

A man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black and white striped sweater, is looking intently at a chessboard. The chessboard is set up with white and black pieces. The background is a gradient of brown and orange tones.

ATTACKING the CARO-KANN

ALEXEY DREEV

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Alexey Dreev

**Attacking the Caro-Kann
A White Repertoire**

Chess Stars

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PREFACE

The advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5) attracted for the first time the attention of the chess theoreticians during the World Championship match between Mikhail Tal and Mikhail Botvinnik back in the year 1961.

White seems to lose a tempo for the move 3.e5, but closes the centre in this way, providing himself with a considerable space advantage and impeding the harmonious development of Black’s kingside. The pawn-structure, which we analyse in this book, resembles a bit the closed variation of the French Defence (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5), but with the difference that Black, contrary to what happens in the French Defence, can develop his “bad” light-squared “French” bishop to the f5-square.

Black often tries the immediate undermining move 3...c5, but still we have to assume that his main line is connected with 3...♗f5. The forthcoming fight is centred more or less around space and although he has no obvious weaknesses, Black’s position is a bit cramped. Therefore, in the majority of the variations, the evaluation of the position depends on the consequences of the undermining move c6-c5, creating more space for Black’s pieces. Still, he has some other schemes in which he is trying to complete his development without playing immediately this undermining move. White often tries to seize the initiative on the kingside by advancing his pawns there in front of his own king. As a rule, he usually begins this by playing with tempo the move g2-g4.

The advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence is a very good alternative to the classical variation 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 (or 3.♘c3) dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗f5 (4...♗d7). The theory after 3.e5 has developed extensively nowadays too; nevertheless, the positions of the advanced variation are considerably less studied than those in the classical lines, in which there is much less practical fight and much more a comparison of thorough theoretical erudition.

Naturally, I do not intend to assert that the move 3.e5 is better than the classical schemes for White. Still, my long-term experience in playing the Caro-Kann Defence with Black has shown to me that his problems in this variation are not

easy to solve at all. I hope this book will be very useful for the adherents to the Caro-Kann Defence, since it would help them to understand better the difficulties they would have to cope with.

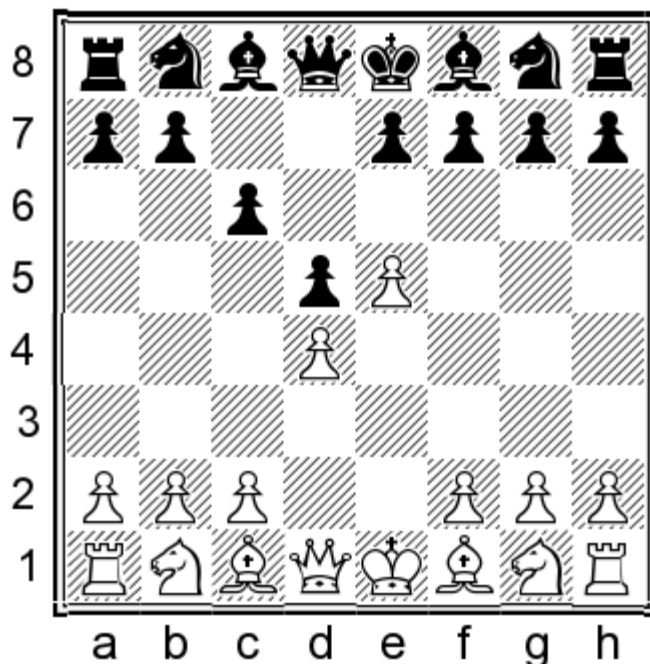
The variation, we analyse in this book, often leads to non-standard situations on the board, so I would recommend it to players who are inclined to enter complicated and unusual positions and who hope to seize the initiative and to maintain it skilfully.

I believe this book will turn out to be a wonderful guide for my readers in the advanced variation of the Caro-Kann Defence...

Alexey Dreev

Chapter 1

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5



3...c5

Black does not have any good alternatives besides 3...c5 and 3...f5. We will be soon convinced of this.

3...h5? 4.f3!?± and his bishop cannot go to the f5-square, while the h5-pawn does not beautify his position at all (4.f2!? h4 5.h3±).

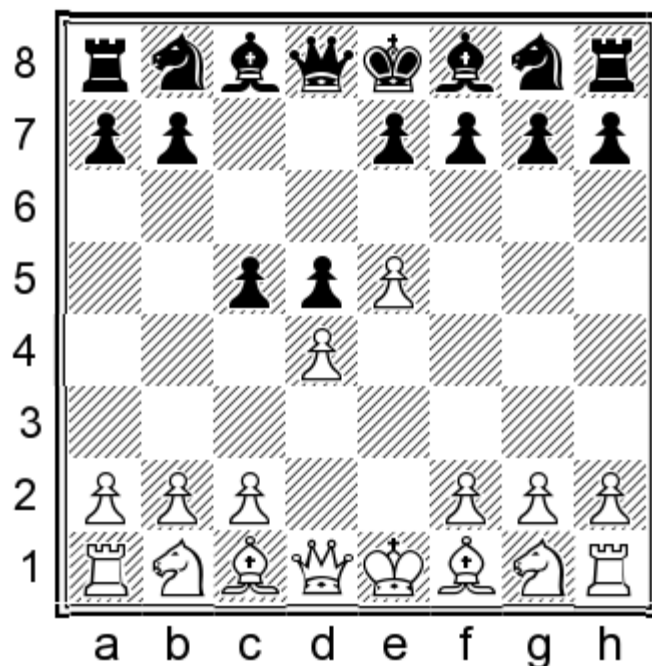
It would be senseless for Black to try 3...e6!., because for example after 4.f3!? c5 5.c3±, there would arise a very fashionable variation of the French Defence (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3), but without a tempo for him.

3...f6?! 4.f3 fxe5 5.fxe5 g6 (5...d7 6.fh5+ g6 7.fxg6 f6 8.fh4 g8 9.fxf8 fxf8 10.f3±) 6.c4 f7 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.f5±

3...a6?! It is obvious that Black's knight on a6 is misplaced. 4.f3!? (4.f3 f5 5.f2 e6 6.0-0±) 4...b4 5.f2 f5 6.a3 e6 7.c3 a6 8.f2±

It is also bad for him to opt for 3...b6!., since White can counter this with the calm line: 4.f2!? f5 5.f3 e6 6.0-0±, with the idea 6...c5?! 7.c4+-, or with the more aggressive approach 4.c4!? dxc4 (4...f5 5.f3 e6 6.f3 b4 7.f2 e7 8.0-0 dxc4 9.fxc4 d5 10.fh4±; 6.c5!? f7 7.g4 f6 8.fge2±) 5.fxc4 f5 6.e6! fxe6 7.fxe6 fxe6 8.f3 d7 9.0-0 g6 (9...e5 10.dxe5 e6 11.fg5 c5 12.fg4 fxe5, Vasiukov – Johannessen, Dresden 2002, 13.fh3+-) 10.f1±

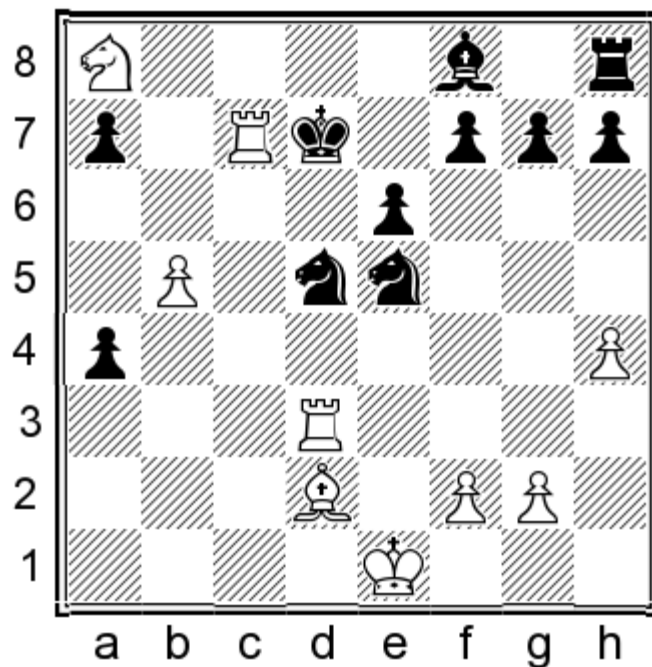
3...g6?! 4.c4. This is White's most energetic alternative. 4...h6 5.f3 f7 6.f4! (It would not be so convincing for him to choose 6.h4 f6 7.h5 g5 8.exf6 exf6 9.f3 f6± Kamsky – Panico, Albany 2014.) 6...dxc4 (Following 6...0-0 7.f2 f5 8.g4±, Black would have problems with his knight on h6.) 7.fxc4 f5 (It would be more or less the same after 7...0-0 8.f2 f5 9.f3±) 8.f3 0-0 9.f2 h5. Black is preventing g2-g4. 10.h3±. His position is very difficult in view of the unstable placement of his knight on f5, as well as due to White's lead in development and extra space. 10...c5 11.d5 e6 12.d6 d4 13.fxd4 cxd4 14.fxd4 f5 15.f4 d6 16.f5 f7 17.0-0 a6 18.fxc6 fxc6 19.f3+-



4.dxc5

This is White's most principled response. It would be very difficult for Black to regain his pawn without certain positional concessions. Still, White has often tried in practice some other moves too. We will have a look at some of them, so that the readers would not have the feeling that we have ignored them.

Black can counter the somewhat surprising counterstrike in the centre 4.c4 in a different fashion, but we will pay attention to some of the most forced lines. 4...cxd4 5.♘f3 (5.♙xd4 e6= White's queen would be attacked with tempo after the move ♖b8-c6.) 5...♙g4!? 6.cxd5 (6.♙a4+ ♙d7 7.♙b3 dxc4 8.♙xc4 e6 9.♘xd4 ♖c6 10.♘xc6 ♙xc6=; 6...♙d7!?) 6...♙xd5 7.♘c3 ♙xf3 8.♘xd5 ♙xd1 9.♘c7+ ♖d7 10.♘xa8 ♙c2 11.♙d2 ♖c6 12.♙c1 d3 13.h4 e6 14.♙h3 ♘ge7 15.♙xd3 ♙xd3 16.♙xd3+ ♘d5 17.b4 b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.b5 ♘xe5 20.♙c7+.

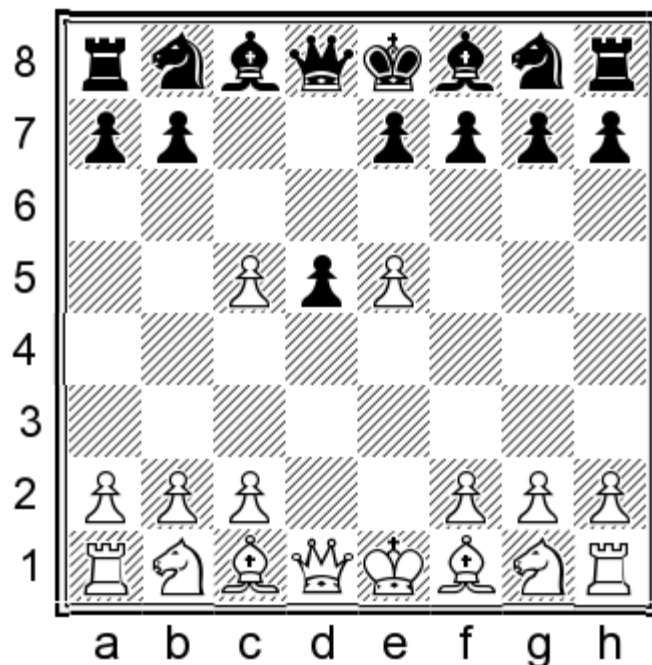


This position was reached in several games. The most likely outcome of the fight would be a draw.

20...♔d8!? 21.♞d4 (21.♞xd5+ exd5 22.♞xa7 ♘c4 23.♘b6 ♘xb6 24.♙a5 ♖c8 25.♙xb6 ♙b4+ 26.♔d1 a3 27.♞a8+ ♖b7 28.♞xh8 ♙c3 29.♙a5 ♙f6 30.♞f8 a2 31.♞xf7+ ♖b8 32.♞f8+ ♖b7 33.♞f7+ ♖b8 34.♞f8+ ♖b7, draw, Najer – I.Khairullin, Loo 2014) 21...♙d6 22.♞xa7 ♙c5 23.♙a5+ ♖c8 24.♞xd5 exd5 25.♘b6+ ♙xb6 26.♙xb6 ♞e8 27.♔d1 ♘c4 28.♙d4 ♞e4 29.♙xg7 ♞xh4= Kosteniuk – Girya, Geneva 2013.

Black would be very close to a draw following 20...♔e8!? 21.♞xd5 (21.♞c8+ ♔d7 22.♞c7+ ♔e8 23.♞c8+ ♔d7, draw, Najer – Khairullin, Moscow 2010) 21...exd5 22.♞xa7 ♙c5 23.♞c7 (23.b6?! a3) 23...♔d8 24.♙a5 (24.♞xc5?? ♘d3) 24...♘c4 25.♞xc5+ ♘xa5 26.♞xd5+ ♔e7 27.♘b6 a3 28.♞d3 ♞b8 29.♞xa3 ♞xb6 30.♞xa5, but he would still need to play accurately.

After the more modest, but still often played move 4.c3, the simplest reaction for Black would be 4...♘c6 5.♘f3 cxd4! (5...♙g4 6.dxc5! – see Chapter 2) 6.cxd4 ♙g4 and he will have an excellent version of the French Defence, due to the absence of problems with the development of his light-squared bishop.



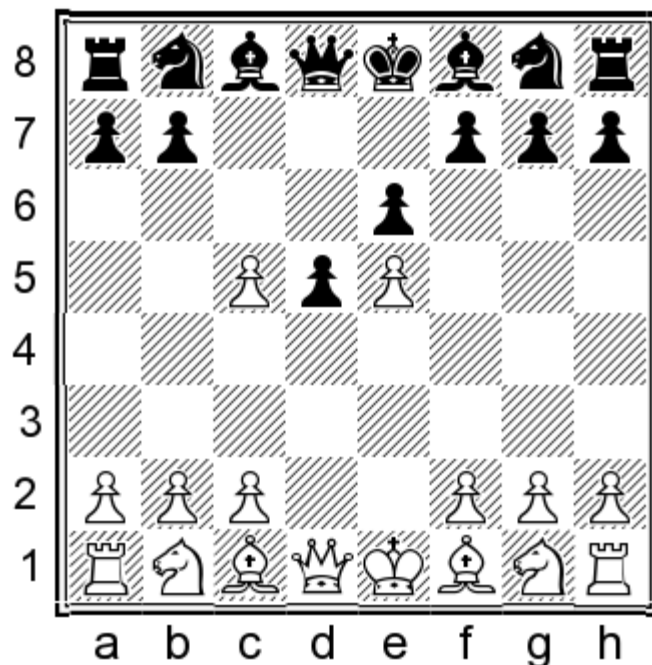
Following 4.dxc5, Black has two main lines: 4...e6 and 4...♘c6 (Chapter 2) and both of them lead to entirely different types of positions. Still, his plans in both cases are quite obvious. He must try either to regain the sacrificed pawn, or to obtain for it some compensation.

4...e6

Black's desire to regain immediately his pawn is easily understandable, however his light-squared bishop is becoming weaker in the process.

About 4...♘c6 5.♗f3 – see Chapter 2.

4...♙a5+?! 5.♘c3 e6 6.♙e3! ♘c6 (6...♙xc5 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♙xc5 ♙xb5 9.♙g4 g6 10.b4 ♙a6 11.♘xd5!+ – Draganic – Avdic, Sarajevo 2012) 7.a3 ♘xe5. It often happens in similar pawn-structures that after Black regains his e5-pawn and his opponent's c5-pawn remains on the board, he would still have some difficulties. The reason for this is that White's outpost on the c5-square is well fortified and squeezes Black's position. In addition, White exerts powerful piece-pressure in the centre. Therefore, his advantage is even more evident due to the fact that Black has lost plenty of time for moves with his queen 8.♙f4!? ♘c6 9.b4 ♙d8 10.♗f3±



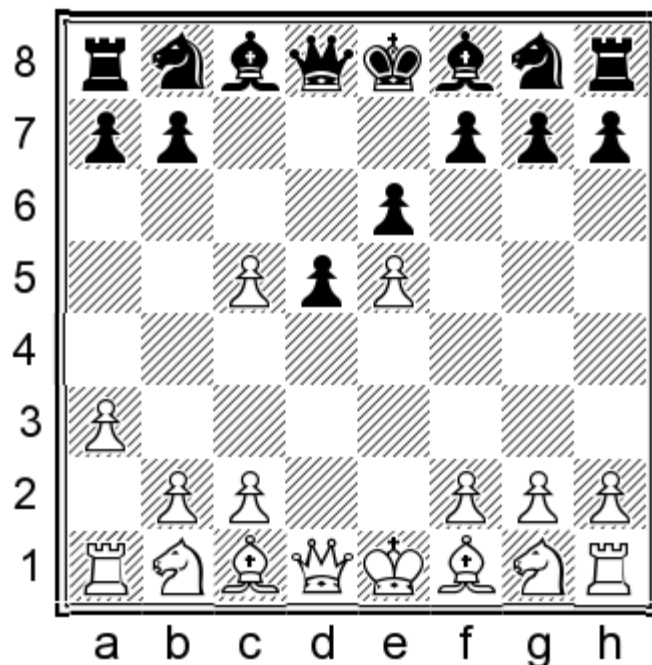
5.a3!?

This move is seemingly modest, but is quite logical. After Black regains his pawn with the move ♟xc5 , White plans with the help of b2-b4 to develop comfortably his queenside pieces. Later, due to his superior development and extra space he can develop his initiative on the kingside and under favourable circumstances even in the centre with the help of c2-c4. Black would have serious problems because of this.

Evgenij Sveshnikov, who is famous for his excellent intuition in the opening stage, was one of the first players in the world who played this variation. Nowadays, this line is included in the opening armour of great attacking players like Ian Nepomniachtchi and Alexander Morozevich. It seems to me that the move is a very good alternative to the much more often played $5.\text{♞e3}$, which for example after the popular lately response $5...\text{♞h6}$, would lead to very complicated positions, which are rather unclear in comparison to the variations, focused on positional concepts, which we will be analysing.

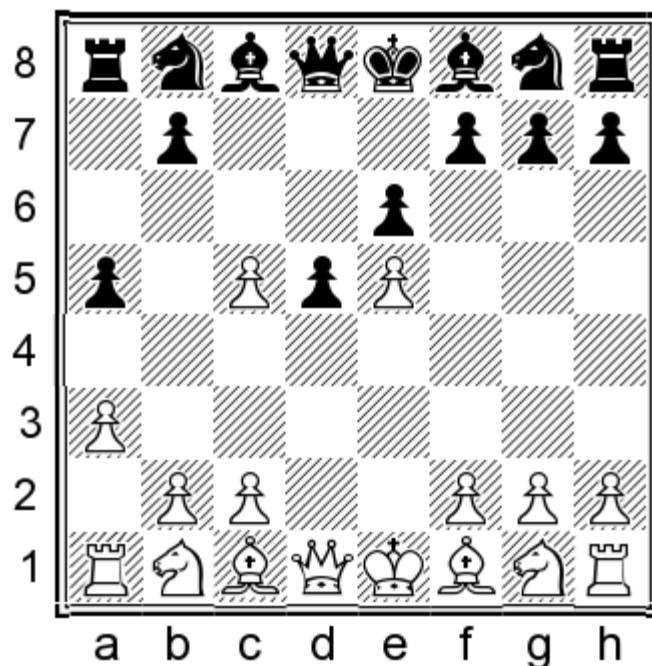
We can also begin with $5.\text{♞f3} \text{♟xc5} 6.\text{a3}$. The following variation is very popular $6.\text{♞d3} \text{♞c6} 7.\text{0-0}$, but after the correct response by Black $7...\text{f6}$! (Strangely enough, the move $7...\text{♞ge7}$ is much more often played here...), he acquires much more space, so his position is not so cramped, which is very typical for this variation.

There may arise a very justifiable question. Why Black is not trying to advance f7-f6?! The answer is very simple. In the variation, which we are analysing, with the move 5.a3, White's dark-squared bishop is fianchettoed on the b2-square, with the help of the move b2-b4, supporting favourably his fight for the e5-square.



Following 5.a3, it would be interesting for Black to try the relatively rarely played move A) 5...♞c7. In fact, he has two main responses. He may either regain immediately the c5-pawn B) 5...♙xc5, or play at first C) 5...♟c6 6.♘f3.

Black cannot solve his problems with the prophylactic move 5...a5, aimed at preventing b2-b4.



About 6.♘f3 – see Rodshtein - Arkell, Hastings 2015 (**game 1**).

In the game Shabalov – Ostrovskiy, Arlington 2010, White was successful following 6.♞g4!? h5 7.♞f4 ♙xc5 8.♙d3 ♟c6 9.♘f3 f6 10.♞g3 ♖f8 11.exf6 ♞xf6 12.♘h4 ♟ge7 13.0-0 e5 14.♟c3 ♙g4 15.h3 g5 16.♟g6+ ♟xg6 17.♟xd5± 6.♙e3!? ♟h6 (6...♞c7 7.♟c3! ♙d7 8.♟b5 ♙xb5 9.♙xb5+ ♟d7 10.b4± Hody – De Billoez, Roux 2009) 7.♘f3 ♟f5, Kryvoruchko – Battaglini, Cappelle la Grande 2010, 8.♙g5!? ♞c7 (8...♙e7 9.♙xe7 ♞xe7 10.♙d3±) 9.g4! ♟e7 10.♟c3 ♙d7 11.♞d4 ♟bc6 12.♞e3 ♟a7 13.♙d3±

5...♟d7. It is a bit too early for Black to determine the placement of his knight on b8. 6.♘f3 (6.b4!? ♟xe5 7.♙b2)

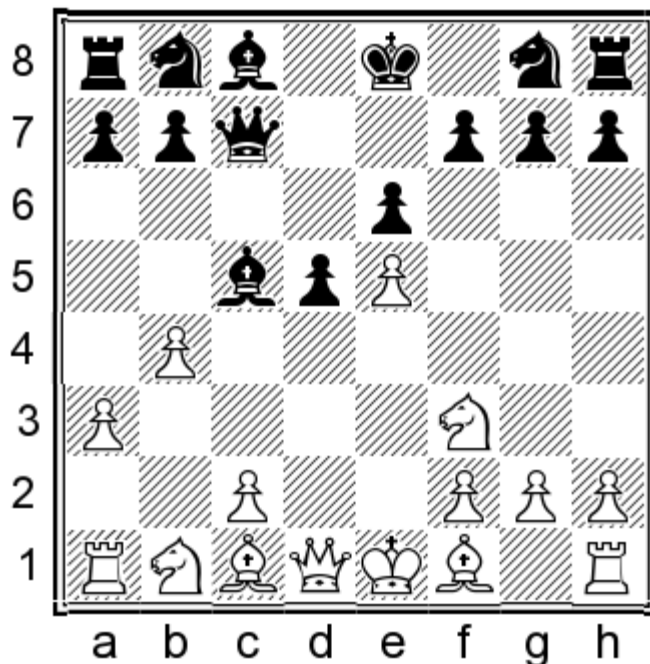
6...♙xc5 (6...♘e7 7.c4! dxc4 (7...♘xc5 8.♗c3±) 8.♙xc4 ♖g6 (8...♘xc5 9.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♗c3±) 9.b4 ♗xe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 12.♙e2±) 7.♙d3 (7.c4!? ♗e7 8.♗c3) 7...♗e7 8.b4 ♙b6 9.♙b2±. White's game is very comfortable.

A) 5...♚c7 6.♗f3 ♙xc5

Black is not in a hurry to clarify the deployment of his knight on b8.

6...♗d7 7.b4 ♗xe5 8.♙f4 ♗xf3 9.♚xf3±

7.b4

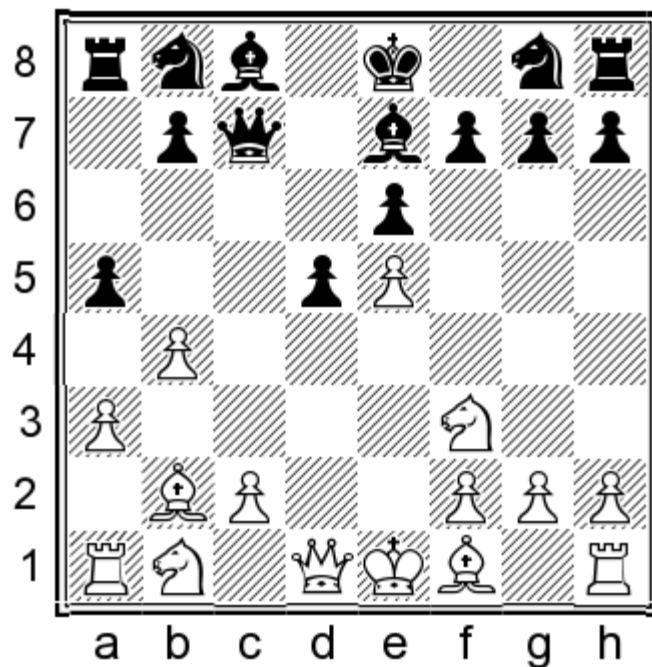


7...♙e7!?

It may seem at first sight this idea is not so good for Black, but the point is that he has already played ♗c6, instead of ♚c7. The essential difference however, is that in our variation Black relies on advancing a7-a5 in order to create havoc in White's plans. When Black's knight is on c6, his advance a7-a5 would not be so good, because White can attack the enemy knight with tempo with the move b4-b5.

The retreat 7...♙b6?! would enable White to realise the advantages of his position with the help of the move 8.c4! and it would turn out that Black would not be well prepared for the opening of the position. 8...a6 (8...dxc4 9.♗bd2±) 9.♙b2 (following 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙b2 ♗e7 11.♙d3 ♗bc6 12.0-0 ♙g4 13.♗bd2±, Black succeeds in completing his development, Shaposhnikov – Prasad, Hoogeveen 2002) 9...♗e7 10.♗bd2 0-0 11.♚c1± with the idea 11...♗bc6 12.b5!

8.♙b2 a5



9.b5

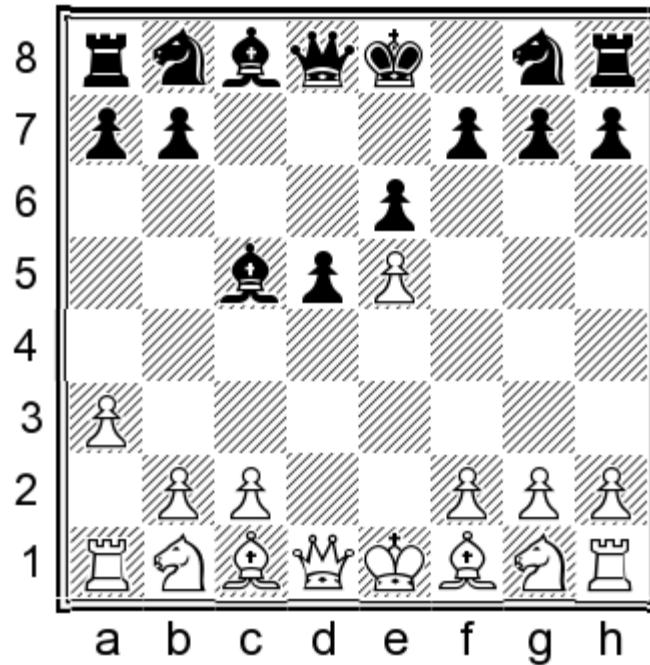
This is White's simplest move. After it, there arises a standard position in which his prospects are preferable thanks to his space advantage and the dominance over the d4-outpost.

9...♞d7 10.♙d3 ♞c5

10...♞h6 11.0-0 b6 12.♞bd2 ♞c5 13.a4 ♙b7 14.♞b3N 14...0-0 15.♞xc5 ♙xc5 16.♞e1±

11.a4 ♞h6 (11...♞xd3+ 12.cxd3±) **12.0-0 b6 13.♞bd2 ♙b7 14.♞b3±** White's space advantage and his reliable position in the centre provide him with better chances. He should not be afraid of the capturing 14...♞xd3, since Black's bishop-pair is not dangerous in a situation like this.

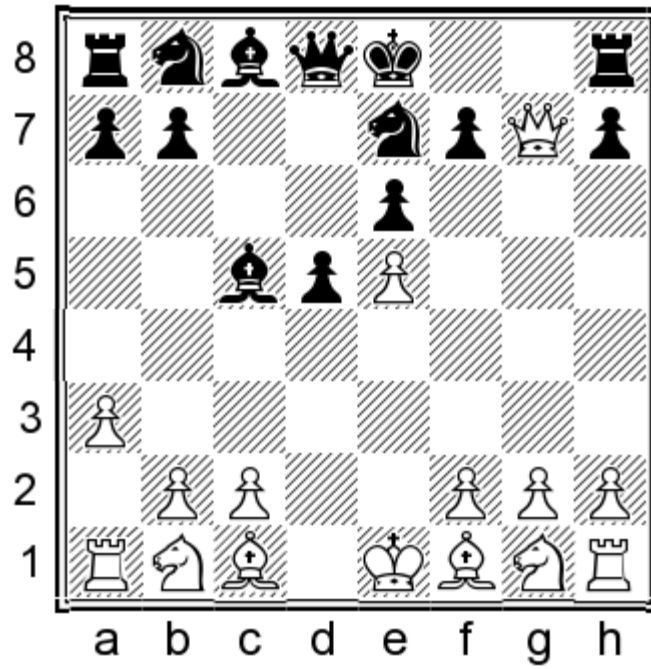
B) 5...♙xc5



Now, White has two possibilities to fight for an advantage in the opening: **B2) 6.♘f3!**, in which he practically transposes to variation C, or he can enter entirely different lines, contrary to those after ♖d1-g4, following the preliminary move **B1) 6.b4!?**

The essential approach for White in a position like this is that he is ready to advance b4, but at an opportune moment, for example if Black plays ♘b8-c6. White is doing this in order to de-evaluate Black's reaction a7-a5, which with an enemy knight on c6, White can counter with b4-b5, winning an important tempo. Still, his reluctance to play ♖d1-g4 is a little bit questionable, so I am sharing with the readers of this book my own impressions.

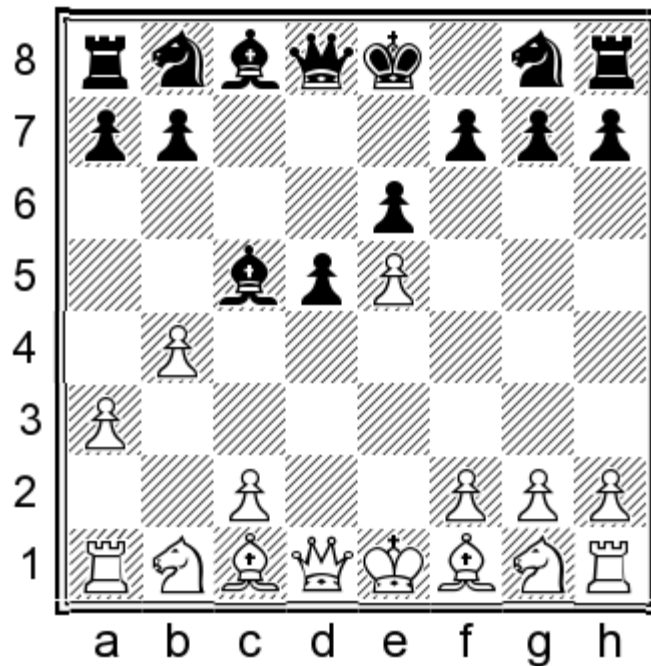
It would not be so good for White to play here 6.♙g4, in view of 6...♘e7! This spectacular pawn-sacrifice makes White's queen-sortie completely senseless. (Following 6...g6 7.♙d3 ♘c6 8.♘f3 ♙c7 9.♙g3!±, the dark squares on Black's kingside are seriously weakened; 9.♙f4?! Ivanchuk – Akopian, Warsaw 2003, 9...f6!⇒) 7.♙xg7 (After 7.b4, Black is not forced to retreat with his bishop. Instead, it would be interesting for him to try 7...h5! 8.♙xg7 ♖g8 9.♙h7 ♙d4 10.♖a2 ♙xe5∞).



Here, Black can force a draw with the line: 7...Bg6 8.Bf3 (8.Bc3?! Akopian – Zhigalko, Moscow 2012, 8...Bd7!?) 8...f8 9.Wf6 e7=, or he can sacrifice a second pawn with 7...g8!?, with the idea 8.Wxh7 Bbc6∞, or 8...Wb6!?∞, obtaining a lively piece-play.

B1) 6.b4!?

Now, Black is forced to clarify the position of his dark-squared bishop.



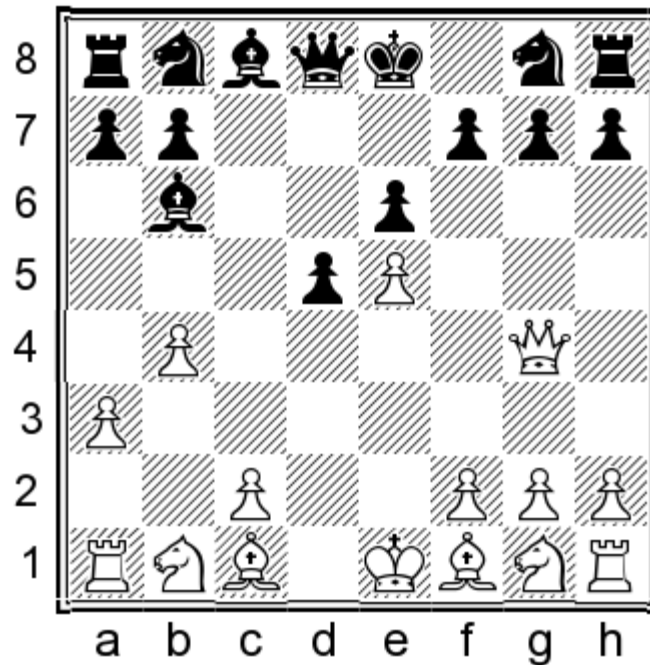
6...e7

After the retreat 6...e7, White can change his plan: 7.c4!? a5 8.b5 (It would not be so clear after 8.cxd5 exd5 9.b5 f6!?∞ and Black would solve the problems with his development.) 8...Bd7 9.eb2↑

Black plays only very seldom the move 6...♙f8!?, which after for example 7.♘f3 a5 8.b5∞, may lead to very complicated positions, which would be rather difficult to evaluate, in which White has serious trumps. It would be only after thorough practical tests that the correct evaluation of this variation win 6...♙f8 would be made.

7.♙g4

Now, in comparison to 6.♙g4, White's last move is played under much more favourable circumstances. This is because Black's dark-squared bishop has already abandoned the important a3-f8-diagonal and has deprived his own queen of the b6-square. It might have gone there, at an opportune moment, as we had already seen in the variations after 6.♙g4.

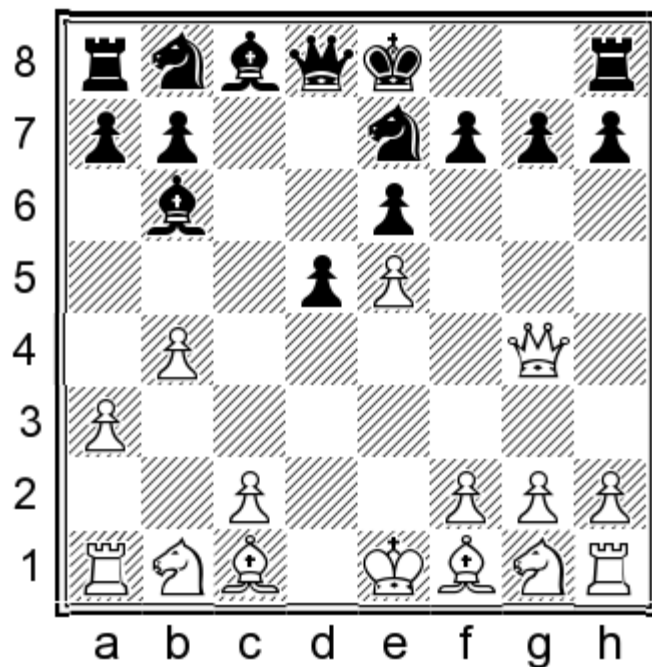


7...♗e7

Here, this gambit pawn-sacrifice is much less effective than following 6.♙g4. It is essential that Black's dark-squared bishop is not on the a3-f8-diagonal, but he had no choice anyway.

7...g6 8.♗f3 a5 9.b5 f6. It would be interesting for White to opt here for 10.♙d3 fex5 11.♙xg6!/? hxg6 12.♙xg6 ♖f8 13.a4!↑ and he would have dangerous initiative.

The move 7...♗f8, is not so justified in this situation, because White plans to develop his initiative on the kingside and Black's king would be a juicy target there. Besides that, it would be inconceivable how he would develop his rook on h8 after this. 8.♗f3 ♗c6 (8...♗d7 9.♙d3 a5 10.♙b2 ♗e7 11.0-0± Kapnisis – Logothetis, Ikaros 2000) 9.♙d3 ♗ge7 10.♙b2 (White can also prevent h7-h5 with the move 10.♙h5!/, for example: 10...♗f5 11.♙b2 g6 12.♙g4 h5 13.♙f4±; 10...♗g6 11.0-0 ♗d4 12.♗xd4 ♙xd4 13.c3 ♙b6 14.a4 a5 15.♙xg6!/? fxg6 16.♙g4±) 10...♗g6 11.0-0 (It would be premature for White to advance his h-pawn here 11.h4, due to 11...♙c7! and Black would begin attacking the enemy e5-pawn. 12.♙g3 d4!∞; 12.♙h5 ♗f4 13.♙g4 ♗g6=) 11...♗ce7 12.♗c3!/? (12.♗bd2±) 12...♗f5 13.♗e2 (It is somewhat premature for White to choose here 13.♙ad1 h5 14.♙g5 ♙xg5 15.♗xg5 ♗ge7 16.♗a4, Antipov – Filipets, Moscow 2013, because after Black's spectacular reply 16...♗e3! White can hardly achieve anything meaningful.). 13...h5 14.♙h3↑ (with the idea ♙a1-d1) Black would be doomed to only defending, moreover that he would have problems with the development of his rook on h8. White intends to open the centre with the breakthrough c2-c4.



We will analyse now White's principled possibility **B1a) 8. ♖xg7** as well as the more pragmatic move **B1b) 8. ♘f3!?**

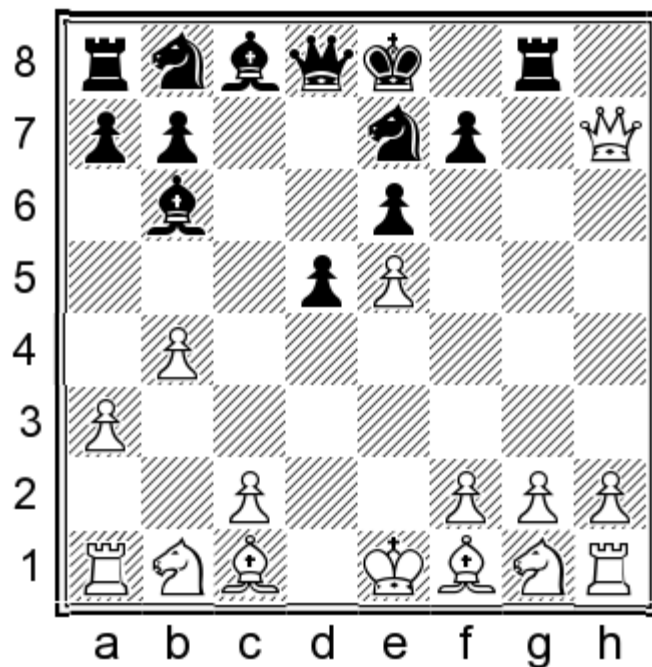
B1a) 8. ♖xg7

This is no doubt a principled move, but is hardly obligatory. We have to pay attention to it, though... It is possible that many players would be interested in it, but we do not plan to analyse it extensively. The final evaluation of this variation can be made only after thorough practical tests, since it had been played only very seldom. I believe the evaluation – “unclear” would be the appropriate one in this case.

8... ♝g8

Now, it would be senseless for Black to opt for 8... ♘g6?!, because his dark-squared bishop had abandoned the a3-f8-diagonal and following 9. ♘f3±, in comparison to the variation with 6. ♖g4, White's queen on g7 would be deployed much more comfortably.

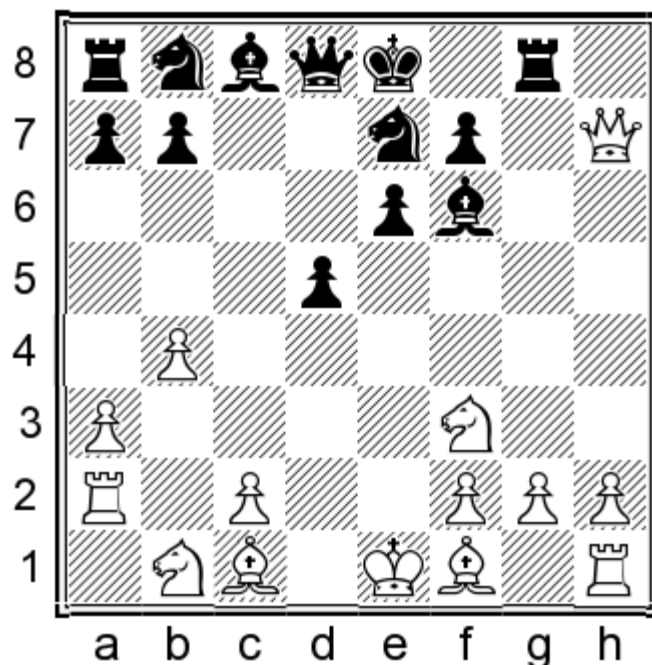
9. ♖xh7



9...♙c7

Black's most powerful piece joins in the actions, trying to pinpoint the most vulnerable spot in his enemy position.

9...♙d4 10.♖a2 (The inclusion of the moves 10.c3 ♙c7 would be in favour of Black.) 10...♙xe5 11.♗f3 ♙f6



The move 12.c4 leads to very unclear positions (It is aimed at preventing Black's pawn-advance 12...e5, since White can counter this with the spectacular response 13.♗c3!, with the idea 13...♙f5? 14.♗xd5! ♙xh7 15.♗xf6+ ♖f8 16.♙h6+ ♖g7 17.♗xh7+ ♗g8 18.♗f6+ ♗h8 19.♖d2 ♙c8 20.♙xg7+ ♗xg7 21.♗h5+ ♗h6? 22.♖d6+ ♗g6 23.♗g3+-) 12...♗bc6 13.♖e2!?∞

12.♙b2!? ♗d7 (12...♙xb2 13.♖xb2 ♗bc6, Kosteniuk – Khotenashvili, Beijing 2012, 14.c4!±; after 13...♙c7, T.Kosintseva – Bystryakova, Sochi 2006, White has the possibility to undermine the enemy d5-pawn with 14.c4!? dxc4

15. ♖c3±) 13. ♗b5 ♜g7! 14. ♛h8+ ♘g8 15.g3± – the arising positions are tremendously complicated and need further practical tests.

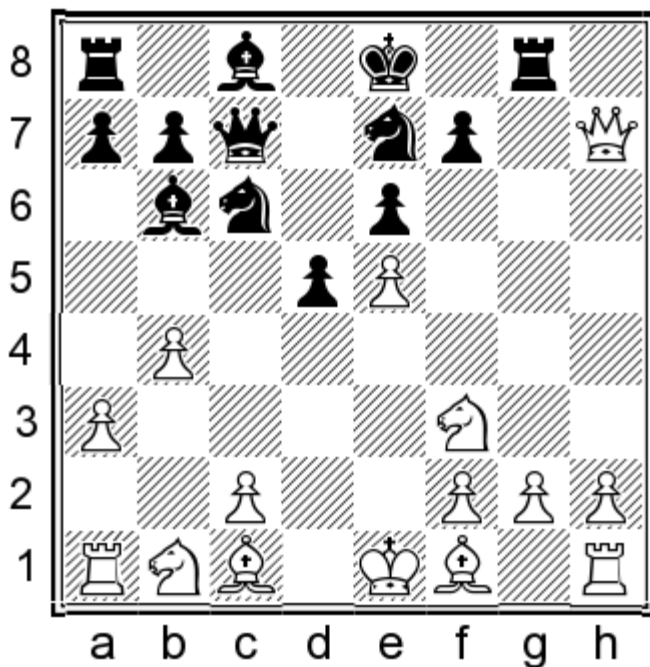
10. ♘f3

It would not be easy for White to consolidate his material advantage in the variation 10. ♗b2 ♘bc6 11.f4 ♗xg1 12. ♜xg1 ♛b6

The positions after 10.f4 are rather difficult to evaluate. White has two extra pawns indeed, but his king is vulnerable and he lags in development, so the position is very unclear. 10...a5 11.b5 ♘d7 12. ♘e2 f6∞, or 10...♘bc6 11. ♘f3 (11. ♜a2 ♘d4 12.a4 ♜g6∞) 11...♘d4 12. ♘xd4 ♗xd4 13. ♜a2 ♗d7∞ (It would be worse for Black to opt here for 13...a5 14.b5 ♛c5 15. ♛d3±, or 15. ♘d1± with the idea a4.).

10... ♘bc6

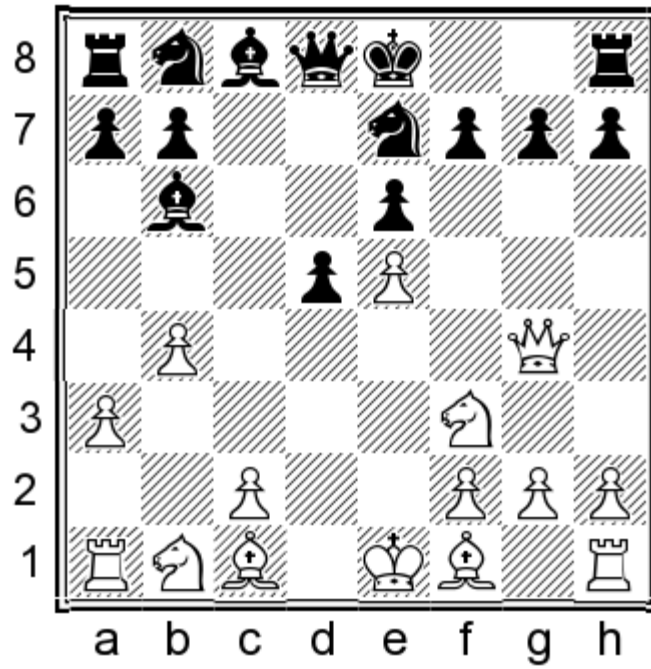
11. ♗b2 ♘d4! (Black's alternatives would not promise him any compensation, for example: 11...a5 12. ♗d3! axb4 13. 0-0±; or 12...♜xg2 13. ♘c3! axb4 14. ♘b5 ♛d8 15.h4! ♜xf2 16. ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 17. ♘xf1±) 12. ♗d3 ♘xf3+ 13.gxf3 ♗d7 14. ♘d2 0-0-0 15.c4 ♜h8 16. ♛g7 (16. ♛xf7 ♘c6) 16...♜hg8 17. ♛h7 (17. ♛xf7 ♘c6) 17...♜h8=



11. ♘bd2!? with the idea 11...♘xe5 (After 11...♘d4, White can choose 12.c4!±; following 11...a5 12. ♗b2!?, or 11...♗d4 12. ♜b1!? and Black will still have to prove whether his compensation is sufficient.) 12. ♗b2 ♘g4 13. ♗b5+ ♗d7 14. ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 15. ♜f1± with the idea 16.h3.

The positions arising after 8. ♛xg7!? need further practical tests.

B1b) 8. ♘f3!?



White can be completely happy with the fact that his queen is very actively deployed and should avoid entering the complications that Black is trying to provoke, enticing his opponent to capture the g7-pawn.

8...♖g6

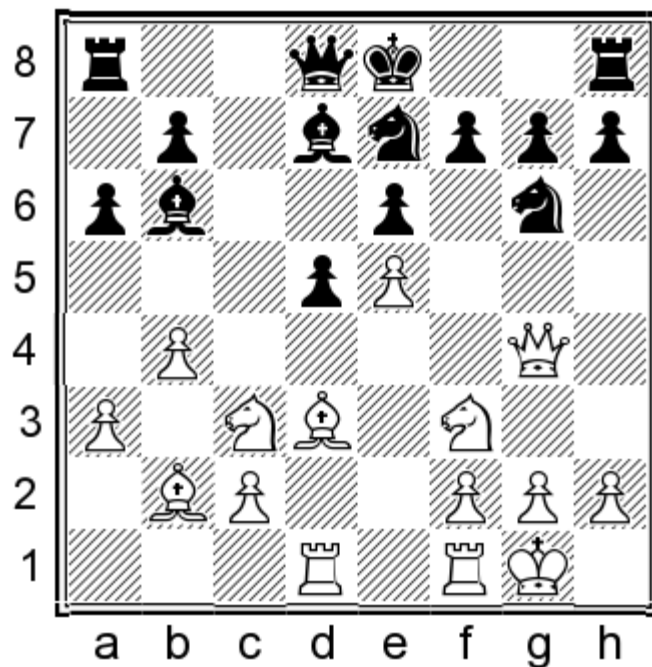
8...♜f8 9.♙d3±

9.♙d3 ♖c6 10.♙b2 ♙d7

10...0-0. Black should better avoid delaying his castling, since he can hardly counter effectively the advance of his opponent's h-pawn. 11.0-0 (White should not be in a hurry to advance 11.h4?, due to 11...f5! 12.exf6 e5↑.) 11...♙c7 (11...f5? 12.exf6 e5 13.♙h5 ♙xf6 14.♖c3!+–) 12.♞e1 ♙d7 (12...f6 13.♙xg6 hxg6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♙xg6+ ♙g7 16.♙xg7+ ♜xg7 17.c4 dxc4 18.♖bd2±) 13.h4↑

11.0-0 ♖ce7 12.♖c3! a6 13.♞ad1

13.h4!/? h5 14.♙g5±



13...♖c8

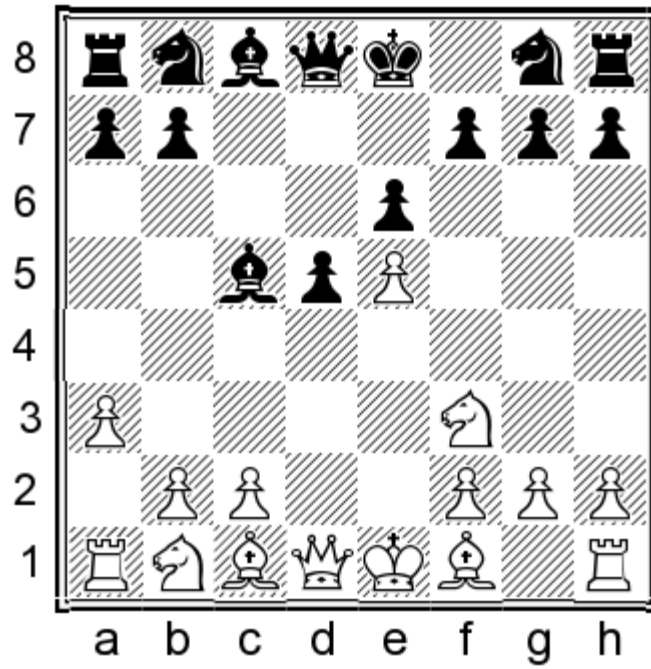
This move is seemingly consistent, but Black has hardly any better alternative anyway.

He cannot solve his problems with 13...♚b8 14.♗fe1 (The situation would not be so clear after 14.♘e2 ♕c7 15.♙g3 0-0, or 15.♘g3 ♘xe5 16.♙xg7 ♘xf3+ 17.gxf3 ♖g8 18.♙f6 ♘g6 19.♙xg6 ♖xg6 20.♙h8+ ♔e7 21.♙xh7 ♙g8 22.♙h4+ f6∞ Almasi – Grishchenko, Yerevan 2014.) 14...♙c7 15.♘b1±

14.♗fe1 ♖c7 15.h4↑ Black is doomed to only defending. 15...♙c8 16.♘e2 h5 17.♙g5 ♙b5 18.♙xb5+ axb5 19.♙d4! ♖c6 20.♙xb6 ♖xb6 21.♘ed4± Nepomniachtchi – Grishchenko, Loo 2014.

B2) 6.♘f3!

White would not mind transposing to variation C.



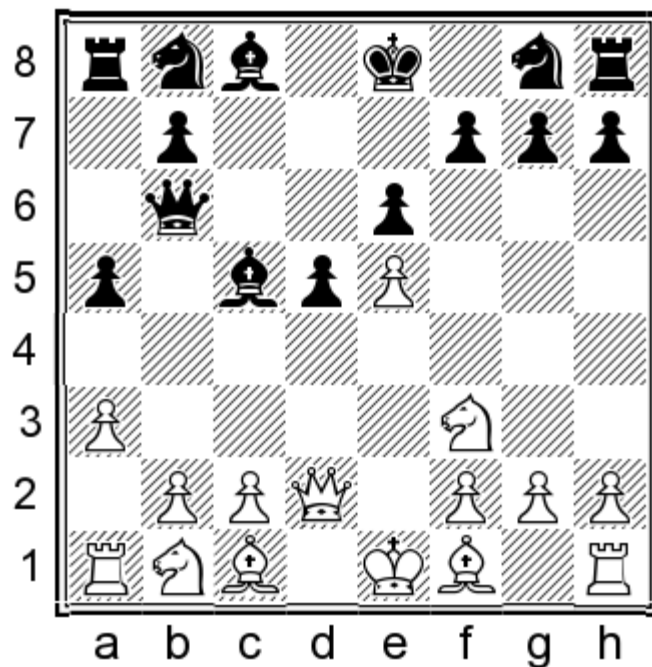
6... ♖b6

The prophylactic move 6...a5 is aimed at preventing b2-b4, but is weakening the b5-square and its effect can be seen in the principled variation 7. ♖d3 ♘c6 (7...b6 8. ♘c3 ♘e7 9. h4 ♙a6 10. ♘b5↑ Cornette – Astengo, Geneve 2008) 8. 0-0 f6 9. ♙b5! ♙d7 10. c4 fxe5 11. cxd5 exd5 12. ♘c3±

6... ♘e7 7. ♖d3 ♘g6 8. 0-0 0-0 (8... ♗c7 9. ♗e1 0-0 10. h4 ♘c6 11. b4 ♙b6 12. ♙b2±; 11... ♙e7 12. ♙b2±) 9. ♘g5! ♙e7 10. ♗h5 ♙xg5 11. ♙xg5 ♗c7 12. ♘c3!?!↑ with the idea 12... ♗xe5 13. ♗ae1 ♗d6 14. ♗e3 (Black was threatening 15... ♗h3.) 14... e5 15. f4!±

7. ♗d2 a5

7... ♙d7 8. ♖d3 ♙b5 9. b4 ♙e7 10. 0-0± Black cannot solve his problems by trading the bishops, because it is not an easy task for him to complete his development, for example: 10... ♘h6 11. ♘c3 ♙xd3 12. ♗xd3±

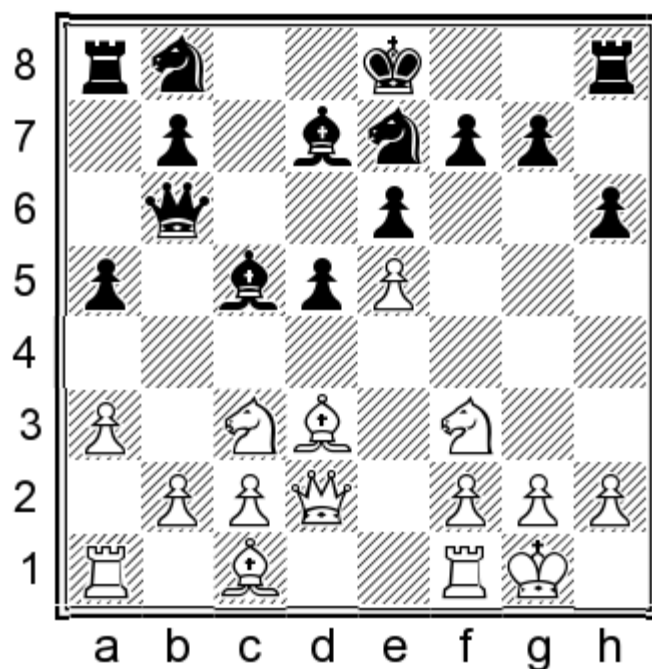


8.♖c3

It is also possible for White to choose here the more consequent line: 8.♙d3 ♜e7 9.0-0 ♞bc6 (It will be rather precarious for Black to opt for 9...0-0?! 10.♖c3 ♙d7 11.♚g5!± and White's queen is transferred to the kingside with a great effect.) 10.♜c3 ♜d4 (10...a4?! 11.♜f4± Kryvoruchko – Kovchan, Alushta 2011) 11.♜xd4 ♙xd4 12.♜a4 ♜c6 13.♜f4 ♙a7 14.♜c3 0-0 15.♜g3↑

8...♙d7 9.♙d3 ♜e7 10.0-0 h6

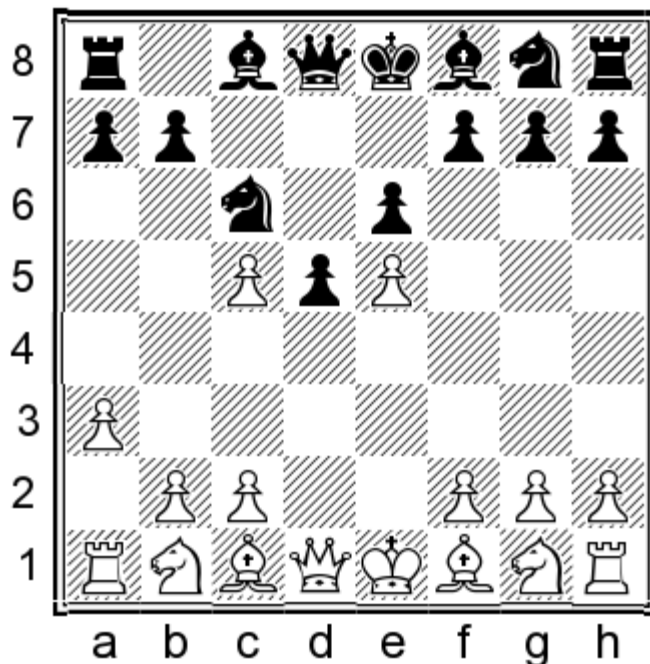
It is rather risky for Black to play here 10...0-0, in view of 11.♚g5!↑ (with the idea 12.♙xh7!) 11...♜g6 12.h4↑ and White's initiative becomes very dangerous.



11. ~~♞f4~~ Motwani – Arkell, Lichfield 2000. White has a space advantage and a superior development, so his kingside initiative is very threatening. Black has problems with his castling on either sides of the board, therefore, he will be doomed to a passive defence.

C) 5...♘c6

Black is trying to provoke the enemy knight to occupy the f3-square, in order to prevent the queen-sortie ♙d1-g4.



6.♘f3

It would be premature for White to choose 6.b4?, due to 6...a5!♣

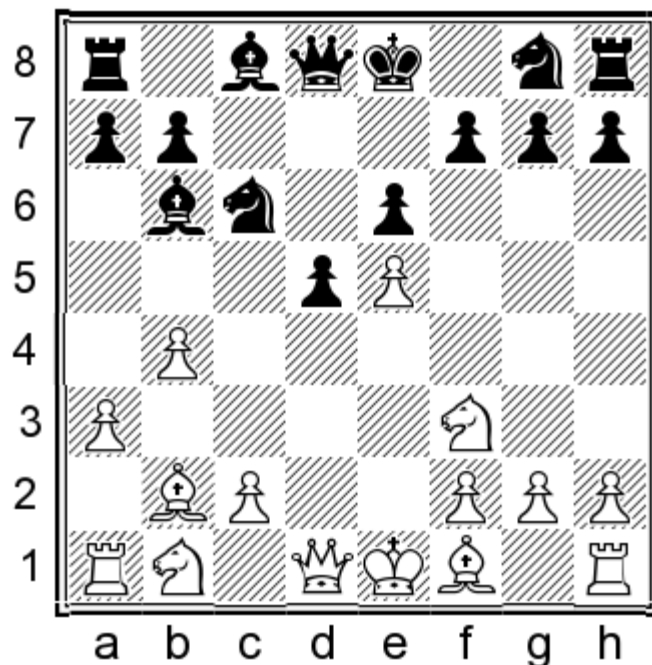
6...♙xc5 7.b4 ♙b6

The drawbacks of the retreat 7...♙e7 are quite evident. Black's bishop thwarts the harmonious development of his kingside 8.b5!. White reduces the tension, concerning the e5-pawn, and this is more important than the slight weakening of the c4-square. (Following the natural move 8.♙d3, Black can free his position with the pawn-break 8...f6! 9.♙b2 ♘h6∞) 8...♘a5 9.♙d3 ♙d7 10.0-0 ♘c4. He fails to withstand the pressure, but remaining passive was not easy to put up with either... (10...♙c7 11.♙e2 ♗c8 12.♗e1 ♙c5 13.♘c3 ♘e7. He has almost completed his development and it might seem that he has some reasons to be optimistic, however, White suddenly attacks the enemy dark-squared bishop – 14.♘a4!±) 11.♙xc4 dxc4 12.♘c3± Black's problems with the development are quite obvious. 12...a6 13.♘d4 (13.bxa6!? ♗xa6 14.♙d4±) 13...♘h6 14.♙xh6 gxh6 15.♙h5 0-0 16.♗ad1 ♙c7 17.♗fe1 ♖h8 18.♘e4 ♙e8 19.♘d6+– Sveshnikov – J.Petrov, Nova Gorica 1999.

8.♙b2

White can also begin with 8.♙d3 and the difference is that following 8...f6, he is deprived of the possibility to react with the move ♙f1-b5.

Here, the move 8.b5 is not so strong, in view of 8...♘ce7! 9.♙d3 ♘g6 10.0-0 (10.h4?! ♘h6♣) 10...♘8e7∞



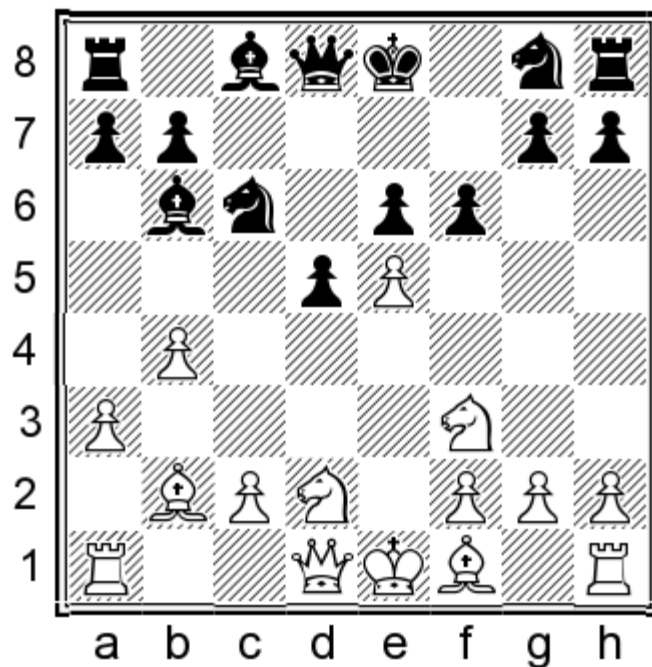
Black has a choice here. He can try to undermine the enemy e5-pawn with the move **C1) 8...f6**, or make an attempt to complete his development as quickly as possible – **C2) 8...g7**.

C1) 8...f6 9.gbd2

This is a simple and promising move.

White can hardly achieve anything meaningful with 9.c4 fxe5 (9...dxe5?! 10.dxe5 fxe5 11.Wh5+ Cf8 12.Wxe5 f6 13.e2±) 10.dxe5 (Or 10.cxd5? exd5 11.dxe5 f6 Shomoev – Kornev, St Petersburg 2006 and he has not obtained an edge after 10.c5 e7 11.b5 b8 12.dxe5 f6, followed by b8-d7.) 10...dxe5 11.e5 f6=

It is also interesting for White to opt here for 9.e5!?, but after Black's surprising response 9...g7! (This is not a blunder of a pawn at all!) I have failed to find any advantage for White. The position however, is so complicated that only the tournament practice may clarify how easy it is to be played by both sides (9...e7 10.gbd2!? xf2+? 11.Cxf2 Wb6+ 12.d4 xd4 13.c4!+-; 10...fxe5 11.ec6 xc6 12.dxe5 f6 13.c4 0-0 14.0-0±) 10.exf6 (10.0-0, Mullan – Nikolaidis, Caleta 2011, 10...fxe5! 11.dxe5 0-0=) 10...gxf6 11.c4 (It would not work for White to play here 11.exf6, due to 11...0-0! 12.h4 e5) 11...e5 12.gbd2 0-0 13.0-0∞

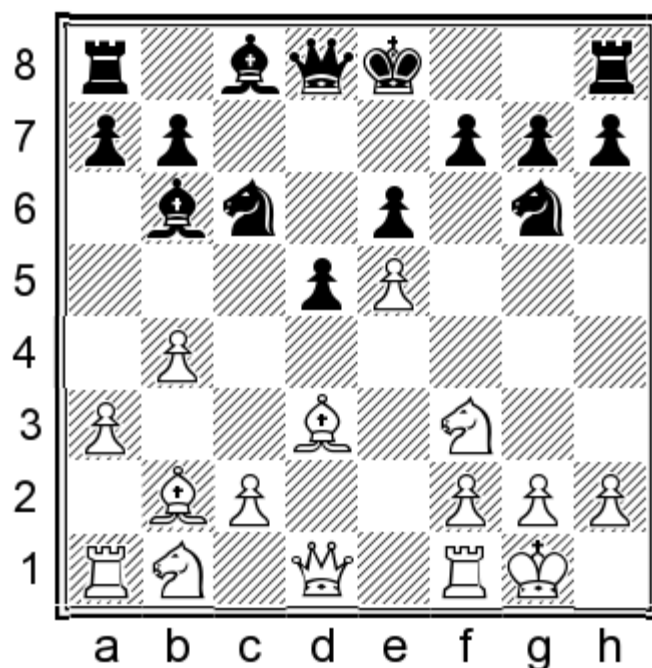


9...fxe5 (9...♖ge7?! 10.exf6 gxf6 11.b5± Vehi Bach – Valsecchi, Barcelona 2013) 10.♖xe5 ♖f6 11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0 a5 13.b5 ♖xe5 14.♗xe5 ♜e7 15.c4 ♗c5 (15...♗d7 16.a4 ♗e8 17.♞c1±) 16.a4 b6 17.♖b3± – White's pieces have occupied the most favourable positions, while Black's pawn-centre is much rather a liability. He will be faced with a very unpleasant passive defence.

C2) 8...♖ge7 9.♗d3 ♖g6

Black increases his pressure against the enemy e5-pawn and prepares the manoeuvre ♖g6-f4 under more favourable circumstances.

10.0-0



This position is like a tabia of the variation with 5.a3. I believe it is very promising for White. Black has completed his

development indeed, but his pieces are somewhat cramped and are not well prepared for active actions. White completes his development and can begin active actions on the queenside, or with the help of advancing h-pawn (g2-g3 and h2-h4) on the kingside, depending on circumstances.

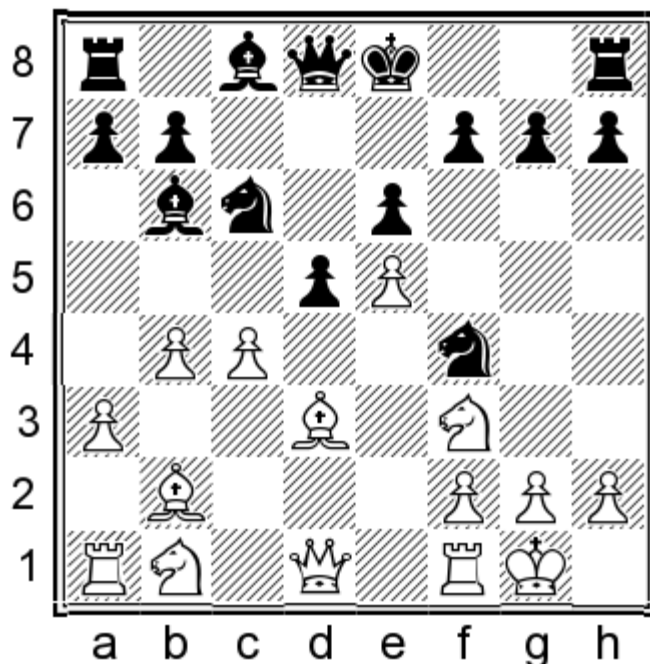
Now, Black has a choice. He can begin a chase after the enemy light-squared bishop with **C2a) 10...♞f4**, or try to complete rapidly his development **C2b) 10...0-0**.

C2a) 10...♞f4

This is the right time for this knight-sortie. We will see that making it later would be senseless.

11.c4!

The modest approach here – 11.♞e1 ♞xd3 12.♞xd3 (12.cxd3!?) is also possible, but is not as energetic as 11.c4.



11...0-0

Black should better refrain from the undermining move 11...f6?! 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♞c3 dxc4 14.♞xc4 ♞xd1 15.♞axd1 e5 16.♞e4 ♞e7 17.b5 ♞a5 18.♞a2± S.Zhigalko – Lomako, Minsk 2011.

Besides its all other pluses and minuses, the move 11...dxc4?! enables White to preserve his valuable light-squared bishop 12.♞xc4 ♞xd1 13.♞xd1. The trade of the queens only creates new problems for Black, instead of facilitating his defence. This is due to his considerable lag in development 13...♞g6. Now, White maintains effortlessly an advantage after 14.b5!? ♞a5 15.♞bd2 0-0 16.♞f1 ♞d7 17.♞e4± A.Fedorov – Lomako, Minsk 2011, as well as following 14.♞bd2!? ♞c7, Quesada Perez – Shmeliov, Greensboro 2013, 15.♞ac1! 0-0 16.♞e2 ♞xe5 17.♞xe5 ♞cxe5 18.g3±

It seems rather slow for Black to opt for 11...a6 12.♞c3 (Or 12.♞c2!?!± with the idea to counter 12...dxc4 with 13.♞bd2.) 12...♞c7 13.♞e2! White is transferring another battle unit to the kingside. 13...dxc4 (13...♞xd3 14.♞xd3 ♞e7 15.♞f4!?!↑; 14...dxc4 15.♞xc4 0-0 16.♞fd1 ♞e7 17.♞g3,) 14.♞xf4 cxd3 15.♞b3± – Here, besides a lead in development and a space advantage, White has excellent attacking prospects against the enemy king, Frolyanov – Grishenko, Samara 2012.

11...♞xd3?! This hasty move is justified by the circumstance that Black's position is cramped, so he is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanges. 12.♞xd3 dxc4 13.♞xc4 0-0 14.♞c3 ♞d4. This is a continuation of Black's planned

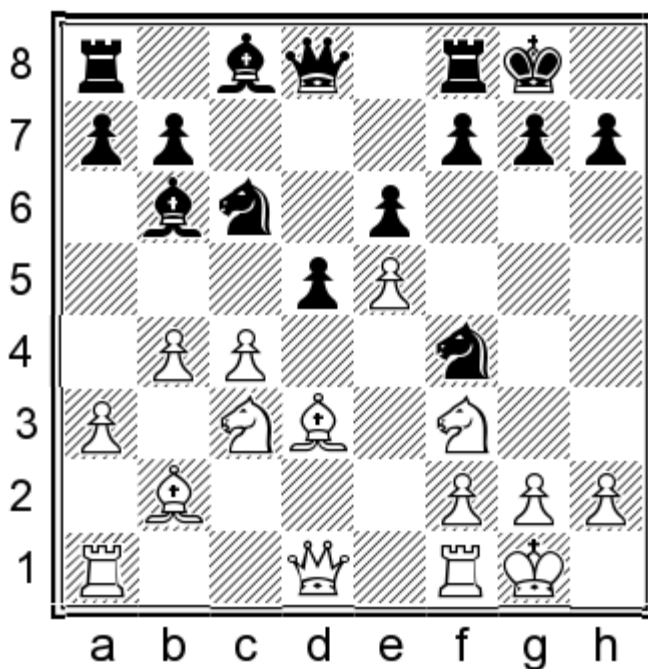
strategy. The exchanges enable him to free his position a bit, but his lag in development is still a very important factor. (He should better refrain from the transfer of his knight to the d5-square, with the line: 14...♞e7 15.♞ad1 ♞d5, because of 16.♞g4, for example: 16...f5. This move is almost forced; otherwise, after ♞c3-e4 Black's king will remain bare and helpless against White's powerful piece-formation on the kingside. 17.exf6 ♞xf6 18.♞h4 ♞d5 19.♞e4± Istratescu – Grachev, Basel 2013; 18.♞g5!?±) 15.♞xd4 ♞xd4 16.♞e2! It is quite natural for the dominant side to avoid exchanges having a superior development! 16...♞h4 (16...♞d7?? 17.♞ad1+–) 17.♞ad1 ♞d8 (17...f5 18.exf6 ♞xf6, Roos – Schubert, Germany 2009, 19.♞a4! ♞f8 20.♞xb6 axb6 21.♞d4 ♞e7 22.♞fd1+–) 18.♞a4! White is so keen on creating weaknesses in the enemy position that he ignores any exchanges. (His edge may prove to be insufficient following 18.♞xd8+, I.Smirnov – Sharapov, Evpatoria 2008, 18...♞xd8 19.♞d1±) 18...♞d7 19.♞xb6 axb6 20.♞d4 ♞e7 21.b5!± – This is a very important resource, fixing Black's weak b6-pawn, as well as his bishop.

White managed to preserve the advantages of his position after 11...♞c7 12.♞d2 ♞xd3 13.♞xd3 0-0 14.♞e1 ♞e7 15.♞c3± Ly – Cheng, Melbourne 2014.

12.♞c3

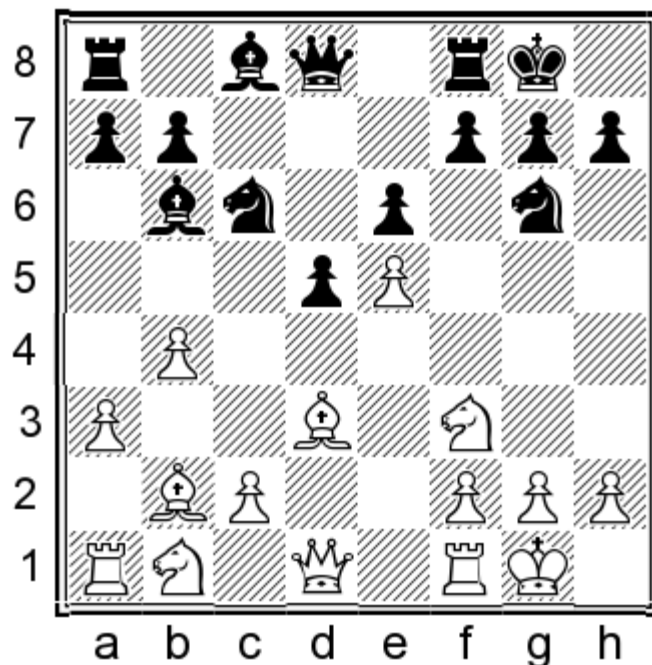
White completes his development.

He could have also attacked the enemy knight with 12.♞d2!? ♞xd3 (12...♞g6 13.c5 ♞c7 14.♞e3±) 13.♞xd3. Now, in comparison to the variation with 11...♞d3, Black has an extra tempo indeed and this is in his favour. Still, he will have to work hard to reach equality. 13...dxc4 14.♞xc4 ♞d7 (14...a6?! 15.♞c3 ♞d4 16.♞xd4 ♞xd4 17.♞e2!± A.Fedorov – Dudukin, Vladimir 2009) 15.♞c3 ♞e7 16.♞fd1 ♞c8 17.♞e2±



12...♞e7 13.c5 (13.♞d2!? ♞xd3 14.♞xd3 dxc4 15.♞xc4± P. Smirnov – Kharitonov, Moscow 2007) 13...♞c7 14.♞b5 b6 15.♞xc7 ♞xc7 16.♞c1± – White's positional advantage is doubtless.

C2b) 10...0-0



11.♞e1

It is best for White to begin with this very move, since it is a part of his set-up anyway. Black's possible knight-sortie ♖g6-f4, which would have been possible after 11.♗bd2, can be countered with the retreat ♕d3-f1. It is also interesting for White to opt here for 11.g3, but Black can also try to counter this with the pawn-brake 11...f6 and then, after the opening of the position, the placement of White's pawn on g3 and the absence of his rook on e1 would provide Black with additional possibilities on the kingside. There arises a situation in which, no matter how Black reacts, White would maintain an advantage, thanks to his extra space. Black can hardly create any meaningful counterplay.

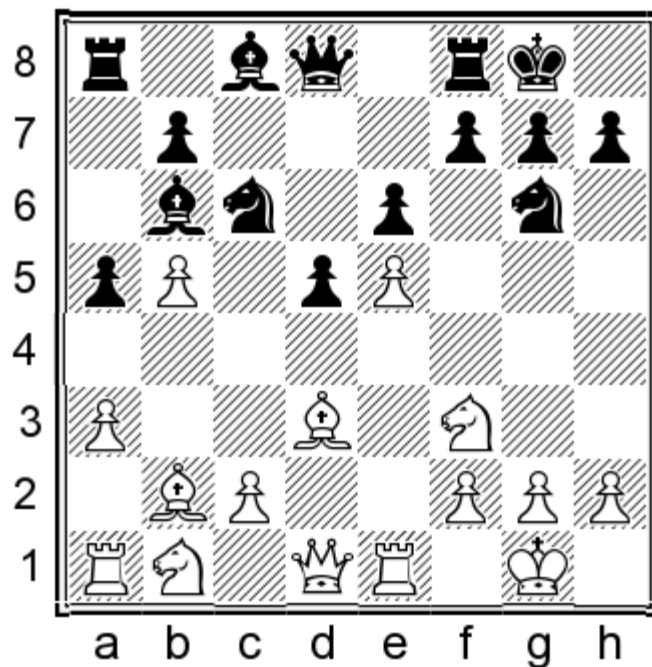
11...a5

It seems rather slow for him to choose here 11...a6 12.♗bd2 ♕d7 13.c4 ♜e7 14.♞b3± Muniz – Larrea, Montevideo 2011.

Black would not achieve much with the undermining move 11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6, because after 13.c4±, his powerful pawn centre vanishes into thin air, while White's pieces remain perfectly placed. 13...♗f4 (13...dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♞xd1 15.♞xd1 ♜f7 16.♗c3 ♜e7 17.b5 ♗a5 18.♕a2 ♞d8 19.♗e4 e5 20.a4 ♕e6 21.♕a3+ ♜f7 22.♗fg5+– Gabriel – Lauber, Bad Woerishofen 1997) 14.♕f1 dxc4 15.♕xc4 (15.♞xd8?! E.Hansen – Houska, Gibraltar 2015; 15...♞xd8=; 15.♗bd2!? ♗d3 16.♕xd3 cxd3 17.♗c4 ♕c7 18.♞e3↑) 15...♞xd1 16.♞xd1 ♜g7 17.♕c1! ♗g6 18.♗c3±

Black would not facilitate his defence with: 11...♕d7 12.♗bd2 ♗ce7 (12...♞c8 13.g3 a6 14.h4 f6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.c4± Pikula – Jovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2014; 12...♗f4 13.♕f1 ♗e7 14.g3 ♗fg6 15.c4 dxc4 16.♗xc4 ♕c6 17.♕d3±; 15.♕d3 ♕a4 16.h4± Swiercz – I.Khenkin, Warsaw 2013) 13.c4 (13.g3!?!±) 13...dxc4 14.♗xc4 ♕b5 15.♗d6± (White would not achieve much by capturing the enemy bishop 15.♗xb6 ♞xb6 16.♕d4 ♞a6 17.♕c2 ♞fd8 18.a4 ♕c4 19.♞d2 b6= Arakhamia Grant – Nikolaidis, Caleta 2010.).

12.b5

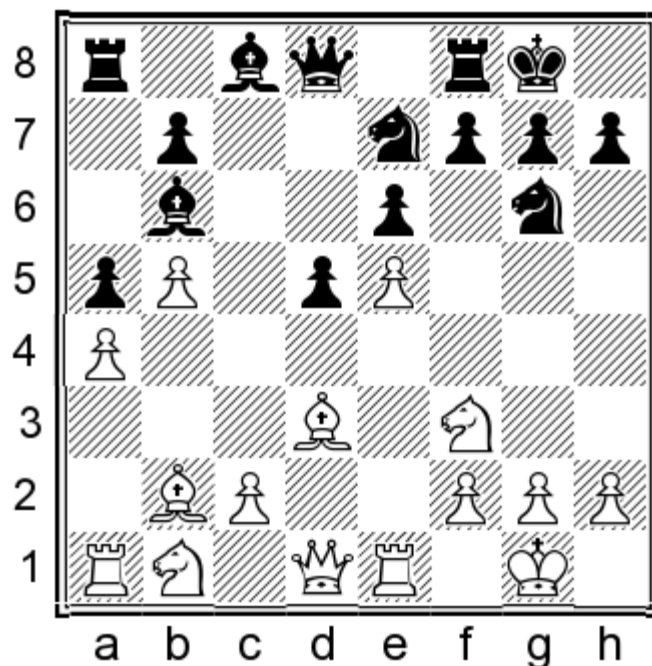


12...♖ce7

Black should better avoid 12...♖b8 13.c4!? (13...♖bd2!? ♖d7 14.a4±), because after 13...dxc4 14.♙xg6 fxg6 15.♚xd8 ♙xd8 16.♖bd2±, as well as following 13...♖d7, Fercec – Bodiřoga, Senj 2008, 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♙xg6 hxg6 16.♖c3±, White would maintain extra space and a superior development.

13.a4

It is also possible for him to play at first 13.g3!? a4 14.c4±

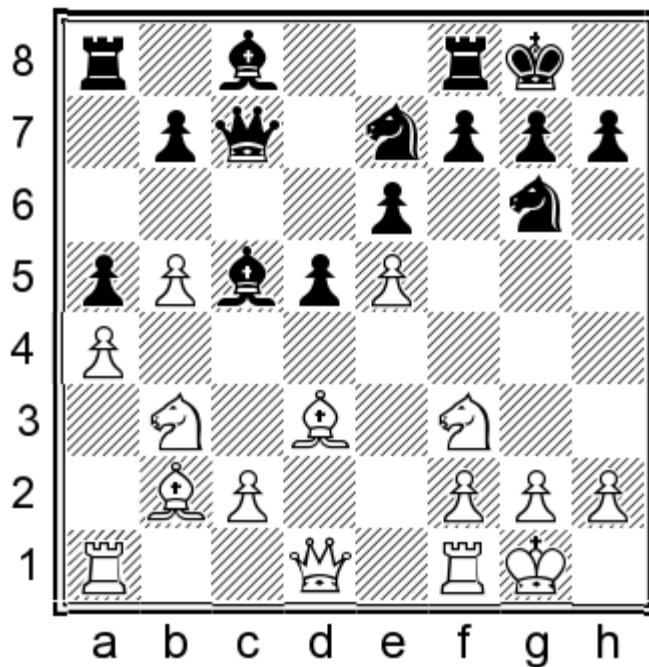


13...♙c5

After this move, Black comes under positional pressing and his pieces remain cramped.

He does not have any attractive alternatives either. For example after 13...f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.c4!, Black will have to cope with new problems, for example: 15...e5 16.cxd5 ♖xd5 17.♙c4 ♙e6 18.♘c3 ♗ge7 (18...♙xf2+ 19.♔xf2 ♚b6+ 20.♕g3±) 19.♗xd5 ♙xd5 20.♗xe5! ♙xf2+ (20...fxe5 21.♚g4+ ♗g6 22.♞ed1+→) 21.♔xf2 fxe5+ 22.♕g1 ♙xc4 23.♚g4±

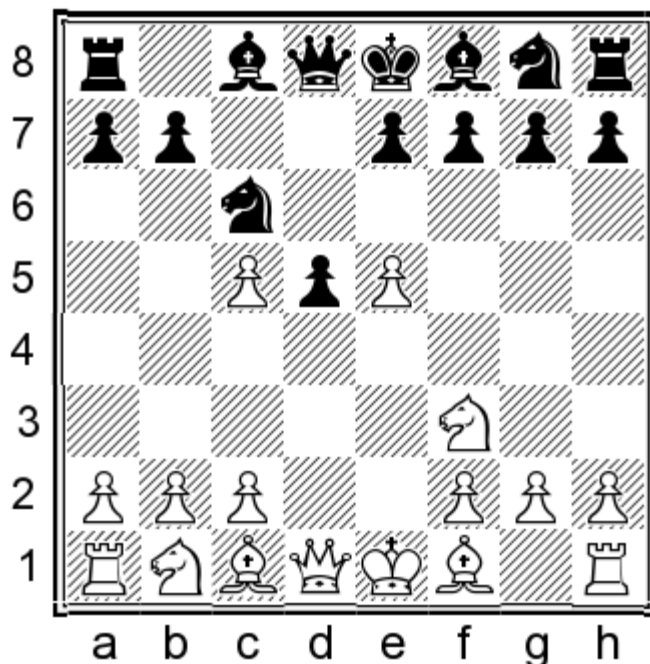
14.♗bd2 ♚b6 15.♞f1 ♚c7 16.♗b3±



White has a superior development and a space advantage. The game Nepomniachtchi – Andreikin, Nizhny Novgorod 2013 followed with: 16...b6 17.♞e1 ♙b4 18.c3 ♙c5 19.♞c1 ♙b7 20.♗bd4 ♞ae8 21.♞c2 ♗f4 22.♙f1 ♗f5 23.♙c1 ♗g6 24.♙d3 ♙c8 25.g3 h6 26.h4 ♚d8 27.h5 ♗ge7 28.♗b3 ♗xg3 29.♗xc5 ♗xh5 30.♗h2 bxc5 31.♚xh5+-. This is an excellent example of realising White's space advantage, which is so typical for the variation we have just completed the analysis of.

Chapter 2

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 ♘c6 5.♗f3



5...♗g4

This is a natural and logical move. Black's plan is to regain the c5-pawn, as comfortably as possible, and to free his light-squared bishop. Still, it would be hardly possible for him to kill two birds with one stone, since White succeeds in preparing counter arguments.

About 5...e6 6.a3 – see Chapter 1.

6.c3!

This is a multi-purpose move. White is ready to protect his c5-pawn with b2-b4, as well as to provide for his queen the possibility for active actions on the queenside, which might be very important for him in numerous lines.

White has often tried in practice 6.♗b5, however this move is losing its popularity recently. One of the reasons is that after 6...e6 7.♗e3 ♖a5+ 8.♗c3 ♗ge7 9.a3 0-0-0! 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6 11.b4 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♖c7, the position is completely unclear and all the three results become possible. 13.♗f4 (The other indirect defence of the e5-pawn is 13.♗d4, with the idea 13...♗xe5 14.♗b5 ♖b8 15.♗xa7±, in which Black has hardly sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material, but after the prophylactic move 13...a6∞, White would have great problems to find a way to obtain an easy advantage: 14.f4 f6 – 14...g5!?!∞ – 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♗xf6 ♗g7 17.♗xg7 ♖xg7 18.♖d3∞. This complicated position was reached in the game Fedorov – Mateuta, Brasov 2011, in which the opponents decided not to take any more chances and agreed to a draw.) 13...a6. This move is with the idea to prevent ♗c3-b5. 14.♗g3 g5!?! 15.h4 (It would be bad for White to try 15.0-0?!, in view of 15...h5, because after that Black would develop powerful initiative on the kingside and White's king would just be an attractive target. 16.h4 gxh4 17.♗h2 ♗g7. Black's pieces have been deployed much more actively and White's queenside attack has no good prospects following 16.b5? h4 17.bxc6 ♖xc6, Edouard – D.Fridman, Plovdiv 2012.). Now, Black can even ignore White's actions and turn his attention to some more important issues – like

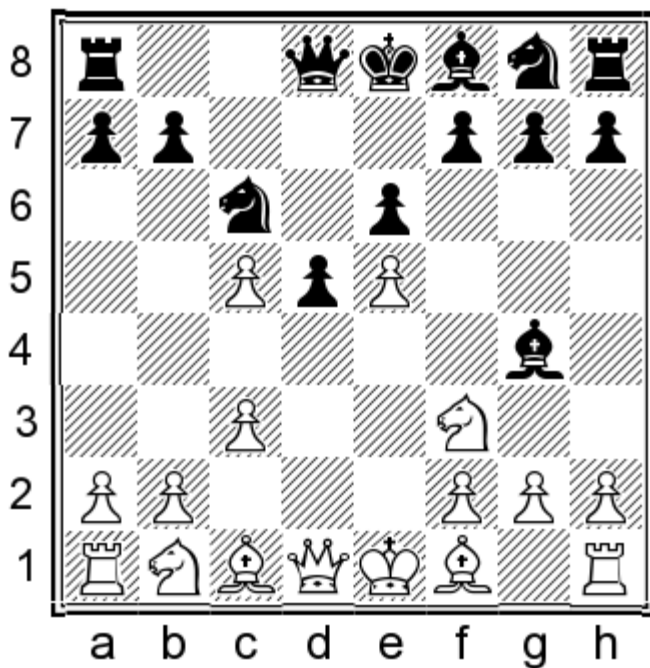
the enemy e5-pawn with the move 15...♔g7!?, obtaining after 16.hxg5 ♕xe5 17.♖e2 f6 18.gxf6 h5∞, a very good position as compensation for the sacrificed material, or try another interesting reaction 15...gxf4 16.♖xf4 h5, with the idea ♕f8-e7 and h5-h4. (Black should better not lose time to regain quickly the sacrificed pawn 16...♖xe5?, following 17.♗e2 ♕g7 18.0-0 h5 19.♖a4±, or 18.♖h5 f5 19.♖a4 f4 20.♕xf4 ♖d3+ 21.♗xd3 ♗xf4 22.♖b1± Kravtsiv – Braun, Shenzhen 2011. White manages to consolidate his position and to begin active operations.) 17.♖a4 ♕e7 18.♖h3 h4∞

6...e6

The e5-pawn is seemingly very attractive, but after capturing it 6...♖xe5?!, following 7.♖xe5 ♕xd1 8.♕b5+ – it turns out to be poisoned.

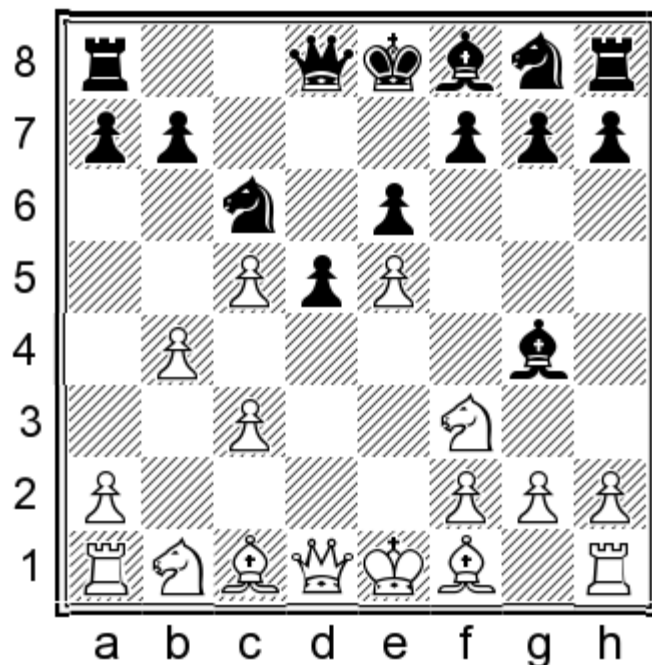
With the move 6...♕xf3?! Black regains immediately his pawn, however White succeeds in developing initiative 7.♗xf3 ♖xe5 8.♕b5+ ♖c6 9.0-0 e6 10.♕e3 ♕e7 (10...♖f6 11.c4 a6 12.♕a4 ♖c8 13.♖d1 – see variation **B1**) 11.c4 ♖f6 12.♖c3±

Black has tried in practice the move 6...a6, not without success though... (for example: Ponomariov – Grischuk, Beijing 2013), but a move like this might be successful only in a single game with the idea to surprise the opponent, because after 7.♗b3! ♗c7 8.♗xd5 e6 9.♗e4±, it would be hardly possible for Black to prove sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.



Now, White can try to obtain an opening advantage with the move **B**) 7.♕e3, but he has also another possibility, which has become very popular lately among the strong players – **A**) 7.b4!?, after which however, it seems to me that the position is rather unclear.

A) 7.b4!?



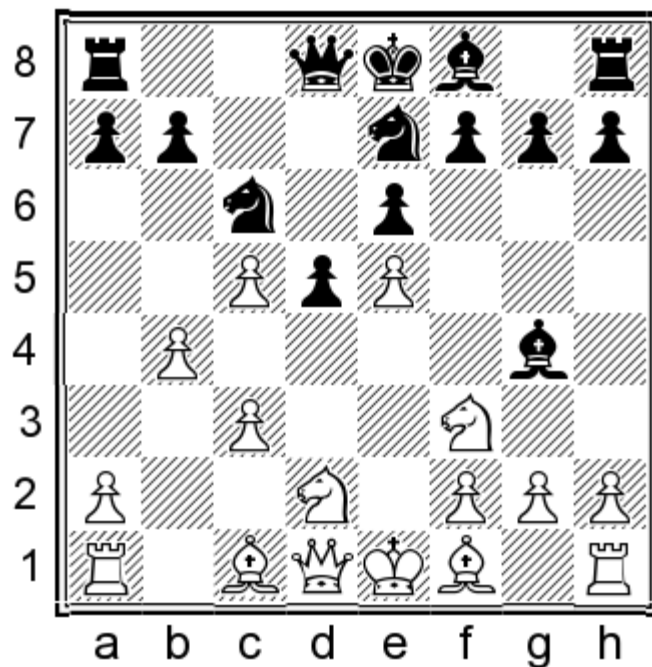
7...♙xf3

Black is trying to restore the material balance as quickly as possible.

It would be weaker for him to opt for 7...♚c7?! 8.♜bd2 ♞xe5 9.♙b5+ ♞c6 10.♚a4± and he would have problems with his development.

Black would be very close to equality following 7...a6!? 8.♜bd2 ♞xe5 (About 8...♞ge7 9.♚a4 – see 7...♞ge7 8.♜bd2 a6 9.♚a4.) 9.♙e2 (9.h3 ♞xf3 10.♞f3 ♙xf3 11.♚xf3 g6= Fedorchuk – Lupulescu, Legnica 2013.) 9...♞xf3 (9...♞c6 10.0-0 ♞f6 11.♙b2!? ♙e7 12.h3 ♙h5 13.a3 0-0 14.c4±) 10.♞xf3 ♞f6!? (10...♙f5? Kosintseva – Stefanova, Moscow 2010, 11.♞d4 ♙g6 12.♚a4+-; 11...♞e7 12.♚a4+ ♚d7 13.♙b5+-) 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.h3 ♙h5 13.♞e5!? ♙xe2 14.♚xe2 0-0 15.c4↑ with the idea 15...a5?! 16.c6!±

It would be a bit too slow for Black to try 7...♞ge7 8.♜bd2.



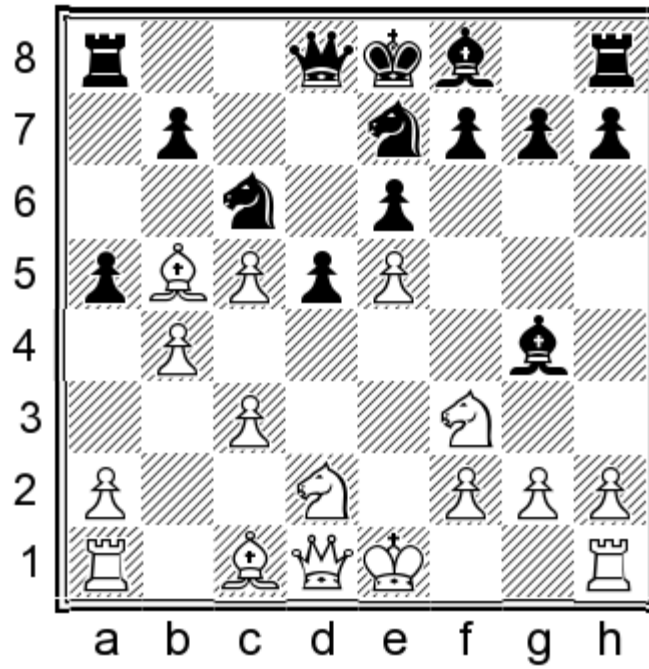
The e5-pawn is still untouchable, just like before 8...♖xe5?, due to 9.♙a4+ ♗d7 (9...♗5c6 10.b5 ♕xf3 11.bxc6+-) 10.♘e5+-, followed by ♕f1-b5.

The prophylactic move 8...a6 is aimed at preventing ♕f1-b5 and eventually b4-b5, and it enables White to solve his problems with his development and to preserve his extra pawn. 9.♙a4 ♕xf3 10.♘xf3 g6 11.♗d3 ♕g7 12.♗f4 0-0 13.0-0 f6 14.exf6 ♕xf6 15.♗h6 ♖e8 16.♙b3+- Grischuk – Shimanov, Moscow 2013.

Black cannot solve his problems with the line: 8...g6 9.h3 ♕xf3 10.♘xf3 ♕g7 11.♗f4 0-0 12.♗e2! This is the most precise move. (12.♗b5 f6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 14.♗xc6 ♘xc6 T.Kosintseva – Ushenina, Dagomys 2009; 12.♗d3 f6 13.exf6 ♕xf6 12...♙c7 13.0-0 ♘xe5 14.♘h1 ♘7c6 15.♖b1 a6 16.a4±

8...♙c7, Ponomariov – Khenkin, Dagomys 2010, 9.♗b5!?± (The position would not be so clear after 9.h3 ♕h5 10.♙e2 g5!?∞).

8...a5 9.♗b5



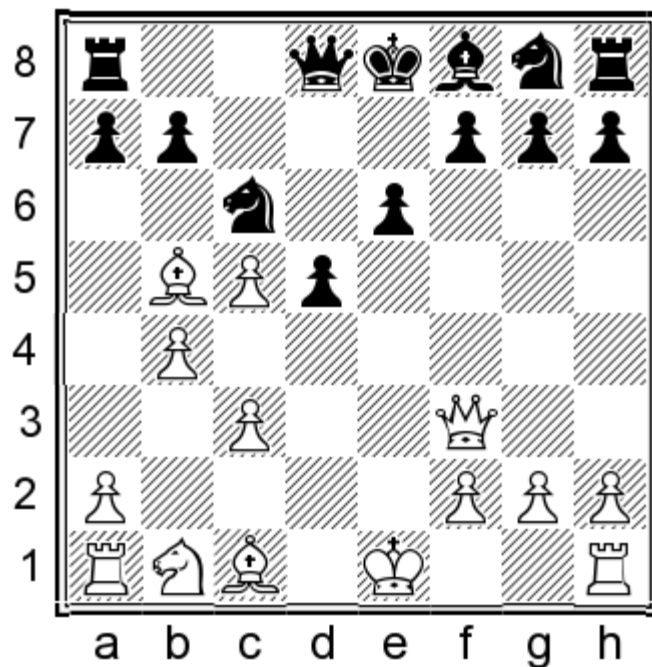
Black has serious problems with the development of his kingside. He should try to exchange his light-squared bishop for the enemy knight on f3, or comply with a weakening of his position. He is going to have great difficulties in both variations.

9...♖c7 10.h3 ♘h5 (Black should better avoid trading his bishop – 10...♙xf3 11.♗xf3 g6 12.a3 ♘g7 13.♙f4 0-0 14.0-0 ♗xe5 15.♗h1 ♗7c6 16.♞e1 f6 17.♗d4 ♖f7 18.♗e2±) 11.0-0± 0-0-0?! 12.♙e2!? ♘g6 13.b5 ♗xe5 14.♗a4 ♗xf3+ 15.♗xf3 ♗f5 16.c6+– Li Shilong – Alavi Moghaddam, Cebu 2007.

There is an interesting possibility for Black too – 9...g5!?, but it would be hardly sufficient for him to equalise. He wishes to develop his dark-squared bishop to the g7-square and to preserve his other bishop. This is going to happen after 10.h3 ♘h5, with the idea 11.g4 ♘g6 12.♗b3 axb4 13.cxb4 h6 14.h4 ♘g7 15.hxg5 h5 16.♗fd4 hxg4 17.♞xh8+ ♘xh8 18.♗xg4 ♙xe5∞ and his pieces would become very active. Still, following 10.0-0 ♘g7 11.h3 ♘h5 12.♞e1 ♖c7 13.♗b3 axb4 14.cxb4 h6 15.♗bd4 0-0 16.♗d2!? ♗xe5 17.♗xe5 ♙xe5 18.♙b2↑, or 16.♙xc6!? ♗xc6 17.♗xc6 ♖xc6 18.♙b2±, Black would still have problems to worry about.

9...g6. After this move he would have to part with his light-squared bishop, which would be a serious positional concession. White would maintain a space advantage and the power of his bishops would be considerable. 10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♗xf3 ♘g7 12.a3!N (White should better not be in a hurry to play 12.0-0?!, since following 12...0-0 13.♗e1 ♖c7 14.♙f4 axb4 15.cxb4 ♞a3!∞, with the idea ♞xf3! gxf3 ♗d4, Black would obtain an excellent game for the sacrificed pawn, Areshchenko – Bernadskiy, St Petersburg 2013.) 12...0-0 13.♙f4 ♖c7 14.0-0 ♗xe5 15.♗h1!± White wishes to increase the effect of the pin on e5, with the moves ♞f1-e1 and ♗d1-e2. It would be rather difficult for Black to get rid of the pin without material losses, for example: 15...♗7c6 16.♞e1 f6 17.♗d4 ♖f7 18.♗e2 ♞ac8 19.♙a4±

8.♗xf3 ♗xe5 9.♙b5+ ♗c6



10.0-0

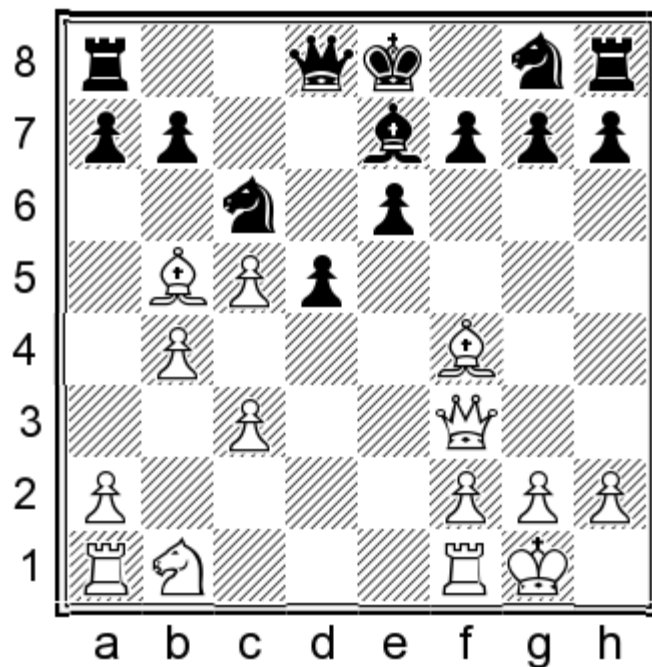
White cannot create any serious problems for his opponent with the line: 10.♘b2 ♘e7 11.c4 ♘f6 12.♘c3 0-0=, while after the rather risky attempt 13.0-0-0?! d4! 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♙xc6, Nepomniachtchi – Andreikin, Moscow 2012, 15...a5!♠, it would be White who would have problems.

10...♘e7

Black can also try to speed up his development with the variation 10...♘f6 11.♘f4 ♘e7 12.♘d2 0-0, but following 13.♖fe1 ♘d7 14.♘b3 ♘f6 15.♘d6 ♖e8 16.♗ad1 ♙c8 17.a3 a6 18.♘xc6 bxc6 19.c4±, he would still have problems, Almasi – Khenkin, Istanbul 2012. We are going to see later that he should better transfer to the f6-square his dark-squared bishop, since it would be much better deployed there than on the e7-square.

11.♘f4

This is the basic difference between this variation and the line with 7.♘e3 – White’s bishop is best placed on f4.

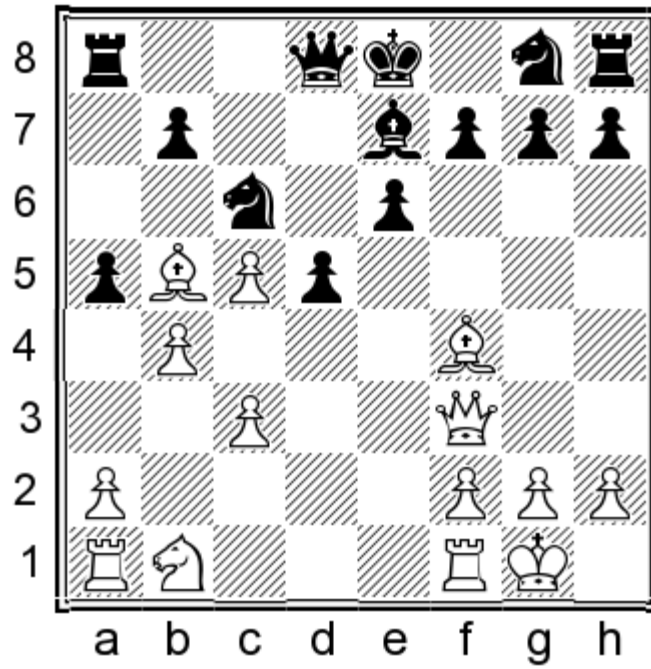


11...a5!N

This is a very important novelty for Black! It is his most precise decision, which reduces considerably White's possibilities.

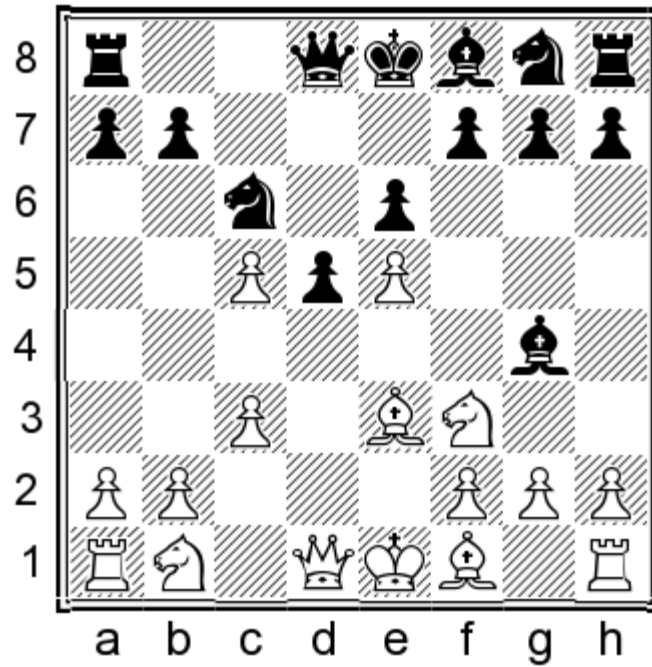
11...♖f6 12.♗d2 – see 10...♗f6.

Following 11...♗f6, White has the resource 12.♗a3 and here 12...a5 (12...♗ge7 13.♖ad1, threatening ♗c4. 13...♖c8 Kurnosov – Goganov, Legnica 2013, 14.♗a4!? a6 15.♗d6 0-0 16.♗c2↑) would not be so effective in view of 13.♗xc6+ bxc6 14.b5± and White maintains an advantage in development and can utilise the power of his c5-pawn, as well as to undermine the enemy centre, under opportune circumstances, with the move c3-c4. 14...♗e7 15.bxc6 ♗xc6 16.♗d6 (16.♗c4 0-0 17.♖fd1±) 16...♗e7 17.♗b5 (17.c4!?±) 17...0-0 18.♖ab1± and in all those lines Black would have difficulties, because of his opponent's actively placed pieces.



White's advantage is much rather symbolic in this position. He can hardly create any serious problems for his opponent with for example: **12. ♖d2 axb4 13. cxb4 ♗f6 14. ♜ad1 ♞c8 15. ♞b3 ♘ge7 16. ♗f3 0-0 17. ♝fe1 ♗f5 18. a4 ♗fd4 19. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 20. ♞d3 ♗xb5 21. ♞xb5 ♗c3 22. ♗d2 ♗xd2 23. ♝xd2 ♞c6=**

B) 7.♔e3

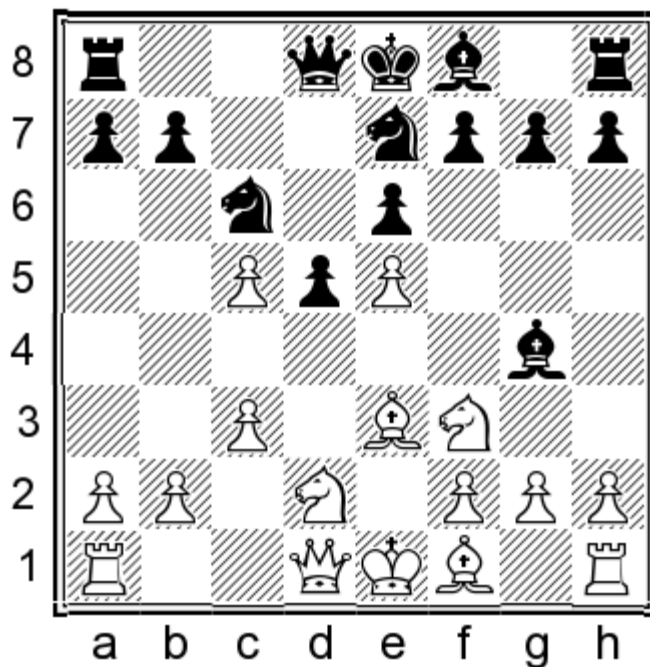


7...♔xf3!?

Black is trying to solve his problems, concerning material.

7...♗xe5?? 8.♖a4+-

After 7...♗ge7, White would have a very effective counter argument – 8.♗bd2!, in order, after the exchange on f3, to recapture with his knight (His alternatives are not so promising, since following 8.♔b5, it would be very interesting for Black to counter with 8...♖a5! 9.♖a4 ♖xa4 10.♔xa4 ♔xf3 11.gxf3, Dussart – Favarel, France 2007, 11...♗f5 12.b4 a5 13.a3 ♔e7!?, or 13...axb4 14.axb4 ♗e7 15.f4 g5; it would be very imprecise for White to opt here for 8.♖a4? ♔xf3 9.gxf3 ♗f5 10.♔b5 ♖c7 11.♔d4, Czarnota – Olender, Bartkowa 2002, 11...♔e7)



8...♗xe5?? 9.♚a4+–

8...♗g6 9.♚a4 ♕xf3 10.♗xf3 ♚c7 11.♙d3! (11...♙b5 ♙e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.♙d4 a5 15.♚fb1 ♚fb8 16.♚c2± Volokitin – Berczes, Germany 2010) 11...♙e7 12.0-0 0-0 (12...♗gxe5? 13.♗xe5 ♚xe5 14.♙f4 ♚f6 15.♙a6!+–) 13.♙xg6 hxg6 14.♚f4±

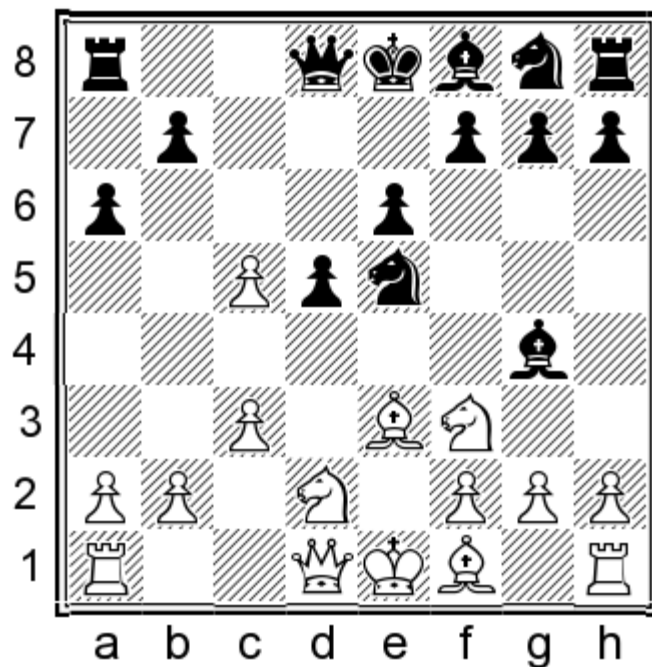
After 8...a6, White has a very attractive queen-sortie – 9.♚a4! and Black would hardly have any compensation after 9...♕xf3 10.♗xf3±, as well as following 9...♙h5 10.h4!±

8...♚c7 9.♚a4 ♕xf3 10.♗xf3 ♗f5 11.♙d4 ♙e7 12.♙d3± Van Kampen – Willemze, Haarlem 2010.

In the variation 8...♗f5 9.♙d4 ♙e7 (9...g5?! 10.h3 ♕xf3 11.♗xf3 ♙g7 12.♙b5 ♚c8 13.♚d2 h6 14.0-0 0-0 15.♚fe1±, White ends up with a solid extra pawn, Pudas – Maki Uuro, Naantali 2011.) 10.♙b5!± Black's compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

8...g6!? 9.♚b3!±N White attacks the b7-pawn and avoids at the same time the pin of the enemy bishop on g4 against his queen. (In the game Svidler – Andreikin, Tromso 2013, White reacted much more prudently – 9.♙f4, although that move was hardly necessary and after 9...♗f5 10.b4 g5! 11.♙xg5 ♚xg5 12.♗xg5 ♙xd1 13.♚xd1 a5 14.♙d3 ♗h4 15.g3 ♗g6 16.f4 axb4 17.cxb4 ♙e7 18.♙b5 ♙xg5 19.fxg5 0-0 20.♙xc6=, the opponents agreed to a draw; 14...axb4!? with the idea 15.♙xf5?! bxc3! 16.♗b1 ♙xc5!±, or 15.cxb4 ♗fd4=) 9...♚c7 10.♗d4 (with the idea ♗b5) 10...♗f5 11.♗xf5 ♕xf5 (11...gxf5 12.♙b5 ♚xe5? 13.♙xc6+ bxc6 14.♚b7+–; 12...♙e7 13.♚a4 0-0 14.♙xc6 bxc6 15.♚d4± and Black failed to obtain any compensation) 12.♙e2 (White cannot fortify the e5-square with the move 12.f4?!, because of the undermining move 12...g5! and Black's pieces liven up – 13.fxg5 h6) 12...g5 (Black obtains a good position neither with 12...h5 13.f4 g5 14.fxg5±, nor following 12...♗xe5 13.♚a4+ ♗e7 14.g4 ♙d3 15.f4 ♗c4 16.♗xc4 dxc4 17.♙xd3 cxd3 18.0-0 0-0+–) 13.♗f3 ♙e7 14.h4 gxh4 (14...g4 15.♗d4+–) 15.♗xh4± Now, White's rook on h1 joins into the actions. If Black tries to restore immediately the material balance with the line: 15...♙xh4 16.♚xh4 ♗xe5, then after 17.♚a4±, he would be faced with new serious problems, since after 17...♗c6, White would have the counter argument 18.♙f4 ♚a5 (18...e5 19.♚h5 ♙d7 20.♙g5±) 19.♚xa5 ♗xa5 20.0-0-0± and he would maintain a considerable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair and more actively placed pieces.

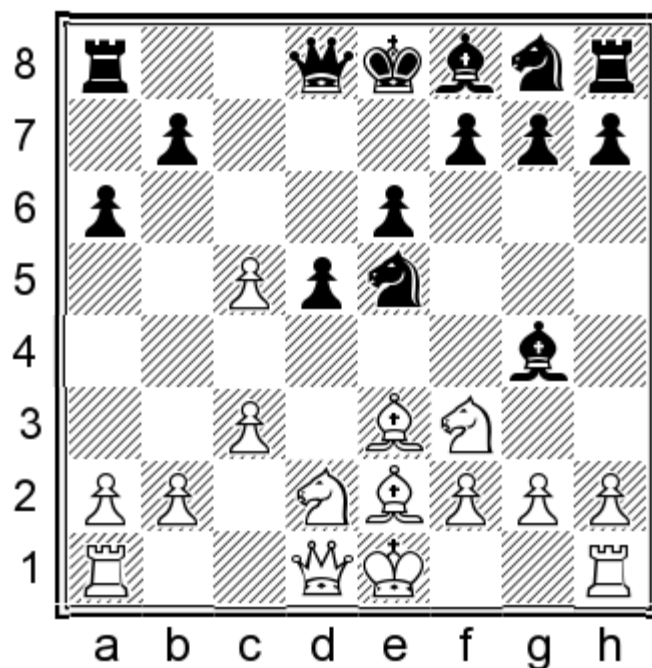
7...a6!? Black is preparing 8...♗xe5. This is a very solid move, but a bit too slow. He regains his pawn and obtains a very solid position, but White has a bishop-pair and can hope to exploit effectively this advantage later. 8.♗bd2 (8.♙d4? ♕xf3 9.♚xf3 b6) 8...♗xe5.



Now, Black should not be afraid of the move 9.♖a4+, because of the possibility 9...♗d7 and his a6-pawn prevents the appearance of the enemy bishop on the b5-square.

It also deserves attention for White to force immediate clarification of the situation after 9.h3!? ♖xf3+ (Black fails to preserve his light-squared bishop with the move 9...♗h5, in view of 10.g4 ♖xf3+ 11.♗xf3 ♗g6 12.♗e5± and White has created the rather unpleasant threat ♖a4 in the process.) 10.♗xf3 ♗xf3 11.♖xf3 ♖c7 (11...♞c8 12.b4 ♖f6 13.♖xf6 ♗xf6 14.♗d3 g6 15.0-0-0! ♗g7 16.♖b2±) 12.b4 ♗d6 13.♞c1 ♗e5 14.♗d3 ♗e7 15.0-0-0 16.♞fe1 ♗c6 17.♗b1± White's two bishops provide him with a slight, but stable advantage.

9.♗e2!? He gets rid of the pin with this developing move.

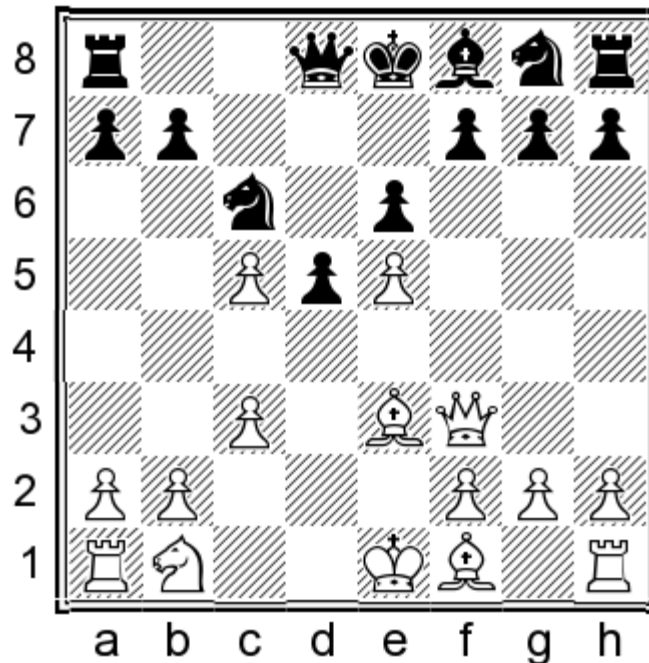


9...♗c6!? Kovacevic – Doric, Croatia 2014, 10.h3 ♗h5 11.b4 ♗f6 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♗d4 ♗xe2 14.♖xe2 0-0 15.♗f4♠ ♞e8 16.♞fe1 ♗d7 17.♗2f3 ♖c8 18.♗h2 ♗f6, Vesela – Nichols, Internet 2013, 19.♞ac1!?, with the idea 19...b6 20.♗xc6 ♖xc6 21.♗d4 ♗xd4 22.cxd4±

This voluntary exchange of the light-squared bishop fails to equalise as well: 9...♟xf3 10.♞xf3 ♞c6 11.0-0 ♞f6 12.b4 (The standard undermining move 12.c4 would not promise White anything special due to 12...♟e7 13.♞c1 0-0 14.cxd5 ♞xd5 15.♟d2 ♟f6= Fercec – Zelic, Banja Vrucica 2009.) 12...♟e7 13.♞b3 0-0 14.♞ad1 ♞c7 15.c4±

9...♞xf3+ 10.♞xf3 (White would not achieve much with 10.gxf3?! ♟f5 11.♞a4+ ♞d7, Charochkina – Belenkaya, Pushchino 2013, 12.♞xd7+ ♞xd7 13.0-0-0 ♞c7∞ and all his efforts turn out to be in vain and anti-positional due to the weakening of his kingside.) 10...♞f6 11.h3. This logical move forces Black to make up his mind about the placement of his bishop on g4. 11...♟f5 (11...♟xf3 12.♟xf3±) 12.♞e5 ♞d7 13.♞a4 ♟c2 (13...f6 14.♞f3↑) 14.♞xc2 (White should better avoid a line with numerous exchanges: 14.♞xd7+ ♞xd7 15.♞xd7 ♞xd7 16.c4 dxc4 17.♟xc4= and Black's defence has been facilitated considerably, Korneev – Goganov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.) 14...♞xe5 15.0-0± White's advantage is based on his superior development and the presence of his bishop-pair. 15...♟e7 16.f4 ♞d7 (16...♞c6 17.f5↑ and Black cannot play 17...e5? due to 18.♞ad1±, followed by ♟f3, and he loses his d5-pawn.) 17.b4 0-0 18.c4 ♞f6 19.♟f3±

8.♞xf3



Here, Black can regain his pawn immediately with **B1) 8...♞xe5**, or try to complete his development as quickly as possible **B2) 8...♞ge7**.

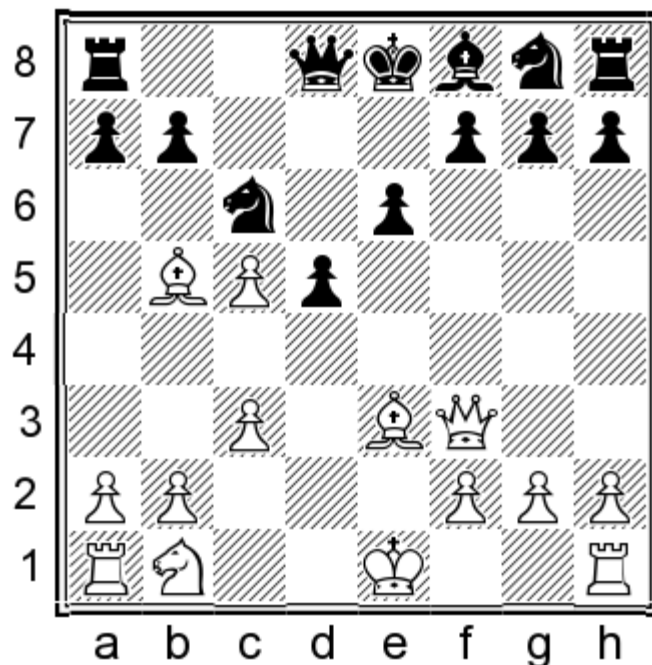
B1) 8...♞xe5 9.♟b5+

White should try here to advance c3-c4 in order to get rid of his doubled pawns and to activate his minor pieces. He should not be so much in a hurry to do this immediately, though...

9...♞c6

White develops very powerful initiative following 9...♞d7?! 10.c4!±

It would be rather strange for Black to retreat here 9...♞e7? 10.♞g3±, since his king would be obviously misplaced in the centre of the board.



10.0-0!

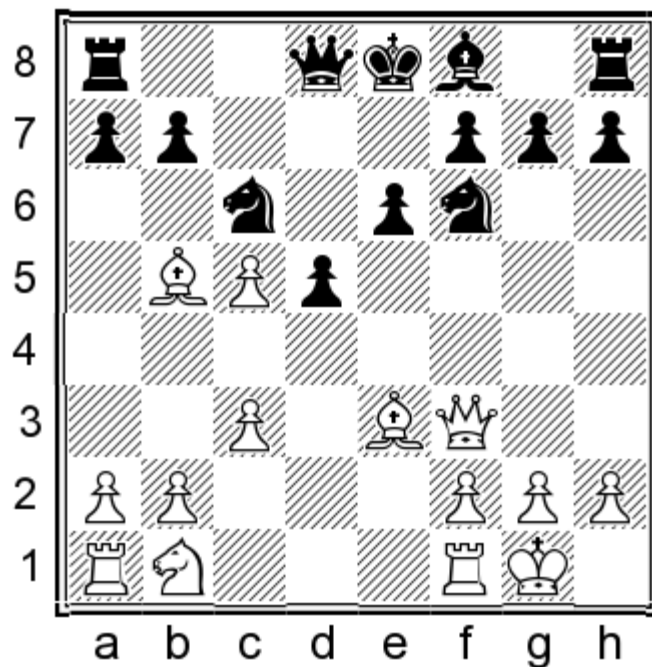
This is a natural and powerful move. It is quite reasonable for White to remove his king away from the centre, before advancing c2-c4 and to prepare his rook on h1 for active operations in the centre. It might be useful on the d1-square at an opportune moment.

It would be slightly weaker for White to play immediately 10.c4, since in that variation Black can reduce his opponent's pressure by exchanging queens 10...♖f6 11.♗d2 ♗ge7 12.0-0 ♜xf3 13.♗xf3±. White has two bishops indeed, but Black's defence has been facilitated considerably and White's edge may turn out to be just symbolic. Black can try the following attractive lines in his attempt to equalise: 13...♞c8!? (13...f6!?, preparing in the process a nice leeway for his king on f7; 13...dxc4!? 14.♗e5, Dvoiryys – Abeln, Cappelle la Grande 2007, 14...♞c8 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♞fc1 ♗e7 17.♞xc4 0-0. White's prospects of achieving anything real have been reduced considerably.) 14.♞ac1 dxc4 15.♗xc4 ♗f5. It would be rather difficult for him to preserve his bishop-pair without positional concessions for example: 16.♗d2 ♗xc5 17.♗xe6 ♗xf2+ 18.♞xf2 fxe6 19.♗g5 0-0 20.♗xe6 ♞fe8 21.♞xf5 ♞xe6=, or 16.♗b5 ♗xe3 17.fxe3 ♗e7 and the position has been simplified.

10...♗f6

10...a6 11.♗a4 ♜a5 (11...♗f6 12.♞d1 – see 10...♗f6 11.♞d1 a6 12. ♗a4; 11...♞h4?! 12.♞d1! Black's queen is absolutely useless on the kingside. 12...♗ge7?! 13.♗d2 0-0-0 14.♗f3 ♞h5 15.b4+– Khairullin – Krenz, Germany 2010. He had better retreat his queen immediately – 12...♞d8, but then it would be completely unclear why he had tried that sortie in the first place. 13.c4 ♗f6 14.♞b3↑) 12.♗c2 ♗f6 13.♗d2 ♗e7 14.♞g3 0-0 15.♗b3 (15.b4±) 15...♞d8 16.♗h6 ♗e8 17.♞ad1± Wang Zili – Magem Badals, Yerevan 1996.

Black lags in development and it would be hardly reasonable for him to lose tempi for the transfer for his knight – 10...♗ge7 11.♞d1! a6 (11...♗f5? 12.c4±) 12.♗a4 ♗g6 (12...♗f5 13.c4 ♗xe3 14.♞xe3±; 13...♞a5? 14.cxd5 ♞xa4 15.♗c3± T.Kosintseva – Girya, Geneva 2013) 13.♗d2!? (It seems attractive for White to try here the risky line: 13.c4!? ♗ge5 14.♞h5 ♗xc4 15.♗d4↑) 13...♗e7 14.♗c4 ♞c7 15.♗b6 ♞d8 16.c4±



Now, White can exert immediate pressure against the enemy d5-pawn with the move **B1a) 11.c4**, or can chose the preparatory move **B1b) 11.♞d1**.

B1a) 11.c4!?

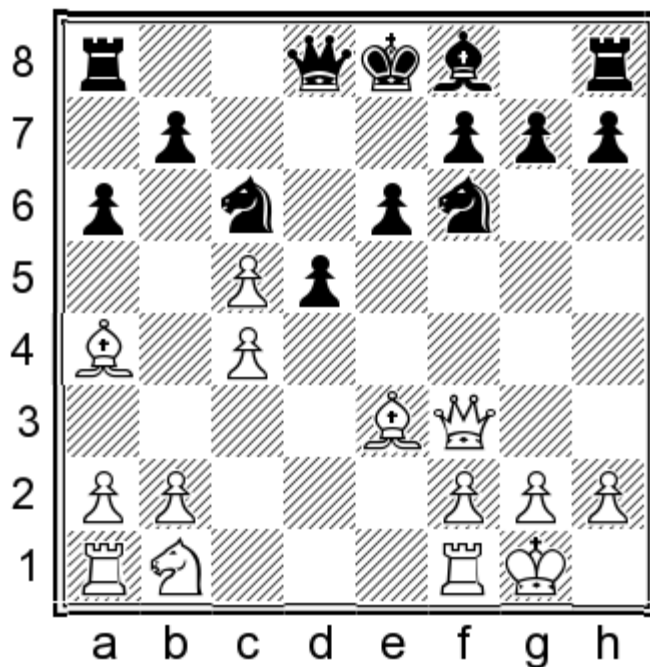
This is a very precise decision which requires serious attention by Black.

11...a6

11...♙e7 12.♘c3 0-0 (12...a6? 13.♙a4 0-0 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♞fd1+- Procacci – Luo, Montreal 2013) 13.♞fd1 ♚a5 14.a3 (14.cxd5 ♜xd5 15.♜xd5 exd5 16.♙d3± – see 11.♞ad1) 14...dxc4 15.♙xc4 ♜e5 16.♚e2 ♜xc4 17.♚xc4 ♞fc8 18.b4 ♚c7 19.♞ac1± Erenburg – Schroer, ICC 2011.

Following 11...♞c8 12.♞d1 ♚a5 (12...a6 13.♙a4 – see 11...a6) 13.♘c3 dxc4 14.♚g3!±, it would be a serious problem for Black to develop his kingside.

12.♙a4



12...♞c8

His desire is easily understandable. He wishes to reduce the enemy pressure against the d5-square with the move d5xc4 and his last move is aimed at just that. Its drawback however, is the fact that the development of Black's kingside is slowed down and White will make use of that in the future.

12...♞a5? 13.♘c3 ♙xc5 (13...♙e7 14.a3+-) 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♞xd5 1-0 Pfau – Schroeder, Germany 2004.

It would be worse for Black to protect his knight with the queen 12...♞c7?!, because of 13.♙f4 (13.♘c3!? dxc4 14.♞fd1 ♙e7 15.♙f4 ♞c8 16.♙d6±) 13...♞d7 14.♘c3 ♙xc5 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♞fe1± and his king remains stranded in the centre, since he cannot follow with 16...♙e7? (16...♙f8 17.♞ad1±) 17.♙g5+-

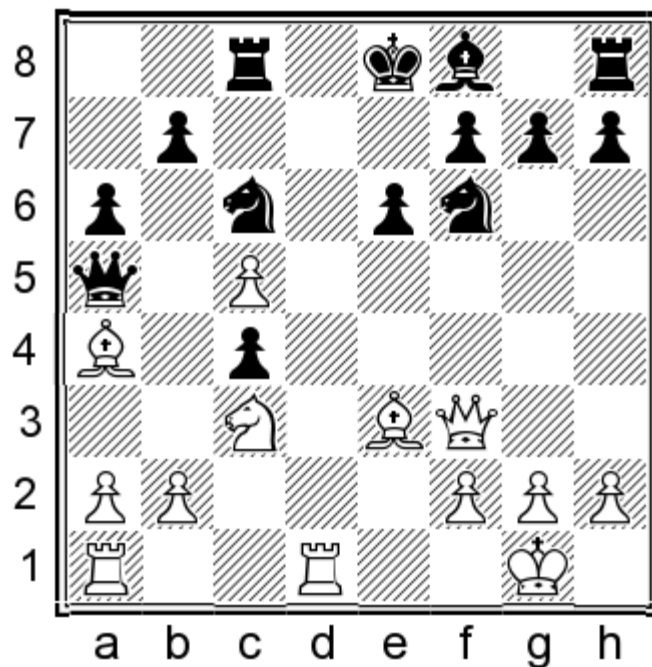
Black's attempt to speed up his development fails here just like before. 12...♙e7 13.♘c3 0-0 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♞ad1!↑ ♞a5 16.♘xd5 exd5 17.♙b3 d4 18.♙xd4 ♘xd4 19.♞xd4 ♞xc5 20.♞d7±. He cannot save his pawn with 20...b5?! (20...♞ab8 21.♞f4!±) 21.♙xf7+ ♙h8 22.♞e4± and now it has become evident why on move 15, White placed on d1 his rook from a1. His other rook on f1 has turned out to be very useful for the protection of the f2-pawn.

13.♞d1!

White prevents Black's plan, connected with the pawn-advance d5xc4.

13.b4!? ♙e7 14.♘c3 0-0 15.cxd5 ♘xd5 16.♞ad1 ♘cxb4 17.a3 ♙f6 18.♘e4 ♘c6 19.♙b3! ♙e5 20.♙xd5 exd5 21.♞xd5 ♞e7 22.♞fd1 ♞fd8 23.♘d6±

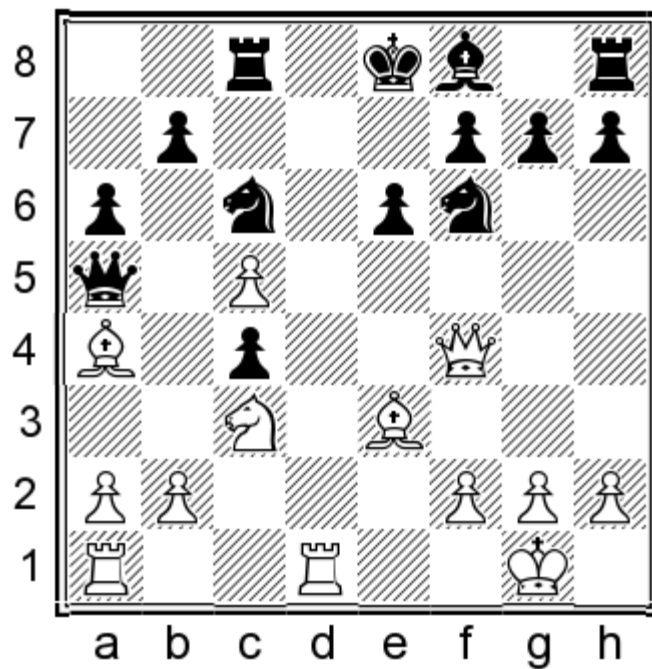
13...♞a5 14.♘c3 dxc4



15. ♖g3

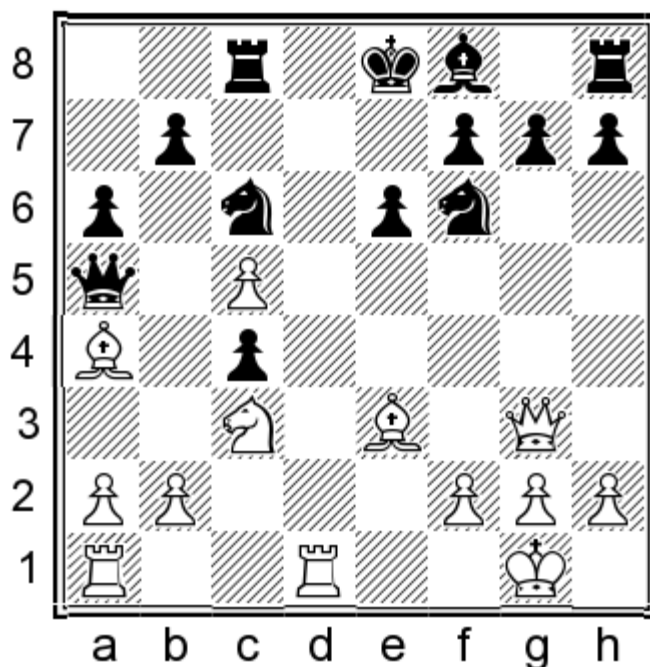
Black has realised his idea, but his kingside has been ignored. White exploits this by threatening the g7-pawn and prevents the development of the enemy bishop on f8.

His alternative here is the move 15. ♖f4!?, with the idea to regain immediately the c4-pawn and to begin an offensive on the queenside by advancing his pawns there. He has very good reasons to follow that plan, because of his pawn-majority, superior development and space advantage.



It would be a suicide for Black to try to win material here with 15... ♖b4?, because of 16. a3 ♖a5 (16... ♖xb2? 17. ♖ab1! ♖xa3 18. ♗xc6+ bxc6 19. ♖b8+-; 17... ♖xc3 18. ♖xb7+-, followed by ♗a4xc6) 17. ♖xc4 ♗e7 18. b4 ♖c7 19. ♗f4 e5 20. ♗g5+- White has weakened the d5-square and is ready to deploy his knight there. 20... 0-0 21. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 22. ♗d5 ♖d8 23. ♖e4, with the idea ♗d5-b6+-

15...♙e7 16.♚xc4 0-0 17.♙xc6! White should be on the alert (following 17.a3?! ♘e5 18.♚f4, Akopian – Bernadskiy, St.Petersburg 2013, 18...♚c7! 19.b4 ♘h5 20.♚e4 f5 21.♚c2 ♘g4, it would be White who should worry about maintaining equality) 17...♚xc6 18.b4 ♚c7 19.a4± (with the idea b4-b5) – Black is helpless against his opponent’s pawn-offensive on the queenside.



15...♙c7

His desire is to trade the queens, or to deflect the protector of the c5-pawn (the bishop on e3), but this does not facilitate his defence at all.

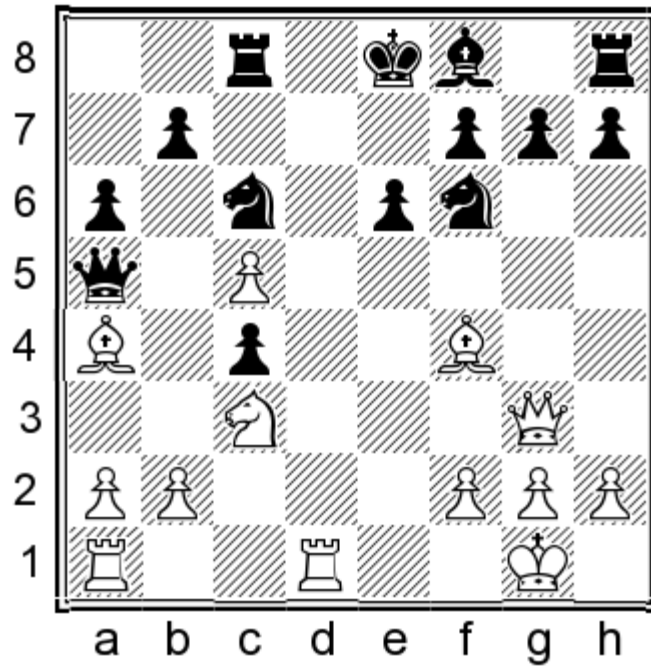
15...♙e7?! Now, Black is in a serious trouble. 16.♙xc6 White frees his knight on c3 from the protection of his bishop and compromises his opponent’s queenside pawn-structure. (He can also capture the enemy g7-pawn 16.♚xg7!? ♚g8 17.♚h6 ♚g6 18.♚f4↑ with the idea ♙a4-c2.) 16...bxc6 17.♙d4↑ 0-0 18.♘e4 ♘e8 (White destroys the enemy kingside too after 18...♘h5 19.♚f3 ♘f6 20.♙c3 ♚b5 21.♚g3 ♘e8? 22.♚d7 ♙xc5 23.a4 ♚b6 24.a5 ♚b5 25.♚e5+; 21...♘h5 22.♚e5 ♘f6 23.♚g5 h6 24.♚g3 ♘h5 25.♚g4 g6 26.♚d7+; 25...f5 26.♚xh5 fxe4 27.♚g4 ♚f7 28.♙xg7 ♚xc5 29.♙d4+ ♚g5 30.♚xe6 ♚f5 31.♚xc4+–) 19.♘d6 ♙xd6 20.cxd6 ♚d8 21.♙c3 ♚f5 22.d7 (22.♚h4!±, White eyes the enemy queenside pawns, which are in ruins.) 22...♘f6 23.♚ac1± and Black’s queenside pawns are in a pathetic state and his position is rather difficult to defend, moreover that White’s d7-pawn is like a wedge in the enemy position.

Black’s attempt to oust the enemy queen from the g3-square with the line: 15...h5 16.♙d4 h4, would not be successful due to 17.♚f4 ♙e7, Gopal – Mammadov, Al-Ain 2013, 18.♙xc6! White is preparing the knight-sortie ♘c3-e4. 18...bxc6 (18...♚xc6 19.♚b8±) 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 (The other possible recapturing 19...gxf6 would weaken Black’s position even more: 20.♘e4 ♚d8 21.b4↑) 20.♘e4 ♙e7 21.h3!± White fixes his opponents far-advanced pawn on h4, which would need permanent protection and would be a serious liability (He obtains a very promising position too after 21.b4 cxb3 22.axb3 ♚b5 23.b4↑) 21...0-0 22.♚d7↑

16.♙f4

The position would not be so clear; nevertheless, the move 16.♚d6!±↑ deserves some practical tests, with the idea ♚ad1.

16...♚a5



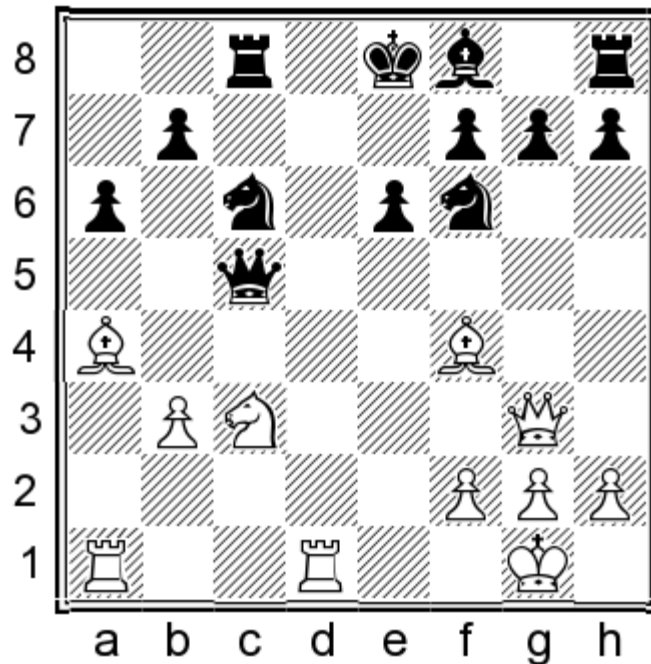
17.b4!?

White's kingside is idle and his king is in the centre, but he should try to bring as quickly as possible all his pieces into the actions. This is what his last move is aimed at, trying to activate his rook on a1 without losing any additional tempi. Naturally, he should not comply with the repetition of moves after 17.♔e3 ♚c7.

17...cxb3

17...♗xb4?? 18.♖ab1+-

18.axb3 ♗xc5



19.b4

White is trying to entice the enemy queen to the b4-square, if it captures the pawn there, and will attack it with tempo with the move ♖a1-b1.

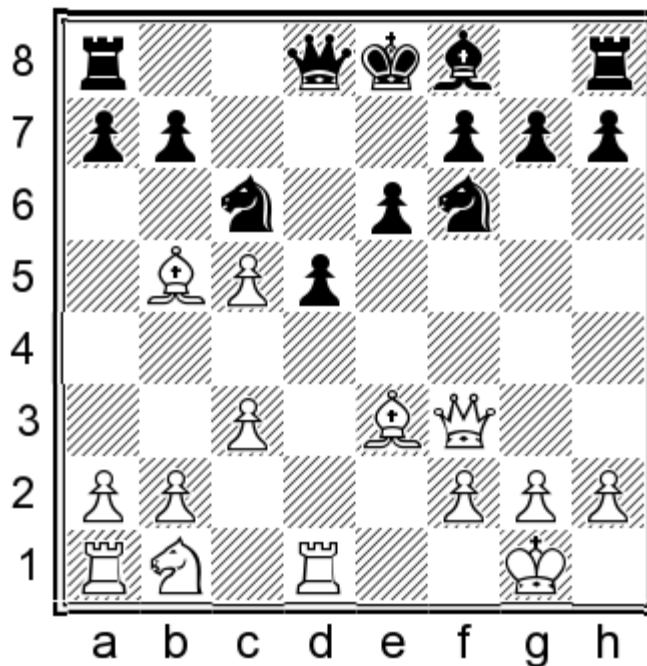
19.♖ac1?! ♜f5 ♞ Zhigalko – Svetlov, St Petersburg 2013.

19...♜f5 20.b5↑

White's initiative is becoming very threatening and Black will have a hard time neutralising it.

20...♘h5 21.bxc6 b5 22.♜f3 ♙e7 23.♙c2 ♚xc2 24.♙e5 ♘f6 25.♖a2! (25.♖xa6? b4) 25...♜b3 26.c7±, followed by ♖xa6.

B1b) 11.♙d1!?



11...♜a5

Black's queen is running away from the pin and seemingly with tempo.

His alternatives would not facilitate his defence either, for example: 11...♙e7 12.c4±, or 11...a6 12.♙a4 ♜c8 13.c4 ♜a5 14.♘c3 dxc4 15.♜g3!±

12.c4!

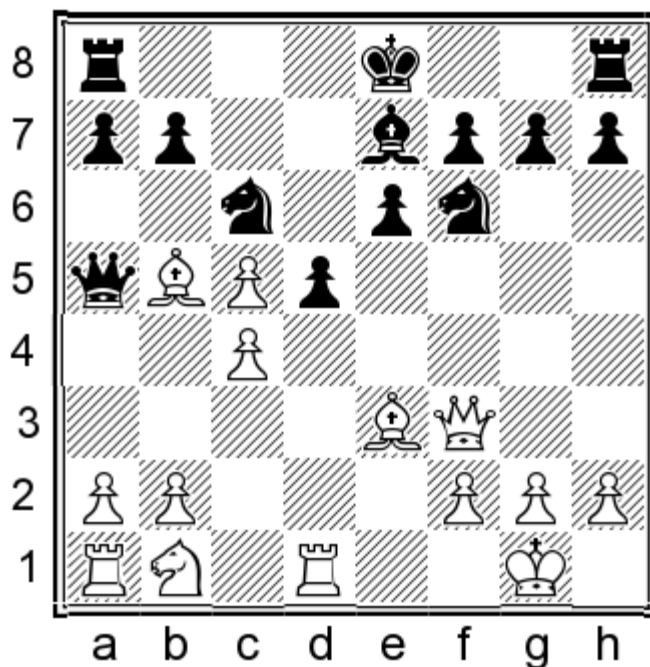
This is an excellent resource! White protects his bishop, undermines the enemy d5-pawn and is ready to exploit the pin on c6 at an opportune moment.

12...♙e7

Black has nothing else to do! He is on the alert about his opponents actions and is trying to complete rapidly his development.

12...dxc4?? 13.♙xc6+–

Black can hardly be happy with the result of the line: 12...a6 13.♙xc6+ bxc6 14.♘d2 ♙e7 15.cxd5 ♘xd5 (15...cxd5 16.♘c4↑) 16.♘c4 ♚b4 (following 16...♚b5, White can exploit the weaknesses of the enemy position in the variation 17.♚g4 0-0 18.♙d4 g6 19.♘d6↑) 17.♘e5±

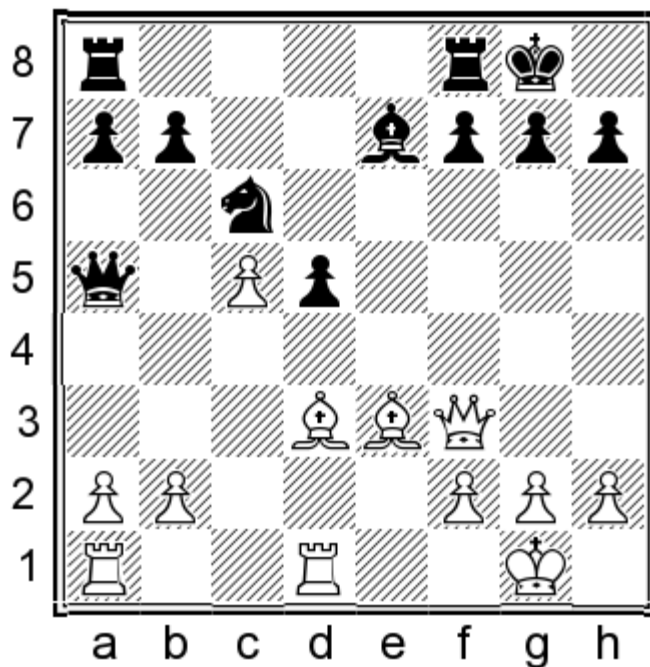


13.♘c3!?

This is a logical move, but is not White's only possibility. He protects additionally his bishop on b5 and increases the pressure against the d5-square at the same time.

His alternative is – 13.a3!?. He wishes to exploit the misplacement of Black's queen on the a5-square and with this preparatory move he is trying to increase his queenside advantage with the move b2-b4. 13...0-0 14.b4 ♚c7. Black's queen is forced to go back. (Black loses after 14...♘xb4?, due to the practically forced line: 15.axb4 ♚xa1 16.♙d4 ♚a2 17.♘c3 ♚c2 18.cxd5 exd5 19.♙d3 ♚b3 20.♚b1 ♚a3 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.♘xd5+-; the other possible retreat of his queen – 17...♚b3 can be countered by White in a very spectacular fashion 18.♘xd5!+-) 15.♙f4 ♚c8 16.♘c3 a6 17.♙a4 dxc4 18.♚e2±

13...0-0 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♙d3±

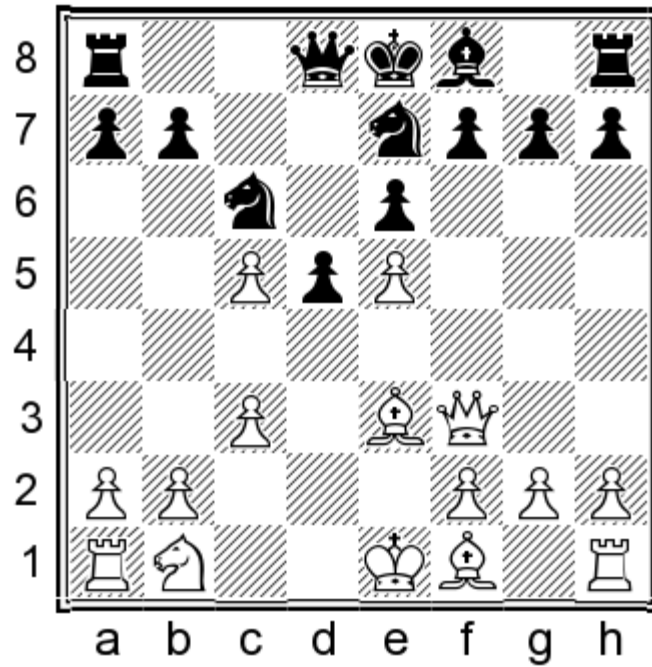


White has preserved his two bishops and has opened up the position in order to increase their power. He can also exploit at an opportune moment the vulnerability of Black's isolated pawn on d5. Now, he has chances of developing kingside initiative. For example, it would not work for Black to opt for 16...♙f6?? in view of 17.♚f5+-

His attempt to win a pawn with 16...♙xc5?! and 17.♙xh7+ ♖xh7 18.♞xd5± would lead to his immediate demise.

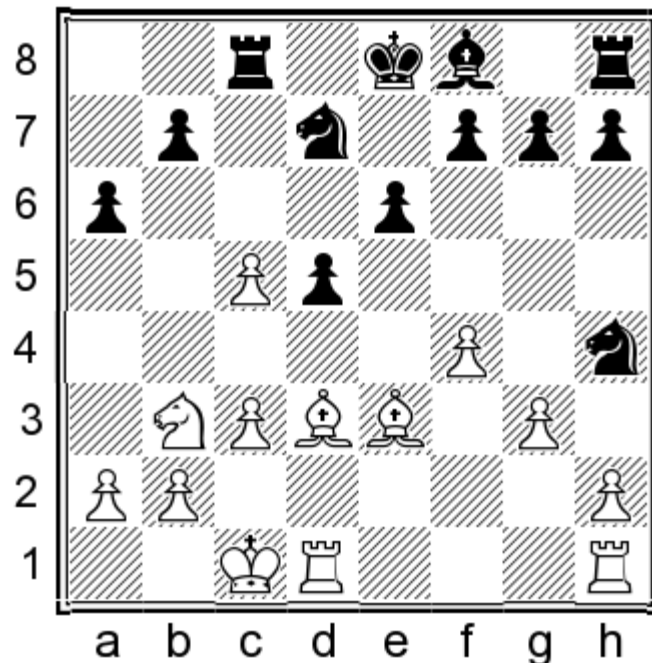
If Black tries to win a pawn after **16...d4 17.♙f4 ♚xc5** (17...♙xc5 18.a3±), then White can begin a chase after the enemy queen with **18.♞dc1!?** (Black would have too many problems to worry about even after the more natural move 18.♞ac1!?±, with the idea 18...♚a5 19.a3±) **18...♚b4**. Black's queen protects his bishop on e7 from the square (The other possible retreat is even worse: 18...♚b6?! 19.♚e4 g6 20.♞xc6±; 19...f5 20.♚e6+ ♞f7 21.♙c4 ♞af8 22.♚xf5±) **19.a3 ♚xb2 20.♞ab1 ♚xa3 21.♞b3 ♚xb3 22.♙xh7+ ♖xh7 23.♚xb3 ♜d8 24.♙e5±** with the idea 24...♜g8 (24...♜e6 25.f4±) 25.f4±

B2) 8...♘ge7



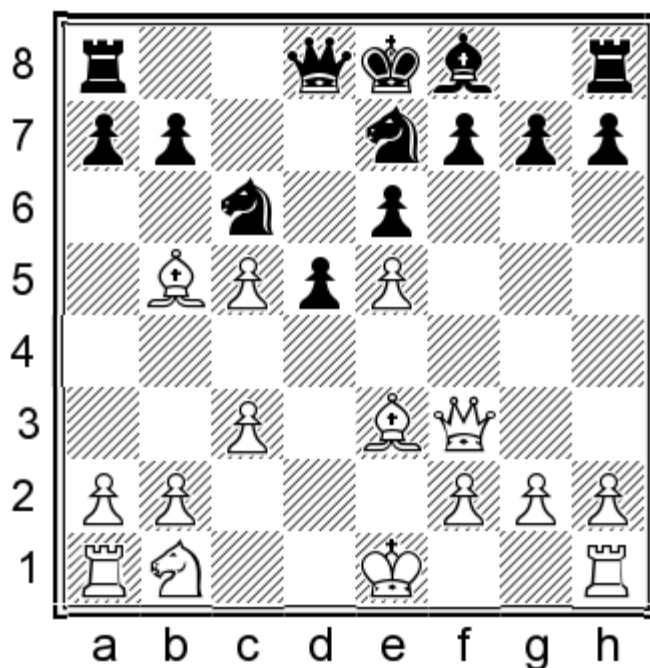
9.♙b5

It is also interesting for White to try here 9.♘d2!?, with the idea to prepare castling queenside, after which his lead in development would become an even more important factor. 9...a6 10.0-0 ♘xe5 11.♙g3 ♘d7 12.♙d3 ♘g6 13.♘b3 ♜c8 14.f4 ♚h4 15.♙xh4. This is a very useful inclusion of this move, since it enables White to preserve the elasticity of his pawn-structure (It would not be so effective for him to choose immediately 15.f5 ♙xg3 16.hxg3 ♘ge5 17.fxe6 ♘xd3+ 18.♞xd3 fxe6= Sutovsky – Khenkin, Plovdiv 2012.) 15...♘h4 16.g3



16...♘g6. This is Black's only move. (It would hardly be advisable for him to opt for 16...♘g2?? 17.♙d4 ♘xc5

18.♙f1+-, and Black's knight would be likely to be lost.). 17.f5 ♖ge5 18.♞he1 ♗xd3+ (18...♙xc5 19.♗xc5 ♗xc5 20.♙c2= White's bishop-pair and his more actively deployed pieces compensate with an interest his minimal material deficit. 20...♗ed7 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♙xc5 ♗xc5 23.♞xd5± – White's bishop is obviously more powerful than the enemy knight in this endgame, moreover that Black has a chronic weakness on the e6-square.) 19.♞xd3 ♗f6 20.♙d4 ♗d7 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♗d4 ♞e8 (After 22...e5? 23.♗b3 ♗c6 24.♞e1 ♞d8 25.♗a5±, Black loses his d5-pawn.) 23.b4± White's knight has occupied the ideal d4-square and as we have been convinced in our notes to the previous move, Black would manage to oust it from there only at the price of considerable material losses. It would be rather difficult to find an appropriate plan for his further actions. White's game is much simpler in similar situations. He maintains the tension in the centre and increases his pressure on the queenside.



9...a6

Black is trying to clarify the future of his opponents light-squared bishop, but all his efforts would be in vain as we will be convinced very soon. It would be difficult however to suggest to him anything more reasonable.

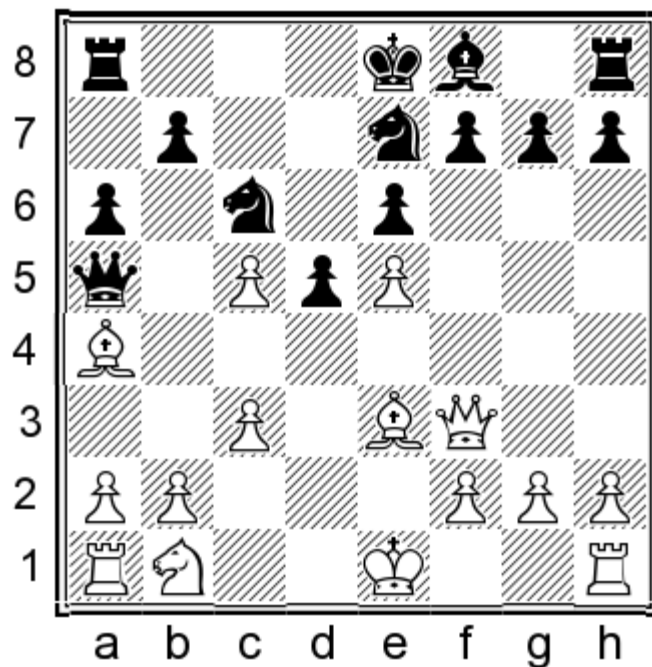
After, for example: 9...♞c7 10.♙d4 (10.0-0!?, with the idea 10...♞xe5 11.♗d2 ♗g6 12.♙d4 ♞c7 13.♞fe1±, White's lead in development may turn out to be decisive.) 10...♗f5 (10...g5 11.0-0 ♙g7 12.♞e1 h5 13.♗a3 g4 14.♞e2 ♗f5 15.♗c2± Yu Yangyi – Labib, Antalya 2013) 11.♗d2± and Black has failed to obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn.

10.♙a4 ♞a5

This seemingly active queen-sortie leads to an attack not so much against the enemy bishop on a4, but against his pawn on e5.

Black could have attacked White's pawn on e5 in a more straightforward manner with the move 10...♞c7, but in the meantime, while Black is regaining his pawn, White will complete rapidly his development. 11.♗d2± (White should better not insist on preserving his extra pawn with 11.♙d4, although even then after 11...♗f5, Lopez Martinez – Valiente Roy, Salou 2008, 12.♗d2 ♙e7 13.b4 0-0 14.♙xc6 ♞xc6 15.♗b3±, his position would be obviously preferable.) 11...♞xe5 12.0-0 ♗g6 13.♗c4 ♞c7 14.♗b6 ♞d8 15.♞ad1 ♙e7 16.c4± White's initiative turns out to be much more important than the extra pawn.

10...♗f5 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.b4± – Black's compensation for the pawn is evidently insufficient.



This is the critical position of this line. We will analyse now: **B2a) 11.♔d1** and **B2b) 11.♕c2!**

B2a) 11.♔d1!?

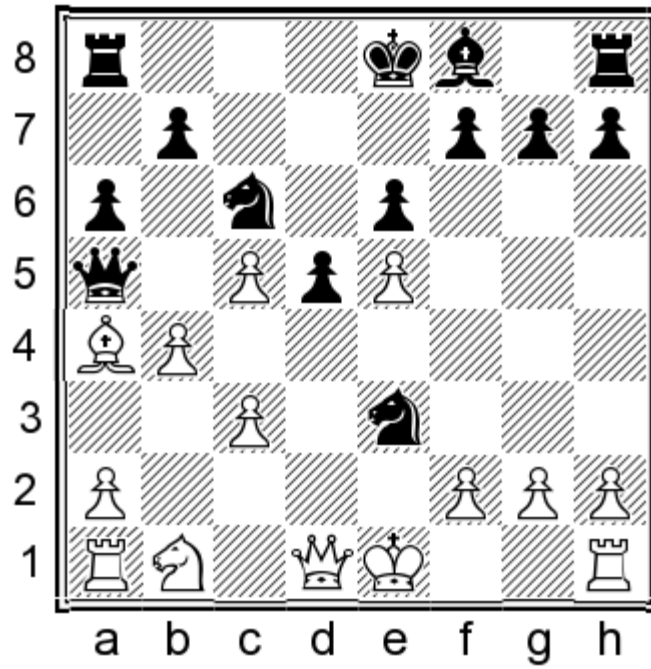
I am not going to ignore this move, although at least for the moment, it does not seem as promising as 11.♕c2.

11...♖f5 12.b4

White would hardly manage to preserve his extra pawn after 12.♕d4 ♖fxd4 13.b4 ♗f3+ 14.gxf3 ♔c7 15.f4 g5

12...♗xe3

Black cannot delay this capturing, which weakens the enemy pawn-structure, because after 12...♔c7 13.♕d4±, he should better forget about this.



13. ♕xc6!

This is an important inclusion of the move, forcing Black to recapture on c6 with his pawn.

It would not be the same after 13.fxe3 ♖c7 14.♗d4 ♙e7 15.♞d2 a5!N. White has not fortified his queenside pawns yet, so Black should try to undermine them as quickly as possible (It would not be so energetic for him to choose here 15...0-0 16.♕xc6 ♗xc6 17.0-0 a5, Svidler – Andreikin, Tromso 2013, 18.a3!± with the idea to counter 18...axb4, with 19.axb4!). 16.♕xc6+ ♗xc6 17.0-0 axb4! (17...0-0?! 18.a3!±) 18.cxb4 0-0 19.♗d3 (19.a3 f6) 19...b6!? Here, the difference with the line with 13.♕xc6!, becomes evident, since this undermining move would be impossible. 20.cxb6 ♗xb6 21.a3 f6. After this undermining move Black succeeds in activating his dark-squared bishop. (The following seemingly active line is weaker: 21...♙g5 22.♗fe1 ♗fc8 23.♞f3 ♙h6 24.♞h1± with the idea e4, or 23...♙e7 24.♗ec1± Black's compensation is insufficient.) 22.♞f3 (22.exf6 ♙xf6 23.♗ab1 ♗fc8) 22...fxe5 23.♞xe5 ♗xf1+ 24.♗xf1 ♙d6 White's e3-pawn is weak, while Black's pieces are more active, so he does not risk anything.

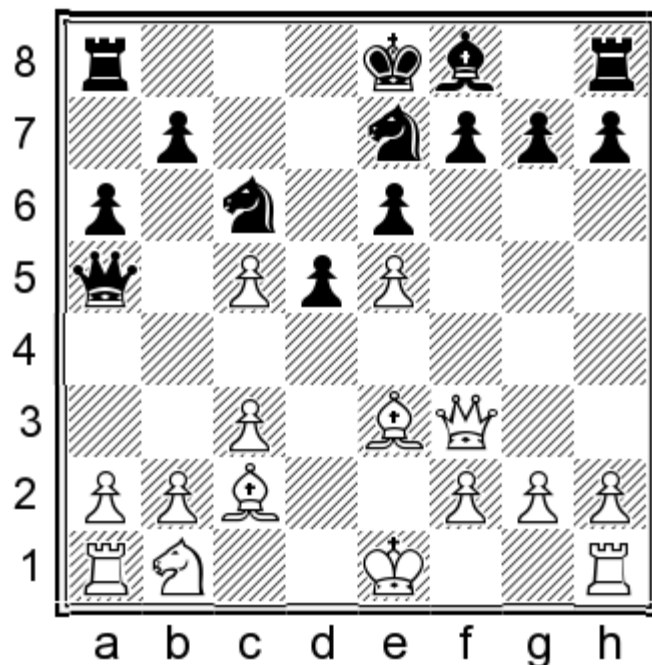
13...bxc6 14.fxe3 ♖c7 15.♗d4± White holds on to his extra pawn, but its realisation would not be easy at all. **15...g5!?**

Black opens a second front on the kingside and his king would feel comfortable even in the centre at the moment.

16.♞d2 ♙g7 17.♞f3 h5 18.h3 ♙e7 19.0-0 (Here, it deserves a practical test for White to try the move 19.♞f2!?∞, after which there arise positions which are very difficult to play for both sides, for example: 19...a5!? 20.a3!? f6!? 21.e4!?∞)

19...g4 20.hxg4 hxg4 21.♗xg4 (21.♞g5?? ♗af8+) **21...♙xe5 22.♞xe5 ♗xe5 23.♗f4 ♗xf4 24.exf4 ♗ag8±** – In fact, White has an extra pawn indeed, but he is not very likely to realise it easily.

B2b) 11. ♕c2!



11...♞xe5

In the game Zhitalko – Khenkin, Baku 2012, following 11...♞b5, the opponents agreed to a draw, although White could have tried to obtain an advantage with the move 12.b4!, for example: 12...♞xe5 13.♞d1 ♞d7 14.0-0 ♞c4 (Black fails to complete effortlessly his development after 14...♞7c6 15.♞d2 ♞e7 16.f4↑, with the idea f4-f5.) 15.♞d4 ♞c6 (It would not work for Black to play here the seemingly attractive line: 15...e5 16.♞e1! f6 17.f4 and he cannot capture the enemy bishop 17...exd4, due to 18.♞a4+–, after which he would be forced to part with his queen.) 16.♞d2± – Black has serious problems with the development of his kingside.

12.♞g3

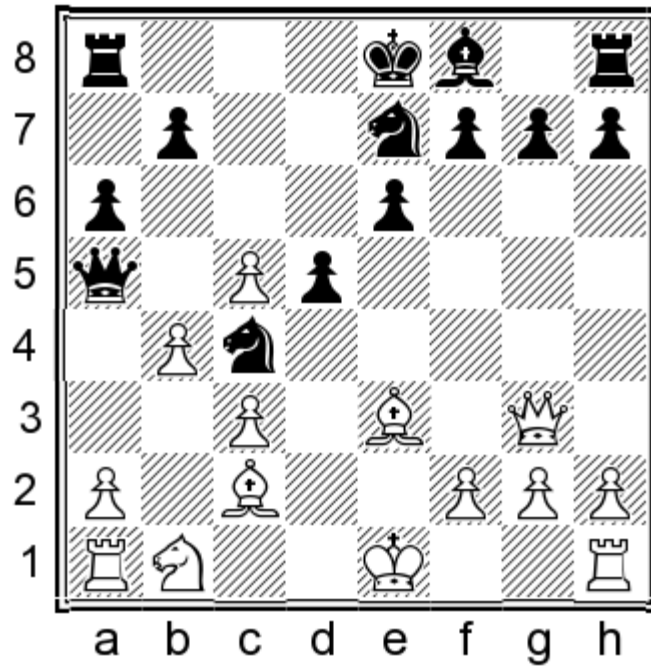
White has given back his extra pawn, as we have already predicted, but has obtained instead a slightly better development and a powerful bishop-pair.

12...♞c4

This is the most principled response for Black.

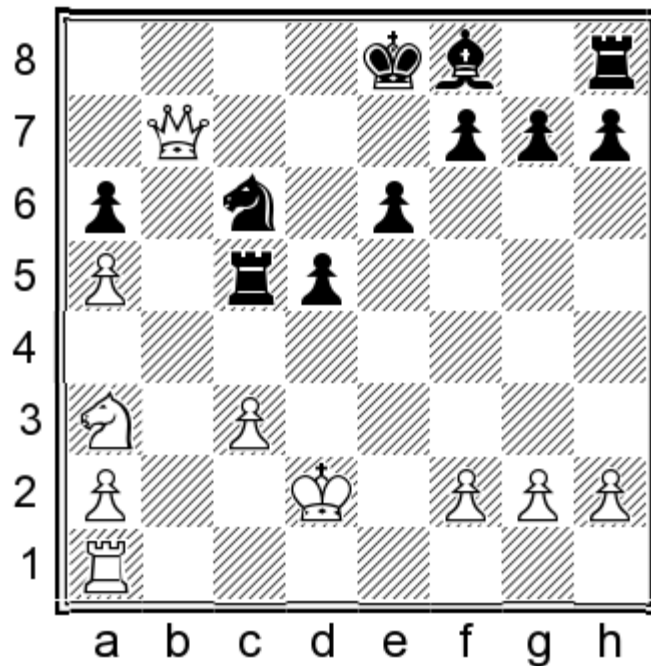
Following 12...♞5c6, White can exploit the misplacement of the enemy queen and can win a tempo and seize the initiative with 13.♞d2 g6 14.♞b3 ♞d8 15.h4! h5 16.0-0-0 ♞g7 17.♞he1 0-0 18.f3↑ and now, if White manages to advance g2-g4, then Black's position would be a sorry sight.

13.b4



13...♔d8

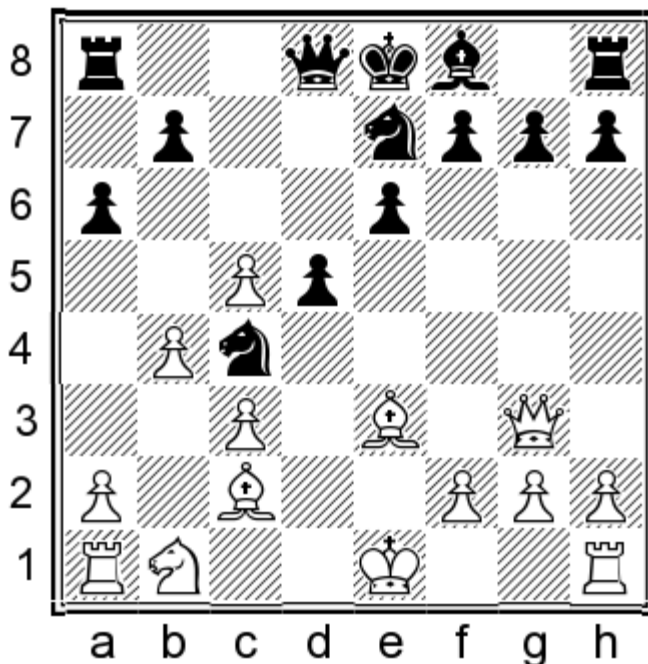
It seems more principled for Black to choose here 13...♘e3. He accomplishes a seemingly favourable exchange of his queen for a rook and two bishops and tries to destroy the enemy pawn-structure in the process. He solves his problems with the development indeed, however his knight on a1 is doomed to perish. 14.bxa5! White accepts the challenge! (The situation would not be so clear after 14.fxe3 ♖b5∞) 14...♘xc2+ 15.♔d2 ♘xa1 16.♚c7! Black lags so much in development that he fails to protect his queenside pawns. 16...♞c8 17.♚xb7 ♞xc5 (17...g6 18.♘a3±) 18.♘a3 ♘c6 19.♞xa1±



The evaluation of the entire line with the 11.♙c2 depends on this position. It may seem that Black has chances of obtaining a favourite result, however he has certain problems in all the lines. 19...♙d6 (Following 19...♙e7?! 20.♞b1! 0-0 21.♞b6, he would lose his a6-pawn. 21...♙g5+ 22.♔d1 ♘e5 23.♞xa6 ♞cc8. This is a forced move, since White was

threatening ♖a6-a8, after which the advance of the a-pawn would have been decisive. 24.♙b3±) 20.♞b1 0-0 21.♙xa6 (After 21.♞b6 ♕f4+ 22.♔d1, in comparison to the variation with 19...♕e7, Black has the possible retreat 22...♘b8! and White's task would not be easy at all, for example: 23.g3 ♕c7±) 21...♕f4+ 22.♔e1 ♞xc3 23.♘b5 ♞c2 24.g3 ♕g5 25.f4 ♕d8 26.♔d1 ♞c5 27.♞c1 ♞xc1+ 28.♔xc1 ♘xa5 29.♔c2± White wishes to advance his a-pawn and in order to do that he would have to prevent the enemy knight on a5 from accomplishing the manoeuvre ♘b5-d4-c6, although even then the realisation of his advantage would not be an easy task.

Following, 13...♙b5, White's dark-squared bishop manages to avoid the chase by the enemy knight on c4 – 14.♕d4!±, with the idea 14...a5 15.a4↑



14.0-0

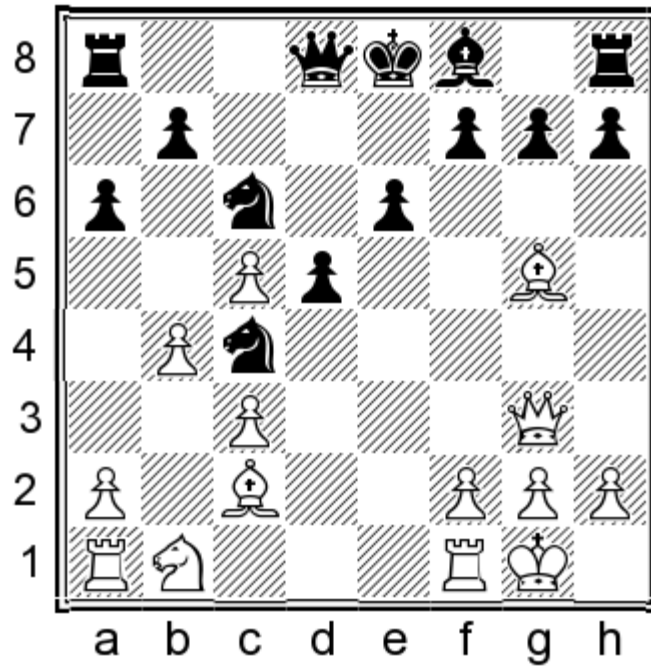
We are going to see in our notes to Black's next move that White should not be afraid of the capturing ♘c4xe3, since his dark-squared bishop may become useful even on the g5-square, while it cannot reach the d4-square at once.

Meanwhile, even after 14.♕d4 a5 15.0-0±, Black will still have problems to worry about.

14...♘c6

Following 14...♘xe3 15.fxe3! ♘c6 16.e4±, Black's lag in development is more than obvious, Zhigalko – Laznicka, Rodos 2013.

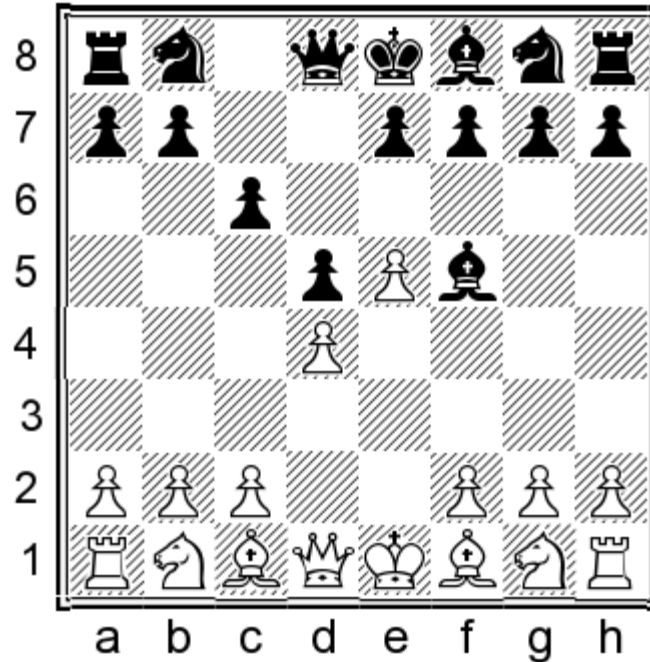
15.♕g5!±↑ with the idea ♘b1-d2.



It is rather difficult for Black to complete his kingside development. **15...f6** (15...♖d7 16.♘d2 ♘xd2 17.♙xd2 g6 18.h4!?↑) **16.♙c1±** followed by ♘b1-d2. Meanwhile, White has created the threat ♙c2xh7 in the process. Black has no chances of creating counterplay. **16...a5** **17.♘d2!?** axb4 **18.♘xc4 dxc4** **19.♞d1!?** (19.♙xh7!?) **19...♞c8** (19...♞e7 20.cxb4 ♘xb4 21.♙xh7 ♞xh7 22.♞g6±) **20.♙xh7 ♞xh7** **21.♞g6+** ♔e7 **22.♞xh7 bxc3** **23.♞e4** ♘e5 **24.♞d4±** (followed by f2-f4) Black has no compensation for the exchange.

Chapter 3

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♕f5



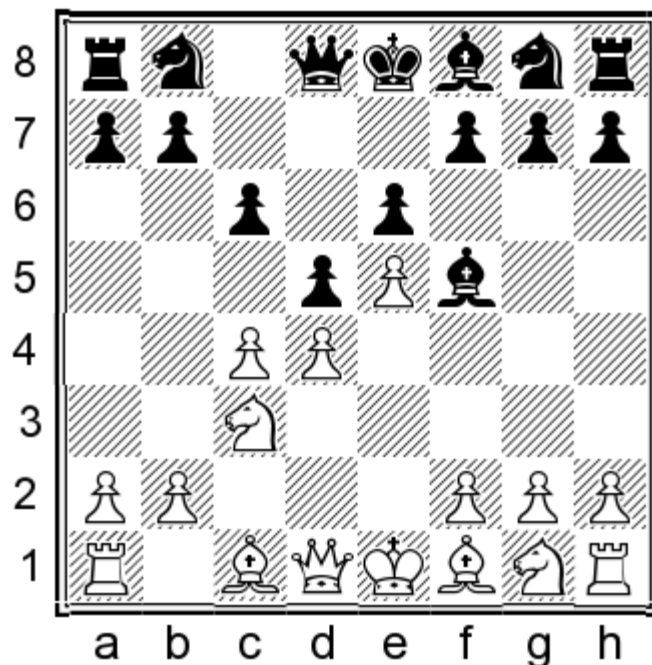
In this chapter we will analyse the moves: A) 4.c4, B) 4.h4 and C) 4.♗bd2, which are relatively popular, but I believe not so promising to White in comparison to 4.♗f3.

A) 4.c4

This is not a very attractive move. Its main plus is that White can play like this without burdening his memory so much, since there is not much theory in this line anyway. The most probable developments after it are like this: Black exchanges on c4 and establishes a piece on the d5-square. Still, he cannot place both knights there, though... White relies on exploiting his slight space-advantage and Black's somewhat cramped position. There arises a similar pawn-structure in some other openings as well, for example in the Queen's Gambit Accepted – 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♘f6 4.e5 ♗d5 5.♕xc4...

Among the very strong players, Evgenij Alexeev plays like this, but most often he does that in games with a shorter time control, or in blitz. In fact, he is striving for not so much an advantage in the opening, but for well familiar middle game pawn-structures, which is very practical in rapid chess.

4...e6 5.♗c3



5...♗e7!

It is also possible for Black to play here simply 5...dxc4, although in the main line he changes the pawn-structure only after the inclusion of the moves 5...♗e7 6.a3, which, of course, seems much more logical. 6.♙xc4 ♗d7 7.♗f3 ♗b6 8.♙d3 ♗e7 9.0-0 ♙xd3 10.♖xd3 ♗f5 11.♙d2 ♙e7 12.♞ad1 ♗d5 (12...0-0?! Alekseev – Burmakin, St.Petersburg 2014, 13.♗e4! ♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♙xh4 15.f4 f5 16.exf6 ♙xf6 17.♙b4 ♞f7 18.♙d6 ♗d5 19.a3!? ♖d7 20.♙e5±) 13.♗e4 h5=

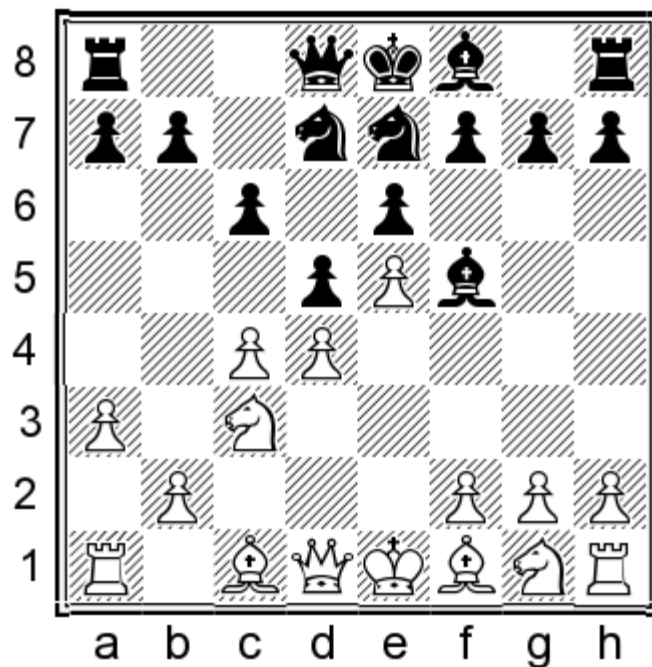
6.a3

White would not create problems for his opponent with the line: 6.♙e3 dxc4 (6...♗d7!? 7.c5!? f6 8.exf6 gxf6∞) 7.♙xc4 ♗d5!? (7...♗d7 8.♗f3 ♗b6 9.♙d3 ♗bd5 10.0-0 ♙xd3 11.♖xd3 ♗f5 12.♞ad1 ♙e7 13.♙c1 h5 14.♗e4 ♖b6 15.a3, Alekseev – Dreev, St Petersburg 2014, 15...0-0-0! 16.b4 ♗b8=) 8.♗f3 ♙e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙d3. White should try to seize the e4-outpost and this justifies the trade of the bishops. 10...♙xd3 (10...♗a6!? 11.♙xf5 exf5 12.♖c2 g6=; 11.a3 ♙xd3 12.♖xd3 ♗xe3!? 13.fxe3 c5 14.d5 exd5 15.♗xd5 ♗c7 16.e4 ♗e6∞) 11.♖xd3 ♗d7 12.♗e4 ♗xe3 13.fxe3 c5 14.♞ac1 cxd4 15.exd4 ♗b6 16.♞c2 ♞c8= Alekseev – Simonian, St.Petersburg 2014.

Black should not be afraid of 6.♗ge2 ♗d7 7.♗g3 ♙g6 8.a3 dxc4 9.♙xc4 ♗b6 10.♙b3 ♗f5!? (He must play very accurately here and be on the alert – 10...♖d7 11.0-0 ♞d8 12.♙e3 ♗ed5, Ahmadiania – Dreev, Jakarta 2011, 13.♗h5!±) 11.♙e3 (11.♗xf5 ♙xf5=) 11...♗xe3 12.fxe3 ♙e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖e2 ♗d5=

6...♗d7!?

It also seems quite acceptable for Black to try 6...dxc4!? 7.♙xc4 ♗d7 8.♗ge2 ♗b6 9.♙b3 ♖d7 10.0-0 ♙g6 11.♗f4 ♗f5 12.♙e3 ♙e7! (12...♞d8 13.♖g4 ♙e7 14.♞ad1 ♗d5 15.♗fxd5 exd5 16.♙c1 h5 17.♖e2 h4 18.g4 hxg3 19.fxg3↑ A.Fedorov – Zhigalko, Minsk 2011) 13.♖g4 ♗d5 14.♗fxd5 exd5∞



7.c5

Naturally, White should not be afraid now that his opponent might undermine his pawn-mass on the queenside, because he has fortified it in advance with the move 6.a3, but Black can try to brake from the other side...

He has nothing to fear in the variation 7.♘f3 ♙g4 (7...dxc4!? 8.♙xc4 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♙d3 ♙xd3 11.♚xd3 ♙e7=) 8.♙e3 ♘f5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.h3 ♙h5 11.♙d3 ♘h4!? (11...♙g6 12.♙f4 a6 13.h4 ♘e7 14.h5 ♙xd3 15.♚xd3± Zhigalko – Rodshtein, Jerusalem 2015) 12.g4 ♘xf3 13.♚xf3 ♙g6=

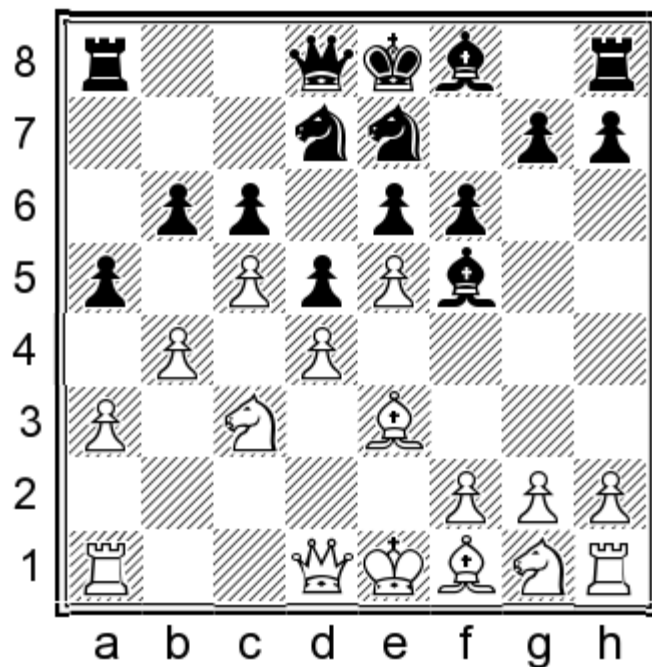
7...b6

It would be weaker for Black to opt here for 7...♙g6 8.h4 f6 9.h5 ♙f7 10.f4 b6 11.b4 a5 12.♙e3 axb4 13.axb4 ♚xa1 14.♚xa1 bxc5 15.bxc5 g5 16.hxg6 ♙xg6 17.♘f3 ♙g7 18.♙e2 0-0 19.♚a7 ♘f5 20.♙f2± Najer – Michalik, Czech Republic 2012, or 7...♚c7 8.♙d2 b6 9.b4 a5 10.♙e2 f6 11.f4± axb4?! 12.axb4 ♚xa1 13.♚xa1 bxc5 14.bxc5 h5 15.♘f3 ♘g6 16.0-0 ♙e7 17.♘e1 ♘f7 18.♚d1 h4 19.♘c2± Fedoseev – Palachev, Samara 2013.

8.b4 a5

8...f6!? with the idea 9.exf6 gxf6 10.♘f3 bxc5 11.bxc5 e5∞

9.♙e3 f6



10.exf6

10.f4?! g6!? (10...fxe5 11.fxe5 axb4 12.axb4 ♖xa1 13.♗xa1 bxc5 14.bxc5 ♜xe5 15.dxe5 d4 16.♜b5 ♜d5! 17.♙xd4 ♗h4+ 18.♔d1 ♗e4; 18.g3 ♗e4+ 19.♔f2 ♗xh1 20.♞f3), with the idea 11.♙e2 ♙h6

10...gxf6 11.♙e2 ♙g7 12.♞f3 0-0 13.0-0 axb4 14.axb4 bxc5 15.bxc5 ♜g6

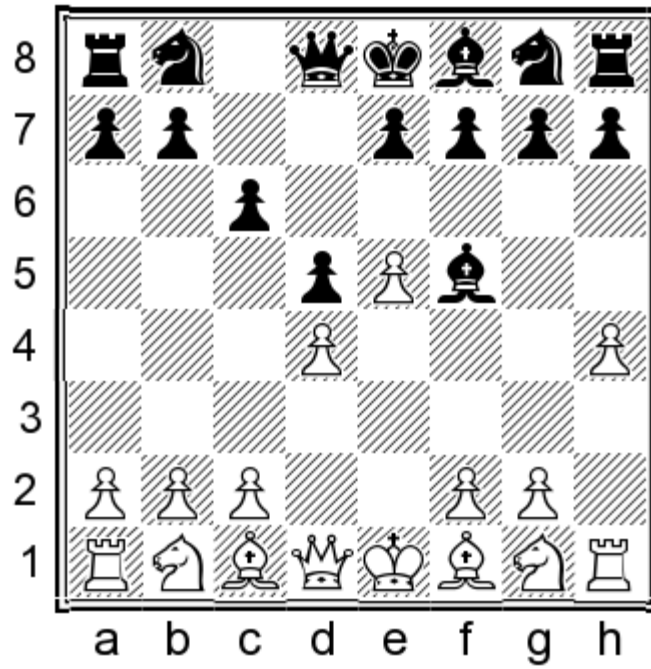
15...♖xa1 16.♗xa1 e5 17.♗a4 ♗c8 18.♖a1 ♙e6

16.♜a2 ♗a5 17.♗d2 ♗a3 18.h3 ♖fb8 Najer – Popov, St Petersburg 2011.

We can make the assumption that the move 4.c4 is only of purely practical interest.

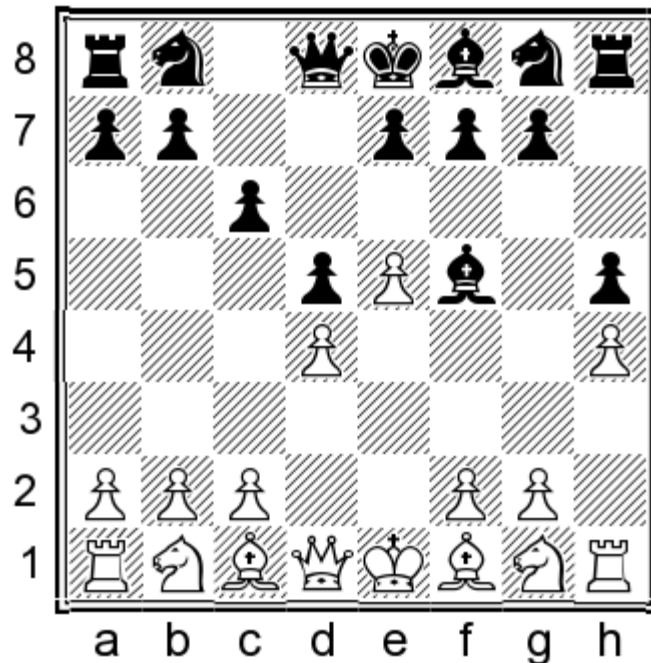
B) 4.h4

This move is not particularly dangerous for Black either. White determines his kingside pawn-structure a little bit too early.



4...h5!?

This is a simple and reliable response after which Black's prospects are not worse at all. After it he ensures a stable placement of his light-squared bishop on the f5-square. Now, White cannot oust it from f5 with the move g2-g4, or exchange it with his knight with the help of the manoeuvre ♖g1-f3-h4. The trade of the light-squared bishop after ♗f1-d3 would not be troublesome for Black, because his king's knight will gain access to the wonderful f5-outpost. White has some space advantage in a similar pawn-structure, but this is practically irrelevant, because as we are going to see later, it would be very difficult for him to prevent Black's standard pawn-break in similar positions with the undermining move c6-c5.



5.c4

This is White's most popular move.

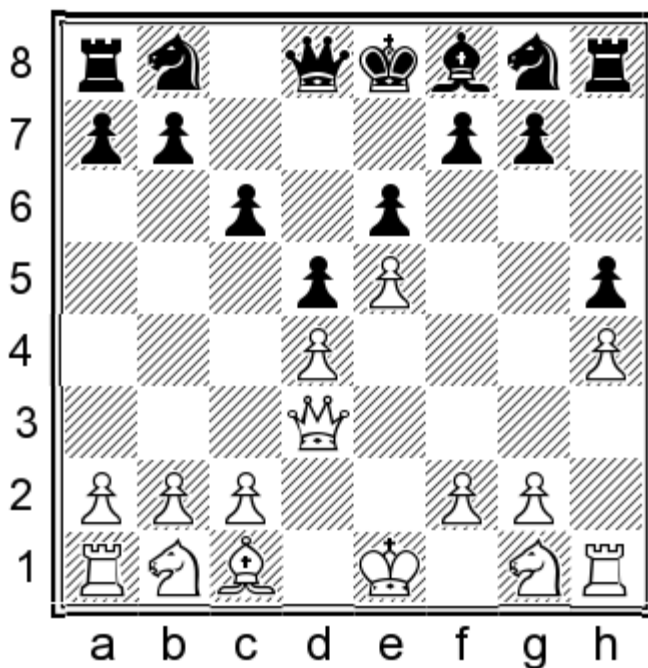
His alternatives are only seldom played and are not dangerous for Black at all.

5. ♖c3 e6 6. ♗f3 c5=

5. c3 e6 6. ♙e2 c5=

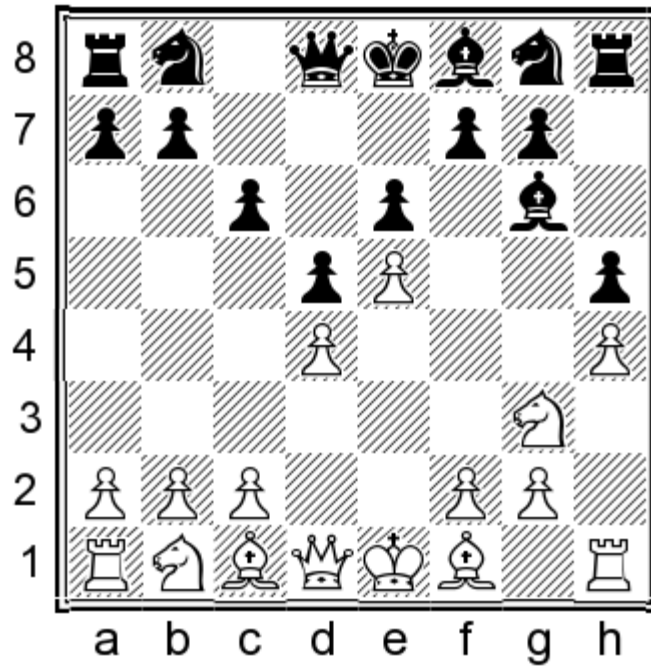
5. ♙g5 ♜b6 6. ♙d3 ♙xd3 (6... ♜xb2?! 7. ♙xf5 ♜xa1 8. e6↑) 7. ♜xd3. It would be too risky for Black to accept the pawn-sacrifice 7... ♜xb2? (He should better choose here 7... e6= – see 5. ♙d3.) 8. e6! f6 (8... ♜xa1 9. ♜b3 b5 10. ♙d2+–) 9. ♗f3! fxe5 (9... ♜xa1? 10. ♜b3+–) 10. 0-0 g4 11. ♗bd2 gxf3 12. ♜fb1 ♜xa1 13. ♜xa1 ♗a6 14. ♜b1 0-0-0 15. ♗b3 ♗c7 16. ♗c5 b5 17. ♜a3 ♗b8 18. ♜a5 ♗f6 19. ♜b3+–

5. ♙d3 ♙xd3 6. ♜xd3 e6=



The exchange of the light-squared bishops is not favourable for White, because his opponent's king's knight will be deployed reliably on the wonderful f5-square. It would be also difficult for him to prevent Black's thematic pawn-break c6-c5. 7. ♙g5 (Following 7. ♗f3 c5!? 8. c3 ♗c6=, or 7. ♗c3 c5!? 8. ♗f3 ♗c6=, he has no problems, because the arising positions resemble the closed variation of the French Defence in a very good version for Black, since the trade of the light-squared bishops is very advantageous for him in similar pawn-structures.) 7... ♜b6 (About 7... ♙e7 – see Potapov – Alekseev, Moscow 2015, **game 2**) 8. ♗d2 (8. ♗c3 c5!? 9. dxc5 ♙xc5 10. 0-0-0 ♗c6 11. ♗a4 ♜a5 12. ♗xc5 ♜xc5= N.To – Jo. Horvath, Budapest 2010) 8... c5!?= 9. c4 ♜xb2 10. ♜b1 ♜xd4 and Black's prospects are not inferior at all, Nepomniachtchi – Motylev, Yaroslavl 2014 (**game 3**).

5. ♗e2 e6 6. ♗g3 (6. ♗f4 c5=) 6... ♙g6! = (6... ♙g6?! 7. ♗xf5 gxf5 8. c4± Tal – Botvinnik, Moscow 1961)

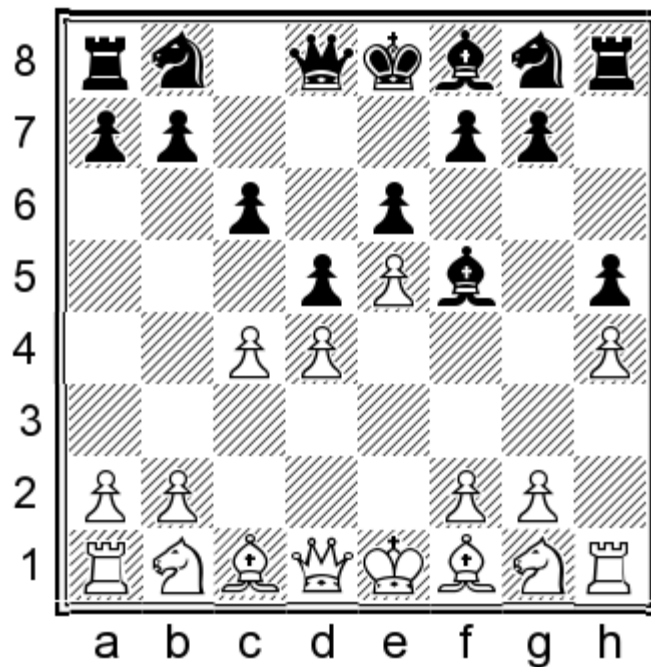


7.♙d3 ♜xd3 8.♚xd3 c5 9.c3 ♘c6

Following 7.♘d2 c5, or 7.♘c3 c5, Black's chances are not worse and the arising positions of the closed variation of the French Defence in a very good version for him, because his light-squared bishop is not on the c8-square, like in the French Defence, but is placed on a more active position – to g6.

After 7.♙e2, the simplest reaction for Black would be to advance the thematic move 7...c5!?, for example: 8.c3 (8.dxc5 ♜xc5 9.♘c3 ♘c6 Timman – Vukich, Banja Luka 1974; 8.♘h5 ♙h5 9.♙h5 g6 10.♙f3 ♜h4 Hecht – Hort, Kecskemet 1964) 8...♘c6 9.♘h5 cxd4 10.cxd4, Ricardi – Bologan, Buenos Aires 2000, 10...♙h5 11.♙h5 g6 12.♙f3 ♜h4

5...e6



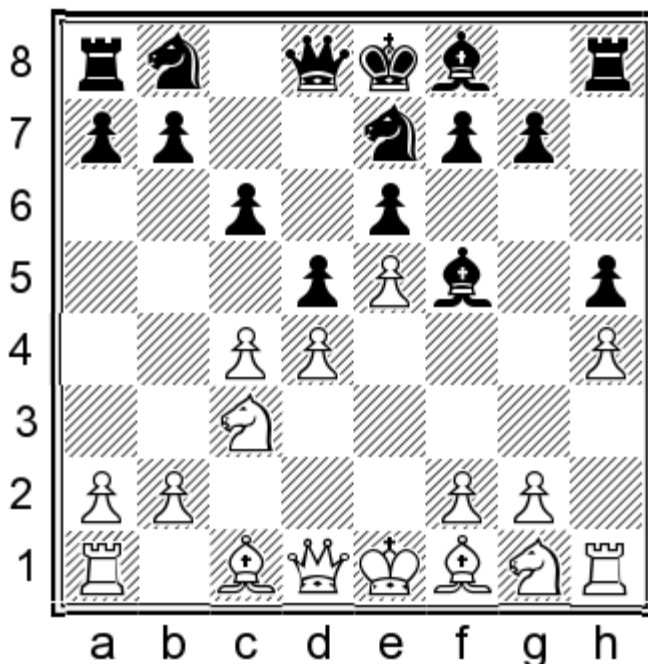
6.♘c3

It is not preferable for White to opt here for 6.♘g5 ♖b6 7.♗d2 dxc4 8.♘c3 (8.♙xc4? ♙xb1 9.♖xb1 ♙b4+) 8...♗a6!?∞ and there arise favourable complications for Black. 9.♘h3 ♘d7 10.♙e2 ♘e7 11.b3 ♙d3 (11...♖d8!?±, with the idea 12.♗e3 f6↑; 12.♙xc4 b5 13.♙d3 ♙xd3 14.♗xd3 ♘xe5±) 12.♙xd3 cxd3= Kurnosov – Galkin, Kazan 2005.

White should better refrain from 6.♘f3, because after for example: 6...♘e7 7.♘c3 ♘d7 8.♙g5 f6!∞, Black's chances would not be worse in the arising complications.

6...♘e7

This is his simplest way to obtain a reliable and approximately equal position.



7.♙g5

This move seems to be the most active for White, but he does not achieve much with it.

7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.♙g5 (8.cxd5 cxd5=) 8...f6!? 9.♙f4 ♘g6±

He sometimes chooses 7.♘ge2, but then, after 7...dxc4!?, there arises a very complicated position in which Black's prospects are not inferior. 8.♘g3 b5!∞ (He can also choose the calmer line: 8...♙g6 9.♙g5 ♖b6= Adams – Karpov, Tilburg 1996; 9.♙xc4 ♘f5!? 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♘xf5 ♙xf5 12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.♖d1 ♙xg5 14.hxg5 ♗e7 15.a3 0-0-0= Chernobay – Gunina, Moscow 2014.) 9.a4 b4 10.♘ce4 ♙xe4 11.♘xe4 ♘f5 12.♙e3 ♗d5 13.♘g3 ♘xg3 14.fxg3 ♘d7± Amonatov – Fedoseev, Kocaeli 2014.

7...♗b6!?

It is worse for Black to play here 7...♘d7, in view of 8.cxd5! exd5 (8...cxd5? 9.♘b5+) 9.♘ge2± Vasiukov – Boehnisch, Dresden 2001.

8.♗d2

Following, 8.b3 ♘d7=, Black does not have serious problems, due to the threat f7-f6.

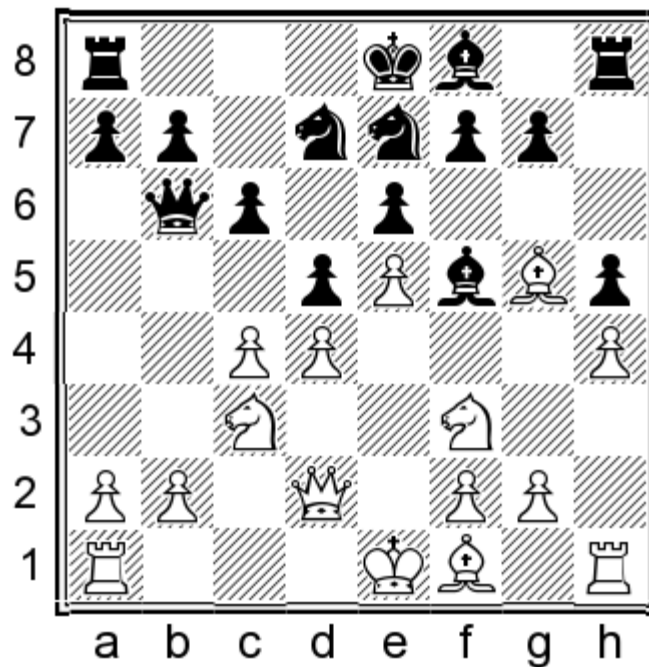
8...♖d7

This is his simplest reaction.

Or 8...dxc4!? 9.♙xc4 ♖d7 10.♗ge2 (10.♗f3 f6∞, or 10...♖d5=) 10...0-0-0 E.Hansen – Laznichka, Dubai 2014.

9.♗f3

After 9.♗ge2, it would be good for Black to continue with 9...dxc4!? 10.♗g3 ♙g6 11.♙xc4 0-0-0 S.Novikov – Ushenina, St Petersburg 2006.



9...f6!?

He can also try here 9...dxc4!? 10.♙xc4 ♖d5 11.0-0 f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♙xd5 cxd5 14.♙f4 ♔f7!?= Dave – Burmakin, Sitges 2014.

10.exf6

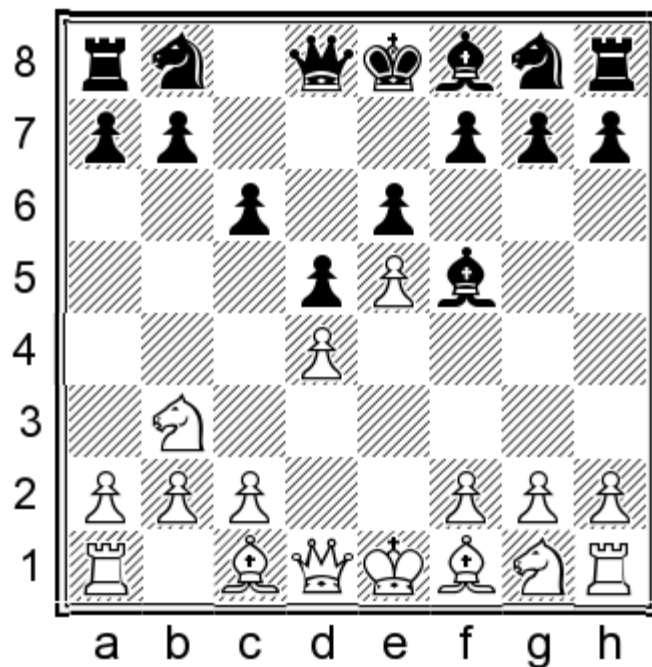
10.♙e3 0-0-0!?!?

10...gxf6=

In this complicated position Black has no serious problems. In the game Gelashvili – Asrian, Batumi 2002, there followed 11.♙e3 ♙g8 (11...0-0-0!?!?) 12.g3 ♗a5 (12...0-0-0!?!?) 13.c5 b6 14.cxb6 ♖xb6 (14...axb6!?!?) 15.♗e4?! (It is better for White to play here 15.♗c1∞) 15...♗xd2+ 16.♗exd2 a5 (16...♗a4!?!?).

C) 4.♗bd2 e6 5.♗b3

White's idea in this variation is to prevent the enemy pawn-advance c6-c5 and thus to avoid the transposition to the line: 4.♗f3 e6 5.♙e2 c5.

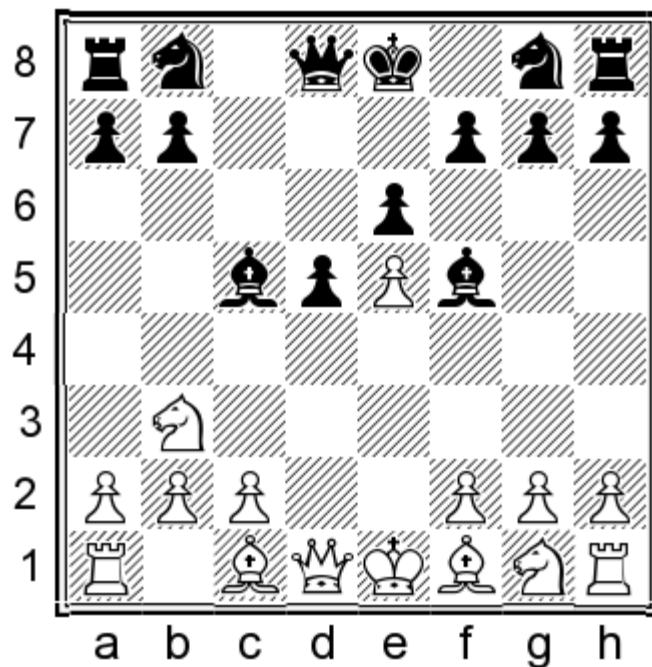


5...c5!?

Following 5...♘e7, or 5...♘d7, the game transposes, but with somewhat reduced possibilities for White (due to the early transfer of his knight to the b3-square.), to a variation, which we have already analysed in details – 4.♘f3 e6 5.♙e2 (but without c6-c5).

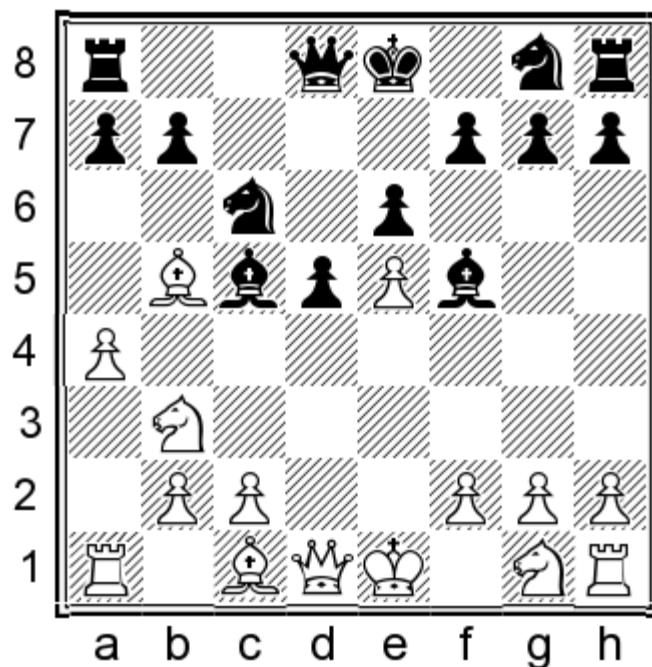
This way of playing for White is no doubt of a great practical interest for him, but Black's immediate move 5...c5, forces White, as it seems to me, to reconsider the purposefulness of this treatment of the entire variation with 3.e5. Black solves his opening problems, after an accurate play, but the position remains sufficiently appealing for the White players, therefore, this variation will always attract new adherents.

6.dxc5 ♙xc5



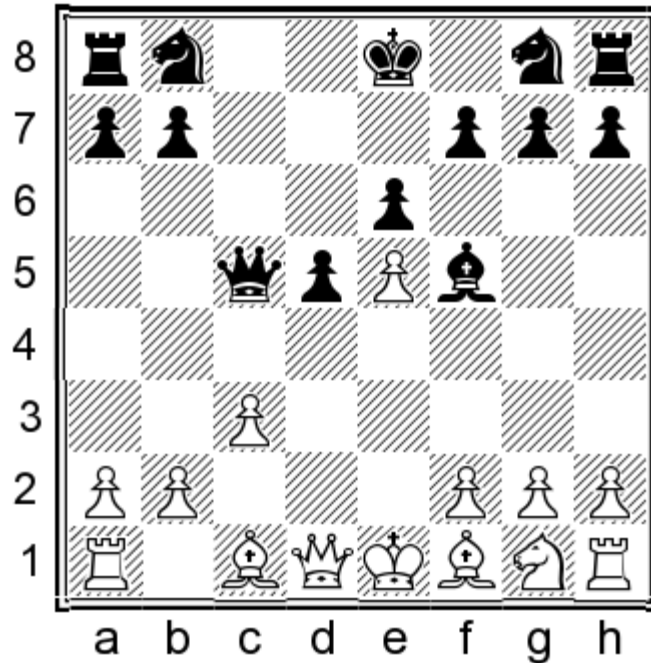
7. ♖xc5

He has often tried in practice, and not without success, the move 7. ♕b5!?, but after 7... ♖c6 8. a4!? (8. ♗e2, Rublevsky – Lintchevski, Olginka 2011, 8... ♗b6 9. ♗bd4 ♗ge7 10. ♗g5 ♖c7 11. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 12. ♗xf5+ exf5=)



8... ♗b6!, Black should ignore the enemy bishop and transpose to pawn-structures similar to the main line (It would be worse for him to choose 8... ♗f8 9. a5! a6 10. ♗a4 ♖c7 11. ♗e2± ♖xe5 12. ♗bd4 ♖c8?! 13. 0-0 ♗c5 14. ♗e3 ♖d6 15. b4 ♗xd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗ge7 17. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 18. ♗c5 ♖c7 19. c4 dxc4 20. ♖g4± Perunovic – Dreev, Erevan 2014; 12... ♗ge7 13. 0-0 ♖d6 14. ♖e1 e5 15. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 16. ♗f4↑) 9. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 10. c3 ♖b6 11. ♗e3 (11. ♗f3 ♗g4 12. ♖d4 ♗xf3 13. ♖xb6 axb6 14. gxf3 ♗d8 15. ♖g1 g6 16. ♗g5+ ♗c7 17. 0-0-0 h6 18. ♗e3=, draw, Solak – Zontakh, Palic 2014) 11... ♖c7 12. ♗e2 ♗ge7 13. f4 a6= and Black has no problems at all (13... 0-0 14. 0-0 ♗a5∞ Antipov – I.Kovalenko, Riga 2014).

7...♖a5+ 8.c3 ♜xc5



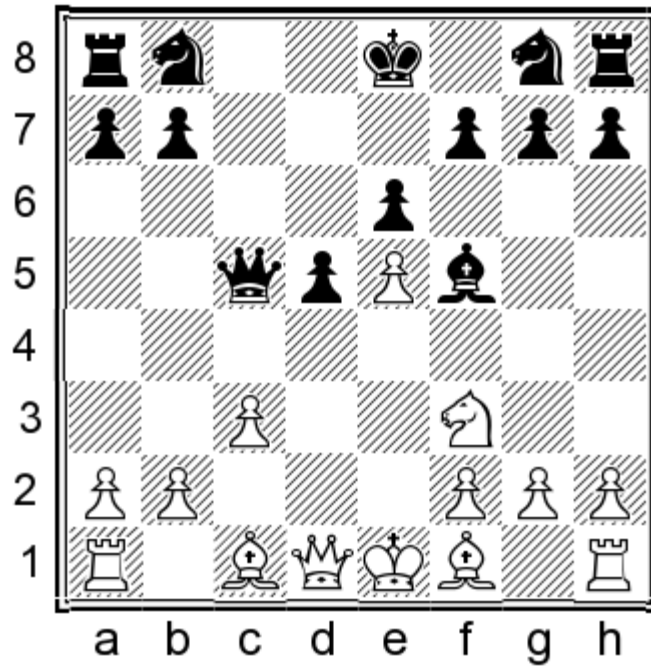
Here, thanks to the pawn-break 5...c5, the pawn-structure has been changed in favour of Black and he has no problems with his development and space. He has paid for that by presenting his opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but this is not such a great positional concession after all...

I have played this position with Black many times against very strong players and have not had any serious problems in the opening at all.

9.♙e3

Following 9.♖a4+, Black can solve his difficulties with 9...♘d7! (9...♘c6?! 10.♙e3±) 10.♙b5 ♜c7 (10...♖c8!?∞) 11.♘e2 (11.♘f3, Vachier Lagrave – Mchedlishvili, Germany 2010, 11...a6 12.0-0 ♜c8=) 11...a6, Naroditsky – N.Adams, Orlando 2011, 12.0-0 ♜c8=

White can try here 9.♘f3, a natural developing move, but it would not be so effective, since he must worry about the protection of his e5-pawn.

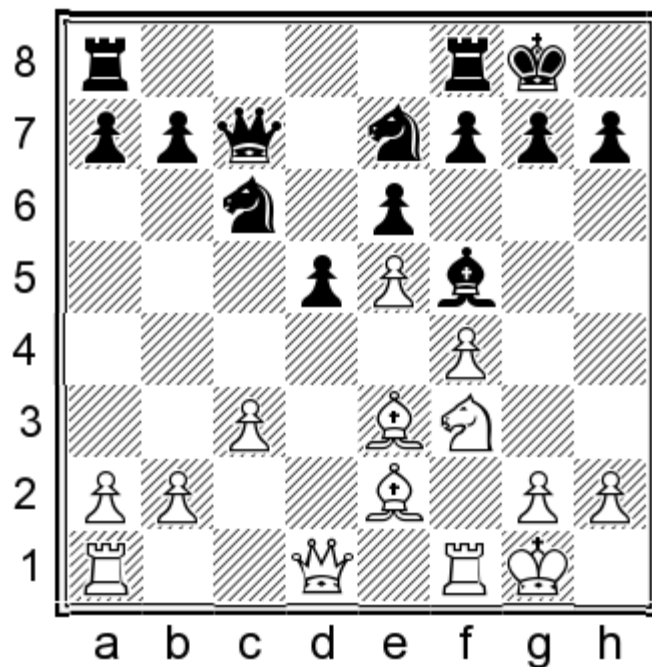


It would be premature for Black to opt here for 9...♖e7, due to 10.♙a4! (10.♜d4 ♜bc6 – see. 9...♜c6; 10.♙e3 ♞c7=) 10...♜bc6 (10...♜ec6 11.♙e3 ♞e7 12.♞b5 a6 13.♞b6 ♙g4 14.♙c5 ♞d7 15.♜d4 ♜xe5 16.h3 ♙h5 17.f4 ♜ec6 18.g4 ♙g6 19.f5±; 10...♜d7 11.♙b5 ♞c8 12.♙g5↑) 11.♙e3 ♞a5 12.♞xa5 ♜xa5 13.♙b5+ ♜ac6 14.♜d4± and White will maintain long-lasting initiative thanks to his bishop-pair, Rublevsky – Dreev, Sochi 2004.

9...♜c6!? 10.♜d4 (10.♞a4 ♞b6∞; Black should not be afraid of 10.♙e3 ♞a5 11.♜d4 ♜ge7 12.f4 ♜xd4 13.♙xd4 ♜c6=; or 12...♙e4!?∞ Dembo – Ruck, Budva 2009.) 10...♜ge7 11.♜b5 ♜xe5 12.♙e3 ♞c6. This is Black's only move. 13.♜xa7 ♞d7 14.♙b5 ♜7c6! (14...♜5c6?! Medvegy – Bernei, Hungary 2000, 15.♜xc6 bxc6 16.♙e2 e5 17.0-0 0-0 18.a4± – White's passed a4-pawn provides him with an edge.) 15.♜xc6 bxc6 16.♙e2 ♜c4! 17.♙xc4 dxc4=

Black can develop his knight in another way too – 9...♜d7, so that he can place on the c6-square his other knight (having in mind the manoeuvre ♜g8-e7-c6). 10.♜d4 ♜e7 11.♙f4 (11.f4 ♙e4=; 11.♙e3 ♞c7 12.f4 a6 13.♙e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♙e4=) 11...♙g6 12.h4 h5 13.♙e2 (13.♞b3 a6±) 13...♜c6 14.♞a4 0-0= Motylev – Bareev, Moscow 2010.

9...♞c7 10.f4 ♜c6 11.♜f3 ♜ge7 12.♙e2 0-0 13.0-0



Until now, the play has been of a positional type. White can hardly obtain a real advantage if Black plays accurately.

13...♙e4!? 14.♘d2

14.♘g5 ♙g6 15.♙d3 h6 16.♙xg6 ♘xg6 17.♘f3 ♖a5 18.♘d4 ♗c4 19.♙c1 f6= Harutjunyan – Sumets, Istanbul 2011.

14...♙g6 15.g4

White cannot create problems for his opponent with the move 15.♘b3, in view of 15...♘a5!=. (It would not be so precise for Black to react with 15...♗fd8 16.♙f3 ♖a5 17.♗e2 ♗ec6 18.♗fd1 ♗c4 19.♙f2± Rublevsky – Laznicka, Valjevo 2011.) 16.♘xa5, draw, Rublevsky – Dreev, Warsaw 2012.

15...f6!?

After this important undermining move, White's pawn-avalanche on the kingside becomes harmless for Black.

Or 15...♗ad8?! 16.♘b3 b6 17.♗e1↑ Iordachescu – Dreev, Mulhouse 2011.

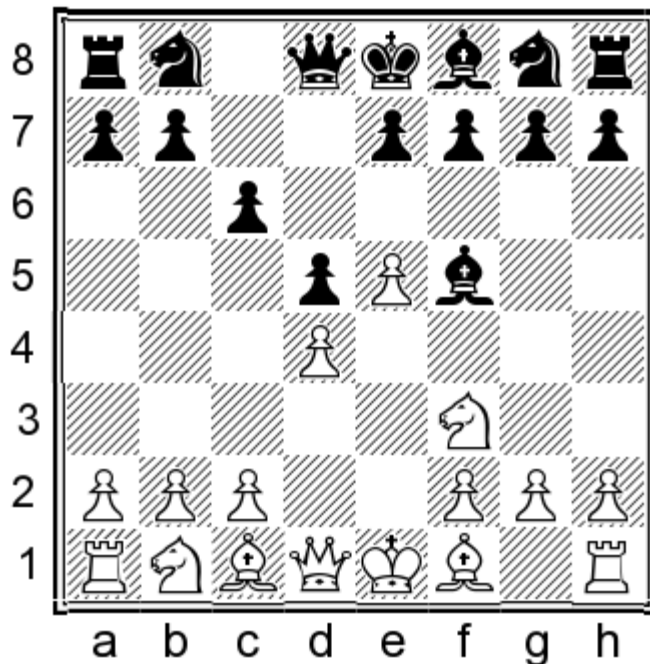
16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♘b3 ♗af8 18.♗e1 h6

Black can also try here the interesting alternative 18...♘c8!?∞, with the idea to transfer the knight to a more promising position – ♗c8-d6.

19.♗g3 ♙c2 20.♗f2 ♗g6∞ (with the idea ♗e7-f5) and Black has good prospects in the arising complications.

Chapter 4

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♗f3



4...e6

Black should better refrain from 4...♝b6? 5.♙e2 e6 6.0-0±

4...h6?! 5.♗h4 ♙d7 (5...♙h7 6.e6±) 6.c4 e6 7.♗f3±

4...c5? 5.dxc5 e6 6.♗d4 ♙g6 7.♙b5 ♗d7 8.b4±

It would be more or less a suicide for Black to opt for 4...f6?, since he should not open files in the centre voluntarily, lagging horribly in development. 5.♙d3± ♙xd3 6.♝xd3 e6 7.0-0 ♗d7 8.exf6 ♝xf6 9.♝b3 ♝b8 10.c4 ♙d6 11.cxd5 exd5 (11...cxd5 12.♗c3+-) 12.♝e1+ ♗e7 13.♙g5 ♝f7 14.♙xe7 ♙xe7 15.♗g5 ♝f6 16.♗e6 ♔f7 17.♝e3±

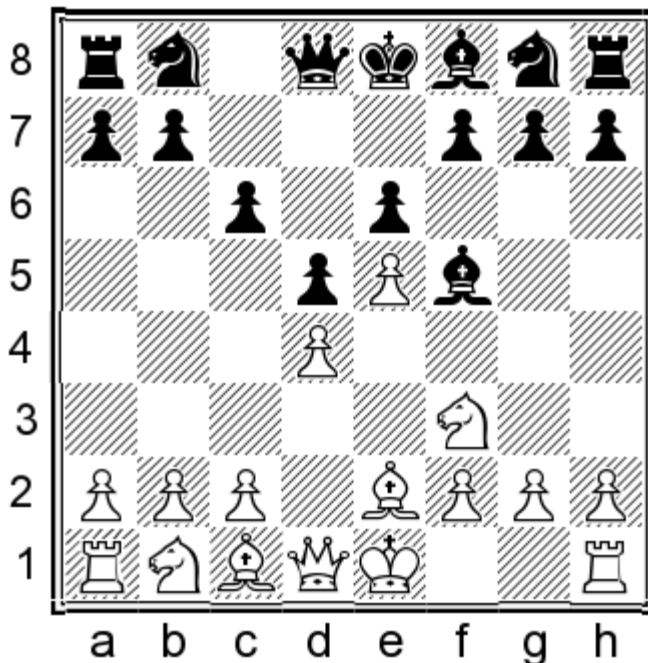
He has also tried in practice the move 4...♙g4. White can react against this rather strange attempt in a different fashion and this would be a matter of style. I would rather counter it with the “modestly” looking variation 5.♗bd2 e6 6.h3 ♙h5 7.♙e2 ♗d7 8.0-0±

Black should not determine so early the placement of his knight with the move 4...♗d7, since he will have to play sooner or later e7-e6 anyway. First of all this move is not logical and it also enables White to try an additional possibility, which would be favourable for him – 5.♗h4!? ♙e4 (5...♙e6 6.♙d3±) 6.e6!? (6.♗d2!? e6 7.♗xe4 dxe4 8.♝g4 ♝a5+ 9.c3 c5 10.dxc5 ♝xc5 11.♝xe4 ♝xe5 12.♝xe5 ♗xe5 13.♙b5+ ♗c6 14.♗f3±) 6...fxe6 7.♗c3 ♗gf6 8.f3 ♙g6 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.f4↑

5.♙e2

White completes calmly his development with the idea that his far-advanced e5-pawn will impede the harmonious development of his opponent’s kingside.

White does not force the issue yet, but is ready to react against his opponent's plans, which should be directed to the completion of his development on the kingside.



5...♞e7

With this developing move Black conceals his plans for a while.

His most popular alternatives are 5...♞d7 6.0-0 – see Chapters 6-7 and 5...c5 6.♙e3 – see Chapters 8-13.

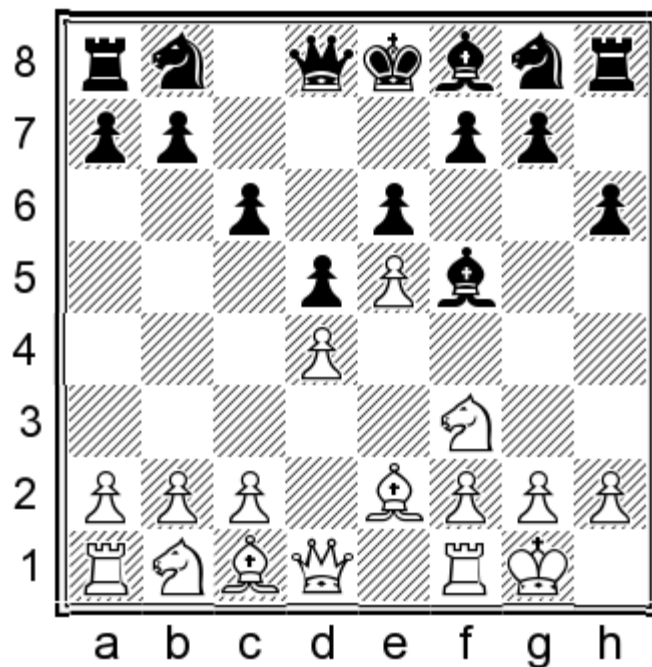
5...♙g6 6.0-0 ♞h6 (6...♞e7 7.♞bd2 – see variation **B**; 6...♞d7 7.♞bd2 – see Chapter 6, variation **A**) 7.♞bd2 ♙e7 (7...♞f5 8.♞b3 – see variation **B**; 7...♞d7 8.♞b3 – see Chapter 6, variation **A**) 8.♞b3 0-0 (8...♞f5 9.g4 ♞h4 10.♞xh4 ♙xh4 11.f4±) 9.♙xh6!? (9.a4!? a5 10.♙d2 b6 11.♞c1 ♞a6 12.c4 ♞b4 13.cxd5↑ Ushenina – Schuurman, Drezden 2008) 9...gxh6 10.♞d2 ♞g7 11.a4! (11.♞ae1?! ♞d7 12.c3 c5= Erenburg – Galkin, Port Erin 2005) 11...♞d7 12.a5± White not only acquires additional space, but deprives his opponent of the important b6-square. 12...c5 13.c4 dxc4 14.♙xc4 cxd4 15.♞bxd4 ♞c7 16.♞e2±

It seems rather suspicious, but not senseless for him, to try the seldom played move – 5...♙b4+ 6.c3!? (6.♞bd2!? ♞d7 7.0-0 ♙a5 8.c4 ♞e7 9.♞b3 ♙c7 10.♞h4±) 6...♙a5 7.♞b3 ♙b6 (7...♞b6 8.♞a3 (8.♞h4!?)±) 8...♞c7 9.♞bd2 h6 10.0-0 ♞e7 11.c4!? a6 12.b4 ♙b6 13.c5 ♙a7 14.♞h4± Eljanov – Ponomarev, St Petersburg 2013) 8.a4 a5 9.♞h4±

Following 5...♞b6? 6.0-0 ♞d7 (6...c5? 7.c4! dxc4 8.♞a3+– Kavalek – Burnet, Gold Coast 1996) White can choose the plan with 7.b3±, after which Black's early queen-sortie would turn out to be just a loss of time.

After 5...♙e7?!, Black deprives his own king's knight of the e7-square, with which he reduces considerably his possibilities and presents his opponent with a much greater choice. For example now, White has sufficient time to follow the plan with b2-b3 and c2-c4, for example: 6.0-0 (Or 6.c4!? dxc4 7.♙xc4± and Black's dark-squared bishop thwarts the development of his king's knight.) 6...♞h6 (6...♞d7 7.b3!?)±; following 6...h5, White has enough time to play 7.b3!?)±, with the idea c2-c4) 7.b3!? (In some other variations the move 7.♙xh6!? would have led to rather unclear consequences, while now it is quite appropriate, for example: 7...gxh6 8.♙d3 ♙g6 9.♞d2 ♙g5 10.♞xg5 hxg5 11.♞c3 0-0 12.f4±) 7...0-0 8.c4 ♙g6 9.♙xh6 gxh6 10.♞c3 ♞d7 11.♞d2 ♞g7 12.♙d3 a6 13.♞e2± Grischuk – Galkin, Moscow 2011.

5...h6 6.0-0

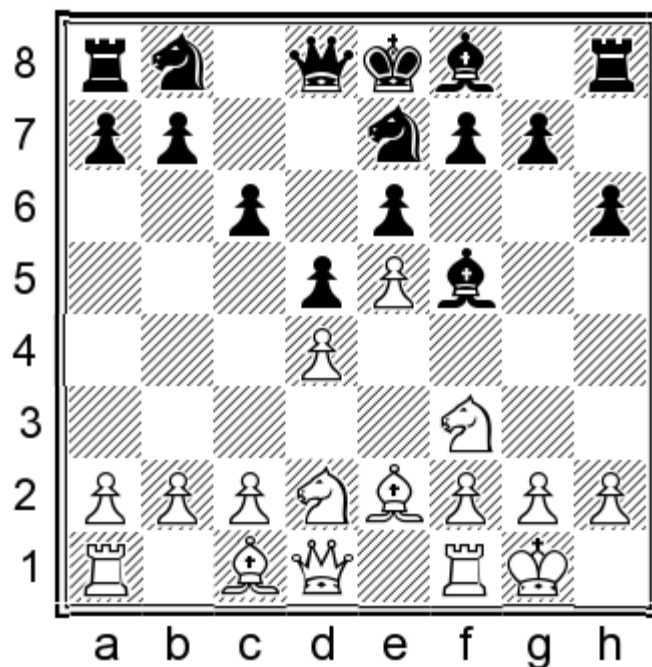


6...c5? 7.c4 dxc4 8.♖a3±

About 6...♗d7 7.♗bd2 ♗e7 – see Chapter 6, 6...h6.

6...g5 7.♗bd2 ♗e7 (7...♗d7 8.♗b3 – see Chapter 6, 6...h6) 8.♗b3 ♗d7 9.♗e1 – see Chapter 7, variation **B**.

6...♗e7 7.♗bd2



7...♗d7 8.♗b3 – see Chapter 7.

7...g5 8.♗b3 ♗d7 9.♗e1 – see Chapter 7, variation **B**.

7...♗g6 8.♗b3 ♗f5 (8...♗d7 9.♗d2 – see Chapter 7, variation **A**) 9.♗d2 ♗d7 10.♖c1 – see Chapter 7, variation **A**.

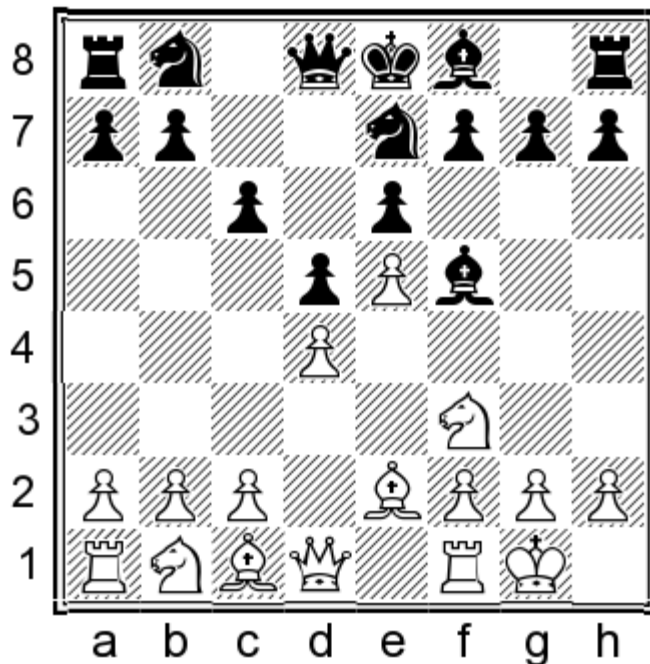
7...♗h7 8.♗b3 ♗f5 (8...♗d7 9.♗d2 – see Chapter 7, variation **C**; 8...♗g6 9.♗d2 ♗d7 10.♖c1 – see Chapter 7, variation **C1**) 9.♗d2 ♗e7 (9...♗d7 10.♖c1 – see Chapter 7, variation **C2**) 10.g4! ♗h4 11.♗xh4 ♗xh4 12.f4 ♗d7 13.f5 ♖e7

14.a3!? (14.♔d3 0-0-0 15.♖f3 ♘b8 16.a3± Oparin – Kovalenko, Riga 2014) 14...0-0-0 15.♔a5 ♜de8 16.c4!±

6.0-0

White would not achieve much with 6.♘bd2, in view of 6...c5! 7.dxc5 ♘ec6 8.♘b3 ♔g4∞ or 8...♘d7!?∞

It is promising for White to try here 6.c3!?, but the move, we analyse as the main line, seems to me to be stronger.



We will deal with: **A) 6...♘c8** and **B) 6...♔g6**.

6...♘d7 7.♘bd2 – see Chapters 6-7.

6...c5 7.♘a3, or 7.c4 – see Chapter 5.

6...h6 7.♘bd2 – see. 5...h6.

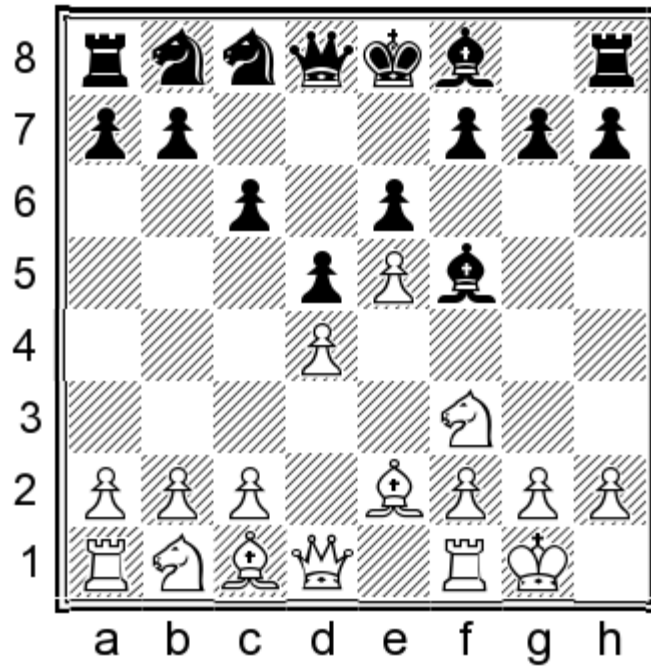
It would be rather dubious for Black to try the rather extravagant move 6...♔g4?! 7.♘bd2 ♘f5 8.h3 h5 9.c3!? (9.♘b3 ♔xf3 10.♔xf3 g6 11.a4± Bologan – Jobava, Poikovsky 2010) 9...♘d7 10.♖b3 ♜b8 11.♔d3±

Following 6...♘g6, Black's light-squared bishop may have some problems, for example: 7.♔e3 (7.c4!? ♔e7 8.♘c3↑, with the idea 8...0-0 9.♘e1! dxc4 10.g4 ♔d3 11.♘xd3 cxd3 12.♖xd3 c5 13.d5 ♘xe5 14.♖e4±) 7...♘d7 (7...♔e7?! 8.♘e1 ♘f8 9.g4 ♔g6 10.f4 f5 11.h3± De Vreugt – Guerra, Lisbon 2000) 8.h3±, with the idea 8...♔e7 9.g4 ♔e4 10.♘fd2±

A) 6...♘c8

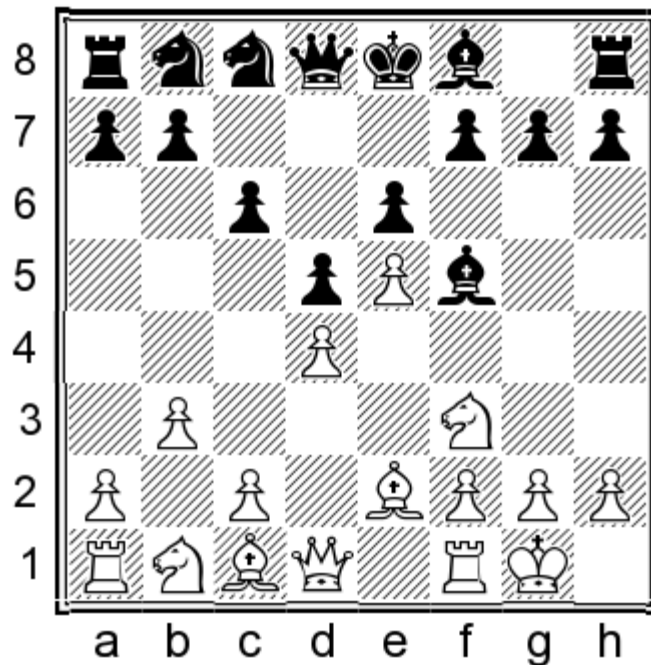
This plan is a bit slow; nevertheless, it is quite logical. Black frees the e7-square for his bishop, while his knight on c8 will be headed for the b6-square.

Still, one of the possible reactions for White is to create tension in the centre with the help of the moves b2-b3 and c2-c4, as well as the plan with the advance of his a-pawn, which would make Black's idea very unattractive.



7.b3

It is also possible for White to try here the move 7.a4!?, emphasizing the rather awkward placement of Black's knight on the c8-square. 7...♙e7 (If he tries to prevent in a radical fashion the advance of White's a-pawn with the move 7...a5, he would not solve his problems at all, for example: 8.♘bd2 ♖a6 9.♗b3 ♙e7 10.♙d2 ♗b4 11.♗e1 0-0 12.c3 ♗a6 13.♗d3±, or 13.♙d3!? ♗c7 14.f4 ♗b6 15.♖c2 ♖c8 16.h3 ♗c4 17.g4 ♙xd3 18.♗xd3 f5 19.exf6 ♙xf6 20.♖ae1 b6 21.♙c1 ♙h4 22.♖e2 ♗e8 23.♗e5 ♗ed6 24.♗xc4 ♗xc4 25.♗d2 ♗xd2 26.♙xd2 ♖d7 27.g5± Kurnosov – Vitiugov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013 and White ends up with an overwhelming space advantage in both variations.) 8.a5 0-0 9.♗bd2!? c5 (9...♗d7 10.c4!±) 10.dxc5 (He would achieve less with 10.c4 ♗c6, Mokhna – Burmakin, Sochi 2012, 11.♗b3 dxc4 12.♙xc4↑, although even then White would maintain an edge.) 10...♙xc5 11.♗b3 ♙e7 12.♗fd4 ♙g6 13.♙e3 ♖c7 14.f4± His extra space and a reliable centre provide him with a slight, but stable advantage.



7...♟b6

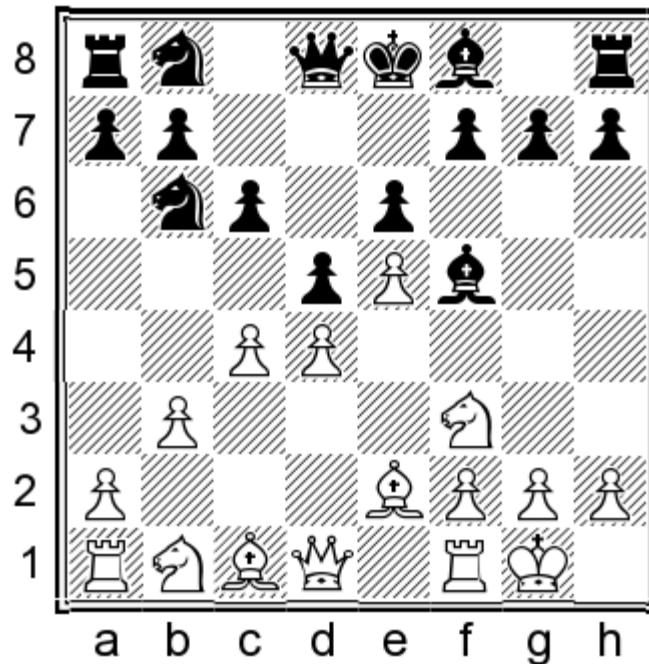
Black lags in development, so he should better refrain from 7...c5?!, since he is not well prepared for the opening of the position. 8.c4 ♟b6 9.♙g5 ♚d7 10.a4±

Black would come under a very unpleasant positional bind following 7...♙e7 8.c4 0-0 9.♟c3 a5 (He would have to face even greater problems after 9...♟d7 10.♙d3 ♙xd3 11.♚xd3± f5?! 12.♟e2 ♜f7 13.h3± Oparin – Burmakin, Sochi 2012.) 10.♙e3 ♟d7 11.♚d2 ♙g6 12.h3± Brkic – Dizdarevic, Solin 2007.

Black's attempt to play actively on the queenside with the move 7...b5 may turn out to be a serious loss of time for him. 8.♟e1 (White should not be in a hurry to trade pieces, which would be possible after 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xe7 ♚xe7, because, as we know, the exchanges are in favour of the defending side, as a rule. 10.♟bd2 0-0 11.c4 bxc4 12.bxc4± Romero Holmes – Lobron, Manila 1992) 8...♙e7 9.g4 ♙g6 10.f4 f5 11.♟g2 (11.exf6!? ♙xf6 12.g5 ♙e7 13.♙h5 ♟d6 14.♙xg6+ hxg6 15.♚e2±) 11...0-0 12.♟e3±

Black has an interesting possibility, at first sight, to try to prevent his opponent from acquiring extra space with the line: 7...a5 8.c4 a4, but in general, that is rather dubious. 9.cxd5 exd5 10.bxa4! ♟b6 11.♟c3 (11.♙d3!? White ousts the enemy bishop on f5 from its active placement. 11...♙xd3 12.♚xd3 ♙e7 13.♟c3 ♟xa4 14.♟e2, transferring the knight closer to the Black's king. 14...0-0 15.♟f4↑) 11...♙b4, Gelashvili – Kacheishvili, Tbilisi 2000, 12.♙g5±

8.c4±

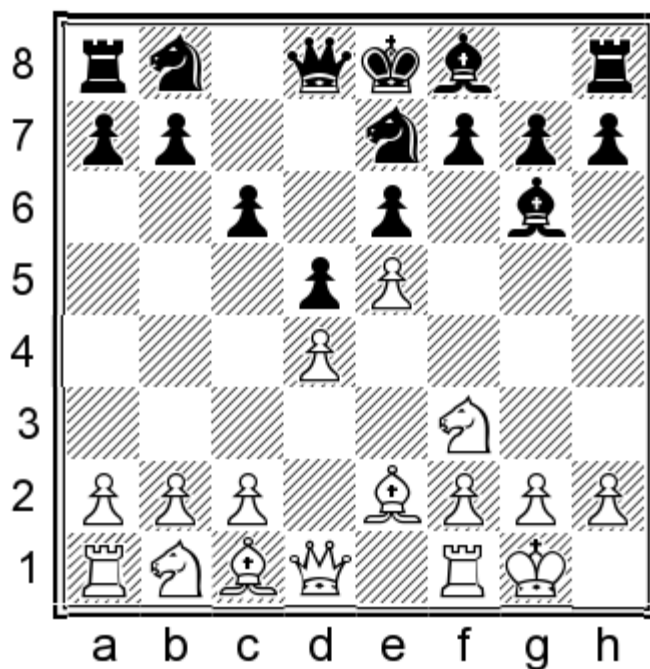


White has occupied additional space and although there will be no decisive events in the nearest future, his position is obviously preferable.

8...♙e7 (Black cannot solve his problems with 8...dxc4 9.bxc4 c5 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♚xe7 12.d5± Q.Liu – Zhou Weiqi, Ningbo 2011.) 9.♟c3 0-0 10.♚d2 ♟a6 11.♙d1 ♟c7 12.h3 h6 13.♙d3!? White deprives his opponent of his only active piece – the light-squared bishop. (13.♙b2!? with the idea ♙e2-d3 and ♜a1-c1). 13...♙xd3 14.♚xd3± with the idea 14...c5 15.a4±

In general, the plan with an early transfer of the knight to the c8-square should be considered as very passive for Black. White obtains effortlessly a slight, but stable advantage and he can try to realise it in different ways.

B) 6...♙g6



The difference between this variation and the much more often played 6...h6, followed by 7...♙f5-h7, is that Black loses less time for the transfer of his knight from e7 to f5 and hopes to utilise somehow this tempo.

7.♘bd2

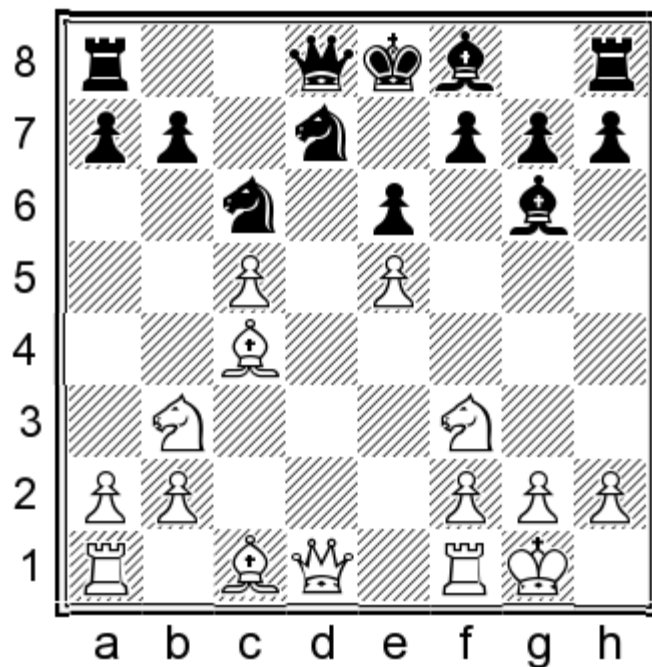
About 7.c3 – see Brkic – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015 (**game 4**).

7...♘f5

About 7...h6 – see 5...h6.

7...♘d7 8.♘b3 – see Chapter 6, variation A.

7...c5 8.dxc5 ♘ec6 9.♘b3 ♘d7 10.c4 dxc4 11.♙xc4



11...♖xc5?! 12.♗e3 ♘xb3 13.♙xb3 ♚c7 14.♘d4 ♗e7 15.♘b5! ♜xe5 16.f4 ♛b8 17.f5! ♕xf5 18.♕f4+- Svidler – Gagunashvili, Rishon Le Ziyon 2006;

11...♘dxе5? 12.♘xe5 ♛xd1 13.♞xd1 ♘xe5 14.♗b5 ♘c6 15.♘a5+- Kaufman – Kvakovszky, Washington 2004.

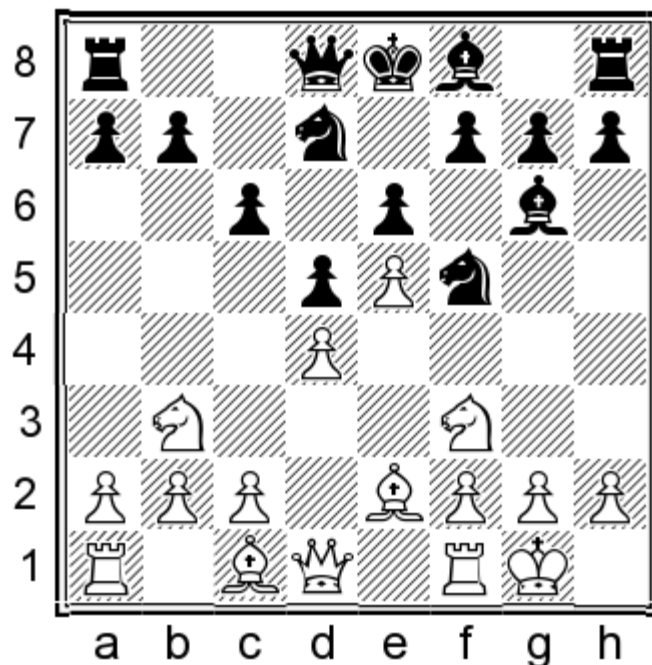
11...a6 12.♗e3 ♘de5 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♛e2! (White would achieve less with 14.♗e2 ♗e7 15.♙xd8 ♗xd8 16.♞fd1 0-0 17.♘d4 ♗f6= Rublevsky – Jobava, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.) 14...♘xc4 15.♞ad1 ♚c8 16.♙c4 ♗e7 17.♕f4 0-0 18.♗d6± Volokitin – Motylev, Jerusalem 2015.

8.♘b3

About 8.g4 – see Shirov – Dreev, Loo 213 (game 5).

8...♘d7

It would be premature for Black to opt for 8...♗e7?! 9.g4 ♘h4 10.♘h4 ♗xh4 11.f4±



9. ♕d2

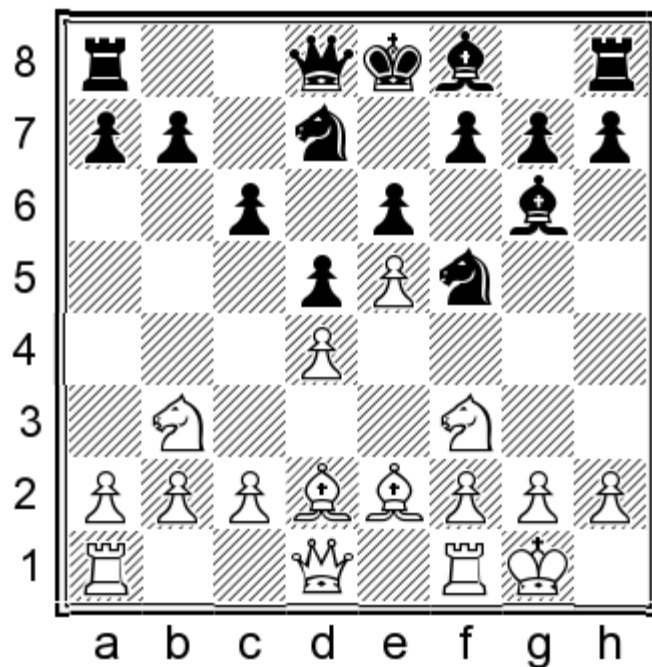
This is the most unpleasant plan for Black.

White improves the placement of his pieces in anticipation of Black's move ♕f8-e7 and White plans to counter that with g2-g4. In this line, after the possible exchange on h4, Black will manage to capture on h4 with his bishop (♗f5-h4 ♗f3xh4 ♕e7xh4) and not with his queen, which is in fact very important for White. Naturally, Black can refrain from ♕f8-e7, but this move is so important for the development of his kingside that he can hardly continue the game without it.

White's other plans are not so dangerous for Black if he reacts properly against them.

White has a move which is more or less with the same ideas, but is not so effective – 9.c3, since Black can counter that with the useful waiting move 9...a6! – he is not in a hurry to play ♕f8-e7 and prepares the pawn-advance c6-c5 at an opportune moment. (White's hopes would be realised following 9...♕e7 10.g4! ♗h4 11.♗xh4 ♕xh4 12.f4 f5 13.exf6! ♕xf6 14.♕d3±; 13...♖xf6 14.♗d2 h5 15.g5 ♖f5 16.♗f3 ♖g4+ 17.♔h1 ♕e4 18.♕d3±) 10.♕f4 (White's alternatives are not dangerous for Black either: 10.♕d2 c5!∞, or 10.g4 ♗h4 11.♗xh4 ♖xh4 12.f4 h5! 13.g5 ♕e7 14.♖f3 f6∞) 10...♕e7 11.g4 ♗h4 12.♗xh4 ♕xh4 13.♕g3 ♕xg3 14.hxg3 f6! ♗f6 Black undermines his opponent's important central e5-pawn, which emphasises White's space advantage. (It is also interesting for Black to opt here for 14...♖b6 15.f4 ♕e4 16.a4 c5 17.a5, Dominguez Perez – Dreev, Loo 2014, 17...♖a7∞). 15.f4 fxe5 16.dxe5 ♖b6∞

Black can react in an analogous way after 9.a4 – 9...a6! (About 9...♖c8 – see Grischuk – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015, **game 6**; It would be weaker for him to opt for 9...♕e7 10.g4 ♗h6 11.h3± Grischuk – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, or 10...♗h4 11.♗xh4 ♕xh4 12.f4 f5 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.♗a5↑, with the idea 14...0-0-0 15.♖a3±; 13...gxf6 14.f5± Gharamian – Pantsulaia, Aix-les-Bains 2011; it would not be so accurate for him to play 12...f6, because of White's principled reply 13.f5↑) 10.a5 c5 11.c3 (11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.c3 ♖d7∞) 11...♖c8! Black makes a useful move and does not determine yet the placement of his bishop on f8. (White is better after the preliminary exchange 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖c8 13.♕d2 ♗b8 14.♗e1 ♗c6 15.♕c3 ♕b4 16.♗d3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3± Wang Hao – Dreev, Rodos 2013; 15...f6! 16.♗d3 fxe5 17.dxe5 ♕e7 18.♗f4 ♖d7 19.♕h5 ♕f7 20.♕g4↑ Berkes – Norowitz, Reykjavik 2014; 18...♕f7 19.♕d3↑; it is also good for White to try here 18.♗bc5!?, with the idea to obtain the two-bishop advantage, for example: 18...♕xc5 19.♗xc5 ♖e7 20.b4 0-0 21.♖e1±) 12.♕f4 cxd4 13.♗bxd4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♕e7 15.♖e1 0-0 16.♕f1 ♗b8= Vachier Lagrave – Wang Hao, Beijing 2013.



9...♙e7

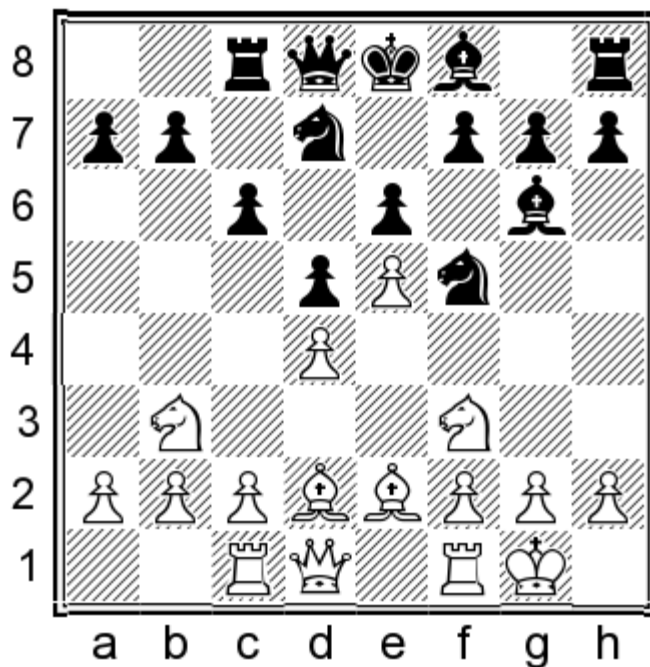
Black cannot solve his problems if he tries to postpone the development of his dark-squared bishop.

After 9...a6, White can try the useful waiting move 10.♞c1 (or 10.a3!?) and Black will have to play sooner or later ♙f8-e7, after which White seizes the initiative with g2-g4, for example: 10...♙e7 11.g4 (It is also possible for him to choose immediately 11.c4!? dxc4 12.♘a5 ♖c7 13.♘xc4 0-0 14.g4 ♘h6 15.h3± Najer – Lastin, Dagomys 2008.) 11...♘h6 (11...♘h4 12.♘xh4 ♙xh4 13.f4 ♙e4 14.♙e3, with the idea ♘bd2±) 12.h3 0-0 13.c4± (White does not need to play the move 13.♙e3, because it will provide Black with additional possibilities after 13...♙h8, being ready to follow with the undermining move f7-f6, Wang Hao – Asrian, Taiyuan 2007.).

Following 9...a5, White can reply with the standard move 10.a4, ending up with a slight, but stable edge after for example: 10...h6 11.♞e1 b6 12.♞c1 ♙e7 13.c4 0-0 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.h3 ♘b8 16.♙b5 ♞a7 17.♞e2± Volokitin – Goryachkina, Yerevan 2014.

Black fails to solve his problems with 9...h6 10.♞c1 ♙e7 11.c4 dxc4 12.♘a5 ♖c8 (12...♞b8 13.g4 ♘h4 14.♘xh4 ♙xh4 15.♘xc4 ♙e7 16.f4 ♘b6 17.♙a5 ♙e4 18.♙f3!?!±; 15.♙b4!?! ♙e7 16.♙xe7 ♖xe7 17.♘xc4 0-0 18.f4 ♙e4 19.♘d6± Gabrielian – Yuffa, Samara 2014) 13.g4! This is an important inclusion of this move. (White should better avoid 13.♙xc4, due to 13...♘b6∞ and Black's knight would control the important d5-square, with the idea to occupy it later, Bologan – Riazantsev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.) 13...♘h4 14.♘xh4 ♙xh4 15.♘xc4. Now, the vulnerability of the d6-square hurts Black. 15...♙e7 16.♙a5! White prevents the important manoeuvre of Black's knight – ♘d7-b6-d5. 16...0-0 (16...b6 17.♙d2±) 17.f4 ♙e4 18.♙f3±

White can react in an analogous fashion following 9...♞c8 10.♞c1!?! (He can also include the moves 10.♙a5!?! b6 11.♙d2±, aiming at provoking some weaknesses on the enemy queenside.)



10...♙e7 11.♙a5!? (11.g4!? ♖h4 12.♗xh4 ♙xh4 13.f4 ♙e4 14.♙e3, with the idea ♖bd2±; 11...♗h6 12.h3 0-0 13.♙d3 – 13.♙e3!?! – 13...♗h8 14.♗e2 ♗g8 15.♗g2± Rublevsky – Asrian, Dagomys 2008) 11...b6 12.♙d2. White weakens the enemy queenside with this bishop-manoeuvre and deprives Black's knight from the b6-square. Now, White can begin active actions on the queenside with c2-c4. 12...0-0 13.c4 ♙h5 14.♖e1 (14.cxd5!? cxd5 15.h3±) 14...dxc4 15.♙xc4 b5 16.♙e2 ♗b6 17.♙a5 ♗d7 18.h3 ♙xf3 19.♙xf3 ♗c4 20.♙xc3 ♗d8 21.♗e2± Rublevsky – Hovhannisyan, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

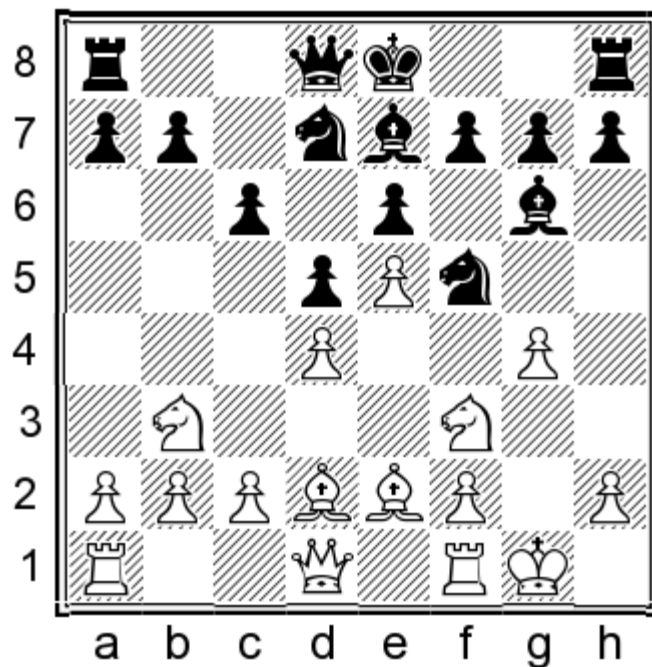
The vulnerability of the light squares on Black's queenside becomes an important factor following 10...h6 11.♙a5!? b6 12.♙d2 ♙e7 13.c4 0-0, Cerbulenco – Iovcov, Chisinau 2015, 14.g4 ♗h4 15.♗xh4 ♙xh4 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♙b4 ♖e8 18.♙b5±

10...♙h5 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 c5 13.c3 (It also seems good for White to try here the more energetic line: 13.c4!? dxc4 14.♖xc4 b5 15.♙a5 ♗b6 16.♖xc5 ♙xc5 17.dxc5 ♗xd1 18.♖xd1 ♗d5 19.♙xd5 exd5 20.♖xd5↑ Sjugirov – Jobava, Moscow 2012.) 13...♗b6 14.♙g4 (14.c4!?!?) 14...c4 15.♗a1 ♗xb2 16.♙xf5 exf5 17.♗c2 g6 18.♗f3 ♗b6 19.g4± Najer – Rodshtein, Netanya 2009.

10...h5 11.♙a5!? b6 12.♙d2 h4 13.c4 ♙e7 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.♙a6 ♖xc1 16.♗xc1 0-0 17.♗c3± – White maintains a long lasting advantage thanks to his domination over the c-file, Smeets – Solak, Biel 2013.

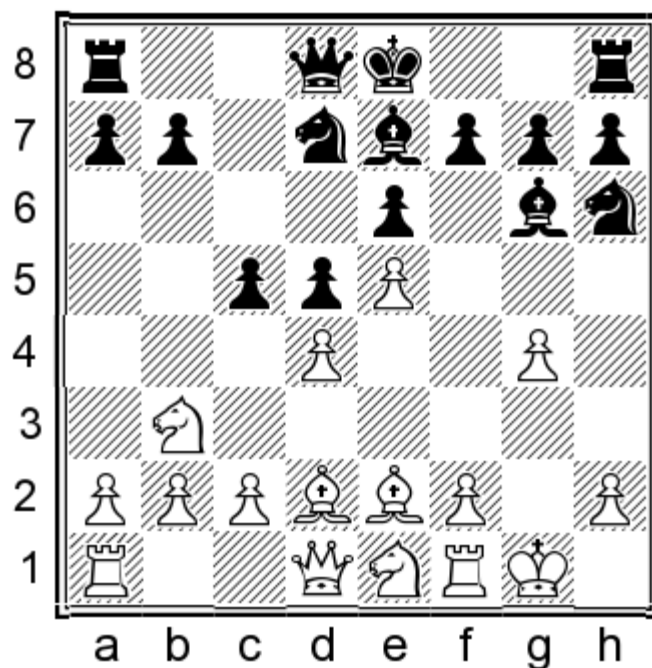
9...h5. We have already analysed a similar situation with a white rook on c1 and with a black rook on c8, in which we have recommended the manoeuvre ♙d2-a5, weakening Black's kingside. Here, a similar idea is also very promising, but since the c1-square is free for the time being, White can try the transfer of the knight via the route ♗b3-c1-d3-f4 and then to squeeze the enemy queenside with the help of the move b2-b4. Therefore, he can choose more prudent strategy – 10.c3, aimed at the fortification of his position in the centre and the improvement of the placement of his pieces. 10...♙e7 11.♗c1 c5 12.♗d3 ♗b6 13.♗a4 ♗c6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.b4! (He would achieve much less with 15.♗f4 ♖b8 16.b3± Mamedov – Solak, Konya 2010.) 15...cxb4 16.cxb4±

10.g4!



10...d4

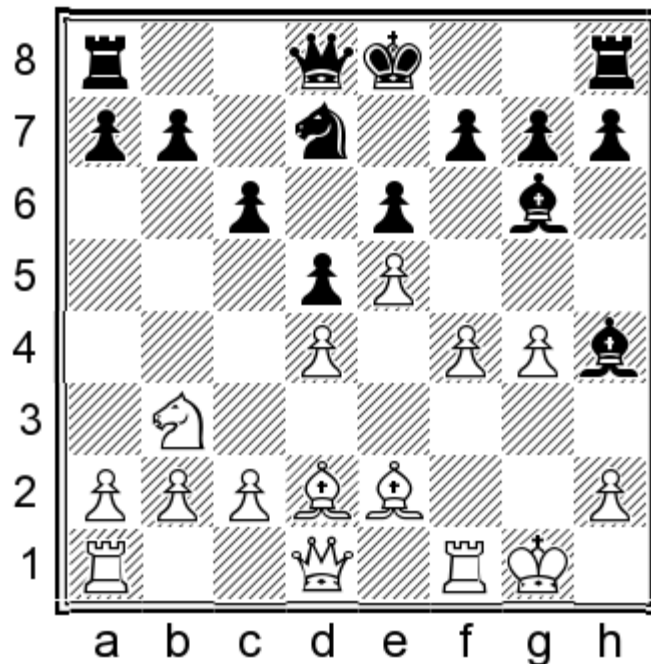
Black would fail to solve his problems with 10...d6 11.d1 (It is also possible for White to try the prophylactic line: 11.h3! d8 12.g2 h5 13.h1 d6∞ Frolyanov – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013; 12.c4!↑; 12.d1! h5 13.gxh5 e4, Volokitin – Mamedyarov, Dubai 2014, 14.d3±, exchanging Black's most active piece – his light-squared bishop.) 11...c5



12.dxc5! (The alternatives for White would not be effective, for example: 12.dxc5 dxc5 13.dxc5 e5 14.b5+ f8 15.h3 g8 16.d3 b6 17.b4+ e7 18.c5 e5 19.e5 g8∞ Karjakin – Mamedyarov, Beijing 2013, or 12.c3 c4 13.d1 f5 14.exf6 e6 15.b3 cxb3 16.bxb3 d7 17.bxb7 0-0 18.d3 d6 19.a6, Grischuk – Mamedyarov, Beijing 2013, 19...b6∞) 12...0-0 (If Black delays his castling, White would have even more promising possibilities, for example: 12...xe5 13.e6 gxh6 14.f4±, with the idea f4-f5, or 12...dxc5 13.b5+ f8 14.g2!±; d3; d7

14.h4!±) 13.f4 ♕e4 14.♕e3 ♖c8 15.♗d3±, with the idea h2-h3 and ♕e2-f3.

11.♗xh4 ♕xh4 12.f4



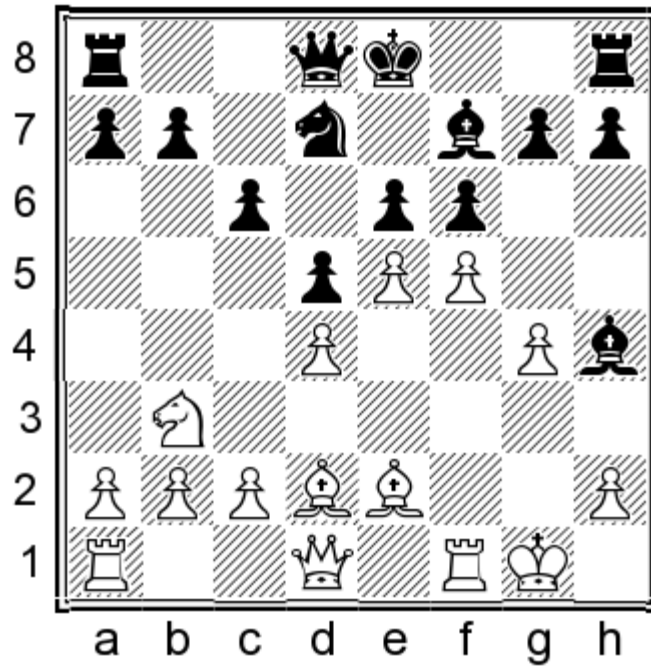
12...f5

White can counter Black's active move 12...h5 with the effective counter-strike 13.f5! (but not 13.gxh5? ♕f5↖) 13...♕h7 14.♕d3±

White can react in an analogous fashion after 12...h6 13.f5 ♕h7 14.♕d3 0-0 15.♗f3 (15.f6!?) 15...c5 16.♗xc5 ♗xc5 17.dxc5 f6, Zhigalko – Jobava, Martuni 2011, 18.♕f4!±, with the idea 18...♗a5 19.exf6 ♕xf6 20.♕d6+–

After 12...♕e4, White can reply with the simple move 13.♕f3, exchanging his opponent's important light-squared bishop. (He can also try to oust Black's bishop from its active position in the centre by playing 13.♕e3!?, with the idea 13...f5 14.♗d2±) 13...♕xf3 14.♗xf3 ♕e7 (14...0-0 15.g5+– and Black's bishop is trapped) 15.f5 0-0 16.♗h1!±, with the idea 16...f6 17.♗g2!± fxe5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.♗d4±

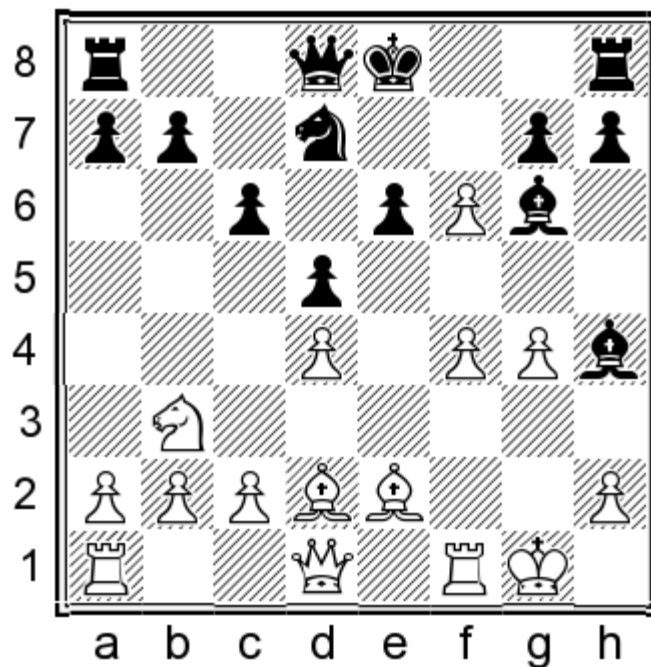
Following 12...f6?!, White is not forced to transfer to the main line with the move 13.exf6, since he has an important inclusion of the moves 13.f5! ♕f7



14.g5!? ♖xg5. This is the only move with which Black can still hold this position. (14...exf5? Rublevsky – Jobava, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005, 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.e6! ♕xe6 17.♗h5+ ♖e7 18.♗b4+-; 14...fxe5? 15.fxe6 ♕xe6 16.♗g4! ♕f7 17.♖xf7! ♔xf7 18.♗f3+ ♔e8, Groszpeter – Vajda, Zalakaros 2002, 19.♗h3+-, or 16...♗e7 17.♗xe6 ♗xe6 18.♗h5+-; 14...fxg5?! 15.♗g4 exf5 16.♗xf5±, or 15...♗e7 16.♗b4+-) 15.♗g4 exf5 16.♗xg5 fxg5 (16...fxg4 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♗e1+ ♔f8 19.♗h4+-; 18...♗e7 19.♖xf6!+-) 17.♗xf5 ♗g6 18.♗xg6+ hxg6 19.♗d3 ♗f8 20.♖ae1!±

White has a very promising alternative here – 14.exf6!?, for example: 14...♗xf6 (His task would be even easier after 14...gxf6?! 15.fxe6 ♕xe6 16.♗d3!± ♗e7 17.♗e2 ♖g8 18.h3 0-0-0 19.♗a6! ♗b8 20.♗xb7+-, or 18...h5 19.♗b4+-) 15.fxe6 ♕xe6 16.♗c5! This is White’s most precise move, activating his knight with tempo. 16...♗e7 17.♗xe6 ♗xe6 18.g5 ♗e4 19.♗g4 ♗e7 20.♖f5!±

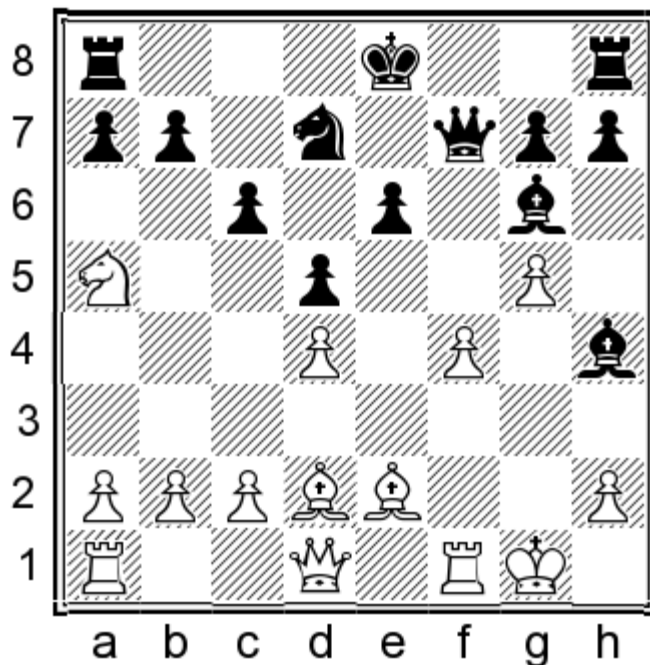
13.exf6



13... ♖xf6

Black's problems would be even greater after 13... ♖xf6 14.g5 ♕e7 15. ♖g4, for example: 15... ♗f8 (15... ♖f5 16. ♖e1 0-0 17. ♖xe6! ♖xe6 18. ♖xe6+ ♗h8 19. ♗g4 ♗b6 20. ♗a5! (20. ♖f1?! ♗c4 21. ♖c1, Caruana – Fernandez Romero, Caleta 2011, 21...g6!∞) 20...g6 21.f5 gxf5 22. ♖xf5 ♗c7 23.g6 ♖g8 24. ♗h1±) 16. ♗e2 ♖e4 (16... ♗d7, Huschenbeth – Turov, Haarlem 2011, 17.f5! exf5 18. ♗c5+→) 17.f5±

14.g5 ♗f7 15. ♗a5



15...0-0-0!?

With this move Black is trying to steer the game into troubled waters.

White obtains effortlessly a slight edge after 15... ♗b6 16. ♖d3 ♖h5 (16... ♖f5, Bartel – Solak, Kavala 2011, 17. ♗xb7 ♗xb7 18. ♗h5+ ♗f7 19. ♗h4±) 17. ♗xb7 ♗c8 18. ♖e2 ♖xe2 19. ♗xe2 ♗xb7 20. ♗h5 ♗f7 21. ♗xh4 ♗d6 22. ♖b4 (22. ♗h3!? ♗f5 23. ♗xf5 exf5 24. ♖f3± Wei Yi – Gunina, Wijk aan Zee 2015) 22... ♗e4 23.c4 a5 24. ♖a3 ♗f5 25. ♖ac1 (White should not try to open prematurely the c-file with 25.cxd5 cxd5 26. ♖ac1 ♗d7 Khalifman – Sjugirov, Legnica 2013.) 25... ♗d7 26. ♖c2±

16.c4!

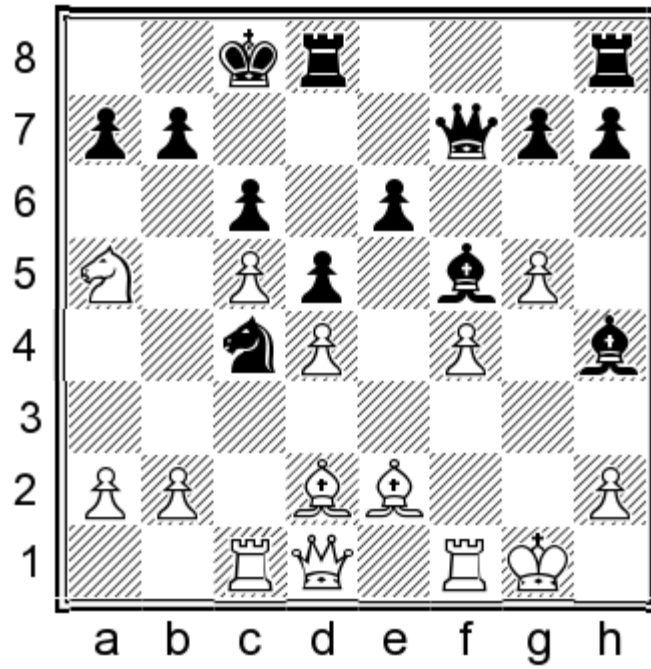
He should play very energetically here.

If White tries a chase after his opponent's misplaced bishop on h4, then Black may even seize the initiative. 16. ♗xc6 bxc6 17. ♖a6+ ♗b8 18. ♗g4 ♗f6! 19. ♗xh4 ♗e4 20. ♖a5 ♖de8, with the idea h7-h6.

16... ♖f5 17. ♖c1 ♗b6!

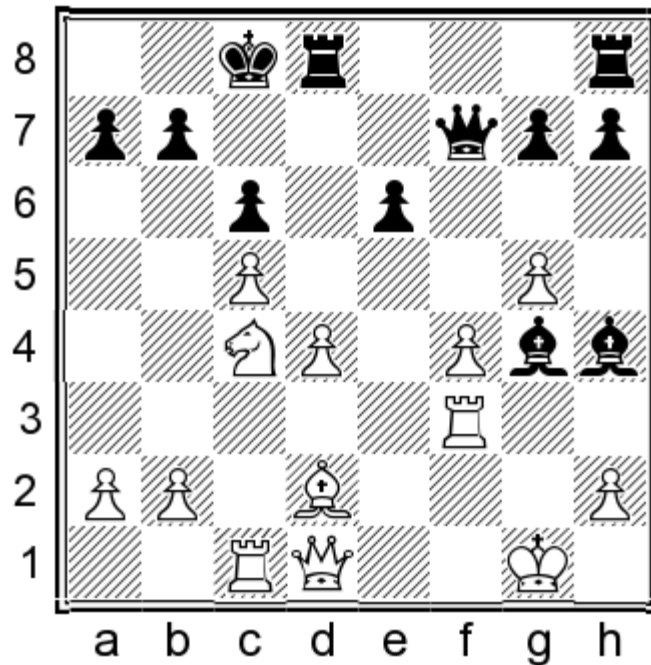
Black plans to sacrifice a pawn with the idea to begin active actions on the d-file.

18.c5 ♗c4



19. Nxc4

White fails to exploit the vulnerability of the d6-square after 19. Nxc4 dxc4 20. Nxc4 Qh3! 21. Rf3 (Following 21. Nd6+, Black has the resource 21... Rxd6 22. cxd6 Rd8=) 21... Qg4

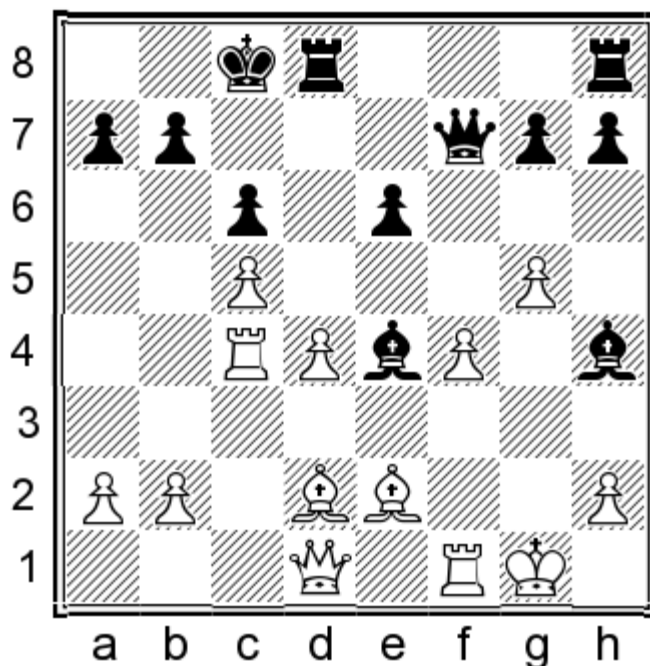


22. Wa4 (White's knight does not have any good prospects after 22. Ne5 Wf5 23. Wa4 Rxd4 24. Wxa7 Rxd2 25. Wa8+ Qc7 26. Wa5+, Sjugirov – Dreev, Rodos 2013, 26... Qc8=) 22... Qxf3 23. Wxa7 Wh5 24. h3! Qd1! 25. Wa8+ Qd7 26. Wxb7+ Qe8 27. Ne5 Qf8 28. g6 Wf5 29. Qa5 Qh5 30. Qxd8 Qf2! 31. Qg2 Wf4=, with a perpetual check.

19... dxc4 20. Rxc4 Qe4

White develops very powerful initiative following 20... h6 21. Wa4 Qb8 22. Qf3!±, for example: 22... Qd3 23. Rb4 Rd5

24.♙xd5 exd5 25.♚xc6 ♜xf1 26.g6! ♔a8 27.gxf7 bxc6 28.♕xf1 ♖f8 29.♕e2 ♗xf7 30.♞b3±



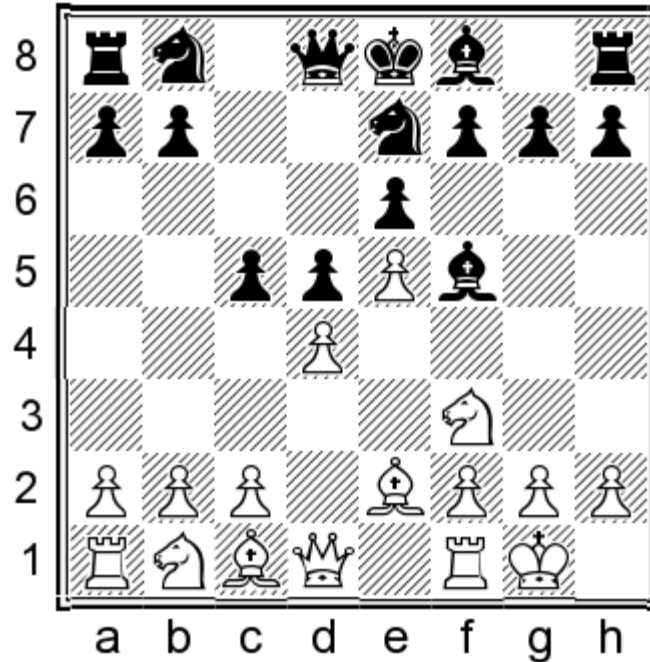
21.♙g4!

White will have greater problems to break his opponent's position after 21.♞a4 a6± (21...♔b8?! 22.f5! e5 23.♚c1±, with the idea 23...♞xd4 24.♞xd4 exd4 25.♞f4+-).

21...♙d3 22.♞a4 ♜xf1 23.♚xf1 h5 24.♙f3± – White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange due to his excellent attacking chances against the enemy king, as well as Black's misplaced bishop on h4.

Chapter 5

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♞e2 ♞e7 6.0-0 c5



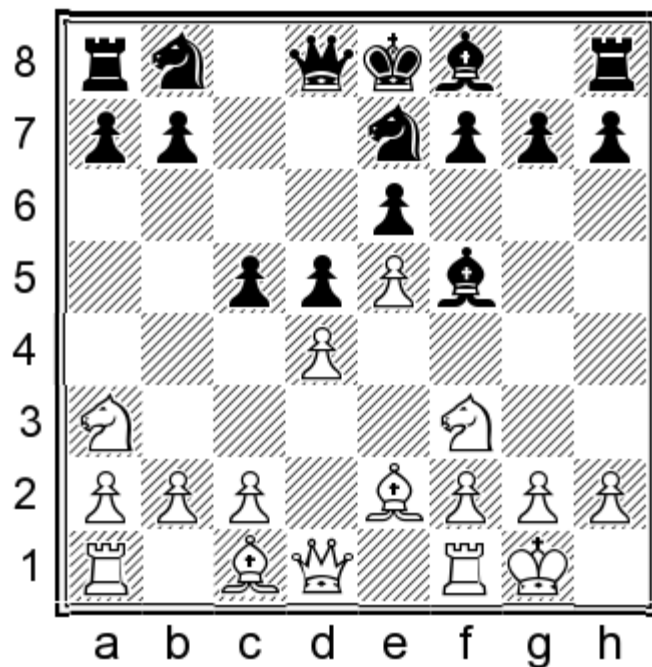
It is only now that Black comes back to his initial plan, connected with with the pawn-advance c6-c5, avoiding in the process the variations, which we will analyse after the move-order 5...c5 6.♞e3.

Here, it seems less promising for White to choose 7.♞e3, since this enables Black to continue with 7...♞ec6 8.dxc5 ♞d7 9.c4 dxc4 – see Chapter 8. White cannot obtain an advantage following 7.dxc5 ♞ec6 8.♞e3 ♞d7 9.c4 dxc4.

His best reaction would be to push immediately c2-c4, trying to open files in the centre exploiting his lead in development and space advantage **B) 7.c4!?**, or to play at first **A) 7.♞a3** and to advance c4 only later.

A) 7.♞a3

This relatively seldom played move is tried sometimes at the very top level. The peak of its popularity has long passed, but it seems to me that White's resources have not been exhausted yet.



7...♞ec6

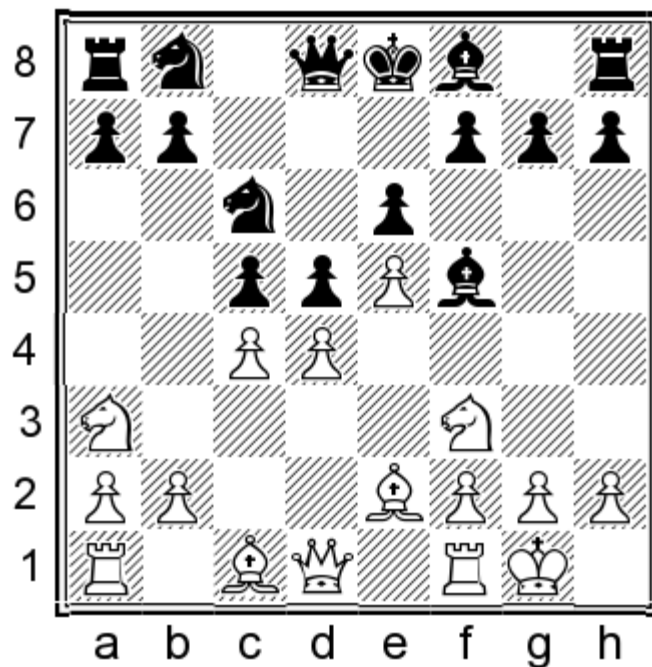
Black cannot solve his problems with 7...a6 8.dxc5 ♞d7 9.c4 ♞xc5 10.♙e3 ♞d7 11.♞d4 ♙g6 (White develops powerful initiative after 11...♞xe5 12.cxd5 ♚xd5 13.♚a4+ ♚d7 14.♙b5 ♞7c6 15.♞ad1+-, or 12...exd5 13.♞e1±) 12.f4± (12.♚b3!?)

White can react in an analogous fashion following 7...♞bc6 – 8.dxc5!↑, with the idea 8...♞g6 9.♙e3 ♙e7 (9...♞gxe5? 10.♞xe5 ♞xe5 11.g4 ♙g6 12.f4+-) 10.♞d4 ♞gxe5 11.g4 (11.♞xf5±) 11...♙g6 12.f4 ♞d7 13.f5±

8.c4

This is a principled decision.

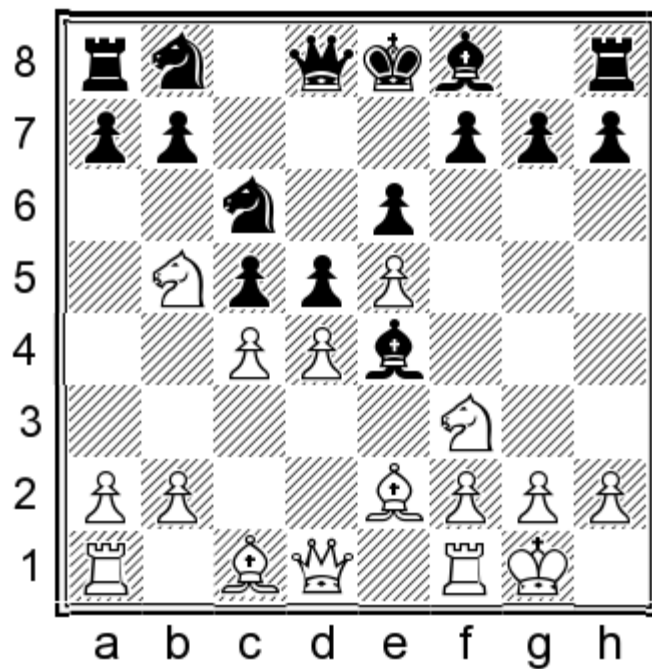
Black should not be afraid of 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xe7 ♚xe7=, since he solves easily the problems with the development of his kingside, Gashimov – Ivanchuk, Warsaw 2010.



8...cxd4

About 8...dxc4 9.dxc5 — see variation **B1**.

After 8...♙e4, White has the resource 9.♘b5!?N (He achieves much less after 9.♙g5 ♙e7=, or 9...♚b6!? 10.cxd5 ♙xd5 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♘c4 ♚c7 13.♚c1 0-0 14.a3 a5 15.♚d3 ♘d7 16.♙f4 f6∞ Ponkratov – Pushin, Izhevsk 2013, as well as following 9.cxd5 ♙xd5 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♚xe7 12.dxc5 0-0 13.♘b5 ♘a6 14.a3 ♚ad8 15.♚c2 ♘xc5 16.♚ac1 ♘d7± Pogonina – Gunina, Loo 2013).



9...a6 10.♙g5!↑ ♚a5 (10...♚b6 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♘d6+ ♙xd6 13.exd6 ♚xb2 14.♘d2 ♘d7 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♚b1 ♚e5 17.♙e3 ♚b8 18.♚d2 0-0 19.f4!± – The far-advanced passed d6-pawn and the presence of two bishops compensate with an interest the missing pawn and Black will be faced with a long and laborious defence.) 11.♘c3 (11.♘d6!? ♙xd6 12.exd6 cxd4 13.♘xd4 dxc4 14.♙e3∞) 11...cxd4 (11...♙xf3 12.♙xf3 cxd4 13.cxd5 dxc3 14.♚b3! ♚b5 15.dxc6 ♚xb3

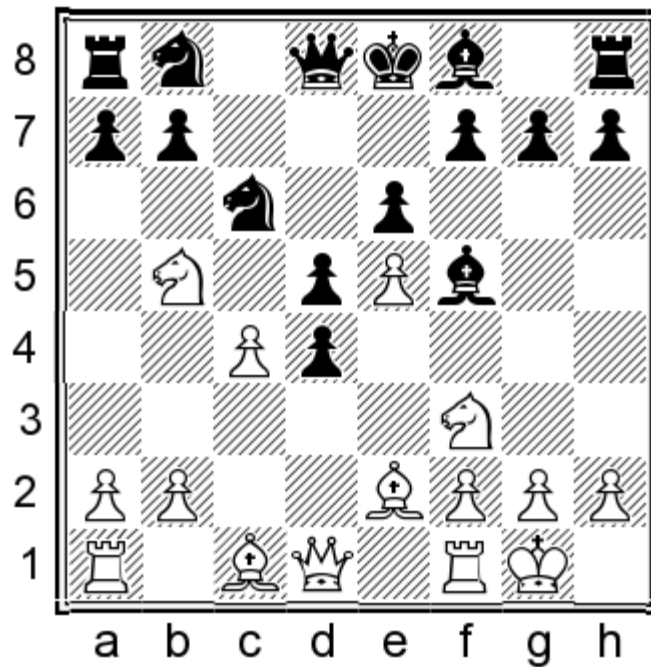
16.axb3 ♖xc6 17.bxc3 ♙e7 18.♙e3 0-0 19.b4±) 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♚xd4 ♗c6 14.♚d1± with the idea 14...♙b4 15.cxd5 exd5 16.e6 fxe6 17.♗xe4 dxe4 18.♙e3 ♚e5 19.♚b3 0-0 20.♞ad1±

9...dxc4 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♙e3 (It may be even stronger for White to choose here 11.♙xc4↑, with the idea 11...0-0?! 12.♚xd8 ♞xd8 13.♗d2 ♙c2 14.♗c7±) 11...a6 (After the trade of the bishops 11...♙xe3 12.fxe3±, the vulnerability of the dark squares in Black's camp is just horrible.) 12.♙xc5 axb5 13.♙d6 ♗d7 14.♞e1☞ – Now, White has an excellent possibility to exploit the misplacement of the enemy king, stranded in the centre. He can also try to undermine Black's pawn-chain on the queenside with the help of the move a2-a4 and this provides White with more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

9.♗b5!

This is a very energetic move, emphasizing the weak points in Black's position.

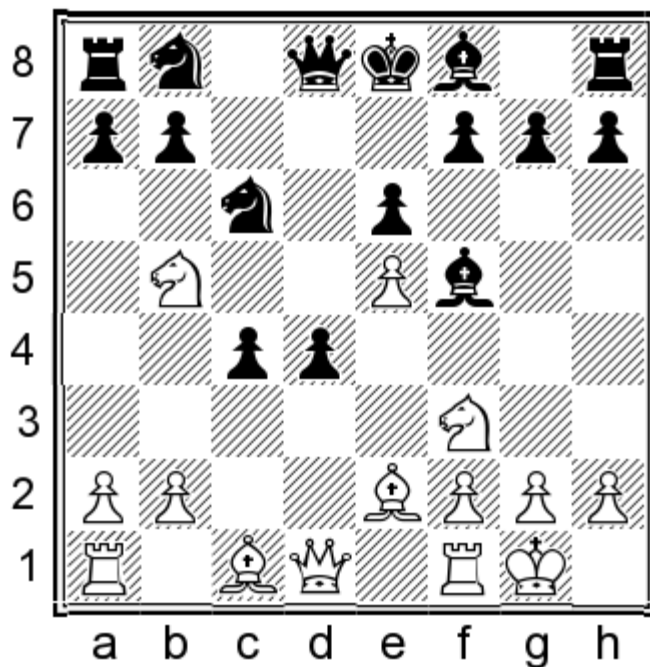
Following 9.cxd5, Black can prevent radically White's knight-sortie with 9...♙xa3! and suddenly, it is White who should worry about equalising, for example: 10.♗xd4 (10.dxc6 ♗xc6 11.♚b3 d3☞, or 11.bxa3 d3☞) 10...♗xd4 11.♚xd4 0-0 12.bxa3 ♗c6 13.♚c5 ♚xd5 14.♚xd5 exd5= Inarkiev – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011.



9...a6

Black would have difficulties after 9...♙e4 10.♙g5 ♚d7 11.♗fxd4↑ Kamsky – Kacheishvili, Philadelphia 2011.

9...dxc4

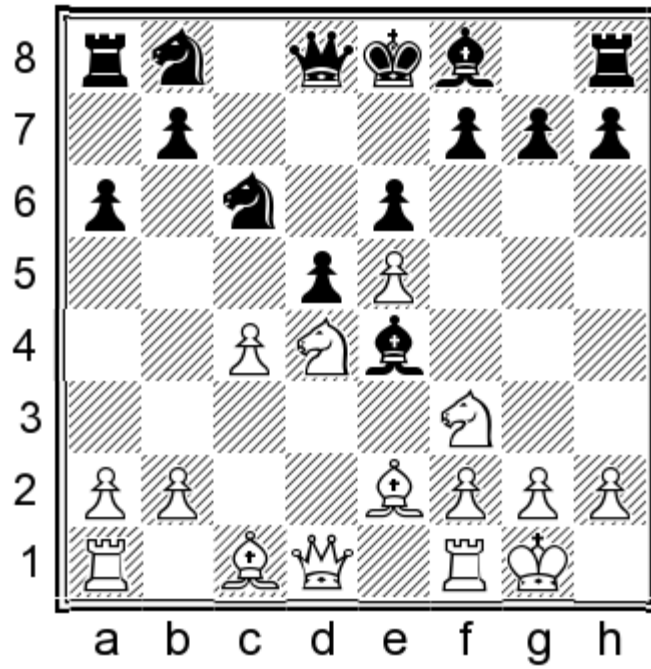


10. ♖g5!? (10. ♘fxd4 ♕d3=) 10... ♜b6 11. ♘bxd4 ♖g6 12. ♕xc4 ♕c5. This risky move may turn out to very good?! (12... ♘xd4 13. ♘xd4 ♕c5 14. ♖b5+ ♘c6 15. ♕xc6+ bxc6 16. ♘b3±) 13. ♘xe6 fxe6 14. ♕xe6, It is more than obvious that Black's king is terribly misplaced. 14... ♘e7 15. ♜a4 ♘bc6 16. ♜g4 ♖d8. White was threatening ♕d7+. 17. ♞fd1 (17. ♞ad1 ♕d3 18. ♕f6 ♕xf1 19. ♕f7+ ♖xf7 20. ♜xg7+ ♖e6 21. ♜g4+ ♖f7 22. ♜g7=) 17... ♕xf2 18. ♖h1☞

10. ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 (10... ♕d3 11. ♕e3±; 10... ♕e4 11. ♕e3 ♕e7 12. ♕xc4 0-0 13. ♜e2 ♕xf3 14. ♘xf3±) 11. ♘xd4 ♕d3 (11... ♕e4 12. ♕xc4 ♘c6 13. ♘b5 ♜xd1 14. ♞xd1 ♞c8 15. b3 a6 16. ♘d6+ ♕xd6 17. ♞xd6 ♘xe5 18. ♕xe6±) 12. ♕e3 ♕e7 13. ♕xd3 cxd3 14. ♜f3!? ♜d7 15. ♞fd1±

10. ♖g5!

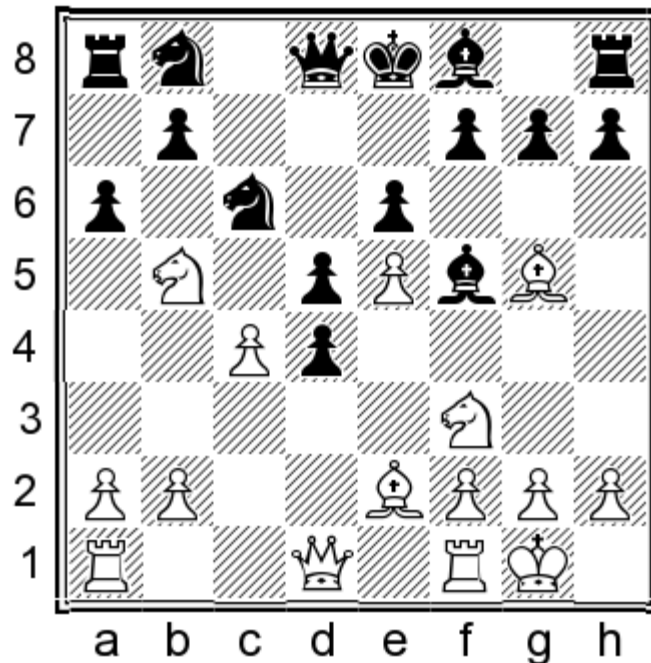
White brings with tempo his bishop into the actions, while after 10... ♕e7?, he has the powerful argument 11. ♘d6±
It is also good for him to play here simply 10. ♘bxd4!? ♕e4



Black should not be afraid of 11. ♘f4 ♙e7 12. cxd5 ♘xd5= 13. ♘d3?! g5! 14. ♘g3 g4 15. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 16. ♗e1 h5 ♠ Inarkiev – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011.

He can hold the position, but not without efforts, following 11. ♗g5 ♖xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♖c6 13. ♗e3 ♘g6 14. cxd5 ♗xd5 15. ♘f3 ♗b5!N It is essential for Black to deprive the enemy queen of the a4-square. (It would be rather careless for Black to choose here 15... ♗c5 16. ♖d1 h6, Volokitin – Ponomariov, Kiev 2011, in view of 17. ♗xe6! fxe6 18. ♗b3 ♗e7 19. ♖d6 ♗d8 20. ♘f4 ♗f7? 21. ♗a4! Now, Black's idea 15... ♗b5 becomes quite clear! 21... b5 22. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23. ♘c6+ ♖d7 24. ♗d4!+-; 20... ♗f7 21. ♖ad1 ♗g8 22. ♖d7 ♗e8 23. ♗b6±) 16. a4 ♗c5 17. ♖d1 h6= 18. ♗xe6?! fxe6 19. ♗b3 ♗e7 20. ♖d6 ♗d8 21. ♘f4? ♗f7+-

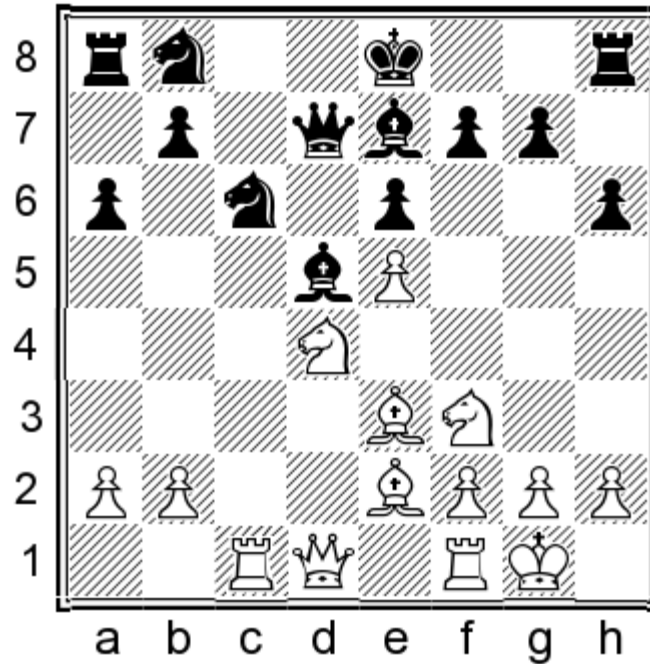
White still has some chances of obtaining an edge after 11. ♘e3!? ♙e7 12. ♗d2 ♠



10... ♗d7 11. ♗bxd4 ♘e4 12. ♖c1 h6 13. ♘e3!

It would be weaker for White to choose 13. ♖h4, due to 13... ♗e7 14. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 15. ♞d2 ♝bc6 16. ♞4b3 ♞c7 17. ♞xe4 dxe4 18. ♞d6 ♞b6 19. ♝fd1 0-0 20. ♞c5 ♞c7 21. ♞d6 ♞b6 22. ♞c5 ♞c7 23. ♞d6, draw, Svidler – Anand, Moscow 2011.

13... ♗e7 14. cxd5 ♗xd5



15. ♞d2!

White's prospects are not so clear after 15. ♗c4 0-0 16. ♞e2 ♝d8 17. ♝fd1 ♗xc4 18. ♞xc4 ♞e8 (18... ♞b4!?) 19. ♞b3 ♝d7 20. a3 ♗f8 21. ♞xc6 ♞xc6 22. ♝xd7 ♞xd7 23. ♝d1 ♞c8 24. ♝c1 ♞d7 25. ♝d1 ♞c8 26. ♝c1, draw, Gashimov – Grischuk, Porto Carras 2011.

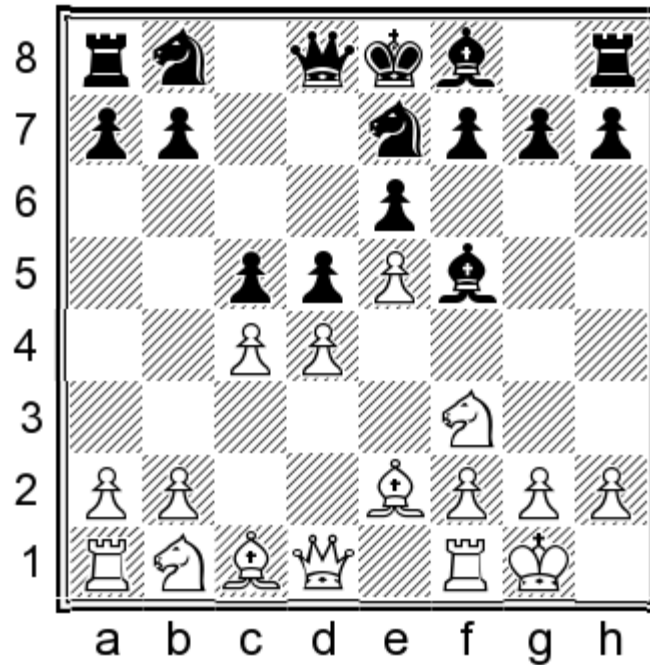
15... ♗b4

Now, White can counter 15... 0-0 with 16. ♗xh6!±

Black would not solve his problems with 15... ♞xd4 16. ♞xd4 ♞c6 17. ♞g4↑

16. ♞d3 0-0 17. a3 ♗e7 18. ♗d1 ♝d8 19. ♗c2 g6 20. ♞e2 ♜g7 21. ♝fd1 ♞xd4 22. ♗xd4 ♞b5 23. ♗d3± White's space-advantage and his more actively deployed pieces provide him with a long-lasting advantage, Gashimov – Grischuk, Beijing 2011.

B) 7.c4!?



Now, Black is faced with a difficult choice. He can either complete the development of his queenside with **B2) 7...♖bc6**, or can reduce in advance the tension, concerning the d5-square **B1) 7...dxc4**.

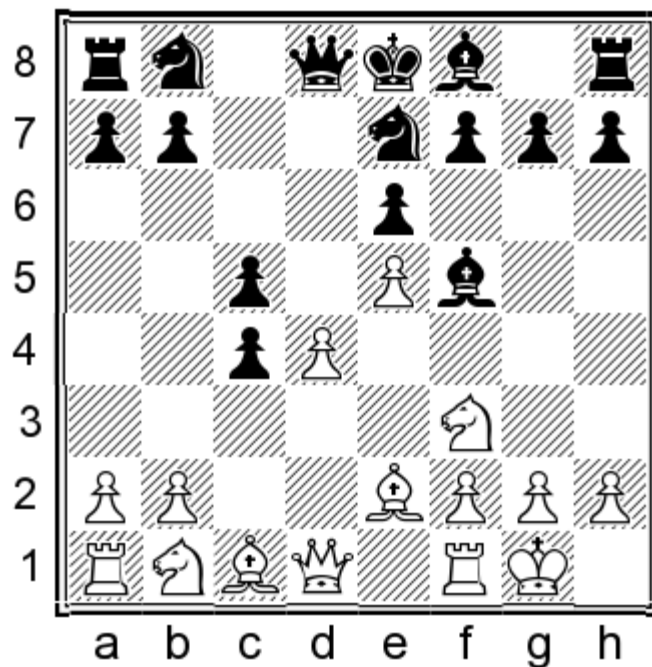
7...♗d7?! 8.♙g5± – see Chapter 6, 6...c5?! 7.c4 ♗e7 8.♙g5.

7...♙xb1? 8.♞xb1 cxd4 9.♗xd4 dxc4 10.♚a4!? ♗bc6 (10...♗d7 11.♙xc4 a6 12.♗xe6! fxe6 13.♙xe6+–) 11.♞d1 ♚a5 12.♚xc4 ♗xd4 13.♚xd4 ♞d8 14.b4!? ♚b6 15.♚xb6 ♞xd1+ 16.♙xd1 axb6 17.♙a4±

7...♗ec6?! 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♗c3 ♙e7 10.♙e3± Vehi Bach – Bello, San Sebastian 1996.

7...cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♗bc6 (8...dxc4 9.♗a3 ♙d3 10.♗xc4 ♙xc4 11.♙xc4, Tate – Grigoriants, Cappelle la Grande 2012, 11...♗bc6 12.♙e3!±, with the idea 12...♗xe5 13.♙b5+ ♗7c6 14.♞c1+–) 9.♗xf5 (9.♗b5!? ♗xe5 10.♚a4 ♗7c6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♙f4↑) 9...♗xf5 10.cxd5 ♚xd5 11.♚xd5 exd5 12.♗c3± Cao – Lou Yiping, Mashhad 2011.

B1) 7...dxc4



8. Na3!

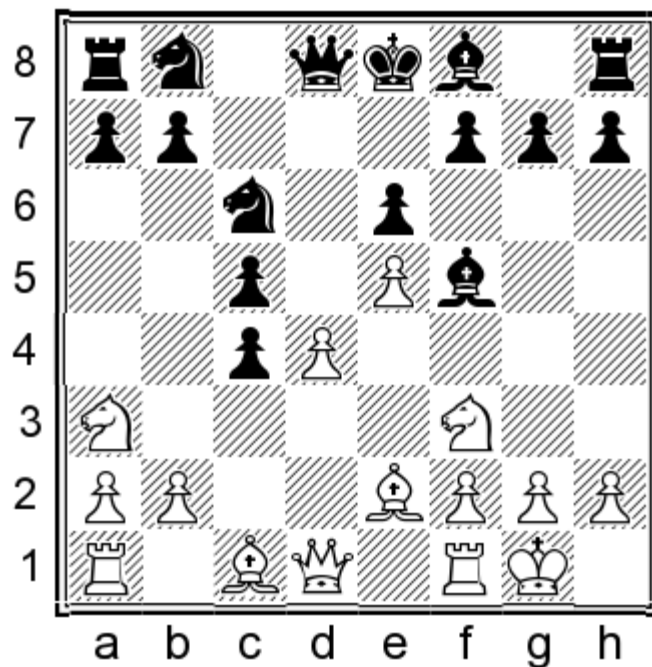
White brings his knight into the actions, without closing the way for his dark-squared bishop (This would have happened after 8. Bd2.) and eventually plans the manoeuvre Nc3-b5.

White has no good prospects in the variation 8. Nc3 Nbc6 9. dxc5 Nd5! 10. Nd4 Nxc3 11. bxc3 Qxc5 12. Nxf5 exf5 13. Wc2 (13. Qxc4? Qxf2 Shirov – Karpov, Vienna 1996; 13. Qf4 0-0 14. Qxc4 We7 15. We2 Nd8=) 13... Wd5 14. Qf4 0-0! (14... We6 15. Wa4± Kosteniuk – Karpov, Moscow 2009) 15. Wxf5 Nxe5! 16. Ch1 Ba8 17. Rad1 We6 18. Wxe6 Bxe6 19. Rd5 Ng6=

8... Nc6

About 8... Nbc6 9. Nxc4 – see variation **B2a1**.

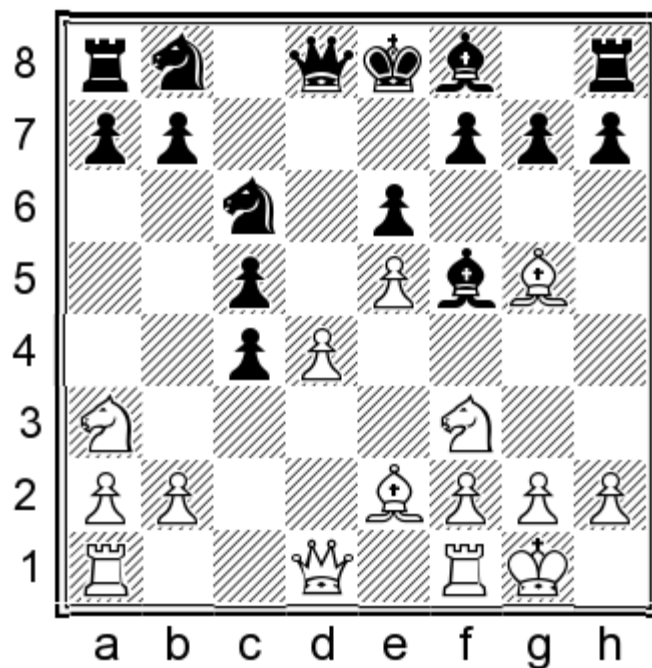
8... cxd4?! 9. Nxd4 Qd3 10. Nxc4 Qxc4 11. Qxc4 Nbc6 12. Qb5±



9.dxc5

This move leads to a multi-piece endgame, in which after the eventual appearance of a white powerful passed pawn on d6 and a bishop-pair, White will have a considerable advantage.

He has another promising alternative – 9.♙g5!?, connected with a pawn-sacrifice.



Black will have to face great difficulties following 9...♞d7 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♘xc4↑, with the idea 11...h6 12.♙e3± Kocian – Splichal, Czech Republic 2006.

It would also be very risky for him to opt for 9...f6 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♙f4 (11.♙e3 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 ♙xa3 14.bxa3 ♘c6=) 11...♘xd4 12.♙xc4! (12.♘xd4 cxd4 13.♙h5+ ♙g6 14.♘xc4 ♘c6 15.♞e1 e5 16.♘xe5 fxe5 17.♙xe5 ♘xe5 18.♞xe5+ ♔f7 19.♞g4 ♞c8 20.♙xg6+ hxg6 21.♞e6+ ♔g7 22.♞d5 ♞h4 23.♞e5+ ♔g8 24.♞e6=) 12...♘bc6

13. ♖e1↑ White's dangerous initiative more than compensates the sacrificed pawn.

9... ♗e7 10. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 11. ♖xc4 0-0 12. dxc5 ♖xc5 (Black cannot solve his problems with 12... ♖a6 due to 13. ♖d6 ♖xc5 14. ♖fd1 ♖ad8 15. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 16. ♖d6 b6 17. ♖ac1 a5, R. Robson – Zhou Weiqi, Ningbo 2013, 18. ♖d4!±) 13. ♖c1 (13. ♖d6±) 13... ♖e7 14. ♖b3 ♗e4 (14... ♖a6 15. ♖fd1±) 15. ♖e3 ♗d5 16. ♖fd1 ♖d7 17. a3 ♖ad8 18. g3!±

9... ♗xc5

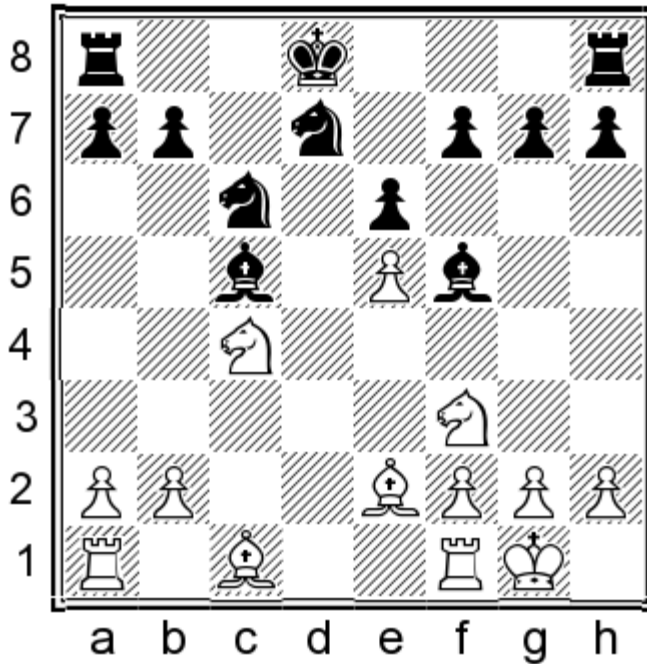
9... ♖d7 10. ♖xc4! (10. ♗g5 ♗e7 11. ♖xc4 0-0 12. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 13. ♖d6 ♖xc5 14. ♖fd1±) 10... ♗xc5 11. ♗g5 ♖b8 12. ♖c1± The exchange of the queens would not facilitate Black's defence at all – 9... ♖xd1 10. ♖xd1 ♗xc5 (10... ♗d3 11. ♗xd3 cxd3 12. ♖b5 ♖a6 13. ♖d6+ ♗xd6 14. cxd6± Borgen – Kudryavtsev, Los Angeles 2011) 11. ♖xc4 ♖d7 (11... 0-0 12. ♖d6±) 12. b3!± ♗e4 13. ♖d6+ ♗xd6 14. exd6± Volokitin – Bologan, Foros 2006.

Black would have to pay a dear price for the postponement of the development of his kingside after 9... ♖a6?! 10. ♖xc4, for example: 10... ♖xc5 11. ♗e3 ♗e7 12. ♖d6+ ♗xd6 13. exd6 ♖e4 14. ♖b3 ♖xd6 15. ♖fd1 ♗e4 16. ♗c5 ♗d5 17. ♖xd5 exd5 18. ♖xd5+– Volokitin – Epishin, Bad Wiessee 2001.

10. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8

10... ♖xd8 11. ♖b5 (11. ♖xc4 ♖dc6 12. ♖d6!± ♗xd6 13. exd6 ♖d7 14. ♗e3±) 11... ♖a6 12. ♗xc4 ♖c6 13. ♗f4 0-0 14. ♖d6 ♗xd6 15. exd6±

11. ♖xc4 ♖d7



12. a3!±

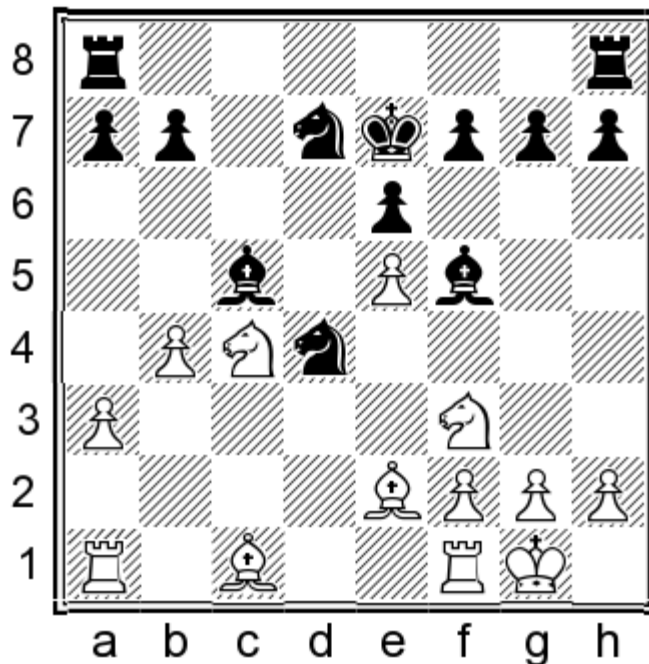
White is well prepared to occupy additional space on the queenside with b2-b4. He has another promising line here: 12. ♗f4 ♗e7 13. ♖d6±

12... ♗e7 13. b4 ♖d4

Black's bishop does not have adequate squares to retreat to, because after 13... ♗b6 14. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 15. b5 ♖a5 16. ♗g5±,

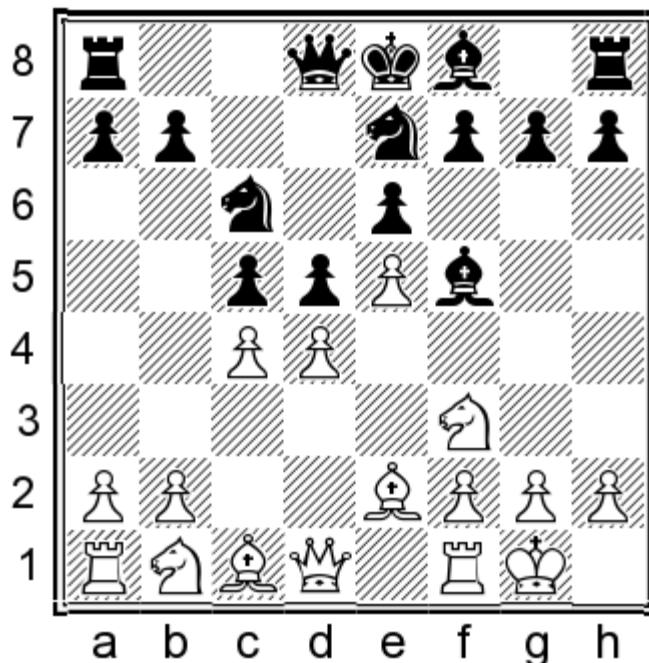
White can exploit effectively his two-bishop advantage.

Black should better not try to capture the enemy e5-pawn 13...♙d4?!, since after 14.b5 ♙xa1 15.bxc6 b5 (15...bxc6 16.♙e3 ♙c3 17.♞c1+-) 16.a4 bxc4 17.♙a3+ ♜d8 18.♞d1 ♙d3 19.♙xd3 cxd3 20.♞xd3 ♜c7 21.♞xd7±, with the idea 21...♜xc6 22.♞d1±, his bishop would be lost.



14.♙g5+ f6 15.exf6+ gxf6 16.♞xd4 ♙xd4 17.♞ad1 ♙xf2+ (The endgame would be very bad for Black following 17...fxg5 18.♞xd4± Nunn – Epishin, Germany 2000.) 18.♞xf2 fxg5 19.♞d6!± – Black will hardly manage to hold on to his extra pawn, therefore, he will have to defend long and hard an inferior endgame.

B2) 7...♞bc6

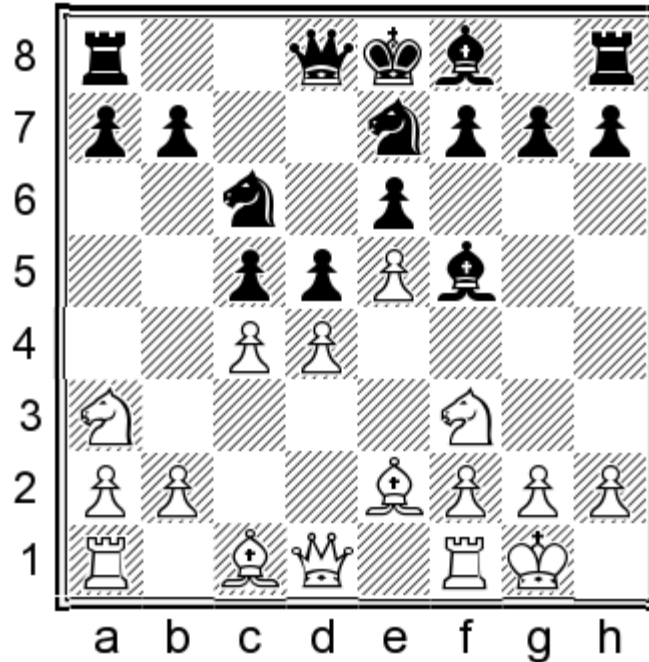


Now, White can choose between two lines in his attempts to fight for an advantage in the opening: **B2a) 8.♞a3!?** and **B2b) 8.dxc5**.

It is weaker for him to opt for 8.♖c3 dxc4 – see variation **B1**, 8.♖c3 ♗bc6.

B2a) 8.♗a3!?

This is a solid move and I feel we have to pay serious attention to it. Its plus is that White can react against 8...dxc4 in a slightly different fashion as against 8.dxc5.

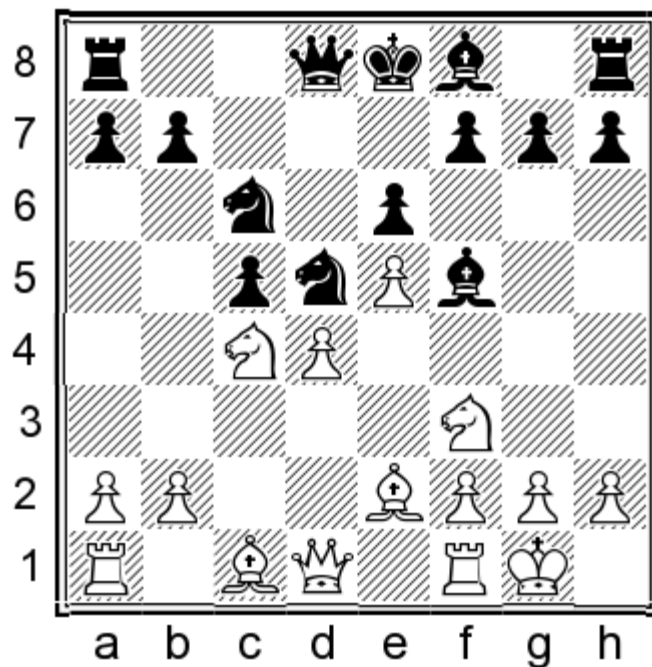


We will analyse in details now the straightforward move **B2a1) 8...dxc4** as well as the prophylactic try **B2a2) 8...a6!**

The exchange on d4 would lead to grave consequences for Black after 8...♗xd4? 9.♗xd4 cxd4 10.♗b5 ♗c6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗xd4±, since it would become obvious that the opening of the central files would be clearly in White's favour, due to Black's considerable lag in development.

He cannot solve his problems with 8...♗e4 9.dxc5 ♗f5 10.cxd5 ♗xd5 11.♗g5! (White achieves much less after 11.♗c2 ♗a5!= Bodnaruk – Gunina, Nizhny Novgorod 2013.) 11...♗e7 (Here, White would counter 11...♗a5 with the powerful argument 12.g4! ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗fd4 14.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 15.♗b3±; 12...♗b4 13.gxf5 ♗g4+ 14.♗h1 ♗xe5 15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♗xd5! exd5 17.♗b5+ ♗c6 18.♗xc6+ bxc6 19.♗ae1+ ♗e7 20.♗xe7+ ♗f8 21.♗f7! ♗g8 22.♗f4+–) 12.♗xe7 ♗xe7 13.♗b5 ♗xf3 14.♗xf3 ♗xe5, Ponomariov – Ding Liren, Tromso 2014, 15.♗e4 ♗xc5 16.♗e2 0-0 17.♗ac1 ♗e7 18.♗fe1! (White should not go for 18.♗xf5 exf5 19.♗fe1 ♗ac8 20.f4 ♗xc1 21.♗xc1 a6=) 18...♗fc8 19.♗xc8+ ♗xc8 20.♗xa7 ♗d8 21.♗xf5 exf5 22.♗f1 ♗d5 23.f4 ♗c5 24.♗e3 ♗g6 25.♗xc5 ♗xc5 26.g3 ♗f8 27.♗e7 ♗c1+ 28.♗f2 ♗c2+ 29.♗e2 ♗c5 30.b4± Now, White's pawn-majority on queenside has become a very important factor.

B2a1) 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d5



10. ♖g5

It would be weaker for White to opt for 10. ♘e3 ♜xe3! 11. ♞xe3 (11. fxe3 ♘e7 12. dxc5 ♘xc5 13. ♞d6+ ♘xd6 14. exd6 0-0=) 11... ♘e4 12. ♖a4, Green – R. Smith, Auckland 2000, 12... ♖a5 13. ♖xa5 ♞xa5 14. dxc5 ♘xc5 15. ♞ac1 ♘xe3 16. fxe3 0-0=

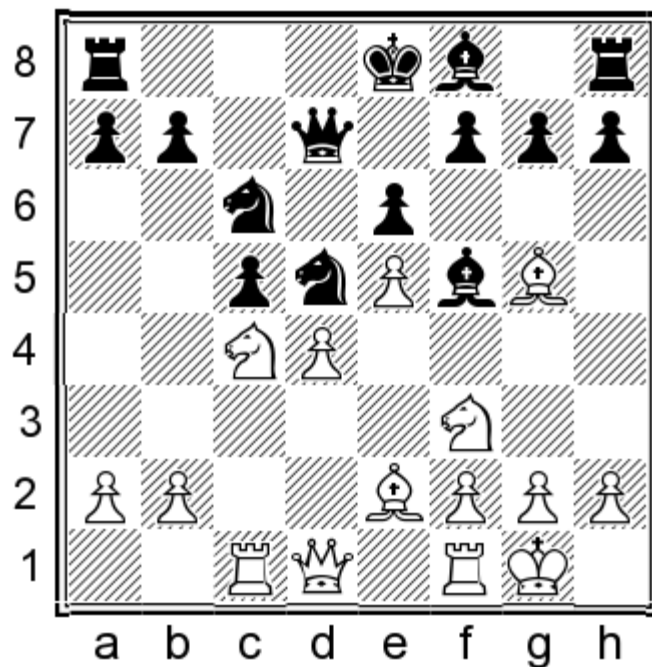
10... ♗d7

It would be rather difficult to suggest to Black anything better.

His king has not castled yet, so the opening of the central files is obviously unacceptable to him – 10... f6?!, for example: 11. exf6 (It is also very good for White to continue here with 11. ♘e3 ♘e4, Gross – Schandorff, Germany 2006, 12. ♖b3!?±; 11... ♞xe3 12. fxe3↑; 12. ♞xe3 ♘e4 13. d5 exd5 14. exf6 gxf6 15. ♞h4±) 11... gxf6 12. ♘e3 ♞xe3 13. ♞xe3 ♘e4 14. ♘b5 ♞f7 15. d5!/? exd5 16. ♞h4↑

It would be rather careless for Black to choose 10... ♖c7?! in view of 11. ♞c1 and his queen would come under an X-ray with White's rook. 11... a6 (11... h6 12. ♘e3±) 12. dxc5!/? ♘xc5 13. ♞h4 ♘g6 14. ♘f3 ♖d7 15. ♘e3 ♞xe3 16. ♖xd7+ ♞xd7 17. ♞xe3 ♘xe3 18. ♘xc6+ bxc6 19. fxe3±

11. ♞c1!

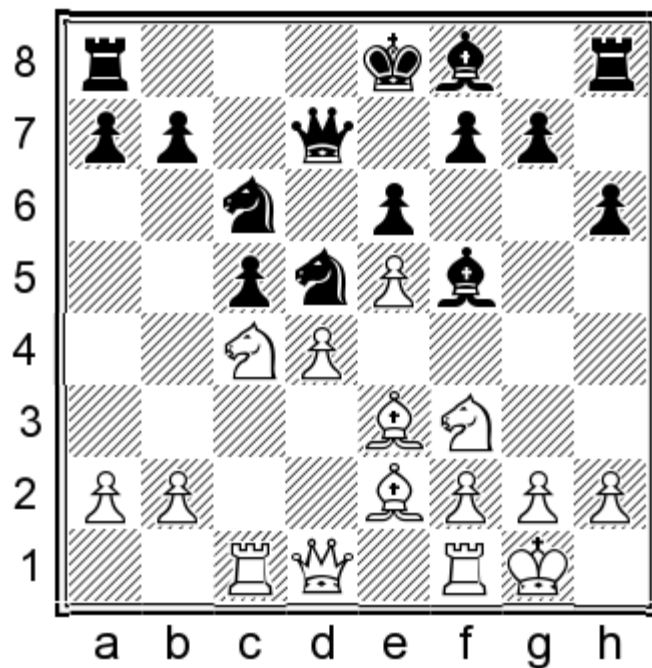


11...h6

11...♙g6 12.♘e3!? h6 13.♙h4 ♘f4 14.♙b5 a6 15.♙xc6 ♗xc6 16.dxc5 ♙d3 17.♖e1 g5 18.♙g3 0-0-0 19.♙xf4 gxf4 20.♘c2 ♙e4 21.♗e2±

Following 11...♙g4, White can develop his initiative with 12.♘e3! (It is also possible for him to play simply 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♗a4↑, or 13.a3!↑, with the idea b2-b4.) 12...♙xf3 (12...♘e3 13.fxe3, with the idea 13...cxd4?! 14.♘xd4 ♙xe2 15.♗xe2 ♘xd4 16.exd4 ♙e7 17.♙xe7 ♖xe7 18.♗f2+; 17...♗e7 18.♗b5+→) 13.♙xf3 ♘xd4 14.♙xd5 exd5 15.f4↑ Olivotto – Wunderlich, ICCF 2007.

12.♙e3

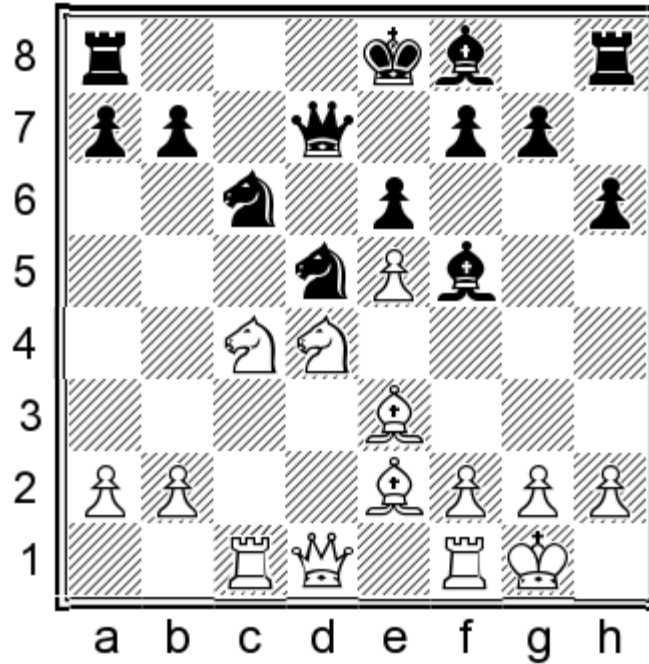


12...b5!

Black has fortified his position on the queenside and wishes to prevent the development of White's initiative there.

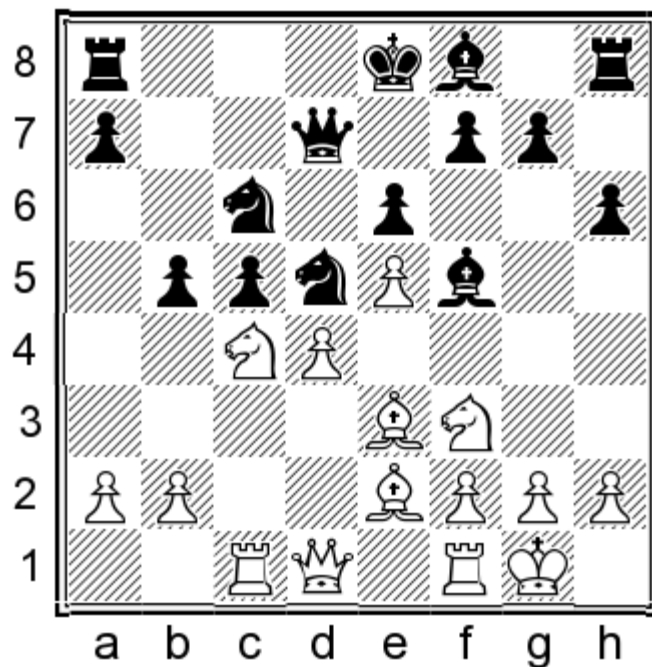
Black cannot harm his opponent with 12...♖xe3 13.♗xe3 ♕e4 (13...♗xd4? 14.♗xd4 cxd4 15.♗xf5 exf5 16.♚b3+-) 14.♗d2!? (14.dxc5±) 14...♗h7 15.d5 ♗xe5 (15...exd5 16.♗g4 ♚d8 17.e6±) 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.♚b3↑

12...cxd4 13.♗xd4



13...♗xd4 14.♗xd4 (14.♚xd4!? ♕e7 15.g4 ♗h7 16.♗d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 0-0 18.♗f4±) 14...♗f4 (14...♗e7, Bologan – Erenburg, Istanbul 2003, 15.♗e3!? ♗e4 16.♗f3 ♗xe3 17.♗xe3 ♚xd1 18.♗fxd1 ♗xf3 19.gxf3 ♗d8 20.♗g2±) 15.♗f3! ♗d3 (15...♗d3?! 16.♗e1 ♚xd4 17.♗e4 ♚d7 18.♗xf4 ♗e7 19.♗d6+-; 18...♗c8 19.♗d4 ♚xd4 20.♗d6±) 16.♚b3 ♗xc1 17.♗xc1 ♗e7 18.♚xb7 ♚xb7 19.♗xb7 ♗d8 20.♗c6+ ♗f8 21.♗xa7±

13...♗xe3 14.fxe3 ♗xd4 15.♚xd4! (15.exd4?! ♗d8? 16.♚b3 ♗e4 17.♗f4 ♗d5 18.♗cf1+-; 15...♗e7 16.d5 exd5 17.♗d6+ ♗xd6 18.exd6 0-0 19.♚xd5 ♗e6 20.♚d4 ♗ac8=) 15...♚xd4 16.exd4 ♗e7 (Following 16...♗e4, White has numerous attractive possibilities, but the best for him seems to be 17.♗a5!?, for example: 17...♗b4 18.♗b5+ ♗d8 19.♗xf7 ♗xa5 20.♗xg7! ♗c6 21.♗xc6 bxc6 22.♗xc6 ♗b6 23.♗d6+ ♗e8 24.♗xe6+ ♗f8 25.♗d7 ♗c8 26.♗f2±; 21...♗d2 22.♗c2 ♗e3+ 23.♗f1 bxc6 24.♗xc6±) 17.d5 (17.♗e3!? ♗g6 18.♗c7 ♗b8 19.♗b5+ ♗f8 20.♗e2 ♗d8 21.♗d7 ♗e8 22.♗b5 ♗f8 23.g3±) 17...0-0 (17...♗c5+ 18.♗h1 0-0 19.d6 f6 20.♗fd1±) 18.d6 ♗g5 19.♗c3 ♗ac8 20.♗f3± and in view of the powerful protected passed pawn on d6 White's prospects are clearly preferable.



13. ♖a3!

13. ♗d6+?! ♕xd6 14. exd6 c4 15. b3 0-0 16. bxc4 bxc4 17. ♕xc4 ♖xd6=

13...a6

13... ♗xe3 14. fxe3 a6 15. dxc5±

14. dxc5 ♕e7

14... ♕e4 15. ♗c2 ♗xe3 16. ♗xe3 ♕e7 17. a4 – see 14... ♕e7.

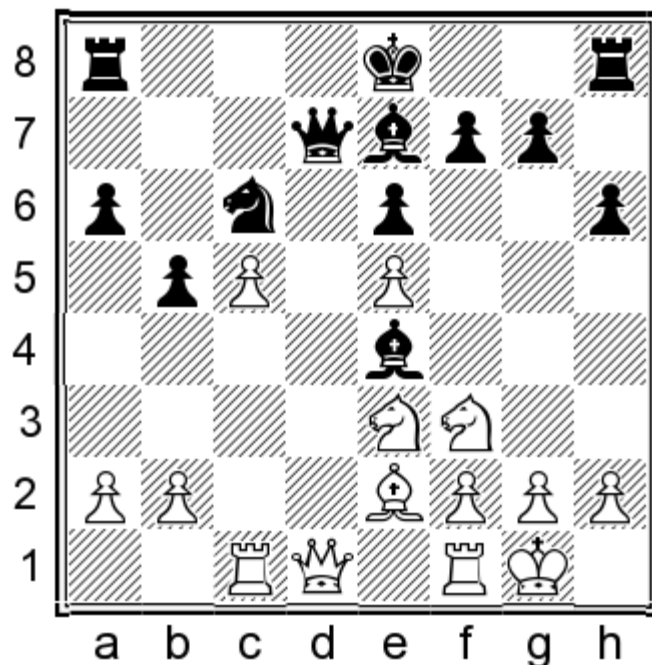
After 14... ♖d8?, Black's lag in development on the kingside may lead to his rapid demise. 15. ♗xb5! ♗xe3 16. fxe3 axb5 17. ♕xb5 ♕d3 18. ♕xd3 ♖xd3 19. ♖a4 ♖d7 20. ♖fd1+-

He would hardly facilitate his defence after the exchanges, which may be possible after 14... ♗xe3 15. ♖xd7+ ♔xd7 16. fxe3±

15. ♗c2 ♗xe3

15...0-0 16. ♗cd4±

16. ♗xe3 ♕e4



17.a4!

This undermining pawn-brake is played at the right moment and is the most practical decision for White.

It would be weaker for him to continue here with 17.a3 ♖c7 18.b4 (After the careless attempt 18.♔d3?! Gopal – Laznicka, Caleta 2012, 18...0-0-0! 19.♖c3 ♔b8, Black would seize the initiative. White would not achieve much with 18.♔d2 ♔h7! 19.♔f3 ♖d8) 18...0-0=

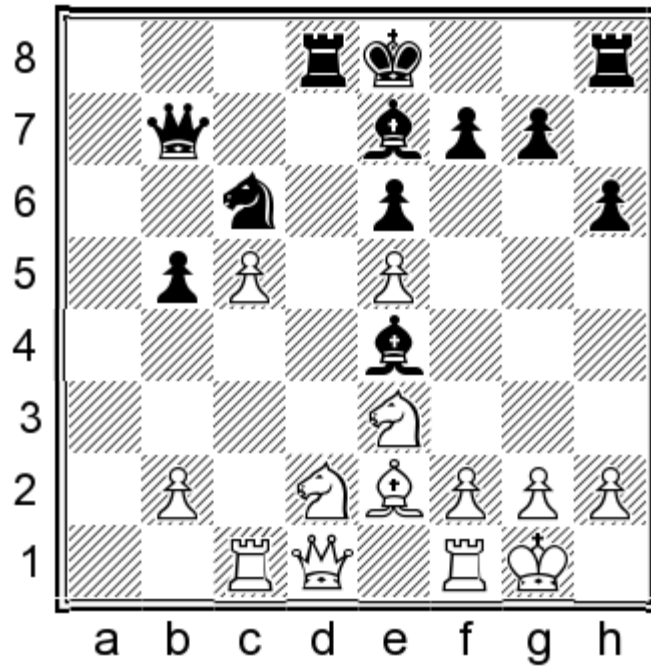
17...♗b7 18.♔d2!

It would be premature for White to go for exchanging pawn on the queenside with 18.axb5 axb5 19.♔d2 (19.♗b3, Motylev – Riazantsev, Poikovsky 2010, 19...0-0! 20.♗xb5 ♗xb5 21.♔xb5 ♔xf3 22.gxf3 ♔xe5 23.f4 ♔f3+ 24.♔g2 ♔d2! 25.♖fd1 ♔b3=) 19...♔g6 (19...♖d8 20.♔xe4) 20.♔f3 (20.♔b3 ♖d8 21.♗e1 ♔xe5 22.♔a5 ♗a6!∞; 22.♗c3 ♔f6 23.c6 ♗c7 24.♗a5 ♗xa5 25.♔xa5 ♔d3 26.♖fe1 ♔xe2 27.♖xe2 ♔d3 28.♖cc2 0-0 29.♖ed2 ♔b4 30.♖xd8 ♖xd8 31.♖c5 ♖c8 32.♖xb5 ♔xc6 33.♖c5 ♔a7= Bologan – Antoniewski, Germany 2012) 20...♖d8= 21.♔xc6?! ♗xc6∞ 22.♗f3?! ♗c7 23.♖fd1 0-0 ♖ Cheparinov – Bologan, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

18...♖d8

White will realise his plan easily after 18...♔g6 19.♔b3! ♖d8 20.♗e1 ♔xe5 21.♔a5!± – This is the reason why White had not exchanged the a-pawns in the first place. Now, Black does not have access to the a6-square with his queen.

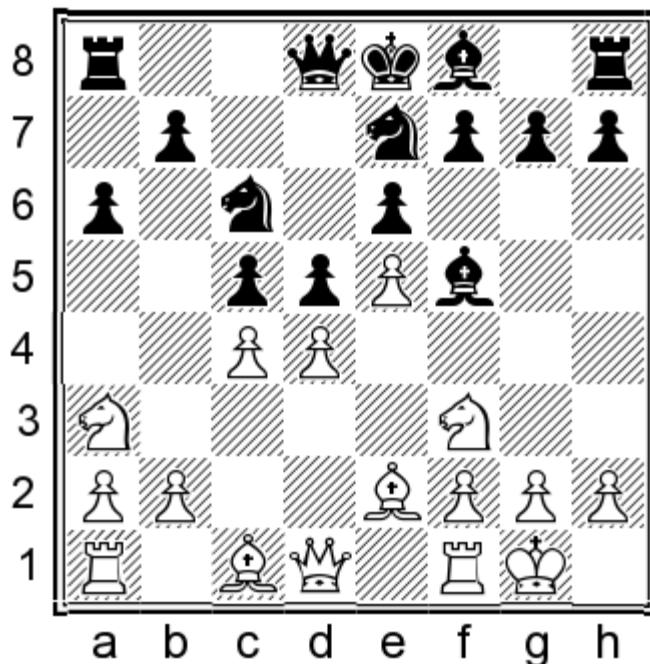
19.axb5 axb5



20. ♖xe4 ♜xd1 21. ♜fxd1 ♘xe5 (21...0-0 22. ♘d6↑) 22. c6 ♞c7 23. ♘c3! White is transferring his knight to the queenside and there it would help the advance of his passed pawn. (He should better refrain from 23. ♙xb5?! 0-0∞ So – Dziuba, Reykjavik 2013.) 23...0-0 24. ♘xb5 ♜b6 25. c7 ♜c8 26. ♞c2↑ The passed c7-pawn provides White with long-lasting initiative.

B2a2) 8...a6!

Black prevents the penetration of the enemy knight to the b5-square.



9.dxc5

White's alternatives do not create any real problems for Black.

He obtains effortlessly a good position following 9.♙e3 cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 ♘c6 12.cxd5 ♖xd5 13.♙c3 ♙xa3 14.bxa3 0-0= Karjakin – Ponomariov, Moscow 2008.

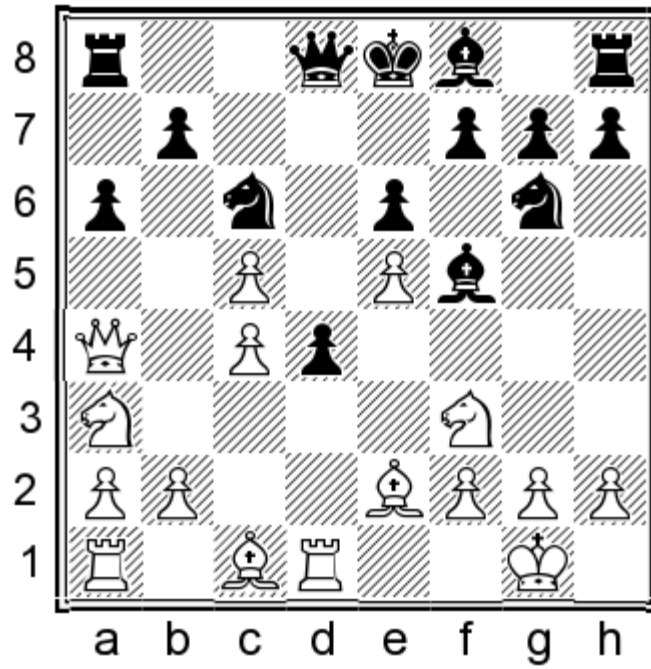
Black should not be afraid of 9.♗a4 dxc4 10.dxc5 ♘d5 11.♙g5 (11.♖xc4 ♖a5=) 11...♗d7 12.♖xc4 ♘a5! 13.♗d4 ♘c6=

9...d4 10.♗a4 ♘g6

About 10...d3 11.♞d1 ♘g6 12.♙e3 – see 11...d3.

11.♞d1

The complications are favourable for Black after 11.b4 ♙e7 12.♞d1 0-0 13.♙b2 ♘f4!? (It is also possible for him to try here the more aggressive line: 13...d3!? 14.♙xd3 ♙xd3 15.♗b3 ♘f4!?∞; after 15...a5!? 16.♞xd3 ♗b8, Volokitin – Ponomariov, Baile Herculane 2010, 17.♘b5 axb4 18.♘d6± White will hardly manage to achieve anything meaningful.) 14.♙f1 ♙e4∞



11...xc5!

It would be premature for Black to opt for 11...d3 12. e3! (12.b4 e7 13. xd3 xd3 14. b3 cxe5 15. xe5 xe5 16. b2 c7 17. xe5 xe5 18. xd3 0-0 19. c2 a5 Naiditsch – Leko, Dortmund 2012) 12...d7! (12...e7 13. c2 0-0 14. xd3 xd3 15. ce1 cxe5 16. xe5 xe5 17. xd3 xd3 18. a3 c8 19. xd3 b6 20. b4 bxc5 21. xc5± Zhigalko – Bologan, Olginka 2011) 13.b4! d8! (13...cxe5? 14. xd7+ xd7 15. e1±; 13...dxe5 14.b5↑; 13...e7?! Edouard – Riazantsev, Mulhouse 2011, 14. xd3! xd3 15. e1 dxe5 16.b5! d4 17. xd3 xd3 18. xd4 xd4 19. bxa6+ d7 20. xd7+ xd7 21. xd3+ c6 22. axb7± – The arising endgame is without any good prospects for Black.) 14.b5 cxe5 15. xe5 xe5 16.f4 dg4 (16...axb5? 17.cxb5 c8 18.fxe5 xc5 19.b6+ e7 20. f4 xa3 21. g4 xg4 22. dc1+; 20...xe3+ 21. xe3 dxe2 22. d6+–) 17. xg4 (The position is not so clear after 17. xd3 xd3 18. xg4 f5 19. f3 f7 20.c6 bxc6 21.bxc6 c7∞) 17...xg4 18.c6 bxc6 19.bxc6 c7 20. db1 c8 21.h3 e2 22. xa6 xc6 23. b6 d7 24. f2±

12.b4

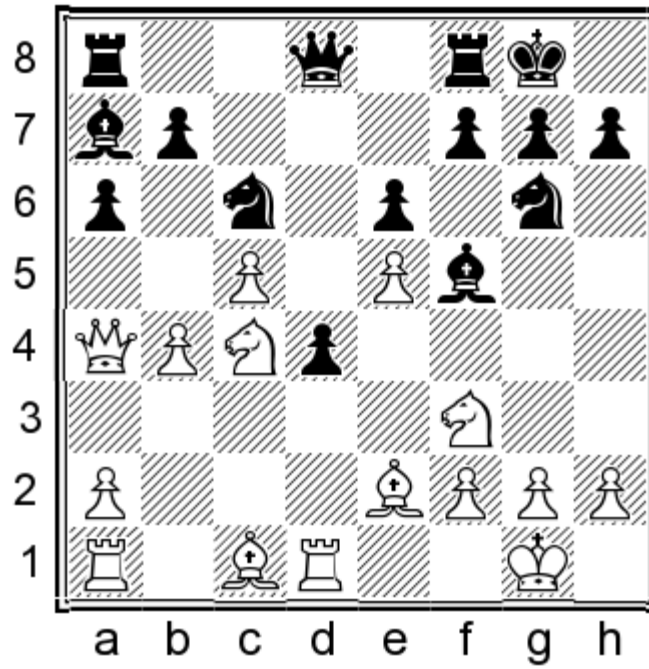
Black has succeeded in completing the development of his kingside, but his set-up obviously lacks harmony.

12...a7

Now, for example, White's pawn is untouchable 12...xb4, in view of 13.g4!±, for example: 13...b5 (13...xg4 14. xd4+; 13...xa3 14. xa3 f4 15. f1 xg4 16. xd4 xf3 17. xd8+ xd8 18. b3 d4 19. e3 g5 20. d6+–) 14.cxb5 axb5 15. xb5 e4 16. xd4 a5 17. dxc6 xd1 18. xd1 xb5 19. dxb5 xc6 20. e3! xe5 21. b1 e7 22. a7 0-0 23. dxc6 dxc6 24.a4± White's passed a-pawn and his two-bishop advantage provide him with a considerable advantage in the endgame.

13.c5 0-0 14. d4

It would be rather careless for him to continue here with 14. e3? due to 14...e8



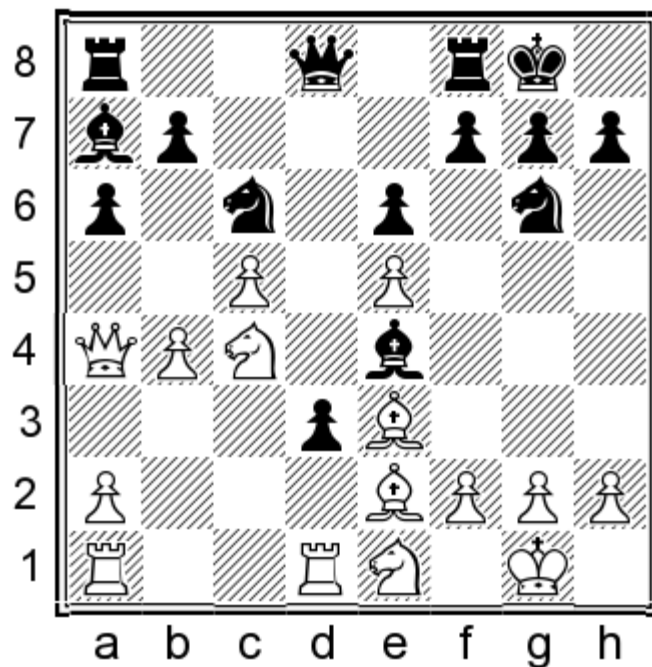
14...♙e4

After 14...d3, White can develop his initiative with the help of the move 15.♙g5!, for example: 15...♖d5 (Black's less energetic move 15...♗c7 would enable White to achieve an even greater advantage, for example: 16.♙xd3 ♙xd3 17.♖xd3 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 ♙xc5 20.♗xa8 ♖xa8 21.♖xa8+ ♙f8 22.h4 h5 23.b5 ♖b4 24.♖d4 ♖d5 25.♖e3±, or 17...♖gxe5 18.♖fxe5 ♖xe5 19.♙f4 ♗c6 20.♗xc6 ♖xc6 21.a3±) 16.♖e3 ♗e4 17.♙xd3 ♗xb4 18.♗xb4 ♖xb4 19.♙xf5 exf5 20.h4↑ h6 21.h5 hxg5 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.♖xg5 ♖fe8 24.♖d5 ♖xd5 25.♖xd5 ♖ad8 26.♖ad1 ♖xd5 27.♖xd5 ♖c8 28.♖d7 ♙xc5 29.♖f1 b5 30.♖e6 ♙f8 31.♖c7!± White can regain his pawn at any moment. In fact, he will have symbolically an extra pawn, since Black has doubled pawns on the g-file. White can also delay this operation and bring his king closer to the focus of the fight. It becomes obvious that he will either win the game, or Black may save the draw, but after a laborious defence.

15.♙e3

Black's task is easier after 15.♖d6 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 ♖gxe5 17.♙e4, White has doubtlessly compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but hardly more than that. 17...♗h4! (17...♗e7 18.g3±; 17...f5 18.♙xc6 ♖xc6 19.♙b2 ♗e7 20.♙xd4 ♖ad8 21.♙c3 ♙b8 22.b5 axb5 23.♗xb5± Nilsson – Josefsson, ICCF 2009) 18.g3 ♗h3 19.♙g2 (It is more or less the same following 19.♖d2 ♗h5 20.♙b2 ♖f3+.) 19...♗h5 20.♙b2 ♖f3+ 21.♙xf3 ♗xf3 22.♙xd4 b5 23.cxb6 ♖xd4 24.♖xd4 ♙xb6 25.♖d2 ♖fd8=

15...d3 16.♖e1



16...♔d5!?N

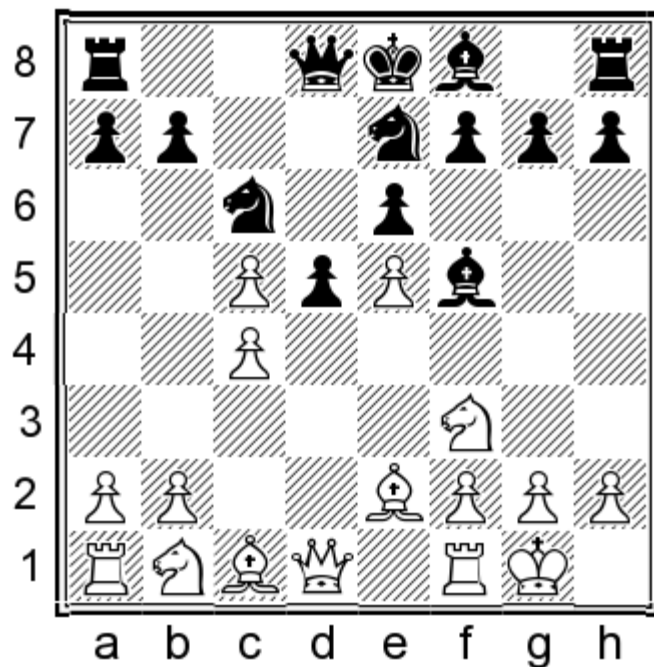
This move requires further practical tests.

Black cannot solve his problems with 16...♖gxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♗xd3, with the idea 18...♗xd3 19.♔xd3 ♔xd3 20.♖b3 ♖f6 21.♖xd3 ♖ad8 22.♖e4 ♖d5 23.♖ac1 ♖fd8 24.♖xd5 exd5 (24...♖xd5? 25.c6!+–) 25.♖d4±

16...♖d5 17.♗d6 ♗gxe5 18.♗xe4 ♖xe4 19.♗xd3± White has a clear advantage thanks to his extra space and the pawn-majority on the queenside, supported by his two powerful bishops, Leko – Roiz, Ningbo 2011.

17.♔xd3 ♖h4 18.g3 ♖g4 19.f3 ♔xf3 20.♗xf3 ♖xf3 21.♖f1 ♖g4 22.♖ae1 ♗cxe5 (22...♖ad8 23.♔e2 ♖e4 24.♖b3 ♗cxe5 25.♔g5 ♖d7 26.♔c1↑ and White's initiative compensates his sacrificed pawn.) 23.♗xe5 ♗xe5 24.♖f4 ♖h5 25.♔e4 ♖ad8 26.♖c2 f5 27.♔xb7 ♗d3 28.♖ef1 ♗xf4 29.♔xf4↑ White's pawn-majority on the queenside, his two powerful bishops and his more actively placed pieces compensate with an interest the sacrificed exchange.

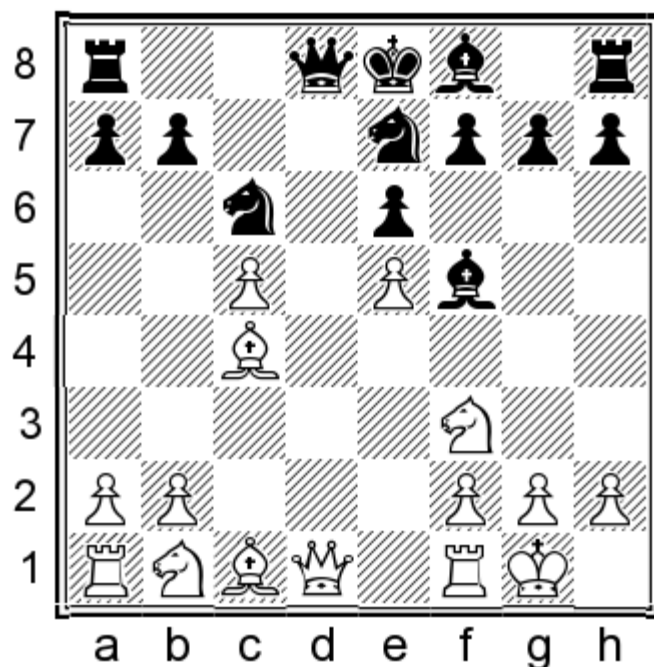
B2b) 8.dxc5



8...d4!?

Black is not in a hurry to regain his sacrificed pawn and restricts the mobility of the enemy pieces, threatening in the process to trap White's bishop with the move d4-d3.

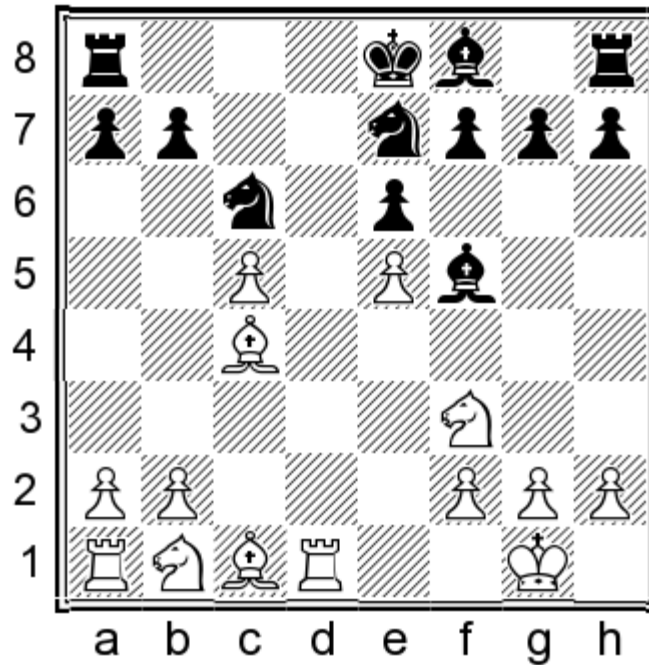
Black could have also chosen the standard approach 8...dxc4!? 9.♙xc4 (9.♚a4?! ♘d5 10.♘d4 ♙d3 11.♙xd3 cxd3 12.♘xc6 ♚d7 13.♘d2 ♙xc5 14.♘e4 ♙e7 15.♞d1 ♞c8 16.♞xd3 ♚xc6 17.♚xc6+ ♞xc6 ♞f6 Frolyanov – Leko, Loo 2014; 9.♘a3 ♘d5 10.♙g5 ♚d7 11.♘xc4 ♙xc5=; 10.♘c4 ♙xc5 11.♙g5 ♚c7 12.a3, Koivisto – Maki Uuro, Salokangas 1996, 12...0-0=; 11...♚d7!?).



9...♙g4 10.♘bd2 ♘g6 (10...♘xe5? 11.♚a4+ ♘5c6 12.b4+-) 11.♚b3 ♙xf3 (11...♚c7? 12.♘e4 ♙xf3 13.♘d6+-) 12.♘xf3 ♚c7 13.♙e3 ♙e7 (13...♘gxe5? 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♙f4 ♙xc5 16.♞ac1 0-0 17.♙e2+-) 14.♙b5 0-0 15.♙xc6±

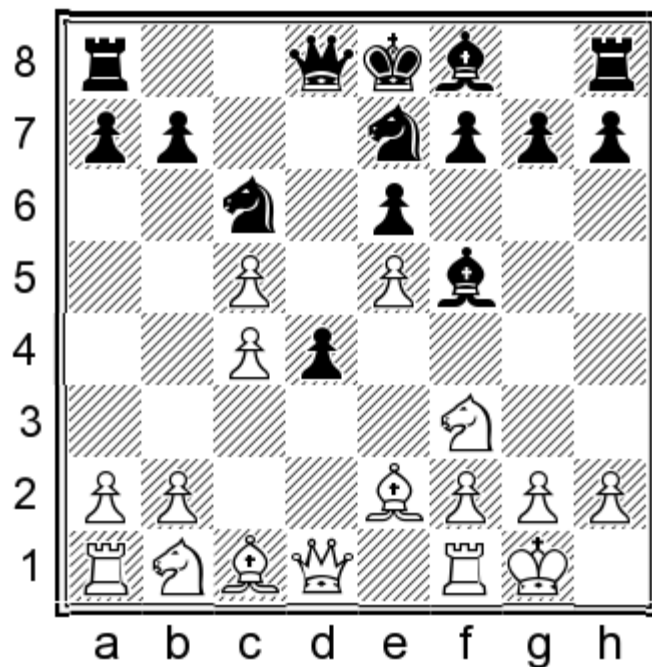
9...♖g6 10.♙e3 ♗g4 11.♜xd8+ ♞xd8 12.♜bd2 ♜gxe5 13.♜xe5 ♜xe5 14.♙b5+ ♜c6, Kaminski – Volzhin, Wisla 1998, 15.♜b3!?±, with the idea ♜b3-a5.

9...♜xd1 10.♞xd1



It would be rather slow for Black to choose here 10...♗g4?! in view of 11.♜c3!. White is planning to create immediate threats with the help of the move ♜c3-b5. 11...♞d8. Black wishes to facilitate his defence by trading pieces. (White realises his plans following 11...♙xf3 12.gxf3, for example: 12...♜xe5? 13.♜b5!+-; 12...♜g6 13.♜b5!+-; 12...♜f5 13.♜b5! ♞c8 14.b4±, with the idea 14...♜xb4 15.♜xa7 ♞xc5 16.♙b5+ ♜c6 17.♞b1+-) 12.♞xd8+ ♜xd8 13.♜g5 ♜xe5 14.♙f4 (White needs to be on the alert; otherwise, he may lose his advantage altogether after 14.f4? ♜xc4 15.♜xf7+ ♜e8 16.♜xh8 ♜c6, or 14.♙f1?! ♜d5 15.♜xd5 exd5 16.♙f4 h6 17.♙xe5 hxg5 18.♞c1± Svidler – Yermolinsky, Madrid 1998.) 14...♜7g6 15.♙xe5 ♜xe5 16.♞e1 h6 17.♜xe6+ ♙xe6 18.♙xe6±

10...♜g6 11.♙e3 a6! (11...♜gxe5 12.♜xe5 ♜xe5 13.♙b5+ ♜c6, Tochtermann – Davydov, Germany 1995, 14.f3!?) White restricts the mobility of the enemy light-squared bishop. 14...♙e7 15.♜a3±) 12.♙e2 (12.♜c3!? ♜gxe5 13.♜xe5 ♜xe5 14.♙e2 ♙e7 15.♞d2!?±, with the idea 15...♞d8 16.♞ad1± – White cuts off Black's king from the queenside. The arising complicated endgame is in favour of White thanks to his pawn-majority on the queenside.) 12...♜gxe5 13.♜xe5 ♜xe5 14.♜a3 ♙e7 15.♙f4 ♜c6 16.♙d6 ♙e4 17.♜c4 ♞d8 18.b3 ♙d5 19.♞ab1±



9. ♖b3!

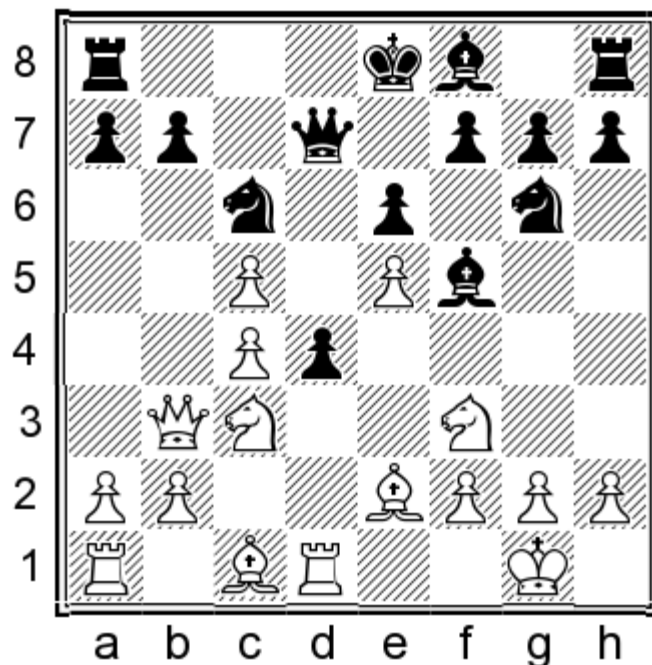
He would not achieve much with 9. ♖a4 ♘g6 (9...d3!?) 10. ♝d1 (10.b4 a5 11.b5, Hamdouchi – Karpov, Cap d’Agde 1998, 11...♗cxe5) 10...d3 11. ♗e3 ♗e7 12. ♗xd3 ♗xd3 13. ♖b3 ♘gxe5 14. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.f4 ♗xc4 16. ♝xd3 ♖a5 17. ♗d2 ♗xe3 18. ♖xb7 0-0 19. ♗b3 ♖a4 20. ♖xe7 ♗d5=

It is less principled for White to choose 9. ♗d3 ♗xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♗g6∞ – Black regains his pawn and the prospects for both sides are approximately equal in this complicated position, Bologan – Razuvaev, Reggio Emilia 1996.

9... ♖c7

Black defends his pawn on b7 and his queen attacks the enemy e5-pawn in the process.

Following 9... ♖d7, the queen would have come under an X-ray with the enemy rook 10. ♝d1 and would be misplaced and less active 10... ♗g6 11. ♗c3



11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♘d5! ♔f7 (13...0-0-0 14.♘xd4 exd5 15.♘xc6 ♖xc6 16.cxd5 ♖xc5 17.♙e3 ♗b4 18.♙a7±) 14.g4 ♙xg4 15.♘g5+ fxg5 16.♙xg4± Vachier Lagrave – Ding Liren, Wijk aan Zee 2015.

White will make use of the pin on the e-file after 11...♘gxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5, Timman – Brunello, Wijk aan Zee 2014, 13.♘b5 ♙xc5 14.♖g3 f6 15.♙e3 ♘c6 16.b4 ♙xb4 17.♙xd4±

11...♙xc5 12.♖b5 b6 13.♘a4 ♘cxe5 (13...♘b4? 14.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 15.a3 ♘c6 16.b4 ♙c2 17.♘xc5+ bxc5 18.♞d2± B.Bok – E.Ronka, Pune 2014) 14.♖xd7+ (14.♘xc5!? ♖xb5 15.cxb5 bxc5 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♙f4 f6 18.♞ac1±) 14...♘xd7 15.♘xd4 ♙xd4 16.♞xd4 e5 17.♞d2 (17.♞d5!?) 17...♘f4 18.♙f1± White's two-bishop advantage provides him with better prospects in this complicated endgame, Nijboer – L'Ami, Boxtel 2011.

Black's attempt to complete as quickly as possible the development of his kingside with the move 9...♘g6 would lead to material losses for him. 10.♖xb7 ♖c8 (The careless move 10...♞c8?! will be countered by White with 11.♙d1!, with the idea ♙d1-a4. 11...♞c7 12.♖a6 ♖c8, Karjakin – Grischuk, Beijing 2011, 13.♖xc8+ ♞xc8 14.b4±) 11.♖xc8+ ♞xc8 12.a3!?, with the idea b2-b4. (It is also attractive for White to try here 12.♘bd2!?, planning ♘d2-b3. 12...♙xc5 13.♘b3 d3 14.♙d1 ♙b6 15.♞e1 0-0 16.♙d2± Shirov – Yevseev, Jurmala 2013.) 12...a5 13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 ♘xb4 15.♘xd4 ♙xc5 16.♘xf5 exf5 17.♞a5 0-0 18.♞d1± Kosteniuk – Bulmaga, Astana 2013 (Or 18.g3!?, with the idea 18...♘xe5 19.♙a3 ♘bd3 20.♞d1±).

10.♘a3

It would not be so effective for White to continue here with 10.♞d1, because Black's queen has already abandoned the d-file. 10...♞d8 11.♘a3 a6 12.♘c2 ♙xc2 13.♖xc2 ♘g6 14.a3 ♙xc5 15.b4 ♙a7 16.♙b2 ♘gxe5 17.♘xe5 ♖xe5 18.♙f3 0-0 19.c5 ♙b8 20.g3 ♖c7 21.♙xc6 ♖xc6 22.♙xd4 ♞d5= Hovhannisyanyan – Jakovenko, Legnica 2013.

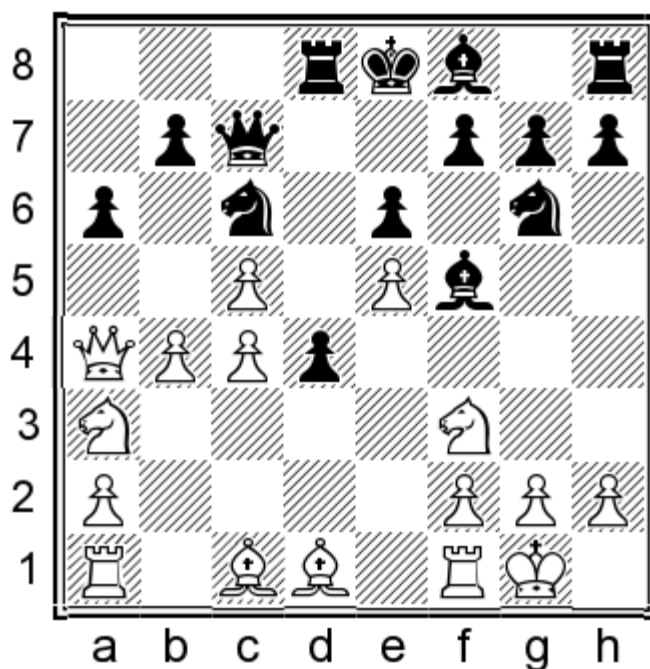
10...a6 11.♖a4 ♞d8

It would be too risky for Black to try here 11...0-0-0?! 12.b4 ♘g6 (12...♘xe5? 13.♘xe5 ♖xe5 14.♙f3, Shomoev – Maletin, Barnaul 2011) 13.♙g5 f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♙xf6 ♘f4 16.♙d1 ♞g8 17.g3±

12.b4 ♘g6 13.♙d1

The move 13.♙b2!? would require extensive practical tests, for example: 13...♘f4 (13...d3 14.♙d1 ♞d7 15.♞e1±

Volokitin – Parligras, Warszawa 2013) 14.♖fe1 ♔g4 (14...♙e4!?) 15.b5 ♖a5 16.♗b3 ♙xc5 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.h3 d3 19.hxg4 ♗xe2+ 20.♔f1 h5 21.g5 h4 22.♞xe2 h3 23.gxh3 dxe2+ 24.♔g2!± ♞d1 25.♗c2 ♗b6 26.♗xb6 ♙xb6 27.♙c3 ♔e7 28.a3 ♞hd8 29.♗fe1±



13...♞d7!

Black will hardly be happy with the results of the line: 13...♙e7 14.b5 axb5 15.♗xb5 ♖d7 16.♗d6+ ♙xd6 17.cxd6 ♗gxe5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.c5± White's powerful pawn-tandem c5 and d6 will create numerous problems for his opponent.

14.♗c2!

The pin on the a4-e8 diagonal is very unpleasant for Black and White may try to gobble the enemy d4-pawn.

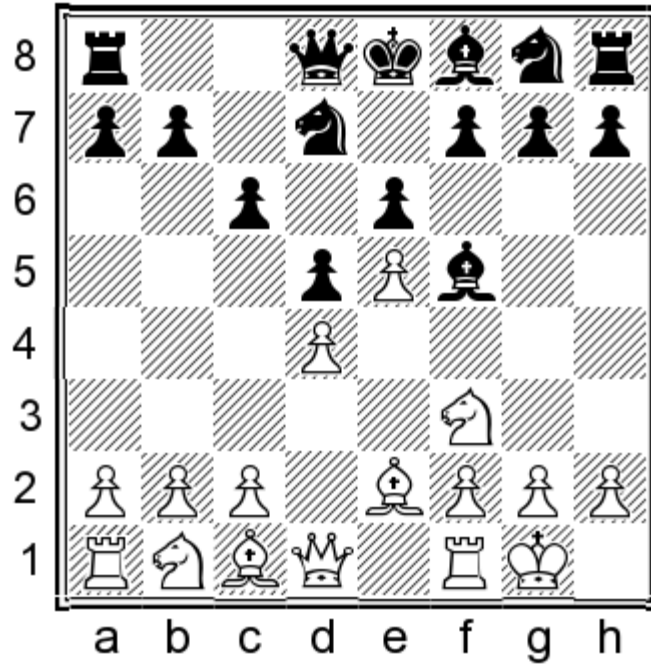
14...♙xc2 15.♙xc2 d3 16.♙d1 ♙e7

Black's situation would become really critical after 16...♗gxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 (17...♗xe5 18.♞b1±) 18.♙f4 g6 19.♙xe5 ♗xe5 20.♙f3 ♔e7 21.c6 bxc6 22.♙xc6 ♞d4 23.♗xa6 ♔f6 24.a3±

17.♙b2 0-0 18.♞b1 ♞fd8 (He would not solve his problems with 18...a5 19.a3±, or 19.b5!? ♗b4 20.a3 ♗c2 21.c6 bxc6 22.bxc6 ♞dd8 23.♙xc2 dxc2 24.♞bc1±) **19.♞e1 ♗h4 20.♗xh4 ♙xh4 21.♞e4 ♙e7 22.♙c3 ♗d4 23.♞b2±** White has managed to preserve his extra pawn and Black's compensation for it is evidently insufficient. **23...g6** (23...a5, Andreikin – Parligras, Warszawa 2013, 24.♗xa5! ♗xa5 25.bxa5 ♙xc5 26.♔f1 ♗c6 27.♙d2±) **24.♞d2** (24.g3!?±) **24...b6 25.♗xa6 bxc5 26.b5 ♗b8 27.b6 ♗b7** (27...♙g5 28.♞b2±) **28.♗xb7 ♞xb7 29.♞b2 ♞db8 30.♙xd4 cxd4 31.♞xd4 ♞xb6 32.♞xb6 ♞xb6 33.♙b3±** Grischuk – Lupulescu, Warsaw 2013.

Chapter 6

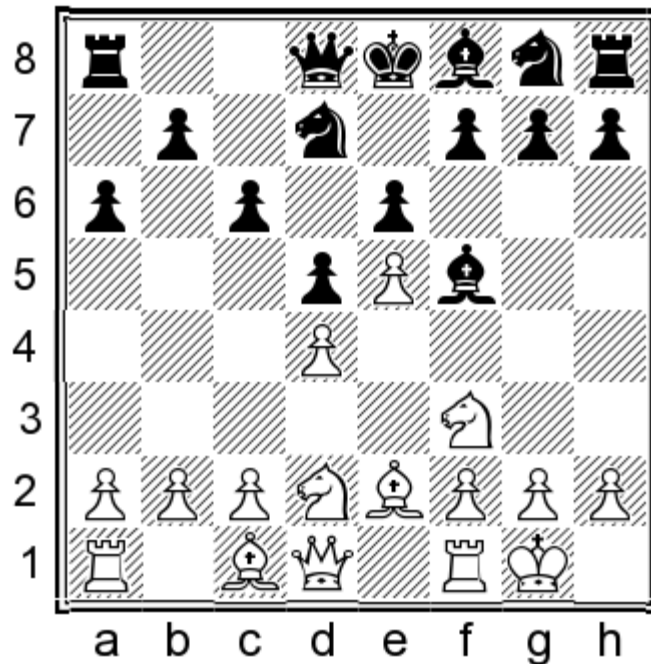
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♟e2 ♞d7 6.0-0



We will analyse: A) 6...♟g6 and B) 6...♞e7.

About 6...f6 7.c4! – see Svidler – Jobava, Tbilisi 2015 (game 7).

The move order 6...a6 7.♞bd2 does not lead to original positions.



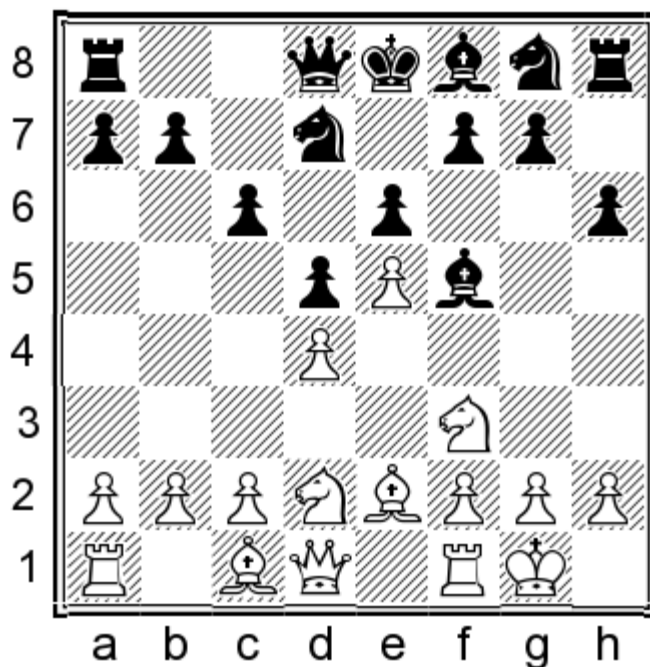
About 7...♟g6 8.c4 – see variation A.

7...c5 8.c4 ♖e7 9.dxc5 – see **B3c**.

7...♗e7 8.♗b3 – see variation **B**, 7...a6 8.♗b3.

7...h6 8.♗b3 ♖e7 9.♔d2 – see Chapter 7, 8...a6 9.♔d2.

After 6...h6, following 7.♗bd2, most often there arises transposition to variations from Chapter 7.



About 7...♗e7 8.♗b3 – see Chapter 7.

7...♔h7 8.♗b3 ♖e7 9.♔d2 – see Chapter 7, variation **C**.

7...g5 8.♗b3 g4?! (8...♗e7 9.♗e1 – see Chapter 7; 8...♖c7 9.♔d2 ♖e7 10.♖c1 - see Chapter 7, 8...♖c7) 9.♗e1 h5 10.♗d3± Morrow – Cimins, ICCF 2009.

Black should better avoid 7...c5?!, in view of 8.c4! ♖e7 9.dxc5 ♗xc5, Nijboer – Schoolenberg, Netherlands 2011, 10.♗d4 ♔g6 11.♗2b3 ♗d7 12.f4± He will hardly manage to complete his development.

He has tried in practice sometimes 6...♖c8, but this move does not impede White's plans and he can counter it with the standard reply 7.♗bd2. Meanwhile, he has another possibility – 7.b3, acquiring additional space and creating tension in the centre with the help of the move c2-c4. 7...h6 (7...c5 8.c4 dxc4 9.bxc4±; 9.d5!?, with the idea 9...cxb3 10.axb3 a6 11.d6!±) 8.c4 ♔b4 9.♔a3!? ♖a5 10.♔b2 ♖d8 11.♗a3 ♖e7 12.♗c2 ♔xc2 13.♖xc2± Shirov – Kamsky, Bazna 2009.

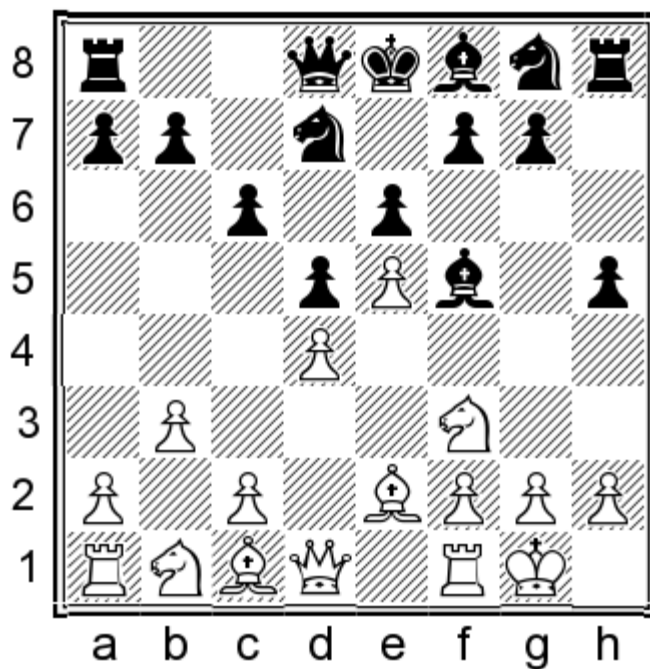
6...♗h6 7.♗bd2 ♔e7 (7...♔g6 8.♗b3 – see variation **A**.) 8.♗b3 0-0 (8...♔g6 9.a4 – see variation **A**) 9.a4 c5 (9...♔g6 10.a5 – see variation **A**) 10.c4 (10.♗xc5!? ♗xc5 11.dxc5 ♔xc5, Alekseenko – Pantsulaia, Yerevan 2014, 12.c3!? ♖c8 13.♔xh6 gxh6 14.♖d2 ♗g7 15.♗d4±) 10...dxc4 11.♔xc4 ♗b6 12.♔e2 cxd4 13.♗fxd4 ♔g6 14.♔f3±

6...♔e7?! 7.c4± (7.b3!?) 7...dxc4 8.♔xc4 ♗b6 9.♔b3 ♔g6 10.♗c3 ♗h6 11.♔xh6 gxh6 12.♖d2±

It would be a futile loss of time for Black to play 6...♖b6?!, because his queen is better placed on the d8-square. On this square his queen may come under attack (after c2-c4) and he has also lost his control over the h4-square. 7.b3!? (7.♗h4!?!; 7.c4!? ♖e7 8.♗c3↑) 7...c5 8.c4↑

6...♖c7?! Black loses his control over the h4-square and White exploits this immediately. 7.♗h4 ♖e7 (7...♔g6 8.♗xg6 hxg6 9.♗d2 ♖e7 10.♗f3±) 8.♗xf5 (8.g4!? ♔g6 9.f4 ♔e4 10.♗c3↑) 8...♗xf5 9.c3± – He has obtained the two-bishop advantage.

6...h5?! This move creates a dangerous weakening of Black's kingside and that might be very precarious for him in the future. 7.b3!?, with the idea c2-c4.

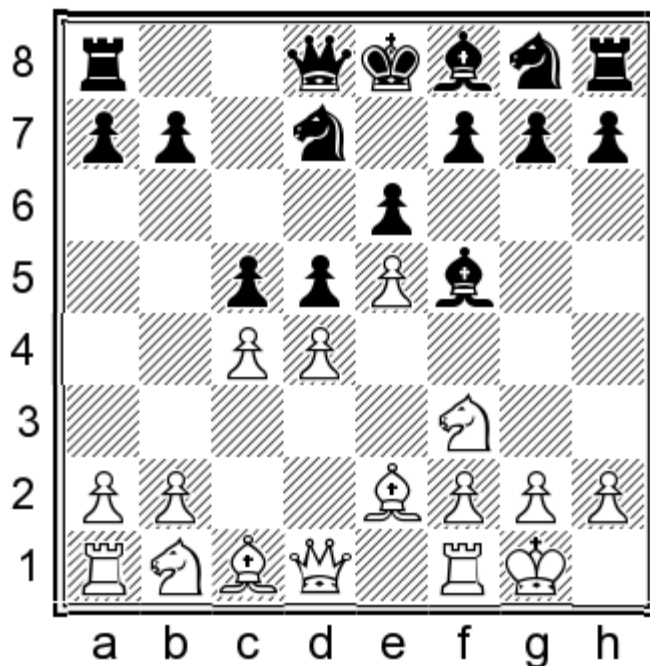


7...d6 8.c4±;

7...d6 8.c4 d6g6 9.d3 e7 10.d2± Now, in view of the weakening h7-h5, Black has problems with his castling kingside 10...0-0, and White will follow this with 11.d3 e4 12.d2±

7...e7 8.c4 d6h6 (8...g5 9.d3 g4 10.d1 f6 11.d3 d3 12.d3 f5 13.d4± Garcia Martinez – Campora, Coria del Rio 2001) 9.d3 a6, Volokitin – Gjorgjieski, Struga 2014 (9...f6? 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.d4 g6 12.d5! exd5 13.e6 d6 14.d5+-) 10.d2!? White prevents radically the pawn-advance g7-g5. 10...0-0 11.h3±

Naturally, it would be very bad for Black to opt for 6...c5?!, since after 7.c4, he will hardly manage to control the situation in the centre.



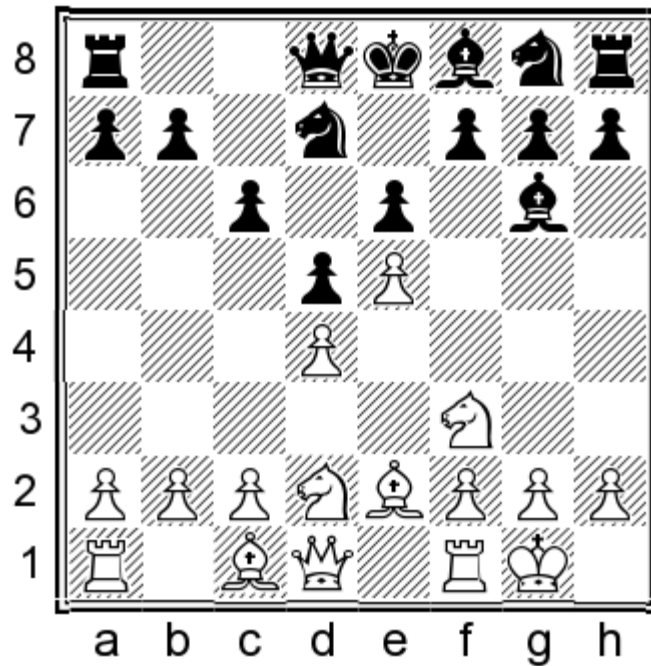
7...cxd4 8.cxd5+-

7...dxc4 8.d3 (8.d5!? d6e7 9.d3c3) 8...cxd4 (8...d6e7 9.d3g5±) 9.dxc4 d3 10.d3 d3 11.d3 d6 12.d8!?

(12. ♖b3!?±) 12... ♜xd8 13. ♘xb6 axb6 14. ♙e3 ♙c5 15. ♙xc5 bxc5 16. b4!?±

7... ♗e7 8. ♙g5 (It is also possible for White to try here 8. ♗c3, but the move 8. ♙g5 is a bit stronger.) 8... dxc4 9. ♗a3±

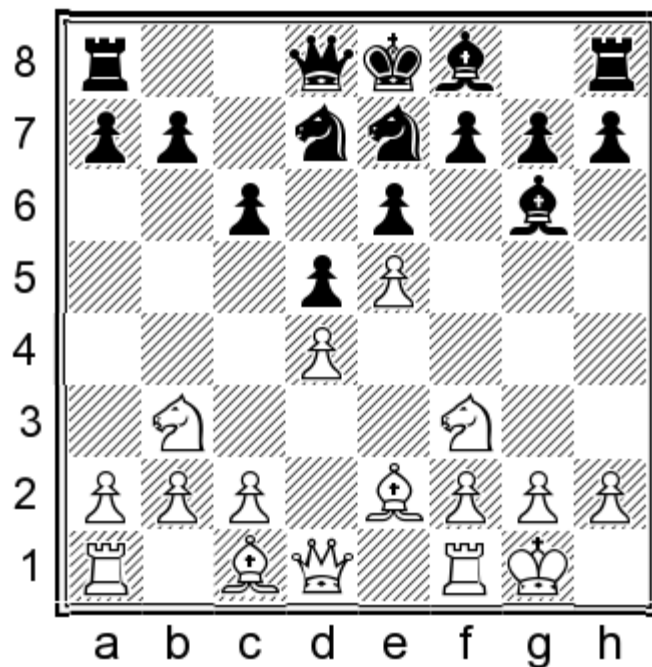
A) 6... ♙g6 7. ♗bd2



7... ♗h6

Following 7...a6, besides the usual move 8. ♗b3, White has an additional possibility 8.c4, with the idea 8...dxc4 9. ♗xc4 and after the exchange of the pawns and 9... ♗b6, it would be very good for White to continue with 10. ♙g5! ♖c7, Socko – Braun, Austria 2009, 11. ♗fd2±, while after the rather slow move 7...a6, Black will have great problems with the development of his kingside.

7... ♗e7 8. ♗b3



8...♘f5 9.♙d2 – see Chapter 4, variation **B**.

8...a6 9.♙d2 – see variation **B**, 7...a6 8.♘b3 ♙g6 9.♙d2.

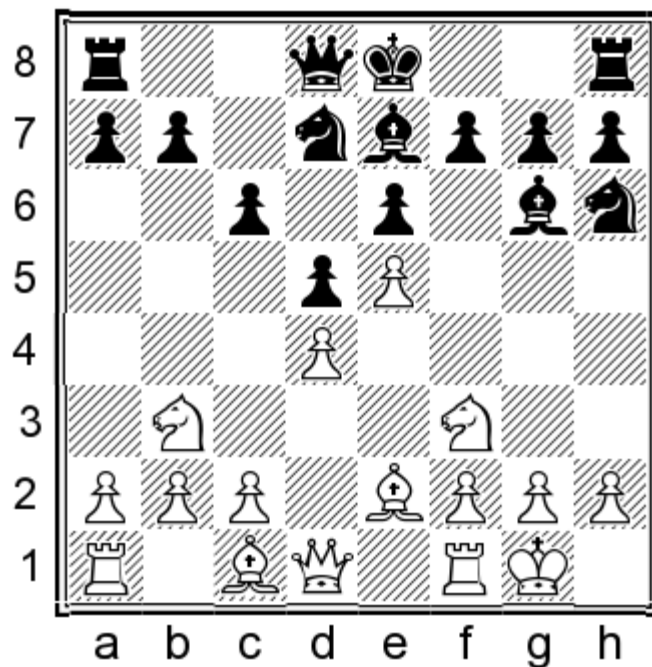
8...♖c7 9.♙d2 ♘f5 10.a4!? ♙e7 11.g4±

8...♘c8 9.a4 ♙e7 10.a5 a6 11.♙e3 ♘a7 12.c4!? dxc4 13.♘bd2 0-0 14.♘xc4 ♘b5 15.♖d2 ♖c7 16.b4!? ♗ad8 17.♗b2±
Lobzhanidze – Lafuente, Neckar 2010.

8.♘b3 ♙e7

About 8...♘f5 9.♙d2 – see Chapter 4, variation **B**.

Following 8...♖c8, the simplest reaction for White would be 9.♙xh6 gxh6 10.♖c1!? ♙g7 (10...b5 11.♘e1!?±, with the idea ♘e1-d3) 11.c4 dxc4 (11...0-0 12.♖e1↑, or 12.cxd5!? cxd5 13.♖xc8 ♖xc8 14.♖d2 ♖b8 15.♙b5 ♘b6 16.♘c5±) 12.♙xc4 0-0 13.♖e1±



9.a4!?

Naturally, White has numerous possibilities here, but it seems to me that the plan with the advance of his a-pawn is the most unpleasant for Black.

White should not be in a hurry to exchange his dark-squared bishop, despite the fact this operation compromises a bit Black's pawn-structure. In fact, White occupies additional space on the queenside. It is essential for him to control the b6-square, moreover that White's plans include the pawn-advance c2-c4. If Black's knight goes to the f5-square, then White can use the standard resource g2-g4, occupying space on the kingside in the process as well.

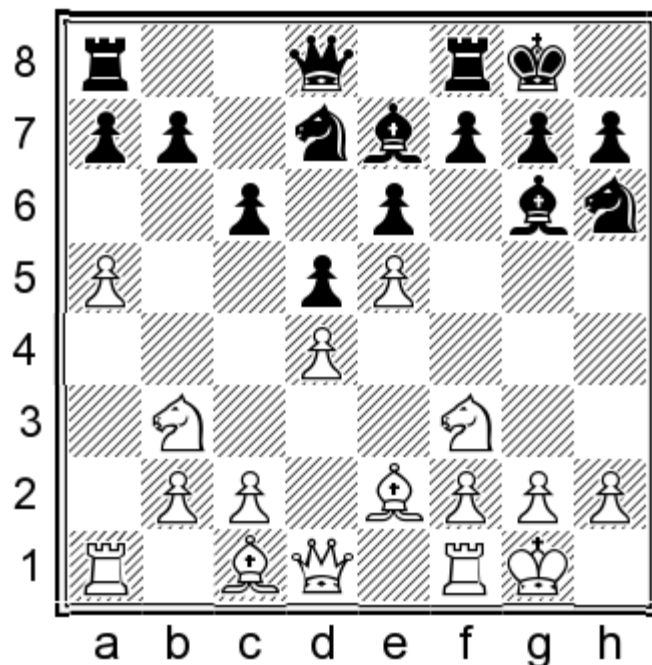
Here, it would not be so good for White to play the standard move 9.♔d2, because Black's knight is not on the f5-square, therefore, White cannot gain space with tempo, as usual, with the move g2-g4, 9...0-0∞, as well as 9.♔xh6 gxh6 10.♖d2 h5! Black is not in a hurry to castle kingside, keeping the possibility to castle queenside in some variations. (10...0-0 11.c3 ♘g7 12.♗c1 c5 13.♗d3 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖c8 15.♗ac1± Rublevsky – Panarin, Olginka 2011) 11.c3 (11.♔d3 ♖c7!) 11...♖c7 12.♗c1 0-0-0 13.♗d3 f6, Friedel – Chiang, Richardson 2013, 14.♗e3 ♗dg8∞

9...0-0

9...♗f5 10.g4. This is a standard move. If, after the possible exchange of the knights on h4, Black captures with his bishop, then, as a rule, this is in White's favour. 10...♗h6 (10...♗h4 11.♗xh4 ♔xh4 12.f4 f5 13.exf6 ♔xf6 14.g5 ♔e7 15.♔g4 ♔f5 16.♗e1↑ Shankland – Pakleza, Las Vegas 2014) 11.h3 ♗g8. Black's knight is doing nothing on the h6-square and he is preparing h7-h5. 12.♔d3!? ♖c7 13.♔e3 (13.♔xg6!? hxg6 14.♗g2±) 13...♔xd3 14.♖xd3 h5 15.g5± Grischuk – Dreev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.

The move 9...a5, may lead in the future to the weakening of the b5-square. 10.♔d2 0-0 (10...♗f5 11.c4!?↑; 11.g4 ♗h4 12.♗xh4 ♔xh4 13.f4 ♔e4 14.♔f3±) 11.c4 ♗f5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♔b5± Solodovnichenko – Alonso Rosell, Andorra 2012.

10.a5



10...♟f5

10...♞c8 11.♙xh6 gxh6 12.c4±

It would be too optimistic for Black to try here 10...c5, Sengupta – Mirzoev, Seville 2011, since this can be countered by White with the standard reaction 11.c4!, for example: 11...dxc4 (11...♟f5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.dxc5 ♟xc5 14.g4! ♟h6 15.♟fd4±) 12.♙xc4 cxd4 13.♙xh6 gxh6 14.♟bxd4±

Following 10...b5, it becomes reasonable for White to capture the enemy knight 11.♙xh6!?, since his opponents queenside is slightly weakened. (It would not be so effective for White to choose here 11.♟e1, Areshchenko – Sundararajan, Chennai 2011, 11...♟f5 12.♟d3 ♞c7∞, with the idea c6-c5 with counterplay.) 11...gxh6 12.♞d2, with the idea 12...♟g7 13.♟c1 f6 14.♟d3 ♙xd3 15.♞xd3 fxe5 16.dxe5 ♞b8 17.♟d4±

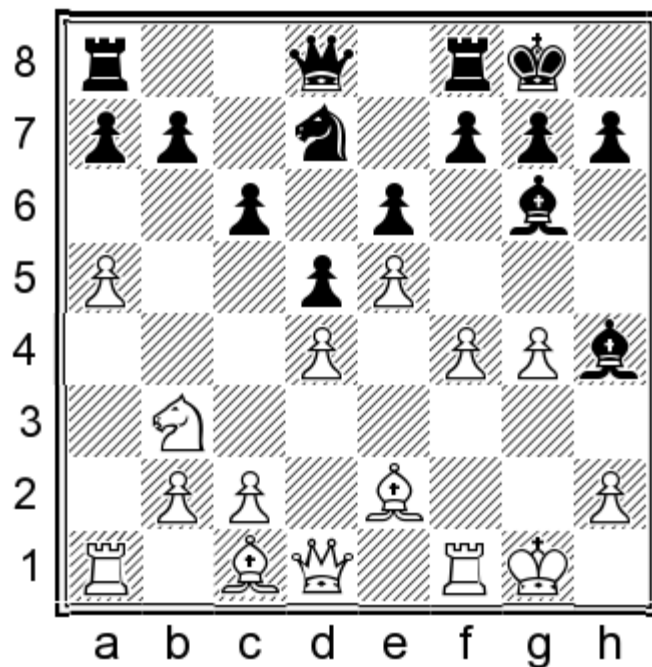
After 10...a6 11.c4 dxc4 (White maintains a slight but stable positional edge following 11...♟f5, Vachier Lagrave – Doettling, Haguenau 2013, 12.g4 ♟h4 13.♟xh4 ♙xh4 14.f4 f6 15.♙e3±, or 14...f5 15.g5 h6 16.gxh6 gxh6 17.♙e3±) 12.♙xc4 c5 (It would be premature for Black to try 12...♟f5, due to 13.g4, and his knight will have to retreat from the centre. 13...♟h4 14.♟xh4 ♙xh4 15.f4± Yang Kaiqi – Zhang Xiaopeng, Beijing 2012) 13.♞e2 ♟f5 14.♞d1 ♟xd4 (Black should better refrain from 14...♙h5?, in view of 15.d5!± and he would be beyond salvation. 15...exd5? 16.♞xd5 ♟h8 17.♞d3 ♙xf3 18.♞xd7+- Najer – A. Shabalov, USA 2014.) 15.♟bxd4 cxd4 16.♟xd4 ♟h8 17.♙e3 (It also seems promising for White to try the exchange operation 17.♟xe6 fxe6 18.♙xe6 ♙e8 19.♞g4 ♙c5 20.♙e3 ♙xe3 21.fxe3 ♞e7 22.♙xd7 ♞xe5 23.♞d4±) 17...♞c7 18.♞ac1± (with the idea 18...♞xe5? 19.♟f3+-). White's space advantage and his more actively deployed pieces provide him with superior prospects.

11.g4 ♟h4

11...♟h6 12.h3 c5. The opening of the position in the centre is advantageous for White in view of the misplacement of Black's knight on h6. 13.c4!± (13.♟xc5?! ♟xc5 14.dxc5 ♙xc5∞ Oleksienko – Laznicka, Legnica 2013) 13...dxc4 14.♙xc4 cxd4 15.♟bxd4 ♞c8 16.♞e2±

White continues with the standard operation – an exchange of pieces, followed by f2-f4.

12.♟xh4 ♙xh4 13.f4



13...f6

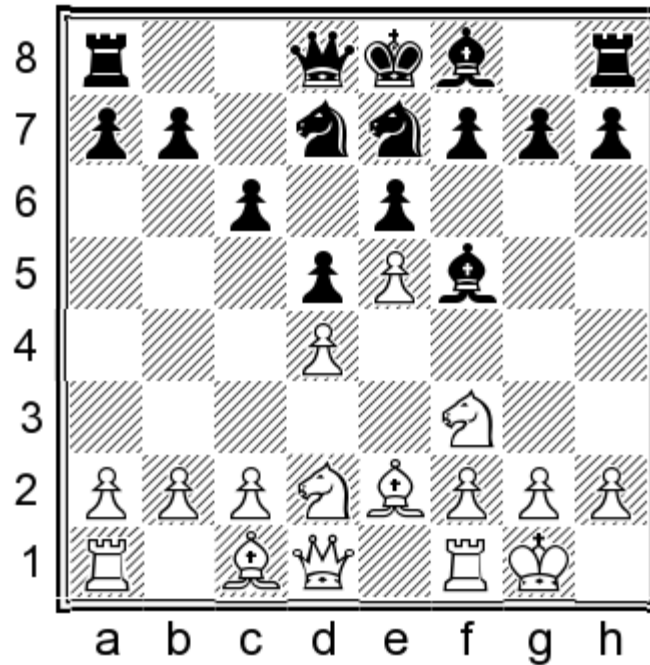
13...♙e4 14.♘d2 f5, Belenkaya – Andreeva, St Petersburg 2013, 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.c3±

13...h6, Das – Bullen, Glasgow 2014, 14.f5 ♙h7 15.♙d3↑

13...f5 14.g5 h6 15.gxh6 gxh6 16.♘h1 ♘h7 17.♙e3 (17.♞f3!? ♞g8 18.♞h3 ♙e7 19.♙e3 ♞c8 20.♗d2 c5 21.c3± Volokitin – Nanu, Plovdiv 2008) 17...♞g8 18.♞g1± ♖c7?! 19.♖f1 b6 20.♗h3+– Arakhamia-Grant – Keen, Hinckley 2014.

14.♙e3 (14.c4!? ♖e7 15.♙e3 ♞ac8 16.♞c1±) **14...♖e7** (14...fxe5 15.dxe5 ♙e7 16.c4 – 16.♖d2!?± – 16...♙e4 17.g5 ♞f7, Bodnaruk – Kharmunova, St Petersburg 2012, 18.♙h5 g6 19.♙g4 ♗f8 20.♗c5±) **15.exf6!? ♗xf6 16.♗d2**. White transfers his knight to the f3-square, after which Black's bishop on h4 may be in trouble. **16...h6** (16...♗e4 17.♗f3. Black was threatening g7-g5. 17...♗d6 18.g5 ♗f5 19.♖d2 ♞ae8 20.♗e5!?±) **17.♗f3±** – He cannot solve his problems, because his pawn-structure is inferior, moreover that White's space advantage is overwhelming, just like before, T.Kosintseva – Chiburdanidze, Jermuk 2010.

B) 6...♗e7 7.♘bd2



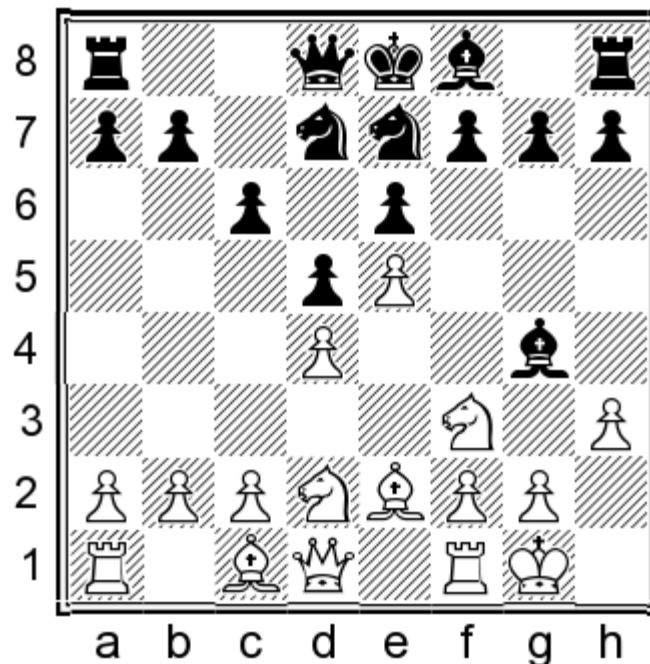
We will deal now with: **B1) 7...♗g6**, **B2) 7...♗c8** and **B3) 7...c5**.

7...h6 8.♘b3 – see Chapter 7.

7...♗g6 8.♘b3 – see variation A, 7...♗e7 8.♘b3.

Following 7...♗c7, besides the standard response 8.♘b3, White has the additional possibility 8.♘h4!?, for example:
 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♜xe5 10.♗b5! (10.c4?! ♗c2! 11.♗xc2 ♜xe2= Akopian – Jaracz, Aix-Les-Nains 2011) 10...♞d8 11.♘df3 ♗c7 12.b4±

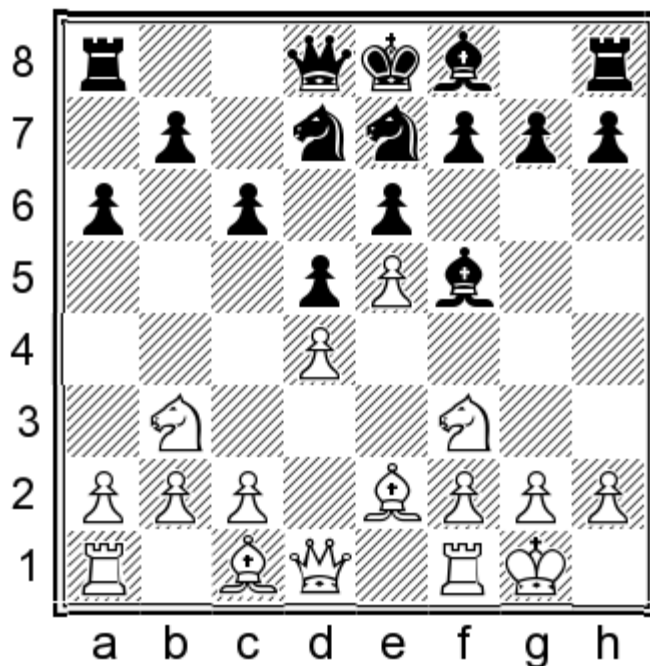
Black's attempt to free the f5-square with the help of the move 7...♗g4 is not to be recommended from the positional point of view. He cannot place his knight on f5 without parting with his light-squared bishop. 8.h3 (8.c3!?)±



8...♙xf3 9.♘xf3± White's advantage is based on his two powerful bishops. 9...c5 10.c4 cxd4 11.♙g5! (11.♖xd4!? ♘c6 12.♗f4 ♘b6 13.♞d1 ♗c7 14.b4±) 11...dxc4 12.♖xd4 ♘c6 13.♗xc4 ♙e7 14.♙f4 0-0 15.♞fd1 ♗c7 16.♞ac1 ♘b6 17.♗e4± Gashimov – Izeta Txabarri, San Sebastian 2011.

8...♙h5 9.c3!?, with the idea 9...c5 10.dxc5 ♘c6 and with the move 11.b4± White will fortify his pawn on c5 (9...♙g6 10.♘h4 ♘f5 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♘f3 ♙e7 13.a4± A.Zhigalko – Sanikidze, Plovdiv 2010).

After 7...a6 8.♘b3, Black will have to complete his development anyway.



About 8...♘g6 9.♙d2 – see variation **B1**.

8...♙g6 9.♙d2 ♘c8 (9...♘f5 10.♞c1 – see Chapter 4, variation **B**) 10.♘a5!? ♗c7 11.c4 b6 12.♘b3± Van den Heever – Klaasen, Windhoek 2014; 12.cxd5!?!±

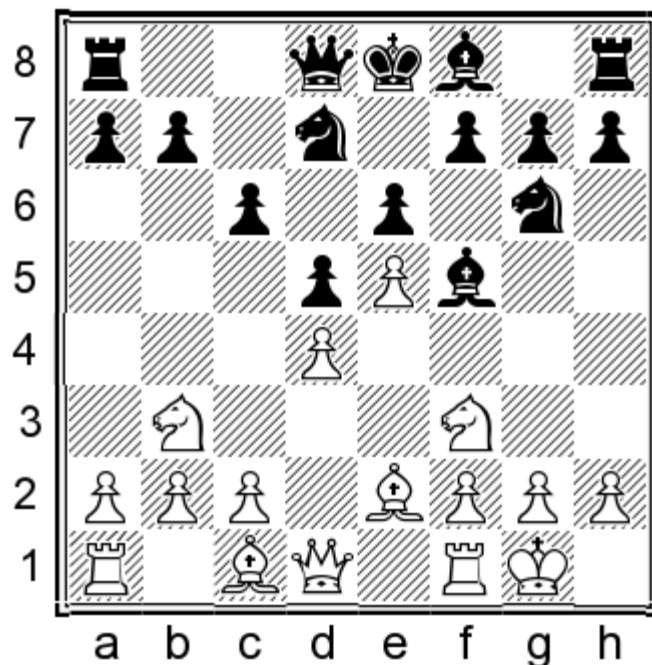
8...♗c7 9.♙d2 ♙g6 10.♞c1 b5 11.♙a5 ♗a7 12.♙b4 ♘c8 13.c3!? ♘cb6 14.♙xf8 ♗xf8 15.♘a5± Oleksienko – Norowitz, Reykjavik Open 2013.

8...♙g4 9.h3 ♙xf3 (9...♙h5 10.♙d2±) 10.♙xf3 ♞c8 11.♗e2!?!±, with the idea 11...c5 12.c4 dxc4 13.♘xc5 ♘xc5 14.dxc5 ♞xc5 15.♙xb7±

8...♘c8 9.♙d2 ♙e7, Praneeth – Deac, Pune 2014, 10.c4 dxc4 11.♘a5 ♗c7 12.♘xc4 0-0 13.♞c1 ♞d8 14.♙a5!? b6 15.♙d2 ♙g6 16.b4±

B1) 7...♘g6 8.♘b3

White's threat g2-g4 is an illusion after 8.♘e1, because Black can counter that with 8...♘f4 (8...h5!? 9.♙d3 ♙xd3 10.♘xd3 c5= Negi – Nigalidze, Baku 2012) 9.♙g4 (9.♙f3 h5 10.♘b3 g5∞) 9...♙xg4 10.♗xg4 ♘g6= Iordachescu – Shengelia, Dubai 2010.



8...♙g4

White maintains a stable advantage following 8...h5 9.♙e3 ♙e7, T.Kosintseva – Dzagnidze, Nalchik 2010, 10.♘fd2!? h4 11.f4±

8...a6 9.♙d2!? c5 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 (10...♘xc5 11.♘fd4±) 11.♘xc5 ♘xc5 12.♙b4!? ♚b6 13.c3 0-0 14.♘d4± Rublevsky – Nisipeanu, Foros 2007.

After 8...♙e7, White can choose between 9.♘e1!, threatening g2-g4. 9...h5 (The move 9...♘gf8 looks completely senseless for Black, since he needs to castle and not to place his knight on the f8-square. 10.g4 ♙g6 11.f4 ♙e4 12.♘d2±; 11...f5 12.♘g2 fxg4 13.♙xg4 ♙f5 14.♙d2 ♘b6 15.♘e3↑). Black's queen now has no access to the h4-square, so White can capture bravely the pawn: 10.♙xh5 ♙g5 (10...♙b4 11.♙g4 ♚h4 12.h3+-) 11.f4± Meszaros – Tatar Kis, Budapest 2013.

After 8...f6, White again has the reply 9.♘e1!, for example: 9...fxe5. This move is connected with a bishop-sacrifice, but it can hardly be recommended anything better to Black. (The move 9...h5 would enable White to consolidate effortlessly his advantage. 10.f4 h4 11.♙g4±, or 11.c3!? ♚b6 12.♘c2 0-0-0 13.♘e3± Smirin – Pantsulaia, Baku 2013.) 10.g4 e4 11.gxf5 exf5 12.f4± Black's compensation for the sacrificed piece is evidently insufficient, Ni Hua – Gelashvili, Turin 2006.

9.h3!?

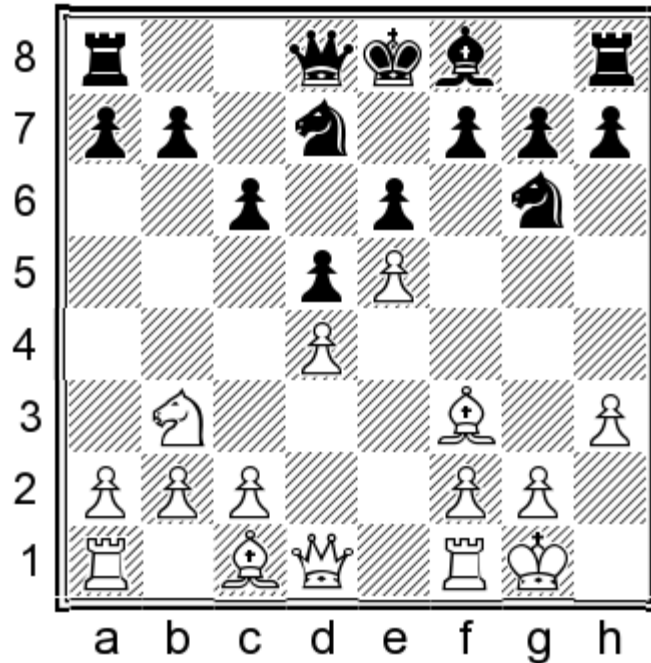
White is trying to clarify immediately the intentions of the enemy bishop on g4.

White can also not provoke immediately the exchanges on f3 and can at first complete his development with 9.♙e3!? ♙e7, Boehm – Bastian, Bublingen 2007, 10.♘bd2. After White has developed his dark-squared bishop, it would not be so good for Black to transfer his knight to the g6-square, because White's knight can go back to the d2-square and it would be much more useful there. 10...0-0 11.h3 ♙xf3 (11...♙f5 12.g4±) 12.♘xf3 c5 13.c3±

9...♙xf3

It is clearly worse for Black to try to preserve his bishop with 9...♙f5?! 10.g4 ♙e4 11.♘g5±

10. ♖xf3



10... ♖e7

Black's attempt to try to change the character of the position with the move 10...f6?! would lead to great difficulties for him following 11. ♖h5! fxe5 12.dxe5± Svidler – Jobava, Novi Sad 2009.

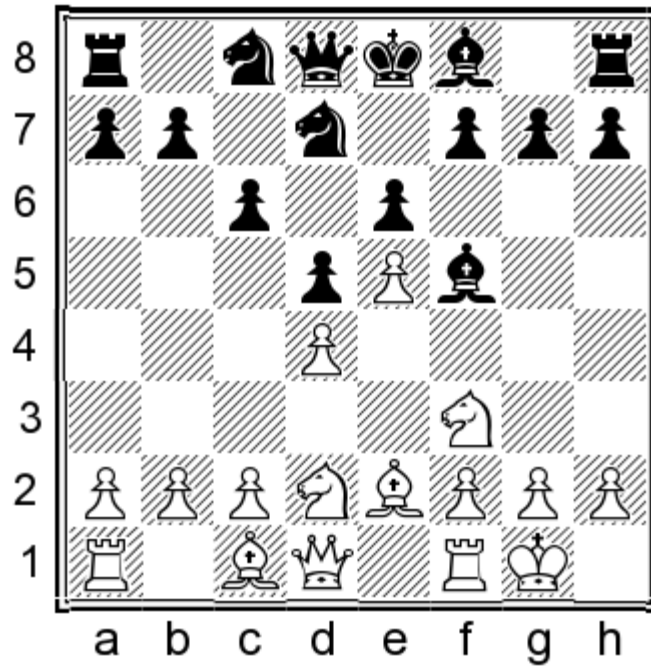
11. ♖e3 ♖g5

Black should better avoid 11...♖c8 12. ♖e2± Boehm – Bastian, Bublingen 2007, since he will not be able to trade the bishops, because White would counter 12...♖g5?! with the move 13.f4±

12.c4± White's space advantage and his more actively placed pieces provide him with long-lasting positional pressure.

B2) 7... ♖c8

Here, White has a great choice between some very promising moves and various plans to fight for an advantage.

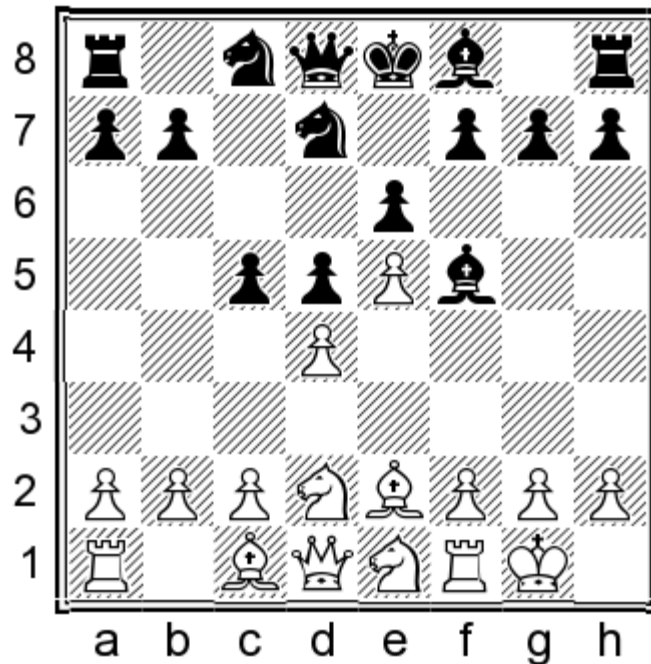


We will deal in details with: **B2a) 8.♘e1**, **B2b) 8.b3!?**, **B2c) 8.a4!?** and **B2d) 8.c3!?**

B2a) 8.♘e1 c5

This is a principled move and it is the only way for Black to fight for obtaining an acceptable position.

His alternatives would not promise him equality for example: 8...♙g6 9.♘d3±, 8...♙e7 9.g4 ♗g6 10.f4±, 8...h6 9.c3 c5 10.♘c2! ♙e7 11.♘e3 ♙h7 12.f4↑



9.g4!?

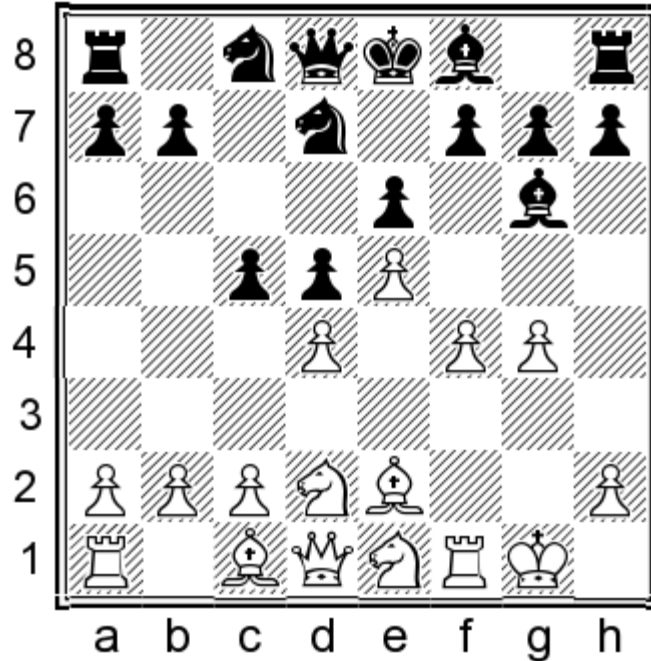
This is a very consistent reaction.

White cannot create problems for his opponent with the line: 9.c3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘e7∞

Here, he cannot achieve much with the standard move 9.c4, in view of 9...dxc4 (Black needs to play very accurately. After the careless move 9...dcb6, he would be in a great trouble for example: 10.b4 cxd4 11.c5 dxc8 12.d3±, with the idea 12...dxe5?! 13.dxd4 de7 14.g4+–; 13...g6 14.b5+ d7 15.dcf3+–; 13...e7 14.b5+ f8 15.dxf5±) 10.dxc4 dcb6∞

Black should not be afraid of 9.g6 10.c3 e7 11.xg6 hxg6 12.d3 a6 (12...c4?! 13.d4 b5 14.g4 dcb6 15.d3 df8 16.g3 d7 17.h4± Karjakin – Topalov, Monte Carlo 2011) 13.dxc5 (13.d3 da7∞) 13...dxc5 14.dxc5 e5 15.d3 de7= Sanchez – Antonio, Manila 2011.

9...g6 10.f4



10...de7!

This is the only move for Black to obtain a good position!

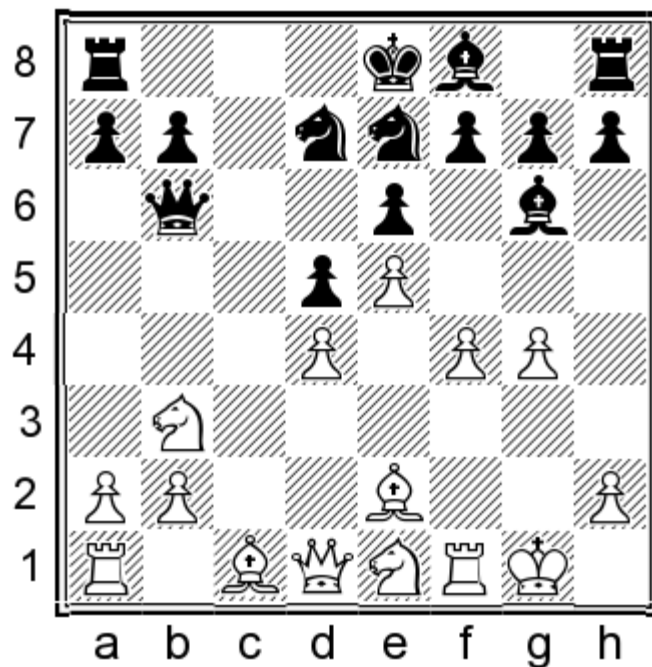
White's space advantage will be consolidated after 10...f5 11.exf6 gxf6 12.d3↑

The inclusion of the moves 10...cxd4 11.f5, would enable White to develop powerful initiative. 11...exf5 (The bishop-sacrifice would not be justified after: 11...dxe5 12.fxg6 hxg6 13.d3 d6, Lagno – Danielian, Warsaw 2013, 14.b5!±) 12.gxf5 g5+ 13.dg2 xf5 14.d3 g6 15.h5 e6 16.h1 (It would be premature for White to choose 16.dxd4?! e5 17.e3± and Black's task would be considerably facilitated.) 16...g6 17.dxd4 b6 18.e6 fxe6 19.d4 e5 20.xg6+ hxg6 21.dxd5 dxd4 22.d7+ e7 23.dxd4 exd4 24.dxa8+–

11.c3 cxd4

It would not be so accurate for Black to choose 11...b6, due to 12.d3 and here after 12...cxd4, White would be able to capture on d4 with his knight 13.dxd4↑

12.cxd4 b6 13.d3

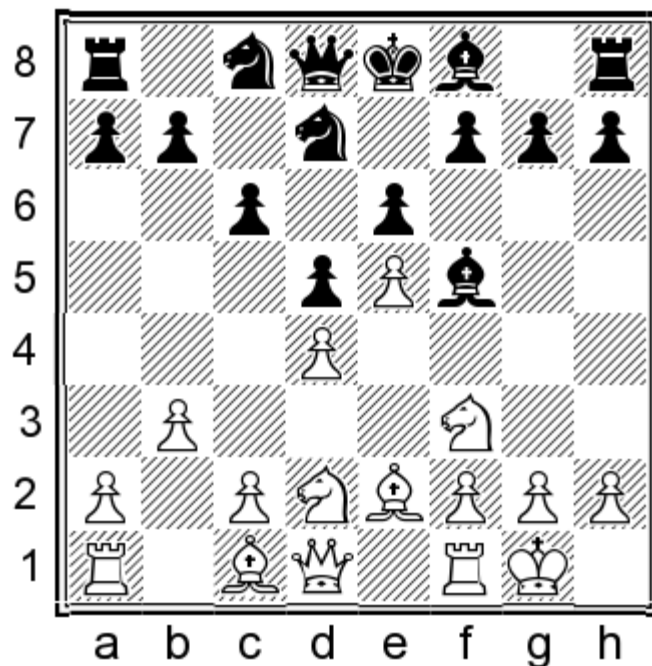


13...Qe4 14.Nd3 h5 15.gxh5 g6 16.Nf2 Qf5∞ The arising complications are advantageous for Black.

The plan with the immediate move Nde1, followed by g2-g4, is somewhat premature on White's move eight, but as we are going to see in variation **B2c**, it would become quite possible after the inclusion of the moves 8.a4 Qe7.

B2b) 8.b3!?

We are already familiar with this plan, in fact, with the way of its implementation, after Black's early manoeuvre Ng8-e7-c8 (see Chapter 4, variation **A**), but then, White's knight had been on the b1-square, so that he could have developed it not only to the d2-square. Still, under the circumstances, the idea to occupy additional space on the queenside seems quite applicable, although it does not provide White with a clear edge.



8...♙e7

With this move Black obtains a very solid position, despite its being somewhat passive.

Black's alternatives do not promise him much.

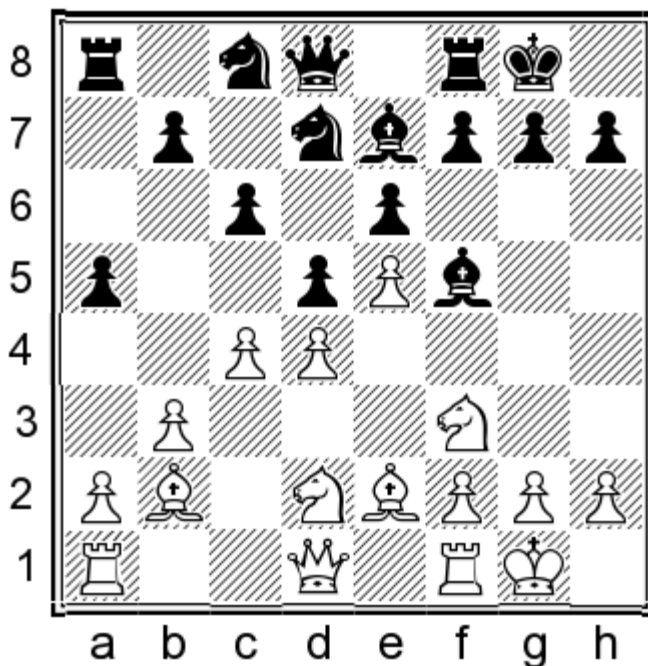
The other way of development of his bishop – 8...♘b4 enables White to improve his position on the queenside with tempo. 9.♙b2 0-0 10.c4 ♘e7 11.a3 ♙a5 12.b4 (12.♘h4 dxc4 13.♘xc4 ♙c7 14.♙f3 ♘b6 15.a4±) 12...♙c7 13.♘h4 dxc4 14.♘xf5 ♘xf5 15.♘xc4 ♘b6 16.♘a5 ♖b8 17.♙d3± Efimenko – Iordachescu, Port Erin 2007.

White can counter the active move 8...c5 with the standard reaction 9.c4 and Black will hardly manage to neutralize his opponent's initiative due to his considerable lag in development. 9...♘cb6 10.a4 a5 11.cxd5!? ♘xd5 12.♘c4 ♙e7 13.♘d6+ ♙xd6 14.exd6 ♘c3. It would be essential for Black to prevent his opponent from utilising the power of his bishop-pair, after an eventual opening of the position. (White would be successful in doing that following 14...0-0 15.♙b2 ♖b6 16.dxc5 ♘xc5 17.♘h4 ♙e4 18.♗d4 ♘f6 19.♖ac1 ♖ac8 20.♙a3 ♘cd7 21.♗xb6 ♘xb6 22.♘f3±) 15.♗e1 ♘xe2+ 16.♗xe2 0-0 17.♙a3±

8...a5 9.c4 a4 (9...♙e7 10.♙b2 0-0 11.a3 – see 8...♙e7) 10.♙b2 (10.bxa4?! Robson – Akobian, Arlington 2013, 10...♘cb6∞) 10...♙e7 11.c5 (There may arise a slightly different type of position after 11.♙c3!?!↑, White is preparing the capturing b3xa4, followed by the pawn-advance a4-a5.) 11...0-0 12.b4± – his positional advantage is quite stable.

9.c4 0-0 10.♙b2 a5

10...♙g6 11.♘e1 a5 12.♙d3. White should redeploy his pieces in advance in the best possible way and only then begin to realise his space advantage by advancing his kingside pawns. (For example, it would not be good for him to play immediately 12.f4 a4 13.g4 ♙b4!∞, with the idea ♙b4xd2 and ♙g6-e4, Pridorozhni – Ovetchkin, Dagomys 2009.) 12...♙xd3 13.♘xd3 a4 14.f4±



11.a3!?

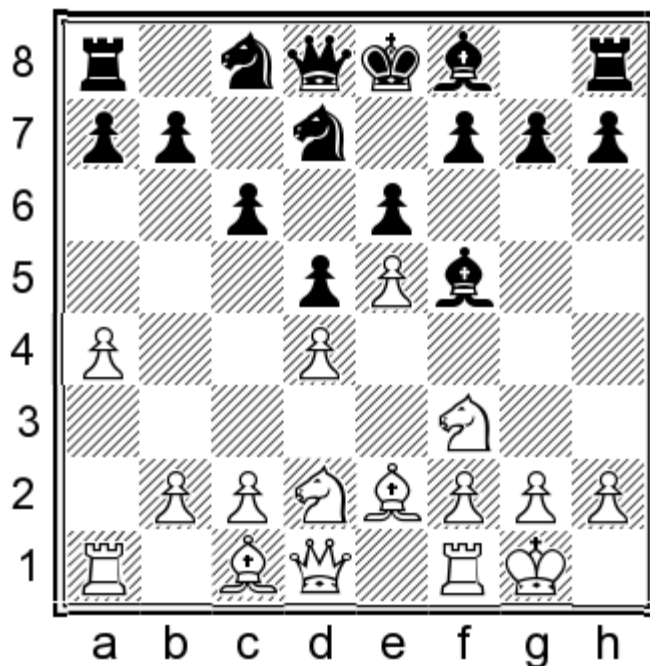
This move is aimed at preventing a5-a4, since White can counter this with b3-b4.

It would not be so clear after 11.a4, in view of 11...♘cb6! 12.c5 (12.♖c1 dxc4 13.bxc4?! c5♣; 13.♘xc4 ♘d5∞) 12...♘c8 13.♘e1 b6 14.g4 ♙g6 15.f4 f5∞

11...a4 12.cxd5 (Black will have a slightly cramped, but still defensible position after 12.b4 dxc4 13.♘xc4 ♘db6 14.♗e3 ♕g6±) **12...cxd5 13.b4 ♗cb6 14.♞c1 ♞c8 15.♙b5 ♞xc1 16.♚xc1 ♚b8±** His position lacks space indeed, but is still solid enough.

B2c) 8.a4!?

This is a useful waiting move. White is ready to counter in advance Black's knight-sortie to the b6-square.



8...♙e7

This move might seem like a positional concession for Black, because it enables White, on his next move, to realise the idea, which we have already analysed in variation **B2a**. Still, Black lags so much in the development of his kingside that his situation is not to be envied.

Or 8...a6 9.c3!? ♙e7, Nevednichy – Cioara, Sarata Monteoru 2012 (9...c5 10.♗b3±) 10.b4 a5 11.♚b3±

Black fails to counter his opponent's plans with the help of the move 8...a5?!, because this weakens the b5-square and may turn out to be very costly for him after the pawn-advance c6-c5, for example: 9.c3 ♙e7 (9...c5 10.♗b3±) 10.♗e1 0-0 11.g4 ♙g6 12.f4 f6 13.f5 ♙f7 14.♗d3±

9.♗e1

With the idea g2-g4.

White has at his disposal another calmer positional plan – 9.a5!? 0-0 10.c4±, which is also possible, but the variation 9.♗e1 is much more dangerous for his opponent.

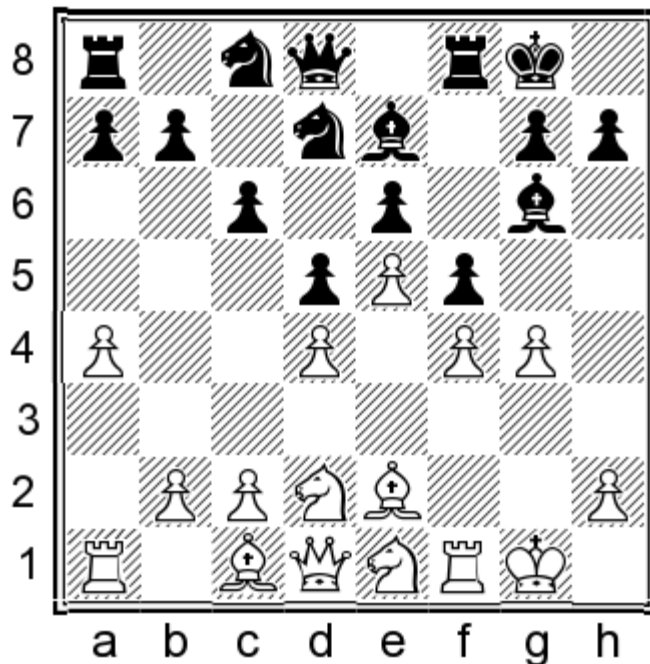
9...0-0

Black must complete his development.

It would be premature for him to play the undermining move 9...f6 10.f4 (10.♙h5!? g6 11.♙e2 h5 12.f4±) 10...fxe5 11.fxe5 0-0, Lindberg – Eriksson, Sweden 2014, 12.♙g4!±, or 9...c5 10.g4 ♙g6 11.f4. The e7-square has been occupied by Black's bishop, so he does not have the resource ♗c8-e7. 11...f6 (11...f5 12.c4 ♗b8 13.♚b3!? ♗c6) 0-0

14. ♖c2±) 12.c4±

10.g4 ♙g6 11.f4 f5



12. ♖g2!?

White is preparing the transfer of his knight to the e3-square.

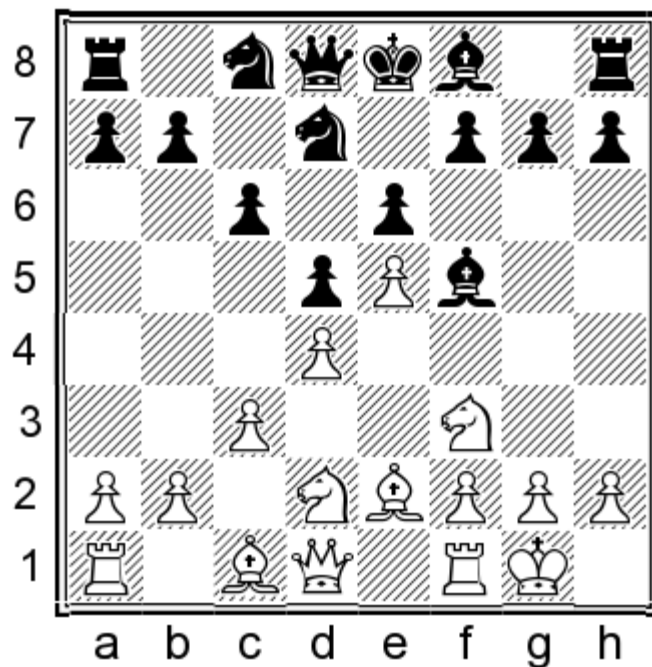
12.h3. White does not need to waste a tempo for this move. 12...a5!? 13. ♖df3 (13. ♖g2 c5⇒) 13...c5 14. ♙e3 ♖h8 (14... ♖a7∞) 15.b3 ♖a7 16. ♖d3 c4 17.bxc4 dxc4 18. ♖c5 ♖xc5 19.dxc5 ♗c8∞ Svidler – Riazantsev, Moscow 2009.

It also seems good for him to try 12.a5!? fxg4 13. ♙xg4 ♙f5 14. ♖g2±, with the idea ♖g2-e3.

12...c5, Bulmaga – Mamedjarova, Tromso 2014, 13. ♖b3± White has obtained excellent prospects for the development of his kingside initiative (It would be weaker for him to opt for 13.gxf5 ♙xf5 14. ♖e3, in view of 14... ♙h3 15. ♗f3 cxd4 16. ♗xh3 dxe3 17. ♖b3 ♗xf4 18. ♖d4 ♖f8 19. ♙xe3 ♗h4 20. ♗xh4 ♙xh4 21. ♙g4 ♙g5 22. ♙f2 ♙h4=).

B2d) 8.c3!?

I believe this insidious move is the most dangerous for Black. White is preparing the plan with ♖f3-e1, followed by g2-g4, under the best possible circumstances. He is going to counter Black's standard move c6-c5 with the counter-strike c3-c4 and Black will be absolutely unprepared for this.



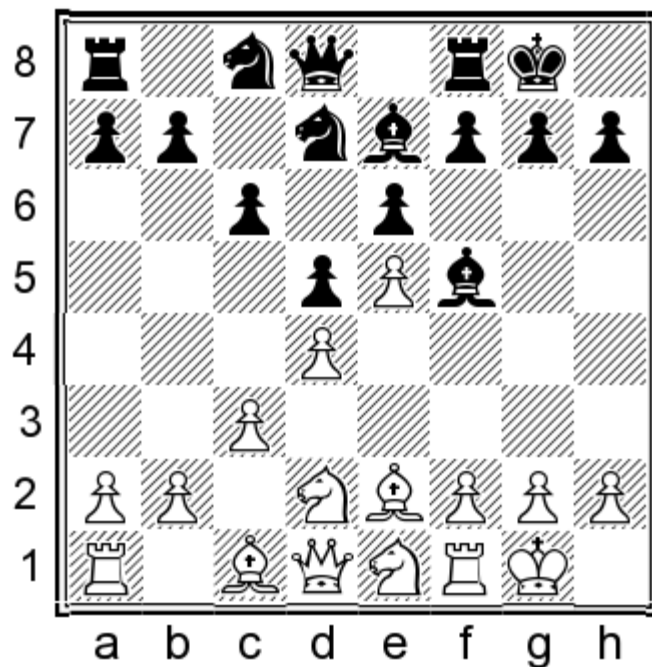
8...♙e7

8...c5. Black is fighting against the enemy centre with this energetic move. 9.c4. (It is possible for White to play here 9.♘b3!? opening the diagonal for his bishop on c1 and increasing the pressure against the enemy pawn on c5. Still, the move 9.c4 is more fashionable and principled.) 9...♘cb6 10.b4↑ The arising situation is obviously in favour of White due to his superior development and extra space. Black will hardly find the way to maintain the balance, for example: 10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♙xb4 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xf5 exf5 14.♙f3 ♘7b6 15.♚b3, with the idea 15...0-0?! 16.♞d1±

9.♘e1 0-0

9...♙g6 10.♘d3 c5 11.♘f4 cxd4 12.♘xg6 hxg6 13.cxd4 ♚b6 (13...♘cb6 14.♙d3!? 0-0 15.♚e2 ♘b8 16.f4 ♘c6 17.♘f3 ♘c4 18.b3 ♘a3 19.♙b2 ♚b6 20.♞ac1 a6 21.g4± Svidler – Houska, Gibraltar 2012) 14.♘f3 a6 15.g3!? ♘a7 16.h4 ♞c8 17.♞b1 ♘c6 18.♙g2± Caruana – Genov, Arvier 2012.

9...c5 10.g4 ♙g6 11.f4 cxd4 12.cxd4 f5 13.♘g2 ♚b6 14.♘b3 a5 15.a4± Akobian – Molner, Saint Louis 2014.



10.g4!?N

It is also possible for White to choose here 10.f4 and after 10...♗g6 (or 10...f6, T.Kosintseva – Gunina, Moscow 2010, 11.g4 ♗g6 12.f5) 11.g4 (It is weaker for White to play 11.♗d3, Sjugirov – Rozum, St Petersburg 2008, 11...c5∞) 11...f6 12.f5 and there arises transposition to the same situation.

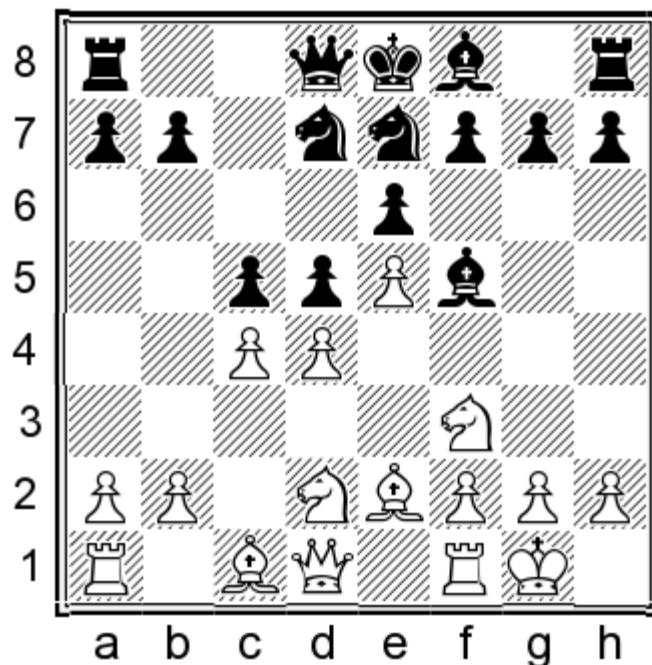
Still, the move 10.g4 looks more accurate, because White would not need to consider the possibility 10.f4 h6.

10...♗g6 11.f4 f6 12.f5 ♗f7 13.♘d3± White exerts powerful pressure on the kingside and has increased his space advantage.

B3) 7...c5 8.c4!

He has created tension, concerning the d5-square, thwarting his opponent's development.

The line 8.dxc5 ♘c6, as well as White's other alternatives are less promising to him.



We will analyse thoroughly **B3a) 8...♟c6**, **B3b) 8...cxd4** and **B3c) 8...a6**.

White's alternatives are considerably less convincing.

It would be too slow for him to opt for 8...♞c7?! 9.dxc5 ♟xc5 10.♟d4±

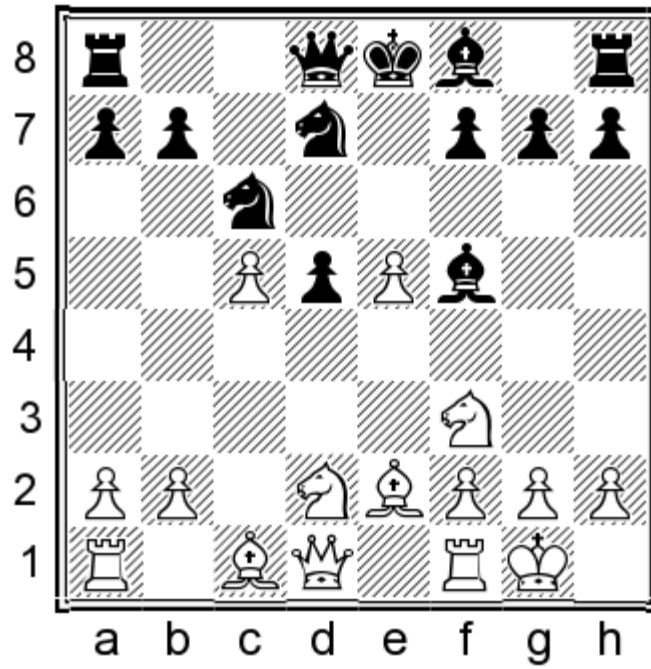
After 8...dxc4?!, Black cannot occupy the d5-square with his knight without certain positional concession. 9.♟xc4 ♟d5 (9...♟c6 10.♟g5 ♞c7. Now, White can either increase methodically his pressure with 11.♞c1!± Mitkov – Fontana, Benasque 1996, or try to clarify immediately the situation in the centre: 11.d5 exd5 12.♟e3 ♟e6 13.♟xd5 ♟xd5 14.♞xd5±, with the idea 14...♟dxe5? 15.♞fe1 ♟e7 16.♟xe5+– Dijkhuis – Maas, Vlissingen 2014.) 10.♟g5 ♞c7 (It would not be preferable for Black to opt here for 10...♟e7? 11.♟d6+–, or 10...f6 11.exf6 gxf6 12.♟h4 ♟e7 13.♟g3, Semasev – Hocevar, Grieskirchen 1998, 13...0-0 14.♟d6±) 11.♞c1±, with the idea 11...h6 12.♟h4 b5, Sepetavc – Wallnoefer, Jenbach 2009, 13.♟d6+ ♟xd6 14.exd6 ♞xd6 15.dxc5+–

8...♞c8 9.dxc5 ♟xc5 10.♟d4 ♟g6, V.Lebedev – A.Popov, ICCF 2009, 11.♟2b3 (It also seems quite consistent for White to continue here with 11.♟2f3!?, for example: 11...a6 12.♟e3 dxc4 13.♟xc4 ♞d7 14.♞c1 b5 15.♟b3 ♟xb3 16.♞xb3 ♟d5 17.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 18.a4 ♞c4 19.axb5 ♞xb3 20.♟xb3 ♟xe3 21.fxe3 axb5 22.♞a1 ♟e4 23.♟fd2 ♟d5 24.e4 ♟xb3 25.♟xb3±) 11...dxc4 12.♟xc4 a6 13.♟e3 ♟d5 (Black's considerable lag in development may turn out to be a very important factor after 13...♟a4 14.♞e2 ♟d5 15.♟xd5 ♞xd5 16.♞fd1 ♞xe5 17.♞ac1±, or 16...♟b6 17.h4 h6 18.h5 ♟h7 19.♞ac1±) 14.♟xd5 exd5 (14...♞xd5 15.♞c1 b6 16.♟xc5 bxc5 17.♞a4+ ♞d7 18.♞xd7+ ♟xd7 19.♟b3±) 15.♞c1↑, with the idea 15...♟d3 16.♞xc8 ♞xc8 17.♞e2 ♟e7 18.f4 ♟e4 19.♞d1±

B3a) 8...♟c6

This is a very straightforward move, but it creates a chronic weakness for Black – the isolated pawn on d5.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.dxc5



10...♙xc5

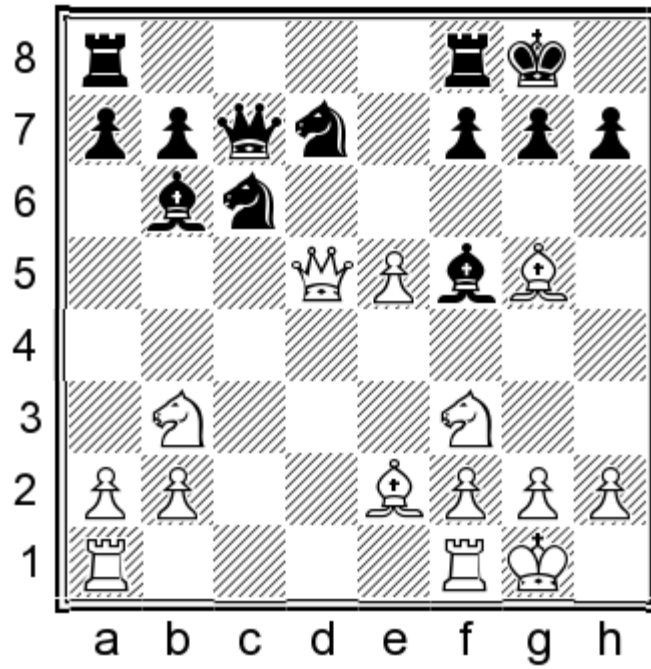
It would not be better for him to capture with his knight 10...♞xc5 11.♞b3 ♞xb3 (11...♞e6 12.♞fd4±; 11...♙e7 12.♙e3 ♞xb3 13.♙xb3±) 12.♙xb3 ♙d7 13.♞d1 ♙e6 14.♞g5. This is a very energetic move. (There arise numerous exchanges following 14.♞d4 ♙c5 15.♞xc6 bxc6 16.♙e3 ♙xe3 17.♙xe3 0-0 18.♞ac1±, although even then Black's position is not to be envied, Vachier Lagrave – Dittmar, Gibraltar 2009.) 14...♙e7 15.♞xe6 fxe6 16.♙h3 ♞xe5, (or 16...0-0 17.♙g4 ♞d8 18.♙e3±) 17.f4 ♞f7 18.♙g4 ♞d8 19.f5 0-0 20.fxe6 ♙d6 21.♙e3 ♞c6 22.♙f3±

11.♞b3 ♙b6 12.♙g5

It also seems advisable for White to try here 12.a4!?, with the idea to oust Black's bishop on b6 away from the g1-a7 diagonal, forcing it to occupy a less promising position. In addition White seizes more space on the queenside in the process. 12...a6 (12...♞dxe5 13.♞xe5 ♞xe5 14.♙b5+ ♞f8 15.a5 ♙c7 16.♞d4±; 12...0-0 13.a5 ♙c7 14.♞fd4 ♙g6 15.f4±) 13.a5 ♙a7. Black has managed to preserve his bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal, but he still has many problems to worry about. 14.♞bd4 ♙g4 15.♞xc6 bxc6 16.♞g5 ♙xe2 17.♙xe2 h6 18.♞xf7 ♞xf7 19.e6+ ♞g8 20.exd7 ♙xd7 21.♞a3± One of the pluses of the advance of White's a-pawn is that his queen's rook on a1 can be brought quickly into the actions on the a-file.

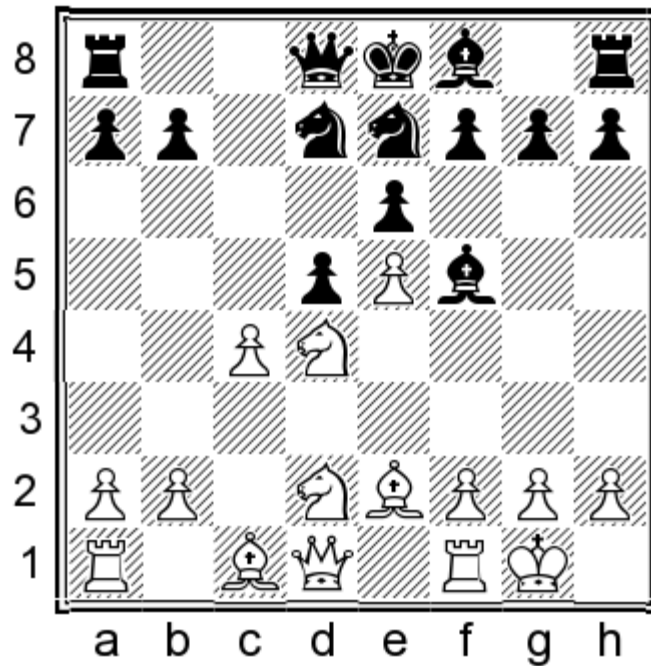
12...♙c7 13.♙xd5 0-0

13...♞dxe5 14.♙b5 0-0 15.♙xc6 bxc6 16.♙xe5 ♙xe5 17.♞xe5 f6 18.♞xc6 fxg5 19.♞e7+ ♞h8 20.♞xf5 ♞xf5 21.♞ae1±



14. Nfd4 Nxd4 15. Nxd4 Qxd4 16. Wxd4 Wxe5 17. Qe3 ± White's powerful bishop-pair provides him with a slight but stable advantage in this open position.

B3b) 8... cxd4 9. Nxd4



9... Nxe5

It would be tremendously risky for Black to accept this pawn-sacrifice.

If he refrains from accepting the sacrificed pawn on e5 with the line: 9... Qg6 10. N2f3 a6 11. Qg5 ±, this would have been a lesser evil, but would not have solved all his problems.

He should better avoid giving up his light-squared bishop with the line: 9...♖c6?! 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.cxd5 ♗cxe5 12.♗c4!? ♗xc4 13.♙xc4 ♙d6 14.♞e1± Ashwin – Lokander, Dubai 2014.

10.♞a4!

White is trying to preserve by all means his opponent's monarch stranded in the centre and is ready to do that even if he has to comply with considerable simplifications, including the trade of the queens.

He would achieve much less with 10.cxd5 ♞xd5 11.♞a4+ (Black equalises almost effortlessly after 11.♗2f3 ♗5c6 12.♙e3 ♙e4 13.♗b5 ♞xd1 14.♞fxd1 ♗d5 15.♗g5 ♙g6 16.♞xd5 exd5 17.♗c7+ ♗d7 18.♗xa8 d4= Ni Hua – Rasmussen, Beijing 2008.) 11...♗7c6 12.♗xc6 (12.♗2f3 – see Gopal – Dragun, Cappelle la Grande 2015, **game 8**) 12...♗xc6 13.♙f3 ♞d7 14.♞d1 (14.♗c4? ♞d8! 15.♙e3 ♗d4≠ Pasiev – Tari, Moscow 2012) 14...♗e5 15.♞xd7+ ♗xd7 16.♙xb7 ♞b8=

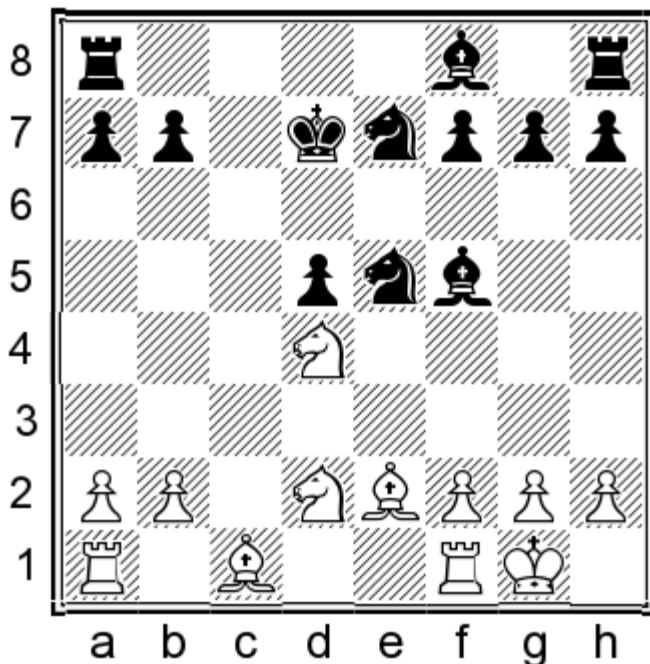
10...♞d7

Black's king is stranded in the centre and this becomes an important factor in the line: 10...♗7c6 11.♗xf5 exf5 12.♗f3 ♗xc4 13.♙xc4 dxc4 14.♙g5 f6 15.♞fe1+ ♙e7 16.♞xc4±, or after 10...♗5c6 11.cxd5 exd5 (Black's attempt to preserve his harmonious pawn-structure fails after 11...♞xd5 and 12.♗c4!±, with the idea 12...♞xd4 13.♞d1±– Von Meijenfeldt – Stolwijk, Amsterdam 2014.) 12.♞e1±

11.♞xd7+ ♗xd7

Black would lose his castling rights too, following 11...♗d7 12.♗b5, so he would have nothing better than 12...♗d8 13.♗d6 ♙g6 14.♗xb7+ ♗c7 15.♗a5 d4 16.b4±

12.cxd5 exd5



13.♗2b3!

White should exploit immediately the misplacement of the enemy king in the centre by avoiding exchanges, since this would facilitate considerably Black's defence.

13. ♖xf5? ♜xf5= Brkic – Drozdovskij, Rijeka 2010.

13... ♜c8

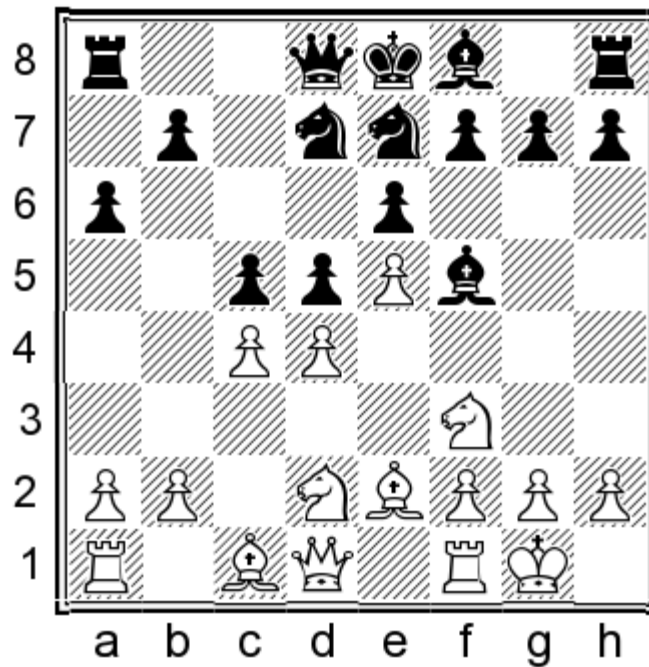
Black's defence would not become any easier after 13... ♜5c6 14. ♖xf5 ♜xf5 15. ♙f3 d4 16. ♙e4 ♜d6 17. ♙d5± , or 17. ♙xc6+ ♜xc6 18. ♙f4±

14. ♙f4 f6

He has no time to retreat his knight: 14... ♜c4 15. ♖xf5 ♜xf5 16. ♜fd1 ♜e7 17. ♜ac1±, with the idea 17... ♜xb2 18. ♙g4± and Black's king ends up horribly misplaced.

15. ♜ac1!? ♜xc1 16. ♜xc1 ♜5c6 17. ♙b5± White's lead in development and the misplacement of the enemy monarch provide him with excellent prospects of developing powerful initiative.

B3c) 8...a6



This is Black's most reliable and solid move in comparison to his alternatives.

9.dxc5

9. ♖h4 ♙e4∞

9... ♜xc5 10. ♖b3

This is a very principled move, which forces Black to make up his mind about the future of his knight on c5. White also frees the diagonal for his bishop on c1 and is preparing the manoeuvre ♖b3-d4 under favourable circumstances.

10... ♜d7

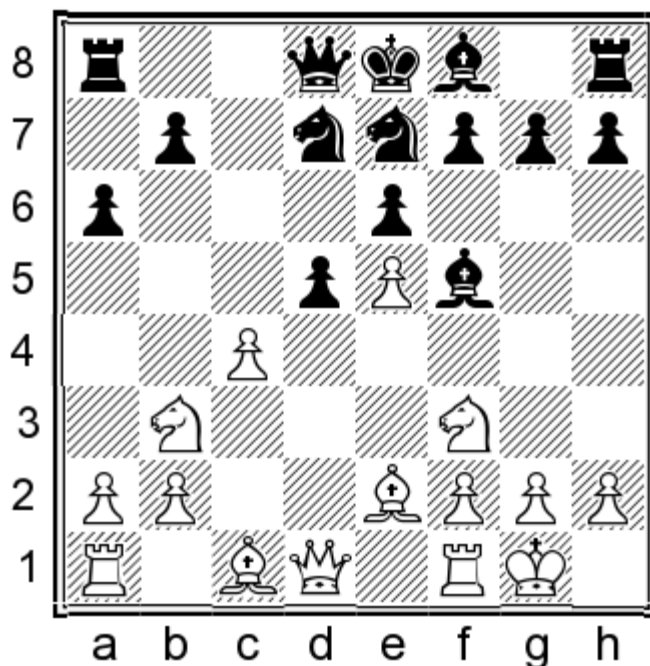
This move looks like a loss of time, but Black has nothing better anyway.

It would be anti-positional for him to continue with 10... ♜xb3?! 11. ♜xb3↑, because this would help White to develop

with tempo his queen to a very active position, freeing in the process the d1-square for his rook.

Black should better avoid the seemingly active line: 10...♖e4 11.♗h4!? (11.♗bd4±) 11...♙g6 12.cxd5 ♖xd5 13.♙f4±, with the idea ♗h4xg6 and ♙e2-f3.

White develops very dangerous initiative after 10...♗c6 11.♙e3 (11.cxd5 ♖xd5 12.♖xd5 exd5 13.♗bd4±) 11...♗xb3 12.♖xb3↑ Adhiban – Short, Caleta 2014.



11.cxd5!N

With this move White reduces the tension against the c4-square with the idea to complete rapidly his development and to consolidate his space advantage.

He should also try in practice the variations 11.♗bd4!? ♙e4 12.♙e3↑, with the idea ♖a1-c1, or 11.♙d2!? ♙e4 (11...dxc4 12.♗a5↑) 12.♗a5 (It is also interesting for him to try 12.♙c3↑, freeing his knight on f3 from the protection of the pawn on e5.) 12...♖b8!? (12...dxc4?! 13.♗xc4 ♗c6 14.♙g5 ♖c7 15.♖c1± Efimenko – Pantsulaia, Plovdiv 2008) 13.♖e1 ♗g6∞

11...♗xd5

Now, White's most promising plan seems to be connected with the advance of his f-pawn.

12.♗fd4 ♙g6

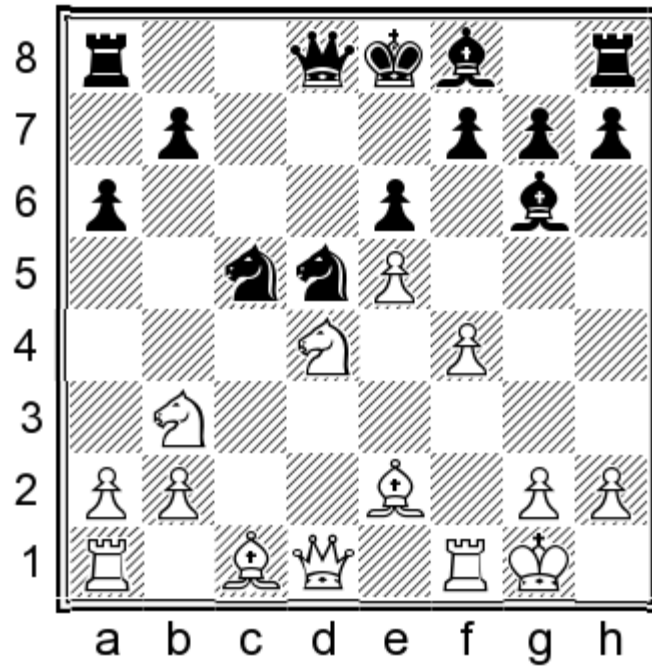
It would be too risky for Black to try to gobble the enemy e5-pawn 12...♗xe5, due to 13.♗xf5 exf5 14.♖d4±, with the idea ♖f1-d1, while White will counter 14...♗c6 with 15.♖e1!± and his queen will be untouchable.

13.f4

White fortifies with this move his space advantage in the centre and on the kingside.

13...♗c5

Or 13...♙e7 14.f5±; 13...♙e4 14.♗h1!±, with the idea 14...♙e7 15.♙g4 h5 16.♙h3 g5 17.♖e2+–



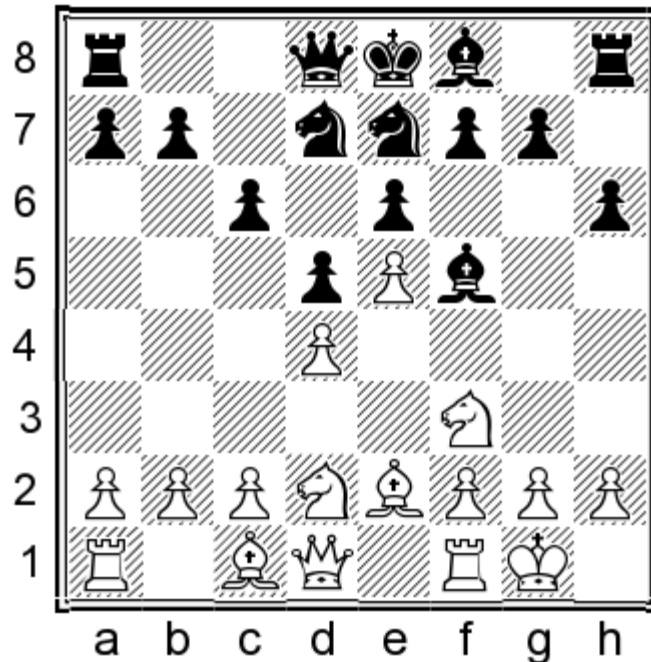
14.f5↑

White exploits the lack of development on Black's kingside and organizes powerful initiative.

14...exf5 15.♘xf5 ♙xf5 16.♖xf5 ♜e7 17.♖f1 ♚xd1 18.♙xd1 ♜c6 19.♙e3 ♜d3 20.e6 fxe6 21.♙g4± White has two powerful bishops and Black will be faced with a long and laborious defence.

Chapter 7

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♞d7 6.0-0 ♞e7 7.♘bd2 h6



8.♘b3

White has some other alternatives with which he can try to obtain an advantage in the opening – 8.c3!?, or 8.♞e1!?, but we are going to analyse his strongest and most logical move – 8.♘b3.

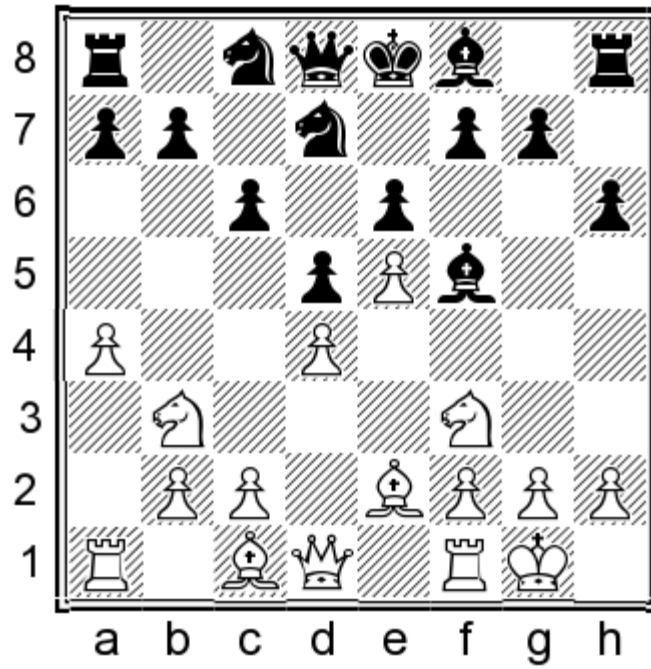
We will deal in details now with: **A) 8...♙g6**, **B) 8...g5** and **C) 8...♙h7**.

8...♘g6? 9.♘e1±

The move 8...a6 does not prevent White's plans. 9.♙d2 ♞c8 (9...♙e4, Quesada Perez – Andreikin, Havana 2013, 10.♞c1!? ♜c7 11.♙b4↑) 10.c4 dxc4 11.♘a5 ♜c7 12.♘xc4 ♙e7 13.♘e1!? (13.♞c1!?)±) 13...0-0 14.♙d3 ♙xd3 15.♘xd3 ♞d8 16.♜g4±

Following 8...♞c8, White can react in a standard fashion – 9.♙d2, for example: 9...g5 (9...♙e4 10.♞c1 c5, Efimenko – Andreikin, Dagomys 2008, 11.♘xc5 ♘xc5 12.dxc5 ♞xc5 13.♙e3 ♞c8 14.c4 ♘c6 15.♘d2!?)±; 15.♜a4 ♙e7 16.cxd5 ♙xd5 17.♜g4±) 10.c4 dxc4 11.♘a5 ♜c7 12.♘xc4 ♘d5 13.♞c1 ♙e7 14.♘e3 (14.a3 ♘7b6 15.♘a5 ♞d8 16.b4 ♜b8 17.h3± Ponomarev – Kamsky, Beijing 2013) 14...♙e4 15.♘e1±

8...♘c8 9.a4

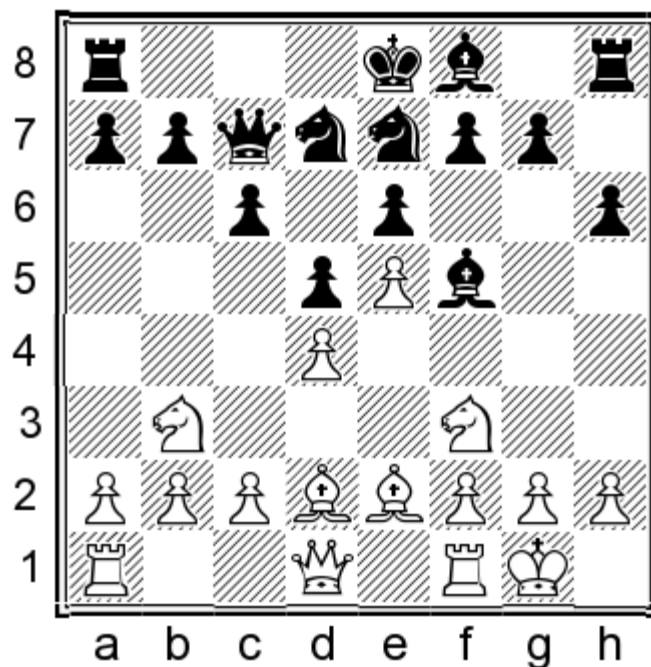


9...♖cb6 10.a5 ♗c4 11.♙d3 ♙b4 12.♞a4!? ♙e7 13.♙f5 (13.♙xc4 b5! 14.♙xb5 cxb5 15.♞a1 ♞c7 Darini – Andreikin, Tromso 2013) 13...exf5 14.♞d3 g6 15.♞xc4! dxc4 16.♞xc4 ♗b8 17.♞e1 ♞d5 18.♞d3±, followed by c2-c4±

9...♙e7 10.a5. Now, Black's knight has no access to the b6-square. 10...a6 (10...0-0 11.♙e3 a6 12.♗e1 f6 13.f4 fxe5 14.fxe5 ♙g5 15.♞d2 ♙xe3+ 16.♞xe3 ♗e7 17.♗d3± Vallejo Pons – Anand, Leon 2008) 11.♙e3 ♗a7, Rodshtein – Donchenko, Hoogeveen 2013 (11...♞c7 12.♗fd2! White is preparing the advance of his kingside pawns. 12...♗a7 13.f4 0-0 14.c4!± Motylev – Rodshtein, Moscow 2008.). He has another promising plan here, connected with pushing forward his pawns on the kingside: 12.♗fd2 0-0 13.f4±

9...a5 10.♙d2 ♙e7, Rajkovic – Ratkovic, Kragujevac 2015, 11.♗e1!±, with the idea 11...0-0 12.♙d3 ♙xd3 13.♗xd3± White is ready to develop powerful initiative on the kingside with ♞d1-g4, f2-f4...

If Black does not clarify the position yet, by playing 8...♞c7, then White can react in the standard way with 9.♙d2.



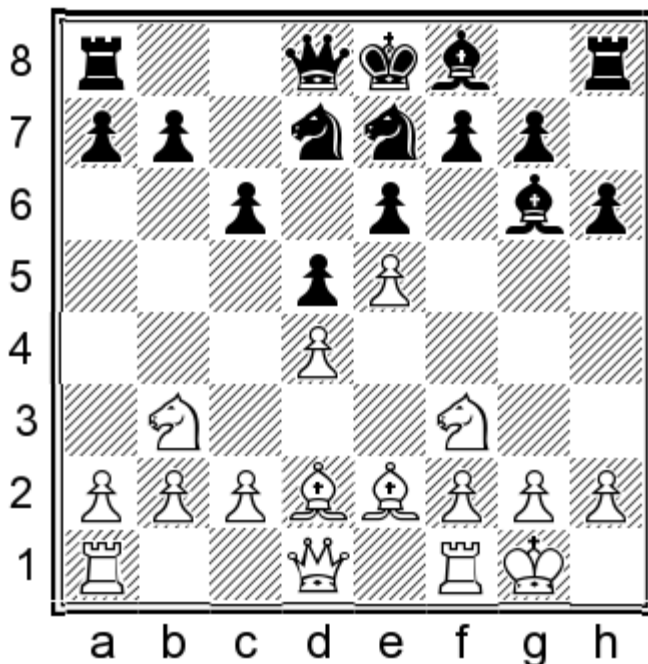
9...♙h7 10.♞c1 – see variation C.

9...a5 10.a4 g5 11.♞c1 ♙g7 12.♞e1 b6 13.c4 dxc4 14.♙xc4 0-0 15.h4 g4 16..♗h2 f6 17.f3 gxf3 18.g4± Bologan – Khismatulin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013.

9...♗c8 10.a4!? ♗cb6 11.a5 ♗c4 12.♙c3 b5 13.axb6 ♗cxb6 14.♗a5 ♙e7 15.b4± Motylev – Lalith, Gibraltar 2015.

9...g5 10.♞c1 ♗b6 (10...f6 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗e5+-; 11...♗g6 12.♗e5 ♗gxe5 13.dxe5 0-0-0 14.♗d4+-; 13...♗xe5 14.♙h5+ ♗d7, Soumya – Yu Ruiyuan, Hong Kong 2014, 15.♞e1 ♙d6 16.♙c3 ♞ae8 17.♞e2+-) 11.♙a5!? (11.♗a5 0-0-0 12.b4 ♗g6 13.♗e1 ♗f4 14.♙d3± Areshchenko – Lalith, Abu Dhabi 2014) 11...♙g7 12.♗fd2 0-0 13.c4±

A) 8...♙g6 9.♙d2



9...♗f5

Black should try to complete the development of his kingside, therefore, he opens the way for the development of his dark-squared bishop.

9...♗c8. This move is played with the same idea, but is somewhat passive. 10.♗a5!? This is an important inclusion of this move, which restricts Black's possibilities. (It will be premature for White to opt for 10.c4, because after 10...dxc4 11.♗a5, Svidler – Dreev, Astana 2012, Black will have the resource 11...b5! 12.♗xc6 ♞c7 13.d5 exd5 14.♗fd4 ♙c5∞ and the arising complications will be favourable for him.) 10...♞c7 11.c4 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♙e7 13.♙a5± Black's position is obviously cramped.

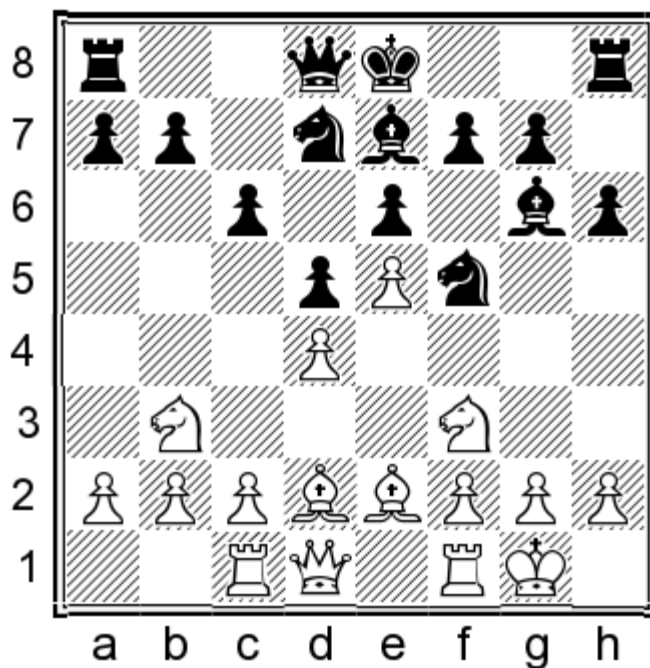
10.♞c1

The immediate move 10.c4 would not be so good for White in view of 10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♗b6= and Black controls the important d5-outpost.

It is also reasonable for White to play here 10.♙a5!?, trying to provoke weaknesses on his opponent's queenside, for example: 10...b6 (10...♞c8 11.♞c1 ♙e7 12.g4 ♗h4 13.♗xh4 ♙xh4 14.f4 ♗b6 15.♙b4± Grischuk – Kamsky, Beijing 2013) 11.♙d2 ♙e7 12.c4 0-0 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♞c1± (It was also interesting for White to try here 14.♙a6!?, preventing the appearance of Black's rook on the c8-square. 14...♙h5 15.h3 ♗h4 16.g4 ♗xf3+ 17.♞xf3 ♙g6 18.♞e2↑; 16...♙g6 17.♗xh4 ♙xh4 18.♞e2↑; About 14.h3 – see Wei Yi – Lalith, Hyderabad 2015, **game 9**).

10...♙e7

10...♙h5 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♙e7 13.♙g4 ♖b6 14.♙xf5 exf5 15.♚f3 g6 16.♞ce1± Paikidze – Charochkina, Moscow 2012.

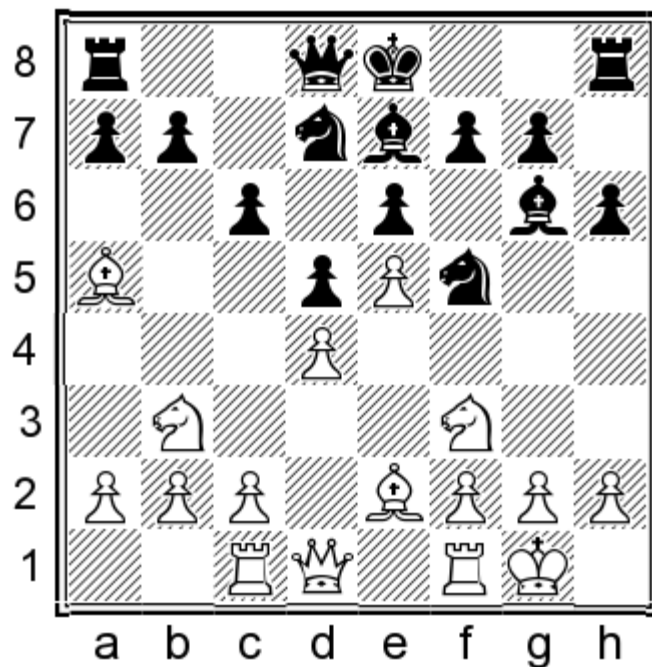


11.g4

Now, after Black's bishop has been developed to the e7-square, this move becomes very promising for White.

11.c4!?! dxc4 12.♖a5 ♞b8 13.g4 ♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♙xh4, Gabrielian – Yuffa, Samara 2014, 15.♗xc4 ♙e7 16.f4 ♗b6 17.♙a5±

11.♙a5!?! He is trying to create weaknesses on Black's queenside.



11...♖b8?! 12.g4 ♘h4 13.♗xh4 ♙xh4 14.f4↑ f5?! 15.♙b4± Dastan – Parligras, Skopje 2013.

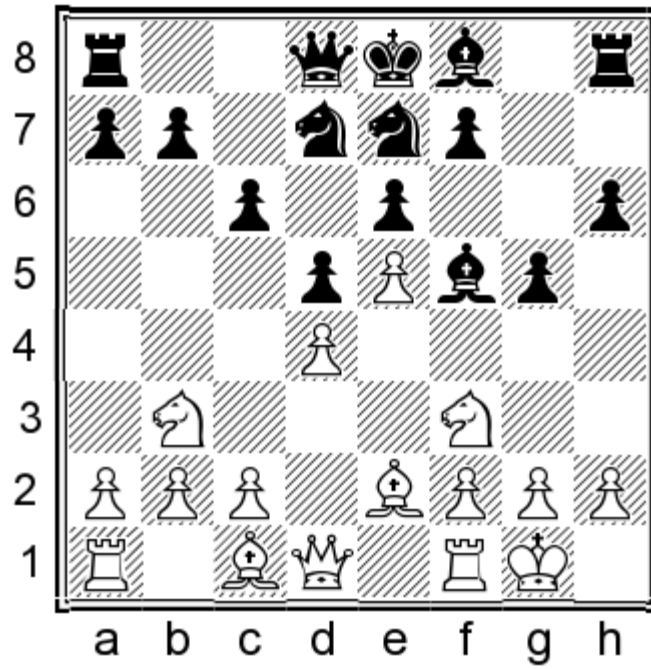
White will develop very powerful pressure on the kingside after 11...♗b6 12.g4 ♘h4 13.♗xh4 ♙xh4 14.f4 (14.♙d3?! ♙xd3 15.cxd3, Kravtsiv – Yuffa, Pardubice 2014, 15...h5!∞ and White's initiative on the kingside has reached its dead end.) 14...0-0 15.♙d3 f5 16.♔h1±

11...b6 12.♙d2 0-0 13.c4 dxc4 14.♙xc4 ♙h5 15.h3 ♙xf3 16.♖xf3 c5 17.♙d3 cxd4 18.♖e4 g6 19.g4! (19.♖fd1 ♔h7 20.♖e2 ♗c5= Grischuk – Bologan, Astana 2012) 19...♗h4 20.♙xh6 ♗xe5 21.f4 ♗xd3 22.♙xf8 ♔xf8 23.♖xd3 ♖d5 24.♖f2±

11...♗h4 12.♗xh4 ♙xh4 13.f4 ♙e4, Demchenko – Yuffa, Nizhny Tagil 2014, **14.♙f3 ♙xf3 15.♖xf3±** White has a very stable position in the centre and excellent prospects to develop initiative on the kingside.

B) 8...g5!?

Black solves his problems with the development, but weakens a bit his kingside (His king is very likely to castle there...).

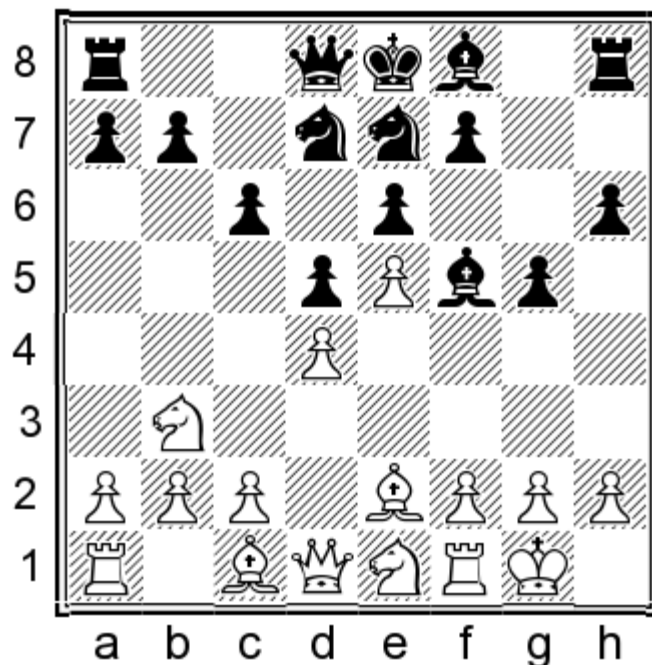


9. ♖e1!?

White regroups immediately his pieces. His knight will go to d3 and his bishop will be very active on the d1-h5 diagonal. It is even more important that he will have the possibility f2-f4, beginning active actions on the kingside.

White must consider very seriously Black's kingside activity and try to parry it in advance. Therefore, I do not recommend here the standard move 9. ♕d2, due to 9...a5 (threatening a5-a4) 10.a4 ♕g7= and Black wins a tempo to continue his plan begun with the move g7-g5.

The variation with 9.h4! has not had sufficient tests in the tournament practice yet. This is a very concrete move with the idea to compromise Black's far-advanced kingside pawns. 9... ♖g6! This pawn-sacrifice enables Black to activate his pieces. (His alternatives provide White with the opportunity to obtain effortlessly a slight, but stable advantage, for example: 9...g4 10. ♖e1 h5 11.g3, with the idea 11...f6 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13. ♕d3±, or 9...gxh4 10. ♖xh4 ♖g8 11.g3!? ♕e4 12.c3 ♖f5 13. ♖g2!±; 12...c5 13. ♕e3 ♖c8 14. ♖h2!± White has parried his opponent's kingside activity and can rely on exploiting in the future Black's kingside pawn-weaknesses.) 10.h5 (It would be too risky for Black to accept the sacrifice: 10.hxg5?! hxg5 11. ♕xg5 ♕e7 12. ♕e3 ♖c7=) 10... ♖f4! This is an attempt by Black to exploit White's early castling, with the idea to open files on the kingside and to organise counterplay there. (10... ♖e7 11. ♖h2 c5 12.c3 ♖c6 13. ♕g4 ♕h7 14.f4 gxf4, Volokitin – Rodshtein, Moscow 2010, 15. ♕xf4 ♖b6 16. ♖d2↑; 13. ♕e3 ♖c7 14. ♕g4 ♕h7 15.f4↑ S.Zhigalko – Ding Liren, Kocaeli 2014.) 11. ♕xf4 gxf4 12. ♖c1, with the idea ♖c1-d3. White is ready to counter his opponent's offensive on the kingside and brings his reserves to assist in the defence. (It would be weaker for him to choose 12. ♖d2 ♖g8 13. ♖fe1. Black was threatening 13... ♕h3 and White was ready to counter it with 14. ♕f1. 13... ♕e4! 14. ♖xf4 ♕xc2 15. ♖ac1 ♕f5∞; 14. ♖c1 ♖xg2+ 15. ♖xg2 ♖g5+ 16. ♖f1 ♖g4 17. ♖d3 ♖h3+ 18. ♖g1 ♖g4= Black forces a draw by a perpetual check.) 12...c5 13.dxc5 (13.c3∞; 13.c4 dxc4 14. ♕xc4∞) 13... ♖g8 14. ♖d3 ♕e4 15. ♖d2 ♖xg2=



Now, we will analyse in details Black's immediate move **B1) 9...c5**, as well as the more prudent **B2) 9...c7**.

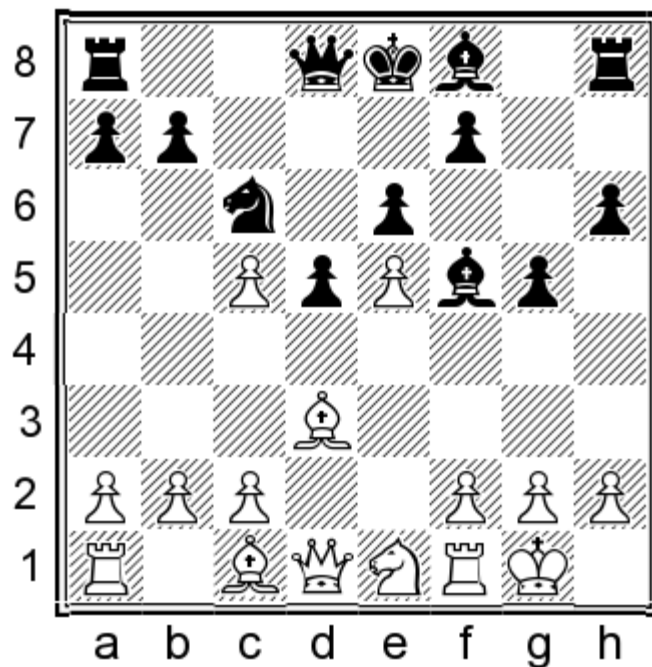
9...g6 10.f4 (10.d3!?) 10...f5 11.h5±

It would not be consistent for Black to opt for 9...g7, because his dark-squared bishop on g7 prevents the development of his own kingside initiative, having closed the g-file for the rook on h8. 10.f4 (White would achieve less with 10.d3 c7!∞; 10...b6!? 11.f4 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.bxc5 dxc5 14.dxc5 b6 15.e3 0-0!∞) 10...b6 (Black cannot solve his problems with 10...gxf4 11.fxf4 b6 12.a4 a6 13.a5± Quesada Perez – Kaufman, Arlington 2013, or 12.h1!? a5?! 13.a4 h5 14.g5 g6 15.xe7 xe7 16.d3± Vachier Lagrave – Harikrishna, Beijing 2014; 12...c5 13.dxc5 c7 14.d3 g6 15.g3↑) 11.d3 (It would not be so promising for White to continue here with 11.a4, Bartel – Bologan, Budva 2009, although even then, after for example: 11...c5 12.dxc5 c7 13.d3 gxf4 14.fxf4 g6 15.g3↑ Black would still have problems to worry about.) 11...gxf4 12.h1 g6 13.dxf4 dxf4 14.fxf4 0-0-0 15.a4± White maintains a considerable space advantage and his pieces are much more actively placed, Kritz – Burmakin, Bad Wiessee 2005.

B1) 9...c5 10.dxc5

It is also good for White to try here 10.dxc5!?, because his pawn on c5 cramps considerably his opponents position. 10...c6 11.d3 xd3 12.dxd3 dxe5 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.f4 c4 15.h5 f6 16.c3↑ (16.fg5?! hxg5 17.xg5 xg5 18.xg5 g8 19.f6 d3 20.f2 d4 21.f3 dxf6= Olszewski – Rodshtein, Puerto Madryn 2009).

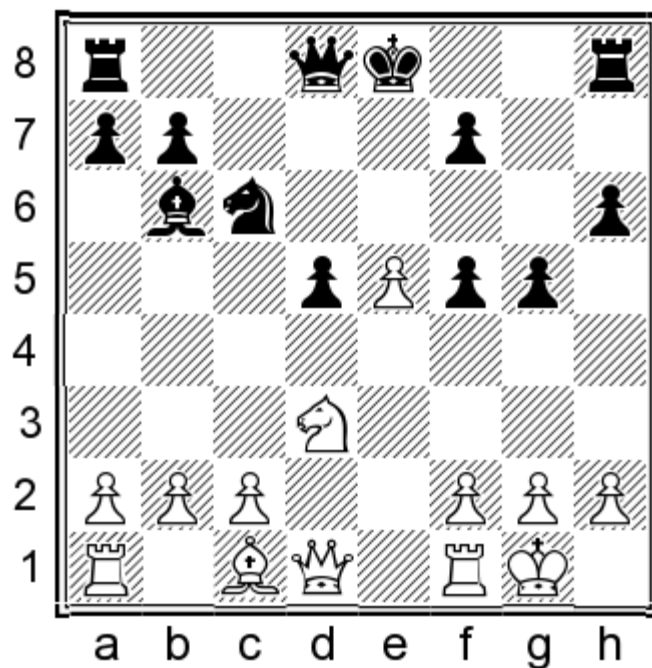
10...dxc5 11.dxc5 d6 12.d3



12...♙e4

With this move Black wishes to restrict the possibility of White's knight on e1 and his rook on f1 to join into the actions, which would be possible after 13.♙xe4 dxe4, for example: 14.♙e3 ♔xd1 15.♖xd1 b6

Following 12...♙xc5 13.♙xf5 exf5 14.♘d3 ♙b6



White can develop his initiative in two different ways:

1) 15.♙e3!? This move is played with the idea to exploit his lead in development. 15...d4 (Black would suffer, because of his lag in development after 15...♙xe3 16.fxe3 ♘e7 17.g4↑) 16.♙d2± ♔d7?! (He should better play here 16...♔d5 17.a4!↑) 17.a4 a6 18.b4 ♘d8 19.♖f3 g4 20.♖f4 ♖c8 21.♖ac1+– Svidler – Nakamura, Amsterdam 2009.

2) 15.♔h5!? White attacks the enemy kingside. 15...♔e7 (15...♘d4 16.c3 ♘e6 17.♖f3 f4 18.♘b4 ♘c7 19.♖d1±)

Pogonina – Ubiennykh, Moscow 2012) 16.e6 (16.♞e1!?) 16...0-0-0 17.♞xf7 ♞xf7 18.exf7 ♞hf8, Antipov – Mamedyarov, Dubai 2014, 19.♞e1±

13.f3!?

Black's bishop on e4 is very unpleasant, therefore, White's desire to oust it from there is easily understandable.

It would not be so good for him to play with the same idea the move 13.♞e2, due to 13...♙xc5 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♞xe4 ♞d4 16.♞xd4 (White would not achieve much if he refrains from trading queens: 16.♞f3 0-0-0 17.♙e3 ♗xe5 18.♞f6 ♞d6 19.♙xc5 ♞xc5= Vachier Lagrave – Cheparinov, Cap d'Agde 2008.) 16...♙xd4 17.♗f3 ♞d8 18.h3 ♙xe5 19.♗xe5 ♗xe5 20.♙e3 b6= Van Kampen – Lauber, Dortmund 2011.

It is also promising for him to opt for 13.♙e3!?, with the idea to preserve in advance the important c5-pawn, which restricts Black's possibilities. 13...♞c7 (The immediate transfer of Black's dark-squared bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal with the move 13...♙g7 would not solve the problems for him, for example: 14.f3 ♙xd3 15.♗xd3 ♗xe5 16.♗xe5 ♙xe5 17.f4± ♙xb2?! 18.♞b1 d4 19.♙d2 ♙c3 20.fxg5 ♙xd2 21.♞xd2 ♞xg5 22.♞xd4± Paichadze – Rodshtein, Yerevan 2014; 20.♙xc3!?! dxc3 21.♞xb7 ♞xd1 22.♞xd1 ♞c8 23.fxg5 hxg5 24.♞d3±) 14.f3 0-0-0 15.fxg4 dxe4 16.♞e2 exd3 17.♗xd3 ♙g7 (17...♗xe5 18.♙f2±) 18.♙f2 ♞d5, Zawadzka – Feuerstack, Wroclaw 2010, 19.♞ae1±

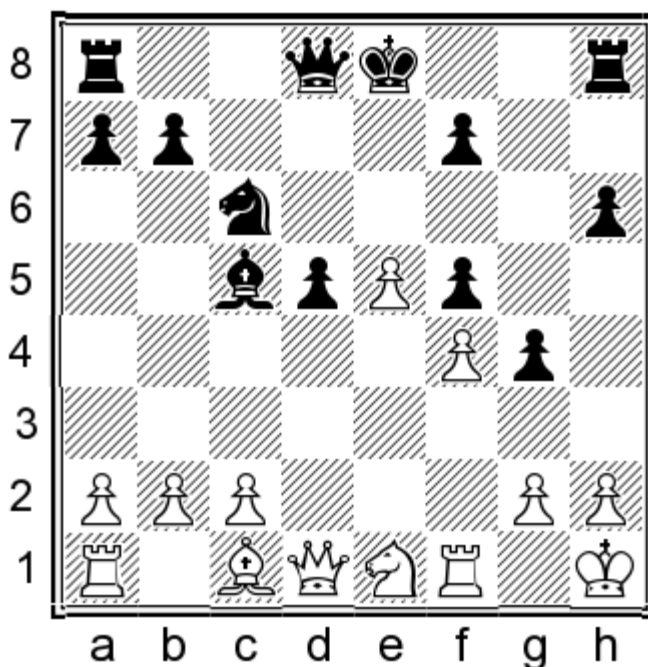
13...♙xc5+ 14.♗h1 ♙f5

The trade of the bishops 14...♙xd3 15.♗xd3 would enable White to bring his knight into the actions with tempo. 15...♙b6 16.f4 gxf4 17.♙xf4± Hernandez Estevez – Aranaz, Linares 2013.

15.♙xf5 exf5 16.f4

It would be rather careless for White to try the ambitious move 16.♗d3 and despite the fact that his knight joins in the actions with tempo, he would have problems with the development of his queenside. 16...♙b6 (16...♙e7!?! 17.f4 g4 18.b4 d4 19.b5 ♗a5 20.♞e1 ♞c8∞ Hosseinzadeh – Ghaem Maghami, Zahedan 2012) 17.f4 g4 18.♙d2 h5 19.♙b4 h4∞ Karjakin – Nisipeanu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

16...g4



17.c3!

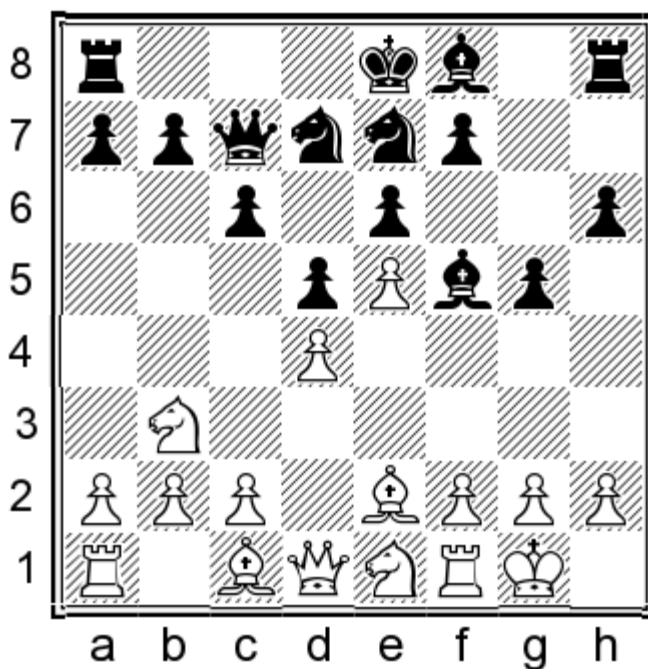
White should not be in a hurry to develop his knight to d3, since it might be handy on the c2-square as well, while the d3-square might be very appropriate for his queen. Now, he plans a very favourable regrouping of his forces with: ♖e1-c2, ♕d1-d3 and ♙c1-e3, enabling him to complete the development of his queenside.

17...d4

White can develop powerful initiative after 17...♗d7 18.♘c2 0-0-0 19.b4 ♙b6 20.a4±

18.♗d3 ♗d7 19.♘c2 dxc3 20.♗xc3± (with the idea ♙c1-e3) – His space advantage and more elastic pawn-structure provide him with superior chances.

B2) 9...♗c7



Black prepares castling queenside with this move, as well as the undermining pawn-break c6-c5, attacking the enemy e5-pawn in the process.

10.♘d3

White needs to develop his pieces and to fortify his position in the centre. He can acquire additional space only later.

About 10.♙h5 – see Nakar – Sjugirov, Jerusalem 2015 (**game 10**).

10.♙d2 c5 11.c4 dxc4 12.♙xc4 a6∞

It would be premature for White to try here 10.f4, since Black will have the pleasant choice between the immediate move 10...c5!? 11.dxc5 (11.c3 c4!? 12.♘d2 gxf4 13.b3∞ Ponkratov – Iordachescu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011) 11...♙e4 12.♘d3 ♘g6!?∞, as well as 10...0-0-0!?∞, with the idea 11.fxg5?! hxg5 12.g4 f6! (12...♙g6 13.♙xg5 c5 14.c3± Haslinger – Turov, Sevilla 2014) 13.gxf5 ♘xf5∞ 14.♙g4 fxe5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♙xf5 exf5 17.♙xg5 ♙d6∞

10...b6

It would be premature for Black to castle here 10...0-0-0, Matinian – Bocharov, Izhevsk 2012, in view of 11.♘dc5!

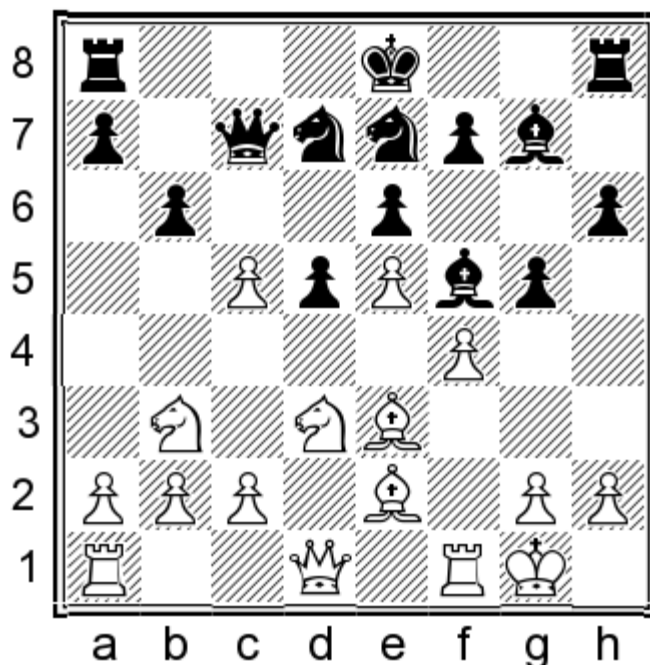
♠xc5 12.♠xc5 ♠g6 13.b4± and he would be too slow with the development of his kingside initiative.

10...♠g6. This is a very rarely played move. 11.♠g4!? (11.a4!? 0-0-0 12.a5↑; following 11.♠d2 0-0-0 12.♠dc1, White must consider very seriously the possible piece-sacrifice 12...c5, for example: 13.g4 ♠e4 14.f3 cxd4 15.fxe4 dxe4 16.♠xd4 ♜xe5 17.♠e1 ♠f6 18.♠cb3 ♠d6 19.♠g3 ♠f4 20.♠h1 ♠c7 21.c3 h5 22.gxh5 ♜h6) 11...♠xg4 12.♜xg4 c5 13.f4 cxd4 (13...c4 14.f5 h5 15.♜h3 g4 16.♜g3 exf5 (16...♠e7 17.fxe6 fxe6 18.♜f2 ♠f5 (18...0-0-0 19.♠bc5 cxd3 20.♠xe6 ♜b6 21.♠xd8±) 19.♠f4 ♜b6 20.♠xd5 ♜c6 21.♠e3 ♠xe3 22.♠xe3 cxb3 23.♜f7 ♠d8 24.cxb3↑) 17.e6 ♜xg3 18.exd7+ ♠xd7 19.♠bc5+ ♠d6 20.hxg3 cxd3 21.c3±) 14.♠xd4 gxf4 15.♠xf4 0-0-0 16.♠h1 h5 17.♜e2± Haria – Qiu, Hinckley 2014.

11.♠e3 ♠g7 12.f4

The move 12.♜c1!?, would need some practical tests, with the idea to react to the undermining move c6-c5 with the counter-strike c2-c4. 12...♜d8 (12...♠g6?! 13.f4 ♠f5 14.♠d2 a5 15.a4± Bok – Narayanan, Pune 2014) 13.♜e1!? (13.f4!? c5 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♠bxc5 gxf4 16.♜xf4 ♠xe5 17.♠a6 ♜c8 18.♠xe5 ♠xe5 19.♜f2↑) 13...c5 14.dxc5 ♠xe5 15.cxb6 axb6 16.f4 ♠5c6 17.c3± Tsydypov – Bukavshin, Moscow 2015.

12...c5 13.dxc5

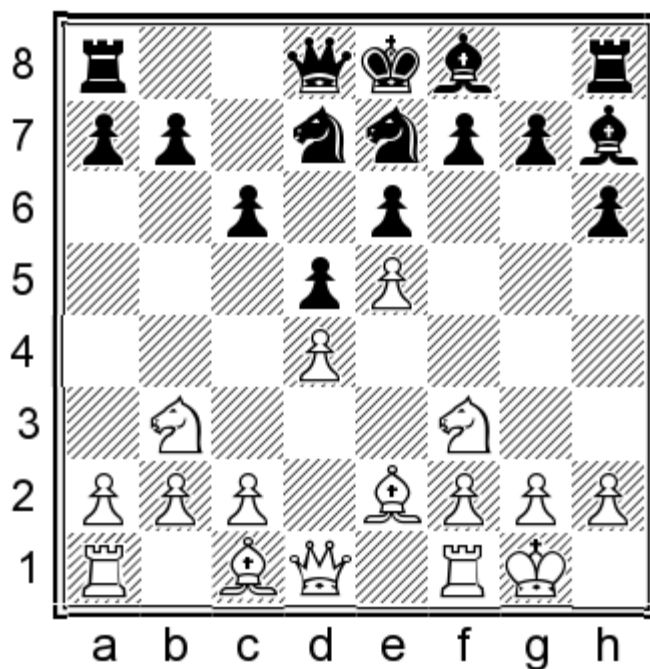


13...gxf4

After 13...bxc5 14.♠dxc5 gxf4, Ashwin – Sasikiran, Jalgoan 2013, White has the possibility for the intermediate capturing – 15.♠xd7!, for example: 15...fxe3 (15...♜xd7 16.♠xf4 ♠g6 17.♠d4±, with the rather unpleasant threats ♠d4xf5 and ♠e2-b5) 16.♠f6+ ♠xf6 (16...♠f8 17.♜d4!±, with the idea 17...♠g6 18.♜b4+ ♜e7 19.♠c5!+–) 17.exf6 ♠c6 (17...♠g6 18.♜d4±) 18.♜xf5!? exf5 19.♜xd5 ♜d8 20.♜c5 (20.♜f3!?) 20...♜d6 21.♜xe3+ ♠f8 22.♜f1 ♜xf6 23.♜c5+ ♠e7 24.c3±

14.cxb6 axb6 15.♠xf4 ♠g6 16.♠g3↑ White has an extra pawn and much more space, so his prospects are obviously better. 16...♠xd3 17.♠xd3 ♠gxe5 18.♜h5!? (18.♜e2 0-0 19.a4±) 18...0-0 19.♠f4 f5 20.♠xh6± Wei Yi – Ding Liren, Shenzhen 2014.

C) 8...♖h7

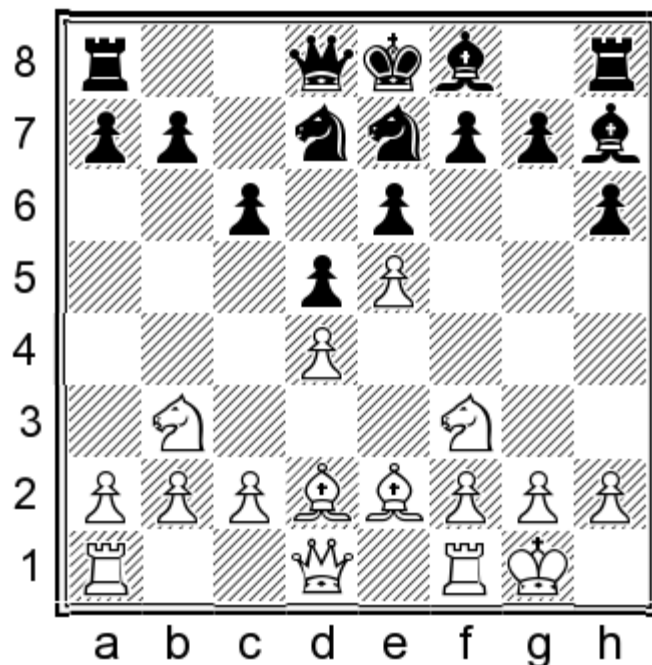


Black retreats his bishop, with the idea to develop his knight to f5, or to the g6-square. Still, such a slow development may lead to tragic consequences for him in an open position. Here, the game is still just maneuvering, so this type of play is possible. One of the basic dangers for Black may arise when he plays ♖e7-f5 and then ♗f8-e7, because after the series of moves – g2-g4, ♗f5-h4, ♗f3xh4, ♗e7xh4 and f2-f4, his position may turn out to be clearly worse. I would also like to mention that with a black knight on f5, White should not have in mind the move g2-g4, before Black's bishop has been developed on e7.

9.♗d2!?

White has also some other promising possibilities, for example: 9.a4!?

I plan to analyse this natural and powerful move – 9.♗d2!? I like it not only because White has the possibility to play at some moment ♗b3-a5, or to provoke Black after ♗d2-a5 to play the move b7-b6, weakening his queenside, since it deprives his knight of the b6-square, but also because before forcing the issue, White has the possibility to make another useful waiting move – ♖c1.



We will deal now with: **C1) 9...♖g6** and **C2) 9...♗f5**.

Black will still have problems after 9...♖c7 10.♞c1 ♗c8 (10...g5, Solodovnichenko – Thejkumar, New Delhi 2009, 11.♗e1!? c5 12.c4 dxc4 13.♙xc4 ♗c6 14.♙b5!?↑; 14.♙d3 cxd4 15.♙xh7 ♞xh7 16.♗f3↑) 11.♙a5 b6 12.♙d2 b5, Dominguez Perez – Dreev, Sochi 2012, 13.♙a5! This important move blocks the advance of Black's a7-pawn. 13...♗cb6 14.♙d3 ♙xd3 15.cxd3 ♙e7 16.♙d2 ♞c8 17.♗a5 ♗b8 18.♗e1 0-0 19.♖g4±

Black cannot achieve much with the inclusion of the moves 9...♞c8 10.♞c1, for example: 10...♗g6 11.c4 dxc4 12.♙xc4 ♙e7 13.♙d3 ♗b6 14.♙a5 (14.♗a5!? ♖d7 15.b4± Alimov – Berezhnov, Saratov 2011) 14...♖d7 15.g3 0-0 16.h4±

White should not be afraid of 9...a5, since he can counter that with the standard move 10.a4, for example: 10...♗g6 (10...♗c8 11.♗e1±) 11.♖e1 b6 12.c4 (12.♞c1!? ♙e7 13.c4 0-0 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.♙b5±) 12...dxc4 13.♙xc4 ♙e7 14.♞c1 (14.♖e2 0-0 15.g3!?↑ Bar – Spraggett, Caleta 2014) 14...0-0 15.♖e3± Vachier Lagrave – Magem Badals, Linares 2013.

C1) 9...♗g6 10.♞c1!?

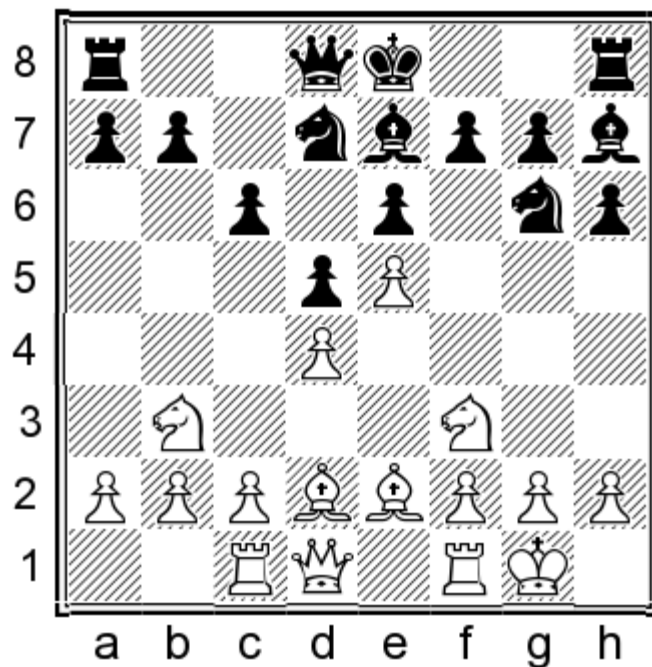
This is an important preparatory move, but is not White's only resource.

He can also play immediately 10.c4!? dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♗e7 (11...♙e7. Now, Black will hardly manage to transfer his knight on g6 to a more favourable placement. 12.♞c1 – see 10.♞c1.) 12.♙b4 a5 13.♙d6 ♗d5 14.♗c5±

White can also emphasize the rather awkward placement of the enemy knight on g6 with the line: 10.g3!? ♙e7 11.h4 0-0 12.c4 f6, Milliet – Bollengier, Pau 2012, 13.♙c3±, or 12...dxc4 13.♗a5±

10...♙e7

White maintains a stable advantage following 10...♗b6 11.♗a5 ♖d7, Andriasian – Ovetchkin, Abu Dhabi 2009, 12.h4 ♙e7 13.g3±, with the idea 13...0-0 14.h5 ♗h8 15.♙d3 ♙xd3 16.cxd3 f5 17.exf6 ♙xf6 18.♗e5±



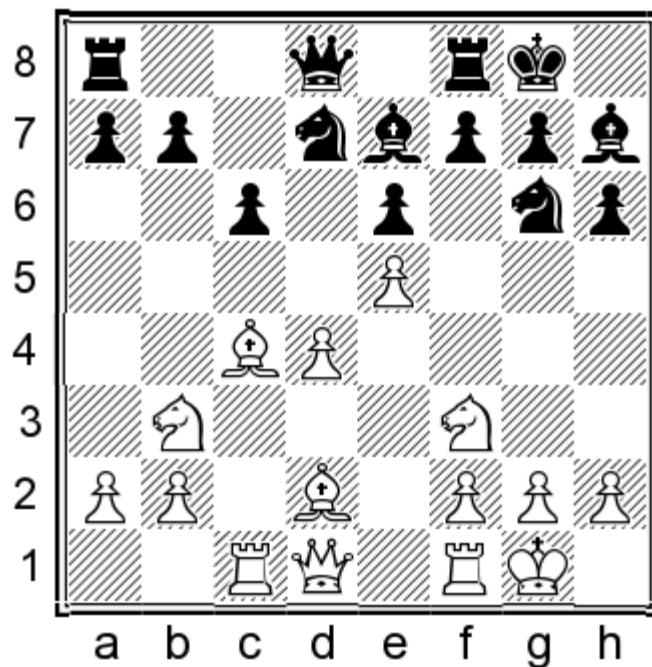
11.c4

After 11.♖a5 ♜b8 12.c4, Black has at his disposal an important tactical resource – 12...♘f4!, which provides him with a quite acceptable position. 13.♙xf4 ♜xa5 14.♙d2 ♙b4 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♙xb4 ♜xb4 17.♞c7 ♜xb2 18.♜c1 ♜xc1 19.♞fxc1, Khairullin – Rodshtein, Moscow 2008, 19...♘b6!, with the idea ♖a8. He should not be afraid of the loss of his casting rights after the possible move ♙e2-b5+, because it is much more important for him to oust the enemy rook on c7 away from the penultimate rank. 20.♙b5+ ♜f8 21.♘d2 g5 22.♘b3 ♘a8! 23.♞d7 ♘b6=

11...dxc4 12.♙xc4

12.♘a5 ♘f4! 13.♙xc4 ♘d3=

12...0-0



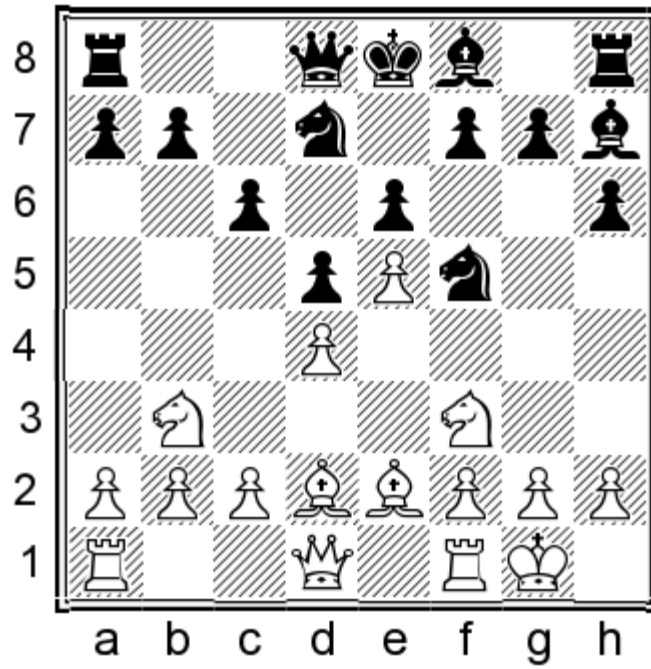
13. ♕d3!?

White removes his bishop in advance against the possible attack ♖d7-b6.

He can also try a plan, which we have recommended in our notes to White's move ten – 13.g3!? ♜e8 (13... ♖b6 14. ♕d3 ♜d7 15.h4 ♜fd8 16. ♕a5 ♖f8 17. ♕xh7+ ♖xh7 18. ♖fd2 ♜d5 19. ♜e2 ♜d7 20. ♖e4 ♜b5 21. ♜xb5 cxb5 22. ♕xb6 axb6 23.a3± A.Kovacevic – A.Bykhovsky, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014) 14. ♜e1 ♕f8 15. ♖a5 ♜b8, Malakhov – Jobava, Kallithea 2008, 16. ♕d3±

13...a5 (13... ♖b6, Wunderlich – Napalkov, ICCF 2008, 14.g3±) **14.a4 ♕b4 15. ♕xb4 axb4 16.a5 ♖e7 17. ♕xh7+ ♖xh7 18. ♖fd2 ♖d5 19. ♖e4±** So – Margvelashvili, Kazan 2013.

C2) 9... ♖f5



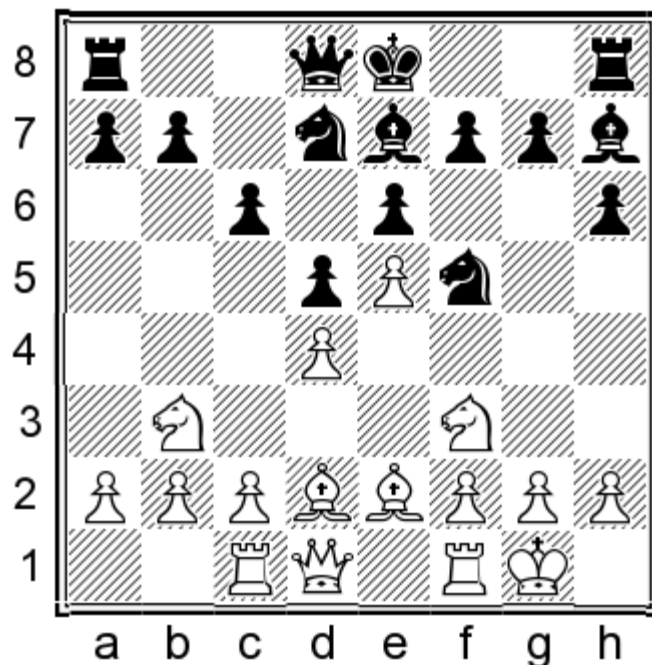
10.♞c1

The move 10.c4 is also interesting here, but leads to rather unclear consequences. 10...dxc4 11.♘a5 ♖c8 (11...♞b8?! 12.♗xc4±; 11...b5 12.g4 ♗h4 13.♗xc6 ♜b6 14.♗xh4 ♜xc6 15.a4 a6 16.♗f5!±, with the idea 16...♞c8 17.axb5 axb5 18.♙f3 ♜b6 19.♙a5 ♜b8 20.d5!! exf5 21.d6 ♙xd6 22.exd6 0-0 23.g5! hxg5 24.♞e1 g4 25.♙d5+—) 12.♗xc4 ♗b6, J.Sanchez – Patuzzo, Nice 2009, 13.b3 ♜d7 14.♙a5 ♗d5 15.g4 b5! 16.gxf5 bxc4 17.bxc4 ♗f4 18.fxe6 ♜xe6

10.♙d3!? ♙g6 (10...h5?! 11.♗g5 ♙g6 12.♗h3 ♗e7 13.♙e2± Kabanov – Shimanov, Pardubice 2006; 10...♙e7 11.g4 ♗h4 12.♙xh7 ♗xf3+ 13.♜xf3 ♞xh7 14.♜d3±) 11.♜e2 ♙e7 12.g4 ♗h4 13.♗xh4 ♙xd3 (13...♙xh4? 14.♙xg6 fxg6 15.♜d3+—) 14.♜xd3 ♙xh4 15.f4±, with the idea f4-f5, Hladecek – Muller-Tupler, ICCF 2009.

10...♙e7

Black may have greater problems if he postpones the development of his kingside after 10...♗b6 11.♗a5 ♞b8 12.♙d3 ♙g6 13.♜e2 ♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♙xd3 15.♜xd3 ♜xh4 16.b3 ♙e7 17.f4± Gharamian – Michiels, Belgium 2010.



11.c4!?

This move leads to positions in which Black's camp looks solid, but is cramped, so White's chances are noticeably better.

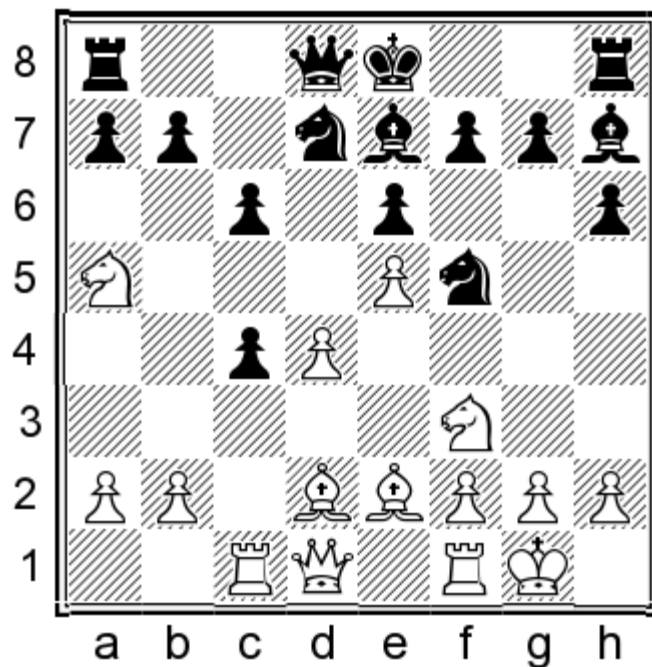
It is also good for him to continue here with 11.g4!? ♖h4 12.♗xh4 ♕xh4 13.f4 0-0 (Black's king will remain stranded in the centre after 13...♝c7?! 14.♖b4±, while his castling kingside will be very difficult and castling queenside will be just precarious, Airapetian – Ponomarev, Serpukhov 2009; 13...♗e7?! 14.f5± g5? 15.♗d3 ♝c7 16.♗a5 b6 17.♗e1 0-0-0 18.♗g3 ♗g8 19.f6 ♗f8 20.c4+– Wang Hao – Darban, Vishakapatnam 2008) 14.♗e3 (14.f5?! c5! 15.♗xc5 ♗xc5 16.dxc5 ♝c7∞) 14...f6 15.c4±

11...dxc4

Black fails to solve his problems after 11...0-0 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♗a5 ♜b8 14.♝a4 ♗g6 15.h3 ♝e8 16.♗b5 ♗b6 17.♝b3 ♜f8, Gargatagli – Sanchez Guirado, Barbera del Valles 2013, 18.g3± White's space advantage and his more actively placed pieces provide him with excellent chances of developing powerful initiative.

12.♗a5

Naturally, this move is stronger than 12.♗xc4. White exploits the possibility to transfer his knight to a more active position (the c4-square), freeing in the process the b3-square for his queen, moreover that the road forward of his b-pawn has been opened.



12...c3

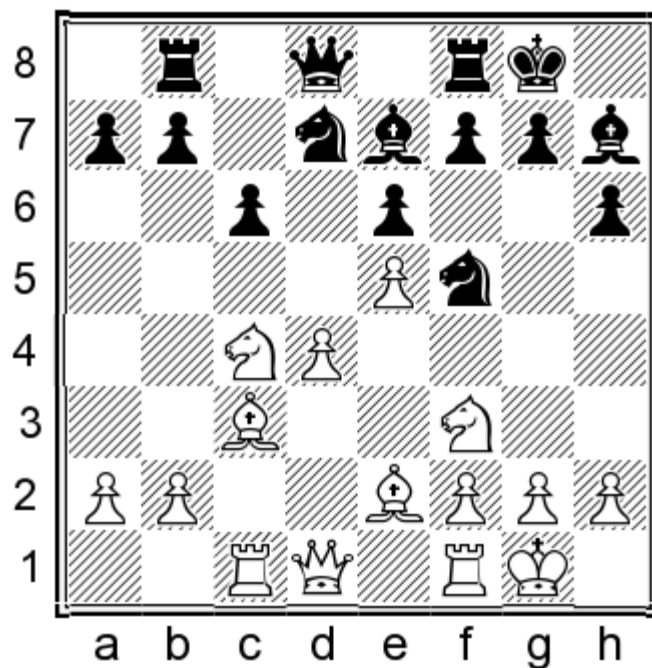
12...♖b8 13.♜xc4±, with the idea 13...♞b6 14.♙a5±

12...♜c8, Yemelin – Figura, Berlin 2009, 13.g4 ♞h4 14.♞xh4 ♙xh4 15.♜xc4 ♙e7 16.♙a5 0-0 17.f4±

12...♜c7 13.♜xc4 ♞b6 (13...0-0 14.♜b3±) 14.♙a5 0-0 15.♜b3± Ferreira – Padeiro, Torres Vedras 2011.

12...♜b8, Salgado Lopez – Kantarji, Jerusalem 2015, 13.g4! ♞h4 14.♞xh4 ♙xh4 15.♜xc4 ♙e7 16.f4±

13.♙xc3 ♖b8 14.♜c4 0-0



15.a4!?

With this move White consolidates his space advantage on the queenside.

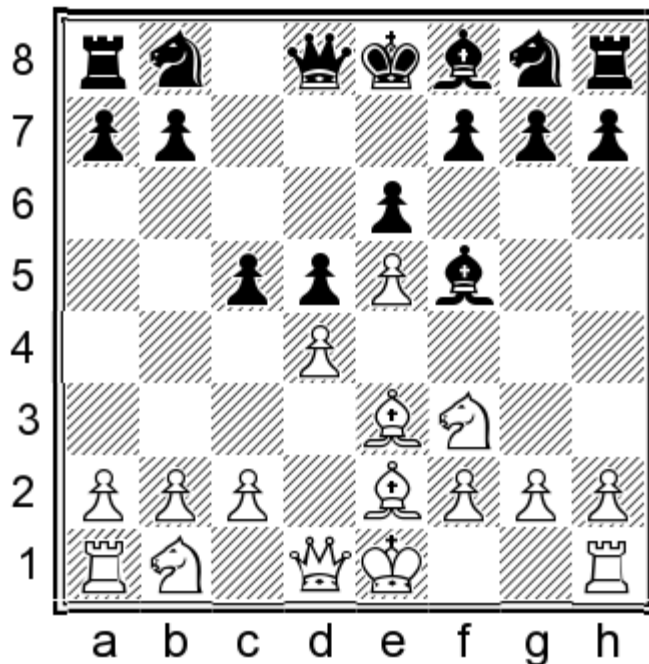
It seems also good for him to opt here for 15.♗a5!?, with the idea to clarify the situation on the queenside.

15...♞b6 16.♗a5±

Black is doomed to a passive defence. It would not work for him to try, for example the seemingly active move 16...c5?, in view of 17.dxc5 ♖xd1 18.♞fxd1 ♞xa4 19.g4+ – Kotenko – Ivaschenko, Armavir 2010.

Chapter 8

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♟e2 c5 6.♟e3



This is a logical developing move, creating the threat to capture on c5.

6...♞e7

This is a seldom played reply for Black.

His main responses here are 6...♞b6, 6...♞d7 and 6...cxd4 and they will be analysed in Chapters 9-13.

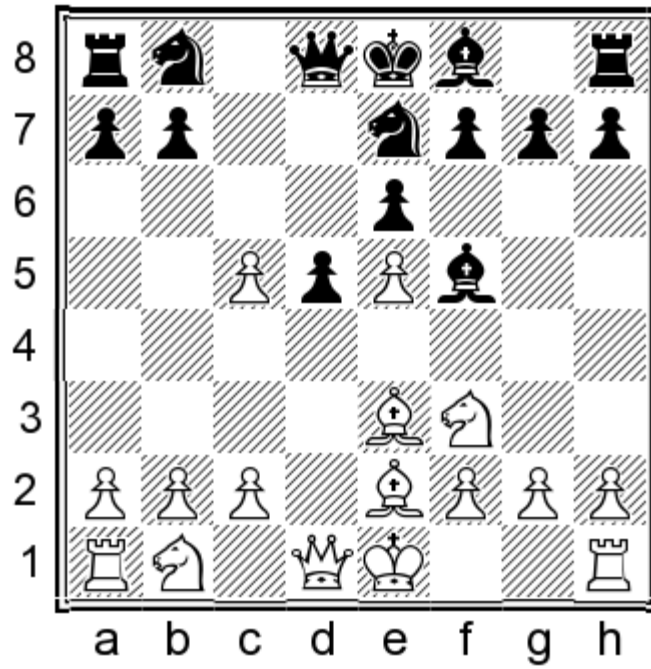
Black should better refrain from 6...♞c6?!, since regaining his pawn after 7.dxc5±, may prove to be very problematic, because it would be a disaster for him to play 7...♞a5+ 8.c3 ♟xc5? 9.b4+–

It is also bad for him to opt for 6...c4?! 7.b3 b5 (After 7...cxb3 8.axb3±, the opening of the a-file will be in favour of White, because he will castle later and will increase his pressure in the centre with the help of the pawn-advance c2-c4.) 8.a4±

7.dxc5

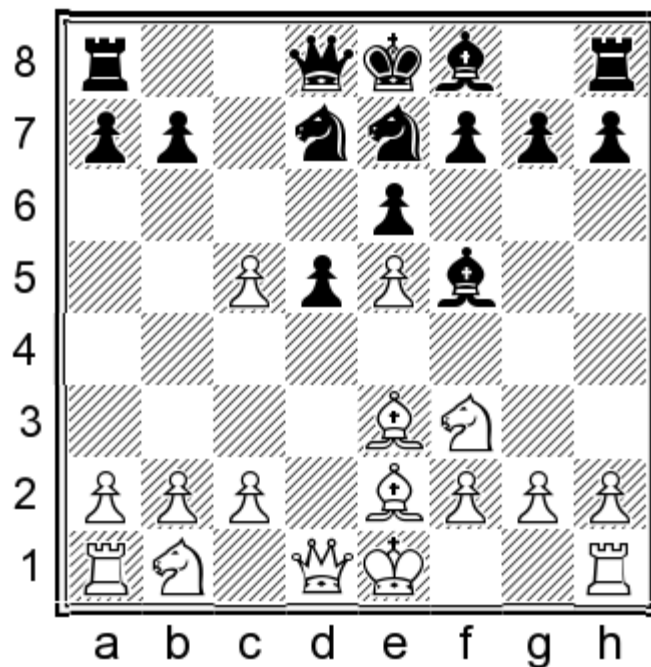
Capturing of this pawn is White's most principled reaction.

He would achieve much less with 7.c4 dxc4 8.♞c3 ♞bc6 9.dxc5 ♞d5 10.♞xd5 ♞xd5 11.0-0 ♟d3 12.♞c1 ♞d8= Shirov – Anand, Dortmund 1996, as well as following 7.0-0 ♞ec6 (7...♞d7 8.♞bd2 – see Chapter 10; 7...cxd4 8.♞xd4 – see Chapter 12) 8.dxc5 ♞d7 – see 7.dxc5 ♞d7 8.0-0 ♞c6.



7...d7

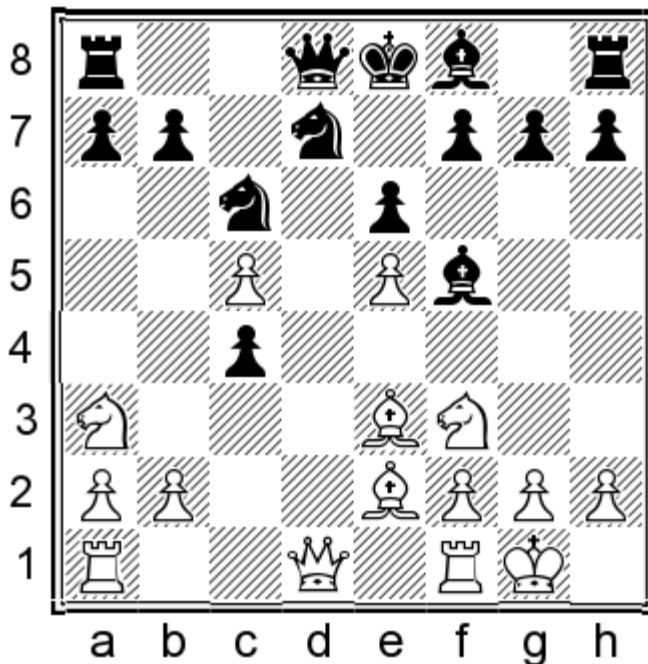
Black should better avoid 7...d6?!, in view of 8.c4! and he would have to lose additional time to regain his pawn. 8...a5 (After Black's alternatives, he suffers material loses without obtaining any compensation for them: 8...dxc4 9.♖xd8+ ♜xd8 10.♞a3 ♞a6 11.♞b5±, with the ideas ♟e2xc4 and ♞b5-d6; 9...♜xd8, Adams – Brunner, Germany 1994, 10.♞a3 ♞d7 11.♞d1 c3 12.bxc3 ♜c8 13.♞d4±; after 8...d4, White has the pleasant choice between 9.♟xd4!± and 9.♞xd4 ♞xd4 10.♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.♟xd4 ♞c6 12.♟e3 ♞xe5 13.♞c3 ♞c8 14.♞a4±) 9.♟d2. He should exploit his opponent's lag in development and not be greedy to win material. (For example, after 9.♖d2 dxc4, Demers – Li Zhichao, Red Deer 2003, 10.♖xa5 ♞xa5 11.♞a3 ♞d7! 12.♞b5 ♟xc5 13.♞c7+ ♜e7 14.♞xa8 ♟xe3 15.fxe3 ♞xa8, White's position becomes very dubious.) 9...♖xc5 10.cxd5 exd5 (10...♖xd5?! 11.♞c3 ♖d7 12.0-0 ♟e7 13.♖a4 0-0 14.♞fd1±) 11.♞a3 ♟e7 12.♞c1 ♖b6 13.♞b5 a6 14.♞d6+ ♟xd6 15.exd6±



8. ♖d4!?

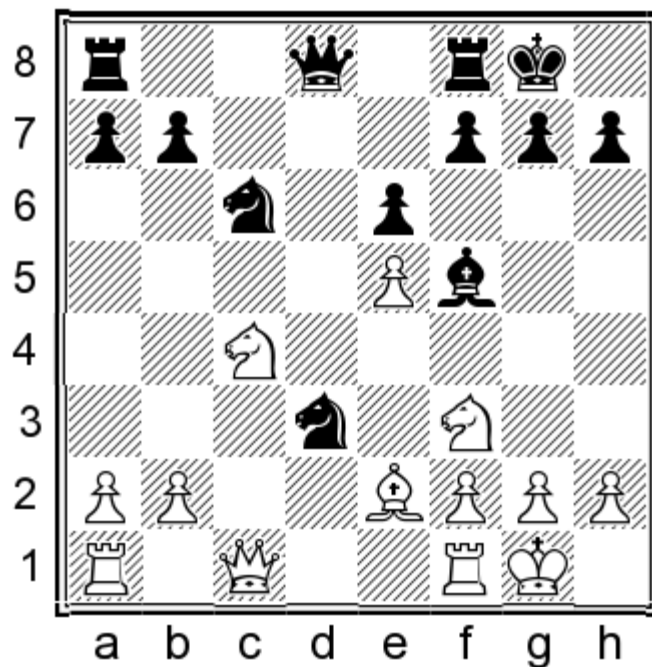
This is a solid move, but White has some alternatives as well.

Following 8.0-0, Black manages to cope with his difficulties in the opening, not effortlessly, though... 8... ♗c6 (Or 8... ♕g4?! 9. ♖bd2 ♗c6 10. b4!±, with the idea 10... ♖xb4 11. ♖b1 ♗c6 12. ♖xb7 ♖c8 13. ♕a6 ♗cb8 14. ♖b4 ♖xa6 15. ♖xg4 ♗xc5 16. c4±) 9. c4 dxc4 10. ♖a3

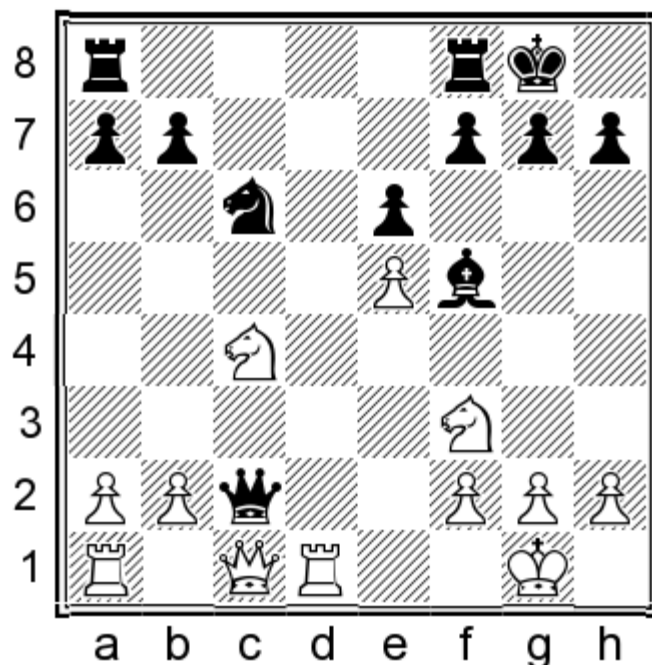


After 10...c3, White has an attractive counter argument – 11. ♖b3! (it would be weaker for White to choose here 11. bxc3 ♕xc5 12. ♗c4 0-0 13. ♗d4 ♖c7!?∞) with the idea to develop powerful initiative following 11...cxb2 12. ♖ad1 b1=♖ 13. ♗xb1 ♖c7 14. ♗c3 a6 (14... ♗xc5 15. ♖c4±) 15. ♗h4 ♕g6 16. ♗xg6 hxg6 17. ♗e4 ♖xe5 18. g3↑; even after Black's relatively best response 11... ♕xc5, he cannot solve his problems either: 12. ♕xc5 ♗xc5 13. ♖xc3 ♗d7 14. ♗c4 0-0 15. ♖ad1 ♕e4 16. ♗d4 ♕d5 17. ♗xc6 bxc6 18. f4±

10... ♕xc5 11. ♕xc5 ♗xc5 12. ♗xc4 0-0 13. ♖c1! ♗d3! After this knight-sortie, Black can rely on reaching an approximately equal position (13... ♕g4 14. ♖d1 ♖e7 15. ♖e3 ♗d7 16. h3 ♕h5 17. ♗d4 ♗xd4 18. ♖xd4 ♕xe2 19. ♖xe2± White dominates over the d6-outpost and can develop his initiative on the kingside, so he maintains a slight but stable advantage, Khalifman – Dreev, Elista 1998; 17. g4!? ♕g6 18. a3↑)



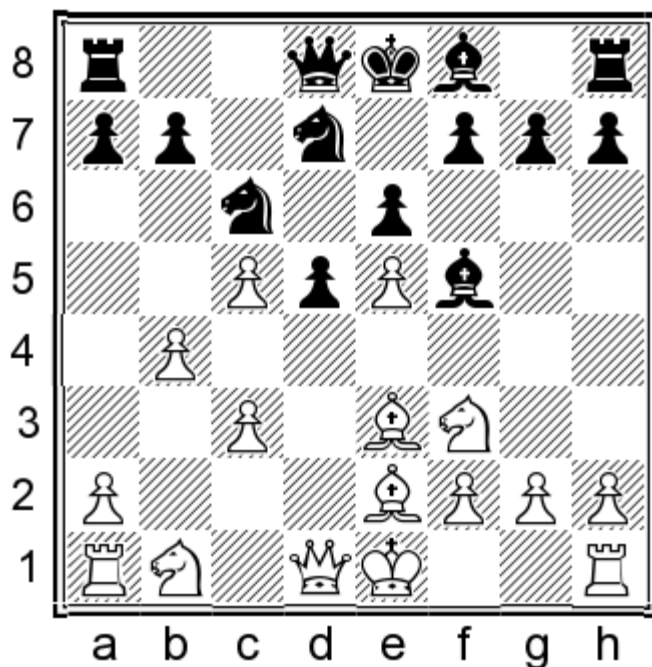
14. ♖xd3 (14. ♜e3 ♜d5! 15. ♘d6 ♘dx5 16. ♞fd1 ♞xf3+ 17. ♙xf3 ♜e5 18. ♜xe5 ♘xe5 19. ♙xb7 ♞ab8= Ivanchuk – Karpov, Monte Carlo 1998; 15. b3 ♜e4 16. ♞fd1 ♜xe3 17. fxe3 ♞fd8=) 14... ♜xd3 15. ♞d1 ♜c2! It is well known that exchanges facilitate the defence of cramped positions. (15... ♜e4 16. ♘d6 ♜b4 17. a3 ♜b6 18. h3!? ♙g6 19. b4± Brkic – Riazantsev, Aix-les-Bains 2011, with the idea 19... f6? 20. ♜c4 ♘xe5 21. ♘xe5 fxe5 22. ♜xe6+ ♔h8 23. ♞a2 e4 24. ♜e7+–)



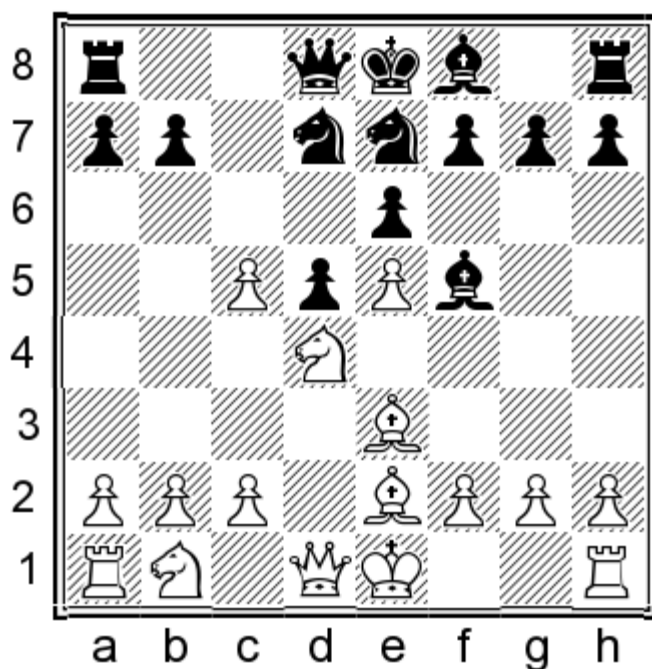
16. ♘d4 (16. ♞d7 ♜xc1+ 17. ♞xc1 ♙e4= Wang Zili – Karpov, Beijing 1998) 16... ♜xc1 17. ♞axc1 ♙e4 18. ♘d6 ♙d5 19. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 (Black's road to equality is much more complicated following 19... bxc6!? 20. b3 a5 21. ♘c4 ♞fb8 22. ♘b2 ♞b4 23. f3 f6 24. exf6 gxf6 25. ♘a4 ♔f7 26. ♔f2 ♔e7 27. ♘c3 ♔d6 28. ♞d2 h5= Kryvoruchko – Miton, Lublin 2012; 24. ♞e1!?) 20. ♞d4 f6=

8.c3!? This is a very interesting move. It is not so ambitious, but White manages to change the pawn-structure and can rely on maintaining long-term initiative thanks to his pawn-majority on the queenside. 8... ♘c6 9. b4 (White managed to

equalise, but with great difficulties following 9.♘d4 ♕xc5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗xf5 exf5 12.♖xd5 ♕xe3 13.e6 ♖b6 14.♖xd7 ♖xb2 15.exf7+ ♔h8 16.fxe3 ♗xe2 17.♖xb7 ♗e5 18.♗a3 ♖xe3+ 19.♔h1 ♗g4 20.♖f3 ♖e5 21.♖f4= Karjakin – Morozevich, Moscow 2011.)



9...♗dx5 (9...a5 10.♗d4 ♕g6 11.f4 axb4 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.cxb4 f6 14.0-0 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♕d4 ♖b8 17.♗c3 ♕e7 18.b5±; 9...♗cx5 10.♗d4 ♕xb1 11.♖xb1 ♕e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.f4± Qin Kanying – Xu Yuanyuan, Beijing 1997) 10.♗d4 ♕g6 (White obtains a stable advantage after 10...♗xd4 11.cxd4 ♗c6 12.a3 ♕e7 13.♗c3 0-0 14.0-0±; or 11...♗c4 12.♗d2 ♗xe3 13.♖a4+ ♔e7 14.fxe3±) 11.0-0 ♕e7 12.♗d2 ♕f6 13.a3!? 0-0 14.f4 ♗xd4 15.cxd4 ♗c6 16.♗f3 ♕e4 17.b5 ♗e7 18.♖d2↑ White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his space advantage and a solid position in the centre.



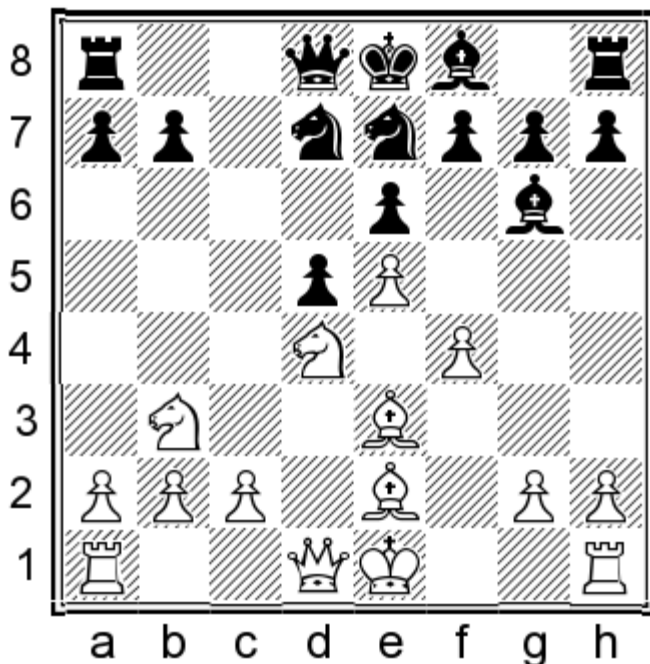
8...♗xc5

Black's alternatives provide White with additional possibilities, connected with preserving his c5-pawn.

Black may pay a dear price for capturing the enemy central e5-pawn after 8...♞xe5 9.♞c3 (9...♙f4!? ♞5c6 10.♞b5 ♞g6 11.♙d6 ♚g5? 12.g4 ♙e4 13.f3+- Bologan – Asrian, Krasnodar 1997; 11...♙xd6 12.♞xd6+ ♜f8, Bologan – Alavkin, Kstovo 1997, 13.♚d2!?) 9...♙g6 (9...a6 10.0-0 ♞5c6 11.♞a4!); 11...♙f3!? ♙g6 12.♞a4 e5, Minasian – Asrian, Yerevan 1996, 13.♞xc6! bxc6 14.♞b6 ♚a7 15.c3±) 10.h4! h5 11.♙f4 ♞7c6 12.♙xe5 ♞xe5 13.♙b5+ ♞d7 14.♚e2 ♙xc5 15.♞xe6+-

Black would not solve his problems with 8...♙g6 9.0-0 (9.b4!? ♞xe5 10.♞d2↑) 9...♞xe5 (9...♞xc5 10.♞d2 a6 11.♞2b3±) 10.♞a3 (White has excellent prospects of developing initiative following 10.f4!? ♞5c6 11.c3 ♞f5 12.♞xf5 ♙xf5 13.♞d2 h6 14.♞f3 ♙e7 15.♙d3↑) 10...a6 11.c4↑, with the idea 11...♞5c6 12.b4 e5 13.♞xc6 bxc6 14.cxd5 ♞xd5 15.♚b3 ♙e7 16.♞c4 ♚c7 17.♞b6+-

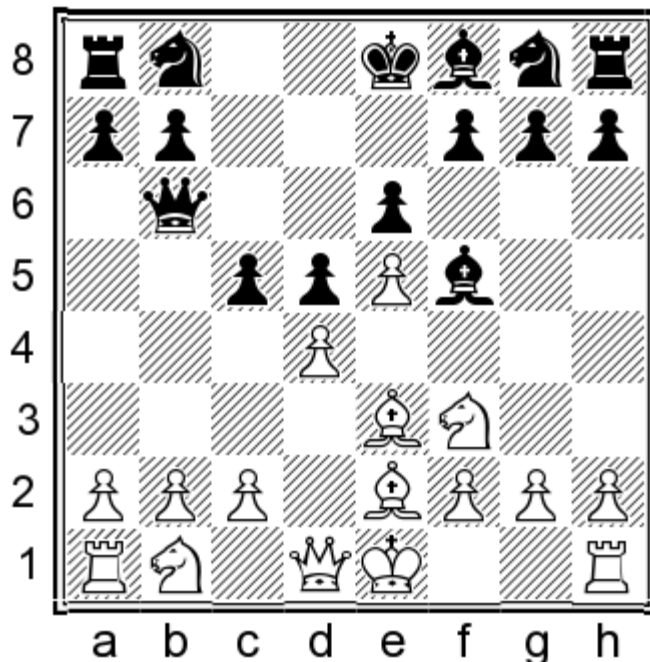
9.♞d2 ♙g6 10.♞2b3 ♞d7 11.f4±



White has succeeded in fortifying reliably his position in the centre (the e5-pawn) and has taken under control the d4-square and all this provides him with a slight edge.

Chapter 9

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♗f3 e6 5.♙e2 c5 6.♙e3 ♚b6



7.♗c3

White is trying to develop his pieces as quickly as possible and to seize the initiative, while Black is attacking the b2-pawn.

The move 7.c4?! is not good for White at all. 7...♚xb2 8.0-0 (8.♗bd2 ♗e7 9.0-0 ♗bc6 – see 8.0-0) 8...♗e7 (8...♚xa1? 9.♚b3) 9.♗bd2 ♗bc6 10.♗b3 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♖d8! Black protects additionally the important d5-square. 12.♗xc5 ♗d5. He has occupied the key d5-outpost and completes effortlessly his development. 13.♗d3 ♚a3 14.♖c1 ♙e7+ – Black has solved the problems with his development and has obtained better prospects, Kosteniuk – Kacheishvili, Las Vegas 2010.

Following 7.♗c3, Black can reduce the tension against the c5-square with **A) 7...c4**, or can continue in a principled way **B) 7...♚xb2**, or can try to complete rapidly the development of his queenside and to increase the pressure against the enemy d4-pawn with the move **C) 7...♗c6**.

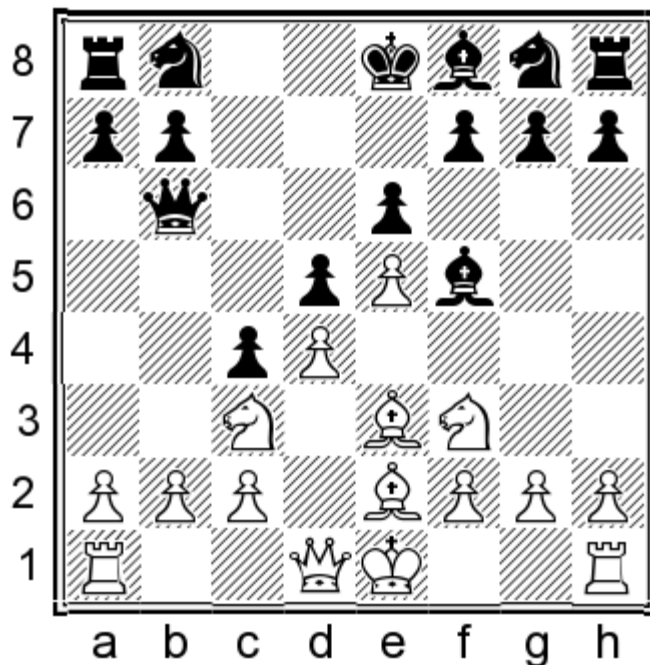
It seems too slow for Black to choose 7...♙g4?! 8.0-0 c4 9.b3 cxb3 10.axb3 ♗e7 11.♗a4 ♚c7 12.c4± Kiik – Kallio, Helsinki 1996, as well as 7...a6 8.♗a4 (8.♗h4!?, with the idea ♗xf5) 8...♚a5+ 9.c3 c4 (9...cxd4 10.♗xd4± ♙g6 11.♗xe6+–, with the idea to capture the enemy queen after ♙e3-b6, Illner – Ahling, Ruhrgebiet 1999) 10.♗h4 (10.b4!? ♚d8 11.0-0 h6 12.g3 ♗c6 13.♗h4±) 10...♙e4 11.f3 ♙g6 12.b4 ♚c7 13.0-0± White plans to increase the tension on the kingside, preparing the standard pawn-offensive f3-f4, g2-g4 and f4-f5. Black is practically deprived of any counterplay.

After 7...♗d7?!, White has the resource 8.♙b5!, threatening to capture on d7 and to keep the enemy king in the centre. 8...♖d8 9.0-0 c4 (Black's pawn-sacrifice would be hardly justified following 9...a6 10.dxc5 ♚c7 11.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 12.♗a4± – White has a material advantage and a superior position. He has a better development and a space advantage; 10...♙xc5?? 11.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 12.♗a4+–) 10.a4 ♙b4 11.♗h4 ♗e7 12.♙g5 ♙g6 13.a5 ♙xa5 14.♙a4 ♙b4 15.♗a2 a6

16. ♖xb4 ♜xb4 17. c3 ♜b6 18. f4 ♙d3 19. ♜f2↑, with the idea 19...h6 20. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 21. f5,

A) 7...c4

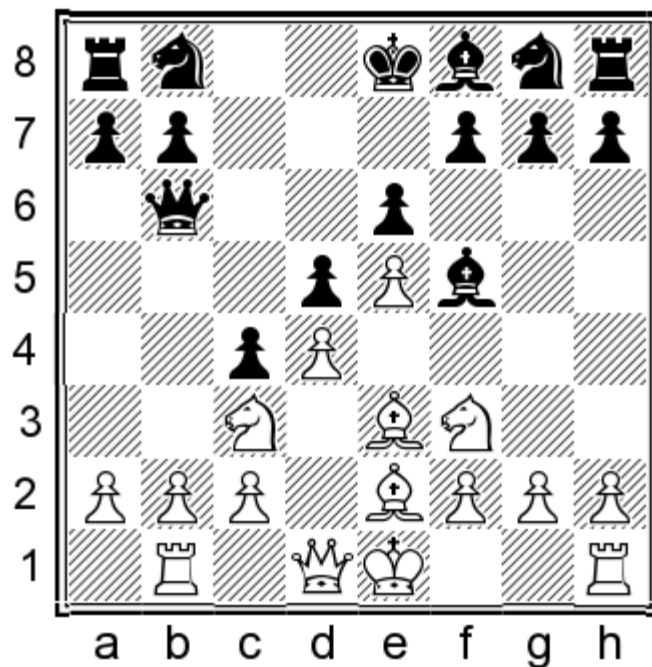
Black has increased his space advantage on the queenside, but has reduced the tension against the important d4-square and this is much more important. This plan cannot be refuted immediately, but it can hardly be termed as principled. White seizes the initiative for long. In addition, Black will have some problems with the development of his kingside.



8. ♙b1!

White solves radically the problem with the protection of his b2-pawn and is ready to exploit the advantages of his position. He has extra space on the kingside, a superior development and a reliable position in the centre. Later, he can play b2-b3 under favourable circumstances and seize the initiative on the queenside and his rook will be very helpful on the b1-square.

The move 8. b3 seems too slow and Black solves effortlessly his problems in the opening. 8... ♙b4 9. ♙d2 ♜a5 10. ♖a4 ♖e7! (Here, Black should better postpone the development of his queen's knight – 10... ♖d7 11. ♙xb4 ♜xb4+ 12. ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 13. ♜xd2 b5 14. ♖c5 ♖e7 15. ♖b7± and as we will see later, his knight will be handy on the d7-square in order to protect his c5-pawn, or can occupy a more active placement on c6; 10... ♙xd2+ 11. ♜xd2 ♖c6 12. ♖c5±; 10... ♖c6 11. ♙xb4 ♜xb4+ 12. c3±, with the idea 12... ♜a5 13. bxc4 dxc4 14. 0-0 ♖ge7 15. ♖c5↑ and Black's knight turns out to be misplaced on c6, since it would have been better placed on the d7-square.) 11. ♙xb4 (The misplacement of the knight on a4 hurts White after 11. c3 ♙a3 12. 0-0 ♖d7!?∞, with the idea b7-b5, or 12... b5!? 13. ♖c5 0-0∞) 11... ♜xb4+, Miciak – Marko, ICCF 2007, 12. ♜d2 ♖bc6 13. c3 ♜a3=



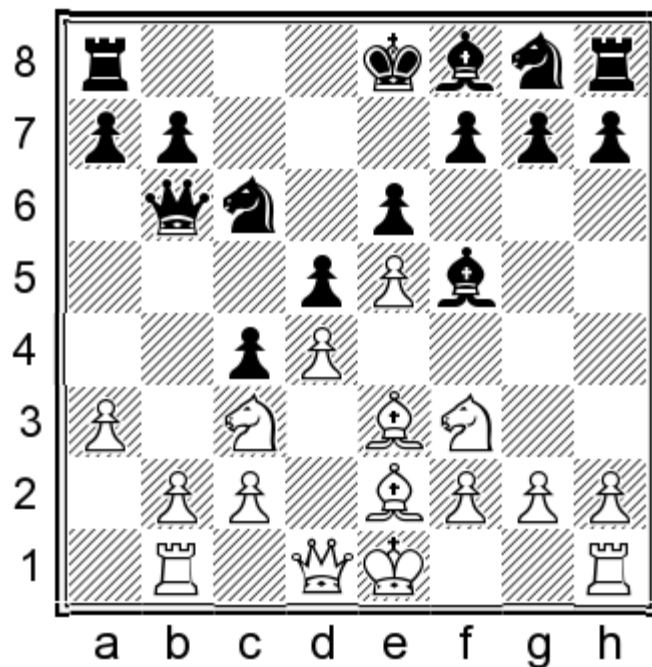
8...♖b4

Black's desire is easily understandable. He wishes to complete his development as quickly as possible. Still, his last move cannot solve all his problems.

It seems like a loss of time if he tries 8...♛c6?! 9.♘h4 ♗g6 10.♙xg6 hxg6 11.b3 ♖b4 12.♛d2± or 8...a6?! 9.♘h4 ♘e7 10.0-0 ♘d7 11.g4 ♗g6 12.f4± Mietzner – Timme, Germany 2006.

8...h6. Black prepares the h7-square for the retreat of his light-squared bishop, saving it from being exchanged if White chooses a manoeuvre, which is a part of his plan – ♘f3-h4. Still, Black is helpless against the advance of his opponent's f-pawn... 9.0-0 ♖b4 (9...♘c6? 10.♗xc4 dxc4 11.d5 ♛a6 12.dxc6± Tukhvatullin – Aplaev, Ufa 2009) 10.♘h4 ♗h7 (10...♘e7 11.f4↑) 11.f4 ♘e7 12.♗g4 0-0 13.f5,

8...♘c6 9.a3!? White prevents the development of his opponent's bishop to the b4-square and impedes considerably the development of Black's kingside. (White should not be afraid of the bishop-sortie ♗f8-b4 however, and should try to develop quickly his kingside initiative – 9.♘h4 ♗g6 10.0-0±; 9.0-0!↑, with the idea ♘h4. 9...♖b4?! 10.♗xc4±).



Following 9...♗ge7? 10.b3!±, Black loses his control over the d6-square and will be unprepared for the opening of the game on the queenside, for example: 10...cxb3 11.♖xb3 ♜c7?? 12.♗b5+–

9...♜d8. After this move, White's hands are free for the development of his initiative. 10.0-0 a6 11.♗e1 h6 12.g4 ♕h7 13.f4 ♗ge7 14.♗g2↑, with the idea f4-f5 and his kingside initiative will become even more powerful.

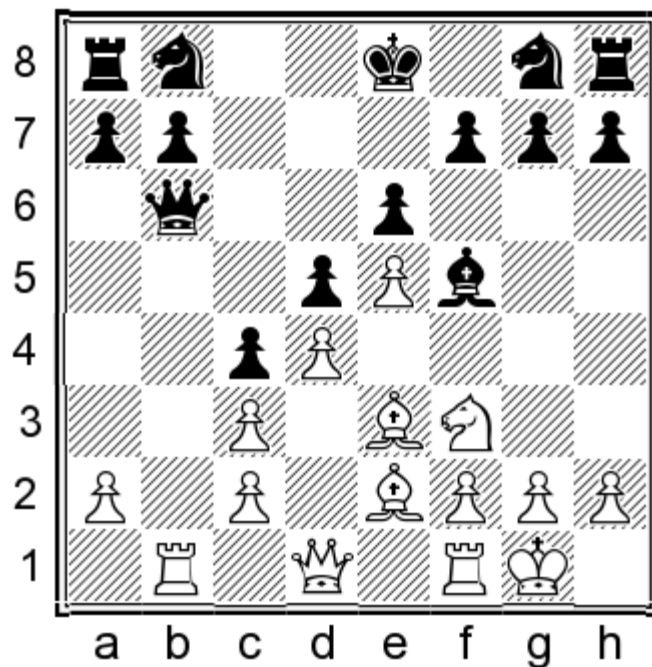
Black's attempt to prevent the move b2-b3 with the help of the line: 9...♜a5 10.0-0 b5 (10...h6 11.b4 cxb3 12.♖xb3 a6 13.♜b1 b5 14.♕d2 ♜b6 15.a4 b4 16.♗a2 ♖b8 17.♜c1 ♖c8 18.♜a1±) 11.♗h4 ♕g6 12.g3!? ♗ge7 (12...♕e7 13.♗g2 h6 14.♗f4 ♕h7 15.♕g4 ♗d8 16.♕h3+–) 13.♕g4± (with the idea f2-f4-f5), would only lead to even greater problems for him due to his lag in development.

9.0-0 ♕xc3

Black is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanging pieces. He weakens his opponent's queenside pawn-structure in the process, but will hardly manage to exploit this, since White's rook on b1 joins in the actions with a great effect.

Black had no other acceptable alternatives anyway... 9...♗e7 10.♗h4↑; 9...♗c6 10.♕xc4! dxc4 11.d5±

10.bxc3



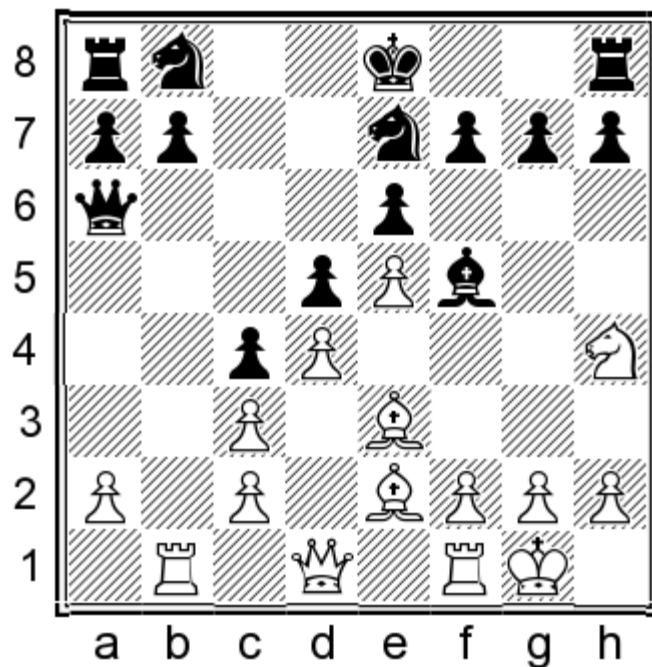
10...♙a6

10...♙c6 11.♘h4 ♘e7 12.♙g5±

10...♙c7 11.♘h4 ♘c6, Korchmar – Ledin, Naberezhnye Chelny 2010 (After 11...♙g6 12.f4 ♘e7 13.g4 ♙e4 14.f5 ♘bc6 15.♙d3!↑, White develops powerful initiative. 15...cxd3 16.cxd3 0-0 17.dxe4 dxe4 18.f6↑; 13...♙d7? 14.f5 exf5 15.gxf5 ♙xf5 16.♘xf5 ♘xf5 17.♙g4 g6 18.♙xf5 gxf5 19.♙h5+– Forgacs – Magyar, Hungary 2012) 12.♘xf5 exf5 13.♙c1± – His two bishops and extra space provide White with long lasting initiative.

11.♘h4 ♘e7

The arising position is obviously in favour of White. He has a considerable space advantage, a better development and a bishop-pair with excellent possibilities to develop initiative on the kingside.



12. ♕g5

It would be useful for White to improve the placement of his dark-squared bishop before the beginning of his pawn-offensive on the kingside.

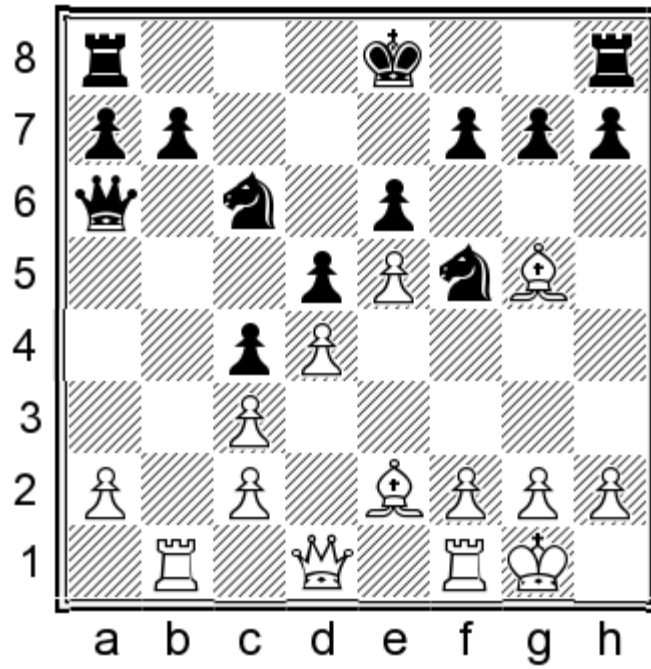
It seems natural and quite logical for him to try the aggressive move 12.g4 here, since White has completed his development and can begin an attack on the kingside. 12...♕g6 13.f4 ♕e4 14.f5 ♖bc6 15.♕f3!? (He should not be in a hurry to clarify the situation on the kingside with the move 15.f6, because after 15...gxf6 16.♖xf6 ♖g8 17.♗f1 ♜d8±, this may turn out to be in favour of Black, Tukhvatullin – Galin, Ufa 2008; 16...b6 17.♗f1 ♜d8= Zivkovic – Ljubinkovic, Novi Sad 2008.) 15...0-0-0 16.♕xe4 dxe4 17.♕d2 ♜d5 18.♗e1 e3 19.♕xe3 ♗xa2 20.♖c1↑ – The material is equal indeed, but Black still has serious problems.

12... ♜bc6

This is his only move, since he must try to complete rapidly his development.

13. ♜xf5 ♜xf5

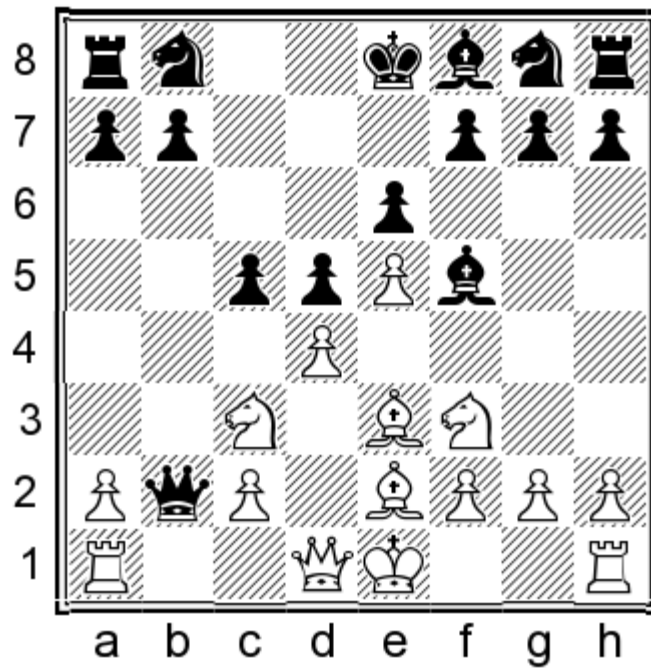
13...exf5 14.a4 b6 15.♗c1±



14.g4 ♖fe7 15.f4↑ (followed by f4-f5) – White has an overwhelming space advantage on the kingside.

B) 7...♙xb2

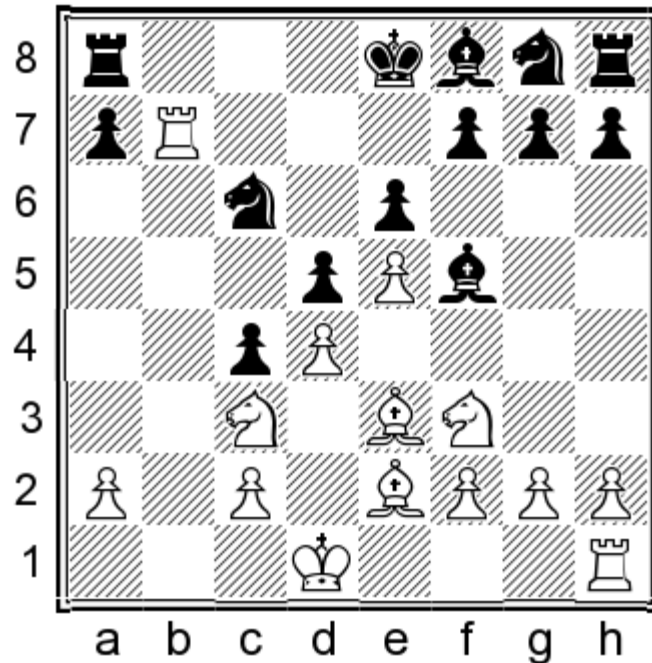
This is a consequent move, to say the least. After it, Black's lag in development will become an even more important factor, but White must play very precisely to prove that his compensation for the sacrificed pawn is sufficient.



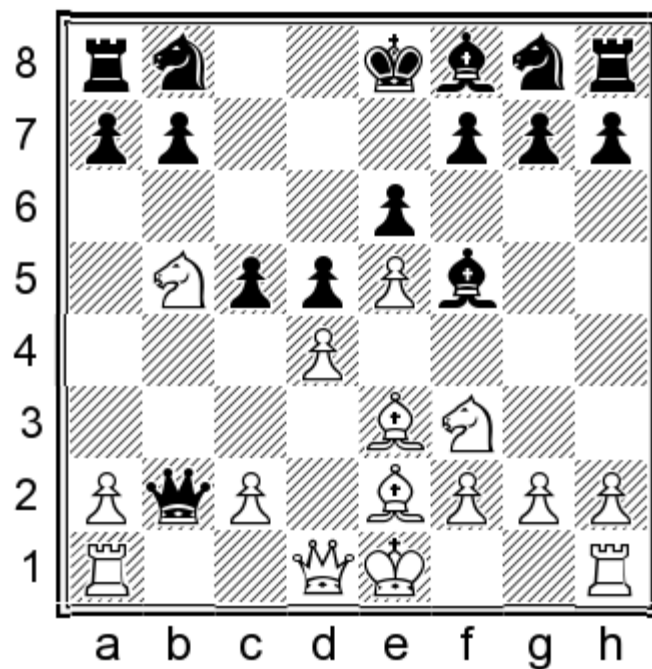
8.♗b5!

He begins an immediate counter offensive on the queenside. White creates the threat ♗b5-c7+ and prevents the retreat of the enemy queen to the b6-square.

The move 8.♖b1 leads to a very complicated endgame. 8...♗xb1+ (8...♗xc3? 9.♕d2+-) 9.♖xb1 c4! 10.♖xb7 ♘c6 11.♙d1!? (11.♙d2 ♕b4 12.♖b1 ♕a5⇒ Inarkiev – Eljanov, Astrakhan 2010)



11...♙d8!N This is Black's simplest response. (Meanwhile, he would be close to equality even if he parts with his light-squared bishop after 11...♖b8!? 12.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 13.♙h4 ♕g6 14.♙a4, Quesada Perez – Khairullin, Havana 2010, 14...♙h6 15.♙d2 ♘c6 16.g4 ♙d7 17.♖b1 ♕b4+ 18.♙d1 ♕e7∞) 12.♖c7!?! (12.♖b1 h6=) 12...h6 13.♕c1= – The queens have been exchanged and the position has been simplified considerably, so White's edge has evaporated.

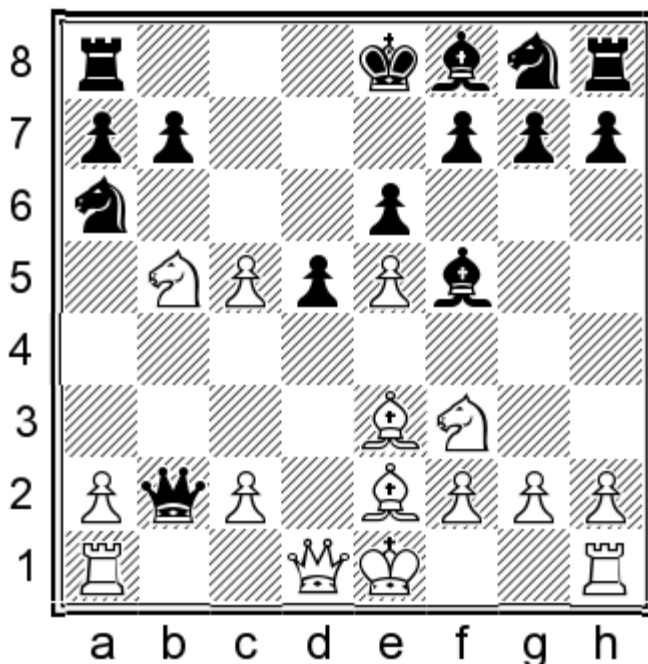


8...c4

This difficult decision is a consequence of the arising circumstances. Otherwise, Black must be constantly on the alert about White's possibility – dxc5.

Black can hardly solve his problems with the rather optimistic line: 8...♔d7 9.c4 ♕c2 10.♖c1 ♗xc1+ 11.♞xc1 ♕e4 12.dxc5+- and despite the absence of the queens, Black's king remains stranded in the centre and will become an easy prey.

8...♗a6? 9.dxc5!



The d6-square is so weak that Black's position seems hopeless.

9...♗b4 10.0-0 ♗xc2 11.♖d2+-

9...♗xc2 10.♗d6+!? ♕xd6 11.cxd6+-

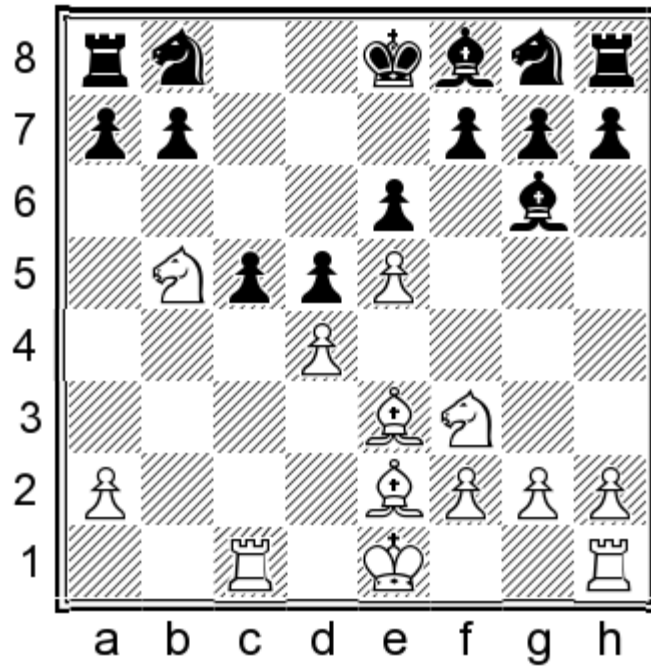
9...♞c8 10.♗d6+ ♕xd6 11.cxd6 ♕xc2 12.♖d4+-

9...♗h6 10.♗d6!? ♕xd6 11.cxd6. This passed pawn plays the decisive role in this position in the majority of the variations, 11...0-0 12.♞b1 ♗xa2 13.♗d4+-

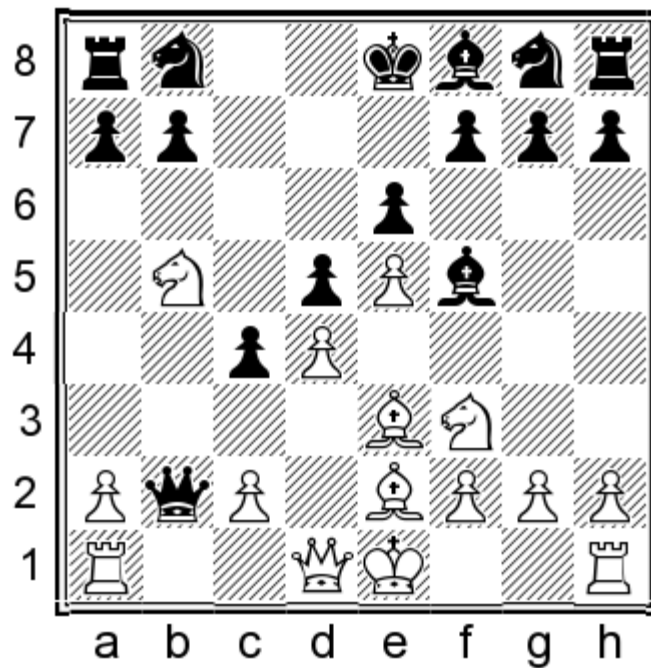
9...♕xc2 10.♖c1 (10.♖d4 ♗xd4 11.♗fxd4 ♕a4 12.♗d6+ ♕xd6 13.cxd6+-) 10...♗xc1+ (10...♗b4+ 11.♗d2 ♕g6 12.c6+-) 11.♞xc1 ♕a4 12.♗d6+ (12.0-0 ♗h6 13.c6+- bxc6 14.♗c3) 12...♕xd6 13.cxd6 ♗h6 (13...♗b4 14.♞c7+- Duppel – Heller, Germany 2002) 14.♕xa6 bxa6 15.♞c7 0-0 16.♗d2 ♗f5 17.♞b1+-

9...♕xc5 10.0-0!? (White does not need to be in a hurry to win the exchange. 10.♕xc5 ♗xc5 11.♞b1 ♗xc2 12.♗xc2 ♕xc2 13.♞c1 ♗d3+ 14.♕xd3 ♕xd3 15.♗c7+ ♗d7 16.♗xa8 ♕c4 17.♗d2 ♗e7 18.♗xc4 dxc4 19.♞xc4±. He will still need to prove that his slight material advantage will be sufficient to win the game.) 10...♗h6 (10...♕xe3. Black reduces his protection of the d6-square and this will decide the issue. 11.♞b1 ♗xc2 12.♗d6+ ♗f8 13.♞xb7 ♗h6 14.♗xc2 ♕xc2 15.fxe3 ♗c5 16.♞c7 ♕d3 17.♕xd3 ♗xd3 18.e4+-) 11.♗fd4 0-0 12.♞b1 ♗xa2 13.♖c1+- Now, White has the decisive threats – ♞a1 and ♕xh6. 13...♗a5 (13...♕xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗a4 15.♞xb7+-, with the idea 15...♗g4 16.♗b2+- and the threat ♞f1-a1, which is impossible for Black to parry.) 14.♕xh6 gxh6 15.♗xf5 exf5 16.♗xh6+-

Black can continue with his plan to capture his opponent's queenside pawns with 8...♕xc2!? 9.♖c1 ♗xc1+ 10.♞xc1 ♕g6, but White would not need to capture the enemy rook on a8, since Black does not need it at all.



White has an additional resource – 11.dxc5! This pawn-structure is completely justified, because White’s lead in development is so great that Black’s defence will be very difficult. (11.♖c7+ ♔d7 12.♗xa8 ♘c4 13.♗h4 ♗c6 14.♗xg6 hxg6 15.0-0 ♗b4 16.♝b1 ♗c8 17.♞fc1 ♗ge7 18.♙g5 ♗f5 19.♙xc4 dxc4 20.♝xc4, S. Hansen – Berkes, Heraklio 2007, 20...♙a5!?) 11...♔d7 12.♗d6 ♗c6 (12...♙xd6 13.cxd6 ♗c6 14.♗d4↑, with the idea 14...a6 15.f4 f6 16.♗b3 fxe5 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♙f4 ♗xd6 19.♗a5 ♝b8 20.♝d1±) 13.♗xb7 ♝b8 (13...f6 14.♗d6 ♗ge7 15.♙b5↑) 14.♗d6 ♗ge7 15.♙b5↑ (with the idea 0-0) and Black will hardly manage to complete the development of his kingside.



9.♝b1!

This is an important inclusion of this move, activating the rook.

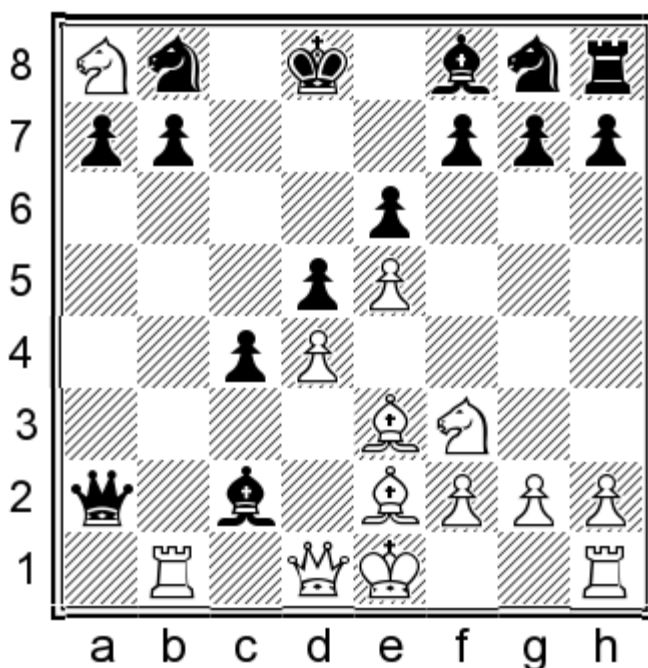
It would not be so good for White to play immediately 9.♖c7+, because of 9...♔d7 10.♗xa8 ♙xc2 11.♞c1 ♙a3 and Black would seize the initiative.

9...♙xa2!

Black should avoid the trade of the queens 9...♙xc2 10.♚xc2 ♘xc2, because his strongest piece is considerably more active than its white counterpart and his opponent's task would become much easier. 11.♞b2 ♘a4 12.♗c7+ ♕d7 13.♗xa8 ♕c8 (After 13...♘c6 14.a4 ♘a3 15.♗b6+ axb6 16.♞xb6 ♗e7 17.♘d2±, White manages to preserve his material advantage without any serious positional concessions.) 14.♘d1 ♘c6, Qin Kanying – Karpov, Beijing 1998 (Following 14...♘a3 15.♞b1 ♘c6 16.♗g5 ♗h6, Huschenbeth – Lenic, Chur 2010, 17.♘d2±, Black's compensation for the missing material is insufficient.) 15.♗g5!/? It would not be so easy for him to oust this knight from its powerful placement. 15...♗h6 16.♘d2 b5 17.h4!/? ♘xa8 18.♞xb5 ♗c6 19.♘c3±

10.♗c7+ ♕d8 11.♗xa8 ♘xc2

It may seem that Black has solved his opening problems, but White has an important tactical resource.



12.♞xb7!

The more natural move 12.♞a1, after 12...♘b4+ 13.♘d2 ♘xd2+ 14.♕xd2 c3+ 15.♕e3 ♞b2 16.♞c1 ♗c6 17.♘b5 ♗h6=, provides Black with a very good position.

12...♘xd1 13.♞xb8+ ♕d7 14.♘d1 ♗e7 15.0-0 h6!

Black prevents ♗f3-g5.

He must play very carefully, because his king is in the centre: 15...♞a6 16.♘a4!! ♞xa4 17.♞fb1+— and Black's king is inside a web from which it cannot escape without considerable material losses, for example: 17...♞a6 18.♗g5+—

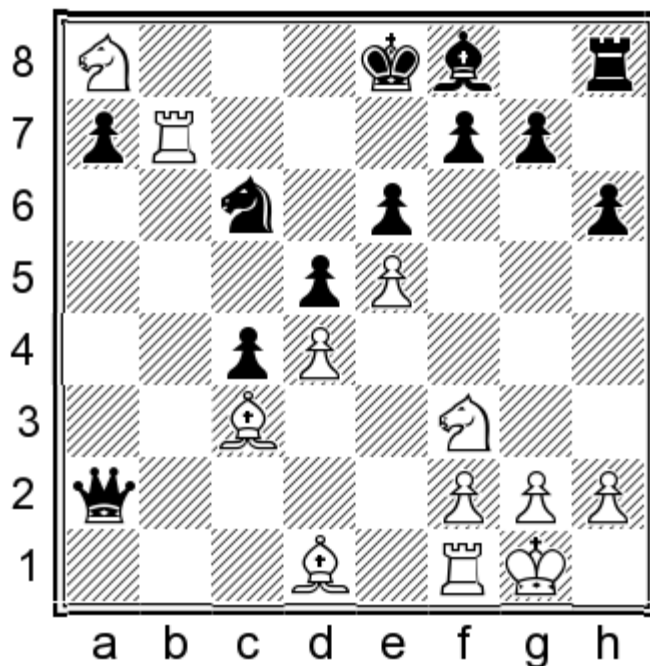
16.♘d2

It would not work now for White to play 16.♘a4? ♞xa4 17.♞fb1 ♞a6 18.♞1b7+ ♞xb7 19.♞xb7+ ♕c8 20.♞xa7 ♕b8±, with the idea 21.♞a1 ♕b7±, and his knight on a8 is doomed.

16...♖c6

Following 16...g5 17.♙a4+ ♚xa4 18.♞fb1 ♜a6 19.♘e1!+-, with the idea ♘e1-c2, White wins by transferring his knight on f3 to the queenside.

17.♞b7+ ♜e8 18.♙c3

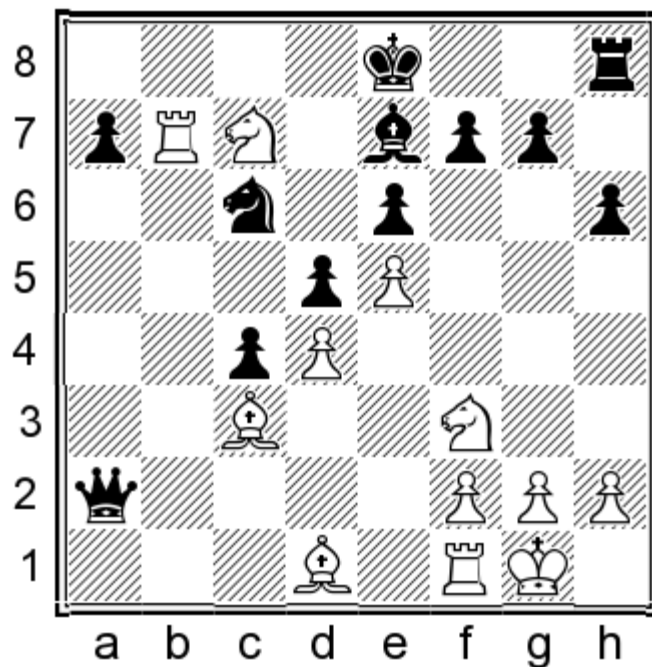


Now, just like before, Black has difficulties with the development of his kingside, while White can mobilise in the meantime his forces to create threats on the queenside.

18...♙e7

Following 18...♙d8 19.♘d2! ♙e7 20.♙h5 ♜c2, Black is already beyond salvation. (20...g6 21.♞a1 ♜c2 22.♙a5+ ♜e8 23.♙d1+-; 22...♘xa5 23.♞xa5+-) 21.♙xf7 ♜xc3 22.♘f3 ♜c8 23.♞c7+ ♜b8 24.♞xc6 ♜xa8 25.♞xe6 ♜b4 26.♞xe7 ♜xe7 27.♙xd5+ ♜b8 28.♞b1+ ♜c8 29.♙xc4± – The position has been simplified considerably and Black even has some slight material advantage; nevertheless, his chances of survival are just minimal, due to the horrible misplacement of his king.

19.♘c7+



19...♔d8

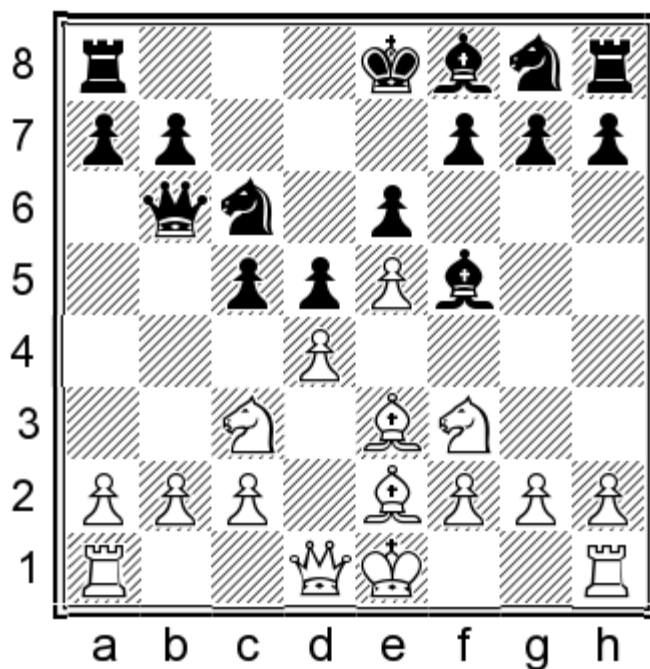
19...♔f8 20.♘d2 ♕d8 21.♙f3! ♘xd4 22.♙xd4 ♚xd2 23.♞d1 ♚a5 24.♞xa7 ♚xc7 25.♞xc7 ♕xc7 26.♞a1+- Areshchenko – Jobava, Burgas 2012.

20.♞b2 ♚a3 21.♘b5

White's knight has run away from the a8-square and the superiority of his perfectly placed pieces becomes the decisive factor.

21...♚a6 22.♘d2± Black is helpless against the combined power of White's pieces, for example: 22...♔d7 23.♘xc4 dxc4 24.d5±

C) 7...♘c6



This is Black's most promising move. He does not determine yet the pawn-structure on the queenside, completes his development and increases the pressure against the d4-square.

8.0-0

White needs to play energetically, without losing time for the protection of his b2-pawn, because after the seemingly natural move 8.♖b1, Black has the powerful counter argument 8...♙e4!↑ and White's d4-square is crumbling.

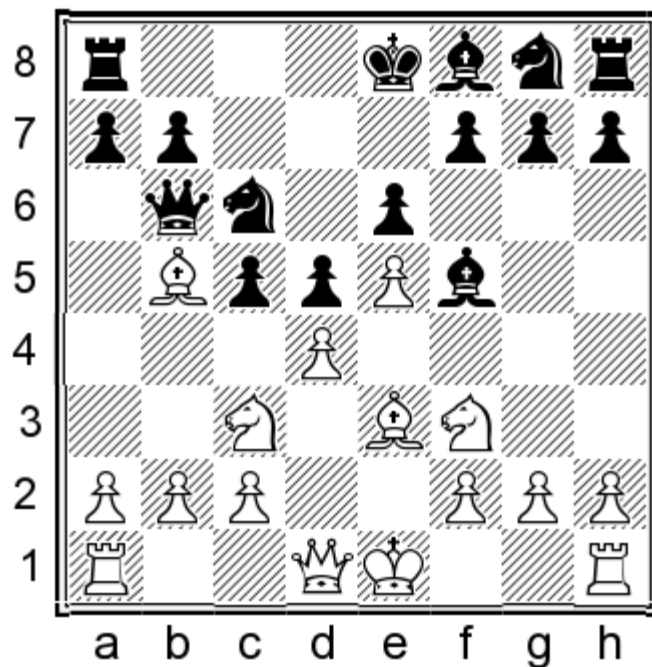
His alternatives are not so principled and interesting.

8.♘b5? c4⚡

White can hardly be successful if he reduces immediately the tension against the c5-square with the line: 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙xc5 ♖xc5 10.♘b5 ♗f8 11.♘bd4, Nakamura – Mamedyarov, Shamkir 2014, 11...♖b4+ 12.♖d2 (following 12.c3 ♖xb2 13.0-0 ♙g6∞, White is unlikely to prove that he has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn) 12...♖xd2+ 13.♗xd2 ♘ge7=

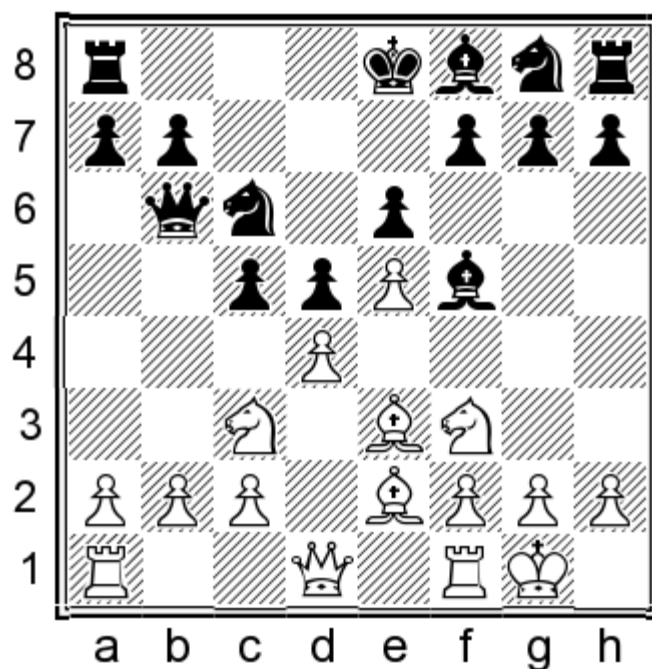
8.♘a4 ♖a5+ 9.c3 cxd4 (9...c4!? 10.0-0 b5 11.♘c5 ♙xc5 12.dxc5 ♖b8!?)⚡; About 10.b4 – see Sethuraman – Zhou Jianchao, Hyderabad 2015, **game 11**) 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 ♘e7 12.b4 (12.♘c5 ♖c7 13.b4 ♘c6∞ Kosteniuk – Gunina, Moscow 2011) 12...♖c7 13.b5 ♘c8=, Black prevents the pawn-advance b5-b6 and preserves the possibility to play ♘c8-b6 at an opportune moment, Areshchenko – Molchanova, St Petersburg 2009.

After 8.♙b5, Black can react in several ways and equalises easily.



White cannot achieve anything real after 8...♘h6!? 9.dxc5 ♕xc5 10.♘d4 ♕xd4 11.♕xd4 ♚c7 12.♕xc6+ ♚xc6 13.0-0 ♕g6= Maze – Ni Hua, Biel 2011.

8...c4. Black closes the way back for his opponent's bishop on b5 and plans active actions on the queenside. 9.♘h4. This standard chase after the bishop on f5 is fruitless, but White has hardly anything better anyway. (9.0-0 a6 10.♕xc6+ ♚xc6 11.♘h4 ♘e7∞ Naiditsch – Adla, Mulhouse 2011) 9...♕g6 10.0-0 ♕b4 11.♕xc4 ♕xc3 12.bxc3 dxc4 13.d5 ♚c7 14.dxc6 ♚xc6= Gashimov – Vallejo Pons, Linares 2010.



8...♚xb2

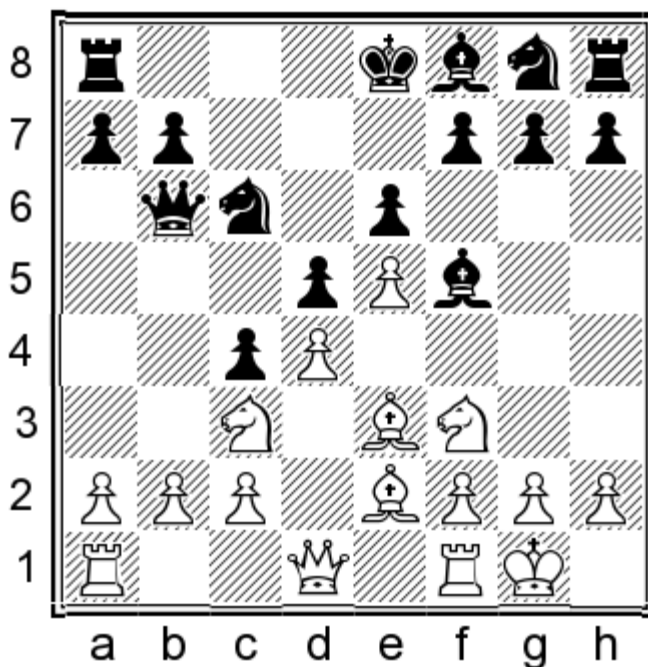
Accepting the pawn-sacrifice is no doubt Black's most principled response.

He only loses time after 8...a6?, due to 9.♘a4↑, with the idea c2-c4. White exploits Black's considerable lag in

development and opens the central files. 9...♖c7 10.dxc5 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♚xe5, Soler – Arnandis, Spain 1998, 12.c4±

It would be bad for Black to choose here 8...cxd4? 9.♘xd4 and White's hands would be free for actions, while Black's queen would come under an attack with tempo. 9...♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♚a5 (10...♖c7 11.♘b5+-) 11.g4 ♙g6 12.f4 f5 13.exf6 ♘xf6 14.♙b5+ ♔d8 15.♖e1+-, Black's king will hardly survive for a long time stranded in the centre.

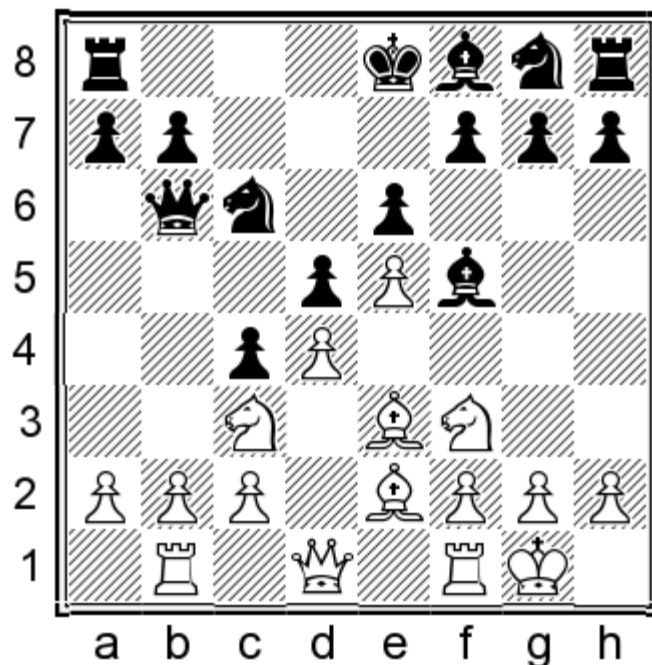
He should better avoid here 8...c4, because in the majority of the variations, due to his lag in development, White will develop effortlessly dangerous initiative on the kingside.



9.♙xc4?! ♚xb2±

It would be also interesting for White to opt now for 9.b3, but after 9...♖a5 10.♙d2 ♙b4, he would not have any clear advantage. 11.♖e1 ♘ge7!? (11...b5 12.a3 ♙xc3 13.♙xc3 ♚b6± – He has not achieved anything meaningful, because his two-bishop advantage is neutralised by the closed pawn-centre. White has a space advantage on the kingside, but Black dominates on the queenside, Granda Zuniga – Magem Badals, Pamplona 1996.) 12.bxc4 (12.a3 ♙xc3 13.♙xc3 ♚c7∞ Van der Werf – Schwalfenberg, Dieren 1991) 12...dxc4! (12...♙xc3 13.♙xc3 ♚a4 14.c5±) 13.♙xc4 0-0 14.a3 ♙xc3 15.♙xc3 ♚c7 16.♙b3 ♖fd8±. Black has a good game for the pawn and excellent chances of equalising.

9.♖b1! This is White's simplest and most logical decision! Besides its defensive functions, this move is aimed at seizing the initiative on the queenside with the help of the move b2-b3. The arising lines are very similar to variation A.



9...♖ge7? 10.b3 cxb3 11.♞xb3 ♖a5 12.♙d2+- Bern – Dahl, Gausdal 1990.

9...♗h6 10.♙xc4 dxc4 11.d5 ♖a5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♞e2± Al Modiahki – Dimitrov, Gibraltar 2008.

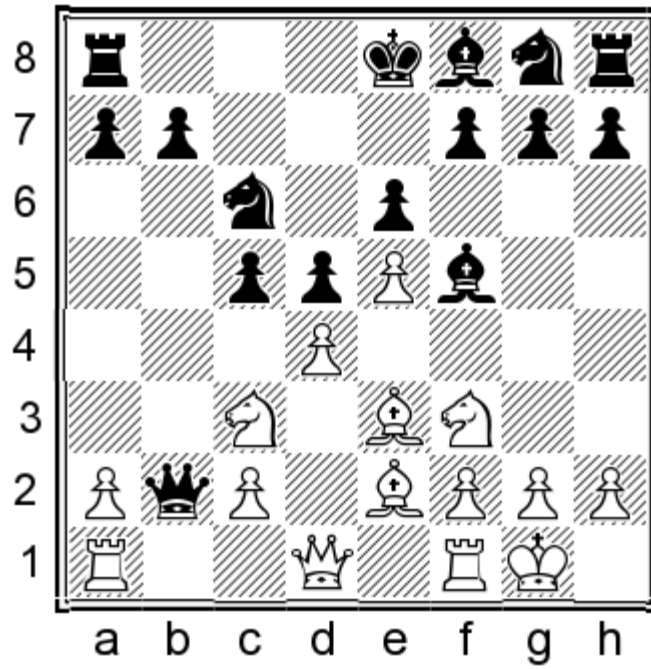
It would not work now for Black to play 9...♙b4?!, in view of 10.♙xc4 dxc4 11.d5 ♖a6 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.a3± and his lag in development is more than obvious, Nemeth – Volosin, Hungary 2005.

White develops his kingside initiative very quickly following 9...♞c7 10.♗h4 ♙g6 11.f4±

Black should better refrain from 9...♞a5 10.♗h4 ♙g6 (10...♗ge7 11.g4 ♙g6 12.f4±) 11.a3 0-0-0 12.♞d2 ♙e7 13.♗xg6 hxg6 14.b4 ♞c7 15.b5 ♗b8 16.b6 axb6 17.♗b5, Paragua – Cervinka, Paris 1998.

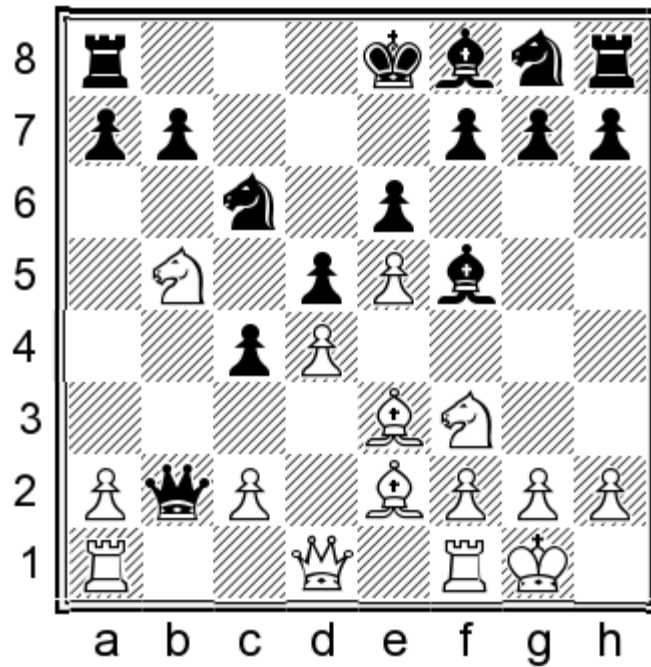
He would not achieve anything either with 9...♗b4 10.♗e1 ♖a5 (10...♗c6 11.f4±; undermining White's centre with 10...f6? and 11.b3+- leads to the opening of the position, which is in favour of White, Korchmar – Kaneyama, St Petersburg 2010.) 11.♞c1 b5 12.a4 bxa4 13.♞a1 a3 14.♞xa3 ♞c7 15.b3+- Neelotpal – Farazi, Vishakapatnam 2008.

9...♞d8. This is a solid move. Black prevents White's plan, connected with ♗f3-h4 and defends against ♙e2xc4. It may look like Black has an acceptable position, but as we have seen in the similar variation A, White can begin active actions on the queenside – 10.b3 ♙b4 11.♗b5! cxb3 12.♞xb3 a6 13.♞xb4±



9. ♖e1!

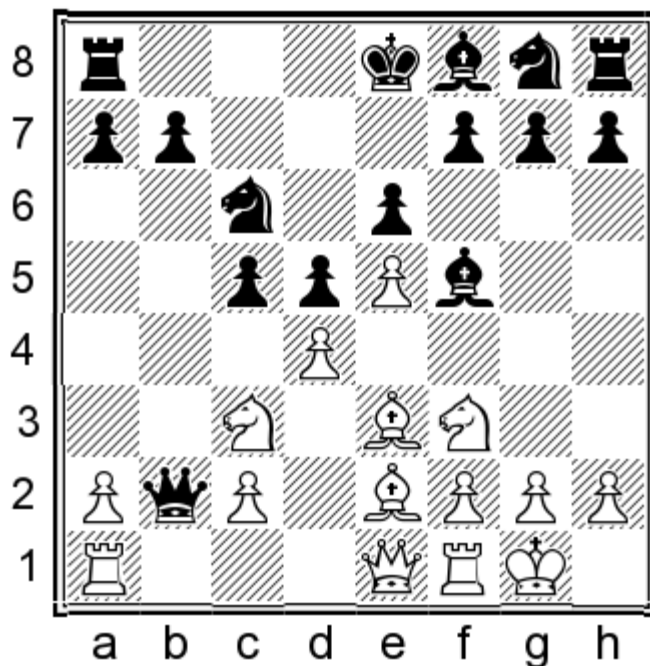
It would not be good for White to choose 9. ♘b5, because after the precise move 9...c4!, Black equalises.



It would be too risky for White to opt here for 10. ♘c7+ ♔d7 11. ♘xa8 ♙xc2 and he must play very precisely in order to hold the balance... 12. ♖c1 (12. ♖e1?! ♙b4 Karjakin – Morozevich, Monaco 2009; 12. ♖d2?! ♙b4 13. ♖ab1 ♖xb1 14. ♖xb1 ♙xd2 15. ♖xb7+ ♔c8 16. ♖xf7, Ni Hua – S.Ionov, Dagomys 2010, 16... ♙a5 17. ♖f8+ ♔b7 18. ♘g5 ♙b4+; 16. ♖c7+ ♔b8 17. ♘d2 ♘ge7 18. ♙g5 ♘f5 19. ♙xc4 ♖c8 20. ♖xc8+ ♔xc8 White will not save his knight on a8 and his pawn on d4 will need permanent protection, so the arising endgame is in favour of Black.) 12... ♙a3 13. ♘e1 ♙g6 14. ♖d1 ♘ge7 15. ♙d3 cxd3 16. ♖b1 ♖xa2 17. ♖xb7+ ♔c8 18. ♖c7+ (18. ♖b3? d2!+) 18... ♔b8 19. ♖a4 ♔xa8 20. ♖xc6 ♘xc6 21. ♖xc6+ ♔b8 22. ♖b5+ ♔a8 23. ♖c6+ ♔b8=

Now, even after White's relatively best line: 10. ♖b1 ♖xc2! 11. ♖xc2 ♙xc2 12. ♖b2 ♙a4 13. ♘c7+ ♔d7 14. ♘xa8 b5

15.♖fb1 ♘a3 16.♞xb5 ♘xb5 17.♞xb5 ♘ge7 18.♞b7+ ♔c8 19.♞b5 ♘d7 20.♞b7+ ♔c8= Black should manage to hold the position.

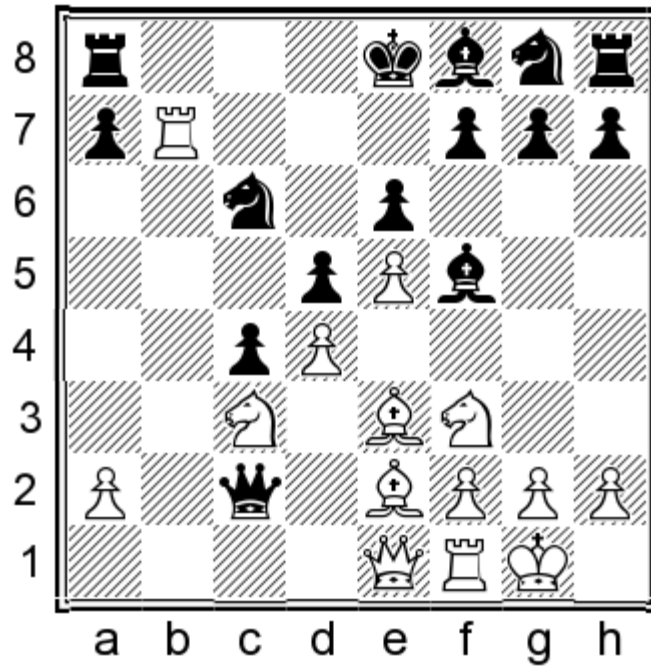


9...cxd4

There is nothing better for him in sight.

It will be too risky for Black to opt for 9...0-0-0, Kamsky – Morozevich, Nice 2009, because White leads in development and Black's king will be tremendously endangered after the opening of files on the queenside. 10.♘b5! ♞a3. Now, he must also worry about the safety of his queen. (White captures the enemy queen after 10...c4 11.a3!, with the idea ♞a1-a2. 11...♞xc2 12.♞a2 12...♞b3 13.♞a1 a6 14.♘d2 ♞xa2 15.♞xa2 axb5 16.♘xb5±, or 12...♞d3 13.♘a4 ♘g6 14.♞c1 ♘h6 15.♞d1 ♞f5 16.♘e2+, threatening ♘e2-g3 and ♘a4-c2.) 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♞b1! d4 (13...♘xc2 14.♞c1 ♘d3 15.♘b1+-) 14.♞b3 ♞a6 (14...♞a5 15.♞b1! ♘e7 16.♘xd4+-) 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 (15...♞xd4 16.♘xd4 ♘xd4 17.♘e4+-) 16.♘xd4 ♞xd4 17.♞e3 ♘xc2 (17...♞d8 18.♞fb1+-) 18.♞xd4 ♘xb3 19.axb3 ♘h6 20.♞d1±, with the idea ♞d4-d7 and ♘c3-e4. 20...♞b7 21.g4±, with the idea ♘c3-e4.

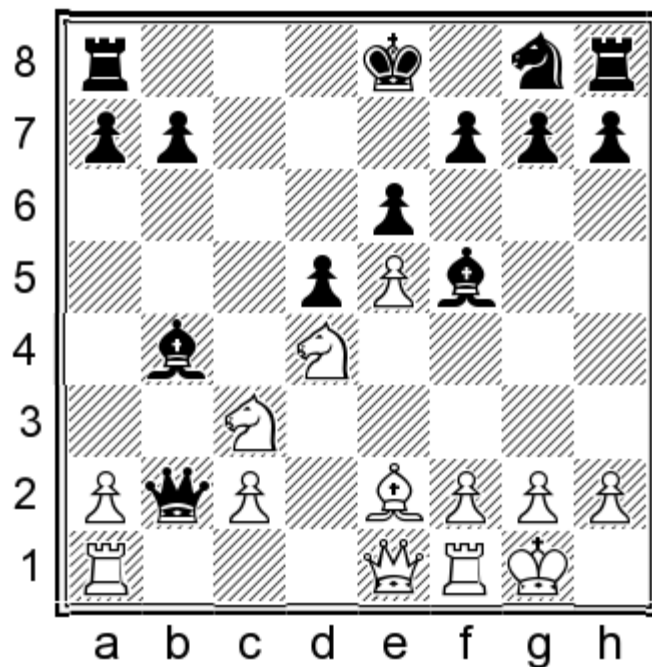
Just like before, Black cannot play 9...c4?! 10.♞b1 ♞xc2 11.♞xb7



11...♙b4. He should try to complete his development as quickly as possible. 12.♖xb4 ♜xb4 13.♙d1! White must play very energetically in order to maintain an advantage in the opening. 13...♞d3 14.♙a4+ ♔f8 15.♞a1±, with the idea ♞b2, bringing his most powerful piece for the attack on the queenside. In addition, White is threatening to trap the enemy queen with the moves ♖d1, or ♜e1, Karjakin – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2011 (**game 12**).

His lag in development becomes an important factor after 11...♖b8 12.♖xb8+ ♜xb8 13.♙d1! (White should better refrain from the attempt to trap the enemy queen with 13.♞a1, with the idea ♙e2-d1, or ♖f1-c1, due to 13...♙b4, with rather unclear consequences, for example: 14.♖b1 ♙xc3 15.♖xb8+ ♔d7 16.♞d1 h6! 17.♖b7+ ♔d8!∞ S.Zhigalko – F.Berkes, Denizli 2013.) 13...♞b2 14.♙a4+ ♜d7 15.♜b5 and Black's king will be in a great trouble. 15...♞b4 (15...♙b4 16.♙c1 ♙xe1? 17.♜d6+; 16...♞b1 17.♜d6+ ♙xd6 18.exd6 ♜gf6 19.♜e5±, with the idea 19...♞b7 20.g4!+–) 16.♞d1 c3, Klein – Michalik, Groningen 2011, 17.♜xa7 ♜e7 18.♞b3 ♞xb3 19.axb3+– and Black's c-pawn falls.

10.♙xd4 ♜xd4 11.♜xd4 ♙b4

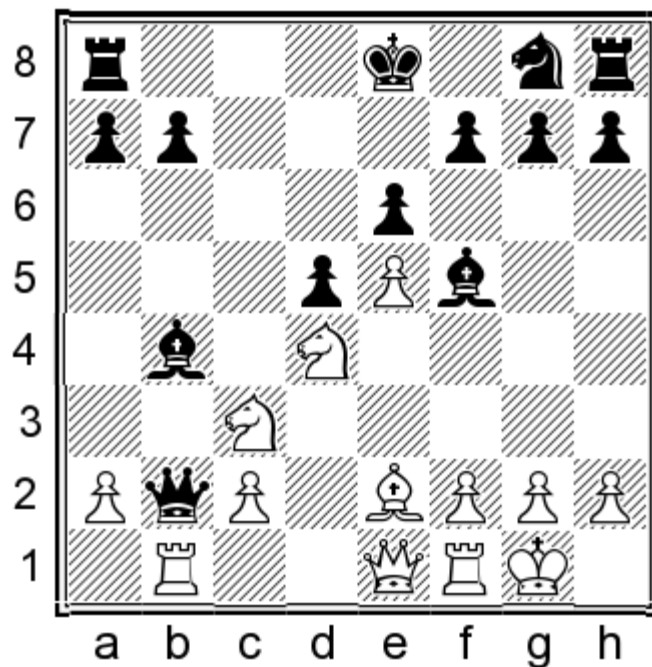


We will analyse now the move **C1) 12.♖b1**, after which Black will have to work long and hard to equalise, although a final theoretical evaluation of it has not been made yet, and **C2) 12.♘db5!?**, preparing at an opportune moment a knight-sortie to the d6-square.

C1) 12.♖b1

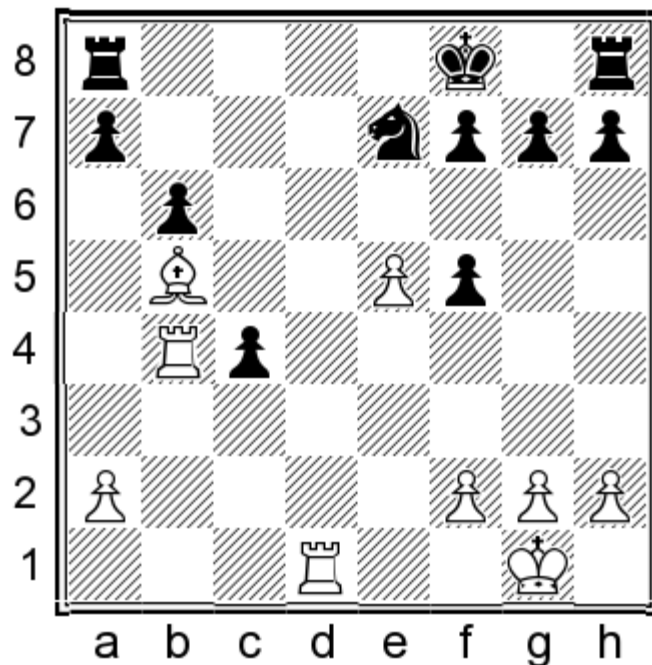
This move leads to the trade of queens. Black may seem close to equality, but he will have to withstand for a long time White's pressure which prevents Black from completing his development. There have been numerous practical games, lost by Black and I would not say that his task to hold the position would be easy. Meanwhile, it cannot be said that White is objectively better in this position. It looks like the most truthful evaluation would be – White maintains long lasting initiative. I have failed to find a clear advantage for him in this complicated endgame, but White can create numerous problems for his opponent.

In fact, he does not risk anything, so I will have to analyse thoroughly this variation...



12...♙xc3

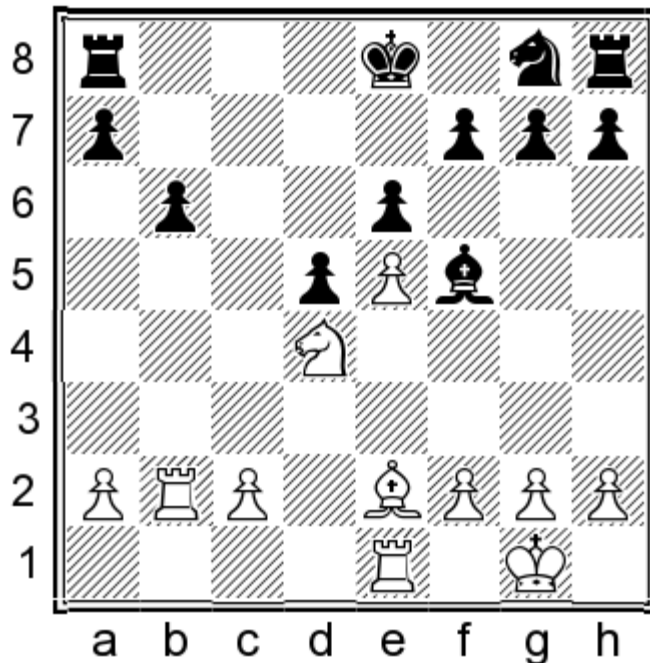
12...♙xc3?! The transfer into an endgame in this situation is in favour of White, because his rook is much more active on b4 than on the b2-square. 13.♖xb4 ♜xe1 14.♖xe1 b6 15.♙b5+ ♔f8 16.♘xf5 exf5 17.♖d1 (17.♖b3 – see 12...♙c3) 17...♘e7 18.c4±. Black must activate his rook and prevent the attack against his king at the same time. He must be on the alert, since there are great dangers for him if he plays carelessly in this seemingly safe endgame. This can be best illustrated by the following possible variation: 18...dxc4 (Black should not be afraid so much of the line: 18...a6 19.♙a4 b5 20.cxb5 axb5 21.♖xb5 g5 22.♙b3±, although even then, his position would be worrisome, Mekhitarian – Turov, Eforie Nord 2010.)



19.♙a4!N Black is incapable of exploiting his material advantage due to his lag in development. His pieces are helpless and White should increase his pressure in the meantime, being careful about Black's counter chances. (He will save the

day after 19.♞xc4 a6! 20.♙a6 g5 21.♙b7 ♞xa2 22.♞c7 ♞a5. This is Black's only move. 23.f4 ♞c5! 24.♞xc5 bxc5 25.fxg5 ♔g7= Kryvoruchko – Yu Ruiyuan, Fujairah City 2012.) 19...♘g6 20.♞xc4 ♘xe5 21.♞c7 g6 22.h3 a6 23.f4 b5 24.♙c2! ♘c4 25.♞dd7 ♔g7 26.♞xf7+ ♔h6 27.g4 fxg4 28.hxg4 ♞af8 29.♔f2! ♞xf7 30.♞xf7 g5 31.♔f3 ♘d2+ 32.♔g3 ♘f1+ 33.♔f2 ♘d2 34.♞d7 ♘c4 35.♔f3 a5 36.♙d3±

13.♞xb2 ♙xe1 14.♞xe1 b6



15.♙b5!?

This is White's most popular and natural move.

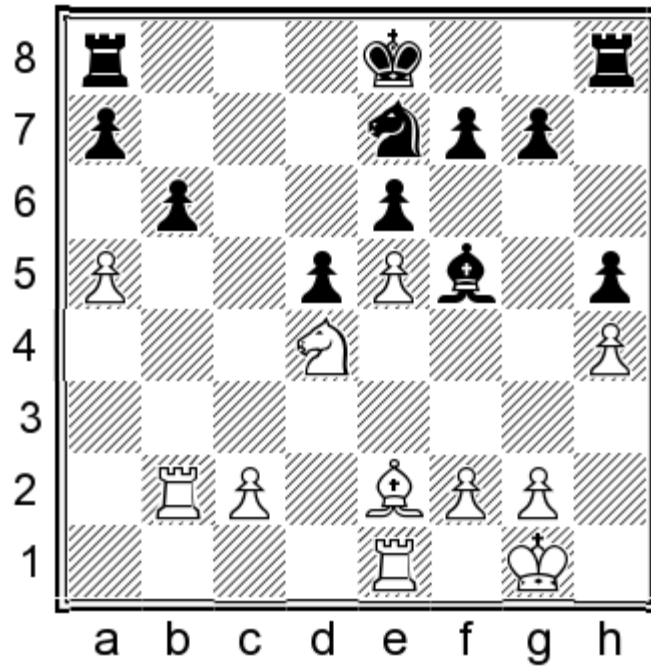
Lately however, he has tried in practice some other possibilities as well.

Black still holds following 15.♘xf5 exf5 16.c4, Poetsch – Lintchevski, Warsaw 2011, 16...♘e7 17.♞d2 0-0-0 18.cxd5 ♞xd5=

White's attempt to occupy additional space on the kingside leads to rather unclear consequences – 15.g4 ♙g6 16.♙b5+ ♔f8 17.♙a6 h5 18.h3 ♘e7 19.♞b3∞ Motylev – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2013.

Black has not completed his development yet, so White can try to penetrate with his rook into the enemy camp 15.♞b3!?, with the idea ♞c3-c7. 15...♘e7 16.♞c3 ♞c8! Black should not let White's rook to occupy the c7-square. (Following 16...0-0 17.g4 ♙g6 18.♞c7 ♞fe8 19.♙a6↑, or 16...g5 17.♞c7 ♙g6, Sjugirov – Eljanov, St Petersburg 2013, 18.♙a6 ♘f5 19.♘c6 0-0 20.h3♞, White succeeds in "occupying" his opponent's queenside.) 17.♞xc8+ ♘xc8 18.♙b5+ (Black obtains a reliable position after 18.♘xf5 exf5 19.♞d1 ♔e7 20.♞xd5 ♞d8 21.c4 ♞d7=) 18...♔d8 19.♘xf5 exf5 20.♞d1 ♘e7 21.c4 ♘g6=

15.h4!?, with the idea g2-g4, in order to attack the enemy bishop on f5. 15...h5 16.a4 ♘e7 17.a5

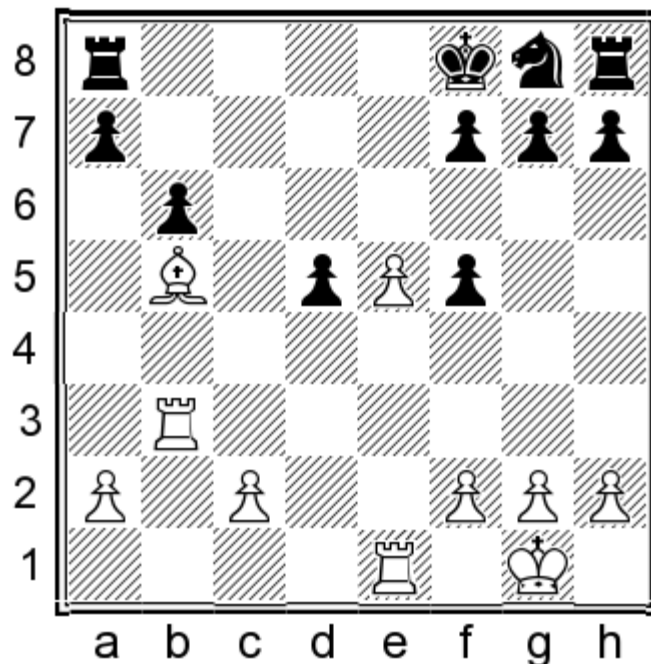


17...0-0!N This is the least of evils for Black, since he needs to activate rapidly his pieces. He removes his king away from the centre and brings his rook on h8 into the actions. (He can try to preserve his pawn on h5 with 17...♙g6, but after 18.♙b5+ ♗f8 19.♞a1♖, Black will have to pay a very dear price for that. 19...bxa5 20.♞xa5 ♖g8 21.♙d3!? ♙xd3 22.cxd3 g5 23.hxg5 ♜g6 24.♞b7 ♜xe5 25.f4 ♜xd3 26.f5↑ Motylev – V.Belov, Dagomys 2010, or 21.♞ba2!? ♗h7 22.♞xa7 ♞xa7 23.♞xa7 ♜f5 24.♜f3 ♞b8 25.♙d3 ♖g8 26.g3↑) 18.♙xh5 ♞fc8 19.axb6 axb6 20.♙e2± Black is close to equality, but White still maintains some pressure.

15...♗f8 16.♜xf5 exf5 17.♞b3!?

White's rook is headed for the c7-square via c3.

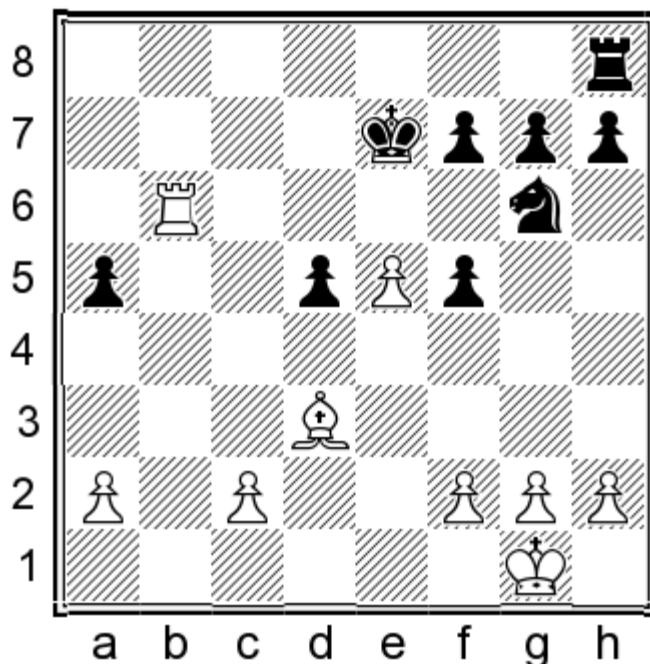
Black holds after 17.♞d1 ♜e7 18.c4 dxc4! 19.♙xc4 ♜c6! He attacks the e5-pawn and frees in the process the e7-square for his king, preparing the activation of his rook on h8. 20.e6 fxe6 21.♙xe6 ♗e7 22.♙xf5 ♞ad8=



17...♖e7

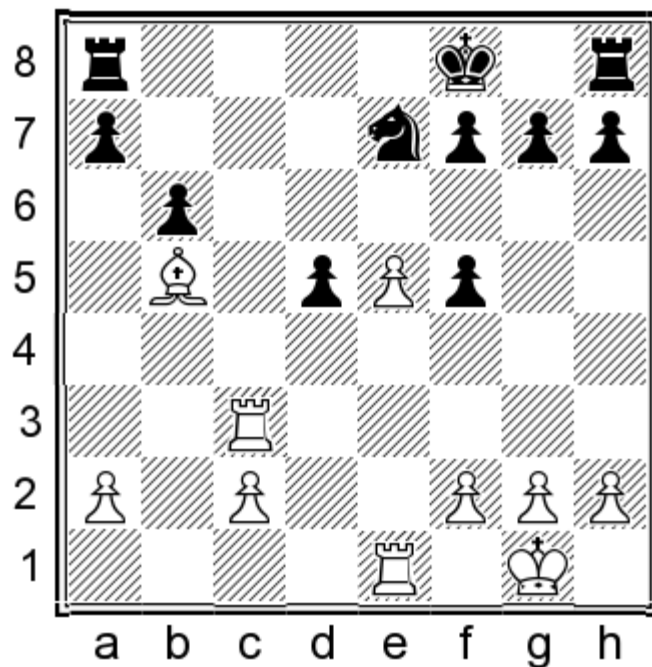
Black has a choice now. He can either prevent his opponent's plan, connected with the penetration of the rook ♖b3-c3-c7, or try to complete quickly the development of his kingside.

17...♖c8!? White's threat ♖b3-c3-c7 is tremendously unpleasant for Black and he prevents that by all means. 18.♖a3 a5 (18...♖c7?! 19.♖d1 ♗e7 20.c4!±; 19...g6 20.♖xd5 ♗h6, Divyasri – Mahalakshmi, Jalgaon 2012, 21.f4 ♗g7 22.c4±) 19.♗d3 ♗e7 20.♖b3 ♖c6 21.♖eb1 ♗g6 22.♖xb6 ♖xb6 23.♖xb6 ♗e7



White's game is much more pleasant in this position. If Black plays very precisely he may save the draw, but in a practical game White's advantage is considerable. 24.♗xf5 ♗xe5 25.♖b5!? (He can also force Black to clarify immediately the placement of his knight on e5 – 25.f4!? g6, Predke – Lintchevski, Kazan 2012, 26.♗h3 ♗c4 27.♖b7+ ♗f6 28.♖b5, with the idea 28...♖d8 29.♗f2 d4 30.g3 d3 31.cxd3 ♖xd3 32.♗f1 ♖c3 33.♖c5 ♗e3 34.♖xc3 ♗d1+ 35.♗f3 ♗xc3 36.♗c4±, ending up in an endgame in which White's bishop is much more mobile and is considerably stronger than the clumsy black knight.) 25...♗d6 (25...♗f6 26.♗h3 g5 27.g3 a4 28.♖b6+ ♗g7 29.♖b4↑) 26.f4! It is essential for White to oust the enemy knight from its active position on e5. (He should not be in a hurry to win a pawn. 26.♖xa5 g6 27.♗d3 ♗xd3 28.cxd3 ♗e5=; 27...♖b8 28.♗f1 ♖b1+ 29.♗e2 ♖h1 30.h3 ♖h2= Black succeeds in exploiting the weak points in White's position.) 26...♗c6 27.♖b7 g6 28.♗d3 f5 29.a3 h5 30.♗f2 ♖e8 (30...♖b8? 31.♖xb8 ♗xb8 32.♗b5!+–) 31.c3!↑ White has placed perfectly his pieces and pawns in the arising endgame and Black will have to work long and hard for a draw.

18.♖c3



18...♖c8

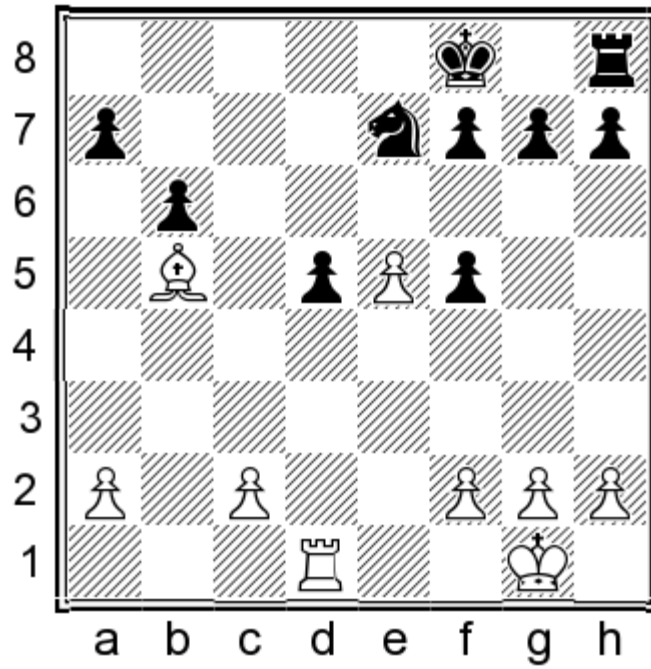
Black should not let the enemy rook inside his camp.

18...a6?! 19.♔d7! White prevents his opponent's rook from occupying the c8-square. 19...g6 (19...h5 20.♖c7 ♜h6 21.f4±) 20.♞c7 b5 (20...♔g7 21.e6! ♔f6 22.exf7+-; 21...fxe6 22.♔xe6 ♔f6 23.♔f7! ♔xf7 24.♞xe7! ♔f6 25.f4+-; 24...♔f8 25.♞c7±) 21.e6! f6. This move is forced; otherwise, White's rook will join in the actions on the e-file with a decisive effect. Now, however, it finds another attractive square – 22.♞e3. 22...b4 (22...♞b8?! 23.♞a7 ♞b6 24.♞c3 h5 25.♔c8 ♞h7 26.♞cc7+- Gashimov – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011) 23.♞b3 a5 24.a3 bxa3 25.♞xa3±

19.♞xc8+ ♔xc8 20.♞d1 ♔e7

Black has managed to facilitate considerably his defence by trading pieces, but still needs to play very accurately.

He cannot complete his development in a natural way without positional concessions – 20...♔e7?! 21.♞xd5 ♞d8 22.c4±



21.f4

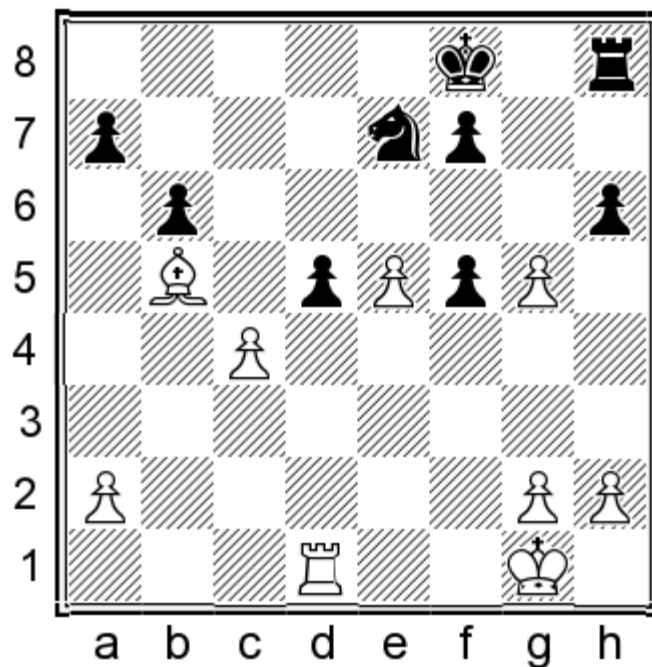
White would not achieve much with 21.c4 ♖g6 22.cxd5 ♕e7= (But not 22...♗xe5?? 23.♞e1 f6 24.f4+- and in view of the threat ♞e1-e8 Black will have to part with his knight.).

21...g5

It is essential for him to bring his rook on h8 into the actions as quickly as possible and he finds a way to do this on the kingside.

22.fxg5 h6 23.c4

23.gxh6 ♞xh6 24.c4 dxc4 25.♙xc4 ♞c6 26.♙b3 ♗g6 27.♞d7 ♗xe5 28.♞xa7 f4 29.♕f2 ♕g7=



23...dxc4!

After this important improvement Black somehow holds the position.

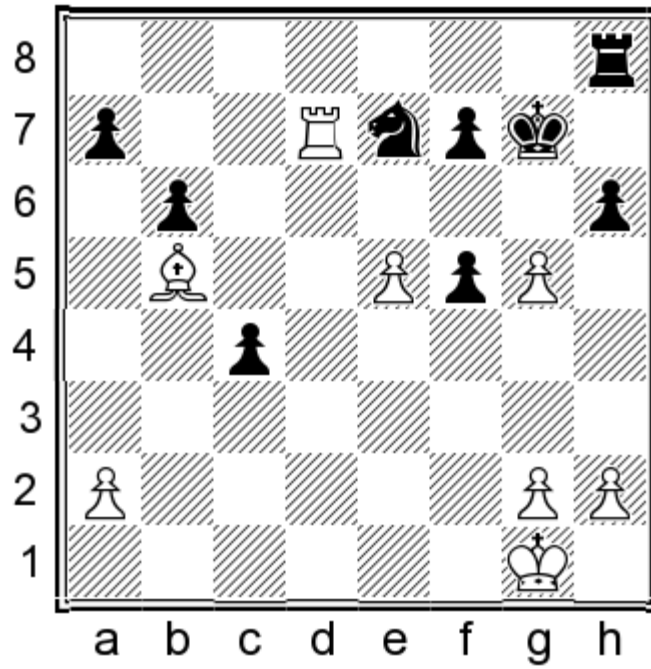
He will have great problems following 23...hxg5? 24.cxd5± ♖g6 25.♖f1!? (25.d6!? ♔g7 26.♖e1+-) 25...f4 26.d6 ♔g7 27.♖e1 ♗f8 28.♙d3 ♗e6 29.♙f5 ♗d4 30.♙g4 ♖e8 31.♗f2 ♗c2 32.♖c1 ♗e3 33.♙f3+- Svidler – Postny, Ningbo 2011.

24.♖d8+

Black equalises after 24.gxh6 ♖xh6 25.♙xc4 ♖c6 26.♙b3 ♗g6 27.♖d7 ♗xe5 28.♖xa7 f4 29.♗f2 ♔g7=

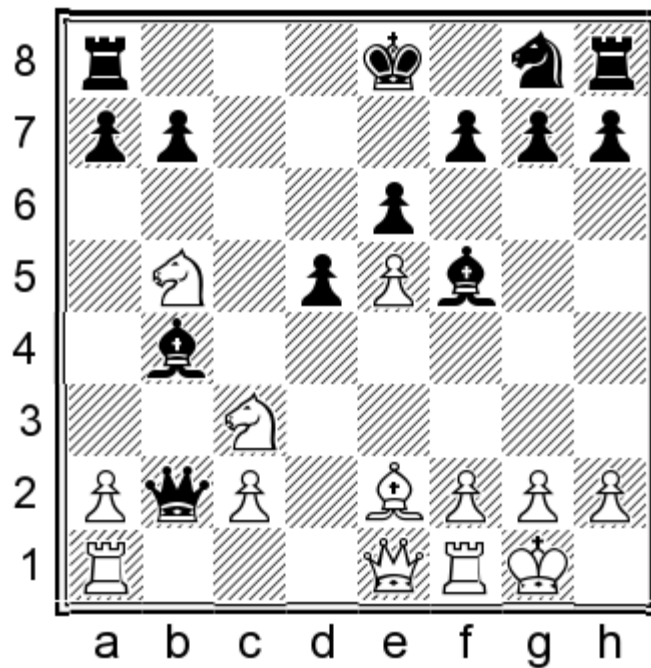
24...♔g7 25.♖d7

25.gxh6+ ♖xh6 26.♙xc4 ♖c6 27.♙b3 ♗g6 28.♖d7 ♗xe5 29.♖xa7 f4=



25...c3! 26. Bxe7 Bc8 27. Qa4 c2 28. Qxc2 Bxc2 29. gxh6+ Qxh6 30. Bxa7 Qg6 31. a4 Bc1+ 32. Qf2 Bc2+ 33. Qf3 Bc3+ 34. Qf4 Bc4+ 35. Qe3 Bc4+ 36. Qd3 Bc5 37. Bb7 Bc6 38. g3 Bc6= White is still slightly better, but objectively this endgame is close to a draw.

C2) 12. Qdb5!?



This is a principled move and is very popular even at a high level. It leads to complicated middle game positions in which White has the initiative and Black must be very careful on his every move.

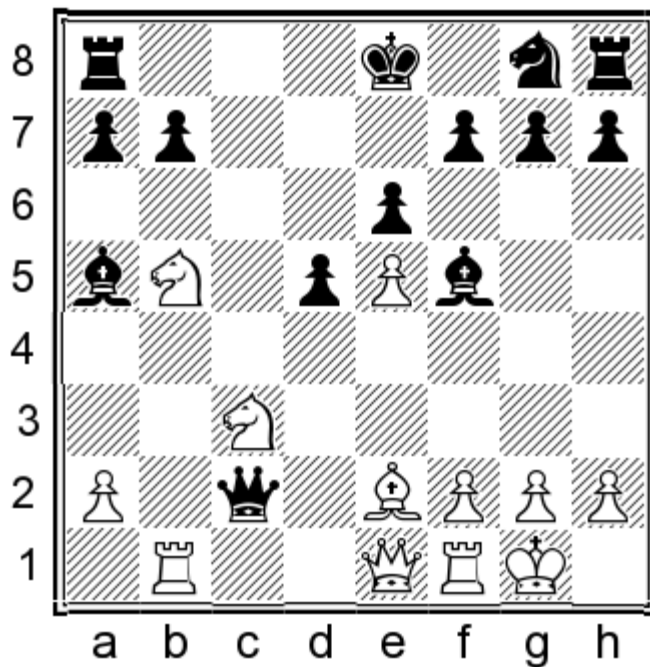
12... Qa5!

It is essential for Black to preserve this bishop and to exert pressure against the c3-square. In addition, the bishop can be

useful to protect the dark squares on the kingside.

After 12...♙xc3?! 13.♗xc3 a6 (13...♗h6 14.♖b1 ♜xc2 15.♙b5+ ♖f8 16.♜e3± Wan Yunguo – Yu Ruiyuan, Jiangmen 2014) 14.♖b1 ♜a3 15.♞xb7 ♗e7 16.♙b5+ ♖f8 17.♙d3 ♞c8 18.♗e2 ♙xd3 19.cxd3↑, Black's king is misplaced and he has problems with bringing into the actions of his rook on h8, Karjakin – Tukhaev, Plovdiv 2010.

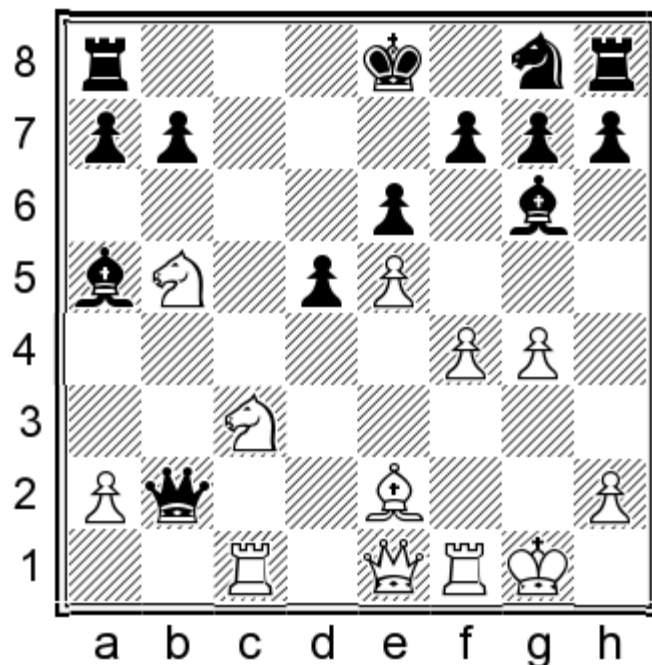
13.♖b1 ♜xc2



14.♖b3!?

The position is simplified following 14.♗d6+ ♖f8 15.♞xb7 ♗h6 16.♖b3 d4 17.♙d1 ♙xc3 (17...♜c1?! 18.♗xf5 ♗xf5 19.♜e4) 18.♙xc2 ♙xe1=

It is also very interesting for White to try here 14.♞c1 ♜b2 15.g4!?, like it was played recently by Caruana, but it is still unclear whether that was not just an attempt for a surprise in a single game. (15.♗a4 ♙xe1 16.♗xb2 ♙a5 17.♗d6+ ♖e7 18.♞c5 ♙b6 19.♗xf5+ exf5 20.♞xd5 ♗h6 21.♗c4 ♞hc8=; 15.♗d6+ ♖f8 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♗a4, Kryvoruchko – Charnota, Catowice 2014, 17...♜b4! 18.♜xb4 ♙xb4 19.♞c7 b6=) 15...♙g6 16.f4



It would be too risky for Black to opt for 16...♙e4?!, in view of 17.♖f2!, for example:

17...♗h6? 18.♙d3 ♖b4 19.♖b1 ♗c5 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♗xa5+- Caruana – Vachier-Lagrave, Saint Louis 2014;

or 17...♗b4?! 18.f5 exf5 19.♗d6+ ♗f8 20.♗d1! ♗f6 (20...♙b6 21.♗cxe4 dxe4 22.♗d5 ♗h6 23.g5+-) 21.♗cxe4 ♗xe4 22.♗xd5 ♗xd6 23.exd6 ♗d2 24.♗c5 ♙b6 25.♗c8+ ♙d8 26.d7 ♗e7 27.♗c5+ ♗d6 28.♗xf5 f6 29.♗e4 ♗e5 30.♗xb7+-;

or 17...♗f8 18.♙d3 (18.f5? exf5 19.gxf5 ♙b6+-) 18...♗b4 19.♖b1 ♗c5 20.♗xe4 ♗xb5 (20...dxe4 21.♗xa5 exd3 22.♗d2 ♗e7 23.♗d6↑) 21.♗f1 ♗d7 22.♗d6 ♙b6 23.f5,

16...♗e7 17.♗d6+ (following 17.f5, White must consider seriously Black's reply 17...0-0∞) 17...♗f8 18.f5 exf5 19.gxf5 ♗xf5 20.♗xf5 ♖c8 21.♙b5 (21.♗xd5 ♗xc1 22.♗xa5 ♗c5+ 23.♗xc5+ ♖xc5 24.♗fe3 ♗e8=) 21...♙xf5 (21...♙xc3? 22.e6+- ♗xb5 23.♖xc3 ♖e8 24.e7+ ♗g8 25.♗e5+-) 22.e6! (Black holds the position after 22.♖xf5 ♙xc3 23.e6 ♗xb5 24.♖xf7+ ♗e8 25.♖xc3 ♖xc3 26.♗xc3 ♗b6+ 27.♗g2 ♗xe6 28.♖xb7 ♗e4=) 22...f6 23.♖xf5 ♙xc3 24.♖xc3 ♗xc3 25.e7+ ♗f7 26.e8=♗+ ♖hx8 27.♙xe8+ ♗f8 28.♗xc3 ♖xc3 29.♙a4 ♖d3 30.♙b3 ♗e7= and he should not lose this endgame.

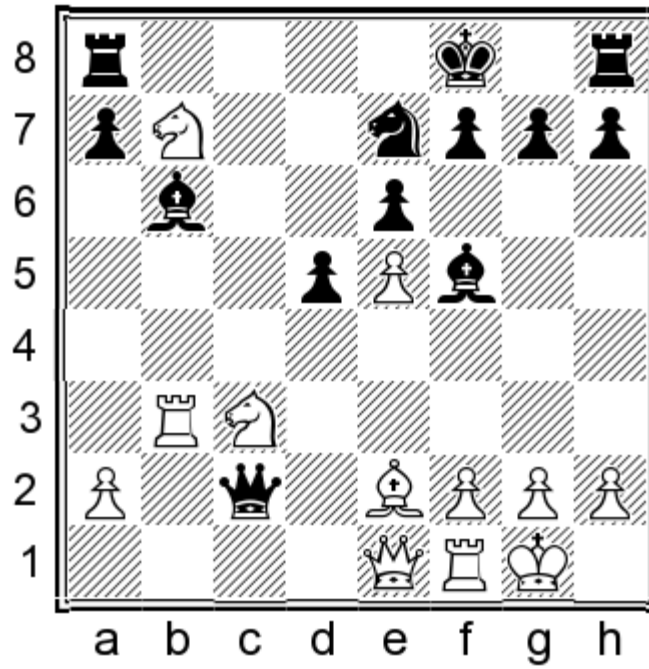
14...♗e7

Black cannot activate his knight in any other way – 14...♗h6?? 15.♗d4 ♙xc3 16.♖xc3 ♗b2 17.♙b5+ ♗f8 18.f3!! (White is threatening to trap the enemy queen with 19.♖f2 ♗b4 20.♖c8.) 18...♖d8 19.♗h4 f6 20.♖fc1+-

15.♗d6+

15.♗d4?! ♙xc3 16.♖xc3 ♗e4= Tukhaev – Mirzoeva, Samara 2012.

15...♗f8 16.♗xb7 ♙b6



17. ♕d1!?

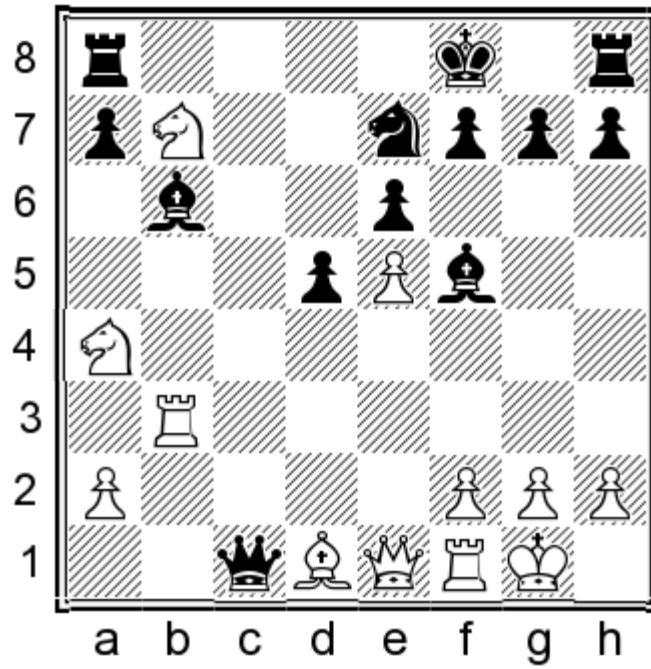
No doubt, it is hardly possible to analyse this position “to the end”, since the game is tremendously complicated and completely irrational.

The situation is very difficult to evaluate following 17. ♖d6 ♗a5 18. ♕f3!?! ♕d3 19. ♖c1 ♖xc1 20. ♖xc1 ♗g6 (After 20... ♖g6?, White has an effective counter strike – 21. ♖xd5! ♖xe5 22. ♖f4 ♖xf3+ 23. gxf3 ♗g6 24. ♖b7 ♗b6 25. ♖c8+ ♖xc8 26. ♖xc8 ♕d4 27. ♖b8 ♕e5 28. ♖a8 ♕xf4 29. ♖xa7+ ♔e7 30. ♖xh8± Karjakin – Fridman, Dortmund 2012, or 21... exd5 22. ♖xd3 ♖xe5 23. ♖xd5 ♖xf3+ 24. gxf3 ♗b6 25. a4 g6 26. a5 ♕d8 27. ♖c8 ♖xc8 28. ♖xc8± Hovhannisyan – Rozum, Yerevan 2014.) 21. ♖b7 ♕d3 (21... ♗b6? 22. ♖a4 ♕d4 23. ♖c5 h6 24. ♖b5) 22. h4 (22. ♕xd5 exd5 23. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 24. ♖xf7 ♔g8 25. ♖xa7 ♖b8 26. ♖xa5 ♖f4=) 22... h5∞

17... ♖c1

Black can also retreat his queen to another square – 17... ♖d3, but can hardly equalise after that. 18. ♖a4!?! (18. a4!?) 18... ♖e4 (18... ♖a6 19. ♖ac5↑) 19. ♖xb6 axb6 (19... ♖xe1!?! 20. ♖d7+ ♔e8 21. ♖d6+ ♔xd7 22. ♖b7+ ♔d8 23. ♕a4+–) 20. ♖c3 d4 (20... ♖c4 21. ♖e3! d4 22. ♖d2±) 21. ♖c7 ♖c6! 22. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 23. f4 ♖xa2 24. ♖xb6 g6 (24... ♕e4 25. ♕f3 ♕xf3 26. ♖xf3 ♖c2 27. ♖d6±) 25. ♖xc6 ♕e4 26. ♕f3 ♕xc6 27. ♕xc6 ♔e7 28. ♖d1 ♖c8 29. ♕f3 ♖c4 30. h3 (30. ♖d6 ♖b4 31. ♖e4 ♖ab2 32. ♔f1±) 30... ♖b4 31. ♔h2±

18. ♖a4



18...♙c7

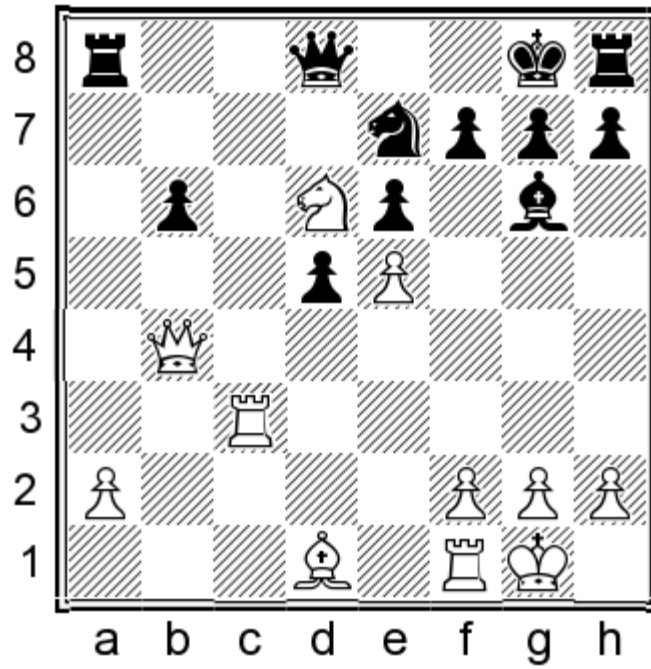
The alternatives would not solve Black's problems either. In the majority of the cases White's lead in development is the decisive factor as well as the misplacement of Black's king. Meanwhile, White must also play very accurately. He must act energetically; otherwise, his initiative may evaporate.

18...g5 19.♗xb6 axb6 20.♚b4↑

18...g6 19.♗xb6 (19.♗d6) 19...axb6 20.g4 ♕e4 21.f3 ♕b1 22.♚b4 ♙c7 23.♗d6 ♕xa2 24.♚f4 ♗g8 25.♞c3 ♕c4 26.♕e2 b5 27.♕xc4 bxc4 28.♞b1±, with the idea ♞b1-b7.

18...♕d4!? This move requires extensive practical tests. 19.♗d6 ♚f4 20.♚a5!? (20.g3 ♚xe5 21.♚b4 g6 22.♗b5) 20...g6 21.♗b6 (21.♗c5!?) 21...♕xb6 22.♞xb6 ♚xe5 (22...♗g7? 23.♞b7 ♚xe5 24.♚c7+-) 23.♞e1 ♚f6 (23...♚xe1+ 24.♚xe1 axb6 25.g4±) 24.♞b7 (24...♗g7? 25.♚a3!+-) 24...e5 25.♗xf5!? (25.♚a3!?) 25...gxf5 26.♕b3↑

19.♗d6 ♕g6 20.♚b4 ♗g8 21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♞c3 ♙d8



23. ♖b7!N

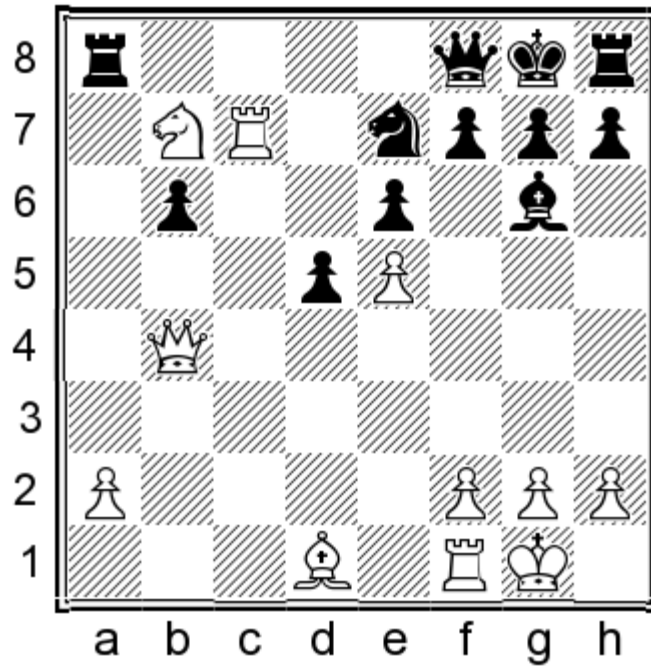
With this move White ousts the enemy queen, which protects the b6-pawn.

He has also tried in practice the seemingly active line: 23. ♕a4 h5 24. ♖fc1 ♖h7 25. ♖c7 ♗f5 26. ♗xf5 (26. ♗xf7 ♕xf7 27. ♖xf7 ♖f8!∞) 26... ♕xf5 27. ♖xf7 ♖c8 28. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 29. h3 ♗c1+ 30. ♖h2 ♖c8=, but White has failed to achieve anything real in the game Caruana – Postny, Achaea 2012.

23... ♗f8

Black can hardly be happy with his position in the multi-piece endgame after 23... ♗d7 24. ♗xb6 ♗c8 25. ♗c7 ♗xc7 26. ♖xc7 h6 27. ♕b3 ♖h7 28. ♖fc1 ♗b6 29. ♗d6±

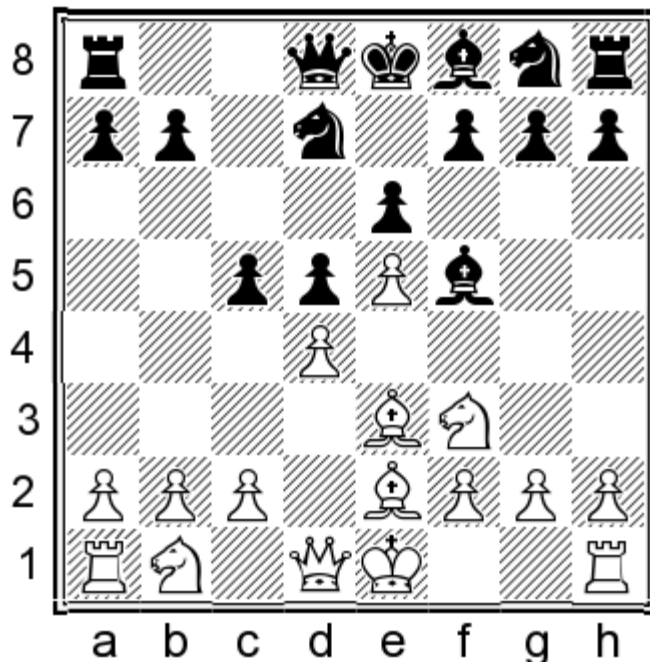
24. ♖c7



24...♖f5 (Following 24...♗c8 25.♙b2 h6 26.♘c2 ♔h7 27.♞c1 ♘e7 28.♗d6±, White's pieces are very active and compensate with an interest the sacrificed pawn.) 25.♙xb6 h6, with the idea ♔h7. (25...♞xa2? 26.g4! ♗h4 27.♗d6 ♞a8 28.f4+→) 26.a4± Black has solved somehow the problems with the development of his kingside, but White's passed a4-pawn remains very dangerous.

Chapter 10

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♞e2 c5 6.♞e3 ♞d7



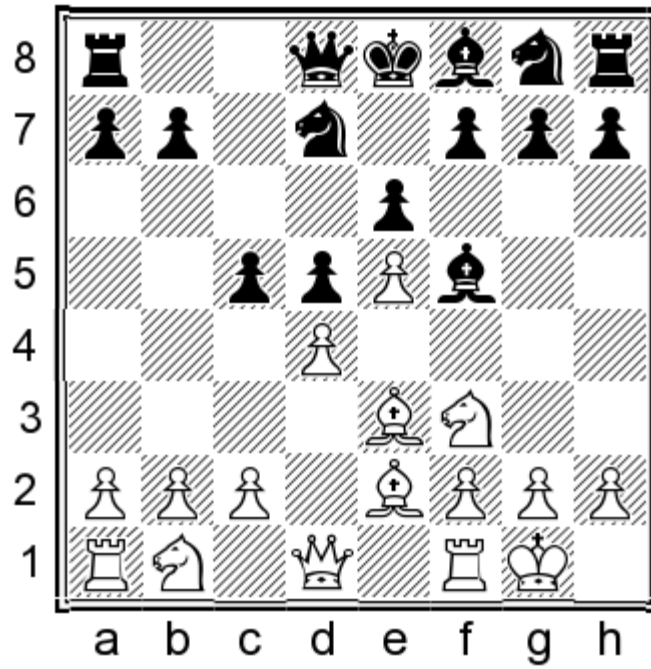
This is a logical move. Black develops a piece and protects his c5-pawn, while the c6-square is left for the other knight. It has a drawback, however. The development of his kingside is delayed.

White's task is to open the game in the centre at an opportune moment and to create problems for the opponent with his development. Black will have to solve them complying with some positional concessions.

7.0-0

It would be premature for White to choose here 7.♞bd2, because he should not be in a hurry to place his knight on this square. We will see later that the knight may be more useful on c3 and even on the a3-square. 7...♞e7 8.dxc5 ♞c6 9.♞b3 and Black has a choice between 9...♞e4!?∞, or 9...♞g4!? 10.♞fd4! ♞xe2 11.♞xe2, Short – Adianto, Jakarta 1996, 11...♞cxe5∞, leading to favourable complications for him.

The immediate move 7.c4 does not create any serious problems for Black. 7...cxd4 8.♞xd4 ♞xb1 9.♞xb1 ♞b4+ 10.♞f1. White plans to exploit the unstable placement of the enemy bishop on b4 in some variations. (10.♞d2?! ♞xd2+ 11.♞xd2 ♞xe5!?∞; 11...♞e7 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.f4 0-0 14.0-0 ♞b6 15.♞f3, Anand – Gulko, Riga 1995, 15...♞ad8!, with the idea 16.♞xd5 ♞xe5 17.fxg5 ♞xd5 18.♞bd1 ♞fd8 19.♞f4 f6!-+; it would be the least of evils for White to play here 16.♞bc1 ♞b8, but he would be hardly happy with that.) 10...♞e7 11.♞a4 ♞a5 12.♞xa5 ♞xa5 13.f4 (He fails to exploit the power of his two bishops after 13.b4 ♞d8 14.f4 dxc4 15.♞xc4 ♞b6 16.♞b5+ ♞f8= Black has his pluses. He controls reliably the d5-square, which is an excellent base for his knights.) 13...♞b6 14.♞f2 ♞c6 (After Black's active move 14...♞c5?!, White has a powerful argument – 15.♞f3!± and his king turns out to be perfectly placed in the centre of the board, Vasiukov – Vyzmanavin, Elista 1995.) 15.♞hd1 ♞xd4 16.♞xd4 dxc4 17.♞xc4 ♞e7 18.♞xb6 ♞xb6 19.♞b3 ♞ac8= Kernazhitsky – Meduna, Stary Smokovec 1996.



Following 7.0-0, Black has a choice. He can make an useful developing move **A) 7...♖c8**, or the prophylactic move **B) 7...a6**, or can try to develop rapidly his kingside with **C) 7...♗e7**.

His alternatives promise him much less.

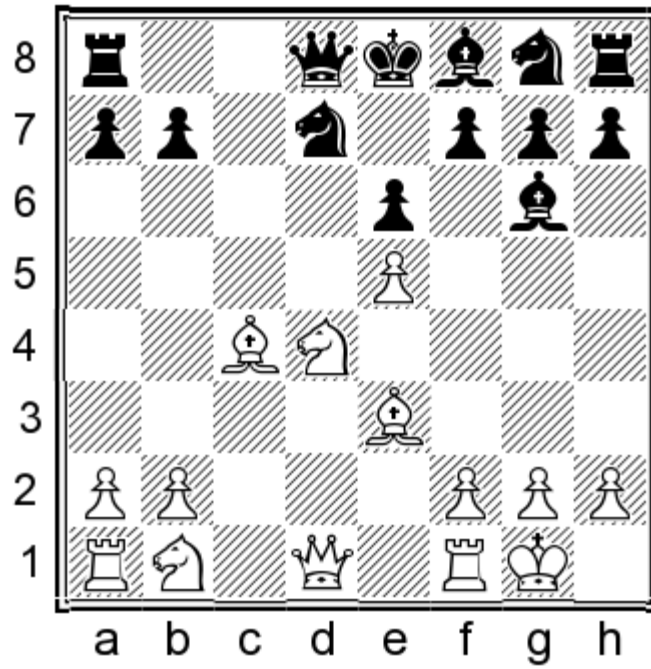
7...cxd4?! This move reduces the tension from the d4-square and enables White to transfer with tempo his knight to a better central placement. 8.♗xd4 ♕g6. Black must lose a tempo to retreat his bishop. (8...♗e7 9.f4±; the e5-pawn is untouchable: 8...♗xe5?? 9.♖b5+ ♗d7 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.♖xd5+-) 9.c4±, with the idea 9...♗e7 (9...dxc4 10.♗d2±) 10.♗b5 ♗xe5 11.♖a4 ♗7c6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♗1c3 ♕e7 14.♗xd5+-, White's initiative is decisive.

7...h5?! 8.c4 ♗e7 (8...cxd4? 9.♗xd4 ♕xb1 10.♖xb1 ♗xe5 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♖b5+ ♗d7 13.♖e1 ♕e7 14.♗f5+- Loftsson – Valtysson, Reykjavik 2008) 9.♕g5±

7...♖c7?! 8.c4 dxc4 9.♗a3 cxd4 (Black loses very quickly if he reacts too slow, for example: 9...a6 10.♗xc4 b5 11.♗d6+ ♕xd6 12.exd6 ♖xd6 13.a4 cxd4 14.♗xd4+- Henrichs – Kamper, Recklinghausen 2011.) 10.♗b5 ♖a5 11.♗bxd4±

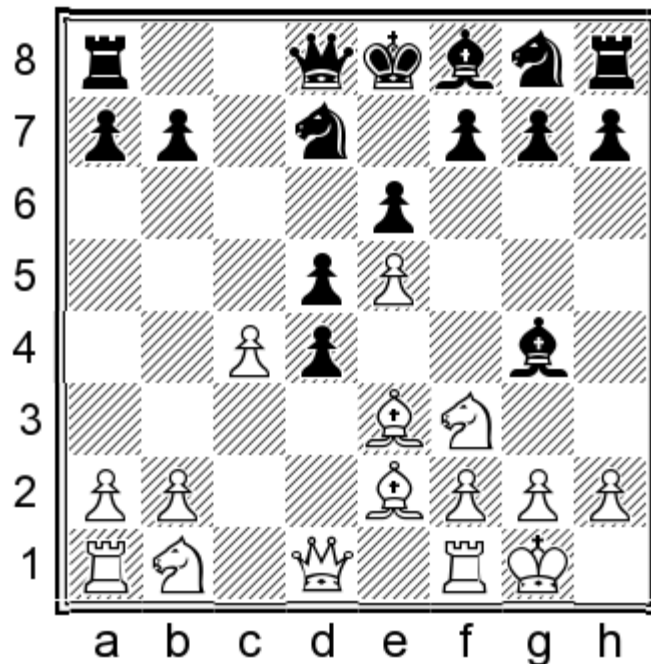
Black should better avoid 7...c4?!, since this reduces the tension against the d4-pawn and White's task will become much easier. He will increase his space advantage by advancing his kingside pawns. 8.b3 b5 (8...cxb3 9.axb3 ♕b4 10.c3 ♕a5 11.♕g5± Ricardi – Garcia Palermo, La Carlota 1995) 9.a4 a6 10.axb5 axb5 11.♖xa8 ♖xa8 12.♗c3 ♖c6 13.bxc4 bxc4 14.♗h4 ♗e7 15.g4 ♕g6 16.f4±

After 7...♕g6?!, as well as against all the other responses for Black, connected with the delay of the development of his kingside, White can react in an analogous way – 8.c4, for example: 8...cxd4 9.♗xd4 dxc4 10.♕xc4!? You will see in the following variations that he can exploit the fact that Black's king is stranded in the centre by sacrificing a piece on the e6-square. (White can also prepare capturing the c4-pawn with his knight – 10.♗d2!? ♕c5 11.♗xc4, transferring it to a wonderful central position from where it exerts powerful pressure against the enemy position. 11...♗e7 12.♕f3±)



10...Bc8 (White can sacrifice his bishop on a6 following 10...a6 11. d3±, with the idea 11...d7 12. ex6 fxe6 13. dxe6 Wa5 14. Wd6 Bc8 15. Bb1+; or 10...dxe5?! 11. Wa4+ d7 12. ex6+- Biti – Hajna, Postojna 2009.) 11. Wa4 (It deserves some practical tests for him to try 11. ex6!? fxe6 12. dxe6∞, but White should better keep this strike in reserve, waiting for the best possible moment for it.) 11...a6 12. Bb1 (12. ex6!?) 12...b5 13. dxb5 c2 14. d6+ exd6 15. Wxc2 ex5 16. d3 dgf6 17. We2 Bb8 18. b3 0-0 19. d4± Gallagher – Kelecevic, Lenk 1995.

It looks like a loss of time for Black to opt for 7...g4?!, since this may become very important for him, having in mind his undeveloped kingside. 8.c4. This key-move enables White to open the position in the centre and this emphasizes Black's lag in development. 8...cxd4 (8...d7 9.h3 gh5 10. d3 dxc4 11. dxc5 d6 12. d2 ex2 13. Wxe2 dxe5 14. dxc4 dxc4 15. Wxc4 ex7 16. Bfd1 Wa5 17. a3±, with the idea b2-b4)

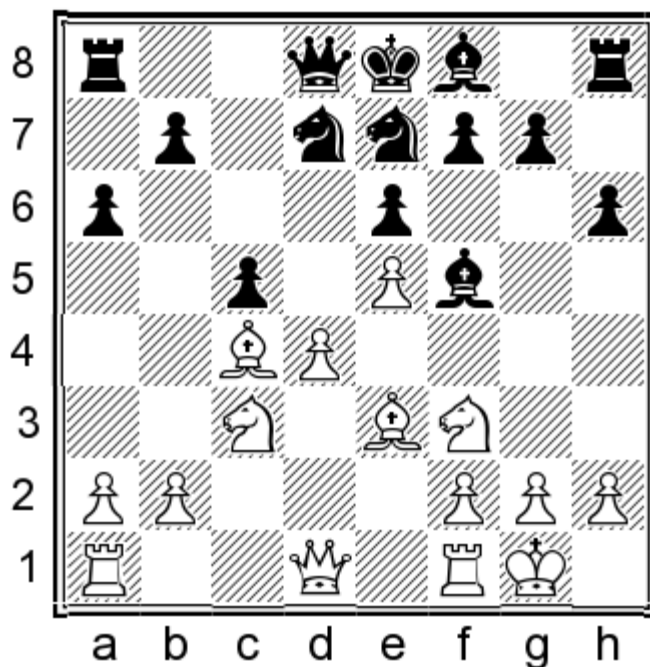


9. exd4!? (9. Wxd4 exf3 10. exf3 c5, Sidorenko – Kantarji, Israel 2008, 11. Wf4 ex3 12. fxe3 d7 13. gh5 0-0 14. exf7+ gh8 15. d3±; 9. d4 ex2 10. Wxe2 dxc4 11. d2 dxe5 12. f4 d6 13. dxc6 bxc6 14. dxc4 d6 15. f5±)

9...dxc4 10.♟bd2 ♞e7 11.♞xc4 ♞c6 12.♙c3±

7...♟b6 8.c4. This is White's most precise move. (8.♞c3!? a6 9.♞a4 ♟c6 10.♞xc5 ♞xc5 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.♞d4 ♙xd4 13.♟xd4 ♞e7 14.♟ac1±) 8...♟xb2 9.♞bd2 ♞e7 (9...♟c2 10.♟xc2 ♙xc2 11.cxd5 exd5 12.dxc5± Paulet – Czarnota, Chisinau 2005) 10.♟c1± b6 (White obtains effortlessly a great advantage after 10...♞c6 11.cxd5 exd5 12.dxc5 ♙e7 13.♞b3 0-0 14.♞bd4±, with the idea 14...♙e4 15.e6±) 11.♞h4 (11.♞b3!?) 11...♟d8 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♟a4±

7...h6 8.c4! ♞e7 (8...dxc4 9.♞a3!?, with the idea 9...c3 10.bxc3 cxd4 11.♞xd4 ♙xa3 12.♞xf5 exf5 13.♟a4+–) 9.♞c3. This is an instructive example why the early development of White's knight to d2 is not so good. Now, the knight is much better placed on c3. 9...dxc4 (9...cxd4? 10.♞xd4 dxc4 11.♞cb5 ♞c6 12.♞xf5 exf5 13.e6+–) 10.♙xc4 a6

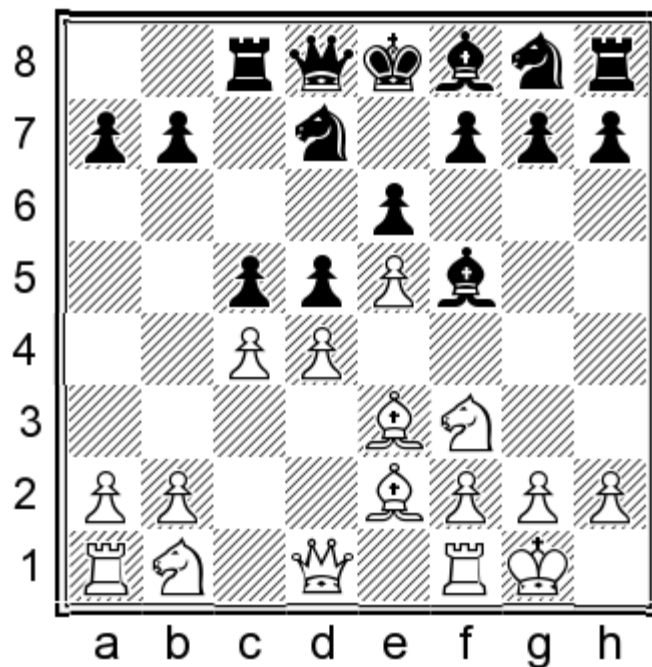


Now, White has a very pleasant choice.

He can increase the pressure with 11.d5!?, for example: 11...♞b6 12.dxe6 fxe6 (12...♞xc4? 13.♟a4+–) 13.♞d2!? ♞xc4 (13...♞ed5 14.♞xd5 ♞xd5 15.♟h5+ g6 16.♟f3 b5 17.♙e2 h5 18.♞e4±) 14.♞xc4 ♟xd1 15.♟fxd1 ♞c6 16.♟d2±, or after for example: 11.dxc5!? ♞c6 12.b4 ♞dxe5 (12...♞xb4?! 13.♞d4! ♙h7 14.♙xe6! ♞xc5 15.♙c4±) 13.♞xe5 ♟xd1 14.♟axd1 ♞xe5 15.♙e2 ♙e7 16.f4 ♞c6 17.♙f3±, he can enter a multi-piece endgame in which he is clearly better thanks to his extra space, more actively placed pieces and his pawn-majority on the queenside.

A) 7...♟c8 8.c4!

This is a principled key-move, which White will play practically against all possible moves by Black in the variation we are analysing in this chapter.

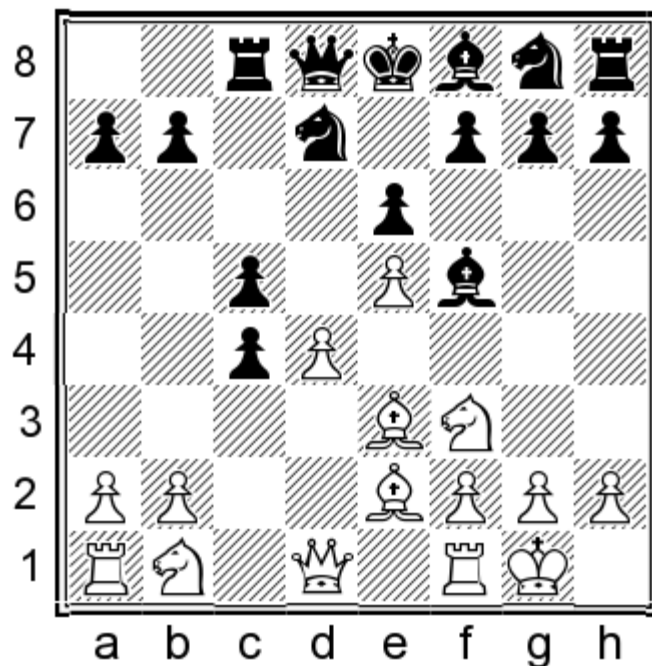


8...dxc4

Before the start of the development of his kingside, Black reduces the tension against the d5-square.

His alternatives are weaker: 8...cxd4? 9.♘xd4 dxc4 10.♘xf5 exf5 11.♖a4± and Black's considerable lag in development enables White to organize powerful initiative, Sepp – Jarvela, Turku 1999, or 8...♙xb1? 9.♞xb1 ♖e7 10.dxc5 ♜xc5 11.cxd5 ♞xd5 12.♙b5+ ♜d7 13.♙xa7 ♞a5 14.♙xd7+ ♜xd7 15.♙d4 ♞xa2 16.♜g5+– Klovans – Kock, Triesen 2000.

8...♜e7 9.♞bd2!? This knight may go to the c4-square at some moment, or may attack the c5-square after the preliminary move ♜d2-b3. (9.♜c3 dxc4 10.♞b5± – see variation A1) 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♜xe5 11.♞b3 ♜5c6 12.♞xb7 ♜xd4 13.♙xd4 ♜c6 14.♞b3!±



Following 8...dxc4, White can develop his initiative in two different ways: A1) 9.♜c3 and A2) 9.d5.

It would not work for him to play now 9.♘a3, since this move would enable Black to complete effortlessly the development of his kingside. 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♕xa3 11.♘xf5 exf5 12.bxa3 ♖e7 13.♗a4 f4!? (13...0-0!?) 14.♕xf4 ♘d5∞

A1) 9.♘c3!?

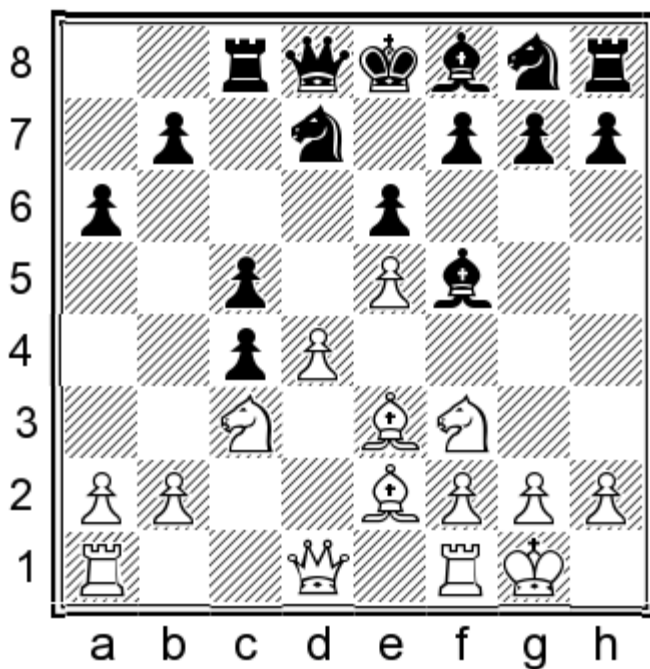
White completes the development of his queenside and is ready to play d4-d5 at an opportune moment.

9...a6

This is an important prophylactic move for Black. There may appear that he has obtained an acceptable position, but this is an illusion, because White manages to preserve his pressure maintaining the initiative.

He is better after 9...cxd4?! 10.♘xd4. White's knight on d4 exerts powerful pressure against Black's position. 10...♕d3 11.♕xd3 cxd3 12.♗xd3± Palac – Borkovic, Borovo 1991.

After 9...♖e7, it would be possible for White to continue with 10.♘b5 (10.♕c4!?) and his initiative would become tremendously dangerous. 10...♘c6 11.♖c1! a6 (11...♕e7 12.♘d6+ ♕xd6 13.exd6 cxd4 14.♘xd4±; 11...cxd4 12.♘fxd4 ♘dx5, Domancich – Luzuriaga, ICCF 2005, 13.♘xf5 exf5 14.♗a4 a6 15.♘a7±; 11...♕g4 12.♖xc4 ♕xf3 13.♕xf3 cxd4 14.♘d4 ♘dx5 15.♘xc6 ♗xd1 16.♘xe5! ♗d8 17.♖d1 f6 18.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19.♖c7 fxe5 20.♖xb7±; 14...♘cxe5 15.♖xc8 ♗xc8 16.♗c1! ♘xf3+ 17.♘xf3±) 12.♘d6+ ♕xd6 13.exd6 cxd4 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♗xd4 e5 16.♗d5 b5 17.a4 0-0 18.axb5 ♕e6 19.♗b7 axb5 20.♗xb5 ♖b8 21.♗a6±



10.♗a4

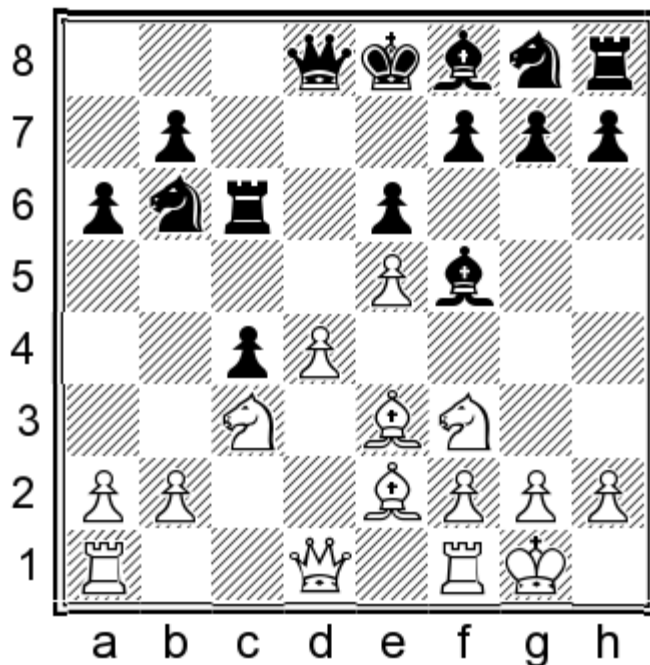
The move 10.d5 promises to White a bit less. 10...♖e7 (Black can advance his queenside pawn avalanche only at the price of some positional concessions – 10...b5 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.a4 b4 13.♘b1±, with the idea ♘bd2xc4, or ♕e2xc4 and his queenside pawns will be blocked.) 11.dxe6 ♕xe6 (11...fxe6 12.♕xc4 ♘b6 13.♕b3 ♘ed5 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.♕g5 ♗d7 16.♖c1 h6 17.♘h4 hxg5 18.♘xf5±) 12.♘g5! ♘xe5 13.♘xe6 ♗xd1 (13...fxe6 14.♗c2 b5 15.♗e4±; 14...♘f5 15.♗e4 ♕d6 16.f4 ♘xe3 17.♗xe3 ♘d3 18.♗xe6+ ♕e7 19.♘h1 ♖c6 20.♗xc4 ♘xb2 21.♗e4 ♗d4 22.♗c2 ♘c4 23.♘d5 ♗xd5 24.♕xc4,) 14.♘g7+ ♕xg7 15.♖axd1 ♘f5 16.♘e4↑ There has arisen a very complicated endgame in which White's prospects are preferable.

10...♖c6!

with the idea b7-b5.

Following 10...♗e7 11.dxc5 ♘d5 12.♗xd5 exd5 13.♗d4±, White's initiative becomes very dangerous, Nemeth – Prohaszka, Budapest 2005.

11.♖xc4 ♗b6 12.♖b3 c4 13.♖d1



13...♗d5!

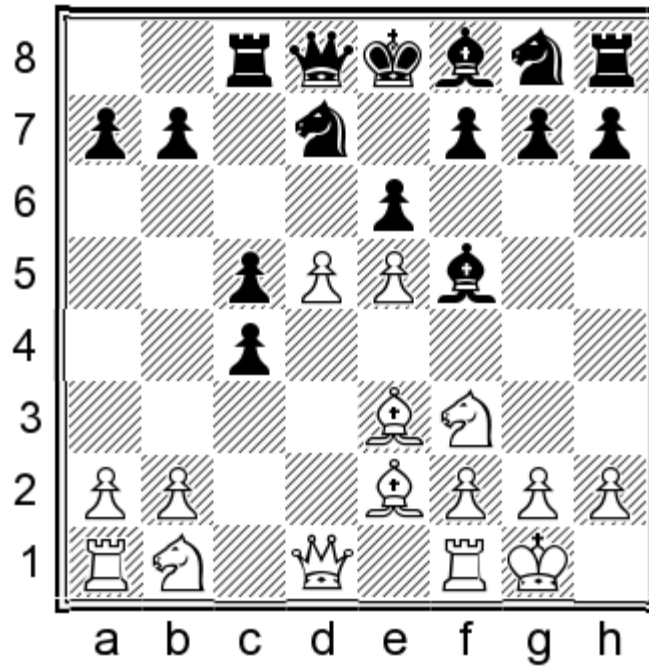
This is an important blocking move for Black.

13...♗e7 14.♗h4 ♗bd5 15.♖c1 b5 16.♗xd5 exd5 17.♗xf5 ♗xf5 18.♗f4 ♗e7 19.♗g4 ♗h6 20.♗h3 ♗g5 (20...0-0 21.♗e3↑) 21.♗xg5 ♖xg5 22.f4, and White exerts powerful pressure on the kingside.

14.♗d2 b5 15.♗f3↑ Black has succeeded in parrying partially his opponent's initiative, but the lack of development of his kingside still hurts him.

A2) 9.d5!?

This is a more precise move for White and its requires serious attention by Black.



9...♗e7!

He is still concentrated on solving his main problem – the development of his kingside.

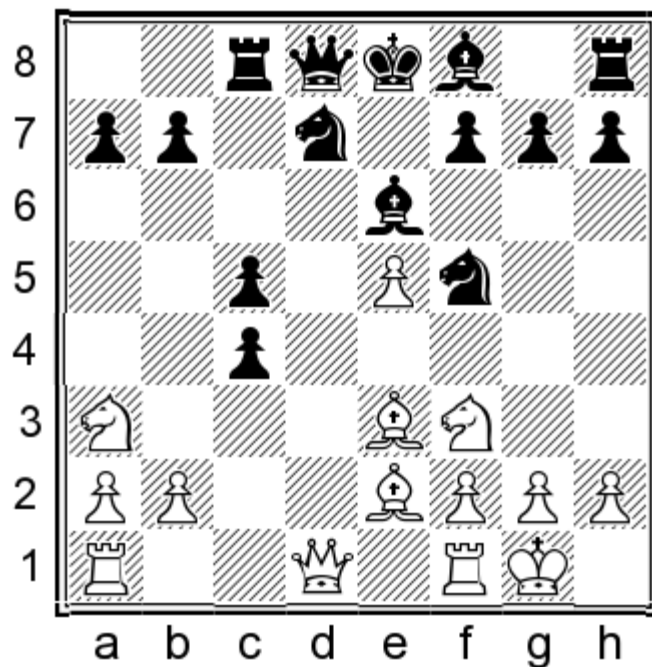
The attempt to preserve the c4-pawn may end up very badly for Black following 9...♗b6?, due to 10.d6 f6 11.a4!±. White exploits the unstable placement of the enemy knight on the b6-square and increases his queenside space advantage in the process. (11.♗a3!? fxe5 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♙xc4 ♙xd6 14.♗g5±) 11...fxe5 12.a5 ♗d5 13.♙a4+ ♖c6 14.♗xe5+–

Black can hardly be happy with the line: 9...exd5?! 10.♙xd5, because this helps the opponent to activate his queen. 10...♗e7 (10...♙c7? 11.♙xc4 ♙e6 12.♙d3 ♙xc4 13.♙xc4+– Gimenez – Quiroga, Buenos Aires 2009) 11.♙xb7 (11.♙xc4!? a6 12.♖d1±) 11...♙b6 12.♙xb6 ♗xb6 13.♗c3±, with the idea 13...♙d3 14.♙xd3 cxd3 15.♖fd1 c4 16.♖ac1 ♗f5 17.♙xb6 axb6 18.g4 ♗e7 19.♗b5 ♗g6 20.♖xd3±

10.dxe6

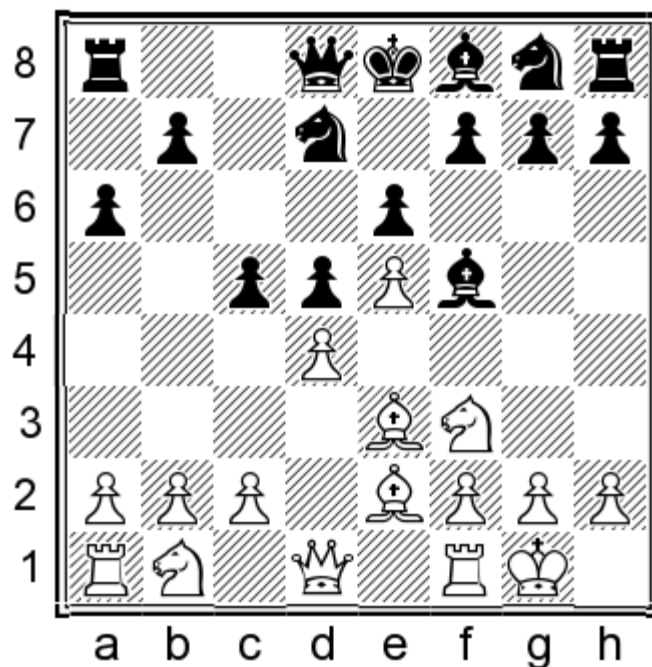
The following line deserves further practical tests 10.d6!?, with the idea 10...♗g6 11.♗bd2!? b5 (11...♗dxe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.f4 ♗d7 14.♗xc4 ♙e4 15.♗e5 a6 16.♖c1↑; 11...a6 12.a4 ♗dxe5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.f4 ♗d7 15.♗xc4↑) 12.a4 a6 13.axb5 axb5 14.b4↑

10...♙xe6 11.♗a3 ♗f5



12. ♖xc4 ♜xe3 13. fxe3 ♖xc4 14. ♜xc4 b5 15. ♜a3 a6 16. ♚d5 ♜b8 17. ♚e4 ♖e7 18. ♜b1! 0-0 19. ♜c3↑ White has extra space and more actively placed pieces, so his prospects are preferable.

B) 7...a6!?



With this prophylactic move Black protects the important b5-square, since White's pieces might be deployed there. Now, Black may try, at an opportune moment, to acquire additional space there with the help of the pawn-advance b7-b5.

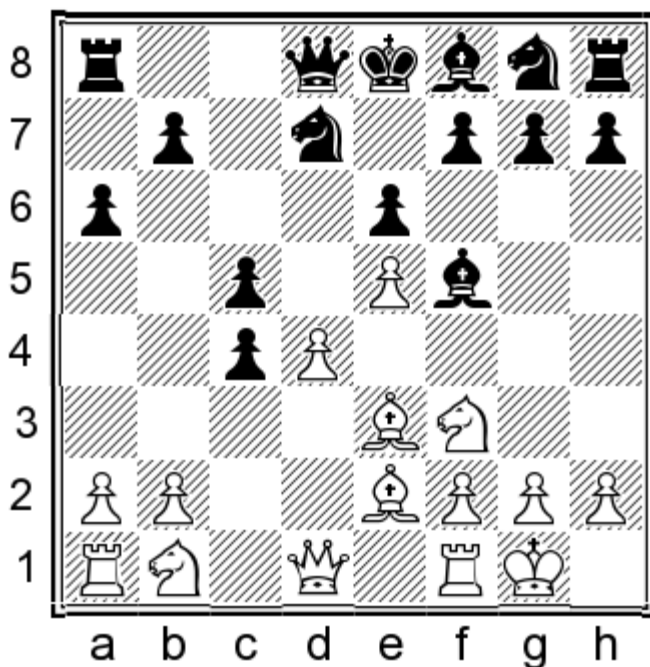
8.c4!?

This seems to be White's most principled move.

It would be also promising for him to try the simple line: 8. ♖bd2!? c4 9. ♗e1 h6 10. c3 ♗e7 11. g4 ♕h7 12. ♗g2 b5 13. f4↑ Karjakin – Wang Hao, Beijing 2011.

8...dxc4

If Black postpones this capture, then White will have the possibility to play even more aggressively – 8... ♗e7 9. ♗c3 cxd4 (It would be still better for Black to choose here 9...dxc4 10. ♕xc4 – see variation **B2**.) 10. ♗xd4 dxc4, Volokitin – Lenic, Plovdiv 2012, 11. f4! (11. ♕xc4 – see variation **B2**) 11... ♖c8 (11... b5 12. g4!±) 12. g4! ♕d3 13. ♕xd3 cxd3 14. ♖xd3 ♗c6 15. ♖ad1±



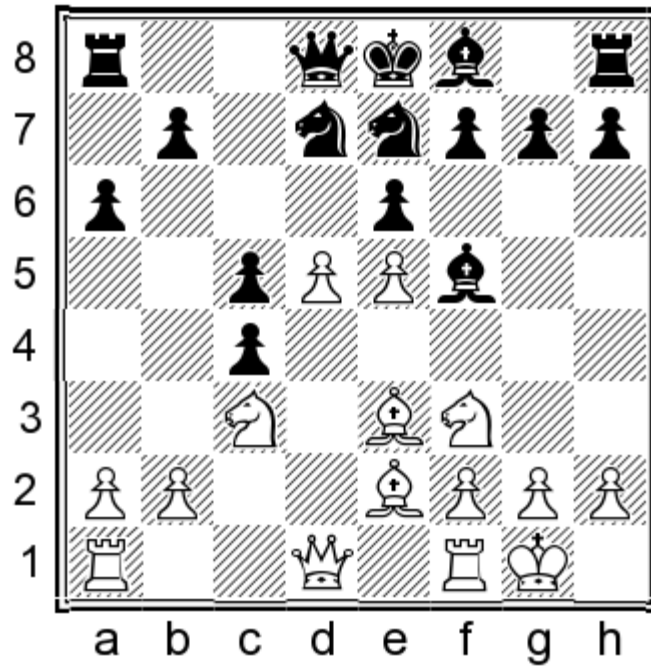
Now, White can fight for an opening advantage in two different ways: **B1) 9.d5** and **B2) 9. ♕xc4**.

B1) 9.d5!?

He increases immediately the pressure, trying to exploit the lack of development of Black's kingside and the misplacement of his king stranded in the centre.

9... ♗e7 10. ♗c3

It would not work for White to play now 10. d6?!, because in comparison to the variation **A2**, Black has played the more useful move – a7-a6. 10... ♗g6↑ Van der Weide – Krizsany, Saarlouis 2002.



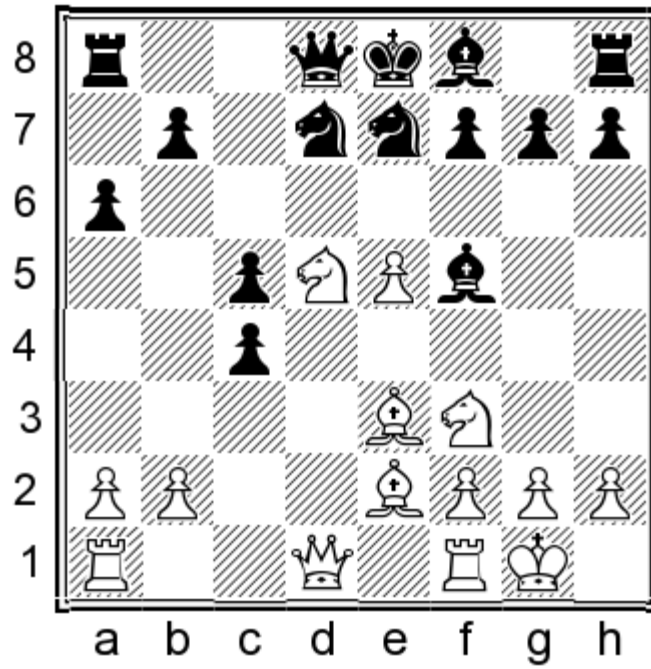
10...exd5

He is trying to facilitate his defence by exchanging pieces. Still, even after that, his considerable lag in development will hurt him.

10...b5 11.♘h4! White would be happy to capture the enemy bishop on f5, after playing in advance d5-d6. (11.♞e1?! exd5 12.♘xd5, Short – Adianto, Moscow 1994, 12...♘b6!∞) 11...♘xe5 12.d6 ♘7g6 (12...♘7c6? 13.♘xf5 exf5 14.♙xc5+–, with the decisive threat ♖f1-e1, Godlauskas – Kaganskiy, Marijampole 1996) 13.♘xf5 exf5, Ricardi – Adianto, Buenos Aires 1997, 14.♙xc5! ♞c8 15.♙a3 ♞b8 (15...♞c6 16.f4±) 16.f4 b4 17.♙xb4 ♞xb4 18.fxe5 ♘xe5 19.♘d5±

Following 10...♘g6, White can begin an offensive on the kingside with the move 11.♘g5!?!↑ (He will have a very good position too after the more modestly looking line: 11.b3!?! cxb3 12.axb3♞, with the idea 12...♘gxe5?! 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.g4 ♙g6 15.f4±) 11...♙e7 (After 11...h6, White has the same idea up his sleeve. 12.♘xf7 ♘xf7 13.f4 ♘g8 14.g4 ♙d3 15.♙xd3 cxd3 16.♞xd3,) 12.♘xf7 ♘xf7 13.f4! White advances his pawn-avalanche on the kingside in an attempt to exploit the misplacement of the enemy monarch. 13...♞f8 14.g4 ♙d3 15.♙xd3 cxd3 16.dxe6+ ♘g8 17.exd7 ♞xd7 18.♞b3+ ♘h8 19.e6 ♞d6 20.♞c4 b5 21.♞e4 c4 (21...♙f6 22.g5!±) 22.♞f3↑, with the idea ♞f3-h3.

11.♘xd5



11... ♖xe5

The inclusion of the moves 11...b5 12.a4±, would not change the character of the position.

12. ♖xe5

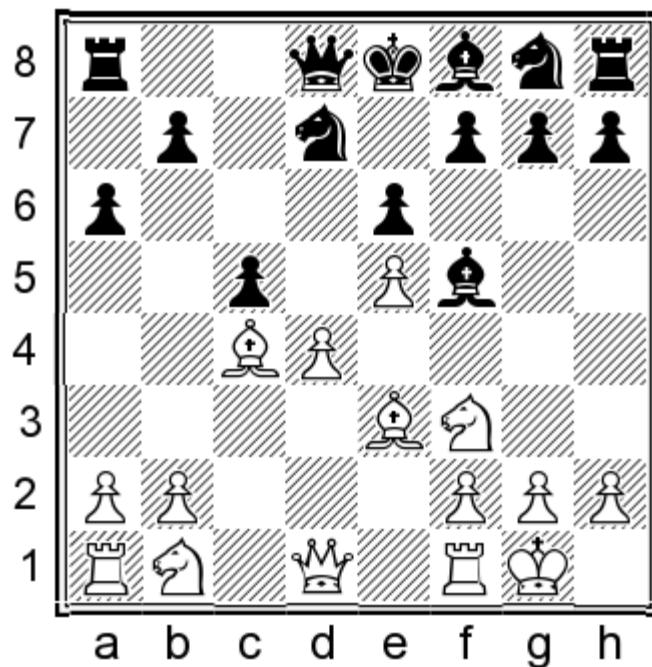
White should better refrain from 12. ♖xe7 ♖xf3+ 13. ♕xf3 ♕xe7 14. ♕xb7 ♖xd1 15. ♖axd1 ♖b8 16. ♕c6+ ♔f8=

12... ♖xd5 13. ♖xc4

White's position would be quite acceptable too after 13.f4 ♖xd1 14. ♖axd1=

13... ♖xd1 14. ♖axd1 ♖c6 15. ♕f3 ♕e6 16. b3 ♖d8 17. ♕xc6+ bxc6 18. ♖a5± Black must fight long and hard for a draw in this endgame. His two bishops are restricted in their movements by his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside and must protect them.

B2) 9. ♕xc4!?



9...♖e7

Or 9...b5?! 10.♙e2 c4 (10...♗e7 11.dxc5 ♖c6 12.a4 b4 13.♗bd2 ♗dxe5 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.f4 ♗c6 16.♗c4+— Shevelev – Kaganskiy, Tel Aviv 2002) 11.a4±

10.♗c3

White must play maximally energetically in order to maintain the initiative.

10.dxc5?! ♗c6= Zalkind – Kaganskiy, Tel Aviv 2002.

10...cxd4

White can counter his opponent's ambitious move 10...b5?!, just like on the previous move with 11.♙e2! (He would achieve less with 11.♙d3 c4, Kamsky – Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1995, 12.♙xf5 ♗xf5 13.d5± and White's edge may prove insufficient to obtain anything meaningful.) 11...♗c6 (Following 11...c4, White may try to capture the enemy bishop on f5 with 12.♗h4±, with the idea 12...♗b6 13.♗xf5 ♗xf5 14.♙f3±) 12.d5 exd5 (12...♗cxe5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.g4 ♙g6 15.f4+–; or 14...exd5 15.gxf5 d4 16.♙f4 ♙d6 17.♗e4+–) 13.♗xd5 ♗b6 14.♗xb6 ♗xb6 15.a4±

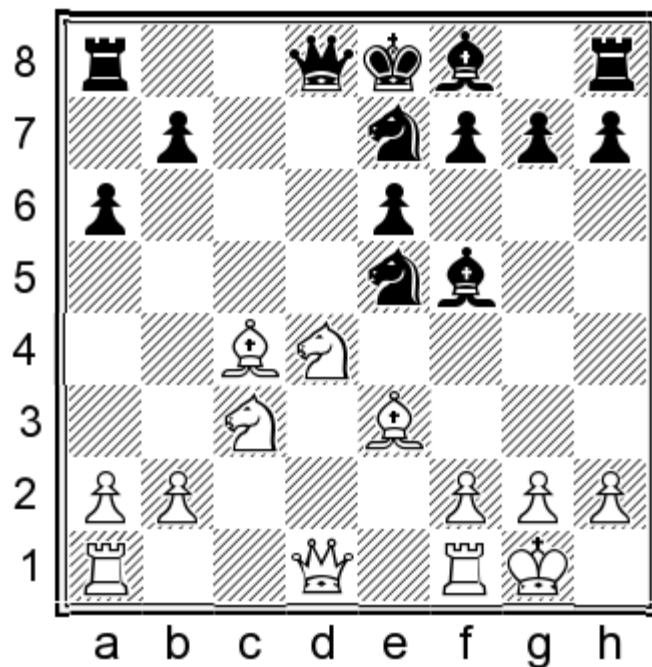
11.♗xd4!

After 11.♗xd4 ♗c6 12.♗f4 ♗c7 13.♙d5 ♙e7±, White's initiative will gradually evaporate. 13...♗cxe5 14.♗ac1=

11...♗xe5

Black can hardly solve the problems with his development, so he captures material in order “to suffer for something real” after all...

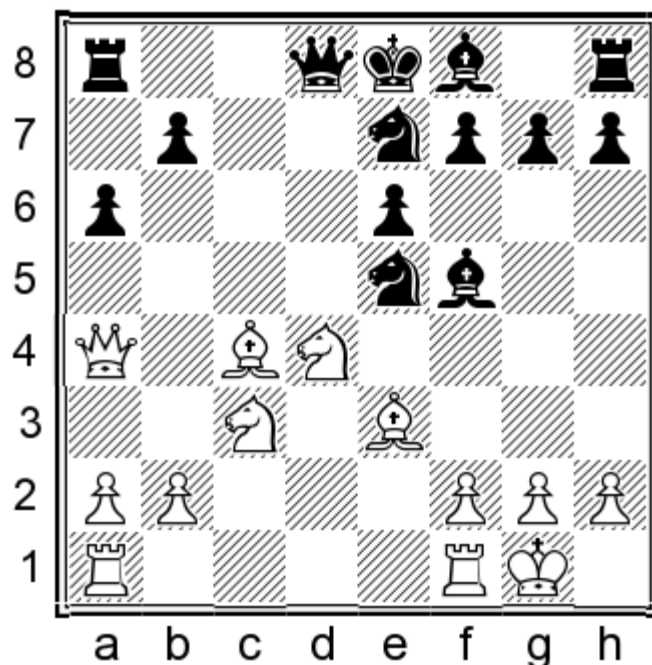
It would be bad for him to try to preserve his dark-squared bishop with 11...♙g6? 12.♙xe6 fxe6 13.♗xe6 ♗a5 14.♗d6 ♗c6 15.♗c7 ♗b8 16.♗ad1+–



12. ♖b3!N

White activates his strongest piece, after which Black's lag in development will become an even more important factor.

White has also tried in practice 12. ♖a4 and this move enables him to fight for the advantage as well.



12...b5?? 13. ♗cxb5 axb5 14. ♕xb5+ ♖d7 15. ♕xd7+-

12...♗d7? 13. ♕g5!±, with the idea 13...b5 14. ♕xb5 axb5 15. ♗dxb5+-

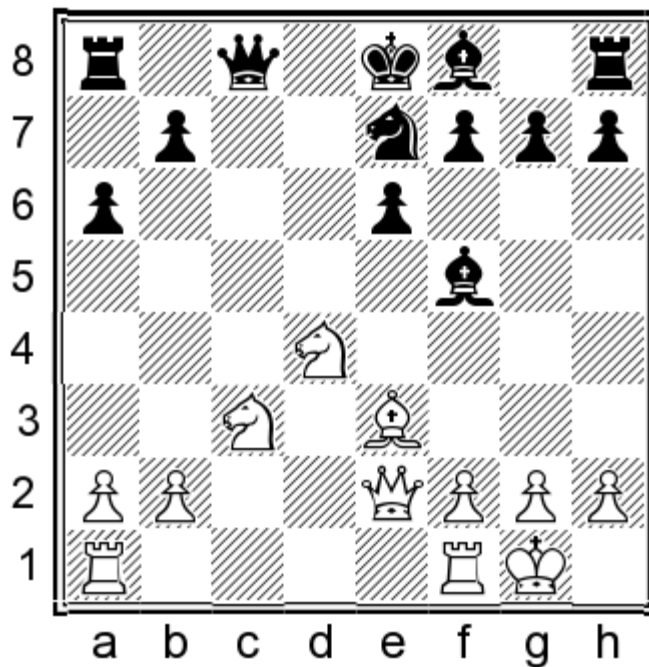
12...♗5c6?! 13. ♖fd1 ♖a5 14. ♖b3! 0-0-0, Volokitin – Lenic, Plovdiv 2012 (Black's attempt to facilitate his defence by trading queens 14...♖b4 can be countered by White with the spectacular move 15. ♗db5!, emphasizing the vulnerability of the dark squares in Black's camp. 15...axb5 16. ♗xb5 ♗d5. This is his only move. 17. ♕xd5 ♖xb3 18. ♕xb3±)

15. ♗a4! White does not lose time and begins an attack against the enemy king. 15...♖b4 16. ♗xf5 ♗xf5 17. ♕xe6 ♖fxe6

18. ♖xe6+ ♜b8 19. ♝xd8+ ♜xd8 20. ♞xf5 ♞xa4 21. ♙f4+ ♜a7 22. ♞e5!+-

12... ♜7c6. Black opens the diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. 13. ♜xf5 b5 (13...exf5 14. ♝ad1±) 14. ♜xb5 axb5 15. ♞xb5 ♝b8 16. ♜d4 ♝xb5 17. ♙xb5 ♙d6 18. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 19. ♙xc6+ ♜e7 20. g3 White's passed pawns are tremendously dangerous and Black will hardly manage to hold them in a practical game...

12... ♜xc4 13. ♞xc4 ♞c8 14. ♞e2



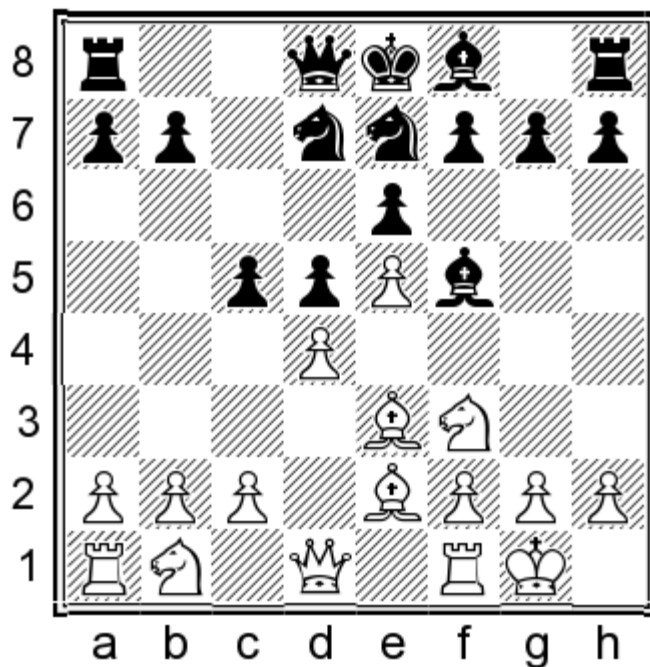
14...e5

He has hardly anything better anyway...

Black's alternatives enable White to obtain a decisive advantage, for example: 14... ♙g6 15. ♝ac1 ♜c6 16. ♜a4 ♞c7 17. ♜xc6 bxc6 18. ♞f3+-

15. ♜xf5 ♞xf5 16. f4 ♞e6 17. ♞f3 ♞c6 18. ♞h5±. White's lead in development is overwhelming.

C) 7...♗e7

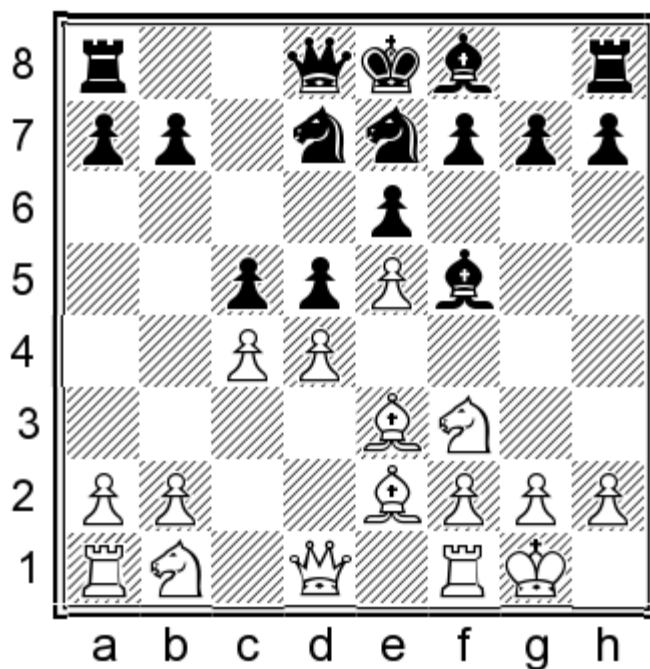


Here, White can follow a well trodden path with **C1) 8.c4!?**, or choose the relatively seldom played move **C2) 8.♗bd2!?**

It is also promising, but not so strong for him to opt for 8.dxc5 – see Chapter 8.

C1) 8.c4!?

White undermines the enemy d5-pawn, hoping to open the central files as quickly as possible and to exploit his lead in development.



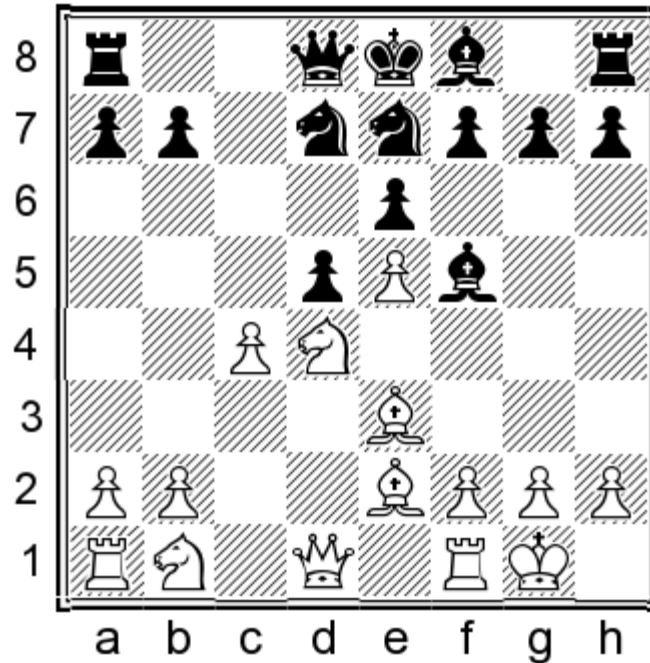
8...dxc4

Black has eliminated the tension from the d5-square and has freed it for his knight.

About 8...♞c8 9.♜bd2 – see variation A.

Black would not solve his problems by exchanging 8...♙xb1?! 9.♞xb1, because after for example: 9...cxd4 10.♙xd4 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♜c6, Vajda – Magyar, Budapest 2001, 12.♙b5 ♙e7 13.♞c1 ♞c8 14.♚a4+–, he would succeed in completing the development of his kingside indeed, but would suffer material losses.

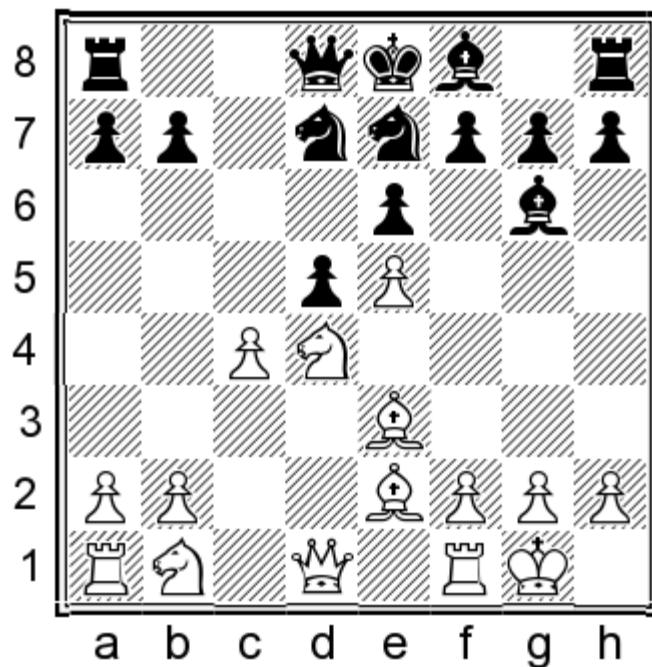
It will be tremendously risky for Black to try 8...cxd4?!, since this move enables White to develop powerful initiative. 9.♜xd4



Black can hardly be happy with 9...♙xb1?! 10.♞xb1 ♜xe5 11.♚a4+– and White has decisive threats on the a4-e8 diagonal, for example: 11...♚d7 12.♜b5+–; 11...♜7c6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.f4+– Rytshagov – Van Baarle, Dieren 1996; 11...♜d7 12.♙f3 ♜c8 13.cxd5 ♜cb6 14.♚b3 e5 15.♜e6+– Almasi – Berkes, Hungary 2006.

Black's horrible lag in development would be fatal for him after the immediate capturing of the e5-pawn 9...♜xe5?! 10.cxd5 exd5 (10...♚xd5 11.♜c3 ♚d7 12.♚b3+–) 11.♞e1 ♙d7 12.♜c3+–, or after the preliminary move 9...dxc4?! 10.♜a3 and only then 10...♜xe5 11.♜xc4 ♜xc4 12.♙xc4 ♙e4 13.♚h5+–

9...♙g6. This is Black's relatively best move.

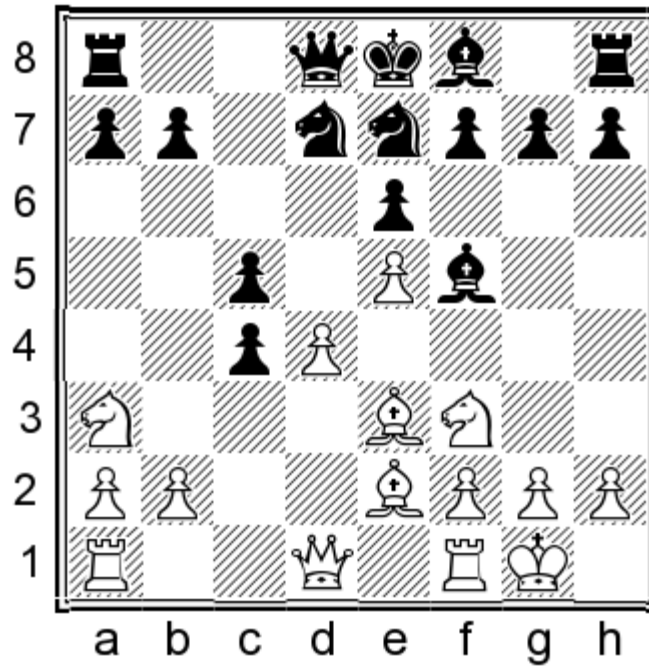


Now, White has a choice between numerous good possibilities.

It seems very appropriate for him to try to impede the development of his opponent's kingside with 10. ♕g5!? ♖b8 (10... ♗e5?! 11. ♗c3 dxc4 12. ♗db5+-) 11. ♕xe7 ♕xe7 12. cxd5 ♖xe5 (12... exd5? 13. ♕b5+-) 13. dxe6 fxe6 14. ♕g4 ♗c5 15. ♖e1 ♖d6 16. ♗xe6±

It is also possible for White to bring his knight into the actions with tempo 10. ♗b5!?, threatening ♗b5-d6. 10... ♗f5 (10... ♗e5?! 11. ♖a4 ♗7c6 12. cxd5 exd5 13. ♗1c3 ♕e7 14. ♗xd5 0-0 15. ♖ad1 a6 16. ♗bc7 ♖c8 17. f4+-) 11. cxd5 ♗xe3 12. fxe3 ♕c5 13. ♗d6+ ♕xd6 14. exd6 e5 15. ♖b3 0-0 16. ♗d2 ♗b6 17. ♖b4 ♗xd5 18. ♖c5 ♗f6 19. ♗c4 ♖e8 20. ♖ac1± 10. ♖a4!? Black's light-squared bishop is too far from his queenside and White creates threats on the a4-e8 diagonal. 10... dxc4 (10... a6 11. ♗d2±) 11. ♕xc4 a6 12. ♕xe6 fxe6 13. ♗xe6 b5 14. ♖d1 ♖b8 15. ♖f3 ♕f5 16. ♖xa8 ♕xe6 17. ♖xa6 ♗f7 18. ♗c3±

9. ♗a3



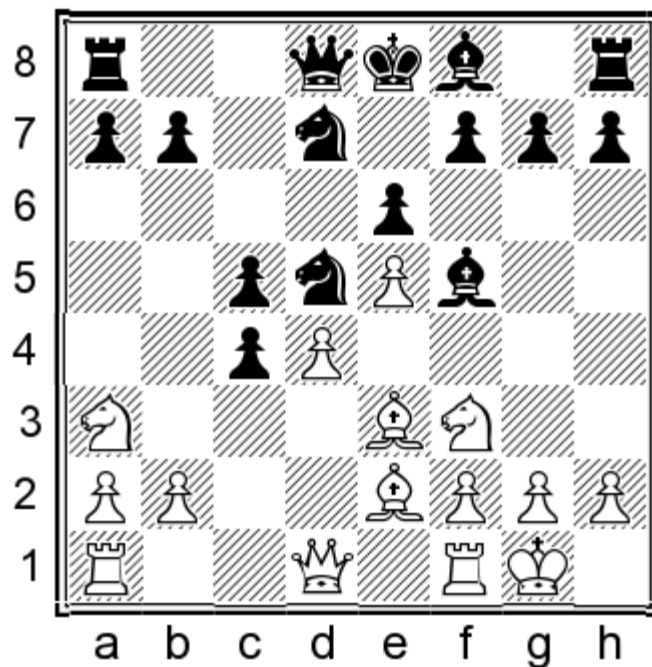
Now, Black can try to complete the development of his kingside with **C1a) 9...♞d5**, or to include before that the move **C1b) 9...c3!**

He should better refrain from 9...cxd4?, in view of 10.♞xc4, threatening ♞c4-d6. 10...♞c6 11.♞xd4. White is perfectly prepared for an offensive against the enemy king stranded in the centre. 11...♞xd4 (11...♙e4 12.♞b5+-; 11...♞dxe5 12.♞xe5 ♞xe5 13.♙b5+ ♞d7 14.♞xf5+- Hunt – Crichton, West Bromwich 2006) 12.♙xd4 ♙e7 13.♞fd1 b5 14.♞d6+ ♙xd6 15.♙xd6+- Dorin – Hernandez Penna, Buenos Aires 1998.

9...♞c6. Black's knight is not so active here as on the d5-square. 10.♞xc4 ♙e7 11.♞d6+ ♙xd6 12.exd6 cxd4 13.♞xd4 ♙e4 14.♞b5 0-0, Feletar – Zelic, Makarska Tucepi 1995, 15.f3 ♙f5 (15...♙d5 16.♞c7±) 16.♞c1± White's powerful bishop-pair and his strong passed pawn provide him with an overwhelming advantage.

C1a) 9...♞d5

Black places his knight in the centre and frees the diagonal for his dark-squared bishop.



We will analyse here: **C1a1) 10.♔g5!?** and **C1a2) 10.♖xc4!**

C1a1) 10.♔g5!?

White avoids the possibility of Black's knight capturing his bishop and hopes to create weak dark squares in Black's camp.

10...♔e7

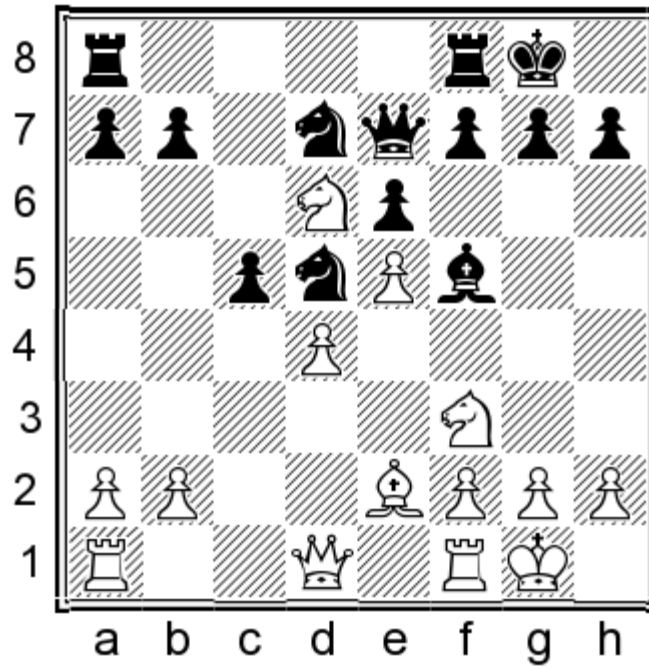
His alternatives provide White with more possibilities, while Black will still have problems with the development of his kingside, for example: 10...♚b8 11.♖xc4 (11.♔xc4 h6 12.♔h4± Smirin – Vyzmanavin, Elenite 1994) 11...h6 12.♔h4 b5 13.♗e3 ♔e4 14.a4±

It is still too risky for Black to play 10...f6, because after 11.exf6 gxf6 12.♔d2±, in view of the unstable placement of his king on the kingside, his castling there would be very precarious, Kersten – Klings, Bad Wildungen 1998.

11.♔xe7 ♚xe7

Black would not be any better if he captures with his knight 11...♗xe7 12.♖xc4 0-0 13.♝c1 ♗c6 14.dxc5 ♗xc5, Dorin – B.Larsen, Buenos Aires 1998, 15.♗d6 ♚b6 16.♔b5±, with the idea ♔b5xc6.

12.♖xc4 0-0 13.♗d6



This is the consequence of the trade of the dark-squared bishops. White's knight has penetrated to the weakened d6-outpost in Black's camp.

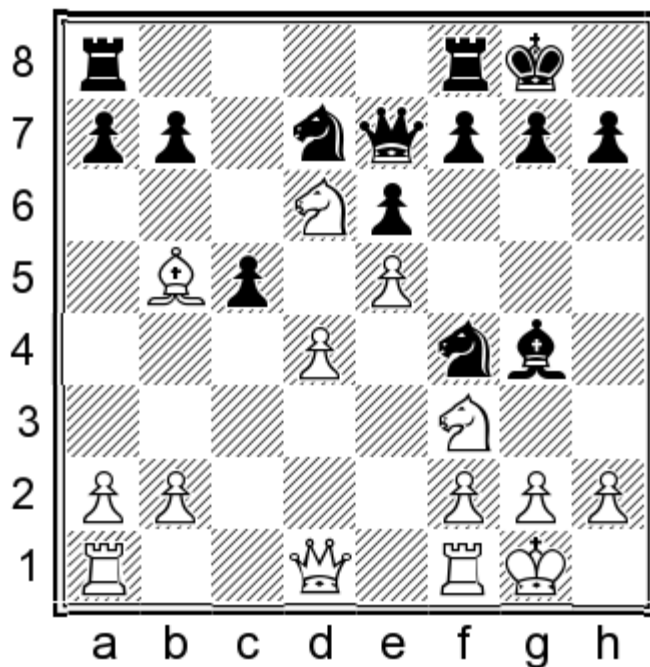
13...cxd4!

This exchange in the centre emphasizes the vulnerability of White's pawn on e5 and frees Black's knight on d7, since it was squeezed with the protection of his c5-pawn.

The move 13...♙g4 can be countered by White with 14.dxc5!, with the idea after 14...♜xc5?, to reply with 15.♚d4+-. 14...♜f4 15.♚d2 ♜xe2+ 16.♚xe2 ♜xc5, Rytshagov – Fridman, Finland 1995, 17.h3 (17.♞ac1!? b6 18.♞fd1±) 17...♙xf3 (17...♙h5?! 18.♞ac1±) 18.♚xf3 f6 19.♞fd1 fxe5 20.♚e3 b6 21.b4± Black is doomed to a passive defence.

His attempt to preserve his bishop with the move 13...♙g6 would not have facilitated his defence either. 14.♞c1 (14.♙c4!?) 14...cxd4 15.♚xd4 ♜7b6 16.♜h4 ♜c8 17.♜xg6 hxg6, Anagnostopoulos – Magem Badals, Manresa 1995, 18.♜e4 ♜cb6 19.♞fd1 (It is also possible for White to play here the prophylactic move 19.a3!?, preventing the penetration of the enemy pieces to this square. 19...♞fd8 20.♙f3±) 19...♞fd8 20.♙f3± The d6-square is very weak in Black's camp, while White has the initiative and a long-lasting advantage.

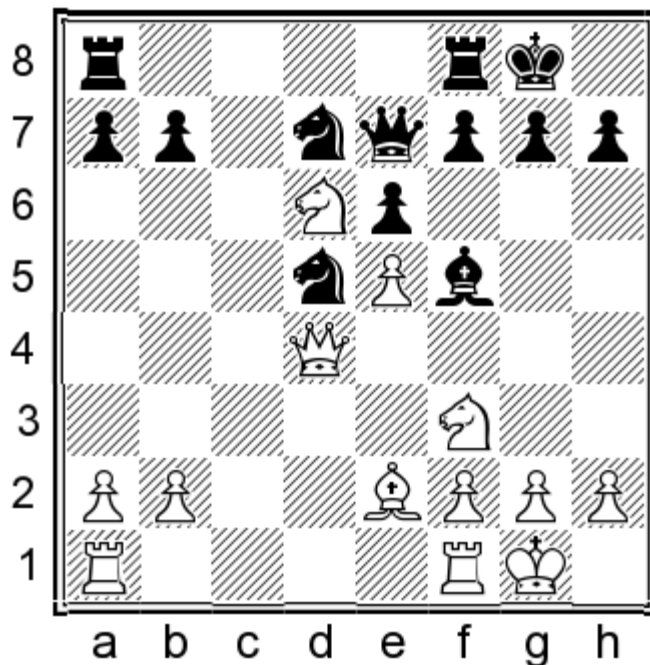
Following 13...♜f4, White can try to preserve his bishop with 14.♙b5!?, or to exchange it for the enemy knight on d7 at an opportune moment (White would not mind giving it up either after 14.♚d2!? ♜xe2+ 15.♚xe2 ♙g4 16.dxc5 ♜xc5 17.h3±) 14...♙g4



15. ♙xd7 . This exchange is forced, since Black's knight is exerting rather unpleasant pressure against White's pawn on e5. (The unstable placement of the pawn on e5 would be detrimental to White's cause after 15. ♞c1? f6! Velcheva – Khurtsidze, Halle 1995.) 15... ♜xd7 16. h3 ♘h5 17. ♞d2 ♖xh3+ (17... ♙xf3 18. ♜xf4 ♘d5 19. dxc5 ♞c6 20. b4 a5 21. a3 ♘xg2 22. b5 ♞f3 23. ♞xf3 ♙xf3 24. ♞fc1+- ; 20... ♙xg2 21. b5 ♞f3 22. ♞xf3 ♙xf3 23. ♞fc1+-) 18. ♖h2 ♙xf3 19. gxf3 f6 20. ♖xh3 fxe5 21. dxe5 ♞xf3+ 22. ♖g2 ♞c6 23. ♞c2! ♞e3+ 24. f3 ♞xe5 25. ♖e4± Black does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed knight.

14. ♞xd4

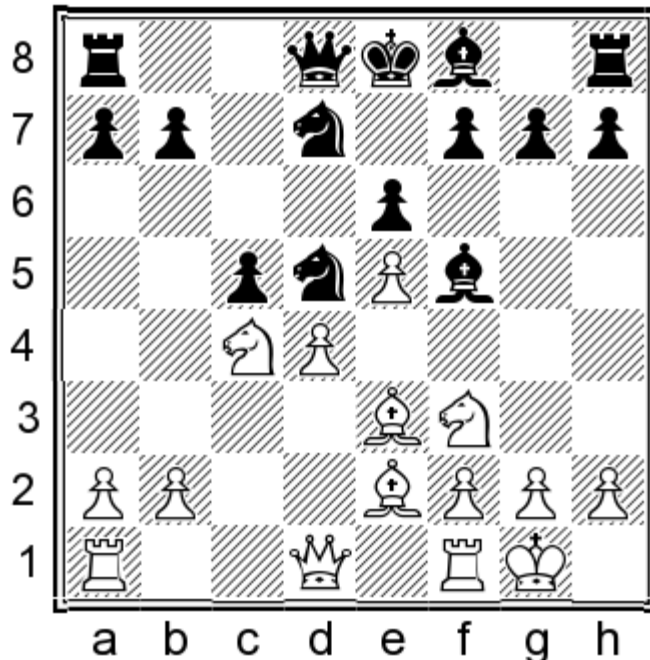
14. ♖xf5!? exf5 15. ♞xd4 ♖7b6 16. ♞fd1±



14... ♙g6 15. ♖xb7 ♖xe5 16. ♖xe5 ♞xb7 17. ♙f3± White's pieces are very active and he can try to exploit later his pawn-

majority on the queenside.

C1a2) 10.♖xc4!



White is not afraid of the trade of his dark-squared bishop and transfers his knight to a more active position.

We will analyse thoroughly now two possibilities for Black: **C1a2a) 10...b5** and **C1a2b) 10...♙e7**.

His alternatives would enable White to obtain effortlessly a great advantage.

10...h6? 11.dxc5 ♜xc5 12.♞d4+-

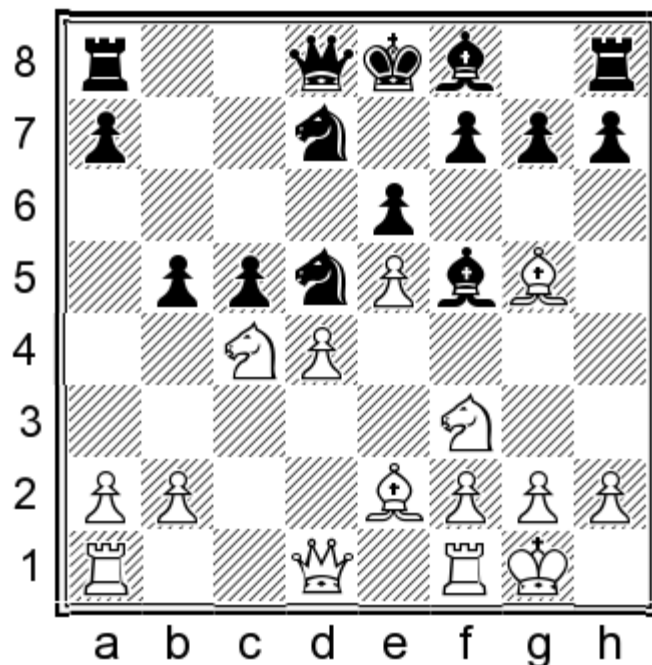
10...a6. This move is too slow. 11.dxc5 ♜xc5 (11...♞xe3 12.♞xe3 ♜xc5 13.♞xf5± Keskisarja – Raud, Tallinn 2000) 12.♙g5 ♚d7, Haslinger – Surtees, Halifax 2008, 13.♞h4!±, with the idea 13...♙g6 14.♚d4+-

Following 10...♞xe3 11.♞xe3 ♙e4, White can develop powerful initiative with the help of the move 12.d5!±, for example: 12...exd5 13.♞xd5 ♙e7 14.♞e1 0-0 15.♙b5 ♙xf3 (15...♙f5 16.e6! ♙xe6 17.♞xe6 fxe6 18.♞xe7+ ♚xe7 19.♚xd7+- Shaked – Frenklakh, Honolulu 1997) 16.♚xf3 ♞b6 17.♞ad1 ♞xd5 18.♙c4±

C1a2a) 10...b5 11.♙g5

White removes his bishop with tempo, freeing the square for his knight.

11.♞d6+!? ♙xd6 12.exd6 c4 13.a4 a6, Jorge Bort – Gonzalez Garcia, Valencia 2006, 14.♞e5↑



11...♖b8

Black has hardly anything better here.

The other retreat of his queen is not so good 11...♚c7?!, since it presents White with an additional possibility – 12.♘d6+ (12.♘e3!? h6 13.♘xf5 exf5 14.dxc5!+-; 13...hxg5 14.♘e3 ♘xe3 15.fxg3+-, with decisive threats ♘f3xg5 and ♙e2xb5; 12...♘xe3 13.♙e3 c4 14.a4± Rytshagov – Helvensteijn, Soest 1996) 12...♙xd6 13.exd6. Now, in comparison to the main line with 11...♖b8, White attacks the enemy queen and wins important tempi for the development of his initiative. 13...♚xd6 (13...♚b7? 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♚d4+-; 13...♖b6 14.dxc5 ♘xc5 15.♘d4+-) 14.dxc5 ♚xc5 15.♘d4 0-0 (15...♙g6 16.♙c1 ♚d6 17.♘xb5 ♚e5 18.♙f3! 0-0 19.♙xd5 exd5 20.♚d2± White has a pawn-majority on the queenside and the possibility to attack Black’s isolated pawn on d5.) 16.♘xf5 exf5 17.♙c1 ♚d6 18.♙xb5±. White has a powerful bishop-pair and a better pawn-structure.

Black cannot solve his problems with 11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6 in view of 13.♘e3!± and it would be difficult for him to win a piece, for example: 13...fxg5 (It would be slightly better for him to choose here 13...♘xe3 14.♙e3 c4 15.d5±, but then his previous play would have lost its purposefulness and his position would remain clearly worse after that.) 14.♘xf5 exf5, Larrea – Morgado, Salta 2004, 15.♙xb5+-

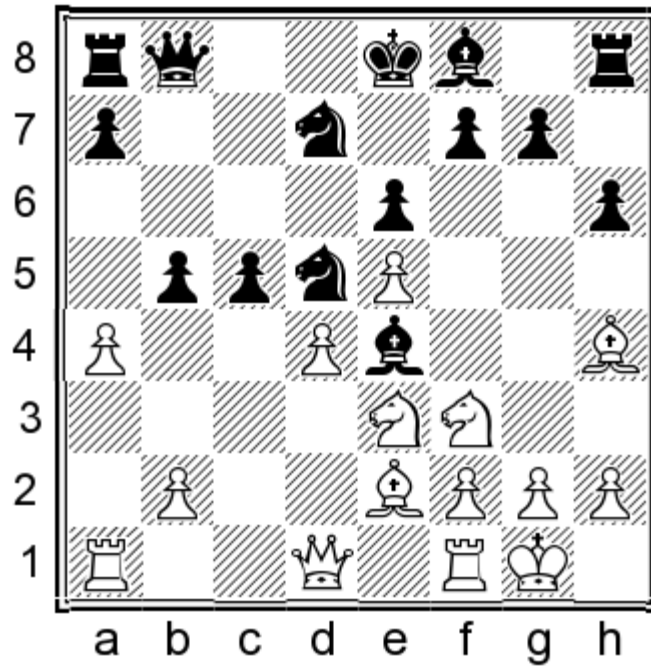
12.♘e3 h6

12...♙e4 13.a4 b4 14.♘d2±

13.♙h4 ♙e4

Or 13...♘xe3 14.fxg3 a6 15.a4 c4 (15...♙e4? 16.♘d2 ♙c6 17.♙h5! g6 18.♙xg6! fxg6 19.♚g4+- Krakops – Rasmussen, Gausdal 2001; 15...cxd4 16.♘xd4 ♙e4 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.♙h5+ g6 19.♚f3!+-; 15...b4 16.♘d2±) 16.d5! ♙c5 17.♘d4 ♚xe5 18.dxe6 ♙xe6 (18...fxe6 19.♙h5+-) 19.♘xe6 ♚xe6 20.♙g4 ♚d6 21.♚xd6 ♙xd6 22.♙fd1 ♘e5 23.♙xd6 ♘xg4 24.axb5+-

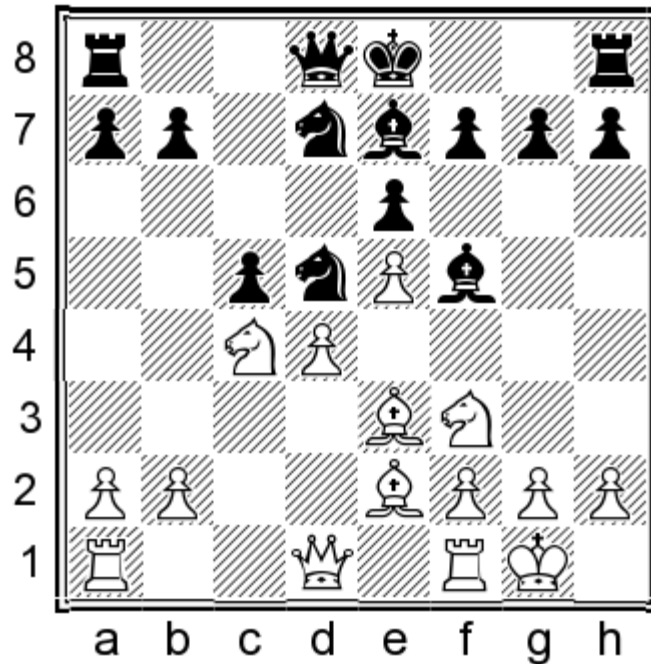
14.a4± Krakops – Teske, Cappelle la Grande 1997.



It is now very difficult for Black to complete the development of his kingside, just like before. White is trying to compromise Black's queenside pawns and to create targets for attack there, for example after 14...b4, White will have the resource 15.♙b5±

C1a2b) 10...♙e7

Black has finally completed the development of his kingside, but White has a space advantage and much more actively placed pieces.

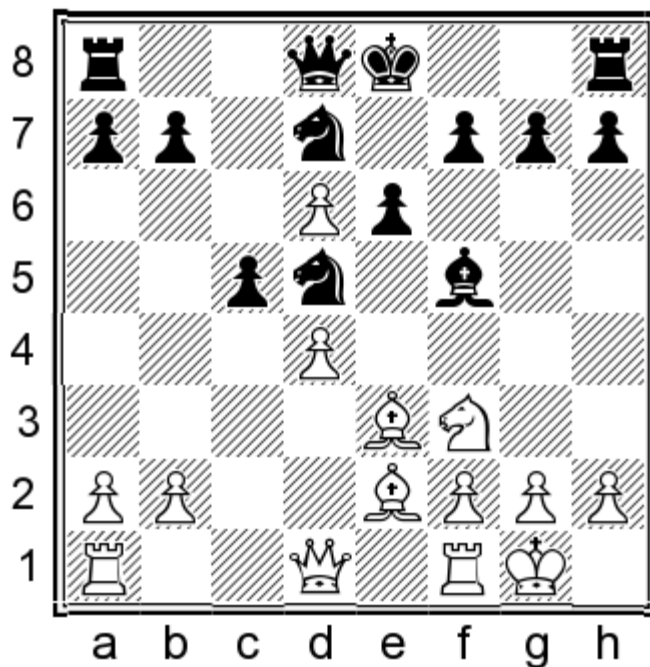


11.♘d6+

He is trying to create a pawn-wedge on the d6-square, which would reduce considerably Black's possibilities.

It is also promising for White to choose here 11.dxc5!?, in an attempt to prevent Black from castling kingside. 11...0-0, Boudre – Verat, Clichy 1997 (11...♖xc5 12.♗xc5 ♗xc5 13.♕a4+ ♔f8 14.♞ad1±) 12.b4! White is trying to deflect the enemy knight from the d5-square. 12...a5 (12...♞xb4 13.♞d6±) 13.a3 axb4 14.axb4 ♞xa1 15.♕xa1 ♞xb4 16.♞d6 ♕c7 17.♞xf5 exf5 18.♕b1 ♞d5 19.♗d2 ♞xe5 20.♕xf5 ♗f6 21.♞c1± The situation has been simplified considerably, but White's powerful bishops provide him with long-lasting initiative in this open position.

11...♗xd6 12.exd6



12...0-0?!

White should not be afraid of the exchange of his dark-squared bishop 12...♞xe3 13.fxe3, for example: 13...♕b6 14.♕a4 cxd4 15.♞e5 ♕xd6 16.♞xd7 ♔e7 17.♞ad1 ♕xd7 18.♕b4+ ♕d6 19.♕xb7+ ♕d7 20.♕b3± and Black's king turns out to be horribly misplaced.

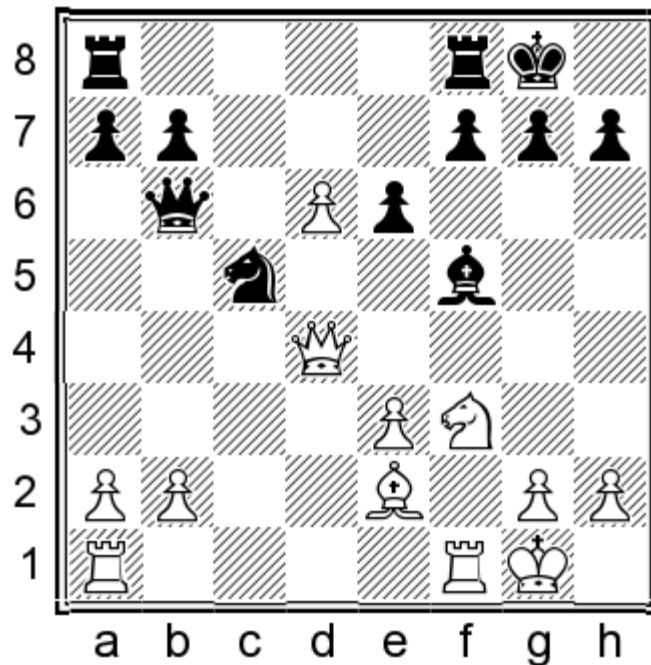
12...cxd4!/? It looks like Black should better reduce the tension against the c5-square prior to his castling. 13.♗xd4!/? White should preserve his bishop with the idea to exploit later his two-bishop advantage. 13...0-0 14.♕b3 ♞7f6 15.♞fc1 b6 16.♗e5 ♞d7 17.♕a3± – His pawn on d6 reduces considerably Black's possibilities and White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his more actively deployed pieces.

13.dxc5 ♞xe3 14.fxe3 ♞xc5 15.♕d4!

He activates his queen with tempo.

15...♕b6

15...♞c8 16.♞ac1 ♞d7 (16...b6?! 17.b4 ♞b7 18.♗a6+–) 17.♞xc8 ♕xc8 18.♞h4±



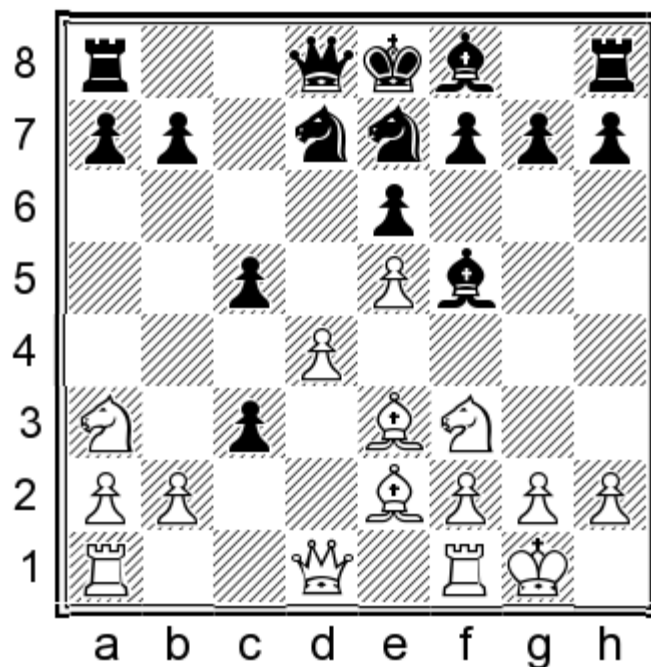
16. ♖h4!

White begins a chase after his opponent's light-squared bishop and plans to exploit later the dominance of his bishop over the enemy knight in this open position.

16. ♖ac1!? ♗e4 17. d7 ♜fd8 18. ♝xb6 axb6 19. ♗e5 ♜f8 20. g4 ♙g6 21. ♙d3 ♗d6 22. ♙xg6 hxg6 23. ♗xg6+ ♜g8 24. ♗e5 f6 25. ♜fd1 ♗e4 26. ♗c4± Smirin – Vyzmanavin, Novosibirsk 1995.

16... ♙g6 17. ♖ac1 ♗d7 18. ♗xg6 hxg6 19. ♜fd1±, with the idea ♙f3 and ♜c7.

C1b) 9...c3!

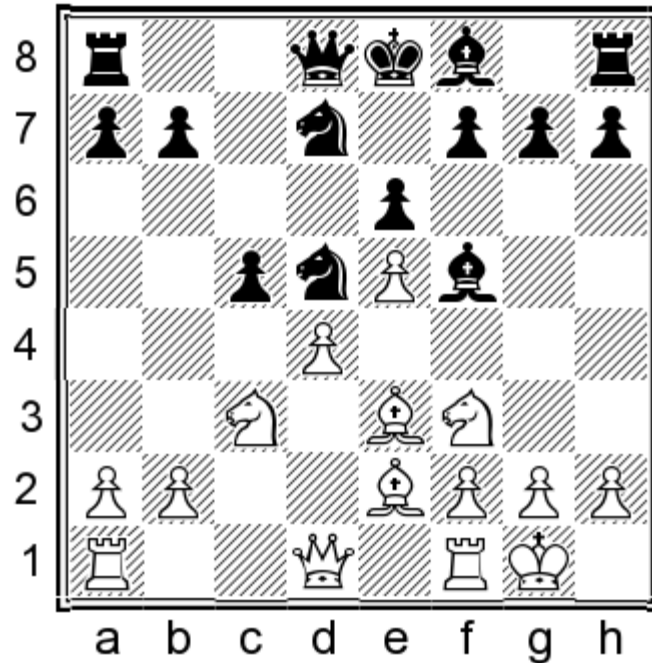


It would be useful for Black to compromise his opponent's pawn-structure before placing his knight on the d5-square.

10. ♖b5

It would be interesting for White to test in practice the line: 10.bxc3!? ♜d5, Krajnc – Forsloef, corr. 2000, 11. ♕g5 ♜b8 (11... ♕e7!? 12. ♕xe7 ♜xe7 13. ♖b5 0-0 14. ♕c4 ♜7b6 15. ♕xd5 ♜xd5 16. c4 ♖b4 17. ♜d6 ♕d3 18. ♜e1!? ♕g6 19. ♜e2 b6 20. dxc5 bxc5 21. ♜d2∞; 18.a3!? ♕xf1 19.axb4 ♕xc4 20. ♜xc4 cxb4∞) 12. ♜b3 h6 13. ♕d2 ♕e7 14. ♜ad1 0-0 15. c4 ♜5b6 16. ♕e3 cxd4 17. ♕xd4∞

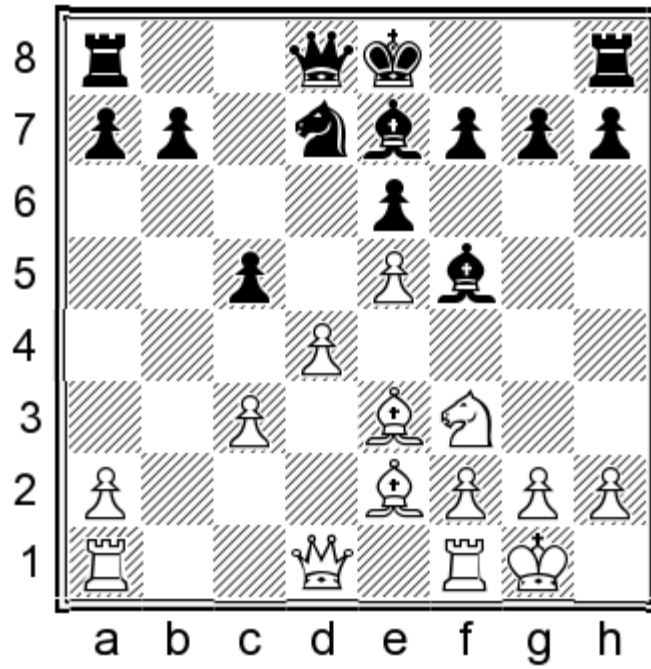
10... ♜d5 11. ♜xc3



11... ♜xc3

This is the most logical capturing for Black; otherwise, White's two bishops may become very powerful after the opening of the centre.

11... ♜xc3 12.bxc3 ♕e7

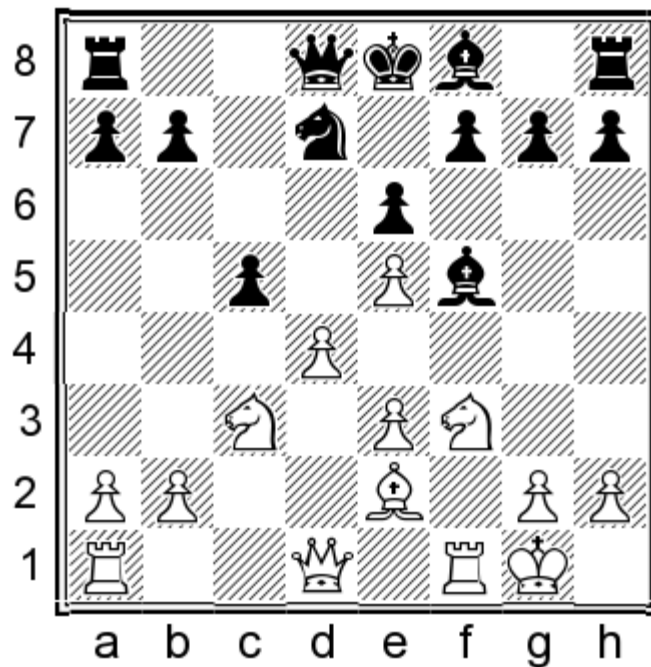


13.dxc5?! Shirov – Eljanov, Moscow 2010, 13...0-0! 14.♘d4 ♕e4 15.f3 ♕d5 16.c4 ♕c6= with the idea ♕e7xc5.

13.♕d3 ♕xd3 (13...♕g4?! 14.♕e4±) 14.♖xd3 0-0 (14...♖c7 15.♕g5!± Ernst – Malmstig, Linköping 1996) 15.d5 exd5 16.♖xd5 ♖c7 17.♖e4!± White removes prudently his queen to an active position before Black attacks it with his pieces.

It also seems logical for White to play here 13.d5, after which he will activate his queen, while Black's pawn on c5 restricts his own pieces. 13...exd5 14.♖xd5 ♖c7 15.♕g5 (15.♘g5!? ♕xg5 16.♕xg5 ♖xe5 17.♕f3 0-0, Pekin – Jordaan, ICCF 2008, 18.♖fe1 ♖xd5 19.♕xd5 ♕e6 20.♕xb7 ♖ab8 21.♕f3±) 15...♕e6 16.♖d2 ♕xg5 17.♘g5 0-0-0 (17...0-0? 18.f4±) 18.♘xe6 fxe6 19.♖ab1↑, with the idea 19...♘xe5 20.♖e3 ♖he8 21.a4↑

12.fxe3



12...♙e7

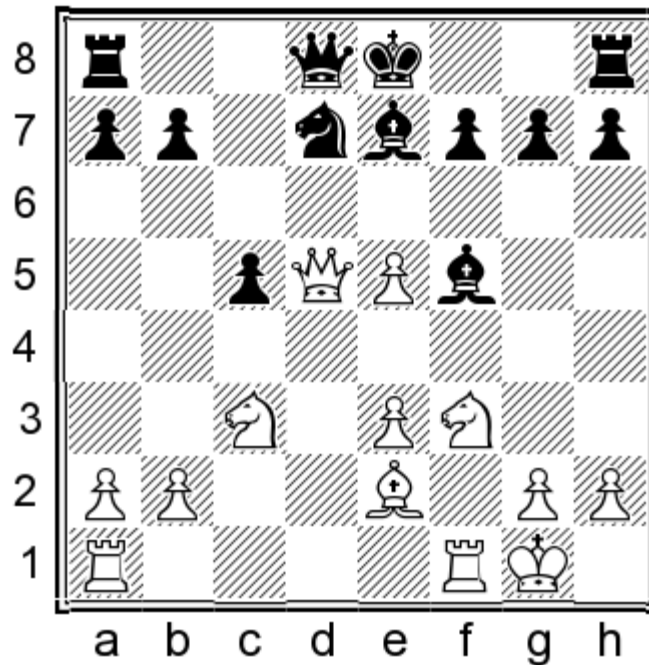
It would not work for Black to play here 12...cxd4?!, because as we have already mentioned before, this move is in favour of White, since it enables him to transfer his knight to a more favourable centralised position. 13.♘xd4 ♙g6 (13...♙c5 14.♘xf5 exf5 15.♚b3 ♙xe3+ 16.♔h1 0-0 17.♞ad1 ♚e8 18.♙b5 ♘c5 19.♚c2 ♚xe5 20.♞xf5 ♚e6 21.♞e1+-; 19...♚c8 20.♘d5 ♙g5 21.♞xf5 ♘e6 22.♚f2± – His initiative has become tremendously dangerous.) 14.♙b5! (14.♚a4 a6 15.♞ad1, Bartel – Rodshtein, Moscow 2009, 15...♙c5!∞ Black completes the development of his kingside.) 14...♙e7 (14...a6 15.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 16.♘a4! ♚d8 17.♚b3±) 15.h4!±, with the idea 15...♙xh4 16.♚g4 ♚g5 (16...0-0 17.♙xd7 ♙g5 18.♚g3+-) 17.♙xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♚e2 ♚xe5 19.♘f3 ♚h5 20.♘xh4 ♚xh4 21.♚b5+-

13.d5!?

This is a principled move which enables White to activate his queen in view of the threat d5-d6.

Black should not be afraid of 13.♚b3, due to 13...0-0! 14.♚xb7 ♞b8 15.♚xa7, Morozevich – Kamsky, Moscow 2008, 15...♞a8 16.♚b7 ♞b8=

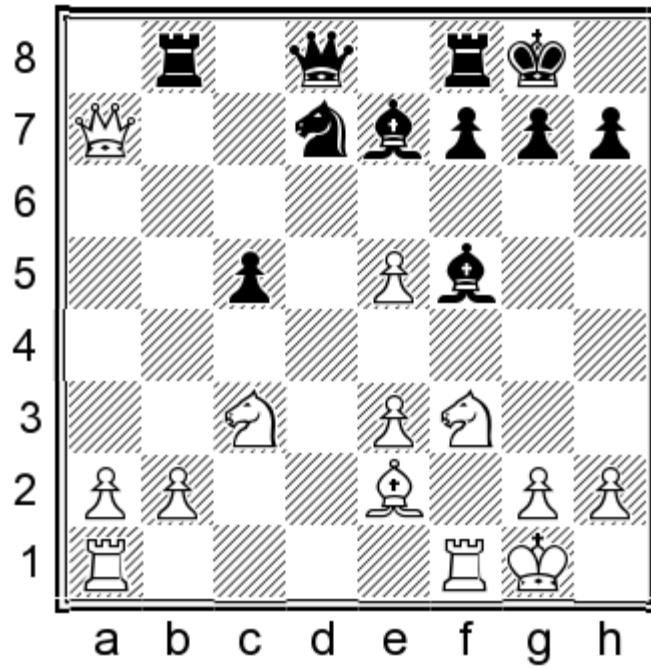
13...exd5 14.♚xd5



14...0-0

If Black postpones his castling kingside with the move 14...♚b6, White can even prevent it later with 15.♙b5!? ♙e6 (15...♞d8 16.♚b3 ♙e6 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.♚xd5 ♚xb5? 19.♘d4!+-; 18...♚e6 19.♚xb7 0-0 20.♚e4±) 16.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 17.♘g5 ♙e6 18.♘xe6 ♚xe6 (It would be too risky for Black to opt here for 18...fxe6, because of 19.♚d1± and his king would have to remain in the centre.) 19.♚xb7 0-0 20.♚e4± Black has not obtained sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

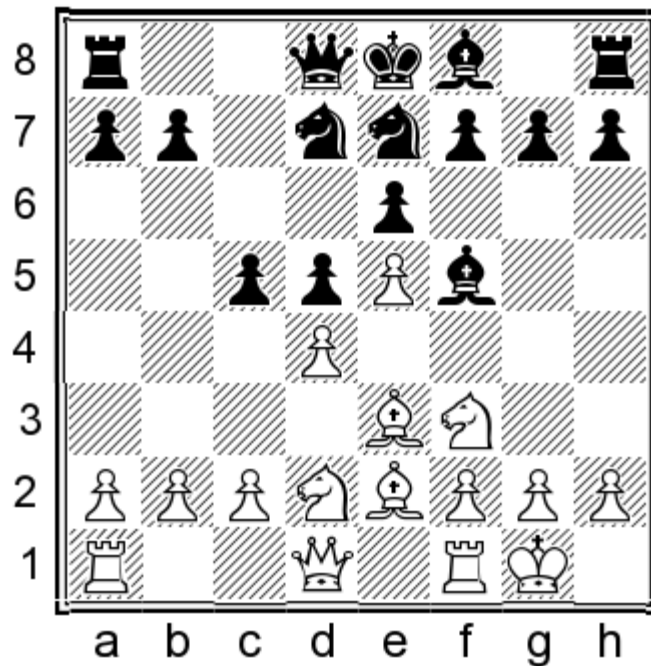
15.♚xb7 ♞b8 16.♚xa7



16...♖a8! (16...♜xb2? 17.♜ad1±) 17.♜b7 ♜b8 18.♜c6 ♜xb2 (18...♜b6 19.♜a4 ♜xb2 20.♜fd1±) 19.♜ad1 ♜e6 20.♜f2 ♜b6 21.♜e4 ♜b4 22.♜c2± – Black will still need to work hard to prove that his compensation for the pawn is sufficient.

C2) 8.♘bd2!?

This quiet developing move is in fact insidious and is connected with the sacrifice of the pawn on e5. Black can hardly find a way of completing his development without positional concessions and accepting the pawn-sacrifice may turn out to be very dangerous for him.

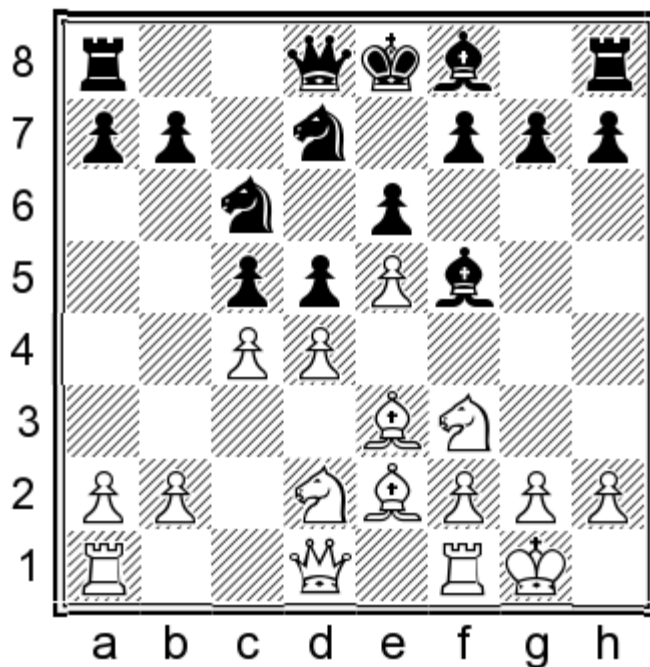


8...cxd4

This is a principled move.

8...c4 9.♖h4! h6 10.♗xf5!? (10.f4↑) 10...♗xf5 11.♕g4↑

8...♗c6?! 9.c4!



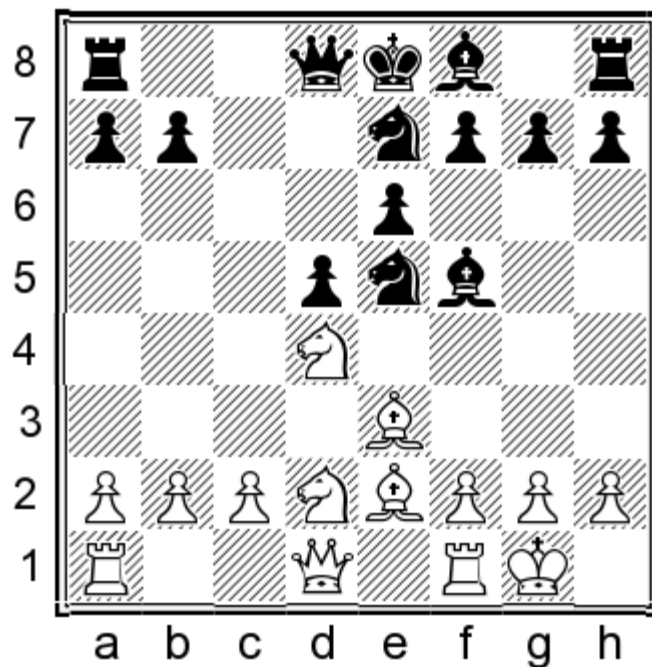
9...♕e4 10.a3!? ♕e7 (10...cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♗dxe5, Krivic – Krajnc, ICCF 2008, 12.♖a4↑) 11.dxc5 ♕xc5 12.♕xc5 ♗xc5 13.b4±

9...♕e7 10.cxd5 exd5 11.dxc5 0-0 12.♗b3 ♗dxe5 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.♗d4± Grischuk – Roiz, Ningbo 2011.

9...cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 (Black's attempt to win a pawn with 10...♗dxe5 11.♖a4 ♕e7 12.♖ad1 0-0 13.♗xf5 exf5 14.♗b3 d4 15.♗xd4±, does not work, because White's two bishops dominate over the board; 12.f4!?) 11.♕xd4 ♕c5 (The reduction of the tension in the centre after 11...dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♕e4 13.♕f3+-, is in favour of White, because of his overwhelming lead in development, Efimenko – Pribeanu, Turin 2006.) 12.♗b3 ♕xd4 13.♗xd4 ♕e4 14.f3 ♕g6 15.cxd5 exd5 16.f4 ♕e4, Cao Sang – Z.Lan, Kuala Lumpur 2010, 17.♖b3!? ♖b6 18.♖xb6 axb6 19.♖fc1± Black is doomed to a very difficult defence in this endgame.

9.♗xd4 ♗xe5

Black will have to capture this pawn, since his alternatives are even less promising. 9...♗c6 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.♗f3 ♕c5, Inarkiev – Khalifman, St Petersburg 2011, 12.♕g5!? ♕e7 13.♕xe7 ♖xe7 (13...♗xe7 14.c4± dxc4? 15.♕xc4 0-0?! 16.e6+-; 14...♗b6 15.cxd5 ♖xd5 16.♖c1±, with the idea ♖c1-c7) 14.♕b5!± a6 15.♕xc6 bxc6 16.♗d4± Black suffers material losses.



10.c4!

Opening of the central files will emphasize the importance of White's lead in development.

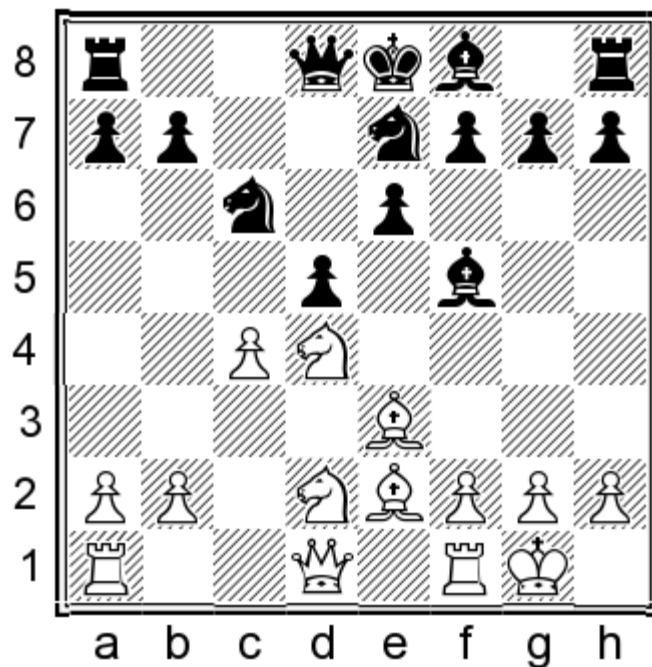
It would not be so effective for him to choose 10.f4 ♖5c6 11.g4 ♔g6!? (11...♔e4!?∞), with the idea 12.f5 exf5 13.gxf5 ♗xf5 14.♗xf5 d4!∞

10...♗5c6

Black transfers in advance his knight to a defensive position.

About 10...♗7c6 11.♖a4 – see 8...♗c6.

10...♔g6. Black is trying to preserve his bishop. 11.♖a4+ ♖d7 (11...♗d7 12.♔f3±) 12.♗b5 ♗5c6 13.♗b3 ♗f5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗c5 ♖c8 16.♖f4±



11.cxd5!

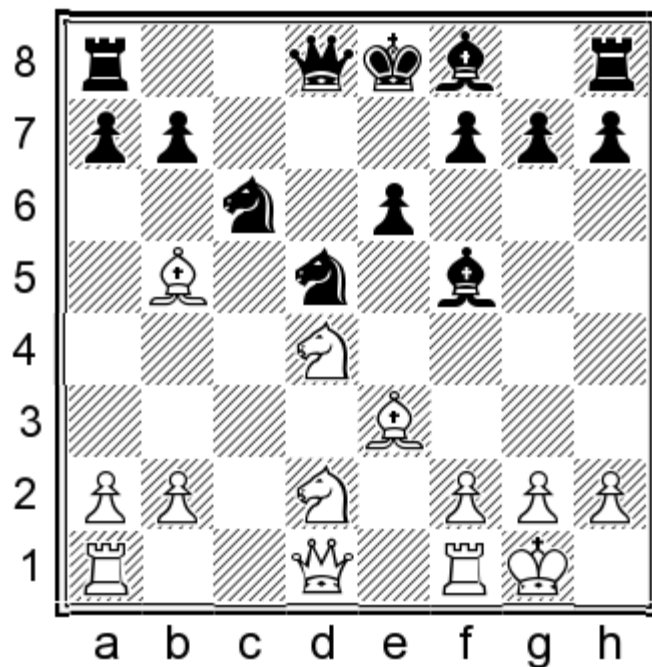
White realises his plan maximally quickly.

It is also promising for him to try the natural move 11.♖a4!?, for example: 11...♔d7 12.♘b5 ♜c8 13.♙xa7! White must capture this important pawn, because it may be very useful for Black in some variations. (13.♙c5?! ♘g6 14.♙xf8 ♖xf8 15.♞fe1♞. White's pieces are very active, but it is too early to say that he has achieved anything real. It would not be so practical for him to try the rather ambitious line: 13.g4 ♙g6 14.♙c5 ♘g8 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♘b3 a6∞ and Black's a-pawn turns out to be very useful.) 13...♞a8 14.♞ad1 ♘c8 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♞f4 ♞xa7 17.♘c4 ♙e6 18.♙g4!., with the idea 18...♙xg4 19.♞xd5!+–

11...♘xd5

11...♘xd5 12.♙xd4 ♞xd5 13.♖a4+ ♘c6 14.♙c3±

12.♙b5



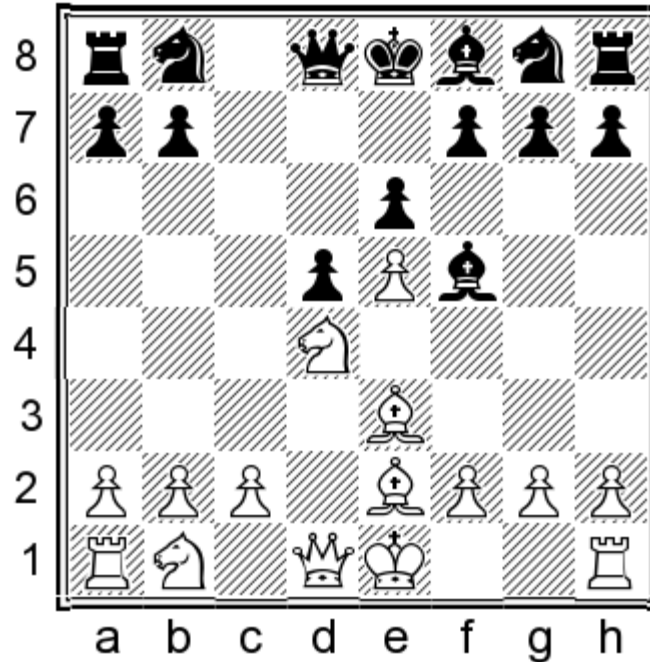
12...♖c8

Following 12...♗xe3 13.fxe3 ♖c8 14.♚f3±, Black is faced with serious problems.

13.♗c4 ♗e7 14.♚f3 ♗g6 15.♗e5 0-0 16.♗exc6 bxc6 17.♗xc6 ♚c7 18.♗xa7 ♜a8 19.♗c6 ♗f6 20.♗d4 ♗xd4 21.♗xd4 ♚e5 22.♜fd1± White has obtained two dangerous connected passed pawns on the queenside.

Chapter 11

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♟e2 c5 6.♟e3 cxd4 7.♞xd4

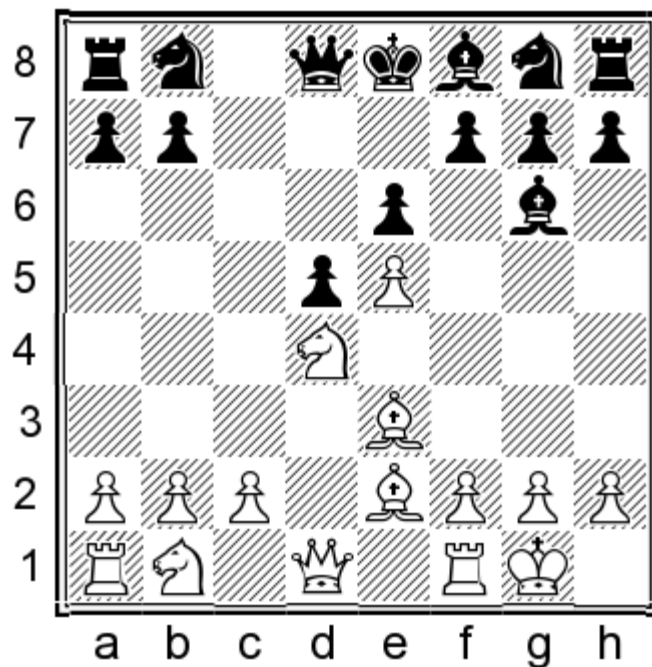


After his last move Black does not need to worry about the protection of his c5-pawn, but White has gained access to the important d4-square.

Black's task is to complete his development, while White should try to prevent this by all means.

7...♞e7

Black lags in development, therefore, his idea to avoid the exchange of his light-squared bishop for White's knight, so the move 7...♟g6?! cannot be recommended. After 8.0-0 and Black's every possible move, White can begin active actions in the centre with c2-c4.



8...♞e7 9.c4! dxc4 (9...♞bc6 10.♞a4±) 10.♞a4!? ♞ec6 11.♞d2 ♟e7 12.♞xc4 0-0 13.♞fd1±

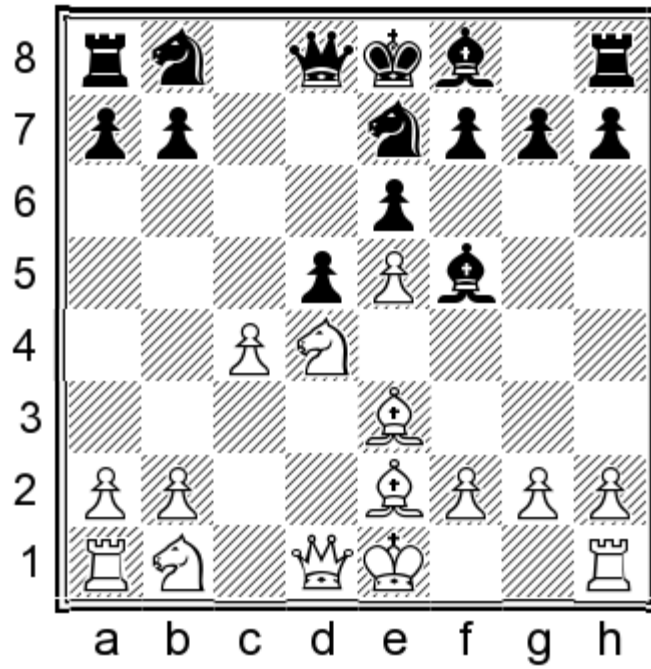
8...♞d7 9.c4! dxc4 10.♟xc4 ♞xe5 (10...♟c5 11.♟xe6 ♟xd4 12.♟xd7±) 11.♞a4 ♞d7 12.♞xe6 fxe6 13.♟xe6 ♟f7 (13...♞gf6 14.♞c3 ♟f7 15.♟xf7 ♞xf7 16.♞b3 – see 13...♟f7) 14.♟xf7 ♞xf7 15.♞d1 ♞gf6, Gietka – Pijewski, Koszalin 2012, 16.♞b3 ♞g6 17.♞c3 h6 18.♞d5 ♟d6 19.♞d3+-

8...♞c6 9.c4! ♞ge7 10.♞c3 ♞xd4 11.♟xd4 dxc4 12.♞b5 ♞c6 13.♟xc4 ♞xd4 14.♞xd4 ♟c5 15.♞a4+ ♞e7 16.♞b3 ♞b6 17.♞ac1 ♞hc8 18.♟e2± Short – Malisauskas, Moscow 1994.

8.c4!?

This is an active and principled move. White is striving for an immediate clarification of the situation. I have failed to find a clear advantage for him at the moment. Still, having in mind the level of the players who have tried it in practice, I feel obliged to pay a serious attention to it.

In Chapters 12 and 13 we will analyse the moves 8.0-0 and 8.♞bd2.



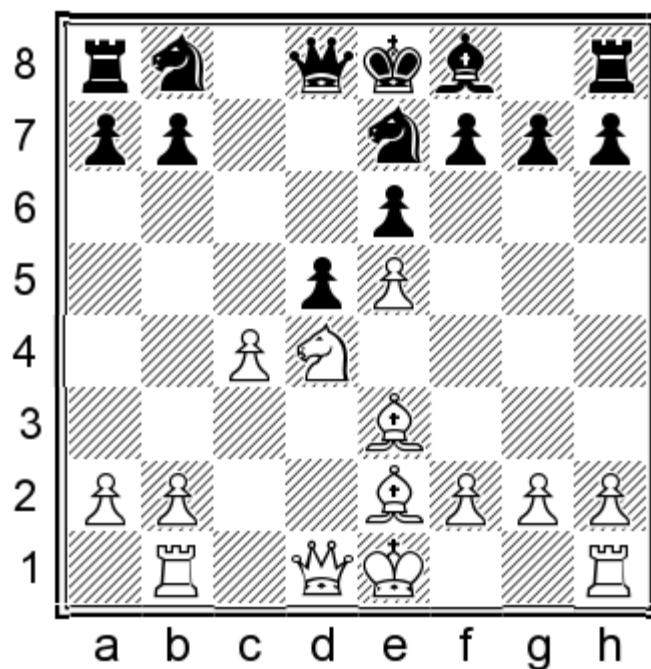
8...dxc4

Black's alternatives are easily refuted by White's active piece play.

Black has no time to retreat his bishop 8...g6?! 9.♖a4+ (9.0-0!? ♗bc6 10.♗a4 dxc4 11.♞d1 ♕a5 12.♗xc4 ♜xe5 13.♗b3+-) 9...♗ec6 10.♜c3± Collins – Keen, Hinckley 2012.

If Black reduces immediately the tension against his d5-square with the move 8...dxc4?! his defence would not be facilitated at all. 9.♞d2 ♗bc6 10.♞xc4 ♞d5, Scholz – Franke, Dortmund 1999, 11.♞xf5 exf5 12.0-0 ♞xe3 13.♞xe3 f4 14.♞d5±

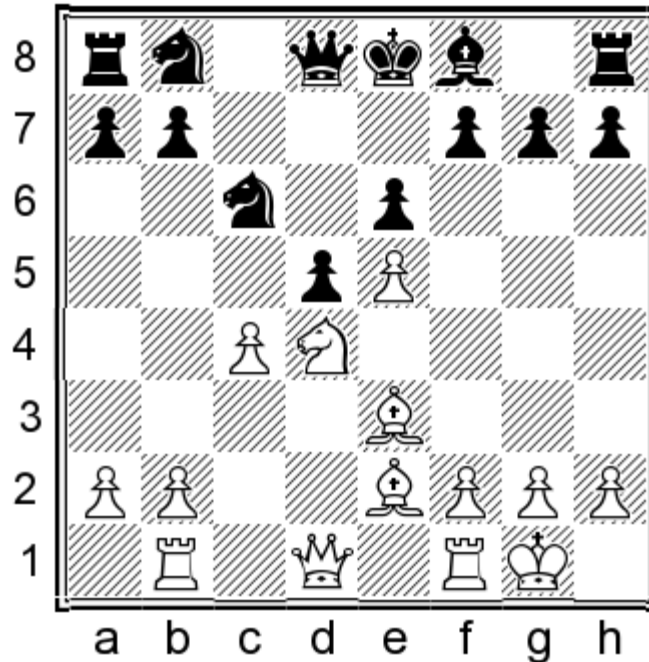
The following exchange operation is in favour of White 8...♗xb1?! 9.♞xb1



9...dxc4 10.♗a4+ ♗bc6 11.0-0±

9...♖bc6 10.0-0 dxc4 (10...♗xe5? 11.♙a4+ ♗d7 12.♙f3 ♗c8 13.cxd5 ♗cb6 14.♙b3 e5 15.♗e6 Almasi – Berkes, Hungary 2006; 15...fxe6 16.dxe6 ♗f6 17.♙b5+ ♗e7 18.♙fd1 ♙c8 19.♙xb6 axb6 20.♙bc1+-; 11...♙d7 12.♗b5 ♗5c6 13.♙bd1+-) 11.♙xc4 a6 (11...♗xe5? 12.♙a4+ ♗7c6 13.♙b5+-) 12.♗xc6 ♙xd1 13.♙fxd1 ♗xc6 14.f4± White's two-bishop advantage is in addition to his extra space, Shaked – Burmakin, Linares 1997.

9...♗ec6 10.0-0!±

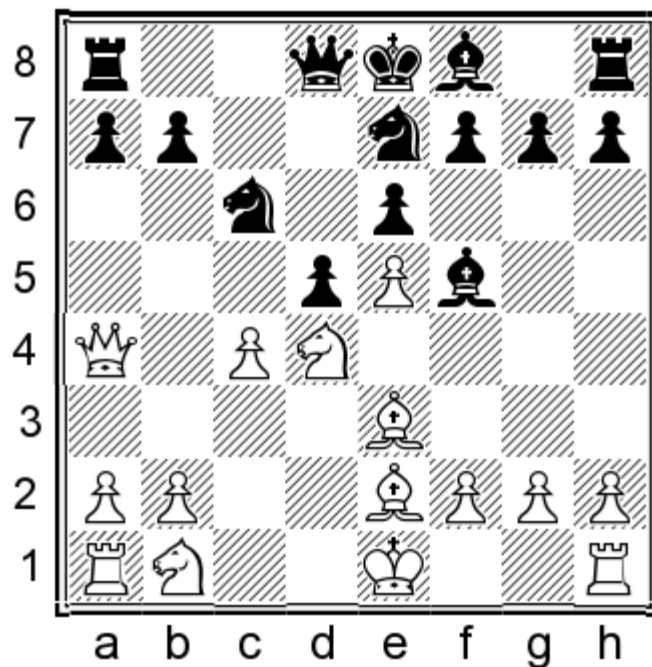


10...dxc4 11.♙a4 a6 (11...♙a5 12.♙xc4!? ♙xe5 13.♙fd1 ♙e7 14.b4 0-0 15.b5+-) 12.♙fd1 (12.♙f3 ♙a5? 13.♙xc4 ♗xe5 14.♙c8+-; 12...♙d7 13.♗b5! ♙e7 14.♙bd1 ♙c8 15.♙b6 0-0 16.♗c7±) 12...♙c7 13.♙xc4 ♙e7 14.f4 0-0 15.♙bc1+-
 10...♗xd4 11.♙xd4 (11.♙xd4!? ♗c6 12.♙a4 dxc4 13.♙f3±) 11...♗c6 12.♙f4. White has a considerable space-advantage and manages to create great problems for the opponent thanks to that. 12...dxc4 13.♙xc4±, or 12...d4 13.♙fd1 ♙c5 14.♙f3±

9.♙a4

White must play energetically here.

9.♗c3?! ♗xd4 10.♙xd4 dxc4± with the idea ♗e7-c6, ♙f8-e7 and 0-0. White is busy with regaining his sacrificed pawn, so in the meantime Black can solve his main problem – the development of his kingside. 11.♙xc4 ♗c6 12.♙b5 ♙e7 13.0-0 (13.♙xc6+ bxc6, Brenjo – Radivojevic, Valjevo 2011, 14.♙f3 0-0±) 13...0-0 14.♙xc6 bxc6 15.♗e2 c5 16.♙c3 ♙b6± Shirov – Anand, Linares 1998.



After 9. ♖a4, Black can try to equalise with the moves: **A) 9...dxc4** and **B) 9...a6**.

After his alternatives, White can consolidate his advantage effortlessly.

It would be premature for Black to opt for 9... ♖a5?!, in view of 10. ♖xa5 ♜xa5 11.cxd5 ♜xd5 (11...exd5 12. ♜b5± Golovachev – Pankov, Anapa 2012) 12. ♘b5+ ♔d8 13. ♜xf5 exf5 14. ♜c3!±

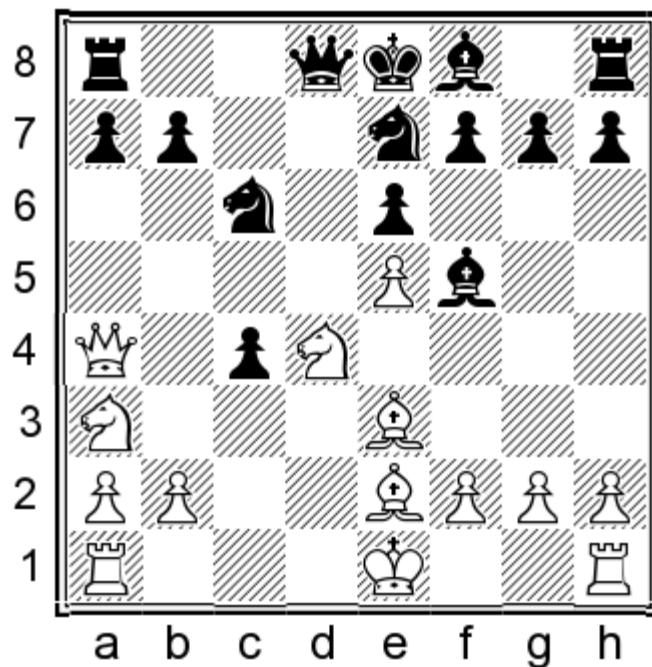
Black's threat against the enemy e5-pawn is just an illusion after 9... ♖c7?! 10.0-0, because its capturing leads to the opening of the e-file and he will have to pay a very dear price for that 10... ♖xe5 11.cxd5 exd5 12. ♜c3 ♘d7 13. ♜f3 ♖f6 14. ♖fe1+-

9... ♖d7?! 10. ♜b5! ♜g6 (10... ♜c8 11. ♜1c3± Van der Poel – Strating, Netherlands 2000) 11.cxd5 exd5 12. ♜1c3 ♘b4 13. ♖d1±

A) 9...dxc4!?

Black reduces the tension against the d5-square.

10. ♜a3



10...♙a5+

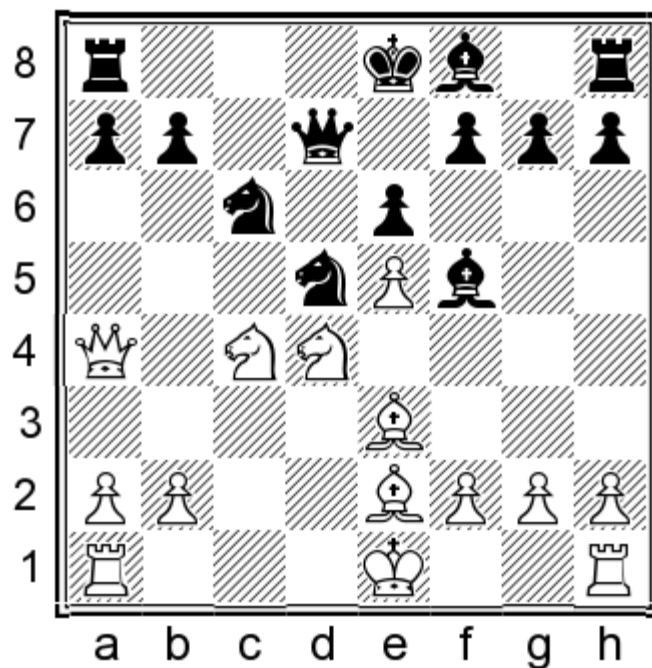
This is his most logical move. Black is trying to exchange his opponent's strongest piece – the queen.

His alternatives would make his problems even more difficult to solve.

It would not work for him to opt for 10...a6? 11.♘xc4 b5, due to 12.♘xb5! axb5 13.♙xb5 ♖b8, Panjwani – Margvelashvili, Heraklio 2004, 14.♙a6!+-, with the idea ♘c4-d6+.

About 10...♘d5 11.♘xc6 ♙d7 12.♘xc4 bxc6 13.0-0 – see. 10...♙d7.

10...♙d7 11.♘xc4 ♘d5

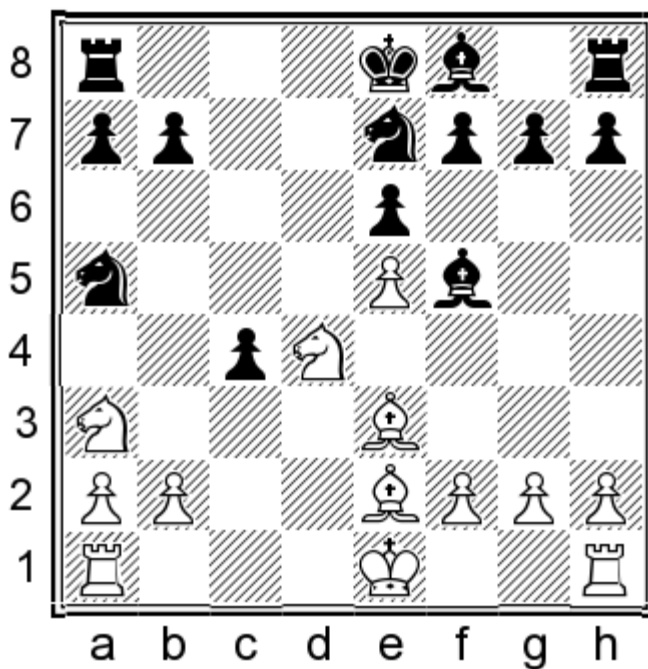


12.♘xf5! ♔b4+ 13.♔d2! (The retreat of White's king 13.♙f1 is weaker in view of 13...exf5, for example: 14.♔f3 f4!

15.♖d1 fxe3 16.fxe3 ♗xe5 17.♗xd7+ ♗xd7=, or 14.♖d1, Khalifman – Dreev, Dagomys 1998, 14...0-0 15.♙f3 ♗xe3+ 16.♗xe3 ♗e7=) 13...♙xd2+ 14.♗xd2 exf5 15.♗d6+ ♗e7 16.♖hd1 ♗xe5 17.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 18.♗xf5 ♖ad8 19.♗e1 ♗c7 20.♗xg7 ♖hg8 21.♖ac1+ ♗b6 22.a4!? ♖xg7 23.a5+ ♗xa5 24.♖c5+ ♗b6 25.♖cxd5± and Black will be faced with a long and laborious defence of an inferior endgame.

12.♗xc6!? bxc6 (12...♗xc6? 13.♗d6+–; 12...♙b4? 13.♗xb4! ♗xb4 14.♗xb4±) 13.0-0 ♙e7 14.♖fd1 0-0 15.♖ac1± – White has long-lasting initiative thanks to his more actively placed pieces and the possibilities to exploit the pawn weaknesses on Black’s queenside, Perpinya Rofes – Avila Jimenez, Sabadell 2011.

11.♗xa5 ♗xa5



12.♗xc4!

White fails to create problems for his opponent with the line: 12.♙d2 ♗ec6 13.♗xf5 exf5 14.♗xc4 (14.♗b5 ♖c8 15.♗xa7 ♗xa7 16.♙xa5 ♗c6 17.♙c3 b5=) 14...♗xc4 15.♙xc4 ♗xe5!?! (15...♙b4=) 16.♙b5+ ♗c6 17.♖c1 0-0-0= The position has been simplified considerably and White’s edge has evaporated completely, Nisipeanu – Galkin, Groningen 1997.

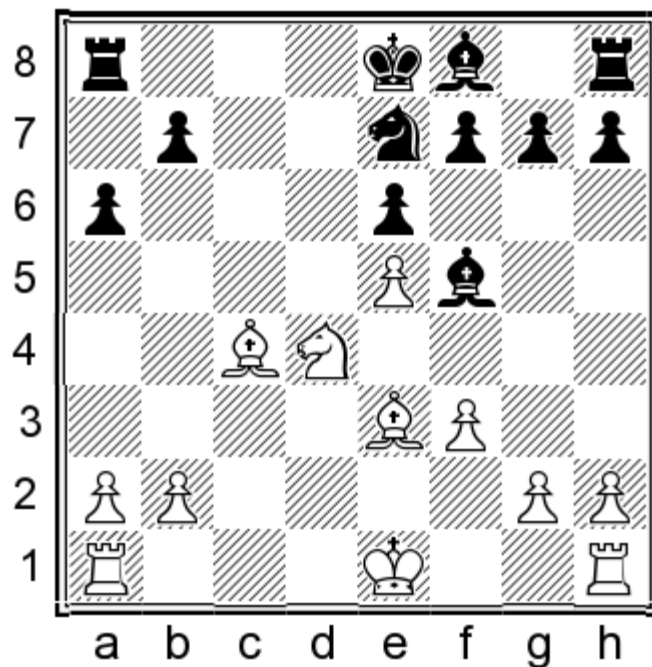
The position remains very complicated after 12.♗ab5 ♗d5 13.♗xf5 (13.♙d2 a6! 14.♗c7+ ♗xc7 15.♙xa5 ♗d5 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♙xc4 ♙b4+ 18.♙xb4 ♗xb4=) 13...exf5 (13...♙b4+ 14.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 15.♗xd2 exf5 16.♙f3!, with the idea 16...c3+ 17.♗c2 cxb2 18.♗d6+ ♗e7 19.♗xf5+ ♗f8 20.♖ad1±) 14.♙d2 a6!?! 15.♗d4 (15.♗d6+ ♙xd6 16.exd6 c3 17.bxc3 ♖c8↑) 15...♙b4 16.♗xf5 0-0!?! (16...♙xd2!?! 17.♗xd2 0-0∞) 17.♙xb4 (17.0-0-0 c3! 18.♙g5 cxb2+ 19.♗xb2 ♗c3 20.♖d4 ♗a4=) 17...♗xb4 18.0-0∞ Gelfand – Karpov, Sanghi Nagar 1995.

12...♗xc4 13.♙xc4 a6 14.f3!?

White prevents Black’s typical manoeuvre ♙f5-e4.

14.♖c1 ♙e4=

14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 15.♙b6 ♙e7 16.0-0 ♙d8=



14...♗g6!

If Black solves radically the problem with the development of his kingside, he can be optimistic about the future.

14...♕g6?! 15.♖c1 ♗f5 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5 17.♖f2 ♕e7 18.♕e2±, with the idea ♖c1-c7.

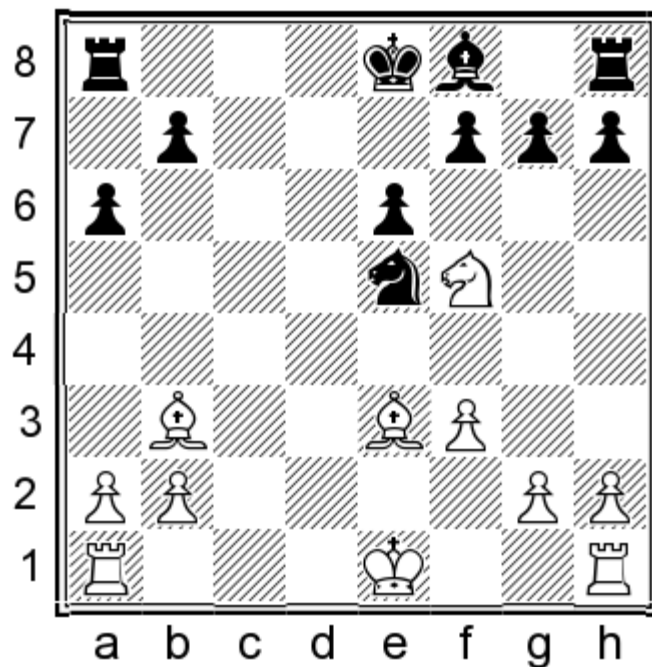
14...0-0-0?! 15.♖c1 (15.♖f2!?) 15...♗b8 16.♖f2 g5 17.♖hd1 h6 18.♗xf5 ♖xd1 19.♖xd1 ♗xf5 20.♕b6 ♕g7 21.g4!
 (21.♖d7 ♖c8 22.b3 ♕xe5 23.♖xf7 ♗d6= Belov – Deviatkin, Moscow 2006) 21...♗e7 22.♖d7 ♖e8 23.♕c5 ♗g6 24.♖xf7
 ♕xe5 25.♕d3± and Black's problems seem impossible to solve.

15.♗xf5

White has hardly anything better here.

Black succeeds in complicating the situation following 15.f4 ♕e4 16.♖f2 ♗h4 17.♖hg1 g5!∞

15...♗xe5 16.♕b3



16...♗b4!

The inclusion of this move is very necessary for Black!

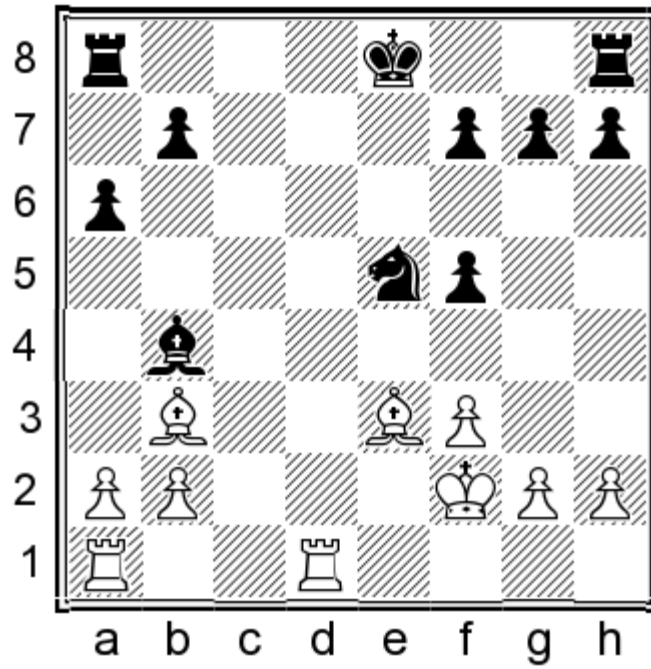
The hasty move 16...exf5?! would provide White with the possibility – 17.0-0-0!↑ and he would have excellent prospects due to his very active pieces, for example: 17...♗e7 18.♞d5 ♘c6 19.♞xf5 0-0 20.♞d1 ♗f6 21.♞d7 b5, Svidler – Anand, Madrid 1998 22.♞c5 (22.♗c5!?! ♘e5 23.♞xe5 ♗xe5 24.♗xf8 ♞xf8 25.g3↑) 22...♘e5 23.♞dd5 ♞fe8 24.♗f4± – White has excellent chances in this multi-piece endgame thanks to his two-bishop advantage and very actively deployed pieces.

17.♔f2

The other possible retreat of his king is not so good – 17.♔e2 exf5 18.♞ac1 0-0 19.a3, Lintchevski – Tate, Plovdiv 2012 and it becomes obvious that White's king is not so stable on the e-file. 19...♗e7! =

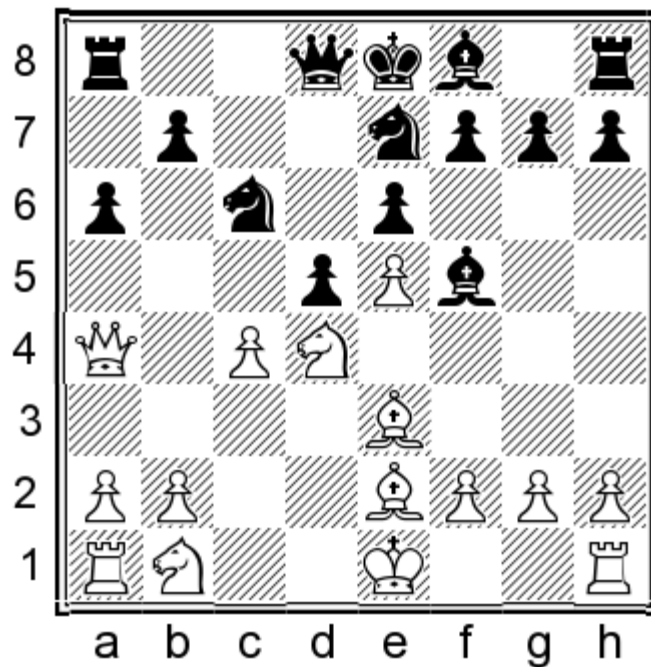
17...exf5 18.♞hd1

18.♞ad1 ♞d8 19.a3 ♗e7 20.♗b6 ♞d6 21.♞xd6 ♗xd6 22.g3 ♔e7 23.♞e1 ♔d7 =



18...♞d8! Van Unen – Muck, ICCF 2011 (18...♞c8 19.♞d5 f6 20.♞ad1!?⚡) 19.♞xd8+ ♔xd8 20.♞d1+ ♔c7 (White maintains a slight initiative after 20...♔e7 21.♙d4 f6 22.a3 ♙d6 23.f4 ♖c6 24.♞e1+ ♔d7 25.♙e6+ ♔c7 26.♙e3⚡; 24.♙b6 24...♙xf4 25.♙c5+ ♔e8 26.♙e6⚡, but Black has excellent chances for a draw.) 21.h3 b5 22.f4 ♖c4 23.♞c1 ♙d6 24.♙xc4 bxc4 25.♞xc4± It looks like White has an edge, but he can hardly ever win a position like this...

B) 9...a6!?



Now, Black is ready to counter the standard move 10.♖a3 with the queen-sortie 10...♞a5.

10.♖c3

Black should not be afraid of 10.cxd5, due to 10...b5! (10...♖xd5 11.♖xc6 ♞d7 12.♖c3↑) 11.♖xc6 ♖xc6 12.♞f4 (12.♞d1 ♖b4=) 12...♖b4! 13.0-0 ♖xd5=

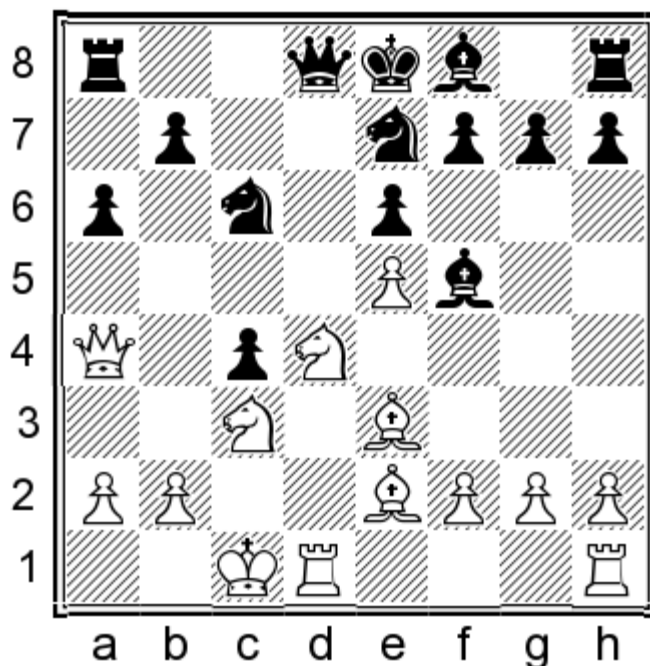
He equalises effortlessly after 10.0-0 dxc4 11.♞d1 ♕d3 12.♙xd3 cxd3 13.♞xd3 ♞a5= Gorkavij – Lastin, Belorechensk 2009.

White cannot create problems for his opponent with the line: 10.♘d2 ♞d7! 11.cxd5 ♘xd4 (11...♘xd5?! 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♞c1 ♙b4 14.0-0 ♘xe3 15.♞xb4 ♘xf1 16.♘c4 ♞e7 17.♘d6+ ♔f8 18.♞xc6 ♔g8 19.♙xf1± Kosteniuk – Paikidze, Moscow 2010; 14...0-0 15.♘c4±) 12.♞xd4 (12.♞xd7+ ♔xd7 13.♙xd4 ♘xd5=) 12...♘xd5 13.0-0 ♞c8 14.♘c4 ♘xe3 15.♞xe3 ♙c5 16.♞g3 0-0, draw, Kosteniuk – Girya, Moscow 2011.

It seems sensible for White to try the move 10.♘a3, with the idea to develop his rook on the c1-square with a great effect. Still, after the standard trade of the queens with 10...♞a5+ (White's idea is justified following 10...♞c8, Cao – Chevannes, Santa Clara 2014, 11.♞c1! ♞d7 12.cxd5 ♘xd4 13.♞xc8+ ♘xc8 14.♞xd4±) 11.♞xa5 ♘xa5, the position is simplified considerably and his edge would be just symbolic. 12.0-0 (12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♘xf5 ♙b4! 14.♔f1 exf5 15.♘c2= Vanegas – Mazara, Santiago de los Caballeros 2011; 12.♞c1 ♘ac6 13.cxd5 ♘xd4 14.♙xd4 ♘xd5=) 12...dxc4 13.♘xc4 (13.♘xf5 ♘xf5 14.♙b6 ♙xa3 15.bxa3 ♘c6 16.f4 g5!= Leko – Le Quang, Dortmund 2010) 13...♘xc4 14.♙xc4 ♙e4! 15.♞ac1 ♙d5 16.♙e2 ♞c8 17.♞xc8+ ♘xc8 18.♞c1 ♔d7= Svidler – Anand, Tilburg 1998.

10...dxc4 11.0-0!

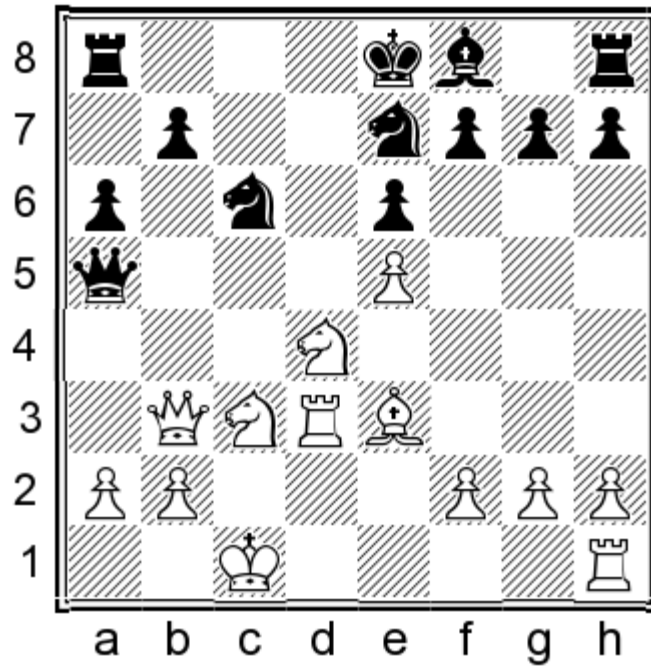
After 11.♞d1, Black can force great simplification with the line: 11...♙d3 12.♙xd3 cxd3 13.♞xd3 ♞a5=, or try to seize the initiative with 13...b5!? 14.♘dxb5 (He would have been successful after 14.♞b3, Svidler – Leko, Tilburg 1998, 14...♘f5! 15.♘cxb5 ♘xe5 16.♞d1 ♘xe3 17.♞xe3 ♙b4+ 18.♘c3 ♞c7) 14...♞xd3 15.♘c7+ ♔d7! 16.♘xa8 ♘d5! 17.♘xd5 (17.♘b6? ♘xb6 18.♙xb6 ♙b4) 17...exd5 18.♞g4+ (18.♘b6+ ♔c7 19.♘xd5+ ♞xd5 20.0-0 ♙e7) 18...♔d8 19.♙b6+ ♔e7 20.♙c5+ ♔d8= Ni Hua – Wu Shaobin, Beijing 2001.



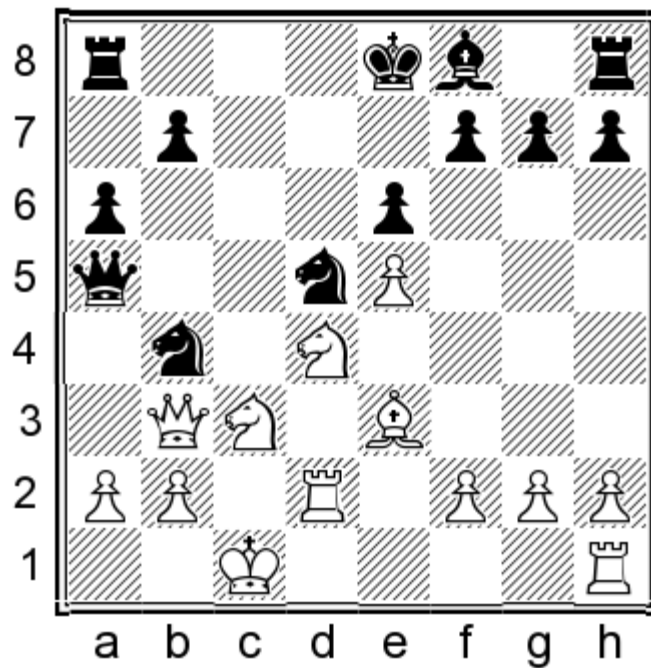
11...♞a5

If Black really intends to exchange the queens, he should do that immediately.

The trade of the queens would not have worked after the preliminary inclusion of the moves 11...♙d3 12.♙xd3 cxd3 13.♞xd3 ♞a5 (13...b5? 14.♘dxb5 ♞xd3 15.♘c7+), due to 14.♞b3! (The endgame, arising after 14.♞xa5!? ♘xa5 15.f4±, would be very unpleasant for Black, but in comparison to the variation with 14.♞b3, it would be a reason for him to celebrate.)



14...♟b4 (14...♞b4 15.♜xe6!±; Black's king would be in a great trouble after 14...♜xe5 15.♞dd1 0-0-0 16.♜xe6! fxe6 17.♙b6+-; 16...♜d3+ 17.♞xd3 ♞xd3 18.♜c5+- and he would be helpless due to the lack of development of his entire kingside; 15...b5 16.♜xe6 fxe6 17.♞xe6 ♜c4 18.♞d7+ ♔f7 19.♙c5+-; 17...♞c7 18.♙b6 ♞c6 19.♞xe5 ♞xb6 20.♜e4+-) 15.♞d2 (It would be imprecise for White to choose 15.♞dd1, because he should leave the d1-square for his rook on h1. 15...♜ed5 16.♔b1, Efimenko – Macieja, Plovdiv 2008, 16...♜xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♜c6! 18.♜xc6 bxc6 19.♞b7 ♞b5+ 20.♞xb5 axb5=) 15...♜ed5



16.♔b1! White must remove his king from the c-file, since Black's rook on a8 may occupy it in the future and leave the c1-square for his rook on h1. 16...♙e7 (16...♜xe3 17.fxe3 ♙e7 18.a3 ♜d5 19.♞xb7 ♜xc3+ 20.bxc3 ♞d5 21.♞xd5 exd5 22.♜f5+-; 16...♜xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♜c6 18.♜xc6 bxc6 19.♞b7 ♞b5+ 20.♞b2 ♞xb7 21.♞xb7+-; White's rook on c1 may become handy following 16...♞c8 17.♞c1! ♙e7 18.a3 ♜xc3+ 19.♞xc3 ♞xc3 20.♞xc3 ♜c6 21.♜xc6 ♞xc3 22.bxc3 bxc6 23.♞b2+-) 17.a3 ♜xc3+ 18.♞xc3 ♜c6 19.♜xc6 ♞xc3 20.bxc3 bxc6 21.♞hd1 (21.♔a2!?±) 21...♙xa3 22.♞d7± In the

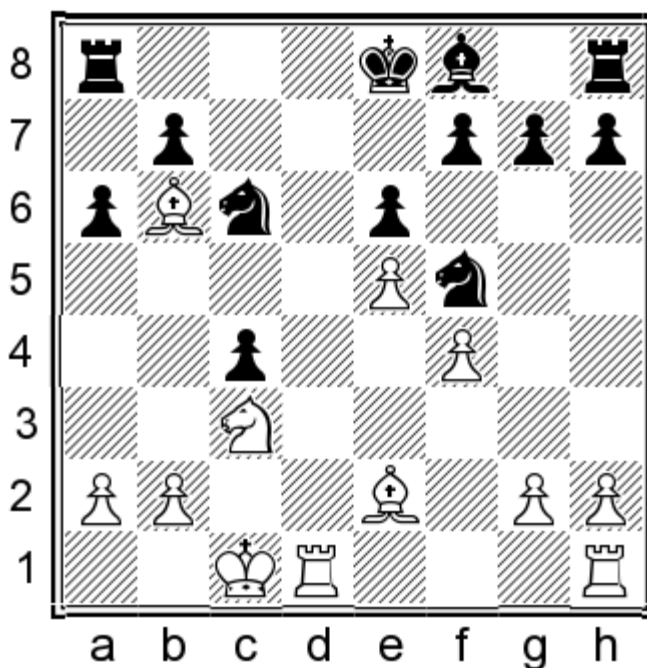
arising multi-piece endgame White's piece activity becomes very important. In addition, Black's bishop on a3 is deprived of acceptable squares to retreat to. 22...♖b8+ (22...0-0?? 23.♔a2+-; 22...♙e7 23.♞c7± with the idea 23...♙d8 24.♞b7! 0-0? 25.♙c5 ♞e8 26.♞dd7+-) 23.♔a2 ♙e7 24.♞a7±

11...♞c8!? Black is trying to provoke complications. 12.♗xf5 ♗xf5 13.♙b6 ♙b4 (13...♙e7 14.g4 ♗h4 15.f4 ♗g6 16.♞xc4± Kosteniuk – Ramstad, Kristiansund 2010) 14.f4. White consolidates his space-advantage with this move. 14...0-0 (14...♙xc3 15.bxc3 0-0 16.♙f3± Predojevic – Harikrishna, Sarajevo 2009) 15.♙f3 ♗fe7 16.g3! He fortifies his pawn-chain. (16.g4? Sebag – Paikidze, Moscow 2010, 16...♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♗d5+-) 16...♖b8! 17.♞d2! White is preparing to prevent his opponent's attempt to get off the positional bind. (17.♔b1 ♙a5 18.♙xa5 b5 19.♞a3 b4 20.♙xb4 ♗xb4 21.♗e4 ♗f5 22.g4 ♗h4 23.♗d6 ♞c5 24.♙b7 a5∞; Black can maintain the balance, but not without great efforts, following 17.♙xc6 ♗xc6 18.♗e4 ♙e7 19.♗d6 ♙xd6 20.exd6 ♞d7 21.♞xc4 e5 22.♞he1 ♞be8=; 19.♔b1 ♗b4 20.♗d6 ♙xd6 21.exd6 c3! 22.♞c1 ♞c4 23.bxc3 ♞d3+ 24.♔a1 ♗d5 25.♞d4 ♞xd4 26.♙xd4 b5 27.c4 bxc4 28.♞xc4 f6=) 17...♙a5 (17...♗d5 18.♞xd5! exd5 19.♗xd5 ♞e6 20.♗xb4 ♗xe5 21.fxe5 ♞xb6 22.♗d5±) 18.♙xa5 b5 19.♞a3 b4 20.♞a4 ♗xa5 21.♞xa5 bxc3 22.♞xc3 ♞c5 23.♞hd1± Black has succeeded in simplifying considerably the position; nevertheless, his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside doom him to a difficult endgame, if that happens.

12.♞xa5 ♗xa5 13.♗xf5 ♗xf5 14.♙b6 ♗c6

14...♙b4 15.♗e4± 0-0?! 16.♗d6 ♗e7 17.♙f3±

15.f4∞



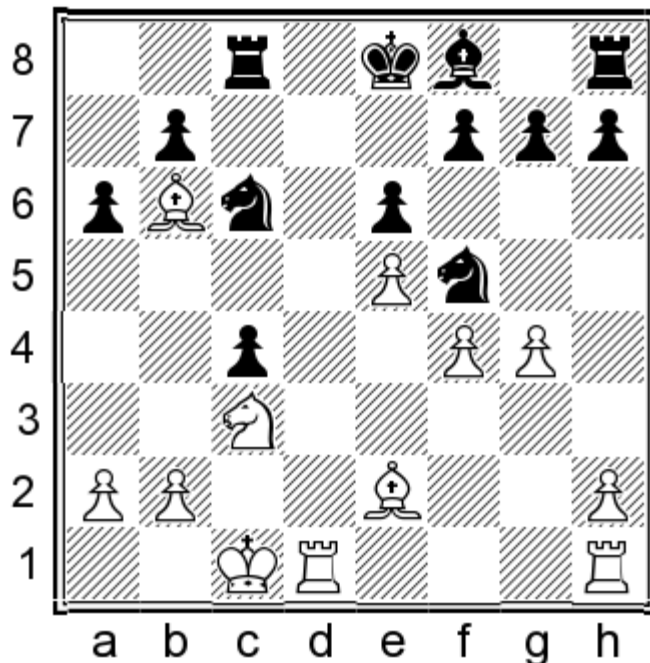
White maintains the initiative and his play is much easier than Black's task to survive in this endgame. Still, it would not be so easy for White to preserve a stable advantage if Black defends accurately. White however, can fight for a win without any risk and should do so in this endgame.

15...♞c8 16.g4

16.♙xc4 g5! 17.g4 ♗h4 – see 16.g4 ♗h4 17.♙xc4 g6.

White cannot create serious problems for his opponent with the rather slow line: 16.♔b1 ♙e7 17.♙xc4 ♗xe5! (17...g5, Dijkhuis – Riemersma, Wijk aan Zee 2013, 18.♙d3! gxf4 19.♙xf5 exf5 20.♗d5↑) 18.♙xe6 fxe6 19.fxe5 ♙c5=

Black solves his problems successfully after 16.♞d2 ♘e7 (16...g5 17.g4 ♖h4 18.♗e4↑) 17.♙f3 (17.♙xc4? ♗xe5→) 17...g5! 18.g3 gxf4 19.gxf4 ♖h4 20.♙e4 ♞g8 21.♜b1 ♞g4= Leko – Anand, Miskolc 2009.



16...♖h4

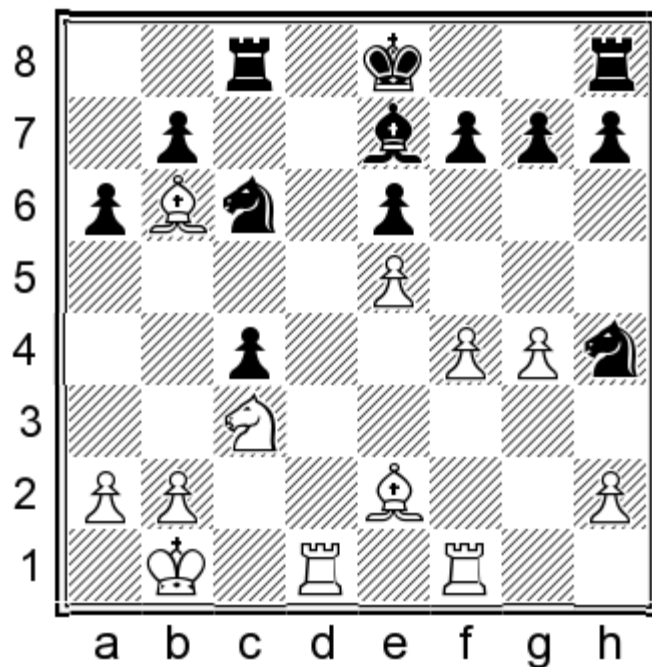
After 16...♗fe7 17.♜b1 (17.♙xc4 ♖g6 18.♞hf1 h5! 19.g5 ♘e7=) 17...♖g6 18.♞hf1 ♘e7 19.a3±, White succeeds in consolidating his space-advantage.

17.♞hf1!?

There are still too many pieces left on the board and this attempt to seize the initiative is no doubt very interesting.

17.♙xc4. White regains his pawn, hoping to realise his two-bishop advantage. 17...g5!?! This is a timely counter-strike. (It would not work for Black to attack directly the enemy bishop on c4-square with 17...♗xe5? 18.fxe5 ♞xc4 19.♞d8+ ♜e7 20.♞hd1+-; 17...♙e7?! 18.♙b3! g5?! 19.f5 ♗xe5 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♙d4 ♗hf3 22.♙xe6± Kosteniuk – Ushenina, Nalchik 2008.) 18.f5 (18.fxg5 ♗xe5 19.♙e2 ♙c5!)=) 18...♗xe5 19.♙b3 ♙c5!?! Black wishes to deprive his opponent of his main trump – the two-bishop advantage. (19...♗hf3 20.♜b1♞) 20.♙xc5 (It would not work or White to win a piece with 20.♙a4?! ♜e7 21.f6+ ♜xf6 22.♗e4+ ♜g7 23.♗xc5, Caruana – Arutinian, Rijeka 2010, due to 23...♞xc5! 24.♙xc5 ♞c8♞) 20...♞xc5 21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♙xe6 ♜e7 23.♙b3 (It would be very difficult to evaluate the endgame arising after 23.♙d5!?! b5 24.♞he1 ♗hg6 25.♜b1 ♞d8 26.♙b7 ♞xd1+ 27.♞xd1 a5 28.♗e4 ♞c7 29.♙a6 h6 30.h3 b4 31.♞d5 ♞d7 32.♞xa5 ♞d1+ 33.♜c2 ♞h1∞ White has a long range bishop, working effectively on both sides of the board, while Black has relatively far-advanced pawns on the kingside.) 23...♞d8 24.h3, draw, Bologan – Le Quang, Moscow 2010.

17...♙e7 18.♜b1♞



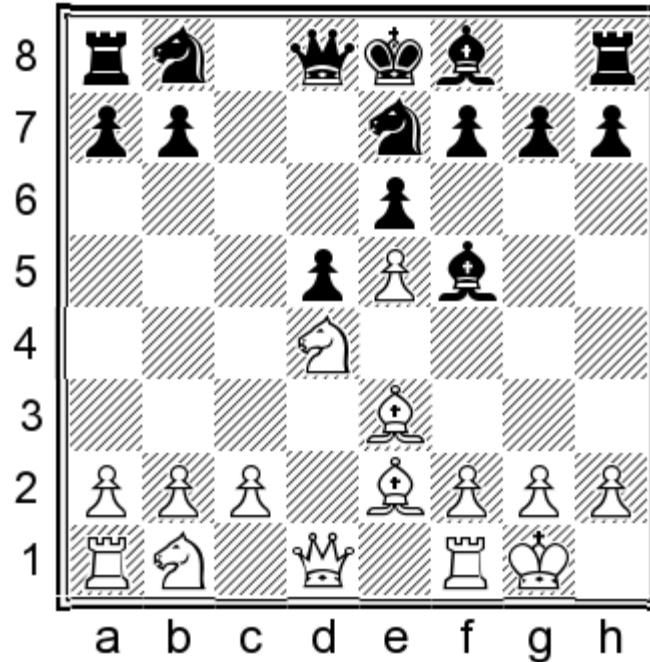
White is not in a hurry to regain immediately his pawn, and plans to do that a bit later.

Black is faced with certain problems now, because his pieces are scattered over the board and disorganized, so he can hardly find an appropriate plan. Therefore, despite his extra pawn, Black will have numerous problems to worry about, for example: 18...h5 19.gxh5 (19.g5!? g6 20.a3 ♖d8 21.♙f2 ♜f5 22.♞e4 b5 23.♙f3↑) 19...♞f5 20.♙g4 (20.♙g1!?↑) 20...♞b4 21.♞a4↑,

or 18...g5, Tate – Bures, Heviz 2012, 19.f5± ♜xe5 (19...0-0 20.fxe6 ♜xe5 21.♞d5 ♞ce8 (21...♞hg6 22.♞f5±) 22.♙d4 ♞hg6 23.♞f5 f6 24.♞b6±) 20.♙d4 f6 21.fxe6 ♞hg6 22.♞d5↑

Chapter 12

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♟e2 c5 6.♟e3 cxd4 7.♞xd4 ♞e7 8.0-0



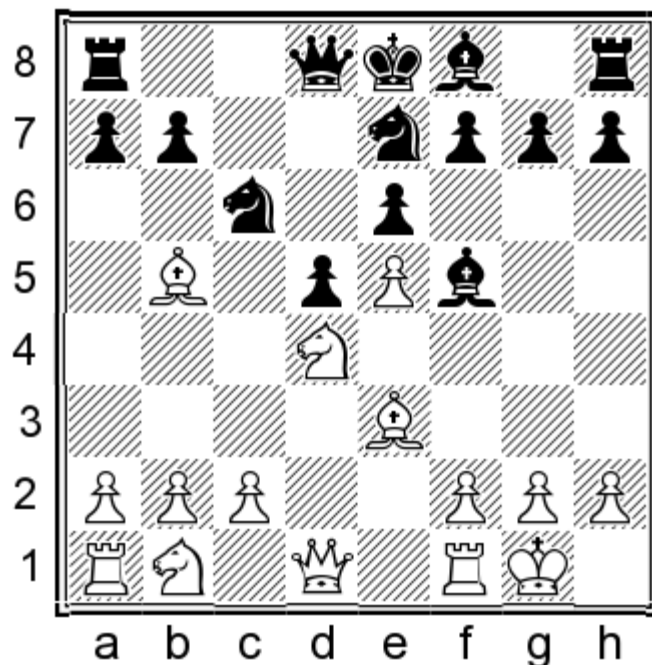
8...♞bc6

8...a6. Black should better avoid to slow down his development with this move. 9.f4!?. White wishes after the possible exchange on f5 to be able to retreat with his bishop to the f2-square. 9...♟g6 (His two bishops will play an important role after 9...♞bc6 10.♞xf5 ♞xf5 11.♟f2± White should not be in a hurry to capture the enemy light-squared bishop. 10.c3!? ♞xd4 11.cxd4↑) 10.♞d2 ♞bc6 11.c4↑

9.♟b5!?

This is a very ambitious move. White plans with the help of the undermining move c2-c4 and the possible inclusion of his queen to active actions, via the a4-square, to create serious problems for his opponent.

About 9.f4 – see Kravtsiv – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015 (**game 13**).



We will deal in details now with the moves **A) 9...a6** and **B) 9...g6**.

9...♖c7?! You will see in the following variations that Black's queen is misplaced on the c-file. 10.c4! dxc4 (10...a6 11.♙xc6+ bxc6 12.♚a4±) 11.♘a3 ♕d3, Sevian – Dale, Wijk aan Zee 2015, 12.♙xc4 ♙xf1 13.♘db5±

Following 9...♗d7, White can complete the development of his queenside with 10.♘d2 (10.c4!? ♙g6 11.♘a3±; 10...a6 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.♘c3 – see variation A) 10...♙g6 (10...a6 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.b4↑) 11.c4 a6 12.♙xc6 ♘xc6 13.cxd5 exd5. Black will have to comply with the weakening of his pawn-structure. (13...♘d4?! 14.♘c4!±; 13...♗xd5?! 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♞c1 ♗d5 16.♘c4±; 14...bxc6 15.♗c1 ♙e7 16.♘c4±) 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♞c1 ♙e7 16.♘b3 0-0 17.♙c5± White fixes the pawn-weaknesses on the enemy queenside.

Black's logical move 9...♞c8 can be countered by White with the simple response 10.♘d2! and while Black loses time for the development of his queenside, White will exploit the lack of development of his opponent's kingside, beginning immediate active piece-play, opening additionally files in the centre. 10...a6 (10...♙g6 11.c4 a6 12.♙a4 ♘f5 13.♘xf5 ♙xf5 14.♗b3 ♗d7 15.♞ad1 ♙e7 16.♙b6 0-0 17.♘f3±) 11.♙xc6+ bxc6 12.b4! (12.♗e2!? c5 13.♘xf5 ♘xf5 14.♗xa6 ♙e7 15.♗b5± Volokitin – Vachier Lagrave, Warsaw 2013) 12...♗c7 (12...♙g6 13.♘2b3 ♘f5 14.♘xf5 ♙xf5 15.♗d2 ♙e7 16.♙c5±) 13.♗e2!± (White does not need to waste time for the move 13.f4↑ Iordachescu – Berkes, Mamaia 2012) with the idea 13...♗xe5?! 14.g4 ♙e4 15.f3 ♙g6 16.f4±, followed by f4-f5.

A) 9...a6 10.♙xc6+

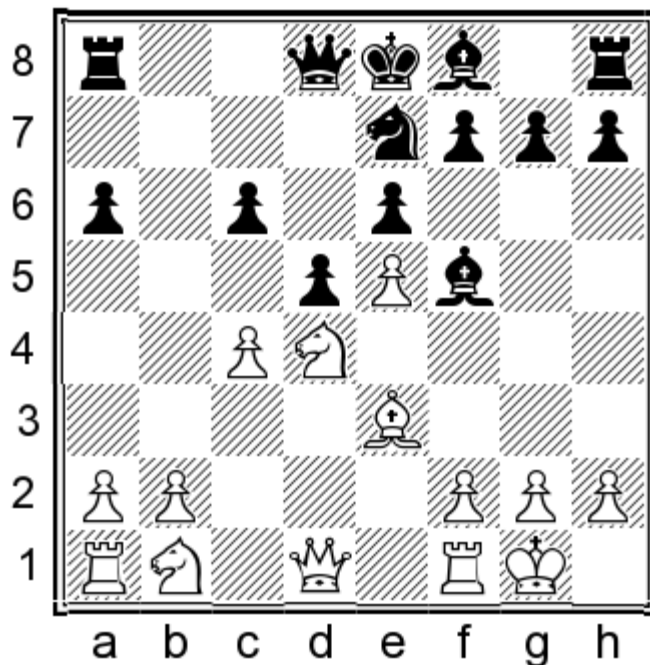
Black does not have enough time to retreat his bishop, since his e5-pawn is hanging.

10...bxc6

After the other possible capture – 10...♘xc6 and 11.♘xf5 exf5, White will have some additional possibilities, connected with exploiting his opponent's compromised pawn-structure. 12.c3! (12.♙d4!? ♙e7 13.♘c3 0-0 14.♘e2 ♞c8 15.c3 ♗d7 16.♗d3± T.Kosintseva – Khotenashvili, Geneva 2013) 12...♙e7 13.♘d2 ♘xe5 (13...0-0 14.♘f3 ♗d7 15.c4±) 14.♙d4 f6 (14...♗d6, Ni Hua – Ankit, Fujairah 2012, 15.♞e1 f6 16.♘b3± – see 14...f6) 15.♞e1 ♘c6 (15...♗d6 16.♘b3 b6 17.♗e2±) 16.♘f1! f4 17.♗g4 0-0 18.♗xf4± White has excellent chances of attacking Black's vulnerable isolated pawn on d5, Shirov – Laznicka, Novy Bor (m/6) 2012.

11.c4

White must play maximally energetically, because slowing down may lead to the loss of his initiative.

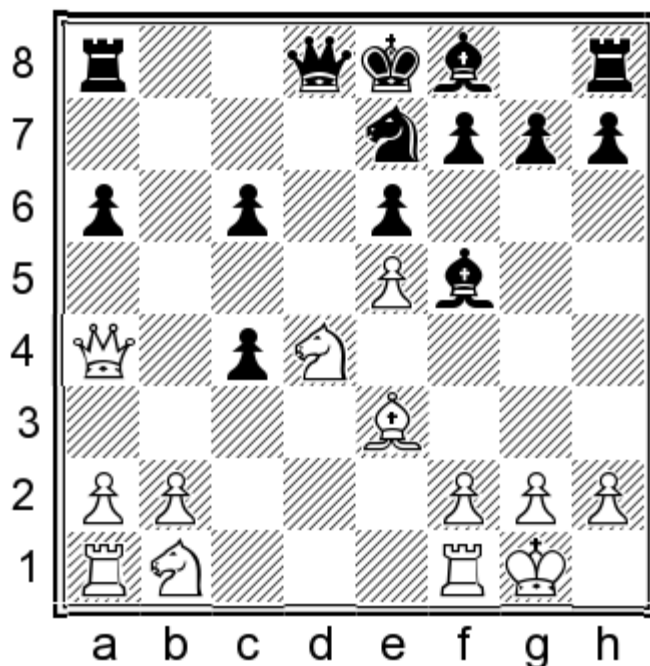


11...♔d7

Black fortifies his c6-square, preparing the establishment of his knight on the d5-square (after d5xc4).

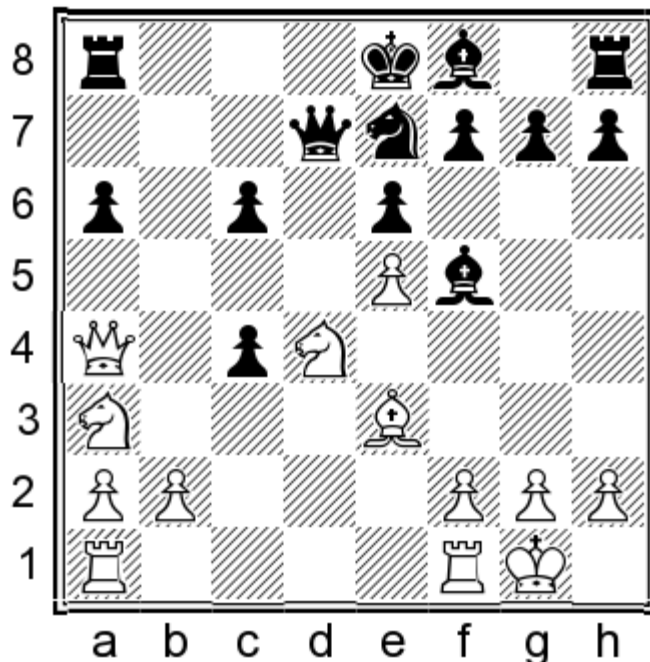
Following 11...c5 12.♘xf5 ♘xf5 13.cxd5, Black's lag in development would hurt him horribly. 13...♔xd5 (13...exd5 14.♚f3!±) 14.♚a4+ ♔d7 15.♚e4 ♖c8 16.♘a3± Giri – Ipatov, Reykjavik 2013.

If he accepts the pawn-sacrifice 11...dxc4, White's queen will occupy a very active position after 12.♚a4, creating threats on the a4-e8 diagonal.



Black has numerous pawn-weaknesses on the queenside, so he will hardly manage to preserve his material advantage.

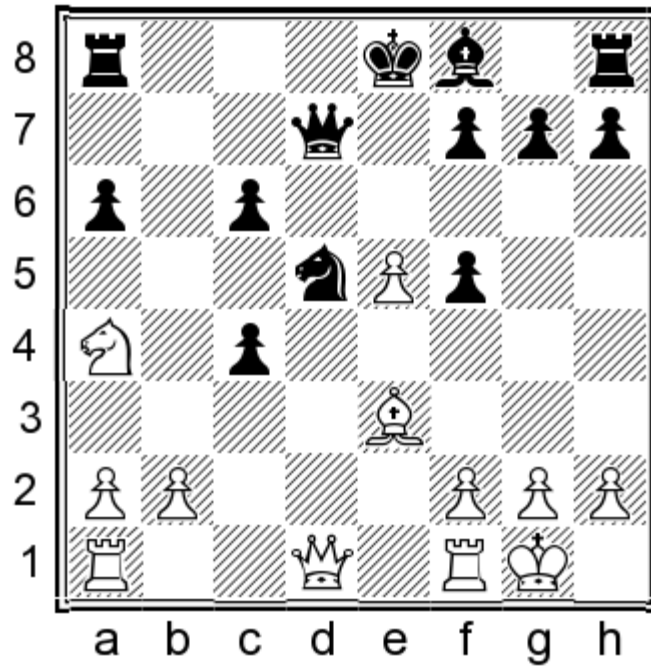
Still, he has at his disposal the important strategically d5-outpost, which can be occupied by his knight. 12...♖d7. Black needs to complete the development of his kingside as quickly as possible. Therefore, he frees his knight from the protection of the c6-pawn and intends to deploy his knight on the d5-square. (12...♗d3?! 13.♞d1 ♖d7 14.♘a3 c5 15.♘db5 ♘d5 16.♘c7! ♘xc7 17.♞xd7+ ♗xd7 18.♘xc4 ♘d5 19.♞xd3 ♗c6 20.♞b3!±; 14...♘d5 15.♘xc4 ♗xc4 16.♞xc4 c5 17.♘b3 ♘xe3 18.fxe3 ♞b5 19.♞ac1 ♞c8 20.♞g4!± g6 21.♘d2±; 20.♞c2 ♗e7 21.♞dc1 ♞xc4 22.♞xc4± Ni Hua – Gagare, Kolkata 2012) 13.♘a3



13...c3. Black gives back the gobbled material, trying to compromise his opponent's queenside pawn-structure. (He can hardly be happy with the endgame arising after 13...c5 14.♞xd7+ ♗xd7 15.♘xf5 ♘xf5 16.♘xc4 ♗c6 17.♞ac1±)

14.bxc3. This capturing is quite logical, because just like before Black's kingside has not been developed yet. (White can make use of this circumstance by the energetic attempt 14.♞ad1!±, with the idea 14...♘d5 15.♘xf5 exf5 16.♗d4 cxb2 17.♗xb2 ♗e7 18.e6 fxe6 19.♗xg7 ♞g8 20.♗e5) 14...♘d5 15.♘xf5 exf5 16.♘c4 ♗e7 17.♞fd1 0-0 18.♘b6 ♘xb6 19.♗xb6 ♞e6 20.♗c7± Khalifman – Laznicka, Plovdiv 2012.

12.♘c3 dxc4 13.♘a4 ♘d5 14.♘xf5 exf5



15.♖c1!

This is an important inclusion of the rook, aiming at exploiting Black’s pawn-weaknesses on the queenside. White follows consistently his plan to mobilise his pieces as quickly as possible!

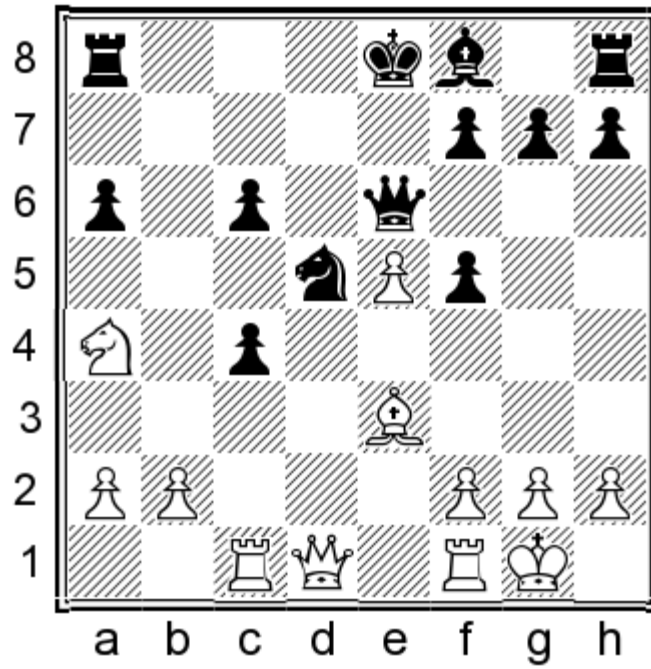
It would be less energetic for him to choose 15.♙d4 ♜d8 16.♚f3 c5!∞ Gelfand – Karpov, Sanghi Nagar 1995.

15...♞e6

Black protects indirectly his c4-pawn and would not mind preserving his material advantage.

After 15...♙e7 16.♞xc4 0-0, Peng Xiaomin – Liang Chong, Shenyang 1999, 17.♞e1 ♞fe8 18.♙c5!? ♙xc5 19.♘xc5 ♚c7 20.♘d3±, Black’s queenside pawns would be considerably weakened.

White should hardly be afraid of the weakening of his pawn-structure after 15...♘xe3, since following 16.♚xd7+ ♔xd7 17.fxe3 ♙e6 18.♞xc4, his lead in development would be a much more important factor. 18...c5 19.b4!?. (It is also quite acceptable for him to opt for 19.b3 ♞c8 20.♘b2 ♙xe5 21.♞a4 ♞c6 22.e4!±) 19...♞c8 (19...cxb4? 20.♞d1 ♞b8 21.♞c6+ ♙e7 22.♘c5+-; 21...♙xe5? 22.♘b2+-) 20.♞fc1 ♙xe5 21.♘xc5 ♙xc5 22.♞xc5+ ♞xc5 23.♞xc5+. In the arising endgame Black will have to work long and hard for a draw, for example: 23...♙e4 24.♙f2 ♞d8 25.♙e2 ♞d7 26.♞c6 ♞a7 27.♞c4+ ♙d5 28.♙d3±



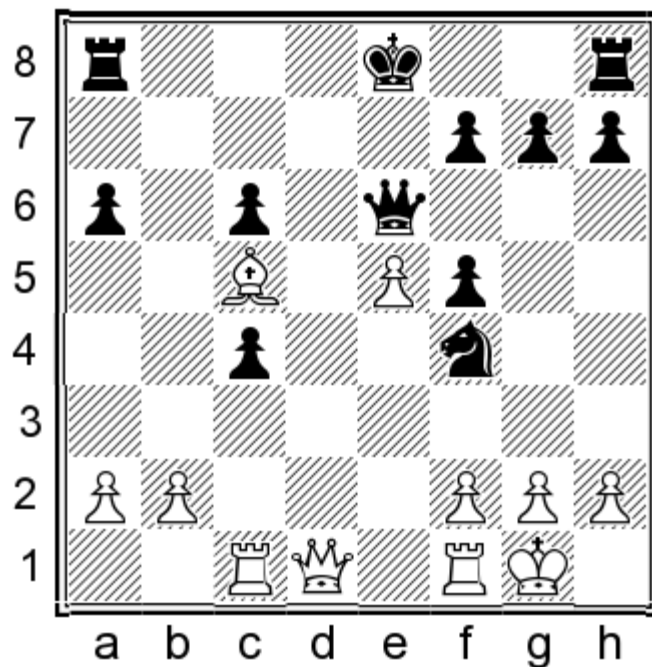
16. ♖c5!?

This move seems very active, but is not White's only possibility.

It deserves attention for him to try to keep the enemy king stranded in the centre with the help of the line: 16. ♕c5!? ♜f4 17. ♕xf8 ♝xf8 18. ♖d2!? Black's position cannot be termed as bad, but it is still very precarious, because White maintains long-lasting initiative. (18. ♖f3 ♜d3 19. ♜b6 ♝d8 20. ♝c3 ♜xe5 21. ♖e3! ♝d3 22. ♖e1 ♝xc3 23. ♖xc3 f6 24. ♝e1 ♜f7 25. f4 c5! =; 21. ♖e2 ♝d4 22. ♝e3 ♝e4 23. ♝xe4 fxe4 24. ♖xe4 f5 =) 18... ♜d3 19. ♝c3 ♝d8 20. ♜b6↑ (20. ♝d1! ?↑).

White has good prospects too if he regains immediately his pawn with 16. ♖d4!? ♕e7 17. ♖xc4 (Black will manage to save the day after 17. ♜c5 ♕xc5 18. ♖xc5 c3 19. bxc3 ♜xe3 20. fxe3 ♖d5 21. ♖xd5 cxd5 22. ♝xf5 ♜e7 =) 17... 0-0 18. ♕d4±, or 16. ♖c2!? ♕e7 (16... ♜xe3 17. fxe3 g6 18. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 19. ♝xc4 ♕g7 20. ♜b6 ♝d8 21. ♝xc6 0-0 22. ♜c4±) 17. ♖xc4 0-0 18. ♕d4±

16... ♕xc5 17. ♕xc5 ♜f4

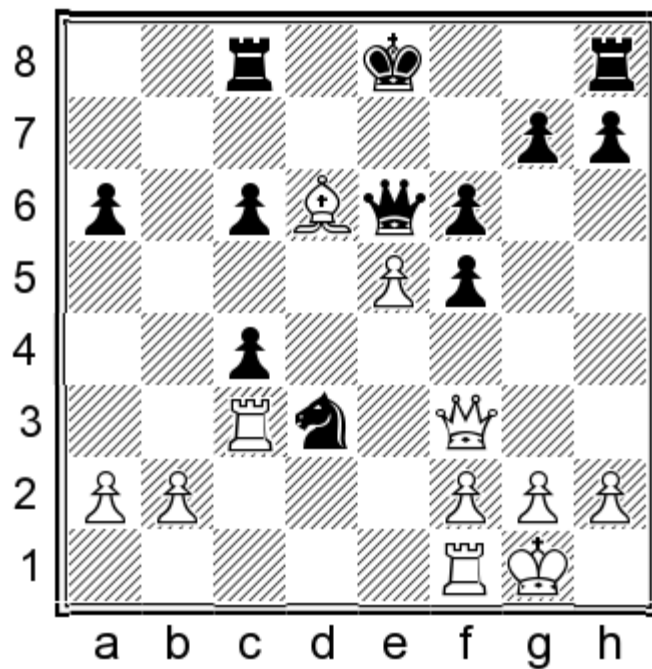


Black transfers his knight to the d3-square in the attempt to oust the enemy dark-squared bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal. White's task here is to exploit Black's misplaced king, stranded in the centre of the board.

18. ♖f3↑ ♞d3 19. ♙d6 ♜c8 20. ♞c3 f6

With this move, Black emphasises the unstable placement of the enemy bishop on the d6-square.

White will manage to exploit the weaknesses in the enemy camp after 20...g6 21. ♛e3!? (21. ♛g3 f4 22. ♛h4 ♞xe5 23. ♙xe5 ♜xe5 24. ♛h6 f5 25. ♞xc4 ♚f7 26. b3± Narayanan – Gagare, Pune 2014) 21...f4 22. ♛a7 ♞xe5 23. ♛xa6±



21. exf6!? ♜xd6

Black will not fare much better if he refuses to accept the pawn-sacrifice 21...gxf6, in view of 22. ♙g3!? (or 22. ♙a3!?↑)

22...h5 23.b3 h4 24.♞xc4 hxg3 25.♞xd3 gxh2+ 26.♙h1±

22.fxg7 ♞g8 23.♞xf5 ♞c7 24.♞e4+ ♞e7 25.♞xc4 ♞exg7 26.g3 ♜b4 27.♞b3 a5 28.♞c1±

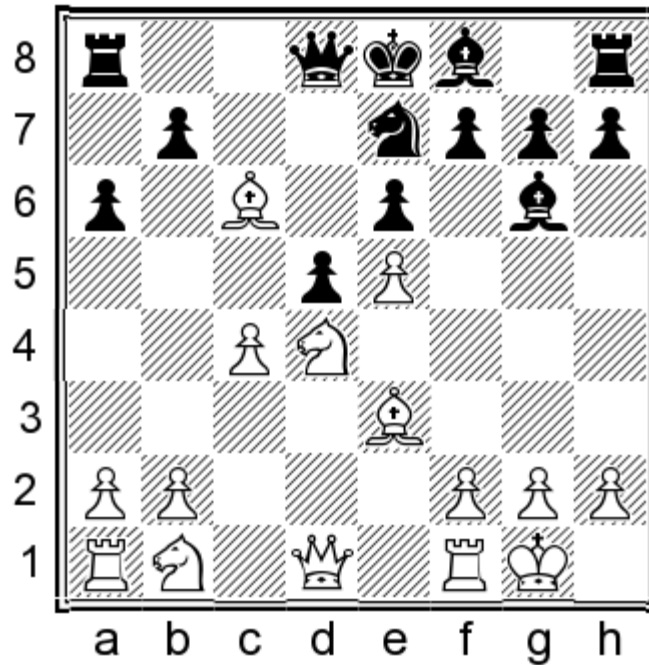
White has played a2-a3 in advance and intends to capture another pawn in order to obtain adequate compensation for the missing knight. In addition, Black's king is rather unsafe, so he will have to work long and hard for a draw.

B) 9...♙g6 10.c4 a6

10...dxc4?! 11.♜a3.

11.♙xc6+

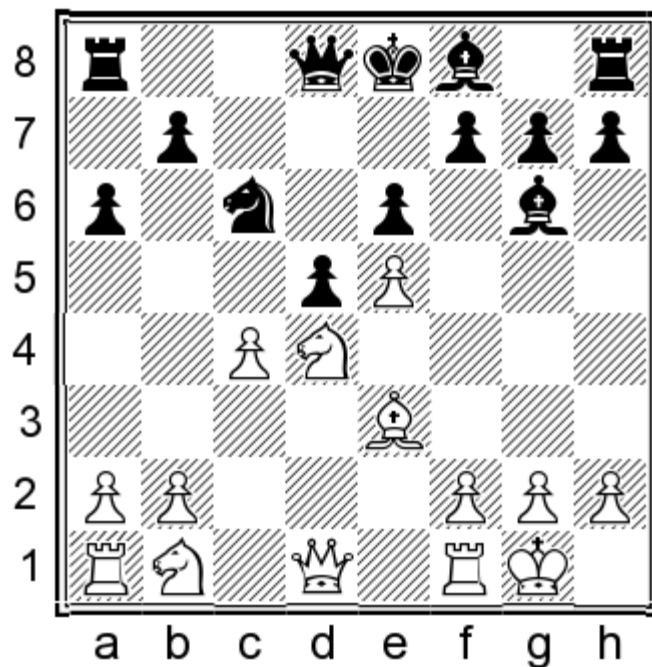
About 11.♙a4 – see Bartel – Laznicka, Dresden 2015 (game 14).



11...♜xc6

Black opens the way for his dark-squared bishop in his attempt to complete the development of his queenside pieces in the fastest possible way.

Here, capturing the pawn 11...bxc6 seems to be a loss of time in comparison to variation **A**, in which he does not lose time for the retreat ♙f5-g6. 12.♞a4 (12.♜c3!? ♞d7 13.♜a4↑; 12...dxc4 13.♞a4 ♙d3 14.♞fd1 ♞d7 15.b3 ♜d5 16.♞ac1! ♜xe3 17.fxe3 c5 18.♜db5!±; 16...♜b6 17.♞a5 c5 18.♜db5 ♞c6 19.♜d6+ ♙xd6 20.exd6 ♞c8 21.♞xa6±) 12...♙d3. It may look like Black has saved the day, but he is faced with a nasty surprise. 13.♞c1! (13.♞d1? ♙xc4 14.♜c3 ♞c8 15.♞ac1, Kotter – Schlecht, Germany 1998, 15...♙b5! 16.♞c2 c5 17.♜dxb5 axb5 18.♜xb5 ♜f5=, followed by ♙f8-e7 and 0-0.) 13...♙xc4 14.♜d2 ♙b5 (14...♙d3 15.♞c3 ♙b5 16.♞c2± Obertin – Santos, ICCF 2006) 15.♞c2 ♞c8 16.a4 c5 17.♜xe6 fxe6 18.axb5 axb5 19.♙xc5 ♜f5 20.♞d3± White runs away from the pin with his queen and preserves all the pluses of his position.

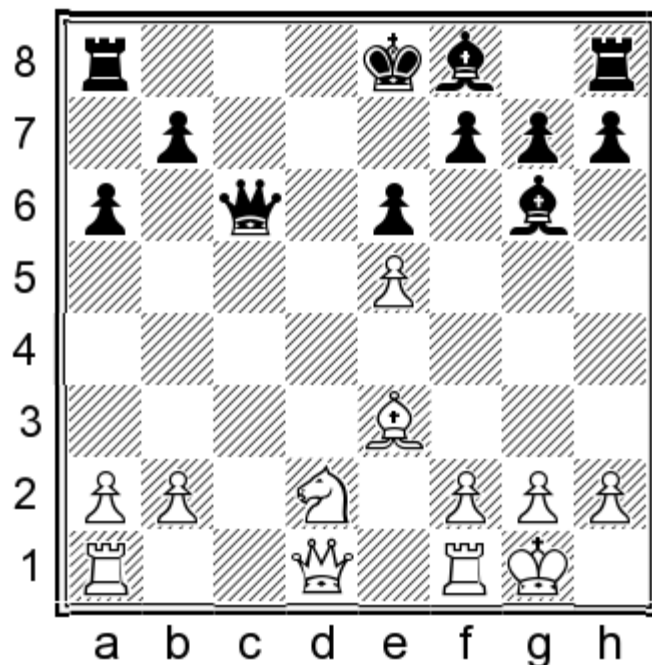


12. ♖a4

This logical decision is not the only one for White.

He would not achieve much with 12. ♘xc6 bxc6 13. ♘c3 ♙e7 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. ♖a4+ ♜d7, draw, Perunovic – Lupulescu, Skopje 2013, or 13. ♖a4 ♜d7 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. ♘c3 ♜xa4 16. ♘xa4 ♙e7 17. ♝fc1 0-0∞ Nevednichy – Sumets, Skopje 2013.

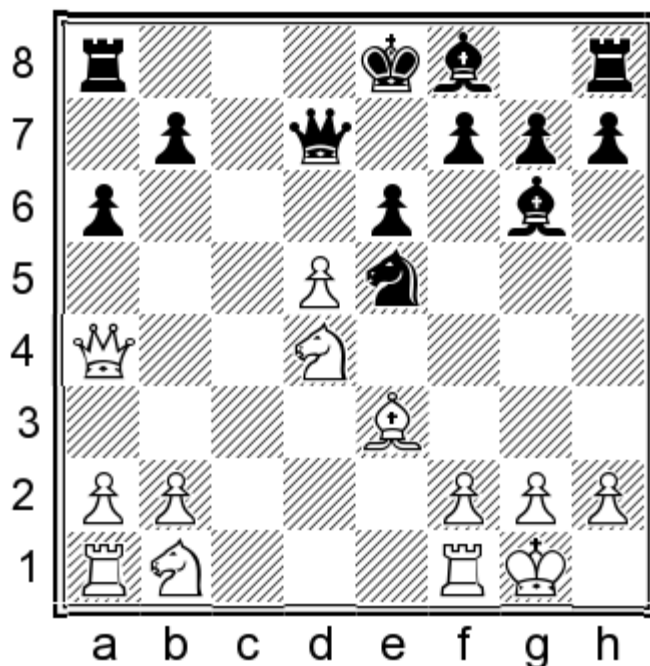
The following line can be of some practical interest: 12. cxd5!? N 12... ♜xd5 13. ♘xc6 (13. ♘c3!? ♜xe5 14. ♘xc6 bxc6 15. ♙d4 ♜c7 16. ♝e1 c5 17. ♜f3↑) 13... ♜xc6 (13... bxc6 14. ♖a4±) 14. ♘d2



This position seems to be rather simple and Black should not have great problems. Still, things are not so straightforward as they may look like... 14... ♙d3! This important inclusion prevents White's possibility to transfer his

knight to the d6-square via c4. (White would have succeeded to do that after 14...♙e7 15.♖c1 ♗b5 16.♖c7 ♗xe5 17.♖xb7 ♗d5 18.♗a4+ ♔f8 19.♗d7!? ♗xd7 20.♖xd7±; 15...♗d5 16.♘c4 ♖d8 17.♘d6 and Black would still have problems to worry about. 17...♙d6 18.exd6 ♗xd6 19.♗a4+ ♗d7 20.♗b4 a5 21.♗xa5 0-0 22.♖c7±; 18...♖xd6 19.♗a4+ ♗b5? 20.♖c8+ ♖d8 21.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 22.♖d1+ ♔c8 23.♗d4+-; 19...b5 20.♗a3↑) 15.♖e1 ♙e7 16.♖c1 ♗d5! (After the retreat 16...♗b5, White's queen joins very effectively in the action 17.♗f3!, with the idea ♖c1-c7. 17...0-0? 18.♖c7+-; 17...♖d8 18.a4 ♗xa4 19.♙b6+-; 18...♗d5 19.♖c7 ♖d7 20.♗xd5 exd5 21.♖ec1± White turns out to be much better prepared for the forthcoming endgame.) 17.♘b3 (Black's task would become much easier after the possible trade of the queens following 17.♗f3 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 ♙b4 19.♖c7 b5=) 17...♙e4 (White's plans include the manoeuvre ♘b3-c5 and it would be justified after 17...0-0 18.♘c5 ♙xc5 19.♖xc5 ♗e4 20.♖c3 ♖ad8 21.♗c1 ♗f5 22.♙c5 ♖fe8 23.♙d6±; 18...♖fd8 19.♘xd3 ♗xd3 20.♗xd3 ♖xd3 21.♖c7 ♙b4 22.♖ec1 b5 23.♔f1±) 18.♗g4 0-0. Black still has problems after 19.♖c7 ♖fe8 20.♖ec1 ♙f5 21.♗f4↑, as well as following 19.♙c5!? ♙f5 20.♗b4 ♙xc5 21.♖xc5 ♗d7 22.h3↑

12...♗d7 13.cxd5 ♘xe5



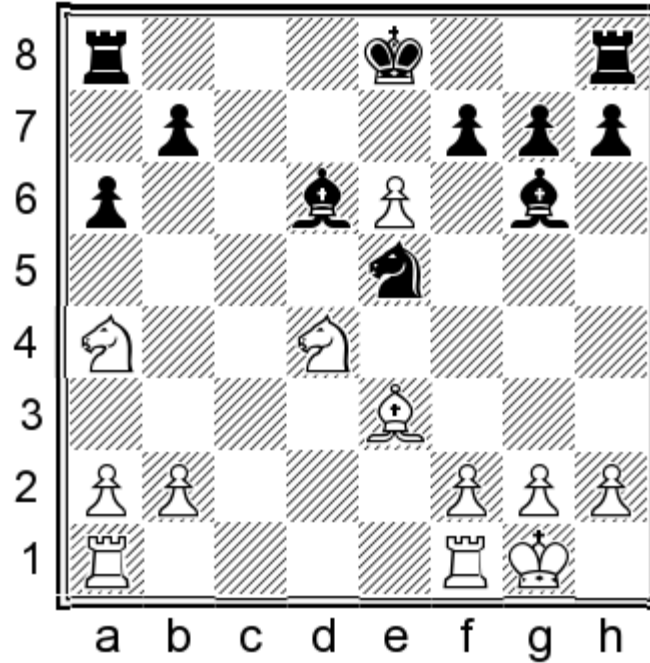
14.♘c3!

White has nothing to brag about in the endgame arising after 14.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 15.dxe6+ fxe6 16.♖d1, although Black will still need to defend precisely. 16...♙d6 17.♘b3 (17.♘c3 ♘c4=) 17...♘d3 18.♘c3 ♖hd8 19.♘a4 ♔e8 20.♘a5 ♖ab8 21.♙a7 ♖a8 22.♙e3=

14...♗xa4 15.♘xa4 ♙d6

Black should better avoid 15...exd5, in view of 16.f4! (16.♖fe1?! ♘d3 17.♙d2+ ♙e7 18.♖e2 ♔f8) 16...♘c4 (16...♘g4 17.f5 ♘xe3 18.♖ae1 0-0-0 19.♖xe3 ♙h5 20.h3 f6 21.♘e6±) 17.f5 ♙h5 18.♙f2 ♙b4 19.h3 f6 20.b3 ♘d2 (20...♘e5 21.♘e6+-) 21.♖fc1 0-0 22.♘b6± and his two bishops are not only very weak, but they are just helpless. There is horrible disharmony in Black's camp, while White's pieces are very active and he is threatening to penetrate with his rook – ♖c1-c7, as well as with his knight – ♘d4-e6. Black will lose unavoidably material. 22...♖ab8 (22...♙d6 23.♘e6 ♘e4 24.♖c2 ♙f7 25.♘xa8 ♖xa8 26.♖ac1 ♙xe6 27.fxe6 ♖e8 28.♖c8 ♔f8 29.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 30.♖c8+ ♔e7 31.♖g8±) 23.♘e6 ♖fe8 24.♙g3+-

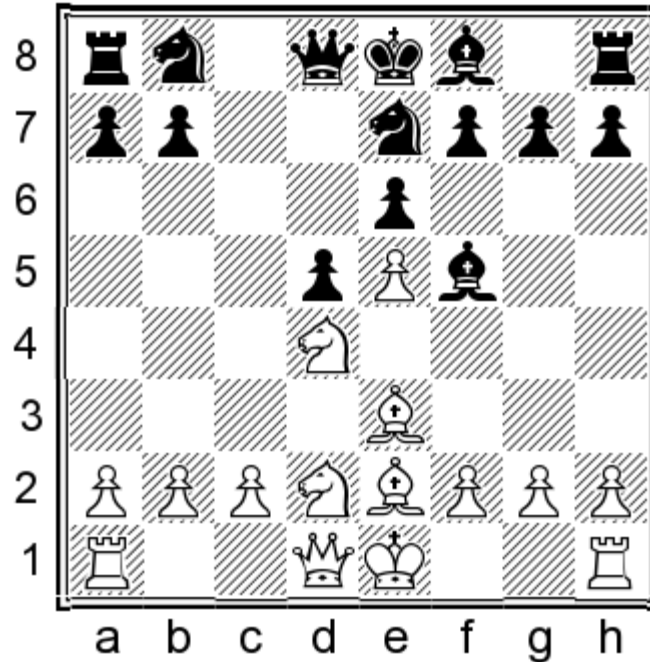
16.dxe6±



Black has some compensation for the pawn, but it is hardly sufficient. **16...0-0 17.♖ad1 ♜ae8 18.♙f4!** (18.♘f5?! ♙xf5 19.♖xd6 ♜xe6= Grischuk – Sumets, Rodos 2013) **18...fxe6 19.♙g3±** Black has a weak pawn on e6 and his pieces are misplaced, so White's position is obviously preferable.

Chapter 13

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♟e2 c5 6.♟e3 cxd4 7.♞xd4 ♞e7 8.♞d2

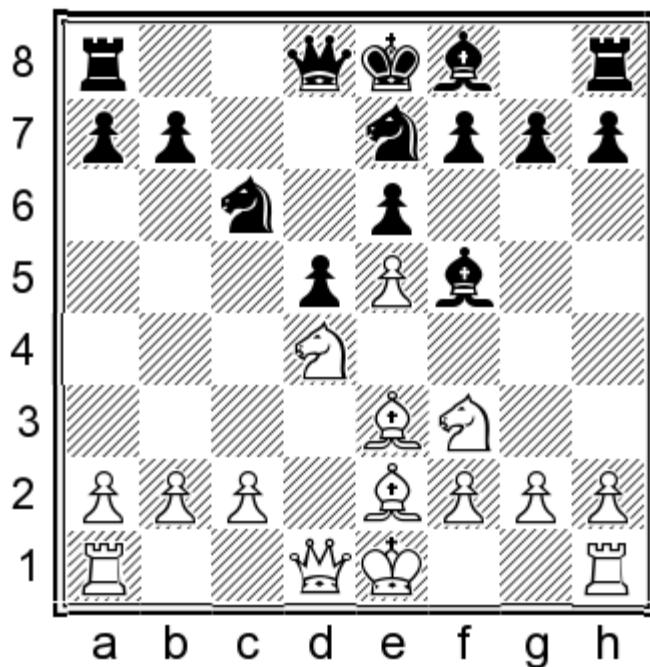


This move leads to a quiet positional play. White does not undermine the centre immediately and avoids forcing the issue, although in numerous variations, under favourable circumstances, he can attack the centre with the move c2-c4. He expects his opponent to make certain positional concessions in order to complete his development. In fact, White often obtains the two-bishop advantage. Naturally his extra space, so typical for the entire variation with 3.e5, is a long-term factor.

8...♞bc6

About 8...a6 9.0-0 ♞bc6 10.♞2f3 – see variation A.

9.♞2f3



Black will have to retreat his bishop on f5 sooner or later in order to complete harmoniously his kingside development.

He can also retreat his bishop to a more natural position **B) 9...♗g4**, or can choose the more complicated move **C)**

9...♗e4!? Black can also delay the retreat of his bishop and play at first **A) 9...a6**.

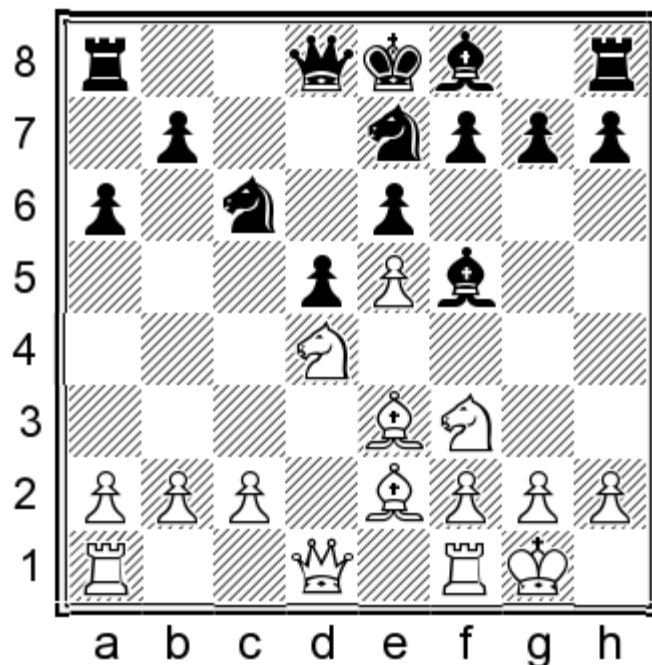
9...♗g6 10.0-0 ♖f5 (10...a6 11.c4! dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♜c8 13.♞c1± Huschenbeth – Nuding, Nuremberg 2011) 11.♗xf5 ♗xf5
 12.♗d4 ♗e4 (12...♗g6 13.c4± Van der Weide – Pappenheim, Bad Wiessee 2002; 12...♗xd4 13.♞xd4 a6 14.c4±)
 13.♗xc6 bxc6, Beshukov – Gutov, Maikop 1998, 14.c4 ♗e7 15.♞a4±

9...♞c8 10.0-0 ♗e4 (10...♗g4 11.♞c1 – see variation **B)** 11.c3!? ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 ♗g6 13.c4 dxc4, Iordachescu –
 Vedmediuc, Romania 2014, 14.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 15.♗xc4 a6 16.♞ac1±, with the idea 16...♗gxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♗e2
 ♗e7 19.f4 ♗d3 20.♞c7 b5 21.f5 e5 22.♗f3±

A) 9...a6

After this move, Black's lag in development will be an even more important factor.

10.0-0



10...♔g4

About 10...♔e4 11.c4 – see variation C.

10...♖c8 11.♖c1 ♔e4 12.c4!?! (12.a3 ♕xf3 13.♘xf3, Haslinger – Pogorelov, Balaguer 2010, 13...g6∞) 12...dxc4 (12...♗xd4 13.♗xd4 dxc4 14.♕xc4 ♔d5 15.b3 ♖d7 16.♗g4↑) 13.♕xc4 ♔d5?! 14.♕xd5 (14.♕d3?! Viswanadha – Hernandez Carmenates, Brownsville 2015, 14...g6=) 14...♗xd5 (14...♗xd5 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♗a4± – White wins a pawn.) 15.♗a4 ♖d7 16.♖fd1 ♗xe5 17.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 18.♖c2 ♗xf3+ 19.♗xf3 ♖c6 20.♖d3 ♖d5 (20...♔d6 21.♖c1 ♖d7 22.♖xc8±) 21.♗b1! ♖b5 22.♗d4 ♖d5 23.♗b3 ♖b5 24.♖c2 ♖c6 25.♖xc6+ bxc6 26.♗a5±

Following 10...♖d7, White can already capture the enemy bishop. 11.♗xf5 ♗xf5 12.♕b6!?! (12.♕f4 ♕c5 13.♖c1 ♗fe7 14.c4± Mamedov – Margvelashvili, Konya 2010) 12...♔e7 13.c4 ♔d8 14.cxd5 ♖xd5 (14...♕xb6 15.dxc6±) 15.♖xd5 exd5 16.♕c5 ♔e7 17.♖ac1± – Now, besides the two-bishop advantage, White has the possibility to attack the weak enemy isolated d5-pawn.

Following 10...♖c7, White can develop powerful initiative with 11.c4, for example: 11...dxc4 12.♗a4 ♗d5 (12...♖c8 13.♕xc4 ♖a5, Ryan – Gomez Jurado, Montcada 2014, 14.♖b3!± He has excellent prospects thanks to his extra space and a superior development.) 13.♗xf5 exf5 14.♖xc4 ♗xe3 15.fxe3 g6 (15...♖b6 16.♗d4±) 16.e4↑

11.♖c1!

This is an important move and is also very typical for this variation. White is preparing c2-c4. Now, Black must make up his mind how to complete his development.

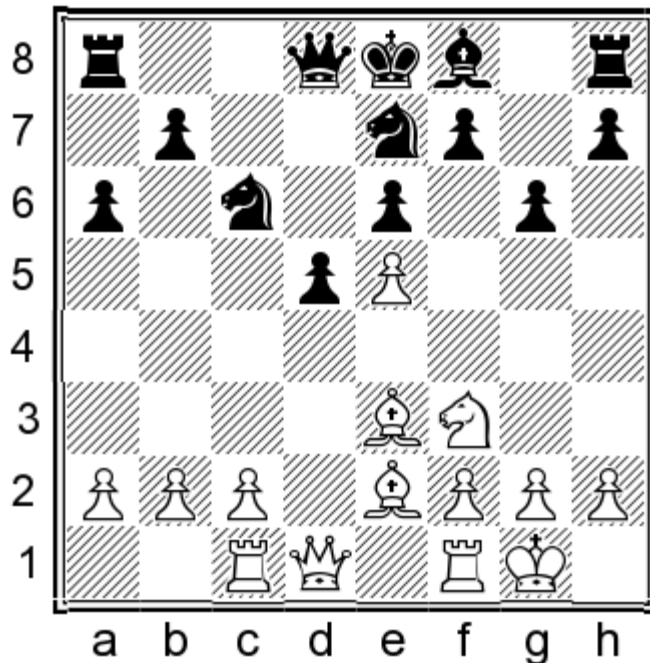
The immediate move 11.c4 would not be so good, because of 11...dxc4 12.♖c1 b5∞ and White would hardly manage to prove that his active pieces compensate his sacrificed pawn.

It would be rather slow for him to opt for 11.c3 ♕xf3 12.♗xf3 ♗g6 13.♖b3 ♖d7 14.♖fd1, Roiz – Bareev, Cala Mayor 2008, 14...♖c8!= Black has no problems, since he can counter 15.c4 with 15...♗a5↗

11...♕xf3

11...♗xd4 12.♗xd4 ♕xe2 13.♖xe2 ♖c8 14.f4 g6 15.♖fd1!?!±

12. ♖xf3 g6



13. c4!?

White would maintain a slight, but stable edge after 13. c3 ♗g7 14. ♗f4±

13... ♗g7 14. cxd5 ♜xd5

14... ♖xd5 15. ♗c5↑ He sacrifices a pawn in order to exploit the misplacement of Black's king, stranded in the centre.

15... ♖xe5 16. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 17. ♗f3 ♗xb2 18. ♗xd5 ♜xd5 19. ♜xd5 exd5 20. ♞fe1+ ♔d8 21. ♞b1 ♗c3 22. ♞ec1 d4 23. ♞xb7±

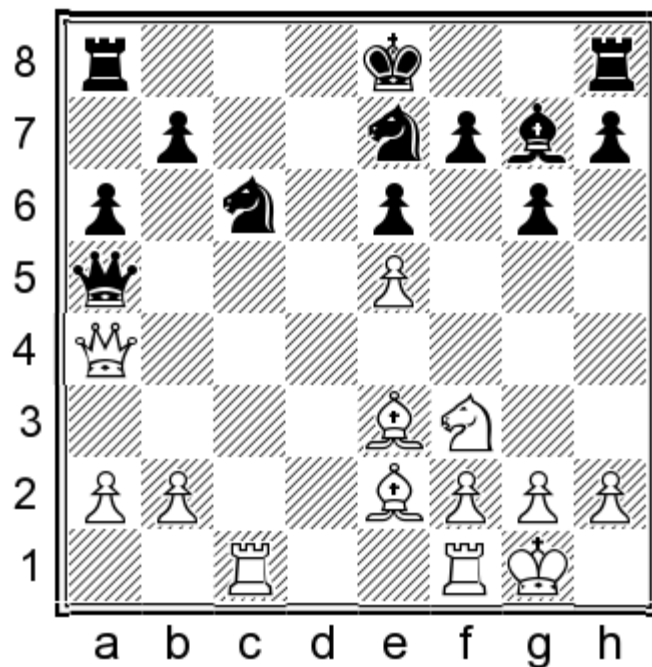
15. ♜a4

It is also interesting for White to continue here with 15. ♜c2!?!↑, with the idea ♞f1-d1, making use of the rather awkward placement of Black's queen in the centre of the board, which can be best illustrated by the variation 15... ♜xa2?? 16. ♞a1 ♜d5 17. ♞fd1+—

15... ♜a5

Black will need to lose time for the retreat of his queen, since his opponent was threatening ♞f1-d1.

15... 0-0 16. ♗c5 ♜d7 17. ♞fd1↑

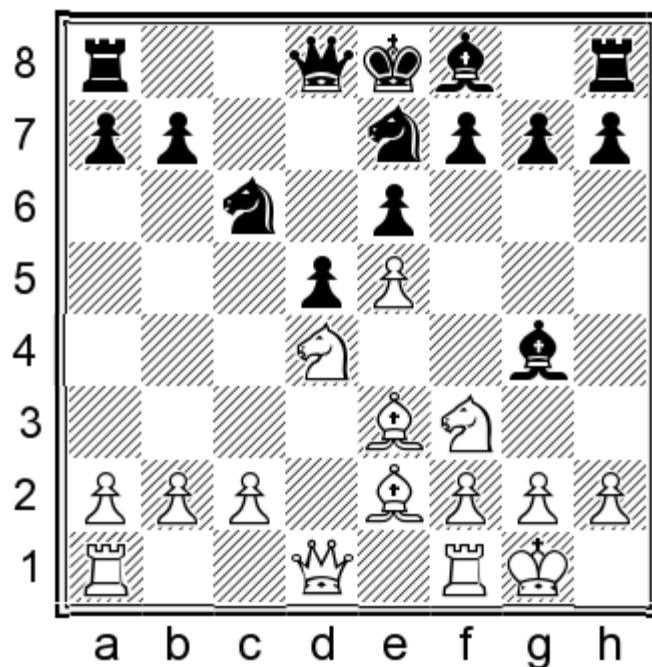


16. ♖xa5

White has also tried in practice the retreat of his queen – 16. ♕b3!?, with the idea to attack the enemy b7-pawn. 16...0-0 17. ♗c5 ♜fe8 18. ♗d6 ♘xe5 19. ♘xe5 ♗xe5 20. ♝c5 ♚d2 21. ♗xe5 ♛xe2 22. ♛xb7 ♘d5∞ It looks like White has not achieved much; nevertheless, the variation deserves serious practical tests, Gashimov – Stellwagen, Novi Sad 2009.

16... ♘xa5 17. ♗d3 ♘ac6 18. ♗e4±

B) 9... ♗g4 10.0-0



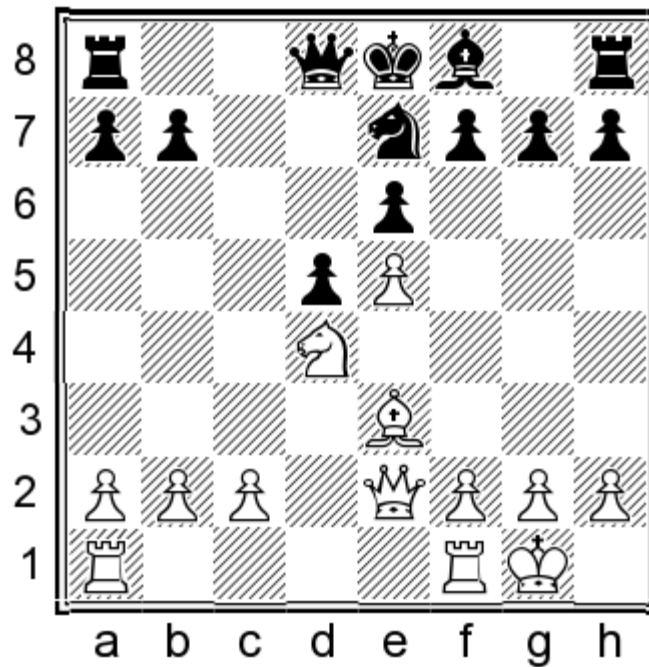
10... ♗xf3

10...a6 11.♞c1 – see variation **A**.

10...♟g6 11.c4! ♟xf3 12.♞xf3 – see variation **B1**.

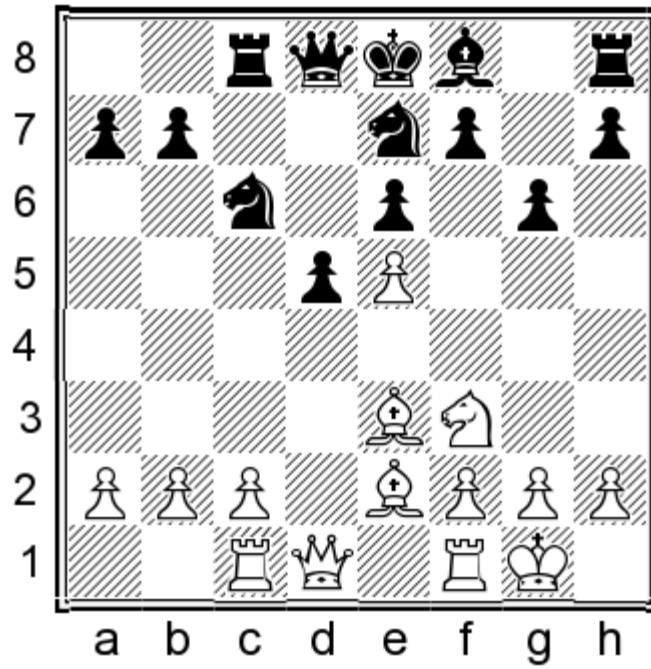
After 10...g6, White's possible ideas were very well illustrated in the game Karjakin – Le Quang, Beijing 2011: 11.h3!? ♟xf3 12.♞xf3. He has a bishop-pair, but Black's position seems to be solid enough. White needs to stabilise the situation in the centre and then to develop his kingside initiative with the help of advancing his h-pawn. We will see how Sergey Karjakin realises convincingly this plan. 12...♟g7 13.♟f4 ♞c7 14.♞e1 0-0 15.♟f1± ♞ac8 (15...d4!? 16.a3!±; 16.♞xd4 ♞ad8 17.c3 ♞f5 18.♞c1±) 16.c3 ♞a5 17.♟d3 ♞c4 18.♞e2 a6 19.h4 h6 20.♞ac1± b5 21.♟b1 ♞b6 22.h5 ♞d7 23.♞d2 ♟h7 24.♞d4 ♞c5 25.hxg6+ ♞xg6 26.♟g3 ♞e4 27.♟xe4 dxe4 28.♞xe4 ♞fd8 29.f4+–

10...♞xd4. Black will be in trouble after this exchange. 11.♞xd4. White's knight on d4 exerts powerful pressure against Black's position and is ready to accomplish under favourable circumstances the manoeuvre ♞b5-d6, penetrating into the enemy camp. (After the capturing 11.♞xd4, Black's task would become much easier. 11...♟xf3 12.♟xf3 ♞f5, Kalod – Velicka, Zlin 1997, 13.♞a4+ ♞d7 14.♞xd7+ ♟xd7 15.c4 ♞xe3 16.fxex3 ♟c5 17.cxd5 ♟xe3+ 18.♟h1± – White has a slight edge, but due to the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board, the draw seems very likely in this endgame.) 11...♟xe2 12.♞xe2±



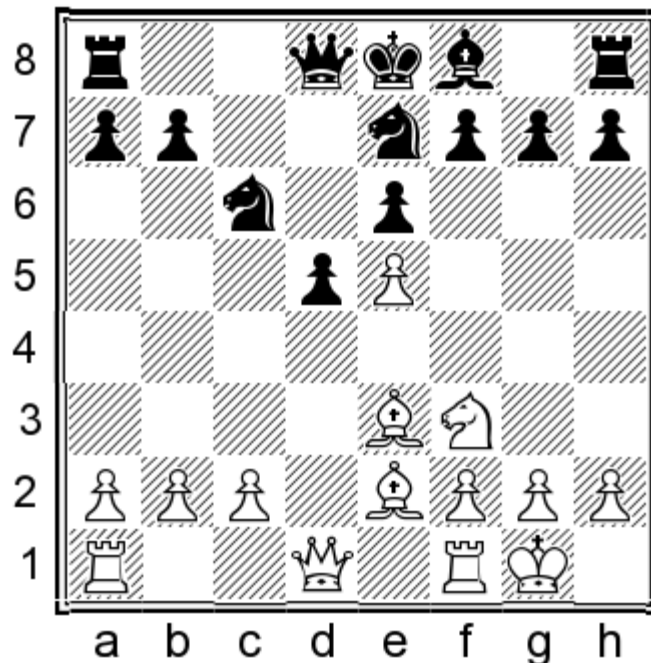
The position has been considerably simplified, but Black can hardly complete his development without certain positional concessions. 12...♞c6 13.c4! White must play very energetically; otherwise, his advantage may evaporate. 13...♟e7 (13...♞xe5?! 14.cxd5 ♞xd5 15.♞ac1 a6 16.♞fd1±; 15...♟e7 16.♞b5 0-0 17.♞c7 ♞d3 18.♞h5+–; 13...♞xd4 14.♟xd4 ♟e7 15.♞fd1 0-0 16.cxd5 ♞xd5 17.♟xa7± Debashish – Linda, Bhiwani 2010) 14.♞fd1 (14.♞xc6!? bxc6 15.♞g4 g6 16.♟h6 ♟f8 17.♞f4±) 14...0-0 15.♞f3!? (15.cxd5!? exd5?! 16.♞f5± Bologan – Bakker, Gibraltar 2006; 15...♞xd5 16.♞xc6 ♞xc6 17.♞ac1 ♞e4 18.♞b5±) 15...♞a5 16.cxd5 exd5, Ni Hua – Yu Ruiyuan, Ningbo 2011, 17.a3 ♞ad8 18.h3±. Black's isolated d5-pawn is very weak in this position.

10...♞c8. Black should not delay the development of his kingside. 11.♞c1 (11.c3 ♞g6∞) 11...♟xf3 (11...a6?! 12.c4 ♞xd4 13.♞xd4 ♟xf3 14.♟xf3 ♞f5 15.♞f4 ♞xe3 16.fxex3 ♟c5 17.cxd5 0-0 18.♟h1± Baklan – Lenderman, Reykjavik 2010; 15.♞d3!? ♞xe3 16.♞xe3±; 11...g6 12.♞xc6!? ♞xc6 13.c4 ♟xf3 14.♟xf3 ♞xe5 15.cxd5 ♞xc1 16.♞xc1 ♞xf3+ 17.gxf3±) 12.♞xf3 g6 (He fails to preserve his dark-squared bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal: 12...♞f5 13.♟f4 ♟e7 14.♟d3 0-0 15.♟xf5 exf5 16.♞d3 ♞d7 17.c3 h6 18.♞fe1 ♞fd8 19.b4 a6 20.a4± Motylev – Evdokimov, Dagomys 2010.)



13.c3!?. After Black's bishop has been developed to the g7-square, White changes his plan. He will have a target for the development of his kingside initiative and his space advantage will enhance that. (He would achieve much less with the seemingly active line: 13.c4 ♕g7 14.cxd5 ♘xd5 15.♗c5 ♗f8 16.♗b5 ♗xc5 17.♞xc5 0-0 18.♗xc6 ♞xc6 19.♞xc6 bxc6 20.♞c1 ♔g7 21.♞xc6 ♞b8= Black's material deficit is just minimal, while White's pawn on e5 may become a liability Cheparinov – Bareev, Moscow 2010.) 13...♗g7 14.♗f4± (followed by ♞f1-e1 and the possible advance of White's h-pawn) – His position in the centre is very reliable and he has good chances of developing initiative on the kingside, Alsina Leal – Macieja, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

11. ♘xf3



Now, Black can place his e7-knight on the g6-square – **B1**) 11...♘g6, attacking in the process White's pawn on e5, or following **B2**) 11...♘f5, he can try to deprive at some moment his opponent of the two-bishop advantage. Black can

also delay the clarification of the future placement of his knight on e7 and make the useful move **B3) 11...♖c7**.

The move 11...g6 has been tested in practice at very hard level indeed, but it hardly deserves serious attention, because White can reach a favourable version of the variation 10...g6 11.h3 ♕xf3 12.♗xf3, in which he has wasted some time for the move h2-h3. 12.♖e1 ♕g7 13.♕f4 0-0 14.♕d3 ♖c8 15.c3 a6 16.♗e2 ♗a5 17.♕g5 ♖c7 18.h4 ♗c4 19.♖ad1 ♗c6 20.♕xc4 dxc4 21.♗e3± Wang Hao – Yu Ruiyuan, Beijing 2014; 21.h5!±

B1) 11...♗g6

Black's knight on g6, as we will see, is isolated from the actions for long and if he captures the enemy pawn on e5, his lag in development may become just horrible.

12.c4!

White does not need to waste a tempo for the protection of his e5-pawn, because Black would lag terribly in development if he captures it.

12.♕b5 ♕e7 13.c4 0-0 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗b3, S.Zhigalko – Ipatov, Plovdiv 2012, 15...♗gxe5! 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♖ad1 ♗g4 18.♖xd5 ♖c7 19.g3 ♗xe3 20.♗xe3 ♖fd8 21.♖fd1 ♖d6=

12...dxc4

12...♕e7 13.cxd5 ♖xd5 14.♗xd5 exd5, Dragnev – Arngrimsson, Budapest 2014, 15.♖ac1 0-0 16.♖fd1 ♖fd8 17.♗f1!? ♗gxe5 (17...♗f8 18.♕a6±) 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♖c7±

White's e5-pawn is poisoned – 12...♗gxe5? 13.♗xe5 ♗xe5 14.cxd5 ♖xd5 15.♗a4+ ♖d7 16.♕b5 ♗c6 17.♖fd1 ♖c7 18.♖ac1 ♖c8 19.♗xa7+– and Black's lag in development would lead it to his demise.

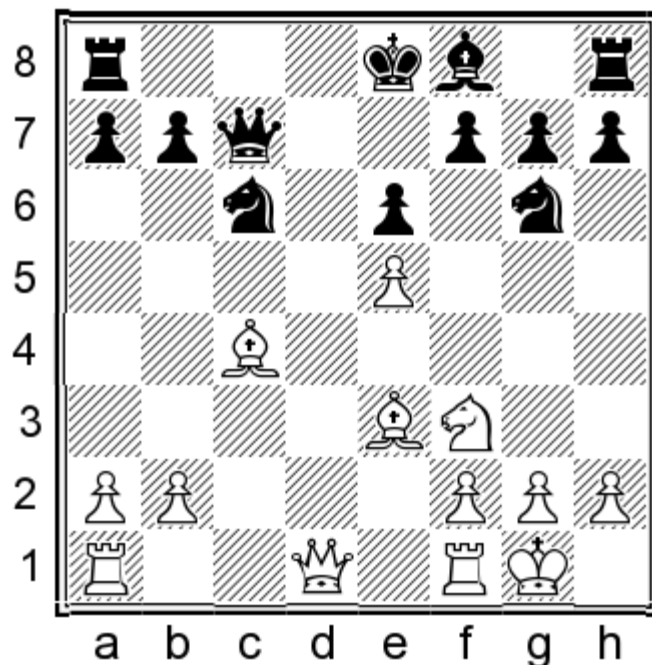
13.♕xc4

White manages to create problems for his opponent too after 13.♗a4!? ♖a5 14.♗xc4 ♕e7 15.♗b3 ♖b8 16.♗b5± Charbonneau – Bartell, ICC 2011.

13...♖c7

The e5-pawn is untouchable, just like before: 13...♗gxe5?! 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 (14...♖xd1 15.♖fxd1 ♗xe5 16.♕b5+ ♗c6 17.♖ac1±) 15.♕b5+ ♗c6 16.♗a4 ♖c8 17.♖fd1 ♖c7 18.♗xa7±, or 18.♖ac1±

The trade of the queens would not facilitate Black's defence either: 13...♖xd1 14.♖fxd1 a6 (14...♗gxe5 15.♗xe5 ♗xe5 16.♕b5+ ♗c6 17.♖ac1±) 15.♕d3 0-0-0, S.Zhigalko – Braun, Gaziantep 2008 (15...♗gxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♕e4 ♗c6 18.♖ac1 ♖c8 19.♖d3±) 16.♕b6! ♖d5 17.♕xg6±



14.♞c1

White should not be in a hurry to pin the opponent on a4-e8 diagonal, which would be possible after the move 14.♞b5, since he would have to exchange after that his light-squared bishop for the enemy knight. He may create thus some pawn-weaknesses in the enemy camp indeed, but this is not a great achievement. In fact, Black will be very happy after that. 14...♞e7 15.♞c1 (15.♞a4 0-0 16.♞xc6 bxc6= Navara – Laznicka, Novy Bor 2011; 15.♞c2 0-0 16.♞xc6 bxc6 17.♞c3 ♜fd8 18.♞fd1 a5 19.a3 ♞xd1+ 20.♞xd1 ♞d8= Motylev – Drozdovskij, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011) 15...0-0 16.♞d4 (16.♞xc6 bxc6 17.♞d4 ♜fd8 18.♞c3 ♞ac8= T.Kosintseva – Danielian, Jermuk 2010) 16...♜fd8 17.♞a4 ♞ac8 18.♞c4 ♞f4 19.♞xc6 bxc6 20.♞xa7 ♞xa7 21.♞xa7 ♞a8 22.♞e3 ♞d3 23.♞xc6 ♞xa2 24.b3 ♞b2=

14...♞e7

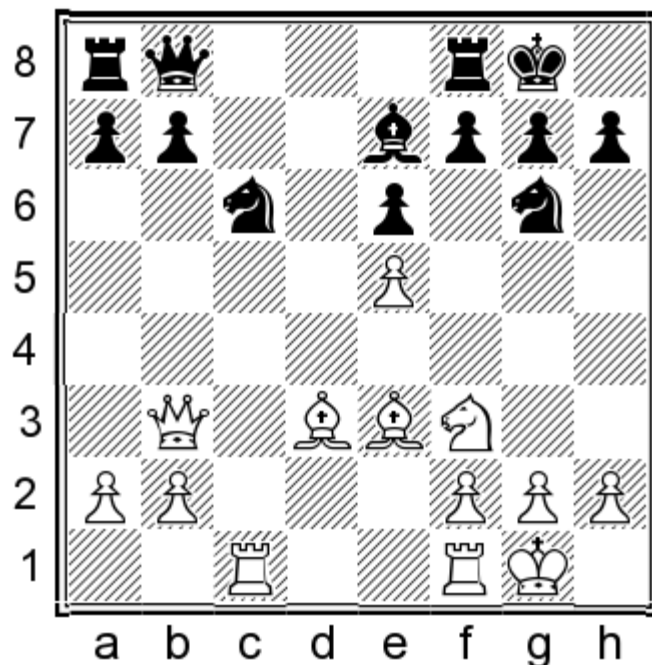
14...♞gxe5 15.♞xe5 ♞xe5 16.♞b3 ♞c7 17.♞f4 ♞d6 (Black will have to give back the pawn; otherwise, after 17...♞b6 18.♞xe6! fxe6 19.♞xe6+ ♞e7 20.♞e2±, he will be faced with a great problems.) 18.♞xd6 ♞xd6 19.♞xb7 ♞b8 (19...0-0 20.♞a6!±) 20.♞a6 ♞b6 (20...0-0? 21.♞fd1+–) 21.♞c8+ ♞d8 22.♞xe6. It is now White who ends up with an extra pawn. 22...♞xc8 23.♞xc8 0-0 24.♞h3 ♞d4 25.♞b1±

15.♞b3!

This is no doubt a useful move and is a necessary preparation for the transfer of White's bishop to the e4-square. After the immediate move 15.♞d3, Black has the resource 15...♞gxe5=

15...0-0 16.♞d3 ♞b8!?

It would not be preferable for him to choose 16...♜fd8 17.♞fd1 ♞f8 18.g3 ♞d7 19.♞e4 ♞xd1+ 20.♞xd1 ♞c8 21.♞g2± Karjakin – W. So, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, with the idea 21...♞gxe5 22.♞g5 h6 23.♞xe6! fxe6? 24.♞xe6+ ♞h8 25.f4+– and his knight on e5 has no acceptable square to retreat to, in view of White's threat ♞e6-g6-h7 with a checkmate!



17.g3!

It may seem strange at first sight, but if White plays immediately 17.♖fd1, then after 17...♗gxe5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗e4, Black will counter with 19...♗g4= This is the reason that White should play 17.g3, in order to prevent all these possible developments.

17...♗d8

Now, after 17...♗gxe5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗e4 Black does not have the move 19...♗g4, due to 20.♗xb7. Following 19...♗c6 20.♖fd1±, Black would still have problems to worry about.

White should counter the active move 17...a5 with 18.a4!?. (Following 18.♗b5 a4 19.♗e4 ♗a5∞ Black succeeds in provoking unclear complications, Volokitin – Laznicka, San Sebastian 2012.) 18...♗gxe5 19.♗xe5 ♗xe5 20.♗e4±

18.♖fd1!?!N

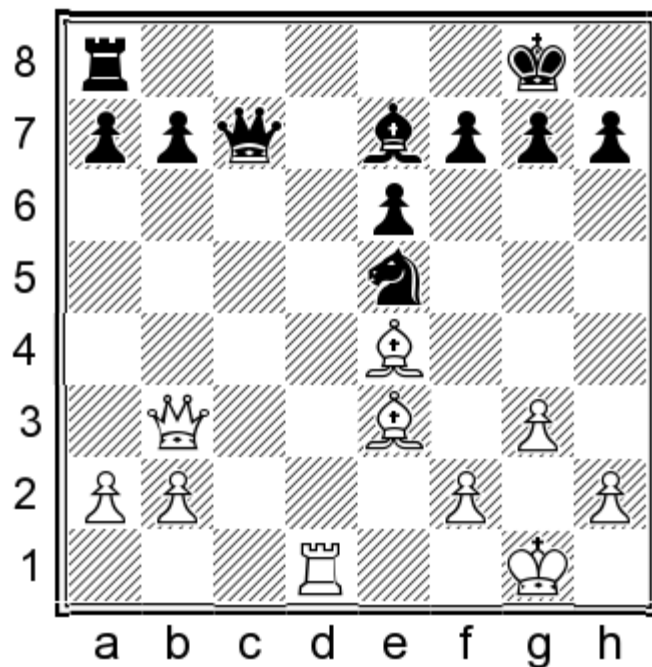
White would not mind to trade his e5-pawn for one of Black's queenside pawns, hoping later to create a passed pawn there.

It deserves some practical attention for White to try here 18.♗e4!?. ♗gxe5 19.♗xe5 ♗xe5 20.♗xh7+ (20.♗xb7 ♗xe4 21.♗xc6 ♗xc6 22.♗xc6 a5= Motylev – Drozdovskij, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011) 20...♗xh7 21.♗xb7 ♗ac8 22.♗xc6 ♗xc6 23.♗xc6 ♗xb2 24.♗c7 ♗a3 25.♗c1 a5 26.♗g2↑

18...♗gxe5 19.♗xe5 ♗xe5 20.♗e4 ♖xd1+

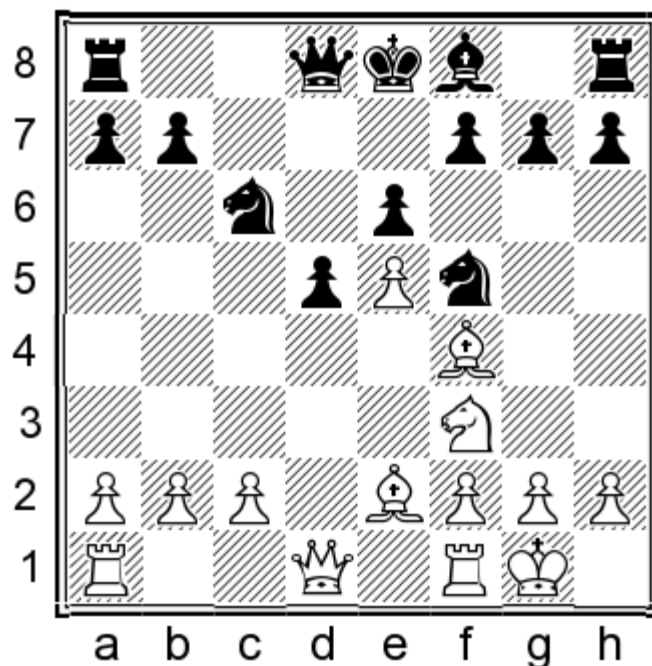
Black will have much greater difficulties on the queenside in the variation 20...♗c6 21.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 22.♗a4! ♗d6 23.b4!±

21.♖xd1 ♗c7



22. ♖xb7 (22. ♕f4!? ♕f6 23. ♗xb7 ♗xb7 24. ♕xb7 ♖b8 25. ♕e4 g5 26. ♕c1±) 22... ♗xb7 23. ♕xb7 ♖b8 24. ♕g2± – White has a powerful pair of bishops and the possibility to create an outside passed pawn, so the arising endgame is obviously in his favour. Black will be faced with a long and laborious fight for a draw.

B2) 11... ♖f5 12. ♕f4

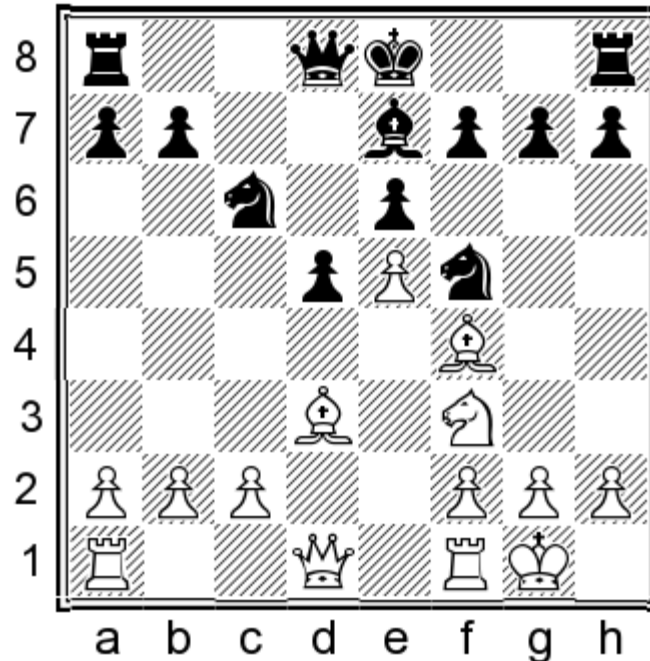


12... ♕c5

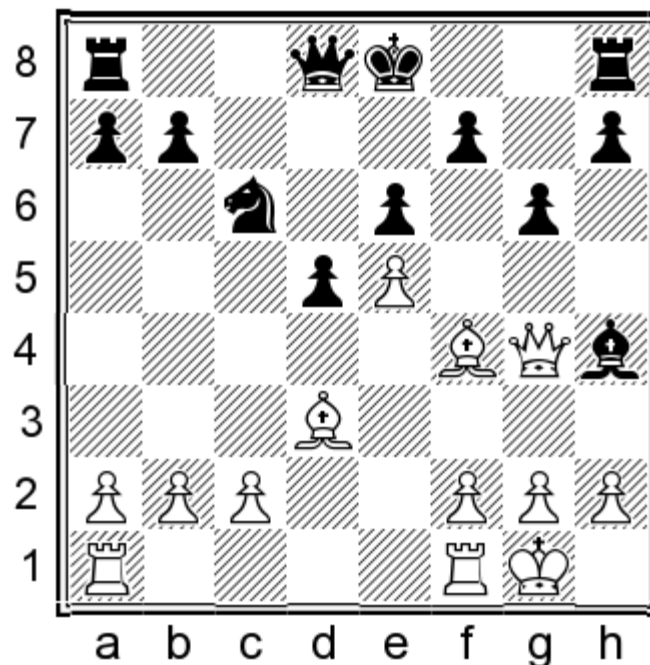
This is his most natural move.

12...h6!? Black plans to play g7-g5 with the idea to organise some counterplay. This is a reasonable decision, because if he plays calmly and even passively, White's space advantage and his two powerful bishops would provide him with

much better prospects. The unstable placement of Black's knight on f5 however, precludes him from accomplishing his plan. 13.♔d3! g5 14.♕xf5 exf5 15.♕e3 ♕g7, Erenburg – Kacheishvili, ICC 2009, 16.♖d4 ♕xe5 17.♗xf5 ♜d7 18.♜d3± 12...♕e7. This is a quiet developing move, after which White should consider his opponent's possibility g7-g5. 13.♕d3. With this principled move White emphasizes the unstable placement of the enemy knight on the f5-square. (The calmer line: 13.c3 ♜c8 14.♕d3 g6 15.♜e2 a6 16.♞fd1 ♜b6 17.♞ac1±, would have provided him with a slight but stable edge, Parligras – Khotenashvili, Paleochora 2010; 13...g5 14.♕c1!, with the idea 14...g4 15.♖d4 ♖fxd4 16.cxd4 h5 17.♕e3±)



13...♗h4 (Following 13...g5 14.♕xf5 exf5 15.♕e3! f4 16.♕d4 ♜g8 17.e6 fxe6 18.♗e5 ♗xe5 19.♕xe5 g4 20.♕xf4 ♕d6 21.♜d4±, Black's king remains stranded in the centre and this is a very important factor, Ni Hua – Vidit, Moscow 2012. After 14...gxf4 15.♕d3, Black will have problems with the protection of his f4-pawn. 15...♜c7 16.♞e1 0-0-0 17.♜d2±) 14.♗xh4 ♕xh4 15.♜g4 g6 (15...g5 16.♕d2 h5, Van der Weide – Schuurman, Utrecht 1999, 17.♜e2! g4 18.c4!±)



16.♖ad1!?, with the idea to exploit the X-ray juxtaposition of the rook on the d-file with the help of the move c2-c4.
 16...h5 (16...0-0 17.c4±) 17.♖f3 g5 18.♙c1 g4 19.♖f4 ♖c7 20.♗fe1± – The far-advanced black kingside pawns are much rather a liability than a beginning of kingside initiative, Granda Zuniga – Gonzalez Vidal, Havana 2003.

16.c4 dxc4 17.♙xc4 h5 18.♖f3 (18.♖e2!?) 18...0-0 (18...♙g5 19.♗fd1 ♖e7 20.♙b5± Dragomirescu – Georgescu, Brasov 2011) 19.♖ad1 ♖c7 (The move 19...♖a5? can be refuted by 20.♖e4+–, with the idea ♙f4-h6. 20...♙e7 21.♙xe6!+–; 20...♗fe8 21.♙d2 ♖d8 22.♙c1 ♖e7 23.♖f4 g5 24.♖e3 ♖b4 25.♙d3 g4 26.♖h6 1-0 Volokitin – Ruck, Budva 2009.) 20.♖e4± White’s extra space, his two bishops and the more actively deployed pieces provide him with noticeable initiative.

13.♙d3

13.c3!±

13...♗h4

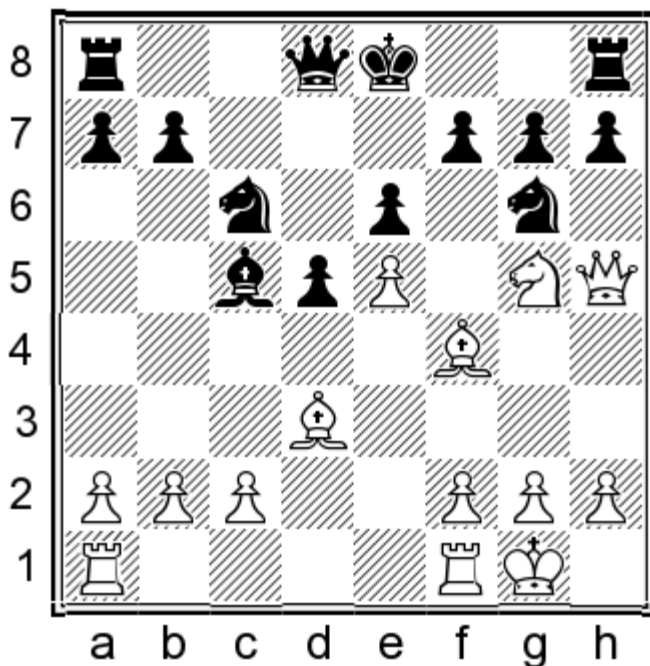
13...♗fe7 14.c3 (14.♗g5!? ♗g6 15.♖h5±; 14...h6 15.♖h5 g6 16.♖h3 ♗f5 17.c3 ♙e7 18.♗f3 h5 19.♗fe1±) 14...♗g6 15.♙g3 a6 16.♖e2 0-0 17.h4↑ Bulmaga – Danielian, Rodos 2013.

13...0-0?! Alsina Leal – Miedema, Aix-les-Bains 2011, 14.♙xf5! exf5 15.♖d3 ♖d7 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 17.♙g5 ♙e7 18.♙xe7 ♗xe7 19.♗d4± Black’s pawn-weaknesses obviously hurt him.

14.♗g5

14.c3!? ♗g6 15.♙g3± Van der Weide – Overeem, Vlissingen 2002.

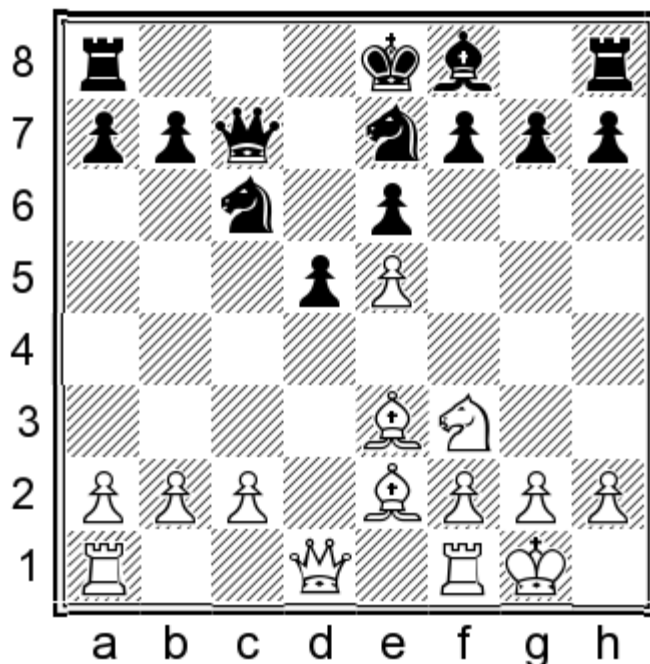
14...♗g6 15.♖h5!±



With this move White deprives the enemy monarch of a safe haven on the kingside. His hands are free, while Black has been deprived of any counterplay whatsoever. 15...♖e7 16.♙xg6 fxg6 17.♖g4 ♗d8 18.♗xh7 ♖xh7 19.♖xg6+ ♖f7 20.♖xh7 ♖xf4 21.♖xg7± – His compensation for the material deficit is evidently insufficient.

B3) 11...♖c7

This is a very reasonable move. Black still does not clarify the future placement of his knight on e7.



12.c4!?

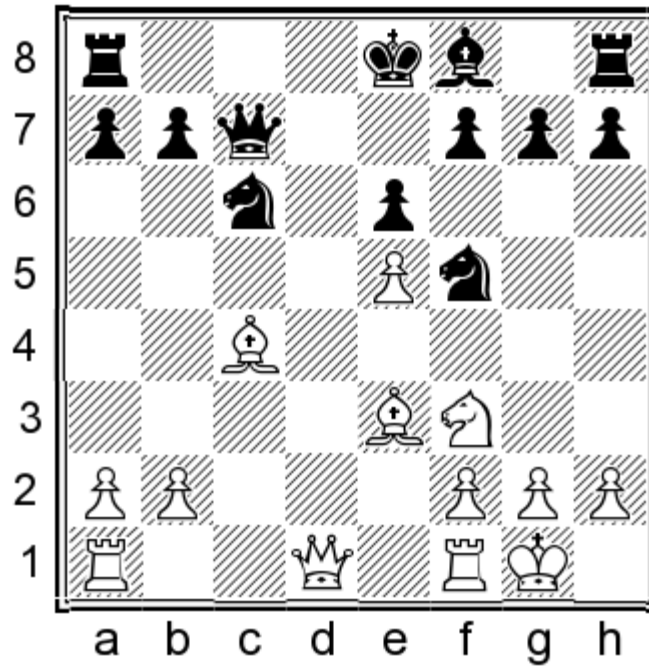
12.♖c1. White also adheres to a waiting strategy, improving the placement of his pieces in the process. 12...♞d8 13.c3 (After 13.c4, Caruana – Iturrizaga Bonelli, Moscow 2012, Black should better reduce the tension in the centre: 13...dxc4! and White would hardly manage to achieve anything meaningful. 14.♞a4 ♘d5 15.♞xc4 ♘xe3 16.fxe3 ♙e7 17.♞c3 0-0, with the idea 18.♙b5 ♞b6∞) 13...♘g6 14.♙d4 (14.♞a4 ♙e7 15.c4, Giri – Wojtaszek, Porto Carras 2011, 15...dxc4! 16.♞xc4 ♞b8=) 14...♙e7 15.♞e1 0-0 16.♙d3 ♞c8 17.g3 ♘xd4 18.cxd4 ♞xc1 19.♞xc1 ♞xc1 20.♞xc1 ♞b8 21.h4 ♙d8 22.♙xg6 hxg6 23.♙f1 ♙f8 24.♘g5 ♙b6 25.f4 ♞e8 26.♘f3 ♞e7 27.♞c8+ ♞e8 28.♞c3 ♞e7 29.♙e2 ♞c7 30.♙d3 ♙e7= Shirov – Laznicka, Novy Bor 2012. Black has succeeded in equalising indeed, but it would be wrong to ignore the move 13.c3 altogether.

12...dxc4

The placement of Black's king will be hardly satisfactory following 12...0-0-0 13.cxd5 ♘xd5, Narayanan – Fedoseev, Kirishi 2009, 14.♞b3 ♙b8 15.♞ac1 ♘xe3 16.♞xe3±

13.♙xc4 ♘f5

About 13...♘g6 14.♞c1 – see variation **B1**.



14. ♖f4!?

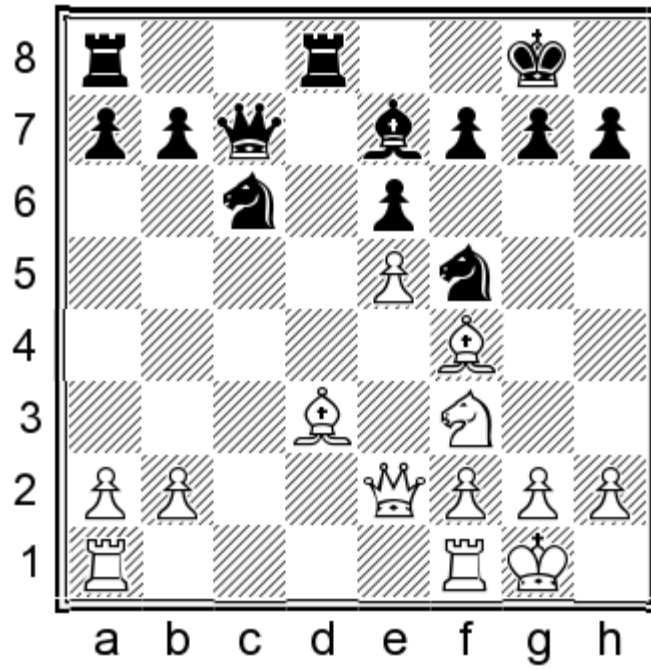
Bishops should be kept!

After 14. ♖e2 ♜xe3 15. ♖xe3 ♖b6! (15... ♗e7 16. ♗d3 0-0 17. ♗e4± Dominguez Perez – Laznicka, Havana 2012) 16. ♖xb6 axb6 17. a3 (17. ♖fd1 ♗c5 18. a3 0-0 19. ♖d2 ♜a5!? 20. ♗a2 b5 21. b4 ♗xb4 22. axb4 ♜b3), there arises an endgame, which would be preferable for White in view of his opponent's doubled pawns. This is true indeed, but it looks like that Black should manage to hold this position. 17...g6 18. ♖fc1 ♗h6 19. ♖c3 0-0 20. ♗b5 ♖fc8 21. ♖d1 ♜a5 22. ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23. b4 ♜c6 24. ♖d7 ♗c1 25. ♖xb7 ♗xa3= Ni Hua – Ding Liren, Danzhou 2012.

14... ♗e7

Black will be faced with much more serious problems after 14... ♖d8 15. ♗d3! ♗e7 16. ♖c2±, with the idea 16... ♜fd4 17. ♜xd4 ♖xd4, Grischuk – A. Evdokimov, Apatity 2011, 18. ♗e4±

15. ♗d3 0-0 16. ♖e2 ♖fd8



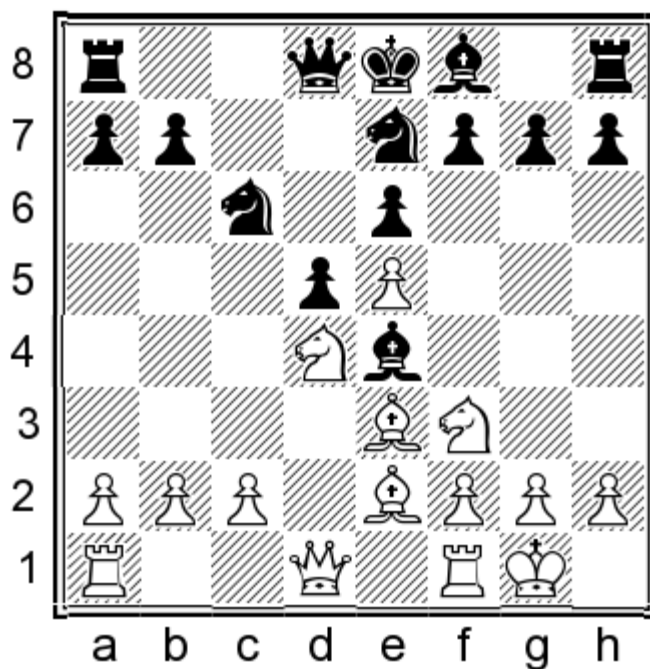
17. Bfd1!N

The idea behind this novelty is to prevent the exchanges on the d4-square under favourable circumstances for Black.

White would achieve less with 17. Bxc1 Bfd4! (17... Qa5 18. a3 Bcd4 19. Bxd4 Bxd4 20. g3 Qd5 21. Qxf5 exf5 22. Bfd1 Bxd1+ 23. Qxd1 Qxd1+ 24. Bxd1 Qf8 25. Bd7± Shirov – Laznicka, Novy Bor 2012) 18. Bxd4 Bxd4 19. Qe4 (19. Qe3 Bd7 20. f4 Bxd8 21. Qe4 Qa5!= Nakamura – Laznicka, Istanbul 2012) 19... h6=, with the idea Bxd8 and Black's position would be quite acceptable.

17... Bfd4 18. Bxd4 Bxd4 (It is essential that now, it would not work for Black to play 18... Bxd4?, due to 19. Qxh7! Qxh7 20. Qc2+–) **19. Qe4±** – White maintains a slight but stable edge thanks to his two powerful bishops and extra space.

C) 9...♙e4 10.0-0



10...♘g6

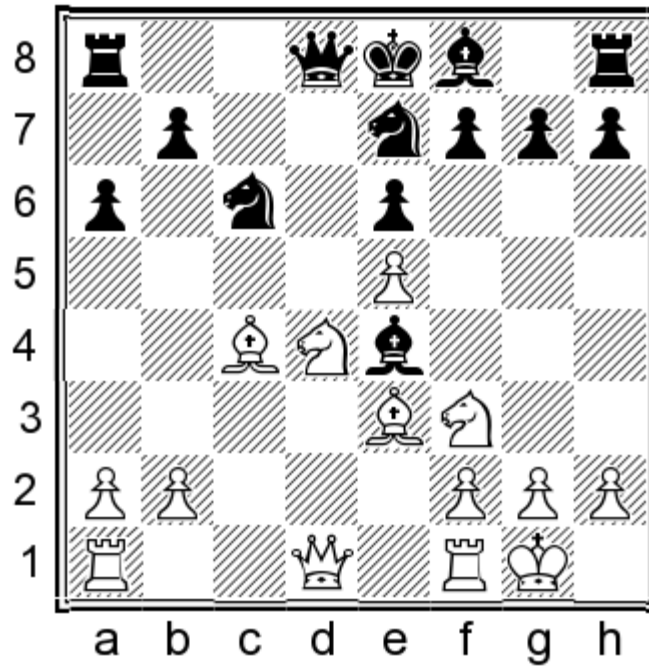
Black creates immediately a threat against the enemy e5-pawn and frees the a3-f8 diagonal for his bishop.

About 10...♙xf3 11.♘xf3 – see 9...♙g4 10.0-0 ♙xf3 11.♘xf3 (variation B).

Black should better avoid the retreat – 10...♗b8?! 11.♞e1±

The simplifications are in favour of White after 10...♘xd4 11.♘xd4 ♘c6, Meszaros – Juhasz, Zalakaros 2011, 12.♘xc6! bxc6 13.c4 (13.♙d3!?), with the idea 13...♗a5 14.♙f3! (14.a3!? dxc4 15.♗d4 ♙d3 16.♙xd3 cxd3 17.♗xd3 ♙e7 18.♞ad1 ♞d8 19.♗e4±) 14...♙xf3 15.♗xf3 ♙e7 (15...♙c5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♗g4 g6 18.♙h6±) 16.♗g4 g6 17.♙h6 ♙f8 18.♗f4± – The dark squares are horribly weak in Black's camp.

The prophylactic move 10...a6 would enable White to begin a decisive offensive with the help of the move 11.c4!, for example: 11...dxc4 (11...♘g6?! 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♘g5! ♘xe5 14.♗d4±; 11...♗d7!? 12.♘g5!? ♘xe5 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♗b3 ♗c7 15.♞fd1 ♘7c6 16.c5! ♙e7 17.♙f4±; 11...♞c8 12.♞c1 – see variation A, 10...♞c8 11.♞c1 ♙e4 12.c4) 12.♙xc4

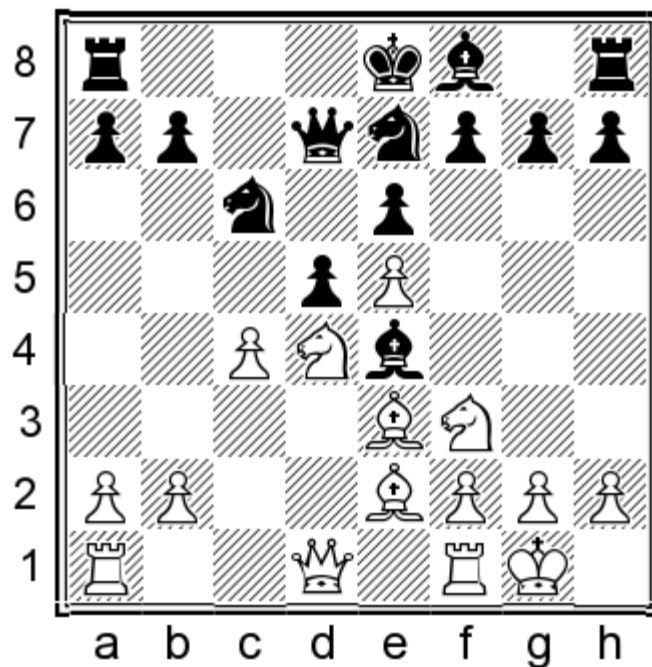


12...♖xd4 13.♗xd4 ♕d5 14.♖c1!? (14.♕e2!?, with the idea 14...♗c6 15.♗xc6 ♕xc6 16.♕f3!±) 14...♕xc4 15.♖xc4 ♗d5 16.♞g4!± The development of Black's kingside has been impeded, Mekhitarian – Deac, Golden Sandsn 2013.

Following 12...♗g6, Black's lag in development hurts him. 13.♗g5! ♗xd4 (13...♕d5? 14.♗xf7! ♗xf7 15.♗xe6 ♕xe6 16.♞f3+ ♗e8 17.♕xe6 ♗gxe5 18.♞h5+ g6 19.♞h3±, or 15...♗xe6 16.♞g4+ ♗f7 17.♞f3+ ♗e6 18.♖ad1 ♗ce7 19.♖xd5 ♗xd5 20.♖d1 ♗ge7 21.♕g5 ♖c8 22.♕xd5+ ♞xd5 23.♖xd5 ♗xd5 24.♞g4+-) 14.♗xe4 ♗xe5 15.♕xd4 ♗xc4 16.♖c1 ♗b6 17.♖c2 ♗d5 18.♞f3±, with the idea 18...♖c8 19.♗g5 ♖c7 20.♖fc1 ♞xg5 21.♖xc7 ♗xc7 22.♖xc7 ♕e7 23.g3 0-0 24.♕e3 ♞f6 25.♞xb7+-

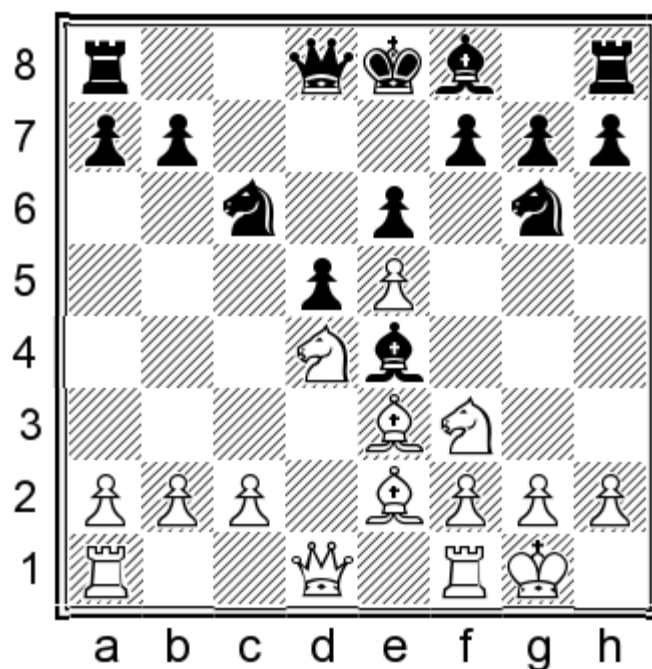
12...♕xf3. This exchange facilitates considerably Black's defence. 13.♗xf3 ♞xd1 14.♖fxd1! (14.♖axd1 ♗g6, Pogonina – Soumya, Mardin 2011, 15.♕d3 ♗gxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♕e4 ♗c6 18.♖d3↑ Black is incapable of preserving his slight material advantage due to the lack of development of his kingside.) 14...h6 (14...♗g6 15.♖ac1 ♕e7 16.♕f1! ♗gxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♖c7 b5 19.g3!±) 15.h4!? (15.♕d3!? g5 16.♕e4 ♕g7 17.h3±) 15...♗g6?! (15...♗f5 16.♕f4 ♕c5 17.♖ac1 ♕a7 18.♕d3↑) 16.♕d3 ♗gxe5 (16...♕e7 17.♕e4 ♗xh4 18.♗xh4 ♕xh4 19.♖ac1 ♖c8 20.♖d6±) 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♕e4 ♗c6 19.♖ac1 ♖c8 20.♖d3! f5 21.♕f3 g6 22.♖dc3 ♕d6 23.♕xc6± Robson – Hernandez Carmenates, USA 2014.

10...♞d7!? Black is trying to provoke complications by building up a battery consisting of a queen and a rook on the d-file. 11.c4



11...♞d8 12.♜b5! ♞f5 (It might be stronger for Black, despite being not so principled, to continue with 12...♞g6 13.cxd5 ♞xd5 14.♜xa7±) 13.cxd5 ♞xe3, Volokitin – Jobava, Austria 2012, 14.fxe3! ♞xd5 15.♞g5 ♞xe5 16.♞d4! ♞c6 (16...f6 17.♞h5+ ♞g6 18.♞xh7+–) 17.♞c3 e5 18.♞ad1 ♞b4 19.♞xd5! ♞xc3 20.♞xd7 ♞xd7 21.♞xc3±

It may be the least of evils for Black to choose here 11...dxc4 12.♞xc4 ♞d5 13.♞g5 ♞g6 14.♞xd5 ♞xd5 15.♞gf3! ♞e7 (15...♞xd4 16.♞xd4 a6 17.♞a4+ b5 18.♞a5±) 16.♞xc6 bxc6 (16...♞xc6 17.♞c1 ♞b5 18.♞c7±) 17.♞a4 0-0 18.♞fd1 ♞b5 19.♞xb5 cxb5 20.♞d4!±, but that would have not solved all his problems anyway.

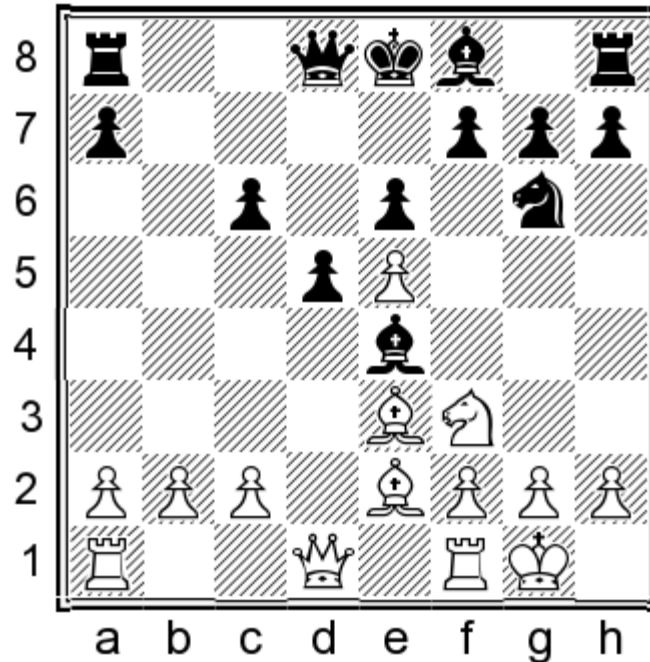


Now, White has two possibilities to fight for an opening advantage: **C1) 11.♞xc6** and **C2) 11.♞b5**.

It seems logical for him to choose here 11.♞g5, but it looks like this is not enough for him to achieve anything meaningful. 11...♞ge5 12.f4?! (It would be relatively better for him to opt for 12.♞xe4 dxe4 13.c3 ♞d6 – see 11.♞d2.) 12...♞c5! ♞ Van Kampen – Mazur, Athens 2012.

Following 11. ♖d2, Black succeeds in equalising after an accurate series of moves. 11... ♗g5 12. ♗xe4 dxe4 13. c3 ♕d6! 14. ♖a4 (14. ♖c2 ♗xd4 15. cxd4 ♗d3! =) 14... ♖a5! 15. ♖b3, Caruana – Fridman, Dortmund 2012, 15... ♖d5!? 16. ♗xc6 (Black would hardly lose the endgame arising after 16. ♖fd1 ♖xb3 17. axb3 0-0-0 18. ♖a4 ♕c7 19. ♗xc6 ♖xd1+ 20. ♕xd1 ♗xc6 21. ♖xe4 f5 22. ♖h4 ♖d8 23. ♕e2 h6 =, with the idea ♕b6) 16... ♖xb3 17. axb3 ♗xc6 18. b4 ♖e7 19. b5 ♗e5 20. ♖a4 f5 21. ♖fa1 ♗d3∞

C1) 11. ♗xc6 bxc6

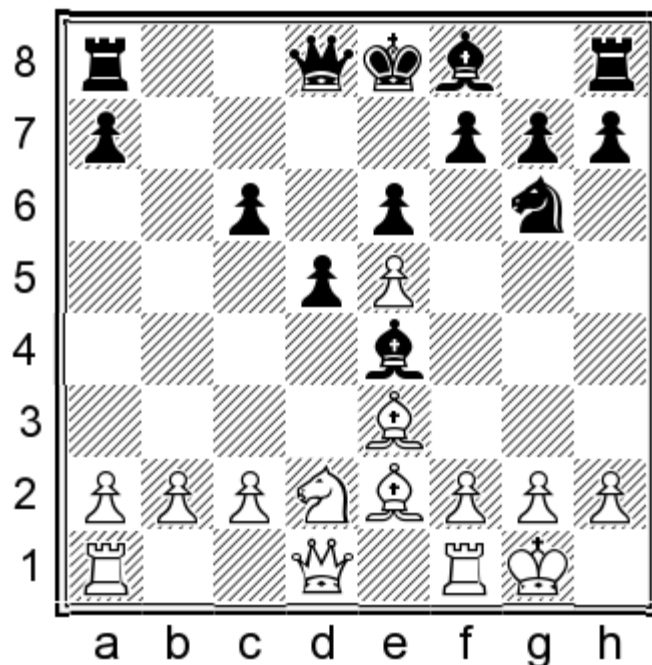


12. ♗d2!?

This is a very interesting move and it has not been analysed extensively yet. After that Black has a choice between defending a slightly inferior endgame and an attempt to complicate radically the situation.

The routine move 12. ♗g5 does not promise much to White. 12... ♕e7 (12... ♗xe5 13. ♖d4!± Van der Weide – Marentini, Triesen 2012) 13. ♗xe4 dxe4 14. ♖d4! ♖d5! 15. f4 (15. ♖c3 0-0 =; 15. ♕h5 ♗xe5 16. ♖ad1 0-0 17. ♖c3 ♖b5 18. a4 ♖b8 = Caruana – Laznicka, New Delhi 2011) 15... exf3 16. ♕xf3 ♖xd4 17. ♕xd4 0-0-0 18. ♕c3 ♕c5+ 19. ♖h1 ♕d4 20. ♕a5 ♕b6 21. ♕c3 ♕d4 = Kryvoruchko – Navara, Turnov 2014.

It may be interesting for him, but still insufficient for an advantage to try 12. ♗d4 ♗xe5 13. f3 ♕g6 14. f4 ♗d7 15. f5 (15. ♗xc6 ♖c7 = Hracek – Postny, Sibenik 2008) 15... ♕xf5. Therefore, a very beautiful series of moves, which is practically forced. 16. ♖xf5 exf5 17. ♗xc6 ♖c7 18. ♖xd5 ♕d6 19. ♖d1 ♕xh2+ 20. ♖h1 ♗f6 21. ♖c5 ♗e4 22. ♕b5 ♕d6 23. ♗xa7+ ♖f8 24. ♖xc7 ♕xc7 25. ♖d7 ♕d6 26. ♕c4 ♖e8 27. ♕b5 ♖f8 28. ♕c4 ♖e8 29. ♕b5 ♖f8, draw, Almasi – Berkes, Paks 2009.



12...♙xg2!

This is the only way for Black to reach a fighting position, entering bravely the complications.

12...♙f5 13.g4 d4 14.gxf5 dxe3 15.fxe3 ♘xe5 16.fxe6 fxe6 17.♚e1! ♚g5+ 18.♔h1 ♙e7 19.♞g1 ♜h6 20.♚g3±

12...♙e7 13.f4± Hovhannisyán – Kreisler, Porto Carras 2011.

12...♘xe5 13.♘xe4 dxe4 14.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 (14...♞xd8 15.♞fd1±) 15.♞ad1+ ♔c7 16.♙f4 f6 17.♞d4 e3 18.♙xe3 ♙c5 19.♞e4 ♙xe3 20.♞xe3± Jasny – Bures, Czech Republic 2012.

13.♔xg2 d4 14.♙f3 dxe3

There may arise a slightly inferior endgame for Black after 14...♞c8!? 15.♘c4 dxe3 16.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 17.fxe3 ♙e7 18.♔h1! (White will preserve a minimal edge following 18.♙g4 ♞f8 19.♞ad1+ ♔c7 20.♞d2 ♙h4±, but Black has serious chances of equalising.) 18...♔c7 19.♞g1 ♞hf8 20.♞af1±

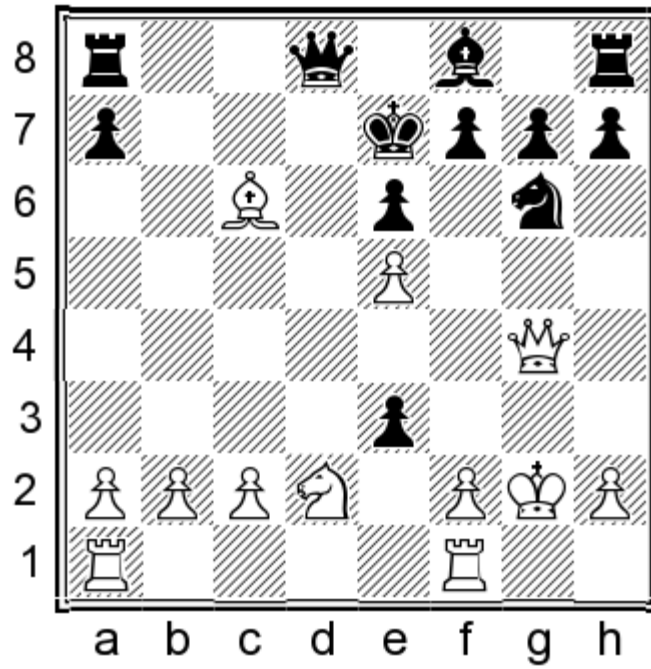
15.♙xc6±

The arising position is no doubt completely irrational. Still, the complications are much rather in favour of White, although both sides must play very carefully.

15...♔e7 16.♚g4

The endgame is approximately equal after 16.♘c4 e2! 17.♚d6+ ♚xd6 18.exd6+ ♔f6 19.♙xa8 exf1=♚+ 20.♞xf1 ♙xd6=

It would be rather difficult to evaluate correctly the position arising after 16.fxe3 ♞c8 17.♙a4 ♘xe5 (17...♚a5!? 18.♙b3 ♞d8 19.c3 ♘xe5 20.♚e2 g6∞; 18...♚xe5 19.♔h1 ♞d8 20.♚e2±) 18.♚e2 g6∞



16...f5!

16...exd2?? 17.♖b4+-; 16...♗xd2? 17.♞ad1.

17.exf6+ gxf6 18.♘f3!

White can hardly be happy with the line: 18.♙xa8 exd2 19.♙f3 ♖b6 20.b3 (20.♔h1 ♙h6 21.♞ad1 ♙f4 22.b3 f5) 20...♙h6 21.♔h1 ♗c5

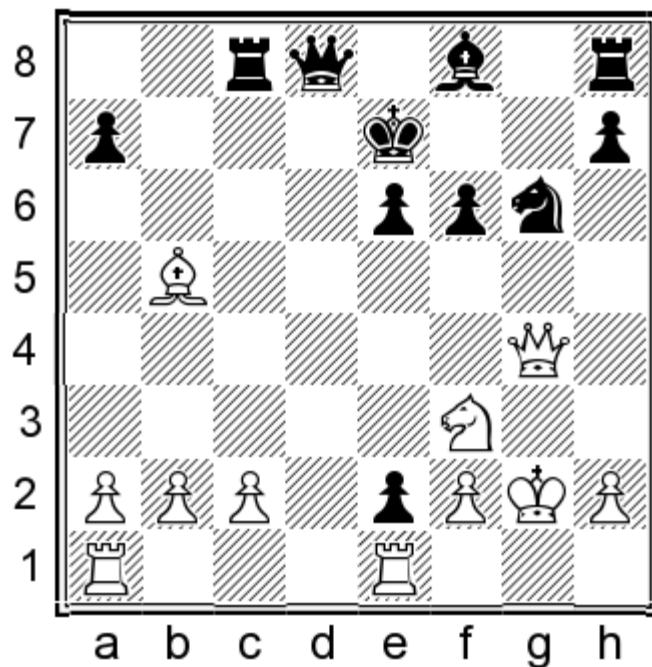
18...e2!

This is Black's only move! He should not allow the enemy rook to penetrate to the d1-square.

18...♞c8? 19.♞fd1!+-

19.♞fe1 ♞c8 20.♙b5

White must play precisely as well 20.♙e4?! f5! 21.♙xf5 exf5 22.♗xf5 ♗d7 23.♞xe2+ ♔d8



20...♖d5!

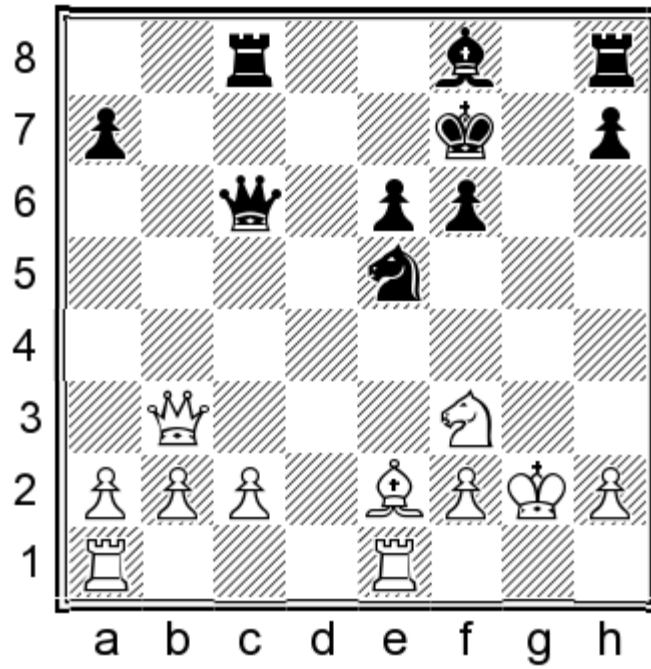
Black will still have problems to worry about after 20...♙h6 21.♙xe2 ♘f4+ 22.♚f1 ♖c5 (22...♗xc2? 23.♗ad1 ♜c8 24.♘d4 ♖c5 25.♙c4!+-) 23.♗ad1 ♜a8 24.♘d4 ♜h1+ 25.♜g1 ♜xg1+ 26.♚xg1 ♖g8+ 27.♚h1 ♘h3 28.♗f1±

21.♙xe2 ♘e5 22.♜b4+

There arises an approximately equal endgame following 22.♜h3 ♖xc2 23.♗ad1 ♜b7 24.♙d3 ♖g8+ 25.♚h1 ♜xf3+ 26.♜xf3 ♘xf3 27.♙xc2 ♘xe1=

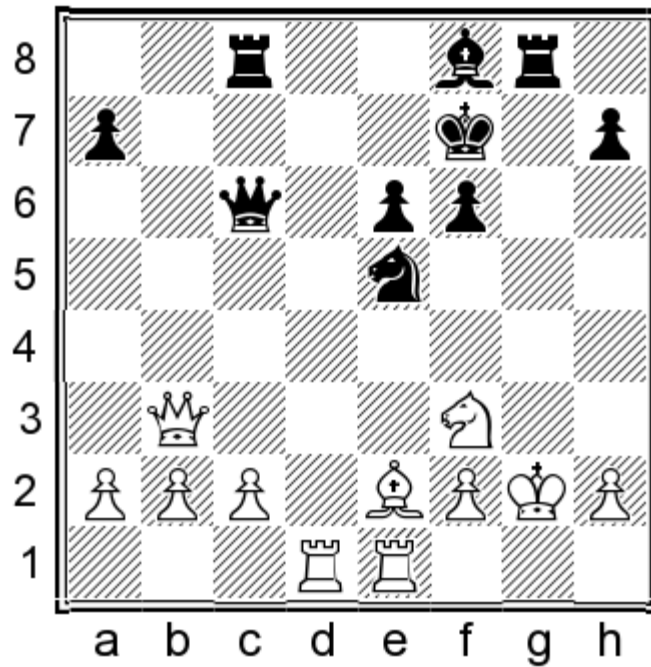
The consequences of the inclusion of the moves 22.c4 ♜b7∞, or 22...♜c6∞ would be rather unclear.

22...♚f7 23.♜b3 ♜c6

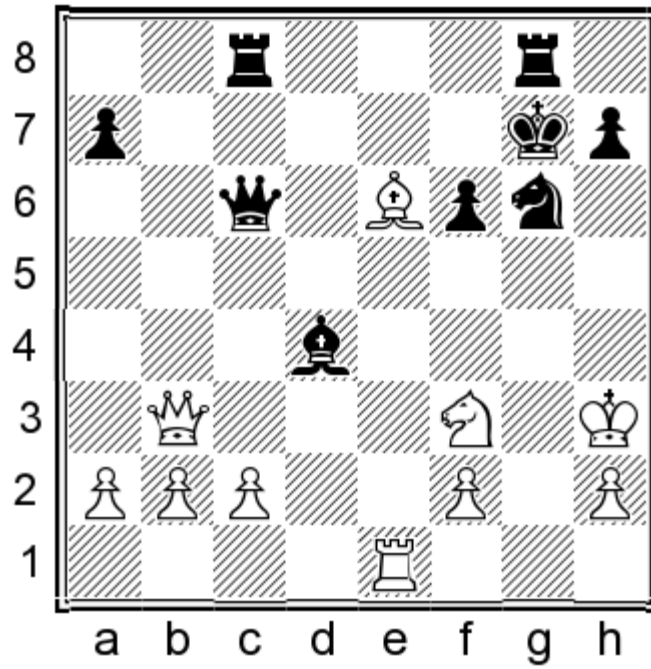


24.♔f1

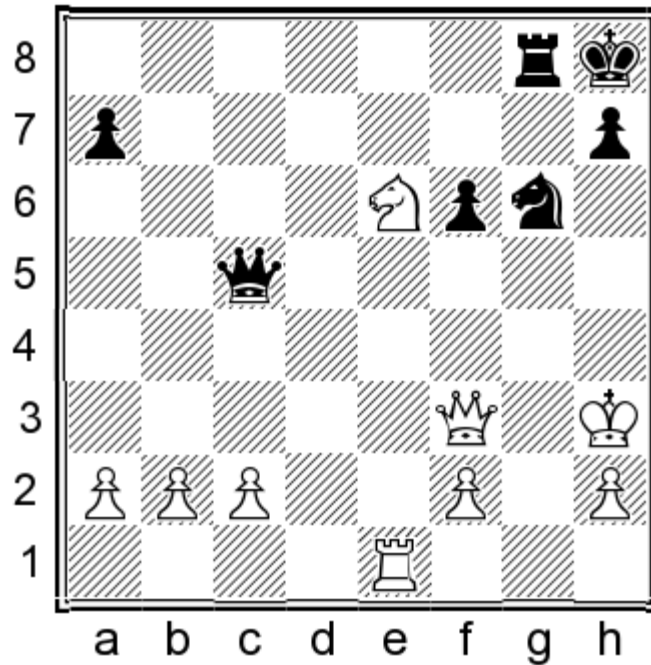
Black manages to draw in a problem-like fashion after 24.♟ad1 ♞g8+.



25.♔h3! (25.♔f1? ♔g7!! Finally, his king has found a safe haven on the h8-square. 26.♟d4 ♔h8) 25...♞g6! 26.♟d4 ♟c5 27.♟c4! ♟xd4 28.♟xe6+ ♔g7

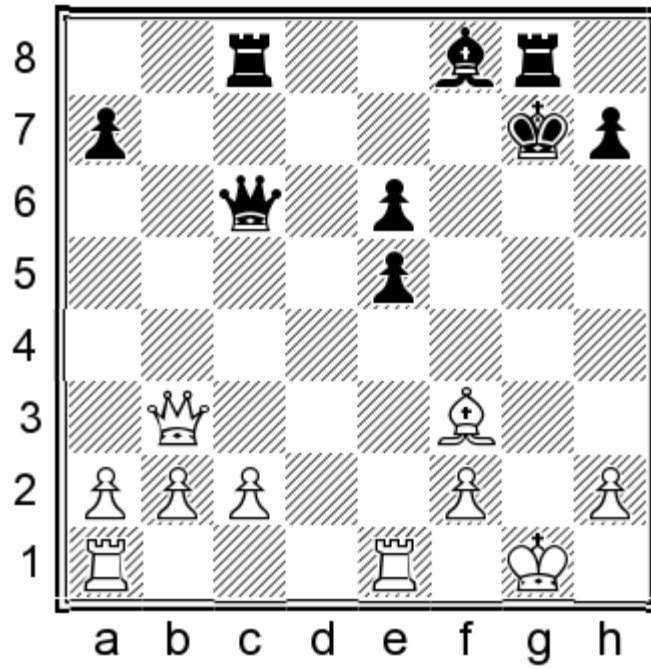


29. ♖xd4! (29. ♙xg8? ♜xg8 30. ♖xd4 ♛c5 31. ♗e6+ ♔h8 32. ♖xc5 ♗f4+ 33. ♕h4 ♖g2=) 29... ♛c5! (29... ♗f4? 30. ♕g4±) 30. ♙xg8 (Black has a perpetual check following 30. ♜e4 ♛h5+ 31. ♕g3 ♗e5 32. ♙xc8 ♔h8+ 33. ♛xg8+ ♕xg8 34. f3 ♛g5+ 35. ♕f2 ♛d2+ 36. ♕g3 ♛g5=) 30... ♜xg8 31. ♗e6+ ♔h8 32. ♛f3 (32. ♖xc5 ♗f4=)



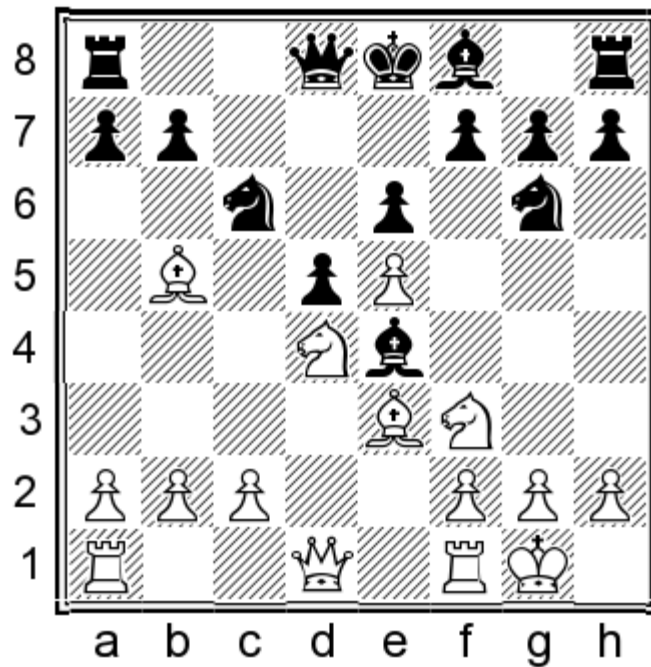
32... ♗f4! This spectacular knight-sacrifice enables Black to save the day by a perpetual check. 33. ♖xf4 ♛f5+ 34. ♕h4 ♛g5+ 35. ♕h3 ♛f5=

24... ♕g7 25. ♕g1 ♜g8 26. ♖xe5 fxe5 27. ♙f3



27...♙f6+ 28.♖h1 ♜xc2 29.♞e3 ♞f5 30.♘e4± Black is close to equality, but he will still need to work hard.

C2) 11.♙b5!?



11...♙xf3

Following 11...♞d7?!, White can begin a dangerous offensive with the line: 12.♘g5 ♖gxe5 13.f4 ♘g6 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.f5↑ and Black will have a hard task to neutralise his opponent's initiative. 15...exf5 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♗xf5± ♞xd1 18.♞axd1 ♗e5 19.♞f4 f6 20.♞xe4 g6 21.♗d6+ ♙xd6 22.♞xd6 0-0 23.♙h6 ♞f7 24.h3 ♞e8?! 25.♞xc6+ – Adams – Summerscale, Canterbury 2010.

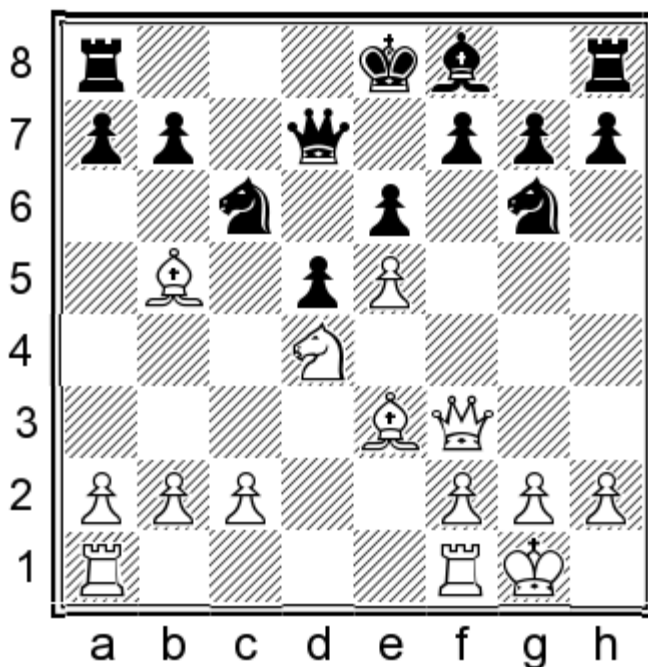
Black has an interesting line here, but it is still advantageous for White: 11...♖c7 12.♘g5 ♘gxe5 13.f4 ♘d7 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.f5 e5 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♘e6 fxe6 18.♚h5+ g6 19.fxg6 0-0-0 20.♞f7 ♚a5 21.g7 ♙c5 22.gxh8=♞ ♙xe3+ 23.♜h1 ♞xh8 24.♞d1 ♙d2 (24...♞d8 25.b4 ♞b6, Iordachescu – Krivosborodov, Moscow 2010, 26.♞h3! ♙d4 27.c3±) 25.♞e2 e3 26.♞xd7 ♜xd7 27.♞xe3±

Black fails to equalise if he tries to protect his c6-square with the move 11...♞c8, because after 12.♘g5 ♘gxe5 13.f4 ♘d7 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♙xc6!? (15.f5 e5 16.♘e6 ♞e7 17.♘g5, Zhao – Wallis, Sydney 2011, 17...♘f6 18.♙c4 ♘d8 19.♙d5 ♞b4∞) 15...bxc6 16.f5 e5 17.♘e6 ♞e7 (17...fxe6? 18.♚h5+ ♜e7 19.fxe6+-) 18.♙g5 ♘f6 19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.♞h5↑, his pawn-weaknesses and the rather unsafe king make his situation very precarious.

12.♞xf3

Black succeeds in maintaining the balance, but not effortlessly after 12.♘xf3 ♖c7 13.c4 (The preparatory move 13.♞c1 would enable Black to solve his problems with 13...a6! 14.♙xc6+ ♞xc6 15.♘d4 ♞c4 16.f4 ♙c5∞ and White's space advantage can hardly be of any use to him.) 13...dxc4 14.♞c1 ♙e7 15.♞xc4 ♘gxe5 16.♘xe5 (16.♙f4 ♙d6 17.♙xc6+ bxc6 18.♙xe5 ♙xe5 19.♞c2 ♙f6=) 16...♞xe5 17.♙xc6+ bxc6 18.♙d4 ♞b5=

12...♞d7



13.c4!

The consequences of the following variation are rather unclear. 13.♞h5 a6! (13...♘gxe5, Almasi – Landa, Reggio Emilia 2010, 14.♞ae1↑) 14.♙xc6 bxc6 15.f4 c5 (15...♙c5!?!∞) 16.♘f3 d4∞ Gharamian – Ragger, Germany 2011.

13...♘gxe5 14.♞h5↑

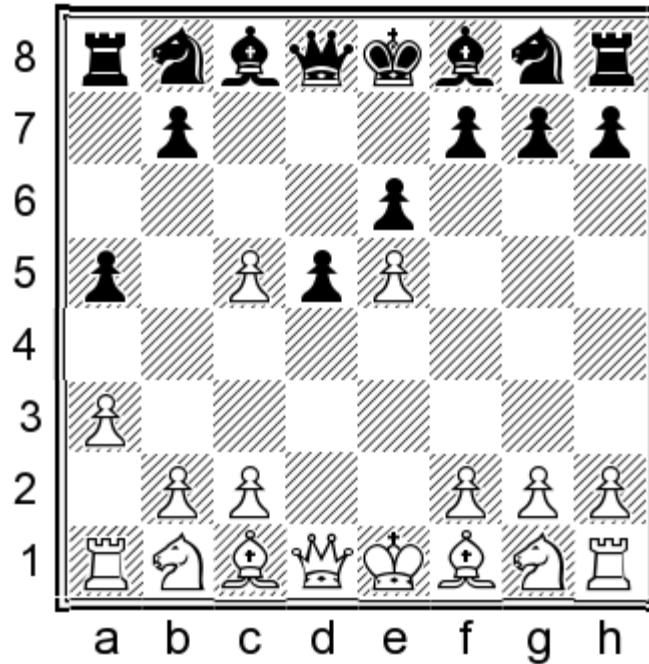
White's long-lasting initiative is more than sufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn for example: 14...♘xc4 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♙xc4 dxc4 17.♞ad1 ♞b7 18.♞e5±

COMPLETE GAMES

1 Rodshtein – Arkell

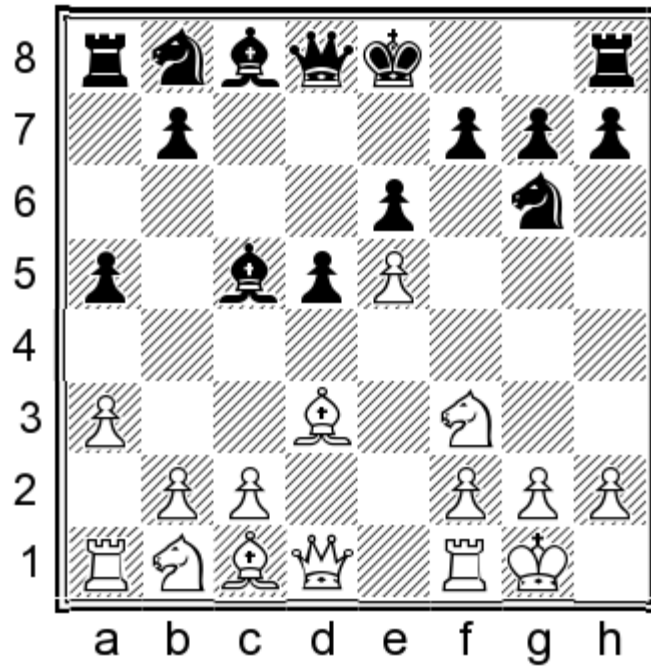
Hastings 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 e6 5.a3 a5



Black prevents reliably his opponent's plan, connected with the pawn-advance b2-b4, but he must pay a dear price for that. He obviously weakens the b5-square and as a result of that will have no counterplay on the queenside.

6.♘f3 ♙xc5 7.♙d3 ♜e7 8.0-0 ♜g6



9. ♖g5!?

The players are crossing their swords, speaking in the language of fencing. White forces his opponent to make an important choice.

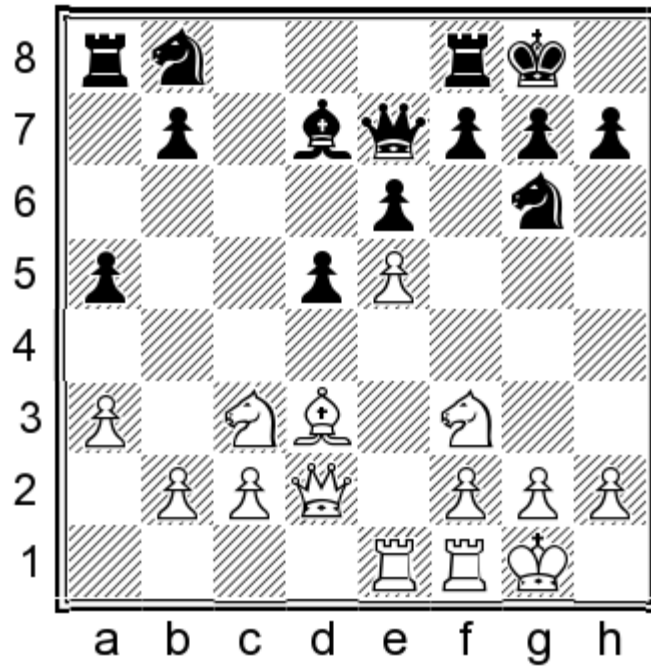
It was also good for him to have tried the logical line: 9. ♘c3!? ♜c6 10. ♚e2 ♞d4?! 11. ♘xd4 ♙xd4 12. ♞b5±

9... ♙e7

This is a very arguable decision. After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, White takes the d4-square under a reliable control and this unties his hands to develop his kingside initiative.

It was preferable for Black to have played 9... ♚c7 10. ♘c3 ♙d7.

10. ♙xe7 ♚xe7 11. ♘c3 ♙d7 12. ♚d2 0-0 13. ♖ae1



13...♘a6

13...♘c6 14.♘b5 ♖c5 15.a4!?±

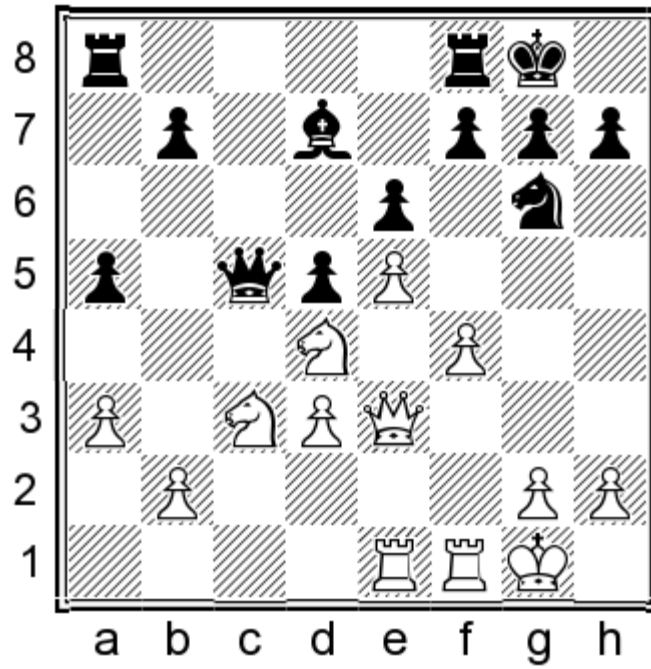
14.♘d4 ♘c5 15.f4

White could have considered here 15.♙xg6!? fxg6 16.f4±

15...♘xd3 16.cxd3

Or 16.♖xd3 ♖c5 17.♔h1 ♜ac8 18.g4 ♜fe8!∞, preventing f4-f5.

16...♖c5 17.♖e3



17...f6?!

After this imprecise move, White obtains a target to exert pressure against.

Black should have played the more prudent move 17...♖ac8∞.

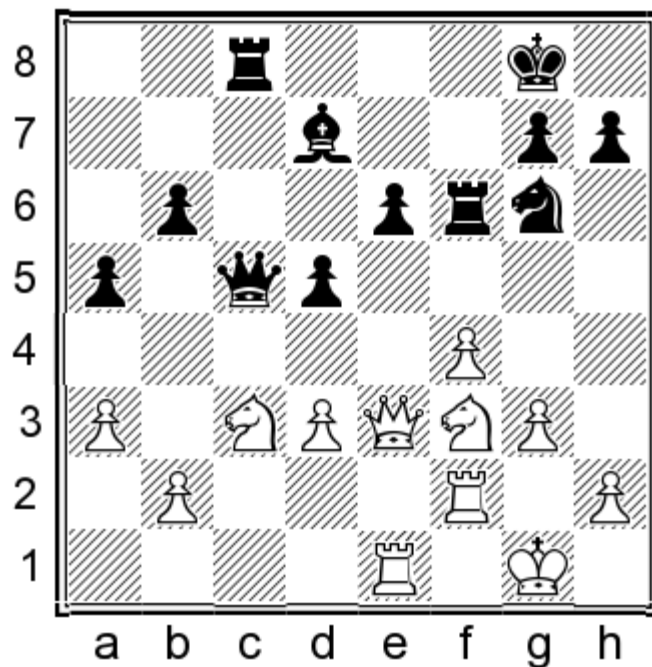
18.exf6 ♜xf6 19.g3!± ♜e8 20.♘f3 ♜c8

White's advantage increases after the trade of the queens, so Black had to prefer here 20...♞d6.

21.♞f2

It was better for White to play 21.♞xc5 ♜xc5 22.♘d4±.

21...b6



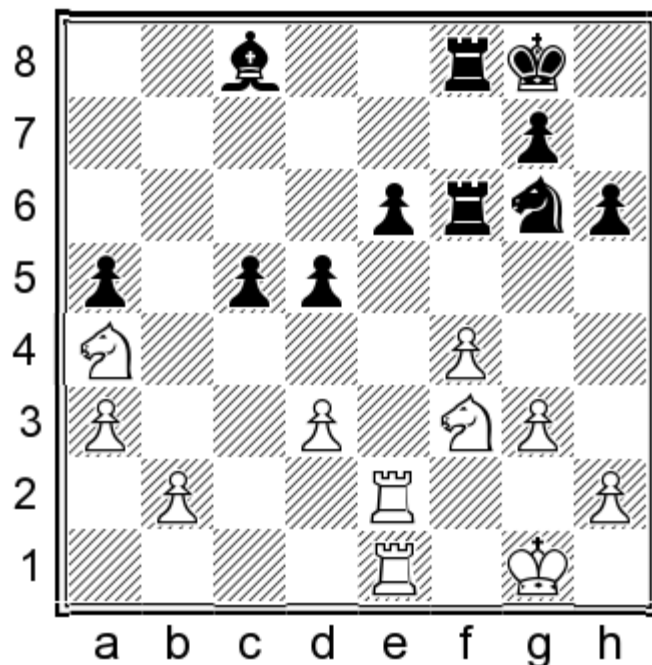
Now, the exchange of the queens on the c5-square is not advantageous for White, because Black will capture on c5 with his pawn, but even without the trade of the queens, it is more than obvious that Black has great problems due to the vulnerability of his e6-pawn and his dark squares in the centre.

22. ♖fe2 h6 23. ♚f2 ♜cf8 24. ♚d4

24. ♜c2!?

24... ♙c8 25. ♚xc5 bxc5 26. ♜a4?

This is an annoying mistake! After 26. ♜d1!? ♙a6 27. ♜f2, White would have maintained a considerable advantage.



26... ♖xf4! ♣

After this move White must think about saving the game.

27. gxf4 ♜xf4 28. ♖xc5?!

He would have had much more chances of survival after 28. ♖e5! ♜xa4 29. ♜c2.

28... ♜xf3 29. ♜e3 ♜3f4 30. h3 ♜8f6

30... e5!? 31. ♜xe5 ♜xh3.

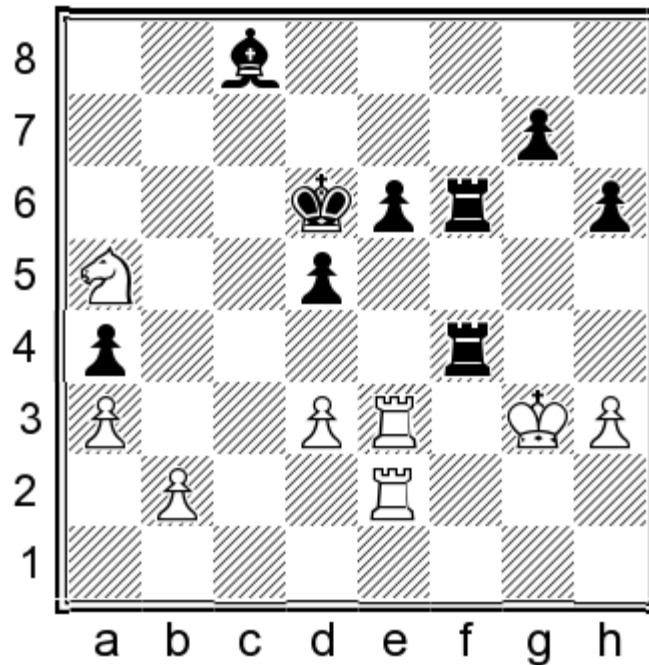
31. ♜1e2 ♜f7 32. ♜g2 ♜e7 33. ♜g3 ♜d6

33... e5—+

34. ♖b3

34. ♖xe6 ♜xe6 35. ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 36. ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 37. ♜xf4 a4!—+

34... a4 35. ♖a5



35... d4

It was better for Black to play here 35... e5—+

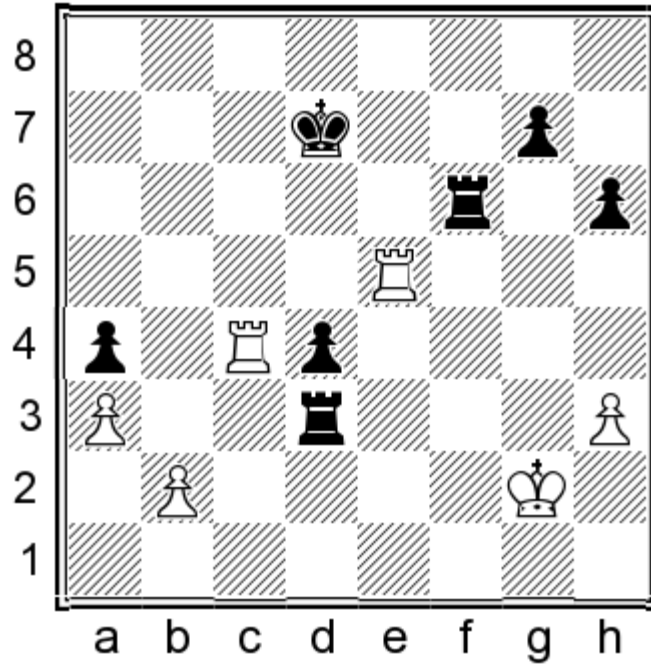
36. ♜e4 ♜f3+ 37. ♜g2 ♜xd3 38. ♜c2 ♜d7

38... ♜a6—+

39. ♖c4+ ♜e7 40. ♖b6 ♜d6 41. ♖c4+ ♜e7 42. ♖b6 ♜d8?!

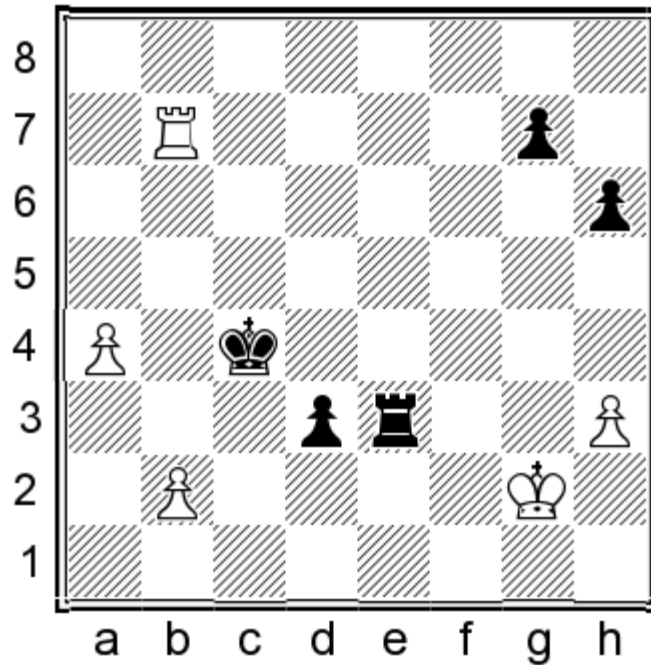
It was preferable for Black to choose here 42...♖g6+ 43.♔f2 ♕b5—+

43.♞c4 e5 44.♜xd7 ♔xd7 45.♞xe5



He has already lost the lion's share of his advantage, but still, not without the help of his opponent, Black managed to win that game. Let us see how this happened.

45...♞c6 46.♞d5+ ♞d6 47.♞xd6+ ♔xd6 48.♞xa4 ♔d5 49.♞b4 ♞e3 50.♞b7 ♔c4 51.a4 d3



52.♔f2?

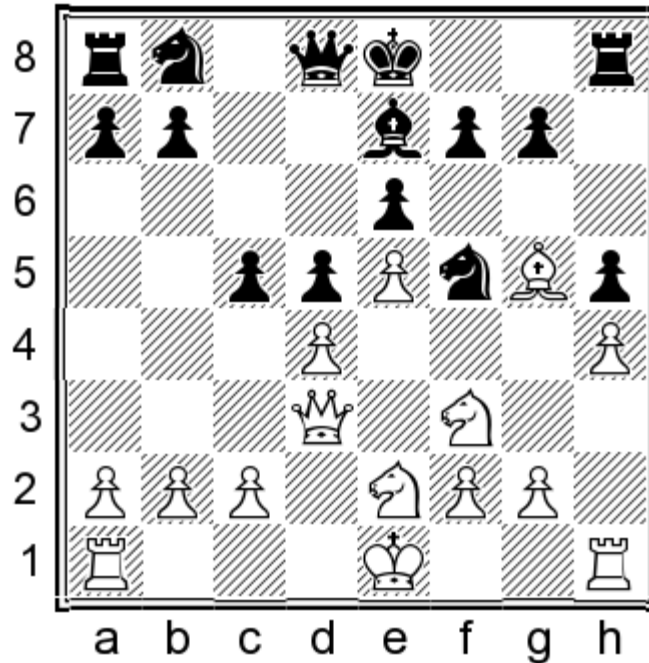
52.♞d7! ♔b3 53.a5 ♔c2 54.♔f2 ♞e2+ 55.♔f3 ♞e6 56.b4 d2 57.b5=

52...d2 53.♞c7+ ♔b3 54.♞d7 ♞xh3 55.♔e2 ♞h2+ 56.♔d1 ♔xa4 57.♞xg7 h5-+ 58.♔c2 ♔b5 59.♞c7 h4 60.♞c8 ♔b6 61.♞c4 h3 62.♞h4 ♔c5 63.♔d1 ♔d5 64.♔c2 ♔e5 65.♞h8 ♔e4 66.♞e8+ ♔f3 67.♞f8+ ♔e2 68.♞e8+ ♔f1 69.♞e3 ♔g2 70.♔xd2 ♞h1 71.♞e8 h2 72.♞h8 ♞b1 73.♔c3 h1=♞ 74.♞xh1 ♞xh1 0-1

2 Potapov – Alekseev

Moscow 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.h4 h5 5.♞d3 ♞xd3 6.♞xd3 e6 7.♞g5 ♞e7 8.♟f3 ♟h6 9.♟c3 ♟f5 10.♟e2 c5



This is a quite logical move. The tension in the centre and on the queenside deflects to a great extent White from the possibility to develop his initiative on the kingside. Meanwhile, with a black knight on b8, and not on d7, this undermining move is stronger, because Black has the possibility to develop the knight to c6. He may also have other ideas in some variations.

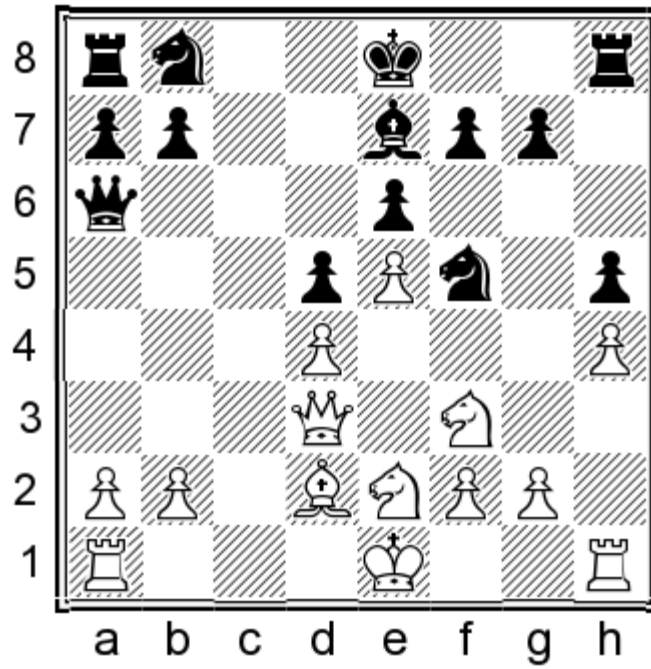
11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4

White would not achieve much with 12.♟exd4 ♟xd4 13.cxd4 ♞a5+! (13...♟c6?! 14.0-0 ♞xg5 15.♟xg5 ♞b6 16.♞fd1 g6 17.♞ac1 0-0 18.♞c3 ♟e7 19.♞b3 ♞c6 20.f3↑).

12...♞a5+ 13.♞d2

13.♔f1 ♞a6=

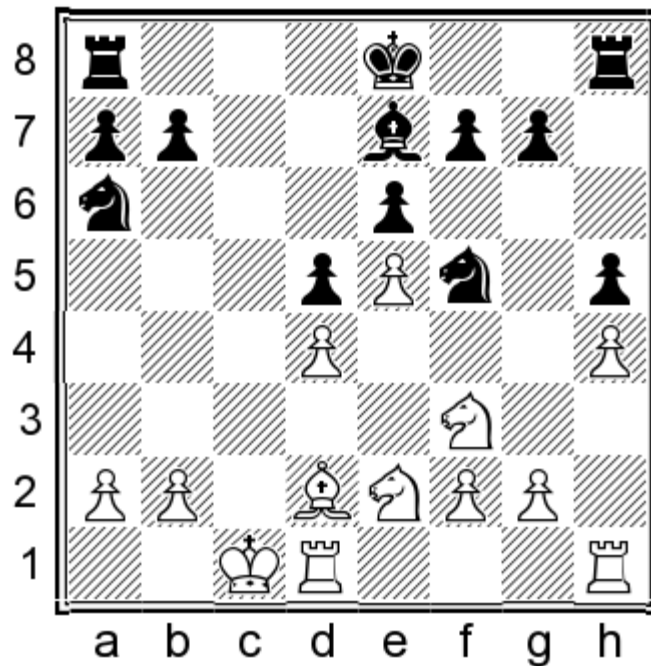
13...♞a6



In fact, this move forces the exchange of the queens after which White must play accurately, since his strategy in the opening is not in harmony with this important decision. We have already mentioned about this in our notes to Black's move ten.

14. ♖xa6 ♞xa6 15.0-0-0

15. ♖c1 ♔d7 16.g3 ♜hc8 17.0-0 ♞b4



15... ♔d7

This is a standard, but somewhat routine move. It was more important for Black to transfer his knight to the c6-square and only then he could have thought about the move f7-f6, followed by ♔e8-f7. Then, his king would have been much

better placed on f7, since later, after some exchanges, it would have the chance to break further on the kingside with the help of the manoeuvre ♖g6-f5.

16.♙g5 ♜hc8+

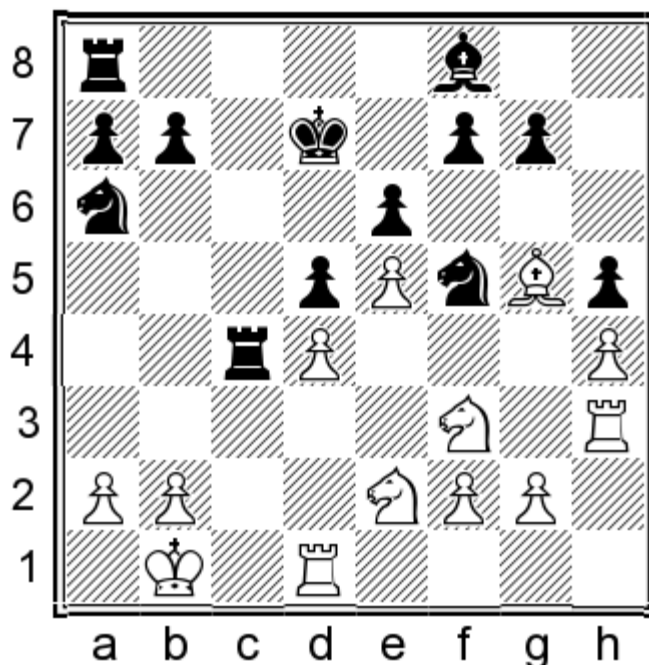
16...f6 17.♙d2 ♜b8 18.♜f4=

17.♜b1 ♙f8 18.♞h3

White could have played here the more concrete move – 18.g4!?, for example: 18...hxg4 19.♜h2 ♙e7 20.♙xe7 ♜xe7 21.♜xg4. The position would be approximately equal, but White's game would have been easier in comparison to what he chose in the game.

18...♞c4?!

18...♜b4=



19.♜g3?!

After this inappropriate exchange, Black's previous play becomes completely justified and he seizes the initiative. Instead, White could have exploited his opponent pseudo-activity, winning an important tempo for the implementation of the plan with the pawn-advance f3-g4: 19.♜d2 ♞c7 20.f3 (20.♞f3!? ♞ac8 21.♜f1↑) 20...♙e7 21.g4 ♙xg5 22.gxf5↑

19...♜xg3 20.♞xg3 ♞ac8 21.♙e3

White had to open the third rank for his rook with the move 21.♜g1.

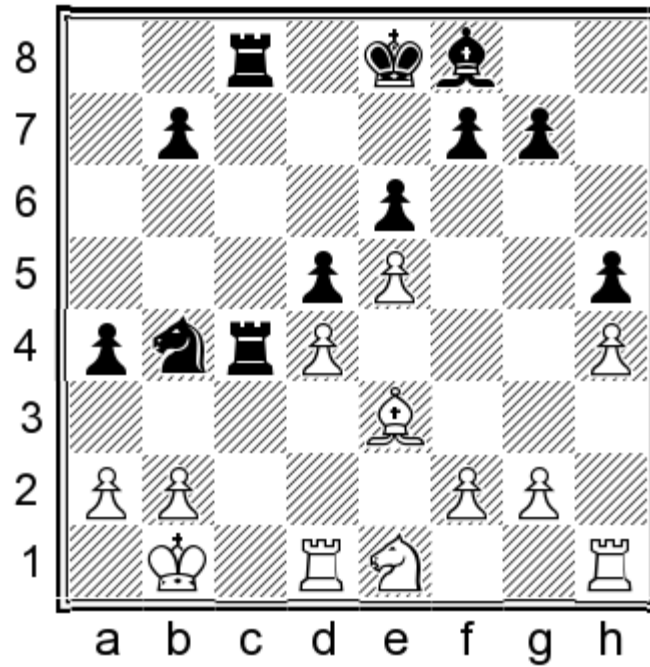
21...♜e8

21...♜b4!? 22.♜g5 ♜e8=

22.♞h3?!

22. ♖g1±

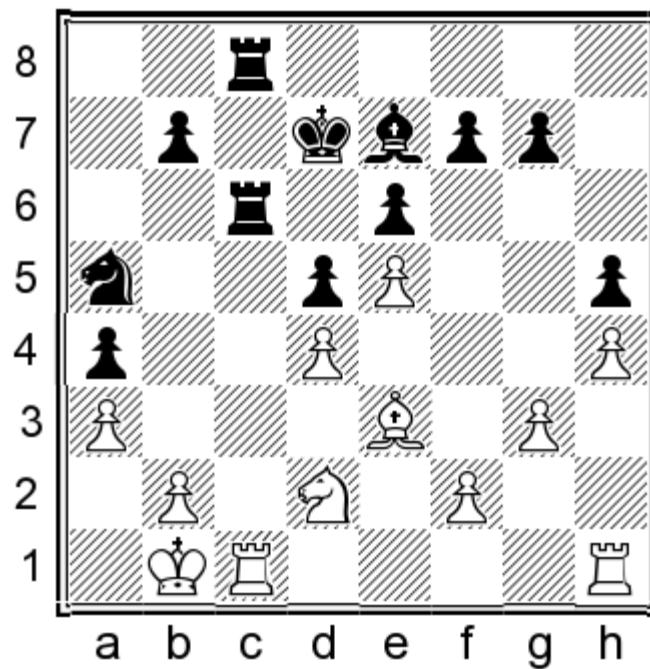
22... ♜b4 23. ♜e1 a5 24. ♜h1 a4



25.a3

This move weakens the light squares, but White cannot continue the game without it, for example: 25. ♜d3?! a3! 26.b3 ♜c2 27. ♜c1 ♜8c3 28. ♜xc2 ♜xc2 29. ♜xb4 ♜b2+

25... ♜c6 26. ♜f3 ♜a5+ 27. ♜d2 ♜4c6 28. ♜c1 ♜e7 29.g3 ♜d7



White's bishop is "bad" and Black can develop his initiative on the queenside, so he is better. chesstouring.com

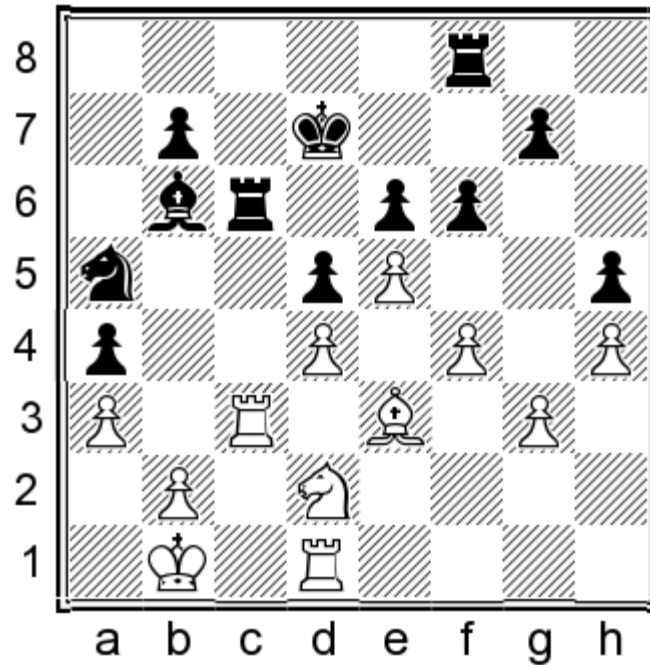
30. ♖hd1 f6

He opens a second front and this should not harm his prospects, but Black could have advanced simply his b-pawn.

31. ♗f4 ♖f8

31...g5!? 32.exf6 gxf4 33.fxe7 fxg3 34.fxg3 ♔xe7

32. ♗e3 ♗d8 33.f4 ♗b6 34. ♖c3



34... ♔e7

Black's king is headed on the promising route to f5 via the g6-square. This seems quite purposeful, but he had some other possibilities as well, for example: 34...fxe5 35.fxe5 ♖c4 36. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 37. ♖xc4 dxc4 38. ♖c1 ♖f3 39. ♗f4 ♗d8 40. ♖xc4 ♗xh4

35. ♔c2 ♔f7 36. ♖g1?!

It was better for White to play here 36. ♔d3 ♔g6 37. ♖g1 ♔f5 38.g4+ hxg4 39. ♖f1

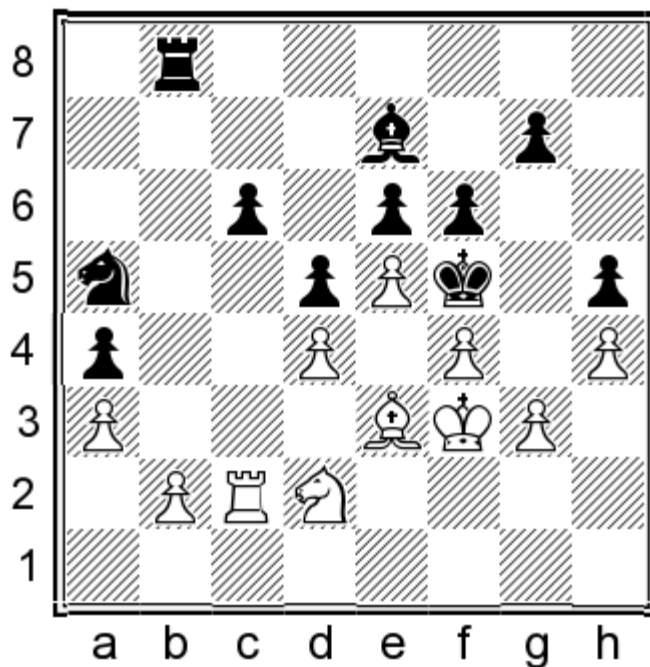
36... ♖fc8 37. ♔d3 ♗d8 38. ♖xc6

38. ♖gc1 ♔g6

38...bxc6

38... ♖xc6!?

39. ♖c1 ♗e7 40. ♔e2 ♖b8 41. ♖c2 ♔g6 42. ♔f3 ♔f5



43.exf6?!

After this bad move Black's advantage is at least doubled. In fact, White's position becomes hopeless, because Black can remove all the pawns from the a1-h8 diagonal and attack the enemy b2-pawn. White will hardly manage to keep it, therefore he had to choose the patient move 43.♔e2 with rather unclear consequences.

43...gxf6 44.♙f2 ♘d6

Black is threatening e6-e5.

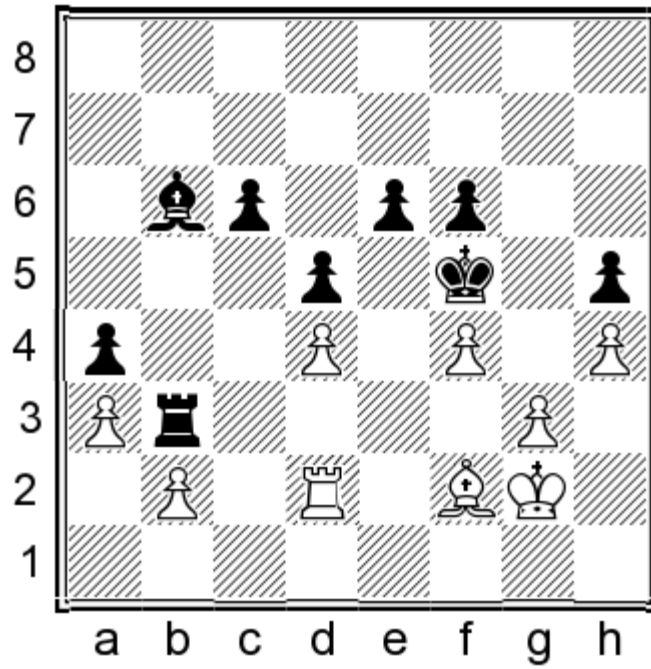
45.♘f1 ♘c4 46.♘e3+ ♘xe3 47.♙xe3 ♖b6

47...e5!/? 48.fxe5 fxe5 49.♖xc6 e4+ 50.♔g2 ♖xb2+ 51.♔h3 ♙xa3 52.♖h6 ♖b3 53.♖xh5+ ♔g6 54.♖h6+ ♔g7 55.♙f4 e3 56.♔g4 ♙b2 57.♔f3 ♙xd4 58.♖a6 ♖b2 59.♙xe3 ♖b3—+

48.♙f2 ♙b8 49.♔g2 ♙a7 50.♖e2?!

It was better for White to play here 50.♔f1.

50...♖b3 51.♖d2 ♙b6



52.♔f1

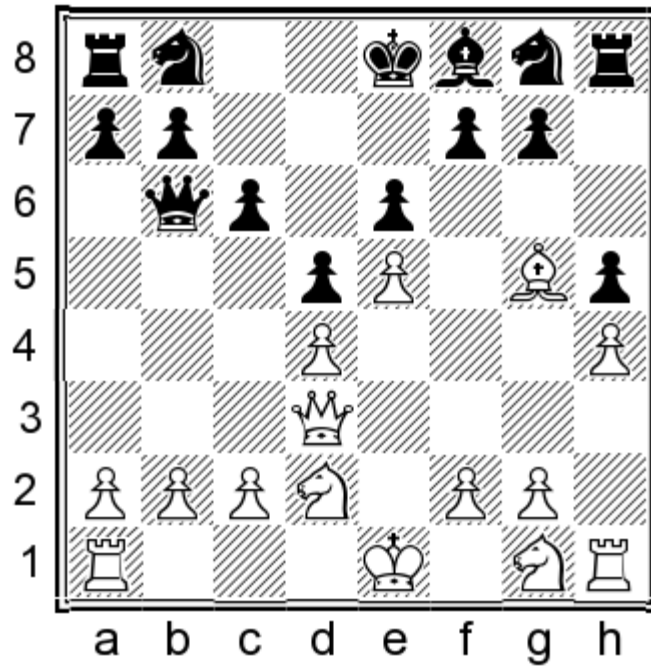
It was more resilient for White to have defended with 52.♖c2, but even then, after the possible variation 52...e5!? 53.fxe5 fxe5 54.dxe5 d4 (54...♙xf2 55.♔xf2 ♕xe5 56.♖xc6 ♖xb2+-) 55.♖xc6 ♕xe5, his position would have remained hopeless.

52...e5+- 53.dxe5 fxe5 54.♙xb6 ♖xb6 55.fxe5 ♕xe5 56.♖c2 ♕e4 57.♖c3 d4 58.♖c5 d3 59.♕e1 ♕d4 60.♖xh5 ♖xb2 61.♖g5 c5 62.h5 c4 63.h6 ♖h2 64.♖g4+ ♕e3 0-1

3 Nepomniachtchi – Motylev

Yaroslavl 2014

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.h4 h5 5.♙d3 ♙xd3 6.♖xd3 e6 7.♙g5 ♖b6 8.♘d2



8...c5

This is Black's most principled decision. He attacks immediately his opponent's centre and forces him to take urgent counter actions.

8...♞a6!?

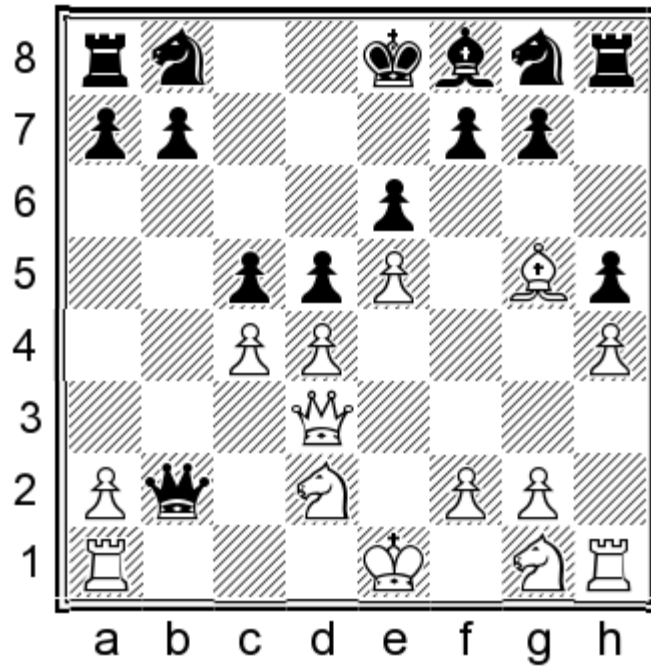
9.c4

9.c3 ♜c6 10.♞e2 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♞ge7 12.0-0 ♞f5 13.♞f3 ♙e7=

9...♞xb2!

Black does not take prisoners!

White would have maintained some initiative after 9...♞e7 10.♞gf3 cxd4 11.0-0 ♞bc6 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.♞c4 ♞c7 14.♞xd4 ♞xd4 15.♞xd4 ♙c5 16.♞d3 0-0 17.♞ac1 ♞d7 18.♞f3.



10. ♖b1

It was better for him to choose here 10. ♖d1 ♗c6 11. cxd5 exd5 12. dxc5 ♜xe5+ 13. ♗e2 ♘xc5 14. 0-0 ♗ge7 15. ♝b5 ♙b6 16. ♗f3

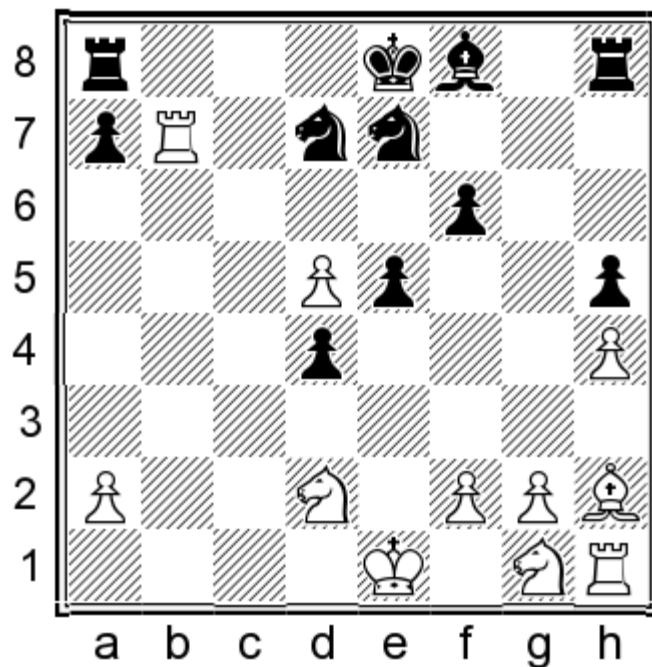
10... ♝xd4 11. ♝xd4 cxd4 12. ♖xb7

It was more prudent for White to continue with 12. ♗gf3 b6 13. cxd5 exd5 14. ♗xd4 f6 15. ♙f4, with some compensation for the pawn.

12... f6 13. ♙f4?!

White had to prefer 13. ♗gf3! ♗d7 14. ♗xd4 ♗c5 15. ♖c7 fxg5 16. hxg5 ♗d3+ 17. ♙e2 ♗xe5 18. ♗xe6 ♗e7 19. ♖b1 ♖c8

13... ♗d7 14. exf6 gxf6 15. cxd5 e5 16. ♙h2 ♗e7-+



White has lost completely the battle in the opening and Black's position is objectively winning. He failed to realise his advantage, however. Still, we should not forget this important game for the theory of this variation was played in rapid chess...

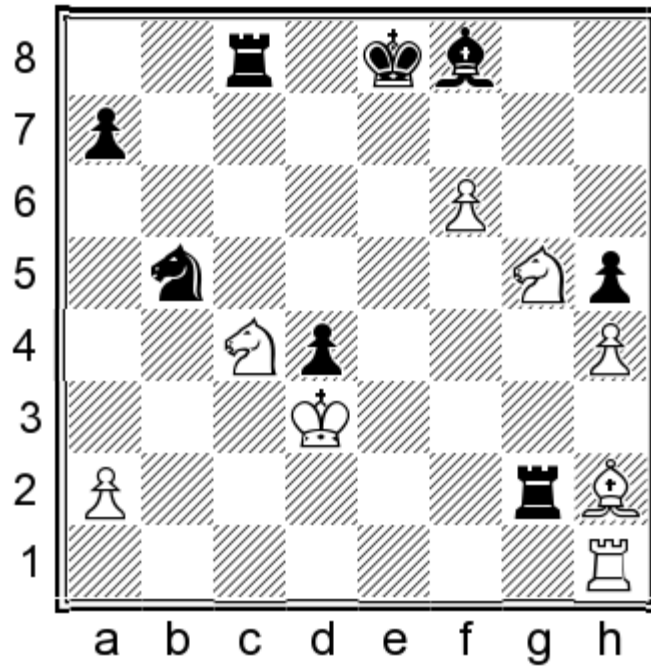
17.f4 d5 18.Bb5 dxd5 19.fxe5 d3+?!

Black loses the lion's share of his advantage. He should have played instead 19...d3 20.Ba5 d3+ 21.f1 b4+

20.f2 d3+

20...d3b4!? 21.d4 d3+ 22.dxc3 dxc3 23.exf6 c2

21.fxd3 dxb5 22.exf6 Bc8 23.d4 Bg8 24.f3 Bxg2 25.dg5



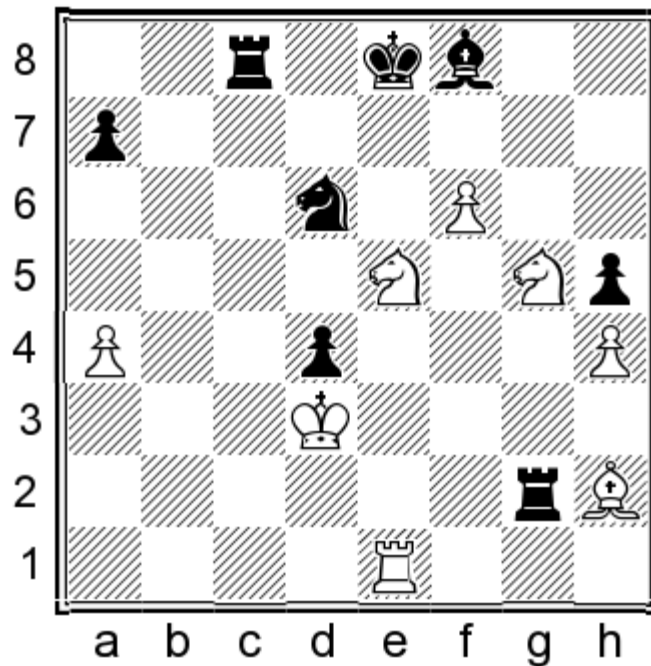
25...♔d7?!

Capturing the pawn would have still preserved some edge for Black 25...♞xa2 26.♞e1+ ♔d7 27.♘e5+ ♔c7.

26.a4 ♘d6 27.♘e5+ ♔e8?

27...♔d8!∞

28.♞e1



28...♞cc2?

Black would have still some chances of saving this position after 28...♖a2, for example: 29.f7+ ♔d8 30.♗g6 ♜c3+ 31.♕xd4 ♜c4+ 32.♕d5 ♜d2+ 33.♕e6 ♜xh2 34.♗xf8 ♕c7.

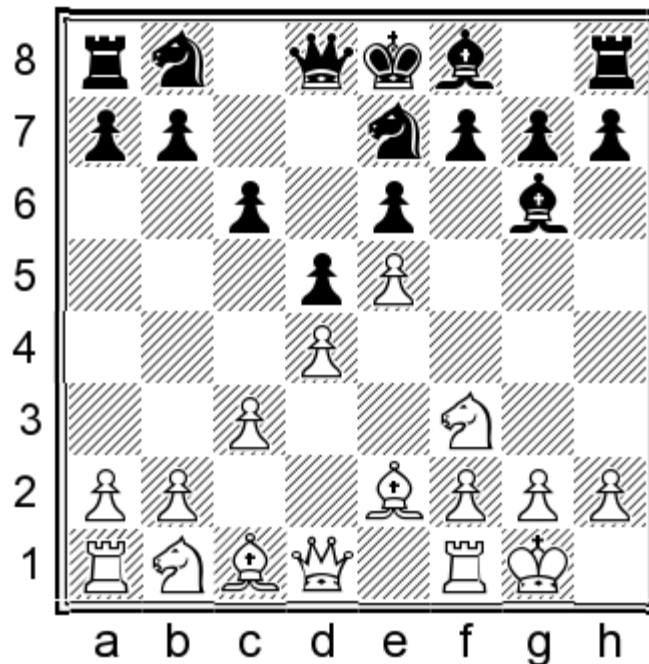
29.♗f4+- ♜a2 30.♗g6+ ♔d8 31.♗e6+ ♕c8 32.♜c1+ ♖b7 33.♗c5+ ♕c6 34.♗e4+ ♖b7 35.♗xd6 ♗h6 36.♜b1+ ♕c6 37.♗e7+ ♕d7 38.♗f5 1-0

4 Brkic – Dreev

Jerusalem 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♗f3 e6 5.♗e2 ♗e7 6.0-0 ♗g6 7.c3

This is a very rarely played move by White. We recommend here – 7.♗bd2.



7...♗c8

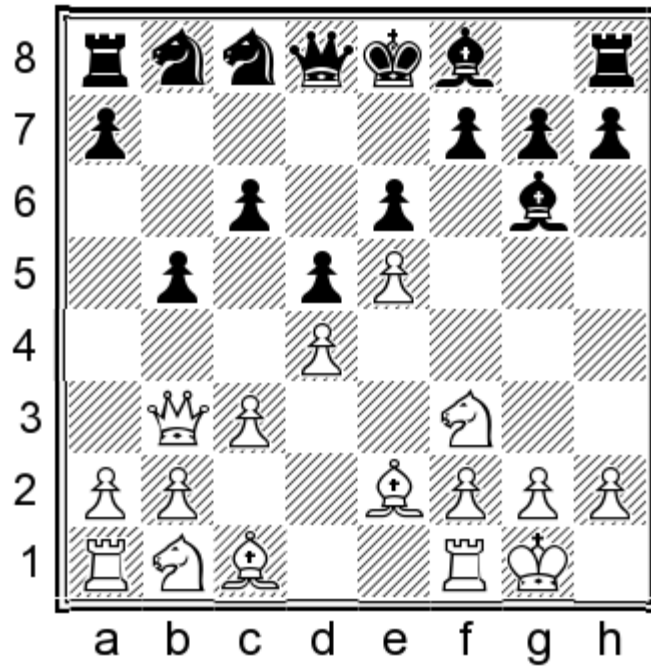
This scheme is quite possible for Black, after White has played instead of 7.♗bd2 the move 7.c3. Still, it was much more principled for Black to choose here 7...♗f5. There might follow: 8.♜b3 ♜c7 9.g4 ♗e7 10.♗h4 h5 11.♗xg6 ♗xg6 12.gxh5 ♗e7 13.♗d2 f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.c4 ♗f5 16.♜h3 ♗xd4 17.♗d1 ♜e5∞ Najer – Riazantsev, Loo 2013.

8.♜b3 b5?!

This move has some idea indeed, but is too ambitious. Black wishes to place his knight on b6 and if White chooses the attractive move a2-a4, Black wishes to obtain counter chances without allowing his opponent to fix the queenside with the help of the move b2-b4.

8...♜c7!?

White would not have achieved much either in the line: 8...♜b6!? 9.♗h4 c5 10.♗e3 cxd4 11.♜xb6 (11.♗xd4 ♜c7!∞) 11...♗xb6 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.cxd4 ♗c6.



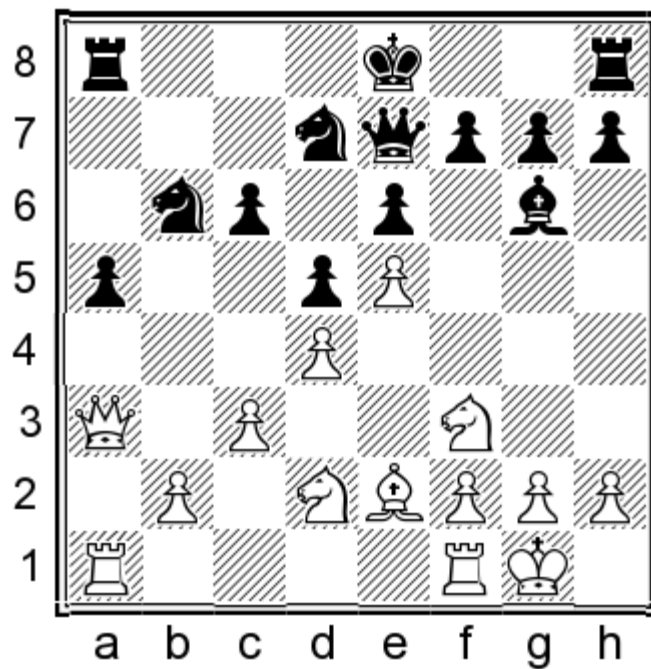
9.a4

White could have put his opponent's plan in doubt after 9.♔g5! ♕e7 10.♔xe7 ♜xe7 11.a4 bxa4 12.♞xa4! (12.♞xa4 a5!⇒) 12...♞b6 13.♞a5±

9...bxa4 10.♞xa4 a5! 11.♔g5

Now, this move is not so strong any more.

11...♕e7 12.♔xe7 ♜xe7 13.♞bd2 ♞b6 14.♞a3 ♞8d7



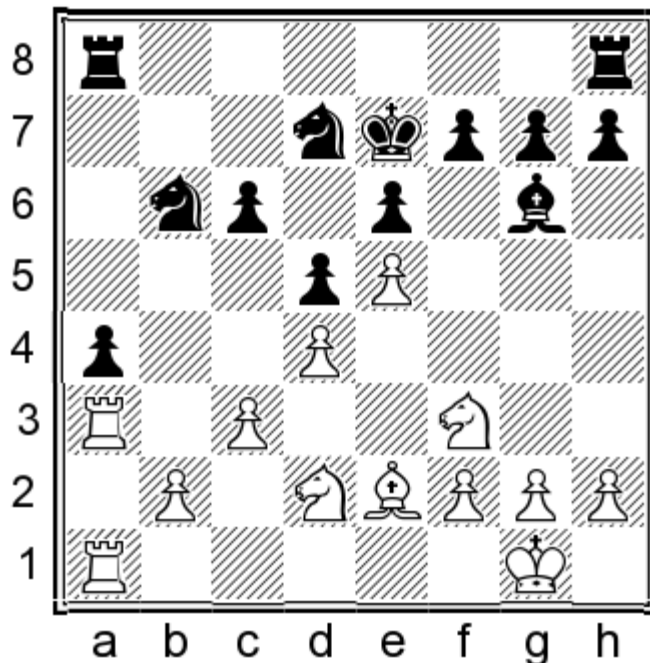
15. ♖a2

White could have preserved some chances of having an edge following 15. ♖d6, but even then after 15... ♗xd6 16. exd6 f6 (16... 0-0 17. ♗e5 ♗xe5 18. dxe5 ♗d7 19. f4↑) 17. c4 ♗xc4 18. ♗xc4 dxc4 19. ♕xc4 ♕f7 20. ♖fe1 0-0 21. ♕xe6 ♕xe6 22. ♖xe6 ♖fd8 23. ♖e7 ♗f8=, the draw would be the most likely outcome.

15...a4

15... ♗xa3!? 16. ♖xa3 a4=

16. ♖fa1 ♗xa3 17. ♖xa3 ♗e7=



18. b3 axb3 19. ♗xb3 ♖xa3 20. ♖xa3 f6 21. ♖a7 ♖a8 22. ♗a5 c5 23. ♖xa8 ♗xa8

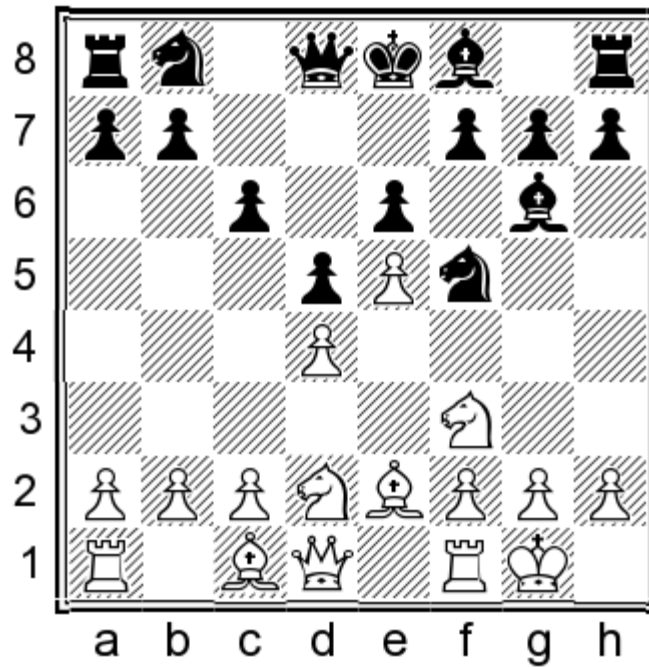
There are no chances of any side fighting for an advantage, so White trades pieces and makes accurately a draw.

24. ♗c6+ ♗e8 25. dxc5 ♗xc5 26. c4 dxc4 27. ♕xc4 ♗b6 28. ♕b5 ♕d3 29. ♕xd3 ♗xd3 30. exf6 gxf6 31. ♗cd4 ♗e7 32. ♗f1 ♗d5 33. g3 ♗c3 34. ♗e1 ♗c5 35. ♗ec2 ♗d5. Draw.

5 Shirov – Dreev

Loo 2013

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♞e7 6.0-0 ♙g6 7.♞bd2 ♞f5



8.g4

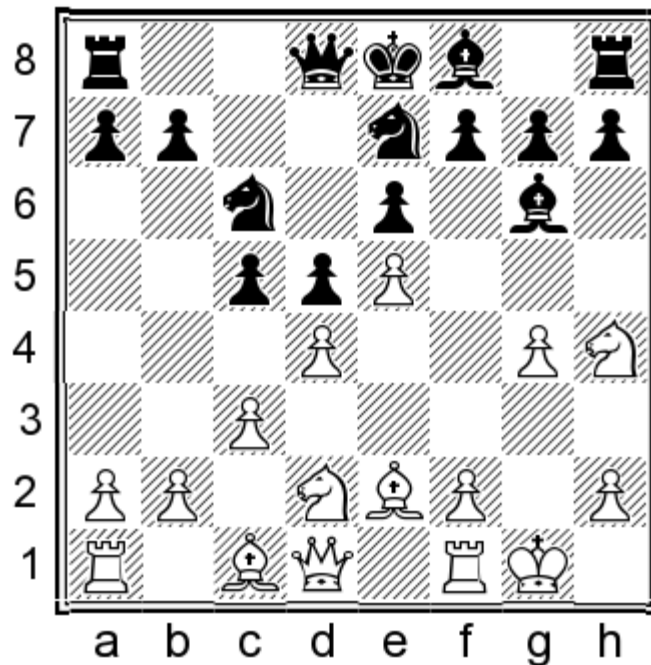
This is an ambitious move. We analyse mostly the calmer try – 8.♞b3.

8...♞e7

After the seemingly attractive line: 8...♞h4 9.♞xh4 ♚xh4 10.f4 h5 11.g5, Black may have problems with his queen.

11...c5 12.♞f2! White frees the f1-square for his bishop. 12...♞c6 13.♞f3 ♚h3 14.♙f1 ♚f5 15.h3 h4 16.♙e3 0-0-0 17.c3 ♙h5 18.♚e1 ♙xf3 19.♞xf3±.

9.♞h4 c5 10.c3 ♞bc6



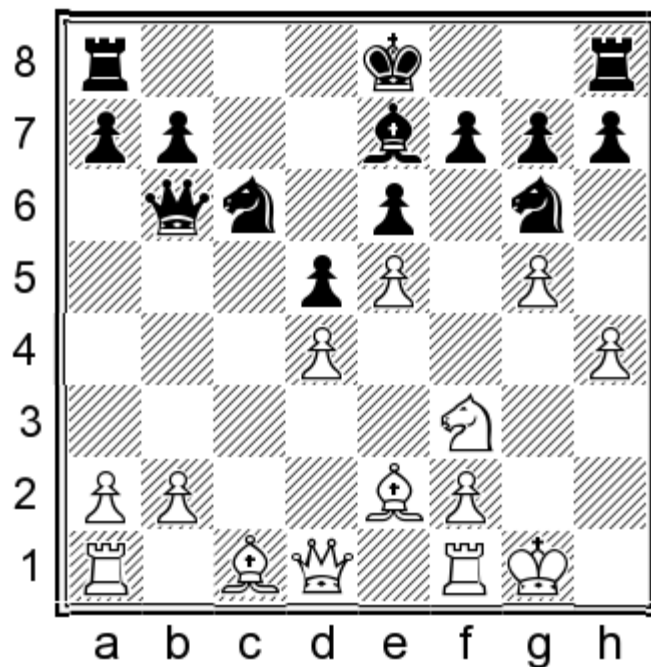
11. ♖xg6

Black's position is quite acceptable following 11. ♖b3 cxd4!? (11...c4 12. ♖d2 h5 13. ♖xg6 ♖xg6 14. gxh5 ♖f4 15. ♔g4 ♖xh5 16. ♔xh5 ♖h4 17. ♔xf7+ ♖xf7 18. ♖f3±) 12. cxd4 ♖c8 13. ♖xg6 hxg6 14. ♔e3 ♖b6 15. ♖c1 ♖c8 16. f3 ♔e7 17. a3 0-0!? 18. f4 ♖c4 19. ♔xc4 dxc4 20. ♖xc4 b5 21. ♖c3 (21. ♖c2 ♖d5) 21...b4 22. axb4 ♔xb4 23. ♖d3 ♖d5

11... ♖xg6 12. ♖f3 ♔e7 13. g5

White's intention to advance his h-pawn is more than obvious.

13... ♖b6 14. h4 cxd4 15. cxd4



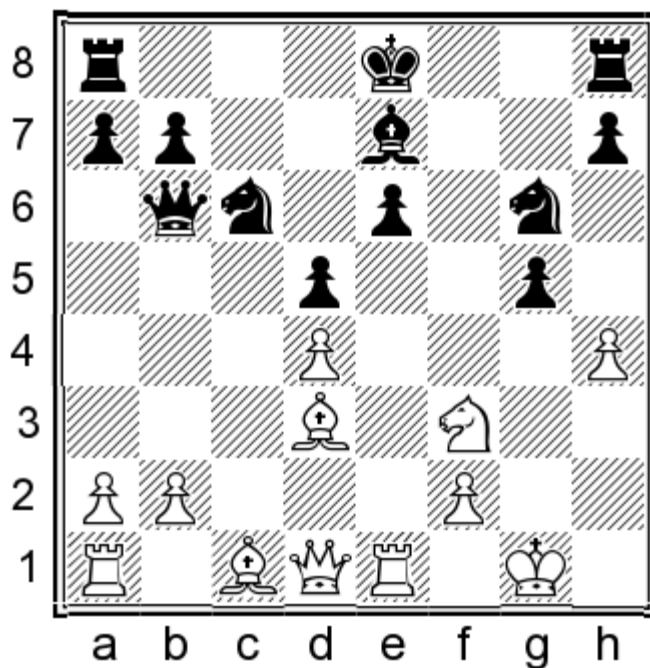
15...f6! 16.exf6

16.h5 ♘f8 17.h6 ♖g8!∞

16...gxf6 17.♙d3?!

It was preferable for White to play here 17.h5 ♘f8 18.b4!/? fxf6 (18...♖g8 19.b5 ♘d8 20.♙h1 fxf6 21.a4 ♘f7 22.a5 ♖d8 23.♘h2; 18...a6 19.♖b1 fxf6 20.b5↑) 19.b5 g4 20.bxc6 gxf3 21.cxb7 ♖g8+ 22.♙h1 ♖xb7 23.♙xf3 ♙d6 24.♖g1 ♖xg1+ 25.♙xg1 ♖b8 26.♙e3 ♖e7 27.♖b1 ♖xb1 28.♖xb1 ♘d7=

17...fxg5 18.♖e1



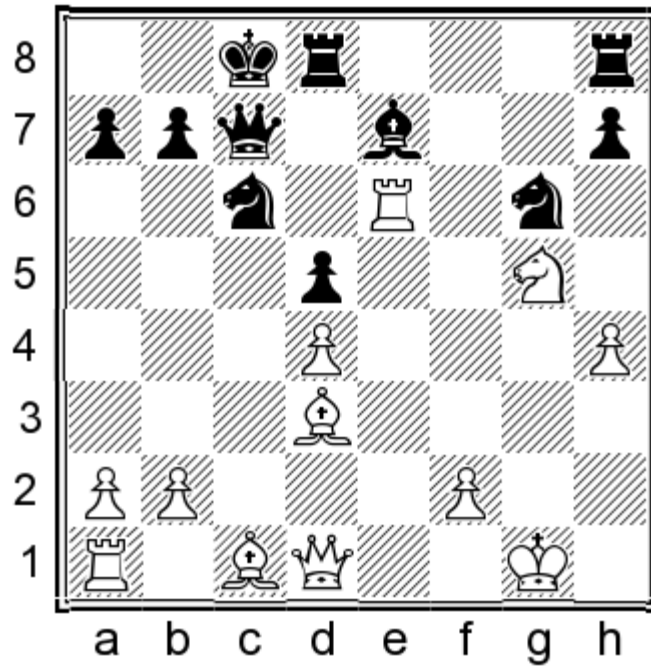
18...0-0-0?!

Black could have exploited the wonderful possibility: 18...g4 19.♘g5 e5! 20.♙e3 (20.♖xg4 ♖xd4+) 20...♙xg5 21.hxg5 0-0 22.♖xg4 e4 23.♙e2 ♖ae8

19.♖xe6 ♖c7

19...♘xh4!/? 20.♘e5 ♖c7 21.♖xc6 bxc6 22.♙d2 ♖d6 23.♖c1 ♙f6.

20.♘xg5



20...♖xd4?

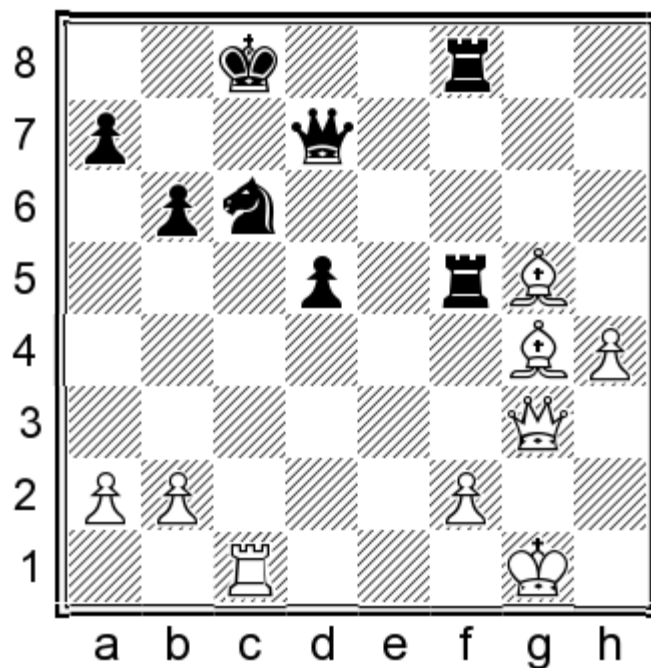
This blunder is rather difficult to explain. Most probably it was due to the time trouble...

After 20...♖df8 21.♔g4 ♕b8, the position would have remained quite unclear.

21.♖xe7

White was winning immediately following 21.♖xg6 ♖xe6 22.♗xe6 ♔d7 (22...♔b6 23.♖f5+-) 23.♖f5+-

21...♗xe7 22.♔g4+ ♔d7 23.♖xd4 ♗c6 24.♖f4 ♖df8 25.♔g3 h6 26.♖e2! hxg5 27.♖g4 ♖f5 28.♖xg5+- ♖hf8 29.♖c1 b6



30. ♖xf5

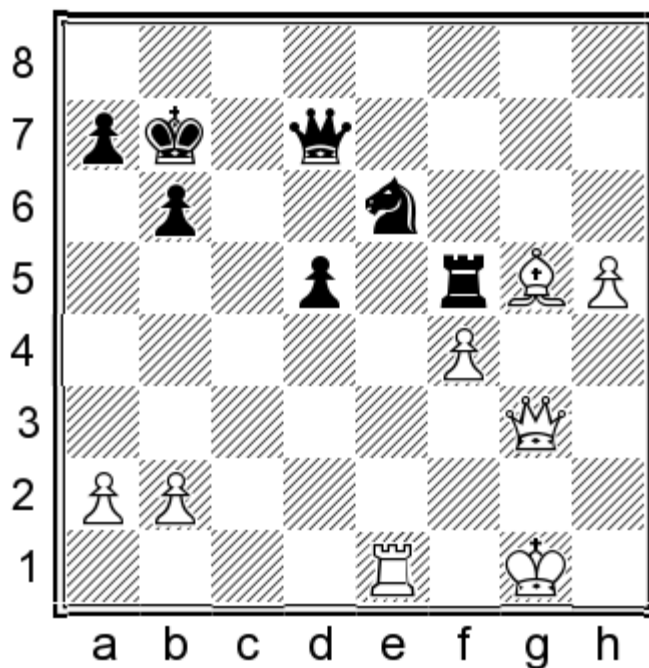
After this imprecise move, Black obtains good chances of offering tougher resistance.

The correct line for White would have been: 30. ♖a3! ♜8f7 (30... ♔b7 31. ♖xf8! ♜xg5 32. hxg5 ♖xg4+ 33. ♔f1+-)
31. ♖a6+ ♔b8 32. ♖f4+ ♔a8 33. ♖g3+-.

30... ♜xf5 31. f4 ♔b7 32. h5 ♜d4 33. ♜e1

33. ♖e3!? ♜e6 34. h6 ♜xg5 35. fxg5.

33... ♜e6

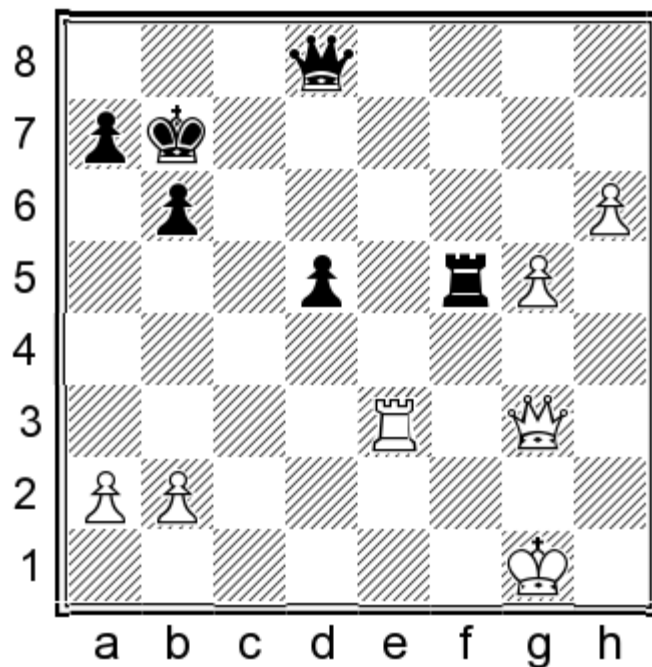


34. h6?

34. ♖g4 ♜xg5 35. ♜e5 ♜f3+ 36. ♖xf3 ♜xe5 37. fxg5 ♖g7+ 38. ♔f1 ♖xe5 39. h6. This queen and pawn ending seems to be difficult for Black, but it is understandable why White wishes to avoid it. It is far from certain whether he will manage to win it easily.

34... ♜xg5 35. fxg5 ♖d8 36. ♜e5 ♖c7 37. ♜e3 ♖d8?

It looks like Black did not believe that he could save the game. In fact, he could and should with the line: 37... ♖c1+ 38. ♔h2 ♖f1!= 39. ♜e7+ (39. h7?? ♜f2+-) 39... ♔a8 40. ♜e8+ ♔b7 41. ♜b8+ ♔a6 42. ♖a3+ ♔b5 43. ♖b3+ ♔a5 44. ♖c3+ ♔a6=



38. ♖g2?!

It was better for White to play here 38. ♖h4! ♜c7! 39. g6 (39. h7 ♜c1+ 40. ♖e1 ♜xg5+ 41. ♜xg5 ♖xg5+ 42. ♔f2 ♖h5 43. ♖e7+ ♔c6 44. ♖xa7 d4=) 39... ♜c1+ 40. ♖e1 ♖g5+ 41. ♔h1 ♜d2 42. ♖g1 ♖xg1+ 43. ♔xg1 ♜d1+ 44. ♔g2 ♜e2+ 45. ♔h3 ♜e3+ 46. ♜g3 ♜xh6+ 47. ♔g2 ♖h5 48. ♜d3±

38... ♖xg5?

Still, Black makes the final mistake.

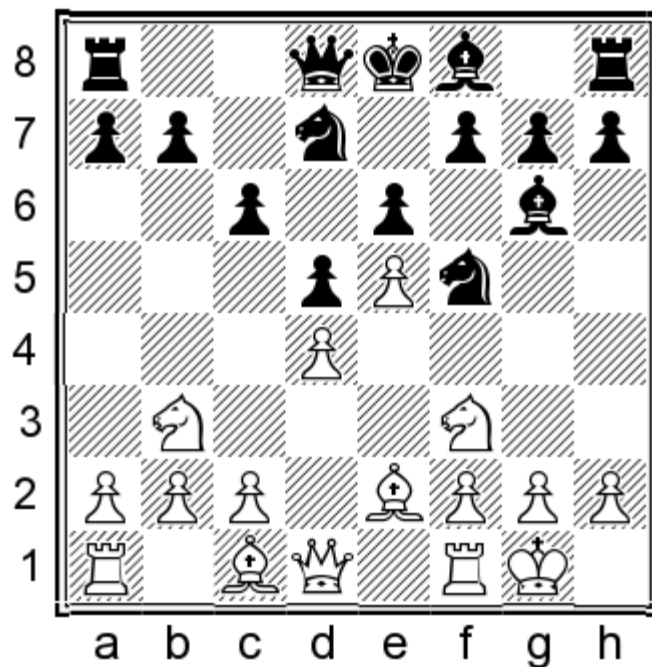
38... ♜c7! =

39. ♖g3+- ♖e5 40. ♖g7+ ♔c6 41. ♜c2+ ♔d6 42. ♖g6+ ♖e6 43. ♜h2+ ♔c5 44. ♖xe6 ♜g8+ 45. ♔f1 1-0

6 Grischuk – Jobava

Tbilisi 2015

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♗f5 4. ♘f3 e6 5. ♗e2 ♘d7 6. 0-0 ♗g6 7. ♘bd2 ♘h6 8. ♘b3 ♘f5



9.a4

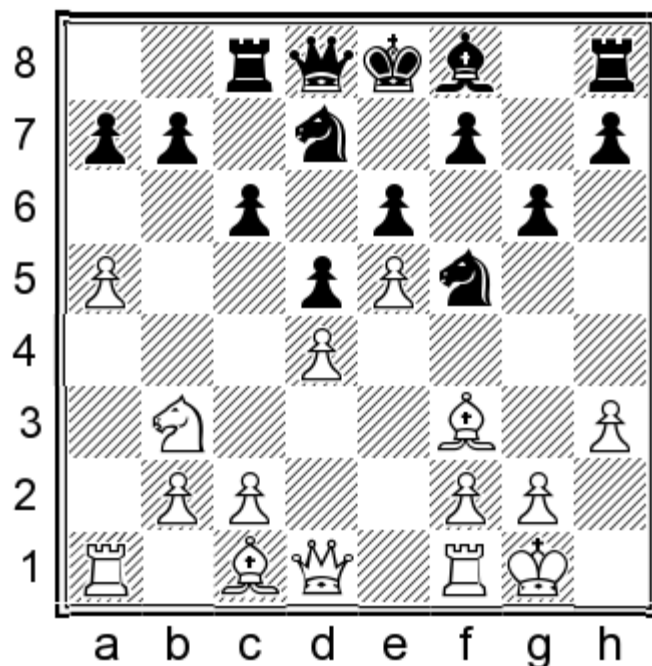
It is better for White to play here 9.♔d2.

9...♖c8 10.a5 ♗h5

10...h6!?

11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 g6

Black solves the problems with his development in an original way, but loses too much time for that and White seizes the initiative obtaining a slight but stable edge.



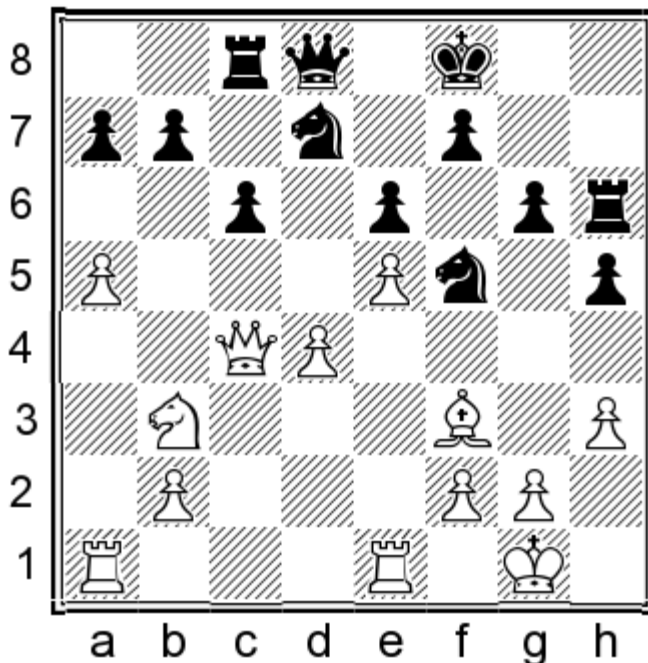
13.♖e1!?

It would be hardly better for White to continue with 13.♗g4 h5 14.♗xf5 gxf5 15.♗f4 ♗e7 16.♜f3 ♘f8.

13...h5 14.♜d3 ♗h6 15.♗xh6 ♖xh6 16.c4!± dxc4

Black should have considered giving up the c-file. 16...♘f8 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.♞ec1 ♖b8 19.♞c3 ♗g7 20.♞ac1 a6 21.♞c7 ♗e7.

17.♜xc4 ♗f8



18.♞ac1

White begins to regroup his forces improving his position even more. Black seems helpless to counter this in any effective way.

18...♗e7 19.♜c3

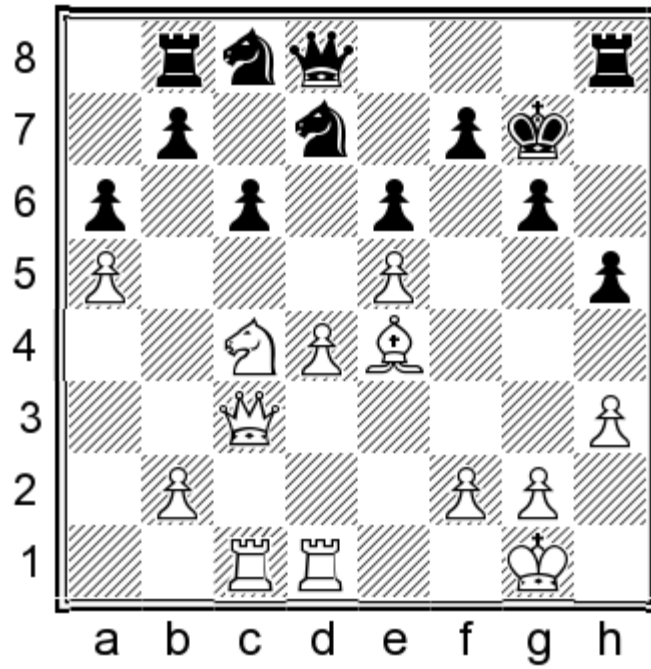
White's knight is headed for the c4-square.

19...♗g7 20.♗d2 ♖h8 21.♗c4 ♖b8 22.♗e4 a6

Black probably intended to transfer his knight to b5, in order to cover the d6-square and to organise some active counterplay, but all these plans are doomed to fail.

23.♞ed1 ♗c8?!

He had to prefer here 23...h4 24.♞d3±



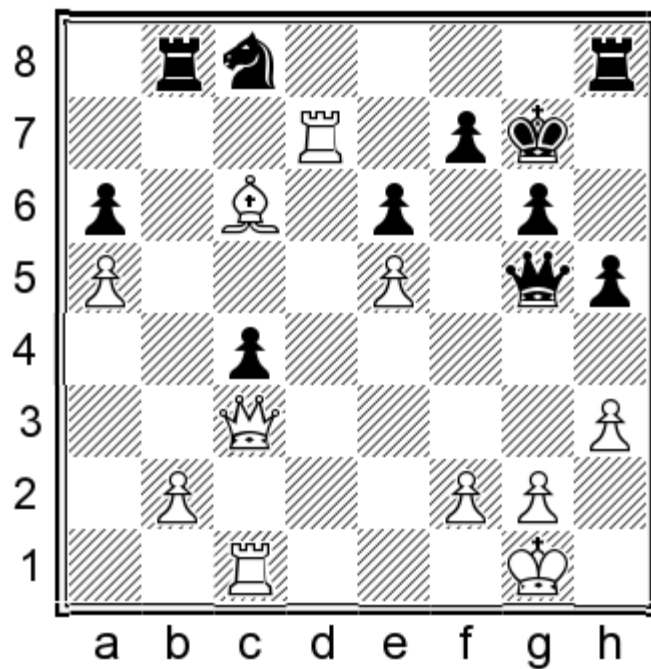
24.d5!

This standard, but really effective pawn-break is winning for White.

24...cxd5 25.♙xd5 b5

Black cannot survive either after 25...♗e7 26.♙e4 ♖d8 27.♞c2 ♜c5 28.♞xd8 ♗xd8 29.♙f3 ♜d7 30.♗d4 ♗e7 31.♞d2 ♜f8 32.♗d8+-

26.♙c6± bxc4 27.♞xd7 ♗g5



28. ♖b7

28. ♖cd1!? ♜e8 (28... ♗e7 29. h4 ♜xh4 30. ♖1d4 ♜g5 31. f4 ♜h4 32. f5+—) 29. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 30. ♜f3+ ♜f5 31. ♗xe8+ ♔xe8 32. ♜c6+—

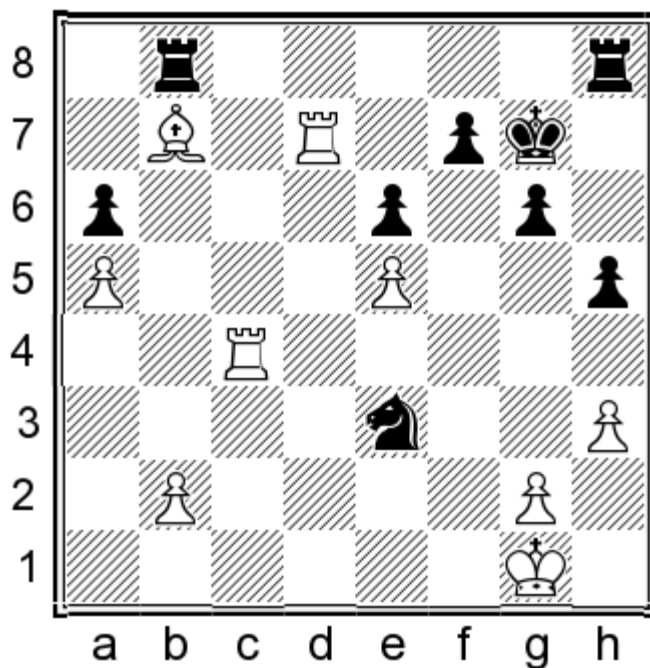
28... ♗e7 29. ♜e3

29. ♖cd1!?+—

29... ♜xe3 30. fxe3 ♗f5

30... ♗d5 31. ♖xc4 ♖hd8 32. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 33. e4 ♗e3 34. ♖c3 ♖d1+ 35. ♔f2 ♖d7 36. ♗c6 ♗d1+ 37. ♔e1 ♖d4 38. ♖b3+—

31. ♖xc4 ♗xe3



32. ♖c6

It would be even more convincing for White to have played here 32. ♖cc7 ♖hf8 33. ♔f2 ♗d5 34. ♖c6+—

32... ♖hd8 33. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 34. ♖xa6 ♖d1+

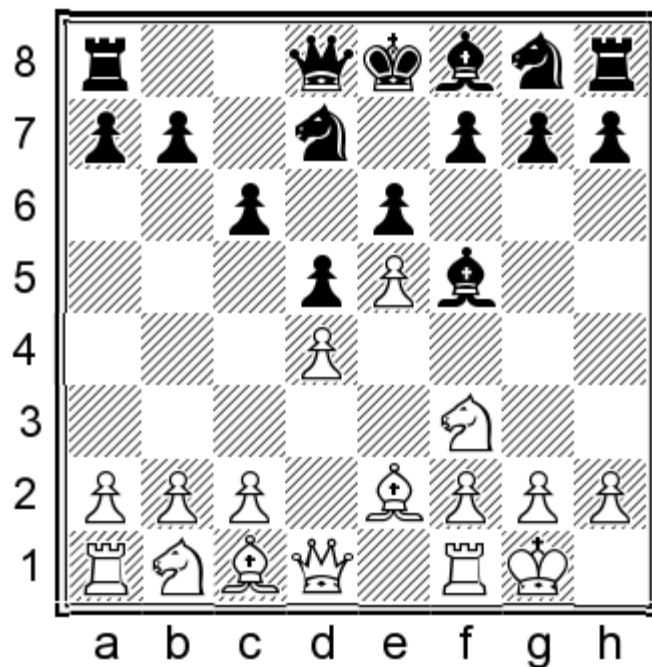
34... ♗c4 35. b3 ♗xe5 36. ♖b6+—

35. ♔f2 ♗c4 36. b3 ♗xe5 37. ♖b6 ♖a1 38. a6 ♔f6 39. ♖b5 ♖a3 40. ♔e2 1–0

7 Svidler – Jobava

Tbilisi 2015

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♗f5 4. ♗f3 e6 5. ♗e2 ♗d7 6. 0-0



6...f6

This is a seldom played move. Black attacks immediately his opponent's centre with the idea after the exchange on e5 to obtain the c5-square for his bishop. Later, after $\text{d}e7$, he plans to castle and to exert pressure on the f-file.

All this sounds too good to be true... No doubt, White has his counter arguments.

7.c4!

This excellent move puts Black's plan in doubt.

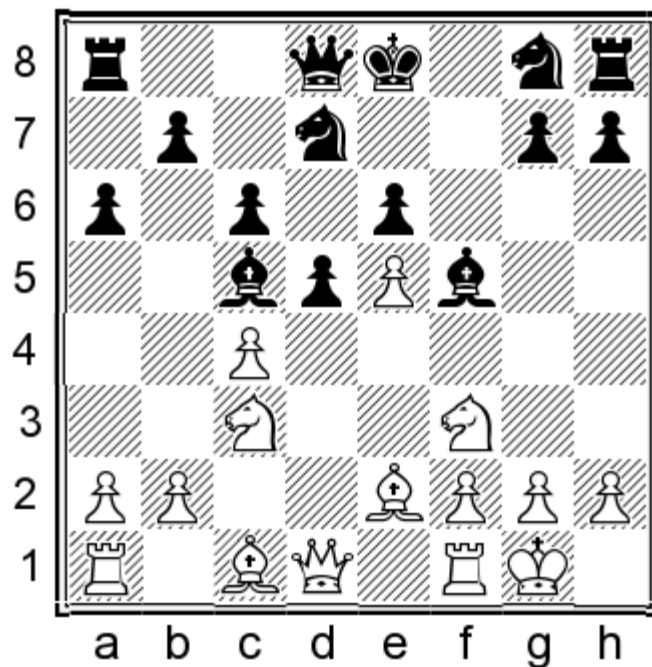
7. $\text{c}f4?! \text{d}e7!?$ (7... $\text{f}xe5$ 8. $\text{d}xe5 \text{d}xe5$ 9. $\text{c}xe5 \text{d}f6$ 10. $\text{d}d2 \text{c}d6$ 11. $\text{d}f3$ 0-0 12. $\text{c}3 \text{c}xe5$ 13. $\text{d}xe5 \text{d}d7=$) 8. $\text{e}e1?! (8.\text{exf6} \text{gxf6} 9.\text{c}4!?\infty)$ 8... $\text{d}g6$ 9. $\text{c}g3 \text{f}xe5$ 10. $\text{d}xe5$, Matsenko – Dobrov, Budva 2009, 10... $\text{b}b6$ 11. $\text{d}bd2 \text{c}e7\bar{f}$

7...fxe5 8.dxe5 c5 9.dxc3

9. $\text{c}xd5!?$ $\text{c}xd5$ 10. $\text{d}bd2 \text{d}e7$ 11. $\text{d}b3 \text{c}b6$ (11... $\text{d}c6$ 12. $\text{d}xc5 \text{d}xc5$ 13. $\text{c}e3 \text{d}d7$ 14. $\text{d}d4 \text{d}xd4$ 15. $\text{b}xd4\pm$) 12. $\text{d}fd4 \text{d}xe5$ (12... 0-0? 13. $\text{g}4+\bar{+}$) 13. $\text{g}4 \text{c}g6$ (13... $\text{c}e4$ 14. $\text{d}xe6 \text{d}d6$ 15. $\text{d}xg7+ \text{c}f7$ 16. $\text{d}h5\pm$) 14. $\text{d}xe6 \text{d}d6$ 15. $\text{d}bd4\uparrow$

9...a6

9... $\text{d}e7$ 10. $\text{d}a4\pm$



10.cxd5

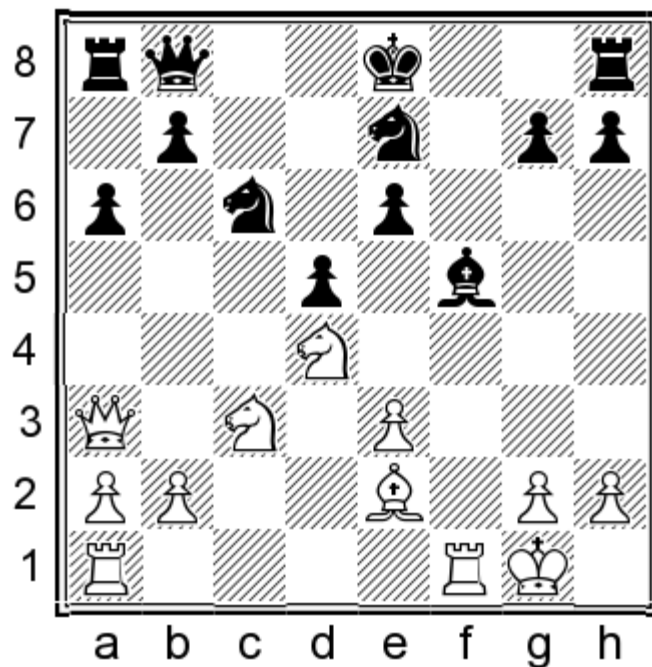
10.♘a4!? ♕a7 11.♘d4 ♘e7 12.g4 ♕xd4 13.♖xd4 ♕g6 14.f4 0-0 15.♕e3± (15.b3!?!±; 15.c5!?!±)

10...cxd5 11.♕e3 ♕xe3 12.fxe3 ♘e7 13.♖b3

13.♘d4 0-0 14.♖b3 ♖c7, E. Hansen – Mamedyarov, Reykjavik 2015, 15.g4 ♘c5 (15...♖xe5 16.♘d1∞) 16.♖a3 ♕g6 17.♖xf8+ ♖xf8=

13...♖b8 14.♖a3 ♘xe5 15.♘d4 ♘5c6?!

Black plays very precisely, but still has some serious problems. Here, it would have been correct for him to prevent the possible move g2-g4 with 15...h5, but even then after 16.♘a4, White would have maintained some initiative.



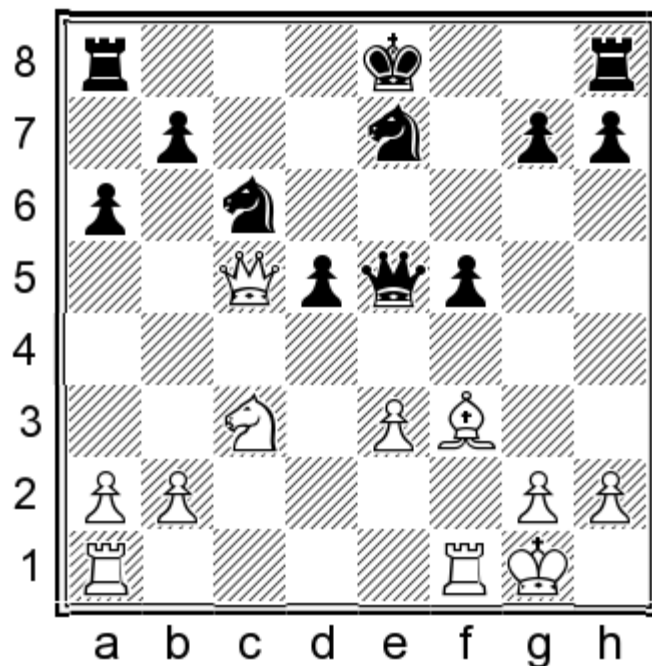
16. ♖xf5?!

White cannot fight for the advantage with this move.

It was correct for him to choose instead 16.g4! ♙g6 (16... ♖xd4 17.exd4 ♙g6 18. ♖a4! b6 19. ♖ac1 ♖a7 20. ♗b4!) 17. ♖xe6 ♗e5 18. ♖b5!+- It is possible that White had overlooked this spectacular strike.

16...exf5 17. ♙f3 ♗e5 18. ♗c5?!

18. ♖ad1 ♗xe3+ 19. ♔h1 0-0 20. ♖fe1 ♗g5 21. ♖xd5=

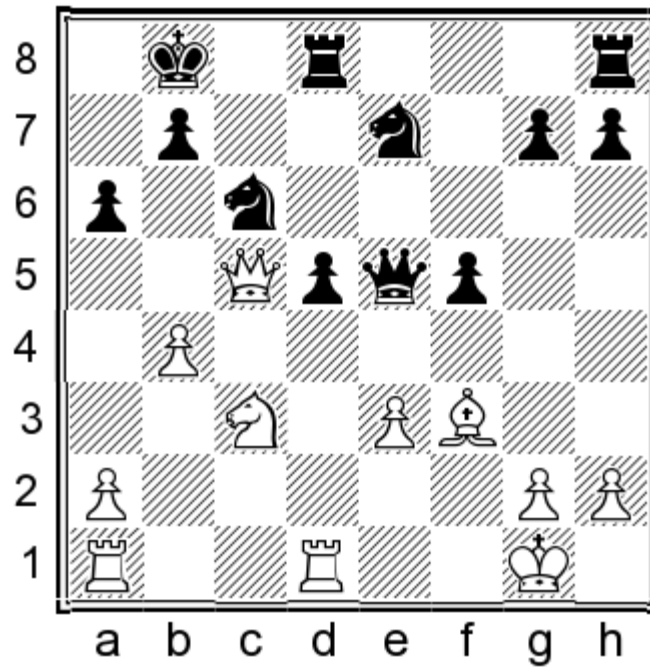


18...0-0! 19. ♖fd1

19.♠ad1 ♔b8 20.b4 ♜d6 21.♗xd5 ♗xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞xd5 23.♙xd5 ♖xb4 24.♚xb4 ♚xd5 25.♛f4+ ♕a8 26.♛xf5 ♛xa2

19...♕b8 20.b4?!

White's best line here was possibly: 20.♞d3!? ♜d6 21.♗a4 ♗e5 22.♞b3.



20...♞d6! 21.b5 ♜c8 22.♞ac1?!

He could have still offered some resistance following 22.♗e2 ♗a7 23.♚d4 ♚xd4 24.♗xd4 ♖xb5 25.♗xb5 axb5 26.e4.

22...♗a7 23.♚a3 axb5 24.♗e2 ♞xc1

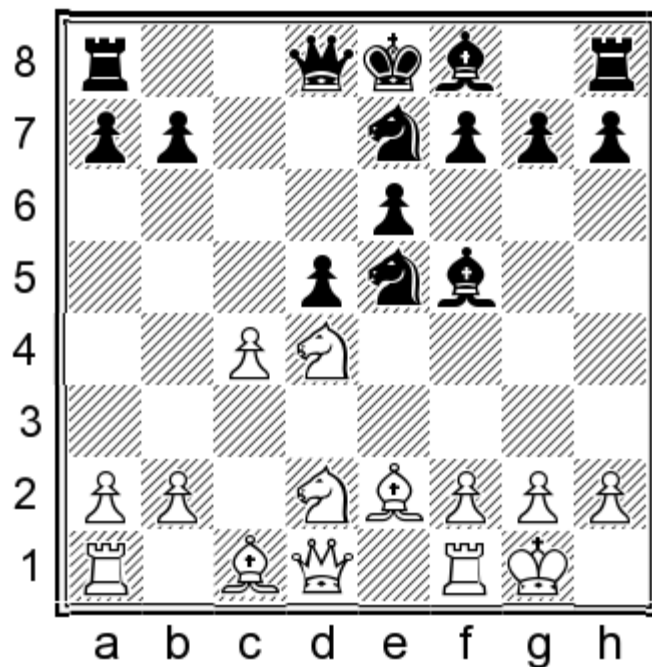
24...g5!?

25.♞xc1 ♗ac6 26.♚c5 g5 27.h3 b4 28.a3 ♞e6 29.♔f2 d4! 30.exd4 ♚xc5 31.dxc5 ♗e5 0-1

8 Gopal – Dragun

Cappelle la Grande 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 4.♗f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♗d7 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♗bd2 c5 8.c4 cxd4 9.♗xd4 ♗xe5

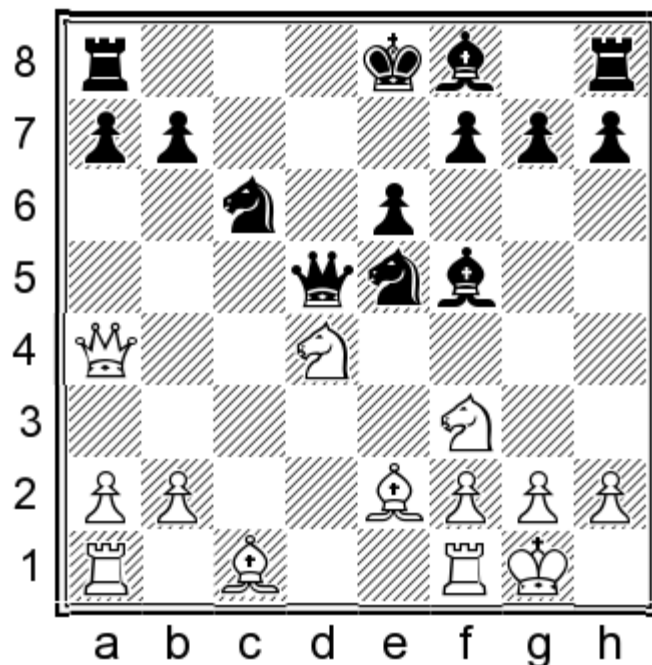


10.cxd5

We have suggested in our book as a more promising move for White to play 10.♖a4+!.

10...♗xd5 11.♖a4+ ♘7c6 12.♘2f3

He could have still tried to obtain an advantage with 12.♘xc6 (12.♘xf5 exf5 13.♘f3 ♕e7 14.♞d1 ♖e4=) 12.♘xc6 ♘xc6 13.♕f3 ♗d7 14.♞d1 ♞d8 (14...♘e5 15.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 16.♕xb7 ♞b8 17.♕e4↑) 15.♘e4 b5 16.♗b3 ♘d4 17.♞xd4 ♗xd4 18.♗xb5+ ♞d7 (18...♗d7? 19.♘f6+! gxf6 20.♕c6+–) 19.♕g5 ♕e7 20.♞d1 a6 21.♗b8+ (21.♗c6 ♕xe4 22.♞xd4 ♕xc6 23.♕xc6 0-0=) 21...♞d8 22.♗b3 ♗xd1+ 23.♕xd1 ♕xe4∞



12...♙d3!=

This is a typical resource in similar positions. Black exchanges the light-squared bishops and reduces thus the tension.

13.♙xd3 ♜xf3+!

13...♜xd3 14.♞d1 ♜c5 15.♞c2↑

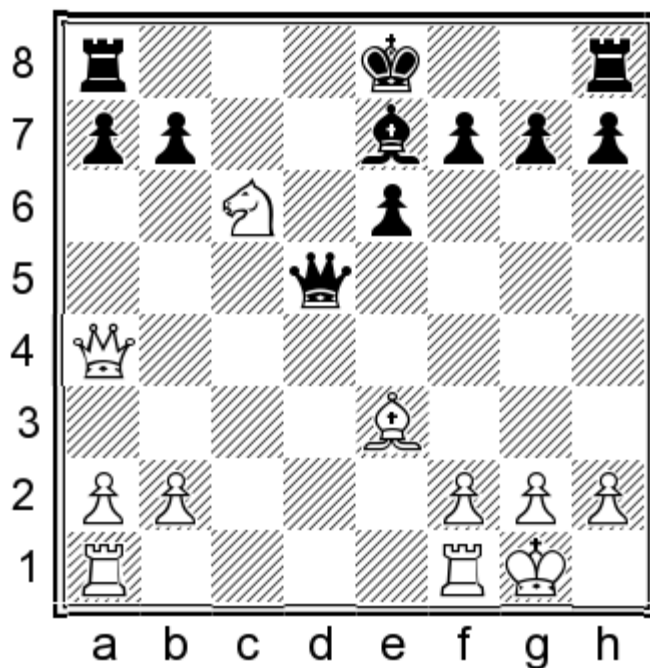
14.♜xf3 ♞xd3 15.♙e3

White has some compensation for the pawn, but he cannot even dream about having an edge.

15...♙e7 16.♜e5

16.♞fd1 ♞a6 17.♞xa6 bxa6 18.♞ac1 ♜b4 19.♞c7 ♜d5 20.♞b7 ♙d6=

16...♞d5 17.♜xc6



17...bxc6

It was also possible for Black to choose here 17...♞xc6 18.♞xc6+ bxc6 19.♞ac1 ♙f6 20.♞xc6 ♜d7=

18.♞ac1 ♞b5 19.♞xb5

19.♞c4!? 0-0 20.♞c2=

19...cxb5 20.♞c7 ♙d6

Black could have tried to hold on to the pawn, but after 20...a6 21.♞b7, White's piece-activity would provide him with sufficient compensation.

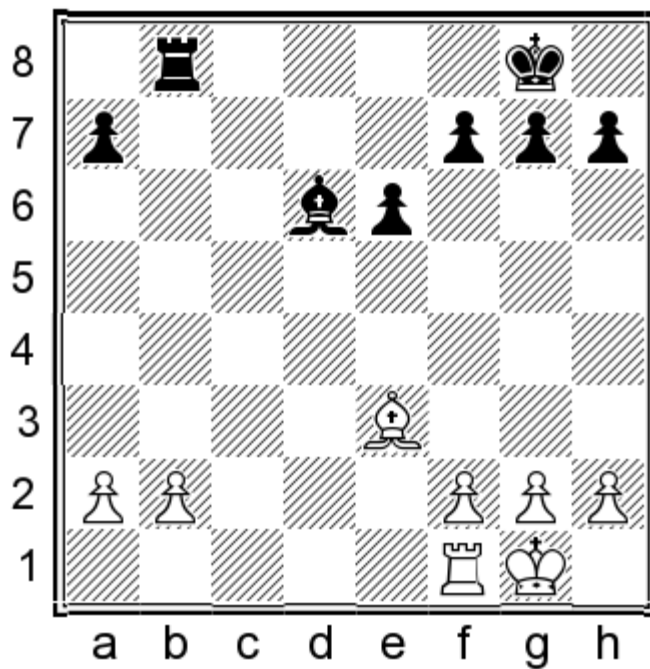
21.♞b7!

21. ♖xa7 ♜xa7 22. ♙xa7 ♚e7 23. ♙d4 e5 24. ♖e1 ♚f6 25. ♙e3 ♜a8 26. a3 ♜c8.

21...0-0

21...a6 22. ♖d1.

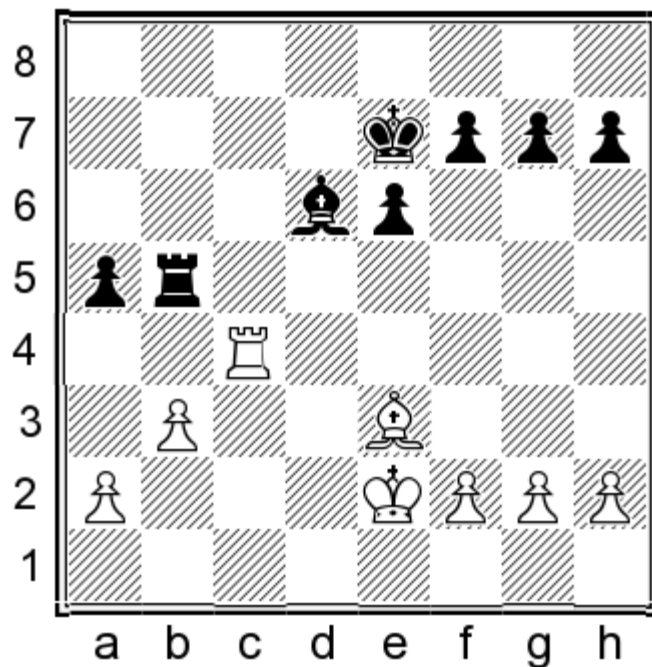
22. ♖xb5 ♜fb8 23. ♖xb8+ ♜xb8



24. ♖c1

White complies with the draw, but following 24. ♖d1! ♜xb2 25. g3 ♙e7 26. ♖d7↑, he could have still tried to make his opponent suffer, while fighting for it.

24...♙f8 25. b3 a5 26. ♖c4 ♙e7= 27. ♙f1 ♜b5 28. ♙e2



28...g5

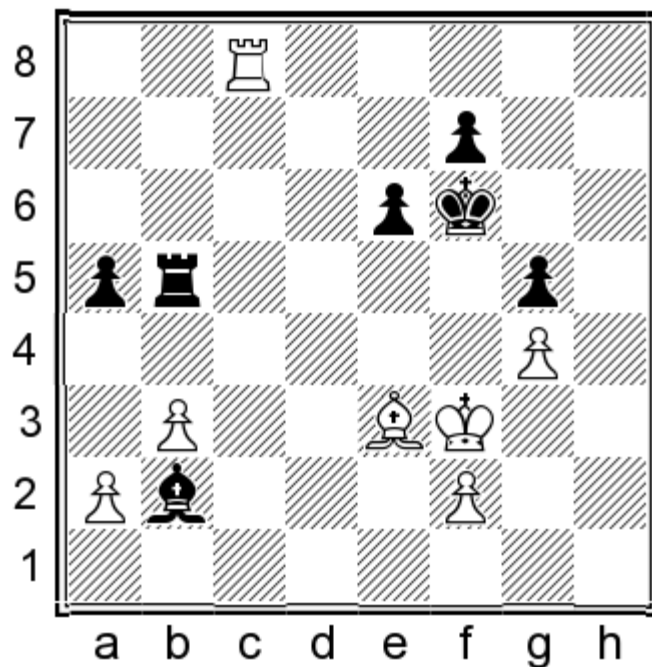
This activity was not necessary. The pawn on g5, after being fixed, might become a cause of worries for Black.

29.h4 h6 30.hxg5 hxg5 31.g4 ♔f6 32.♔d3 ♔g6 33.♞c8 ♞d5+ 34.♔e4 ♞e5+ 35.♔d3 ♞d5+ 36.♔e4 ♞e5+ 37.♔f3 ♞b5 38.♞a8 ♟b4 39.♞d8 ♟c3 40.♞g8+ ♔f6 41.♞c8

White could have tried some active actions after 41.♔e4!? ♞d5 42.a3, with some chances of obtaining a slight advantage.

41...♟b2?

41...♟b4=



42. ♖c2?

White failed to exploit the chance of trading the rooks: 42. ♖c5! ♜xc5 43. ♙xc5±. Black would have serious problems after that.

42... ♙a3 43. ♜c4 ♙d6 44. ♔e2 ♔g6 45. ♜c8 ♜d5 46. ♜d8 ♔f6?!

46... f6 47. a4 ♔f7 48. ♙d2 ♔e7 49. ♜a8 ♙c7=

47. ♜d7 ♔g6 48. ♜d8?!

48. a4 f5 49. ♙d2 ♜e5+ 50. ♔f1 ♙b8 51. ♜b7 ♙d6 52. ♜a7±

48... ♔f6?! 49. ♔f3?!

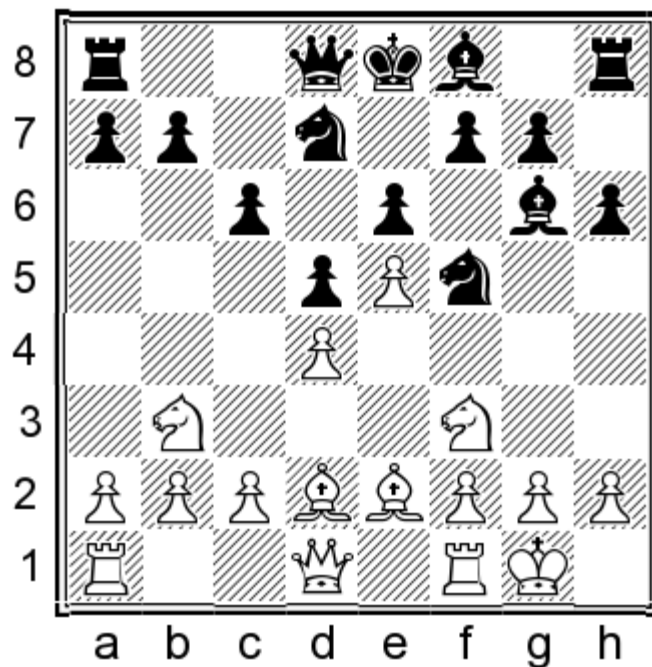
49. ♜d7±

49... ♔e7 50. ♜a8 ♜b5 51. ♜a6 ♜d5 52. a4 ♔f6 53. ♔e4 ♜e5+ 54. ♔d3 ♜d5+ 55. ♔e4 ♜e5+ 56. ♔f3 ♜d5 57. ♔e4. Draw

9 Wei Yi – Lalith

Hyderabad 2015

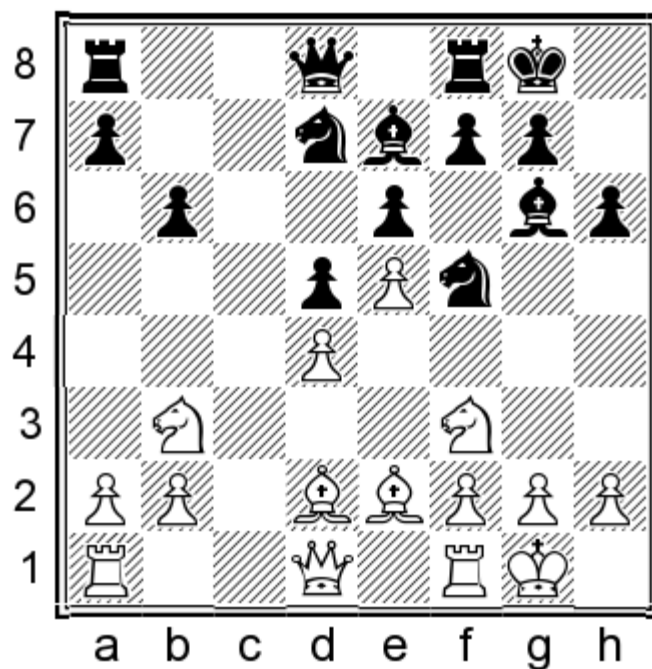
1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♙f5 4. ♗f3 e6 5. ♙e2 ♗d7 6. 0-0 h6 7. ♗bd2 ♗e7 8. ♗b3 ♙g6 9. ♙d2 ♗f5



10. ♕a5

This is a typical resource. White provokes his opponent to weaken his queenside and although he loses a tempo while doing this, it is not so important after all...

10...b6 11. ♕d2 ♕e7 12.c4 0-0 13.cxd5 cxd5



14.h3

This is in principle a useful move, because White opens a leeway for his king and prevents the possibility ♕g6-h5.

Still, it would have been more precise for him to have chosen 14. ♖c1±

14...♖c8 15.g3

This move is not obligatory, but it restricts Black's pieces.

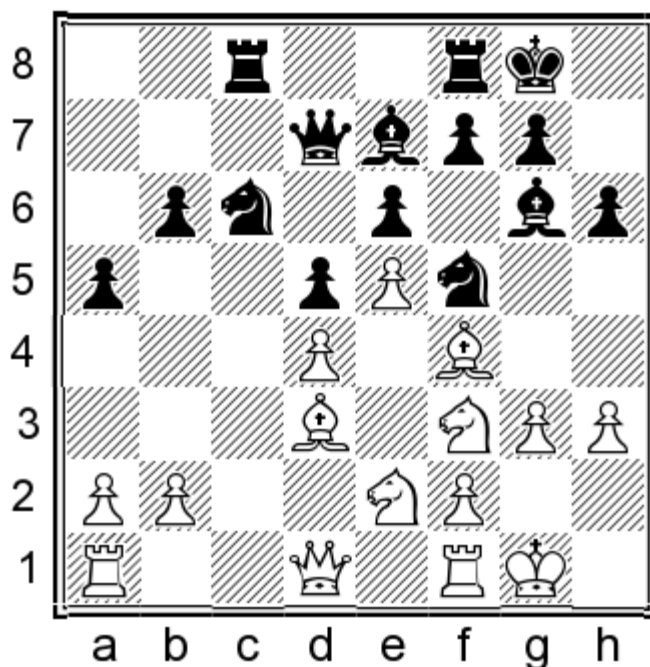
15...♗b8 16.♕f4?!

I do not like this move. White's knight belongs to the f4-square and not his bishop. He could have continued here with 16.♕c3 ♖c6 17.a3 (This is a prophylactic move.) 17...♔d7 18.♖c1↑, with the idea ♖d3-f4.

16...♔d7 17.♕d3 a5

17...♔a4!? 18.♔e2 a6∞

18.♖c1 ♖c6 19.♖e2



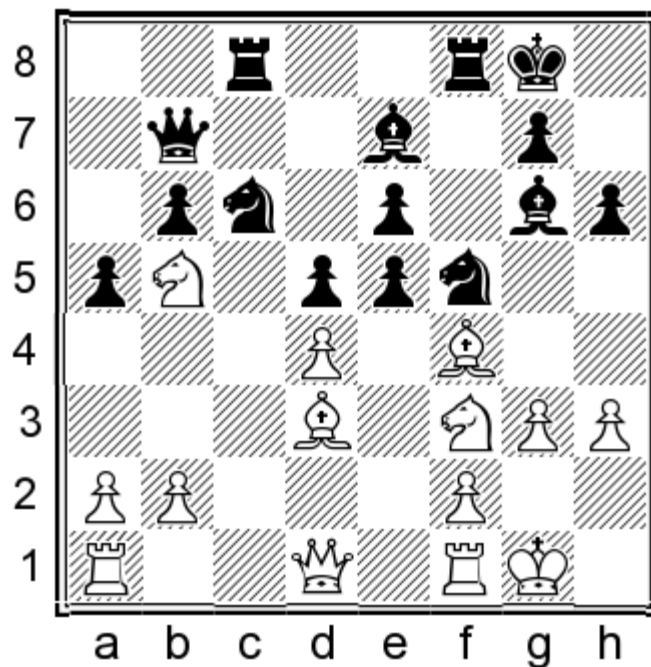
19...♔b7

Black could have tested his opponent's peaceful intentions with the line: 19...♖b4 20.♕b1 ♖c6 and if White would be reluctant to comply with this and play instead of 21.♕d3, the move 21.♖c3, then after 21...b5!?, the character of the fight could have been changed radically following 22.♖xb5 ♖xe5 23.♖xe5 ♔xb5∞

20.♖c3 f6

It was more reliable for Black to choose 20...♖a7∞

21.♖b5 fxe5

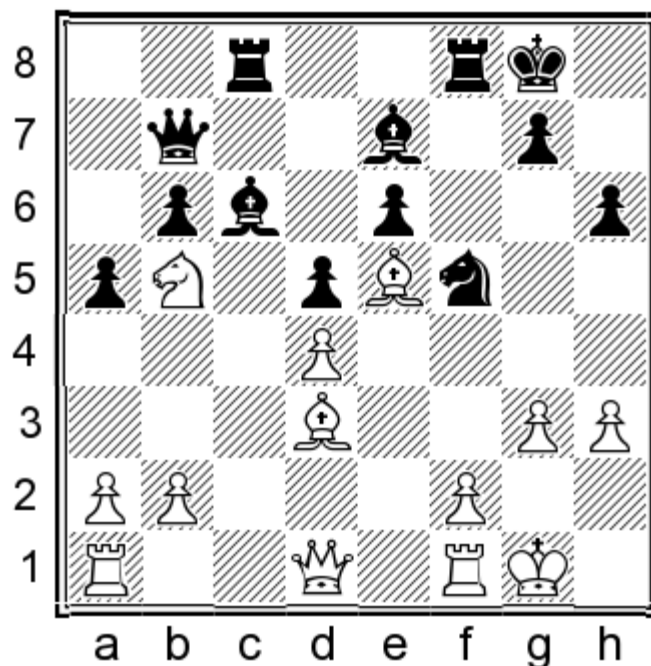


22. ♖xe5

The most natural move is not always the best. It was correct for White to play 22. ♖xe5!±, protecting reliably his d4-pawn.

22... ♗e8 23. ♘xc6 ♗xc6 24. ♗e5

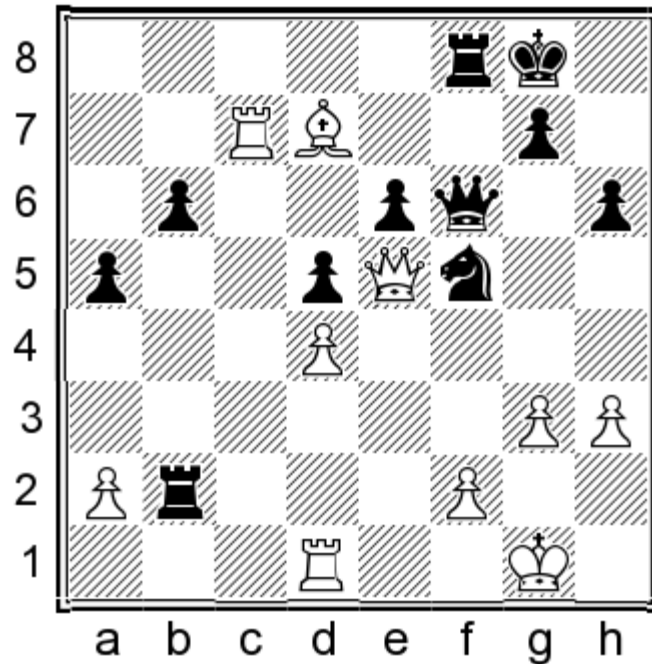
He would not achieve much with 24. ♗xf5 ♜xf5 (24... exf5 25. ♘d6 ♗xd6 26. ♗xd6 ♜f8 27. ♜f3 ♜f7 28. ♗e5 ♗b5 29. ♜fe1±) 25. ♜e2 ♜f7.



24... ♗xb5! 25. ♗xb5 ♗f6= 26. ♜e2 ♜e7 27. ♜fd1 ♗xe5 28. ♜xe5 ♜c2 29. ♜ac1 ♜xb2

29...♖xc1!? 30.♖xc1 ♜f6=

30.♖c7 ♜f6 31.♙d7



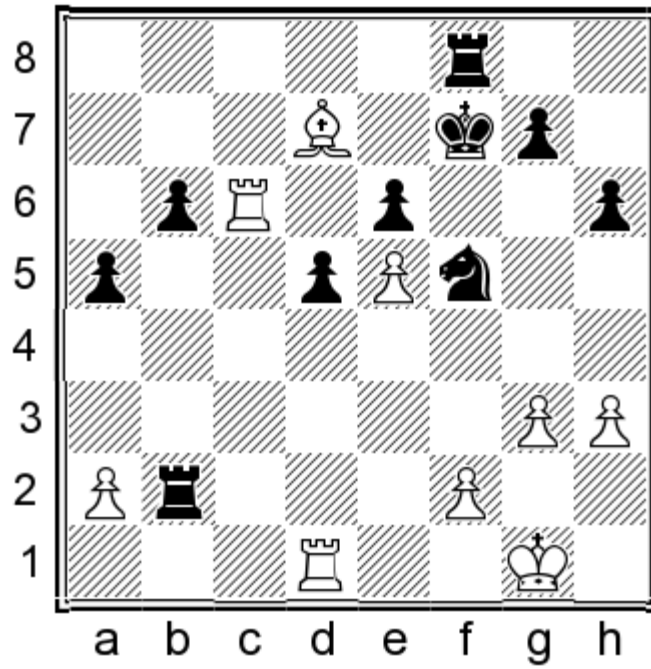
31...♜xe5?

Black overlooked here an excellent tactical possibility and gradually made his defensive task harder and harder...

31...♘xd4! 32.♜xd4 ♖b1 33.♜d2 (33.♔g2 ♜f3+ 34.♔h2 e5 35.♙g4 ♖xd1 36.♜xd1 ♜xf2+ 37.♔h1 d4=) 33...♖xd1+ 34.♜xd1 ♜xf2+ 35.♔h1 ♖f6=

32.dxe5± ♔f7 33.♖c6?!

It was much better for White to play here 33.♖d3 ♖xa2 34.♖f3±, with the idea 34...♔e7? 35.♙b5+ ♔d8 36.♖fc3+—



33...♘e7?

Black overlooks again a nice tactical possibility. Following 33...♘e7 34.♙xe6 ♜xf2! 35.♞c7+ ♘xe6 36.♙xf2 ♘xe5, he could have been quite optimistic about the future.

34.♙xe6 ♜b8

34...♞xa2 35.♞d4+-

35.♞d3+- ♜f8 36.a4

36.♞d4!?!+-

36...♘f5 37.♞xd5 ♞d8 38.♞c6 ♘e7 39.♙e6+ ♘e8 40.♞xd8+ ♘xd8 41.♞d6+ ♘e8.

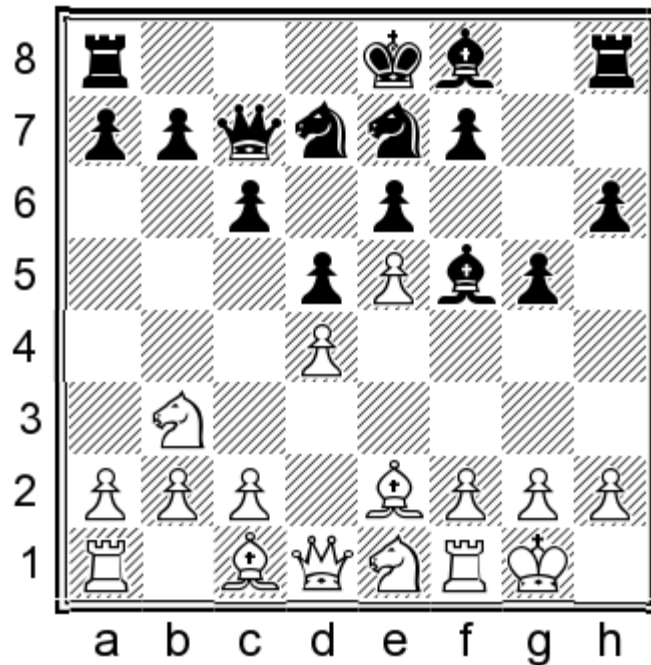
Black could have already resigned, but there still followed:

42.♙d7+ ♘f8 43.♙b5 ♘f5 44.♞xb6 ♘d4 45.♞b8+ ♘e7 46.♞b7+ ♘f8 47.♙g2 ♞b4 48.h4 g5 49.hxg5 hxg5 50.♞a7 ♘xb5 51.axb5 ♞xb5 52.f4 g4 53.♙f2 ♞b2+ 54.♙e3 a4 55.♙e4 1-0

10 Nakar – Sjugirov

Jerusalem 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♗f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♗d7 6.0-0 h6 7.♗bd2 ♗e7 8.♗b3 g5 9.♗e1 ♖c7



10.♙h5

This move is possible and seemingly active, but I do not consider it to be principled. Still, it would be interesting to see what the results would be after avoiding the main line...

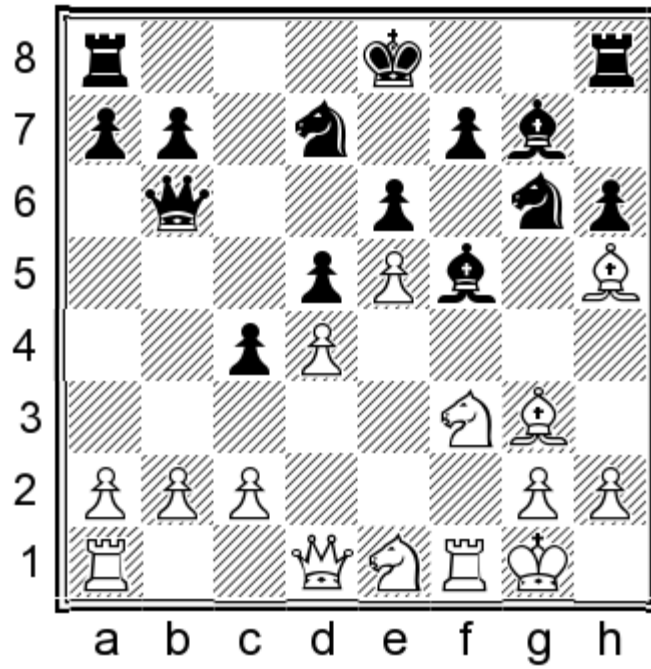
10...c5 11.f4

It is more prudent for White to play here 11.c3 and there may follow 11...♙g7 12.f4 c4 13.♗d2 gxf4 14.b3 ♖a5 (14...0-0 15.♙a3 ♗xe5 16.dxe5 ♙xe5 17.♗ef3 ♙xc3 18.♖c1↑) 15.bxc4 ♖xc3 16.♗b3 dxc4 17.♙d2 ♖b2 18.♙c1 ♖c3=

11...c4 12.♗d2 ♖b6

12...gxf4?! 13.♖xf4 ♙g7 14.♙xf7+! ♗xf7 15.g4 ♖af8 (15...♖ag8 16.♗h1±) 16.gxf5 ♗xf5 17.♗g2 ♗e8 18.♗f3 h5 19.♗fh4±

13.♗df3 gxf4 14.♙xf4 ♗g6 15.♙g3 ♙g7



16. ♔h1?!

It was correct for White to play the seemingly ugly move 16. ♖f2, for example: 16...0-0 (16... ♙xb2?! 17. ♘h4! ♘xh4 18. ♙xh4 0-0 19. ♙e7 ♖fe8 20. ♙d6±) 17. c3. He protects his b2-pawn and fortifies his centre. 17...f6 18. exf6 ♘xf6 19. ♙xg6 ♙xg6 20. ♘e5 ♙h5 21. ♙c1∞

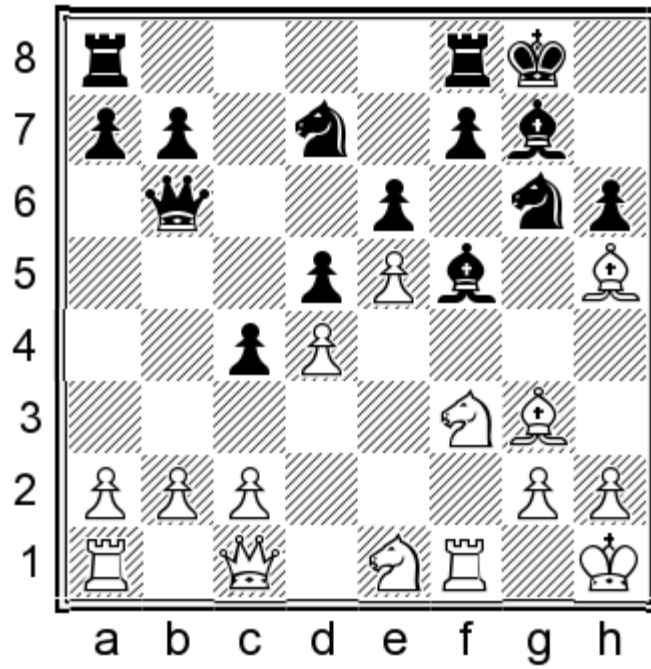
16...0-0

Now, it would not be so comfortable for White to protect his b2-pawn.

17. ♙c1

17. ♘h4 ♘xh4 18. ♙xh4 f6!±

17. b3 ♖ac8±



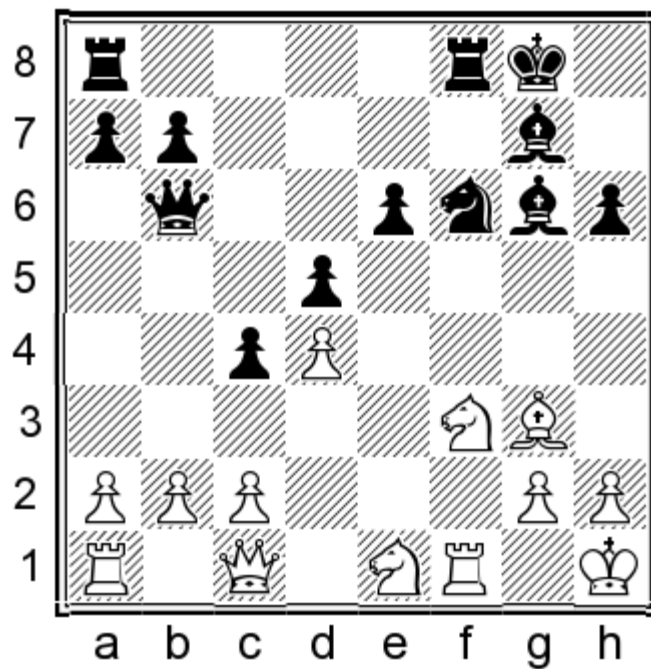
17...f6!

This is the right moment to open the game in the centre. White's pieces are not so well prepared for this.

18.exf6 ♖xf6

This is a reliable move, but played without imagination. It was much more interesting for Black to have tried instead 18...♖xf6 19.♖e5 ♖gxe5 20.dxe5 ♖ff8 21.♖f3 ♕e4

19.♕xg6 ♕xg6



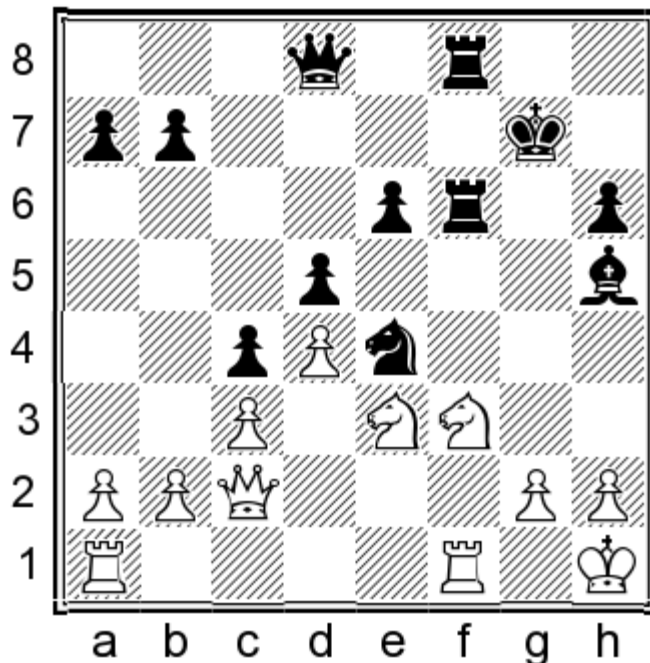
20. ♖e5?

This is a grave positional blunder. White simply forgot about his knight on e1... Naturally, he had to continue with 20. ♖e5 ♙e4 21. ♗f3, with a rather complicated position. 21... ♗h5!? 22. ♗d7 ♗xg3+ 23. hxg3 ♖d6 24. ♗xf8 ♖xf8 25. ♗d2 ♖xf1+ 26. ♖xf1 ♙xc2 27. ♖f2 ♙f5∞

20... ♗e4+ 21. ♙xg7 ♗xg7 22. c3 ♖f6 23. ♗c2 ♖af8 24. ♗e3 ♙h5 25. ♖c2

25. ♗e5 ♖d8±

25... ♖d8



26. ♗xc4?

This is another blunder, but White's position was very difficult anyway...

26. ♖e2 ♖c7±

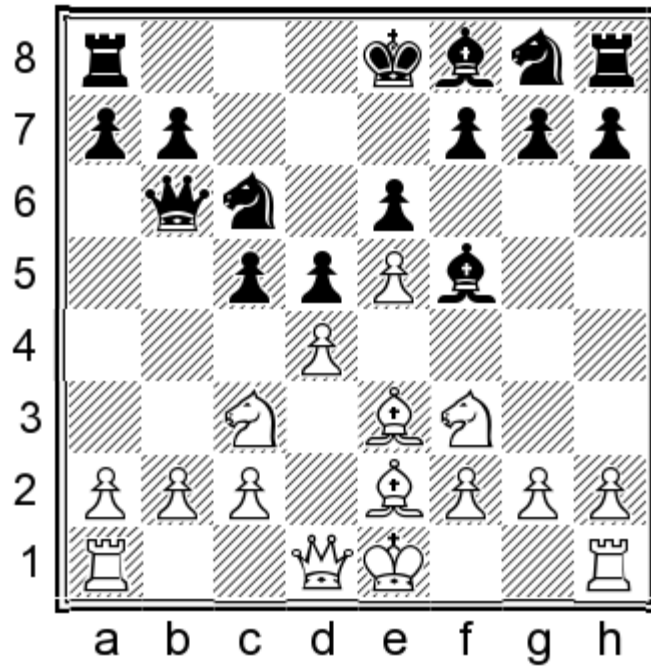
26... ♙g6! White loses a piece, because after the retreat of his knight and 27... ♗g3, he will have to part with his queen.

0-1

11 Sethuraman – Zhou Jianchao

Hyderabad 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 4.♗f3 e6 5.♙e2 c5 6.♙e3 ♖b6 7.♗c3 ♗c6

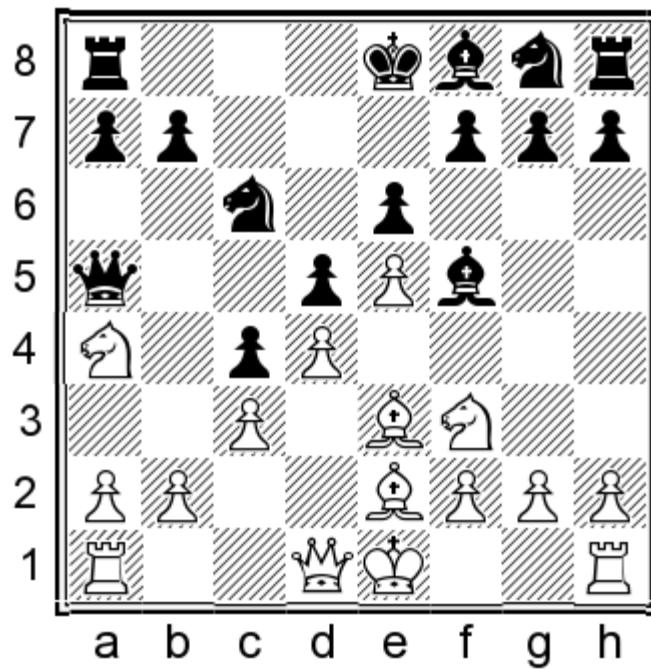


8. Nc4

This may not be White's most principled decision, but it is quite possible and leads to fresh and not so well investigated positions.

8... Qa5+ 9. c3 c4

Black's other possibility here is 9... cxd4! ?



10. $\text{b4!?$ N

This is an original idea.

10...♞d8

This is a positional concession by Black. Now, after the queenside has been reliably blocked, White can gradually develop his initiative on the kingside.

The objective evaluation of the position probably hinges on the principled move 10...♞xb4!? There might follow 11.cxb4 ♜xb4 12.♞c5 (12.0-0? ♞c2?) 12...♞c2+ 13.♜f1 ♞xa1 14.♞xa1 ♞c7!? 15.♞h4 ♞e7 16.g4 ♞g6

11.0-0

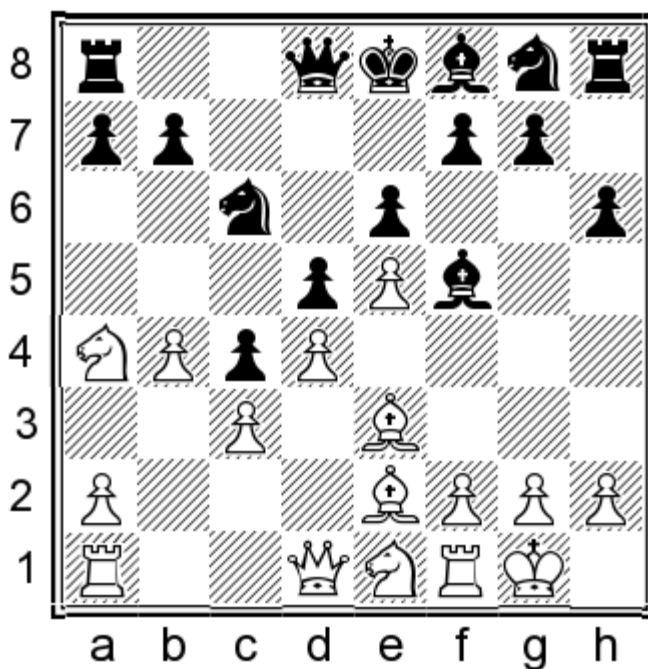
It was sensible for White to retreat in advance his knight to the b2-square, so that after b7-b5, he could begin, before the opponent, active operations on the a-file with 11.♞b2 b5 12.a4.

11...h6

It was too early for the move 11...b5, because of 12.♞c5 a5? 13.a4!±

12.♞e1

White had to choose now the more prudent line: 12.♞b2 b5 13.a4±



12...b5!

Now, after White's knight has occupied the e1-square, Black's queenside counterplay is quite justified.

13.♞b2

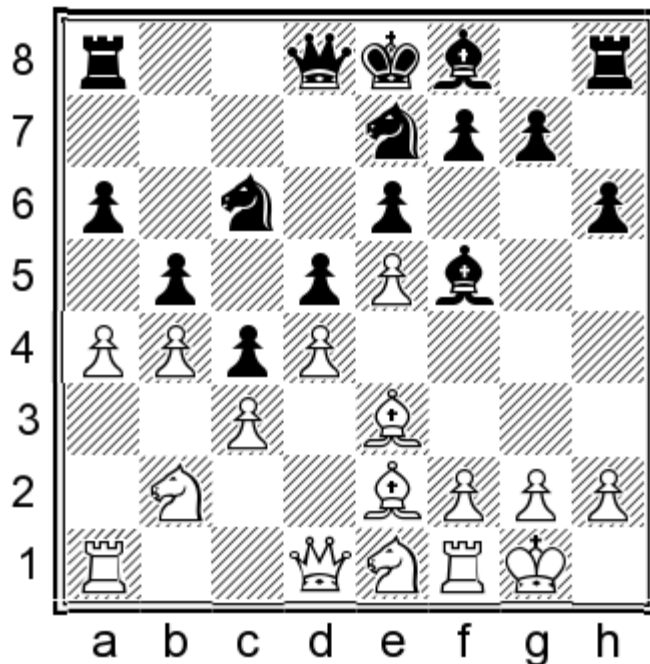
13.♞c5 a5 14.a4 ♞xc5 15.dxc5 ♜b8!

13...♞ge7

Black did not take the risk to try a very good chance and presented his opponent with the initiative. He had to play

instead 13...a5!? 14.a4 axb4!? (14...♖b6∞) 15.axb5 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 ♗a5∞

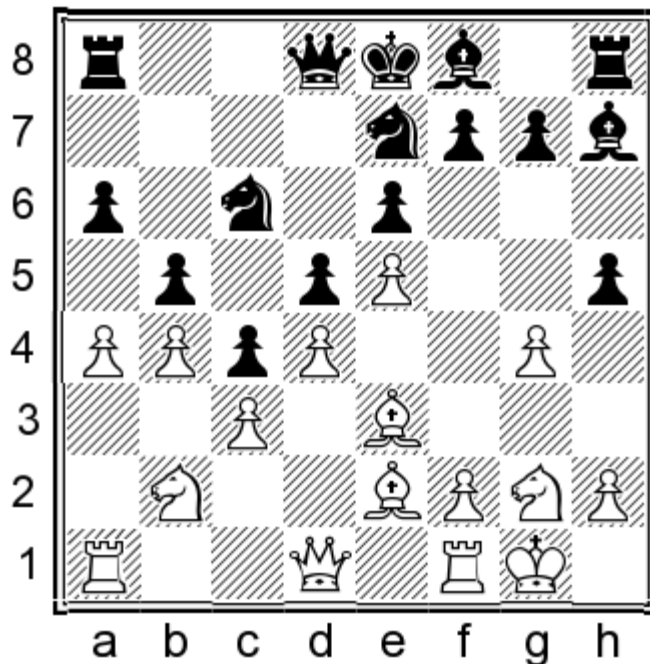
14.a4 a6



15.g4

White follows a standard plan for similar pawn-structures. He advances his kingside pawns and frees in the process the g2-square for his knight. From there, it protects his own king and may join quickly in the attack against the enemy monarch.

15...♗h7 16.♘g2 h5!?



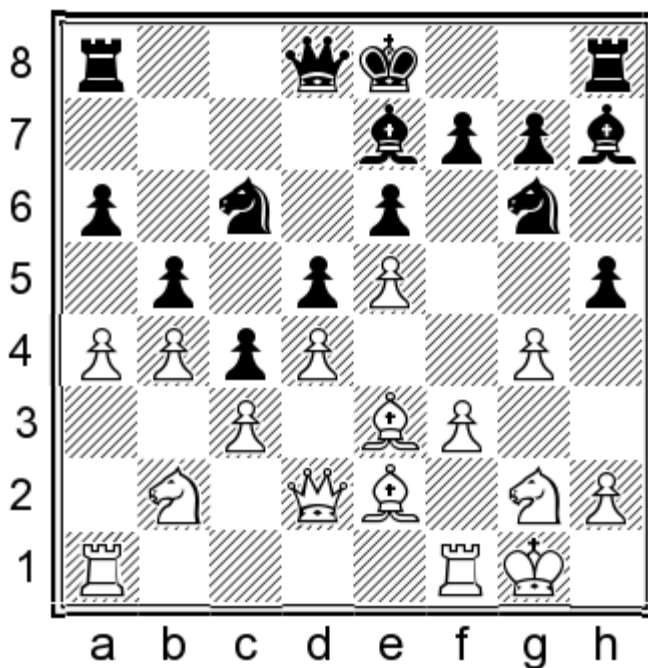
17.f3!?

It was not necessary for White to be so principled. He could have captured the pawn instead 17.gxh5!? ♖f5 18.♔g4±, but even after the move in the game, Black had enough problems to worry about. His position remained rather cramped.

17...♗g6 18.♖d2?!

It was better for White to play here 18.♖e1 ♕e7 19.axb5 axb5 20.gxh5± and Black could not reply with 20...♗h4?, because of 21.♖xa8+—

18...♕e7



19.♗d1?

White is not on the alert.

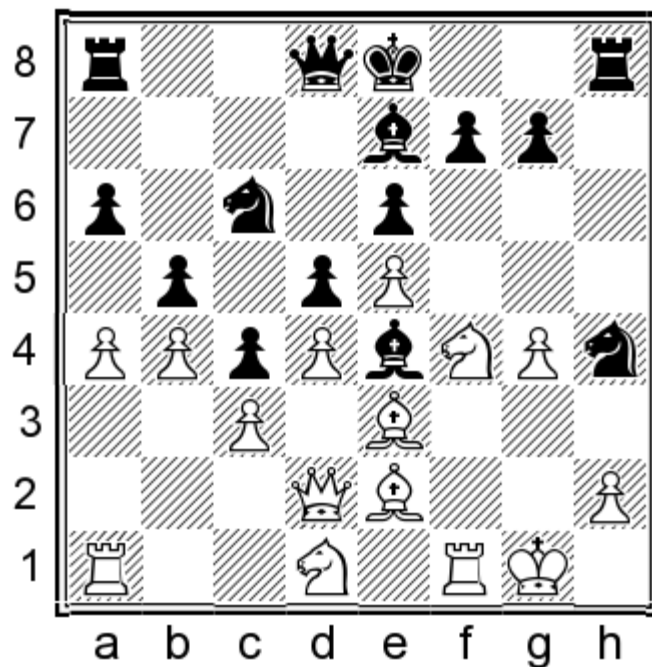
19.gxh5 ♗h4 20.♗xh4 ♕xh4 21.♖h1±

19...hxg4 20.fxg4 ♗h4

After the surprising move 20...bxa4!, Black could have seized the initiative: 21.♖xa4 a5± 22.b5?! ♗a7!±.

21.♗f4 ♕e4?!

He had to play instead 21...bxa4 22.♖xa4 0-0∞



22. ♖h5!?

White could have tested his opponent about the purposefulness of his last move with the line: 22. ♖f2!? ♗f3+ 23. ♕xf3 ♕xf3 24. ♖4h3!, with the idea 24... ♕xg4 25. ♖xg4 ♜xh3 26. ♚f2±

22... ♜h7 23. ♕f4

This move is very difficult to understand... After the simple improvement of the position of his pieces 23. ♖g3 ♕g6 24. ♖f2, White would have been clearly better.

23... ♖g6?

It looks like Black has completely forgotten about the missed possibility on his move 21 – 23... bxa4!? 24. ♜xa4 a5!?∞

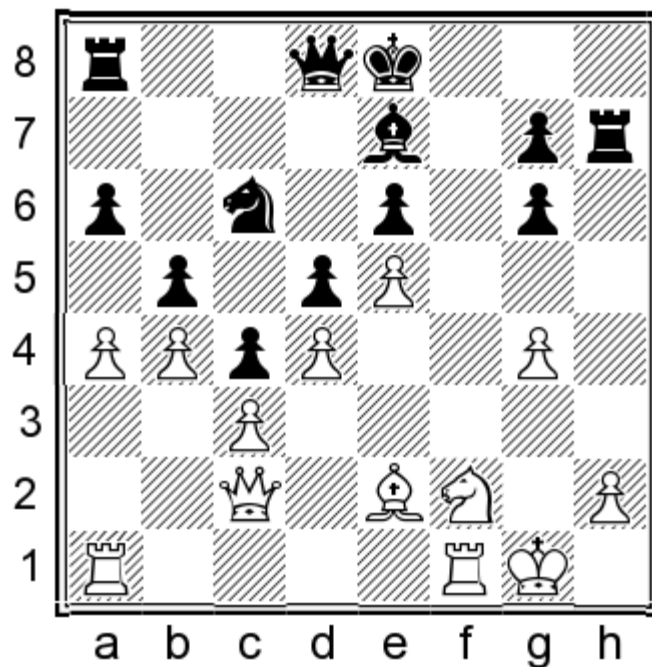
24. ♖f2 ♖xf4 25. ♖xf4 ♕g6

Now, he has to retreat...

26. ♖xg6

White consolidates the advantage he has obtained once again...

26... fxg6 27. ♚c2±



27...♖h6?!

Black would have preserved some practical chances following 27...♔d7 28.♙xg6 ♖h6 29.♙xg7 ♗h8 30.♙xh8 ♖axh8 31.h3 ♕g5.

28.g5!

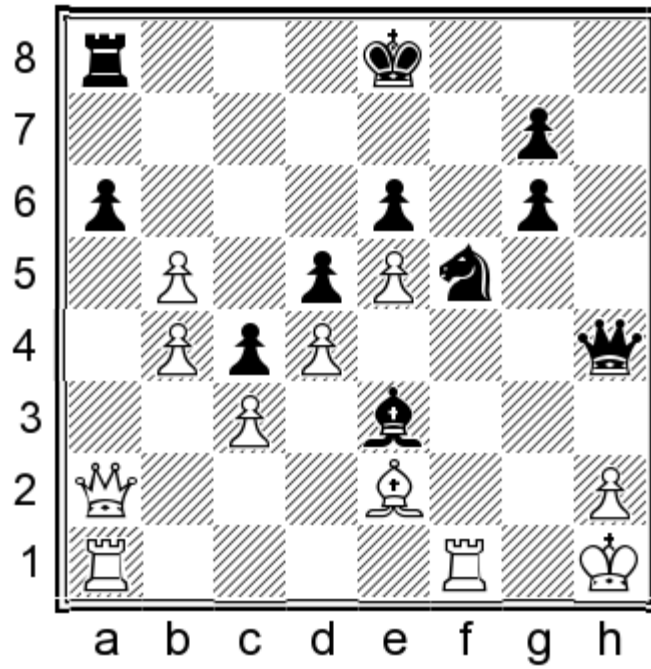
This is a spectacular move and naturally, it is based on the principle “This is also possible...”

28...♕xg5 29.♘g4 ♘e7 30.♘xh6 ♕xh6

30...gxf6 31.♙a2 ♖b8 32.♕g4+-

31.♙a2 ♘f5 32.axb5 ♕e3+ 33.♔h1 ♗h4

Black’s desperate attack is a bit too late and at first White reacts very precisely...



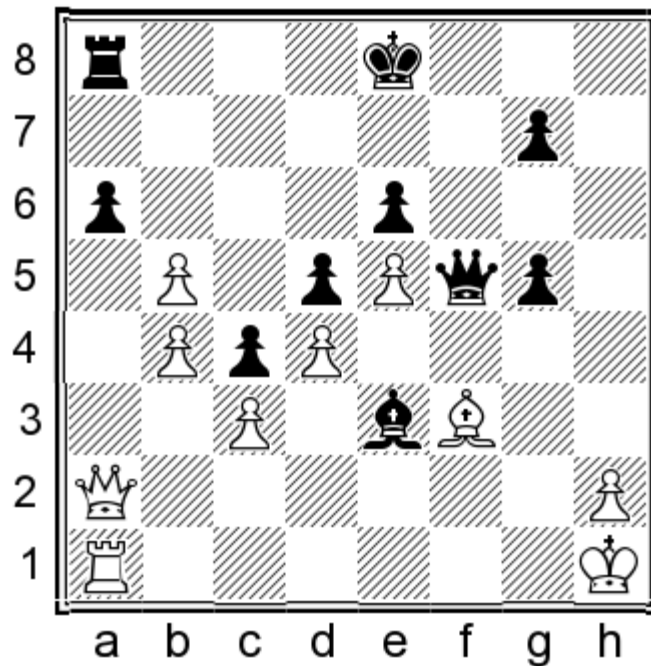
34.♞f3! g5 35.♞xf5 ♚e4+

35...exf5 36.♞f3+-

36.♞f3?!

White was winning easily after 36.♞f3 g4 37.♞af1 ♔d7 38.♞d1 gxf3 39.♞xf3+-.

36...♞xf5



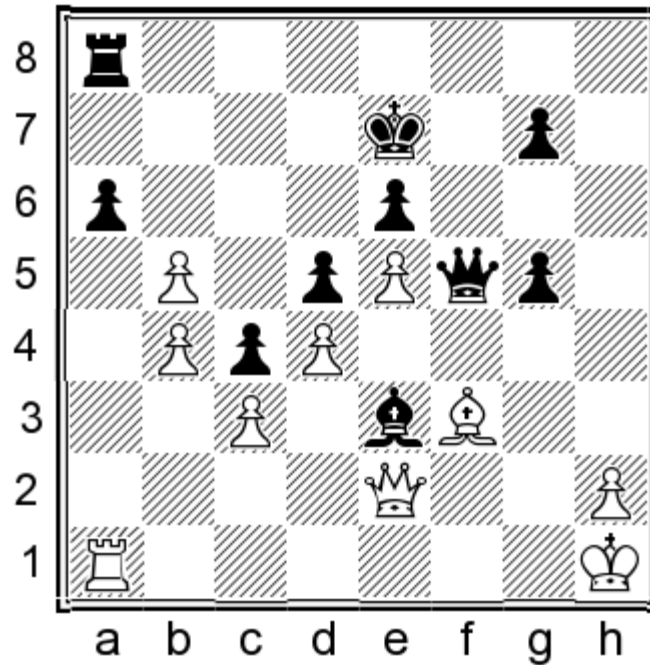
37.♞g2?

He was still winning after 37. ♖e2, with the following possible developments 37... ♗d3 38. ♗xd3 cxd3 39. bxa6 ♕d2 40. b5 ♕xc3 41. b6+-

37... ♕e7! 38. ♗e2

This is a correct decision, but it is too late for it.

White possibly intended to play the attractive move 38. ♕xd5, but it would have been the perfect way for him to fall into Black's prepared net: 38... exd5 39. ♗xd5 ♖h8= 40. bxa6?? ♖xh2+-

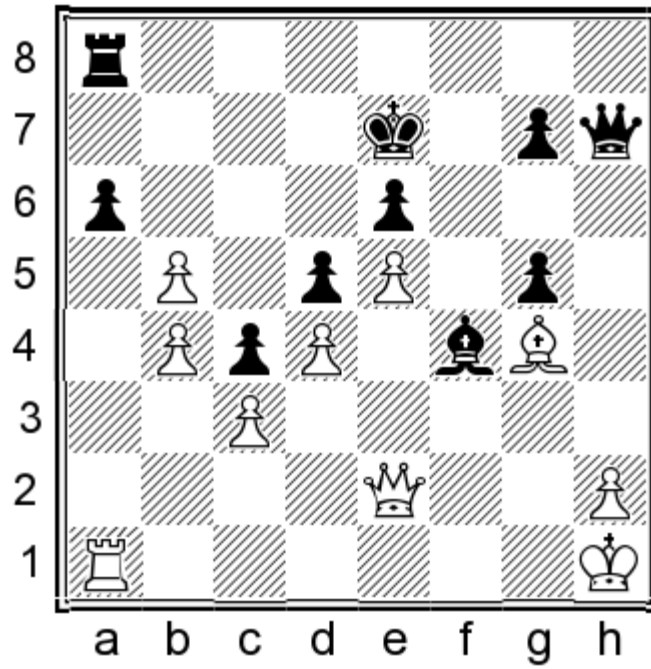


38... ♕f4?

The Chinese player is again unlucky.

After the fantastic resource 38... ♖h8! =, the position may be used as an example in a textbook about tactics. It may serve the same purpose even like this, though... 39. ♗xe3 (39. bxa6 ♗f4 40. a7 ♖xh2+ 41. ♗xh2 ♗xf3+ 42. ♗g2 ♗h5=) 39... ♖h3 40. ♖f1 (40. bxa6 ♖xf3 41. ♗e2 ♖f2=) 40... g4 41. bxa6 ♖xf3 42. ♖xf3 gxf3 43. ♗f2 ♗b1+ 44. ♗g1 ♗e4=

39. ♕g4 ♗h7



40.bxa6?

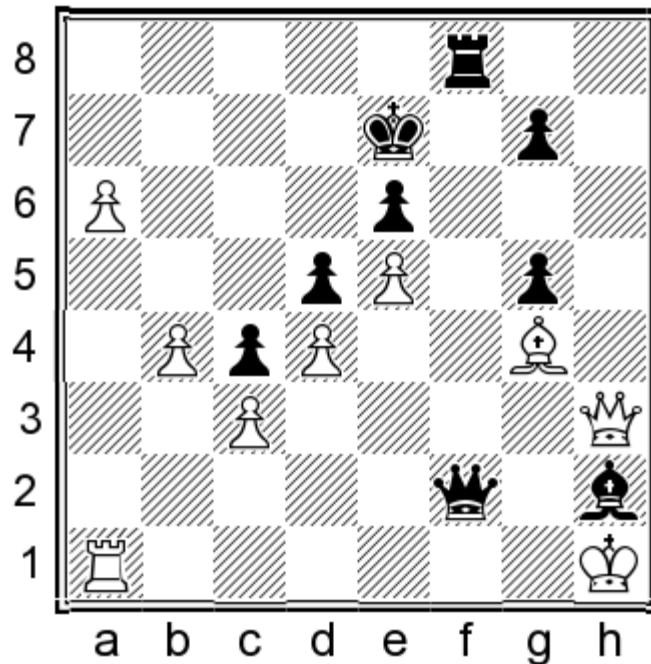
The readers should not be bothered by the great number of mistakes in this game. It is well known that one of the best way of learning things is to analyse the mistake of others...

40.♖xa6+- ♜h8 41.h3.

40...♙xh2! 41.♔g2 ♚h4 42.♗f3 ♝f8 43.♗h3

43.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 44.a7 ♗xg4=

43...♗f2+ 44.♔h1



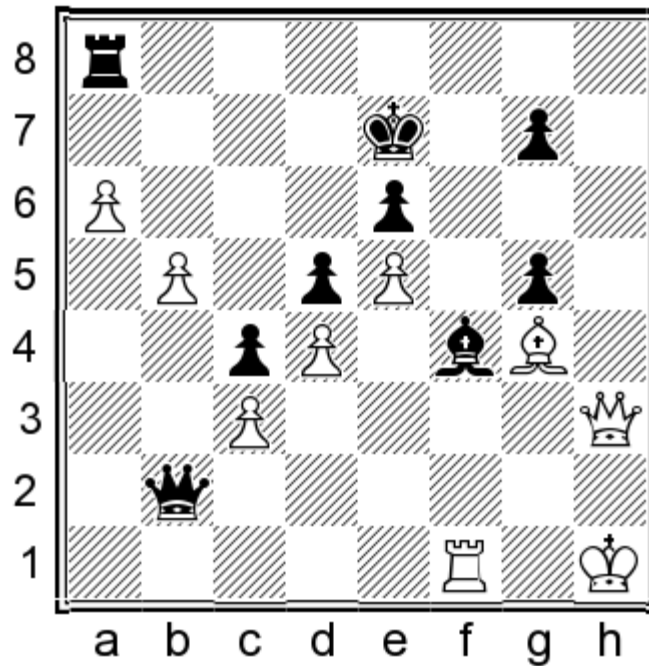
44...♖b2?

44...♔g3! 45.a7 ♖f4! 46.a8=♚ ♖xa8 47.♖xa8 ♖e4+ 48.♔g1 ♖e3=

45.♖d1!+- ♔f4 46.♖f1?

46.b5! ♖xb5 47.♖h7+-

46...♖a8 47.b5



47...♖xb5?

47...♖c2! 48.♔xe6 ♖e4+ 49.♔g1 ♔e3+ 50.♔h2 ♔f4=

48.♖h7+- ♖f8 49.♖a1 ♖e8 50.♖b1

50.♖xg7+ ♖f7 51.♖h6+-

50...♖h8 51.♖b7+ ♔d8 52.♖b8+ ♔c7 53.♖xh8

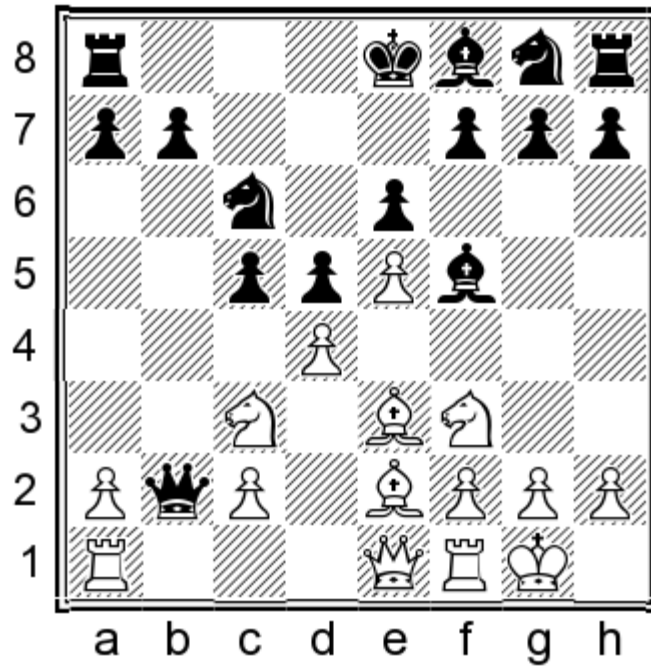
53.♖xe8 ♖xh7+ 54.♔g1 ♔b6 55.♖xe6+ ♔a7 56.♖c6+-

53...♖xb8 54.♖xb8+ ♔xb8 55.♔xe6 ♔d2 56.♔xd5 ♔xc3 57.e6 ♔b4 58.♔xc4 g4 59.♔g2 ♔d6 60.♔f2 ♔a7 61.♔f1 g3+ 62.♔f3 ♔b6 63.♔e4 ♔e7 1-0

12 Karjakin – Laznicka

Poikovsky 2011

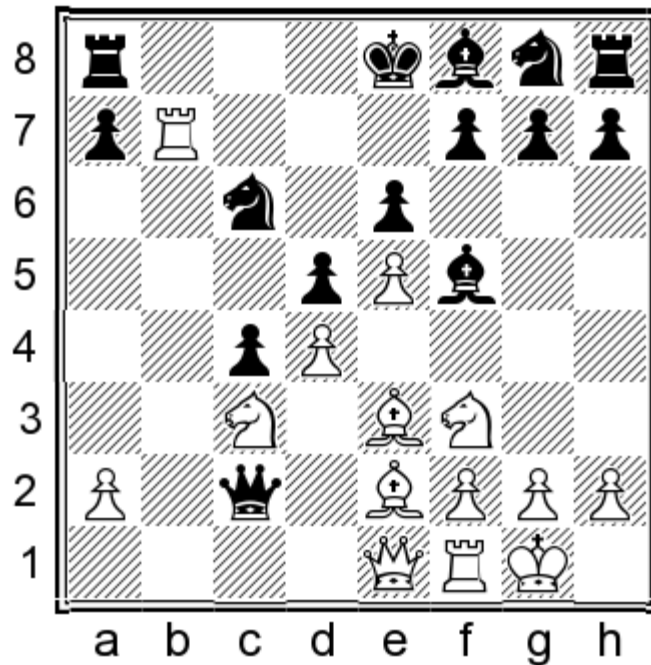
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♔f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♔e2 c5 6.♔e3 ♖b6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.0-0 ♖xb2 9.♖e1



9...c4

This move is at least very risky for Black. The main theoretical discussions are centred around the move 9...cx4. Still, White must play super-precisely in order to put in doubt Black's move 9. White succeeds in doing this, though...

10.♖b1 ♜xc2 11.♞xb7

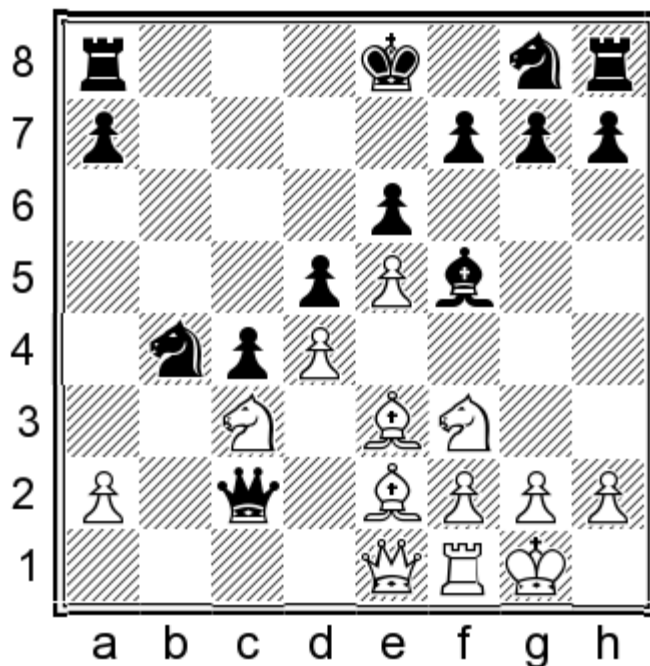


11...♞b4?!

It was correct for Black to choose here 11...♞b8 and although his situation would remain very precarious, but it would be still defensible. There might follow 12.♞xb8+ ♜xb8 13.♞d1 ♜b2 14.♞a4+ ♜d8 (14...♞d7 15.♞b5,) 15.♞g5 ♜b7

(15...♖h6 16.♗xd5 exd5 17.♜a5+ ♔c8 18.♗xf7 ♗xf7 19.♞xd5 ♗d8 20.♞xc4+ ♔b7 21.♞d5+ ♗dc6 22.e6 ♕g6 23.♕xc6+ ♗xc6 24.♞d7+-) 16.f3↑

12.♞xb4 ♗xb4



13.♕d1!

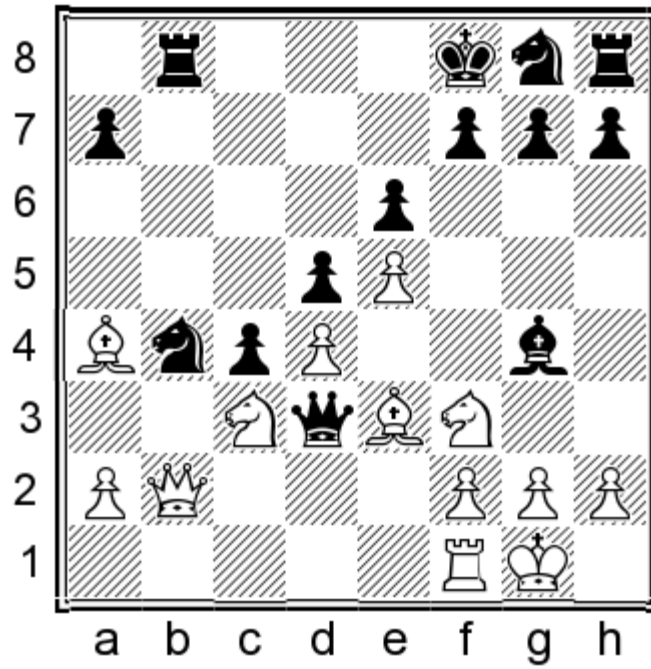
This is a serious improvement in comparison to the previous game on this subject and it followed with 13.♞a1 ♗xa2! 14.♗xa2 ♞a4 15.♗c3 ♞xa1 16.♞xa1 ♗e7 17.♕c1 ♞b8 18.♕d1 0-0 19.♕a3 ♞b7 20.♕a4 a6 21.h3= Motylev – Alsina Leal, Moscow 2011.

13...♞d3 14.♕a4+ ♔f8 15.♞a1 ♕g4

White was threatening to trap the enemy queen with 16.♗e1.

16.♞b2 ♞b8

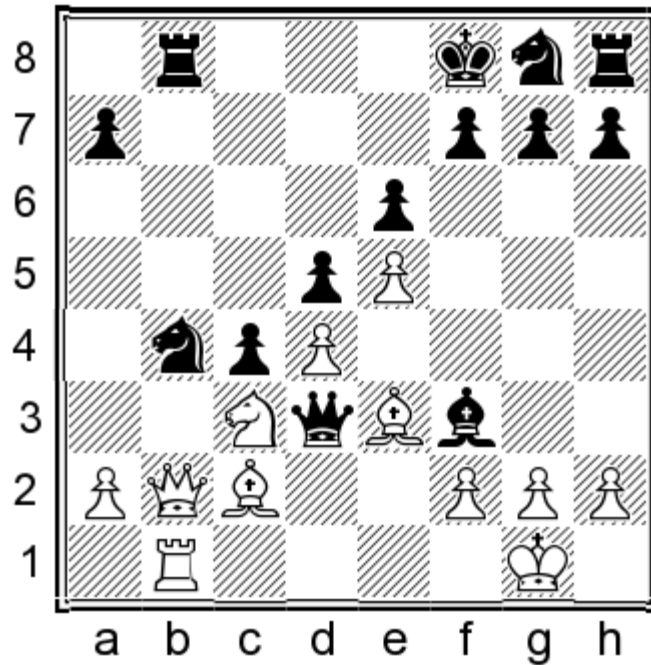
16...a5 17.♗e1 ♞g6 18.a3+-



17. ♖b1! ♙xf3

17...f6 18. ♗e1 ♜g6 19. ♚xb4+! (It was also good for White to play the more modest line: 19.f3 ♗h5 20.a3 ♗c6 21. ♚xb8+ ♗xb8 22. ♖xb8+ ♖e7 23. ♖b7+ ♖f8 24. ♗e2+-) 19...♖xb4 20. ♖xb4 ♜h5 (20...♖e7 21. ♖b7+ ♖d8 22. ♗b5 ♚b1 23. ♗d2+-) 21. ♖b8+ ♖e7 22.f3 ♗f5 23. ♗c1+-

18. ♗c2

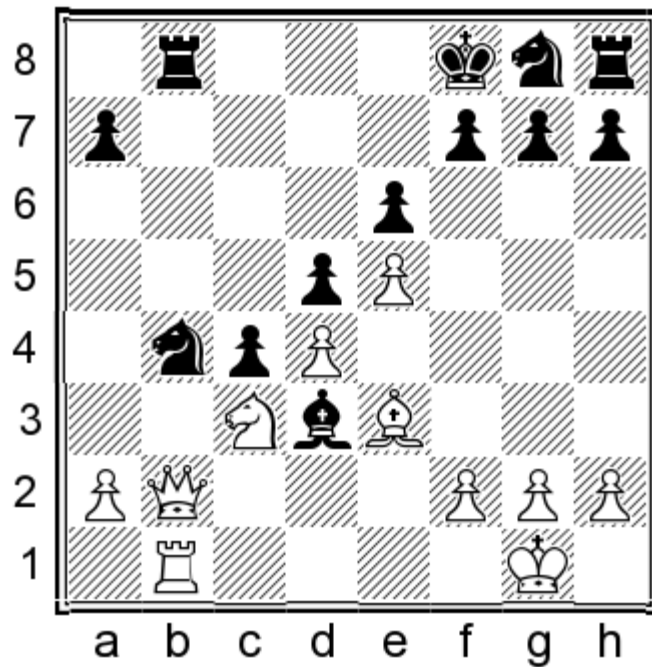


18... ♗e2?

This move loses immediately. Black had to play instead 18... ♚xc2 19. ♚xc2 ♗xc2 20. ♖xb8+ ♖e7 21.gxf3 f6 22. ♖b7+

♔d8 23.♖xa7 ♘e7 24.♗b5±

19.♙xd3 ♘xd3



20.a3!

20.♖c1?! ♘e7∞

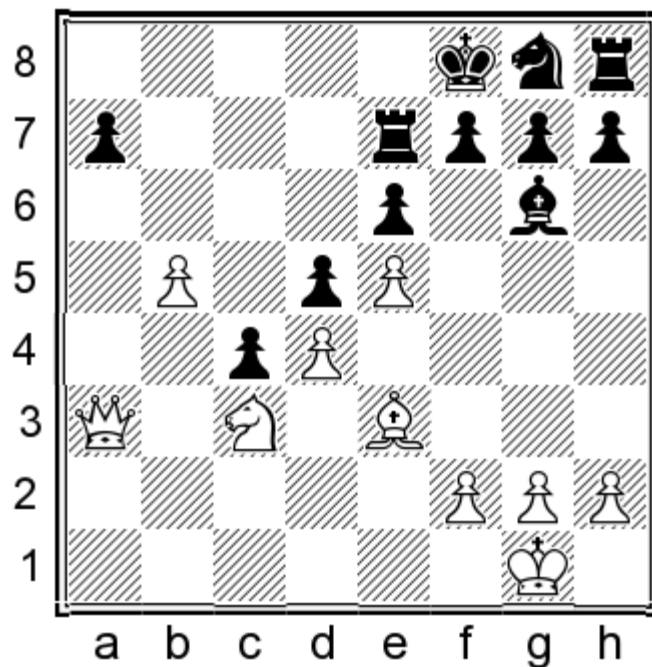
20...♙xb1

20...♗c6 21.♖xb8+ ♘xb8 22.♖xb8+ ♔e7 23.♗b5+—

21.axb4 ♙g6 22.♖a3

22.b5!?! f6 23.♖a3+ ♔f7 24.b6!?! (24.♖xa7+?! ♘e7) 24...axb6 25.♗b5+—

22...♖b7 23.b5+ ♖e7



24. ♖f4

This move is sufficient for victory, but White could have continued in a more forceful way – 24. b6!? axb6 25. ♗b5 f6 26. ♕d2 ♖e8 27. ♘d6 ♗c6 28. ♕b4+–

24...h6 25.h4

25. ♜a5 ♗f5 26. ♕c1+–

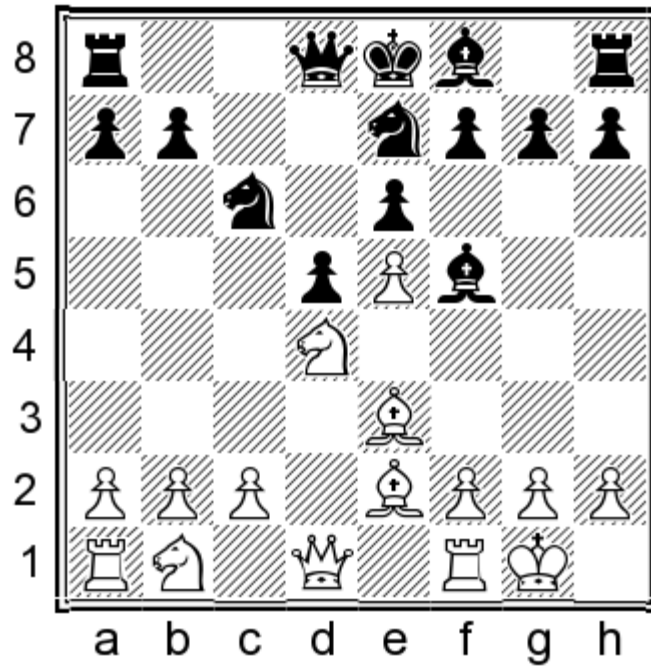
25...♞h7 26. ♜a6 ♗f5 27. ♕c1 f6 28. ♕a3 fxe5 29. ♜c8+ ♔f7 30. ♘xd5 1–0

This was a very good and dynamic game illustrating perfectly White's obvious, as well as concealed, attacking possibilities in this variation.

13 Kravtsiv – Dreev

Jerusalem 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 c5 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♗e3 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♘ge7



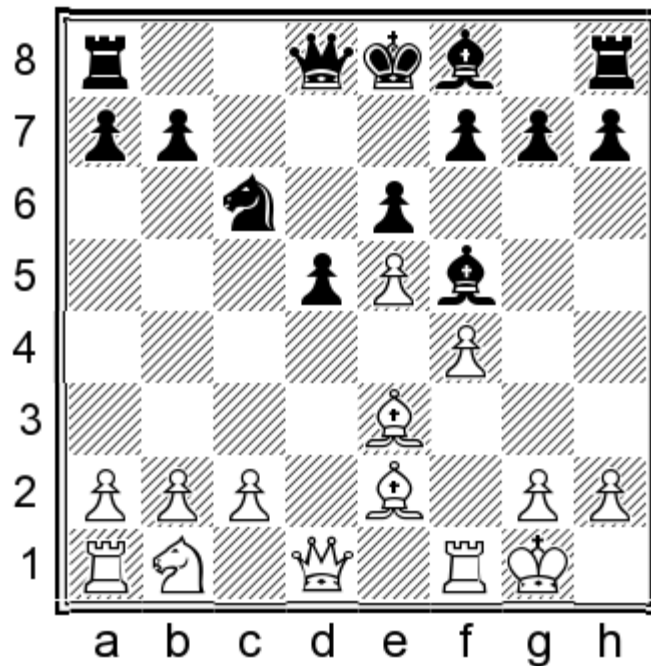
9.f4?!

This is a bit too straightforward decision.

It was correct for White to choose 9.♘b5, as I had recommended in the theoretical part of this book.

9...♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♖c6 11.♙e3?!

White remains ignorant about the possible dangers. It was correct for him to play 11.c3!=



11...♗a5!

Black will develop his bishop comfortably to the c5-square, creating an uncomfortable situation for his opponent on the queenside.

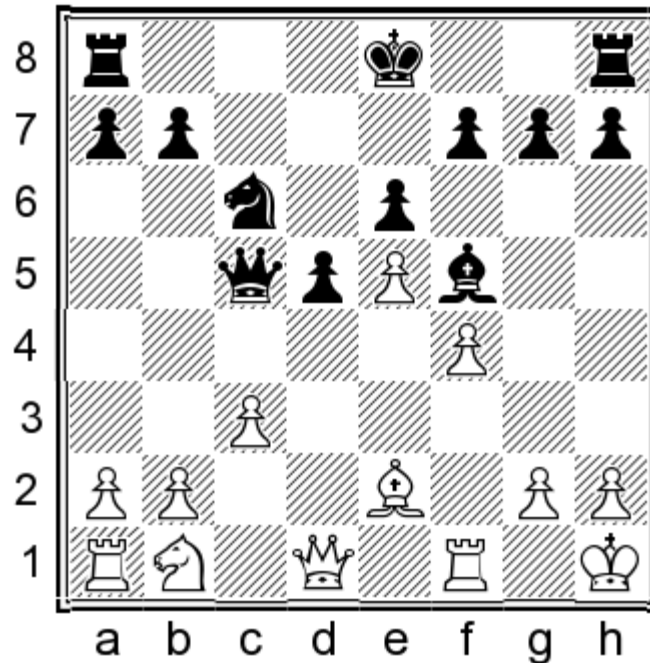
I believe his last move is stronger than 11...g5, which leads to an unclear position.

12.♖h1

It was better for White to opt for 12.♘d2 ♕c5 13.♙f2 ♜b6 14.♘b3 ♕xf2+ 15.♞xf2 0-0

12...♕c5 13.♕xc5 ♜xc5 14.c3

14.♕d3 ♕xd3 (14...♕g6!??) 15.cxd3 ♞c8 16.♘c3 0-0 17.♞d2 ♜b6 (17...♞a5!?)



14...♜b6!

This is a very good idea. Black provokes his opponent's queen to occupy the b3-square, so that after

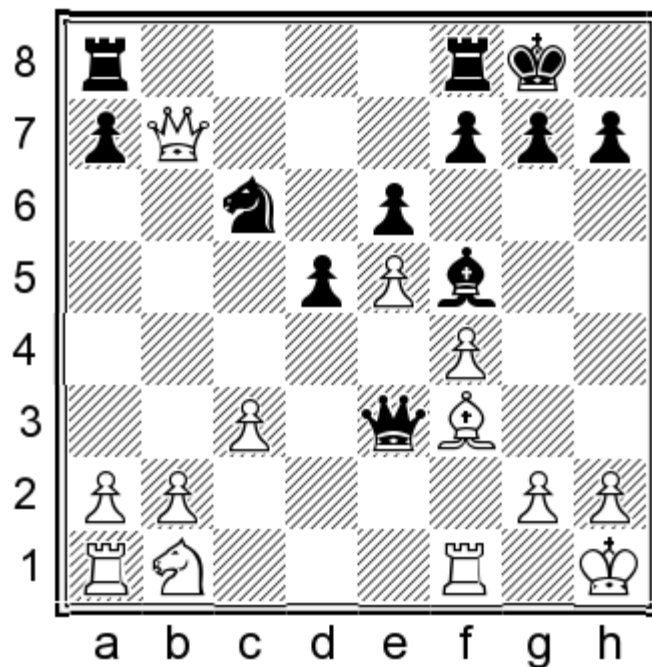
15.♜b3

he can play

15...♞e3! 16.♜xb7?

This principled move is... a mistake. It was correct for White to play 16.♕b5 0-0 17.♞f3 ♜c5 18.♘d2 ♞ac8

16...0-0 17.♕f3



17...♖fc8

It was also good for Black to have chosen 17...♙d3 18.♞d1 ♖fc8+

18.♜a3 ♞ab8 19.♚d7

White would not be happy either after 19.♞ae1 ♚xf4 20.♚a6 ♚d2.

19...♚b6

His queen is already trapped.

20.♙xd5 ♞c7+ 21.♜c4 ♞xd7 22.♜xb6 ♞xb6 23.♙f3 g5!

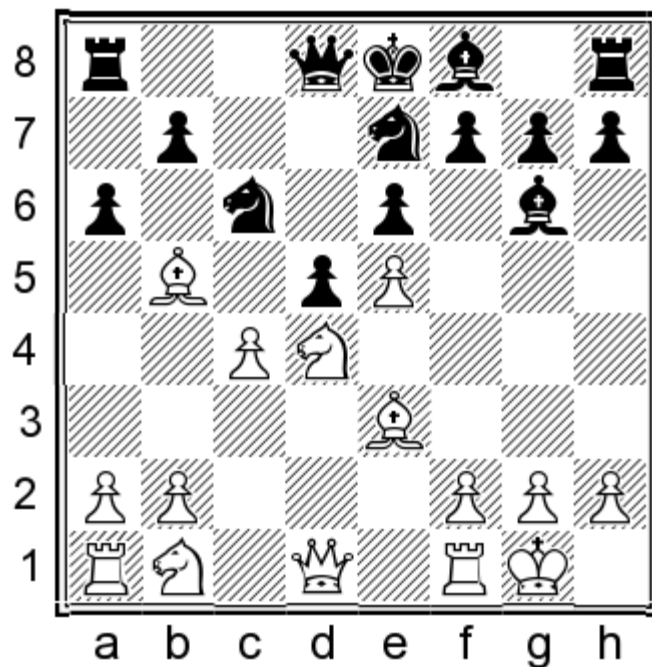
The rest is very simple.

24.g4 ♙d3 25.♞fe1 gxf4 26.♞ad1 ♜e7 27.b3 ♙b5 28.c4 ♞xd1 29.♞xd1 ♙c6 30.♜g2 ♜g6 0-1

14 Bartel – Laznicka

Dresden 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 4.♜f3 e6 5.♙e2 c5 6.♙e3 cxd4 7.♜xd4 ♜e7 8.0-0 ♜bc6 9.♙b5 ♙g6 10.c4 a6



11. ♕a4!?

This is an original idea.

11... dxc4 12. ♖a3 ♕d3 13. ♖c1!?

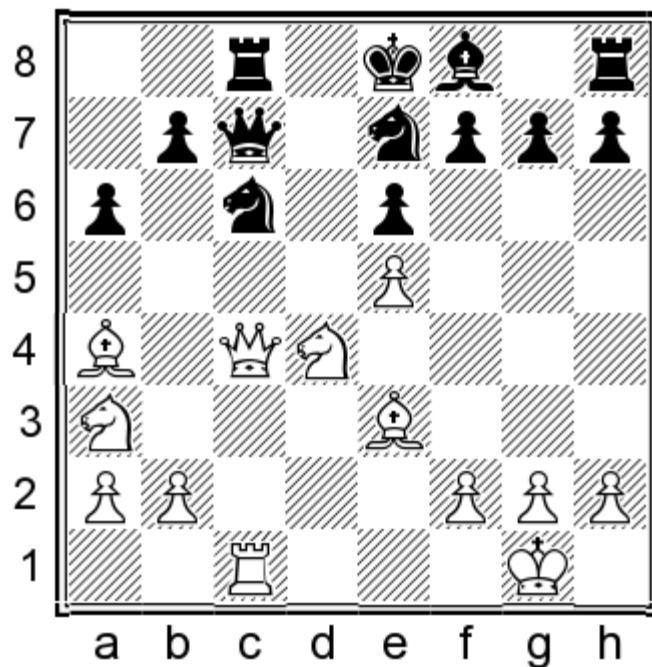
It may be also interesting for White to try the more prudent move 13. ♖e1, with the idea to counter Black's natural response 13... b5? with the line: 14. ♗axb5 axb5 15. ♕xb5! ♖d7 16. b3+- . Still, after 13... ♖d7! 14. b3 ♗d5, the position would have remained rather unclear.

13... ♕xf1

This is a principled response.

14. ♖xf1 ♖c8 15. ♖xc4 ♖c7?

15... ♖d7 16. ♖c2! ♗d5! 17. ♗xc6 (17. ♗c4 g6∞) 17... ♕xa3 18. ♗b8 ♖xc2 19. ♕xd7+ ♖e7 20. ♕g5+ f6 21. ♖xc2 ♖xb8=



16. ♖c2?

White in his turn makes a mistake too.

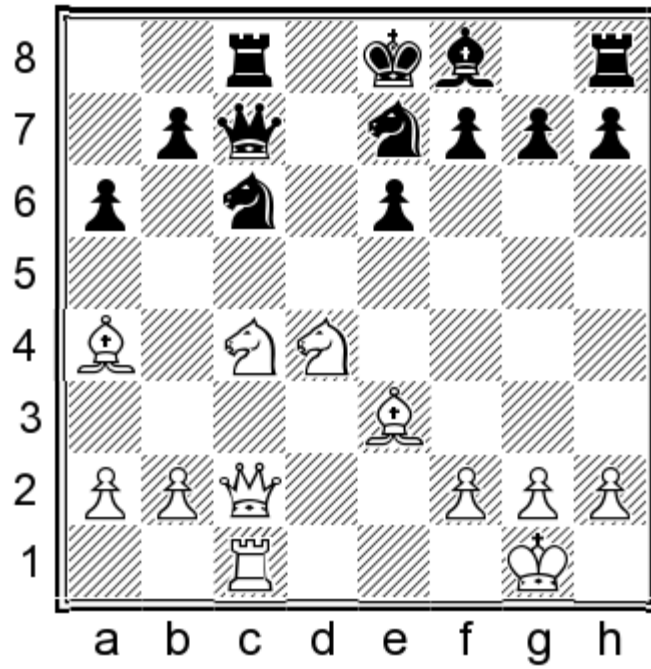
After the correct reply 16. ♖b3, Black would be beyond salvation, for example: 16...g6 17. ♘c4 ♘d5 18. ♘xc6 bxc6 19. ♘b6 ♘xb6 20. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 21. ♙xb6+—

16... ♗xe5?

Black would have preserved some chances of survival following 16...g6 17. ♘c4 ♘d5 18. ♘xc6 bxc6 19. ♖b3 ♘xe3 20. ♘b6 ♖xe5 21. ♘xc8 ♙c5±

17. ♘c4 ♖c7

17... ♖b8 18. ♘a5 ♖c7 19. ♘xb7 ♖xb7 20. ♘xc6 ♘xc6 21. ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 22. ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 23. ♗xc6+—

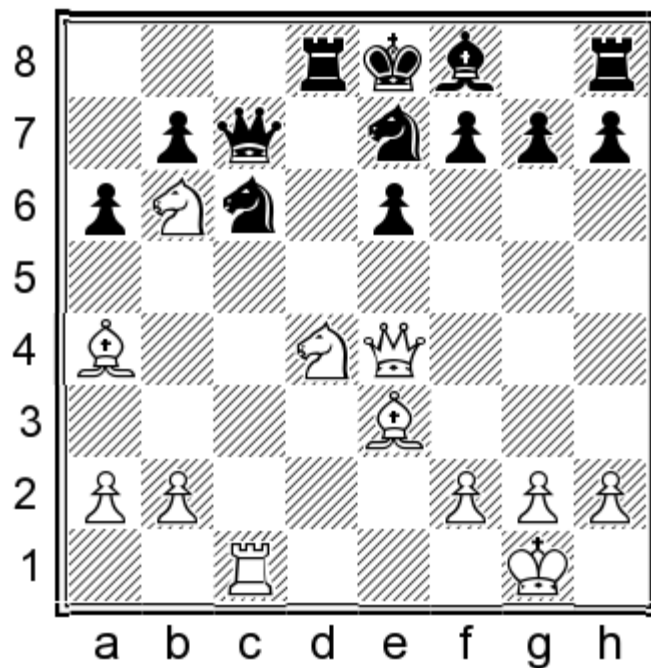


18. ♖b6?

The readers may be surprised with the quantity of the mistakes in this game. In fact, this is quite normal, since the positions of this type are very difficult to play over the board and very often the best moves are tremendously hard to find. For example, here, after the not so obvious move 18. ♖e4!, Black would be in a great trouble. 18...g5 (18...g6 19. ♕f4; 18...♖d8 19. ♖d1+-; 18...♗d5 19. ♗xc6 bxc6 20. ♗e5+-) 19. ♗xe6 fxe6 20. ♖xe6 ♖d8 21. ♗e5 ♖d6 22. ♖f7+ ♔d8 23. ♗c4 ♗c8 24. ♗xd6 ♕xd6 25. ♖f6+-

18... ♖d8 19. ♖e4?!

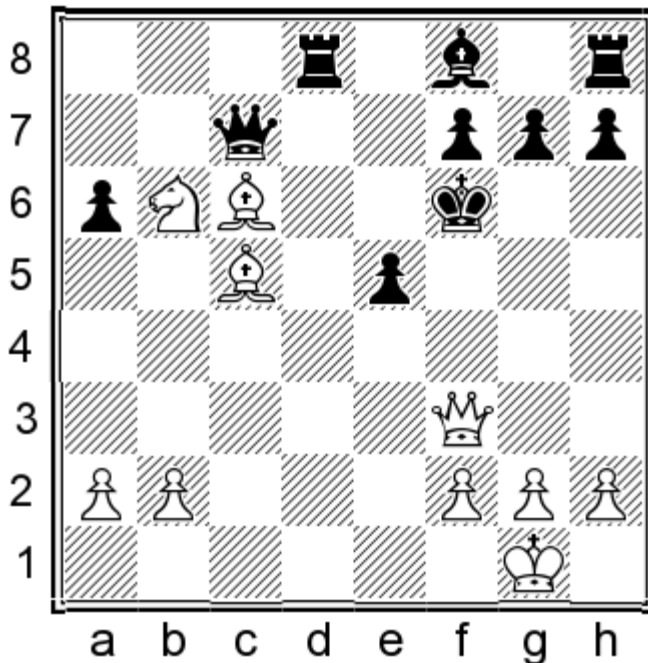
This is the same move, but not with the same effect...



19...e5??

Black returns the favour and with an interest... After the natural response 19...g6, White had already to think about equality: 20.♖xc6 ♖xc6 21.♗c4 (21.♞xc6?! bxc6 22.♙xc6+ ♔e7 23.♙c5+? ♕f6—) 21...♙d6 22.g3 0-0 23.♙b6=

20.♖xc6 ♖xc6 21.♞xc6 bxc6 22.♙xc6+ ♔e7 23.♙c5+ ♕f6 24.♞f3+



24...♕e6

24...♕g6 25.♙e4+ ♕h6 26.♙e3+ g5 27.♞f6+ ♕h5 28.♞xg5#

25.♙d5+ ♞xd5 26.♞xd5+ ♕f5 27.♗d7

It was simpler for White to win with 27.♞f3+ ♕e6 28.♞b3+ ♕f5 29.♞h3+ ♕g6 30.♞g4+ ♕f6 31.♗d5#

27...♕g6

27...♙xc5 28.♞xf7+ ♕e4 29.♗f6+ gxf6 30.♞xc7 ♙d4 31.b3+—

28.♗xe5+ ♕f6 29.♗d7+ ♕g6 30.g4 1-0

Index of Variations

Chapter 1 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

various

3...c5 4.dc various w/o 4...c6

4.dc e6 5.a3 various

A) 5.a3 c7

B) 5.a3 c5 6.g4

B1) 6.b4!?

B2) 6.f3!

C) 5.a3 c6 6.f3 c5 7.b4 e7

C1) 7.b4 b6 8.b2 f6

C2) 8.b2 ge7

Chapter 2 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 c6 5.f3 g4

6.b5

6.c3! various

A) 6.c3! e6 7.b4

B) 6.c3! e6 7.e3 various

B1) 7.e3 xf3 8.gxf3 xe5

B2) 8.gxf3 ge7

Chapter 3 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5

A) 4.c4 e6

B) 4.h4 h5

C) 4.bd2 e6

Chapter 4 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3

various

4...e6 5.e2 various

4...e6 5.e2 e7 6.0-0 various

A) 6.0-0 c8

B) 6.0-0 g6

Chapter 5 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 e7 6.0-0 c5

A) 7.a3

B) 7.c4 various

B1) 7.c4 dxc4

B2a) 7.c4 d1bc6 8.d1a3!?

B2b) 8.dxc5

Chapter 6 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0

various

A) 6...g6

B) 6...e7 7.dbd2 various

B1) 7.dbd2 g6

B2a) 7.dbd2 c8 8.e1

B2b) 8.b3

B2c) 8.a4

B2d) 8.c3

B3) 7.dbd2 c5 8.c4 various

B3a) 8.c4 c6

B3b) 8.c4 cxd4

B3c) 8.c4 a6

Chapter 7 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 d7 6.0-0 e7 7.dbd2 h6 8.d3

various

A) 8...g6

B) 8...g5 9.e1 various

B1) 9.e1 c5

B2) 9.e1 c7

C) 8...h7 9.d2 various

C1) 9.d2 g6

C2) 9.d2 f5

Chapter 8 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3

various

6...e7

Chapter 9 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 b6 7.c3

various

A) 7...c4

B) 7...xb2

C) 7...c6

Chapter 10 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 d7 7.0-0

various

A1) 7...c8 8.c4 dxc4 9.c3

A2) 9.d5

B1) 7...a6 8.c4 dxc4 9.d5

B2) 9.xc4!?

C1) 7...e7 8.c4!?

C2) 8.bd2!?

Chapter 11 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 cxd4 7.xd4

7...g6

7...e7 8.c4 various

8.c4 bc6 9.a4 various

A) 9.a4 dxc4

B) 9.a4 a6

Chapter 12 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 cxd4 7.xd4 e7 8.0-0 bc6 9.b5

various

A) 9...a6

B) 9...g6

Chapter 13 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 f5 4.f3 e6 5.e2 c5 6.e3 cxd4 7.xd4 e7 8.d2 bc6 9.f3

various

A) 9...a6

B) 9...g4

C) 9...e4

COMPLETE GAMES

1) Rodshtein – Arkell, Hastings 2015

2) Potapov – Alekseev, Moscow 2015

3) Nepomniachtchi – Motylev, Yaroslav 2014

4) Brkic – Dreev, Jerusalem 2015

5) Shirov – Dreev, Loo 2013

- 6) **Grischuk – Jobava**, Tbilisi 2015
- 7) **Svidler – Jobava**, Tbilisi 2015
- 8) **Gopal – Dragun**, Cappelle la Grande 2015
- 9) **Wei Yi – Lalith**, Hyderabad 2015
- 10) **Nakar – Sjugirov**, Jerusalem 2015
- 11) **Sethuraman – Zhou Jianchao**, Hyderabad 2015
- 12) **Karjakin – Laznicka**, Poikovsky 2011
- 13) **Kravtsiv – Dreev**, Jerusalem 2015
- 14) **Bartel – Laznicka**, Dresden 2015