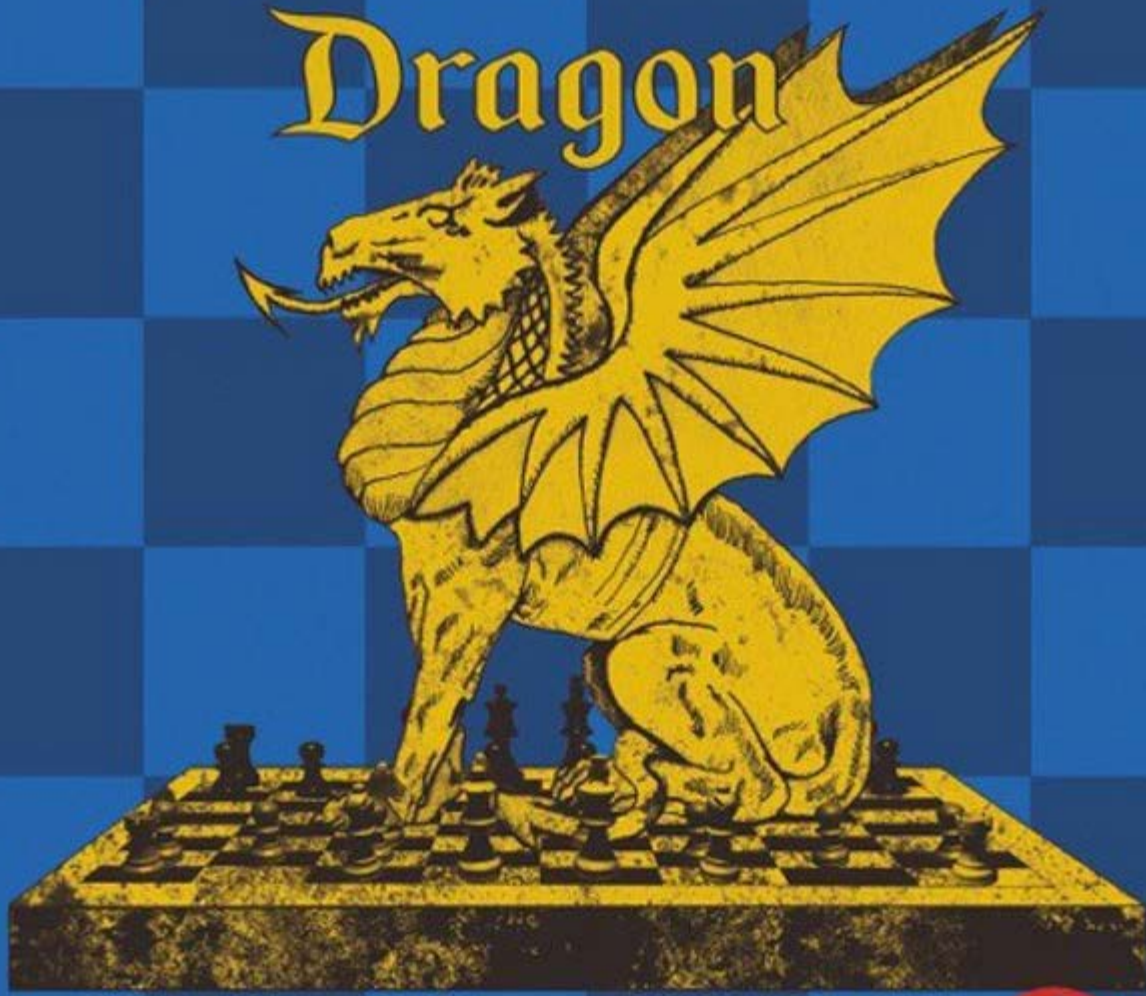


Raja Panjwani

# The Hyper Accelerated Dragon



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE

KEY TO SYMBOLS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1. CLASSICAL VARIATION (♘e2)

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4

CHAPTER 2. 7.♘c4: ANTI-YUGOSLAV VARIATION

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4 Part 5

CHAPTER 3. 7.♘c4: MY SYSTEM

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3

CHAPTER 4. MAROCZY BIND: BREYER VARIATION

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4 Part 5 Part 6 Part 7 Part 8

CHAPTER 5. MAROCZY BIND: MAIN LINE

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4 Part 5 Part 6

CHAPTER 6. 4.♙xd4 VARIATION

Part 1 Part 2

CHAPTER 7. ANTI-SICILIANS: ALAPIN AND MORRA

Part 1 Part 2 Part 3 Part 4 Part 5 Part 6

**Swipe left for next chapter**

# THE HYPER ACCELERATED DRAGON

by  
**Raja Panjwani**



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Managing Editor

Romain Edouard

Proofreading

Daniël Vanheirzeele

Graphic Artist

Philippe Tonnard

Cover design

Iwan Kerkhof

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# KEY TO SYMBOLS

- ! a good move
- ? a weak move
- !! an excellent move
- ?? a blunder
- !?! an interesting move
- ?! a dubious move
- only move
- = equality
- ∞ unclear position
- ∞̄ with compensation for the sacrificed material
- ± White stands slightly better
- ∓ Black stands slightly better
- ± White has a serious advantage
- ∓ Black has a serious advantage
- +– White has a decisive advantage
- + Black has a decisive advantage
- with an attack
- ↑ with initiative
- ↔ with counterplay
- Δ with the idea of
- ▷ better is
- ◁ worse is
- N novelty
- + check
- # mate

# INTRODUCTION

*It simply isn't an adventure worth telling if there aren't any dragons.*

J.R.R. Tolkien

## My Favorite Sicilian

I was introduced to the Accelerated Dragon when I was ten years old, more than seventeen years ago. It was arguably my first 'serious' defense against 1.e4: prior to then I would develop my pieces in a manner my father and I called 'P-Play' (the 'P' deriving from our family name) but which I later discovered is widely known as the Hippopotamus Defence. He and I were of similar strength at the time, and we studied the opening together from the then recently published, and now classic, *Accelerated Dragons* by IMs Donaldson and Silman.

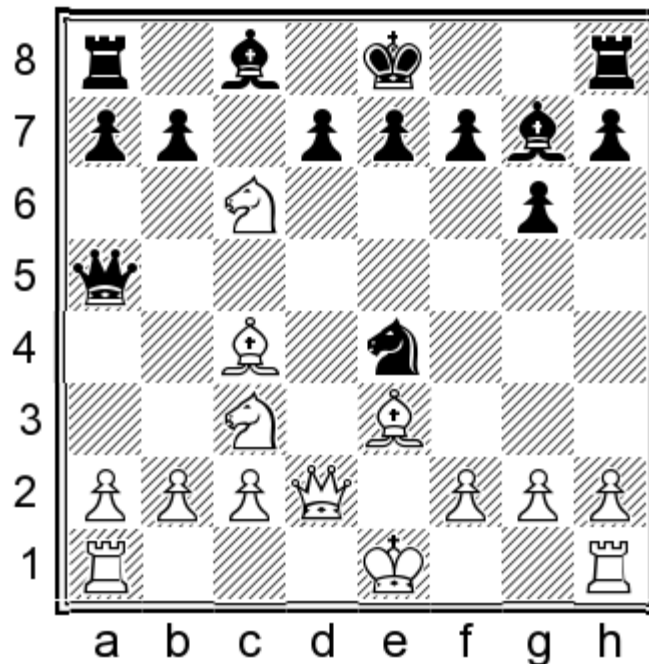
What drew me to the opening initially was the abundance of cheapos I could set up for my opponents in the early stages of the game, which even experts and masters seemed unprepared for. The following was always one of my favorites:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♖f6 7.♙c4 ♚a5 8.♚d2?

8.0-0

8...♗xe4! 9.♗xc6

9.♗xe4 ♚xd2+ 10.♙xd2 ♗xd4



9...♗xc3!! 10.♚xc3

10.bxc3 ♗xd2 11.♙xd2 bxc6

Beyond simple tricks like this one, I found that the positional themes of the opening were fairly easy to digest; for example, dark square control, central breakthrough (especially ...d7-d5), queenside expansion, as well as the typical favorable and unfavorable endgames which tend to arise. As I have matured as a player, my perspective on this opening has correspondingly transformed, but my respect and appreciation for its strength has only been enhanced. This book is an attempt to convey my current understanding and approach with black.

I have always felt that the Accelerated Dragon does not get its due respect among the Sicilians. Even its prodigal brother, the un-accelerated Dragon, had its time in the spotlight when it was used by Kasparov to twice defeat (and twice draw) Anand in their 1995 PCA World Championship match. Why then, has the Accelerated Dragon — the theoretically no worse off, and much safer of the two (I like to think of it as the only Sicilian where Black needn't worry about getting mated in 25 moves) — historically been only an occasional guest in top events, and, unlike every other respectable Sicilian, never occupied the central battlefield of a World Championship match? Part of the discrepancy is a vestige of the old (pre-1970s) dogma that in the Sicilian, to avoid suffocation, Black must prevent White from obtaining a 'clamp' pawn center (pawns on e4 and c4). Indeed, the Maroczy Bind (5.c4) has always been the bane of the Accelerated Dragon's existence. However, while this attitude towards the Sicilian may have been justifiable half a century ago, Black has since demonstrated counterattacking prospects against the e4/c4 clamp in a variety of structures, as in the Hedgehog, Kalashnikov, Kan, Taimanov, and certainly no less in the Accelerated Dragon.

I suspect that computers have deterred many potential devotees away from the Accelerated Dragon. Computer evaluations in the main lines tend to fluctuate between +0.25 and +0.5, which plausibly leads to the rationale that playing the Accelerated Dragon instead of the Berlin or Marshall — where evaluations are closer to +0.15 — is like playing with a small handicap straight out of the opening. Things, however, are not so simple. Computers evaluate each position by objective features, without regard for subjective factors which are very often more important in tournament chess. Machines systematically ignore the value of, for example, being able to follow one of a small number of thematic plans, irrespective of what the opponent does, saving on clock time as well as risk of mishandling the position. This sort of human element is unaccounted for by the engine, resulting in an inflated estimation of White's chances. In this regard, there are similarities between the Accelerated Dragon and the King's Indian Defense — another opening notoriously bastardized by the engine. King's Indian devotees are used to seeing +0.5 computer evaluations, but they are not discouraged because they recognize that there is a narrow margin of error for White, and to err is human. The same can be said for the Accelerated Dragon.

Fortunately, the tide of fashion is turning, and contemporary Accelerated Dragon experts like (super) Grandmasters Tiviakov, Mamedov, Iturrizaga, and Malakhov have demonstrated that this opening can be a reliable counter to 1.e4 even against top opposition. Recently, in fact, World Champion Magnus Carlsen upheld the Black side of a Maroczy to put a halt to Caruana's 7-0 run in the 2014 Sinquefeld Cup. I predict a bright future for this opening, for many reasons, but most of all because 1) The resulting positions are difficult for computers to properly assess- many '+=' evaluations are more accurately '=' but more importantly 'easier to play for Black', a factor which should not be underestimated especially considering the increasingly short time controls, and 2) There is plenty of unexplored terrain, which cannot be easily navigated by the positional dictums we are brought up with, because the Accelerated Dragon is a genuinely nonstandard opening. This means that there is a competitive advantage to those who work out its unusual nuances, unlike in, say, the Najdorf or Sveshnikov where it often feels like the strategic ideas are all well known, and only concrete novelties are yet to be discovered (if it is unclear what I mean by this, I hope it isn't by the end of the book!).

### **The Accelerated Dragon State of Mind**

A friend of mine (a strong IM) recently commented to me that if he could be certain that his opponents wouldn't play the Maroczy bind, he would always play the Accelerated Dragon instead of his usual (un-accelerated, but I sometimes teasingly prefer 'un-playable') Dragon, because White can't play the critical Yugoslav Attack against the Accelerated Dragon (despite this being lesson #1 of the Accelerated Dragon, a surprising number of masters have not gotten the

memo). “However”, he continued, “in the Maroczy, Black is just playing for a draw, you can never win!” A loyal defender of my beloved pet opening, I insisted he had it all wrong, and that I welcome the Maroczy in must-win games with Black. “That’s really weird dude, you’re probably the only one” was his retort, but I think when it comes to the Accelerated Dragon, there’s a requisite state of mind needed in order to properly handle it — some players have had a conversion experience after catching a glimpse of its incredible power, while others haven’t. Plausibly as a result of this, from my experience there is a peculiar camaraderie among Accelerated Dragon practitioners. Whereas Najdorf ‘bros’ espouse a Darwinian angst that their novelty on move 25 in the Poisoned Pawn variation will be discovered, used, and rendered useless by their colleagues, I have found that Accelerated Dragon players enjoy discussing their ideas with each other. A personal anecdote of mine is fairly typical: in the final round of the 2013 US Masters tournament I was in a must-win ‘money game’ with Black against Cuban GM Abreu, and I noticed GM Rauf Mamedov (a leading expert on the Black side of the Accelerated Dragon) was taking an interest in the Maroczy Bind on my board. I won the game in a tense struggle, and afterwards when I was collecting my prize, Rauf kindly congratulated me on the win and took an interest in the 15...e6 line I played (see chapter 5), which he said he hadn’t studied before. I told him I was not too happy with the more popular 15...Qb6, but he asserted that from his analysis Black has no problems there — “it’s equal” he said. His confident proclamation was just the nudge I needed to look closer into some of the lines I thought were undesirable for Black, and on closer inspection I realized (unsurprisingly) he was right!

While this elusive ‘state of mind’ is somewhat ineffable, and better grasped from experience than anything else (if I am successful then the contents of this book will convey precisely this), I think it is helpful to think of the Maroczy as a close cousin of the Hedgehog. I understand the ‘philosophy’ of the Hedgehog in terms of how Mihai Suba describes it in his excellent *Dynamic Chess Strategy*. It is worth quoting him at length.

“White’s position looks ideal. That’s the naked truth about it, but the ‘ideal’ has by definition one drawback — it cannot be improved. ...In the early 1970s, the successes of Karpov and Andersson showed that [Hedgehog] positions are not only playable but offer as many winning chances as any other opening. This was in glaring conflict with classical strategy. White enjoys more space, better development [and] his position has no weaknesses. How is it possible that Black not only resists in these positions but sometimes wins? The only plausible answer lies in the hidden dynamics of the positions. After the opening, White’s position has all the qualities of a successful picture, but lacks concrete possibilities for improvement. Within our terminology, it is rigid (not elastic). Black’s position, in contrast, ‘looks’ bad but has greater scope for improvement.” (p. 26)

This description applies equally well to the Maroczy. In fact, you might say that the Accelerated Dragon (specifically the Black side of the Maroczy) ‘state of mind’ is, to borrow Suba’s phrase, an appreciation for the “hidden dynamic factors” in each position which compensate for the static deficiencies (again, the best way to ‘sense’ these is by studying the opening — the variations in this book are meant to illustrate these factors). Moreover, as a long time Hedgehog player myself, I must say that in my opinion, Black has much more freedom in the Maroczy than in the Hedgehog; for instance, in the Hedgehog, it is usually unfavorable for Black to exchange queens, whereas in the Maroczy (and the Accelerated Dragon more broadly), White often takes pains to avoid exchanging queens so as to not lose the initiative, and that is a liability which contributes to the “rigidity” (another apt term of Suba’s) of White’s position. Terms like ‘elastic’ and ‘counterattacking potential’ will be interspersed throughout this book — they are much more informative than reductive evaluations like ‘=’.

## **An Inclusive Opening**

One of the remarkable things about the Accelerated Dragon is its appeal to players with vastly different styles. Compare Bent Larsen, the epitome of dynamic, offbeat, risky chess, with Sergei Tiviakov, who claimed in an interview recently that his style has been shaped most by Petrosian (who was a great Accelerated Dragon devotee himself), Smyslov, and Karpov — both these players have championed the Accelerated Dragon as their main weapon against 1.e4 and yet their styles are in many ways polar opposites of each other! How can this be? I think the answer to this question is subtle and instructive. I think that when playing the Accelerated Dragon it ‘feels’ like you are playing White, not Black (albeit in a hypermodern manner). What I mean is, in chess, White tends to be the one to control the tempo of the game — usually

it is White who chooses whether to enter into an opposite side castling situation, or to exchange pieces early on and maneuver around in a simplified middlegame, or invoke the center as the locus of battle, ensuring king safety above all. Furthermore, Black usually needs to play accurately to not end up slightly worse, or at least give the initiative to White. The situation is, to the well prepared Accelerated Dragon player, precisely the reverse: in the Maroczy, for example, there are half a dozen different ways for Black to develop, and players of diverse styles can choose the one which suits them best (or vary their choice depending on practical considerations). Black controls the tempo and determines the character of the struggle, which is why it is so effective in must-win games. Furthermore, unlike in many 1...e5 openings, or in most other Sicilians like the Kan, Sveshnikov, or even the Najdorf, White's choices are rather limited if he does not want to end up slightly worse out of the opening. In practice, White meets the Accelerated Dragon with either the Maroczy Bind or the 7.♘c4 variation; this is simply not so in the Najdorf where every single reasonable move is a viable candidate from the starting position of the Najdorf (6.h3, 6.♖g1, 6.g3, 6.f3, 6.♗e3, 6.f4, 6.♗e2, 6.♗c4, 6.♗g5, 6.a4, and that is not even to mention variations therein), and the margin for White error is far greater (for example 6.♗e2 e5 7.♗f3!? is a serious challenge to the Najdorf but 6.♗e2 ♗g7 7.♗f3?! is just dubious against the Accelerated Dragon).

The above may sound a little hyperbolic, and I would like to make it clear from the outset that I am not claiming that 'Black is better' in the Accelerated Dragon; to do so would be dishonest. My claim is a serious one: the character of the Accelerated Dragon is that of a White opening. In fact, the Accelerated Dragon reversed *is* a White opening, called the English, and is fashioned by most of the top players in the world, including Carlsen, Kramnik, Aronian, Anand, Giri, and others: the exact piece arrangement occurs with colors reversed (and a tempo up) after 1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♗f6 3.♗g2 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.♗c3,

as well as 1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.g3 ♗c6 6.♗g2 ♗c7 7.0-0 e5 (reversed Maroczy). I have enjoyed playing this 'reversed Accelerated Dragon' with White as well.

In addition to being inclusive in the above sense, that it can suit players of diverse styles, and also that it can be a coherent complement to a 1.c4 repertoire with White, there are many interesting ways that the opening 'fits' with defenses against 1.d4/1.c4/1.♗f3, and can often directly transpose from them.

King's Indian:

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6

i) 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♗e2 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♗c6

ii) 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 c5 7.♗ge2 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♗c6

Benoni/Benko Gambit:

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.♗f3 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c6 5.♗c3 g6 6.e4

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 g6 3.c4 c5 4.♗c3 (4.d5 either 4...b5 or 4...e6) 4...cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♗c6 6.e4

Symmetrical English:

1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗g7 5.e4 ♗c6

1.♗f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗g7 5.e4 ♗c6

Of course, there is no obligation on Accelerated Dragon players to deploy these defences in order to allow for transpositional possibilities — Tiviakov has been a lifelong Nimzo-Indian/Queen's Indian devotee as a counterexample — but I have found it useful to play these systems in tandem myself.

One more point on the topic of move orders: since the Accelerated Dragon (especially the Maroczy) can come about from so many different move orders, I have taken some liberties with the games in this book to convert the initial moves to the 1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 g6 'Hyper-Accelerated Dragon' move order we will be focusing on. I have done this, following a not uncommon practice, purely for didactic purposes — I don't want readers happy with their 1.d4 defenses to be confused by transpositions from openings they don't play.

## About This Book

This book presents a repertoire for Black after 1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 — the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon. I am relatively lax about distinguishing between ‘Accelerated Dragon’ (1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♞c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 g6) and ‘Hyper-Accelerated Dragon’, and I use the two interchangeably unless to emphasize move order nuances, for example, “the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon avoids the Rossolimo”. However, this is not merely ‘a’ Hyper-Accelerated Dragon repertoire, it is *my* repertoire, and I present the material as such, from a first person perspective, making brazen use of my own games and offering personal anecdotes and opinions. This stylistic choice risks my coming across as presumptuous and at times even boastful, but my hope is rather that the conversational mode of presentation makes readers feel as though I am their tour guide through what might otherwise feel like an insurmountable labyrinth of variations. Further on the point of stylistic choices, I am regrettably not sufficiently skilled in writing without gender-specific pronouns, so please regard all generic references to ‘he’ as ‘s/he’ (or alternative) and so on.

I provide as much information as I think is necessary for readers to play this opening with Black; however, this is absolutely not meant to be an anthology on the opening. I make no claim to cover every conceivable variation White can play. Any attempt at such, couched under the heading of a ‘complete repertoire’ would not only be misleading, but in this day and age obsolete. This is not to say that opening books are altogether obsolete; on the contrary, as inundated with information as we all are nowadays, it can be enormously helpful to have an author divulge opening secrets from their years of experience which would not easily be gathered from a database search.

What is obsolete is the attempt to thoroughly and comprehensively ‘prove equality’ with Black, and more importantly for our purposes it is antagonistic to the spirit of the Accelerated Dragon, which is that of an opening refusing to be evaluated on static grounds alone. As Jonathan Rowson instructs in his *Seven Deadly Chess Sins*, “You need to assess not only the position as it stands but the position as it has changed and how it is likely to continue to change”. (p.75) So, I am not a big fan of evaluations like ‘=’ or ‘=+’ or ‘+=’ (though I capitulate to these at times) because ‘=’ makes me think of a draw and ‘+=’ makes me feel like I ought to be satisfied with a draw as Black, when in reality Black can very much be optimistic about his position despite such evaluations, and that is why I prefer evaluations like “counterplay” or “mutual chances”.

If you encounter a variation not covered in this book, for example 1.e4 c5 2.♞a3, my general prescription is this: find a database (no excuses, they are free online), and search the position with an Accelerated Dragon player (I gave you a list above) as Black to see how they have chosen to play the position. Ideally you’ll find a model game that you can recall whenever you face the system; after all, when it comes to rare systems like 2.♞a3 it is foolish to memorize concrete variations since you’ll never remember them anyway, but the key ideas of a model game you can. Even in the main lines of the Accelerated Dragon, don’t try to memorize the moves given in this book as if they are the ultimate truth. They aren’t. Your learning will be enhanced if you actively seek out novelties of your own, and try to understand how the various positional ideas for both sides fit together.

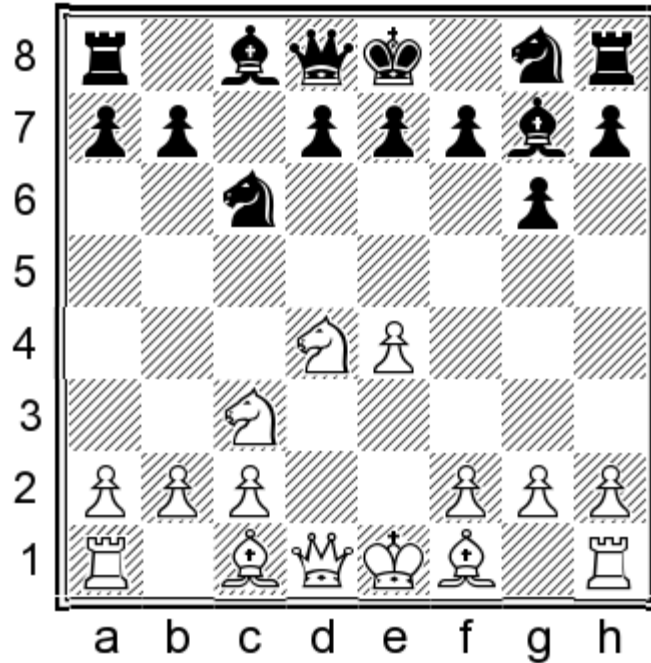
To make this book as valuable to the Petrosian-style (risk-averse) Accelerated Dragon player as to the Larsen-type (risk-craving), I have recommended two systems against each of the 7.♙c4 and Maroczy Bind variations. I hope at least one of these suits you. For those among you who will embark on the risky course (‘My System’ against 7.♙c4 and the Breyer Variation of the Maroczy), may I caution you to do so with a realistic attitude towards the cost of risk-taking in chess. It is in the (mathematical) nature of risk-taking that it increases the variability of outcomes — both good and bad. The mature risk taker is mindful of this, cognizant that their risk-taking is compatible with their aims and justifications. This was the attitude of Bent Larsen. If you would like to play the Accelerated Dragon ambitiously, with a tolerance for risk, keep in mind the following description of Larsen, given by Reshevsky: “He is a firm believer in the value of surprise. Consequently, he often resorts to dubious variations in various openings. He also likes to complicate positions even though it may involve considerable risk. He has a great deal of confidence in his game and fears no one. His unique style has proven extremely effective against relatively weak opponents but has not been too successful against top-notchers.” Alas, this is the risk-taker’s predicament, but far from discouraging it, I am thankful for the risk-takers among you who resist the ‘genetic’ drift of our chess community towards timidity and results-oriented pragmatism.

I sincerely hope you find this to be an enjoyable and enriching experience.

# CHAPTER 1

## CLASSICAL VARIATION (♘e2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘g7 5.♗c3 ♗c6



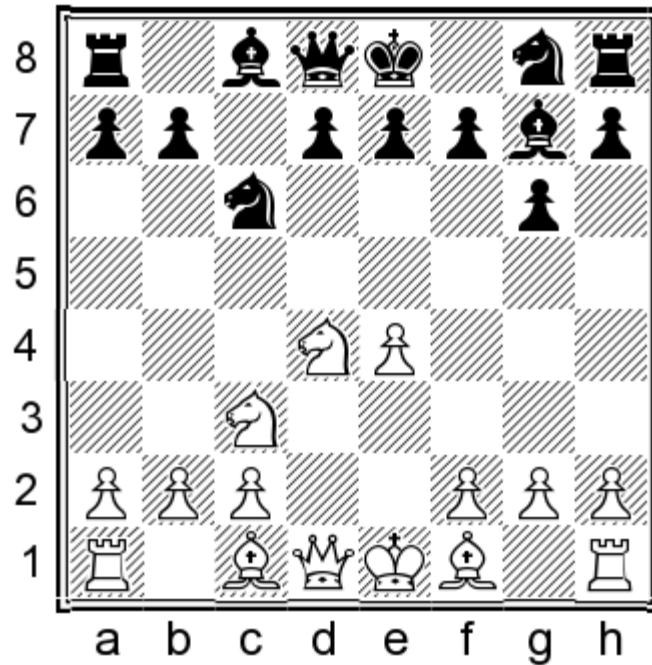
### Contents

1. 6.♗b3, 6.♗de2
2. 6.♘e3 ♗f6 7.sidelines & 7.♘e2 d5!?
3. 6.♘e3 ♗f6 7.♘e2 0-0 8.sidelines
4. 6.♘e3 ♗f6 7.♘e2 0-0 8.0-0

We begin with the variation which epitomizes the Accelerated Dragon philosophy. In most defenses to 1.e4, White has the option of playing a ‘Classical’ variation by developing the light squared bishop to e2. This is particularly the case in Sicilians like the Najdorf, Scheviningen and Taimanov, but also in other defenses like the Pirc/Modern and Alekhine. In all these systems, the Classical Variation offers White serious chances to obtain an opening advantage, and the immortal games of past champions like Geller and Karpov provide textbook illustrations of successful ‘Classical’ 1.e4 play. In contrast, the ♘e2 (Classical) variation against the ordinary, un-Accelerated Dragon is rather harmless for Black, the Yugoslav Attack being its critical test. As Accelerated Dragon players, we are in an even more favorable situation than ordinary Dragon players when it comes to the Classical variation, because we can choose to transpose to harmless variations of the Classical Dragon by opting for ...d7-d6 at opportune moments, and in some lines we can strike with ...d7-d5 directly, saving a full tempo compared with analogous lines in the Dragon. Despite the fact that this system offers White no advantage, it is still seen in about 15% of Accelerated Dragons (the other 85% are nearly evenly

distributed between the Maroczy and ♖c4 variations), the bulk of which occur at the club level.

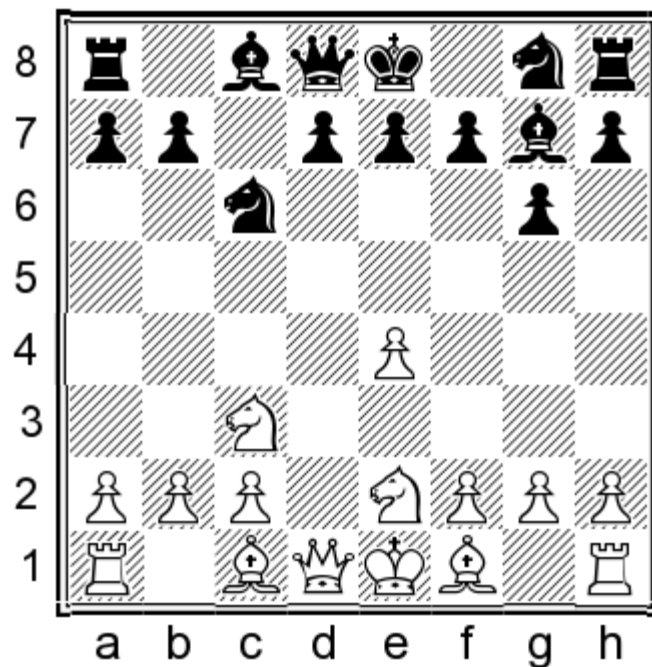
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖g7 5.♗c3 ♗c6



6.♗b3

This move tends to be played later on anyway in the ♖e2 system, in order to hinder Black from playing ...d7-d5 (note that the Maroczy and ♖c4 variation both target the d5-square), so some players prefer to play 6.♗b3 directly without committing the Bishop to e3.

6.♗de2

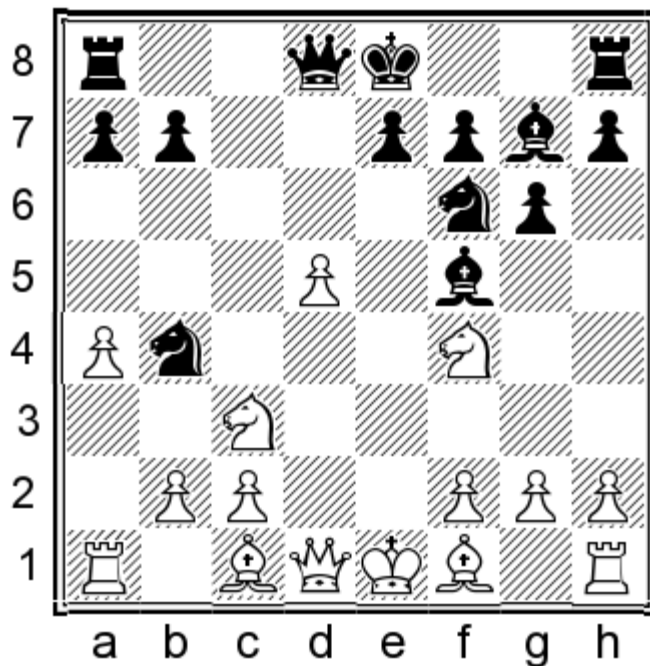


This is not part of the ♖e2 system so I just mention it in passing. Some people who like to fianchetto their light bishop

in other Sicilians play this 'Chameleon' line; such variations are apt against tamer Sicilians like the Najdorf, not the unforgiving Accelerated Dragon.

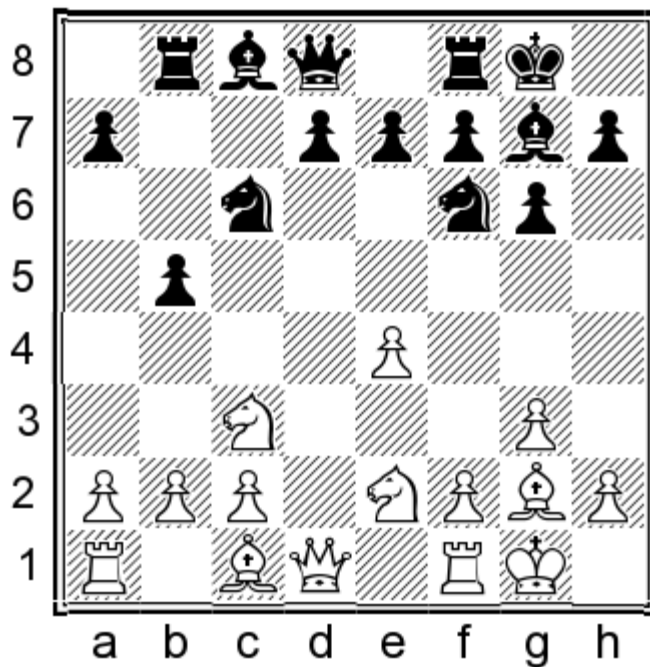
6...♗f6 7.g3

(7.a4 d5!N 8.exd5 (8.♗xd5? ♗xe4⚡) 8...♗b4 9.♗f4 (9.♗g3 0-0 10.♙c4 ♖c7 11.♙b3 ♜d8⇒) 9...♙f5



10.♙b5+ ♖f8 11.♙d3 ♗xd3+ 12.cxd3 g5 13.♗fe2 ♗xd5 14.♙xg5 ♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♙xd3 16.0-0 ♙c4=)

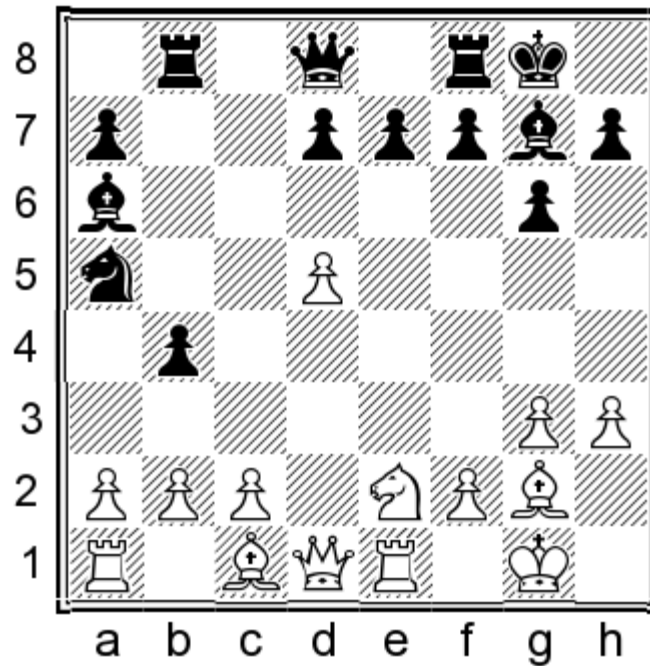
7...b5! 8.♙g2 ♜b8 9.0-0 0-0



10.h3

a) 10.♗d5 d6 11.♙g5 (11.h3 ♗d7 12.c3 e6 13.♗b4 ♗xb4 14.cxb4 ♗b6⚡ Polgar,Z (2550)-Georgiev,V (2615) Matinhos 1994) 11...♗d7 12.c3 ♜e8 13.♗d4 ♗xd4 14.cxd4 ♗b6 15.♗b4 ♙b7 16.♜c1 ♜d7 17.b3 a5 18.♗c2 b4= 1-0 (57) Kuzmin,G (2540)-Maciejka,B (2460) St Petersburg 1996;

b) 10.♔f4 d6 11.♖d2 b4 12.♗d5 ♗g4 13.♞ab1 ♗ge5 14.b3 e6 15.♗e3 ♞a5⚡;  
 10...b4 11.♗d5 ♔a6 12.♞e1 ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♗a5



14.♔f4

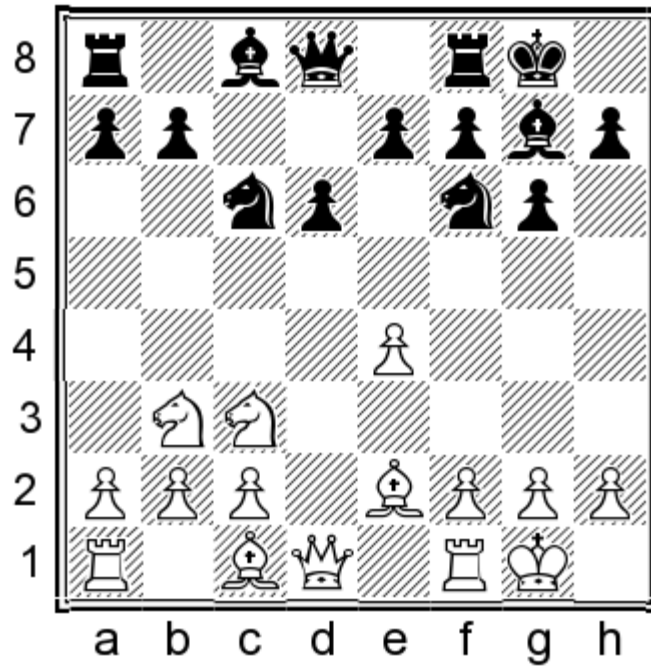
(14.♗d4 ♗c4 15.♞b1 e5! 16.dxe6 fxe6⚡)

14...♞c8 15.d6 e6 16.a3 b3! 17.cxb3 ♞b6 18.b4 ♗c4⚡ Perovic-Nikolic, Pula 1991.

**6...♗f6 7.♔e2 0-0 8.0-0**

There are ways of playing this in the spirit of the Accelerated Dragon but I think Black's best and simplest path is to proceed in Dragon style with ...d7-d6 and ...♔c8-e6, aiming to play ...d6-d5.

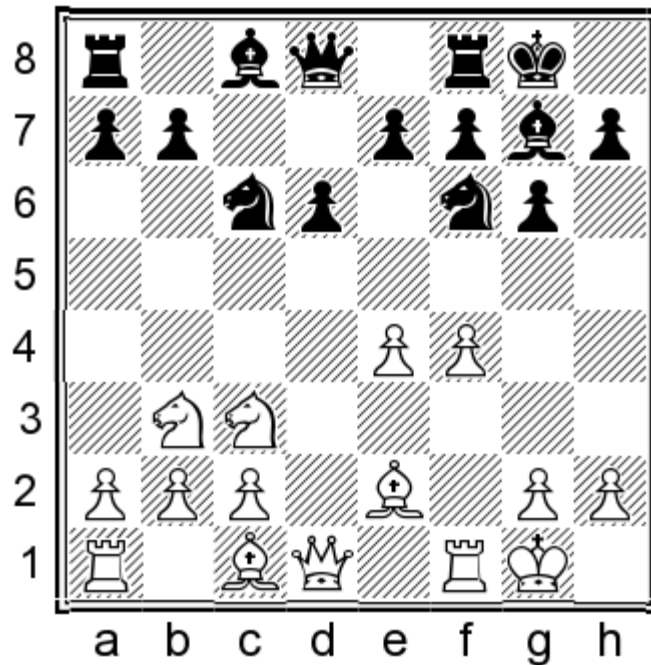
**8...d6**



9. ♖g5

This is likely to be White's idea if they play 6. ♘b3 directly.

9.f4?!



9...b5! ♘;

9. ♖h1 ♙e6 10.f4 ♗c8! Preventing f4-f5.

(10...d5?! 11.f5 ♙c8 12.exd5 ♘b4 13.fxg6 hxg6 14. ♙f3 ♙f5 15. ♘d4±)

11. ♙e3

(11.f5? gx5 12.exf5 ♙xf5 ± One might think White has some compensation because Black's king position has been

compromised but the far more salient factor is Black's superiority in the center.)

11...♖d8= White cannot prevent ...d6-d5, which as a rule (at least) equalizes for Black.;

9.♞e1 ♘e6 10.♙f1 d5 11.♗c5

(11.exd5 ♗xd5 12.♗e4 b6=)

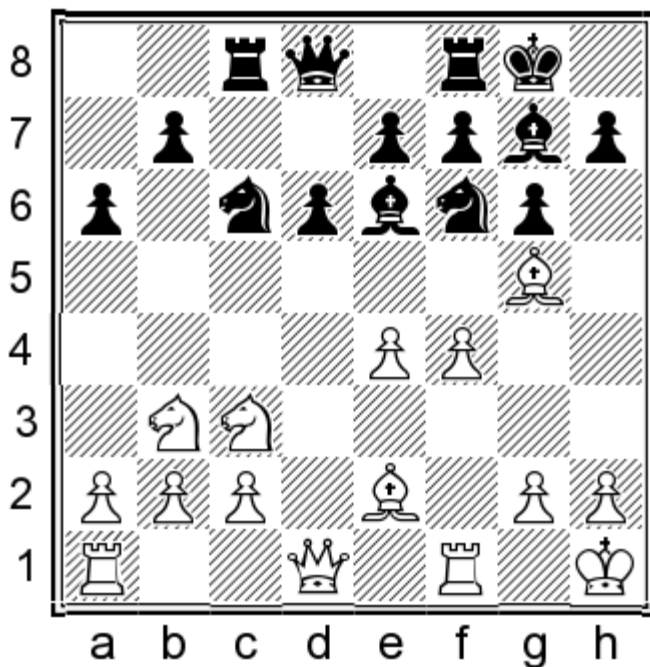
11...dxe4 12.♗xe6 ♜xd1 13.♞xd1 fxe6 14.♙c4 ♖f7 Black's tripled pawns are not to be scoffed at; they restrict White's pieces by controlling important central squares.

**9...♙e6 10.♖h1**

White signals his intention to continue with f2-f4. Since White's bishop is on g5, it is no longer realistic for Black to aim for ...d6-d5, so he refocuses attention toward the queenside.

10.f4?! b5!⇒

**10...♞c8 11.f4 a6**



Black can take his time on the queenside because if White continues with f4-f5 then Black will happily take possession of the e5 square with his knight.

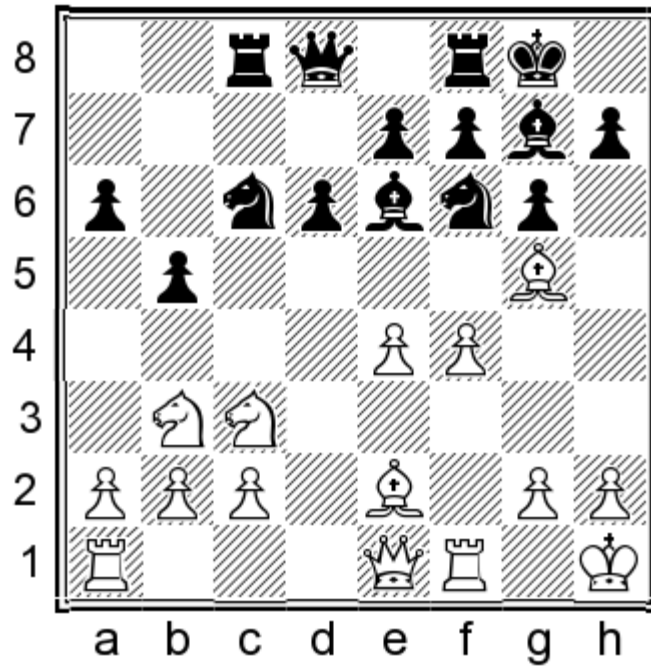
**12.♞e1**

12.f5 ♙d7! 13.♞c1 ♗e5 14.♞f4 b5⇒;

12.♙f3 ♗d7!? Just one idea of many. 13.♞b1 ♙xc3 14.bxc3 ♞c7⇒;

12.a4 ♗a5 13.♗xa5 ♞xa5 14.♙d3 ♞fe8 15.♞e2 ♞b4 16.a5 ♙g4 17.♞d2 ♙d7 Black threatens ...d6-d5 thanks to the pin on the c3-knight. 18.♞e2?! ♞xb2 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♗d5 ♙b5 21.♙xb5 ♞xb5 22.♞xb5 axb5 23.♞ab1 ♞c5⇒ 0-1 (42) Anand, V (2715)-Topalov, V (2640) Linares 1994.

**12...b5**

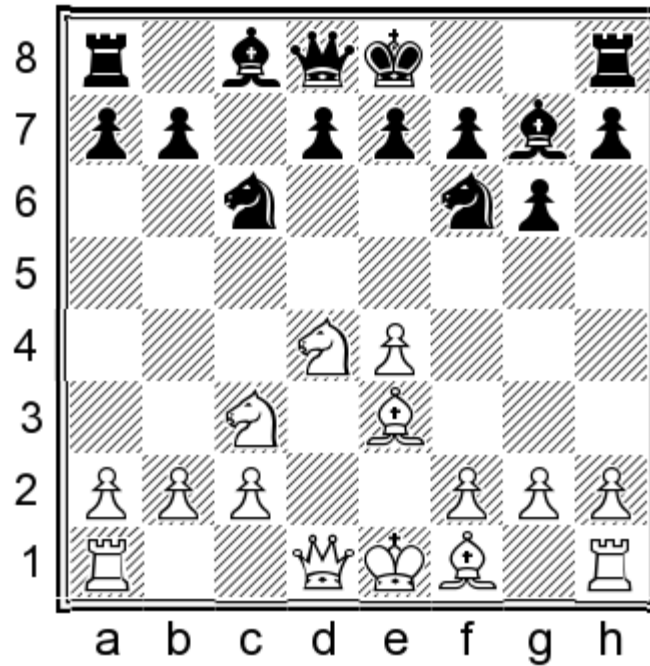


13.f5 ♔d7 14.♚h4 ♜e5 15.♞d4 ♞c5!↗

Black intends ...♚d8-a8 with prospects for the thematic ...♞xc3 Sicilian exchange sacrifice.

15...♞c4?! 16.♞d5 ♞xd5 17.exd5↑

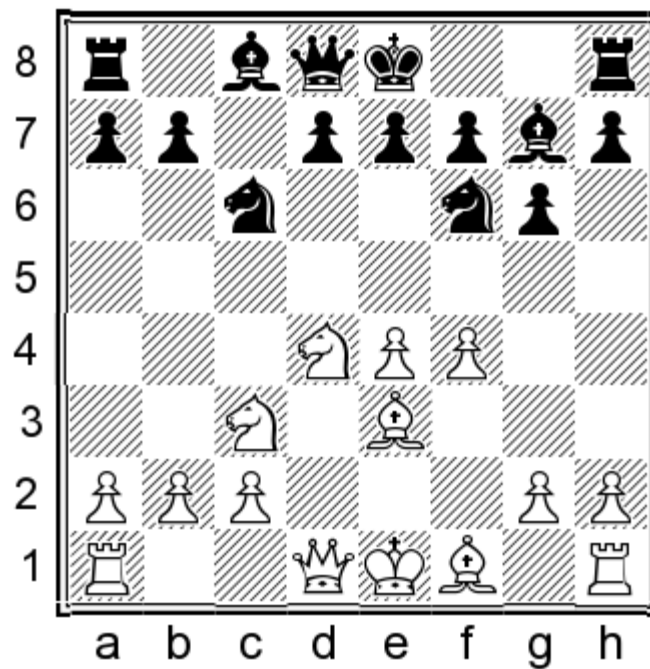
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.♖c3 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6



7.♙e2

7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♗g8! (8...♗d5 I never liked this pawn sacrifice but several grandmasters have played it. 9.♗xd5 cxd5 10.♙xd5 ♖b8∞) 9.f4 ♗h6 10.♙d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 d6! =;

7.f4

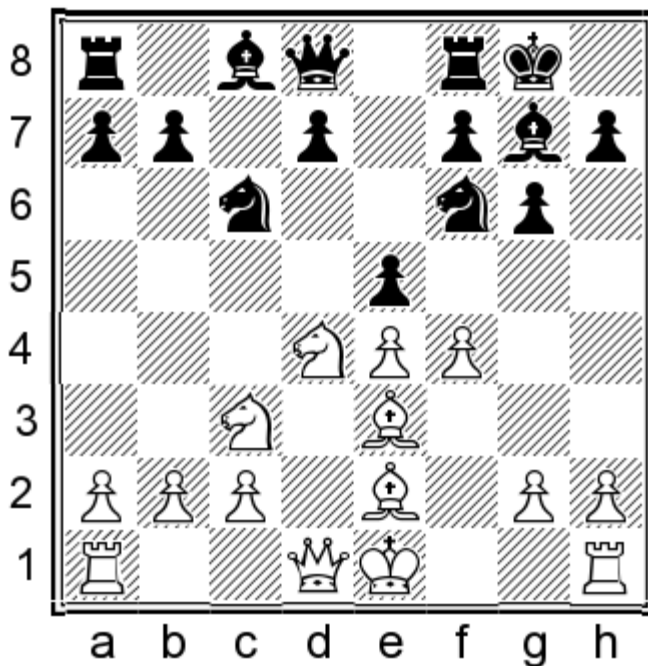


7...0-0 8.♙e2 Black can of course continue with 8...d6 here and transpose to the ordinary Dragon but I suggest we only

do so after White has displaced his knight from the active d4-square.

(8.e5 White can't afford such extensions before castling and completing development. 8...♖e8 9.♖f3 (9.♘xc6?! bxc6 10.h4?! d6 11.h5 ♖a5 12.hxg6 hxg6±; 9.♗d2 d6±) 9...d6 10.0-0 (10.♘xc6?! bxc6 11.♗xc6 ♔d7±) 10...♔d7±)

8...e5!



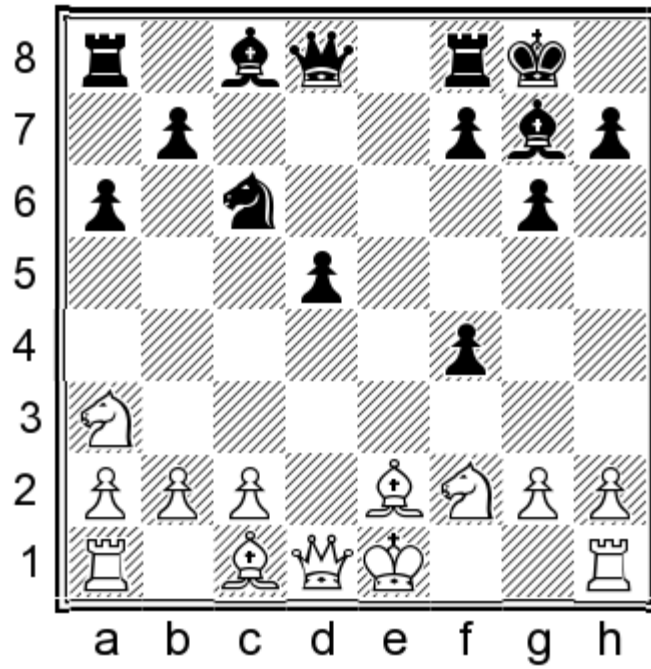
9.♘db5 Black has safe paths to equality here like 9...♖e8, but the following opportunity, while messy and slightly risky, is far too appealing to pass up.

(9.fxe5 ♘xe5 10.0-0 d6 11.♔g5 h6 12.♔h4 g5 13.♔g3 ♖b6 14.♗h1 ♘eg4 15.♗d3 ♘h5±; 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.fxe5 ♘g4!±)

9...♘xe4!!N 10.♘xe4 d5 11.♘f2

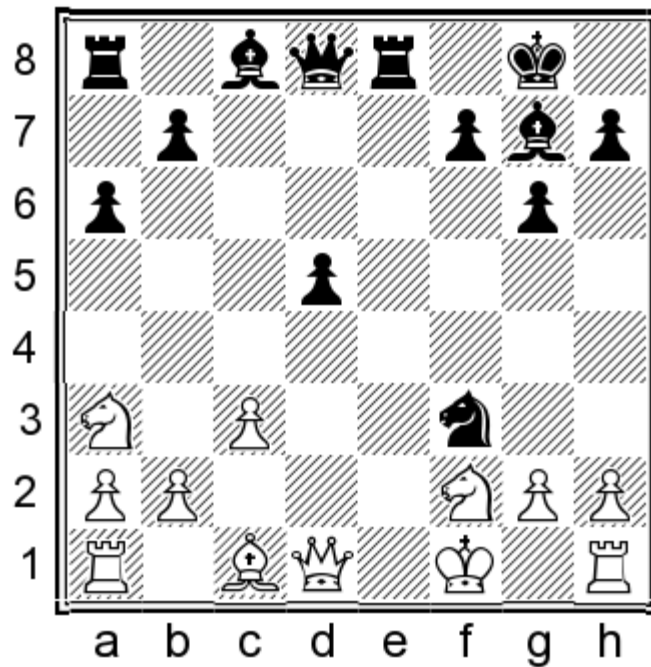
(11.♘ed6 a6 12.♘xc8 ♗xc8 13.♘a7 ♘xa7 14.♔xa7 b6±)

11...a6 12.♘a3 exf4 13.♔c1



Black's compensation is of a long-term nature. For the sacrificed piece he currently has two pawns, control over the center, and most of White's pieces are awkwardly placed. Black can 'just play' the position, even the computer gives its approval ("0.00") to several moves (13...♖e8, 13...♚h4, 13...♘d4). The following is just one possible continuation.  
 13...f3!? 14.♙xf3

(14.gxf3?! ♚h4 15.0-0 ♘d4 16.c3 ♙a7 17.♘c2 ♙h3 18.♙e3 ♙xe3 19.♘xe3 ♚g5+ 20.♙h1 ♙xf1 21.♘xf1 ♖fe8=)  
 14...♖e8+ 15.♙f1 ♘d4 16.c3 ♘xf3

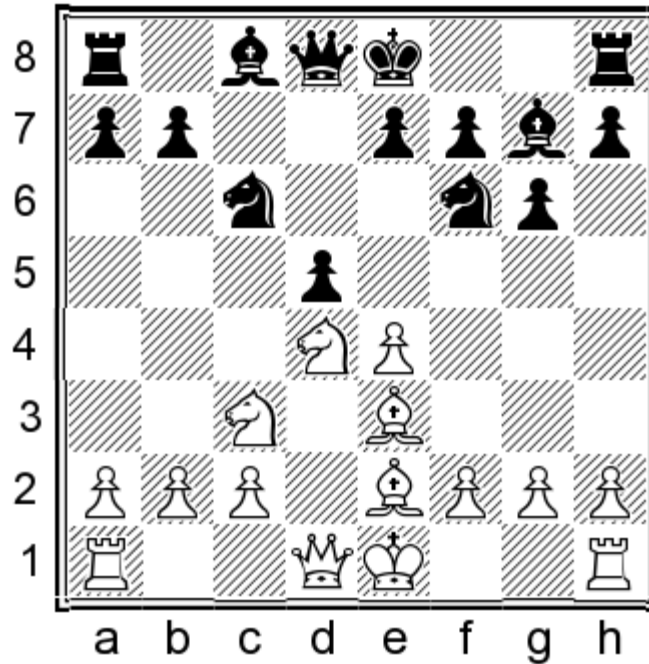


17.gxf3  
 (17.♚xf3 d4! 18.♙d2 ♙e6 19.♖e1 ♚b6+)

17...d4! 18.♙f4  
 (18.cxd4?! ♙f5 19.d5 ♖c8 20.h4 b5 21.♘b1 b4!+)

18...dxc3 19.♖xd8 ♜xd8 20.bxc3 ♙xc3 21.♞d1 ♙e6 22.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 23.♘b1 ♙d4 24.a3 ♞c8 25.♔g2 ♞c2 26.♘d2 ♞a2=

7...d5!?



Black is not supposed to be able to play this; the general rule is that, except in extraordinary circumstances, Black must castle before playing this. Obedience to that rule is likely why this move has never been played by a 2400+ player (at least according to the database). Computers are helpful for showing us the exceptions to our rule of thumb heuristics. Nevertheless, Black is not better off here than he is in the main line (7...0-0), it is just another path to easy equality.

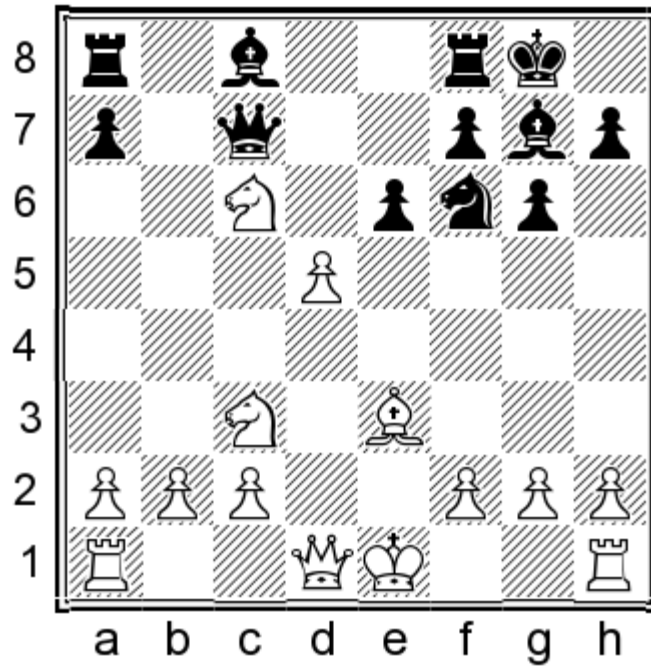
8.♙b5

8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♘xd5 ♖xd5 11.0-0 0-0= We have transposed to the 7...0-0 8.0-0 d5 line.

8...0-0 9.♙xc6

9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♙xc6 ♞b8=

9...bxc6 10.♘xc6 ♞c7 11.exd5 e6!



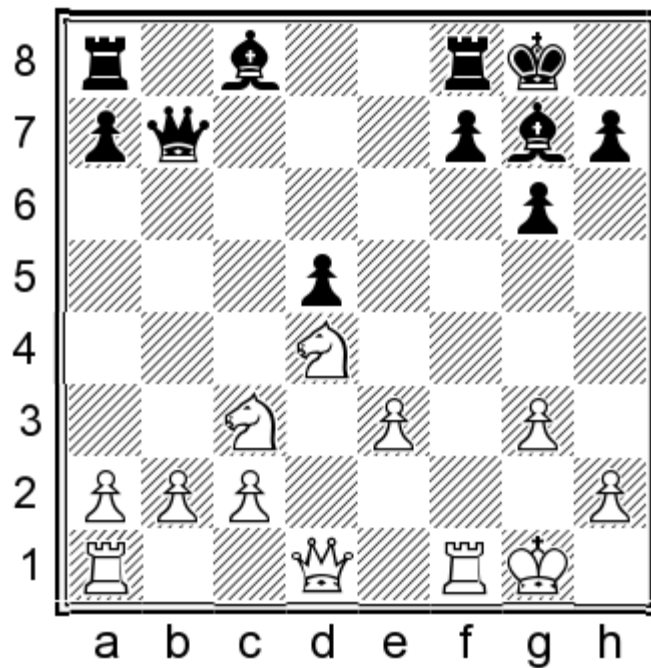
**12.0-0**

12. ♖b5 ♜b7 13. ♗d6 ♜c7 14. ♗b5 ♜b7=;  
 12. ♜d2 exd5 13. ♗d4 ♗e4 14. ♗xe4 dxe4=

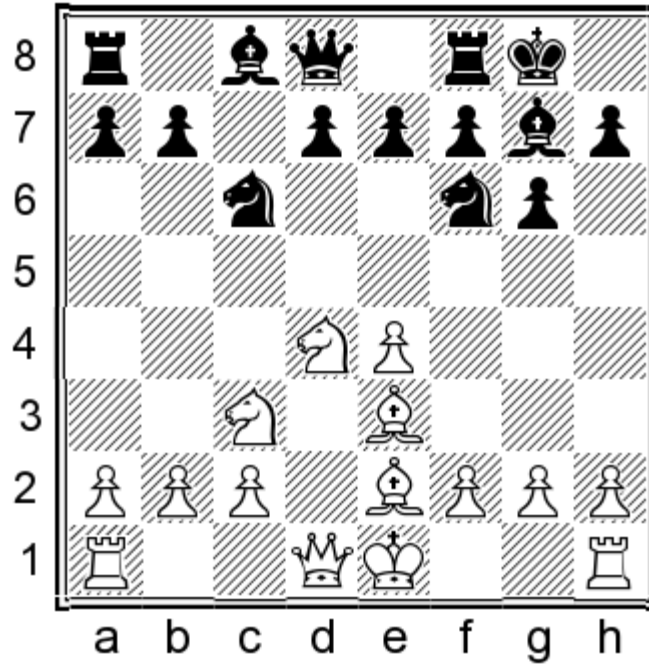
**12...exd5 13. ♗d4**

13. ♗b4 ♗g4 14. g3 ♗xe3 15. fxe3 d4=

13... ♗g4 14. g3 ♗xe3 15. fxe3 ♜b7=



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.♖c3 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♙e2 0-0



### 8.♗b3

We previously considered this move coupled with ♙c1–g5; here Black proceeds in essentially the same way.

8.♙d2?! d5 9.exd5 ♗xd5 10.♗xd5

(10.0-0-0 ♗xe3 11.♗xc6 ♙xd2+ 12.♙xd2 ♘f5 13.♗b4 ♙h6–+ 0–1 (13) Salimbagat,R (2269)-Panjwani,R (2393) World Open 2016)

10...♗xd4! 11.♗xe7+

(11.♙xd4 ♙xd5 12.♙xg7 ♙xg2! 13.♙xf8 ♙xh1+ 14.♙f1 ♙e4+ 15.♙e2 ♗xf8±)

11...♙xe7 12.♙xd4 ♙xd4 13.♙xd4 ♙e8 14.♙e3 ♙b4+ 15.♙d2?!

(15.c3 ♙a4±)

15...♙xe2+ 16.♗xe2 ♙g4+ 17.f3 ♙e8+ 18.♗d1 ♙xb2 19.♙c1 ♙b6–+

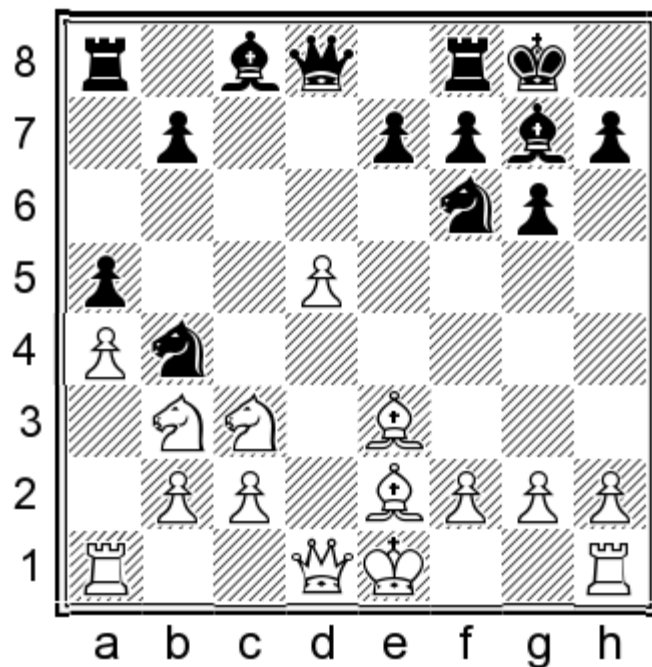
### 8...d6!

As per our recipe, we transpose to the Classical Dragon when White commits to ♗b3.

8...a5 I used to follow Donaldson and Silman in playing this Accelerated Dragon-style move, but unfortunately I don't think it equalizes. 9.a4 d5?!

(9...♗b4?! 10.f4 (10.0-0 d5 11.e5 ♗e4 12.f3 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♗c6 14.f4 f6 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16.♙d2 e6∞) 10...d5 11.e5 ♗e4 12.♗b5!±)

10.exd5 ♗b4



11. ♖f3

(11.d6 ♕f5 12. ♘d4 (12.dxe7 ♜xe7 13. ♘d4 ♜fd8±) 12... ♜xd6=)

11... b6N

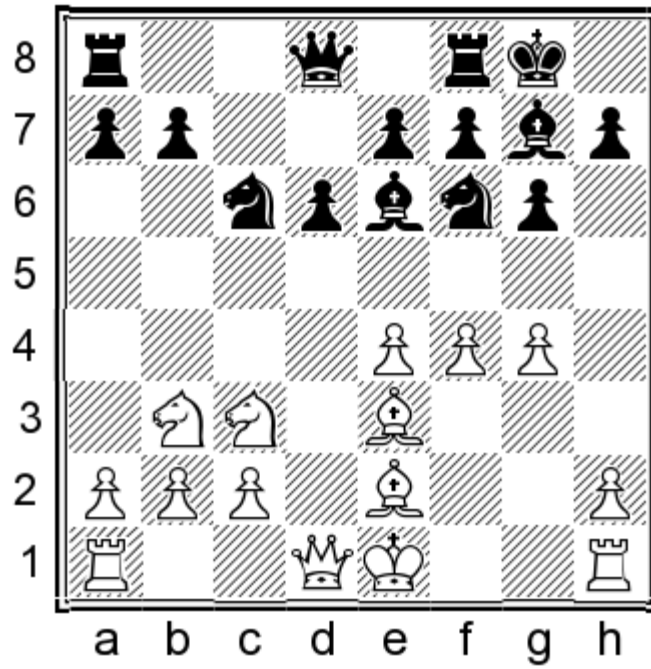
**a)** 11... ♕g4 12. ♕xg4 ♘xg4 13. ♜xg4 (13. ♕d4 ♕xd4 14. ♘xd4 ♘f6=) 13... ♘xc2+ 14. ♔e2± (14. ♔d2±);

**b)** 11... ♕f5 12. ♘d4 ♘fxd5 13. ♘xf5 ♘xc3 14. ♜xd8 ♜fxd8 15. ♘xe7+ ♔f8 16. 0-0 ♘xc2 17. ♕c5 ♕d4 18. ♘c6+ ♕xc5 19. ♘xd8 ♜xd8 20. ♜ac1 ♘e3 21. ♜fe1!±;

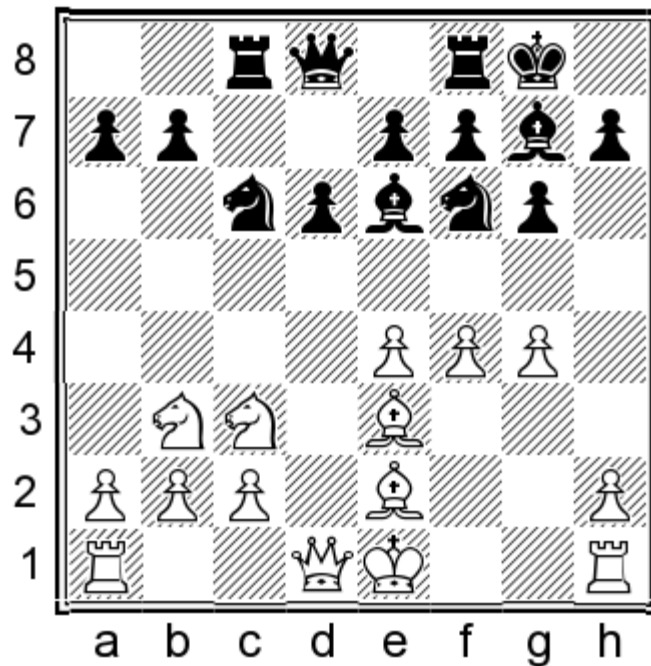
12.d6 ♕g4 13. ♕xg4 ♘xg4 14. ♜xg4 ♘xc2+ 15. ♔e2 ♘xa1 16. ♜xa1 ♜xd6 17. ♜d1 ♜xh2 18. ♕f4 f5 19. ♜f3 ♜h4 20. ♘d4 e5 21. ♕g3±

**9.0-0**

9.f4 ♕e6 10.g4



This is the old 'Rabinovich Attack', popularized in the 1930s by Kan, Levenfish, Bondarevsky, and Alekhine. 10...♞c8



(10...d5?! 11.f5 ♞c8 12.exd5 ♘b4 13.♖d2 (13.♙f3 gxf5 14.a3 fxg4 15.♙g2 ♘a6 16.♖d3 e6 17.0-0-0 ♘xd5 18.h3 g3 19.♞hg1 ♖d6 20.♙xd5 exd5 21.♘xd5 ♘h8 22.♙f4+- 1-0 (38) Fischer,R-Reshevsky,S Los Angeles 1961; 13.d6 ♖xd6 14.♙c5 ♖f4 15.♞f1 ♖xh2 16.♙xb4 ♘xg4 17.♙xg4 ♖g3+ 18.♞f2 ♖g1+ 19.♞f1 ♖g3+ 20.♞f2 ♖g1+ 1/2-1/2 (20) Alekhine, A-Botvinnik,M Nottingham 1936) 13...♘fxd5 14.♘xd5 ♖xd5 15.0-0-0! ♖xd2+ 16.♙xd2±)

11.f5

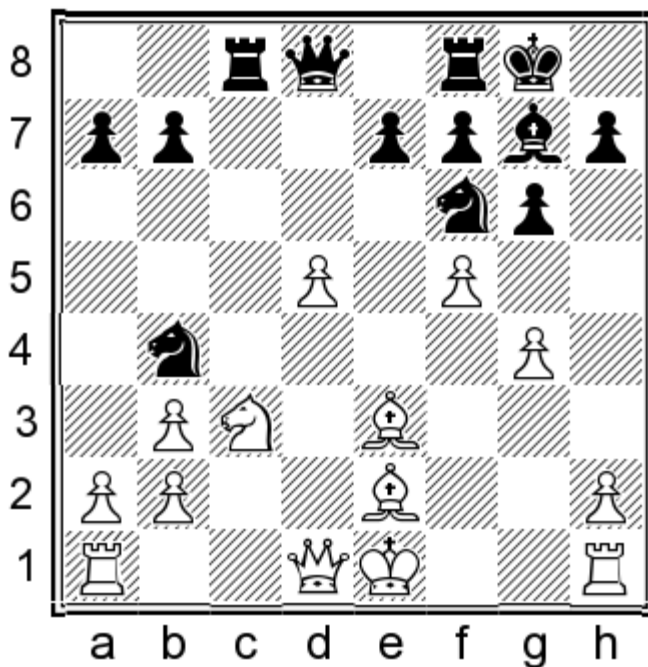
(11.g5 ♘d7 12.h4 ♘c5! 13.♘xc5 (13.♙xc5 dxc5 14.♖xd8 ♞fxd8 15.♘xc5 ♘d4 16.♘xe6 ♘xe6) 13...dxc5 14.♖xd8 ♞fxd8 15.♙xc5 ♘d4 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4 17.♙d3 ♙xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♞xc3)

11...♙xb3! Thank you to Daniel Vanheirzeele for informing me of this idea. 12.cxb3

(12.axb3 This is a worse version for White than 12.cxb3 since the c2-pawn falls in the main line. 12...d5! 13.exd5

(13. ♖xd5 ♜xe4) 13... ♜b4 14. ♙f3 (14. ♙c4 a6) 14... ♜fxd5!! 15. ♜xd5 (15. ♙xd5 ♙xc3+ 16. bxc3 ♜xc3 17. ♙h6 ♜b6!! 18. fxg6 hxg6 19. ♙e4 ♜d8 20. ♜e2 ♜f6 21. ♙a5 ♜h4+ 22. ♜f2 ♜xg4+) 15... ♜xc2+ 16. ♜f2 ♜xa1 17. ♜xa1 e6 18. f6 exd5 19. fxg7 ♜e8)

12...d5! 13.exd5 ♜b4



14. ♙f3

(14. ♙c4 Here I prefer the simple 14... ♜a5 but 14...b5 leads to interesting complications. Unlike in the 12.axb3 line, 14...a6 is not playable here because White has a2-a3 available to him in this line. 14... ♜a5!

a) 14...a6 15.g5 ♜e8 16.a3±;

b) 14...b5 15. ♜xb5 ♜fxd5 (15... ♜bxd5 16. ♙xa7 ♜a5+ 17. ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 18. ♜xd2 ♜xg4 19. ♜e2±) 16. ♙xa7 ♙xb2 17.0-0∞;

15.0-0 ♜cd8=)

14... ♜fxd5!! 15. ♜xd5

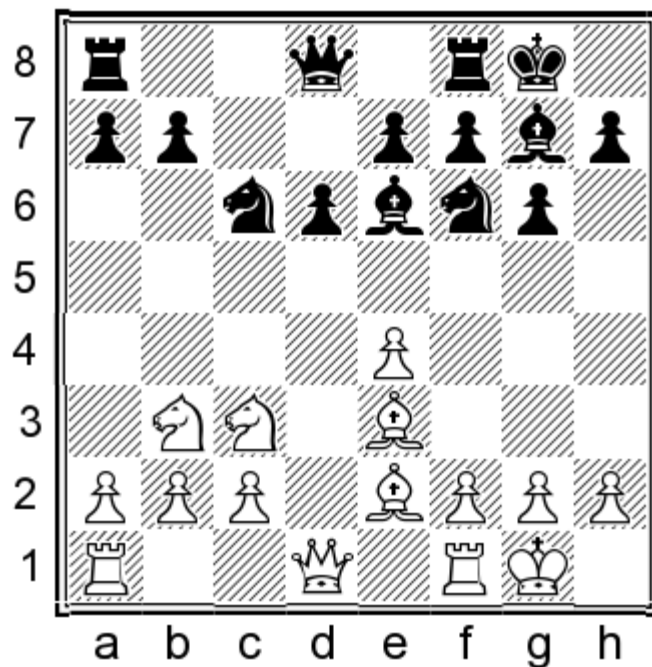
(15. ♙xd5 ♙xc3+ 16. bxc3 ♜xc3 17. ♙xf7+ ♜xf7)

15... ♜c2+ 16. ♜f2

(16. ♜f1 ♜xd5! 17. ♙xd5 ♜xe3+)

16... ♜xa1 17. ♜xa1 e6 18. f6 exd5 19. fxg7 ♜e8) Practically speaking, White is just lost here — computer level accuracy is required to only remain slightly worse.

9... ♙e6



**10.f4**

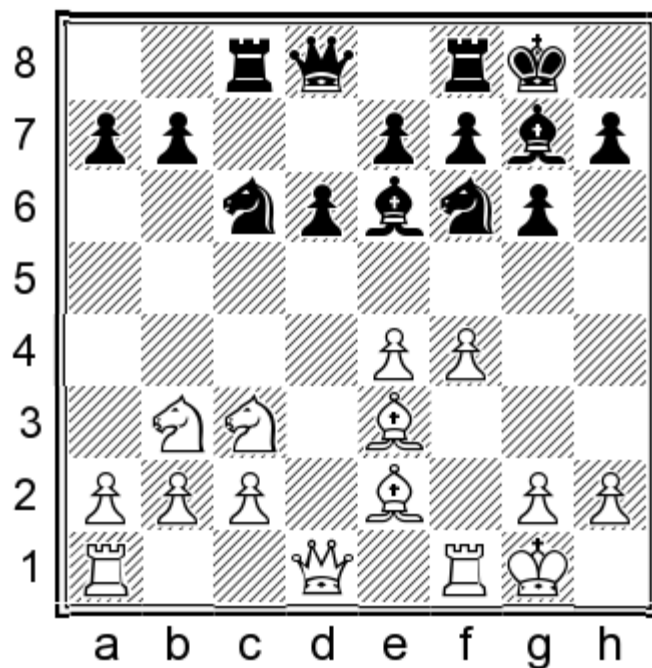
10. ♖d2 d5=;

10. ♘d4 d5 11. ♘xe6

(11. exd5 ♙xd5=)

11... fxe6 12. exd5 exd5=

**10... ♖c8**



This position has been defended on the Black side by such champions as Khalifman and Kramnik. White's attack is not to be underestimated, but Black's resilience and counterattacking chances are fully adequate. [chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

10...♖c8!? 11.h3 ♜d8 12.♙f3 ♘d7 13.♗d2 ♘b6=

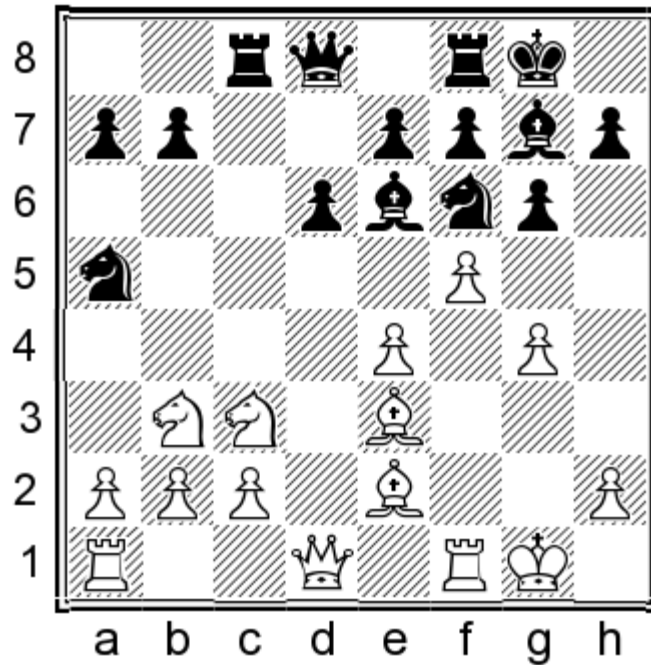
11.♗e1

11.f5?! White cannot just 'go for it'; too many weaknesses are created in the process. 11...♙d7 12.g4 ♘e5! 13.g5?

(13.♘d2 ♜xc3! 14.bxc3 ♙c6=)

13...♜xc3!→ Just thirteen moves and White is toast.;

11.g4 ♘a5 Another thematic idea to keep in mind. 12.f5



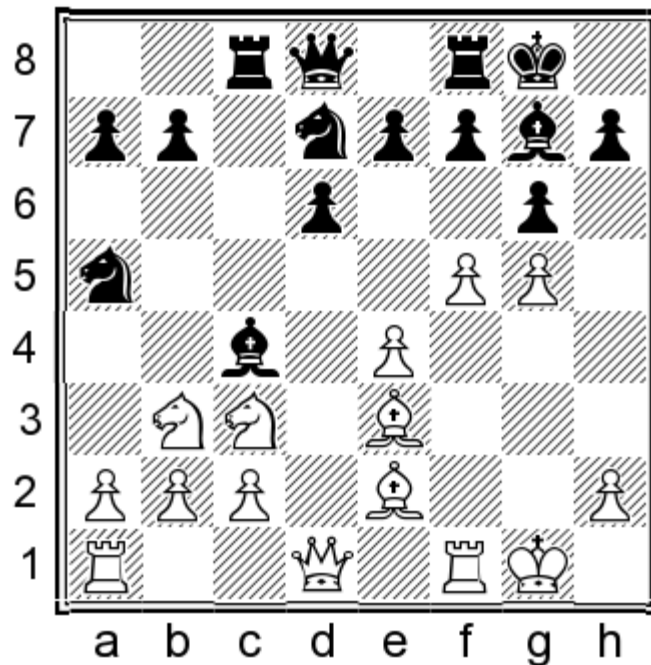
12...♙c4!

(12...♙d7?! We were happy to move back to d7 when the knight's arrival on e5 was imminent but here White's attack is too fast. 13.♘d2 (13.g5? ♜xc3!⚡) 13...♘c6 14.♜f2 ♘e5 15.g5 ♘e8 16.h4→)

13.g5

(13.♙d3 ♘xb3 (13...♘d7 14.♙xa7=) 14.axb3 ♙xd3 15.cxd3 d5! 16.g5? d4⚡)

13...♘d7



14. ♖d3

(14. ♖xa7 ♖xc3 (14... ♖e5!? ♖) 15. bxc3 ♖xe2 16. ♗xe2 ♖xc3 17. ♖d4 ♖c8 ♖)

14... ♖xc3! Black creates a target for his queenside counterplay. The g7-bishop is often a liability anyway when White threatens f5-f6, etc. 15. bxc3 ♖e5 16. ♖d4

(16. ♖c1 d5 ♖)

16... ♖ac6 ♖;

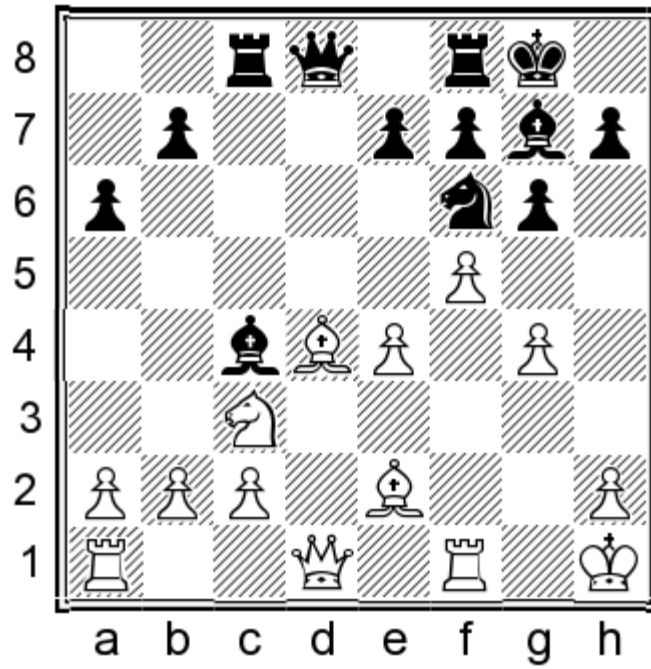
11. ♖h1 a6 12. g4

(12. ♗e1 This transposes to 11. ♗e1.; 12. ♖f3 ♖d7! ♖ Intending ... ♖d7-b6-c4.)

12... d5! 13. f5 d4! 14. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 15. ♖xd4

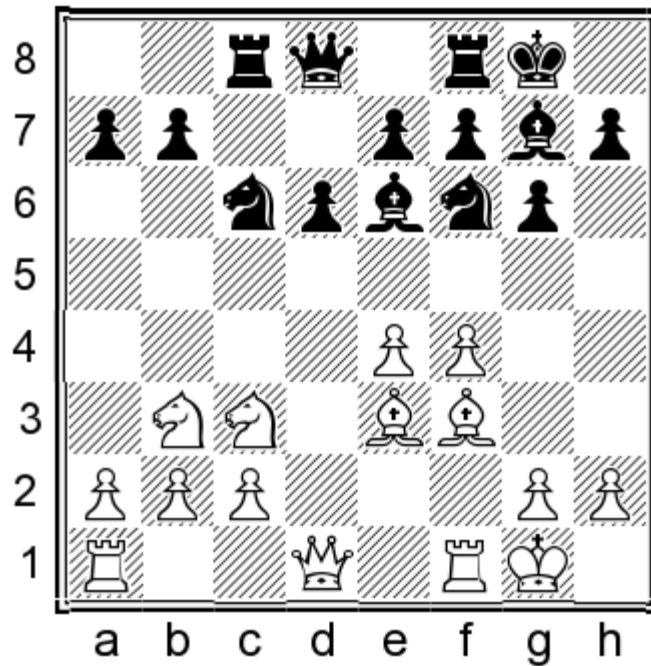
(15. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 16. ♖xd4 ♖c4 ♖)

15... ♖c4 ♖



Black has full compensation, White has to play accurately to not become worse;

11. ♖f3

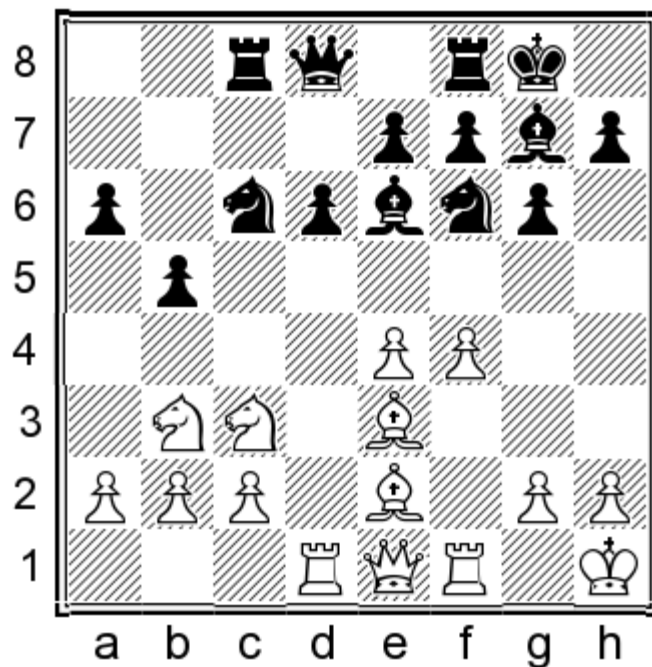


11... ♘d7! ⇨ The reader might have noticed this is a common way to meet ♙e2-f3. Black can temporarily remove the d7-retreat square from his bishop since White has relinquished control over c4, and if Black achieves ... ♘d7-b6-c4 he will take over the initiative.

11... a6 12. ♖h1

12. ♖d1 ♘g4 ⇨

12... b5 13. ♖d1



**13...b4!N**

13...♖d7 14.f5 ♘c4

(14...♙xb3 15.cxb3± 0–1 (50) Negi,P-Kryvoruchko,Y FIDE World Cup 2013)

15.♙xc4 bxc4 16.♗d2

(16.♗d4 ♗xd4 17.♙xd4 ♙xd4 18.♞xd4 ♞b6 19.♞d1 ♗f6 20.♞f3 ♗g7=)

16...♙xc3

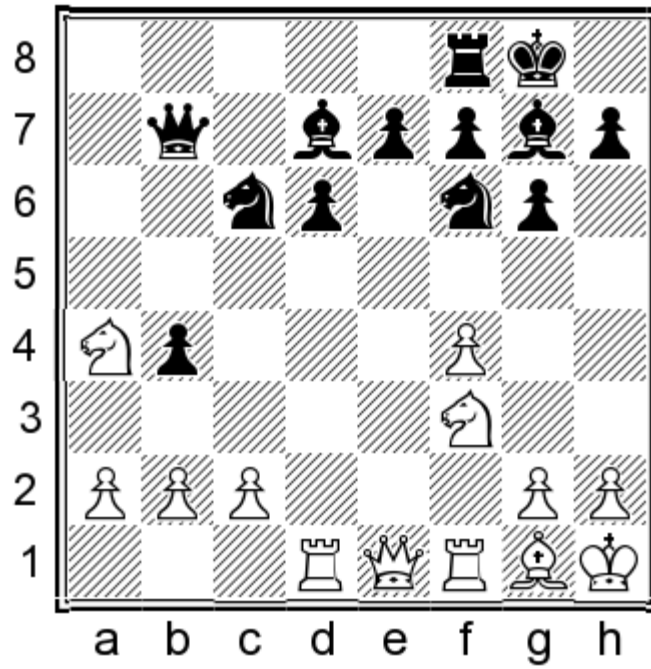
(16...♞a5!? 17.♗d5 (17.♗xc4 ♙xc3 18.♞xc3 ♞xc3 19.bxc3 ♗cb8!±) 17...e6! 18.fxe6 (18.♗f4 ♞xa2 19.fxe6 fxe6±) 18...fxe6 19.♗f4 ♞xa2∞ (19...♗d8!?)

17.bxc3 ♞a5 18.♗f3 ♞b8±

**14.♗a4 ♗xe4 15.♙b6 ♞e8 16.♙xa6 ♗f6 17.♙xc8 ♞xc8**

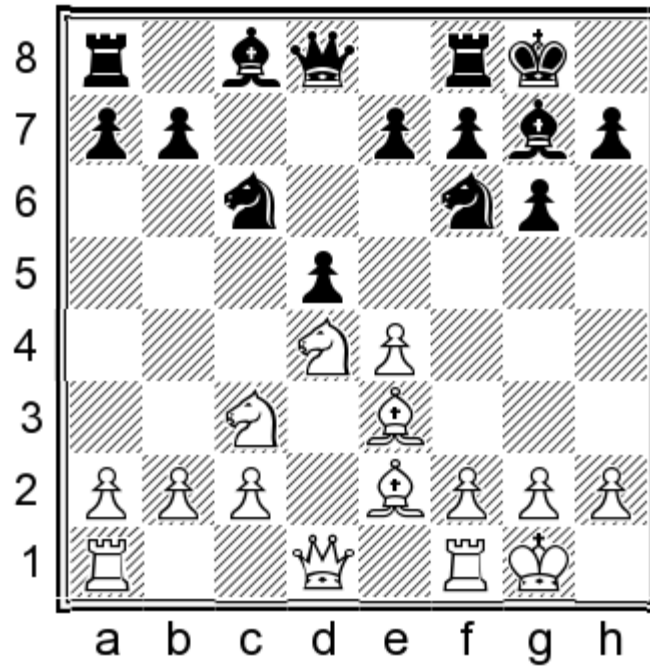
Black's compensation is undeniable.

**18.♗d4 ♙d7 19.♗f3 ♞b7 20.♙g1**



20...♖d8! 21.b3 ♗e6 22.♗d4 ♗d5 23.f5 ♗ef4 24.♖g3 ♗h5 25.♖f3 ♖a8=

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.♖c3 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♙e2 0-0 8.0-0 d5

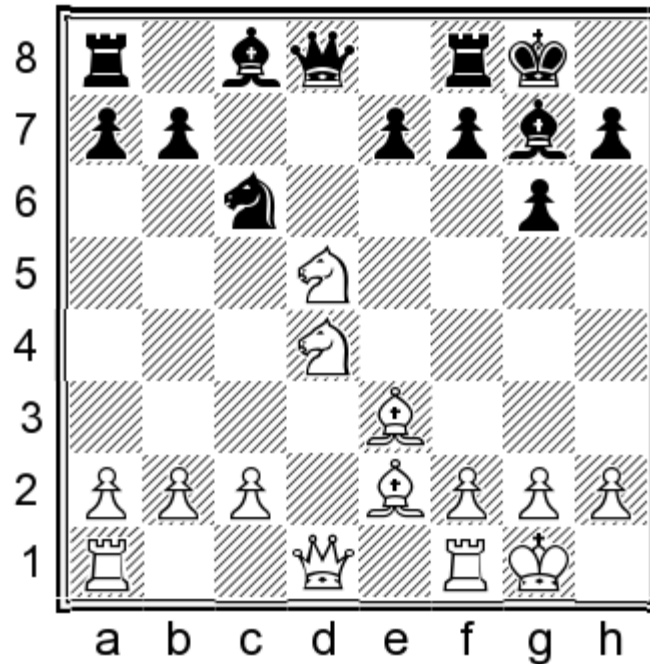


If Black played 8...d6 instead, we would have a position from the Classical Dragon where Black would intend to play 9...d5 next. This is the sense in which we are effectively up a tempo in the Accelerated Dragon.

9.♗xc6

Not the most popular but in my opinion White's best.

9.exd5 ♗xd5 10.♗xd5



The following choice is just a matter of taste: both lead to very dry, equal endgames. I tend to prefer 10...♞xd4 because it keeps Black's pawn structure in tact.

(10.♞xc6 bxc6 11.♞xd5 cxd5 12.♙f3 ♘b7 13.c4 d4 14.♙xb7 ♞b8 15.♙d2 ♞xb7 16.b4 e5=)

10...♞xd4

(10...♞xd5 11.♙f3 ♞c4 (11...♞a5 12.♞xc6 bxc6 13.♞c1 ♞b8 14.c3 c5 15.♞d1 White is not better, but our current world champion has taught us with his games that enduring even mild unpleasantness such as this can be made to be a Herculean task.) 12.♞xc6 (12.♙e2 ♞b4) 12...bxc6 13.c3 ♙f5 14.♞b3 (14.♙e2 ♞e6 15.♞a4 ♞fb8 16.♙c4 ♞c8 17.♙b3 ♙e6=) 14...♞a6 15.♙c5 ♞ab8 16.♞a3 ♞xa3 17.♙xa3 ♞fc8=)

11.♙xd4

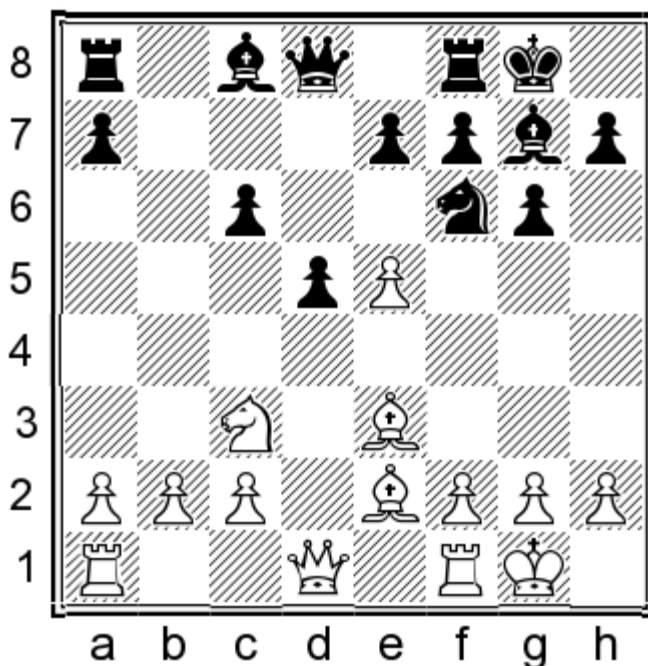
(11.♙c4 e5 12.c3 ♙e6=)

11...♞xd5 12.♙xg7 ♞xd1 13.♞axd1 ♞xg7 14.♞d2

(14.♙f3 ♙e6=)

14...♙e6 15.♞fd1 ♞fc8 16.a3 ♞ab8=

**9...bxc6 10.e5**



This system is underrated, and Black needs to be a little careful here. Computers initially think every move is absolutely equal, but they are slow at grasping the positional pressure White can apply if Black does not act fast.

**10...♞e4!**

Liquidating the position is in my judgment the easiest path to equality for Black.

10...♞e8 This (like 10...♞d7) is thematic but Black needs to play very energetically to cope with his static weaknesses and the requisite level of accuracy makes this a risky variation to enter into. 11.f4 f6 12.exf6 ♙xf6 13.♞d2 ♞b8

(13...♞d6? 14.♞xd5±)

14.b3 ♞d6 15.♞ad1 ♞c7

(15...♙f5 16.♙f3 I prefer White.)

16. ♖a4 e5 17. fxe5 ♗e4 18. ♖e1 ♕xe5 19. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 20. ♖h4 ♔g8∞;

10... ♗d7 11. f4 e6

(11... f6?! 12. ♗xd5! fxe5 13. fxe5 ♗xe5 14. ♗f4±)

12. ♗a4 a5

(12... f6 13. exf6 ♖xf6 14. c3 These positions are just much easier to play for White, so I recommend avoiding them, even though Black must objectively be fine.; 12... ♖a5 13. c4 ♕a6 14. ♕d2 ♖c7 15. ♖c1 ♖b7 16. ♖e1 ♖fc8 17. ♖f3 dxc4 18. ♖h4 ♖b5 19. b3 ♖d5 20. ♕e3 ♖a5 21. ♕xc4 ♕xc4 22. ♖xc4 ♗b6 23. ♗xb6 axb6 0–1 (40) Paiva, J-Panno, O (2570) Sao Paulo 1972)

13. ♖d2?!

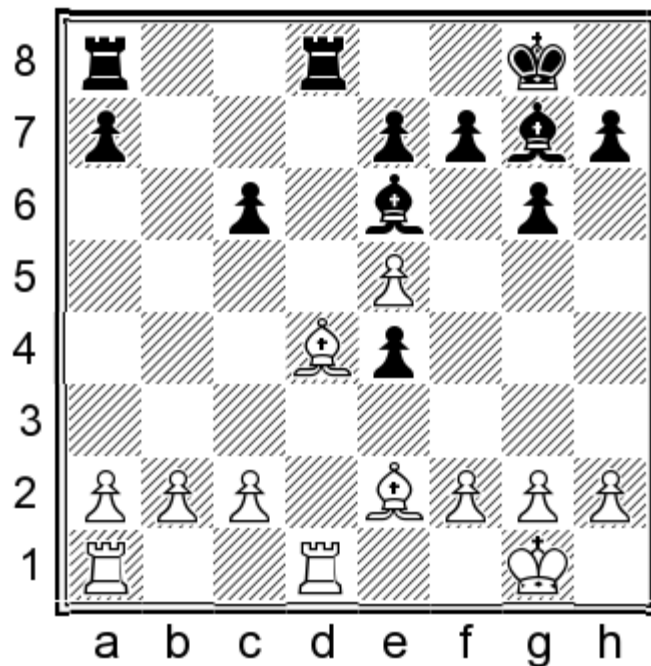
(♞13. c4! f6 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. exf6±)

13... ♕a6 14. c4 ♖b8 15. cxd5 ♕xe2 16. ♖xe2 cxd5 17. ♖ac1 g5!?∞ 0–1 (38) Mahia, G (2380)-Sorokin, M (2490) Pehuajo 1993.

11. ♗xe4 dxe4 12. ♖xd8

12. ♖d4 ♖d5=

12... ♖xd8 13. ♖fd1 ♕e6 14. ♕d4



14... c5!

14... ♖d7 15. a4 Nigel Short demonstrates what can go wrong for Black if he isn't careful. 15... f5?! 16. exf6 exf6 17. a5 ♔f7 18. f3 exf3 19. ♕xf3 ♖c7 20. b4!± 1–0 (59) Short, N (2685)-Yrjola, J (2485) Manila 1992.

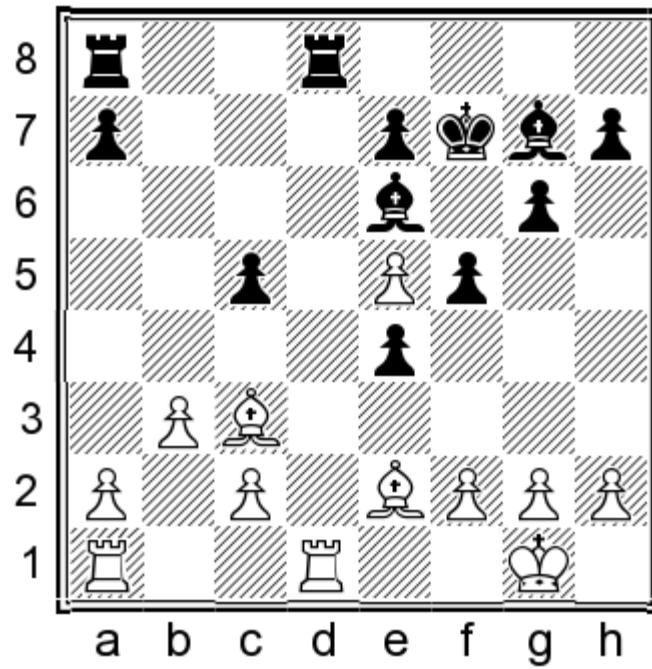
15. ♕c3

15. ♕xc5 ♖dc8=

15...f5 16.b3

16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.♗xf6 exf6=

16...♔f7=

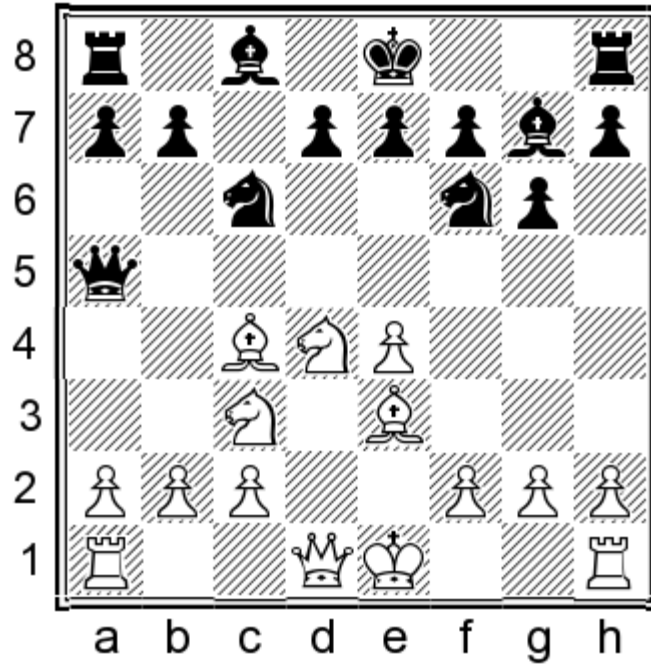


Neither side can make progress; Black should resort to waiting moves (...♗h6-g7, etc.) until White initiates exchanges.

# CHAPTER 2

## 7.♘c4: ANTI-YUGOSLAV VARIATION

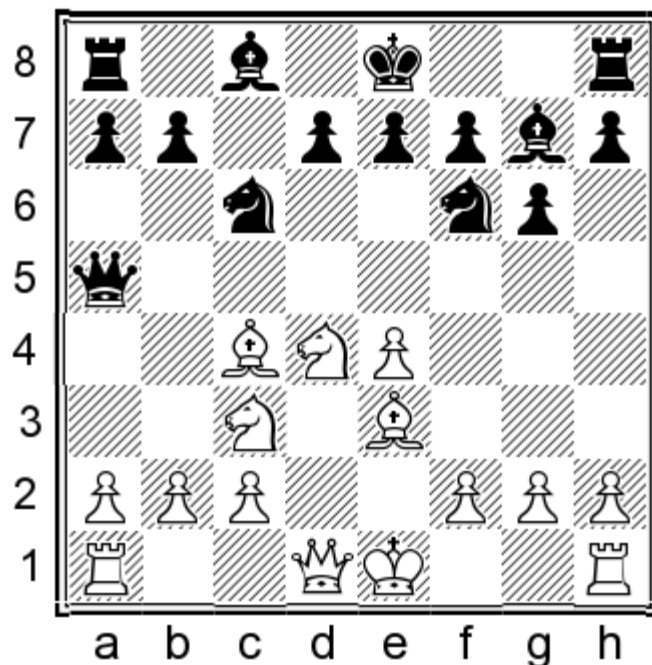
1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♘e3 ♗f6 7.♘c4 ♚a5



### Contents

- 1. 8.sidelines & 8.0-0 0-0 9.sidelines
- 2. 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘b3 d6 10.sidelines
- 3. 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘b3 d6 10.h3 ♘d7 11.sidelines
- 4. 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘b3 d6 10.h3 ♘d7 11.♙e1
- 5. 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘b3 d6 10.h3 ♘d7 11.f4

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c6 5.♗c3 ♘g7 6.♘e3 ♗f6 7.♘c4 ♚a5



I follow Donaldson and Silman in referring to this system as the ‘Anti-Yugoslav variation’. In their words, “We call this system the Anti-Yugoslav because 7...♚a5 more or less forces White to castle kingside and thus avoids the dangers of the Yugoslav Attack in the Dragon.”

This concession from White is not without compromise from Black. In his repertoire book on the White side of 1.e4, Negi points out the defects in Black’s position: “...the queen on a5 is badly placed — it just gets in the way of Black’s typical plans like ...♘a5, or ...b5/...a5. Now ...b5 can always be met by a2-a3 without any worries. Black also has the typical plan of ...♘d4 and ...♙c6 available but if White avoids playing f2-f4, the positions after ♘d5 (intending to meet ...♙d5 with exd5) seem quite pleasant for him. Moreover, it is not easy for Black to find a new square for the queen. Going to c7 will only encourage ♙g5, with ideas of ♙xf6 and ♘d5, so the most common plan is ...♚h5. Although this may offer a few tactical tricks, it’s hard to believe that the queen can be well placed there.” I do not disagree with Negi — Black’s queen usually does need to be relocated from a5, because the c6-Knight wants that square, and very often Black’s maneuvers in this system are (in his words) “hard to believe”. That being said, the fact that White players will be incredulous towards Black’s maneuvers is a positive feature of Black’s strategy (in this specific variation and more broadly in the Accelerated Dragon), not a reason to avoid this line.

In my experience playing this system over the board for more than sixteen years, White players have real difficulty managing their position, because Black’s Queen on a5 means that play neither resembles the Yugoslav Attack nor does it follow the usual paths in the ♙c4/0-0 Dragon. White therefore must be extremely accurate in order to pose any problems whatsoever for Black, and more often than not White players are unprepared to do so. Black, in his favor, is usually confined to deciding between a few typical themes, and that makes his life much easier.

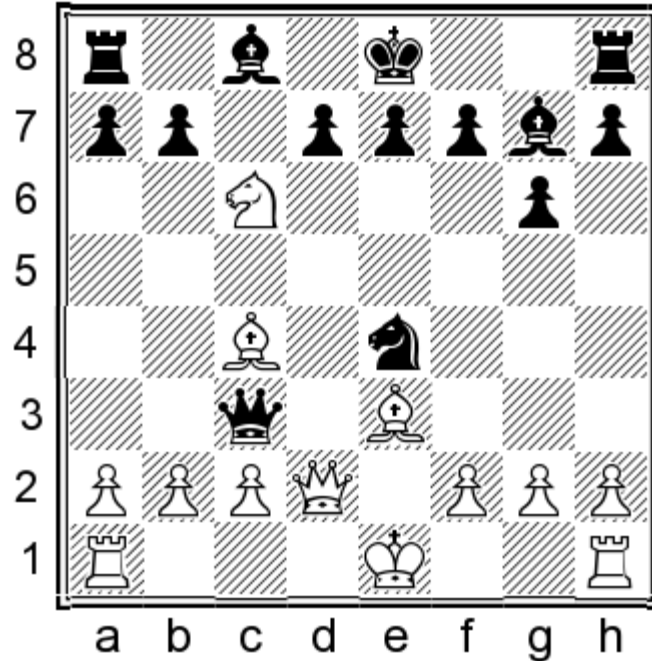
In the introduction to the book I mentioned that I was initially drawn to this system for its incredible “cheapo potential”, but to reassure the reader that this is a serious, safe, and reliable counter to 7.♙c4, I point out that Ivanchuk relied on this system at the highest stage when he employed it against Grischuk in the London Candidates, 2013 (see 10.♘d5! in the next subchapter).

## 8.0-0

Conventional wisdom dictates that this is basically forced, but in my opinion 8.f3 is not to be underestimated either.

8.♚d2? For White players who have never seen 7...♚a5, this blunder is not a rare occurrence. 8...♘xe4! 9.♘xc6 (9.♘xe4 ♚xd2+ 10.♘xd2 ♘xd4+)

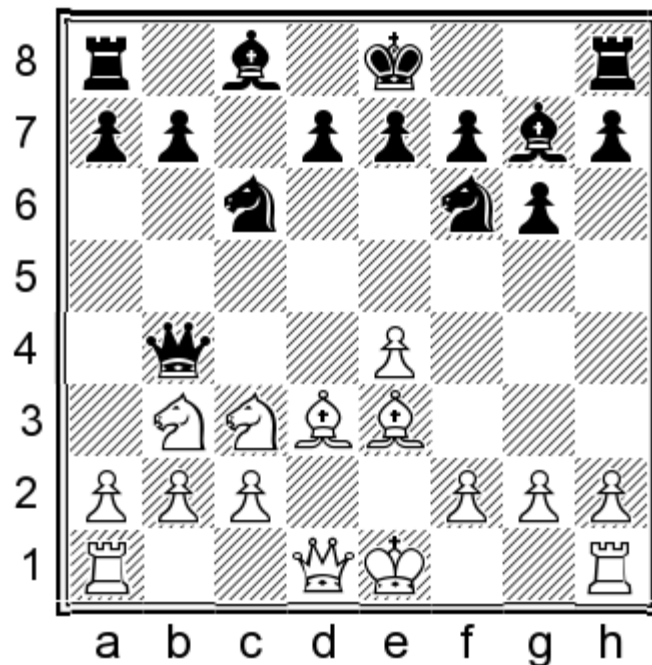
9...♔xc3!!



I've had the pleasure of playing this over the board many times. Black is up at least a pawn in all variations.;

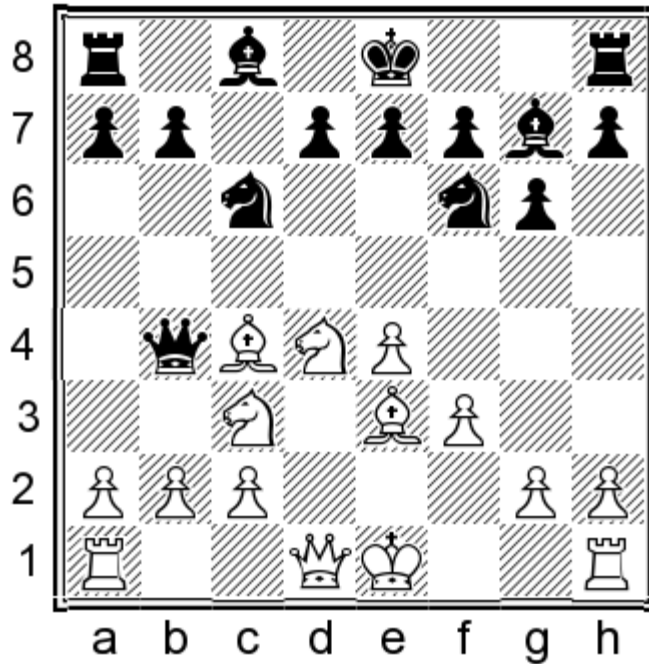
8.♘b3? Another frequent sighting when facing unprepared opposition. 8...♔b4! 9.♙d3

(9.♘d2 Apparently, according to Donaldson and Silman, this was an idea of the late GM Pilnik, who felt that White had enough compensation for a pawn. Plausible as it may have been at the time, modern computers demonstrate concretely that White just ends up suffering here — and being down material. 9...♔xb2 10.♘b5 ♔e5 11.f4 ♔b8 12.e5 ♘xe5! 13.fxex5 ♔xe5 14.♘f1 ♘g4! 15.♔xg4 ♔xa1+ 16.♙f2 0-0)



9...♘xe4! 10.♙xe4 ♙xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♔xe4;

8.f3!? This move is highly underrated; for example, Donaldson and Silman, as well as Negi give the move a question mark. 8...♔b4!



Black must not allow White to play ♖d2 and 0-0-0, establishing a Yugoslav setup. The ‘Anti-Yugoslav variation’ wouldn’t be aptly named if it allowed this! 9.♘db5! White takes advantage of Black’s queen being on b4, and therefore the c7 square being vulnerable. This move has surprisingly been overlooked by other commentators.

(9.♘b3? ♗xe4 10.♗xc6 ♘xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♙xc3+ 12.♙e2 dxc6 13.♙d4 ♙xd4 14.♘xd4 ♗f6 15.♙he1 ♙g8! Keeping the king centralized in anticipation of the endgame. 16.♙f2 ♗d5⚡)

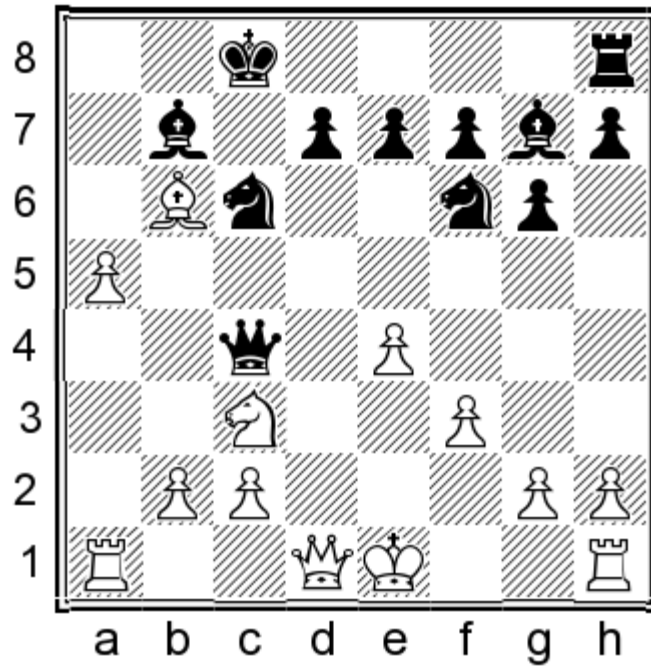
9...♙xc4!

(9...0-0 10.♘b3 d6 11.♙d2 ♘d7 12.0-0-0 This is ‘just a game’, of course, but White has succeeded in establishing the Yugoslav setup, so on principle we do not allow it.)

10.♗c7+ ♙d8 11.♗xa8 b6 12.a4 ♘b7 13.♗xb6

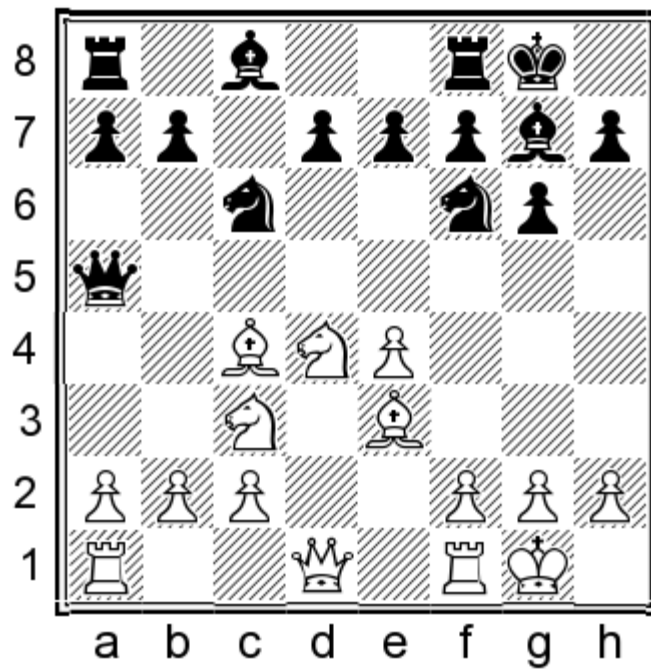
(13.a5 bxa5 14.e5 ♗e8 15.♙a4 ♙e6 16.f4 ♘xa8— 0–1 (31) Tatekhin,V (2154)-Danin,A (2543) Belgorod 2011)

13...axb6 14.♘xb6+ ♙c8 15.a5



A highly unusual position has arisen. If memory serves, it was Bent Larsen who claimed that in unusual positions the best moves are often unusual themselves. The following maneuver may appear unusual, but it will be a recurring theme in this book. 15...♞e8! Black's knight unblocks the g7 bishop and heads to d6, targeting the c4 square. 16.♘a4 ♞d6! 17.♙e3 ♚b5 18.♛d5 ♜a6=

**8...0-0**



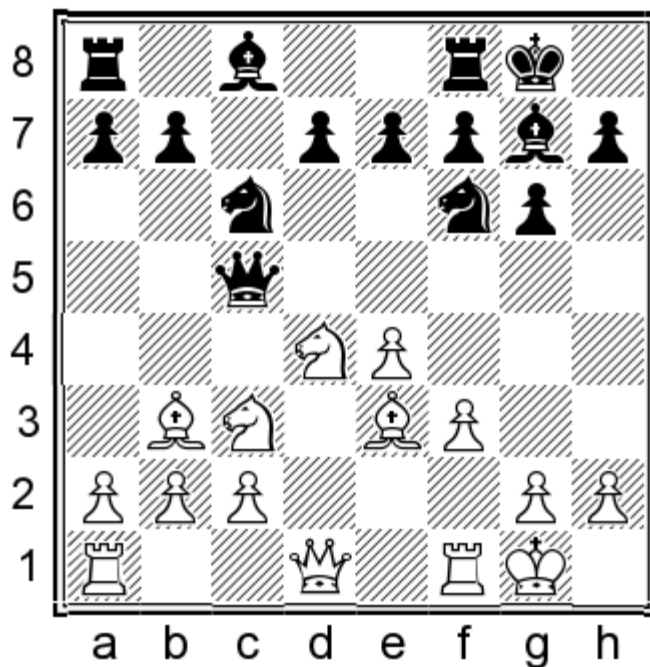
By far the most popular move for White here is 9.♙b3, which will be the subject of the next few chapters. Here we consider alternatives for White.

**9.♘b3**

This is a clever line: if Black continues 9...♛a5-d8, White intends to accept the loss of a tempo with ♙c4-e2, because

Black has lost two tempi with ...♙d8-a5-d8. Thus, a position from the Classical Dragon is reached a full tempo up for White. This was reason enough for Donaldson and Silman to attribute a “?” to 9...♙d8, but in my judgment the Classical Dragon is ‘so equal’ that even a tempo down, Black has no problems.

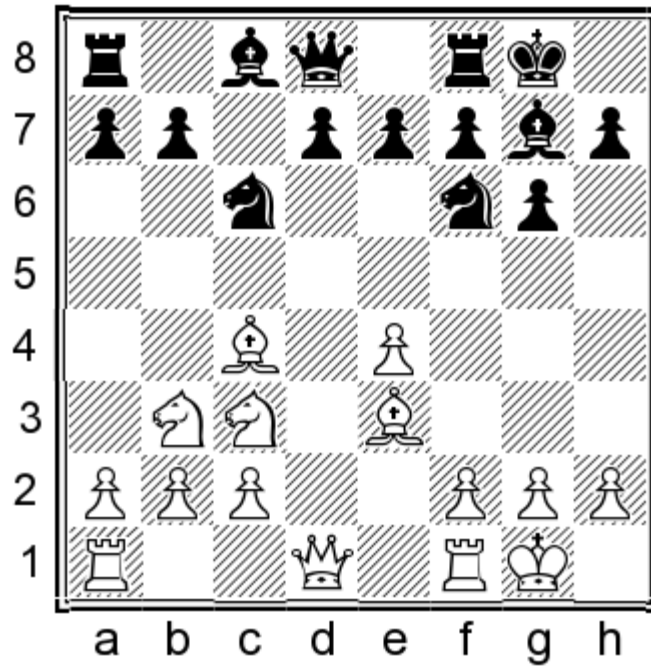
9.f3?! ♖c5 10.♗b3



If you ask a seasoned Accelerated Dragon player how many times the d4-knight is currently under attack, they will surely say “three”, never forgetting to include the g7-bishop, which can be uncovered with tempo. 10...♘g4! 11.f3g4 ♗xd4 12.♗xd4 ♘xd4 13.♖h1 ♗e5 14.♘d5 ♘c6=;

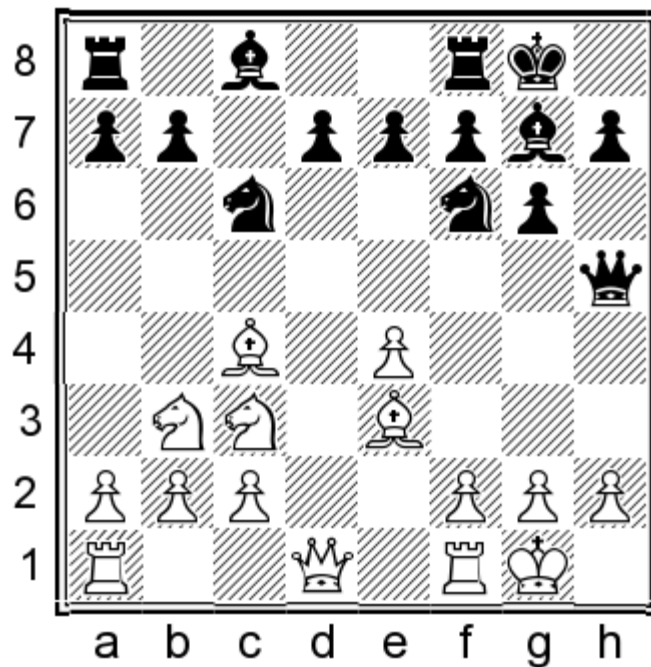
9.♘d5 White cannot hope for an advantage by releasing the central tension so quickly. 9...♘xd5 10.exd5 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 e5! 12.dxe6 dxe6 13.♗xg7 ♖xg7=

**9...♙d8!**



I recommend calling White out on their cleverness. If White plays the 7.♘c4 variation against the Accelerated Dragon (as opposed to 7.♘e2) in the hope that they will be able to favorably transpose into a 7.♘e2 line, then they probably don't have much experience with ♘e2 systems, so we should welcome this transposition. Besides, it is no more correct to say that Black is down a tempo in this line than it is to say that Black is up a tempo in the Classical line as compared to this one! Retreating the queen to d8 is the simplest way for Black to handle the position; he intends to continue in the same fashion as I recommended in the ♘e2 chapter. It is worth mentioning that super GM Malakhov has adopted this move in more than one tournament game.

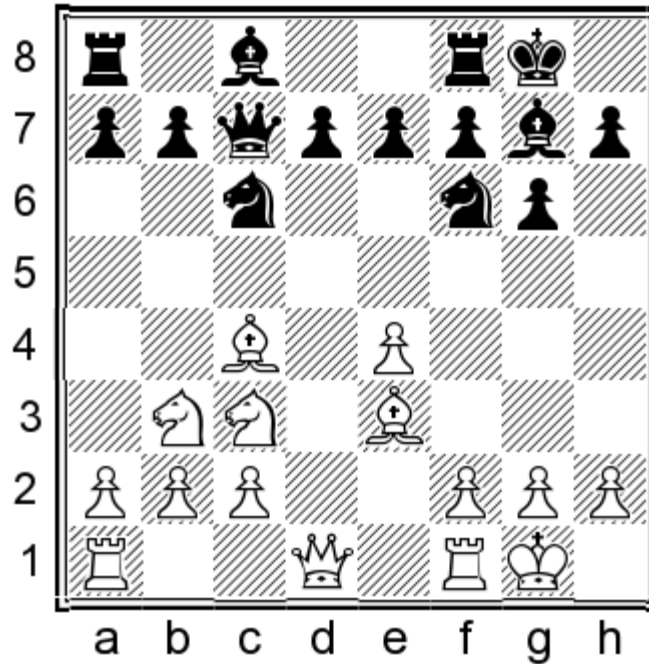
9...♗h5



I used to enjoy playing this when I was younger. It amazed me that Black's queen could get away with such tightrope acrobatics. Unfortunately I can't recommend this for anything other than, perhaps, blitz chess. 10.♘e2 ♗h4 11.f3 ♘h5 12.♗d2

(12.♔f2?! One little inaccuracy from White and Black is back in business. 12...♖g5 13.♘d5 e6 14.♙e3 ♕h4 15.♗d2 ♙e5 16.f4 ♙xb2 17.♖ab1 ♙g7∞)

12...♙e5 13.f4 ♙xc3 14.♗xc3 ♘f6 15.♘d2 d5 16.♘f3 ♗h5 17.e5 ♘e4 18.♗d3±;  
9...♗c7



10.♙g5± Perhaps it is a little harsh to evaluate this as +=, because the truth is, it is just an interesting game after, for example, 10...e6!?. In this opening, though, what matters is the level of counterplay, not objective assessment. With White threatening ♙g5xf6 and ♘c3-d5, Black's counterplay is put on hold in order to defend further, and so compared to 10...♗d8! which genuinely offers equal chances, I assess this as slightly preferable for White.

(10.f4 d6 11.♙e2 a6 12.♗e1 ♙g4 13.♙xg4 ♘xg4 14.♘d5 ♗d8 (14...♗b8 15.c3 e6 16.♘b6 ♘xe3 17.♗xe3 ♗a7 18.♖ad1 ♖ad8=) 15.♙b6 ♗d7 16.♖d1 ♘f6 17.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 18.e5± 1-0 (62) Wei Yi (2641)-Bu Xiangzhi (2710) Zhongshan CHN 2014)

## 10.♙e2

10.♙g5 d6 11.♖e1

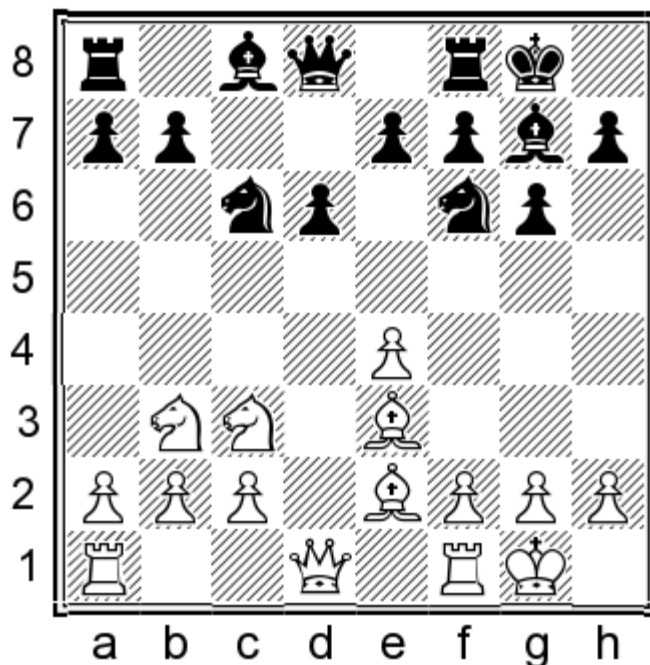
(11.♙xf6?! ♙xf6∞ Since Black's queen is on d8 (and not c7), Black can recapture with the bishop without fearing ♘c3-d5xf6.)

11...♘d7 12.♗d2 ♘b6 13.♙e2 ♙e6 14.♙h6 ♖c8 15.♙xg7 ♘xg7 16.♖ad1 ♘c4

(16...♘e5 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 ♗c7 19.c3 ♖cd8 20.♘d4± 1/2-1/2 (56) Perez Candelario,M (2474)-Malakhov,V (2664) Sanxenxo ESP 2004)

17.♙xc4 ♙xc4 18.♘d5 b5= Black will continue with a typical minority attack on the queenside.

## 10...d6



Since this variation is discussed, tempo up, in the chapter on the ♕e2 (Classical) Accelerated Dragon, here we will only consider attempts by White to take advantage of the extra tempo with aggressive play. If White sticks to slow maneuvering, the extra tempo will be diluted over time.

#### 11.f4

11.♖d2 a5 12.a4 ♗e6 13.♞fd1 ♞c8 14.f3 ♘d7 15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 17.♚xd4 ♚b6 18.♙b5 ♚xd4+ 19.♞xd4 ♘b6 20.♙f2 ♞c5 21.♞d2 ♞fc8 0-1 (58) Recuero Guerra,D (2407)-Malakhov,V (2690) Benidorm ESP 2007.

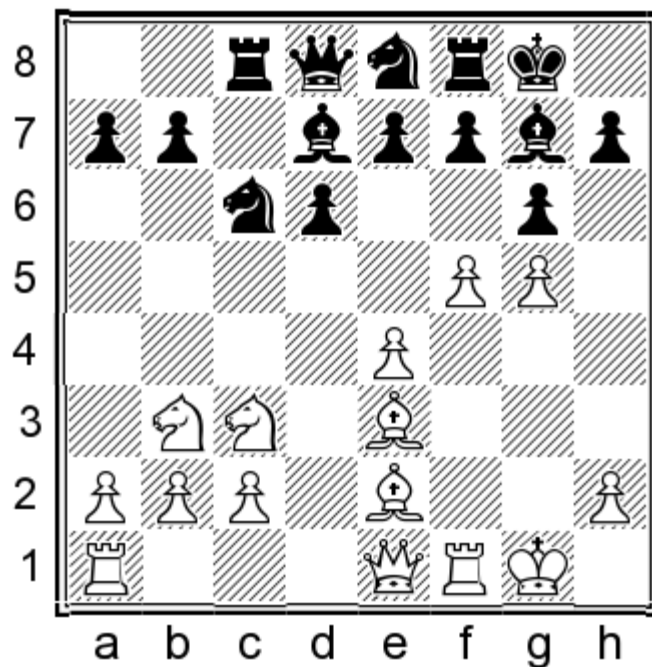
#### 11...♗e6 12.g4

The test of whether Black can get away with playing this system down a tempo is whether such immediate attacks work for White. Fortunately, they don't, so as Black we should provoke and welcome White to overreach. 12.♚e1 ♞c8 13.♚h4 ♘b4 14.♞ac1? ♞xc3! 15.bxc3 ♘xa2

#### 12...♞c8 13.g5

13.f5 ♗d7 14.♚e1?! A typical method of attack but simply inadequate here. 14...♘e5 15.♚h4?! ♞xc3! 16.bxc3 ♘xe4

#### 13...♘e8 14.f5 ♗d7 15.♚e1

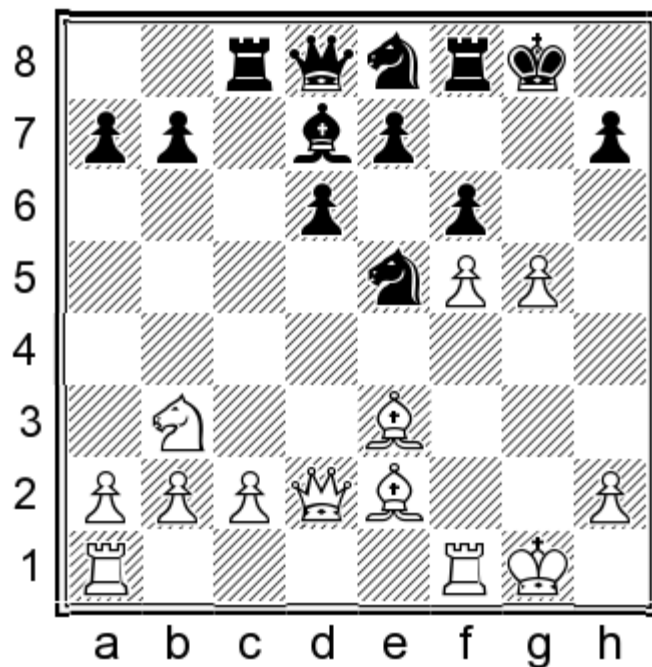


White is overextended; the onus is now on Black to hit back and demonstrate the soundness of Black's counterplay, even down a tempo.

15...♙xc3! 16.♚xc3

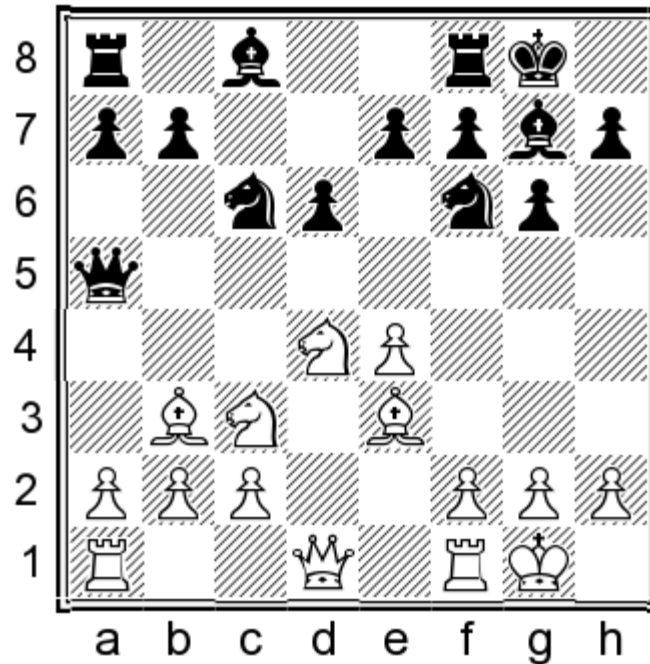
16.bxc3 ♘e5

16...♘e5 17.♚d2 gxf5! 18.exf5 f6!⇒



Black has counterattacking ideas such as ...♖h8/♗g8, ...♘e8-g7, and ...♙d7-c6 (a consequence of White's overextension).

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♙g7 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♙c4 ♚a5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙b3 d6



White's options are limited, as Black threatens ...♘f6-g4.

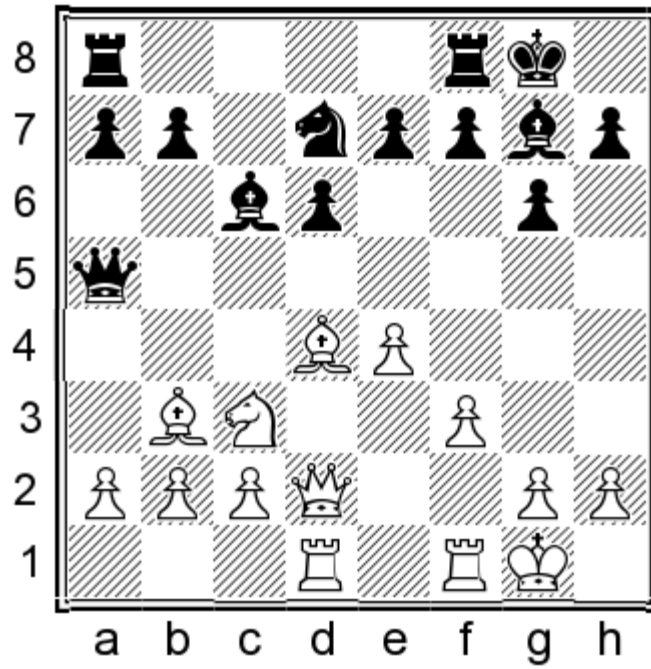
### 10.♘d5

Played in Grischuk-Ivanchuk, London Candidates 2013. After that game, I considered this move to be the critical test of this entire variation. However, I now consider it to be harmless, and not just because of 10...♚d8!

10.f3 This move is played often, but it is clearly inferior to 10.h3, because Black can continue in the same way as he does in the main line, except White will eventually lose a tempo when he inevitably plays f3-f4. 10...♙d7

(10...♘xd4 This is playable but unnecessary. 11.♙xd4 ♙e6 12.f4 (12.♘d5 ♙xd5 13.exd5 ♘d7 14.c3 ♙xd4+ 15.♚xd4 ♜fe8 16.♞fe1 a6 17.♞e2 ♚c5 18.♚xc5 ♘xc5 19.♞ae1 ♔f8 20.♙c2 b5=) 12...♚a6!? 13.♞e1 ♚c6 14.♘d5±)

11.♚d2 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙c6 13.♞ad1 ♘d7=



Black has solved his opening problems. It is crucial to understand that if Black succeeds in exchanging on d4, and exchanging queens with ...♙a5-c5, then Black is to be preferred (though not enough to seriously plan for more than a draw), for typical Sicilian reasons: more central pawns, potential queenside minority attack, etc.;

10.♙d2? ♜xd4! (10...♜xe4 11.♜xc6±) 11.♙xd4 (11.♙xd4 ♜g4) 11...♜xe4

### 10...♙d8!N

Black vacates the a5-square for his knight, leaving White with the only piece in 'no man's land' (the 5th rank).

10...♜xd5!? 11.exd5 ♜e5 12.h3 ♙a6;

10...♞e8 11.♜xf6+ ♙xf6 12.c3 ♙d7

(12...♜e5?! This was Ivanchuk's choice, and it turned out okay for him — though he lost the game, it was due to the clock rather than the position. White, however, could have posed serious problems with 13.f4! 13.f4! (13.h3 ♙a6 14.♜c2 ♜d3 15.♙f3 ♙e6 16.♙d4 ♙xd4 17.♜xd4 ♙c4= 1–0 (39) Grischuk,A (2764)-Ivanchuk,V (2757) London ENG 2013) 13...♜g4 14.♙c1!± Black's knight is stranded on g4, and White's b3-bishop will coordinate with his f1-rook to target f7 after f4-f5.)

13.f4 ♜xd4 14.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 15.♙xd4 ♙c5=

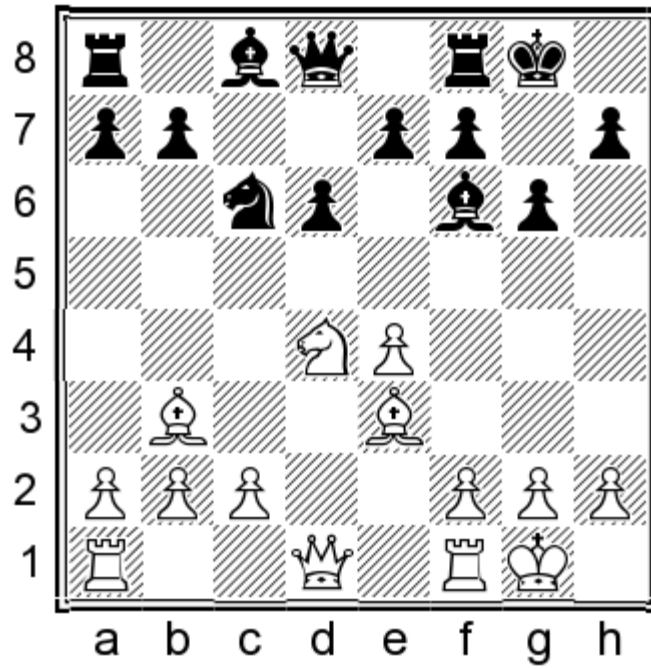
### 11.♜xf6+

11.f3 Black has his pick of ways to equalise. 11...♙d7

(11...♜a5 12.c3 ♜xd5 13.exd5 ♙d7=; 11...♜xd5 12.♙xd5 e6!? 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.♜xc6 ♙c7 15.♜d4 ♙b8 16.♙b1 ♙a6 17.♙e1 ♙fd8 With two bishops and ...d6-d5 imminent, Black's compensation is undeniable.)

12.c3 ♜a5= Black's queenside counterplay, combining a minority attack with infiltration via ...♜a5-c4, is simple and strong.

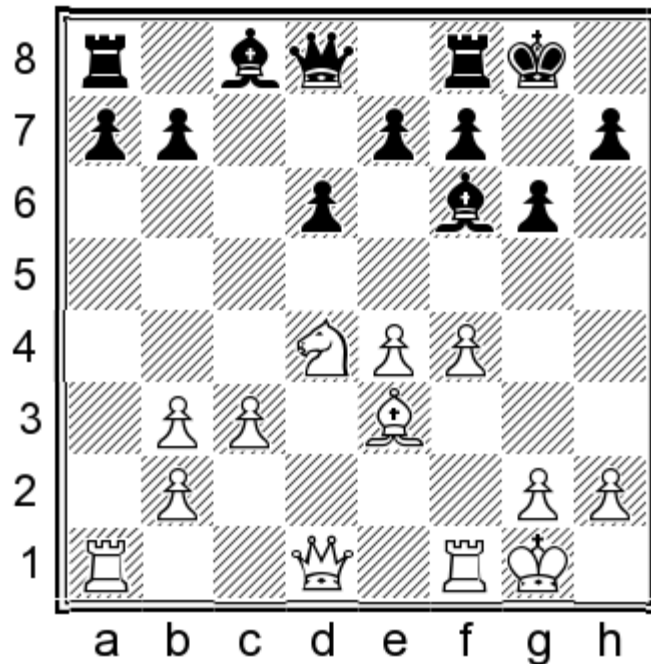
### 11...♙xf6



**12.c3**

12.♖xc6 bxc6 13.c3 c5 14.♗c4 ♜b8 15.♞b1 ♚a5 ⇒ Black prepares to exchange light squared bishops with either ...c8-e6 or ...♗c8-a6, releasing pressure from the f7-pawn, so that White's f4-f5 loses force. The onus will then be on White to defend against Black's ensuing b-file pressure.;

12.f4 ♗a5 13.c3 ♗xb3 14.axb3



14...a5! 15.♞f3 ♗d7 16.f5 b5 ⇒ This is typical of Black's counterplay in this variation.

**12...♗a5! 13.♞d2**

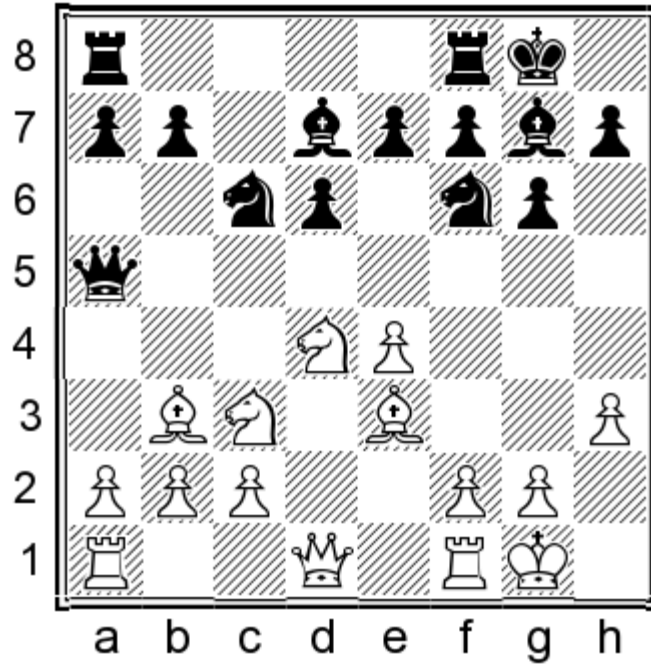
13.♗d5 e6 14.♗b3 a6 15.♖c2 b5 16.♗f4 ♗e5! =

**13...♗d7**

Black prepares to take on b3, then charge forward on the queenside with ...a7-a5/b7-b5/a5-a4. It is unclear what White is doing; 14.f4 only creates weaknesses.

**14.f4 ♖xb3 15.axb3 e5! 16.♗e2 ♗c6 17.♗g3 d5! =**

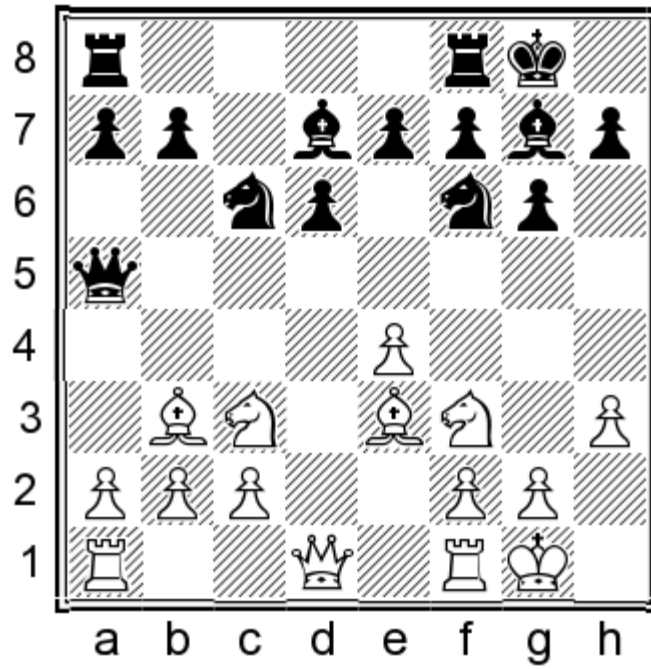
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♕g7 6.♖e3 ♗f6 7.♖c4 ♜a5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖b3 d6 10.h3 ♖d7



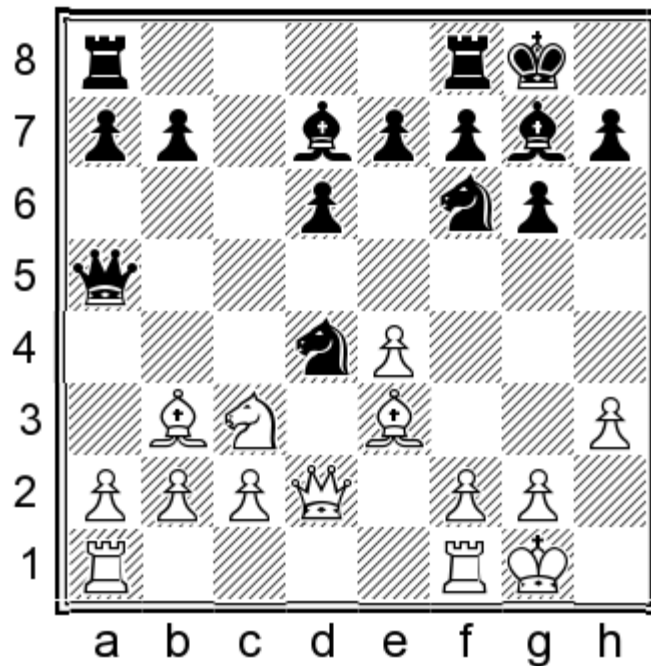
The first major branching point for this variation. Black intends ...♗c6xd4, followed by ...♖d7-c6 and ...♗f6-d7. Ideally, Black will exchange dark squared bishops on d4, as well as queens (after ...♜a5-c5). Black seeks out an endgame for obvious reasons: Black's trumps include a central pawn majority and the prospect of a long term queenside minority attack coupled with play along the half-open c-file. White is banking on obtaining a middlegame initiative as compensation for these long term disadvantages, so White will try to avoid exchanges. The two most sensible moves here are 11.♞e1, recommended by Negi, and the main line, 11.f4. These two moves will be covered in the next two subchapters.

10...♗xd4 11.♖xd4 ♖e6 12.♗d5±

11.♗f3



11. ♖d2? A surprisingly common blunder — the database shows that even grandmasters have fallen for this. 11... ♗xd4



12. ♗xd4?!

(12. ♖xd4 Most strong players catch their blunder and choose to accept a worse endgame rather than lose a pawn.

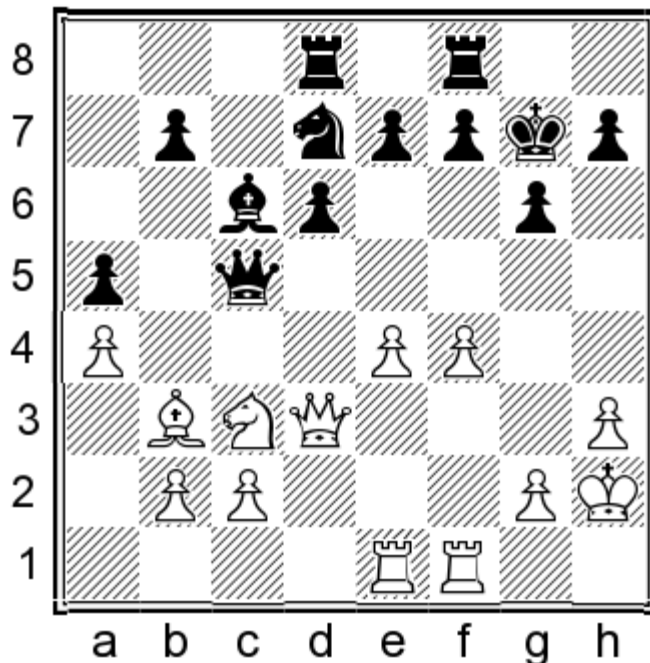
12... ♗g4 13. ♖d5 ♖xd5 14. ♗xd5 ♗xe3 15. ♗xe7+ ♔h8 16. fxe3 ♜ae8 17. ♗d5 ♗xb2 18. ♞ab1 ♗e5 (18... ♗g7 19. ♗f6 ♗xf6 20. ♞xf6= 1–0 (75) Medvegy,Z (2474)-Stolz,M (2391) Balatonlelle 2005; 18... ♗a3 19. ♗f6 ♞e7 20. ♗xd7 ♞xd7 21. ♗d5= 1/2–1/2 (29) Simacek,P (2476)-Malinovsky,K (2367) Olomouc 2009) 19. ♗f6 ♞d8 20. ♗d5 b6 21. ♗xd7 ♞xd7)

12... ♗xe4! 13. ♖e3

(13. ♗xe4 ♖xd2 14. ♗xd2 ♗xd4)

13... ♗xd4 14. ♖xe4 ♗xc3 15. bxc3 ♖g5 0–1 (70) Hou Yifan (2584)-Bacrot,E (2721) Villarrobledo ESP 2009;

11. ♖d3 Black proceeds with the usual plan of ... ♖c6xd4, ... ♗d7-c6, and ... ♜f6-d7. 11... ♜xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♗c6 13. ♝ae1 ♜d7 14. ♗xg7 ♜xg7 15. f4 ♝c5+ 16. ♜h2 a5 17. a4 ♞ad8



18. ♝g3 ♜f6

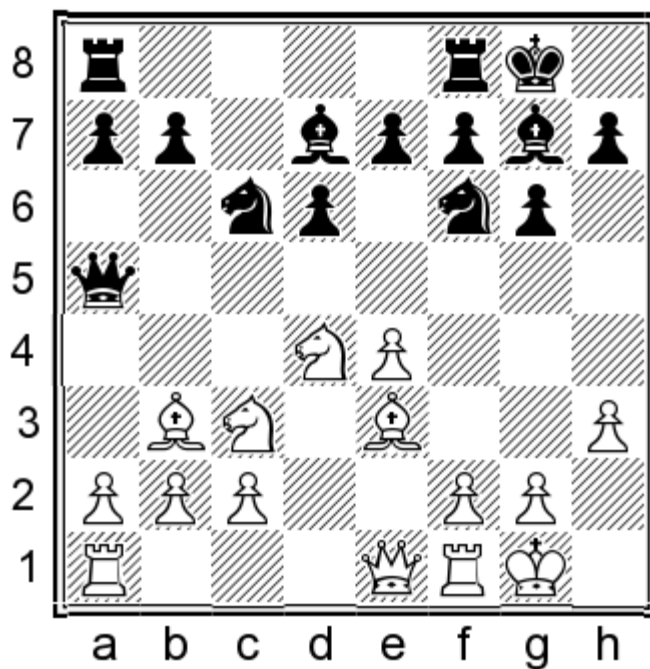
(18... ♝b4?! Misplacing the queen; Black wants to be able to meet f4-f5 with ... ♝c5-e5. 19. f5 ♜e5 (It is not too late for Black to admit his mistake. 19... ♝c5! =) 20. f6+± 1/2-1/2 (58) Wei Yi (2557)-Yu Yangyi (2657) Shenzhen CHN 2013)

19. f5

(19. e5 dxe5 20. fxe5 ♜h5 21. ♝f2 ♝xf2 22. ♞xf2 g5! 23. g3 ♞d4!±)

19... ♝e5=;

11. ♝e1?!



A move once played by Carlsen. White sets up a positional trap (see 11...♖xd4), but Black has an easy path to equality. 11...♖xe4!

a) 11...♖xd4?! The usual plan doesn't work here. 12.♙xd4 ♘c6?! 13.♗d5! ♚xe1? (13...♚d8 14.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 15.♙xf6 exf6 16.♞d1±) 14.♗xe7+ ♖h8 15.♞fxe1+-;

b) 11...♞fe8 Perfectly playable but unnecessary given the strength of 11...♗xe4. 12.♞d1 ♗xd4 13.♙xd4 ♘c6 14.f4 (14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♗d5 ♚c5 16.♗xf6+ (16.♗c7 ♙xb2) 16...exf6 17.♚d2 ♞ad8) 14...♗d7 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7 16.f5 (16.♖h2 ♞ac8 17.♚h4 h6 18.♗d5 e6 19.♗c3 ♗f6 20.♚e1 1/2-1/2 (20) Nisipeanu,L (2695)-Carlsen,M (2646) Sarajevo BIH 2006) 16...♗f6 17.♚h4 ♚e5 18.♙d5 ♞f8! (18...e6 19.♙xc6 bxc6 20.fxg6 fxg6 21.♞xd6 ♚xd6 22.♚xf6+ ♖g8 23.♚f7+ ♖h8=) 19.♞f3 e6 20.♙xc6 bxc6=;

12.♗xc6

(12.♗xe4? ♚xe1 13.♞fxe1 ♗xd4)

12...♙xc6 13.♗xe4 ♚xe1 14.♞axe1 ♙xe4 15.♙c1 ♙c6 16.♞xe7 ♙f6 17.♞e3 d5=

### 11...b5!

11...♞fc8 (This is the routine way we meet White's ♗d4-f3, with the idea of ...♙d7-e8, ...♗f6-d7-c5. This is Negi's recommendation for Black, but in this particular move order I think we can do better with 11...b5!.) 12.♗g5! ♙e8 13.f4± White's f1 Rook, b3 Bishop, and g5 Knight all target f7, and Black doesn't ideally want to play ...h7-h6 to kick out the g5 knight because then the g6 pawn is weakened.

### 12.a3

12.♞e1!? Black is no worse in the ensuing complications. In my opinion, such lines aren't worth memorizing; Black's position is fundamentally sound (none of his pieces are bad) so White's pawn sacrifice is bound to be inadequate — there are laws of justice governing our beloved game. 12...b4 13.♗d5 ♗xe4 14.♙f4

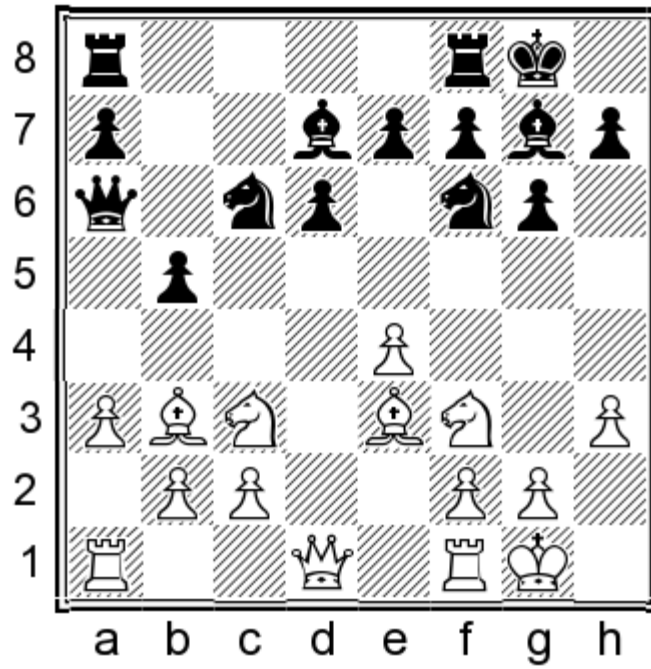
(14.♙c1 ♗c5 15.♙g5 ♙xb2 16.♞b1 ♙c3 17.♗xc3 bxc3 18.♙xe7 ♗xe7 19.♞xe7 ♗xb3 20.axb3 ♙c6=)

14...♗c5 15.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 16.♙xd6

(16.♞xe7 ♙e6=)

16...♗f5 17.♙xc5 ♚xc5 18.♚xd7 ♞ad8 19.♙xf7+ ♖h8 20.♚b7 ♙xb2 21.♞ad1 ♞xd1 22.♞xd1 ♗d4=

### 12...♚a6!N



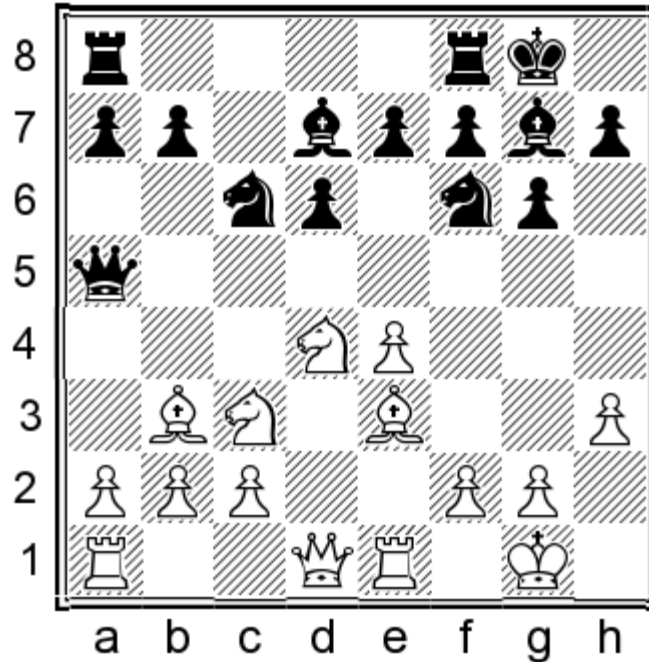
With the intention of relocating the queen to b7, where it simultaneously keeps one eye on the center and one eye on the queenside minority attack.

**13. ♖e1**

13. ♖d2 ♖b7 14. ♗h6 ♘e5 15. ♘xe5 dxe5 16. ♗xg7 ♙xg7 17. ♘d5 ♗c6 18. ♖c3 ♘d7 19. ♘xe7 ♗xe4 20. f3 ♖ae8=

**13... ♖b7 14. ♗g5 h6 15. ♗h4 g5 16. ♗g3 ♘a5=**

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞c6 5.♞c3 ♟g7 6.♟e3 ♞f6 7.♟c4 ♚a5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♟b3 d6 10.h3 ♟d7 11.♞e1



As I have mentioned, Black's main plan in this system begins with exchanging on d4 and playing ...♟d7-c6. The prophylactic 11.♟f3!? prevents this idea, but it is better for White to wait a move to ask Black to commit a piece before playing ♞d4-f3, especially since on this move 11...♞xd4 is dubious.

### 11...♞fc8

It was hard to decide which move to recommend in this line, but I am happy with this choice for two reasons:

- 1) Black's next few moves (except after 12.f4) can be pretty much played on autopilot (...♟d7-e8, ...♞f6-d7-c5) — one shouldn't underestimate the value of such conveniences.
- 2) In the other lines, play often liquidates into positions where Black is close to equal but without many winning chances;

11...♞ac8 (Even though I am not recommending this, it will be instructive for the reader to play through these variations to get a feel for why 11...♞fc8 is a better choice, especially to play for a win.) 12.♟f3

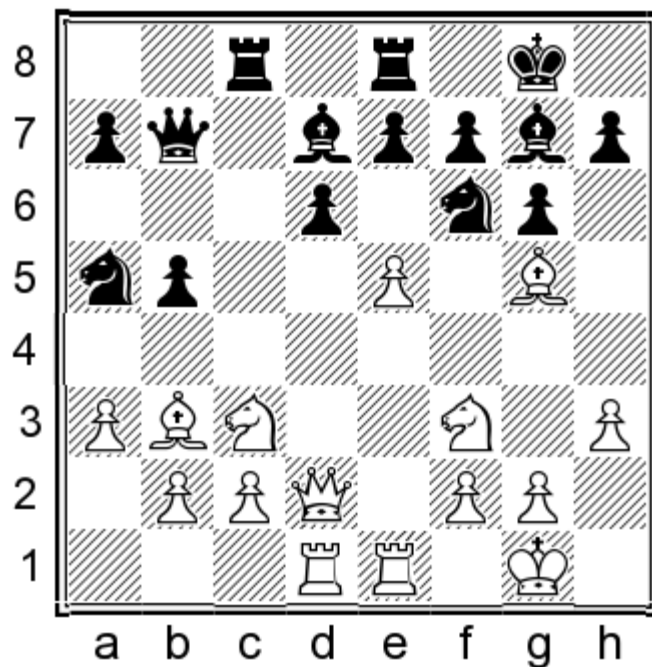
**a)** 12.♚e2!? Prophylaxis against ...♞c6-e5, because now White will be able to hit the e5 knight with f2-f4, and the c4-square will be unavailable to it. 12...a6 13.♞ad1 ♚c7 14.♞d5 ♞xd5 15.exd5 ♞e5 16.♚d2 ♞fe8 17.♟h6 ♟f6 18.♟g5 ♟g7 19.♟h6 ♟f6 1/2–1/2 (19) Brkic, A (2573)-Mamedov, R (2653) Sarajevo BIH 2010;

**b)** 12.♞d5 ♞fe8 13.♞xc6 bxc6 14.♞c3 ♞cd8 15.♚d2 ♟c8 16.♞ad1 ♞d7 17.♟d4 ♞c5 18.♟xg7 ♚xg7 19.♚e3 e5!= 0–1 (62) Mehar, C (2246)-Kuzubov, Y (2626) Gurgon IND 2009;

### 12...♚h5

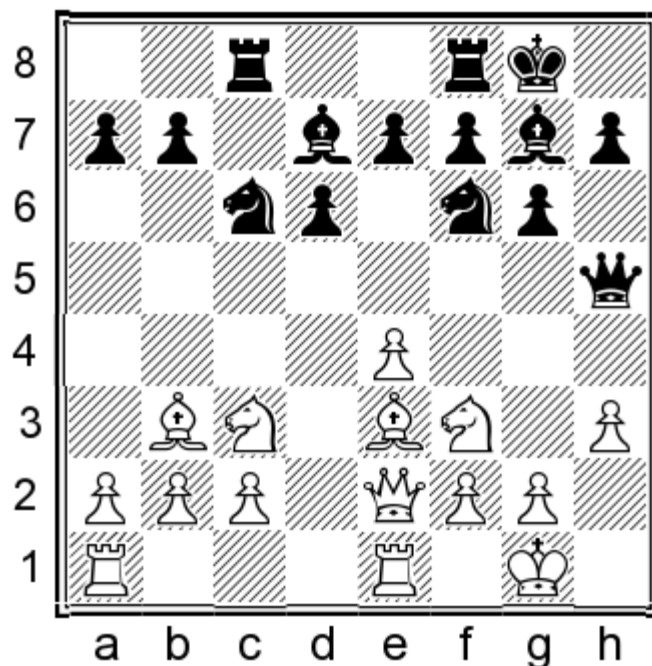
**a)** 12...♚c7?! 13.♟g5! ♞a5 14.♟xf6 exf6 15.♞d5± 1/2–1/2 (54) Petrosian, T (2627)-Mamedov, R (2640) Bursa TUR 2010;

**b)** 12...♞fe8 13.♚d2 b5 14.a3 ♚a6 15.♟g5 ♚b7 16.♞ad1 ♞a5 17.e5±



We see that one of the problems for Black in this line is the d7-bishop; this is why I recommend playing 11...Rfc8 and 12...Ke8;

13. We2



Negi's recommendation. He omits our next move though. 13...Ng4!N Black forces simplifications and the resulting position is close to equal.

**a)** 13...a6 14. Rad1 Nde5 15. Nde5 Wxe5 16. f4 Wa5 17. Wf2 Rxc3 18. Qd2!± 1-0 (34) Fedorov, A (2602)-Malakhov, V (2670) Warsaw POL 2005;

**b)** 13...h6 14. Rad1 g5 15. Nd5 b6 16. Qa4! A novelty found by Negi. The ensuing variation he gives is not inspiring for Black. (16.c3 Nxd5 17. Qxd5 Ne5 18. Nxe5 Wxe2 19. Rxe2 Qxe5 20.h4 Qb5 21. Re1 Qf6 22.hxg5 hxg5= 1/2-1/2 (50) Wang Hao (2519)-Malakhov, V (2670) Khanty Mansyisk RUS 2005)

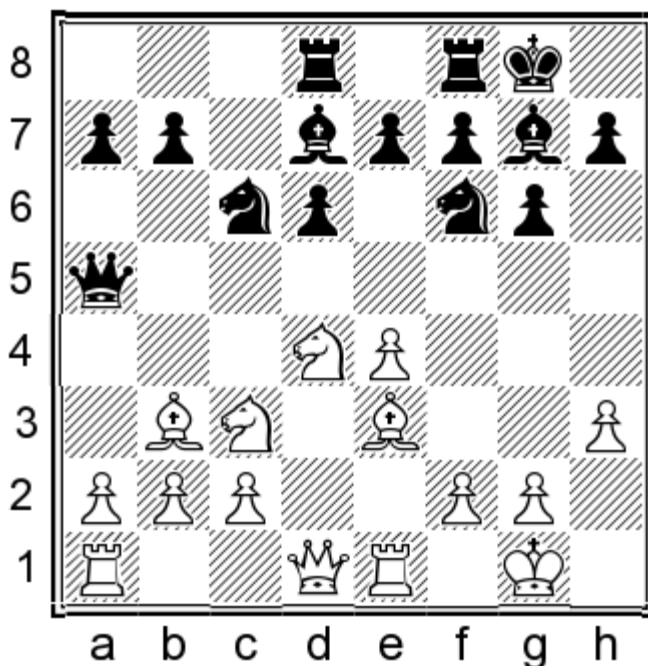
♙xf6 20.♙d4 ♘xd4 21.♖xd4!±;

14.hxg4 ♙xg4 15.♖b5

(15.♘d5 g5 16.♙xg5 ♙xf3 (16...♘e5 17.♖e3 ♘xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♙xf3 19.♖xf3!! ♖xf3 20.♖e3 ♖h5 21.♖g3 ♖c5 22.♙xe7 ♖xd5 23.♙xd5±) 17.♖xf3 ♖xg5=)

15...♙xf3 16.♖xh5 ♙xh5 17.f3 g5 18.♙xg5 ♙g6 19.♘d5 ♙xb2 20.♙xe7 ♙xa1 21.♖xa1 ♘xe7 22.♘xe7+ ♔g7 23.♘xc8 ♖xc8 24.♖d1 ♖c6 25.♖d5 f6 Black should be able to hold, but I recommend avoiding all this and playing 11...♖fc8 instead.;

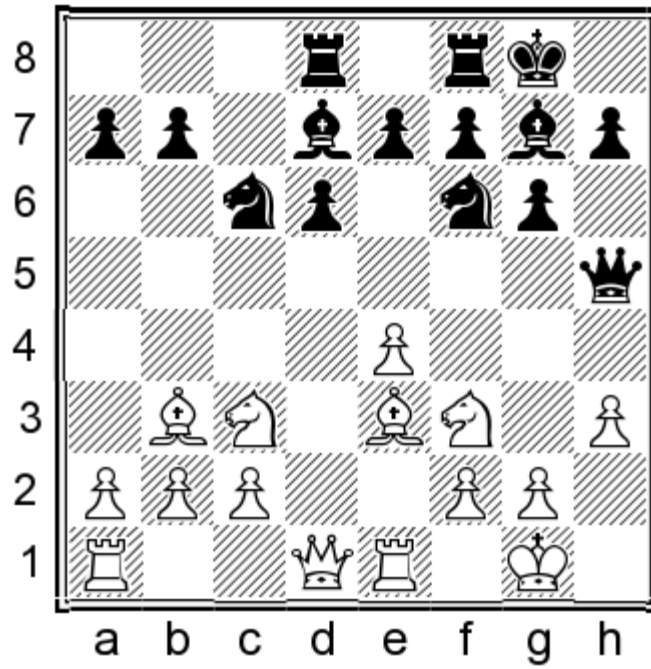
11...♖ad8!?



A move not mentioned by Negi, but deserving of our attention if for no other reason than the fact that Korchnoi played it in 2003. In my judgment this is a serious alternative to our main line, and perhaps the place to go if our main line runs into theoretical problems. 12.♘f3! This must be White's best.

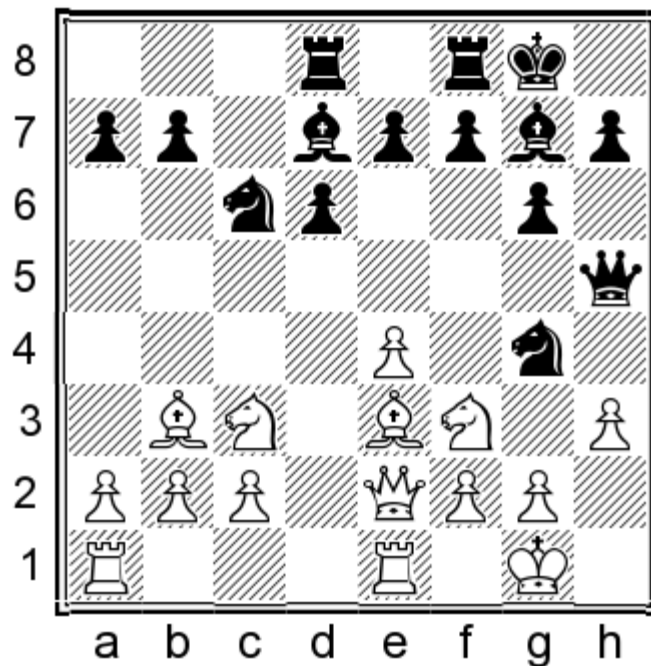
(12.♖d2 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 ♙c6 14.♖ad1 ♖fe8 15.♖e3 ♘d7 16.♙xg7 ♔xg7 17.♔h1 ♖c5= 1/2-1/2 (53) Sadvakasov,D (2523)-Korchnoi, V (2642) Astana KAZ 2003)

12...♖h5!



This move is a recurring theme in this  $\text{d4-f3}$  variation. Black intends to continue with ...h7-h6 and ...g6-g5, with counterplay against White's king. 13.  $\text{Rb1!}$ ? Prophylactically defending the b2-pawn which will be vulnerable after  $\text{c3-d5}$ .

(13.  $\text{We2}$   $\text{d}4$ g4!

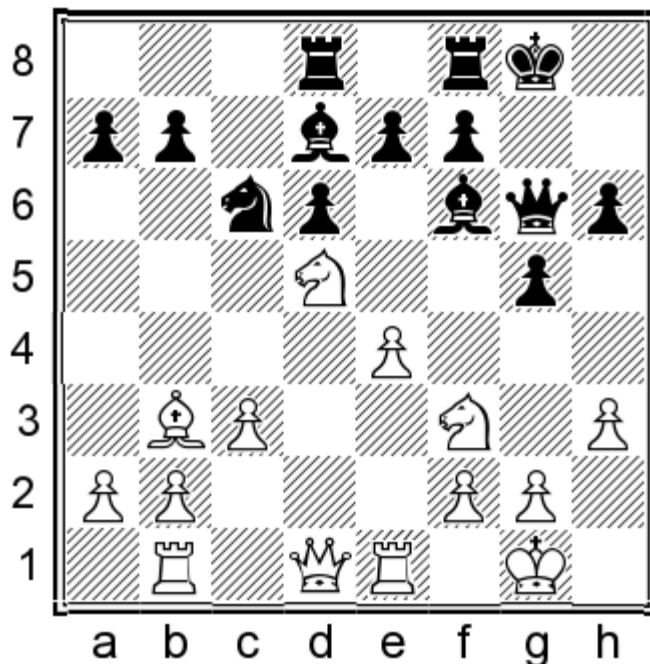


A stunning resource that we see more than once in this chapter. 14.  $\text{hxg4}$   $\text{g}4$  15.  $\text{Wb5}$  (15.  $\text{d}5$   $\text{g}5!$  (15...  $\text{d}e5?$  16.  $\text{d}f4+$ ) 16.  $\text{g}5$   $\text{d}e5$  (16...  $\text{d}d4?$  17.  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{e}2$  18.  $\text{e}7$   $\text{d}4$  19.  $\text{f}6!!\pm$ ) 17.  $\text{W}e3$   $\text{d}xf3+$  18.  $\text{gxf3}$   $\text{e}3$  19.  $\text{h}4$   $\text{W}g4+$  20.  $\text{g}3$   $\text{W}h5$  21.  $\text{h}4=$ ) 15...  $\text{e}3$  (15...  $\text{d}5$  Unfortunately White gets away after this. 16.  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{e}3$  17.  $\text{bxc3}$   $\text{e}3$  18.  $\text{gxf3}$   $\text{d}e5$  19.  $\text{f}6!!\pm$ ) 16.  $\text{W}xh5$   $\text{e}5$  17.  $\text{f}3$   $\text{g}5$  18.  $\text{g}5$   $\text{d}7=$  Black is about equal.)

13...h6 14.  $\text{d}5$   $\text{g}5$

(14...  $\text{d}xe4?$  15.  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{W}f5$  16.  $\text{g}4$   $\text{W}a5$  17.  $\text{d}xg6\pm$ )

15.♙d4 ♖g6 16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.c3



17...♗h8!⇒ Black is ready for ...♞f8-g8 and ...g5-g4. White players won't know what hit them!;

11...♗xd4?! 12.♙xd4 ♙c6

(12...♖g5 13.♙e3±)

13.♗d5! Black is not given time to play ...♗f6-d7; he has to make a concession either by allowing White to capture on f6, damaging Black's pawn structure, or by opening up White's e-file. 13...♙xd5 14.exd5 ♞fe8 15.c4 a6 16.♙c3 ♖c7 17.♞c1 ♗h5 The following is a recommendation of Negi's. 18.♙a4!? ♞ec8 19.♖d2±

## 12.f4

I am a little surprised that Negi didn't recommend this in his book. This rare move is extremely underrated, and has only been played by one 2500+ player — none other than Negi himself (Negi-Khalifman 2007). The main upshot of this move from White's perspective is that it deters Black from his usual, comfortable course of ...♙d7-e8 and ...♗f6-d7, because White's f-file pressure can become overwhelming.

12.♖e2 ♖h5!

(12...♙e8 is playable as well but 12...♖h5 is better)

13.♗f3

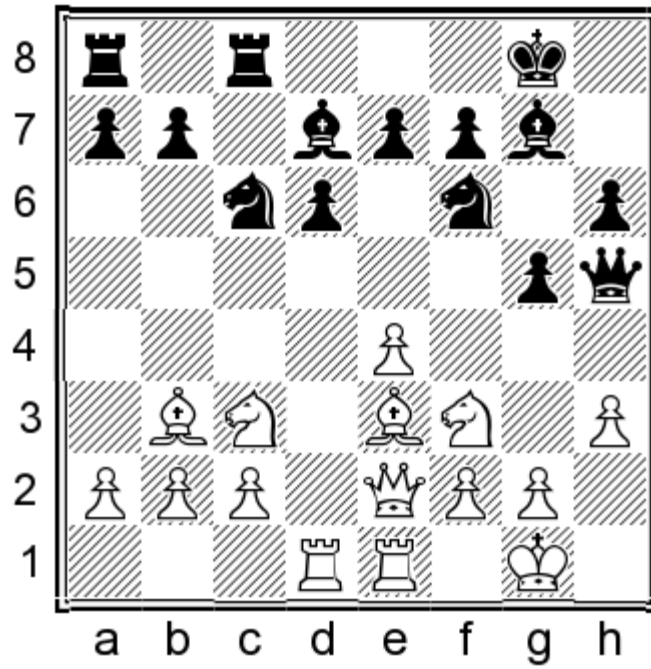
a) 13.♗xc6 ♙xc6 14.f3 d5! 15.g4 (15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♙xd5 17.c3 ♙c6=) 15...♖xh3 16.exd5 ♙d7 17.♖g2 ♖xg2+ 18.♗xg2 b5!⇒;

b) 13.♖xh5 As usual Black welcomes the trade of queens. 13...♗xh5 14.♞ad1 ♗a5 15.♗d5 ♗f8=;

13...h6!

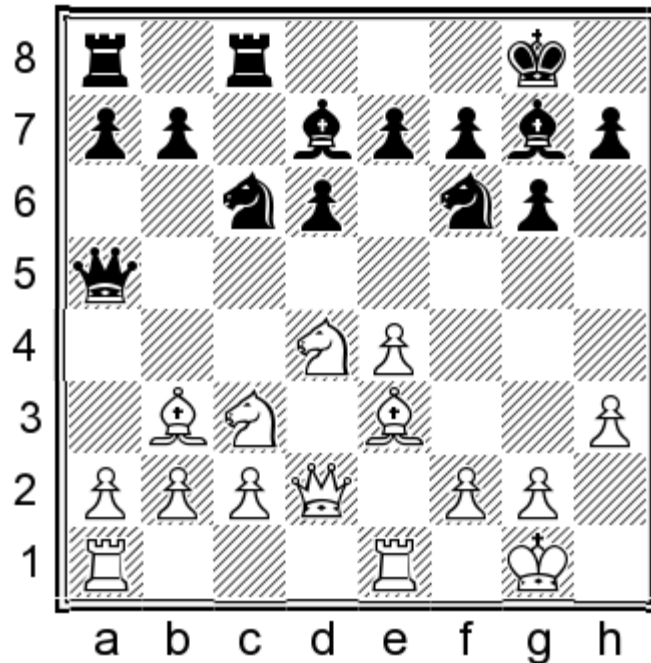
(13...♗g4? This doesn't quite work here, because the f7-pawn's weakness poses a problem. 14.hxg4 ♙xg4 15.♖c4!±)

14.♞ad1 g5!



15. ♖d5 ♜xd5 16. ♙xd5 ♙xb2 17. ♜b1 ♙c3 18. ♜xb7 ♙xh3 19. ♜xg5 ♛xe2 20. ♜xe2 ♙g4 21. ♜f3 e6 22. ♙xc6 ♜xc6 23. ♙xh6 We have been following Carlsen-Radjabov, 2010 (1-0). Black's opening preparation was excellent, but his play could have been improved here. 23... ♜b6! 24. ♜c7 ♙a5 25. ♜c4 e5! = Black's two bishops fully compensate for the pawn; if I had to choose I'd take Black.;

12. ♛d2



12... ♜e5

(12... ♙e8 As always Black can follow through with this plan, but with White's queen on d2 Black has the added possibility of ... ♜c6-e5-c4.)

13. ♙h6 ♜c4 14. ♙xc4 ♙xh6 15. ♜xh6 ♜xc4 16. ♜b3

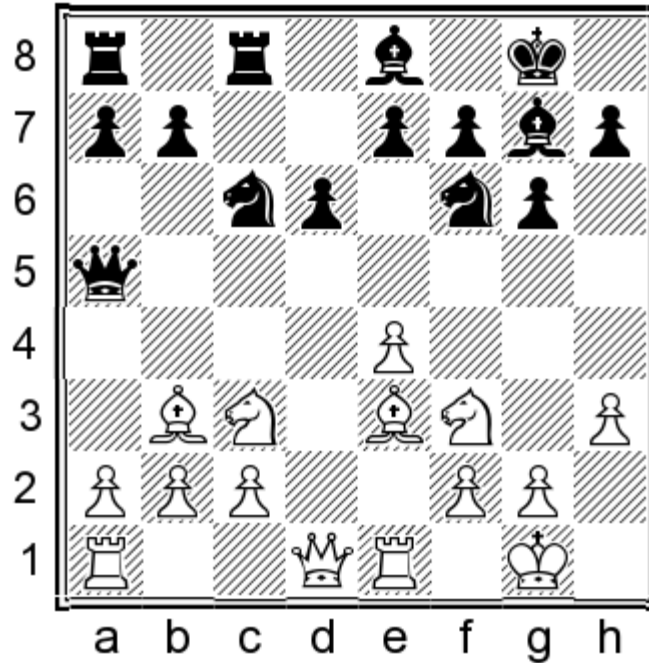
a) 16. ♜ad1 ♜b6 17. e5 dxe5 18. ♜f3 e4 19. ♜e5 ♜d4 20. ♜xd4 ♛xd4 21. ♜xd7 ♛xd7 22. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 23. ♜xe4 ♛d1

24.♔h2 ♚d6+ 25.♔g1 ♚d1+ 26.♔h2 ♚d6+ 1/2–1/2 (26) Akopian,V (2712)-Bacrot,E (2721) Jermuk ARM 2009;

**b)** 16.♘f3 ♚h5 17.♚e3 ♚c5=;

16...♚b6 17.♞ad1 a5 18.e5 dxe5 19.♞xe5 a4 20.♘d2 ♞d4 21.♚e3 ♚d6= 1–0 (57) Akopian,V (2696)-Bacrot, E (2728) Nalchik RUS 2009;

12.♘f3 It is a good sign for our 11...♞fc8 that 12.♘f3, which is supposed to be White's main idea after 11.♞e1, is not very effective here. 12...♙e8!



13.♚d2

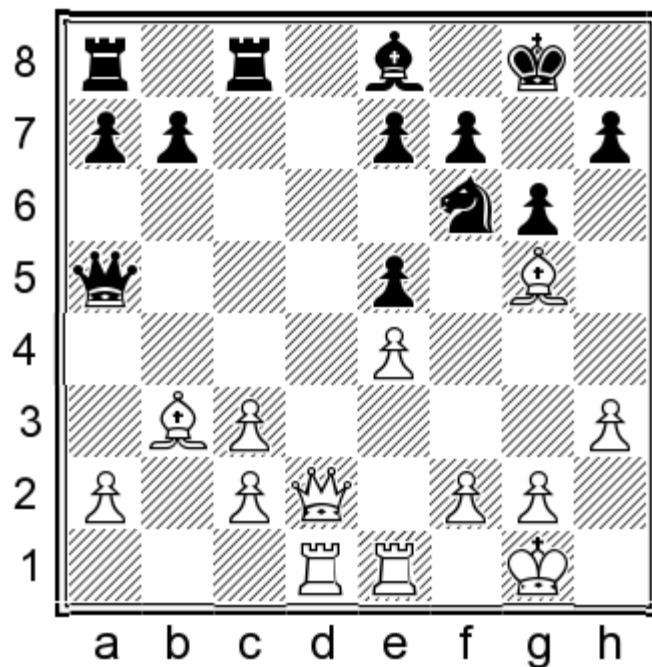
**a)** 13.♘d5 ♘d7 (13...e6 Black should be fine here as well. 14.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 15.c3 ♘e5 16.♘xe5 dxe5=; 13...♘xe4 14.♙f4 ♘c5 15.♞xe7 ♙xb2 16.♞b1 ♙g7∞) 14.c3 e6 15.♘f4 ♘c5 16.♚xd6 ♘xe4 17.♚d1 ♘c5 18.♙c2 ♘d7=;

**b)** 13.♙g5 ♘d7 14.♘d5 e6 15.♘e7+ ♘xe7 16.♙xe7 ♙xb2 17.♞b1 ♙g7 18.♙xd6 ♘e5 19.♙xe5 ♙xe5 20.♙d5 ♙c3 21.♙xb7 ♙xe1 22.♚xe1 ♚xa2 23.♙xc8 ♞xc8 24.♞a1 ♚xc2 25.♞xa7 ♚c1 1/2–1/2 (25) Kurnosov,I (2602)-Bacrot, E (2722) Moscow RUS 2009;

13...♘d7 14.♞ad1

(14.♙h6 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♘ce5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♚g5 ♘f6⇒ In addition to winning the c3-pawn, White's b3 Bishop will be vulnerable to Black's ...a5-a4.)

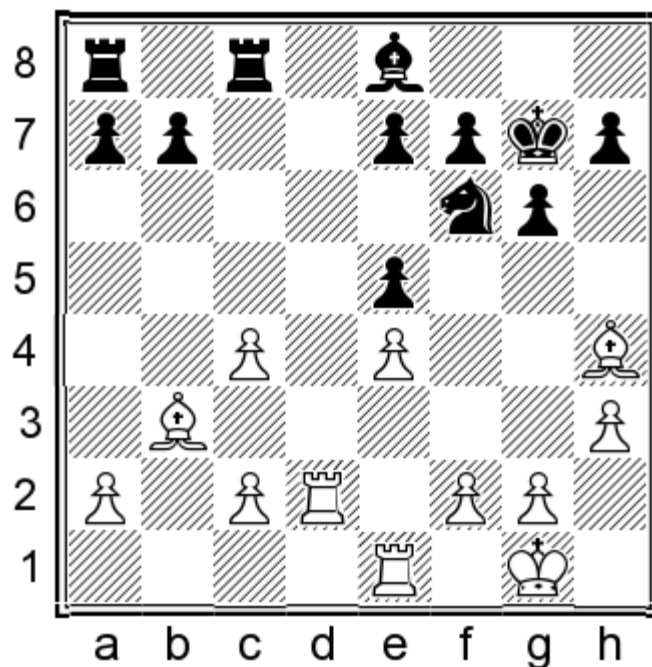
14...♙xc3! 15.bxc3 ♘ce5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♙g5 ♘f6



18.♙h4 Threatening ♖d2-h6.

(18.♞e3 ♞c7!≠; 18.c4 ♜xd2 19.♞xd2 ♔f8 20.f3 ♘d7=)

18...♔g7 19.c4 ♜xd2 20.♞xd2



20...♔f8! 21.f3

(21.♙g3 ♘d7 22.♞ed1 ♘b6 23.♙xe5 ♘xc4 24.♙xc4 ♞xc4≠)

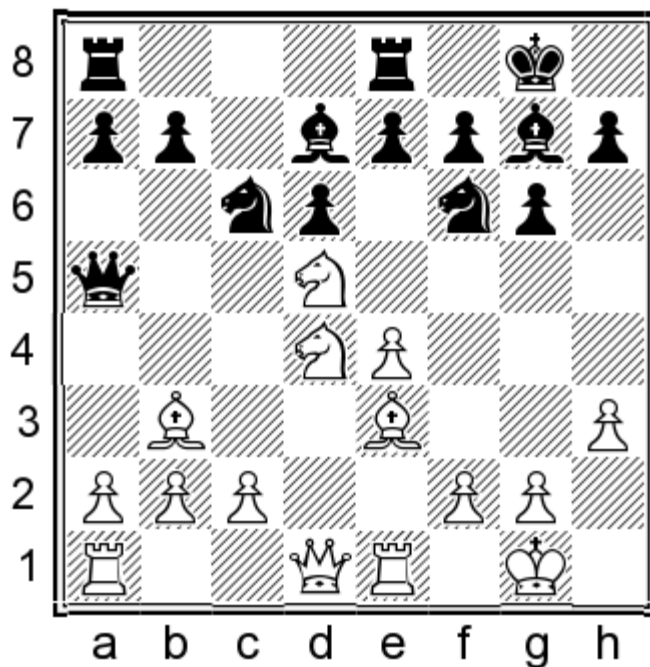
21...♘d7 22.♞ed1 ♘c5≠;

12.♜d3 Played by GM Timofeev, but as best I can tell the Queen just becomes a target to either ...♘f6-d7-c5 or simply ...♘c6-e5 12...♙e8

(12...♘e5 13.♜e2 ♜a6!≠)

13.♖ad1 ♘d7 14.♘d5 ♚d8!= 0-1 (43) Timofeev,A (2657)-Malakhov, V (2690) Tomsk RUS 2006;

12.♘d5 This is Negi's recommendation. He only considers 12...♘xd5 and 12...♚d8, but it seems to me that Black's best is 12...♞e8!

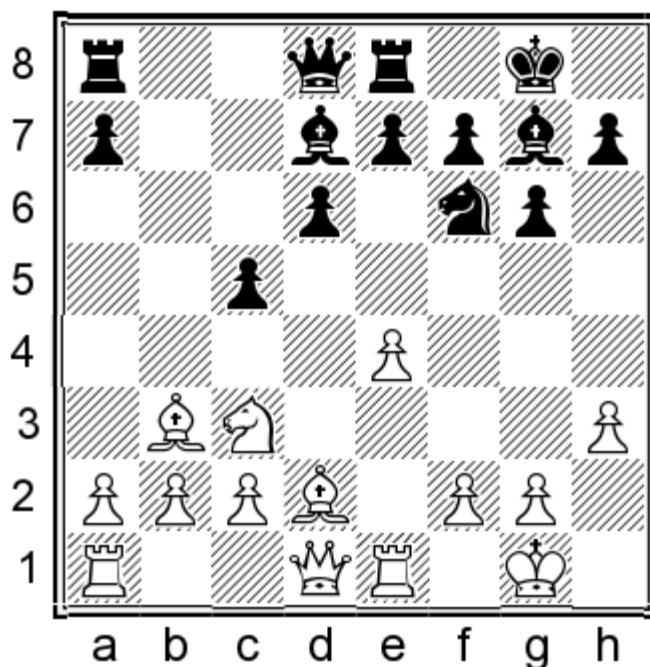


I don't see anything for White here; as a general rule I tend to think that if White rushes with ♘c3-d5 then as long as Black isn't obligated to take it, he should be fine (this doesn't mean that if he is forced to take it then he is necessary not fine!).

(12...♘xd5 13.exd5 ♘e5 14.♙g5 ♞e8 15.c3± (Negi); 12...♚d8 13.♙g5! ♘xd4 14.♙xf6! ♘c6 15.♙h4 ♙xb2 16.♞b1 ♙g7 17.♙a4± (Negi))

13.♘xf6+

a) 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♙d2 ♚d8 15.♘c3 c5



Black has no problems. If White starts to get ambitious then Black come out on top. 16.e5?! dxe5 17.♞xe5 c4 18.♙xc4? ♞c7±;

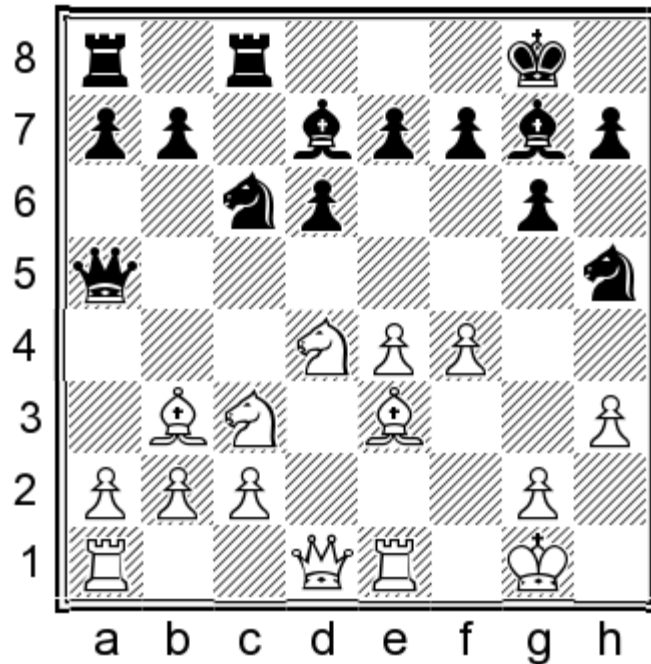
b) 13.♙d2 ♞c5 14.♘xc6 (14.♘f3 ♘d5 15.exd5 ♘a5 16.♙e3 ♞b5=) 14...♘d5! (14...bxc6?? 15.♘c7+-) 15.exd5 bxc6 16.♙e3 ♞b5=;

13...♙xf6 14.c3 ♞c7! Vacating the a5 square for the knight.

(14...♘d4!? This is acceptable but unnecessary. 15.♙xd4 (15.cxd4 e6!)=) 15...♙xd4 16.♞xd4 (16.cxd4 e6!)=) 16...♞c5 17.♞d2 ♙c6 18.♞ad1 ♞ad8=)

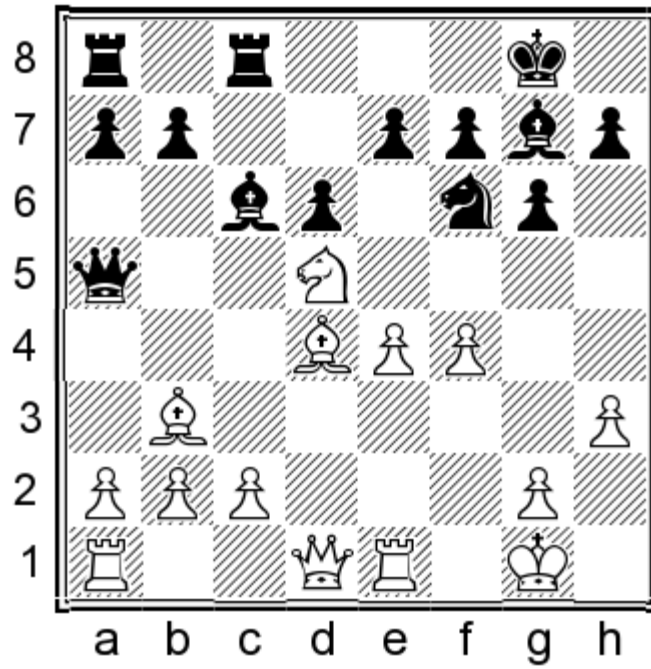
15.♘b5 (15.f4 ♘a5=) 15...♞b8 16.a4 a6 17.♘d4 ♘a5 18.♙a2 ♞c7=

**12...♘h5!N**



In this particular variation Black is well advised to abandon the ...♙e8/ ...♘d7 plan, because as we see in the alternatives White is able to build up pressure on f7 after f4-f5/♞e1-f1/ ♞d1-f3. Instead, we take immediate advantage of the weakness White has created: Black threatens to win the f4 pawn, so White's options are limited.

12...♘d4 13.♙xd4 ♙c6 14.♘d5



14...♙xd5

(14...♞e8 15.c3 ♘d7 (15...♘xd5 16.exd5 ♙xd4+ 17.♞xd4 ♙d7 18.♖h2±) 16.f5! (16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♞d4+ e5 18.♞f2 ♙xd5 19.♙xd5 ♞c5 20.♞xc5 dxc5 21.♞ad1 (21.♙xb7 ♞ab8 22.♙c6 ♞e7=) 21...♞e7 22.f5 ♘f6=) 16...♙xd4+ 17.cxd4 ♙xd5 18.♙xd5 ♘f6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♙b3±)

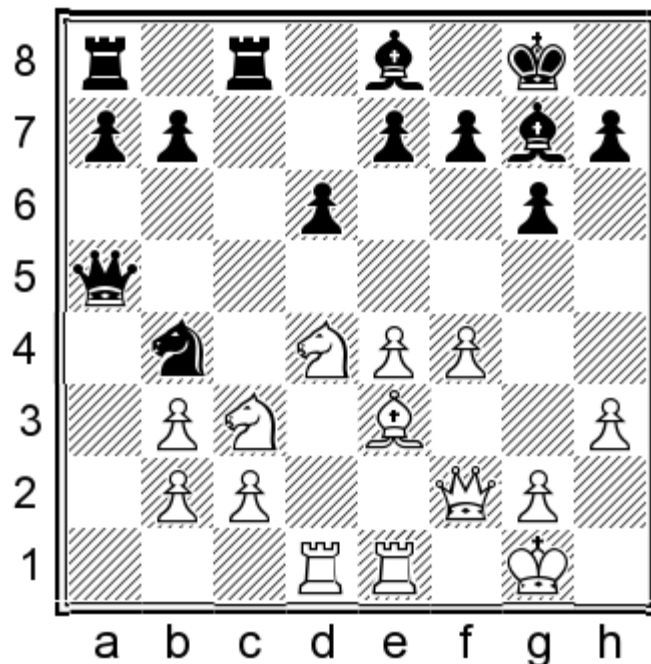
15.exd5 ♞e8 16.c3

(16.c4 a6 17.♙c3 ♞c5+ 18.♙d4 ♞a5 19.♙c3 ♞c5+ 1/2–1/2 (19) Negi,P (2529)-Khalifman,A (2632) Amsterdam NED 2007)

16...b5 17.a3 ♘d7 18.♙f2±;

12...♙e8 Unfortunately Black can't stick to the routine and play this move here; White builds up too much pressure.

13.♞f3 ♘d7 14.♞ad1 ♘c5 15.♞f2 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♘b4

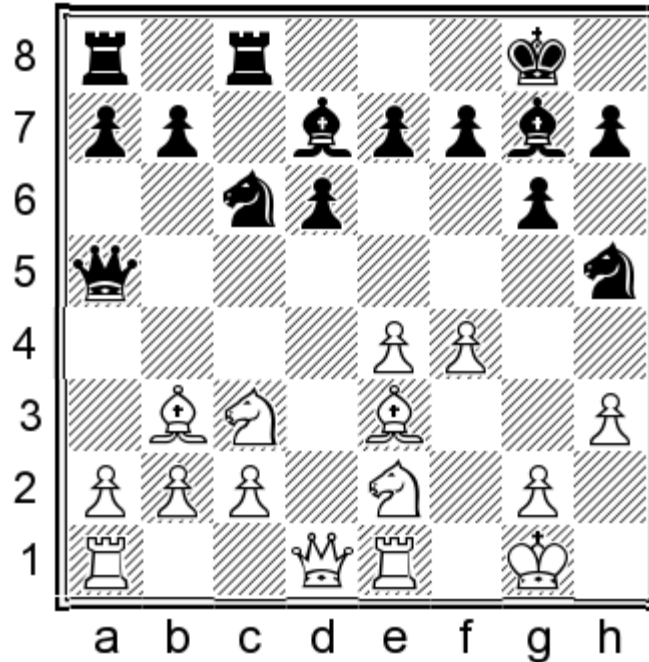


This was played by Bacrot in Burg-Bacrot, 2011 where White's play could have now been improved upon.

(16...♗xd4 17.♙xd4 ♘xd4 18.♖xd4 (18.♗xd4 ♗c5=) 18...♙c6 19.b4! ♗b6 20.b5! The beginning of a long forcing variation which is unequivocally in White's favor. 20...♙xb5 21.♗d5 ♗d8 22.♗h4 ♖c4 23.♗xe7+ ♕f8 24.♖xc4 ♙xc4 25.♗f6! ♕e8 26.♗d5 ♗xf6 27.♗xf6+ ♕e7 28.♗xh7 f6 29.e5 dxe5 30.fxe5 f5 31.♗g5±)

17.f5!± White will simply pile up on the f-file with ♖e1-f1, and I don't see a constructive plan for Black.

### 13.♗de2



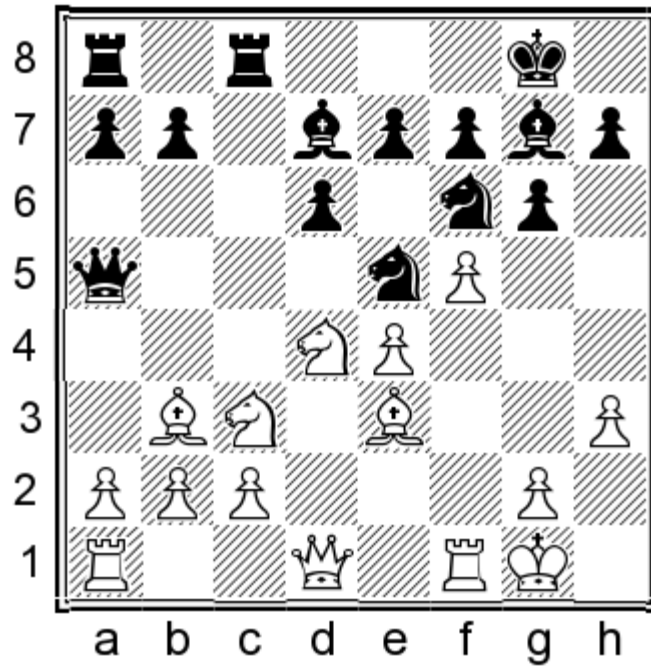
13.f5 ♗f6 Having provoked White into weakening the e5-square, Black retreats to f6, guarding d5 against ♗c3-d5, and prepares ...♗c6-e5.

(13...♗xd4 Black is perfectly resilient against White's attack here as well. 14.♙xd4 ♙c6 15.♖f1 ♖f8 16.g4 ♗f6 17.♗d5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 ♗d7=; 13...♗e5?! 14.♗d5±)

### 14.♖f1

(14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.g4 ♙e8! =)

### 14...♗e5



A typical Dragon position; Black is salivating at the prospect of an exchange sacrifice on c3. 15.♖e2

(15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.♙xd5 ♙c6 17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♙b3 ♖ab8=)

15...♖xc3! 16.♙d2

(16.bxc3 ♘xe4=)

16...♖xc2!

(16...♙b5 17.♘xb5 ♖b6+ 18.♔h2 ♖c5 19.a4 (19.♘d4 ♖ac8=) 19...♖f8 20.♖ae1 a6 21.♘c3 ♖cc8 22.g4±)

17.♙xc2

(17.♘xc2 ♖b5=)

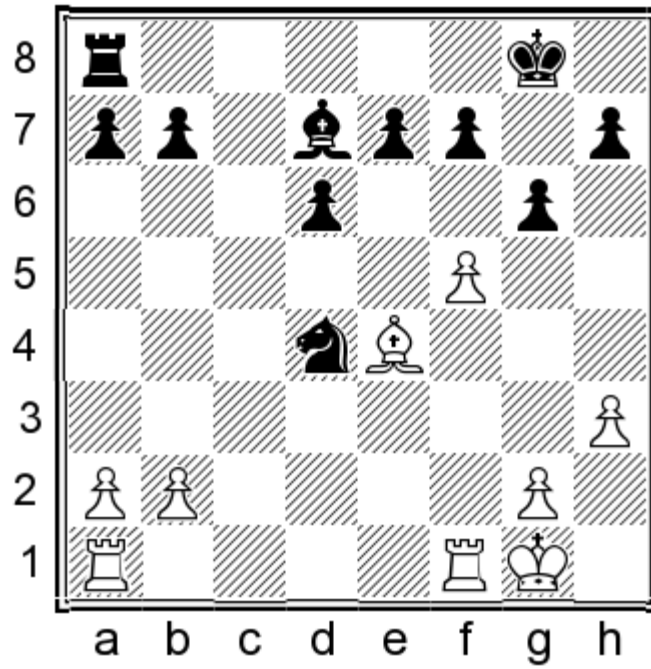
17...♖b6 18.♙c3

(18.♙e3 ♖xb2 19.♖ab1 ♖xa2 20.♖xb7 ♙c8 21.♖xe7 ♔f8 22.♖c7 ♖a5 23.♖xc8+ ♖xc8=)

18...♘c6 19.♖f2

(19.♖ad1 ♘g4 20.♔h1 ♘xd4 21.♙xd4 ♙xd4 22.hxg4 ♖c8 23.b3 g5=)

19...♘xe4! 20.♙xe4 ♙xd4 21.♙xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖xd4 ♘xd4



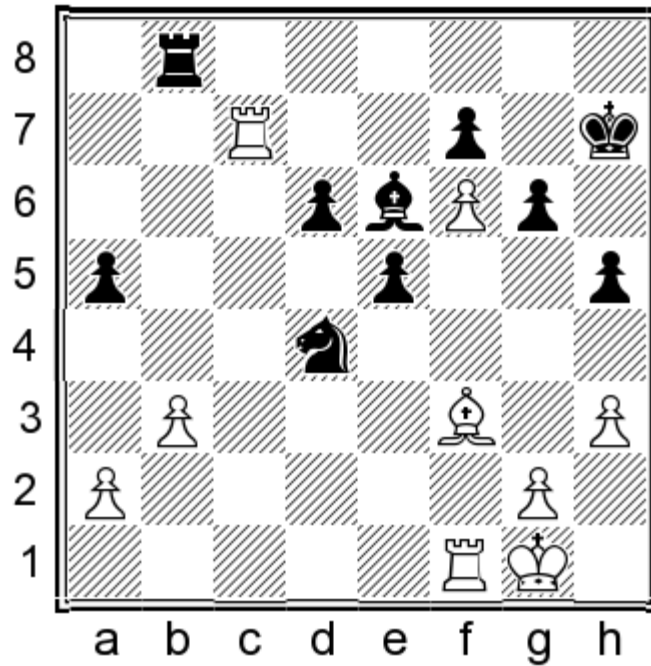
23.f6

(23.fxg6 hxg6 24.♙xb7 ♜b8 25.♙d5 e6 26.♙b3 a5 27.♞ad1 ♜xb3 28.axb3 d5 29.♞a1 ♞xb3 30.♞xa5 ♞xb2 31.♞a7 ♙e8 32.♞a8 ♔f8 33.♞c1 ♞b7 34.♞cc8 ♞e7=)

23...e5

(23...♙c6 24.♙xc6 bxc6 25.fxe7±)

24.♙xb7 ♜b8 25.♙f3 a5 26.b3 h5 27.♞ac1 ♙e6 28.♞c7 ♔h7



29.♙c6

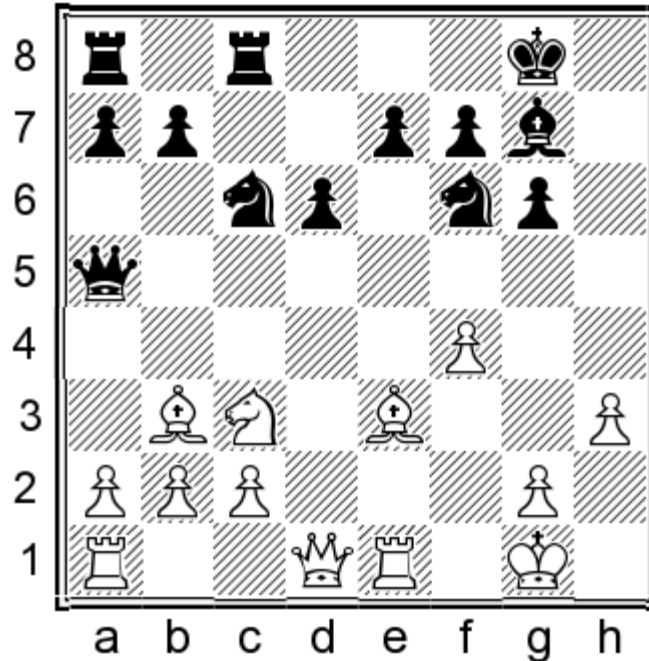
(29.h4 d5=)

29...g5! 30.♙d7

(30.♙e4+ ♜h6=)

30...♜g6 31.♙xe6 ♜xe6 32.♞d7 ♞b6=;

13.♜f5 Thanks to my editor, GM Romain Edouard, for assuaging my concerns about this variation. In his words, "White better give mate, or he is worse!" A more modest assessment is that Black has at least equal chances in the ensuing complications. 13...♙xf5 14.exf5 ♜f6 15.fxg6 hxg6



16.♞d3

(16.g4 ♞d8 17.f5 d5 18.g5 ♜h5 19.fxg6 fxg6 20.♙f2 ♜h7±)

16...♞d8! This move saves the day. Black indirectly defends the g6 pawn. 17.g4 (17.♞xg6? d5!±) 17...e6 18.♞ad1 (18.f5 gxf5 19.gxf5 ♞xf5 20.♞xf5 exf5=) 18...d5 19.♙f2 ♜e7= Preventing f4-f5. Things are at a standstill; it is hard to see how either side makes progress, but Black is certainly no worse.;

13.♜d5 ♞e8 Black maintains his threat to win the f4 pawn, as its defender on d5 can be hit with ...e7-e6. 14.g4 ♜xd4 15.♙xd4 ♜xf4 16.♜xf4 e5 17.♜xg6 exd4 18.♜f4 ♞g5 19.♞f3 ♙e5 20.♞f1 ♙e6=

**13...♞d8!**

After 13...♞c7 14.♞d2 ♜a5 15.♞ad1 we would like to play ...♙d7-e8 but White then has ♜c3-d5xe7. This is why we play 13...♞d8! 15...♙e8? 16.♜d5 ♞d8 17.♜xe7+ ♞xe7 18.♞xa5±

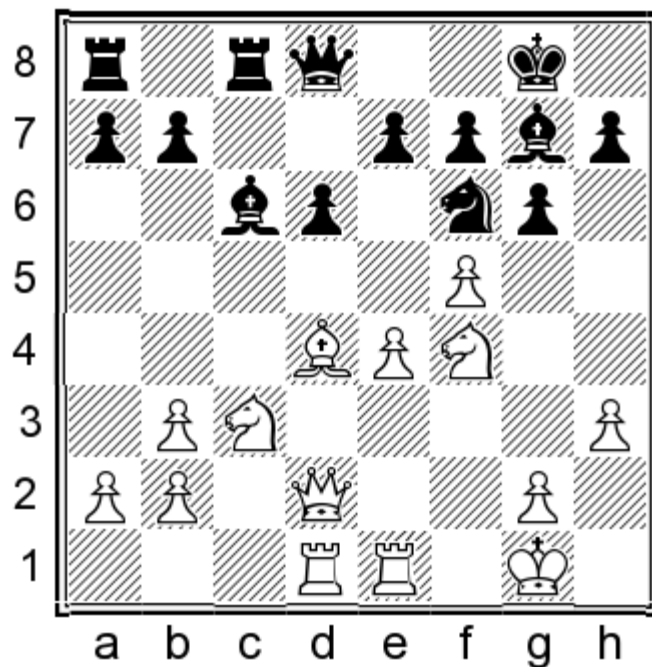
**14.♞d2 ♜a5 15.♞ad1**

15.♜d4?! ♜c4 16.♙xc4 ♞xc4±

**15...♙e8**

15...b5 16.e5±

**16.f5 ♜xb3 17.cxb3 ♙c6 18.♙d4 ♜f6 19.♜f4**



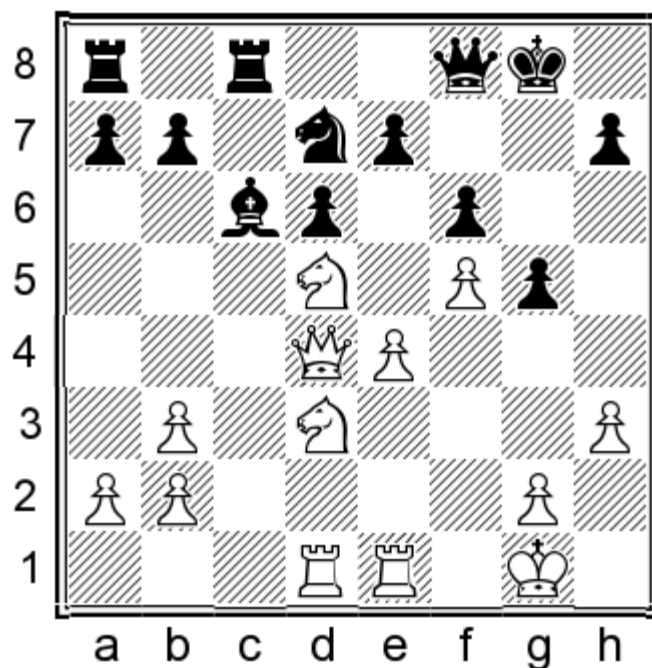
19...♙f8!

A nice little queen sortie; Black intends to continue with ...♘f6-d7, and then recapture on g7 with his queen, potentially heading to e5 eventually.

20.♙e3 ♘d7 21.♙xg7

21.♘cd5 ♙xd4 22.♞xd4

(22.♙xd4 g5 23.♘d3 f6=



The weak e6-square is inaccessible to White. As we will see, in other lines Black allows White to plant a knight on e6; it turns out to not do much from there.)

22...♙h8 23.♖g3 ♕xd5 24.♜xd5 ♖c2 25.♜b4 ♖cc8 26.♖h4

(26.♜d5=)

26...♖g7 27.♖ed1 g5 28.♖f2 g4! 29.hxg4 ♜f6 30.♖h4 ♜xg4±;

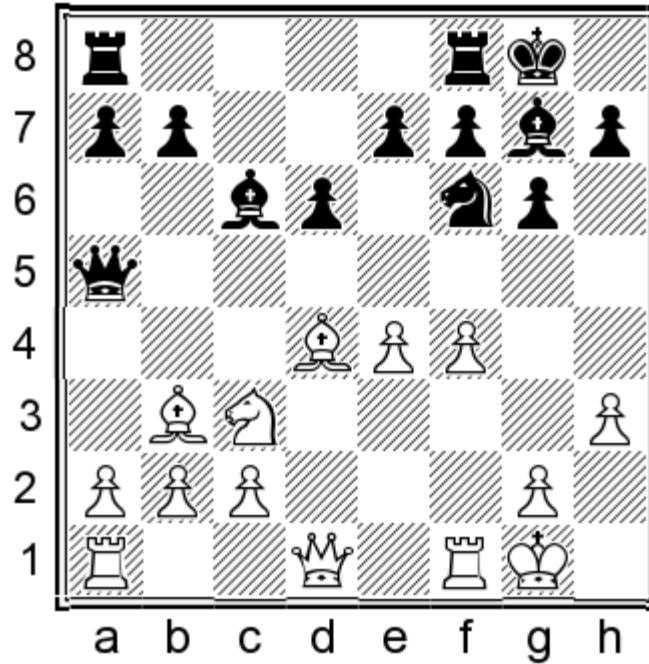
21.♜fd5 ♕xd4 22.♖xd4 f6 23.♜f4 ♜e5 24.♜e6 ♖h6 25.♜d5 ♕xd5 26.♖xd5 ♖ab8= White has no productive discovered check, and Black's e5-knight is more valuable than his counterpart on e6, which is hitting thin air. Computers call this position 0.00 but I suspect most White players would collapse rather quickly here in over the board play — the squares Black controls are more valuable than the squares White controls.

21...♖xg7 22.♜fd5 ♕xd5 23.♜xd5 ♖e5=

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞c6 5.♞c3 ♟g7 6.♟e3 ♞f6 7.♟c4 ♚a5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♟b3 d6 10.h3 ♟d7 11.f4

The most popular move, though I suspect it may become overshadowed by 11.♞e1, especially given the popularity of Negi's book which recommends it.

11...♞xd4 12.♟xd4 ♟c6



Black proceeds with his usual plan. Next he'd like to play ...♞f6-d7, and ideally exchange dark squared bishops and queens.

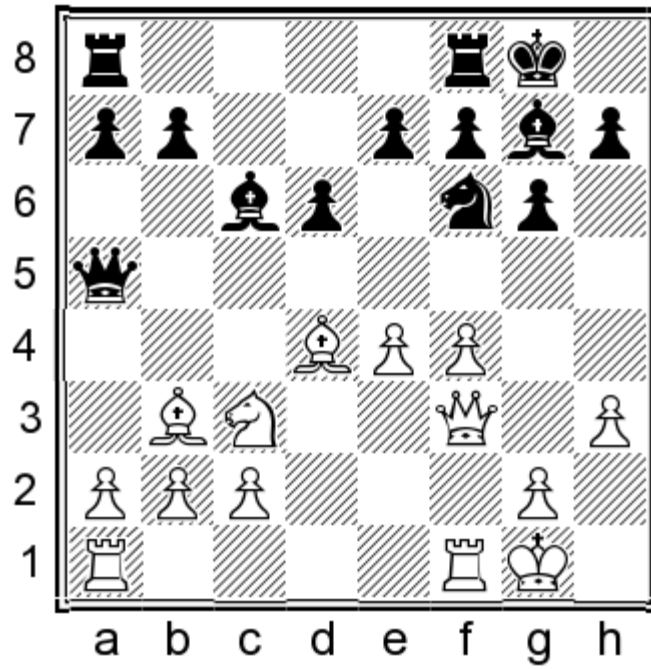
13.♚d3

13.♚e1?! This 7...♚a5 line is one which induces even grandmasters to blunder within the first 15 moves. 13...♚b4!  
14.♟xf6

(14.♞d1 ♞xe4!!±)

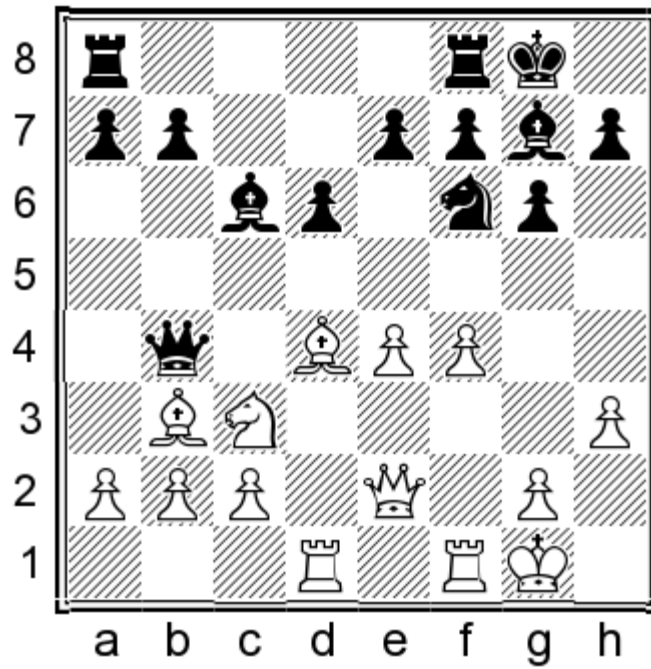
14...♟xf6 15.♞d5 ♚c5+ 16.♞h1 ♟xd5 17.♟xd5 ♚xc2 18.♞c1 ♚xb2 19.♞b1 ♚d4± 1/2-1/2 (47) Hector,J (2551)-Efimenko,Z (2680) Emsdetten GER 2008;

13.♚f3?



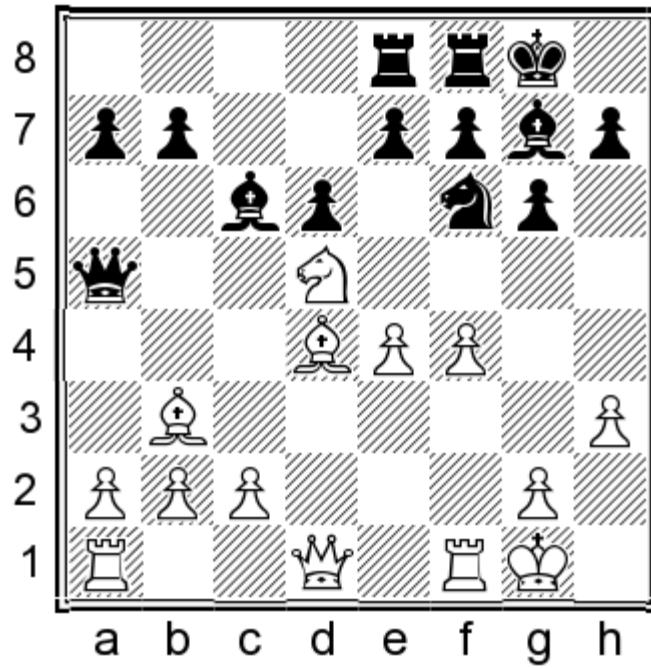
13... ♖xe4! 14. ♗xg7 ♚c5+ 15. ♔h1 ♜f6!±;

13. ♗e2? The database shows that a 2478-rated player fell for this. 13... ♗b4! 14. ♖ad1



14... ♖xe4!±;

13. ♖d5 ♚ae8!



Abiding by the general rule that if we can avoid taking on d5 then we should — here White's weak e4 pawn more than compensates for the doubling of our f-pawns in the event that White takes on f6. 14.f5

a) 14. ♖xf6+ exf6;

b) 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. ♗xf6+ exf6 16. ♚xd6 ♝xe4 17. ♞ad1 (17. ♚xf6?? ♝e2 18. ♞f2 ♞xf2 19. ♜xf2 ♚d2+—) 17... ♜g7;

c) 14. ♚d3 ♗d7 15. ♞ad1 ♙xd4+ 16. ♚xd4 ♚c5=;

14... ♙xd5 15. exd5 ♗d7

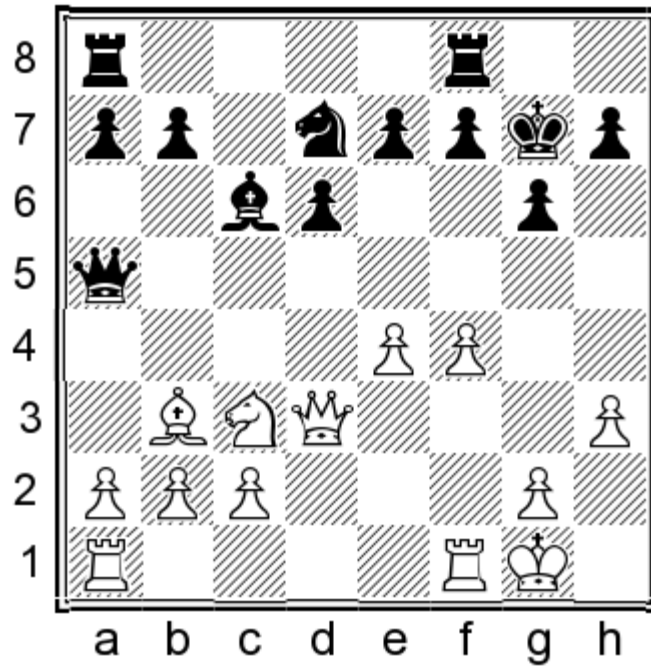
(15...b5?! An odd recommendation of Donaldson and Silman. This move seems altogether wrong-headed. 16.c3±)

16. ♜h1 ♙xd4 17. ♚xd4 ♗e5 18. f6 ♗d7! In the long run, White's dark squared weaknesses will tell.

**13... ♗d7**

13... ♞ad8 This is the recommendation of Donaldson and Silman, but their problems with 13... ♗d7 can be solved.

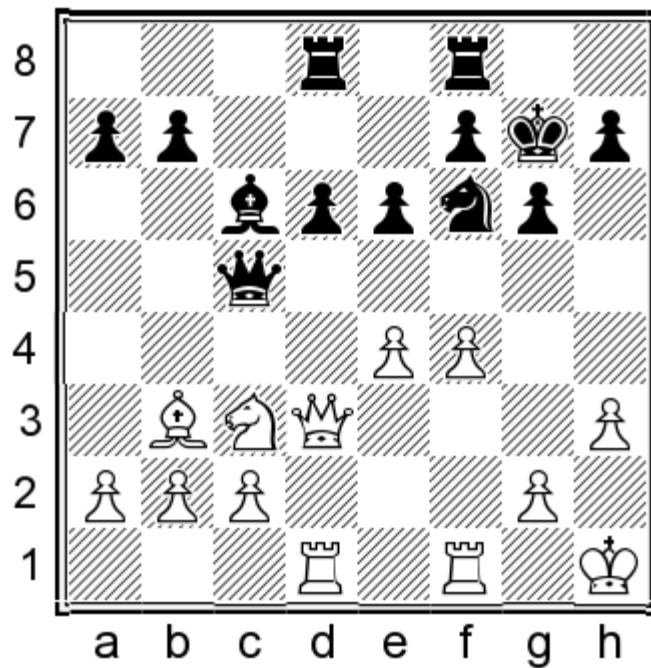
**14. ♙xg7 ♜xg7**



**15.♔h1**

This used to be considered good for White, because Black would follow up with 15...♘c5 and further queenside play, rather than reverting back to the kingside and solidifying control over the center with ...e7-e6!

15.♘d5 ♖c5+ 16.♔h1 e6 17.♘c3 ♗f6 18.♖ad1 ♗ad8



Black is slightly better. 19.f5 ♖e5 20.♖de1 b5 21.♘d5 ♗h5 22.♖e3 a5 23.f6+ ♔h8 24.a3 ♗b7+ White's initiative has run out of steam and Black is ready to collect the f6 and thereafter the e4 pawn.

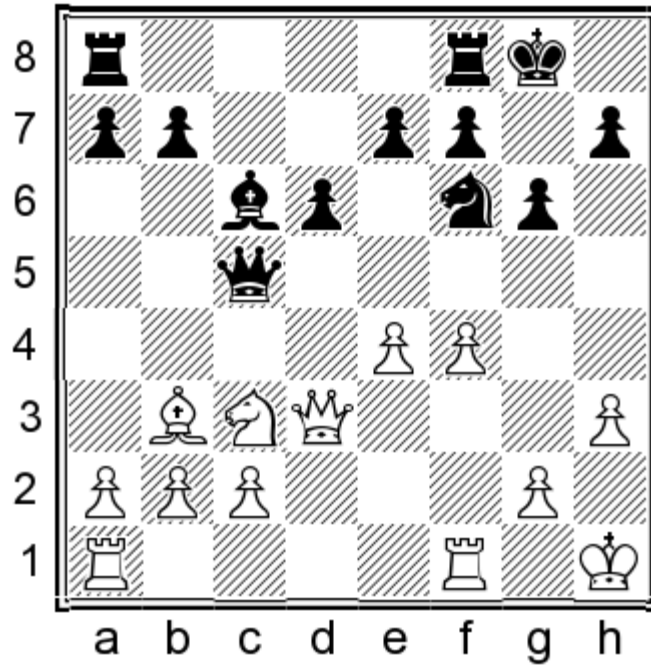
(24...♖xb2 25.♗e7 ♗a8 26.♖xb5 ♗xf6+ 27.♖g5 ♗xe4 28.♖h4 ♖e5?? (♠28...g5 29.♖h6 ♖g7+) 29.♖xf7!±

Morozevich,A (2760)-Carlsen,M (2864) Moscow 2013);

15.♖d4+ ♔g8 16.♔h1

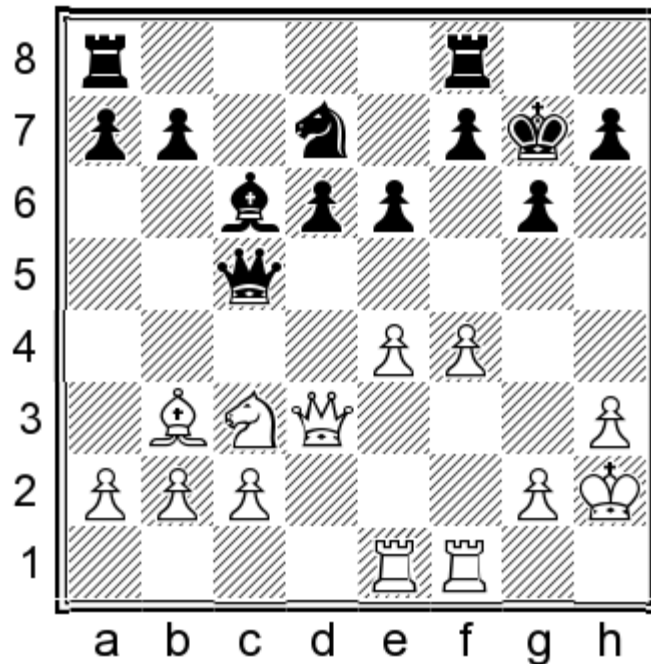
(16.♖f2 ♔c5 17.♚d3 b5 18.♙d5 ♙xd5 19.♜xd5 e6 20.♞c3 ♞f6±; 16.♞ad1 ♚c5=)

16...♚c5 17.♚d3 ♞f6



Black has ideas of ...♞ad8, ...e7-e6, and then either (or both) ...b7-b5/...a7-a5 or ...d7-d5. The dark square weaknesses in White's position, especially g3, are a significant liability. 18.♞ae1 e6 19.f5 ♚e5 20.♞d5 ♞h5 21.♞e7+ ♔g7 22.♞xc6 bxc6±;

15.♞ae1 ♚c5+ 16.♔h2 e6!



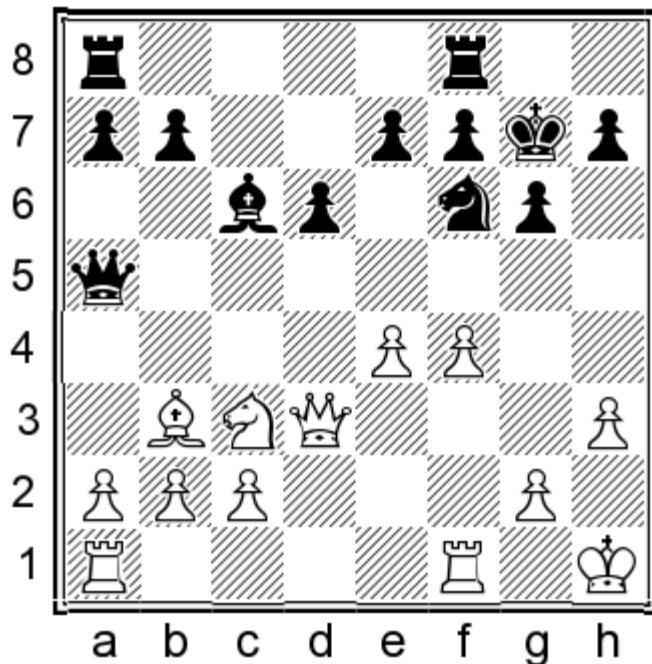
Typical for this line. Black tempts White's f4-f5, when either his knight or queen would discover immortality on e5.

(16...b5?! 17.♙d5±)

17.♞d1 ♞f6 18.♞fe1 ♞ad8± The position doesn't look too bad for White, but all the dynamic potential in the position lies in Black's hands: he can take his time expanding on the queenside, and break with ...d6-d5 at the right moment, while

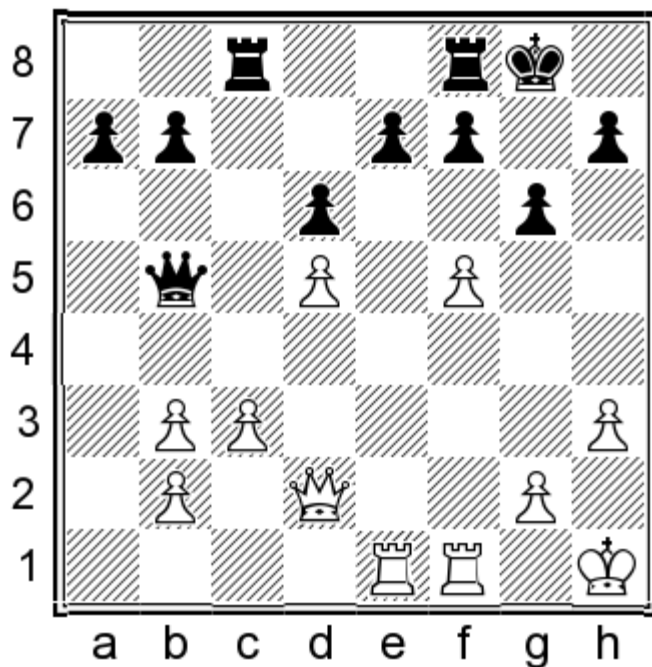
White can only wait in angst.

15...♘f6!N



This idea of countering in the center and kingside, instead of playing on the queenside (at least for now — that is certainly on the to-do list for later on) breathes new life into this variation.

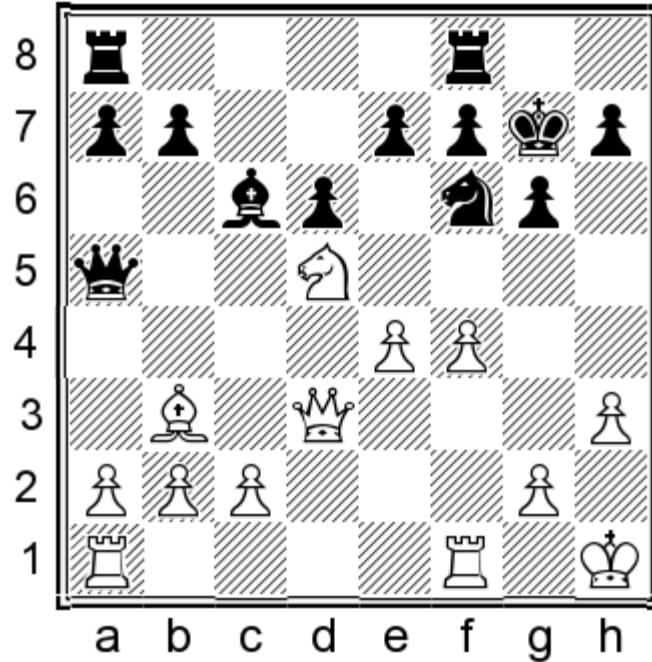
15...♘c5 This is currently the most popular move but I believe it too much neglects Black's kingside, as the following game illustrates. 16.♞d4+ ♔g8 17.♞ae1 ♘xb3 18.axb3 ♞c5 19.♞d2 ♞ad8 20.♘d5 ♙xd5 21.exd5 ♞c8 22.c3 ♞b5 23.f5!



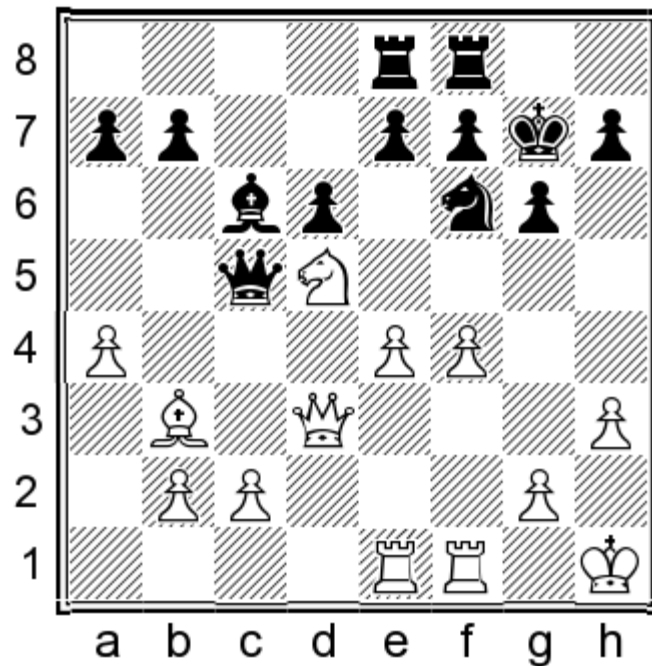
23...♞c5 24.♞h6 ♞d3 25.♞f4 ♞g3 26.♞ef1 gxf5 27.♞xf5 f6 28.♞1f4 ♞e1+ 29.♔h2 ♞f7 30.♞g4+ ♔h8 31.♞h5 1-0 (31) Guseinov,G (2573)-Ahmadinia,E (2195) Iran 2005.

16.♞ae1

16. ♖d5!?

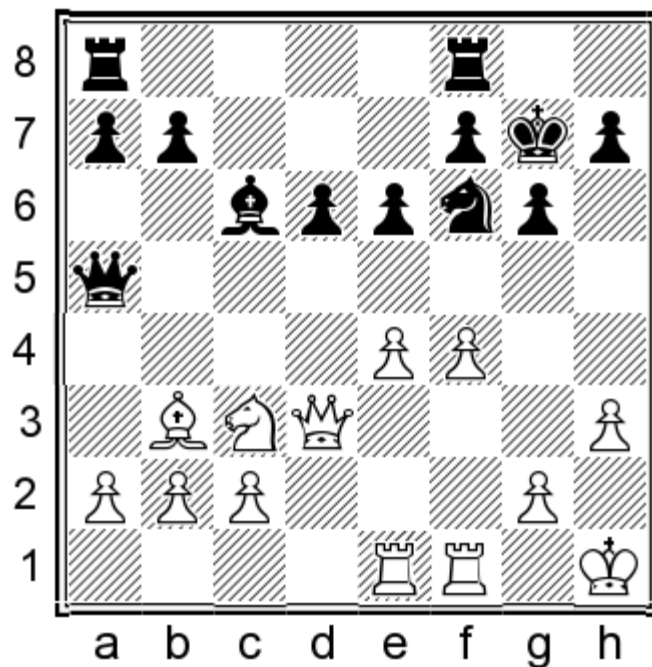


White seeks to prevent Black from playing ...e7-e6, but it can still be played after a bit of preparation. 16...♙c5 17.♞ae1 ♞ae8 18.a4



18...e6! 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 Black has nothing to fear. White can't target d6 without dropping e4 either. 20.f5 ♘g7 21.f6+ (21.fxe6 fxe6 22.♞xf8 ♘xf8 23.♞f3+ ♘g7 24.♞f1 ♞e5 25.♞f7+ ♘h8 26.c3 ♞xe4 27.♞f6+ ♘g8 28.♞f7+ ♘h8=) 21...♘h8= Do not fear ghosts: White has no mating attack, and to divert his pieces to the kingside in the hope of obtaining one would allow Black to dominate the center more than he already has.

16...e6!



**17.e5**

17.♖xd6? ♜fd8 18.♗e7 ♜d7 19.♗a3 ♗xa3 20.bxa3 ♜ad8 ♞ Black will win his pawn back after ...♞d4 (and if e4-e5 then ...♞f6-h5), and after he does his superior pawn structure will yield him the advantage.;

17.♗e3 ♜ad8 18.f5 ♗c5

(18...♗e5 Black also comes out on top in the ensuing complications here. 19.♗xa7 ♞xe4 20.♞xe4 ♞xe4 21.f6+ ♔h8 22.♗e3 d5 As long as Black can meet ♗h6 with ...♞g8 (and ♜f4 with ...g5) — which Black always can as long as his king is on h8, there is nothing to worry about. White's b3-Bishop is missing in action. 23.♗h6? ♞g8 24.♜f4? g5—)

19.fxe6 fxe6 20.♞xe6 ♞xe4! 21.♜xf8 ♜xf8 22.♗xc5

(22.♞xe4?! ♜f1+! 23.♔h2 ♗e5+ 24.g3 ♜xe1 25.♗xe1 ♗xe6 26.♗c3+ ♔g8 27.♞f2 ♗xa2 ♞)

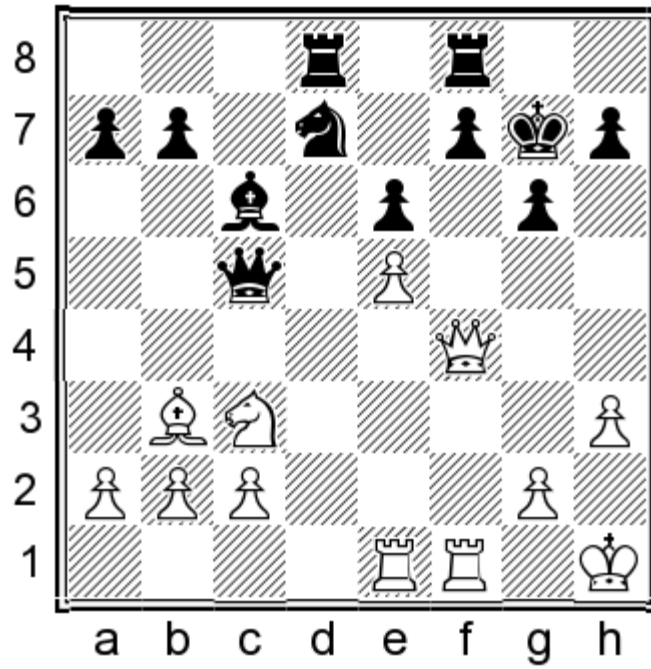
22...♞xc5 23.♞d5 ♜f2 ♞

**17...dxe5 18.fxe5 ♞d7 19.♗e3**

19.♗g3 ♜ad8 ♞

**19...♗c5 20.♗f4 ♜ad8**

White needs to play perfectly to not be worse here; in practice most players will collapse, either allowing Black queenside counterplay or central control.



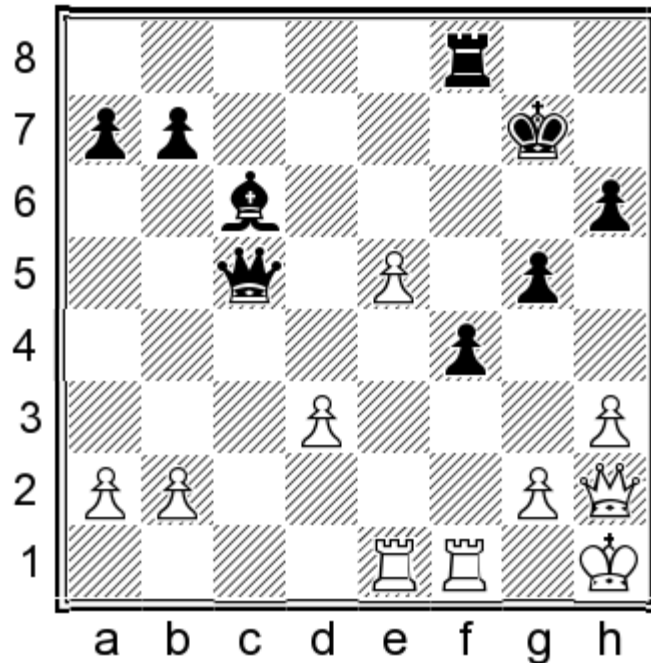
Generally speaking, exchanges favor Black (White's e5 pawn will be weak in any endgame), and Black should keep a lookout for counterplay with ...f7-f6(f5). A sample variation may continue as follows

21. ♖d1! h6

21... f6!? 22. exf6+ ♜xf6 ♜

22. ♖f2 f5! 23. exf6+

23. ♙xe6?! g5 24. ♚h2 f4 25. ♙xd7 ♜xd7 26. ♖d3 ♜xd3! 27. cxd3



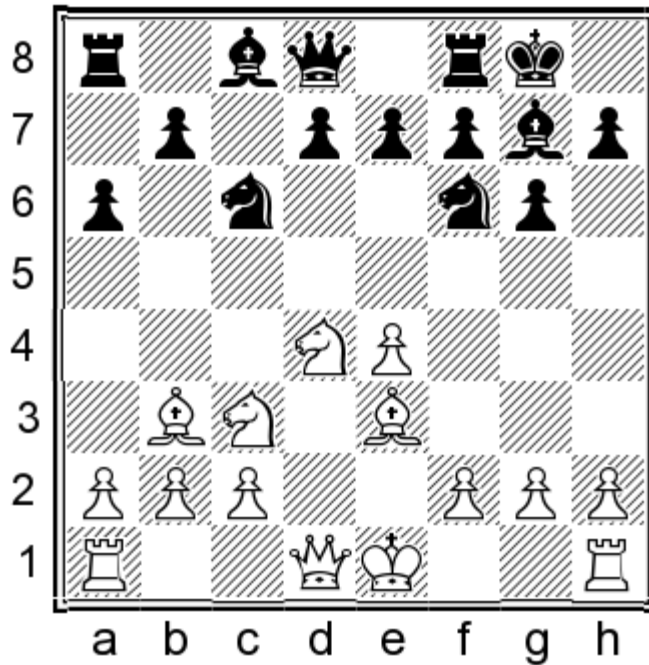
27... f3 ♚

23...xf6 24.g3 df8 25.xe6 b5 26.xf6 xf6 27.c4 c6

# CHAPTER 3

## 7.♟c4: MY SYSTEM

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♟g7 5.♖c3 ♗c6 6.♞e3 ♘f6 7.♟c4 0-0 8.♞b3 a6!?



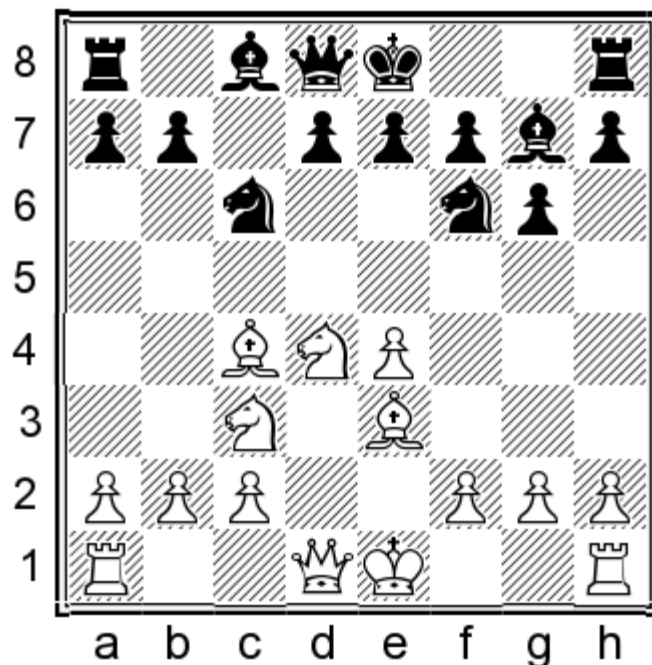
### Contents

1. 9.sidelines

2. 9.f3 ♟c7 10.sidelines & 10.♟d2 b5

Appendix. 9.f3 ♟c7 10.♟d2 ♗a5

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c6 5.♖c3 ♟g7 6.♞e3 ♘f6 7.♟c4

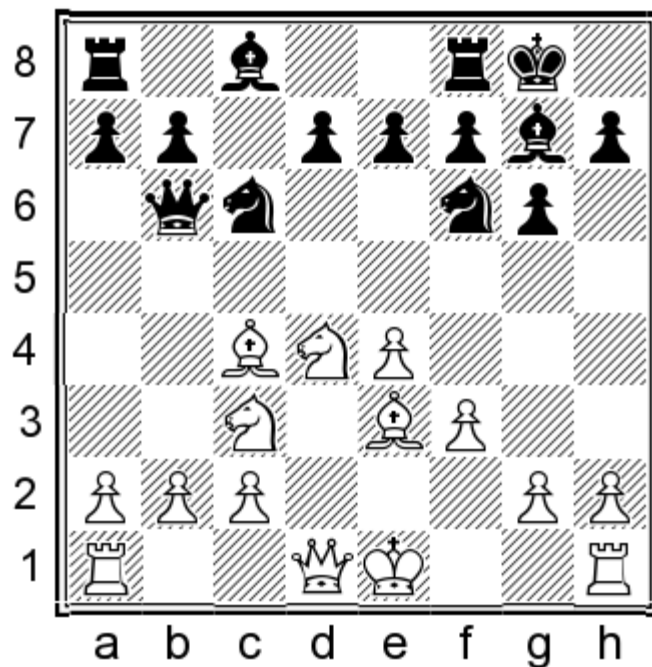


The Anti-Yugoslav Variation (7...♞a5) seemed to me to be in trouble after Grischuk-Ivanchuk, Candidates 2013 (recall Grischuk's 10.♘d5!?). In the summer of 2013 I had not yet discovered the equalizing 10...♞d8! novelty, and I found myself struggling to meet the 7.♙c4 variation. I searched the database for some guidance, but to no avail. At the time I was simultaneously a Taimanov Sicilian player as well, and at some point it occurred to me that nobody plays ♙c4 against the Taimanov, presumably because its scope on c4 is stunted by the e6 pawn. This led to the idea of meeting the ♙c4 variation with an eventual ...e7-e6, and transporting ideas from the Taimanov such as ...a6-...♞c7-...b5-...♙b7-...♘c6-a5(e5), and even ...♘f6-e8-d6. The process of developing this system has been some of the most enjoyable chess research I have engaged in, and I am pleased to say it has resulted in a powerful and truly novel system. As the 'prime mover' of this project, my work is undoubtedly incomplete. There are reams of unexplored possibilities, and I encourage readers to attempt their own contributions. The following chapters are by no means the final — only the first — word on this system.

### 7...0-0 8.♙b3

Black's next few moves can almost be played automatically, irrespective of what White does: ...a6, ...♞c7, ...b5, ...♙b7. Although our main idea is to play ...e7-e6, the first priority is to complete our development and connect the rooks.

8.f3?! White must not be permitted to reach a Yugoslav Attack setup with ♞d2 and 0-0-0. 8...♞b6!

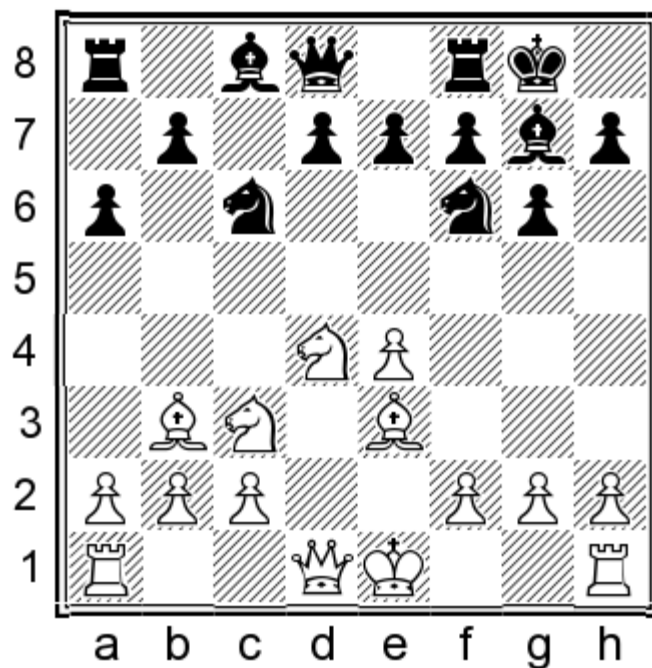


9. ♖b3

(9.a3 ♚c5 (9... ♗xe4?? 10. ♗d5 ♚a5+ 11.b4+-) 10. ♖a2 ♗g4 11.fxg4 ♖xd4 12. ♖xd4 ♗xd4=)

9... ♗xe4! 10. ♗d5 ♚a5+ 11.c3 ♗c5 12. ♗xc6 dxc6 13. ♗xe7+ ♔h8 14. ♗xc8 ♚axc8 15.0-0 ♜fe8=

8...a6



From my experience playing this system over the last few years, most players, never having seen this system before, follow a safe course of castling kingside as White usually does in the 7. ♖c4 system. However, in this particular system, White castling kingside leads to easy equality for Black, which I take to be a significant practical upshot of this system. We will postpone our discussion of White's queenside castling until the next chapter.

8... ♚c7 This move has been championed by Grandmasters Aronin, Pogorelov, and Balogh, also with the intention of

expanding on the queenside, but they did without our core idea of ...e7-e6. It is a matter of taste which move (8...a6 or 8...♖c7) is played first; usually they will transpose. 8...♖c7 avoids 9.♗xc6 followed by 10.e5 since the e5 square is covered, but depending on your taste you might prefer to welcome the uncritical 9.♗xc6. When I came up with the idea of this system I was unaware of 8...♖c7, and for some (possibly arbitrary) reason went with 8...a6.

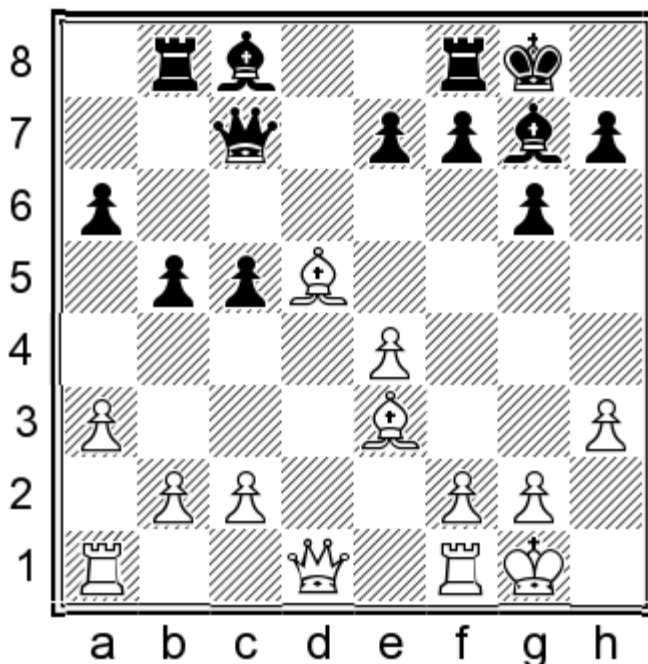
9.♗db5 ♖a5 10.f3 a6 11.♗d4 ♖c7 transposes to our main line in the next chapter.

### 9.0-0

Although Black can choose whether to play 8...a6 or 8...♖c7, whichever he chooses on move 8 it is important to follow it up with the other on move 9 before embarking on 10...b7-b5.

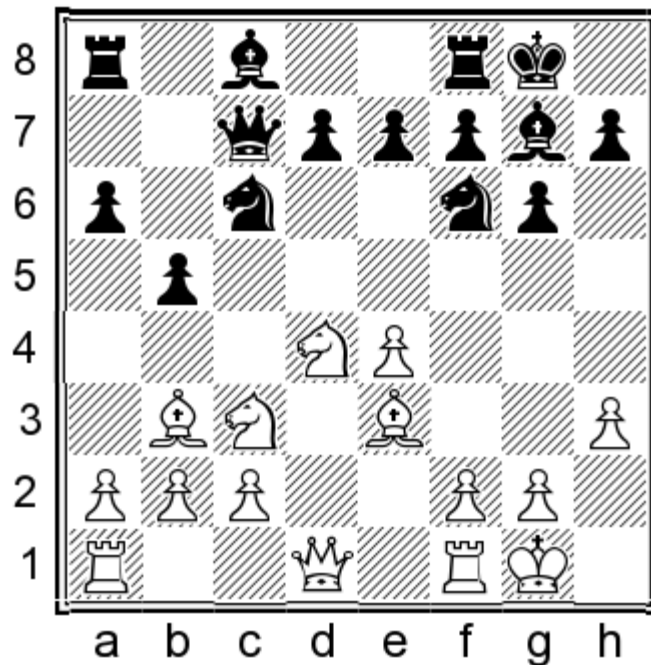
9.h3 ♖c7 As per protocol. 10.0-0

(10.♗xc6?! dxc6 11.0-0 b5 12.a3 c5 13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.♙xd5?! ♖b8)



Variations like this illustrate what I meant in the introduction when I claimed that it often feels like you're playing White when you play the Accelerated Dragon. A couple of careless moves by White and Black is not only equal, Black is already better. It is uncommon for White to be forced to play under such a slim margin of error as he must in this line.)

10...b5



11.a3

(11.f4 b4 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.♙xd5 e6! (Black is also to be preferred after 13...♙b7 14.♞c1 e6 15.♙xc6 dxc6 16.c3 e5!) 14.♙b3 (14.♘xc6 dxc6 15.♙c4 ♙xb2) 14...♙b7 ⇒ Δ15.f5? gxf5 16.exf5? ♜e5—+)

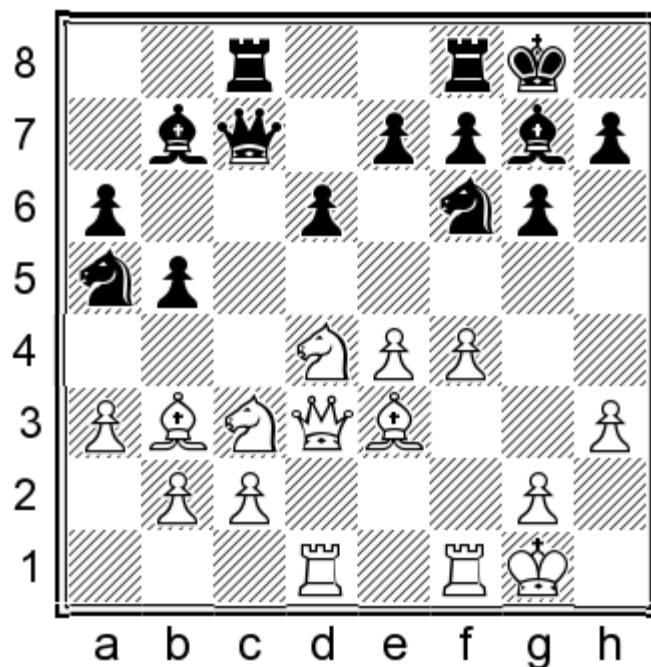
11...♘a5 12.f4 d6 The usual way to meet White's f2-f4.

(12...♙b7!? 13.e5 ♘e4 14.♘d5 (14.♘xe4 ♘xb3 15.♘b3 ♙xe4) 14...♞d8 15.♘f3 (15.♙a2 e6) 15...♘b3 16.♙b6 (16.cxb3 d6) 16...♞b8 17.♙c7 ♞e8 18.cxb3 ♘g3 19.♞e1 ♘h5∞)

13.♞d3

(13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.exd5 ♙b7)

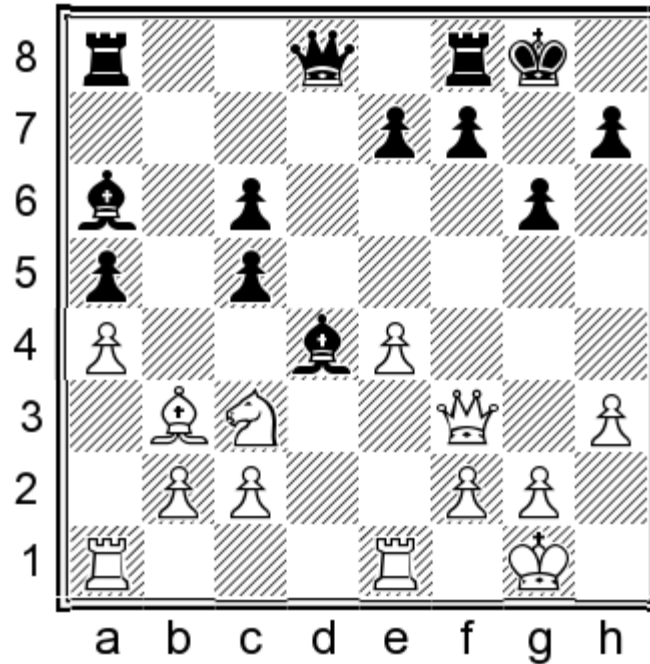
13...♙b7 14.♞ad1 ♞ac8



White has nothing to do. Black will continue to build pressure, keeping an eye out for central counterplay with ...e7-e5';

9. ♖xc6 bxc6 10.e5

(10.0-0 d6 11.h3 a5 12.a4?! ♕a6 13.♞e1 ♜d7 14.♞d2 ♜c5 15.♕xc5?! dxc5 16.♞e3 ♕d4 17.♞f3

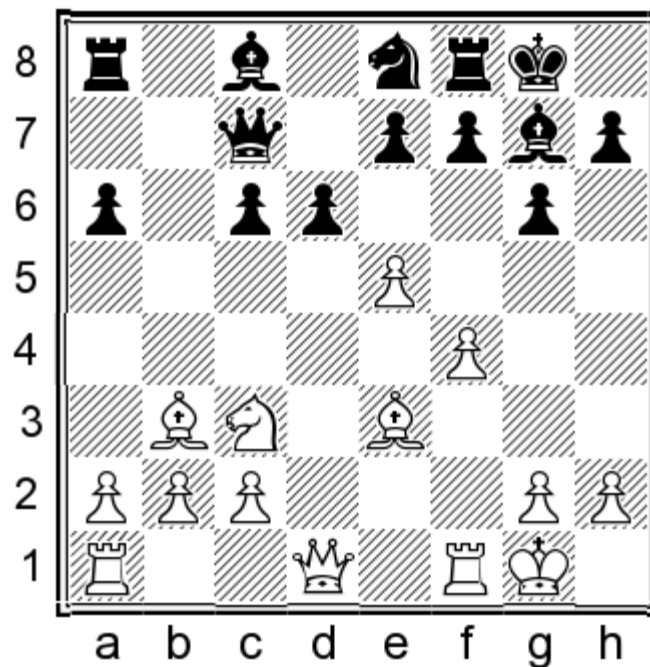


17... ♞b8! 18. ♜e2 ♕e5 19. ♞ab1 ♞b4! 20. ♜c3 c4 21. ♕a2 ♞fd8 0-1 (36) Ruiz-Panjwani, SPICE Cup 2013).

10... ♜e8 11.f4 d6

(11...d5 12.0-0 ♜c7 13.♞f3 a5 14.♕b6±)

12.0-0 ♞c7

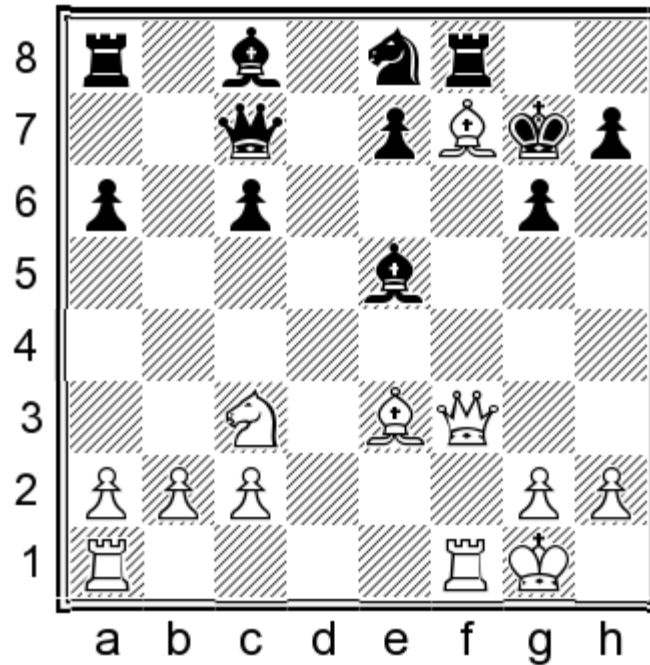


13. ♞e2 White's best attempt.

a) 13.exd6 White cannot hope for an advantage without the possession of any central pawns 13...exd6 14.♕d4 ♜f6

15. ♖f3 a5±;

b) 13. ♖f3 This forcing variation is worth committing to memory, or at least remembering that it exists and that the complications favor Black 13... dxe5 14. fxe5 ♗xe5 15. ♗xf7+ ♔g7-+



Black threatens to win a piece with ... ♗xc3 and ... e7-e5, as well as with ... ♖e8-d6. 16. ♖e2 (16. ♔h1 ♗xc3 17. bxc3 e5-+; 16. ♖ae1 ♖d6 17. ♗h6+ ♔xh6 18. ♖e3+ g5 19. ♖xe5 ♖a7+ 20. ♔h1 ♖xf7-+) 16... ♖d6 17. ♗h6+ ♔xh6 18. ♖e3+ g5 19. ♖xe5 ♖a7+ 20. ♔h1 ♖xf7-+;

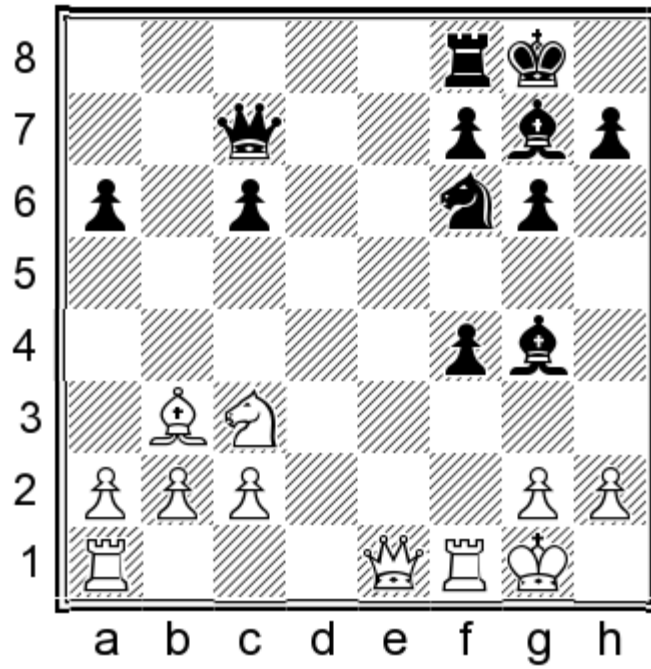
13... dxe5 14. ♗c5! exf4!

(14... ♗e6 This may be enough for equality but is unnecessary given 14... exf4! 15. ♖ae1 (15. ♗xe6 fxe6 16. fxe5 ♖xf1+ 17. ♖xf1 ♖xe5=) 15... ♗xb3 16. axb3 ♖d6 17. fxe5 ♖b7 18. ♗f2 ♖d8 19. ♖a4 ♖e6=)

15. ♗xe7

(15. ♖xe7 ♗d4+ 16. ♔h1 ♗xc5 17. ♖xc5 ♗e6=)

15... ♗g4 16. ♖e1 ♖f6 17. ♗xf8 ♖xf8=

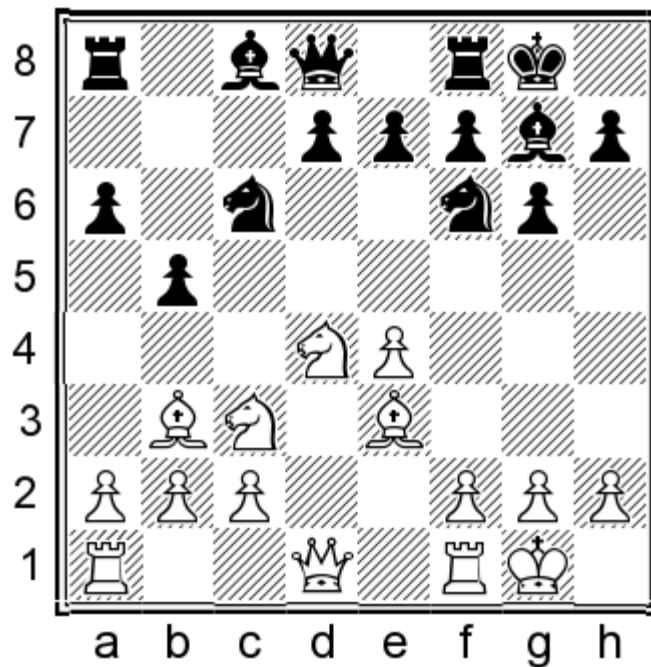


As is often the case in Dragon setups, White's dark squared bishop is worth the exchange, especially here where Black is up a pawn as well.

9...♔c7

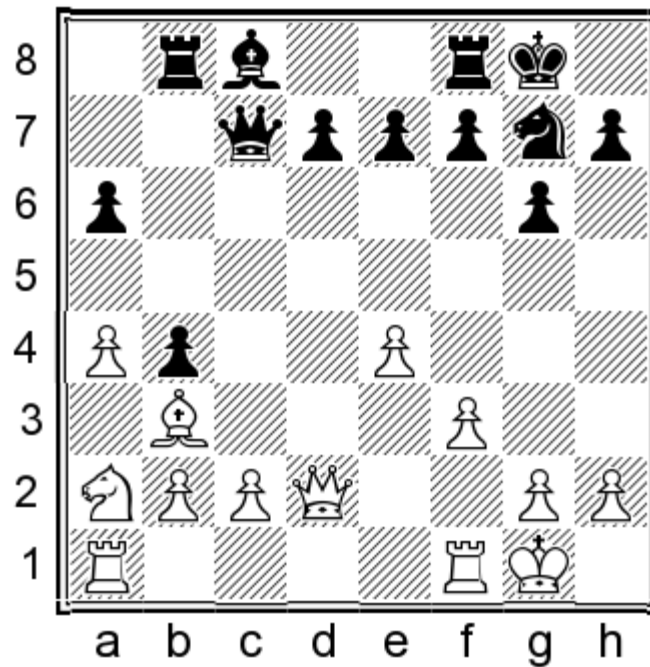
Black will simply continue ...b7-b5, ...♕c8-b7, ...♖c6-a5, and if White plays f2-f4 Black will prevent e4-e5 with ...d7-d6.

9...b5?! The first file I made on this system recommended this move. I sent the file to a friend over Facebook (a GM who will remain unnamed) and he found the following slight edge for White. In a way, the problems with 9...b5 make Black's life easier, because he can follow the simple rule: first 8...a6/9...♔c7 (or the other way around) and only then consider ...b7-b5.



10.♘xc6!

(10.f3 ♖c7 11.♗d2 (11.a4 b4 12.♘a2 (12.♘d5?! ♘xd5 13.♙xd5 (13.exd5 ♗e5→) 13...♙b7 14.♖c1 e6! 15.♙b3 ♙e5!  
 16.f4 (16.h3 ♘xd4 17.♙xd4 ♙f4 18.♖b1 a5⚡; 16.g3 f5!⚡) 16...♘xd4 17.fxg5 ♘xb3 18.cxb3 ♗xe5 19.♗xd7 ♗xe4  
 20.♖f3 ♗d5 21.♗e7 ♖ae8 22.♗xb4 ♖c8=) 12...♖b8 (12...♘xd4 13.♙xd4 a5?! 14.c3± Black should avoid positions like  
 this where he lacks counterplay) 13.♗d2 ♘xd4 14.♙xd4 ♘e8! 15.♙xg7 ♘xg7



Black is to be preferred: the knight will find its way to c5 via e6, and White's pieces are sloppy on b3 and a2.)

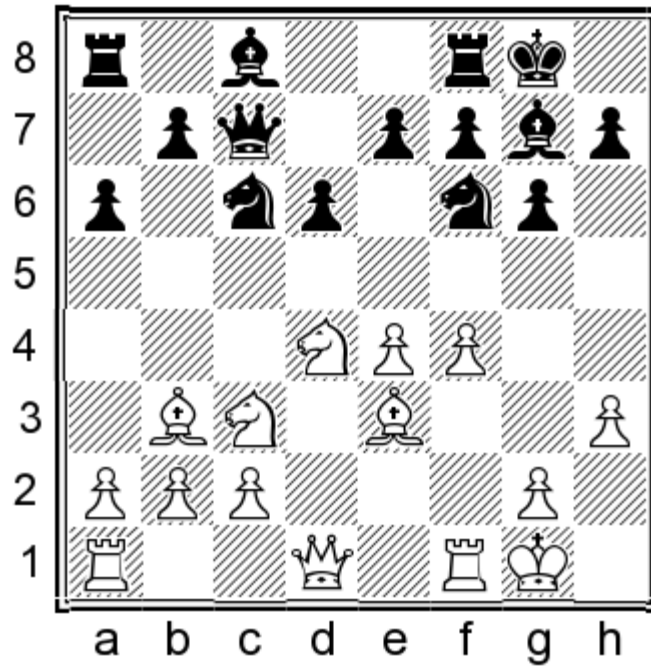
11...♘a5 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.♙xd5 ♖b8=)

10...dxc6 11.♗xd8

(11.f3 ♖c7 12.a4 (12.♗e1 c5 13.a4 b4 14.♘e2 c4 15.♙a2 a5⚡) 12...♖d8 13.♗e1 b4 14.♘e2 a5 15.♗f2 (15.♙c4 ♘d7⚡)  
 15...♘d7=)

11...♖xd8 12.♖fd1 ♘d7 13.f4 White has a moderately annoying clamp on Black's position. Black should still be fine with precise play but it is better to avoid this.

**10.f4 d6 11.h3**



**11...♖a5 12.♚d3 b5 13.♗d5**

13.a3 ♘b7 14.♞ad1 ♞ac8 White has nothing to do. Black will continue to build pressure, keeping an eye out for central counterplay with ...e7-e5.

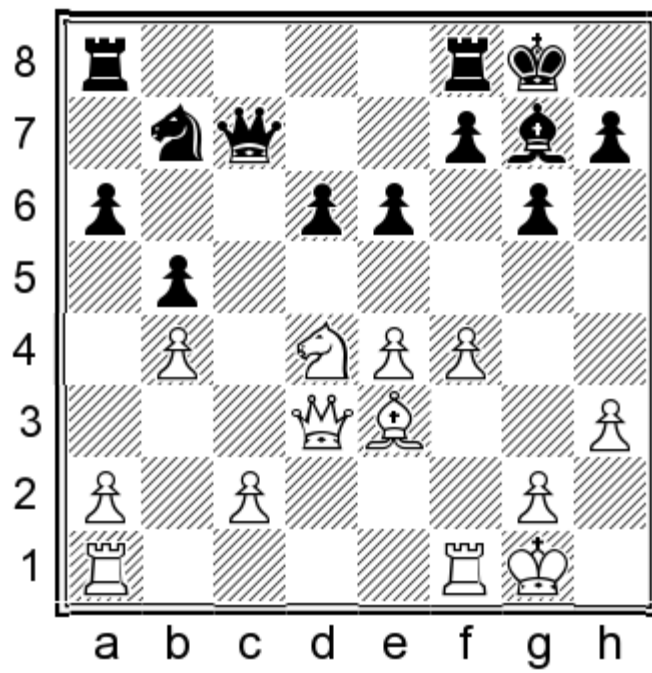
**13...♗xd5 14.♙xd5 ♘b7**

Also good for Black is 14...♞b8 15.b4?!

(15.f5 ♗c4?)

15...e6! 16.bxa5 exd5 17.exd5 ♘b7 18.f5 ♙e5 19.♚b3 ♞bc8

**15.b3 e6! 16.♙xb7 ♗xb7 17.b4**



**17...e5!**

17...♖ad8?! 18.f5 exf5 19.exf5 ♜fe8 20.f6 ♙f8 21.♙f4 ♜b6 22.a4 ♘c5 23.a5 ♘d3 24.axb6 ♘xf4 25.♞xf4± Kurnosov,I-Topalov,V Astana KAZ 2012.

**18.♘e2**

18.fxe5 dxe5

**18...d5! 19.fxe5 ♜xe5 20.♙d4**

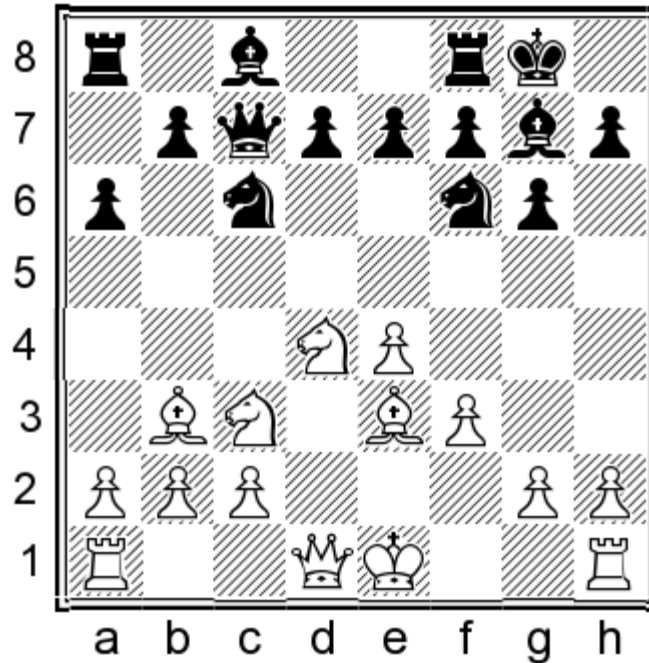
20.exd5 ♜ae8+

**20...♜xe4**

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 ♕g7 6.♖e3 ♗f6 7.♖c4 0-0 8.♖b3 a6 9.f3

White signals his intention to play in Yugoslav Attack fashion with ♖d2 and 0-0-0. This is the most critical continuation, but since White players are not prepared for this new system, over the board they tend to shy away from the challenge.

9...♖c7



9...b5?! Don't forget — first 9...♖c7, and only then 10...b5. 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.e5±

10.♖d2

10.0-0 It makes no sense to combine f3 with kingside castling, as White's only constructive plan after 10.0-0 is to go for f4 anyway.

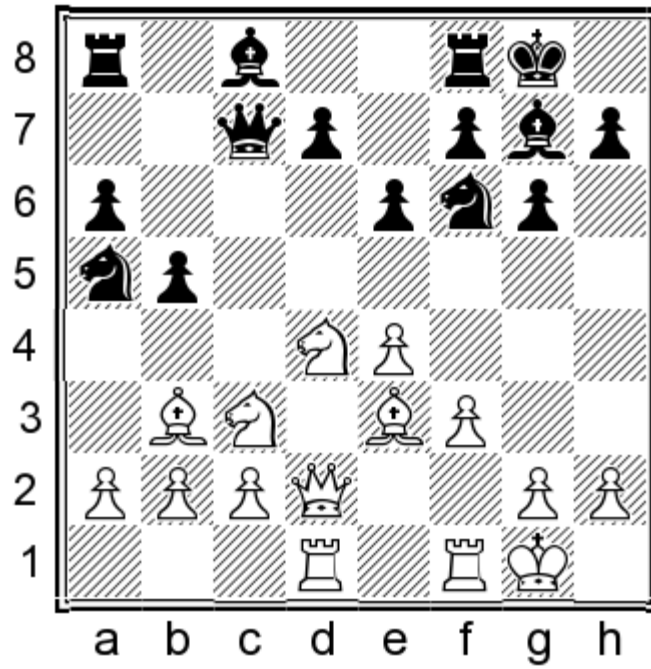
10...♗a5

(As usual 10...b5!? is perfectly playable as well.)

11.♖d2

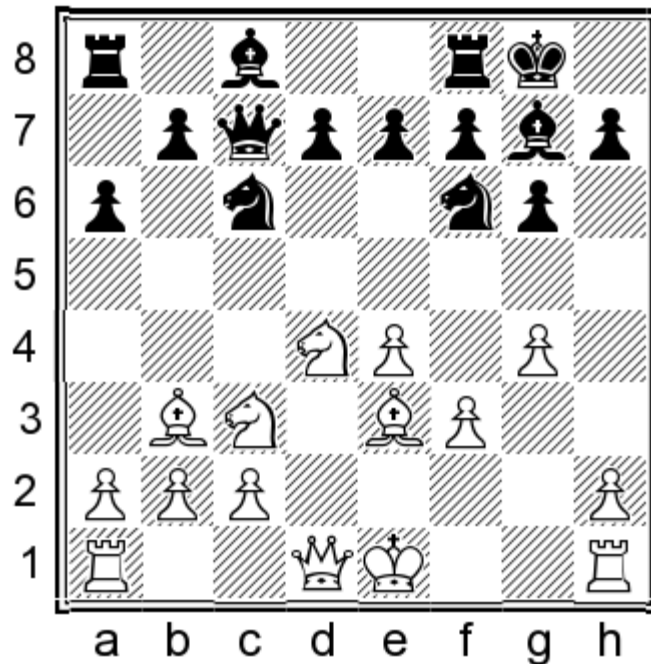
(11.♗d5?! ♗xd5 12.exd5 b5 (12...♗xb3 13.axb3 ♖e5 14.♖e1 ♖xd5 15.c4) 13.♖d2 ♖b7)

11...b5 12.♖ad1 e6!



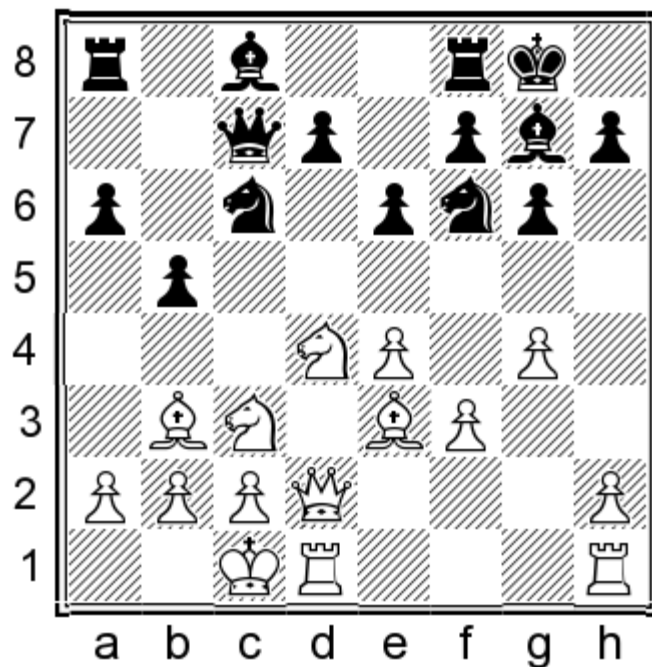
Now White's b3 Bishop literally has no squares to go to, a triumph of our concept 13.a3 ♖b7 Superficial developing moves on White's part have allowed Black to take over the initiative: ...d7-d5 is now imminent.;

10.g4!? Black must be accurate here.



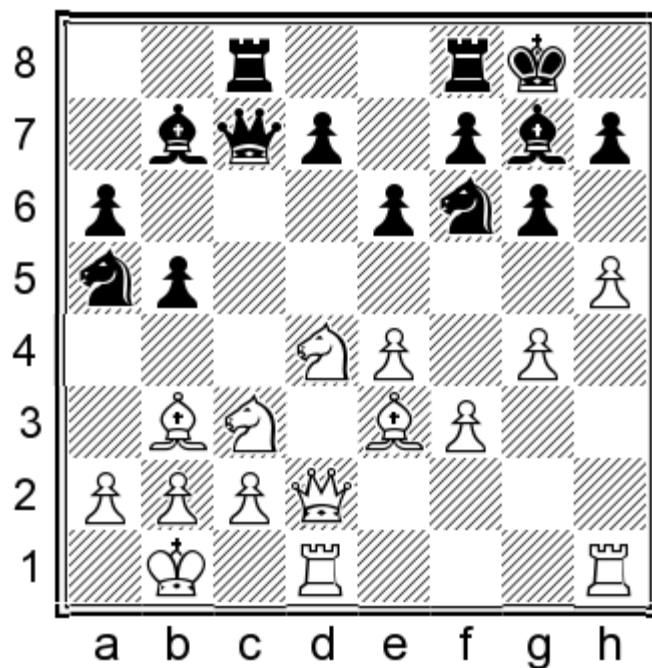
10...b5!

(10...e6 Black can play this way and transpose to the main line but 10...b5! takes advantage of White's premature 10.g4. 11.♙d2 b5 12.0-0-0



12...♖a5?! (♞12...♙b7 13.h4 h5 This transposes to our main line.) 13.h4→ 13...h5 We will see similar positions later on, except with Black's knight on c6.

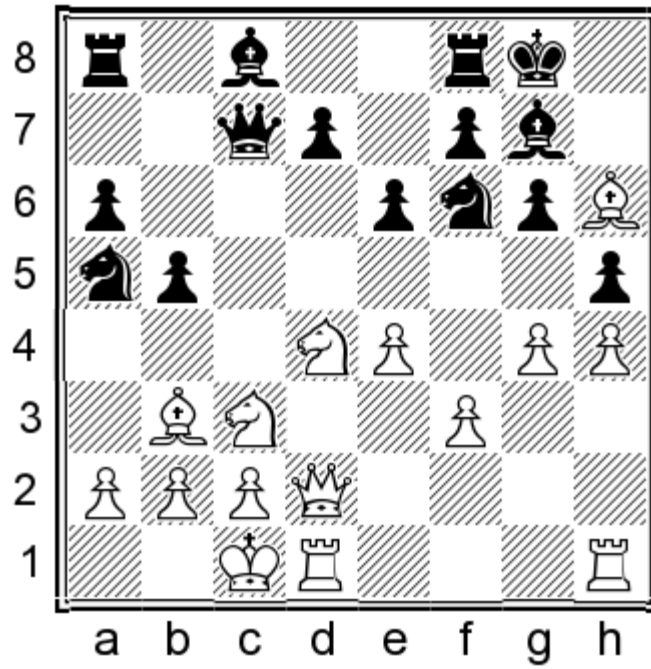
**a)** 13...♙b7?! 14.h5 In this system it is almost always unwise for Black to allow White h4-h5. 14...♞ac8 (14...b4 15.♖a4 ♜xe4 16.fxg4 ♙xe4 17.hxg6 ♜xb3+ 18.axb3 fxg6 19.♞h2±) 15.♙b1±



15...♜xg4 16.fxg4 ♜xb3 17.♜xb3+-;

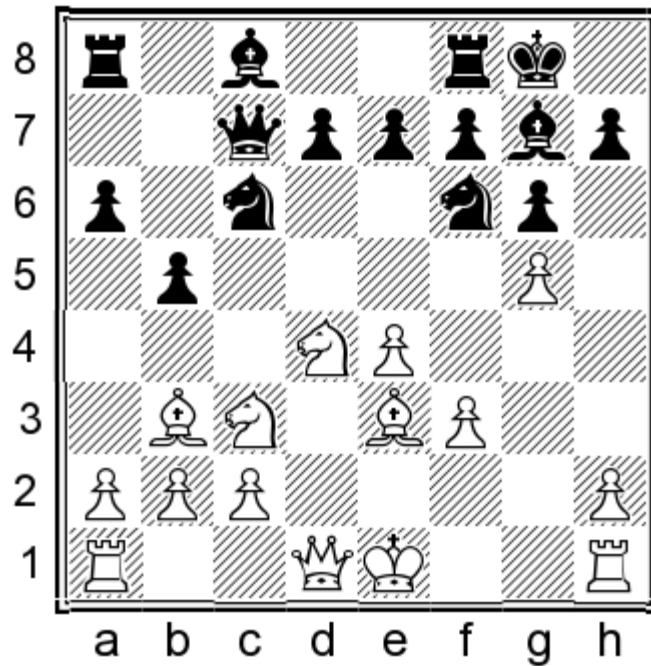
**b)** 13...d5!? It is worth researching this move further;

14.♙h6±



It took me a while to realize that Black should keep his knight on c6 to prevent White from playing this move, on account of ... $\text{dxd4}$  winning a piece. Allowing White  $\text{e3-h6}$  in this way is enough of a concession to turn a dynamically equal position into a difficult one for Black. (14.g5  $\text{e8}\text{z}$ )

11.g5



11...h5

(11... $\text{e8}$  Playable but not the best. 12.d5  $\text{d6}$  (12... $\text{e5}$  13.c3  $\text{a5??}$  14. $\text{f4+}$ — This is why the knight is better on h5) 13. $\text{d2}\pm$ )

12.d5  $\text{e5}$  13.c3  $\text{a5!}$  14.e2 (14. $\text{c2}$   $\text{c4}\mp$ ) 14... $\text{xb3}$  15.axb3 (15. $\text{xb3}$  e6 16. $\text{e7+}$   $\text{h8}\mp$ ) 15... $\text{b7}\text{z}$

10...b5

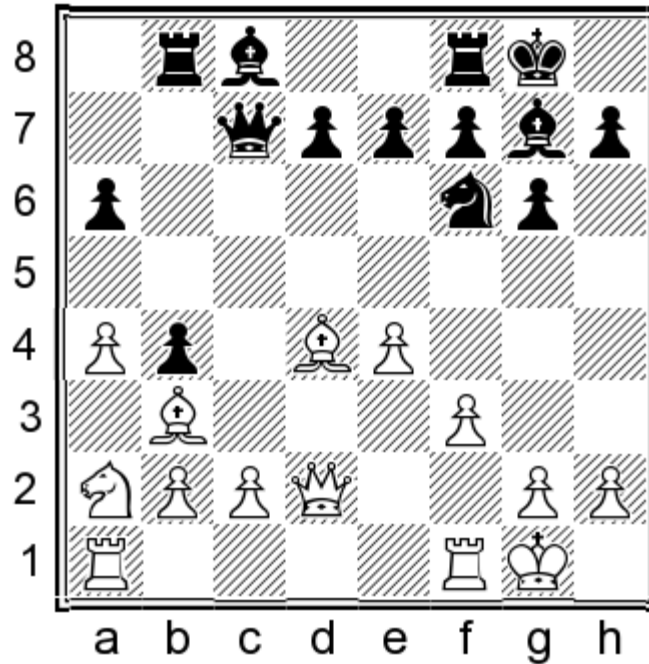
I give some analysis on 10...♘a5 in the next chapter, but that material is an appendix to this one; I prefer to play in the way I recommend here.

### 11.0-0-0

11.♘xc6 dxc6= Although objectively equal, Black is to be preferred in practice. White is planless; the b3 bishop is vulnerable to Black's ...c5-c4, and the c3 knight no longer has its favorite d5 square.;

11.a4 b4 12.♘a2 ♖b8! 13.♘xc6

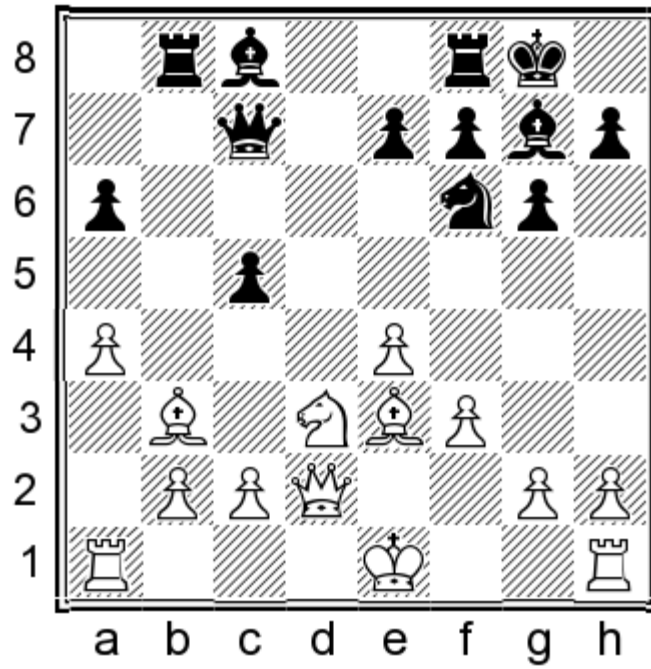
(13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♙xd4



14...♘e8! 15.♙xg7 (15.♘xb4 ♙xd4+ 16.♙xd4 e5 17.♙c3 ♙b6+--+) 15...♘xg7= The knight will find its way to c5 via e6; White's pieces are sloppy on b3 and a2.)

13...dxc6 14.♘xb4 c5 15.♘d5

(15.♘d3



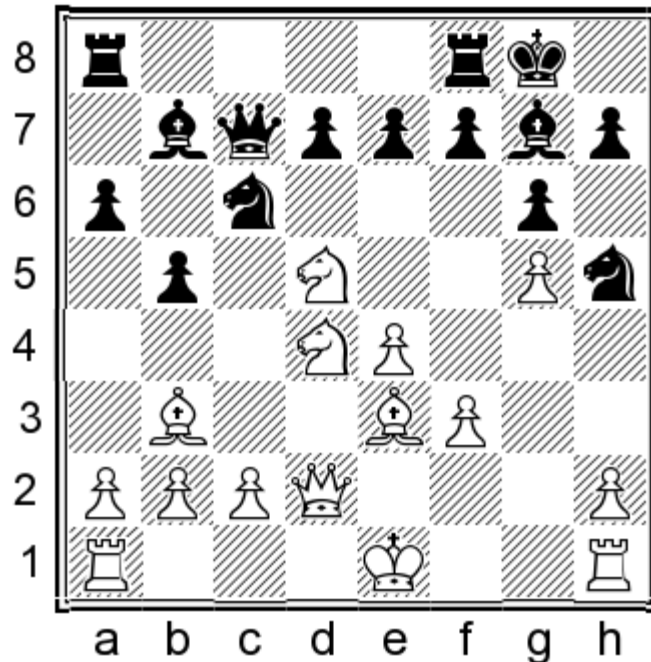
15...dxe4!! (15...c4 16.f4±) 16.fxe4 c4 17.f4 e5± The ability to play ...e5 in response to f4 is why Black must sacrifice with 15...dxe4!!)

15...dxd5 16.Wxd5 Qxb2 17.Rd1

(17.Rb1?! Qa3 18.0-0! Qe6±)

17...Qe6 18.Wxc5 Wxc5 19.Qxc5 Qf6 20.Qxe6 fxe6= Δ...Rfc8;

11.g4 Qb7 12.g5 Qh5 13.Qd5



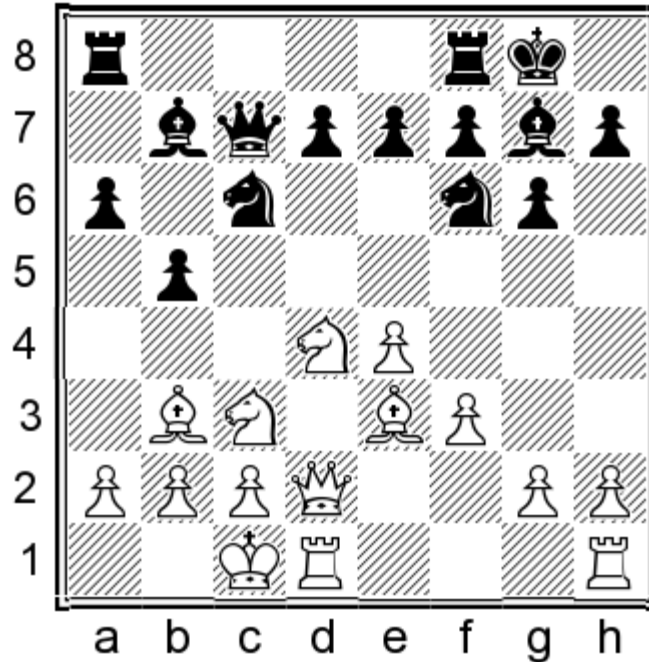
13...Qd6 It is admittedly a little difficult to remember to play 13...Qd6 in this 11.g4 variation, whereas in the 10.g4 variation the right move was 12...Qe5. The reason is that in the 10.g4 variation White was forced to play 13.c3 in response to 12...Qe5, whereas here, thanks to White's d2-queen already being developed, White can defend the d4-knight with 14.0-0-0.

(13...♙e5 14.0-0±)

14.0-0-0 ♖xd4 15.♙xd4 ♙xd4 16.♗xd4 ♙xd5 17.e5 ♖c7 18.♗xd5 ♗g7=;

11.h4 h5 12.0-0-0 ♙b7 transposes to the main line.

**11...♙b7**



Although this position has only been reached 30 times in the database, it is the first critical position of our main line. Both sides have developed their pieces and connected their rooks, and it remains to be determined which of the opposing wing attacks will succeed. Black's sights aren't limited to the queenside though, because the central pawn majority offers prospects for counterplay with ...d7-d5 or even ...e7-e5.

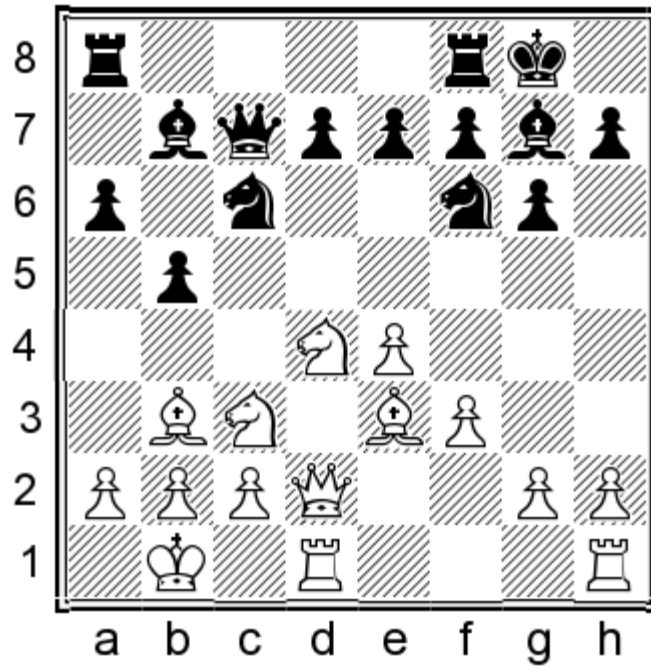
**12.h4**

By far the most common move.

12.♗d5?! ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♗e5 14.♙b1 ♖ac8 15.♙h6 ♗c4 16.♙xc4 ♙xh6 17.♗xh6 ♗xc4 18.h4 f6±;

12.♙h6?? ♗xd4 13.♙xg7 ♗xb3+ 14.axb3 ♗xg7-+;

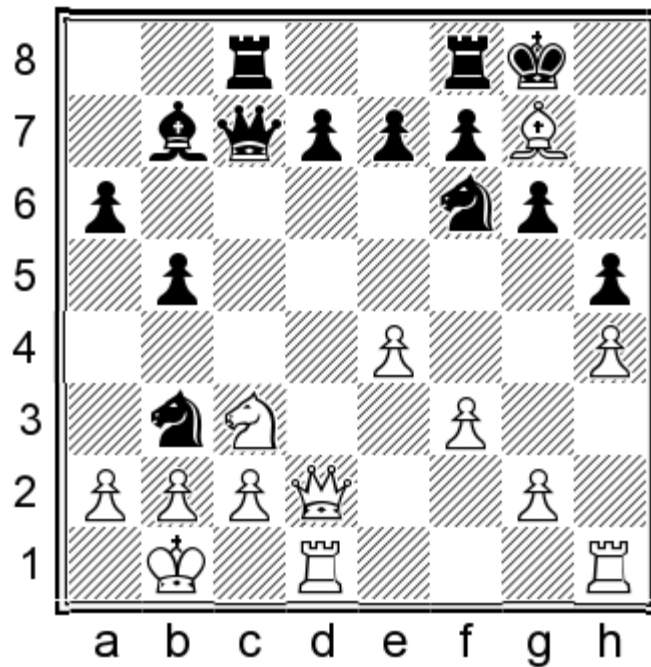
12.♙b1



This is the concession we induce by prolonging the Knight's stay on c6. White now threatens 13.h4 h5 14.♙h6, as after 14...♗xd4 15.♙xg7 ♗xb3 is no longer check, allowing 16.♖h6+.

12...♗a5! Having induced White's ♗b1, Black can now go for lines similar to those after 10...♗a5 where White is effectively down a tempo in the critical variations because ♗b1 turns out to be unnecessary.

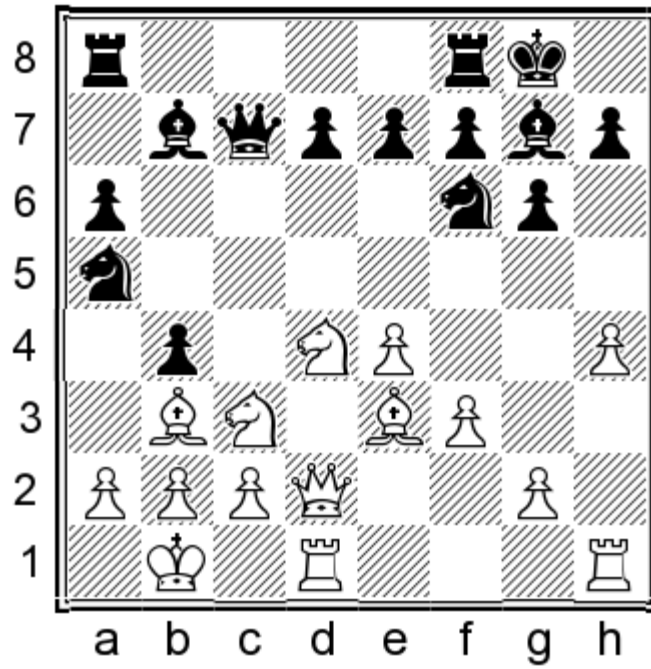
(12...e6 13.♗xc6 ♙xc6 14.♙f4 ♖b7 15.♗d5 a5 16.♗e7+ ♗h8 17.a3±; 12...♗ac8?! 13.h4 h5 14.♙h6 ♗xd4 15.♙xg7 ♗xb3??)



No longer check as it was when the White king was on c1. 16.♖h6+)

13.♙h6

(13.h4 b4!



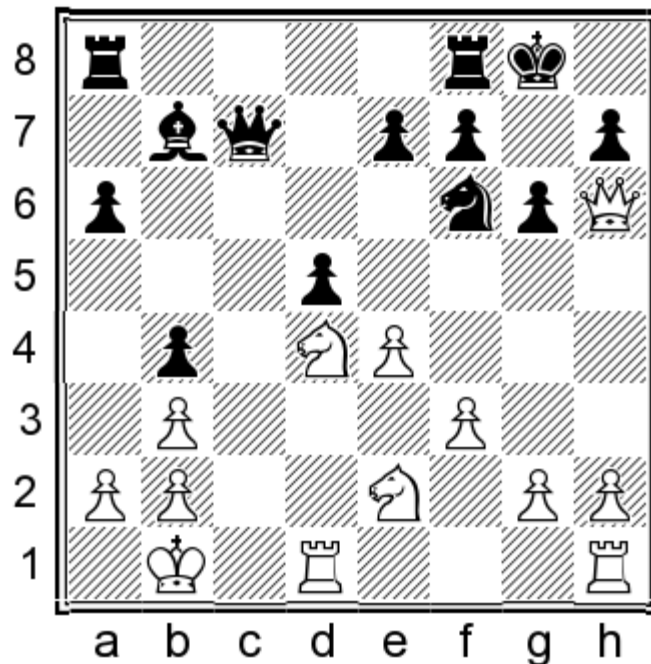
Since White spent a tempo on ♖b1, Black's queenside counterplay is in time. 14.♗a4 (14.♗d5 ♕xd5 15.exd5 ♖fc8 ♞h5?! ♗xb3 17.♗xb3 ♗xd5! ♣) 14...e5! 15.♗e2 d5! ♞

13...♗xb3 14.cxb3

(14.♗xb3 ♕xh6 15.♖xh6 b4 Black can allow White's ♗c3-d5 when he can capture with the bishop on b7, leaving the f6 knight to defend against White's h4-h5 attack (in particular the h7 square will be defended). 16.♗d5 ♕xd5 17.exd5 ♖fc8 18.♖d2 ♗d6 19.h4 a5 20.h5 a4 21.♗d4 a3 22.hxg6 (22.b3 ♖a5 23.hxg6 fxg6+) 22...fxg6+)

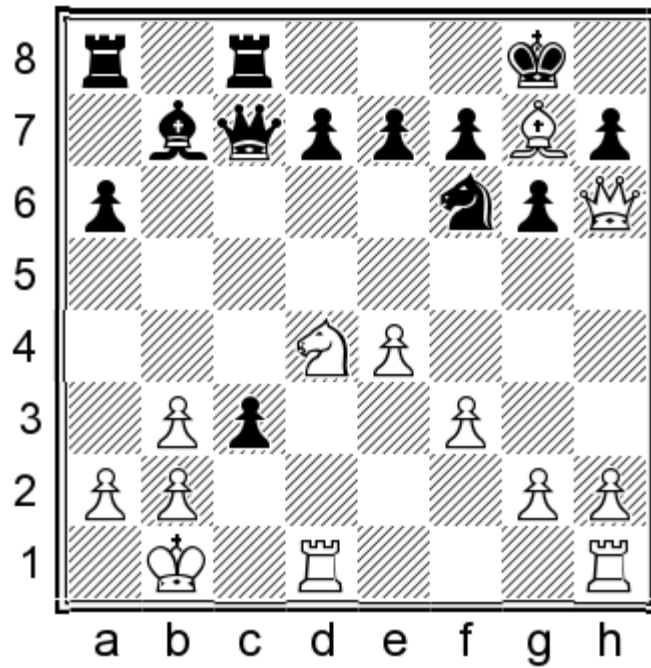
14...b4 15.♕xg7

(15.♗ce2 ♕xh6 16.♖xh6 d5!)



17.h4 e5 18.♗f5 Fear not! 18...♗e8! 19.♗e3 (19.♖g5 f6 20.♗h6+ ♖g7 21.♗f5+ ♖h8 ♣) 19...d4 20.♗c4 f6=)

15...bxc3 16.♖h6 ♖fc8!



This is one of the few lines worth committing to memory as well. 17.bxc3 ♖h5 18.♗f5 gxf5 19.♕d4 e5 20.♙xh5

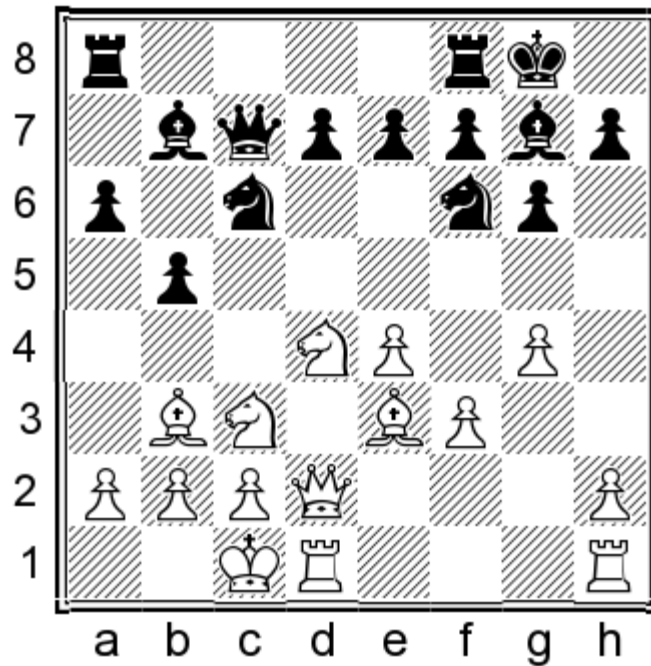
(20.♘b6 ♚xc3 21.♙xh5 ♚c2+=)

20...exd4 21.♙g5+

(21.♙xd4 ♚xc3 22.♙g5+ ♔h8 23.♙f6+ ♔g8 24.♙g5+ ♔h8=)

21...♔h8 22.♙f6+ ♔g8=;

12.g4



A slight inaccuracy. White should start with 12.h4, so as to ensure that Black plays ...h7-h5; in this line Black can get away without it.

12...♗a5!

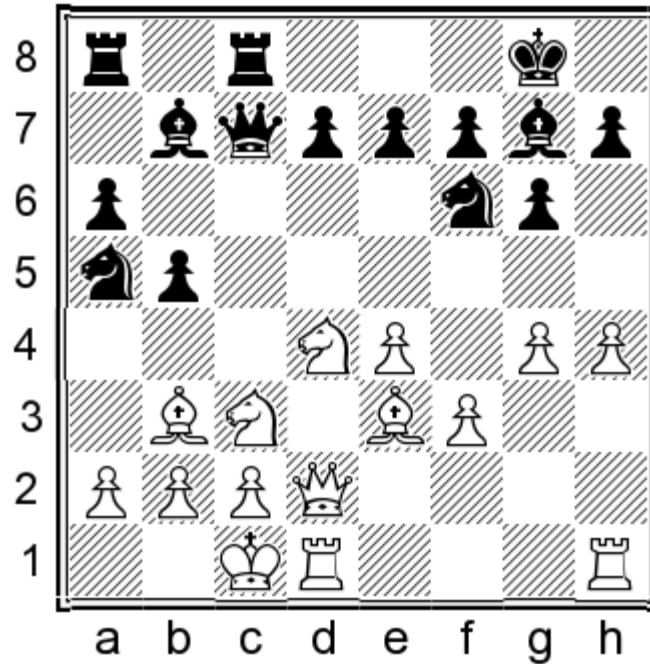
(12...♖ac8 13.g5 ♘h5 14.♗d5±; 12...e6!? Black can transpose to the main line with this move. 13.h4 h5 etc.)

13.♗b1

a) 13.♗h6 ♗xh6 14.♖xh6 ♖ac8⇒ Black's queenside attack is too fast for White (14...b4 15.♗d5 ♗xb3+ 16.axb3 ♗xd5 17.exd5 ♖ac8 18.d6!∞);

b) 13.g5 ♗h5⇒ Black has a knight on each rim, but it is White's position which is dim.;

c) 13.h4 ♖fc8!

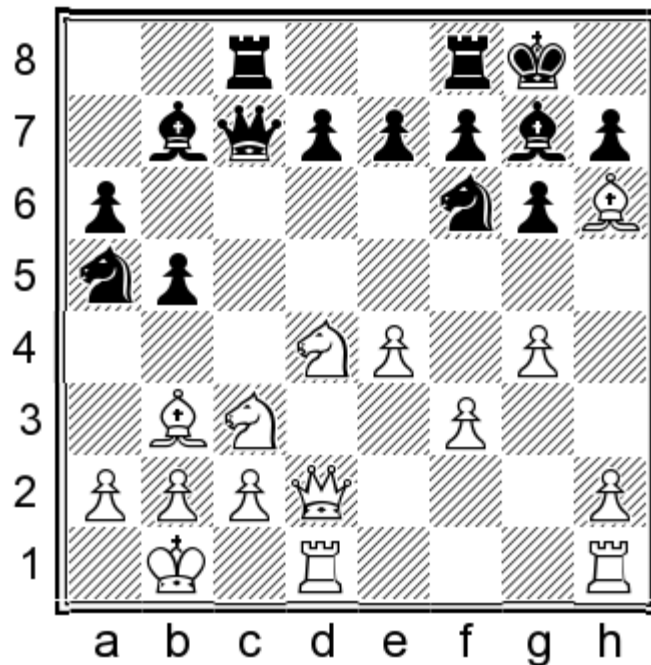


We see that White's g2-g4 is redundant; Black could have played h2-h4-h5 without it, as it would have been suicide for Black to capture ...♗f6xh5. (13...h5?! 14.♗h6±) 14.h5 ♗xb3+ 15.axb3 b4 16.♗a4 e5 17.hxg6 fxg6 18.♗e2 ♗xe4! 19.fxe4 ♗xe4⇒;

13...♖ac8

(13...♖fc8 14.♗h6 ♗xh6 15.♖xh6 b4 16.♗f5 gxf5 17.g5±)

14.♗h6



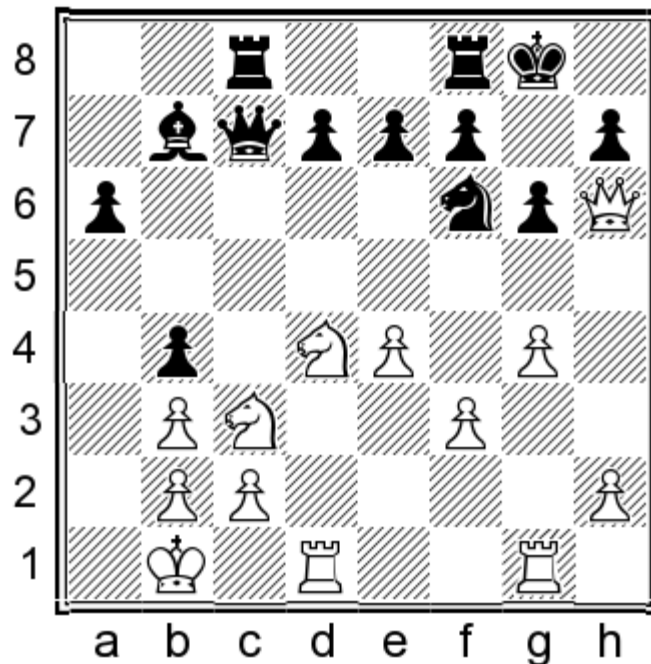
As a rule, Black's counterplay (whether on the queenside or in the center) tends to 'work' when White has spent a tempo on ♔b1. 14...♟xb3

(14...♞xh6 15.♞xh6 ♟xb3 (15...b4 16.♞d5 ♞xd5 17.exd5 (17.♞xd5 e6 18.♞b3 d5 19.exd5 ♟xb3 20.d6 ♞c5) 17...♟xb3 18.d6!! Black may be fine here but to allow this is unnecessary 18...exd6 19.cxb3± White threatens ♞d4-f5, winning.) 16.axb3 transposes to 14...♟xb3. (16.cxb3? b4 17.♞ce2 ♟xg4! 18.fxg4 ♞xe4+ 19.♔a1 ♞xh1 20.♞xh1 ♞e5)±))

15.axb3

(15.cxb3 b4 16.♞ce2 ♟xe4 17.fxe4 ♞xh6 18.♞xh6 ♞xe4+ 19.♔a1 ♞xh1 20.♞xh1 ♞e5)± 21.♞d1 (21.h4 ♞c5 22.h5 ♞g5)±) 21...♞c5)±)

15...♞xh6 16.♞xh6 b4 17.♞hg1!?



(17.♖a4 d5!?)

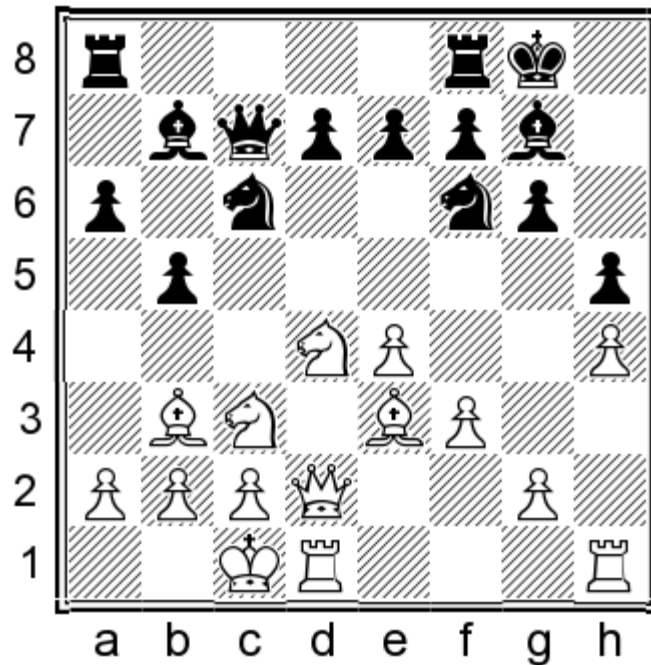
17...♗h8! 18.♖a4

(18.♖a2 d5 19.exd5 ♖xd5?)

18...d5 19.e5 ♗xe5 20.g5 ♖d7?

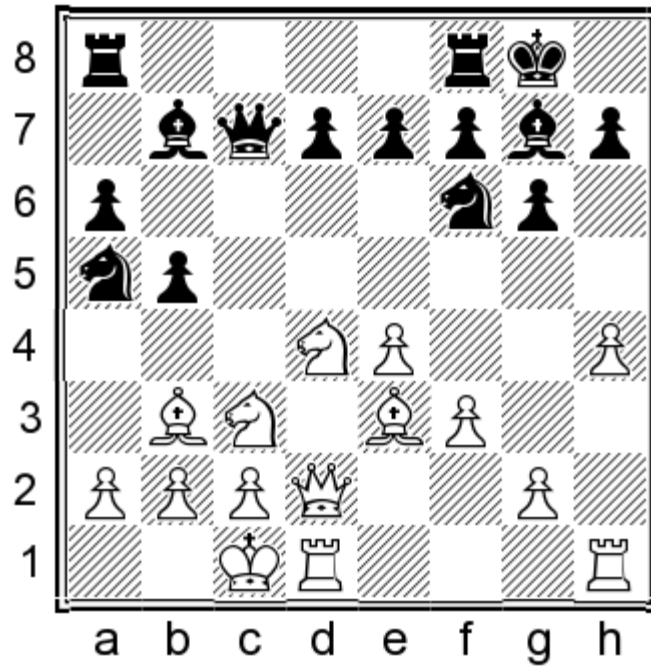
## 12...h5!N

A new move, but more importantly a new concept for this line: containment.



Previously, Black would rush with queenside counterplay, hoping to mate White before getting mated himself. It turns out that Black can contain White's kingside attack and solidify the center with ...e7-e6, and only then proceed with queenside and/or central counterplay. For his part, White must keep the attack going with urgency, because Black's queenside counterplay is just a few moves away, and it will come with devastating effect (...♖ac8, ...♗fd8, ...♖a5, etc.).

12...♖a5!?



This may turn out to be playable as well, but it is not in the spirit of the concept I am advocating. To allow White h4-h5 without immediate counterplay is akin to the ordinary Yugoslav Attack in the Dragon; our aim is to play in ‘Taimanov style’ with ...h7-h5 and ...e7-e6. 13.h5 b4 14.♖a4

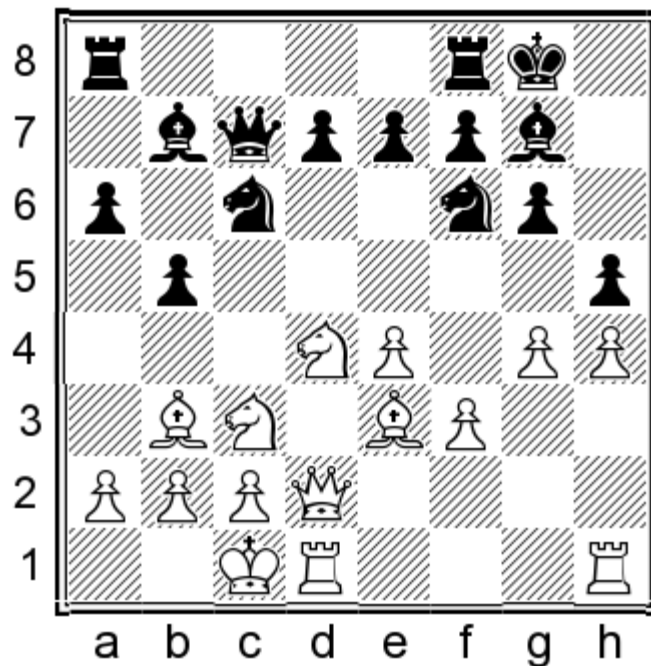
(14.♖ce2 ♜fc8 15.hxg6 ♘xb3+ 16.♖xb3 hxg6 17.♖c5 ♙c6 18.♙h6 ♙h8∞)

14...♘xb3+ 15.♖xb3 ♘xh5 16.♖b6

(16.g4 ♖f6 (16...♖g3? 17.♙h2) 17.♖b6 ♜ad8 18.♖a5∞)

16...♜ad8 17.♖a5±

### 13.g4



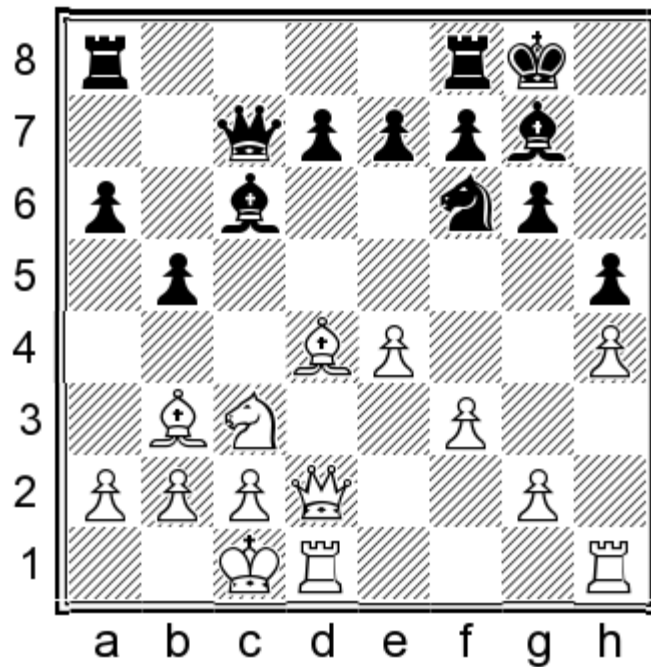
The character of the position demands that this be played. Timidity will not suffice; time is of the essence in the race to

determine which of the flank attacks will succeed. My initial attitude towards this system was that I should delay ...e7-e6 for as long as possible, because I felt I would always have the option later on, and I thought there could be more useful attacking moves on the queenside such as 13...♖a5 (which also guards the important d5-square). However, as I delved deeper into this variation, I realized that Black should keep the knight on c6 for a little longer to deter White's ♗e3-h6. The result is a rather peculiar middlegame 'standoff', where White cannot make progress with ♗e3-h6 until Black moves his knight from c6, but at the same time Black cannot make progress on the queenside until he does either.

13.♗xc6 This may look unnatural — and it is — but the 'computer move' which it is based on (14.♗d4!) is not to be underestimated. Black's f6-knight is the MVP (most valuable piece) of his position, as without it, White's g2-g4xh5 would be decisive. Fortunately, the f6-knight is difficult to get at, as 13.♗g5?? loses to 13...♗xe4. White's 13.♗xc6 takes aim at Black's f6-knight by paving the way for 14.♗d4. 13...♗xc6

(13...dxc6 Black does not quite equalize here. 14.♗c5 a5 15.a3 (15.a4 ♗a6∞) 15...♞fd8 (15...b4 16.♗a4 ♗a6∞) 16.♞e3 ♞xd1+ 17.♞xd1 a4 18.♗a2 ♞d8 19.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 20.e5 ♗d5 21.♗xd5 cxd5 22.f4±)

14.♗d4



(14.♗h6 a5 15.♗xg7 ♗xg7 16.♞d4 b4 17.♗a4 d6 18.g4?! hxg4 19.h5 ♞a7! 20.♞d2 ♞h8)

14...a5!

(14...e6?! 15.e5 (15.g4 a5 16.gxh5 ♗xh5=) 15...♗h7 16.♞e3 a5 17.a4 ♞fb8 18.axb5 ♗xb5 19.g4 White's attack is too fast. 19...a4 20.♗a2 hxg4 21.h5 a3 22.b3 ♗c6 23.hxg6 fxg6 24.♗e4 ♞f8 25.f4→)

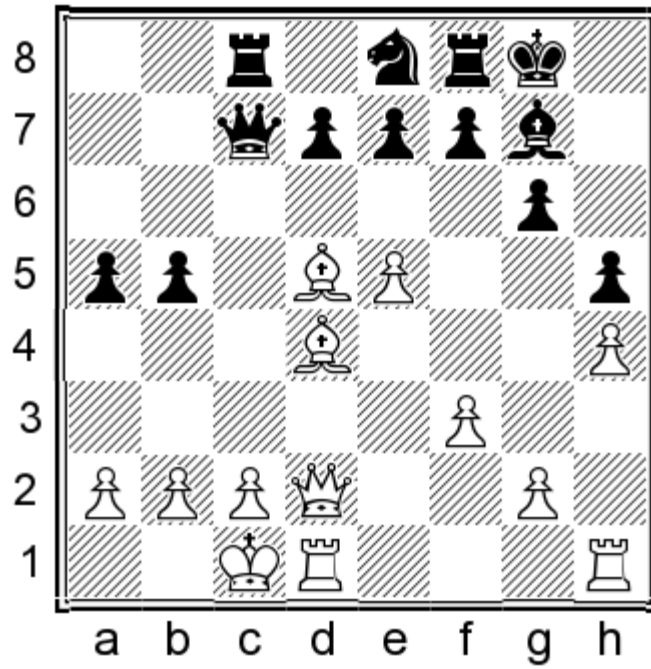
15.e5

(15.♗d5?! ♗xd5 16.♗xd5 ♞ac8)

15...♗e8 16.♗d5

(16.♞g5 a4 17.♗d5 Black has an embarrassment of riches, needing to choose between two beautiful variations 17...axb3!! (17...♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♞c8 19.♞d2 e6 20.♗e4 ♞c4 21.♗b1 ♗d6!!↔) 18.♗xc7 bxa2 19.♗d2 ♗xc7)

16...♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♞c8



Fair warning is in order: what follows is a total mess. That being said, look closely and you will see that it is White who needs to be accurate and find several (nontrivial) ‘only’-moves in order to survive the complications. As Black, playing a risky line like this, we should welcome our opponents into what Tal called the “deep dark forest where  $2+2=5$  and the path leading out is only wide enough for one”. 18.f4

(18.g4 e6 19.♙e4 ♜xe5 20.♙xe5 ♚xe5 21.♖he1 ♚c5 22.♗h6 ♞f6 23.♙xg6 fxg6 24.♗xg6+ ♔h8 25.g5 ♞d5 26.♗h6+ ♔g8 27.♗g6+ ♔h8=)

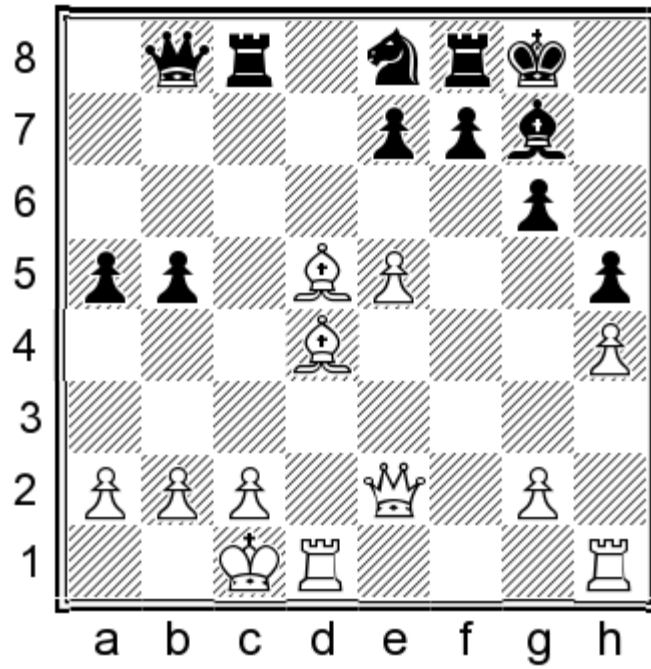
18...d6 19.♗e2

(19.e6? f5⚡)

19...dxe5

(19...e6 20.♙f3 ♙h6 21.g3 d5 22.g4 ♙xf4+ 23.♔b1→)

20.fxg6 ♗b8!!



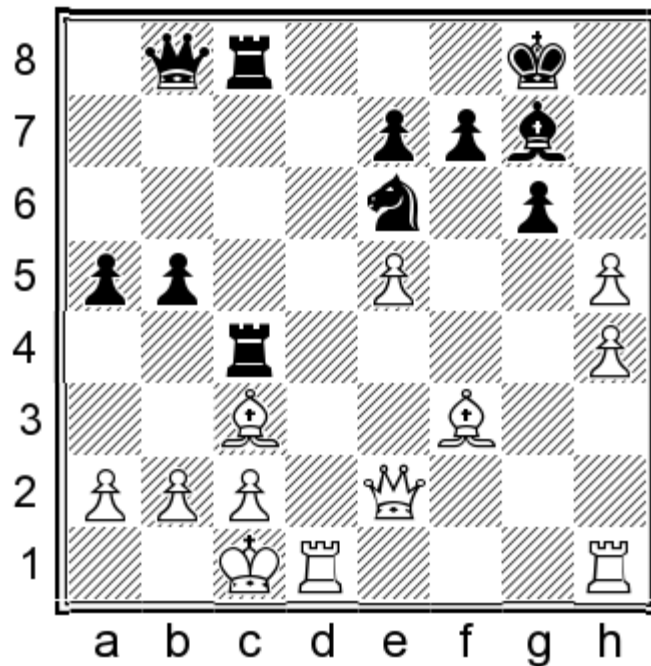
Making room to relocate the knight from e8-c7-e6. 21.g4

(21.a3 ♖c7 22.♙a2 b4↗)

21...♗c7 22.♙f3 ♗e6 23.gxh5 ♜c4 24.♙c3

(24.c3 ♜fc8 25.♙b1 b4 26.♙d5 bxc3 27.♙xc4 ♜xc4 28.♙xc3 ♜xc3 29.hxg6 fxg6↗)

24...♜fc8!



(24...♜c7 25.hxg6 (25.♙b1 ♜xc3 26.bxc3 ♗c5 27.hxg6 ♗a4 28.gxf7+ ♜xf7 29.♜e3 ♗xc3+ 30.♙c1 ♗xa2+ 31.♙d2 ♙xe5∞) 25...♜xc3 26.gxf7+ ♙h8 27.bxc3 ♜xc3∞)

White's only move to not be clearly worse here is... 25.♙d7□ 25...♜b6 26.hxg6 ♗f4 27.gxf7+ ♙f8 28.♜d1□ 28...b4 29.♙b1□ 29...bxc3 30.b3 ♜c5 31.♙d8+

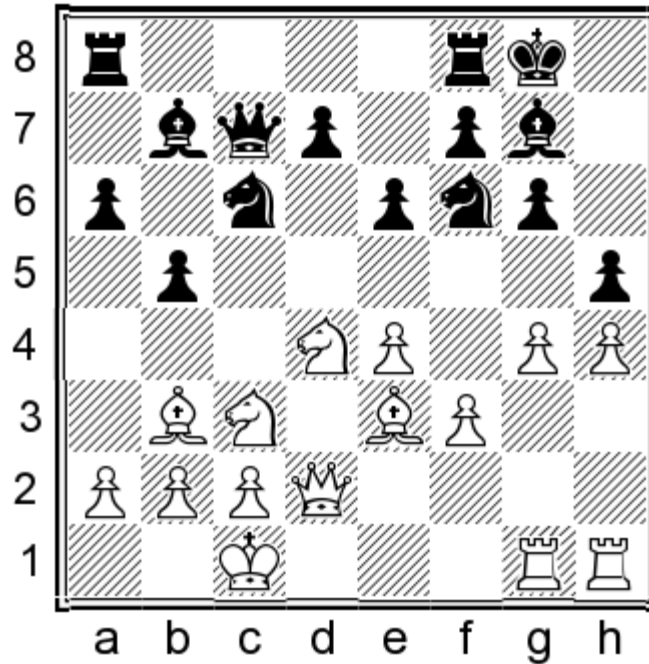
(31.♔a1 ♖a3 32.♗d8+ ♗xd8 33.♞xd8+ ♜xf7 34.♙d5+ e6 35.♞d7+ ♔g8 36.♙xe6+ ♜xe6 37.♞xe6+ ♔h7 38.♞f5+ ♔g8 39.♞e6+ ♔h7=)

31...♗xd8 32.♞xd8+ ♜xf7 33.♗f1□ 33...♗d4 34.♙h5+ ♔e6 35.♞g8+ ♔d7 36.♙g4+ ♔c7 37.♞c8+ ♔b6 38.♞b8+ ♔c6 39.♙f3+

(39.♞c8+ ♔b6=)

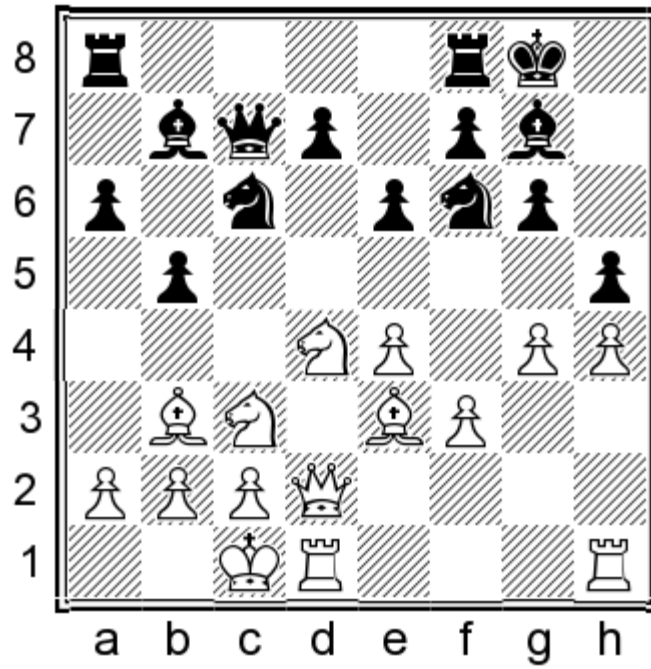
39...♔d7 40.♗e1 ♖a3 41.e6+ ♜xe6 42.♞b5+ ♔d8 43.♞b8+ ♔d7=;

13.♗dg1?! White cannot hope for an advantage with such timidity 13...e6 14.g4

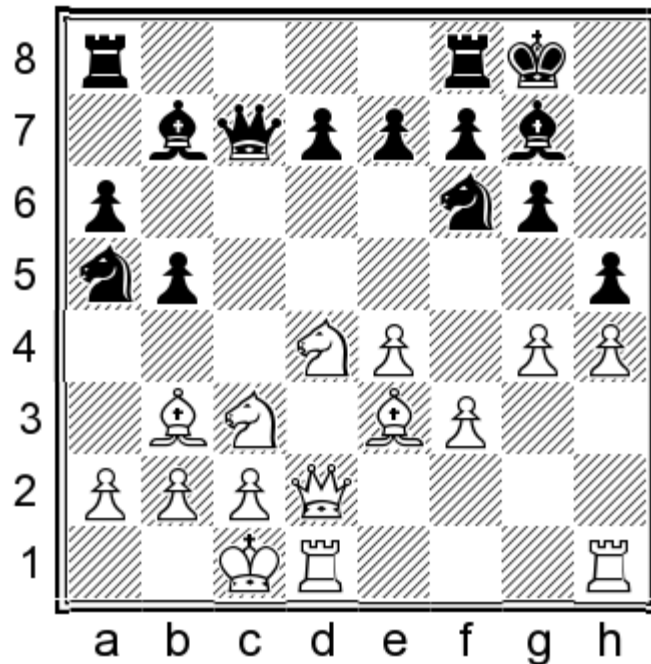


14...♞d6! 15.♜xc6 ♞xd2+ 16.♙xd2 dxc6 17.gxh5 ♜xh5 White's ♙b3 is a mere spectator, soon to be cornered by Black's c-pawn (...c5-c4).

**13...e6!**

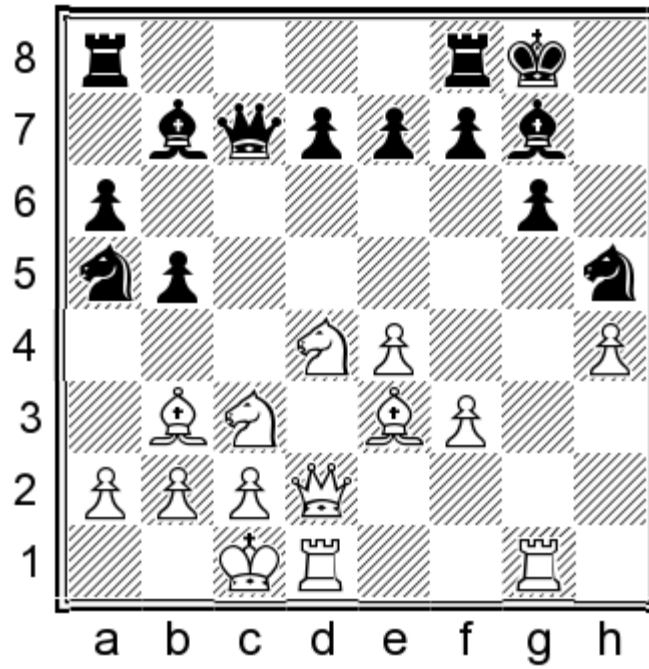


Like 13...♖a5, this move also prevents White's g4-g5 followed by ♖c3-d5, but by keeping the knight on c6, White's ♗e3-h6 is hindered. What follows is somewhat a game of 'cat and mouse' — White's main resource of ♗e3-h6 is unavailable at present, and it is difficult to see how to continue the attack without that. Black would welcome White's g4-g5, which locks up the kingside and directs Black's knight to d6 via e8. On the other hand, Black's queenside attack is stalled by the fact that he can't play ...♖c6-a5 without allowing ♗e3-h6. That being said, whereas White is at a loss for ways to improve his position, Black can place his rooks on the d-and-c (or b-) files and threaten both central counterplay and a queenside pawn storm. 13...♖a5?!

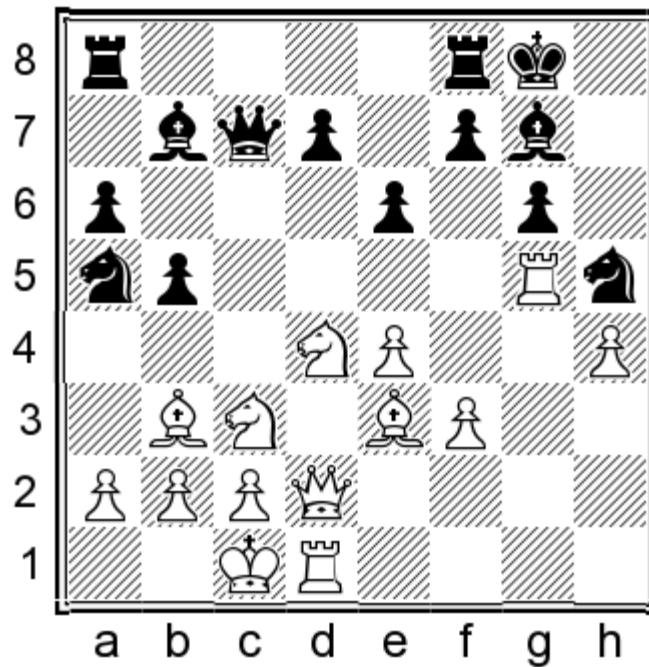


14.♗h6! This is ultimately the problem with 13...♖a5 — White gets to exchange Black's 'Dragon bishop'. White threatens ♖d4-f5, so the following (14...e6) is forced.

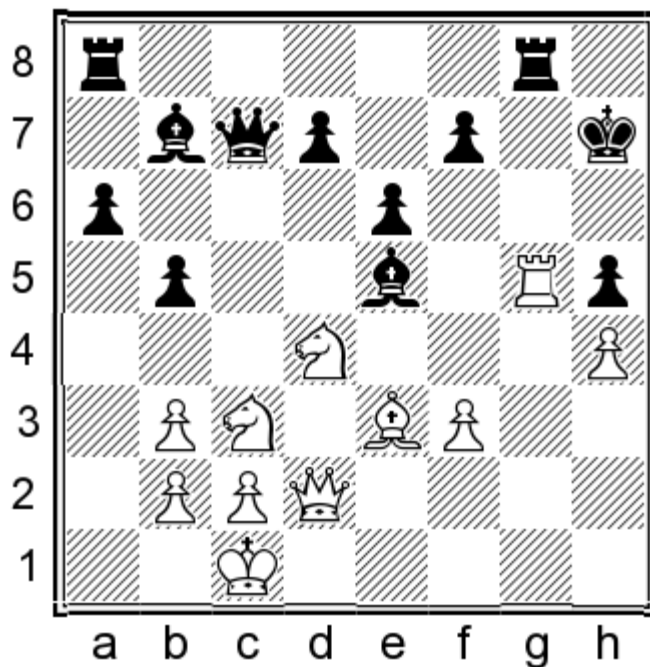
a) 14.gxh5 ♖xh5 15.♖hg1



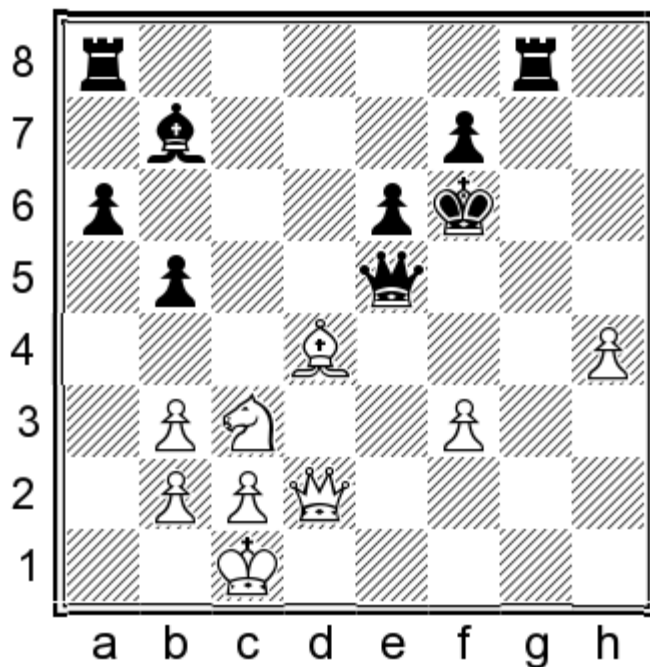
Computers take some time to appreciate the power of this idea, but anyone who has studied the Yugoslav Attack will know that White's recipe is to, as Fischer said, "pry open" files to Black's king, then "sac, sac, mate". 15...e6! (15...♖xb3+ 16.axb3 b4 17.♘a4 d5 18.♙g5! This is the point. White really does intend to "sac, sac, mate" 18...dxe4 19.♗xh5! e5 (19...gxh5 20.♗g1+-) 20.♚h2 gxh5 21.♘f5+- White's attack is overwhelming) 16.♙g5!



The aggressively inclined Black player may be in dismay — White is initiating dangerous threats like ♗g5xh5, and Black's counterattack seems far off. However, as Suba teaches in his book *Dynamic Chess Strategy*, "initiative is a psychological advantage", so it is up to us as defenders to grant or deny this advantage to our opponents. The aggressor is not better simply by virtue of being on the offensive: White was the first to initiate action but if we defend well, he may quickly run out of steam and be left with no attack and static pawn weaknesses. 16...♗h7! (16...♙f6?! 17.♗xh5 gxh5 18.f4+) 17.♗dg1 ♙f6 18.♗xh5+ gxh5 19.e5 ♖xb3+ 20.axb3 ♙xe5 21.♗g5 ♗g8

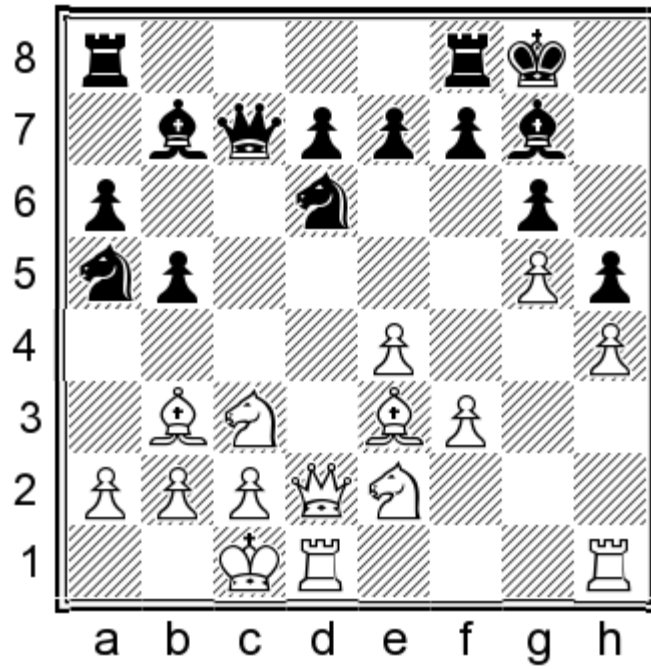


This position is a draw according to my computer. Technically, then, Black is not worse in this variation, but you can see why I prefer to avoid this mess by playing 13...e6!. 22.♞xh5+ (22.♜xe6 dxe6 23.♞xh5+ ♔g6 24.♞g5+ ♔h7= (24...♔f6 25.♞xe5 ♞xe5 26.♙d4

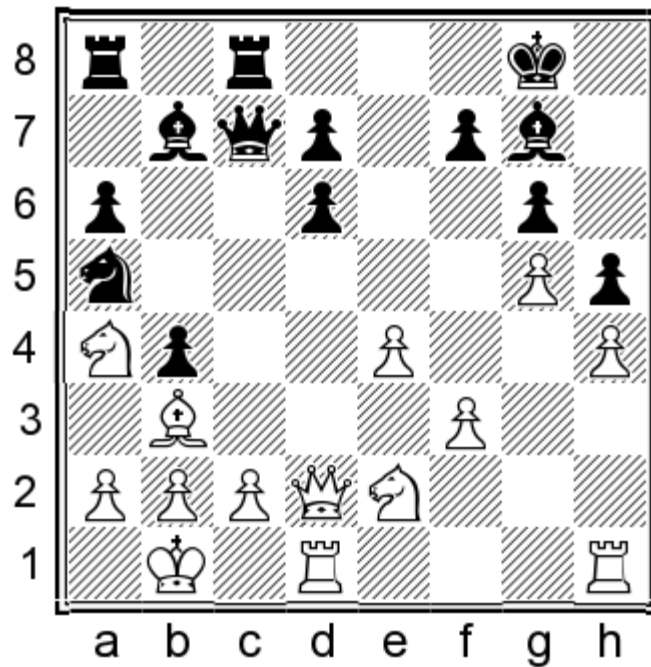


26...♞g1+ 27.♜d1 ♙xf3 28.♙xe5+ ♔e7!! Study-like 29.♞b4+ ♔e8 30.♔d2 ♞d8+ 31.♔e3 ♙xd1=) 22...♔g6 23.♞d3+ ♔f6 24.f4 ♙d6∞ The Higher Power calls this “0.00”, but I would not write a book recommending this madness as the first option.;

**b)** 14.g5 Black is usually happy to see this; White blocks off his own attack and lures Black’s knight to e8 where it wants to go anyway 14...♞e8! 15.♜de2 ♜d6!



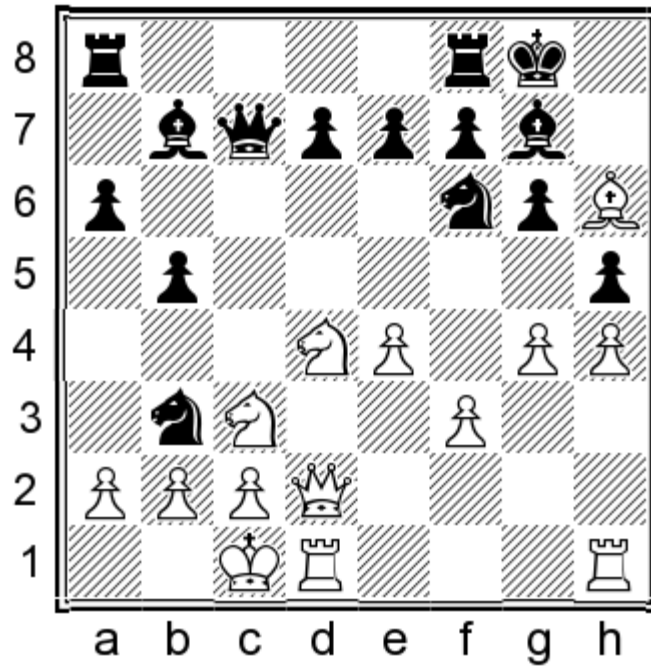
When the concept of transporting this maneuver from the Taimanov occurred to me, I was pessimistic that it would turn out to be possible in the Accelerated Dragon. It was a pleasant surprise when I saw that the computers approve of it, and as it turns out it is a recurring theme in this line. 16. ♖f4 b4 17. ♘a4 (17. ♘d5?! ♘xb3+ 18. axb3 ♙xd5 19. ♗xd5 ♜fc8 20. ♞d2 a5! 21. ♙xd6 exd6 22. ♗xd6 a4 23. ♗xc7 ♞xc7 24. ♚b1 a3!⚡) 17... ♜fc8 18. ♙xd6 exd6 19. ♚b1



19...d5! 20.exd5 ♘xb3 21.cxb3 ♙xd5 22. ♗xd5 ♜c2+ 23. ♚a1 ♗xe2⚡;

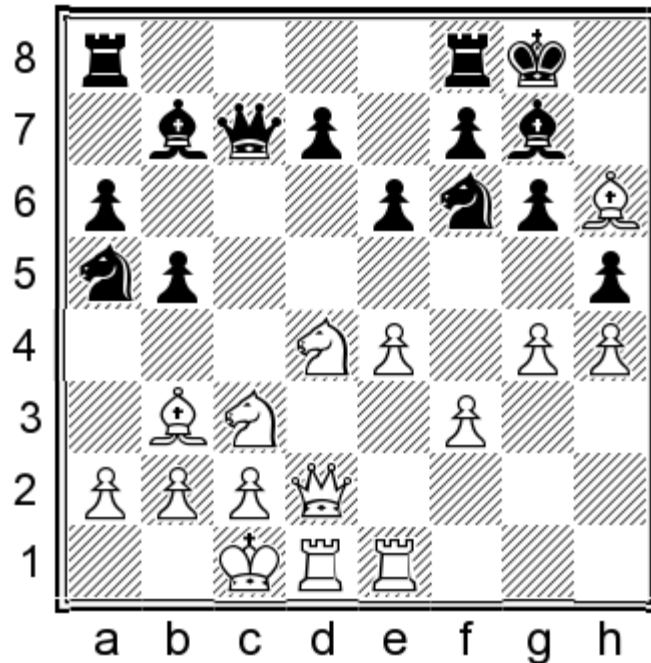
14...e6

(14... ♘xb3+



In the one tournament game in which I had this position over the board, I played this move. I took over the advantage in that game, but only because my opponent let me...15.axb3 b4 16.♘ce2 hxg4 17.♙xg7 ♔xg7 18.♚g5 ♖h7 19.♚xe7?! (19.♚xg4 e6 20.♘f4±) 19...♚a5 20.♚xd7? gxf3! 21.♘f4?! ♚a1+ 22.♔d2 ♚xb2 23.♘de6+ ♔g8 24.♘xf8 ♚c3+ 25.♔c1 ♙xe4= Cao,J-Panjwani,R Kitchener 2015).

15.♙he1!

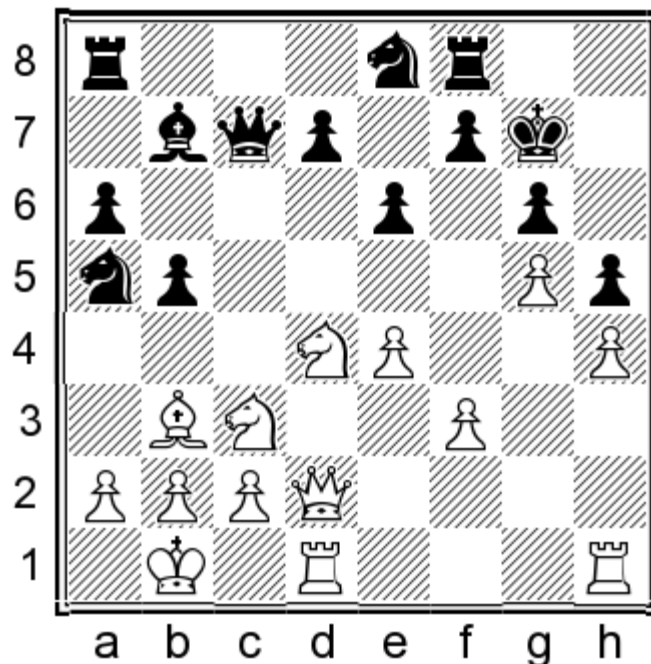


Not an easy move for humans to find because we tend to expect that the battle will be decided on the kingside. The logic of this move is clear: White threatens e4-e5, and Black cannot prevent this with 15...d6 for tactical reasons.

Furthermore, White's pressure on the kingside is still felt, and eventually some sort of ♘d4-f5 or gxh5 will be decisive.

(15.♙xg7 This eases Black's task a little; there is no need to take on g7, as Black certainly couldn't allow White's queen to infiltrate by taking on h6 15...♔xg7 16.g5 (16.♙he1 ♖xb3+ 17.axb3 d6±) 16...♘e8! (16...♘g8!? 17.♙he1 b4 (17...♘e7 18.f4 ♙ad8 19.f5 ♔g8 Black's position is surprisingly resilient) 18.♘a4 e5 19.♘e2 ♖xb3+ 20.axb3 ♙ac8

21.♔b1 a5 22.c4 ♕c6=) 17.♔b1

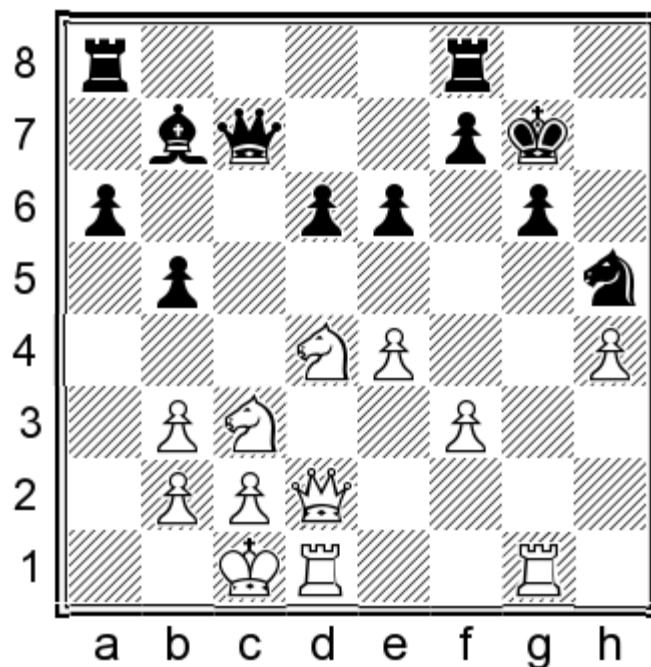


17...♞d8! Preparing the thematic ...♞e8-d6, since now after 18.♞xe6+ dx6 the d6-Knight is defended 18.♞de2 ♔g8! Threatening ...b5-b4 (18...b4 19.♞d4+-) 19.♞f4 b4 20.♞a4 ♞xb3 21.cxb3 d5! 22.exd5 a5!±)

15...♞xb3+

(15...b4 16.♞a4 hxg4 17.♞xg7 ♔xg7 18.e5 ♞d5 19.fxg4±; 15...d6?? 16.♞xe6! ♞xh6 17.♞xh6 fxe6 18.♞xg6+ ♞g7 19.♞xg7+ ♔xg7 20.♞xe6+-)

16.axb3 d6 17.♞xg7 ♔xg7 18.gxh5 ♞xh5 19.♞g1



Black is suffering. White's attack is not decisive, but lacking counterplay Black is condemned to passive defense.

19...♔h7

(19...♞ae8 20.b4 Black needs to be accurate to not collapse here. 20...♞f6?! 21.h5! ♞xh5 22.f4 d5 23.♞df1 dx4

24.f5!±; 19...♖h8?? 20.♗xg6++-)

20.♗g5 Threatening ♜d4xe6, as well as f4-f5.

(20.♗g5 ♖g8 21.b4 ♗ad8 22.♞de2 f6 23.♗g4 e5!⇒)

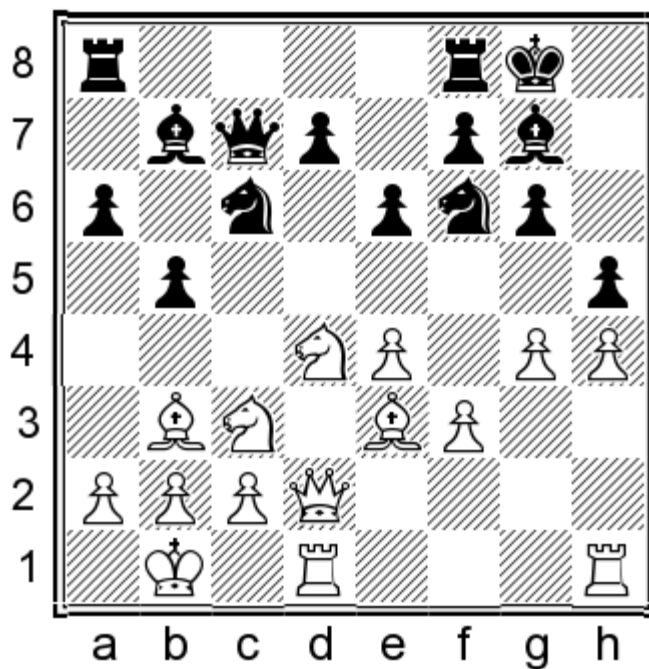
20...♗fe8 21.b4! ♗ac8

(21...♗e7 22.♞b3±)

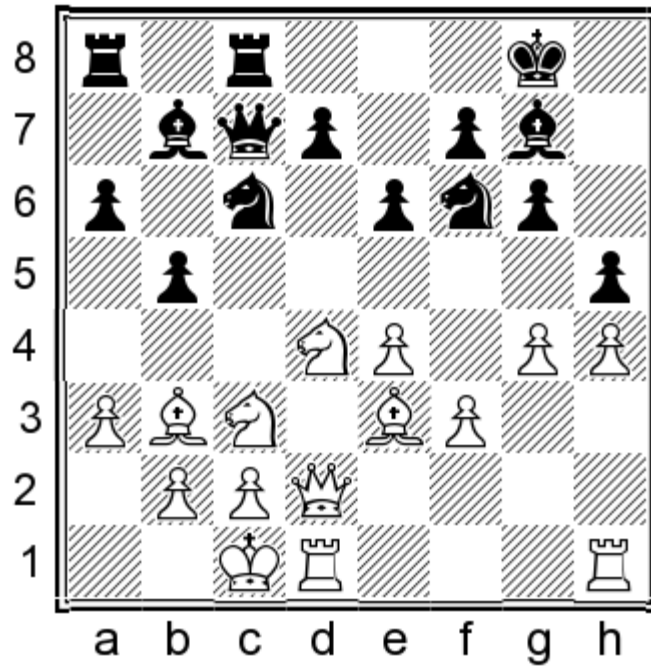
22.♞b1 ♗e7 23.♞b3± Black is positionally dominated.

### 14.♞b1

Small ‘refinement’ moves like this are useful prophylaxis for when the position (inevitably) explodes.

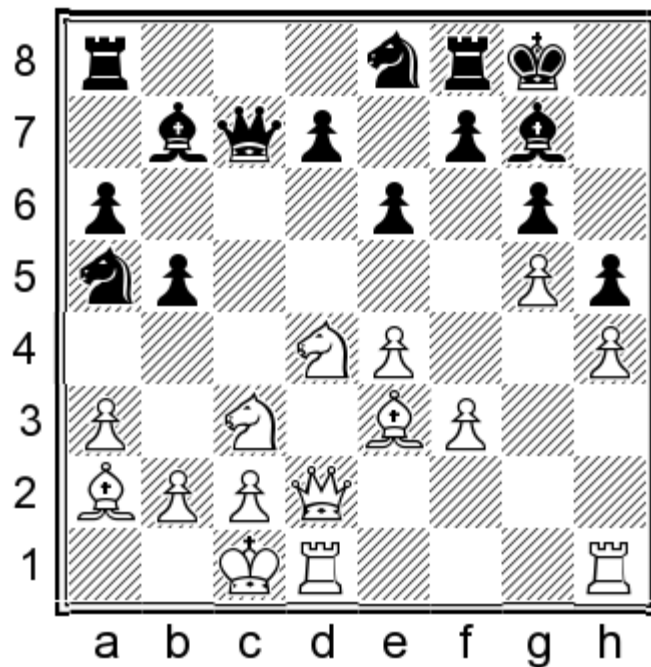


14.a3 This is admittedly a ‘computer move’ — I can’t imagine many humans will weaken their king position unprovoked. Nevertheless, it is instructive to see how Black builds up attacking potential. 14...♗fc8!

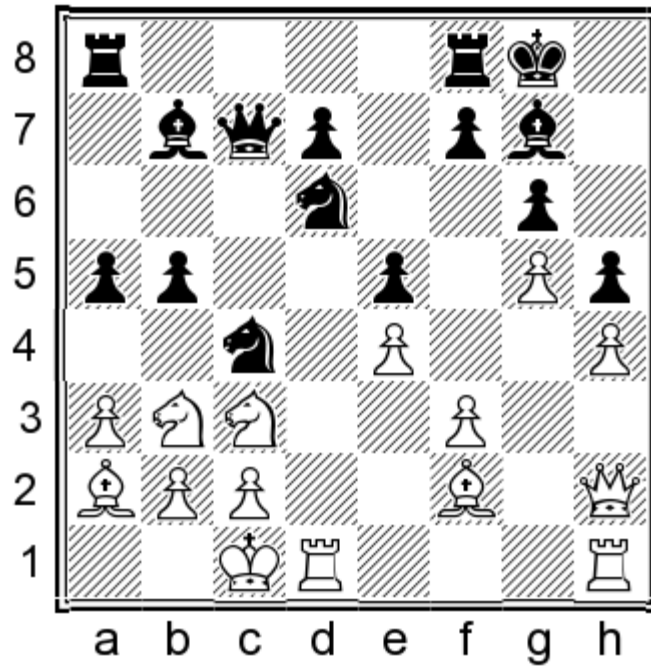


In such positions it is notoriously difficult to decide which rook to put on a given file. Pal Benko is rumored to have joked that his method is as follows: think really hard, decide which rook would be the right choice, then play the other rook! By placing the f-Rook on c8 instead of d8, Black sidesteps a potential ♕e3-g5 pin, and also defends his ♖c7 in case, after ...♗c6-e5 for example, White pins the Knight with ♕e3-f4 or ♖d2-h2.

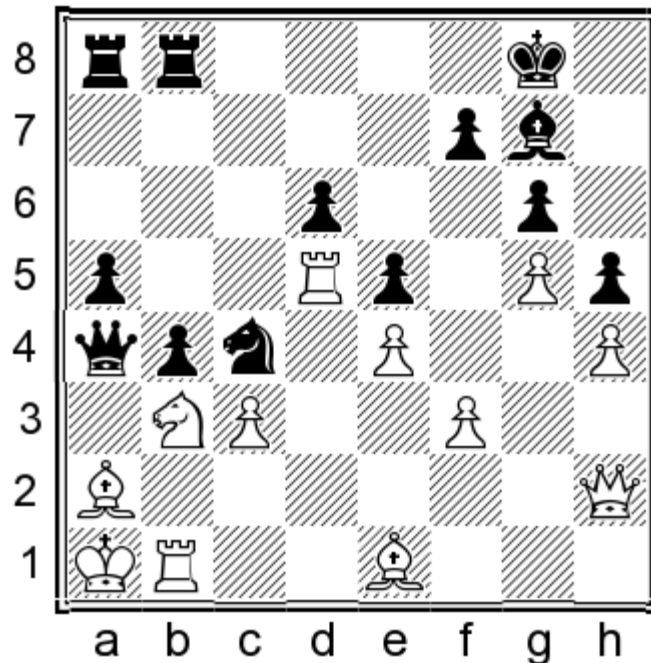
(14...♗a5?! This always runs into ♕e3-h6 15.♕h6± (15.g5 I can't resist including some pretty variations which I encountered in my research. 15...♗e8 16.♕a2



16...♗d6! Computers rarely suggest this as their first choice (including here) but from my perspective, if I can get away with this maneuver then I'm playing it 17.♖h2 (17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.♖xd6 ♖xd6 19.♖xd6 ♕xc3 20.bxc3 ♖xf3 21.♕b6 ♗c4 22.♕xc4 bxc4 23.♖xd7 ♕xe4=) 17...e5! 18.♗b3 ♗ac4 19.♕f2 a5



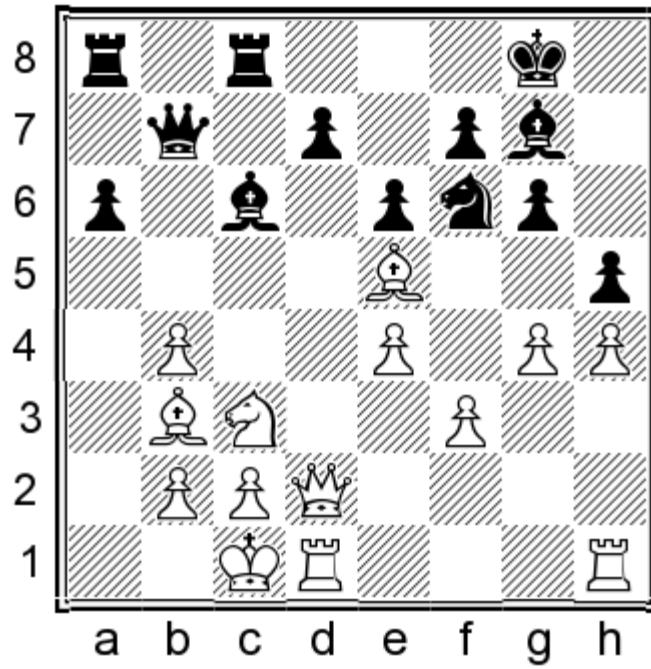
Black's pieces are the picture of harmony; in contrast, look at White's! 20.♘d5 ♕xd5 21.♖xd5 To those who complain that computers have ruined chess, I sympathize for the most part, but every now and then they win back our hearts with ingenious sequences like the following 21...♘xb2!! 22.♙xb2 ♘c4+ 23.♚a1 d6!! White's pieces are so uncoordinated that Black can take time out of his day for this calm, solidifying move, covering the c5 square and threatening ...♘c4xa3. (23...♘xa3 24.♕c5±) 24.c3 b4! 25.a4 ♖c6 26.♖b1 ♗xa4 27.♕e1 ♞fb8



Alas, at least as often as computers uncover hidden beauties for us, they ruin our fun with flawless defense, insisting that chess played correctly settles down to a draw. 28.♗e2 ♘a3 29.♖c1 ♘b5 30.♞d3 ♕f8= Apparently 0.00 but we needn't continue along these lines, as 15.♕h6 must not be permitted earlier on.)

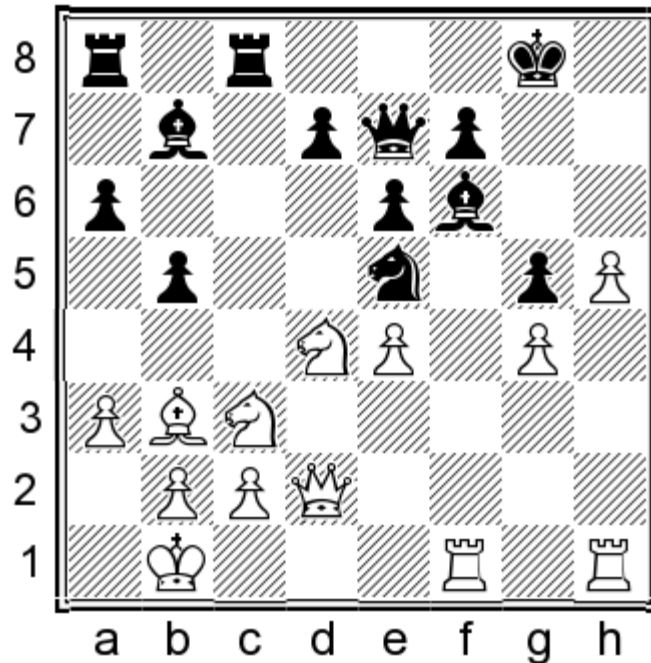
15.♕f4

a) 15.♘xc6 ♕xc6 16.♕f4 ♖b7 17.♕e5 b4! 18.axb4



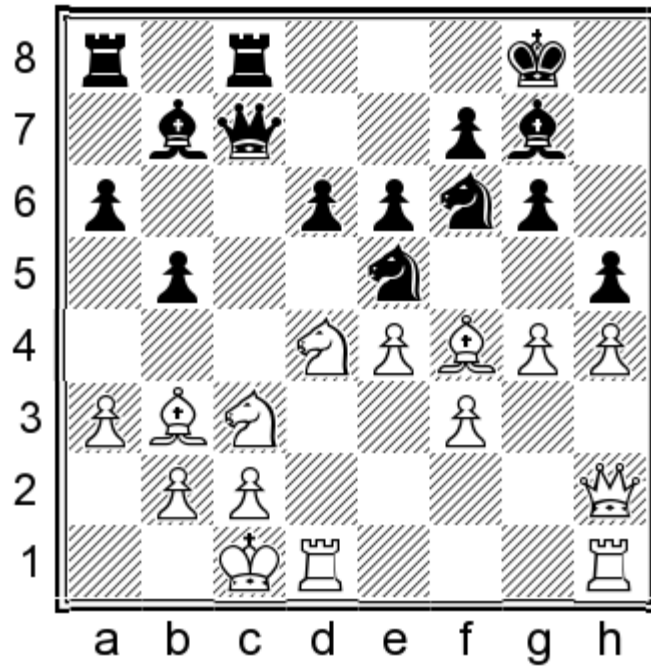
18...a5!! 19.♖f4 (19.bxa5?? ♜xa5 20.♖f4 ♜xe5! 21.♖xe5 ♘xe4+) 19...axb4 20.♙xf6 (20.♘b1 ♘xe4!! 21.♙xg7 (21.fxe4 ♙xe5 22.♖xe5 ♙xe4 23.♞h2 hxg4) 21...♘c5!! 22.♙c4 ♔xg7 23.gxh5 ♙xf3 24.♞df1 ♙xh5 25.♖xf7+ ♔h8 26.♖f6+ ♔h7=) 20...bxc3 21.bxc3 ♞a5! ♞ Black enjoys superior king safety and White's light-squared bishop is caught offside, unable to assist on the Kingside;

b) 15.♔b1 ♘e5 16.♙g5 hxg4 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6 18.h5 g5 19.fxg4 ♖c5! 20.♞df1 ♗e7⇒



Black plans to play ...♞c8-c5 and double up rooks on the c-file, threatening to sacrifice the exchange on c3 with devastating effect.;

15...♘e5 16.♗h2 d6



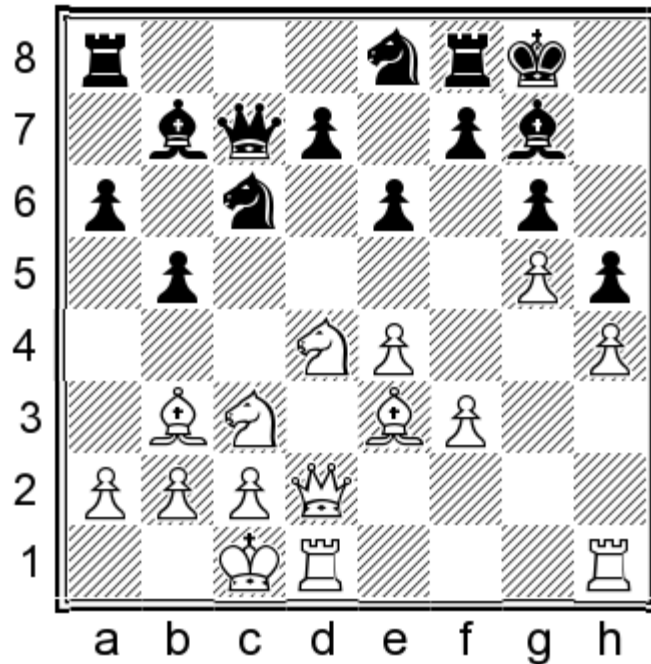
Black has a lot going for him: more central pawns, White's attack has been halted, and Black's queenside attack is just getting started. In addition to this, the tactics on e6 do not work for White.

17. ♖xe6

(17. ♗xe5 dxe5 18. ♘xe6 fxe6 19. ♗xe6+ ♔h7 20. ♗xc8 ♝xc8=)

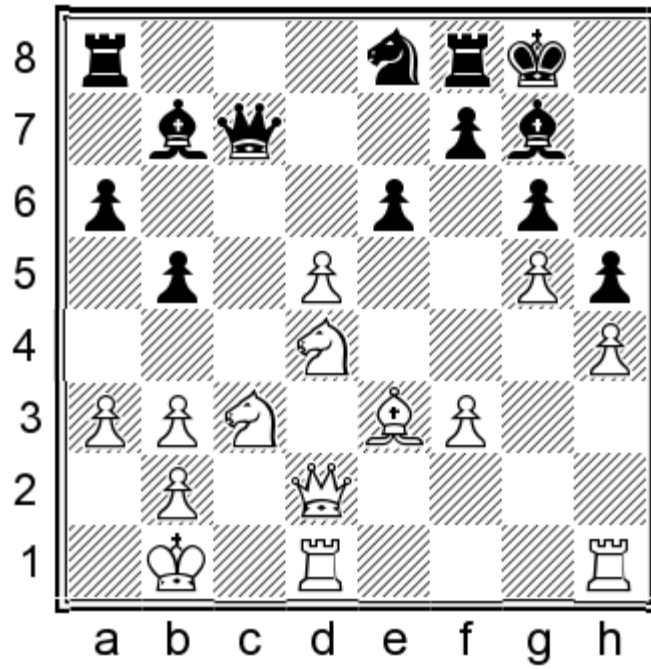
17... fxe6 18. ♗xe5 dxe5 19. g5 ♜e7 20. gxf6 ♗xf6 21. ♞h3 ♝c6 22. ♞g3 ♔h7=;

14. g5 ♘e8



15. ♘de2

a) 15. a3 ♘a5 16. ♔b1 (16. ♗a2 ♘c4 17. ♗xc4 bxc4=) 16... d5! 17. exd5 ♘xb3 18. cxb3



18...Rd8! We have seen this before; it is worth keeping this idea in mind. 19.Rc1 (19.dxe6 Qxf3) 19...Qb8=;

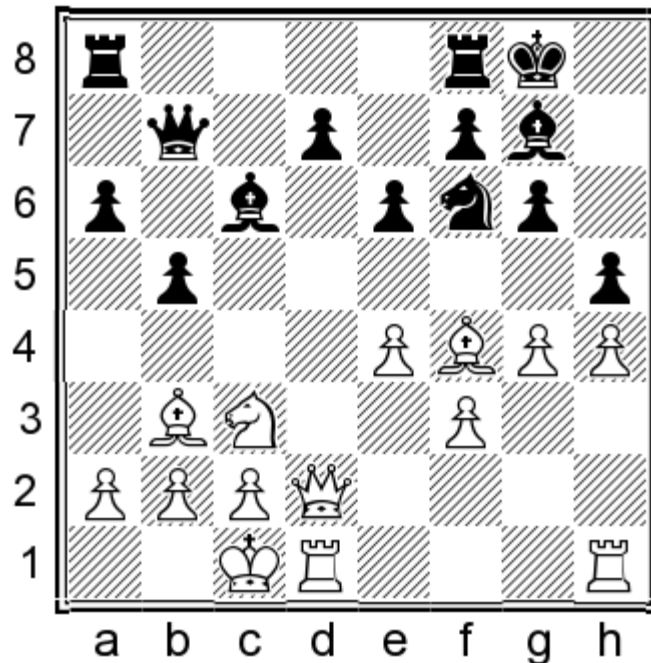
b) 15.Qxc6 Qxc6 16.Qc5 d6 17.Qxd6? (17.Qd4 Qxd4 18.Qxd4 Rb8) 17...Qxd6 18.Qxd6 Qb6! with ...a5-a4 to follow;

15...d6 16.Rhf1 Qa5 17.Qb1

(17.f4? b4 18.Qa4 Qxb3+ 19.axb3 Qxe4)

17...Rd8! Since White's pawn storm has been blocked, he is condemned to meandering piece play, whereas Black is effectively up a pawn in the center. 18.Qd4 d5 19.exd5 Qxb3 20.axb3 Qxd5=;

14.Qxc6 Qxc6 15.Qf4 Qb7



16.Qh6 a5 17.Qxg7 Qxg7 18.g5

(18.gxh5 ♖xh5 19.♖hg1 a4 20.♙d5 b4 21.♚d4+ ♔h7 22.♙xc6 dxc6 23.♗e2 c5!?)

18...♗e8 Computers take quite some time to realize that black has no problems here. 19.♙d5 b4 20.♙xc6 ♚xc6 21.♗e2 ♖d8=;

14.♖dg1 ♚d6! 15.♗xc6 ♚xd2+ 16.♙xd2 ♙xc6 17.g5 ♗e8?

### 14...♖fd8

14...♖ad8 The following is a good illustration of what not to do. 15.a3 d5?! 16.gxh5 ♖xh5 17.♗xc6 ♙xc6 18.exd5 exd5 19.♙g5 ♖d7 20.♗e2 ♙b7 21.♗d4±;

14...♖fc8?! This doesn't work here, as White hasn't weakened himself with a2-a3, so Black's queenside pawn storm is less effective than in was after 14.a3. 15.♗xc6

(15.♙f4 ♗e5 16.♚h2 d6 17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.♙xe5 dxe5 19.♙xe6+ ♔h7 20.g5 ♗e8 21.♙xc8 ♖xc8=)

15...♙xc6 16.♙f4 ♚b7 17.♙e5 a5

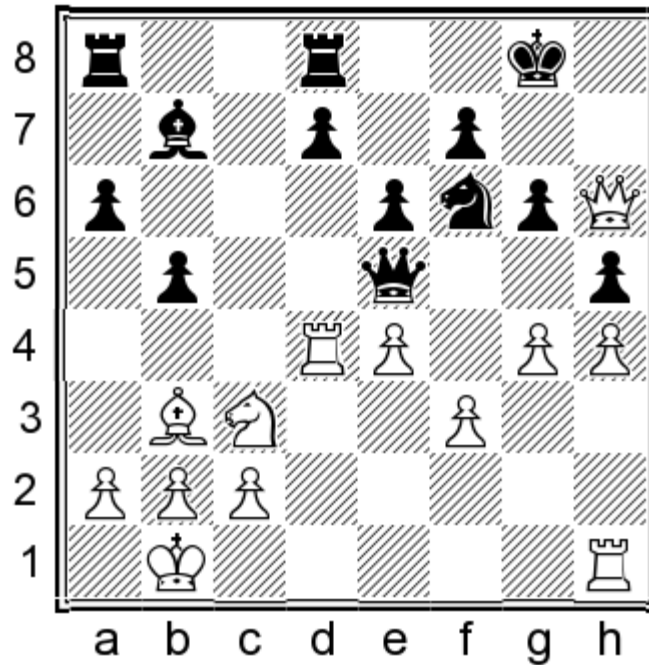
(17...b4 18.♚f4 bxc3 19.♙xf6 ♚c7 20.♚g5±)

18.♚f4 a4 19.♙xe6 dxe6 20.♙xf6 b4 21.♙xg7 ♔xg7 22.♗e2±

### 15.g5

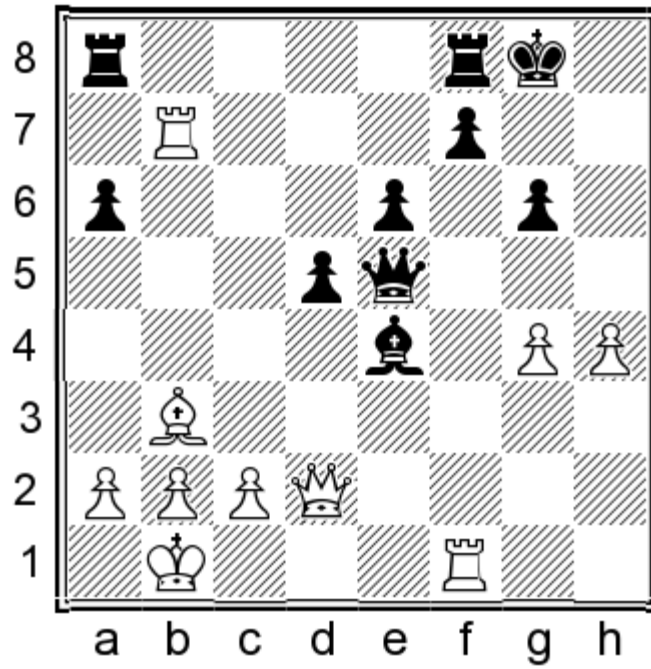
We are in unexplored territory here, so I can only guess what White's likely choice would be in an over-the-board situation. I suspect that the urge to 'do something' would be overwhelming, and White would be the first to cave in. These days we tend to think the onus is on White to initiate complications. In the early days of chess, they used to think that the more talented player has a moral responsibility to initiate aggression!

15.♙h6 White invites simplifications which yield no advantage 15...♙xh6 16.♚xh6 ♗xd4 17.♖xd4 ♚e5!



18.gxh5

(18.♚d2 hxg4 19.fxg4 b4 20.♖xb4 ♗xe4 21.♗xe4 ♙xe4 22.♖f1 d5 23.♖b7 ♖f8=)



The computer gives 'zeroes' ("0.00") but I would prefer Black in a practical setting because Black has a better Bishop, more central pawns, and potential for taking over the initiative with ...a5-a4, whereas attempts by White to 'do something' seem to only make his position worse. 24.g5?! a5 25.a4 ♖ab8 26.♗b5 ♗xb5 27.axb5 ♖c7 With ...♗f8-b8 to follow.)

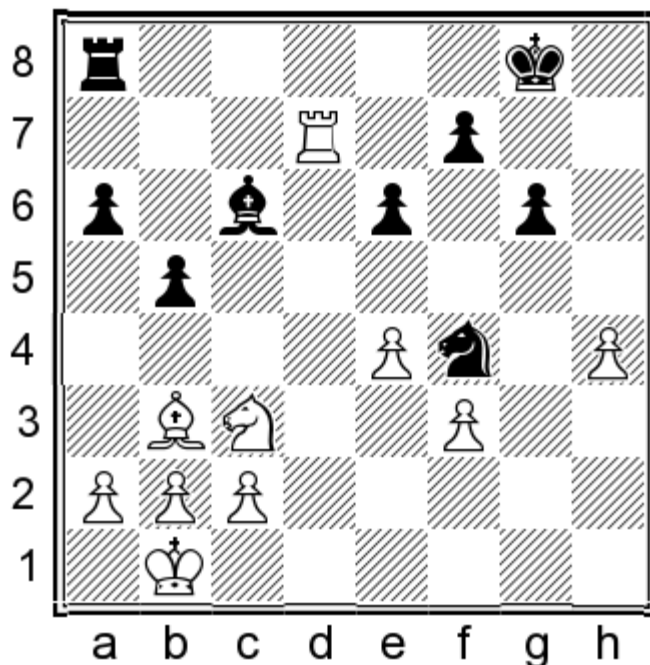
18...♗xh5 19.♖hd1 ♕f4!

(19...♗c6 Black should be able to hold here with accurate play but the position is a little annoying to defend because Black lacks a constructive plan. This is why I recommend forcing matters by liquidating with 19...♕f4. 20.♗e2 a5 21.a3 b4 (21...♗e8 22.♗g1 ♖ab8 23.f4 ♕g7 24.♕g5 d5 25.e5±) 22.a4 ♗e8=)

20.♕xf4

(20.♕g5 ♗c6 21.♗e2 ♕xg5 22.hxg5 a5 23.a3 ♗f8=)

20...♗xf4 21.♗xd7 ♗xd7 22.♗xd7 ♗c6=



It is not necessary to memorize the precise way Black draws in the ensuing variations; I include them just for the sake of completeness, but without comments. It is enough to recognize that White's h4 pawn is bound to eventually capitulate to Black's ...♔g8-g7 and ...♖a8-h8 or ...♘f4-g2, and White's Bishop remains frozen, missing in action on b3.

23.♖c7

(23.♖d6 ♖c8=; 23.♖d2 ♔f8! 24.♘e2 ♘xe2 25.♖xe2 ♔e7 26.♖g2 ♖h8 27.♖g4 e5=)

23...♙e8 24.e5

**a)** 24.♖c5 b4 25.♘d1 (25.♘a4 ♙xa4 26.♙xa4 ♔g7=) 25...♙b5 26.c4 bxc3 27.♘xc3 ♙d3+ 28.♔c1 (28.♙c2 ♔g7 29.♙xd3 ♘xd3 30.♖a5 ♖h8 31.♖xa6 ♖xh4=) 28...♖d8=;

**b)** 24.♔c1 ♖d8=;

**c)** 24.a4 ♘g2 25.axb5 axb5=;

24...♖d8 25.a4

(25.a3 a5 26.a4 bxa4 27.♘xa4 ♘g2=)

25...bxa4

(25...♘g2?! It is inspiring that despite such an error Black can still hold; such margin for error is important to account for when choosing a repertoire. 26.a5! ♘xh4 27.f4 ♘g2 28.♖a7 ♘xf4 29.♘e4 ♙c6 30.♘d6 ♙d7 31.♖xa6 g5 32.♘e4 ♘g6 33.♘xg5 ♘xe5=)

26.♙xa4

(26.♙c4 ♘g2 27.♙a6 ♘xh4 28.♙b7 ♖d7 29.♖xd7 ♙xd7 30.♔a2 g5 31.♘e4 ♔g7 32.♘xg5 ♘g6 33.♔a3 ♘xe5 34.♔b4 f5 35.♔c5 ♔f6 36.f4 ♘g6 37.♘h3 e5=; 26.♘xa4 ♘g2 27.♘c5 ♘xh4 28.f4 ♘g2 29.♘a6 ♘xf4=)

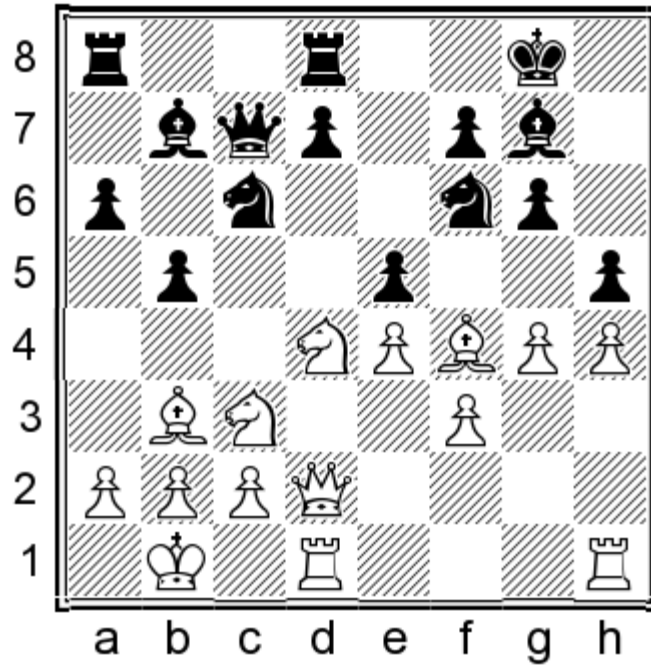
26...♙xa4 27.♘xa4 ♖d1+

(27...♘g2 28.♖c4 a5 (28...♖d5 29.♖c8+ ♔g7 30.c4 ♖xe5 31.c5±) 29.c3 ♖d3 (29...♔g7 30.b4 axb4 31.cxb4 ♘e3 32.♖c3 ♘d5 33.♖b3±) 30.b4 axb4 31.cxb4 ♖xf3 32.♔b2 ♘e3 33.♖e4 ♘d5 34.b5 f5 35.exf6 ♖f5 36.♔a3 (36.♖xe6 ♘c7=) 36...♘xf6 37.♖xe6 ♔f7 38.♖b6 ♘d7 39.♖b7 ♔e6 40.♘c3 ♖h5 41.♖c7 ♖xh4 42.b6 ♘xb6 43.♖c6+ ♔f5 44.♖xb6=)

28.♔a2 ♖h1 29.♘c5

(29.b4 ♖xh4 30.♞a7 ♜d5 31.c3 ♜xb4+ 32.cxb4 ♖xb4 33.♜c5 ♞f4 34.♞xa6 ♞xf3=)

29...♞xh4 30.♜xa6 ♜d5 31.♞c8+ ♔g7 32.♜c7 ♜e7 33.♜e8+ ♔f8 34.♞a8 ♞f4 35.♜f6+ ♔g7 36.♞a3 ♜c6 37.♜g4 g5=;  
15.♞f4 e5



16.g5

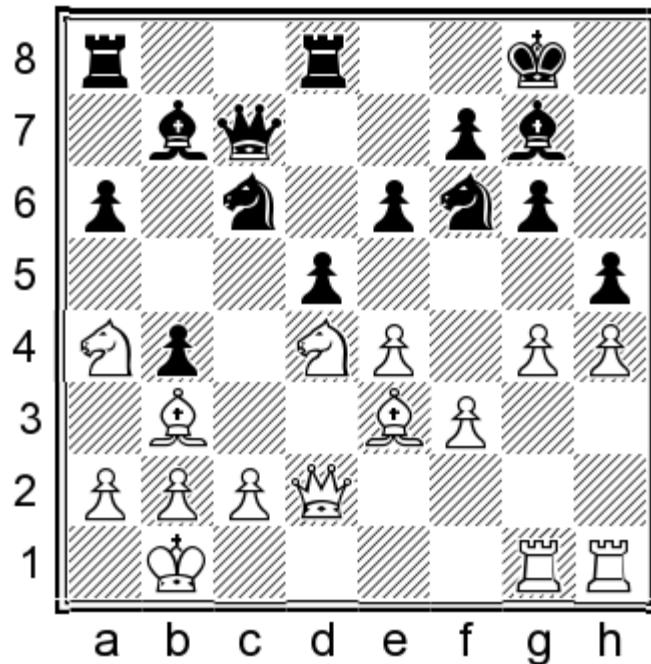
(16.♜f5 gxf5 17.♞g5 ♜a5 18.♞xf6 ♞xf6 19.♞d5 f4 20.g5 ♞g7 21.g6 ♔f8 22.♞xf7 ♞ac8+)

16...♜xe4!

(16...♜xd4 17.♞xd4 d6 18.♞d3 ♜xe4 19.♜xe4 exf4 20.♜f6+ ♔h8 21.♞he1∞)

17.♜xe4 exf4±;

15.♞dg1 b4 16.♜a4 d5!



17.gxh5

(17.g5 ♖xe4! 18.fxe4 dxe4 19.c3 bxc3 20.bxc3 ♖a5=)

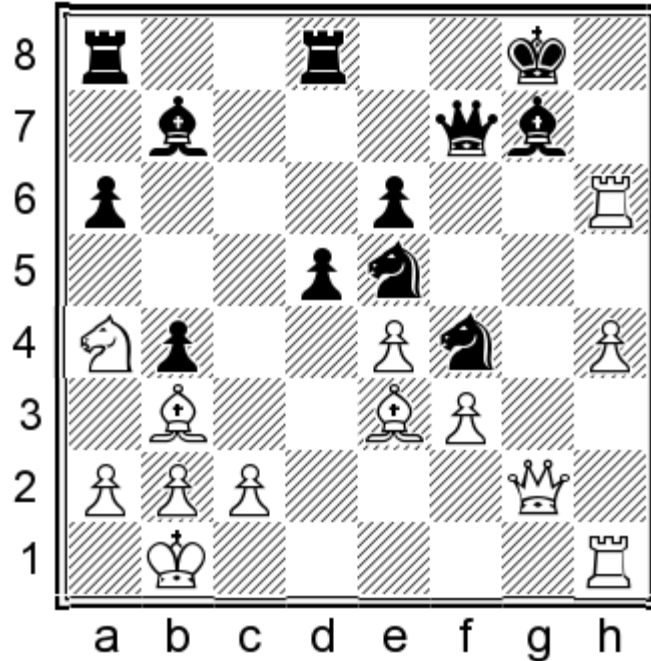
17...♖xh5 18.♖xe6

(18.♞xg6 fxg6 19.♖xe6 ♞e5 20.♖xd8 ♞xd8 21.♙xd5+ ♔h8=; 18.♖c5 ♖xd4 19.♙xd4 ♙xd4 20.♞xd4 dxe4 21.♞xb4 ♙d5 22.♖xe4 ♙xe4 23.fxe4 ♖g3 24.♞h3 ♖e2 25.♞f1 ♖g3 26.♞g1=)

18...fxe6 19.♞xg6 ♞f7 20.♞g2

(20.♞g5 ♖e5±; 20.♞xe6 ♖a5±)

20...♖e5 21.♞h6 ♖f4



22.♙xf4 ♞xf4 23.♞xe6 ♞xf3 24.♞g1

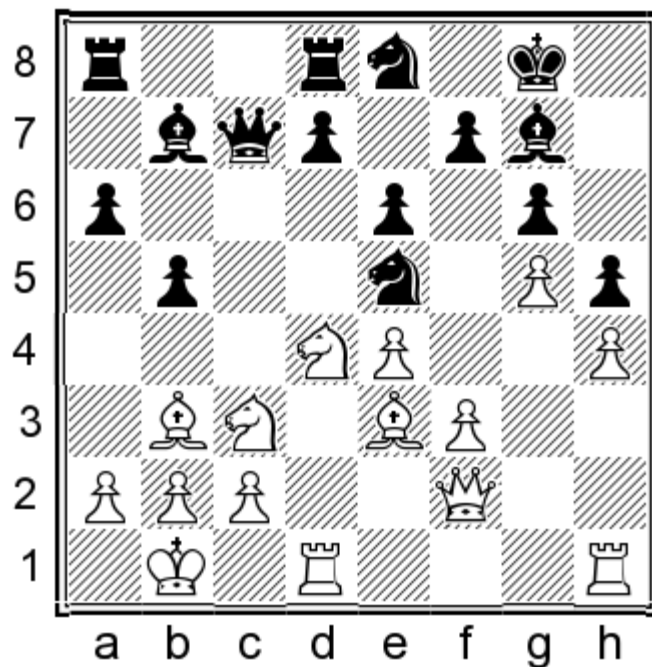
(24.♞g1 ♞xg2 25.♞xg2 ♔f8 26.♞f2+ ♔g8 27.♞g2 ♔f8=)

24...♞e8 25.♖c5

(25.♞b6 ♞a7 26.h5 ♔h8 27.h6 ♙f8±)

25...♙c6=

15...♖e8 16.♞f2 ♖e5

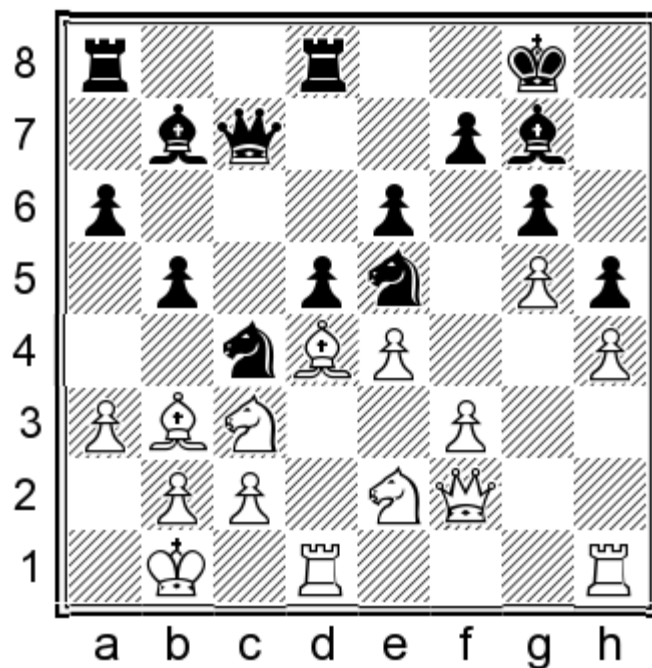


Around now White will start to regret caving under the pressure to ‘do something’ with 15.g5.

17. ♖de2

17. ♕f4 ♜d6! ⇒ White’s kingside attack is distant memory, and the fun is just getting started for Black.;

17. a3 ♜d6 18. ♜de2 ♜dc4 19. ♕d4 d5!



20. ♕xc4 ♜xc4 21. ♕xg7 ♜xg7 22. exd5 ♕xd5 23. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 24. ♜xd5 exd5 25. ♖d4+ ♖e5 26. ♖xe5+ ♜xe5 27. ♜d4 ♜c8 28. c3 ♜c6=;

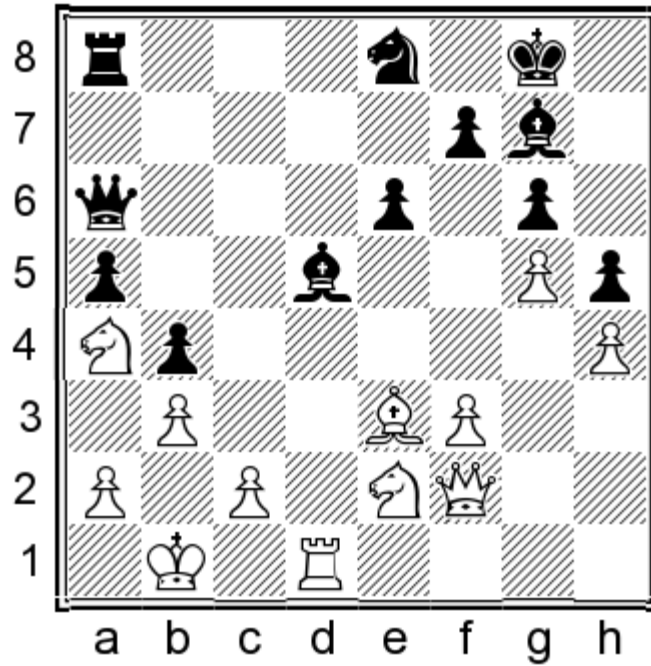
17. ♖g3 ♜d6 ⇒

17... ♜c4 18. ♕xc4

18. ♕d4 d5 19. ♕xc4 ♕xd4 20. ♖xd4 dxc4 21. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 ↗

**18... ♖xc4 19. ♕d4**

19. ♖d2 d5 20. ♖hd1 a5! 21. exd5 b4 22. b3 ♖a6 23. ♗a4 ♖xd5 24. ♖xd5 ♕xd5



25. ♗b6 ♖b8 26. ♗xd5 exd5 27. ♕d4

(27. ♖xd5? ♗c7 28. ♖d3 ♗b5+)

27... ♕xd4 28. ♗xd4 ♗d6=

**19... ♕xd4 20. ♖xd4**

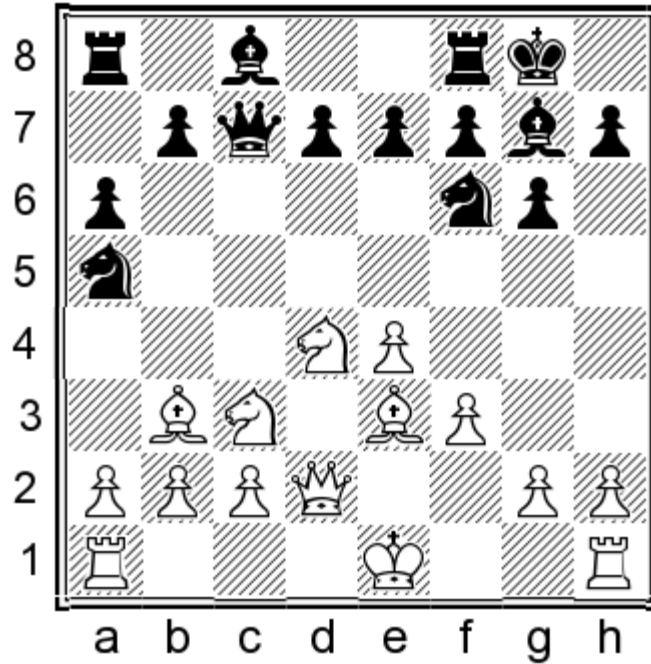
20. ♗xd4 ♖c5! 21. ♖d2 ♗d6 22. ♗b3 ♖xf2 23. ♖xf2 ♗c4 24. ♗c5 ♕c6=;

20. ♖xd4 ♖c7! =

**20... ♖c5 21. f4 ♗d6! ↗**

## Appendix

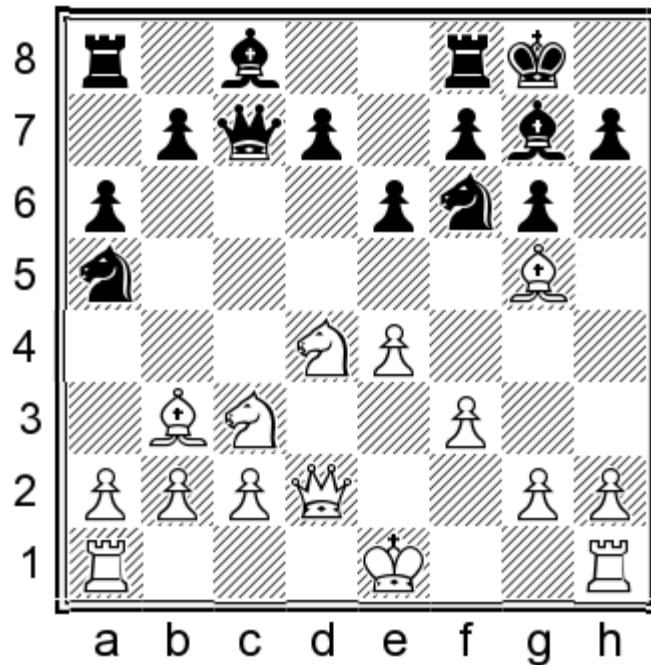
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♖c6 5.♗c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗b3 a6 9.f3 ♖c7 10.♖d2 ♗a5



This may (with further research) turn out to be playable (and if my mainline runs into problems this is a serious fallback to research further) but I prefer to continue developing before committing the knight. In the early stages of developing this system I tried out all kinds of move orders, and ultimately realized that Black should keep the knight on c6 so as to deter White's ♗e3-h6 as long as possible (when ...♗c6xd4 would win a piece).

### 11.0-0-0

11.♗g5 e6!



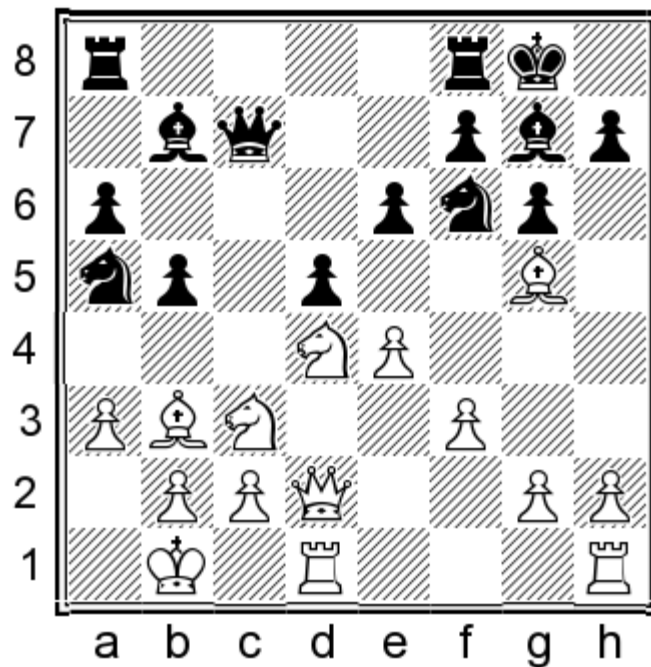
The core theme of my system. 12.0-0-0

(12.0-0 b5 13.♞fe1 d6 14.a3 ♞b8 15.♞ed1 ♜c4 16.♙xc4 bxc4 17.♞ab1 ♙b7 18.♜de2 d5)

12...b5 13.a3 ♙b7 14.♞b1

(14.♙a2 ♜c4 15.♙xc4 ♞xc4 16.♜b3 a5 17.♞d3 ♞xd3 18.♞xd3 b4)

14...d5!

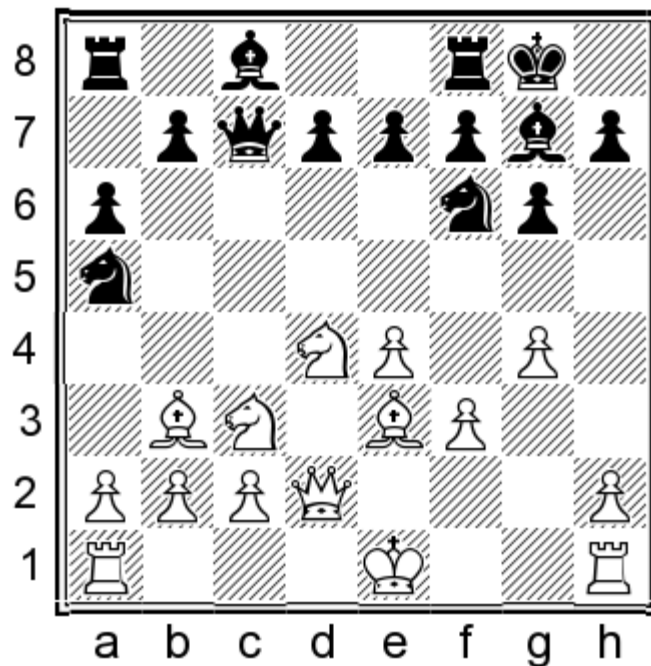


15.exd5

(15.♙xf6 ♙xf6 16.exd5 ♜xb3 17.♜xb3 ♙xc3 18.bxc3 ♙xd5+)

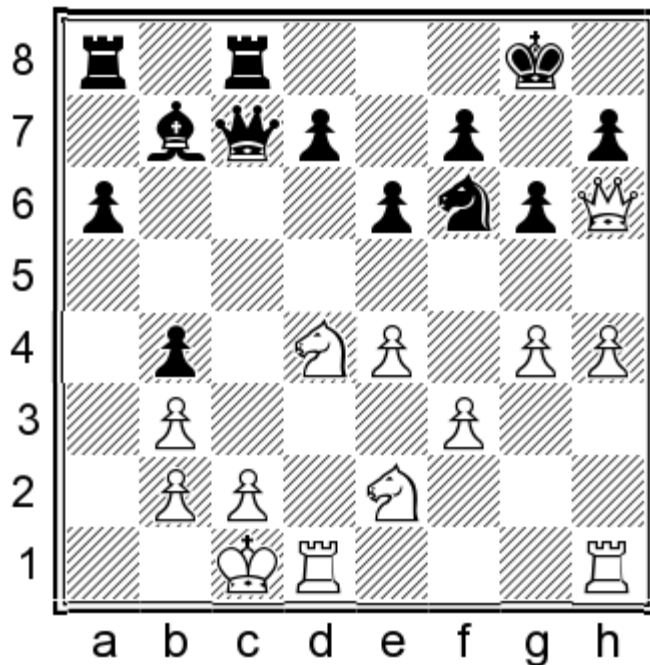
15...♜xb3 16.♜xb3 ♜xd5+

11.g4



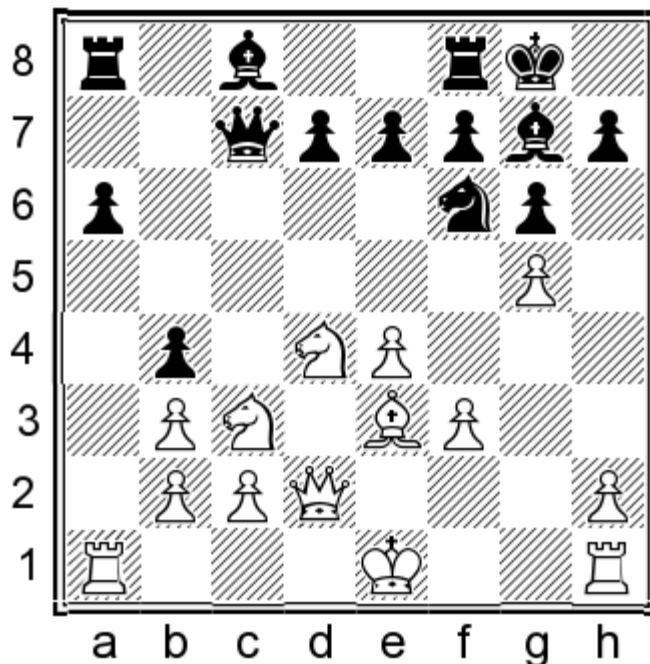
11...b5!

(11...e6?! If Black is intent on this 10...♖a5 variation then he should prefer 11...b5 instead. 12.h4 (12.0-0-0 b5 13.♙h6 ♙xh6 14.♚xh6 b4 15.♘ce2 ♙b7 16.h4 ♘xb3+ 17.axb3 ♖fc8∞



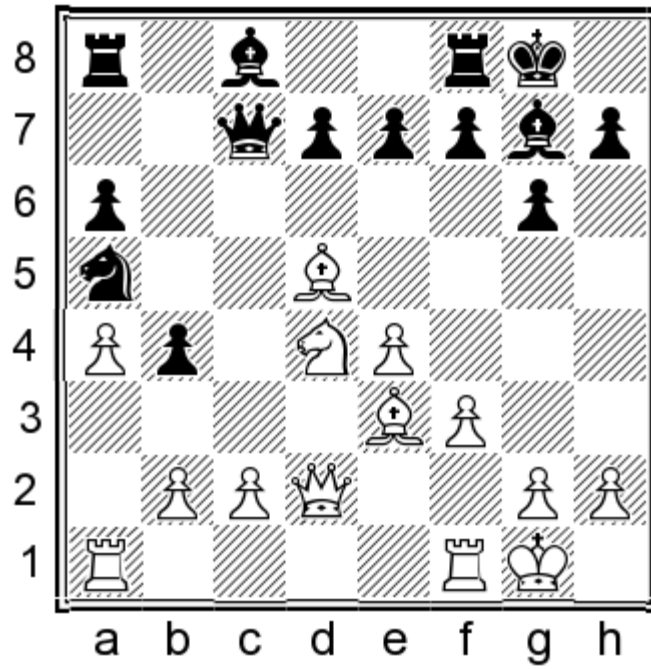
18.♞d2 (18.c4 bxc3 19.♘xc3 d5⌘) 18...♙xe4 19.fxe4 ♘xe4 20.h5 (20.♖f1 d5⌘) 20...g5∞) 12...h5 13.0-0-0 b5 14.♙h6±  
 Again, Black wishes his knight were on c6 to deter this move.)

12.g5 ♘xb3 13.axb3 b4⇌



Black is just in time: he will play ♘h5 only after White's knight moves from c3 (and therefore cannot reach d5).;

11.0-0 I include this move, because computers endorse it, but I can't imagine humans combining f3 with 0-0. 11...b5  
 12.a4 b4 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.♙xd5



14...♙b7

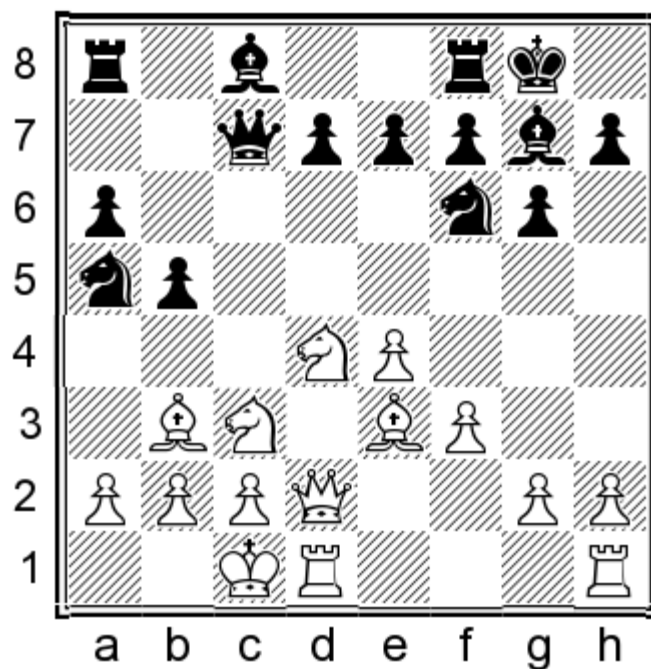
(14...♜b8 Black may prefer this. 15.♞ac1 e6 16.♙a2 ♘c4 17.♙xc4 ♜xc4 18.b3 ♜c7 19.c3 bxc3 20.♞xc3 ♜a5=)

15.♜xb4

(15.♙xb7 ♜xb7; ♞15.b3 e6 16.♙xb7 ♜xb7)

15...♙xd5 16.exd5 ♜ab8 17.♜c3 ♜fc8 Black is calling all the shots. In most openings, White can get away with a few inaccuracies, especially with innocent developing moves, but the price of an inaccuracy is quite high for White in this system.

11...b5



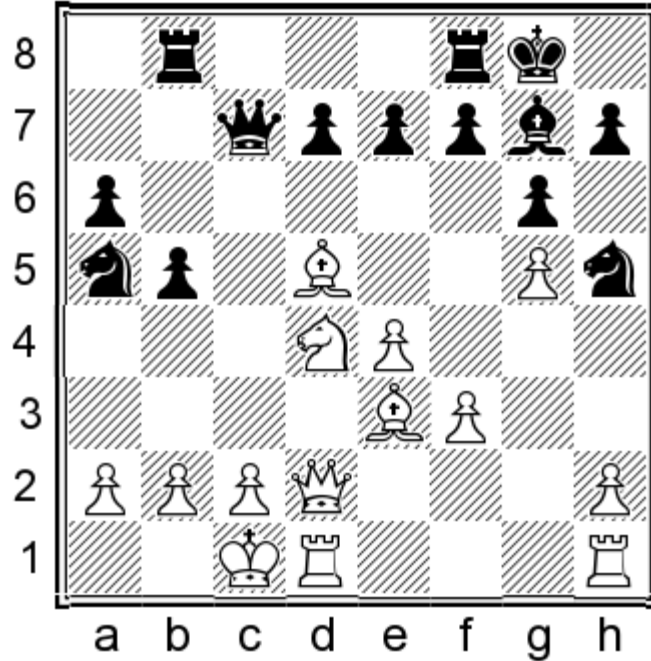
## 12.h4!

12.g4 Black generally has three ways of meeting this move, all intended to prevent White from playing g4-g5 and  $\text{h3-d5}$ :

- 1) ... $\text{c8-b7}$
- 2) ... $\text{e7-e6}$
- 3) wait for g4-g5 and meet it with ... $\text{b5-b4}$ .

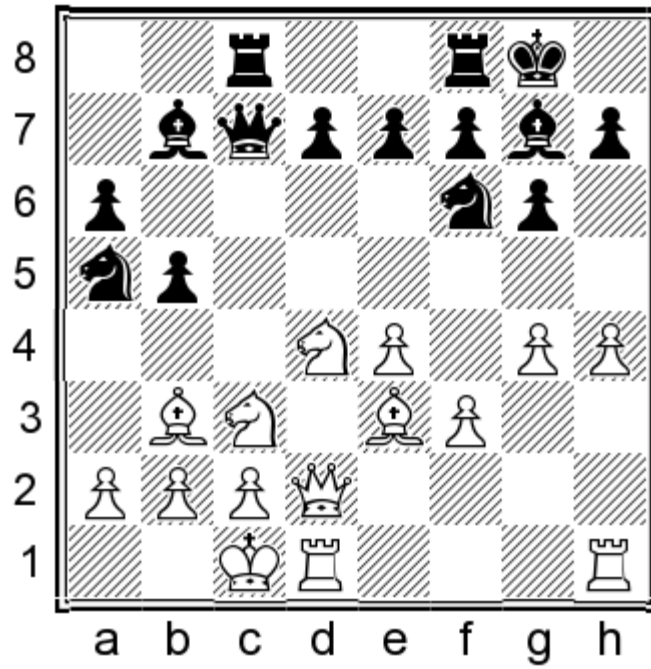
Concrete factors determine which of these is the best in each particular situation. 12... $\text{b7}$  13.h4

(13.g5?!  $\text{h5}$  14. $\text{d5}$   $\text{cxd5}$  15. $\text{cxd5}$   $\text{ab8}$ )



A sample continuation may be... 16. $\text{b1}$   $\text{c4}$  17. $\text{xc4}$   $\text{bxc4}$  18.c3  $\text{b7}$  19. $\text{a1}$   $\text{fb8}$  20. $\text{b1}$  a5 21. $\text{e2}$  a4 22.a3  $\text{b3}$  23. $\text{a2}$  (23. $\text{c1}$   $\text{xc3}$ ) 23...e6! 24. $\text{g3}$   $\text{xcg3}$  25.hxg3  $\text{b8b5}$  26. $\text{h2}$   $\text{d6}$  27. $\text{hxh7+}$   $\text{f8+}$  White is defenseless against the combined threats of ... $\text{g7xc3}$  and infiltration with ... $\text{d6-d3}$  (threatening ... $\text{xb2+}$ .)

13... $\text{ac8}$ !

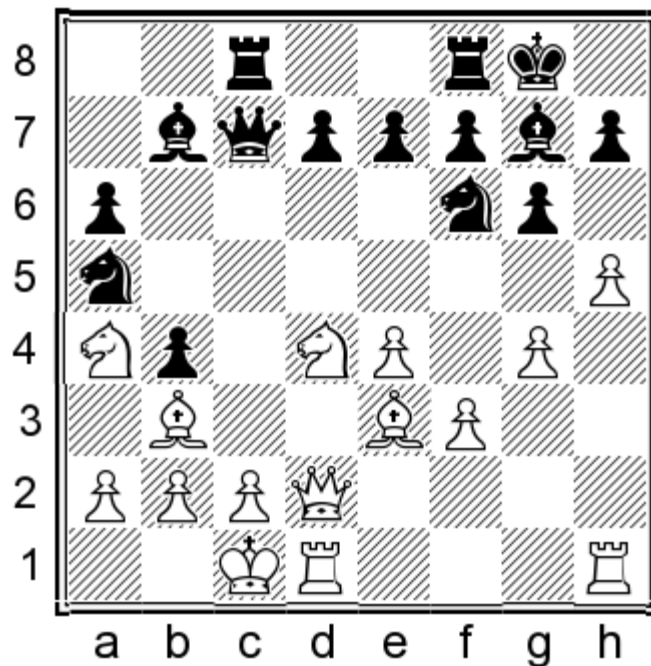


An isolated instance where Black can allow White to play h4-h5.

(13...h5?! Black would ideally like to prevent White's h4-h5 but since Black's knight is on a5, White now has 14.♙h6! → White threatens ♜d4-f5, so the following is forced 14...e6 15.♞he1! ♜xb3+ (15...d6?? 16.♙xe6+-) 16.axb3 d6 17.gxh5 ♜xh5 18.♙xg7 ♔xg7 19.♞g1 ♕h7 20.♞g5± Black is on the defensive. Things aren't so dire, but we can do better (13...♞ac8!).)

14.♕b1

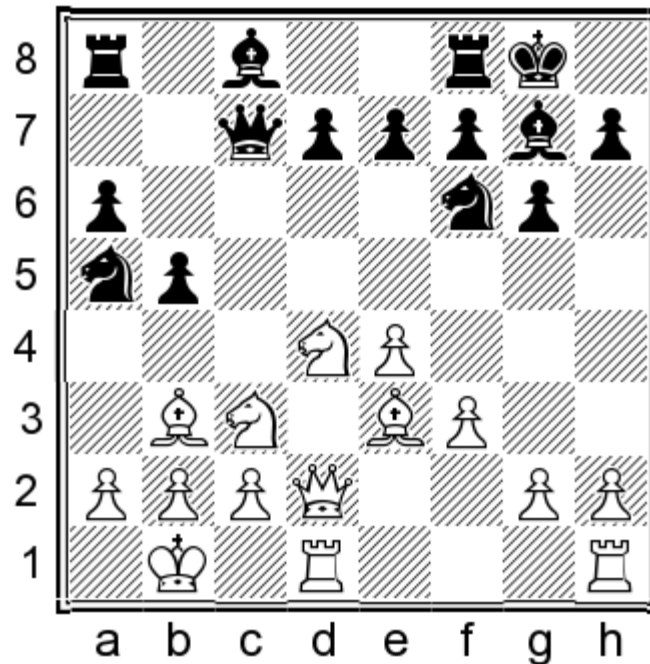
(14.h5?! b4 15.♜a4



15...♜xe4!! 16.fxe4 ♙xe4 17.hxg6 ♜xb3+ 18.axb3 fxg6 19.♞h2? e5+-)

14...e5! 15.♜de2 d5! 16.g5 ♜xb3 17.axb3 d4 18.gxf6 dxe3 19.♞d6 ♙h8 20.♞xc7 ♞xc7 21.♞d6 ♞fc8 22.h5 ♞c6 23.♞d7 ♞6c7 24.♞d6=;

12.♖b1

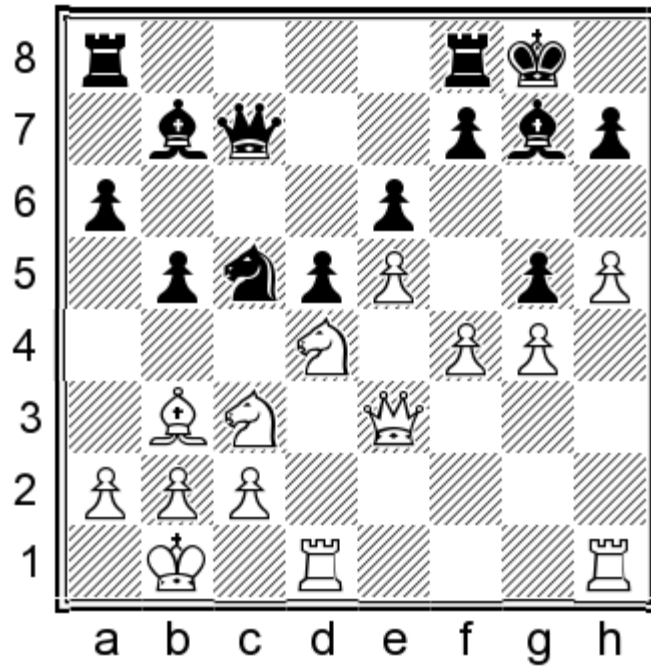


12...♗b7

(12...♗c4?! This should 'feel' wrong; Black needs to harness more potential energy before striking. 13.♗xc4 bxc4 14.g4→)

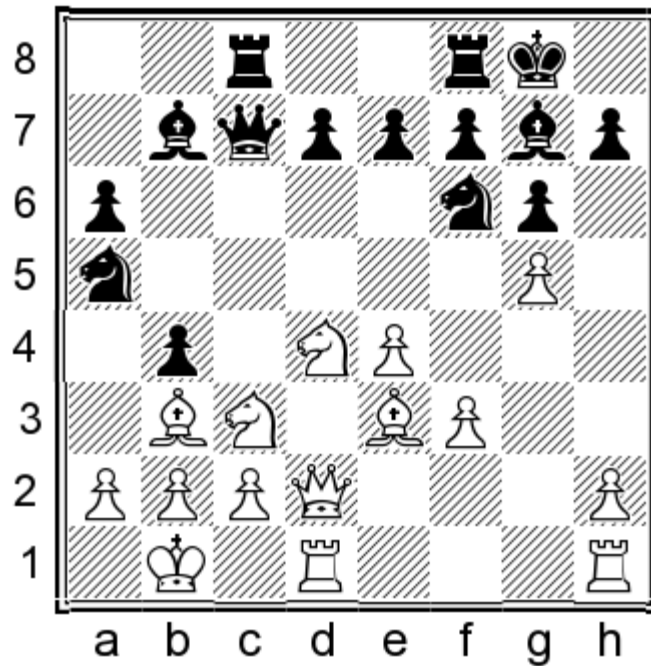
13.a3

(13.g4 The position is very rich, and Black has many possibilities. I'll just show a couple of them. 13...♖ac8 (13...e6 14.h4 (14.♗de2?! d5 15.g5 ♗h5 16.exd5 b4 17.♗e4 exd5 18.♗xd5 (18.♗c5? d4! 19.♗xd4 ♗xf3 20.♗xg7 ♗xg7 21.♗d7 ♖ad8 22.♖hf1 ♗xb3 23.axb3 ♖xd7 24.♗xd7 ♗xd7 25.♖xd7 ♗xe2) 18...♖ad8 19.♗f4 ♗b6 20.♗e3 ♗b5 21.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 22.♗d6+ ♖xd6 23.♗xd6 ♗c4 24.♗c7+ ♗g8 25.♗c5 ♗a3+ 26.♗c1 ♗xe2 27.♗xf8 ♗e3+ 28.♖d2 ♗xb2+ 29.♗xb2 ♗xd2 30.♗h6 ♗d4+ 31.♗b3 ♗d5+ 32.♗b2 ♗d4+ 33.♗b3=) 14...d5! 15.e5 (15.g5 ♗h5 16.exd5 ♗xb3 17.cxb3 b4 18.♗e4 ♗xd5) 15...♗d7 16.f4 ♗c4 17.♗e1 (17.♗xc4 dxc4 18.♖hf1 ♗c5) 17...♗c5 18.h5 ♗xe3 19.♗xe3 g5!!)



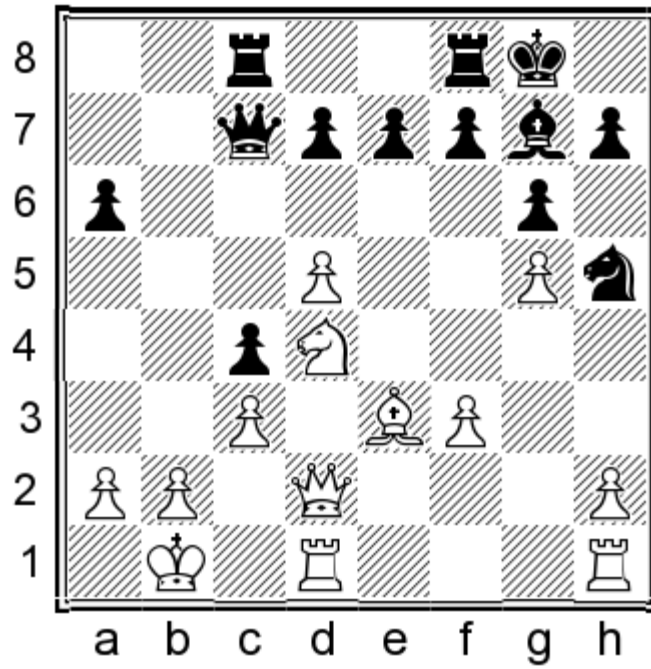
) White has two main options now.

a) 14.g5 ♖h5 (14...b4



Things get pretty insane in this line. Fortunately it isn't necessary for Black to go into this. 15.♖f5!

(15.♖a4 ♖xe4! 16.fxe4 ♗xe4 17.♖c1 ♖xb3 18.axb3 ♗xh1 19.♖xh1 f6=) 15...bxc3 16.♖xe7+ ♖h8 17.♖f2 ♖h5 18.♗b6 (18.♖xc8 ♖xc8) 18...♖e5 19.♖xc8 ♖xb3 20.axb3 ♗xc8=) 15.♖d5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♖c4 17.♗xc4 bxc4 18.c3



18...e5! This is a thematic push in this line, made possible by Black holding back the d7 pawn. 19.dxe6 fxe6;

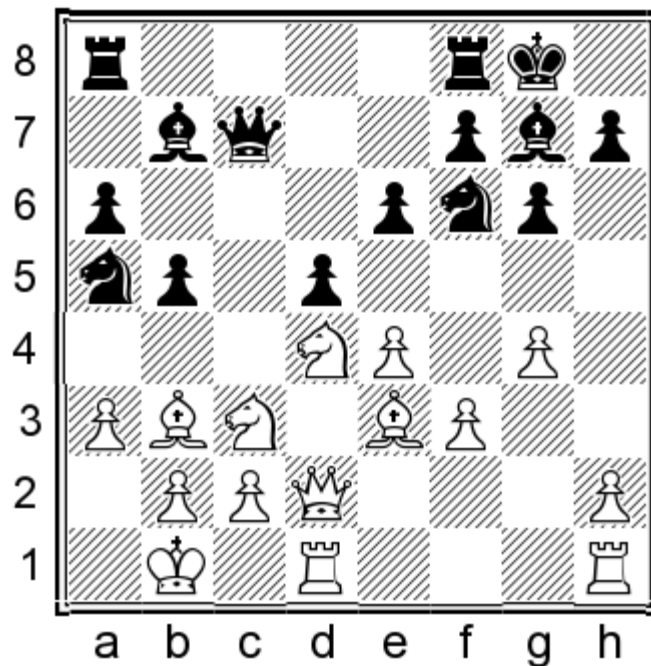
**b)** 14.h4 e5! 15.♘de2 ♘xb3 16.cxb3 (16.axb3 d5 17.exd5 ♘xd5) 16...b4 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 e4 19.♙c1 ♚b7±; 13...e6!

(13...♙ad8 14.♚f2 ♚b8!?)

**a)** 14...d5 15.♘f5 dxe4 16.♙b6∞;

**b)** 14...♘c4 15.♙xc4 bxc4 (15...♚xc4 16.♘b3±) 16.♘de2±);

14.g4 d5!



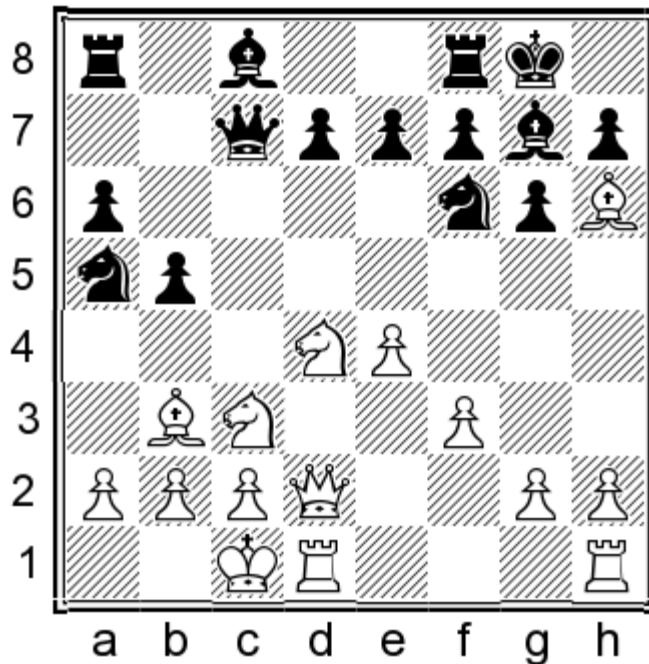
15.e5

(15.g5 ♘h5 16.exd5 ♘xb3 17.cxb3 ♙ad8! 18.♚c2 (18.dxe6? ♙xf3+) 18...exd5±)

15...♖d7 16.f4 ♘c4 17.♙xc4 dxc4 18.♗hf1 ♘c5⇌;

12.♙g5 ♙b7⇌;

12.♙h6



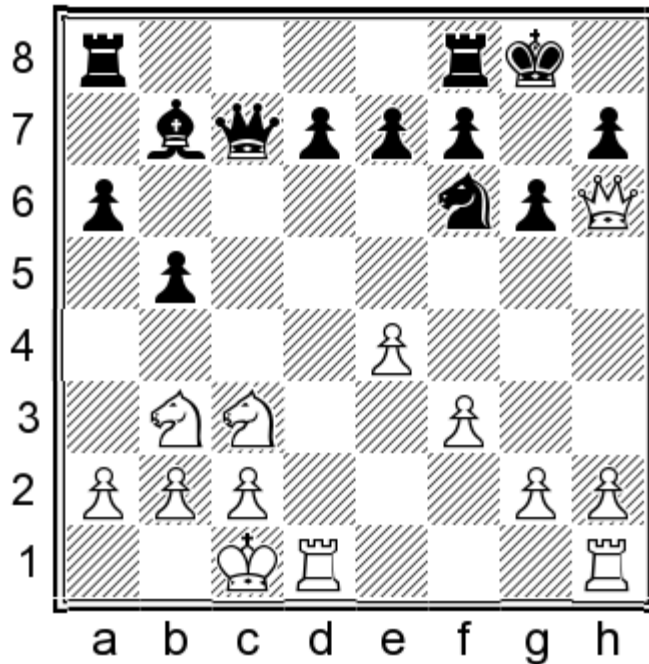
12...♘xb3+

(12...e5?? 13.♘f5+- Beware of this!; 12...♘c4? Too soon, Black needs to harness more potential before striking 13.♙xc4 ♙xh6 14.♗xh6 bxc4 15.h4+- White is too fast, Black has no counterplay.)

13.♘xb3

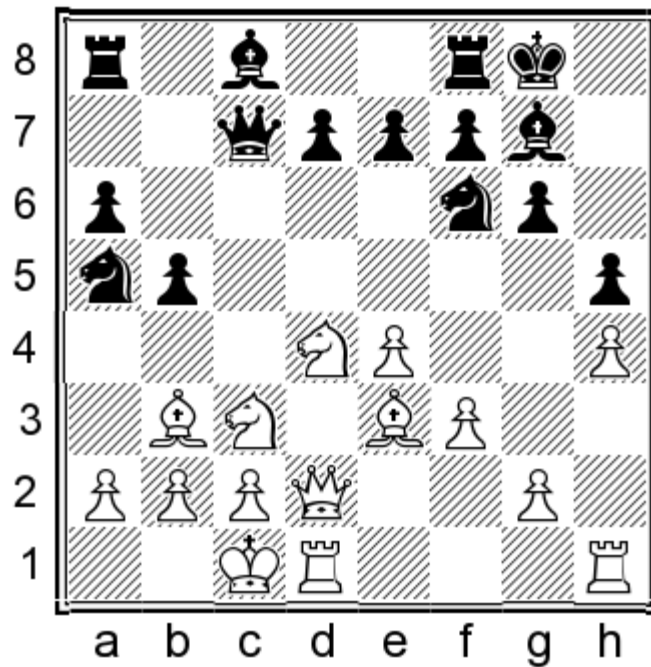
(13.axb3 ♙xh6 14.♗xh6 b4 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 e5! 17.♘f5 gxf5 18.♗g5+ ♔h8 19.♗f6+ ♔g8=)

13...♙xh6 14.♗xh6 ♙b7⇌



Black will continue ...♖fc8, ...a5, ...b4, etc.

**12...h5**



**13.♗h6!**

This poses Black the most problems when the knight is on a5.

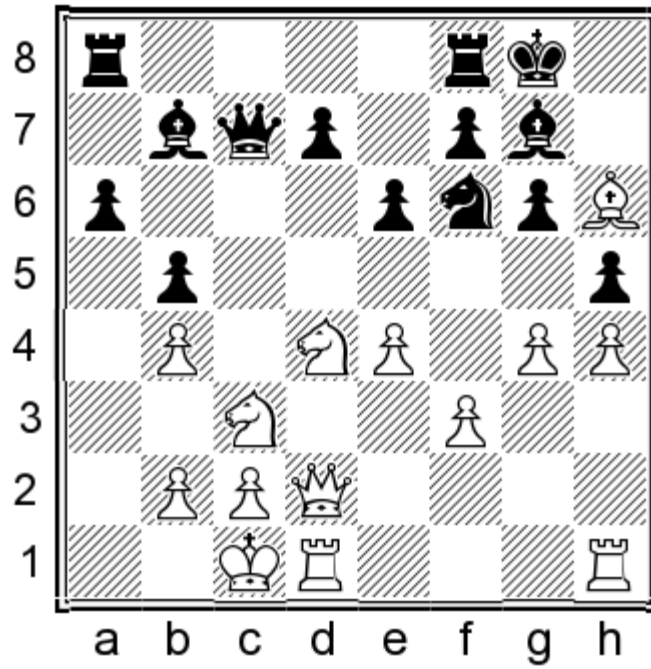
13.g4!? ♗b7 14.♗h6→

(14.g5 ♖e8 15.♗b1 ♖d6! 16.♖d5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♖ac8 18.♗d3 e6 19.♗b3 ♖dc4 20.♗c1 d5! 21.exd5 ♖fd8 22.♖xe6 fxe6 23.♗xg6 ♖a3+ 24.♗a1 ♖xb3+ 25.cxb3 ♗c2→)

**13...♖xb3+ 14.axb3**

14.♖xb3 ♗xh6 15.♗xh6 ♗b7 16.a3 ♖ac8 17.♗b1 a5⇌

**14...♗b7 15.g4 e6 16.b4!±**

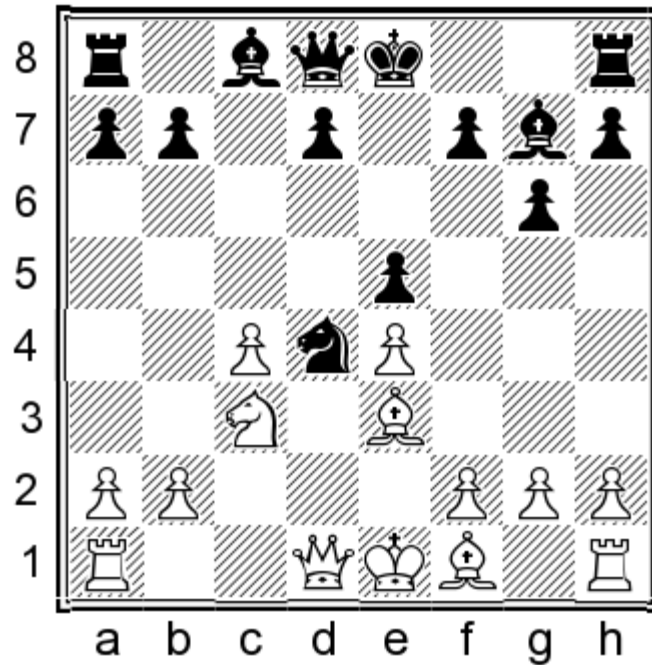


Such positions are to be avoided: White dominates on all sides of the board, which will be evident after  $\text{♞d4-b3-a5(c5)}$ .

# CHAPTER 4

## MAROCZY BIND: BREYER VARIATION

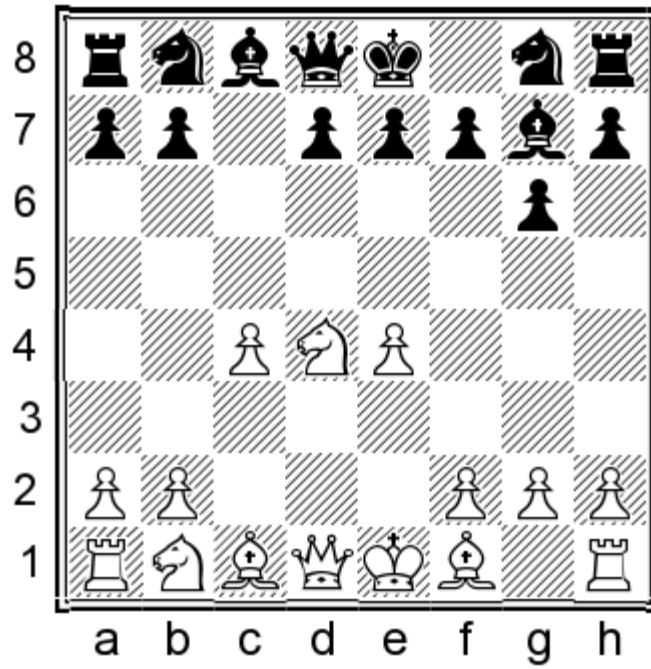
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♖xg4 ♗xd4 9.♖d1 e5



### Contents

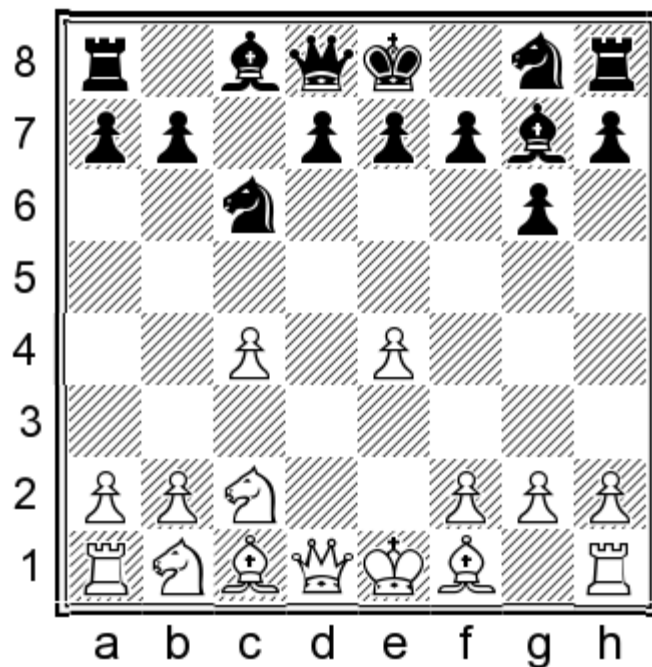
- 1. 6.♗c2 ♗f6
- 2. 6.♗c2 e6
- 3. 10.♙e2
- 4. 10.♗b5 0-0?!
- 5. 10.♗b5 d6!N 11.sidelines
- 6. 10.♗b5 d6!N 11.♖d2
- 7. 10.♙d3 d6
- Appendix. 10.♙d3 0-0

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4



We have here the starting position of the Maroczy Bind, named after Hungarian master Geza Maroczy (1870–1951). Maroczy was one of the best players in the world in the early 1900s, and was even set to play a World Championship match with Emanuel Lasker in 1906, but for various political reasons the match did not end up taking place. He was an engineer by training, and a financial auditor by profession. Capablanca, near the end of his life in the early 1940s, said of Maroczy that “with the exception of Botvinnik and Keres, Maróczy in his time was superior to all the other young masters of today.” Maroczy popularized White’s setup in his capacity as a chess journalist, but there are no published games of his where he played the system with White. In fact, the first recorded game in the Maroczy Bind is Swiderski-Maroczy, 1904, where Maroczy defended the Black side of the Accelerated Dragon against the (to be named) Maroczy Bind. In order to combat the Maroczy Bind, Black must follow a dark-squares strategy. Notice that in asserting the central c4/e4 ‘clamp’, White has forever denied the (dark) d4-square protection from a pawn. We will see in the subchapter 3 that the Breyer Variation is based on seizing this square from White’s grip. In keeping with the dark-squares strategy, exchanging dark-squared bishops is in general congenial to Black. In fact, GM Tiviakov once highlighted the importance of this exchange by playing the highly creative, though slightly dubious, 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.c4 ♕h6!?

**5...♗c6 6.♗c2**

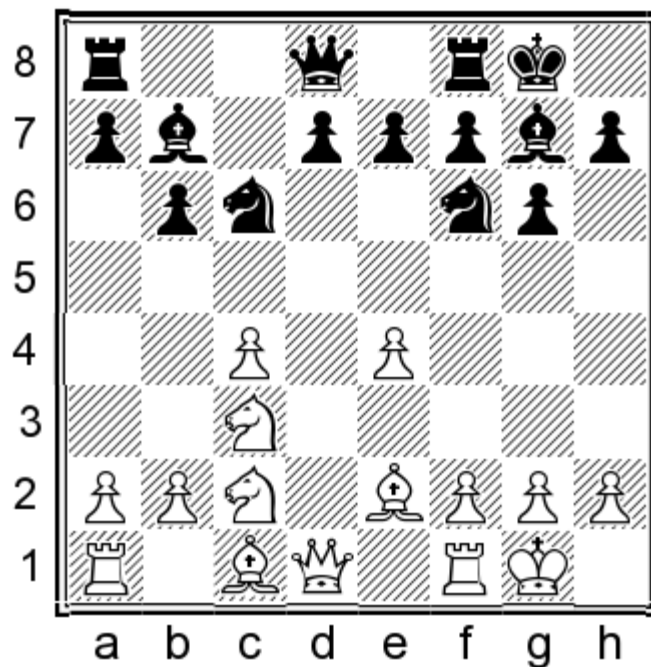


This is not the most challenging line for Black, but since it has been played by Keres, Tal, Korchnoi, and Carlsen, it has earned our serious attention. White usually waits for Black to play ...♗c8-d7 before retreating this Knight, because Black's two most common ways of countering ♘c2 are either a) ...♘f6-d7-c5, often capturing on c3 with the g7 bishop (an option made available by White's departure from d4), or b) ...♗c8-e6 (which is not recommended when White's knight is on d4) and quickly targeting the c4 pawn with ...♖a8-c8, ...♘c6-e5, etc. The latter of these plans will be covered when we discuss the 'Main Line' Maroczy. Here I will go over two additional systems for the reader who wishes to take advantage of White's premature retreat.

### 6...♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♗e2 b6

The double-fianchetto is particularly adept at meeting White's ♘d4-c2. With the knight on d4, a reliable way to meet Black's double fianchetto is with ♘d4xc6, which is not possible here.

### 9.0-0 ♗b7



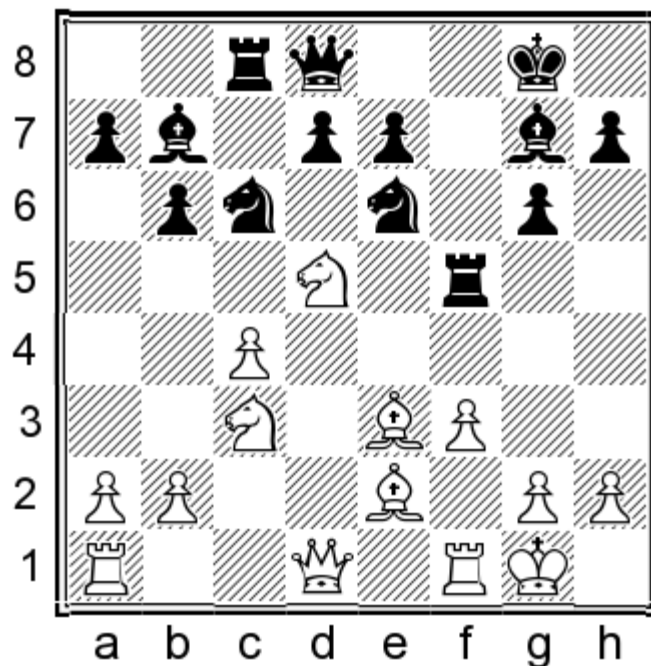
Black intends to continue with the at first glance unbelievable, but in this book thematic, ...♘f6-e8-d6, followed by ...f7-f5.

### 10.f3

10.♙f4 This deters Black's ...♘e8-d6 idea but after ...♘f6-e8 Black may instead gain a tempo on the f4-bishop after ...♘e8-c7-e6. Also, White's f4-bishop is under X-ray attack from Black's f8 rook after an eventual ...f7-f5. 10...♞c8 11.♘e3 ♘e8 12.f3

(12.♘g4?? h5 13.♘e3? e5+ Herman-Panjwani, New York 2014)

12...♘c7 13.♘ed5 ♘e6 14.♙e3 f5 15.exf5 ♞xf5⇌



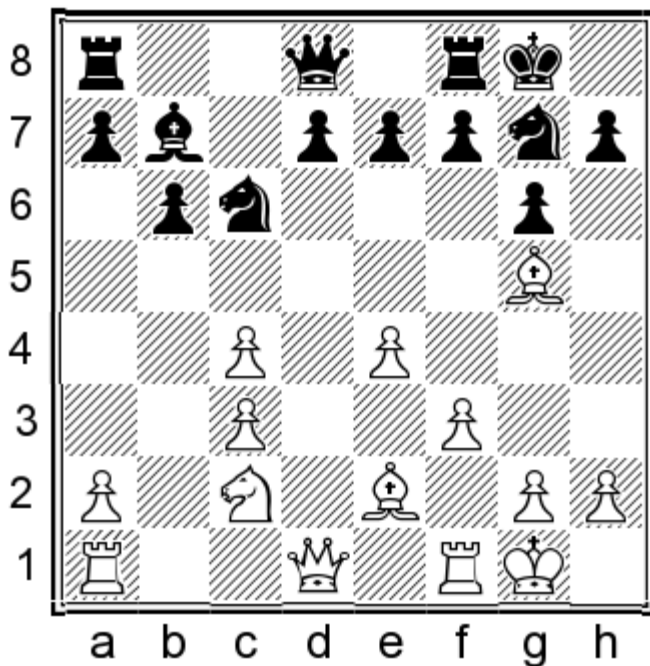
Black will continue with ...♘e6-d4, ...e7-e6, and eventually ...d7-d5.;

10. ♕g5 Not the most popular, but quite possibly White's best. 10... ♖e8!

(10... ♜c8?! Black should not delay ... ♗f6-e8, because that allows White to coordinate in the center and render the plan too slow. 11.f3 h6 12. ♕e3 ♖h7 13. ♗e1 ♗e8?! 14. ♝d1 ♗d6?! 15. ♗d2! (15. ♖h1 f5 16.c5 bxc5 17. ♕xc5 fxe4 18. ♕xd6 exf3 19. ♕xf3 exd6 ⇒ 0–1 (35) Sadorra,J (2431)-Jobava,B (2664) Al Ain UAE 2008) 15...f5 16.exf5 ♗xf5 17. ♗xd7 ♗xe3 18. ♗xe3±)

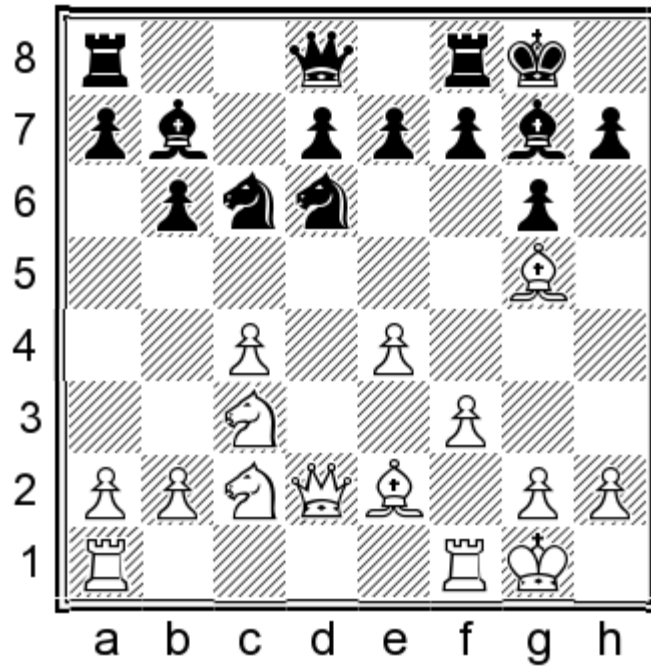
11. ♗d2

(11.f3 ♕xc3 (11... ♗d6 12. ♗xd6! exd6 13. ♕xd8 ♝axd8 14. ♝ad1± Black certainly has compensation for the weakened structure, because White is without his prized dark-squared bishop, but I think Black's compensation will be at best enough for a draw, and as a general rule it is worth avoiding positions where your opponent is playing for two results.) 12.bxc3 ♗g7 ⇒



Black will play in accordance with the system of Nimzowitsch: first blockade White's doubled c-pawns with ...d7-d6, ... ♗g7-e6-c5, then pile up on the weak c4-pawn with ... ♝a8-c8, ... ♗c6-a5, ... ♕b7-a6.)

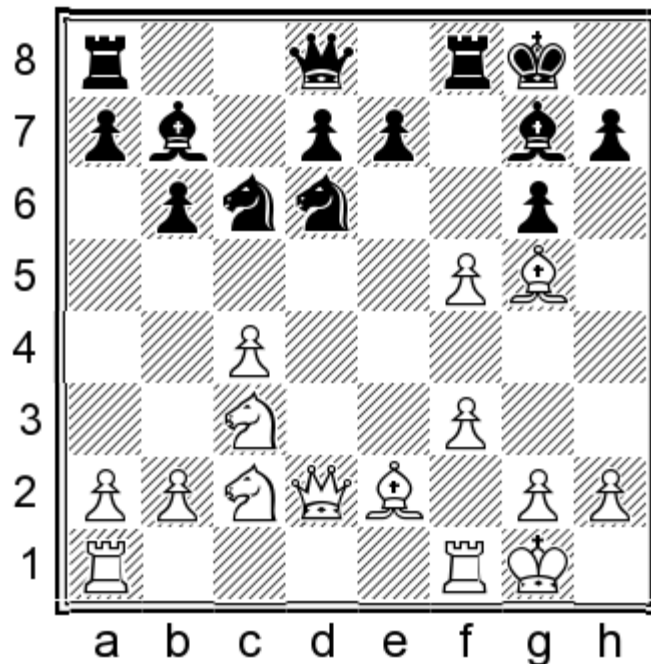
11... ♗d6 12.f3



12...f5!

(12...f6 It is instructive to see how Black ends up worse after this move. 13.g4 (13.g6 g6 14.h6 h6 15.g5) 13...e5 14.e3 f5 15.exf5 xf5 16.f5 f5 17.e3 c8 18.b3 Black cannot allow White to coordinate like this, because Black has made anti-positional moves and he can only get away with them if he plays energetically enough to prevent White from 'achieving harmony'. Therefore, Black lives and dies by the power of his counterplay: here, unfortunately, Black has capitulated control over the center, and is consequently unable to achieve the desired ...d7-d5. 18...f7 19.ad1 d6 20.d4±)

13.exf5



Both recaptures on f5 are interesting, but my analysis indicates that 13...xf5 is the better of the two. 13...xf5

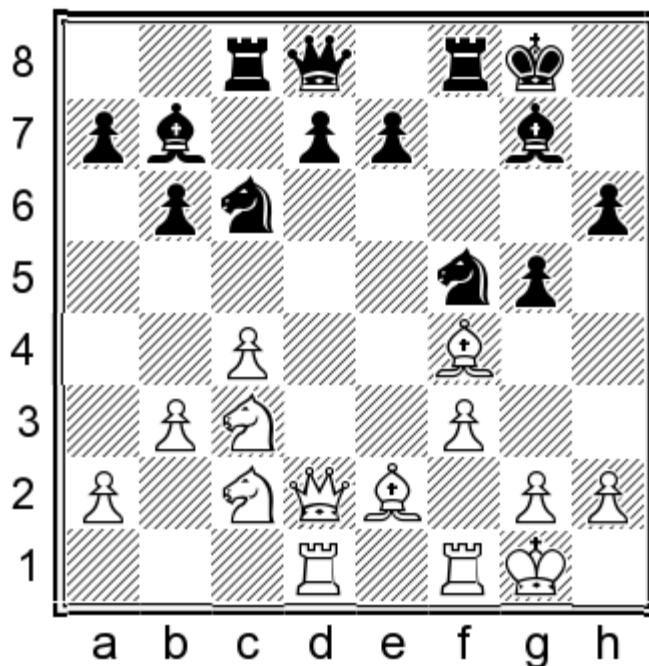
(13...xf5?! 14.g6! This move, which is all too easy for White to find, makes life difficult for Black. From a broader

perspective this should not surprise us: by exchanging pieces White dulls Black's counterplay, which is Black's only compensation for his hanging central pawns and multiple weaknesses. (14.♔e3 ♖f8! 15.♞ad1 ♞f7 16.c5 ♘f5 17.cxb6 e6 18.bxa7 ♘xe3 19.♞xe3 ♘xa7) 14...♞f8 15.♔xg7 ♞xg7 16.b3 ♞af8 17.♞ad1 g5 In a practical game Black can probably get away with playing like this, but I cannot recommend this as something to aim for from the outset. 18.♔d3 ♞f4 19.♘e4 ♘e5 20.♘d6 exd6 21.♔e2! ♞8f6 22.♘e3±)

14.♞ad1 ♞c8! 15.b3

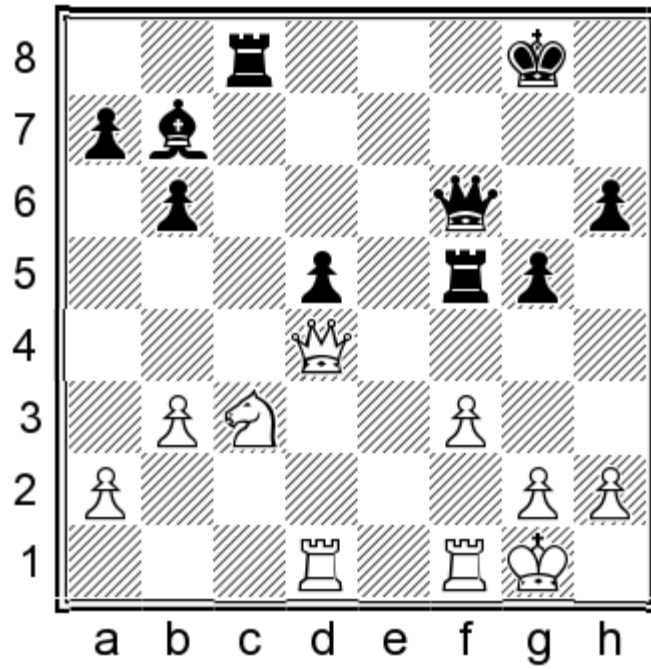
(15.♞xd7? ♔d4+ 16.♞xd4 ♘fxd4 17.♞xb7 ♘xc2)

15...h6! Black guarantees himself the two bishops, if he desires. 16.♔f4 g5



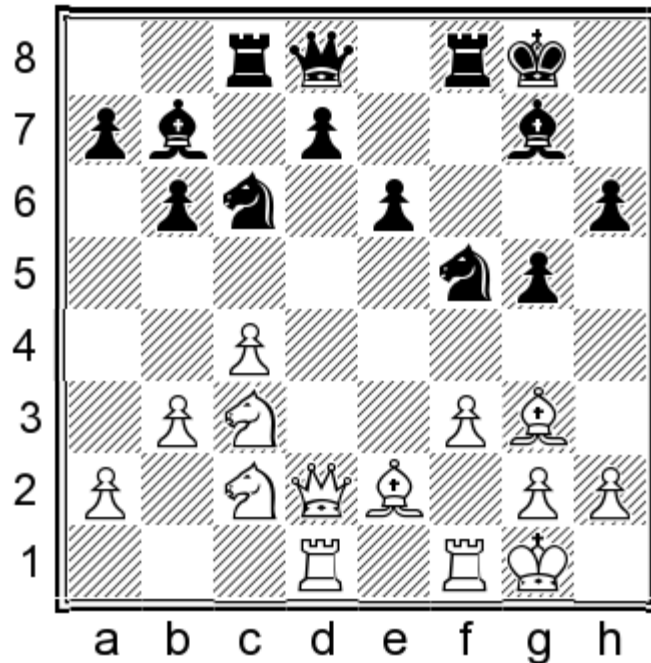
Irrespective of where White moves his bishop, Black will continue with ...e7-e6 and ...d7-d5. It is amazing that Black can get away with this central break seeing as White currently has four pieces directly targeting at the d5 square and Black has none! 17.♔g3

(17.♔e3 e6 (17...d5!? 18.♘d5 (18.cxd5?? ♔xc3 19.♞xc3 ♘cd4+) 18...e6 19.♘db4 (19.♘c3 ♞f6 20.♘b5 ♞cd8 21.♞c1 a6 22.♘ba3 ♘xe3 23.♞xe3 ♘d4 24.♘xd4 ♞xd4!=) 19...♘xb4 20.♞xb4 ♞c7 21.♔f2 ♔e5 22.h3 ♘g3 23.♔xg3 ♔xg3) 18.♔d3 (18.♘b5 d5! 19.cxd5 exd5 20.♞xd5+? ♞xd5 21.♞xd5 ♘a5 22.♞d2 ♞xc2 23.♞xc2 ♘xe3+) 18...d5! 19.♔xf5 ♞xf5 20.cxd5 exd5 White's position is slightly more pleasant but Black shouldn't have much difficulty holding. 21.♘d4 (21.♘d5 ♞d6) 21...♘d4 22.♔xd4 ♔xd4+ 23.♞xd4 ♞f6



Black will have enough activity to compensate for his pawn deficiency. It is not worth memorizing an exact path to equality in the ensuing variations; there are multiple paths. 24. ♖xf6 (24. ♘b5 ♕a6 25. ♖a4 ♕xb5 26. ♖xb5 d4 27. ♖d3 ♕d5=) 24... ♖xf6 25. ♘xd5 ♖e6 26. ♘b4 a5 27. ♘d3 ♕a6 28. ♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 29. ♘xe1 ♖e8 30. ♘c2 ♖e2 31. ♖d8+ ♔f7 32. ♘d4 ♖xa2 33. ♖d6 ♖a1+ 34. ♔f2 ♖a2+ 35. ♔e3 h5 36. ♖xb6 ♕f1=)

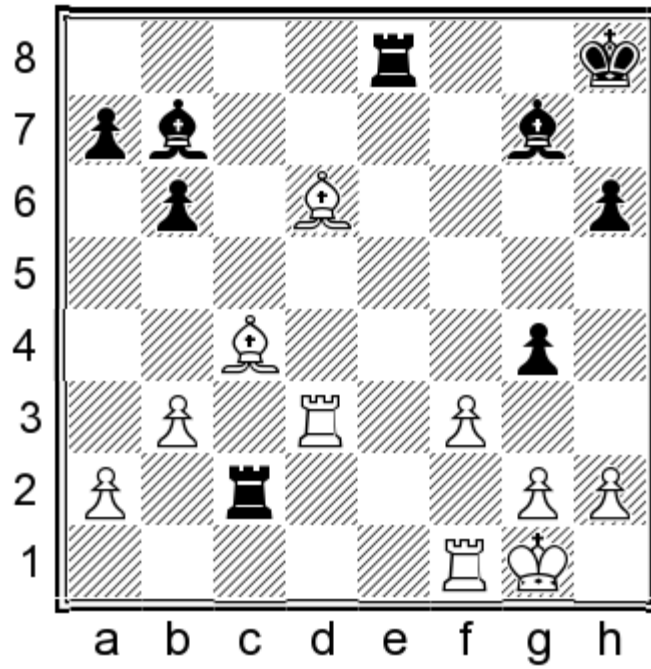
17...e6



18. ♘b5

(18. ♕f2 d5!! 19. cxd5? ♕xc3 20. ♖xc3 ♘cd4+)

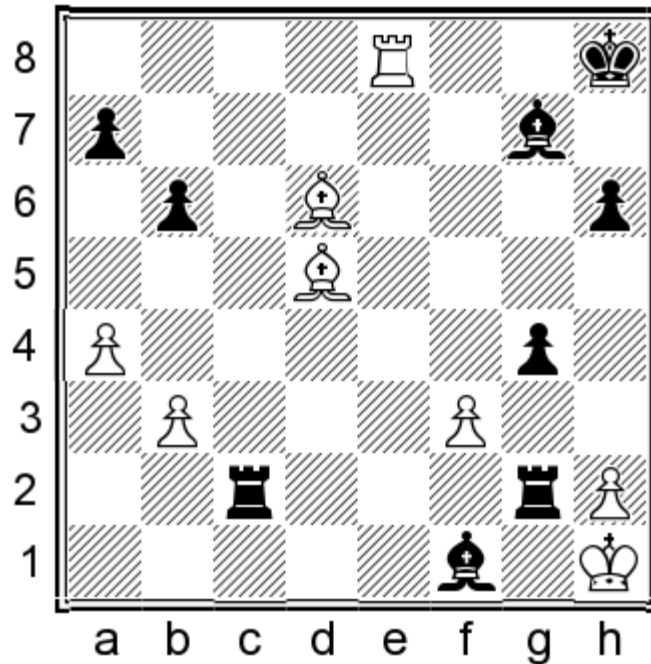
18...d5! Black will be fine after a long forcing series of exchanges. 19. cxd5 exd5 20. ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 21. ♖xd5 ♘cd4 22. ♖xd4 ♖xc2 23. ♕c4+ ♔h8 24. ♖d3 g4! 25. ♘d6 ♘xd6 26. ♕xd6 ♖e8



27.a4

(27.♙b4 Preventing ...♞e8-e2 on account of ♖d3-d8+. 27...gxf3 28.gxf3 ♞xa2=)

27...♞e2 The following variation is remarkable: 28.♔h1! ♞xg2 29.♙d5 ♙a6 30.♞e3! ♙xf1 31.♞e8+



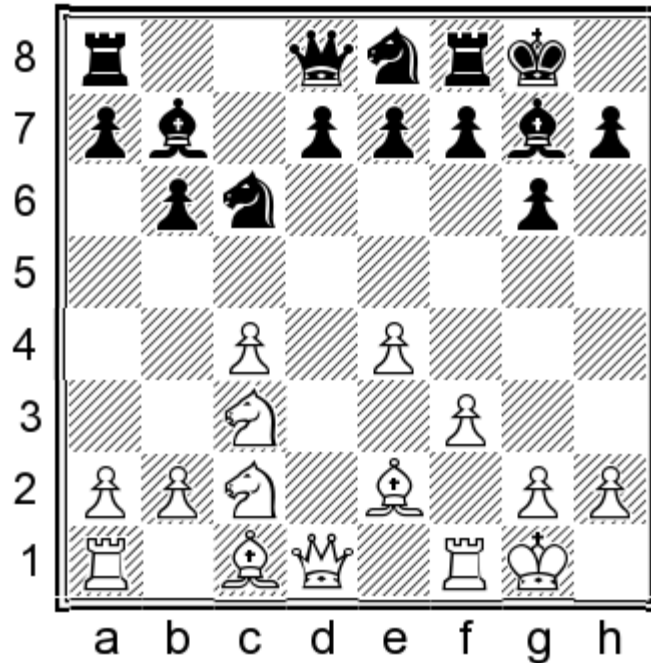
31...♙f8

(31...♔h7 32.♙e4#)

32.♞xf8+ ♔g7 33.♞g8+ ♔f6 34.♞f8+ ♔g7 35.♞g8+ ♔h7 36.♙e5!! gxf3 37.♞h8+ ♔g6 38.♙e4+ ♔h5 39.♙xf3+ ♔g5 40.♙xg2 ♙xg2+ 41.♔g1=;

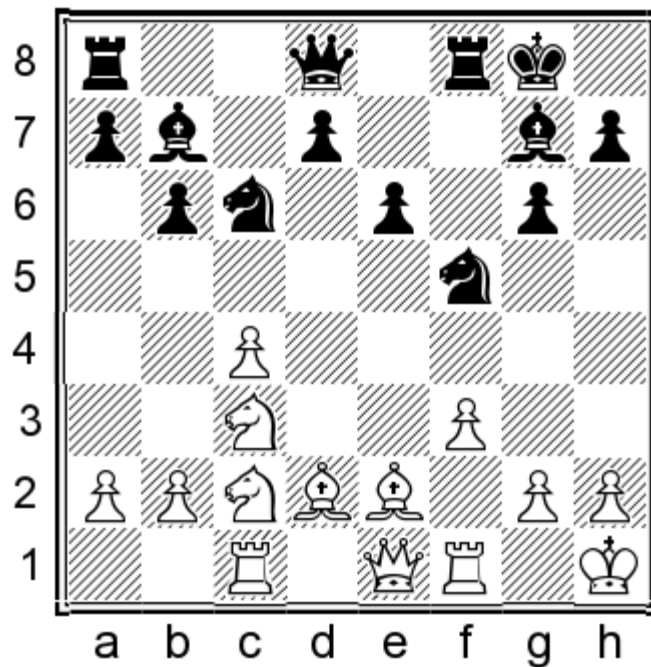
10.♞b1 ♘e8 11.♞d2 ♘d6 12.f3 f5 13.♘b5 fxe4 14.♘xd6 exd6 15.♞xd6 ♘e5 16.f4 ♘d3 17.♙xd3 exd3 18.♞xd3 ♞e8=0-1 (38) Tsherkovsky, V (2555) -Gufeld, E (2535) Vilnius 1975.

10...♖e8



11.♙e3

11.♙d2 Played in order that Black will not capture on c3, but to seek an advantage White should allow that. 11...♘d6 (Δ...f5) 12.♞c1 f5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14.♔h1 e6 15.♚e1



15...♔h8

(15...d5!? 16.cxd5 exd5)

16.♘e3 ♘fd4

(16...♘cd4 17.♙d3 ♘xe3 18.♙xe3 d5?! 19.cxd5 exd5 20.♞d1 ♘f5 21.♙xf5 ♞xf5 22.♙d4± 1-0. (46) Hebert, J.

17.b3 d5!☞

### 11...♞d6

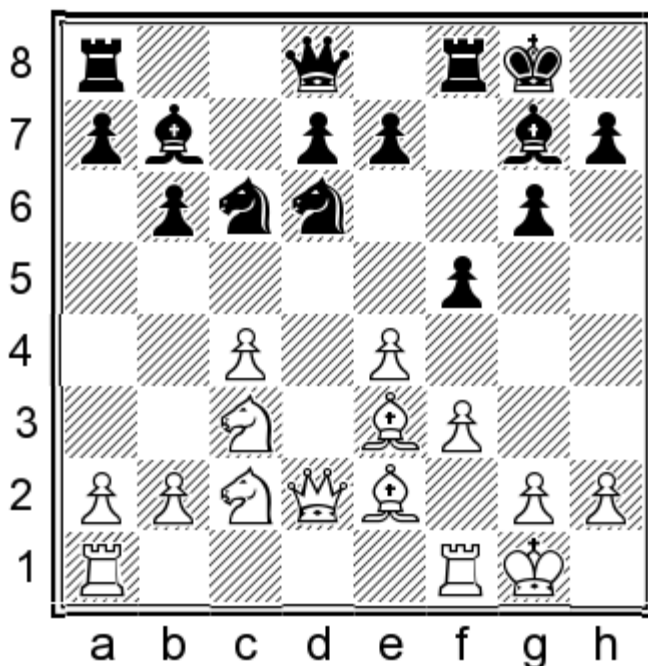
A significant branching point for this variation. White's attempts in the database are not convincing, but I have found a new move (12.♞d4) which does present Black with some problems. Fortunately, they are not insurmountable.

11...♙xc3!? 12.bxc3 d6 13.♙h6 ♞g7 14.f4 ♞e8 15.♙g4∞

### 12.♞d4N

As I mentioned before, White's knight belongs on d4 in these double-fianchetto systems, especially in the cases where Black's play revolves around ...f7-f5. White intends on eliminating Black's pesky d6 knight with ♞d4-b5.

12.♚d2 f5



13.c5

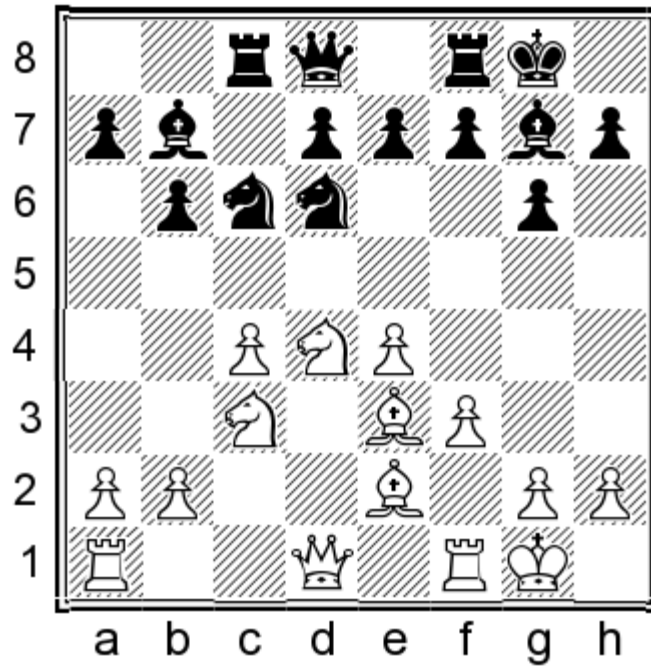
(13.exf5 ♞xf5 14.♙f2 ♙h6 15.♚e1 (15.♚d1 e6 16.g4 ♞fe7 17.♙g3 d5 18.cxd5 ♞xd5 19.♞xd5 exd5☞) 15...e6 16.♞d1 ♚e7 17.g4 ♞g7 18.♙g3 ♙f4=)

13...bxc5 14.♙xc5 fxe4 15.fxe4 ♞xf1+ 16.♞xf1 ♞e5 17.♙xd6 ♚b6+ 18.♞h1 ♚xd6=;

12.c5 bxc5 13.♙xc5 f5 14.♙xd6 exd6 15.♞h1 ♚h4 16.g3 ♚h3 17.exf5 ♙e5 18.♞g1 ♞e7!☞;

12.♞b5 ♙xb2 13.♞b1 ♙e5 14.f4 ♙g7 15.♞xd6 exd6 16.♚xd6 ♞e8 17.♚d3 ♞a5 18.♙f3 ♞c8☞ 0–1 (37) Minasian,A (2478)-Aronian,L (2528) Ohrid 2001.

### 12...♞c8!



12...f5?! 13.♖db5 ♜xb5 14.cxb5 ♖a5 15.♙d4±

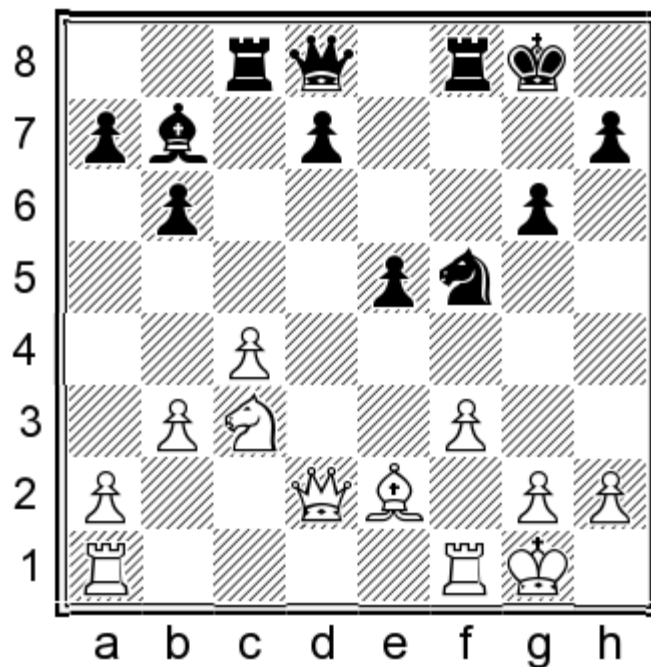
### 13.b3

13.♖db5 ♜xb5 14.cxb5 ♖a5 15.♙d4 ♙h6 16.f4 e6 17.♙e5 f6 18.♙d6 ♖f7= Black can play around the d6 bishop, and always get rid of it with ...♙b7-a8 and ...♜a5-b7 if necessary.

### 13...f5! 14.exf5 ♜xd4

14...gxf5 15.f4 e6 16.♜xc6 ♙xc6 17.♚xd6 ♙xc3 18.♖ad1±

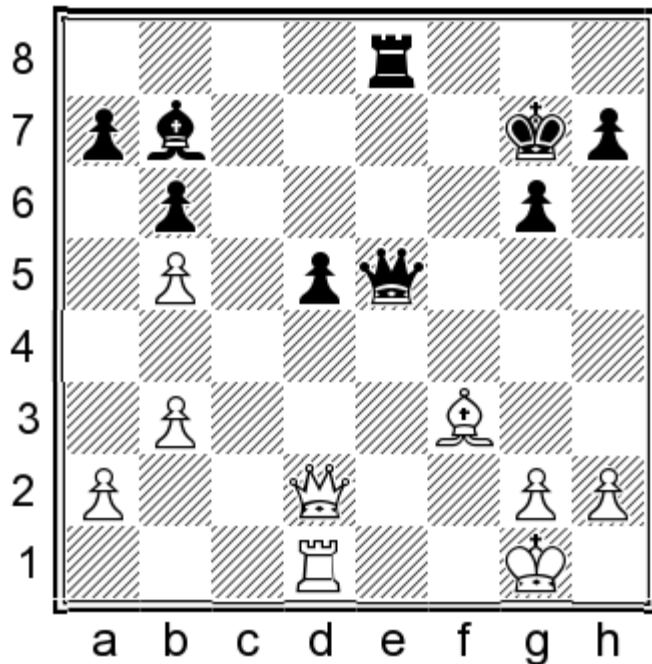
### 15.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 16.♚xd4 ♜xf5 17.♚d2 e5!



18. ♖ad1 ♜d4

The position is equal, even if White has the 'better half' of it. Things will eventually fizzle out; the following is a sample.

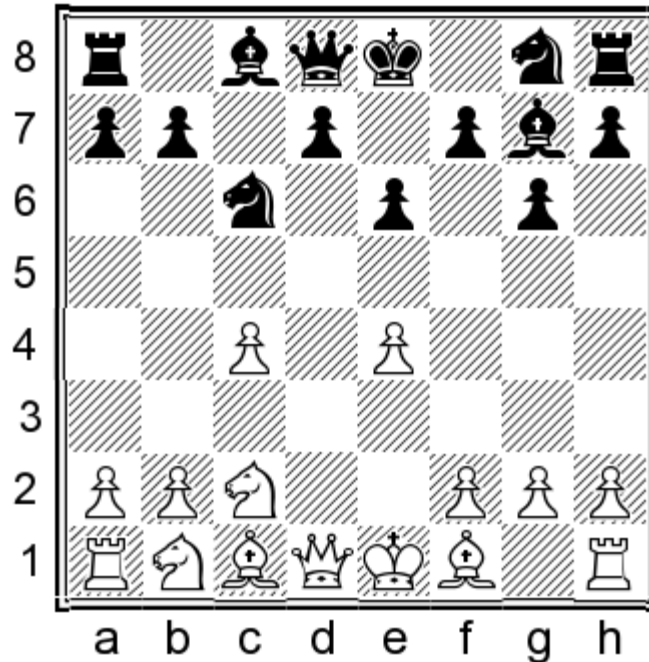
19. ♗b5 ♜xb5 20. cxb5 d5 21. f4 ♚e7 22. fxe5 ♝xf1+ 23. ♝xf1 ♚xe5 24. ♘f3 ♞e8 25. ♝d1 ♔g7=



Black should stick to waiting tactics — let White try to make progress. At the right moment Black may ditch the d5-pawn to arrive at a drawn rook endgame.

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♙g7 5.c4 ♞c6 6.♟c2 e6!

This move is almost a novelty, but (to my dismay) not quite: it has been played a mere four times (and with different intentions to ours) in the recorded history of our game.



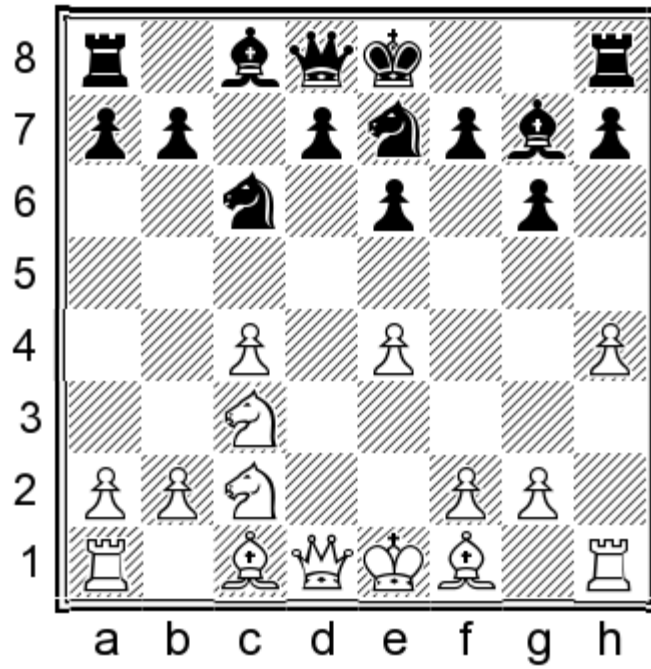
The idea of this move occurred to me while I was analyzing the ...♞e8-d6 maneuver in the 6...♞f6 line, where Black often plays ...f7-f5 and recaptures on f5 with the knight. I wondered whether Black could reach similar positions and save some time by taking the route ♞g8-e7-f5 rather than ♞g8-f6-e8-d6-f5. I was also aware of similar ideas with colors reversed in the English opening, such as after 1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♞f6 3.♙g2 d5 4.cxd5 ♞xd5 5.♟c3 ♞b6 6.e3!?

or 1.c4 c5 2.♟c3 ♞f6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 ♞xd5 5.♙g2 ♞c7 6.e3!?. Black's basic idea is to go for a quick ...f7-f5, and then recapture on f5 with the knight, from where it controls the important d4 square and also often pressurizes White's e3 bishop. White can take one of (at least) two strategies: either try to develop normally and hope that Black's offbeat play will lead to static positional weaknesses in the middlegame, or White can aim for a refutation of the system with an early h2-h4 or ♙c1-f4-d6. According to my analysis, Black equalizes in all variations.

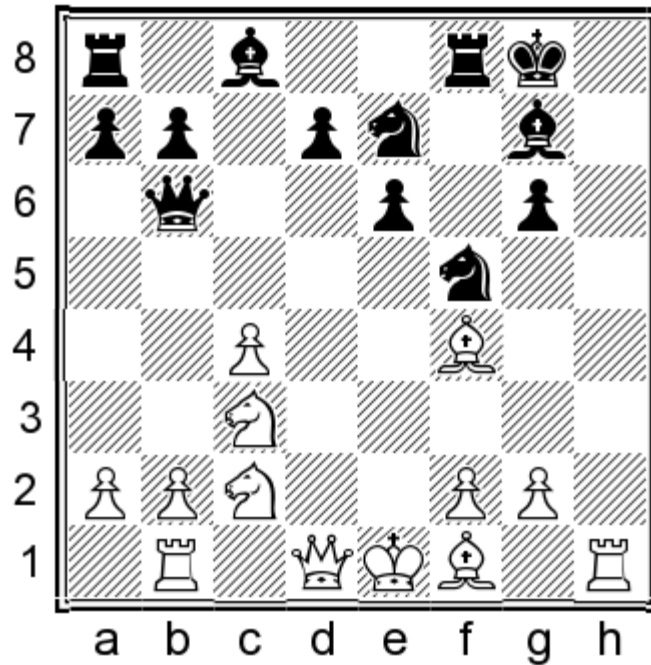
1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♙g7 5.c4 ♞c6 6.♟c2 e6! 7.♙e2

7.♟c3 ♞ge7 8.♙f4 This is the most obvious way to counter Black's setup — planting a bishop on d6. It turns out, however, that Black need not be bothered by such an intruder.

a) 8.h4



8...f5 (8...0-0 9.h5 d5!? Further research is warranted here.) 9.exf5 (9.h5 fxe4 10.♖xe4 d5 11.♗c3 0-0) 9...♗xf5  
 10.h5 0-0 11.hxg6 hxg6 12.♙f4 (12.♗g4 ♗e5 13.♗h3? ♘f7! 14.♗e4 ♖h8 15.♗g5+ ♔g8-+; 12.♗e3 ♗b6) 12...♗b6  
 13.♖b1 ♗ce7!

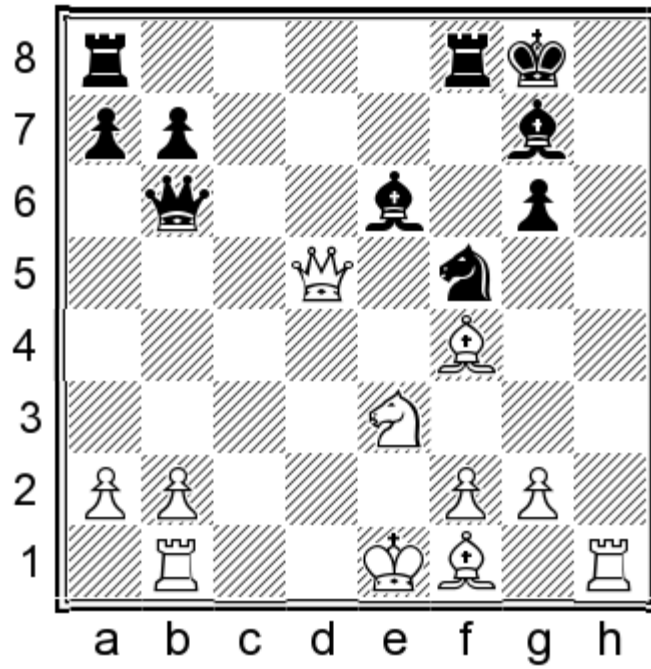


Black can 'premove' ...d7-d5 here; with White's king in the center Black shouldn't hesitate to sacrifice a pawn to open files. 14.♗e3

**a1)** 14.♙e2 d5! 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♗xd5? ♗xd5 17.♗xd5+ ♙e6+;

**a2)** 14.♗d2 d5! 15.g4 ♗d6 16.♙e3 ♗c7 17.♙h6 (17.cxd5 ♗c4 18.♙xc4 ♗xc4) 17...♗f7 18.♙xg7 ♔xg7=;

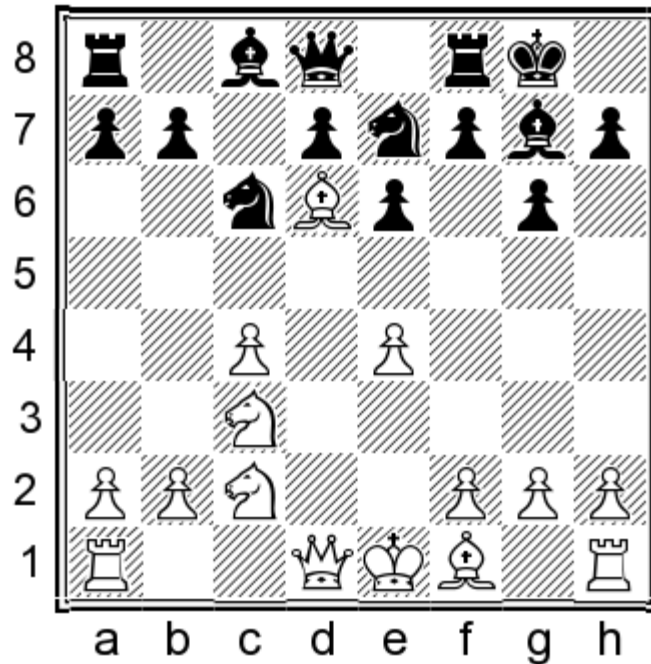
14...d5! 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♗cxd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5+ ♙e6



18. ♖xe6+ ♜xe6 19. ♕c4 ♜xc4 20. ♜xc4 ♞ae8+ 21. ♜e3 ♞e4 22. ♕g5 ♕f6 23. ♕xf6 ♞xf6 24. ♞h3 g5=;

b) 8. ♕g5 0-0 9. ♜d2 ♜a5 10. ♕h6 (10. ♕e2 d5!?) 10... ♕xh6 11. ♜xh6 f5!?

8...0-0 9. ♕d6

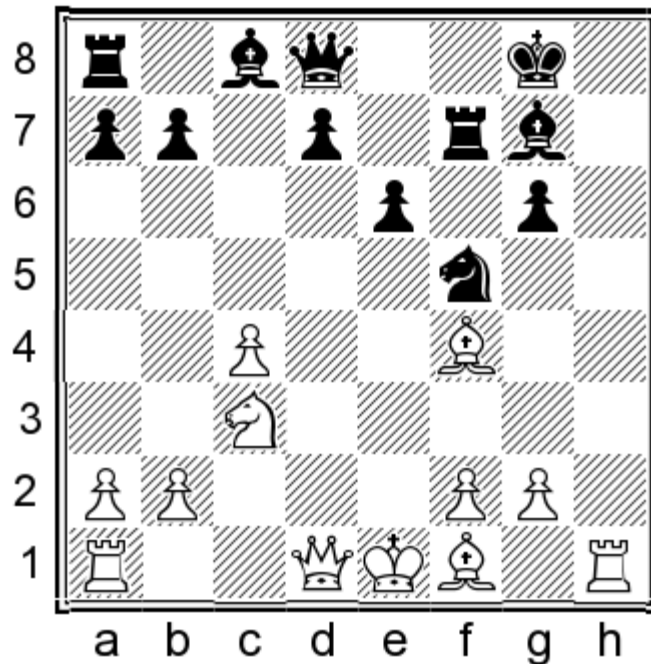


9...f5 White has taken time to occupy d6; as such, he is behind in development so Black should not delay this counter-punch.

(9...b6?! 10.h4 ♕b7 11.h5 f5?! 12.hxg6 hxg6 13. ♜f3 fxe4 14. ♜h3 ♜f7 15. ♜xe4 ♞h8 16. ♜g5+ ♜g8 17. ♜xh8+ ♕xh8 18. ♞xh8+ ♜xh8 19. ♜f7+ ♜g7 20. ♜xd8 ♞xd8 21.0-0-0±) 10.exf5 (10. ♕d3 ♞f7 11.0-0 b6 12. ♜d2 ♕b7 13. ♞ae1 ♞c8 14.b3 ♜e5 15. ♕xe5 ♕xe5 16.exf5 ♕xc3 17. ♜xc3 gxf5=)

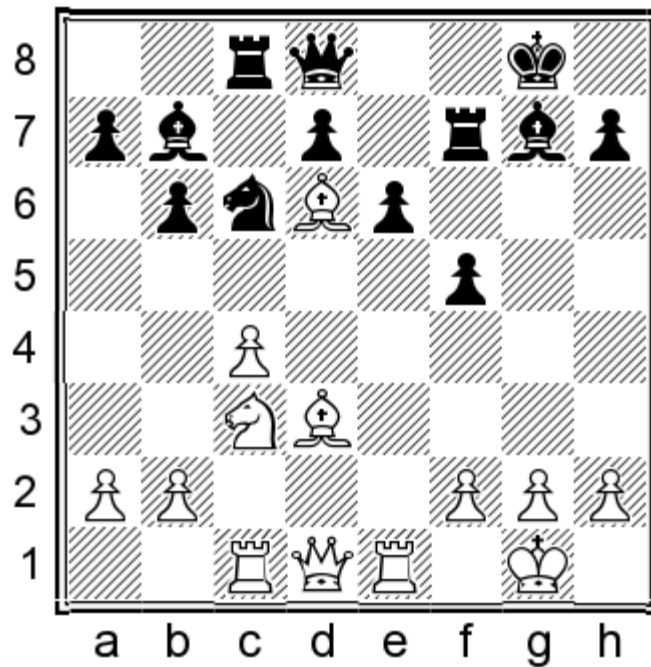
10...♞xf5 Although Black would normally prefer to take on f5 with the knight, the knight will find its way to f5 anyway after ...♞f5-f7. 11. ♕d3

(11.♖e3 ♜f7 12.h4 ♘d4 13.h5 ♘ef5 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.♗xf5 ♗xf5 16.♙f4



16...b5!! A shot out of the blue. Black can afford to sacrifice a pawn in order to accelerate his development because White's king is still awkwardly uncastled. 17.♗xb5 (17.cxb5 d5) 17...♙b7 18.♚d2 (18.♚g4 ♗xb2 19.♚d1 ♚f6) 18...♚b6 19.♚h3 ♚af8 20.0-0 d5!)

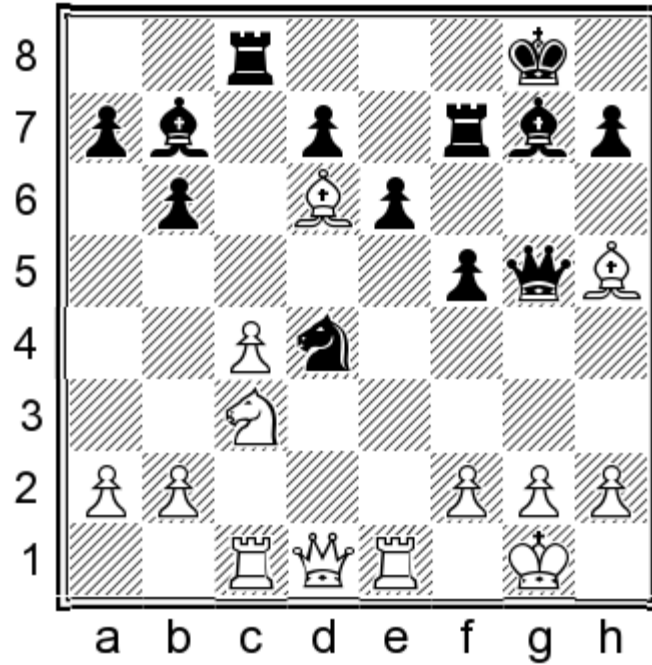
11...♜f7 12.0-0 b6 13.♗e3 ♗b7 14.♚e1 ♚c8 15.♚c1 ♗f5 16.♗xf5 gxg5 Routine development for both sides has led to a dynamically equal position.



Black looks forward to occupying the g-file with his rook, which combines nicely with pressure from the b7-bishop. 17.♙e2

(17.♚e3 ♚f6 18.♚g3 A little knight sortie solidifies Black's kingside and calls into question the placement of White's g3-rook. 18...♗e5! 19.b3 ♗g6!)

17...♖d4 18.♙h5 ♗g5!



19.g3

(19.♙xf7+ ♔xf7 20.♙g3 f4 21.♗d2 ♙xg2! 22.♗xf4+ ♗xf4 23.♙xf4 ♙b7 24.♔f1 ♖xc4= Two bishops and two central pawns are more than enough compensation for Black.)

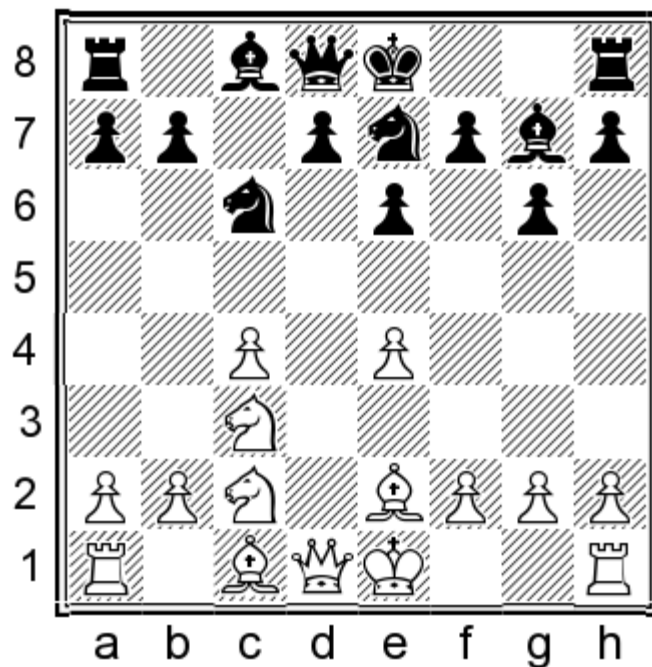
19...♖xc4 20.b3?

(20.h4 ♗d8 21.b3 ♖c6 22.♙xf7+ ♔xf7 23.♗h5+ ♔g8 24.♙e5 ♙xe5 25.♖xe5 b5!)

20...♙f3!! 21.♙xf3 ♗xc1!! 22.♗xc1 ♔xf3+ 23.♔g2 ♖xc3 24.♗d1 ♔xe1+ 25.♗xe1;

7.h4 ♔ge7 8.h5 d5! 9.h6 ♙f6

7...♔ge7 8.♔c3



### 8...f5!

As is so often the case in this opening, Black's play is contrary to basic chess principles; usually one is supposed to castle before such breaks. Then again, White's king isn't castled either.

The only top-level game continued as follows: 8...0-0 9.0-0 f5 10.exf5 gxf5?! This misses the point; Black should recapture with the knight! (10...♞xf5=) 11.f4 d5! 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♞f3 ♕e6 14.♕d3 ♜c8 15.♞g3 ♞f6! 16.♕d2 ♞g6 17.♞e1 ♕f7 18.♞h1 ♞d7 19.♞f2 ♞e8 20.a3 ♞c8! 21.♞e1 ♞xe1+ 22.♕xe1 ♞d6 1/2-1/2 (56) Yanofsky,D-Stoltz,G Karlovy Vary 1948.

### 9.h4

When I thought of this system, I showed it to a 2600+ rated friend, and he claimed he was confident he could refute this line over the board. This was his first attempt (of many unsuccessful attempts!).

9.exf5 ♞xf5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♕f4 b6 Both of Black's bishops occupy the longest diagonals on the board. 12.♞d2 ♕b7 13.♞ad1 ♞cd4 14.♞xd4 ♞xd4=;

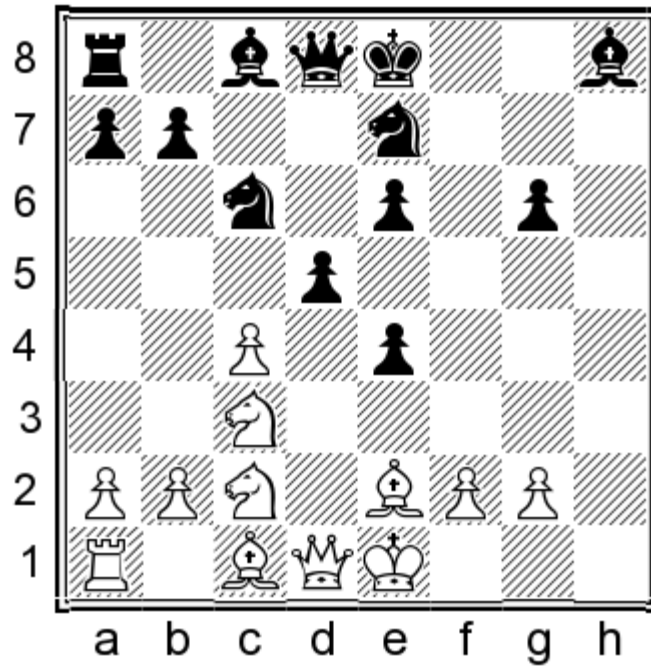
9.0-0 fxe4 10.♞xe4 d5 11.♞c3 0-0=

### 9...fxe4 10.h5

10.♞xe4 d5⇌;

10.c5 b6 11.♞xe4 0-0 12.h5 bxc5 13.hxg6 ♞xg6 ̄

10...d5 11.hxg6 hxg6 12.♞xh8+ ♕xh8



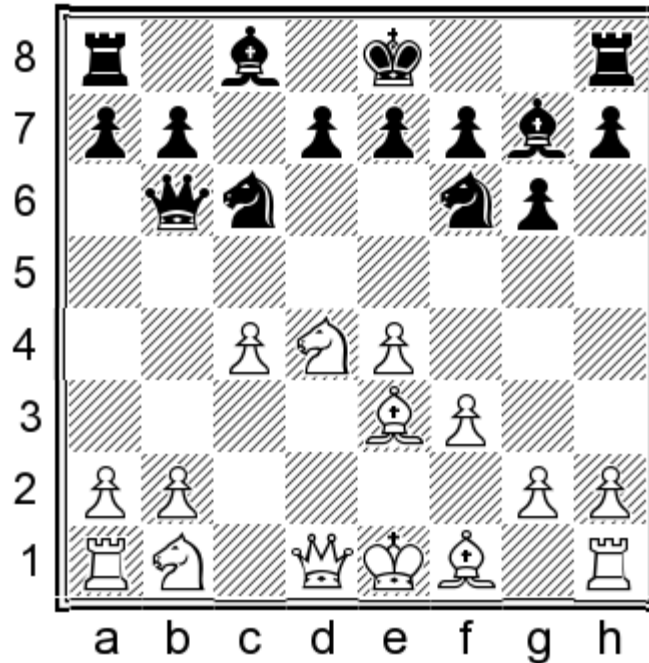
White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn but only enough for equality, and that is with perfect play from here on out.

13. ♖g5! ♜a5 14. ♚d2 ♙d7 15. 0-0-0 ♙xc3 16. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 17. bxc3 0-0-0 18. ♘e3 ♜f8=

The Breyer variation of the Maroczy is characterized by Black's 7...♘g4. Unlike the Maroczy Bind (5.c4), which was never played by its namesake Geza Maroczy, the Breyer variation was indeed first played by Gyula Breyer in Kostic-Breyer, Gothenburg 1920. It has since been entrusted for important games by World Champions Botvinnik (Smyslov-Botvinnik, Alekhine Memorial 1956) and Kasparov (Ribli-Kasparov, World Cup 1988).

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♙g7 5.c4 ♘c6 6.♗e3 ♚f6 7.♘c3

7.f3 ♜b6!

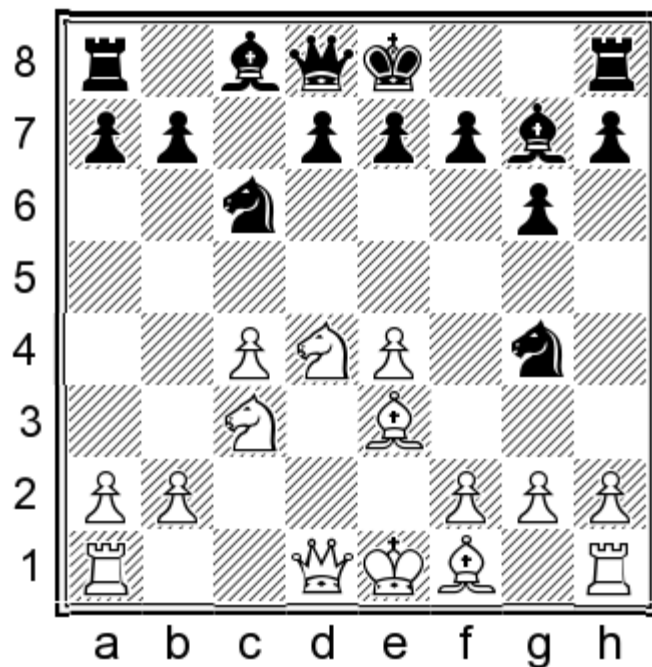


8.♘f5 ♜xb2 9.♘xg7+ ♚f8 10.♘d2

(10.♗h6?? ♜xa1-+)

10...♘xg7 11.c5 ♗d8 12.♞b1 ♜e5 13.♘c4 ♜e6- Black will free his position with either ...d7-d5 or ...b7-b5.

7...♘g4



**8. ♖xg4**

8. ♗xc6?! This is what they played in Breyer's time. 8... ♗xe3 9. ♗xd8 ♗xd1 10. ♗xd1 ♗xd8

**8... ♗xd4**

8... ♗xd4? It is reasonable to ask why this move is not played more often, given that Black usually seeks to exchange dark-squared bishops in the Marozy. True, in the middlegame — after both sides have developed — the trade of dark squared bishops is generally desirable for Black, but here Black purchases this exchange at the cost of precious time. 9. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 10. 0-0-0! ♗c6 11. ♖g3! 0-0 12. h4± White's attack is overwhelming.

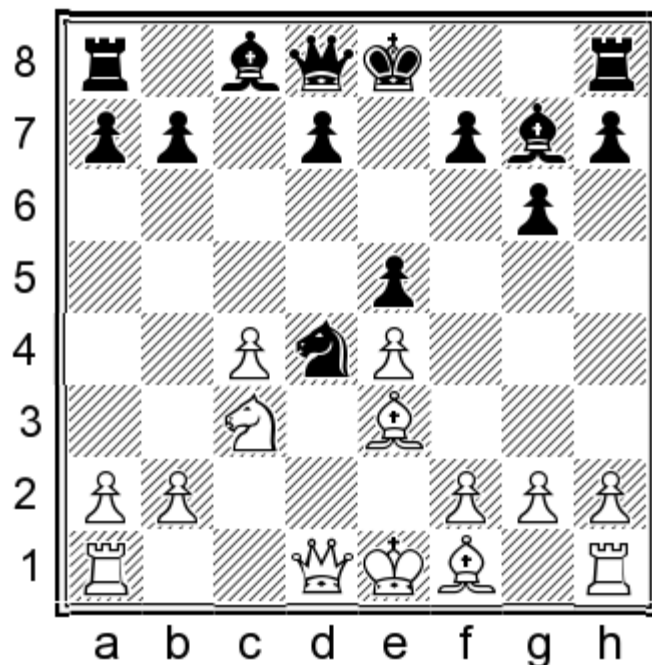
**9. ♖d1**

9. 0-0-0 Nobody plays this. 9... ♗c6 10. ♗d5 e6!

(10... 0-0 11. ♖h4→)

11. ♗c3 ♖a5

**9...e5**



Bent Larsen used to prefer 9...♘e6, but I think 9...e5 offers more chances for counterplay based on Black's occupation of the center. Computers generally tend to prefer White in the Breyer, but from my experience even 2600+ GMs find it very uncomfortable to 'play around' Black's d4 knight, which (invariably) leads them to mishandle White's position. This line has a very Sveshnikov Sicilian feel to it. Fischer taught us that "you have to give squares to get squares"; Black has opted to relinquish control over the light squares (especially d5) in order to stake a claim over the all-important d4 square. This is the first significant branching point for White: he will either develop routinely with ♗d3, 0-0, ♖d2, etc., or he will attempt to immediately take advantage of Black's weaknesses with 10.♘b5. We consider these options in the coming chapters, but we begin with an underrated sideline.

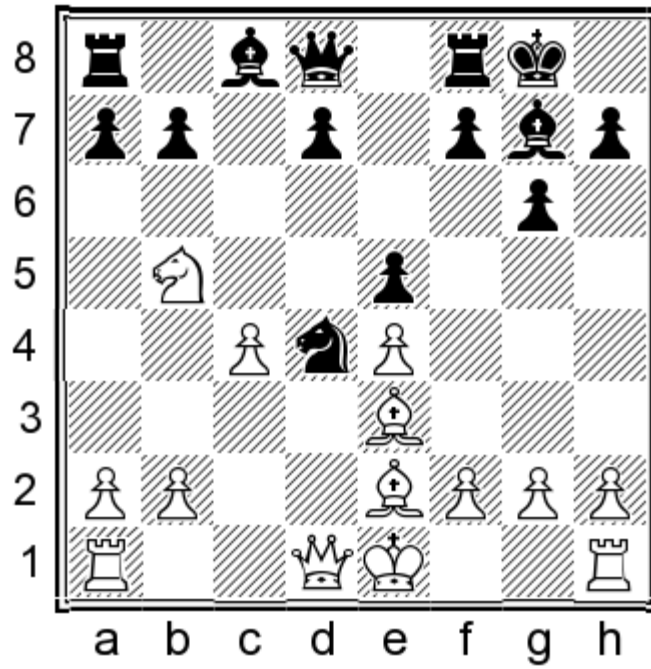
### 10.♗e2

If this move is followed by routine development, then it lacks independent value, since White's bishop is better placed on d3. However, there are some idiosyncrasies to this line if White combines ♗f1-e2 with ♘c3-b5.

### 10...0-0

10...d6 The reader can make life easier for themselves by playing 10...d6 in response to any of White's major options, but since he can get away with it, it is at least symbolically more flexible for Black to castle first.

### 11.♘b5!



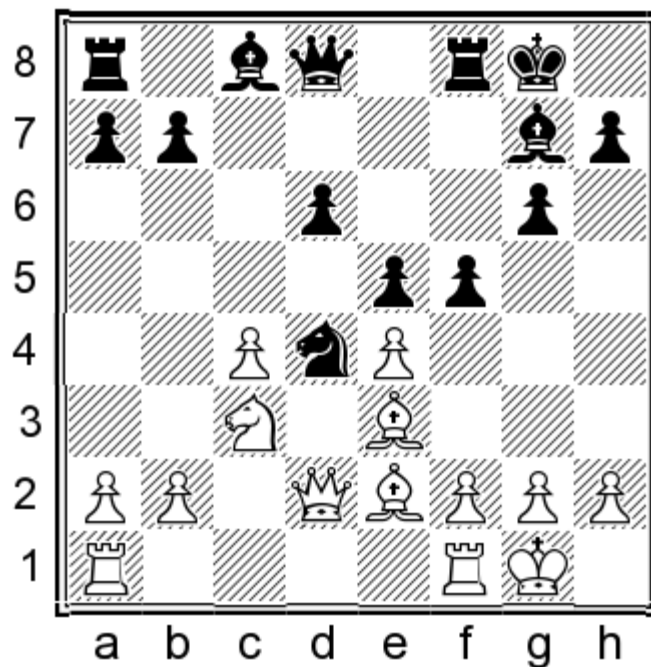
A tricky move, not least of all because the response recommended by the computer at even high depths (11...Wh4) is a blunder due to a brilliant double-rook sacrifice demonstrated by former Women's World Champion Nona Gaprindashvili more than 40 years ago!

11.0-0 d6 12.Whd2

(12. Nb5 Nb5 13. cxb5 Be6 14. Whd2 (14. Bf3?! Bc4=) 14...f5 15. Bg5 Be6 16. Bxf6 Wxf6 17. Wxd6 Bfd8 18. Wc7 Bd7 19. Wc5 fxe4 20. Be4 Bd4 21. Bxe6+ Wxe6=)

12...Be6= White can obtain this position with his bishop more appropriately placed on d3. In fact, my computer recommends that White play 13. Bd3 here.

(12...f5?!)



Black shouldn't rush ...f7-f5; the following is just a blitz game I played over the internet which gives an illustration of

the sort of counterplay Black can generate. 13.f3 (13.exf5 ♖xe2+ 14.♗xe2 gxf5 15.♞fd1 ♗e7 16.c5!±) 13...f4 14.♙f2 g5 15.♗b5?! ♖xe2+ 16.♗xe2 a6 17.♗c3 g4 18.fxg4 ♗g5 19.h3 h5⇒)

### 11...♗xb5!

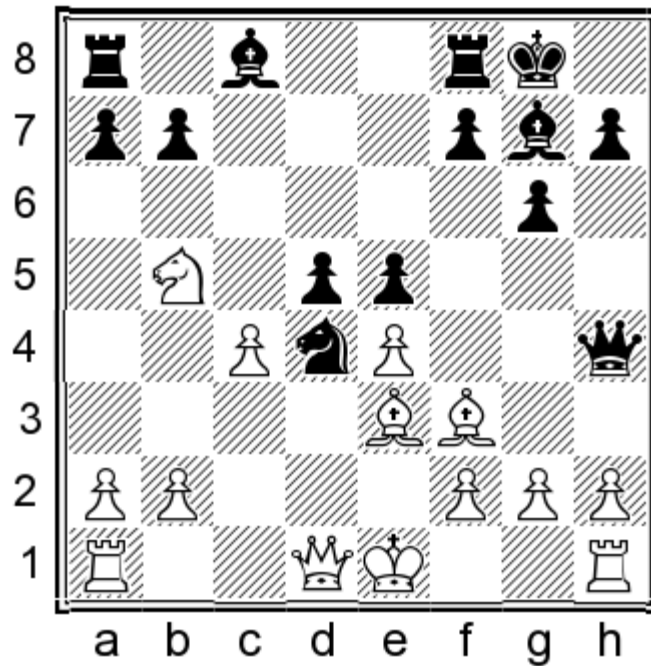
Black is well advised to transpose into the variations after 11.0-0 d6.

11...♗h4? It is a pity this doesn't work for Black (on account of 12.♗xd4!), because many of the ensuing variations illustrate the elastic potential for Black's position to suddenly 'come to life'. 12.♗xd4!

a) 12.♗d3 d5!! 13.cxd5 (13.exd5? ♙f5±) 13...♗xe2 14.♙xe2 (14.♗xe2 ♗xe4=) 14...f5 15.f3 fxe4 16.♗xe4 ♗f6!±;

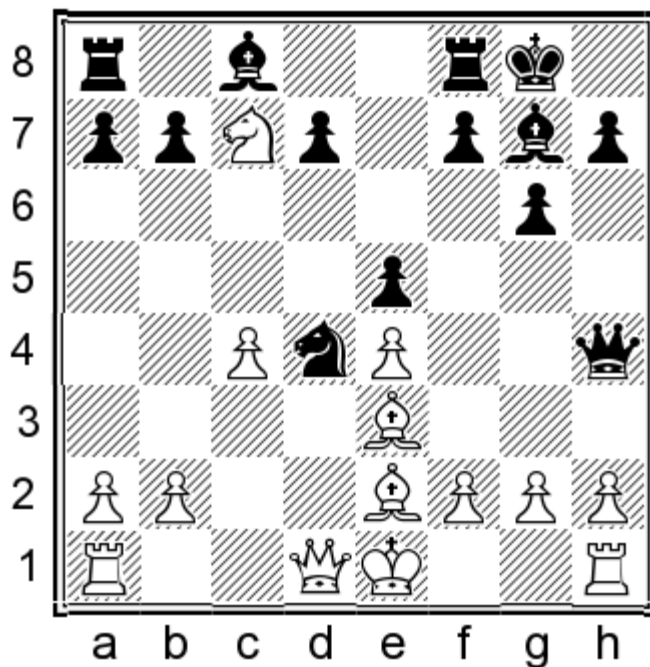
b) 12.♗d6 ♗e7 13.♗xc8 ♞fxc8 14.0-0 ♗b4 15.b3 a5 16.♞b1 a4 17.♙xd4 (17.♙d3 axb3 18.♙xd4 exd4 19.♞xb3 ♗d6= See 17.♙xd4 for transposition.) 17...exd4 18.♙d3 axb3 19.♞xb3 ♗d6 20.♗b1 ♞cb8 21.f4 ♗c7 22.e5 ♞a5=;

c) 12.♙f3? d5!!

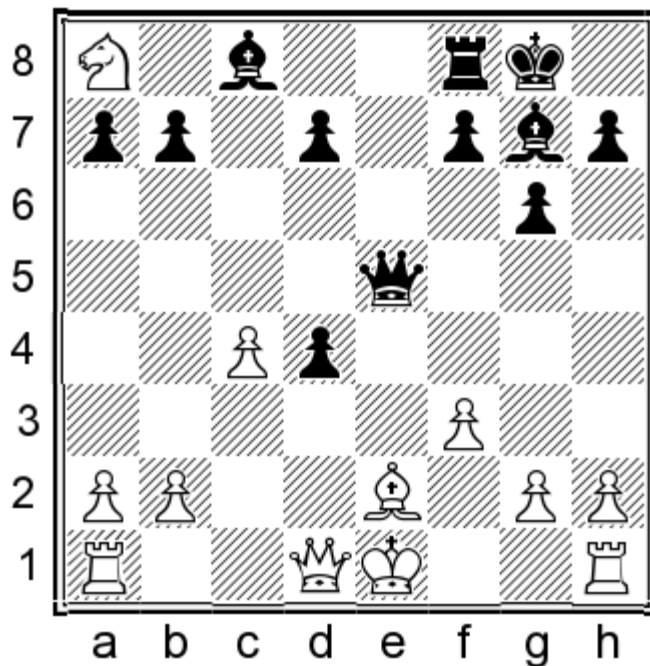


13.exd5 ♗xf3+ 14.♗xf3 ♗xc4±;

d) 12.♗c7

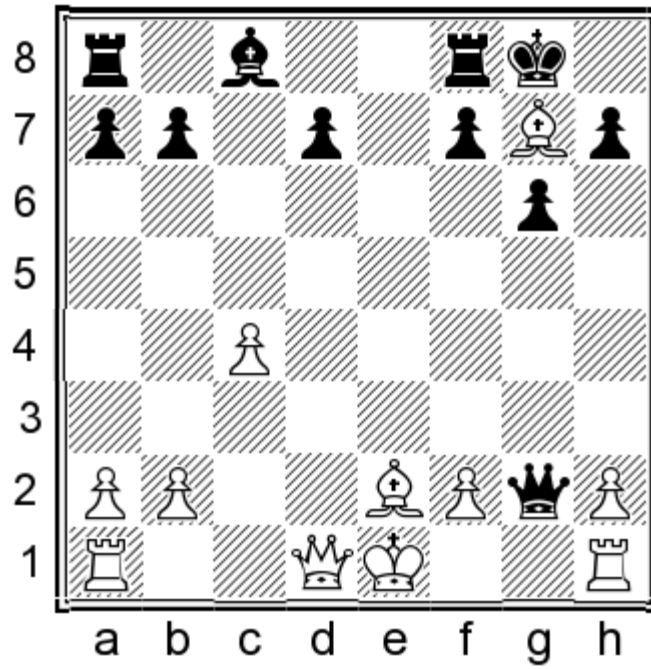


12... ♖xe4!! (12... ♖b8!? 13. ♕d3 (13. ♗d3? f5 14. exf5 d5!!) 13... b6 (13... d6 14. 0-0 f5 15. f3±) 14. 0-0 ♕b7 15. ♘d5 (15. f3 f5 16. exf5?! ♘xf5 17. ♕xf5 gxf5 18. ♗xd7 ♗xc4 19. ♘e6 ♖f7 20. ♗d6 ♖e8 21. ♘d8 ♕f8 22. ♗d2 ♕b4 23. ♗d1 ♖g7 24. ♘xb7 ♖xb7=) 15... f5 16. ♕xd4 ♕xd5 17. cxd5 fxe4 18. g3 ♗f6 19. ♕xe4 exd4 20. ♗d3 White's position is more pleasant, but Black can shift around and ask White to prove an advantage — most likely things will fizzle out into a draw.) 13. ♕xd4 (13. ♘xa8 ♗xg2 14. ♖f1 d5! 15. cxd5 ♕f5 16. ♕xd4 exd4 17. ♘c7 ♗h3= Black is a full rook down but his attack is overwhelming.; 13. ♕f3 ♘c2+ 14. ♘d2 ♘xe3 15. ♕xe4 ♘xd1 16. ♖axd1 ♖b8=) 13... exd4 14. f3 (14. ♘xa8 ♗xg2 15. ♖f1 ♗xh2 After Black eats up the a8 knight with ... ♗h2-b8, he will be materially and positionally winning.) 14... ♗e5 15. ♘xa8



15... ♕h6!! (15... d5 16. 0-0 (16. cxd5 ♕f5 17. 0-0 d3 18. ♕xd3 ♗d4+ 19. ♖f2 ♕xd3=) 16... ♕f5 17. ♘h1! ♖xa8 18. f4±) 16. 0-0 (16. ♘f1 ♕e3=) 16... ♕f4 17. g3 ♕xg3 18. hxg3 ♗xg3+ 19. ♘h1 ♗h3+ 20. ♘g1=;

12... exd4 13. ♕xd4 ♗xe4 14. ♕xg7 ♗xg2



(14...♔xg7 15.0-0±)

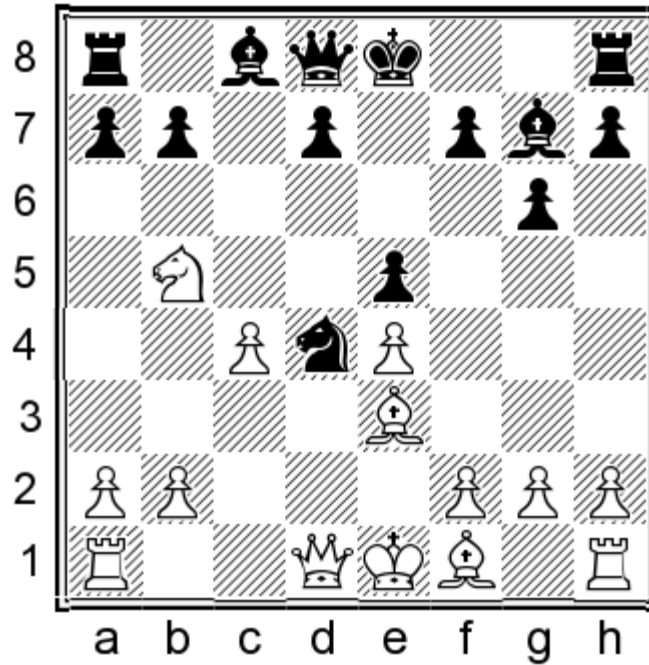
15.♕d4!! Engines have difficulty seeing this brilliant motive several moves in advance, but humans, especially after Anderssen-Kieseritzky 1851 (better known as “The Immortal Game”), know to look for such ideas. 15...♖xh1+ 16.♔d2 ♖xa1 17.♖f6! 1-0 (17) Gaprindashvili,N-Servaty,R Dortmund 1974.

**12.cxb5 d6 13.0-0 ♔e6=**

We have transposed to 11.0-0 d6 12.♘b5, which we have already seen is fine for Black.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♚xg4 ♗xd4 9.♚d1 e5 10.♗b5

In the 1960s and 1970s, thanks to some masterpieces by World Champions Smyslov and Tal, this move was thought to be a near refutation of Black's setup. Over the years, preference of top players has vacillated between 10.♗b5 and 10.♙d3, their popularities remaining about equal to this day.

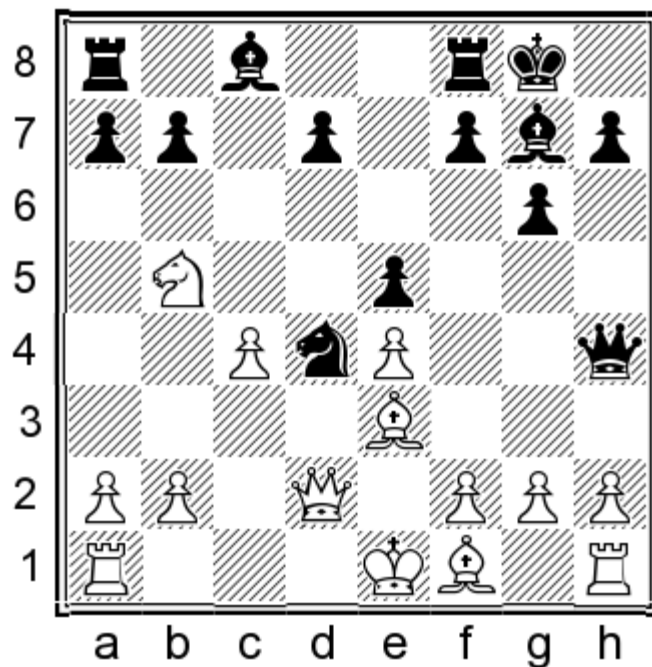


### 10...0-0?!

This is what everyone plays, but the positions Black tends to get are not inspiring, and White is scoring quite well (over 60%) after this move in the database. This is why I recommend instead the powerful novelty 10...d6! in the next subchapter.

### 11.♚d2 ♚h4!

Definitely Black's best try, but due to the novelty I recommend for White next move, Black is left struggling to equalize.



11...♖e8 12.♗d6 ♜e6 13.c5±;

11...d6 12.♗xd4 exd4 13.♙xd4 ♜h4 14.♙xg7 ♜xe4+ 15.♙e2 ♗xg7 16.0-0±;

11...d5 12.cxd5 ♜h4 13.♗c3 ♙g4 14.♙g5±;

11...♗xb5 12.cxb5 d6

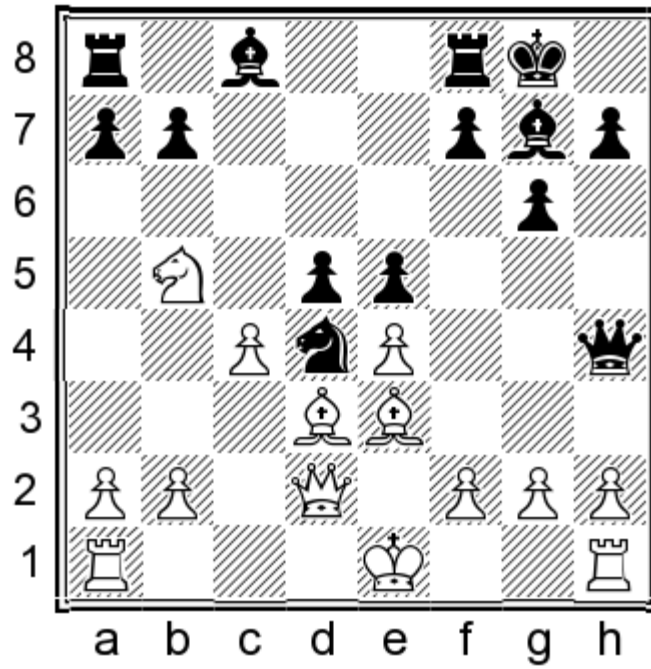
(12...♜h4 13.♙d3 ♜g4 14.0-0 b6 15.♙c4 ♙b7 16.f3+—)

13.♙c4±

## 12.♗c3!N

It may appear odd to retreat this knight to where it was just a couple of moves ago. White's idea is to castle queenside and pawn storm Black's king — punishment for castling too early, at least compared to the line I recommend in the next chapter. Black's queen is misplaced on h4, and if it retreats to d8 then White and Black's lost tempi 'cancel out'.

12.♙d3 d5!!



13.exd5

(13.cxd5 ♖xb5 14.♙xb5 ♚xe4 15.0-0 ♜d8 16.♞fd1 ♙d7=)

13...♙h3!! 14.♙xd4 exd4 15.gxh3

(15.0-0 ♙xg2 16.♙xg2 ♚g4+ 17.♙h1 ♚f3+ 18.♙g1=)

15...a6 16.♗d6

(16.♗a3 ♙h6 17.♚c2 ♚xh3=)

16...♚e7+ 17.♗e4 f5 18.0-0-0 fxe4 19.♞he1 b5 20.♞xe4 ♚c7=

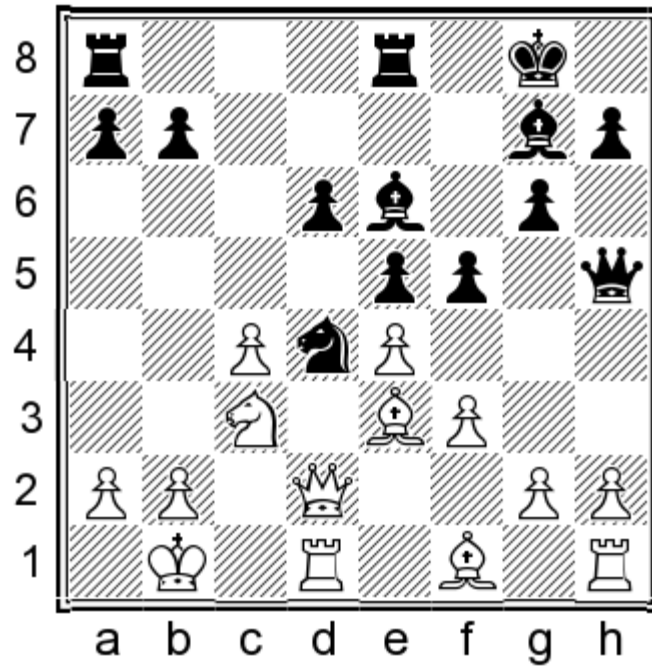
**12...d6**

12...♚d8 13.h4 h5 14.♗e2 ♗c6 15.g4 hxg4 16.h5→

**13.0-0-0 ♙e6**

13...♚d8 14.h4 h5 15.♗e2 ♗c6 16.♚xd6 ♚a5 17.♗c3 ♗d4 18.♚a3 ♚xa3 19.bxa3±

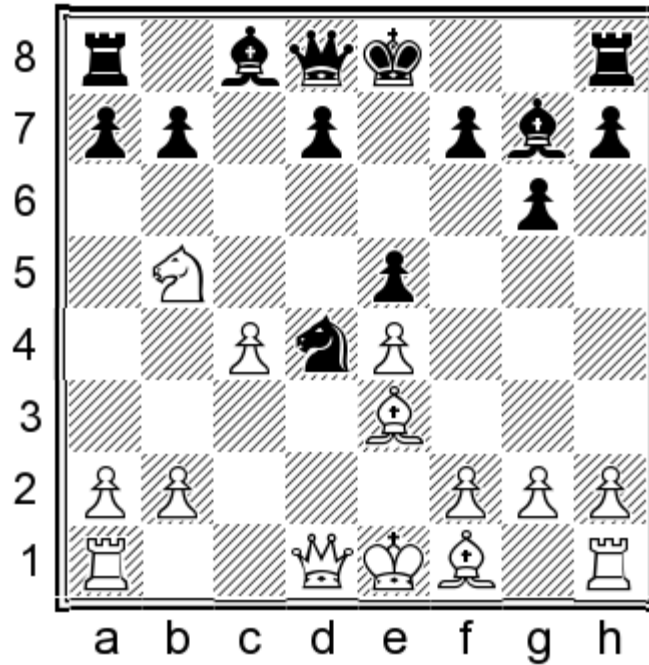
**14.♙g5 ♚h5 15.♙b1 f5 16.f3 ♞fe8 17.♙e3±**



Black's queen is miserable on h5.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♖c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♚xg4 ♗xd4 9.♚d1 e5 10.♗b5

It is remarkable that in the sixty year history of this position, which has been defended by such champions as Kasparov and Korchnoi, not a single game is in the database after 10...d6!. The following is arguably the most powerful novelty in this book; I believe that the ensuing variations demonstrate the superiority of 10...♙d3 over 10.♗b5.



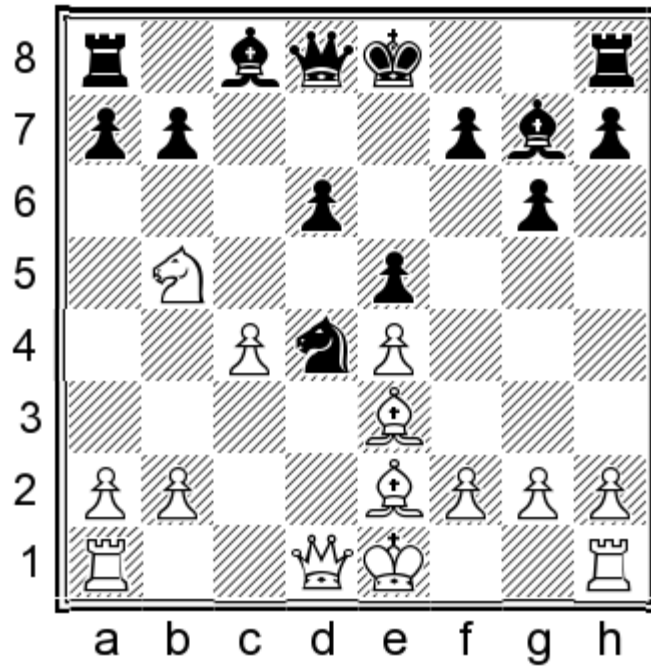
### 10...d6!N

I refer to this as a novelty, even though (as we will see) I have played this move twice (and won both times!) in tournament play — in unpublished games against WGM Nemcova (2350) and IM Gorovets (2550). Black saves a crucial tempo by delaying ...0-0 which allows him to generate central counterplay one move sooner. This does not violate the laws of opening play; after all, White is not castled either. It is actually quite in line with the advice given by American legend GM William Lombardy in his recent book: “Not only should one not rush to castle, but should delay that passive maneuver for as long as good judgment relates that there are more urgent, if only slightly better, tasks to accomplish”.

### 11.♗xd4

This is of course the first line to check: presumably 10...d6 was never played because it was thought to lose a pawn in this way.

11.♙e2!?

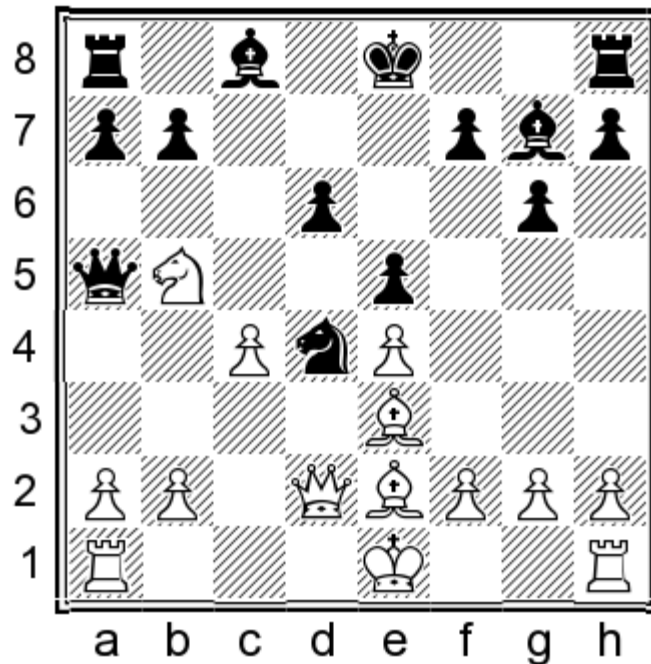


11...Qa5+!

(11...Nxb5?! This transposes to an inferior version of our main line. 12.cxb5 Qe6 13.0-0 0-0 (13...d5 14.exd5 Qxd5 15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Bfd1 Qe6 17.Qf3+-) 14.Qd2 d5 15.exd5 Qxd5 16.Qxd5 Qxd5 This is a position from our main line except there Black plays ...e5-e4 instead of ...0-0. 17.Bfd1 Qe6 18.Qf3±)

12.Qd2

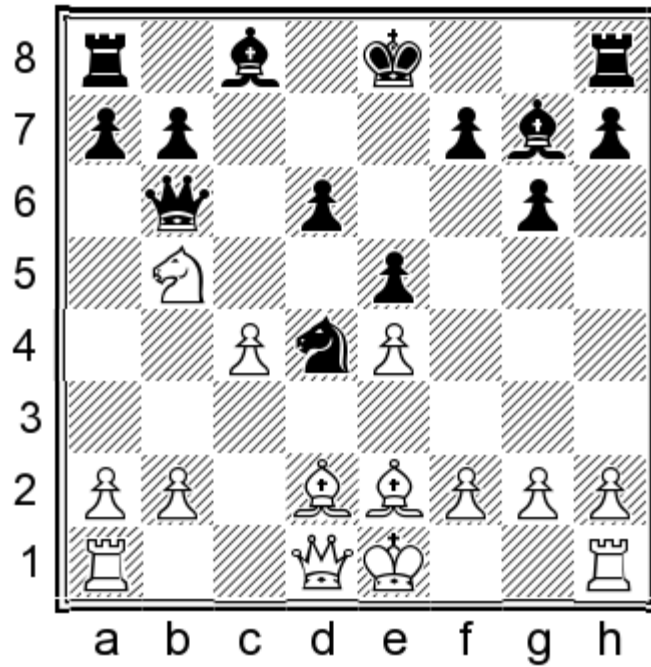
(12.Qd2



12...Qd2+ (12...Nc2+ 13.Qd1 Nxe3+ 14.fxe3 Qxd2+ 15.Qxd2 0-0 16.Bhd1 Qh6! 17.Nxd6 Bd8 18.c5 b6 19.b4 Qe6 20.a3 a5±) 13.Qxd2 (13.Qxd2 Nxb5 14.cxb5 Qe6 15.0-0 f5 16.Qb4 0-0-0 17.Bfd1 d5=) 13...Nxb5 14.cxb5 Qe6 15.Qf3 (15.Bhc1 d5 16.exd5 Qxd5 17.b6 axb6 18.Qb5+ Qe7 19.Bc7+ Qe6 20.Qe2 e4± This was a game I played online.) 15...0-0 16.Bhc1 a6 17.bxa6 (17.b6? f5! 18.exf5 gxf5 19.Qxb7 Bxb8 20.Qxa6 f4±) 17...Qxa6 18.Bc7 Bb8=

White's occupation of the 7th rank is short-lived; Black will continue ...♙g7-f6-d8 with equality.)

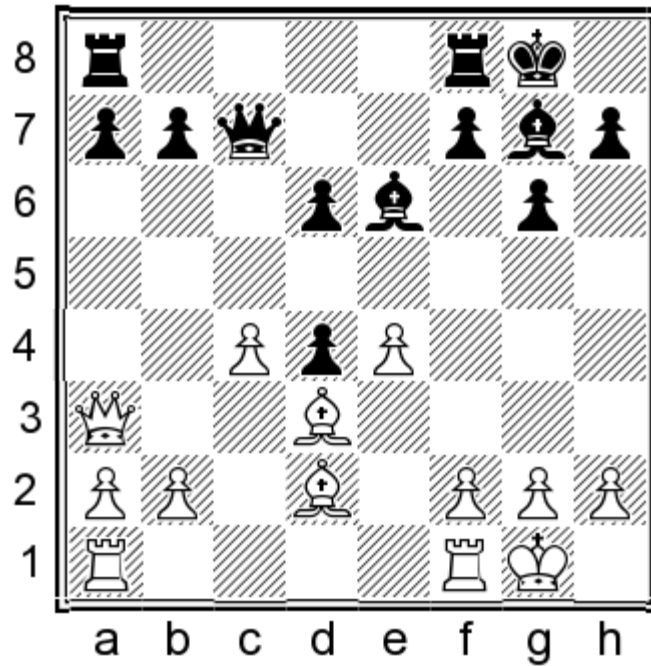
12...♙b6



13.♘xd4

(13.0-0 0-0 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♙b3 ♙e6 16.♙d3 ♚c7 transposes to 13.♘xd4.; 13.♙e3 a6 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♙c1 f5⇌)

13...exd4 14.♙b3 0-0 15.♙d3 ♙e6 16.0-0 ♚c7 17.♙a3



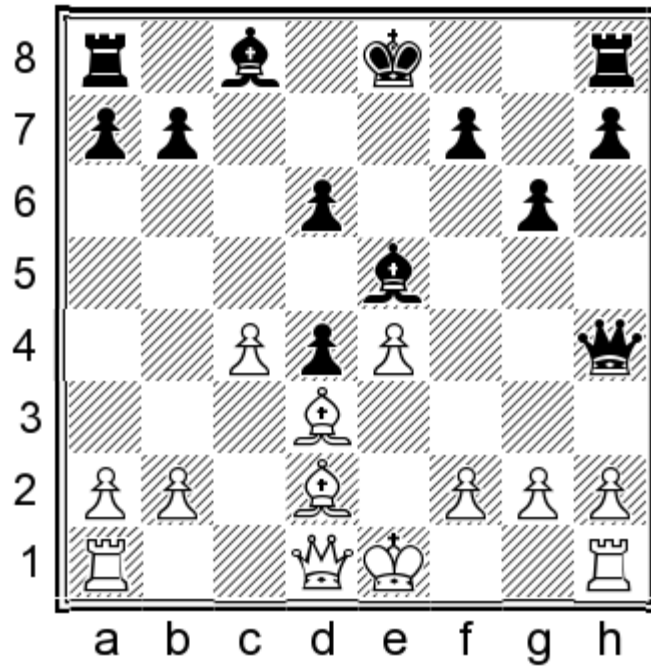
17...f5 18.exf5 ♙xf5 19.♙xf5 ♚xf5= Black will eventually undouble his pawns with ...d6-d5.

11...exd4 12.♙xd4

12.♙d2 White cannot expect an advantage playing like this; Black has many ways to equalize. 12...♙h4

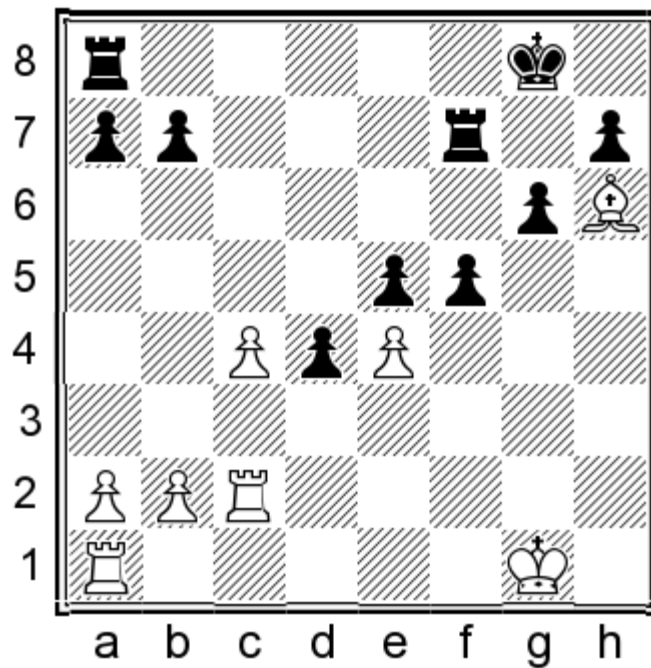
(12...0-0!? 13.♔d3 f5 14.0-0 ♕e6 15.♖e2 ♗c7 16.b3 ♜ae8 17.♞ae1 ♔d7=)

13.♔d3 ♕e5



14.g3

(14.h3 0-0 15.♖c1 f6 (Δ...g5) 16.0-0 (16.g3 ♔xg3 17.fxg3 ♗xg3+ 18.♔e2 ♗g2+-+; 16.c5 ♕e6⇌) 16...♔xh3 17.f4 (17.gxh3 ♗xh3-+) 17...♗g3 18.♞f2 ♔xg2! 19.♞xg2 ♗xd3 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.♔h6 ♞f7 22.♖c2 ♗xc2 23.♞xc2 f5⇌)

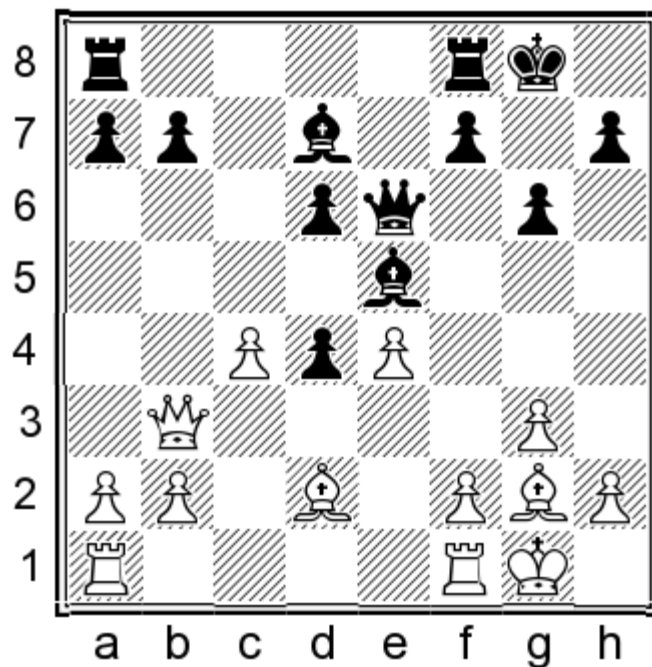


This will most likely be drawn but I'd rather be Black than White.)

14...♗h3 15.♔f1 ♖e6 16.♗b3

(16.f4 ♔g7 17.♔d3 ♗h3=)

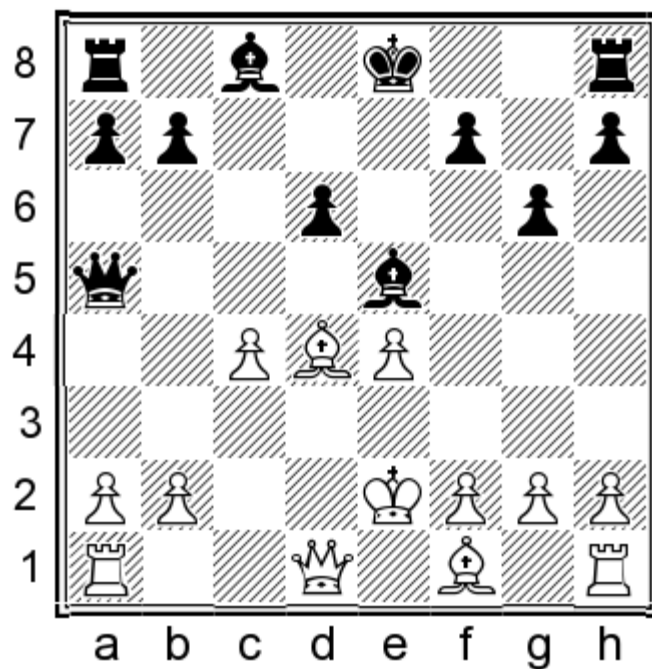
16...0-0 17.♔g2 ♔d7 18.0-0



18...b5!?

12.♔f4?! f5! 13.exf5 0-0

12...♖a5+ 13.♔e2 ♕e5!



Our compensation becomes of a long-term nature with this move. White cannot exchange bishops without returning his extra pawn, so he has to look for ways to disentangle his pieces — starting with his king on e2. I suspect most players will not play the most critical lines for White here (it can't be easy to if you have never seen this position before), so Black may pragmatically opt to just remember 13...♕e5! and figure things out over the board from here.

14.f3

According to my research this is clearly White's best try for an advantage.

14. ♖xe5 ♜xe5

(14...dxe5!?)

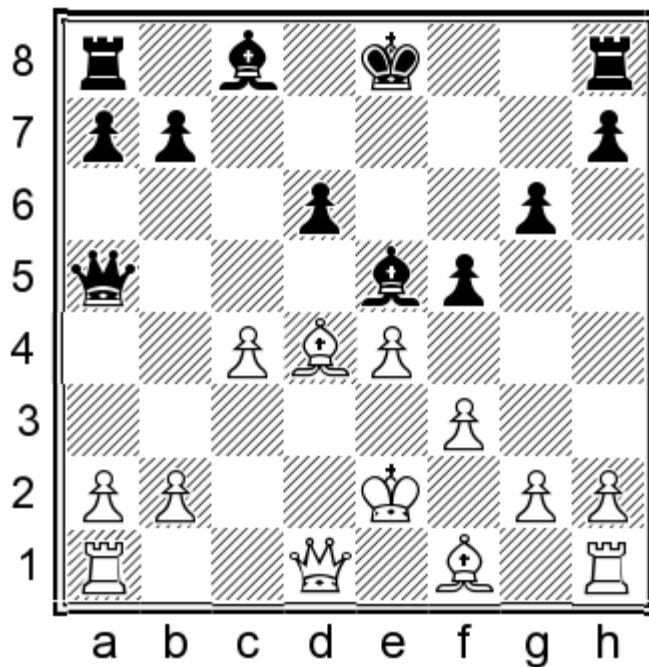
15. ♜d2 ♜xe4+ 16. ♜e3 ♜e7=;

14. g3 ♖e6 15. ♖f3

(15.b3 0-0 16. ♖g2 b5!?)

15...f5 16.exf5 ♖xf5 17. ♖g2 ♖e4+ 18.f3 ♖c6 19. ♖e2 0-0=

**14...f5!**



14... ♖e6 15. ♖f2 0-0 16. ♖e2 f5 17. b4 ♜c7 18. ♖xe5 dxe5 19. exf5 ♜xf5 20. c5 ♜d8 21. ♜c2 ♜f4 22. ♜c3 e4 23. ♜e3±;

14...0-0 15. ♖f2 ♖e6 16. ♖e2 f5 17. exf5 ♜xf5 18. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 19. ♜d2 ♜c5+ 20. ♜e3 ♖xc4 21. ♖xc4+ ♜xc4=

**15. ♜d3!**

15. exf5 ♖xf5 16. ♖f2 0-0-0

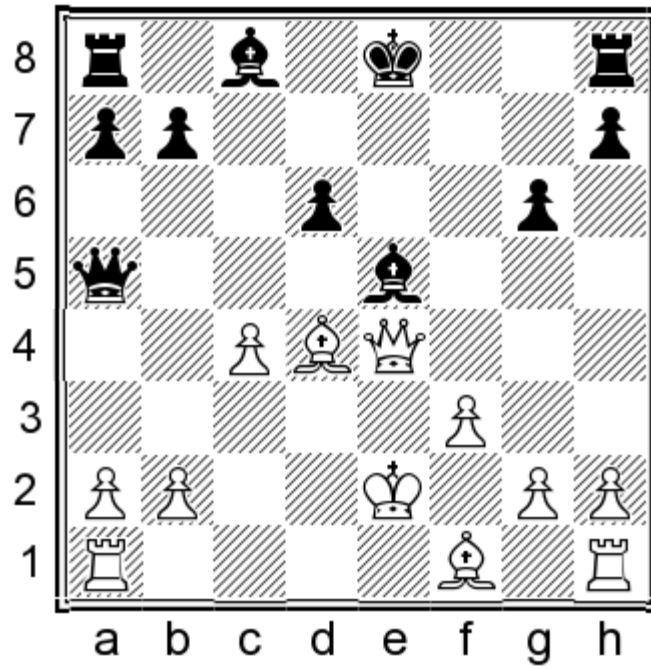
(16...0-0!?)

17. ♜c1

(17. ♖e2? ♖c2!?)

17... ♜he8 18. ♖e2 ♖b8 19. ♜c3 d5±

**15...fxe4 16. ♜xe4**



16...♙e6!

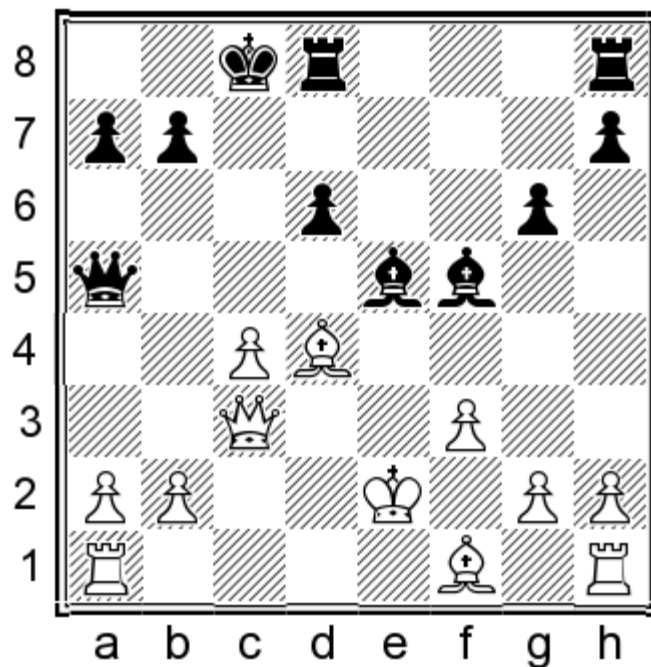
16...♙f5?! It's too bad this doesn't quite work because of 17.♞e3; the variations after 17.♞xb7 are quite pretty. 17.♞e3!

(17.♞xb7 ♙xd4! 18.♞xa8+ ♔e7 19.♞d5 ♞b6 20.♞d1 (20.♞b5 ♞c7 21.♞d5 ♞b6) 20...♙c5)

17...0-0-0

(17...0-0 18.♔f2 ♞ae8 19.♙xe5 ♞xe5 20.♞d4±)

18.♞c3!



This ♞c3 move would not be available to White were his pawn on b3, as it is in the (main) variation 16...♙e6 b3 17.♙f5.

(18.♔f2 ♞he8 19.♞c3! ♞xc3 20.bxc3 (20.♙xc3 ♙xc3 21.bxc3 ♞e5=) 20...♞e7 21.♞d1 ♔c7 22.♞d2 ♞de8 23.g3 h5

24.♙e2±)

18...♚xc3 19.bxc3 ♘b8 20.♙f2 ♜c8 21.h4±

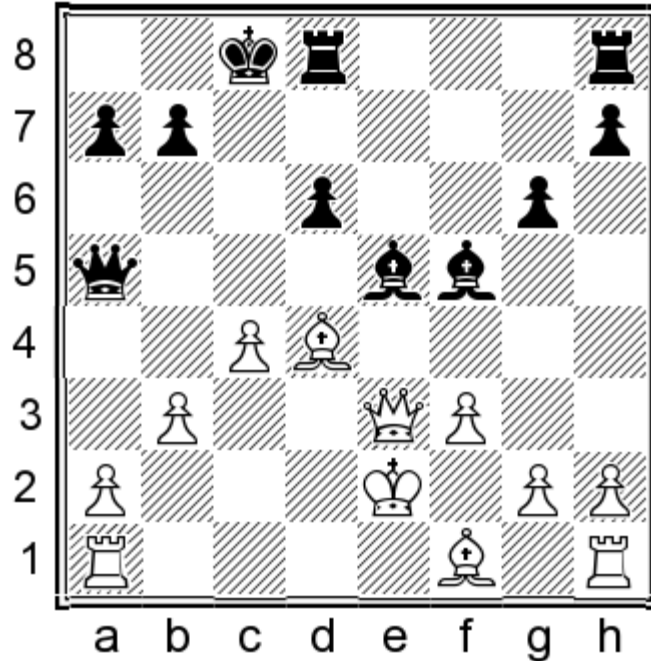
### 17.♚e3

17.♞d1 ♙xc4+ 18.♙f2 ♙f7 19.♙xe5 dxe5 20.♚xb7 0-0 21.♚b5 ♚xa2 22.♚xe5 ♞fe8 23.♚f6 ♞ab8 24.♞d2 ♚a5=;

17.b3 ♙f5! Unlike in the 16...♙f5 lines, White will not have ♚e3-c3 now. 18.♚e3

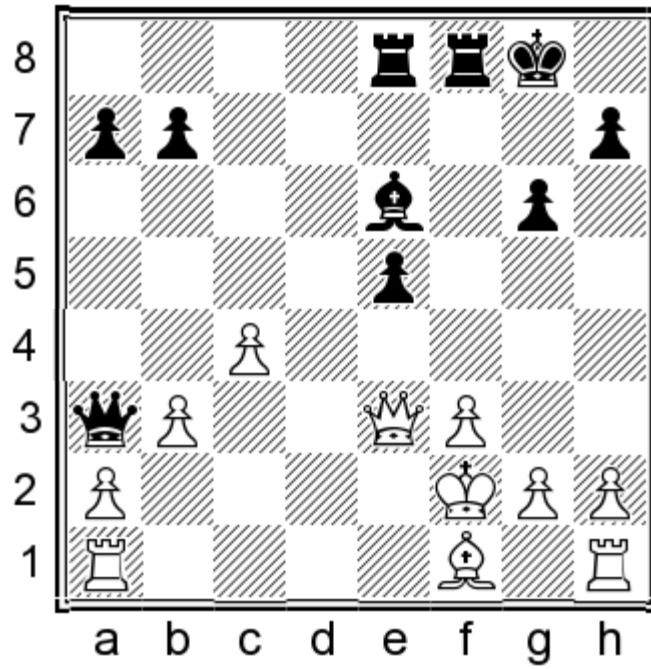
(18.♚xb7?? ♙xd4 19.♚xa8+ ♙e7 20.♚b7+ ♙f6-+)

18...0-0-0



19.♙f2 ♞he8 20.♙xe5 ♞xe5 21.♚d4 ♞de8=;

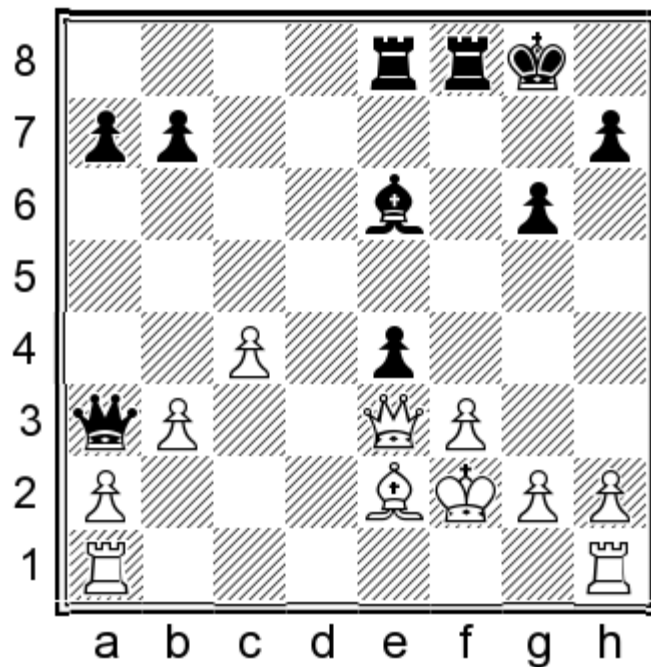
17.♙c3 ♚c5 18.♙xe5 dxe5 19.b3 0-0 20.♚e3 ♚a3! 21.♙f2 ♞ae8



22. ♕e2

(22. ♖xe5? ♗f7 23. ♖c3 ♖c5+ 24. ♔g3 ♜e3 25. ♖b2 ♞d8 26. ♕e2 ♗g5+ 27. ♔f2 ♞xe2+-+)

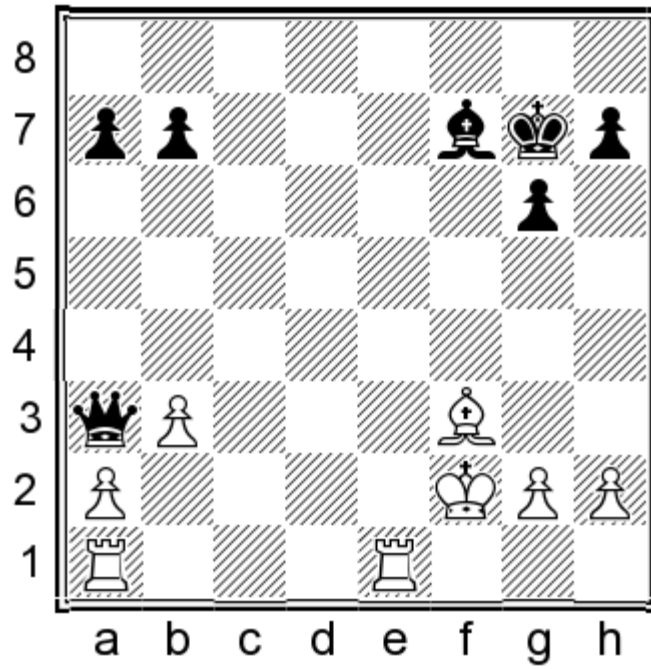
22...e4!



23. ♞he1

(23. ♖xe4 ♖c5+ 24. ♔f1 ♗h3 25. ♖d3 ♖e5 26. ♖d5+ (26. ♞e1 ♞d8 27. ♖c2 ♖e3 28. gxf3 ♞d2-+) 26... ♖xd5 27. cxd5 ♗xg2+ 28. ♔xg2 ♞xe2+ 29. ♔g3 ♜e3 30. ♞hf1 ♞d3 31. ♞ad1 ♞xf3+ 32. ♞xf3 ♞xd1=)

23...exf3 24. ♕xf3 ♗xc4 25. ♖xe8 ♞xe8 26. ♞xe8+ ♔g7 27. ♞ee1 ♗f7



This position may not look equal; White does after all have a slight material advantage, but his rooks will be permanently tied down to the defense of the queenside pawns and therefore never able to get activated. The position is just a draw. 28.♔g1

(28.♙xb7 ♚c5+ 29.♞e3 ♚c7 30.♙f3 ♚xh2=)

28...b5 29.♔h1 ♚b2 30.♙c6 b4 31.♞f1 a5 32.♞ae1 ♙g8 33.♞e7+ ♔h6 34.♞e8 ♔g7=;

17.♙xe5 dxe5 18.♔f2 0-0-0 19.♚e3 ♞d2+ 20.♙e2 ♞hd8 21.♞ad1 ♚b6 22.♚xb6 axb6=

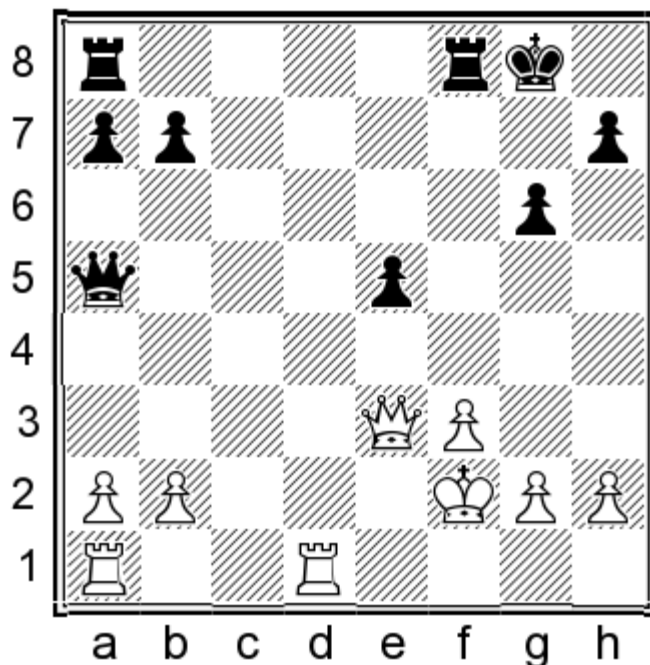
**17...♙xc4+ 18.♔f2 ♙xf1 19.♞hxf1**

19.♙c3 ♚b6 20.♚xb6 axb6 21.♙xe5 dxe5 22.♞hxf1 ♔f7 23.♞fe1 ♔e6 24.a3 ♞hc8 25.♞e2 ♞a5 26.♞ae1 ♞c4=

**19...0-0 20.♙xe5 dxe5**

20...♚xe5 21.♚xe5 dxe5 22.♞fe1 ♞ae8 23.♞e2±

**21.♞fd1**



The simplified nature of the position should not induce a comatose attitude. From Shereshevsky's marvelous book "Endgame Strategy" we are shown the plight of the passive defender; Black must be vigilant to avoid ending up on the wrong end of a masterpiece.

**21...♖ac8!**

In such endgames it is usually easiest to get a draw by defending actively — Black threatens to invade the 2nd rank, allowing White to invade the 7th.

21...♖ad8 22.a3 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♗a4 24.♖c1 ♗h4+ 25.♔g1 ♗f4 26.♗c3 ♖d8 27.g3±;

21...♖ae8 22.♗b3+

(22.♔g1 ♖f7 23.a3 ♖e6 24.♔h1 ♗b6 25.♗e2 ♖fe7=)

22...♔h8 23.♗xb7

(23.♖d5 ♗c7 24.♗e3 e4 25.♗d4+ ♗g7 (25...♔g8 26.♖d7 ♗e5 27.♗xe5 ♖xe5 28.♖xb7±) 26.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 27.♖d7+ ♖f7 28.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 29.f4 ♔e6 30.♖d1 ♖c8 31.♔e3 h5 (31...♖c2 32.♖d2 ♖xd2 33.♔xd2±) 32.♖d2 ♔f5 33.h3 ♖c1 34.♖d5+ ♔e6 35.♖e5+ ♔f6 36.♖b5 b6 37.♔xe4±)

23...♗c5+ 24.♔f1 e4 25.♖d7 ♗h5 26.♗xa7 exf3 27.♗d4+ ♖e5 28.♖e1 fxe2+ 29.♔g1 ♖f1+ 30.♖xf1 gxf1=♗+ 31.♔xf1 ♗xh2 32.♖e7 ♗h1+ 33.♔f2 ♗h2+ 34.♔f1=

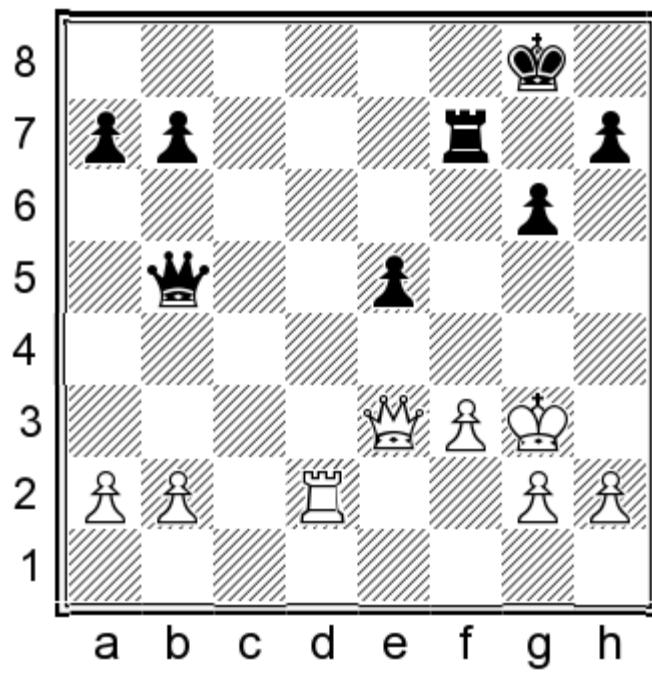
**22.♖d7 ♖f7 23.♖ad1**

23.♗b3 ♗b6+ 24.♗xb6 axb6 25.♖xf7 ♔xf7 26.♖e1 ♔e6 27.♖e2 ♖c4=

**23...♖c2+ 24.♔g3**

24.♖7d2 ♖xd2+ 25.♖xd2 e4! =

**24...♗b5 25.♖1d2 ♖xd2 26.♖xd2**



26...e4!! 27.♞d8+

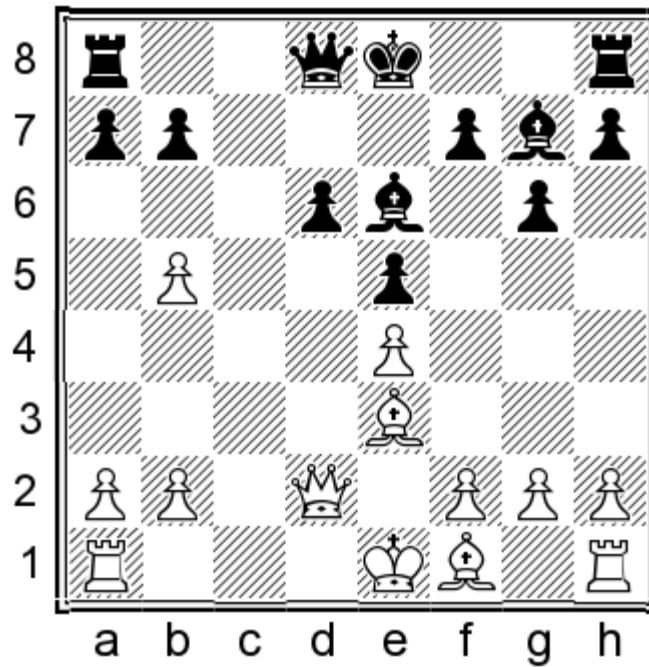
27.f4 ♞a5 28.a3 ♞e7=

27...♞f8 28.♞xf8+ ♔xf8 29.♞xe4 ♞xb2=

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♙g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♙xg4 ♗xd4 9.♙d1 e5 10.♗b5 d6!N  
11.♙d2

I dub this the main line because it was played in the only two tournament games of mine in this variation.

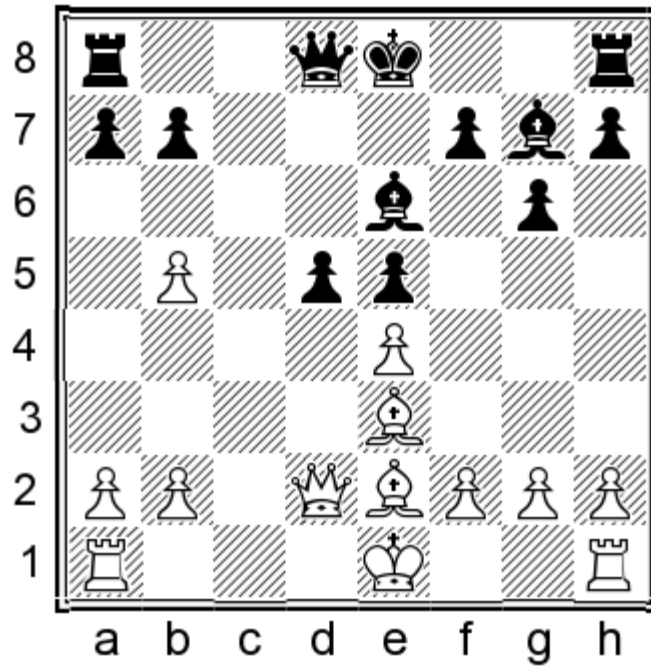
11...♗xb5 12.cxb5 ♙e6!



We continue to delay castling — Lombardy would be proud. The importance of the saved tempo is already felt: if 12...0-0 then we transpose into the 10...0-0 line and White is allowed 13.♙c4+=. It amazes me how good Black's position is here: it is already 'zeroes' according to the computer, and if White makes the slightest inaccuracy (as both my strong opponents did) then Black is already better. Once again, this opening forces us to look past our intuitive, visceral response to each position, which might mislead us into thinking White is better here due to Black's backward d-pawn and apparent lack of counterplay.

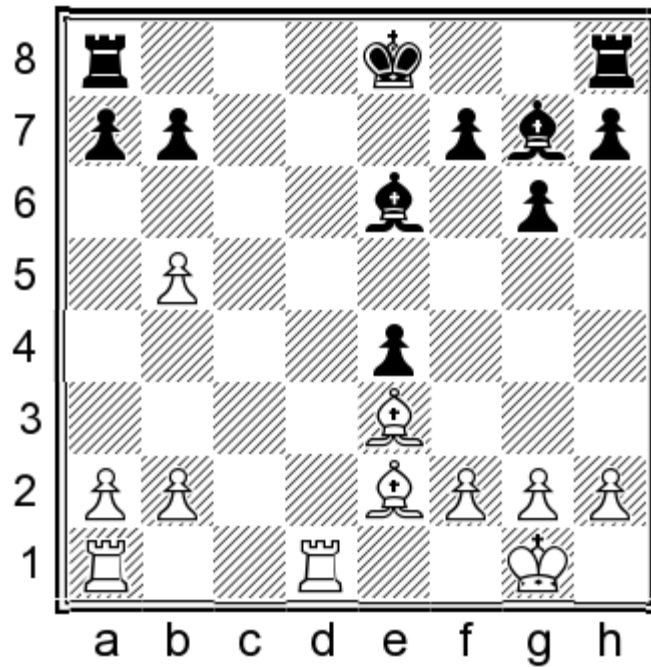
12...0-0?! 13.♙c4±

13.♙e2 d5



14.exd5 ♖xd5 15.♗xd5 ♘xd5 16.0-0 e4! 17.♞fd1 ♙e6

White must already, as Carlsen often says, “pull the emergency brake” so as to not end up worse.



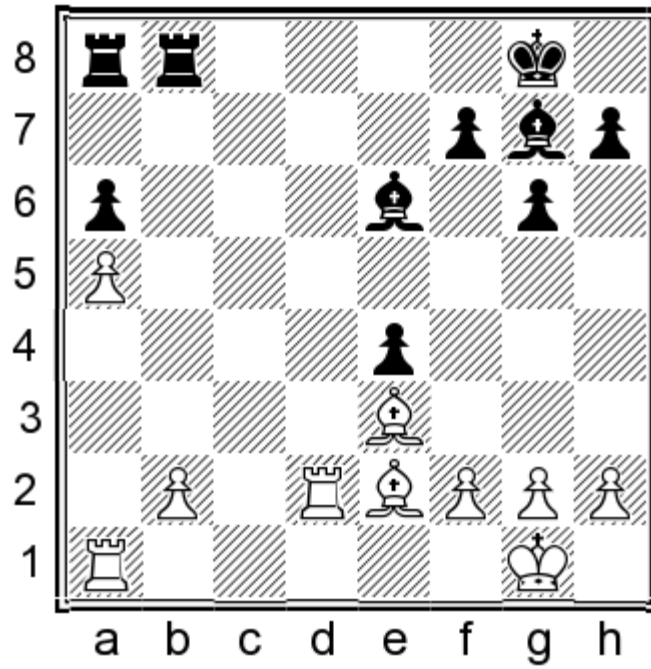
18.♙d4

This was Nemcova’s choice.

18.♞d2 Gorovets went with this one. 18...0-0 19.a4 a6

(19...f5 20.g3 (20.♙f4 ♞fd8) 20...♙e5 21.♞c1 ♞fd8 22.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 23.a5 b6 24.b4±)

20.bxa6 bxa6 21.a5 ♞fb8!



This nuance was preparation; I doubt I would have come up with the subtlety of luring White's bishop to b6 over the board. 22.♘b6 ♜c8! Black threatens ...♙g7-h6. 23.♞ad1 ♙f6 Preventing White from trading rooks with ♜d8+, and preparing ...♙e6-c4.

(23...♙h6? 24.♜d8+ ♜xd8 25.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 26.♙xd8±)

24.b4?! ♙b3! 25.♞b1

(25.♙g4 ♜c3 26.♞b1 ♙g5↔)

25...♙c3 White's last chance to achieve equality. 26.♞xb3?

(26.♞d7 ♙c2 27.♞f1 ♙xb4 28.f3 exf3 29.♙xf3 ♙f5 30.♞d4 ♙c3 31.♙xa8 ♙xd4+ 32.♙xd4 ♞xa8 33.♙f6=)

26...♙xd2 27.g4 ♙g5! 28.b5 axb5 29.♙xb5 ♙d8 30.♙d7 ♞cb8 31.♙c6 ♞a6—+ 0–1 (39) Gorovets,A-Panjwani ,R Greensboro 2016.

### 18...0-0

This was as far as I had prepared (though it was still time consuming for me to remember my preparation over the board!).

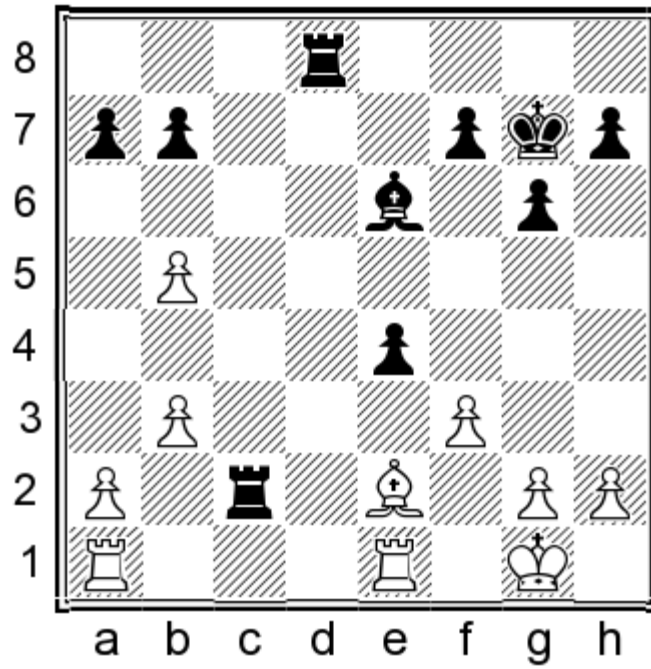
19.♙xg7 ♙xg7 20.f3?!

20.♞d4 f5 21.♙c4 ♙xc4 22.♞xc4=

20...♞fc8! 21.b3 ♞c2 22.♞e1?!

22.♙f1 ♙f5↗

22...♞d8!



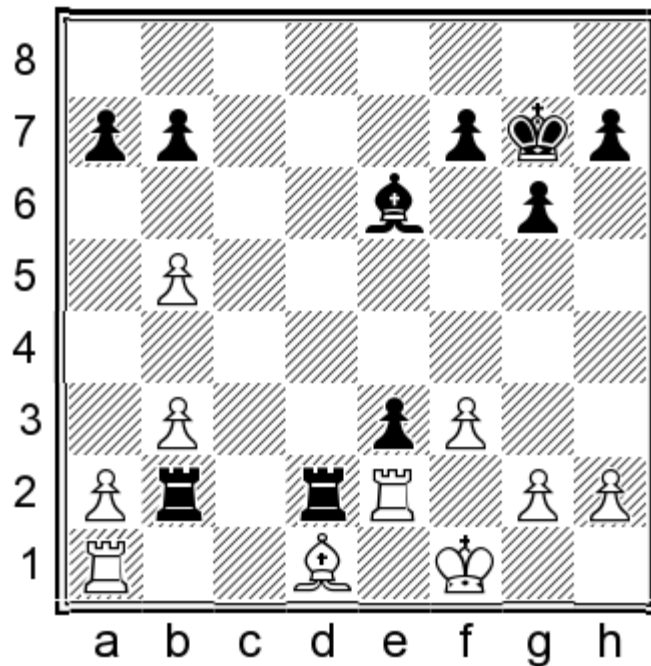
23. Qd1

23. fxe4 Bdd2 24. Qf1 Qg4 25. Qxg4 Bf2+ 26. Qg1 Bxg2+ 27. Qh1 Bxh2+ 28. Qg1 Bcg2+ 29. Qf1 Bxg4+

23... Bb2 24. Qf1?!

24. fxe4 Bdd2 25. Qf3 Bxa2

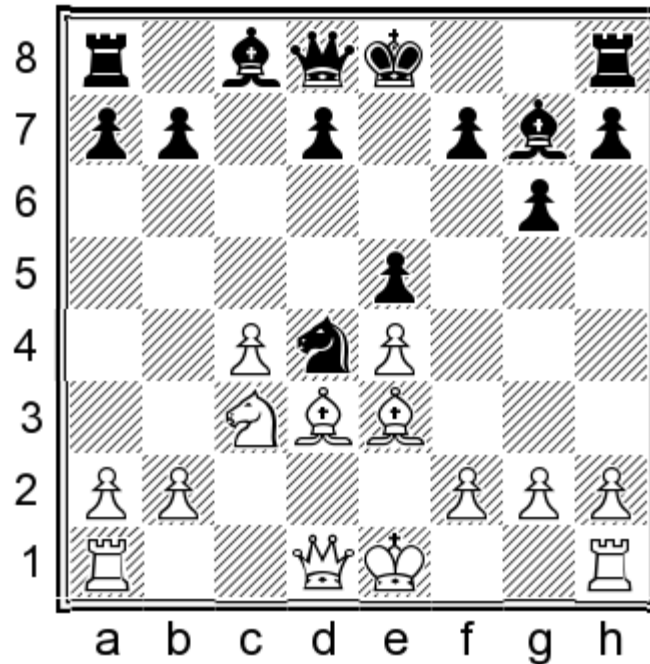
24... Bdd2 25. Be2 e3!



26. Bxd2 Bxd2 27. Qe2 Qf6! 28. a4 Qxb3 29. Ba3 Bb2 30. g3 Bb1+ 31. Qg2 Qe5! 32. a5 Qd4

0-1 Nemcova-Panjwani, Chicago 2014.

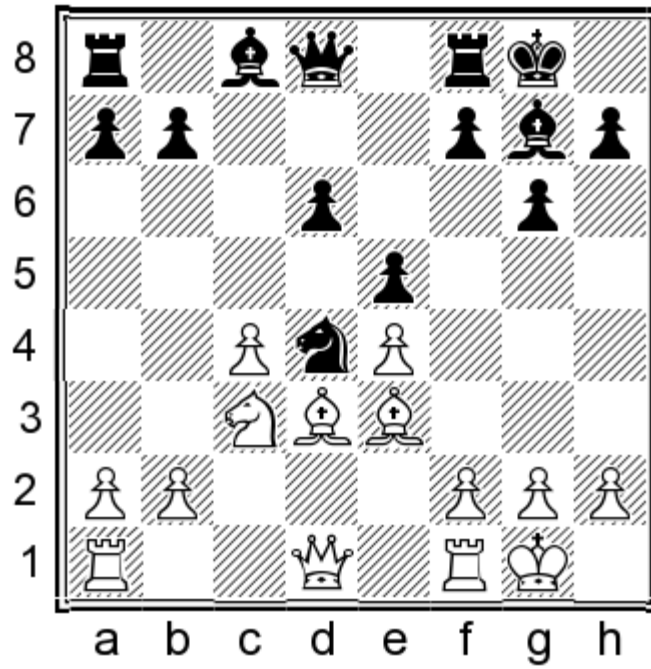
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♙xg4 ♗xd4 9.♙d1 e5 10.♙d3



In my opinion this is White's best move, but authors like Khalifman recommend 10.♗b5 because they claim that "White should straighten out the situation with the black knight on d4 at once. Should it be left unmolested now, it will be much harder to contend with it later."

**10...d6 11.0-0 0-0**

White has many possibilities here, but Black's play is fairly straightforward regardless. He will either play on the queenside with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 or on the kingside with ...f7-f5 (and often he combines play on both sides). However, he should not rush with either of these plans, because that would give White something to respond to, while at present the onus is on White to reveal how he plans to improve his position.



12.♖d2

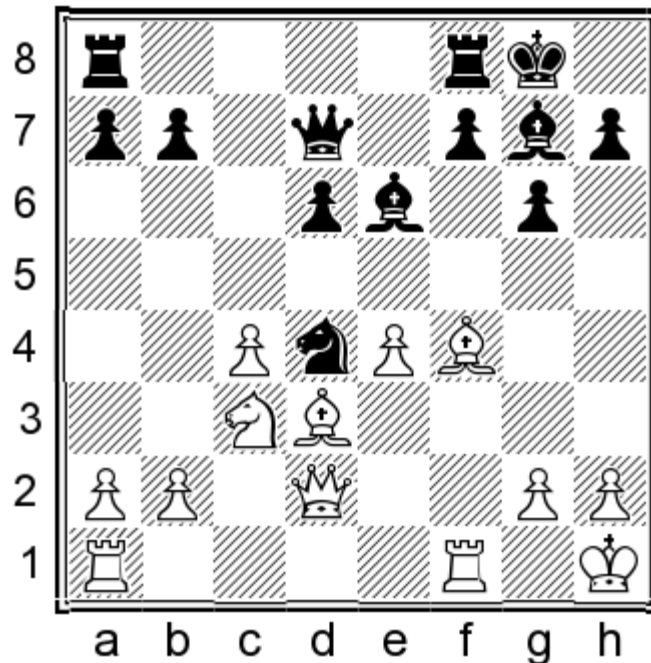
12.♖b5?! Played by Almasi, Korneev, and Izoria. With this move, however, White no longer has an opening advantage.

12...♗xb5 13.cxb5 d5 14.exd5 ♖xd5 15.f3 ♕e6 16.♖e2 ♖d7 17.♗fd1 ♗e7=;

12.♗h1?! Not a bad move in and of itself, but it only makes sense in combination with f2-f4 (when the king is better placed off the g1–a7 diagonal) which yields White nothing here. 12...♕e6 13.♖d2 ♖d7

(13...f5?! Too soon. 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♕xf5 gxf5 16.♕g5 ♕f6 17.♕xf6 ♖xf6 18.b3 ♗ad8 19.♗ad1 a6 20.f4±)

14.f4 exf4 15.♕xf4



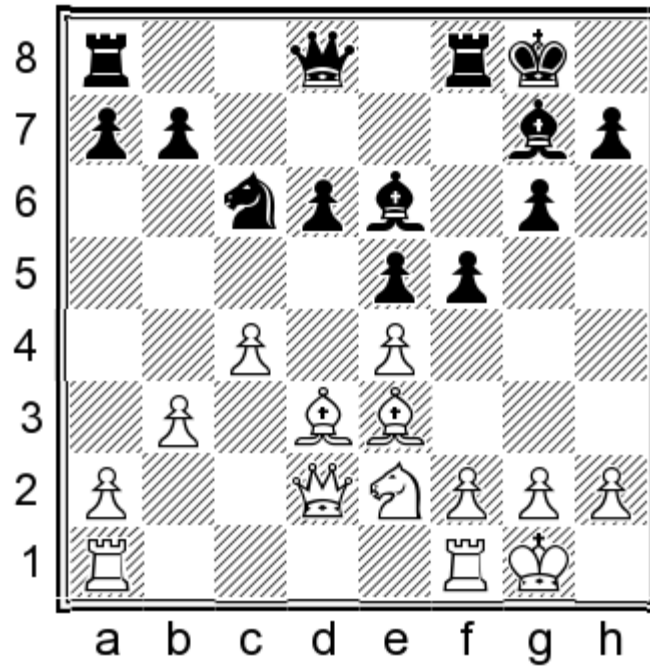
15...♗c6! This is the typical way to meet White's f2-f4. 16.♗d5 ♕xd5 17.exd5 ♗e5=;

12.f4?! exf4 13.♙xf4 ♖e6

(13...♗c6!?)=)

14.♙e3 ♙e5 15.♚d2 ♗c5 16.♙c2 ♙e6 17.b3 ♚a5 18.♙d4 ♜ac8↗;

12.♗e2 GM Shankland played this against me in 2014. Our game continued... 12...♗c6 13.♚d2 ♙e6 14.b3 f5!



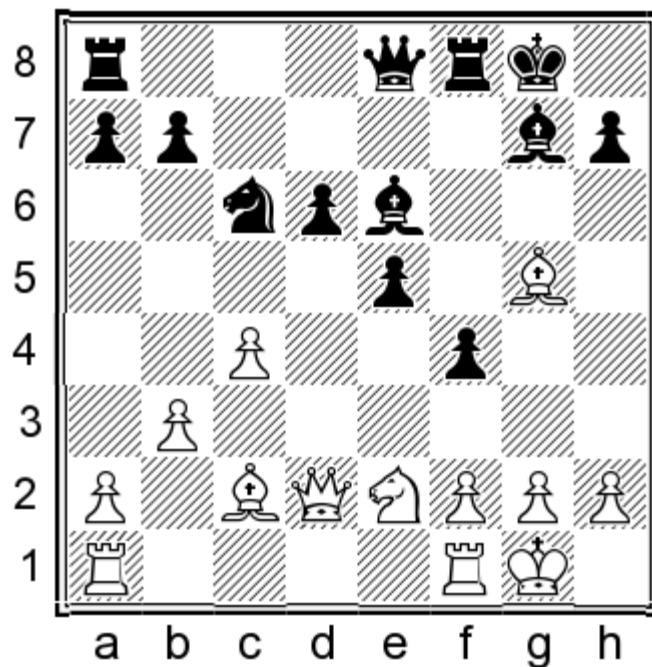
With White's knight misplaced on e2 I felt I could play ...f7-f5 earlier than usual. 15.♙g5?!

(15.f3 f4 16.♙f2 g5 17.♗c3 h5 18.♜fd1 ♜f7↗)

15...♚e8 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♙c2

(17.f3 ♚h5 18.♙e3 f4 19.♙f2 ♜f6 20.♗h1 ♗h8 21.♙g1 ♜g8↗; 17.♗c3 f4 18.♙e4 ♚h5 19.♚xd6 ♜fe8 20.♙d5 ♙xd5 21.♚xd5+ ♗h8 22.♗e4 ♜f8 23.♚d7 ♜f7 24.♚h3 ♚xh3 25.gxh3 ♗d4↗)

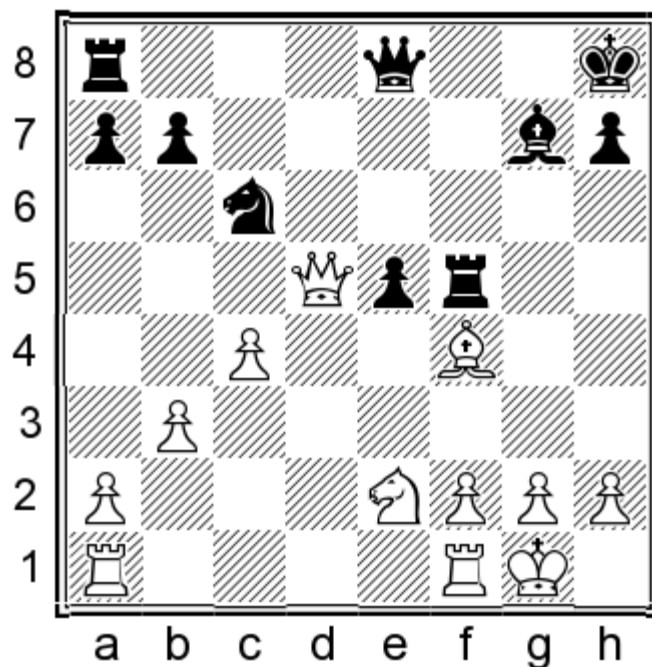
17...f4!



18. ♖xd6

(18. ♜ae1 ♞h5 19. h4 (19. ♖xd6 ♙f7+) 19... ♞f7 20. ♖xd6 ♙f5 21. ♙xf5 ♞xf5+)

18... ♙f5 19. ♙xf5 ♜xf5 20. ♖d5+ ♔h8 21. ♙xf4



I was not accurate here. I should have continued with 21... ♞d8!

(21... ♘e7 This was my choice, but White is close to equal here thanks to a surprise resource that I missed. 22. ♖xb7 exf4 23. ♜ae1 ♜b8 24. ♖xa7 ♜a8 25. ♖b7 ♜b8 26. ♖a7 Instead of repeating here and accepting a draw I made a terrible hallucination. 26... ♜e5?? 27. ♘xf4 My board vision failed me as I had missed White's last move in this variation. 27... ♜xe1 28. ♜xe1 ♘c6 29. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 30. ♖e3+)

22. ♖e4 exf4 23. ♖xf5 ♙xa1 24. ♜xa1 ♖xe2 25. ♖f6+ ♔g8 26. ♖g5+ ♔f7 27. ♖xf4+ ♔e8+;

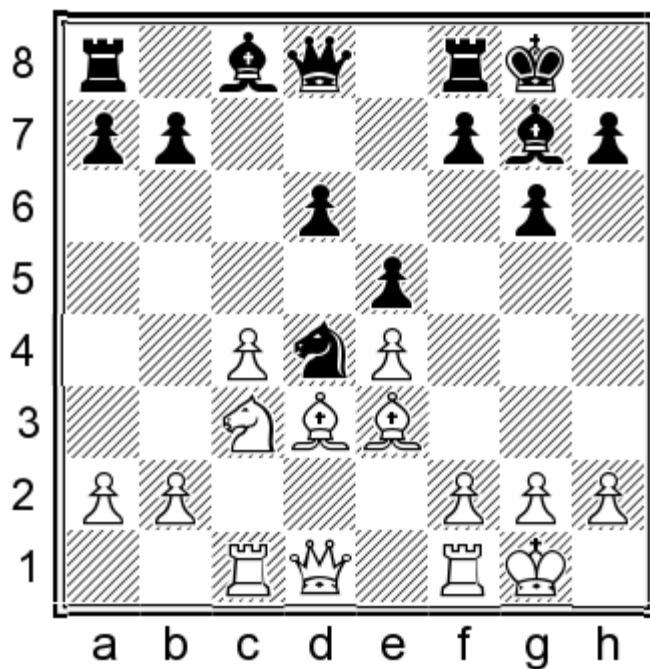
12. a4 ♙e6 13. a5 f5 White has effectively wasted two tempi with a4-a5 so Black can play ...f7-f5 earlier than usual.

14.exf5

(14.♙xd4 exd4 15.♘d5 f4 16.♙e2 ♙xd5 17.cxd5 h5⇌)

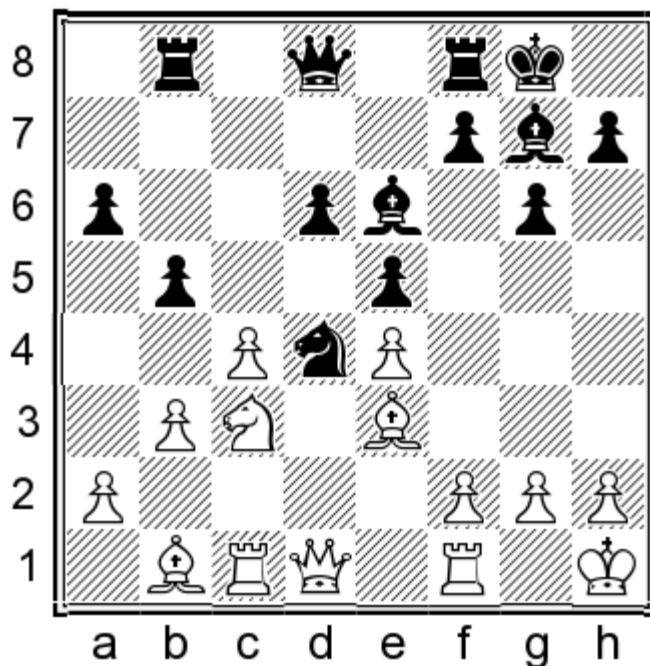
14...♗xf5 15.♙xf5 gxh5⇌;

12.♞c1

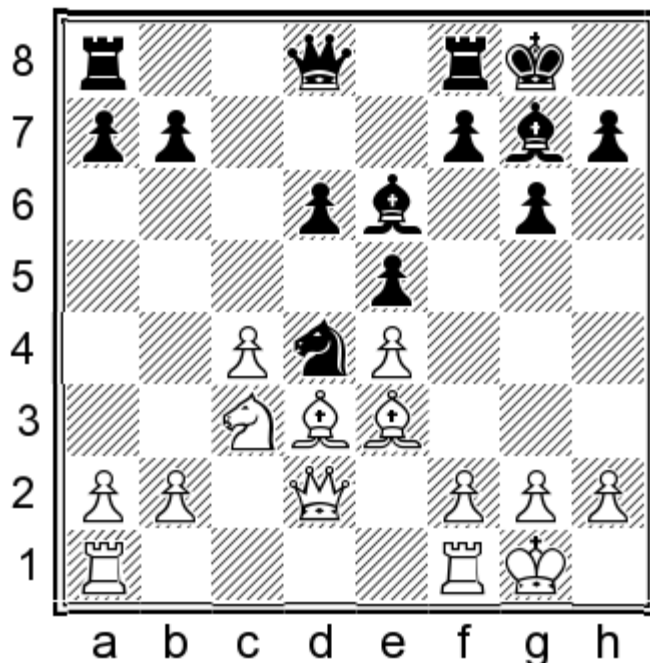


Witness the battle between two former World Chess Champions (though Smyslov got his title the year after this game was played). Botvinnik masterfully outplayed Smyslov but let him get away with a draw in the end.

12...♙e6 13.b3 a6 14.♙b1 ♞b8 15.♗h1 b5



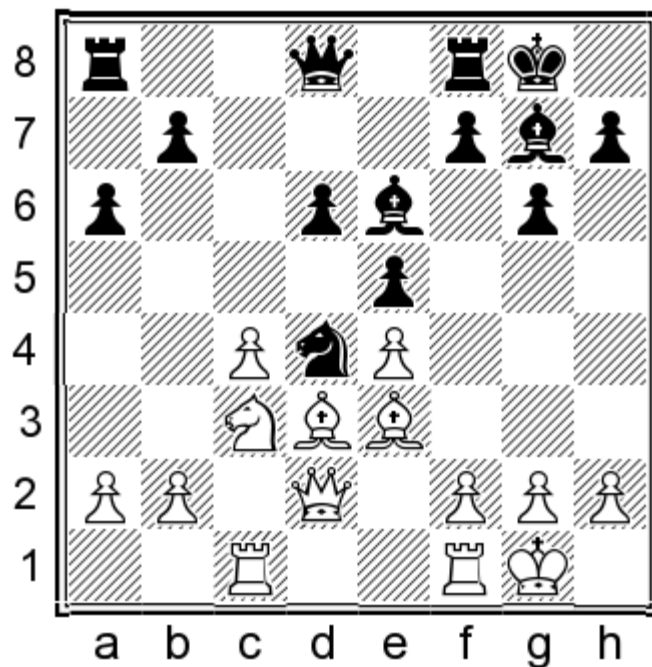
16.cxb5 axb5 17.♞d3 b4 18.♗d5 ♙xd5 19.exd5 ♞a5 20.♞c4 ♞b5 21.♙d2 ♞fb8 22.♞c8+ ♙f8 23.♞d7 ♞5b7 24.♞g4 f5 25.♞h3 ♞xd5 1/2-1/2 (46) Smyslov,V-Botvinnik,M Moscow 1956.



It is worth dissecting this position a little, because it is one where general understanding of themes is more important than concrete knowledge of moves. Black's counterplay will take root in either (or both) ...f7-f5 or ...b7-b5, but suppose for a moment that Black 'does nothing' — what will White do? There are basically two plans at White's disposal that Black must constantly be prepared to meet: White will either aim for ♘c3-e2 or go for f2-f4. Black generally has three ways of meeting ♘c3-e2: capture on e2, ignore it and play ...b7-b5, or retreat ...♞d4-c6. Which of these Black plays will depend on the concrete timing of White's ♘c3-e2; sometimes all three options are viable for Black. In response to f2-f4, Black will either (and not both this time) play ...f7-f5, or he will capture on f4 and re-route his knight from d4 to e5 via c6. Of course, Black should not 'do nothing'; he should remain flexible so as to be able to play either ...f7-f5 or ...b7-b5 depending on what White does. Black's a8 rook will either be placed on c8 or b8. Black's Queen usually goes to d7, but as we will see it can also find a home on e7, c7, or a5. An important disclaimer is in order before we continue: computers favor White by approximately +0.4 in most lines. However, when one presses the computer to formulate a plan, it is totally at a loss: while maintaining its += evaluation, it recommends shifting White's pieces back and forth aimlessly. So, my point is, do not be discouraged by the engine's prejudice — it has similar biases against the King's Indian and other respectable openings as well.

### 13.♞ad1

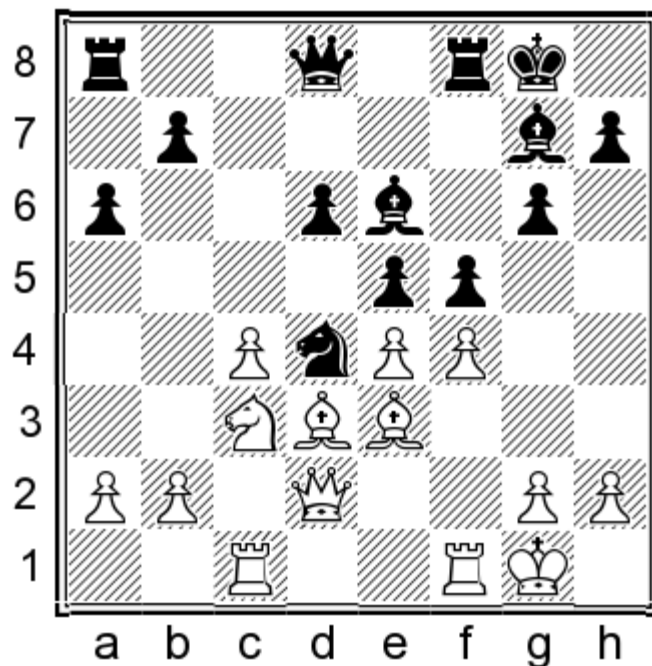
13.♞ac1 a6



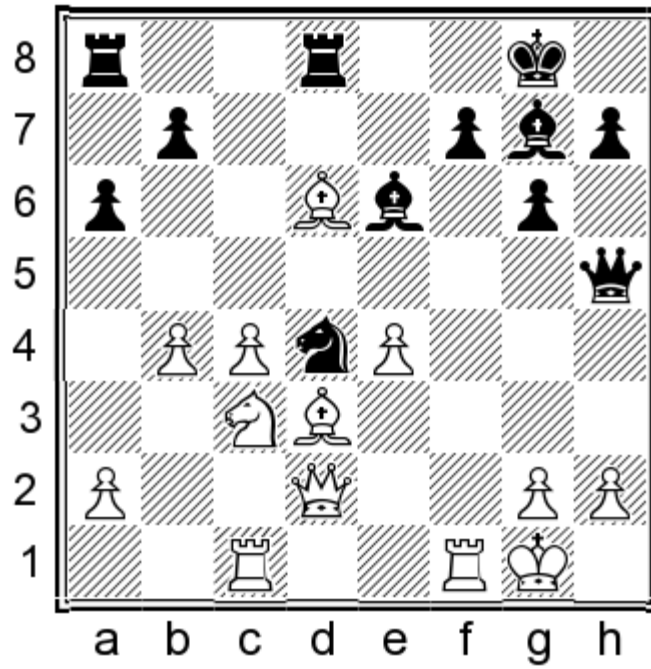
14.b3

a) 14.♖fd1 The following is just one way for Black to handle this position; he can alternatively play 14...♞c8 or 14...♚d7. 14...♞b8 15.f3 (15.b3 ♚d7 16.f3 b5 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.cxd5 ♞fc8 19.♚a5 ♚b7=) 15...b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 b4 19.♞c4 ♚a5 20.♙xd4 exd4 21.a3 ♚xd5=;

b) 14.f4 exf4 (14...f5?!

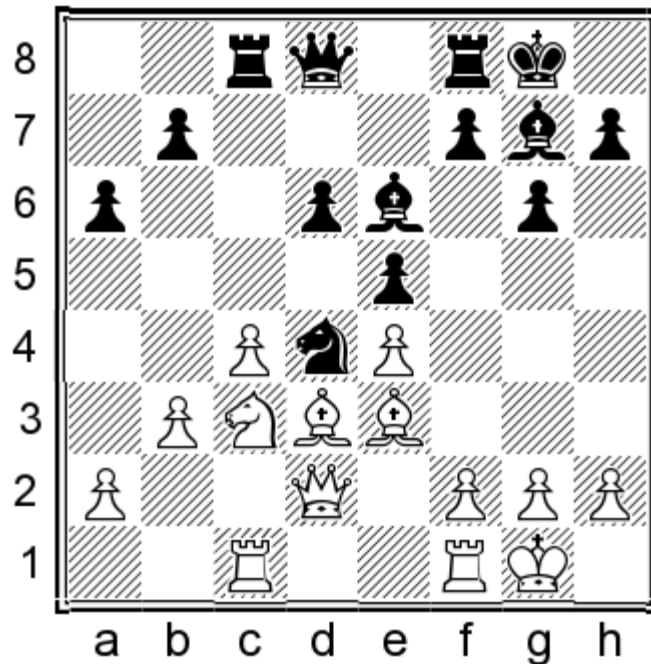


Even though this is suboptimal here, it is worth seeing the variations which arise from it to get a feel for the 'other' way of meeting White's f2-f4. 15.fxe5?! (15.♘d5! b5 16.♙xd4 exd4 17.exf5 ♙xf5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.a3±) 15...dxe5 16.♘d5 White's knight is vulnerable on d5, which it would not have been had White played 15.♘d5 without exchanging on e5. 16...b5 (16...fxe4!? 17.♙xe4 ♚h4↔) 17.exf5 (17.cxb5 fxe4→) 17...bxc4 18.fxe6 cxd3 19.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 20.♚f2 ♘xe6↔) 15.♙xf4 ♚a5! (15...♘c6!?= This is perfectly playable as well.) 16.♙xd6 ♞fd8 17.b4 ♚h5



18.c5 (18.♙f4 a5! (18...♙xc4?? 19.♙xc4 ♖f3+ 20.♙xf3 ♙xd2 21.♙xd2+-) 19.b5 ♙xc4 20.♙xc4 ♖f3+ 21.♙xf3 ♙xd2 22.♙xd2 ♚c5+-+) 18...♙xd6! 19.cxd6 ♙e5 20.h3 ♙xd6±;

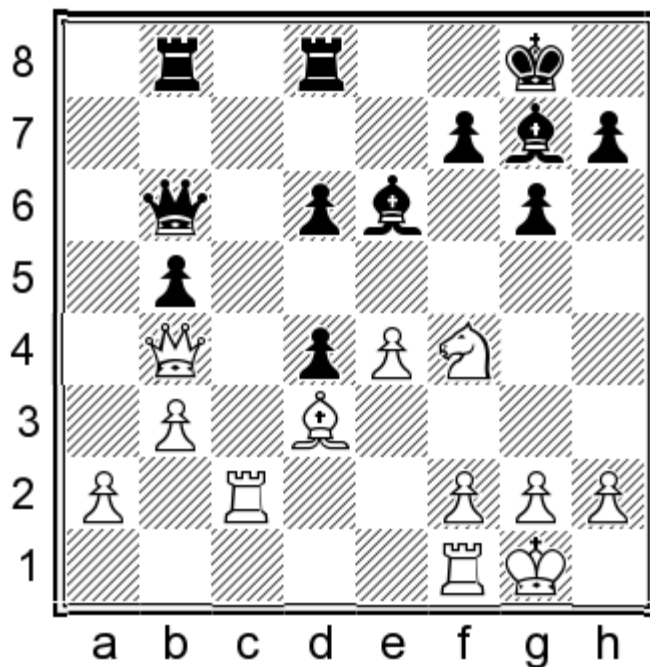
14...♙c8!



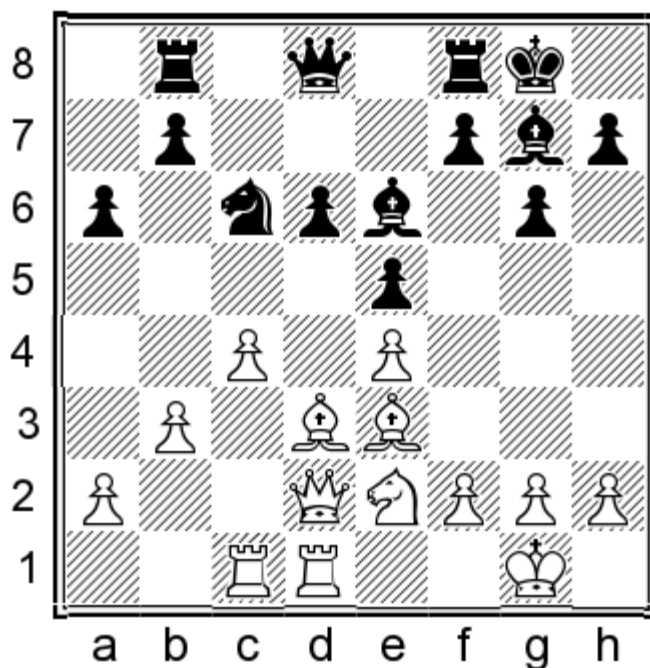
Black intends to meet White's ♖c3-e2 by taking on e2 and defending the d6 weakness with ...♙c8-c6.

**a)** 14...f5?! Black should not commit to this so early; it just enables White to clarify his intentions. 15.exf5 gxf5 (15...♖xf5 16.♙xf5 ♙xf5 (16...gxf5 17.♙g5 ♚d7 18.♙fd1±) 17.♚d5+ ♙f7 18.f3±) 16.♙xd4 exd4 17.♖e2 d5 18.c5±;

**b)** 14...♙b8!? 15.♖e2 (15.♙xd4 exd4 16.♖e2 b5! 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♚b4 ♚b6 19.♙c2 ♙fd8 20.♖f4



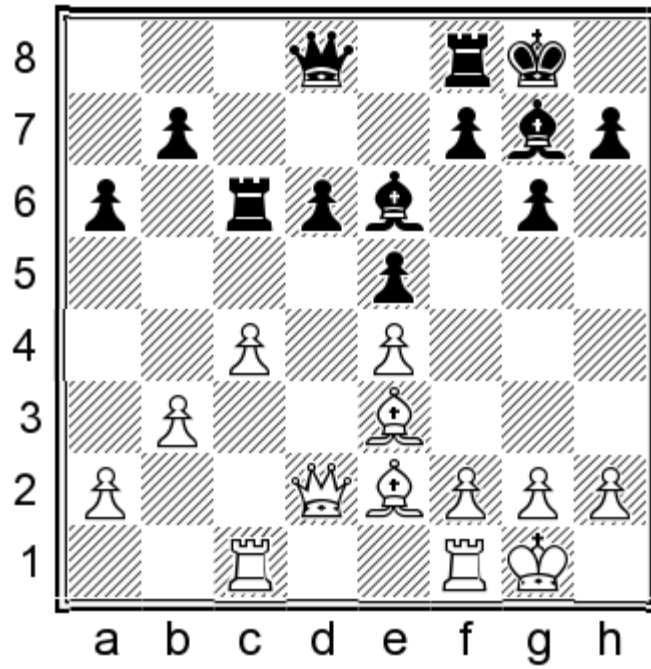
20...d5! 21.exd5 ♕xd5 22.♖xd5 ♜xd5= 1/2–1/2 (39) Foisor,S (2258)-Melekhina,A (2205) St. Louis USA 2016  
 15...♗c6! (15...b5?! 16.cxb5 (16.♖xd4 exd4 17.♕h6 ♕xh6 18.♜xh6 ♜a5 1/2–1/2 (18) Korneev,O (2615)-Georgiev,V (2519) Elgoibar 1999 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♕b1±) 16...axb5 17.♖xd4 exd4 18.♕h6 ♕xh6 19.♜xh6 ♜a5 20.♕b1 d5 21.e5±) 16.♜fd1



(16.a4 f5±; 16.f4 exf4 17.♖xf4 ♜d7 18.h3 ♗e5=) 16...♜e7!? (16...f5!? 17.exf5 (17.f3 f4 18.♕f2 g5 19.♕b1?! g4! 20.♜xd6? ♜e8±) 17...gxf5 18.f4 (18.f3 ♜e8 19.♕b1 ♜d8 20.♗c3 ♜f7 21.♖d5 ♗h8±) 18...♜e8 19.♗c3 ♜d8 20.♖d5±) 17.♕b1 (17.♕b6 ♕f6 18.♜b2 ♕g5 19.♜b1 f5 20.♗c3 ♜g7±) 17...♜bd8 18.f3 f5 19.exf5 gxf5 20.♗c3 ♜f7 21.♖d5±  
 Anything can happen, but objectively I'd say White has better chances.;

15.f3

(15.♗e2 ♗xe2+ (15...♗c6!? 16.♜fd1 ♜e7 17.♕b1 ♜fd8 18.♕b6 ♜d7 19.♗c3 ♜f8 20.♕e3 ♖d4±) 16.♕xe2 ♜c6!

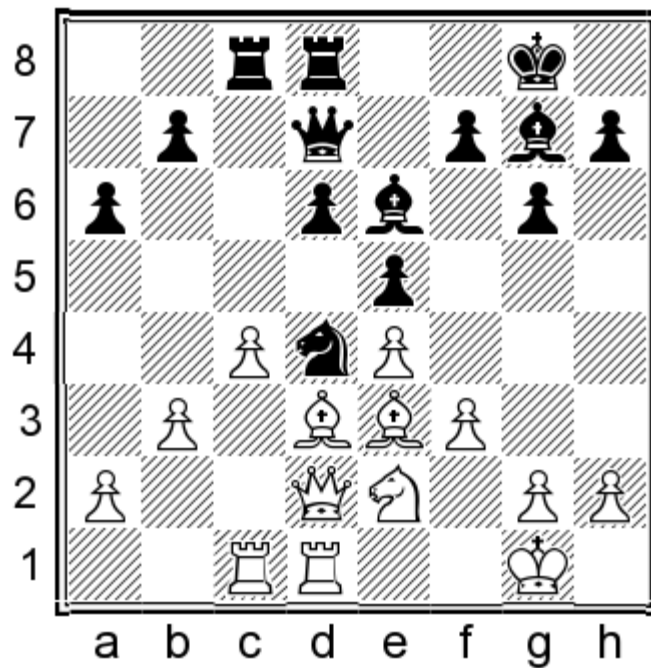


An excellent square for the rook: Black hinders White's b3-b4 due to the c4 weakness, and defends d6 while preventing a future  $\text{♙e3-b6}$ . 17.  $\text{♖fd1 f5}$  18.  $\text{exf5 gxf5}$  19.  $\text{♕g5 ♜e8}$  (

15...  $\text{♞d7}$  16.  $\text{♞fd1}$

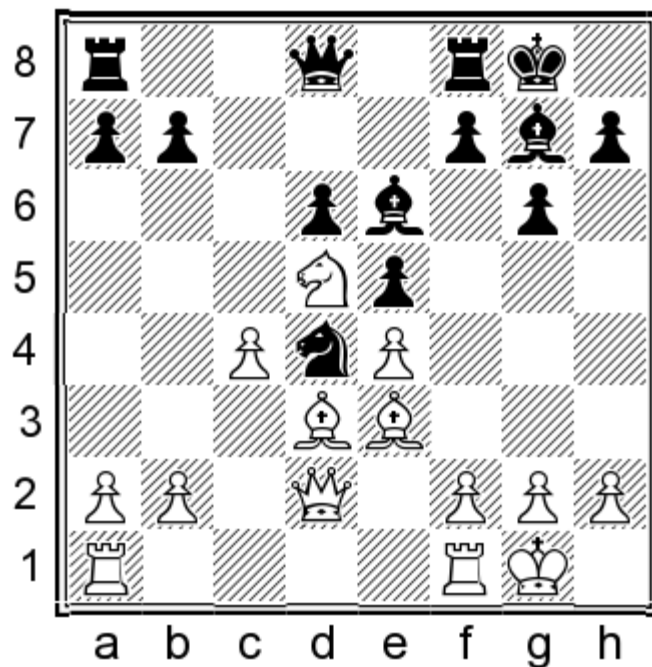
(16.  $\text{♜e2 b5}$  17.  $\text{♜xd4 exd4}$  18.  $\text{♙h6 ♙xh6}$  19.  $\text{♞xh6 bxc4}$  20.  $\text{bxc4 ♞c5}$ =)

16...  $\text{♞fd8}$  17.  $\text{♜e2}$



17...  $\text{♜xe2}$ ! Without knights on the board Black's d5-square is less of a weakness. 18.  $\text{♙xe2 ♞e7}$  19.  $\text{♙b6 ♞d7}$  20.  $\text{a4 f5}$  21.  $\text{exf5 gxf5}$ ;

13.  $\text{♜d5}$



This was GM Sevian's choice against me in August 2016. Please note that our game was somehow incorrectly recorded in the database as an entirely different game altogether — clearly someone confused our scoresheets with another game's! Our game continued... 13...♙xd5

(13...f5 14.♙xd4 ♘xd5 15.exd5 exd4 16.♖fe1 ♜e8 17.♞e6±)

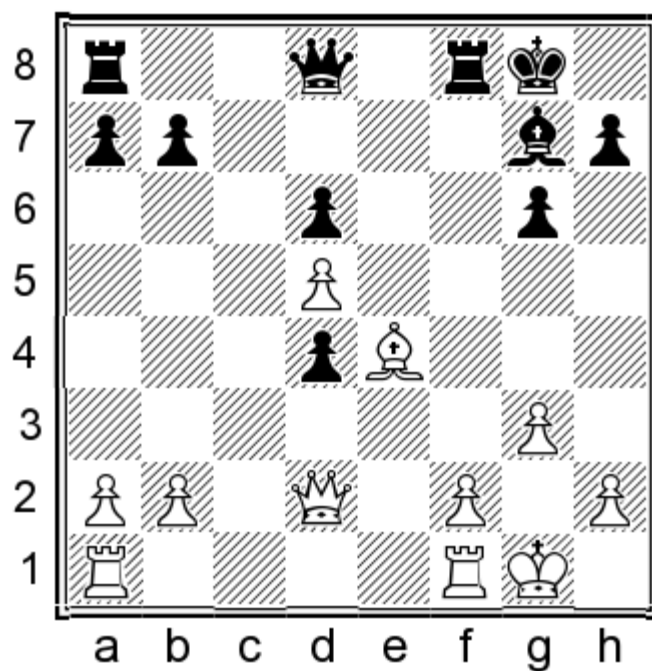
14.cxd5

(14.exd5 ♚d7=)

14...f5 15.♙xd4

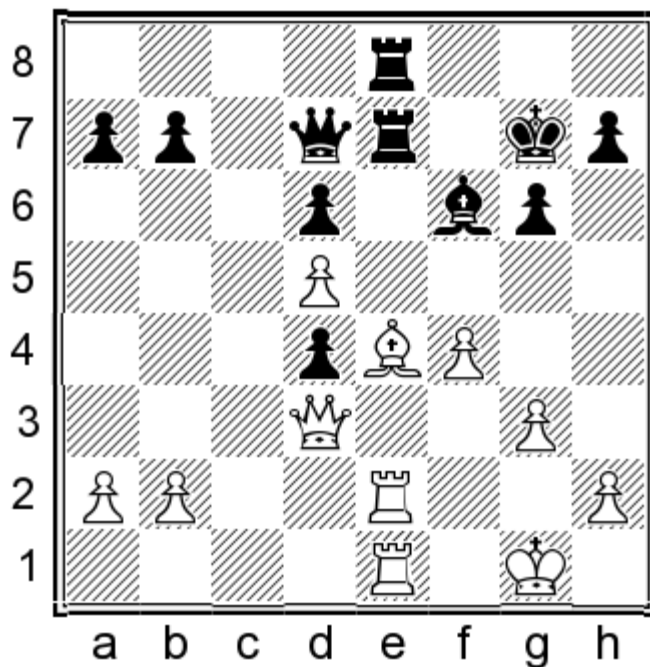
(15.f3 f4 16.♙f2 ♚d7 17.♞ac1 g5⇒)

15...fxe4! 16.♙xe4 exd4 17.g3



17...♖b6

(17...♗d7 18.♞ae1 ♞ae8 19.♗d3 ♞e7 20.f4 ♟f6 21.♞e2 ♞fe8 22.♞fe1 ♔g7



I was concerned about not having counterplay were I to go into this variation but it turns out that passive defence suffices for Black. 23.♔g2 ♗g4 24.h3 ♗d7 25.h4 ♗g4=)

18.♟d3! ♞ac8

(18...♞ae8! 19.♞ac1 ♗d8! 20.♞fe1 ♗d7=)

19.♞ac1 ♞c5 20.h4 ♔h8? I thought I calculated this accurately but I missed White's 'only-move' on move 26.

**a)** 20...♗c7! The queen's assistance is needed on the kingside. 21.h5 (21.♞fe1 ♞xc1 22.♞xc1 ♗f7=) 21...gxh5 22.♗g5 ♗f7=;

**b)** 20...♞fc8?! 21.h5 ♞xc1 22.♞xc1 ♞xc1+ 23.♗xc1±;

21.h5 gxh5

(21...♞xd5 22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♔g2!+–)

22.♗g5 ♞xc1

(22...♗c7 23.♗xh5 ♟e5 24.♞xc5 dxc5 25.♟xh7±)

23.♞xc1 ♗xb2 24.♞c2

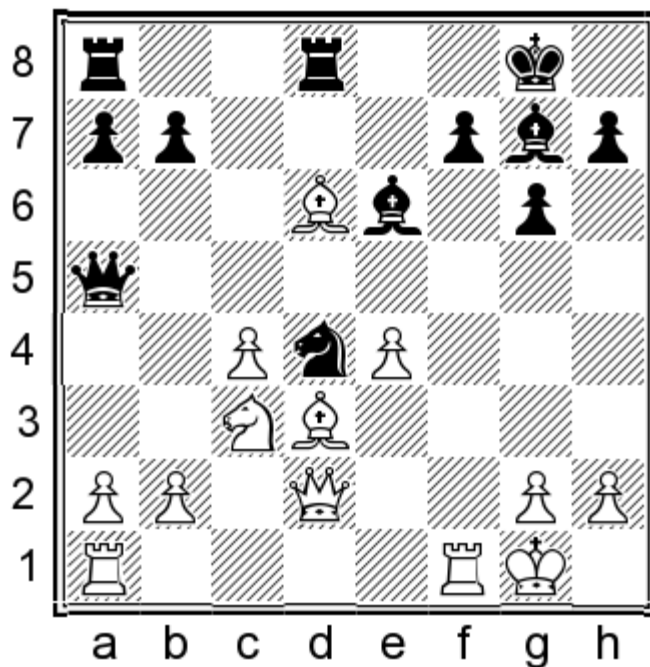
(24.♞f1 ♗c3 25.♞d1 ♗c7 26.♗xh5 ♟e5 27.f4 ♟f6 28.♞e1±)

24...♗b1+ 25.♔g2 ♗d1 26.♟f5□ 26...d3 27.♞c7 ♞g8 28.♗h6 1–0 Seviaan,S-Panjwani,R Greensboro 2016;

13.f4 exf4 14.♟xf4 ♗a5! 15.♟xd6

(15.♞ad1 ♔c6! 16.♟xd6 ♞fd8 17.c5 ♟d4+ 18.♔h1 ♟xc5 19.♟xc5 ♗xc5±)

15...♞fd8



16.b4 Two moves are equally good here: 16...♖b6 is simpler to remember but 16...♖h5 gives White more chances to go astray.

(16.c5 16...♙e5!! 17.♙xe5 ♖xc5 18.♙xd4 ♖xd4+ 19.♖f2 ♖xd3=; 16.e5 ♘c6⊕)

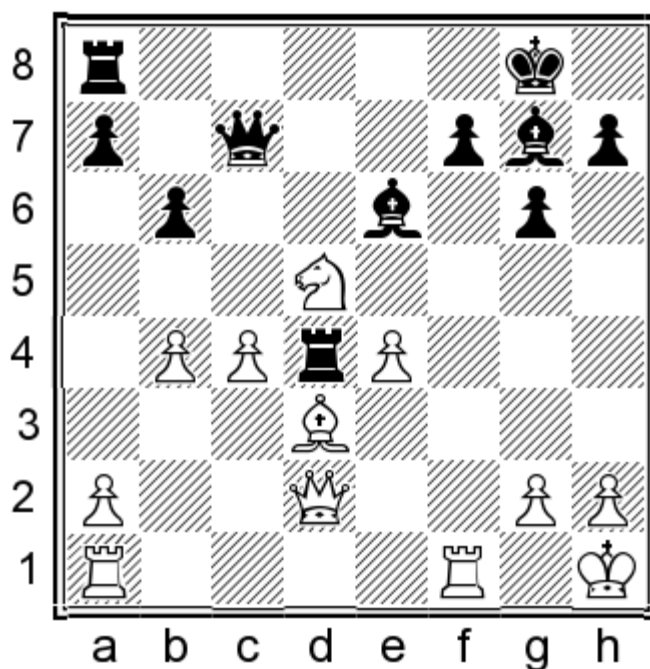
16...♖b6

(16...♖h5 17.♙f4 (17.c5?! ♖xd6! 18.cxd6 ♙e5 19.h3 ♙xd6⊕ White is naked on the dark squares.) 17...♘e2+! 18.♘xe2 ♙xc4 19.♘g3 ♖xd3 20.♘h5 ♙d4+ 21.♖f2 gxh5 22.♖fd1 ♙xf2+ 23.♗xf2 ♖ad8=)

17.♙c5 ♖c7 18.♗h1

(18.♖ad1 b6 19.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 20.♗h1 ♙xc4 21.♙xc4 ♖xc4 22.♘d5 ♙e5=)

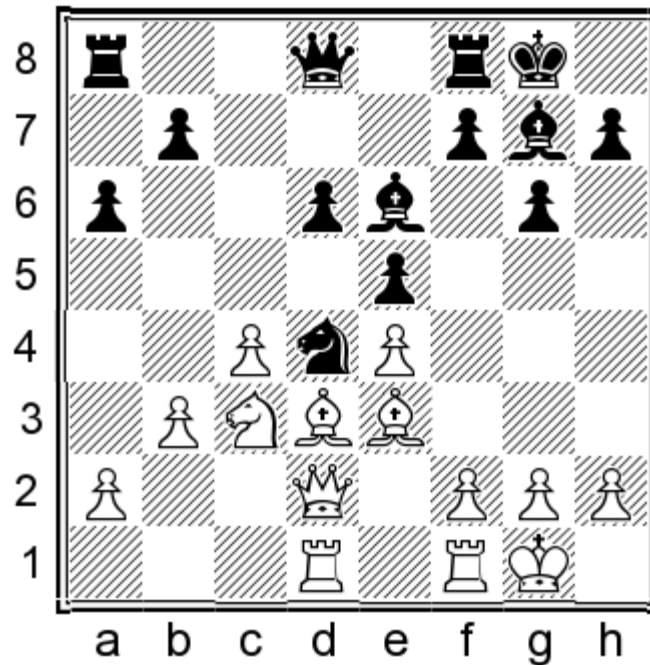
18...b6 19.♙xd4 ♖xd4 20.♘d5



20...♖xc4! 21.♞ad1 ♕xd5 22.♗xc4 ♞xd2 23.♗xd5 ♞xd1 24.♞xd1 ♞c8=

### 13...a6 14.b3

In addition to being a good solidifying move, White is now ready for ♖c3-e2 (14.♖e2 b5!). Black has several ways of playing this position. I have recommended what I consider to be the simplest as the main line (14...♞c8), but both alternatives are playable as well.



### 14...♞c8!

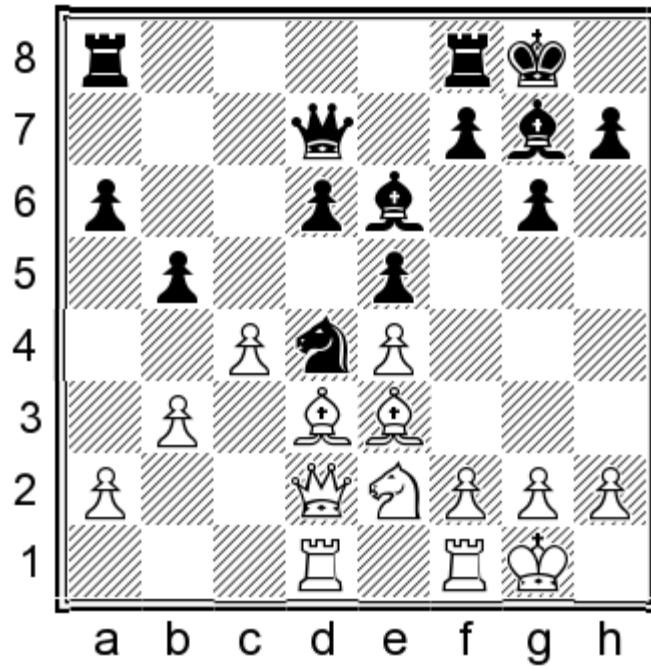
Just as in the variation where White plays 13.♞ac1, Black intends to meet ♖c3-e2 by taking on e2 and defending d6 with ...♞c8-c6!

14...♞d7 White's attempts against this move which are found in the database do not pose problems for Black, but if White plays the novelty 15.♖e2!? then Black's best option is to defend a slightly worse but drawn rook endgame. I would have felt bad recommending this as the main line, but if one is happy with a draw and comfortable defending the resulting endgame, then this may be the best option. 15.♖e2!N Unlike when Black's queen is on c7, he cannot here capture on e2 because the d6-pawn will fall (a defender on d8 can be hit by ♗e3-b6).

**a)** 15.♖d5 ♗xd5 16.cxd5 ♞ac8=;

**b)** 15.f4 exf4 (15...♞ae8!? 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♖d5 b5 18.♖f6+ ♗xf6 19.♞xf6 bxc4 20.bxc4∞) 16.♗xf4 ♖c6N (16...♗e5 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♞g5 ♞c7 19.♖h1 b5 20.♖d5 ♗xd5 21.cxd5± 1-0 (48) Bellia,F (2424)-Royset,P (2215) Rethymnon 2011) 17.♗e2 ♖e5 18.♖d5 ♞ae8±;

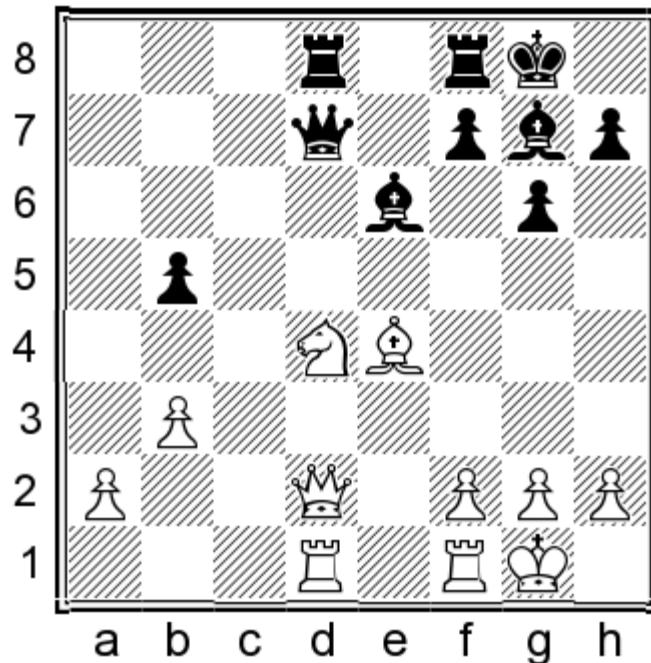
15...b5!



- a) 15...Bfd8?! 16. Nxd4 (16. Qg5 Nxe2+ 17. Qxe2 f6 18. Qe3 Bc6 19. f3 f5) 16...exd4 17. Qh6 Qh8 18. Wg5±;  
 b) 15...Nc6?! 16. Qb1±;

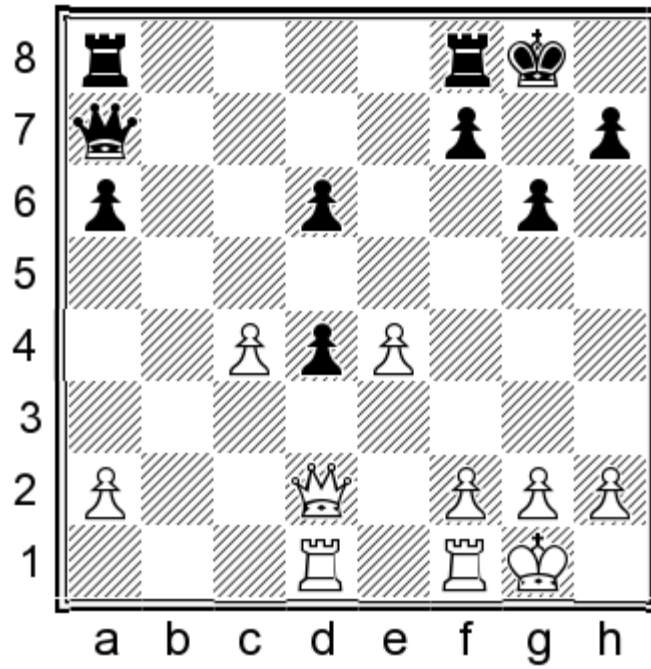
16. Nxd4

(16. Qxd4 exd4 17. cxb5 axb5 18. Qb1 d5! 19. Nxd4 dxe4 20. Qxe4 Bxd8



21. Nxe6 (21. Nf3 Wxd2 22. Bxd2 Bxd2 23. Nxd2 Bd8 24. Nf3 b4=) 21...Wxd2 22. Bxd2 Bxd2 23. Nxf8 b4 This endgame is easy for Black to draw. 24. Nxb7 Qxb7 25. g3 Bxa2 26. Qd5 f5 27. Qc4 Qd4 28. Qg2 Qg7 29. Qf3 Qf6 30. h3 Qg7 31. g4 fxg4+ 32. hxg4 Bxa1 33. Bxa1 Qxa1 34. g5 Qc3 35. Qe4 1/2-1/2 Brattain-Panjwani, Philadelphia 2014)

16...exd4 17. Qh6 Qxh6 18. Wxh6 bxc4 19. Qxc4 Qxc4 20. bxc4 Wa7 21. Wd2



The aforementioned slightly better, but with some accuracy drawn rook endgame starts here. Black's first task is to decide where to place his rooks. I give some sample variations, but I make no claim to 'solve' this endgame. 21...♖fc8!

(21...♖ab8 22.♗xd4 ♗xd4 23.♙xd4 ♖b2 24.♙xd6 ♖xa2 25.g3 ♖c8 26.♖c1 ♖c5 27.♖c3 ♖a4 28.♙d8+ ♔g7 29.♙d7 ♖axc4 30.♙f3+-)

22.♗xd4 ♗xd4

(22...♗c5 23.♗xc5 ♖xc5 24.♙xd6 ♖xc4 25.♙e1 ♖c2 26.a3 ♖c3 27.♖a1 (27.a4 ♖c4 28.a5 ♖a4 29.♙d5 ♖b8=) 27...♖ac8 28.f3 ♖8c6 29.♖xc6 ♖xc6=)

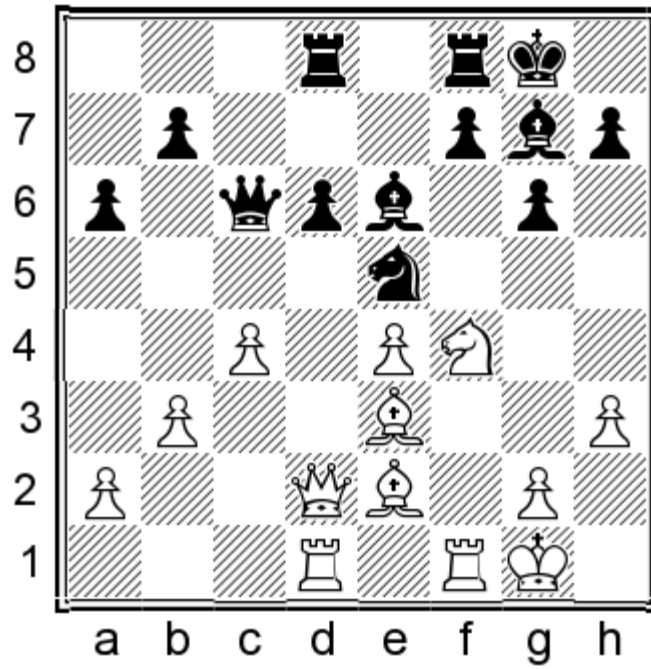
23.♙xd4 ♖ab8 24.g3!

(24.f3 ♖b2 25.a3 ♖a2 26.♖b1 ♖xa3 27.♖b6 ♖a4 28.♖bx6 ♖axc4 29.♖xc4 ♖xc4 30.♖xa6 h5=)

24...♖c6 25.♙fd1 a5 26.♙d6 ♖xc4 27.e5 ♖b2 28.a3 ♖c5 29.♙f6 ♖b7 30.e6 fxe6 31.♖xe6 ♖c3 32.a4 ♖a3 33.♖a6 ♖xa4 34.♙d5 ♔g7 35.♖axa5 ♖xa5 36.♖xa5 h5=;

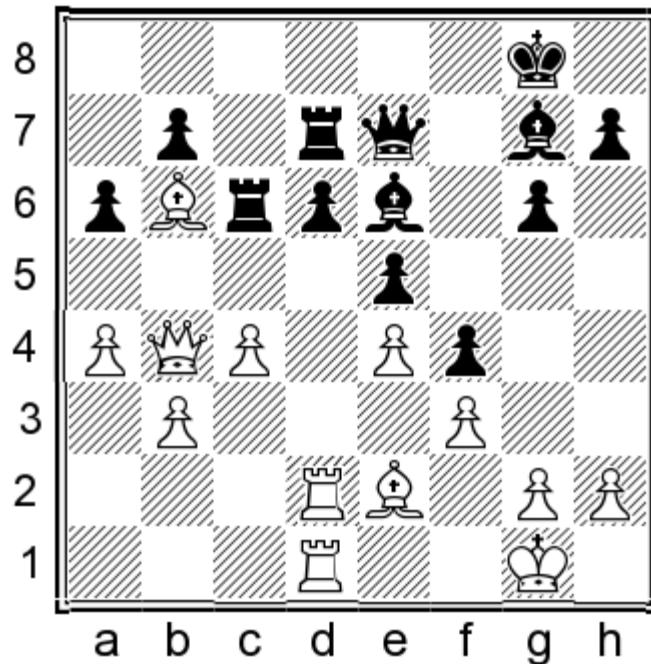
14...♗c7!? This was Dzindzichashvili's choice against my compatriot GM Lesiege in 1993. With the queen on c7, Black can respond to ♖c3-e2 with either ...♗d4xe2 or ...♗d4-c6, since the d6-pawn can be defended in one move by either rook. 15.♙xd4

**a)** 15.♗e2 Both 15...♗c6 and 15...♗xe2+ are playable; it is just a matter of taste. 15...♗c6 (15...♗xe2+ 16.♙xe2 ♖fd8 17.♗b4 ♗e7 18.♙b6 ♖d7 19.♙d2 ♖c8 20.♖fd1 ♖c6 21.♙a5 f5 22.♙f3 f4 23.♖d3 ♙f8 24.a4 ♗f7 25.♗d2 h5 26.h3 b6 27.♙b4 a5 28.♙a3 ♗f6= It is difficult to see how either side will make progress.) 16.f4 (16.♙b1 ♖ad8 17.♗c3 f5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.f4 ♗f7=) 16...exf4 17.♗xf4 ♗e5 18.♙e2 ♖ad8 19.h3 ♗c6!



20. ♖d5 ♙xd5 21. ♚xd5 ♚c7 22. ♙f4 ♜fe8 23. ♙g5 ♞d7 24. ♞f2 h5 25. ♙f4 ♚c5=;

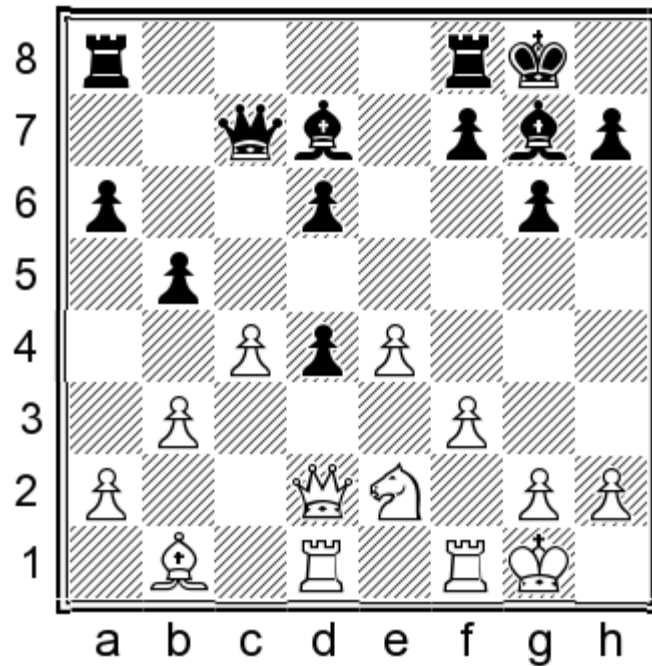
**b)** 15. f3 ♜ac8 16. ♖e2 (16. ♞c1 ♚d7 17. ♖e2 b5=) 16... ♖c6 (16... ♖xe2+!? 17. ♙xe2 ♞fd8 18. a4 ♚e7 19. ♚b4 f5 20. ♞d2 ♞c6 21. ♞fd1 f4 22. ♙b6 ♞d7



White only has four pieces capable of attacking the d6-pawn, and Black has four potential defenders. If White triples on the d-file and aims for c4-c5 then Black will be able to obtain counterplay against White's weak pawn on b3 (with ... ♚e7-f7 for example). A sample variation may continue as follows. 23. a5 g5 24. h3 h5 25. c5 dxc5 26. ♙xc5 ♚xc5+ 27. ♚xc5 ♞xc5 28. ♞xd7 ♙xd7 29. ♞xd7 ♞xa5 30. ♞xb7 ♙f8=) 17. ♙b1 ♞fd8 18. a4 ♞d7 19. f4 (19. ♖c3 ♖d4?) 19...exf4 20. ♖xf4 ♚a5=;

15...exd4 16. ♖e2 ♙g4 17. f3 ♙d7 18. ♙b1  
(18. a4 b5 19. cxb5 axb5 20. axb5 ♞fb8=)

18...b5



19.cxb5 ♔xb5 20.♔d3 ♚b6 21.♚f2 ♜fc8 22.g3 ♞a7 23.♙g2 d5 24.exd5 ♞d7 25.♞c1 ♞xc1 26.♜xc1 ♞xd5 27.♔xb5 axb5= 0-1 (62) Lesiege,A (2485)-Dzindzichashvili,R (2535) New York 1993.

### 15.f3

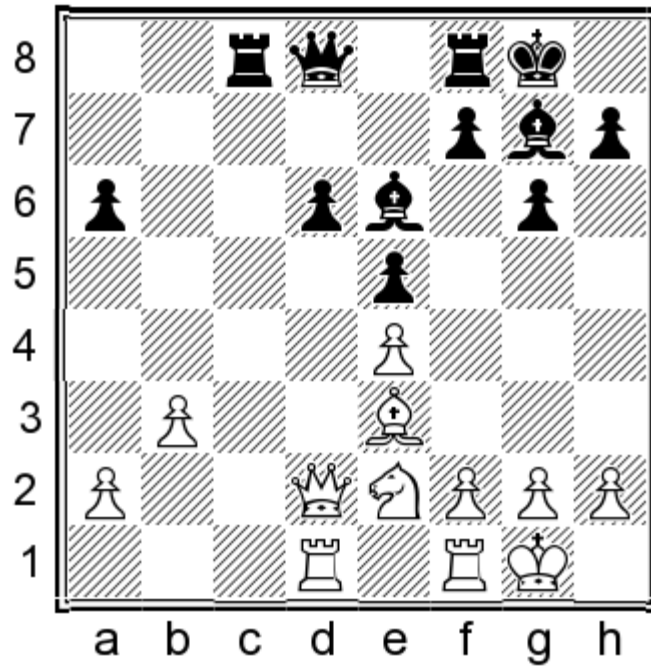
15.♜e2 b5!

(15...♜xe2+!? 16.♔xe2 ♞c6∞)

16.♔xd4

(16.cxb5 ♜xb5⇌)

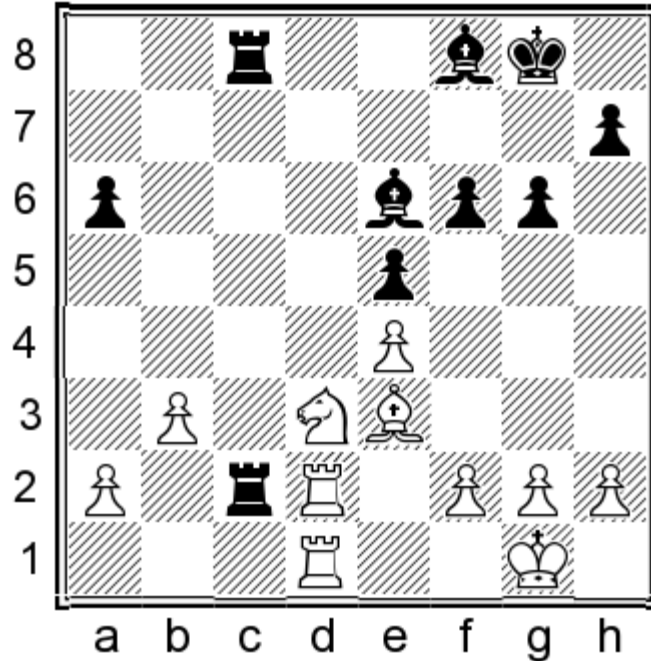
16...bxc4!? 17.♔xc4 ♔xc4 18.♔e3 ♔e6



19. ♙xd6

(19. ♘c3 ♙d7 20. ♗a4 (20. ♗d5 ♙b7=) 20... ♞c6 21. ♞c1 ♙b7 22. ♞xc6 ♙xc6 23. ♙d3 d5 24. exd5 ♗xd5 25. ♞c1 ♙a8 26. ♗b6 ♗e4! 27. ♙c4 ♙b7=)

19... ♙xd6 20. ♞xd6 ♞c2 21. ♗c1 ♙a8 22. ♞fd1 ♗f8 23. ♞6d2 ♞ac8 24. ♗d3 f6



Black is at little risk here; his two bishops and active rooks provide fully adequate compensation for the pawn. 25. f3 a5 26. ♗f2 h5 27. ♞xc2 ♞xc2+ 28. ♞d2 ♞c6 29. f4 exf4 30. ♗xf4 ♗f7=

15... ♙d7 16. ♞fe1

16. ♗e2 ♗xe2+

(16... b5 17. cxb5 ♗xb5 18. ♙a5 ♙b7=)

17. ♖xe2 ♜c6 18. a4 f5 ♞

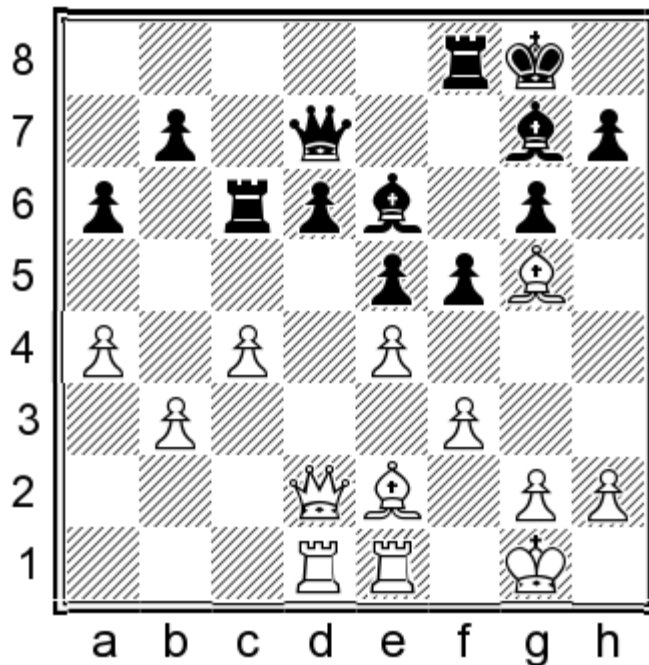
**16... ♜fd8**

16... b5!? 17. cxb5 axb5 18. ♖xd4 exd4 19. ♜xb5 ♜c5 20. ♜a3 ♜c3 ♞

17. ♜e2 ♜xe2+

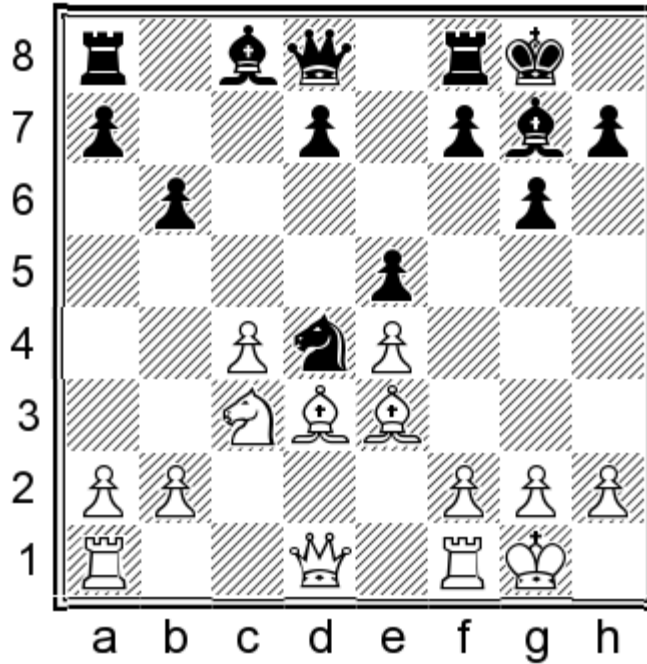
17... b5 18. cxb5 ♜xb5 19. ♜a5 ♜a8 ♞

**18. ♖xe2 ♜c6 19. ♖g5 ♜f8 20. a4 f5 ♞**



## Appendix

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 ♗g4 8.♙xg4 ♗xd4 9.♙d1 e5 10.♙d3 0-0 11.0-0 b6!?



I was pleasantly surprised to come across this very rare idea in a book on pawn structures by Andy Soltis. Soviet (grand) masters of the 1950s and 1960s like Simagin, Bagirov, Aronson, and Veresov developed some truly original ideas in this system. Even if their crafty maneuvers are ultimately ‘too good to be true’, it is instructive to play over their games to get a feel for this system. Black plans to continue with ...♙c8-b7, ...♗f8-e8, ...♗a8-c8, followed by ...♙f8-c5/...♗d4-e6, or ...♗e8-e6-d6! I envy them for playing chess in the pre-computer era; the analysis of this variation must have brought them such joy. Computers do spoil the fun a little, but there is no clear refutation of the idea either.

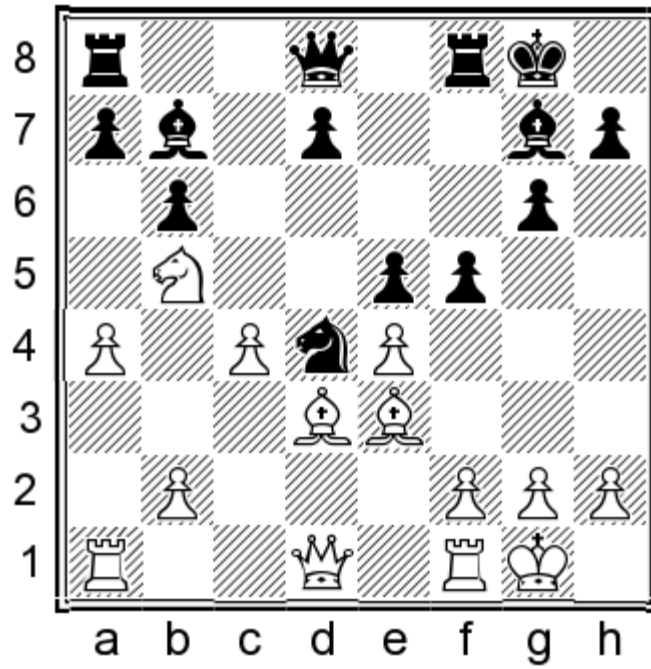
### 12. ♙d2

12.♗d5?! ♙b7 13.f4 exf4 14.♙xf4 d6 15.♙d2 ♗e6 16.♙h6 ♙xh6 17.♙xh6 ♙xd5 18.exd5 ♗c5 19.♗f3 f5! ♞ 0-1 (69) Byvshev, V-Simagin, V Moscow 1952;

12.a4 ♙b7 13.♗b5

(13.a5 bxa5 14.♙a4 ♙c6 15.♙xa5 ♙xa5 16.♗xa5 ♗fb8=)

13...f5!



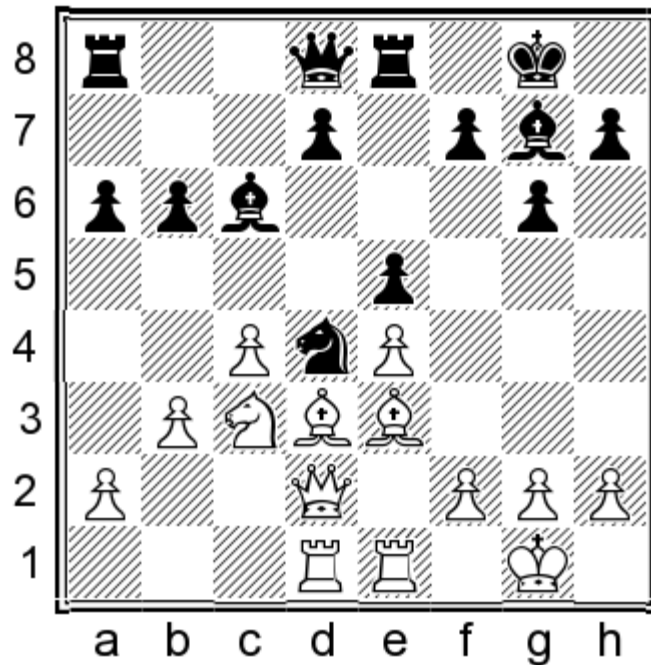
14.♙b1 f4!

(14...♗xb5 15.axb5 fxe4 16.♖g4± 1/2–1/2 (36) Honfi,K-Zaitsev,A Budapest 1963)

15.♙xd4 exd4 16.♞a3 ♜f6 17.f3 a6 18.♘c7 ♞ac8 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.cxd5 ♞c5 21.♙d3 a5=

12...♙b7

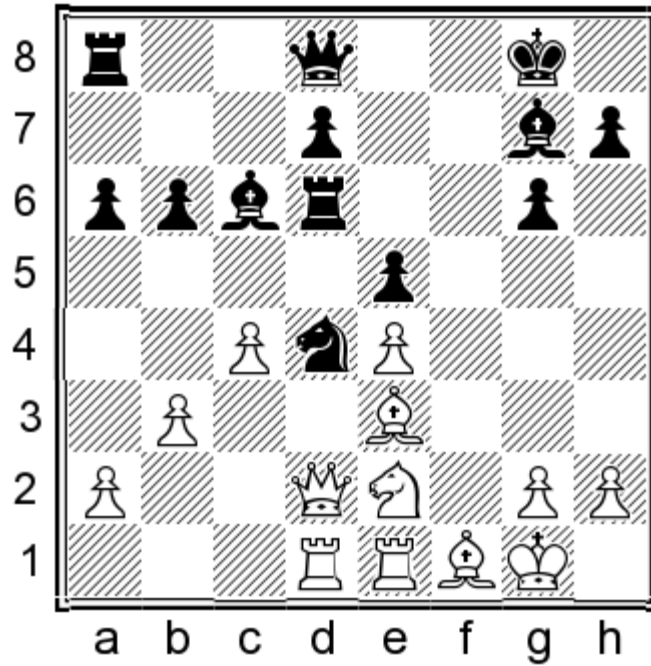
12...♞e8!? 13.♞fe1 ♙b7 14.♞ad1 a6 15.b3 ♙c6



This is another typical idea of this line: Black plans to leave the pawn on d7, so the bishop is well placed on c6 from where it defends (and is defended by) the d7 pawn and prepares ...b6-b5. 16.f3 ♞e6!?

(16...♘e6 17.♖f2 ♞b8 18.♘d5 b5 19.♙b6 ♜c8 20.♙a7 ♞b7 21.♙e3 ♞b8 22.♖h4 ♙xd5 23.exd5 ♘f4 24.♙xf4 exf4 25.♞xe8+ ♜xe8 26.♖xf4±)

17.♙f1 f5 18.♘e2 fxe4 19.fxe4 ♘xe2+?!  
 (19...♞d6!?)



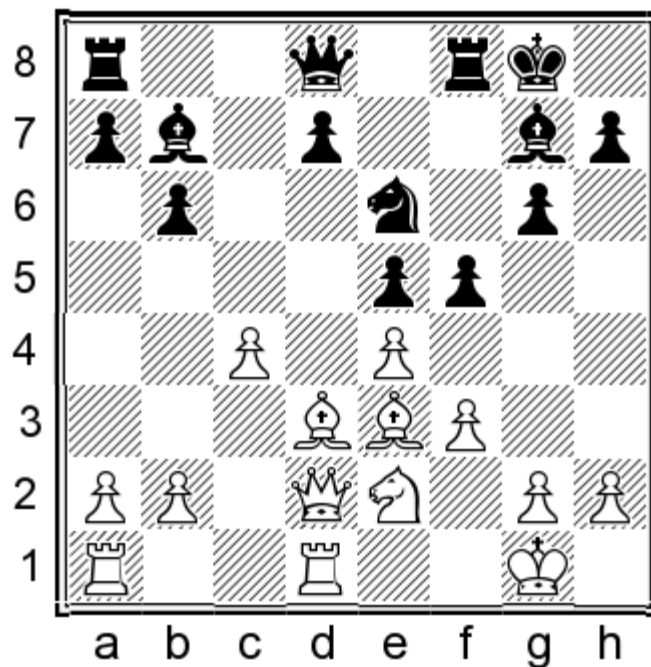
What a triumph of the artistic approach to chess that this was Black's best try. 20.♘xd4 exd4 21.♙g5 ♜f8 22.c5!!  
 Incredibly, Black can equalize against all other moves! 22...bxc5 23.♙c4+ ♞e6 (23...♗h8 24.e5±) 24.♙xe6+ dxe6  
 25.e5±)

20.♙xe2 ♜c7 21.♙g4 ♞f6 22.♙xd7 ♙b7 23.♙g5 ♞ff8 24.♜d6 ♜c5+ 25.♜xc5 bxc5 26.♙e7 ♞f4 27.♙e6+ ♗h8 28.♙d5 1-0 (28) Kholmov,R-Aronson,L Riga 1954.

### 13.♞ad1

It is not clear how Black should handle this position. Based on my research, Black should delay ...♞a8-c8 for some time.

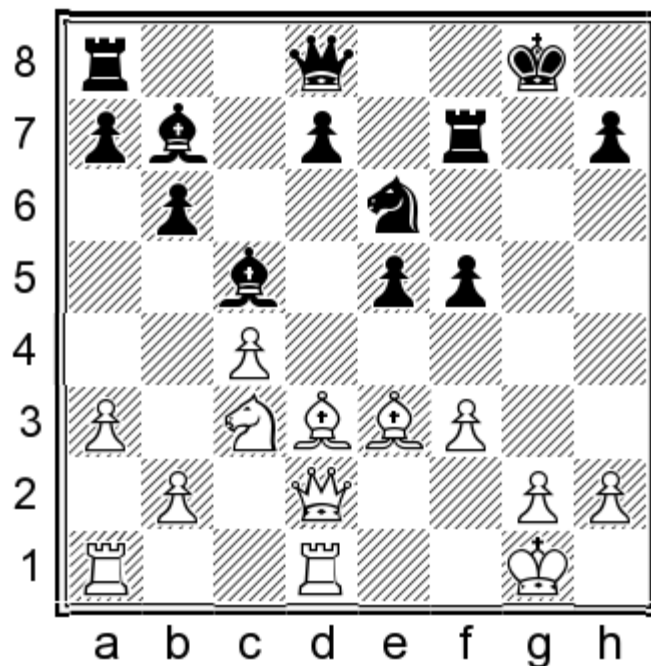
13.♘e2 ♘e6 14.♞fd1 f5 15.f3



15...Bf7! Black's idea is to exchange dark squared bishops with ...Bg7-f8-c5. Computers tend to make us pessimistic about such maneuvers, but in this particular position science and aesthetics coincide.

(15...f4 16.gf2 We7 17.c5 Bxc5 18.gc4+ Ch8 19.b4 Bc6 20.a3 Bfd8 21.Bc3 Bc7 22.Wd6 Wxd6 23.Bxd6 Bxc8 24.Bd3 Be6 25.gxe6 dxe6 26.Bxd8+ Bxd8 27.Bb5 1/2-1/2 (27) Roizman,A-Veresov,G Minsk 1955)

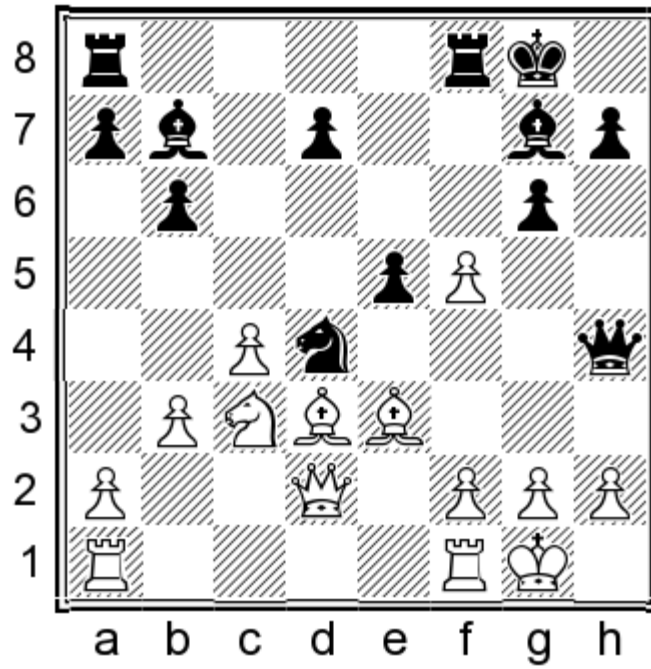
16.Bc3 gf8! 17.exf5 gxf5 18.a3 gc5



19.gxc5 bxc5=;

13.f3 We7 14.Bfd1 f5 15.exf5 gxf5 16.Bd5 Wd6! =;

13.b3 f5 14.exf5 Wh4!



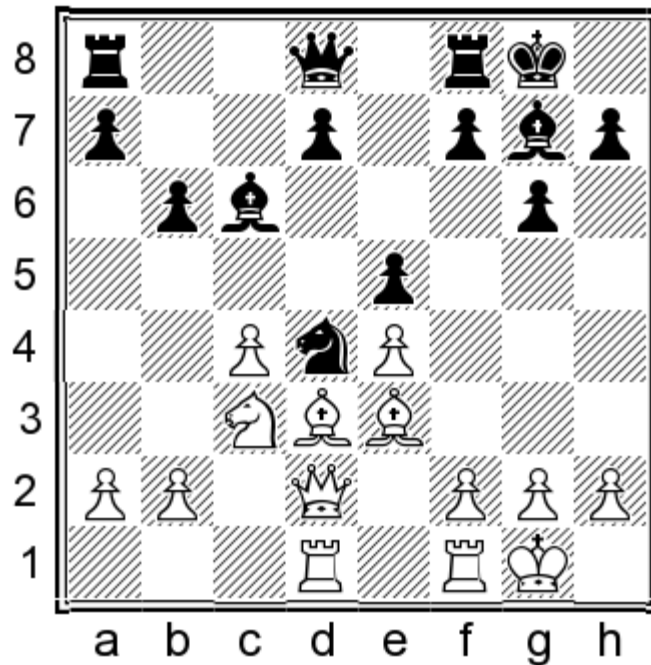
15.f3

(15.fxg6?? ♖f3+ 16.gxf3 ♗xf3--)

15...gxf5 16.♖d5 ♗xd5 17.cxd5 e4⇒

13...♗e6

13...♗c6!?



14.f4

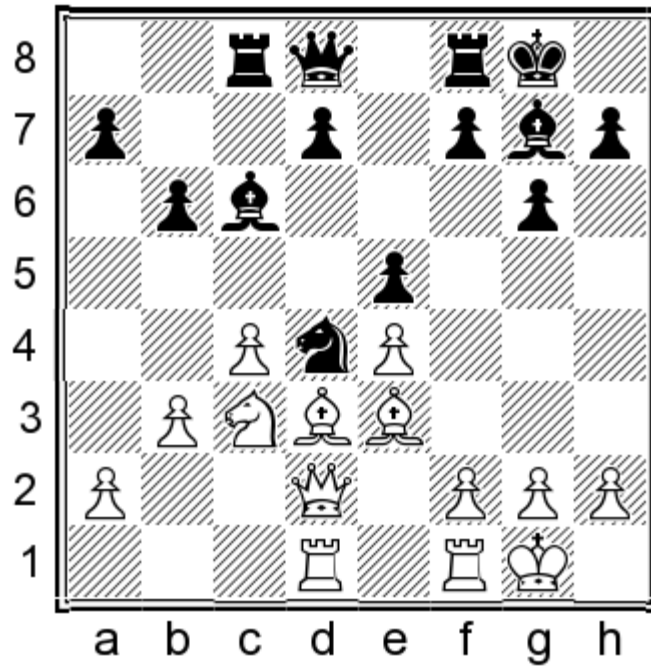
(14.b3 ♗e6 15.♗c2 ♜e8 16.b4 ♜c8 17.♗b3 ♗d4 18.f3 ♗f8 19.♗xd4 exd4 20.♗e2 b5 21.♗xd4 bxc4 22.♗xc4 ♗a4 23.♗b3 ♗xb3 24.♗xb3 ♜b6+=)

14...exf4 15.♙xf4 ♖e6 16.♙d6

(16.♙h6 ♙xh6 17.♚xh6 ♚e7 18.♜d5 ♙xd5 19.exd5 ♜g7=)

16...♞e8 17.♜h1 ♜c5 18.♚f2 ♜h8 19.♚xf7 ♚g5 20.♙c2 ♜b7 21.♜b5 ♜c5=;

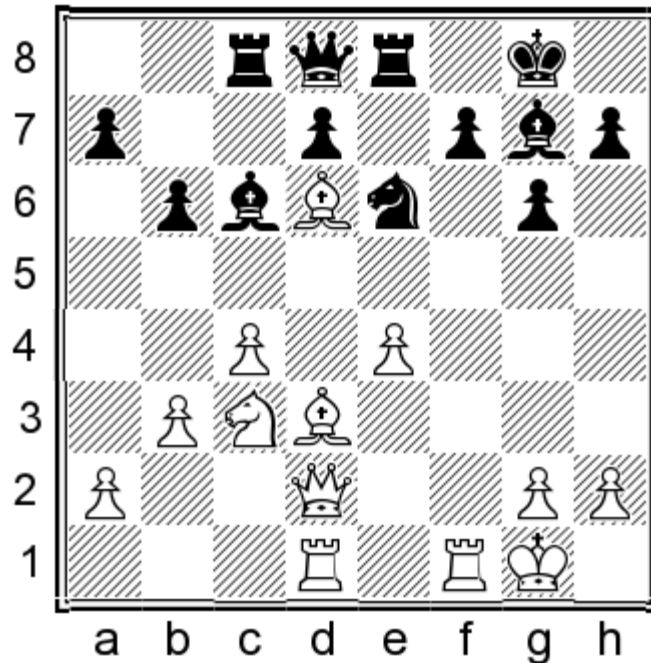
13...♞c8?! 14.b3 ♙c6



15.f4

(15.♙b1 ♜e6 16.a4 ♙f6! 17.♜b5 ♞a8 18.♜d6 (18.g3 ♙e7 19.♜d6 ♚b8 20.♙c2 ♜d4 21.♙xd4 ♚xd6 22.♙c3 ♚e6 23.a5 bxa5 24.♙xa5 ♙c5 25.♙b4 ♚e7 26.♙c3 ♞fb8 27.♞a1 ♞b7=) 18...♙g5 19.g3 ♙xe3 20.♚xe3 ♚e7 21.f4 f6=)

15...exf4 16.♙xf4 ♖e6 17.♙d6 ♞e8

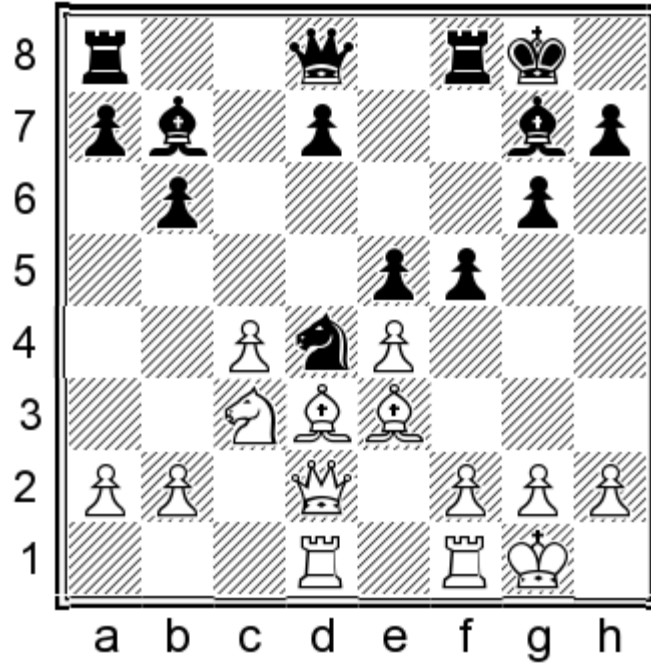


18.♜b5 This is one reason Black's rook would have been better placed on a8.

(18.e5 ♖c5 19.♗f4 ♜b7 20.♜b5 ♙xb5 21.♗xf7+ ♜h8 22.cxb5 ♜xd6 23.exd6 ♗h4 24.g3 ♗d4+ 25.♗f2 ♗xf2+ 26.♜xf2 ♞e6 27.♙c4 ♞f8+ 28.♜g2 ♞xf1 29.♙xf1 ♙f8=)

18...a6 19.♜a7 ♞a8 20.♜xc6 dxc6 21.e5±;

13...f5



14.exf5 ♗h4 15.♜d5

(15.fxg6?? ♜f3+ 16.gxf3 ♙xf3--)

15...♜xf5

(15...gxf5 16.f4±)

16.♙xf5 gxf5 17.f4 e4 18.♙d4±

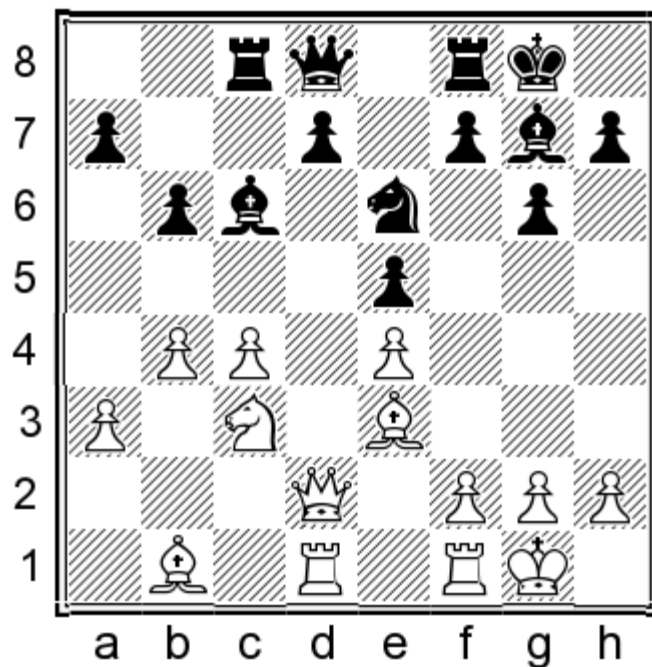
**14.♙b1**

14.b3 ♙c6 15.f3 ♞e8

(15...♗e7 16.♙c2 ♞fd8 17.♞fe1 ♗a3!= Black can 'premove' ...♙g7-f8.)

16.♜d5 ♙f8 17.b4 ♙g7 18.♞c1 ♞c8 19.a4 ♜d4 20.♞c3 a5 21.b5 ♙xd5 22.cxd5 ♙f8=

**14...♙c6 15.b4 ♞c8 16.a3**



**16...♖h8!**

16...♖c7 17.♙a2 ♖h8 18.c5 ♘d4 19.f4 bxc5 20.bxc5 ♖b7 21.fxe5

(21.♘d5±)

21...♘e6 22.♙xe6 fxe6 23.♙g5 ♖a5 24.♗d6 ♖bb8 25.♙e7 ♖xf1+ 26.♖xf1 ♖e8 27.♖f3 ♗xa3 1/2–1/2 (36) Smyslov, V-Bagirov, V Leningrad 1960.

**17.♙a2**

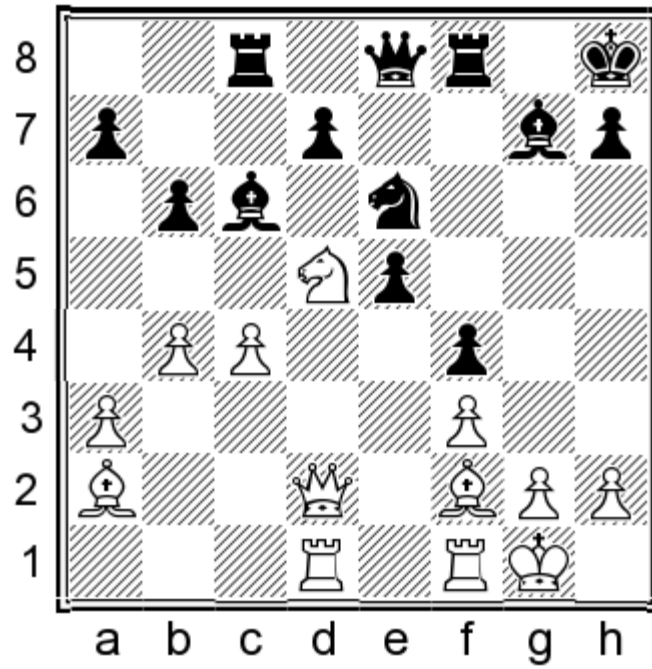
17.c5 bxc5 18.bxc5 ♗a5±;

17.b5 ♙a8 18.♗xd7 ♗xd7 19.♖xd7 ♖xc4 20.♘d5 ♖a4=

**17...f5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.f3 ♗e8 20.♘d5**

20.b5 ♙a8 21.♗xd7 e4±

**20...f4 21.♙f2**

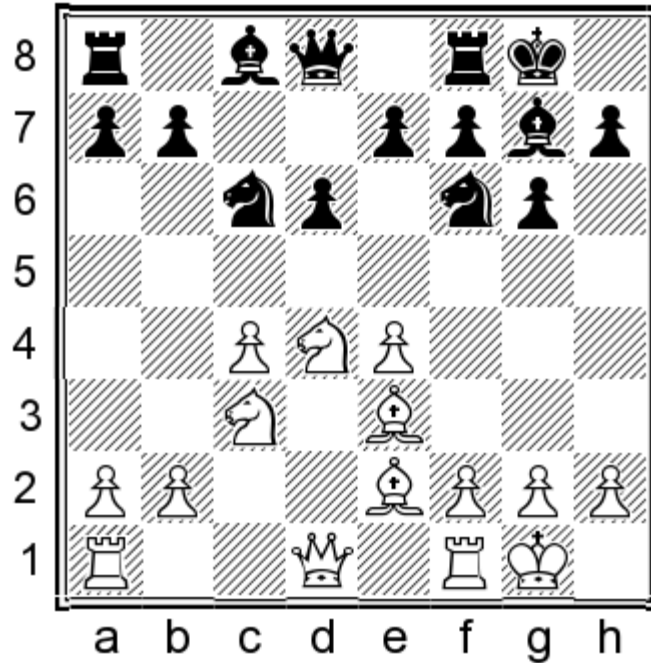


21...e4! 22.fxe4 ♔h5 23.♖de1 ♕e5⇒

# CHAPTER 5

## MAROCZY BIND: MAIN LINE

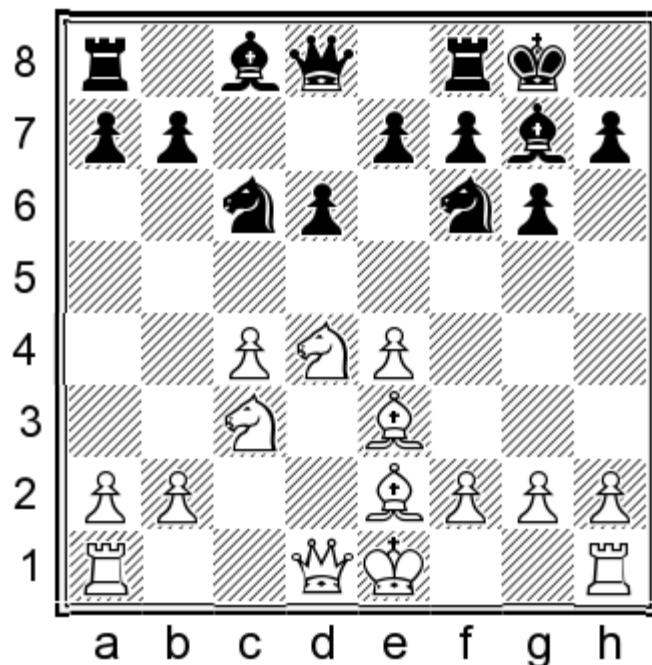
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♖c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0



### Contents

- 1. 9...♗xd4
- 2. 9...♙d7 10.sidelines
- 3. 9...♙d7 10.♗c2
- 4. 9...♙d7 10.♖d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♕c6 12.sidelines
- 5. 9...♙d7 10.♖d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♕c6 12.f3 ♗d7 13.sidelines
- 6. 9...♙d7 10.♖d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♕c6 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♙e3

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♖c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0

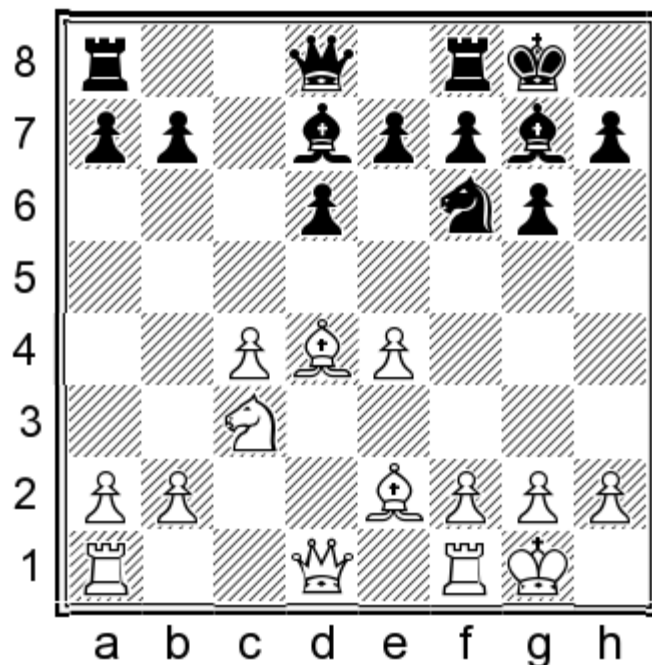


This variation does not have an accepted name, but because it is the top choice of virtually all the top Accelerated Dragon players nowadays, I will refer to it as the ‘main line’. Compared with the Breyer Variation, this line is far more nuanced and, frankly, difficult to play well (for both sides). As with all practical matters, the choice involves a tradeoff: the Breyer is easy to play for Black, but if White plays accurately (which very few are able to do in practice) then he can achieve a slightly more pleasant position (if you find this state of affairs to be unacceptable, I recommend abandoning the Sicilian altogether in favor of the Berlin or Marshall). In this line Black’s counterplay is more reactive in nature — Black can’t just ‘wear a blindfold’ and proceed with a plan on autopilot, but in return Black can count on dynamic equality and a tense struggle where all three results are on the table.

### 9.0-0

There are many ways to play this position for Black, but the main tabiya involves Black playing (in various move orders) ...♘c8-d7, ...♗c6xd4, ...♘d7-c6, ...a7-a5, ...♗f6-d7-c5. The question of move order is an important one for Black here: should Black start with 9...♘d7 or first play 9...♗xd4 10.♘xd4 ♘d7? In practice they usually transpose, because most White players are unwilling to play a different line against each of these, preferring instead to enter the ♖d2 main line regardless of Black’s move order. That being said, according to my research, 9...♘d7 is the significantly better move order (and it is introduced in the next chapter), in light of 9...♗xd4 10.♘xd4 ♘d7 11.♖d3!.

### 9...♗xd4 10.♘xd4 ♘d7

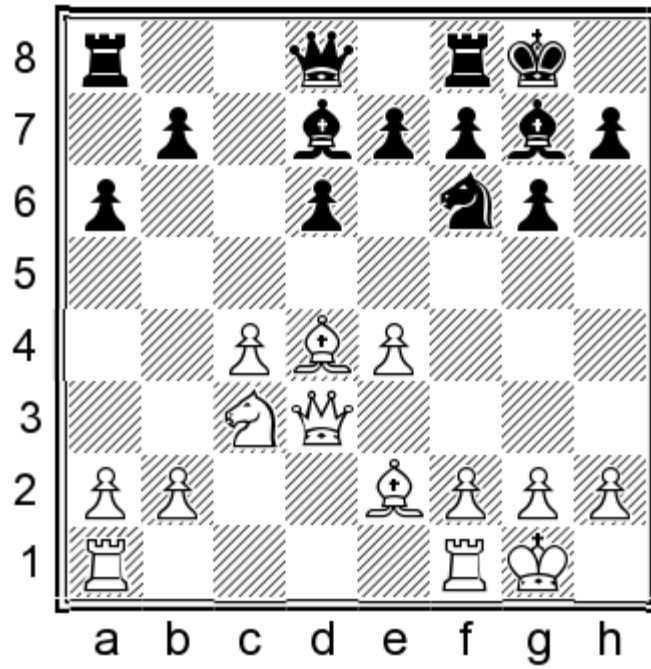


### 11. ♔d3!

This is not a new move, it was first played in Smyslov-Pirc 1956 (1–0); for some reason it has not caught on. I owe Kevin Spraggett for revealing its strength to me. White's basic idea is to prophylactically defend the e4-pawn so that ...♗d7-c6 can be met with b2-b4! White usually wants to wait for Black's bishop to be on c6 before playing b2-b4, because the weak c4-pawn is under less pressure when Black's bishop is on c6 as opposed to e6. In general Black wants to prevent White from playing b2-b4 (at least) until his knight has landed on c5, so the central theme of this variation is White trying to achieve b2-b4 and Black trying to either prevent it or render it premature. Unfortunately, nothing seems to work for Black. I will present the following lines without comment, because I am recommending we avoid this altogether, but I encourage the reader to try to find improvements on my analysis, and to at least skim through the ensuing variations to get a feel for which positions are playable for Black and which are to be avoided.

11.b4 ♕e6 12.f3 ♞d7 13.♞d5 ♕xd4+ 14.♔xd4 ♕xd5 15.cxd5 a5 16.a3 axb4 17.axb4 ♖xa1 18.♖xa1 ♔c7=

### 11...a6!?



11... Qc6?! 12. b4!±;

11... a5 12. b3!

(12. a3 a4 13. c5 dxc5 14. Qxc5 Qc6 15. We3 Wc8 16. f3 (16. Qxe7 Re8 17. Qxf6 Qxf6 18. f3 We6) 16... We6 17. Rfd1 Rfd8=)

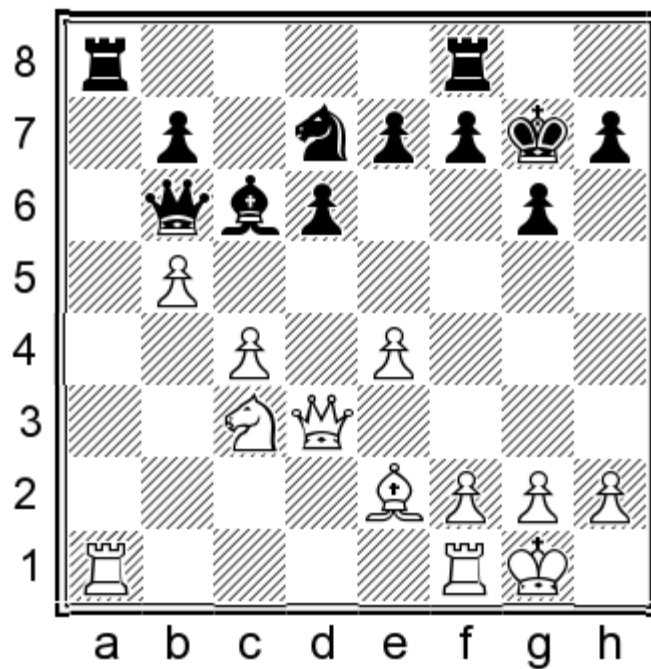
12... Qc6 13. a3 Qd7

(13... b6 14. b4 Qd7 15. Qxg7 Qxg7 16. Wd4+ Qg8 17. f4±)

14. Qxg7 Qxg7 15. b4 axb4

(15... b6±)

16. axb4 Wb6 17. b5



17...♖xa1

(17...♗e5 18.♖d2 ♗d7 19.♗a4 ♖a7 20.c5 dxc5 21.♖d5 ♖b8 22.♗xc5±)

18.♖xa1 ♗e5 19.♖d2

(19.♖c2 ♗d7 20.♗d5 ♖d4 21.♖d1 ♖c5 22.♗xe7 ♖e8 23.♗d5 ♗xb5=)

19...♗d7 20.♗a4!

(20.♗d5 ♖c5 21.♖e3 (21.♗xe7 ♗xc4 22.♖c3+ ♗e5 23.♖xc5 dxc5 24.f4 ♗g4=) 21...♖c8 22.♖c3 (22.♗xe7 ♗xc4=) 22...e6 23.♗e3 f6 24.♖d2 ♗e8 25.♖d1 ♗f7 26.♗g4 ♗d7=)

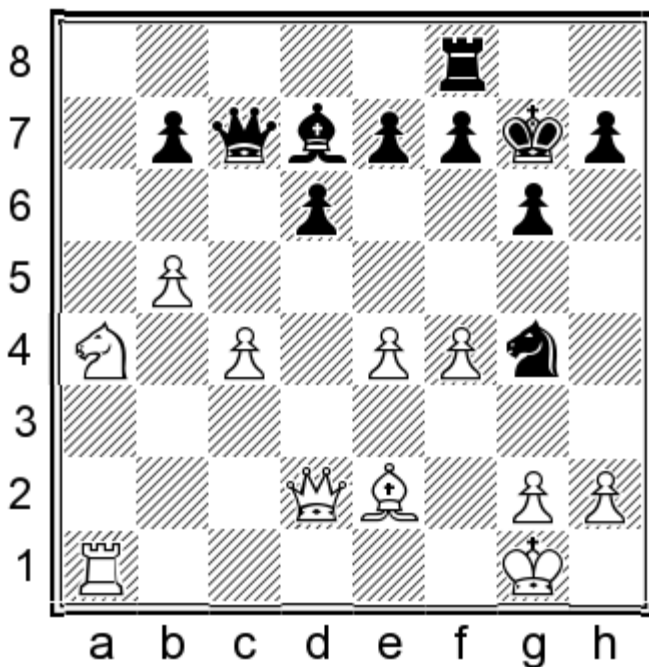
20...♖c7

(20...♖a7 21.c5 dxc5 22.f4 c4+ 23.b6±)

21.f4

(21.♖d4 g5 22.h4 h6=)

21...♗g4



22.♖d1!

(22.♖d4+ e5 23.♖b6 ♖xb6+ 24.♗xb6 ♗f6 25.♖d1 ♗e6 26.♗f3 ♖b8! (26...exf4 27.♖xd6 ♖b8 28.e5 ♗e8 29.♖d4 g5 30.♗d7 ♖d8 31.♗xb7 ♖xd7 32.♖xd7 ♗d7 33.b6 ♗f8 34.♗d5±) 27.♖xd6 ♗e8 28.♖d1 exf4 29.e5 (29.c5 g5 30.h3 ♗c7 31.♖b1 ♗e8∞) 29...f6 30.exf6+ ♗xf6 31.h4 h6 32.♖d6 ♗f7 33.♗d5 ♗xd5 34.♗xd5+ ♗xd5 35.cxd5 ♖c8 36.♖d7+ ♗f6 37.♖xb7 ♖d8 38.♖b6+ ♗f5 39.d6 g5 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.♖c6 ♗e5 42.b6 ♖xd6 43.♖xd6 ♗xd6 44.♗f2 g4 45.b7 ♗c7 46.♗e2 ♗xb7 47.♗d3 ♗c6 48.♗e4 f3 49.gxf3 gxf3 50.♗xf3 This was not a game, I just wanted to analyze at least one variation ‘down to kings’ in this book.)

22...♗f6 23.♖d4 ♗c8 24.e5

(24.♗c3 e5=)

24...dxe5 25.fxe5 ♗d7 26.e6+ ♗f6 27.exf7 e5 28.♖c3

(28.♖c5±)

28...♗e6 29.c5 ♗d5 30.♖b2 ♗xf7 31.♗f3±

## 12.b4!

12.a4 a5 13.♘d5

(13.♞fd1 ♙c6 14.b3 ♘d7 15.♞ab1 ♘c5 16.♞e3 ♙xd4 17.♞xd4 e5 18.♞d2 ♞e7=)

13...♘xd5 14.exd5 ♙f5 15.♞e3 ♙xd4 16.♞xd4 ♞a6=;

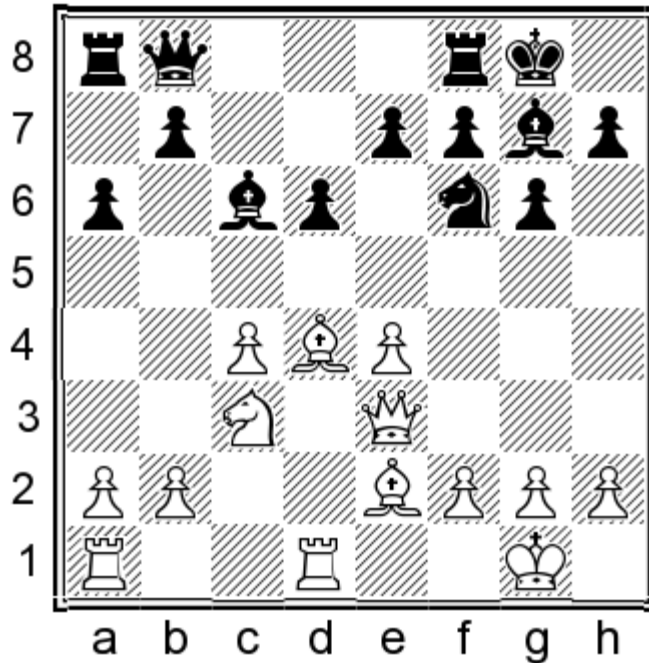
12.♞e3 ♞b8!?

(12...b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♙xb5 (14.♘xb5 ♞a4!☞) 14...♙xb5 15.♘xb5 e5 16.♙a7 d5 17.♙c5 d4 18.♞d3 ♞e8 19.b4±)

13.♞fd1

(13.a4 a5 14.♞fd1 ♙c6 15.♘d5 ♞e8! (15...♙xd5 16.cxd5 ♘d7 17.♙xg7 ♘xg7 18.♙b5 ♘c5 19.♞ac1 f6 20.f4±) 16.♘b6 (16.b3 ♘d7 17.♙xg7 ♘xg7=) 16...e5 17.♙c3 ♘xe4 18.♘xa8 ♘xc3! (18...♞xa8?! 19.♙e1 ♘c5 20.b4 (20.♞xd6 ♘e6☞) 20...axb4 21.♙xb4 ♙f8 22.a5±) 19.bxc3 ♞xa8 20.♞xd6 ♙f8 21.♞dd1 e4☞)

13...♙c6



14.♞ac1

(14.a4 a5 15.♘d5 ♞e8 (15...♙xd5 16.cxd5 ♘d7 17.♙xg7 ♘xg7 18.♙b5 ♘c5 19.♞ac1 ♞d8 20.f4 f6 21.♞c3 ♞c8 22.♞dc1 ♞g8! 23.♞1c2 b6 24.b3 ♞f8! 25.♞c4 ♘h8 26.g3 g5=; 15...e5 16.♙b6 ♙xd5 17.cxd5 ♘d7 18.♞ac1 ♘xb6 19.♞xb6 ♙f6 20.g3 ♙d8 21.♞b5 ♞a7 22.♞d7 ♞b8 23.♞d3 ♙b6 24.♞b3 ♞d8 25.♞b5 ♙d4 26.♞xb7 ♞xb7 27.♞xb7 ♞db8 28.♞xb8+ ♞xb8=) 16.♘b6 e5 17.♙c3 ♘xe4 18.♘xa8 ♘xc3 19.♞xc3 ♞xa8 20.♞xd6 e4☞)

14...b5

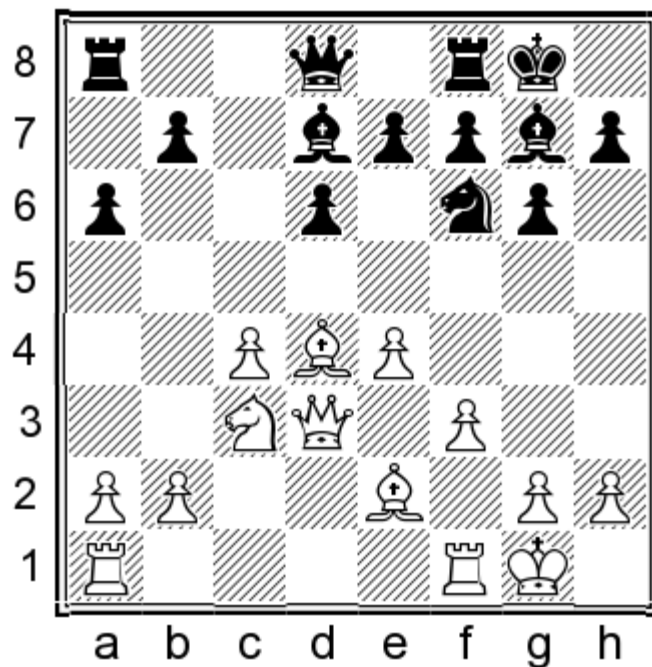
(14...e5 15.♙b6 ♘d7 16.♘d5 ♙xd5 17.♞xd5±)

15.♘d5 ♙xd5

(15...♞e8 16.cxb5 ♙xd5 17.exd5 axb5 18.♞b3 b4 19.♞c4± 1-0 (31) Gurevich,I (2475)-Taylor Chicago 1992)

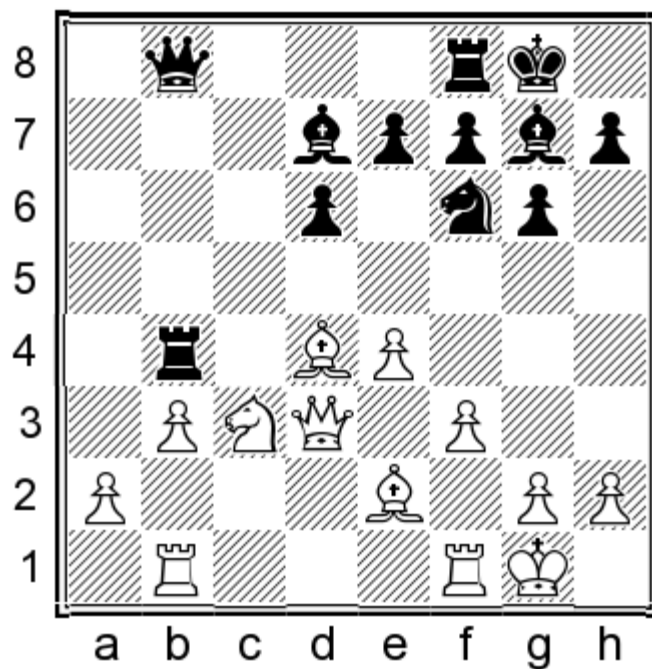
16.cxd5 ♘d7 17.♙xg7 ♘xg7 18.♞d4+ ♘g8 19.♙g4 ♘f6 20.♙h3 ♞a7 21.♞d3 a5 22.g3 ♞fb8∞;

12.f3



12...Rb8

(12...b5?! 13.cxb5 axb5 14.dxb5 Ra4 15.dxc3 (15.dxa3 Rb8!); 15.e3 exb5 16.Wxb5 Ra8=) 15...Rb4 16.Rab1 (16.b3 dxex4 17.exg7 dxc5 18.We3 cxcg7 19.d5 Rb8= Instinctively, White appears to be better because of the connected passed pawns; however, those pawns are easily blocked and the dark squared weaknesses in White's position shouldn't be discounted.) 16...Rb8 (16...dxe4 17.exg7 dxc5 18.We3 cxcg7 19.d5 Rb8 20.b4 da4 21.b5 dxc5 22.Rfd1 ee6 23.ec4 f6 24.Wd4 exd5 25.exd5 Rb6∞) 17.b3



17...e6 (17...Rxd4 18.Wxd4 dg4 19.Wd3 (19.Wd2 Wa7+ 20.ch1 df2+ 21.Rxf2 Wxf2 22.d5 eb5=) 19...Wa7+ 20.ch1 df2+ 21.Rxf2 Wxf2 22.d5 e6 23.de3 eb5 24.Wxb5 Wxe3 25.Wd3 Wf2 26.Rf1 Wa7 27.a4 d5 28.exd5 Rd8 29.Wa6 Wxa6 30.exa6 Rxd5 31.ec4 Rd2 32.a5±) 18.e3 d5 19.ec5 dxe4 20.fxe4 Rd8 21.We3 Rb7 22.Rbd1 Rbd7 23.ch1±)

13.a4 b6 14.Rfd1 ec6 15.b4 a5 16.b5 eb7=;

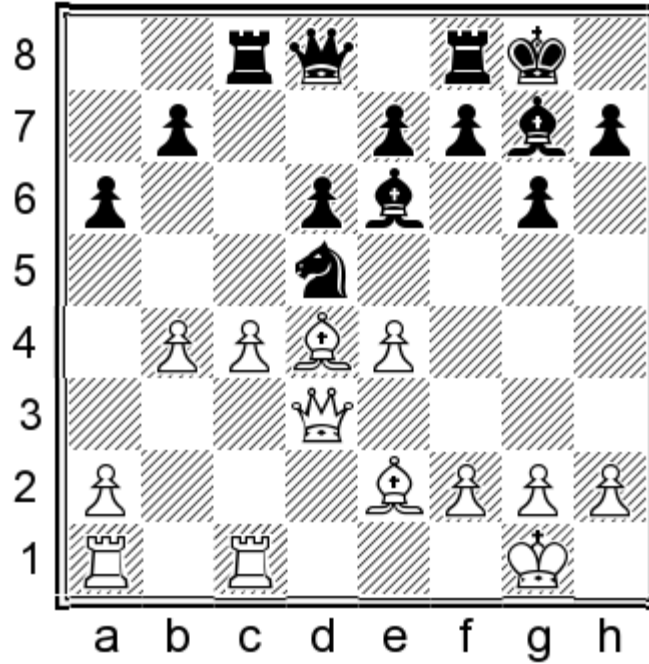
12.♞fd1 b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♜xb5 ♘xb5 15.♚xb5 ♜xe4 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♙f3 ♞b8 18.♚d3 ♜c5=

**12...♙e6**

12...b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♜xb5 ♘xb5 15.♚xb5 ♜xe4 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♚d5 ♜f6 18.♚b3±;

12...e5 13.♙e3 ♙e6 14.♞ac1 ♞c8 15.♜a4 b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♜c3 ♙c4 18.♚d2±

**13.♞fc1 ♞c8 14.♜d5 ♜xd5**



**15.exd5**

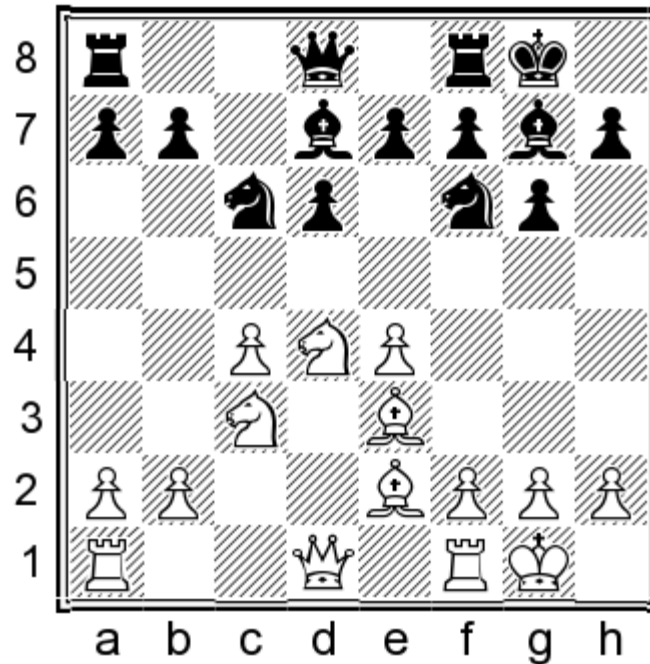
15.cxd5 ♙xd4 16.♚xd4 ♙d7=

**15...♙f5 16.♚d2 ♙xd4 17.♚xd4 ♞e8**

17...e5 18.dxe6 ♙xe6 19.a3±

**18.♙f3 a5 19.a3 b6 20.h4 h5 21.♞e1±**

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 ♗d7

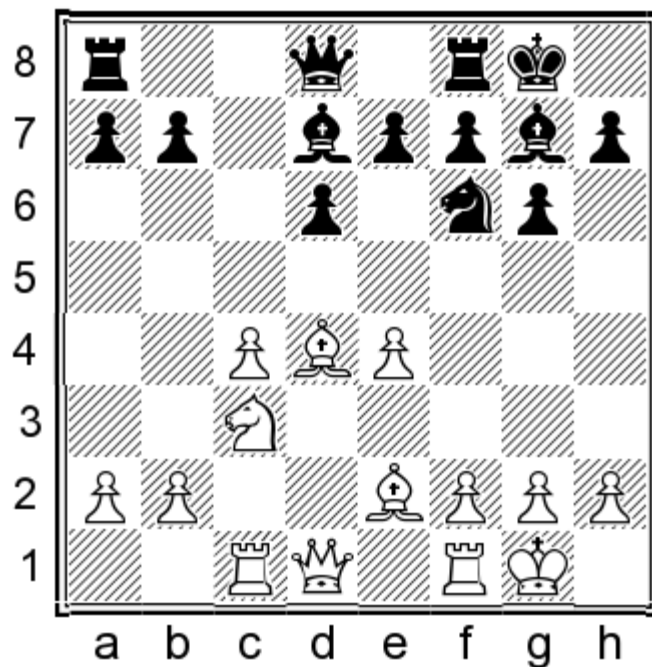


The downside of this line is 10.♗c2, whereas the downside of the 9...♗xd4 move order is 11.♙d3! In my judgment we should prefer to allow White 10.♗c2 here. Let's first have a look at some side moves.

### 10.♗b3

The logic of this move is similar to 10.♗c2: since White has more space, he wants to avoid exchanges to keep Black's position cramped. Furthermore, the 'soft' c4-pawn can be defended by ♗b3-d2, as it often is by ♗c2-a3 in the 10.♗c2 line.

10.♙c1 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4

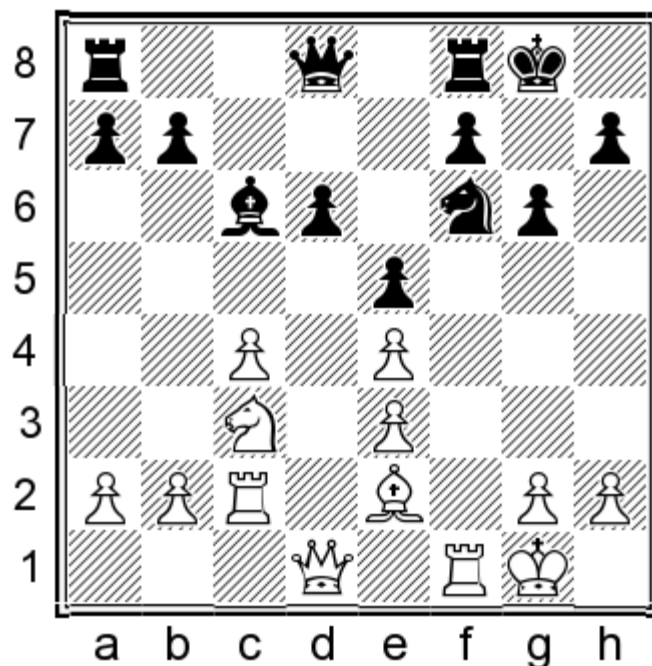


Nowadays I prefer to play 11...c6 here, because things are likely to transpose to the 10.♖d2 line where White's rook on c1 does nothing to promote the central positional aim of b2-b4. The reader may prefer 11...h6!? which I have played a few times as well. The choice is just a matter of taste. 11...h6!?

(11...c6 If Black plays this then the 10.♖c1 line has little independent value. 12.f3 a5 13.b3 ♘d7 14.♙e3 ♘c5 15.♗d2= This is a transposition to the 10.♗d2 line, where White's a-rook does not tend to go to c1.)

12.f4

(12.♖c2 e5 13.♙e3 ♙xe3 14.fxe3 ♙c6



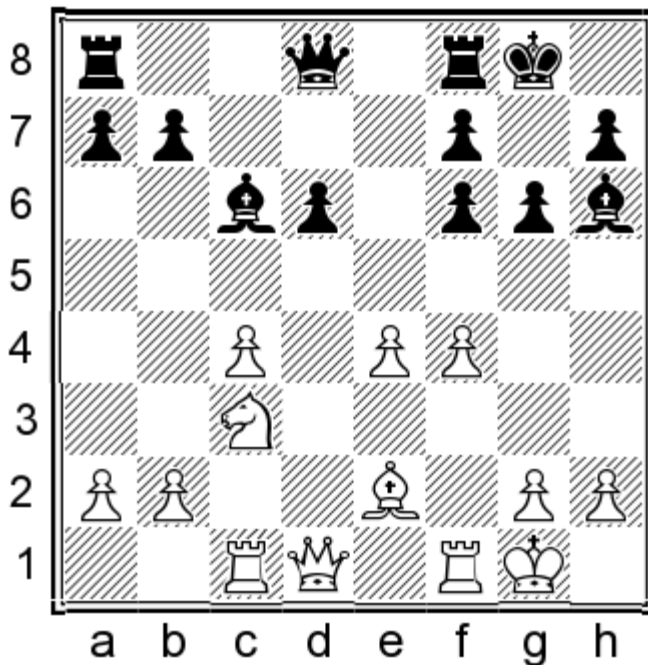
15.♗d3 (15.♙d3 a5 16.♖cf2 ♘d7 17.♗g4 ♘c5 18.♙c2 ♙d7 19.♗d1 ♙e6 20.♘d5 ♖g7 21.b3 ♙xd5 22.♗xd5 f6 23.a3 ♗b6 24.♖b1 ♗c6=) 15...a5 16.♖d2 ♘e8 17.♙d1 ♗b6 18.♖df2 ♖d8 19.♙g4 ♘c7 20.h4 ♘a6 21.h5 ♘c5 22.♗c2 ♗b4 23.♘d5 ♙xd5 24.exd5 e4 25.♙e2 (25.♖f6 ♘d3 26.b3 a4?) 25...a4∞)

12...♙c6 13.♙xf6

a) 13.e5 dxe5 14.♙xe5 ♘d7 15.♙d4 e5! (15...♞e8!? 16.♞c2 e5 17.fxe5 ♘xe5) 16.fxe5 ♞g5 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.cxd5 ♞xc1 19.♞xc1 ♙xc1 20.♞xc1 ♘xe5 21.♞c7 (21.d6 f6) 21...f6 22.♞xb7 (22.d6 ♞ac8 23.♞xb7 ♞f7 24.♞xa7 ♞xa7 25.♙xa7 ♞c2) 22...♞f7 23.♞b5;

b) 13.♞d3 e5 14.♙e3 exf4 15.♙xf4 ♙xf4 16.♞xf4 ♘d7=;

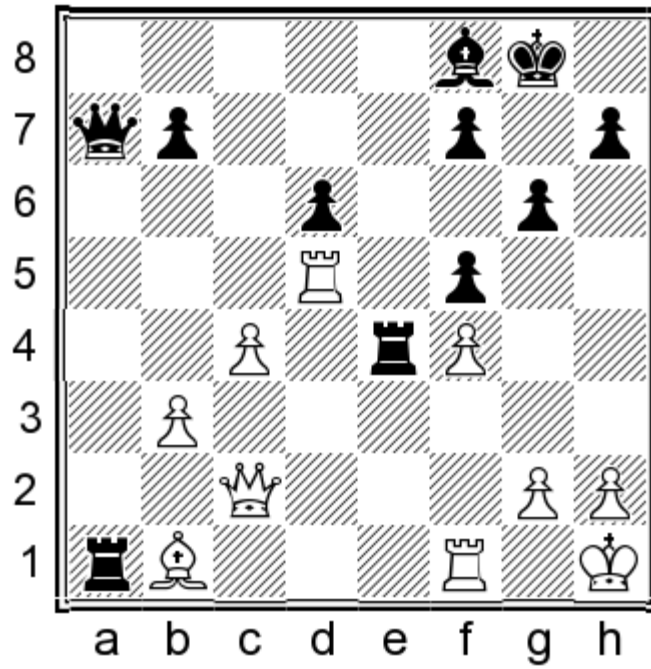
13...exf6



14.♞d4 This was American prodigy Ruifeng Li's choice against me.

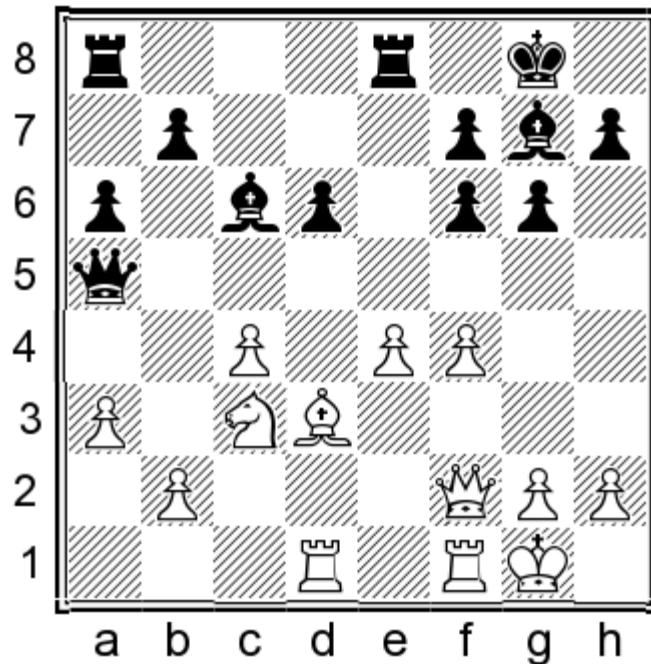
a) 14.♞d2 ♞e8 15.♙f3 ♞b6+ 16.♙h1 ♞ad8 17.g3 ♙g7 18.♞c2 ♞c5 19.♘d5 a5=;

b) 14.♙h1 We follow one of my games here. 14...♞e8 15.♙d3 ♞b6 16.♞c2 a5 17.♞d2 a4 18.♙b1 ♙f8 19.b3 axb3 20.axb3 ♞a1 21.♘d5 ♙xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞e3? (22...♞xe4 23.♙xe4 ♞xd1 24.♞dxd1 f5 25.♙d5 ♙g7 26.b4 ♙f6 27.b5 ♙g7=) 23.♞f3 (23.c5!) 23...♞a7 24.♞c2 f5 25.♞f1 ♞xe4 (25...fxe4 26.f5 e3 27.fxg6 hxg6 28.♞xf7 ♞xb1++)



26.g4!! ♖e3 27.♞d3 ♚e2 (27...♞xf4 28.♞xe3 ♞xf1+ 29.♔g2 ♞fxb1∞) 28.♚xe2 ♞xe2 29.gxf5 ♞b2± Shlionsky-Panjwani, New York 2016 (1/2–1/2);

14...♞e8 15.♞cd1 ♚a5 16.♙d3 ♙g7 17.♚f2 a6 18.a3



18...f5! 19.exf5 ♙xc3

(19...gxf5 20.♙d5 ♙xd5 21.cxd5 ♚xd5 22.♙xa6=)

20.bxc3 gxf5 21.♞de1

**a)** 21.♚g3+ ♔h8 22.♚g5 ♞g8 23.♚f6+ ♞g7 24.g3 (24.♙xf5?? ♙xg2–+) 24...♚xa3=;

**b)** 21.♚h4 ♞e6±;

21...♚xa3 22.♙xf5 ♚xc3± Ruifeng Li — Raja Panjwani, Philadelphia 2014 (0–1);

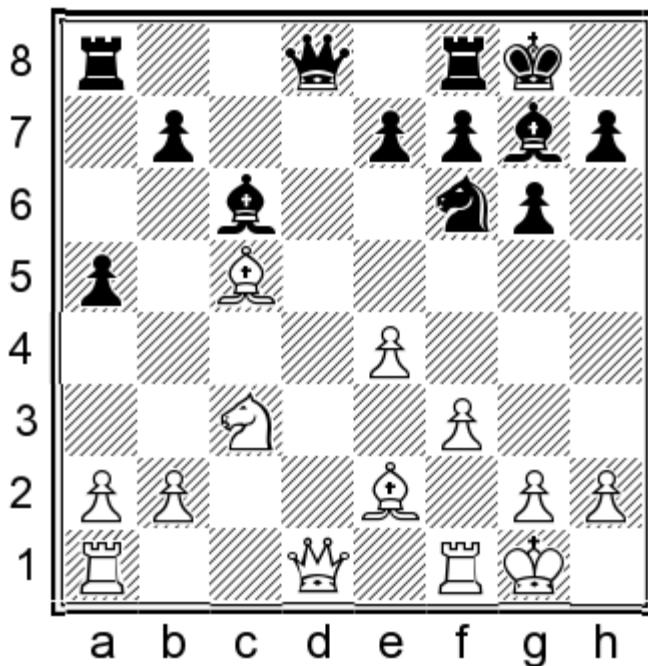
10.f3 (As with the 11.♖d3 line which we avoided by playing 9...♗d7 instead of 9...♗xd4, White prophylactically defends the e4-pawn in anticipation of ...♗d7-c6). 10...♗xd4 11.♗xd4 a5 If White plays ordinary developing moves like 12.♖d2 here then we will transpose into material we will discuss later, so we will just consider attempts by White to obtain immediate play.

(11...♗c6?! 12.b4±)

12.c5

(12.b3 ♗c6 13.a3 ♗d7 14.♗xg7 ♖xg7 15.♖d4+ ♗g8 16.b4 ♖b6 17.♖xb6 ♗xb6=)

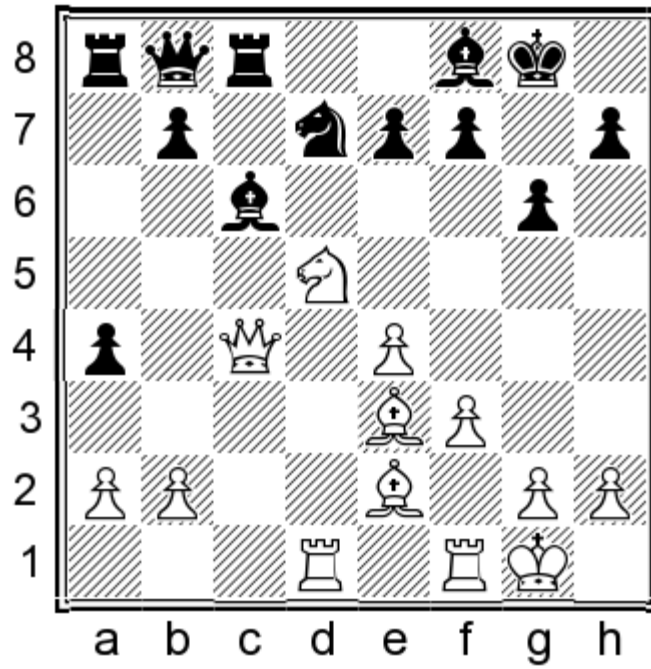
12...dxc5 13.♗xc5 ♗c6



14.♖b3

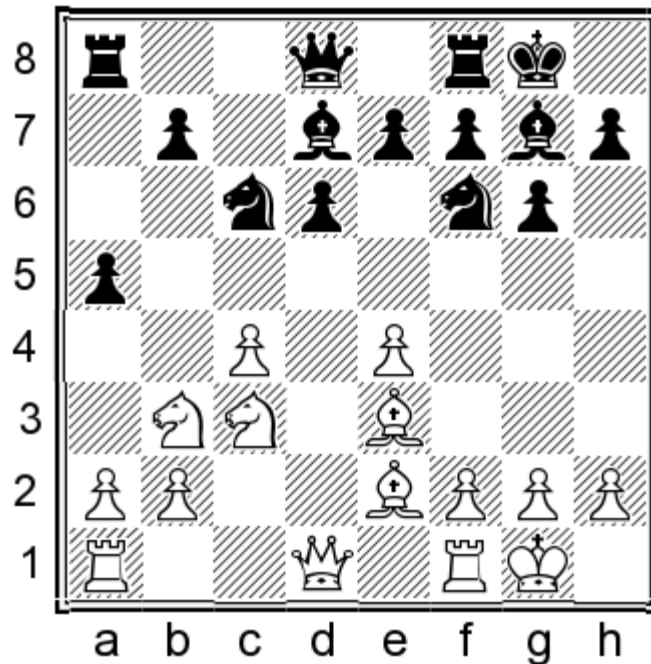
(14.♖xd8 ♖fxd8 15.♗xe7 ♖d2=; 14.♖c1 ♗d7 15.♗e3 a4 16.♖c2 ♖a5=)

14...♗d7 15.♗e3 ♖b8! 16.♖ad1 a4 17.♖c4 ♖c8 18.♗d5 ♗f8!



Black may optically appear to be passive but his compactness is deceptive; all of Black's soft spots have been covered and White has no targets. 19.♖b4 e6 20.♘xc6 ♜xc6 21.♙b5 ♕c5 22.♘xc5 ♘xc5=

**10...a5!**



Black immediately targets White's b3 knight and threatens to gain further space on the queenside with ...a5-a4 and ...♙d8-a5.

**11.♘d2**

11.f3?! a4 12.♘d2?! a3 13.bxa3 ♘g4 14.fxg4 ♕xc3±;

11.a3 a4 12.♘d2 ♙a5= Ideas for Black include ...♕e6/...♘d7-c5 or alternatively ...e7-e5/...♘c6-d4.

### 11...♙c8!

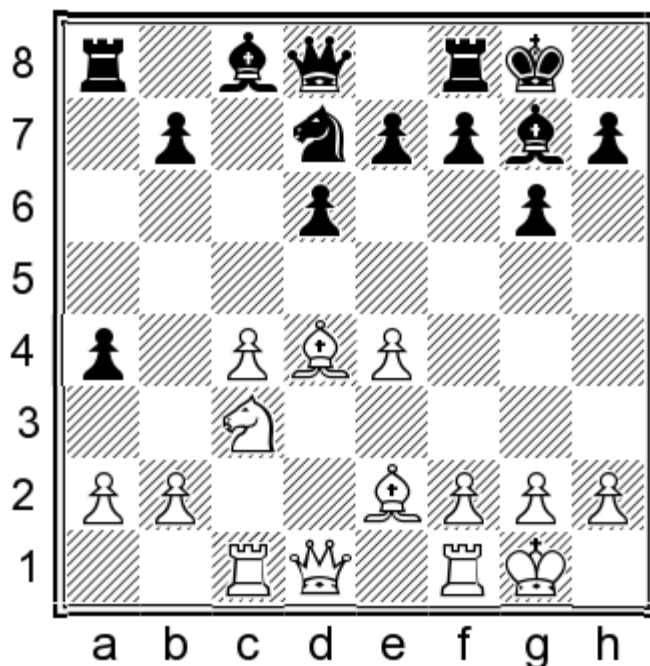
Black's bishop is misplaced on d7 in both the 10.♘c2 and 10.♘b3 lines. Ordinarily Black would prefer to play ...♙e6/...♘d7-c5 but there is no time for that here since White's f4-f5 comes too fast.

11...♙e6 12.f4 ♘d7?? 13.f5+-

### 12.♞c1 ♘d7 13.♘b3

13.f3 ♙d4!N 14.♙xd4 ♘xd4 15.♘db1 e5 16.♘a3 ♘c5 17.♘ab5 ♘ce6=

### 13...a4 14.♘d4 ♘xd4 15.♙xd4



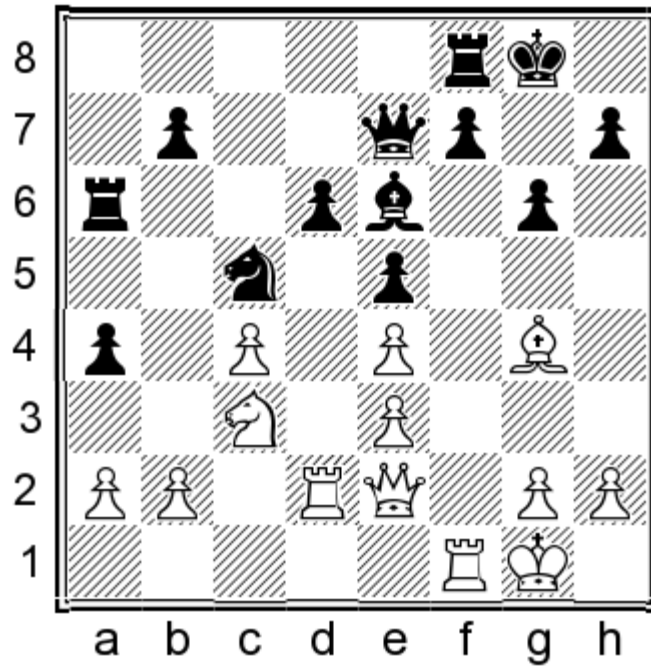
### 15...♙h6!

This is a fairly common idea when White's rook is on c1. Black wants to play ...e7-e5 next, when White has to accept doubled, isolated e-pawns.

### 16.♞c2

16.f4 e5 17.♙e3 exf4 18.♙xf4 ♖b6+ 19.♙h1 ♙xf4 20.♞xf4 ♖xb2 21.♞c2 ♖b6 22.♞d2 ♘e5 23.♘d5 ♖c5 Black's dark squares are in theory weak, but without White's dark squared bishop on the board Black has nothing to worry about. On the other hand, Black's light squared bishop is clearly superior to its counterpart. 24.♘f6+ ♙g7 25.♞xd6 ♙e6=

16...e5 17.♙e3 ♙xe3 18.fxe3 ♘c5 19.♞d2 ♞a6 20.♙g4 ♙e6 21.♞e2 ♞e7



It is hard to see how either side will make progress; Black doesn't particularly want to play ...f7-f5 because that would undouble White's e-pawns, but White has nothing constructive to do either. Black can literally play ...♖a6-a8-a6-a8 and wait for White to do something.

**22. ♕xe6**

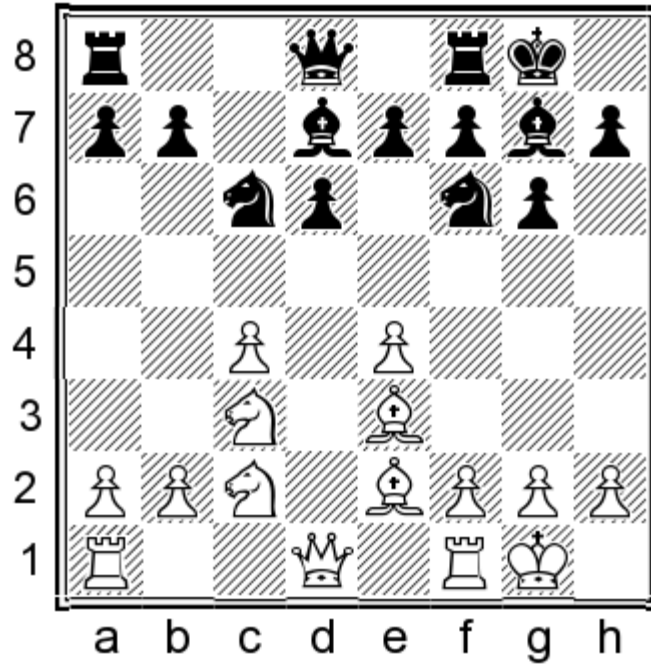
22. ♘d5? ♕xd5 23. exd5 f5

**22...fxe6 23. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 24. ♘b5 ♔g7 25. ♗f3 ♖c6 26. ♖f2 ♖c8 27. ♘xd6**

27. g4 ♖f8 28. ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 29. ♖xf8 ♔xf8 30. ♘xd6 ♔e7 31. ♘b5 ♘xe4

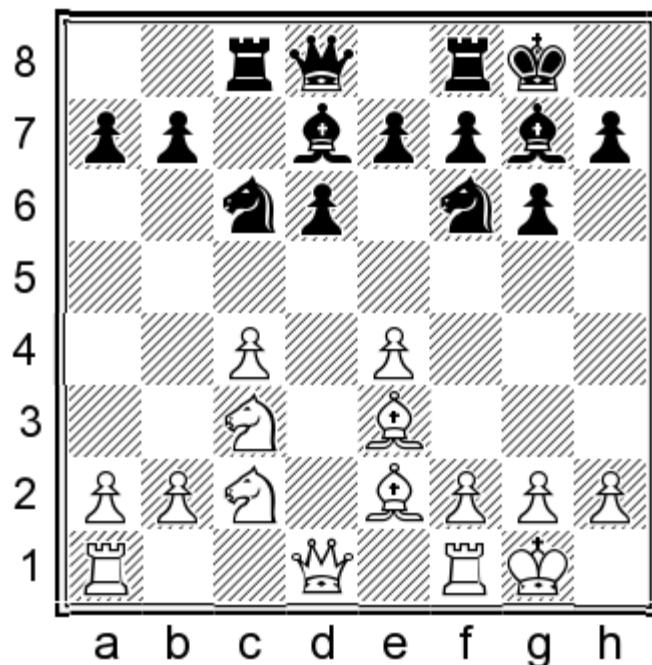
**27...♗xd6 28. ♗f6+ ♔g8 29. ♗f7+ ♔h8 30. ♗f6+ ♔g8=**

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♖c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 ♗d7 10.♗c2



This move was a real headache for me to deal with when preparing this book. I did not have the luxury of recommending the usual 9...♗xd4 because I was in on the secret of Smyslov's powerful 11.♙d3! The database games were not much help either; the consensus seems to be that Black must sit back passively and demonstrate resiliency in the face of White's b2-b4 or f4-f4/g2-g4 expansions (see the alternatives to 10...♖c8 for an illustration). I analyzed all kinds of weird ideas for Black, like ...a7-a5/...♗c6-b4/...♗d7-c6/...♗f6-d7-c5, but I realized that White's position is too solid for Black to get away with unprincipled play. I concluded that if Black is going to be able to equalize in this line, it will be via 'healthy', thematic moves in the spirit of the opening.

**10...♖c8!**



Until around 2012 this was by far the most popular move, and it still is overall, but it has been absent from the top games in the last five years, particularly in favor of 10...♖a5. I find the positions after 10...♖a5 to be overly provocative: Black does not need to cede as much ground as he tends to in those lines. After 10...♖c8 we will consider White's three most popular attempts.

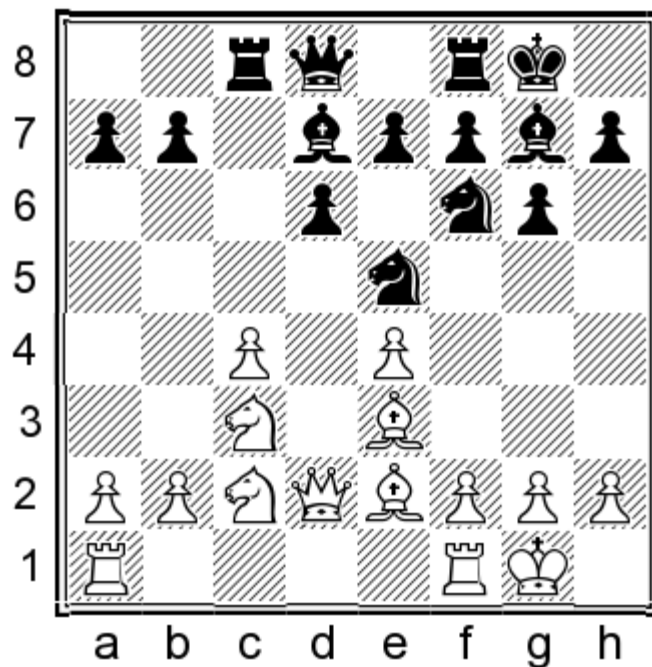
10...♖a5 11.♖d2 ♜fc8 12.♞ac1 ♘e5 13.b3 ♘c6 14.b4 ♖d8 15.f4 ♙g4 16.♙d3 ♙e6 17.h3 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 ♘b8 20.♘d5 ♙xd5 21.cxd5 ♞a2 22.♞e1 ♘bd7 23.♘d4 ♞a3 24.♖d2 ♞ca8 25.♙h2 ♞a2 26.♞c2 ♞xc2 27.♞xc2 ♞b6 28.♞c4 ♖d8 29.♞c1± 0-1 (42) Swiczak,M-Cyborowski,L Poland 2015;

10...a6 11.f3 ♘a7?! 12.♘a3 ♙c6 13.♖d2 ♘d7 14.♞ab1 ♞b8?! 15.♞fc1 ♞c8 16.b4 b6 17.c5 dxc5 18.bxc5 ♘b5 19.♘axb5 axb5 20.cxb6 ♘xb6 21.♘xb5 ♙e8 22.♞xc8 ♘xc8 23.♞c1!+- 1-0 (47) Vuckovic,B (2558)-Abramovic,B (2455) Kraljevo SRB 2015.

### 11.f3

This is by far White's most popular choice. Against White's other moves Black plays ...♘c6-e5, but here since White has committed himself to f2-f3, Black can play 11...♙e6! when White's best plan is to go for f4-f5, now at the cost of a tempo.

11.♖d2 ♘e5



12.b3 White's most popular move.

**a)** 12.♘a3 ♕e6 13.b3 ♖a5 14.♘ab5 a6 15.♘d4 b5=;

**b)** 12.c5 ♕c6! (12...dxc5 13.f4 ♘c6 (13...♘eg4 14.e5 ♘h5 15.h3 ♘xe3 16.♖xe3 ♕h6 17.♖ad1 ♖e8 18.♕xh5 gxh5 19.♗f3±) 14.♖ad1 ♘b8 15.♗e1 (15.e5 ♘g4±) 15...♗e8 16.♗h4 b5 (16...♕c6 17.f5 ♘bd7 18.♘e1±) 17.f5 b4 18.♘d5 ♘xd5 19.♖xd5 ♕xb2 20.e5∞) 13.cxd6 ♕xe4 14.♕xa7 ♖xd6 15.♗xd6 exd6 16.♘e3 ♕d3=;

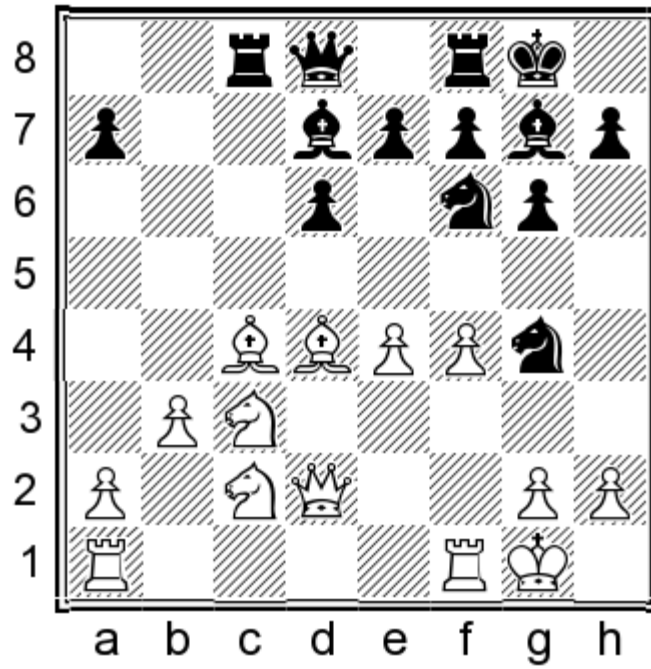
12...b5! 13.f4

(13.cxb5? ♖c7 14.♕d4 ♘xe4 15.♘xe4 ♖xc2 16.♗e3 f5!±)

13...♘eg4 14.♕d4

(14.♕xa7 bxc4 15.b4 ♕c6= 1/2–1/2 (38) Nijboer,F (2525)-Bosch,J (2425) Amsterdam 1996)

14...bxc4 15.♕xc4

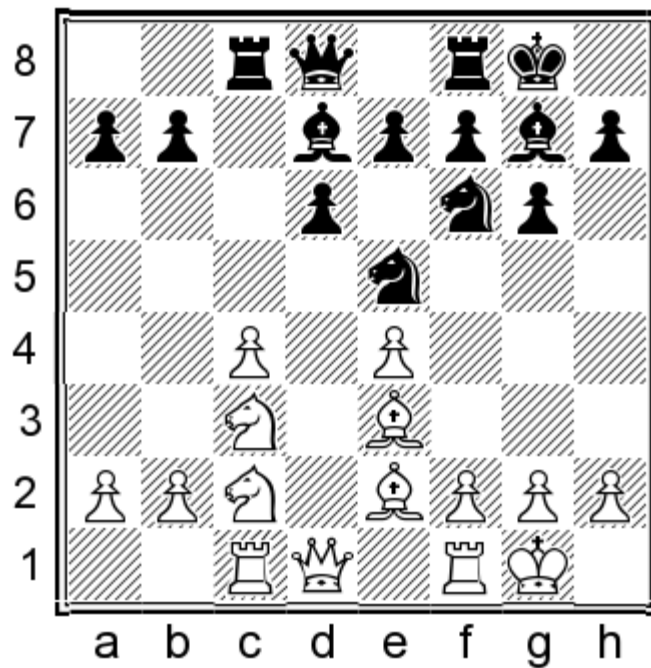


15...e5! 16.fxe5

(16.♙xa7? ♖a5 17.♙e3 ♘xe3 18.♘xe3 exf4 19.♖xf4 ♘xe4+)

16...dxe5 17.♙xa7 ♖c7 18.♙f2 ♙e6! 19.♘b5 ♖b7 20.♘d6 ♘xe4!;

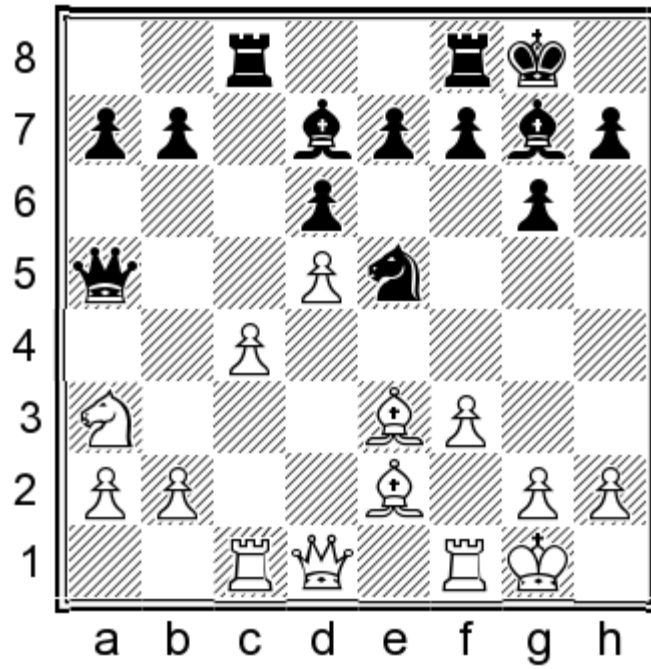
11.♖c1 ♘e5



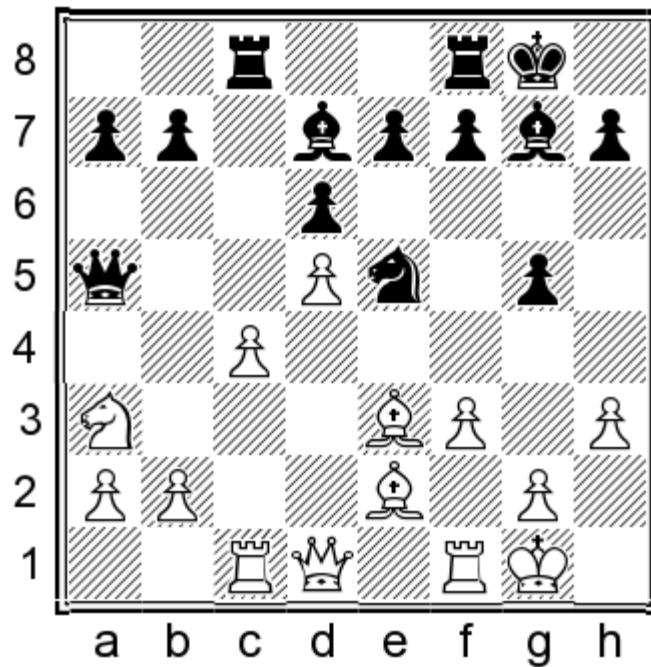
(11...a6!? 12.f4 b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.♙xb5 ♘g4 15.a4 ♘xe3 16.♘xe3 ♘d4 17.♙xd7 ♖xd7 18.f5 ♖a7 19.♔h1 e6 20.♖b1 ♖fd8)

12.b3 This line may be one reason that Black stopped playing 10...♖c8, but I have found a new move which seems to revive Black's position.

(12.♘a3 ♖a5 13.f3 ♙e6 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♙d7

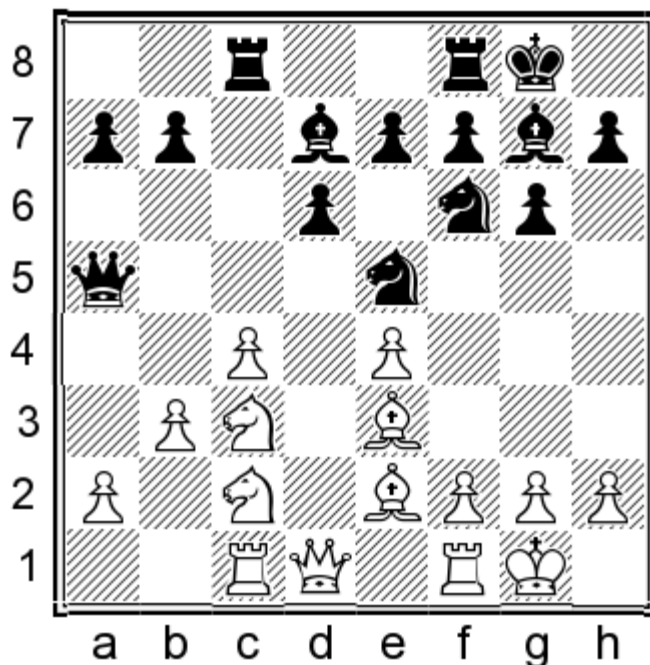


In general Black has three plans in such positions: either play ...f7-f5-f4 securing the e5 square for Black's knight, or play ...e7-e6 opening up the center with White's knight misplaced on a3, and finally ...a7-a6/...b7-b5 as usual. Here we will see Black implement a different idea from these, which works because of the concrete features of the position. 16.h3 (16.f4 ♘g4 17.♙xg4 ♙xg4 18.♚xg4 ♙xb2 19.♘b5 ♙xc1 20.♖xc1 ♖xc4!-+) 16...g5!?



Not the only move for Black, but certainly his most aesthetically appealing option. 17.♚e1 (17.♖c2 h6 18.f4 gxf4 19.♖xf4 f5±; 17.♙xg5?! ♚b6+ 18.♖f2 h6 19.♙d2 ♚xb2 20.♘b1 ♚xa2±) 17...♚xe1 18.♖fxe1 f5 19.♙xg5 (19.♙xa7 g4±) 19...♘f7 20.♙xe7 ♖fe8 21.♙d1 ♙xb2 22.♖b1 ♙xa3 23.♖xb7 ♘e5 24.♖xe5 ♙c5+ 25.♙f1 dxe5 26.♙xc5 ♖xc5 27.♖xd7 ♖xc4 28.♖xa7 ♖d4=)

12...♚a5!N



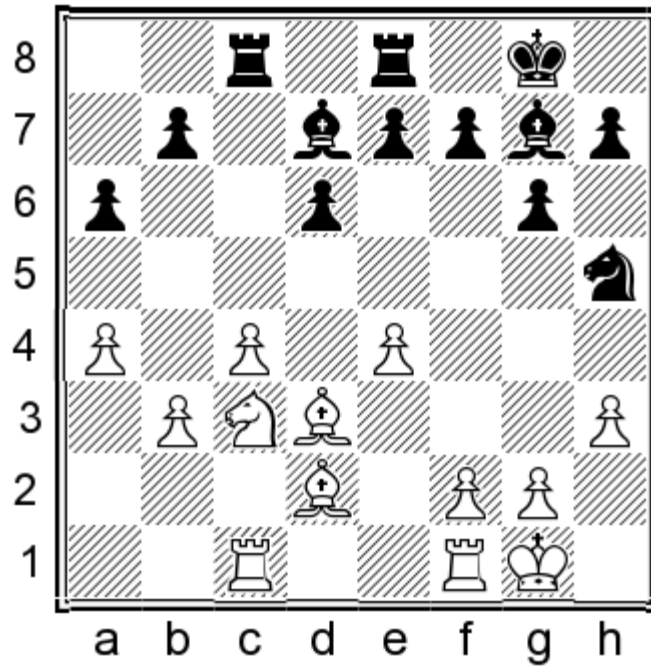
An important novelty. White is forced to make a decision of how to deal with the hanging c3-knight, and Black will respond accordingly.

**a)** 12...a6 13.♘d4! Were it not for this move, 12...a6 would be fine for Black. 13...♙a5 (13...♞eg4 14.♙d2 ♖b6 15.♘c2±) 14.♘d5! ♘xd5 (14...♙d8 15.f3 ♘xd5 16.exd5 e6 17.dxe6 fxe6∞) 15.exd5 f5 16.a4 ♘g4 17.♙xg4 fxg4 18.♞e1±;

**b)** 12...b5?! This is thematic but unfortunately Black's compensation is inadequate. 13.♘xb5 ♘xe4 (13...♙xb5 14.cxb5 ♘xe4 15.f4 ♘d7 16.♘d4±) 14.♘xa7 ♞a8 15.a4 ♘c5 16.♙xc5 dxc5 17.♘b5 ♙b6 18.♙d2 ♞fd8 19.♙e3 ♙f5 20.♘b4 e6 21.♞fd1 ♞ab8 22.♘d3±;

13.♙d2

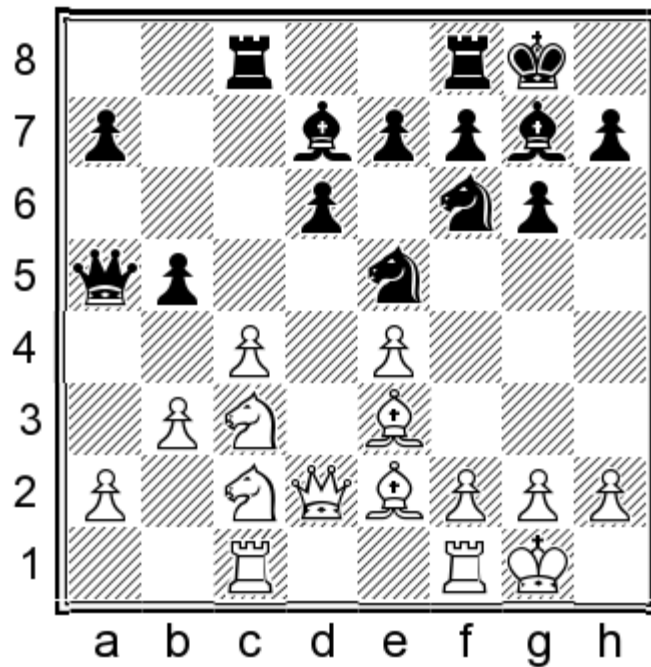
**a)** 13.♘d4 ♞eg4! (13...a6 14.♘d5! (14.h3 b5 15.f4 ♘c6 16.cxb5 ♘xd4 17.♙xd4 axb5=; 14.f3 b5 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♘dx5 ♙xb5 17.♘xb5 ♞xc1 18.♙xc1 ♙xa2=) 14...♞fe8 15.b4 (15.a4 ♘xd5 16.exd5 e6 17.dxe6 (17.f4 ♘xc4! 18.bxc4 exd5∓) 17...fxe6 18.f4 ♘f7 19.♙f3 d5=) 15...♙d8 16.f4! (16.♘xf6+ exf6! 17.♙d2 ♘c6 18.f3 f5⇌) 16...♞eg4 (16...♘c6 17.♘c2±) 17.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 18.e5 ♘e4 19.e6 fxe6 20.♙g4 ♙xd4 21.♙xd4 ♘f6 22.♙e2 ♞f8 23.♙b3±) 14.♙d2 ♙c5 (14...♘h2 15.♘cb5 ♙b6 16.♘xh2 a6 17.♙e3 axb5 18.♘e6 ♙a5 19.♘xf8±) 15.♘f3 (15.♘c2 Compare this to the analogous position in the 12...a6 line, where Black's queen is on b6 instead of c5. There, Black's next move is unavailable to him. 15...♙e5! 16.g3 ♙h5 17.h4 ♙c5=) 15...♞fe8 16.h3 ♘e5 17.a4 a6 18.♘xe5 ♙xe5 19.♙d3 ♙h5! 20.♙xh5 ♘xh5=



In general Black should be happy to exchange queens in this line of the Maroczy. Here, Black will consider relocating his h5 knight to c5, or perhaps instead he will relocate his g7 bishop to a7 and keep the knight on f6. Eventually things will fizzle out: White will play  $\text{♞d5}$ , Black will take it with either knight or bishop, and rooks will get exchanged on the c-file. As always, Black's counterplay is to be found in ...f7-f5 or ...b7-b5.;

**b)** 13.  $\text{♙d2}$   $\text{♜b6}$  14.  $\text{♞d5}$   $\text{♞xd5}$  15.  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{f5}$ ±;

13...b5!



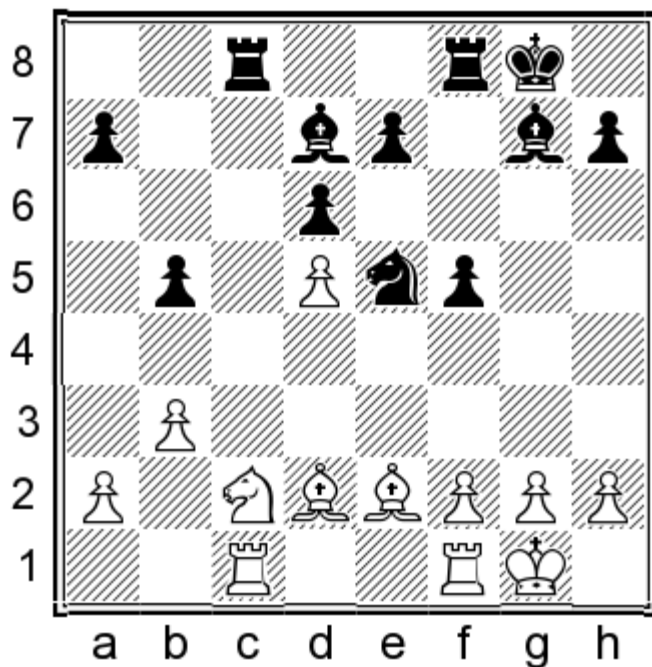
Now that White's c3-knight is 'pinned',  $\text{♞c3xb5}$  is no longer possible as it was after 12...b5. 14.  $\text{♞d5}$

(14.  $\text{b4}$   $\text{♜c7}$  15.  $\text{c5}$   $\text{♞fd8}$ ±; 14.  $\text{♞xb5}$ ?!  $\text{♜xd2}$  15.  $\text{♙xd2}$   $\text{♞xe4}$  16.  $\text{♙e3}$   $\text{a6}$  17.  $\text{♞bd4}$   $\text{f5}$ ±)

14...  $\text{♜xd2}$  15.  $\text{♙xd2}$

(15.  $\text{♞xe7}$ +  $\text{♚h8}$  16.  $\text{♙xd2}$   $\text{♞ce8}$  17.  $\text{♞d5}$   $\text{♞xe4}$ =)

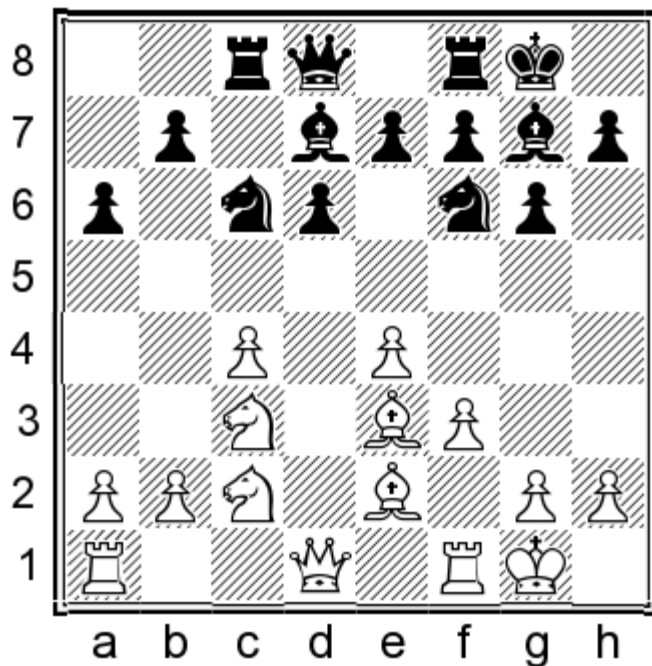
15...♖xd5 16.cxd5 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 The position is dynamically equal. Black has obvious static weaknesses, but he also has more central pawns and active pieces. I will just give a sample variation for how play could continue.



18.♖d4 a6 19.a4 bxa4 20.bxa4 ♙xa4 21.♙xa6 ♜xc1 22.♞xc1 ♙d7 23.♗c6 ♞a8 24.♙b5 ♜f8 25.♙g5 ♖g6=

11...♙e6!

11...a6



12.♞c1!

(12.♞d2 ♗e5 13.♗a3 (13.b3 b5 14.cxb5 ♞a5 15.b4 ♞c7 16.♙d4 ♗c4! (16...♙xb5 17.♗e3 ♗c4 18.♗xc4 ♙xc4 19.♞ac1 ♞b7=) 17.♞c1 axb5⇒) 13...♙e6 14.♗d5 ♙xd5 (14...♗fd7?! 15.♞ac1 (15.♙d4 ♗c6 16.♙xg7 (16.♙e3 f5 17.♗f4 ♙f7∞) 16...♜xg7 17.♜h1 a5 18.♗c2 ♗c5 19.♗ce3 f6±) 15...f5 16.exf5 gxf5?! (16...♙xf5 17.♞fd1±) 17.f4 ♗c6 (17...♗g4

18.♙xg4 fxg4 19.f5 ♕f7 20.b3 ♖f6 21.♗xf6+ exf6 22.♟f4 h5 23.♞d4±) 18.♙f3 ♖c5 19.♟fe1 ♕f7 20.b4 ♖e4 21.♙xe4 fxe4 22.b5 ♖b8 23.♙b6± 1-0 (53) Young,G-Panjwani,R Las Vegas 2013) 15.exd5 (15.cxd5 e6=) 15...e6 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.♞ad1 (17.b4 d5=) 17...d5 18.c5 ♖fd7 19.♟c1 (19.b4 a5=) 19...d4 20.♙g5 (20.♙xd4 ♖xc5≠) 20...♖f6=)

12...♖e5?!

(12...♙e6 A recommendation of Khalifman. 13.♖d5! (13.♖a3 ♖d7 14.♟d2 ♟a5 15.♟fd1 f5! 16.exf5 ♙xf5 17.♟d5+?! ♟xd5 18.cxd5 ♖b4 19.g4?! ♙d3 20.♙xd3 ♟xf3≠) 13...♖d7 14.b4 f5 15.exf5 ♙xf5 16.b5±)

13.c5!! A brilliant computer-move!

(13.♖a3 ♙e6 14.♖d5 ♖fd7 15.f4 ♖c6= Black will continue with ...f7-f5; White's knight is awkward on a3.)

13...dxc5 14.f4 ♖eg4

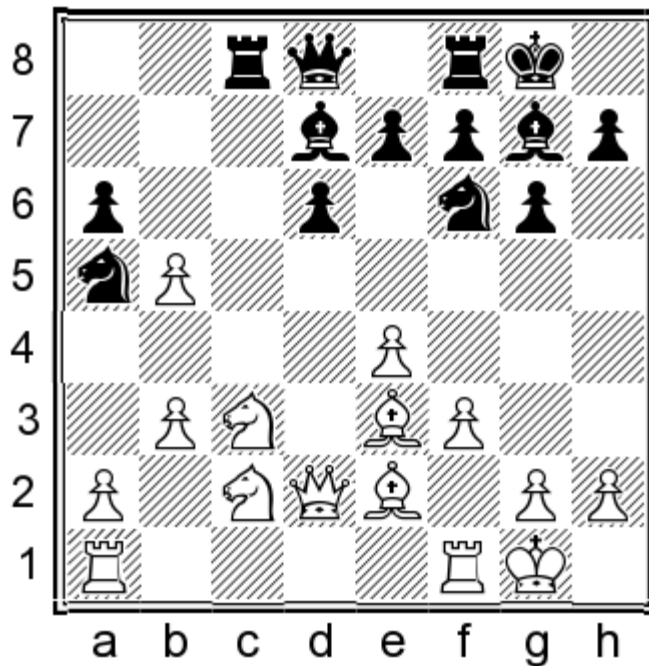
(14...♖c6 15.e5 ♖e8 16.♙f3 b6 17.♟f2! ♙e6 18.♟xd8 ♖xd8 19.♖a4 ♟b8 20.b4±)

15.e5 ♖xe3 16.♖xe3 ♖e8 17.♟c2! b5 18.♞d2 ♟c7 19.a4±;

11...♖a5 12.b3 a6

(12...♖g4 13.♙d2! ♟b6+ (13...♖e5 14.♟c1 (14.f4 ♖exc4!≠) 14...f5 15.f4 ♖f7 16.exf5 ♙xf5 17.♖e3±) 14.♖h1 ♖f2+ 15.♟xf2 ♟xf2 16.♖d5+≠)

13.♟d2 b5 14.cxb5



14...♟c7

(14...♟xc3 15.♟xc3 ♖d5 16.♟d2 ♖xe3 17.♖xe3±; 14...♖g4 15.♙d4 e5 16.♙a7!±)

15.♙d4 ♙xb5

(15...axb5 16.♖b4 ♟b8 17.♖h1 ♖c6 18.♖xc6 ♙xc6 19.a4±)

16.♙xb5 axb5

(16...e5 17.♖b4 exd4 18.♖cd5 ♖xd5 19.♖xd5 ♟a7 20.♙d3 ♖c6 21.f4 ♖e7 22.♖xe7+ ♟xe7 23.♙xa6 ♟c3 24.♙d3±)

17.♟ac1 ♟b7 18.♖d5 ♖xd5

(18...e5 19.♙e3 ♖xd5 20.exd5 ♟a8 21.♖b4±)

19.♙xg7 ♖xg7 20.exd5±;

11...♗e5 12.b3 a6 13.♘d5 ♗xd5 14.exd5 f5 15.♚d2 b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♘d4±

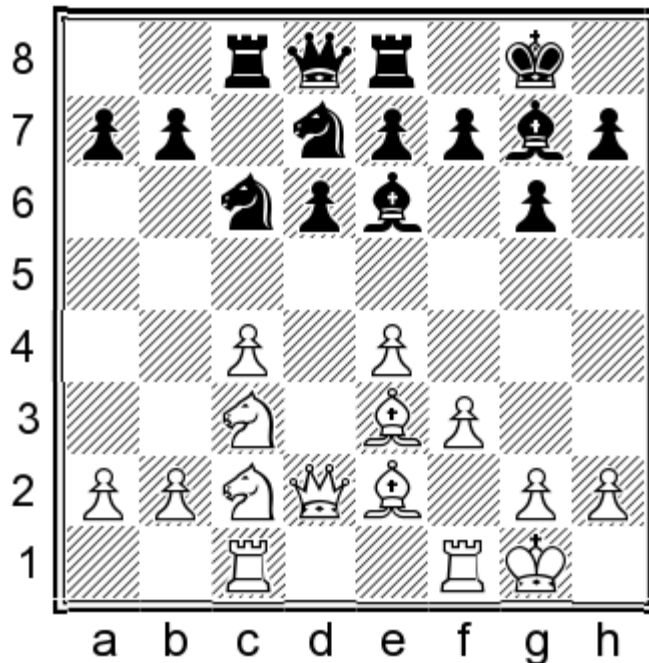
## 12.f4

This is the computer's recommendation — machines don't have egos about blatantly losing tempos.

12.♚d2 ♗d7 13.♞ac1

(13.♞ab1 f5 14.exf5 ♙xf5=; 13.♘d5 ♙xb2 14.♞ab1 ♙g7 15.♞xb7 ♗c5=)

13...♞e8!



Prophylaxis! Black would like to play 13...♚a5 instead, but that allows 14.b4! which works because of Black's e7-pawn being weak.

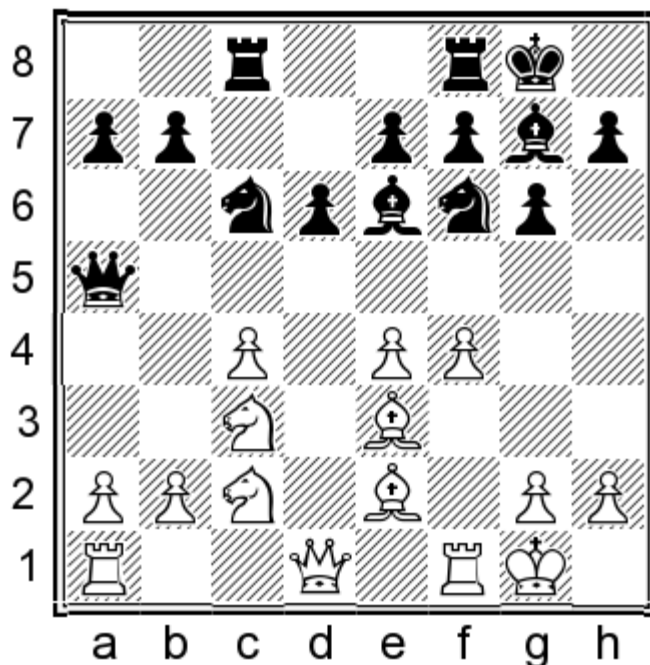
(13...♚a5?! 14.b4! ♗xb4 15.♘d5 ♗c6 16.♚xa5 ♗xa5 17.♘xe7++-)

14.b3

(14.♞fd1 ♚a5=; 14.f4 ♗c5 15.♘d4 ♗xd4 16.♙xd4 ♚b6 17.♙e3 ♚b4=)

14...♚a5 15.♘d4 ♗xd4 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 17.♚xd4 ♚c5 18.♚xc5 ♗xc5=

12...♚a5!



Black threatens a discovery attack on the c4-pawn with either ...♖c6-b4(b8), when White's usual b2-b3 is impossible because of the hanging c3 knight.

12...a6 This followed by 13...b5 almost works but not quite. The opposite colored bishop endgame which results is highly unpleasant for Black, even if objectively drawn. 13.♞c1

(13.♞d2 ♖a5 14.b3 b5 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♙xb5 ♞c7 17.♙d4 ♙xb3!±)

13...b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.♙xb5 ♖g4 16.f5!

(16.♙xc6 ♖xe3 17.♖xe3 ♞b6 18.♞d2 ♞xc6∞)

16...♖xe3 17.♖xe3 ♞b6 18.fxe6 ♞xe3+ 19.♙h1 fxe6 20.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 21.♖a4 ♖a7 22.♞xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♞f3+ ♞xf3 24.gxf3 It won't surprise me if Black can find a plan to force a draw in this endgame, but fortunately we don't need to in light of 12...♞a5! 24...♙d4

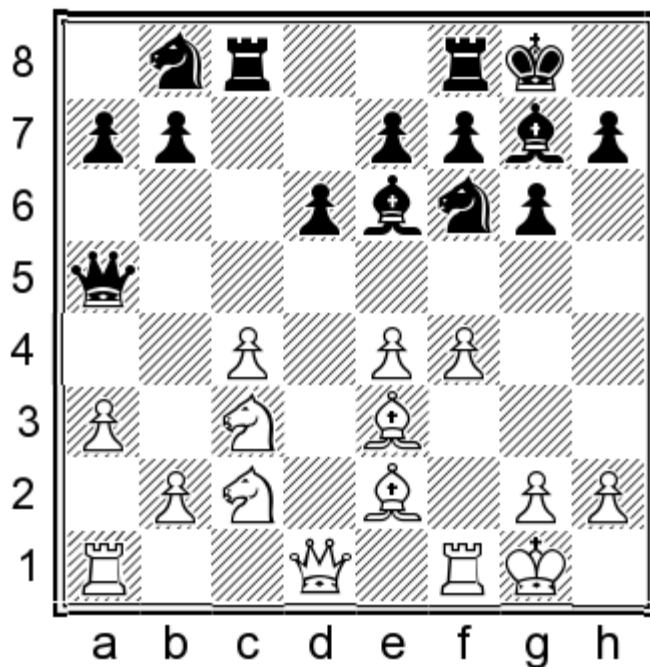
(24...d5!?!∞)

25.♙d7 ♖b6 26.♖xb6 ♙xb6 27.♙xe6 ♙d4 28.b4±

### 13.♞c1!

The most logical choice: White takes his rook off the h8-a1 diagonal on which it was vulnerable after b2-b4, and by X-ray defends both the c3-knight and c4-pawn.

13.a3 ♖b8!



14. ♖d5

(14.b4 ♜d8 ♞ White's c4-pawn falls.)

14... ♜d8 15. ♙d3

(15.f5 ♙d7 16. ♙xa7 ♜xd5 17. ♜xd5 ♙c6 18. ♜d3 ♙xb2 19. ♞ab1 ♙e5=)

15... ♜bd7 16. ♖d4 ♙g4=;

13.g4 ♜b4!

(13... ♜b8!?)

14. ♜xb4 ♜xb4 15.a3 ♜a5 16. ♖d5 ♜xd5 17.exd5 ♙d7=

**13... ♜a6!**

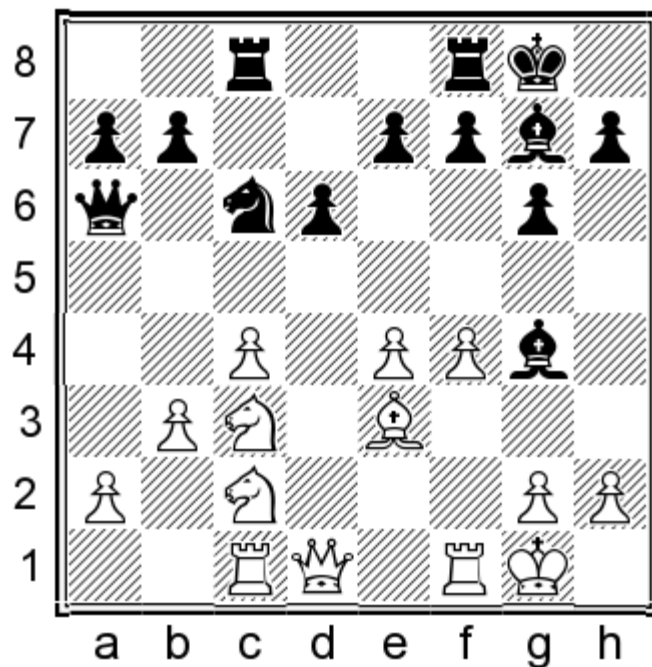
13... ♜b4?! 14. ♜xb4 ♜xb4 15.b3±;

13... ♜b8?! 14. ♖d5 ♜d8 15. ♜xf6+ ♙xf6 16. ♖d4± Note that were White's rook not on c1 the c4-pawn would be hanging.

**14.b3**

14. ♖a3 ♜xe4! 15. ♜xe4 ♙xb2 16. ♖b5 ♙xc1 17. ♜xc1 ♜xa2 18. ♜bc3 ♜a5⇌

**14... ♜g4 15. ♙xg4 ♙xg4**

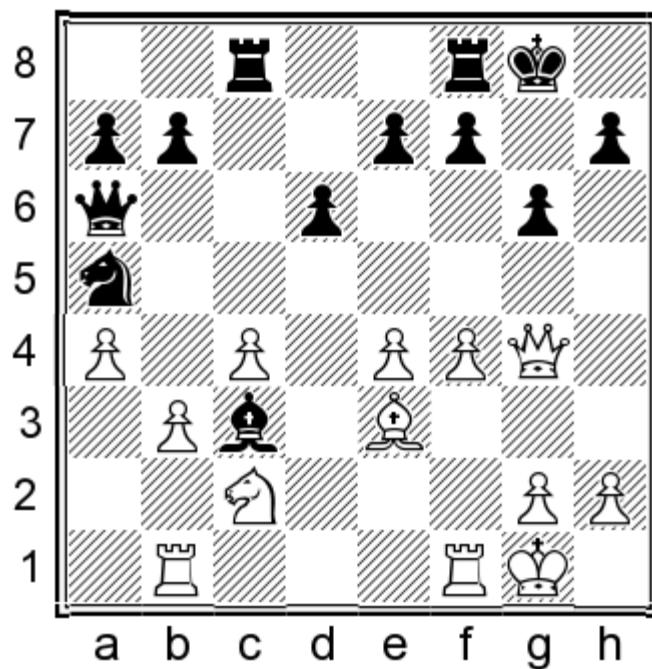


16.♙d2!

16.♙xg4 ♔xc3 17.a4 White is searching for harmony, and Black must act fast to prevent White from finding it.  
17...♘a5!

(17...♙a5 18.♞cd1 ♔g7 19.♙e2±)

18.♞b1



18...♘b3! 19.♞b3 ♙xc4 20.♞fb1 ♙xe4 21.♙e2 ♞c4 22.♘a3 ♞xa4 23.♞xc3 ♞xa3 24.♞bc1 ♞xc3 25.♞xc3 a5=

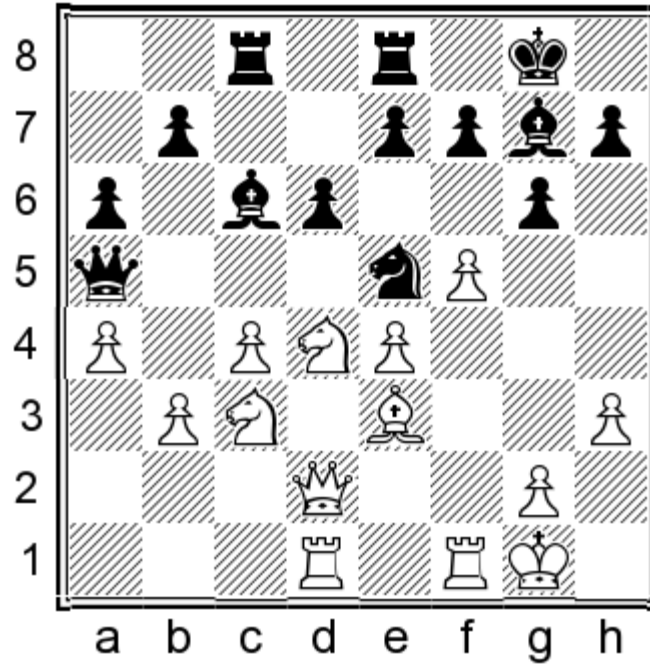
16...♔d7 17.f5 ♙a5 18.♘d4 ♞fe8! 19.♞cd1 a6 20.a4 ♘e5

20...♔e5 21.♘d5 ♙xd2 22.♞xd2 ♔xd4 23.♔xd4 ♘xd4 24.♞xd4 ♔c6 25.♘b6 ♞cd8 26.♞fd1

(26.b4 e5 27.fxe6 ♖xe6=)

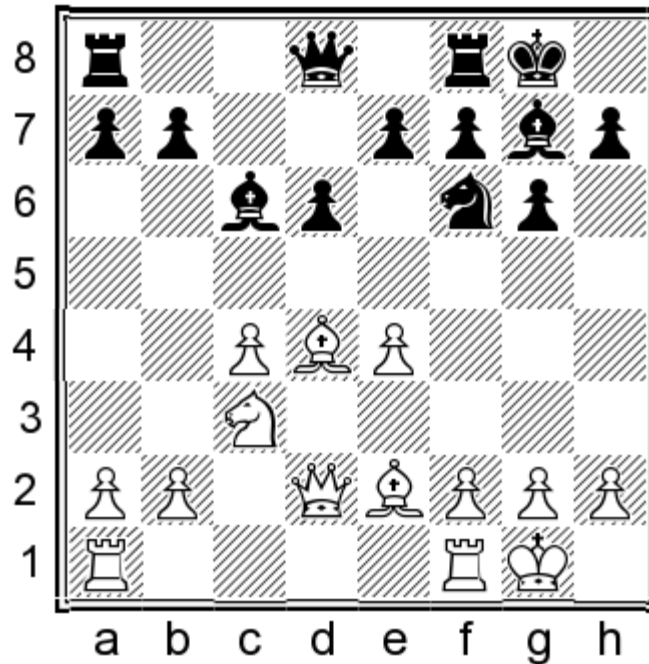
26...a5 27.c5±

**21.h3** ♙c6±



This is one of the few times in the book where I'll give White a slight advantage in a main recommendation. The reader should be suspicious of authors who claim pure equality in all lines in anything other than the most topical lines of the Ruy Lopez or perhaps the Najdorf Sicilian. This is the sort of += we have to live with as Accelerated Dragon players. White played very well to get here; he had to navigate his way around many landmines. After all that, we can seek consolation in the fact that objectively speaking, there are only three results in chess, and '+=' is just short-hand for '= after accurate play'. The onus is on White to improve his position; Black can shift his pieces around until White makes a concession. For example, if White goes for g4-g5, then Black may relocate his knight to c5 via d7, and place his bishop on e5, perhaps combined with ...♙a5-b4.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 ♙d7 10.♚d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♙c6



Here White's main alternative to 12.f3 is 12.♙d3.

### 12.♙d3

A move first played by GM (and now professor of economics at Harvard) Ken Rogoff against Bent Larsen in 1976. By abstaining from f2-f3, White intends to meet ...♗f6-d7 with the exchange of dark squared bishops, followed by the rook lift ♖a1(f1)-e1-e3-h3, threatening ♚d2-h6.

12.♖fd1 e5 13.♙e3 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♙xe4 15.♚xd6 ♚h4=;

12.♚e3 e5 13.♙xa7 ♗xe4!N 14.♗xe4 ♙xe4 15.♖fd1 ♙c6! 16.♙c5 dxc5 17.♖xd8 ♖fxd8= I'd rather be Black: ...e5-e4 and ...♙g7-d4 are to follow.

### 12...a5

By far Black's most popular choice.

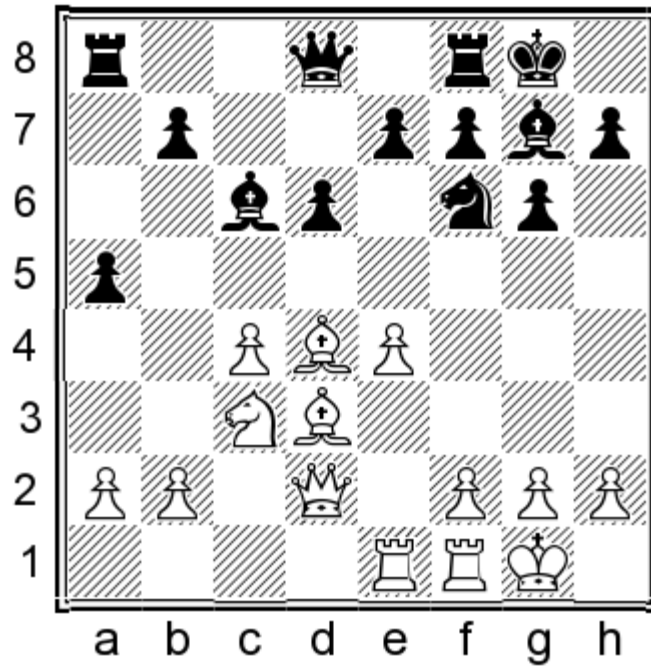
12...a6!? This was Larsen's choice against Rogoff. It appears to be perfectly sound and deserves further research.

13.♖fe1

(13.b4 b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.♚e2 ♚d7 16.a4 bxa4 17.b5 ♙b7 18.♗xa4 ♚g4 19.f3 ♚g5=)

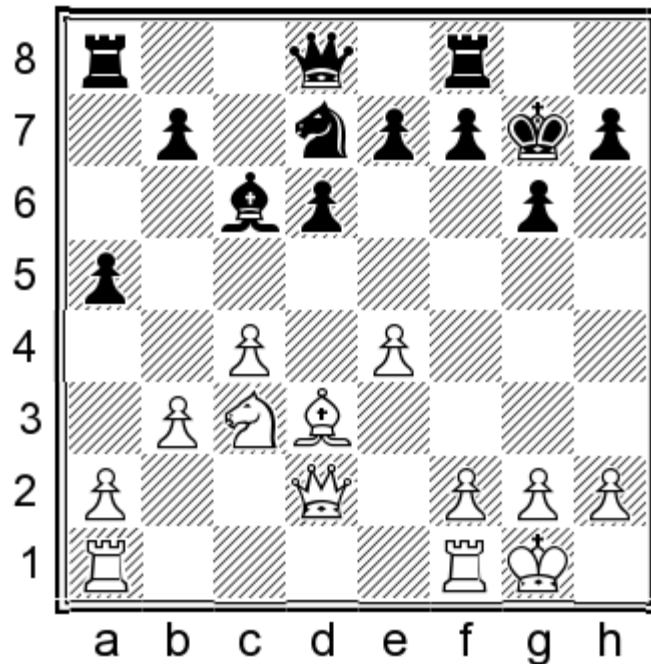
13...♖b8 14.a4 a5 15.♗d5 ♗d7 16.♙xg7 ♗xg7 17.♖e3 e5 18.♖h3 h5 19.♗c3 ♗c5 20.♙c2 ♚e7 21.♖d1 ♖bd8= 1/2-1/2 (40) Rogoff,K (2480)-Larsen,B (2625) Biel 1976.

### 13.♖ae1



White is anticipating Black's ...♘f6-d7, and preemptively initiating his thematic rook lift. Black, however, need not comply.

13.b3 ♘d7 14.♙xg7 ♖xg7



15.♙fe1 Once played by a 14-year old Magnus Carlsen!

(15.♙ae1 ♘c5 16.♙e3 e5! 17.♙h3 h5 18.f4 exf4 19.♙xf4 (19.♙xf4 a4!⇒) 19...♙e7=)

15...♙b6! Black threatens ...♙b6-d4/...♘d7-c5. If Black manages to exchange queens he will have the 'better half' of an equal endgame.

**a)** 15...♙e8 16.♙e3 ♙b6 17.♙h3 ♖g8 18.♙h6 ♘f6 19.♙e2 ♖h8 20.g4→;

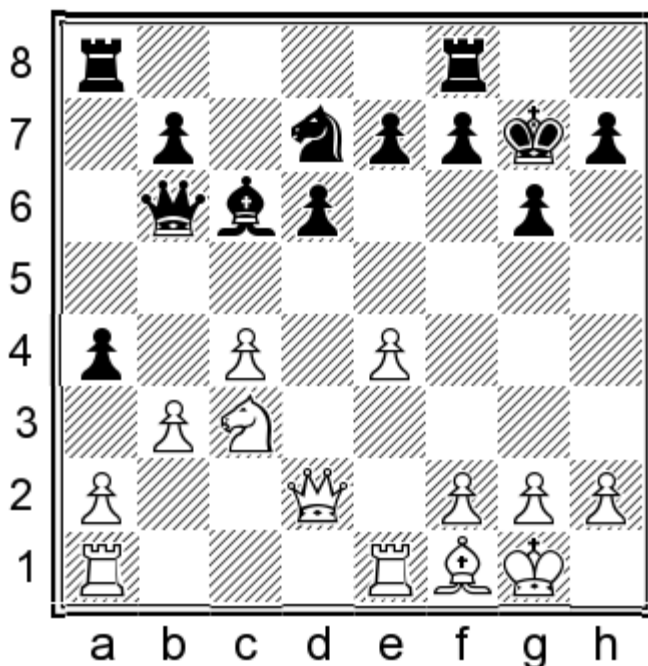
**b)** 15...♘c5 16.♙c2 (16.♙f1 e6 17.♙e3 ♙f6 18.♙ae1 e5 19.♘b5 ♙fd8 20.♘c7 ♙a7 21.a3 b6 22.♘d5 ♙xd5 23.exd5 a4 24.b4 ♘b3 25.♙d1 ♙g5 1/2-1/2 (25) Shabalov, A (2520)-Panjwani, R (2422) Dearborn 2013) 16...b6 17.a3±;

16.♙f1 This was 14-year old (but still nearly 2600-rated) Carlsen's choice.

a) 16.♙c2 ♖c5 17.♘d5 (17.♞e3 a4 18.♞h3 ♘f6 19.♞h6+ ♗g8 20.♞d1 axb3 21.axb3 ♞a5=) 17...e6 18.♞c3+ e5 19.♞ad1 ♞fd8 20.♞d3 ♘f8! 21.♞d2 ♘e6=;

b) 16.♘d5 ♙xd5 17.exd5 ♞d4 18.♞ad1 ♘e5 19.♙c2 ♞xd2 20.♞xd2 g5! 21.♞d4 ♞ab8 22.a4 ♞h8! 23.f4 gxf4 24.♞xf4 ♞bg8 25.♙f5 b6 26.♗f2 ♗f8=;

16...a4!



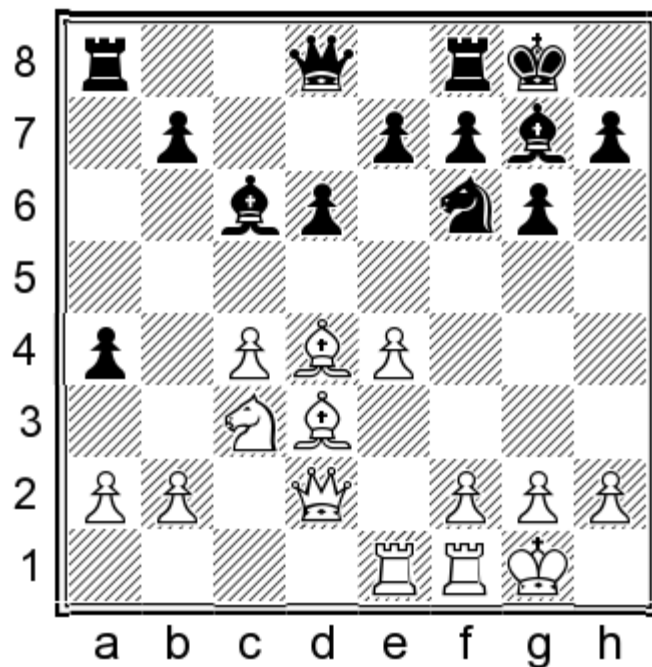
a) 16...♞c5 17.♞ad1 ♞fd8 18.♞e3 e6 19.♞xd6 (19.♞d3 ♘f6=) 19...♞xd6 20.♞xd6 ♘c5 21.♞xd8 ♞xd8 22.f3±;

b) 16...♘e5 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.exd5 e6 19.♞ad1 exd5 20.♞xd5± 1/2-1/2 (65) Carlsen,M (2581)-Lie, K (2474) Drammen 2004;

17.♞b2 ♘e5 18.♘d5 ♙xd5 19.exd5 axb3 20.axb3 f6 21.♞c3 g5= In such positions Queens and Knights tend to cooperate better than Queens and Bishops.;

13.♞fe1 a4 14.♘d5 ♘d7 15.♙xg7 ♗xg7 16.♞e3 e5 17.♞h3 h5 18.♘e3 ♞h8 19.♞g3 ♘c5 20.♞d1 h4 21.♞h3 ♙xe4± 0-1 (47) Kramnik-Grischuk, WCh Candidates KAZ 2011.

13...a4!



Here all the games in the database continue with 14.♘d5 in order to prevent Black's ...♙d8-a5.

13...♘d7?! 14.♙xg7 ♖xg7 15.♞e3 ♞b6 16.♞h3

(16.♘d5 ♙xd5 17.exd5 ♞fe8 18.♞c3+ ♖g8 19.♞fe1±)

16...h5 17.♞xh5 gxh5 18.♞g5+ ♖h8 19.♞xh5+ ♖g7 20.♞g5+ ♖h8 21.e5→

#### 14.♘d5

14.f4 ♞a5 15.e5 ♘g4 16.h3 dxe5 17.fxe5 ♘xe5→

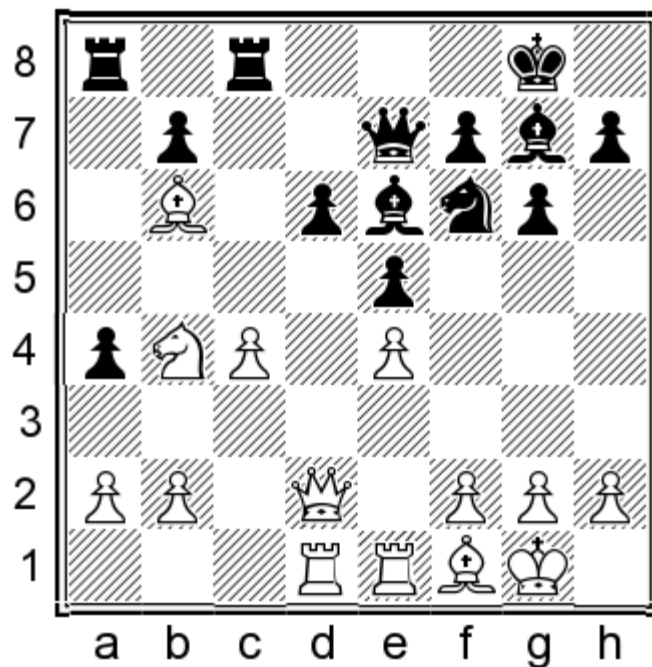
#### 14...♘d7

Now that White has 'wasted' a move with ♘c3-d5, Black is in time to counter White's attack after the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

14...e6 15.♘b4!

(15.♙b6 ♞d7 16.♘b4 (16.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 17.♞d1 d5 18.♙b1 d4 19.♞f4 ♙g7 20.e5 ♙xg2! 21.♞xd4 ♞c6 22.♞d6 ♞f3 23.♞xf3 ♙xf3 24.♞e1 ♞fc8↔ 1/2-1/2 (85) Tomazini,Z (2411)-Krumpacnik,D (2290) Ptuj SLO 2015) 16...♞e7 17.♙d4 ♞c7 18.f4 ♘d7 19.♙xg7 ♖xg7 20.♖h1 (20.f5 ♞b6+ 21.♖h1 ♞d4=) 20...♞b6 21.♞c3+ ♖g8 22.f5 ♘e5 23.f6 ♞c5 24.♞d2 ♖h8 25.♞h6 ♞g8 26.♞f4?? g5→)

15...♙d7 16.♞d1 ♞e7 17.♞fe1 ♞fc8 18.♙f1 e5 19.♙b6 ♙e6



20.b3

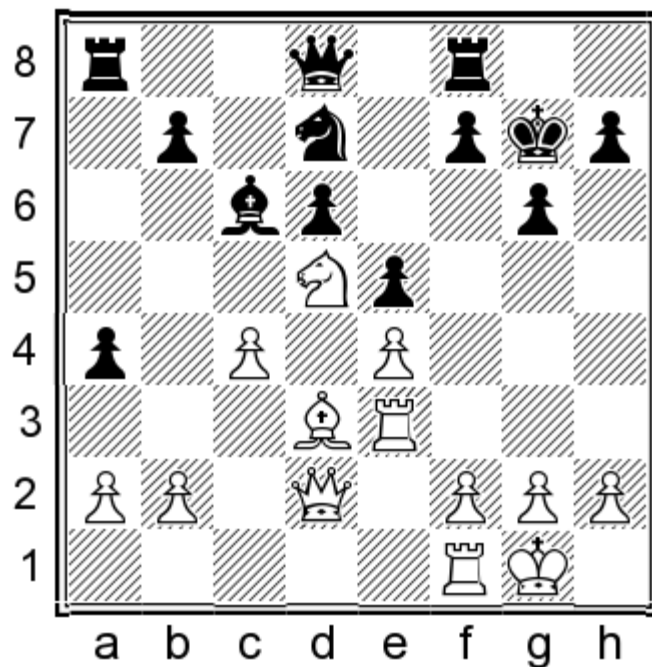
( $\Delta$ 20.  $\Delta$ d5  $\Delta$ xd5 21.cxd5  $\Delta$ d7 22.  $\Delta$ c1 f5 23.f3 fxe4 24.fxe4  $\Delta$ h4 25.  $\Delta$ b4  $\Delta$ h6 26.  $\Delta$ xc8+  $\Delta$ xc8 27.  $\Delta$ f2  $\Delta$ e7 28.  $\Delta$ xb7 $\pm$ )

20...axb3 21.axb3  $\Delta$ d7 22.  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ c5 23.  $\Delta$ xd6  $\Delta$ xd6 24.  $\Delta$ xd6  $\Delta$ xb3= 1/2-1/2 (36) Wojtaszek,R (2727)-Mamedov,R (2650) Huai'an 2016.

**15.  $\Delta$ xg7  $\Delta$ xg7 16.  $\Delta$ e3**

16.  $\Delta$ c3+ e5 17.  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ c5 18.f3  $\Delta$ a5 19.  $\Delta$ xa5  $\Delta$ xa5 20.  $\Delta$ d1  $\Delta$ a6 21.  $\Delta$ b1  $\Delta$ b6 22.  $\Delta$ f2  $\Delta$ d8 23.  $\Delta$ dd2  $\Delta$ f8 24.  $\Delta$ fe2  $\Delta$ e7 25.  $\Delta$ f1  $\Delta$ a8 26.  $\Delta$ e1 f6 27.  $\Delta$ d1  $\Delta$ e6 28.  $\Delta$ c1  $\Delta$ d4= 0-1 (64) Moreno Ibanez,M (2210)-Moreno Ruiz,J (2470) La Roda 2015.

**16...e5!**



Not only does this move take firm grip over the d4-square, Black also uncovers his Queen's defense of the important g5-square which in many variations prevents ♖d2-g5.

**17. ♖h3 h5 18. ♗e3**

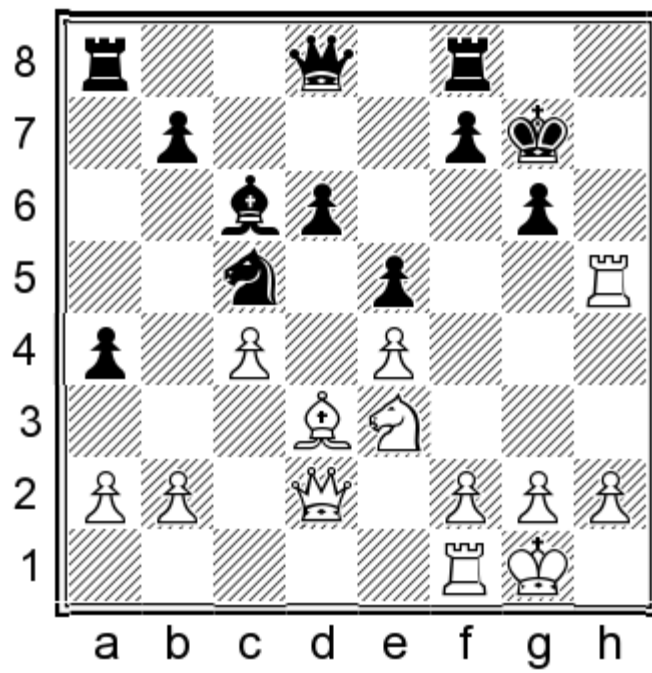
18.f4 ♕xd5 19.exd5 ♖a5 20.♖xa5 ♗xa5 21.f5 ♘f6 22.fxg6 e4 23.♕e2 fxg6=;

18.g4?! ♕xd5 19.exd5 ♘f6 20.gxh5 ♗xh5 21.♖xh5 gxh5 22.♔h1 ♖f6 23.f4 e4! 24.♖g2+ ♔h6 25.♖xe4 ♖h8±

**18... ♗c5**

18... ♖h8!? 19.♗d1 ♗c5 20.♗c3 ♗e6 21.♖d1 ♖b6 22.♕f1 ♖ad8 23.♖d3 ♗d4= 1/2–1/2 (32) Espinosa Aranda, A (2399)-Vazquez Igarza, R (2597) Madrid 2015.

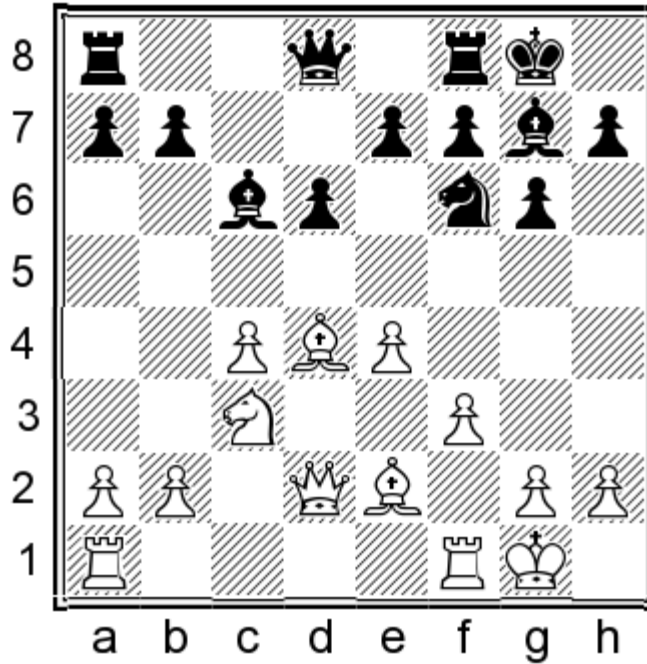
**19. ♖xh5?!**



19...♖xd3! 20.♗f5+ ♔f6! 21.♙xd3 gxf5 22.♞xf5+ ♔e7

0-1 (28) Jerez Perez, A (2405)-Herraiz Hidalgo, H (2442) Barcelona 2015.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘g7 5.c4 ♗c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 ♘d7 10.♚d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♙c6 12.f3



12...♗d7

12...a5 It is hard to say which move order — 12...a5 or 12...♗d7 is more accurate. In practice neither is because they will quickly transpose. 13.b3 ♗d7 14.♙e3 ♗c5 transposes to 12...♗d7.

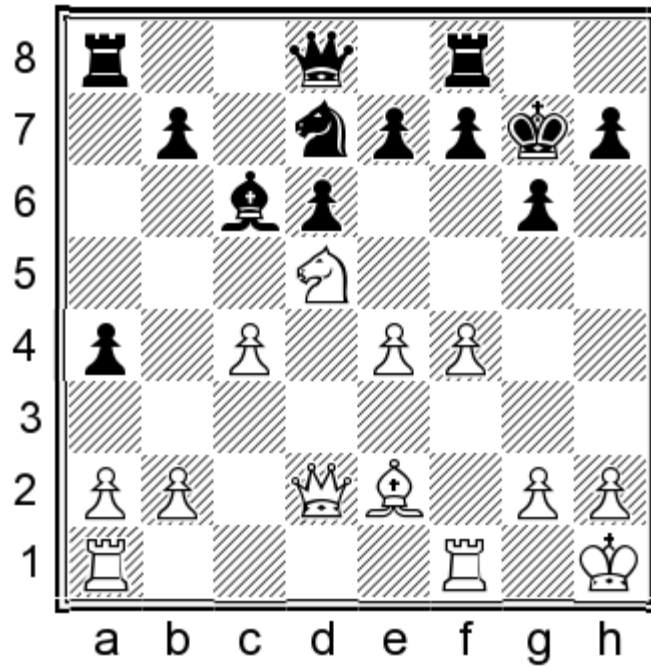
13.♙f2!?

This is only played about 6% of the time, 13.♙e3 being by far the most popular (80%), and 13.♙xg7 second most (13%). However, this move has at least two clear advantages over 13.♙e3:

- 1) As we will see, it is helpful for the bishop to be less vulnerable on f2 than it is on e3 in the ...♚b6 lines.
- 2) In the ...e6/...♙e5 lines, a common idea for Black is to play ...♚d8-h4, which is now impossible.

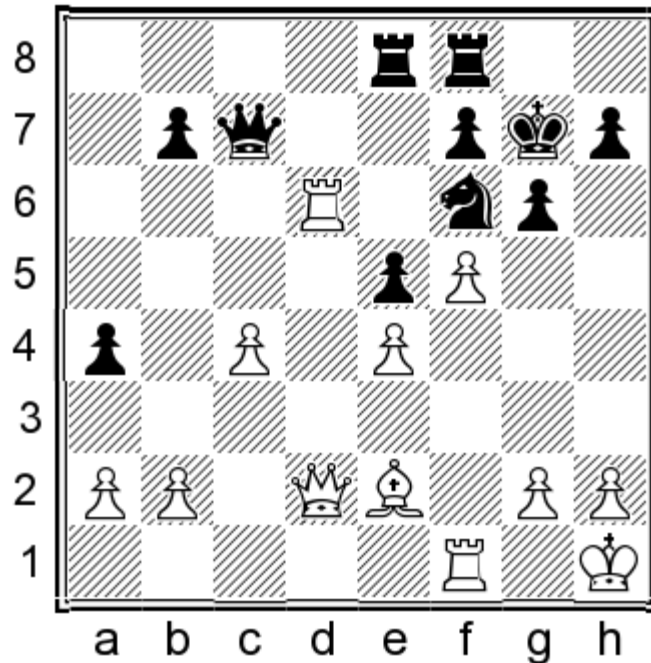
13.b4 ♙xd4+ 14.♚xd4 ♚b6 15.♚xb6 ♗xb6=;

13.♙xg7 ♗xg7 14.♗h1 This was GM Oliver Barbosa's choice against me in 2016. I managed to win the game, but both our play could have been significantly improved upon. 14...a5 15.f4 a4 16.♗d5



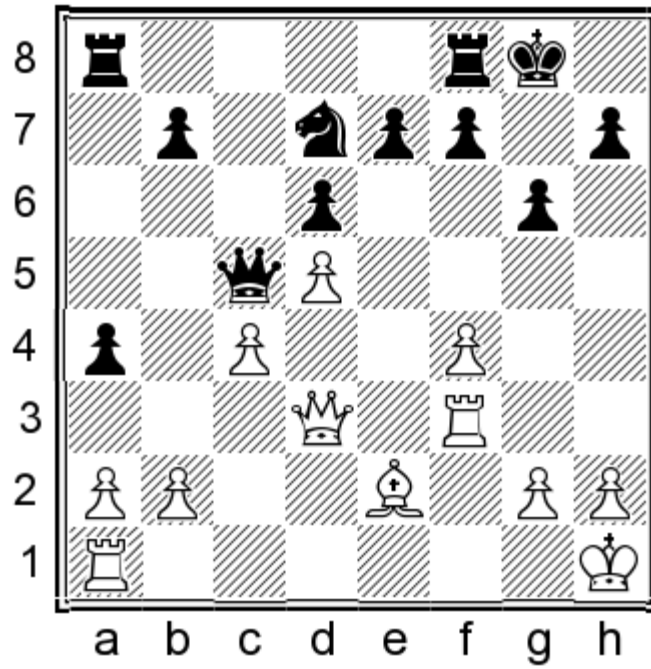
16...♙xd5

(16...♙a5!? This was my choice against Barbosa. 17.♙e3 (17.b4!? axb3 18.♙b2+ ♘f6 19.axb3 ♙d8 20.♙xa8 ♙xa8=; 17.♙xa5 ♙xa5 18.♘xe7 ♙xe4) 17...♙c5 18.♙c3+ e5?! (18...♘f6! 19.♘xf6 exf6 20.♙f3 b5=) 19.♙ad1 ♙ae8 20.f5 (20.♙g4 ♘b6 21.♘xb6 ♙xb6 22.♙xd6 ♙c5 23.♙fd1 ♙xe4=; 20.fxe5! ♘xe5 21.b4 axb3 22.axb3±) 20...♙xd5 21.♙xd5 ♙c7 22.♙d2 ♘f6 23.♙xd6



23...♙d8! (23...♘xe4 24.f6+ ♘h8 25.♙h6 ♙g8 26.♙d3 g5 27.♙xh7+ ♘xh7 28.♙h3+ ♘g6 29.♙h5+ ♘h7 30.♙xf7#) 24.c5 ♙xd6 (24...♘xe4 25.f6+ ♘h8 26.♙h6 ♙g8 27.♙f3 g5 28.♙xh7+ ♘xh7 29.♙h3+ ♘g6 30.♙h5+ ♘f5 31.♙f3#) 25.cxd6 ♙c6 26.fxg6 hxg6 27.♙f3 ♙d8 28.♙d1 ♘xe4 29.♙a5 ♙c5! ♣ Barbosa-Panjwani, NY Int 2016 0-1)

17.exd5 ♙a5 18.♙d4+ ♘g8 19.♙f3 ♙c5 20.♙d3



20...f5! 21.♖e3 ♘f6 22.♙f3 ♜fe8 23.♞ae1 b5! 24.cxb5 ♞ab8=

**13...a5 14.b3 ♘c5 15.♞ab1 e6**

15...♞b6 16.a3 ♞d8 This has been played a few times by Tiviakov and Larsen. Black is sitting back and waiting for White to ‘do something’ like b3-b4 in which case Black at present has adequate counterplay. That being said, if White calmly continues developing then eventually he will achieve a favorable b3-b4, and by ‘wasting’ time with ...♞d8-b6-d8 Black’s counterplay has been stalled. (16...♘xb3?? 17.♞d1!+- Note that if White’s bishop were on e3, this would not be possible.) 17.♙d1!?

(17.b4?! axb4 18.axb4 ♞a3±)

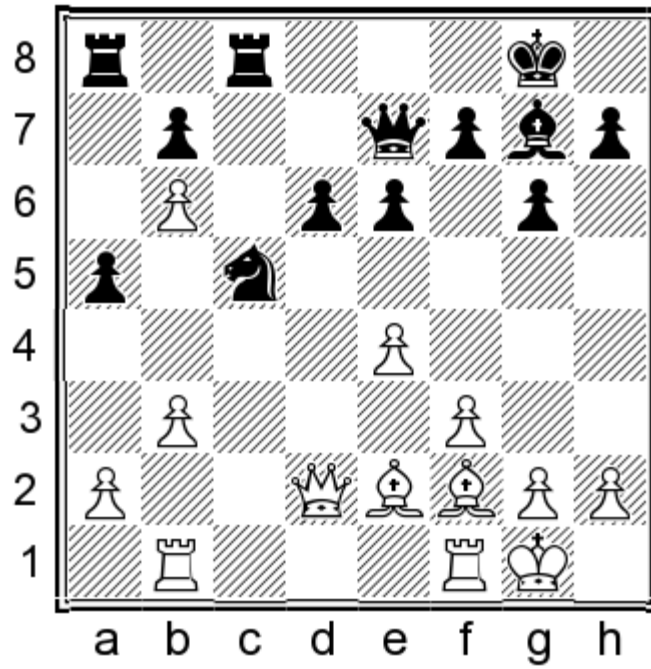
17...b6 18.♙c2 ♞b8 19.♞fc1 ♞c8 20.b4±

**16.♞fd1**

16.♘b5 This is premature; White should first lure Black’s bishop to e5 (with 16.♞fd1) so that he can later gain a tempo with f3-f4. Now Black can do without ...♙g7-e5 because he is in time to connect his rooks. 16...♙xb5 17.cxb5 ♞e7 18.b6

(18.♞fd1 ♞fd8 19.b6 d5=)

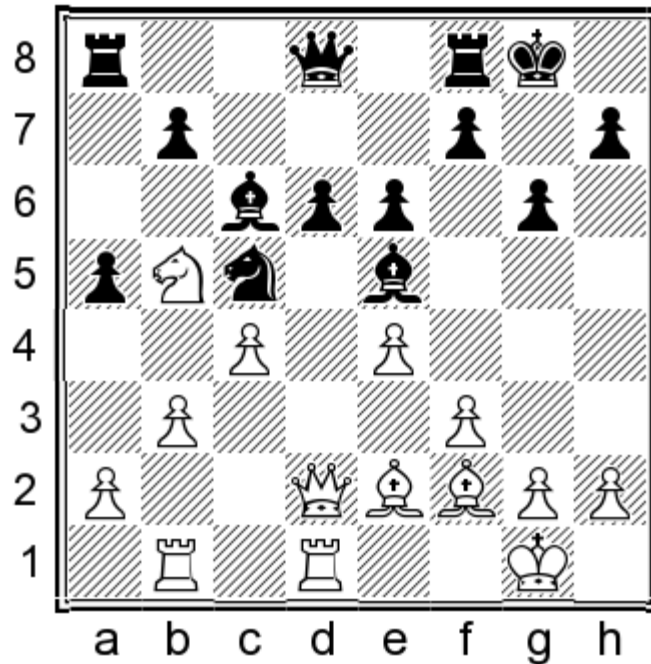
18...♞fc8!



(18...Rfd8 19.Rfc1! Preventing Black's freeing ...d6-d5.)

19.Rfd1 d5! A long forcing variation results in equality. 20.exd5 exd5 21.Wxd5 Wxe2 22.Qxc5 Qf8! 23.Qxf8 Rc2 24.f4 Rd8!! 25.Wf3 Wxf3 26.gxf3 Rxd1+ 27.Rxd1 Qxf8 28.Rd7 Rxa2 29.Rxb7 Rb2 30.Ra7 Rxb3 31.Rxa5 Rxb6=

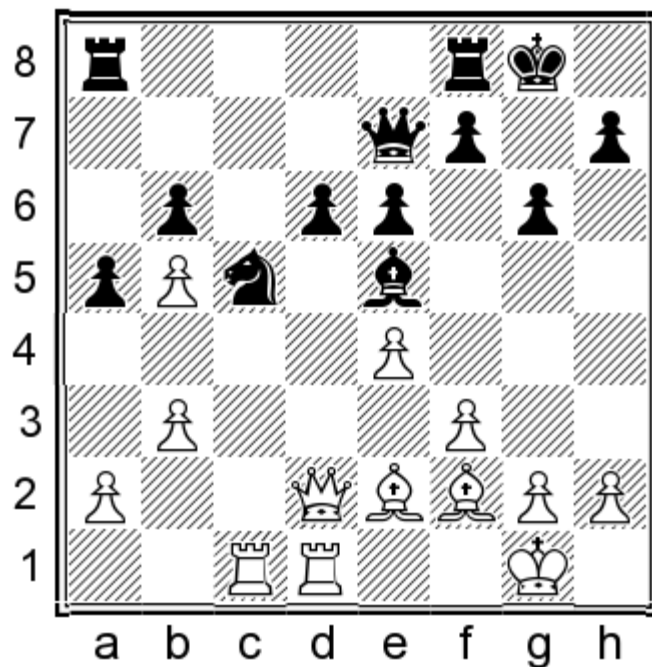
16...Qe5 17.Qb5



Compare this with the analogous line after 13.Qe3. There, 17.Qb5 is just a blunder because of 17...Wh4!

17...Qxb5 18.cxb5 We7!?

18...b6!?! This was my choice when I faced this position over the board. Precise move orders are not so important here; Black will eventually play both ...b6 and ...We7, then look for opportunities to break with ...d6-d5. 19.Rbc1 We7



20.♞c4?!

(20.♞e3 ♞ad8 21.f4 ♟g7 22.g4 ♟h6! 23.g5 ♟g7 24.♟g4 f6!♣)

20...d5! 21.exd5 exd5 22.♟h4 ♞c7 23.♞xd5 ♟xh2+ 24.♚h1 ♞ae8 25.♟f1 ♞e6 26.♞g5 ♞e5 27.♞f6?? ♞h5 28.♞g4

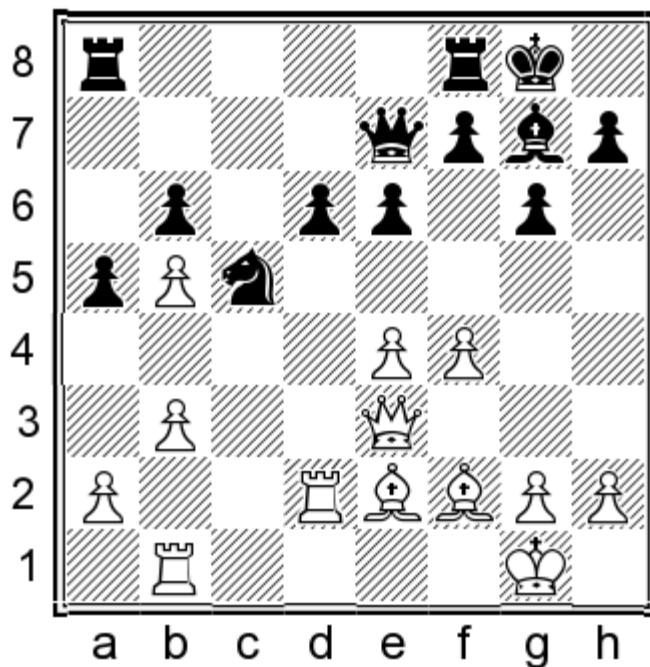
(28.g4 ♟e5 29.gxh5 ♟xf6 30.♟xf6 ♞g3 31.♟g2 ♚e6 32.♞g4 ♞f2→)

28...♟e5 29.♞c6 ♞xc6 30.bxc6 f5 31.♞c4 g5→ 0-1 (37) Findlay,I-Panjwani,R Calgary 2016.

**19.♞e3 b6 20.f4 ♟g7**

20...♟f6!/? is also possible.

**21.♞d2**



We have been following Macieja-Zaninotto, 2016. Here I recommend an improvement which turns out to be a fairly thematic way of handling such positions.

**21...♙h6!**

Since White does not possess a knight to plant on d5, Black is able to go for the ...e6-e5 push, which also unleashes pressure on the weak e4-pawn.

21...♖fd8 22.♜bd1

(22.g4!? This would have been a better try for Macieja. 22...e5 23.f5 ♔f6 24.♞f3±)

22...♜ac8 23.a3 ♔h6! 24.♔g4 ♜c7 Zaninotto should have maintained some pressure on the c-file.

(24...♜b8? 25.b4 axb4 26.axb4 ♘xe4 27.♞xe4 f5 28.♞f3 (28.♞e1 fxg4 29.♔h4 g5 30.fxg5 ♔xg5 31.♔xg5 ♞xg5 32.♞xe6+±) 28...fxg4 29.♞xg4± Macieja-Zaninotto, Najdorf Memorial 2016)

25.♞f3

(25.b4 axb4 26.axb4 ♘a4±)

25...e5! 26.b4 axb4 27.axb4 ♘a4 28.♞b3 ♘c3 29.♔xb6 ♘xd1 30.♜xd1 exf4 31.♔xc7 ♞xc7 32.♞d5 ♜b8 33.♔e2 f3! 34.gxf3 ♔f4=

**22.♜bd1 ♜ad8 23.e5**

23.♔f3 e5 24.g3 ♜fe8±

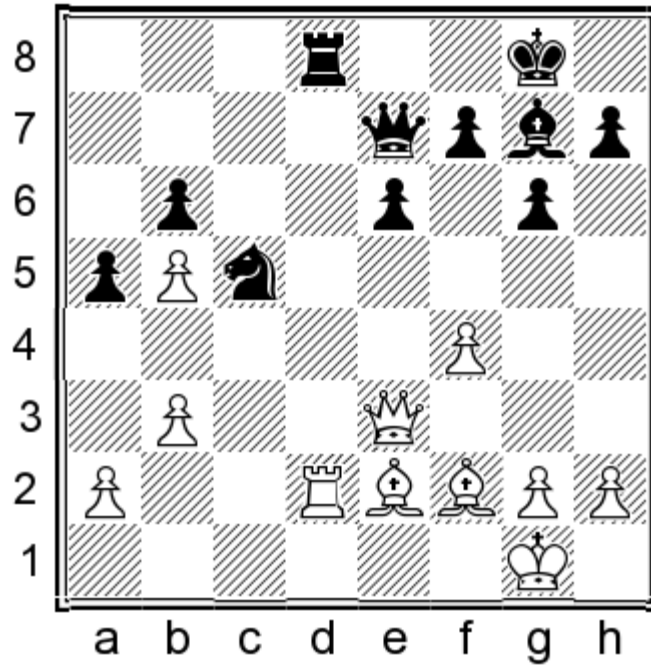
**23...dxe5**

23...d5 24.♜c2 ♜c8

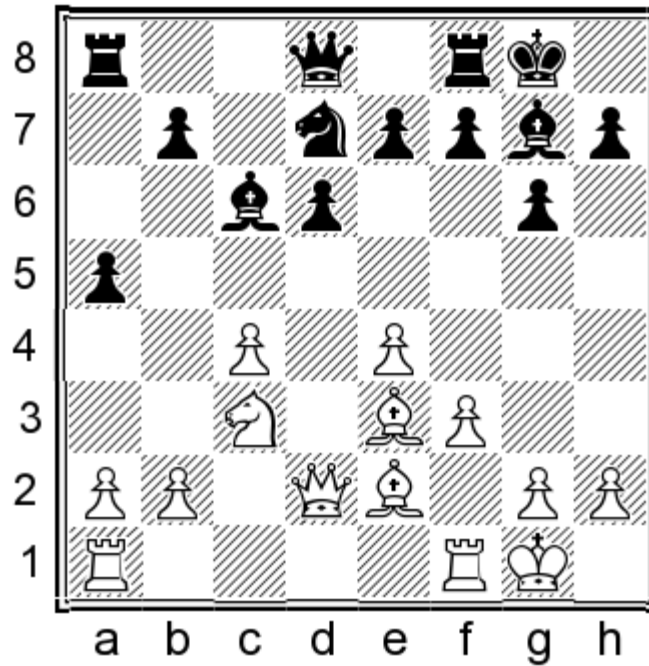
(24...f6 25.♔h4 g5 26.exf6 ♜xf6 27.♔xg5 ♔xg5 28.fxg5 ♜f5 29.h4±)

25.♜dc1 f6 26.♔h4 ♔g7 27.a3±

**24.♞xe5 ♔g7 25.♞e3 ♜xd2 26.♜xd2 ♜d8=**



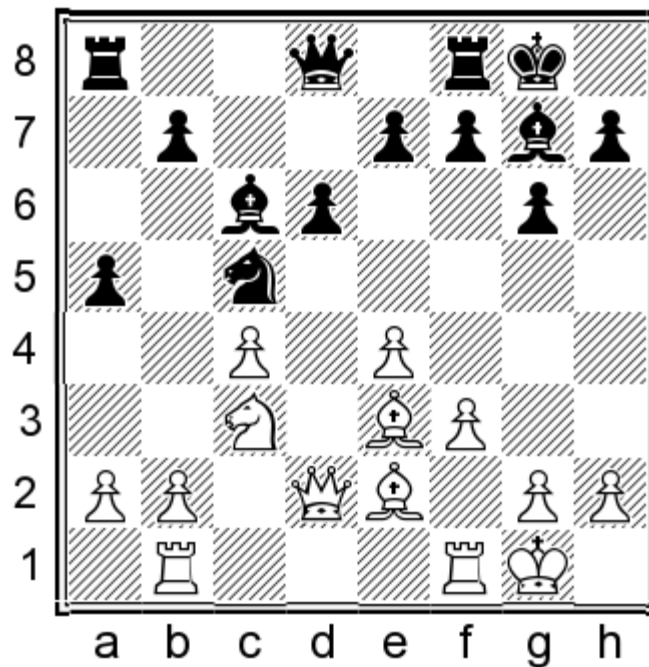
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♕g7 5.c4 ♖c6 6.♙e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 ♕d7 10.♚d2 ♗xd4 11.♙xd4 ♙c6 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♙e3 a5



Most people automatically play 14.b3 here, but it isn't technically necessary to do so immediately. If White wants to expand on the queenside, though, b2-b3 is inevitable, as a direct a2-a3 will invariably be met by ...a5-a4!

### 14.b3

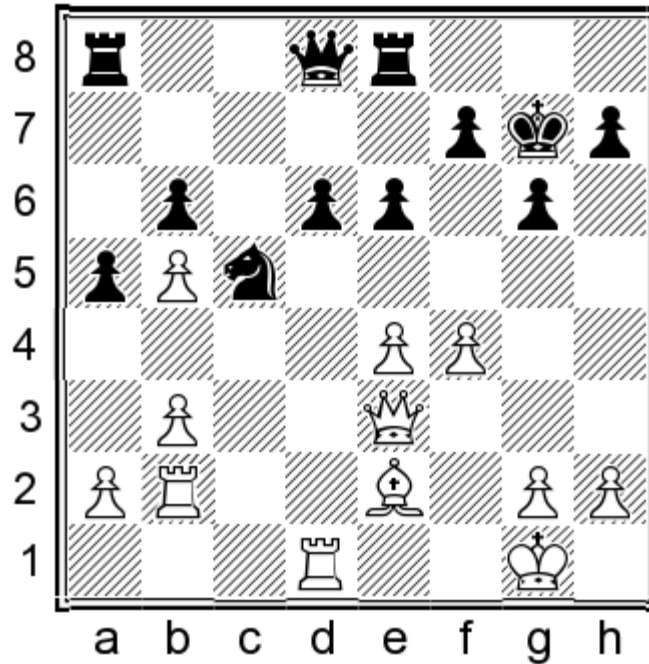
14.♙ab1 ♗c5



(14...a4 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3±)

15.♖h1 GM Fedorowicz played this against me and then offered a draw the next move.

(15.♞fd1 ♕e5 16.♞g5 (16.♞d4 ♜e6=) 16...♜e6 17.♞h6 ♞e8 18.b3 ♜c5 19.♞e3 e6 20.♜b5 ♞xb5 21.cxb5 b6 22.f4 ♞g7 23.♞xg7 ♜xg7 24.♞b2



24...d5! White's weak dark squares justify the following pawn sacrifice to open files and diagonals. 25.exd5 exd5 26.♞d4+ ♜g8 27.♞xd5 ♞e7 28.♞f3 ♞ad8)

15...a4 16.♞fc1 1/2–1/2 Fedorowicz-Panjwani 2015

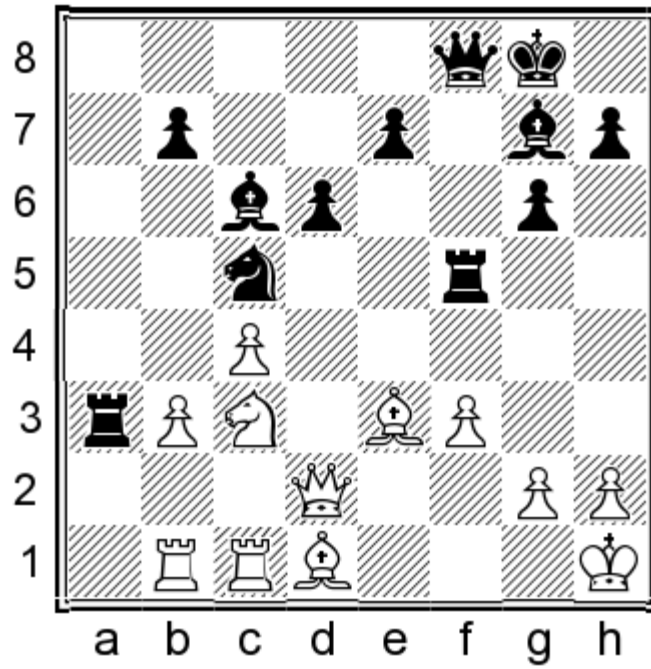
(16.♞g5 ♜e6 17.♞e3 ♜c5=; 16.♜d5 e6 17.♜b4 ♞e7±)

16...♞e5 This is likely how I would have played on if I had declined Fed's draw offer.

(16...f5!? It's nice to always have this option in a must-win type situation, but in general I think Black should hold off on ...f7-f5 until he at least connects his rooks, or until White does something to disrupt the harmony in his position (like ♜c3-b5).

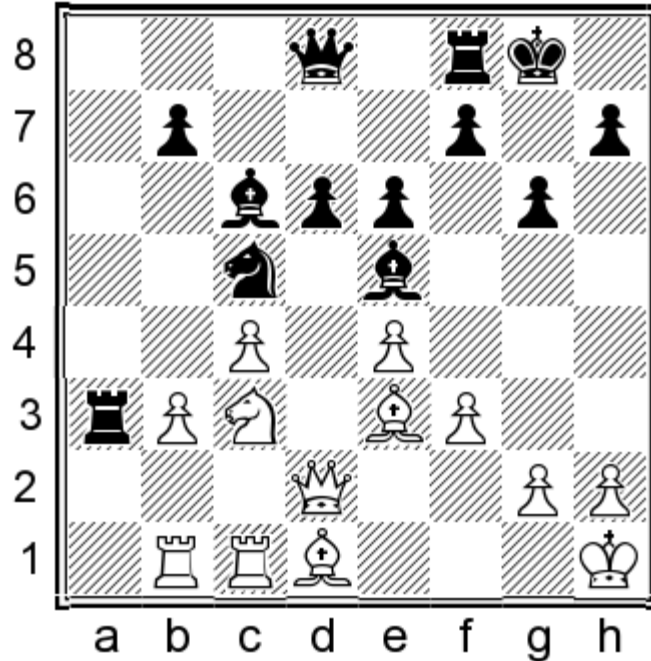
17.exf5 ♞xf5 18.♜d5

(18.b4 axb3 19.axb3 ♞a3 20.♞d1 ♞f8!



The 'degenerate' plan of ...♖f5-h5 and ...♜f8-f6-h4 is actually Black's best here. 21. ♗b5 ♙a8 22.b4 ♗e4!∞)  
 18...♜f8∞ This is probably 'objectively' += (whatever that means) but the position is such a mess that in a practical game both sides have equal chances.)

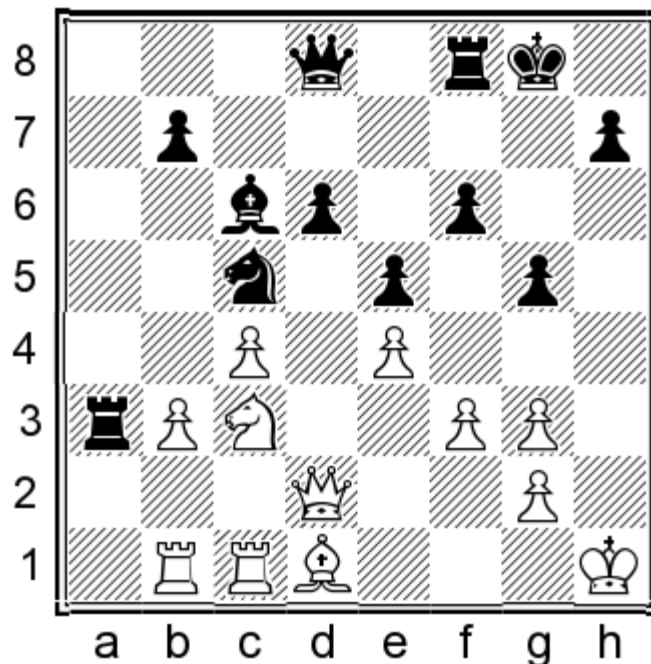
17.b4 axb3 18.axb3 ♙a3 19.♗d1 e6



20.♗g5  
 (20.b4? ♜h4 21.♗g1 ♜f6 22.bxc5 ♗xc3 23.♜e2 d5!♣)

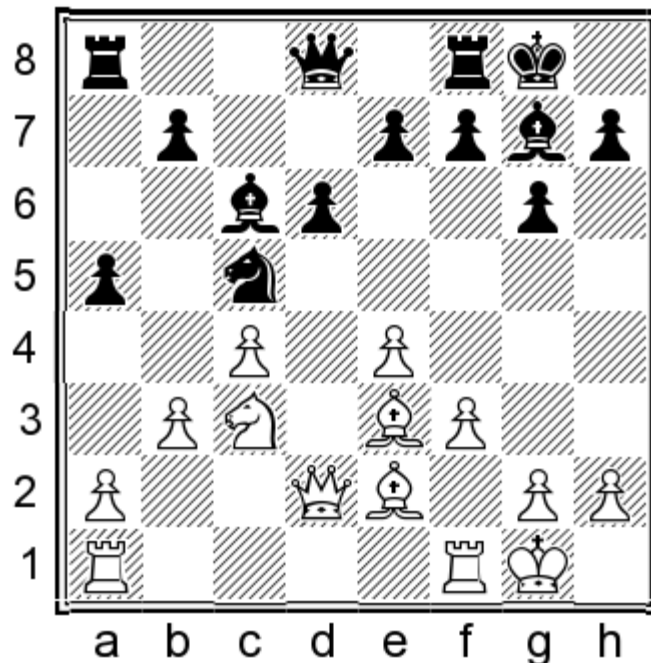
20...f6  
 (20...♜d7!? 21.b4 ♗a4 22.♗xa4 (22.♗e2 b5!♣) 22...♗xa4 23.b5 ♜c7! 24.f4 ♗g7 25.f5 ♗e5 26.♗e2 The computer calls this equal but I find it a little awkward to function with my bishop stranded on a4 so I prefer 20...f6 instead.)

21.♙h4 g5 22.♙g3 ♙xg3 23.hxg3 e5



I like the look of Black's dark-squared Stonewall formation (shift Black's g,f,e,d-pawns to the right one square). 24.b4 ♘e6=

14...♘c5



The first stage of Black's plan is complete. Far and away the most common (nearly 80% of the time) way to continue for Black is with the spectacular, if unbelievable ...♙b6, ...♞fc8, ...h5, ...♙d8, ...♔h7, and ...♙h8 with pressure on the long diagonal. This is the line I mentioned early in the book, which Mamedov suggested was equal. Playing this plan on autopilot has its appeal, but because of its extravagance most White players are aware of it nowadays, and will not be caught off guard. The line I recommend in lieu of this is, in contrast, quite rare (it is played only about 8% of the time, but it has been growing in popularity) and in my judgment equally sound, but with far greater surprise value. The

idea is to fight for the center with ...e7-e6 and ...♗g7-e5, ideally followed by ...f7-f5. Black's bishop is rather safe on e5, because White can scarcely achieve f3-f4 without losing the e4-pawn. White tends to focus his attention in one (or more) of three directions: either he will directly target the weakness on d6 that Black creates after ...e7-e6, or he will try to achieve f3-f4 which indirectly targets d6 by hitting its defender (the bishop to be on e5), or as always White can 'ignore' Black's central gestures and continue with the usual a3/b4 queenside expansion.

### 15.♖ab1

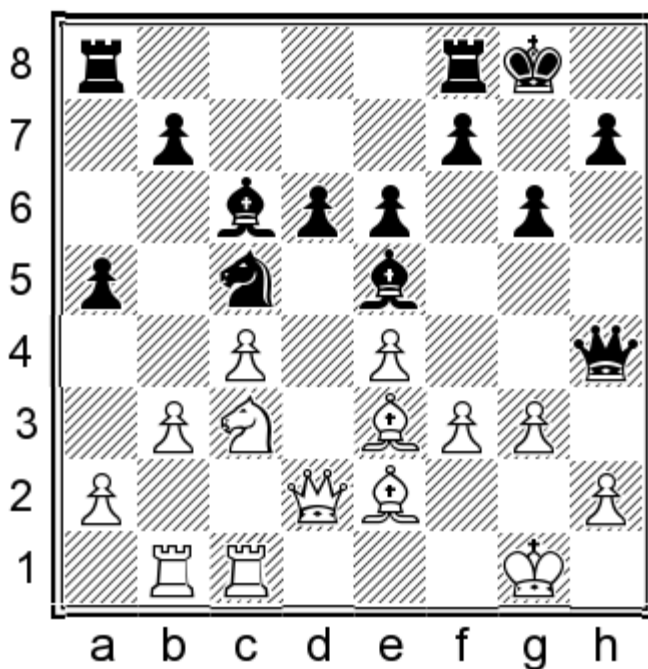
This is by far the most popular move, played nearly 90% of the time. 15.♖fc1 ♗e5

(15...e6!? Move order is not important here; ...e6/...♗e5 are interchangeable.)

16.♖ab1 e6 17.♗e1 ♗f6 18.♗d2

(18.g3 ♗d4 (18...g5!?) 19.♗d2 ♗xe3+ 20.♗xe3 e5 21.♘d5 ♗d8 22.f4 exf4 23.♗xf4 ♗xd5 24.exd5 f5⊖)

18...♗h4! 19.g3



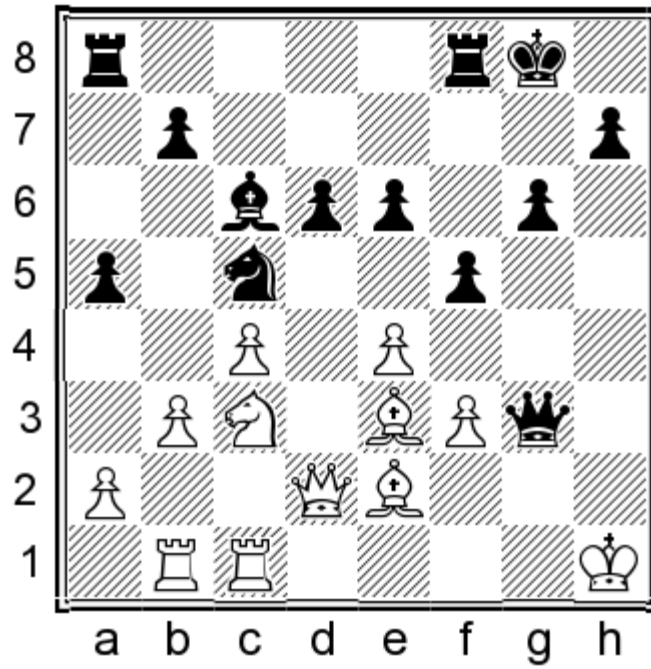
19...♗xg3

(19...♗e7 GM Maze probably wanted to avoid a draw (with 19...♗xg3) so chose to play on this way. 20.♘d1 b6 21.♘f2 ♖ad8 22.♘d3 ♗g7 (22...f5 23.exf5 ♖xf5 24.♖f1 ♗g7=) 23.♖c2 f5 24.exf5 ♖xf5 25.♖f1 ♖df8 26.♘e1 h5 27.♗h6 e5 28.♗xg7 ♗xg7 29.♗c3 ♘e6⊖ 0-1 (68) Makka,I-Maze,S Aix-les-Bains FRA 2011)

20.hxg3 ♗xg3+ 21.♔h1

(21.♔f1 f5 22.♗xc5 dxc5 23.♗e3 fxe4 24.♘e4 ♗xe4 25.♗xe4 ♖f5! 26.♗xe6+ ♔h8 27.♗e3 ♖af8—)

21...f5



22. ♕xc5!

(22. ♖e1 ♗h3+ 23. ♔g1 fxe4 24. ♕xc5 exf3--)

22...dxc5 23. ♖f1 □ Black can give a perpetual whenever he wants, it's just a matter of how many accurate moves he wants to make White find before he gives the draw.

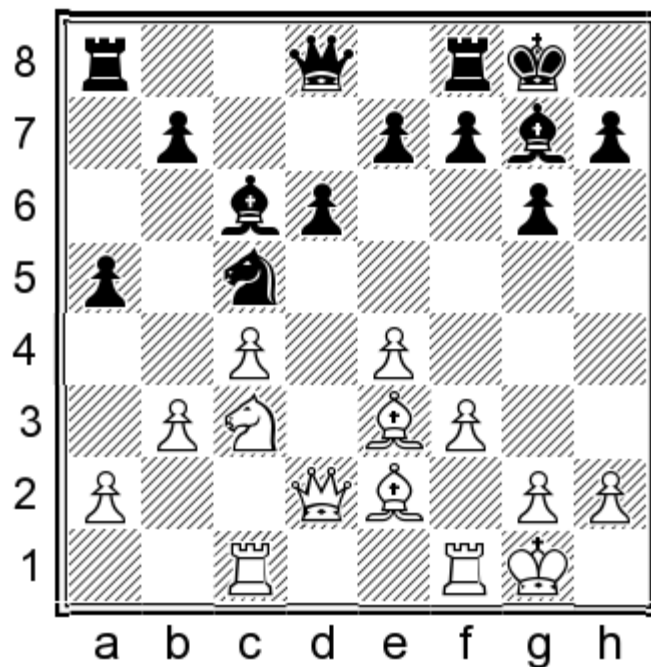
(23. ♖e1? ♗e5-)

23...g5 24. ♖e1 □ 24...♗h3+ 25. ♔g1 ♖f6

(25...g4 26. ♖f2 g3 27. ♖g2 f4∞)

26. ♖f2 ♖h6 27. ♖g2 ♗h1+ 28. ♔f2 ♗h4+ 29. ♔f1 ♗h1+ 30. ♔f2=;

15. ♖ac1



The second most popular move. GM Lenderman played this against me in 2013. My game against him will be our main line in what follows.

15...e6

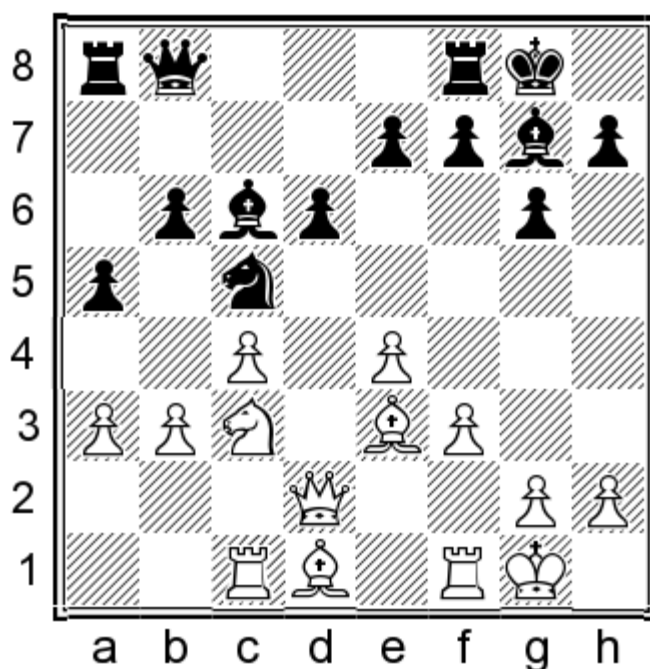
(15...b6 An interesting recommendation of Khalifman's which is a perfectly viable alternative to 15...e6. Black intends the crafty maneuver ...♖a8-a7-d7. I played this against GM Kovalyov in 2013; I was unsuccessful in that game but it was not due to the opening. 16.♟fd1

(16.♙d1 Not the last time we will see this idea. 16...♞b8!?)

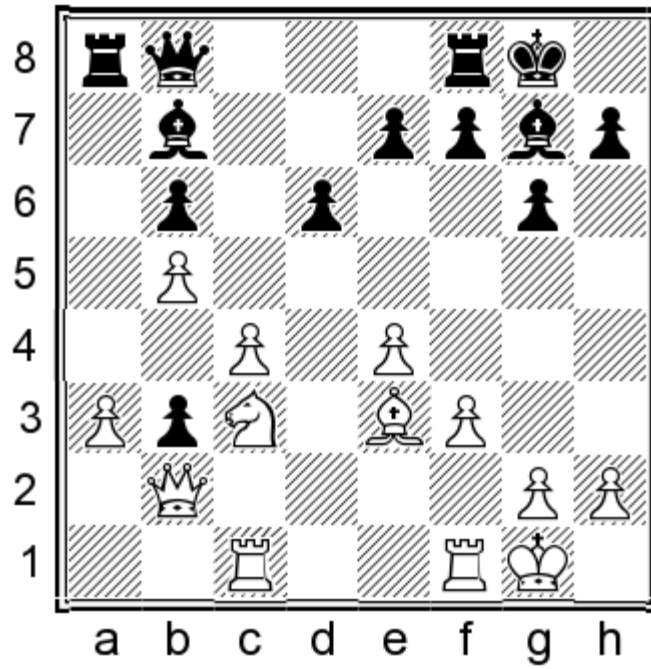
a) 16...e5?! 17.♙c2 ♖a7 (17...♗e6 18.♟fd1 ♗d4 19.♙xd4 exd4 20.♗e2 ♞h4 21.g3 ♞h5 22.♗xd4±) 18.♟fd1 ♖d7 19.a3 ♗e6 20.b4 f5 21.♗d5 ♗d4 22.♙g5±;

b) 16...e6 This deserves further research. 17.a3 a4 18.b4 ♗b3 19.♙xb3 axb3 20.♞b2 d5∞ (20...♙a4 21.♟fd1 ♞c7 22.♙d4 ♙h6 23.♗xa4 ♙xc1 24.♞xc1 ♖xa4?? 25.♙f6□+);

17.a3

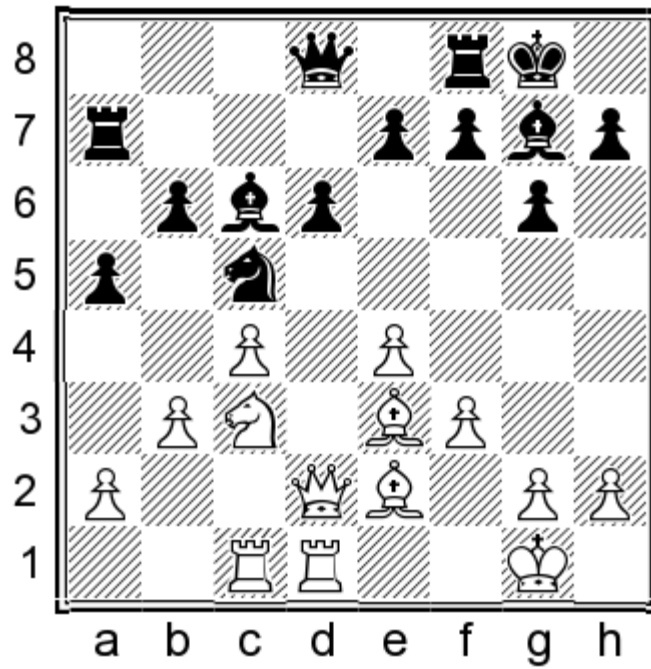


17...a4! (17...b5 18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 ♗e6 20.♗xb5 ♙xb5 21.cxb5 ♖a3 22.♞e1 ♞xb5 23.♙e2 ♞b7 24.♗h1 ♙e5 25.♟c2 ♟xe3 26.♞xe3 ♞xb4±) 18.b4 (18.bxa4 ♙xa4 19.♙xa4 ♙xc3 20.♞xc3 ♗xa4 21.♞d4 ♗c5 22.♙h6 ♗e6 23.♞c3 ♖e8 24.f4 f6 25.f5 ♗c5 26.fxg6 hxg6 27.♟xf6 exf6 28.♞xf6 ♖a7 29.♞xg6+ ♗h8=) 18...♗b3 19.♙xb3 axb3 20.b5 ♙b7 21.♞b2

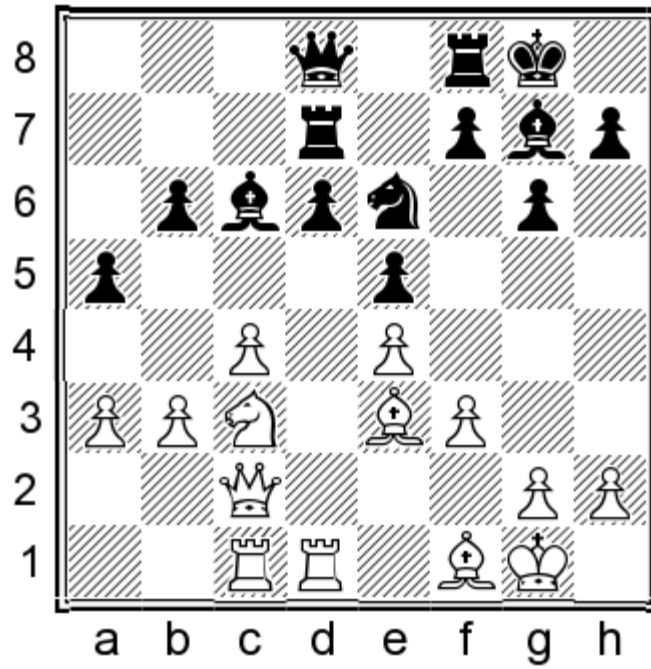


21...d5!! 22.exd5 ♖d6 23.♗xb3 ♜xa3 24.♗b2 ♜xc3 25.♞xc3 ♜c8=)

16...♞a7



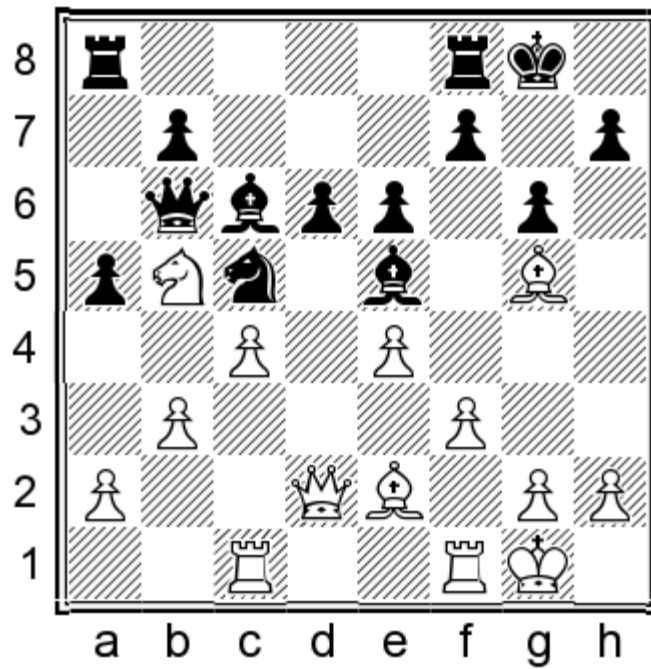
17.♙f1 (17.♘b5 ♞d7 18.♘d4 ♙b7 19.♞b1 e5 20.♘b5 f5±; 17.♘d5 ♞d7 18.♙g5 f6 19.♙e3 e6 20.♘c3 f5 21.exf5 ♞xf5 22.f4 ♗h4 23.g3 ♗h3 24.♙f1 ♗h5 25.♙e2=) 17...♞d7 The following is my game against Kovalyov. 18.♗c2 e5 (18...e6 19.a3 a4 20.b4 ♘b3 21.b5 ♙b7 22.♘xa4±) 19.a3 ♘e6!



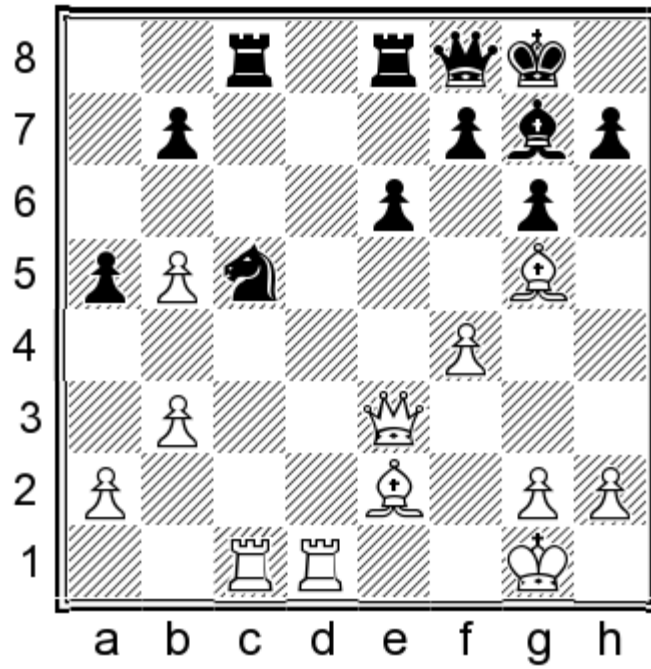
This would have led to a very interesting game. (19...f5?! 20.♘d5 fxe4 21.fxe4 ♖h4 22.g3! ♚xe4 23.♚xe4 ♘xe4 24.♙g2 ♙xd5 25.♞xd5 ♜c5 26.♞cd1 ♜xb3 27.♞xd6 ♞xd6 28.♞xd6± 1-0 (43) Kovalyov-Panjwani Michigan 2013)  
 20.b4 (20.♜b5 f5 21.exf5 gxf5 22.♙d3 e4 23.fxe4 f4 24.♙f2 f3) 20...♜d4 21.♙xd4 (21.♚f2 f5) 21...exd4 22.♜e2 axb4 23.axb4 ♚g5 24.♜h1 f5)

16.♞fd1

a) 16.♜b5!? ♙e5 17.♙g5 ♚b6

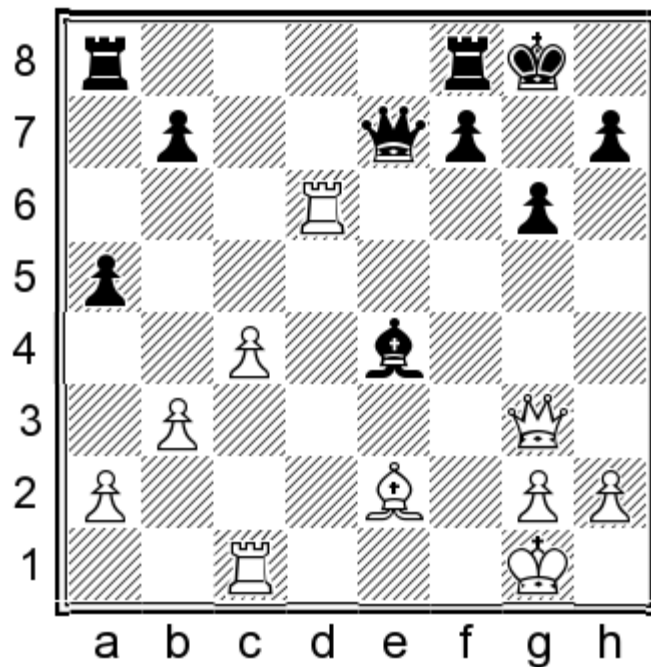


18.♚e3 (18.♜h1 ♞fe8 19.♜xd6?? ♞ed8+) 18...♙xb5! We have come across the resulting structure in the 13.♙f2 line.  
 19.cxb5 ♞ac8 20.f4 (20.♞fd1 ♞fe8 21.♚f2 ♚c7 22.♙e3 b6 23.f4 ♙g7 24.♙f3 ♚e7= Black is ready to continue with ...d6-d5.) 20...♙g7 21.e5 ♞fe8 22.exd6 ♚xd6 23.♞fd1 ♚f8!



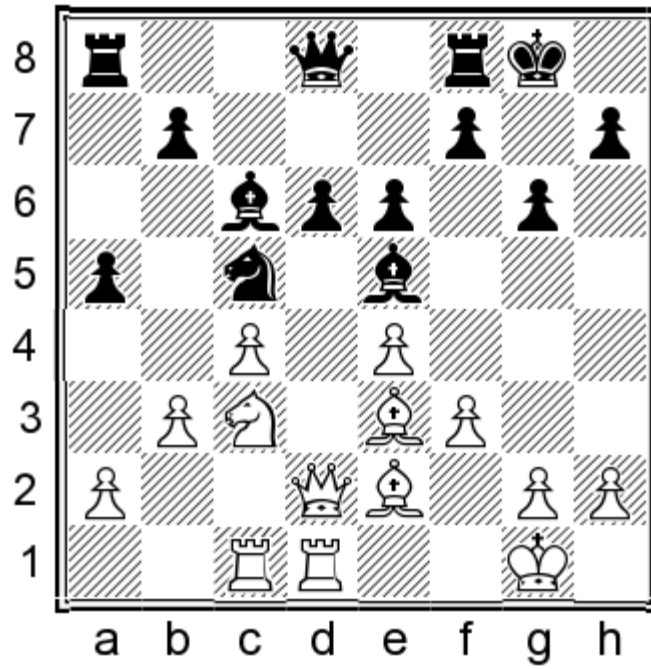
Black's idea is to open up the center with ...e6-e5 and take advantage of White's weak dark squares and loose pieces.  
 24.♔c4 (24.b6 e5↔; 24.♔g4 h5 25.♔h3 f5! 26.g3 e5!↔) 24...b6 25.♔h4 (25.♖c2 ♔h8! 26.a3 f5 (26...e5=) 27.♔h4 e5 28.♔f2 ♘e4=) 25...♔h8! Sidestepping the light diagonal in order to play ...f7-f5 before ...e6-e5. (25...e5? 26.♖f1!±) 26.♖c2 f5! 27.♖cd2 e5 28.fxe5 (28.♔f2 exf4 29.♗xf4 ♔e5 30.♗h4 ♔f6 31.♗h3 ♖b8=) 28...♖xe5 29.♗f4 ♖e4 30.♗g3 a4 31.♖d8 ♖e8 32.♖xe8 ♗xe8=;

b) 16.♔d4 ♔e5 17.♖fd1 ♗e7 18.f4 ♔xf4 19.♗xf4 e5 20.♗g3 exd4 21.♖xd4 ♘xe4 22.♘xe4 ♔xe4 23.♖xd6?



(23.♗xd6?? ♗g5-+) 23...♔f3!!-+ Gorgeous.;

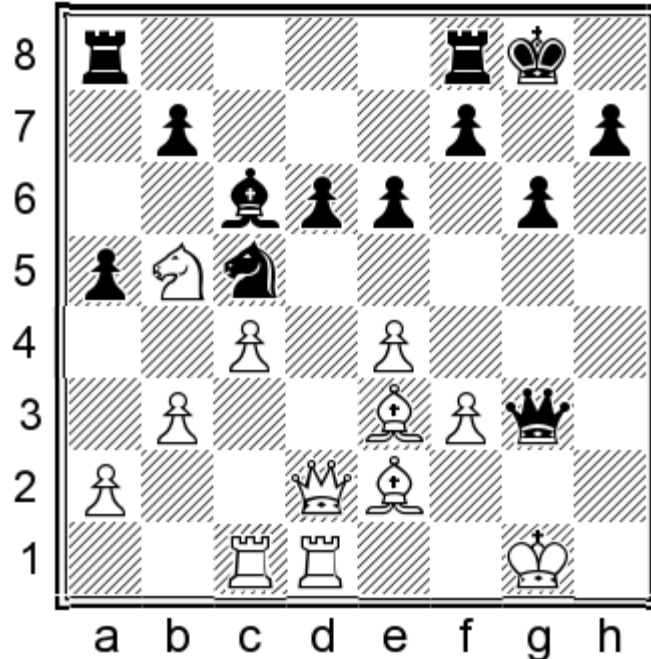
16...♔e5



White must already take precautions against Black's immediate threat of ...♖d8-h4.

17.♙g5 This was Lenderman's choice against me. I played correctly for the next 6 moves, then stumbled — fortunately he didn't punish my error.

a) 17.♘b5? ♖h4 18.g3 (18.h3 ♖g3 19.♘d6 b6 20.♘b5 f5—) 18...♙xg3 19.hxg3 ♖xg3+

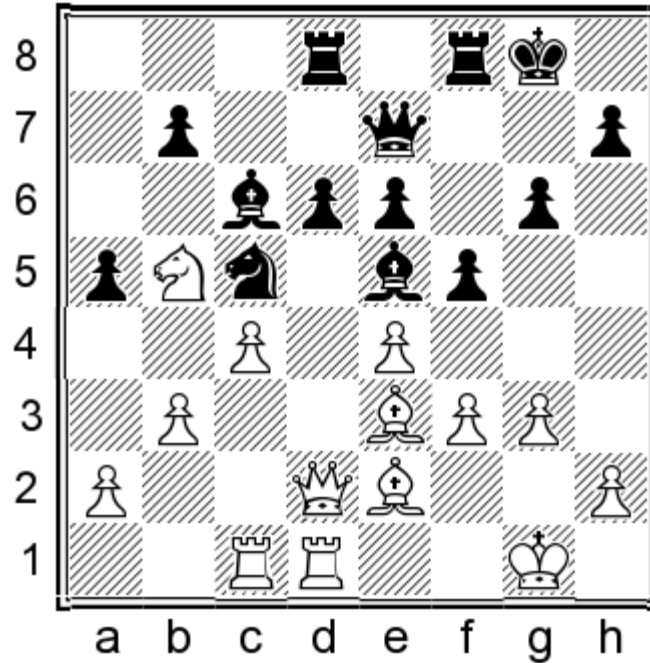


Remember the ensuing ideas, they come up in various permutations of this type of position. 20.♙f1 (20.♙h1 ♘xe4! 21.♖e1 ♖h3+ 22.♙g1 ♘g3 23.♙b6 ♘xe2+ 24.♖xe2 ♙xf3—) 20...♘xe4! 21.♖d3 (21.fxe4 f5!—) 21...f5!— White can't untangle, so Black can take his time with ideas like ...g6-g5-g4.;

b) 17.♙d4 ♖e7 18.f4 ♙xf4 19.♖xf4 e5 20.♖e3 exd4 21.♖xd4 ♘xe4 22.♘xe4 ♙xe4 23.♖xd6 ♖g5 24.♖g3 ♖xg3 25.hxg3 ♖fd8=;

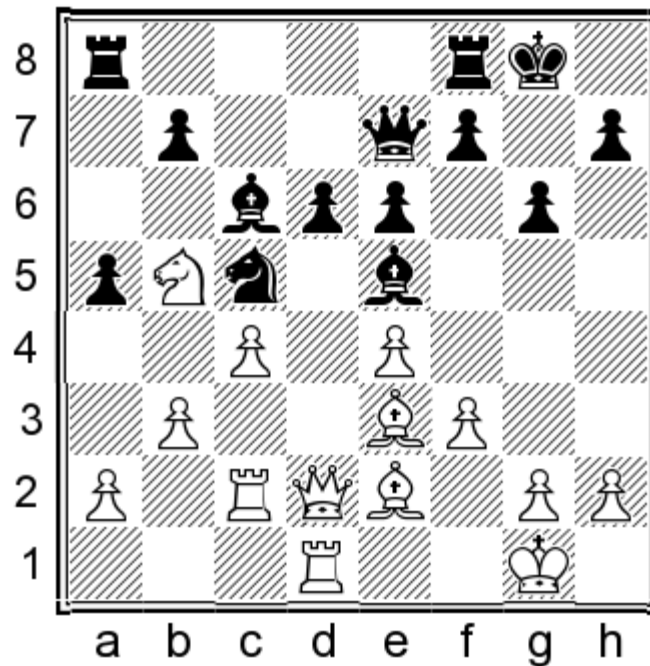
c) 17.g3 ♖e7 18.♙g5 (18.♘b5 ♖fd8 19.♙g5 ♙f6 20.♙xf6 ♖xf6 21.♘d6 e5 22.♖e3 ♘xb3 23.axb3 ♖xd6=) 18...f6

19.♙e3 ♖ad8 (19...b6? 20.f4 ♙xc3 21.♚xd6!±) 20.♘b5 f5



21.exf5 exf5!⇒ I admit it is always hard to decide what to recapture with on f5. It needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis. Here, Black's a5-pawn is hanging unless Black opens up the e-file to tie down White's queen to the defense of the e3-bishop. (21...gxf5 22.♙g5 ♙f6 23.♙h6 ♖f7 24.♚xa5±);

**d)** 17.♖c2 Witness how even a top grandmaster can fall victim to Black's sudden counterplay. 17...♚e7 18.♘b5?



18...♚h4! 19.g3 ♙xg3 20.hxg3 ♚xg3+ 21.♔f1 ♘xe4 22.♚d3 f5 23.♘d4 f4 24.♘xc6 fxe3 25.♚xe3 ♖f4 26.♘d4 ♖h4 27.♚g1 ♖h1 0–1 Lupulescu-Iturrizaga, Baku Olympiad 2016;

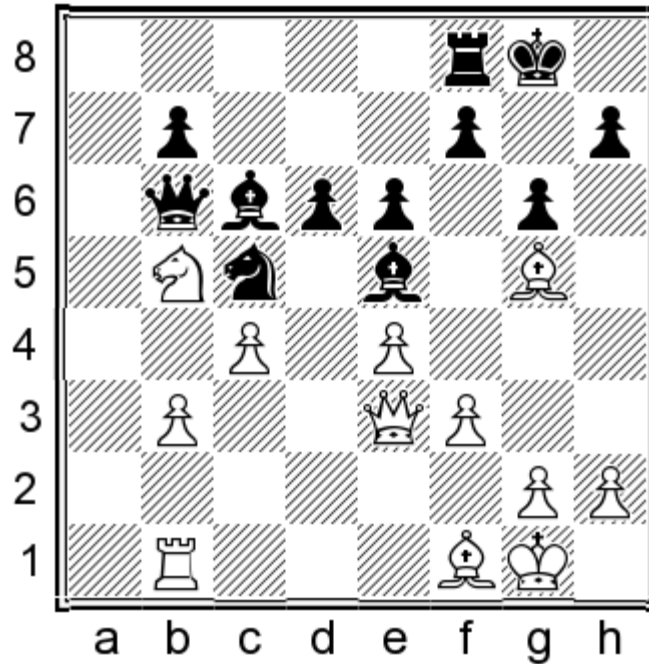
17...♚b6 18.♚e3

(18.♔h1 a4 19.♙e7 axb3 20.♙xf8 ♔xf8 21.axb3 ♘xb3 22.♚b2 ♚b4 23.♖c2 ♙g7 24.♖b1 ♖a3→)

18...a4! 19.♘b5

(19.b4 ♖xb4 20.♙e7 a3 21.♙xf8 ♜xf8; 19.f4 ♙xc3! 20.♞xc3 axb3 21.axb3 ♚a7 22.e5 ♜e4 23.♚xa7 ♞xa7 24.♞e3 ♜xg5 25.fxg5 d5=)

19...axb3 20.axb3 ♞a2 21.♙f1 ♞b2! 22.♞b1 ♞xb1 23.♞xb1



23...♞a8?!

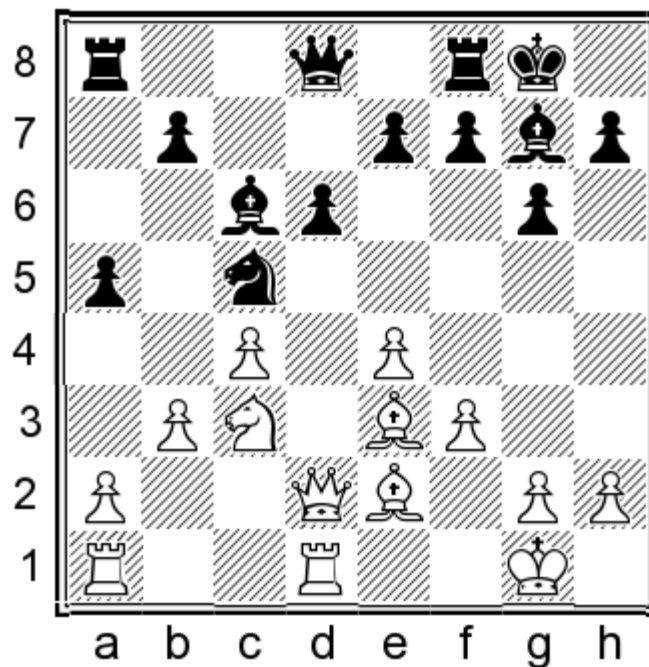
(♞23...♙xb5 24.cxb5 ♞a8 25.f4 ♞a1 26.♞xa1 ♙xa1 27.b4 ♜a4)

24.f4 ♞a1 25.♞xa1 ♙xa1 26.♜xd6?

(26.b4! ♙xb5 (26...♜a4 27.♚xb6 ♜xb6 28.♜xd6+-) 27.bxc5 dxc5 28.♚b3!±)

26...♚xb3 27.♚xb3 ♙d4+ 28.♜h1 ♜xb3 1/2-1/2 Lenderman-Panjwani, Arlington 2013;

15.♞fd1



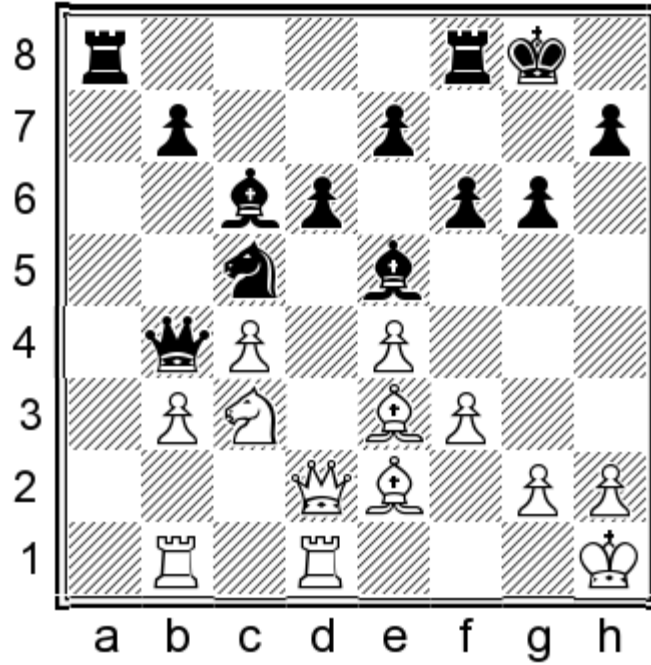
White can only temporarily delay ...e7-e6 with this move, as after 15...♙e5 White has no appealing way of preventing it.  
 15...♙e5 16.♙g5?!

(16.♙d4 ♗e6=; 16.♞ab1 transposes to the main line 15.♞ab1.)

16...♞b6 17.♜h1 f6 18.♙e3

(18.♙h6 ♞fb8! 19.♙e3 a4 20.♞ab1 axb3 21.axb3 ♞b4 22.♜d5 ♞xd2 23.♞xd2 ♙xd5 24.cxd5 ♞a3=)

18...a4 19.♞ab1 axb3 20.axb3 ♞b4!

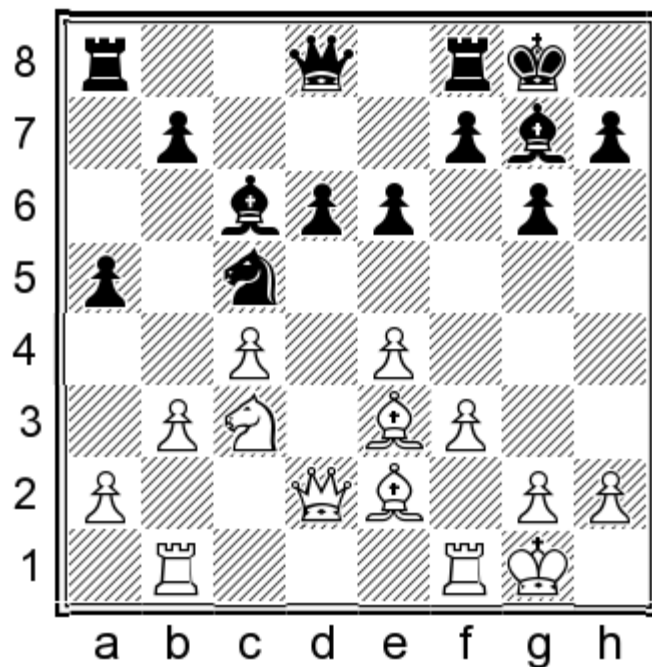


Typical for this line. Black sets up a dark-square blockade, to be followed by ...♞a8-a3 if unhindered. 21.♜d5 ♞xd2  
 22.♙xd2

(22.♞xd2 ♙xd5 23.cxd5 ♞a3 24.♙c4 ♞b8=)

22...♙xd5 23.cxd5 ♞a3 24.♙c4 b5 25.♙xb5 ♞xb3 26.♞xb3 ♜xb3 27.♙e3 ♞b8 28.♙e2 ♜c5=

**15...e6**



16. Rfd1

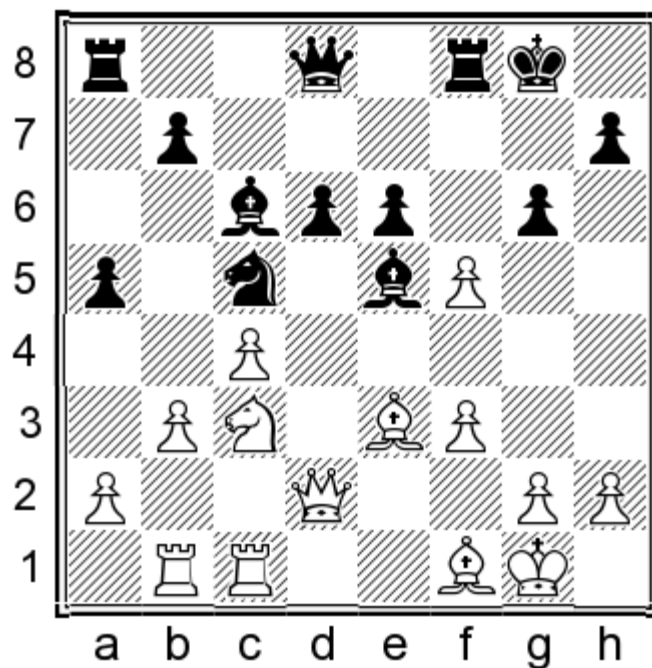
16. Rfc1 e5 17. e1f1

(17. g3 h5 18. b5 h4 19. g4 f5)

17... f5

(17... e7!? 18. c2 f5 19. exf5 gxf5 20. e1 b6 21. e2 h4 22. f4 ad8 23. cc1 d7 24. g3 f6 25. cd1 f4 26. f2 g6 27. h1 g7 28. c3 h5 0-1 Perera, P-Cuenca Jimenez, J Seville ESP 2004)

18. exf5



It is a perpetual dilemma for this line — what to recapture on f5 with? I have yet to come up with a general algorithm;

the concrete features of the position usually suggest one over the others, but here there are two viable continuations.

18...♞xf5 Black has two bishops and a rook pointed at White's king, and his queen is ready to join the action with ...♞d8-h4.

a) 18...gxf5!? 19.♘e2 (19.f4 ♙xc3 20.♞xc3 ♘e4 21.♞d4 ♜f6 22.a3 ♞g6↗) 19...♞h4 (19...♞f7 20.♘d4 ♞g7 21.♘xc6 bxc6 22.g3± 1/2–1/2 (49) Bauer,C-Schmitt,A Clichy FRA 2004) 20.♘f4 ♞h6↗;

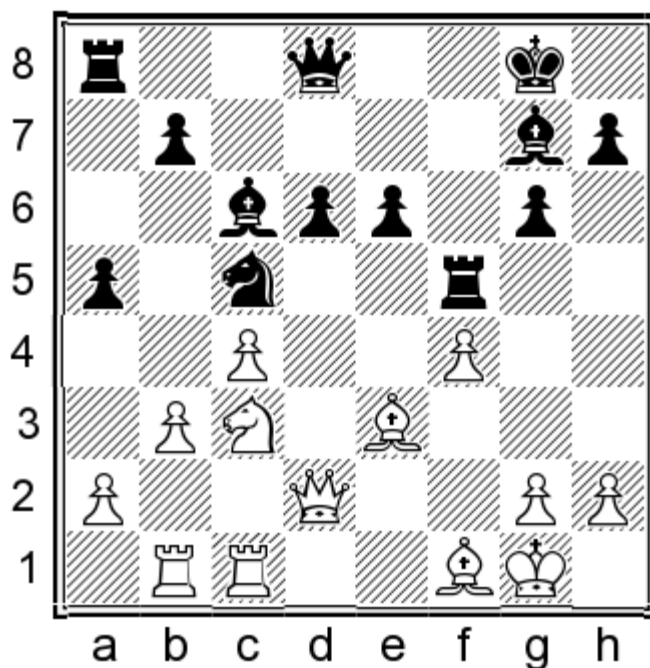
b) 18...exf5? 19.♘d5±;

19.f4

a) 19.a3?? ♞h4 20.g3 ♙xc3 21.hxg3 ♞xc3+ 22.♙g2 (22.♞g2 ♞e5→) 22...♞xf3 23.♙xc5 dxc5→ ...♞a8-f8 to follow.;

b) 19.♘b5 ♞h4 20.g3 ♙xc3 21.hxg3 ♞xc3+ 22.♙g2 ♙xf3 (22...♞xf3 23.♙xc5 dxc5 24.♞f1 ♞f5 25.♞xf5 exf5 26.♞f2 ♞g4↖) 23.♘d6 ♙xc2 24.♘f5 exf5 25.♙f4 ♞g4 26.♞xc2 ♞xf4 27.♞d5+ ♔g7 28.♞xc5 ♞g3+ 29.♔f1 ♞h3+ 30.♔f2 ♞h2+ 31.♔f1 ♞h3+ 32.♔g1=;

19...♙g7



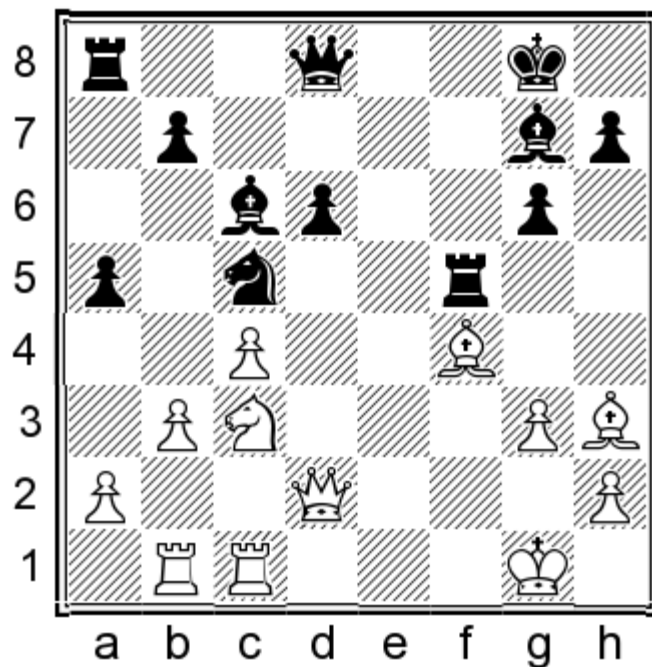
A point made by GM Rowson in his book Chess for Zebras: a pawn on f4 weakens the king in a way which should not be underestimated. It is such a common move in so many openings that we take it for granted, but it weakens squares around White's king and here Black is ready to shine light on those weaknesses with ...e6-e5. 20.g3

(20.♙e2 e5! 21.♞f1 exf4 22.♞xf4 ♞xf4 23.♙xf4 ♞f6 24.♘d5 ♞d4+ 25.♙e3 ♞xd2 26.♙xd2 ♙xd5 27.cxd5 ♘e4 28.♙e1 ♙d4+ 29.♔h1 ♞c8↗)

20...e5! 21.♙h3

(21.fxe5 ♞e8!↗)

21...exf4 22.♙xf4

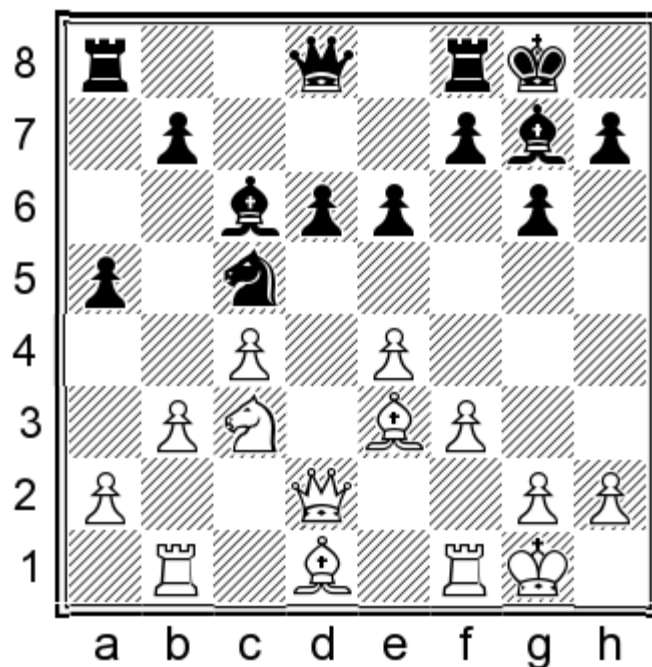


22...Rxf4! 23.gxf4

(23.Wxf4? Wb6-+)

23...Wb6=;

16.Bd1



I first came across this move when Cuban GM Abreu seemed to come up with it over the board against me after a long think in the game I mentioned in the introduction of this book. However, he was not the first to play it; that honor goes to the late Bulgarian GM Georgi Tringov who played it in 1986. 16.Bd1 is a perfectly logical move: the bishop will relocate to c2, from where it simultaneously bolsters the critical e4, b3, and a4 squares. White already threatens 17.a3 since the knight cannot hop into b3 after 17...a4 18.b4. In the last few years, 16.Bd1 has been played more times than it has in all previous years combined. I think the most common move, 16...Le5, does not equalize for Black, but 16...Wc7

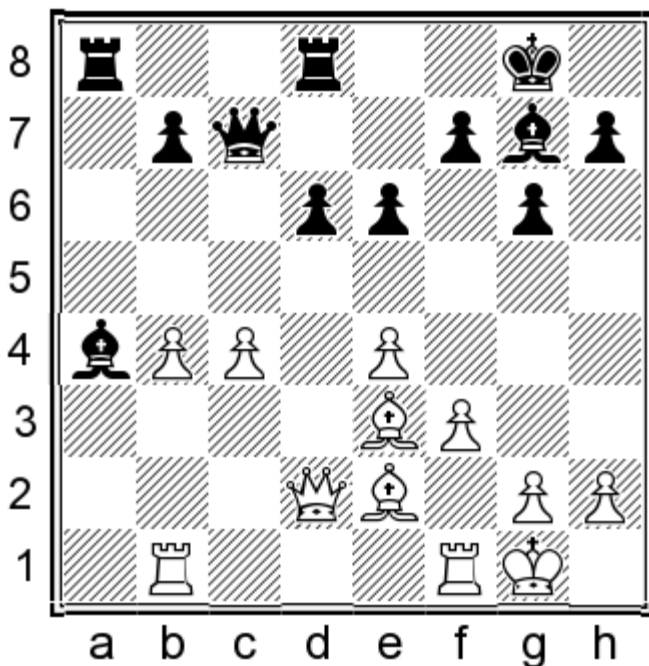
does. It makes sense too — Black targets the c4-square which has been abandoned by the relocation of the e2-bishop. I thank IM Dave Ross for suggesting this move to me. 16...♙c7! This move is a good illustration of the aforementioned ‘reactive’ nature of Black’s play in this line. White relocates his bishop to c2, so Black targets the c4-pawn with his queen, and in some lines with his knight by relocating to e5 via d7.

**a)** 16...f5?! 17.exf5 gxf5 (17...♞xf5 18.♜e2± 1–0 (43) Tringov, G-Haik,A Vrnjacka Banja 1986) 18.♞c2 f4 19.♞f2 ♜g5 20.♜h1 ♞e5 21.♞fe1 ♜g7 22.♜e2 b6 23.♜d4 ♞b7 24.a3 ♞f6 25.b4 ♜d7 26.♜b5 ♜h8 27.♞g1 axb4 28.axb4 ♞g8 29.♞e2 d5 30.♞be1 (♞30.cxd5 ♞xd5 31.♞b3 ♞xb3 32.♞xb3±) 30...dxc4 31.♜d4 ♞h6 32.♞xe5?? ♜xe5 33.♞xe5 ♜xe5 34.♜f5 ♞f6?? (34...♞xf3!–+) 35.♜d6 (♞35.♞d4 ♞d8 36.♞xe5 ♞xd2 37.♞xf6+ ♜g8 38.♜d4=) 35...♞d5 36.♜c3 e5 37.♜xb7 ♜xb7 38.♞xe5 ♜g7 39.g4 fxg3 40.♞d4 g2+ 41.♜g1 ♞xf3 0–1 Abreu Delgado-Panjwani, US Masters 2013;

**b)** 16...♞e5 17.a3! ♜c7 (17...f5 18.exf5 ♞f6 19.♜e2 exf5 20.g3!±) 18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 ♜a4 20.♜xa4 ♞xa4 21.♞e2 ♞fd8 22.f4 ♞g7 23.b5 d5 24.cxd5 ♜c2 25.♞fc1 ♜xd2 26.♞xd2 ♞d4+ 27.♜f1 exd5 28.e5±;

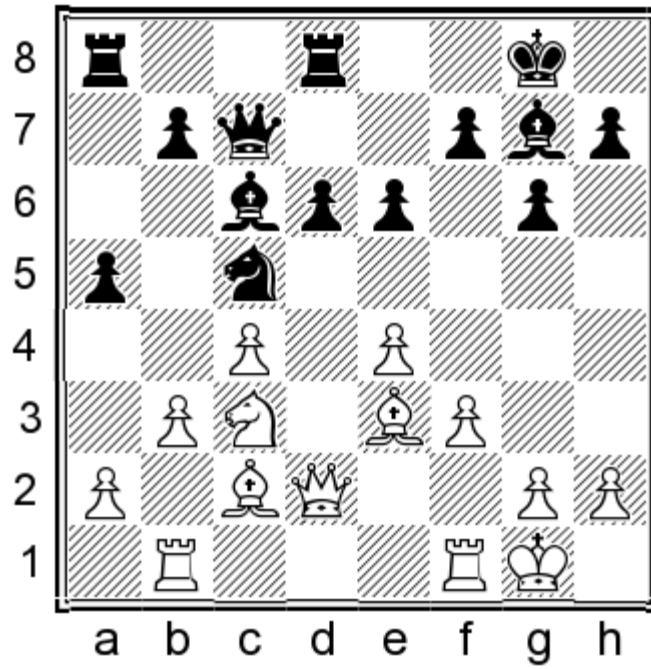
17.♞c2

(17.a3 ♞fd8 18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 ♜a4 20.♜xa4 (20.♞xa4 ♞xa4 21.b5 ♜xc4 22.♞fc1 ♞dc8 23.♜d5 exd5 24.♞xc4 dxc4±) 20...♞xa4 21.♞e2



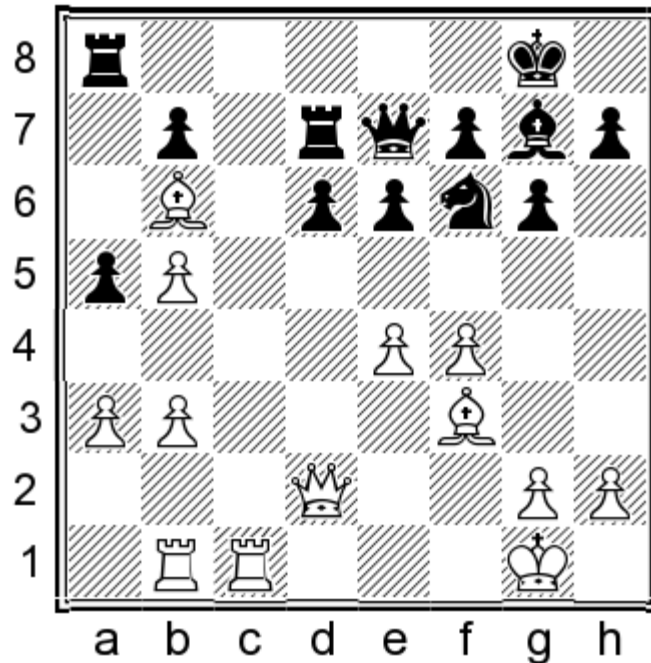
21...d5! 22.exd5 exd5 23.cxd5 ♜e5=)

17...♞fd8



An important branching point. White's a2-a3 is imminent; other plans do not make sense of White's bishop maneuver. It is just a question of how White chooses to position himself before playing it. 18.♞fd1

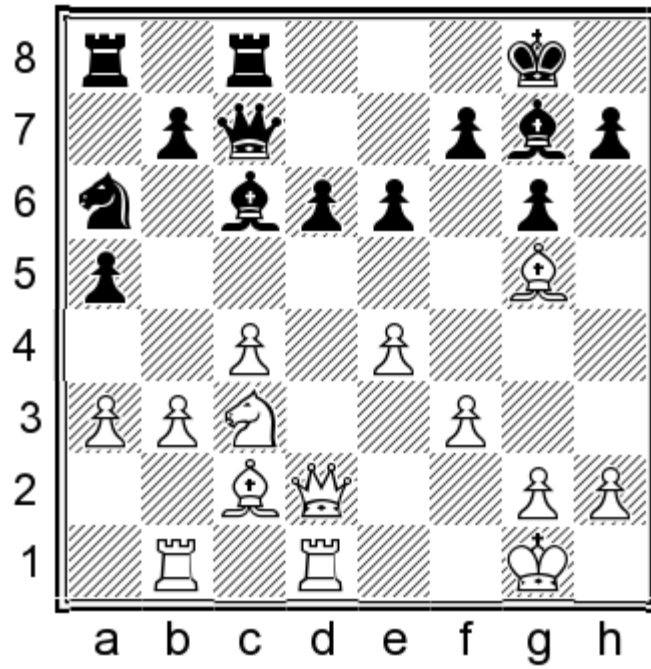
- a) 18.♞fc1 ♘d7! White's last move (by X-ray) defended the c4-pawn, so Black calls the knight for reinforcement.  
 19.a3 ♘e5 20.♘b5 ♜e7 21.♙b6 ♞d7 22.f4 (22.♜e2 ♙h6 23.♞d1 d5 24.♙d4 dxc4 25.bxc4 ♙g7) 22...♙xb5 23.cxb5 ♘g4 24.♙d1 ♘f6 25.♙f3



25...♙h6! 26.g3 e5±;

- b) 18.a3 a4! 19.♘xa4 (19.b4 ♘b3 20.♙xb3 axb3 21.♞xb3 ♙e8!)=) 19...♙xa4 20.bxa4 ♞dc8=;

- c) 18.♙g5 ♞dc8 19.♞fd1 ♘a6! 20.a3

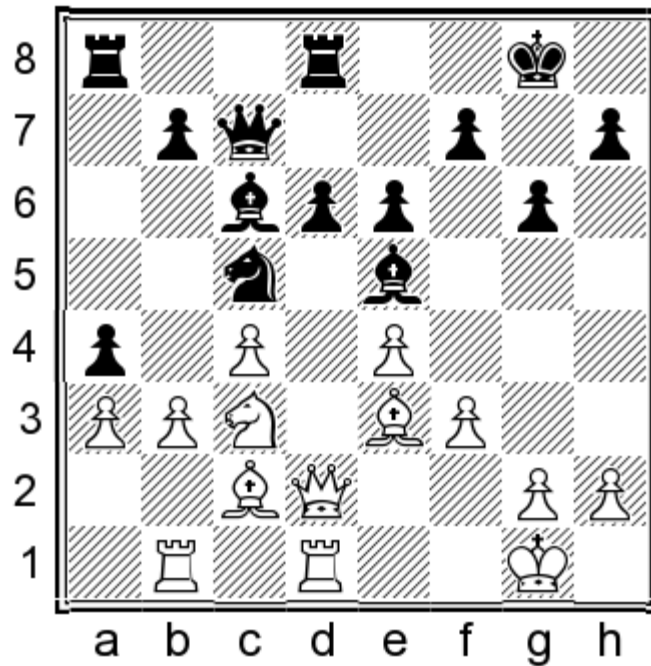


20...b5!! 21.cxb5 ♖e8 22.bxa6 ♜xa6 23.♙d3 ♙xc3 24.♚f2 ♞aa8=;

18...♙e5 19.a3

(19.g3 f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.♘b5 ♚g7⇒)

19...a4!



A major idea of 17...♚c7 is to be able to meet a2-a3 with this move, softening the c4-pawn further. 20.b4

**a)** 20.bxa4 ♜dc8 21.♞b4 ♘a6 22.♘b5 ♙xb5 23.♞xb5 ♚xc4 24.♙b3 ♚c6=;

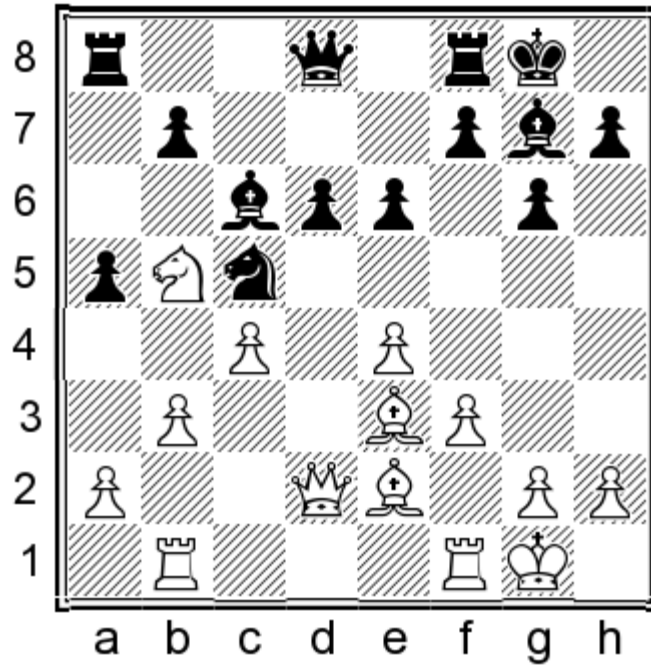
**b)** 20.♘xa4 ♙xa4 21.bxa4 ♜dc8 22.f4 ♙f6 23.♚b4 (23.♚xd6 ♘xa4 24.♚xc7 ♞xc7=) 23...♚c6 24.♙xc5 ♚xc5+ 25.♚xc5 ♞xc5 26.♙b3 ♞c6 27.♞d3 ♙d8=;

20...♘b3! It will be evident from this variation why the queen is so valuable on c7 in this line. 21.♙xb3

(21.♙d3 d5⇌)

21...axb3 22.♞xb3 ♕e8! 23.♚e2 ♞dc8 24.f4 ♕f6 25.♜b5 ♞xc4 26.♞xc4 ♞xc4 27.♜xd6 ♕a4! 28.♜xc4 ♕xb3 29.♞c1 ♕xc4 30.♞xc4 ♞xa3 31.♞c8+ ♜g7 32.♕c5 ♕c3=;

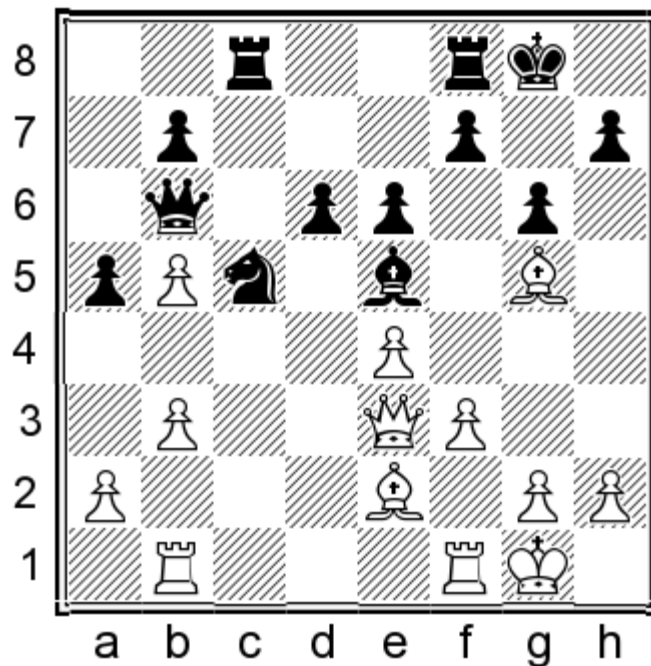
16.♜b5



We saw the following idea in my game against Lenderman after 15.♞ac1. 16...♕e5 17.♕g5 ♞b6 18.♚e3 White threatens f3-f4 and d6 will fall, so Black must act quick.

(18.♜h1 ♞fe8 19.♞bd1 (19.♜xd6?? ♞ad8 20.♕xd8 ♞xd8+) 19...d5! 20.♚e3 (20.♕e3 ♞ed8=) 20...♕xb5 21.cxb5 ♕g7 22.e5 ♜d7 23.♞xb6 ♜xb6=)

18...♕xb5! 19.cxb5 ♞ac8

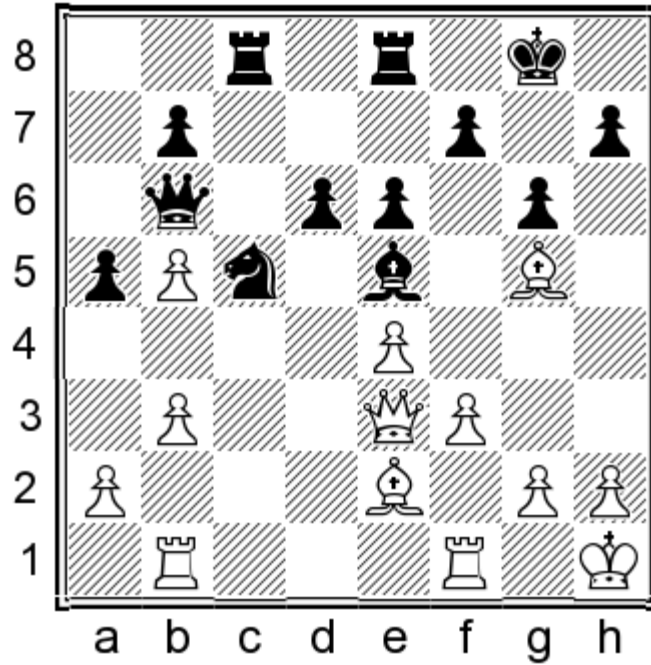


20.♜h1

**a)** 20.f4 ♖g7 21.♞fd1 ♞fe8 22.♞bc1 d5 23.e5 ♕f8 24.♞c3 (24.♕h4 ♜d7=) 24...♜d7 25.♞xb6 ♜xb6 26.♞dc1 ♕e7 27.♕h6 ♕f8 28.♞xc8 ♞xc8 29.♞xc8 ♜xc8 30.♕xf8 ♜xf8=;

**b)** 20.♞fd1 ♞fe8 21.♞f2 ♞a7 22.♕c4 (22.a3 b6 23.♕e3 ♞b7 24.♕d4 ♕xd4 25.♞xd4 d5!⚡) 22...b6 23.g3 (23.♞bc1 ♞b8= White has no constructive plan, whereas Black has long term ideas of ...f7-f5 or even ...d6-d5 after ...♞c8-c7-d7/...♞b8-b7.) 23...f5 24.exf5 d5 25.♕e2 gxf5 26.♞e3 ♞g7↔;

20...♞fe8

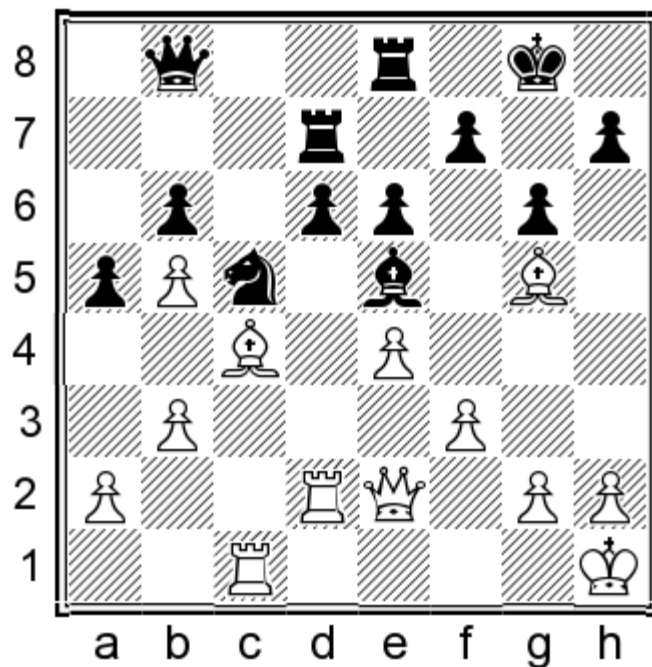


21.♞d2 White targets Black's weak d6-pawn, but does not demonstrate any constructive plan. Black has time to regroup and prepare for ...d6-d5 or ...f7-f5. The following is just one illustration of how Black can successfully regroup.

**a)** 21.f4 ♕g7 22.♞bc1 (22.a3 d5 23.e5 ♜a4!⚡) 22...d5 23.e5 ♜d7 24.♞xb6 ♜xb6 25.♕h4 ♕h6⚡;

**b)** 21.♞fd1 d5↔;

21...♞a7! 22.♞fd1 b6 23.♞bc1 ♞b8 24.♕c4 ♞c7 25.♞e2 ♞d7 26.♞d2



26...f5! 27.a3

(27.exf5 gxf5 28.♙e3 d5 29.♙xc5 bxc5 30.b6 ♜de7 31.♙b5 ♜d8 32.♞xc5 ♙xh2 33.♞dc2 ♙g3=)

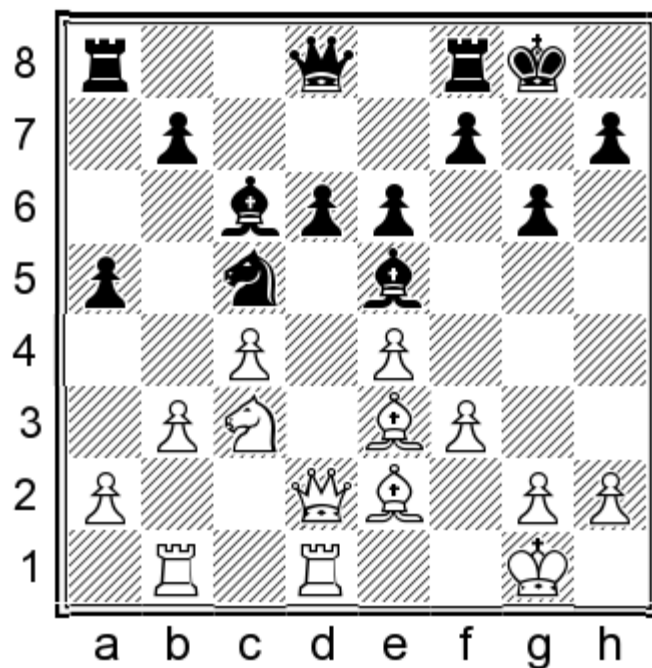
27...a4 28.exf5

(28.b4 ♜b3 29.♙xb3 axb3+)

28...gxf5 29.bxa4 d5 30.♙a2 ♙xh2 31.a5 ♙d6 32.axb6 ♞g7≠;

16.♙g5?? ♙xc3+

16...♙e5

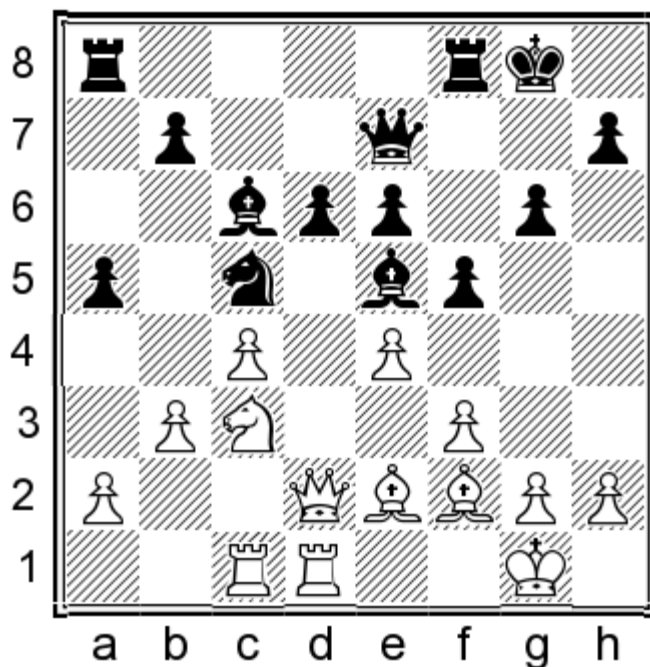


The database reveals that it was Danish IM Jan Sorensen who introduced the idea of ...e6/...♙e5 into tournament

practice. In 1990 and 1991 he scored 1.5/2 against then IMs (now GMs) J. Kristiansen and A. Fishbein. It has since been championed most notably by Azerbaijani GM Gadir Guseinov, and has also been implemented by Grandmasters Iturrizaga, Bauer, Leon Hoyos, Cebalo, Lie, Perelshteyn, and many others.

### 17. ♖e1

17. ♕f2 The fact that this retreat is played so often indicates to me that the bishop should go directly to f2 from d4 earlier on. 17... ♖e7 18. ♖bc1 f5



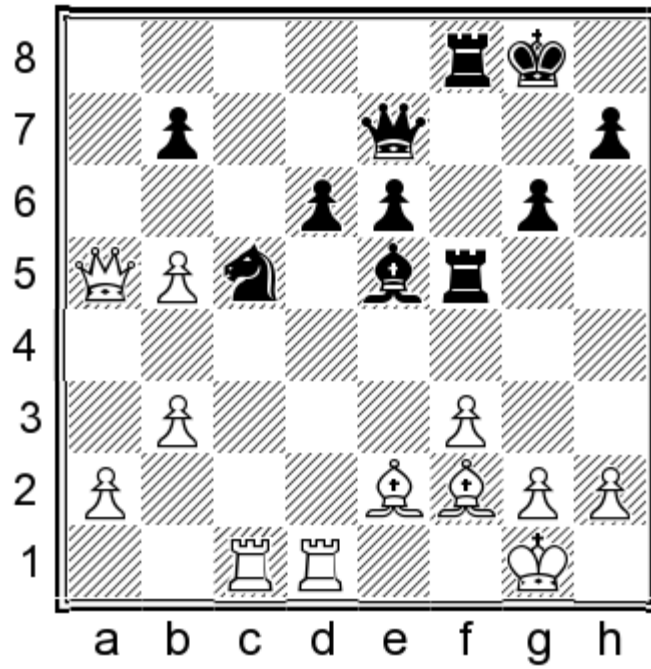
19. exf5 ♖xf5!

(19... gxf5 20. ♘b5 (20. ♕d4 ♕xd4+ 21. ♖xd4 ♖ad8 22. ♖d2 e5 23. ♖f2 ♘e6 24. ♖e1 ♔h8 25. ♕f1 ♖g7 ♞ 0-1 (39) Jakovljevic, V-Leon Hoyos, M Cento 2011) 20... ♖fd8 21. ♘d4±)

20. ♘b5

(20. ♕d4 ♕xd4+ 21. ♖xd4 ♖d8= Black has ideas of ...e6-e5 and ...♘c5-e6-d4. Black's weakened d5-square is less of an issue than White's weakened d4-square because Black has a light-squared bishop to guard his weak square.)

20... ♕xb5 21. cxb5 ♖af8! 22. ♖xa5

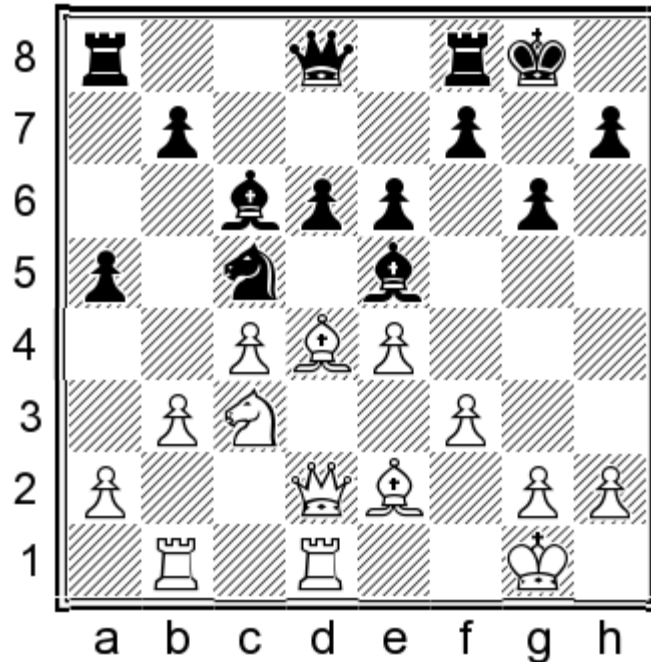


22...dxe4! 23. Wee1

(23. e3?? exh2+ 24. exh2 Wh4+ 25. c1g1 Rh5-+)

23...Wg5 Black has enormous pressure. The following is just an illustration of how things could continue. 24. e1h1 d5 25. g3 Rxf3 26. exf3 Rxf3 27. Rc8+ c7g7 28. ed4 exd4 29. Rxd4 Wf6 30. Rc7+ c6h6 31. Rd1 Rf2 32. We3+ g5 33. c1g1 Wf5 34. Rxb7 Wh3 35. Wxf2 cxf2 36. exf2 Wxh2+ 37. c1f1 d4! 38. Rd7 e5-+;

17. ed4



Black has (at least) two adequate responses to this move. I prefer 17...We7 but the alternative is more direct and simplifying. 17...We7

(17...exd4+ 18. Wxd4 Wb6!? Black twists and turns in order to achieve ...e6-e5 and ...c5-e6. 19. a3 e5 20. We3 Wd8 21. b4 axb4 22. axb4 de6 23. b5 e8 24. d5 c7g7 25. f4 (25. Wb6 Wxb6+ 26. dxb6 Rd8 27. Ra1 f6 28. Ra7 de5 29. ca4

♞xa4 30.♞xa4 ♜f7 31.♞a2 (31.c5 ♜fd7=) 31...♙f8 32.♞ad2 ♜fd7=) 25...f6 26.fxe5 fxe5 27.♙g4 ♞c5= 0-1 (41) Porat,M-Bejtovic,J Prague 2011).

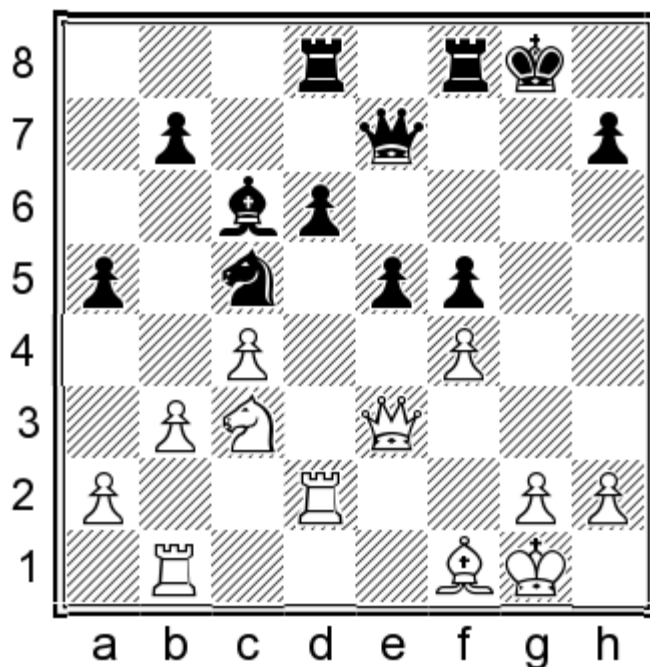
18.♙f1

(18.f4 ♙xf4 19.♜xf4 e5 20.♜g3 exd4 21.♞xd4 ♞xe4 22.♞xe4 ♙xe4 23.♞e1 f5 24.♙f3 ♜e5=)

18...♞ad8 19.♜e3 ♙xd4 20.♞xd4 e5 21.♞d2 f5

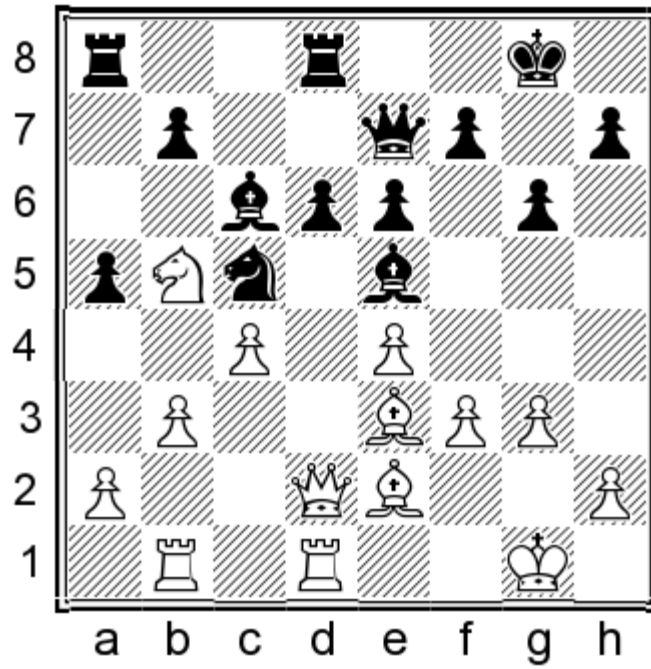
(21...♞e6=)

22.exf5 gxf5 23.f4



23...♞e6! 24.fxe5 f4 25.♜e1 dxe5 26.♞xd8 ♜c5+ 27.♜f2 ♞xd8= Bok, B-Lie,K Wijk aan Zee NED 2010;

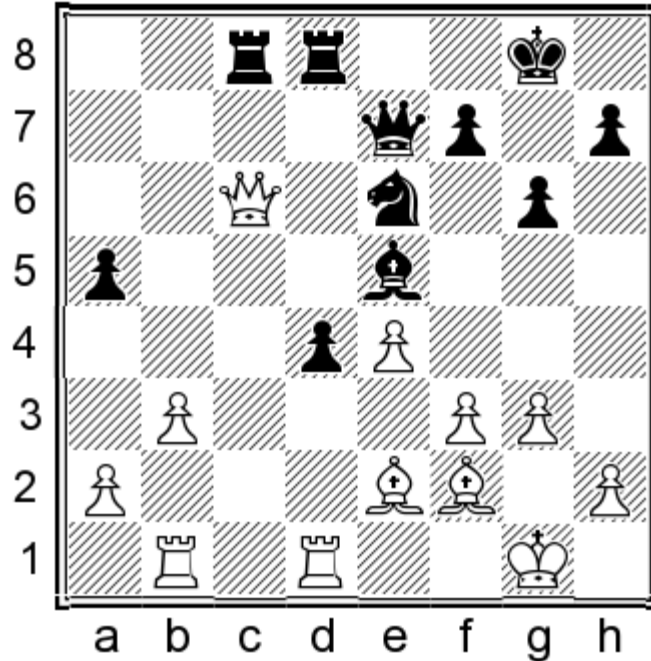
17.g3 A recommendation of Khalifman's in his (eternally informative) repertoire series for White. 17...♜e7 18.♞b5 ♞fd8



19. ♖d4

(19. ♗g5 f6 20. ♗e3 g5 21. ♖d4 ♗e8 ⇒ Black has ideas of ...h7-h5, ...g5-g4, ...♗e8-g6. White is solid but already on the defensive.)

19...d5! 20.cxd5 exd5 21. ♖c1 ♖e6 22. ♖xc6 bxc6 23. ♖xc6 d4 24. ♗f2 ♖ac8



25. ♖a6

(25. ♖a4 ♖g5! 26.f4?? ♖xe4 27.fxe5 ♖c3-+)

25...♖c2 26. ♗f1 ♖g5!

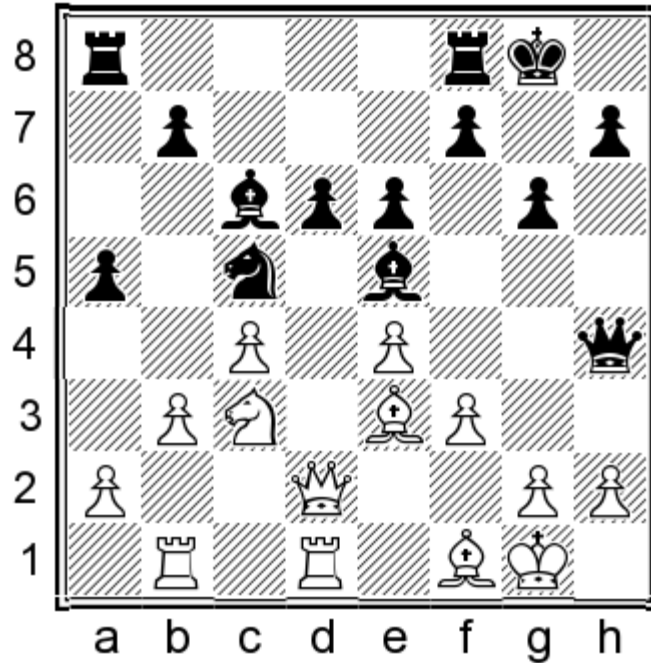
(26...♖xa2 27.♖a1 ♖xa1 28.♖xa1 d3 29.♖d1 ♖b4 30.♖xd3 ♖xd3 31.♖xd3 ♗d4= 1/2-1/2 (46) Nyback-Sorensen 2008)

27.a4?

(27. ♖xa5?? ♜xf2-+; ♞27. ♙d3 ♜xa2 28. ♜a1 ♜b2 29. ♜xa5 ♞f4⇒ Computers give a way for White to escape with a draw but it would be terrifying to defend this over the board.)

27...h5 28.h4 ♜f6 29.♙d3 g5-+;

17. ♙f1? The Accelerated Dragon is full of landmines. Grandmasters Chuchelov, Erenburg, Zubarev, and Beim have misstepped onto the following. 17... ♜h4!

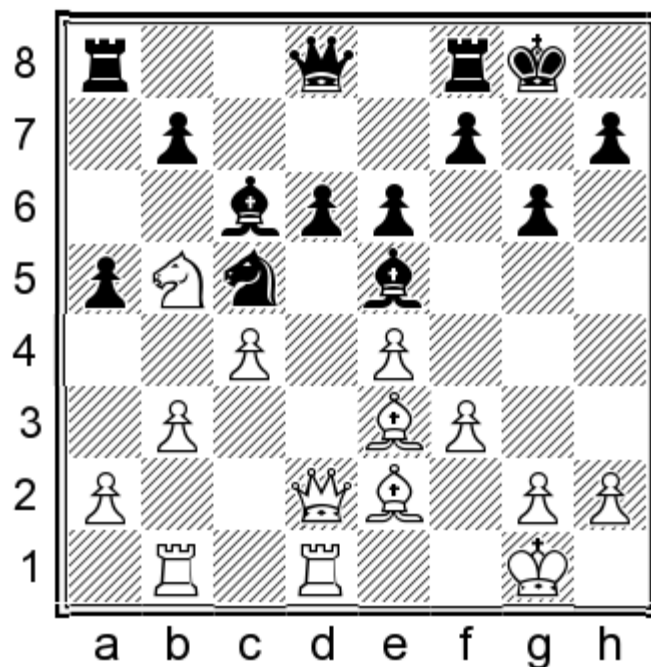


18.h3

(18.g3 ♜f6+ The f3-pawn falls.)

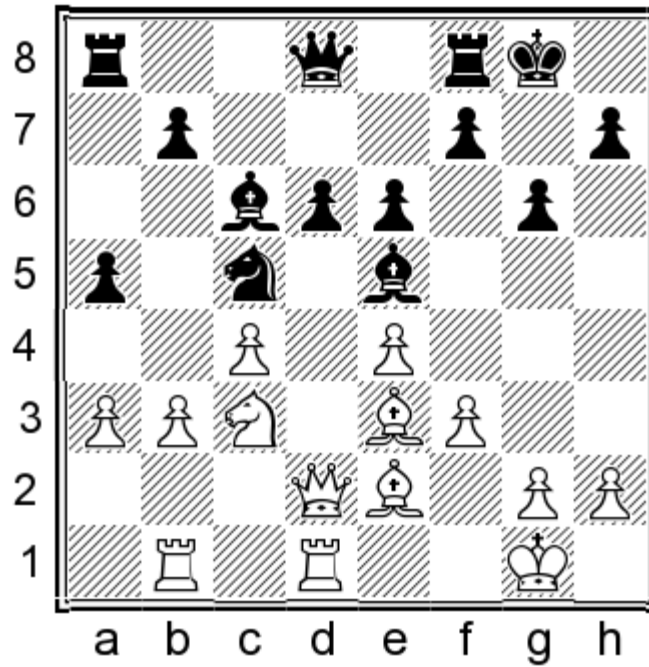
18... ♜g3 19. ♙d3 f5 20.exf5 ♞xd3 21. ♜xd3 ♙xf3-+ Shvayger, Y-Socko, M, Baku 2016;

17. ♞b5?



Victims of the following include IM Danny Rensch and GM Peter Heine Nielsen! 17...♖h4! 18.g3 ♘xg3 19.hxg3 ♗xg3+ 20.♔f1 ♘xe4! 21.fxe4 f5±;

17.a3



Black's last move accompanied a threat of ...♖d8-h4, which is enough for equality, but it is far more effective if White's knight has been driven away from c3. 17...♖f6!?

(17...♖h4!? 18.g3 ♘xg3 19.hxg3 ♗xg3+ 20.♔f1 ♗h3+ 21.♔e1 ♗h4+ 22.♙f2 ♗h1+ 23.♙f1 ♗xf3 24.♗e3 ♗xe3+ 25.♙xe3 ♘xe4 26.♘xe4 ♙xe4 27.♙d3 ♙c6=)

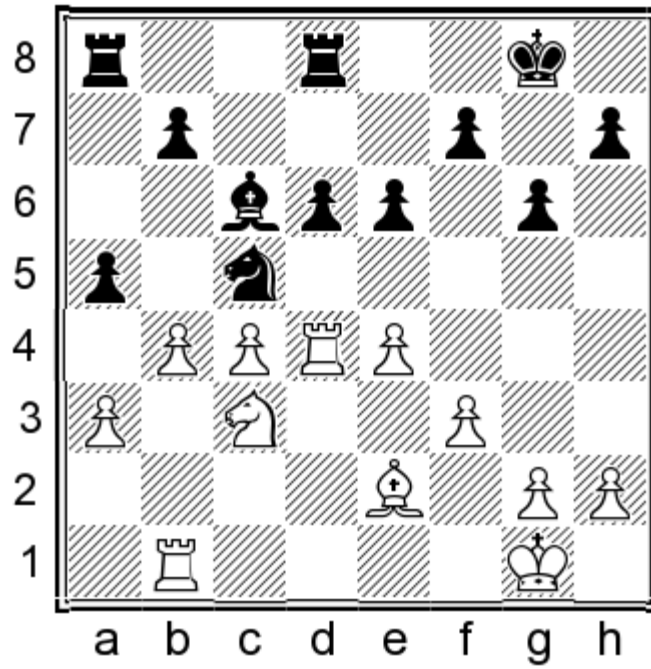
18.♙d4

(18.♘b5? ♖h4! 19.g3 ♘xg3 20.hxg3 ♗xg3+ 21.♔f1 ♘xe4! 22.fxe4 f5→)

18...♙xd4+

(18...a4 19.♙xe5 dxe5 20.b4 ♘b3 21.♗e3 ♘d4 22.b5 ♙d7∞)

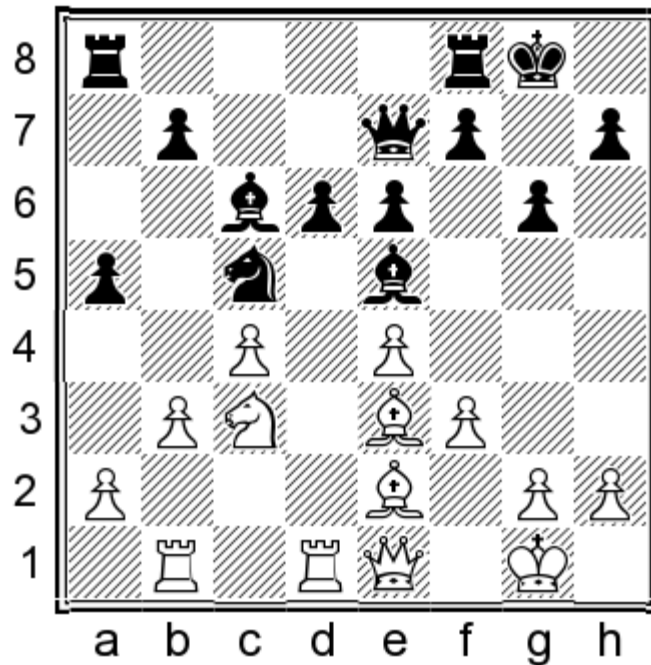
19.♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 20.♙xd4 ♙fd8 21.b4



(21.♔d1 e5 22.♖d2 ♘e6=)

21...e5! 22.♖d2 axb4 23.axb4 ♘e6 24.b5 ♕e8 25.♘d5 ♘d4=

17...♚e7



In the database Black plays his Queen to f6 about equally as often, but I tend to prefer my Queen on e7 as a general rule unless there is something concretely favorable about placing it on f6.

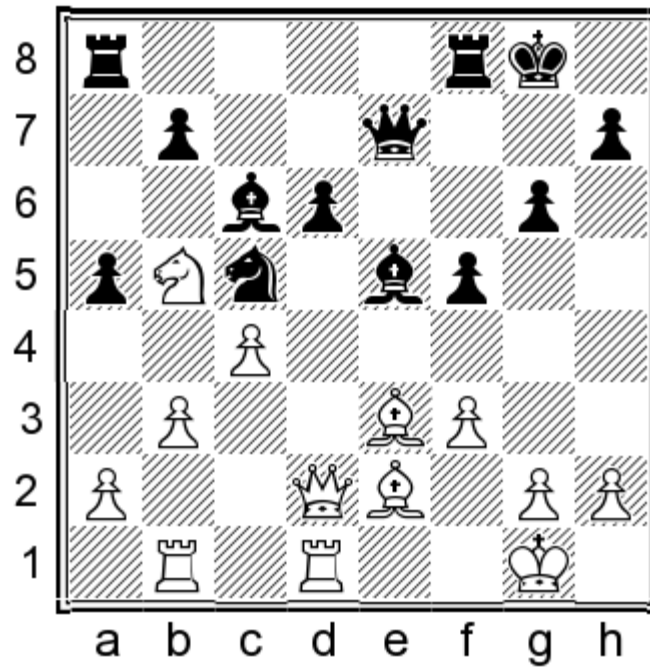
17...♚f6 18.♘b5

(18.♖bc1 ♖ad8 19.♔f1 g5±)

18...♖fd8 19.♘d4 ♕f4 20.♔f2±

18.a3

18. ♖b5 f5 19. exf5 exf5! 20. ♕d2?



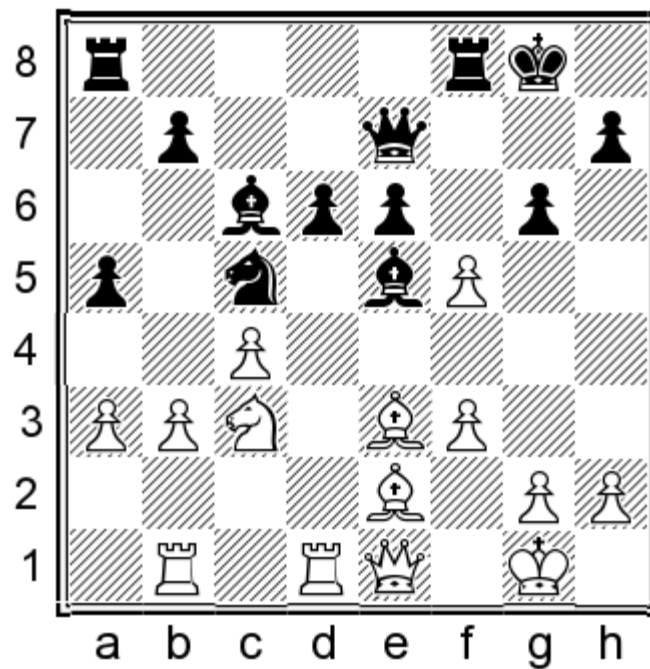
(20. ♔d4 ♗e6=)

20... ♗e4!! 21. ♕e1

(21. fxe4 ♕h4→)

21... ♔xb5 22. fxe4 ♔c6 23. exf5 ♔xh2+ 24. ♖xh2 ♕xe3±

18...f5 19.exf5



It is usually a challenge to decide how to recapture on f5 but here Black has an embarrassment of riches not only are

all three recaptures playable, Black can even opt for none of the above with 19...♖f6!?

### 19...♖xf5

19...exf5 20.♖d2 ♜fe8 21.♘d5 ♞f7 22.♙f2 ♙xd5 23.♞xd5 ♙xh2+ 24.♔xh2 ♞xe2 25.♙g3 ♞xd5 26.♞xd5 ♞d8 27.♙xd6 ♘e6=;

19...gxf5 I would recommend this the least of the four options. 20.b4

(20.♙d4 ♞g7 21.♞f2 ♙xd4 22.♞xd4 ♞fd8 23.♞xg7+ ♔xg7 24.b4 ♘a4 25.♘xa4 ♙xa4=)

20...axb4 21.axb4 ♞g7 22.♘b5 ♙xb5

(22...f4 23.♙f2 ♘a4 24.♘d4 ♙d7 25.♙f1 ♔h8 26.♔h1 ♞g8 27.♞bc1±)

23.bxc5 ♙a4 24.♞xd6! ♙xd6 25.cxd6=;

19...♞f6!? 20.♘b5 ♞xf5 21.♘xd6

(♔21.h3 ♙xb5 22.cxb5 ♞ac8=)

21...♙xh2+ 22.♔xh2 ♞e5+ 23.♔g1 ♞xe3+ 24.♞f2 ♞g5=

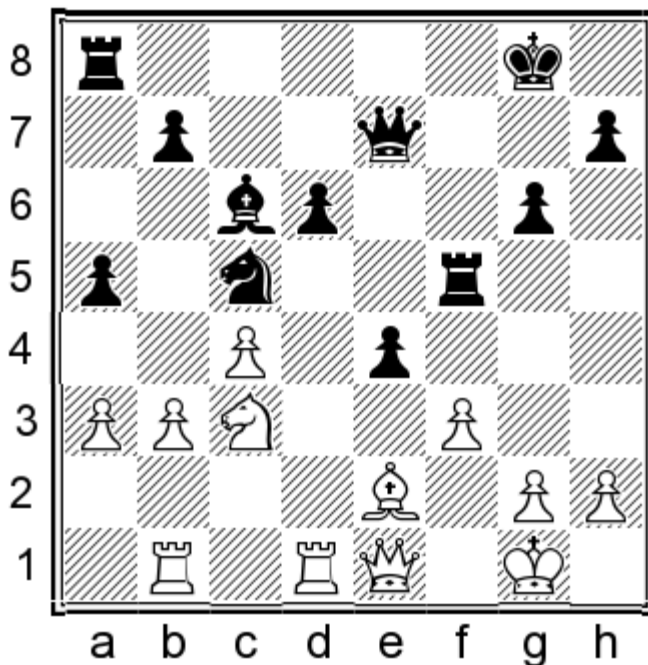
### 20.♙d4

20.♘b5 ♙xb5 21.cxb5 d5=

### 20...♙xd4+ 21.♞xd4 e5 22.♞dd1

Black can continue 'normally' with 22...♘e6, especially if he wants to keep tension and play for a win, but the simplest path to equality is to liquidate things with 22...e4! 22.♘d5 ♞g7 23.♞dd1 e4 24.fxe4 ♘xe4 25.♙f3 ♙xd5 26.♙xe4 ♙xe4 27.♞xe4 ♞e5 28.♞d3 ♞e7=

### 22...e4!



### 23.fxe4

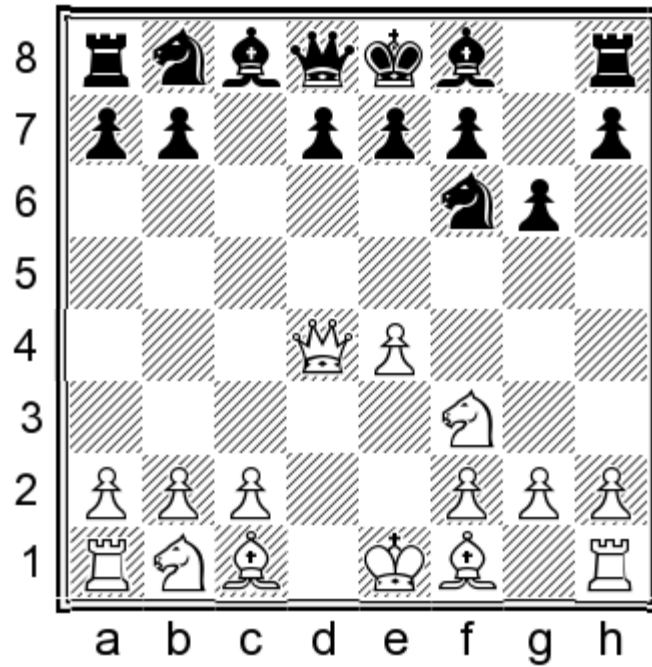
23.♙d3 ♖xf3! 24.gxf3 ♜g5+ 25.♞g3 ♜e3+ 26.♞f2 ♜g5+=

23...♗xe4 24.♙d3 ♖e5 25.♙xe4 ♙xe4 26.♗xe4 ♖xe4=

# CHAPTER 6

## 4. ♔xd4 VARIATION

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♚xd4 ♘f6

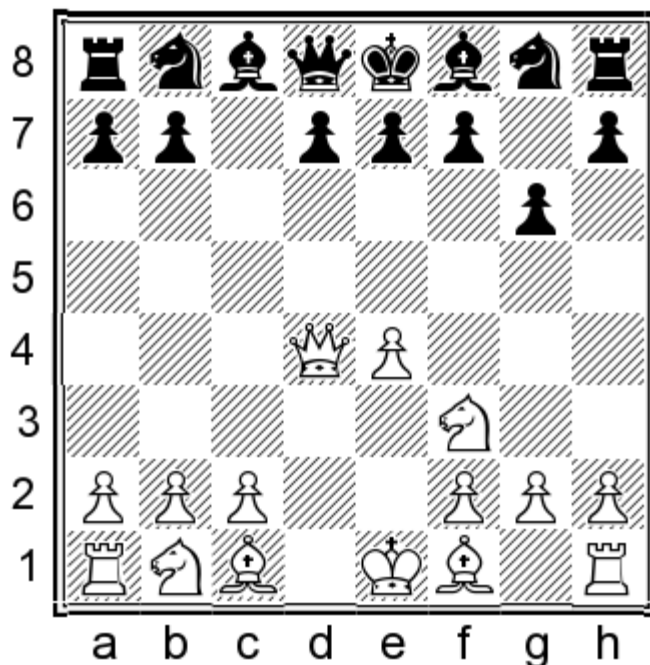


### Contents

1. 5.sidelines

2. 5.e5

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♚xd4



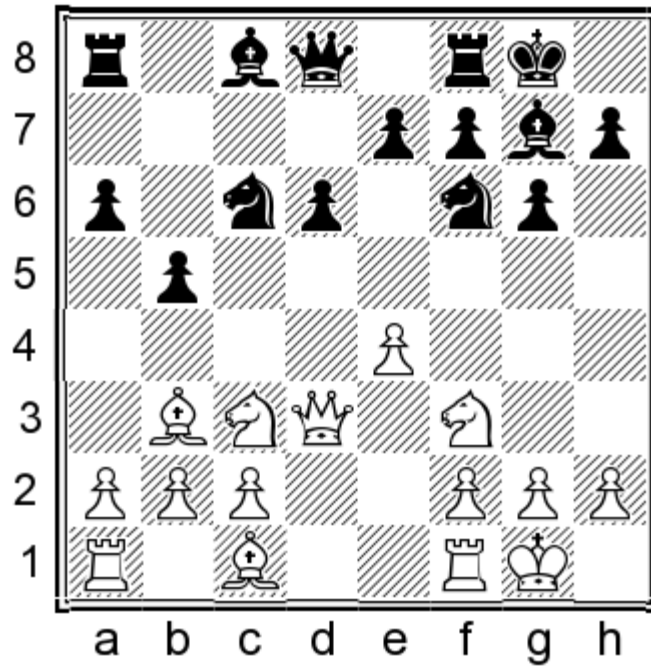
The Hyper Accelerated Dragon move order (2...g6) avoids the ♖b5 Sicilian at the cost of allowing 4.♙xd4 here. In my opinion, the tradeoff is very much worth it: the ♖b5 Sicilian is a real buzzkill for the dynamic and ambitious Black player, whereas the 4.♙xd4 line is for the most part rich in dynamical possibilities and offers Black real chances to play for a win.

#### 4...♘f6 5.♗c3

We cover White's main move, 5.e5, in the next subchapter. This line has some venom, and in my judgment Black does not equalize in the most popular way of dealing with it.

5.♖b5 I have faced this move several times in online blitz but never over the board. It's basically just a cheapo attempt: if Black plays 5...♗g7 then 6.e5! is strong for White. However, this unrespectable move actually has, according to Donaldson and Silman, a highly respectable originator — David Bronstein. 5...a6 (5...♗g7? 6.e5±) 6.e5 This can be a little scary the first time you see it, but it's just a bluff by White. It works well against an unprepared opponent in 1-minute chess though!

a) 6.♖a4 b5 7.♖b3 ♗c6 8.♙d3 ♗g7 9.♗c3 0-0 10.0-0 d6



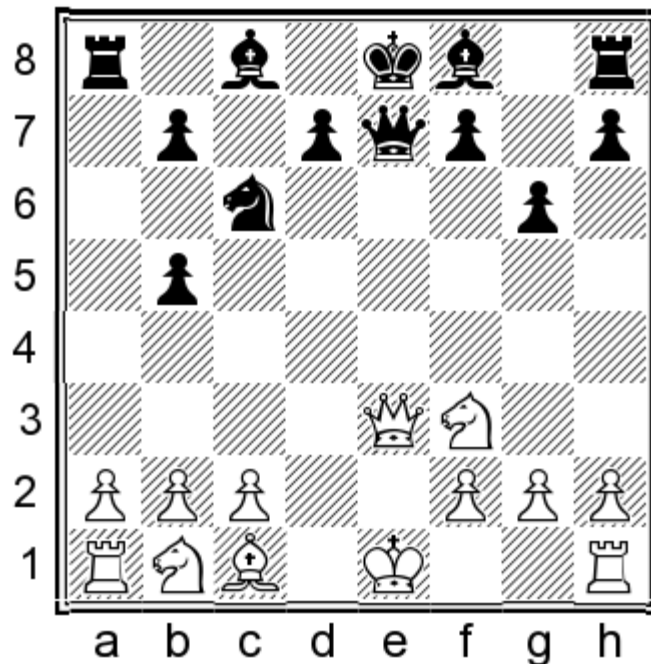
We have here just a normal Dragon structure for Black where White's pieces are misplaced. 11. ♖g5 h6 12. ♗e3 (12. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13. e5 ♗f5±; 12. ♗h4 g5 13. ♗g3 ♖h5±; 12. ♗d2 ♖d7±) 12... ♖g4 13. ♗f4 ♗b7=;

**b)** 6. ♖a4?! ♖xe4! (6... b6 7. e5 ♗b7∞ Arribas Lopez-Leon Hoyos, New Orleans 2016) 7. ♖xe4 (7. ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 8. ♖xe4 ♖c6±) 7... axb5 8. ♖e5 f6 9. ♖xb5 ♖a5+ 10. ♖xa5 ♖xa5±;

6... axb5 7. exf6 ♖c6 8. fxe7

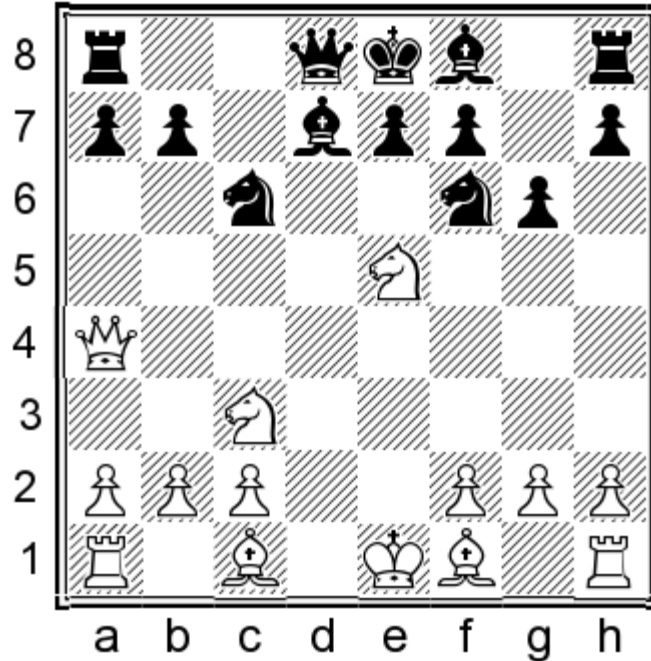
(8. ♖d3 b4! 9. 0-0 e6±; 8. ♖h4 exf6 9. 0-0 d5 10. ♖e1+ ♗e6 11. ♖c3 b4 12. ♖b5 ♗g7 13. ♗h6 0-0 14. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 15. ♖bd4 ♖d6±)

8... ♖xe7+ 9. ♖e3



Donaldson and Silman give preference to White here but it is Black who is better. 9... ♖xe3+ 10. ♗xe3 ♗g7 11. c3 b4!±

5...♖c6 6.♚a4 d6 7.e5 dxe5 8.♗xe5 ♕d7



9.♗xd7

Here 9...♚xd7 is the most popular move by a 6:1 margin but it looks to me that Black struggles to equalize there. Giving up the two bishops is already a concession Black has to live with in this line; he should rush to finish his development with 9...♗xd7 rather than spend several tempos on queen moves as he must after 9...♚xd7.

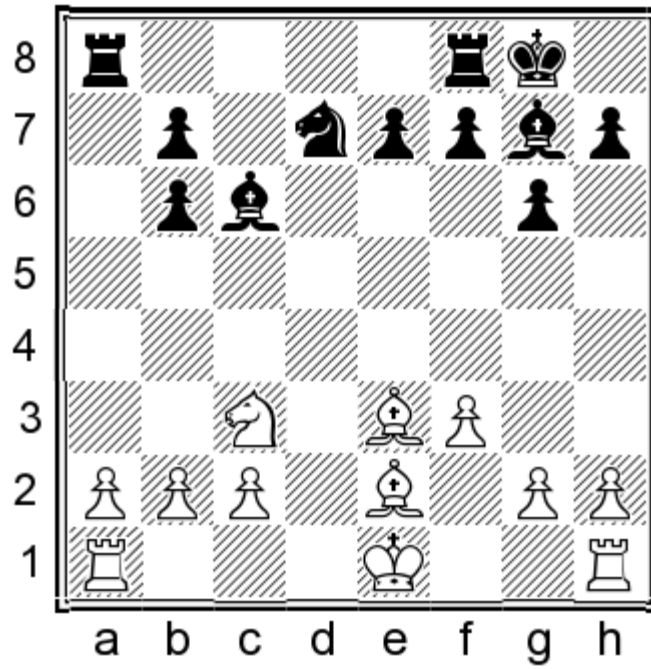
9.♗xc6 Donaldson and Silman give this as += however... 9...♚b6!N A nice little novelty which renders 9.♗xc6 harmless. We wait to see where White puts his f1-bishop before we decide how to take back on c6.

(9...♗xc6 10.♗b5± Black is slow getting developed and castled.)

10.♚b3

(10.♗b5 bxc6! 11.♗c4 ♗g7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗b3 c5 14.♚c4 ♖ac8⇒)

10...♗xc6 11.♚xb6 axb6 12.f3 ♗g7 13.♗e2 0-0 14.♗e3 ♗d7



The ♖d7/♗c6/b7 are a common trio in the Accelerated Dragon — all three pieces are mutually defended and they exert control over important central squares. 15.♕f2 ♗xc3! 16.bxc3 ♞a3↗

### 9...♗xd7!

9...♗xd7 10.♗e3 ♗g7 11.♞d1 ♞g4

(11...♗c8 12.♗e2 0-0 13.0-0 a6 14.♗f4 ♗f5 (⊔14...e6 15.♗f3 ♞d8 16.g3±) 15.♗xf5 gxf5 16.♗a4 e6 17.c4 ♞fd8 18.♗b6 ♞xd1 19.♞xd1± 1-0 (67) Rausis,I (2600)-Turner,M (2493) Fagernes NOR 2015)

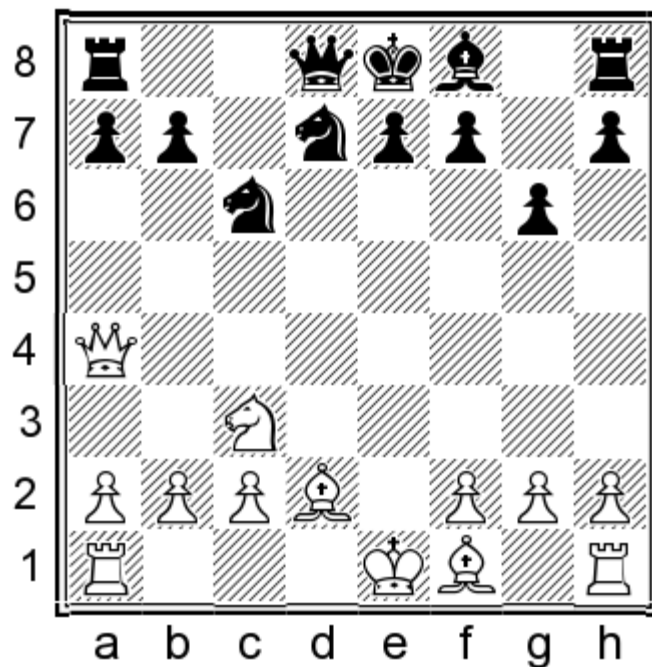
### 12.♗b3!

(12.♞d4 ♗f5! (12...♗c8 13.♗b5 a6 14.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 15.♗xc6+ bxc6 16.♕e2 0-0 17.♞hd1 e6 18.♞c4 ♗d5 19.♗d4 ♞fc8 20.♗xg7 ♕xg7 21.♞c5 ♞ab8 22.b3± 1-0 (43) Erdos,V (2651)-Gledura,B (2395) Zalakaros HUN 2014) 13.♗d3 ♗e5 14.♞b4 ♗c7 15.♗b5 0-0 16.♞c4 ♞fc8 17.0-0 e6 18.♗f4 ♗b6 19.♗e3 ♗c7= 0-1 (36) Wei Yi (2706)-Bu Xiangzhi (2681) China CHN 2015)

12...0-0 13.h3 ♗b4 14.♗e2 ♗xb3 15.cxb3 ♞fd8 16.♗f3 a6 17.♕e2 ♞xd1 18.♞xd1 ♞d8 19.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 20.b4±

### 10.♗b5

10.♗d2



This new move (with the idea of castling queenside) was tried by GM Popilski in 2016. It has some bite, so Black should be accurate here. 10...♔g7

(10...♘b6!? 11.♚e4 ♔g7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.h4 ♚d4=)

11.0-0-0 0-0

**a)** 11...♚c8 12.h4 h5 13.♖g1!? (13.♚f4!?→) 13...♘b6 14.♚e4 0-0 15.g4 hxg4 16.h5→

**b)** 11...♘b6!? tr. 10...♘b6;

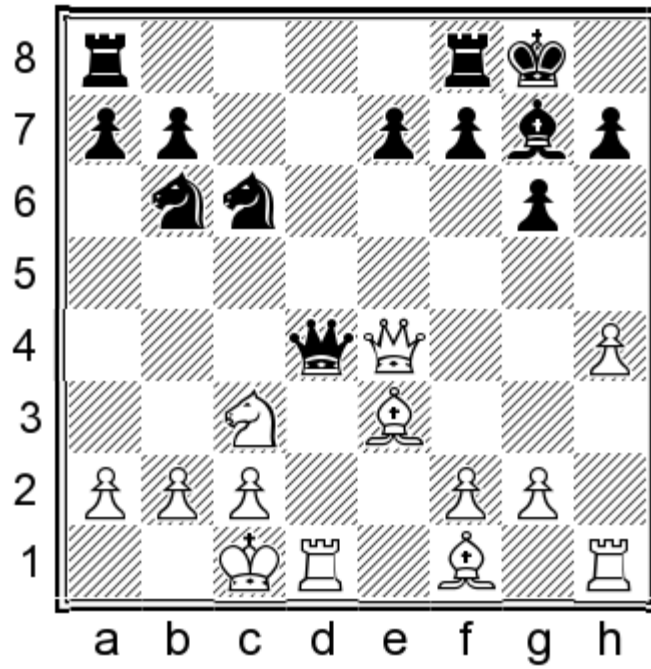
12.h4!

(12.♔b5 ♘b6 13.♚e4 ♚c7= Popilski-Perelshteyn, Dallas 2016)

12...♘b6!

(12...h5? 13.g4±)

13.♚e4 ♚d4 14.♔e3



14... ♖b4!

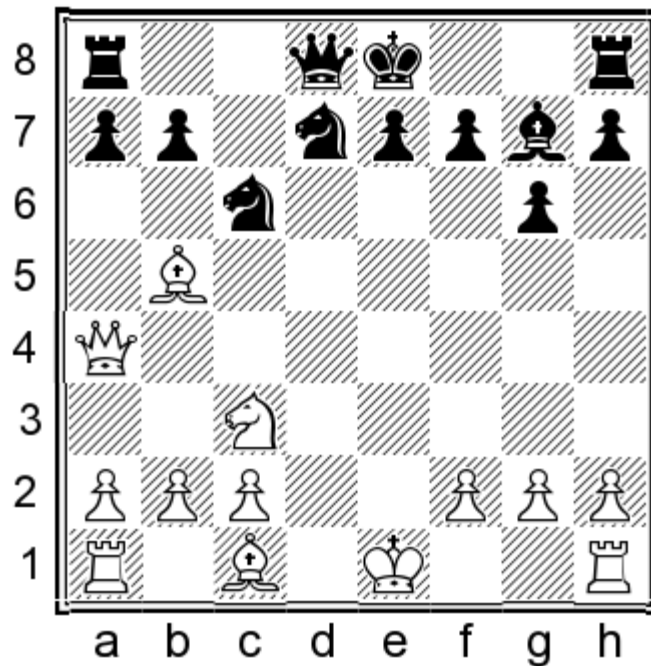
(14... ♖xe4 15. ♗xe4 ♜fd8 16. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 17. ♙xb6 axb6 18. c3±)

15. ♖xb4 ♗xb4 16. h5

(16. a3 ♙xc3 17. bxc3 ♗4d5=)

16... ♜fd8=

10... ♙g7!



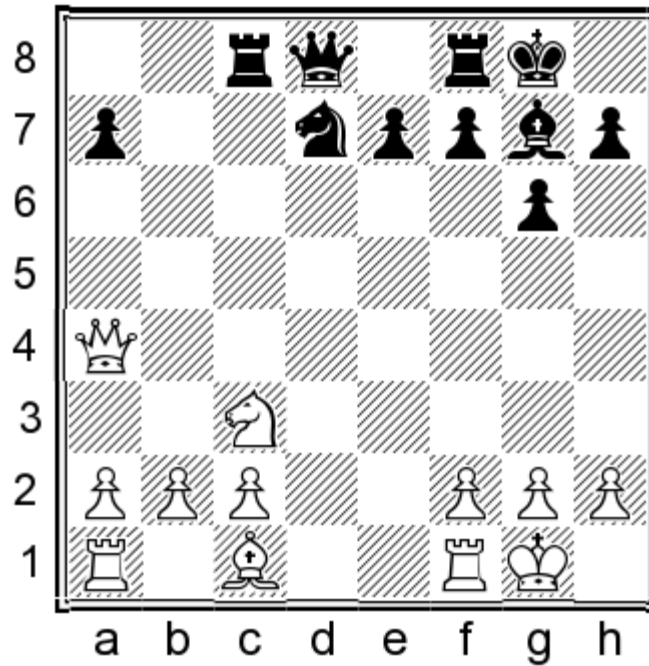
A temporary pawn sacrifice.

11.0-0

11. ♖xc6 bxc6 12. 0-0

(12. ♗xc6 ♜c8 13. ♗f3 ♖xc3+! 14. bxc3 ♗a5 15. 0-0 0-0 16. ♜e1 ♜fe8 17. ♖d2 ♘e5= White will not be able to hold on to his extra pawn.)

12... 0-0 13. ♗xc6 ♜c8 14. ♗a4



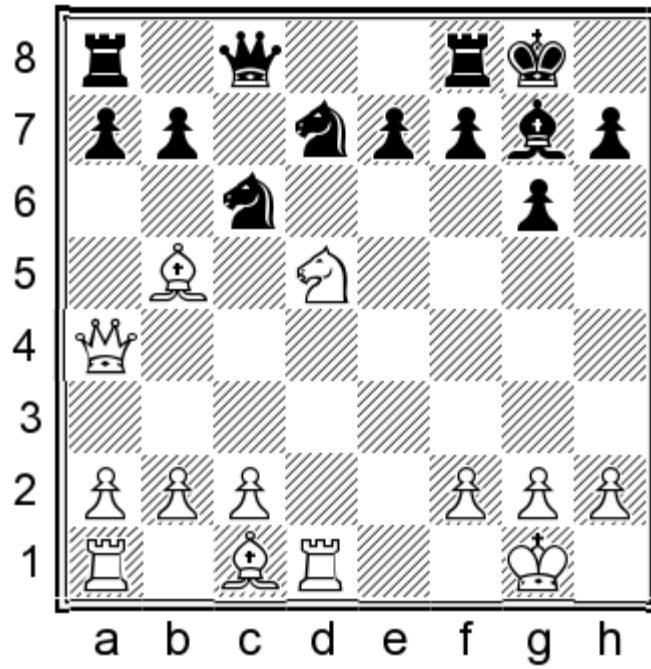
14... ♖xc3! 15. bxc3 ♗c7 16. ♖e3 ♘b6

(16... ♘c5 17. ♗h4 ♘e6=)

17. ♗a5 ♗xc3 18. ♖xb6 axb6 19. ♗xb6 ♗xc2=

**11... 0-0 12. ♖xc6**

12. ♜d1 ♗c8 13. ♘d5



13...♖b6! 14.♗xb6 axb6 15.♙c4 ♜d8 16.♞xd8+ ♚xd8 17.c3 ♘a7 18.♙e3 ♞c8 19.♙b3 ♗xb5 20.♙xb5 ♞c6= Black's pawns are doubled but White cannot make use of his queenside majority without allowing Black to undouble them.

**12...♗b6**

12...bxc6!? This will transpose to 11.♙xc6.

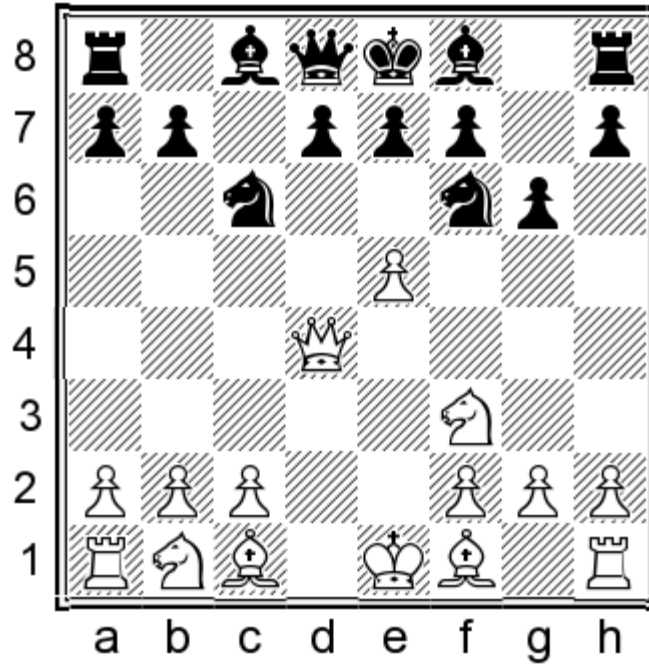
**13.♙h4 bxc6 14.♙h6 e6=**

1/2–1/2 (44) Gorovets,A (2551)-Panjwani,R (2393) New York 2016.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♚xd4 ♘f6 5.e5

If White is going to seek an advantage in this line, this is his best hope.

5...♘c6



6.♚a4

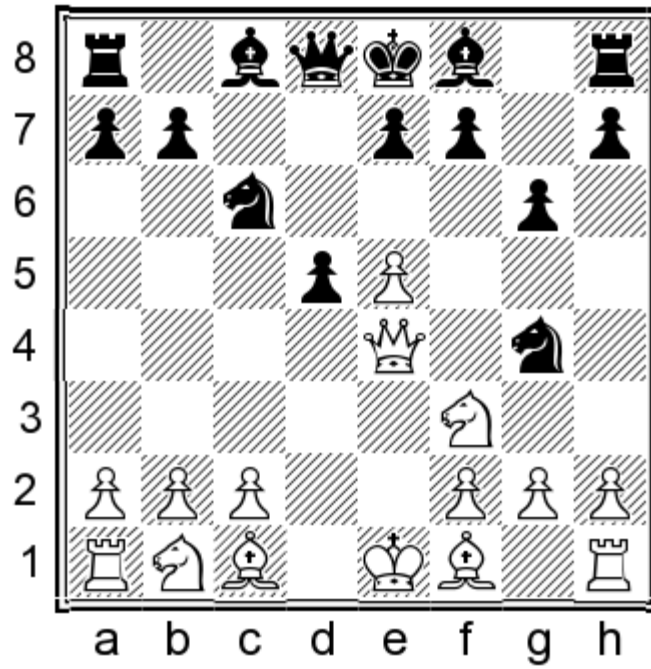
6.♚c3 ♘e4!

(6...♘d5!?)

7.♚e3 d5 8.exd6 ♘xd6;

6.♚h4? ♘xe5! 7.♘xe5 ♚a5+ 8.♘c3 ♚xe5+;

6.♚e3? ♘g4 7.♚e4 d5!



(7...♖gxe5 8.♗xe5 ♜a5+ 9.♗c3 ♜xe5 10.♞xe5 ♗xe5 11.♗b5 ♔d8 12.♙e3=)

8.exd6 ♙f5 9.♞e2 ♞xd6 10.h3 ♗ge5 11.♗xe5 ♗xe5=

**6...♗d5 7.♞e4**

7.♞b3 ♗c7!

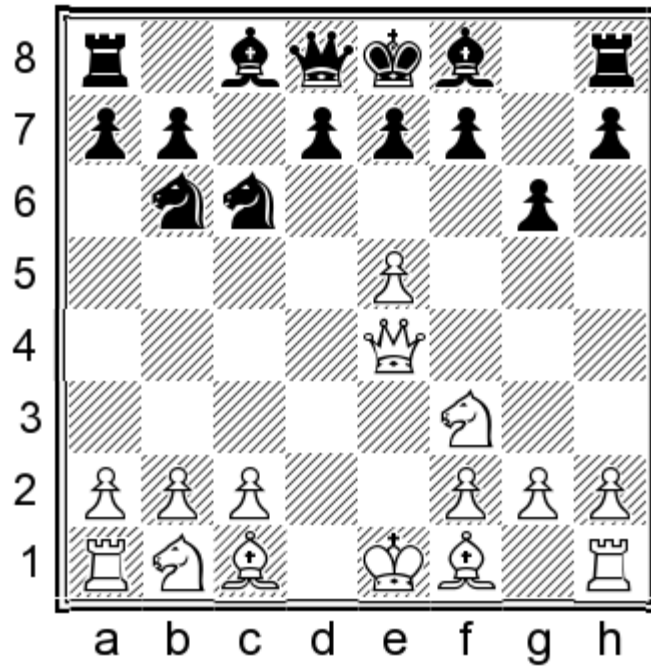
(7...♗b6 8.a4 a5?? 9.♙e3+-)

8.♗c3

(8.♙c4 ♗e6=)

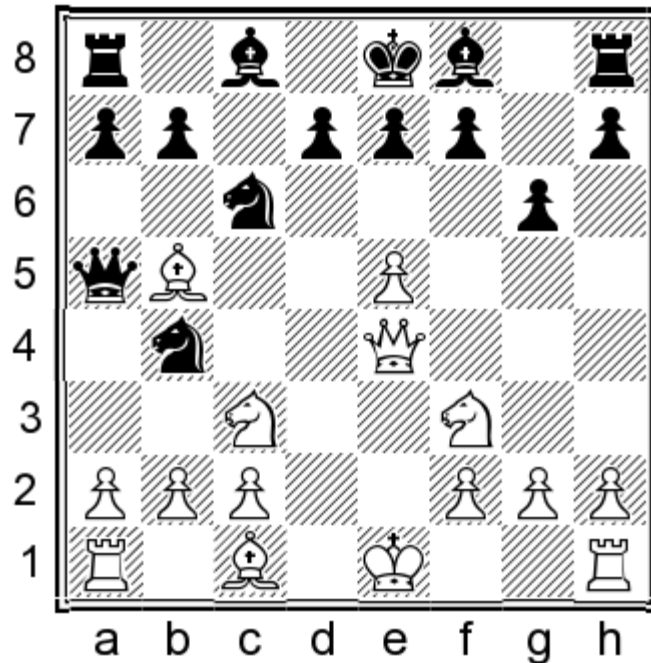
8...d5 9.exd6 ♞xd6 10.♙c4 ♙e6 11.♙xe6 ♞xe6+ 12.♙e3 ♞xb3 13.axb3 ♙g7=

**7...♗b6!**



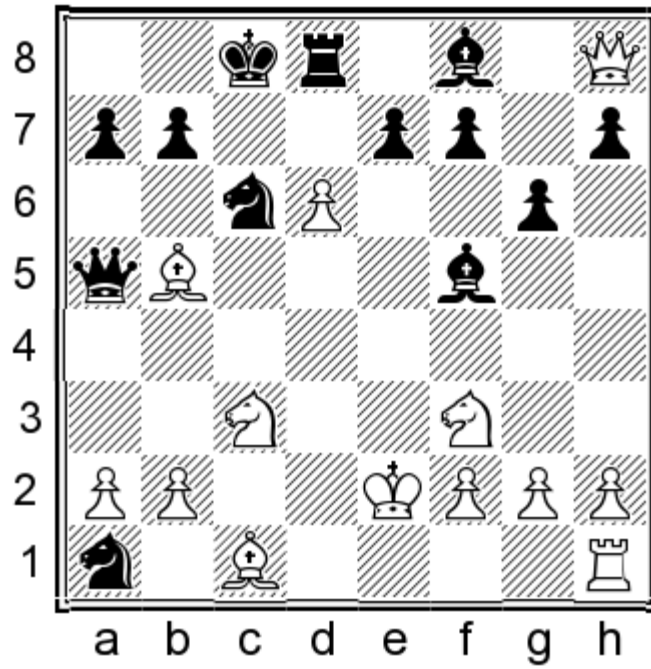
Black's knight is less vulnerable on b6 than it is on b4 in the 7...Ndb4 line, and it is also better placed on b6 than c7 because it deters White's Qf1-c4. What I like most about this line for Black is that White has to be extremely accurate to not immediately be worse — there are a lot of ways to go astray.

7...Ndb4?! This is the most popular move, even though Sutovsky basically refuted the system ten years ago. 8.Qb5 W a5 9.Nc3



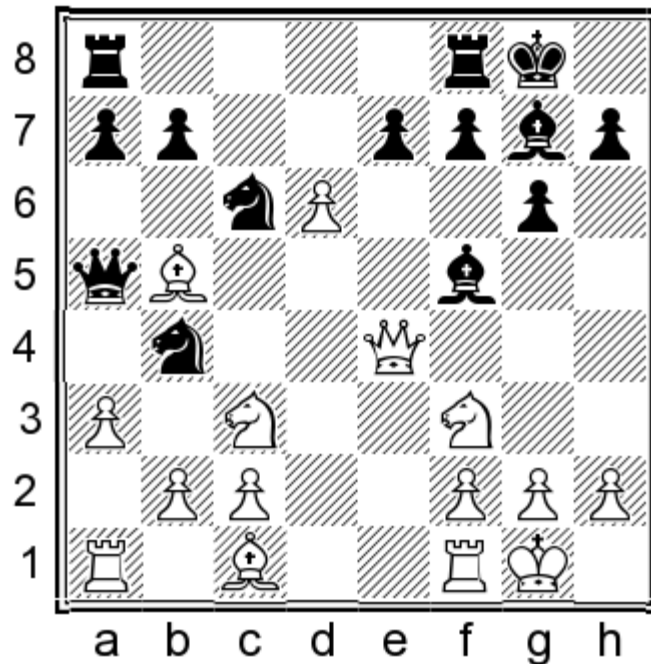
9...Kg7

(9...d5 10.exd6 Qf5 11.W e5 Nxc2+ 12.Qe2 0-0-0 13.Wxh8 Nxa1



This used to be thought of as better for Black (for example Donaldson and Silman say “Black has a distinct advantage”) but the optics are misleading: White has a clear advantage. 14. ♖xh7 ♜c2 15. ♜d1±)

10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 d5 12.exd6 ♜f5



13.axb4! ♜xa1 14. ♜h4 exd6 15. ♜d5 f6 16. ♜xc6 bxc6 17. ♜e7+ ♜h8 18. ♜xf5 gxf5 19. ♜d4± 1–0 Sutovsky,E (2637)-Guseinov,G (2586) Dresden GER 2007.

8. ♜c3

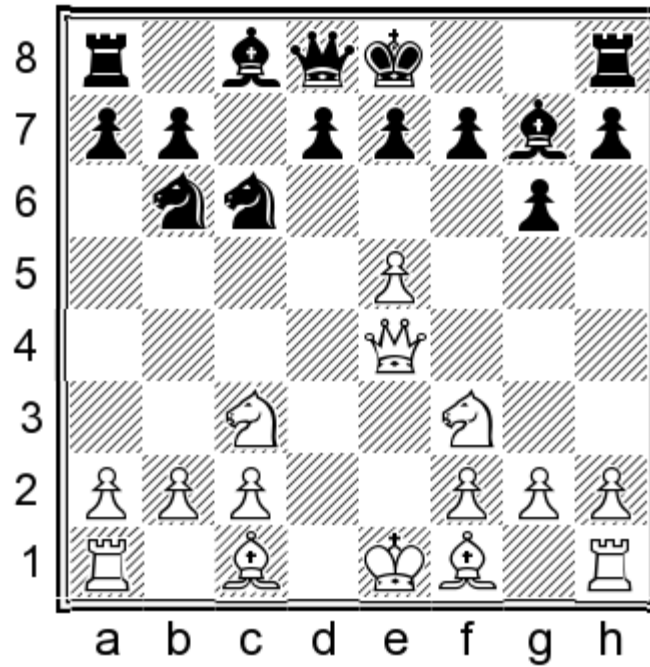
8. ♜b5?! a6 9. ♜xc6 dxc6 10.0-0 ♜g7 11. ♜h4 h6 12. ♜c3 ♜f5±;

8. ♜f4?! d5 9.exd6 ♜f5 10. ♜e2 ♜d5! 11. ♜g3

(11. ♜e5 f6 12. ♜g3 e5±)

11...♖db4 12.♗a3 ♘g7

8...♘g7



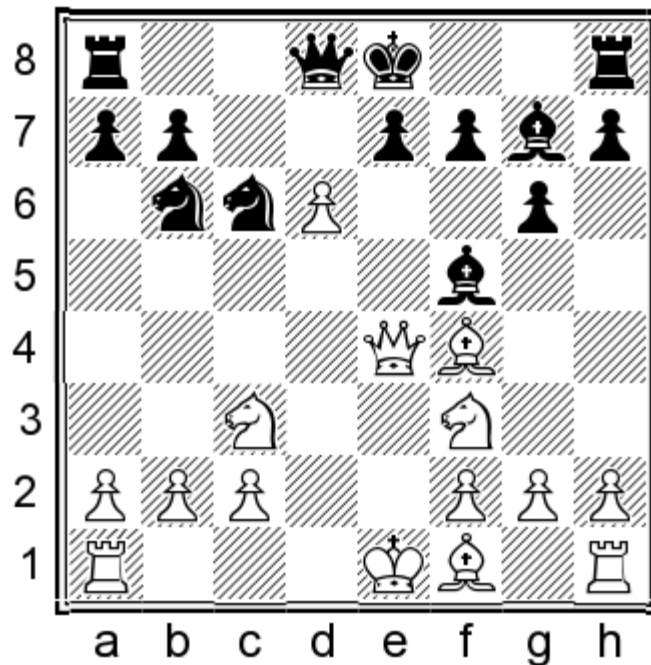
9.♘f4

9.♘g5?! d5! 10.exd6 ♘xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♖xd6 12.♘b5 f6 13.♘f4 e5

9...d5!

As we have seen, this is the central motive for Black in this variation. 9...0-0 10.0-0 d5 11.exd6 ♘f5? (♗11...♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♘f5) 12.dxe7±

10.exd6 ♘f5



White might be well advised to already seek to liquidate the position into an equal endgame after 11.dxe7. Otherwise, with Black's pieces so active and White's king still in the center, things could become dire pretty fast on the slightest misstep by White.

### 11. ♖e3

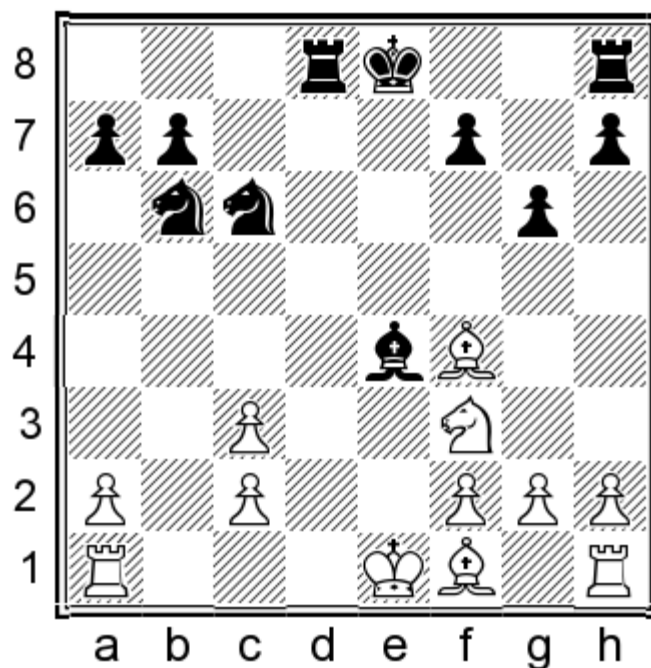
11.dxe7 (This used to be the most popular move but in the last few years it has been eclipsed by 11. ♖e3 and 11. ♖e2.)

11... ♗xc3+!

(11... ♖d7 12. ♖e2 (12. ♖e3 ♗b4 13. ♖c1 ♗xc2+ 14. ♖xc2 ♗xc2 15. ♗b5 ♗xc3+ 16. ♖xc3 ♖xb5 17. ♖xh8+ ♗xe7=)

12... ♗b4 13. ♖c1 ♖xe7 14. ♗d6! ♖xe2+ 15. ♗xe2 ♗xc2+ 16. ♗f1 ♗d4 17. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18. g4 ♗d7 19. ♗g2±)

12.bxc3 ♗xe4 13.exd8=♖+ ♖xd8



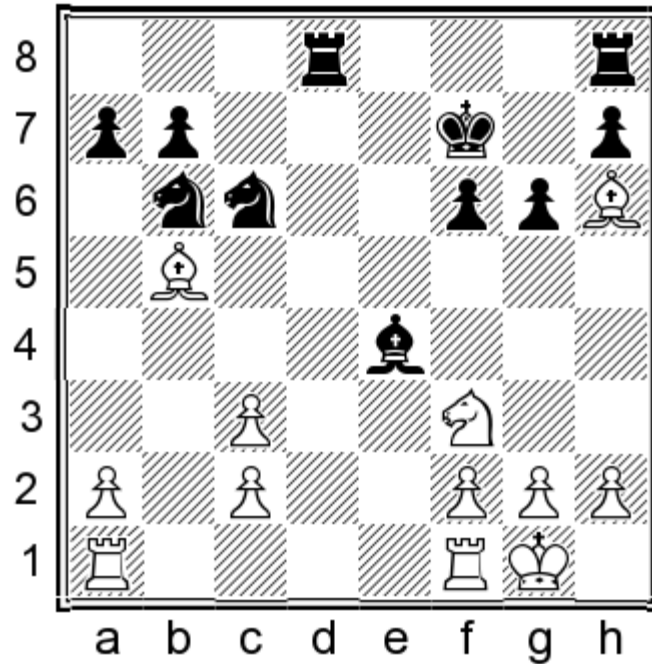
14. ♖h6!

(14. ♖g5 ♜d5 15. ♖h6 ♜h5 16. ♖g7 ♜g8 17. ♖d4 ♖xf3 18. gxf3 ♘xd4 19. cxd4 ♔e7= White's extra pawn is fleeting.)

14... ♔e7! In order to play ...f7-f6 without blundering a pawn to ♖h6-g7. Black has time to do this because White is so under-developed.

(14... f6 15. ♖g7±)

15. ♖b5 f6 16. 0-0 ♔f7

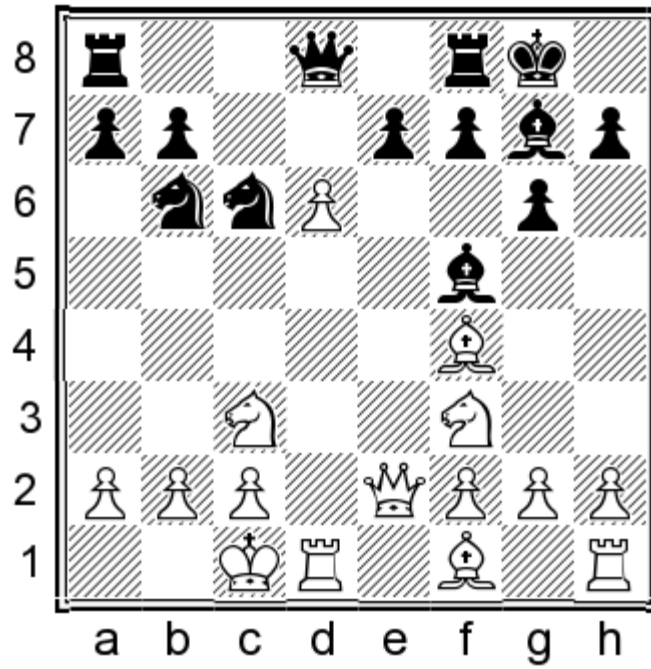


17. ♖e3

(17. ♜fe1 ♖xc2 (17... ♖xf3!? 18. gxf3 g5 19. f4 ♜hg8 20. fxg5 fxg5 21. f4 ♜d6 22. ♖xg5 h6 23. h4 hxg5 24. fxg5=) 18. a4 ♖d3=)

17... ♘d5 18. ♖c4 ♖xf3 19. gxf3 ♘e5 20. ♖b3 ♔g7 21. ♖xd5 ♜xd5 22. ♜fd1 ♜hd8 23. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 24. f4 ♘c6=;

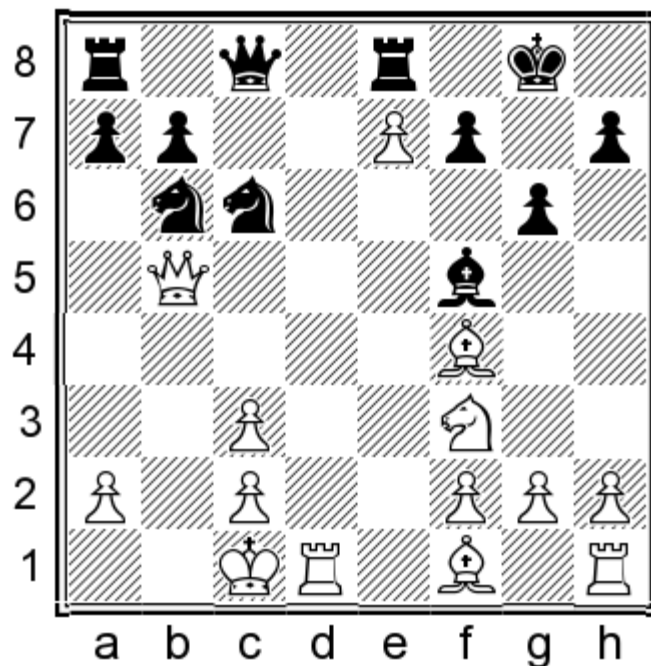
11. ♜e2 0-0 12. 0-0



There are a couple of novelties that Black can try here, but I think the best practical chances come from what has already been played — 12...exd6, because White has to find several ‘only moves’ in order to survive. 12...exd6 Here, innocent moves like 13.h4 (played by GM Pavlidis in 2015) or 13.♙xd6 leave White simply worse.

a) 12...♙xc3!?N 13.bxc3 (13.dxe7 ♖xe7 14.♗xe7 ♙xb2+ 15.♔xb2 ♜xe7 16.♜d4 ♙d7 17.♙d6 ♜fe8) 13...e6! 14.♗b5! ♜d5 15.♞xd5! exd5 16.♗xd5 ♙e6 17.♗c5 (17.♗g5 f6 18.♗c5 ♗b6 19.♗xb6 axb6) 17...♗b6 18.♗xb6 axb6 19.♔d2 ♞a4 20.♙g3 ♙xa2 21.♙b5 (21.♙d3 ♞d8) 21...♞a5 22.c4 ♜a7 23.♞e1 ♜xb5 24.cxb5 ♞xb5 25.♞e7 ♙e6 26.♜d4 ♞d5 27.c3 ♙c8;

b) 12...♞e8N 13.dxe7 (13.♗b5 exd6 14.♞xd6 ♗c7! 15.♙g3 ♗e7) 13...♗c8 14.♗b5 ♙xc3 15.bxc3



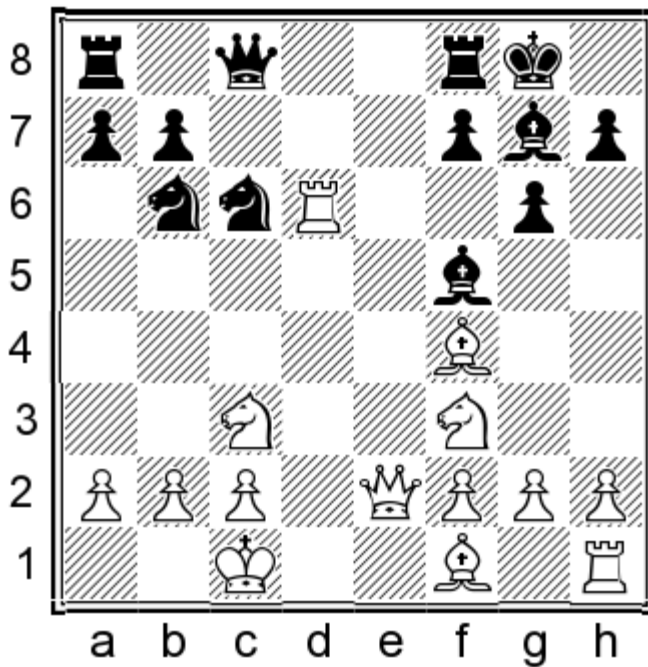
15...♗e6! 16.♞e1 ♗xa2 17.♗b3 ♗a1+ 18.♔d2 ♗a5 19.♜g5 ♗d5+ 20.♗xd5 ♜xd5 21.♙d6 ♜cxe7 22.♙xe7 ♞xe7 23.♞xe7 ♜xe7=;

13.♞xd6

a) 13.h4? ♞e8?! (♠13...♙xc3! 14.bxc3 ♜f6 15.♞e3 ♞fe8 16.♞xd6 ♞xe3 17.♞xf6 ♞xc3♠) 14.♞d2 d5 15.♙d3? d4?  
(♠15...♜b4! 16.♙xf5 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♜xa2+ 18.♜b1 ♜c4+♠) 16.♜b5 ♞d5 17.b3?? (17.♜b1♠) 17...♙xd3 18.♜c7 ♞c5  
19.♜xe8 ♞xe8 20.♞xd3 ♜b4 0-1 (20) Pavlidis, A (2522)-Zvjaginsev, V (2660) Berlin GER 2015;

b) 13.♙xd6? ♙xc3! 14.bxc3 (14.♙xf8 ♞xf8 15.bxc3 ♞a3+♠) 14...♞e8 15.♞b5 ♙e4 16.♙g3 ♞f6♠;

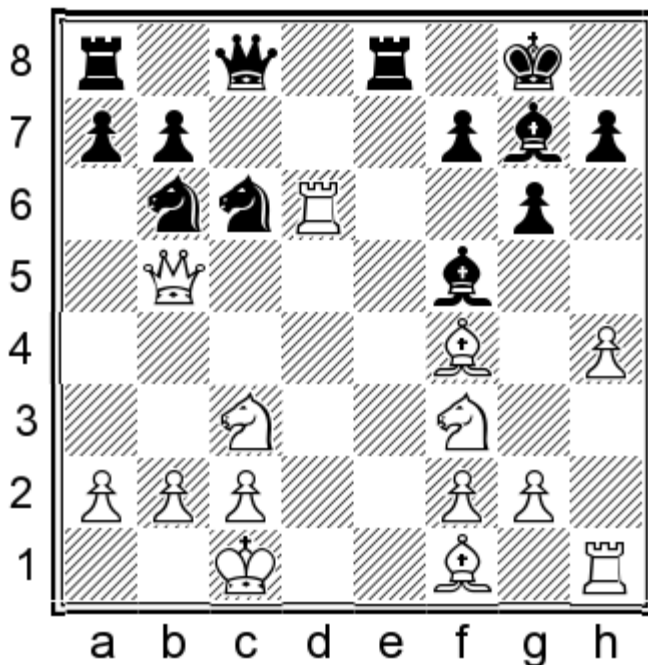
13...♞c8



White only has one move here — he needs to prevent ...♜c6-b4 (a5). 14.♞b5♠ 14...♞e8

(14...♙g4 15.♙d3 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♜d4 17.♞b4 ♜e6?! 18.♙g3 ♞e8 19.♞d1 ♞d8 20.♜e4± Esserman,M (2295)-  
Perelshteyn,E (2555) Philadelphia USA 2008).

15.h4



( $\triangleleft 15.\text{♕d3} \text{♕xc3} 16.\text{bxc3} \text{♕xd3} 17.\text{♖xd3} \text{♗e6} 18.\text{♖b1} \text{♗c4}\right)$

15... $\text{♕xc3!}$

(15... $\text{h5?!}$  16. $\text{a4??}$  ( $\triangleleft 16.\text{♕d3}\pm$ ) 16... $\text{♕xc3} 17.\text{bxc3} \text{♖e4}\rightarrow 1/2$  (30)  $-1/2$  (30) Saric,I (2666)-Hou Yifan (2673) Wijk aan Zee NED 2015)

16. $\text{bxc3} \text{♖e4} 17.\text{♕e3} \text{♗c7} 18.\text{♖d2} \text{♗e7} 19.\text{♕c5} \text{♗f6} 20.\text{♕d4} \text{♗xd4} 21.\text{♖xd4} \text{♖xd4} 22.\text{♗xd4} \text{♕d7}\mp$

**11...0-0 12.0-0**

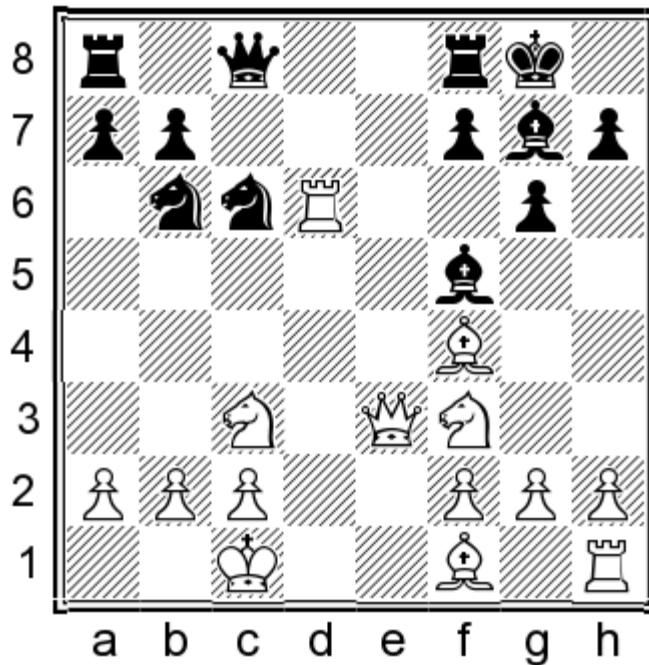
12. $\text{dxe7} \text{♗xe7} 13.\text{♕g5} \text{♗ed5!}\mp$

**12...exd6 13.♖xd6**

13. $\text{♕h6} \text{♖e8} 14.\text{♗d2} \text{♕h8} 15.\text{♗xd6} \text{♗xd6} 16.\text{♖xd6} \text{♗b4} 17.\text{♖d2} \text{♖ec8}\right);$

13. $\text{♕xd6} \text{♖e8} 14.\text{♕g3} \text{♗d7} (14...\text{♗f6!?) } 15.\text{♗d2} \text{♗a5} 16.\text{a3} \text{♖ac8} 17.\text{♕d3} \text{♕e6}\mp$

**13...♗c8**



**14.♕h6**

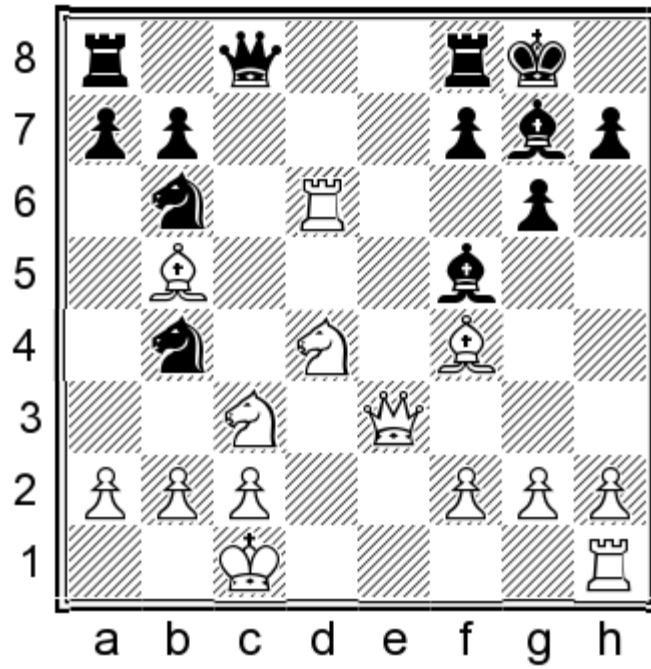
This option was not available to White in the analogous position after 11. $\text{♗e2}$ .

14. $\text{♗c5}$  This move is analogous to 14. $\text{♗b5}$  in the 11. $\text{♗e2}$  line: White needs to prevent ... $\text{♗c6-b4(a5)}$ .

14... $\text{♖e8!}\mp$  The threat is ... $\text{♕g7-f8}$ .

(14... $\text{♕xc2} 15.\text{♖xc2} \text{♗d4+} 16.\text{♗xd4} \text{♕xd4} 17.\text{♖xd4}\pm$ );

14. $\text{♕b5?} \text{♗b4} 15.\text{♗d4}$



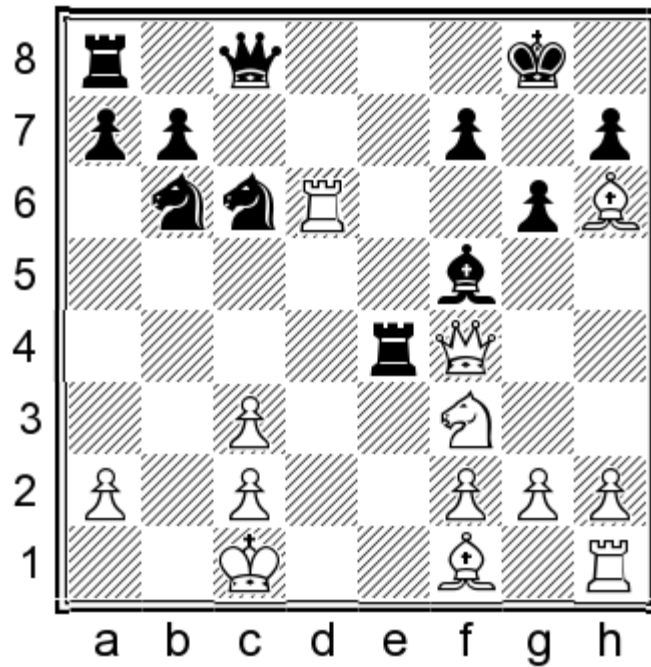
15... Nxa2+! 16. Qb1

(16. Nxa2 Qxd4+)

16... Nxc3+ 17. Qxc3 Qxc3 18. bxc3 Qe4 19. f3 Qd5

14... Re8 15. Qd2

15. Qf4!? Qxc3! 16. bxc3 Re4



17. Qg5

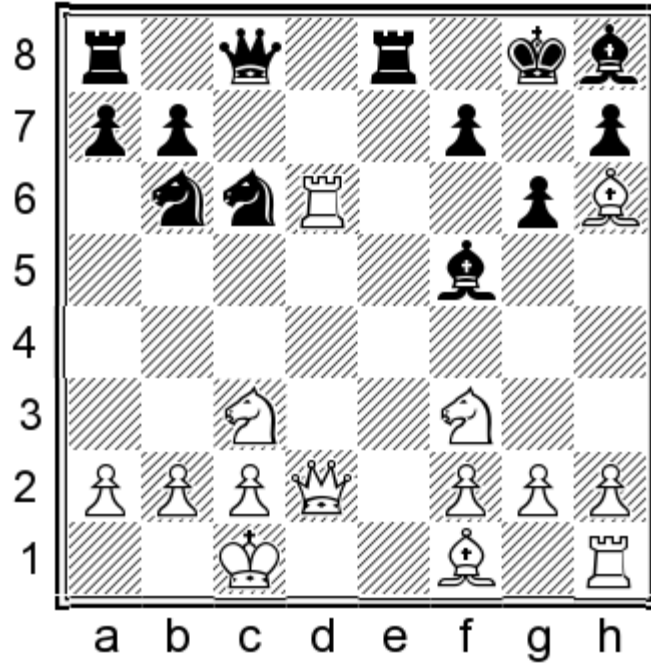
(17. Qd2 Qc7 18. Qg5 Qe6 19. Qf6 Nd7)

17... Re6 18. Qf4

(18.♞d1?? ♜b4!→)

18...♜d8!⇒ (18...♞e4=)

15...♞h8



I think most (even strong) players would falter and collapse here. Black threatens ...♜c6-b4(a5) and only one (highly computerized) idea prevents it.

16.♞e3!

16.♞b5 a6 17.♞xc6? bxc6 18.b3 ♜d5! 19.♜xd5 cxd5 20.♞xd5 ♞e4 21.♞d6?? ♞c5→;

16.♞f4?! ♜e7! 17.♞d3 ♞xc3 18.bxc3 ♞xc3⚡;

16.h4?! ♜b4⚡

16...♞b8!?

16...♜a5 This leads to a forced draw but it is unnecessary to allow the ensuing chaos. 17.♞d4□

(17.♞xb6 axb6 18.♜d4 ♜c6! 19.♜xf5 ♞xf5 20.♜b1 ♞c5⚡)

17...♜ac4 18.♞xc4 ♜xc4 19.♞h6 ♜xd6 20.♞xh8 ♜xh8 21.♜g5 ♜g8 22.♞d1!

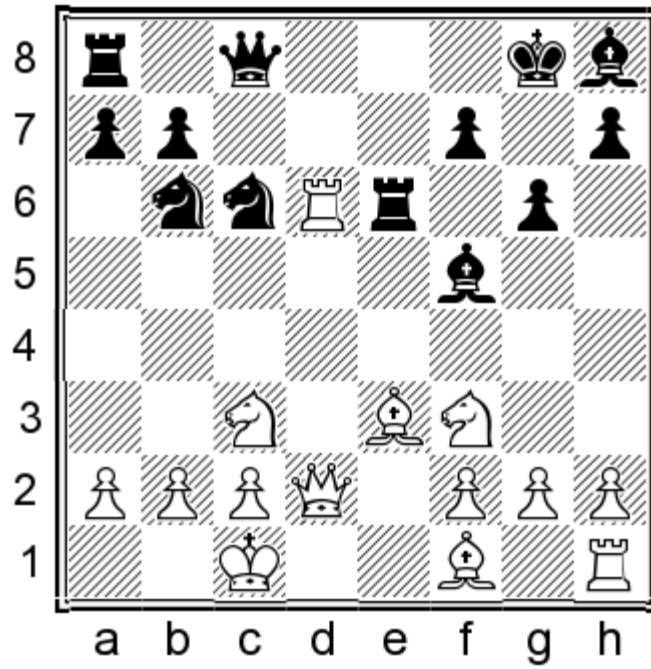
(22.♞xh7+ ♜f8 23.♞d1!)

22...♞c6

(22...♞e2 23.♞xh7+ ♜f8 24.♞xd6 ♞xc2+ 25.♜d1 ♞c4 26.♞h8+ ♜e7 27.♞e5+ ♜f8=)

23.♞xh7+ ♜f8 24.♞h6+ ♜g8 25.g4 ♞xg4 26.♞xd6 ♞e1+ 27.♜d1 ♞e8 28.♞h7+ ♜f8 29.♞h8+ ♜e7 30.♞f6+ ♜f8=;

16...♞e6!?



I had originally intended to recommend this as the main line; perhaps some readers will prefer this to my selection.  
 17. ♖g5

(17. ♖xb6 ♖xc3 18. bxc3 axb6 19. ♖c4 ♖xd6 20. ♗xd6 ♜a5 21. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 22. ♜g5+ ♜g8 23. ♗d5+ ♜h8 24. ♗e5+ ♜g8=; 17. ♖xe6 ♗xe6 18. ♜g5 ♖xc3 19. ♗xc3 ♗xa2=)

17... ♖xd6 18. ♗xd6 ♖e5 19. ♗c5 ♖g7 20. ♖c4 ♜xc4 21. ♗xc4 ♗e8=;

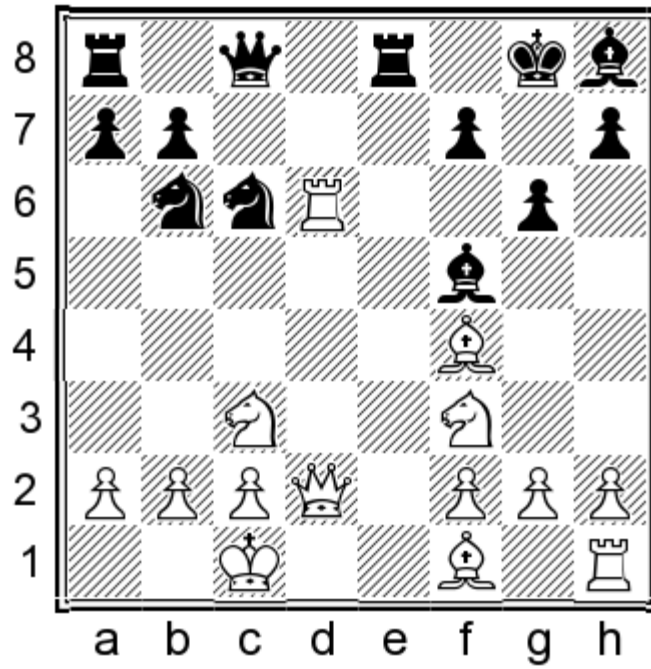
16... ♜b4?! (This doesn't work here because of a brilliant resource which was the point of 16. ♖e3!) 17. ♖d4! ♜xc2 18. ♖xh8 ♜xh8 19. ♖b5 ♜c4 20. ♗h6! ♜xd6 21. ♜g5 ♖e1+ 22. ♖xe1 ♗g8 23. ♖e7±

**17. ♖f4**

17. ♖b5 a6 18. ♖xc6? ♜c4!±;

17. h4?! ♜e5±

**17... ♗c8!**



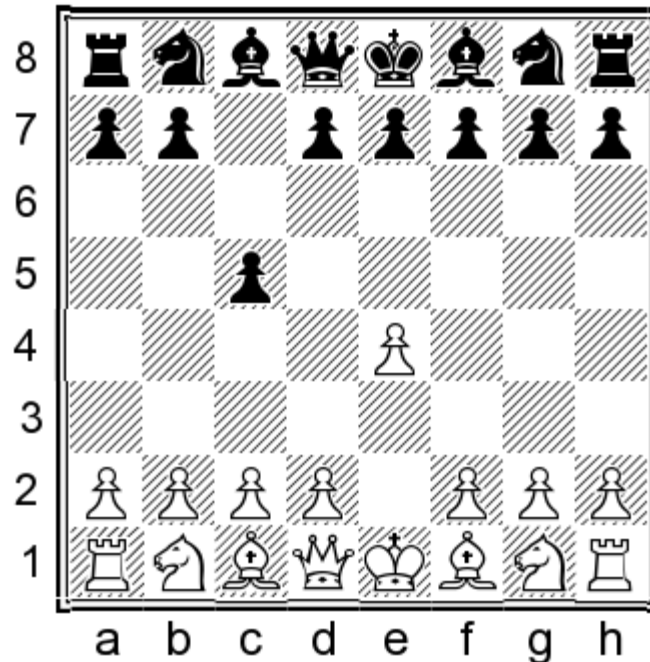
By diverting White's bishop from e3, Black reinstates his threat of ...♘c6-b4. White is worse if he doesn't accept the repetition.

18. ♕e3 ♜b8=

# CHAPTER 7

## ANTI-SICILIANS: ALAPIN AND MORRA

1.e4 c5



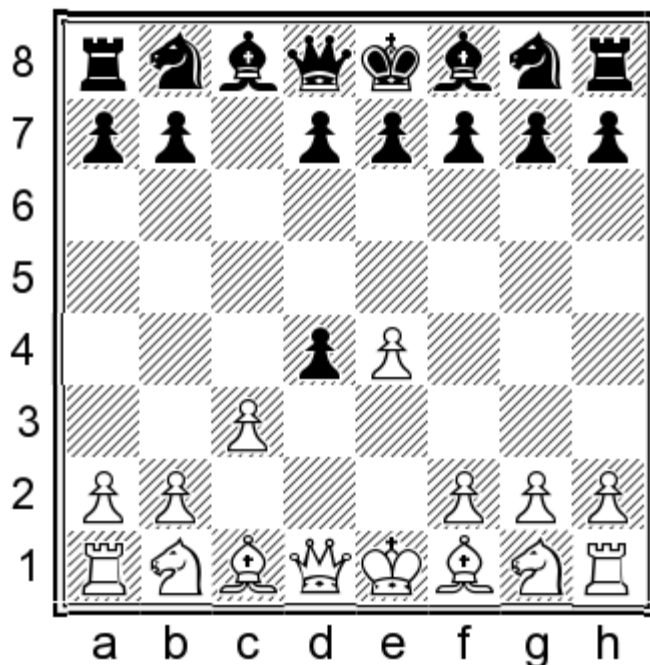
### Contents

1. 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3
2. 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.sidelines & 4.d4 g6 5.sidelines
3. 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♘f3 ♙g7 & 5...♘c6 6.sidelines
4. 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♘f3 ♙g7 6.♙e2
5. 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3 d5
6. 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3 ♘c6

### 1

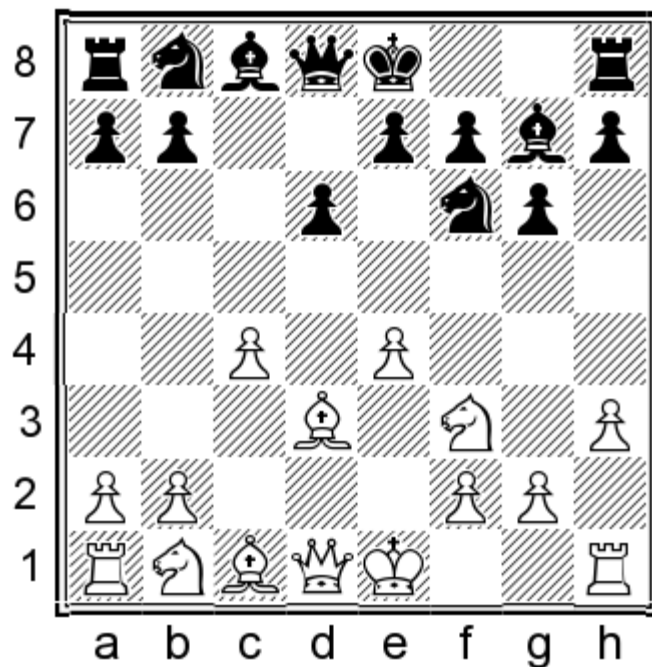
In these final chapters we turn to White's most popular anti-Sicilian options after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6: the Alapin, also known as the c3-Sicilian, and the Morra Gambit, also known as the Esserman Gambit. The Alapin can be played on move two (1.e4 c5 2.c3) or on move three (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3), so for convenience and consistency I recommend a line for Black which works against either of these. The Morra Gambit (1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 or 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.c3), a sister to the Alapin, has recently seen a revival, especially at the club level, thanks to the publication of IM Esserman's masterpiece "Mayhem in the Morra".

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3



Here we have the Morra Gambit, a system emblematic of the Romantic Era in chess — not chronologically, but in spirit: “The masters of that time found a sound and fruitful plan: disregarding pawns, achieve a rapid development of the pieces for a swift attack on the enemy king. “ (World Champion Emanuel Lasker). On Steinitzian grounds one might insist that the principled continuation for Black is to accept the gambit — “the best way to refute a gambit is to accept it”. However, there is a hidden premise in this assertion: the gambit must be refutable! It is not at all clear to me that the Morra Gambit is refutable; on the contrary, Esserman’s aforementioned book is a convincing defense of its soundness. Furthermore, as Hyper Accelerated Dragon players we offer White the option of a ‘delayed’ Morra Gambit 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.c3 after which our options are far more limited. As best I can tell, Black cannot safely accept the delayed Morra Gambit, so for the sake of consistency I recommend declining after 1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 as well. The usual way to decline the gambit is to transpose to the Alapin with ...♘g8-f6, but this is not in keeping with my recommended Alapin repertoire. Fortunately, the ...d4-d3 line is a reliable way of transposing into Maroczy-structures which we are familiar with and happy to play as Black. I cannot overstate how frustrating it is for Morra Gambit players to be denied their Romantic fantasies and instead be lulled into a slow, maneuvering Maroczy structure.

3...d3 4.♗xd3 g6 5.c4 ♗g7 6.♘f3 d6 7.h3 ♘f6



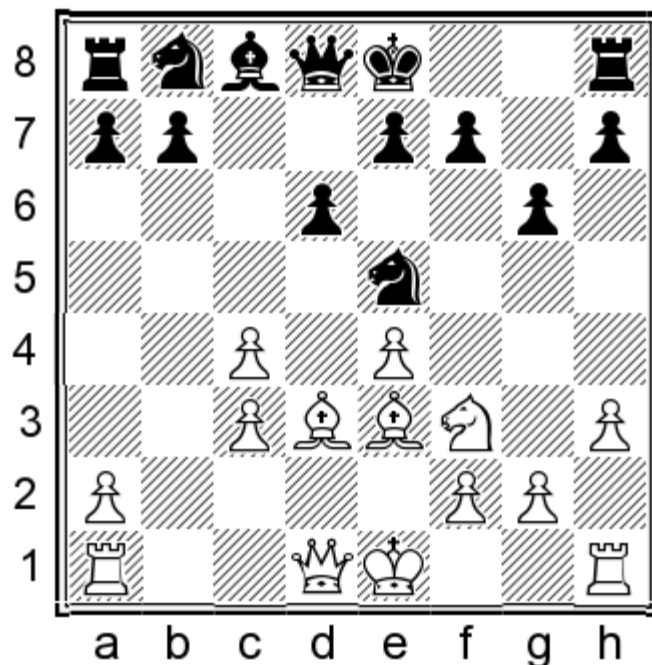
In what follows, Black is free to proceed with traditional Maroczy development; however, I am instead recommending a new idea I came up with while preparing this book based on a rapid ...♘f6-d7 and ...♙g7xc3.

### 8.0-0

8.♘c3 ♘fd7! If Black wants to play my idea, then White must not be permitted to recapture on c3 with the queen, so Black must play ...♙xc3 before White achieves ♙c1-e3 and ♖d1-d2.

(8...0-0 9.♙e3 ♘fd7 10.♖d2 This is of course playable for Black but not in keeping with our theme.)

9.♙e3 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♘e5!

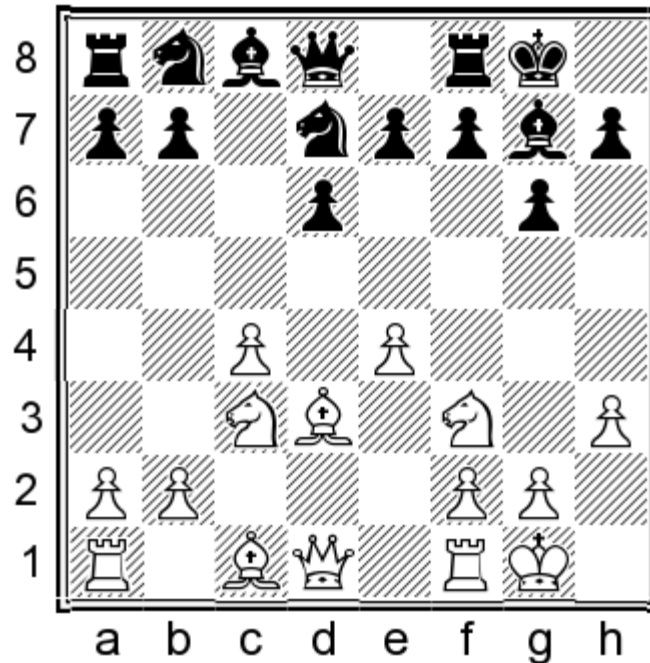


This idea will be studied in greater detail in the main line. 11.♘e5

(11.♙h6 ♘xd3+ 12.♖xd3 ♘d7 13.0-0 f6=)

11...dxe5 12.♘h6 ♔c7 13.♚e2 ♙e6 14.0-0 ♘d7=

8...0-0 9.♘c3 ♘fd7!N



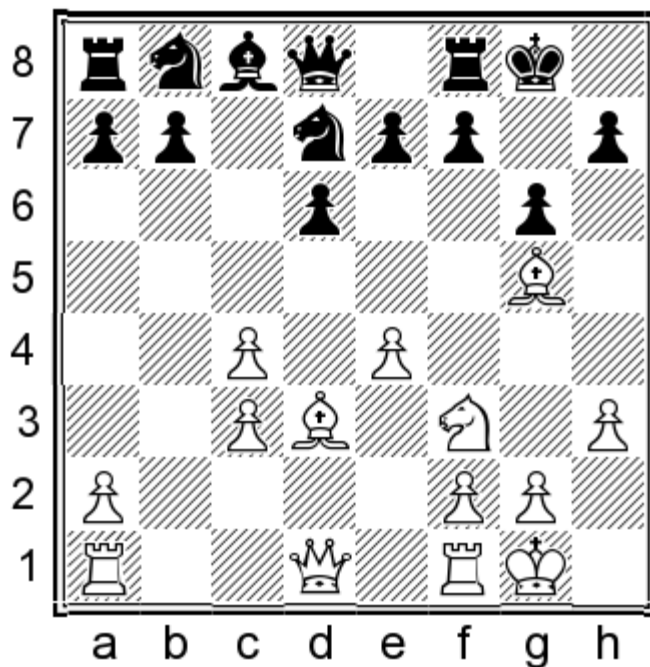
In a similar position, Esserman cautions that White should not allow “the queen’s knight to be lopped off by the swooping ...♘xc3 wrecking the pristine Maroczy structure...Black’s dark squared deficiencies are overshadowed by White’s mangled formation.” Here, however, White does not have much of a choice: Black is ready to capture on c3 and White’s only ways to prevent it are rather contrived.

9...♘c6 Black’s most popular move, but in my judgment it is insufficiently sensitive to the time factor in the position. White does, after all, have more space, so he will go on to have a more comfortable position (‘achieve harmony’) if Black is unable to pose any disruptive threats. 10.♘e3 ♘d7 11.♚d2 ♘c5 12.♘h6!± Black should be able to defend, but White is playing for two results.

10.♘e3

I think if White wants to attempt an opening advantage then this is his best hope. Allow the doubled pawns, and hope there is enough dynamic compensation. In researching this structure I have come to regard White’s attacking potential as quite formidable, even though computers tend to think that Black is equal ‘no matter what’. I recommend immediately aiming for simplifications with 11...♘e5! to neutralize White’s initiative.

10.♘g5 ♘xc3! 11.bxc3



11...♖e5 Computers take some time to appreciate this idea, but from a human perspective it is clear that exchanging pieces benefits Black. This is because White's compensation for his static pawn weaknesses must be predicated on dynamic piece play.

(11...♖c5 This is perfectly playable for Black as well, but as a matter of convenience I have recommended 11...♖e5 here instead since I recommend the same idea in the main line. 12.♙c2 ♙e6 13.e5 (13.♚e2 f6 14.♙h6 ♖e8=) 13...♙xc4 14.exd6 ♚xd6 15.♚xd6 exd6 16.♗fd1 d5=)

12.♖xe5

(12.c5 ♖xd3 13.♚xd3 dxc5 14.♚xd8 ♖xd8 15.♙xe7 ♖e8 16.♙xc5 ♖xe4=)

12...dxe5 13.c5

(13.f4 exf4 14.♖b1 ♖a6!)=)

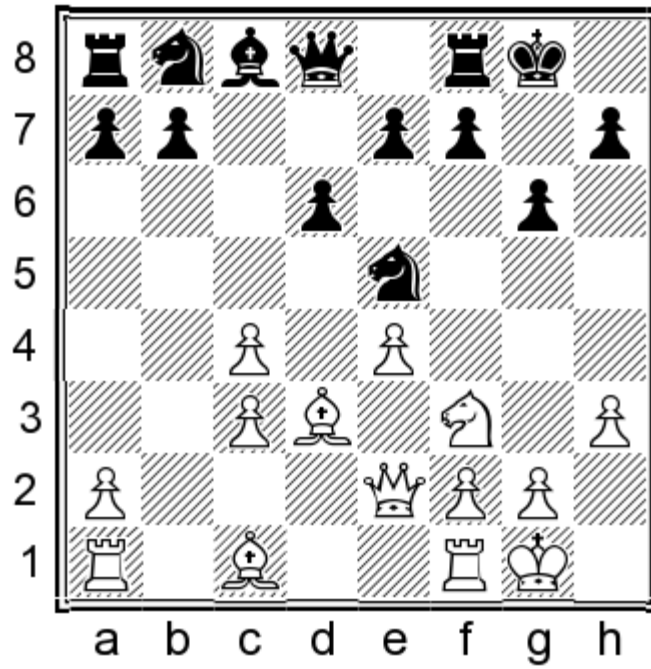
13...♙e6 14.♖b1 ♖d7 15.♖xb7 ♚c8! =;

10.♖d5 This is a pretty extreme way for White to avoid ...♙g7xc3; with this concession Black can equalize with 'normal' Maroczy moves. 10...♖c5 11.♖b1 e6 12.♖e3

(12.♖c3 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 e5=)

12...a5 13.♖g4 ♖c6 14.♙c2 f5♣;

10.♚e2 ♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♖e5

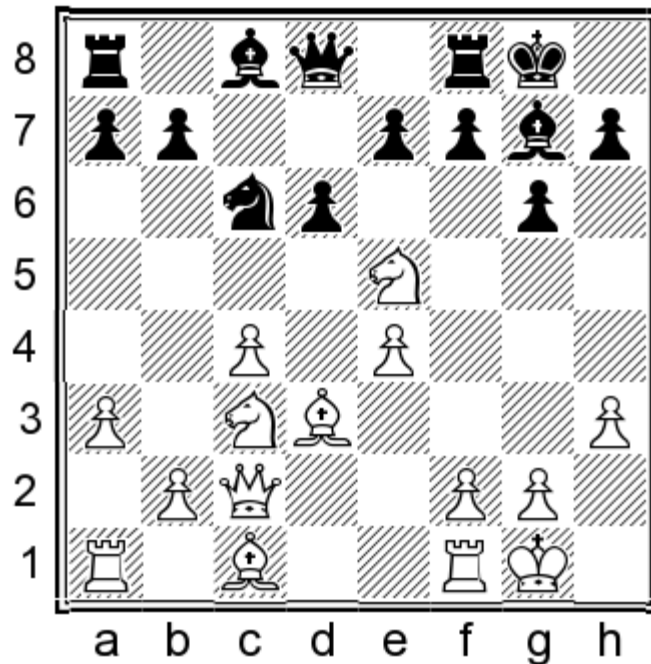


Our go-to idea: the resulting structure is always fine for Black as long as White can't immediately stir up some trouble.

(11...♖c5 12.♙c2 e5!? This interesting blocking idea is playable as well. 13.♜d1 ♘c6 14.♘d2 ♙e6 15.♗f1 ♗a5 16.♘e3 ♞c8 17.♘d5 ♜h4 18.♞b1 b6=)

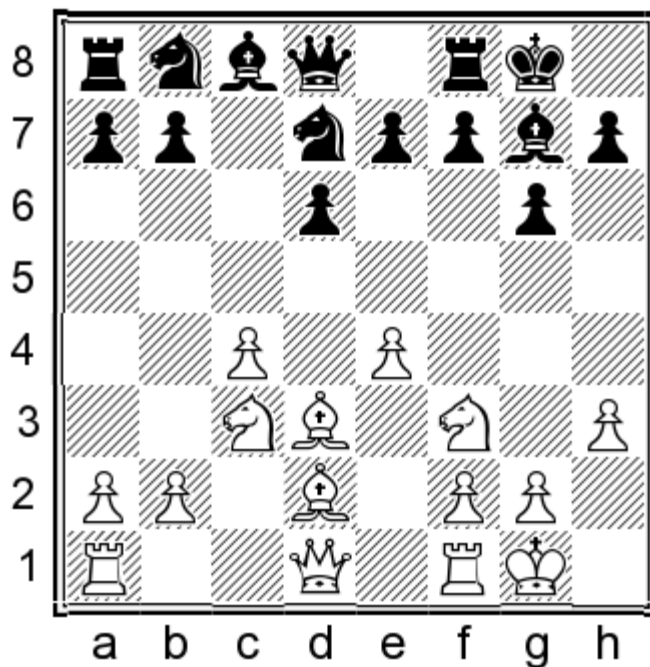
12.♘xe5 dxe5=;

10.♞c2 White deters Black's ...♙g7xc3 but in so doing misplaces his queen. 10...♗c6 Threatening ...♗c6-b4. 11.a3 ♗de5 12.♗xe5



12...♗d4! 13.♞d1 dxe5=;

10.♙d2



This is a concession — the bishop would prefer a more active square. Now we can equalize with ‘normal’ Maroczy development. 10...♖c5 11.♙c2 ♘c6 12.a3 There are of course many ways to handle this position, I just give one relatively straightforward and logical path for Black — targeting the d4-square.

(12.♞b1 ♗b4 13.a3 ♘xc2 14.♚xc2 b6 15.b4 ♗e6=)

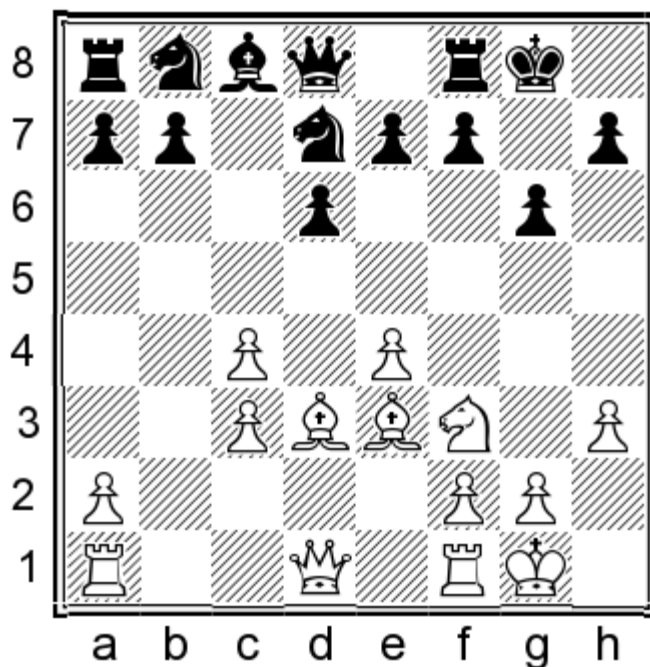
12...b6 13.b4 ♗e6 14.♙d3 ♙b7 15.♞c1 ♗e5! 16.♗xe5 dxe5 17.♙e3 ♗d4=;

10.♚d2 ♗e5!

(10...♗c6 11.b3 ♗c5 12.♙b2 f5 13.exf5 ♗xd3 14.♚xd3 ♙xf5 15.♚e3±)

11.♗xe5 dxe5 12.b3 ♗c6 13.♙b2 b6 14.♞ad1 ♙b7=

**10...♙xc3 11.bxc3**

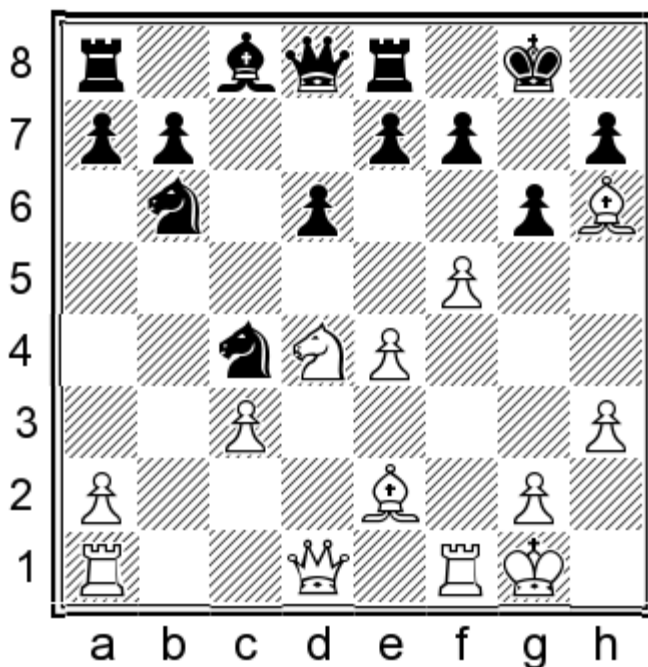


## 11...♞e5!

I recall an interview with Aronian where he said (paraphrasing) that the greatest joy in chess preparation nowadays comes from finding ideas the computer is unable to immediately appreciate. That was certainly the case with this move. The computer's suggestions all enabled White to develop a dangerous kingside attack, but I was looking for something requiring less accuracy from Black. The engine initially thinks that White is += after the exchange on e5, but the human realizes that either Black is getting into immediate trouble or he'll successfully develop his pieces and be fine. If it is the latter, which it fortunately is, then '+=' is not a very meaningful assessment.

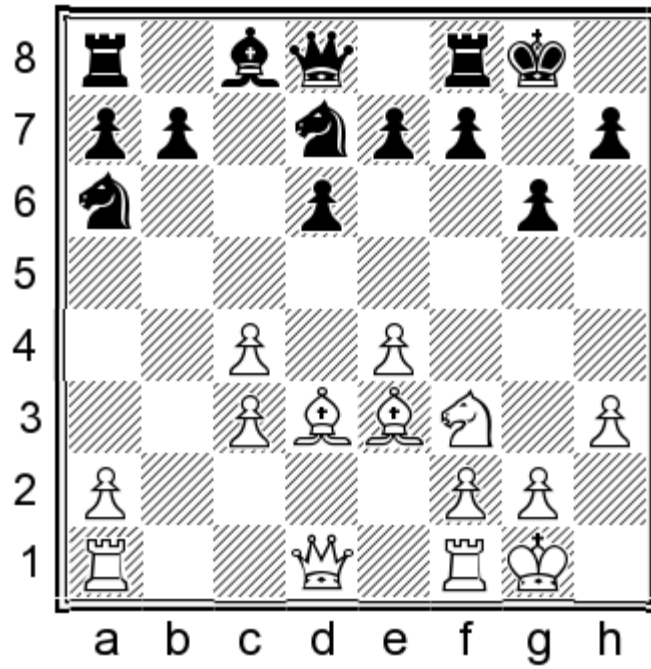
11...♞c5?! 12.♟xc5 dxc5 13.e5±;

11...♞c6 This is the computer's first choice but I think the engine underestimates White's attacking potential. 12.♞d4 ♞ce5 13.♟e2 ♞b6 14.♟h6 ♞e8 15.f4 ♞exc4 16.f5→

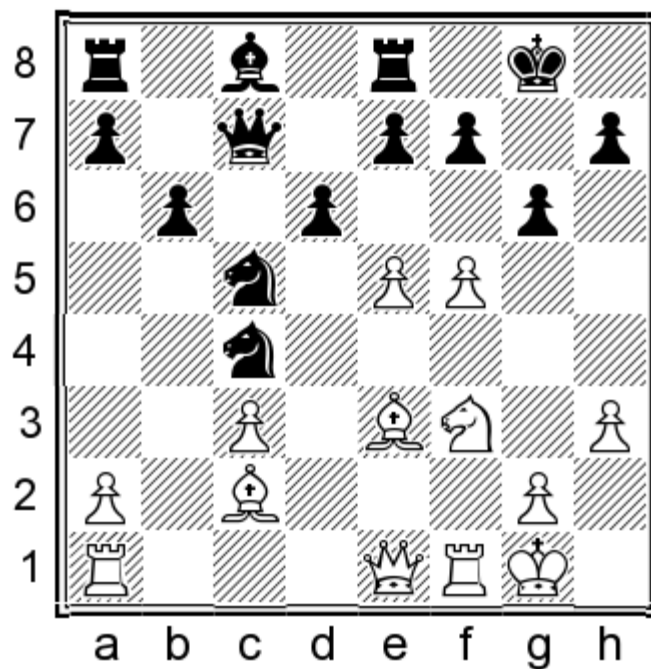


White's attack is not devastating, but it's just not very comfortable to be Black here. The position is reminiscent of lines in the Scaemish or Rubinstein Nimzo Indian where Black doubles White's c-pawns and expends several tempos to win the c4-pawn at the cost of allowing White an f4-f5 attack.;

11...♞a6

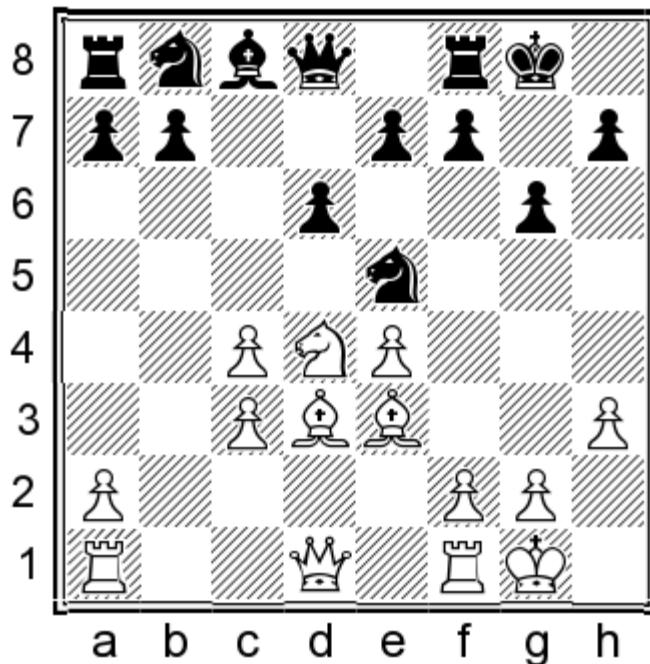


This move fits with Nimzowitsch's philosophy of blockade: "First restrain, next blockade, lastly destroy". Unfortunately, the ideal blockade is not always the most relevant aspect of a position, and I believe Black's first priority should be to avoid a kingside onslaught by liquidating with 11...♖e5! 12.♙c2 ♖ac5 (12...f6 13.♘d4 ♖ac5 14.♙h6 ♖e8 15.f4 ♖h8 16.h4 ♖g8 17.♖e1 ♖b6 18.e5 dxe5 19.fxe5 ♖xc4 20.exf6 exf6 21.h5±) 13.♘d4 ♖e8 (13...b6 14.♘c6 ♗e8 15.♙h6±) 14.f4 b6 15.f5 ♖e5 (15...♙b7 16.♗f3 (16.fxg6 fxg6) 16...♖e5 17.♗f4 ♖h8 18.fxg6 fxg6 19.♗h4 ♖g8 20.♖ad1±) 16.♘f3 ♗c7 17.♗e1 ♖xc4 18.e5∞



A complete mess. We should avoid this, as the overzealous Morra Gambit player will be rewarded for their impatience in positions like this which require direct, un-nuanced play.

12. ♖d4!



I believe this is White's best attempt to develop an initiative.

12. ♖h6 ♜e8 13. ♖d4 f6! 14. ♗e2

(14. f4?? ♖f7+)

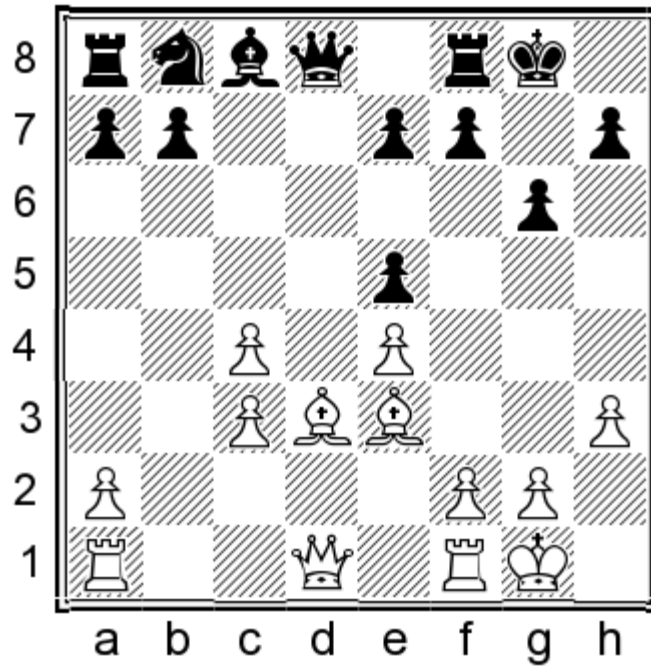
14... ♖bc6 15. ♗e3 ♖a5±;

12. ♗c2 ♗e6 The simplest way for Black.

(12... ♖xf3+ 13. ♗xf3 ♖c6 14. c5 dxc5 15. ♗xc5 ♗a5 16. ♗d4∞; 12... ♖xc4? 13. ♗h6 ♜e8 14. ♗b3 ♖e5 15. ♖g5 e6 16. f4 ♖ec6 17. f5+)

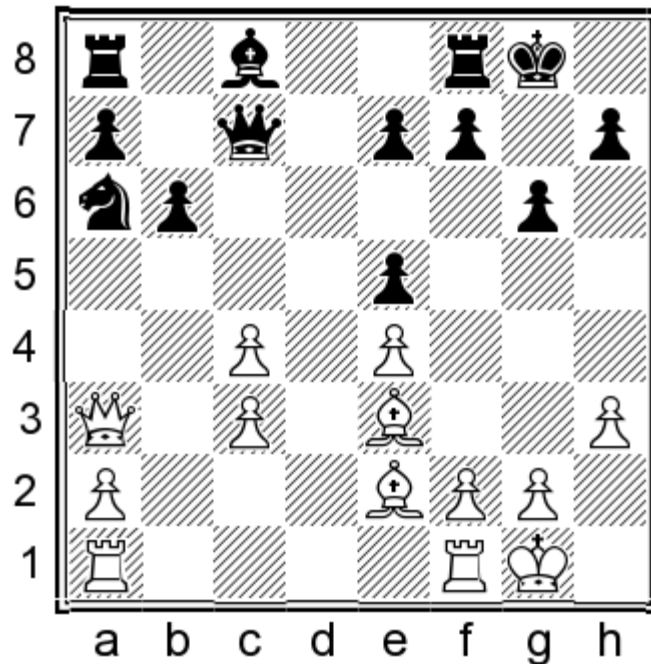
13. ♗h6 ♖xf3+ 14. ♗xf3 ♜e8 15. e5 ♖c6 16. exd6 ♗xd6 17. ♗fb1 ♖a5=;

12. ♖xe5 dxe5



White had better act quick, otherwise Black will be better if he achieves ...♖d8-c7, ...♘b8-d7, ...b7-b6, and ...♙c8-a6.  
 13.♞b1

a) 13.♙e2 ♜c7 14.♞a4 ♘a6 15.♞a3 b6



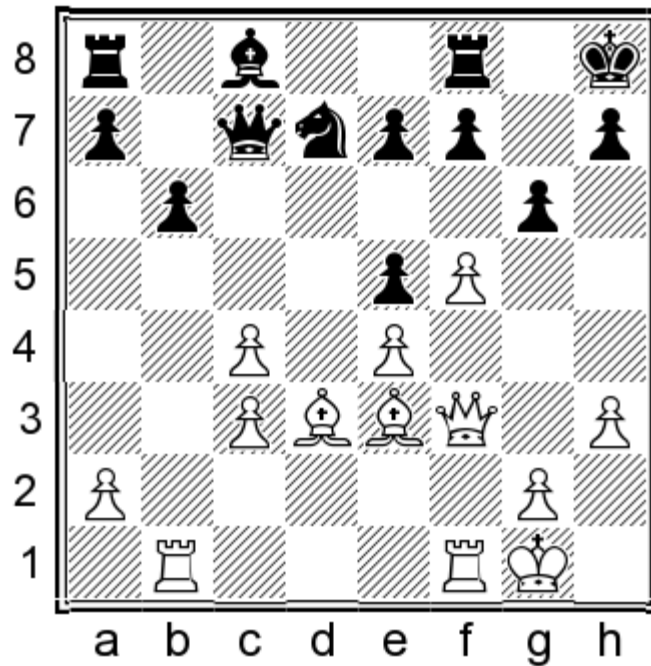
16.♞ab1 (16.♞fb1 ♞d8 17.♞b5 ♔g7 18.♞ab1 ♜d6 19.♞c1 ♙e6 20.a4 ♘c5 21.♙xc5 (21.a5 ♙d7) 21...bxc5 22.♞e3 ♞dc8=) 16...♞d6 17.♞xd6 (17.c5 ♘xc5 18.♞fd1 ♞f6 19.♙h6 ♙d7! 20.♙xf8 ♔xf8 21.f3 ♔g7= Black clearly has full compensation, just look at the dark squares.) 17...exd6 18.♞fd1 ♘c5 19.f3 ♞d8 20.♞d2 ♙e6 21.♞bd1 ♘b7=;

b) 13.f4 exf4 14.♙xf4 ♞b6+ 15.♞f2 ♙e6 16.♞b1 ♜c6 17.♙g5 ♞c7 18.♙f4 ♞c8 19.♞e2 ♘d7=;

13...♞c7 14.f4 ♘d7 15.f5 b6 16.♞f3 Threatening ♙e3-h6.

(16.♙h6 ♞d8 17.♞f3 ♘f6= White cannot make progress on the kingside, and Black is ready to pick up the c4-pawn with ...♙c8-a6.)

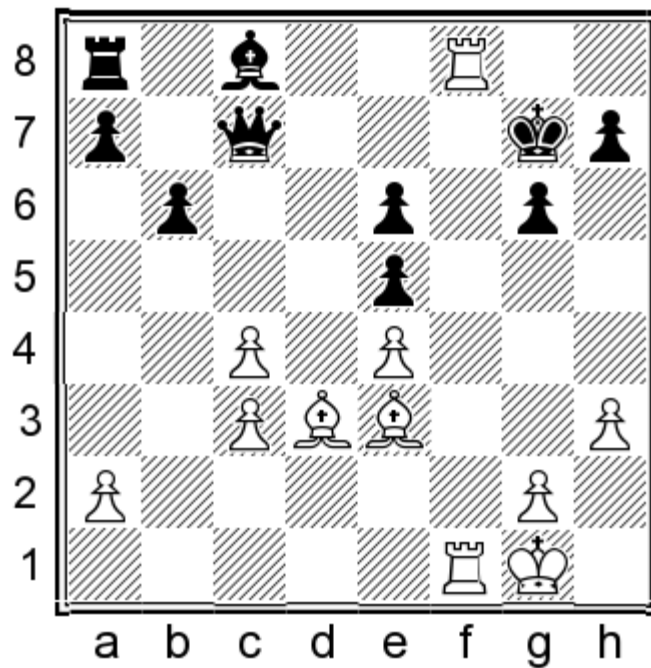
16...♔h8!



17.fxg6

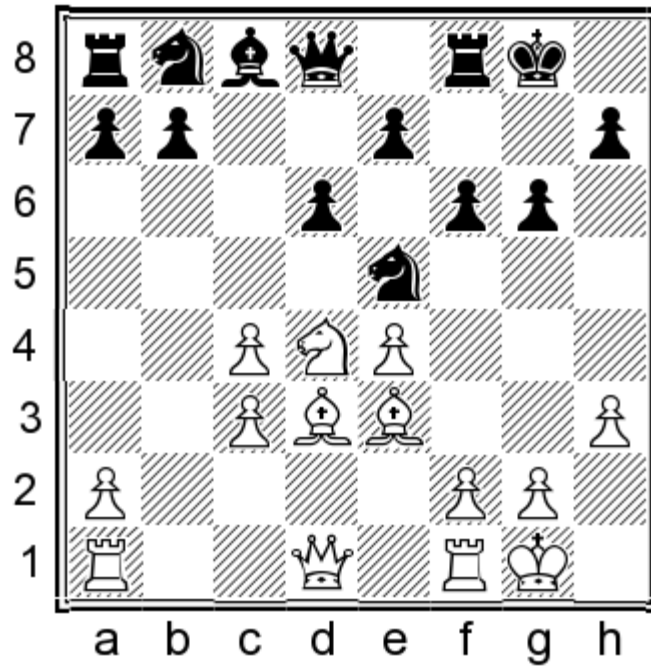
(17.♔h6 ♖g8 White's aggressive stance is wholly illusory; Black is already clearly better. 18.fxg6 ♖xg6 19.♗xf7 ♔a6 20.♔e3 ♖ag8 21.g4 ♘f6⌘)

17...fxg6 18.♗xf8+! White can force a draw here. 18...♘xf8 19.♖xf8+ ♔g7 20.♖bf1 e6



21.♖1f7+! ♗xf7 22.♔h6+! ♔f6 23.♔g5+ ♔g7 24.♔h6+ ♔f6=

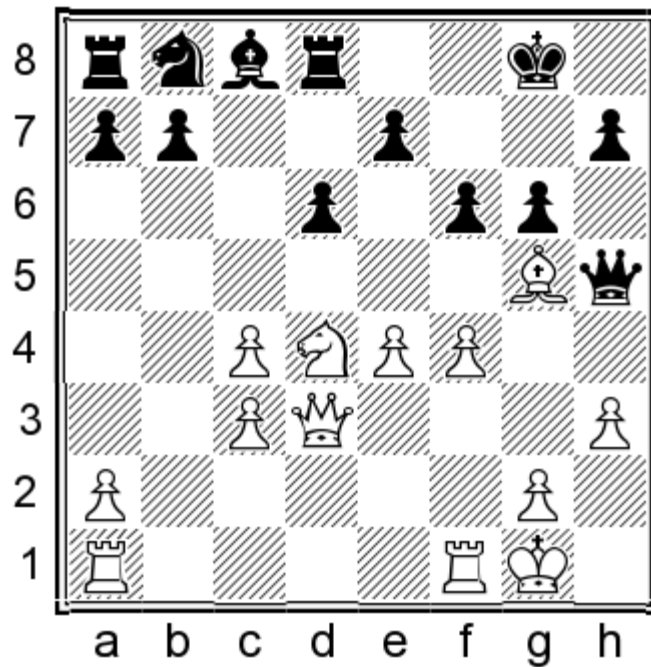
12...f6!



This move is prophylaxis against 13. ♖h6 ♜e8 14. f4?? when 14... ♘f7! wins a piece. It also bolsters the all-important e5 square.

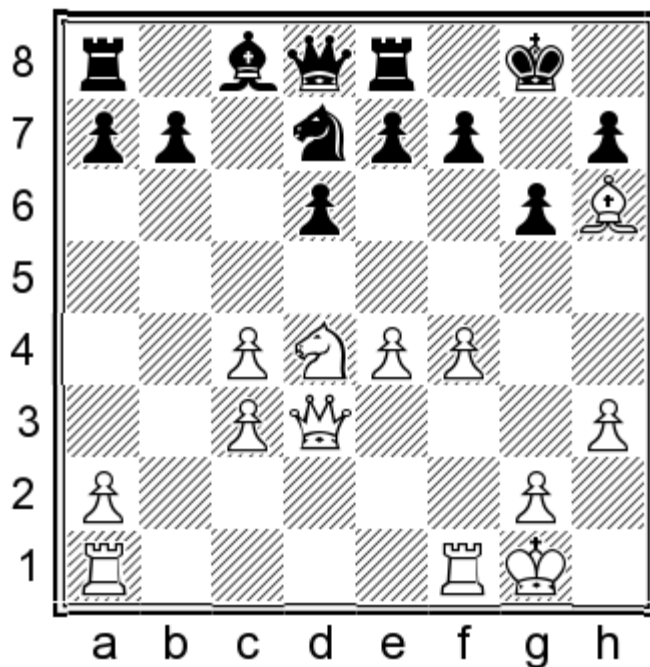
12... ♘xd3 This is the most obvious move — Black would normally be happy to capture White's bishop. However, here Black is severely underdeveloped, which allows White the time to initiate a strong attack. 13. ♖xd3 ♘d7

(13... ♖a5?! 14. ♖h6 ♜d8 15. f4 ♖h5?! Black deserves to be punished for parading around with his queen in total neglect of his development. 16. ♖g5 f6



17. c5!! fxg5 (17... d5 18. exd5 fxg5 19. ♖c4 ♖xh3 20. c6±) 18. ♖c4+ ♖h8 19. cxd6 exd6 (19... ♖xh3 20. dxe7 ♜e8 21. f5!!±) 20. ♖f7 ♜g8 21. ♖f6+ ♜g7 22. fxg5+—)

14. ♖h6 ♜e8 15. f4



Whatever the objective evaluation of this position, I would not want to defend it as Black. 15...b6

(15...f6 16.♘e6 ♖b6+ 17.♞f2 ♗c5 18.♘xc5 ♞xc5 19.f5 ♕f7 20.♞af1±)

16.e5! ♙a6

(16...dxe5 17.fxe5 ♗xe5 18.♞e4+)

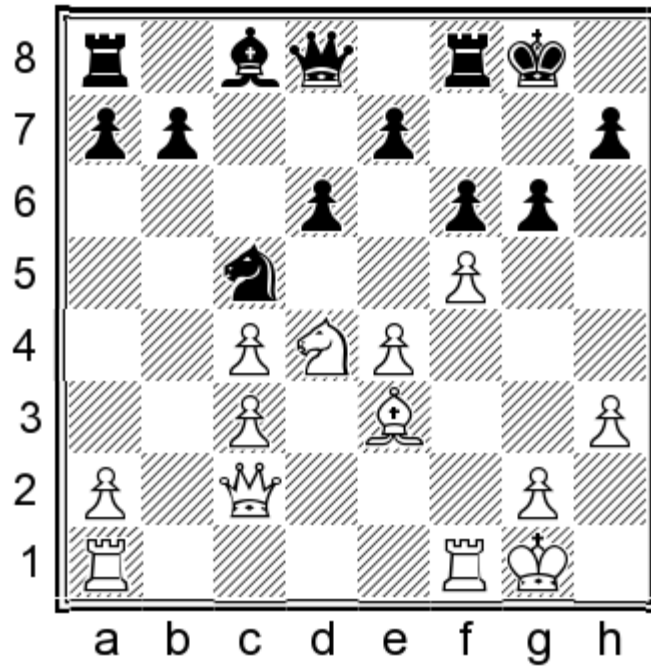
17.e6 fxe6 18.♗xe6 ♞c8 19.f5 ♗e5 20.♞g3 ♞xc4 21.♞ae1 ♞ac8 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.♗f4±;

12...♗bd7 13.♙e2! ♗c5 14.f4 ♗ed7 15.♙f3 ♗b6 16.♞e2±

### 13.♙e2

13.♙c2 ♕h8 The onus is on White to make something happen here; Black's ideas of completing development and blockading on c5 are clear. In a practical game I would prefer Black, because I think most White players would mishandle the simultaneous demands of aggression and restraint. 14.♙b3 ♗a6 (14...g5!?!∞) 15.f4 ♗f7 16.♙c2 ♗c5 17.h4 e5 18.♗b5 b6 19.fxe5 ♗xe5 20.♞xd6 ♞xd6 21.♗xd6 ♙e6=;

13.f4 ♗xd3 14.♞xd3 ♗a6 15.f5 ♗c5 16.♞c2



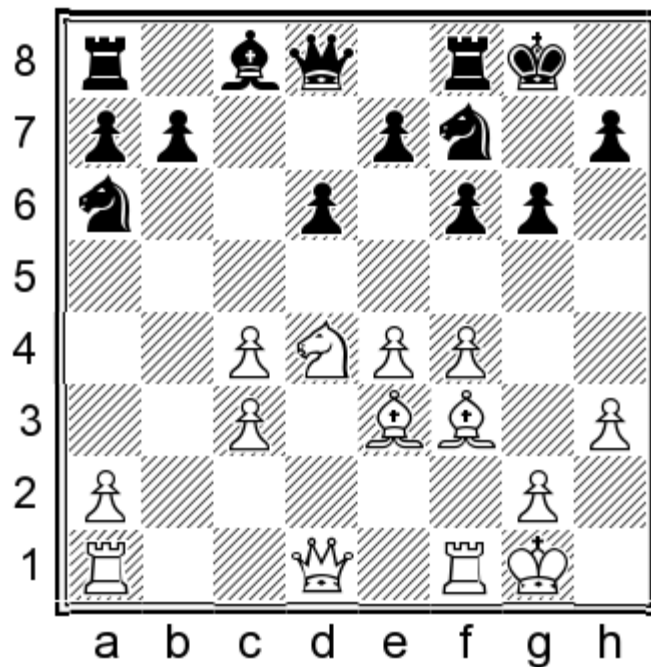
16... ♖e8! 17. ♘d3 ♘d7 White is well advised to liquidate the situation before Black achieves ...b7-b6 and cements White's c4-weakness.

(17... b6 18. ♙h6 ♜f7 19. ♘xc5 bxc5 20. ♜f4±)

18. c5 dxc5 19. ♘xc5 ♘xc5 20. ♙xc5 b6 21. ♙d4 ♙b7=;

13. ♙h6 ♜e8 14. f4?? ♘f7-+

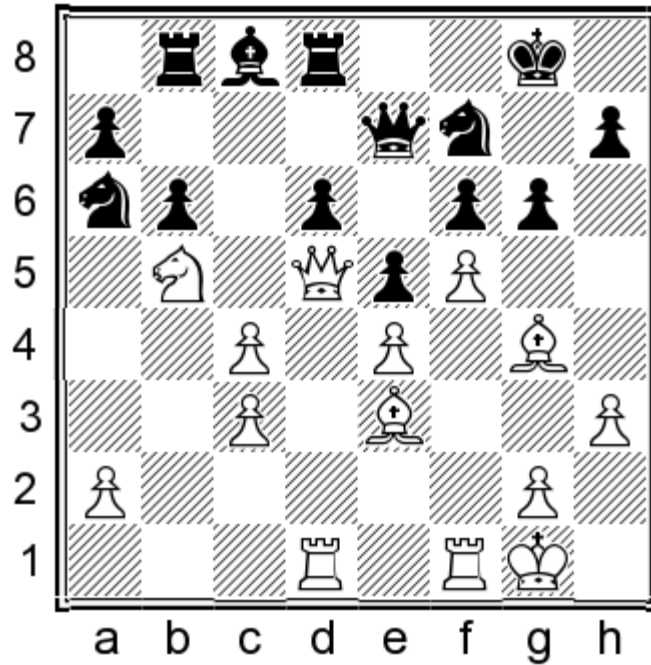
13... ♘a6 14. f4 ♘f7 15. ♙f3



The position is dynamically equal: White has two bishops and a space advantage as compensation for his weakened pawn structure.

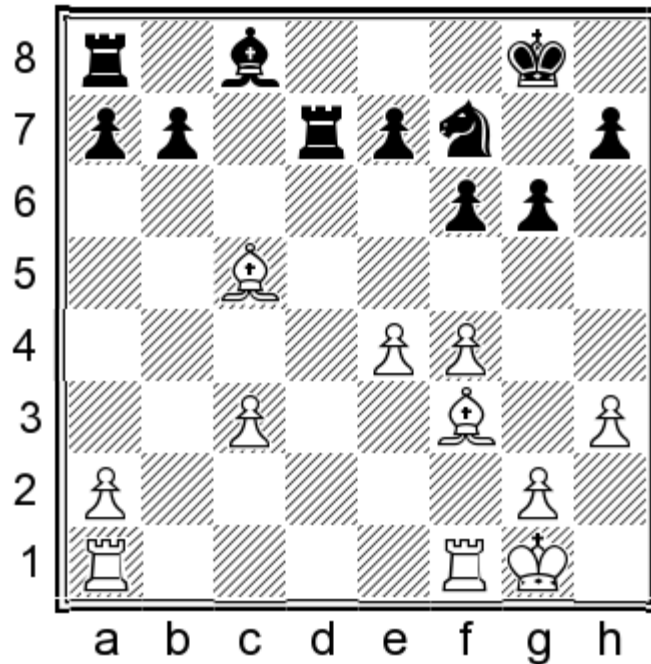
15...♖c5

15...e5?! 16.♗b5 ♕e7 17.f5 b6 18.♖d5 ♜b8 19.♞ad1 ♞d8 20.♙g4!



20...♗c5 21.fxg6 hxg6 22.♙xc8 ♜bxc8 23.♞f2 ♔g7 24.♞df1±

16.♗b3 ♗a4 17.c5 dxc5 18.♖xd8 ♜xd8 19.♗xc5 ♗xc5 20.♙xc5 ♞d7

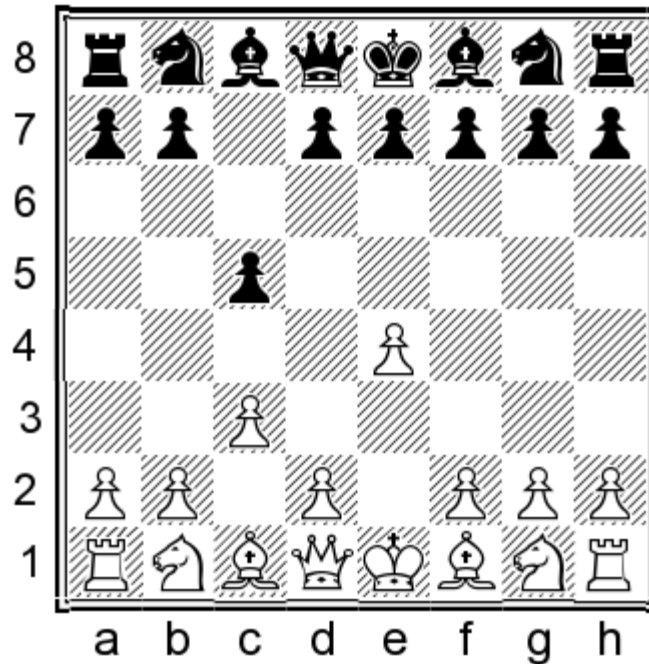


White has gotten rid of his c4-weakness but the isolated c3-pawn still remains a liability. The position should fizzle out into a draw; the following is an illustration.

21.e5 ♜c7 22.♙d4 fxe5 23.fxe5 ♗g5 24.♙d5+ ♙e6 25.c4 ♞d8 26.♙e3 ♙xd5 27.cxd5 ♗e4 28.♞ae1 ♞cc8 29.♙xa7 ♗d2 30.♞f4 ♞xd5=



1.e4 c5 2.c3



In keeping with our theme of ...g7-g6, Black has three options:

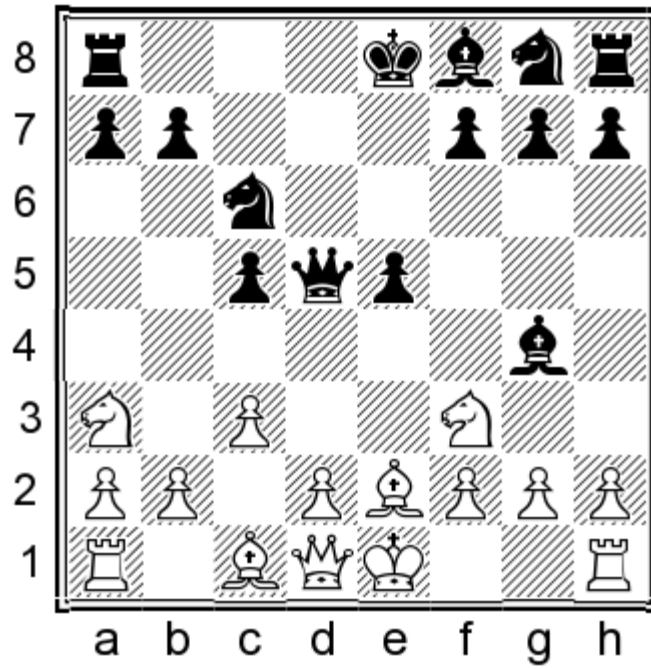
- 1) 2...g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 d5!? as recommended by Albur, Dzindzichashvili, and Perelshteyn in their “Chess Openings for Black, Explained”.
- 2) 2...♟f6 3.e5 ♞d5 4.d4 cxd4 5.♞f3 g6!? as in Adams-Kramnik, Dortmund 2013 (1/2–1/2).
- 3) My recommendation 2...d5 3.exd5 ♞xd5 4.d4 g6!? which was also recommended by Ftacnik in his “Grandmaster Repertoire” book on the Sicilian.

### 2...d5 3.exd5 ♞xd5 4.d4

4.♞a3 The first time I saw this move was in Nakamura-Yangyi, Gibraltar 2015 (1–0). It worked out for White in that game, but I don’t think Black has any problems if he responds actively. 4...♞c6

(4...♟f6 5.♞f3 ♞c6 6.♟c4 ♞d8 7.0-0 a6 8.♞c2 ♟g4 9.d4 e6 10.h3 ♟xf3 11.♞xf3 ♞c8 12.♞d1 cxd4 13.♟b3! ♞c7 14.♞xd4 ♞xd4 15.cxd4 ♟d6 16.♟g5 ♟e7 17.♞e1± 1–0 (39) Nakamura,H-Yu Yangyi Gibraltar 2015)

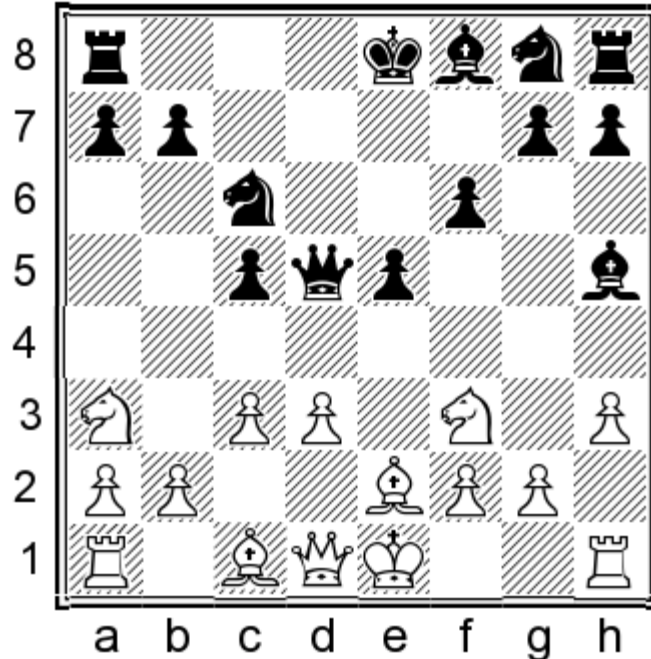
5.♞f3 ♟g4 6.♟e2 e5!



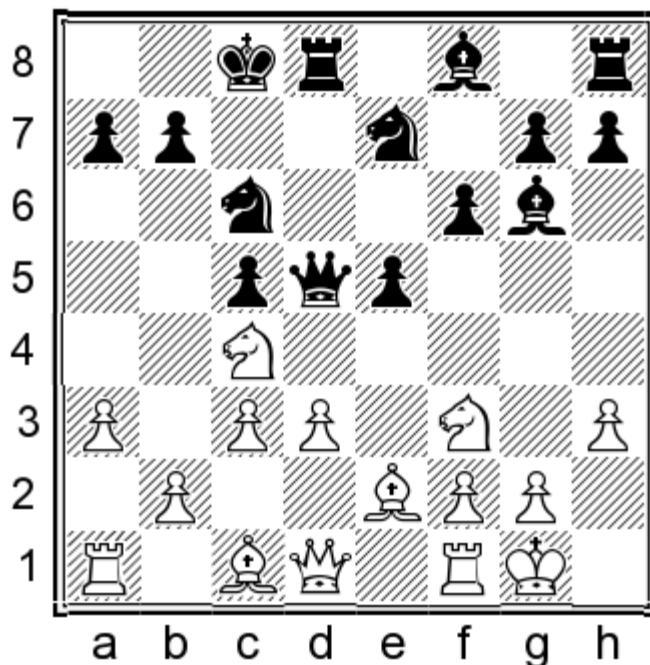
It is unusual for Black to be able to assert central dominance so early in the Alapin. I do not think he should fear ghosts in doing so: Black is effectively calling White's provocation in delaying d2-d4 a bluff. 7.d3

a) 7.♖a4?! e4 8.♘b5 ♜c8 9.♘fd4 ♙xe2 10.♘xe2 ♘f6±;

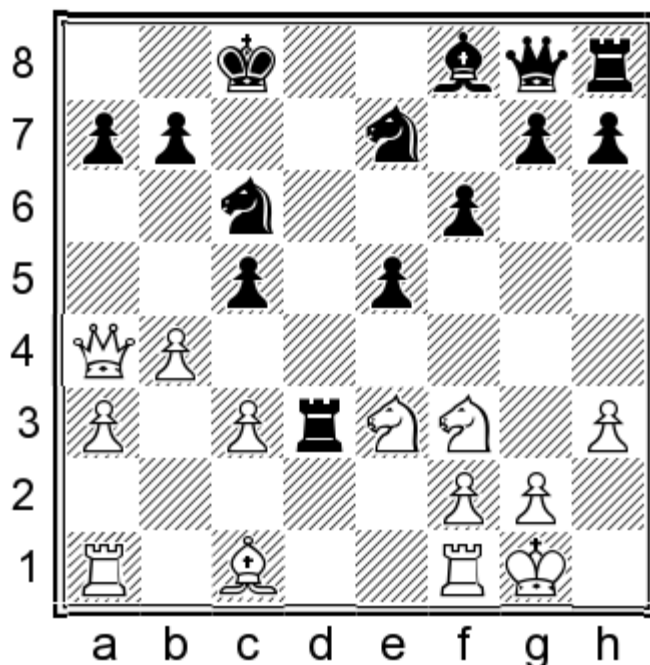
b) 7.h3 ♙h5 8.d3 (8.♗b3 0-0-0±; 8.0-0 e4 9.♘e1 ♙xe2 10.♗xe2 0-0-0±) 8...f6



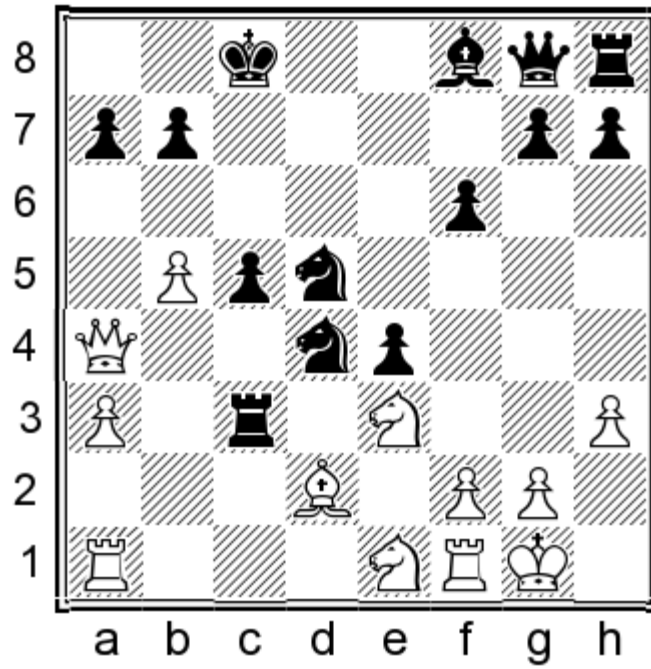
By further delaying his kingside development, Black signals his intention to castle queenside. 9.0-0 (9.♙e3 0-0-0 10.0-0 ♘ge7 11.c4 ♗g8! 12.♙xc5 ♘g6!! 13.♙xf8 ♗xf8 14.g4 ♙xg4!! 15.hxg4 ♘f4±) 9...♘ge7 10.♘c4 0-0-0 11.a3 (11.♘e3 ♗d7 12.♘xe5 ♙xe2 13.♘xd7 ♙xd1 14.♘xf8 ♙e2 15.♘e6 ♙xf1 16.♘xd8 ♗xd8 17.♙xf1 ♗xd3=) 11...♙g6



In this line the Accelerated Dragon player gets to play the reverse of their usual role — White is playing in hypermodern fashion by relinquishing the center and seeking counterplay on the flanks. From our experience and preference for the Black side of the Maroczy, we know not to underestimate the elastic potential of White's structure here, but it is clear nevertheless that Black should be content with the result of the opening. 12. ♖e3 (12. ♖a4 ♕xd3 13. ♕xd3 ♖xd3 14. ♕e3 ♘d5) 12... ♗g8 (12... ♗d7=; 12... ♗e6?! 13. ♘h4±) 13. ♖a4 ♕xd3 14. ♕xd3 ♖xd3 15. b4

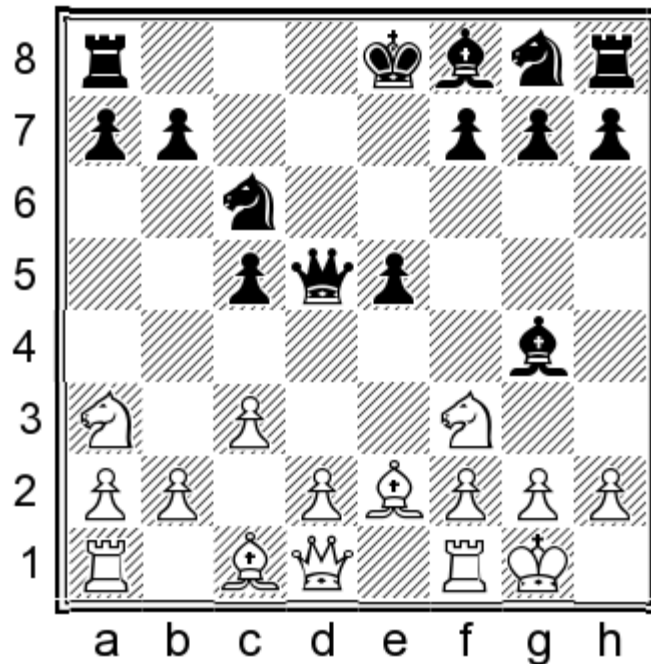


Black should trust the soundness of his structure and enter the complications head on with 15...e4! 15...e4! (15... ♖b8 16. b5 ♘d8 17. ♘e1 ♖d6 18. ♘c4 ♖d5 19. f4 (19. ♘e3 ♖d6=; 19. ♘c2 ♖e6 20. ♘2e3 ♖d7=) 19... ♖e6 20. fxe5 fxe5 21. ♘c2 (21. ♘f3 ♘f7=) 21... ♘g6 22. ♕e3 ♕e7 23. ♘b4!∞) 16. ♘e1 (16. ♘d2 ♘d5 17. ♘xe4 ♖e6±) 16... ♖xc3 17. b5 (17. ♖d1 ♖e6 18. ♕d2 ♖b3 19. ♖c1 ♖b8 20. ♘c4 ♘d4) 17... ♘d4 18. ♕d2 (18. ♖xa7 ♘d5 19. ♖a8+ ♖c7 20. ♖a5+ ♘b6 21. ♘1c2) 21... ♘e2+ 22. ♖h1 ♖d3) 18... ♘d5!



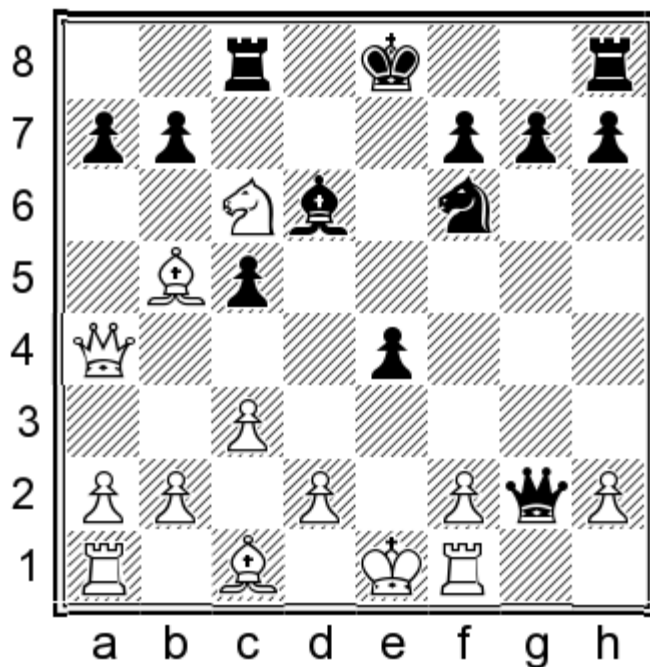
If Black makes it this far he should be able to figure the rest out over the board. 19.b6 (19.♘d5 ♜xd5 20.♙xc3 ♜e2+ 21.♖h1 ♜xc3 22.♜xa7 ♙d6; 19.♘1c2 ♜xc2 20.♜xc2 ♞d3; 19.♙xc3 ♜xc3 20.♜xa7 ♙d6) 19...♜xb6 20.♜e8+ ♖c7 21.♙xc3 ♜e2+ 22.♖h1 ♜xc3 23.♞c1 ♖23...♜e2 24.♞a1 ♖ (24.♞d1? ♙d6 25.♜xg8 ♞xg8+) 24...♜c3=;

c) 7.0-0



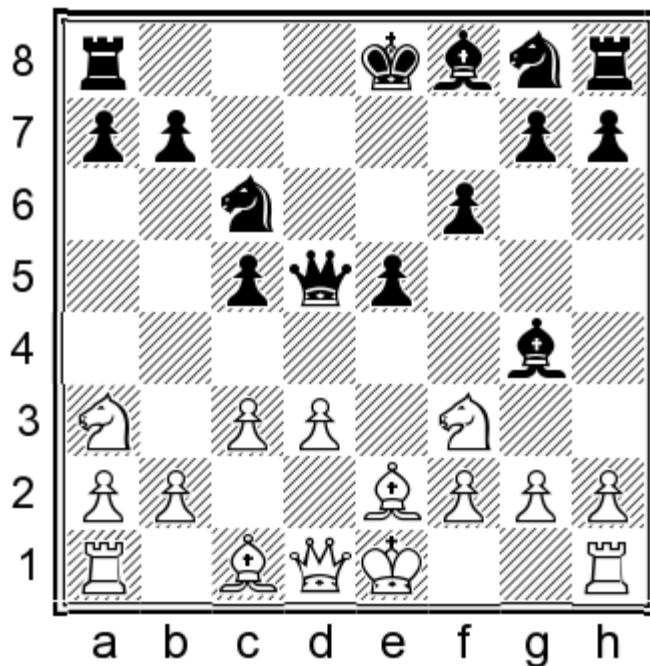
This is oddly White's most popular move but it leads quite straightforwardly to a slight edge for Black. 7...e4 8.♜e1 ♙xe2 9.♜xe2 0-0-0 10.f3 exf3 11.♜xf3 ♜f6;

d) 7.♜c2 e4 8.♜e3 ♜d7 9.♜xg4 ♜xg4 10.♜a4 ♜f6 11.♜e5 ♜xg2 12.♞f1 ♞c8 13.♙b5 ♙d6 14.♜xc6



14...0-0! 15.♘a5 (15.♘xa7 ♖a8⇒ ...♙b8 follows) 15...a6 16.♙e2 b5⌘ 17...♘d5 will follow, eyeing the f4-square. Black can take his time with the attack: White's king isn't going anywhere.;

7...f6!N



This is our theme in this line: bolster the center and aim to castle queenside.

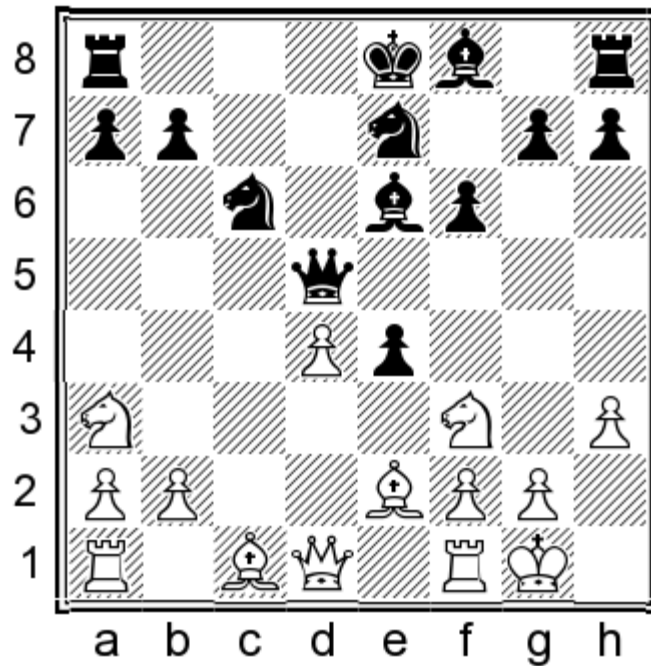
(7...0-0-0 8.♘c4 f5 9.♘e3 ♖d7 10.h3 ♙h5 11.♘xf5 ♖xf5 12.g4 ♙xg4 13.hxg4 ♖d7 14.♘g5±)

8.0-0 ♘ge7 9.h3

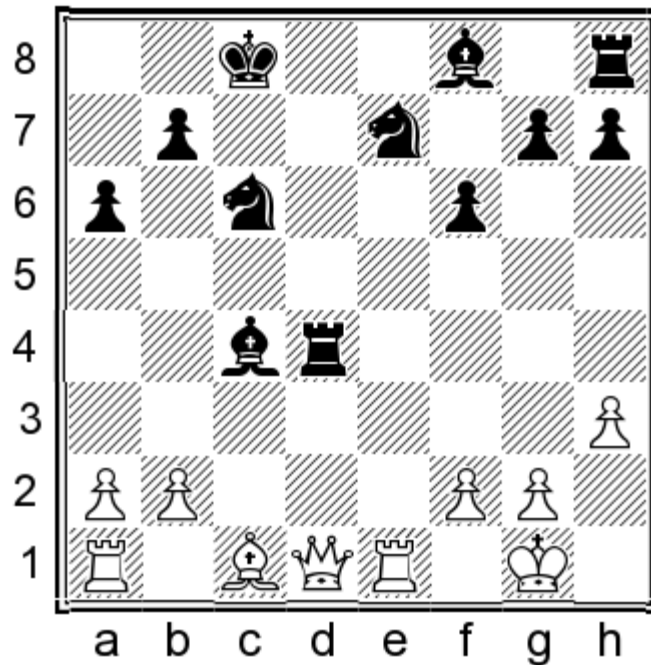
(9.♘c4 ♙e6 10.♖e1 (10.a3 ♖d7 11.b4 ♘d5; 10.♘f2 ♖d7 11.♘b3 ♘d5 12.d4 exd4 13.cxd4 b5 14.♘e3 c4 15.♘c5 ♙xc5 16.dxc5 0-0⇒) 10...♖d7 11.a4 (11.a3 ♘d5 12.♖c2 0-0-0 13.b4 ♘b8 14.♖b2 ♖c7 15.b5 ♘a5 16.a4 g5⇒)

11...♘d5 12.♙f1 0-0-0 (12...♙e7 13.d4 exd4 14.cxd4 0-0⌘) 13.♖b3 ♘b8 14.a5 g5! 15.a6 b6⇒)

9...♙e6 10.d4 cxd4 11.cxd4 e4

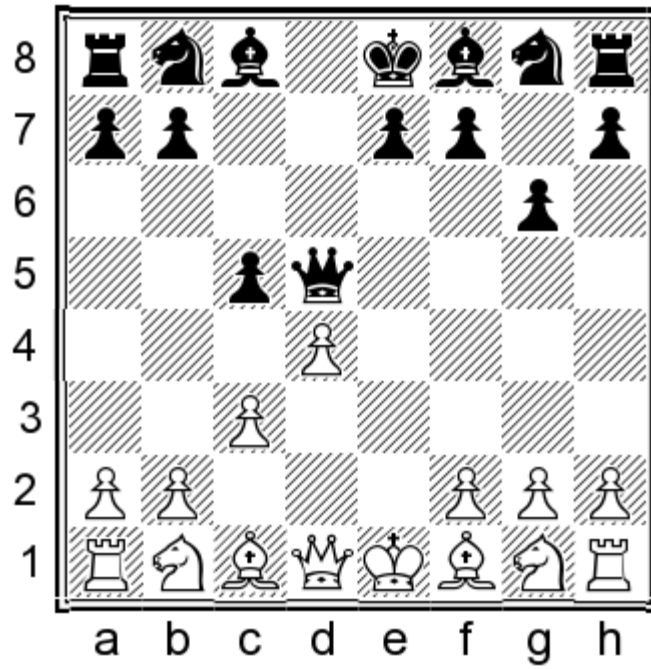


12. ♖b5 0-0-0 13. ♘d2 a6 14. ♙c4 ♚d7 15. ♘xe4 ♙xc4! 16. ♘bd6+ ♚xd6 17. ♘xd6+ ♜xd6 18. ♞e1 ♞xd4



If we accept Euler's estimation of the value of the pieces, then the material is numerically equal (three pieces for a queen). However, in chess (and in many spheres of life) there is a phenomenon whereby the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. My father used to refer to this as 'cooperation points': for every combination of pieces, add a point, so two pieces are worth 3+3+1, ie. more than a rook+pawn (pawns don't count as pieces) . Similarly, three pieces are worth 3+3+3+1+1+1. This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it's not a bad first approximation. I suspect my father thought of this himself (in the context of a variation in the Pirc where three pieces outshine a Queen and two pawns), but I also came across the idea in Lasker's Chess Manual.

4...g6



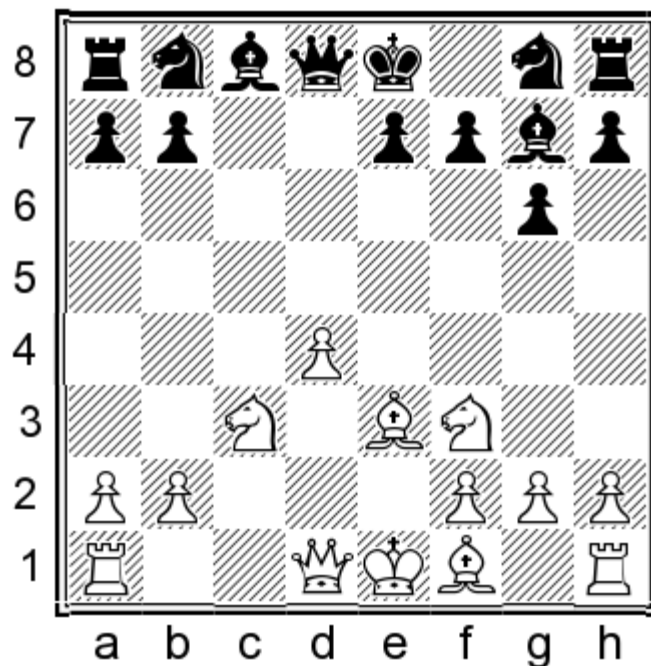
The first strong player to consistently play this move was Yugoslavian Grandmaster Ognjen Cvitan, who played it several times throughout the 1990s. Since then, the move has found a brigade of supporters, most notably Radjabov, Karjakin, Dreev, and Almasi. It was also played several times by a young Magnus Carlsen.

### 5.dxc5

5.♔e3 This was the 'main line' in the early days of the opening, but it is no longer considered a critical test for Black.  
5...cxd4 6.cxd4

(6.♖xd4 ♘f6 7.♟a3 (7.♗xd5 ♘xd5 8.♙d4 f6=) 7...♞c6 8.♗a4 ♙g7 9.♞b5 ♗d8!?)

6...♙g7 7.♞c3 ♗d8 8.♞f3



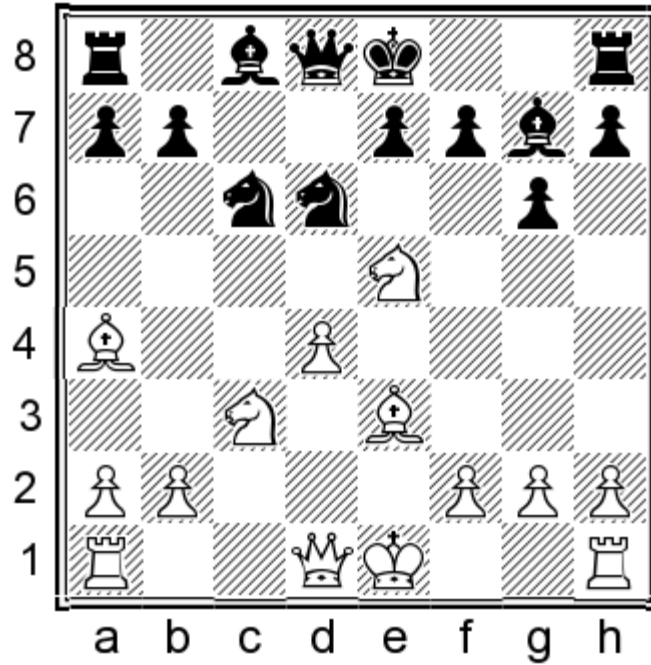
8...♞h6!?

(8...♖f6 Black may prefer this mode of development; it is largely a matter of taste. I think many IMs and GMs prefer ideas with ...♗g8-h6 because they lead to positions which their lower rated opponents (in Swiss-system tournaments) may be unfamiliar with.)

9.♗c4

(9.♗b5+ ♖d7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗c4 ♗f5=)

9...♗f5 10.♗e5 ♗d6 11.♗b3 ♗c6 12.♗a4



12...0-0! 13.♗xc6

(13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♗xc6 ♖b8 15.b3 ♗a6±)

13...bxc6 14.♗xc6 ♗d7 15.♗e5 ♗b7±;

5.♗e2!? A tricky move first played by Grandmaster Hort in 1992. 5...cxd4!

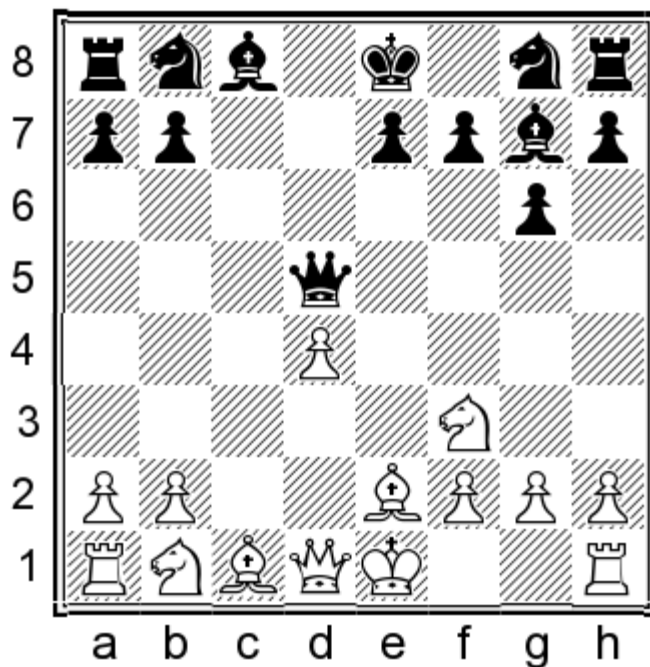
**a)** 5...♗c6?! 6.♗f3± (6.dxc5±) ;

**b)** 5...♗xg2?? 6.♗f3+-;

6.cxd4

(6.♗f3 ♗f6 7.cxd4 ♗g7 8.♗c3 ♗d6=)

6...♗g7 7.♗f3

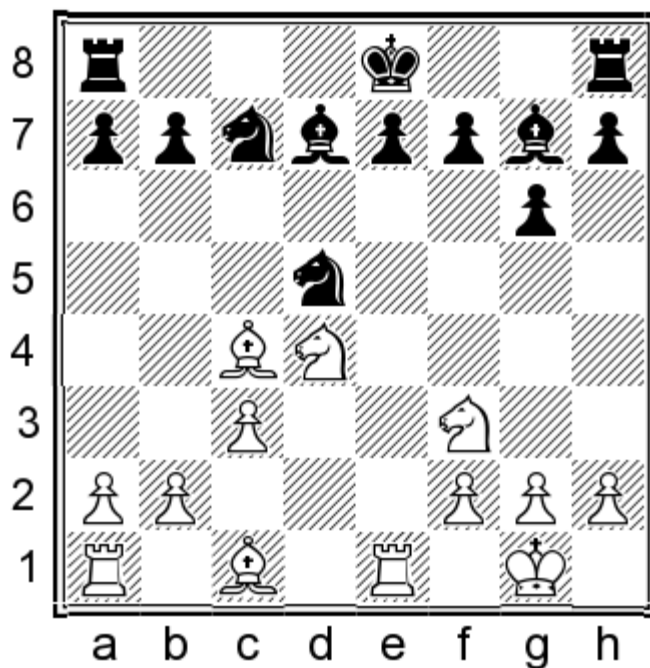


7...Nh6

(7...Nf6 I tend to prefer my knight on f6, but as I have said, it is usually a matter of taste. 8.Nc3 Qd6=)

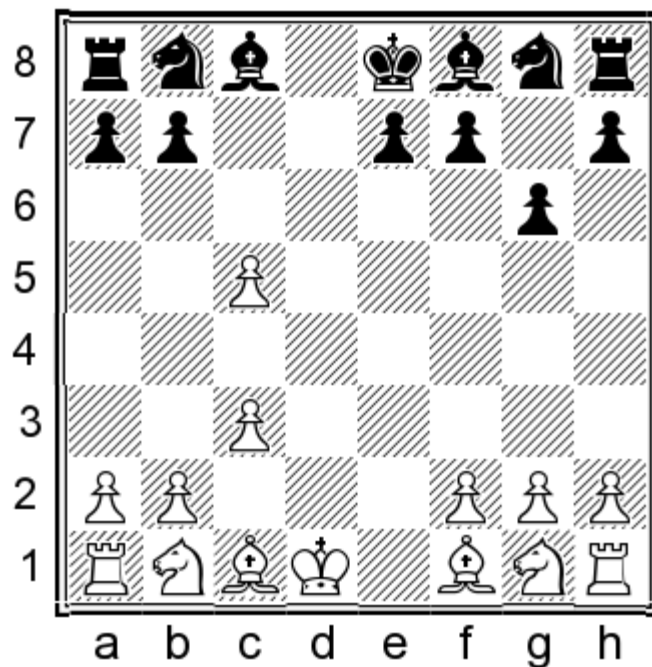
8.Nc3 Qd8 9.Qf4 0-0 10.0-0 Nf5 11.d5 a6 12.a4 Nd7 13.Qb3 b6 14.Rad1 Qb7 15.Rfe1 Kc8= 1/2-1/2 (29) Hort, V (2560)-Spraggett, K (2540) San Bernardino 1992;

5.Na3 cxd4 6.Nb5 Na6 7.Qxd4 Qxd4 8.Nxd4 Nf6 9.Ngf3 Qg7 10.Qb5+ Qd7 11.0-0 Nc7 12.Qc4 Nfd5 13.Re1



13...f6! Black flexes his muscles; the center is his for the taking. 14.a4 a6=

5...Qxd1+ 6.Qxd1

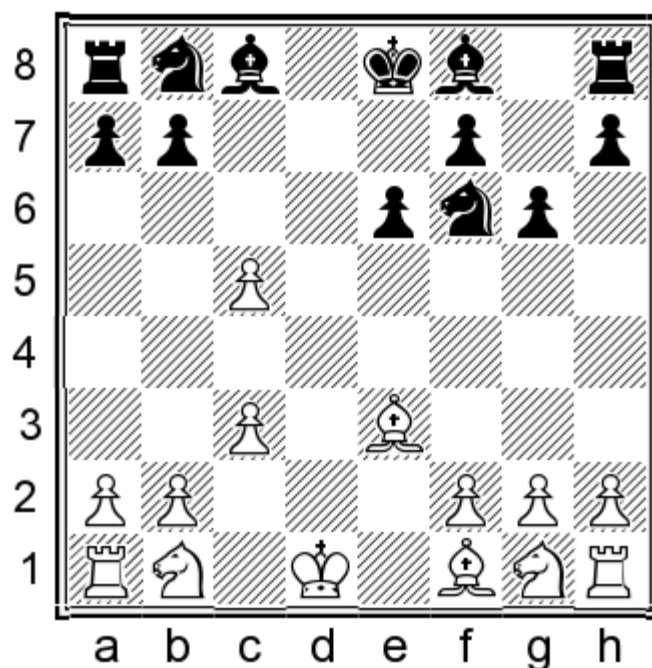


6...e6

Black needn't rush to win back his sacrificed pawn. Sometimes he will even play ...b7-b6, abandoning hopes to regain the pawn in favor of opening up lines for his pieces. Even with queens off the board, White's king is not safe in the center.

6...e6 I toyed around with this new idea for a while, but I came to the conclusion that it is unnecessary since the main move, 6...e6, equalizes comfortably. I have included my analysis of 6...e6 in case the reader is interested. 7.b4!

a) 7. e3 e6



8. f3

a1) 8. e4 e7 9. f3 0-0 10. bd2 d8 11. c2 d5 12. c4 c6 13. he1 xd4+ 14. cxd4 b6 15. xd5 xd5 16. b4

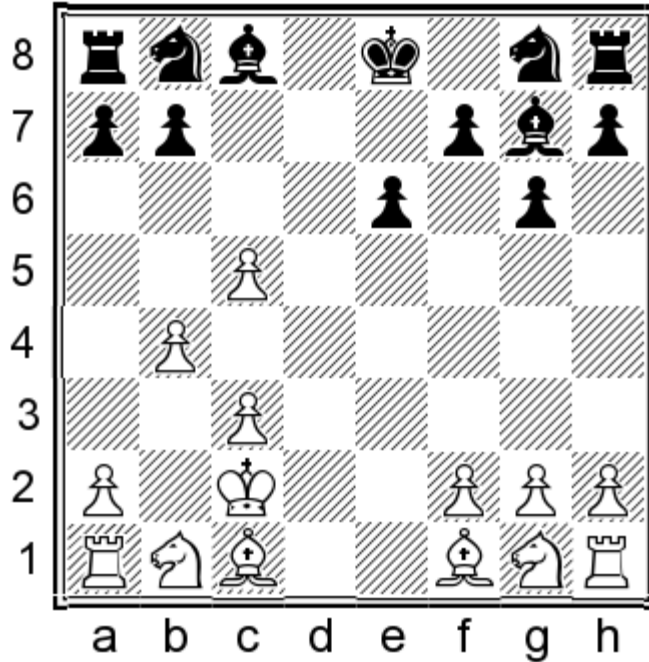
♠b7;

**a2)** 8.♠a3 ♠bd7 9.♠b5 (9.♠b5 ♠g4 10.c6 bxc6 11.♠xc6 ♠b8) 9...♠d5 10.♠f3 ♠xe3+ 11.fxe3 ♠e7 12.b4 a5;

8...♠e7 9.♠a3 0-0 10.♠b5 ♠d5 11.♠c2 ♠xe3+ 12.fxe3 a5 13.♠d6 ♠d7 14.b4 ♠f6 15.♠xc8 ♠fxc8 16.♠b3 b6 17.♠c4 (17.cxb6 ♠e4 18.b7 ♠xc3+ 19.♠b2 ♠b8+) 17...bxc5 18.b5 ♠e4;

**b)** 7.♠b5+ ♠d7 8.♠xd7+ ♠xd7 9.b4 ♠e7 10.♠c2 ♠g7 11.♠d2 0-0 12.♠e4 ♠d5 13.♠b2 b6 14.c6 (14.cxb6 ♠7xb6) 14...♠e5 15.b5 a6 16.a4 ♠c4 17.♠e2 ♠c7 18.bxa6 ♠fc8;

7...♠g7 8.♠c2



8...♠e7

(8...a5 9.♠b2 (9.b5 ♠d7 10.♠a3 ♠gf6 11.♠d3 ♠f8 12.c6 bxc6 13.bxc6 ♠c5 14.♠b5 e5=) 9...♠f6 10.♠d2 0-0 11.♠gf3 axb4 12.cxb4 ♠d7 13.♠c4 ♠c6 14.♠hg1 ♠d8 15.♠b3 ♠b5 16.♠c4 ♠c6 17.a3 ♠e4 18.♠xg7 ♠xg7 19.♠ge1±)

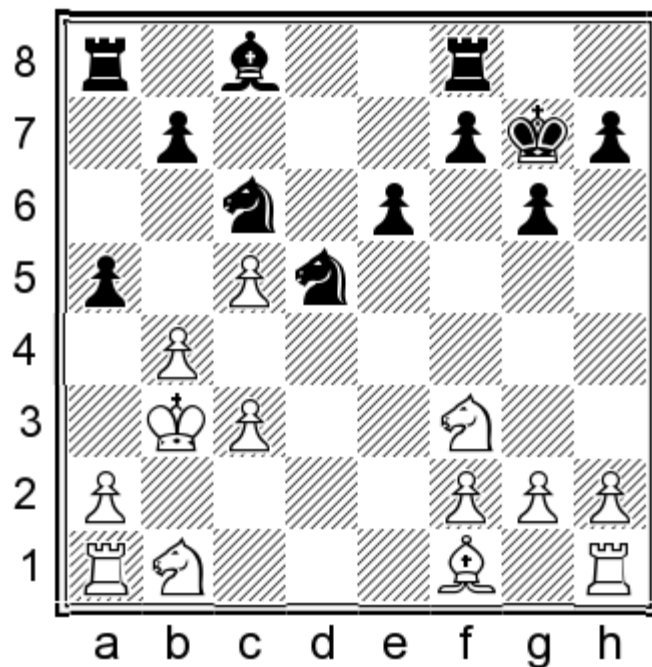
9.♠f3 0-0 10.♠f4

(10.♠bd2 ♠d5 11.♠b2 b6 12.♠e4 (12.cxb6 axb6) 12...bxc5 13.♠xc5 ♠d7 14.♠e4 ♠b7 15.♠d6 ♠ab8 16.a3 ♠c6 17.b5 ♠a8 18.c4 18...♠xb2 19.♠xb2 ♠f4 20.♠c3 ♠b6 21.♠d1 ♠c5 22.♠b4 ♠a6+ 23.♠a5 ♠c5 24.♠b4=)

10...♠d5

(10...♠ec6 11.b5 e5 12.♠g3 (12.♠e3 ♠e7=) 12...♠f5+ 13.♠b2 ♠a5 14.♠bd2 (14.♠xe5 ♠xe5 15.♠xe5 ♠d8) 14...♠d7 15.♠b3 ♠xb3 16.axb3 e4 (16...♠xc5 17.♠xe5 ♠xe5 18.♠xe5 ♠fd8 19.♠c4 ♠d2+ 20.♠a3±) 17.♠d4 ♠xc5 18.♠d6 ♠fc8 19.♠xf5 gxf5 20.♠xc5 ♠xc5 21.♠c4±)

11.♠e5 a5 12.♠xg7 ♠xg7 13.♠b3 ♠c6



14. ♖c4

(14.b5 ♜b8!)=

14...axb4 15. ♖xd5 ♜a5+

(15...exd5 16.cxb4 ♜e8 17.b5 ♜a5+ 18.♙c3 ♖d7 19.♜d4±)

16.♙c2 exd5 17.cxb4 ♖f5+ 18.♙c3

(18.♙b2!±)

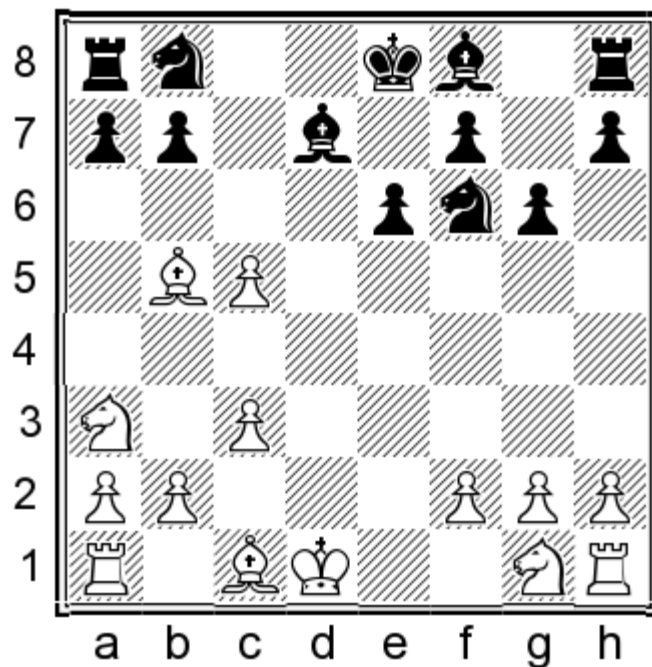
18...♜c6 19.a4 d4+ 20.♜xd4 ♜xd4 21.♙xd4 ♜fd8+ 22.♙c4 b5+ 23.cxb6 ♜ac8+ 24.♙b3 ♖e6+ 25.♙b2 ♜d4 26.♜a3 ♜xb4+ 27.♙a1 ♜xb6=

**7. ♜f3**

7. ♖b5+ ♖d7 8. ♜a3

(8. ♖xd7+ ♜bxd7 9.c6 bxc6 10.♜f3 e5 11.♜e1 ♜g4 12.♙c2 f6 13.♖e3 ♜xe3+ 14.♜xe3 ♖h6 15.♜e2 ♜d8 16.♜bd2 ♖xd2 17.♜xd2 ♙f7= 1/2–1/2 (28) Pedersen,N (2508)-Nevednichy,V (2569) Istanbul 2003)

8...e6!



(8...♔g7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♖c8 11.♙e3 ♜d5 12.♞hd1 ♝xe3 13.♗xe3 ♙xb5 14.♘xb5± 1/2-1/2 (57) Madeira,W (2215)-Leitao,R (2566) Sao Paulo 2004)

9.♙xd7+ ♜bxd7 10.♘b5

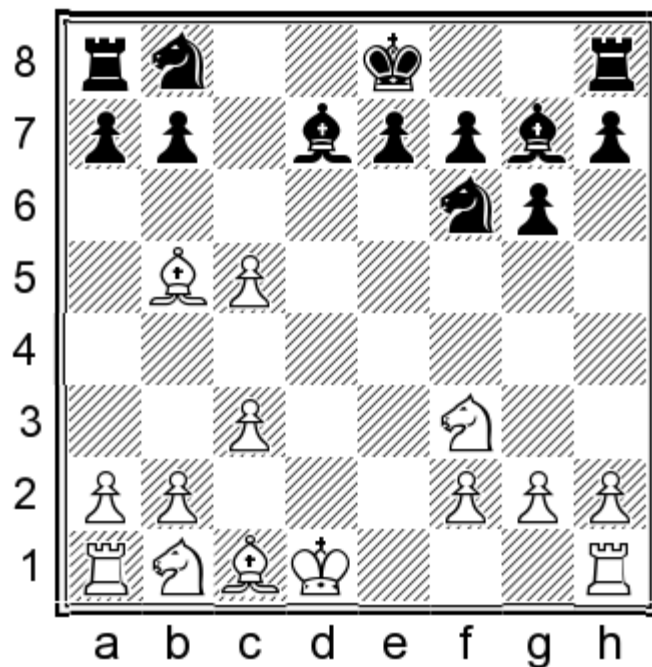
(10.b4 ♜e4)

10...♗e7! 11.b4 a6 12.♘d6 b6

7...♔g7 8.♙b5+

8.♙e3 ♜g4 9.♙b5+ ♙d7 10.♙xd7+ ♜xd7 11.♞e1 ♜xe3+ 12.♞xe3 ♜xc5 13.♗c2 e6 14.♘bd2 ♗e7 15.♘b3 ♞ac8= 0-1 (49) Ragger, M (2265)-Kozul,Z (2587) Maribor 2003.

8...♙d7



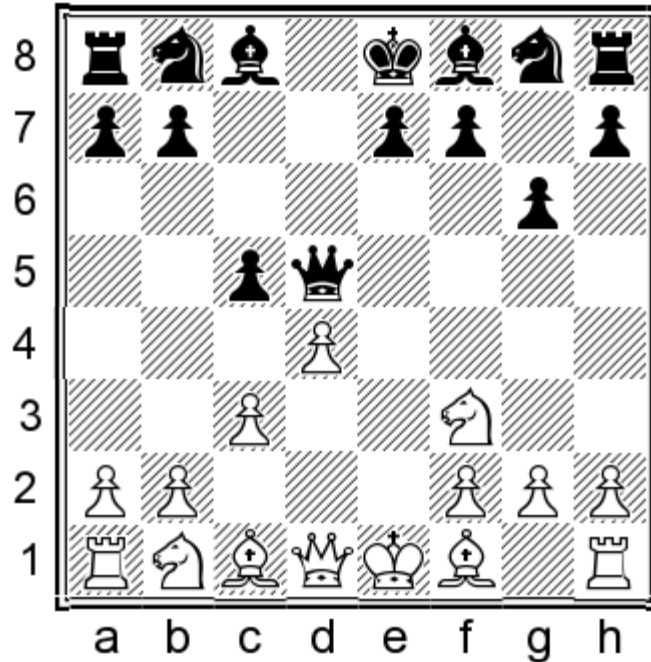
**9. ♔d3**

9. ♔xd7+ ♖bxd7 10. ♗c2 ♜xc5 11. ♔e3 ♜c8 12. ♜e1 ♜d5 13. ♔d4 0-0 14. ♔xg7 ♗xg7 15. ♜bd2 b5 16. g3 ♜fd8 17. ♜ad1 e6 18. ♜b3 ♜a4 19. ♜d4 ♜axc3 20. ♗d2 ♜xa2 0-1 (21) Sriram, J (2356)-Kunte, A (2487) Mumbai 2000.

**9... ♔c6 10. ♔e3 ♜g4 11. ♜bd2 ♜d7 12. ♜b3 0-0-0 13. ♗c2 ♜de5 14. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 15. ♔f1 ♔e4+ 16. ♗c1 ♜g4**

1/2-1/2 (53) Smerdon, D (2470)-Saric, I (2559) Dresden 2008.

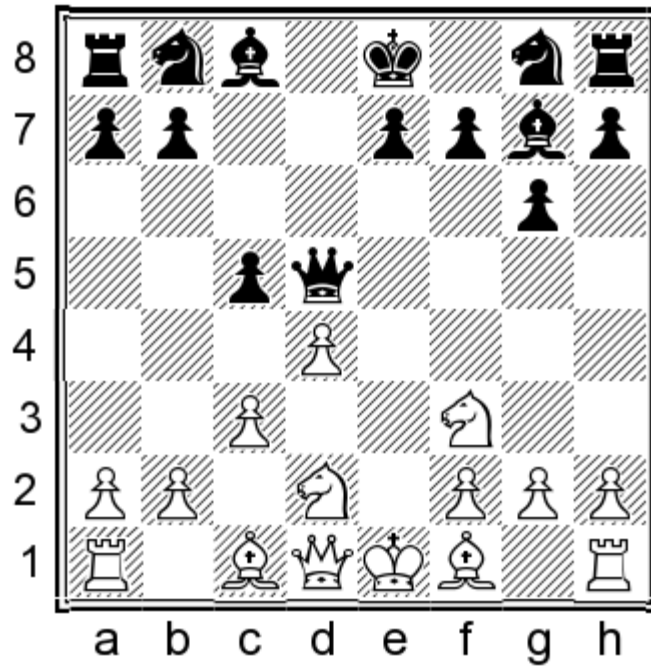
1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♔xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♘f3



5...♘c6!?

In this book I have tried, where possible, to present novel ideas, even where the accepted wisdom is perfectly adequate. There is value in exploring new terrain, both from a scientific perspective of enriching the literature on an opening, but also from the practical, ‘surprise value’ perspective. 5...♘c6 is an extremely rare move, about fifty(!) times less common than the main move, 5...♗g7. I am not sure, nor do I frankly care very much, which of 5...♗g7 or 5...♘c6 is ‘objectively’ the better move. It seems to me though, that the new ideas which follow lead to rich, unexplored positions where a well-prepared Black player can pose serious problems for their opponent. Praxis and the test of time will determine whether these ideas have wings, or whether Black is better off adhering to the usual 5...♗g7. Before continuing I would like to mention that the following is joint analysis between myself and Canadian (exiled by marriage to America) IM Dave Ross.

5...♗g7 The reader may consult GM Ftacnik’s book on the Sicilian for his treatment of this move. Black may be fine with accurate play, but the amount of awkward queen moves Black is lured into is not to my taste. 6.♘bd2!



I think this rare move deserves more attention.

(6.♖a3 This transposes to subchapter 5, 1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 g6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♜xd5 5.♟a3 ♞g7 6.d4.)

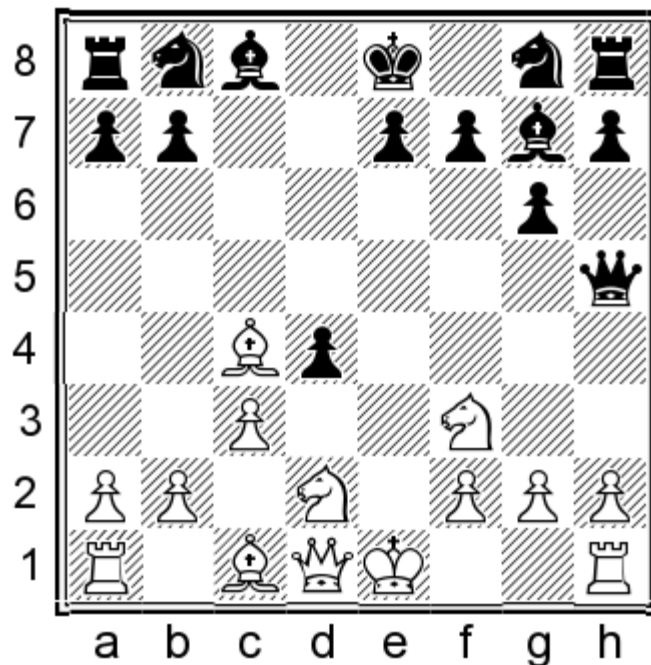
6...cxd4

(6...♞e6+?! We will see this is the right move after 5...♟c6 6.♟bd2 but not here. 7.♞e2 cxd4 8.♟xd4 ♞xd4 This is the reason: instead of trading on d4 with a knight as in the 5...♟c6 line, Black has to cede the two bishops to White.

9.cxd4 ♟f6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♞f3±)

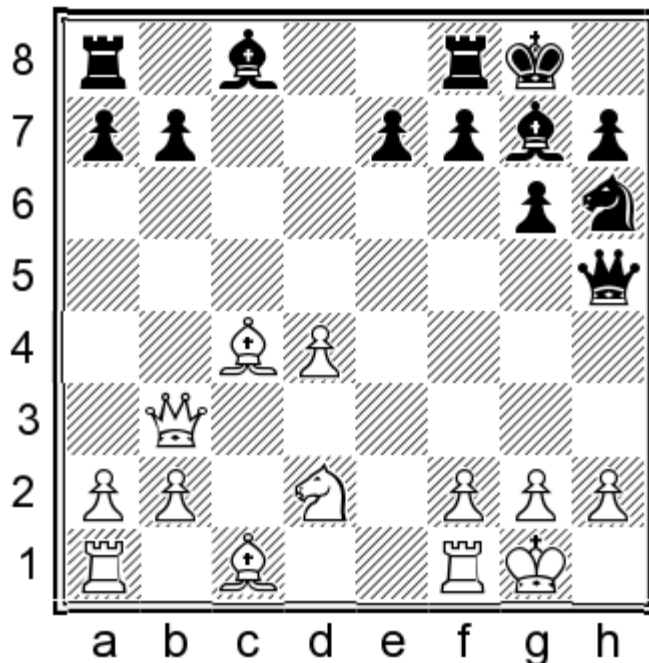
7.♞c4 ♞d8

(7...♞h5N



Black does not quite equalize here. 8.0-0! (8.♞b3 ♟h6 9.♟xd4 0-0 10.♟2f3 ♟f5 11.0-0 ♟d6 12.♞d3 ♟d7=) 8...♟c6 (8...dxc3? 9.♟e4! cxb2? 10.♞xf7+! ♟xf7 11.♞b3+ ♟f8 12.♟eg5 ♟h6 13.♞xb2 ♞xb2 14.♞xb2 ♞g8 15.♟xh7+ ♟e8

16. ♖fg5+—) 9. ♖b3 (9. cxd4 ♜f6 10. d5 ♜xd5 11. ♖b3 e6 12. ♖e4 0-0 13. ♜g3 ♖a5! 14. ♖b5 ♜c7! = Alas, Black hangs on by the skin of his teeth.) 9... ♜h6 10. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 11. cxd4 0-0

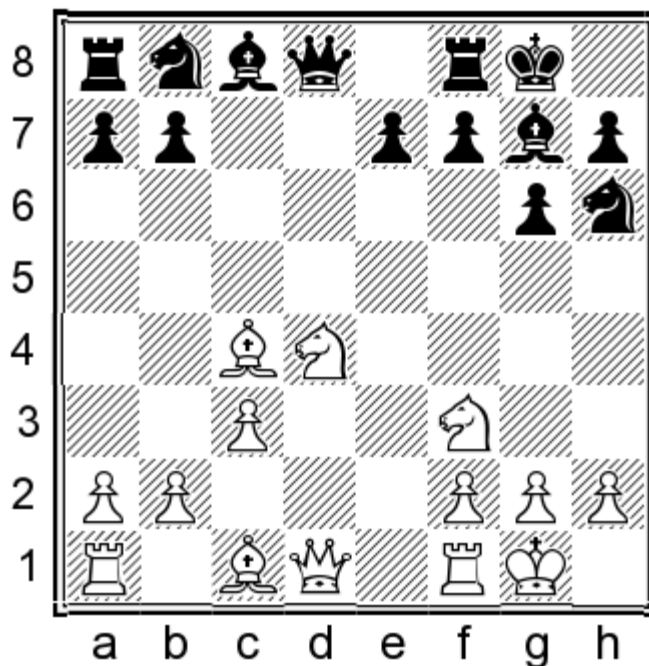


12. h3! A strong prophylactic move: Black can no longer disentangle with ... ♜h6-f5 in light of g2-g4. 12... ♜xd4 (12... g5?! 13. g4 ♜xg4 14. ♜e2 (14. hxg4 ♜xg4 15. ♜g2 ♜f5=) 14... ♖h4 15. hxg4 ♜xg4 16. ♜f3±) 13. ♜e1 ♜f5 (13... ♜g7 14. ♜f3 ♜f5 15. ♜f4±) 14. ♖e4 ♜d6 15. ♜xd6 exd6 16. ♜e7 g5 17. ♜d2! g4 18. hxg4 ♜xf2+ 19. ♜f1! (19. ♜xf2 ♖h4+ 20. ♜g1 ♖xe7=) 19... ♖g6 20. ♜xf2 ♖f6+ 21. ♖f3 ♖xe7 22. ♜h1±)

8. ♜xd4 ♜h6

(8... ♜xd4 9. cxd4 ♖xd4 10. 0-0 ♜c6 11. ♖b3±; 8... ♜f6 9. 0-0 0-0 10. ♜2f3±)

9. ♜2f3 0-0 10. 0-0



Black's position is not pretty; I prefer the fresh positions which arise after 5... ♜c6!?.

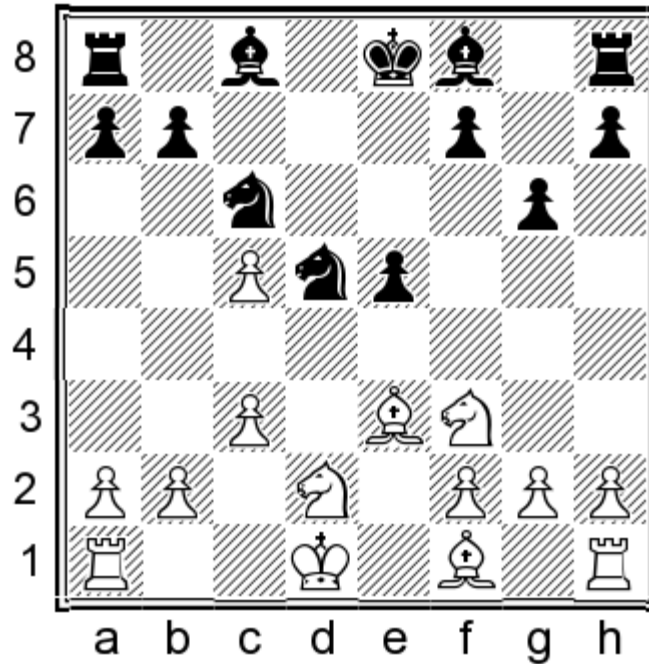
10...♖f5 11.♞e1

(11.♙g5 ♜c7 12.♞e2±)

11...♗xd4 12.♗xd4 ♜c7 13.♙b3 a6 14.♙g5± 1/2–1/2 (57) Onischuk,A (2664)-Kudrin,S (2549) Tulsa 2008.

### 6.♙e3

The main move 6.♙e2 will be covered in the next subchapter. 6.dxc5 This is premature; if White wants to take on c5 then he should first play 6.♙e3 then take on c5 after Black commits his bishop to g7. 6...♞xd1+ 7.♗xd1 ♗f6 8.♙e3 ♗d5 9.♗bd2 e5!

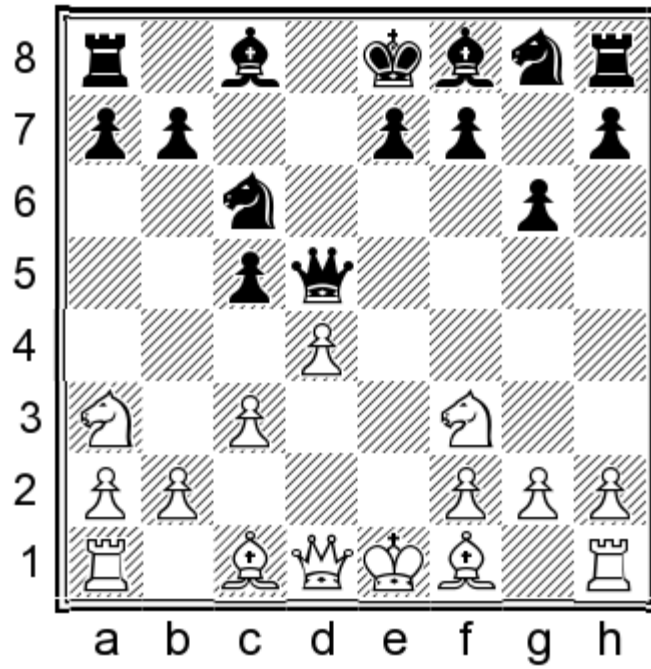


10.♗e4 ♙f5 11.♙d3 0-0-0 12.♗e2 ♗xe3 13.fxe3 ♙e7 14.♗d6+

(14.♙c2 ♙g4 15.♗f2 ♙xf3+ 16.gxf3 ♙xc5=)

14...♙xd6 15.♙xf5+ gxf5 16.cxd6 ♞xd6 17.♞ad1 ♗d7! =;

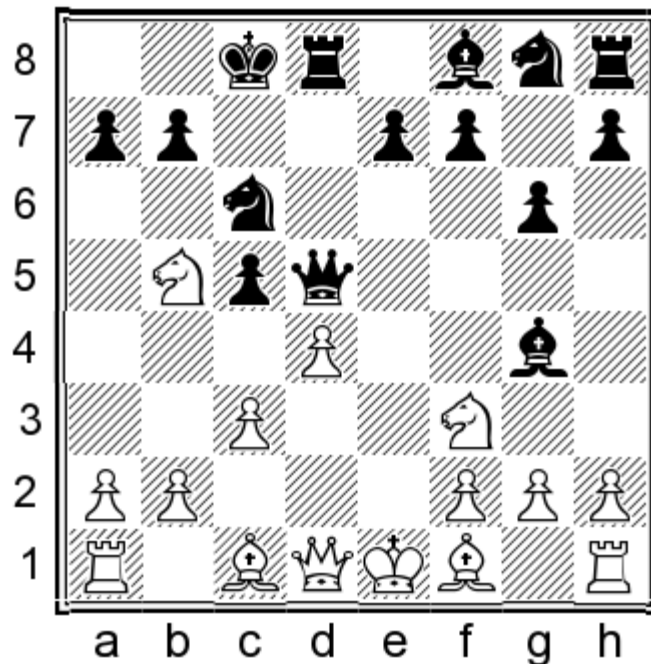
6.♗a3



One of the nice things about this 5...Nc6 system is that it is particularly well-suited to meet 6.Na3, which is the most popular move against 5...g7. Indeed, when I was practicing this line in online blitz I came across Alapin specialist GM A. Zhigalko and 6.Na3 was his choice as well. As we see, though, Black's 5...Nc6 enables him to quickly castle queenside and pose White with immediate problems. 6...g4 7.Nb5

(7.g2 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nf6 9.Nb5 Bc8 10.Nc3 Qa5 11.d5 Bd8 12.0-0 g7; 7.g4 gxf3 8.gxf3 Wf5 It is a great practical upshot of this system that natural moves by White allow Black to equalize with ease. 9.gd3 Wh5 10.g4 Nf6 11.Nb5? Nxe4 12.Nc7+ Qd7 13.Nxa8 Nf6)

7...0-0-0!



White is suddenly caught off guard — Black isn't supposed to be able to castle queenside in this opening! Reap the rewards of 5...Nc6. Black has taken over the initiative and White needs to be extremely accurate to not lose outright in the next few moves. 8.g2

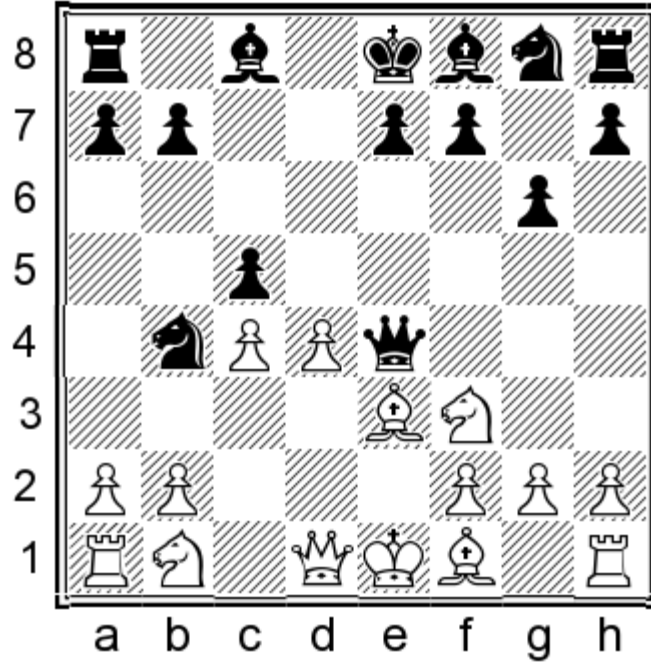
(8.♙e3 a6 9.a4 ♗xf3 10.gxf3 ♖h6!)

8...a6 9.a4

(♞9.♘a3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 ♖xd4 12.♖c2 ♗d3 13.♗xd3 ♖xd3 14.♘c4)

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 axb5 11.axb5 ♗xf3 12.bxc6 ♗xe2 13.♖a8+ ♘c7 14.♗f4+ e5 15.♗xe5+ ♗xe5+;

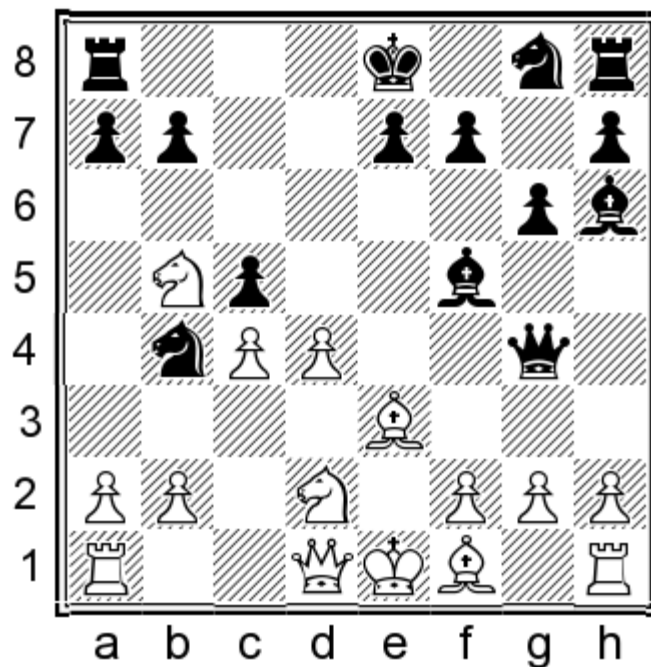
6.c4?! ♗e4+ 7.♗e3 ♘b4!



Black gets to have some fun in this line. 8.♘a3

(8.♘c3 ♘c2+ 9.♘d2 ♘xe3 10.fxe3 ♗c6 11.♘e5 ♗a6=)

8...♗h6! 9.♘d2 ♗g4 10.♘b5 ♗f5!



If you ever get this position over the board, relish your opportunity — your opponent is likely a masochist, and you may

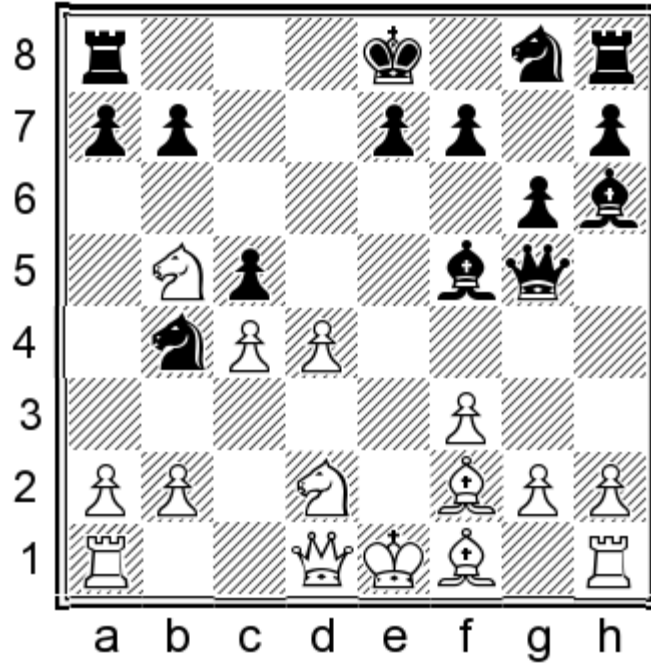
get to enact one of the beautiful variations which follow. 11.f3

(11.♖c7+ ♔d8 12.f3 ♗h4+ 13.♙f2 ♗f6 14.♜xa8 ♜c2+ 15.♕e2 ♗e6+ 16.♜e4 ♙xe4 17.dxc5+ ♕c8—)

11...♗h4+ 12.♙f2

(12.g3 ♗f6 13.♙xh6 ♜c2+ 14.♕f2 ♜xh6 15.♞c1 a6 16.♜c7+ ♔d8⌘)

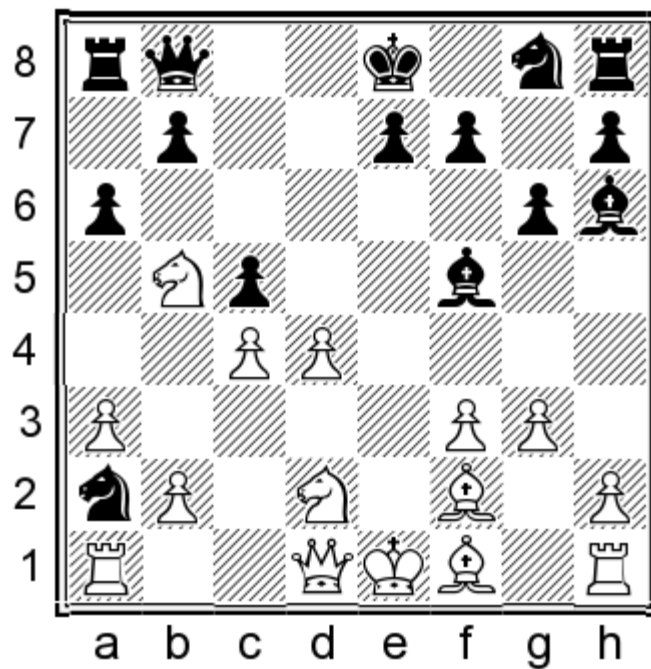
12...♗g5



13.♞c1

(13.♜c7+ ♔f8 14.h4 (14.♜xa8 ♜c2+ 15.♕e2 cxd4—) 14...♗f4 15.♜d5 ♜xd5 16.cxd5 cxd4⌘)

13...♗f4 14.g3 ♗b8 15.a3 ♜a2 16.♞a1 a6



17.♞xa2 axb5 18.♗b3

(18.cxb5 ♖f6 19.♙g2 0-0 20.0-0 cxd4)

18...cxd4 19.♙xd4 bxc4 20.♗xc4

(20.♙xc4 ♜d6!)=)

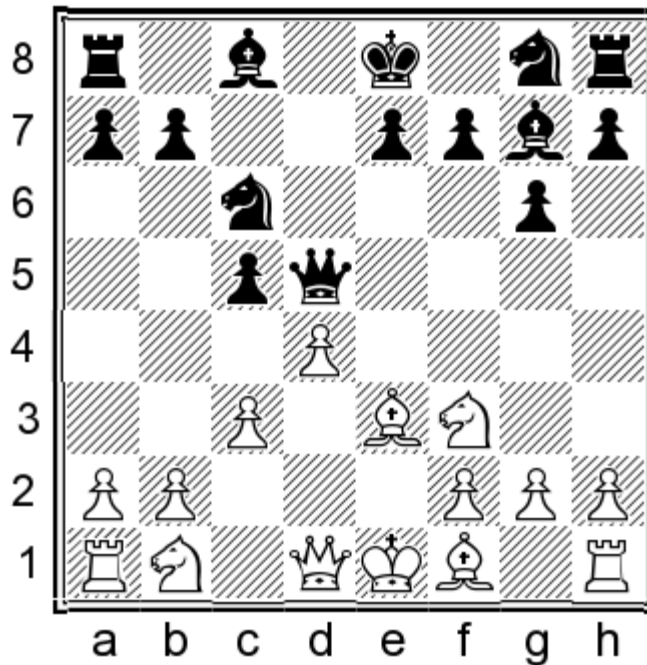
20...♗f6 21.♙e5 ♜d8 22.♜b5+ ♙d7 23.♜xb7 0-0=;

6.♗bd2N Since this was a big problem in the 5...♙g7 line I searched for games after 5...♗c6 6.♗bd2. Turns out it is a novelty, but not one Black needs to worry about. 6...♜e6+! 7.♙e2 cxd4 8.♗xd4

(8.cxd4 ♗f6 9.0-0 ♙g7 10.♗c4 0-0 11.b3 ♗d5 12.♙b2 ♜d8=)

8...♗xd4 9.cxd4 ♗h6 10.0-0 ♙g7 11.♙b5+ ♙d7 12.♜e1 ♜g4!=

**6...♙g7**



6...♙h6 7.dxc5 ♜xd1+ 8.♗xd1 ♙xe3 9.fxe3±;

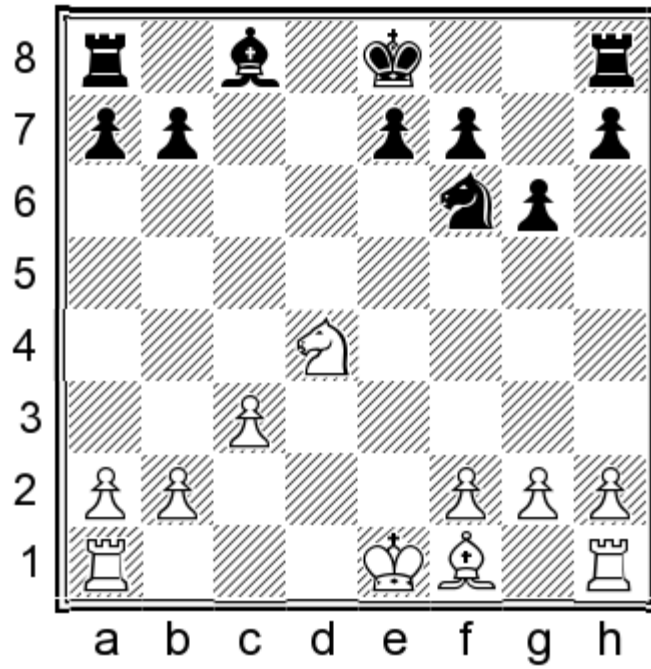
6...♗f6 7.c4 ♜d6 8.d5 ♗e5 9.♙e2±

**7.dxc5**

7.♗a3 Black is fine after the mass exchanges on d4. 7...cxd4 8.♗b5 ♜d8 9.♗bxd4 ♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙xd4

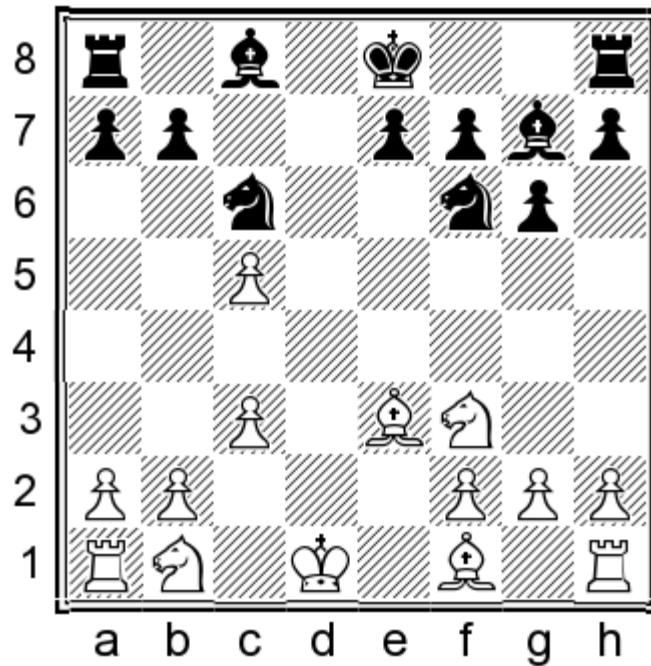
(10...♗f6!? 11.♙b5+ ♙d7 12.♜e2 0-0 13.♜d1 ♙xb5 14.♜xb5 ♜c8=)

11.♜xd4 ♜xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗f6



13.0-0-0 ♕d7 14.♗e2 0-0-0 15.♞he1 e6 16.♗f3 g5! =

7...♞xd1+ 8.♜xd1 ♘f6



Black is down a pawn, and will likely stay down a pawn for the foreseeable future, but as compensation he has better control over the center and the potential to harrass White's king which has lost its castling rights.

9.♗c4

9.♗d3 ♘d5 10.♘bd2

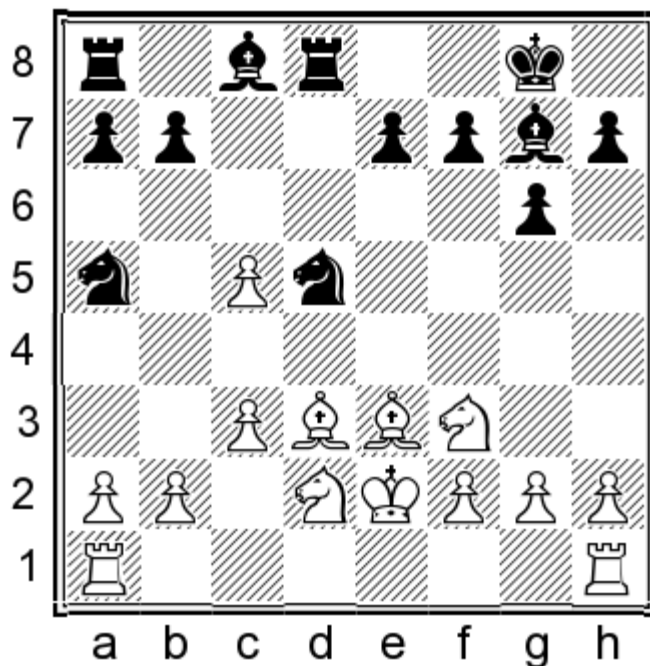
(10.♗e4 0-0! 11.♗xd5 ♞d8 12.♜e2 ♞xd5 13.♘a3 b6! 14.♘b5 (14.cxb6 ♗a6+ 15.♜e1 axb6 16.♞d1 ♞a5! 17.♘d4 ♘e5⇌) 14...♞b8 15.♘c7 ♞d7 16.cxb6 axb6 17.♘b5 ♗a6 18.a4 ♘a7=)

10...0-0 11.♖e2 ♜d8 12.♞hc1 h6 Prophy lactically guarding the g5-square. Black will continue ...e7-e5/...♙c8-♙e6/...f7-f5 etc. White can only hope he is resilient enough to endure this, because he has no aggressive ambitions of his own.

9...0-0 10.♘bd2 ♜d8 11.♖e2 ♞a5 12.♙d3

12.♞hd1 ♘xc4 13.♘xc4 ♘d5=

12...♘d5



13.♘b3

13.♘c4 ♙f5! 14.♘xa5 ♘xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♙xd3+ 16.♖d2 ♙e4+ 17.♙d4 e5=;

13.♞ac1 b6! 14.b4

(14.cxb6 axb6 15.a3 ♘b7!?)

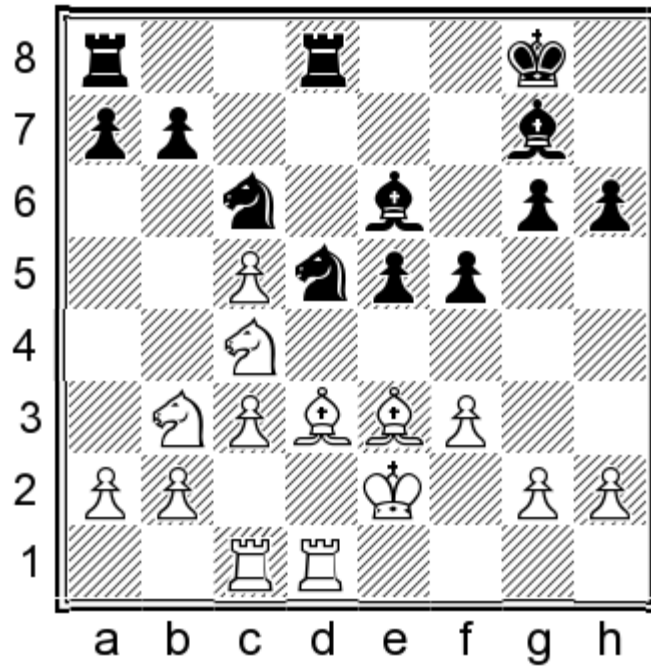
14...♘b7 15.c6 ♘d6 16.♘d4 e5 17.♘b5 ♙g4+ 18.f3 ♙f5 19.c7 ♙xd3+ 20.♖xd3 ♜d7 21.♘d6 ♞xd6

13...♘c6

Black is happy to 'just play' this position down a pawn, without feeling any urgency to regain it. Petrosian once said (paraphrasing) that 'too often players sacrifice a pawn and then go on to play as if they blundered it'.

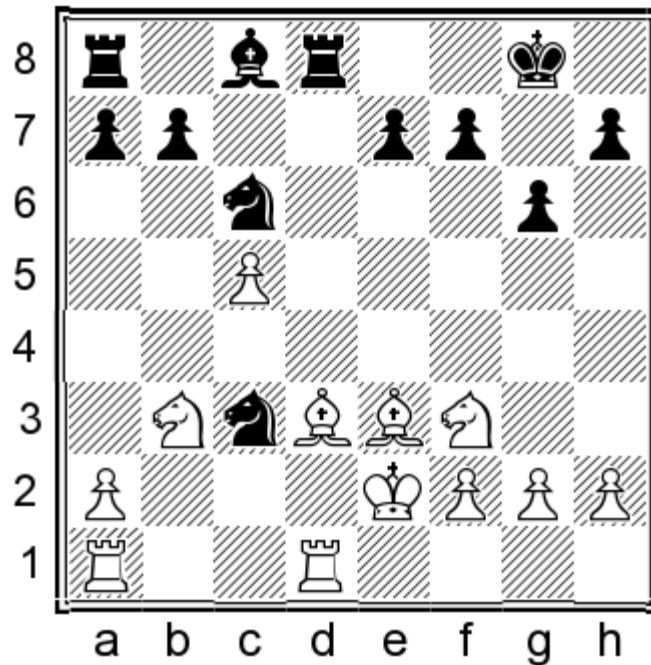
14.♞hd1

14.♞ac1 e5 15.♞hd1 h6 16.♘fd2 f5 17.f3 ♙e6 18.♘c4



18...e4! 19.fxe4 fxe4 20.♙xe4 ♜xc3+ 21.bxc3 ♙xc4+ 22.♚f2 ♜f8+ 23.♚g1 ♜ae8=;  
 14.♙c2 a5 15.a4 ♙e6=

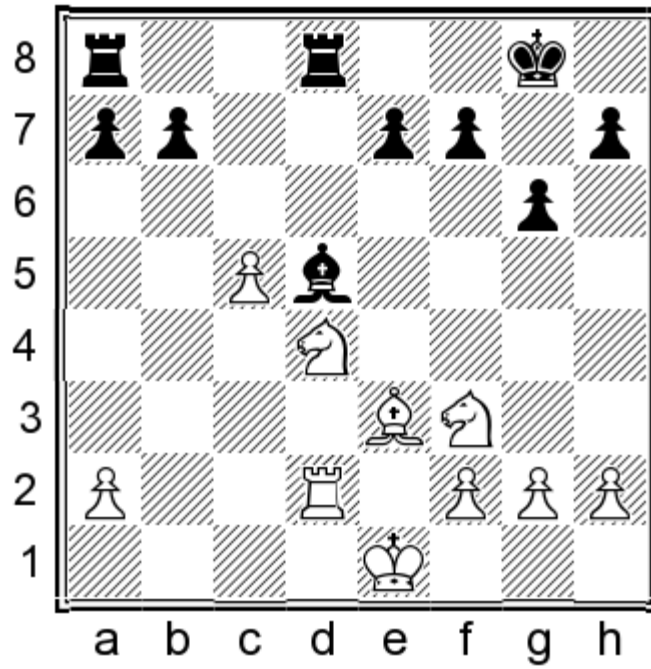
14...♙xc3!? 15.bxc3 ♜xc3+



16.♚f1

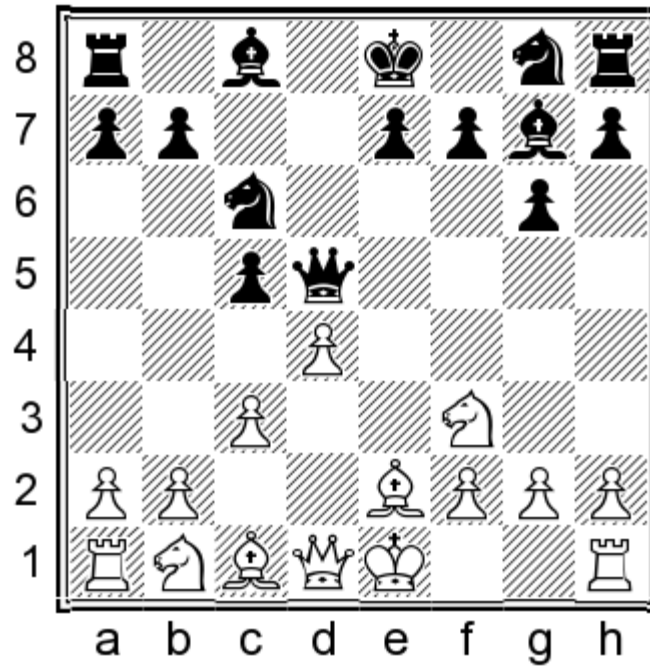
16.♚e1 ♜b4 17.♙e2 ♜c2+ 18.♚f1 ♜xd1 19.♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 20.♙xd1 ♜xe3+ 21.fxe3 ♙e6 22.♜fd4 ♙d5 23.♙f3 ♙xf3  
 24.gxf3 b6= A rook is no worse than two knights in the endgame.

16...♜xd1 17.♜xd1 ♜b4 18.♜bd4 ♜xd3 19.♜xd3 ♙e6 20.♜d2 ♙c4+ 21.♚e1 ♙d5=



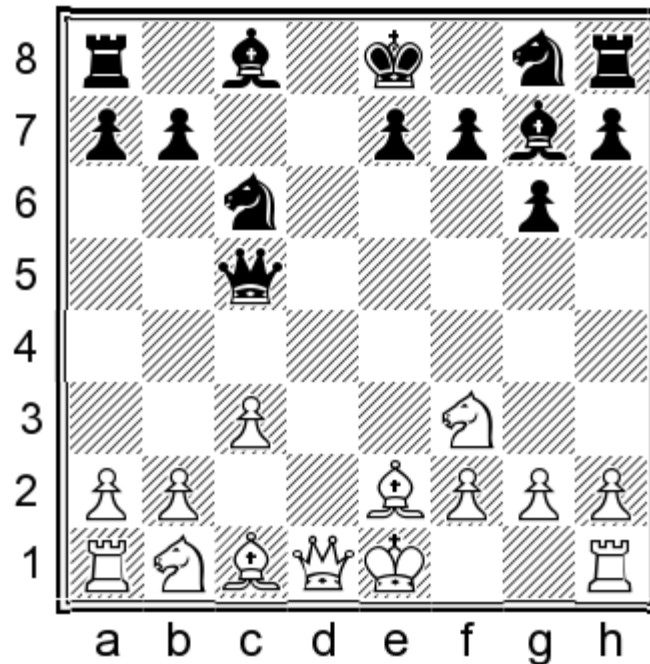
It may not be clear from the looks of this position, but it will be clear that Black is no worse, perhaps even to be preferred, once he achieves ...f7-f6 and ...e7-e5.

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♘f3 ♘c6!? 6.♙e2 ♙g7



7.c4

7.dxc5 We do not take on d1 this time because White can retain his castling rights by recapturing with the bishop.  
7...♖xc5



8.♘a3

(8.♙e3 ♖a5 9.0-0 ♘f6 10.♘a3 0-0 11.♘c4 ♖c7 12.♖c1 ♘d5 13.♙h6 e5=)

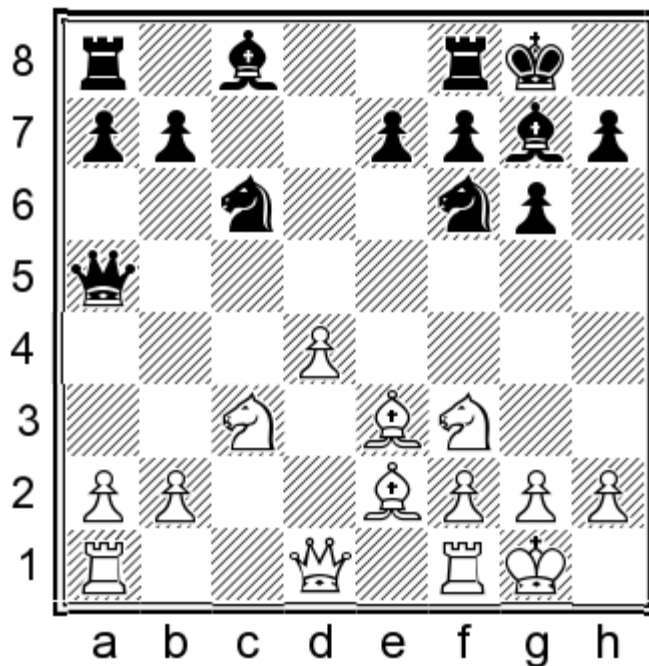
8... ♖f6 9. ♗b5 0-0 10. ♕e3 ♜f5=;

7. ♗a3 cxd4 8. ♗b5

(8.cxd4 ♗f6 9. ♗b5 0-0=)

8... ♜d8! 9. ♗fxd4 ♗xd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗f6 11. ♜a4+ ♕d7 12. ♜b4 ♜b6 13. ♜xb6 axb6 14. a3 0-0 15. 0-0 ♗d5 16. ♕c4 ♕c6  
17. ♖d1 e6=;

7. ♕e3 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗f6 9. ♗c3 ♜a5 10.0-0 0-0

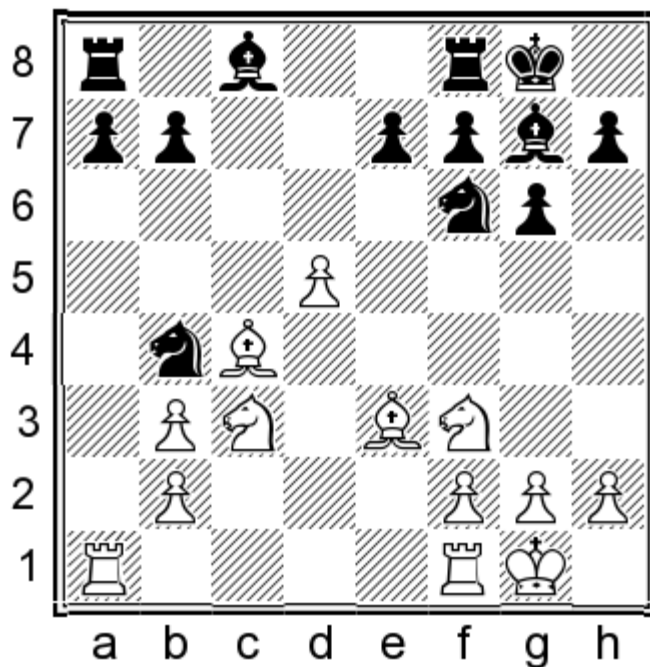


This is a well-known position from the Tarrasch Queen's Gambit Declined (Rubinstein Variation), with colors reversed.

Thus, White is effectively playing the Tarrasch QGD a tempo up here, but this tempo is only enough to allow him to equalize, and in fact I still prefer Black. 11. ♜b3

(11.a3 ♕e6 12.b4 ♜d8=)

11... ♜b4! 12.d5 ♜xb3 13.axb3 ♗b4 14. ♕c4



14...b5! 15.♗xb5

(15.♗c5 bxc4 16.♗xb4 cxb3 17.♗xe7 ♖e8 18.d6 ♗e6)

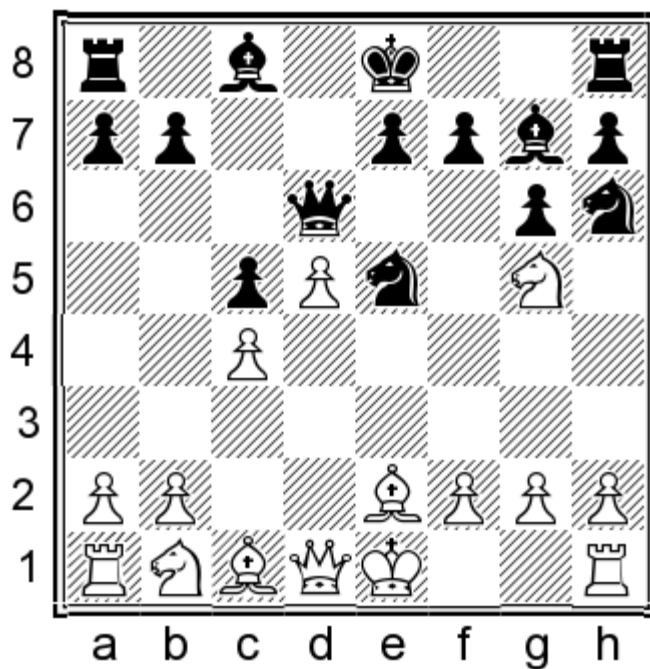
15...♗fxd5 16.♖xa7 ♗xe3 17.♖xa8 ♗xf1 18.♗xf1 ♗a6 19.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 20.♗c3 ♗xc4+ 21.bxc4 ♗d3=

### 7...♕d8!

The queen turns out to be happier on d8 than d6 because it won't come under attack from White's ♗b1-a3-b5 or ♗f3-g5-e4.

7...♕d6 8.d5 ♗d4

(8...♗e5 9.♗g5! (9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.♗c3 ♗f6 11.♗h6 ♗d7 12.h3 0-0-0=) 9...♗h6

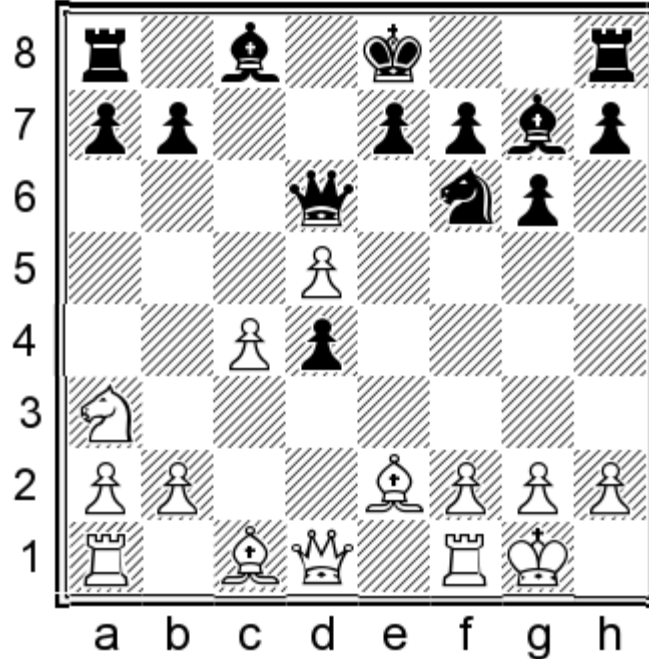


10. ♖e4 (10. ♖c3 ♗f5 11. ♗ge4 ♜c7=) 10... ♜b6 11. ♗bc3 ♗f5 12. 0-0 0-0 13. b3 ♗d4 (13... ♜d8 14. ♗b2 b6 15. ♜d2 ♗b7 16. ♞ae1±) 14. ♗b2 ♗d7 (14... f5 15. ♗a4±) 15. f4 f5 16. fxe5 fxe4 17. e6±

9. ♗xd4!

(9. ♗c3 ♗xf3+ 10. ♗xf3 ♗h6 11. 0-0 ♗f5⇌)

9... cxd4 10. 0-0 ♗f6 11. ♗a3!



11... 0-0 12. ♗b5 ♜b6 13. a4 ♗e4 14. ♗f3

(14. a5 ♜f6 15. ♗f3 ♗d6 16. ♗xd6 exd6 17. b4 ♗f5 18. c5 d3 19. ♞a3 ♜d4⇌)

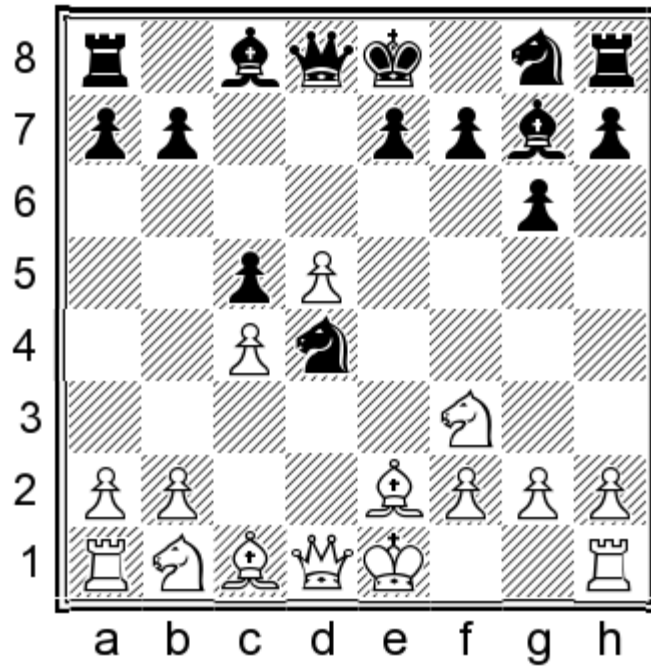
14... ♗d6 15. ♗xd6 exd6 16. b3±

(16. ♗e4±)

### 8.d5

8. dxc5 ♜xd1+ 9. ♗xd1 ♗e6 10. ♗e2 ♗h6 11. ♗c3 ♗f5 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♞d1 ♞fd8 14. ♗f4 ♗fd4 15. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 16. ♗d3 ♞ac8=

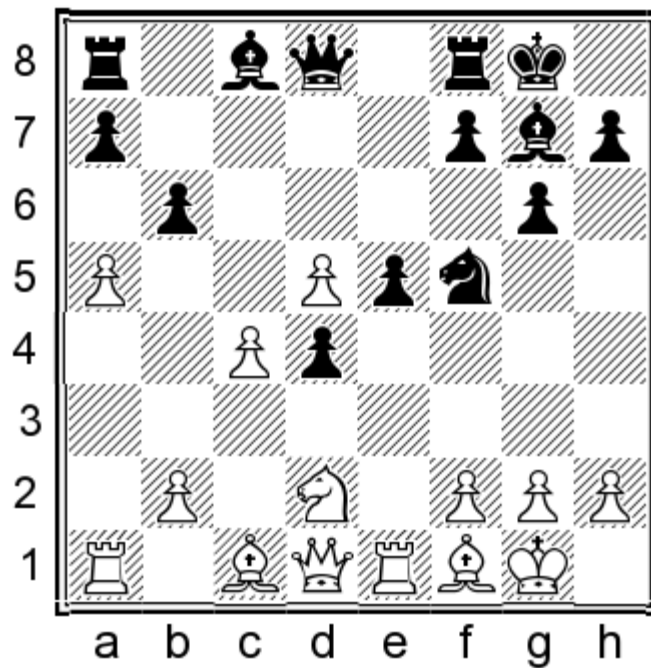
8... ♗d4



9. Nc3

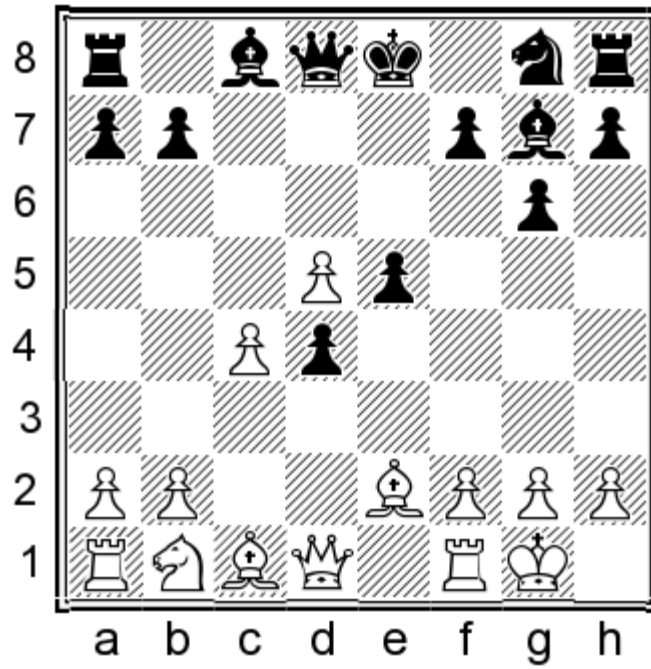
9. Nxd4 cxd4 10. 0-0

(10. Nd2 e5! (10...e6!? 11. Ne4 exd5 12. cxd5 Ne7 13. Bb5+ Qf8)) 11. 0-0 (11. f4 exf4 12. 0-0 Ne7=) 11... Ne7 12. Re1 0-0 The position is rich, and offers mutual chances. 13. Bf1 b6 14. a4 Nf5 15. a5



15...b5! 16. b3 Re8 17. Bd3 Rb8 18. Ba3 Nd6=)

10...e5!



It is very unclear which side's passed pawns are stronger here, but determining this over the board will certainly lead to an interesting fight.

(10...e6!? 11.♖e1 (11.dxe6 ♗xe6 12.♘a4+ ♘d7 13.♘xd7+ ♗xd7=) 11...♗e7 12.♘a4+ ♗d7 13.♘a3 0-0 14.♗g5 f6 15.♗d2 exd5 16.♗a5 b6 17.♗b4 ♖f7 18.♗f3 ♗f8∞)

11.♖e1

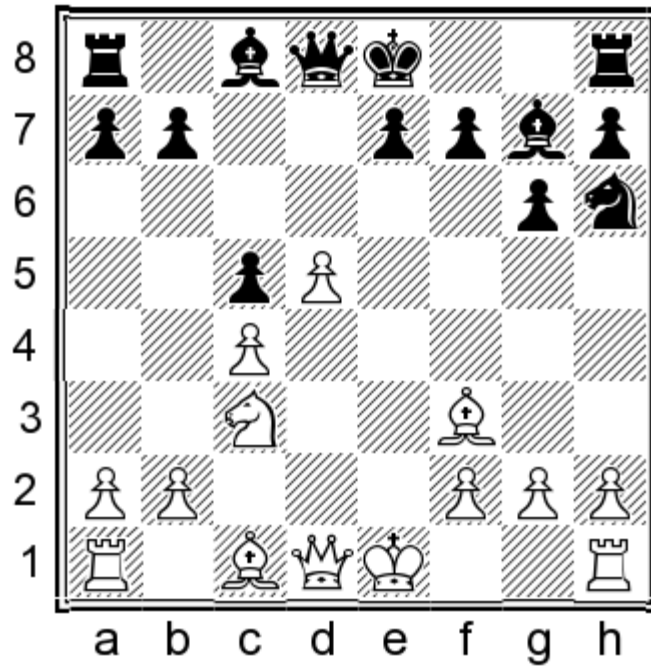
(11.dxe6 ♗xe6 12.♘a4+ ♘d7 13.♘xd7+ ♗xd7 14.♖e1 0-0-0=; 11.♗d2 ♗e7 12.♘a4+ ♗d7 13.♘b3 b6 14.f4 exf4 15.♗e4 0-0 16.♗xf4 ♗f5=)

11...♗e7 12.♗d3 0-0 13.a4 b6

(13...f5!? 14.f3 f4 15.♗d2 ♗f5↔)

14.b4 ♗f5 15.♗f1 ♖e8=

**9...♗xf3+ 10.♗xf3 ♗h6**



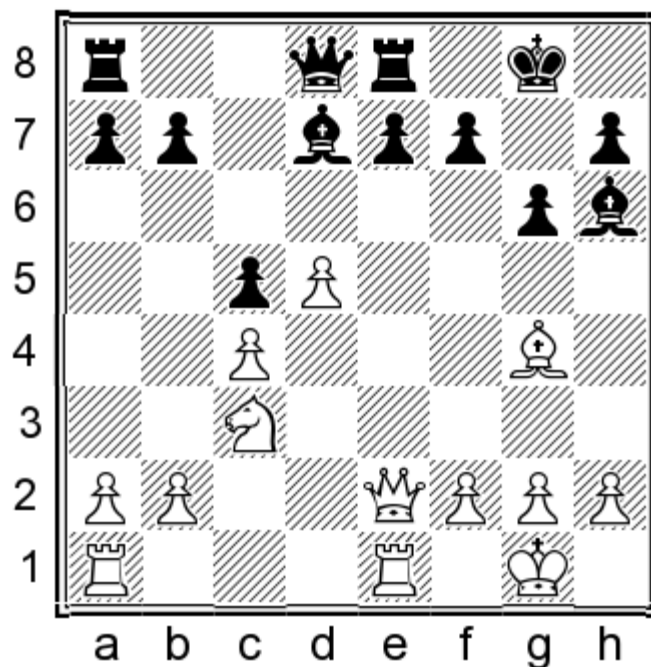
Once Black plants his knight on d4 he should be well positioned for anything White throws at him.

### 11.0-0

11.♙xh6 (The concept for this move is borrowed from a well known line in the English: 1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2 ♙g7 5.♗c3 d6 6.0-0 ♗h6 7.d4! cxd4 8.♙xh6! ♙xh6 9.♗xd4). 11...♙xh6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♞e1 ♙d7 14.♞e2

(14.♞b3 ♞b8 15.♞a3 b6=)

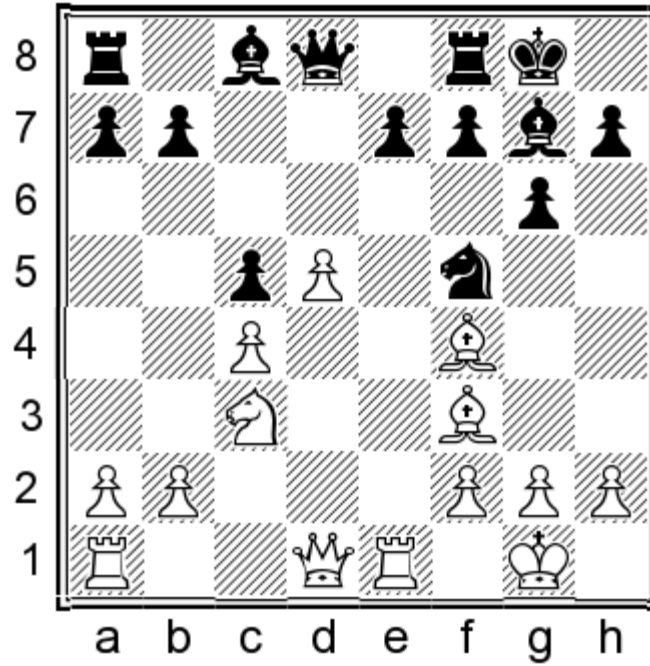
14...♞e8 15.♙g4



15...f5! 16.♙f3 a6 17.a4 ♞b8 18.a5 ♙g7=

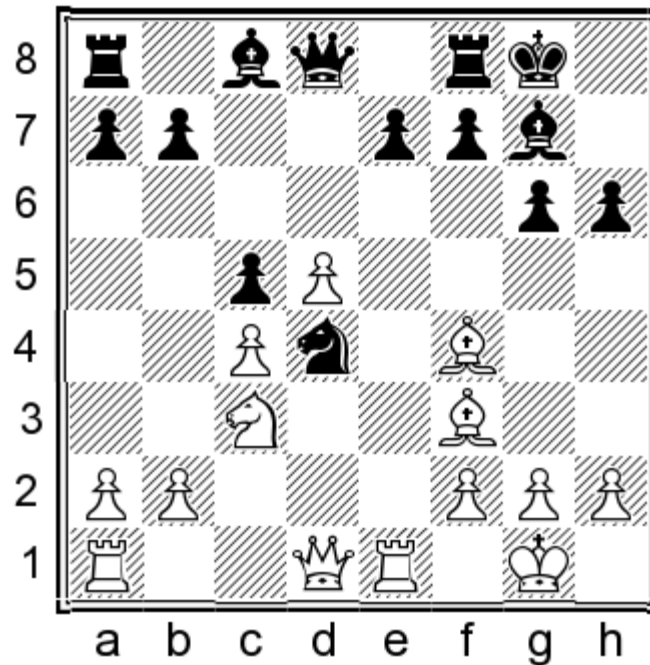
11...♗f5 12.♞e1 0-0 13.♙g5

13. ♖f4



White may do without provoking ...h7-h6, but Black continues in more or less the same way. 13... ♖d4 14. ♗e4 (14. ♖c1 a6 15. b3 ♖e8 (15... ♗d7?! 16. ♗g5 ♖e8? 17. d6±) 16. ♗e4 ♗d7 17. ♖d2 f5 18. ♗d3 e5 19. dxe6 ♗xe6=) 14... ♖e8 15. ♖c1 ♗d7 16. ♖d2 f5 17. ♗d3 e5 18. dxe6 ♗xe6 19. ♗e5 ♗c6=

13...h6 14. ♗f4 ♗d4

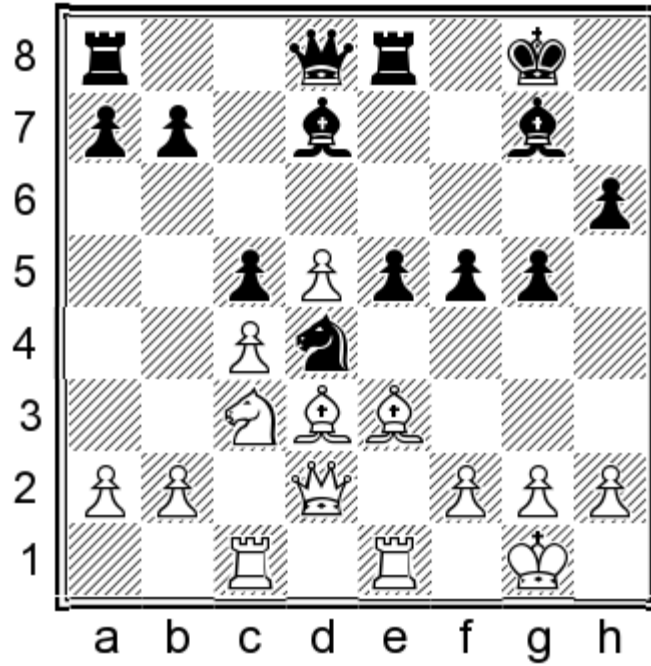


As in the Breyer Variation of the Maroczy, Black's knight on d4 is a nuisance for White to play around. The following variations illustrate some possible ways the game might continue, but in general Black can probably just figure things out over the board from here. The position is roughly equal.

15.♖c1

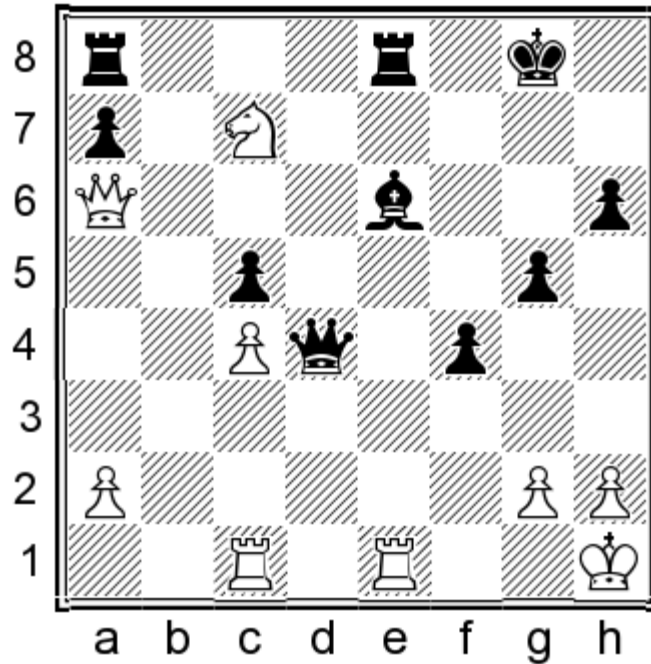
15.♙e4 g5 16.♙e3 e5 17.dxe6 ♗xe6↗

15...♙d7 16.♙e4 ♖e8 17.♚d2 g5 18.♙e3 f5 19.♙d3 e5!



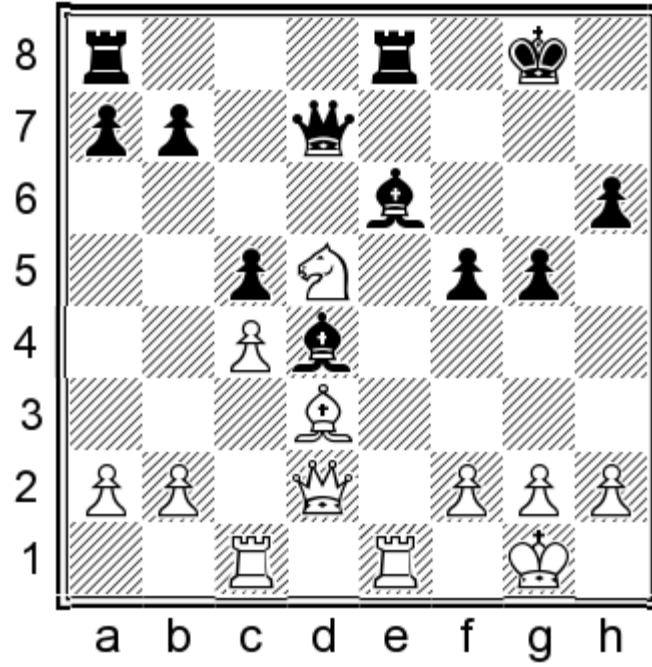
20.dxe6 ♗xe6 21.♘d5 ♚d7 22.♙xd4

22...b4 b6 23.bxc5 bxc5 24.♚a5 f4 25.♙xd4 ♙xd4 26.♘c7 ♚d8 27.♚a6 ♙xf2+ 28.♔xf2 ♚d4+ 29.♔f1 ♚xd3+ 30.♔g1 ♚d4+ 31.♔h1



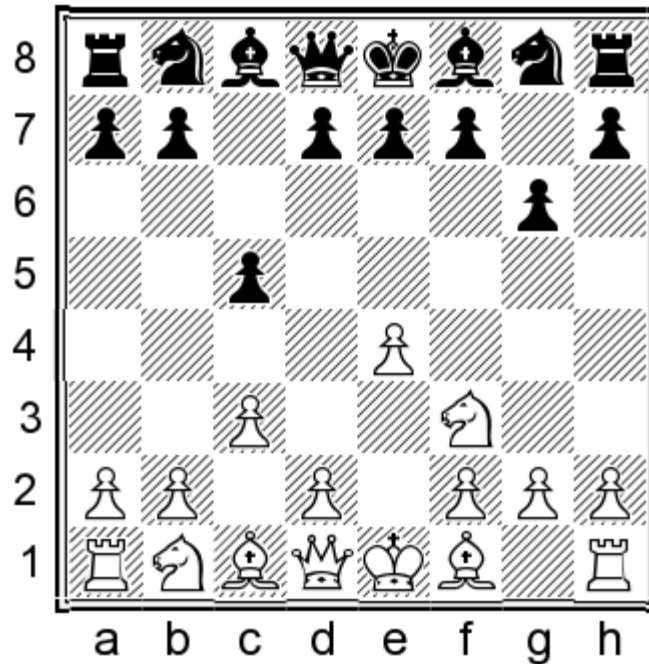
31...f3!! 32.gxf3 ♚f4 33.♚b7 ♖ab8 34.♘xe6 ♖xb7 35.♘xf4 ♖xe1+ 36.♖xe1 gxf4=

22...♙xd4



23.b4 b6 24.bxc5 bxc5 25.♞xe6 ♜xe6 26.♘c7 ♞f6 27.♘xa8 ♞xa8=

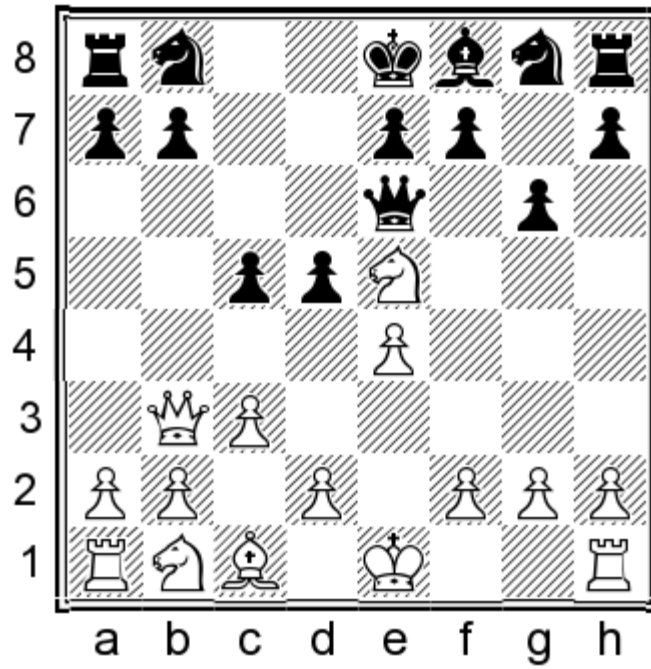
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3



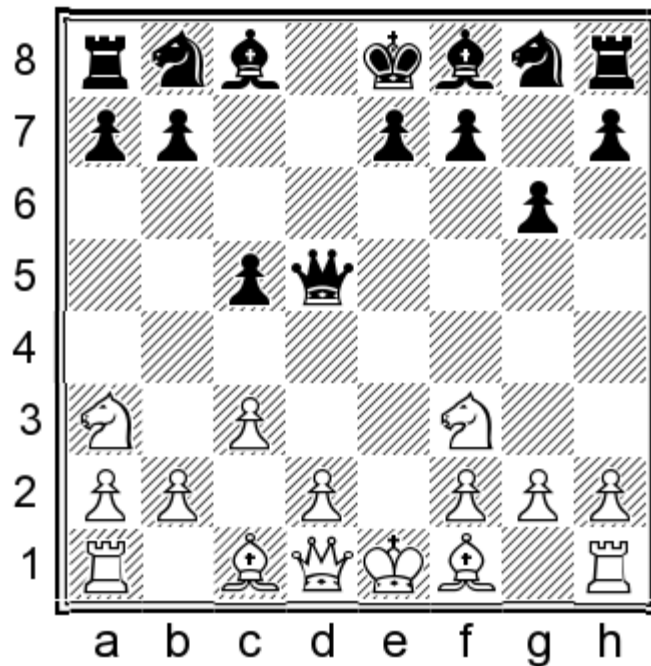
This move order is recommended by GM Sveshnikov in his book ‘The Complete c3 Sicilian’ as particularly effective against the system I am recommending against 2.c3. White’s idea is to delay d2-d4, so that after 3...d5 4.exd5 ♖xd5 White has the option of 5.♘a3, considered better for White by Sveshnikov. Black has two ways to transpose to the main line of this chapter: either play 3...d5 and allow Sveshnikov’s 5.♘a3, or play 3...♘c6 and allow a ‘delayed’ Rossolimo (4.♙b5). According to my analysis, either of these is fine for Black, but 3...♘c6 is more in keeping with my recommended repertoire for reasons I will make clear in this subchapter.

### 3...d5 4.exd5

4.♙b5+ This effectively leads to a forced draw, which may be (for some) another reason to prefer 3...♘c6. 4...♙d7  
 5.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 6.♘e5 ♖e6 7.♗b3!?



7... ♖xe5 8. ♗xb7 ♖xe4+ 9. ♔f1  
 (9. ♔d1?? ♗a4+ 10. b3 ♖c6--+)  
 9... ♗d3+ 10. ♔e1  
 (10. ♔g1? e6 11. ♗xa8 ♕d6+)  
 10... ♗e4+ 11. ♔f1=  
 4... ♗xd5 5. ♖a3



Sveshnikov is quite optimistic about White's chances: "White develops quickly and takes a firm grip on the initiative".  
 5.d4 ♖c6 This transposes to the main line of the Alapin (2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♗xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♖f3 ♖c6).

## 5...♟g7 6.d4

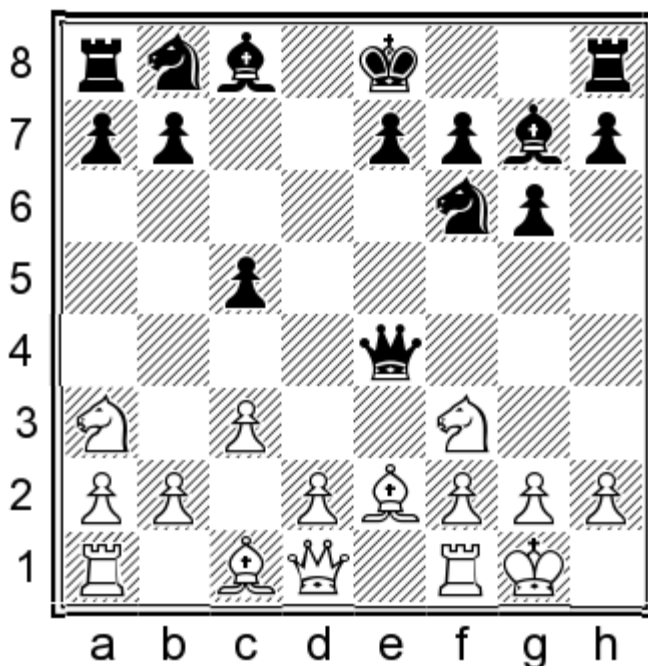
This transposes to 1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♘f3 ♟g7 6.♗a3, and I think it is fine for Black. However, I recommend (in the main line of the Alapin section) that Black plays 5...♗c6 instead of 5...♟g7, so this variation does not 'come up' in the main move order. That being said, I recommend 5...♗c6 because I don't like Black's position after 5...♟g7 6.♗bd2! which is not the case here, so some readers may prefer to allow this line rather than allowing a delayed Rossolimo with 3...♗c6.

6.♟c4 This is Sveshnikov's recommendation (following up with: 6...♞e4+ 7.♟e2). 6...♞e4+ 7.♟e2

**a)** 7.♞e2 ♞xe2+ 8.♟xe2 (8.♞xe2 a6! =) 8...♗f6 9.d4 (9.♗b5 ♗d5 =) 9...cxd4 10.♗xd4 0-0 11.0-0 ♖d8 12.♖d1 ♟d7 13.♟f3 ♗c6 =;

**b)** 7.♞f1 ♟e6 8.♟e2 ♗c6 9.♗g5 ♞f5 10.♗xe6 ♞xe6 11.♞b3 ♞d7 =;

7...♗f6 8.0-0



We have been following Sveshnikov's recommendations from his book, but here he only gives 8...0-0 which Miezis played against him in 2005. The improvement for Black was first played by Van Kampen in 2011.

**a)** 8.♗b5 ♞c6 9.d4 (9.♗e5 ♞b6 10.♗c4 ♞d8 11.d4 a6 12.♗ba3 b5 13.♟f3 ♖a7 14.♟f4 ♗fd7 =) 9...0-0 10.0-0 a6 11.♗e5 ♞b6 12.dxc5 (12.♗a3 ♟e6 =) 12...♞xc5 13.♞d4 ♗bd7 =;

**b)** 8.d4 cxd4 9.♗b5 (9.♗xd4 ♞xg2 10.♟f3 ♞h3 ♢; 9.♞xd4 ♞xd4 10.♗xd4 0-0 11.0-0 ♖d8 12.♖d1 ♟d7 13.♟f3 ♗c6 =) 9...0-0 10.♗bxd4 (10.♗c7 dxc3 11.♗xa8 ♗d5 -+; 10.♞xd4 ♞xd4 11.♗bxd4 ♟d7 12.0-0 ♗c6 13.♗b3 ♖ad8 14.♗c5 ♟c8 =) 10...♗c6 11.0-0 ♟g4 =;

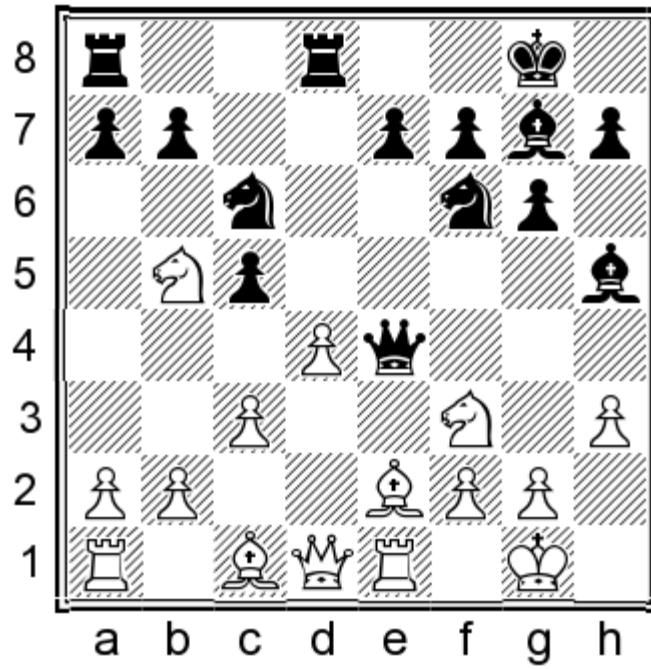
8...♗c6!

(8...0-0 9.d4 cxd4 10.♗xd4 ± Sveshnikov-Miezis 2005)

9.d4

**a)** 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♟c4 (10.♟b5 ♞d5 11.♟xc6 ♞xc6 12.♖xe7? ♟e6 ♢) 10...♞f5 11.♗c2 ♞h5 12.h3 (12.♟e2 ♖d8 =) 12...♖d8 13.♞e2 ♗d5 14.d4 cxd4 15.♗cxd4 ♗xd4 16.cxd4 ♟f6! = (16...e6? 17.♟g5 ±);

**b)** 9.♗b5 0-0 10.♖e1 ♖d8 11.d4 ♟g4! 12.h3 ♟h5!

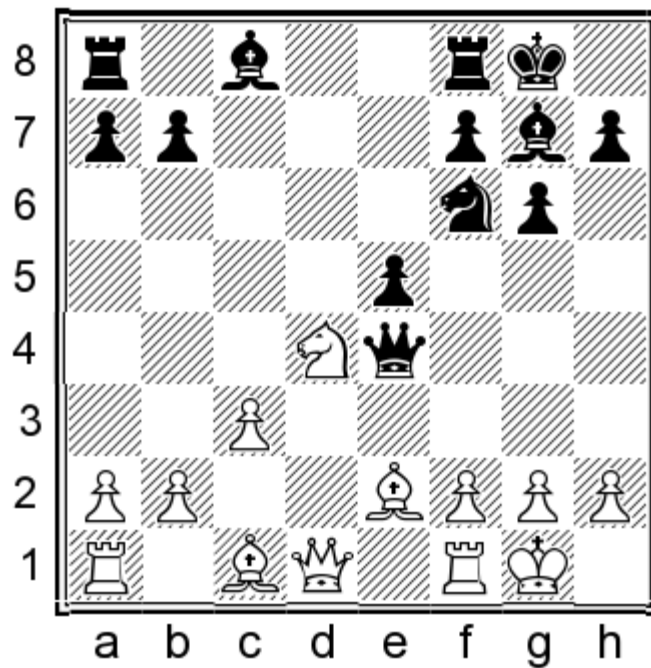


13. ♕e3 (13.g4? ♕xg4 14.hxg4 ♖xg4+ 15.♔f1 ♗h3+ 16.♔g1 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖d5) 13... ♗d5 14. ♖c1 ♗xe3 15. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 16.fxe3 ♕xf3 17. ♕xf3 cxd4 18.exd4 e5 19.dxe5 ♗xe5=;

9...cxd4 10. ♗b5

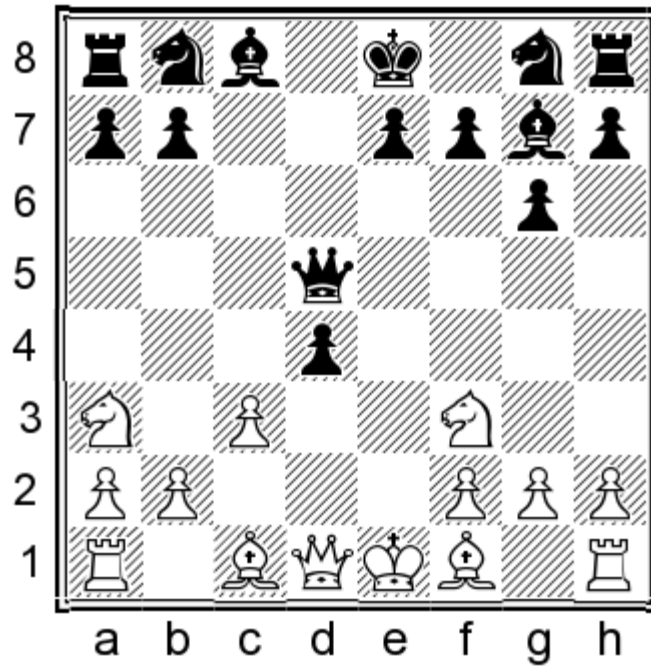
(10. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.cxd4 0-0 12. ♕f3 ♖f5 13. ♖e1 ♗d5=)

10...0-0 11. ♗fxd4 ♗xd4 12. ♗xd4 e5



13. ♗b5 ♖c6 14. ♖d6 ♕d7 15. ♖d1 a6 16. ♕g5 ♖ad8 17. ♗xc6 ♕xc6 18. ♗d6 h6 19. ♕h4 ♖d7 20. ♗c4 ♗d5 21. ♕g3 ♖e8 22.a4 ♗f4 1/2-1/2 (40) Michalczak,T (2325)-Van Kampen,R (2519) Dortmund 2011.

6...cxd4



7. ♖c4

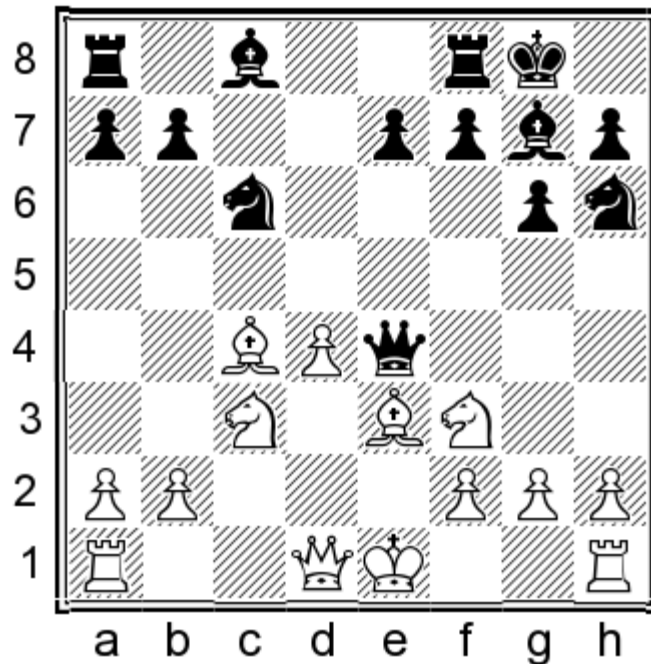
7. ♖b5 ♗a6 8. ♗bx4 ♗f6 9. ♖b5+ ♖d7 10. ♗e2 0-0 11. ♖xa6 bxa6= 12. ♗xa6?? e5 13. ♗e2 ♖b5 14. ♗a5 ♗d3 15. ♗g3 ♗h5-+

7... ♗e4+ 8. ♖e3 ♗h6

Not 8... dxe3?? 9. ♖xf7+ winning.

9. cxd4

9. ♗b5 0-0 10. cxd4 ♗c6 11. ♗c3



Black has two equally viable options here. 11...♞f5 is riskier, but perhaps more fun as it involves an unclear piece sacrifice. 11...♞g4!?

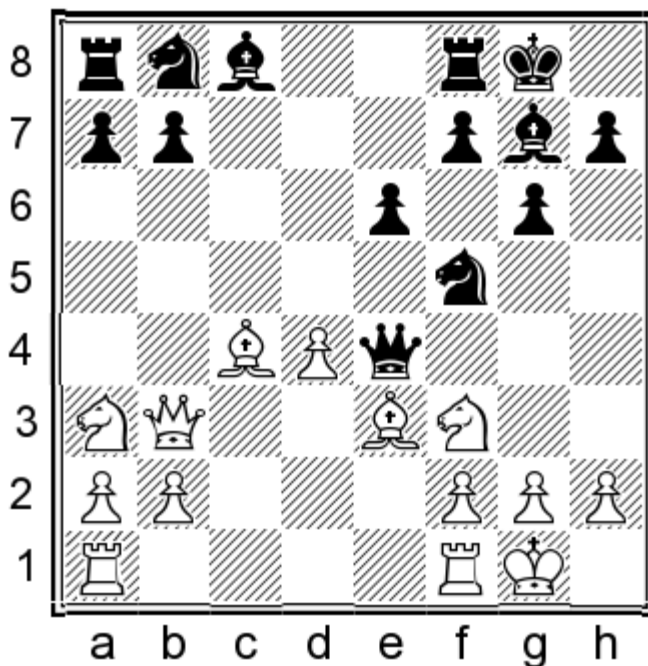
(11...♞f5!? 12.h3 (12.0-0 ♘g4 13.h3 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 e6= Black will be fine after he relocates his queen to e7 via f6.)  
 12...♞a5 13.g4 (13.d5 ♘e5 14.♘xe5 ♙xe5 15.♙xh6 ♙xc3+ 16.♚f1 ♙g7 17.♙xg7 ♚xg7 18.♞d4+ f6 19.♞e1 ♞b4=)  
 13...♘g4! 14.hxg4 ♙xg4=)

12.h3 ♞h5 13.♞d2

(13.0-0 ♘f5=)

13...♘g4 14.♙g5 h6 15.♙h4 ♘f6=

**9...0-0 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♞b3 e6**



I've seen some grandmasters in America play this line against lower rated players in Swiss tournaments presumably to obtain winning chances but in my view White is playing with little risk: the isolated pawn is inadequately blockaded, so it can always be pushed if White is content to neutralize the position.

**12.♞ae1**

12.♘b5 ♘c6 13.♘c3

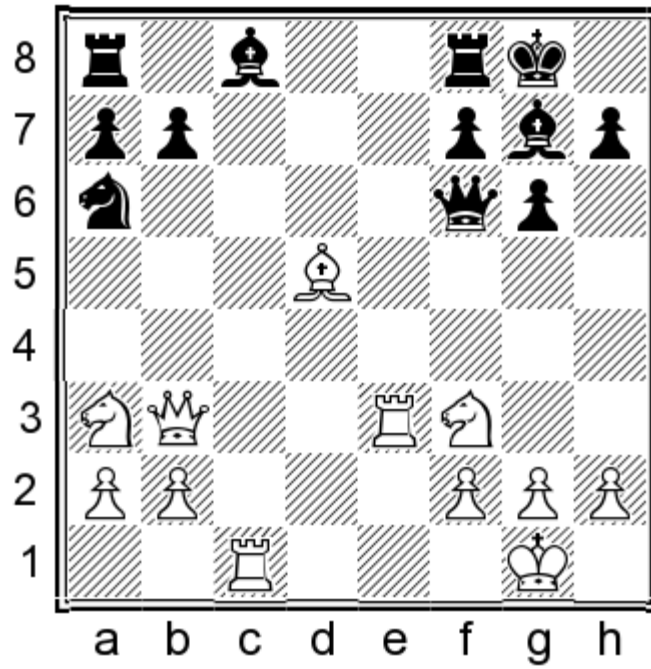
(13.♙d3 ♞d5 14.♞a3 ♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♞d8=)

13...♞g4 14.♙e2 ♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♞h5=

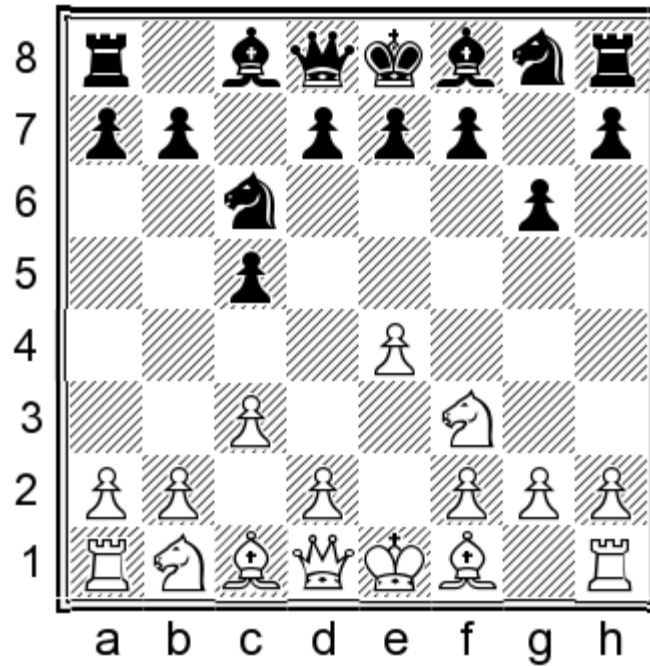
**12...♘xe3 13.♞xe3**

13.fxe3 ♘c6=

**13...♞f4 14.d5 exd5 15.♙xd5 ♘a6 16.♞c1 ♞f6=**



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.c3 ♘c6

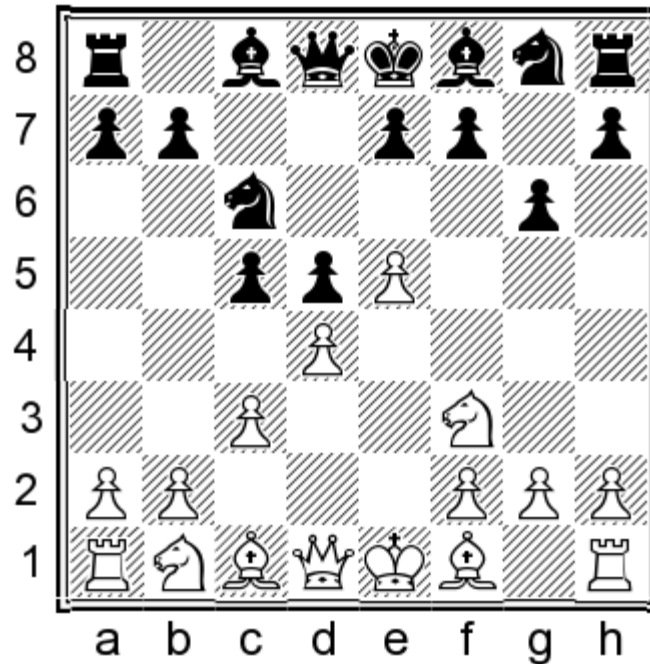


I prefer this move order, because I quite like the delayed Rossolimo (4.♗b5) for Black, especially if it is an Alapin player on the White side.

4.♗b5

This transposes to a harmless variation of the Rossolimo: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.c3.

4.d4 d5 5.e5



Aside from transposing to the main line of the Alapin subchapter with 5.exd5, this is White's only serious attempt at playing for an advantage. However, I prefer Black in the tense struggle which ensues.

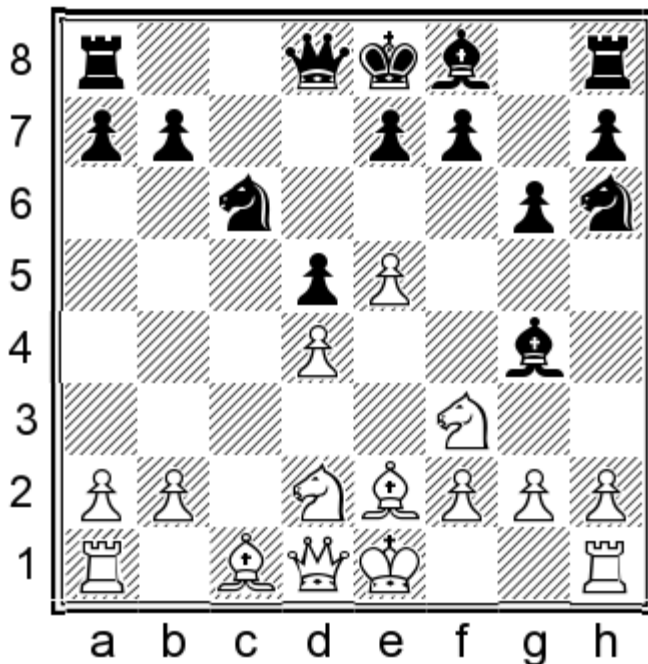
(5.dxc5 This offers White no advantage whatsoever. 5...dxe4 6.♖xd8+ ♜xd8 7.♞d4 ♙g7 8.♙b5+ ♙d7 9.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 10.0-0 ♞c6 11.♞d1 ♞xd4 12.cxd4 f5 13.♞c3 ♜e6! 14.d5+ ♜f7=; 5.exd5 ♖xd5 This transposes to 1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.d4 g6 5.♞f3 ♞c6.)

5...cxd4 6.cxd4 ♙g4 Black has ideas of ...♖d8-b6, ...♞g8-h6-f5, etc. The position plays itself. 7.♙e2

a) 7.♞bd2 ♞h6 8.h3 ♙xf3 9.♞xf3 ♞f5 10.♖a4 (10.g4 ♞g7=) 10...a6 11.♙d3 ♖d7 12.♙xf5 ♖xf5 13.♖b3 ♖d7=;

b) 7.♙b5 ♖b6 8.♙xc6+ ♖xc6 9.0-0 e6 10.h3 ♙xf3 11.♖xf3 ♙g7 12.♞c3 ♞e7 13.♙g5 ♞f5 14.♞e2 h6 15.♙d2 0-0=;

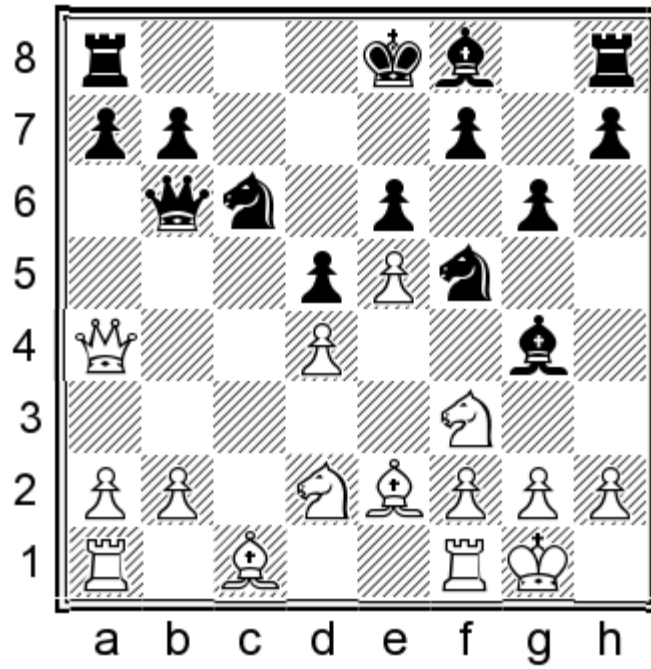
7...♞h6 8.♞bd2



GM Hoyos now faltered against Topalov with 8...f6?! but he would have had a slightly preferable position after 8...♞f5. 8...♞f5

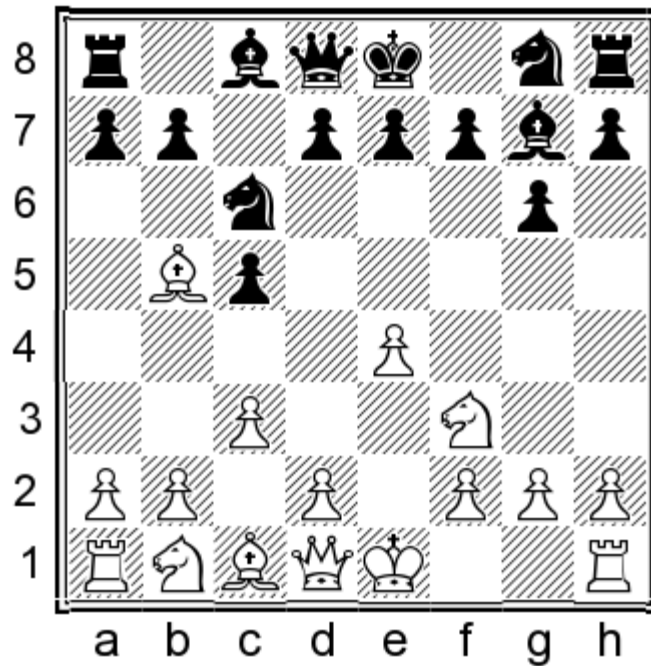
(8...f6?! 9.exf6 exf6 10.0-0± Topalov-Leon Hoyos, Mexico 2010)

9.0-0 ♖b6 10.♖a4 e6=



Black is ready to set up the 'V'-structure with ...h7-h5, and it is unclear whether White has anything other than defensive ambitions.

4...♔g7

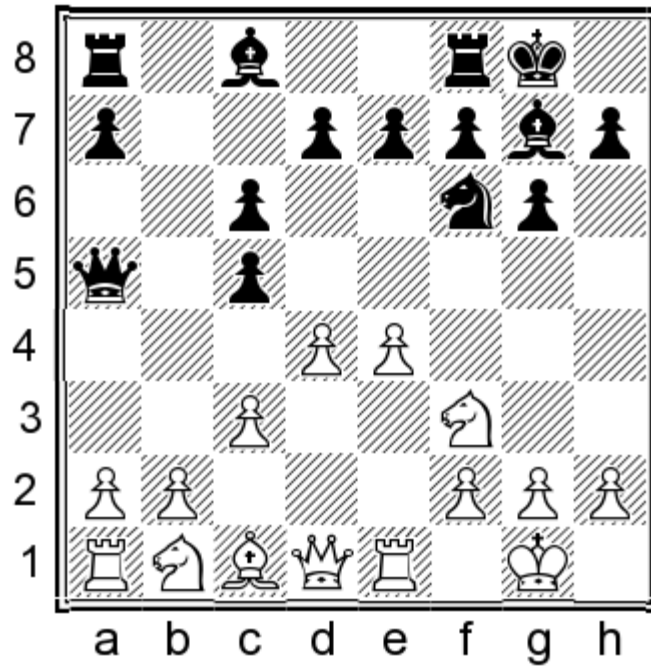


5.0-0

5.d4 ♖a5! 6.♙xc6 bxc6 7.0-0 ♘f6

(7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f6 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙d2 ♖b6 12.b3 d6 13.♞c1±)

8.♞e1 0-0



9.e5

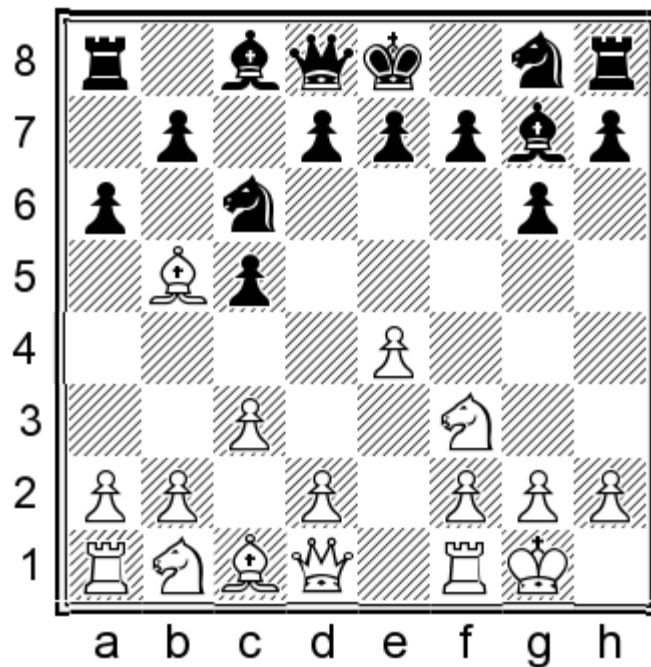
(9.♙g5 h6 10.♙h4 cxd4 11.cxd4 g5 12.♙g3 ♘h5↗)

9...♞d5 10.c4 ♞c7 11.dxc5 ♚xc5 12.b3 d6 13.♙b2 ♙g4=;

5.♙xc6?! This is premature, as Black planned to expend a tempo next move with ...a7-a6 inducing White to take on c6.

5...dxc6=

**5...a6!**



I very much like this move, which grew up in the 1960s in the arsenals of grandmasters Mednis, Taimanov, and Pirc. Black demands a decision from White, and the 'wasted' tempo on ...a7-a6 is not really a waste when we consider that White rarely couples ♙b5xc6 with c2-c3 in the Rossolimo.

## 6. ♖xc6

6. ♖a4 b5 7. ♖c2 d5 8. d4 cxd4 9. cxd4 ♖g4=

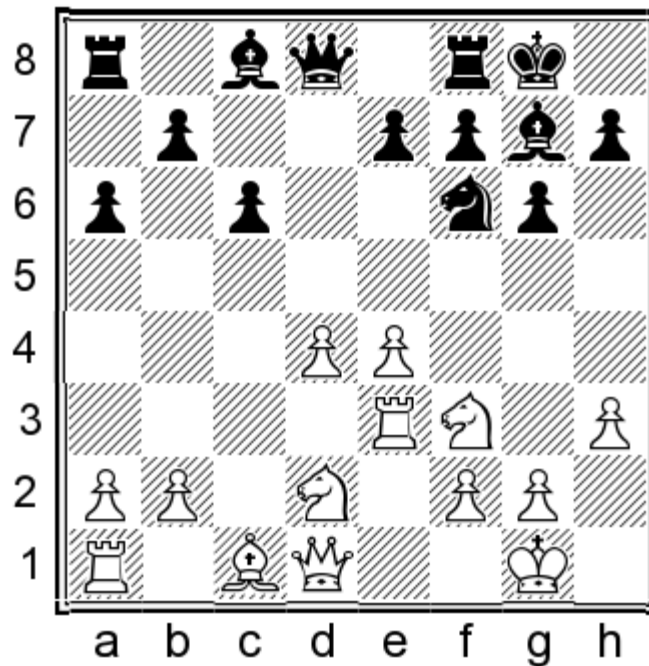
## 6...dxc6!

White wishes the c-pawn were on c2; on c3 it obstructs the natural square for the knight, and also weakens the d3-square. The only way for White to make sense of his position is to play for d2-d4.

6...bxc6 7. d4 cxd4 8. cxd4 ♗f6 9. ♗c3 0-0 10. ♖e1 d6 11. h3 ♖b8 12. ♕c2 ♕b6 13. b3±

## 7.d3

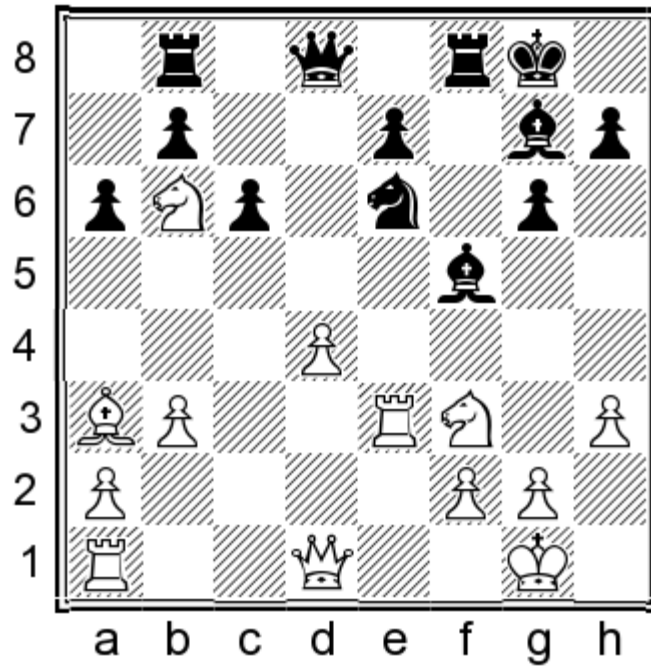
7. h3 ♕d3! 8. ♖e1 ♗f6 9. ♖e3 ♕d8 10. d4 0-0 11. ♗bd2 cxd4 12. cxd4



12...♗e8! A thematic idea for this structure: Black has his eye on the to-be d5 hole after an eventual ...f7-f5. From e8, the knight can reach d5 either via e8-d6-b5-c7-d5 or directly e8-c7-d5. 13. b3 ♗c7 14. ♗c4 f5 15. ♗b6 ♖b8 16. exf5

(16. ♗xc8 ♖xc8=)

16...♖xf5 17. ♖a3 ♗e6



18. ♖c4 ♗xd4 19. ♙xe7 ♚d5 20. ♙xf8 ♜xf8 21. ♗xd4

(21. ♗e1 c5)

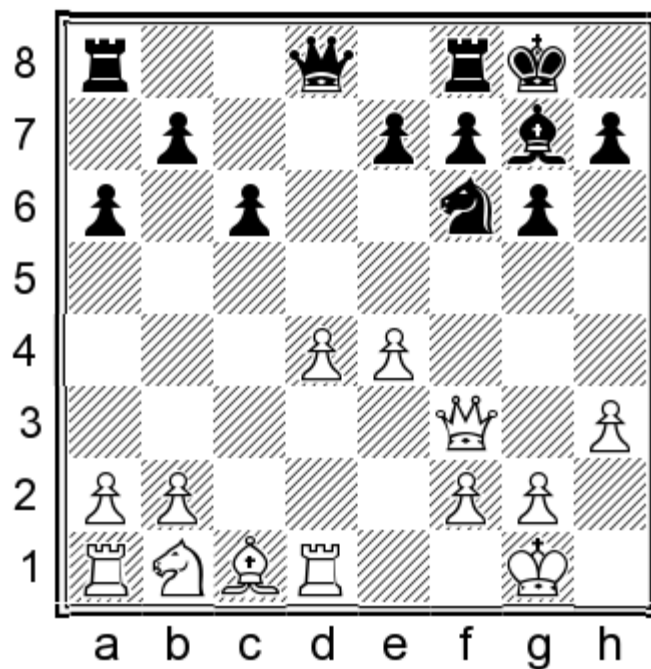
21... ♙xd4=;

7.d4?! cxd4 8.cxd4 ♙g4 9. ♗bd2 ♚xd4! 10. ♚b3 ♚d7 11. ♗g5 ♗h6 12.f3 ♚d4+ 13. ♖h1 ♙c8 14. ♜d1 ♚a7

7... ♙g4!? 8.h3 ♙xf3 9. ♚xf3 ♗f6

9...e5 10.a4 a5 11. ♗a3 ♗e7 12. ♙e3 b6 13. ♗c4 0-0 14. ♚g3 f6 15. ♜fd1±

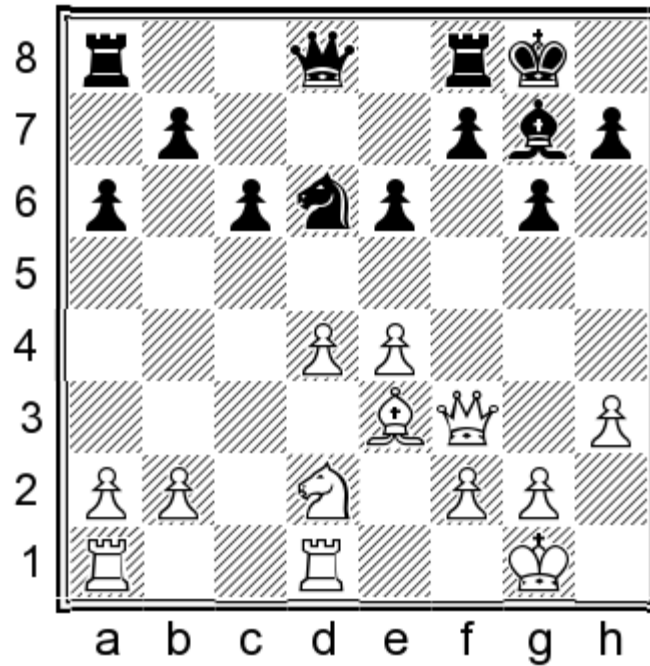
10. ♜d1 0-0 11.d4 cxd4 12.cxd4



12...♖e8!

A recurring theme.

13.♙e3 ♜d6 14.♞d2 e6



All of Black's pawns are on light squares; as such, he plans to occupy the light squared to-be hole on d5. For his part, White will seek dark-squared holes like d6 and c5 for his knight, but Black's dark squared bishop can protect these squares, whereas White's dark-bishop cannot protect White's corresponding weaknesses on the light squares.

14...f5!? 15.e5 ♜b5 16.♜b3 e6 17.♞c5 f4 18.♙c1 ♞xd4 19.♚e4 ♚e7∞

15.♙ac1 f5 16.e5 ♜b5 17.♚f4

17.♞c4? f4!±

17...♞c7 18.♞c4 ♞d5 19.♚f3 ♚f7=