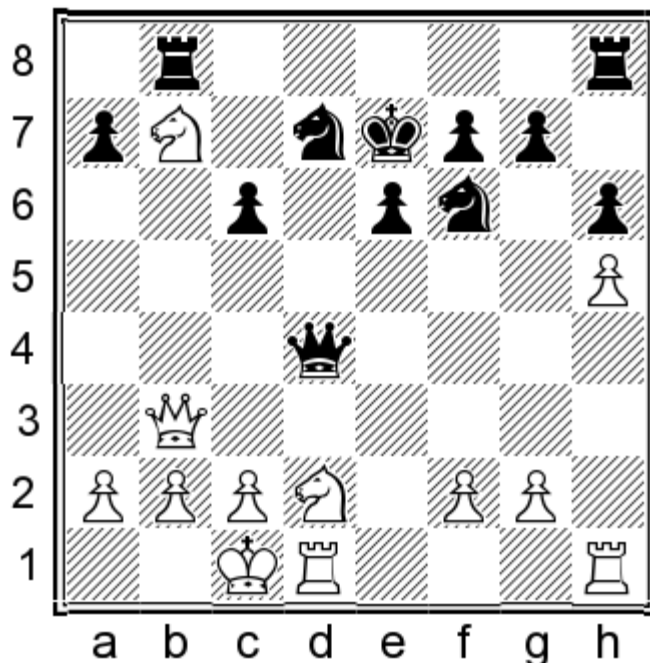
16... ♜b4 17. ♜b3

17. ♜a3?! This move leads to the weakening of White's queenside pawn-structure. 17...♜xa3 18. bxa3 ♜ab8 19. ♜b1 (19. ♖c5 ♖xc5 20. dxc5 ♜b2 21. ♗d1 ♜d8 22. ♗c1, Feoktistov – Lastin, Soukhumi 2007, 22...♜b7!?+; 19. ♖a5 ♜hc8 20. ♖dc4 ♜b5+ Filippov – Landa, Moscow 2009.) 19...c5 20. dxc5 ♜hc8 21. ♗e2 ♜c7 22. c6 ♜xc6+ Kuba – Kreisler, Austria 2012. White's extra pawn is absolutely immaterial, because his queenside is hopelessly weakened.

17... ♜xd4

Black restores the material balance.

18.0-0-0 ♖ab8



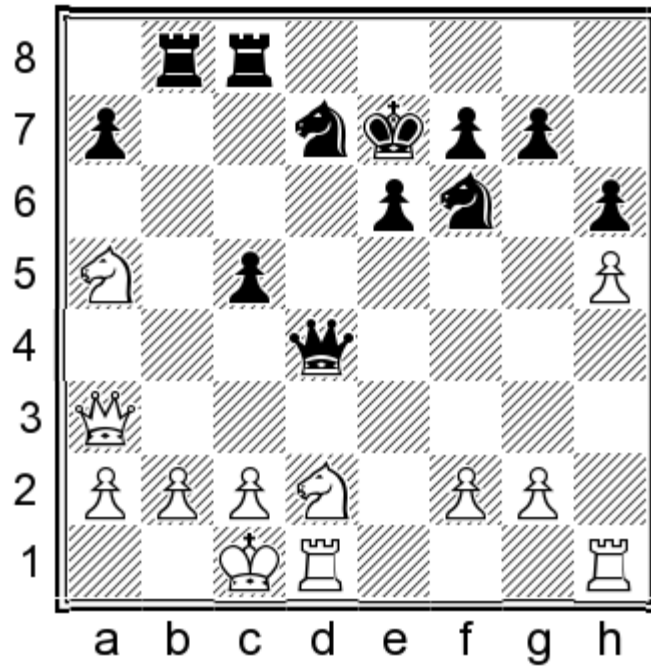
19. ♖a3+

He gets rid of the pin of his knight.

19. ♖c4?! ♜f4+ 20. ♔b1 ♜xb7! 21. ♜xb7 ♜xc4 22. ♜xa7 c5 ♠ Kanarek – Jaracz, Poland 2016. Black's two knights will be stronger than White's rook and two pawns.

The intermediate move 19.c3 cannot change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. 19... ♜e5 20. ♜a3+ c5 21. ♖a5 ♜hc8 22. ♜a4 ♜c7. The weakness of the pawns on c5 and a7 is compensated by Black's counterplay on the b-file. 23.g3. Here, before playing ♖dc4, White must defend against the enemy queen-sortie to the f4-square. 23... ♔f8 24. ♖dc4 ♖b6 25. ♜c2 ♜d8 26.f4 ♖xc4 27. ♖xc4 ♜xd1+ 28. ♜xd1 ♜d8. With a white knight on c4, the pressure against the b2-pawn cannot bring Black anything, so he begins a fight for the d-file. 29. ♜f3 ♜d7= Rauduve – Spasov, ICCF 2012. White cannot play ♜d1, because he would lose his h5-pawn.

19...c5 20. ♖a5 ♜hc8



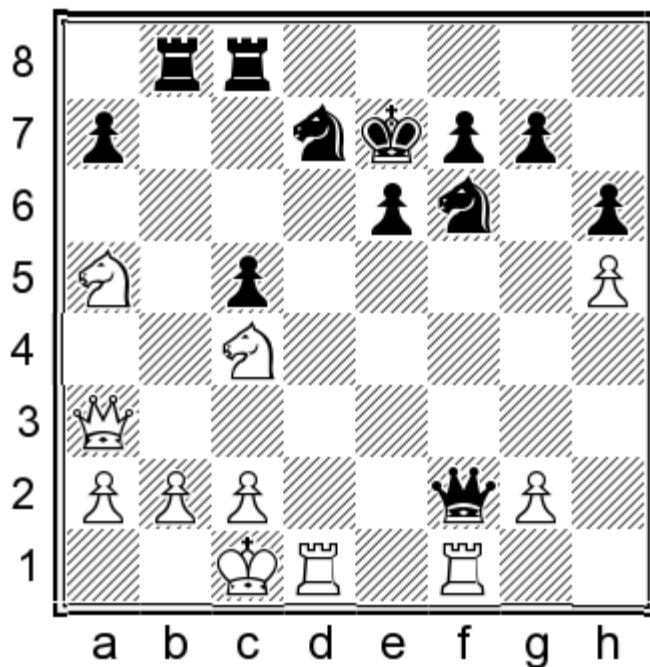
21. ♖dc4

White sacrifices a pawn in an attempt to seize the initiative.

He has also tried in practice the more reliable line: 21.f3 ♖b6 22.♗e4 ♜b4 23.♗d6 ♝c7 24.♜xb4 cxb4 25.♗b5 ♝c5 26.♗xa7. White has won a pawn, but his cavalry is isolated on the queenside. 26...♞a8 27.♗5c6+ ♕e8 28.♞d4 ♗fd5 29.♞e1 ♗e7 30.♗xe7 ♞xa7 31.♞xb4 ♗d7 32.♗g6. White's knight is doomed on e7, so White sacrifices it voluntarily, hoping to collect several more pawns for it. 32...fxg6 33.♞xe6+ ♕f7 34.♞xg6 ♞xa2 35.♞b7 ♞a1+ 36.♕d2 ♞d5+ 37.♕e2 ♞a8 38.♞g4 ♞e8+ 39.♞e4 ♞e7. White's three pawns compensate the knight, but not more than that. 40.♞xe7+, Gonzalez – Ohtake, ICCF 2011, 40...♕xe7=

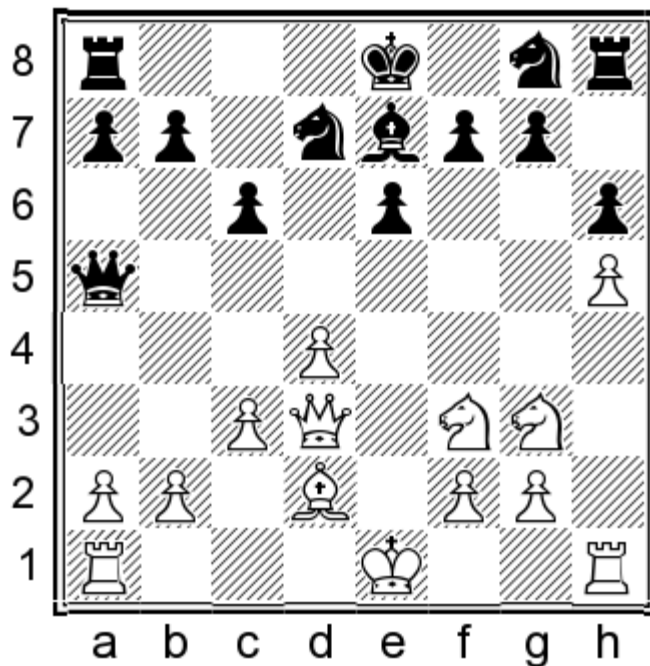
21... ♜xf2 22. ♞hf1

22.♞df1. The attack against the enemy queen with the other knight would not change the evaluation of the position. 22...♜d4 23.♜g3 ♗e4 24.♜f4 ♗ef6. Neither side has any reasons to avoid the repetition of moves. 25.♜g3 ♗e4 26.♜f4 ♗ef6 27.♜g3 ♗e4= Churkin – Balabanov, ICCF 2010.



22...♖h4 23.♔b1 ♗g4 24.♘d3 ♕f8. Black's king is in the centre, but is not safe there anymore. 25.♜d6 c4. He sacrifices a pawn, just like his opponent, in order to activate considerably his rook on c8. 26.♞axc4 ♝c7 27.b3 ♕g8 28.♞h1 ♗g5 29.♗e3 ♗c5 30.♞h4 ♜b6 31.♔c1 ♕f8 32.♞d2 ♗xe3 33.♜xe3 ♝c5 34.c4 a5∞ Naturally, Black should not allow b3-b4, Rimkus – Packroff, ICCF 2015.

B) 13.c3 ♞e7



14.c4

The alternatives for White are only seldom played in the tournament practice.

14.a4 ♖gf6 15.♖e2 0-0 16.♗e5 ♜fe8!?= This is a good prophylactic move depriving White of the tactical possibilities, connected with ♗xf7 and ♗g6, Boscolo – Sbraccia, Porto San Giorgio 2011.

14.♖e2. White is preparing ♗e5. 14...♗gf6 15.♗e5 0-0 16.0-0 ♜fe8 17.♜f1 ♗f8= Babaev – Jaracz, Bad Wiessee 2007.

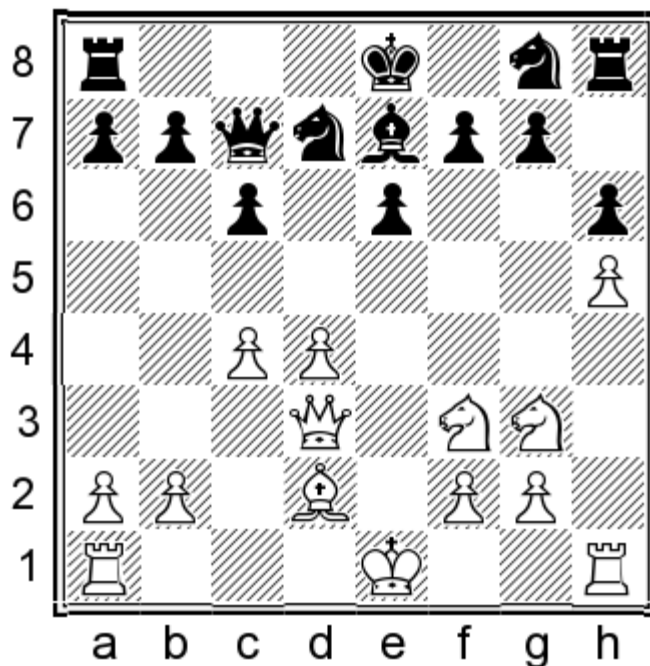
14.a3. This prophylactic is not necessary. Before advancing c3-c4, White takes care about ♗b4, but Black had no intention to play like that anyway. 14...♗gf6 15.c4 ♖c7 16.♗e4 ♞d8 17.♗xf6+, Barcenilla – Paragua, Manila 2011, 17...♗xf6!?!=

14.0-0 ♗gf6 15.♜f1 (15.c4 ♖c7 – see variation **B1**) 15...0-0 16.♗e5 (16.c4 ♗b4 17.♗xb4 ♖xb4 18.a3, Palac – Izoria, Warsaw 2005, 18...♖a5!?!=) 16...♞ad8 17.♖e2 ♜fe8 18.b4, Sanchez – Landa, Marseille 2006, 18...♖d5!?!= Black impedes his opponent to occupy additional space on the queenside with the move c3-c4 and obtains a quite acceptable game.

Following 14.♗e4 ♗gf6 15.♗xf6+ (15.c4 ♖c7 – see 14.c4) 15...♗xf6 16.♗e5 c5 17.♖g3, Black has a small combination 17...cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖xd2+! 19.♗xd2 ♗e4+ 20.♗d3 ♗xg3 21.fxg3. White's pawn-structure has been weakened, but he can maintain the balance with a precise play. 21...♞d8 22.♞ac1 ♗d6 23.♞he1 ♗e7 24.♞c3 (24.g4 ♞c8=) 24...♗xe5 25.♞xe5 ♞d7= Almarza Mato – Balta, ICCF 2014. The position is objectively drawish, but White must still play numerous accurate moves in order to share the point.

14...♖c7

Black's idea is becoming clear. Having provoked the pawn-advance c2-c4, he will manage, if White castles queenside, to create quickly counterplay there with the help of the pawn-advance b7-b5.



White's most popular move in this position is – **B3**) 15.0-0-0, but before analysing it, we will have a look at **B1**) 15.0-0 and **B2**) 15.d5.

15.♗f1. The transfer of White' knight to e3 seems rather slow. 15...♗gf6 16.♗e3 0-0= Lutz – Schlecht, Germany 2016.

15.♗e4 ♗gf6 16.♗xf6+ (16.0-0-0 ♞d8 – see 15.0-0-0; 16.g3 0-0 17.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 18.♖e2 c5= Berger – Rasmussen, Germany 2005) 16...♗xf6 17.0-0-0 c5 18.♗b1 cxd4 19.♗xd4 a6=, followed by 0-0, ♞fd8, ♞ac8, moreover that the idea of the pawn-sacrifice b7-b5 is permanently on the agenda, Pap – Agrest, Benidorm 2009.

B1) 15.0-0

Now, White may have problems with the protection of his h5-pawn.

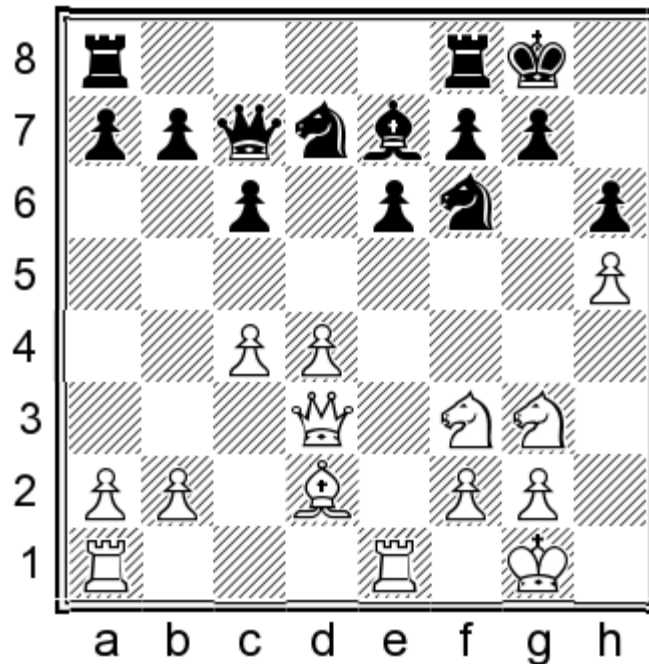
15...♟gf6 16.♞fe1

He is preparing ♟f5.

16.c5. White occupies space on the queenside at the price of the weakening of the d5-square. 16...0-0 17.b4 ♟g4 18.♞e2 ♟df6 19.♞ab1 ♞fd8 20.a4. Here, Black does not need to wait for b4-b5 and can inflict a strike first: 20...b6 ♞ Quattrocchi – Gerbich, ICCF 2011.

16.♞e2 0-0 17.♟e5 (17.♞fe1 ♟d6 – see 16.♞fe1) 17...c5 18.♟xd7 ♞xd7 19.dxc5 ♟xc5 20.♟c3 ♞c6. Black is not afraid of the exchange on f6, because after it White will be incapable of exploiting the slight weakening of Black's king shelter. 21.♞ad1 ♟e7 22.♟f5. The tactical complications cannot change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal. 22...exf5 23.♞xe7 ♟xh5 24.♞h4 ♞g6 25.♞d3 ♞g4 26.♞xg4 fxg4 27.♞e1 b6= Joao – Dhanish, ICCF 2012. Black will not manage to realise his extra pawn, because White's pieces are obviously more active and his bishop is more powerful than Black's knight in a fight on both sides of the board.

16...0-0



17.♟f5

17.♞ac1, Ragger – Donchenko, Nuremberg 2007, 17...♞fd8!??

17.♟e5 ♞ad8 18.♞e2, Baramidze – Ernst, Dieren 2006. 18...c5!??

17.♞e2 ♟d6. Black emphasizes the misplacement of the enemy knight on g3. 18.♟e5. This is the only move; otherwise, White would lose a pawn. 18...c5 19.♟xd7 ♟xd7 ♞ Demianjuk – Riazantsev, Salekhard 2006.

17.♟c3. This is possibly White's best move in this position, since he at least would not be worse after it. 17...♞ad8 18.♞e2 ♟d6 19.♟e5 c5 20.dxc5 (20.♟xd7 ♞xd7 21.d5 ♟xg3= Here, he should better refrain from entering the complications arising after 22.♟xf6?! ♟h2+ 23.♟h1 gxf6 24.g3, Adams – Riazantsev, Bastia 2005, because after 24...♟xg3!? 25.♞g1 ♟h7 26.♞xg3 ♞e5 ♞, Black parries all the threats against his king and remains with an extra pawn.) 20...♟xe5 21.♟xe5 ♟xe5 22.♞xe5 ♞xe5 23.♞xe5 ♟d7 24.♞e3 ♟xc5. The position has been simplified considerably.

25.b4. This is White's only chance of fighting for an advantage – advancing his pawn-majority on the queenside.
 25...♖d3. Black defends actively. He attacks the enemy b4-pawn and forces White's rook to occupy a passive position.
 26.♖b1 b6= Lopez Martinez – Borne, Banyoles 2006.

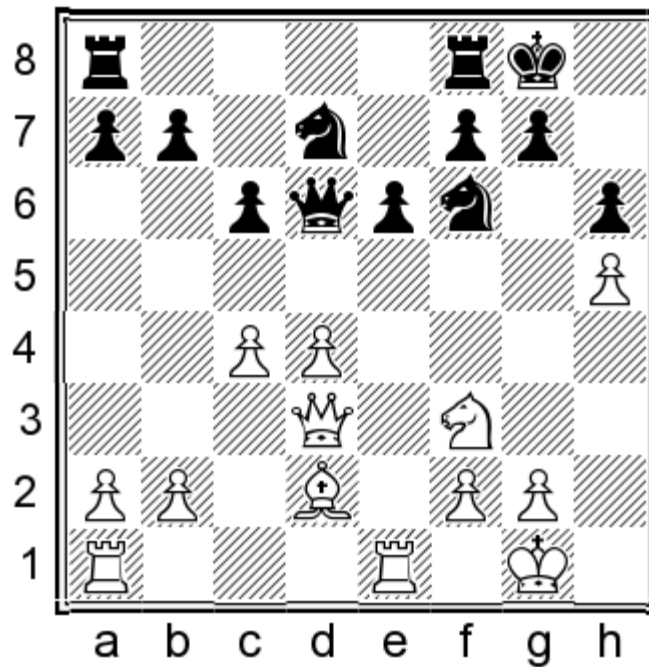
17...♙d6!?

Black is not afraid of the sacrifice on h6.

18.♗xd6

18.♗xh6+ gxh6 19.♙xh6 ♜fe8 20.♚d2 (20.♚e3 ♗h7+) 20...♗h7. Black parries his opponent's hasty attack and remains with extra material. 21.c5 ♙f8 22.♙f4 ♚d8 23.h6 e5. He sacrifices a pawn and frees the 6th rank for his rook. Now, he plans to attack the enemy h6-pawn. 24.♙xe5 ♜e6 25.♙f4 ♜g6 26.♞ad1 ♚f6 27.♚e3 ♙xh6 28.♙xh6 ♞xh6+ Solf – Mut Company, ICCF 2012.

18...♚xd6



19.♞ad1

19.♞b3. This attack against the b7-pawn is not dangerous for Black. 19...a5 20.♞ad1 a4 (It also seems good for him to play here 20...b5 21.♗e5 bxc4 22.♞xc4 ♜fc8. The vulnerability of the pawns on d6 and c6 is about balanced. 23.♞e2 ♞d5= Dominguez Perez – Dreev, Beersheba 2005.) 21.♞c3 ♗xh5 22.♗e5 ♜fd8 23.♞h3 ♗hf6 24.a3 c5 25.♙xh6. White must force a draw here; otherwise, he would end up a pawn down. 25...gxh6 26.♞g3+, Poljak – Chaika, ICCF 2013, 26...♗h7 27.♞d3+ ♗g7=

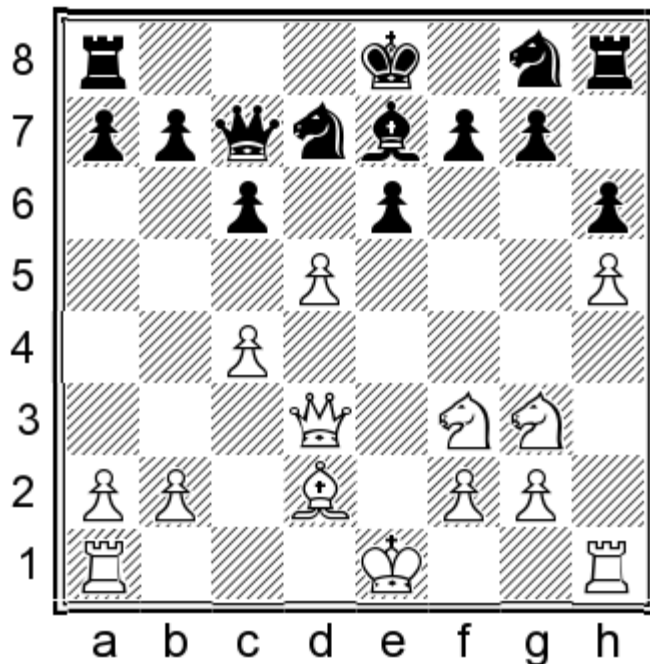
19...♜fd8

This is Black's simplest reaction. He does not need to capture the h5-pawn and to risk an attack against his king.

20.♞b3 b5!?! Black is fighting for the d5-square. 21.♗e5 bxc4 22.♞xc4 ♗d5 23.♙a5 ♜db8 24.b4 ♗7f6 25.♞xc6 ♞xc6 26.♗xc6 ♜b7 27.a3 ♗xh5 28.g3 ♗hf6 29.♞c1 ♗e8 30.♗e5 ♗d6 31.♞ed1 ♗f5+ Burrigge – Grayland, ICCF 2016.

Black's prospects seem preferable in this position thanks to the powerful placement of his knight at the middle of the board and the weakness of his opponent's isolated d4-pawn.

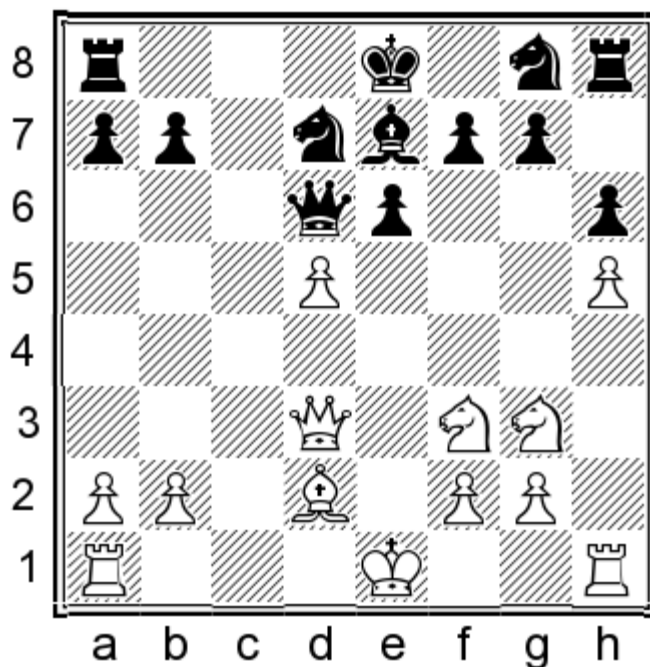
B2) 15.d5



White wishes to open the position in order to exploit his lead in development. Still, Black will preserve at least an equal position if he plays precisely. The only thing he must not do in this variation is to capture on d5 with his e6-pawn, because then White's knight will gain access to the wonderful f5-square.

15...cxd5 16.cxd5 ♔d6

Black exploits the defencelessness of the enemy queen on d3.

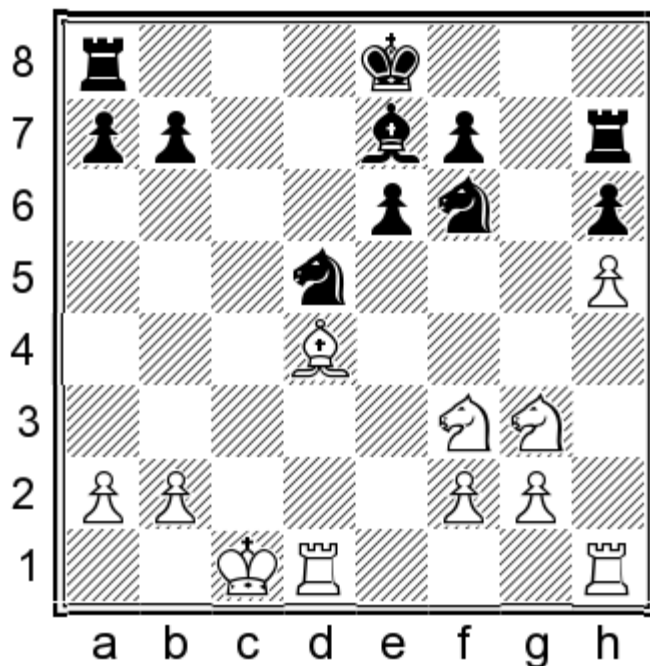


17. ♖b3

About 17. ♕c3 ♗gf6 18. 0-0-0 – see 17.0-0-0.

17. ♖e2. This is an original move, but not very strong. White leaves his king in the centre if eventually there arises a transfer into an endgame. 17... ♗gf6 18. dxe6 ♜xd3+ 19. ♖xd3 fxe6. The queens have been exchanged indeed, but there are still too many pieces on the board and White's king is unsafe on the d3-square. 20. ♞ac1 (20. ♖e2 0-0. Black should not be afraid of the transfer of the enemy knight to the g6-square. 21. ♗h4 ♙d6 22. ♗g6. White's knight might look beautiful here, but is in fact absolutely harmless. 22... ♞f7 23. ♞h4 ♙xg3 24. fxg3, Vega Palma – Zidu, Email 2011, 24... e5!?) White's pawn on h5 needs permanent protection.) 20... ♙d6 21. ♗e4 (21. ♞he1 ♖f7) 21... ♗xe4 22. ♖xe4 0-0∞ Golubev – Ovetchkin, playchess.com 2006.

17.0-0-0 White is preparing to exchange his d5-pawn for the enemy g7-pawn. This exchange operation however, turns out to be in favour of Black. 17... ♗gf6 18. ♕c3 ♜xd5 19. ♜xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♙xg7 ♞h7 21. ♙d4 ♗7f6



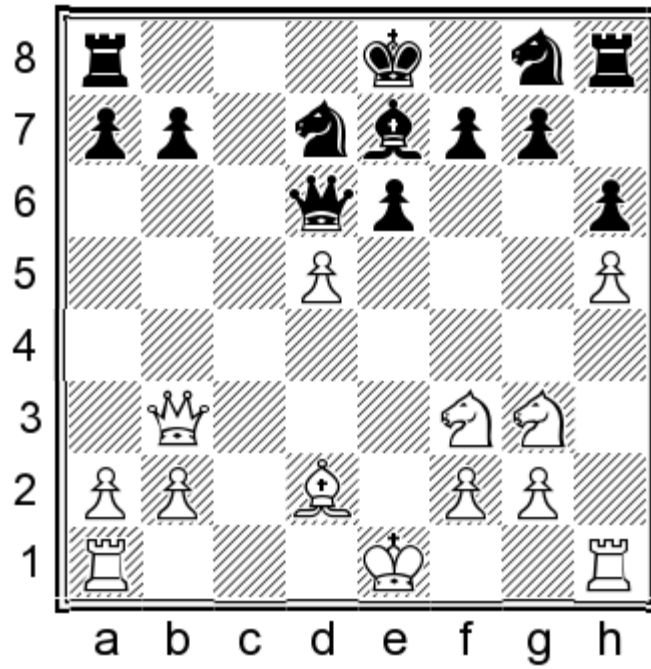
22. ♞he1 ♞g7!?)

22. ♗e5 ♞g7? Abergel – Houska, Gibraltar 2007.

22. ♞h4 ♞g7 23. ♖b1 ♙d8? Rodriguez Guerrero – Khenkin, Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005. Black knight is very powerful at the centre of the board.

22. ♖b1 ♞g7. He improves the placement of his rook. 23. ♞c1 (23. ♞he1 ♞g8?) 23... ♞g8 24. ♞he1 ♙d8 25. a3, Garus – Coyne, ICCF 2012, 25... a6!?) removing his pawn from the attack. Here, White's game is not simple at all, because the enemy knight on d5 exerts powerful pressure against his position and his pawn on h5 would need permanent protection.

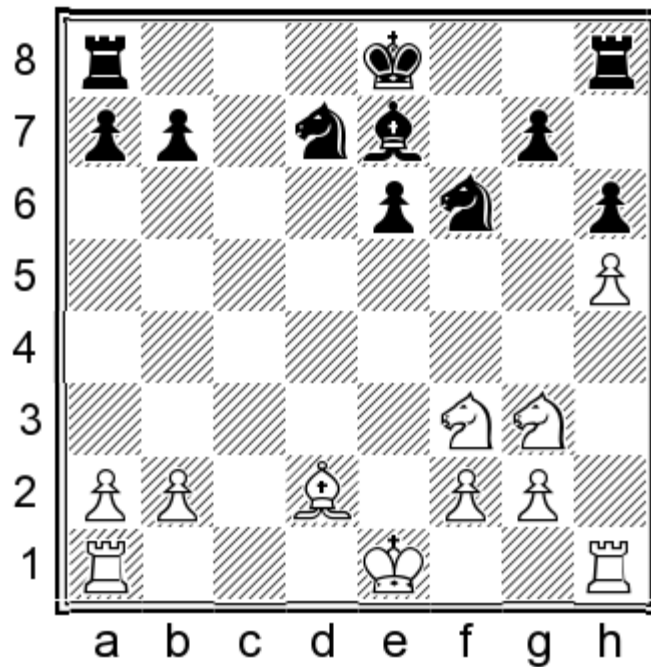
17. ♖b5 ♗gf6 (17... ♜xd5?! 18. ♜xd5 exd5 19. ♗f5±) 18. dxe6 ♜xe6+. This is one of the rare cases when Black can allow his opponent to play ♗f5. 19. ♖f1 0-0 20. ♞e1 (After 20. ♙d1, Amonatov – Khenkin, Havana 2008, Black can simply capture the pawn: 20... ♜xa2!?) 20... ♜d5 21. ♜xd5 ♗xd5. Black's bishop has gained access to the wonderful f6-square. 22. ♗f5 ♙f6 23. ♞h3 (23. ♗3d4 ♞fe8∞ Golod – Roiz, Zuerich 2009) 23... ♞fe8 24. ♞xe8+, Berelowitsch – Khenkin, Belgium 2005, 24... ♞xe8= Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his position, while White's rook on h3 seems rather passive.



17... Nf6!

Black is not afraid of having an isolated pawn on e6, because it is much more important for him to trade the queens. In the endgame, White's slight lead in development would not be important at all.

18. dxe6 Qxe6+ 19. Qxe6 fxe6



White has numerous alternatives in this position, but the best that he can dream about is equality.

20.0-0

About 20. Rf1 Qf7 21.0-0 Rhd8 – see 20.0-0.

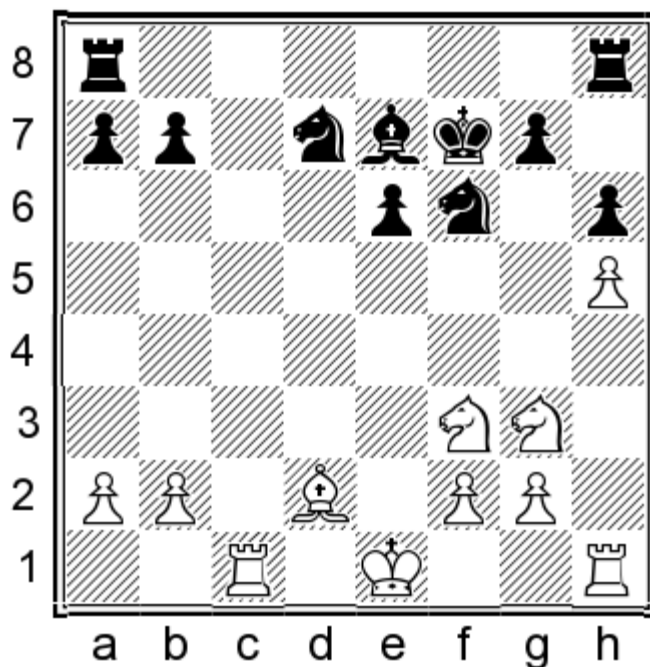
20.♖d4 ♕f7 Spence – Houska, Hastings 2009.

After 20.0-0-0, Black can play 20...♙c5, squeezing the enemy rook with the protection of the f2-pawn, which had remained defenceless. 21.♞hf1 0-0 22.♙c3 ♖d5 23.♙d4 ♞ad8 24.♗e2 b6 25.♗b1 ♗7f6 26.♗g3 ♙d6 27.♙e5 ♙xe5 28.♗xe5 ♗f4 29.♗g6 ♞xd1+ 30.♞xd1 ♗xg6 31.hxg6. Now, White must play very accurately not to lose his g6-pawn, which is isolated from the rest of his forces. 31...♗d5 32.♗e4 ♞f4 33.f3 ♕f8 Peet – Murin, ICCF 2015.

20.♗h4 ♕f7 21.♗g6 ♞hc8 22.♗xe7 ♕xe7 23.♙c3 ♞c4= White – Porte, Vlissingen 2012.

20.♗e2. This move seems a bit clumsy, but is sufficient for equality. 20...0-0 21.♞d1 ♞fd8 22.♗f4 e5 23.♗g6 ♙c5 24.♞h4 e4 25.♗h2 a5= Corujedo Hernandez – Lesko, ICCF 2013. The vulnerability of Black's e4-pawn is compensated by the more harmonious placement of his pieces.

20.♞c1. White is preparing penetration of his rook to the penultimate rank, but this is not dangerous for Black. 20...♕f7



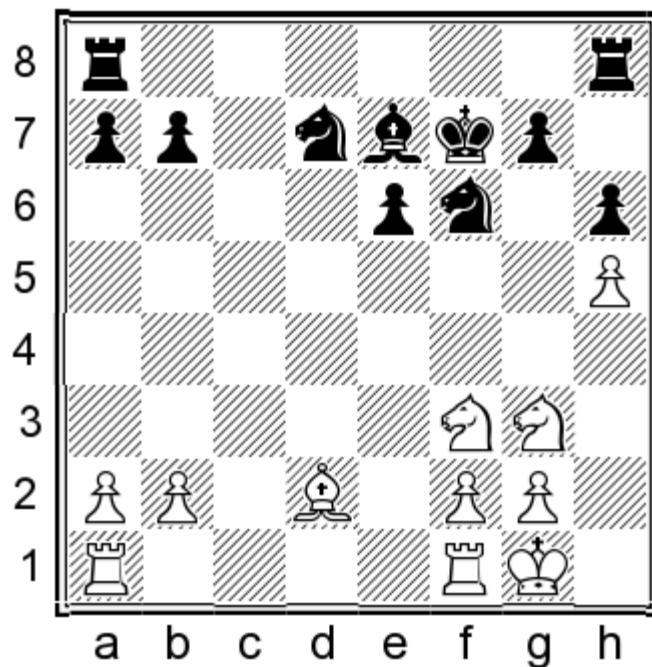
21.♕e2 ♙d6=

21.♙f4 ♗d5 22.♙d2 ♞hc8=

Following 21.♞c7, Black protects at first his pawn 21...♞ab8 22.♙f4 and then exchanges the active enemy rook. 22...♞hc8 23.♞xd7 ♗xd7 24.♙xb8 ♞xb8 25.♗e4 ♞c8 26.♗d2 ♗f6 27.♗e5+ ♕e8 28.♗d3 ♗xe4 29.♗xe4 ♞c2 30.♗d3 ♙f6∞ Rimkus – Mickevicius, ICCF 2015. Black's active rook compensates with an interest the slight weakness of his e6-pawn.

20...♕f7

He protects his e6-pawn in advance and coordinates his rooks.



21.♖ad1

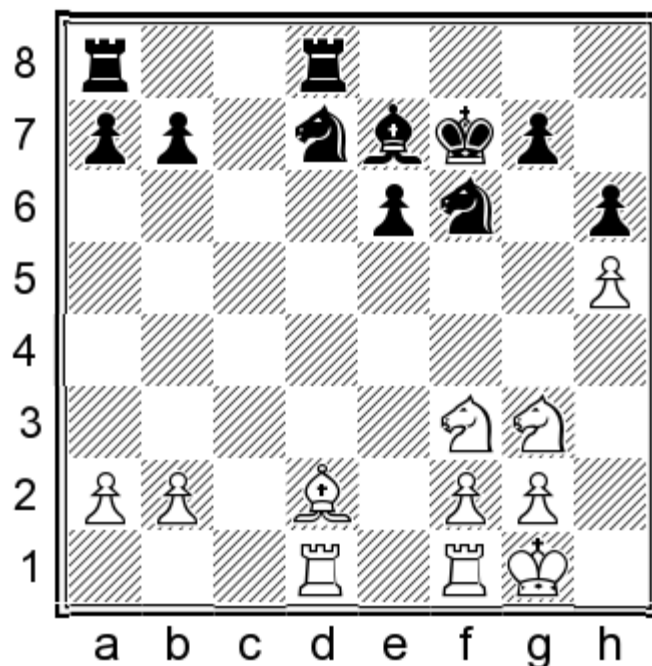
Even after White's alternatives he would be incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the enemy e6-pawn.

21.♖ae1 ♜hd8 22.♞e2 ♙d6 23.♘d4 ♜f8= Nithander – Agrest, Vaxjo 2008.

21.♙c3 ♜hd8 22.♞fe1 ♞ac8 23.♖ad1 ♜g4 24.♙f1 ♜df6 25.♞xd8 ♙xd8 26.♜e4 ♜xe4 27.♞xe4 ♜f6= Schulz – Jansen, ICCF 2017.

After 21.♞fe1 ♜hd8 22.♙a5 (22.♖ad1 – see 21.♖ad1) 22...b6 23.♙c3 ♜d5 24.♙d4 ♜b4 25.♖ad1 ♞ac8 26.♜e2 ♙f6, all Black's pieces are very active. 27.♙xf6 gxf6 28.a3 ♜d5= Mercader Martinez – Woodard, ICCF 2016.

21...♜hd8



22. ♖a5

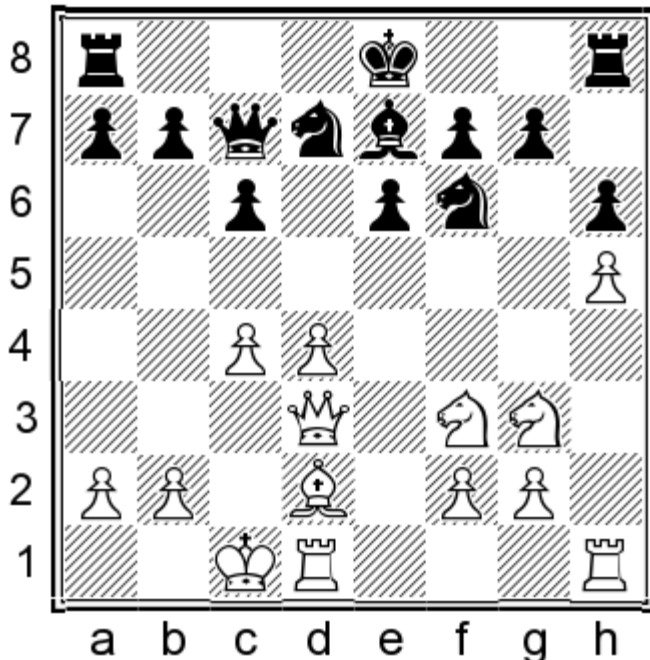
White provokes the move b7-b6, but will be incapable of exploiting the weakness of the c6-square anyway.

22. ♖c3 ♜d5 23. ♖d4 ♖ac8= Vera Siguenas – Nabaty, Baku 2016.

22. ♖fe1 ♜g4. Black is trying to create counterplay against the f2-square. 23. ♖e2 ♜df6 24. ♖de1 ♖c5 25. ♖c3 ♖d5 26. ♖xf6 gxf6 27. ♜e4 ♖b6 28. b4 ♖c8. His pieces are tremendously active, but White still finds a way to draw the game. 29. ♜c5. He forgets about his ambitious plans and relies on the famous chess-proverb “Rook and pawn endings are always a draw.” 29... ♖xh5 30. ♖xe6 ♖xc5 31. bxc5 ♜e5 32. ♖6xe5 fxe5 33. g4 ♖h3 34. ♖e3 ♜g7 35. ♜g2 ♖xf3 36. ♜xf3 ♖xc5= Gerasimchuk – Chaika, ICCF 2009. Black’s extra pawn is not sufficient for him to win this position.

22...b6 23. ♖c3 ♜d5 24. ♖e5 (24. ♖d4 ♖ac8 25. ♖fe1 ♖d6 26. ♜e4 ♖b4 27. ♖c3 ♖e7 28. g3 ♜7f6= Pripke – Hiltunen, ICCF 2012) 24... ♖ac8 25. ♖fe1 ♜c5 26. a3 ♜f6 27. ♖d4 ♜g4 28. ♜f1 ♖f6 29. b4 ♜b3 30. ♖xf6 gxf6 31. ♜e4 ♜e7 32. ♜h4 ♜e5 33. ♖xd8 ♖xd8= Brzeszkiewicz – Vodicka, ICCF 2015. This endgame is still a bit sharp, but is objectively drawish.

B3) 15.0-0-0 ♜gf6



16. ♜b1

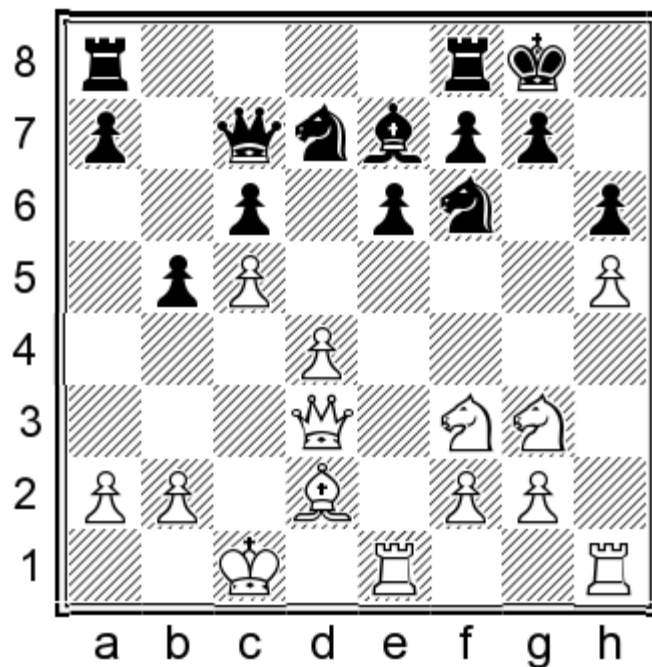
This is a flexible move. White ensures the safety of his king, concealing his further plans for the moment.

About 16. ♖e2 0-0 17. ♜e5 (17. ♜b1 c5 – see 16. ♜b1) 17... ♖fe8 18. ♜b1 b5 19. ♖c1 b4= Farley – Sanduleac, Turin 2006.

Following 16. ♖c3, Black can still play 16...b5!? 17.c5 (17.cxb5 cxb5 18. ♖xb5, Ollenberger – Stewart, Germany 2012, 18... ♜d5!?) 17...0-0= Cvicela – Dobrovolsky, Tatranska Lomnica 1997.

16. ♖c2 0-0 17. ♖h4, Heberla – Hera, Wroclaw 2011, this move is too original (It is better for White to play here 17. ♜b1 ♖fd8 – see 16. ♜b1.) 17...b5!? This is a standard pawn-sacrifice in similar positions and is even stronger with a white rook on h4. 18.c5 (18.cxb5?! ♜d5 19. ♖e4 ♖fc8 20. ♜b1 ♖b7) 18... ♜d5= The powerful placement of Black’s rook at the centre of the board provides him with a stable advantage.

16. ♖de1 b5 17.c5 0-0

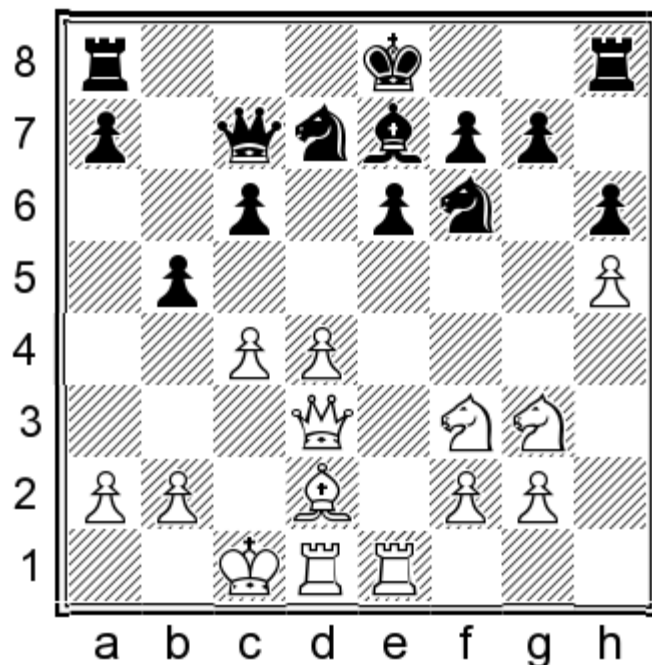


18.♖b1. This move leads to a quiet positional game. White will try to prepare an attack against the enemy king, while Black will counter attack on the queenside and will exploit the d5-square as an excellent base for his knight, or queen.
 18...a5 19.♗e4 ♗xe4 20.♙xe4 ♗f6 21.♙e5 ♙d7 22.♙g3 ♖h8 23.♙h3 b4 24.♙f4 ♙ad8∞ Neagu – Ruefenacht, ICCF 2009.

18.♗e4. White is preparing immediately g2-g4. 18...♙fd8 (The f8-square might be necessary for Black's king, so this move seems more reliable than 18...♙ad8.) 19.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 20.g4 ♗h7. Naturally, Black must prevent by all means the opening of the game on the kingside. 21.♙e4 ♙d5∞ Barnsley – Napalkov, ICCF 2008.

18.♗e2 ♗g4. Black squeezes the enemy rook with the protection of the f2-pawn. 19.♙ef1 (19.♙hf1 ♙fd8∞ Dourerassou – Ducarmon, Paris 2012) 19...♙fd8. The threat ♗xc5 forces White's queen to occupy a less active position. 20.♙c2 a5. Black has seized completely the initiative. He combines his pawn-offensive on the queenside with the threat to break in the centre (e6-e5) and maintains an advantage. 21.♙h3, Aveskulov – Korobkov, Kharkov 2007, 21...a4 22.♙g3 ♗df6 23.♗e1 b4 24.♙xb4 e5 25.♗f3 ♙d5∞

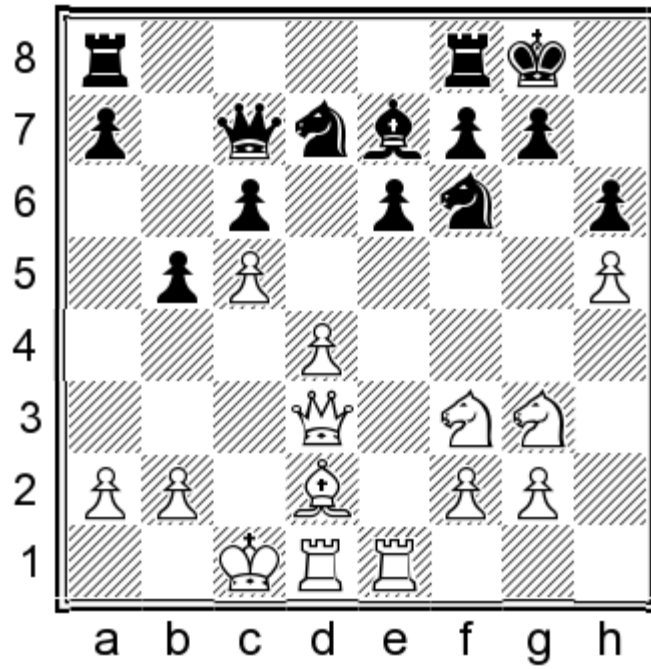
16.♙he1. This move looks more natural than 16.♙de1. The h5-pawn is not under attack at the moment, so White can place both his rooks on the central files. 16...b5



17.♔b1 bxc4 18.♖xc4, Vuckovic – R.Vukic, Vrnjacka Banja 2006. The weaknesses of the pawns on d4 and c6 about balance each other. 18...0-0 19.♖c1 ♖ac8∞

After 17.cxb5, Black should react with 17...♖b8!?, sacrificing a pawn under most favourable circumstances. 18.bxc6 ♖xc6+ 19.♔b1 ♖b6 20.b3 0-0. White's extra pawn is practically immaterial. The vulnerability of his king is of paramount importance. Black's game is much easier from the practical point of view. 21.♗e5 ♗xe5 22.dxe5 ♖fd8 23.♖e3 ♗c5 24.♖f3 ♗d5 25.♗e4 ♗a3 26.♗c1 ♗b4 27.♖e2 (The move 27.♖h1 seems to be too slow. 27...a5. This pawn is headed for the a4-square in order to weaken the shelter of the enemy king even more. 28.♖g4 ♗h8 29.♖h3 a4 30.♖g3 ♖g8. White's attack has reached its dead end. 31.♗b2 ♖a6 32.bxa4 ♗e7 33.♖b3 ♖xa4) Jimenez Ariza – Marquez Abreu, ICCF 2015.) 27...a5 28.♖g4 ♗h8 29.♖d3 a4 30.♖g3 ♖g8 31.♖c2 ♖a7 32.♗d6 axb3 33.axb3 ♗xd6 34.exd6, Gradwohl – Brewer, ICCF 2013, 34...♖b4 35.♖e2 ♖b6 36.♗b2 ♖xb3 37.♖xb3 ♖xb3 38.♖f3 ♖xf3 39.gxf3 ♖d8 40.♗a3 ♗g8= Black has a superior pawn-structure, but it is not easy to see how he can capture the enemy passed pawn, which is reliably protected by the bishop on a3.

17.c5. White occupies space, but weakens the d5-square. 17...0-0

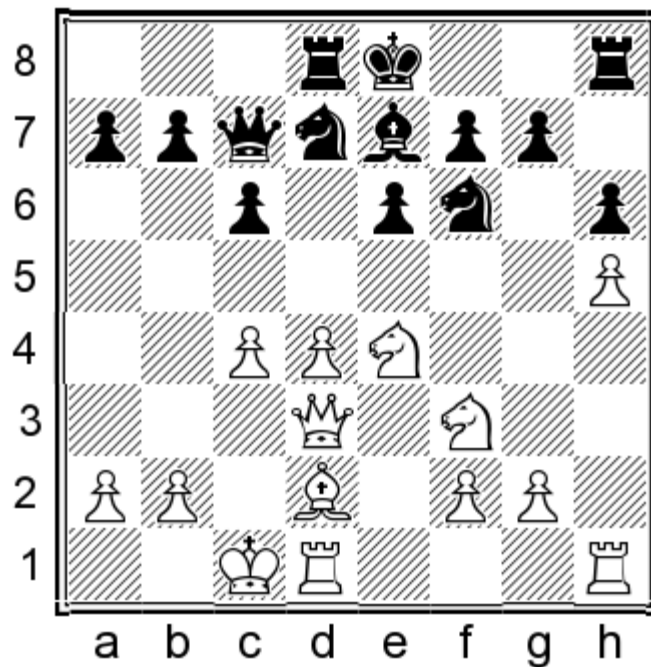


After 18. ♖f5?!, Black can inflict an interesting tactical strike. 18...exf5 19. ♖xe7 ♗xc5! 20. ♖e2 ♗cd7. White has no compensation for the pawn. His attempt to sharpen the game even more, might lead him to a hopeless position. 21. ♗h4 ♗d5 22. ♗xf5 ♗xe7 23. ♖xe7 ♖ae8 24. ♖h4 ♗h8 25. ♖g4 ♖g8 26. ♖f3, Zufic – Doric, Bol 2013, 26...♖e6+, this is prophylactic against sacrifices on h6.

18. ♗e4 ♖ad8 19. ♖a3 ♖b7∞ Lundberg – Evans, ICCF 2011.

18. ♗b1 ♖fd8 19. ♖c2 a5 20. ♗e2 ♗g4 21. ♗f4 ♖b7 22. ♗g3 a4 23. ♗c3 (23. ♗f4 ♗f8!?∞, Black protects reliably the e6-square against White's possible sacrifices there.) 23...♗df6 24. ♗e5 ♗xe5 25. ♗xe5 ♗d5 26. ♖e4 ♗f8∞ Jankowiak – Krebs, ICCF 2016. White has slightly more space, but this is compensated by the powerful outpost on d5 dominated by Black's pieces.

16. ♗e4 ♖d8

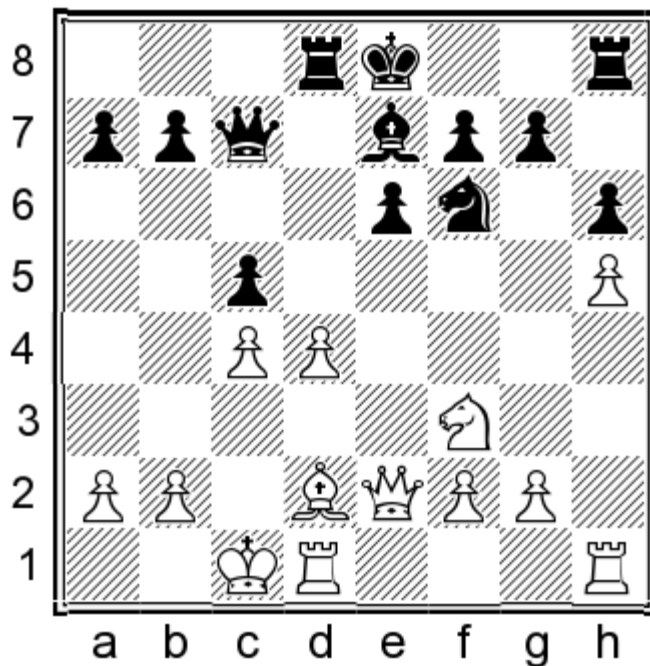


About 17.♔b1 0-0 – see variation **B3a**.

17.♘c3. The transfer of the knight from g3 to c3 is hardly worth two tempi. 17...b5!? This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice. 18.cxb5 cxb5 19.♖xb5, Pap – Ringoir, Metz 2010, 19...♖b8!? 20.♗d3 0-0

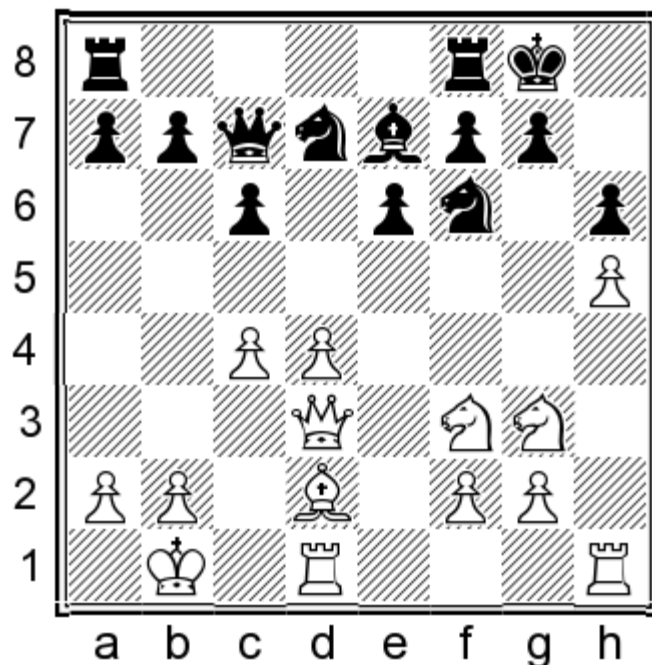
17.g3. White is preparing ♕f4, but this plan is not so dangerous for Black. 17...0-0 18.♕f4 ♖b6 19.♘xf6+ ♘xf6∞ Cilloniz Razzeto – Rawlings, ICCF 2013.

17.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 18.♗e2 (18.♔b1 0-0 – see variation **B3a**) 18...c5



19.d5!? This move cannot change the evaluation of the position as approximately equal, but still, this interesting pawn-sacrifice deserves approval, 19...exd5 20.♖he1 dxc4 21.♘h4. White exerts pressure on the e-file, impedes his opponent's castling and his knight is headed for the f5-square. Black must play super precisely; otherwise, he might be crushed very quickly. 21...c3! This pawn-strike solves all his problems. 22.♗b5+ (22.♕xc3 0-0 23.♗xe7 ♖f4+ 24.♔b1 ♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♗xh4 26.♕xf6 gxf6=) 22...♔f8 23.♕xc3 ♖f4+ 24.♕d2 ♖xh4 25.♖xe7 ♔xe7, Nogga – Zlotkowski, ICCF 2012, 26.♗xc5+ ♖d6 27.♗e5+ ♔d7 28.♗f5+ ♔c6 29.♗c2+ ♔b5 30.♗b3+ ♔c6= Unfortunately for Black he will be incapable of realising his huge material advantage, because his king cannot avoid the perpetual check.

16...0-0



We will analyse now in this position as main lines for White the moves: **B3a) 17.♘e4** and **B3b) 17.♞he1**.

17.♙c3 b5 18.c5. This move leads to the weakening of the d5-square. (18.cxb5 cxb5 19.♞xb5 ♞ab8 20.♞d3 ♞b7 ♞ Muller – Vaassen, Email 2008. Black has good attacking prospects against the enemy king.) 18...a5 19.♘e4, Gao – Feher, Zalakaros 2008, 19...♞fd8 ♞

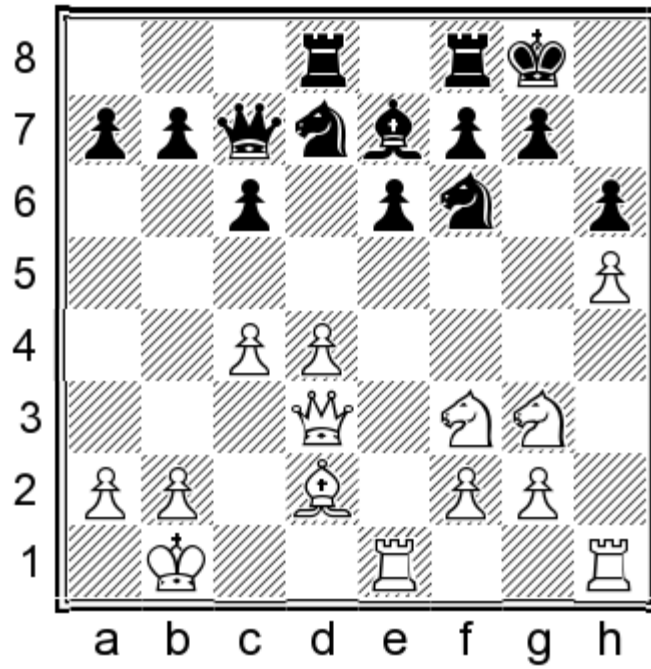
Following 17.♞e2, Black can open advantageously the game in the centre. 17...c5 18.♙c3 cxd4 19.♘xd4 ♞fe8!? This is necessary prophylactic against ♘f5 and ♘xe6. 20.♘b5 ♞c6 21.♘d4 ♞b6 22.♞d2 ♞ad8 ♞ Koehl – Sukhodolsky, ICCF 2012.

17.♙c1 ♞ad8 ♞ Pijpers – Garcia Palermo, Groningen 2013.

17.♞h4 b5 18.c5 ♞fd8 19.♞c2 a5 ♞ Rozenberg – Napalkov, ICCF 2008.

17.♞c1. This is a prophylactic move against b7-b5, but after White's rook has abandoned the d-file, Black's pawn-advance c6-c5 is even stronger. 17...♞fd8 18.♞e2 c5 19.♙c3 cxd4 20.♘xd4 ♘c5 21.♞hd1, Tsheshkovsky – Shimanov, Irkutsk 2010, 21...♘a4!? 22.♙e1 a6 ♞. His king is safer than its white counterpart, because it is sheltered by four pawns, while White's king has in defence only two, because his c4-pawn has left its defensive position.

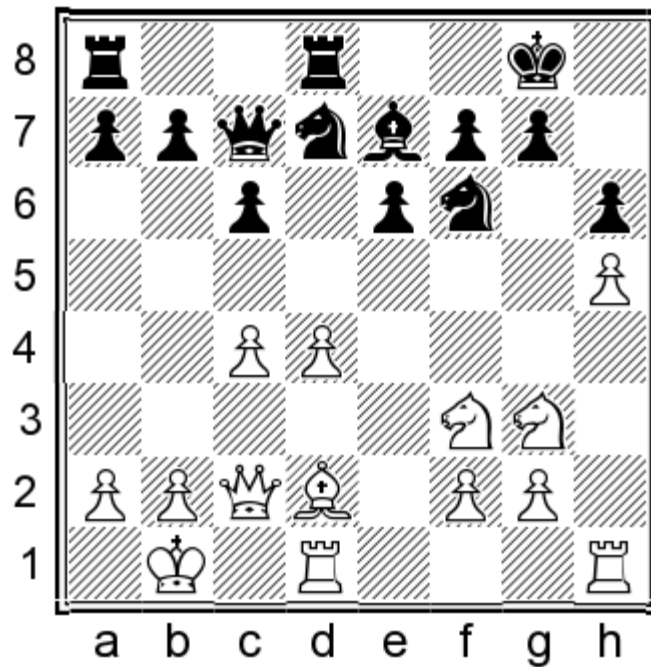
17.♞de1 ♞ad8!? Black must put here this rook, because he would need the other rook for the protection of his kingside.



It would not be consequent for White to choose here 18.♖c2, because after 18...♜fe8, Black would manage to defend against ♜f5. 19.♞e5 ♞d6 20.f4 c5 21.dxc5 ♞xc5 22.♙c3 a6 23.♙d4 ♙xe5 24.♙xe5 ♖c6 25.♞d1 ♞g4= Blanco Gramajo – Jacquin, ICCF 2008. White can hardly neutralise the activity of his opponent's pieces.

18.♞f5 exf5 19.♞xe7 ♖d6 20.♞e2 ♞e4 21.♞h4 ♞dc5. Black forces simplifications. 22.♖c2 ♖xd4 23.♙e3 ♖f6 24.♙xc5 ♞xc5 25.♖xf5. After the exchange of the pawns, Black corrects the only defect of his position – the doubled pawns on the f-file. 25...♖xf5+ 26.♞xf5 ♞fe8= Kubasky – Krakovsky, ICCF 2013.

17.♖c2. White impedes b7-b5. 17...♞fd8



18.♞de1 a5 19.a3 (19.♞e2, Loskutov – Iordachescu, Serpukhov 2008, 19...c5!?=) 19...b5!? Black opens files on the queenside with the help of this pawn-sacrifice. 20.cxb5 ♞dc8 21.♞c1 ♖b6 22.♖a4. White defends accurately. The opening of the a-file will be much safer for him than of the b-file. 22...cxb5 23.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 24.♖xa5 ♖b7 25.♞c1 ♞xc1+ 26.♙xc1 ♙d6= Titzhoff – Giertz, ICCF 2014. White will fail to preserve his extra pawn, since he is incapable of

protecting his h5-pawn.

18.♔c1. White plays this move so that after c6-c5, he can reply with d4-d5. 18...♖ac8 19.♗he1 (19.♘e2. He is preparing g2-g4, but is unlikely to obtain full compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 19...c5 20.d5 exd5 21.g4 ♘xg4 22.♗dg1 ♘df6 23.♘h4, Kotronias – Braun, Dresden 2008, 23...♙h8!?) 19...a5 20.♘e5 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♗xd1 22.♗xd1 ♘d7 23.f4 b5= Raivio – Sapundjiev, ICCF 2010.

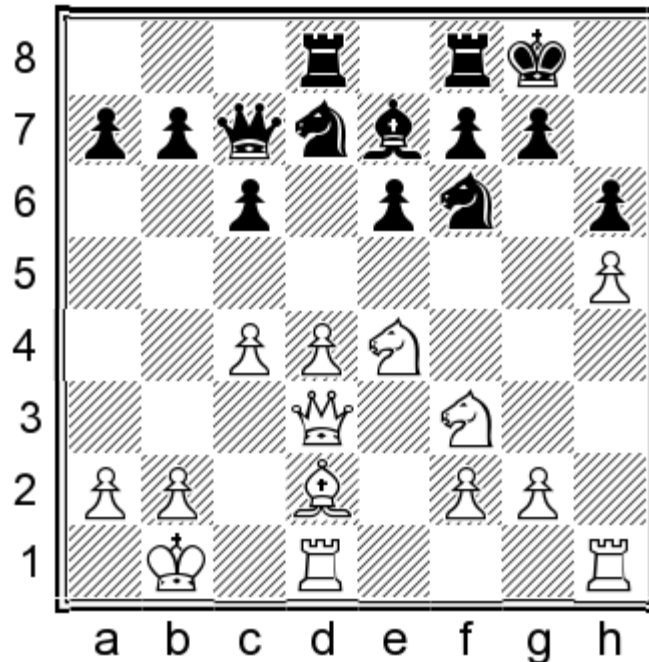
After 18.♘e2, it seems good for Black to opt for 18...♘g4, preventing g2-g4 and attacking the f2-pawn. 19.♙f4 ♙d6 20.♙xd6 ♗xd6 21.♘g3 (It is worse for White to choose instead 21.♘c1, since Black is not obliged to wait for the move ♘b3, thwarting the pawn-advance c6-c5 and can open the game in the centre immediately with 21...c5= Rost – Goncharenko, ICCF 2009.) 21...♗c7 22.♗e2 ♘gf6= Poli – Legemaat, ICCF 2011.

18.♗h4 ♘e8!? Black begins outright to chase the enemy rook exploiting its exposed placement. 19.♗e4 (Following 19.♗hh1, Black is not obliged at all to repeat the moves. 19...♘df6 20.♗de1 ♖ac8 21.♘e5 ♙f8 22.♗h4 c5= Epure – Rogetzer, ICCF 2012. His pieces are obviously better prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.) 19...♘df6 20.♙f4 ♙d6 21.♙xd6 ♗xd6 22.♗e2 ♗ad8 23.♗ed2 c5. White's defence is very difficult. He has lost too much time on manoeuvres with his rook and now, he must worry about holding on to the d-file, as well as how not to lose his h5-pawn. 24.♘e4 ♘xe4 25.♗xe4 ♘f6 26.♗e5 ♗8d7 27.b3 cxd4 28.♘xd4 b6 29.g3 ♗b7= Castello Benavent – Salzmann, ICCF 2014.

B3a) 17.♘e4

Now, Black must watch carefully about his enemy pawn-sacrifice g2-g4, after which White's attack might become very powerful. According to the classical rules, flank attacks should be countered by a counter strike in the centre, so later, Black should not think about undermining the c4-pawn (b7-b5), but should concentrate on the quickest possible opening of the d-file (c6-c5, cxd4).

17...♗ad8



18.♘xf6+

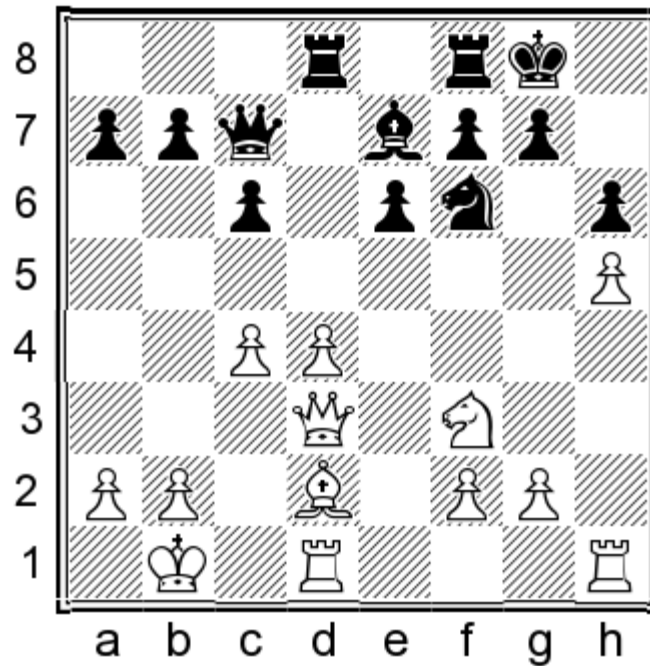
About 18.♗e2 ♘xe4 19.♗xe4 ♘f6 20.♗e2 c5 – see 18.♘xf6.

It would be premature for White to play here 18.g4?! ♖xg4 19.♚e2 ♜h8 ♞ Guliyeв – Karpov, Ajaccio 2007. He has no compensation for the pawn.

18.♙c3 c5 19.♚e2 (19.b3 a6 20.♙b2 cxd4 21.♜xd4 ♞f4 22.♜xf6+ ♜xf6 ♞ Bartsch – Robert, ICCF 2012; 19.♜xf6+ ♜f6 20.♚e2 cxd4 – see 18.♜xf6+) 19...♜xe4 20.♚xe4 ♙f6 ♞ Nora – Kozlov, ICCF 2013.

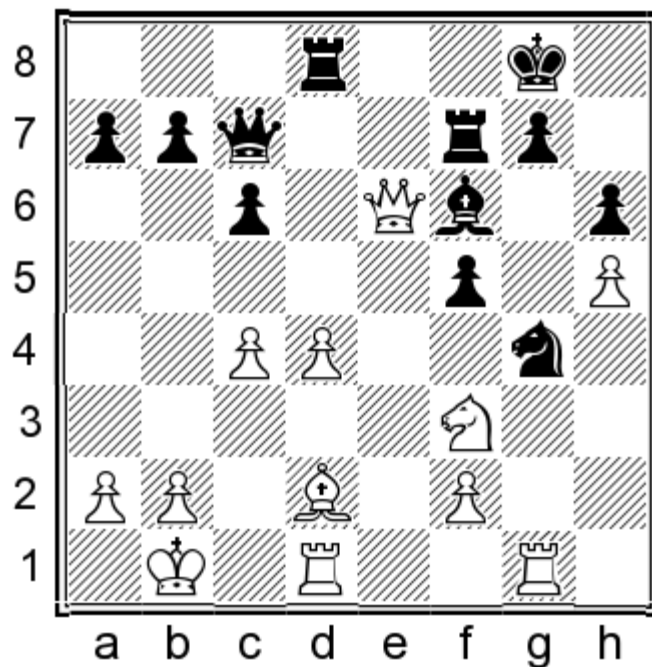
18.g3. White is preparing the development of his bishop to f4. 18...c5 19.♙f4 (It seems less consistent for him to choose 19.♙c3 cxd4 20.♙xd4 ♞fe8 21.♙xf6 ♜xf6 22.♜xf6+ ♙xf6 23.♚e2 ♞b6 ♞ Marczell – Zhak, ICCF 2009.) 19...♞b6 20.♙e3 ♞a6 21.♜xf6+ ♙xf6 22.♚c2 cxd4 23.♙xd4 ♙xd4 24.♜xd4 ♜e5. Black's pieces have been much more actively deployed. 25.b3 ♞b6 26.♞h4 ♚c5 ♞ Van den Bos – Chaika, ICCF 2009.

18...♜xf6



19.♚e2

19.g4. This pawn-sacrifice sharpens the game indeed, but would not provide White with an advantage. 19...♜xg4 20.♞hg1 f5 21.♚e2 ♙f6. Black should not hold on to his extra material. It is much more important for him to coordinate his pieces. 22.♚xe6+ ♞f7

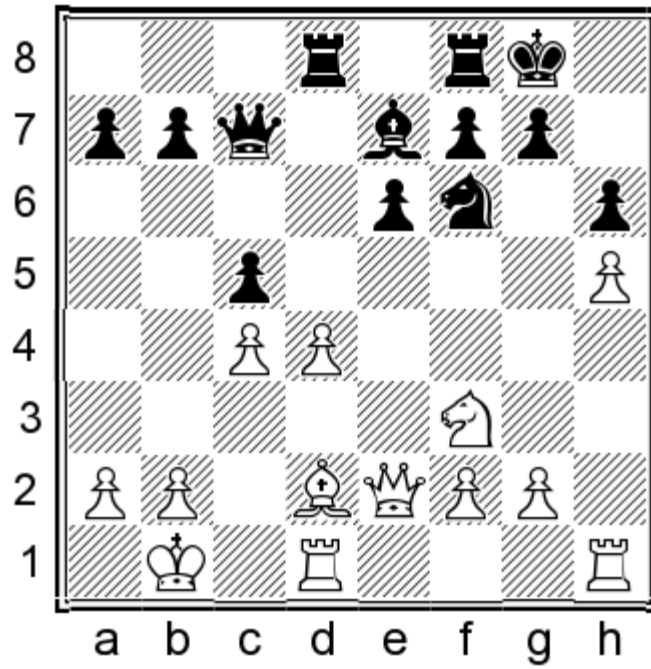


After 23.♖xf5, there arise interesting complications, which turn out at the end to be favourable for Black. 23...♗xf2 24.♞de1 ♕xd4 25.♞e6 ♕xb2 26.♔xb2 ♖d3+ 27.♔c2 ♖xe1+ 28.♞xe1 ♞c8 29.♞xc8 ♞xc8. In the arising endgame, it is essential for Black to create a passed pawn on the h-file, since it is well known that minor pieces (particularly the knights...) cannot fight effectively against passed rook-pawns. 30.♗e5 ♞f2 31.♗d3 ♞h2 32.♞e7 ♞xh5 33.♞xb7 a5 34.♗f4 ♞f5 35.♗g6 ♞f7 36.♞e7 ♞f2 37.♞d7 ♔h7 38.♗e5 h5= Klauner – Barlow, ICCF 2008. The position is still sharp, but Black's game is much easier. He simply advances his passed h5-pawn, while White must find tactical resources in order to prevent its promotion.

23.♞g2 ♞d7 24.♞xd7 ♞fxd7 25.♕c3 ♞e8∞ Soares – Unen, ICCF 2012.

23.♞de1 ♞d7 24.♞xd7 ♞fxd7 25.♞e2 ♕xd4 26.♗xd4 ♞xd4 27.♕c3. White's threats enable him to restore the material balance, but not more than that. 27...♞d3 28.f3 ♗e3 29.♞xg7+ ♔f8 30.a4 ♞xc3=, Black forces a transition into a drawish rook and pawn ending, V.Ivanov – Halliwell, ICCF 2015.

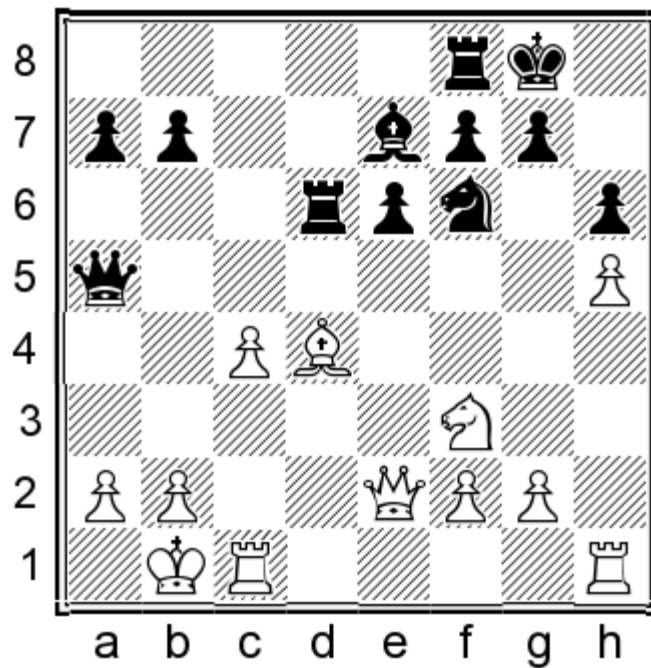
19...c5



20.g4

The Black players should be very well prepared for the arising complications, because each imprecision might lead them to a difficult position.

20.♙c3 cxd4 21.♙xd4 ♖d6 22.♞c1 ♔a5

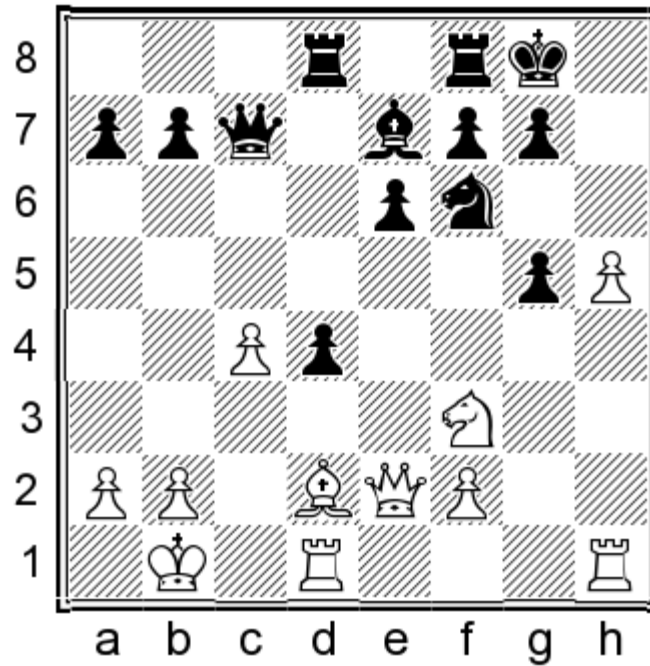


Following 23.♙c3 ♔f5+, Black's queen becomes much more active than its counterpart, so White should better comply with the trade of queens. 24.♞c2 ♞xc2+ 25.♞xc2 ♞fd8 26.♞e2 ♞d1+ 27.♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 28.♔c2 ♞f1 29.♙xf6 ♙xf6. White has a pawn-majority on the queenside in this endgame, but Black's prospects are at least equal thanks to his very active rook. 30.c5 (30.b3 ♔f8= Masek – Chukanov, ICCF 2013) 30...♔f8 31.♔d2 ♞h1= Noble – Dudyev, ICCF 2008.

23.♞e5. After this move, there arises an approximately equal endgame. 23...♞xe5 24.♙xe5 ♞c6 25.b3 ♙c5 26.♞c2 ♞d8=

Cilloniz Razzeto – Woodard, ICCF 2013. White can hardly advance his pawn-majority on the queenside, because Black's pieces are very active and White must worry about the protection of his h5-pawn all the time.

20...cxd4 21.g5 hxg5



22.h6!?

He continues to increase the pressure.

The move 22.♙xg5 seems less precise. 22...d3 23.♚e1 ♘g4 24.h6, Ponomariov – Motylev, Motril 2008, 24...♙xg5!? 25.♘xg5 g6 ♞ White has no chances of organising an effective attack against the enemy king and is a pawn down, while Black's passed d3-pawn seems very strong.

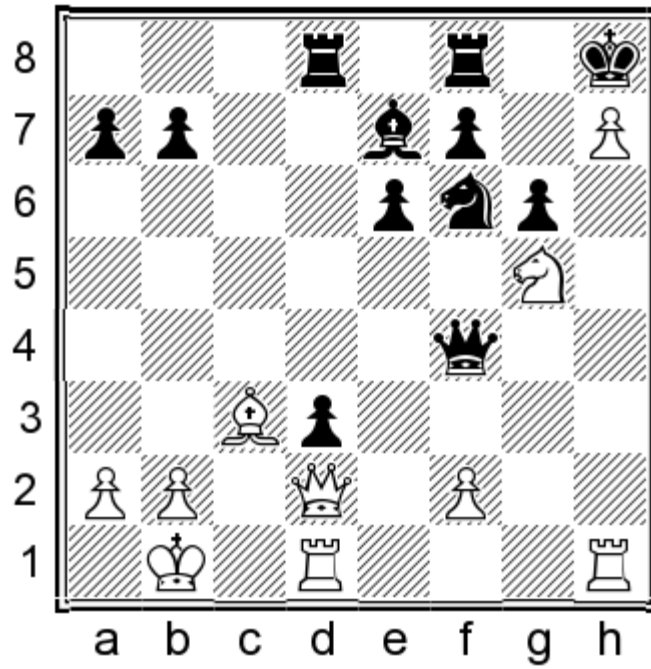
22...d3

This is a useful intermediate move. Black attacks the enemy queen and advances his passed pawn a square forward.

23.♚e1 g6 24.h7+!

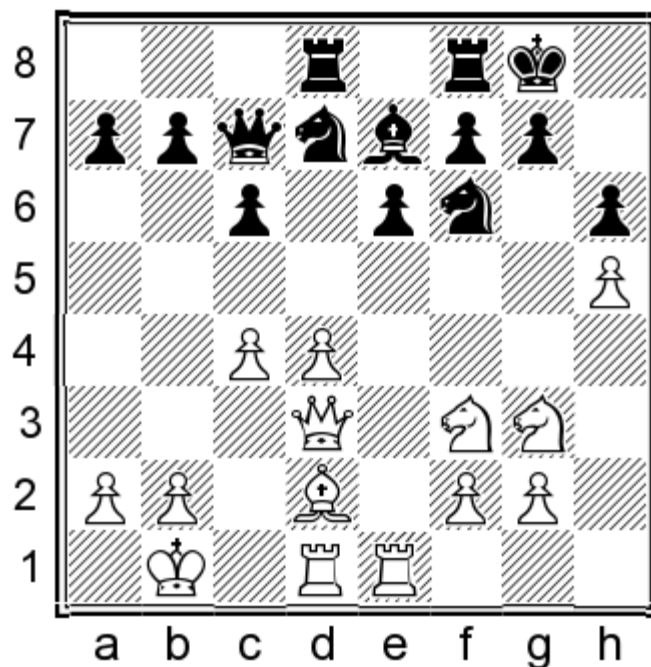
24.♙xg5 ♘g4 25.♙xe7 ♚xe7 26.♚g1 f5 ♞ Liebert – Rhodes, ICCF 2012.

24...♙h8 25.♙c3 ♚xc4 26.♘xg5 ♚f4 27.♚d2



White exchanges the queens and forgets about his attacking chances, relying on the pin of the enemy knight on f6. Black's defensive resources however, are quite sufficient to maintain the balance. 27...♙xd2 28.♞xd2 ♞d5 29.f4 b5 30.b3 a5 31.♞h3 e5!? Black creates active counterplay sacrificing at first a pawn and then the exchange, getting rid of the rather unpleasant pin. 32.♙xe5 ♞xe5 33.fxe5 ♟g4 34.♟f3 ♙b4 35.♞g2 ♟e3 36.♞g1 d2 37.e6. White brings his last reserves, but his attempt to obtain an advantage are in vain. 37...d1=♚+ 38.♞xd1 ♟xd1 39.♟e5 ♟c3+ 40.♟b2, Manduch – Rogetzer, ICCF 2011, 40...♟d5 41.♟xf7+ ♞xf7 42.exf7 ♙f8 43.a4 bxa4 44.bxa4 ♟f6 45.♞g3 ♟xh7 46.♞g5 ♟g7 47.♞xa5 ♟e4 48.♞b5 ♟c5 49.a5 ♟xf7= It would be sufficient for Black to draw just to give up one of his minor pieces for the enemy passed a-pawn.

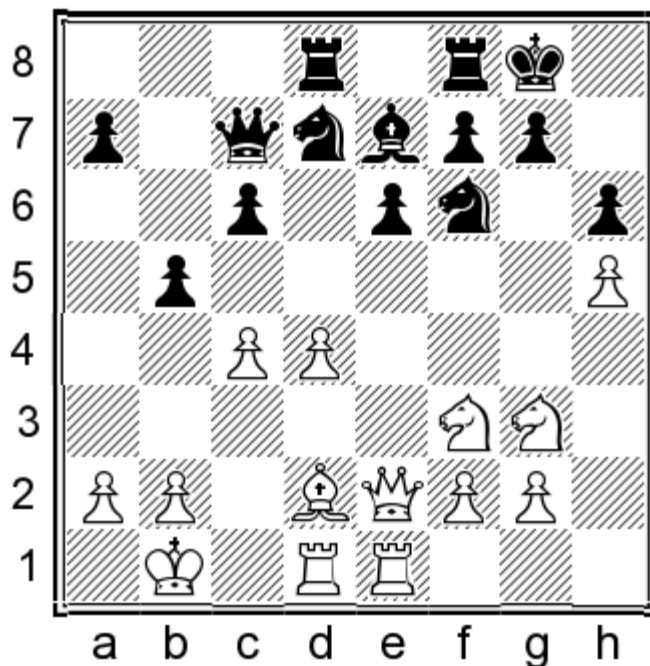
B3b) 17.♞he1 ♞ad8



18. ♖c2

White prevents b7-b5.

Following 18. ♖e2 b5!?, Black obtains good counterplay, due to the fact that White cannot preserve his control over the important d5-square.

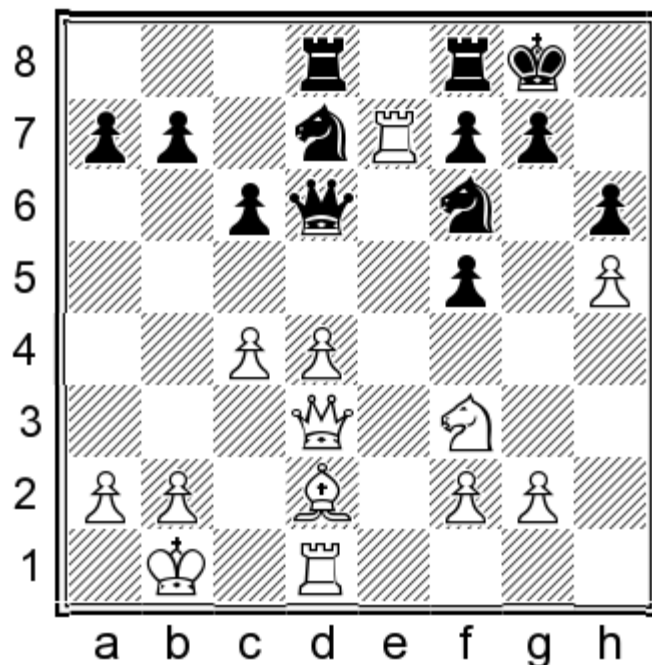


Accepting the pawn-sacrifice 19. cxb5 cxb5 20. ♖xb5, leads to the opening of the b-file and Black's major pieces can begin an attack against the enemy king using it. 20... ♖b8 21. ♖d3 ♖b6 22. b3 a5 ♠ Ramsden – Kristiansen, ICCF 2010.

After 19. ♖c1 bxc4 20. ♖xc4 ♖c8, the vulnerability of the c6-pawn is less noticeable than that of White's d4-pawn. His attempt to seize the initiative with a sacrifice of a piece 21. ♘f5 ♘d8 22. ♘xh6+ gxh6 23. ♘h6 ♖e8, would lead only to the worsening of his position, because Black can parry easily the threats against his king. 24. ♗e5 ♗d5 25. ♗xc6 ♖b6 26. ♖a4 ♘f6 27. ♖c4 ♖b7 ♠ Likhachev – Anikeev, ICCF 2014. Black's minor piece will be stronger than White's three pawns in this middlegame.

19. c5 ♖fe8 ♠ Van Delft – Saltaev, Germany 2006.

18. ♗f5. White forces immediately the issue. 18... exf5 19. ♖xe7 ♖d6. Black must oust in a flash White's active rook from the penultimate rank.

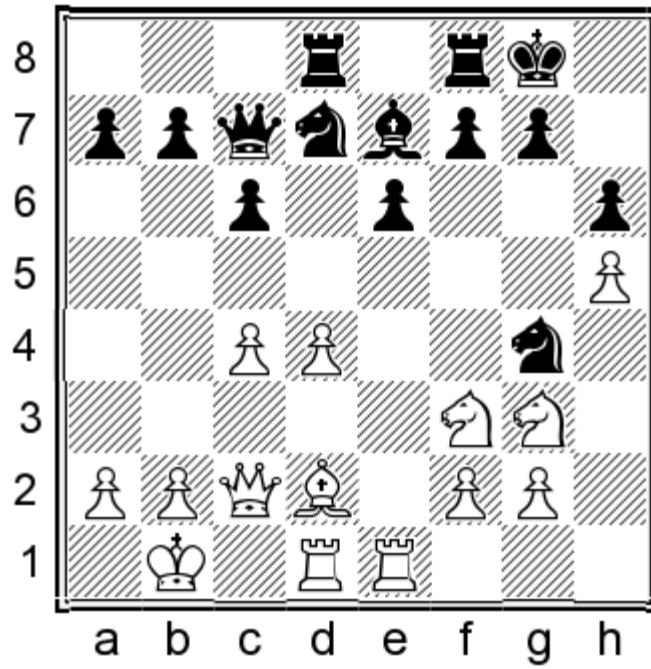


After 20.♖e1 ♗e4, White will have to lose a tempo for the protection of his f2-pawn. 21.♙e3 ♜fe8 22.♚c2 ♗df6 23.♗e5 ♚c7 24.c5. He is preparing ♗c4-d6, but weakens the d5-square. 24...♞d5 25.♗c4 ♚d7 26.f3 ♗g3 27.♗d6 ♞e6 28.♙f2 ♜xe1 29.♜xe1 f4 30.♞e5 ♗gxh5∞ L.Hansen – Krakovsky, ICCF 2014. White's pieces are very active, but Black's extra pawn compensates this.

20.♞e2 ♗e4 21.♙c1 (21.♗h4. This attempt to exploit immediately the vulnerability of the f5-pawn is parried easily by Black. 21...♗dc5 22.♚c2 ♚f6 23.♗f3 ♗e6 24.♙e3 ♞d6 25.a3 ♜fd8 26.♞de1 b5♣ Pluemmer – Markus, Email 2013. He has seized completely the initiative, so White will need to defend.) 21...♜fe8 22.♙a1 (22.g3, Rohit – Antonio Rogelio, Cebu 2007, 22...c5!♣) 22...♗dc5. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to e6, from where it would exert powerful pressure against the pawn on d4. 23.♚c2 ♗e6 24.g3 b5 25.cxb5 cxb5 26.d5 ♞c8 27.♚b3 ♞ed8 28.♙e3 f4 29.♙xf4 ♗xf4 30.♜xe4 ♗xh5 31.♚xb5 ♚xd5 32.♚xd5 ♞xd5. The tactical complications are over and the position has been simplified considerably. Black maintains a slight but stable edge. 33.♞e8+ ♙h7 34.♞e1 ♜f5 35.♞d3 ♗f6♣ De Pinho – Woodard, ICCF 2013. The threats ♞c2 and ♗g4 are very unpleasant for White.

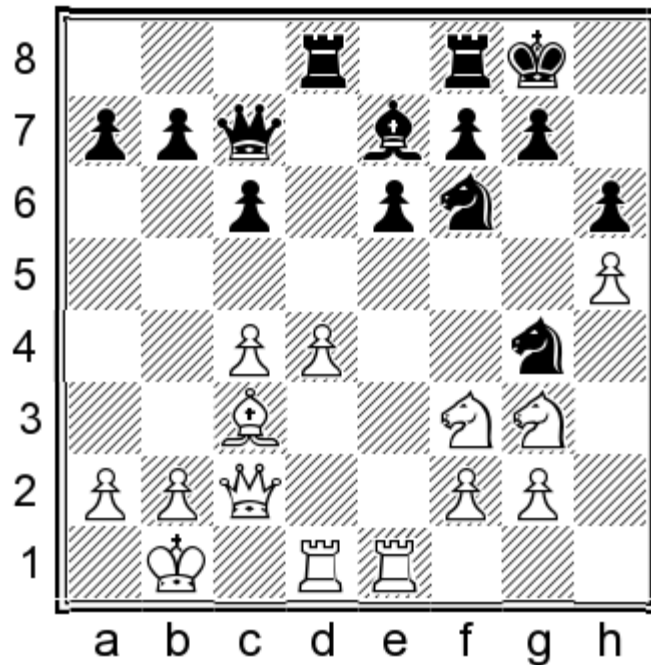
18...♗g4

Black exploits the fact the the f2-pawn is defenceless and activates his knight with tempo.



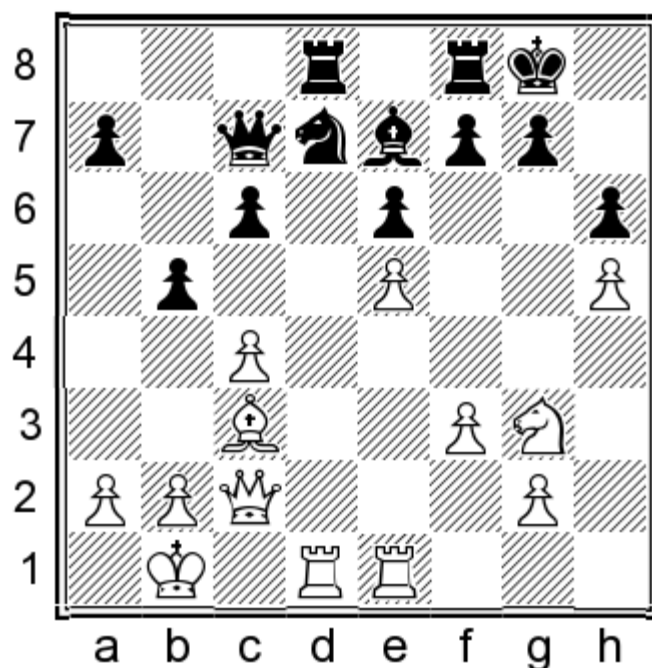
19. Qc1

Following 19. Qc3, Black has a very interesting possibility 19... Ndf6!? (It would be sufficient for him to play here 19... Rfe8= in order to equalise, Motylev – Dreev, Moscow 2005.)



20. a4 c5 21. d5 exd5 22. Nf5 Rfe8 23. cxd5 Qf8. White's knight is very active on f5, but despite this he cannot even rely on equality, because his isolated d5-pawn is very weak. 24. Qxf6 Nxf6 25. Rxe8 Nxe8 26. Wc4 a6 27. g4 b5 28. axb5 axb5 29. Wxb5 Wf4 30. Wd3 Nf6 31. d6 Nxc4 32. Ne7+ Qxe7 33. dxe7 Re8 34. Rxc1 Nf6 35. Rxc5 Rxe7 36. Rxc8+ Ne8 Wosch – Leon, FICGS 2011. White has managed to simplify the position, but the vulnerability of his king still hurts him.

20. Ne5 b5 21. f3 (It is possible that his best move in this position is 21. c5 – losing the control over the d5-square, but preventing the opening of the game on the queenside. 21... Rd5 22. f4 a5 23. Rd3 b4 24. Qd2 Rfd8 25. Ne2 Nxe5 26. fxe5 Ne4 Akrill – Rohde, ICCF 2016.) 21... Nxe5 22. dxe5 Nd7



23. ♖f1 ♜b6 24. cxb5 cxb5 ♜ Hernandez Fernandez – Gatterer, ICCF 2012.

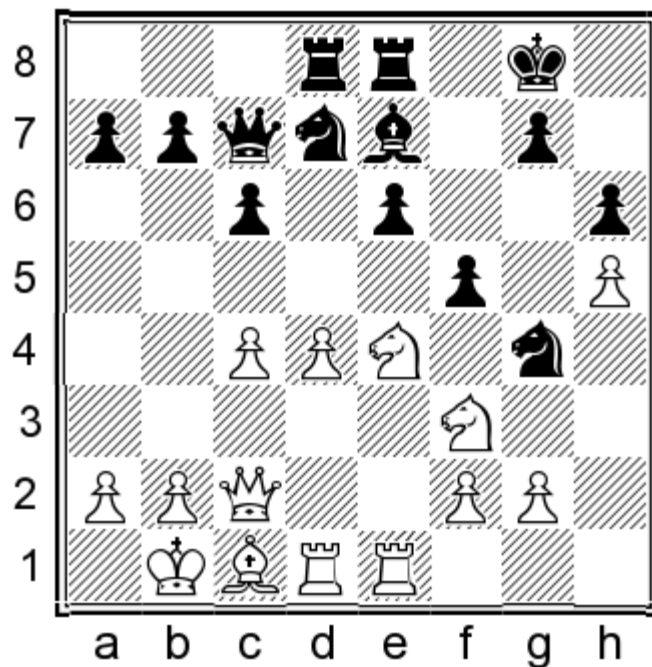
23. cxb5 ♔h4 24. ♗f2 cxb5 25. ♝d4 ♞b6 26. ♞ee4 ♕e7 27. ♞e1 ♞c6 28. ♞g4 ♜h8 29. ♞e4 ♞c7 30. ♞e2 ♞c8 31. ♝d1 a6 ♜ Heydt – Orekhov, ICCF 2015.

23. ♞e4. White defends against ♔h4. 23...b4 24. ♕d2 a5 25. f4 ♜c5. Black's knight will be very powerful on this square, controlling the important e4 and d3-squares and supporting his queenside pawn-offensive (a5-a4, b4-b3). 26. ♞e3 ♞b6! This is a very strong move. Now, after the trade of the knights, Black will manage to transfer quickly his queen to the kingside. 27. ♜e4 ♜xe4 28. ♞xe4 ♗f2 29. ♕c1 ♞h4 30. ♝ed4 ♞xh5 ♜ Peli – Molinero, ICCF 2014. White has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

19... ♞fe8 20. ♜e4

20. a3, Mkrtchian – Riazantsev, Cheliabinsk 2007, 20...b6!?∞

20... f5



White ousts the enemy knight away from the centre at the price of the weakening of his e6-pawn.

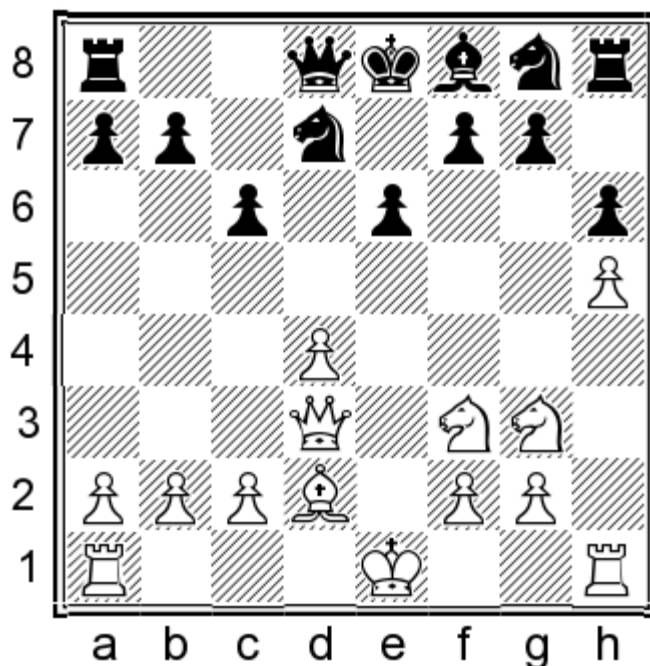
21. Nc3

21. Nc3?! d6 22. Nf1 Ndf6 Trana – Sapundjiev, ICCF 2015.

21... b4 22. Nh4 xc3 23. bxc3 Nb6 24. c5 Nc4 25. a1 b5 26. f3 Nf6 Moskalyov – Chaika, ICCF 2014. The shelter of White's king has been weakened, while Black's knight on c4 is very active. The position is approximately equal indeed, but Black's game is much simpler.

Chapter 18

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♖g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5 ♖h7 9.♕d3 ♕xd3 10.♖xd3 e6 11.♕d2



Now, just like after 11.♕f4, White is preparing to castle queenside, but here Black does not have the possibilities, connected with ♖a5 and ♕b4. On the other hand, White's bishop is not so active on d2 as on f4.

11...♗g6 12.0-0-0

White sometimes postpones his castling for a while, but does not achieve much with this.

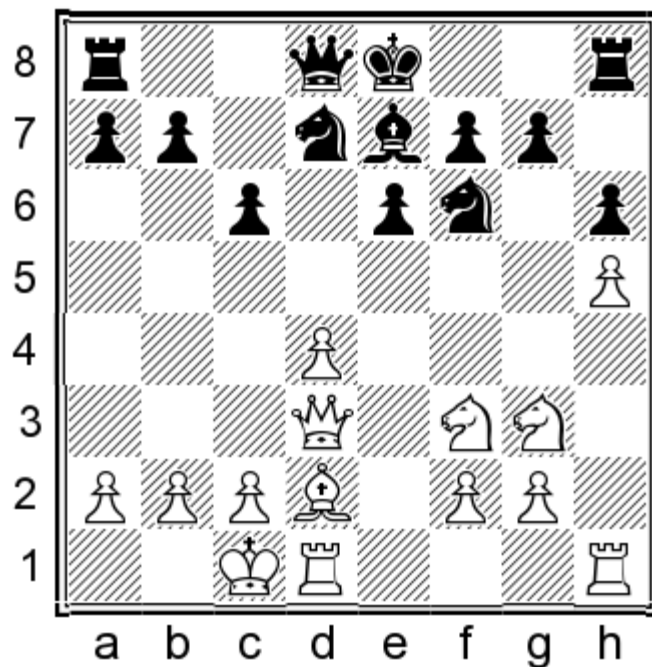
12.♗e4 ♗xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗f6 14.♖d3 ♕e7 15.0-0-0 c5, or 14.♖e2 ♕e7 15.0-0-0 ♖d5 – see 12.0-0-0.

12.c4 ♕e7 13.♖e2 (13.0-0-0 0-0, or 13.♗e4 0-0 14.0-0-0 c5 – see 12.0-0-0) 13...0-0 – see 12.♖e2.

12.♖e2 ♕e7 13.c4. White wishes to place his bishop on c3 and to castle only after that. Still, as the readers already know from our previous chapter, the placement of White's pawn on c4 enables Black to organise counterplay on the queenside. (13.0-0-0 0-0 – see variation **B**) 13...0-0 14.♕c3 (14.0-0-0 b5 – see variation **B**) 14...b5!?! This is a standard pawn-sacrifice for similar positions and Black obtains very good compensation for it. 15.cxb5 cxb5 16.♖xb5, Kotan – Bernei, Kobanya 1991, 16...♕d6 17.♗e2 ♗d5

12...♕e7!?

Black's plan with castling queenside 12...♖c7 and 13...0-0-0 has not been refuted yet, but he often obtains a solid but passive position, without too many chances of seizing the initiative. Therefore, in the last several years, the much more active plan with castling kingside has become very popular among the fans of the Caro-Kann Defence.



We will analyse now: **A) 13.♘e4**, **B) 13.♙e2** and **C) 13.♚b1**.

About 13.♞he1 0-0 14.♙e2 (14.♚b1 ♜b6 – see variation **C2**) 14...♙b6 – see variation **B**.

13.♞de1 0-0 14.♘e4 ♘g4 15.♙e2 c5∞ Motylev – Ruck, Legnica 2013.

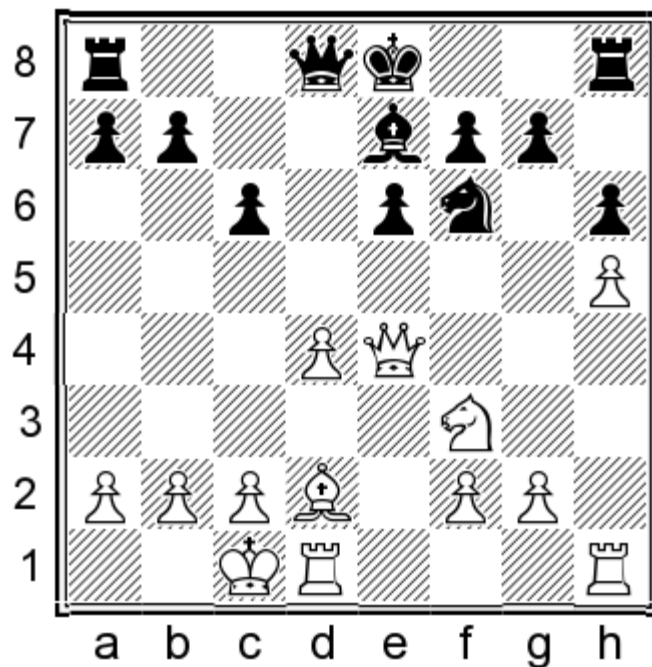
About 13.c4 0-0 14.♘e4 (14.♙e2 b5 – see variation **B**; 14.♚b1 ♜b6 – see variation **C1**) 14...c5 15.♙c3 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♙c7 17.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 18.♘e5 ♞ad8 19.♙e3, Garcia Gildardo – Garcia Palermo, Bayamo 1981, 19...b5!?♠ Black sacrifices a pawn and wishes to open the c-file and to gain access to the d5-square for his knight.

13.♘f1. Here, before Black has played 0-0, this move seems premature, because the plan, connected with the pawn-advance g2-g4 seems senseless at the moment, while the transfer of the knight to e3 looks rather slow and is obviously not worth the two tempi lost. 13...c5 14.♘e3 cxd4 15.♙xd4 ♙c5 16.♙f4 ♞c8 17.♙c3 ♙c7= Here, White must comply with the fact that he has no advantage and exchange the queens, because his attempt to avoid it 18.♙h4?! Kristjansson – Grant, Reykjavik 2014, might lead very quickly to a hopeless position for him. 18...0-0!♠ 19.g4?! ♙xe3+ 20.fxe3 ♘e4 21.♙h2 ♘xc3 22.♙xc7 ♘xa2+ 23.♚b1 ♞xc7 24.♚xa2 ♘f6+ White has neither attack nor material.

A) 13.♘e4

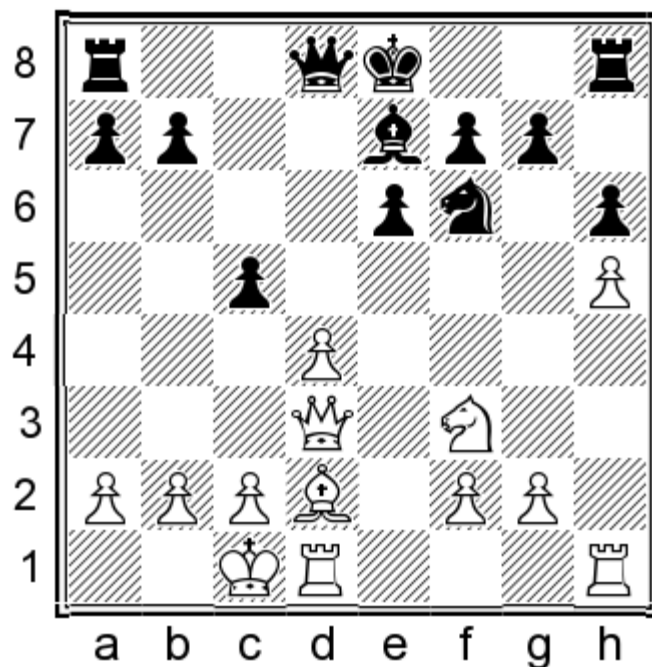
This move cannot create problems for Black, because he can exchange quickly the queens, exploiting the defencelessness of the a2-pawn, after which there would arise an approximately equal endgame.

13...♘xe4 14.♙xe4 ♘f6



15. ♖e2

Following 15. ♖d3, Black should better forget about the plan, connected with ♖d5-e4 and begin an immediate attack against the d4-square. 15...c5!? (15... ♖d5 16.c4 ♖e4 17. ♖b3±).

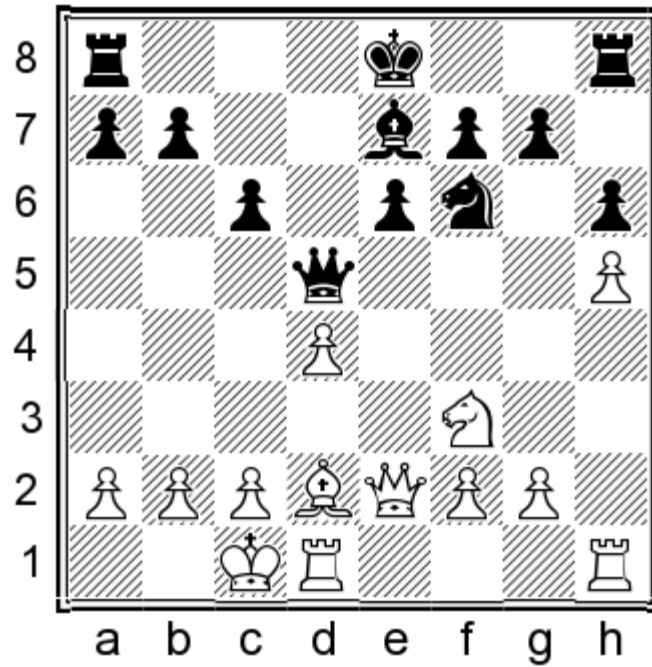


16. ♗e3 0-0∞

The move 16. ♖b5+ is completely harmless for Black 16... ♖d7 17. ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 18. ♗e3 cxd4 19. ♗xd4 ♗f6 20. ♗e3 (20. ♖he1 ♗e7= Chigaev – Dreev, Sochi 2016) 20... ♗b6 21. ♗xb6 axb6. The weakness of Black's isolated pawns on the b-file is compensated by the fact that his bishop is stronger than the enemy knight in an open position with a fight on both sides of the board. In addition, White might have problems with the protection of his pawn on h5, for example after ♗a5. 22.a3 ♗e7 23. ♗d3 ♖hc8 24. ♖b3 ♗c6 25. ♗e1 ♗a5= Williamson – Rufenacht, ICCF 2016.

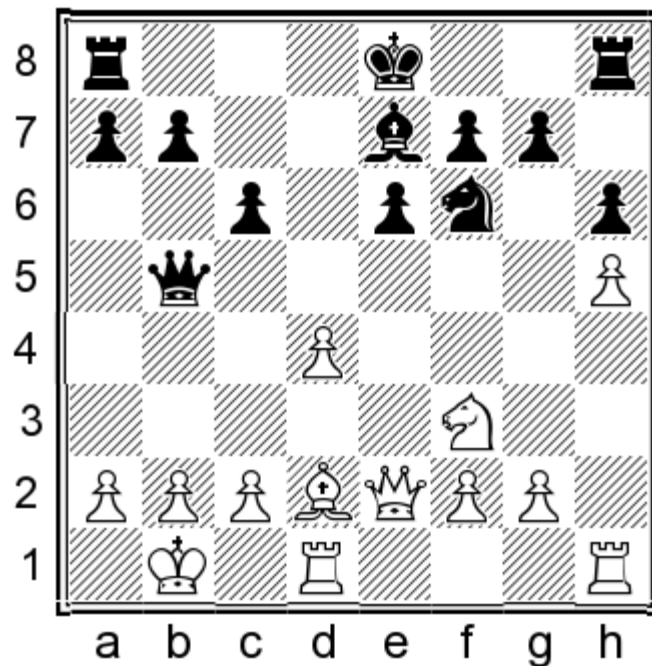
16.♔b1 ♖c8!? This is Black's most reliable way of equalising (after 16...0-0, he must consider 17.g4∞) 17.♗b5+ ♕d7
 18.♗xd7+ ♜xd7 19.♙e3 ♘f6 20.♞e5 ♞d5 21.♙c1 ♙f6= Kokarev – Rozum, Loo 2014.

15...♗d5



16.c4

Black can counter 16.♔b1 with 16...♗b5!?



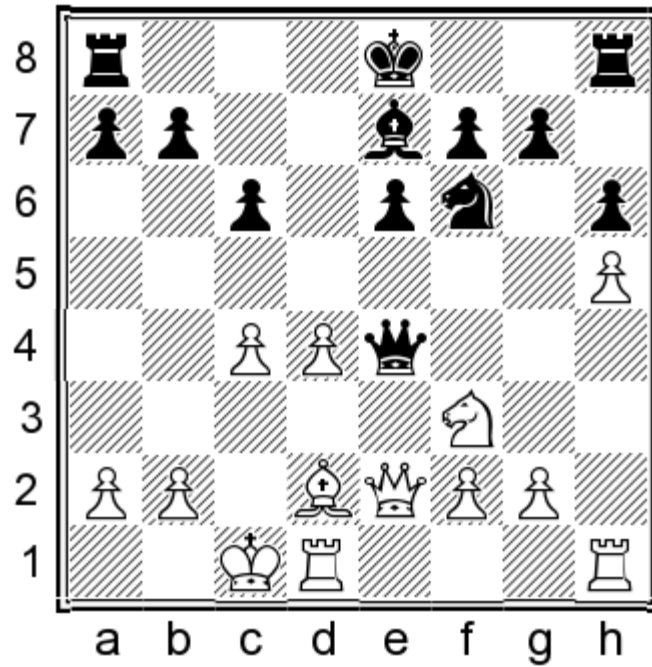
White cannot harm his opponent with 17.♗xb5 cxb5= Efroimski – Li Xueyi, Oslo 2017.

17.♗e5 ♖d8∞ Paehtz – Gunina, Tromsø 2014.

17.c4 ♗f5+ 18.♔a1 0-0-0. Black's king will be completely safe here. 19.♙c3 (19.♙e3 ♙d6= German – Hoefelsauer,

Marianske Lazne 2017) 19...♔d6 20.♖de1. This move seems a bit strange. Still, White needs his other rook for the protection of his h5-pawn. 20...♖he8= Lanc – Goncharenko, ICCF 2013.

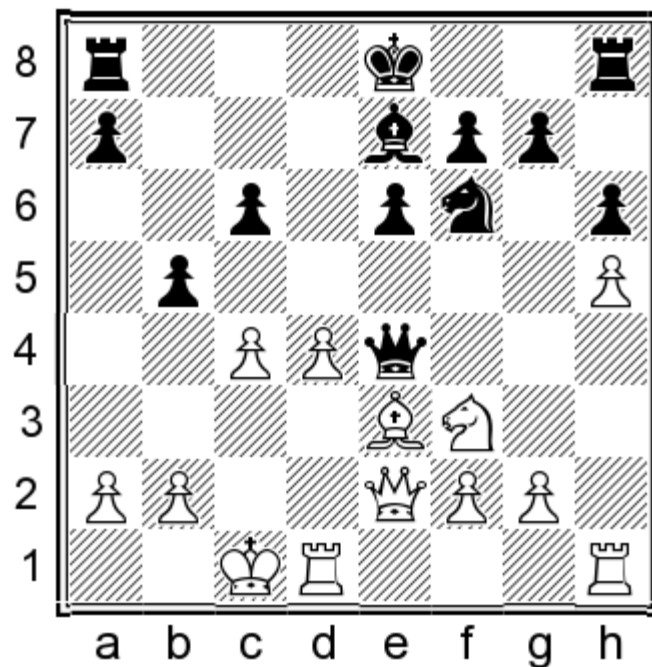
16...♗e4



17.♗xe4

17.♗f1. White avoids the exchange of the queens, but worsens its position considerably. 17...0-0 18.♖e1, Kosashvili – Langeweg, Breda 2000, 18...♗f5!?

Following 17.♔e3, Black can begin immediate active actions on the queenside without losing time for castling. 17...b5!?

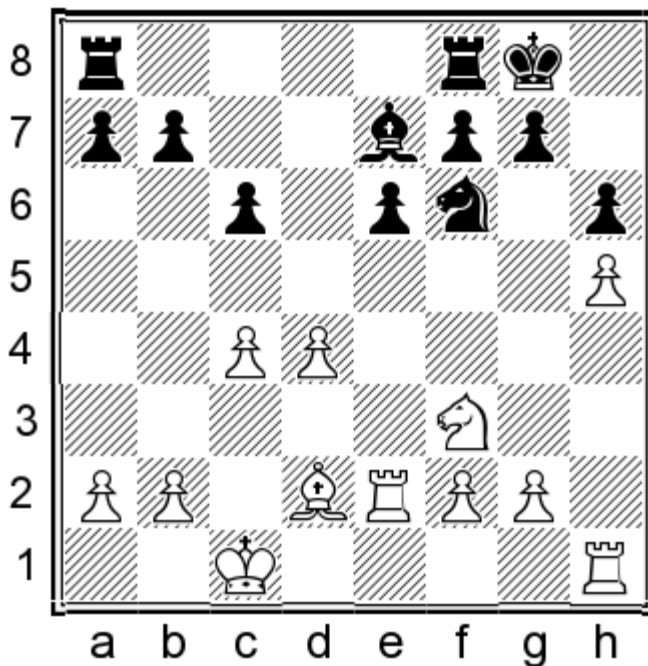


After 18.♗e5 bxc4 19.f3 ♗d5 20.♗xc4, the weakness of the pawns on c6 and d4 is about balanced. 20...0-0 21.♗xd5

♖xd5 22.♙d2 ♜fc8=

18.♜h4. White ousts the enemy queen from its active position, but his rook will be misplaced on h4. 18...♚h7 19.♗e5 ♜c8 20.g4, Nedev – Dreev, Yerevan 2001. 20...bxc4!? 21.♖xc4 ♗d5=

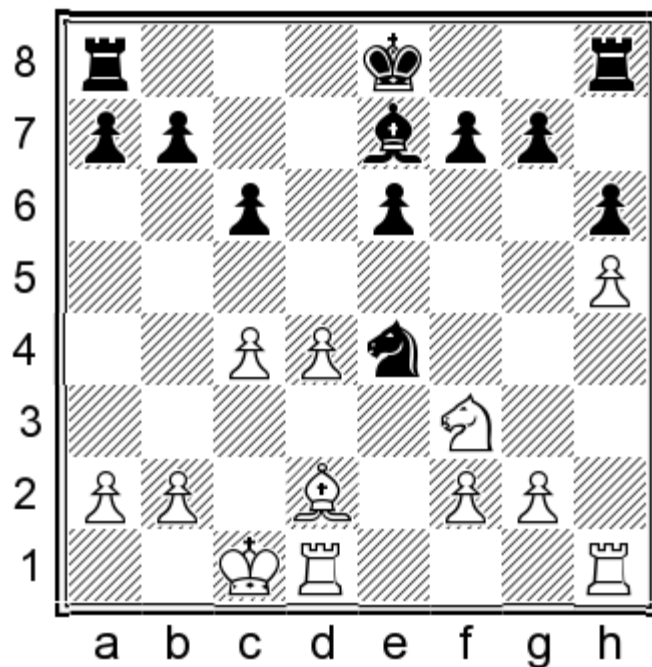
17.♞de1 ♚xe2 18.♞xe2 0-0. Black has no problems at all in this endgame.



19.g4 ♗xg4 20.♞g1 f5 21.♞xe6 (Following 21.♗e5?! ♗xe5 22.dxe5 ♗f7+, White has no compensation for the pawn, Ilyin Zhenevsky – Bogoljubow, Moscow 1924.) 21...♙f6 22.♗e5, Pererva – Fichtner, Oberhof 2011, 22...♗xf2!? This is Black's simplest decision. 23.♙xh6 ♙xe5 24.dxe5 ♗f7 25.♞d6 gxh6 26.♞gg6 ♗e4 27.♞d7+ ♗e8 28.♞gg7 ♞h8. He wishes to play ♗g5, taking the f7-square under control. Here, White must force a draw by a perpetual check; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position. 29.♞ge7+ ♗f8 30.♞f7+ ♗g8 31.♞g7+ ♗f8=

19.♗e5 ♞fd8 20.♙e3 (20.♙c3 ♞ac8 21.a4 b5= Ivanovic – Kavalek, Bugojno 1982) 20...♞ac8 21.g4 c5 22.dxc5 ♙xc5 23.♙xc5 ♞xc5 24.b4. White has pawn-majority on the queenside, but if Black plays correctly it would not harm him. 24...♞cc8 25.♞d1 ♗d5= Kobalia – Ezat, Reykjavik 2014.

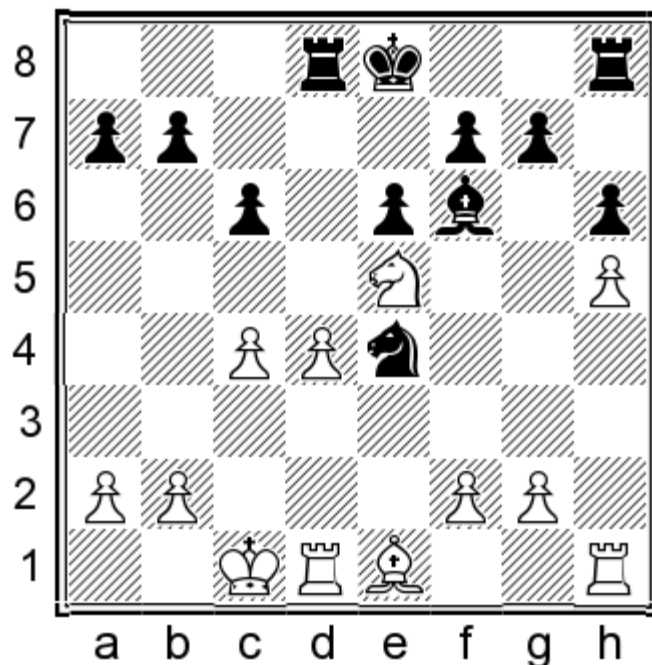
17...♗xe4



White has somewhat freer game, but his central d4-pawn is placed on a square with the same colour of his bishop. This might hurt him later, moreover that he would need to lose some time to protect his f2-pawn.

18. ♖e3

18. ♖e1. Here, White's bishop will not be attacked after f5-f4, but is not so actively placed. 18... ♗f6 19. ♘e5 ♖d8



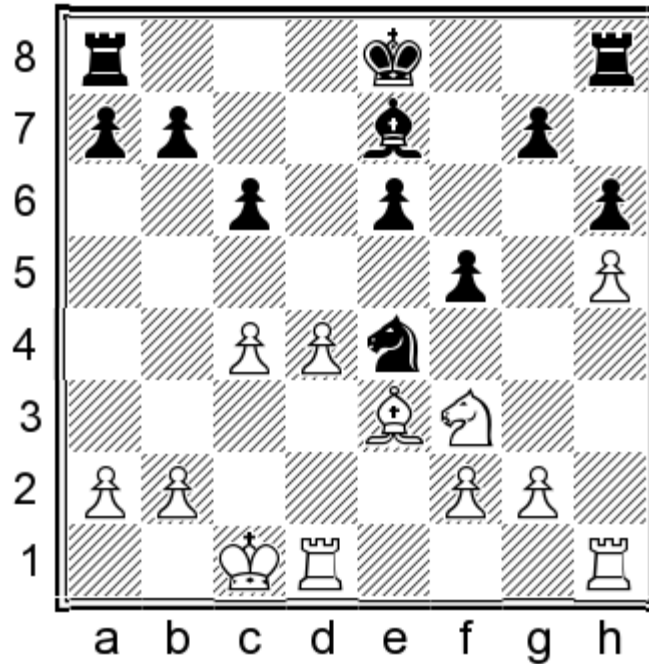
20. f3 ♘d6= Vibbert – Akobian, Dallas 2014.

20. f4 0-0 21. ♖h3 ♗xe5 22. dxe5 ♖xd1+ 23. ♔xd1 ♖d8+ 24. ♔e2 ♖d4 25. b3 f5 26. exf6 ♘xf6 27. ♗d2 b6= Muzyka – Zhak, ICCF 2011. White is incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the enemy e6-pawn, because his rook is squeezed with the protection of his h5-pawn.

After 20. ♖h3, it is an endgame indeed, but there arise interesting complications. White is reluctant to protect his f-pawn

with his knight. 20...c5 21.♞hd3 ♞xd4 22.♞xd4 cxd4 23.f4 ♟xe5 24.fxe5 f5 25.♞xd4. Black's knight is very powerful at the centre of the board, but White's long-range bishop is not weaker than it. 25...♞g8. Black's rook is not so well placed, so he should activate it as quickly as possible. It cannot come to the d-file, so Black is preparing to open files on the kingside. 26.♟h4 g5 27.hxg6 ♞xg6 28.♞d8+ ♔f7 29.♞d7+ ♔g8 30.♞xb7 ♞xg2 31.♞xa7 ♞g4 32.♞a8+ ♔g7 33.♟e7 h5, Ponomarjov – Valstep, www.bestlogic.ru 2016, 34.c5 ♘xc5 35.♟f8+ ♔f7 36.♟xc5 ♞c4+ 37.♔d2 ♞xc5 38.♞h8 ♞xe5 39.♞xh5= The rook and pawn ending is drawish.

18...f5



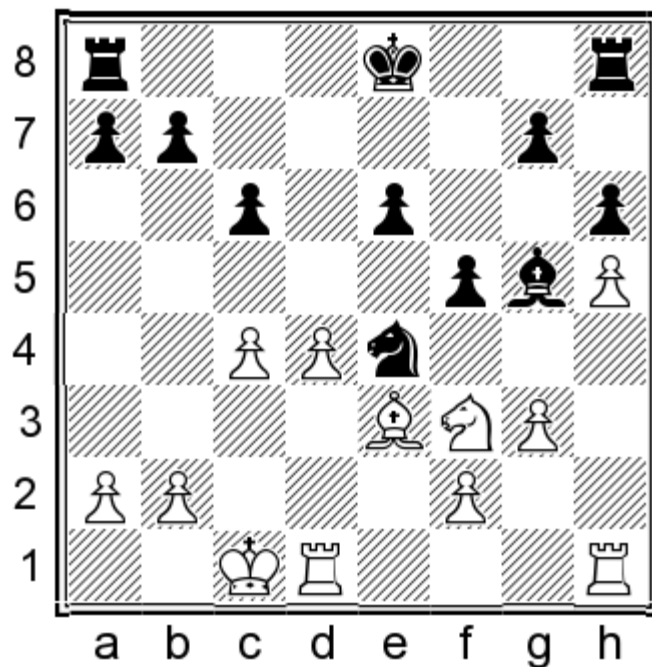
19.♞he1

19.♞d2. White ousts immediately the enemy knight away from the centre, but worsens the placement of his own knight. 19...♞f6 20.f3 (There arises a repetition of the position after 20.♞f3 ♞e4=; 20.♞de1 ♔f7= Ameir – Grischuk, Baku 2016.) 20...b5!? 21.♟f4 ♔f7∞ Ahmad – Antonio, Jakarta 2011.

The pawn-break in the centre 19.d5 simplifies the position even more. 19...cxd5 20.cxd5 f4 21.♟d4 (It would be worse for White to choose here 21.♞d4, because after 21...exd5 22.♟xf4 0-0 23.♟e3 ♞f5, Black's pieces would be much more active, Sulskis – Cheparinov, Novi Sad 2009.) 21...exd5 22.♟xg7 ♞g8 23.♟d4 ♞xg2 24.♞dg1 ♞xg1+ 25.♞xg1 ♞g5 26.♞xg5 ♟xg5 27.♔d2 ♔f7= Nevostrujev – Mokhov, Barnaul 2011. There is just a few material left on the board.

19.♔c2. White wishes to activate his king as quickly as possible. 19...f4 20.♔d3 (20.♞d2 fxe3 21.♞xe4 exf2= Muzas – Hollands, ICCF 2012.) 20...fxe3 21.♔xe4 exf2 22.♞df1 (After 22.♞hf1, Mista – Miton, Dresden 2017, White's pawn on h5 is not protected by his rook anymore and perishes quickly. 22...0-0!? 23.♞xf2 ♞f5 24.♞e2 ♞xh5 25.♔d3 ♟f6 26.♞xe6 ♞a5 27.a3 ♞d8=) 22...♞f8 23.♞xf2, Anand – Leko, Nice 2008, 23...0-0-0!? This is Black's simplest road to equality. His actively deployed pieces compensate the slight weakness of his e6-pawn. 24.♞e2 c5 25.♔d3 ♟f6 26.♞xe6 ♟xd4= Black has managed to exchange his weak e6-pawn.

19.g3. White prevents f5-f4, but Black can play instead 19...♟g5!?



20. ♖xg5 hxg5 21. ♜h2, Hracek – Navara, Ostrava 2014 (White would not achieve much if he prevents g5-g4: 21. g4 f4 22. f3 ♗d6 23. c5 fxe3 24. cxd6 ♜f8= Zierk – Vigorito, ICC 2015.) 21...g4!?∞, fixing the enemy pawns on g3 and f2 on the same colour of squares as his bishop.

20. ♖xg5 hxg5 21. ♜h2 g4 22. ♗e5 ♝d8 23. ♔c2 ♜h6= Jakubowski – Varitski, Pardubice 2015. White's rooks are squeezed with the protection of his pawns on d4 and h5.

20. ♜h2. No matter how White captures on g5, Black's rook will exert rather unpleasant pressure against the h5-pawn. 20...♖xe3+ 21. fxe3 0-0 22. ♜g1 ♗f6 23. ♗e5 ♗g4!? Black has weakened his pawn-structure, but has traded his opponent's powerful knight and opened the f-file for his rook. 24. ♗xg4 fxg4 25. ♜h4, Calzetta Ruiz – Kovchan, Porto San Giorgio 2009, 25...♜f2!? 26. ♜xg4 ♜af8 27. ♜f4 ♜8xf4 28. exf4 ♗f7. Black's active rook compensates his sacrificed pawn. 29. ♝d1 ♜f3 30. d5 exd5 31. cxd5 cxd5 32. ♜xd5 ♗e7 33. ♜b5 b6. White is incapable of holding on to his extra material. 34. a4 ♜xg3=

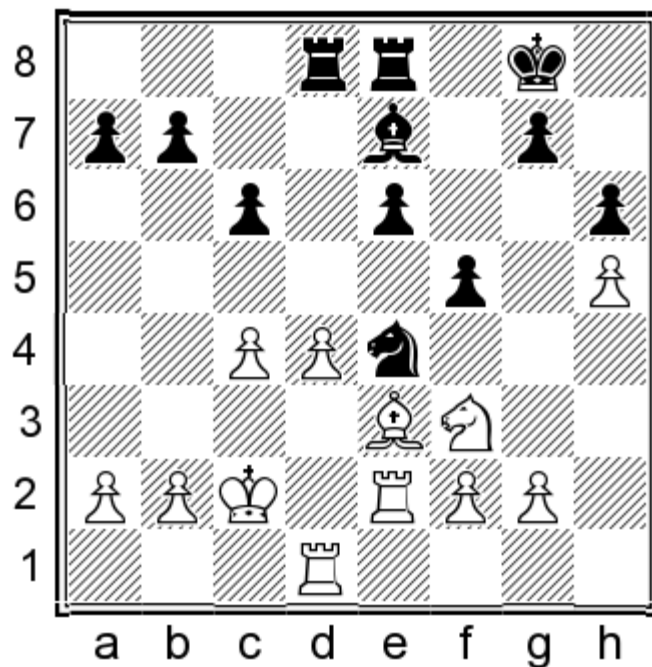
19...0-0 20. ♔c2

About 20. ♜e2 ♝ad8 21. ♔c2 ♜fe8 – see 20. ♔c2.

20...♝ad8 21. ♜e2

White frees his bishop on e3 from the protection of the f2-pawn.

21...♜fe8



22. ♖e5

22. ♖f4 ♕d6 23. ♖xd6 ♜xd6= Martello – Barlow, ICCF 2008. White cannot exploit the slight weakness of the enemy e6-pawn, because Black's knight is very powerful on e4, while White's pawns on d4 and h5 would need permanent protection.

22... ♕d6 23. ♜g1

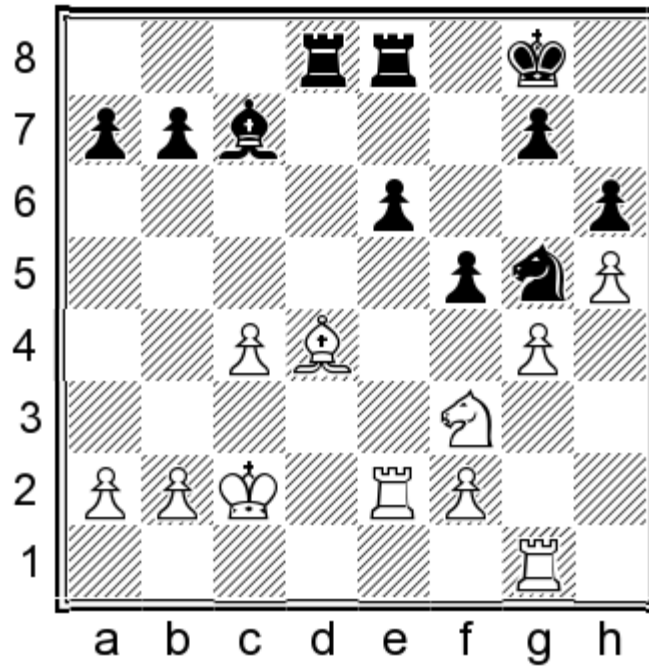
White is preparing g2-g4.

The penetration of his knight to the g6-square is not dangerous for Black: 23. ♖g6 ♗f6 24. ♜h1 ♕c7= Kiss – Barlow, ICCF 2008.

23... c5

Black plays energetically in the centre in an attempt to deflect his opponent from his flank operations.

24. g4 cxd4 25. ♖xd4 ♕c7 26. ♗f3 ♗g5



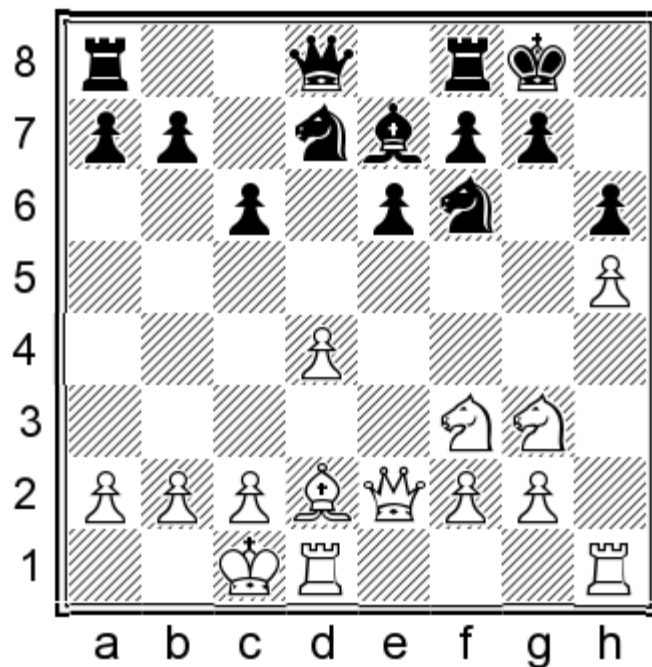
27.gxf5

This is White's only chance of fighting for an advantage.

27.♖xg5 ♜xd4 28.♗xe6 ♜xg4. Black has got rid of his weakness on e6 and equalised completely. 29.♞xg4 fxg4 30.♔d3 ♕h2 31.♔d4 ♖f7= Sanchez – Yloenen, ICCF 2011.

27...♗xf3 28.♞xg7+ ♖f8 29.♕c3 ♕a5 30.♞xb7 ♕xc3 31.♔xc3 exf5 32.♞xe8+ ♖xe8 33.♞xa7. White has three pawns for the piece and an active rook, but Black's knight is tremendously mobile. 33...♗g5 34.♞a5 f4 35.♞e5+ ♖f7 36.♞f5+ ♖e6 37.♞xf4 ♖e5 38.♞g4 ♗e4+ 39.♖b3 ♞b8+ 40.♖c2 ♞f8 41.b4 ♞xf2+. Black has managed to activate considerably the few pieces he has left on the board. 42.♖b3 ♞f5. Black wishes to capture the enemy h5-pawn at least because it impedes his pawn on h6 to advance. 43.b5 ♞xh5, Oreopoulos – Gerbich, ICCF 2011. Black manages to trade his passed pawn for one of White's queenside pawns. 44.a4 ♞h3+ 45.♖b4 ♞h1 46.c5 h5 47.♞g6 ♞b1+ 48.♖a5 ♗xc5 49.♞g5+ ♖d4 50.♞xh5 ♞a1=

B) 13.♞e2 0-0

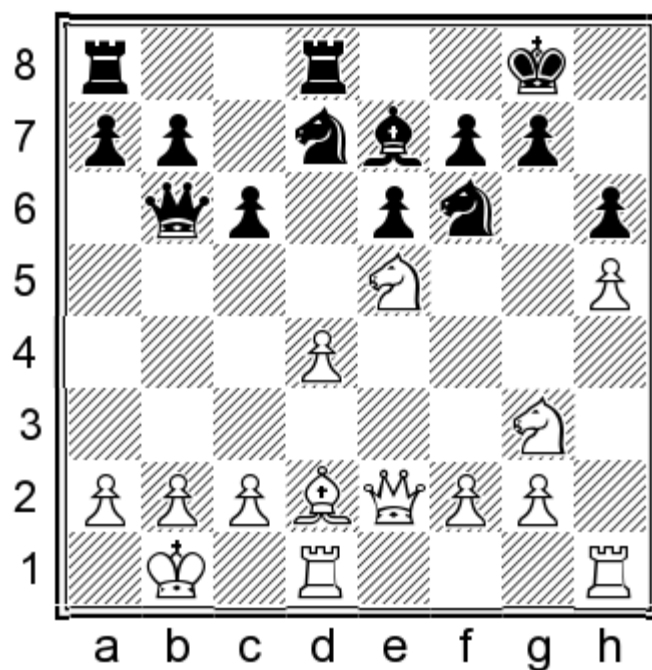


We will analyse now: **B1) 14. dxe5** and **B2) 14. dxf1**.

After 14. dxe4?! e4xe4 15. exxe4 f6f6 16. e2e2, there arises a position from variation A, but with an extra tempo for Black.

The move 14. c4 only helps Black. 14... b5 15. dxe5, Oei – Grooten, Wijk aan Zee 1994, 15... d6!? 16. dxc6 c8c8 17. dxe5 bxc4=

About 14. b1 b6 15. dxe5 (15. c4 c5 – see variation C1) 15... f8f8



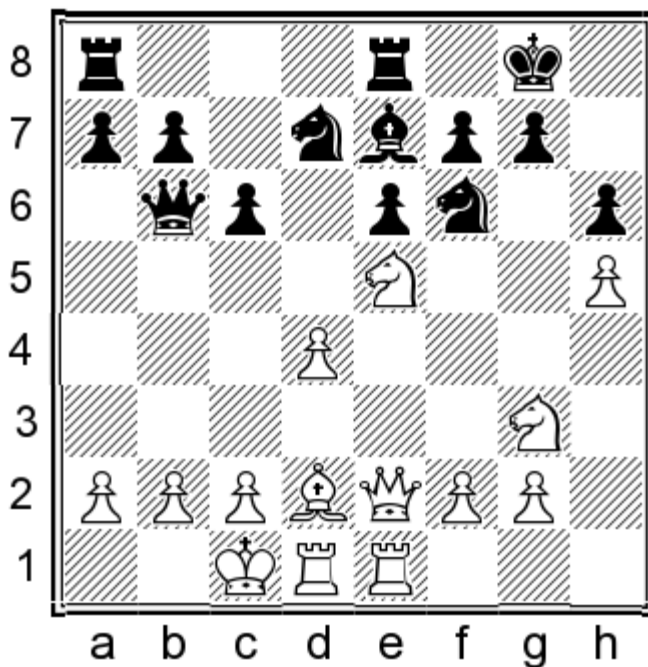
16. dxe5 b4 17. c3 d6= Martin Clemente – Dosi, ICCF 2009.

16. c4 c5 17. dxd7 dxd7 18. dxc5 dxc5 19. c3 d4 20. dxd4 dxd4 21. dxd4 dxd4 22. d1 c5= Hou – Riazantsev, Moscow 2007.

16. dxe1 c5 17. dxc5 dxc5, Srebrnic – Lenic, Slovenia 2013, 18. d3 e7=

16.♙c1 a5 17.f4 a4 18.a3 c5 19.dxc5 (19.♘xd7 ♜xd7 20.dxc5 ♙xc5 21.♞xd7 ♘xd7= Tulfer – Mignon, ICCF 2011)
 19...♙xc5 20.♞hf1 ♚c7 21.♞de1 ♞a6. Black brings his rook into the fight for the d-file. 22.♞f3 ♞d6 23.♘xd7 ♚xd7
 24.♘e4 ♘xe4 25.♚xe4 b5= Copar – Degerhammar, ICCF 2014. He is preparing b5-b4.

Following 14.♞he1, before advancing c6-c5, Black should remove his queen from the d-file. 14...♚b6!? 15.♘e5 ♞fe8



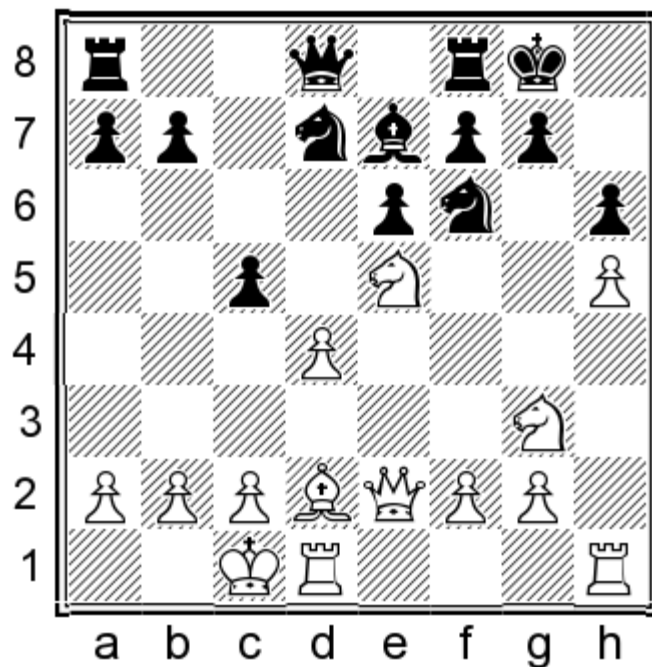
This is necessary prophylactic against the threats ♘xf7 and ♘g6.

The move 16.♘xd7 leads to quick simplification of the position. 16...♘xd7 17.♘e4 ♞ad8 18.♙e3 ♘f6 19.♘xf6+ ♙xf6
 20.c3 ♚a5 21.♙b1 e5= Bakre – Jobava, Abu Dhabi 2007.

16.♘c4 ♚a6 17.♘a5. White should better refrain from this removal of his knight from the centre of the board. 17...b5
 18.♙b1 c5= Naiditsch – Jobava, Dortmund 2006.

16.f4 c5 17.♘xd7 (17.f5 ♘f8=) 17...♘xd7 18.♙c3 ♚c7 19.♚f3 cxd4 20.♙xd4 ♞ac8 21.♞e2 ♞ed8 22.c3 b5∞ Guedes
 Filho – Baumgartner, ICCF 2011.

B1) 14.♘e5 c5



This move seems rather risky. Still, after a thorough analysis of the position, it turns out that White is absolutely incapable of exploiting advantageously the juxtaposition of his rook with the enemy queen on the d-file.

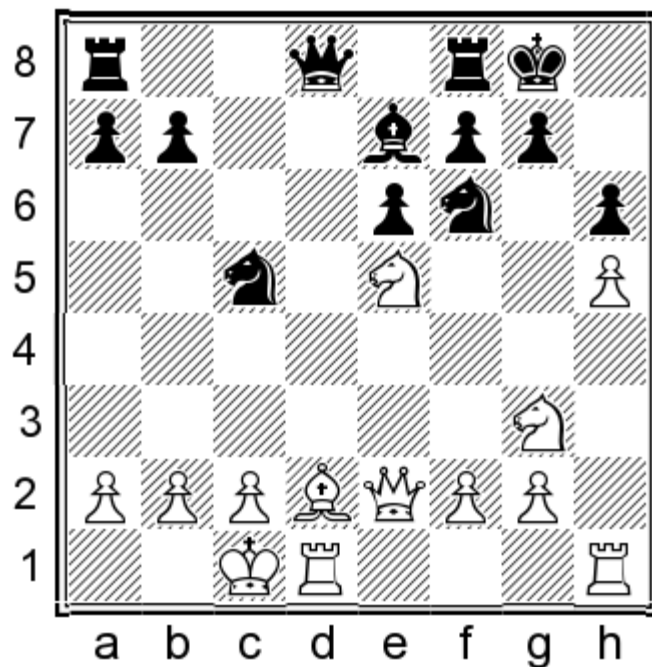
15.dxc5

After 15.♖g6, Black has the calm response 15...♞e8 16.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 17.dxc5 ♞xc5 18.♗e4 ♗xe4 19.♞xe4 ♗f6 20.♞f3 ♞ac8 21.c3 b5= Grabowski – Gierth, ICCF 2010.

After the patient move 15.♙e3, Black succeeds in removing his queen from the dangerous file. 15...♞a5 16.♗xd7 ♗xd7 17.♗b1 ♗f6 18.c4 cxd4 19.♙xd4 ♞fd8 20.♞d3 ♞ac8 21.♞hd1, Ma.Tseitlin – Yates Doerr, Biel 2000, 21...a6!?=

15.♗xd7 ♞xd7 16.dxc5 ♞d5. Black restores the material balance, because White cannot protect simultaneously his pawns on c5 and a2. 17.♗b1 ♞xc5 18.♙c3 (18.♗e4 ♞c6 19.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 20.g4, Srebrnic – Ruck, Slovenia 2014, 20...♞fe8=) 18...♞c6 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♗e4 ♙e5= Barrababe Menal – Mercadal Benejam, Spain 1997.

15...♗xc5!



This is the point! Black is not afraid of the possible moves of the enemy bishop on d2.

16. ♖xh6

16. ♖f4?! M. Bezgodova – Schepetkova, Obninsk 2007, 16... ♗d5

16. ♗g4. This move looks rather artificial. 16... ♖c7 17. ♖b1 ♖fd8 18. ♖c3, Xie Jun – Hort, Marbella 1999, 18... ♗d5 19. ♖e5 ♖c6 20. ♖he1 ♖ac8

16. ♖b1 ♖c7 17. ♖f4 (17. ♗g4 ♖fd8, or 17. ♖c3 ♖fd8 18. ♗g4 ♗d5 – see 16. ♗g4; 17. ♖he1 ♖fd8 18. f4 ♖ac8 Sanz Alonso – Magem Badals, Seville 1993) 17... ♖fd8 18. ♗d3 ♖b6 19. ♖e3 ♗d5 20. ♖d4 ♖f6. Black exchanges the active enemy bishop and seizes completely the initiative. 21. ♖xf6 ♗xf6 22. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 23. c3 a5 24. ♖d2 b5 Dufour – Tudor, ICCF 2007. Black has good attacking prospects against White's king.

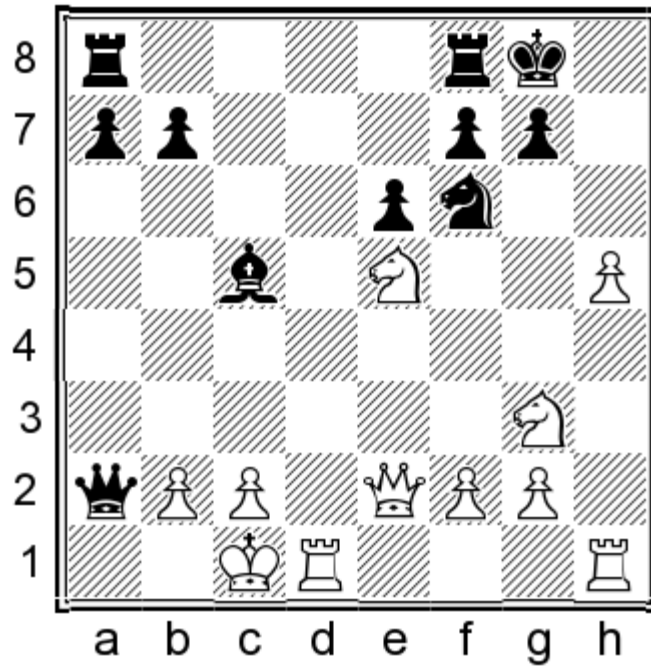
16... ♖a5

White's a2-pawn is hanging as well as his bishop and he has an only way of equalising. He must know it beforehand however, because it would be practically impossible for him to find it over the board.

17. ♖e3!

This is the only move! White loses immediately after 17. ♖xg7? ♖xg7 18. h6+ (18. ♖e3 ♖xa2+) 18... ♖h7 19. ♖b1 ♖ad8 20. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21. ♗f3 (21. f4 ♖d4+) 21... ♗g4 22. ♗e4 ♖g8 23. ♗fg5+ ♖xg5 24. ♖xg4 f5 25. ♗xg5+ ♖xg5. Black's pieces managed to assist in the defence of his king just in time. White has two pawns for the piece, but this is not sufficient compensation. 26. ♖d1 ♖d8 27. ♖f1 ♖d2+ Mai – Smith, ICCF 2012.

17... ♖xa2 18. ♖xc5 ♖xc5



19.c4!?

This is again an only move for White.

19.h6? White has not prepared well his kingside offensive. 19...♖a1+ 20.♔d2 ♜xb2 21.♕e1 ♜xf2+! With this simple, but exquisite tactical strike Black simplifies the position and preserves his extra material. 22.♕xf2 ♜xe5 23.♜xe5 ♘g4+ 24.♕f3 ♘xe5+ 25.♕e4 ♘g4 26.hxg7 ♘f6+ 27.♕e5 ♕xg7→ Zaitsev – Riazantsev, Vladimir 2004.

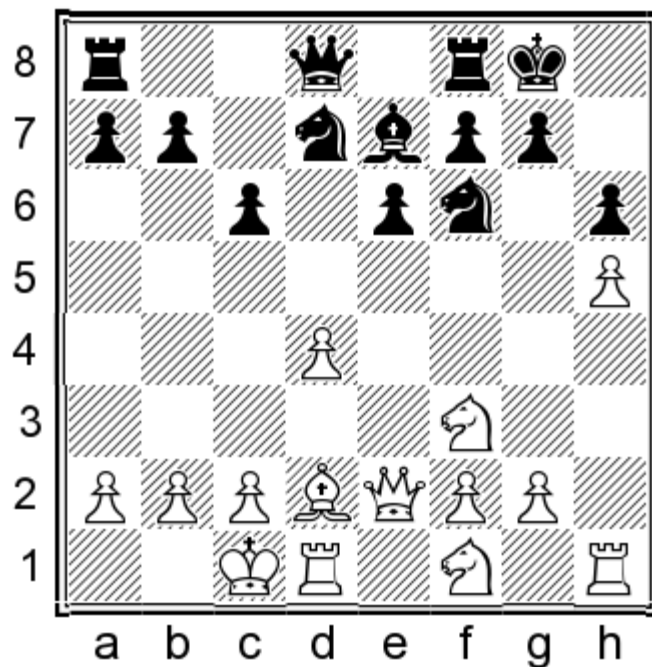
19...♘d5 20.h6!

Now is the right time for the attack!

20.cxd5? ♜ac8 21.♕d2 ♜xb2+ 22.♕e1 ♜b4+ 23.♕f1 ♜c2 24.♜f3 ♜xe5±

20...♘c3 21.♜d3 ♘xd1 22.hxg7 ♜xb2+ 23.♕xd1 ♜a1+ 24.♕c2 ♜a2= Neither side can avoid advantageously the repetition of the position.

B2) 14.♕f1!?



White's knight frees the way forward of his g2-pawn. Black must play very precisely in anticipation of the enemy pawn-storm. A single mistake may turn White's attack into a victorious offensive.

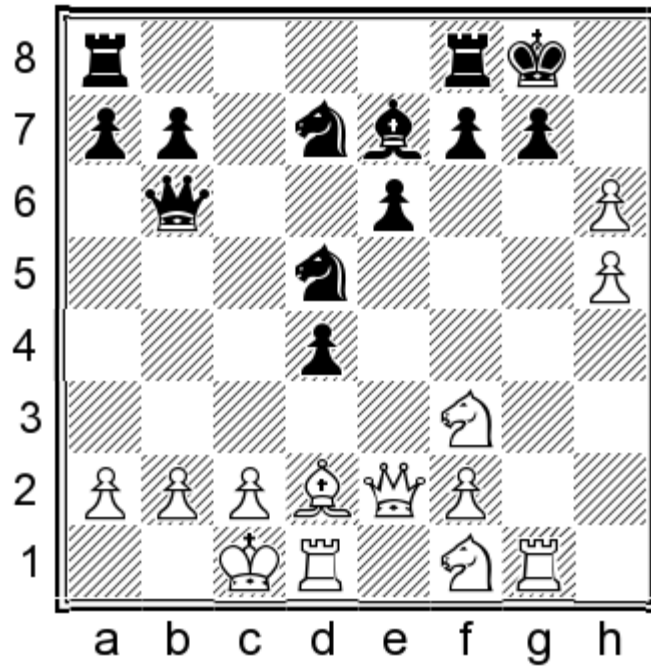
14...c5 15.g4 cxd4

After this move it all ends in a perpetual check if both sides play correctly.

If Black must play for a win, due to his tournament situation, he might try the less forced variation 15...♘h7!?, impeding the enemy pawn-advance g4-g5. 16.♔b1 ♚b6 17.g5 ♘xg5 18.♘xg5 ♙xg5 19.♙xg5 hxg5 20.♞g1 f6∞ Mezera – Sykora, ICCF 2013. Black's king shelter has been weakened, but he still has an extra pawn.

16.g5 ♘d5 17.gxh6 ♚b6 18.♞g1

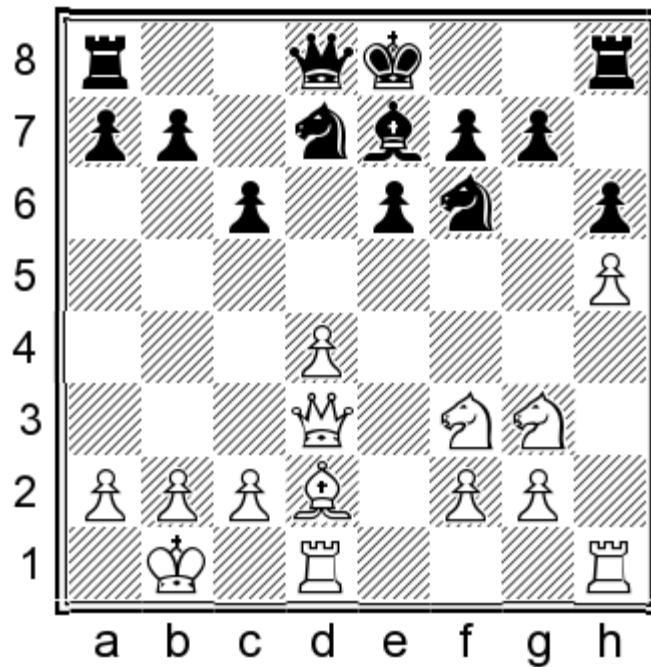
18.♞e4. White prepares the transfer of his queen to the g-file. 18...♘c5 19.♞g4 ♙f6 20.♙g5. White wishes to exchange an important defender of his opponent's king. 20...♘a4 21.♙xf6 (21.b3 ♚b4 22.♙xf6 ♚a3+ 23.♔d2 ♚b4=) 21...♞xb2+. White's king cannot avoid the perpetual check. 22.♔d2 ♚b4+ 23.♔c1 ♚a3= C.Balogh – Rodshtein, Wroclaw 2010.



18...♔a3!

With this exquisite move Black begins a counter attack. Now, White must give a perpetual check; otherwise, he will end up in an inferior position. **19.♖xg7+** (19.bxa3 ♘c3 20.♙xc3 dxc3 21.♖xg7+ ♔h8 – see 19.♖xg7+) **19...♔h8 20.bxa3** (Here, it is premature for White to opt for 20.♖h7+? ♔xh7 21.♚d3+ ♔h8=) **20...♘c3 21.♙xc3** (21.♖h7+ ♔g8!)= **21...dxc3 22.♖h7+ ♔g8=** (Black cannot play for a win 22...♔xh7? 23.♚e4+ ♔h8 24.♖xd7+)

C) 13.♔b1



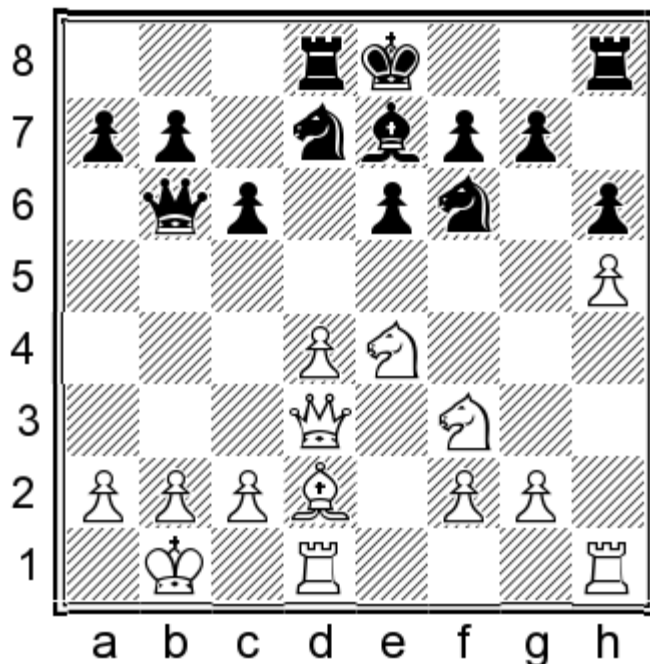
This is a good prophylactic move. The more attentive readers may have noticed already that in the variations, we have analysed up to now, White has had many times problems with the defencelessness of his pawn on a2.

13...♖b6!?

Black is not in a hurry to castle kingside, in order to create difficulties for his opponent, who is planning an attack there, connected with the preparation of g2-g4.

We will deal now with **C1) 14.c4** and **C2) 14.♖he1**.

After 14.♗e4, Black should not castle, but choose instead 14...♞d8.



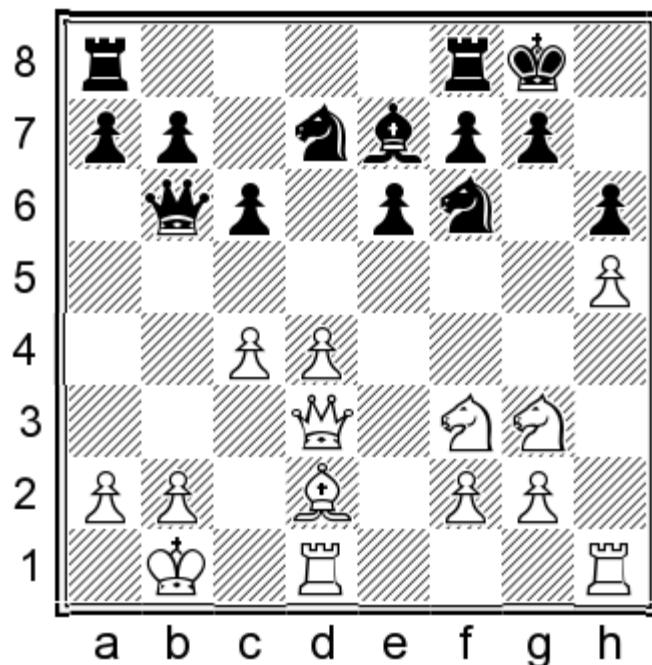
15.♗e2 ♗b5=

15.c4 0-0 16.♗e2 (Following 16.♙c3, Black can neutralise the activity of his opponent's pieces with the help of exchanges and will soon equalise completely. 16...♗a6 17.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 18.♗e5 ♗d7= Dervishi – Eljanov, Baku 2016) 16...c5 17.♙c3 cxd4 18.♙xd4 ♗c6 19.♗xf6+ ♙xf6= Hou – So, Dortmund 2015.

15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♙e3 (After 16.♗e2, Black has the powerful resource 16...♗b5!?. He will either trade the queens, or will transfer his queen to an active position (the f5-square), from where it would impede the enemy pawn-advance g2-g4. 17.c4 ♗f5+ 18.♙a1 0-0. Now, Black can already castle. 19.♙e3 c5= Kevlishvili – Soors, Amsterdam 2015.)

16...♗g4 17.♗e4 ♙a3. White's bishop must protect his f2-pawn, so he is forced to weaken the shelter of his king. 18.b3 ♗f6 19.♗d3 0-0 20.♗e5 ♗d5 21.♙d2 ♙d6 22.♗c4 ♗a6= Kurgansky – Kozlov, ICCF 2013.

C1) 14.c4 0-0



15. Qf4

White develops his bishop to an active position at the price of a loss of a tempo.

15. ♖e4 c5 16. ♗c3 ♜fd8. Black is well prepared for actions in the centre. 17. ♜xf6+ ♗xf6 18. ♚e2 cxd4 19. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 20. ♜xd4 ♜f6 21. ♜c2 ♚c6 ♞ Zapata – D.Gurevich, Charlotte 2017. Black's king is safer than its white counterpart.

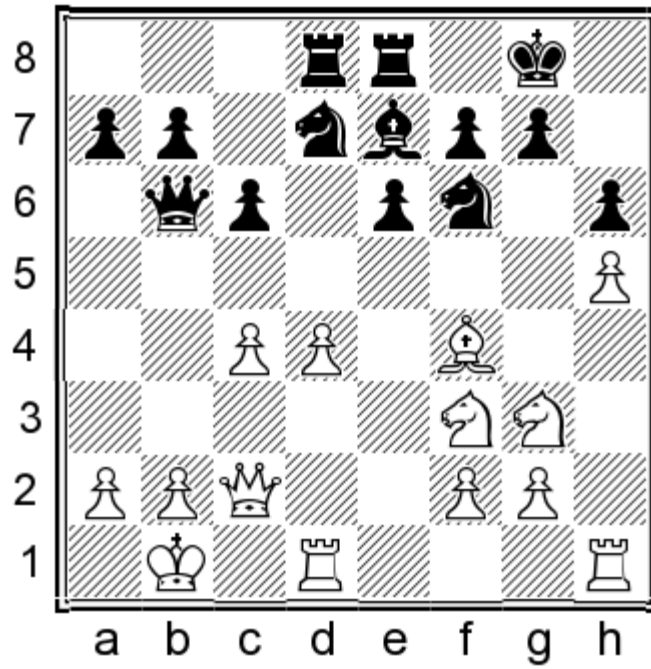
15. ♚e2 c5!? 16. ♗c3 cxd4 17. ♜xd4 (17. ♗xd4 ♚c6!? 18. ♗xf6 ♜xf6 19. ♜e5 ♚c7 20. f4 ♗d6 21. ♜d4 ♜fd8 22. ♜hd1 ♗c5 23. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 24. ♜xd8+ ♚xd8 ♞ Zieba – Fessler, ICCF 2014. Black's pieces are better coordinated.) 17... ♗b4. He exchanges the powerful enemy bishop and maintains an edge. 18. ♜b5 ♗xc3 19. ♜xc3 ♜c5 ♞ Macieja – Karpov, Polanica Zdroj 1998.

15. ♜he1 ♜fd8. After an eventual attack by White, the presence of a free f8-square might be very useful for Black's king. 16. ♜f5 ♗b4!? Black must play very carefully (The routine move 16... ♗f8? would enable White to sacrifice advantageously a piece and to organise an attack which would be nearly impossible for Black to parry: 17. ♜xh6+! gxh6 18. g4 → Kosteniuk – Pelletier, Flims 2016.) 17. ♜xe6!? This is an interesting rook-sacrifice, but Black is not forced to accept it. (Here, the move 17. ♜xh6+ does not seem so convincing: 17... gxh6 18. g4 ♚a5 19. ♗xb4 ♚xb4 ♞, followed by ♚f8 and Black's queen manages to come and help in the defence of his monarch.) 17... ♗xd2 18. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 19. ♜xd2 (19. ♜xd2 ♚c7 ♞) 19... c5 20. ♜e5 cxd4 21. ♜e2 ♜e8 22. ♜xh6+. White sacrifices a knight and forces a draw by a perpetual check. 22... gxh6 23. ♚g3+ ♜f8 24. ♚a3+ ♜g7 25. ♚g3+ ♜h7 26. ♚d3+ ♜g7=

15... ♜ad8 16. ♚c2

White removes his queen from the X-ray juxtaposition with the enemy rook.

16... ♜fe8



17. ♖e5

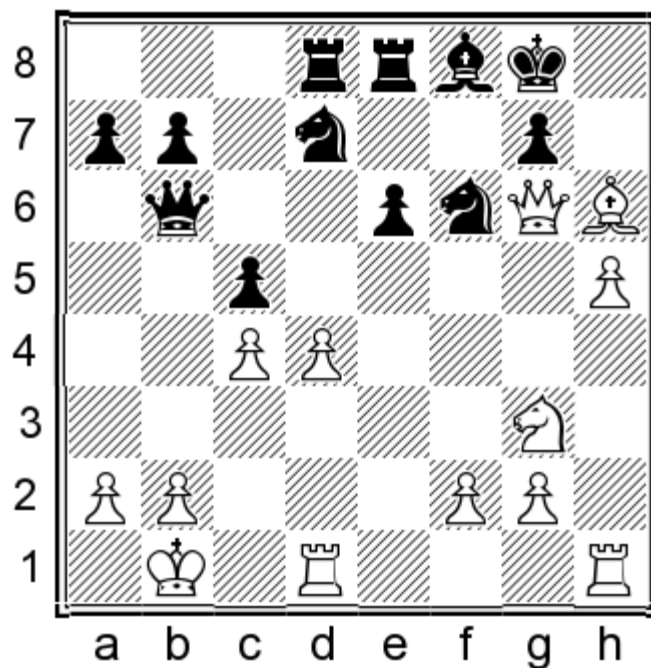
The move 17.c5 weakens the d5-square. 17... ♙a6 Zeng – Ghosh, Lund 2017.

17. ♘f1 is too passive. 17... c5 18. d5 exd5 19. cxd5 ♙d6 20. ♙xd6 ♗xd6 Milliet – Van den Bersselaar, Erice 2015.

17...c5 18. ♘xf7!?

This is an interesting piece-sacrifice. White destroys the pawn-shelter of the enemy king.

18... ♙xf7 19. ♗g6+ ♙g8 20. ♙xh6 ♙f8



21. ♖h1!

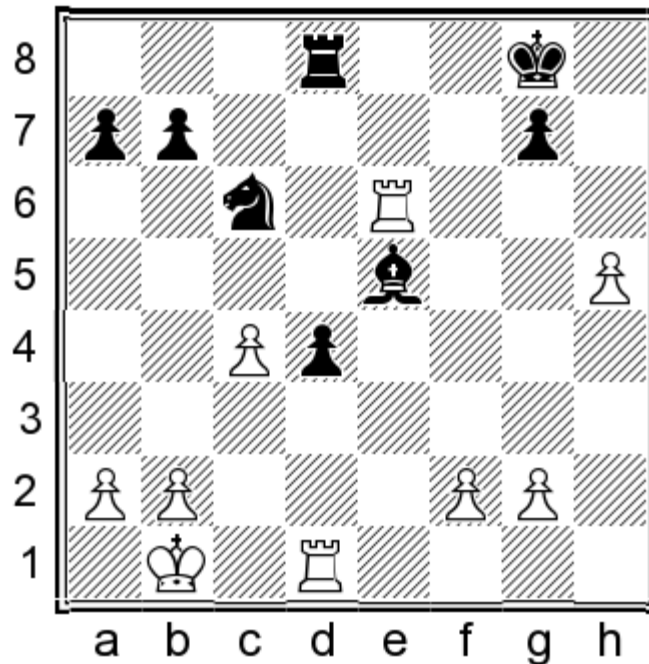
This is the right move!

After 21. ♖xg7?, Black parries the enemy offensive and remains with extra material. 21... ♖xg7 22. h6 ♖e7 23. dxc5 ♗xc5 24. hxg7 ♖xd1+ 25. ♖xd1 ♗cd7+ Dragnev – Ruck, Zalakaros 2015.

21... ♖d6 22. ♖g5 cxd4 23. ♗e4 ♗xe4

Black neutralises his opponent's active pieces with the help of exchanges.

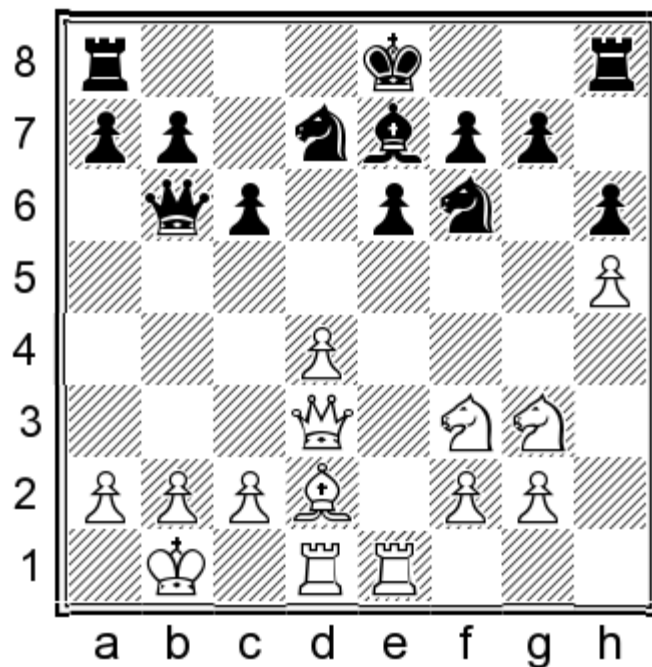
24. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 25. ♖xe4 ♗e5 26. ♖g3 ♗c6 27. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 28. ♖xe6 ♖e5



In this endgame, Black's two minor pieces do not seem to be weaker than White's rook and two pawns. **29. ♖g6 ♖f6 30. ♖g3 ♖e8 31. h6** (If White defends passively, he might end up being worse. 31. ♖gd3?! ♖e2 32. ♖3d2 ♖e4 33. g3 ♗h7+, followed by ♗h6, Grayland – Coyne, ICCF 2014. White may have problems with the protection of his pawn on h5.) **31... ♖e2 32. a3 ♖xf2 33. hxg7 ♖e5 34. ♖g5 ♖xg7 35. g4 ♖e2 36. b4 ♖e3 37. b5 ♗d8 38. ♖xd4 ♗e6 39. ♖xg7+, Krzyzanowski – Rufenacht, ICCF 2016, 39... ♗xg7 40. ♖d7 ♖xa3 41. ♖xb7 ♗e6 42. ♗b2 ♖a5 43. ♖e7 ♗c5 44. ♖c7 ♗e6=**

C2) 14. ♖h1

White wishes, if Black castles, to exploit the defencelessness of the bishop on e7 with the move ♗f5, but this threat turns out to be not so dangerous.



14...0-0 15.♘f5

About 15.c4 ♜fd8 – see variation C1.

15...exf5!?

Black complies with the doubling of his pawns, but obtains a wonderful square for his knight at the middle of the board.

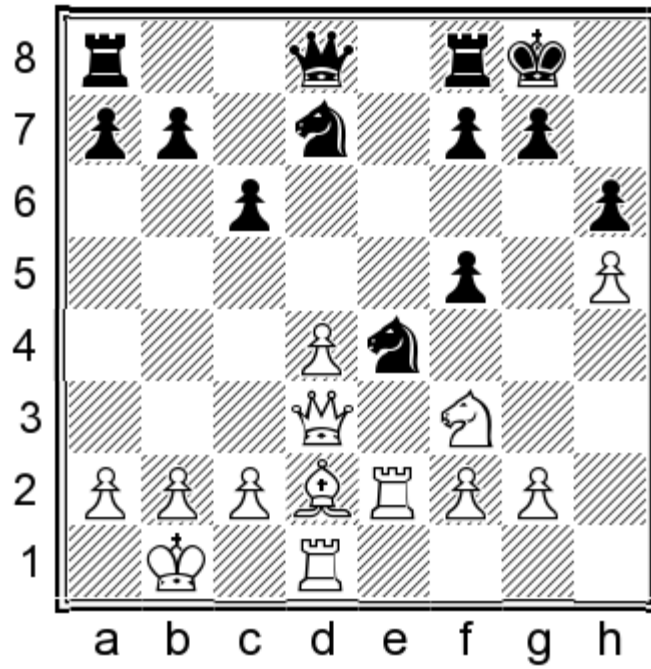
16.♞xe7 ♚d8

White's rook on e7 is very active, so Black should oust it immediately from there.

17.♞e2

Following 17.♞a3 ♜e8 18.♞xe8+ ♚xe8 19.♞a5, Black can let the enemy queen to occupy the c7-square, because it cannot create threats against his queenside pawns. 19...♞e6 20.♞c7 b6 21.♞e1 ♘e4 22.♙e3 a5 23.♘e5 ♘xe5 24.dxe5 a4 25.a3 b5. Black has managed to redeploy his queenside pawns to light squares. Now, White's bishop on e3 cannot attack them. 26.♞d1 ♜f8 27.f4 ♞c4= Gonzalez – Napalkov, ICCF 2010.

17...♘e4

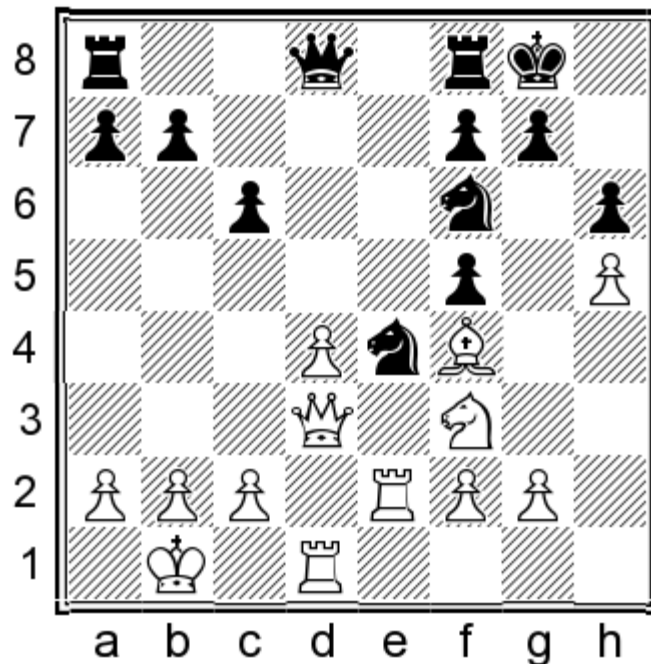


18. Qc1

18. Qe1 Re8 19. g3 Qdf6 20. Qh4, Papp – Doric, Sibenik 2012, 20... Qe7!? Now, before playing Qd7, Black ousts the enemy king away from the centre due to the threat Qc3. This might prove to be useful if there arises transition to an endgame. 21. Qa1 Qd7=

18.g3. White is preparing Qh4. 18... Re8 19. Qh4 Qdf6 20. Qc1 (It would be too risky for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice: 20. Qxf5?! Qd5 21. Qh4 c5!? 22. Qe1 c4 23. Qf3 Qxh5= Black has not only managed to restore the material balance, but has also restricted considerably the enemy pieces.) 20... Qa5 21. c4 Qad8= Puijssers – Khenkin, Dieren 2016.

18. Qf4 Qdf6



After 19.♔h2, Black can force this bishop to occupy a passive position on the g1-square. 19...♖g4 20.♙g1 ♖e8 21.c4 ♜d7= Sivuk – Torosyan, Yerevan 2016.

19.♖e5 ♖d5!?∞

19.♖de1 ♖e8 20.♙e5 ♖xh5 21.♜b3 ♜d5 22.♜xb7 ♖hf6 23.♜b3 ♖g4 24.♜xd5 cxd5. The active position of Black's knights compensates the defects of his pawn-structure. 25.♖h4 f4 26.♙xf4 ♖gxf2 27.♖f5 ♖e6 28.c4 ♖d3 29.cxd5 ♖f6, Teichmann – Coyne, ICCF 2015, 30.♖e7+ ♖f8 31.♙e5 ♖b6 32.♖xe4 ♖xe1 33.♖xe1 ♖xe7 34.♙c7+ ♖d7 35.♙xb6 axb6. There has arisen a rook and pawn ending. White has an extra pawn, but he is unlikely to hold on to his weak d5-pawn. 36.♖e3 ♖a5 37.♖g3 g5 38.♖h3 ♖xd5 39.♖xh6 ♖xd4 40.♖xb6 ♖d1+ 41.♖c2 ♖g1 42.a4 ♖xg2+ 43.♖c3. The pawn-race should end in an exchange of the most advanced passed pawns. 43...g4 44.a5 ♖g1 45.♖b5 g3 46.♖g5 g2 47.♖b4 ♖c6 48.♖g7 f5 49.a6 f4 50.a7 ♖a1 51.♖xg2 ♖xa7=

18...♖e8 19.g4

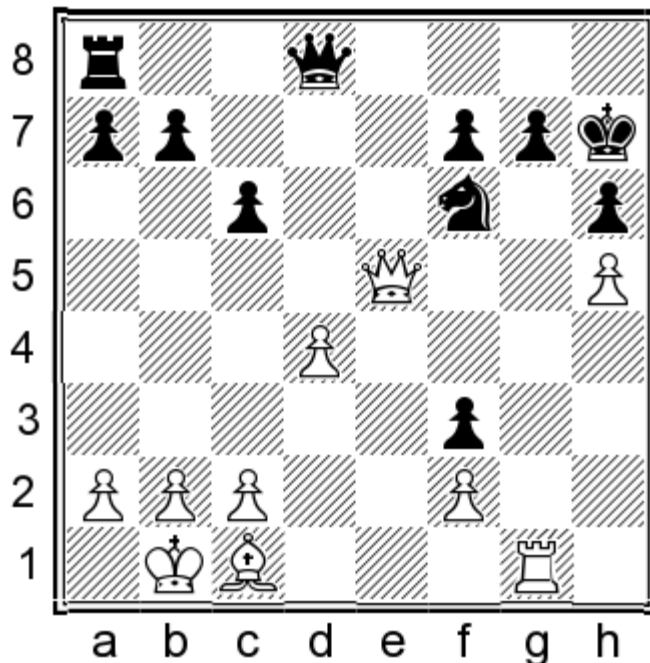
White undermines the base under the enemy knight on e4, but now, Black can get rid of his doubled pawns.

About 19.g3 ♖df6 20.♖h4 ♜a5 – see 18.g3.

It would be too passive for White to choose here 19.♖g1, Dgebuadze – Soors, Antwerp 2013, 19...♖df6!?=

19.♖de1 ♖df6 20.♖h4 ♜d7 21.♜f3 ♜xd4 22.♖xf5 ♜d5 23.♖e3 ♖ad8. White cannot get any advantage out of the pin of the enemy knight, because Black's pieces are very active and he is ready to begin a counterattack at the first possible moment. 24.♖a1 ♜c5 25.♖xe4 ♖xe4 26.♖xe4 ♜xc2. Now, White has nothing better than to force a draw by a perpetual check. 27.♖xh6+ ♖h8 28.♖xf7+ ♖g8 29.♖h6+ ♖h8= Andrae – Mehlhorn, Germany 2014.

19...fxg4 20.♖xe4 ♖xe4 21.♜xe4 ♖f6 22.♜e5 gxf3 23.♖g1 ♖h7



24.♙xh6. This bishop-sacrifice cannot provide White with more than equality. 24...gxf3 25.♖g3 (He loses after 25.♜f5+?, because in the variation 25...♖h8 26.♜e5 a5!, Black manages to bring his rook into the defence along the 6th rank. 27.a4 c5 28.d5 ♖a6 29.♜f4 ♜f8+ Kozionov – Kryakvin, Moscow 2015.) 25...c5 26.♖xf3 ♖g7 27.♜g3+ ♖f8 28.♜f4 ♜xd4. After several moves there will arise on the board an equal rook and pawn ending. 29.♜xd4 cxd4 30.♖xf6 ♖d8 31.♖f5 d3 32.cxd3 ♖xd3=

Part 4

In this part of the book we will analyse lines in which White refrains on move 1 from 1.d4, as well as from 1.e4. In Chapter 1 we will deal with some seldom played moves. In Chapter 2 we will analyse the Bird Opening – 1.f4. The readers should pay greater attention to Chapters 21-23, since in them we will analyse the Reti Opening and the English Opening (1.♘f3 and 1.c4).

Chapter 19

- A) 1.♘c3
- B) 1.b4
- C) 1.b3
- D) 1.g3

In this chapter we will deal with some of the not so popular lines for White: **A) 1.♘c3**, **B) 1.b4**, **C) 1.b3** and **D) 1.g3**.

About 1.c3 d5 2.d4 (2.f4 ♘f6 – see Chapter 20; 2.♘f3 ♘f6 – see Chapter 21; 2.g3 e5 – see variation **D)** 2...c5 – see Volume 1, Chapter 23.

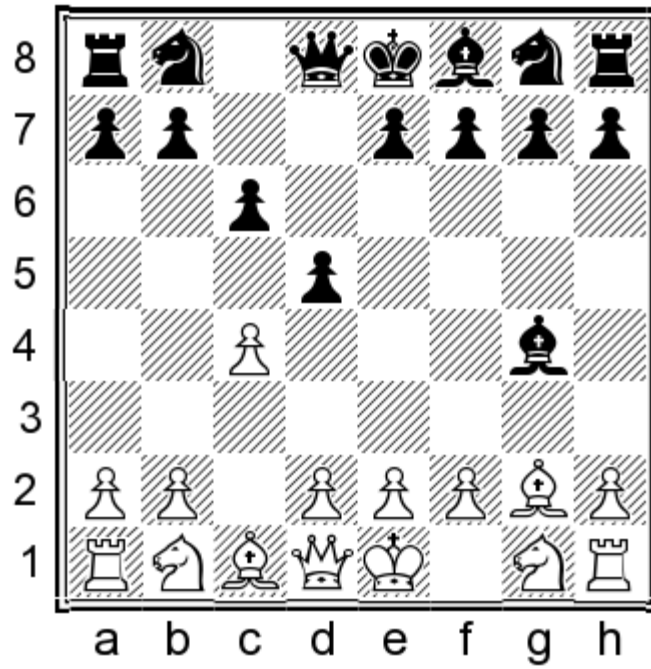
1.a3 d5 2.d4 (2.d3 e5 – see 1.d3; 2.b4 e5 – see 1.b4; 2.e3 e5 – see 1.e3; 2.♘f3 ♘f6 – see Chapter 21) 2...♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 23.

After moves with the rook-pawns it is only White who might have problems. 1.a4?! d5 2.h4?! e5 3.a5 ♘f6, or 1.h4?! e5 2.h5?! White continues with his risky opening strategy and enables his opponent to occupy the centre with his pawns. 2...d5 3.c3 (Following 3.h6 ♘xh6, White has no compensation for the pawn, for example: 4.d4 ♘c6 5.♙xh6 gxh6 6.dxe5 ♘xe5 ♣ Lipnowski – Tetrault, Winnipeg 2002.) 3...h6!? This is Black's simplest move – now, he does not need to worry about the possibility h5-h6. 4.d4 exd4 5.cxd4, Hurta – Shilov, Karvina 2014, 5...♙d6!? 6.♘c3 ♘f6 ♣ Black has a better development, while the vulnerability of White's h5-pawn might hurt him in the future.

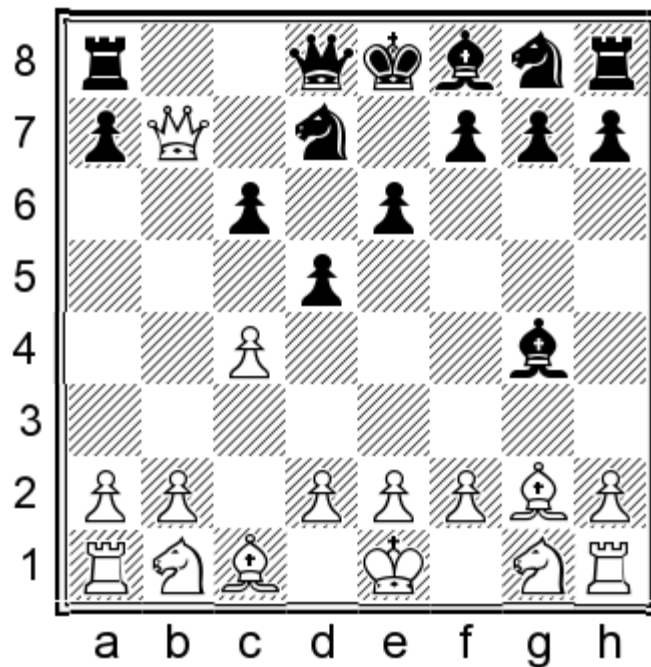
1.♘a3?! White's knight is misplaced at the edge of the board. 1...e5 2.♘c4 ♘c6 3.e4 d5 4.exd5 ♗xd5 5.♘e3, Grosar – Leben, ICCF 1999. He has managed to improve the placement of his knight, but has lost too much time for that. 5...♗d6!?! ♣

1.h3 d5 2.g4 h5 – see 1.g4.

1.g4. This opening was named after the Swiss chess player Henry Grob. White prepares the development of his bishop to g2, but weakens considerably his kingside. 1...d5 2.♙g2 (It would be too passive for White to play here 2.h3 h5!?) Black provokes further weakening of White's kingside. 3.g5. The fact that now Black's knight has been deprived of an access to the f6-square is not so important, because later it can go to the g6, or to the f5-squares via e7. 3...e5 4.d3 ♘e7 5.♙g2, Taga – Tihonov, Agneaux 2004, 5...♙e6!?! 6.c4 c6 ♣ 2...♙xg4!?! Black has refrained from capturing this pawn in the majority of the games, being afraid of White's counterplay, connected with the queen-sortie to the b3-square. In fact, if Black knows theory well, he can enter the complications, because they turn out to be in his favour. 3.c4 c6



The opening of the c-file 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♖b3 is in favour of Black. 5...♘f6 6.♗xb7 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 e6 8.♙b5 ♖c8 9.♗xa7. White has managed to win a pawn at the price of a lag in development. 9...♙c5. Black develops his pieces with tempo. 10.♗a4 0-0 11.d4, Buzas – Taucius, Vilnius 1995, 11...♙e7!?⚡, followed by ♗b6, ♖c4, seizing completely the initiative. 4.♗b3 e6 5.♗xb7 (After 5.cxd5 exd5! 6.♗xb7 ♘d7, White's bishop on c1 is defenceless, so he cannot capture the pawn on c6. 7.♘c3, Bloodgood – Casteen, corr. 1960, 7...♖c8!? 8.d4 ♙d6 9.♗xa7 ♖a8 10.♗b7 ♘e7 11.♗b3 0-0⚡ Black has obtained more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 5...♘d7

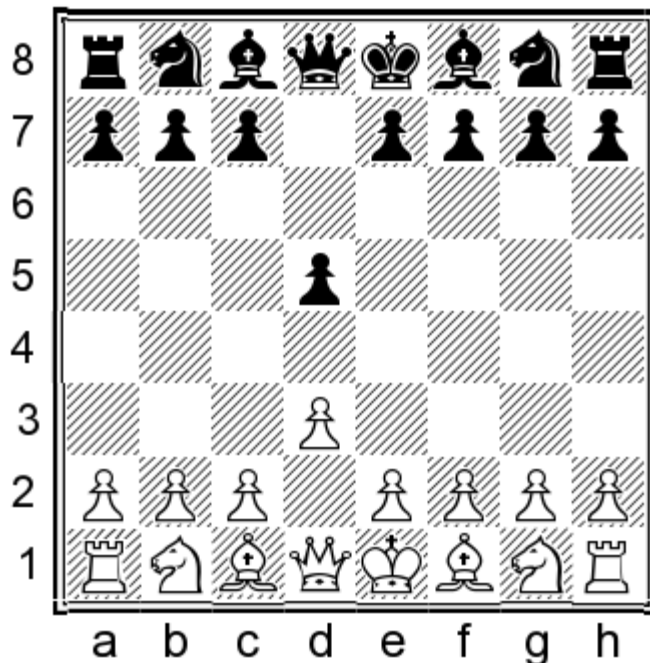


If White continues in his attempts to gobble material 6.♗xc6, he will be crushed very quickly. 6...♖c8 7.♗a6 ♖xc4 8.♘a3 ♖c8 9.♗xa7 ♙c5 10.♗a4, Kiltti – Niemela, Helsinki 1996, 10...♙xf2+! This tactical strike is decisive. 11.♙xf2 ♗h4+ 12.♙e3 (The idea of Black's combination is that after the other possible retreat of White's king 12.♙f1, he would lose his queen: 12...♙xe2+ 13.♘xe2 ♗xa4+) 12...d4+! Black forces the enemy queen under a double attack by his knight and wins a tempo for the development of the knight. 13.♗xd4 ♘h6 14.♙e4 e5 15.♗a4 ♙f5+ White has a great

material advantage, but his position is hopeless, since his king is completely helpless.

6.♖c3 ♜e7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4 ♝b8 9.♞a6 ♞b6 10.♞d3. White has succeeded in ensuring the safety of his queen, but later the vulnerability of his kingside will be a much more important factor for the evaluation of the position than the weakening of Black's queenside pawn-structure. 10...♞g6 11.h3 ♙e6 12.♞f3 ♙d6 ♣ Ohtake – Parsons, ICCF 2014.

The move 1.d3, as a rule, does not lead to original positions. 1...d5



About 2.g3 ♞f6, or 2.a3 e5 3.g3 ♞f6 4.♙g2 ♙d6 – see variation D.

2.f4 ♞f6 – see Chapter 20.

2.♞f3 ♞f6 – see Chapter 21.

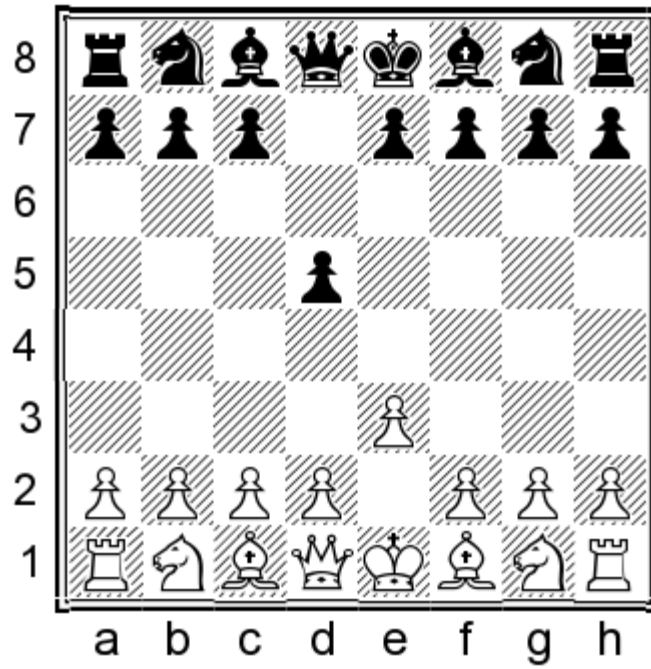
2.♞d2 e5 3.e4 c6, or 3.♞gf3 ♙d6 4.e4 c6 – see Chapter 3.

2.e4. This move enables Black to exchange the queens and to enter an approximately equal endgame.

2...dxe4 3.dxe4 ♞xd1+ 4.♙xd1 e5 5.♙e3 ♞f6 6.f3 ♞bd7. Black must try to trade the dark-squared bishops in positions with a similar pawn-structure. 7.♞d2 a5 8.a4 ♙c5 9.♞c4 ♙xe3 10.♞xe3 ♞c5= Galmandakh – Motylev, Caleta 2015.

The fact that the majority of White's pawns are deployed on squares with the same colour as his bishop might hurt him later.

1.e3 d5



2.♘c3 e5 – see variation A.

2.b3 e5 – see 1.b3.

2.f4 ♘f6 – see Chapter 20.

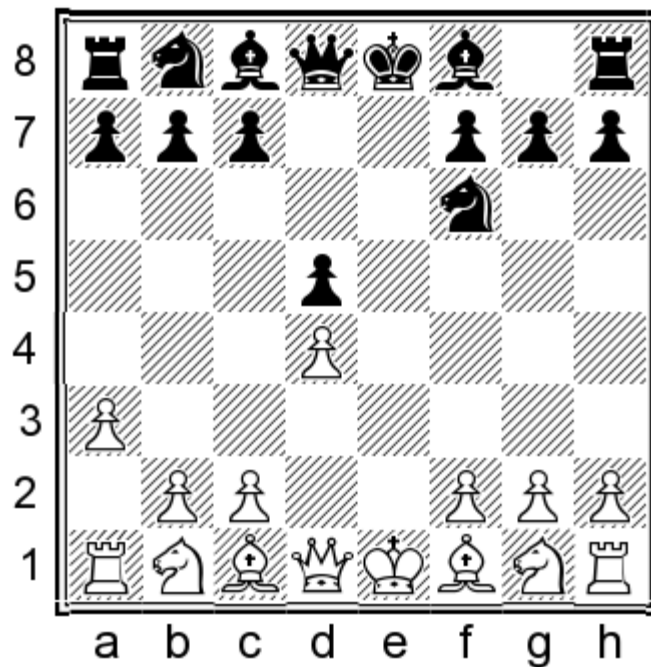
2.♘f3 ♘f6 – see Chapter 21.

2.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22.

2.d4 ♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 23.

2.a3 e5 3.d4 exd4 4.exd4. There has arisen on the board a position from the exchange variation of the French Defence, which is considered to be harmless for Black. In addition, White has lost a tempo for the not so useful move – a3.

4...♘f6



5.♘f3 ♕d6 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 ♗g4 8.♗g5 ♜bd7 9.♜bd2 c6= Skopetz – Trifunovic, Vienna 2003.

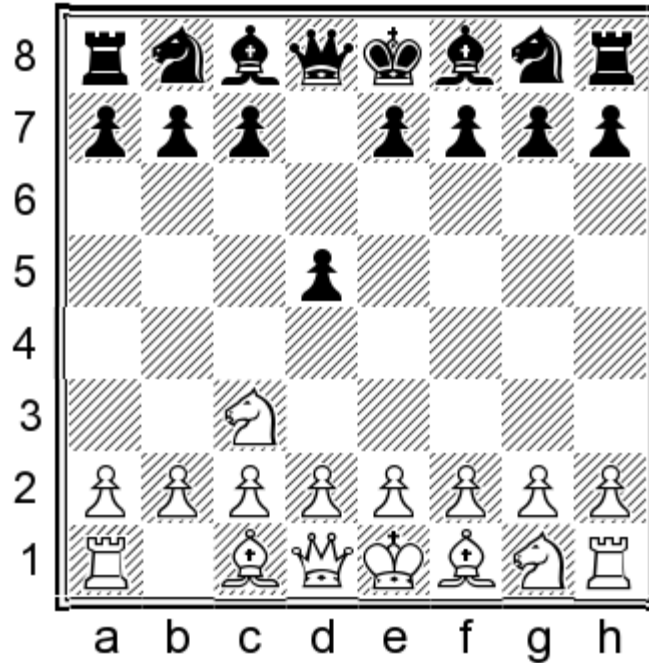
Following 5.♗d3, Black can begin active actions in the centre: 5...c5!= Brehovsky – Kainz, Feldkirchen 1998.

5.♘c3 ♕d6 6.♗g5 c6 7.♗d3, Morozevich – Comp Fritz 6, Frankfurt 1999, 7...h6!? 8.♗h4 0-0=

A) 1.♘c3

White's knight controls the important central e4 and d5-squares from here, but the circumstance that he would be incapable of playing c2-c4 in the middle game might turn out to be in favour of Black.

1...d5

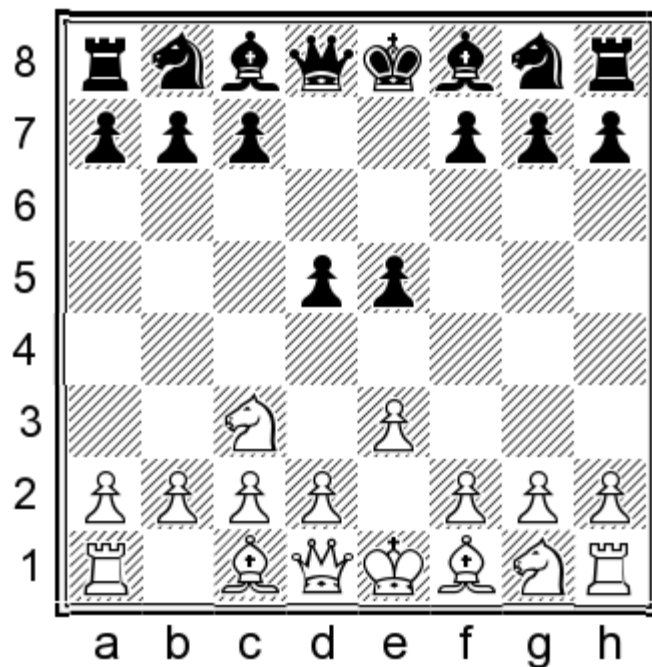


2.e4

2.♘f3 ♜f6 – see Chapter 21.

2.d4 c6 – see volume 1, Chapter 23.

2.e3 e5



After 3.d4, Black can play 3...e4, occupying space. 4.f3. With a knight on c3, it would be difficult for White to advance c2-c4, so he would be forced to follow a plan which is not so popular in similar positions. 4...♘f6 5.fxe4 dxe4 6.♗ge2, Schuster – Schranz, LSS 2009, 6...h5!?∞ Black prepares in advance to play h5-h4 if White's knight appears on the g3-square. 7.♗g3?! ♚e7

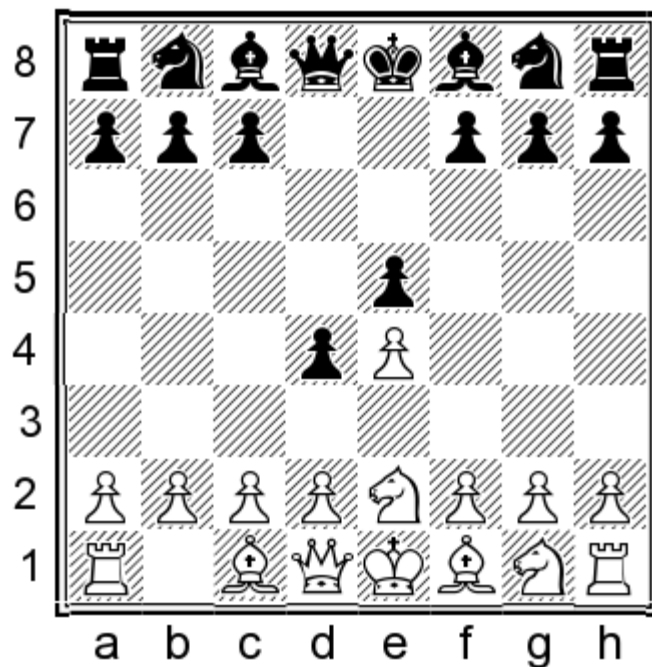
3.♚h5!? White begins an immediate piece-attack against the enemy centre. This is original indeed, but not more than that... 3...♘c6 4.♙b5 ♚d6 5.d4 exd4 6.exd4 ♙e6 7.♗ge2 0-0-0 8.♙f4 ♚d7 9.♚f3 ♗ge7. There are no pawn-weaknesses in Black's position, so White can hardly find any objects for attack. 10.0-0-0 a6 11.♙a4 h5 12.h4 ♗f5= Siigur – Rabler, ICCF 2015.

2...d4!

Black occupies space with tempo.

Naturally, Black can play here simply 2...c6, transposing to the Caro-Kann Defence, but the move 2...d4 seems much more energetic.

3.♗ce2 e5

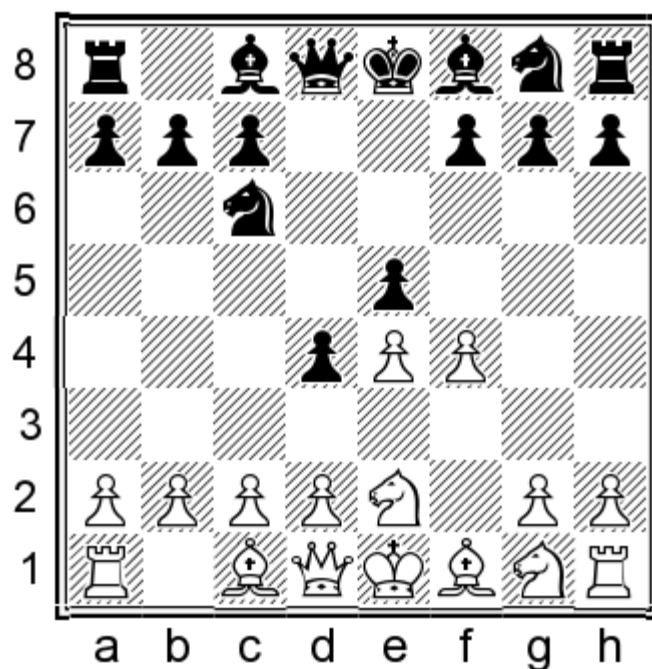


4. ♖g3

White prepares the development of his bishop to the c4-square.

4. ♖f3 f6 5. ♖g3 ♙e6 – see 4. ♖g3.

4.f4. This move seems premature before the development of White's kingside pieces. 4... ♖c6



Following 5.d3 ♙g4 6.h3 ♙b4+, Black will either manage to trade advantageously the dark-squared bishops, or will deprive his opponent of his castling rights. 7. ♖f2 ♙xe2 8. ♖xe2, Mrsevic – Drincic, Jahorina 2001, 8...h5!? 9.a3 ♙d6 10.f5 g6

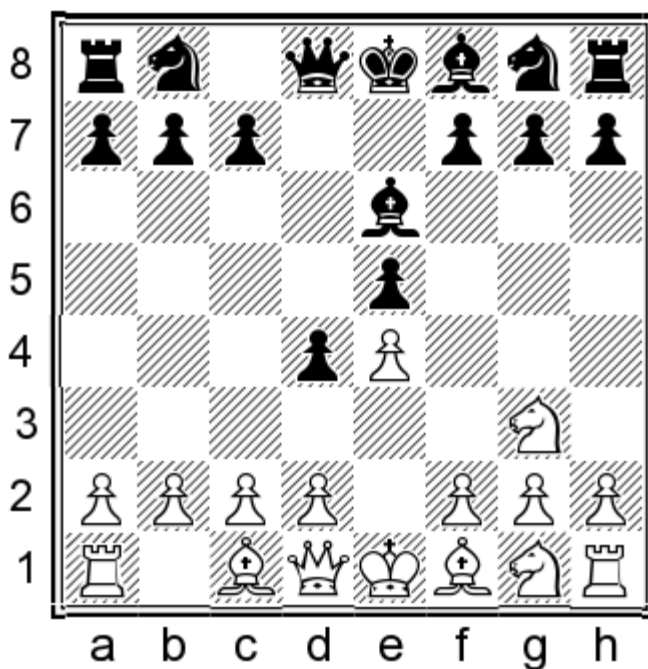
5. ♖f3 exf4 6. ♖xf4 g5! Black prepares with tempo the development of his bishop to the g7-square. 7. ♖d3 ♙g7!?! (It also seems good for Black to play here 7... ♖e7 8.c3, Brodda – Stalmach, ICCF 2004, 8...dxc3 9.dxc3 g4 10. ♖d4 ♖xd4

11.cxd4 ♖xe4+ 12.♖e2 ♘f5+ White does not have full compensation for the pawn.) 8.g3 h5. Black continues with his offensive on the kingside. He wishes to play h5-h4, followed by an exchange on g3, which would lead to the opening of the h-file and the appearance of a weak pawn in White's position. 9.♙g2 h4! 10.0-0 hxg3 11.hxg3 g4 12.♘h4 ♖d6 13.♖e1 ♘e5 14.♖f2 ♙e6. White's defence is difficult, because his queenside pieces are not developed yet. 15.♘f5 ♙xf5 16.♖xf5 ♘e7 17.♖g5 ♘xd3 18.♖xg7 0-0-0!+ Fuhr – Zlotkowski, ICCF 2014.

It seems rather passive for White to choose here 4.d3, because his light-squared bishop cannot be developed to an active position (c4 or b5) and Black will maintain a stable advantage thanks to his extra space. 4...♘c6 5.g3 (5.f4 ♙g4 – see 4.f4) 5...f5!? 6.♙g2 (6.exf5?! ♖d5 7.f3 ♙xf5+ Nuber – Trapp, Bayern 2008) 6...fxe4 7.dxe4 ♘f6 8.♘f3, Rohel – Dukic, Germany 2008, 8...♙g4!? 9.0-0 ♖d7+ White's pieces are cramped. His knight on e2 is particularly misplaced, since it has no moves at all.

4...♙e6!

This is an important moment. Black must prevent ♙c4 by all means.



5.♘f3

About 5.♙e2 ♖d7 6.♘f3 f6 – see 5.♘f3.

5.♙b5+. This transfer of White's bishop to the b3-square seems time-consuming. 5...c6 6.♙a4 ♘a6 7.♙b3 ♙xb3 8.axb3 d3! This is the point! Black prevents d2-d3 and isolates the enemy bishop on c1 from the actions for a long time. 9.c3 ♘c5 10.♘f3 ♙d6 11.0-0, Barhudarian – A.Eliseev, St Petersburg 2008, 11...♘e6!+?

After 5.c3, the simplest response for Black would be 5...a6!?, preparing ♘c6. 6.♘f3 (There arises an approximately equal position after 6.cxd4 ♖xd4!? 7.♘f3 ♖d6 8.d4 exd4 9.♖xd4 ♘c6 10.♖c3 ♘f6 11.♙d2 ♖c5= Henri – Rattinger, ICCF 2009.) 6...♘c6 7.d3 f6. Black prevents ♘g5. 8.a3 ♖d7. He wishes to castle kingside. 9.♙e2 0-0-0 10.c4 h5 11.h4 ♘ge7. The transfer of the knight to f4 promises Black at least equality. 12.b4 ♘g6 13.♖b1 ♘f4 14.♙f1 ♙g4 15.♖b3 ♘b8∞ Stephan – Ludgate, ICCF 2015.

5...f6

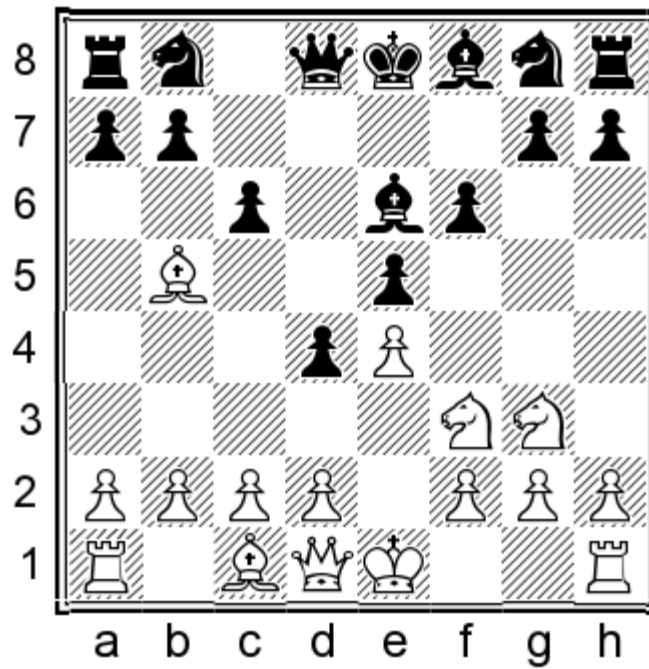
Black is not in a hurry to play the move ♘c6, since White would counter that with ♙b5.

6. ♖b5+

Undermining of the centre 6.c3?! seems obviously premature. 6...d3! 7. ♗xe5 (White would not solve his problems with 7. ♗h4 c5. Black wishes to fortify his pawn on d3 with the move c5-c4. 8. ♖a4+ ♗c6 9. ♖b5 c4! 10. ♖xb7. White has regained his pawn, but at a very dear price. Now, neither of his bishops has any moves. 10... ♗ge7 11. ♗hf5 ♖b8 12. ♖a6 ♗f7 13. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 ♣ Larsson – Cinca, ICCF 2006.) 7...fxe5 8. ♖h5+ ♗f7 (8... ♗d7!? 9. ♖xe5 ♗c6 ♣) 9. ♖xe5+ ♗e7 10. ♖b5+ ♗d7 11. ♖xd3 c5 12. ♖e3 h5 ♣ Nagel – Vlasov, ICCF 2012. Black's knight seems more powerful in this middlegame than White's three pawns.

White's position would remain cramped after 6. ♗e2 ♖d7 7. 0-0 ♗c6 8. d3 0-0-0 9. c4 h5 10. h4 ♗ge7 11. ♖a4 ♗g6 ♣ Azevedo – Kruger, ICCF 2015.

6...c6

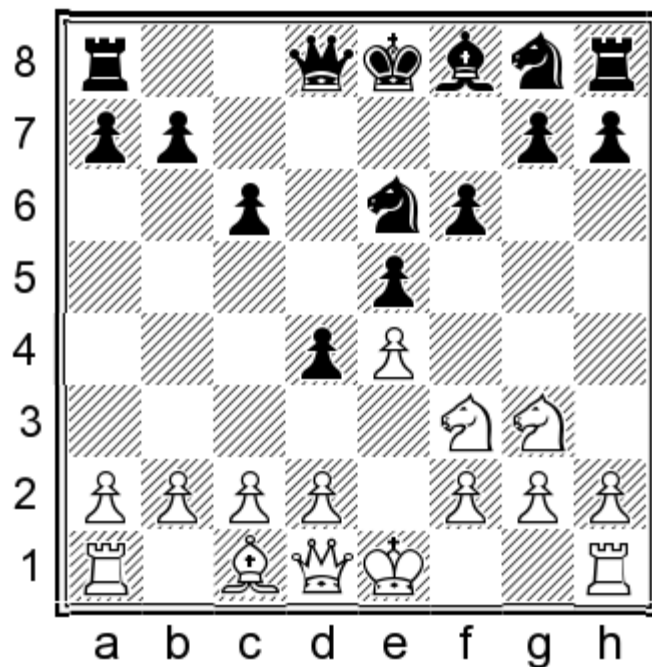


7. ♗a4

The transfer of White's bishop to d3 would not solve his problems either.

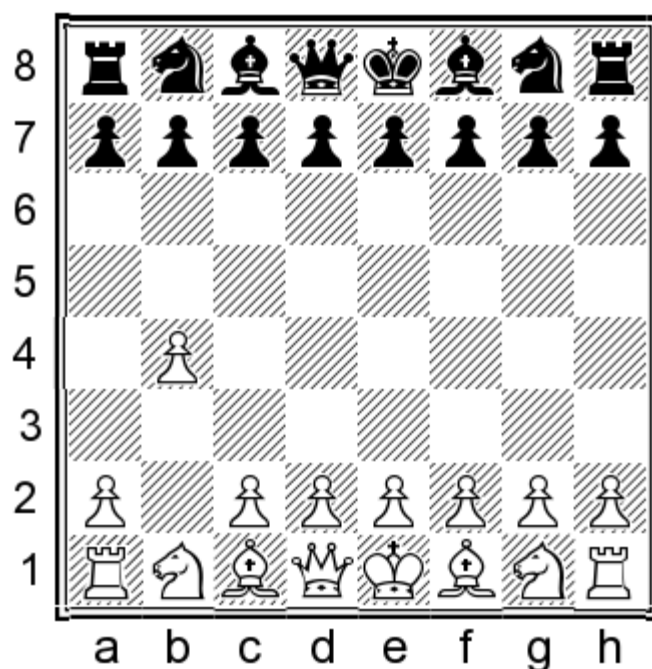
7. ♗e2. White's bishop has provoked the pawn-advance c7-c6 and retreats back into his camp. 7... ♖d7 8. 0-0 c5 9. d3 ♗c6 10. ♗d2 g6. Black's f6-pawn impedes the development of his knight on g8. Accordingly, he prepares its development to f7 via h6. 11. c3 ♗h6 12. ♖c1 ♗f7 ♣ White's position is cramped and he can hardly organise any meaningful counterplay. 13. h4 h5 14. ♖c2 ♗e7 15. ♖b1 0-0 16. cxd4 cxd4 17. b4 b5! ♣ Kokorin – Zemlyanov, ICCF 2011. White's attempt to create counterplay has only weakened his queenside pawns. Later, Black will play a7-a5, opening the a-file for his rook.

7... ♗a6 8. ♗b3 ♗c5 9. ♗xe6 ♗xe6



The knight will prevent the enemy pawn-advance f2-f4 from this square. **10.d3 ♖d7 11.0-0 0-0-0 12.♘d2 g6**. Black restricts the mobility of the enemy knight on g3. **13.a4 h5 14.h4**. White creates a target for attack in his camp. Still, he was reluctant to allow h5-h4. **14...♘h6!?** Black's further plan includes the pawn-advance g6-g5. At first he transfers his knight to f7 and then plays ♕e7 and ♜dg8. This plan would take too much time indeed, but White can hardly create any counterplay on the queenside. **15.♘c4 ♘f7 16.a5 ♕e7 17.a6 b6 18.♘d2 ♜dg8 19.♞e1 ♘d8 20.♙h2 g5** Kokorin – Shpakovsky, ICCF 2012.

B) 1.b4



This opening was named after the Soviet master Alexey Sokolsky, who contributed greatly to its analysis. In the English speaking chess literature the name – Orangutang Opening has become much more popular, given to it by Saviely

Tartakower. According to the legend, it came to his mind during the New York chess tournament in the year 1924 when the grandmasters went to visit the Zoo during the free day... The Sokolsky Opening is not so popular in the tournament practice, because White ignores already on his first move one of the basic principles of playing in the opening – the fight for the centre.

1...e5

Black occupies immediately the centre and attacks the enemy b4-pawn.

2.♘b2

White attacks the pawn on e5.

It would be too passive for him to play 2.a3, because after 2...d5, Black succeeds in occupying the centre with his pawns. This circumstance forces White to fight for equality. 3.♘b2 ♘d7 4.e3 ♘gf6 5.c4 a5 6.c5 c6 ♞ Grosz – Secula, corr. 1995.

2.b5 a6!? 3.♘b2 axb5 4.♘xe5 d5 ♞ Mai – Peled, ICCF 2012.

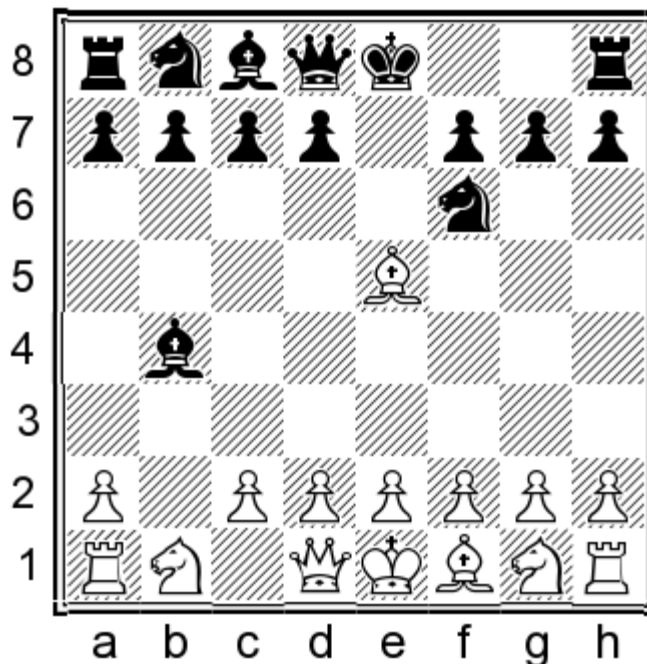
2...♘xb4!?

As a rule, it is not recommended to exchange flank pawns for central pawns. Still, we have an exceptional case here. Later, Black will attack the enemy bishop on e5 winning tempi for the development of his pieces.

3.♘xe5

3.f4. White's attempt to exploit the defencelessness of the pawn on g7 is easily parried by Black and would only lead to the increase of White's lag in development. 3...♘h6!? 4.fxg4 ♘g4 5.c3 ♘e7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.e3, Hecimovic – Martinovic, Zagreb 2015, 7...d6 ♞

3...♘f6



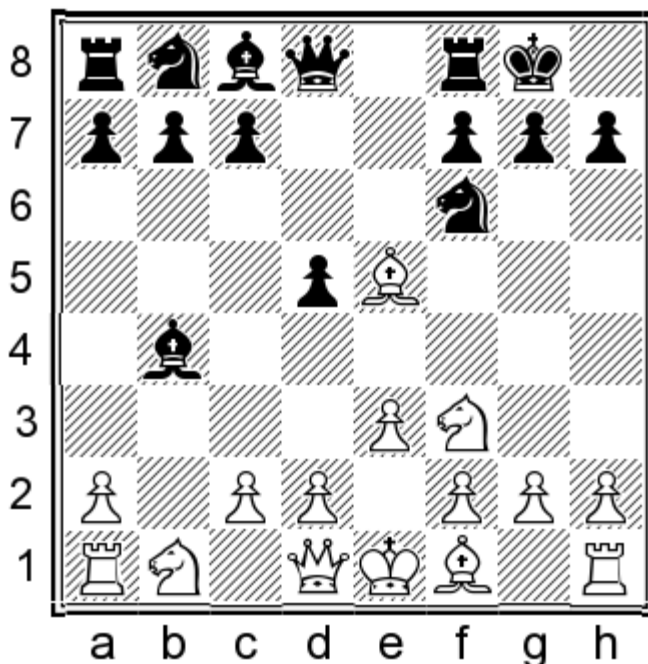
4.♘f3

About 4.e3 d5 5.♘f3 0-0, or 4.a3 ♖a5 5.e3 d5 6.♘f3 0-0 – see 4.♘f3.

4.c3. After this move, White's bishop cannot come back to b2. 4...♙a5 5.e3 (5.d3?! Andersson – Pietrzak Poland 1991, 5...c5!?) 5...♘c6 (This move is more precise than 5...0-0, which White can counter with 6.♙f3∞, threatening to exchange on f6 and to compromise Black's pawn-structure.) 6.♙g3 d5 7.d4 ♘e4♞ Martinez Munoz – Bussqvist, ICCF 2013.

4.c4. White begins an immediate fight for the d5-square, but does this ignoring his development. 4...d5 5.cxd5 0-0 6.♘f3 ♘xd5 7.e3 ♙f5 8.♙e2 c5 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♙b2 ♚e7 11.a3 ♙a5 12.♙b3 ♜fd8♞ Mehlhorn – Leupold, Germany 2012. Black's pieces are obviously more actively placed, while White has not even completed yet the development of his queenside pieces. His pawn-dominance in the centre is absolutely irrelevant.

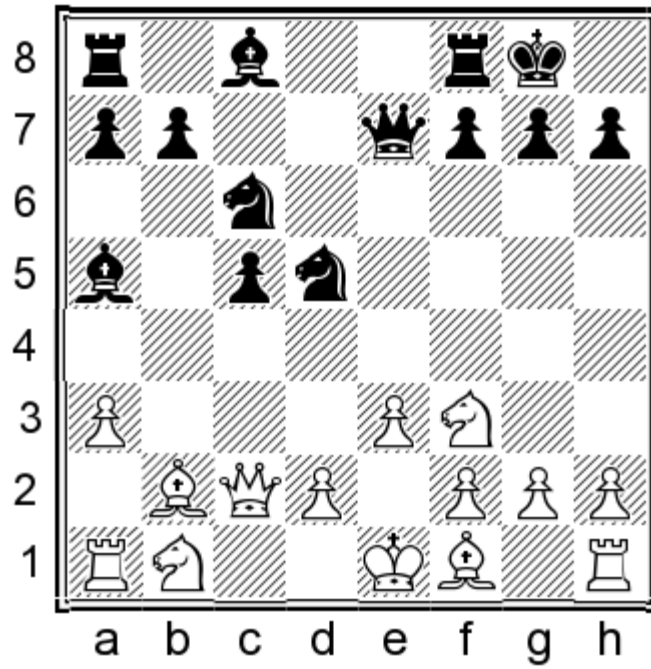
4...d5 5.e3 0-0



6.♙e2

White wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to evacuate his king away from the centre. After 6.c4, it seems very good for Black to play 6...♙f5!?, developing his bishop to active position. 7.a3 ♙d6 8.♙b2 c5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘c3 ♘xc3 11.♙xc3 ♘c6 12.♙e2 ♜c8. His pieces are well developed and he has no pawn-weaknesses in his position. 13.♙b3 ♚e7 14.0-0 b6 15.♙b2 f6 16.♜fd1 ♜fd8 17.h3 ♘h8 18.d4. White can hardly continue the game without this move, but now the position is simplified even more. 18...cxd4 19.♘xd4 ♘xd4 20.♜xd4, Kural – Heinke, ICCF 2016, 20...h6!?= White's pieces have been squeezed with the protection of his pawn on a3, moreover that Black's pawn-majority on the queenside might become a telling factor in the future.

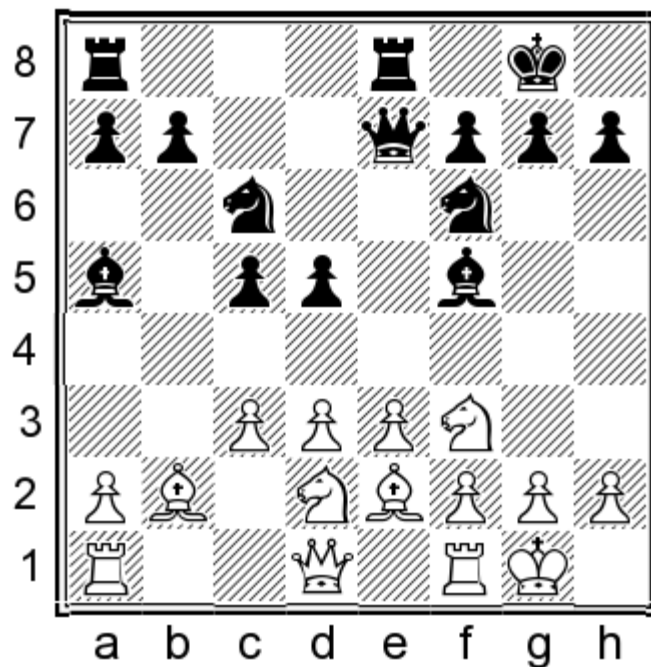
6.a3. White wishes to clarify immediately the placement of the enemy dark-squared bishop. 6...♙a5 7.c4 c5. Now, before playing ♘c6, Black advances at first his pawn. 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♙c2 ♘c6 10.♙b2 ♚e7



The active development of the bishop – 11. ♖d3 may lead to difficulties for White, because after 11...h6 12.0-0 ♗g4, he has nothing better than 13.♗e2 ♜fd8 14.♞c3 ♞xc3 15.♗xc3 ♗xc3 16.dxc3 g6 17.♝b2 b6. Black’s prospects seem already preferable, since he has only two pawn-islands, while White has three. 18.c4 ♞d7. Black prepares the doubling of his rooks on the d-file. 19.h3 ♗e6 20.♜fd1 ♞ad8 Muri – Schwichow, ICCF 2014.

11.♗e2 ♗g4 12.0-0 ♞ad8 13.h3 ♗h5 14.♞c3. The position is simplified now, but White would be incapable of developing his queenside in any other way. 14...♗xc3 15.♗xc3 b6 16.♞ac1 ♞xc3 17.♝xc3 ♞d6 18.♜fe1 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♞e5= Kural – Haznedaroglu, ICCF 2014. The active position of his pieces and the pressure against the pawn on d2 provide Black with at least equal prospects.

6...c5 7.0-0 ♞c6 8.♗b2 ♞e8 9.d3 ♝e7 10.c3 ♗a5 11.♞bd2 ♗f5



Black's pieces have been harmoniously deployed. His chances are not worse in the forthcoming fight. **12.c4 d4**. Black exploits the defencelessness of the bishop on e2 restricting considerably the mobility of the other enemy bishop. **13.e4 ♘d7 14.♞e1 a6 Skerlik – Roques, ICCF 2012. There arises a complicated middlegame with mutual chances. White will advance his pawns in the centre and on the kingside, while Black will push b7-b5 trying to organise counterplay on the opposite side of the board.**

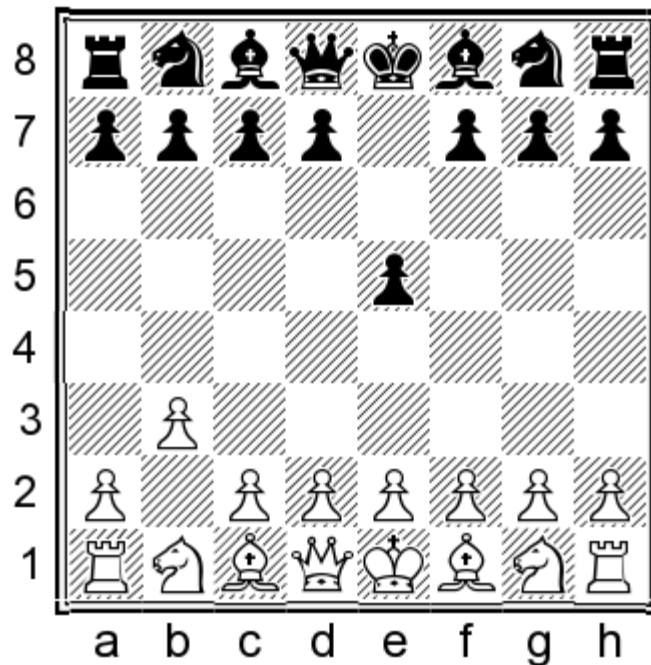
C) 1.b3

White prepares the development of his bishop on the b2-square.

1...e5!

This is Black's most precise move.

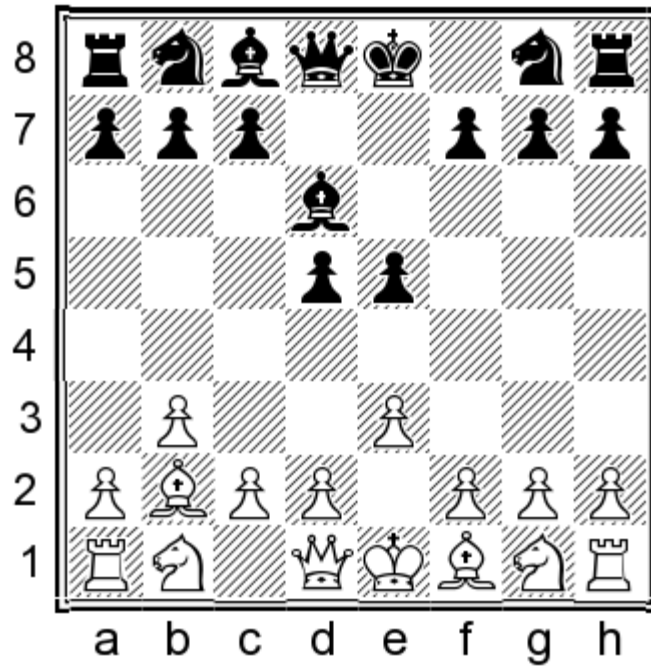
After 1...d5 2.♞b2 ♞f6 3.e3, Black will have problems to develop his pieces according to his habitual scheme: c7-c6, ♞g4. 3...♞g4 (Following 3...c6 4.f4!?, there arises a transposition to the Bird Opening in which Black has played the not so necessary move c7-c6.) 4.f3 ♞f5 5.g4!? This is the point. White continues the chase after the enemy bishop and seizes the initiative. 5...♞g6 6.h4 h6 7.♞h3↑ Svidler – Matlakov, Dubai 2014.



2.♞b2

About 2.c4 ♞f6 3.♞b2 ♞c6 – see variation C1.

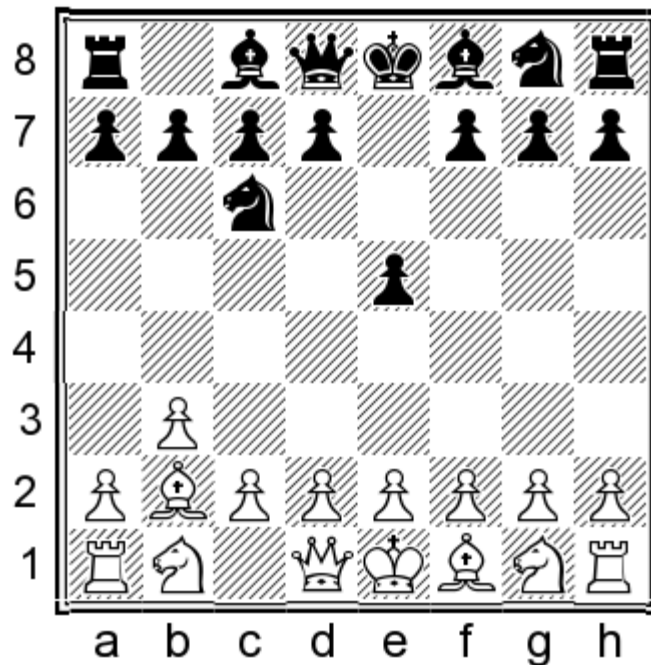
The move 2.e3 does not prevent Black from occupying of the centre. 2...d5 3.♞b2 ♞d6



4.f4?! It is now very risky for White to enter tactical complications. 4...exf4! 5.♗xg7 ♖h4+ 6.g3 fxg3 7.♗g2 gxh2+ 8.♕f1 ♗g4! Black is trying to develop his pieces as quickly as possible. 9.♖f3 ♗h5. The pin of the knight, combined with the threat ♗e7-f5-g3, make White's position very difficult to defend. 10.♘c3 ♗e7 11.♗xh8 ♘d7 12.e4 0-0-0 13.♗d4, Moskalkenko – Vallejo Pons, Linares 2013, 13...♘c6!? 14.♗f2 d4 15.♘d5 f5 16.e5 ♗dxe5 17.♖xh2 ♗f7. White will fail to hold on to his material advantage. 18.♘f4 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♗xf4 20.♗xg4 ♗xh2–+ Black has two extra pawns and White's king is hopelessly weak.

4.c4 c6 5.cxd5 (5.♗f3 f6 6.d4 e4 7.♗fd2, Bauer – Grandadam, Flims 2012, 7...f5!?, preparing the development of the knight to the f6-square. White's pieces obviously lack space.) 5...cxd5 6.♘c3, Bischoff – Wittmann, Austria 1995, 6...♗e7!?∞

2...♘c6

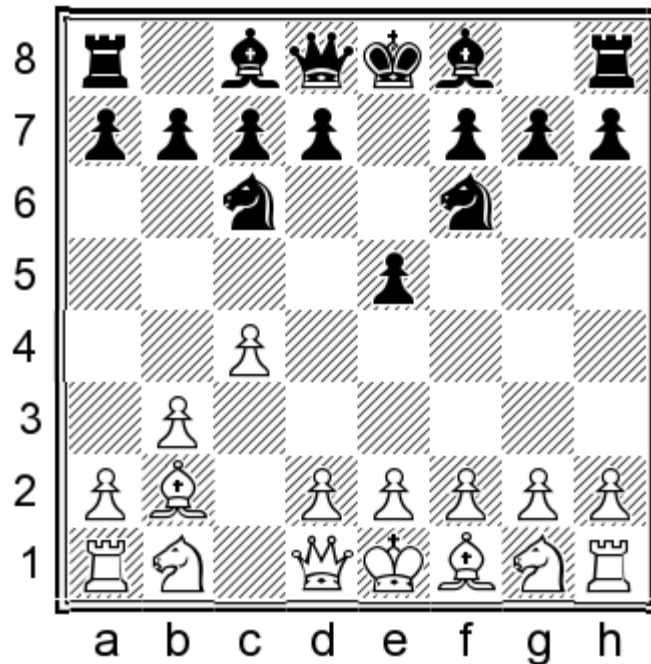


Now, White has a choice. He can play **C1) 3.c4**, after which there will arise a position from the Sicilian Defence, but with colours reversed, or continue with **C2) 3.e3**, preparing the development of the bishop to b5 with the idea to increase the pressure against the e5-pawn.

3.g3. White ignores the fight for the centre and this leads to difficulties for him. 3...d5 4.♔g2 h5!? The threat h5-h4 is very unpleasant for White. 5.h3 (5.h4. He prevents radically Black's plans, but weakens the g4-square in the process. 5...♙c5, followed by ♖f6, ♗g4.) 5...h4 6.g4 ♙e6 Abrines Sampol – Matas Artigues, Cala Mendia 2001. Later, Black will play ♖e7, ♗g6, eyeing the weakness on the f4-square.

After 3.♗f3 e4 4.♗d4 ♗xd4 5.♙xd4 d5 6.e3, Black must play energetically in order to preserve his pawn-centre. 6...♙f5!? 7.♙e2 h5! Black is not waiting for the moment when White will begin to undermine his centre with the moves c2-c4 and d2-d3 and begins immediate active actions on the kingside. 8.0-0 (8.♙xh5? ♖g5+) 8...♗h6 9.c4 (It seems too risky for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice, because the opening of the h-file would enable Black to organise an attack which would be impossible to parry. 9.♙xh5? ♖h4 10.♙e5 ♗g8 11.♙e2 ♙d6+) 9...♗g4 → Perini – Ossig, ICCF 2016.

C1) 3.c4 ♗f6

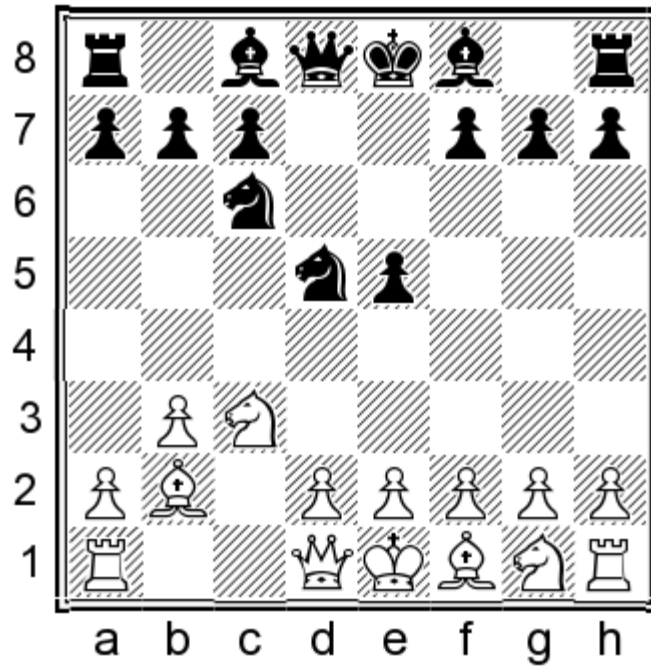


4.e3

About 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.e3 ♙d6 – see 4.e3.

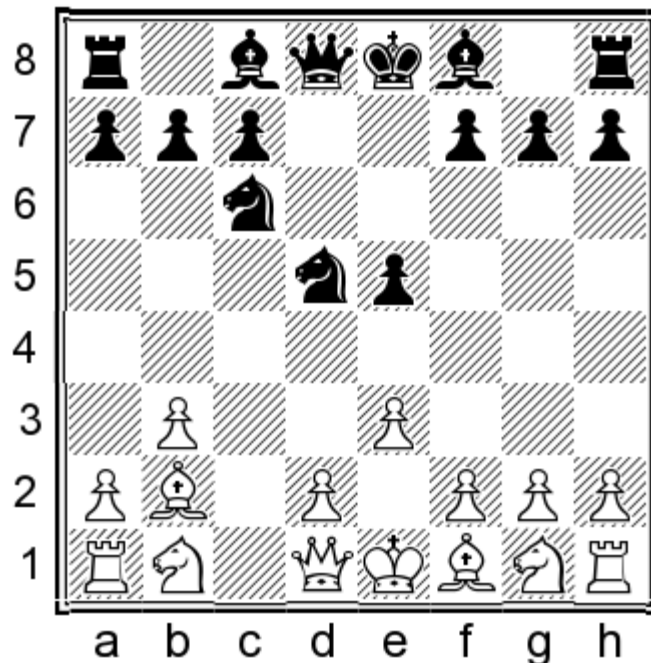
The move 4.♗f3 was tried in the famous game Larsen – Spassky, Belgrade 1970. 4...e4 5.♗d4 ♙c5 6.♗xc6 (Following 6.e3 ♙xd4 7.exd4 d5, Black's prospects are preferable thanks to his superior pawn-structure.) 6...dxc6 7.e3 ♙f5 8.♖c2 ♖e7 9.♙e2 0-0-0 Black leads in development, while White's king is still in the centre, so he must defend patiently. 10.f4?! This move was obviously premature. White had better take care about the development of his pieces. 10...♗g4 11.g3 h5 12.h3 h4! → Black sacrifices a piece and begins a decisive attack. 13.hxg4 hxg3 14.♖g1 ♖h1! 15.♖xh1 g2 16.♖f1 ♖h4+ 17.♙d1 gxf1=♖+ 0-1

4.♗c3 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5



After 6.♘f3, Black can simply exchange on c3. 6...♘xc3 7.♙xc3 (Following 7.dxc3, there arises an approximately equal endgame: 7...♙f5 8.♚xd8+ ♜xd8 9.e3 ♙e7= Mohanakrishnan – Conde Poderoso, ICCF 2015.) 7...♙d6 8.d3 0-0 9.e3 ♚e7 10.♙e2 ♙d7 11.0-0 ♜ad8= 12.♘d2 f5 13.♘c4 f4 14.♘d6 ♚xd6 15.exf4 ♜xf4 16.♙f3 ♜df8 17.♙e4 ♘d4 18.♙d2, Korchnoi – Gipslis, Tbilisi 1976. Here, Black had a very promising exchange-sacrifice: 18...♜xe4!? 19.dxe4 ♚g6 20.f3 (After 20.♔h1?, Black has a spectacular tactical strike: 20...♙h3!!) 20...♙h3 21.♜f2 ♘xf3+ 22.♔h1 ♘h4 23.♜xf8+ ♔xf8 24.♚f1+ ♔g8 25.gxh3 ♚xe4+ 26.♔g1 ♚d4 Black regains his bishop and will have two pawns for the exchange, while White must be on the alert about his king, since its shelter has been seriously compromised.

4...d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5



White covers immediately the b4-square against the possible enemy knight-sorties.

After 6.d3 ♘c5 7.♗f3 ♘g4↑, Black's pieces are very active, while the careless move 8.♗c3?! would enable him to even increase his advantage: 8...♘b4! 9.♖c1 ♗f6 10.h3 ♘h5↑ Berkes – Navara, Gothenburg 2005.

It seems premature for White to play here 6.♘b5, because after 6...♗db4 7.♗f3 e4!? 8.♗d4, Black can exploit the vulnerability of the g2-pawn with the move 8...♗g5↑ Fries Nielsen – Rosmann, Hamburg 2009.

6...♘d6

Black prepares castling kingside and protects the important pawn on e5 in the process.

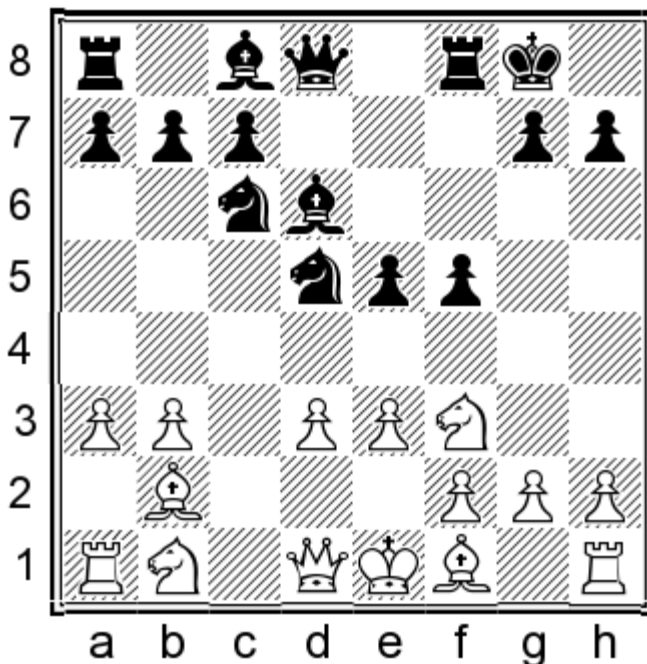
7.d3

After 7.♗c2, it seems good for Black to play 7...♗e7!?, preparing e5-e4 either immediately, or after the preparatory move f7-f5. 8.d3 (8.♘c4 ♗b6 9.♘e2, Karlsson – Brinck Claussen, Copenhagen 2006, 9...f5!?) 8...f5 9.♘e2 a6 10.b4 ♘d7. Black refrains from castling kingside and evacuates his king to the queenside with the idea to attack later on the kingside with the move g7-g5. 11.♗c3 ♗xc3 12.♘xc3 0-0-0 13.♗f3 ♖hf8 14.0-0 g5→ Fels – Pazderski, ICCF 2016.

7...0-0 8.♗f3

About 8.♗d2 f5 9.♗gf3 ♗e7 – see 8.♗f3.

8...f5



9.♗bd2

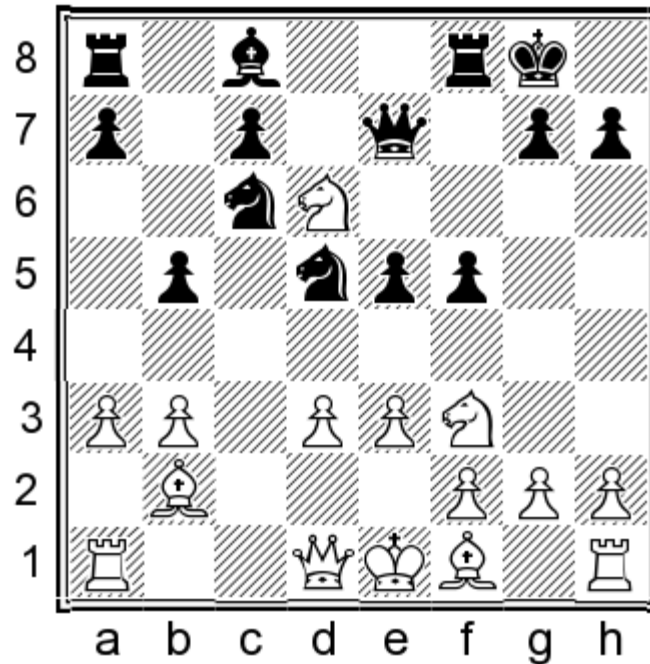
After 9.♘e2, Hickl – K.Mueller, Austria 2002, Black can begin an immediate pawn-offensive on the kingside with 9...g5!? 10.d4 e4 11.♗e5 ♘e6 12.0-0 ♗f6↑

9...♗e7 10.♗c4

It is less precise for White to choose here 10.♗c2, because after 10...♘d7 11.♘e2, Black will have the resource 11...b5!?,

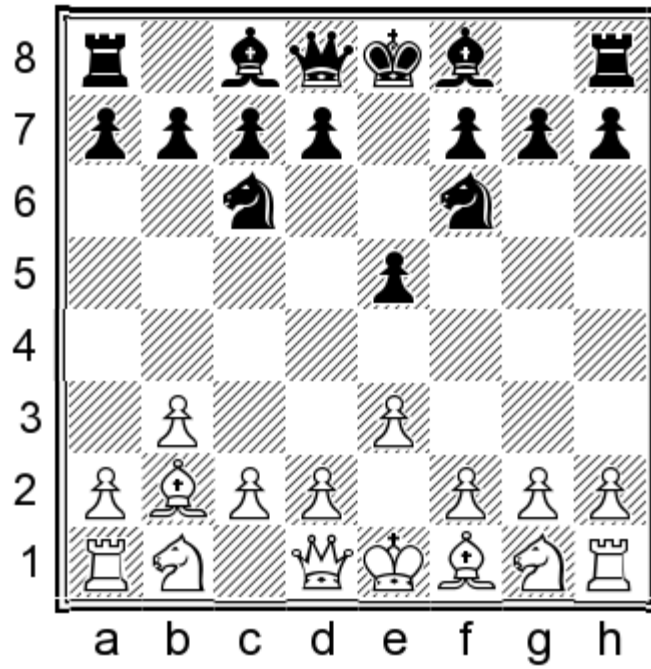
depriving his opponent of the possibility to play ♞c4 , saving his bishop on d6 from an exchange. 12.g3 (12.0-0 ♞ae8 13.g3 f4 – see 12.g3) 12... ♞ae8 13.0-0 f4 14.exf4 exf4 Rubinas – Stephan, ICCF 2013. Black has good attacking prospects, because the pawn-shelter of White's king has been compromised by the move g2-g3.

10...b5 11.♞xd6



White reduces considerably his opponent's attacking potential with this exchange and the play becomes strictly positional. His two-bishop advantage will be compensated by Black's more actively deployed pieces. 11...cxd6 12.g3 ♞d8. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to the f7-square. 13.♞g2 ♞b7 14.0-0 ♞f6 15.b4 a6 16.a4 ♞f7 17.axb5 axb5 18.♞a5 ♞c6 19.♞e2 ♞b7 = Punzon Moraleda – Havumaki, ICCF 2016.

C2) 3.e3 ♞f6



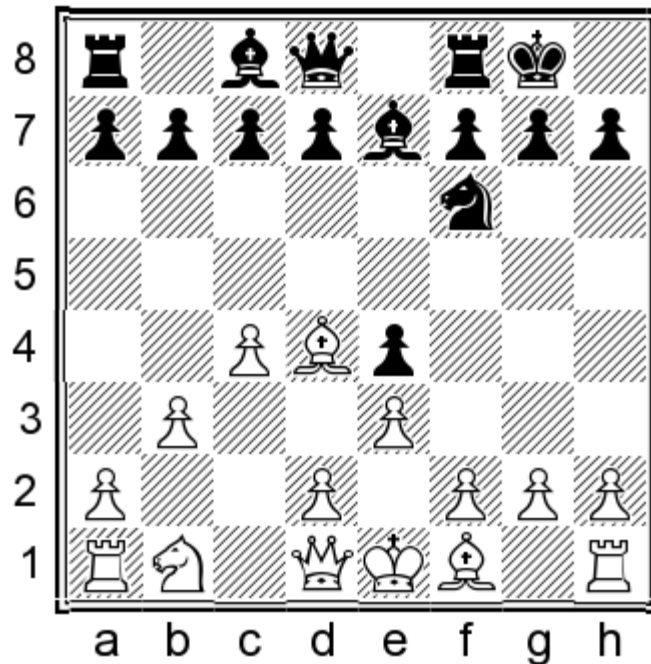
4. ♖b5

White increases the pressure against the pawn on e5 and prevents the occupation of the centre by his opponent quite comfortably with (d7-d5, ♕d6).

About 4.c4 d5 – see 3.c4.

Following 4.d3 d5=, Black occupies the centre with his pawns and it is only White who might have problems in the middlegame.

The move 4. ♖f3 leads to a simpler position. 4...e4 5. ♖d4 (5. ♖e5 ♖xe5 6. ♕xe5 d5 7.d4 exd3 8.cxd3 ♕b4+ 9. ♖d2 ♔e7 10. ♕b2 0-0 11. ♕e2 c6= Gonzalez Rodriguez – De la Paz Perdomo, Barbera del Valles 2004) 5... ♖xd4 6. ♕xd4 ♕e7 7.c4. White begins a fight for the d5-square. 7...0-0

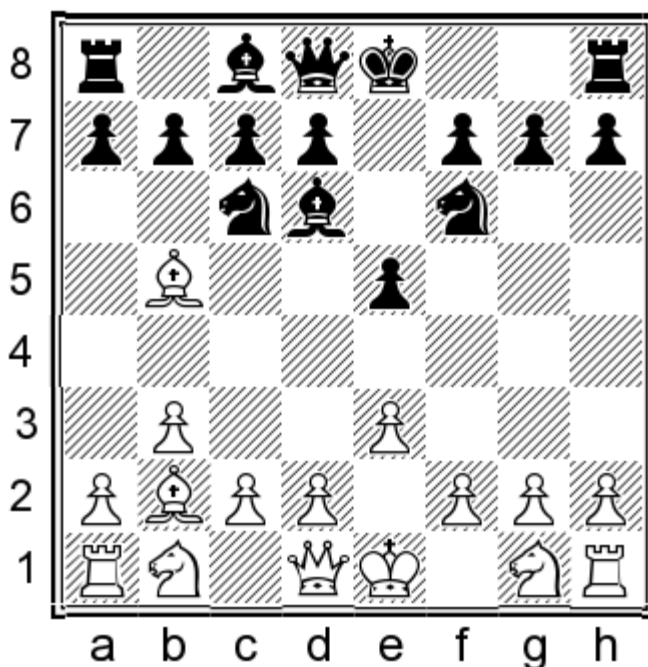


After 8.♖c2 ♜e8 9.♞c3, Black can obtain the two-bishop advantage with the move 9...c5. 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.♙e2 b6 12.0-0 ♙b7= His bishop will control the weakened d5-square from here, Karg – Canibal, ICCF 2009.

8.♞c3 c5 9.♙e5. White wishes to transfer his bishop to the g3-square in order to avoid its exchange for the enemy knight. (After 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.♖c2 ♙xc3 11.dxc3 ♜e7 12.♙e2 d6, Black's superior pawn-structure may become a telling factor in the future. 13.0-0 ♙d7 14.♞ad1 ♞ad8 15.♞d2 ♙c6 16.♞e1 f5 17.g3 ♞f6 From this square Black's rook protects the pawn on d6 and may take part in the attack at the same time (♞h6), Reichgeld – Pospelov, ICCF 2011.) 9...d6 10.♙g3 ♙f5 11.♞c1 (11.♙e2 d5 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.0-0 ♙f6 14.♞c1 a6= Punzon Moraleda – Yamaliev, ICCF 2014) 11...d5. After this freeing pawn-break Black equalises completely. 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.♙c4 ♞xc3 14.dxc3 ♜b6= Verde – Rhodes, ICCF 2010.

4...♙d6

Naturally, Black should be reluctant to place his bishop in front of his pawn, but his central pawn needs protection.



5.♞a3

White prepares the transfer of his knight to the c4-square in order to increase his pressure against the enemy centre.

Or 5.d4 exd4 6.exd4 0-0 7.♞e2, Alias Ginel – Monclus Domingo, Spain 1996, 7...♞b4!? 8.a3 c6 9.♙c4 b5

After 5.d3, Black can retreat his knight 5...♞e7!? Now, in order not to lose his bishop on b5, White is forced to make a second move in a row with his d-pawn. 6.d4 e4 7.♙e2 c6 8.c4 ♙c7. Black's e4-pawn cramps considerably White's position and prevents the development of his knight on g1. 9.d5 cxd5 ♞ Simacek – Wagner, Sibenik 2012.

5.♞e2 ♞e7!? 6.f4 ♞g6 7.fxe5 ♞xe5 8.♞g3 c6 9.♙e2 ♙c7 10.d4 ♞g6 ♞ Zurek – Navara, Czech Republic 2007. There has appeared a weak e3-pawn in White's camp.

5.♙xc6. This voluntary exchange of White's bishop is obviously bad for him. 5...dxc6 6.d3. Black wishes to open the position 6...e4!? 7.♞e2 (After 7.♞d2 ♙f5 8.dxe4 ♞xe4 9.♞xe4 ♙xe4 10.♖g4 ♜e7 ♞, Black's bishops will be tremendously powerful, Gonzalez Rodriguez – Avila Jimenez, Barcelona 2011. The capturing of the pawn 11.♖xg7? would lead immediately to a lost position for White. 11...0-0-0 12.♞f3 ♞hg8 13.♖f6 ♙b4+ 14.♞e2 ♖c5--+) 7...♙f5 8.♞bc3 ♜e7 9.♞g3. Now, Black will be forced to trade his powerful bishop, but White's rather slow manoeuvres have led to his considerable lag in development. 9...♙xg3 10.hxg3 exd3 11.cxd3 0-0-0 12.d4 h5 ♞ Savchenko

Lorparizangeneh, Dubai 2016. White is incapable of castling kingside, because after h5-h4, Black's attack would be almost impossible to parry.

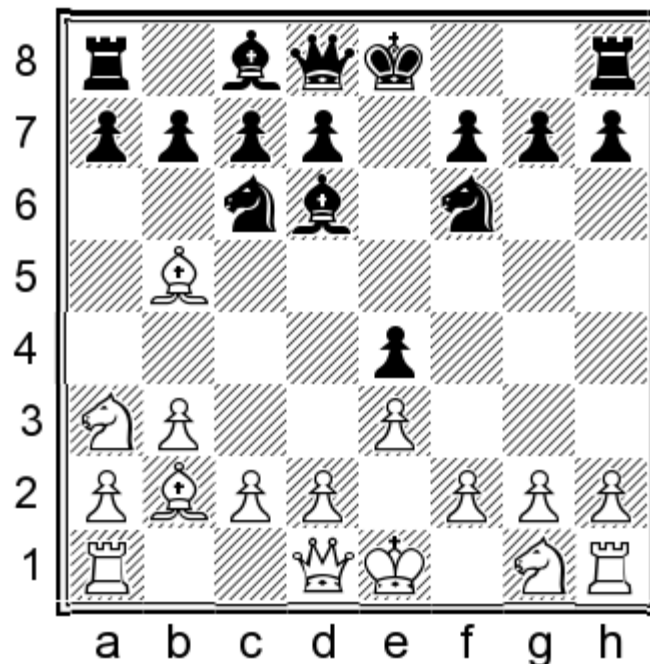
5.♖c3 a6 6.♙xc6 dxc6 7.♗ge2 h5!? White wishes to play ♗g3, so Black is preparing in advance to counter this move. 8.♗g3 (It is less precise for White to play here 8.h3, because after 8...h4, his knight on e2 would be severely restricted by his pawns on h4 and e5. 9.d3 ♖e7 10.♗d2 ♙e6 11.e4 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♗h5, impeding the pawn-break f2-f4, Morley – Vroom, ICCF 2007. White has problems to find a suitable plan for his actions, because the pawn-advance d2-d4 would lead to the opening of the position, which would be favourable for Black who has the two-bishop advantage.) 8...♙b4 9.h4 ♖e7 10.a3 ♙c5 11.♖e2 ♙e6 Mulder – Paul, ICCF 2015. White has an elastic pawn-structure, but Black has two powerful bishops and a freer game.

5.♗f3 e4 6.♗h4. White prepares a transfer of his knight to the f5-square. (There arises a complicated position after 6.♗d4 ♗xd4 7.♙xd4 ♖e7 8.♗c3 c6 9.♙e2 ♙c7 10.♙xf6 gxf6 Spagnoli – Sarakenidis, ICCF 2013.) 6...♙e5. Black removes in advance his bishop from the possible attack by the enemy knight. 7.d4 (It is possible White should have complied here with equality and continue with 7.♙xe5 ♗xe5=) 7...exd3 8.c3, Shirazi – Malaniuk, Malakoff 2010, 8...d2+!? This is an exquisite tactical strike. Black exploits the defencelessness of the knight on h4. 9.♕f1 (9.♗xd2 ♗d5) 9...♗e4 10.♗f3 ♙f6 White has been deprived of his castling rights and will have to lose plenty of tempi in order to coordinate his pieces.

5...e4!?

Now, following ♗c4, Black will have simply to retreat his bishop, since it does not need to protect the pawn on e5 anymore.

It is almost equally strong for Black to play here the prophylactic move 5...♗a5=



6.♗c4

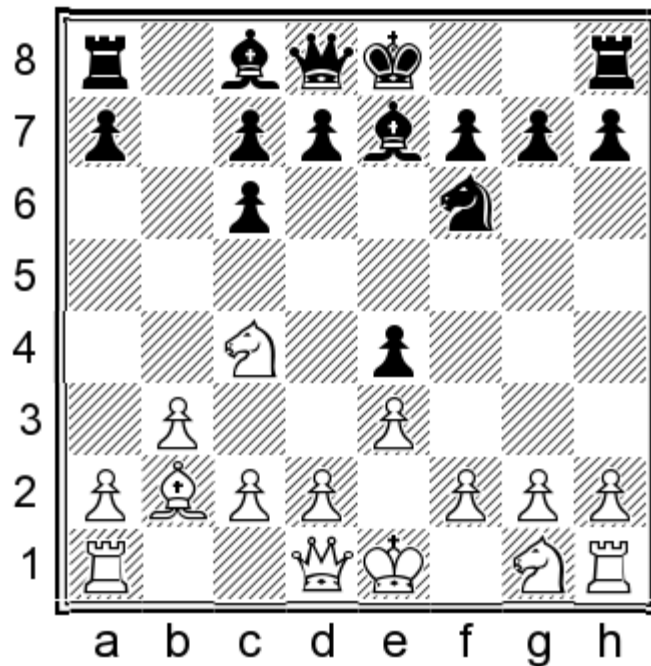
After 6.♙xc6 dxc6 7.♗c4, Chernyshov – Saric, Pardubice 2011, 7...♙e6!? 8.♗xd6+ ♖xd6 9.♙xf6 gxf6, Black's superior development and his pressure on the semi-open d and g-files would compensate the defects of his pawn-structure. 10.♗e2 ♙g4!? (10...0-0-0=) 11.h3 ♙xe2 12.♖xe2 ♖g8 13.0-0 0-0-0=

It would be too passive for White to opt here for 6.♗e2 ♙e5 7.♖c1 ♙xb2!? (It is less precise for Black to choose 7...0-0

8.h3 ♖e7 9.♙xc6 ♙xb2 10.♚xb2 dxc6= The position is approximately equal. White should not castle queenside here, because his king would come under an attack there. 11.0-0?! a5 12.♘c3 b5 ♣ Jobava – Aronian, Beijing 2012.) 8.♚xb2 ♘e7 9.♘g3 h5 10.h4. White is reluctant to allow h5-h4, but now he weakens the g4-square. 10...c6 11.♙e2 d5 12.d3 ♘f5 13.♘xf5 ♙xf5 14.♚e5+ ♙e6 ♣ Abcouwer – Bus, ICCF 2016. White's knight is misplaced at the edge of the board, so he has no chances of equalising.

6.f4. White increases his control over the e5-square, but his last move does not contribute to his development. 6...0-0 (Here, it is possibly even stronger for Black to play 6...♙c5 7.♙xc6 dxc6 8.♘c4 h5 9.♘e2 h4 10.h3 ♖e7 11.0-0 ♙e6 12.♘e5 0-0-0 ♣) 7.♘c4 ♙e7 8.♙xc6 bxc6 9.♘e2 a5 10.0-0 a4 11.♘g3 c5 12.♘f5 d5 13.♘xe7+ ♚xe7 14.♘e5 ♘d7. Black trades the powerful enemy knight. 15.♚h5 ♚d6 16.♘xd7 ♙xd7 17.♚e5 ♚xe5 18.fxe5 ♚fb8 ♣ Ott – Janisch, ICCF 2015. Black exerts some pressure against the enemy queenside, so White must play very accurately. Still, he should gradually equalise due to the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board.

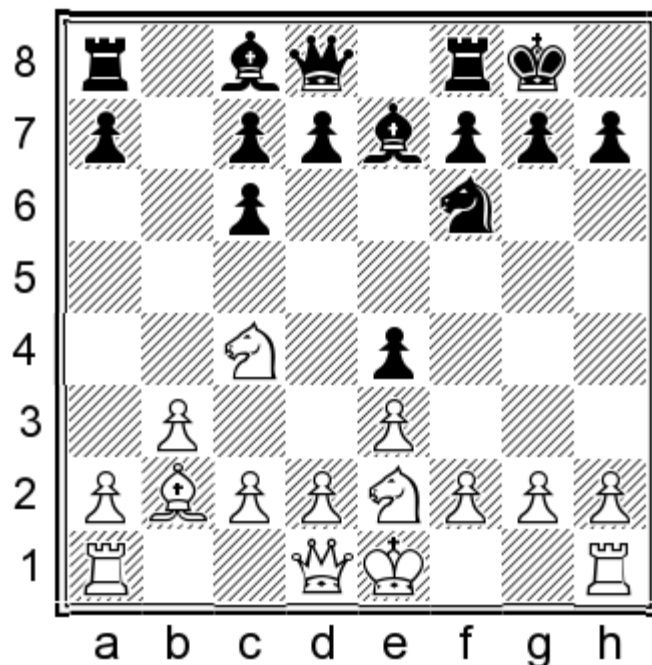
6...♙e7 7.♙xc6 bxc6



8.d3

8.♘e5 0-0 9.♘e2 ♚e8 – see 8.♘e2.

8.♘e2 0-0



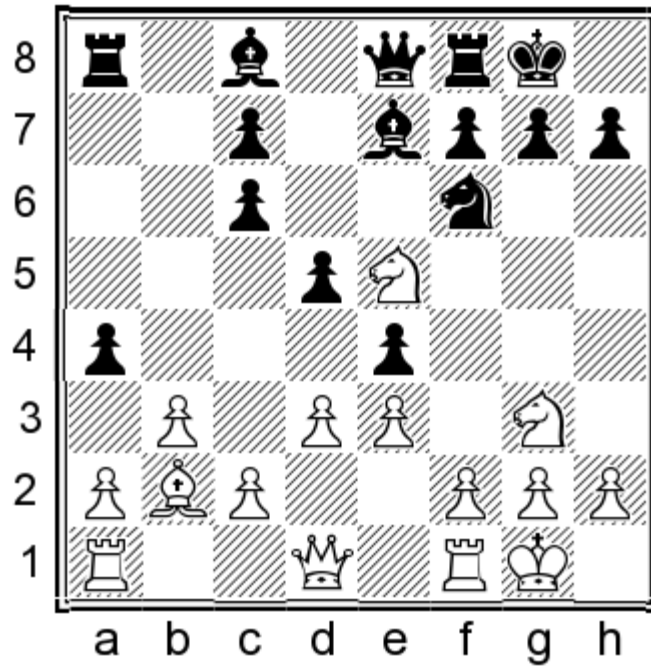
9.d3 a5 – see 8.d3.

9.♘e5 ♚e8. Black is preparing d7-d6. 10.♘d4 ♙d8 11.f4 c5 12.♘e2 d6♣ Black ousts the enemy knight from the centre and obtains an edge, T.L.Petrosian – Barsov, Tashkent 2015.

He reaches an excellent position too after 9.d4 ♙a6 10.♘d2. The bishop on a6 exerts powerful pressure against his opponent's position, so White wishes to play c2-c4, in order to restrict it. Still, the manoeuvres with his knight take too much time and Black manages to get rid of his doubled pawn. 10...d5 11.c4 c5 12.dxc5 ♙xc5= Granda Zuniga – Demuth, La Massana 2015.

9.0-0 a5 10.♘g3 (10.d3 a4 – see 8.d3; 10.f3, Rapport – Bacrot, Calvi 2013, 10...exf3!? 11.♙xf3 a4♣) 10...d5 11.♘e5 ♚e8 12.c4 (Following 12.f4 exf3 13.♘xf3 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♘d4 f5∞, Black's two powerful bishops and extra space compensate the weaknesses of his queenside pawn-structure.) 12...♙d6 13.d4, Jobava – Bacrot, Fujairah 2012, 13...a4!?∞

8...0-0 9.♘e2 a5 10.0-0 a4 11.♘g3 d5 12.♘e5 ♚e8



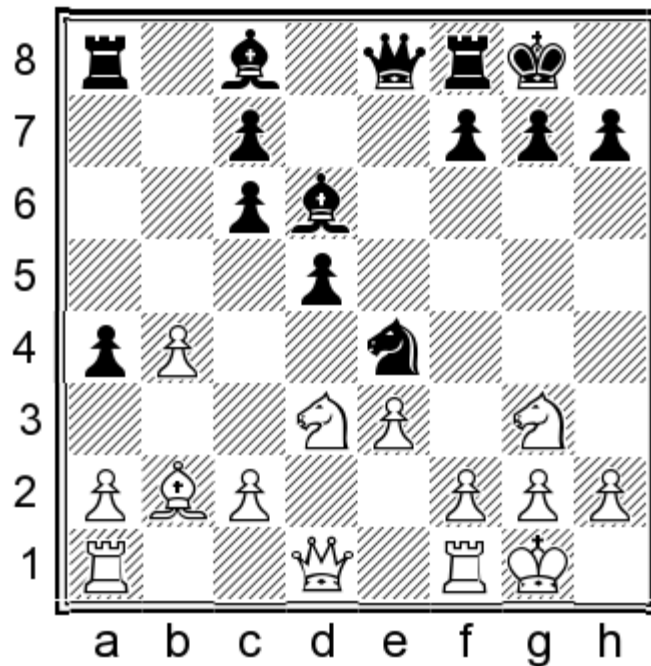
Now, White must play very precisely; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position.

13.dxe4 ♘xe4 14.♘d3

The manoeuvre with this knight seems rather slow. White has no reasons to refrain from simplifications.

It seems more reliable for him to play here 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♖d4 f6 16.♘c4 ♖g6 17.♘d2 ♙a6 18.♞fd1 ♙e2 19.♞e1 ♞fd8 20.♞xe4. He forces further simplifications. 20...♞xd2 21.♞xe7 ♞xc2 22.♞xc7 ♙f3 23.♞g3 ♞xg3 24.hxg3 ♙d5= The endgame rooks completely drawish.

14...♙d6 15.b4

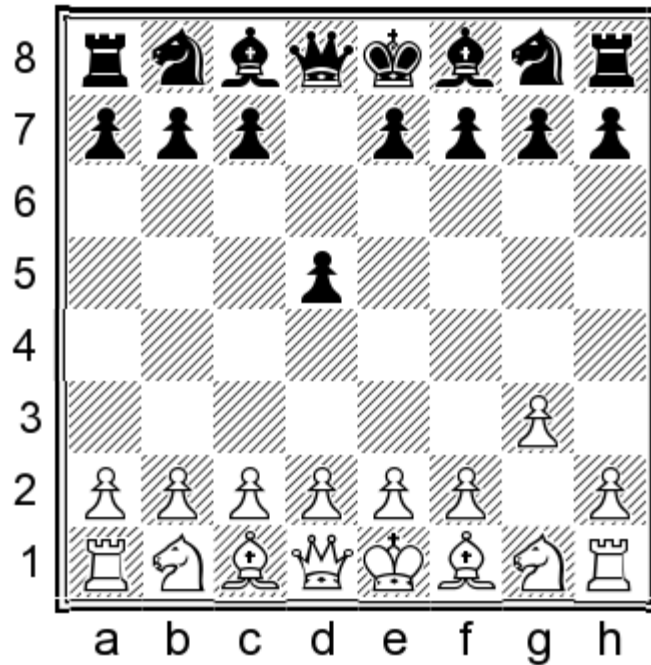


This position was reached in the game Rapport – Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2017. Here, Black could have tried to obtain an advantage with the line: **15...a3!?**, fixing the enemy pawn on the a2-square. **16.♘d4 ♗a6**. Black's bishop is headed for the c4-square. **17.♞e1 f6 18.♟xe4 dxe4 19.♟c5 ♗c4 20.c3**. The vulnerability of the light squares hurts White. Meanwhile, Black has excellent prospects on the queenside. **20...♞g6 21.♞c2 f5**

D) 1.g3

This move is often chosen by players who play the King's Indian Defence with Black, or the Pirc Defence in order to obtain their favourite schemes with colours reversed and an extra tempo. Still, White refrains from a fight for the centre and this cannot be approved.

1...d5



2.♗g2

2.b3 e5 3.♗b2 (3.♗g2 ♟f6 – see 2.♗g2) 3...♟c6 – see 1.b3.

2.c3 e5 3.♗g2 ♟f6 – see 2.♗g2.

2.d3 ♟f6 3.♗g2 (3.♟f3 c6 – see Chapter 21, variation **B**) 3...e5 – see 2.♗g2.

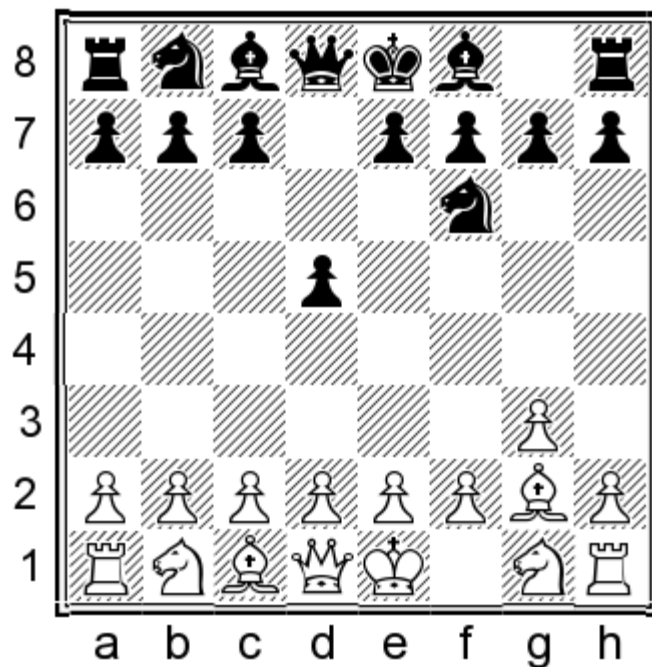
2.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22.

2.f4 h5 – see Chapter 20.

2.d4 ♟f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 23.

2.♟f3 ♟f6 – see Chapter 21, variation **B**.

2...♟f6



3.d3

3.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22.

3.♘f3 c6 – see Chapter 21, variation **B**.

3.f4 g6 4.d3 ♕g7 5.♗f3 0-0 – see Chapter 20.

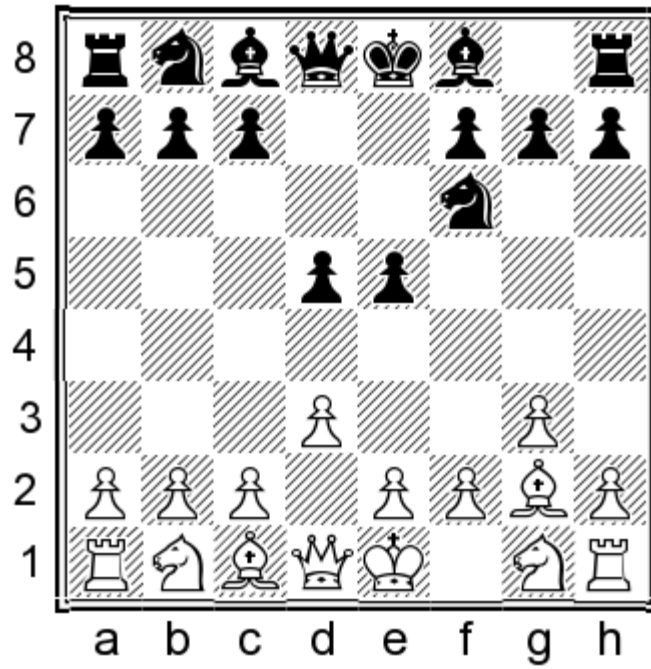
3.b3. White prepares the fianchetto of his second bishop. Still, after 3...e5 4.♗b2 ♕d6 5.d3 0-0 6.♗d2 c5, White's position is obviously cramped. 7.e3 ♖c6 8.♗e2 ♜e8= Wohl – Arkell, Millfield 2000.

3.c3 e5 4.d4 (4.d3 ♕d6 – see 3.d3) 4...♗bd7!? 5.dxe5 ♗xe5 6.♗d2 ♕d6 7.♗gf3 ♗xf3+ 8.♗xf3 c6 9.0-0 0-0= Knudsen – Masters, USA 1979. Black's position looks a bit freer, but White has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp.

White should possibly pay attention to the situation in the centre and transpose to the variations, which we have analysed in Volume 1 (Chapter 23) – 3.d4 c6.

3...e5!

Black occupies the centre with his other pawn as well.



4. ♘f3

White wishes at first to complete the development of his kingside pieces and to evacuate his king away from the centre.

4.a3 ♘d6 5.c4, Nakamura – Friedel, Ledyard 2009, 5...c6!?=

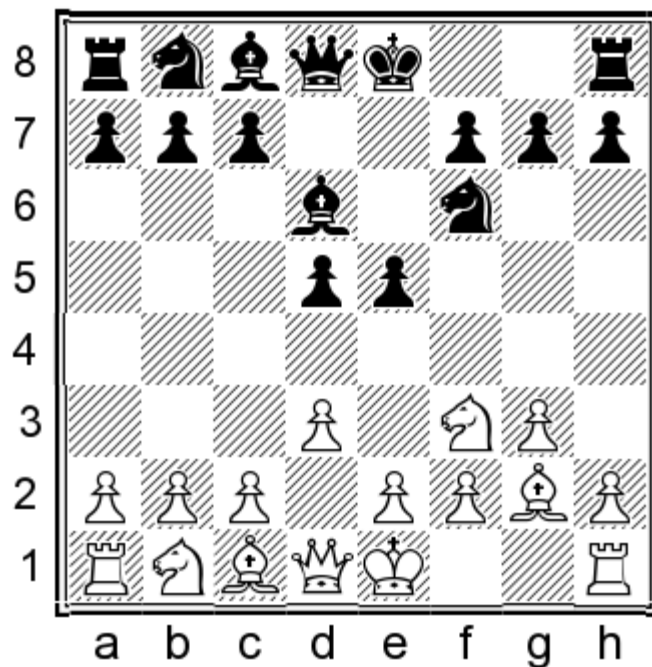
4.c3 ♘d6 5. ♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8 or 4.c4 d4 5. ♘f3 ♘d6 6.0-0 0-0 – see 4. ♘f3.

4. ♘d2 ♘d6 5.e4 (5. ♘gf3 0-0 – see 4. ♘f3) 5...c6 – see Chapter 3.

White would not achieve much if he tries to exert pressure against the d5-square. 4. ♔g5 ♘e7 5. ♘c3 d4 6. ♔xf6 ♔xf6 7. ♘e4 ♔e7. Black saves his bishop from an exchange. 8. ♘f3 ♘c6 9.c3 0-0 10.0-0 f5 11. ♘ed2 dxc3 12.bxc3 ♔e6∞ Petran – Rogovski, Presov 1997. Black's two powerful bishops promise him at least equality.

4... ♘d6

This is a very flexible move. Black refrains from developing his knight to the c6-square at the moment, so that he can protect his pawn on d5 with the move c7-c6 in the future, or to occupy space with c7-c5.

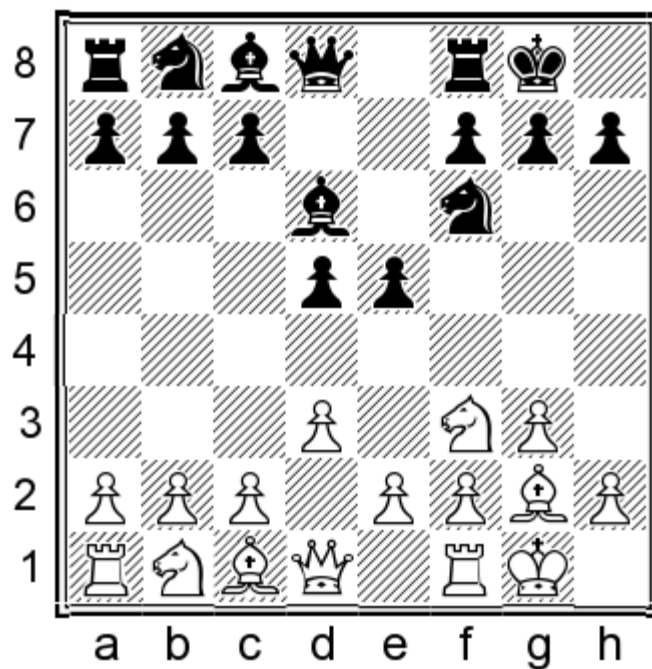


5.0-0

About 5.♘bd2 0-0 6.0-0 (6.e4 c6 – see Chapter 3, variation **B**) 6...c6 – see 5.0-0.

5.c4 d4 6.0-0 0-0, or 5.♘c3 c6 6.0-0 0-0, or 6.e4 0-0 7.0-0 d4 – see 5.0-0.

5...0-0



6.c4

Finally, White begins to fight for the centre. Still, Black's fortress in the centre seems quite solid.

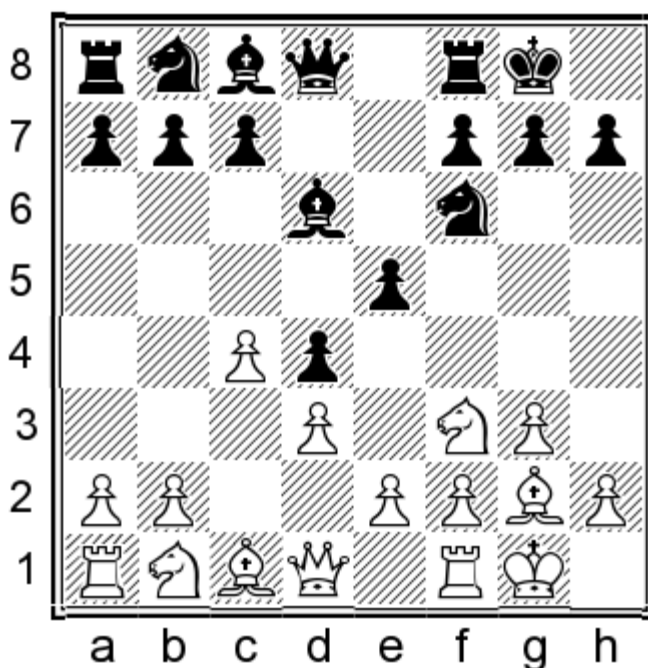
About 6.♖bd2 c6 7.e4 ♜e8, or 7.c3 ♜e8 8.e4 ♘bd7 – see Chapter 3, variation **B**.

The move 6.c3 does not seem so active. 6...♜e8 7.♚c2 h6 8.e4 c6 9.♜e1 ♘bd7=, followed by ♘f8-g6, T.L.Petrosian – Carlsen, chesscom 2016. Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his powerful centre.

6.♘c3 c6 7.e4 (7.♘d2, Spraggett – Wells, Ubeda 1996, 7...♙e6!? 8.e4 ♜e8 9.h3 ♘bd7) 7...d4!? Black continues to occupy additional space. 8.♘e2 c5 9.♘d2 ♘c6 10.h3 ♙c7 11.f4 exf4!? This is his simplest reaction. After this pawn-exchange, Black prevents his opponent's pawn-offensive f4-f5, g3-g4-g5. 12.gxf4 ♘h5 13.♜f2 g6∞ Klewe – Shuler, ICCF 2015.

6...d4!?

Black is reluctant to waste time and forces to defend the d5-square and simply advances his pawn. Now, White must play very accurately in order to avoid coming under a positional bind. His further plans should be connected with undermining White's centre.



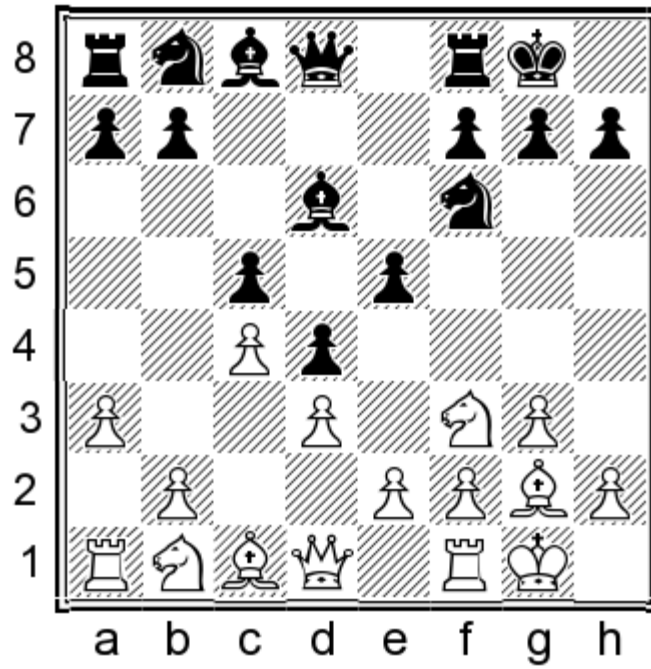
7.a3

7.♘a3 c5 8.♘b5 ♘c6 9.♘xd6 ♚xd6. The position is closed and White's two-bishop advantage is not so important. 10.a3 a5 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙xf6 ♚xf6∞ Andersen – Johnson, ICCF 2010.

7.e3 c5 8.exd4 exd4 9.♙g5. White's position is cramped, so the trade of a couple of minor pieces is in his favour. 9...♘bd7. After an eventual exchange on f6, White wishes to capture there with his knight, since it would control from there the important central d5 and e4-squares. 10.♘a3 a6∞ Mercadal Benejam – Sodomski, ICCF 2016.

7.b4 ♜e8. Black is reluctant to exchange his central e5-pawn for the flank enemy b4-pawn. 8.♚b3 a5. Black begins a fight for the c5-square for his knight. 9.b5 ♘bd7 10.♘bd2 h6 11.♚c2 a4= Now, before playing ♘c5, Black wishes to prevent ♘b3. White's position is cramped and his defence would be very difficult in the forthcoming middlegame, Piersig – Petrigin, ICCF 2013.

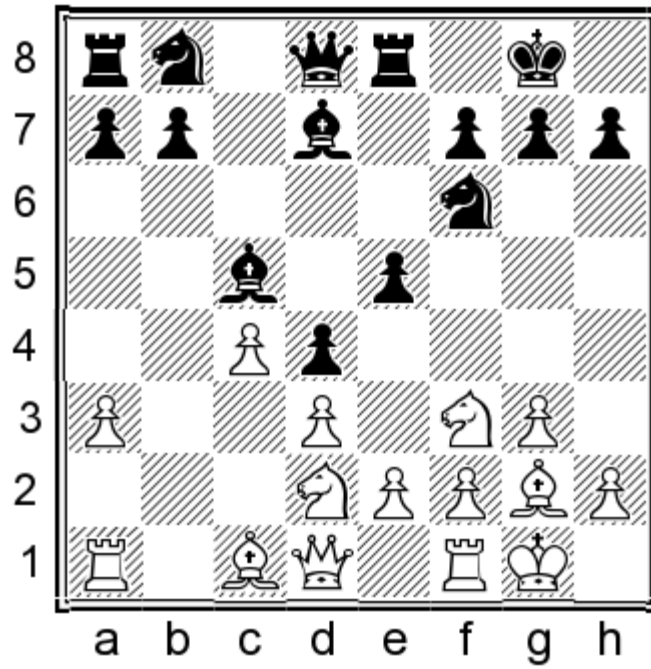
7...c5



8.b4

Following 8.e3 ♞c6 9.exd4 exd4, White can hardly organise any meaningful active counterplay. 10. ♙g5 h6 11. ♙xf6 ♜xf6 12. ♞fd2 ♞g6 13. ♞e4 ♙e7 14.f4 ♙d7 15. ♞bd2 f5 Papienin – Blass, ICCF 2012. Black has two powerful bishops and a space advantage.

8... $\text{♞e8}!$? 9.bxc5 ♙xc5 10. ♞bd2 ♙d7 ∞

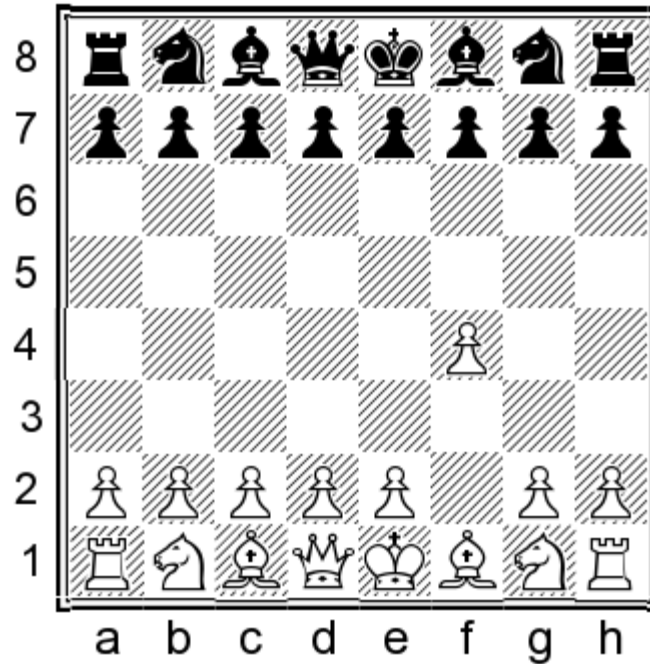


There has arisen a complicated double-edged position. It is worth mentioning that White should better avoid 11. $\text{♞xe5}?!$, because after 11... ♞xe5 12. ♙xb7 ♞c6 13. ♙xa8 ♞xa8 Papienin – Akdag, ICCF 2012, there would be just a few open files on the board, so White's rook and two pawns would not be capable of countering effectively Black's two minor

pieces. Meanwhile, after the disappearance of White's bishop on g2, his king's shelter has been seriously weakened.

Chapter 20

1.f4



This opening was named after the British chess player Henry Bird during the 19th century. He contributed greatly to the development of the scheme with 1.f4. This opening is only seldom played in the contemporary tournament practice, but Black should be well prepared for it, because White plays in fact the Dutch Defence with colours reversed, but with an extra tempo.

1...d5 2.♘f3

White can hardly continue the game without this move and the delay of the development of his king's knight would not promise him anything positive.

2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e3 g6 – see 2.e3.

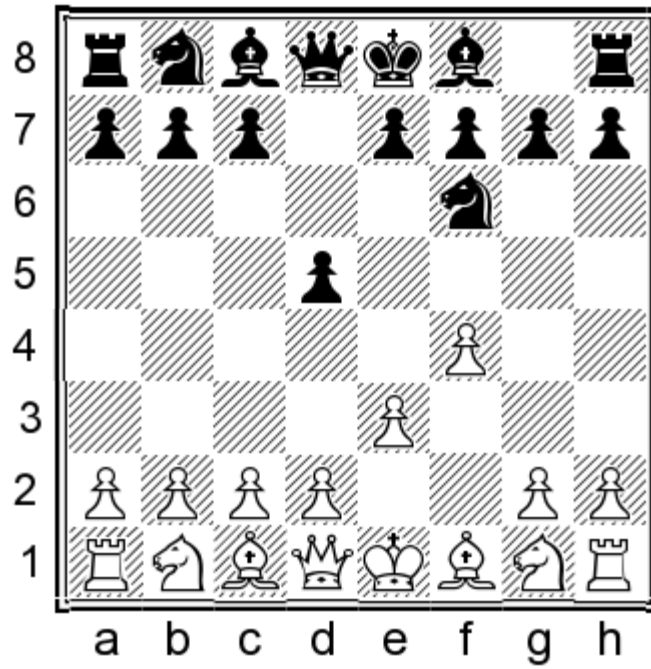
About 2.c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 g6, or 3.d3 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 – see 2.♘f3.

2.d3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 (3.c3 g6 – see 2.c3) 3...g6 – see 2.♘f3.

2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘f3 (3.e3 ♗f5 – see 2.e3) 3...♗f5 – see 2.♘f3.

2.b3 g6 3.♗b2 ♘f6 4.e3 (4.♘f3 ♗g7 – see 2.♘f3) 4...♗g7 – see 2.e3.

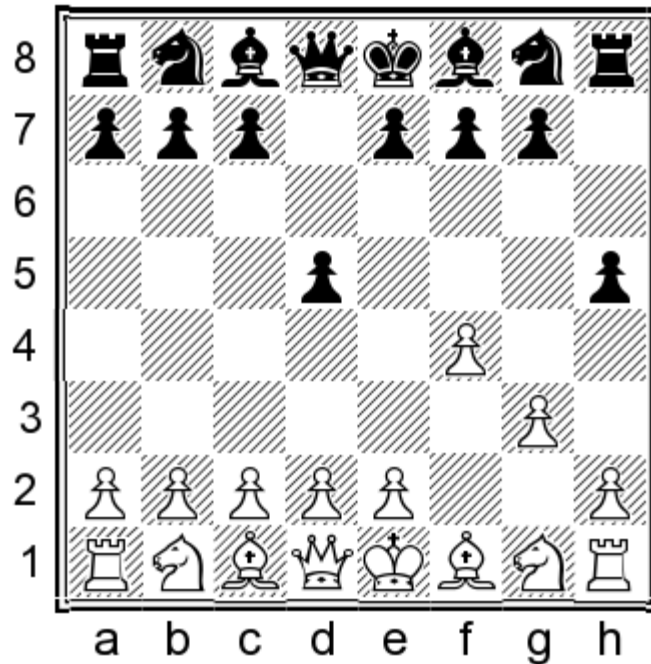
2.e3 ♘f6



About 3.♘f3 g6, or 3.♗c3 g6 4.♘f3 ♖g7, or 3.b3 g6 4.♘f3 ♖g7, or 4.♙b2 ♖g7 5.♘f3 0-0, or 5.♙e2 c5 6.♘f3 0-0 – see variation **B**.

3.d4 ♙f5 4.♘f3 e6, or 4.♙d3 e6 5.♘f3 c5 – see 2.♘f3.

2.g3?! White should better play this move after the preliminary ♘f3, because now, after the energetic response 2...h5!, Black seizes firmly the initiative.

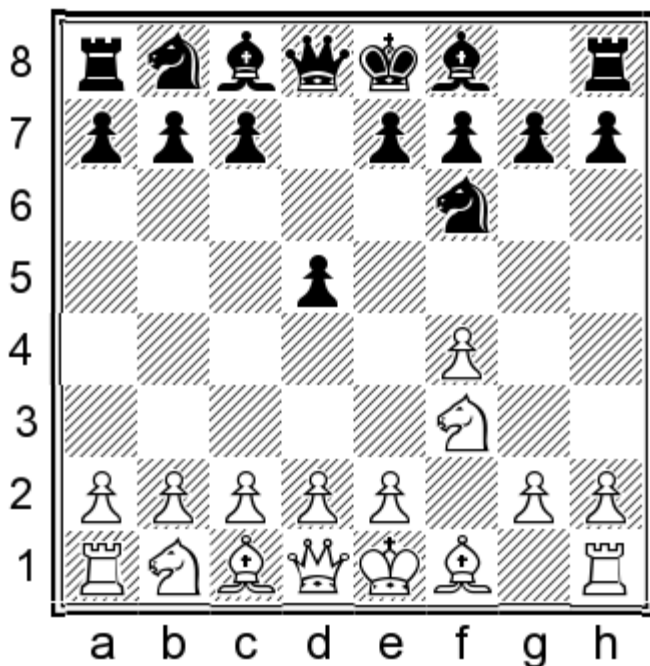


3.♘f3?! h4 4.♗xh4 ♖xh4! Black sacrifices the exchange and destroys his opponent's kingside. 5.gxh4 e5 6.d3. White must give up two pawns in order to defend against the checkmate. 6...♗xh4+ 7.♔d2 ♗xf4+ 8.e3 ♗h6. Black has a pawn for the exchange and a powerful centre, while White's king has been deprived of its castling rights. 9.c3. White is preparing ♗c2 and ♘d2. 9...♘c6 10.♗c2 ♘f6 11.♙g2 e4. Black occupies space and restricts the enemy bishop on g2. 12.d4 ♙e6 13.♗e2 0-0-0 14.♘d2 ♘e7. He prepares the transfer of his knight to the h4-square. 15.♘f1 ♘f5 16.♖g1 ♘h4+
 Domenche Redondo – Cattani, ICCF 2015. Black's pieces have been deployed very actively and harmoniously. White

can hardly activate his rooks and is faced with a rather difficult defence.

3.♔g2 h4 4.♘c3 (The move 4.d4, Minasian – Yegiazarian, Yerevan 1999, leads to the weakening of the e4-square: 4...♘f6!? 4...♘f6 5.d3 ♘c6 6.e4 (The move 6.gxh4 is definitely not good for White, since Black will regain easily his pawn and White will have no compensation for his compromised kingside. 6...♔g4 Rodriguez Vila – Fusco, Santos 2011.) 6...♔g4. Black develops his bishop with tempo. 7.♚d2, Beukema – Hautot, Schelle 2015, 7...dxe4!? 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♔xe4 f5! 10.♔xc6+. White exchanges his powerful bishop, but he had no other choice (After 10.♔g2 ♚d6, followed by e7-e5, 0-0-0, he would have to pay a very dear price for the postponement of his castling kingside and the development of his pieces there.). 10...bxc6 11.♚g2 ♚d5 12.♚xd5 cxd5 Black will have better prospects in this endgame thanks to his two powerful bishops.

2...♘f6

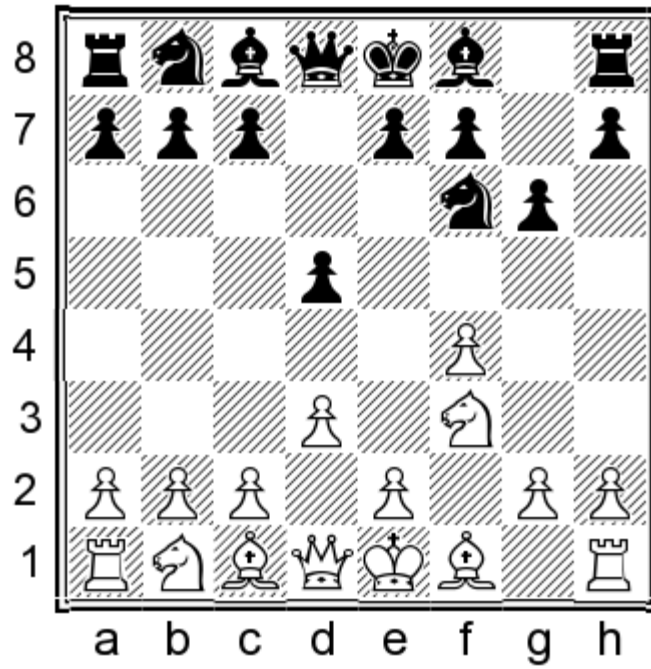


Now, we will analyse as main lines for White: **A) 3.g3** and **B) 3.e3**.

About 3.c3 g6 4.d3 (4.g3 ♔g7 5.♔g2 0-0 – see variation **A**; 4.d4 ♔g7 5.e3 0-0 6.♔d3 c5 – see variation **B**) 4...♔g7 – see 3.d3.

3.b3 g6 4.♔b2 (4.e3 ♔g7 – see 3.e3) 4...♔g7 5.e3 (5.g3 0-0 – see variation **A**) 5...0-0 – see variation **B**.

3.d3 g6



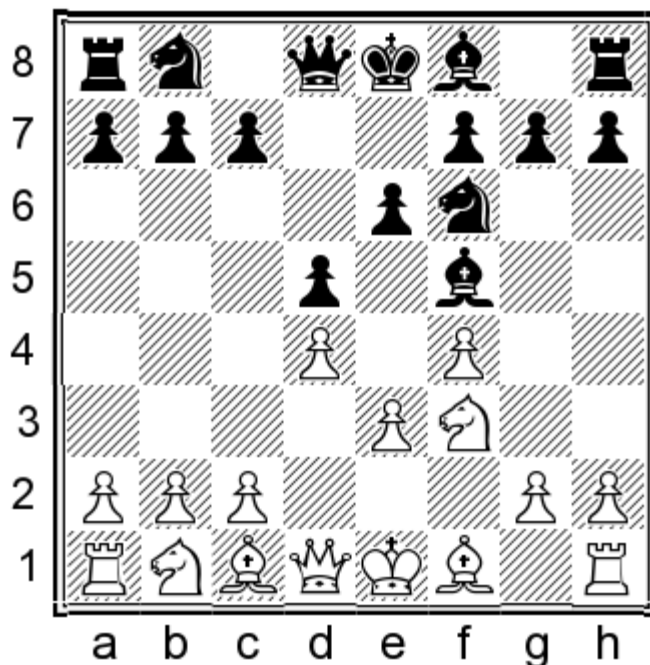
4.g3 ♕g7 – see variation **A**.

4.e3 ♕g7 – see variation **B**.

After 4.♖bd2, Black can exploit the weakening of the g4-square with the move 4...♗g4!?. Naturally, White will soon oust the enemy knight from this position, but now, White will be forced to play 5.♖b3, in order not to lose his queen and his knight will remain misplaced there. 5...♕g7 6.c3, Laznicka – Sargissian, Tromsø 2014, 6...0-0!? 7.h3 ♗f6 8.g4 b6 9.♕g2 c5∞

4.c3 ♕g7 5.♖c2. White wishes to advance e2-e4 immediately (5.g3 0-0 – see variation **A**). 5...0-0 6.e4 dxe4 7.dxe4 ♗bd7 8.♕c4 (The move 8.e5 would present to Black's minor pieces the d5 and f5-squares. In addition, White must consider the possible undermining of his e5-pawn with the move f7-f6. 8...♗d5 9.♕c4, Caballe Sasot – Marsal, Vilanova 1993, 9...c6!? 10.0-0 f6∞) 8...♗c5. Black exerts pressure against the e4-pawn and forces 9.e5, developing his bishop with tempo. 9...♕f5 10.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 11.♗bxd2 ♗fd7 12.♗b3 ♗d3+ 13.♕xd3 ♕xd3= Malnar – Dimitrov, ICCF 2008. If Black manages to activate his bishop on g7, he will maintain an advantage.

3.d4. This move seems premature. If White wishes to advance d2-d4, he should play like in variation **B**: at first 3.e3 and only after Black has played g7-g6, to push d2-d4. Now, Black can refrain from g7-g6 and play instead 3...♕f5!? After this move the vulnerability of the e4-square will be the cause of permanent worries for White. In addition, Black's plan is quite simple: e6, c5, ♗c6, ♕d6(e7), 0-0, ♗e4. If White places his knight on e5, Black can oust it from there with f7-f6. 4.e3 e6



5.♙e2 c5 6.c3 (6.0-0 ♖c6 7.c3 ♙d6 – see 6.c3) 6...♗c6 7.0-0 ♙d6 8.♗e5 h6 9.♗d2 ♗c7 10.♗df3 0-0, followed by ♗e4, f7-f6, ousting the enemy knight from the centre of the board, Wahlberg – Rauramaa, Finland 1981.

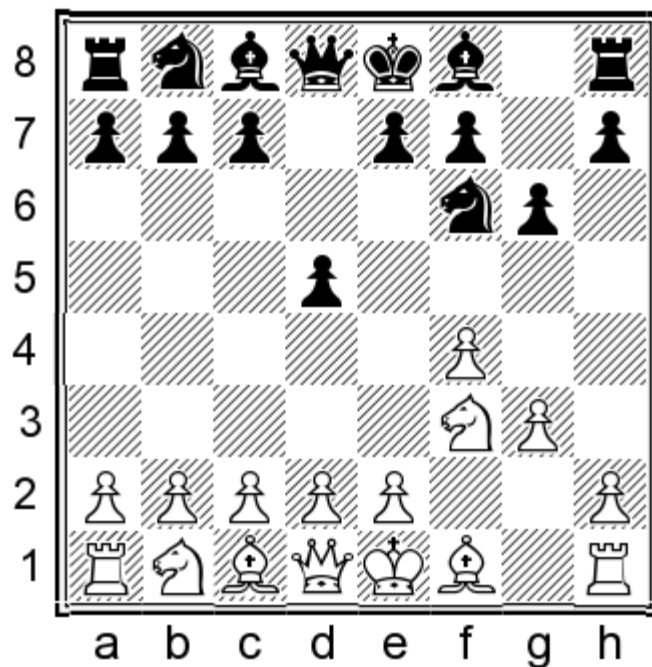
5.c4 c5!? 6.♗b3. White has not completed the development of his pieces yet, so his attempt to exploit the vulnerability of the b7-pawn would not bring him anything positive. 6...♗c6! Black sacrifices a pawn and increases his lead in development even more. 7.♗xb7 ♗b4 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗a3 ♙d6 10.cxd5 ♗b8 11.♗a4 exd5 12.♙e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♙d2 a6 15.♗d1 ♗f6 Saglione – Sanner, ICCF 2012. White has completed the development of his kingside pieces, but his e3-pawn is weak and his knight is horribly misplaced at the edge of the board. Black's pieces have been deployed much more actively and harmoniously.

5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 (The exchange 6.♙xf5 only increases Black's control over the important e4-square and in the middlegame his major pieces will exert pressure against White's weak e3-pawn. 6...exf5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.b3, Fressinet – Brown, Internet 2001, 8...g6!? 6...♗c6 7.0-0 ♙d6 8.♗e5 (8.♗e2 0-0 9.♗e5 – see 8.♗e5) 8...0-0 9.♗e2 ♙xd3 10.♗xd3 (10.♗xd3, Evdokimov – Kharchenko, Odessa 2010, 10...♗b6!? 10...♗e4 (10...♗b6!? 11.♗d2 c4. Black occupies space on the queenside. 12.♗f2 f5. He deploys his pawns “according to the rules” – that is on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop. 13.♗dx4 fxe4 14.b3 b5 Mesropov – Kramnik, Moscow 1991. White's bishop is restricted by his own pawns and is obviously weaker than his opponent's counterpart.

A) 3.g3

There has arisen the Leningrad variation of the Dutch Defence, but with colours reversed. White wishes to complete the development of his kingside pieces as quickly as possible and to castle, after which he will try to advance e2–e4. Black must try to prevent this pawn-advance; otherwise, White's pawns on e4 and f4 will exert powerful pressure against the enemy position.

3...g6



4.♖g2

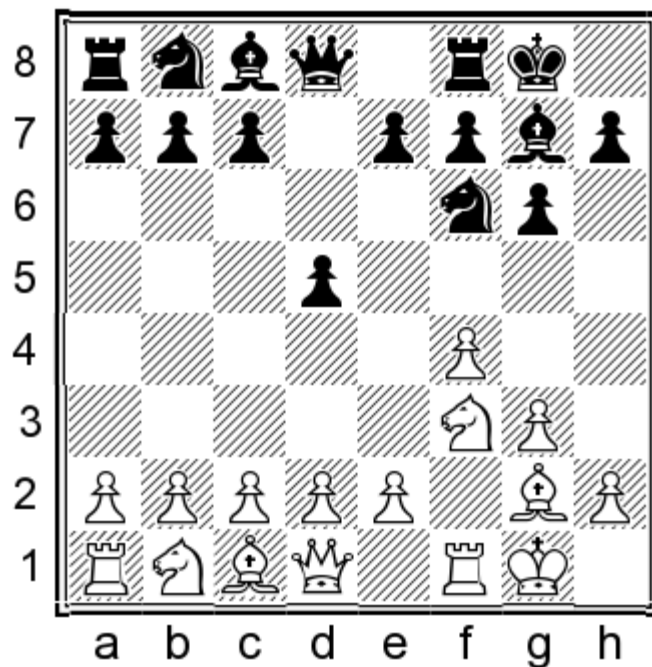
About 4.d3 ♖g7 5.♖g2 0-0, or 5.c3 0-0 6.♖g2 c5 – see 4.♖g2.

4.b3 ♖g7 5.♖b2 0-0 6.♖g2 c5 7.0-0 (7.e3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♚c7 – see 7.0-0) 7...♘c6 8.e3 (8.♘e5 ♘xe5 9.♖xe5 ♖e6 10.♘c3 ♚c8 11.e3 ♚d7= Zakharov – Muzyka, ICCF 2009) 8...♚c7 9.♘e5 ♖e6= Larino Nieto – Recuero Guerra, Linares 2013. Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp and has slightly more space.

4...♖g7 5.0-0

About 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0, or 6.d3 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6, or 5.d3 0-0 6.0-0 c5, or 6.c3 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6 – see 5.0-0.

5...0-0



6.d3

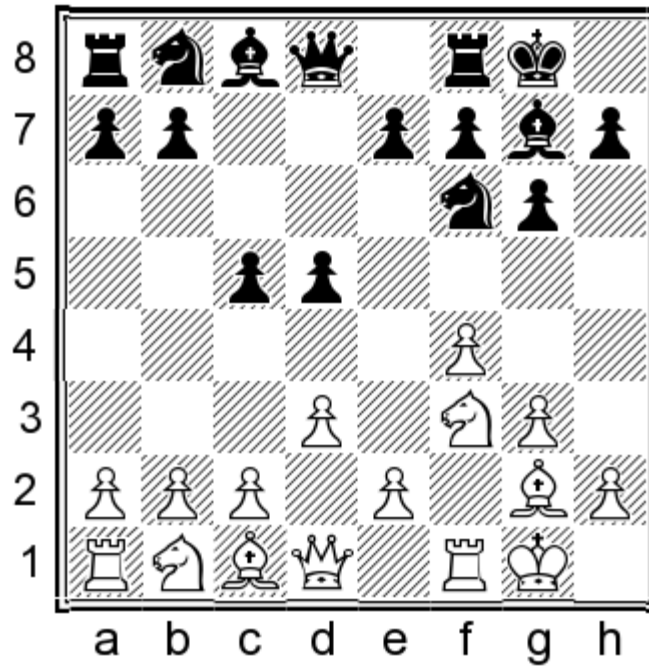
6.h3 c5 7.d3 ♖c6 – see 6.d3.

6.d4 c5 7.e3 (7.c3 ♖c6 – see 6.c3) 7...♖c6 – see 6.e3.

6.e3 c5 7.d4. White's pawn-structure does not combine well with the placement of his bishop on g2. (7.d3 ♖c6 – see 6.d3; 7.♚e2 ♖c6 8.d3 ♜e8 – see 6.d3) 7...♖c6 8.♚e2 (8.c3 ♚b6 – see 6.c3) 8...♙g4 9.♞d1 ♚b6 ♞ Bocharov – Dergilev, Novosibirsk 2009. He has no compensation for the weakness of the e4-square.

6.c3 c5 7.d4 (7.d3 ♖c6 or 7.♞a3 ♖c6 8.d3 ♜b8 – see 6.d3) 7...♖c6!? 8.e3 (Black obtains good compensation for the pawn after 8.dxc5 b6! ♞ Belikov – Iljin, Alushta 2010.) 8...♚b6 9.b3 ♙f5 ♞ Veccek – Ilyin, ICCF 2013.

6...c5



7.c3

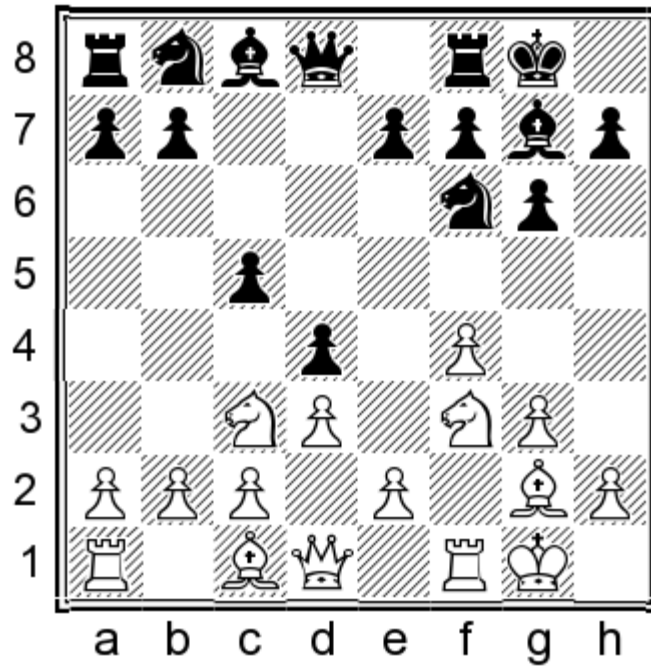
7.h3 ♖c6 8.♗c3 (8.c3 b6 – see 7.c3; 8.♚e1 d4 – see 7. ♚e1) 8...d4 9.♗e4 ♗xe4 10.dxe4 ♚b6 – see 7.♗c3.

7.♗bd2. White is preparing e2-e4, but weakens his control over the e3-square. 7...♗c6 8.e4?! Gallart Zafra – Perez Manas, Barcelona 2017, 8...♗g4

7.♗a3 ♗c6 8.c3 (8.♚e1 e5 – see 7.♚e1) 8...♞b8.

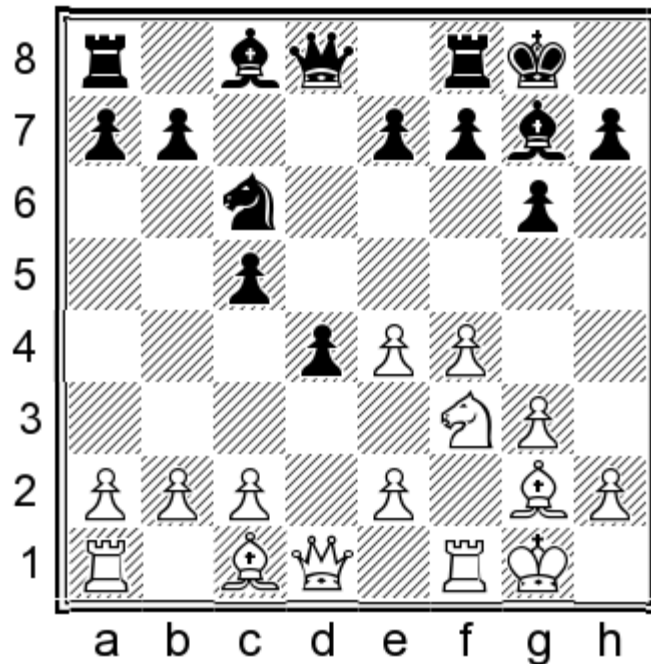
7.e3. White wishes to play ♚e2 and to advance e2-e4, but this plan seems to be somewhat slow. 7...♗c6 8.♚e2 ♞e8 9.♗e5 (Black can counter his opponent's thematic move 9.e4, after the preliminary exchange 9...dxe4 10.dxe4, with the move 10...e5) Kristensen – Douven, Ribe 1978.) 9...♚c7 10.♗xc6, T.Smirnov – Selin, Anapa 2012, 10...bxc6!? Black weakens a bit his pawn-structure, but still his queen does not lose its control over the important e5-square. His idea is to advance his e-pawn two squares forward as quickly as possible. 11.e4 e5 12.fxe5 ♚xe5 13.♗c3 dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♟f5 Black's pieces exert powerful pressure against his opponent's position.

After 7.♗c3, Black can advance with tempo 7...d4.



8. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}a6!$? 9. $\text{c}4$ $\text{b}8$. He is preparing $\text{b}7$ - $\text{b}6$. 10. $\text{d}2$, Shtanchaev – Temirbayev, Ekaterinburg 1997, 10... $\text{d}6$ 11. $\text{b}1$ $\text{b}6\infty$

8. $\text{d}e4$. White complies with the doubling of his pawns. 8... $\text{d}xe4$ 9. $\text{dxe}4$ $\text{d}c6$



10. $\text{h}3$ $\text{b}6$ 11. $\text{g}4$ $\text{e}6\bar{}$ Jakubiec – Hera, Oberwart 2007.

10. $\text{h}1$ $\text{e}5$ 11. $\text{f}5$, Li Ruifeng – Shmeliov, Chicago 2016. Now, Black does not need to accept the pawn-sacrifice, since he preserves a slight advantage after the simple move – 11... $\text{b}6!$? $\bar{}$

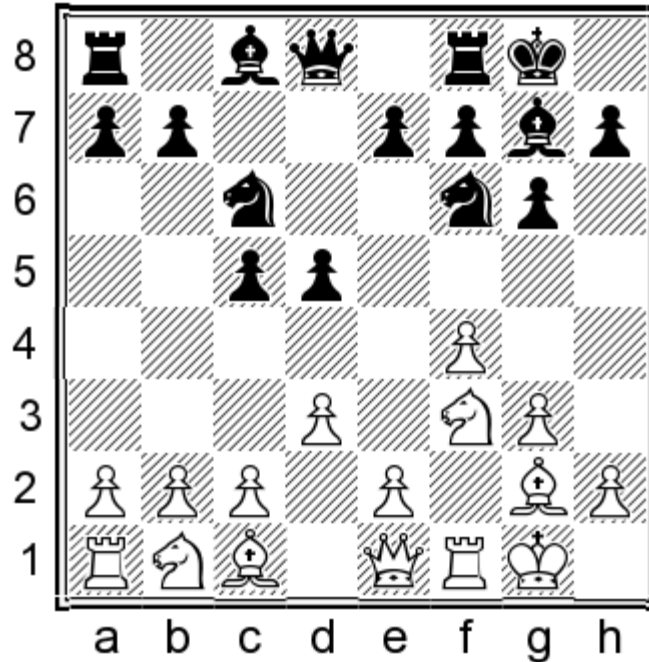
The move 10. $\text{a}3$ is too slow. 10... $\text{b}6$ 11. $\text{h}3$ $\text{c}4$. Black begins active actions on the queenside. 12. $\text{h}1$ $\text{d}8$ 13. $\text{g}4$ $\text{d}7$. His bishop impedes the coordination of his rooks, so he transfers it to the $\text{e}8$ -square. 14. $\text{f}5$ $\text{e}8\bar{}$ Bulanov – Johannessen, Minsk 2015.

Following 10. $\text{e}5$, Black should exchange immediately the enemy pawn on $\text{e}6$, which cramps his position. 10... $\text{f}6!$? $\bar{}$

11.exf6 exf6 12.e4, Liebert – Pietzsch, Zinnowitz 1966, 12...♙e6!?!=

10.e3. White corrects his pawn-structure. 10...♚b6 11.exd4 (11.♚e2 ♜d8 12.e5, Straschewski – Erofeev, corr. 1994, 12...♙f5∞ Fister – Le Page, ICCF 2007) 11...cxd4 12.♙h1. White removes his king from the dangerous diagonal. 12...♙g4 13.h3 ♙e6 14.b3 ♜ac8∞, followed by ♜fd8, ♖b4, eyeing the weak enemy pawn on c2, Ter Veen – Samerdokas, ICCF 2006.

After 7.♚e1, Black can prevent patiently the enemy pawn-advance e2-e4. 7...♗c6



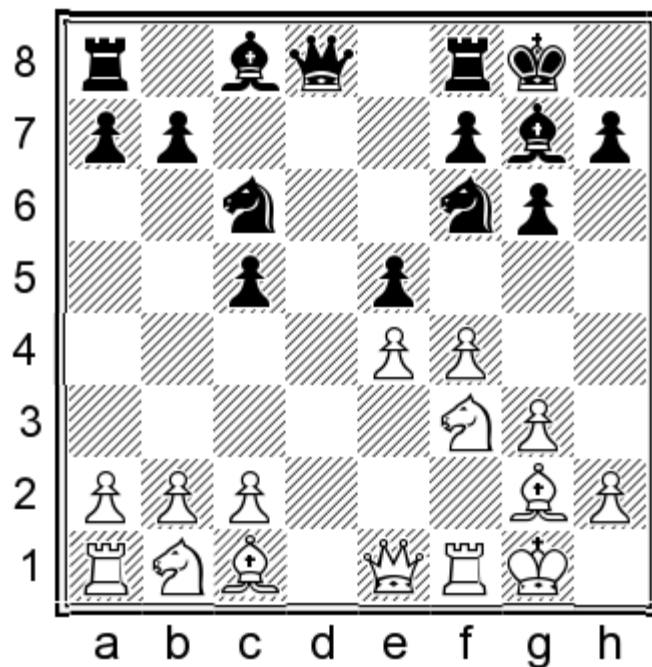
About 8.c3 b6 – see 7.c3.

8.♙h1 d4 9.♗a3, Malaniuk – Danin, Saratov 2006, 9...♙e6!?!∞

After 8.♗a3, Black obtains a good position with the temporary pawn-sacrifice 8...e5!?! 9.fxe5 ♗g4 10.♙g5 (10.c4, Jakubiec – Aginian, Moscow 2005, 10...♙e6!?!∞) 10...♚b6∞ Jakubiec – Clark, West Bromwich 2004.

8.h3 d4 9.♗a3. White prepares the transfer of his knight to the c4-square. (Following 9.c4 ♚c7 10.♗a3 a6 11.♚f2, Pelikan – Marini, Buenos Aires 1959, Black can prevent the pawn-advance g2-g4 with the move 11...♗h5!?!∞.) 9...♗d5 10.♗c4. White should not allow e7-e5. (10.♙d2 e5 11.fxe5 ♗xe5 12.c4, Gelashvili – Shengelia, Tbilisi 2001, 12...♗e3!?! 13.♙xe3 dxe3∞ The vulnerability of the dark squares hurts seriously White.) 10...b6. Black prepares ♙b7 and this neutralises the pressure of his opponent's bishop on g2 on the long diagonal. 11.♙d2 ♙b7 12.c3 e6 13.♜c1 ♜c8= Svidler – Jakovenko, Kazan 2014.

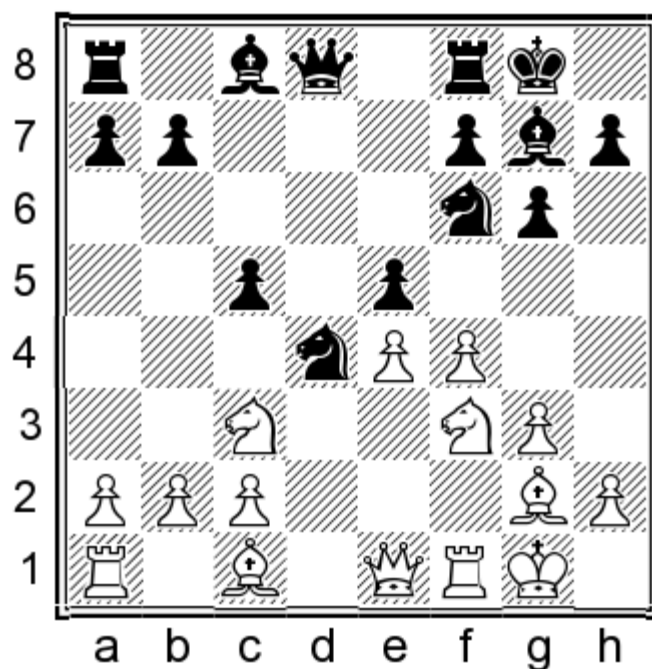
8.e4. This is White's most principled move. 8...dxe4 9.dxe4 e5!?! Black begins an immediate fight for the central squares and prevents the cramping enemy move e4-e5.



10.c3 exf4 11.gxf4, Hermann – Reschke, Germany 1996, 11...♘h5!?

The exchange on e5 leads to the appearance of an isolated pawn in White's position. 10.fxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♖d4+ 12.♔h1 ♚xe5= Boder – Magnucka, Wisla 2000.

10.♘c3 ♘d4

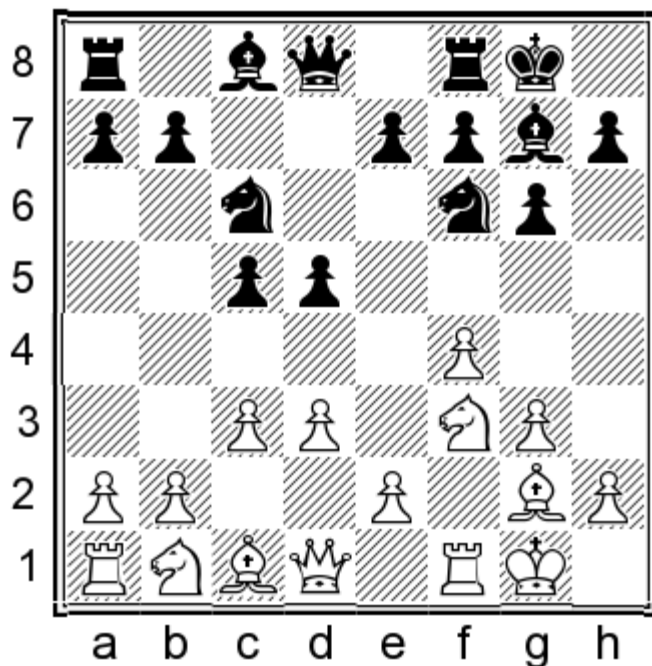


The passive defence of the c2-pawn would lead to difficulties for White, for example: 11.♖f2 exf4 12.gxf4 ♜e8 Dam – Tateo, ICCF 2016, or 11.♚d2 exf4 12.gxf4 ♘h5 13.♚f2 ♙g4. Black's pieces are very active. 14.♘xd4. White is trying to neutralise his opponent's initiative by trading pieces. 14...cxd4 15.♘d5 ♙e6 16.c4 ♜c8 17.b3 b5 18.♙a3 ♜e8 Jensen – Rudenko, ICCF 2015.

11.fxe5. This is the only way for White to preserve the equality. 11...♘g4 12.♘xd4 cxd4 13.♘d5 ♘xe5. Black has restored the material balance. White's bishop on g2 is restricted by his own pawn on e4, but his powerful centralised

knight is sufficient to keep the equality. 14. ♖b4 (or 14. ♘f4 ♙e6 15. ♖b4 ♜e8= Daanen – Grego, LSS 2013) 14...a5 15. ♖b5 ♙d7. Black develops his queenside pieces at the price of a pawn. 16. ♖xb7 ♜b8 17. ♖a7 ♜e8 18.a4 ♖c8 19. ♗f6+ ♘xf6 20. ♜xf6 ♖xc2= Fengier – Offenborn, ICCF 2016.

7... ♗c6

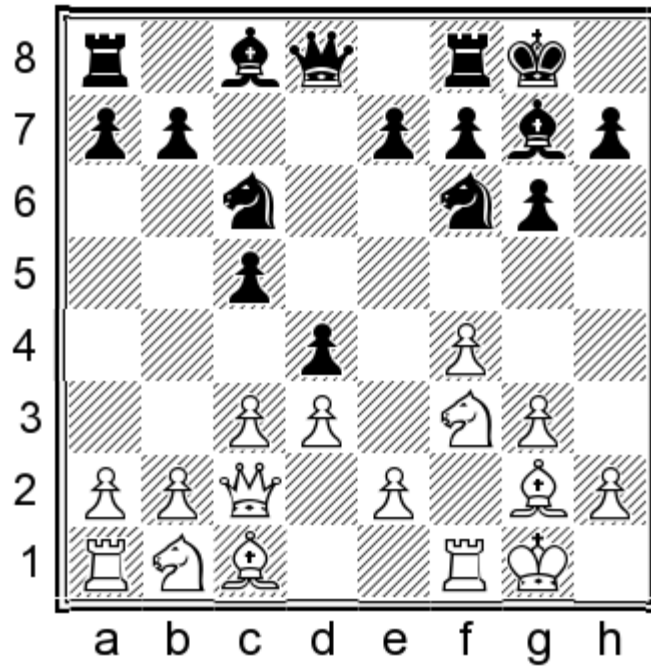


8. ♗a3

8.h3 b6 9. ♖c2, Koch – Hahner, Germany 1992, 9... ♖c7!?

After 8. ♗e5 ♗xe5 9.fxe5 ♗g4 10.d4 ♙e6 11.h3 ♗h6∞ Himanshu – Sanikidze, Kolkata 2013. Black must try to advance f7-f6 as quickly as possible.

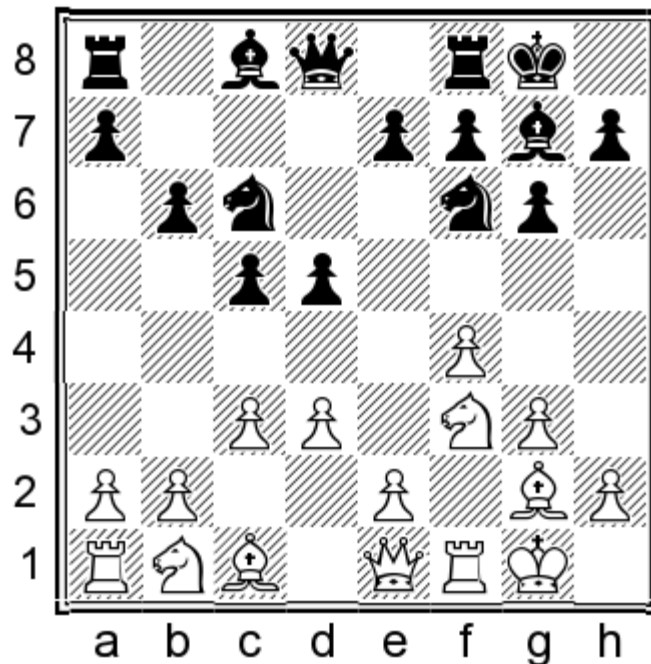
8. ♖c2. White is preparing e2-e4, but Black can counter that simply with 8...d4.



The move 9.e4 leads to the weakening of the pawn on d3. 9...dxe3 10.Qxe3 Qf5

9.Na3 Nd5 10.Qd2 Qg4 11.Rae1 (In the variation 11.h3 Qxf3 12.Qxf3, Bohn – Kolbus, Germany 2002, Black obtains a good position with the move 12...e6!? followed by the transfer of his knight to the f5-square: Nc6-e7-f5.) 11...Qd7 12.Ng5 Rad8 White can hardly find an active plan for his actions. For example, after the straightforward move 13.h3?!, his kingside is seriously weakened. 13...h6 14.Qb3 hxg5 15.hxg4. It turns out that Black can simply sacrifice his knight here. 15...Qxg4! 16.c4 (White loses after 16.Qxd5, because of 16...Na5 17.Qb5 Rxd5 18.Qxa5 Qxg3+ 19.Qh1 gxf4+) 16...Nb6+ Dvrvinder – Zehser, ICCF 2016.

8.Qe1 b6



The move 9.e4 leads to the weakening of the f1-a6 diagonal. 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 Qa6 11.Rf2 e5 12.f5 Qc8 13.Na3 Qd3 14.Nh4 c4 Price – Ruiz Jarabo Pelayo, ICCF 2011.

9.h3 ♖c7 10.♗a3 ♕a6. Now, White will hardly manage to advance e2-e4. 11.g4 e6 12.♖d2, M.Gurevich – Adams, Ostend 1991, 12...♗e8!?, followed by ♗d6.

9.♗a3 ♕b7 10.e4. If White refrains from this pawn-advance, then Black will prepare e7-e5 obtaining an edge. (10.h3 ♜e8 11.♖f2, Soederberg – Piccoli, Denmark 2000, 11...e5!?) 10...dxe4 11.dxe4 ♕a6 12.♖f2, Cassens – Hawranke, Pinneberg 2007, 12...e5!?=

8...♖b8

Black is preparing b7-b5.

9.♗e5

After 9.♖e1 b5 10.♗c2 b4∞, Black begins active operations on the queenside. White must play very accurately; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position. For example after: 11.♗e5 ♗xe5 12.fxe5 ♗g4 13.cxb4?! Nakamura – Svidler, Moscow 2010, Black could have obtained an advantage with the move 13...♖b6!?

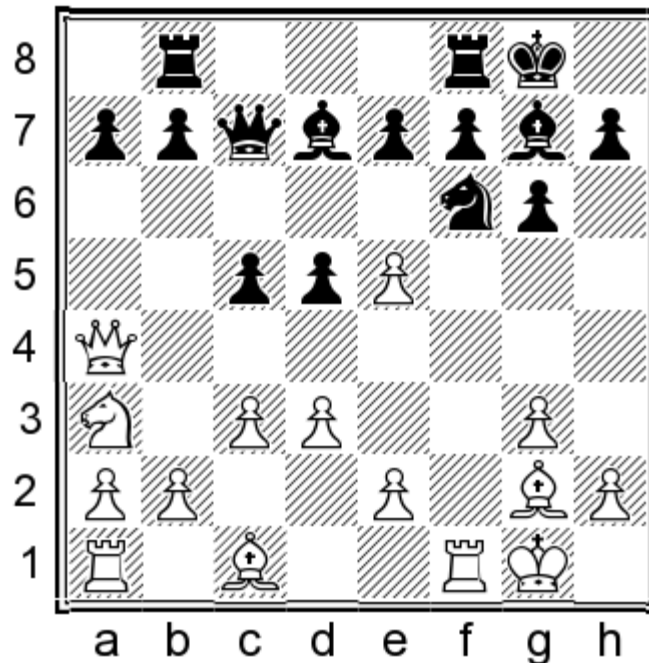
After 9.♗c2, Black can continue with the more modest move 9...b6 10.♖d2 e6∞ Arnold – Pereira, ICCF 2016.

9...♖c7 10.♖a4

The following complications turn out to be in favour of Black.

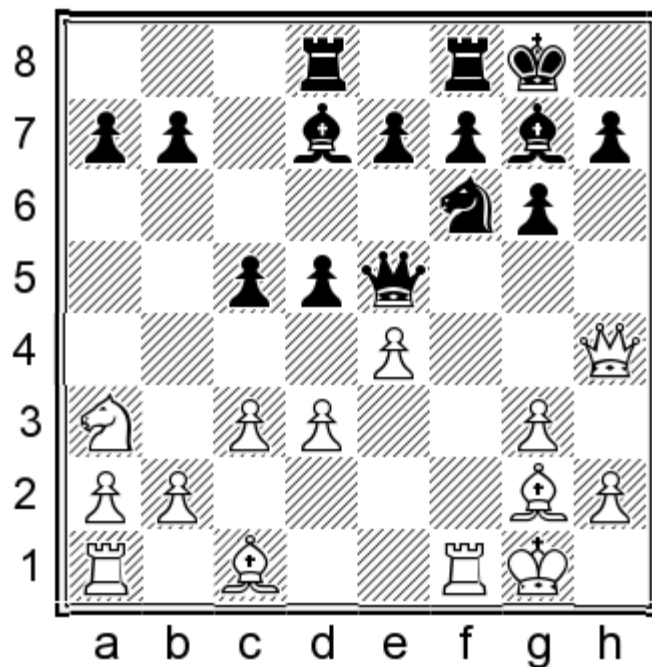
10.♗xc6 ♖xc6 11.♗c2, Paravyan – Pustovoitova, Khanty-Mansiysk 2016, 11...♖d8!?

10...♗xe5 11.fxe5 ♖d7



12.♖f4

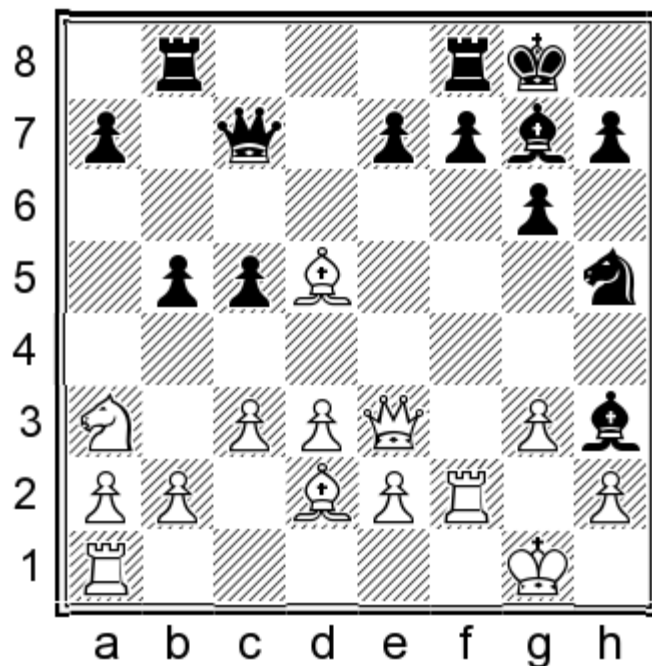
After 12.♖h4 ♖xe5 13.e4, Black can maintain a considerable advantage with the move 13...♖bd8!



14. ♕f4 ♖e6 15. exd5 ♜xd5 16. ♖fe1. Here, Black could have sacrificed advantageously his queen: 16... ♜xf4! 17. ♖xe6 ♜xg2 18. ♔xg2 ♕xe6, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the d-file, Cook – Brasier, ICCF 2015. White's d3-pawn is weak and his king might come under a dangerous attack.

14. exd5 ♜g4 15. ♖g5 ♕f5 16. h3 h6 17. ♖d2 ♜f6 18. g4 ♕c8 19. c4 h5 20. g5 ♜e8 21. ♖b1 e6, Cook – Bell, ICCF 2015. White has managed to preserve the material balance, but his position is considerably weakened.

12... ♜h5 13. ♖g5 ♕xe5 14. ♕xd5 ♕f6 15. ♖e3 b5 16. ♕d2 ♕h3 17. ♖f2 ♕g7



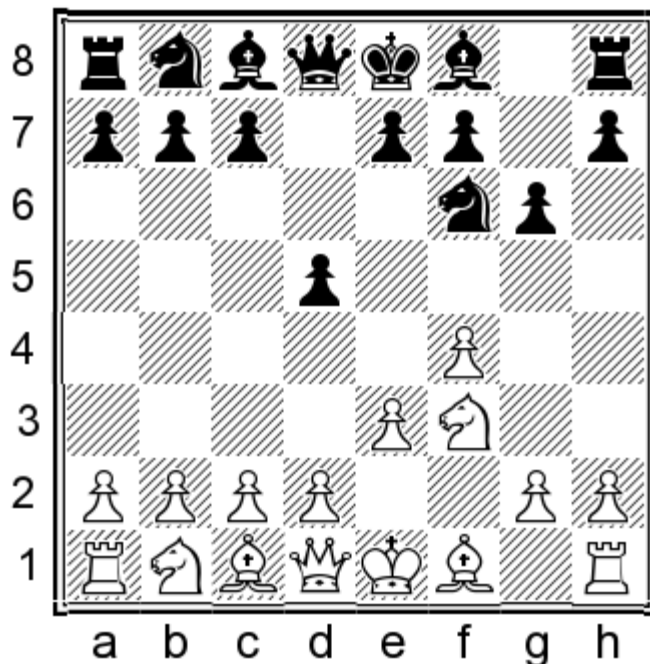
The edge of the board is not the best place for Black's knight and he plans to centralise it with ♜f6. White has succeeded in trading a flank pawn for the enemy central pawn, but Black's prospects in the forthcoming fight are at least equal, because his king is much safer. 18. ♖g5 ♜f6 19. ♕f3 ♕f5 20. g4 h6 21. ♖f4 e5 22. ♖g3 ♕e6 23. h3 ♖d7 24. ♜c2 a5

25. ♖xh6 ♗xh6 26. g5 e4 27. dxe4 ♘h5 28. ♗xh5 ♗g7 29. ♗g4 ♖be8

Arnold – Balutescu, ICCF 2015. White's doubled e-pawns are useless. Black's position is preferable, because White's king would need permanent protection.

B) 3.e3 g6

Black prepares the fianchetto of his dark-squared bishop.



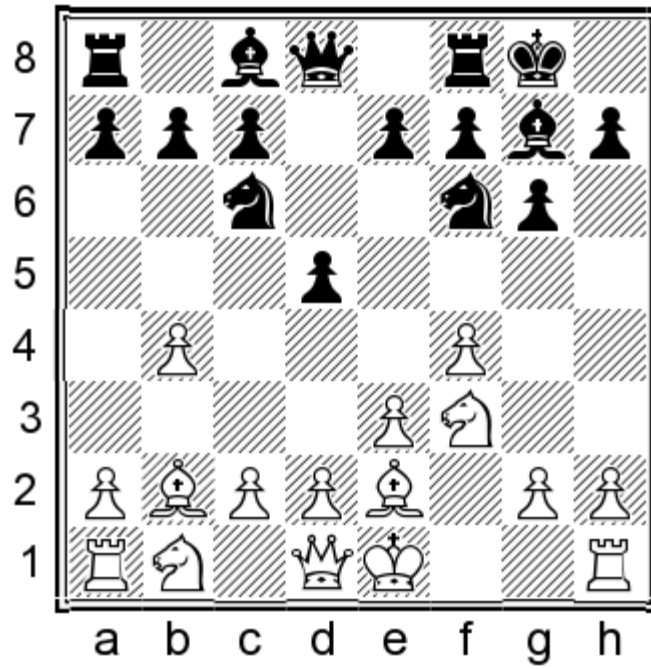
4. ♗e2

White has numerous possibilities in this position, but neither of them promises him more than equality.

About 4.d3 ♗g7 5. ♗e2 0-0 – see 4. ♗e2.

4. ♘c3 ♗g7 5. d4 0-0 – see 4.d4.

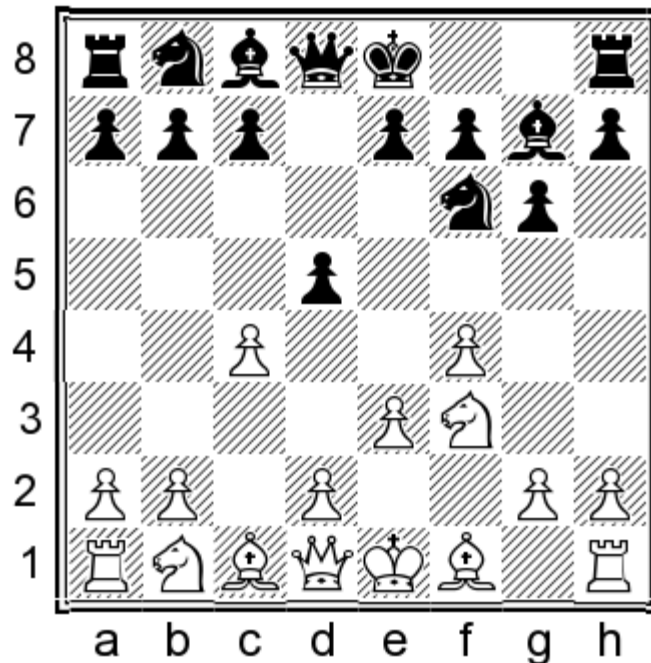
4.b4. He prepares the development of his bishop to b2 and occupies space on the queenside at the same time. 4... ♗g7 5. ♗b2 0-0 6. ♗e2 (6.c4 c6 7. ♗e2 dxc4 8. ♗xc4 b5 9. ♗e2 a5= Bonehill – Aalderink, LSS 2008) 6... ♘c6!? Black wishes to exploit the somewhat exposed position of the enemy pawn on b4 in order to create counterplay on the queenside, or to inflict a strike in the centre with the move e7-e5.



7.b5 ♖a5 8.a4 c5= Bittner – Gutermuth, Remote 2011.

7.a3. White loses an important tempo for the protection of his pawn and Black advances immediately 7...e5! 8.b5 e4 9.bxc6 exf3 10.♙xf3 bxc6. He has ended up with doubled pawns on the c-file, but still has good prospects thanks to the active placement of his pieces. 11.0-0 ♜e8 12.♞e1 ♞b8 13.♙d4 ♖e4 14.♙xg7 ♜xg7 15.♙xe4 ♞xe4 16.d4!/? This is an interesting idea. White fixes the enemy weakness on c6. His later plan includes the transfer of his knight to the c5-square. Still, his move 16 has a drawback, because Black will manage to create pressure against his opponent's backward e3-pawn. 16...♞e7 17.♞d2 ♙f5 18.♖c3 ♞e6 19.♖a4 ♞e8 20.♜f2 ♞h4+ 21.♜g1 ♞e7= Heb – Plas, ICCF 2016.

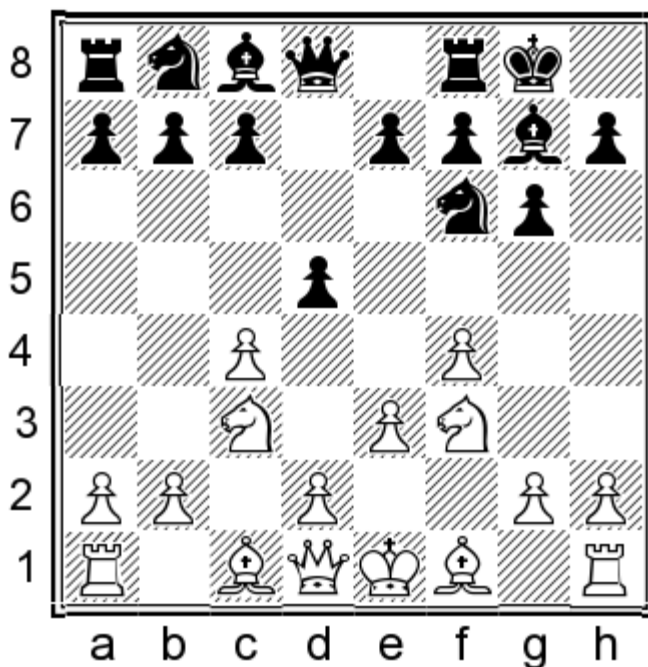
4.c4. After this move there arises an interesting hybrid between the Dutch Defence, with colours reversed, and the English Opening. 4...♙g7



5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.d4 (6.♖c3 0-0 – see 5.♖c3) 6...c5!/? 7.e4 ♖c7= Szymczak – Fus, Warsaw 2016. White's seemingly beautiful pawn-centre would need permanent protection.

It is not good for White to play here 5.d4, because after 5...c5, the position is opened in the centre and the move f2-f4 becomes completely useless for him, since it has only weakened the e4-square and his kingside and has impeded the possibility for his bishop on c1 to go to the f4, or g5-squares in the middlegame. 6.♘c3 (6.dxc5 0-0 7.♘c3 e6 – see 5.♘c3) 6...cxd4 7.exd4 0-0. White has problems to find a sensible plan for his actions, because Black has the permanent threat to capture on d4 and enter a standard position with an isolated pawn for White. Following 8.c5, Estrada Degrandi – Szabo, Asuncion 1960, 8...b6!?, White's lag in development precludes him from holding on to the c5-outpost.

5.♘c3 0-0

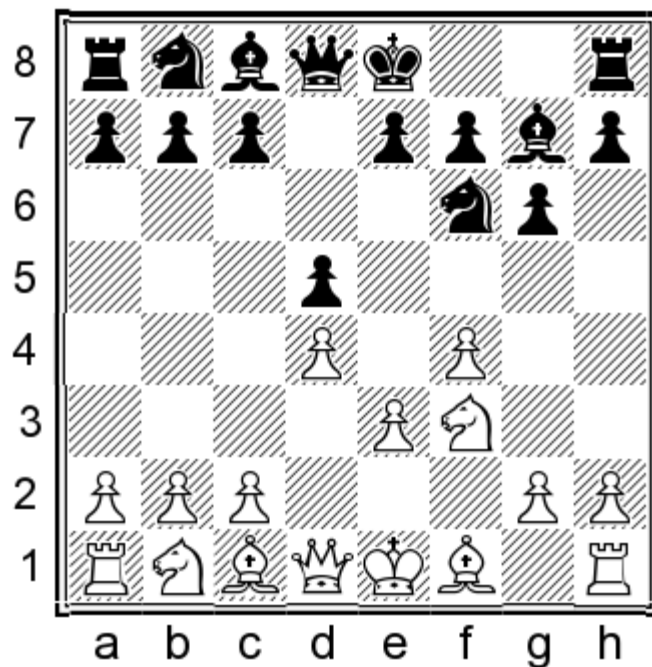


6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♙c4 ♜b6 8.♙e2 c5 9.b3 ♜c6 10.♙b2 ♙f5? Capaliku – Iasman, Trieste 2012. Black's pieces are obviously more harmoniously deployed.

After 6.♙b3, it seems very good for Black to choose 6...e6!?, protecting reliably the d5-square. He wishes to continue with c7-c5, ♜c6, increasing his control over the centre. 7.♙e2 c5 8.0-0 ♜c6 9.♜e5 ♜a5. This is an interesting idea. Black wishes to exchange his opponent's powerful knight on e5 and not to allow – fxe5. 10.♙c2 ♜xc4 11.♜xc4 dxc4 12.♙xc4, Vlasenko – Lomako, Vladimir 2007, 12...e5!? Black exploits White's weakened control over the strategically important e5-square and inflicts an energetic strike against his centre. 13.fxe5 ♜g4 14.h3 ♜xe5?

6.d4 c5. Now, there has arisen on the board a position from the Catalan Opening with colours reversed in which White has used his extra tempo for the not so useful move f2-f4. 7.dxc5 e6 8.♙e2 (His attempt to protect his c5-pawn with 8.♙b1 ♙e7 9.b4 leads to the weakening of the long diagonal. 9...♜e4 10.♜xe4 dxe4 11.♜d4, Moreira – Amann, ICCF 2002, 11...e5!? 12.fxe5 ♙d8?) 8...♜bd7 9.0-0 ♜xc5. Black has restored the material balance and White has no compensation for the weakness of the e4-square. 10.♙c2 ♜fe4 11.♜e5 ♜xc3 12.♙xc3. Now, Black can change favourably the route of his knight and go with it not to e4, but 12...♜d7? After the exchange on e5, White's pawn-structure will be seriously compromised, Coleby – Hauff, ICCF 2010.

4.d4. White increases his control over the e5-outpost, but weakens the e4-square. 4...♙g7

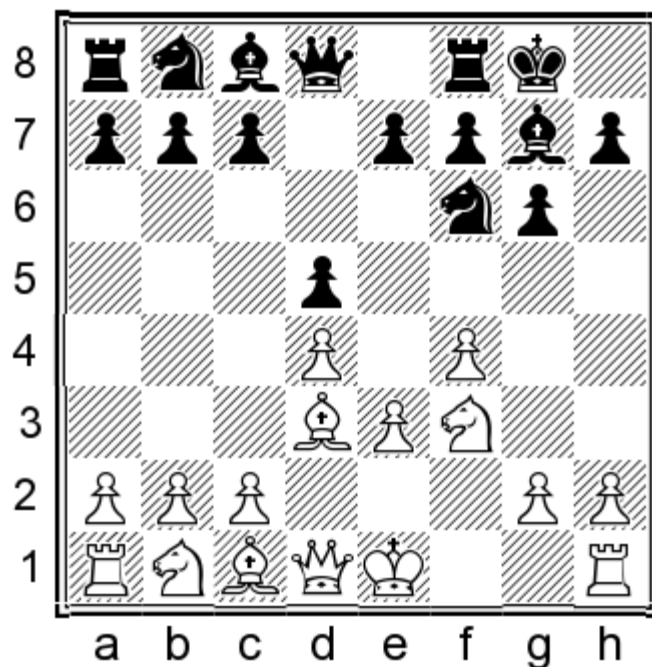


About 5.♘c3 0-0 6.♙d3 c5 – see 5.♙d3.

5.♙e2 c5 – see 4.♙e2.

5.c4 c5 – see 4.c4.

5.♙d3 0-0



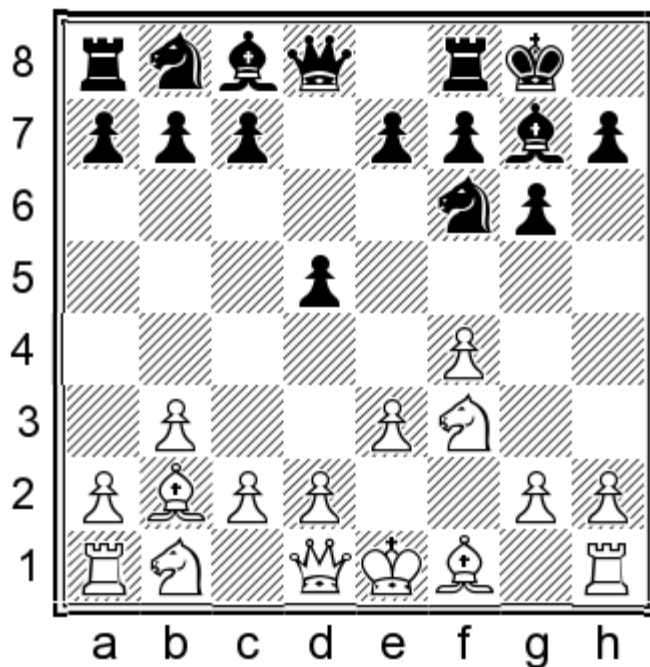
6.c3 c5 7.0-0 ♖b6 – see 6. 0-0.

Following 6.♘c3 c5 7.0-0, Black can attack the d4-pawn and force his opponent to play the undesirable move ♖a4. 7...cxd4!? 8.exd4 ♘c6 9.a3, Lehotzky – Zacks, East Lansing 1991, 9...♙b6!? 10.♖a4 ♙c7 and then ♙f5.

6.0-0 c5 7.c3 ♖b6. From this square Black's queen will not only protect the pawn on c5, but will also impede the typical enemy manoeuvre for similar positions – ♙d2-e1-h4. 8.♘bd2 ♙f5. Black trades White's "good" bishop and leaves him with the bishop on c1, which is severely restricted by his own pawns. 9.♙xf5 gxf5 10.♖e5 ♘bd7 11.♙e1 e6 Ragozin –

Makogonov, Moscow 1940.

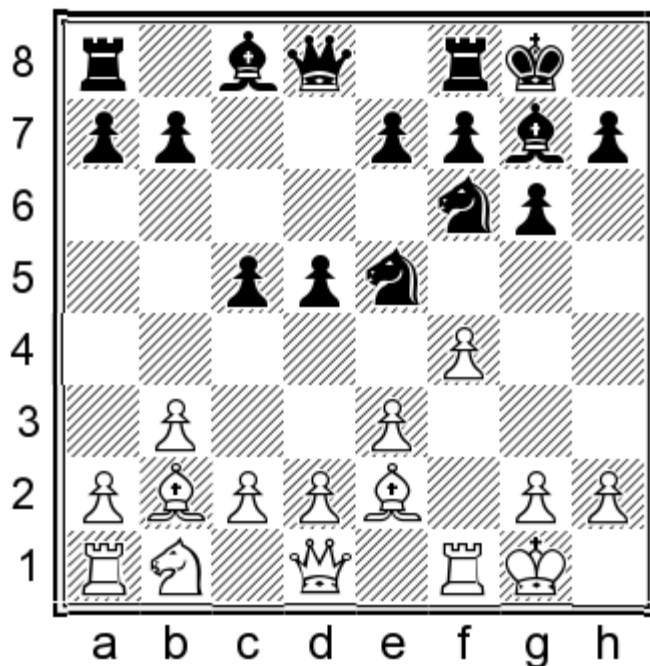
4.b3 ♖g7 5.♙b2 0-0



It does not seem logical for White to play here 6.♘c3. The knight will restrict the scope of action of his own bishop on b2. 6...c5 7.♘a4. Now, he must place his knight at the edge of the board in order to open the diagonal of his bishop on b2. 7...b6 8.♙e2 ♙b7 9.♘e5 ♚d6 10.♙f3 ♘e4+ Schuster – Zhak, ICCF 2012.

The position is simplified after 6.c4 ♙f5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♙xg7 ♔xg7 9.♚c1 ♘c6 10.♚b2+ f6= Bagirov – Magerramov, Moscow 1983.

6.♙e2 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘e5 (After 8.♙b5, the simplest move for Black would be ♘a5, avoiding the doubling of his pawns. 8...♘a5!? 9.♙e2, Chernyshov – Lastin, Elista 2001, 9...♘c6=; 9...b6!?∞) 8...♘xe5



Following 9.fxe5, White's pawn on e5 will restrict considerably his bishop on b2. 9...♘e4. This is an interesting idea.

Black wishes to force the move 10.d3 ♖d6. He exploits the defencelessness of the bishop on b2 and transfers his knight to f5 in order to attack the weak pawn on e3. 11.d4 ♘f5 12.♗d3 ♙h6 13.♙c1 ♙e6 ♣ Geus – Moeykens, ICCF 2009.

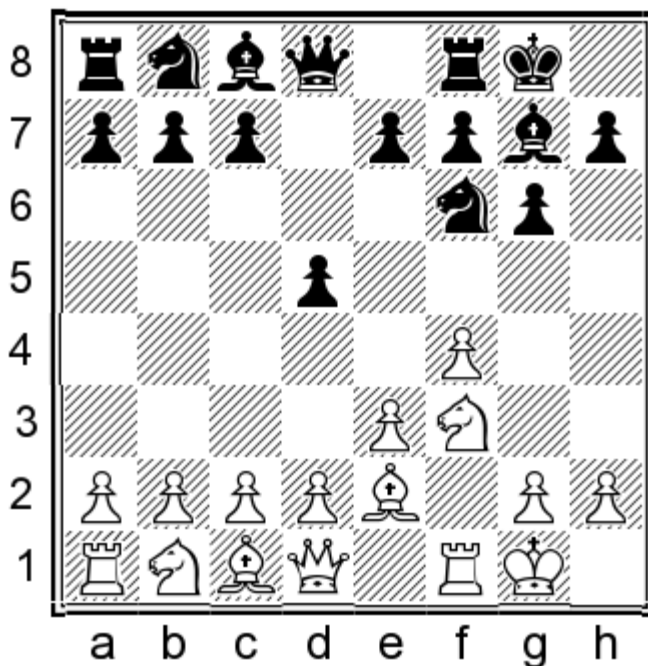
9.♙xe5 ♘e8. Exchanging pieces is Black's simplest road to equality. 10.♙xg7 ♘xg7 11.♙f3 (The move 11.d4, Blatny – Rabięga, Austria 2002, leads to the weakening of the e4-square. 11...cxd4!? 12.exd4 h5 ♣) 11...♙e6 12.♘c3 ♞c8= Sielaff – Federau, Berlin 2001.

4...♙g7 5.0-0

About 5.b3 0-0 6.♙b2 c5 – see 4.b3.

5.d4 c5 6.0-0 0-0, or 5.d3 0-0 6.0-0 c5 – see 5.0-0.

5...0-0



6.d3

There has arisen the Ilin-Zhenevsky system of the Dutch Defence, but with colours reversed.

6.b3 c5 7.♙b2 ♘c6 – see 4.b3.

6.♗e1 c5 7.d3 ♘c6 – see 6.d3.

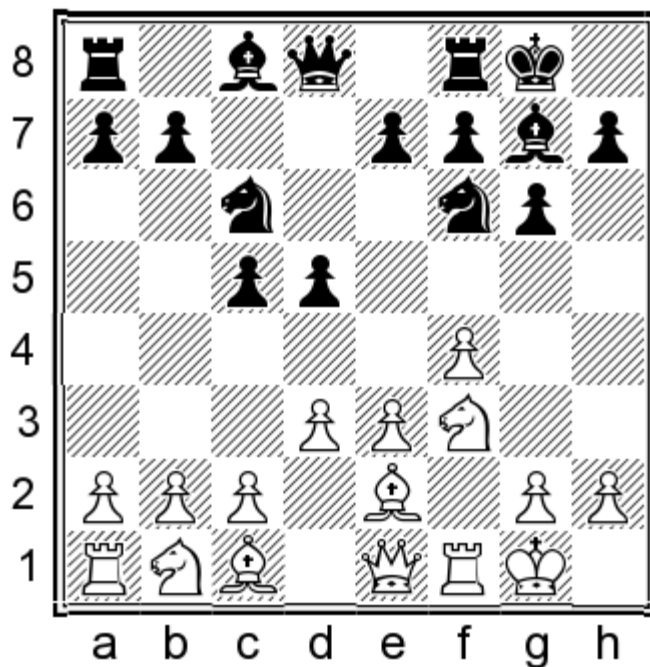
6.d4 c5 7.c3. This set-up has been named “The Stonewall”. 7...♘bd7!? 8.♘e5 (After 8.♘bd2, Black has the powerful resource 8...♘g4! Now, White's knight must go back to its initial position in order for him to protect his pawn on e3. 9.♘b1 ♘h6 10.a4 ♘f5 ♣ Pisani – Khokhlov, ICCF 2016.) 8...♘e4 9.♘d2 ♘df6 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♙f3 ♙e6= Nielsen – Siikaluoma, ICCF 2006. Black can oust the enemy knight away from the centre with the move f7-f6 if he so wishes. White is deprived of this possibility, though...

6...c5 7.♗e1

About 7.a4 ♘c6 8.♗e1 b6 – see 7.♗e1.

7.♘c3 d4!? 8.♘e4 ♗b6 9.♘xf6+. Here, it is better for Black to capture with his pawn 9...exf6!, so that after 10.e4, to use the f-pawn in order to attack the enemy pawn-centre. 10...f5 11.a4 ♞e8 12.a5 ♗c7 ♣ Humphreys – Noble, ICCF 2010.

7...♘c6



8.♙h4

White wishes to use his queen to organise an attack against his opponent's king, but Black's position is quite solid and breaking it is not an easy task at all.

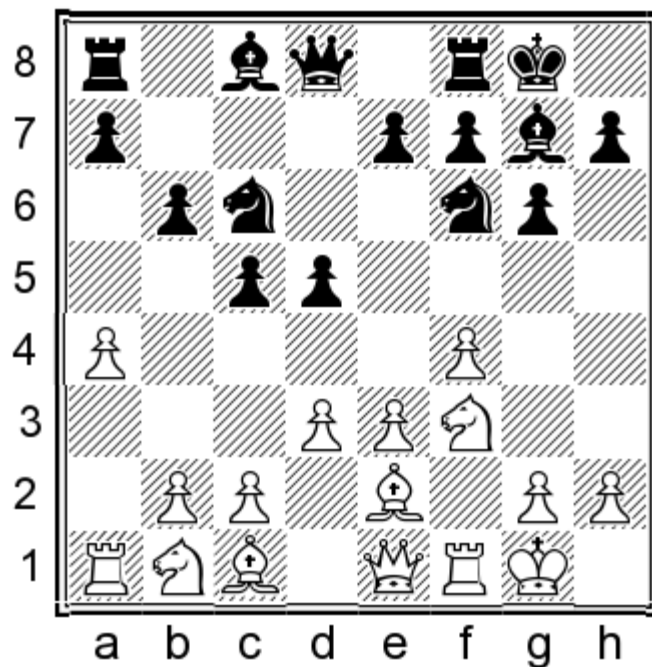
8.♙d1. This preparation of the pawn-advance e3-e4 seems rather slow. 8...b6 9.e4 (9.a4 ♖b7 10.c3 ♜e8 ♣ Rasidovic – Fressinet, Izmir 2004) 9...dxe4 10.dxe4, Khandelwal – Chirila, Herceg Novi 2005, 10...e5! ♣ Black leads in development and is better prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.

8.♘bd2 ♜c7 9.♙h4 e5. After this thematic move, White must begin a fight for equality, because the vulnerability of his e3-pawn might hurt him in the forthcoming middlegame. 10.fxe5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♜xe5 12.♘f3 ♜e7 ♣ Yu Ronald – Lane, Parramatta 2008.

8.c3 ♜c7 9.♙h4 (9.d4. White prevents the enemy pawn-advance e7-e5 at the price of a tempo, but weakens the light squares in his camp in the process. 9...♙g4 ♣ Oren – Chouari, ICCF 2008) 9...e5 ♣ Lawrence – Lense, corr. 1965.

8.♘c3 d4. Naturally, Black should not wait for his opponent to advance e3-e4. 9.♘d1 dxe3 10.♘xe3 ♜c7 11.♘c4, Hayward – Thompson, USA 1985, 11...b6 ♣, followed by ♙b7 and Black's fianchettoed bishops would be must stronger than their white counterparts.

8.a4 b6



9. ♖bd2 ♚c7 Zaitsev – Zhukhovitsky, Moscow 1969.

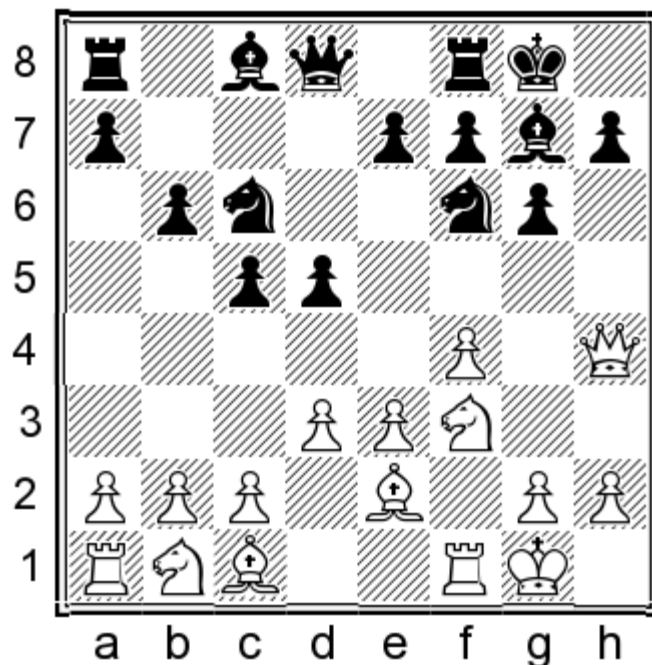
9. ♗e5 ♗xe5 10. fxe5 ♗d7 11. d4 f6. White's e5-pawn cramps Black's position, so he wishes to exchange it as quickly as possible. 12. ♕f3 e6 13. exf6 ♗xf6 Maltais – Severins, ICCF 2014.

9. ♗h4 ♕a6. Black's bishop will be very well placed on this diagonal. 10. ♗a3, Bergold – Davenport, Muensterland 2002, 10...e6!?

9. ♗a3 ♕b7 10. c3 e6 11. ♖b1 ♖e8 12. b4. White's actions on the queenside only lead to the appearance of additional weaknesses in his position. 12...♖b8 13. bxc5 bxc5 14. e4 a6 15. e5 ♗d7 16. ♗c2 ♗c7 17. ♕e3 ♗a5, followed by ♗b6, Beyer Lecaros – Jimenez Ariza, ICCF 2016. The vulnerability of the pawn on a4 is likely to hurt White in the future.

8...b6

Later, depending on circumstances, Black can develop his bishop either to a6, or to the b7-square.



9. ♖bd2

9.a4 ♕a6 – see 8.a4.

9. ♖c3 ♕b7 10. ♕d2 e6!? Black fortifies his centre and plans after the removal of his knight from f6 to trade the queens.
 11. ♗h3 h5. Black prevents g2-g4. 12. ♖g5 d4. He is obviously better prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.
 13. ♖d1 dxe3 14. ♖xe3 ♖d4 15. ♕d1 ♖f5 16. ♖f2 ♖h7 17. ♖xh7 ♖xh7 18. ♖b1 ♕d4 ♖ Ramos Mora – Ottesen, ICCF 2013.
 Black's bishops control almost the entire board.

9... ♕a6 10. ♖f2

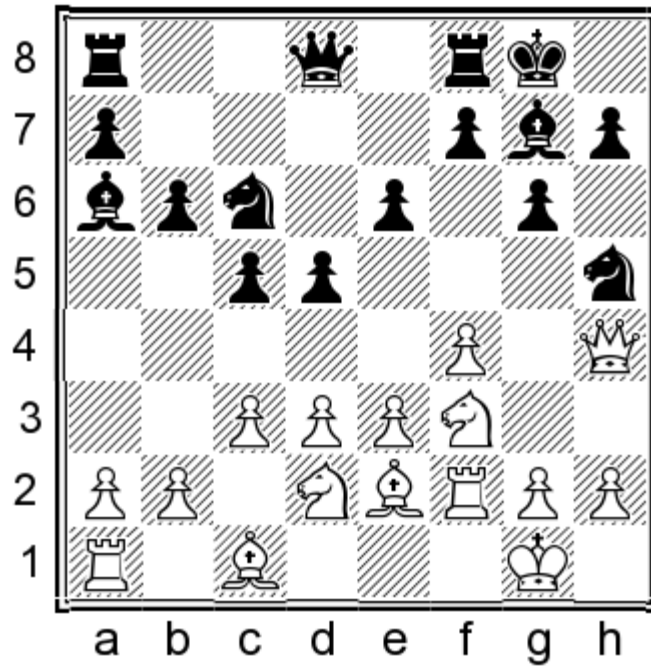
10.c3 e6 ♖

10...e6!?

Black's plan, connected with advancing e7-e5, leads to equality, but he has quite sufficient reasons to aspire for more in this position. 10... ♖e8 11.c3 e5 12. ♗xd8 ♖xd8 13.fxe5 ♖xe5 14. ♖xe5 ♕xe5 15.a4 (15.d4?! ♕xe2 16. ♖xe2 ♕g7 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.e4 d4 ♖ Flor Trejo – Piccoli, ICCF 2005) 15... ♕b7 16.d4 ♕g7 17.dxc5 bxc5 18. ♖b3 ♖c8= Larsen – W.Schmidt, Aarhus 1971.

11.c3 ♖h5

Black wishes either to trade the queens, or to oust the enemy queen to a passive position.



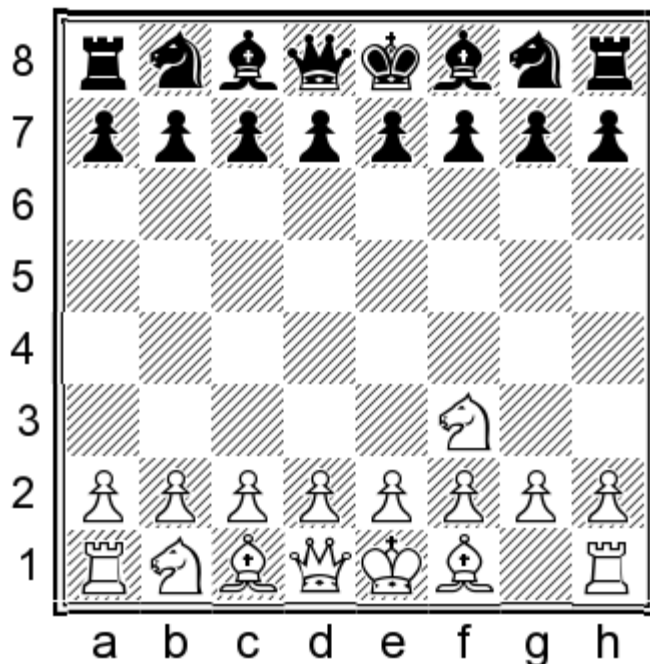
12. ♖xd8

Following 12. ♖h3, Black can continue with 12...d4 13.cxd4 cxd4, exploiting the insufficient protection of the enemy pawn on f4.

12... ♜fd8 After the queens have disappeared off the board, Black's king is safe against any attacks. In the endgame he has a freer game and his pieces are better developed. In general, he has a slight but stable advantage.

Chapter 21

1.♘f3



In this chapter we will analyse the opening variations, in which White plays ♘f3, but later refrains from d2-d4 and c2-c4.

1...d5

Black deploys his forces just like in the Slav Defence. He wishes to play ♘f6, c6, ♙g4, ♘bd7 and later e7-e5 or, if White prevents this pawn-advance, he can comply with the more humble move e7-e6. In the majority of the lines White fianchettoes his light-squared bishop: **B) 2.g3**. Sometimes, there are adherents to the other fianchetto: **A) 2.b3**.

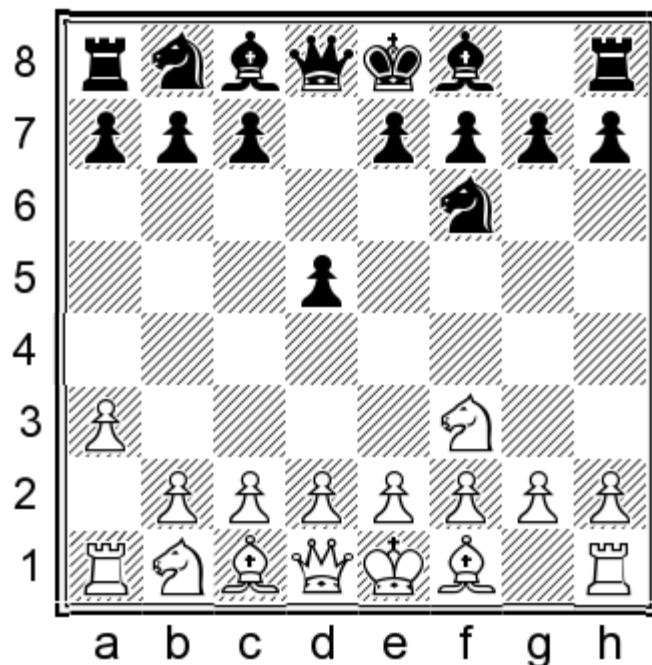
About 2.d4 ♘f6, or 2.c3 ♘f6 3.d4 ♙f5 – see volume 1, Chapter 25.

2.c4 c6 – see Chapters 22-23.

2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.d4 (3.d3 ♙g4 – see 2.d3) 3...c5 – see volume 1, Chapter 25.

2.e4?! This pawn-sacrifice is not well prepared. It would have been more sensible if Black had played f7-f5 instead of d7-d5. 2...dxe4 3.♘g5 ♙f5 4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♙e2 (Following 5.♙c4 e6 6.♙e2, Black can continue with 6...♙d4 7.♘b5 ♙d7 8.♘c3 ♘c6 and then ♘d4 and 0-0-0, Mangei – Stern, Baden-Baden 1991.) 5...♘c6 6.♙c4 e6 7.♘gxe4. White has regained the sacrificed pawn, but lags in development. 7...♘xe4 8.♘xe4, Rivas Pastor – Gonzalez Merino, Cala Galdana 2001, 8...♙d5!?)

2.a3. This move seems too humble. If White wishes to advance b2-b4, he could have done that without the preparatory move with this pawn. 2...♘f6



3.d4 c6 – see volume 1, Chapter 25.

3.g3 ♘g4 4.♙g2 ♞bd7 5.0-0 e5= Vastrukhin – Timerkhanov, Voronezh 2015.

3.e3 ♘g4 4.h3, Lenderman – Schroeder, London 2016, 4...♙xf3!? 5.♚xf3 e5=

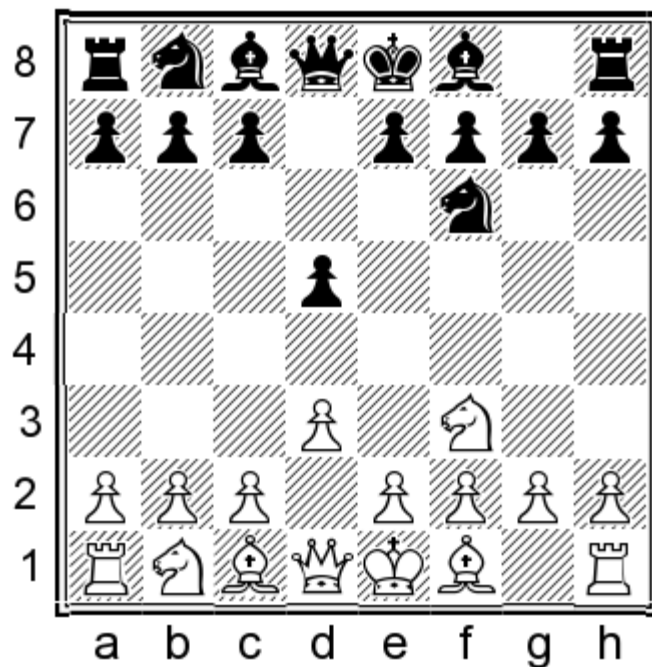
3.b4 a5. Black provokes 4.b5 and weakens a bit his opponent's queenside. 4...♙g4 5.♙b2 ♞bd7. From here, depending on circumstances, Black's knight can go to c5 as well as to b6 and will also support the freeing pawn-advance e7-e5.

6.e3 e5 7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♚xf3 ♙d6 9.♞c3, Gritsayeva – Girya, Vladivostok 2014, 9...♞b6!?! Black's powerful pawn-centre is more important than White's two-bishop advantage.

2.b4. White is playing in the spirit of the Sokolsky Opening. 2...♙g4 3.♙b2 ♞d7 4.e3 (4.a3 a5 5.b5 ♞gf6 – see 2.a3) 4...e5 5.h3 ♙xf3 6.♚xf3 ♞gf6 7.a3 ♙d6 8.c4. He begins a fight against his opponent's centre, but Black's pieces are better mobilised, so he is not afraid of the opening of the position. 8...e4 9.♚d1 dxc4 10.♙xc4, Casafus – Torres Becchio, Tucuman 1977, 10...0-0!? 11.0-0 ♞e5 12.♙e2 c6 13.♚c2 ♙c7=, followed by ♚d6, eyeing the enemy king.

2.e3 ♞f6 3.b4. Here, Black can exploit the insufficient protection of the enemy pawn on b4 with (3.b3 ♙g4 – see 2.b3; 3.d4 ♙g4 – see volume 1, Chapter 25; 3.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22, variation A) 3...e5!? 4.♞xe5 ♙xb4 5.♙b2 0-0 6.c4 ♙e6 7.♚c2 c5 8.cxd5, Stoczek – Riazantsev, Wroclaw 2014, 8...♙xd5!?! Despite the fact that the exchange of a central pawn for a flank pawn is not in favour of Black, his lead in development promises him a good game.

2.d3 ♞f6

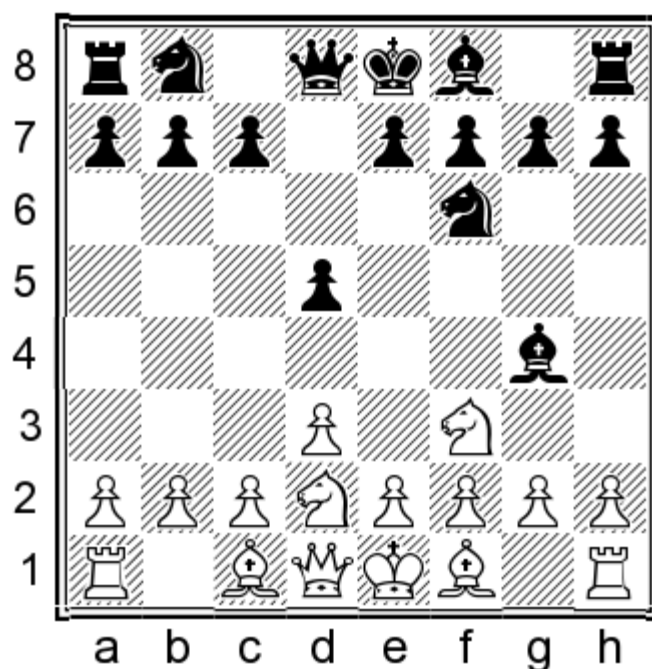


About 3.g3 c6 – see variation **B**.

After 3.♘g5, the simplest way for Black to avoid the doubling of his pawns is the move 3...♖bd7 and after 4.♗bd2, he can begin a chase after the powerful enemy bishop. 4...h6 5.♘h4 g5 6.♘g3 ♗h5∞ Grabner – Boskovic, Finkenstein 2000.

3.♗c3 ♘g4 4.g3 ♘xf3. Black presents his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but weakens his kingside pawn-structure. 5.exf3 ♗bd7 6.♘g2 c6 7.0-0 e6 8.f4, Mestrovic – Brglez, Ljubljana 1997, 8...g6!?!= Black is playing “according to the rules”. He deploys his pawns on light squares, having a dark-squared bishop.

3.♗bd2 ♘g4. Now, before playing ♗bd7, Black develops his bishop to an active position.



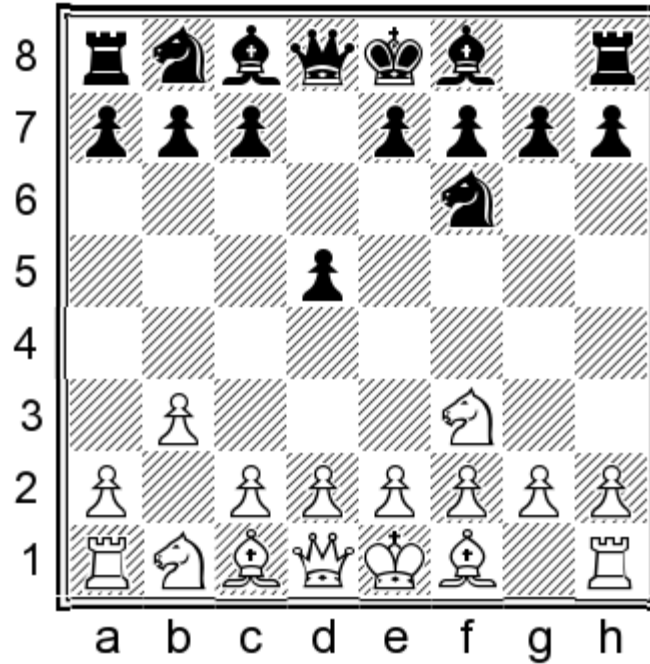
About 4.g3 c6 – see variation **B**.

4.h3 ♘xf3 5.♗xf3. White has managed to obtain the two-bishop advantage, but lags in development. 5...♗bd7 6.g3 e5

7.♔g2 ♕d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.c3 ♖e8 10.♗c2 c6= Sparwel – Kemper, Germany 2009. Black's prospects are not worse thanks to his powerful pawn-centre.

4.e4 e6. Here, Black can refrain from the pawn-advance c7-c6, because later, he might push c7-c5 at once in order to begin active actions on the queenside. 5.h3 (5.♕e2 c5 6.0-0 ♖c6 7.c3 ♕d6 8.♗e1 ♕xe2 9.♗xe2 ♗c7= Galmandakh – Danielsen, Caleta 2014. Black has a much freer game and it is much rather White who must think about equalising.) 5...♕h5 6.♕e2 (6.♗e2, Golovin – Mischuk, Moscow 2013, 6...♖c6!?) 6...♕e7 7.♗e5 ♕xe2 8.♗xe2, Danielsen – Prohaszka, Koge 2014, 8...0-0!? 9.0-0 ♗fd7. The exchange of the powerful enemy knight is Black's simplest road to equality. 10.♗xd7 ♗xd7=

A) 2.b3 ♗f6

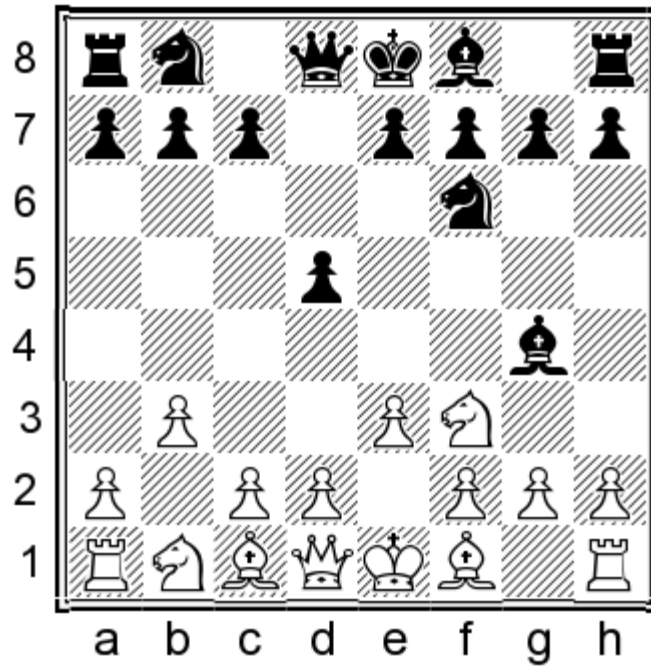


3.♕b2

3.g3 c6 – see 2.g3.

3.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22, variation B.

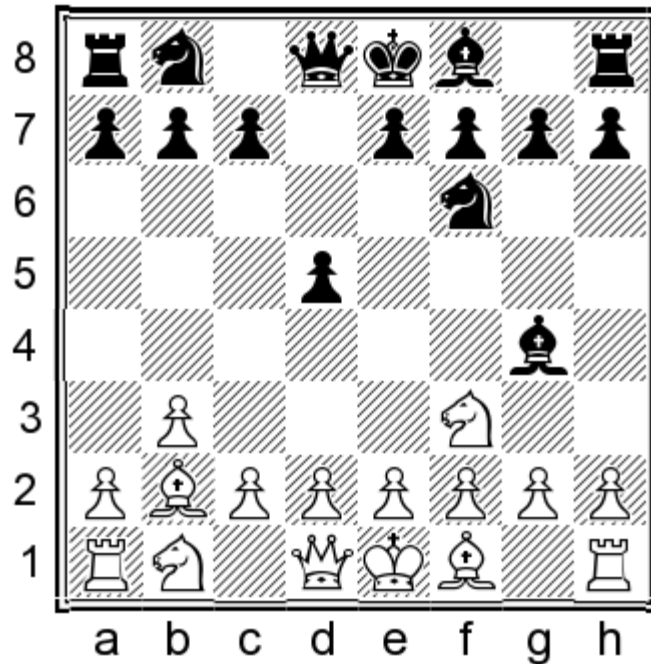
3.e3 ♕g4



4. ♖b2 ♜bd7, or 4. h3 ♙h5 5. ♖b2 ♜bd7, or 4. ♙e2 ♜bd7 5. ♖b2 e6 – see 3. ♙b2.

4. ♙a3. This is an attempt to impede Black's pawn-moves e7-e5, or e7-e6. Still, he can play 4...e5 anyway, without being afraid of the loss of his castling rights. 5. ♙xf8!∞ Black has occupied the centre and has a very good development. The fact that he has failed to castle is not important, since later he can coordinate his forces after g7-g6, ♜g7, or h7-h6, ♜g8-h7.

3... ♙g4



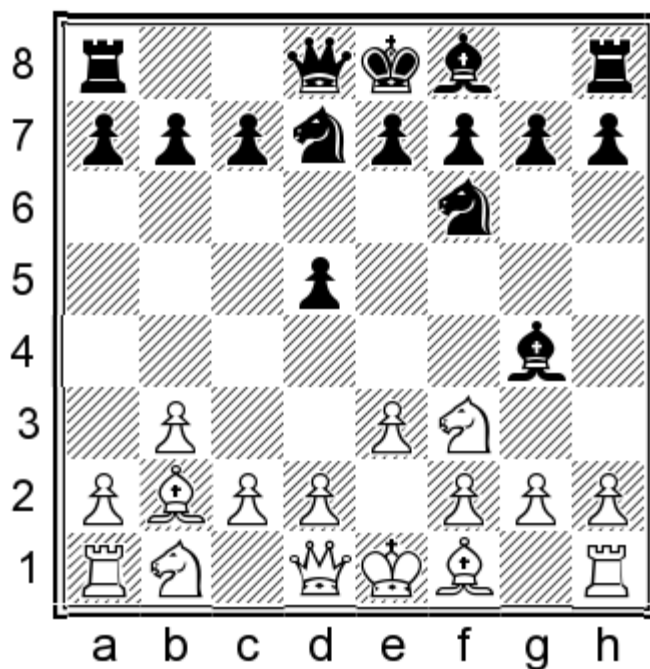
4.e3

About 4.g3 c6 5. ♙g2 ♜bd7 – see variation B.

4.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22, variation B.

4.♖e5 ♕h5 5.g3 c6 6.♗g2 e6 7.0-0 ♜bd7 8.d4 ♝xe5 9.dxe5 ♞d7 10.♞d2 ♖c5 ♞ Tomik – Pavkov, Backa Topola 2011.

4...♞bd7

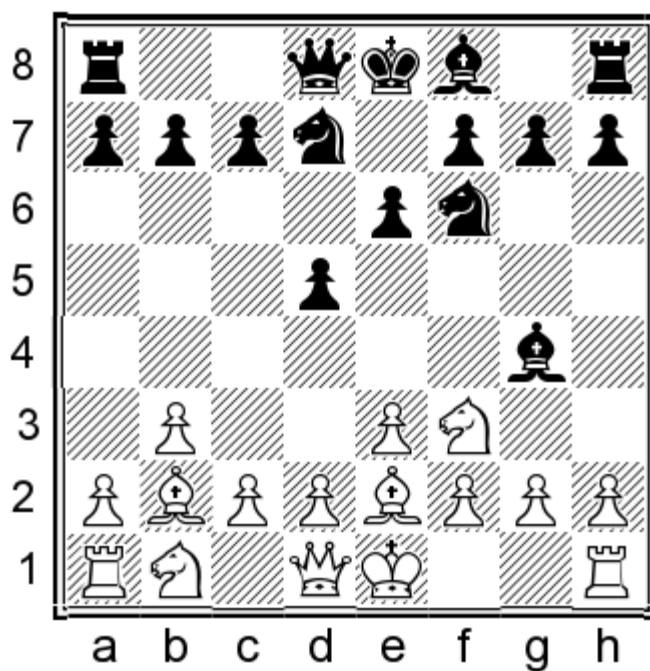


5.h3

This move may turn out to be useful for White.

5.c4 e5 6.cxd5 e4 7.h3 ♕h5 8.g4 ♖g6 9.♞h4 ♞xd5 10.♞xg6 hxg6= Medina – Jenni, Turin 2006.

5.♗e2 e6



6.h3 ♖h5 – see 5.h3.

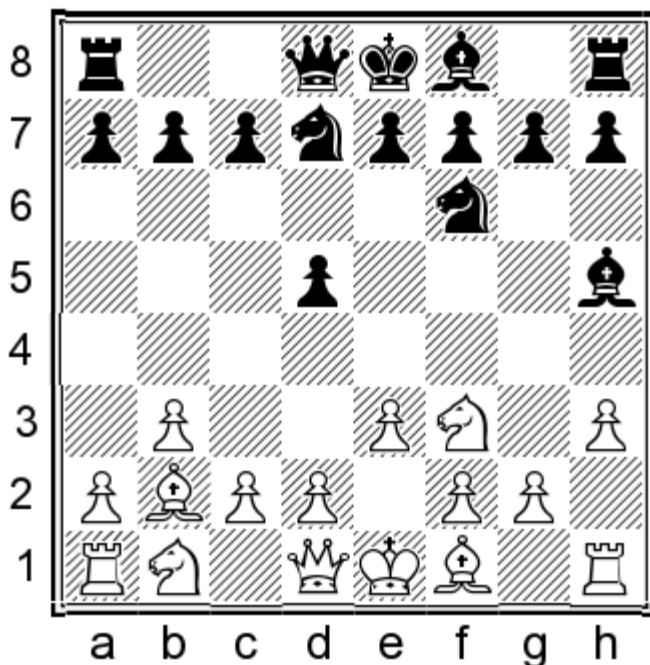
6.c4 c6, or 6.0-0 ♖d6 7.c4 c6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B1**.

6.♗e5. White's fight for the e5-square will lead to the simplification of the position. 6...♗xe5 7.♖xe5 ♖xe2 8.♜xe2 ♖d6 9.f4 ♖xe5 10.fxe5 ♗d7 11.d4 c5= Manolache – Khenkin, Germany 2008.

6.d3 ♖d6 7.♗bd2 (After 7.c4, the simplest for Black would be to play here 7...h6!?, preparing a square for the retreat of the bishop on g4 after h3, g4, ♗h4.) 7...0-0 8.0-0 (8.♗h4 ♖xe2 9.♜xe2, Blatny – Fontaine, Corsica 1997, 9...♞e8!?=). White has completed his development, but now, Black can occupy the centre with his pawns after 8...e5 9.e4 ♞e8 10.h3 ♖h5 11.♞e1 c6 12.a3 a5= Schneider – Degerman, Sweden 2002.

5.d3. This move does not prevent Black's plan, connected with the occupation of the centre. 5...e5 6.h3 ♖xf3 7.♜xf3 c6 8.♗d2 ♖d6 9.g3 (9.g4 0-0. Now, after g4-g5, Black's knight can retreat to the e8-square. 10.♜e2 ♜e7∞ Krejci – Neuman, Aschach 2014. White can hardly develop any meaningful initiative on the kingside.) 9...0-0 10.♖g2 ♜e7 11.a3. White defends against the threat ♖a3. 11...a5 12.0-0 ♞fe8 13.e4 d4 14.♜e2 a4∞ Balashov – Luther, Uzhgorod 1988. White's two-bishop advantage is practically immaterial, because the position is closed.

5...♖h5



6.♖e2

About 6.c4 e6 7.♖e2 c6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B1**.

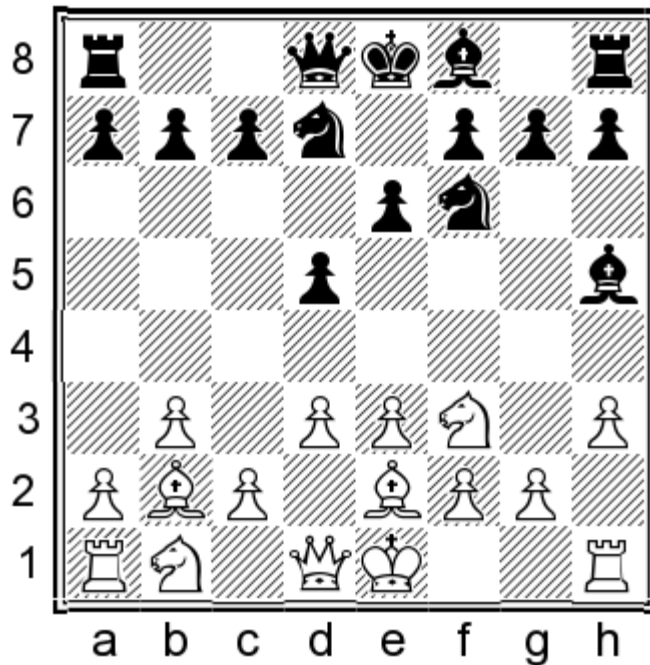
After 6.d3, Black can play 6...h6!?, saving his light-squared bishop from an exchange. 7.♗bd2 (7.c4 e6 8.♖e2, Liljedahl – Ek, Eksjo 1973, 8...♖b4+! 9.♗bd2 0-0=) 7...e6 8.♜e2 (8.♖e2 ♖g6 – see 6.♖e2; 8.g4 ♖g6 9.♖g2 ♖c5= Kharlov – Van Ketel, Fuegen 2006) 8...a5! Black begins active operations on the queenside. 9.a3 a4 10.b4 c5∞ Korchnoi – I.Novikov, Antwerp 1997. Black has seized firmly the initiative.

6.g4 ♖g6 7.♗h4. This move is at least quite consequent. Now, White will obtain the two-bishop advantage. (7.d3 h6! 8.♗bd2 c6 9.♗h4 ♖h7 10.f4 e6∞ Schmidt – Rothenbacher, Giessen 1992) 7...e5 8.♗xg6 hxg6 9.c4 c6 10.cxd5 ♗xd5∞, opening the road of his queen to the kingside, Gulko – Agzamov, Frunze 1981.

6...e6 7.d3

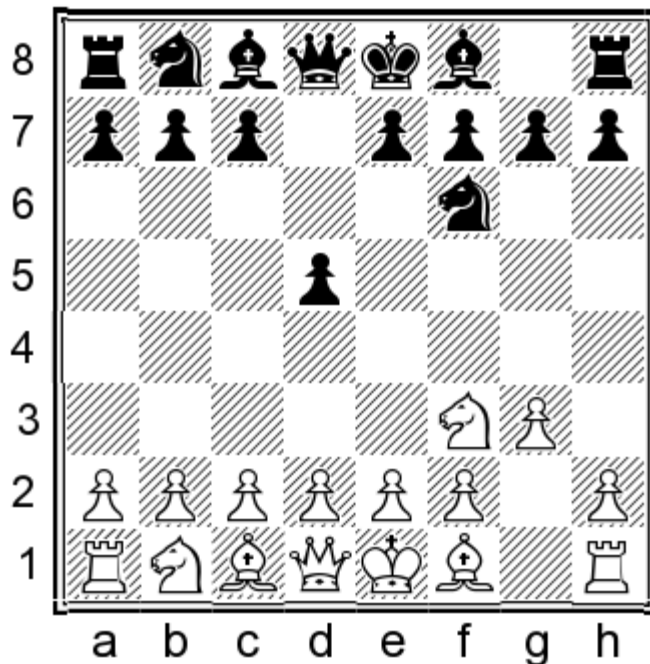
About 7.c4 c6 – see see Chapter 22, variation **B1**.

Following 7.d4, Black can occupy firmly the centre of the board with his knight: 7...♞e4 8.0-0 ♞d6 9.♞bd2 f5 10.♞e5 ♞xe2 11.♞xe2 0-0= Gordiyenko – Hryhorenko, Lvov 2003.



7...h6!? This is the simplest for Black. Now, he would not need to worry about g2-g4, ♞h4. 8.♞bd2 ♞g6 9.♞e5 ♞xe5 10.♞xe5 ♞d6 11.♞f3 0-0 12.0-0 ♞e7 13.c4 a5 14.♞c2 ♞d7 15.♞xd6. White's chances of obtaining an edge evaporate with every exchange of a piece. 15...♞xd6 16.a3 ♞e5 17.♞xe5 ♞xe5= Salov – Anand, Madrid 1993. Black's position has no pawn-weaknesses at all and the position is dead drawish.

B) 2.g3 ♞f6



3.g2

3.c3 c6 4.g2 g4 – see 3.g2.

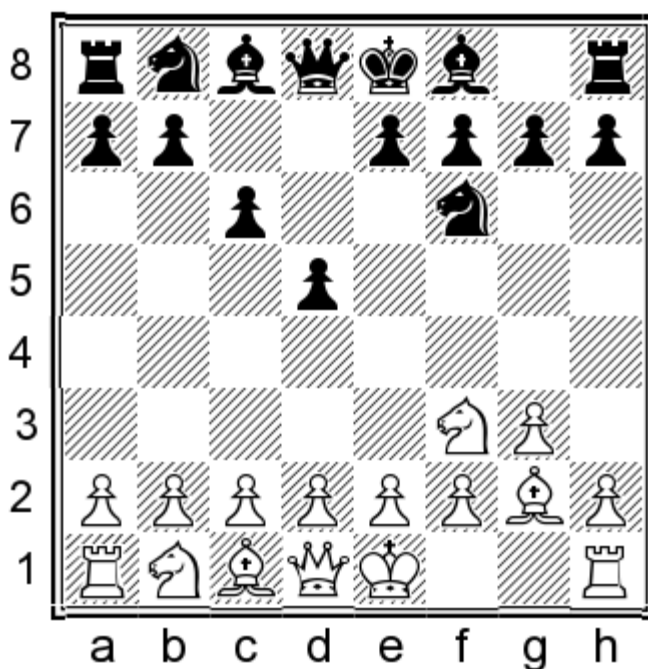
About 3.c4 c6 – see Chapter 23.

3.d4 c6 – see volume 1, Chapter 26.

3.b3 c6 4.b2 (4.g2 g4 – see 3.g2; 4.c4 g4 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**) 4...g4 5.g2 b7 – see 3.g2.

3.d3. In principle, White's delay in the development of his light-squared bishop does not lead to original positions, but if he so wishes, he can try some unexplored lines. 3...c6 4.b2 (4.g2 g4 – see variation **B1**) 4...g4 5.h3 (5.g2 b7 – see variation **B1**) 5...h5 6.g4 g6 7.b4. Now, Black's bishop will be exchanged, but White has weakened his kingside in order to accomplish this. 7...e5 8.e3 d6 9.g2 b7∞ Garcia Luque – Fernandez Romero, Seville 2006.

3...c6



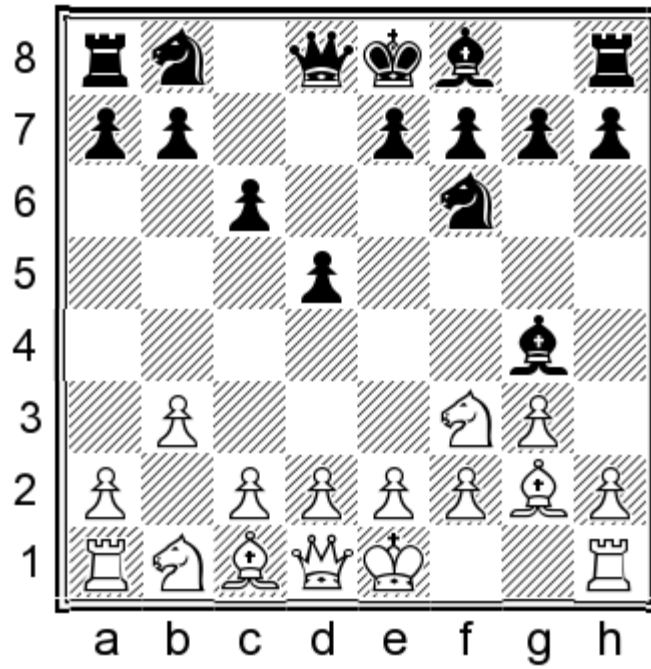
White's choice of this system is based on his desire to castle as quickly as possible **B2**) **4.0-0**, but there have been amassed plenty of games in the Database in which he was not in a hurry to castle **B1**) **4.d3**.

About 4.c4 g4 – see Chapter 23.

4.d4 g4 – see volume 1, Chapter 26.

4.c3. White prepares the development of his queen to b3, but this will hardly create serious problems for Black. 4...g4 5.b3 (5.0-0 b7 – see variation **B2b**) 5...b6 6.d3 b7 7.e3, Gutman – Farago, Wuppertal 1986, 7...a6!?= The exchange on b3 would lead to the activation of the rook on a1, so Black refrains from it.

4.b3 g4

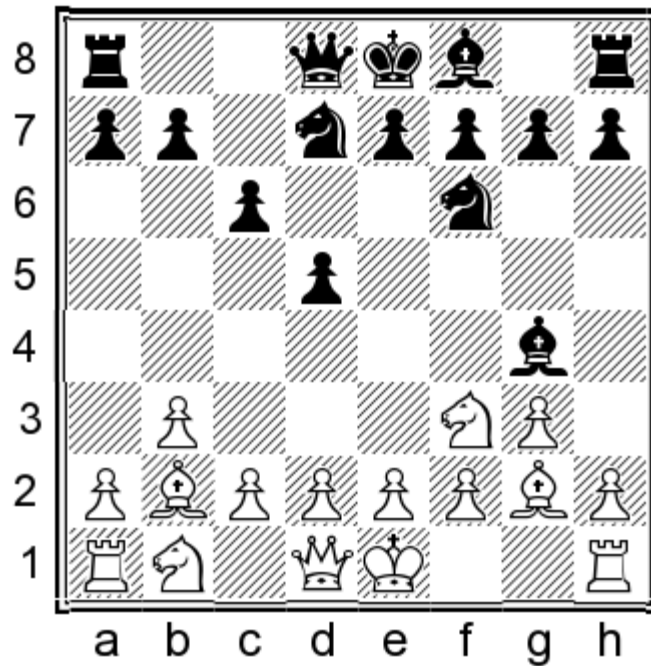


5.d3 ♘bd7 – see variation **B1**.

5.0-0 ♘bd7 – see variation **B2a**.

5.c4 e6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

5.♙b2 ♘bd7



6.d3 e6 – see variation **B1**.

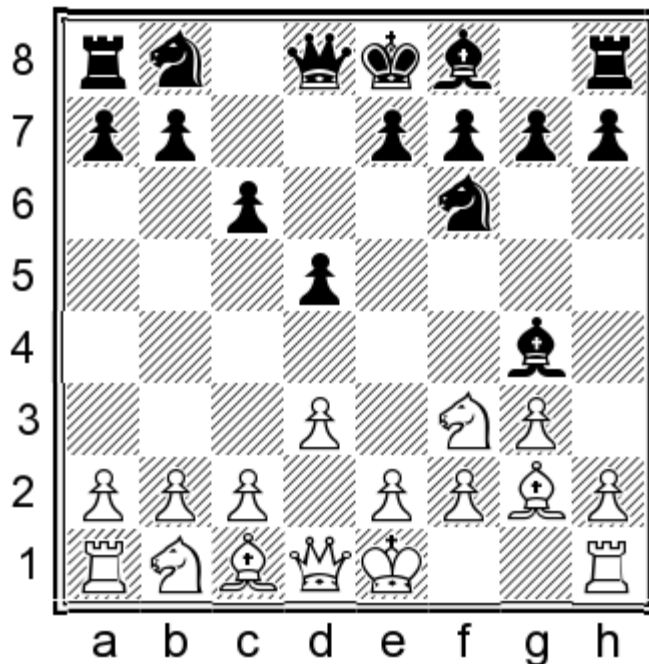
6.0-0 e6 – see variation **B2a**.

6.c4 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

6.d4 e6 7.♘bd2 (7.0-0 ♙d6 8.c4 0-0, or 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.c4 ♖e7 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2a**) 7...♙d6 8.c4 (8.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0) 8...0-0 9.0-0 ♖e7 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2a**.

6.h3. This move enables Black to occupy the centre. 6...♙xf3 7.♙xf3 e5 8.♙g2 ♖d6 9.d3 0-0 10.e3 ♜e7= Chigaev – Skawinski, Krakow 2016.

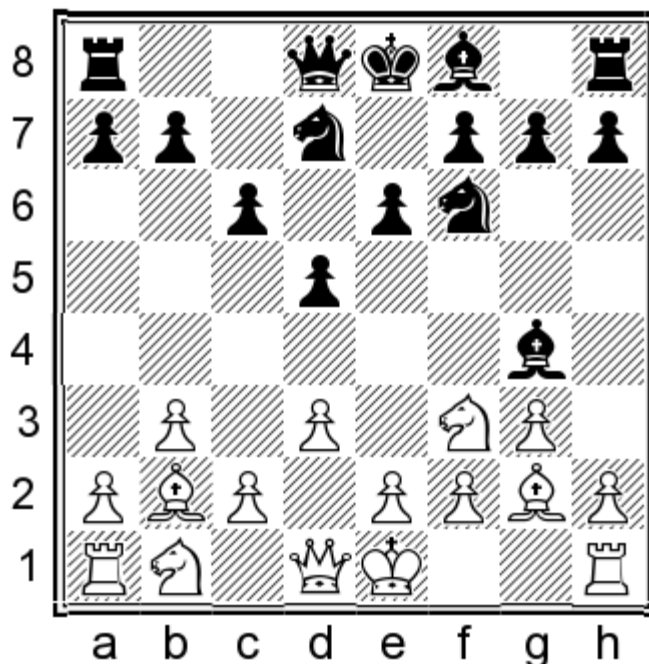
B1) 4.d3 ♙g4



5.♘bd2

5.0-0 ♘bd7 – see variation **B2b**.

5.b3 ♘bd7 6.♙b2 e6



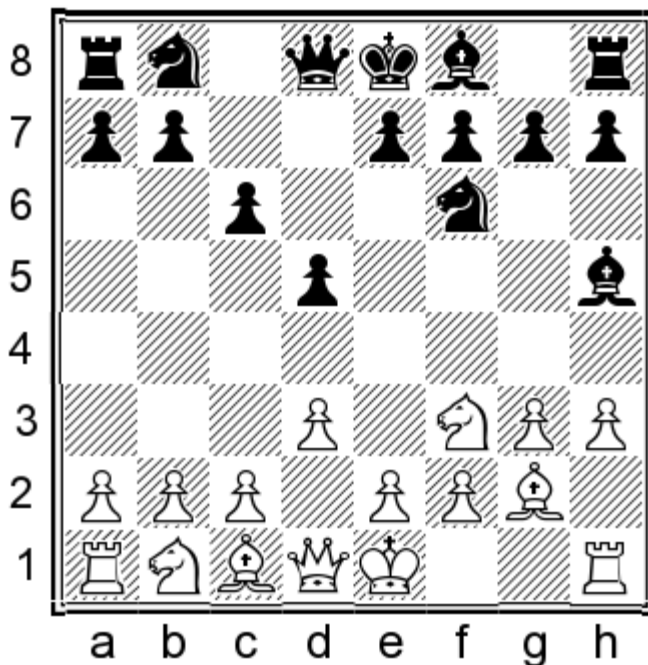
7.0-0 ♙d6 – see variation **B2a**.

Following 7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♙xf3, before placing his bishop on d6, Black can play 8...♙b4+ 9.c3, Schulz – Miechowicz,

Guben 2003, restricting the enemy bishop on b2. 9...♔d6!?=

7.♖bd2 ♕d6 8.h3 (8.0-0 0-0 – see variation **B2a**; 8.c4 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**) 8...♕xf3 9.♗xf3 (9.♕xf3 a5= Barbero – Chernin, Skien 1979) 9...♔a3!?! This small combination is for the sake of strategy. Black deprives his opponent of his two-bishop advantage. 10.♕xa3 (White fails to avoid the trade of his bishop. 10.♕c3 ♖e7 11.0-0 ♕b4 12.♕b2 ♕a3= Hodgson – Geller, Sochi 1986.) 10...♗a5+ 11.c3 (11.♗d2 ♗xa3 12.0-0 0-0= Wohl – Kragelj, Arco 2001) 11...♗xa3= Hickl – Pelletier, Switzerland 2009. Two couples of minor pieces have disappeared off the board. White has no chances of obtaining an advantage, since Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp.

5.h3 ♕h5



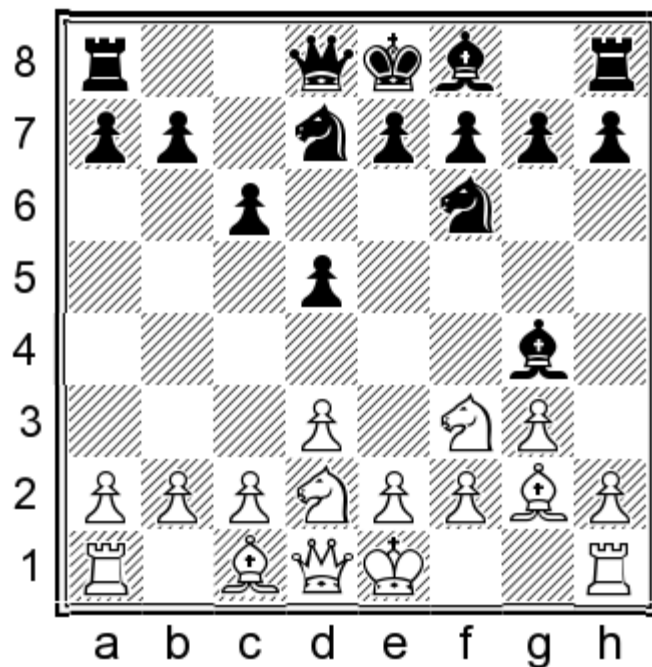
6.♗bd2 ♗bd7 – see 5.♗bd2.

About 6.0-0 ♗bd7 – see variation **B2b**.

6.g4 ♕g6 7.♗h4 (7.♗e5 ♗bd7 8.♗xg6 hxg6 – see 7.♗h4. Following 7.♕f4 ♗bd7 8.e3, Black can play 8...h6!?, saving his bishop on g6 from an exchange. 9.♗c3 e6= Pantsulaia – Mirzoev, Konya 2016.) 7...♗bd7 8.♗xg6 (8.♗d2 – see 5.♗bd2) 8...hxg6 9.e3 e5∞ Kashin – Tiunova, Perm 2007.

6.b3 ♗bd7 7.♕b2 e6 8.♗bd2 (8.0-0 ♕d6 – see variation **B2a**; 8.g4 ♕g6 9.♗h4 ♕d6 10.♗d2 ♖e7 – see 8.♗bd2) 8...♕d6 9.g4 (9.0-0 0-0 – see variation **B2a**; 9.e4, Fauland – Lukacs, Austria 1995, 9...♕e5!?!=) 9...♕g6 10.♗h4 ♖e7 11.a3, Maghsoodloo – Tomashevsky, Doha 2016, 11...0-0!?!= Black's position is very solid, while White's kingside pawn-structure has been weakened.

5...♗bd7



6.h3

6.0-0 e5 – see variation **B2b2**.

6.e4 e5 7.h3 (7.0-0 dxe4 – see variation **B2b2**) 7...♙h5 – see 6.h3.

6.b3 e5 7.h3 (7.♙b2 e4 8.dxe4 (8.♘e5 ♘xe5 9.♙xe5, Jeszenkovics – Kiss, Hungary 2000, 9...♙d6!?) 8...dxe4 9.♘d4 e3 10.fxe3 ♙c5 11.0-0 0-0) 7...♙xf3 8.♙xf3, Petran – Stajcic, Topolcianky 1994, 8...♙c5!?)

6...♙h5 7.g4

7.0-0 e5 – see variation **B2b2**.

7.b3 e5 8.♙b2 (8.0-0 ♖c7 – see variation **B2b2**) 8...♙c7 9.g4 (9.0-0 ♙e7 – see variation **B2b2**) 9...♙g6 10.♘h4 0-0-0 Gausel – Brontz, Sweden 2004.

7.e4 e5 8.exd5, Larsen – Huebner, Montreal 1979 (8.0-0 dxe4 – see variation **B2b2**) 8...♘xd5!?)= Now, Black would not need to consider anymore White's plan connected with g3-g4 and ♘h4.

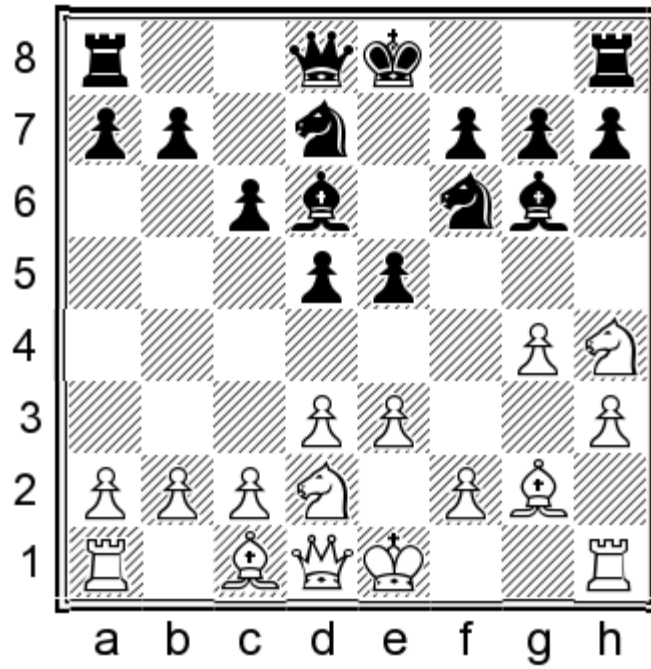
7...♙g6 8.♘h4

8.0-0 e5 – see variation **B2b2**.

8...e5 9.e3

It seems less reasonable for White to play here 9.c4, because after 9...d4, Black occupies additional space in the centre. 10.a3 a5= Likavsky – Hracek, Trencianske Teplice 2002.

9...♙d6



10. ♖e2

10.0-0, Hickl – Blauert, Bad Neuenahr 1989, 10... ♗e7!?

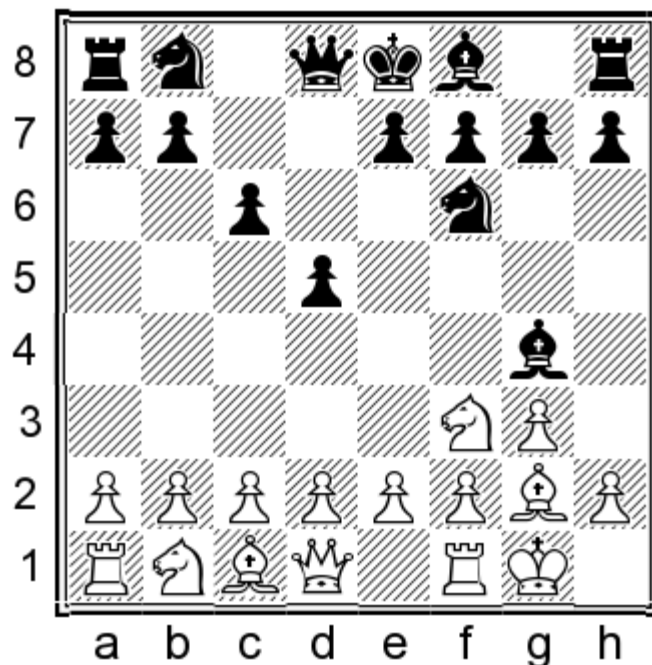
After 10.b3, it would be good for Black to opt for the line: 10... ♗e7 11. ♘b2 0-0 12.0-0 ♖ad8∞ Hickl – Dobosz, Germany 2014. He has a powerful pawn-centre.

10... ♗e7 11.c4

It would be too humble for White to continue here with 11.a3 ♘c5 12.b3 ♘fd7 13. ♘xg6 hxg6∞ Bilek – Varga, Budapest 1995.

11...dxc4 12. ♘xc4, Svidler – Agdestein, Stavanger 2014, **12...0-0-0!?**∞ The weakness of White's d3-pawn might hurt him in the future.

B2) 4.0-0 ♙g4



Here, White must make an important decision whether to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop, or not. We will analyse: **B2a) 5.b3** and **B2b) 5.d3**.

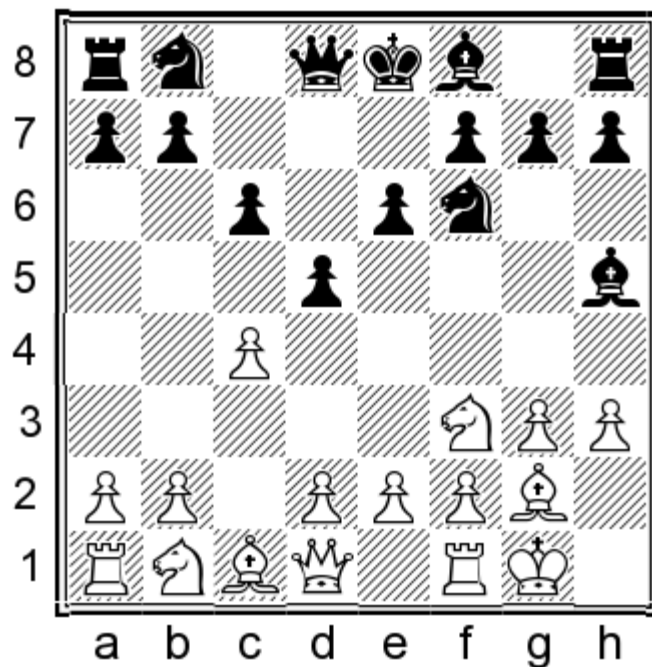
5.d4 e6 – see volume 1, Chapter 26.

5.c4 e6 – see Chapter 23, variation **B**.

5.♘e5 ♕h5 6.c4 (6.d4 e6 – see volume 1, Chapter 26) 6...♗bd7 7.d4 e6 8.cxd5 (8.♘c3 ♕e7 – see volume 1, Chapter 26) 8...♗xe5 9.dxe5 ♗xd5 10.h3 ♕c5. This is Black's most precise move. He develops his bishop and prevents the pawn-advance f2-f4 at the same time. Now, White's attempts to push his pawns in the centre and on the kingside will only weaken his position. 11.g4 ♕g6 12.e4 ♗b4 ♠ Oblitas Guerrero – Borges Matos, Matanzas 1992.

5.c3 ♗bd7 6.♖b3 (6.d4 e6 7.♗bd2 ♕e7 – see volume 1, Chapter 26) 6...♗b6 7.d3 e5 8.♕e3, Gutman – Euler, Germany 1997, 8...♕c5!?. This is Black's simplest road to equality. The point is that White cannot win a pawn with 9.♕xc5 ♗xc5= 10.♗xb6 axb6 11.♗xe5?, because of 11...♗b3 ♠

5.h3 ♕h5 6.c4 (6.d4 e6 – see volume 1, Chapter 26; 6.d3 ♗bd7 – see variation **B2b2**) 6...e6



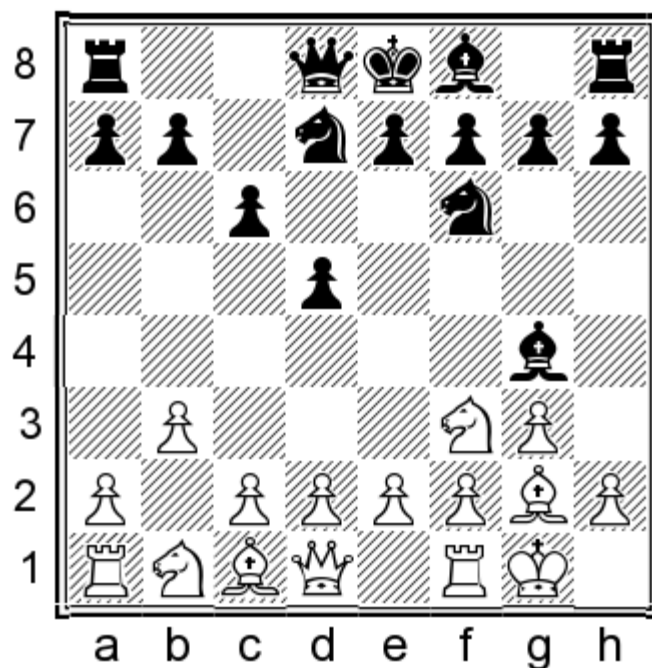
7.d4 ♕e7 – see volume 1, Chapter 26.

7.d3 ♖bd7 – Chapter 23, variation B.

Following 7.cxd5, Black should at first exchange on f3 7...♙xf3 8.♙xf3 and only then capture with his c-pawn; otherwise, White would have the possibility ♖a4 and ♗e5. 8...cxd5 9.a3 ♕e7 10.♙g2 0-0 11.d3 ♗c6= Dubov – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2016. Black has a very solid position and a good development. White's two-bishop advantage is practically immaterial.

7.♙b3 ♙b6 8.♗c3 (8.d4 ♕e7 9.♗c3 0-0 – see volume 1, Chapter 26) 8...♗bd7 9.cxd5, Ponkratov – Girya, Khanty-Mansiysk 2015, 9...♙xb3!? 10.axb3 exd5=. Black's superior pawn-structure promises him at least equal prospects.

B2a) 5.b3 ♗bd7



6.♖b2

White has managed to prevent e7-e5, but Black can obtain a good position even if he advances his e-pawn just one square forward.

About 6.d4 e6 – see volume 1, Chapter 26.

6.c4 e6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

6.d3 e6 7.c4 (7.♖b2 ♗d6 or 7.♘bd2 ♗d6 8.♖b2 0-0 – see 6.♖b2) 7...♗d6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

White cannot obtain an edge with the move 6.♖a3, because Black can play 6...e5, without being afraid of the loss of his castling rights. 7.♖xf8 ♗xf8 8.d3 g6=, followed by ♗g7, ♖e8, Franke – Hess, Germany 1981.

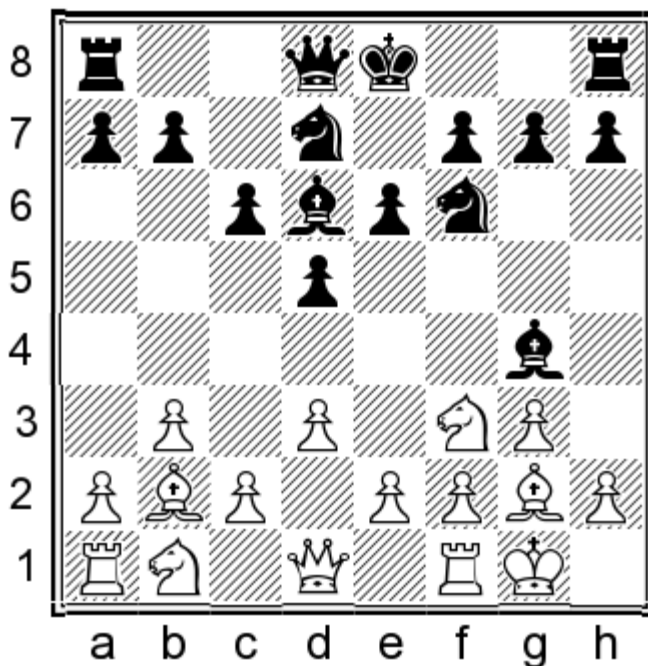
6...e6 7.d3

7.c4 ♗d6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

7.d4 ♗d6 8.c4 0-0, or 8.♘bd2 0-0 9.c4 ♖e7 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2a**.

7.h3 ♗h5 8.d4 (8.d3 ♗d6 – see 7.d3; 8.c4 ♗d6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**) 8...♗e7 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.c4 a5 – see volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B2**.

7...♗d6

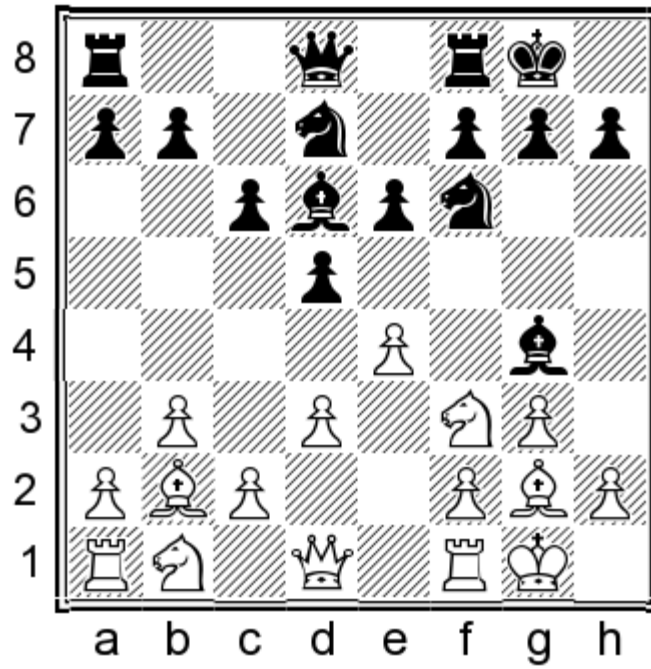


8.♘bd2

8.c4 0-0 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**.

8.♖e1 0-0 9.e4 (9.♘bd2 e5 – see 8.♘bd2) 9...dxe4 – see 8.e4.

White tries sometimes to advance e4 without ♘bd2. For example: 8.e4. Here, Black should better refrain from capturing on e4 due to the vulnerability of his g7-pawn and the insufficient protection of his bishop on d6. 8...0-0

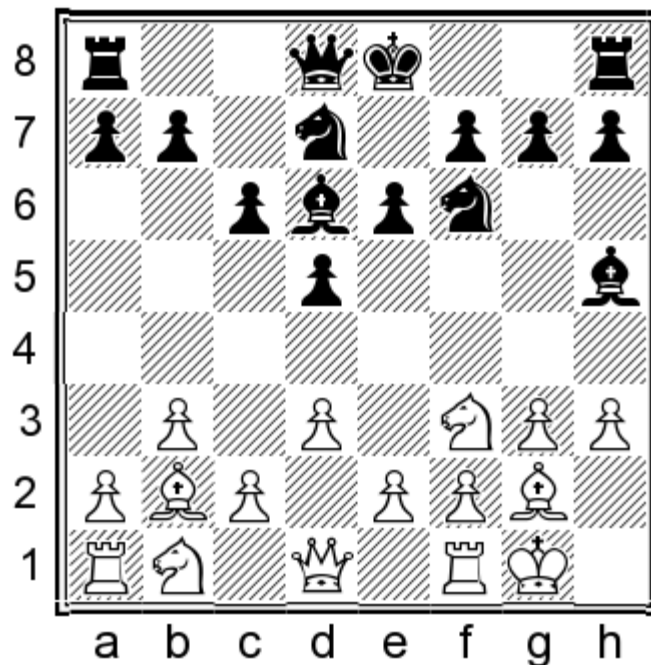


9. ♖bd2 e5 – see 8. ♖bd2.

After 9.h3, Black's simplest road to equality is 9...♙xf3 10. ♖xf3 ♙e5 11.d4. White avoids the trade of the dark-squared bishops, but now after 11...dxe4 12. ♖e2, Miles – Karpov, Biel 1996, 12...♙c7!? 13. ♖d2 e5, Black opens the a1-h8 diagonal and realises his plan anyway. 14.dxe5 ♙xe5 15. ♙xe5 ♖xe5. Now, White has been deprived of his bishop-pair and the position is completely equal. 16. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 17. ♖xe4 ♖e8=

9. ♖e1 dxe4 10.dxe4 ♙xf3 11. ♙xf3 ♙e5 12.c3. White avoids the exchange of the dark-squared bishop, but restricts its mobility. 12...♖c7 13. ♙g2 ♖fd8 14. ♖e3 ♖b6= White must play very accurately in the arising position. For example, the straightforward approach 15. ♖xb6?! axb6 16.f4 ♙c7, would lead to difficulties for him. Black is threatening ♖c5-d3 and after 17.b4, he has the powerful resource 17...b5±, followed by the transfer of his knight to the c4-outpost, Hickl – Boensch, Lippstadt 1992.

8.h3 ♙h5

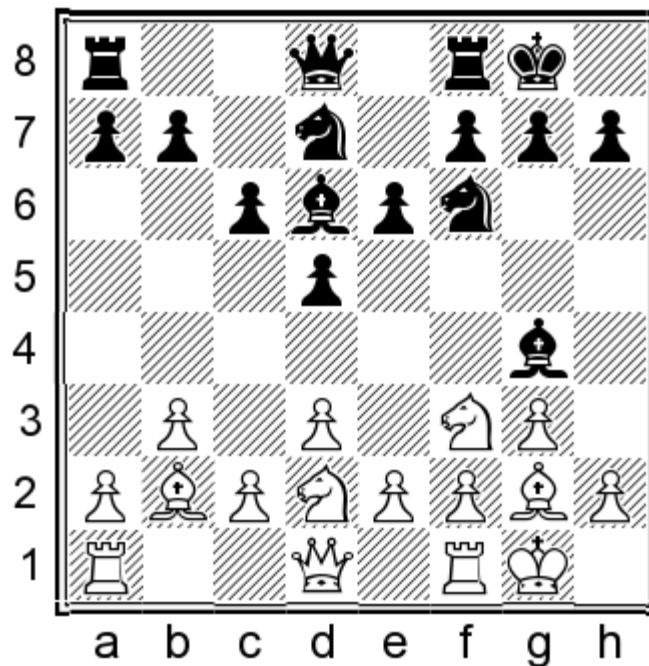


9.♖bd2 0-0 – see 8.♖bd2.

About 9.c4 0-0 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**.

9.e4. Here, contrary to the variation with the move 8.e4, Black can capture his opponent's central pawn, because after the opening of the g-file, he would have excellent attacking prospects due to the weakness of the g3-square. 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 ♖xe4∞ 11.♗xg7?! ♜g8 12.♗b2, Zarqua – Sulashvili, Tbilisi 2002, 12...♗c5!/? This is the point! The threat of capturing on g3 forces White to weaken his position even more. 13.g4 f5! Black sacrifices a piece in order to open the g-file. 14.gxh5 ♜c7. He does not need to be in a hurry to attack and can first complete his development and evacuate his king away from the centre. 15.♗d4 0-0-0 16.♜e2 ♗xd4 17.♖xd4 ♜e5. Black prepares the transfer of his queen to the g-file with tempo. 18.c3 ♜g7 19.f3 ♖xc3. Now, he regains his piece with the help of a simple combination and preserves all the pluses of his position. 20.♖xc3 ♜xd4+ 21.♔h1 ♜xc3—

8...0-0



9.h3

White should better clarify immediately the placement of the enemy bishop, until it might go to the e6-square, after Black plays e6-e5.

9.♞e1 ♞e8 10.e4 e5 or 9.♜e1 e5 10.e4 ♞e8 – see 9.e4.

About 9.c4 ♞e8 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**.

9.a3, Csom – Matanovic, Skopje 1972, 9...e5!/?=

9.e4 e5 10.♜e1 (10.h3 ♗h5, or 10.♞e1 ♞e8 11.h3 ♗h5 – see 9.h3) 10...♞e8 11.♖h4 (11.h3 ♗h5, or 11.a3 a5 12.h3 ♗h5 – see 9.h3) 11...♜c7 12.h3, Minasian – Pavasovic, Cannes 1996, 12...♗e6!/?∞

9...♗h5 10.e4

10.♞e1 e5 11.e4 ♞e8, or 10.♜e1 e5 11.e4 ♞e8 – see 10.e4.

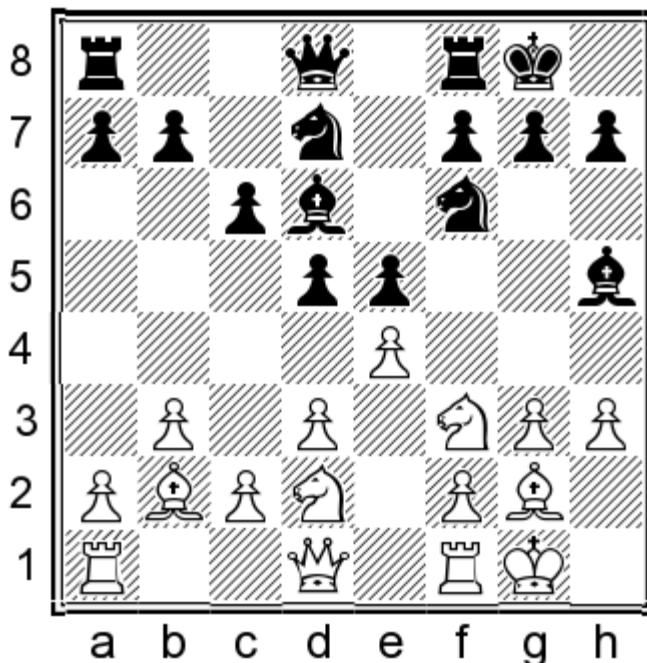
10.c4 ♞e8 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**.

After 10.e3, Black's simplest reaction would be 10...h6!?, preserving his light-squared bishop from an exchange.
 11.♖e1 ♜e8= Nogueiras – Leyva, Valencia 2000.

10.a3, T.L.Petrosian – Carlsen, chesscom 2016, 10...♞e8!?!=

It would not work for White to try the straightforward line: 10.g4 ♙g6= 11.♘h4?!, because Black can reply with an interesting combination. 11...♗xg4! 12.♗xg6 fxg6! He opens the f-file for his rook. 13.hxg4 ♜h4 14.f4 ♙xf4 15.♞xf4 ♞xf4 16.♖e1 ♜xg4 17.♗f3 ♞af8= Cornell – Kasabasic, LSS 2013. Bishops can fight successfully in the middlegame against a rook and two pawns, but here Black has gobbled already three pawns.

10...e5

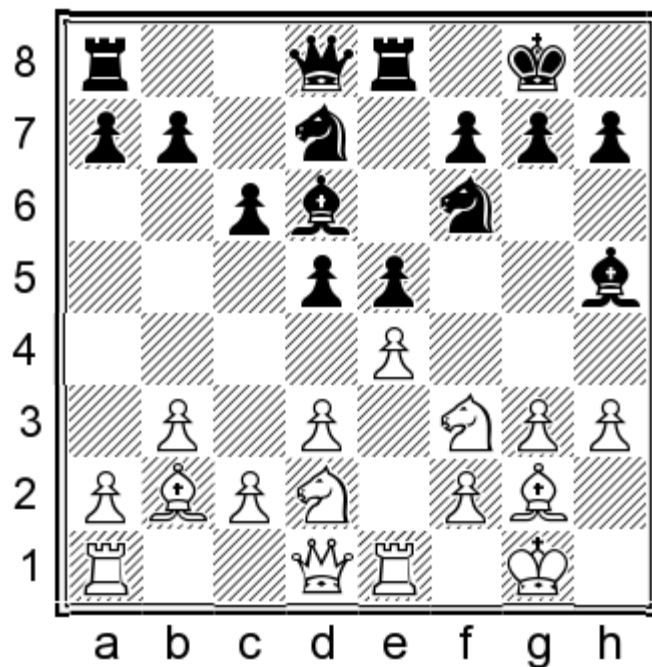


11.♖e1

Following 11.♖e2, White's knight is pinned and he does not have the manoeuvre ♗f3-h4. 11...♞e8 12.♞fe1 a5 13.a3, Fitzgerald – Byrne, Lincoln 1969, 13...h6!?!=

The move 11.g4 weakens the f4-square and Black's knight might go there later in the game. 11...♙g6 12.♗h4 ♞e8 13.♗f5, Movsziszian – Kindermann, Germany 1994, 13...♙c7!?!=, followed by ♗f8, ♗e6.

11.♞e1 ♞e8



12. ♖e2 a5 – see 11. ♖e2.

It would be too passive for White to opt here for 12. a3 a5 13. c3 ♘c5 14. ♖c2 ♙c7 ♞ Hickl – Dautov, Switzerland 2007.

12. exd5. He begins to open the game in order to exploit the power of his bishops. Still, Black's position is quite solid.
12... cxd5 13. g4 ♙g6 14. ♘h4 ♞c8 = Jurek – Supatashvili, Mlada Boleslav 1994.

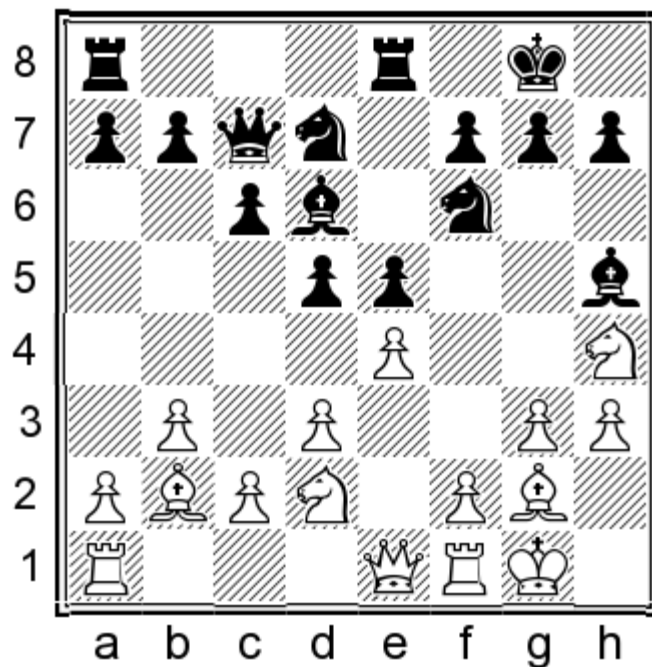
11... ♞e8 12. ♘h4

White is preparing the transfer of his knight to the f5-square.

12. a3 a5 13. ♘h4 ♖c7 – see 12. ♘h4.

12. ♖e2 a5 13. a3, Beliavsky – Bagirov, Lvov 1978, 13... h6! ♞

12... ♖c7



13. ♘f5

13. ♖h1 a5 14. a3 ♜ad8 – see 13. a3.

The inclusion of the moves 13. a3 a5 would not change the character of the position. 14. ♘f5 (14. ♖h1 ♜ad8 15. ♘f5 ♙f8 – see 14. ♘f5) 14... ♙f8 15. ♖h1 (The opening of the game in the centre with the move 15. f4 seems premature. 15... dxe4 16. dxe4, Koneru – Chiburdanidze, Mallorca 2004, 16... ♙g6!? ♞) 15... ♜ad8 16. f4. Without this move White's position would be worse. (16. ♘f3, Minasian – Gareev, Mallorca 2004, 16... a4!? ♞, or 16. ♘e3 ♙g6!? ♞) 16... dxe4 17. dxe4 ♙g6= Espig – Becking, Saarlouis 2002.

13... ♙f8 14. f4

This energetic pawn-break leads to interesting complications.

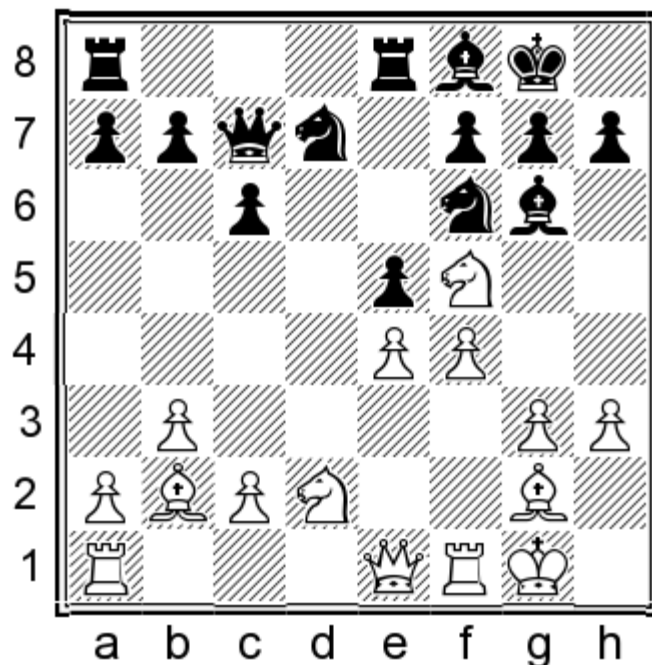
About 14. a3 a5, or 14. ♖h1 a5 15. a3 ♜ad8 – see 13. a3.

14. ♞e3, Tregubov – Zvjaginsev, Wijk aan Zee 1995, 14... a5↑

14. ♘e3 ♜ad8 15. ♞c1 dxe4 16. dxe4 ♘c5∞ Sorensen – Schandorff, Denmark 2011.

The move 14. a4 leads to a calmer game. 14... a5 15. ♘e3 dxe4 16. dxe4 ♙b4= Van Wely – De Boer, Eindhoven 1991.

14... dxe4 15. dxe4 ♙g6



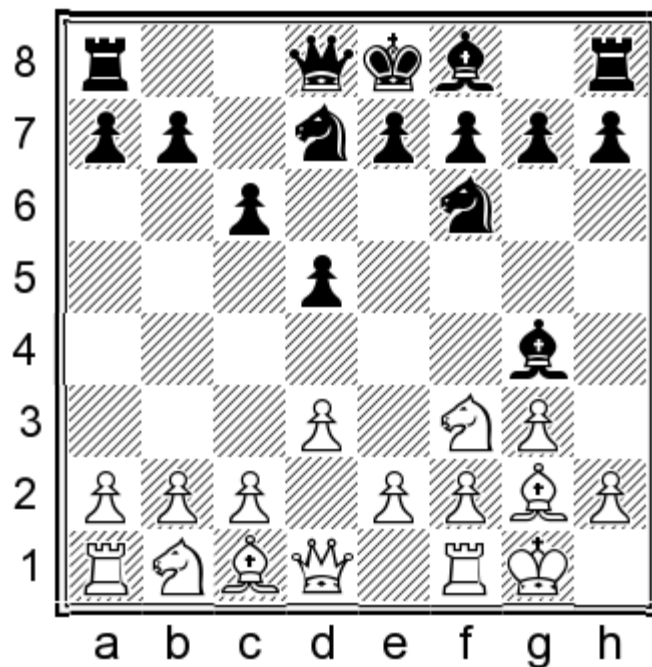
16. ♖xg7!

This is the only move for White not to end up in an inferior position.

16. ♖h4 exf4 17. gxf4 ♘h5 ♠ Hachijan – Roeder, Germany 2015.

16... ♗xg7 17. f5, Girinath – Sundararajan, Kolkata 2000, 17... ♗h5 18. g4 ♘xg4 19. hxg4 ♗xg4. Black has managed to win a pawn, but the shelter of his king has been weakened. 20. ♗f3 ♗xf5. Black solves all his problems with this temporary piece-sacrifice. 21. exf5 e4 22. f6 exf3 23. ♖h4 ♘xf6 24. ♖xf3 (24. ♗xf6?? ♗xf6 25. ♖xf6 ♖g3+ 26. ♔h1 ♖g2#) 24... ♖e2 25. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 26. ♖xf6 ♖xd2 27. ♖g5+ ♔h8 28. ♖xd2. White has an extra rook, but his king has been deprived of any pawn-shelter. 28... ♖g3+ 29. ♖g2 ♖e5. Both White's rooks are hanging, moreover that Black is threatening ♖g8. 30. ♖af1 ♖g8 31. ♖xf7 ♖xg2+ 32. ♔xg2 ♖e2= White has given back the extra material, but has managed to coordinate his pieces. The most likely outcome of the game would be a draw.

B2b) 5.d3 ♘bd7



Now, as main lines in this position, we will analyse **B2b1)** 6.♔e1 and **B2b2)** 6.♘bd2.

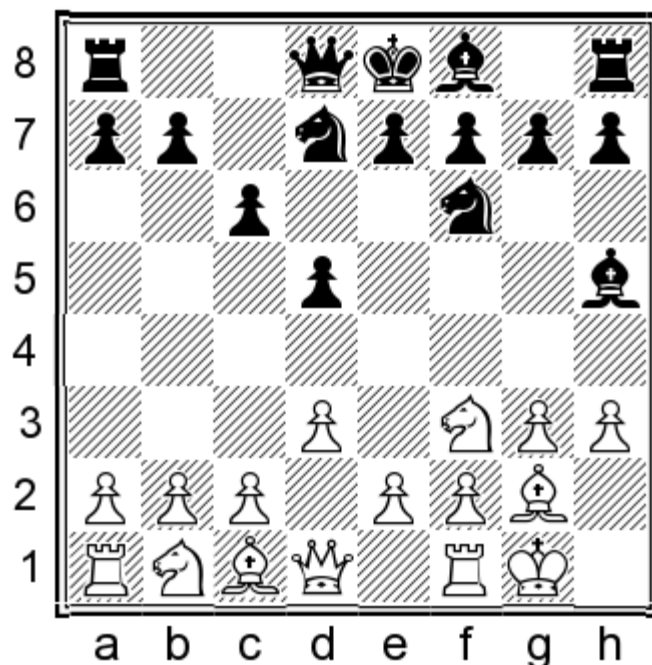
6.c4 e6 – see Chapter 23, variation **B**.

6.b3 e6 – see variation **B2a**.

About 6.♘c3 e5 7.h3 (7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.dxe4 ♘c5 – see variation **B2b2)** 7...♙xf3 8.♙xf3 ♘c5 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.dxe4 ♔e7 12.♔e2 0-0 13.♖g2 ♘f6= Ralls – Van Seben, Email 2012.

White would not achieve much with 6.♙f4 ♙xf3 7.exf3. Without this move, Black will advance e7-e5 with tempo. 7...♔b6∞

6.h3 ♙h5



About 7.b3 e6 8.♙b2 ♙d6 – see variation **B2a**.

7.♖e1 e5 – see variation **B2b1**.

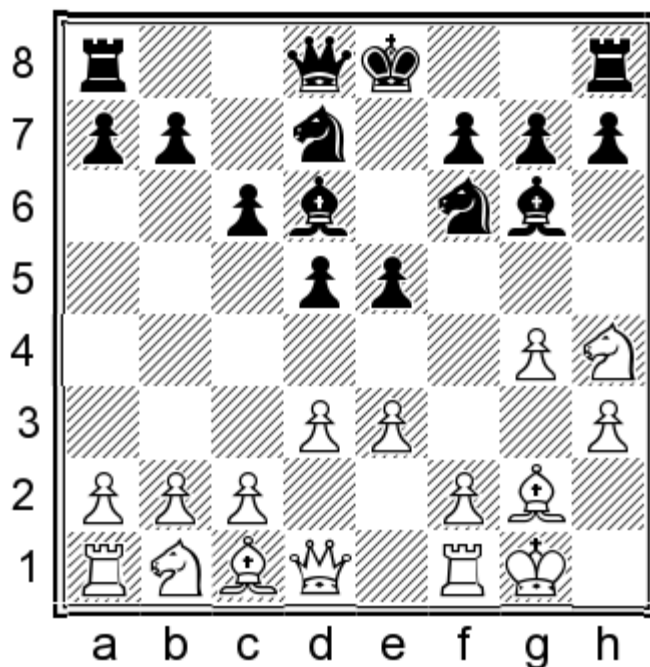
7.♘bd2 e5 – see variation **B2b2**.

7.c4 e6 – see Chapter 23, variation **B**.

It would be too humble for White to choose 7.c3, because this move does not prevent the occupation of the centre by Black. 7...e5 8.♖c2 ♘d6 9.e4 0-0 10.♞e1, Czebe – Kantor, Budapest 2015, 10...♞e8!?=

7.♙f4, Grigoriants – Ni Hua, Gibraltar 2016, 7...h6!? 8.c4 dxc4 9.dxc4 e6 10.♘c3 ♙e7=

7.g4 ♙g6 8.♘h4 e5 9.e3 ♙d6



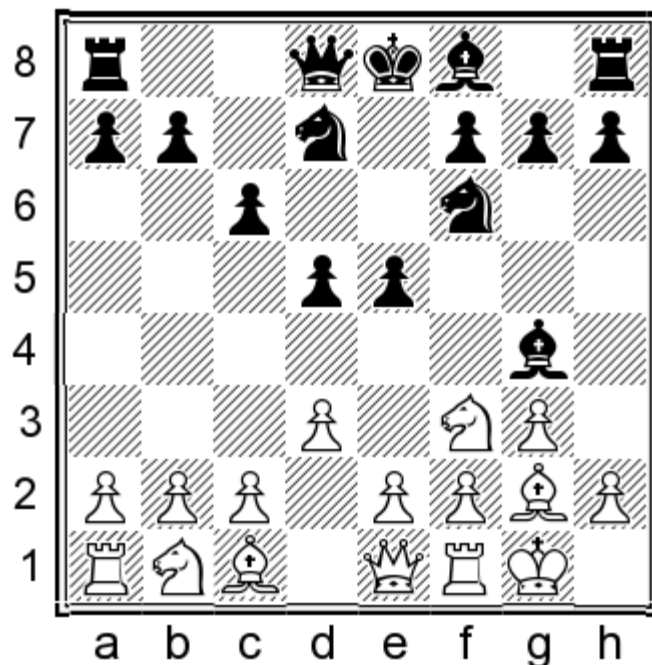
White cannot obtain anything with the line: 10.c4 dxc4= 11.♘g6?! This exchange seems premature before Black has castled. Now, the h-file is opened for his rook. 11...hxc6 12.dxc4 ♖e7+, with the rather unpleasant threat e5-e4 and ♖e5, Kozul – Matlakov, Gjakova 2016.

10.f4. White is preparing f4-f5, but weakens the shelter of his own king. The move 10...♖e7!? leads to wild complications which are nearly impossible to calculate (It would be sufficient for Black to equalise with the simple response 10...h6 11.♘g6 fxg6= Sanal – Bok, Doha 2016.) 11.f5 e4 12.♖e1 (12.fxg6? hxg6 13.♖e1 ♘xg4!-+) 12...♙h5! 13.gxh5 ♘xh5. Black's minor pieces are headed for the g3-square, but White has the move 14.f6, freeing a square for his knight with tempo. 14...♖e5. Black is reluctant to lose a tempo to capture the enemy pawn. 15.♘f5 ♖h2+ 16.♔f2 ♞g8 17.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 18.♙e2 ♘g3+ 19.♔d1 ♘xf1 20.♙xf1 gxf6+, opening the g-file for his rook. Black has a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces, moreover that White's king has been deprived of its castling rights and his queenside pieces are not developed.

B2b1) 6.♖e1

White wishes to advance e2–e4 and does not determine yet the future of his knight on b1.

6...e5



7.e4

7.♘bd2 – see 6.♘bd2.

The line 7.h3 ♕h5 8.♘c3, Hickl – Paolicchi, Bled 2002, allows Black to pin rather unpleasantly the enemy knight. (8.e4 dxe4 9.dxe4 ♕c5 – see 7.e4) 8...♕b4!?=

7...dxe4

Black stabilises his pawn-structure in the centre.

8.dxe4 ♕c5

His bishop will be very active on this square.

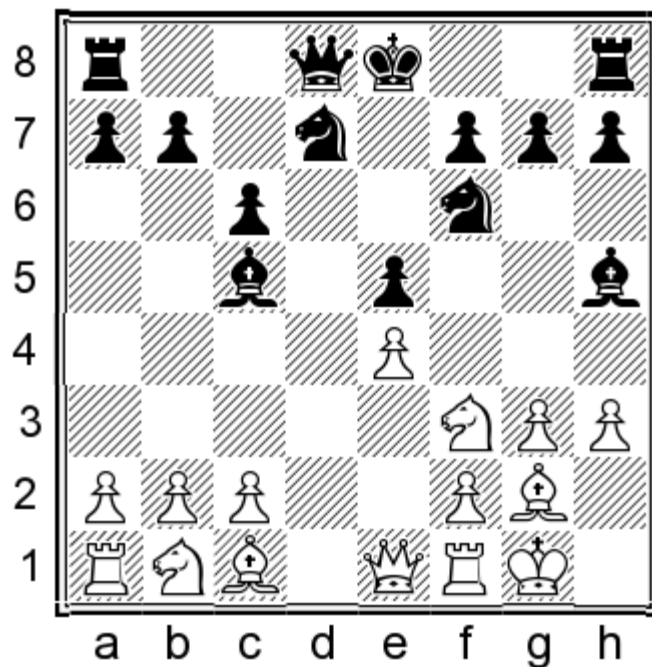
9.h3

9.♘bd2 0-0 – see variation **B2b2**.

9.b4. White ousts immediately the enemy bishop, but weakens his queenside. 9...♕d6 10.♘a3 ♖e7 11.c3, Vaganian – Dorfman, Moscow 1990, 11...♘b6!?!=

9.a4. White is preparing the manoeuvre ♘a3-c4. 9...0-0 10.♘a3 a5 11.♘c4 (11.h3 ♕h5 – see 9.h3; 11.♕d2, Vaganian – Chiburdanidze, Bazna 2007, 11...♖e8!?!=) 11...♖c7 12.♕d2 ♕e6!?! Black exploits his opponent's rather slow play, with the inclusion of the moves h3 ♕h5, and seizes the initiative. 13.♖e2?! (Here, the least of evils for White would be 13.♘xa5 ♕b6 14.♘b3 ♕c4=, although even then his compensation for the exchange would be insufficient.) 13...b5 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♘xa5, Skeels – Petersen, IECG 2008, 15...b4!?! 16.♖b5 (16.♘c4? ♕xc4 17.♖xc4 ♕xf2–+) 16...♕xf2+ 17.♖xf2 ♖fb8 18.♖f1 ♖xa5 19.♖xa5 ♖xa5 20.♘g5 ♘g4=, emphasizing the vulnerability of the a7-g1 diagonal. Black has seized quite firmly the initiative.

9...♕h5



10.a4!?

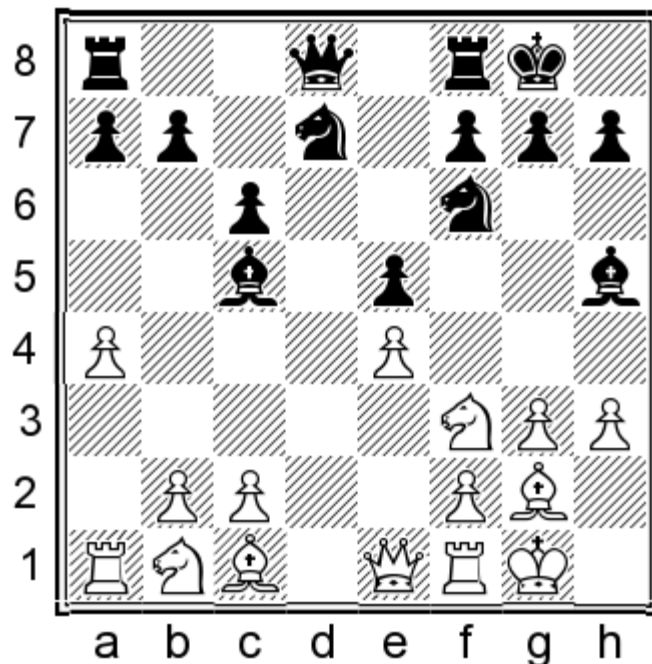
This move has become popular after the victory of Vladimir Kramnik over Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

10.♖bd2 0-0 – see variation **B2b2**.

10.♗h4 a5 11.♗d2 a4= Bacrot – Short, playchess.com 2004.

It seems premature for White to play here 10.b4, because after 10...♙b6, the undermining move a7-a5 provides Black with counterplay which is quite sufficient for equality. 11.♙b2 (11.♗bd2, Haub – Spielmann, Vandoeuvre 2004, 11...a5!?) 11...♙xf3 12.♙xf3 a5= Karasev – Kashtanov, St Petersburg 2001.

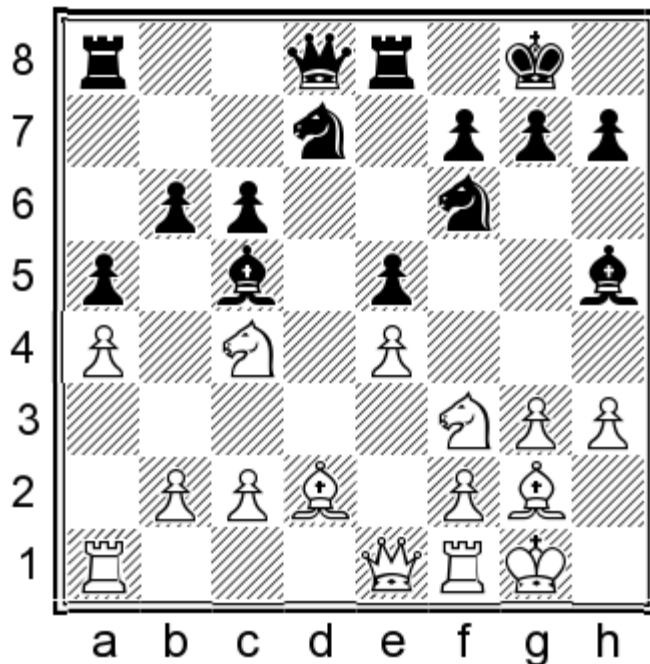
10...0-0



11. ♖h4

11. ♖bd2 a5 – see variation **B2b2**.

11. ♖a3 a5 12. ♗c4 (12. ♗d2 ♖e8 13. ♗c4 b6 – see 12. ♗c4) 12... ♖e8 13. ♗d2. The attack against the a5-pawn would not be effective for White, because Black can protect it simply with the move b6 (13. ♗h4 ♖c7 – see 11. ♗h4). 13... b6



About 14. ♗h4 ♖c7 – see 11. ♗h4.

14. ♗h1 ♗xf3!? 15. ♗xf3 ♖c7=, followed by ♗f8-e6, ♖ad8, Forster – Papa, Switzerland 2005.

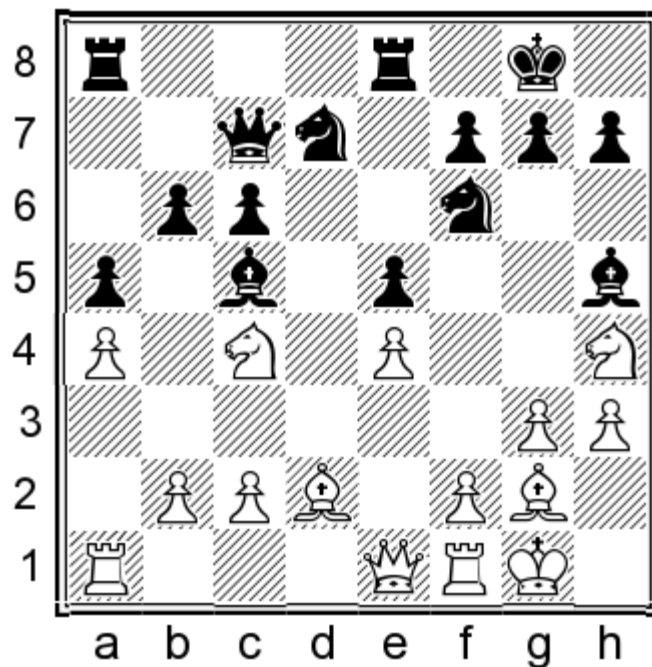
14. ♗c3 ♖c7 15. ♗h1 (15. ♗h4 ♗f8 – see 11. ♗h4) 15... ♗xf3 16. ♗xf3 ♗f8 17. ♗g2 ♖ad8= Sommerbauer – Banusz, Austria 2012.

11...a5

Black prevents the pawn-advance b2-b4.

Following 11... ♖e8 12. ♖a3, Black will have to play anyway 12... a5 13. ♗d2 b6 14. ♗c4 ♖c7 – see 11...a5, because after 12... ♗f8, he will encounter difficulties: 13. b4 ♗e7 14. ♗f5± Kramnik – Vachier Lagrave, Shamkir 2015.

12. ♗d2 ♖e8 13. ♗c4 ♖c7 14. ♗d2 b6



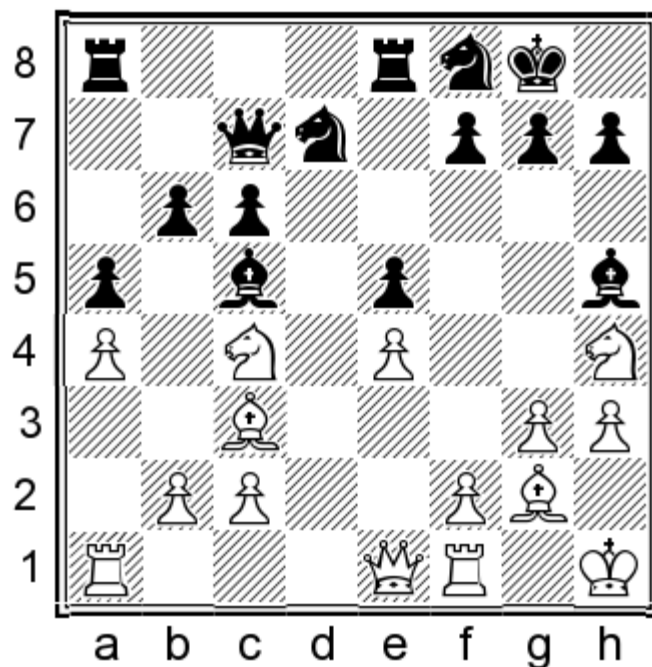
15. ♖h1

15. ♘g5 h6 16. ♙e3 ♜h7=

15. ♜h2 ♞ad8 16. f4 exf4 17. ♙xf4, Akopian – Hracek, Cap d'Agde 1996, 17... ♚c8!?= Black has very good counterplay against the isolated enemy pawn on f4.

After the immediate move 15. ♘f5, Black can play 15... ♘g6, preparing the exchange of the active enemy knight. 16. ♞d1 ♙xf5 17. exf5 ♘d5 18. ♘e3 ♘7f6= Vaganian – Fahnenschmidt, Germany 1992.

15. ♙c3 ♘f8 16. ♜h1 ♘6d7



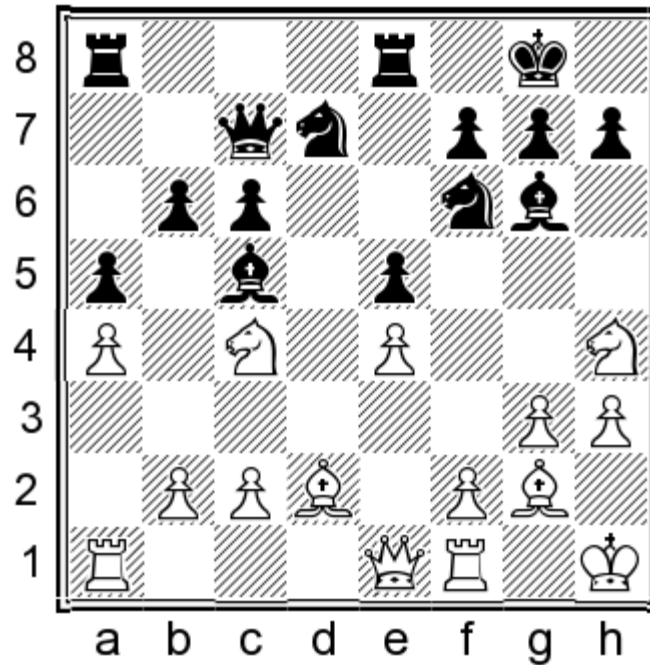
17. ♙f3 ♙xf3+ 18. ♘xf3 f6 19. ♚e2 ♘e6= Lenic – Bogner, Reykjavik 2015.

17.f4 f6 18.b3 ♗f7 19.♚e2 ♘e6∞ Kovanova – Goryachkina, Khanty-Mansiysk 2012.

17.♘f5 ♘e6 18.f4 f6= Efimenko – Ragger, Dubai 2014. White has problems to develop his initiative on the kingside, because his bishop on g2 can hardly join into it and Black has managed to protect reliably the e5-square.

15...♗g6

Black exerts pressure against the e4-square in an attempt to impede the pawn-advance f2-f4.



16.♘xg6

With this move White at least obtains the two-bishop advantage.

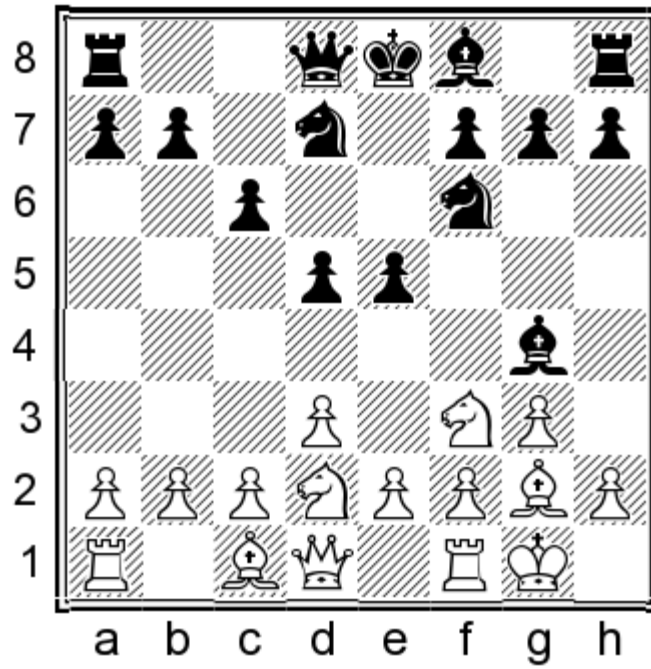
16.♗g5, Movsesian – Alavkin, St Petersburg 2007, 16...h6!? 17.♗xf6 ♘xf6 18.♘xg6 fxg6=

Plenty of pawns are exchanged after 16.♚d1 b5 17.axb5 cxb5 18.♘xa5 ♗b6 19.b4 ♚xc2= Zubarev – Klein, Boeblingen 2015.

16...hxg6 17.♚e2 ♘f8 18.c3 (18.♚fd1 ♚ed8 19.♗c3 ♚xd1+ 20.♚xd1 ♘6d7 21.♗d2 ♘f6 22.c3 b5 23.axb5 cxb5 24.♘e3 ♚b8= Stigter – Nemeč, ICCF 2016) **18...♘e6 19.♚fd1 ♚eb8 20.♗e1 b5 21.♘d2 ♗d6 22.axb5 cxb5 23.♘f1 a4=**

Mukherjee – Seelig, ICCF 2015. White has a bishop-pair indeed, but can hardly claim an edge, because his bishop on g2 is severely restricted by his own pawn on e4.

B2b2) 6.♘bd2 e5



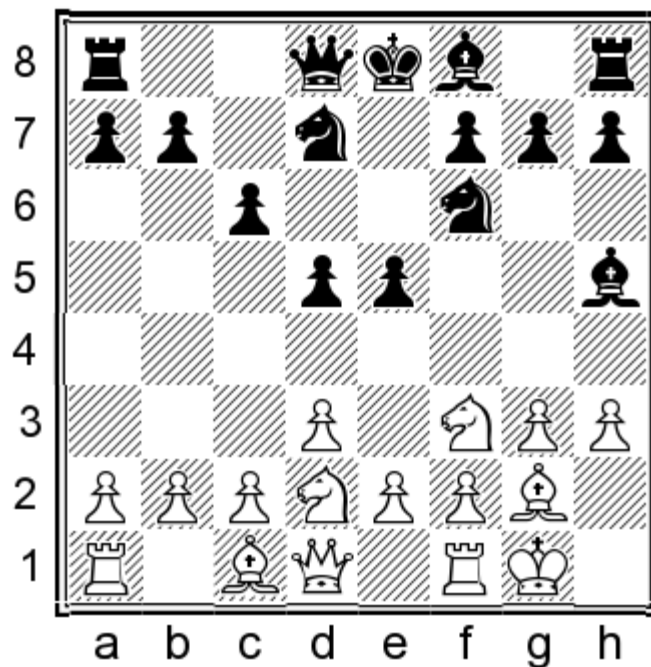
7.e4

If White refrains from the immediate occupation of the centre with his pawns, he would not achieve much.

7.♖e1 ♘c5 8.e4 0-0= Black has a pawn-centre and a good development. White's attempt to win a pawn might lose his queen. 9.exd5?! (9.h3 ♘h5 10.♟h4 ♞e8 – see 7.h3 ♘h5 8.♖e1 ♘c5 9.♟h4 0-0 10.e4 ♞e8) 9...♟xd5 10.♟xe5? ♟xe5 11.♞xe5 ♞e8+

Following 7.c4, Black can occupy additional space with 7...d4!? 8.h3 ♘h5 9.a3 a5 10.b3 ♘d6 11.♞c2, Can – Yildiz, Konya 2012, 11...0-0!?= White can hardly find any active plan for his actions.

The inclusion of the moves 7.h3 ♘h5 would not change the character of the fight. Later, White can hardly continue the game without the pawn-advance e2-e4.



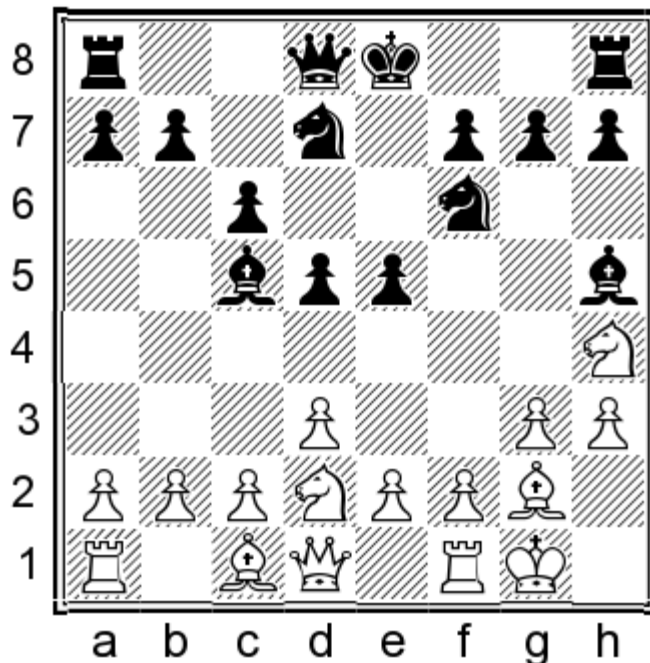
About 8.e4 dxe4 9.dxe4 ♗c5, or 9.♗xe4 ♗xe4 10.dxe4 ♗c5 – see 7.e4.

8.b3 ♖c7 9.♗b2 ♗e7 10.♗h4, Kunte – Zhang, Kolkata 2001, 10...0-0=

8.♖e1 ♗c5 9.♗h4 (9.e4 dxe4 10.dxe4 0-0 – see 7.e4) 9...0-0 10.g4 (10.e4 dxe4 11.dxe4 ♖c7 – see 7.e4) 10...♗g6 11.e3 ♜e8 12.♗xg6 hxg6∞ Almasi – Shirov, Warsaw 2010. White has obtained the two-bishop advantage, but has weakened his kingside.

In the variation 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♗h4 ♗c5 10.e3, Smirin – Kaganskiy, Ashdod 2006, Black does not need to castle, but can play 10...♖e7!?, after which the exchange on g6 will not be good for White, because the h-file will be opened and later Black's rook on h8 might participate in an attack against White's king.

8.♗h4 ♗c5



9.g4 ♗g6 – see 8.g4.

9.♖e1 0-0 – see 8.♖e1.

9.♗b3. White opens the diagonal for his bishop. Still, the b3-square is not the best for his knight, since it does not control the central squares from there. 9...♗b6 10.c4 0-0 11.♖c2 a5. Now, in order not to allow the pawn-advance a5-a4, White must weaken the b4-square. 12.a4 ♜e8 13.c5 ♗c7∞ Zaitseva – Kovacs, LSS 2013.

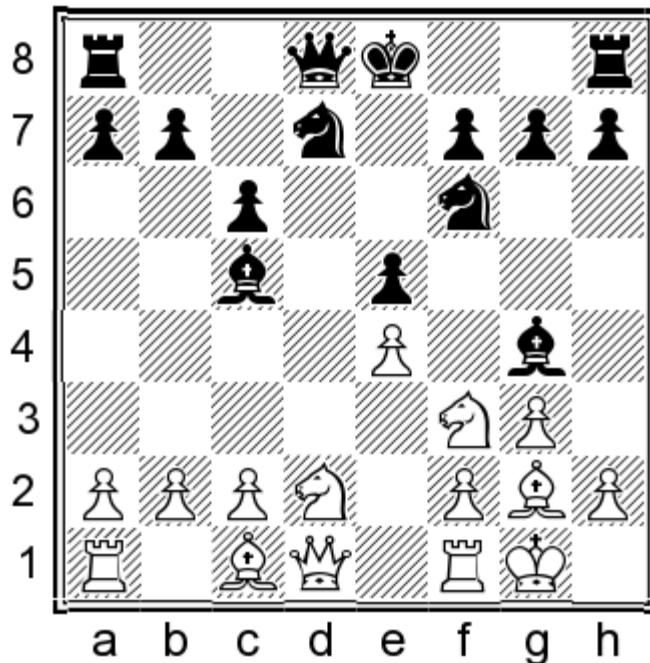
9.c4 0-0 10.g4 (After 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗e4 ♗b6 12.♗f5, Black must be very careful about the tremendously active enemy knights. 12...♗c5=, followed by ♗e7, or ♗g6, Bosboom – Giri, Wijk aan Zee 2009.) 10...♗g6 11.♗xg6 hxg6 12.♖b3. The attack against the b7-pawn is not dangerous for Black (Even after 12.♗b3 ♗b6 13.g5 dxc4! 14.dxc4, Ubilava – Sturua, Protvino 1993, 14...♗h5!?, Black has an excellent position.) 12...♗d6!?= Gagliardi – Lupini, ICCF 2014. White should better refrain from 13.♖xb7?!, because after 13...♗c5 14.♖b4 ♗xd3 15.♖a4 ♗f4, Black not only regains the sacrificed pawn, but also transfers the knight to the f4-square from where it exerts powerful pressure against the enemy king.

7...dxe4 8.dxe4

The trade of the knights facilitates Black's defence. 8.♗xe4 ♗xe4 9.dxe4 ♗c5 10.h3 ♗h5 11.♖d3 0-0 12.♗e3 ♖c7 13.♖c3 ♗xe3 14.♖xe3 ♜fd8= Porper – Kosashvili, Israel 1996.

8...♗c5

The bishop will be very active on this square.



9.h3

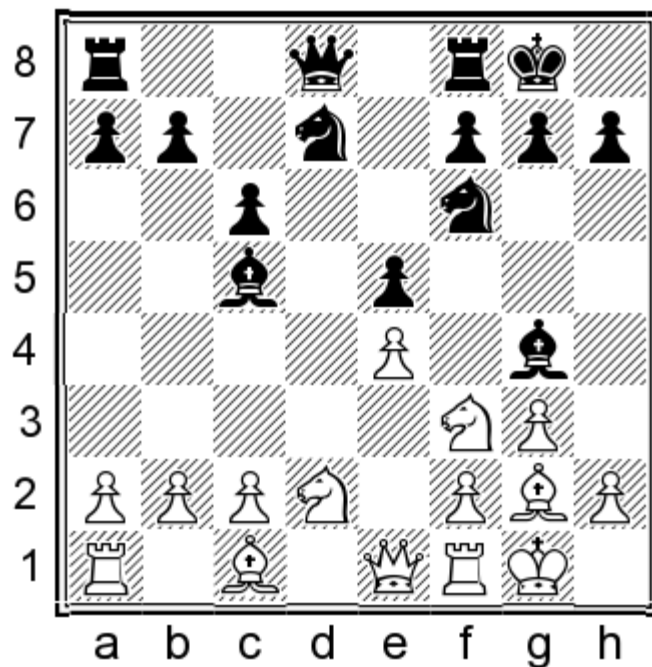
White clarifies immediately the placement of the enemy bishop.

9.a4 0-0 10.h3 ♗h5 – see 9.h3.

9.♖e2 0-0 10.♘c4 (10.h3 ♗h5 – see 9.h3; 10.a4 ♖c7= Kustar – Pataki, Hungary 2003) 10...♗c7 11.♘e3. White attacks Black's bishop and wins a tempo for the transfer of his knight to the f5-square. 11...♗h5 12.♘f5. Still, White cannot create serious problems for his opponent with just one knight on f5. 12...♞fe8 13.h3, Fries Nielsen – Pachman, Hamburg 1980, 13...a5!?∞

9.c3 a5. Black should not allow b2-b4. 10.a4 (After 10.♖c2 0-0 11.b3 ♞e8 12.♗b2, White's dark-squared bishop will not be particularly active and his pawn-advance c3-c4 will lead to the weakening of the d4-square. 12...♖c7 13.a3 h6!?∞ Now, after h2-h3, Black's bishop will manage to retreat to e6 and there it would be much more active than on the d1-h5 diagonal, Shaw – Banks, New Zealand 1994.) 10...0-0 11.♖c2 h6!? Once again Black plans to retreat with his bishop to e6. 12.♘h4, Yandemirov – Lempert, Orel 1995, 12...♗e6!?∞

9.♖e1 0-0



About 10.h3 ♘h5 – see 9.h3.

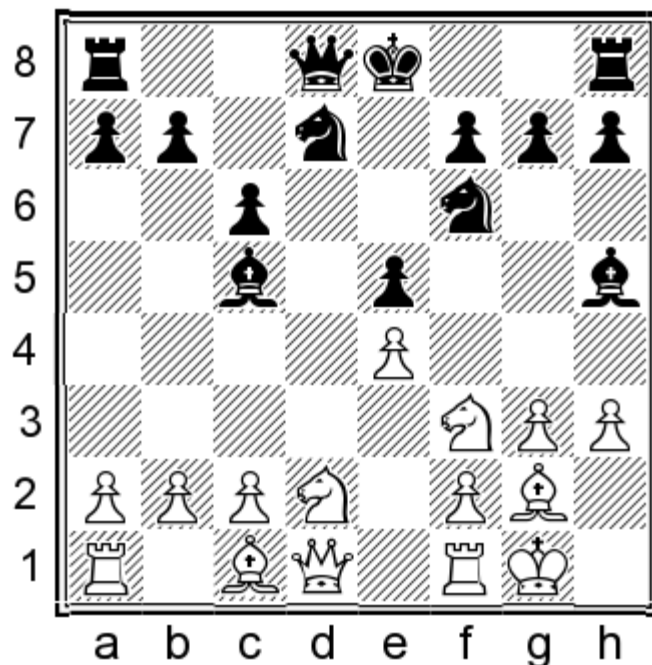
10.a4, Fiorito – Rosito, Argentina 1995, 10...h6!?=

10.♘b3 ♘b6 11.a4 a5 12.♙d2, Tadic – Markus, Budva 2002. Now, Black can exploit the defects of the move 10.♘b3 (the weakened control over the c4-square) with 12...♘e8!?!∞, followed by ♘d6-c4.

After 10.b3, Black can play 10...♙b4!?, preventing the development of the enemy bishop to b2. 11.♚e3 (11.♙b2?! ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♚a5) 11...♚b6= Heika – Rozentalis, Bad Wiessee 1999.

10.♘c4 ♚c7 11.a4 ♙e6 12.♚e2 h6 13.b3 b5. Black ousts the enemy knight from its active position. 14.♘b2 a6 15.♙d2 ♜fe8= Vajda – Sanal, Golden Sands 2014. All these variations show that White should better not delay the move h2-h3, since without it Black has many more possibilities.

9...♙h5



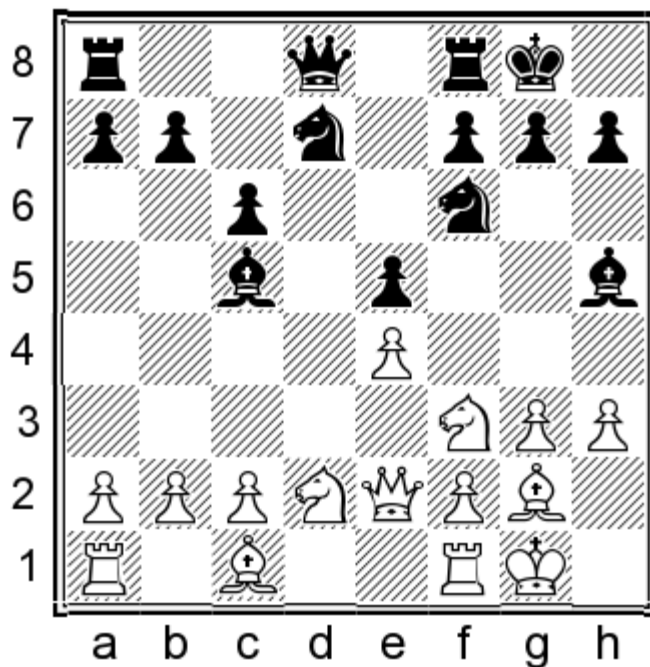
10. ♖e1

10. ♘b3 ♙b6 11. ♚e2 0-0 – see 10. ♚e2.

10.a4 0-0 11.a5. White occupies space on the queenside, but this is not dangerous for Black. (11. ♚e1 a5 – see 10. ♚e1; 11. ♚e2 a5 – see 10. ♚e2) 11... ♗c7 12. ♚e2 ♙e7 13.b3 ♙b4!? Black exploits the exposed placement of the enemy pawn on a5 and creates counterplay, which is quite sufficient to maintain the balance. 14. ♘c4 b5 15.axb6 axb6 16. ♙b2 b5 17. ♘cd2 ♜fe8= Esen – Oezmen, ICCF 2007.

10.c3 a5 11. ♚c2 (11.a4 0-0 12. ♚c2 ♜e8 – see 11. ♚c2) 11...0-0 12.a4 (After 12. ♘c4 ♜e8 13. ♘h4, Black can begin himself a pawn-offensive on the queenside. 13...b5 14. ♘e3 a4= Ilinsky – Imanaliev, Bishkek 2012.) 12... ♜e8 13. ♘c4 ♙f8 14. ♙g5 b5. White's knight would be very active on c4, so Black wishes to oust it from there. 15. ♘cd2 h6 16. ♙e3, Hodgson – Vaganian, Neu Isenburg 1992, 16... ♘c5!? This active move is Black's simplest way of equalising. 17.axb5 cxb5 18.b4 axb4 19. ♜xa8 ♚xa8 20.cxb4 ♚a4 21. ♚xa4 ♘xa4=

10. ♚e2. It may seem that White's queen is more active on this square than on e1, but now, he does not have the move ♘h4. 10...0-0



11. ♖b3 ♙b6 12. a4 a5 – see 11. a4.

11. c3 a5 12. ♖d1 ♗c7 13. g4. White wishes to transfer his knight to f5, but now, there appears a weakness on f4 in his position. 13... ♙g6 14. ♖h4 ♖fd8 15. ♙f3 ♗f8, followed by ♖f8-e6-f4, Javakhishvili – Zhukova, Konya 2009.

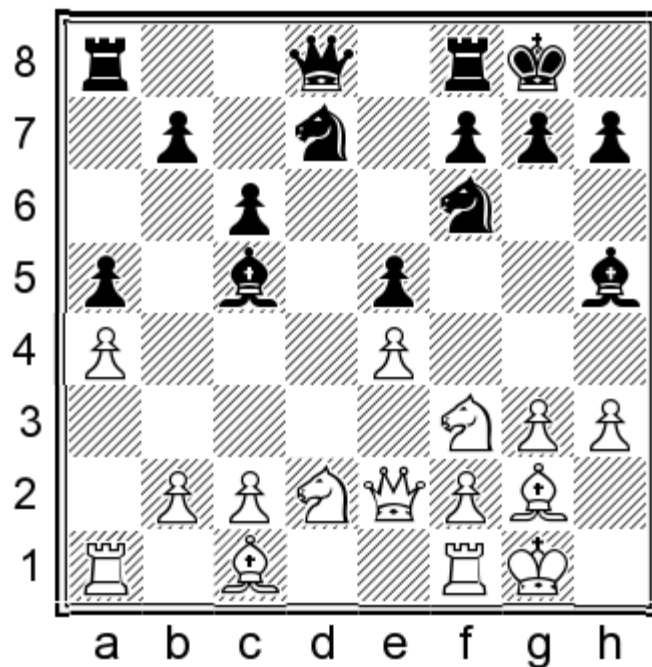
11. ♖d1 ♗c7 12. a4 a5 13. b3 ♖fe8. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to e6. His other knight on f6 will protect the e5-pawn. 14. ♙b2 ♗f8 15. ♖c4 ♖d6d7 16. ♗e3 ♗e6 17. ♗f5 ♖ad8, Danielsen – El Debs, Dresden 2008. Black's pieces are much more harmoniously deployed. White cannot support his active knight on f5, because Black controls reliably the dark squares around his king.

11. b3 ♖e8 12. ♙b2 a5 13. a4 h6 14. ♗c4 ♗e7=

White should better refrain from 11. ♖c4, because after 11... b5, his knight will have to retreat. 12. ♖cd2 ♗c7= Yu Yangyi – Bu Xiangzhi, Hefei 2010.

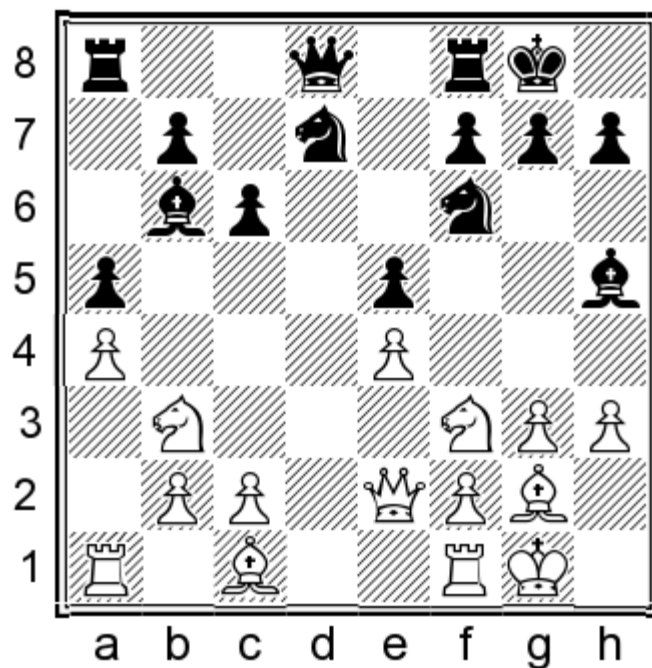
11. ♖e1. White is preparing ♗f1. Still, the knight will be passive on this square in comparison to c4. 11... ♖e8 12. ♗f1, Pachow – Meduna, Pardubice 1999, 12... ♗b6=

11. a4 a5



12. ♖c4 ♜e8 13. ♞d1 ♚c7 14. g4 (There arises a calmer position after 14. ♙d2 b6 15. ♙c3, Bruch – Mayer, Germany 1997, 15...h6!?) 14... ♙g6 15. ♗h4 ♗f8 16. g5 ♗h5∞ Anand – Ragger, Dubai 2014. White is fighting for the initiative, but weakens his kingside pawn-structure.

12. ♗b3 ♙b6

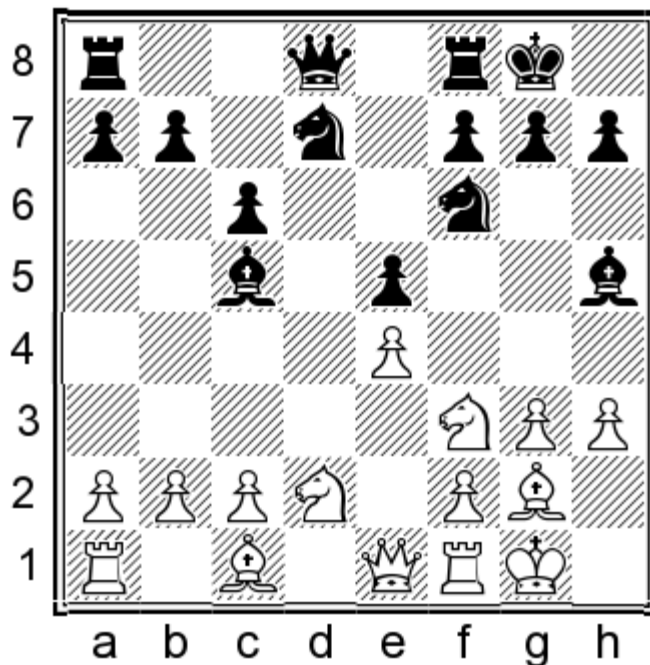


13. ♙d2 ♜e8 14. ♙c3 ♚e7= Bischoff – Dautov, Baden-Baden 1990.

13. ♙e3. Black's bishop is too actively placed, so White wishes to exchange it. 13... ♚c7 14. ♞fd1 ♜fe8= Haakert – Olbrich, Germany 2001.

13. ♚c4 ♜e8 14. ♗h4 ♗f8 15. ♙f3 ♙xf3 16. ♗xf3, Foisor – Abreu Delgado, La Pobra de Lillet 2002, 16... ♚e7!?= White has managed to exchange his "bad" bishop, but this is insufficient for him to maintain an advantage, because Black has no weaknesses in his position.

10...0-0



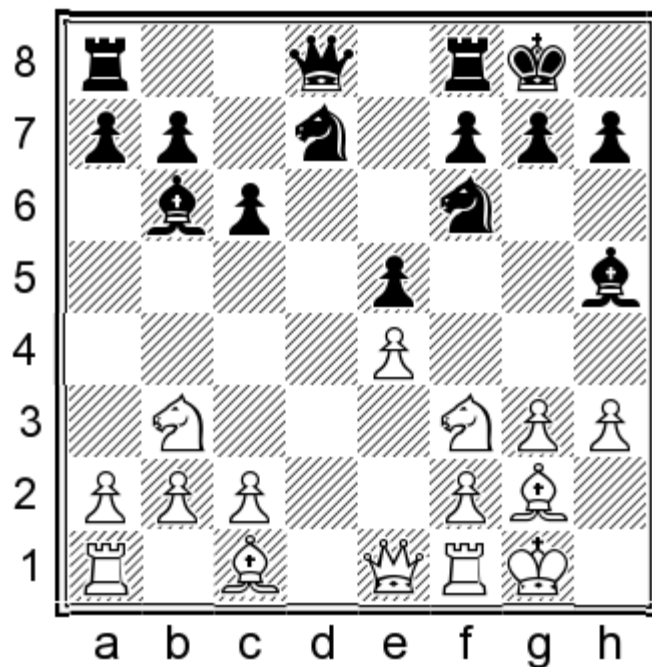
11.♖c4

11.a4 a5 12.♗b3 (12.♗h4 ♜e8, or 12.♗c4 ♜e8 – see variation **B2b1**) 12...♙b6 – see 11.♗b3.

11.a3 a5 12.b3. This move seems rather humble. 12...♗e8!? Black now solves effortlessly, thanks to his opponent's slow play, the problem with his bishop on h5 transferring it to the a2-g8 diagonal. 13.♙b2 f6 14.♗c4 ♙f7= Abramovic – Ratkovic, Kragujevac 2015.

11.♗h4 ♜c7 12.♗b3 (12.♗c4 ♜fd8=) 12...♙b6 13.a4 a5. White cannot find meaningful objects to attack, because Black's pieces defend each other perfectly. 14.♙g5 ♜fe8 15.♗h1 h6 16.♙e3 ♗f8= Gabrielian – Kobalia, Vladivostok 2014.

11.♗b3 ♙b6

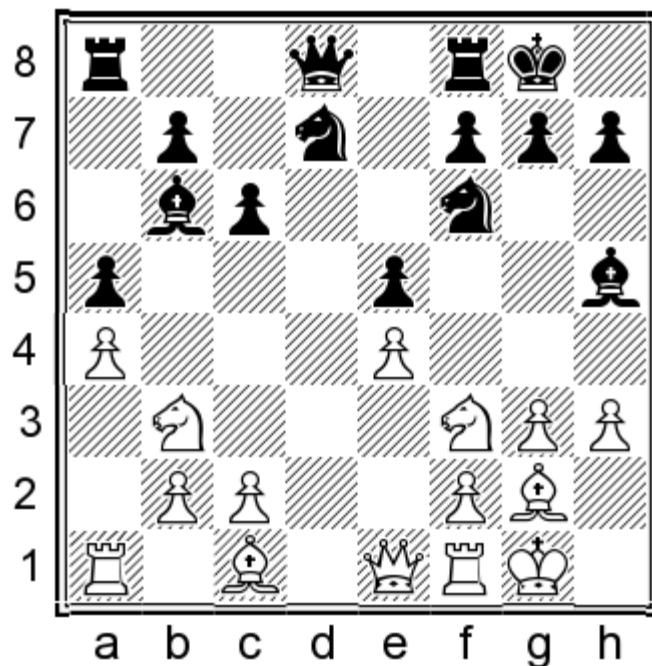


12.♙g5 ♖c7= Vajda – Kolaric, Malinska 2015.

12.♘fd2. This is a very original idea. White wishes to transfer his knight on f3 to the c4-square. 12...♙c7 13.♘c4 ♖e7 14.f3, Silva – Rogemont, Brazil 1999. He defends reliably the pawn on e4, but thus restricts his bishop on g2.

14...♙g6!? 15.♙d2 ♜fd8=, removing his rook from the possibility ♙b4.

12.a4 a5



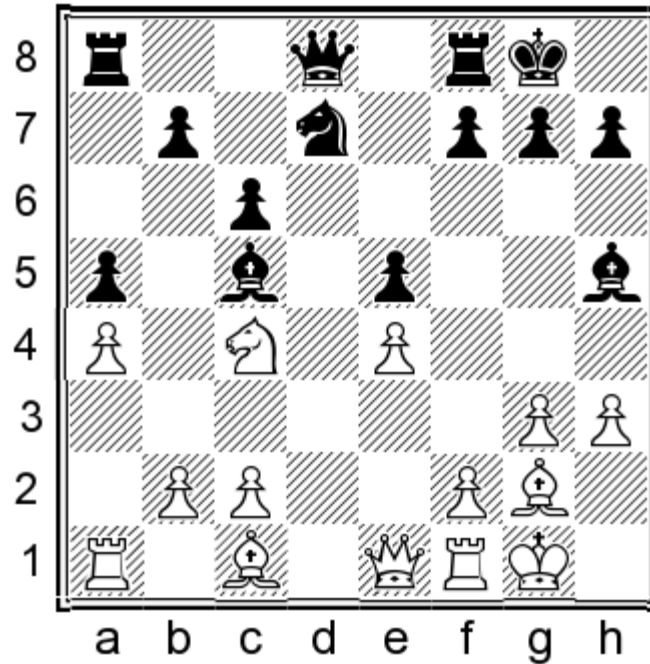
13.♙d2 ♖c7= Kocian – Brecka, Czech Republic 2011.

13.♙g5 h6 14.♙d2, Kozul – Banusz, Zagreb 2011, 14...♙g6!? Black takes the f5-square under control. 15.♘h4 ♙h7=

13.♙e3 ♙xf3!? He exchanges immediately his not so active light-squared bishop, because it would be misplaced after White plays ♘fd2. 14.♙xf3 ♜e8 15.♖c3 ♙xe3 16.♖xe3 ♖c7 17.♜fd1, Moser – Rapport, Austria 2011, 17...h6 18.♙e2 b6 19.♔g2 ♜ed8=

13.♞bd2 ♜c7 14.♞c4, Efimenko – Aryan, Abu Dhabi 2016 (14.♞e3 ♞e8 15.♞c4 ♞b6= Colin – Vinchev, ICCF 2016) 14...♞c5!? This temporary pawn-sacrifice is Black's simplest way of equalising. 15.♞fxe5 ♞e8 16.♞f4 ♞fxe4 17.♞xe4 f6. Now, Black regains his piece, thanks to the pin on the e-file and the position is gradually balanced. 18.♞e3 ♞xe4 19.♞xe4 ♞g6 20.♞e2 fxe5 21.♞xe5 ♞xe5 22.♞xe5 ♞g5 23.♞fe1 ♞f5= White's pawns on h3 and c2 are hanging, so he fails to preserve his material advantage.

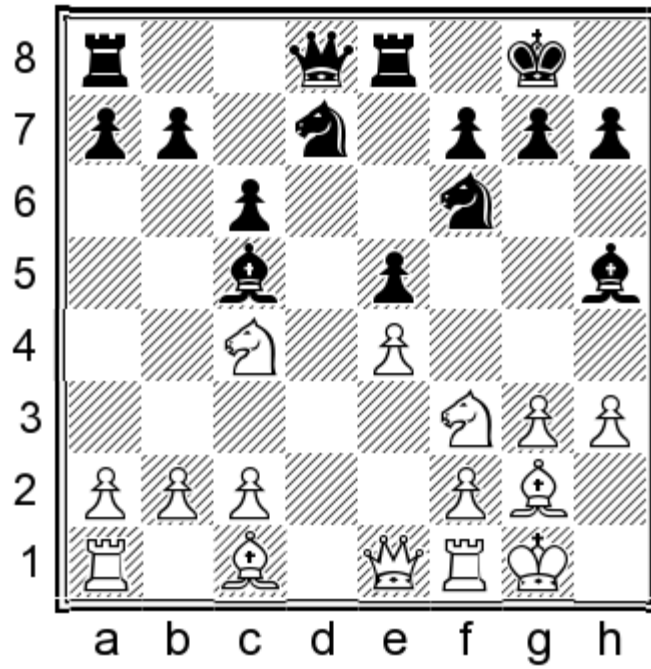
13.♞fd2 ♞c5. Black exchanges a pair of knights and facilitates his further defence. 14.♞xc5 ♞xc5 15.♞c4 (15.♞h1 ♞e8= Kozul – Gyimesi, Sibenik 2007) 15...♞d7



16.♞d2 b6 17.♞h1 f6 18.f4 ♞c7∞ Kozul – Handler, Austria 2013.

The move 16.g4 weakens the f4-square. 16...♞g6 17.♞e3 ♞e7 18.♞d1 ♞xe3 19.♞xe3 ♞c5. This knight is headed for the f4-square via e6. 20.♞a3. White pins the enemy knight impeding its march to f4. Still, Black gradually realises his plan. 20...f6 21.♞fe1 ♞f7 22.♞b6 ♞ad8 23.♞c3 ♞e6 24.♞xa5 ♞f4∞ Zmokly – Efremov, ICCF 2010. The powerful placement of his knight on f4 is good enough to compensate the sacrificed pawn.

11...♞e8

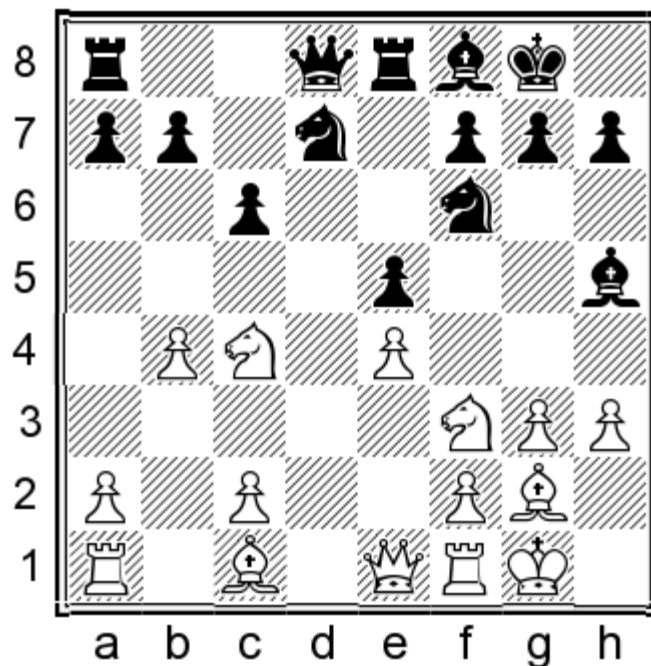


12.a4

12.♔d2, Bauer – Nezar, Montpellier 2015, 12...b5!? Black weakens his c6-pawn, but ousts the enemy knight from the c4-square. 13.♘a5 ♕b6 14.a4 (14.♘xc6?! ♖c7) 14...♖c8 15.♘b3 a6=

12.♘h4 b5 13.♘e3 (13.♘a5 ♖c7 14.a4 ♕b6 – see 12.a4) 13...a5. The f5-square is an excellent base for White's knights, but only one of them can occupy it... 14.♘ef5 (14.a4 b4 15.♘c4 ♘b6= Benussi – Perina, ICCF 2015) 14...♘f8 15.♕e3 ♖b6= Bericat – Pisani, ICCF 2016.

12.b4. Now, Black's bishop must abandon the g1-a7 diagonal, while White's pawn on b4 would need protection. 12...♕f8



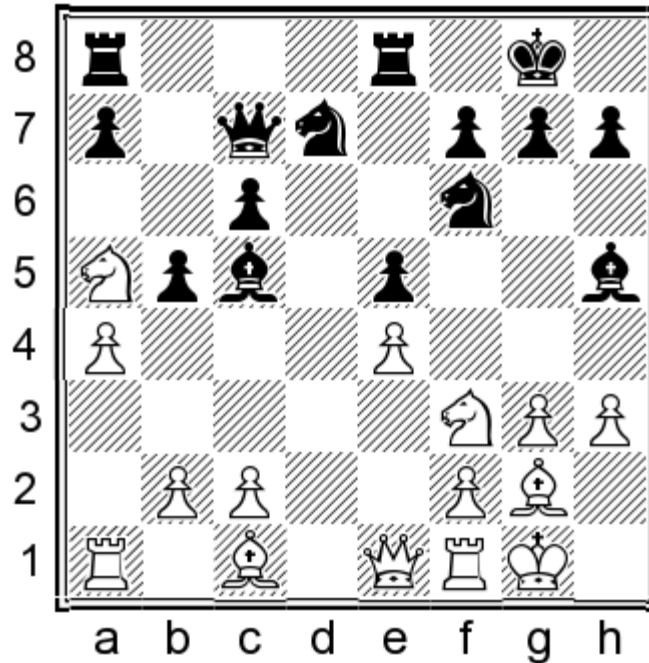
13.a3 b5∞ Heinrich – Karlovich, Germany 2004.

Following 13.a4 ♖c7 14.♟h4, Black can begin immediate active actions on the queenside: 14...b5 15.♞e3, Krysztofiak – Warakomska, Krakow 2014, 15...a5!?!=

After 13.♟h4, it seems interesting for Black to opt for 13...b5. He is not afraid of having a weak pawn on c6, since he can simply advance it. 14.♞a5 c5 15.a3, Markos – Kuipers, Zuerich 2010, 15...♞c8!?!=

13.♞b2 ♞xf3!?! This is a concrete approach to the position. Black leaves the h3-pawn unprotected. 14.♞xf3 ♖e7 15.g4, Phillips – Timman, Breda 1998 (Now, White must weaken his position, because after 15.a3 ♖e6 16.♖e2 ♖xh3♞, he ends up simply a pawn down, Barbero – Baburin, Switzerland 1992) 15...h6!?!∞

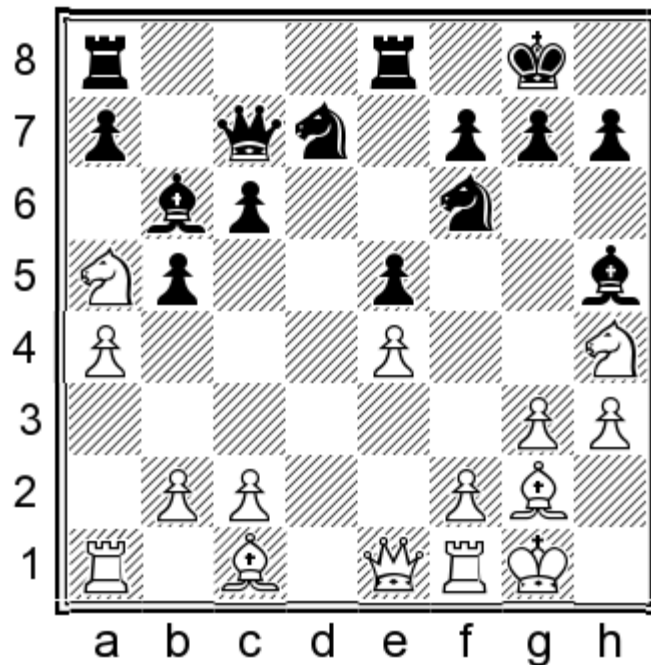
12...b5 13.♞a5 ♖c7



14.♟h4

White obtains no advantage after 14.♞g5 h6 15.♞d2 ♞b6 16.♟b3 a6 17.♟h4 c5= Aronian – Bu Xiangzhi, Athens 2001, as well as following the immediate 14.♞d2 ♞b6= His knight on a5 exerts pressure against the enemy pawn on c6 indeed, but is placed at the edge of the board and needs permanent protection. Black can begin a counter attack at any moment. For example: 15.♟h4?! Zueger – Lenic, Sibenik 2012, 15...♟c5!?!♞

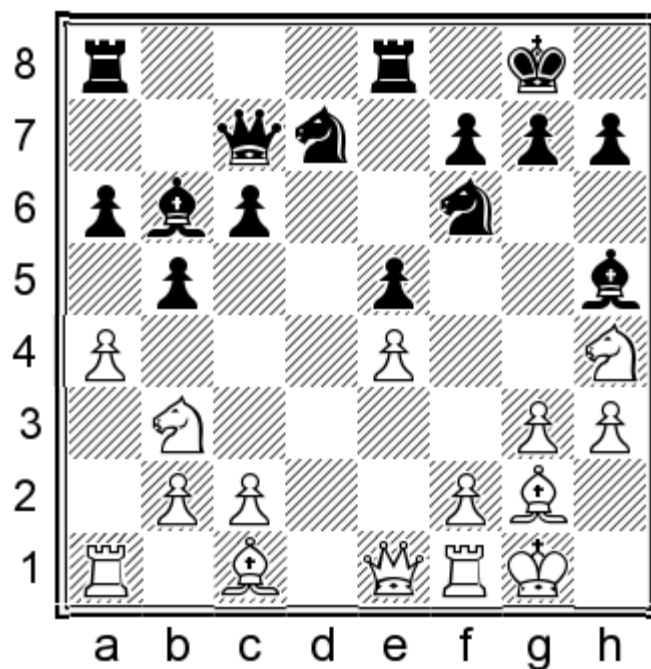
14...♞b6



15. ♖b3

15. b4 a6 16. ♕e3 c5. Black has got rid of his weakness on c6 and has very good prospects in the future. 17. c3 (17. ♘f5 ♕g6=) 17... ♕g6 18. f3 ♖ec8 19. axb5 axb5 20. ♗f2!? White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. This is interesting, but still insufficient for an advantage. 20... ♕xa5 21. bxa5 ♖xa5 22. ♗b2 ♖xa1 23. ♖xa1 ♖b8 24. ♕f1 ♘e8 25. ♖a6 ♘f8= Valeinis – Bahnke, ICCF 2015. The activity of White's pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

15... a6

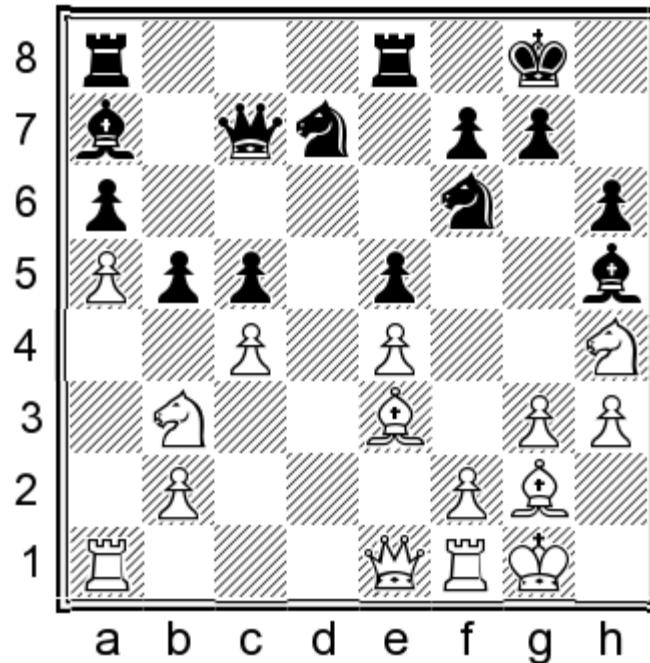


16. ♕g5

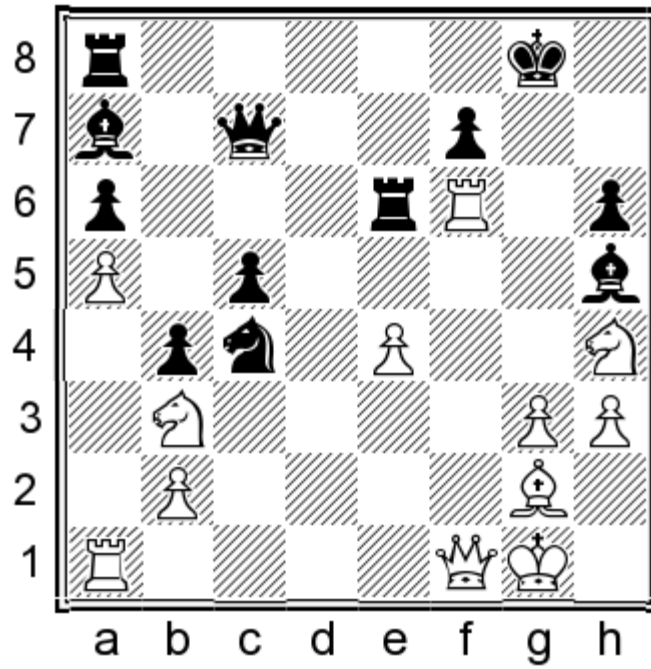
16.♙e3. The exchange of the bishops does not promise anything to White. 16...♗xe3 17.♚xe3 c5 18.♘f5. His knight is actively placed here, but after 18...♙g6=, Black can exchange it at any moment, Arcenegui Rodrigo – Polo Molina, ICCF 2012.

16.a5. This is a double-edged move. White occupies space on the queenside, but his pawn may turn out to be vulnerable later. 16...♙a7 17.♙g5 ♖ad8 18.♙h1 h6 19.♙e3 c5 20.c4 b4 21.♘d2 ♘f8. Black prepares the transfer of his knight to d4. 22.f4 exf4 23.gxf4 ♙b8 24.e5 ♗d3∞ Peschke – Nemchenko, ICCF 2012. There has arisen a very complicated and tense position. More than twenty moves have been played on the board, but not a single piece has been exchanged. White must be constantly on the alert about the possible rook-sacrifice on e5.

16...c5 17.a5 ♙a7 18.c4 h6 19.♙e3



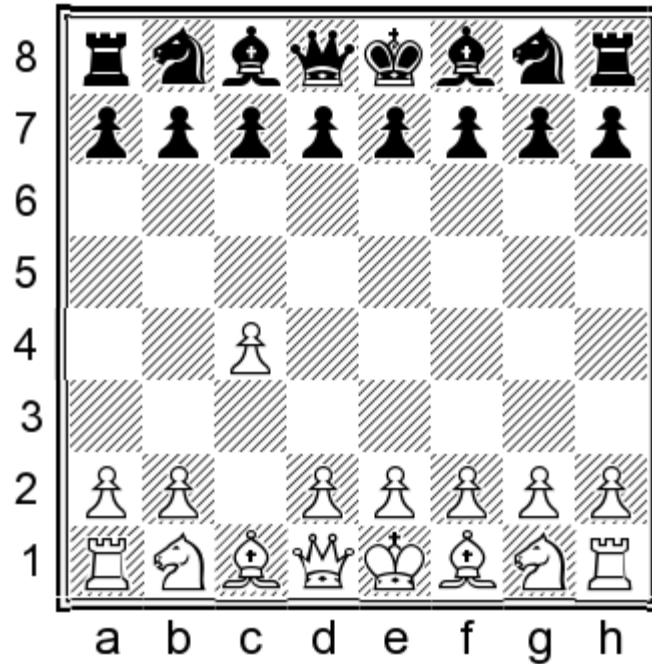
This position was reached in the game Aronian – Korobov, Ohrid 2001. Here, Black could have tried **19...b4!? 20.f4**. Now, White is forced to open the position, because after quiet developments, Black can transfer his knight to the d4-square, obtaining an advantage. **20...exf4 21.♙xf4 ♘e5 22.♙xh6 gxf4 23.♗xf6 ♖e6 24.♚f1 ♘xc4**



After this tactical strike, there arises a combination-storm on the board. **25. ♖xe6 ♜e3 26. ♜xa6 fxe6 27. ♜xe6+ ♙f7 28. ♜xh6 ♜xg3 29. ♜d2 c4.** Black's bishop on a7 has finally entered the actions. **30. ♙h1.** White removes his king from the dangerous diagonal. Still, after **30... ♙b8** his opponent is threatening a checkmate again. **31. ♜df3 ♙f4.** Black's king has no pawn-shelter, but his actively deployed pieces attack the enemy king and protect his own king at the same time. **32. ♜f6 c3.** Black sacrifices a pawn with the idea to deflect the enemy queen. **33. bxc3 bxc3 34. ♖g1** (The move **34. ♜xc3** leads to a perpetual check almost by force. **34... ♜xg2 35. ♜f5 ♜xh3+ 36. ♙g1 ♙e3+ 37. ♜xe3 ♜xe3 38. ♜xe3 ♜g3+ 39. ♙f1?? ♙c4+**; **39. ♙h1 ♜h3=**) **34... c2 35. ♙f1.** White wins the enemy queen thanks to the pin, but Black is about to promote a new queen. **35... c1=♜ 36. ♜xf4 ♜xg1+ 37. ♜xg1 ♜xf1 38. ♜xe3 ♖xa5 39. ♜g3+ ♙h7=** The tactical complications are over. The remaining material ratio on the board is rather non-standard; nevertheless, the most likely outcome of the game would be a draw. Meanwhile, it would be only Black who might play for a win.

Chapter 22

1.c4



White wishes to play the English Opening, but the connection between the Caro-Kann and the Slav Defence is so close that Black does not need to enter the intricacies of the English Opening.

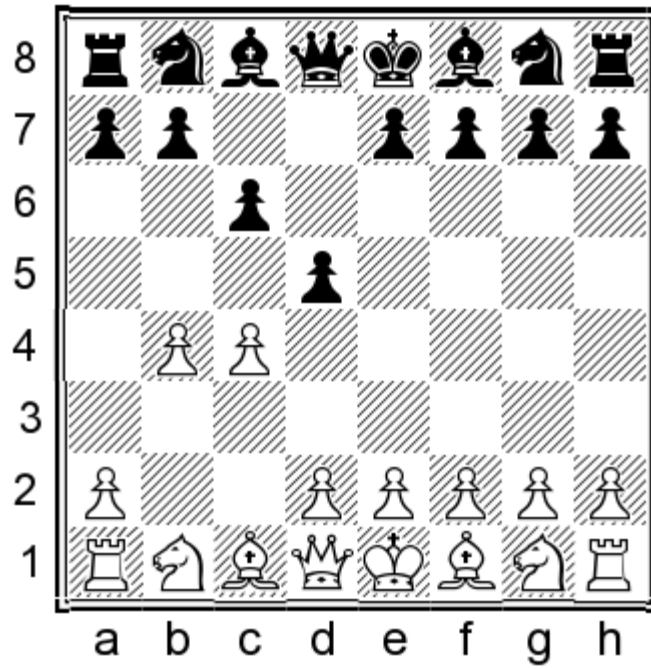
1...c6 2.♘f3

About 2.d4 d5 – see Volume 1.

2.e4 d5 – see Chapter 4.

2.e3 d5 3.d4 (3.b3 ♘f6 – see 2.b3; 3.♘c3 ♘f6 – see 2.♘c3; 3.♘f3 ♘f6 – see variation A) 3...♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 1.

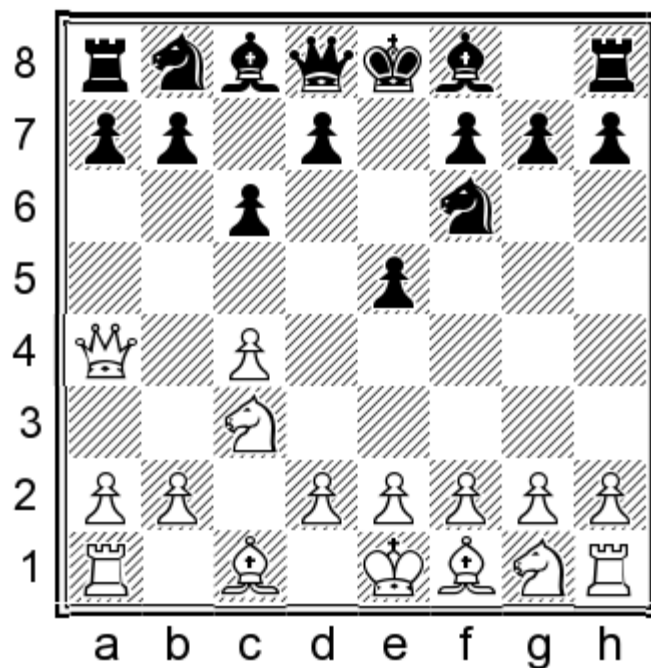
2.b4. This flank strategy, ignoring the fight for the centre, is not impressive at all. 2...d5



After 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.♙b2, Ulybin – Ibarra Jerez, Mondariz 2000, the simplest reaction for Black would be 4...♙g4!?∞, followed by ♜d7, ♝gf6, e6 (e5).

3.e3 e5 4.♙b2 f6. Black has occupied the centre with his pawns and his prospects in the forthcoming fight are not worse to say the least. 5.a3 ♙e6 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.d4 (The move 7.f4 only weakens White's position on the kingside. 7...exf4 8.exf4 ♙d6 9.♙b5+ ♜c6̄ Bulcourf – Panno, Buenos Aires 1993.) 7...e4 8.♜e2, Sjoberg – Rytshagov, Gothenburg 1997, 8...♙d6!?∞ Black has more space. White's bishop on b2 is restricted by his own pawn on d4. In addition, in the middlegame, Black can exploit the vulnerability of the c4-square with the manoeuvre ♜d7-b6-c4.

2.♞a4. White pins the enemy c6-pawn with the idea to impede the pawn-advance d7-d5. Still, the idea to develop the queen at such an early stage of the game cannot be recommended. 2...e5. It is not advantageous for Black to try to advance d7-d5, so he prepares castling. 3.♜c3 (3.g3 ♙c5 4.♙g2 ♜f6 5.♜c3 – see 3.♜c3) 3...♜f6

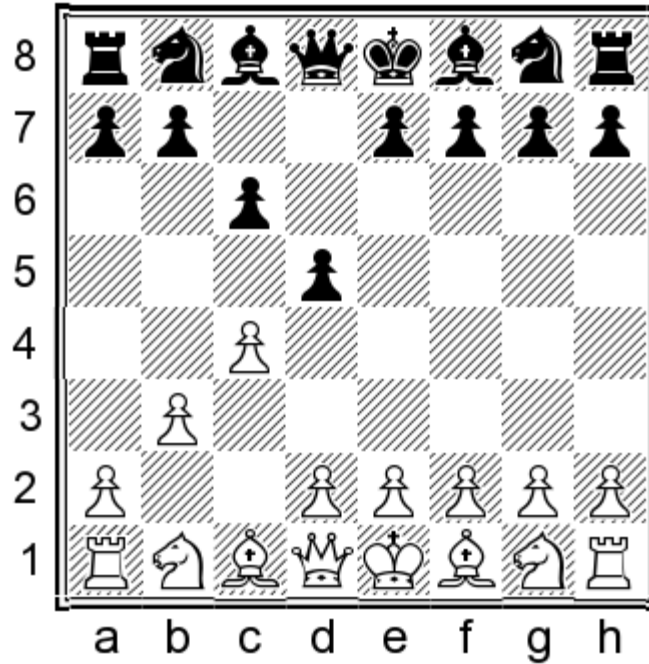


4.g3 ♙c5 5.♙g2 0-0 6.b4 ♙e7 7.♞b3, Voiska – Shneider, Cappelle-la-Grande 2000, 7...d5!? Black sacrifices a pawn in

an attempt to exploit the delay of his opponent with the development of his kingside pieces. 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.♖xd5 ♖xd5 10.♙xd5 ♗c6 11.♙xd8 ♖xd8 Black has more than sufficient compensation for the minimal material deficit and after 12.b5 ♗d4, he regains his pawn preserving all the pluses of his position.

4.♗f3 ♕d6!? 5.♙c2 0-0 6.d4 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♕e5= Black exploits the defencelessness of the enemy knight on d4 and frees with tempo the way forward of his d-pawn, Dvoirys – Raznikov, Jerusalem 2013.

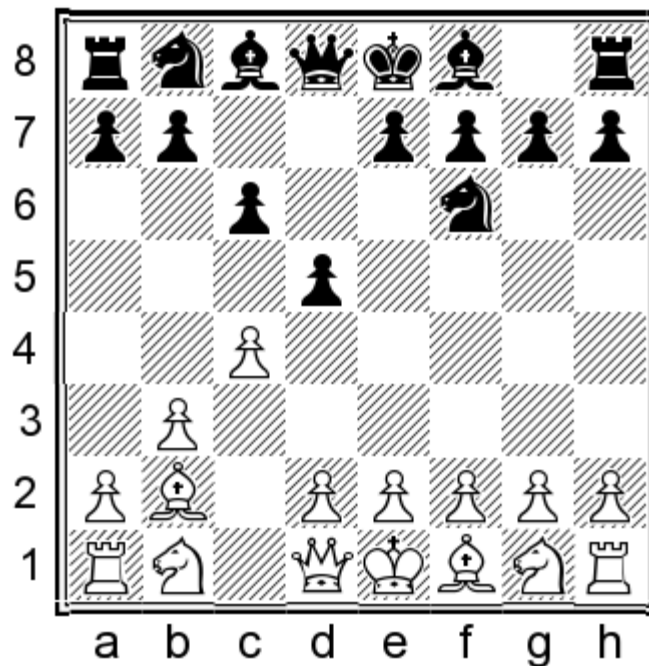
Following 2.b3 d5, in the majority of the lines White develops his knight to the f3-square anyway.



3.♗f3 ♗f6 – see variation **B**.

3.e3 ♗f6 4.♕b2 ♕g4 – see 3.♕b2 (4.♗f3 ♕g4 – see variation **B1**).

3.♕b2 ♗f6

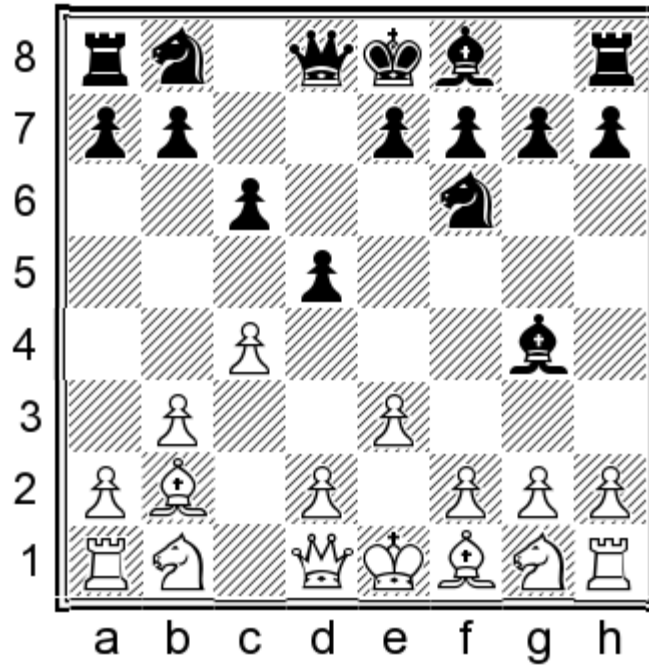


4.♗f3 ♕g4 – see variation **B**.

4.g3 ♖g4 5.♗g2 e6 6.♘f3 ♖bd7, or 6.h3 ♗h5 7.♘f3 ♖bd7 – see variation **B2**.

4.d3 ♗g4=

4.e3 ♗g4



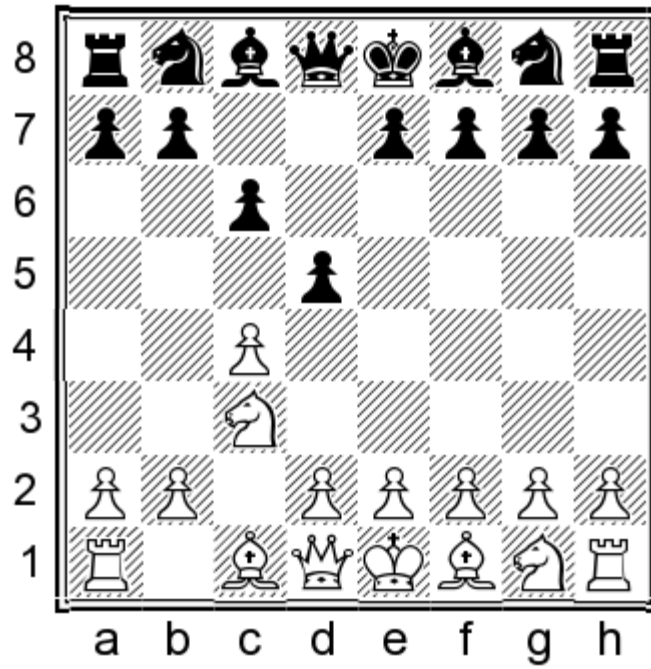
5.♘f3 e6 – see variation **B1**.

5.♘e2 ♖bd7=

5.f3 ♗h5 6.♘h3. White is playing a bit too originally in the opening... 6...♗g6 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♘f4 e6 9.♗e2 ♗d6 10.d4 ♘c6 11.♘c3 0-0∞ Kornev – Yevseev, Tula 2001. Black's position is quite solid, while the weakness of White's e3-pawn might hurt him in the future.

5.♗e2 ♗xe2. The exchange of a couple of minor pieces facilitates Black's defence. 6.♙xe2 (6.♘xe2. White's knight is less actively placed here than on the f3-square. 6...e6 7.f4, Meijers – Huerga Leache, Pamplona 2008, 7...♗e7!? 8.0-0 0-0=) 6...e6 7.f4 ♖bd7 8.♘f3 ♗d6. White cannot reap any dividends out of his control over the e5-square. 9.0-0 0-0 10.d3 ♙e7 11.♘e5, Genova – Bulmaga, Predeal 2007, 11...a5!?!=, preparing a5-a4. Black has good counterplay on the queenside.

2.♘c3 d5



About 3.e4 d4 – see Chapter 4.

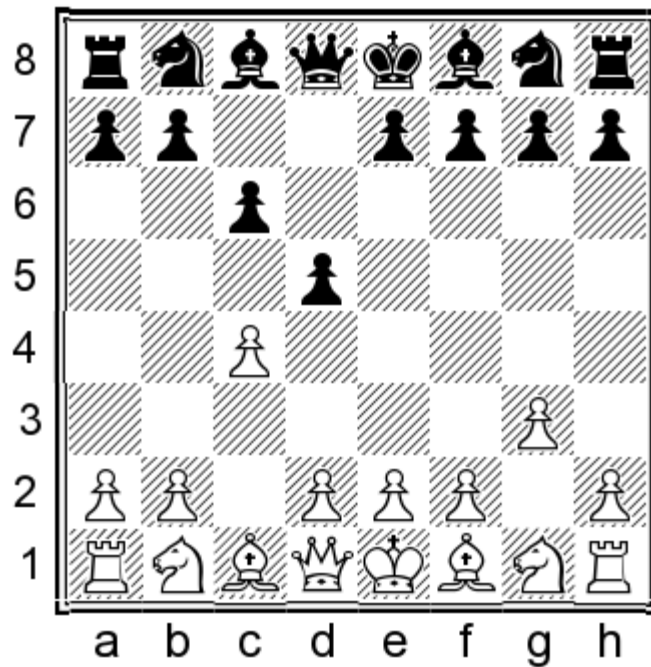
3.d4 ♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 2.

3.cxd5 cxd5 4.♘f3 (4.d4 ♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 3) 4...♗c6 5.d4 ♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 4.

3.e3 ♘f6 4.♖c2 (4.♘f3 e6 – see variation A; 4.d4 e6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 2) 4...e5=

3.♘f3 d4. Black exploits the fact that his opponent ignores the control over the central squares. 4.♘e4, Hoeper – Kolkin, Troisdorf 2003, 4...e5!? 5.♘xe5? ♖e7 6.f4 f6→

2.g3 d5



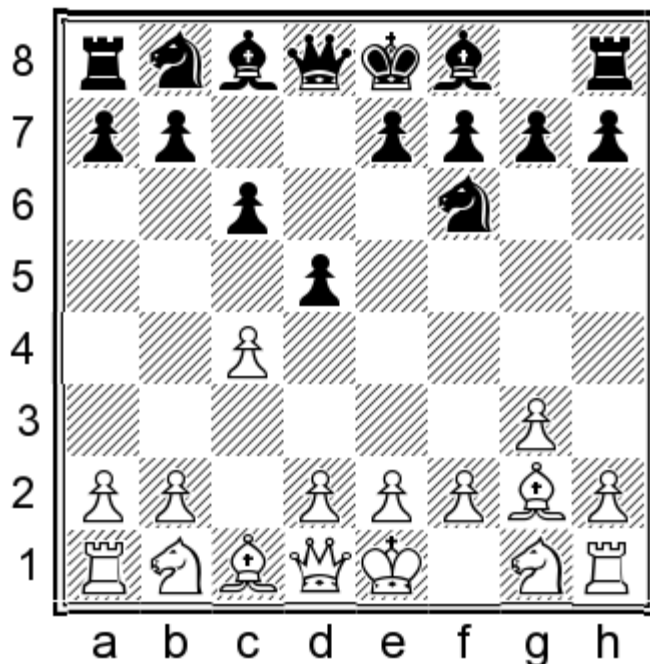
3.d4 ♘f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 1.

3.♘f3 ♘f6 – see Chapter 23.

3.♖c2 ♗f6 4.♙g2 (4.♗f3 ♙g4 – see 23 Chapter) 4...♙g4 – see 3.♙g2.

3.b3 ♗f6 4.♗f3 (4.♙g2 ♙g4, or 4.♙b2 ♙g4 5.♙g2 e6 – see 3.♙g2) 4...♙g4 – see variation **B2**.

3.♙g2 ♗f6



White usually develops his knight on f3 in this position. (4.♗f3 ♙g4 – see Chapter 23). Still, he has tried some other moves too.

4.d4 ♙g4 – Volume 1, Chapter 1.

4.♖c2 ♙g4 5.♗f3 e6 – see Chapter 23.

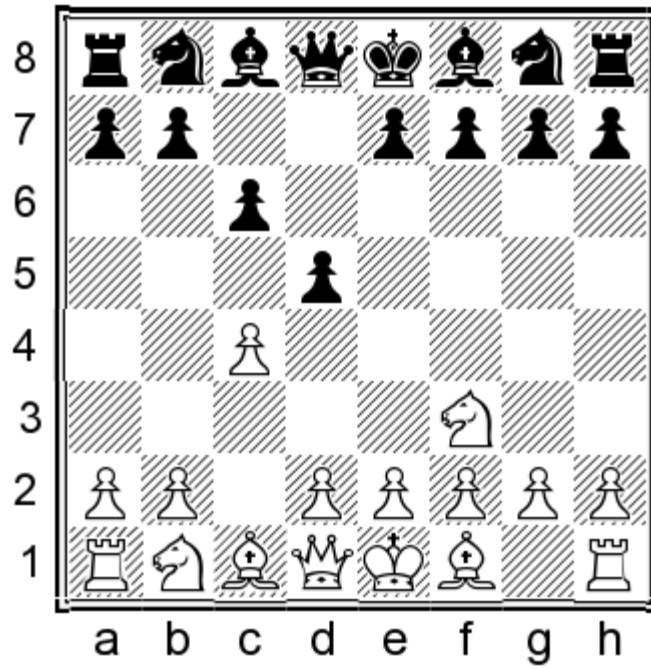
4.b3 ♙g4 5.♗f3 e6, or 5.♙b2 e6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7, or 6.h3 ♙h5 7.♗f3 ♗bd7 – see variation **B2**.

4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♗f3 ♗c6 – see Chapter 23 (5.d4 ♗c6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 3).

4.♖a4 ♗bd7. With this move Black wishes to be able to recapture on d5 with his pawn after an exchange there. 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♗c3 e6 7.♗f3 ♙e7 8.d4 0-0 9.♙f4, Galkin – Volkov, Konya 2014. White has managed to prevent the development of the enemy light-squared bishop to f5, or g4. Still, this is insufficient for him to claim an advantage, because Black can develop it on b7, advancing b7-b5 with tempo. 9...a6!? 10.♖c1 ♗h5 11.♙d2 b5∞, and White cannot play 12.♗xb5?, because of 12...♗b6–+

After 4.♖b3, Black can simply occupy additional space with 4...d4!? 5.♗f3 c5 6.e3 ♗c6 7.0-0 ♗d7. The placement of White's queen on b3 does not seem appropriate, since it impedes the pawn-advance b2-b4 and after an exchange on d4, Black will manage to win a tempo to transfer his knight to the c5-square. 8.d3 e5 9.♗h4 g6 10.♙d5 ♙e7 Maletin – Lysyj, Nizhnij Tagil 2006.

2...d5



We will analyse now **A) 3.e3** and **B) 3.b3**. The move 3.g3 will be dealt with in the next chapter.

3.d4 ♖f6 – see Volume 1.

3.♗c3 d4 – see 2.♗c3.

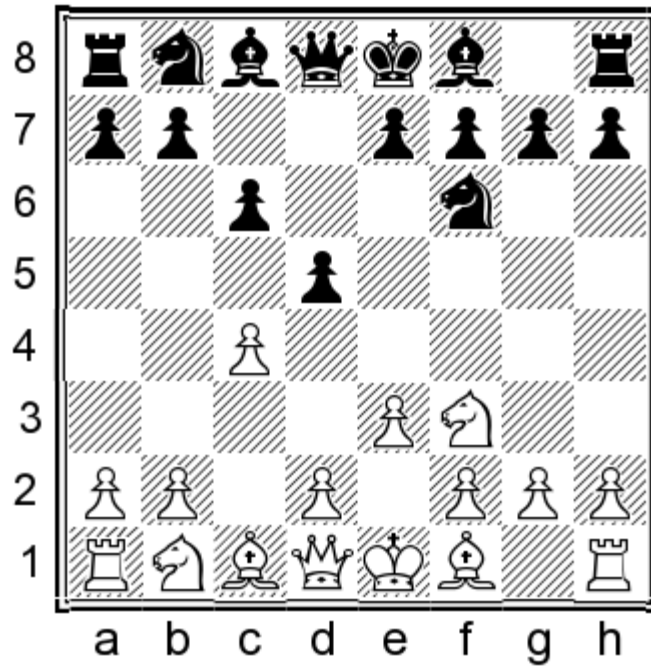
3.♞b3 ♖f6 4.d4 (4.g3 ♞b6 – see Chapter 23) 4...dxc4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 7.

3.♞c2 ♖f6 4.g3 (4.b3 ♙g4 – see variation **B1**; 4.e3 ♙g4 – see variation **A**; 4.d4 dxc4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 7) 4...♙g4 – see Chapter 23.

3.cxd5 cxd5 4.g3 (4.d4 ♖f6, or 4.♗c3 ♗c6 5.d4 ♖f6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 4) 4...♗c6 5.♙g2 ♖f6 – see Chapter 23.

3.♞a4 e6. After a trade on d5, Black wishes to be able to capture on d5 with his e-pawn. 4.g3 (4.d3 ♗d7!?∞) 4...♗d7 5.d3 ♙d6 6.♙g2 ♗gf6 7.0-0 0-0. It may look like White's strategy has triumphed, since Black has failed to develop his bishop on c8 to an active position. This is not true however, because after he advances e6-e5, this bishop might go to f5, or g4. 8.♗bd2, Csom – Guindy, Aarhus 1991 (8.♗c3 e5=) 8...e5!?∞

A) 3.e3 ♖f6



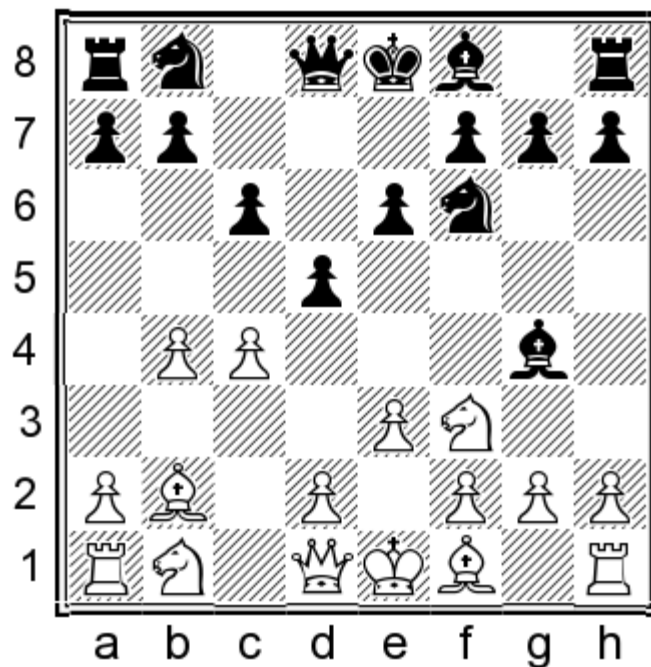
4.♘c3

White is not in a hurry to play d2-d4, but Black must be ready at any moment to a possible transfer to the Slav Defence (4.d4 ♖g4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8).

4.b3 ♗g4 – see variation **B1**.

It would be too slow for White to choose here 4.a3 ♗g4 5.h3 ♗h5 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♘c3 ♘c6= Carlsen – Ivanchuk, Nice 2010, or 4.h3 e6 5.d4 ♗d6 6.♘c3 0-0 7.♗d3 ♘bd7. The move h2-h3 is hardly useful for White. Black advances e6-e5 and enters a very good version for him of a position with an isolated pawn. 8.0-0 e5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5= Ehlvest – Bacrot, Dubai 2002.

4.b4 ♗g4 5.♗b2 e6

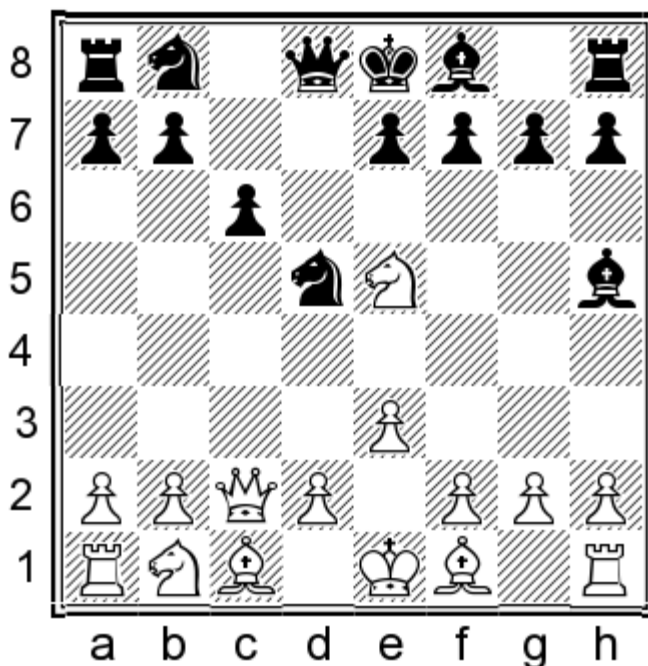


6.♖b3 ♘bd7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♙e2 ♙d6=, followed by 0-0, Lombardy – Quinteros, Torremolinos 1974.

After 6.a3 ♙d6 7.d4 0-0 8.♘bd2, White impedes his opponent's pawn-advance e6-e5, but in the variation 8...♘bd7 9.♙e2 ♘e4!?= and then f7-f5, Black reaches a very good version of a Stonewall position, because his bishop has already been developed to the g4-square, Grube – Sperlich, Ruhrgebiet 2003.

After 4.♙e2, Black solves immediately the problem with the development of the bishop on c8. 4...♙g4 5.♘c3 (5.b3 ♘bd7 – see variation **B1**; 5.d4 e6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8) 5...e6 6.0-0 (6.d4 ♘bd7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8, variation **D**) 6...♘bd7 7.b3 (7.d4 ♙d6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8, variation **D**) 7...♙d6 8.h3 (8.♙b2 0-0 – see variation **B1**; 8.d4 0-0 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8, variation **D**) 8...♙h5 9.♙b2 (9.d4 0-0 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **D**) 9...0-0 – see variation **B1**.

4.♖c2. White is trying to thwart the development of the bishop on c8. The f5-square is under control, while the move 4...♙g4 will be countered by 5.♘e5. Still, this is not sufficient for White to maintain an edge. 5...♙h5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5



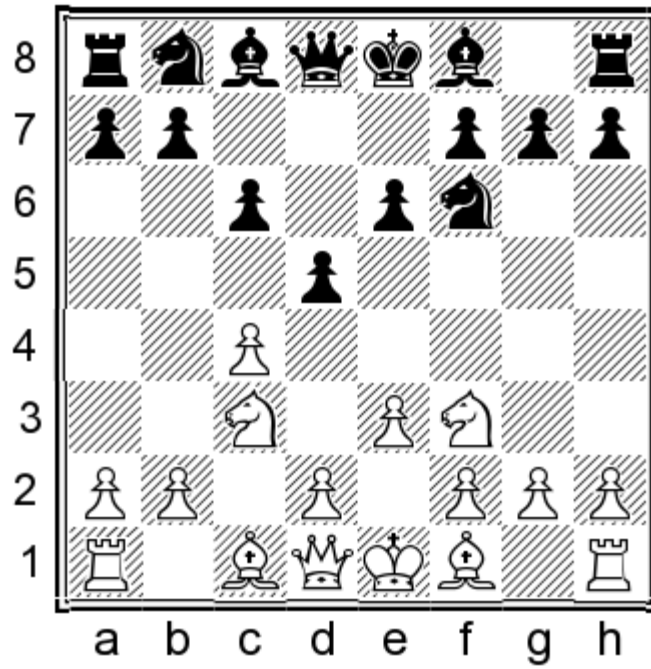
7.a3 e6= Kurajica – Ali Marandi, Izmir 2016.

7.♖f5. This queen-sortie is not dangerous for Black. 7...♘f6 8.♖h3 ♘bd7 9.f4. White creates the threat g2-g4. After the cold-blooded response 9...♖c8∞ however, Black has nothing to complain about.

7.♘c3 e6 8.d4 ♘d7 9.♘xd7 ♖xd7 10.♙c4, Zhao – Girya, St Petersburg 2012. White's pawns dominate in the centre, but this is not sufficient for an advantage, because Black has no weaknesses in his position and can complete quickly his development. 10...♙e7 11.0-0 0-0=

4...e6

Black cannot develop immediately his bishop to an active position, because after 4...♙g4, White has the resource 5.♖b3±



5.b3

About 5.d4 a6 – see Volume 1, Chapters 13-18.

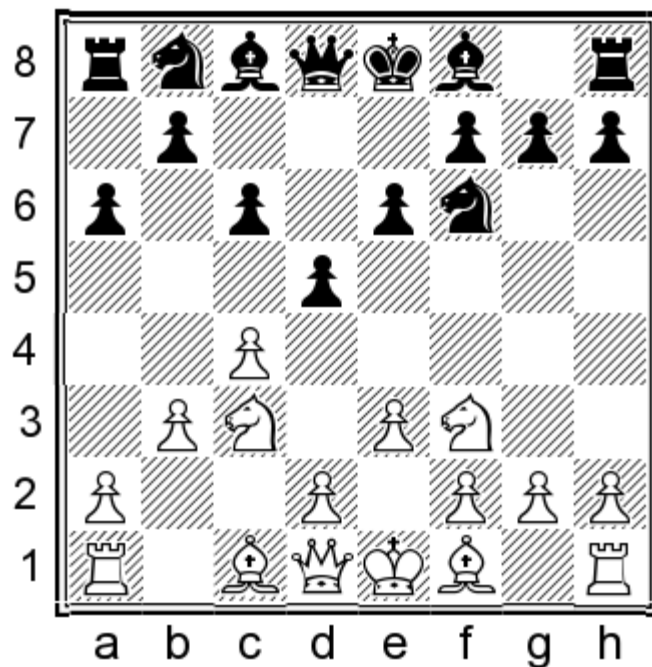
5.a3 a6 6.d4 ♘bd7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 13, variation C.

5.♖c2 a6 6.b3 (6.d4 c5 – see Volume 1, Chapter 18) 6...c5 – see 5.b3.

5.♙e2 a6 6.0-0 (6.d4 dxc4 – Volume 1, Chapter 14) 6...dxc4 7.♙xc4 b5 8.♙e2 (8.♙b3 c5 9.d4 ♙b7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 15, variation B) 8...c5 9.d4 ♙b7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 15, variation A.

5...a6!?

Black plays analogously to the Slav Defence.

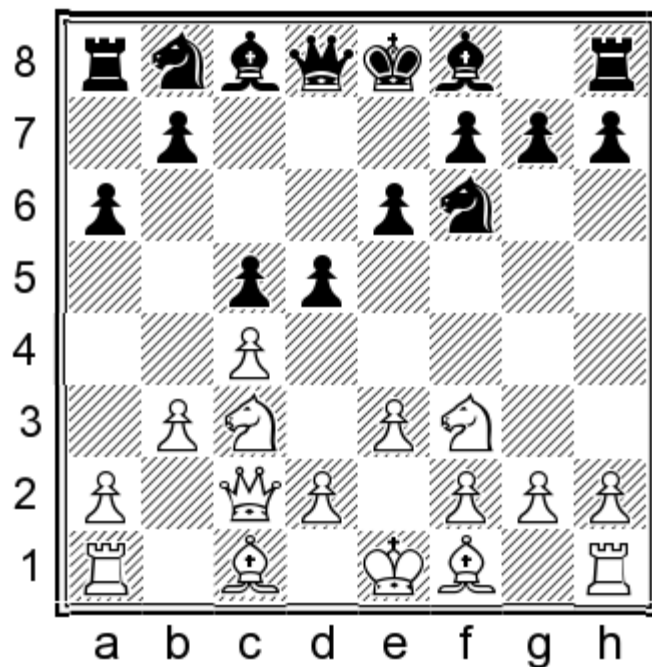


6. ♖c2

6.d4 ♗b4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 17.

After 6. ♗b2, it seems good for Black to play 6...c5, preparing the development of his knight to c6. 7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4 ♘c6 9. ♗e2 cxd4 10. ♘xd4. There has arisen a standard position with an isolated queen's pawn. The relative vulnerability of the pawn on d5 will be compensated in the middlegame by the active placement of Black's pieces. 10...♗d6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞c1 ♘e5 13.♞c2 (13.♞d2 ♞e8 14.♞fd1, Ehlvest – Abergel, Gibraltar 2007, 14...♞e7!?) 13...♞e8 14.♘f5, Potkin – Handke, Dresden 2007, 14...♗xf5!? This is the simplest for Black. He exchanges the active enemy bishop. 15.♞xf5 ♞e7 16.♞fd1 ♗a3. After this move Black deprives his opponent of the two-bishop advantage. 17.♗xa3 ♞xa3 18.♞c2 ♞ad8=

6...c5

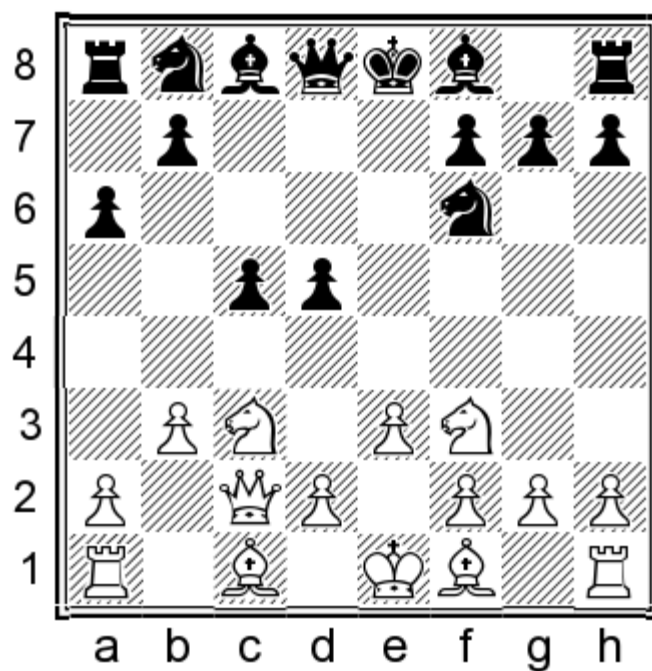


7. ♕b2

This was the moment White could have played for the last time 7.d4 ♖c6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 18.

7. ♕d3 ♘c6 8.a3, Iturrizaga Bonelli – Malakhatko, Cannes 2010, 8... ♕e7!?=

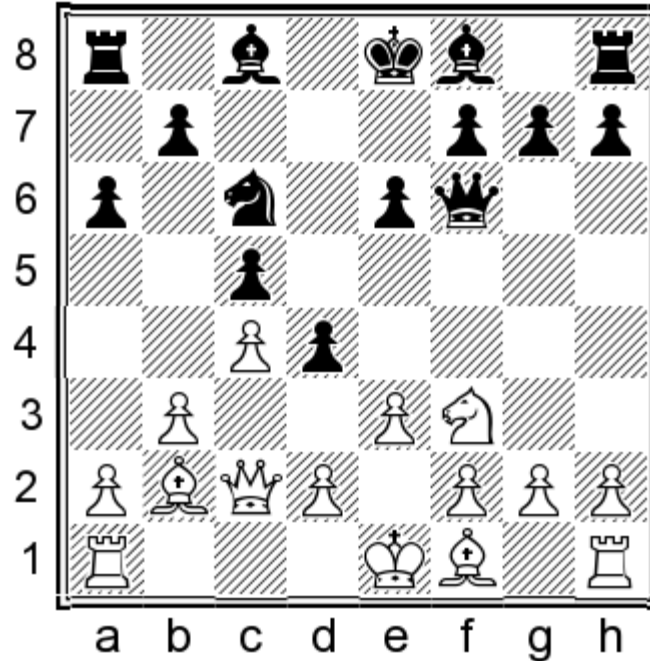
7.cxd5 exd5



8.d4. With a queen on c2 it would be very bad for White to enter a position with an isolated pawn, because he has weakened his control over the key d4-square. 8... ♖c6 9. ♕e2 (9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10. ♕e2 d4= Evdokimov – Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2015) 9...cxd4 10. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.exd4 ♕e6 12.0-0 ♜c8. The move b2-b3 has only weakened the c3-square, because with a pawn on d4, it would be useless for White to develop his bishop on b2. 13. ♞d3 ♕d6 14. ♕d2 0-0 Blanco Fernandez – Luther, Merida 2003.

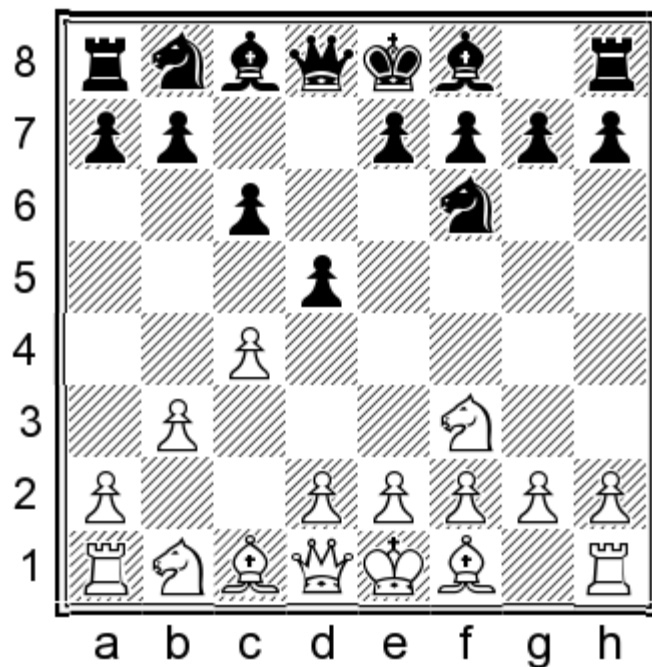
After 8.♙b2 ♜c6 9.a3 ♙g4 10.♞a4, Kveinys – Tolhuizen, Gausdal 2008, it would be interesting for Black to try 10...♞c8!?, after which capturing on c5 would lead to complications advantageous for him. 11.♞xc5 ♙xc5 12.♞xc5 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♞e5 14.♞b4 ♞xf3+ 15.♞d1 ♞e4→ White's king is obviously placed less reliably than its black counterpart.

7...d4!? Black occupies space with tempo. 8.♞e4 ♜c6 9.♞xf6+ ♞xf6



10.exd4 cxd4 11.♙d3 ♙d6 12.0-0 h6 13.♙e4 e5= Gajewski – Eljanov, Reykjavik 2015. The arising position resembles the Modern Benoni with colours reversed. In similar positions White's bishop is better placed on the c1-h6 diagonal, since on b2 it would be severely restricted by the pawns on e5 and d4.

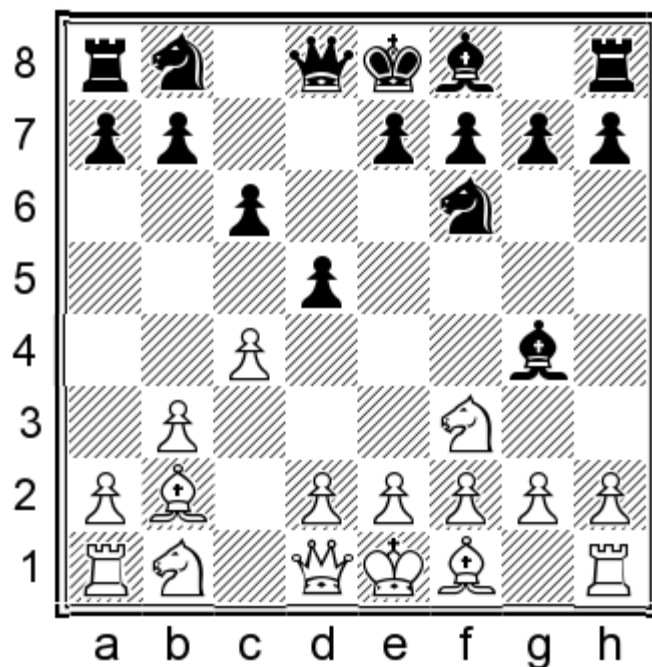
B) 3.b3 ♞f6



Now, White has a choice. He can either fianchetto his second bishop **B2B1**

4.♞c2 ♜g4 5.♞b2 ♘bd7 6.e3 e6 7.♞e2 ♞d6 8.0-0 e5∞ Schunk – Naumann, Germany 1995.

4.♞b2 ♜g4

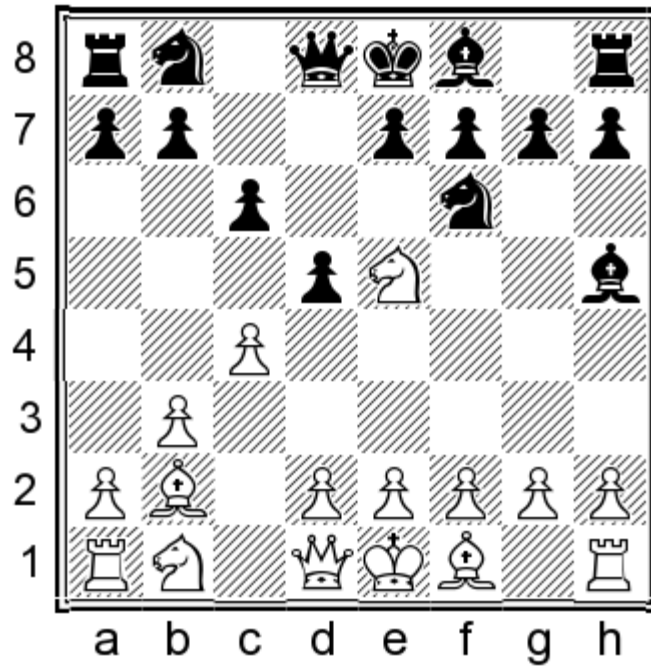


5.e3 e6 – see variation **B1**.

5.g3 e6 – see variation **B2**.

Following 5.d3 ♘bd7 6.♘bd2, Black can try an interesting idea: 6...♞xf3! 7.♘xf3 and now – 7...e5. He exploits the vulnerability of the e1-a5 diagonal and succeeds in occupying the centre with his pawn. 8.a3 e4↑ Tamosiunas – Tvarijonas, Kaunas 2016.

5.♘e5 ♜h5



6.g3 e6 – see variation **B2**.

It would be too original for White to opt here for 6.♖g1, Spangenberg – Ginzburg, Villa Martelli 1997, because after that move he will have problems to evacuate his king away from the centre. 6...♗bd7!? 7.g4 ♕g6 8.♗xg6 hxg6

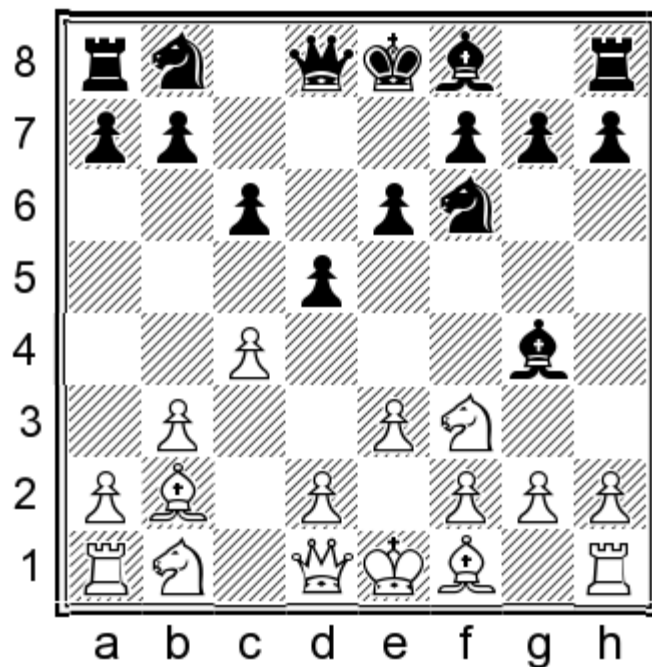
6.cxd5 cxd5 7.b4. This move has been tried by a very strong grandmaster like John Spielman, but it can hardly be recommended, because White loses a second tempo with a pawn before the completion of the development of his pieces. Black can parry easily the tactical threats of his opponent on the a4-e8 diagonal. 7...♗bd7 8.♖a4 (8.♖b3 e6 9.♗xd7 ♖xd7 ♗ Speelman – Mueller, Lippstadt 2000) 8...e6 9.e3 a6 10.♗xd7 ♗xd7 11.b5, Galego – Kallio, Bled 2002. It may look like White exerts pressure against the g7-pawn and thus impedes the development of Black's kingside pieces, but this threat to capture on g7 is illusory. 11...♕e7!? 12.♕xg7 (12.bxa6 0-0) 12...♖g8 13.♕c3 ♗c5 14.♖d4 ♖c8 15.bxa6 bxa6

B1) 4.e3 ♕g4 5.♕b2

About 5.d4 e6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8.

5.h3 ♕h5 6.♕b2 e6, or 5.♕e2 e6 6.♕b2 ♗bd7, or 6.h3 ♕h5 7.♕b2 ♗bd7 – see 5.♕b2.

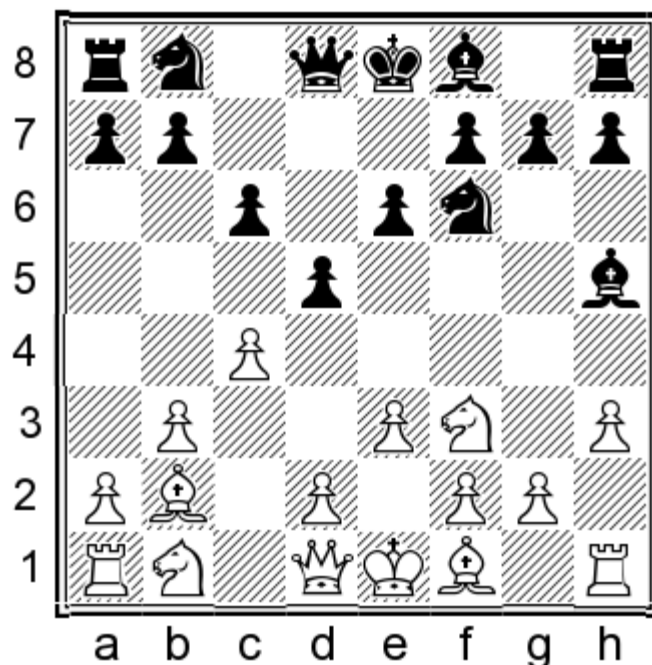
5...e6



6.♙e2

6.d3 ♘bd7 7.♙e2 ♙b4 – see 6.♙e2.

The inclusion of the moves 6.h3 ♙h5 would not change much the character of the fight.



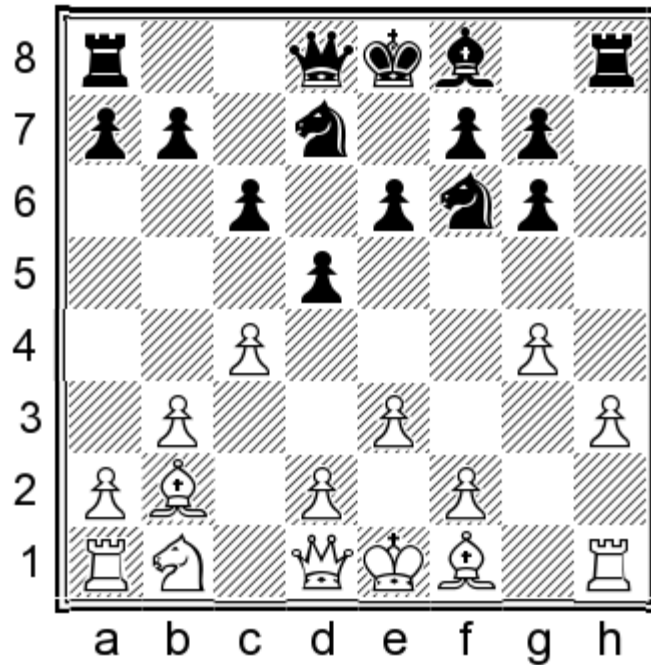
7.♙e2 ♘bd7 – see 6.♙e2.

7.d3 ♙xf3 8.gxf3, Stremavicius – Starostits, Panevezys 2015, 8...♚a5+!? 9.♚d2 ♙b4 10.♘c3 ♙a3=, Black deprives his opponent of his two-bishop advantage. Later, White must play very accurately; otherwise, the vulnerability of his kingside might hurt him.

7.♘c3 ♘bd7 8.g4 (8.♙e2 – see 6.♙e2) 8...♙g6 9.♘h4 ♘c5 10.♘xg6 hxg6. Once again White has the two-bishop advantage, but his g4-pawn would have been much better placed on g2, or g3 11.♚e2 (11.d3, Bajarami Beradze,

Khanty-Mansiysk 2015, 11...dxc4!? 12.bxc4 ♖b6 13.♟b1 e5∞) 11...a5= Hillarp Persson – Giri, Malmo 2010.

7.g4 ♕g6 8.♘e5. White wishes to obtain the two-bishop advantage, but with this he weakens his kingside. 8...♘bd7
9.♘xg6 hxg6

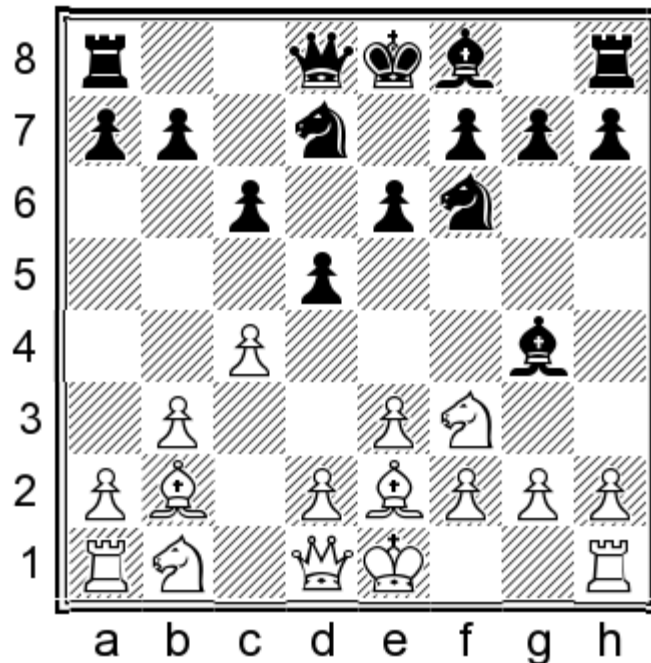


10.h4, Votava – Gretz, Austria 2017, 10...♘e4!?!=

10.♕g2, Romanov – Postny, Berlin 2015, 10...g5!?!=, Black fixes the enemy weakness on h3.

10.♘c3 g5 11.♖e2 ♘d6 12.♕g2 ♖e7= Popovics – Hardicsay, Budapest 2017.

6...♘bd7

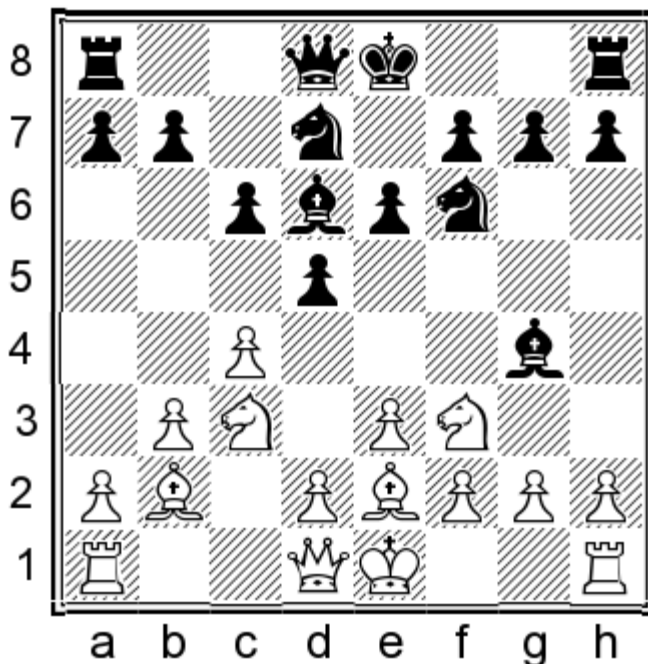


After the immediate move 7.d4, Black has the powerful resource 7...♙b4+!? With this check he causes disharmony in the set-up of his opponent's pieces. 8.♙c3 ♙d6=

After 7.♙c2 ♙d6 8.0-0, Black can simply occupy the centre with his second pawn. 8...e5= Schunk – Naumann, Germany 1995.

The move 7.♗e5 leads to considerable simplifications. 7...♘xe5 8.♙xe5 ♙d6 9.♙xd6 ♙xe2 10.♙xe2 ♙xd6 11.0-0 0-0 12.d4, Barczay – Dely, Bari 1970, 12...dxc4!? 13.♙xc4 ♖ac8 14.♗c3 c5=

7.♗c3 ♙d6



About 8.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0.

8.d4 0-0 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.h3 ♙h5 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **D**.

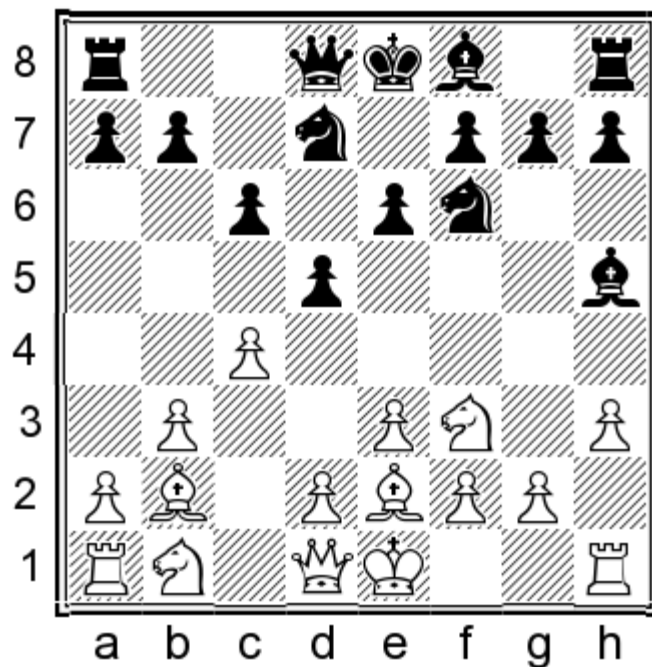
8.h3 ♙h5 – see 7.h3.

8.♗d4 ♙xe2 9.♙xe2 0-0 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗f5. White's piece-activity seems unprepared here. 11...♙e5 12.f4 ♙xf4! 13.exf4 ♖e8 14.♗e3 d4 15.0-0 dxc3 16.♙xc3 ♗d5= Anderson – Edwards, ICCF 2014. He has no compensation for the isolated d2-pawn.

8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗d4 ♙xe2 10.♗cxe2 g6 11.0-0 0-0 12.f4 (12.♗f3 ♙e7= Ivkov – Campora, New York 1987) 12...♖e8 13.♗g3 ♙f8 14.♙c2 ♙g7= Medina – Gyimesi, Turin 2006.

It looks rather premature for White to try now 7.d3 ♙b4+!? 8.♗bd2 ♙xf3 and he will have to weaken his pawn-structure. 9.gxf3 (9.♙xf3?! ♗c5!?) 9...e5 10.♖g1 0-0 11.a3 ♙d6= Blatny – Onischuk, Germany 1994.

7.h3 ♙h5



8.0-0 ♕d6 – see 7.0-0.

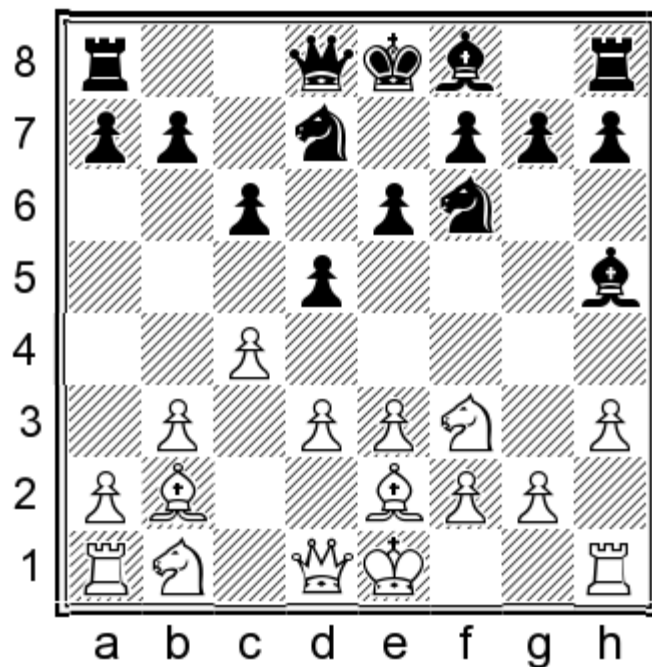
8.d4 ♕b4+ 9.♕c3, Dumpor – Plenca, Bol 2014, 9...♕d6!?!=

After 8.cxd5 exd5 9.g4 ♕g6 10.d3, it seems good for Black to continue with 10...♖a5+ 11.♗bd2 ♕a3, exchanging the powerful enemy bishop. 12.♕xa3 ♖xa3 13.g5 ♗g8 14.♗h4 ♗e7 Terrieux – Mullon, Guingamp 2003. White's ill-prepared kingside activity has only weakened his own position.

After 8.a3, Black's simplest reaction would be 8...h6!?, preparing a square for the retreat of his bishop on h5. 9.d3 ♕d6 10.♗bd2 (10.g4 ♕g6 11.♖g1 e5) 10...♖e7 11.b4 a5 12.c5 ♕c7 13.♖c2 ♕g6 14.0-0 0-0∞, followed by e6-e5, Speelman – Conquest, Hastings 2000.

8.♗c3 ♕d6 9.d3 (9.0-0 0-0, or 9.♖c1 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e7 – see 7.0-0) 9...h6 10.0-0 (10.a3 0-0= Hou – Muzychuk, Caleta 2017) 10...0-0. Black has completed his development and White will have problems to find an active plan for his actions. 11.cxd5 exd5 12.e4 ♖e8 13.exd5 ♗xd5= Yudasin – Magem Badals, Las Palmas 1993. The opening of the game in the centre has only led to further simplifications.

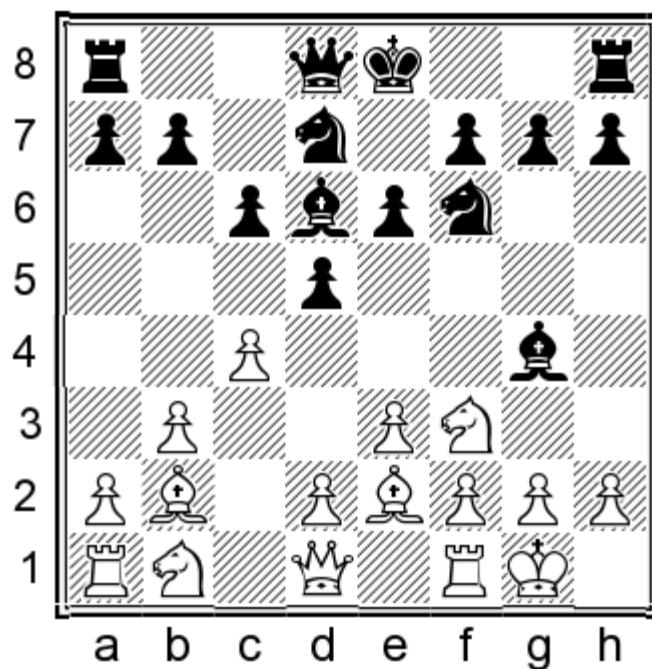
After 8.d3, Black must react very carefully.



The careless move 8...♙d6 would lead to problems for him. 9.g4 ♗g6 10.g5 ♖h5 11.♞g1. Now, it turns out that Black can parry the threat ♖h4 only at the cost of the considerable weakening of his position. 11...h6 12.♖h4 hxg5 13.♖xg6 fxg6 14.♖d2± Timofeev – Kornev, Kazan 2001.

8...♙b4+!? 9.♖bd2 (9.♖c3 0-0 10.a3 ♙d6=) 9...♙xf3 10.gxf3 (10.♙xf3, Stefanova – Sebag, Moscow 2010, 10...♖c5, followed by the unavoidable penetration of the knight to the d3-outpost. 11.♞c2 dxc4 12.dxc4 ♖d3+ 13.♗e2 ♖xb2 14.♞xb2 ♞a5± The dark squares in White's camp have been considerably weakened.) 10...e5 11.a3 ♙d6 12.d4 (12.cxd5 cxd5 13.d4 0-0± Csom – Portisch, Biel 1976) 12...0-0∞ Zilberman – Zifroni, Herzliya 1998. Black's prospects do not seem to be worse thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

7...♙d6



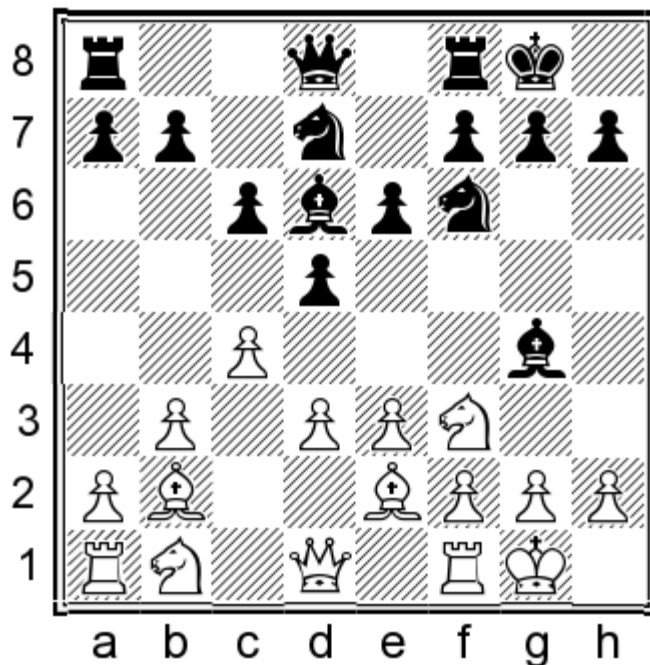
8.h3

It would be useful for White to have a leeway for his king in the middlegame.

8.d4 0-0 – see Volume 1, Chapter 8.

8.cxd5. White determines a bit too early the pawn-structure in the centre and thus facilitates Black's choice of his further plan for actions. 8...exd5 9.d3 0-0 10.♘bd2 ♖e8 11.♘d4 (11.♖e1 a5 12.a3 ♘h5 13.h3, Chkhaidze – Jansa, Sort 2006, 13...♘c5!?) 11...♙xe2 12.♗xe2 g6. Black prevents the enemy knight-sortie to the f5-square. 13.♞ad1 a5= Piket – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

8.d3 0-0

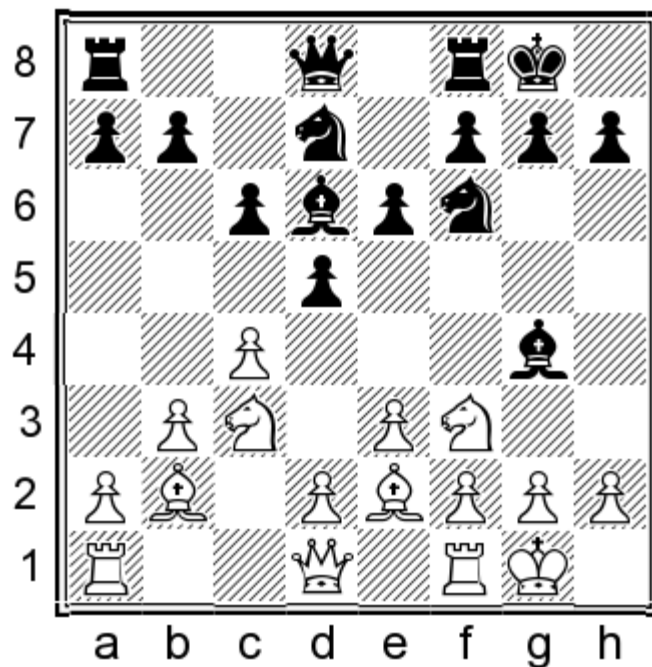


About 9.cxd5 exd5 – see 8.cxd5.

9.h3 ♘h5, or 9.♘bd2 e5 10.h3 ♘h5, or 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.h3 ♘h5, or 11.e4 ♖e8 12.h3 ♘h5 – see 8.h3.

9.♘c3 ♖e8 10.cxd5 cxd5!?= This is Black's simplest road to equality. He is reluctant to present his opponent with pawn-dominance in the centre, Portisch – Erdos, Hungary 2005.

8.♘c3 0-0



About 9.d3 ♖e8 – see 8.d3.

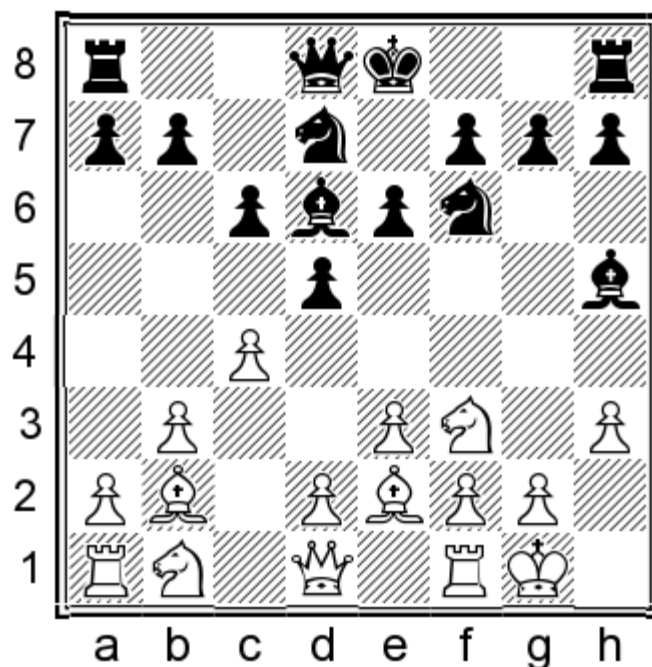
9.h3 ♙h5 – see 8.h3.

9.d4 ♗e7 10.h3 ♙h5 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation D.

After 9.♖c1 ♖e8 10.h3 ♙h5, White will have problems to find an active plan for his actions. 11.d3 ♗e7 12.♖c2 a6 13.cxd5 exd5= A.Efimov – Zontakh, Cutro 1999.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.♘d4 ♙xe2 11.♘ce2 ♖e8. Black prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop. 12.♘g3 (12.♗c2 ♖c8∞) 12...♙f8 13.d3 a5 14.a3 (14.a4 ♘c5⌘) 14...♗b6 15.♗c2 g6. Black wishes to transfer his bishop to g7 in order to neutralise the pressure of the enemy bishop on b2. 16.♙c3 ♙g7=

8...♙h5

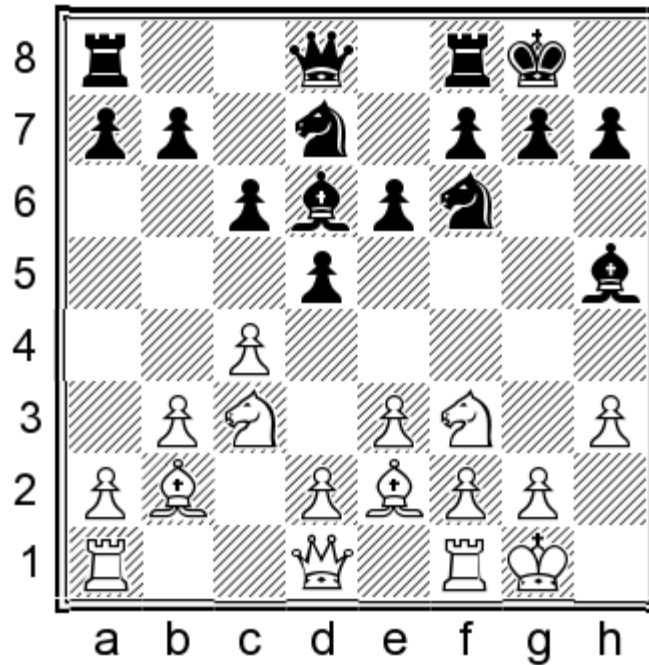


9.d3

9.d4 0-0 10.♘c3 (10.♘bd2 ♖e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **A**) 10...♗e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **D**.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.♘c3 0-0 – see 9.♘c3.

9.♘c3 0-0



10.d3 ♗e7 – see 9.d3.

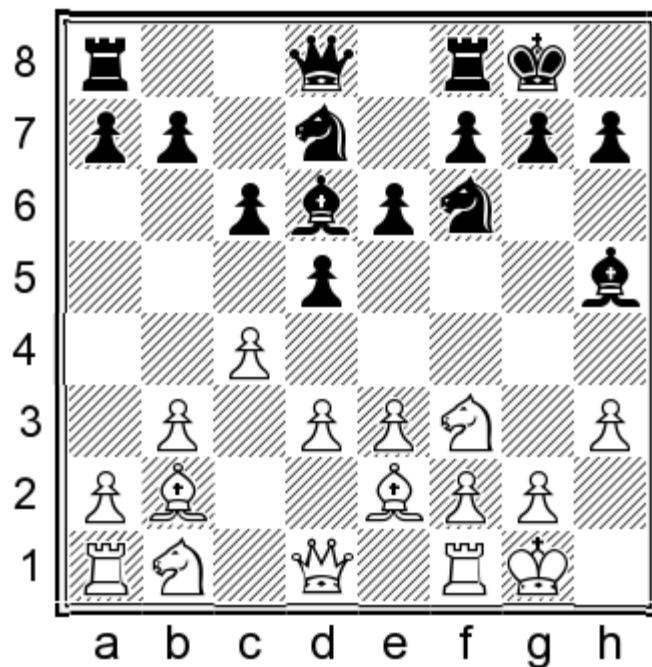
10.d4 ♗e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **D**.

10.a3, Speelman – Tukmakov, Tilburg 1994, 10...♞e8!?∞

10.♞c1 ♗e7 11.♘d4, Piorun – Vitiugov, Tallinn 2016 (11.d4 ♞ac8 – see Volume 1, Chapter 9, variation **D**) After 11...♙g6!? ♣ Black should better avoid the trade of the bishops and take the f5-square under control, creating the positional threat e6-e5.

10.cxd5 exd5 11.♘d4 (White would weaken considerably his kingside with the impulsive move 11.g4?! ♙g6 12.♘d4, Malakhov – Dreev, India 2000, 12...♘c5!? ♣) 11...♙xe2 12.♘cxe2 ♞e8 13.d3 ♘f8 14.♗d2 a5 15.a3 ♘e6 16.♘f5 ♙f8= Ljubojevic – Kramnik, Linares 1993.

9...0-0



10. ♖bd2

10.a3 ♜e7 11. ♘c3 ♜ad8 – see 10. ♘c3.

10.g4 ♙g6 11. ♘h4 e5= Chilingirova – Giessmann, Genova 2000.

10. ♘c3. White's knight is not so harmoniously placed on this square restricting the scope of action of his own bishop on b2. 10... ♜e7 11.a3 ♜ad8 12. ♘h4 ♙xe2 13. ♜xe2, Urday Caceres – Alvarez, Mesa 1992, 13... ♜fe8!?

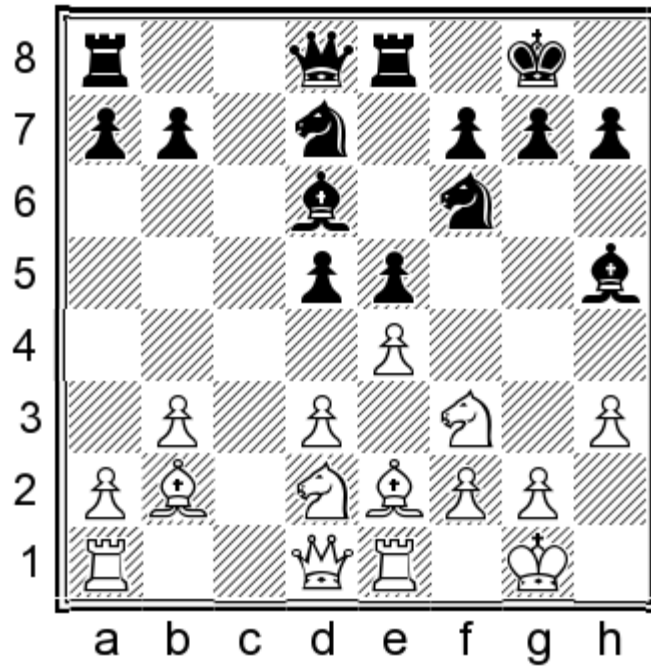
10...e5

Black should better play this move without the preliminary ♜e7; otherwise, he would have to consider the possible enemy manoeuvre – ♘h4-f5.

11.cxd5

After 11. ♘h4 ♙xe2 12. ♜xe2, Kunin – Khenkin, Osterburg 2006, Black's simplest reaction would be 12... ♜e8!?, preparing a square for the retreat of his bishop. 13. ♘f5 ♙f8

11...cxd5 12.e4 ♜e8 13. ♜e1



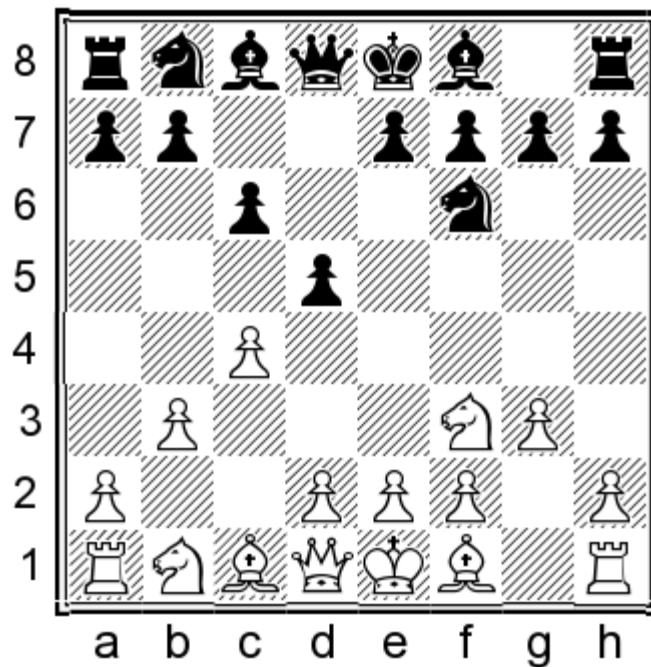
13...♕xf3!?

Before restricting the scope of action of the enemy bishop on b2 with his d-pawn,

Black must trade the bishops, because after the immediate move 13...d4?, White would have the powerful resource 14.♘xd4± Ftacnik – Movsesian, Kaskady 2002.

14.♕xf3 d4∞ Later, Black has two plans for actions, which are about equally strong. He must either try to exploit the vulnerability of the c3-square with ♖c8, ♕b4-c3, or to advance his a-pawn – a7-a5-a4.

B2) 4.g3



White prepares the fianchetto of his second bishop.

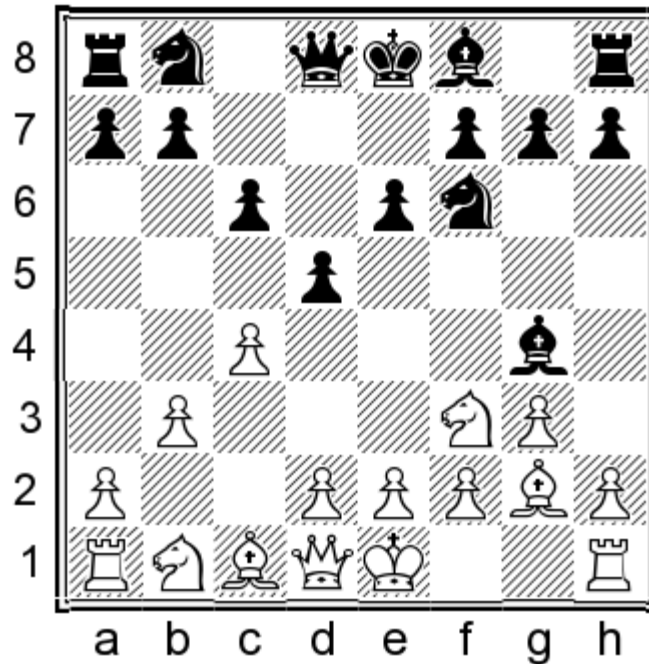
4...♗g4 5.♗g2

About 5.♗b2 e6 6.♗g2 ♖bd7 – see 5.♗g2.

5.♖e5 ♗h5 6.♗b2 e6 7.♗g2 ♖bd7 8.♖xd7 ♗xd7 9.0-0, Reti – Torre, Moscow 1925, 9...d4!?

5...e6

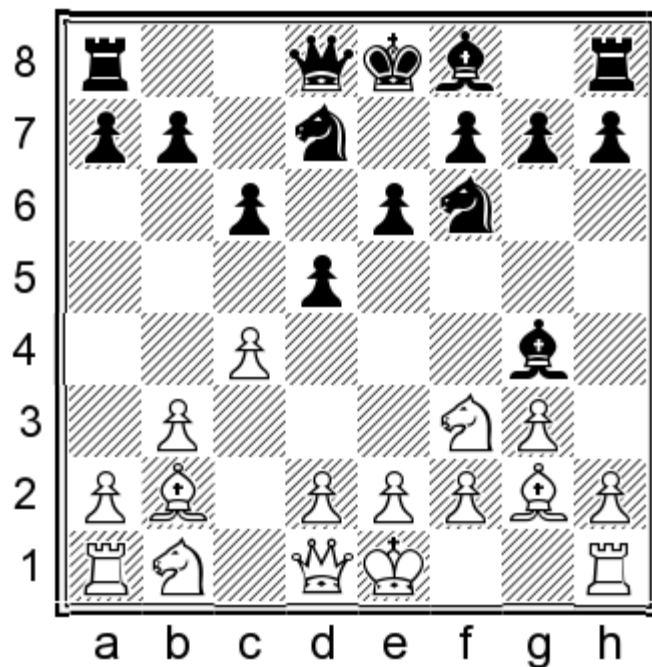
Black's attempt to win a pawn would lead to problems for him, because after 5...♗xf3 6.♗xf3 dxc4?! 7.bxc4 ♗d4, White would have the move 8.♗b3± Just – Fechner, Canada 1975, his c4-pawn has been protected and capturing of the rook 8...♗xa1? would lose for Black after 9.♗xb7+–



6.0-0

White will have to castle at some moment anyway.

6.♗b2 ♖bd7



About 7.0-0 ♕d6, or 7.d3 ♕d6 8.0-0 0-0 or 8.♗bd2 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 – see 6.0-0.

7.h3 ♕h5 8.d3 (8.0-0 ♕d6 9.d3 0-0 – see variation **B2b**; 9.d4 ♗e4 10.♗c3 f5∞ Szalai – Pataki, Hungary 2014) 8...♕d6 9.♗bd2 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8 – see variation **B2b**.

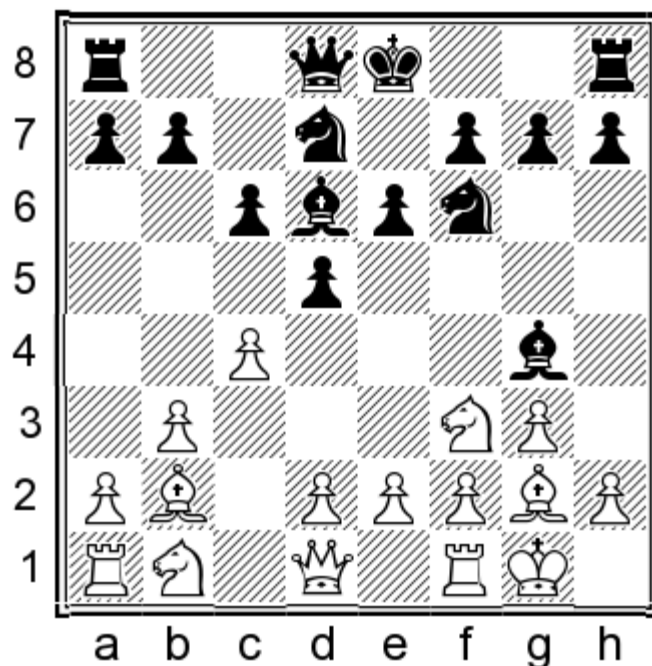
6...♗bd7 7...♙b2

7.d4 ♕e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B2**.

7.♖c2 ♕d6 8.♙b2 0-0 – see 7.♙b2.

7.d3 ♕d6 8.♙b2 0-0, or 8.♗bd2 0-0 9.♙b2 ♖e8, or 8.♗a3 0-0 9.♗c2 ♖e8 10.♙b2 a5 – see variation **B2b**.

7...♕d6



Now, White must choose where to deploy his d2-pawn: **B2a) 8.d4**, or **B2b) 8. d3**.

8.♖c2 0-0 9.d3 (9.d4 ♕f5 10.♗d1 h6= Fine – Reinfeld, New York 1933) 9...e5 – see variation **B2b**.

8.cxd5 cxd5= Hecht – Hennings, Amsterdam 1972.

8.♘c3 0-0 9.d3 (9.d4 ♗e7 – see variation **B2a**) 9...♞e8 – see variation **B2b**.

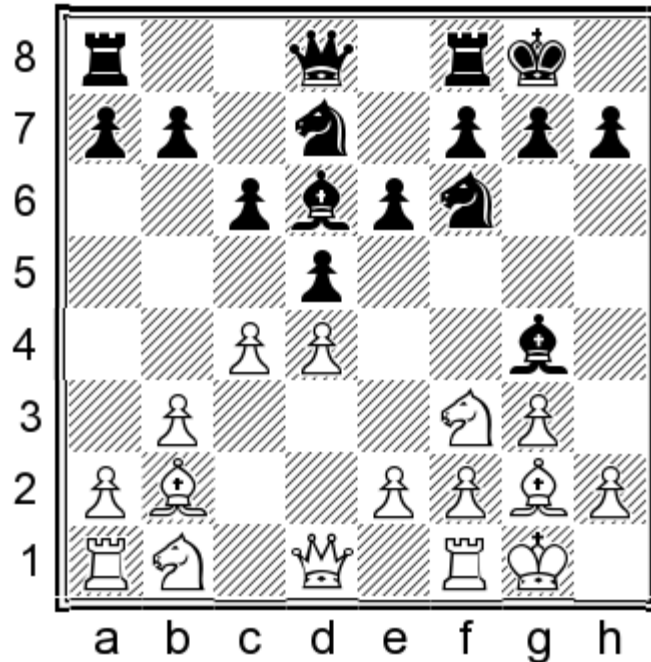
8.♘a3 0-0 9.d3 ♞e8 or 9.♘c2 ♞e8 10.♘e3 ♕h5 11.d3 a5 – see variation **B2b**.

B2a) 8.d4

White increases his control over the e5-square, but now, Black should not be afraid of the pawn-advance e2-e4, since it would only lead to the simplification of the position.

8...0-0

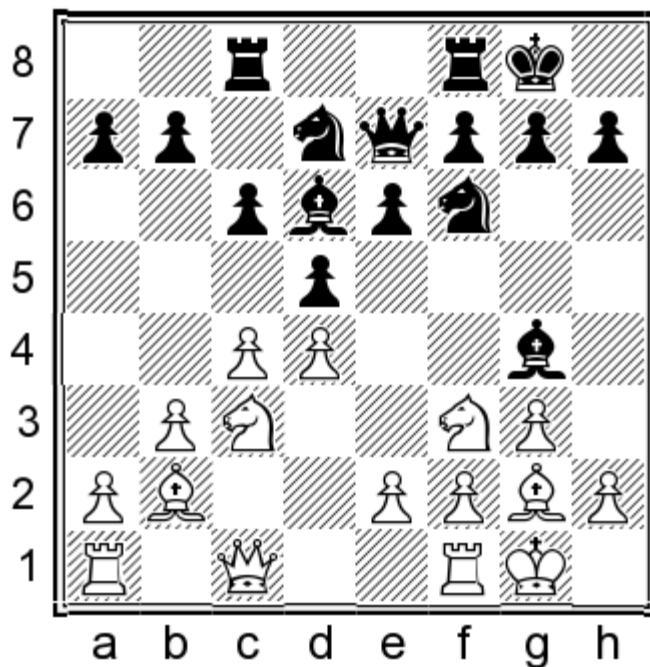
We have already analysed a similar position in Volume 1 (Chapter 6, variation **B2**), but there Black's bishop was on e7. Here, after ♘e5, he cannot play ♘xe5, since he would lose a piece, but the evaluation of the position remains as approximately equal anyway.



9.♘bd2

9.♘e5 ♕f5 10.♘d2 ♗e7 – see 9.♘bd2.

9.♘c3. As a rule, after this move, White connects his plans with the pawn-advance e2-e4: ♗c1, ♘h4, e2-e4, but this would lead to the simplification of the position. 9...♗e7 10.♗c1. This is necessary prophylactic against ♕a3. (10.♞e1 ♕a3 11.♕xa3 ♗xa3 12.♘e5 ♕f5= Barros Pazos – Tropf, ICCF 2011) 10...♞ac8



Black is not in a hurry to clarify his further plans.

Following 11.♖e1, Black can begin active actions in the centre. 11...dxc4 12.bxc4 e5 13.h3 ♕e6 14.e4 exd4 15.♗xd4. White has extra space indeed, but there has appeared a weak c4-pawn in his position. 15...♖fe8. After this move, Black's queen can retreat to the f8-square if the e-file is opened. 16.♖b1 ♗e5 17.♗f5 ♕xf5 18.exf5 ♖f8= Brissman – Hjelm, ICCF 2007. Black's superior pawn-structure compensates White's two-bishop advantage.

11.h3 ♕h5 12.♗h4 ♖fe8 13.e4 dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xe4 15.♕xe4, Conquest – Pinter, Batumi 1999, 15...f5!/? This is an interesting idea. Black weakens his e6-pawn, but obtains an excellent outpost for his knight at the centre of the board. 16.♕f3 ♕xf3 17.♗xf3 ♗f6 18.♔g2 ♗e4 19.♖e3 c5=

9...♖e7

This is a very good square for Black's queen, because he can exchange at some moment the dark-squared bishops with the move ♕a3. In addition, from that square the queen may support the freeing pawn-breaks c6-c5 and e6-e5.

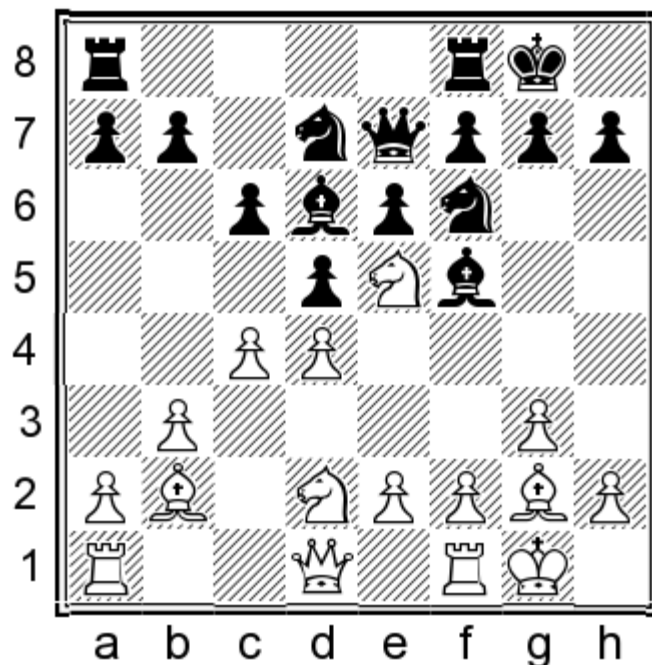
10.♗e5

White should refrain from 10.a3. He prevents ♕a3 indeed, but now his rook would be forced to protect that pawn. 10...♖ad8 11.♖e1 ♗e4= Bagirov – Oll, Vilnius 1997.

10.♖e1 ♕a3. In principle, the trade of the dark-squared bishops is in favour of White in similar pawn-structures. Here however, Black plans to continue with dxc4, followed by e6-e5, after which the position in the centre will be opened. 11.♖c1 ♕xb2 12.♖xb2 ♖ad8 13.♖ac1 ♖fe8. These are Black's last preparations before the break in the centre. 14.h3 (14.e3 h6= Bagirov – Ehlvest, Tallinn 1988) 14...♕h5 15.b4 (15.♗h4, Spraggett – Pinter, Paris 1990, 15...h6!/?=) 15...dxc4 16.♗xc4 ♕xf3 17.♕xf3 e5. The further simplifications of the position are unavoidable. 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♖xe5 20.♖xe5 ♖xe5 21.♖ed1 ♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♔f8= Ju Wenjun – Gunina, St Petersburg 2012.

10...♕f5

The bishop will prevent White's pawn-advance e2-e4 from this square.



11.a3

11.e3 ♜fd8= Strikovic – Kalod, Sabadell 2007.

White's attempt to occupy space on the queenside 11.c5 ♙c7 12.b4, Minasian – Hracek, Yerevan 1996, is harmless for Black 12...a5!?=

11.♞e1 ♜fd8 12.♘xd7 ♜xd7= Boyd – Colovic, France 2007.

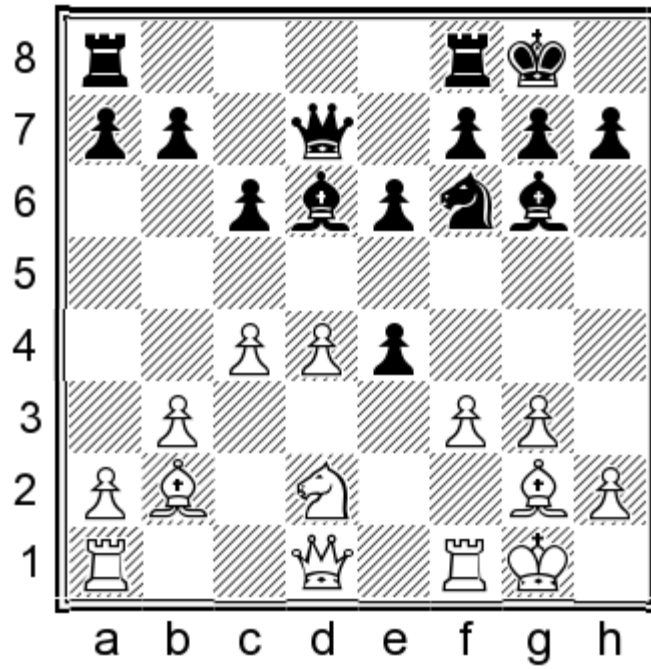
After 11.f3, Black can play 11...♘xe5 12.dxe5 and remove his bishop with tempo 12...♙c5+ 13.♔h1 ♘d7 14.f4, Bellini – Castaldo, Bratto 2002, 14...♞ad8!?=

Following 11.h3, Black's simplest reaction would be 11...h6, preparing a square for the retreat of his bishop. 12.g4 ♙h7= Yudasin – Bagirov, Podolsk 1990. The weakening of White's king shelter might hurt him in the future.

11.♞c1 ♞ac8. This move is played with the idea after c6-c5 to exploit the juxtaposition of the rook and the enemy queen on the c-file. 12.♘xd7 (12.a3 c5= Smejkal – Farago, Amsterdam 1979) 12...♞xd7 13.f3 ♙g6 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 e5.

There has arisen a position from the variation 11.♘xd7, but with the inclusion of the moves ♞c1 and ♞ac8. This circumstance cannot change much the character of the fight. 16.♘f3 ♘xe4 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5 18.dxe5, Bagirov – Slobodjan, Cuxhaven 1994, 18...♞fd8!?=

11.♘xd7 ♞xd7 12.f3. This is an interesting plan for White to occupy the centre with his pawns. Black must react very energetically not to end up in an inferior position 12...♙g6 13.e4 dxe4

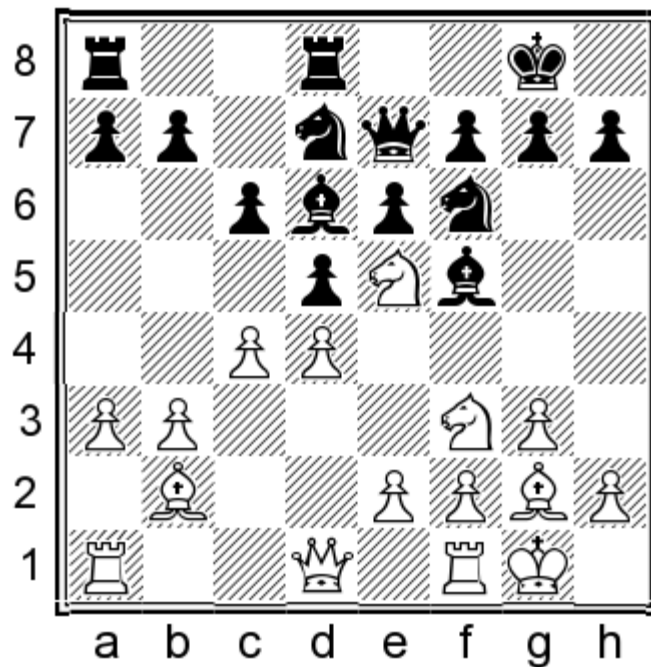


14.fxe4 e5 15.gf3 dxe4 16.gxe5 ex5. This move presents White with the two-bishop advantage, but exchanges his powerful knight and weakens his pawn-structure. 17.dxe5, Romanovsky – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1930, 17...♖c7!?
 18.♗d4 ♜fd8 19.♗e3 ♗b6 20.♞ae1 ♗xe3+ 21.♞xe3 ♗g5= In this endgame, White's isolated e5-pawn precludes him from exploiting the power of his bishop-pair.

It seems less consistent for White to choose here 14.gxe4. If he had planned to capture on e4 with his knight, he had better prepare the pawn-advance e2-e4 earlier with ♞e1, and not with f2-f3. 14...♞e7 15.♗e2 ♗c7 16.♞ad1 ♞ad8= Vladimirov – Illescas Cordoba, Logrono 1991.

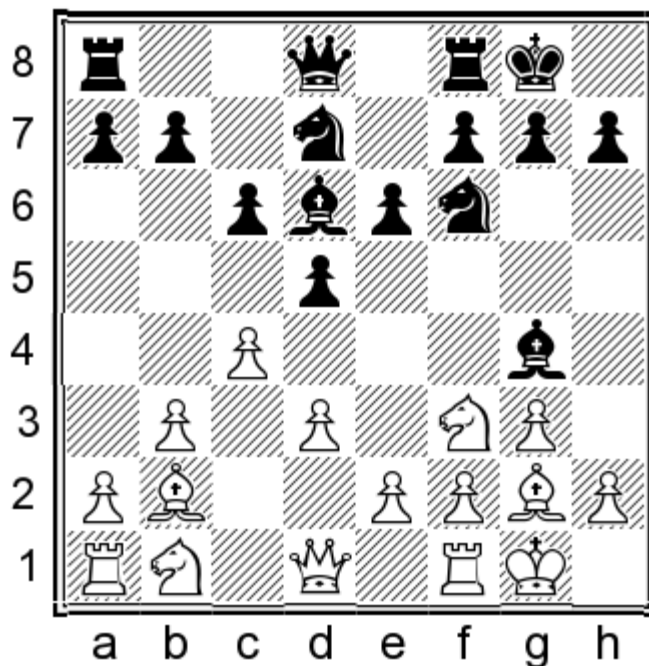
11...♞fd8 12.gdf3

12.♗c1 a5 13.gdf3 h6= Granda Zuniga – Kirov, Havana 1986.



12...♙e4= Azmaiparashvili – Kramnik, Dortmund 1992. Now, both sides have problems to find an active plan for their actions, because the central squares e5 and e4 are under reliable control and opening of the position on the queenside would be rather difficult to accomplish.

B2b) 8.d3 0-0

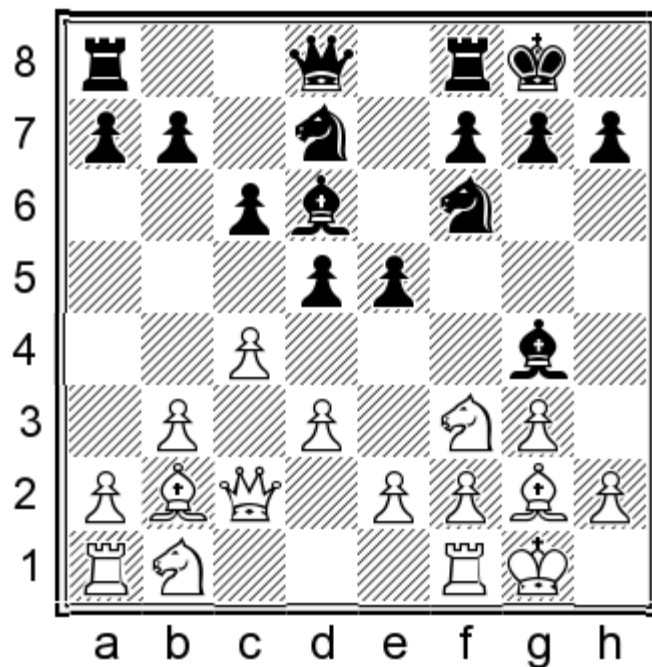


9.♘bd2

9.♘c3 ♞e8 10.♞c1 ♚e7 11.♞c2 ♞ad8= L.Hansen – Rasmussen, Denmark 1997.

9.h3 ♙h5 10.♘c3. White's knight would be more elastically placed on the d2-square and not on c3 (10.♘bd2 ♞e8 – see 9.♘bd2). 10...♞e8 11.♞c1 ♚e7= Thiede – Chuchelov, Germany 2006.

After 9.♚c2, Black can occupy the centre immediately with his pawn 9...e5.

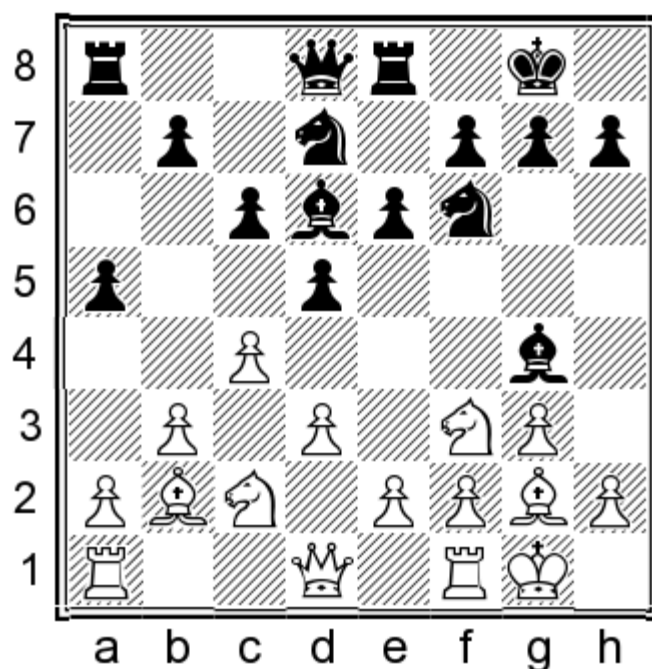


About 10.♘bd2 ♜e8 – see 9.♘bd2.

10.a3. This is a preparation for the pawn-advance b3-b4. Still, this move only creates a target for Black to organise counterplay on the queenside. 10...♜e8 11.b4, Rogers – Torre, Manila 1990, 11...a5!? 12.c5 ♕c7 13.e4 h6

10.h3 ♕h5 11.♘h4, Hickl – Landenbergue, Horgen 1994, (11.♘bd2 ♜e8 – see 9.♘bd2) 11...d4!? Black occupies space and restricts the enemy bishop on b2. 12.g4 ♘e8 13.♘f5 ♕g6 14.♘xd6 ♘xd6 Here, the two-bishop advantage is not important at all, because the position is closed. Meanwhile, the moves h2-h3 and g2-g4 have led to a serious weakening of White's kingside.

White transfers rather often in practice his knight to the c2-square. 9.♘a3 ♜e8 10.♘c2 a5



About 11.♞b1 ♕h5 12.♘e3 ♕c5 13.♞d2 ♞b6 14.a3 h6 – see 11.♘e3.

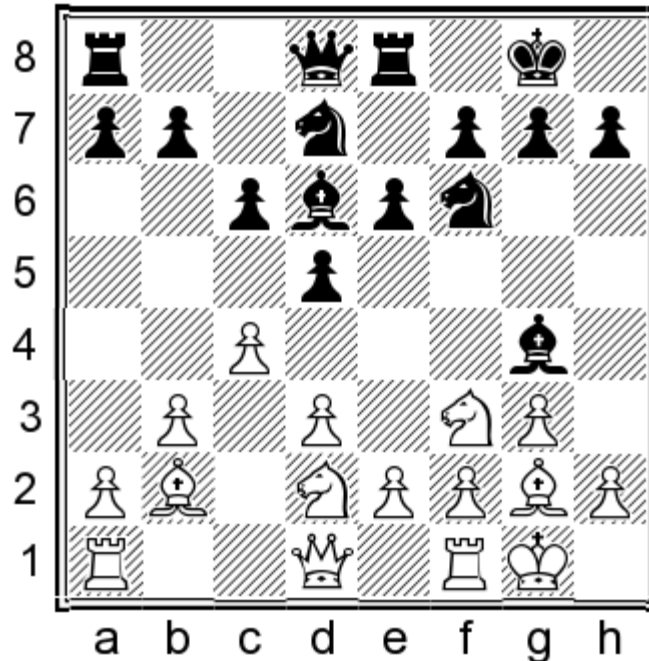
11.♞c1 ♕h5 12.♞e1 ♞b6∞ Timman – Jussupow, Linares 1992.

11.a3 ♖b6 12.♟b1 h6= Gazi – Baumgartner, ICCF 2012.

11.♘e3 ♗h5 12.a3 ♖b6 13.♟b1 ♘c5. The manoeuvre with the knight to the e3-square has taken too much time and meanwhile Black has deployed very actively his pieces. His prospects seem already preferable. 14.♗d2 h6 (It is less precise for Black to opt here for 14...♖a7 15.♘c2 ♗f8= Salov – Jussupow, Linares 1991.) 15.h3 ♗g6 E.Popov – Grabner, ICCF 2014.

9...♞e8

Black's plan is quite simple. He prepares and advances e6-e5, occupying the centre with his second pawn. If after that White plays e2-e4, he would weaken horribly the d4-square.



10.♖c2

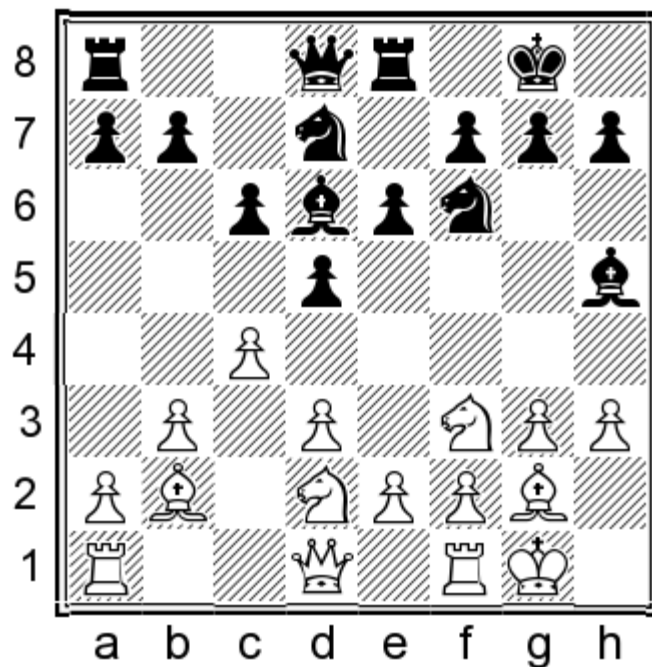
Or 10.♞e1 e5 11.♘f1, Winants – Berg, Ostend 1991, 11...♗b4!?=

10.♞c1 ♖e7 11.♞c2. This plan has been encountered long ago in the games of Richard Reti. White wishes to play ♖a1 and to follow that with ♞fc1. 11...a5. Now, Black's threat a5-a4 would be very unpleasant for White. With a rook still on a1, he could have played a2-a3, but his rook is already away from that square. 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♘xf3 a4= Kveinys – Khenkin, Dresden 2008.

After 10.e4, Al Ostath – Osieka, Baden 1987, the simplest road for Black to equality would be 10...♗e5!? 11.♗xe5. Now, White is forced to comply with simplifications (The move 11.d4?! leads to problems for him after 11...♗xd4! 12.♗xd4 dxe4 13.h3 ♗h5 14.g4 exf3 15.♘xf3 ♗g6= White's two-bishop advantage does not compensate fully his missing pawn.) 11...♘xe5 12.♖c2 ♘xf3+ 13.♗xf3 e5 14.cxd5 ♗xf3 15.♘xf3 cxd5=

10.a3. Playing this move before Black has played a7-a5 does not seem really useful for White. 10...e5 11.h3 ♗h5 12.cxd5 (12.♘h4?! Sebenik – Ragger, Pula 2003, 12...♘c5!?) 12...cxd5= Jacobsen – Hansen, Aarhus 1993.

10.h3 ♗h5



11. ♖c2 e5 – see 10. ♖c2.

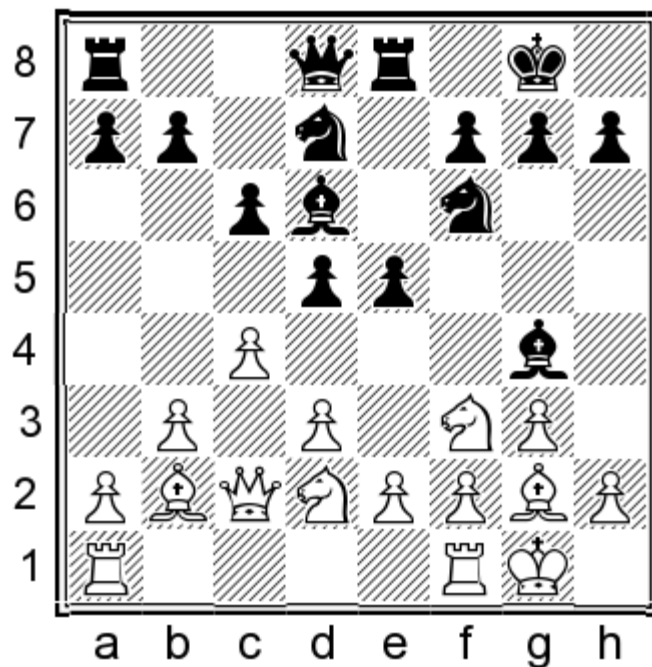
11. a3 e5 – see 10. a3.

Following 11. ♖e1 e5 12. e4, Habibi – Khenkin, Schaan 1998, Black can block the centre with 12... d4!?, after which the fight will continue on the flanks and White's rook on e1 would be misplaced.

It is premature for White to play here 11. ♖c1, because after 11... a5, he will hardly manage to prevent a5-a4. 12. a3 (12. ♖b1, Polugaevsky – Gomez Baillo, Rio Hondo 1987 12... e5!?) 12... ♖e7. Now, White's rook must go back to its initial position in order to protect the pawn. 13. ♖a1, Phung – Duong, Vung Tau 2004, 13... e5!?

11. e4 dxe4 12. dxe4 (Black would be better in the line: 12. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 13. dxe4 ♖c7 14. g4 ♖g6 15. ♖e2 e5. White has already two real weaknesses – the d4 and f4-squares. Black can emphasize this with a transfer of his knight to the e6-square. 16. ♖h4 ♖f8 17. ♖f5 ♖c5 18. ♖c3 ♖e6 19. ♖b2 ♖f4 Zueger – Pelletier, Bern 2014) 12... ♖e5= Sienczewski – Vlahos, Athens 2012.

10...e5



11.h3

After 11.♖ae1, Sadorra – Dreev, Richardson 2010, Black has a very useful waiting move 11...h6!?! This is not only a leeway for his king, but after h2-h3, g3-g4, ♘h4, also a square for the retreat of his bishop.

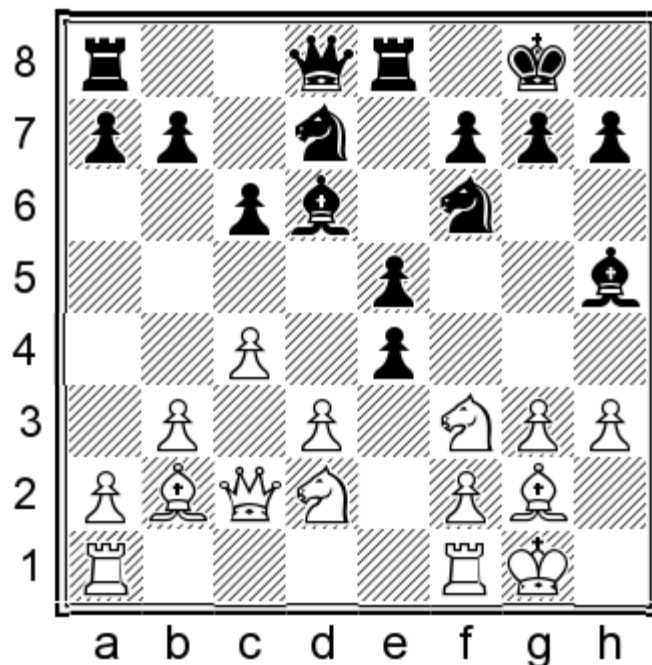
11.e3 ♗e7 12.a3 ♖ad8= Zolnierowicz – Hansen, Tastrup 1997.

11.e4 dxe4 12.dxe4 a5 13.♘h4, Hickl – M.Gurevich, Jakarta 1996 (13.h3 ♙h5, or 13.a3 ♗b6 14.♙c3 ♙c5 15.h3 ♙h5 – see 11.h3) 13...♘c5!?!

11...♙h5 12.e4

12.e3 ♘f8! Lobron – Torre, Bochum 1981. Black's prospects are already preferable thanks to his powerful pawn-centre.

12...dxe4



13.dxe4

White must already think about equality. It is possible that he had better capture with his knight because of that. 13. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 14.dxe4 ♚c7. Now, he can neutralise the vulnerability of the d4-square with an accurate play. For example: 15. ♗h4 ♗c5 16.b4. He occupies space on the queenside. 16... ♗e6 17.c5 ♘f8 18. ♘f3. White exchanges his not so active bishop. 18... ♘xf3 19. ♗xf3 ♜f6∞, followed by b7-b6, Teran Alvarez – Narciso Dublan, Linares 2016.

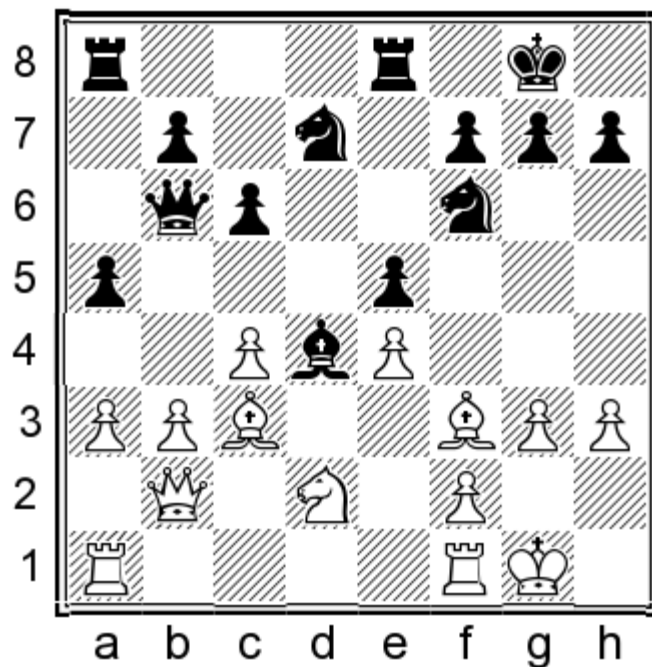
13...a5 14.a3

14. ♗h4 ♗c5 15. ♘f3, Janaszak – Dziuba, Warsaw 2011, 15... ♘f8!??

14...♚b6 15.♘c3 ♘c5 16.♚b2 ♘xf3!?

Black exploits the fact that capturing with the knight would lose the e4-pawn for White and trades advantageously the dark-squared bishops.

17. ♘xf3 ♘d4



Now, White must play very precisely; otherwise, he would end up in a strategically very difficult position due to his “bad” bishop on f3.

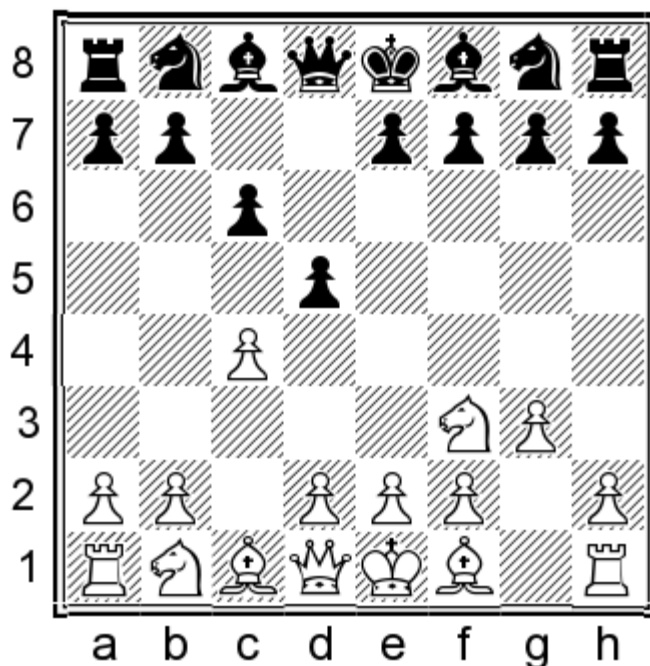
18.b4

18.♔g2 ♕xc3 19.♖xc3 c5. Black prevents his opponent from deploying his queenside pawns on the dark squares (b3-b4, c4-c5). 20.♞ab1 ♖c7 21.♞fe1 ♜f8 22.♞f1 ♜e6 23.♞e3 ♞d4 Suba – Salov, Moscow 1986. Here, White is doomed to defend long and hard an inferior position without too much of a chance of organising counterplay.

18...c5 19.♞ab1 ♕xc3 20.♖xc3 axb4 21.axb4 ♖c7 Zimina – Lagno, Rhodes 2013. White can still hold this position with an accurate play, but his game would be very difficult from the practical point of view. He must be constantly on the alert about the possible transfer of the enemy knight to the centre of the board with ♞f8-e6-d4.

Chapter 23

1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.g3



In this chapter we will analyse the variations in which White fianchettoes only his light-squared bishop. If he plays later b2-b3, then there would arise by transposition lines from the previous chapter.

3...♗f6 4.♙g2

4.♚b3 ♜b6 5.♙g2 ♙g4 – see 4.♙g2.

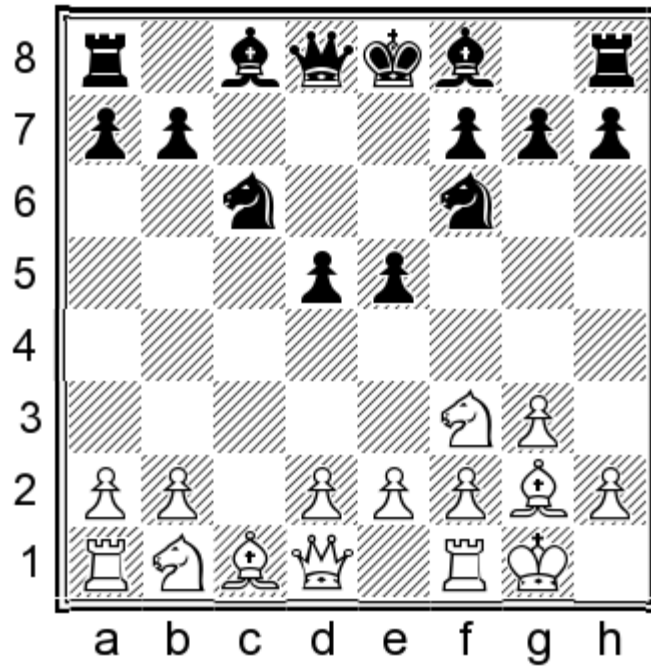
4.d4 ♙g4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6.

About 4.b3 ♙g4 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

4.♚a4 ♙g4 5.♙g2 e6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗e5, Venkatesh – Gopal, Kolkata 2012, 7...♙f5!?=

4.♚c2 ♙g4 5.♗e5 (5.♙g2 e6 – see 4.♙g2) 5...♙h5 6.♙g2 e6 7.d4 ♗bd7 8.♗xd7 ♚xd7. Black has a solid position. White has problems to find an active plan for his actions, since his bishop on g2 is severely restricted by the pawn on d5. 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.b3 0-0 11.♙b2, Kurajica – Guniaeva, Las Palmas 2016, 11...a5=

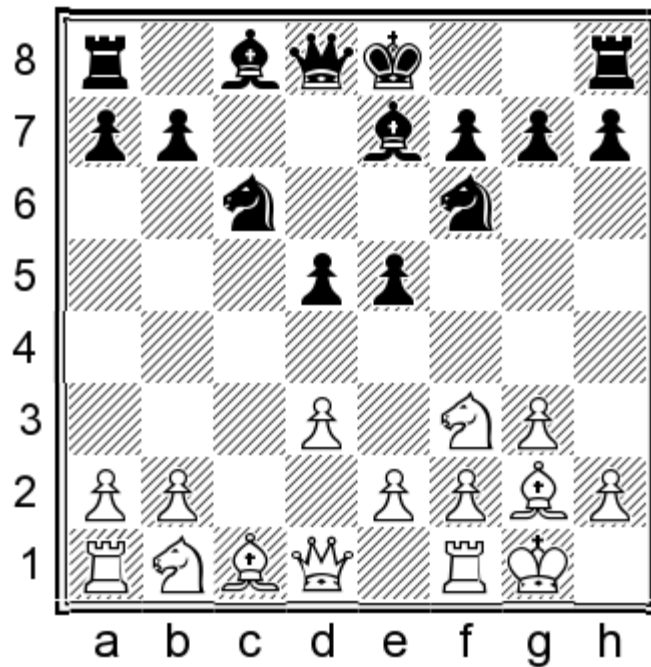
4.cxd5. This exchange seems premature, because after 4...cxd5, Black obtains the possibility to develop his knight to a more active position – the c6-square. 5.♙g2 (5.d4 ♗c6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 4) 5...♗c6 6.0-0 (It seems more reliable for White to play here 6.d4, preventing the occupation of the centre by the enemy pawns. 6...♙f5 – see Volume 1, Chapter 4; 6.d3 e5 7.0-0 ♙e7 – see 6.0-0.) 6...e5



Black's prospects already seem preferable thanks to his powerful pawn-centre.

7.d4 e4 8.♘e5 ♙d6 9.♙f4 (After 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♚c2 ♙d7, White must play very accurately. For example, after the routine move 11.♘d2?! Veen – Harding, England 2002, Black has the powerful energetic response 11...h5! 12.♘b3 h4, with a crushing attack.) 9...0-0 10.♘c3 ♞e8 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♚d2 ♙xf4 13.♚xf4, Foisor – Glek, Porto San Giorgio 2000, 13...♘g4!?, followed by ♘h6-f5.

7.d3 ♙e7



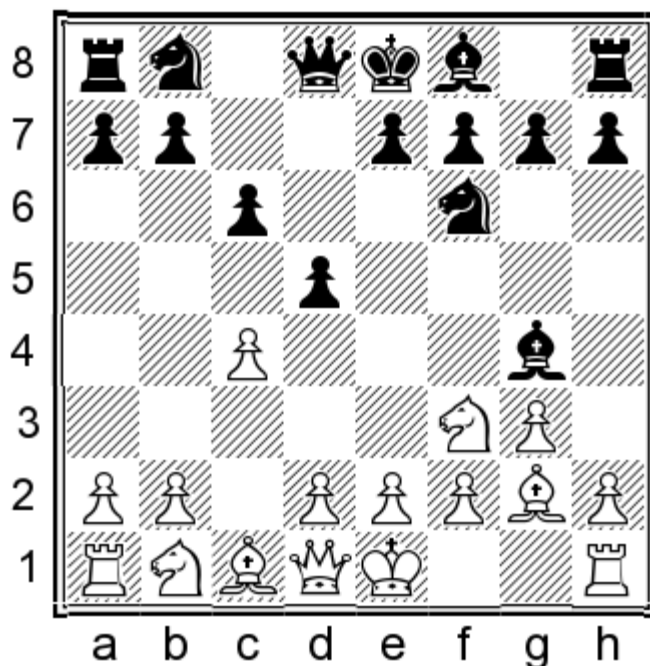
8.♘c3 d4 9.♘b1 ♘d5 10.♘bd2 ♙e6 Yandemirov – Kharlov, Kazan 2007.

8.d4. This move may seem a bit strange, because White could have played it at once, without losing a tempo. 8...e4 9.♘e5 0-0 10.♘c3 ♙e6 11.♙f4 (It was possibly better for him to play immediately 11.♘xc6, in order to create counterplay against the weak enemy c6-pawn. 11...bxc6 12.♘a4, Szabo – Keres, Moscow 1956, 12...♞c8!?) 11...♞c8

12.♖c1 h6 13.♗xc6 ♜xc6 Dreisch – Foulds, ICCF 2016.

8.♗g5 0-0 9.♗c3 ♗e6 10.a3 (After 10.d4 e4 11.♗e5 ♜c8 12.♗xc6 ♜xc6, Black's game is a bit freer. 13.♞d2 h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 Paunovic – Teran Alvarez, Seville 2004. He has not only the two-bishop advantage, but also extra space.) 10...h6 (Black is again better in the line: 10...d4!? 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♗e4 f5 13.♗ed2, Woisetschlaeger – Hoffmann, Freudenstadt 2006, 13...♜c8, but this variation looks less reliable for him from the practical point of view, since his king's position is weakened.) 11.♗xf6 (11.♗d2 d4) 11...♗xf6 12.♖c1 ♜c8 13.♗d2 ♞d7 14.♞a4 ♜fd8 Mamedov – Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010. Black has a powerful pawn-centre and the two-bishop advantage.

4...♗g4



We will analyse now A) 5.cxd5, B) 5.0-0 and C) 5.♗e5.

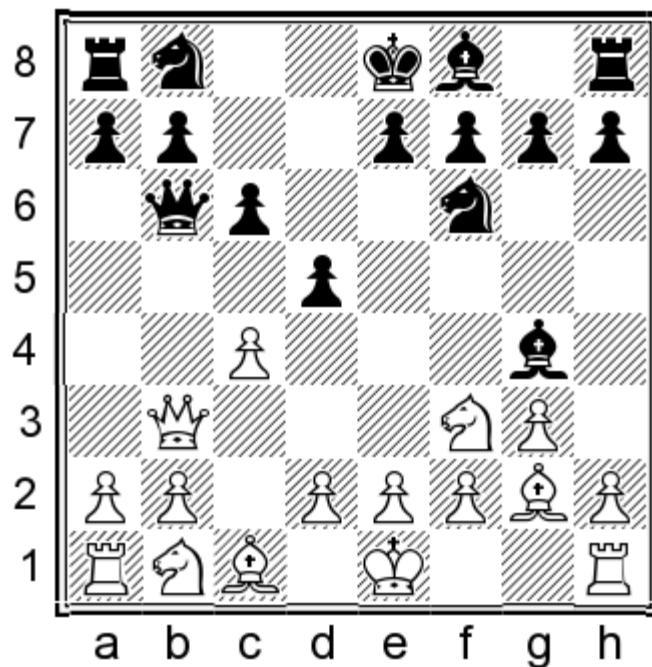
About 5.d4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation B.

5.h3 ♗h5 6.0-0 e6 – see Chapter 21, variation B2.

5.b3 e6 – see Chapter 22, variation B2.

5.♞c2 e6 6.d3 (6.0-0 ♗bd7 – see variation B; 6.b3 ♗bd7 7.♗b2 ♗d6 8.0-0 0-0 – see Chapter 22, variation B2) 6...♗bd7 7.♗bd2 (7.0-0 ♗d6 – see variation B) 7...♗d6 8.0-0 0-0 – see variation B.

5.♞b3. White is trying to exert pressure against the b7-square. 5...♞b6



6.♘e5 ♕e6 – see variation C.

6.0-0 e6, or 6.♖c2 ♘bd7 7.0-0 e6 – see variation B.

6.d4 e6 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation B.

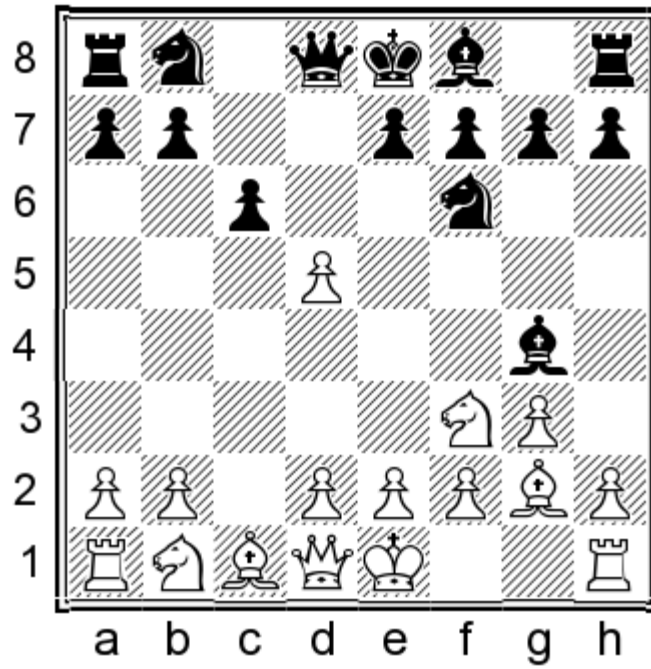
6.d3 e6 7.♕e3 (7.0-0 ♘bd7 – see variation B) 7...♗xb3 8.axb3. Here, Black can simply play 8...♘bd7!?= I.Sokolov – Pourramezanali, Iran 2017, ignoring the threat of taking the pawn: 9.♖xa7? ♗xa7 10.♕xa7 ♕xf3 11.♕xf3 ♕b4+ 12.♘d2 b6, followed by ♗d8-c7. White's bishop will not get away from the a7-square. Therefore, he should better choose 9.♘c3 a6 10.0-0 h6 transposing to variation B.

6.♘c3 e6 7.d4 (7.0-0 ♘bd7, or 7.d3 ♘bd7 8.0-0 ♗xb3 – see variation B) 7...♘bd7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation B1.

After 6.♗xb6, Black's rook on a8 is activated. 6...axb6 7.cxd5 ♘xd5. This is better for Black than capturing with the pawn, since now, the b-pawns will not be isolated. 8.0-0 ♘d7 9.♘c3 (9.d4?! ♘b4 10.♘a3 e6 11.♕d2 b5 White's knight is misplaced at the edge of the board.) 9...e6= Vrhovnik – Kukuljan, Rijeka 2009.

A) 5.cxd5

This move has venom. After taking with the pawn White wishes to exploit the weakening of the a4-e8 diagonal.



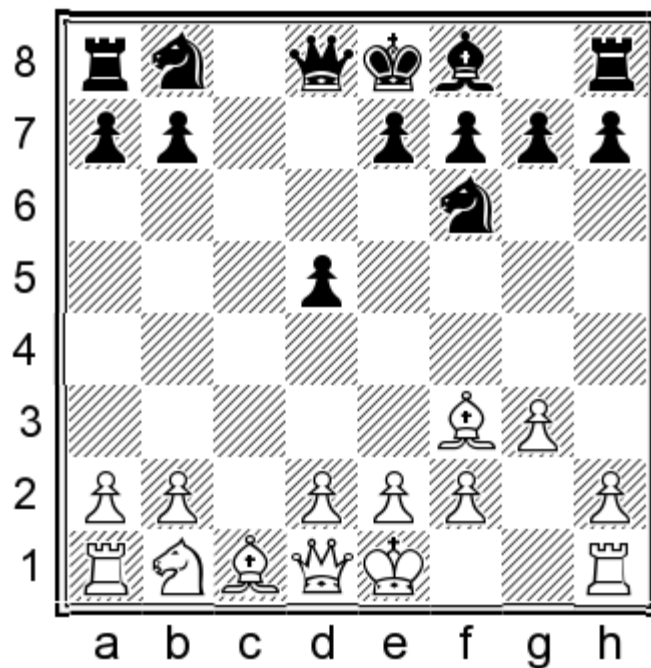
5...Qxf3!

This is the only move for Black with chances of equalising.

Following 5...cxd5 6.♘e5 ♕h5 7.♖a4+ ♗bd7 8.♘c3 e6 9.g4! ♕g6 10.h4±, White seizes completely the initiative.

6.♕xf3 cxd5

Black has presented his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but has obtained an excellent square for his knight.



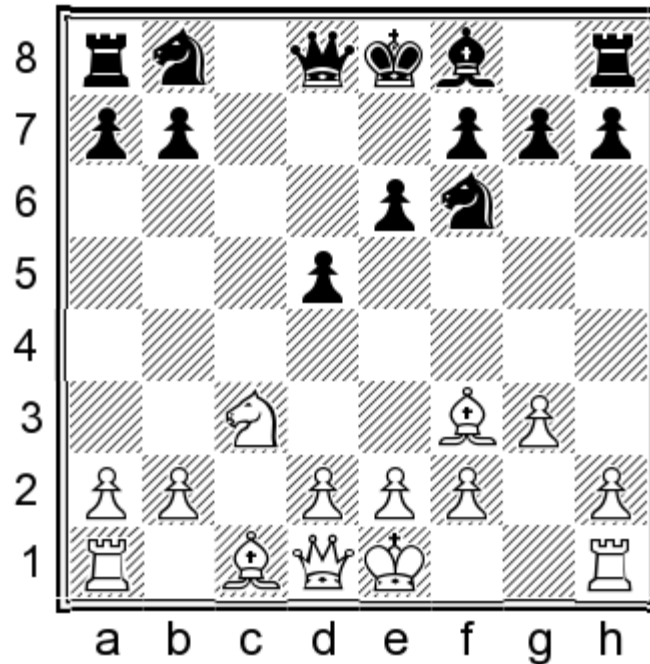
7.0-0

White will hardly continue the game without castling. His alternatives lead as a rule to transposition of moves.

About 7.d3 ♖c6 8.0-0 e6 – see 7.0-0.

7.d4 e6 8.♖c3 (8.0-0 ♖c6 – see 7.0-0) 8...♖c6 9.e3, Wen Yang – Wang Hao, China 2015 (9.0-0 ♗e7 – see 7.0-0)
9...♞c8!?=

7.♖c3 e6

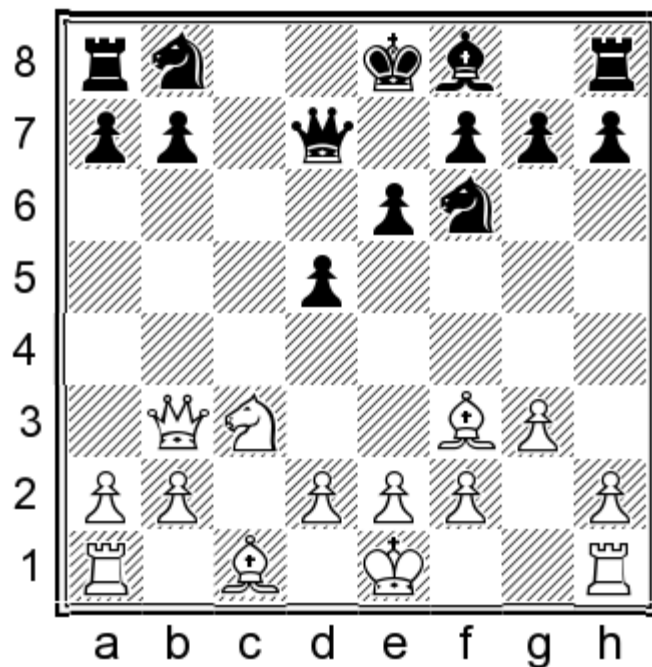


8.d4 ♖c6 – see 7.d4.

8.0-0 ♖c6, or 8.d3 ♖c6 9.0-0 ♗e7, or 9.♗d2 ♗e7 10.♞c1 0-0 11.0-0 ♗b6 – see 7.0-0.

8.e4. White wishes to open immediately the position in order to exploit the two-bishop advantage. Still, there appears an isolated pawn in his position and it might turn out to be weak in the middlegame. 8...dxe4 9.♖xe4 ♖xe4 10.♗xe4 ♖c6= Hudjakov – Malahov, Alushta 1999.

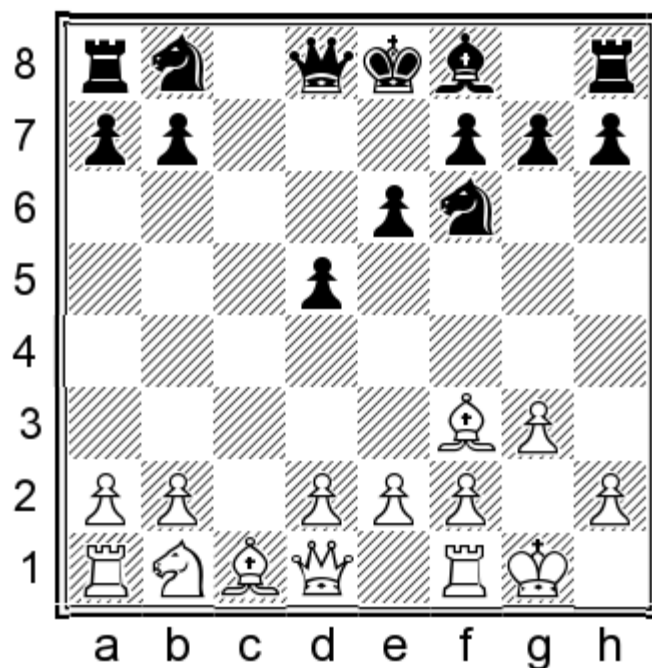
7.♗b3 ♗d7 8.♖c3 e6



9.0-0 ♜c6, or 9.d3 ♜c6 10.♙g2 ♙e7 11.0-0 0-0 – see 7.0-0.

9.d4 ♜c6 10.e3 ♜a5 11.♙b5, Bayarmandakh – Batchuluun, Ulaanbaatar 2010, 11...♙xb5 12.♜xb5 ♔d7= In this endgame it would be difficult for White to prove the power of his bishops, because Black controls reliably the e4-square and White has no other ways of opening the position.

7...e6



8.♜c3

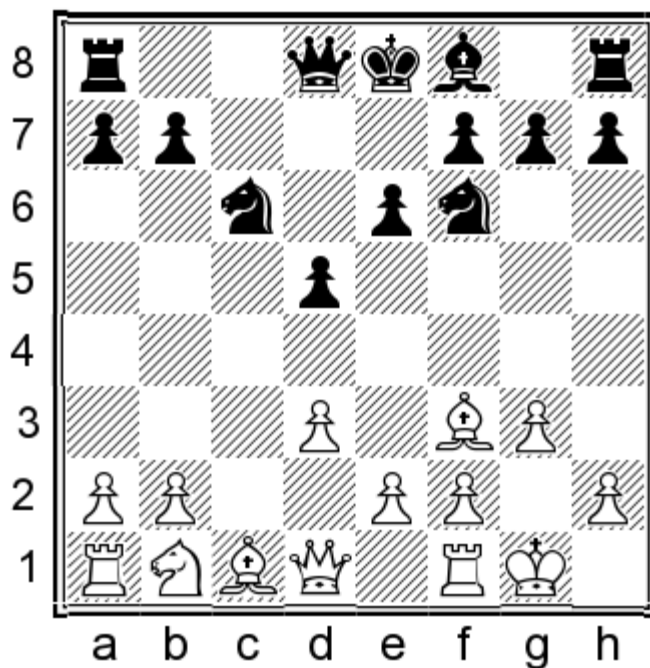
8.♙b3 ♙d7 9.d3 (9.♜c3 ♜c6 10.♙g2 ♙e7 11.d3 0-0 – see 8.♜c3) 9...♜c6 10.♙e3 (10.♙g2 ♙e7 11.♜c3 0-0 – see 8.♜c3) 10...♙e7 11.♜d2 0-0 12.♞fc1 ♞fc8= Kharlov – Yakovich, Rostov on Don 1993.

8.g2 c6 9.a3, Leon Hoyos – Ghaem Maghami, Istanbul 2012 (9.d3 e7 – see 8.d3) 9...e7!?=

8.b3 c6 9.b2 e7. Black completes effortlessly the development of his kingside pieces and castles. He has no pawn-weaknesses in his position and White can hardly find an active plan for his actions. 10.d3 0-0 11.e3 (11.d2, Tan – Ushenina, Teheran 2017, 11...c8!?=) 11...c8= Nakamura – Adams, Sharjah 2017.

8.d4. White restores the parity in space, but impedes his possibility to exploit the power of his bishops, because now, the pawn-advance e2-e4 would be very difficult to accomplish. 8...c6 9.e3 (9.c3 e7 – see 8. c3) 9...e7 10.b3 (10.c3 0-0 – see 8.c3) 10...0-0 11.b2, Fressinet – Lazarev, Balagna 2017, 11...a5!?=, followed by f8, while after the removal of the knight from the b1-square, Black will always manage to deprive his opponent of his two-bishop advantage with the move a3.

8.d3 c6



About 9.c3 e7, or 9.a3 e7 10.c3 0-0 – see 8.c3.

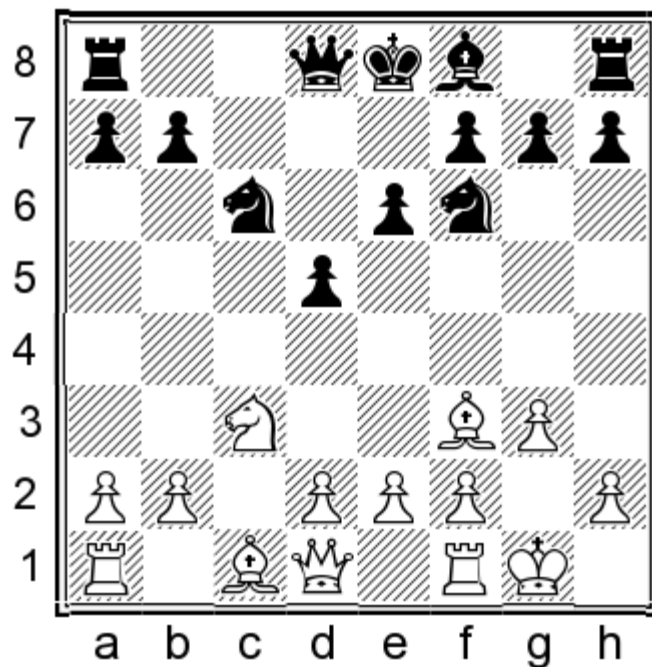
9.e3 e7=

9.d2. White prepares the transfer of his knight to the b3-square. 9...e7 10.b3 0-0 11.e3. He wishes to penetrate with his knight to c5, but after 11...d7, Black can prevent that. 12.c1 f6= Reshevsky – Taimanov, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

9.e4. This move seems logical, because White has the two-bishop advantage and he must try to open the game. 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 c5. The bishop will be very active on this diagonal. 11.d2 0-0 12.b3 b6= Grigoryan – Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan 2014.

9.g2 e7 10.b3 (10.c3 0-0 – see 8.c3) 10...0-0 11.b2 c8 12.d2 b6=, followed by f8, Fridman – T.L.Petrosian, Warsaw 2012. If White wishes to advance e2-e4, then Black will be perfectly prepared for the opening of the game in the centre.

8...c6

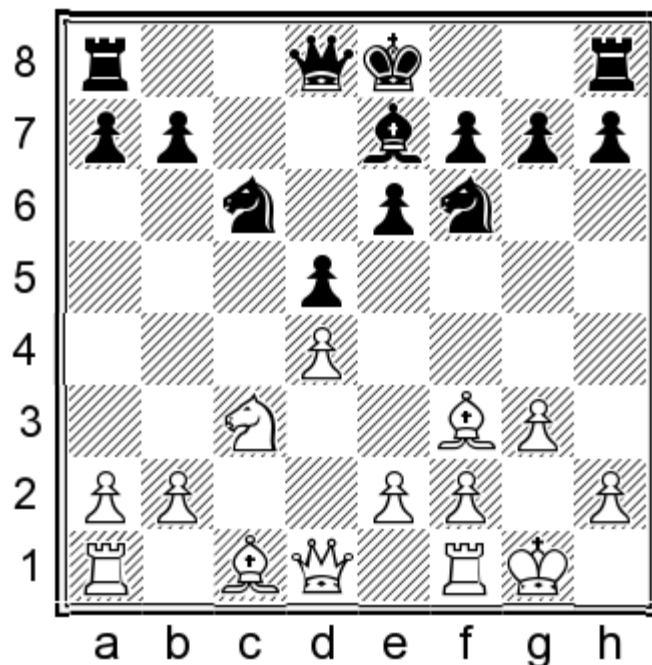


9.d3

About 9.♘g2 ♘e7 10.d3 0-0 – see 9.d3.

9.a3. White wishes to advance b2-b4 as quickly as possible and to fianchetto his other bishop. 9...♘e7 10.b4 (10.d3 0-0 – see 9.d3) 10...0-0 11.♘g2 (11.d3 a5 – see 9.d3) 11...♝c8 12.♘b2 ♞d7. This is the simplest for Black. He wishes to play ♘f6, in order to exchange on b2, after the removal of the knight from the c3-square, and thus to deprive White of his two-bishop advantage. 13.♝c1 ♘f6= Romanov – Looshnikov, Voronezh 2010.

9.d4 ♘e7

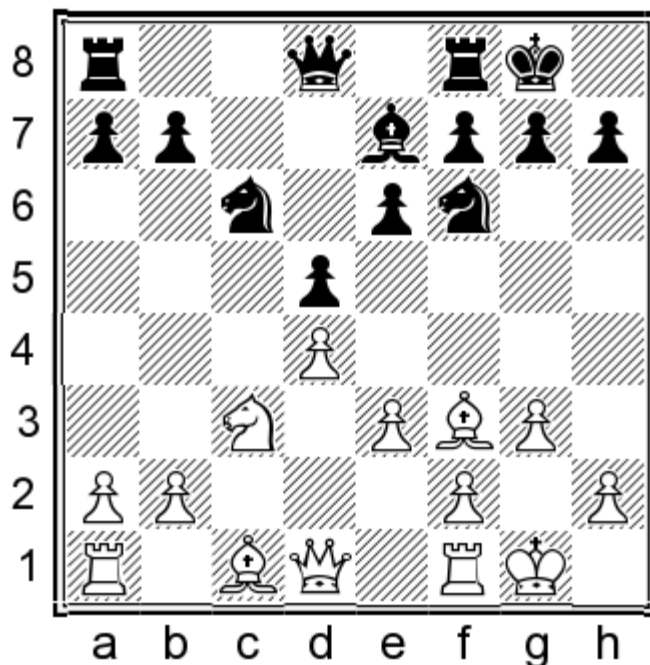


10.♝b1 0-0= Loginov – Solozhenkin, St Petersburg 2000.

10.b3. White prepares the development of his bishop to b2, but it would not be so active on this square. In addition,

Black can exchange it there with ♖a5 and ♗a3. 10...♖a5 11.♗b2 (11.♗d3 ♜c8= Gabuzyan – Hracek, Golden Sands 2014) 11...♗a3= Xiu Deshun – Lenderman, Ningbo 2013.

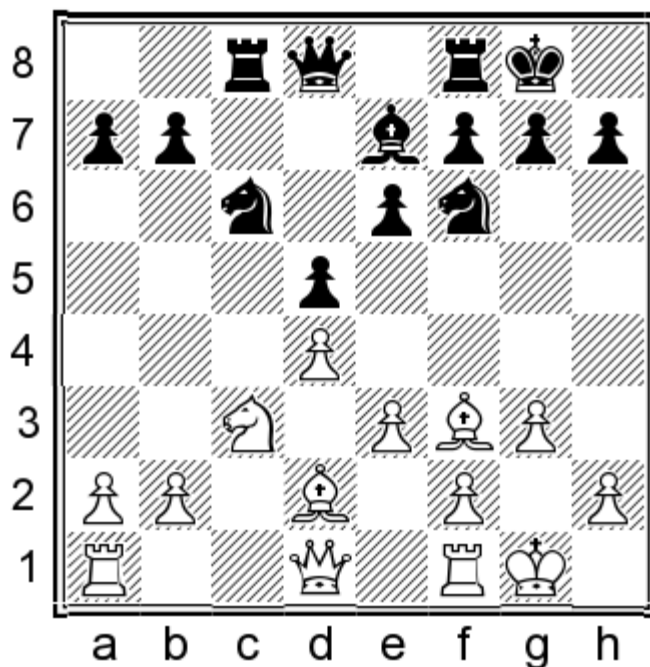
10.e3. White wishes to develop his knight on d2, but he must protect at first his d4-pawn. 10...0-0



11.♗e2 ♜c8 12.♗d2 a6 – see 11.♗d2.

11.b3 ♖a5 12.♗b2 ♗a3 13.♗c1 ♗xb2 14.♗xb2 ♜fc8= Carlsen – Caruana, Moscow 2013. White has no chances of obtaining an edge after the loss of his two-bishop advantage.

11.♗d2 ♜c8



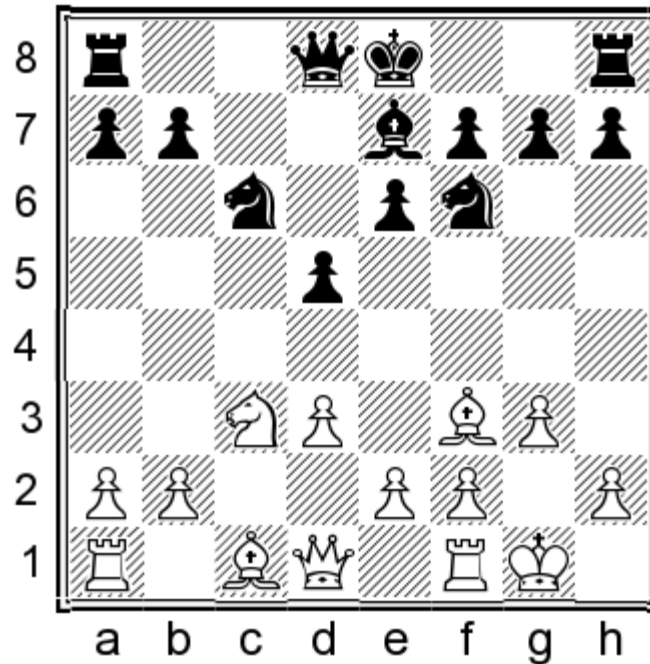
The arising pawn-structure is more typical for the exchange variation of the Slav Defence. There is just one open file on the board and as a rule the side which manages to transfer the knight to c4, or c5 obtains an edge.

12.♗g2 ♖a5 13.♗e2 ♖c4 14.♗c1 ♖a5= Malakhov – Gunina, Jurmala 2015.

12.♖e2 a6. Black prepares b7-b5 and deprives the opponent of the possibility to play ♖b5. 13.♟fd1 (Following 13.♟ac1, Black should play 13...b5=, preventing the activation of White's knight (♘a4-c5), Movsesian – Nyback, Germany 2014.) 13...b5 14.♙e1 (14.a4 b4 15.♘a2 ♖b6= Gabuzyan – Bok, Maribor 2012) 14...♖b6 15.♙g2 ♟fd8= Vishnu – Ravi, Noida 2016.

12.♞c1 ♟d7 (It seems less precise for Black to play here 12...♘d7, since in that case White would obtain a good game by transferring his knight to f4, from where it might go to the c5-square via d3. 13.♘e2 ♘b6 14.♘f4 ♘c4 15.♙c3± Karjakin – Eljanov, Baku 2015) 13.♖e2, Tomashevsky – Grachev, Sochi 2017, 13...a6!?!= White cannot play here 14.♘a4?, since that would lose a pawn for him after: 14...♘xd4 15.exd4 ♖xa4+

9...♙e7



10.♙g2

Now, White will manage to play ♖b3, without being afraid of ♘d4. Besides this move however, he has numerous other alternatives, but neither of them promises him any advantage. For example:

10.♖a4 0-0 11.♙f4 a6 – see 10.♙f4.

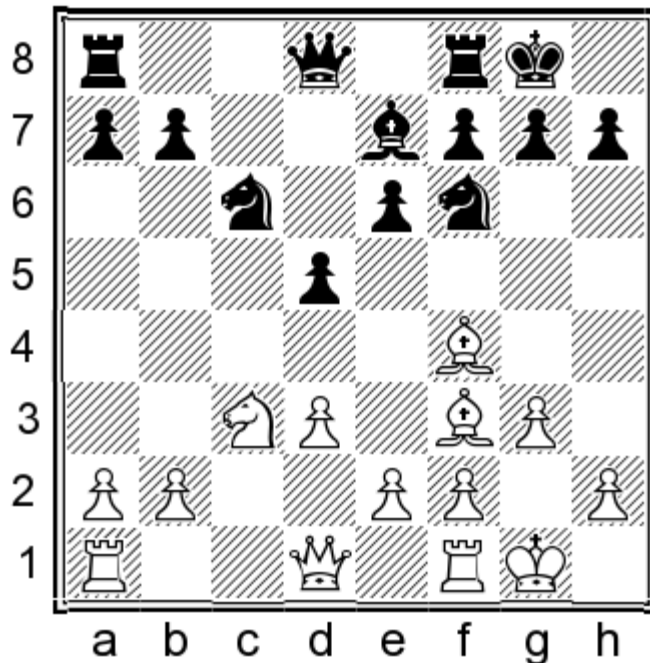
10.d4 0-0 11.e3 ♟c8= Cordova – Matlakov, Moscow 2017.

10.♙d2 0-0 11.♟c1 (11.♙g2 ♟c8 – see 10.♙g2; 11.a3 ♟c8 12.♙g2 a6 – see 10.♙g2; 11.♖a4 ♖b6 12.♟ab1, Lenderman – Bluebaum, Bad Wiessee 2014, 12...a6!?!=) 11...♖b6 12.♘a4 ♖b5 13.♙g2 ♟fc8= Delchev – Iljin, Plovdiv 2008.

After 10.e4, Black can try to fight for the d-file 10...dxe4 (It might be also good for him to occupy some additional space with 10...d4!?!). 11.dxe4 0-0 12.♙e3 ♖a5 13.a3 (The move 13.♖b3 allows the trade of the dark-squared bishops. 13...♙c5 14.♙xc5 ♖xc5= 15.♖xb7?! The exchange of the b-pawns is obviously in favour of Black. 15...♘d4 16.♙d1 ♟fb8 17.♖a6 ♟xb2± Starostits – Krivonosov, Riga 2005. Black's pieces are very active.) 13...♟fd8 14.♖e1 ♘e5 15.♙e2 ♘eg4 16.♙f4 ♖h5. He provokes a weakening of White's kingside. 17.h4 ♖g6 18.♟d1 ♘h5 19.♙c7 ♟dc8 20.♟d7 ♙c5∞ David – Nezd, St Petersburg 2013.

10.a3 0-0 11.b4 (11.♙d2 ♟c8 – see 10.♙d2; 11.♙g2 ♟c8 – see 10.♙g2). Here, Black can try to organise active counterplay on the queenside with the line: 11...a5 12.b5 ♘d4 13.♙g2 a4 14.♟b1 ♘b3 15.♙b2 ♘c5= Keene – Geller, Teeside 1975. White's queenside has been weakened.

10.♔f4 0-0



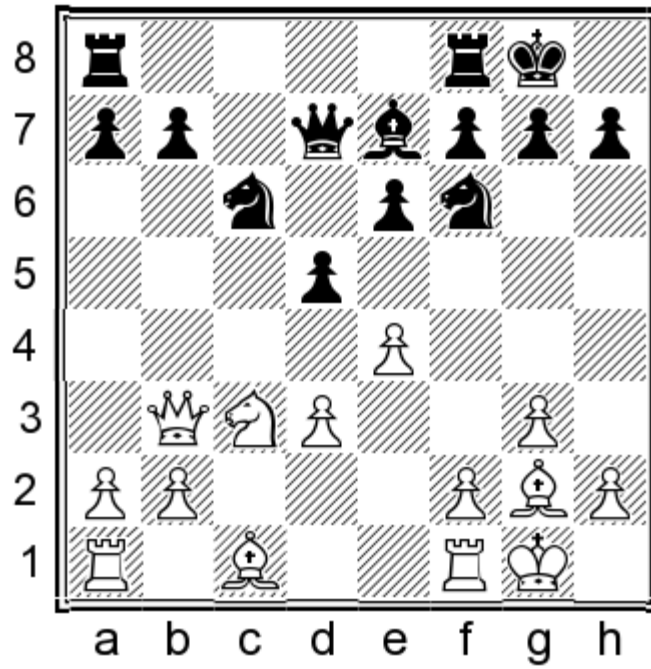
11.♕g2 ♖c8 – see 10.♕g2.

After 11.e4, Black can prevent the opening of the position with: 11...d4 12.♗b5 a6 13.♗a3 b5= Gabuzyan – Harutyunian, Yerevan 2013.

11.♖c1 ♖c8 12.a3, Kunin – Kolesnik, Germany 2014, 12...♗b6!?=

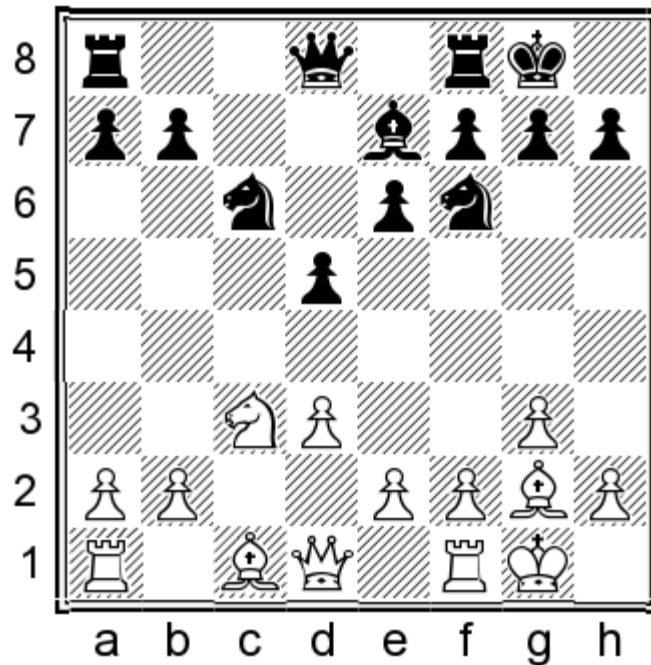
11.♗a4 a6 12.♖fc1 (12.♖ac1, Harika – Eljanov, Moscow 2013, 12...♗b6!?=) 12...♖c8 13.♗d1 (13.♕g2 ♗b6= Amin – Elsness, Tromsø 2014) 13...h6 14.♕g2 ♕c5. The bishop will be very active on this diagonal exerting pressure against the enemy f2-pawn. 15.♕d2 ♕a7 16.♖ab1 ♗g4 17.e3 ♗ge5 18.d4. White has succeeded in restricting his opponent's bishop on a7, but now, Black can simply force a draw by repetition of the position. 18...♗d3 19.♖c2 ♗db4 20.♖cc1 ♗d3= Ziese – Jacot, ICCF 2016.

10.♗b3 ♗d7. Now, before playing ♗d4, Black naturally should protect his b7-pawn. 11.♕g2 0-0 12.e4 (12.♕f4 ♖fc8!?=; 12.♕d2 ♖fc8 13.♖fc1 ♖ab8= Farkas – Krstulovic, Budapest 2017)



12...d4. White is ready to open the game in the centre, so Black should better try to keep the position closed. 13.♘e2 a5 14.a3. White should not allow the enemy knight to penetrate to the b4-square (14.♙d2 ♖b4 15.♗f4 a4 16.♚d1, Nevostrujev – Medvedev, Prokopenvsk 2012, 16...♚b5!?↑, exerting rather unpleasant pressure against the d3-pawn) 14...a4 15.♚d1, Zaragatski – Mons, Nuremberg 2013, 15...♗a5!? Black's knight is headed for the weakened b3-square. 16.e5 ♗e8 17.♝b1 ♘c7∞

10...0-0



11.♙d2

11.♙f4 ♜c8 12.a3 ♗d7= Medvegy – Gonda, Zalakaros 2013.

11.h3 ♖c8= Brunello – Kogan, Otranto 2011.

11.a3 ♖c8 12.b4 (12.♙d2 a6 – see 11.♙d2) 12...♗d7=, followed by ♙f6, Benjamin – Morovic Fernandez, Buenos Aires 1992. Black is preparing in advance for the appearance of the enemy bishop on the b2-square.

11...♖c8 12.a3

After 12.♗b3, Black's simplest reaction would be 12...♗d7= and White's attempt to capture a pawn would lead to the loss of his queen, Zaragatski – Gyimesi, Germany 2011.

12.h3 a6 13.f4. If White tries to advance his kingside pawns, there would arise a double-edged situation, because the e3-square would be weakened. 13...d4 14.♗e4, Bocharov – Jakovenko, Novosibirsk 2012, 14...♗d5!?∞

12.♖c1 ♗b6 13.♗a4 ♖a6 14.a3 ♗d7∞ Mastrovasilis – Prohaszka, Achaea 2012.

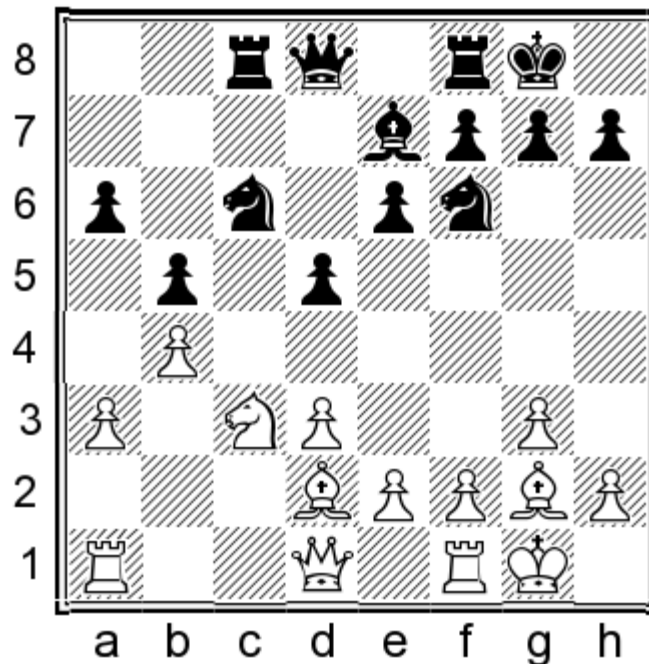
12...a6

Black intends to occupy space on the queenside with the move b7-b5.

13.b4

13.♖c1 b5 14.♗a2. The edge of the board is hardly the best place for White's knight. (14.b4 ♗d7 – see 13.b4) 14...♗d7 15.e3 a5 16.♖c2 b4= Pigusov – Speelman, Cala Galdana 1994.

13...b5



14.♖c1

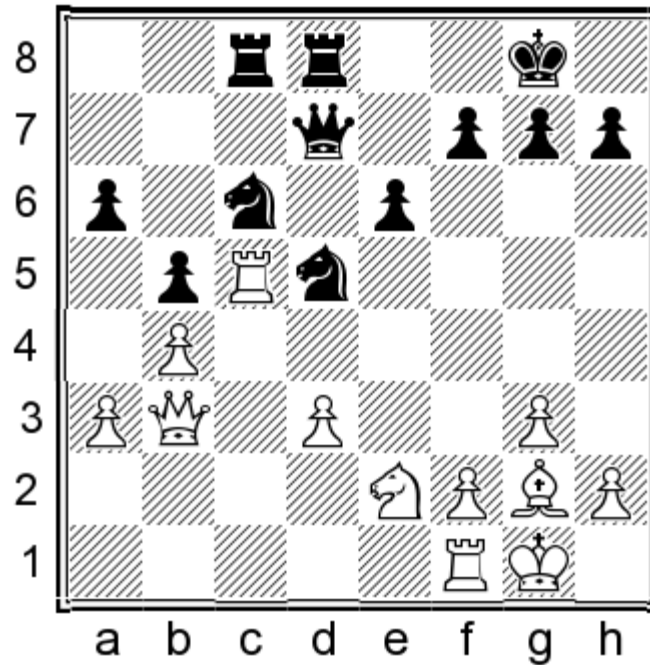
14.♗b3 ♗d7=

14.♖a2 ♗b6= Minasian – Almasi, Ohrid 2001.

14...♗d7 15.♗b3

15.♙f4, Maletin – Sebag, Moscow 2008, 15...♞fd8!?, preparing in advance against the enemy pawn-break e2-e4.

15...♞fd8 16.e3 d4. Black prevents d3-d4. 17.♘e2 dxe3 18.♙xe3 ♘d5 19.♙c5 ♙xc5 20.♞xc5



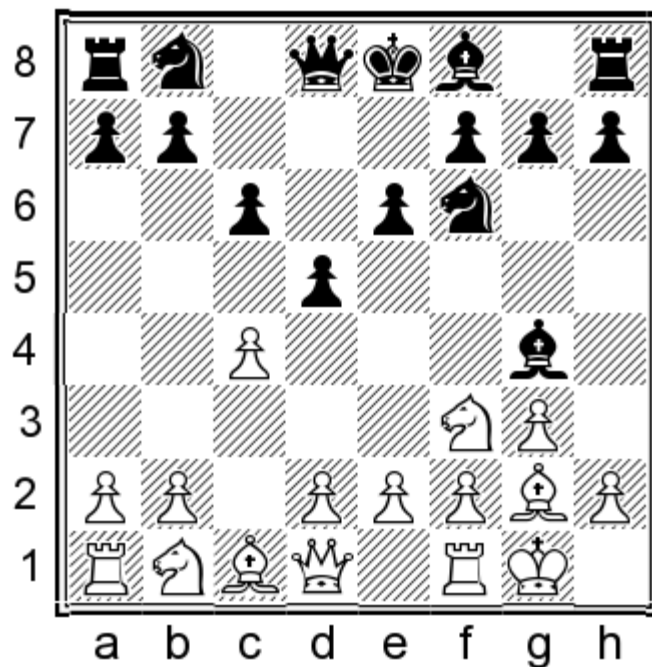
The powerful placement of the knight in the centre and the weak enemy pawn compensate for Black the vulnerability of his c5-square. 20...♘b6. This knight is headed for a4 in order to take control over the c5-square. (It would be sufficient for Black to choose here 20...♘ce7=, in order to equalise, increasing the control over the important strategically d5-square.) 21.♞fc1 ♘e7 22.d4 ♘a4 23.♞xc8 ♞xc8 24.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 25.d5. White must get rid of his isolated pawn; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position. 25...♘xd5 26.♙xd5 exd5 27.♞xd5 ♘b6 28.♞e4 ♘c4 29.♞f3 h6= The position has been simplified considerably and in the game Tiits – Jacot, ICCF 2012 the opponents agreed to a draw.

B) 5.0-0

This is a very flexible move. White makes a useful continuation and conceals for the moment his further plans.

5...e6

Black should better ignore the presently defenceless c4-pawn. His basic task is to hold on to the d5-square.



6.d3

White opens the diagonal for his bishop, protects his c4-pawn and increases his control over the e4-square.

6.cxd5 ♙xf3 7.♙xf3 cxd5 – see 5.cxd5.

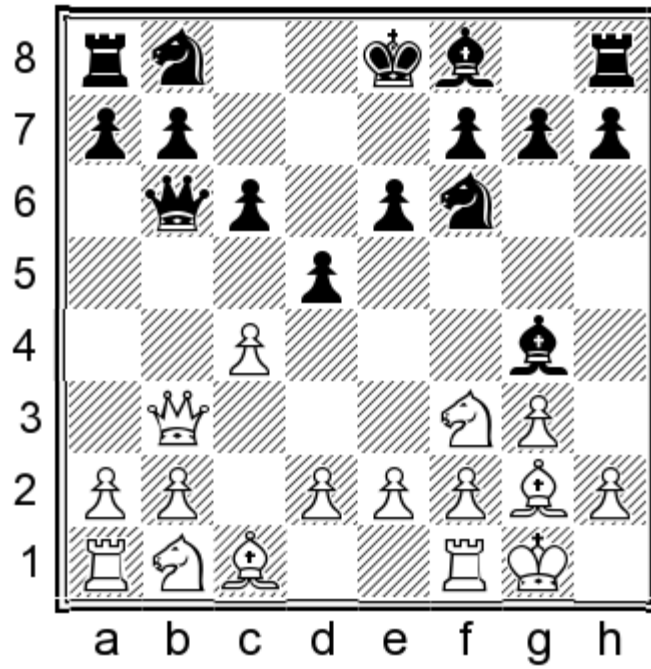
6.d4 ♘bd7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B**.

6.b3 ♘bd7 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

6.♙c2 ♘bd7 7.d3 (7.d4 ♙e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B**; 7.b3 ♙d6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**) 7...♙d6 – see 6.d3.

Following 6.h3, Black can even accept the pawn-sacrifice. 6...♙xf3 7.♙xf3 dxc4 8.♙c2 ♙d4∞ Deneuveville – Fister, ICCF 2013.

6.♙b3 ♙b6



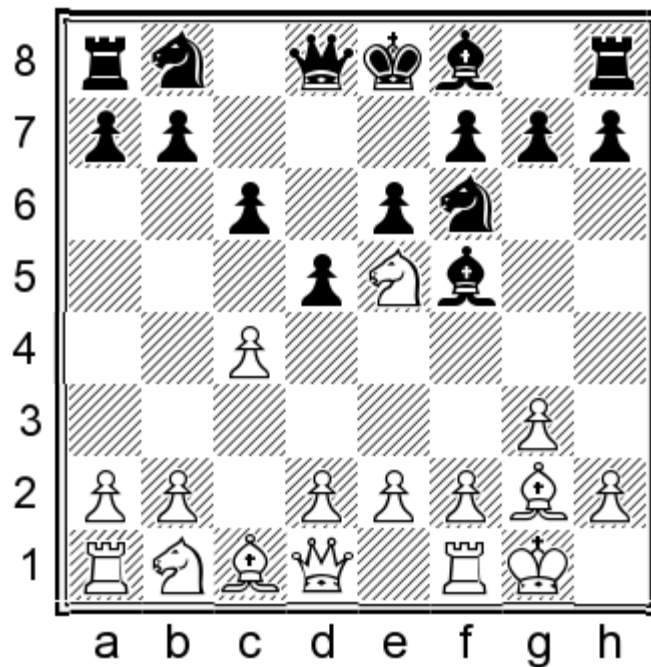
About 7.d3 ♖bd7 – see 6.d3.

7.d4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B1**.

7.♖c3 ♖bd7 8.d4 (8.d3 ♖xb3 – see 6.d3) 8...♙e7 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **B1**.

7.♙c2 ♖bd7 8.b3 (8.d3 dxc4 – see 6.d3) 8...a5 9.♖c3. White prevents a5-a4. 9...♙e7 10.d3 0-0 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3, Eljanov – Rublevsky, Loo 2013, 12...♙a6!?, followed by b7-b5, a5-a4. Black has the initiative on the queenside, while White must still prove the power of his bishops.

6.♖e5 ♙f5

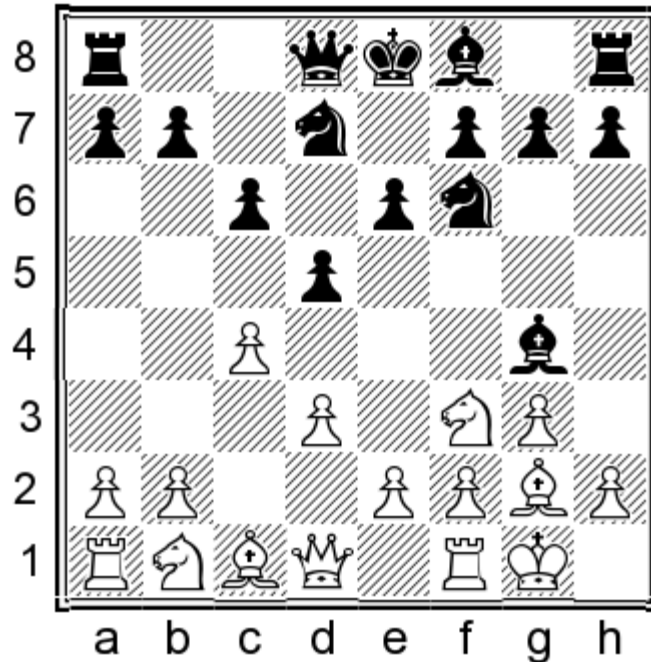


7.d4 – see Volume 1, Chapter 6, variation **A**.

7.♙b3. The attack against the b7-pawn would not promise much to White. 7...♙b6 8.d3 ♖bd7 9.♖xd7 ♖xd7 10.♙e3 ♖xb3 11.axb3 a6= Romanishin – Safyanovsky, Bad Woerishofen 2010.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.d4 (After 8.d3 ♔d6 9.e4 ♕xe5, White obtains the two-bishop advantage, but his pawn-structure is weakened. 10.exf5 0-0 11.d4 ♔d6 12.♖c3 ♗bd7= Goffin – Sasvari, ICCF 2012.) 8...♔d6 9.♖c3 0-0 10.♕f4 ♗a6 11.♗b3 ♗b8∞ Jovanovic – Miroshnichenko, Kragujevac 2009.

6...♗bd7



7.cxd5

About 7.b3 ♔d6 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2**.

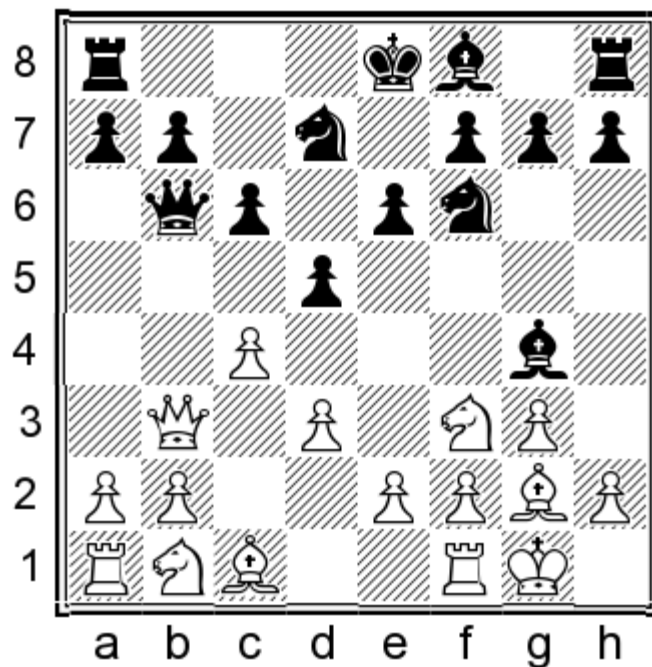
7.♗c2 ♔d6 8.b3 (8.♗bd2 0-0 – see 7.♗bd2) 8...0-0 9.♕b2 e5 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**.

7.♕f4 ♕e7 8.h3 ♕xf3 9.♕xf3 0-0= Loomans – Zucchelli, Arco 2002.

7.♗c3 ♕e7 8.♕e3 (8.cxd5 cxd5 – see 7.cxd5) 8...dxc4 9.dxc4 ♗c7 10.h3 ♕h5 11.♗c2 0-0= Bosiocic – Tomashevsky, Doha 2016.

7.h3 ♕h5 8.♗b3 (8.cxd5 cxd5, or 8.♕f4 ♕e7 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗c3 0-0 – see 7.cxd5; 8.♕e3, Pigusov – Pavasovic, Dubai 2001, 8...dxc4!? 9.dxc4 ♕c5=) 8...♗b6 9.♗c2, Rotstein – Sandhoefner, Latschach 2012, 9...♔d6!?=

7.♗b3 ♗b6



After 8.cxd5 ♖xb3 9.axb3 exd5=, White ends up with doubled pawns on the b-file, Wang – Harikrishna, Beijing 2014.

8.♗c3 ♖xb3 9.axb3, Umansky – Beim, Bayern 2010, 9...a6!?=

Following 8.♖c2, Black can provoke the enemy queen under a knight double-attack and that would lead to considerable simplifications. 8...dxc4!? 9.♖xc4 ♗xf3 10.♗xf3 ♘e5 11.♖f4 ♘xf3+ 12.♖xf3 ♗e7 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♗c4 ♖b5 15.♗d2 ♖fd8 16.b4, Eljanov – Banusz, Jerusalem 2015, 16...♖a4!? Black prevents the pawn-advance a2-a4. 17.♖fb1 ♗d5 18.♖b3 b6 19.e4. White ousts the enemy knight away from the centre, but weakens his d3-pawn. 19...♗c7 20.♖a3. White has nothing better here than to repeat the position; otherwise, if Black plays ♗b5, his prospects would be preferable. 20...♖b5 21.♖b3 ♖a4=

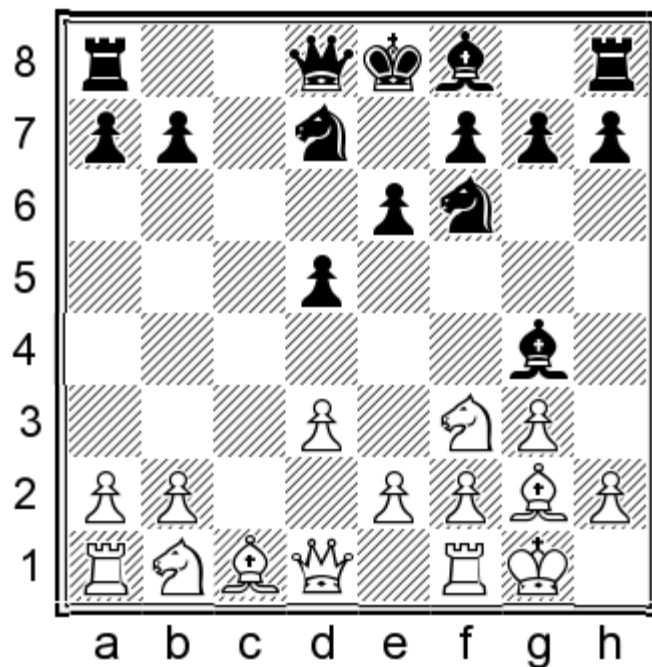
8.♗e3 ♖xb3 9.axb3 a6 10.h3 (10.♖c1, Wang – Sargissian, Huaian 2016, 10...h6!?=; 10.♗c3 h6= I.Sokolov – Pourramezanali, Iran 2017) 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♗e7. Almost all of Black’s pawns are deployed “according to the rules” i.e. on squares opposite of the colour of his bishop. 12.♖c1 0-0 13.♗c3 ♗e8!? Black is preparing the transfer of his knight to the d6-square. 14.♗a4 ♗d6 15.♗b6 ♖ad8 16.♗xd7 ♖xd7= Wang Yue – Wang Hao, China 2015. Black’s position is very solid. White can hardly find an active plan for his actions.

7.♗bd2 ♗d6 8.cxd5 (8.b3 0-0 9.♗b2 ♖e8, or 8.h3 ♗h5 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2 ♖e8, or 8.♖c2 0-0 9.b3 ♖e8 10.♗b2 e5, or 9.h3 ♗h5 10.b3 ♖e8 11.♗b2 e5 – see Chapter 22, variation **B2b**) 8...cxd5 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♗d4 0-0∞ Harikrishna – Abdulla, Kolkata 2001.

After 7.♗e3, Black can play at first 7...dxc4!? and then develop his bishop to c5. 8.dxc4 ♗c5 9.♗xc5 (White cannot avoid the trade of the bishops, because after 9.♗d4, Black will have the simple response 9...e5= Kosten – Kallai, Gonfreville 2006.) 9...♗xc5. Black’s knight is very powerful on this square. Later, he must watch carefully about the possible enemy pawn-advance b2-b4. In order to prevent it, he must play either a7-a5, or ♖b6. 10.♗c3 (10.♖c1 ♖b6= Romanishin – Dastan, Legnica 2013) 10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♖xd1 12.♖fxd1 a5= Weber – Pichler, Germany 1987.

7...cxd5

Black can equalise also if he captures in the other way 7...exd5=, but then it would be easier for White to sharpen the game. After advancing e2-e4, he will obtain pawn-dominance in the centre and Black will need to play very accurately in order to neutralise his opponent’s initiative.

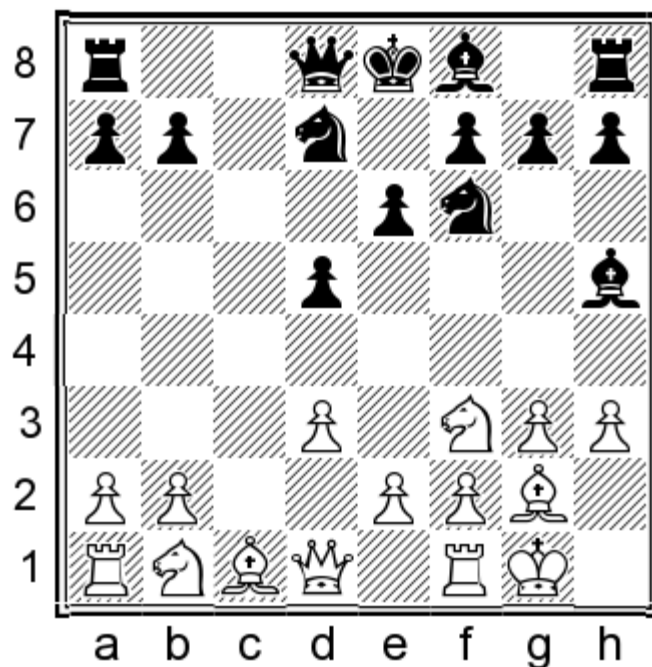


8. c3

About 8. f4 e7 9. c3 0-0 – see 8. c3.

The move 8. ♖a4 would not promise much to White. 8... ♕d6 9. c3 0-0 10. ♗g5 (10. ♗e3 a6=) 10... h6 11. ♖xg4 ♗xg4 12. ♗xd8 ♖fxd8= Laznicka – Jirovsky, Prague 2012.

8. h3 e5



9. c3 e7 – see 8. c3.

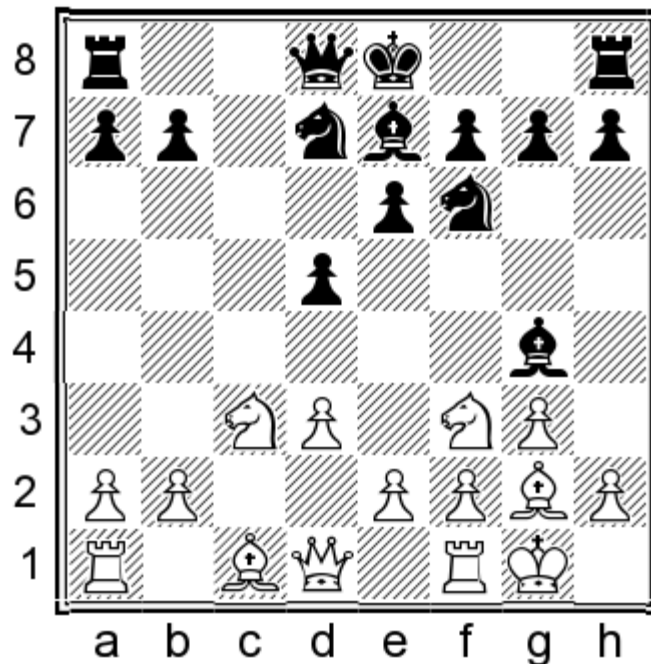
9. g4 e6 10. f4, Mikhalevski – Postny, Stockholm 2016, 10... e7 11. b2 0-0 12. c1 c8 13. b3 ♖b6=

After 9. ♖b3, the simplest way for Black to equalise is 9... ♗xf3. He must exchange there, since he plans ♗c5, and it is

essential for him to deprive White of the possibility ♖e5. 10.♙xf3 ♘c5 11.♚b5+ ♛d7 12.♘c3, Bai – Zhang Ziji, China 2017, 12...a6!? 13.♚xd7+ ♘cxd7=

8.♚b3 ♘c5 9.♚b5+ ♛d7 10.♘c3 (10.♚xd7+ ♘cxd7=) 10...a6 11.♚xd7+ ♘cxd7. This endgame seems approximately equal. 12.♙f4 (12.h3, Loginov – Maiorov, St Petersburg 2003, 12...♙xf3!? 13.♙xf3 ♙d6=) 12...♙e7 13.♞ac1 (Following 13.♘e5 ♙h5 14.♞fc1, Fressinet – Almasi, Linares 2014, Black can continue with 14...g5!?, after which White loses his control over the e5-square. 15.♘xd7 ♘xd7 16.♙d2 0-0=) 13...0-0 14.h3 (14.♞c2, Pelletier – Morozevich, Biel 2012, 14...h6!?) 14...♙xf3. Black does not lose time for the retreat of his bishop, because White will obtain the two-bishop advantage anyway with g3-g4, ♘h4. 15.♙xf3 ♞fc8 16.g4 h6 17.e4 e5. Black must prevent the opening of the position, because then White's bishop-pair might turn into a telling factor. 18.♙g3 d4 19.♘d5 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♙d6∞ Pelletier – T.Kosintseva, Cap d'Agde 2010.

8...♙e7



9.h3

The inclusion of this move is useful for White.

9.♘h4 ♙h5 10.h3 0-0 11.g4 ♙g6 12.e4 (12.f4 ♚b6+ 13.e3 ♘e8 14.♘f3, Markowski – Gaag, Minsk 1998, 14...h6!?) The advance of White's pawns has only led to the weakening of his own position.) 12...dxe4 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.dxe4, Garza Marco – Roche Simon, Aragon 2015, 14...♘e5! Black must try to exchange the queens in this position. 15.♚e2 ♚d3=

It would not be so active for White to opt for 9.a3 0-0 10.b4 (He should better choose 10.♙d2 – see 9.♙d2.) 10...a5 11.b5 a4!?, followed by ♚a5, Wright – Lewi, Athens 1969. The premature advance of White's b-pawn has weakened his queenside.

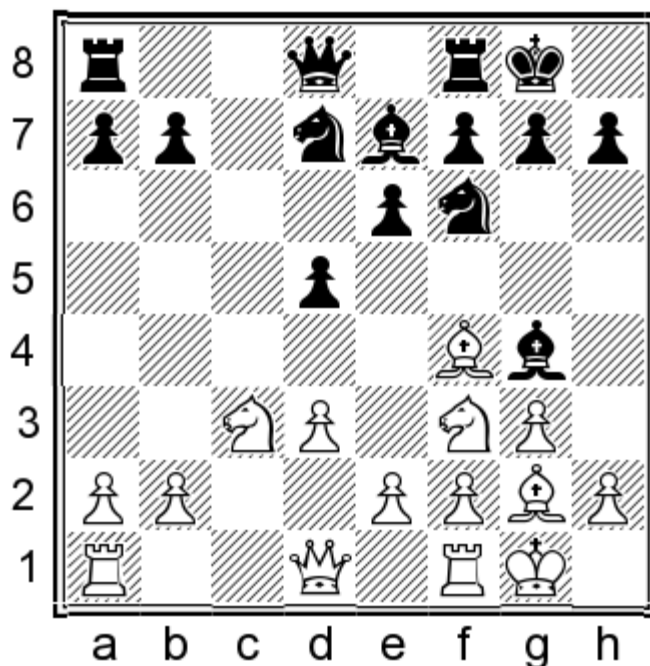
After 9.♚b3, Black does not need to lose time to protect his b7-pawn. 9...0-0! 10.♚xb7. It is too risky for White to accept this pawn-sacrifice, because after that Black's pieces begin a chase after the enemy queen. (10.♙f4 ♘c5 – see 9.♙f4; 10.♙e3 b6 – see 9.♙e3) 10...♞b8 11.♚xa7 ♘c5 12.♙f4 ♞b7 13.♚a3. Now, White is forced to leave his queen under an indirect attack. 13...♘xd3 14.♚a6 ♘c5 15.♚a3 ♚b6. Black has regained one of his pawns. His pieces have occupied very active positions, while White's queen has not found yet a safe place. 16.♙e3 ♞a7 17.♚b3 ♘xb3 18.♙xb6 ♞b7 19.axb3 ♞xb6 20.♘d2 ♞bb8 Black has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

9.♔d2 0-0 10.a3 ♖c8 11.b4, Loginov – Lyrberg, Budapest 1993. Here, it seems very good for Black to transfer his knight to the d6-square. 11...♞e8!?

9.♔e3 0-0 10.♞b3. Now, Black is deprived of his standard reaction – ♘c5, or ♞b6, but he can equalise with 10...b6, because White would be incapable of exploiting the slight vulnerability of the c6-square. 11.♞fc1 ♕xf3 12.♔xf3 ♘e5 13.♔g2 ♘fg4. Black begins a counterattack against the enemy f2-pawn. 14.♔d2 ♕c5 15.♞f1 ♞f6 16.♘d1 ♞ac8 17.♞c1 ♞g6 18.♞a4 ♘c6= Tiits – Oikamo, ICCF 2014. White has managed to parry the direct threats against his f2-pawn, but his pieces have remained very passive.

9.e4 d4 10.♞e2 ♕xf3 11.♔xf3 e5 12.♔g2 0-0 13.♔h3, Obukhov – Krivoborodov, Voronezh 2003 (13.h4 a5∞ Movsziszian – Boensch, Germany 1996) 13...♞b6!?=, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the c-file. White's knight is misplaced on e2.

9.♔f4 0-0



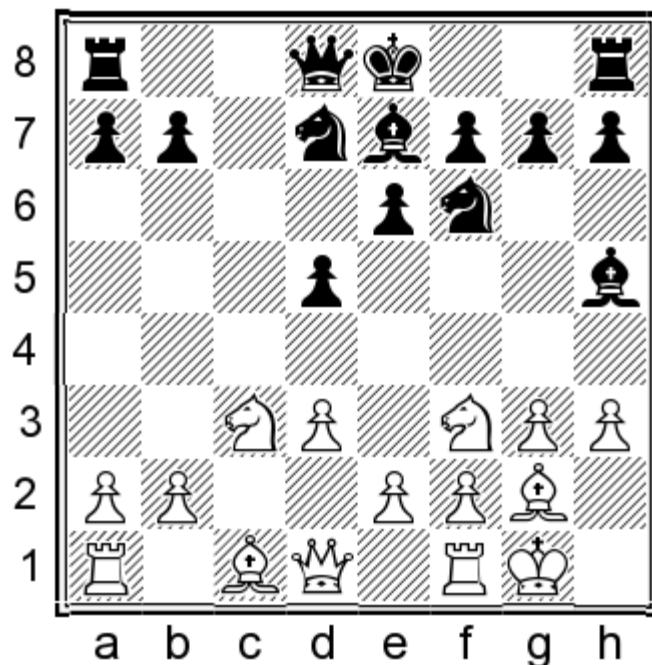
About 10.h3 ♔h5 – see 9.h3.

10.♞b3 ♘c5 11.♞d1 ♞c8= Malakhov – Laznicka, Dubai 2014.

After 10.a3 ♖c8 11.♞b3, Ponomariov – Dubov, Tromsø 2013 (11.♞c1 ♞b6 12.b4, Loginov – Huebner, Manila 1992, 12...d4!? 13.♘e4 ♘d5∞) 11...d4!?!∞, and White cannot play 12.♘xd4?, because of 12...e5–+

10.♞c1 ♖c8 11.h3 ♕xf3 12.♔xf3 a6= Black prevents ♘b5. White must work hard in order to break his opponent's defence, Loginov – Epishin, Seefeld 1996.

9...♔h5



10.e4

10.♞d4. White would not achieve much after transferring his knight to the b3-square. 10...0-0 11.♞b3 ♞c5= Pigusov – Kharitonov, Sochi 2007.

The move 10.g4 only weakens the pawn-shelter of White's king. 10...♙g6 11.♞h4, Ki.Georgiev – Tischbierek, Nordhausen 1987, 11...♞c8!? 12.e4 ♞xe4 13.dxe4 ♙xh4 14.exd5 0-0∞

10.♞b3 0-0 11.♙e3, Kacheishvili – Holt, Richardson 2012, 11...♞c5!? 12.♙xc5 ♙xc5 13.♞a4 (It would be too risky for White to accept the pawn-sacrifice here 13.♞xb7?! ♙xf3 14.♙xf3 ♞d6⚡ Black is threatening to trap the enemy queen as well as ♞xg3.) 13...♙xf3 14.♙xf3 b6 15.♞xc5 bxc5=

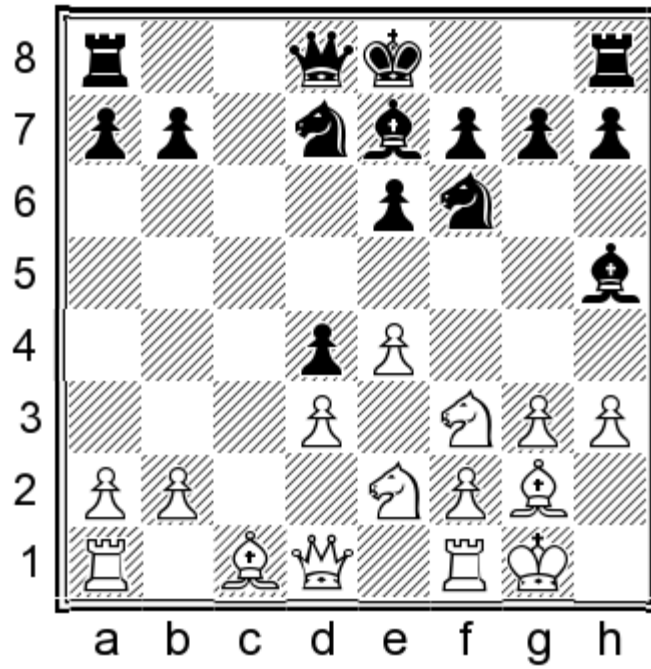
10.♙f4 0-0 11.g4 (11.♞b1, Markos – Varga, Slovakia 2009, 11...♞c8!?) 11...♙g6= White cannot obtain the two-bishop advantage, since after 12.♞h4?, Black has the resource 12...♞xg4! 13.♞xg6 fxg6⚡ and the defencelessness of the bishop on f4 hurts White, Korchnoi – Ponomariov, Donetsk 2001.

10...d4

Black blocks the centre. Now, the focus of the fight is on the flanks. Black will try to penetrate into his opponent's camp on the c-file, while White will try to organise an attack against the enemy king.

11.♞e2

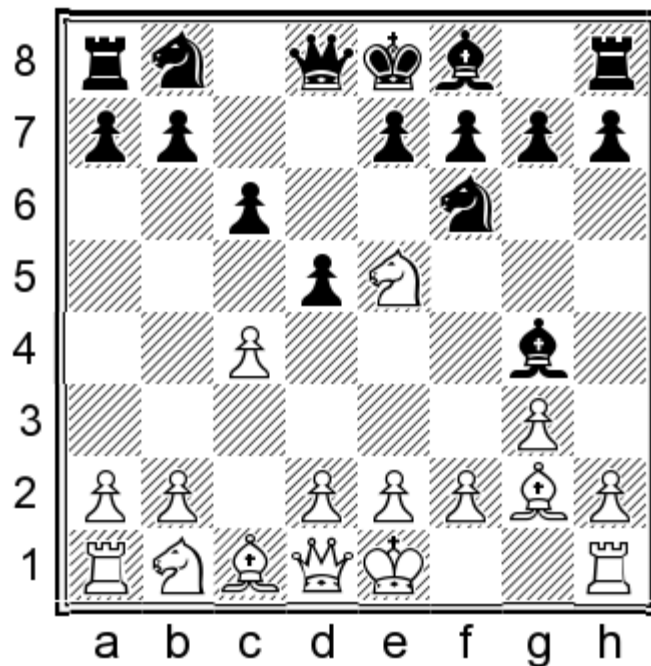
11.♞b5 e5 12.a4 0-0= Urban – Movsesian, Warsaw 2004.



11...xf3

Black should better give up immediately his bishop for his opponent's knight; otherwise, White will play g3-g4, followed by h4, after which he will have a choice – to exchange on g6, or to play h5. 12.xf3 e5 13.g2 0-0 14.f4 c8 15.h1 b6 16.g1 d6 17.f5, Grischuk – Bjelobrk, Tromsøe 2013. Before beginning active actions on the c-file, Black should better apply some prophylactic on the kingside. 17...h6!? 18.g4 e7 19.f3 h7∞, followed by c6, fc8, d8, preparing the penetration to the c2-square. White will hardly manage to advance h3-h4, g4-g5.

C) 5.e5

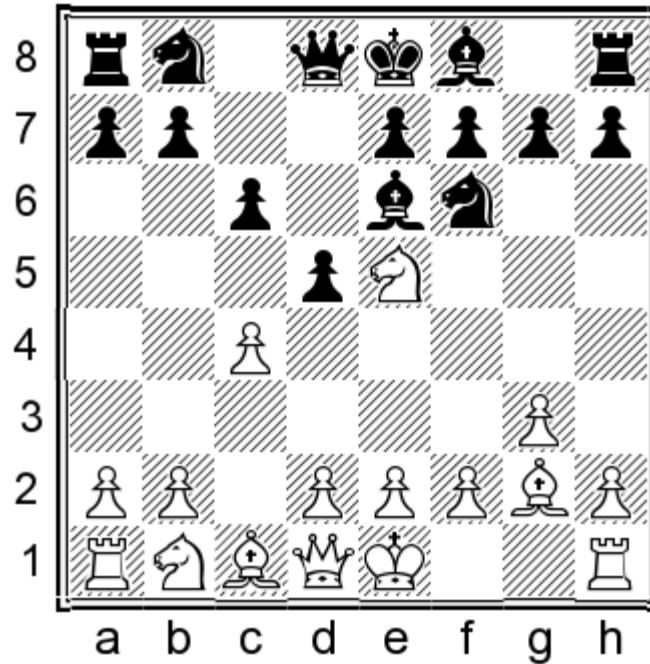


White begins immediate active actions not losing a tempo for castling.

5...♙e6!?

This is Black's only move.

The routine move 5...♙h5 would lead to difficulties for him after 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♚a4+ ♜bd7 8.♞c3 e6 9.g4 ♙g6 10.h4±. In general, it is not recommended to place your pieces in front of the central pawns in the opening, but here we have an exceptional case. Black will wait until White captures d5, in order to reply with ♙xd5, neutralising the pressure of the enemy bishop on g2 and freeing the way forward of his e7-pawn.

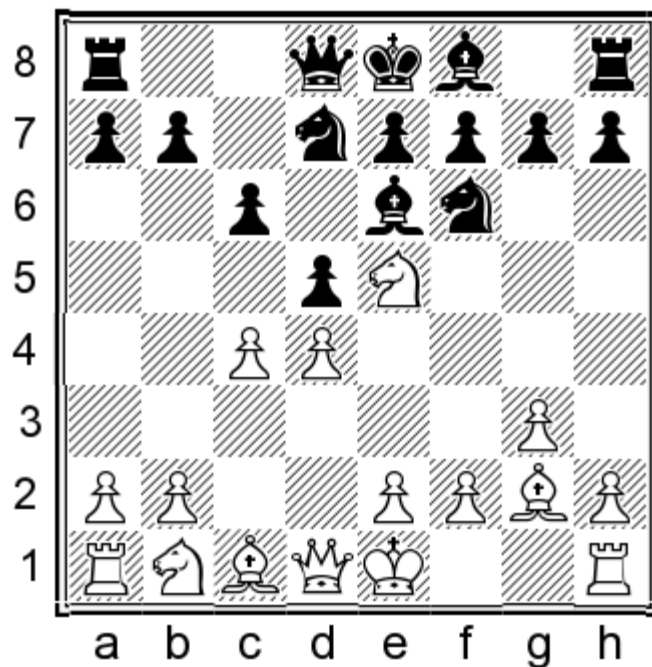


6.cxd5

Or 6.b3 dxc4 7.♞xc4, Ruettinger – Gradl, Fuerth 2000, 7...♙d5!?=

6.0-0 ♜bd7 7.d4 (7.cxd5 ♙xd5 8.♞f3 c5 9.♞c3 ♙c6 – see 6.cxd5). Here, Black can accept the pawn-sacrifice and White must still prove that he has sufficient compensation for it. 7...dxc4 8.♚c2 ♞xe5 9.dxe5, Keeling – Chevannes, West Bromwich 2003, 9...♞d7!?∞

6.d4 ♜bd7



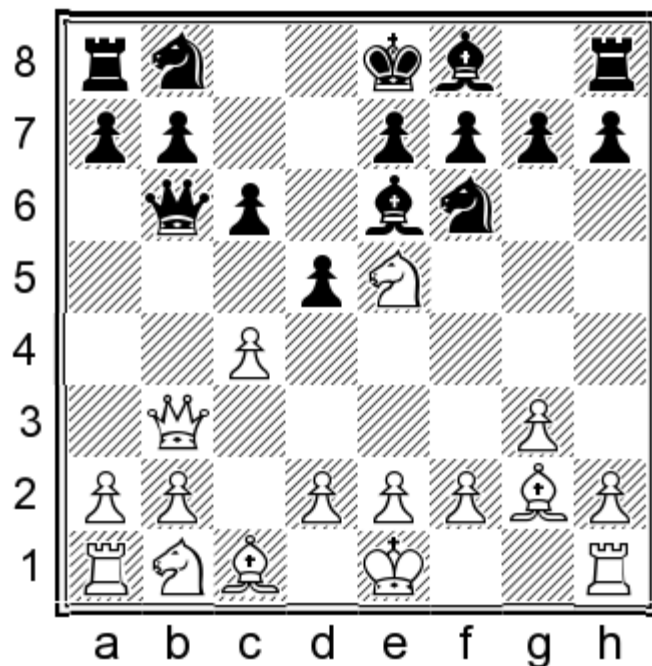
7.0-0 dxc4 – see 6.0-0.

7.♖b3 ♜c8=

7.♘c3. This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice, but is insufficient for White to claim an edge. 7...dxc4 8.f4 g6 9.0-0 ♘xe5 10.fxex5, Skibbe – Nedic, Germany 2013, 10...♘d7!? 11.e4 ♙g7∞ His powerful pawn-centre compensates White's minimal material deficit, but not more than that.

7.♘a3 g6 8.0-0 ♙g7 9.cxd5, Giri – Granda Zuniga, Germany 2017, 9...♘xd5!?=, followed by 0-0. Black's pieces have been harmoniously deployed, while White must watch carefully all the time about the possibility c6-c5.

6.♖b3 ♜b6



The move 7.♖xb6?! leads to a favourable opening of the a-file for Black 7...axb6 Benjamin – Sveshnikov, Hastings 1984.

Following 7.♘c3 g6 8.0-0 ♕g7, Black completes the development of his kingside pieces and equalises completely. 9.d3 0-0 10.♗e3 ♜c7= Svidler – Dreev, Almaty 2016.

7.d3 ♘bd7. Black must exchange the active enemy knight as quickly as possible. 8.♘xd7 ♘xd7 9.♗e3 dxc4. He continues in his attempts to simplify the position. 10.dxc4 ♜xb3 11.axb3 a6 12.♘d2. Now, Black must solve the problem with the development of his bishop on f8 in order to obtain complete equality. 12...g6 13.♗d4. This move prevents Black's plans, but is still insufficient for White to obtain an edge. 13...f6 14.b4, Bauer – Riff, Switzerland 2010, 14...♞d8!?! Now, if White breaks on the queenside, Black will have the possibility to exchange his a-pawn. 15.b5 axb5 16.cxb5 cxb5 17.♗xb7. White's chances of obtaining an advantage evaporate with every exchange. 17...♗g7 18.0-0 0-0 19.♞fc1 ♘c5. Black simplifies the position even more with this small combination. 20.♗xc5 ♞xd2 21.b4 ♗c4 22.♗f3 f5 23.♞a7 ♗f6 24.♗xe7 ♗xe7 25.♞xe7 ♞f7 26.♞e5 ♘f8 27.♞b1 ♞a7 28.h4 ♞aa2= Black's piece-activity compensates fully the sacrificed pawn.

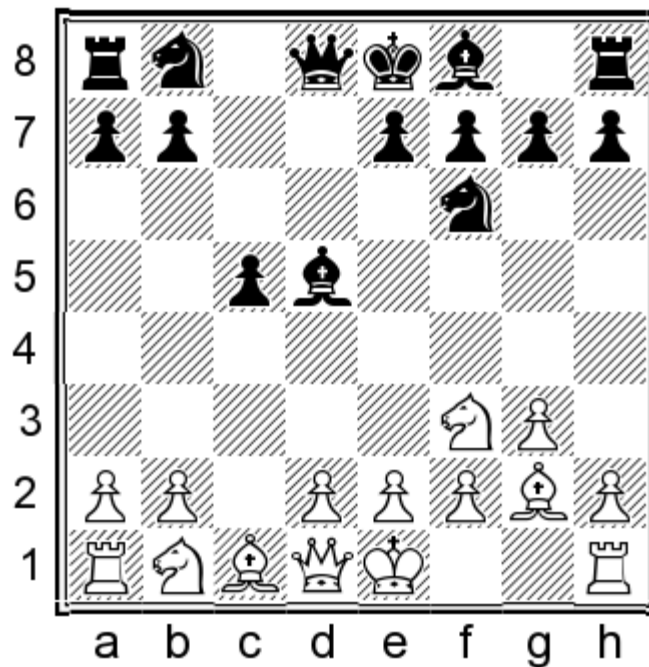
6...♗xd5 7.♘f3

White preserves his important bishop from an exchange.

He can also play with the same idea the move 7.f3, but it seems less elastic. 7...♘bd7 8.d4, Hickl – Carron, Switzerland 2009, 8...♘xe5!?! 9.dxe5 ♘d7 10.♘c3 ♗e6 11.f4. White's e5-pawn cramps Black's position, so he must play 11...f6∞

7...c5!?

Black prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop.

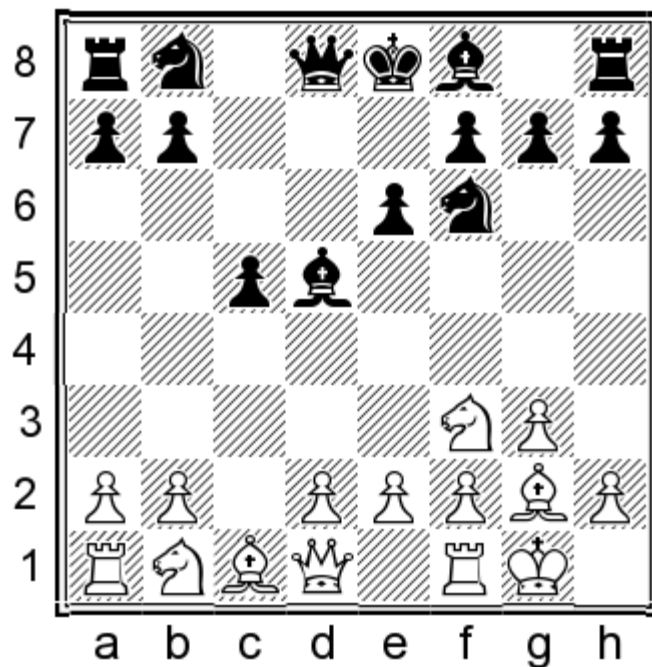


8.♘c3

White does not need to be in a hurry to play ♘c3.

8.d3 e6 9.0-0 ♗e7 – see 8.0-0.

8.0-0 e6

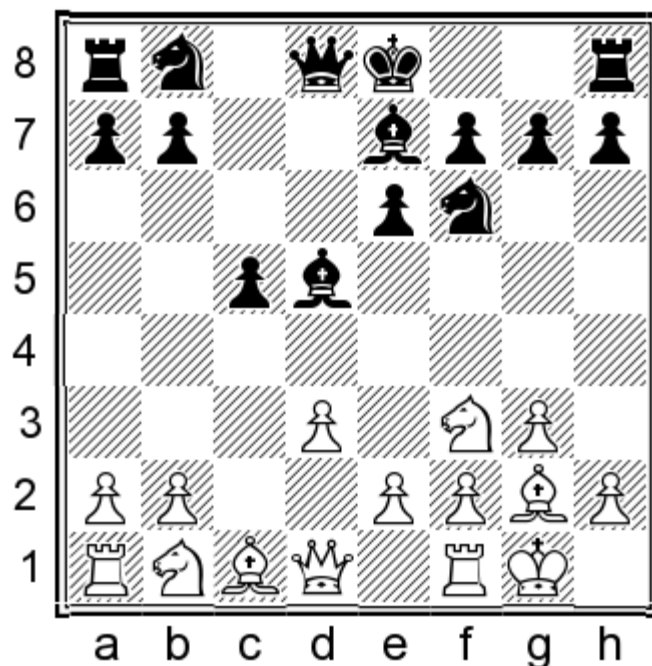


9.♖c3 ♜c6 – see 8.♖c3.

9.b3 ♜e7 10.♞b2 0-0 11.d3 (11.♖c3 ♜c6 – see 8. ♖c3) 11...b6 – see 9.d3.

9.♞e1, Ponkratov – Litvinov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2015, 9...♖c6!? 10.d3. The threat e2-e4 forces Black to part with his powerful light-squared bishop, but he still manages to equalise thanks to his wonderful piece-development and extra space. 10...♞xf3 11.♞xf3 ♞c8 12.♖c3 ♜e7 13.b3 0-0 14.♞b2 a6 15.♚d2 b5=, followed by ♚b6, ♞fd8.

9.d3 ♜e7



10.♖c3 ♜c6 – see 8.♖c3.

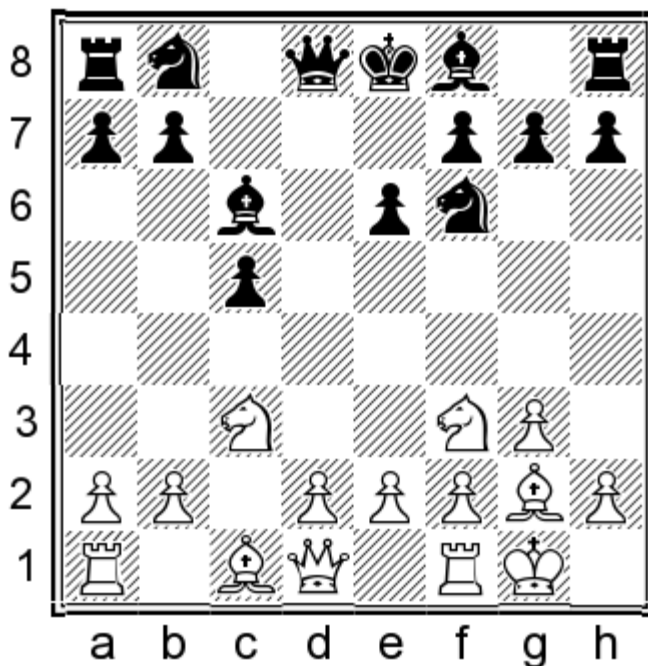
After 10.e4, White's d3-pawn becomes weak. 10...♜c6 11.♚e2 ♞b5 12.♞d1 ♖c6 13.♖a3. Now, he transfers his knight to the c4-square in order to neutralise the pressure of the enemy bishop on b5. 13...♞a6 14.♖c4 0-0= Harika – Ushenina, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014.

10.b3 b6. After this move Black will manage to retreat his bishop to b7. 11.♗b2 0-0 12.♘bd2 ♗b7 13.♞c1 ♘c6 14.♙e5, Raddatz – Zachert, Germany 2005, 14...♘d5!? 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.d4 ♞c8=

8...♗c6 9.0-0

9.d3 e6 10.0-0 ♗e7 – see 9. 0-0.

9...e6



10.d3

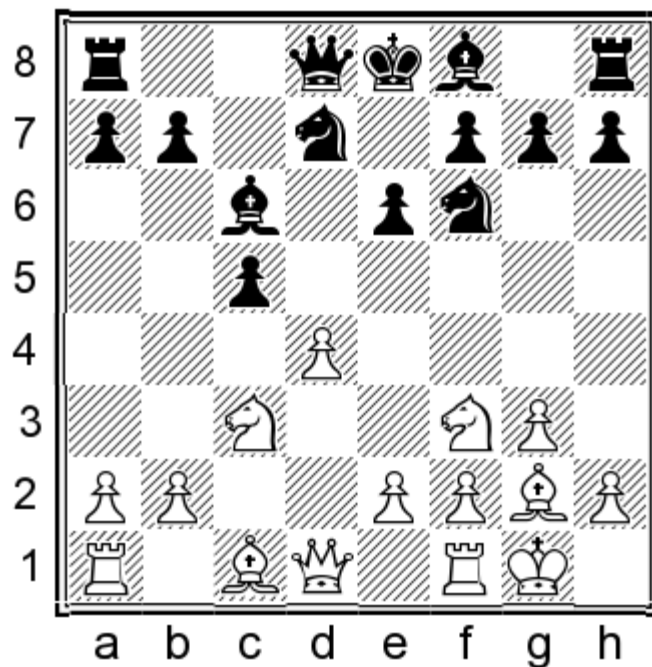
10.♞b3. White wishes to play ♞d1 and to advance d2-d4. In the meantime Black manages to complete the development of his pieces and to castle. 10...♗e7 11.♞d1 0-0 12.d4 ♘bd7 13.♗e3, Shimanov – P.Martynov, Stockholm 2014, 13...♘d5!?=

10.b3 ♗e7 11.♗b2. White fianchettoes his second bishop as well. 11...0-0 12.♞c1 (Following 12.d3, Durarbayli – Fedoseev, Dubai 2014, Black can occupy additional space on the queenside. 12...a6!? 13.e4 b5 14.♞c1 ♗b7= Black exerts pressure against the e4-pawn, so White cannot advance d3-d4. On his next move Black plans to continue with ♘c6, increasing his control over the central squares.) 12...♘bd7 13.d4, Keres – Arulaid, Tallinn 1969, 13...♞a5!? Black's queen is activated and frees a square for his rook. 14.♞d3 ♞fd8=

10.♞c2 ♘bd7 11.e4 e5. Now, White cannot advance d2-d4. 12.d3, Lorparizangeneh – Arcuti, Porto Carras 2015, 12...♗d6!?!∞ White must play very accurately in this middlegame; otherwise, the vulnerability of the d3-pawn and the e4-square would hurt him.

10.♞e1 ♗e7 11.e4 0-0 12.d4 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♞b6 14.♘b3 ♞d8 15.♞e2 ♞a6. Black wishes to trade the queens. 16.♞c2. White avoids the exchange, but after 16...♘bd7 17.♗e3 ♞ac8=, the juxtaposition of the rook and the queen on the c-file will be in favour of Black, Mchedlishvili – Gonda, Germany 2012.

10.d4. The position is simplified quickly after this move. 10...♘bd7. Black's plans include the moves cxd4 and ♗c5.



About 11.b3 ♕e7 12.♕b2 0-0 13.♖c1 ♗a5 – see 10.b3.

11.a3 ♖c8=

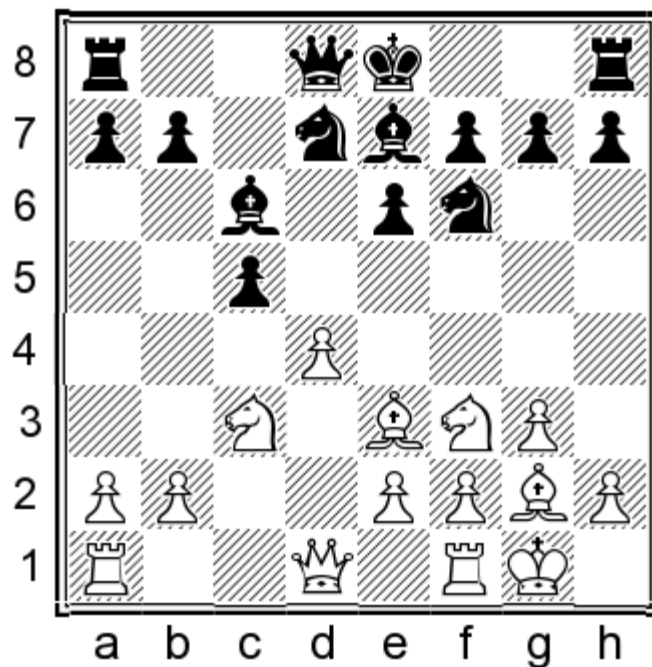
11.♘g5, Pigusov – Smirin, Biel 1993, 11...cxd4!? 12.♗xd4 ♗b6 13.♗xb6 axb6=

11.♕f4 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♕c5. Black develops his bishop with tempo. 13.♗d3 0-0 14.e4 ♗b6= Hentunen – Lahtinen, Finland 2005.

11.♕g5. This pin is harmless for Black. 11...♕e7 12.dxc5 ♕xc5 13.♘d2 ♕xg2 14.♔xg2 0-0 15.♘de4 ♕e7= Johnston – Davidov, ICCF 2011. White has no chances of obtaining an advantage, because Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his position.

11.♗d3 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♕xg2 13.♔xg2 ♕c5 14.♘b3 ♕b4 15.♘e4 0-0 16.♖d1 ♘e5. Black continues with his strategy of simplifications. 17.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 18.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19.♕g5 ♕e7 20.♖c1 ♔f8 21.♘xf6 gxf6. White has managed to weaken partially his opponent's pawn-structure on the kingside, but this is insufficient for him to obtain an edge, since Black can protect easily his weaknesses. 22.♕e3 ♘c6 23.f3 f5= Andersson – Lutz, Katrineholm 1999.

11.♕e3 ♕e7

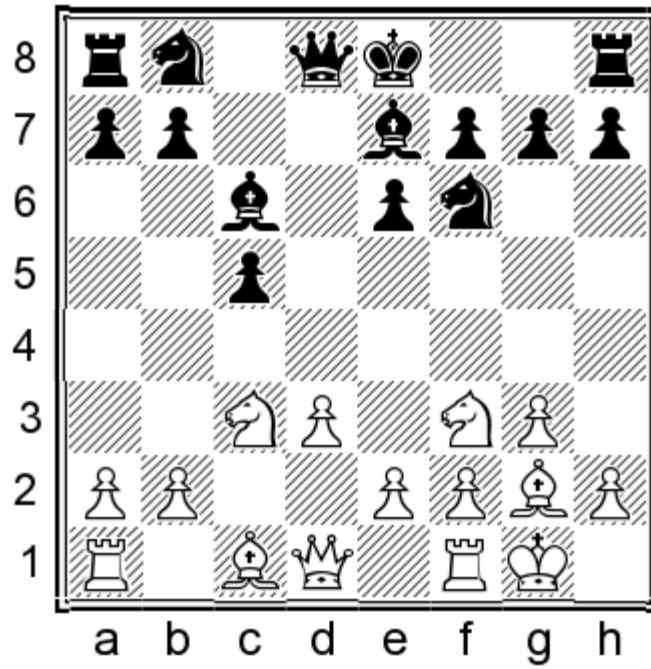


Following 12.♖c1 cxd4 13.♚xd4 0-0 14.♜fd1, in order to neutralise White's pressure on the d-file, Black must remove his queen from d8 and to play ♜fd8. 14...♚a5 15.♘g5 ♙xg2 16.♙xg2 ♜fd8. White's pieces are a bit more active, but he cannot achieve anything meaningful, because there are no targets to attack in Black's position. 17.♚c4 ♘e5 18.♚b5 ♚xb5 19.♘xb5 ♜xd1 20.♜xd1 ♘d5= Ki.Georgiev – Portisch, Dubai 1986.

12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♙xc5 ♘xc5 14.♚xd8+ (After this move the position is simplified even more, but even following 14.b4 ♘ce4 15.♘xe4 ♙xe4 16.♚a4+ ♚d7, White will have nothing better than to enter an approximately equal endgame. 17.♚xd7+ ♙xd7 18.♘e5+ ♙e7= Rausis – Gourlay, St Clement Bay 2015.) 14...♜xd8 15.♜ac1 (The character of the position would remain more or less the same after 15.♜fd1 ♙e7= T.L. Petrosian – Pashikian, Yerevan 2012, or 15.♜fc1, Lein – Schulien, Dublin 1987, 15...♙e7!?) 15...♙e7. Black must keep his king at the centre of the board in this endgame, so he avoids castling quite correctly. 16.b4 ♘cd7 17.♜c2, Andersson – Illescas Cordoba, Pamplona 1998, 17...♜hg8!? This is the beginning of an interesting plan for Black. He wishes to play g7-g5-g4 and after the retreat of the enemy knight from the f3-square to deploy his own knight at the middle of the board. 18.♜fc1 g5 19.a3 g4 20.♘d4 ♙xg2 21.♙xg2 ♘e5=

10...♙e7

Black is not in a hurry to play ♘bd7, because in some variations he can remove his bishop from c6 and develop his knight to a more active position.

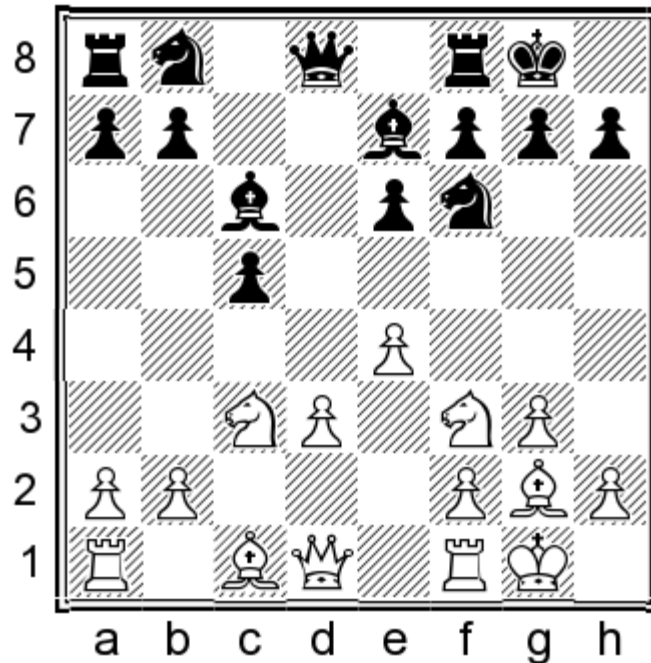


11.e4

This is a very ambitious move. White occupies space, but weakens his d3-pawn in the process.

11.a3 0-0 12.♖c2 (After 12.♖b1 ♜bd7 13.b4, Black should better not allow the pawn-advance b4-b5: 13...a6=) 12...♞bd7 13.♞d1 (13.e4 b5!?) 13...b5 14.b3 ♜b6 Lie Kjetil – Carlsen, Gjovik 2009. Black has already a somewhat freer game.

11...0-0



12.♖e2

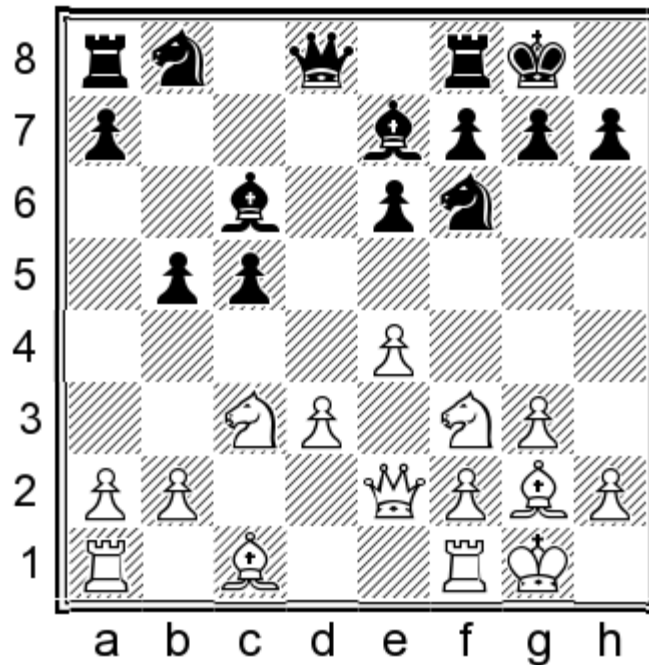
12.a4 b6=

12.♞e1 h6!? 13.♞e2 b5=

12.♞c2. Here, just like in the main variation, Black must advance his queenside pawns. 12...b5 13.a4 b4 14.♖b1 ♕b7=, followed by ♖c6, ♞c8, Hausrath – Rozentalis, Belgium 2010.

After 12.♖e5, Amin – Jakovenko, Baku 2015, Black should continue with 12...b6!?, without being afraid of the weakening of the h1-a8 diagonal. 13.♕e3 (Following 13.♖xc6 ♖xc6, White should better refrain from the move 14.e5?!, since Black can counter that with 14...♖xe5! 15.♕xa8 ♞xa8. He has a pawn for the exchange and good attacking prospects against the enemy king, moreover that the vulnerability of White's d3-pawn might also hurt him.) 13...♕b7 14.f4 ♖c6=

12...b5



13.a4

White wishes to provoke the move b5-b4, in order to gain access to the c4-square for his knight, but its transfer there would take too much time.

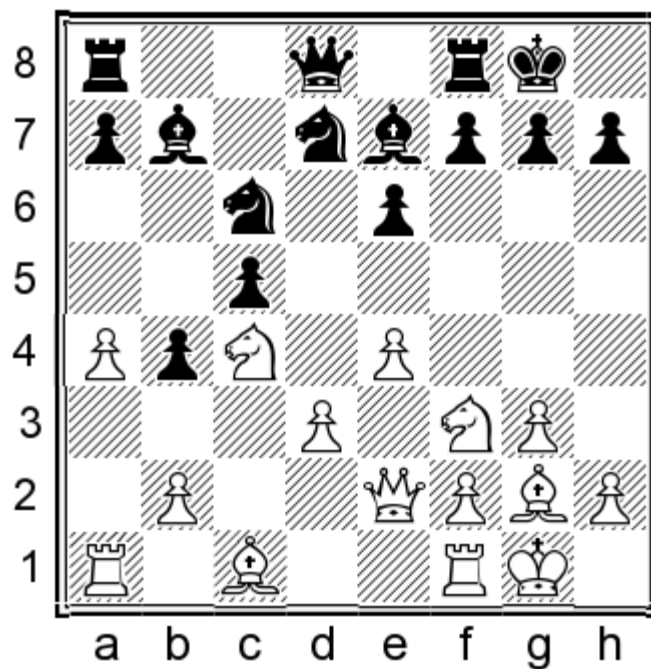
13.♖e5. White is trying to obtain the two-bishop advantage, but this enhances the development of Black's queenside. 13...b4 14.♖xc6 ♖xc6 15.e5 ♖d4 16.♞d1 ♖d7. Collutiis – Caprio, Fano 2012. Black's prospects are not worse and after 17.♕xa8?! ♞xa8, it would be White who might encounter difficulties, because after the disappearance of his bishop on g2 off the board, his king's shelter would be seriously weakened.

13.♞d1 b4 14.♖b1 ♕b5 15.e5 (15.a4 ♕a6=) 15...♖d5 16.♖bd2 ♖c6. Baghdasaryan – Ovod, Moscow 2017. Black has managed to develop his queenside pieces. His chances in the forthcoming fight are not worse at all.

13...b4 14.♖b1 ♕b7 15.♖bd2 ♖c6 16.♖c4

16.♖b3. White's attempt to exert pressure against the enemy c5-pawn is parried easily by Black. 16...♕a6 17.♞d1 ♖d7 18.♕e3 ♞c8. Berlinger – Duliba, ICCF 2011.

16...♖d7



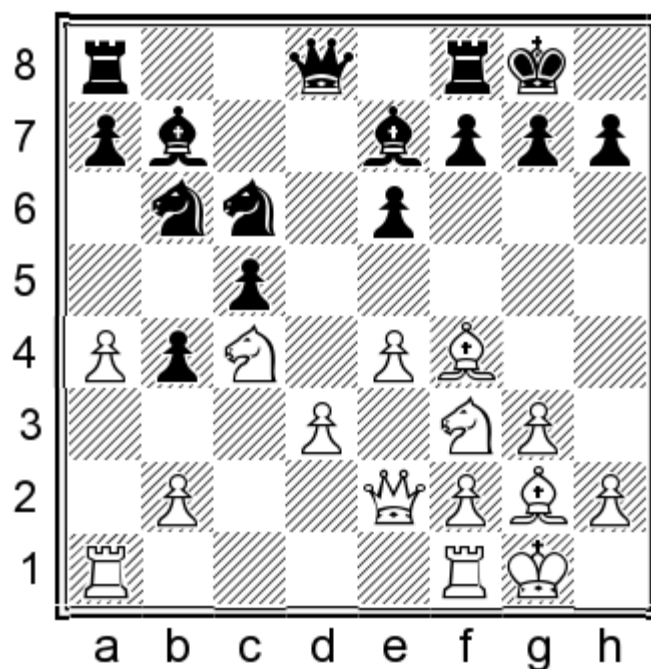
17. ♕f4

17. ♕e3 ♖c7= Arsovic – Beliavsky, Sarajevo 2012.

After 17. ♖d1, the simplest way for Black to prevent the pawn-advance d3-d4 would be 17... ♗d4 18. ♗xd4 cxd4= Harikrishna – Quesada Perez, Havana 2013. The powerful placement of White's knight on c4 is compensated by Black's space advantage.

17... ♗b6

He defends against ♗d6 and prepares the exchange of the powerful enemy knight.



18.♖f1

It seems less precise for White to play here 18.a5, because later this pawn might turn into a target for the enemy attack.
18...♗xc4 19.dxc4 ♖c8 20.♖f1 ♗d8 21.♗xd8+ ♕xd8 ♞ McCartney – Latta, ICCF 2011.

18...♗xc4 19.dxc4, Rahman – Amanov, Istanbul 2012, **19...♖e8 20.b3 ♗d8**= The major pieces are likely to be exchanged soon on the d-file and the position would be considerably simplified.

Index of Variations

Chapter 1: 1.e4 c6

various

A) 2.b3 d5

B) 2.f4 d5

C) 2.♘f3 d5

Chapter 2: 1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5

various

A) 3.♖e2 d4

B) 3.♘f3 ♘f6

Chapter 3: 1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5

various

3.♘d2 e5 4.♘gf3 ♙d6 various

A) 5.d4 exd4

B) 5.g3 ♘f6

Chapter 4: 1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5

various

3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♘f6 various

A) 5.♙b5+ ♘bd7

B) 5.♖a4+ ♘bd7

Chapter 5: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e6

various

4.♘c3 ♙b4

Chapter 6: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5

A) 4.c4 cxd4

B) 4.♘f3 cxd4

C) 4.c3 ♘c6

Chapter 7: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 e6

various

A1) 5. ♖f3 ♗xc5 6.a3 ♜c6

A2) 6. ♗d3 ♜c6

B) 5. ♗e3 ♜d7 various

6. ♗b5 ♜e7

Chapter 8: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5

various

A) 4.c3 ♜c6

B) 4. ♖f3 ♜f6 various

B1) 5. ♗d3 ♜c6

B2) 5. ♗f4 ♜c6

C) 4. ♗d3 ♜c6 5.c3 ♗c7 various

C1) 6.h3 ♜f6

C2) 6. ♜e2 ♗g4

Chapter 9: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6

various

5. ♜c3 g6 various

6. ♜f3 ♗g7 various

A) 7. ♗e2 0-0

B) 7.cxd5 ♜xd5

Chapter 10: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 g6 6.cxd5 ♜xd5

A1) 7. ♗b3 ♜b6 8. ♗b5+ ♗d7

A2) 8.d5 ♗g7

B) 7. ♗c4 ♜b6

Chapter 11: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 g6 6. ♗b3 ♗g7 7.cxd5 0-0

various

8. ♗e2 ♜bd7

Chapter 12: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♜c3 dxe4

A) 4.f3 exf3

B) 4. ♜xe4 ♗f5 various

5. ♜c5 b6

Chapter 13: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♜c3 dxe4 4. ♜xe4 ♗f5 5. ♜g3 ♗g6

various

6. ♖f3 ♗d7

Chapter 14: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.♗1e2 e6 7.♗f4 ♕d6

various

8.c3 ♗f6

Chapter 15: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.♕c4 e6 7.♗1e2 ♗f6

various

8.♗f4 ♕d6

Chapter 16: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6

various

A) 7.f4 e6

B) 7.♕c4 e6

C) 7.♗f3 ♗d7 w/o 8.h5

Chapter 17: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5 ♕h7 9.♕d3 ♕xd3 10.♖xd3 e6

various

11.♕f4 ♖a5+ various

12.♕d2 ♕b4 13.a3 ♕xd2

A) 13.♗e4 ♗gf6

B) 13.c3 ♕e7 various

B1) 14.c4 ♖c7 15.0-0 ♗gf6

B2) 15.d5 cxd5

B3) 15.0-0-0 ♗gf6

Chapter 18: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5 ♕h7 9.♕d3 ♕xd3 10.♖xd3 e6 11.♕d2 ♗gf6

various

12.0-0-0 ♕e7 various

A) 13.♗e4 ♗xe4

B) 13.♖e2 0-0 various

B1) 14.♗e5 c5

B2) 14.♗f1 c5

C) 13.♖b1 ♖b6 14.♗e4 ♖d8

C1) 14.c4 0-0

C2) 14.♖he1 0-0

Chapter 19

various

A) 1.♘c3 d5

B) 1.b4 e5

C) 1.b3 e5

D) 1.g3 d5

Chapter 20: 1.f4 d5

various

2.♘f3 ♘f6 various

A) 3.g3 g6

B) 3.e3 g6

Chapter 21: 1.♘f3 d5

various

A) 2.b3 ♘f6

B) 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 c6 various

B1) 4.d3 ♙g4

B2) 4.0-0 ♙g4 various

B2a) 5.b3 ♘bd7

B2b) 5.d3 ♘bd7

Chapter 22: 1.c4 c6

various

2.♘f3 d5 various

A) 3.e3 ♘f6

B) 3.b3 ♘f6 various

B1) 4.e3 ♙g4

B2) 4.g3 ♙g4

Chapter 23: 1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.g3 ♘f6

various

4.♙g2 ♙g4 various

A) 5.cxd5 ♙xf3

B) 5.0-0 e6

C) 5.♘e5 ♙e6