

Alexander Khalifman

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The Modern Scotch



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The Modern Scotch

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Preface

The most “open” of all the Open Games

After a lengthy pause, I return once more to the literature of the chess openings. This was not an easy decision for me. I still believe that my work on the previous multi-volume books was of good quality. I tried to put my best efforts into it and I think I succeeded, at least to the best of my modest capabilities. But still there comes a moment when this hard creative work had to take a back seat, replaced by the monotonous conveyor-belt of other tasks in life... This is really tiring, believe me...

I needed a new concept for my return to work on chess. I gradually found it; in fact my life made me come back to it... Naturally, we are all very familiar with the classical division of the openings into Open games, Semi-open games and Closed openings. It is quite possible that back in the 19th century and even at the beginning of the 20th century this division corresponded more or less to the character of the struggle in these openings. But even in my youth I began to have the feeling that something was wrong with this categorisation. Firstly, even in the Closed openings things are often far from being dull and monotonous, while if we compare the Open games with the Semi-open games, where the fight is more concrete and sharper, it becomes quite obvious that the traditional classification is again somewhat inadequate. In fact, as a young player, this terminological contradiction seemed to me practically irrelevant and I accepted it as just another historical paradox.

After the Berlin system became tremendously popular at the beginning of the new century, in the basic lines of the Ruy Lopez most players with White began more and more often to prefer set-ups with the move d2-d3 (maybe because of the lack of a reasonable alternative...). In this situation the contradiction between the classical terminology and the real developments on the board makes no sense at all. Of course, the positions remain complicated, and there are numerous strategic nuances, but please – can that really be called an Open game? Then there came a moment when the main alternative to the Ruy Lopez for White became the closed Italian Game (it has been named the Giuoco Piano, after all...), so this tendency has become quite obvious.

All of this had little effect on the games in my own tournament practice. I have always tried to have a universal style of play and, for the reasons I have already explained, I chose 1.d4 as my basic first move, after which I have had no problems reaching sharp concrete positions. Nevertheless, later, when my main chess activity became acting as a coach to chess players at the top level, this problem became really serious.

Here's a typical conversation which I have had in recent years, and numerous times at that:

– Hey boss, what am I supposed to do with White tomorrow after 1.e4 e5?

- Well, you can try the anti - Berlin, there is a relatively new scheme against it, but, you know, things are far from simple there...
 - Oh man, this anti - Berlin system gives me headaches. I wouldn't like to play it. Is there anything else reasonable at all?
 - Hm-m-m..., there is an interesting new order of moves in the Italian Game. It might not really be quite new, but there are a lot of nuances which are not so easy to notice.
 - Oh-h-h, in the Italian Game my entire body hurts.... Could you think up something else for me, even if just for one game?
 - Well... in that case...
- I kept having to find a solution to such problems, and this took time, but I usually managed to find something just for one game. But the problem persisted and it required serious work.

So, little by little, a solution was found. The most "open" of all the Open Games turned out to be the Scotch Game. I am presenting it to you with this book. I believe that nowadays this is the only really Open Game, in its essence, which matches the traditional terminology.

I can anticipate that some people will not agree with me. What about the King's Gambit and or the Danish Gambit? These are much more open. This is true, I agree, but both of these, along with various other inventions of the romantic age of chess, are unsuited to the pragmatic tendencies of contemporary chess at the top level. My classical chess education has programmed me to look for an opening advantage with White and in the above-mentioned gambits exactly which side would be fighting for an advantage would be far from clear...

So what led to my decision about the Scotch Game? This is in fact a rhetorical question. It is the move 3.d2-d4, which departs immediately from the symmetry in the opening; White tries to occupy the centre and gain additional space. Black also has his resources though, and the details of this opening struggle will be covered in this book with all due attention.

Rapid contact between the opposing forces takes place, in fact much quicker than in the other open (and not only open...) games, which increases the value of every move and requires from both sides tremendous accuracy at a very early stage of the game. There is another factor to be taken into account. The opening struggle is also characterised by the fact that positions with castling on opposite sides arise much more often in the Scotch than in all the other Open Games put together. There are no compromises in a fight of this type and the outcome of the game is often decided by direct attacks against the enemy king.

Of course I do not assert that the Scotch should be the universal way of countering 1.e4 e5 for every player and I do not believe that after the publication of this book the move 3.d4 will necessarily become more popular than 3.Bb5 and 3.Bc4. Nevertheless I think that for players who wish to enter sharp and concrete positions this book will give strong

encouragement to base their opening repertoire on the Scotch, while for other players it provides the possibility of widening their opening repertoires. There is also another important consideration here; as a rule, players who as Black usually prefer the move 1...e5 are looking forward to a quiet manoeuvring game, so the Scotch may come as rather unpleasant surprise to them. Even if we ignore the effect of surprise, for players who prefer to base their opening play mostly on common sense, the move 3.d4 will hardly be the source of positive emotions.

Finally, I should like to add that in general I believe that chess, from the mathematical point of view, is doubtless a drawish game – i.e. if both sides play perfectly then the game should end in a draw. The current situation in opening theory is that White can hardly obtain any serious advantage in almost any opening. That may sound to you a rather banal statement, but my experience in writing the series “Opening for White According to Anand” taught me a lot. Subsequently on the Internet I read numerous times comments like “Khalifman has written that he has refuted the French Defence, but this can’t be true...” etc., so I ought to clarify things a little... I have not refuted the French Defence and with this book I do not assert that the Scotch Game wins for White after the moves 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6. The essence of the book is to generalise from all the accumulated experience and indicate the directions in White should strive to obtain an advantage in this opening.

It may seem that Black’s situation is quite secure in the field of fighting for equality in the opening, but it is still up to White to fight for the advantage. This is because the right to make the first move presents White with the chance to choose his preferred character of the battle and to create chances for the opponent to make mistakes. It is all in your hands, and I hope that the information that you will find in this book will help you to enter interesting positions and to obtain optimal results in them. I wish you success!

*Alexander Khalifman
St Petersburg*

Part 1

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4

In the first part of our book we analyse all the answers for Black on move 4 except the two main lines – 4..Bc5 and 4...Nf6. The fact is that all these various sidelines flout at least one of the basic principles of the chess openings. Either they do not contribute to the harmonious development of the pieces, or else they do not fight actively enough for the centre. Therefore, in general, Black will struggle to equalise in these lines. In many variations he can obtain a solid (although usually very passive) position, but in some lines White needs to play very precisely and concretely in order to maintain an advantage in the opening.

The following data illustrates quite well the fact that in the database the percentage of the games in which Black has refrained from the moves 4...Bc5, or 4...Nf6 is about 25%. Furthermore, if we include only the games in which masters or even stronger players are Black, then this percentage falls to 15%. Finally, if we confine this statistic to the grandmaster level, then it amounts to a mere 10%. So, in general, we can assert convincingly that if you play the Scotch Game with White, it will be good news for you if Black avoids the two main lines.

We have dealt with all the second-rate moves for Black in our first chapter. These moves cannot create any real problems for White and he can calmly obtain a comfortable advantage just by

playing simple developing moves. We just need to mention here the move 4...Nxd4, not because it has any real pluses, but simply because it is very often played at amateur level... In general, the idea that by trading pieces you come closer to equality and an eventual draw is just ridiculous, not only in principle, but also in this particular case... Still, not everybody is aware of this...

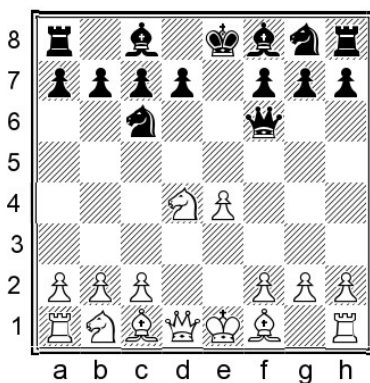
In our second chapter we have analysed the sharp variation – 4...Qh4. Many years ago this line was considered to be one of the most critical (it would be sufficient to mention here that Steinitz used to play it, and quite successfully at that...), but that is now all in the past. The contemporary evaluation of this line is as follows: Black's tricky queen-sortie brings White two items of news – one good and one bad... The bad news is that White will have a problem maintaining material equality. But the good news is that White does not need to count pawns! After White's clearly best line 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Be2!, Black will be faced with a serious problem – how to come out of the opening with even a relatively acceptable position. Still, having all this in mind, amazingly the move 4...Qh4 is still played sometimes at master level; not very successfully though...

In chapter three we analyse the rather specific variation – 4...g6. The players of the classical period of chess did not play like this. During the middle of the 20th century, however, openings such as the King's Indian Defence and the Dragon variation of the Sicilian Defence became very fashionable. This influenced the choice of the move 4...g6 for Black. It is

relatively easy to recommend to White what he should do and that is: Nc3, Be3, Qd2, 0-0-0, f3 and later, following the steps of Robert Fischer: “h2-h4-h5 and mate!”. All this might seem a bit schematic, but it works very effectively in practice. It is also worth mentioning here that in comparison with the Dragon variation of the Sicilian Defence, in the Scotch Black has a pawn on c7, which hinders him from organising effective counterplay: 1) the c-file is closed and 2) it is difficult for him to activate his queen quickly.

Everything we have mentioned so far no doubt deserves attention and thorough study, but in practice you will not often face these lines. However, you do need to study thoroughly the final two final chapters of this section, because right up to the present day Black has made persistent attempts to demonstrate the relative and even the absolute correctness of these lines.

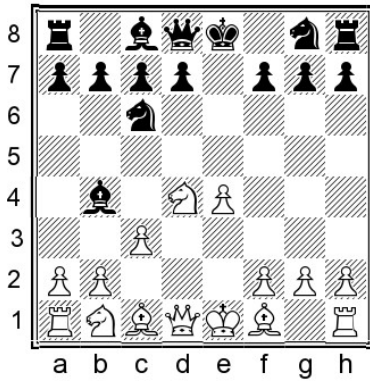
In chapter four we analyse the variation 4...Qf6.



You need to treat this move quite seriously, as it has been used by Carlsen and Ivanchuk, even as mature grandmasters, as well as by some other eminent players. The point of this idea is quite clear: Black is trying to improve on

the 4...Bc5 variation. Now, after 5.Nxc6 Bc5 or 5.Be3 Bc5, play transposes to well-known theoretical variations in which Black obtains a quite acceptable position, whereas (unlike after 4...Bc5) the retreat of White's knight to the b3-square would not gain a tempo. Nevertheless, the retreat of the knight to b3 still makes some sense, but after 5.Nb3 Qg6!? we have failed to find any promising lines for White. We have therefore decided to recommend the less popular but rather insidious move 5.Nf3!? After this the defects of the early sortie of Black's queen will be emphasized permanently and Black must play very precisely, otherwise he is likely to encounter serious difficulties early in the opening stage of the game. If Black copes with these problems, complicated and relatively unexplored positions arise, in which White has a space advantage and more harmoniously deployed pieces.

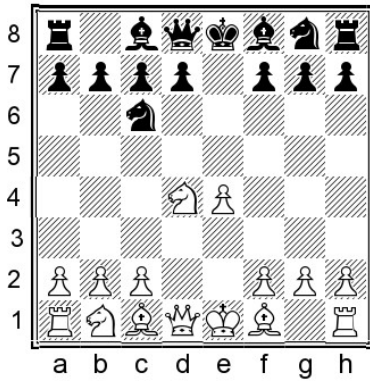
Finally, in Chapter 5 we shall deal with the variation with 4...Bb4+. This move also requires very serious treatment, not least because it has been played recently by Carlsen, as well as by Kramnik, Aronian, Svidler and Adams, although most of these games were played with a shortened time-control. The bishop check may seem at first sight to be a loss of tempo, since after the natural move 5.c3 Black's bishop has to retreat.



Yet there is a very rational idea behind it, because White's pawn on c3 deprives his queen's knight of its natural development square. Nevertheless, White has many other plans to develop his pieces harmoniously, either without the move Nc3, or with the set-up c4 + Nc3, depending on where Black's bishop retreats on move 5. White maintains a stable positional advantage in all lines, but he must know the theory well and have a deep understanding of how to handle a position with this pawn-structure.

Chapter 1

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4



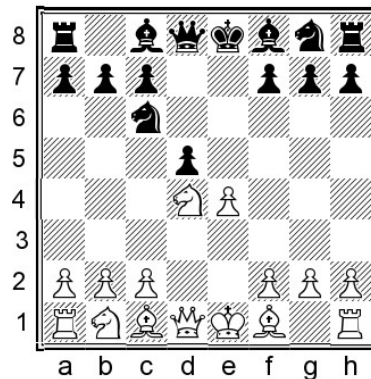
The diagrammed position is basic for our study of the Scotch Game. Black has several popular alternatives, but in this chapter we will analyse only some seldom played lines: **A) 4...d5**, **B) 4...d6**, **C) 4...Be7**, **D) 4...Nxd4** and **E) 4...Nge7**.

He has also tried the move 4...Qe7, introduced into the tournament practice, back in the year 1894, by the first World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz. This move is obviously bad, because it contradicts the main principles of the mobilisation of pieces in the opening and also impedes the development of Black's kingside. 5.Nc3 Nf6 (About 5...Nxd4 6.Qxd4 – see variation **D**; 5...d6 6.Be2 Nf6 7.Bg5 – see 5...Nf6; 6.Bf4!? Nf6 7.Bb5 Bd7 8.0-0±, with the idea after 8...0-0-0?!, to destroy the pawn-shelter of the enemy king: 9.Bxc6 bxc6 10.Qd3 Kb7 11.b4,) 6.Be2!? (It is also good for White to play here immediately 6.Bg5. Black will have great problems to get rid of the pin of this knight: 6...Qe5 7.Bxf6 gxf6 8.Nf3±, or 6...h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Ndb5 Qe5 9.Nd5 Qxe4+?! 10.Be2 Kd8 11.0-0±) 6...d6 (6...Qb4? 7.Ndb5 Qa5 8.Bf4

d6 9.Bd2+- Vasile – Nagy, ICCF 2007; 6...Nxe4 7.Nd5 Qd8 8.Nb5 Bd6 9.Bf3 Nc5 10.Nxd6+ cxd6 11.0-0 0-0 12.b4±) 7.Bg5 Bd7 (7...Be6 8.Nd5 Bxd5 9.exd5 Nxd4 10.Qxd4± Black has problems with his development, because of the unfavourable position of his queen on the e7-square.) 8.Ndb5 Be6 (8...0-0-0 9.Nxc7!±) 9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nd5 Bxd5 11.exd5 Ne5 12.0-0± Ivanisevic – Tomic, Budva 2004. Black's kingside pawn-structure is hopelessly compromised and the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board only increases the effect of White's actions on the light squares.

A) 4...d5

Black is reluctant to comply with the role of the defending side and inflicts a counterstrike in the centre.



5.Bb5

5.exd5 Qxd5 6.Qe2+ Be6 7.Nxe6 fxe6 (7...Qxe6 8.Qxe6+ fxe6 9.Bb5² Dancevski – Organdziev, Skopje 2011) 8.Nc3 Bb4 9.Bd2 Qf5 10.Qb5 0-0-0, Manelidou – Organdziev, Skopje 2013, 11.Bd3!?, with a slightly preferable pawn-structure for White.

5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.exd5 Qxd5 (6...cxd5? 7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Qxd5±) 7.Bd3 Qe5+ 8.Qe2 Qxe2+ 9.Kxe2 Bd6 10.Nd2 Ne7 11.Nc4 Bf5 12.Rd1 0-0-0 13.Be3 Bxd3+ 14.Rxd3 Nd5, Drenchev – Organdziev, Cetinje 2012, 15.Rad1!? Rhe8 16.Kf3 Nxe3 17.Nxe3², with a minimal edge for White due to the defects of Black's queenside pawn-structure.

In both lines White's fight for the minimal advantage is connected with simplifications. The bishop move to b5 aims at the continuation of the fight for obtaining an edge in the middlegame.

5...dxe4

After 5...Qd6?! 6.Nc3±, the exposed placement of the enemy queen provides White with additional tempi for the development of his initiative.

The move 5...Bd7 loses a pawn for Black. 6.exd5 Nxd4 7.Bxd7+ Qxd7 8.Qxd4 Nf6 (8...0-0-0 9.c4±; 8...c6, Kasc – Tasdemir, Goynuk 2018, 9.Nc3±) 9.Nc3 Be7 (After 9...c5 10.Qe5+ Be7 11.Bf4 0-0 12.d6±, White's extra d-pawn becomes even more important.) 10.0-0 (10.Bg5!? 0-0 11.0-0-0±) 10...c6 (10...0-0 11.Bf4 Rfd8 12.Rad1 Ne8 13.Rfe1 Nd6, Plenkovic – Belinic, Pula 2002, 14.h3±) 11.Bf4!? (11.Re1, Kasparov – Prasinou, Corfu (simul) 1996, 11...0-0 12.Bf4²) 11...cxd5 12.Rad1± Black has restored temporarily the material balance, but White captures the enemy d5-pawn with his next move.

Black can maintain the tension with the move 5...Nge7, but it impedes the development of his kingside. 6.Nc3 (White can also enter a better endgame with the line: 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Ba4 Ba6 8.Nc3 Qd6 9.Be3 0-0-0 10.Qd4 c5 11.Qxc5 Qxc5 12.Bxc5 dxe4 13.Bxa7 Ng6 14.Bb5²) 6...dxe4 (6...Bd7? 7.exd5 Nxd4 8.Qxd4 Bxb5 9.Nxb5±) 7.Bg5 f6. Here, White can obtain a considerable advantage in a very convincing way: 8.Bxf6! (8.Be3 a6, Rausis – Shaaban, Cairo 2003, 9.Ba4²) 8...gxf6 9.Qh5+ Ng6 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Bxc6+ Bd7 12.Bxe4 f5 13.Bxa8 Qxa8 14.0-0-0± Luksic – Bystrick, ICCF 2016.

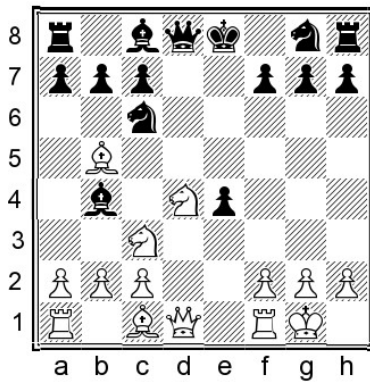
6.Nc3

It is essential that after 6.Nxc6 Qxd1+ 7.Kxd1 a6 8.Ba4 Bd7÷, Black regains temporarily the sacrificed piece.

6...Bb4

The move 6...Bd7 is too passive. 7.0-0 Nf6 (7...f5 8.Bxc6 bxc6 9.f3 c5 10.Nb3 exf3?! 11.Qxf3±; 10...c4 11.Nd4 c5 12.Nde2 exf3 13.Rxf3 Be7 14.Qd5²) 8.Bxc6 bxc6 9.Bg5 (9.Qe2!? Be7?! 10.Rd1 Qc8 11.Nxe4 0-0 12.Bg5±; 9...Bd6 10.Bg5 0-0 11.Nxe4 Be7 12.Bxf6 Bxf6 13.Rad1 Qe7 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 15.Qc4²) 9...Be7 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.Nxe4 Be7, Ilic – Organdziev, Skopje 2010, 12.Qf3!? 0-0 13.Rad1² Black's bishops can hardly show their power due to the centralised position of the enemy pieces.

7.0-0

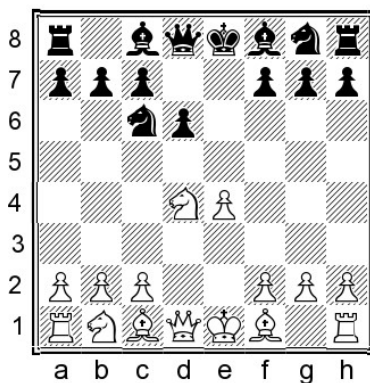


7...Nge7

It would be too risky for Black to opt here for 7...Bxc3 8.bxc3 Nge7, because after 9.Ba3! a6 10.Bxc6+ Nxc6 11.Qh5°, he will have to postpone his castling and his further attempts to win material with 11...Nxd4 12.cxd4 Be6 13.c4 Qxd4 14.Rad1 Qf6 15.Qc5+–, would lead to a hopeless position for him.

8.Nxe4 0-0 9.Nxc6 Nxc6 10.c3 Be7 11.Bf4² The placement of Black's knight on the c7-square causes problems for him with the protection of the pawn on c7.

B) 4...d6



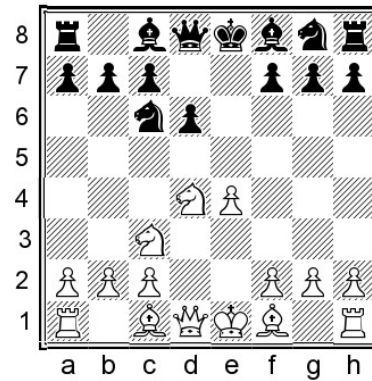
Black closes voluntarily the a3-f8 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop,

planning to develop it later on the long diagonal.

5.Nc3

White can castle later on either side of the board, depending on circumstances.

After 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.Bd3 Nf6 7.0-0 g6 White would not achieve anything much, for example: 8.Qe1 Bg7 9.e5 dxe5 10.Qxe5+ Be6 11.Bg5, Zelcic – Rogic, Pula 1996, 11...h6÷ or 8.b3 Bg7 9.Bb2 0-0 10.Nd2 Re8 11.f4 (11.Re1 a5÷) 11...Nxe4 12.Bxg7 Nxd2 13.Qxd2 Kxg7 14.f5 Re5 15.f6+ Kg8 16.Qf4, Pavasovic – Mastrovasilis, Istanbul 2003, 16...Bf5 17.Bxf5 Rxf5÷



5...Bd7

Now, it becomes clear that Black will fail to realise his plan to develop his bishop on the long a1-h8 diagonal: 5...g6? 6.Nd5! a6 (White is threatening a knight-sortie to the b5-square – 6...Bg7? 7.Nb5+–; or 6...Be7? Kavalek – Miles, Buenos Aires 1978, 7.Nb5+–; the prophylactic move 6...Bd7 would not help Black, because of his opponent's small combination: 7.Nb5 Rc8 8.Nxa7! Nxa7 9.Qd4 f6 10.Qxa7 Bc6 11.Qd4±; after 6...Nf6 7.Bg5 Be7 8.Nxe7 Qxe7 9.f3±, Black will have to suffer long and hard, because of the chronic vulnerability of the dark squares on his

kingside.) 7.Nxc6 (7.Bb5!? axb5 8.Nxb5 Ra5 9.Nbxc7+ Kd7 10.Qf3 f5 11.0-0 Nf6 12.Bg5 Be7 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.exf5±) 7...bxc6 8.Qd4 f6 9.Bc4± Black will hardly manage to complete the development of his pieces and his pawn on f6 creates problems for him on the light squares and does not beautify his position at all.

Black's alternatives here do not lead to original positions: 5...Nxd4 6.Qxd4 – see variation **D**; 5...Nge7 6.Be3 – see variation **E**; 5...Be7 6.Nxc6 (or 6.Be3), or 5...Nf6 6.Be2 Be7 7.Be3 – see variation C.

6.Be3 g6

About 6...Be7 7.Be2 Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4, or 6...Nf6 7.Be2 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4 – see variation **C1**.

7.Qd2

White fortifies the placement of his knight on d4 and plans to castle queenside.

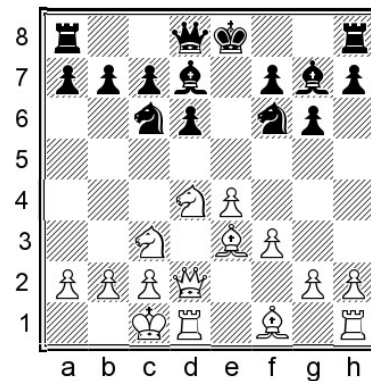
7...Bg7 8.0-0-0 Nf6

The other possible development of Black's knight 8...Nge7 9.Be2 0-0 10.h4!, would enable White to begin a pawn-offensive on the kingside.

The reduction of the tension in the centre: 8...Nxd4 9.Bxd4 Bxd4 10.Qxd4 Qf6 11.Qb4, would lead to great problems for Black, because after 11...0-0-0 12.Nd5! Qxf2 13.Qc3 c6 14.Qxh8 cxd5 15.Qc3+

Kb8 16.exd5+–, he would lose material by force.

9.f3



9...Qe7

About 9...0-0 10.g4 – see Chapter 3, variation **B2b1**.

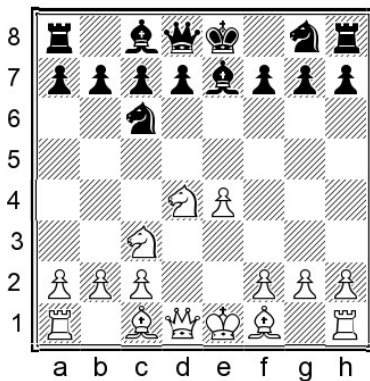
9...a6 10.g4 h5 11.g5 Ng8 12.f4 Nge7 13.Rg1± Andre – Tamm, Germany 1985.

10.g4 Nxd4

Black has also tried in practice to castle queenside with the idea to counter his opponent's offensive, but it turned out to be even worse: 10...0-0-0? 11.g5 Nh5 12.Nd5 Qe5 13.f4 Qxe4 (13...Qe8 14.Nxc7!+–) 14.Bg2 Qe8 15.Nb5+– Belouadah – Bensaid, Algiers 2015.

11.Bxd4 0-0 12.g5 Nh5 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.f4± White is threatening after 15.Be2 to compromise his opponent's pawn-structure and Black cannot prevent that with the move **14...Kh8**, in view of **15.h4** with a powerful attack for White.

C) 4...Be7 5.Nc3



5...d6

This is a necessary move for Black.

If Black refrains from it and develops his knight immediately 5...Nf6, then after 6.Nxc6 dxc6, he will have to defend an inferior endgame (It would be even worse for him to opt here for 6...bxc6?!, because of 7.e5 and Black's knight has no good square to retreat to: 7...Ng8 8.Qf3±, with the idea 8...f6? 9.Bc4!, or 7...Nd5 8.Nxd5 cxd5 9.Qxd5 Rb8 10.Bd3 Bb7 11.Qd4 0-0 12.0-0±). 7.Qxd8+ Bxd8 8.Bf4 Be6 (8...0-0 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.f3 Rc8 11.Ne2² Ibrohimov – Karamshoev, Dushanbe 2015. The peculiarities of the pawn-structure force Black to avoid total exchanges (The king and pawn ending is hopeless for him...), and he must also worry about the protection of his pawn on c7.

5...Bf6 6.Be3 Nge7 (After 6...Nxd4 7.Bxd4 Bxd4 8.Qxd4, there arises a position analogous to the variation 4...Bc5 5.Be3 Nxd4 6.Bxd4 Bxd4 7.Qxd4, but with the extra move Nc3 for White and it would not be surprising that after 8...Qf6 9.e5±, he maintains an obvious

advantage.) 7.Qd2 0-0 8.0-0-0 d6 9.Be2 a6 10.f4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bxd4 12.Qxd4 Qe8 13.g4± Wiedenkeller – Engstrom, Karlskrona 1983. White has already begun his offensive on the kingside, while Black has not even completed his development yet.

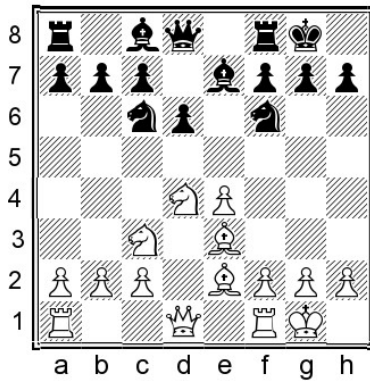
We will deal now with **C1) 6.Be3** and **C2) 6.Nxc6**. White has very good chances of obtaining an advantage in both schemes, but it looks like his play would be much easier in the second line.

C1) 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0

About 7...Bd7 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4 – see 7...0-0.

Black lacks space, so he must be very careful about the problem with the exchange of a couple of knights: 7...Nxd4 8.Bxd4 0-0 9.0-0, but this trade cannot guarantee for him counterplay in the centre. 9...c5 (9...c6 10.f4 d5 11.e5 Ne4 12.Nxe4 dxe4 13.f5 c5 14.Bc3± Stoinev – Sturc, Cappelle-la-Grande 1993. He must worry about his weak e4-pawn and take care about White's kingside offensive.) 10.Be3 Be6 11.f4 (11.Bf3!? Nd7 12.Qd2 Ne5 13.Be2 Nc4 14.Bxc4 Bxc4 15.Rfd1 Be6 16.Bf4 Qb6 17.a4²) 11...d5 12.f5 Bc8, Byambaa – Bezgodov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013 (12...d4 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.e5 Nd7 15.Bc4 Rxf1+ 16.Qxf1 Nf8, Blatny – Tomczak, Germany 1993, 17.Bd2 dxc3 18.Bxc3±) 13.Nxd5 Nxe4 14.Bc4 Nf6 (14...Nd6? 15.Bxc5+-) 15.Qe2± Black has great problems to cope with the pressure of his opponent's centralised pieces and after 15...Nxd5, White has the resource 16.Rad1.

8.0-0

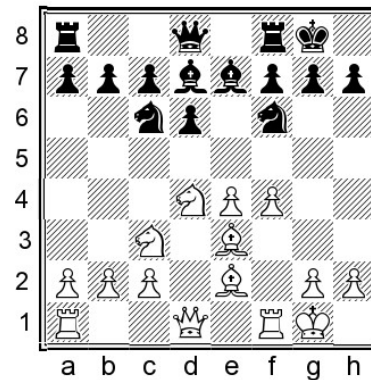


8...Re8

About 8...Nxd4 9.Bxd4 – see 7...Nxd4.

Black's active play 8...Ne5 9.f4 Neg4 10.Bc1 c5, does not achieve anything for him and after 11.Nf3 Ne8 12.h3 Ngf6 13.e5 Nd7 14.Be3±, he will have difficulties with the protection of the d5-square.

8...Bd7 9.f4 (It is worth mentioning here the move 9.Nb3!?, for example after: 9...Re8 10.f3 Be6 11.Qe1 Ne5 12.Rd1 c6 13.Nd4 Bd7 14.g4f, White seizes the initiative. Black's attempt to counter his opponent's flank attack with an academic counterstrike in the centre 14...d5? 15.g5 Nxe4 16.fxe4 c5 17.Nf5 d4 18.Qg3 Nc6 19.Nh6+ ended in a disaster for him in the game 1-0 Morozevich – Yandemirov, Russia 1998.)



9...Nxd4. Black lacks space and naturally wishes to exchange pieces. 10.Bxd4 Bc6 (He can occupy some space on the queenside with the move 10...c5, but only at the price of a chronic weakening of his d6-pawn: 11.Bf2 Bc6 12.Bf3 Qc7 13.Qd3² Vokhidov – Fisher, Pune 2014.) 11.Bf3 Nd7 (It would be very difficult for Black to organise effective counterplay against the enemy e4-pawn: 11...Qd7 12.Qd3 Rae8, Klimshin – Shishkin, Peterhof 2008, 13.Rad1²) 12.Qd2 Bf6 13.Rad1 Re8, Bykhovsky – Kofidis, Agios Nikolaos 1997. After 14.Rfe1², White could have preserved all the advantages of his position, connected with his ample extra space.

If Black exchanges the knight a bit later: 9...Re8 10.Bf3 Nxd4 11.Bxd4, then after for example: 11...Bc6 12.Qd3 (12.g4!?! h6 13.g5 hxg5 14.fxg5 Nd7 15.h4f Sevan – Campora, Lisbon 2018) 12...Nd7 13.b4 a6 14.a4 Nf8 15.b5 Bd7 16.Nd5 Ne6 17.Be3 axb5 18.axb5 Rxa1 19.Rxa1², he will have problems due to the dominating position of White's knight on d5. 19...Nc5? 20.Bxc5 dxc5 21.e5± Danielian – Klinova, Plovdiv 2003.

Following 9...Qc8, White can play a prophylactic move 10.h3!?! Re8 11.Bf3², maintaining the tension, forcing Black to consider the possibility of White not exchanging the knight and retreating it from d4 to e2.

9.f4 Bf8

9...Bd7 10.Bf3 – see 8...Bd7.

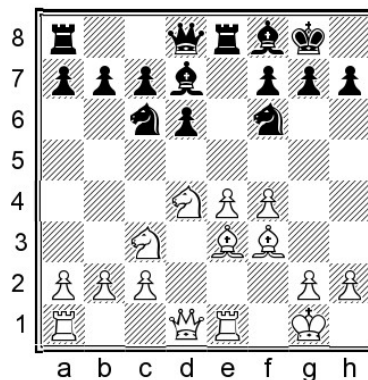
10.Bf3 Bd7

10...Nb8, Khachatryan – Kanevskaya, Moscow 2019, 11.Re1!? Nbd7 12.Bf2 Nc5 13.e5 dxe5 14.fxe5 Nfd7 15.b4 Ne6 16.Nxe6 Rxe6 17.Bd5 Bxb4 18.Bxe6 fxe6 19.Re3±

It would be also logical for Black to try to transfer his knight 10...Ne7 11.Bf2 Ng6 12.Bg3 c6 13.a4 a5 14.Kh1 Qb6, Lyell – Jeraj, Bled 1997, but even then, after 15.Qd3², White's position would be more pleasant thanks to his extra space.

10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 c6, Tseshkovsky – Karasev, Zvenigorod 2005. Now, it is essential that after 12.Qd2 d5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.Rae1², Black fails to free his position completely. The vulnerability of his pawn on d5 squeezes his actions.

11.Re1



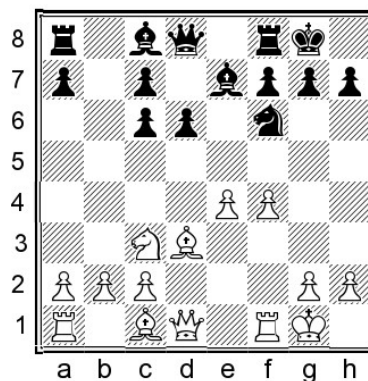
11...g6

11...Qc8 12.h3², covers the g4-square from the possible sorties of the enemy pieces.

The exchange of a couple of knights 11...Nxd4 12.Bxd4 c5 (12...Bc6 13.Qd3²) 13.Bf2 Bc6 14.Qd3², also preserves an edge for White, because Black can hardly manage to create effective pressure against the enemy pawn on e4.

12.h3 Bg7 13.Qd3² Gat – U.Geller, Tel Aviv 1962. White's position is preferable thank to his space advantage.

C2) 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4



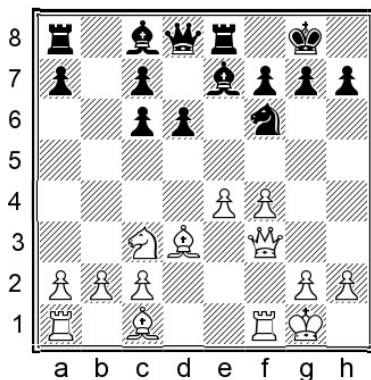
9...d5

This is Black's most active way of organising counterplay.

9...Rb8 10.b3 d5 11.e5 Bc5+ (following 11...Ng4 12.Na4 f6 13.h3 Nh6 14.Be3 a5 15.Qd2 Nf5 16.Bf2 fxe5 17.fxe5 Rb4, Charbonneau – Becerra Rivero, Paget Parish 2001, White can maintain complete control over the dark squares with the line: 18.Qc3!? Bd7 19.Bc5±) 12.Kh1 Ng4 13.Qe1 f6 14.Na4 Bb4 15.c3 Be7 16.h3 Nh6 17.Be3², with a blockade on the dark squares.

9...Nd7 10.Be3 Bf6 (10...Nc5?! 11.Bxc5 dxc5 12.Qe2 Rb8, Campora – Alvarez Ibarra, Seville 1994, 13.Rab1± Black's tripled pawns do not beautify his position; 10...Re8 11.Qd2 Bf8 12.Rae1 a5 13.Qf2!? Ba6 14.Bxa6 Rxa6 15.Qf3²; 13.b3 Ba6 14.Bxa6 Rxa6, Sethuraman – Bu Xiangzhi, Riyadh 2017, 15.Qd3²) 11.Qd2 Re8, Czebe – Sarno, Montecatini Terme 1997. Here, it would be in the spirit of the position for White to play 12.Rad1², forcing Black to consider all the time the enemy pawn-advance e4-e5.

9...Re8 10.Qf3



The move 10...d5 is already too slow:
11.e5 Bc5+ 12.Kh1 Ng4 13.Qg3±

After 10...Bb7 11.b3 Nd7 12.Bb2 Bf6, Levushkina – Gelves, Oropesa del Mar 2000, the standard pawn-break 13.e5! dxe5 14.Ne4 exf4 15.Nxf6+ Nxf6 16.Qxf4 c5 17.Rad1 Qe7 18.Bxf6 gxf6 19.Qxf6 Qxf6 20.Rxf6±, leads to a great advantage for White in the endgame.

Following 10...Rb8 11.b3 Nd7 12.Bb2 Nc5, Zambrana – Vajda, Athens 2001, White maintains powerful pressure with 13.Bc4!? Be6 14.Bxe6 Nxe6 15.Rad1± 10...Bf8 11.Bd2 Bb7 12.Rae1 c5, W.Schmid – Straeter, Germany 2002, 13.b3², preventing the possible pawn-advance c5-c4.

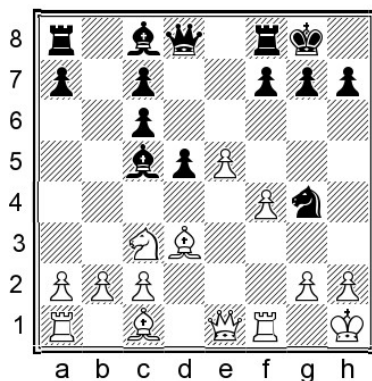
10.e5

10.Qf3?! Szuk – Kopasz, Hungary 2019, 10...Bg4 11.Qf2 dxe4 12.Nxe4 Nxe4 13.Bxe4 Bh4f

10...Bc5+

In the variation 10...Ng4 11.Na4 f6 12.h3 Nh6 13.Be3², White succeeds in establishing a blockade on the dark squares against Black's pawn mass in the centre.

11.Kh1 Ng4 12.Qe1



12...f6

This is Black's most consequent move.

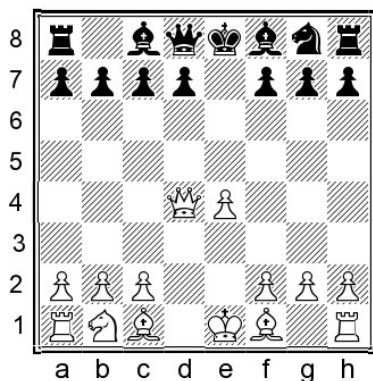
If he does not attack the enemy pawn on e5: 12...f5 13.h3 Nh6 14.Na4±, then White maintains easily dominance on the dark squares at the centre of the board.

13.h3 Nh6

The complications after 13...Nf2+ 14.Rxf2 Bxf2 15.Qxf2 fxe5, Dzhumayev – Mista, Sharjah 2016, turn out to be in favour of White. The point is that after 16.Qg3 e4 17.Be2 Bf5 18.Na4±, his dark-squared bishop, without an opponent, becomes totally dominant.

14.f5 fxe5 15.Bxh6 gxh6, Lappalainen – Dolana, Prague 2012, **16.f6!** (White is threatening 17.Qg3+) **16...Kh8 17.Qxe5 Rf7 18.Rae1**² White's f6-pawn is very unpleasant for Black.

D) 4...Nxd4 5.Qxd4



Exchanging the knights Black forces his opponent's queen to occupy a square in the centre, but he cannot exploit this effectively, because he cannot attack it comfortably.

We will analyse now **D1) 5...d6** and **D2) 5...Qf6**.

About 5...Ne7 6.Nc3 – see variation **E**.
5...Be7? 6.Qxg7 Bf6 7.Qg3±

The move 5...Nf6? proves to be a loss of time: 6.e5 Ng8 (6...Nh5? 7.g4+–; 6...Qe7 7.Be3 Ng8 8.Nc3±; 6...c5 7.Qe3 Nd5 8.Qe4 Nc7 9.Nc3±) 7.Nc3 d6 8.Bf4±

After 5...c5?, Black weakens chronically the d5-square and loses a pawn. 6.Qe5+ Qe7 (6...Be7? 7.Qxg7 Bf6 8.Qg3±; 6...Ne7?! 7.Qxc5±) 7.Qxe7+ Bxe7 (7...Nxe7 8.Nc3 a6 9.Be3±) 8.Bf4 d6 9.Nc3±

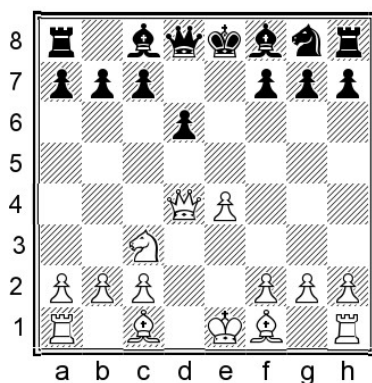
The move 5...b6? does not contribute to the harmonious development of Black's pieces, because he cannot deploy his bishop on c5 without material losses. 6.Nc3 Bb7 (6...Bc5? 7.Qxg7+–; 6...Nf6 7.e5 Bc5 8.Qf4 Qe7 9.Be2 Ng8 10.Nd5+–) 7.Bf4 Nf6 8.f3 Bc5 (8...Be7 9.0-0-0±) 9.Qe5+ Qe7 10.Qxc7 Bc6 11.0-0-0± Rublevsky – Agniashvili, Cheboksary 2016.

0± and Black will have great problems to protect his d6-pawn.

After 5...Qe7?!, Black will have problems with the development of his kingside pieces. 6.Nc3 c6 (6...Qc5 7.Qd3±; 6...Nf6 7.Be3±; 6...d6 7.Be3±) 7.Be2 d6 8.Bf4 Be6 9.0-0-0±

5...c6?! 6.Nc3 Qf6 7.e5 Qe6 8.Be3 f6 9.f4 Nh6 10.Bc4 fxe5 (The move 10...d5? is connected with a tactical miscalculation: 11.exd6 Nf5 12.Bxe6 Nxd4 13.d7!+- Hamdouchi – Cardi, Ajaccio 2012.) 11.fxe5 Nf5 12.Bxe6 Nxd4 13.Bxd7+ Bxd7 14.Bxd4² Black's bishop-pair does not compensate fully his sacrificed pawn.

D1) 5...d6 6.Nc3



White is preparing to castle queenside.

6...Nf6

Black plans to complete the development of his kingside as quickly as possible.

About 6...Ne7 7.Bd2 Nc6 8.Qe3, or 7.Be3 Nc6 8.Qd2 – see variation E.

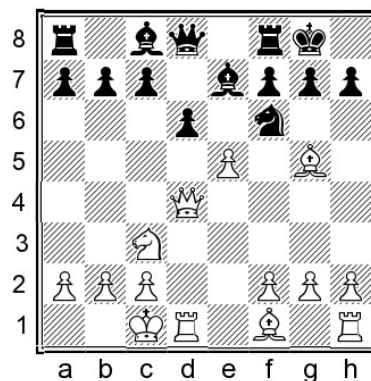
After his alternatives it would be much more difficult for him to accomplish this task. For example: 6...c6? 7.Bf4 Nf6 8.0-0-

6...Be6?! Nikhil – Kafle, Mumbai 2019, 7.Bf4 Nf6 (7...Ne7 8.0-0-0 Nc6 9.Qe3±, threatening to continue with the pawn-break e4- e5) 8.0-0-0 Be7. Now, White opens the position: 9.e5! dxe5 10.Qxe5 Bd6 11.Bb5+ Kf8 12.Qe3±, depriving his opponent's king of its castling rights.

It is also bad for Black to play analogously to variation D2 – 6...Qf6?! After 7.Qd3 c6 8.Be3 Bd7 9.0-0-0 Be7 10.f4 0-0-0 11.Be2±, Black manages to castle indeed, but the situation with his king is still unreliable (The a7-pawn is vulnerable...), Vehi Bach – Carreno Roca, Salamanca 1998. He must worry even more about his knight on g8, which has no comfortable square to develop to.

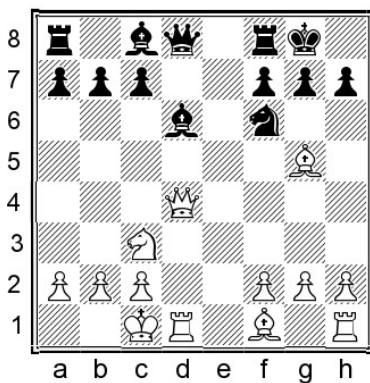
7.Be3!?

White plays more often in practice 7.Bg5 Be7 (The inclusion of the moves 7...h6 8.Bh4, would not change White's plan aimed at the accomplishment of the pawn-advance e4-e5.) 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.e5



It is bad for Black to play passively here 9...Ne8?! 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.exd6. Now, no matter how Black captures the pawn, he will be in trouble. 11...Qxd6 (11...Nxd6 12.Nd5 Qe4 13.Nxc7 Qxd4 14.Rxd4 Nf5 15.Rd2 Rb8 16.Bd3± Benko – Martinez, Havana 1966; 11...cxd6 12.Nd5 Qd8 13.Bd3 Be6 14.Nf4 Nf6 15.Rhe1 Qd7 16.Re3 Bf5 17.Rg3 Bg6 18.h4 Qd8 19.h5 Bxd3, Pavasovic – Ascic, Bizovac 2000, 20.Rgxd3± White maintains a powerful outpost for his knight on d5 and exerts pressure against the enemy d6-pawn.) 12.Qxd6 Nxd6 13.Nd5 Ne4 (13...Ne8? 14.Ne7+ Kh8 15.Rd8 g6, Mestrovic – Truta, Ljubljana 1994, 16.c4+-) 14.Rd4! Nxf2 15.Rg1 Be6 (Here, due to the threat 16.Rf4, Black cannot play 15...c6?, in view of 16.Ne7+ Kh8 17.Nxc8 Raxc8 18.Rf4+-) 16.Nxc7 Rac8 17.Nxe6 fxe6 18.Bc4±, with powerful pressure for White against the weak enemy e6-pawn.

9...dxe5 10.Qxe5 Bd6 (After 10...Qe8?! 11.Qxc7+-, or 10...Bd7 11.Ne4 Nxe4 12.Bxe7 Re8 13.Bxd8 Rxe5 14.Bxc7 Re7 15.Re1±, Black ends up a pawn down.) 11.Qd4



After 11...Be7?, White has the possibility to begin a kingside offensive: 12.Qh4! Qe8, Luch – Valenta, Litomysl 2008. Now, the line: 13.Bd3!? h6 14.Bxh6 Ng4 15.Bg5 Bxg5+ 16.Qxg5 Nxf2 17.Nd5 f6 18.Qh4 Nxd3+ 19.Rxd3+-, would have made Black's position hopeless – against

the threats 20.Nxc7 and 20.Re1, he would have no satisfactory defence.

The inclusion of the moves 11...h6 12.Bh4 is an attempt by Black to improve the situation, but even then, after 12...Be7 (12...g5?! 13.Bg3± Beaskoa Estany – Baratech, Barcelona 2017) 13.Qe3f, White maintains powerful pressure, Santos – Baptista, Santos 2000.

11...Be6 12.Ne4 Be7 13.Bxf6!? This move provides White with a slight but stable edge (13.Qe3 Nd5= Petrov – Kostov, Sofia 2011). 13...Bxf6 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 15.Qxf6 gxf6 16.Rd4², White's kingside pawn-structure is preferable.

7...Be7

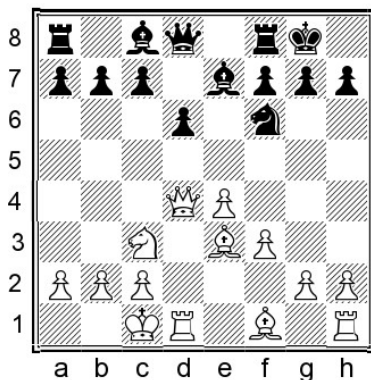
About 7...Be6 8.0-0-0 Be7 9.f3 – see 7...Be7.

Black fails to develop his bishop on the long diagonal with 7...g6?, because of 8.Bg5 Be7 9.Nd5 Nxd5 10.Qxh8+-

8.f3 0-0

He cannot evacuate his king on the queenside: 8...Be6 9.0-0-0 a6 10.g4 h6 11.h4 Qd7 12.Be2±

9.0-0-0



9...Be6

Black can hardly continue the game without the move 9...c5 anyway, but here, it is not so good: 10.Qd2 a6 11.Qf2 Qa5 12.g4 b5 13.g5 Nd7 14.Nd5 Bd8 15.Kb1 Nb6 16.Nxb6 Qxb6 17.Bg2f Black's d6-pawn is weak and both his bishops remain tremendously passive.

10.g4

White begins to occupy space on the kingside, preparing an attack against the enemy king at the same time. Black can hardly manage to counter this plan effectively.

10...Nd7

The move 10...c5 cannot solve the problems for Black: 11.Qd2 Qa5 12.Kb1 Nd7 13.g5± His bishops are incapable of helping his queen in the idea to exert pressure against White's queenside.

11.Rg1 Ne5 12.Be2 a6

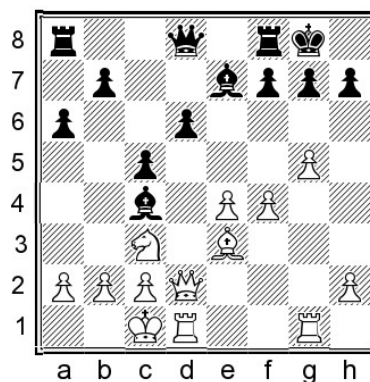
With the move 12...Bf6 Black can develop his bishop on the long diagonal, but his queen fails to join in the pressure

against his opponent's queenside. 13.Qd2 Nc4 14.Bxc4 Bxc4 15.g5 Be7 16.h4 Re8 17.h5 Be6 18.f4 f5 19.exf5 1-0 Videki – Velvart, Balatonbereny 1992 (19...Bxf5 20.Qd5+ Kh8 21.Qxf5+-).

13.f4 c5

After 13...Nc6 14.Qd2±, Black is incapable of countering White's kingside attack.

14.Qd2 Nc4 15.Bxc4 Bxc4 16.g5

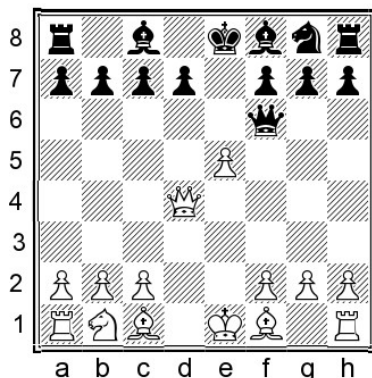


16...f5

Without Black's last move, White will have a decisive attack under the cover of his pawns: 16...Re8 17.f5 Bf8 18.b3 Bb5 19.Nd5 Kh8 20.Rg4 Bc6 21.Qg2 Bxd5 22.Rxd5 Re5 23.Rh4 Rxd5 24.Rxh7+! Kxh7 25.Qh3+ Kg8 26.g6 1-0 Licina – Kosir, Slovenia 1994.

17.Nd5 fxe4 18.b3 Bb5 19.Qg2±, White's knight on d5 dominates over the board.

D2) 5...Qf6 6.e5



White occupies space with this move. Later, this will become a key-factor for the evaluation of this variation.

6...Qb6

After the other retreats of his queen, Black cannot complete the harmonious development of his pieces.

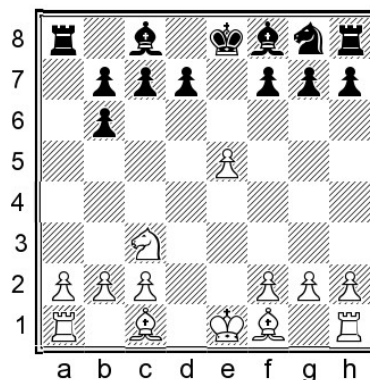
For example: 6...Qg6 7.Nc3 Ne7 (7...c6 8.Ne4±) 8.Bf4 Nc6 9.Qd2± and Black suffers due to the lack of space.

6...Qc6 7.Nc3 Bc5 (7...a6 8.Be3 d6 9.0-0-0 Be6 10.exd6 cxd6, Gao – Munkh-amgalan, Zhengzhou 2019, 11.Bd3±; After 7...Ne7 8.Bd2 Ng6 9.Be3 Be7 10.Nd5 0-0 11.h4 Re8 12.h5, Black's position is so cramped that the material losses would be unavoidable for him. 12...Nxe5? 13.Qxe5 Bb4+ 14.Nxb4+- Rizouk – Zurita Galisteo, Seville 2003; or 12...Nf8 13.0-0-0 d6 14.h6 dxe5 15.Qxe5 Bf6 16.Qxc7+-) 8.Qg4 Qg6 (The move 8...g6 only creates holes for the penetration of White's pieces: 9.Qf4 Ne7 10.Bc4 0-0 11.Ne4+-) 9.Qxg6 hxg6 10.Nd5 Bb6, Korchnoi – Hatoglou, Greece 2002, 11.a3!? c6 12.Nxb6 axb6 13.Be2± There is no good square in sight for the development of Black's bishop.

7.Qxb6!?

Black has no chances of equalising after 7.Be3 Qxd4 8.Bxd4 Ne7 9.Nc3 Nf5 (9...Nc6 10.0-0-0 Nxd4 11.Rxd4 – see 9...Nf5) 10.0-0-0 Nxd4 11.Rxd4 Bc5 12.Rd2 Bb4 13.Rd3², but he would at least remain with a bishop-pair.

7...axb6 8.Nc3



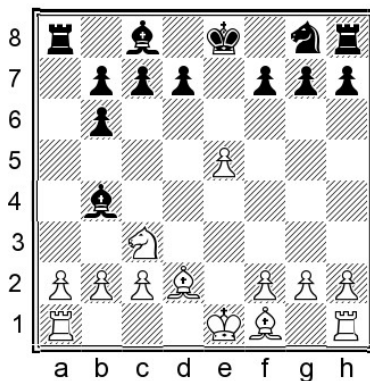
8...Bb4

White's knight is headed for the d5-outpost. Black should not let it go there, but he has a problem how to do that with minimal concessions for his position. For example, he can play 8...c6 and then 9.Be3 b5 (9...Ra5 10.f4 Bc5 11.Bxc5 bxc5 12.Ne4± Okhotnik – Babic, Feffernitz 2018) 10.0-0-0 (10.Ne4 d5 11.exd6 f5 12.d7+ Bxd7 13.Nc5 Bc8, Berdayes Ason – Perez Mitjans, Platja d'Aro 2019, 14.a3 Nf6 15.0-0-0²) 10...f5 (Black can win a pawn with 10...b4 11.Ne4 Rxa2, but following 12.Kb1 Ra5 13.f4 f5 14.Nd6+ Bxd6 15.Rxd6 Ne7 16.Bb6 Ra8 17.Bc4±, his light-squared bishop may turn out to be horribly isolated to the end of the game.) 11.Kb1 Ne7, Tomczak – Dauth, Germany 2011. Now, after the prophylactic move 12.a3!? Ng6 13.f4 b4

14.axb4 Bxb4 15.Ne2 0-0 16.c3 Be7
 17.Nd4±, Black's light-squared bishop
 may again be isolated for a long time.

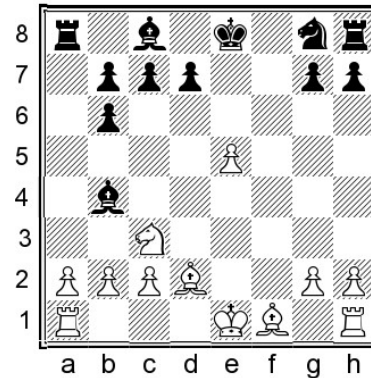
His alternative – 8...Ne7 – enables
 White to change the route of his knight.
 9.Bd3 h6 (Black's knight should not
 abandon this square: 9...Ng6? 10.Nd5 Kd8
 11.Bxg6 hxg6 12.Bg5+-) 10.Nb5!? Kd8
 11.0-0 Nc6 12.Bf4±

9.Bd2



9...Ne7

Black's main problem is the enemy
 pawn on e5. He has tried numerous times
 in practice to eliminate it with 9...f6, but
 this does not help. 10.f4! (After the
 removal of the e5-pawn off the board
 10.Nd5 Bxd2+ 11.Kxd2 Kd8 12.exf6 Nxf6
 13.Nxf6 gxf6 14.Bd3², White's advantage
 diminishes considerably, Areshchenko –
 Ovsejevitch, Ordzhonikidze 2001.)
 10...fxe5 11.fxe5

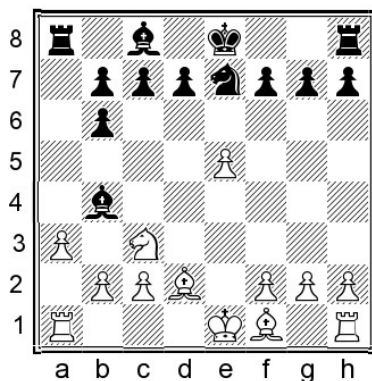


After 11...Ra5 12.Nb5 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2
 Kd8 14.b4 Ra4 15.Kc3±, Black fails to get
 rid of the enemy e5-pawn.

11...Ne7 12.0-0-0 (12.a3!? d5 13.exd6
 Bxd6 14.Nb5±) 12...d5 (Following
 12...Bxc3 13.Bxc3 Rxa2, Black can win a
 pawn, but he fails to coordinate his rooks
 and to develop his bishop on c8: 14.Kb1
 Ra8 15.Bc4 Rf8 16.Rhf1 Ng6 17.g3±)
 13.exd6 Bxd6 14.Nb5 Rxa2 15.Kb1 Be6,
 Pokorna – Farkas, Slovakia 2013. It might
 look like Black has achieved a lot, but his
 pieces are not deployed stably and his
 material losses are unavoidable: 16.Re1!
 Bf7 (16...Kf7 17.Rxe6 Rha8 18.Rxe7+ Kxe7
 19.Na3 Bxa3 20.bxa3 R2xa3 21.Bb4+-)
 17.Nxd6+ cxd6 18.Bb5+ Kf8 19.Rhf1+-

Black has another possibility here. He
 can present immediately his opponent
 with the two-bishop advantage: 9...Bxc3
 10.Bxc3 Ne7. He cannot equalise like this
 and White can obtain an advantage in
 numerous ways: 11.a3!? 0-0 12.0-0-0±; or
 11.Bd3 0-0 12.0-0 Nd5 13.Bd2 Re8
 14.Rfe1± Di Paolo – Salvo, Condino 2009.

10.a3



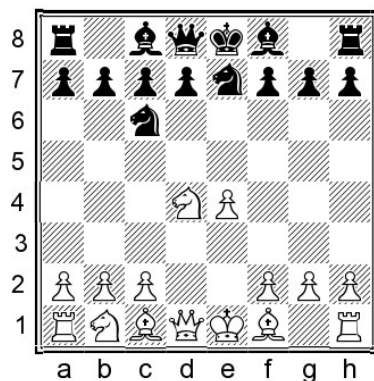
10...Nc6

White's knight, until it is present on the board, is ready to attack the enemy c7-pawn at any moment: 10...0-0 11.Nb5! Bxd2+ 12.Kxd2 d6 13.Nxc7 Ra5 14.exd6 Rd8 15.Nb5± Delgado Ramirez – Lazzarin, Concordia 2019.

We have already mentioned that the exchange 10...Bxc3 11.Bxc3 provides White with a bishop-pair. 11...Nd5 12.Bd2 f6 13.Bc4 Ne7, Velichko – Asanov, Samara 2014. In positions of this type, as a rule, White can choose between many attractive possibilities. We can recommend this line, for example: 14.exf6!? gxf6 15.Bc3±

11.0-0-0 Be7 12.Nd5 Bd8 13.Bc3 Ne7 14.Ne3 0-0 15.g3 f6 16.Bc4+ Kh8 17.f4± Kutuzovic – Medancic, Umag 2000. White's e5-pawn cramps Black's position and his pieces are forced to occupy the last two ranks, so White has a considerable advantage.

E) 4...Nge7



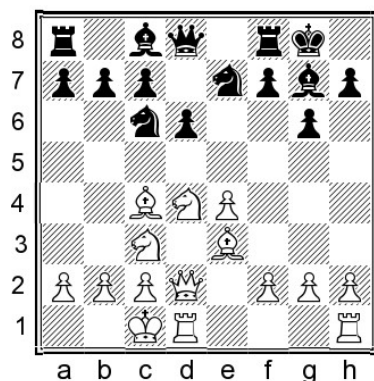
Black plans to trade the knights on d4. We will analyse two promising possibilities for White: **E1) 5.Bc4** and **E2) 5.Nc3**.

E1) 5.Bc4!?

In this variation White has an additional possibility after the exchange of the knights on d4.

5...Nxd4

5...g6 6.Qf3! d5 (6...Ne5? 7.Qf6+-) 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bb3 Bg7 9.Nc3 0-0 10.0-0± 5...d6. Black uses very often at first this move in practice in order to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop. 6.Be3 g6 7.Nc3 Bg7 8.Qd2 0-0 (8...Ne5 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0-0, or 8...a6 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.h4 – see 8...0-0) 9.0-0

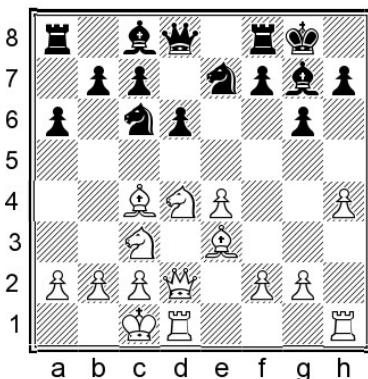


The exchange of the dark-squared bishops 9...Nxd4 10.Bxd4 and then

10...Nc6 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.h4±, or
 10...Bxd4 11.Qxd4 Nc6 12.Qd2 Be6, Song –
 Rogers, Brisbane 2006, 13.Be2±, is always
 in favour of White, since it weakens
 Black's king shelter.

The counterstrike in the centre 9...Ne5
 10.Be2 f5, Bosch – Lorenz, Chemnitz
 1998, following 11.Bg5!, would cost Black
 an exchange: 11...fxe4 12.Nd5 Rf7 13.f4
 exf3 14.gxf3±, or 11...c6 12.exf5 Bxf5
 13.Nxf5 Rxf5 14.f4 Nf7 15.Bg4±

9...a6 10.h4. Black has completed his
 development indeed, but his position is
 hardly satisfactory. White's kingside
 attack is much faster than Black's
 operations on the opposite side of the
 board.



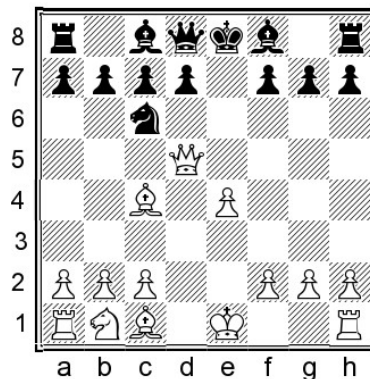
10...b5 11.Nxc6 Nxc6 12.Bd5 Bd7,
 Moingt – Bouton, Clichy 1998, 13.Bg5!
 Qe8 14.h5 b4 15.hxg6 bxc3 (15...hxg6
 16.Qf4 bxc3 17.Qh4+-) 16.Qf4 cxb2+
 17.Kb1 h5 18.Qh4 Bg4 19.f3+-

10...Ne5 11.Be2 b5 12.h5 c5, Loew –
 Birkmann, Bad Woerishofen 1996,
 13.Nf3!? Ng4 14.h6 Bh8 15.Bxc5+-

Black can try to contain somehow his
 opponent's attacking actions with the
 move 10...h5, but even then after 11.f3 (It
 is possibly simpler for White to opt here
 for 11.Be2 with the idea to trade the dark-
 squared bishops, for example: 11...b5
 12.Nxc6 Nxc6 13.Bh6±) 11...b5 12.Nxc6
 Nxc6 13.Bd5 Bd7 14.Bh6 Rb8 15.g4! b4

16.Ne2 hxg4 17.h5+- White's attack is
 victorious, Cernousek – Horton, ICC 2009.

6.Qxd4 Nc6 7.Qd5



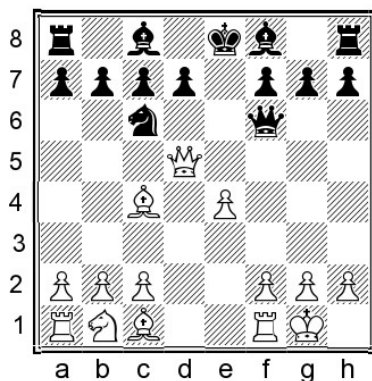
This possibility, to force Black to
 defend the f7-square, is the main idea of
 the variation with 5.Bc4.

7...Qf6

It is not good for Black to choose here
 7...Bb4+? 8.c3 Qe7, M.Pribyl –
 Keitlinghaus, Stribrna Skalice 1993, in an
 attempt to complete his development in a
 tactical fashion. The concrete variations
 are obviously not in favour of Black:
 9.cxb4 Nxb4 10.Qg5 Qxe4+ 11.Be3 Nc2+
 12.Kd2 Nxa1 (12...Nxe3 13.Qxe3+-)
 13.Bd3 (13.Qxg7+-) 13...Qb4+ 14.Kc1 0-0
 15.Bc5 h6 (15...Qa5 16.b4 Qa4 17.Bxf8+-)
 16.Qf5 g6 17.Bxb4 gxf5 18.Bxf8 Kxf8
 19.Nc3+- Black's knight, stranded on the
 a1-square is doomed to perish soon.

7...Qe7 8.Nc3 Ne5 (8...d6 9.Bg5 Qe6
 10.Nb5±) 9.Be2 c6 10.Qd1 g5 11.Be3 d6,
 Nakamura – Blatny, New York 2001,
 12.h4!? g4 13.Qd4 Rg8 14.0-0-0 Be6 15.f4
 gxf3 16.gxf3± Black's queen is misplaced
 on the e7-square and impedes the
 development of his own kingside.

8.0-0



8...Ne5

The a3-f8 diagonal is opened for Black's dark-squared bishop, but it cannot find a reliable square to be developed to:

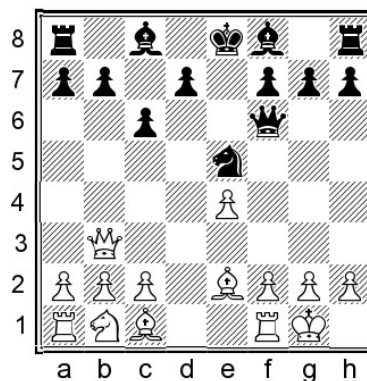
8...Bb4 9.c3 Ba5 10.e5! Qg6 (10...Qe7 11.Bf4 0-0 12.Nd2±) 11.Bf4 0-0, Tischbierek – Breutigam, Germany 1997, 12.Na3 Bb6 13.Rfe1± Now, Black's queenside is cramped for long due to the powerful white e5-pawn.

8...Nb4 9.Qd1 Bc5, Hjaltason – Fjallheim, Reykjavik 2018, 10.a3 Nc6 11.Nc3± Black's bishop is well placed on c5, but he has lost several tempi to put it there, roaming with his knight and that was hardly worth it.

8...Be7 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Qd1 Bd8 (10...Qg6 11.f4 Na5 12.Bd3±) 11.Be3!? (White cannot achieve much with 11.Nd5 Qg6 12.Re1, Minasian – Anastasian, Yerevan 1996, 12...Re8.) 11...d6 12.f4² White's pieces are obviously more actively placed and he has more space as well. 12...Be6 (12...Ne7 13.f5!?, with the idea 14.Bd4, 15.Rf3, chasing the enemy queen) 13.Be2. White does not need to facilitate his

opponent's defence by exchanging pieces. 13...Qe7 14.Qd2², followed by Rae1.

9.Be2 c6 10.Qb3



10...Bc5

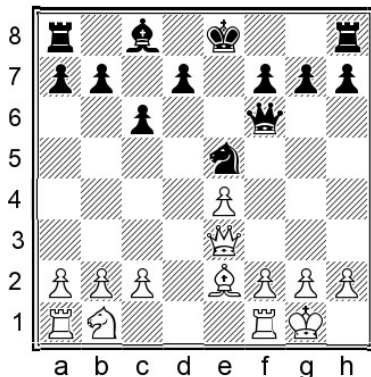
It happens very often in the Scotch Game that Black strives to deploy his bishop on the long a7-g1 diagonal. This variation is no exception.

10...h5 11.Qc3 g5, Van der Wiel – I.Sokolov, Groningen 1994 (11...Ng4 12.h3 Bd6 13.Qxf6 Nxf6, Palac – Degraeve, Makarska 1997, 14.Rd1 Bc7 15.Bf3 d6 16.Bf4²) 12.f4 (12.Be3 d6 13.Nd2²) 12...gxf4 13.Bxf4 d6 14.Nd2² Black must still solve the problem with the placement of his king. It impedes in the centre the coordination of his own major pieces and his pawn-structure has been compromised on both flanks.

10...Ng6 11.Be3 Nf4, Tieken – Leenders, ICCF 2013 (11...b6 12.f4 d6 13.Nd2 Bd7, Wood – Smiley, ICCF 2013, 14.Rad1 Be7 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 Qxe5 17.Qxf7+ Kd8 18.Nc4+-) 12.Bc4 Bd6 (12...Be7 13.Bxf7+) 13.g3 Ne6 14.Nd2², White leads in development and has extra space. 14...0-0 15.a4!? (White's queen is not so well placed, so the move 15.f4 is not so good

immediately, because of 15...Nc5 16.Qa3 Na6 17.Qd3 Nc5.) 15...Nc5 16.Qa2 a5 17.c3², followed by f4, occupying additional space.

11.Be3 Bxe3 12.Qxe3



This is the critical position for the evaluation of this variation.

12...g5!?

Black is trying to organise a blockade on the dark squares.

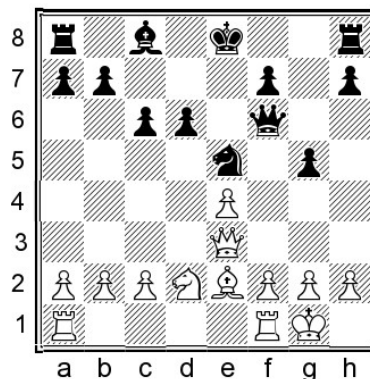
If he fails to do this, White might manage to break in the centre, or on the kingside.

For example: 12...Ng6 13.Nc3 Nf4, Tomescu – Gordan, Bucharest 1994, 14.e5! Qg5 15.g3 Nh3+ 16.Kg2 Qxe3 17.fxex3 d5 (Black cannot allow the enemy knight to occupy the d6-square.) 18.exd6 Ng5 19.g4±

The move 12...0-0 looks more reliable for Black. 13.Nc3 Re8 14.f4 Ng6 15.Rad1 d5 16.f5 Nf8. Still, even then after 17.Qd3! dxe4 18.Nxe4 Qxb2 19.Bh5 Re7 20.f6, White can prevent his opponent from consolidating on the dark squares at the price of only a pawn. His advantage is doubtless: 20...Rd7 21.Nd6 (21.fxg7 Rxd3 22.gxf8=Q+ Kxf8 23.Rxf7+ Kg8 24.cxd3±)

21...g6 22.Qd2 Qb6+ 23.Kh1 Qd8 24.Be2 Rxd6 25.Qxd6 Qxd6 26.Rxd6 Bf5 27.Bd3± Haugen – Taylor, ICCF 2007.

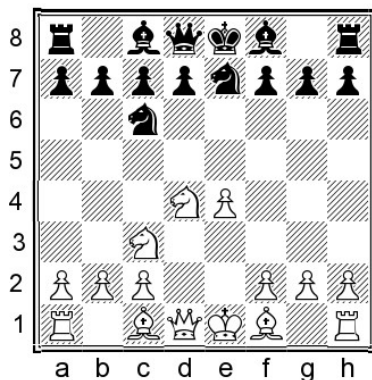
13.Nd2 d6



This position was reached in the game Andreikin – Forsberg, Stockholm 2016.

14.f4! White opens the f-file for his rook. 14...gxf4 15.Rxf4 Qe7 16.Nc4 (He exchanges Black's only well placed piece.) 16...Be6 17.Nxe5 dxe5 18.Rf2² There is no direct win for White in sight, but it is evident that the maximum that Black can hope for is a draw. It is understandable that Black can castle neither on the kingside due to the simple response Qg3xe5, nor to the queenside, because of the vulnerability of his a7-pawn. White will place his queen's rook on d1, or f1, depending on circumstances, and will try to weaken his opponent's position even more by attacking his e5-pawn.

E2) 5.Nc3

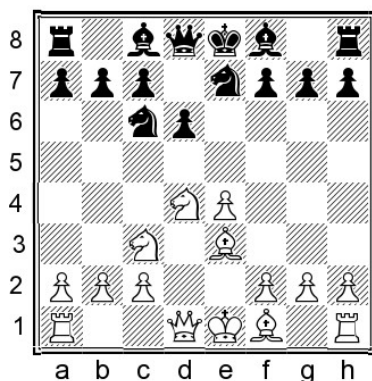


5...Nxd4

This is a thematic reply by Black.

His attempt to develop his bishop on the long diagonal with the move 5...g6? can be refuted dramatically by White with the line: 6.Bg5 Bg7 7.Nd5! Bxd4 (7...Nxd4 8.Bxe7+-) 8.Qxd4!+- and Black cannot accept the queen-sacrifice due to the checkmate in two moves.

The move 5...d6 only postpones the problem with the development of Black's dark-squared bishop for later. 6.Be3

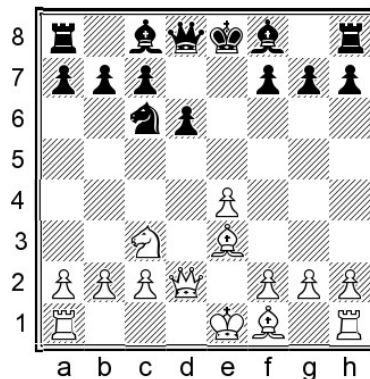


6...g6? 7.Bg5 Bg7 8.Nd5 Qd7 9.Bb5±

Following 6...Ng6 7.Nd5, Black should better simplify the position. 7...Nxd4 (After 7...Bd7? Rublevsky – Ragozin, Paris 1993, 8.Nb5 Rc8 9.h4, he will have problems with the completion of the development of his pieces after 9...a6?

10.Nbxc7+ Rxc7 11.Bb6+-, as well as following 9...h5 10.Qd2±) 8.Bxd4 c6 9.Ne3²

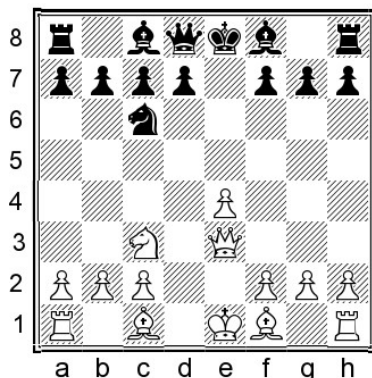
6...Nxd4 7.Qxd4 Nc6 8.Qd2



In the variation 8...Be6 9.0-0-0 Be7 10.f4 0-0 11.Rg1±, Black has not sufficient space and can hardly create any meaningful counterplay, while White has a clear-cut plan, connected with the pawn-advance g4. There arises an analogous situation after 8...Be7 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.Be2 f5 11.exf5 Bxf5 12.g4 Be6 13.f4± Teloeken – Rosing, Germany 2009.

8...g6 9.0-0-0 Bg7 10.Bh6 (The idea of the trade of the dark-squared bishops is to weaken Black's kingside.) 10...Bxh6 11.Qxh6 Be6 12.Nd5 (12.f4!? Qd7 13.f5 gxf5 14.Qf6 Rf8 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Bb5 Be6 17.Ne4 Qe7 18.Bxc6+ bxc6 19.Qc3±) 12...Kd7, E.Andreev – Sarmir, Martin 2011. Black wishes to transfer his king to the queenside. After White's best line: 13.f4! Qf8 14.Nf6+ Kc8 15.Qxf8+ Rxf8 16.Nxh7±, he manages to do that only at the price of a pawn.

6.Qxd4 Nc6 7.Qe3

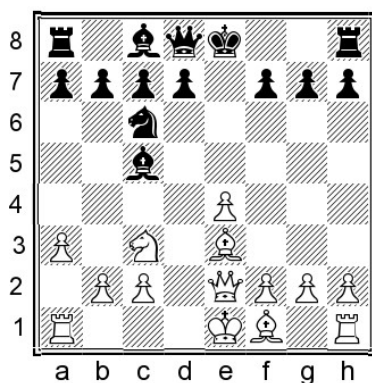


White does not allow the enemy bishop to occupy the c5-square.

7...Bb4

Black can still try to place his bishop on c5, but he would lose plenty of time for this.

After 7...Nb4 8.Qe2 Bc5 9.a3 Nc6, White can still try to trade the dark-squared bishop and to follow this with castling queenside. 10.Be3



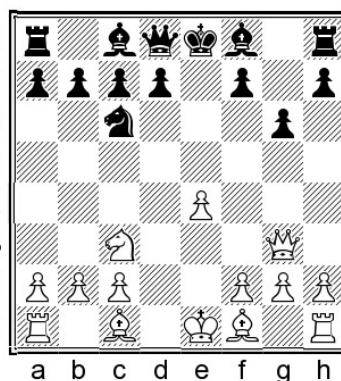
10...Bb6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.h4 d6 13.h5 h6 14.f4 Bxe3+ 15.Qxe3 Bg4 16.Be2 Bxe2 17.Qxe2 Re8 18.g4, Spacapan – Cespedes, Graz 2015.

10...d6 11.0-0-0 Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 0-0 13.Be2 Qe7 14.f4 Be6 15.g4 f6 16.h4 Rae8 17.Qg3 Kh8 18.g5 f5 19.Bh5 Rb8 20.exf5 Bxf5 21.Rhe1 Qd7 22.Nd5± Mulligan – Akwei, ICCF 2014.

10...Bxe3 11.Qxe3 0-0 12.0-0-0 a6 13.g4 d6 14.Be2 b5 15.h4 Rb8 16.h5 b4 17.axb4

Nxb4 18.h6 g6 19.e5 d5 20.f4 c6 21.Qc5 a5 22.Ne4 Qb6?? (22...f5 23.Nf6+–) 23.Nf6+ 1-0 Vescovi – Pita, Sao Paulo 1999. As you have seen in all these examples, Black's counterplay is obviously too slow.

7...g6. His plan to develop the bishop on the long diagonal has its defects too. 8.Qg3!? (It would be less ambitious for White to opt here for 8.Bd2 Bg7 9.Nd5 d6 10.Bc3²)



After 8...Bg7 9.Bg5 f6 10.Bf4 d6 11.Bc4 Ne5 12.Bb3±, Black will have problems to castle.

8...d6 9.Nd5 Bg7 10.Bg5 f6 11.Bd2± The pawn on f6 does not beautify his position at all and it would be dangerous for him to castle: 11...0-0 12.h4,

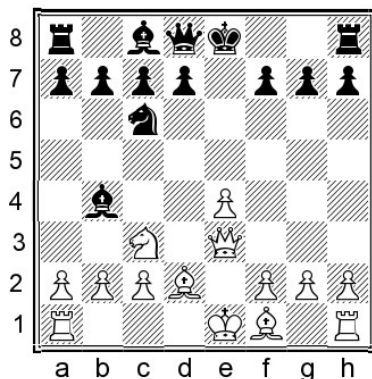
8...h6 9.Nd5 Bd6. Black is forced to give up the idea to develop his bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal (9...d6 10.Qc3+–). 10.f4!? (The trade of the dark-squared bishops is also in favour of White: 10.Bf4 Bxf4 11.Qxf4 d6 12.0-0-0± Ortiz Suarez – Castrillon Gomez, Bogota 2013) 10...0-0 11.Bd2 Re8 12.0-0-0 Rxe4 13.Bc3+–

After the indifferent move 7...d6, White can continue with 8.Bd2 g6 9.h4!? h5 (following 9...Bg7 10.h5, White's rook on h1 joins into the attack) 10.Qg3 Bg7

11.Bg5 Qd7 12.Nd5± Black's position is difficult and he loses after 12...Bxb2?

13.Bf6 Bxa1 14.Bxa1+-

8.Bd2



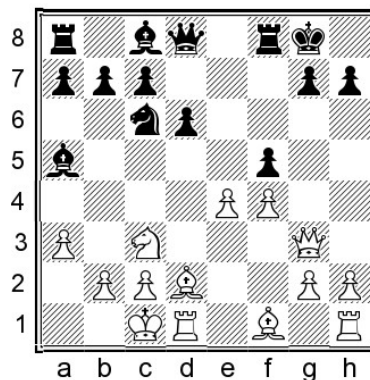
8...0-0

The move 8...d6 would not change practically anything. 9.0-0-0 Be6 (9...0-0 10.a3 – see 8...0-0) 10.a3 Bc5 11.Qg3 Bd4 (11...0-0 12.f4!?) 12.Nd5 0-0 (12...g6? Simacek – Freisler, Havlickuv Brod 2006, 13.Bg5 f6 14.Bh6 g5 15.h4 Be5 16.Qb3 Qd7 17.Nxc7+-) 13.Bh6 Bf6 14.h4± White's kingside initiative is faster than Black's queenside actions.

9.0-0-0 d6 10.a3

White could have also continued the game without this move. 10.Qg3 Be6 11.f4 f6, Fluvia Poyatos – Narciso Dublan, Torredembarra 2018 (11...f5 12.a3 Ba5 – see 10.a3) 12.f5 Bxc3 (12...Bf7 13.Bh6+-) 13.Qxc3 Bf7 14.g4 a5 15.Rg1, threatening g5.

10...Ba5 11.Qg3 f5 12.f4



12...fxe4

Simplifying the position is the best that Black can do under the circumstances.

After 12...Be6, he must consider 13.exf5!? (Following 13.Bd3 Qd7 14.Rhe1, the game remains very complicated and Black must play very carefully, because after 14...Rae8?! he loses a pawn: 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Rxe8 Rxe8 17.Nd5 Bxd2+ 18.Rxd2 Rf8 19.Bxf5 Rxf5 20.Qb3 Rf7 21.Qxb7+- Kotsur – Shchekachev, Smolensk 1997. Still, by choosing 14...Qf7!? 15.Qf3 Nd4 16.Qf2 c5 17.Nb5 Bxd2+ 18.Rxd2 Nxb5 19.Bxb5², he can avoid having too great problems, Vandervoort – Lobzhanidze, Belgium 2002.) 13...Bxf5 (after 13...Rxf5 14.Qh3 Rf6 15.g4±, White can begin to advance his kingside pawns) 14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.Rhe1± White's pieces have been much more actively deployed.

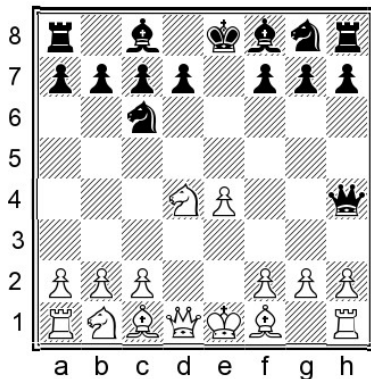
13.Nxe4 Bxd2+ 14.Rxd2 Bf5 15.Bc4+ Kh8 16.Ng5

The alternative – 16.Re1!?, would prevent the activation of Black's queen. After 16...h6, White has the resource 17.h3, followed by Qf3, g4.

16...Qf6 17.Re1 Bg6!? (17...h6?
Morozevich – Hjartarson, Berlin 2015,
18.Ne4! Bxe4 19.Rxe4 Rae8 20.Rde2
Rxe4 21.Rxe4± White controls the only
open e-file and is ready to begin an attack
with Qe3, g4.) **18.Rf2**² Black exerts some
pressure against the f4-pawn and
impedes somehow White's offensive.

Chapter 2

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Qh4



With his move Black is threatening to capture the pawn on e4.

His last move however, contradicts the basic principles of the piece-development on the opening. Still, the first official World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz played it in numerous games.

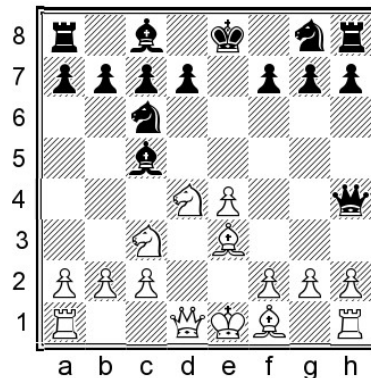
5.Nc3

It would not be good for White to try to punish immediately his opponent for his challenging queen-move with 5.Nb5, because of 5...Bc5.

5...Bb4

Black continues consistently with his attack against the enemy e4-pawn.

It would be bad for him to opt here for 5...Bc5?!, since his pieces would be hanging due to the unfavourable placement of his queen. 6.Be3



6...Nf6?? 7.Nf5+-

6...Nge7?? 7.Nf3 Qh5 8.g4!+- Kulaots - J.Geller, Moscow 2002.

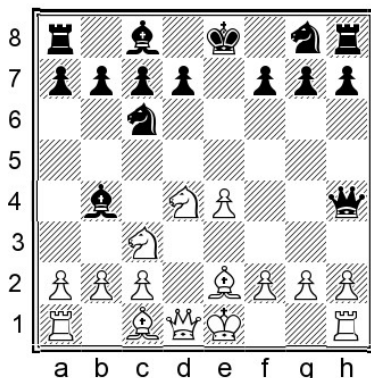
Following 6...Bb4 7.Qd2±, Black would in fact lose a tempo in comparison to the move 5...Bb4.

After 6...d6 7.g3 Qe7 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.Bxc5 dxc5 10.Qe2±, Black's pawn-structure will be compromised.

6...Nxd4 7.Bxd4 Bxd4 8.Qxd4. Black is practically forced to trade pieces in the centre, but now, he would have difficulties with the completion of his development, because White's queen has occupied a dominant placement at the centre of the board. 8...Nf6?! (Black should better prefer here 8...Qf6 9.e5 Qb6 10.Qc4±, but even then White leads considerably in development and has much more space.) 9.g3 Qh5 10.e5 Qg4 (10...Ng4 11.Be2) 11.Qe3 Kd8 (11...Ng8 12.Nd5 Kd8 13.Qc5 Qe4+ 14.Kd2 Qxe5 15.Qf8+ Qe8 16.Qxe8+ Kxe8 17.Nxc7+-) 12.Be2+- Zuriel - Miserendino, Olivos 2002.

6.Be2!

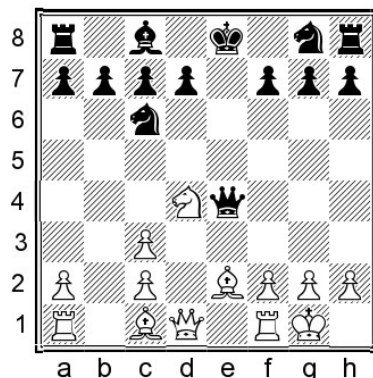
This is a pawn-sacrifice for the sake of quick development.



We will analyse in details now: **A)** 6...Nf6, **B)** 6...Nge7, **C)** 6...d6 and **D)** 6...Qxe4.

6...a6 7.0-0 Bxc3 (7...Nge7, Clarkson – Starley, England 2018, 8.Nf3 Qf6 9.Bg5 Qd6 10.Nd5±) 8.Nxc6! (8.bxc3 Nge7 9.f4 d6 10.Be3 0-0, Angermuende – Caloone, Cappelle la Grande 2017, 11.Qd2²) 8...dxc6 9.bxc3 Nf6 (9...Ne7 10.Qd4 0-0 11.g3 Qf6 12.Bf4± Black has great problems, connected with the protection of his pawn-weaknesses.) 10.Ba3 Bd7 11.Rb1 b6 (11...0-0-0? 12.Bxa6! bxa6 13.Qe2 Be6 14.Qxa6+ Kd7 15.Rfd1+–) 12.Qd3 Rd8 13.e5± Black would hardly manage to castle and his queenside pawns would need permanent protection.

After 6...Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 Qxe4 (7...Nf6 8.Nf5!), White's strongest response would be 8.0-0! (After 8.Nb5, he can transpose to variation **D**, but he has all the reasons to strive for more...)

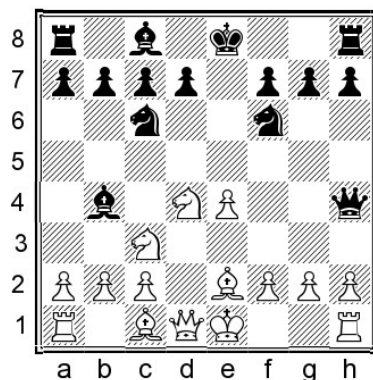


About 8...Nxd4 9.cxd4 Qh4 10.Re1 Ne7 11.Bd3, or 8...Nge7 9.Re1 Nxd4 10.cxd4 Qh4 11.Bd3 – see variation **B** (6...Nge7 7.0-0 Bxc3 8.bxc3 Nxd4 9.cxd4 Qxe4 10.Re1 Qh4 11.Bd3).

The move 8...Qg6? enables White to organise a decisive attack: 9.Nb5! Kd8 10.Bf4 d6 11.Bh5 Qf6 12.Qd2 h6 13.Bxd6! cxd6 14.Nxd6+–

A) 6...Nf6

This natural developing move can be refuted immediately in a tactical fashion.

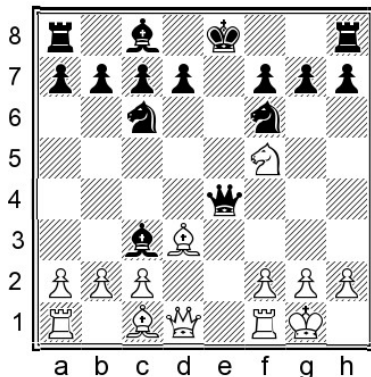


7.Nf5!?

Black has not castled yet, so this provides White with an additional possibility to attack immediately the enemy g7-pawn.

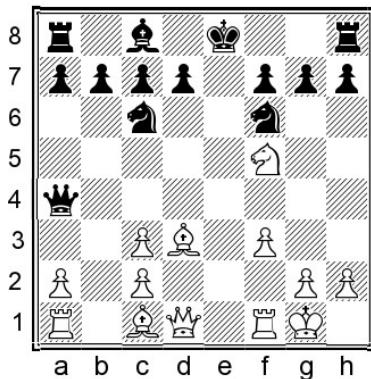
It is also possible for him to continue with the more traditional approach 7.0-0

Bxc3 (7...d6 8.Nf3 – see line C) 8.Nf5 Qxe4
9.Bd3



9...Qe5 10.bxc3 0-0 (10...Kf8 11.Re1+-)
11.Re1 Qa5 (11...Qxc3? 12.Rb1 d6 13.Bb2
Qa5 14.Nh6+ Kh8 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Rb5
Qc3 17.Rh5+-) 12.Rb1 Re8 (12...d5?
13.Nxg7! Kxg7 14.Qd2 Ng8 15.Rb5 Qxa2
16.Qg5+ Kh8 17.c4 f6 18.Qh5 f5
19.cxd5+-) 13.Rxe8+ Nxe8 14.Qh5 d6
15.Nh6+ gxh6 16.Qxh6 Bf5 17.Rb5 Qxc3
18.Rxf5 Ne7 19.Rb5± Black has an extra
pawn, but has great problems due to the
open position of his king.

9...Qg4 10.f3 Qa4 (The check 10...Bd4+
11.Kh1+-, cuts off the possible retreat of
Black's queen.) 11.bxc3. He is helpless
against White's threats.



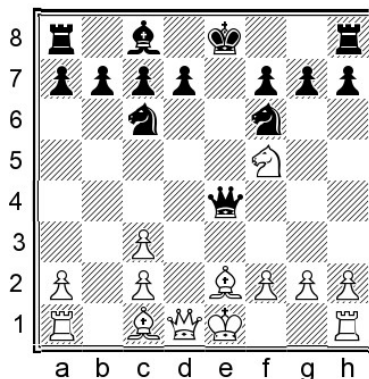
11...Kf8, M.Mueller – Schiffer, Germany
1997, 12.Nxg7! Kxg7 13.Bh6+! Kxh6
14.Qd2+ Kg7 15.Qg5+ Kf8 16.Qh6+ Kg8
17.Qxf6 d6 18.Rae1 Be6 19.f4 h5 20.Rxe6
fxe6 21.Qxe6+ Kf8 22.Qf6+ Kg8 23.Re1+-

The following spectacular attack 11...0-0
12.Nxg7! Kxg7 13.Bh6+! Kxh6 14.Qd2+
Kh5 15.g4+ Nxg4 16.fxg4+ Qxg4+ 17.Kh1
d6 18.Rf6 Qg5 19.Be2+ Bg4 20.Bxg4+ 1-0
Karjakin – Malinin, Sudak 2002, provided
Sergey Karjakin with the title – the
youngest grandmaster in the history of
world chess.

7...Bxc3+

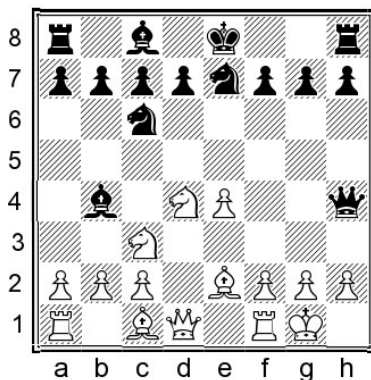
The immediate capturing of the pawn
7...Qxe4, gives White the possibility to
bring his knight on c3 into the attack:
8.Nxg7+ Kd8 9.0-0 Qg6 10.Nh5 Rg8
11.Nf4 Qg7 12.Ncd5±

8.bxc3 Qxe4



9.Nxg7+ Kd8 10.0-0 Qg6 (10...Rg8
11.Bd3 Qd5 12.c4 Qd4 13.c3± Qxc3?
14.Rb1+-) 11.Nh5 Nxh5 12.Bxh5 Qg7,
Zesch – Collini, Leipzig 2004, 13.Re1±
Black's king is stranded in the centre and
he would hardly manage to complete his
development, for example: the move
13...d6? enables White to inflict a tactical
strike 14.Bxf7! Qxf7 15.Bg5+ Kd7
16.Qg4+.

B) 6...Nge7 7.0-0

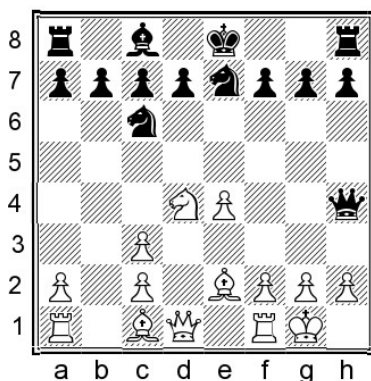


Now, the f5-square has been reliably covered, so White is in a hurry to complete his development, freeing his knight on c3 from the pin.

7...Bxc3

Without this move, White's knight on c3 will enter the actions. 7...0-0 8.Ndb5 Ba5 9.Nd5! Nxd5 10.exd5 Ne5 11.f4 Bb6+ (It would be more resilient for Black to defend with 11...a6 12.fxe5 axb5 13.Bf4±, but even then he would fail to solve the problem with the development of his queenside.) 12.Kh1 Ng6 13.f5 Ne5 14.d6 c6 15.Rf4 Qd8 16.Nc3 Re8 17.Ne4 a5 18.Qe1 f6 19.Qg3+- Reinaldo Castineira – Golod, Linares 2001.

8.bxc3



8...Nxd4

About 8...Qxe4 9.Nb5 Kd8 10.Re1 – see variation **D2** (6...Qxe4 7.Ndb5 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Kd8 9.0-0 Nge7 10.Re1).

8...0-0?! 9.Nb5 Qxe4 10.Nxc7 Rb8 11.Ba3 Qh4, Rublevsky – Dolgov, Sochi 2017, 12.Qd6 Rd8 13.Bd3+-

8...a6 9.f4 0-0 10.Nf3 Qh5 11.Ng5 Qh6 12.Bd3± Black's queen has occupied an awkward position and his queenside is not developed.

9.cxd4!?

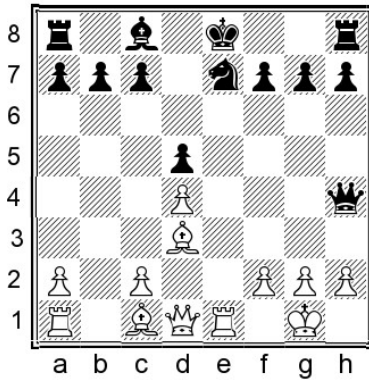
It is also good for White to capture here with the pawn, but he should better correct his pawn-structure.

9...Qxe4

Without this move White would have a bishop-pair and a powerful centre and it would be inconceivable what Black is suffering for...

10.Re1 Qh4 11.Bd3 d5

After 11...Qf6, it would be easier for White to impede his opponent's castling. 12.Qh5! h6 13.h4 g6 14.Qe2 d6 15.d5 Rh7, Reefat – Y.Vladimirov, Kolkata 2000, 16.Rb1!? Qe5 17.Qd2 Qf6 18.Rb4+-



12.c4!

Black's king has not castled yet, so White must open the centre.

In the game P.Nielsen – Hector, Festuge 1991, White played 12.Rb1 and that enabled Black to castle.

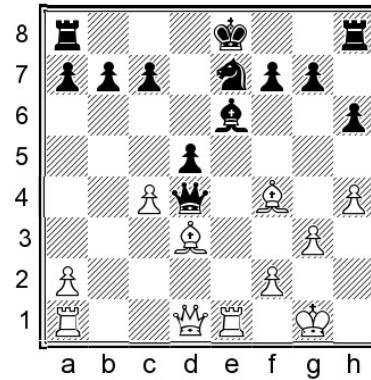
12...Be6

Following 12...0-0, Black will lose a piece due to the pin on the e-file 13.Ba3 Re8 14.Qe2±

13.g3 Qf6 14.h4 h6

It is essential that Black cannot play here 14...Qxd4, because of 15.Rxe6! dxc4 (15...fxe6 16.Bg6+) 16.Rxe7+ Kxe7 17.Qe2+ Kd8 18.Bg5+ f6 19.Rd1+-

15.Bf4 Qxd4



16.Rxe6! dxc4 (16...fxe6 17.Bg6+)

17.Qa4+ b5 (17...Kf8 18.Ree1 Qxd3 19.Rad1 Qc2 20.Qa3 Re8 21.Qxe7!+-)

18.Qxb5+ Kf8 19.Rxe7! It is also good for White to play here 19.Be5, but the move in the text is much simpler.

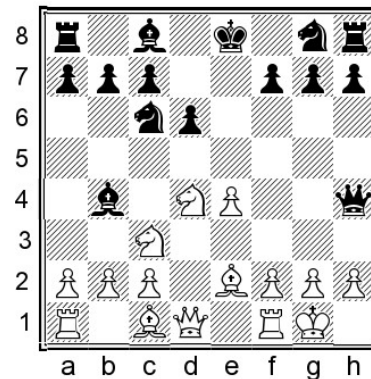
19...Qxa1+ 20.Bb1 Kxe7 21.Be5+-

C) 6...d6

Now, just like in variation B, Black takes the f5-square under control.

7.0-0

White's knight on c3 has been freed from the pin.

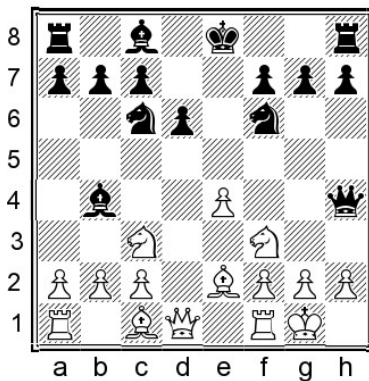


7...Bxc3

This exchange would be forced at some moment. When you see the variations below, you will be convinced why Black is reluctant to postpone it.

7...Nge7 8.Nxc6! bxc6, Sipos – Rajic, Vrbas 2011 (After the other possible capture, White's knight would obtain an excellent square at the middle of the board 8...Nxc6?! 9.Nd5±) 9.Qd4! Bxc3. Black is forced to give up his bishop for the enemy knight without causing any harm to the opponent's flank (After 9...Bc5 10.Qxg7 Rg8 11.Qh6 Qh3 12.g3±, Black has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn.). 10.Qxc3 0-0 11.f4 c5 (Following 11...Bg4 12.Bd3±, White has no intentions to trade the bishops.) 12.b3 Bd7 13.Bb2± White has a bishop-pair and exerts powerful pressure on the dark squares, so he maintains a stable advantage.

7...Nf6 8.Nf3

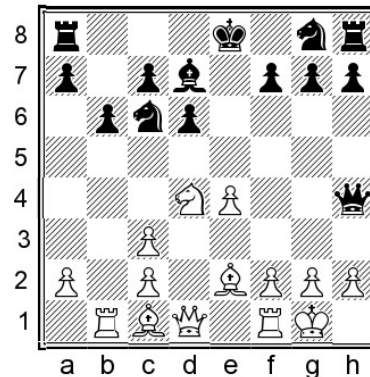


8...Qh5?! 9.Nd5! Nxd5 10.Ng5 Qg6 (10...Qh4 11.exd5 Ne7 12.g3 Qh6 13.Ne6+-) 11.exd5!? (11.Bh5 Qf6 12.Bxf7+ Kf8 13.Bxd5+- Pitl – Steinbacher, Austria 2013) 11...Ne5 (11...Ne7 12.Bh5+-) 12.f4 h6 13.Bh5 Bg4 14.Bxg6 Bxd1 15.fxe5 fxg6 16.Ne6 Bxc2 17.Nxc7+-
8...Qg4 9.Nd5 Nxd5 10.exd5 Ne7 11.h3 Qd7 12.Bd3± White has a great advantage, because the logical move 12...0-0, following 13.Ng5! h6 14.Nh7 Re8 15.Qh5 Ng6 16.Bxh6! Kxh7 17.Bd2+ Kg8

18.Bxb4 Re5 19.Qf3, would lose a pawn for Black.

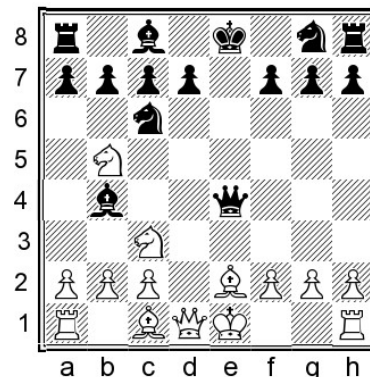
8.bxc3 Bd7 9.Rb1 b6

9...0-0-0?! 10.Qd3± He is incapable of protecting his queenside. 10...Re8 (10...Nf6?? 11.Qa6!+-; 10...a6?? 11.Qxa6!+-) 11.Qb5 Nd8 12.Qa5 Nc6 13.Nxc6 Bxc6 14.Rb4 Rxe4? 15.Bg5+-



10.f4 Nge7, Eschbach – Scherer, Germany 2008, **11.e5!? 0-0** (11...dxe5 12.fxe5 Nxe5 13.Rb4+-; 12...0-0 13.Nxc6 Bxc6 14.Rb4+-) **12.Nf3 Qh5 13.Ng5 Qh6 14.Bd3 Bf5 15.Bxf5 Nxf5 16.Qd3±** Black's queen is misplaced on the h6-square and he cannot hold the blockade of the enemy pawn on f4, because the move 16...Nce7 loses after 17.g4+-

D) 6...Qxe4 7.Ndb5



Black cannot defend effectively against the knight double attack on the c7-square without compromising his position.

7...Bxc3+

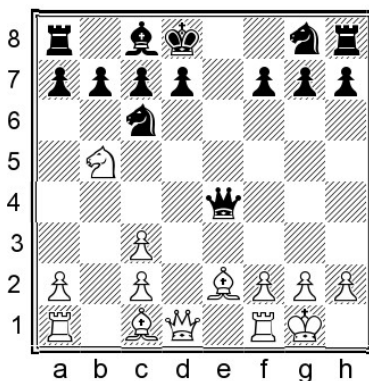
7...Ba5? 8.Nxc7+.

7...Qe5? 8.f4 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Qc5
10.Nxc7+–

7...Qxg2? 8.Bf3 Qh3 9.Nxc7+ Kd8
10.Nxa8 Nf6 (10...Ne5 11.Be2+–) 11.Be3
Re8 12.Bxc6 Rxe3+ 13.fxe3 Qxe3+ 14.Qe2
Bxc3+ 15.Kd1! (15.bxc3 Qxc3+ 16.Kf1
bxc6 17.Kg2? Ba6! =) 15...Qd4+ 16.Qd3
Bxb2 17.Qxd4 Bxd4 18.c3 Bxc3 19.Rc1
Be5 20.Bf3 d5 21.Rg1 g6 22.Rg2 Bd7
23.Ke1 Bc6 24.Rgc2+–

7...Kd8 8.0-0 Bxc3 (Without this move,
White's knight on c3 will enter the
actions: 8...Qe5? 9.Nd5!+–; 8...Qe8? 9.Bf4
d6 10.Nd5! Ba5 11.Ndxc7 Bxc7 12.Nxc7
Kxc7 13.Qxd6+ Kb6 14.Qc7+ Kc5 15.b4+–;
8...Qg6? 9.Bf4 d6 10.Bh5 Qf5 11.Bxd6!?
cxd6 12.Nxd6+–) 9.bxc3 – see 7...Bxc3+.

8.bxc3 Kd8 9.0-0

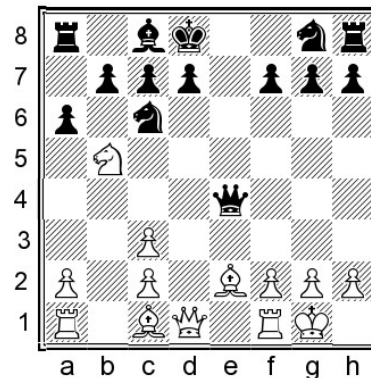


We will analyse now: **D1) 9...a6, D2) 9...Nge7, D3) 9...Nf6.**

The move 9...d6?! is not popular and quite deservedly so... 10.Bf3! (The immediate line: 10.Nxd6 cxd6 11.Qxd6+ Ke8 12.Bf3 Qe6 13.Qc5 Nge7 14.Ba3±, creates immediate pressure against the enemy king stranded in the centre, but it is more logical to clarify immediately the placement of the enemy queen.) 10...Qg6 (After 10...Qc4, White's knight-sacrifice would be even stronger: 11.Nxd6! cxd6 12.Qxd6+ Ke8 13.Ba3 Nge7 14.Rfe1 Be6 15.Rad1+–) 11.Bf4 a6. White sacrifices a piece 12.Nxd6! cxd6 13.Bxd6 Bd7 14.Rb1 b5 15.Re1+– and opens the position of the enemy king.

D1) 9...a6

Before clarifying his plans for the further development, Black attacks the enemy knight on b5.

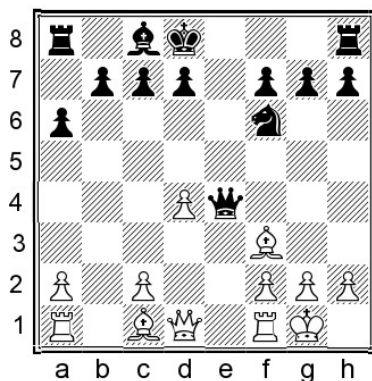


10.Bf3!?

White maintains the tension and is trying to clarify the placement of the enemy queen, before deciding where to deploy his knight.

He has played more often in practice 10.Nd4. It is also a good move, but presents Black with additional possibilities. 10...Nxd4 (10...Nge7? 11.Re1 Qd5 12.Bf3 Qc5 13.Be3 Qxc3 14.Bxc6 Nxc6 15.Bg5+ f6 16.Ne6+ Ke7, Kovchan –

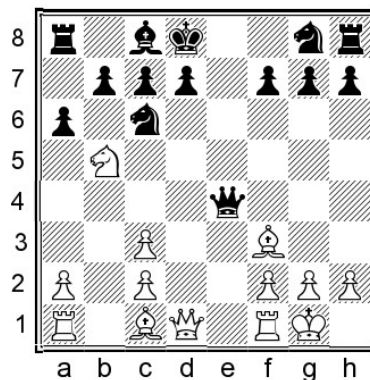
Febrero Perez, Balaguer 2005, 17.Nxg7+-
) 11.cxd4 Nf6 (11...Ne7 12.Bf3 Qg6 13.Re1
 – see 10.Bf3; 11...d5? 12.Bf3 Qf5 13.Re1
 Be6 14.Re5 Qg6 15.Bh5 1–0 Harutjunyan
 – Perez Bolanos, Seville 2019; 11...d6,
 Rodriques – Do Prado, Florianopolis
 2018, 12.Re1 Nf6 13.c4 Re8 14.Bg5 Qg6
 15.Qd2 h6 16.Bh4±). 12.Bf3. White wishes
 to open the position of the enemy king by
 advancing his c-pawn.



12...Qh4, Brekhov – O.Fedorov, Saratov
 2012, 13.c4!?±

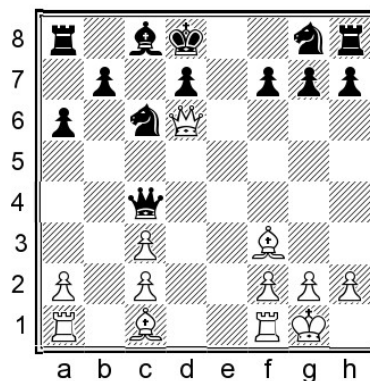
12...Qf5 13.c4!? d6 14.Ba3 g5 15.Rb1
 Rb8 16.Bc6 Nd7 17.Ba4 b5 18.Bc2 Qe6
 19.Re1. Black was reluctant to allow the
 advance of the enemy c-pawn and played
 here 19...Qxc4, but after 20.Bb3 Qc3
 21.Qe2+-, he lost quickly, Medvegy –
 Novkovic, Oberwart 2001.

12...Qg6 13.c4!? d6 14.Qb3 Rb8
 (Following 14...h5, White can realise his
 idea with 15.c5! d5 16.Re1 Rb8 17.c6+-)
 15.c5! dxc5 (15...Be6 16.d5 Bg4 17.cxd6
 cxd6 18.Qb6+ Kd7 19.Ba3 Ne8 20.Bxg4+
 Qxg4 21.Rfe1+-) 16.dxc5 Be6 17.Qa3 Bg4
 18.Re1 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Qg4 20.Qb3 Qg6
 21.Bf4+- V.Moiseenko – Kurilin,
 Pervomaisky 2016.



10...Qg6

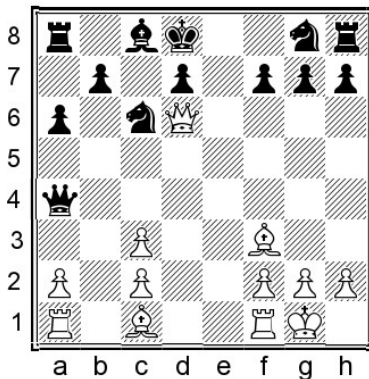
After the other possible retreats of
 Black's queen, White can sacrifice his
 knight with the idea to cramp the enemy
 position, for example: 10...Qc4 11.Nd6!
 cxd6 12.Qxd6



Black has an extra piece indeed, but his
 defence is very difficult, because of his
 horrible lag in development. 12...Nge7
 (12...Nf6 13.Be3 Ne7 14.Rfe1 Nfd5
 15.Bxd5 Nxd5 16.Qxd5 1-0 Oral –
 Kantorik, Slovakia 2000; 13...Qb5 14.Rab1
 Ne8 15.Qa3 Qc4 16.Bb6+ Nc7 17.Rfe1 Re8
 18.Qd6 Ne7 19.Re5+- Black has no
 satisfactory defence against the threat
 20.Rc5.) 13.Re1! (13.Bf4 b6!?) 13...b6
 (13...Ng6? De Zwart – Bach, Vlissingen
 2008, 14.Bg5+! f6 15.Be3 Nce7 16.Bb6+
 Ke8 17.Rxe7+ Nxe7 18.Re1 Qf7 19.Bc5+-;
 after 13...Qxc3 14.Bf4 Qa5 15.Bxc6 Nxc6,
 White wins with 16.c3! f6 17.Re6!+- and

his threat 18.Rxf6 would be almost impossible for Black to parry.) 14.Rxe7 Nxe7 15.Bxa8± White maintains powerful pressure on the dark squares, moreover that Black's king has no reliable shelter.

There arises an almost similar situation after 10...Qa4 11.Nd6! (This knight-sacrifice seems more convincing than the line: 11.Bxc6 axb5 12.Qh5±, after which Black has the possibility to activate his rook on the a-file.) 11...cxd6 12.Qxd6



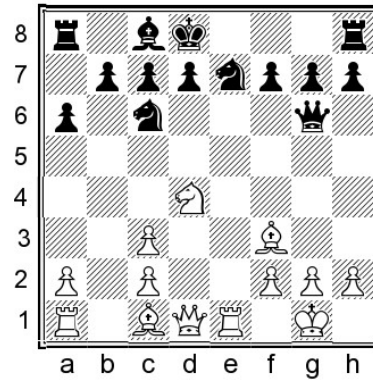
Black has an extra piece, but is incapable of defending this position. 12...Nf6 13.Be3 Qa5 14.Rab1 Ne8 15.Qd2 Nc7 16.Bb6 Qe5 17.Rfe1 Qf6 18.Bxc6 bxc6 19.c4 a5 20.Qe3+-

12...Nge7 13.Re1 Re8 14.Bf4 Qa5 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Re5 Qc7 17.Qxc7+ Kxc7 18.Rxe7+ Kd8 19.Rxf7+-

11.Nd4 Nge7

After 11...Nxd4 12.Qxd4!?, Black has also great problems to complete the development of his queenside pieces. 12...Qf6 13.Qd2 Ne7 14.Rb1 Re8 15.c4±

12.Re1



12...d6

The exchange of the knights 12...Nxd4 13.cxd4 helps White to get rid of his doubled pawns. Black's king is stranded in the centre for long and he suffers almost for nothing (just for a pawn...). 13...d6 (After the riskier move 13...d5, White would be almost totally dominant over the dark squares in the centre: 14.Ba3 Re8 15.Re5 Be6 16.c4! dxc4 17.d5 Bd7 18.Qe2 Nc8 19.Rxe8+ Bxe8 20.Re1 Bb5 21.Be7+ Ke8, Strikovic – Ferron Garcia, Naron 1993, 22.Qe5+-) 14.c4 Rb8 (Black's preparation to exchange the bishops 14...h5 proves to be too slow after 15.Bf4 Bg4 16.c5±) 15.Bf4 Re8 16.Rc1± The moment White opens the game after the move c4-c5, Black's position would become hopeless.

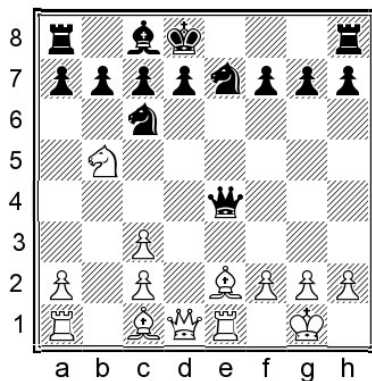
13.Rb1 Nxd4 (13...Re8 14.Bf4 Nxd4, Sepp – Kiltti, Laukaa 1998, 15.cxd4±) 14.cxd4 Rb8 (14...c6? 15.d5! c5 16.Bd2 a5 17.Qe2+-) 15.Rb3± c6? Eriksson – J.Nielsen, Koge 2015, 16.d5! c5 17.Bd2 b6 18.Ba5!+-

D2) 9...Nge7

Black completes the development of his kingside.

10.Re1

This is an all-purpose useful move. White's rook occupies the open file and forces Black to consider the possible sorties of his opponent's light-squared bishop.



10...a6

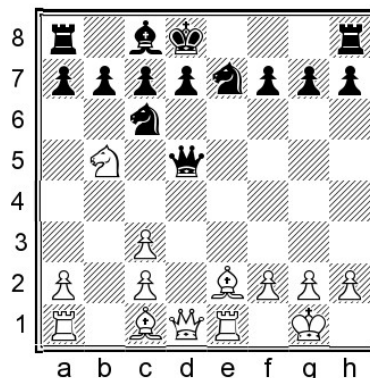
Black is trying to oust the enemy knight further away from his king.

After the careless move 10...d6?!, White can follow with the typical piece-sacrifice.

11.Nxd6! cxd6 12.Qxd6+. Black has no satisfactory defence. 12...Bd7 (12...Ke8 13.Bg5 Qe6 14.Bxe7 Nxe7 15.Bb5+-) 13.Bf4 Qg6 (13...Qf5 14.Bf3 Rc8 15.Rad1+-) 14.Qc7+ Ke8 15.Rad1 Be6, Broekmeulen – Tan, Schagen 2003, 16.Qxb7!? Rc8 17.Bb5+-

Black has tried in practice to abandon the dangerous e4-square with his queen earlier, but he can hardly find a suitable square for it, for example: 10...Qa4 11.Ba3 Re8, Elters – Teixeira, Montevideo 2013, 12.Qd2± White's advantage is almost decisive. 12...a6?! 13.Nxc7! Kxc7 14.Bd6+ Kd8 15.Qe3 Qa5 16.Bf3+-

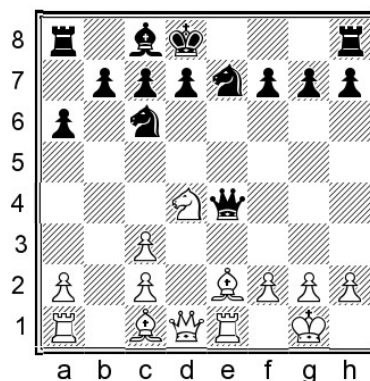
10...Qd5



Here, White can obtain an overwhelming advantage in two different ways. 11.Bd3 a6 (11...Ng6 12.c4 Qc5, Fernandes – Rocha, Lisbon 2013, 13.Be3 Qf8 14.Bxg6 hxg6 15.Bf4 d6 16.c5+-, destroying completely Black's king shelter) 12.c4 Qc5 13.Be3 Qb4 14.Rb1 Qa4 15.Nxc7! Kxc7 16.Bb6+ Kb8 17.Qf3 Ra7, Gunnarsson – Breidfjord, Reykjavik 2017. Black's pieces would be absolutely paralysed after 18.Qxf7!? d6 19.Be4+-

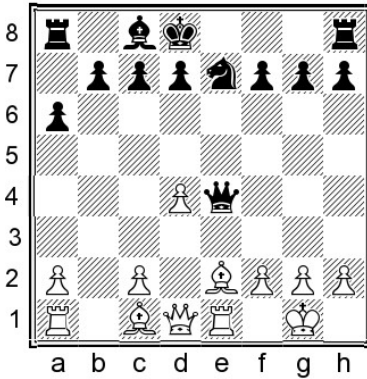
It is also very attractive for White to choose here 11.Bf4!? and Black fails to trade the queens, because of the threat against his pawn on c7: 11...d6 12.Bd3 and now, following 12...a6 (12...Ne5 13.c4 Qe6 14.Bxe5+-) 13.c4 Qc5 14.Be3 Qe5, White wins with 15.Bb6!+-

11.Nd4



11...Qg6

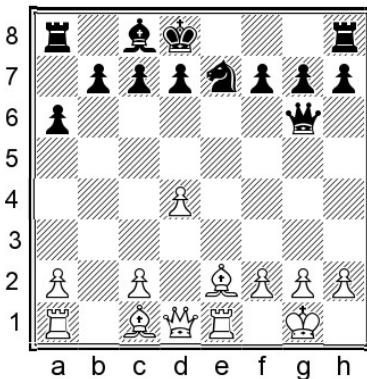
The exchange 11...Nxd4 12.cxd4 improves considerably White's pawn-structure.



About 12...d6 13.Bf3 Qg6 14.c4 – see variation **D1** (9...a6 10.Bf3 Qg6 11.Nd4 Nge7 12.Re1 Nxd4 13.cxd4 d6 14.c4).

12...Qh4 13.Bf3 d6 (13...Nf5 14.Re4 Qf6 15.Qd3 Re8 16.Bb2 Rxe4 17.Bxe4 d6 18.Re1 Ne7 19.Qb3± Galytskyi – Vugt, ICCF 2010) 14.c4 Nf5, Nuber – Patzer, Willingen 2006, 15.Bb2 Re8 16.Qd2± White has taken complete control over the dark squares.

12...Qg6



13.Bf4 d6 14.c4 Qf5 15.Qd2 Ng6 16.Bg3± and here, after the careless move 16...h5?! Izeta Txabarri – San Claudio Gonzalez, Lleida 1991, White managed to inflict a spectacular strike 17.Bxd6 (Now, it might be even stronger for him to choose instead the simple move 17.c5, for

example: 17...h4 18.Bxd6 cxd6 19.Qa5 Kd7 20.Bb5+ axb5 21.Qxb5+-) 17...cxd6 18.Bd3. Here, the retreat of Black's queen 18...Qd7, would just lose it: 19.Bxg6 fxg6 20.Qg5+ Kc7 21.Re7!+-, while following 18...Qf4, White develops a crushing attack: 19.Qa5+ b6 20.Qxb6+ Kd7 21.Bc2+- and then 22.Ba4+.

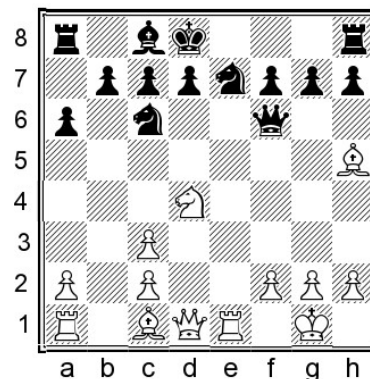
13.c4 Qf6 (13...h5 14.Bd3 Qg4 15.Qd2±) 14.Bf3 Rb8 15.Bb2 Nf5 16.Qd2± Black's position is very difficult, since his queenside pieces are not developed. His attempt to counter White's pressure by exchanging pieces 16...Re7? fails, because of 17.d5 Rxe1+ 18.Rxe1 Qg6 19.Qe2 c5 20.dxc6 bxc6 21.Qe8+ Kc7 22.Be5+- Lindhom – Natskar, ICCF 2012.

12.Bh5

This is a concrete decision.

White can continue the fight in the middlegame with 12.c4!? Nxd4 13.Qxd4 Nf5 14.Qf4±

12...Qf6



13.Bxf7

This is the strike, which White had in mind making his move twelve.

13...Nxd4

But not 13...Qxf7?, because of 14.Ne6+ Ke8 15.Nxc7+-

14.Qxd4 Qxd4

14...Qxf7? 15.Bg5 Re8 16.Rxe7 Rxe7 17.Re1+- O.Berg – Said, Larnaka 2014.

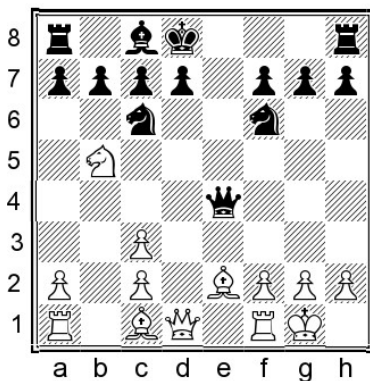
15.cxd4 h6 16.Bb3 d6 17.Bb2 Bf5

18.c4 Rf8 19.Re3 Kd7, Smagin – Sermek, Vienna 1991, 20.Rae1± White exerts powerful pressure against the enemy position.

10...Re8?! 11.Bd3 Qd5 12.Qh5 Ne7 (12...Qe6 13.Qxh7 Ne7 14.Qxg7 Nh5 15.Qh7+- Torma – Simonyi, Hungary 2012) 13.Qh4 c6 14.c4 Qc5 15.Be3 Ng6 16.Bxg6 Rxe3 17.fxe3 cxb5 18.Bxf7 Qe7 19.Bg8 b4 20.Bxh7+- Nechaev – Domenche Redondo, ICCF 2016.

It would be simpler for Black to play 10...d6 11.Re1, transposing to the variation with 10.Re1.

D3) 9...Nf6

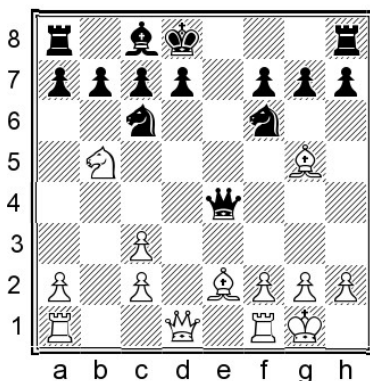


10.Re1

This is White's most logical move.

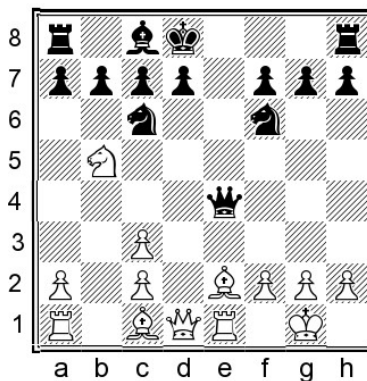
10.Be3 d6 11.Bf3 Qc4 12.Rb1 Re8 13.Nxd6 cxd6 14.Qxd6+ Nd7÷ Kronberg – Kogler, ICCF 2000.

It would be also possible for him to try 10.Bg5!?



10...a6 11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.Bxf6+ gxf6 13.cxd4±

White has a reserve variation here 10.Rb1!?, preserving his edge, for example: 10...Re8, Sepesi – Hros, Slovakia 2018, 11.Bf3 Qf5 12.Nd4 Nxd4 13.Qxd4², or 10...a6 11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.cxd4 Re8 13.Bf3 Qg6 14.Bf4 d6, Van der Wiel – Pliester, Enschede 2003, after which White has the line: 15.c4!? Bf5 16.Rxb7 Be4 17.Rb3²



10...d6

Black will have to play this move anyway, because he must solve the problem with the development of his queenside.

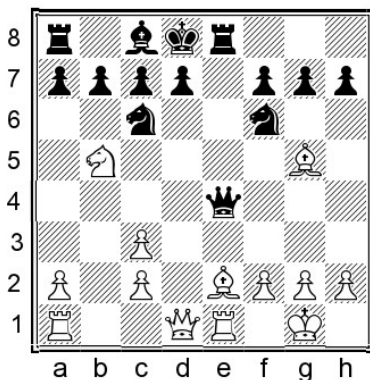
The move 10...a6 looks like a loss of time. 11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.cxd4 d6 (12...Re8 13.Bg5 – see 10...Re8) 13.Bg5 h6 14.Bxf6+ gxf6 15.Bf3 Qf5 16.Qe2 Qd7, Daulte-Varoquier, Cappelle la Grande 2016,

17.c4!? c6 (17...Re8 18.Qd2+-) 18.c5 d5
19.Bg4+-

The removal of Black's queen from the danger zone 10...Qd5 would not contribute to the development of his queenside pieces. 11.Nd4!? (11.Bd3 Re8 12.Be3 a6 13.c4 Qe5 14.Bd2 Qc5 15.Rxe8+ Nxe8 16.Nc3 h6 17.Ne4 Qf8 18.Bc3² Hoehner – Bauer, ICCF 2014) 11...Re8 12.Be3 d6 13.c4 Qa5 14.Rb1f White has powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. If Black accepts the second pawn-sacrifice 14...Qxa2?! 15.Nxc6+ bxc6 16.Ra1 Qb2 17.Bd4 Qb4 18.c3 Qb2 19.c5±, White will open the game in the centre and will organise a dangerous attack against the enemy king.

10...Qf5 11.Bd3 Qg4 12.f3 Qh4 13.g3 Qh5 14.Bf4 Qc5+ 15.Be3 Qf8 16.Rb1 b6 17.c4 Bb7 18.Bf4 Rc8 19.Bf1± Narciso – Rihtaric, ICCF 2013. The voluntary roaming of Black's queen all over the board has enabled White to centralise his pieces with tempo.

10...Re8 11.Bg5

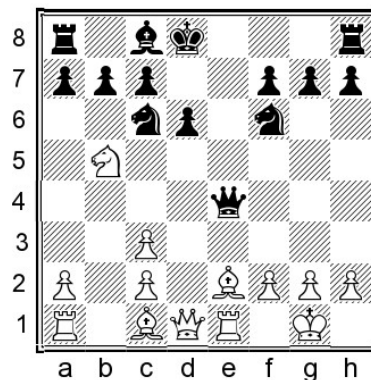


11...d6 12.Qd2 – see 10...d6.

The move 11...Qg6 loses due to the standard piece-sacrifice: 12.Bf4 d6 13.Nxc7!+-

If Black tries to get rid of the pin with 11...h6 12.Bxf6+ gxf6 13.Qd2 Rg8 14.g3 Qg6 15.Bf3 Qg5 16.Qe2, his position would not satisfy him either. 16...Ne5 (16...f5 17.Bxc6!? bxc6 18.Nd4 f4 19.Rad1 Qf6 20.Nxc6+ Qxc6 21.Qe7#) 17.Bg2 Qg4 18.Qe3 a6 19.Nd4 d6, Chazalette – Bourgoin, ICCF 2013, 20.f4+-

11...a6 12.Nd4 Nxd4 (The delay of the trade of the knights 12...Qg6 13.h4 Nxd4 14.Qxd4 d6 15.Bd3 Bf5 16.Bxf6+ gxf6 17.h5 Qg5 18.f4 Rxe1+ 19.Rxe1 Qh4 20.Qe3+-, has led to a loss of a piece for Black, Hoehner – Richter, ICCF 2012.) 13.cxd4 Qf5 (After 13...Qg6 14.Qd2 d6, Blodig – Lochte, Fuerth 1999, analogously to variation D1, White can prepare the opening of the game in the centre 15.c4!? Bd7 16.Bf3±) 14.Bh4 h6 (14...d6 15.c4±) 15.c4 b5 16.Qb3 Bb7, Parente – Cooper, ICCF 2014, 17.Rad1±



11.Bg5!?

White completes the development of his pieces.

11...Qf5

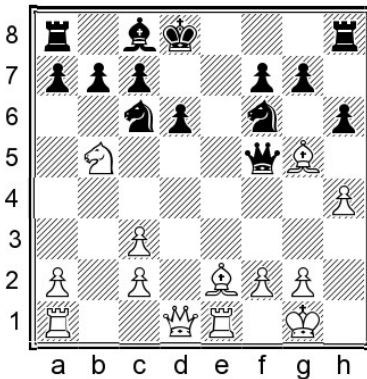
11...Re8 12.Qd2 Qa4, Milanovic – Lorincz, Vrnjacka Banja 2012 (12...Qg6?! 13.Bd3 Rxe1+ 14.Rxe1 Bf5 15.Bxf6+ Qxf6 16.Bxf5 Qxf5. Here, the standard knight-

sacrifice 17.Nxd6! cxd6 18.Qxd6+ Qd7
 19.Qf8+ Kc7 20.Qxa8+-, leads to a
 material advantage for White.) 13.Nd4!?
 Nxd4 14.cxd4 Be6 15.Rab1! (He is
 threatening 16.Bb5.) 15...a6 16.Rxb7±

12.h4 h6

This move enables White to inflict a
 spectacular tactical strike.

After 12...Re8 13.Qd2 Be6 14.Nd4 Nxd4
 15.cxd4±, the game develops quietly.
 White has more than sufficient
 compensation for the pawn, thanks to his
 two-bishop advantage and the
 misplacement of Black's king, which
 impedes his rook on a8 to enter the
 actions.



13.Nxd6! cxd6 14.Qxd6+ Bd7 15.Bd3

Qa5

15...Qg4?! 16.f3 Qa4 17.Bxf6+ gxf6
 18.Bf5+-

16.Bxf6+ gxf6 17.Rab1 Qxc3

After 17...Rb8 18.Rb5 Qxc3 19.Rd1!+-,
 White's threat to remove his bishop from
 the d3-square decides the outcome of the
 fight in his favour.

18.Bf5 Qd4 19.Qg3 Bxf5

This queen-sacrifice is practically
 forced.

Following 19...Kc8 20.Qb3!? Rb8
 (20...Na5 21.Qb5! Bxf5+ 22.Qxf5+ Kc7

23.Qxa5+-) 21.Red1 Qxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Bxf5
 23.Qxf7+-, White will capture the enemy
 queen anyway.

20.Rbd1 Qxd1 21.Rxd1+ Ke8 22.Rb1

Black obtains a rook and two minor
 pieces for his queen and this seems to be
 more than sufficient compensation. His
 pieces are disordinated however, and
 his kingside pawns are in ruins.

22...Rb8

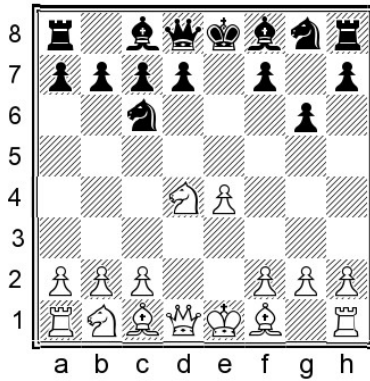
22...b6 23.Qf3 Bd7 24.Qxf6 Rg8 25.Re1+
 Be6 26.f4+-

Black's attempt to save the game with
 less sacrificed material after 22...Ne7
 23.Rxb7±, leads to an almost hopeless
 position for him, since White would be
 threatening 24.Qc7. **23.Qf3 Bd7?**

(23...Ne7 24.Qf4 Rd8 25.Rxb7±) **24.Qxf6**
Rh7 25.f4 Kf8 26.Qd6+ Ke8 27.Rb3 Be6
28.Re3 Rd8 29.Qc7 Ne7 30.f5 Nxf5
31.Rxe6+ fxe6 32.Qxh7+- Gool -
 Kochan, ICCF 2013.

Chapter 3

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 g6



When Black chooses this move he wishes to develop harmoniously his pieces and to fianchetto his bishop on g7. He often obtains rather cramped positions, however. White has two promising lines, which are approximately equally useful. We will analyse them both: **A) 5.Nxc6** and **B) 5.Nc3**.

A) 5.Nxc6

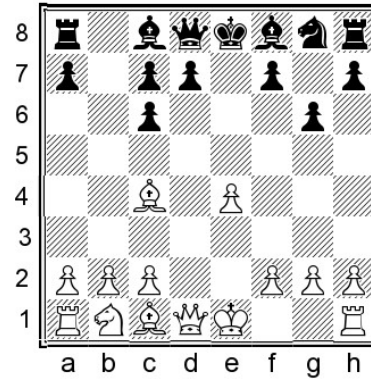
In this variation White relies on utilising his space advantage as well as the defects of Black's pawn-structure.

5...bxc6

It would not be logical for Black to play here 5...dxc6, because after 6.Qxd8+ Kxd8, his pawn-structure is compromised and he lags in development without any compensation for that. White's advantage is doubtless and does not need concrete variations to support this evaluation. We will just mention that White's best is not 7.Bc4 Be6, which would lead to further simplifications, but 7.Nc3!² and Black

will be faced with a difficult fight for a draw.

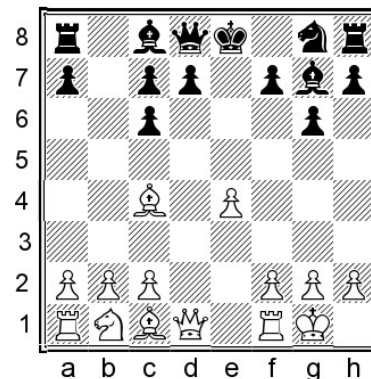
6.Bc4



This is White's most logical move. He combines the pressure against the f7-square with prophylactic against the enemy pawn-advance d7-d5. Besides that, White will manage easily to prepare the advantageous exchange of the dark-squared bishops on the d4-square.

He has often tried in practice the straightforward move 6.Qd4, but Black's response 6...Qf6! is quite reliable.

6...Bg7 7.0-0



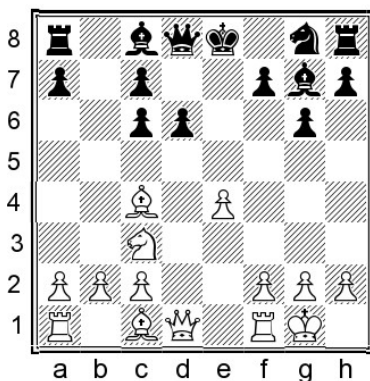
Here, the hasty move 7...Nf6?! can be countered by White with 8.e5±, therefore

Black has two logical moves: **A1) 7...d6** and **A2) 7...Ne7**.

A1) 7...d6

This move can be connected with the preparation of the development of the knight on f6, as well as with the early move Be6.

8.Nc3

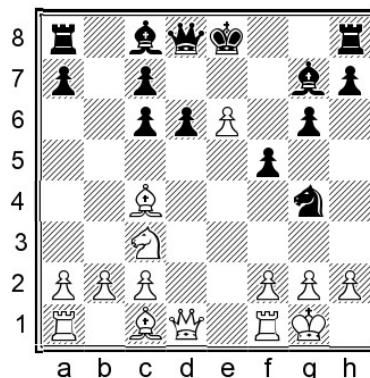


8...Be6

This is a principled decision by Black, but his attempt to neutralise the enemy light-squared bishop has some serious positional defects as we will see later. At first, let us have a look at some other possibilities for him.

About 8...Ne7 9.Bg5 – see variation **A2**.

8...Nf6? 9.e5! Ng4 (9...dxe5 10.Qxd8+ Kxd8 11.Bxf7±; 9...Nd7 10.e6 Ne5 11.exf7+ Kf8, Epstein – Hahn, Parsippany 1996, 12.Re1±) 10.e6! (It would not be so convincing for White to play here 10.exd6 0-0 11.Ne4², although in the game Jakovenko – Diehl, St Ingbert 1995, he managed to win rapidly, but only due to his opponent's horrible play: 11...Qh4?! 12.Bf4± Nxh2? 13.g3 Qh3 14.Ng5 1-0) 10...f5



Now, White can exploit the fact his his opponent's king is stranded in the centre in two different ways:

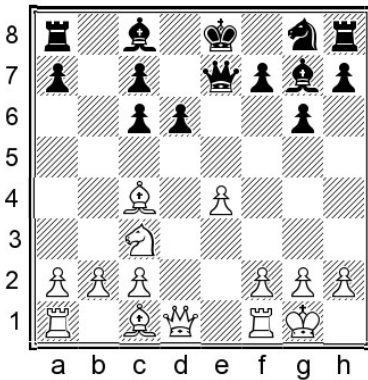
11.e7 Kxe7 (11...Qxe7 12.Re1 Ne5 13.Bb3±; 11...Qd7 12.Bb3±) 12.Bg5+ Nf6 (12...Bf6 13.Nd5+! cxd5 14.Qxd5+-) 13.Nd5+! Kd7 (13...cxd5 14.Qxd5+-) 14.Nf4 Re8 15.Qd3±, with an overwhelming advantage for White.

11.h3 Nf6 (11...Ne5 12.Bb3 Ba6 13.Re1 Qe7 14.f4 Nc4 15.Ba4 0-0 16.Bxc6 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Rab8, Minaya Molano – De Greif, Bogota 1970, 18.Qd4±) 12.Qf3 Bb7 (12...d5 13.Re1! Qe7 14.Bxd5! cxd5 15.Nxd5 Nxd5 16.Qxd5 Rb8 17.Qc6+ Kf8 18.Bg5+-) 13.Re1 d5 (13...Qe7 14.Ba6!+-) 14.e7± Bejtovic – Skytte, Borup 2010. Black has numerous weaknesses and a very unsafe king.

The inclusion of the moves 8...Rb8 9.Bb3 cannot be of any positive use for Black. 9...Ne7 (9...Qh4?! 10.Qf3 Nf6 11.e5! dxe5 12.Qxc6+ Bd7 13.Qxc7 0-0 14.Qxe5 Ng4 15.Qg3± Salekhov – Badalov, Baku 1999. Black has no compensation for the lost pawns.) 10.Bg5 (10.Be3!? with the idea Bd4.) 10...0-0 11.Qd2 Re8, Pickles – Bathie, Edinburgh 1996, 12.Rad1²

Having in mind Black's lag in development, it would be rather

suspicious for him to opt for 8...Qe7, although it would not be so easy for White to refute this move.

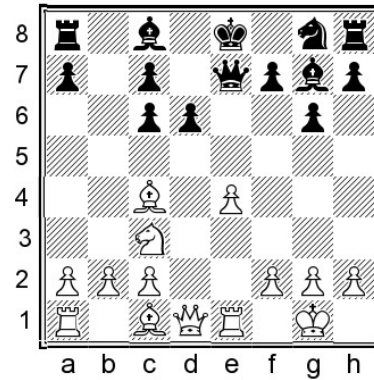


Now, White has numerous promising moves.

White can try a move here, which has not been tested in practice yet – 9.e5!?N 9...dxe5 (9...d5? 10.Nxd5! cxd5 11.Qxd5 Rb8 12.Bg5! Qd7 13.Qc5+–; 9...Bxe5 10.Re1 Be6 11.Qf3! Rb8 12.Bb3! c5 13.Nd5±, with very powerful initiative for White as compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 10.Re1 Nf6 11.Qf3 0-0 (Following 11...Bd7 12.Bf4!, Black has nothing better than to give back the pawn with 12...0-0 13.Bxe5 Rae8 14.Bf1²) 12.Qxc6 Bd7 (12...Rb8 13.Bg5²) 13.Qf3² with a superior pawn-structure for White.

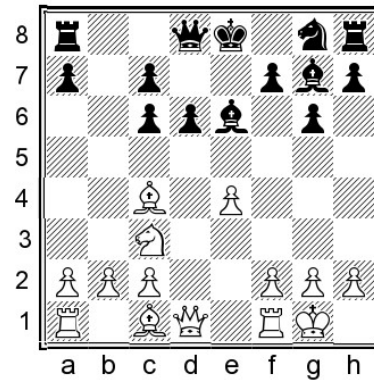
9.Bf4!? Nf6 (9...Be6 10.Bb3 Nf6 11.Ba4! Bd7 12.e5 dxe5 13.Bxe5 0-0 14.Re1²) 10.e5 dxe5 11.Bxe5 0-0 12.Re1 Re8 (12...Be6 13.Bxe6 Qxe6 14.Qf3²; 12...Bf5, Hoen – Wrangell, Norway 1991, 13.Qf3! Qc5 14.Bb3²) 13.Bxf6! After this move, White transfers into an obviously better endgame. 13...Qxe1+ 14.Qxe1 Rxe1+ 15.Rxe1 Bxf6 16.Re8+ Kg7 17.Ne4! (After the hasty move 17.Ba6?, Black has the resource 17...Bb7.) 17...Bb7 18.Nxf6 Kxf6 19.Re4 Rd8 20.Kf1² with good winning chances for White.

It is also good for him to play here 9.Re1



9...Be6 10.Nd5! Qd7 (10...cxd5? 11.exd5+–) 11.c3!? Ne7 (11...Nf6? 12.Bh6!+–; 11...Kf8 12.Ne3±) 12.Bh6 0-0 13.Bg7 Kg7 14.Qd4 f6 15.Nf4±

In the game Bagi – Nemeth, Zalakaros 2015, Black continued with 9...Nf6 and here, instead of the indifferent move 10.Bf4?! Nd7!, White had to play more resolutely: 10.Nd5!? (10.e5!? dxe5 – see 9.e5) 10...Qd8 (It would be too risky for Black to choose 10...cxd5?! 11.exd5 Ne4 12.Bb5+ Kf8 13.f3 f5 14.fxe4 fxe4 15.c3±) 11.Nxf6+ Qxf6 12.c3 0-0 13.Qa4² with a positional advantage for White.



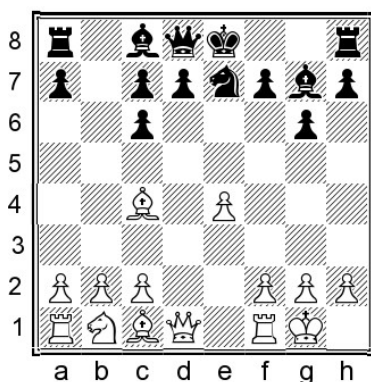
9.Qd3

He has a good alternative here 9.Bxe6!? fxe6 10.Be3 Ne7, Votava – Hracek, Karvina 1989. Now, White had to choose the energetic line: 11.Qg4! (11.Qf3 Rb8!) 11...Qd7 (11...Qc8 12.Bg5!²) 12.Rad1 0-0 13.Na4!² Black has managed to complete

his development, but is facing new problems.

9...Ne7 (Following 9...Bxc4 10.Qxc4 Ne7 11.Bg5², White's pressure is very powerful.) **10.Bxe6 fxe6 11.Qh3** (11.Bg5!? 0-0 12.Rad1 Rb8 13.b3 c5 14.f4 Qe8 15.e5²) **11...Qd7 12.Bh6 0-0 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Rad1²** Kilic – Yaran, Ankara 2018.

A2) 7...Ne7



This is the main line for Black. He is trying to complete the development of his kingside as quickly as possible and to castle.

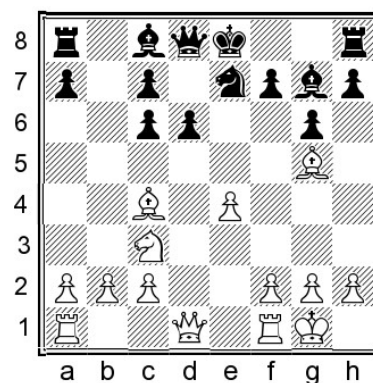
8.Nc3 d6

Black can also begin here with 8...0-0, but this is likely to lead to transposition of moves. There is no good opportunity in sight for him to advance d7-d5. 9.Be3 (9.Bg5 h6 10.Be3 d6 11.Qd2² – see 8...d6; 9...Qe8 10.Qd2²) 9...Bb7 (It is hardly good for Black to play immediately 9...d5?!, because he would need to give up his dark-squared bishop for the enemy knight in c3 in order to avoid losing a pawn; it is more reliable for him to continue with 9...d6 – see 8...d6.) 10.Bd4 d5 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.Qd4 Kg8 (12...f6

13.Bb3 Qd6, Ganigev – Karagodin, Belorechensk 2007, 14.Na4±) 13.Bb3 Qd6 14.Na4±

9.Bg5

9.Be3!? 0-0 10.Bd4 c5 (10...Bxd4 11.Qxd4 c5 12.Qd2 Rb8 13.b3 Be6 14.Bd3² Bakalchuk – Haimovich, Herzliya 2017; 10...Be6 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.Bb3 c5 13.f4² Korneev – Wantiez, Bergamo 2014) 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.Qd2 Rb8 13.b3 Nc6, Ianovsky – Taborov, Kiev 2002, 14.f4² White has a superior pawn-structure, while Black's king is rather unsafe. White has two possible promising pawn-breaks (e4-e5 and f4-f5) and this provides him with a stable advantage.



9...0-0

9...h6 10.Be3 0-0 11.Qd2 Kh7 12.Rad1 Be6 13.Bxe6 fxe6 14.Ne2! Preparing the transfer of his knight to a more active position. 14...c5, Vogt – Sukhanov, DDR 1969, 15.b3² Black's bishop is doing nothing and his pawn-structure has been even more compromised after the move h7-h6, while White has very promising prospects for the development of his initiative on the kingside. He can place his knight on f4 and then advance his h-

pawn, or continue with the manoeuvre Qe2-Qg4. He has also the possibility to advance f2-f4 and then his knight will be very well placed on the g3-square.

9...Be6, Dobuchak – Lima, Natal 2019, 10.Bxe6 fxe6 11.Qg4 Qd7 12.Rad1 0-0 13.Na4! Rae8 (Black plans to give up his e6-pawn but capture the enemy e4-pawn.) 14.Nc5 Qc8 15.Qxe6+ Rf7 16.f4!± Now, nothing sensible can be recommended to Black and following 16...dxc5?! 17.Rd7, his position becomes critical in connection with White's powerful threat f4-f5 (This is his real threat and not the capturing Bxe7, after which he gets pinned...).

10.Qd2

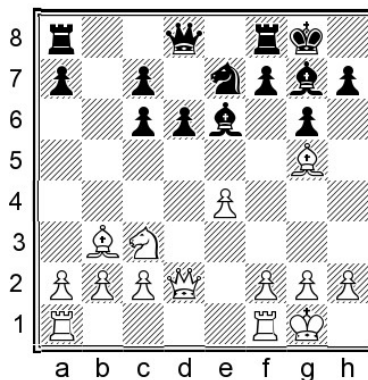
White prepares the trade of the dark-squared bishops.

He has an alternative 10.f4!?, followed by the development of the queen to the d3-square. 10...Be6 11.Bb3 Qd7 (11...Bxb3?! 12.axb3 Re8 13.Qd3 Qd7 14.f5± Antal – Valsecchi, Forni di Sopra 2015) 12.Qd3²

10...Be6

This move has become more reliable for Black after White's queen has occupied the d2-square, because he cannot exchange on e6 and follow this with Qg4.

11.Bb3



11...Qd7

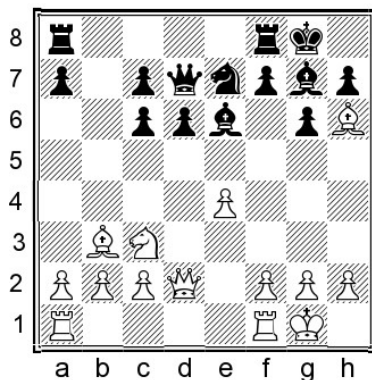
It would be dubious for Black to choose here 11...d5?! 12.f4 Qd7 13.Na4± Stepovaia – Karabakhsjan, Eisk 2007.

11...Rb8 12.f4 Qd7 13.f5! gxf5 14.exf5 Nxf5 15.Ne4 h6 (15...Bxb3? 16.Nf6+ Bxf6 17.Bxf6+-; 15...f6? 16.Nc5+-) 16.Nf6+ Bxf6 17.Bxf6 Kh7 18.c4 Rg8 19.Bc2± Tari – Semcesen, Stockholm 2016.

12.Bh6

Now, it would not be so effective for White to play 12.f4 Rae8 and Black is well prepared for the move f4-f5.

It might be good for White to include here 12.Rad1!? and later, for example: 12...Nc8 13.Bh6 Nb6 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.f4², or 12...f5 13.Rfe1²



12...Rfe8

12...Rae8? 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Qd4+ Kg8
15.Qxa7±

12...d5?! 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Rad1 Rfd8
15.Qd4+ Kg8 16.Rfe1± Gulyas – Boer,
Aggtelek 1995.

12...Bxh6 13.Qxh6 f5, Popov –
Ostrovsky, Belorechensk 2013, 14.Rfe1
Rae8 (14...fxe4?! 15.Nxe4±) 15.Qh4!²

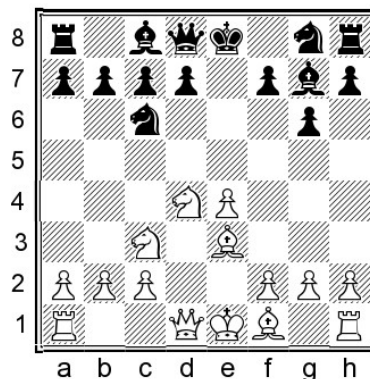
13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.f4 f6 15.Rae1²
White has a comfortable advantage
thanks to his extra space and a superior
pawn-structure. The game Macs –
Harman, ICCF 2015 illustrates the
dangers Black is facing: 15...c5 16.f5 Bxb3
17.axb3 g5? (after 17...gxf5, White has the
powerful argument 18.Qd1!², followed by
exf5 and Qg4.) 18.e5! Nxf5 19.exf6+ Kg6
20.Ne4 h6 21.Qd3 1-0.

B) 5.Nc3

This is White's most popular and most
aggressive move. He is not in a hurry to
exchange on c6, avoids the opening of the

b-file and plans to castle queenside. I will
mention that this position is often
reached in the Three Knights Opening
after the move-order 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6
3.Nc3 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4.

5...Bg7 6.Be3



Now, Black must decide where to
develop his knight on g8. We will analyse
B1) 6...Nge7 and **B2) 6...Nf6**.

6...d6 7.Qd2 Nxd4 (7...Nf6 8.f3 – see
6...Nf6; 7...Nge7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.h4 – see
6...Nge7) 8.Bxd4 Bxd4 9.Qxd4 Qf6 10.Qd2
Ne7 11.0-0-0 Be6 (11...0-0?! 12.Nb5±)
12.f4² Aroshidze – Shahtahtinsky, Nikea
2005.

B1) 6...Nge7

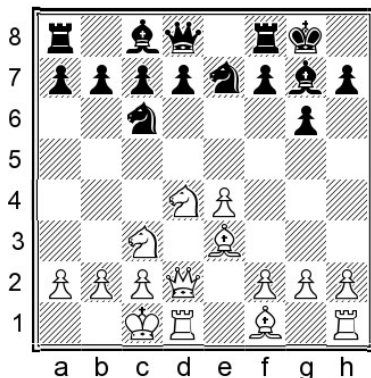
Here, Black's knight cannot be attacked
after e4-e5, but is passively placed in
comparison to the f6-square. We will see
that White obtains an advantage almost
effortlessly.

7.Qd2 0-0

The move 7...d5 is premature. 8.Nxc6
bxc6 9.0-0-0 Be6 (9...0-0 – see 7...0-0)
10.Bh6 0-0 11.Bxg7 Kxg7 12.Qd4 f6
13.Qc5± Nunn – Beliavsky, Belgrade 1991.

About 7...d6 8.0-0-0 (8.Bc4!? – see Chapter 1, 4...Nge7 5.Bc4 d6 6.Be3 g6 7.Nc3 Bg7 8.Qd2) 8...a6 (8...0-0 9.h4 – see 7...0-0) 9.Nxc6!? (9.h4) 9...Nxc6 10.Bh6 0-0, Fox – Thorfinnsson, Dublin 2019, 11.h4 Re8 (11...Bxh6 12.Qxh6 f6 13.f4,) 12.Bxg7 Kxg7 13.h5 g5 14.h6+ Kh8 15.Nd5 Rxe4 (15...Be6 16.Nxc7 Qxc7 17.Qxg5+–) 16.g3 with the idea 17.Qc3+–

8.0-0-0



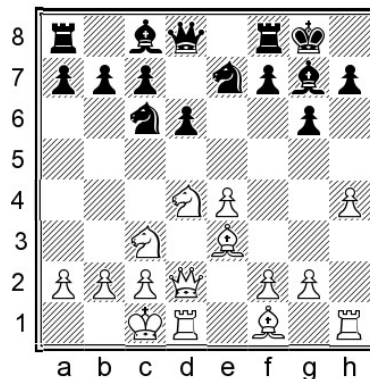
8...d6

8...d5 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Bd4 (He can avoid simplifications with 10.Bc5!? Be6 11.h4 h5 12.Be2±) 10...dxe4 11.Nxe4 Qxd4 12.Qxd4 Bxd4 13.Rxd4. Black's weaknesses are quite obvious. 13...Bf5 14.Bc4 Bxe4 15.Rxe4 Nf5 16.Bd3 Rfd8 17.Rc4 Ne7 18.Re1 Kf8 19.Be4 Rd6 20.Bf3 Rad8 21.Ra4 Ra8 22.Ra6± Perunovic – Dragovic, Kragujevac 2014.

8...Re8 9.h4 h5 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.g4!? (11.Bd4 d6 12.Bc4± Mannion – Hogg, Perth 1995) 11...hxg4 12.h5 gxh5 13.Rxh5 Ng6 14.Bd4 Re5!? (After 14...Ne5, White has the resource 15.Be2± and later Rg1 and his attack is running practically unopposed.) 15.Bxe5 Bxe5 16.Kb1 Qf6 17.Bc4 d6 18.Rdh1± White has excellent chances of realising gradually his extra exchange.

9.h4

It would not be so precise for White to choose here 9.f3, because he might have a chance later to advance f2-f4 at once.



We will deal now with **B1a)** 9...h5 and **B1b)** 9...Nxd4.

B1a) 9...h5

Black prevents h4-h5, but weakens the g6-square and his position becomes strategically risky.

10.f3

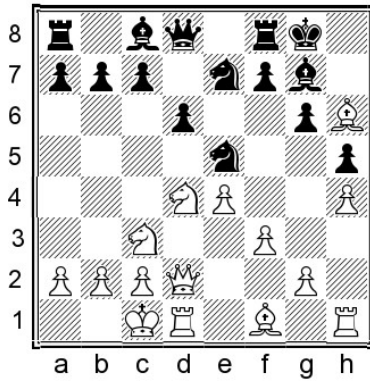
10.Be2!? Ne5 (10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bxd4 12.Qxd4 Nc6 13.Qd2 Be6 14.f4±) 11.Bg5!? (11.Bh6) 11...f6 12.Bh6± Belkhodja – Duchovny, Paris 1993.

10...Ne5

After the simplifying line: 10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bxd4 12.Qxd4 Nc6 13.Qd2, Black would be still too far from equality. The ex-World Champion Boris Spassky failed to solve the opening problems: 13...Be6 14.Be2 Qf6 15.f4 Rae8 16.f5 gxf5 17.Bxh5

f4 18.Rdf1 Qe5 19.Be2 Nd4 20.Bd3 c5
 21.Qxf4 c4, Stertenbrink – Spassky,
 Germany 1986, 22.Be2±

11.Bh6



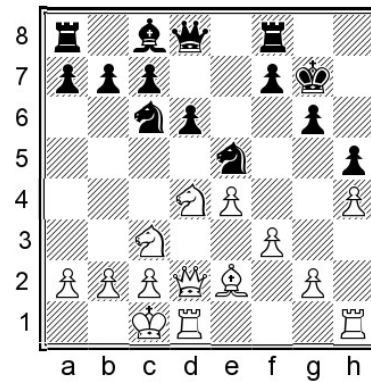
11...N7c6

11...a6 12.Bxg7 Kxg7 13.f4! (13.g4 c5!)
 13...Ng4 14.f5! gxf5 (14...Ng8 15.Bc4±
 Lintchevski – Ponkratov, Taganrog 2011.)
 15.Bd3 fxe4 16.Nxe4 Ng6 17.Ng3 Rh8
 18.Rhf1± and White has a crushing attack
 for the sacrificed pawn.

12.Bxg7 Kxg7 13.Be2

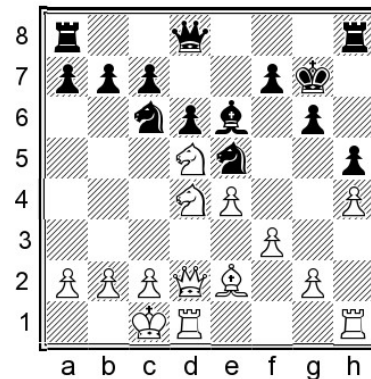
In this position, with castling on
 opposite sides of the board, White is
 clearly ahead in the development of his
 initiative, so he can play calmly and
 reliably.

It is also possible for him to play more
 resolutely 13.g4!? hxg4 14.f4 Nxd4
 (14...Nf3 15.Nxf3 gxf3 16.h5 Rh8
 17.Nd5±) 15.Qxd4 c5 16.Qe3 Nc6 17.Bc4±



13...f6

13...Rh8 14.Nd5 (It is also good for
 White to play the prophylactic move
 14.Kb1?) 14...Be6



It is essential for White here not to
 allow his opponent to stabilise the
 position, as it happened in the game
 Muminova – Stefanova, Istanbul 2012
 after 15.Rdg1? Bxd5 16.exd5 Nxd4
 17.Qxd4 Qf6=

15.g4 Nxd4 (15...hxg4 16.Nxe6+ fxe6
 17.Nf4±) 16.Qxd4 hxg4 17.f4 Bxd5
 18.exd5 Rxh4 19.Rxh4 Qxh4 20.fxe5 Qg5+
 21.Qd2± It is important that White
 succeeds in capturing the pawn on g4.

His simplest line here is the immediate
 15.f4 Ng4 16.Nxe6+ fxe6 17.Bxg4 hxg4
 18.Qc3+ Kf7 19.Ne3+–, winning a pawn
 and beginning the technical realisation of
 his advantage.

14.Kb1

This prophylactic move is almost always necessary in similar positions.

White is better after 14.f4!? Ng4
15.Rhf1±

14...Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Be6 16.f4 Nc6

After 16...Ng4, White has 17.Rhf1± and later f4-f5.

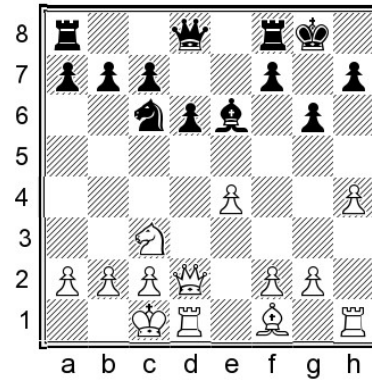
17.Qd2± Black has failed to cope with the opening problems. He can prevent the appearance of the enemy pawn on f5 only by playing **17...f5** (17...Qd7 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf5 Bxf5 20.Bxh5± Mohr – Gyorkos, Austria 1997), but this would lead to the weakening of the g5-square. Later, White can calmly improve his position, for example with **18.Bf3 Qf6 19.g3 Rae8 20.Rhe1±**

B1b) 9...Nxd4

Black's desire to simplify the position is easily understandable.

10.Bxd4 Bxd4 11.Qxd4 Nc6 12.Qd2 Be6

About 12...h5 13.Be2 Be6 14.f4± – see 9...h5.

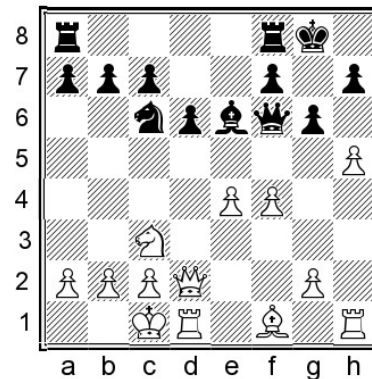


13.h5

13.Be2!? a6 14.f4 b5 15.g4 b4 16.Nd5 a5 17.h5 (17.g5!?) 17...g5 18.fxg5 Bxd5 19.exd5 Ne5 20.Rhf1± Vokarev – Adler, Briansk 1995.

13...g5

Black plays more often in practice 13...Qf6, but then White advances 14.f4 immediately and Black would be in a great danger.

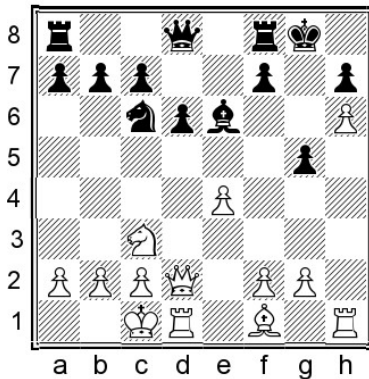


14...Qg7 15.Be2 f5 16.hxg6 hxg6, Vujosevic – Csala, Gyongyos 1996, 17.exf5 gxf5 (17...Bxf5 18.g4 Be6 19.f5+–) 18.Nd5 Rae8 19.Rh5+–

14...Rad8 15.g4! Bxg4 16.Nd5 Qg7 17.Be2 (He could have also played here immediately 17.f5!? Bxd1 18.f6 Qh8

19.Qxd1, threatening a check with his knight on e7 and Black is completely helpless: 19...Rfe8 20.hxg6 fxg6 21.Bc4 Kf8 22.Nxc7+-) 17...Bxe2 18.h6 Qd4 (18...Qh8 19.Qxe2 Rd7, Grund – Wohlfart, Mannheim 1994, 20.Qg4 f5 21.exf5 Rxf5 22.Rhe1+-) 19.Qxe2 Qa4 20.Kb1±

14.h6!



14...Ne5

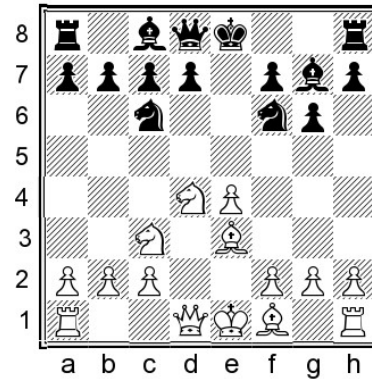
14...Qf6?! 15.Rh5! g4 16.Nd5 Bxd5 17.Rf5! Qe7 18.exd5 Ne5 19.Be2±

It is stronger for him to continue with 14...Kh8 15.Be2 Rg8, Weaving – Garrido Dominguez, England 2013, 16.Nb5!?! Rc8 17.Qc3+ f6 (17...Ne5 18.Nxa7 Ra8 19.Nb5 Rxa2 20.Nxc7±) 18.Bc4 Qe7 19.Bd5 Bxd5 20.exd5 Ne5 21.Nd4² and Black's weaknesses make his position very difficult.

15.Rh5 f6 16.Be2 Kh8 17.f3. White prepares gradually the advance of his pawn to f4. **17...Qe8 18.Rhh1 Qg6 19.g3 f5?! (19...Nc6 20.f4 Qg8 21.Kb1²) 20.f4 gxf4 21.gxf4 Nc6**, Boguslavsky – Lammers, Munich 2017, **22.Nd5 Bxd5 23.exd5 Ne7 24.Bh5 Qf6 25.Rde1+-**

B2) 6...Nf6

This is an active move by Black and it requires a precise reaction by White.



We will analyse two promising variations for him: **B2a) 7.Nxc6** and **B2b) 7.Qd2.**

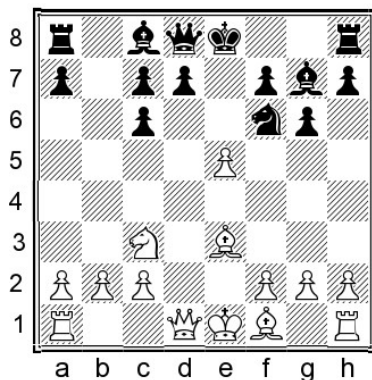
B2a) 7.Nxc6!?

This is a concrete decision. After the exchange of the knights White will advance his central pawn with tempo.

7...bxc6

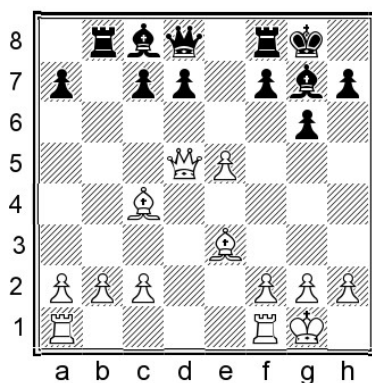
Following 7...dxc6?! 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.0-0-0±, the endgame is obviously better for White.

8.e5



8...Ng8

Black is reluctant to retreat his knight to its initial square, therefore it might seem logical for him to try to sacrifice a pawn with 8...Nd5!? He hopes to exploit his quick development and after exchanging pieces to obtain a position with chances for a draw. Still, we will see that this plan is not so successful. 9.Nxd5 cxd5 10.Qxd5 Rb8 11.Bc4 0-0 12.0-0



12...Bb7 13.Qd4!? d6 14.f4±

12...d6 13.exd6 Be6 (13...cxd6, Tate – Sulskis, Plovdiv 2012, 14.Bb3²) 14.Qc6 Qxd6 (14...Bxc4? 15.dxc7+-) 15.Qxd6 cxd6 16.Bb3 Rfc8, Lindberg – Wieweg, Sweden 2010. White must play very accurately if he wishes to preserve real winning prospects. Here, he had to continue with 17.Rfd1 Bxb2 (17...Bxb3 18.cxb3 Bxb2 19.Rab1 Rc2 20.Rxd6 a5 21.Rd5 Ra8 22.a4±) 18.Rab1 Be5 19.Bxa7

Ra8 20.Be3 Bxb3 21.cxb3 (21.axb3 Rxc2 22.b4²) 21...Rxa2 22.b4² Now, thanks to his well deployed pieces and his outside passed pawn White has very good chances of winning this endgame.

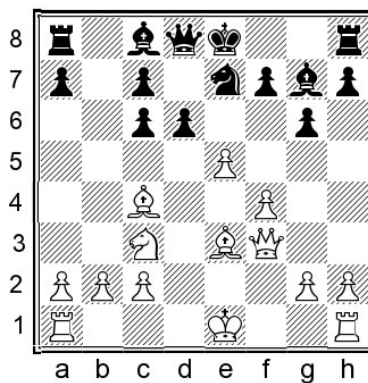
9.f4 Ne7

Black does not have time for the undermining move 9...f6?!. White will counter it with 10.Bc4! fxe5 11.0-0 d5 12.Nxd5! cxd5 13.Bxd5, crushing his opponent, for example: 13...Rb8 14.Bf7+ Ke7 15.Bc5+-; 13...Bd7 14.fxe5+-; 13...Bf5 14.Bc6+ Kf8 15.g4+-

10.Qf3 d6

10...0-0 11.Bc4 d5 (11...d6 12.0-0-0 – see 10...d6) 12.0-0-0! Bd7 13.Bb3 Nf5 14.Bf2 Re8 15.g4 Nh4 16.Qe2 Qe7 17.h3± Borkovec – Andersen, ICCF 2010.

11.Bc4



11...0-0

11...Nf5 12.Bf2 dxe5, Grandelius – Sandipan, Abu Dhabi 2015, 13.Rd1! Bd7 (13...Nd4 14.Qe4 Bxf5 15.Rxd4+-; 14...f5 15.Qd3 e4 16.Nxe4 fxe4 17.Qxe4+ Qe7

18.Qxe7+ Kxe7 19.Bxd4 Bxd4 20.Rxd4+-;
 15...Ne6 16.Qe3 Qf6 17.0-0±) 14.fxe5 0-0
 (14...Bxe5 15.g4 Qe7 16.gxf5 Bxc3+
 17.Kf1+-) 15.g4 Nh6 (15...Ne7 16.Bh4
 Qe8 17.0-0±) 16.h3±

12.0-0 Bd7

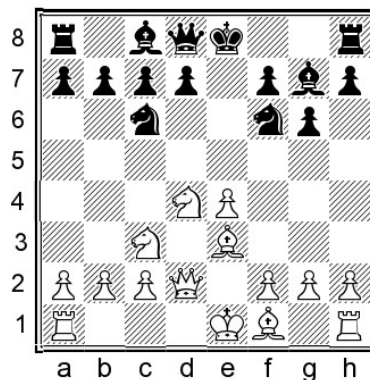
The move 12...Be6 leads to a strategically difficult position for Black. 13.Bxe6 fxe6 14.Qh3 Nf5 15.Bf2. He has numerous weaknesses and has no chances of creating meaningful counterplay. 15...Qc8 (15...Qb8 16.Rhe1±) 16.Rhe1 Rb8 17.b3 Qa6 18.Kb1 d5 19.g4 Ne7 20.Ne2 Rf7 21.Qg3± Hagen – Andreassen, ICCF 2009.

13.Rhe1

White should not ignore his harmonious development for the sake of material gains. After 13.exd6?! cxd6 14.Rxd6 Nf5÷, Black's pieces are activated and the consequences would be unclear.

13...Qc8 14.h3± White's advantage is quite obvious. His pieces are perfectly placed and he is ready to open the game in the centre, as well as to prepare a pawn-offensive with the help of the moves g2-g4, f4-f5. **14...dxe5 15.Bc5 Re8 16.Rxe5!? Nf5** (16...Bxe5 17.fxe5 Be6 18.Ne4 Bxc4 19.Nf6+ Kh8 20.Nxe8 Qxe8 21.Qf6+ Kg8 22.Bxe7±) **17.g4 Nd6 18.Bb3 a5 19.Bd4 Rb8 20.Rxe8+ Qxe8 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 22.Na4±** Fister – Kostanjsek, ICCF 2012.

B2b) 7.Qd2



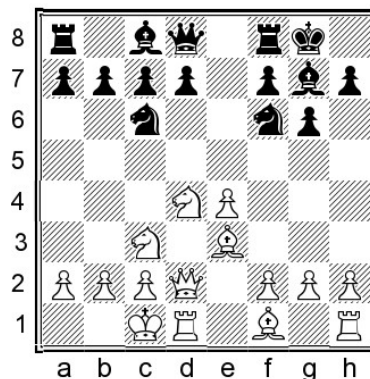
This is a solid move. White is not in a hurry and at first completes the development of his queenside and prepares castling queenside.

7...0-0

About 7...d6 8.f3 0-0 9.0-0-0 – see 7...0-0.

7...Ng4 8.Bg5!? (8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.Bd4 Bxd4 10.Qxd4 Qf6 11.Qd2² Martinez Carlos – Lima, Sao Paulo 2004) 8...f6 9.Bf4 0-0 10.Nd5 d6 11.Nb5 Rf7 12.h3 Nge5 13.Be3± and Black cannot play 13...a6?, because of 14.Nbxc7! Rxc7 15.Bb6+–

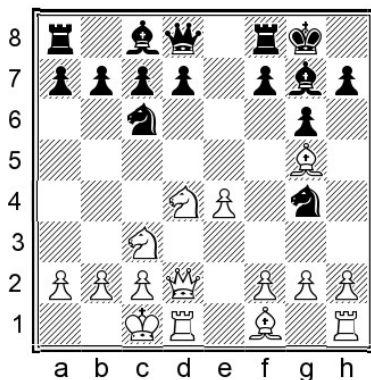
8.0-0-0



Now, Black's main lines are **B2b1)** 8...d6 and **B2b2)** 8...Re8.

It would be premature for him to opt for 8...d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Nxd5 cxd5 12.Qxd5 Qf6 (12...Rb8 13.b3 Qf6 14.Qd4 Qc6 15.Qc5 Qf6 16.Bd4 – see 12...Qf6.) 13.Qd4 Qf5 14.Qc5 Rb8, Postnikov – Tsvetkov, Tyumen 2014, 15.b3! Qf6 16.Bd4 Qf4+ 17.Rd2 Bh6 18.Be3 Qf6 19.Qd4 Qxd4 20.Rxd4± He has managed to parry Black's activity and has preserved his extra pawn.

Once again, it is not so good for Black to play 8...Ng4, in view of 9.Bg5!

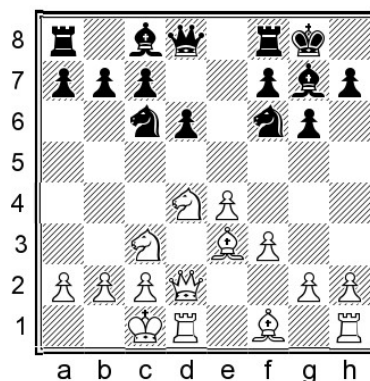


9...Bf6?! 10.Nxc6 bxc6 (10...Bxg5 11.Nxd8 Bxd2+ 12.Rxd2 Rxd8 13.Nb5±) 11.Bxf6 Nxf6 (11...Qxf6? 12.f3 Ne5 13.f4 Ng4 14.h3 Nh6 15.g4+-) 12.e5± 9...f6 10.Nxc6! (10.Bf4 f5 11.Bg5±; 10...Nxd4 11.Qxd4 f5 12.Qc4+ Kh8 13.Bxc7 Qf6, Mazurok – Sushchev, Chernigov 2005, 14.Qe2 Qc6 15.Bd6 Re8 16.f3 Bh6+ 17.Kb1 Ne3 18.Nb5!? Nxd1 19.Qxd1 Re6 20.e5+-; 18.Rd4+-) 10...bxc6 11.Bh4. Black's attempt to free his position with 11...g5 12.Bg3 f5 fails, because White will continue with 13.exf5 Nh6 14.Bc4+ Kh8 (14...d5? 15.Nxd5+-) 15.h4± with a considerable advantage.

B2b1) 8...d6

This position might arise after many different move-orders and in numerous openings (besides the Scotch Game, the Philidor Defence, the Three Knights Opening and even the Pirc Defence). In general, the character of the fight resembles the Dragon variation of the Sicilian Defence, but there is a principled difference as well. Black still does not have open (or semi-open) files on the queenside and this impedes considerably his chances of obtaining active counterplay.

9.f3



Now, Black must choose between many different possibilities. We will deal in details with **B2b1a)** 9...Re8 and **B2b1b)** 9...Nxd4.

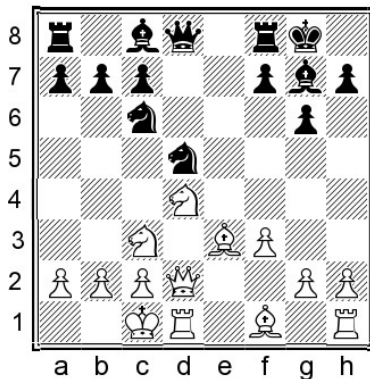
About 9...Be6 10.g4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 – see 9...Nxd4.

9...a6 10.g4 Ne5 (10...Re8 11.Kb1 – see 9...Re8; 10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Be6 12.g5, or 11...b5 12.h4 – see 9...Nxd4) 11.Be2 b5 12.g5 Nfd7 (12...b4 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.exd5±) 13.f4±

9...Bd7?! The right place for Black's bishop in this scheme is the e6-square (usually after the preliminary exchange on d4). 10.g4 Re8 (10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6 12.h4 h5 13.Ne2±) 11.h4 Ne5 (11...h5

12.g5 Nh7 13.Be2 Nf8 14.f4± Hu Yu – Gu Jiazhen, Zhongshan 2015) 12.Be2 h5 13.gxh5 Nxh5 14.Bg5 f6 (14...Qc8 15.f4 Ng4 16.f5+-) 15.Be3 a6 16.Rhg1 c5 17.Nb3 c4 18.Nd4 b5 19.f4 b4 20.fxe5 bxc3 21.Qxc3 fxe5 22.Rxg6 exd4 23.Bxd4+- Navara – Kallio, Leon 2001.

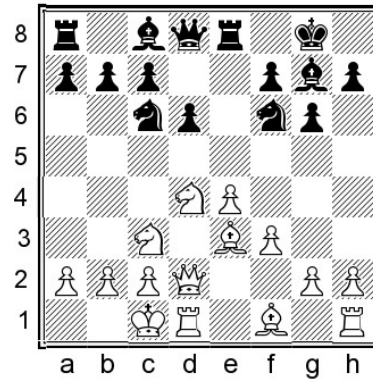
If 9...d5, then after 10.exd5 Nxd5, there arises a position similar to the one, we have analysed – see 8...d5. The difference is only that White's pawn is already on f3 and this nuance should be considered.



11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Bd4! (12.Nxd5?! cxd5 13.Qxd5 Qf6 14.Qd4 Qe6!) 12...Be6 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Ne4 f5 15.Nc5 Bf7 16.Bc4 Re8, Van Delft – Bissieres, Naujac 2009, 17.Rhe1 Qh4 18.Bxd5 cxd5 19.g3± White not only has a superior pawn-structure but his knight is much stronger than his opponent's bishop.

The move 11.Bg5 seems even more convincing for him. 11...Nxc3. This is an interesting attempt by Black, but still insufficient (After 11...Qd7, M.Gurevich – Zaichik, Lvov 1987, 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Qxd5 Qa4 15.Qb3±; 14...Rb8 15.b3±) 12.Bxd8 Nxa2+ 13.Kb1 Rxd8 14.Nxc6!? White wishes to clarify the situation in his favour. 14...Rxd2 15.Rxd2 bxc6 16.Kxa2± and he should manage to realise the extra exchange.

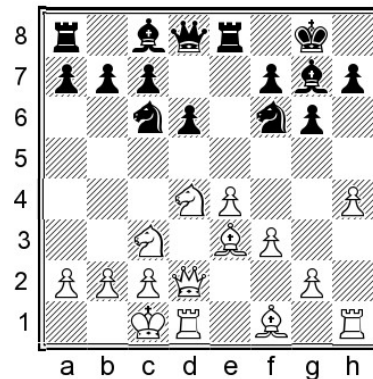
B2b1a) 9...Re8



10.g4

White's main idea here is to cramp maximally his opponent by advancing his pawn to the g5-square.

He tries only seldom in practice the other way of attacking with the move 10.h4!? In this case White can open sometimes the h-file without the preparatory move g2-g4, but every time that happens, the consequences must be evaluated concretely.



White should not be afraid of the restricting move 10...h5?! – after a precise reaction by him Black would be in trouble: 11.Bg5! Ne5 (11...Qd7, Thornert – Semcesen, Sweden 2018, 12.Ndb5 a6 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Nd5 Bg7 15.Nbxc7+-; 13...axb5 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.Bxb5+-)

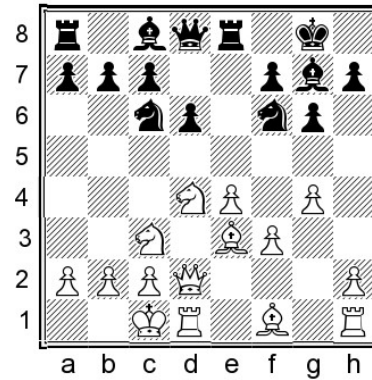
12.Be2 a6 13.g4! c5 (13...hgx4 14.f4 Nf3
15.Nxf3 gxf3 16.Bxf3+- Lammers –
Rychlik, Bad Zwischenahn 2003) 14.Nb3
hgx4 (14...c4 15.Nd4 hgx4 16.f4±) 15.f4
Nc6 16.e5±

10...Ne5 11.Bh6! Bh8 12.h5 Nxh5,
Emms – Summerscale, London 1997,
13.Bg5!? (13.g4?! Ng3!÷) 13...Bf6
(13...Qd7 14.Rxh5! gxh5 15.Nd5+-; 13...f6
14.Bh4±, threatening g2-g4.) 14.Rxh5!
gxh5 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Nd5 Qd8 17.Qh6
Ng6 18.Nf5 Bxf5 19.exf5±

10...d5 11.h5 dxe4 (11...Nxh5? 12.Nxd5;
11...Nxd4 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.Qxd4 Ng4
14.Qxd5 Qxd5 15.Nxd5 Nxe3 16.Nxe3²)
12.hxg6 hxg6, Janes – Chikovani, Rostov
on Don 1976, 13.Bb5 Bd7 (13...exf3
14.gxf3² Bd7? 15.Bh6 Bh8 16.Bg5 Bg7
17.Qf4+-) 14.Bxc6 Bxc6 15.Bh6 e3
(15...Bh8? 16.Bg5 Qd6 17.Nxc6 Qxd2+
18.Rxd2 bxc6 19.Rxh8+-; 16...Bg7 17.Qf4
Qd6 18.Qh4+-) 16.Bxe3 Qe7 17.Bh6±

After 10...a6, White must play very
accurately. Black would obtain good
counter chances after 11.h5 Nxh5 12.g4
Ng3÷, or 11.g4 Ne5 12.Be2 b5 13.h5 c5!÷
The best for White is 11.Nxc6! (After this
exchange, the move a7-a6 has become
senseless.) 11...bxc6 12.Bh6 Bxh6
(12...Bh8 13.Bg5 Qe7 14.h5, Degraeve –
Reinderman, Germany 2003) 13.Qxh6
Nh5 14.g4 Ng3 15.Rh2 Nxf1 16.Rxf1 Qf6
17.h5² The position has been simplified a
bit, but Black still has problems.

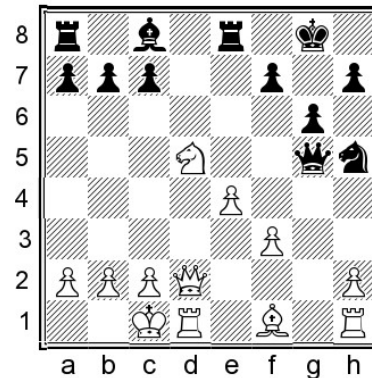
10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Be6 12.h5 c5,
Hobusch – Unger, corr. 1977 (12...Nxh5?!
13.Bxg7 Nxc7 14.Qh6±) 13.Bf2!? Nxh5
14.Bb5 Rf8 15.Qxd6 Qxd6 16.Rxd6²



10...a6

About 10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Be6 12.g5 –
see line **B2b1b**.

10...d5 11.g5 Nh5 12.Nxd5 (12.Bb5!? In
order to avoid material losses, Black must
part with his dark-squared bishop,
because after 12...Nxd4, White has the
option: 13.Bxe8 Nxf3 14.Bxf7+! Kxf7
15.Qf2+-) 12...Nxd4 13.Bxd4 Bxd4
14.Qxd4 Qxg5+ 15.Qd2



15...Qe5 16.f4 Qxe4 17.Bb5 Rf8
18.Rhe1+- Sutovsky – Vorotnikov,
Zuerich 2009.

15...Qd8 16.Qh6! (threatening 17.Nb6)
16...Qd6 17.Rg1 c6 (After 17...Nf6, White
can exploit the activity of his pieces with
an energetic play: 18.Bb5! Re5 19.Bc4
Nxd5 20.Bxd5 Qf8 21.Rxg6+! hxg6
22.Qxg6+ Kh8 23.Bxf7+- Dvoirys –

Vorotnikov, Moscow 1985.) 18.Rg5 Qf8
 (18...cxd5 19.Rxh5+-) 19.Rxh5 Qxh6+
 20.Rxh6 cxd5 21.exd5±

In this position Black has often chosen in practice the move 10...Ne5. Now, it is good for White to play 11.g5 Nh5 12.f4 Ng4 (12...Bg4 13.fxe5 Bxd1 14.Qxd1 dxe5 15.Nb3± Lintchevski – Beletsky, Nizhny Tagil 2015) 13.Bg1 a6 14.h3 Ng3 15.hxg4 Nxh1 16.Qg2±, as well as 11.Be2 a6 12.g5 Nh5 (12...Nfd7 13.f4 Nc6 14.h4± Billard – Spraggett, Montreal 1988) 13.f4 Ng4 14.Bf3! Nxe3 15.Qxe3 d5. This is an active attempt by Black, but White is perfectly prepared for it. 16.Bxh5 gxh5 17.e5 c5 18.Nb3 d4 19.Qg3± Fritsche – Jurgensen, ICCF 2010.

11.Kb1

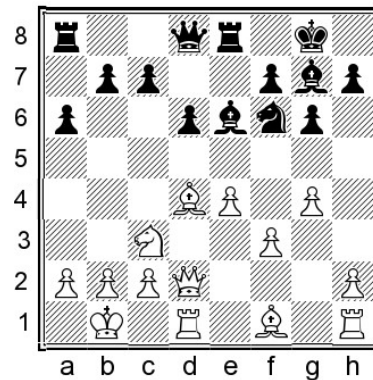
This prophylactic move with the king seems to be White's best decision, because the advance of the g and f-pawns seems to be even more effective with a black knight on the e5-square.

11...Nxd4

11...Ne5 12.g5 Nh5 13.f4 c5 (13...Nc6 14.f5±; 13...Ng4 14.Bg1 c5 15.Nde2±, threatening h2-h3, Aird – Robertson, Paisley 1995) 14.Nb3 Nc6 15.Be2±

12.Bxd4 Be6

12...c5?!, in view of 13.Bxc5 Bxg4 14.Qe3±



13.g5

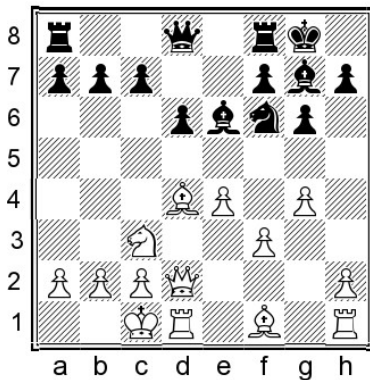
White can also choose here the accurate line: 13.Qf2!? Nd7 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.h4 h6 16.Rg1 g5, Kotronias – Managadze, Athens 2007, 17.f4±

13...Nh5 14.Bxg7 Nxg7 15.f4± Black is incapable of countering White's increasing initiative. After **15...Bg4**, Mainka – Stertenbrink, Germany 1990, White's simplest reaction would be **16.Be2 Bxe2 17.Qxe2 Nh5 18.Qf2±** Black's knight is stranded at the edge of the board, while White has a clear-cut plan for actions in the centre. Now, his king's rook will occupy the f1-square after which he will manage to advance f4-f5.

B2b1b) 9...Nxd4 10.Bxd4 Be6

After 10...a6 11.g4 b5 (11...Be6 12.g5 – see 10...Be6), the further advance of the b-pawn would be in favour of White. 12.h4 b4 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.exd5 a5 16.h5± F.Schmid – Marschall, Bayern 2004.

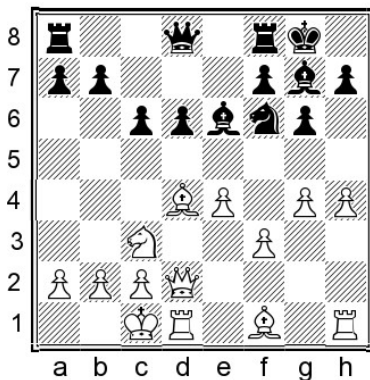
11.g4



11...c5

This is Black's most popular response.

The move 11...c6 was used very successfully in several games by GM Vladislav Vorotnikov. Black plans to organise counterplay placing his queen on a5 and advancing his b-pawn, while in some line he would be even ready to part with his backward d6-pawn. White should better not be in a hurry to play g5 and should prefer instead 12.h4.



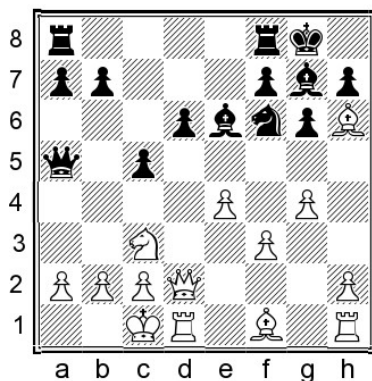
12...b5 13.g5 (It is not easy to predict the consequences of the complications arising after 13.h5 b4 14.Na4 c5 15.Be3 Qe8÷) 13...Nh5 14.Bxg7 Nxb7 15.Qxd6 (Now, thanks to the move 12.h4, the pawn on g5 is not hanging.) 15...Qb6 16.Qd4 b4 17.Na4 Qa5 18.b3 (18.Nc5!? Qxa2 19.Qxb4 Rab8 20.Qa3±) 18...Rad8 19.Qc5 Rxd1+ 20.Kxd1 Rd8+ 21.Kc1 Qc7 22.Be2± Elistratov – Vorotnikov, Moscow 2016.

12...Qa5 13.h5 (13.Qf4!? Ne8 14.Bxg7 Nxb7, Dvoirys – Vorotnikov, Jurmala 1980, 15.Qh6! f6 16.Bd3 Bxa2 17.f4 Be6 18.h5 g5 19.e5+-) 13...c5 14.Be3 d5. This move is purposeful, but not quite correct. 15.h6! Bh8 16.Nxd5 Qxd2+ (16...Qd8 17.Bxc5 Re8 18.Ne7+- Kalisky – Dudas, Topolcianky 1994) 17.Rxd2 Bxd5 18.exd5± Flueckiger – Vorotnikov, Basel 2013.

11...a6 12.g5 Nh5 (12...Nd7 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.h4 f6 15.f4 Qe7 16.Bd3 Nc5, A.Potkin – Kuritsin, Moscow 1998, 17.f5±) 13.Bxg7 Nxb7 (13...Kxg7 14.Be2 f6 15.f4 fxb5 16.Bxb5 gxb5, Boguslavsky – Vajda, France 2007, 17.Rhg1±) 14.h4 Qe7 15.f4 f5 (15...c6 16.f5 gxf5 17.h5±) 16.exf5 Nxf5 17.Re1 Qf7 (17...c6 18.Bc4 d5 19.Nxd5! cxd5 20.Rxe6!+- Fercec – Jurkovic, Zagreb 2010.) 18.Ne4±

11...Re8 12.g5 Nh5 (12...Nd7 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.h4± Shytaj – Barlocco, Bratto 2003) 13.Bxg7 Nxb7 (13...Kxg7 14.Be2 d5 15.f4 dxe4 16.Qe3 Qe7 17.Bxb5 gxb5 18.Qd4+ Kg6 19.Nd5 Bxd5 20.f5+ Kxf5 21.Rhf1+- Nitin – Hegde, Chennai 2017) 14.h4 Qe7 (14...Nh5?! 15.Rg1 c6 16.f4 b5 17.Be2 b4 18.Na4 Bxa2 19.b3+-; 14...c6, Ploetz – Bauer, Germany 1985, 15.Qxd6 Qa5 16.a3 Rad8 17.Qh2 Rxd1+ 18.Nxd1 b5 19.Qd2 Qc7 20.Nf2±) 15.f4 c6 16.f5!? (16.Be2 Rad8 17.Bf3± Rodin – Meister, Podolsk 1992.) 16...gxf5 17.h5. He is threatening to trap the enemy knight. 17...d5 (17...Red8 18.Re1±) 18.exd5 Bxd5 19.Nxd5 cxd5 20.Bb5 Red8 21.Bd3±

12.Be3 Qa5 13.Bh6



13...Bxh6

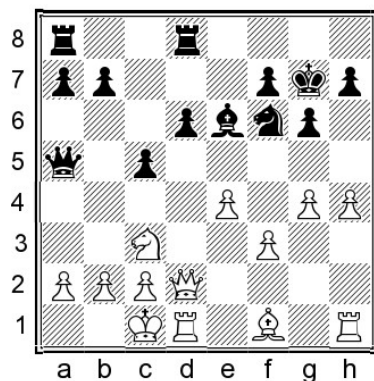
This is an attempt to remove White's queen from the centre and begin quickly counterplay on the queenside.

13...Bxa2? 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.Nxa2 Qxa2 16.Qc3+- Yurtaev – Beliavsky, Frunze 1979.

13...b5? 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.Nxb5 Qxd2+ (15...Qxa2 16.Qc3 h6 17.h4+- Sandor – Gross, Balatonbereny 1996) 16.Rxd2 d5 17.g5 Nh5 18.exd5+- Potkin – Flores, Athens 2001.

Black's attempt to begin actions in the centre is obviously too slow: 13...Rad8 14.h4 d5 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.g5 Nh5 17.exd5 Bd7 18.Bd3 Ng3?! (otherwise, Black will simply end up a pawn down) 19.h5! Nxh1 (19...Nxh5 20.Rxh5! gxh5 21.Qf4+-) 20.Rxh1 Qc7 21.Ne4 Qe5 22.Nf6+- Maffei – Rilberg, ICCF 2011.

13...Rfd8 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.h4

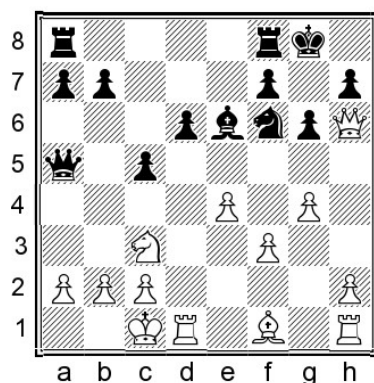


Now, it is bad for Black to choose

15...Bxa2?, in view of 16.h5! (16.Nxa2? Qxa2 17.Qc3 d5 18.g5 Qa1+ 19.Kd2 dxe4+ 20.Bd3, Najer – Mamedyarov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, 20...Qa6! 21.fxe4 c4=) with a winning attack for White, for example: 16...Be6 17.hxg6 fxg6 18.Qh6+ Kg8 19.g5 Nh5 20.Rxh5 gxh5 21.Qxe6+-

15...h5. It seems more solid for Black. 16.gxh5 Nxh5 17.Rg1 b5 (17...Nf6 18.h5!? Nxh5 19.Qg5 Nf6 20.f4 d5 21.f5 Nxe4 22.Qf4! Nxc3 23.Qe5+ Kf8 24.fxe6+-) 18.Qg5 (18.Bxb5!? Rab8 19.Qg5 Kh7 20.f4+-; 18...a6 19.Ba4 Rab8 20.Qg5±) 18...b4, Yurtaev – Gulko, Frunze 1985, 19.Ne2 Qxa2 (19...Rh8 20.Rxd6±) 20.Qxh5 Qa1+ 21.Kd2 Qxb2 22.Qg5±

14.Qxh6



14...b5

With this move Black forces his opponent to even think about defence and to play very precisely.

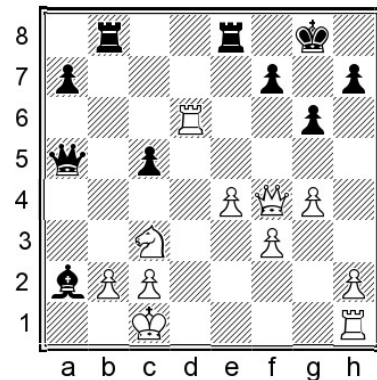
14...Bxa2?! 15.h4 Be6 16.h5 Rfe8, Schmied – Hvenekilde, Copenhagen 2005 (16...Qa1+ 17.Kd2 Qxb2 18.Rb1 Qa3 19.hxg6 fxc6 20.g5+-) 17.hxg6 fxc6 18.Qh4! Kf7 19.Rxd6+, threatening 20.e5.

15.Bxb5 Rab8 16.Qf4! Ne8 17.Bxe8 Rfxe8 18.Rxd6

White has two extra pawns and Black's resources are insufficient as we are going to see.

18...Bxa2

18...Rxb2?! 19.Kxb2 Rb8+ (19...Qb4+ 20.Kc1 Qxc3 21.Rhd1 c4 22.g5 Bf5 23.h4+-) 20.Kc1 Qxc3, Arseniev – Mishuchkov, Ivanovo 1982, 21.Rd3! Qb2+ 22.Kd2+-



19.Qf6!

White's major pieces have occupied dominating positions and he is planning a surprising manoeuvre with his king, making us remember the famous game Short – Timman, Tilburg 1991, which has entered forever the golden treasure of the chess art.

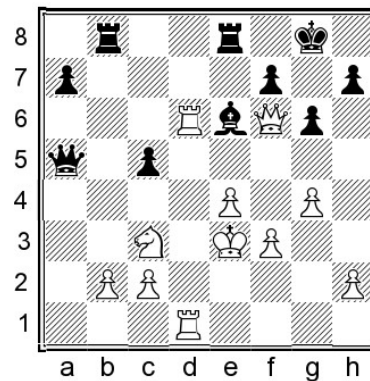
19...Be6

Black ends up in a very difficult endgame after 19...Bc4 20.Rhd1 Qa1+ 21.Kd2 Qxb2 22.Rb1 Qa3 23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.h4 Qa1 25.Nd5 Qa5+ 26.Qc3±, forcing the exchange of queens, which is advantageous for White.

20.Rhd1 Qa1+ 21.Kd2 Qa5

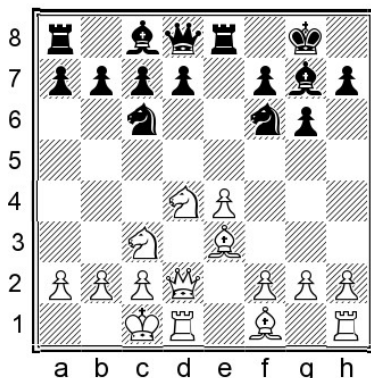
21...Qxb2? 22.Rb1 Qa3 23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.Rxe6!+-

22.Ke3!±



22...c4, Tseshkovsky – Vorotnikov, Aktjubinsk 1985 (22...Rxb2? 23.Rxe6! fxe6 24.Rd7+-; 22...Qb4 23.Kf4! Qxb2?! 24.Kg5! Qxc2 25.R1d2+-, followed by 26.Kh6) **23.e5!** (Having again in mind the idea with the break of the king...) **23...Qb4** (23...Rxb2 24.Ne4 Rxc2 25.Rd8+-) **24.Kf4** (24.Ne4!?!±) 24...h6 (24...Qxb2?! 25.Kg5!+-) **25.Rb1!?!±** White's king has been transferred to the other flank. He has an extra pawn and continues his attack against the enemy king.

B2b2) 8...Re8



This more popular and active move was introduced into the tournament practice by GM Efim Geller. Black plans to advance d7-d5 at once and under most favourable circumstances – when White’s bishop on e3 is not well protected. He must play tremendously precisely in order to maintain an advantage.

9.f3 d5!?

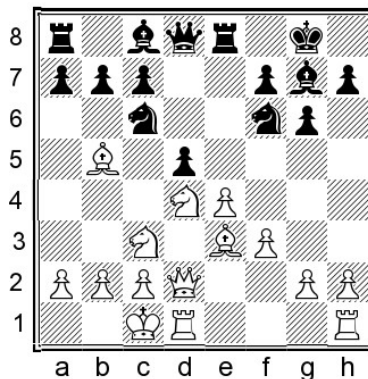
9...d6 10.g4 – see 8...d6.

9...Qe7?! 10.g4 Nb4 (10...d6? 11.g5 Nh5 12.Nd5 Qd8 13.Nb5 Ne5 14.Ndxc7+- Jurkovic – Pinter, Tucepi 1996) 11.Bg5 (Black’s idea will be somehow justified after 11.a3 Nbd5.) 11...c6 12.h4 d5 13.a3 (13.exd5!? Nbx d5 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.h5±) 13...a5 14.exd5 Nbx d5 15.Nxd5 cxd5, Sher – Lerner, Prague 1988, 16.h5±

10.Bb5!

White’s attempt to play for just a minimal edge with 10.exd5 Nxd5 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Bd4, turns out to be not so dangerous for Black. 12...Bxd4 13.Qxd4 Bf5 (13...Qg5+ 14.Qd2 Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Bf5= Vorobiov – Inarkiev, Dagomys 2009) 14.g4 Qg5+ 15.Qd2 Qxd2+ 16.Kxd2 Rad8

17.Nxd5 Rxd5+ 18.Kc1 Rxd1+ 19.Kxd1 Rd8+ 20.Kc1 Be6 21.b3 f5= and the position looks very drawish.



10...Bd7

There arise complications advantageous for White after 10...Qd6 11.Bf4! Qf8 (11...Qb4, Vokarev – E.Romanov, Koszalin 1999, 12.e5! Qxd4 13.Qxd4 Nxd4 14.Bxe8 Nxe8 15.Rxd4±) 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Bxc6 Rb8 14.Bxe8 Rxb2, Van Hul – Thoeng, Belgium 2001, 15.Be5! Qxe8 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17.e5 Bxe5 (17...Qxe5 18.Kxb2+-) 18.Rde1 Rb6 19.f4+- 10...dxe4 11.Qf2! (11.Nxc6 Qxd2+ 12.Rxd2 exf3÷) 11...Bd7 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Bxc6 Rb8 14.Bxa7 Qe7 15.Bxb8 e3 16.Qe2 Rxb8 17.Bxd7 Nxd7 18.Rxd7 Qxd7 19.Qxe3± Black’s compensation for the two lost pawns is insufficient.

11.Bxc6!

He is not trying to refute his opponent’s defensive concept, but just relies on obtaining a slight but stable advantage.

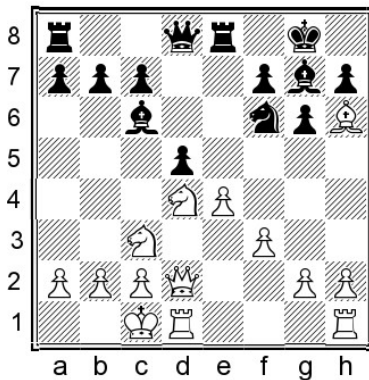
White has tried numerous times in practice the move 11.exd5, but after 11...Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Bxb5 13.Nxb5 Qxd5, it leads to a position in which he must choose the modest reply 14.Nc3 Qc6=

Braun – E.Geller, Dortmund 1992, since the line: 14.Nxc7?! Qxa2 15.c3 Rac8 16.Nxe8 Nd5!±, can only be in favour of Black.

11...Bxc6

After 11...bxc6, Black's queenside is seriously compromised. 12.Nb3 a5 (12...dxe4 13.fxe4 Nxe4 14.Nxe4 Rxe4 15.Bc5²; 13...Ng4 14.Bg5! f6 15.Bf4²; 14...Bxc3 15.bxc3 f6 16.Bh4! Ne5 17.Rhf1²; 16.Qxd7 Qxd7 17.Rxd7 fxe5 18.Re1²) 13.Nc5 Be6 14.Rhe1 Rb8 15.Bd4 Rb4, Le Roux – Delorme, Paris 2017, 16.a3!? Rc4 (16...Rxd4 17.Qxd4 Nxe4 18.Qxe4 dxe4 19.Rxd8 Rxd8 20.Nxe6 fxe6 21.Nxe4±) 17.Qd3²

12.Bh6



12...Bh8

After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops the position is simplified, but Black fails to obtain complete equality: 12...Bxh6 13.Qxh6 Qd6 (13...Qe7 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nf5!? Qf6 16.Nxd5 Qxf5 17.g4²) 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Ne4 Qf8 16.Qxf8+ Kxf8 17.Nxc6 bxc6 18.Rhe1² The defects of

Black's queenside pawn-structure doom him to a long and difficult fight for a draw.

13.Rhe1 Qd6

There arises an inferior endgame for Black after 13...dxe4?! 14.Nxc6 Qxd2+ 15.Rxd2 bxc6 16.Nxe4 Nxe4 17.Rxe4 Rxe4 18.fxe4± White dominates on the open d-file and can penetrate to the penultimate rank, while Black's queenside pawns are very weak. White's winning chances are quite real.

14.Nf5!?

This is an aggressive move for White, but he has alternatives as well.

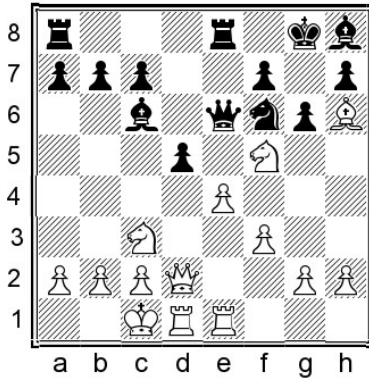
Winning the exchange with the line: 14.e5 Rxe5 15.Bf4 provides Black with some compensation, but it is hardly sufficient. After 15...Nd7, White does not need to capture the pinned enemy rook immediately and should better prefer 16.a3²

It is interesting for him to choose here 14.Bf4!? Qc5 (14...Qd7 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.g4²) 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.Bxc7 (White not only wins a pawn with this move, but also establishes control over the b8-square.) 16...dxe4 17.Nxe4 (He can also opt here for 17.fxe4 Re6 18.h3²) 17...Nxe4 18.fxe4² Black must still prove that the activity of his pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn.

14...Qe6

14...gxf5?? 15.Qg5+–

14...Qd7 15.Qg5± and White is threatening 16.exd5.



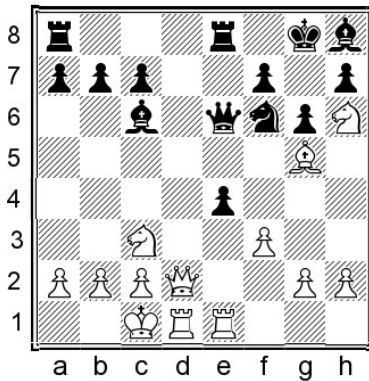
15.Bg5!

This is a very powerful resource for White. He frees the h6-square in order to attack the enemy king.

15...dxe4

15...gxf5?! 16.exd5±

16.Nh6+



16...Kg7

This is a very ugly move.

It might seem more attractive for Black to play 16...Kf8, but his king is vulnerable there as well. In the variation 17.Nxe4! Nxe4 18.Qb4+ Re7 19.fxe4±, he would lose material.

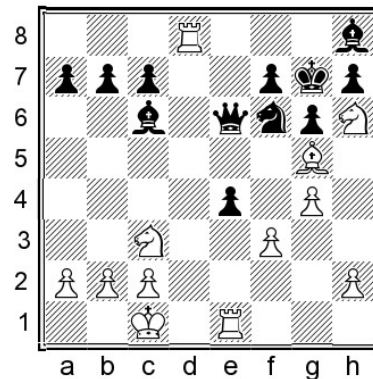
17.g4!?

White creates a hidden threat here – 18.Bxf6+ Qxf6 19.Nxe4 Bxe4 20.g5!

17...Rad8

This move gives up two rooks for a queen, but Black had nothing better anyway.

18.Qxd8 Rxd8 19.Rxd8



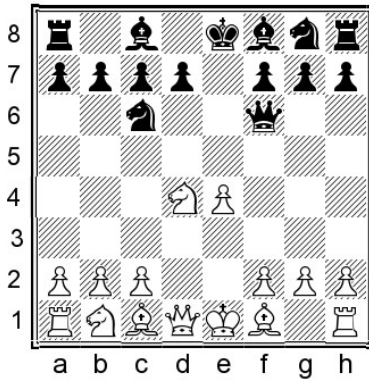
The transformation of the material ratio is in favour of White. If Black does not play accurately, then his position will soon become critical.

Now, he must defend against the checkmate on g8, while White is ready simply to capture a pawn. So, Black must continue with **19...Ne8!**, freeing the way forward of his f7-pawn and preparing the move Kf8. **20.Bd2!?** (with the idea 21.Nxe4 and 21.g5; it is only a draw after 20.Nxe4?! f5 21.gxf5 gxf5 22.Rg1 fxe4 23.Be3+ Kf6 24.Bg5+ with a perpetual check) **20...Qf6 21.Rb8±** In this non-standard position Black must play very precisely. For example, he loses immediately after 21...exf3? 22.g5 Qd6 23.Rbx8, while following 21...Kf8 22.g5 Qd4 23.fxe4 Bg7 24.Ng4 a5 25.Be3 Qc4

26.Nf6 Bxf6 27.gxf6 Qe6 28.Nd5, it is not clear how he can unpin his pieces.

Chapter 4

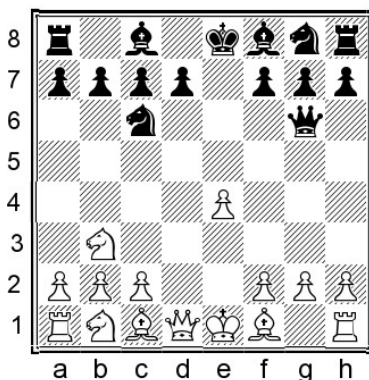
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Qf6



5.Nf3

After 4...Bc5, White was planning to reply with 5.Nb3, so here, it would not be good for him to choose 5.Be3, because of 5...Bc5=, with a transfer to the scheme with 4...Bc5 5.Be3, which we would be trying to avoid.

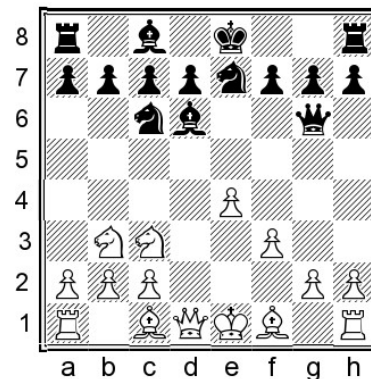
5.Nb3. This knight is too far from the king after this move. White would not be able to castle queenside comfortably, so Black organises counterplay on the kingside after 5...Qg6!



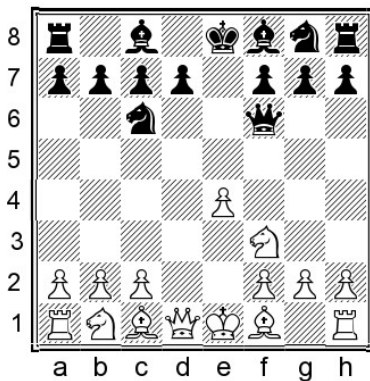
Black is attacking the pawn on e4, eyeing in the process the g2-pawn as well.

6.Nc3 Bb4. He pins the enemy knight and continues his attack against the enemy central pawn. (In response to 6...Nf6, Moskovic – Cox, Newport Pagnell 2010, White obtains very good attacking prospects sacrificing his central pawn: 7.Nb5 Qxe4+ 8.Be2 Kd8 9.0-0©) 7.f3 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Nge7= Black has no pawn-weaknesses in his camp. 9.Nd4 Nxd4. Without this move White would capture the pawn on c7. 10.cxd4 d5= Black leads in development and has obtained a quite acceptable position.

6.f3 Bd6 (It might be interesting, but a bit risky for Black to choose 6...Nf6 7.Bf4 d5! 8.exd5 Nb4 9.Bb5+, Muzychuk – Stefanova, Baku 2016 and here, he had to find the line: 9...c6 10.Qe2+ Be7 11.d6 Be6 12.dxe7 Nxc2+ 13.Kf2 Nxa1 14.Bd3 Bf5 15.Nc5 Nd5 16.Bg3 Bxd3 17.Nxd3 Qf6 18.Rc1 Qxe7 19.Qxe7+ Nxe7 20.Nc3 Rd8 21.Ke2 0-0 22.Rxa1 Rfe8 23.Kd2 c5 24.Kc2 Nc6÷ Black has obtained an excellent position, while White will hardly manage to coordinate his pieces.) 7.Nc3 (After the early moves 7.g4 h5!, Black fixes the enemy pawn-chain and plans later to undermine it. 8.g5 Nge7 9.Nc3 Be5 10.Be3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 b6 12.Qd2 Bb7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0÷ White's bishops are powerful, but Black can counter that with an active piece-play, emphasizing the defects in his opponent's pawn-structure.) 7...Nge7!



8.Be3 (After 8.g3, Black does not need to play 8...0-0 9.Bg2 f5 10.f4 Bb4, Daulyte – Enchev, Rochefort 2017, 11.0-0 Bxc3 12.exf5 Nxf5 13.bxc3 d6 14.Re1² It would be much better for him to continue in a standard fashion 8...Be5! 9.Bg2 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 b6. Now, White's king would be in trouble on any of the flanks. 11.0-0 h5 12.f4 h4,,) 8...Bxh2 9.Qd2 (9.Ne2 Bg3+ 10.Nxg3 Qxg3+ 11.Bf2 Qe5 12.c3 d5³ Khatanbaatar – Fressinet, Tromso 2014) 9...Bg3+ 10.Bf2 b6! 11.0-0-0 Bxf2 12.Qxf2 Bb7³ Black completes comfortably his development and preserves his extra pawn. 13.Bd3 0-0-0 14.e5 Qe6 15.f4 f6 16.f5 Qf7 17.exf6 Qxf6 18.Ne4 Qf8 19.Rhf1 Ne5μ Yu Yangyi – Carlsen, Dubai 2014. Black's pieces have been perfectly deployed, so White has no compensation at all for the sacrificed pawn.

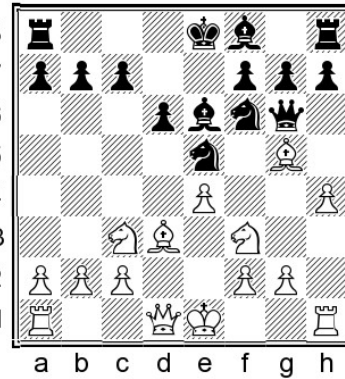


We will analyse now in details: **A)** 5...Bc5 and **B)** 5...Bb4+.

White can develop comfortably his knight in the other lines.

5...d6 6.Nc3 Be6 (6...Bg4, De Oliveira – Vieira, Florianopolis 2019, 7.Nd5 Qd8 8.h3±; Black should not let the enemy knight to the centre of the board: 6...h6 7.Nd5 Qd8 8.Bb5 Bd7 9.0-0 a6 10.Bxc6 Bxc6, Sofiev – Berndsen, Espoo 2000,

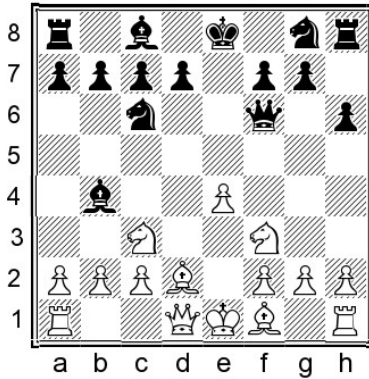
11.Re1± Nf6 12.Nd4 Be7? 13.Nf5+–) 7.Bg5 Qg6, Hein – Nilsen, Helsingor 2008, 8.h4 Nf6 (8...h6 9.h5 Qh7 10.Be3²; Black's camp would be seriously weakened after 8...h5 9.Qd2 Be7 10.0-0-0±) 9.Bd3 Ne5



10.Nb5 Rc8 11.Nxa7 Rd8 (After the routine move 11...Ra8, White can maintain his initiative in a tactical fashion: 12.Nxe5 dxe5 13.f4 Bg4 14.h5 Bxh5 15.Qd2 h6 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Bb5+ c6 18.Nxc6 Qxe4+ 19.Kf1 bxc6 20.Re1 Rd8 21.Qxd8+ Kxd8 22.Rxe4 Bg6 23.Bxc6 Bxe4 24.Bxe4± It would be rather difficult to imagine how Black might stop the advance of White's three connected pawns.) 12.Nb5 Rd7 13.Qd2 Nxd3+ 14.cxd3 h6 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Qc3² Black's bishop-pair is insufficient to compensate the sacrificed pawn.

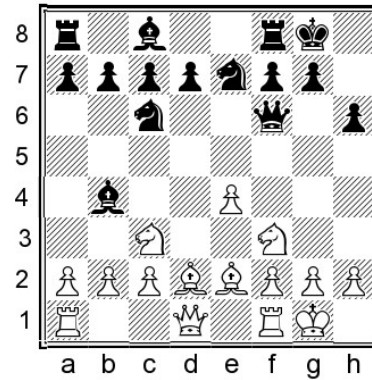
It also deserves attention for White to play more aggressively here 10.Nd5!? Nxd3+ (It is amusing that after 10...Nxd5 11.Nxe5 dxe5 12.exd5 Bf5 13.Bb5+ Bd7 14.Bxd7+ Kxd7 15.0-0 h6 16.Be3±, Black's king occupies a square on which his queen is usually placed.) 11.cxd3 Bxd5 12.exd5 0-0-0 (12...Nxd5 13.Qb3 Qe6+ 14.Kf1 Ne7 15.Qxb7±) 13.0-0 Be7 14.Qa4 Nxd5 (14...Kb8? 15.Rfe1 Rhe8 16.Nd4+–, with the idea Nc6) 15.Qxa7² White's queen has penetrated into the enemy camp and Black would have serious problems because of that.

It would not be good for Black to take care about the safety of his queen with the line: 5...h6 6.Nc3 Bb4 7.Bd2



It is not recommended to play twice with the same piece in the opening, so it would be bad for Black to choose here: 7...Nd4? 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 9.Bd3 Ne7 10.a3 Ba5 11.Qe2 0-0 12.0-0-0 d6 13.g4 a6, Szecsi – Andahazy, Hungary 2012, 14.h4 b5 15.g5, with a dangerous attack for White, as well as 7...Qd8 8.Nd5 Bxd2+ 9.Qxd2 Nf6, Hetterich – Schenk, Germany 2004, 10.0-0-0² Black lacks space and after the rather optimistic attempt 10...Nxe4?, he would lose immediately: 11.Qf4 Nd6 12.Nxc7+ Qxc7 13.Rxd6 0-0 14.Bd3 Re8 15.Bh7+ Kh8 16.Rhd1+-

7...Nge7 8.Be2 0-0 (Black fails to develop his pieces after 8...d6?! 9.Nb5 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2. Now, he loses quickly after 10...Qxb2? 11.Nxc7+ Kd7 12.Rd1 Kxc7 13.Qxd6+ Kb6 14.Nd2+- Prieto Martin – Glavina, Zaragoza 2014, but even after the more accurate defence 10...0-0 11.0-0-0±, White would maintain an obvious advantage.) 9.0-0

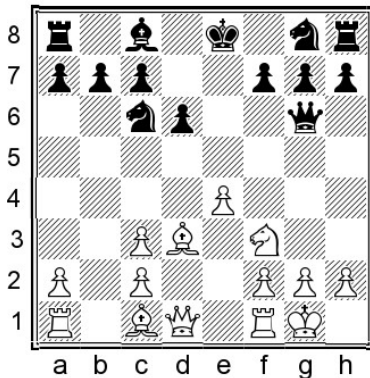


9...Rd8?! 10.a3 Bc5 (10...Ba5 11.Nd5 Nxd5 12.exd5 Bxd2 13.Qxd2 Ne5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.d6² White squeezes the enemy queenside.) 11.Na4 Bd4 12.c3 Be5 13.Nxe5 Qxe5 14.Bd3 d5 (14...b5? 15.f4) 15.f4 Qe6 16.e5 Qg4 (16...b6 17.b4²) 17.Nc5² Black will have great problems to develop his queenside.

9...d6 10.Nb5 Bxd2 (10...Bg4 11.Bxb4 Nxb4 12.Nxc7 Rac8 13.Nb5 Nxc2 14.Rb1 Bxf3 15.Bxf3 a6 16.Nxd6 Rc7 17.Nxb7 Nd4 18.Na5² The activity of Black's pieces cannot compensate fully his couple of sacrificed pawns.) 11.Qxd2 Qxb2 12.Nxc7 Rb8 13.Rab1. The idea behind this pawn-sacrifice is to deprive the enemy queen of the a3-square to retreat to. (Therefore, it would be worse for White to choose here: 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.exd5 Ne5 15.Nd4 Qa3.) 13...Qxa2 14.Ra1 Qb2 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.exd5 Ne5 17.Nd4 Qb6 18.Rfb1 Qc5 19.Ra5 b5 20.Rxb5 Rxb5 21.Rxb5 Qc7 22.Qa5² There arises unavoidably an endgame in which Black's pawn-islands are vulnerable, his bishop is passive and his knight is not stable at all.

5...Qg6 6.Nc3 (White can play here in the style of the great masters of the 19th century: 6.Bd3!?N 6...Qxg2. Without this move White will castle and Black's queen will come under a rather unpleasant attack after the pawn-advance e4-e5.

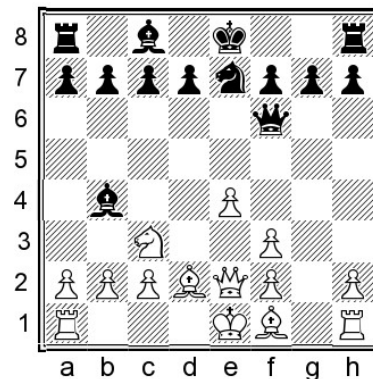
7.Rg1 Qh3 8.Bc4. White is threatening a strike against the f7-square. 8...f6 9.Nc3@d6 10.Nd5 Qd7 11.Qe2± Black has great problems with his development.) 6...Bb4 7.Bd3 (If White sacrifices here his central pawn 7.Bd2 Bxc3 8.Bxc3 Qxe4+ 9.Be2, Medianikova – Struchkova, Moscow 1981, then Black will complete his development after 9...Nge7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Re1 Qd5÷ and White will hardly manage to prove the correctness of his idea...) 7...Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 (8...Qxg2 9.Rg1 Qh3 10.Rxg7±) 9.0-0²



9...Bg4 (It is more reliable for Black to choose here 9...Nge7 10.Nd4 0-0 11.f4²; 11.Rb1², with good prospects for White in the centre and on the kingside; or 9...Qh5 10.Rb1 a6 11.e5 dxe5 12.Nxe5 Qxd1 13.Rxd1 Nxe5 14.Re1 Be6 15.Rxe5 0-0-0 16.c4², with some edge for White in this open position in which his bishop-pair would be a very important factor.) 10.e5 Qe6 (It would be too risky for Black to opt here for 10...Qh5 11.exd6 cxd6, Sitnikov – Vul, Tashkent 2019, 12.Be2 0-0-0 13.h3±; 11...Bxf3 12.d7+ Kd8 13.gxf3± His king has remained hopelessly stranded in the centre and his couple of doubled pawns would only help White's rooks to enter the actions very quickly, for example: Rb1-b5, beginning a chase after the enemy queen, while in the variation 11...0-0-0 12.dxc7 Rd7 13.Rb1 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Qxf3 15.gxf3 Nge7 16.Re1±, White will have a material advantage and

a couple of very powerful bishops.) 11.exd6 Qxd6 12.h3 (It is also good for White to play here 12.Qe1+ Nge7 13.Ng5 h6 14.Ne4 Qe6 15.Bf4 0-0-0 16.Rb1²) 12...Bh5 13.Qe2+ (It would be even more energetic for White to continue here with 13.Re1+!? Nge7 14.a4 0-0-0 15.Ba3 Qf6 16.g4 Bg6 17.g5 Qxc3 18.Bxe7 Bxd3 19.Bxd8 Bxc2 20.Qe2±) 13...Nge7 14.Rd1 Qe6 (14...0-0?? 15.Bxh7+ Kxh7 16.Rxd6 cxd6 17.Ng5+ Kg6 18.g4+-; 14...0-0-0 15.Bf5+ Nxf5 16.Rxd6 Nxd6 17.Bf4²) 15.Qxe6 fxe6 16.g4 Bf7 (16...Bg6 17.Bc4) 17.Re1² White has a stable long-term advantage.

5...Ne5. This position might arise in the Nimzowitsch Defence (1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 e5 3.dxe5 Nxe5 4.Nf3 Qf6). 6.Nc3! Nxf3+ (6...Bb4 7.Bd2 Ne7 8.Nxe5 Qxe5 9.f4 Qe6 10.Qe2 0-0 11.f5 Qe5 12.a3 Ba5 13.0-0-0 d5 14.Qb5 Bb6 15.g4; 9...Qd4 10.Qf3 d5, Radlovacki – Keresztes, Kecskemet 2015, 11.0-0-0 Bxc3 12.Bxc3 Qxe4 13.Qf2 Qa4 14.Bxg7 Rg8 15.Bf6±) 7.gxf3 Bb4 8.Bd2. White plans to castle queenside, so the opening of the g-file would be definitely in his favour. 8...Ne7 9.Qe2



9...Nc6? 10.0-0-0 Nd4 (10...Bxc3 11.Bxc3 Qh6+ 12.Kb1±) 11.Qc4 Bxc3 12.Bxc3 Qh6+ 13.Bd2 Qb6 14.Be3 c5 15.Rg1+-
9...0-0 10.0-0-0 d6 (10...c6 11.h4 d5 12.Kb1 d4 13.Bg5 Qd6 14.Qc4±) 11.Rg1

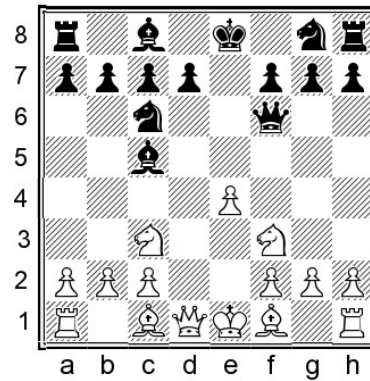
Qe6 12.f4± f5? 13.Qb5 Bxc3 14.Bxc3+-
Eynon – Kynoch, Edinburgh 1996.

9...Ng6 10.0-0-0 c6 11.Kb1 Bd6 12.h4
Nf4 (12...h6? 13.e5 Bxe5 14.Re1 0-0
15.h5+-) 13.Qe3 (with the idea e4-e5+-)
13...Be5 14.Ne2 Nxe2, Plaskett – Sherwin,
Birmingham 2002. After the non-standard
capture 15.Qxe2, White protects his pawn
and frees the way forward of his bishop.
15...0-0 (15...Bxb2? 16.e5+-) 16.Bg5 Qe6
17.f4 Bc7 18.f5 Qe8 19.f6 g6 20.h5+-

Black must try to liven up his
queenside as quickly as possible. 9...b6
10.h4 Bb7 11.a3 Bc5 (11...Bd6 12.Bg5 Qg6
13.e5 Bc5 14.0-0-0 h6 15.Bxe7 Bxe7
16.Bh3 0-0-0 17.Nd5 Bc5 18.h5 Qc6
19.Rhg1± Black's bishop-pair is not
dangerous for White, because one of the
bishops is restricted and his pawn on g7
would need protection.) 12.Bg5 (12.0-0-0!
h6 13.Nb5 0-0-0 14.Bc3 Qf4+ 15.Qd2
Qxf3 16.Rh3 Qxf2 17.b4 Qxd2+ 18.Rxd2
Bd6 19.e5±) 12...Qc6 13.Qd2 a6 14.0-0-0
0-0-0, Tari – Djurhuus, Oslo 2017 (14...h6
15.Bxe7 Bxe7 16.Nd5 Bd6 17.f4±) 15.h5!
f6 16.Bf4 g5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Rxh8 Rxh8
19.Bc4± White controls the centre and is
suddenly threatening to trap the enemy
queen.

9...d6 10.a3 (It is also possible for
White to choose 10.0-0-0 Bd7 11.Rg1 h6
12.Qc4 Ba5 13.e5 dxe5 14.Ne4 Bxd2+
15.Rxd2 Qc6 16.Rxg7 Qxc4 17.Bxc4 0-0-0
18.Rxf7± with an overwhelming
advantage in the activity of the pieces.)
10...Bc5 (10...Ba5 11.0-0-0 c6 12.Kb1 Bc7
13.Rg1 Ng6 14.Bg5±, followed by f4-f5,
Gombac – Barle, Skofja Loka 2000.) 11.h4
h6 (11...0-0 12.Bg5 Qe6 13.0-0-0±)
12.Nb5 Bb6 13.Bc3 Qg6 14.0-0-0± Now,
we can see once again how dangerous for
Black the opened g-file on the kingside is.

A) 5...Bc5 6.Nc3



6...Nge7

About 6...Nd4 7.Nd5 Nxf3 8.gxf3 – see
6...Ne5.

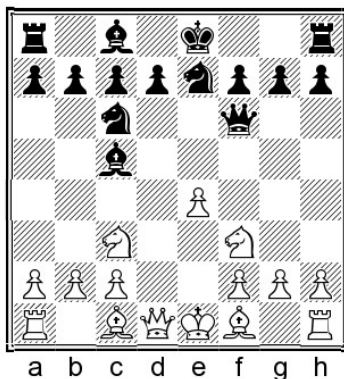
6...Ne5?! Here, just like on move 5, the
attempt to exchange the knight would not
facilitate Black's defence. 7.Nd5 Nxf3+
8.gxf3 Qd8 9.Bf4 d6 10.b4. White has
mobilised quickly his forces to active
positions. 10...Bb6 11.a4 Nf6, Gioutsou –
Mplitsa, Trikala 2019, 12.Bg5 c6 13.Nxb6
axb6 14.Qd4 0-0 15.Rg1 Kh8 16.0-0-0±
Rxa4? 17.e5+-

If Black prevents the appearance of the
enemy bishop to the g5-square with the
move 6...h6, then White's bishop will be
perfectly placed on the long diagonal.
7.Nd5!? Qd8 8.b3! Nf6 (8...Nge7 9.Bb2 0-0
10.Be2²) 9.Bb2 Nxe4 10.Bd3 Nxf2
11.Qe2+ Kf8 12.Rf1 Nxd3+ 13.Qxd3 d6
14.0-0-0f, White has powerful initiative
for the sacrificed material.

In response to 6...d6, White's most
logical move would be 7.Bg5!?N. He
exploits the circumstance to develop his
bishop to an active position with tempo.

7...Qe6. Black's queen is roaming all over the board and that cannot be good for Black. Nothing better can be recommended to him, though... (7...Qg6 8.Nd5 Bb6 9.Qd3 f5 10.e5!? dxe5 11.0-0-0 Be6 12.Qb5± White regains his central pawn and his dangerous attack continues; 10...Nxe5 11.Nxe5 Qxg5 12.Nc4 Kd8 13.Ncxb6 axb6 14.Qc3 c6 15.f4 Qh6 16.Nxb6 Ra7 17.0-0-0± Black's king, as well as his pieces, scattered all over the board are just a sorry sight.) 8.Nd5 Qxe4+ 9.Be2 Kd7 10.0-0 f6 11.Re1!? fxg5 12.Bb5 Qf5 13.Qe2 Qf8 14.b4 Bb6 15.c4 a6 16.c5+- dxc5?? 17.Nf6+ Nxf6 18.Rad1+ Qd6 19.Qe7#

6...Bb4 7.Bd2 Nge7 8.a3 (8.Bd3!? d6 9.Nb5 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 Qxb2 11.0-0 0-0 12.Nxc7 Rb8 13.Rab1 Qxa2 14.e5 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 dxe5 16.Qb4 Nc6 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qxf8 Bd7 19.Qc5 Bf5 20.Rfc1 Qa4 21.Nb5² His rooks are tremendously active in this open position.) 8...Ba5 9.Bd3 (9.Bb5!? 0-0 10.0-0 d6 11.Bxc6 Nxc6 12.Nd5 Qd8 13.b4 Bb6 14.Bc3 Be6 15.a4 a6 16.Nxb6 cxb6 17.b5² His pieces are active and he has a superior pawn-structure.) 9...d6 10.h3 Ne5 11.Nxe5 dxe5 (11...Qxe5?! Pollock – Baird, New York 1889, 12.f4 Qf6 13.Qf3± 12.Qh5 Be6 13.Rf1 Nc6 14.0-0-0² White enjoys a slight lead in development.



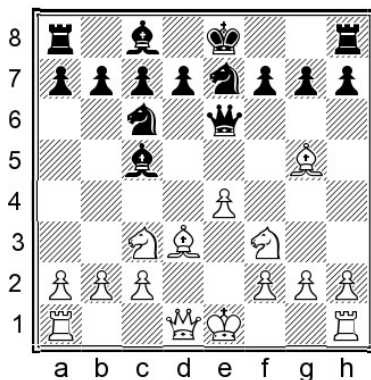
7.Bg5

7.Bd3!? This is another promising alternative for White 7...Ne5 (about 7...d6 8.Bg5 – see 7.Bg5) 8.Qe2 Nxf3 9.Qxf3 Qxf3 10.gxf3 d6 11.Rg1 g6 12.Bg5 a6 13.Bf6 Rg8 14.f4² Black lacks space, while White's powerful dark-squared bishop practically paralyzes all his army. Black can hardly manage to oust the enemy bishop from its active placement without material losses.

7...Qe6

The move 7...Qg6 would not facilitate Black's defence either. 8.Bd3 Ne5 (8...d6? 9.Nd5 f6, Hoffmann – Kielstein, Leipzig 2009, 10.Nxc7+ Kd8 11.e5 Bf5 12.Ne6+ Kc8 13.Nh4 Qf7 14.Nxc5 fxg5 15.Nxf5 Nxf5 16.exd6+-) 9.Qd2 Nxd3+ (9...f6 10.Nxe5 Qxg5 11.f4 Qh6 12.Nf3 a6 13.0-0-0 d6 14.Rde1 Be6 15.Nd5² Black has lost his castling rights.) 10.Qxd3 f6 11.Nb5 Bb6 12.Be3 Ba5+ 13.Bd2 Bb6 14.0-0 a6 15.Nc3 d6 16.Rfe1 0-0 17.Be3 Bxe3 18.Rxe3 Nc6 19.Nd5 Qf7 20.Qb3 Kh8 21.c4² White dominates in the centre and his game is much more pleasant.

8.Bd3



8...0-0

It seems just bad for Black to try 8...f6 9.Nb5 Kd8 10.Bf4² His king has begun to roam over the board.

It would be rather optimistic for Black to try the move 8...Qg4, after which White's initiative is running effortlessly in all the variations. 9.0-0 (9.Qe2!? Nd4 10.Nxd4 Qxg5 11.Nf3 Qf4 12.e5 d5 13.exd6 Bxd6 14.Ne4 Bg4 15.Nxd6+ Qxd6 16.0-0-0²; 15...cxd6 16.Bb5+ Kf8 17.Qd2 Qxd2+ 18.Nxd2² Black has reached a clearly inferior endgame.) 9...Ne5 (After 9...0-0 10.Qd2 h6 11.Be3², Black's pawn on c7 would become a juicy target.) 10.Nxe5 Qxg5 11.Nf3 Qf4 (11...Qh6 12.e5 0-0 13.Re1 d6 14.exd6 Bxd6 15.Nb5² Bc5? 16.b4 Bxb4 17.Re4 Bc5 18.Rh4 Qf6 19.Bxh7+ Kh8 20.Bd3+ Kg8 21.Nxc7±) 12.e5 0-0 13.Nb5 Bb6 14.a4 a6 15.Nc3 Ba5 16.Re1± Bxc3? 17.Re4 Qf5 18.Rh4+-

8...d6 9.Qe2 h6 (9...0-0 10.0-0-0 – see 8...0-0). Here, the simplest for White would be to continue with 10.Nb5. (After 10.Be3 Bxe3 11.Qxe3 0-0 12.0-0-0 a6 13.g4!?, Black should not accept the gift, but should try to organise counterplay: 13...b5 14.g5 b4 15.Ne2 hxg5 16.Qxg5 Qh6

17.Rhg1 Qxg5+ 18.Rxg5² White's pieces have more space for manoeuvring.) 10...Qd7 11.Be3 0-0 (11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 0-0 13.0-0-0²) 12.Bxc5 dxc5 13.Qe3 Nb4 14.0-0-0 Nxd3+ 15.Qxd3 Qc6 16.Ne5 Qb6 17.Nc3 Be6 18.f4 Ng6 (18...Rad8? 19.Qxd8 Rxd8 20.Rxd8+ Kh7 21.f5+-) 19.Nxg6 fxg6 20.g3² White is dominant on the open file and his pawn-structure is superior, so he maintains the advantage.

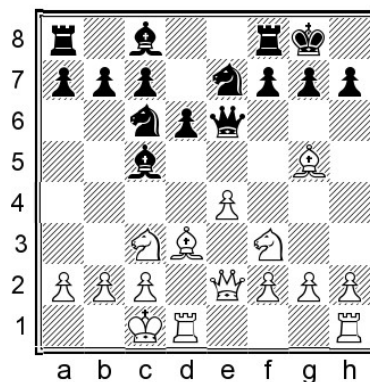
9.Qe2!?

Here, White can also play simply and after 9.0-0 Ne5, in the game Batyte – Mamedjarova, Istanbul 2000, he could have obtained a material advantage with 10.Nb5 Nxf3+ 11.Qxf3 Qc6 12.Qg3 Ng6 13.Qxc7², ending up with a solid extra pawn.

9...d6

About 9...h6 10.Be3 Bxe3 11.Qxe3 a6 12.0-0-0 d6 13.Kb1 – see 9...d6.

10.0-0-0



10...a6

Black can enter an endgame here with 10...Bb4 11.Bd2 Bxc3 12.Bxc3 Qxa2 13.Bc4 Qa4 14.Bb3 Qa1+ 15.Kd2 Qa6 16.Qxa6 bxa6 17.Ra1², but his doubled pawn is doomed and White's two long-range bishops provide him with a stable advantage.

11.Kb1 h6 12.Be3 Bxe3 13.Qxe3. In this position with castling on opposite sides, the presence of the pawn-target on h6 facilitates considerably White's opening of files. **13...b5 14.Rhg1 b4 15.Ne2 Ne5 16.Nf4 Qf6 17.h3²** White's attack is running much faster.

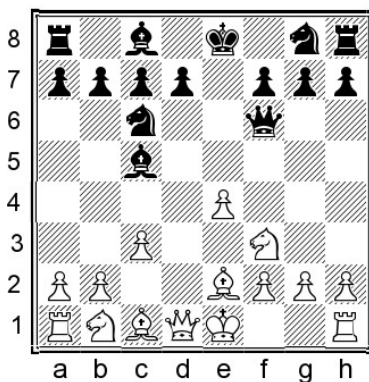
B) 5...Bb4+

It is only with this tempo-losing move that Black can try to fight for equality.

6.c3 Bc5

After the other possible retreat 6...Ba5 7.a4 Bb6 8.Nbd2 d6 9.Nc4², Black's bishop would be rather uncomfortable.

7.Be2

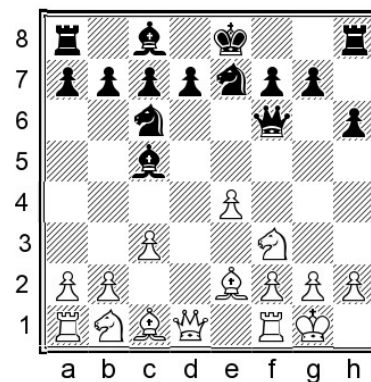


7...d6

7...Nge7 8.Bg5 Qg6 9.b4N. Black's queen is a bit isolated, so White begins active

actions on the queenside (It is also possible here for him to continue with 9.Nbd2 a5 10.Bh4 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.a3 f6 13.b4 Ba7 14.b5 Ne5 15.Nd4², with an advantage in the centre and the idea to advance later f4-f5.). 9...Bb6 (9...f6 10.Bh4 Bb6 11.a4 – see 9...Bb6) 10.a4 f6 11.Bh4 a6 (Black fails to develop his pieces after 11...a5 12.b5 Nd8 13.0-0 Qxe4 14.Nbd2 Qd5 15.Bg3 Nf5 16.Re1 Ne6 17.c4 Qc5 18.Nb3 Qe7 19.c5 Bxc5 20.Nxc5 Nxc3 21.hxc3 Qxc5 22.Rc1 Qe7 23.Bd3 0-0 24.Rxc7 Qd8 25.Rc1 d5? 26.Rxc8 Qxc8 27.Bf5 and White will capture the enemy knight.) 12.0-0 d6 13.Na3 Be6 (13...Qf7 14.Nd4 Bxd4?! 15.cxd4 Nxb4 16.Rc1 Nbc6 17.d5±) 14.a5 Ba7 15.b5 Nxa5 16.Nd4 Bf7 17.Ne6. This tremendously mobile knight creates havoc in the enemy camp and prevents Black from castling. 17...Kd7 (17...Bb6 18.bxa6 bxa6 19.Bg4±) 18.Nf4 Qxe4 19.Bg3 h5 20.Bd3 Qe5 21.Ng6 Qc5 22.Nxh8 Rxh8 23.bxa6 Nb3 (23...bxa6 24.Nb5) 24.Ra2 bxa6 25.Bxa6± Black cannot even dream about having compensation for the exchange-sacrifice with such a vulnerable king.

7...h6 8.0-0 Nge7 (about 8...d6 9.b4 – see 7...d6).

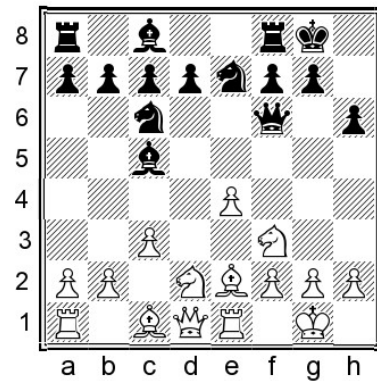


9.Qd2. White does not need to play risky here by giving up his central pawn. 9...d6 10.b4 Bb6 (10...Bxb4?? 11.cxb4 Qxa1 12.Nc3+–) 11.Bb2 Qg6 12.Kh1 0-0

13.c4 Qxe4 14.Nc3 Qh7÷ Andreikin – Salomon, Helsingor 2018.

9.Qc2!? a5 10.Na3 Bxa3 11.bxa3 0-0 12.Bb2. White's bishop will be very useful on the long diagonal. 12...d6 13.c4 Qg6 14.Qc3 Be6 (14...Bg4?? 15.Nh4 Qg5 16.f4 Qc5+ 17.Rf2+-) 15.Nd2² White's centre is mobile, while Black's cavalry is too far from the only possible outpost for it – the c5-square.

9.Nbd2!? 0-0 (9...d6 10.e5 Nxe5 11.Ne4 Qf5 12.Nxc5 dxc5 13.Nxe5 Qxe5 14.Re1²; 12...Nxf3+ 13.Bxf3 Qxc5 14.Re1 Be6 15.Bxb7 Rb8, Mihalik – Flear, London 2018, 16.Be4 0-0 17.Be3²) 10.Re1



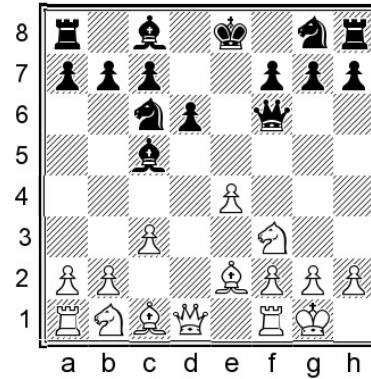
10...Ng6, Kantans – Alvarado Diaz, Lluçmajor 2019, 11.e5!? Nxc5 12.Ne4 Qc6 13.Nxc5 Qxc5 14.Be3 Qe7 (14...Qc6 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.Bd4 d6 17.f4 Ng6 18.Bf3°) 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.f4 Ng6 (16...Nc6 17.Bf3°) 17.Bh5 Qf6 18.Bd4° Qxf4? 19.Bxg6 fvg6 20.Qb3+ d5 21.Re7 Rf7 22.Qxd5 Bg4 23.h3+-

If the position is opened after: 10...d6 11.e5 Nxe5 12.Ne4 Qe6 13.Nxc5 dxc5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.Bf3 Qf6 16.Be3 Nf5 17.Bxc5 Rd8 18.Qa4², White's bishops would be tremendously powerful.

10...Ne5 11.a4 a6 12.Nd4 d6 13.Nf1 (He can restrict the mobility of the enemy pieces with the line: 13.N2b3 Ba7 14.f4 N5g6 15.g3.) 13...Qh4 14.f4 Bg4 15.Be3 Bxe2 16.Qxe2 Ng4 17.g3 Qh5 18.Kg2²

White will gradually oust the enemy pieces.

8.0-0



8...Nge7

8...h6 9.b4!?!N It is not a secret that in tactical complications the side which has the better development usually prevails. 9...Bxb4 (9...Bb6 10.Nbd2 Nge7 11.a4 a6 12.Nc4 Ba7 13.Be3 0-0 14.Bxa7 Nxa7 15.Nd4² White plans to advance his pawns and to break the enemy queenside.) 10.e5 dxe5 11.cxb4 e4 12.b5 exf3 13.bxc6 fxe2 14.Qxe2+ Qe6 15.Qb2 bxc6 16.Bd2 Qg6 17.Re1+ Be6 18.Qb7 Rd8 19.Qxc6+ Rd7 20.Bb4± Black's king will have a hard time deprived of castling.

Following 8...Bg4, Kriebel – Godena, Balatonszarszo 2017, White can exploit the already familiar idea: 9.b4!?! Bxf3 (9...Bxb4? 10.Qb3) 10.Bxf3 Bb6 11.a4 a5 12.e5 Nxe5 13.Bxb7 Rb8 14.bxa5 Bxa5 15.Qd5 c5 16.Qb3±

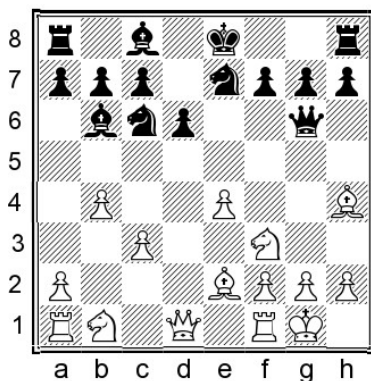
9.b4 Bb6

9...Bxb4?? 10.Bg5.

10.Bg5 Qg6

White wins an important tempo after the line: 10...Qe6 11.a4 a5 12.b5 h6 13.Bc1 Ne5 14.Nd4²

11.Bh4



11...Qh6

About 11...a6 12.Nbd2 0-0 13.a4 Bh3 14.Bg3 Be6 15.Re1 – see 11...Bh3.

11...Bh3 12.Bg3 Be6 13.Nbd2 0-0 14.a4 a6 15.Re1 (White does not need to sacrifice a pawn here: 15.Nc4 Bxc4 16.Bxc4 Qxe4 17.Bd3 Qg4÷ Xiong – Gareev, Burlingame 2017; 15.b5!? axb5 16.axb5 Rxa1 17.Qxa1 Nb8 18.Nd4 Nd7 19.Re1²; 17...Na5 18.Bd3 Qh5 19.Nd4 Bd7 20.N2f3² Kh8, Tuncer – Agamaliev, Istanbul 2019, 21.e5 Nf5 22.Qa3 Nxc3 23.hxc3±) 15...f5 16.Nh4 Qf7 17.exf5 Nxf5 18.Nxf5 Bxf5 19.Bc4 d5 20.Ba2² White's pieces have been harmoniously deployed and later he can create problems for the enemy bishop with the moves Nb3-c5, or Nb3-d4, as well as to prepare the pawn-advance c3-c4.

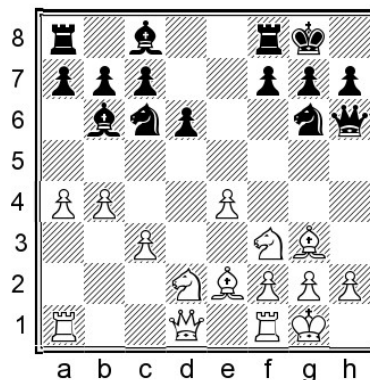
11...Ne5, Cornette – Barbot, Brest 2019, 12.Nbd2 N7c6 13.a4²

After the undermining line: 11...a5 12.a3 axb4 (12...Bh3 13.Bg3 Be6 14.Nbd2 0-0 15.b5 Nd8 16.Nd4 Bd7 17.a4²), White will calmly capture with his pawn “away from the centre”. 13.cxb4 Bh3 (13...Nxb4 14.Bxe7 Kxe7 15.Nc3 Nc6 16.Nd5, destroying completely the enemy flank and depriving his king of its castling rights.) 14.Bg3 Bg4 15.Nc3² White's pieces dominate in the centre and he can advance his rook-pawns having in mind that the enemy queen is too far away from the focus of the actions.

12.Nbd2 Ng6 13.Bg3 0-0

After 13...Nce5 14.Nxe5 dxe5 15.Nc4², Black's bishop will be captured and his queen would be misplaced at the edge of the board.

14.a4

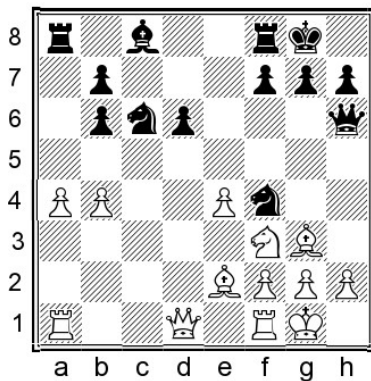


14...a5

14...a6 15.Nc4 Ba7 16.b5 Nce7 17.b6± 15.Nc4 axb4 16.cxb4 Nf4

It is again not good for Black to choose here 16...Ba7 17.b5 Nce7 18.b6±

17.Nxb6 cxb6



18.Bb5

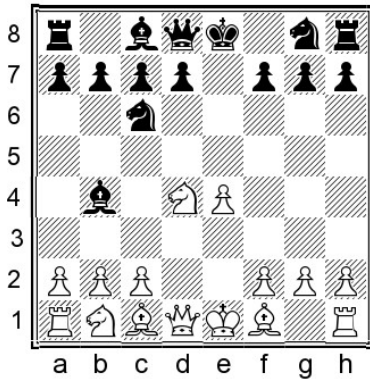
White has a good alternatives here
18.h3!? or 18.b5!? Ne5 19.Nd4 Bd7
20.Re1 and if he manages to oust
gradually Black's cavalry, then the pawn-
weaknesses on b6, b7, d6 will come under
serious long-term pressure.

18...Bg4 19.Qc1 Bxf3 20.gxf3 g5
21.Bxf4 gxf4 22.Bxc6 Rfc8, Giri –
Andreikin, Wijk aan Zee 2017, **23.Kh1**
Rxc6 (Black's attempt to correct his
pawn-structure 23...bxc6 24.Rg1+ Kh8
25.Qc3+ f6 26.a5+–, would lead to a
disaster for him in view of the triumphant
march forward of White's rook-pawn.)
24.Rg1+ Kf8 25.Qd1² In this endgame
with major pieces White's prospects are
preferable, because of his safer king and
Black's numerous pawn-weaknesses.

Chapter 5

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4

4.Nxd4 Bb4+



Lately, this variation has occupied the third place in popularity (after the main lines 4...Nf6 and 4...Bc5) and this is easily understandable. White has a slight space advantage and it is essential that he controls the d5 and f5-squares. Accordingly, the main strategical task for Black would be to prepare and advance at an opportune moment the freeing move d6-d5. White cannot prevent this radically (Black could have even played immediately 4...d5.), so he would need to apply here a more exquisite strategy. He must be on the alert, so that Black's pawn-break in the centre would not be satisfactory for him for some reasons. This is not so easy however, since it would all depend on the accurate calculation of the variations and their correct evaluation. Naturally, White would like to develop his second knight to the c3-square in order to improve his control over the situation, but this is exactly what Black's last move is aimed at preventing...

5.c3

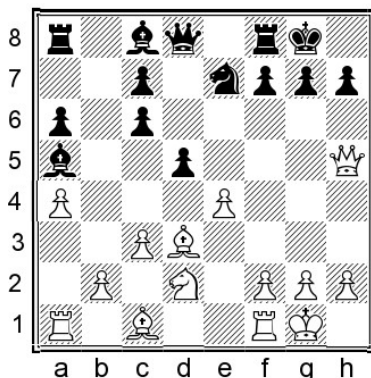
This move is practically forced if White wishes to fight for an advantage in the opening.

We must also mention some positive sides of the move in the text. White wins a tempo for his development and this is good compensation for the impossibility of developing the knight to the c3-square.

We will analyse now: **A) 5...Be7** and **B) 5...Bc5**.

The move 5...Nxd4?! leads to a considerable advantage for White: 6.cxb4 Ne6 7.Nc3 d6 8.f4 Nf6 9.f5 Nf8 10.g4±

After 5...Ba5?!, Black will need to lose another tempo in order to transfer his bishop to the "correct" g1-a7 diagonal. His bishop would be as vulnerable on the a5-square, from the point of view of tactics, as on the c5-square (for example if his opponent develops his queen to h5), but White's idea to organise a pawn-offensive on the queenside would be more effective. 6.Nxc6 bxc6, Mikulas – Tabor, Priedvidza 1987, 7.a4 a6 (Black could have tried to save a tempo for this move, but then his bishop would be endangered, which can be seen in the variation 7...Bb6 8.a5 Bc5 9.Bd3 Ne7?! 10.Qh5 d5 11.b4 Bd6 12.e5 g6 13.Qe2+–) 8.Nd2 d5. Black can hardly continue the game without this move. (8...Ne7? 9.Nc4 Bb6 10.Nxb6 cxb6 11.Qd6±; 8...Bb6 9.Bd3 Ne7 10.Qh5 0-0 11.0-0 d6 12.Nc4 Ba7 13.e5f; 11...d5 12.Nf3±) 9.Bd3 Ne7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Qh5

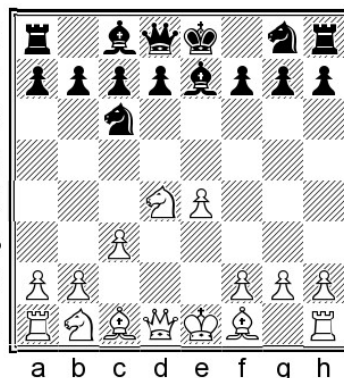


Black can clarify the situation in the centre with the move 11...f5, but after 12.exd5 cxd5 13.Re1², his pieces would be dis-coordinated and he would have numerous weaknesses in his position, so White would maintain long-term initiative.

On the other hand, in the variation 11...Bb6, the reduction of the tension would facilitate a bit Black's defence – 12.exd5 g6 13.Qh6 (13.Qe2 cxd5²) 13...cxd5 14.Nf3 f6 15.a5 Ba7², therefore it would be best for White to choose here 12.Nf3±

11...h6 12.Nf3 (threatening Bxh6+-)
 12...Qd6 (12...f5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.b4 Bb6
 15.a5 Ba7 16.Bf4 c5 17.Rfe1±) 13.e5 Qe6
 14.h3 (preventing 14...Qg4) 14...f5 (14...c5
 15.Ng5! Qc6 16.Nh7 Rd8 17.Bg5+-)
 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.Bg5 Qf7 17.Qxf7+ Rxf7
 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.b4 Bb6 20.a5 Ba7
 21.Rfe1 Kf8 22.Ne5±

A) 5...Be7

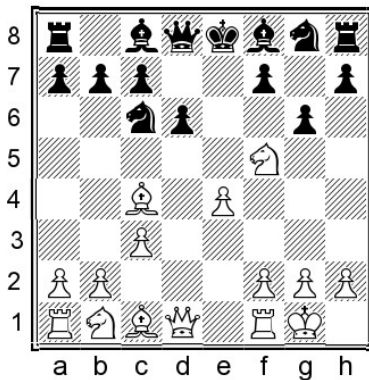


In this situation White's extra tempo for the move c2-c3 is not so important. Naturally, the d4-square has been fortified reliably, but his knight on b1 has no access to the c3-square for development and that would have been the best square for it.

Objectively speaking, White has sufficient time, but it is not so great, so we would like to analyse the most principled lines for him. In general, the move **A1)** 6.Nf5 seems very attractive, while after **A2)** 6.Nxc6, White will maintain a slight but stable advantage thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

A1) 6.Nf5 Bf6

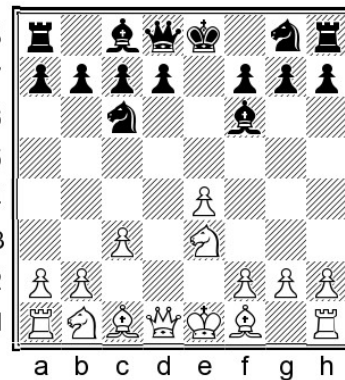
Black would even lose another tempo after 6...Bf8, but this move would provide his knight with the possibility to occupy its habitual f6-square and deserves attention at least because of this reason.
 7.Bc4 d6 7...g6 8.Qd5 Qf6 9.Bg5 Qe6
 10.Ne3±; 7...Ne5 8.Bb3 d5 9.Qd4! f6
 10.Qxd5 Qxd5 11.Bxd5 Ne7 12.Nxe7 Bxe7
 13.0-0²; 10.Bxd5 c6 11.Bb3 Nd3+ 12.Ke2
 Bxf5 13.exf5 Qxd4 14.cxd4 Nxc1+ 15.Rxc1
 0-0-0 16.Nc3² Rxd4? 17.Rd1±) 8.0-0 g6
 (8...Nf6 9.Qb3 Ne5 10.Bg5 h6 11.Bh4²;
 9...Qd7 10.Re1 Na5 11.Qb5²).



Naturally, it seems attractive for White to choose here 9.Re1 and after 9...gxh5 10.exf5+ Kd7 11.Nd2 Qg5 12.Ne4 Qxf5 13.Bd3 Qd5 14.c4 Qd4 15.c5f, Black's dis-coordinated forces would provide White with excellent prospects. After the preliminary move 9...Ne5 however, Moncelli – Oppici, Bratto 2008, 10.Bb3 (10.Nd4 Nxc4 11.Qa4+ Bd7 12.Qxc4 Bg7 13.Bf4 Ne7 14.e5 d5 15.Qb3 c5 16.e6 cxd4 17.exd7+ Qxd7 18.Qa3 Bf6 19.Bh6 g5!? 20.cxd4 Rg8 21.f4 0-0-0 22.Bxg5 Bxd4+ 23.Kh1 Rde8∞) 10...gxh5 11.exf5 Be7 12.f4 Nd7 13.Qh5 Nc5 14.Bxf7+ Kf8 15.Bd5 Qe8 16.Qxe8+ Kxe8 17.Bxg8 Rxc8 (17...Nd3 18.Re3 Rxc8 19.Rxd3 Bxf5∞) 18.f6 Be6 19.fxe7 Bf5∞, things would not be so simple at all.

After the move 9.Nd4!?, White would preserve his control over the situation and would keep a slight edge. 9...Bg7 10.Nxc6 (White must try to cause some defects in his opponent's position.) 10...bxc6 11.Na3 (11.Qf3!? Nf6 12.e5 dxe5 13.Rd1 Bd7 14.Bg5 0-0 15.Na3©) 11...Ne7 12.Bg5 0-0 13.Qd2²

7.Ne3



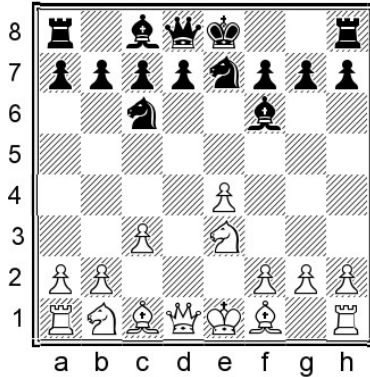
7...Nge7

About 7...d6 8.g3 Nge7 9.Bg2 – see 7...Nge7.

7...g6 8.Nd5 Bg7 9.Na3 a6 9...d6? Dworakowska – Dergileva, Germany 2006, 10.Nb5+–) 10.Bg5!?! (10.Nc4 d6 11.Bg5 f6 12.Bh4 Nh6 13.Be2 0-0 14.0-0 Be6, Rombaldoni – Godena, Sarre 2009, 15.Nce3²) 10...Nge7 (10...f6 11.Bh4 d6 12.Bc4±) 11.Qf3!?! (After the seemingly attractive move 11.Nf6+, Black will manage to get rid of the positional pressing that he is under...: 11...Kf8 12.Nd5 h6 13.Bh4 d6 14.Nxe7 Nxe7 15.Qd2 g5 16.Bg3 Ng6 with the idea h5, g4, Bh6,) 11...h6 (11...0-0? 12.Nf6+ Kh8 13.Qh3+–; 11...Ne5? 12.Qf6!+–; 11...d6 12.Bc4 0-0 13.Nf6+ Kh8 14.Qf4±) 12.Bf6 0-0 13.c4 d6 14.Rd1±

7...Bg5 8.g3 (8.Bd3!?!²) 8...Bxe3 9.Bxe3 Nf6 (9...Qe7 10.Bg2 Nf6 11.Nd2 d6 12.h3 Be6, Koh – Bhakti, Singapore 2008, 13.0-0 0-0 14.f4±) 10.Bg2 0-0 11.c4 d6 12.0-0 (12.h3!?! Be6 13.b3 Qd7 14.Nc3 Rfe8 15.g4±, with a space advantage for White and a couple of powerful bishops.) 12...Be6 13.b3 Qd7 (Now, the possibility to play Bh3, followed by the trade of the light-squared bishops, would enable Black to hold his defence somehow.)

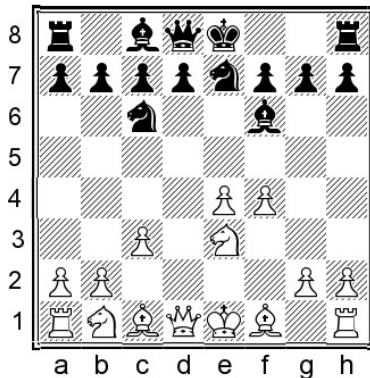
14.Bg5 Ne8, Sax – Djuric, Italy 1995,
 15.Nc3 Bh3 16.Bxh3 Qxh3 17.Nd5 Ne5
 18.f3± White is threatening at the
 moment 19.Be7, while after 18...Kh8
 19.Bd2±, he will simply transfer his
 bishop to the long diagonal, increasing his
 pressure.



8.g3!?

This is a solid positional scheme for
 White.

8.f4!?



8...Ng6 9.Nd5 0-0 10.Bd3 Bh4+ 11.g3
 Nce7, Tukhaev – Nozdrachev, Sochi 2016,
 12.Ne3 Nxf4 13.gxh4 Neg6 14.Nf5 Nxd3+
 15.Qxd3 d5 16.0-0 dxe4 17.Qxe4 Re8
 18.Qf3±

8...0-0. White is still not well prepared
 for an immediate offensive and you can
 see that in the following exemplary
 variations: 9.e5 Bh4+ 10.g3 Ng6 11.Qf3
 (11.gxh4? Qxh4+ 12.Kd2 Qxf4³)

11...Be7∞, therefore it would be better for
 him to choose here 9.Be2 d6 10.0-0 g6
 11.Na3 Bg7 12.f5²

8...d6 9.Ng4. The problem with this
 move for White is that he must be ready
 to enter non-standard actions with an
 irrational decision. (Accordingly, it would
 be simpler for him to base his hopes on a
 line with which he holds on to his space
 advantage: 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 – see 8...0-0.)
 9...Ng6 (9...h5!? 10.Nxf6+ gxf6 11.Bd3 d5²;
 11.Be3 f5 12.Nd2 Qd7!? 13.Bd3 Qe6
 14.Qe2 Qg6²) 10.g3 h5 11.Ne3! (11.Nxf6+
 Qxf6 12.Bg2 h4∞) 11...Bd7 12.Bg2 Qc8
 13.h4 Nge7 14.Nd2 g6 15.Nf3 Ng8,
 Schmitt diel – Adler, Groningen 1994,
 16.0-0 Nge7 (16...Bh3 17.e5 dxe5 18.fxe5
 Nxe5 19.Nxe5 Bxe5 20.Qb3+–) 17.Qd3
 Bh3 18.Bd2 Bxg2 19.Kxg2 0-0 20.Rae1²

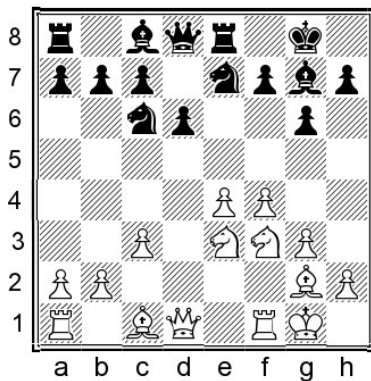
8...0-0

8...d6 9.Bg2 h5!? 10.Nd2 h4 11.f4 hxg3
 12.hxg3 Rxh1+ 13.Bxh1 g6 14.Qe2
 (14.Nf3 Be6 15.Nd5 Bg7 16.Ng5 Qd7
 17.Nxe6 fxe6 18.Nxe7 Kxe7 19.Be3 e5²
 White's game is more pleasant, but his
 prospects are somewhat restricted by the
 absence of his knight. It would have been
 very useful in a position of this type.)
 14...Be6 15.g4²

9.Bg2 d6 10.0-0 g6 11.f4 Re8

11...Bg7 12.Nd2, SerS – El Patzero, Cafe
 2017 (12.f5!? f6² Golubev – Itkis,
 Illichevsk 2006) 12...Kh8 (12...f5?! 13.exf5
 Nxf5 14.Nxf5 Bxf5 15.Qb3+ d5 16.Qxb7±;
 12...Be6? 13.f5 Bd7 14.f6+–) 13.g4 f5
 14.exf5 gxf5 15.g5²

12.Nd2 Bg7 13.Nf3



13...f5?

This move leads to immediate material losses for Black.

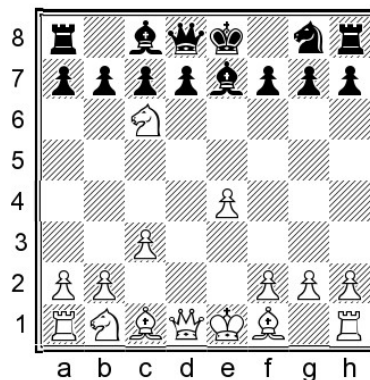
It would be much more resilient for Black to opt here for 13...Kh8 14.Ng5 Rf8 15.Qb3 Qe8 (15...Na5? 16.Nxf7+ Kg8 17.Nxd8+ Nxb3 18.axb3±) 16.Bd2 h6 (16...f6 17.Nf3±) 17.Nf3 Rb8 18.Rae1±

13...Bd7!? 14.f5 f6 (14...gxf5?! 15.Ng5±; 14...Nc8 15.a4±) 15.Qb3+ Kh8 16.Qxb7 gxf5 17.Nxf5 Nxf5 18.exf5 a5 (18...Rb8 19.Qa6 Rb6 20.Qd3±) 19.g4±

14.Qb3+ Kh8 15.Ng5 Rf8 16.exf5 Nxf5 17.Nxf5 Bxf5 18.Nf7+ Rxf7

19.Qxf7+- Morozevich – Nozdrachev, Moscow 2016.

A2) 6.Nxc6

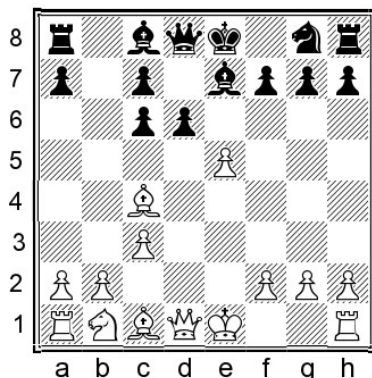


6...bxc6

The capturing 6...dxc6 is encountered only very seldom in practice and that is easily understandable. In the exchange variation of the Ruy Lopez Black obtains immediately the two-bishop advantage. Here, he does not have any compensation for his compromised pawn-structure; nevertheless, the statistic in this variation is in favour of Black in the Database. There are no objective reasons for that, but it is a middle game on the board and White's advantage should not be overestimated. It is stable indeed, but still far from being decisive. 7.Qxd8+ Bxd8 8.Bf4 Nf6 (8...Be6. Naturally, White would be happy to avoid the exchange... 9.Nd2 Nf6 10.f3 0-0 11.Bc4² Dunn – Winfridsson, West Bromwich 2004; 8...f5 9.exf5 Bxf5 10.Bc4²) 9.Nd2 0-0 10.f3² c5?! 11.0-0-0 Be6 12.Bc4± Sion Castro – Sanz Alonso, Mondariz 2002.

7.Bd3

White has a very interesting move here – 7.e5!?, at least because of the fact that he would not need to memorise so many forced variations after it. Black's knight cannot go to the f6-square now and the character of the fight changes. 7...d6 (7...d5 8.Bd3 – see 7.Bd3 d5 8.e58.Bc4

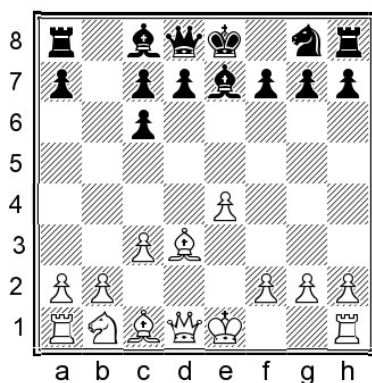


8...d5 9.Bd3 – see 7.Bd3 d5 8.e5.

8...dxe5?! 9.Qh5 g6 10.Qxe5 Nf6 11.Bh6 Qd6 12.Qe2 Ng4 13.Bg7 Rg8 14.Bd4 c5 15.Qf3! cxd4 16.Qxa8 Qe5+ 17.Be2 Kd8 18.cxd4 Qxd4 19.Bxg4 Bb4+ 20.Nc3 Re8+ (20...Bxc3+ 21.Kf1 Qxg4 22.bxc3+-) 21.Kf1 Qxg4 22.h4±

8...Bf5 9.Qf3 Qd7 10.Bb5 d5 11.Bxc6 Qxc6 12.Qxf5 Bc5, Jones – Djuric, Bratto 2013, 13.Nd2!? Ne7 14.Qd3 0-0 15.0-0²

8...Qd7!? 9.Qf3. (Now already, Black can capture on e5, for example in the variation 9.0-0 dxe5 10.Qh5?! Qf5, or 10...Bd6.) 9...d5 10.Bd3 Qe6 (10...Qg4 11.Nd2 Nh6 12.0-0 0-0 13.h3 Qxf3 14.Nxf3²) 11.Qg3 Nf6 12.f4 g6 13.0-0 Ne4 14.Bxe4 dxe4 15.Nd2 Qd5 16.Re1 Bf5 17.Nb3 0-0 18.Be3²



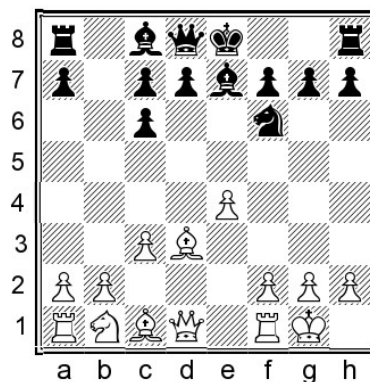
7...d6

This is Black's most natural reaction.

7...Bf6. This is hardly the best set-up of his pieces, moreover that it requires several additional tempi. 8.0-0 d6 9.f4 Ne7, Calzetta Ruiz – Hardarson, Olomouc 2001, 10.Be3 0-0 11.Nd2 Re8 12.Qf3 Ng6 13.Rad1 Qe7 14.Rfe1²

7...d5 8.e5!? (8.0-0 Nf6 9.e5 – see 7...Nf6) 8...Bc5 9.Qh5. This is a good square for White's queen and the opponent cannot oust it from there without some positional concessions. 9...g6?! This move weakens the dark squares. (It would be more reliable for Black to choose here 9...Ne7 10.Nd2 Qd7 11.h3! a5 12.0-0 Nf5 13.Nf3²) 10.Qe2 Qh4, Ahmed – Islam, Dhaka 2013, 11.h3! (White prevents the exchange of the queens.) 11...Ne7 12.g3 Qh5 13.g4 Qh4 14.Nd2±

7...Nf6. After this move White can advance his central pawn. 8.0-0 (Things are not so clear after 8.e5 Nd5 9.Qg4 g6 10.Bh6 Bf8 11.Bxf8 Kxf8 12.0-0 d6= Boe Olsen – Dalmau, Budapest 1999; 12.Nd2 Qe7 13.Qd4 d6 14.f4 dxe5 15.fxe5 Qg5∞; 12.Qg3 Rb8 13.c4 Nb4∞).

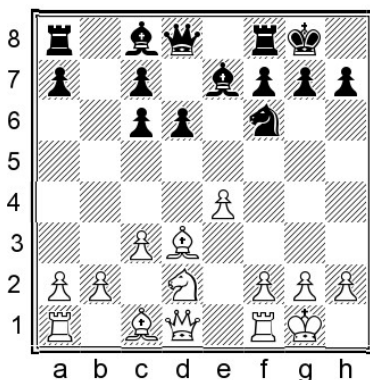


About 8...d6 9.Nd2 – see 7...d6.

8...d5 9.e5 Ng4 (9...Nd7, Adell Cortes – Fons Cervero, Valencia 1995, 10.Re1 0-0 11.Nd2 a5 12.Nf3 Nc5 13.Bc2² Ba6?!)

14.Nd4±) 10.Qe2 f6 11.exf6 Nxf6 12.Re1 Bg4 13.f3 Bd7, Ruiz Aguilar – Castaneda, San Antonio del Tachira 2013, 14.Nd2 Kf7 15.Nb3 Re8 16.Qf2 c5 17.c4±
 8...0-0 9.e5 Ne8 (9...Nd5 10.Be4²) 10.Nd2 d5 11.f4 f6 (11...g6 12.Nb3²) 12.Nf3 fxe5 (12...Bg4? Varga – Egri, Zalakaros 2012, 13.Qc2 f5 14.Nd4+--)
 13.fxe5 g6 14.Qc2²

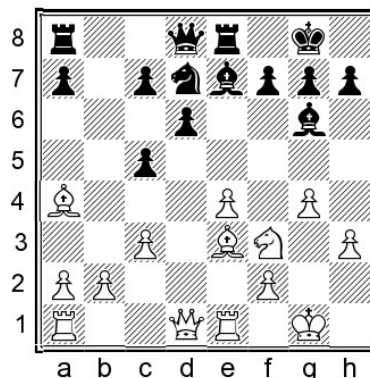
8.0-0 Nf6 9.Nd2 0-0



10.f4!?

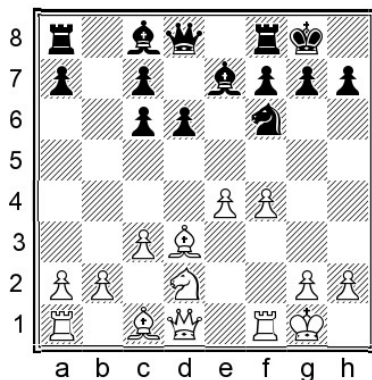
Besides its obvious pluses (the occupation of space in the centre and on the kingside and the control over the e5-square), this plan has some defects too. White weakens his control over the g1-a7 diagonal and it would be much more difficult for him to defend the g4 and e4-squares if necessary.

Therefore, it would be interesting for him to try another more patient treatment of this position with the idea to prevent the counterplay by his opponent. 10.Re1 Re8 11.Nf3 Nd7 12.Bf4 Nc5 13.Bc2 Bg4 14.h3 Bh5 15.Be3 Nd7 16.Ba4 c5 17.g4. This is a principled way for White. He is slightly better, but he would hardly manage to organise an offensive with a pinned knight on f3. 17...Bg6



18.e5 Rb8 19.b3 (19.Bf4?! Rxb2 20.exd6?! Bxd6. Black's pieces are free now. 21.Rxe8+ Qxe8 22.Bxd6 cxd6 23.Qxd6 Qe2 24.Qg3 Nf8 25.Re1 Rb1 26.Rxb1 Bxb1 27.Bc6 Bxa2 28.Qd6 Qc4 29.Ne5 Qxc3 0-1 So Wesley – Carlsen, Saint Louis 2017.) 19...Be4 20.Bf4. White still maintains the initiative. 20...Bxf3 (20...Ba8 21.exd6 cxd6 22.Bxd6 Bxf3 23.Qxf3 Bxd6 24.Rxe8+ Qxe8 25.Rd1 Qe7 26.Qd5²) 21.Qxf3 dxe5 22.Bg3 Bd6 23.Rad1²

18.Bc6!? White increases his pressure. His bishop is deployed to a dominating position and besides he is threatening a queen-sortie to the a4-square. 18...Rb8 19.b4 Bf6 (The rook-move 19...Rf8 preserves the extra material for Black, but leads to a difficult position for him. 20.b5 h5 21.a4 hxg4 22.hxg4 Nf6 23.Nd2±) 20.e5 Rxe5 (20...Bxe5 21.Nxe5 Rxe5 22.f4 Re7 23.f5+-; 21...Ne5 22.Bxe8 Qxe8 23.Bf4 f6 24.Bxe5 fxe5 25.bxc5±) 21.Bxd7 Qxd7 22.Nxe5 Bxe5 23.Rc1 Be4 24.Bxc5 Qc6±



10...d5

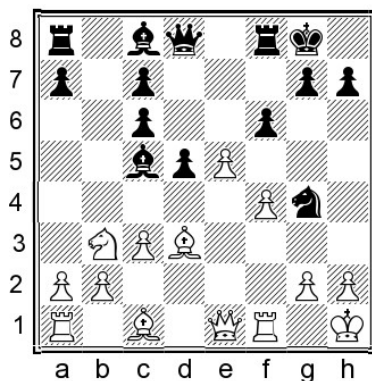
10...c5 11.Qe2 Bb7 (11...Bg4 12.Qf2²)
12.e5²

10...Nd7, Balcaite – Karsokaite, Vilnius
2007, 11.Nf3 Rb8 12.Qc2 Nc5 13.Be2 d5
14.e5²

11.e5 Bc5+

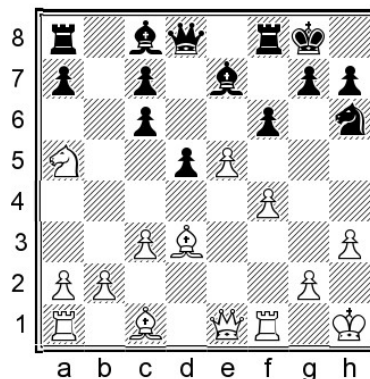
After 11...Ng4 12.Nb3, Black cannot
sustain his attacking ambitions. 12...a5
(12...c5 13.Be2±) 13.Nd4±

12.Kh1 Ng4 13.Qe1 f6 14.Nb3



14...Bb6

14...Be7, Pandavos – Yandemirov,
Peristeri 1993, 15.h3 Nh6 16.Na5



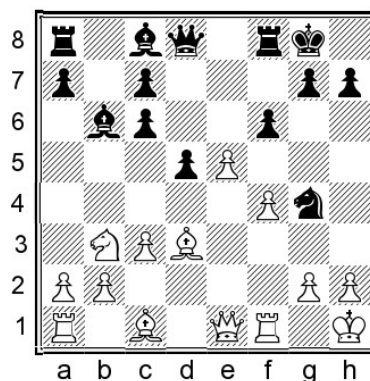
Black cannot solve the problems with
his queenside pawns in a comfortable
fashion:

16...Qd7 17.b4±

16...c5 17.b3±, Black will still have to
worry about his c6-square.

16...fxe5 17.Nxc6 (17.fxe5 Bf5 18.Qe2±)
17...Bh4 18.Nxd8 Bxe1 19.Rxe1 e4
20.Bxe4 dxe4 21.Nc6±

16...Qe8 17.f5 fxe5 (Black does not have
much of a choice, since he would be
reluctant to allow the enemy pawn to the
e6-square: 17...Nf7 18.e6 Ne5 19.Qg3 Bd6
20.Bf4±) 18.Bxh6 gxh6 19.Qxe5±



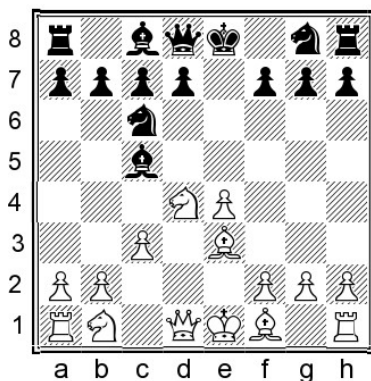
15.e6!?

It is more principled for White to play
here 15.h3, although Black will obtain
some counterplay after it. 15...c5 16.c4
fxe5 17.hxg4 e4 18.Bc2. White prevents

the enemy pawn-advance d5-d4. (18.Be2 d4 19.f5 Qe7 20.Bf4± T.Kosintseva – Stefanova, Kazan 2012). 18...dxc4? 19.Nd2 c3 20.Nc4+–

15...Qd6 (Black can play here 15...Re8, not sacrificing a piece yet, but he would hardly manage to put up for long with the enemy pawn on e6... 16.f5 Ne5 17.Be2±) **16.h3 Bxe6** (16...Nh6? 17.f5+–) **17.hxg4 Bxg4 18.Qg3 f5 19.c4** (White wishes to solve radically the problem with the g1-a7 diagonal.) **19...Rae8 20.Bd2 Re6 21.c5 Bxc5 22.Nxc5 Qxc5 23.Qf2±**

B) 5...Bc5 6.Be3



6...Bb6

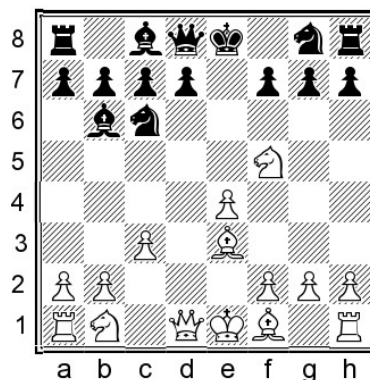
The X-ray juxtaposition between the dark-squared bishops provides White with numerous tactical possibilities and the most reasonable action for him would be to solve this problem immediately.

6...Qf6 7.g3. The development of the bishop to the g2-square is White's most effective measure against Black's freeing pawn-advance d7-d5. The popularity of this plan is also connected with the fact that White's king would be well protected and the extra tempo, in comparison to

one of the main lines of the Scotch Game: 4...Bc5 5.Be3 Qf6 6.c3 Nge7 7.g3, would also be a quite serious argument. 7...Nge7 (7...d5, Lee – Remlinger, Los Angeles 2011, 8.exd5 Nxd4 9.cxd4 Bb6 10.Bg2 Ne7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Nc3±; 7...h5 8.h3 h4 9.g4 g5 10.Qd2 Qe7 11.Bg2 f6 12.Qe2 Nh6 13.Nd2 Nf7 14.0-0±) 8.Bg2 d6 9.0-0 Bd7, Mihok – Farago, Budapest 2006, 10.b4 Bb6 11.a4 a5 12.Nb5 0-0 13.Bxb6 cxb6 14.bxa5 Nxa5 (14...bxa5 15.Qxd6 Be6 16.Qc5±) 15.N1a3 Bc6 16.Rb1 Rfd8 17.Re1±

6...Qe7 7.Bd3 Nf6 (7...Nxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Nc3±; 7...d6 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.Bxc5 dxc5 10.0-0±; 7...d5 8.exd5 Nxd4 9.cxd4 Bb6 10.0-0±) 8.Nf5 Qf8 9.0-0. This is White's simplest decision. (He can also win a pawn with 9.Bxc5 Qxc5 10.Nxg7+ Kf8 11.Nf5 d5 12.Ng3, but in this variation Black would seize the initiative: 12...h5 13.h4 dxe4 14.Nxe4 Nxe4 15.Bxe4 Bf5 16.Bxf5 Qxf5 17.0-0 Rd8f) 9...d6 10.Bxc5 dxc5 11.e5 Nd5 12.Re1²

7.Nf5

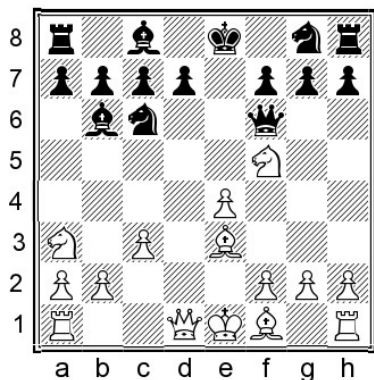


We are going to deal now with: **B1)** 7...Bxe3 and **B2)** 7...g6.

Black should better refrain here from 7...Kf8 8.Bxb6 axb6 9.Ne3²

The move 7...d5?! is of course possible, but White will have several extra tempi in comparison to the variation 4...Bc5 5.Nf5 d5 and this would be important. 8.Nxg7+ Kf8 9.Nh5 Qh4 10.Ng3 dxe4 (10...Bxe3 11.fxe3 dxe4 12.Be2±) 11.Qc1² Black's pawn-structure has been compromised and he has not castled yet, so his defence would be difficult.

Black can also try here 7...Qf6, but then suddenly he would have problems with the protection of his pawn on c7. 8.Na3



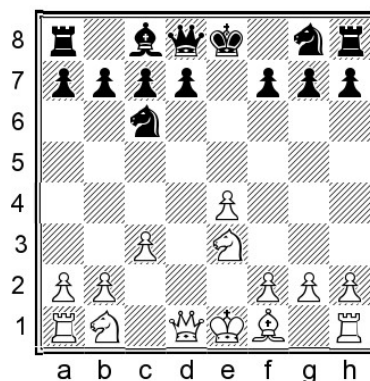
8...d5. After this exchange of strikes, White will obtain a clear advantage. 9.Bxb6 Bxf5 (9...axb6? 10.Nb5±) 10.Bxc7 Bxe4 11.Nb5 Qe6 12.Bf4 Bd3+ 13.Be3 Bxb5 14.Bxb5²

8...Bxe3 9.Nxe3 Nge7 (9...Qe5 10.Bd3 Nf6 11.0-0 0-0 12.Re1 Qe8 13.Nd5 Qd8 14.Nb5 Ne8 15.e5 d6 16.exd6 cxd6, Zelcic – Godena, Nova Gorica 2000, 17.Rxe8 Rxe8 18.Ndc7 Rb8 19.Nxe8 Qxe8 20.Nxd6±; 12.Nd5!? Nxd5 13.exd5 Ne7 14.Re1 Qg5 15.d6±) 10.Nb5 Qe5 (10...Kd8 11.Bc4±) 11.Bd3 Kd8. Black will hardly manage to coordinate his forces with a king at the centre of the board. (11...d5? 12.0-0 dxe4 13.Nc4 Qc5 14.b4 Qg5 15.Nxc7+ Kf8 16.Bxe4+- Smieszek – Gurbanov, Bialystok 2016. After 11...0-0

12.0-0±, Black will have great difficulties. Meanwhile, White is threatening 13.Ng4, 13.Nd5, or even 13.b4, in order to deprive the enemy queen of the c5-square, followed by f2-f4.) 12.0-0 a6 13.Na3 d6 14.Nac4 (14.f4!? Qe6 15.e5±; 14...Qc5 15.Qd2 Bd7 16.b4 Qa7 17.Kh1± and later Nac2, a4, b5.) 14...Qe6 15.f4 b5, Wang – Lane, Kuala Lumpur 2011, 16.Nd2±

8...Nge7 9.Nb5 Ba5 (9...Kd8 10.Qd2 Bxe3 11.Nxe3 d6, Jarmula – Chylewski, Graz 2017, 12.g3 Be6 13.Bg2±) 10.Nxe7 Qxe7 11.Bd3. White is playing in an academic fashion. (11.b4!? a6 12.Nd6+ cxd6 13.bxa5 Nxa5 14.Bb6 Qxe4+ 15.Qe2 Qxe2+ 16.Bxe2 Nc6 17.c4 0-0 18.0-0-0²) 11...d6 12.0-0 0-0 (It would be simpler for Black to solve immediately the problem with his bishop on a5: 12...Bb6 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.f4²) 13.a4 Ne5?! Lagno – Stefanova, Tashkent 2013 (After 13...Be6², the fight would have been still very tense.) 14.Nxa7 Bg4 15.f3 Bd7 16.Nb5±

B1) 7...Bxe3 8.Nxe3



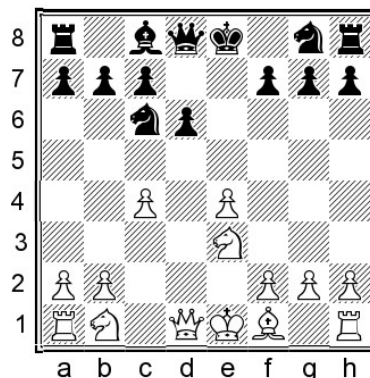
In this position Black has a choice between **B1a)** 8...d6, preserving the possibility to develop his knight to the e7-square and the usual move **B1b)** 8...Nf6.

There may arise original positions after 8...Nge7, refraining for the time being from the move d7-d6. 9.g3 b6 10.Bg2 Ba6 11.c4 (Black has no counterplay at all, so White does not need to be in a hurry: 11.Na3!? 0-0 12.c4±, or even 11.f4 0-0 12.Kf2±) 11...b5 12.cxb5 Bxb5 13.Na3 Ba6?! Tuncer – Asadli, Kocaeli 2017 (Black will fail anyway to preserve his bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal, in order to thwart his opponent's castling kingside. In addition, he does not have sufficient space for his pieces, so he should better give up his bishop: 13...Rb8 14.Nxb5 Rxb5 15.b3²) 14.Qa4 Qc8 15.b4±

B1a) 8...d6 9.g3!?

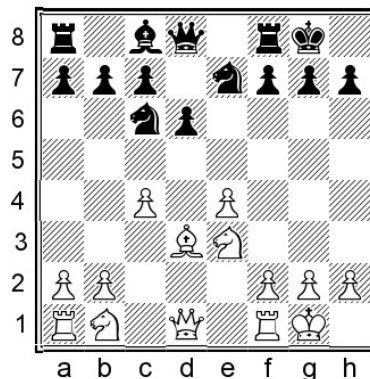
White's pawn on e4 is still not under an attack yet, so he can experiment with the set-up of his pieces and with the order of moves. It is always very popular for him to fianchetto his bishop in similar positions. It consolidates his space advantage, exerts long-range pressure, does not stand in the way of his other pieces and can hardly be exchanged.

Still, the traditional development of his light-squared bishop to d3 and the e2-squares has also some advantages. At first it requires a tempo less and secondly, this would not weaken his kingside. The bishop is also protected against an exchange on these squares. Therefore, the simple move 9.c4 is a very good alternative for White.



9...Nf6 10.Nc3 0-0 (10...Qe7 11.Bd3 Ne5, Brunello – Locci, Fiuggi 2007, 12.0-0 0-0 13.f4 Neg4 14.Nxg4 Bxg4 15.Qd2²) 11.Bd3 Ne5 12.0-0 Re8, Dauw – Raats, Brasschaat 2018, 13.f4 (13.Bc2²) 13...Nfg4 14.Nxg4 Bxg4 15.Be2 (15.Qd2 Nxd3 16.Qxd3 f6 17.b3²) 15...Bxe2 16.Qxe2 Nd7 17.Rad1²

9...Nge7 (Black is planning f7-f5.) 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0! (White wishes to avoid the numerous exchanges in the line: 11.Nc3 f5 12.exf5 Nxf5 13.Bxf5 Bxf5 14.Qd5+ Kh8 15.Nxf5 Qf6 16.0-0 Qxf5 17.Qxf5 Rxf5= Khairullin – Alekseev, St Petersburg 2012.)



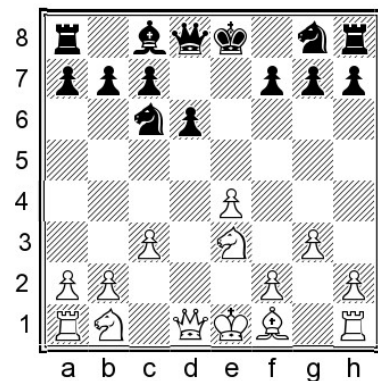
About 11...Ne5 12.Nc3 Nxd3 13.Qxd3 – see 11...Nb4.

11...Nb4 12.Nc3 Nxd3 13.Qxd3 f5 (13...Be6. This move is not so ambitious for Black and does not change much the character of the position. 14.Rad1 a6 15.f4 f6 16.b3² Popilski – Khakimov, St Petersburg 2013.) 14.f4 Kh8 15.Rae1 fxe4

16.Nxe4 Nf5, Fercec – Kasimdzhanov, Fuegen 2006, 17.b3 (17.Nd5 c6 18.Ndc3²) 17...Nxe3 18.Rxe3 Bf5 19.Qd5 b6 20.Rfe1±

This is a very important moment in the game and we will pay attention to it. Now, contrary to the variation with 11.Nc3, after Black's immediate move 11...f5, White will have the resource 12.f4² and in the variation 12...fxe4 13.Bxe4, his pawn would be protected by his rook on f1. He can also choose the more principled line: 12.exf5 and here it would be bad for Black to continue with 12...Nxf5? 13.Bxf5 Bxf5 14.Qd5+ Kh8 15.Nxf5 Qf6 16.Ne3 Qxb2 17.Qd2 Qxa1 18.Nc3+– Instead, he must play 12...Ne5, with the following possible developments 13.g4!/? Nxd3 14.Qxd3 g6 15.f4! gxf5 16.g5±

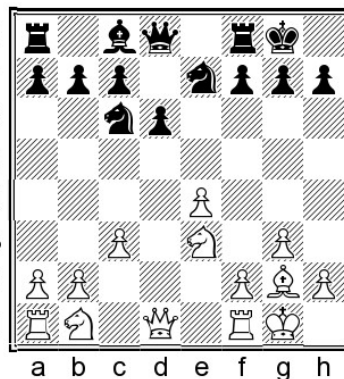
If 11...Kh8, then it would be good for White to opt for 12.Nc3 f5, Burg – Dragnev, Emsdetten 2016, 13.f4²



9...Nf6

9...h5, Pavlidis – Kigel, Athens 2012. This is a standard reaction for Black against his opponent's previous move, but White is much better prepared for the eventual consequences of the further advance of that pawn. 10.Nd2!/? h4 (10...Nf6 11.Bg2²) 11.Rg1 hxg3 12.hxg3 Nf6 13.f4 Qe7 14.Qf3 d5 15.e5 d4 16.Nb3 dxe3 17.exf6 Qxf6 18.0-0-0²

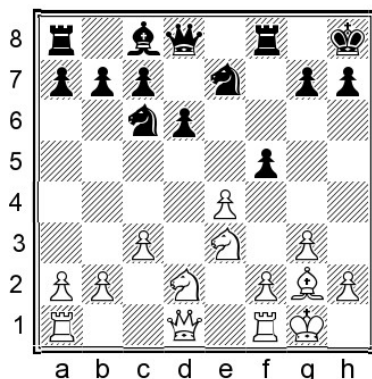
Black can complete the development of his kingside in another way – 9...Nge7. His knight is not so well placed on this square as on f6, but he has the possibility to accomplish the freeing pawn-advance f7-f5 and White must prepare well against it. 10.Bg2 0-0 11.0-0



11...Be6 12.f4 f6 13.c4 a6 14.Nc3 Qb8, Goikhman – Khmelniker, Netanya 2019, 15.Ncd5!/? b5 16.Qd2± bxc4 17.Rac1 Qa7 18.Kh1+–

Following 11...Rb8, White has a great number of about equally strong alternatives, for example: 12.Nd2 b5, Handoko – Tolentino, Dubai 2007, 13.f4!/?²; if 12...f5, then 13.exf5 and Black will have to give up his light-squared bishop, since it would be very bad for him to choose here 13...Nxf5 14.Qb3+ Kh8? 15.Bxc6+–

11...Kh8. This prophylactic is necessary, since after f7-f5, there might arise total exchanges after White plays Qb3. 12.Nd2 f5



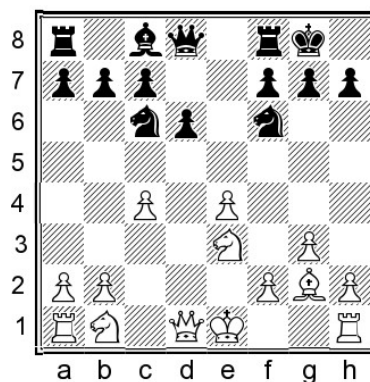
13.exf5. With this exchange White helps his opponent to speed up his development. Still, this would not be so important for the evaluation of the position, but provides Black with some additional possibilities. 13...Nxf5 14.Re1 Ne5 15.Ndc4 Nxe3 16.Nxe3 g5!?

(16...Nd7?! 17.Qd4 Nf6 18.Rad1± Savchenko – Adams, Moscow 2007)

17.Qd4 Qf6 18.Nd5 Qg7 19.Nxc7 Qxc7 20.f4 gxf4 21.gxf4 Qg7 22.fxe5 Bh3 23.exd6 Qxd4+ 24.cxd4 Rg8 25.Re2 Rg4 26.Rd1 Rag8 27.Rdd2 Rc8² It would not be easy to tell whether this rook and pawn ending can be won or not...

13.f4!? fxe4 (13...Be6, Vidit – Abdulla, Chengdu 2017 and here it would have been sensible for White instead of exchanging on f5 to maintain the tension, because he would have a much greater choice of doubtlessly useful moves: 14.Re1², or 14.Qc2!? Qd7 15.Rad1²) 14.Nxe4 Nf5 15.Re1 Nce7 16.Ng5 h6 (Following 16...c6, Black would have to put up somehow with the powerful enemy knight on the g5-square: 17.Qh5 Nh6, Le Roux – Schroeder, Helsingor 2014, 18.Be4 Nef5 19.Nxf5 Bxf5 20.Bxf5 Rxf5 21.Re2 Qb6+ 22.Kg2 Raf8 23.Rd1±) 17.Nxf5 Nxf5 18.Ne6 Bxe6 19.Rxe6 c6, Matlakov – Postny, St Petersburg 2018, 20.Qb3!? Qd7 21.Rae1±, followed by Bh3.

10.Bg2 0-0 11.c4



11...Bd7

Black is practically helpless to counter his opponent's spatial bind.

11...a5. Black ensures for a while the placement of his knight on the c5-square, but on the other hand White's knight may occupy the b5-square. 12.Nc3 Nd7 13.0-0 Nc5 14.Qd2 (14.f4!?) 14...f5?! Black's desire to solve the problem with his insufficient space by trading pieces is quite understandable, but now, White's bishop on g2 will have no opponent. (It was better for Black to have chosen here 14...Be6².) 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Nxf5 Rxf5 17.Rae1± Zumsande – Rjabzev, Pardubice 2015.

11...Re8 12.Nc3 Ne5 13.0-0 (13.h3 Ned7 14.0-0 Nc5 15.Qc2 a5 16.b3 c6?! Zhou – Collutiis, Livigno 2012, 17.Rad1±; 16...Bd7 17.Rfe1²) 13...Nfg4 14.Nxg4 Bxg4 15.f3 Bd7 16.b3²

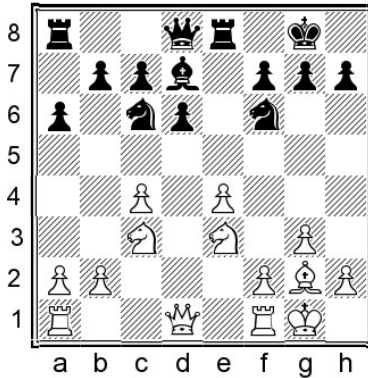
11...a6, Pridorozhni – Yandemirov, Kazan 2017, 12.0-0 Rb8 13.f4!?

(If White wishes to realise the idea, connected with the pawn-advance c4-c5, he must take the e5-square under control as early as possible.) 13...Bd7 (13...h5 14.h3 Bd7

15.Nc3 b5 16.c5 Re8 17.Ned5²) 14.Nc3 (It is still too early for White to play 14.c5 dxc5 15.e5 Ng4!! 16.Nxg4 Bxg4 17.Qxg4 Qd4+ 18.Kh1 Qxb2³) 14...b5 (14...Re8 15.c5²) 15.c5 Re8 (15...dxc5 16.e5±) 16.a3 (16.Ned5 Nxd5 17.exd5 Ne7 18.c6 Bf5 19.Qd2²) 16...a5 17.Ned5 Nxd5 (17...b4 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6 19.axb4 axb4 20.Nd5 Qxb2 21.Nxc7±) 18.exd5 Ne7 19.c6 Bf5 20.Qd2²

operations. Meanwhile, White mobilises his forces very quickly. 16.Kh2 (White could have begun immediate positional pressing with 16.g4 h6 17.f4²) 16...Nb4 17.b3 Na6 18.Qc2 Nc5 19.Rad1 Bc6 20.f3 b6 21.Nf5 Bb7 22.Rfe1 Nfd7 23.f4 Re6 24.Nd5 Bxd5 25.cxd5 Re8 26.Nd4± Rublevsky – Yandemirov, Sochi 2015.

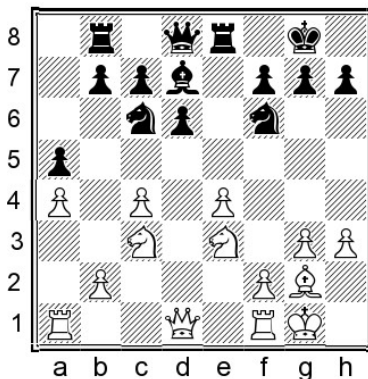
12.Nc3 a6 13.0-0 Re8



14.Rc1!?

White can solve the problem with the enemy pawn-advance b7-b5 in another way and that is to close the queenside.

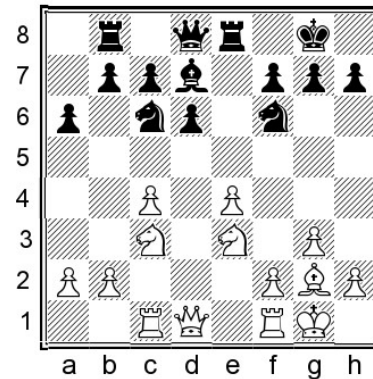
14.h3 Rb8 15.a4 a5



Naturally, White has weakened the c5 and b4-squares, but it is not easy to see what Black can achieve because of that. He still lacks space for effective active

14...Rb8

14...b5 15.Ned5 (In the variation 15.cxb5 axb5 16.Nxb5 Rxa2 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.exd5 Ne5 19.Nxc7 Rf8 20.Qb3 Ra4 21.Ne6, Black can save the game with the move 21...Qb8! =) 15...Nxd5 16.Nxd5²



15.b3

This solid move shows that White is reluctant to exchange on b5.

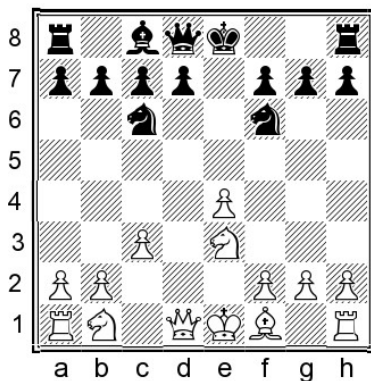
Meanwhile, he can counter Black's actions on the queenside in another way too: 15.f4 b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.Ncd5 Nxd5 (17...Nxe4 18.b4! White deprives his opponent of the c4-square. 18...f5 19.Qd3 Ne7 20.Nxc7±) 18.Nxd5²

15.Ned5 Nxd5 16.Nxd5 Ne5 (16...Ne7 17.Ne3 Qc8 18.f4 Bh3 19.Bxh3 Qxh3 20.f5±) 17.f4 (17...Bg4 18.Qd4 Nc6

19.Qc3±) 17...Ng4 18.Qd4 c5 19.Qc3 Bc6
20.h3 Nf6 21.e5 dxe5 22.fxe5 Nd7 23.Rf5f

15...b5 16.Ned5 Nxd5 (White is much better prepared for the sharpening of the game: 16...bxc4 17.Nxf6+ Qxf6 18.Nd5 Qb2 19.Nxc7 Red8 20.Rxc4 Qxa2 21.Qxd6 Be8 22.Qc5±) **17.Nxd5 Ne7 18.c5 Nxd5 19.Qxd5 Be6 20.Qd4²**

B1b) 8...Nf6



9.f3

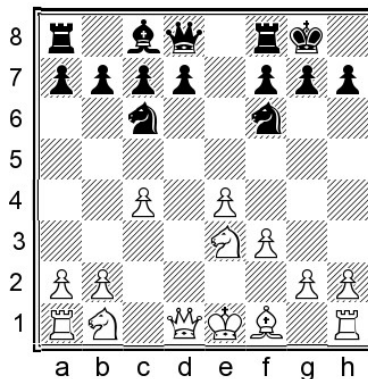
It is essential for White to control the centre.

After 9.Nd2?! d5=, the position is equal.

9...0-0

9...d6 10.c4 Nh5 (About 10...0-0 11.Nc3, or 10...Nd7 11.Nc3 Nc5 12.Be2 0-0 13.0-0 – see 9...0-0; 10...Qe7 11.Nc3 Qe5 12.Qd2 Bd7, Ansell – De Vreugt, Hilversum 2008, 13.Ned5 0-0-0 14.f4 Qe6 15.Bd3 Kb8 16.0-0±; 14...Qh5 15.Be2 Qg6 16.Bf3±) 11.Qd2 (11.g3 0-0 12.Nc3 – see 9...0-0) 11...Qh4+ 12.Qf2 Qxf2+ 13.Kxf2 Nf4 14.Nc3 Bd7, Sazonova – Mukhina, Satka 2015, 15.Ncd5²

10.c4



10...d6

This is the main line for Black.

On the other hand he leads in development and can try to exploit this, or to put it simply – he can experiment a bit with the order of moves.

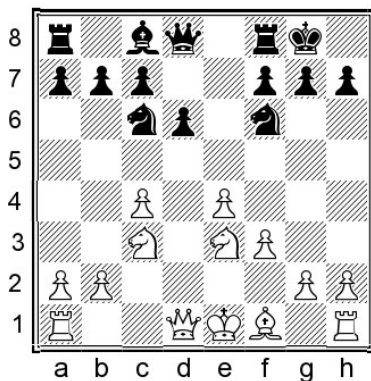
About 10...Ne5 11.Nc3 d6 12.Be2, or 10...Nh5 11.g3 d6 12.Nc3 – see 10...d6.

Black should better avoid here 10...Nxe4?! 11.fxe4 Qh4+ 12.Kd2 Qxe4 13.Nd5 and White will gradually consolidate his position 13...d6 (13...Qd4+ 14.Kc1+-) 14.Nbc3 Qh4 15.Kc1 Bg4 16.Qd2 Rfe8 17.b3±

10...Qe7 11.Nc3 Qc5. Black can hardly organise here effective active actions, so the placement of his queen on this square would much rather create problems only for him. He must also worry about the protection of his pawn on c7.) 12.Qd2 d6 (12...Ne7, Markovic – Lajthajm, Kragujevac 2016, 13.g4±) 13.Ncd5 (13.Ned5!? Ne8 14.Nb5 Ne5?? 15.b4+-; 14...a6 15.Nbxc7 Nxc7 16.Nxc7 Rb8 17.0-0-0 Rd8 18.Kb1±) 13...Ne8 (13...Nxd5 14.Nxd5±) 14.b4 Qd4 15.Rd1 Qxd2+ 16.Rxd2 a5 17.b5 Ne5 18.c5 Be6

(18...dxc5? 19.Ne7+ Kh8 20.Rd8+-)
 19.cxd6 Bxd5 20.Nxd5 cxd6 21.Be2 Nf6
 22.Nb6± Palac – Stevic, Pula 1999.

11.Nc3



11...Nd7

In principle, in positions of this type, Black's choice of moves is not so great. This is because there are many possibilities to transpose to some other lines.

11...a5 12.Be2 Nd7 13.0-0 Nc5 14.Qd2 – see 11...Nd7.

11...a6 12.Qd2 Re8 13.Be2 Bd7 14.0-0, or 11...Bd7 12.Be2 Re8 13.0-0, or 12...a6 13.0-0 Qb8 14.Qd2 Qa7 15.Rad1 Rfe8 16.Kh1 – see 11...Re8.

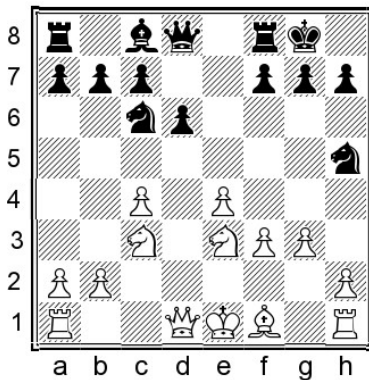
11...Re8 12.Be2 Bd7 13.0-0 a6 (13...Ne5 14.Qd2 Ng6 15.Rad1 a6, Van Foreest – Acs, Germany 2015, 16.b4! White occupies space on the queenside and prevents the appearance of Black's bishop on the c6-square. 16...h5 17.a4 h4 18.a5²; White can also play here the prosaic move 16.Rfe1²) 14.Qd2 Qb8 15.Kh1 Qa7 16.Rad1 (16.Rac1!?. White is eyeing the enemy pawn on c7 and plans to penetrate

with his knight – Nc3-d5. 16...Ne7 17.c5 dxc5? 18.e5 Nf5 19.Nc4+-) 16...Ne5 (16...Ne7 17.g4 h6 18.Rg1 Qc5 19.Nf5 Nxf5 20.gxf5 Kh7, Van Kerkhof – De Groote, Netherlands 2011, 21.Nd5 Nxd5 22.cxd5±) 17.g4 (17.c5!? Qxc5 18.Ncd5 Nxd5 19.Nxd5 b5 20.Rc1 Nc4 21.Bxc4 bxc4 22.b3±) 17...Bc6 (17...h6 18.Rg1,) 18.Nf5 Qc5, Motylev – Looshnikov, Vladivostok 2014, 19.Rc1±

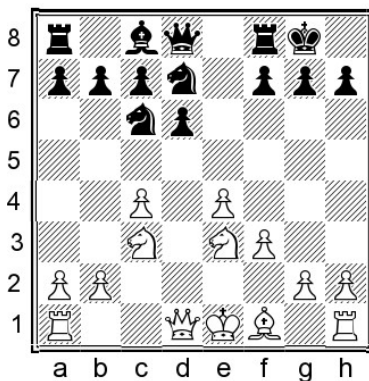
11...Ne5 12.Be2 a6 (12...Re8 13.0-0 c6 14.Qd2² Balaian – Surovtseva, Mamaia 2016) 13.Qd2 Bd7 14.0-0 Rb8 (14...Ng6, Vardan – Lajthajm, Novi Sad 2018, 15.Rfd1 Re8 16.Rac1²) 15.a4!?. White wishes to create a positional bind and ignores the dark squares in the process. 15...a5 16.Rad1 b6 17.Ned5 Bc6 18.f4 Ng6 19.Bd3² Tseshkovsky – Golod, Biel 2005.

11...Be6 12.Be2 (12.Qd2 Nd7 13.Be2 a5 14.0-0 Nc5 15.Rad1 – see 11...Nd7) 12...Re8 (12...Nd7 13.0-0 Nc5 14.Qd2 a5 15.Rad1 – see 11...Nd7) 13.f4!?. White occupies space on the kingside and deprives his opponent of the manoeuvre Nf6-d7. 13...a5 14.Qd2 Nb4 15.0-0 Bd7 16.Bf3 Bc6 17.Ned5 Nbx5 18.cxd5 Bd7 19.Qd4 c5 20.dxc6 Bxc6 21.Rad1 Rc8, Thirion – Larsson, ICCF 2007, 22.Rfe1²

11...Nh5 12.g3



12...f5?! This attempt by Black to provoke complications will backfire. (12...Re8, Sisoiev – Galunova, Sofia 2010, 13.f4²) 13.exf5 Bxf5 (13...Qe8 14.Ncd5 Bxf5 15.Qd2±; 13...Kh8, Gomez Baillo – Villarreal, Buenos Aires 1995, 14.Bh3±) 14.Qd5+ Kh8 15.Nxf5 Nb4 (15...Qg5 16.Nh4+-) 16.Qd2 Rxf5 17.0-0-0 (White can continue here in a calmer way: 17.Be2, followed by 0-0, f4, Bf3²) 17...Rxf3 18.Nd5!? Na6 (18...a5 19.Be2 Rf2 20.Qe3±; 18...Nxd5 19.Qxd5 Rf2 20.Qxh5 Qf6 21.Qb5!+-) 19.g4 c6 (19...Nf6 20.Bg2 Ne4 21.Qe1 Qg5+ 22.Kb1 Qg6 23.Ka1+-) 20.Bg2 Rf8 21.gxh5 cxd5 22.Bxd5 Nc5 23.h6±



12.Be2

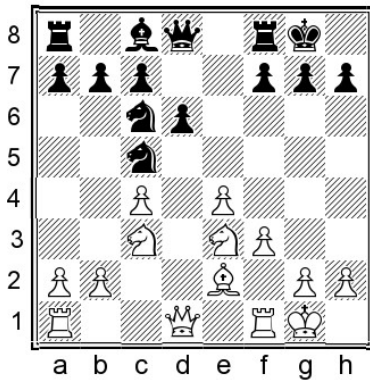
White can postpone sharpening of the game, because he has a stable space advantage: 12.g3 Nc5 13.Bg2²

12.Bd3!? Nc5 13.0-0 Be6 (13...Nxd3. This white bishop “cements” his position and prevents Black’s counterplay. On the other hand it is not a very impressive piece in similar pawn-structures. Accordingly, the evaluation of the position remains the same, but the character of the fight changes a bit. 14.Qxd3 Ne5 15.Qd2 Be6 16.b3 f6 17.f4 Nf7 18.Rad1² A.Muzychuk – Korneev, Linares 2018.) 14.Bc2 f6 15.Qd2 Qd7, Tomczak – Koziak, Poznan 2015, 16.Rab1 a5 17.b3²

12...Nc5 13.0-0

Following 13.Qd2, Black can advance 13...f5 under more favourable circumstances 13...a5 14.0-0 – see 13.0-0), but the evaluation of the position would remain the same. 14.exf5 Bxf5 15.Nxf5 Rxf5 16.0-0 Qh4 (16...Rf7 17.f4 Qf6 18.Rad1± Sanchez – Vitoux, Gap 2007; 16...Kh8 17.f4 Rf7, Vuelban – Collutiis, Grosseto 2013, 18.Bf3±) 17.f4 Raf8 18.Bf3 (18.g3 Qh6 19.Rad1 Kh8 20.Nd5± Carlsson – Lindberg, Sweden 2013) 18...Kh8 19.g3 Qd8 20.Rae1 a5 (20...g5? 21.Nd5 gxf4 22.gxf4 Qh4 23.Kh1+- Black will hardly manage to defend against his opponent’s numerous threats.) 21.b3 R5f7 (21...a4 22.Rb1±) 22.Nd5 Nb4 23.Rd1 Qa8 (23...Nxd5 24.Bxd5 Re7 25.Qxa5 Re2 26.Bf3±) 24.Bh5. White is trying to break his opponent’s position, but Black can hold successfully his defence. 24...Rd7 (24...g6 25.Nxb4 axb4 26.Bf3 Qa5 27.Rfe1±) 25.Nc3 Re7 26.a3 Nc6 27.Nd5 Rd7 28.Qe3 a4?! 29.b4 Nb3. After the removal of his knight from the key defensive c5-square, Black’s position

crumbles. 30.Rfe1 Qa7 31.Qxa7 Nxa7
 32.Be8 Rd8 33.Bxa4 1–0 Palac – Vaisman,
 Cap d’Agde 1998.

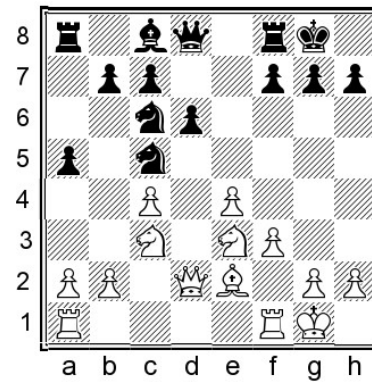


13...a5

13...Re8 14.Qd2 Bd7, Akhmetov –
 Makhnev, Astana 2017, 15.Ned5 a5
 16.Nb5 Ne6 17.Rfd1²

Following 13...f5 14.exf5 Bxf5, Van
 Kampen – Babula, Warsaw 2013, White
 has a powerful tactical strike at his
 disposal: 15.b4!?, for example: 15...Ne6
 (15...Nxb4? 16.Nxf5 Rxf5 17.Qb1+-;
 15...Qe8 16.Nxf5 Rxf5 17.bxc5 Qe3+
 18.Kh1 Qxc3 19.cxd6 cxd6 20.Bd3±) 16.f4
 Bg6 (16...Ned4 17.Bh5 g6 18.b5 gxh5
 19.bxc6 Nxc6 20.Qxh5 Qd7 21.Rae1±;
 16...Ncd4 17.g4 Bg6 18.f5 Qg5 19.Qd3±)
 17.f5 Qg5 18.Ncd5 Bxf5 19.h4 Qxh4
 (19...Qg6? 20.b5+-) 20.Nxf5 Qg5 21.Qd3±

14.Qd2



14...Ne7

About 14...Bd7 15.Rad1 Ne7 16.f4 – see
 14...Ne7.

14...f5 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Nxf5 Rxf5 17.f4
 Kh8 18.Rae1 Rf7, Vitoux – Wantiez,
 Reunion 2007, 19.Bf3²

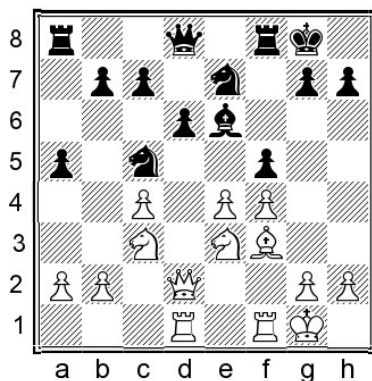
14...Kh8 15.f4 f6 16.Bf3 Be6 17.Rad1
 Nb4 18.b3 Qd7, Goumas – Delithanasis,
 Nikaia 2014, 19.Nb5²

14...Be6 15.Rad1 Qd7 (15...Ne7 16.f4 –
 see 14...Ne7; 15...a4, Firat – Georgiadis,
 Warsaw 2013, 16.f4²) 16.Nb5 Rae8
 17.Nd5 Na6, Li – Bachmann, Las Vegas
 2016, 18.f4±

15.Rad1 Be6

15...Bd7 16.f4 f5 17.Bf3 Bc6 18.exf5
 Nxf5 19.Nxf5 Rxf5, Zelcic – Lazic, Cannes
 2006, 20.Nd5 Kh8 21.g3² White is
 dominant in the centre and on the e-file.

16.f4 f5 17.Bf3

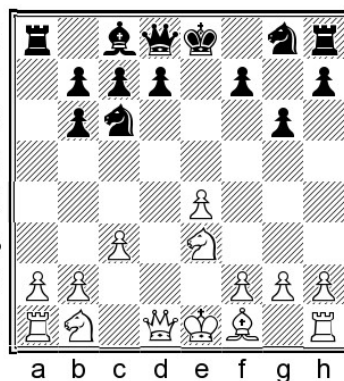


17...Kh8

17...Qb8, Markovic – Lazic, Novi Sad 2000. With a black pawn on a5, the placement of his queen on a7 would not be so purposeful. 18.g3 Kh8 19.exf5 Nxf5 20.Nxf5 Bxf5 21.Rfe1 Qd8 22.Nb5±

18.g3 Bd7 19.Rfe1 Re8, Naumann – Lammers, Solingen 2017, **20.Bh5!? Rf8** (20...g6 21.Bf3 Bc6 22.Ned5±; 20...fxe4 21.Bxe8 Qxe8 22.Qg2 Qg6 23.g4±) **21.e5 dx5 22.fxe5** (White is planning Nd5-f4.) **22...f4** (22...Qc8 23.Ned5±; 22...Ba4 23.Nxa4 Qxd2 24.Rxd2 Nxa4 25.Nd5 Nxd5 26.cxd5 Nc5 27.Rc2 b6 28.e6 g6 29.e7 Rfe8 30.Bf3 Ra7 31.Rce2 Nd3? 32.d6+–; 31...Kg7 32.g4 fxg4 33.Bxg4±) **23.Ng2!? fxg3 24.e6 Bxe6 25.Qe3 gxh2+ 26.Kxh2 Nf5 27.Rxd8 Nxe3 28.Rxa8 Rxa8 29.Nxe3±**

B2) 7...g6 8.Bxb6 axb6 9.Ne3

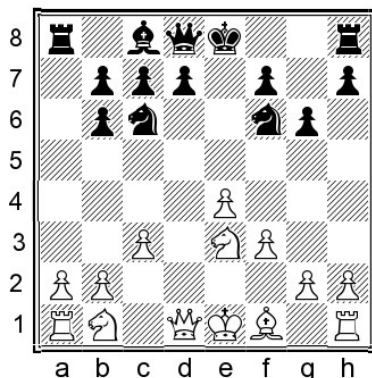


9...Nf6

About 9...Qe7 10.f3 Nf6 11.Be2 – see variation **B2b**.

9...d6 10.c4 Nge7 (10...Nh6. Black leaves the d8-h4 diagonal free for his queen. In this case, White's plan with the move f2-f4 would not be so good for him, so he must choose 11.Nd5²) 11.Bd3 (It is possible that White should better prefer another move-order: 11.f4 f5 12.Bd3 etc.) 11...0-0 12.0-0 Nb4 13.Nc3 f5 14.f4 Nxd3 15.Qxd3 fxe4 16.Qxe4 c6 (Black should better play here 16...Bd7 17.Rae1 Bc6 18.Qd4² and he would solve at least the problem with his light-squared bishop.) 17.Rad1 Ra5 18.g4! White plays aggressively and his main task is to restrict the mobility of the enemy knight on e7, which stands in the way of Black's own pieces and preventing particularly his queen from entering the actions. 18...h5 19.h3 Rf7 20.Qd3 hxg4 21.hxg4 d5 22.cxd5 Nxd5 23.Ncxd5 cxd5 24.a3± Darini – Iordachescu, Dubai 2013. Maybe White did not need to worry about his pawn on a2 and he could have played 24.Rf2!?±, threatening to transfer his rook to the h-file.

10.f3



We will analyse in details **B2a)** 10...0-0 and **B2b)** 10...Qe7.

10...d5. Naturally, White is not well prepared for this pawn-break, but Black is not quite ready either... 11.exd5 Qe7 (It would be less adequate for Black to try here 11...Ne7 12.Qd4 Nf5 13.Nxf5 Bxf5 14.Bb5+ Kf8 15.Na3±) 12.Kf2 Ne5 13.Be2 0-0, Dzhakaev – Tarlev, Kislovodsk 2010, 14.Qd4 Re8 (14...Rd8 15.Rd1±) 15.Re1±

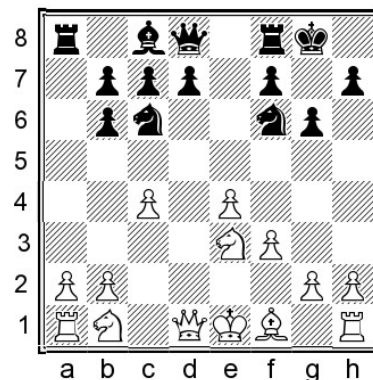
10...Nh5, Alonso – Roselli Mailhe, Rio de Janeiro 2016, 11.g3 0-0 (11...d6 12.c4 – see 10...d6) 12.Bg2 f5 13.exf5 Re8 (13...gxf5 14.f4 Qe7 15.Kf2 Nf6 16.Re1±) 14.Qd2. It is obvious that Black does not have sufficient resources to maintain the initiative. 14...gxf5 (14...Qe7 15.Kf2±) 15.f4±

10...d6. This move may be an attempt by Black to transpose to other lines, as well as a try to begin active actions before castling – this is in a situation a bit uncomfortable for both sides... 11.c4 Nh5 (11...0-0 12.Nc3 – see variation **B2a)** 12.g3!? (Afte12.Qd2, Dochev – Aggelis, Heraklion 2011, it is also possible for Black to continue with 12...f5 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.Nxf5 gxf5 15.Nc3 Qe7+ 16.Qe2 Qxe2+

17.Kxe2 Nf4+ 18.Ke3 Ne6 19.Bd3 Rf8 and this is hardly the position, which White would be happy to reach.) 12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 (13...Bxf5 14.Nc3 0-0 15.Bg2²) 14.f4 Nf6 (It would not be quite correct for Black to play here 14...Nxf4 15.gxf4 Qh4+ 16.Kd2 Qxf4 17.Nc3±) 15.Nc3 Qe7 16.Qd2. He will most probably castle queenside and White's king is likely to do the same not to come under an attack on the kingside. 16...Be6 17.0-0-0±

B2a) 10...0-0 11.c4

11.Be2. White must be always very careful about the d5-square. 11...d5!? 12.exd5 (12.Nxd5 Nxd5 13.Qxd5 Qe7 14.Qd2 f5) 12...Qe7 13.Qd2 Rd8 14.c4 b5 15.Nc3, Iljiushenok – Danielyan, Moscow 2017, 15...bxc4 16.0-0 b5 17.Nxb5 Nxd5 18.Nxd5 Qc5+ 19.Qe3 Rxd5 20.Qxc5 Rxc5 21.a4 Na5 22.Rac1 c6 23.Nd6 Be6 24.b4 Re5=



11...d6

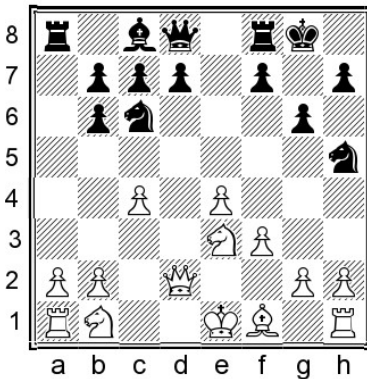
About 11...Re8 12.Nc3 d6 13.Qd2 – see 11...d6.

11...Qe7 12.Nc3 Qc5 13.Qd2 Nb4 (with the idea Qxe3+) 14.Rc1 Qe5 (14...Nxa2? 15.Ra1) 15.a3 Nc6 16.Ncd5 Ne8 17.Bd3 d6 18.0-0 Be6 19.Kh1 (19.f4 Qd4

20.Kh1±) 19...Nd4 20.Rc3 Qg7 21.f4 f5
 22.exf5 gxf5 23.Re1 Kh8, Rublevsky –
 I.Sokolov, Kragujevac 2009, 24.Nc2!?
 Bxd5 25.cxd5 Rf7 26.Nb4±, with the idea
 Bc4, Rd3.

Re8 17.0-0 fxe4 18.b4 Nc6 19.Nb5±)
 15...Nc6 16.f4 f5 (16...Ne6 17.Bg2 Nc5
 18.Rhe1±) 17.Bg2 fxe4 18.Bxe4 Be6,
 Chigaev – Gasanov, St Petersburg 2013,
 19.Kb1± It looks like Black would be
 helpless against his opponent's planned
 massive offensive: Rhe1, Nb5, Bd5 etc.

11...Nh5 12.Qd2



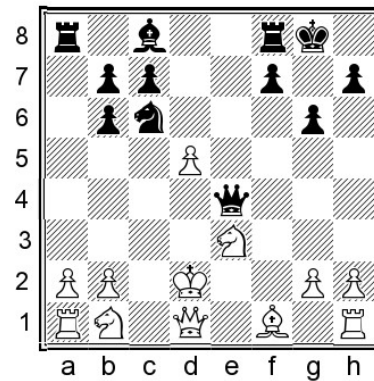
About 12...d6 13.Nc3 – see 11...d6.

12...Re8 13.Nc3 f5, Danin – Meskovs,
 Riga 2014, 14.exf5!. White obtains more
 than sufficient compensation for the
 exchange. 14...Qh4+ 15.Kd1 Ng3 (15...d5
 16.cxd5±) 16.hxg3 Qxh1 17.Kc2±

12...f5 13.exf5 Qh4+ (13...Re8 14.Nc3 –
 see 12...Re8; 13...gxf5 14.Nc3 d6 15.0-0-
 0±) 14.Qf2 Qd4 15.Nc3 Re8 16.Ne4 Nf6
 (16...Ra3? 17.Nd5+- Antal – Cruz,
 Barcelona 2017; 16...d6 17.fxg6 hxg6
 18.Nd5±) 17.Bd3 Nb4 (17...d5, Pichot –
 Flores, Buenos Aires 2017, 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6
 19.0-0±) 18.Rd1 Nxd3+ 19.Rxd3 Qxd3
 (19...Nxe4 20.Rxd4 Nxf2 21.Kxf2 Rxa2
 22.Rd2±) 20.Nxf6+ Kf8 21.Nxe8 Rxa2
 22.Qd2 Ra1+ 23.Nd1 Qxd2+ 24.Kxd2 Kxe8
 25.Re1+ Kf7 26.fxg6+ hxg6 27.Nc3 Rxe1
 28.Kxe1 c6 29.Na4 d6 30.Nxb6 Be6
 31.Kd2±

12...Na5 13.Na3 d6 (After 13...Nc6,
 besides the move 14.Nb5², White can
 continue with 14.0-0-0 d6 15.g3 Ne5
 16.Bg2², followed by f3-f4.) 14.g3 Ng7
 15.0-0-0 (Here, it seems more reliable for
 White to castle kingside: 15.Bg2 f5 16.f4

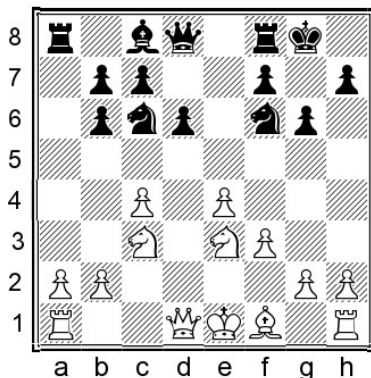
11...d5!? This is a very interesting
 pawn-sacrifice, but it seems that after a
 correct reaction by White, Black would
 not have sufficient resources to create
 serious problems for his opponent.
 12.cxd5 (It would be insufficient for
 White to opt for 12.Nxd5 Ne5 and Black
 would obtain serious counterplay:
 13.Nbc3 c6 14.Ne3 Qe7 15.Be2 Rd8
 16.Qc1 Nh5 17.0-0 Nf4∞; 13.Qd4 Nxd5
 14.cxd5 Qh4+ 15.Qf2 Qe7 16.Nc3 f5∞;
 15.Kd1 Re8 16.Nc3 c6,,) 12...Nxe4 13.fxe4
 Qh4+ 14.Kd2 Qxe4



15.Bd3!? White must play accurately.
 (Following 15.Nc3 Qd4+ 16.Ke2 Qf4!
 17.dxc6 bxc6! 18.Qd2 Re8!∞, it would be
 White who must worry about how to
 maintain the balance.) 15...Qd4!
 (15...Qb4+ 16.Nc3 Ne5 17.Qb3+- A.Vovk –
 D'Amore, Gallipoli 2016) 16.Qb3 Re8
 (16...Qh4 17.g3 Nd4 18.Qc4 Nf3+ 19.Kc1
 Qg5 20.Qf4± Black has failed to break his
 opponent's defence and White will
 gradually consolidate his position.)
 17.Re1 Ne5 18.Na3 Bd7 (After 18...Nxd3,

Danin – Zeller, Wunsiedel 2016, White will have the resource 19.Nac2! Qf4 20.Qxd3 Qxh2 21.Qd4±) 19.Nac2 Qf4 20.Rf1 Qg5, Perunovic – Stojanovic, Ruma 2017, 21.a4! (Black planned after 21...Ba4, followed by 22...Bxc2, to eliminate the defender of the enemy knight on e3.) 21...Ng4 (21...Rad8 22.Ra3±) 22.h4 Qh6 (22...Qxh4 23.d6 Be6 24.Qb4+-) 23.Rae1±

12.Nc3

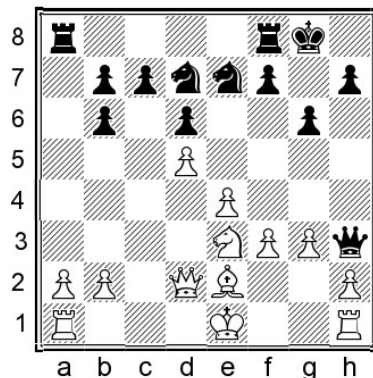


12...Nh5

12...Re8 13.Qd2 Ne5 14.0-0-0 Be6 (14...Nh5 15.g4 Nf4 16.h4±) 15.Kb1 Ra5 16.f4 (16.Be2!? Qd7 17.g4±) 16...Nc6 17.Nc2! White's position in the centre is not so solid as with a pawn on f3, so he must play carefully (After 17.Ned5?! T.Petrosian – Glud, Novi Sad 2009, there might arise complications: 17...Nxe4! 18.Nxe4 Bf5 19.Bd3 Rxe4! 20.Bxe4 Bxe4+ 21.Ka1 Bxd5 22.cxd5 Ne7,,) 17...Ra8 (After the move 17...Nd7, White might begin a total offensive with 18.b4!? Ra8 19.Bd3±) 18.Bd3± He is ready for a pawn-assault on the kingside.

12...Be6 13.Qd2 (White fails now to follow a scheme with a fianchetto of his bishop on the g2-square: 13.g3 Ne5

14.Qe2 c6 15.Bg2 b5! 16.cxb5 Qb6 17.0-0?! Bc4.) 13...Nd7 (13...Ne5 14.Be2 Nh5 15.g3 Ng7 16.f4 Nc6, Ibanez – Roselli Mailhe, Montevideo 2016, 17.0-0±) 14.Be2 Qh4+ (14...Nc5 15.0-0 Ne7 16.b4 Nd7 17.Nb5 Nc6 18.f4 f6, Vatkali – Manelidou, Achaia 2013, 19.Nd5±) 15.g3 Qh3 16.Ncd5. White's pieces are dominant, but he must still solve the problem with his king stranded in the centre. 16...Bxd5 (16...Rfc8 17.f4±) 17.cxd5 Ne7



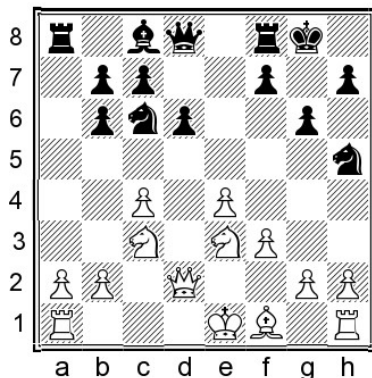
18.Rc1! Rxa2 (18...c5 19.dxc6 bxc6 20.Qxd6±; 19...Nxc6 20.a3±) 19.Rxc7 Ra1+ 20.Bd1. Despite the pin on the fifth rank, White still has many different possibilities and some direct threats (Ng4; Ng2-f4; Qg2; Kf2, f4, Bg4), against which Black's defence would not be easy at all, for example: 20...Rc8 21.Rxc8+ Nxc6 22.Kf2 b5 (22...Nc5 23.b4+-; 22...h5 23.Ng2+-; 22...Nf6 23.Qc3+-) 23.f4 Nc5 (23...Nf6 24.Qd4 Rxd1 25.Nxd1 Ng4+ 26.Kg1+-) 24.Qd4 Nb3 25.Qf6 Nc5 26.Qd8+ Kg7 27.Bg4 Nxe4+ 28.Kf3 Nd2+ 29.Ke2+-

13.Qd2

White plans to evacuate his king to the queenside. In general, entering positions with castling on opposite sides of the

board, is the sharpest and most principled way of fighting for an advantage in the opening.

Still, White has here a rather timid move (Having in mind that it would not require too much time to be studied...) and it would be suitable for the players who would be reluctant to take too many chances – 13.g3!?N



13...Ne5

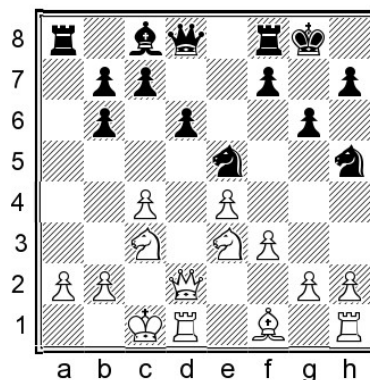
Black can try here a manoeuvre with his knight: 13...Ng7 14.Bd3!? f5 (14...Ne5, Lagno – Ovod, Chita 2015, 15.0-0 f5 16.exf5 Nxd3 17.Qxd3 Nxf5 18.Rfe1±) 15.exf5 Bxf5 (15...Nxf5 16.Bxf5 Bxf5 17.0-0²) 16.Nxf5 Nxf5 17.0-0-0!? (17.0-0 Qf6 18.Nb5 Qg7 19.Be4 Kh8 20.b3² Vega Gutierrez – Yildiz, Mamaia 2016) 17...Ne5 (17...Nb4 18.Bb1!? Qd7 19.Rhe1 Qg7 20.a3 Nc6 21.Re4±) 18.Bc2 Kh8 19.b3 Qf6 20.Kb1²

13...Ra5, Bakalchuk – Gurbanov, Israel 2018. This is an original development of Black's rook and from here it might go to the e-file, or to the kingside. Still, he would need some help from the opponent to make his rook useful... 14.g3 Re8 (14...Ng7 15.Bg2 f5 16.f4 fxe4 17.0-0±)

15.f4 f5 (15...g5 16.Be2 gxf4 17.Ned5±; 15...Nf6 16.Bg2 Ng4 17.Nxg4 Bxg4 18.0-0±) 16.exf5 Nxf4 (16...Rxf5 17.Be2±) 17.0-0±

13...Be6 14.g3!? Re8 (14...Qf6 15.Bg2 Ne5 16.Qe2 Rae8 17.0-0± Draskovic – Nikcevic, Podgorica 2014) 15.f4 f5 (15...Na5 16.Rd1 Nf6 17.b3 Nc6 18.Bg2±) 16.exf5 gxf5 (16...Bxf5 17.Bg2±) 17.Be2 (17.0-0-0!?) 17...Nf6 18.0-0±

14.0-0-0



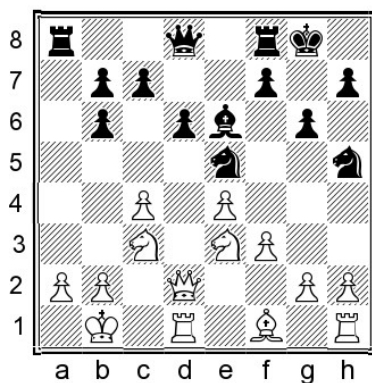
14...Be6

14...Ng7 15.f4 (White can delay this pawn-advance for a move: 15.Kb1!?) 15...Nd7 (15...Ng4 16.Kb1 Nxe3 17.Qxe3 Be6 18.Bd3 f5 19.exf5 Bxf5 20.Bxf5 Nxf5 21.Qf3± White's king is safer and he has many more possibilities to begin active actions.) 16.Bd3 Nc5 17.Bc2 Bd7 (17...Be6?! 18.f5±) 18.e5 (It was in the spirit of the position for White to have continued with his positional pressing: 18.h4!? Nh5 19.g4 Nxf4 20.Rdf1 Nfe6 21.Ned5 f6 22.Qh6 Rf7 23.h5 g5 24.b4 Na6 25.e5+-) 18...Ne8?! (18...dxe5 19.fxe5 Bc6 20.Ned5±) 19.h4 Bc6 (19...dxe5 20.fxe5 c6 21.e6 fxe6 22.h5+-) 20.h5+- Tomazini – Schwabeneder, Austria 2017.

the a8-square (19...Rc5 20.b3 Ra5 21.h3±). 20.g3 Qf6 21.Ncd5 Qd8 22.b3²

15.Kb1

Following 15.g4, Sindarov – Abdulla, Al-Ain 2015, the fight would become much more complicated: 15...Nf4 (15...Nf6!? 16.Be2 b5 17.cxb5 Bxa2 18.Kc2²) 16.h4 b5!? 17.Qh2 (17.Nc2 g5 18.hxg5 Qxg5 19.Rh5 Nfd3+ 20.Bxd3 Nxd3+ 21.Kb1 Qxd2 22.Rxd2 bxc4 23.Rdh2 Kg7 24.Rxh7+ Kf6²) 17...b4 18.Nb1 Qf6 19.g5 Qg7 20.Qxf4 f6© After the exchange on g5 and the capture Rxa2, White would have troubling weaknesses on f3 and b2, as well as a vulnerable king.



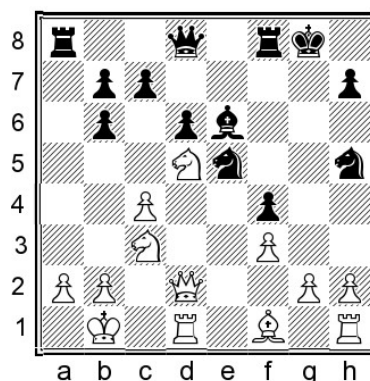
15...f5

15...c6 16.g4 (It would not be reasonable for White here to try to gobble material: 16.Qxd6?! Qg5∞) 16...Nf4 17.h4 Qf6 (17...b5 18.Nc2±) 18.Nf5²

15...Ra5 16.Be2 Nf4 (16...Qa8, R.Volkov – Nasyrova, St Petersburg 2017, 17.Ned5 c6 18.Ne7+ Kh8 19.f4 Nxc4 20.Bxc4 Bxc4 21.Qd4+ Ng7 22.Qxc4 Qe8 23.Nxg6+ fxg6 24.g3±) 17.Rhf1 h5 18.Rf2 Nxe2 19.Qxe2² It would not be easy for Black to begin active actions here, while White will gradually increase his pressure: 19...Qh4. Black is trying to bring his other rook to

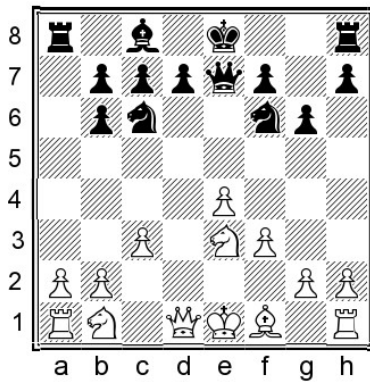
16.exf5 gxf5 17.Ned5 f4

17...c6?! Brandenburg – L'Ami, Dieren 2007, 18.Nxb6 Qxb6 19.Qxd6 Bxc4 20.Bxc4+ Nxc4 21.Qe6+ Kh8 22.Qxc4±



18.g3!? This is the right moment for White to play this, since he does not have many other useful moves... **18...Nxf3** **19.Qg2 Ne5** (19...fxg3 20.hxg3 Bg4?! 21.Be2±; 20...Nf6 21.Bd3 Ng5 22.Nxf6+ Qxf6 23.Qxb7²) **20.gxf4+ Ng6** **21.Bd3 Nhx4** **22.Nxf4 Rxf4** **23.Bxg6 Rg4** **24.Bxh7+ Kxh7** **25.Qxb7²** This is not a simple position. Still, White's game is easier and his king is relatively safe. His further plans include the activation of his king's rook, for example: 25...Ra5 26.Rhg1², while after 25...Rxc4 (with the idea for Black at least for a while to restrict White's queen with the move d6-d5) – 26.Rde1 Bf5+ 27.Ka1 Ra5 28.Qf3±

B2b) 10...Qe7



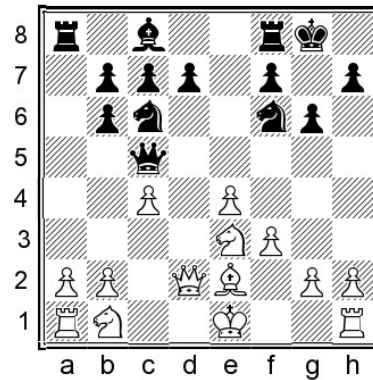
11.Be2!?

White's usual move here is – 11.c4. Still, Black's main idea in this line is to give a check with his bishop on the b4-square and to follow that with the exchange of the queens, so it would be reasonable for White to wait until the opponent has castled and to play only after that c3-c4. In this situation Black's king would be too far away from his basic weaknesses – the pawns on the queenside and particularly the pawn on c7. He will have to protect it with a piece, while White's plan to advance his kingside pawns would become much more effective.

11...0-0

The move 11...Qc5 is Black's only alternative in this situation, which would lead to original positions and would justify his early queen-sortie to the a3-f8 diagonal and there might follow: 11...Qc5 12.Qd2 0-0 (Black can hardly afford to play in this situation the rather abstract move 12...h5 – 13.Na3 Qe7 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Ne5 16.d6 Qxd6 17.Qxd6 cxd6 18.Nb5+- Duda – Degraeve, Chartres 2017; it would be more resilient for him to choose 13...0-0 14.Nb5 Na7 15.Nd4±,

but even then it would be evident that the last changes in the position would be definitely in favour of White.) 13.c4

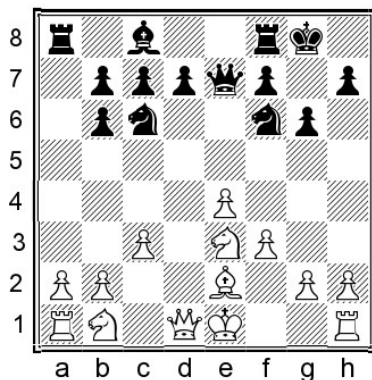


and here, Black is faced with a choice:

13...Nb4. He intends to trade a couple of pieces, including the queens. 14.Nc3 Qxe3, Mai – Dahl, Douglas 2017, 15.Qxe3 Nc2+ 16.Kd2 Nxe3 17.Kxe3 d6 18.Nb5 Ne8. Black is forced to defend and not in the most comfortable fashion. 19.g4 f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.h3! (White maintains the pressure. In general, the exchange on g4 is not in favour of Black and the situation on the kingside is volatile, which might be also an additional problem for him.) 21...c6 (The quite approach by Black would not be effective here – 21...Bd7 22.a3 Nf6 23.Bd3 Rae8+ 24.Kd2 Bxb5 25.cxb5±) 22.Nc3! (This is the best square for White's knight. From here it protects the pawn on a2 and controls the d5-square.) 22...Be6 (22...Ra5 23.f4±) 23.Rad1 Rd8 24.Na4!? (It is also possible for him to play now 24.Bd3² White has some other ideas up his sleeve – to transfer the king to the g3-square, with the idea to free the e-file for his rook. Then has the pawn-advance g4-g5, particularly if he manages to follow that with f3-f4 and then his structural advantage would become even more obvious. It would be very difficult for Black to coordinate his pieces and it would all depend on whether he would

manage to advance d6-d5, without additional positional concessions.)
 24...Ra8 (24...b5 25.Nc5 Bc8 26.cxb5²)
 25.b3 Ra5 (After 25...f4+ 26.Kf2 Ra5
 27.Rd4! b5 28.cxb5 cxb5 29.Nc3±, Black
 would have to worry also about his pawn
 on f4.) 26.Rd4! (White is parrying the
 threat 26...b5 27.cxb5 cxb5 28.Nc3 b4)
 26...h6 27.Ra1² and Black will have
 problems with the protection of his pawn
 on b6.

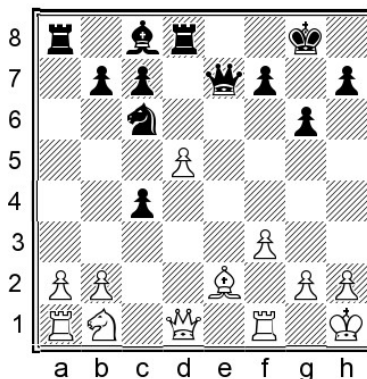
13...Nd4 14.Bd1 b5 (If Black slows
 down here, he will have difficulties to
 organise counterplay later – 14...c6
 15.Nc3 Re8 16.Rc1±) 15.b4 Qe5 16.Nc3 c5
 17.Rc1 (17.Rb1!?) 17...cxb4 (17...b6,
 Sevian – Bacallao Alonso, Varadero 2016,
 18.cxb5!? d5 19.bxc5 Rd8 20.0-0 dxe4
 21.Qf2±, or 18...cxb4 19.Ncd5 Nxd5
 20.Nxd5 Nxb5 21.Qb4±) 18.Ncd5 Nxd5
 19.Nxd5 d6 20.0-0 Ne6?! 21.cxb5 Qd4+,
 Xiong – Gomez Garrido, Varadero 2016,
 22.Rf2+–



12.c4

There is an interesting computer line
 after 12.0-0, but White must find plenty of
 precise moves and his edge would be just
 minimal at its end. There might follow:
 12...d5 (Black's alternatives are weaker:
 12...Re8 13.Rf2 Qc5 14.Qd2 d6 15.Na3
 Be6 16.Nb5 Re7, Kravtsov – Nikitenko,
 Minsk 2017, 17.c4±; 12...Qc5 13.Qd2 d6

14.Kh1², or 13...Rd8 14.c4 b5 15.Nc3 bxc4
 16.Bxc4²; 12...Rd8 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.exd5
 Qc5+ 15.Rf2 Ne7 16.c4 b5 17.Nc3 d6
 18.Qd2±, or 17...bxc4 18.Ne4 Qe3 19.d6±)
 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.exd5 Rd8 15.c4 b5
 16.Kh1 bxc4



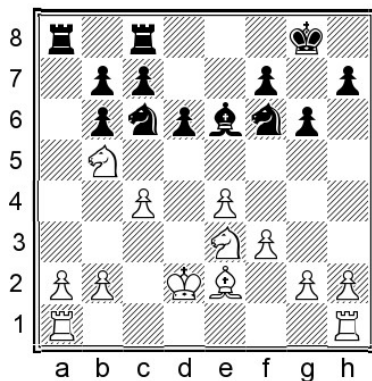
17.Nc3 (White would not achieve much
 after 17.Bxc4?! Daulyte – Stefanova,
 Belgrade 2013, 17...Qb4 18.Nd2 Na5
 19.b3 Nxc4 20.bxc4 Bf5©) 17...b5
 18.Nxb5 Ne5 19.Re1 c6 20.d6 Qf6 21.Nc7
 Rb8 22.Bf1² Nd3 23.Bxd3 cxd3 24.Qxd3
 Bf5 25.Qa3 Rxb2 26.Rad1 Bd7 27.Qe3
 Rdb8 28.Na6 Re8 29.Qxe8+ Bxe8
 30.Rxe8+ Kg7 31.d7 Qg5 32.Rg8+ Kh6
 33.Rg1 Rd2 34.Nb8 c5 35.a4 c4 36.Rc8
 Qh4 37.a5 Rd5 38.h3 Rd3 39.Rc1 Qg5
 40.R8xc4 Rd2 41.Rg1 Qxa5 42.Nc6 Qc7
 43.Rh4+ Kg7 44.d8Q Rxd8 45.Nxd8 Qxd8
 46.Ra4 g5! =

It would be insufficient for White to opt
 here for 12.Nd5, because after 12...Nxd5
 13.exd5 Re8! 14.dxc6 dxc6 (Black is
 planning Bf5 and Rad8.), it would be
 already him who must play very carefully
 – 15.Rf1 Ra5 16.Rf2 (or 16.c4 Rh5 17.Nc3
 Rxh2 18.Qd4 Rg2 19.Rf2=) 16...Rd5
 17.Qc1 Re5 18.Qd1=

12...Qb4+

About 12...Qc5 13.Qd2 – see 11...Qc5
12.Qd2 0-0.

**13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Kxd2 d6 15.Nc3
Be6 16.Nb5 Rfc8**



17.a3

It is also possible for White to choose 17.Nd5!? Ne8 18.Rhd1² He has many more resources to improve his position. His minor pieces are nearly perfectly placed and he must only decide how to place his king and rooks. Meanwhile, he must be on the alert about his opponent's possible counterplay. After the situation is stabilised, White can begin active operations on the kingside.

17...Na7

17...Ne7 18.Rad1²

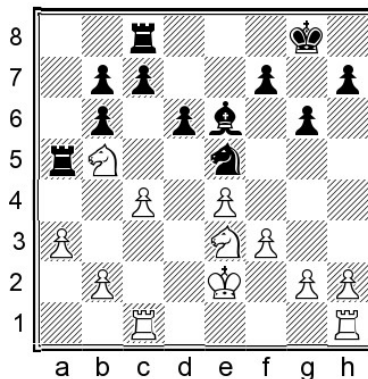
18.Nc3 Nc6 19.Rad1

In principle, if White wishes to preserve his bishop, he can play 19.Kd3², followed by Rad1, Kc2 etc.

19...Nd4 20.Ke1 Nxe2

20...c5 21.Kf2 Kg7 22.Rd2²

21.Kxe2 Nd7 22.Nb5 Ne5 23.Rc1 Ra5



24.b4!?

It would be more reliable for White to choose here 24.b3 Kf8 25.a4², since he must try to increase his advantage somehow.

24...Ra4 (Black loses after 24...Bxc4+?
25.Nxc4 Rxb5 26.Nxd6+-) **25.f4 Ng4
26.Nd5 Bxd5 27.cxd5 Nf6 28.Rc4!±**

Part 2

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Bc5

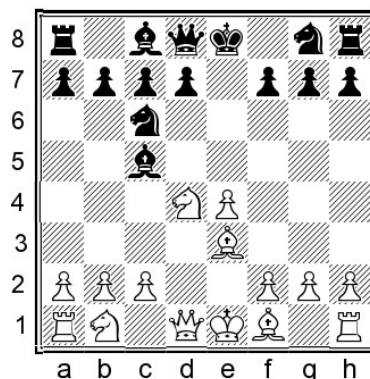
In the second part of our book we analyse variations which arise after one of the most popular tries for Black on move 4 – 4...Bc5. This developing move seems quite natural and reasonable.

It is worth mentioning that 4...Bc5 is practically Black's main line, since in the Database it is encountered (approximately 25%) more often overall than its main alternative – 4...Nf6. But if we consider only games played in the third decade of the 21st century and in particular contemporary grandmaster games, this ratio changes dramatically in favour of the move with Black's knight. There have been no striking opening discoveries for a long time in either of these lines but the explanation is quite simple: Black's game is much simpler after the bishop move and he can play just following common sense, without thorough knowledge of complicated concrete variations. This approach cannot equalise for Black if White plays accurately, but White's advantage will be only minimal. In stark contrast, the move 4...Nf6 requires an entirely different approach from Black. The top-players are ready for this, as a rule (in fact it is they who determine the fashion...), but less experienced players (even at a solid master level...) are often not so well prepared.

We believe that this should be enough general discussion about the lines with

4...Nf6 and 4...Bc5 in contemporary tournament practice. It is high time now that we discussed some concrete details – specifically, how White should respond to Black's bishop move.

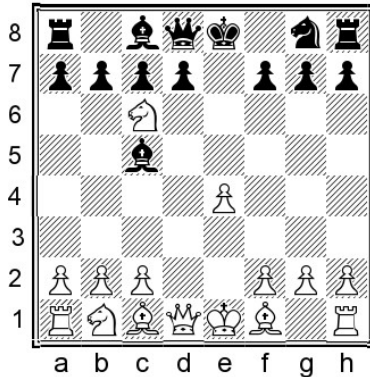
At the dawn of the development of opening theory White's main line was considered to be 5.Be3,



as Kasparov himself played, when the Scotch Game reappeared at the top level at the beginning of the 1990s. Subsequently however, after thorough analyses, it soon became evident that after 5...Qf6 6.c3 Nge7 (this was considered to be Black's main line even as far back as the 19th century...), Black's defensive fortress is very difficult for White to breach. White has tried, and is still trying, to obtain at least a small edge, mainly with the moves 7.Bc4 and 7.g3 (White's latest fashionable try here is the move – 7.Bb5), but in general, the most that he can rely on is the effect of surprise; players with Black can solve their opening problems quite successfully as long as they are well prepared theoretically.

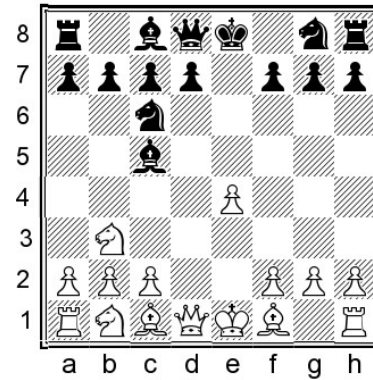
Instead of 5.Be3, it became fashionable (again following the example of Kasparov,

but several years later...) for White to try the move 5.Nxc6,



which had been played many, many years ago. Damaging Black's pawn-structure on the queenside (as we have seen and will still see...) is one of the basic ideas for White in the Scotch Game. However, in this line the active placement of Black's dark-squared bishop helps him to compensate effectively for the defects of his pawn-structure. The line 5...Qf6 6.Qd2 was considered to be White's basic weapon, but Black soon found quite reliable recipes and now, in the 21st century, only the line 5...Qf6 6.Qf3 is considered critical. As a rule, this leads to very interesting non-standard positions, in which no final evaluation has appeared yet. Black has good chances of equalising and in any case the exchange of the queens on move 6 is not really consistent with the general concept of this book.

We come now to the move 5.Nb3,



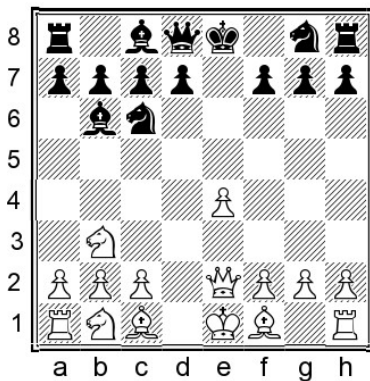
which is our recommendation for White. The history of this variation dates back to the times of Blackburn and Zuckertort, but its second wave of popularity came later than the alternatives, described above. Ivanchuk and Rublevsky played this move several times at the beginning of the 21st century and then, in the year 2009, Carlsen tried it four times (albeit in blitz games...) and... it became fashionable! We, the authors, remain a bit sceptical towards such fashion trends, prompted by the chess elite, but here, bearing in mind that this knight move has remained the focus of attention for more than ten years now, we have to admit that it seems to be the most promising continuation for White nowadays.

The idea is in principle quite simple. White retreats his knight with tempo and plans to develop his queenside quickly and castle on that wing. Admittedly the knight is not as active on b3 as on d4, but White is not worried about that at the moment.

In chapter six we deal with some sidelines, connected with the slightly illogical retreat of Black's bishop to the e7-square, either immediately, or (more frequently) after the preliminary check 5...Bb4+ 6.c3. The bishop is rather passive

on e7 and White can obtain a comfortable positional advantage with precise play. He will have to give up the idea of castling queenside, due to several circumstances, but this is not anything for him to worry about.

In the following chapters we analyse Black's main line, 5...Bb6. There is an important moment here. White usually replies with 6.Nc3 but, in this particular case, after 6...Nf6 7.Qe2 0-0!, he fails to achieve much. Some complicated forced lines can arise now, but White will probably fail to maintain an edge. Therefore our recommendation is to begin with the more flexible move 6.Qe2!?



This has already been played at the top level (for example in the blitz games of Carlsen, which we have already mentioned...), but still not very frequently. In general White's plan remains the same (Nc3, Be3, 0-0-0), but he wishes to avoid the above-mentioned order of moves, since now 6...Nf6 7.e5 seems too risky for Black under the circumstances.

In chapter seven we analyse some variations in which Black does not continue his development with natural moves like 6...d6, or 6...Nge7, but instead tries to emphasise the drawback of his opponent's move order. As a rule, these tricks will not achieve anything positive

for Black, but there still remain some nuances, in particular with the inclusion of the moves ...a5 and a4, so they deserve thorough attention.

Our chapter eight is devoted to variations in which Black develops his knight to the e7-square. His plan is usually connected with the pawn-advance f7-f5, after castling kingside. This idea might seem very powerful at first sight, but if we pay close attention to some details it becomes evident that Black's positional threat of f5-f4 is hardly any threat at all... White's pieces are much more harmoniously deployed and Black will need to struggle long and hard for equality.

In chapter nine we analyse variations in which, after 6...d6 7.Be3, Black exchanges the bishops on the e3-square, either immediately or a bit later. This usually leads to a rather typical situation with opposite sides castling. It is worth mentioning, however, that in comparison with similar developments in the Sicilian Defence or the King's Indian Defence, both sides will have difficulty in preparing an offensive, because of details in the deployment of their pieces. Nevertheless, White's prospects in the forthcoming positional battle are preferable.

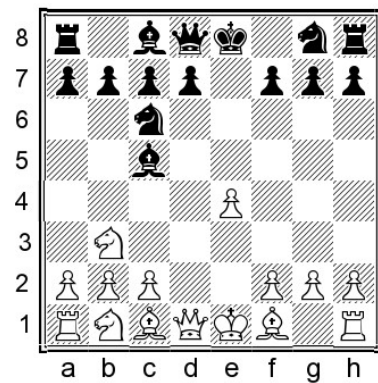
Finally, in chapter ten, we deal with the remaining variations, in which Black is in no hurry to trade the bishops and leaves this to White. White in turn is reluctant in principle to exchange on b6 too early, because Black would be happy to have his pawns doubled towards the centre and the opening of the a-file might provide him with chances of organising

counterplay. In general, play would unfold in somewhat similar fashion to the previous chapter, with the exception of the variations in which Black also castles queenside. In positions of this type, pawn-offensives are practically irrelevant, but White's space advantage and his more harmoniously developed pieces provide him with a slight edge.

In conclusion, we do not assert that we have refuted the system with the move 4...Bc5 at all. It still remains quite reliable. However, we believe that even with best play Black can do no more than eventually "almost" equalise. White can even afford some experimentation and Black must react very accurately to ensure a draw. Having in mind the current situation of the theory in this line, we consider this to be an achievement for White.

Chapter 6

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3



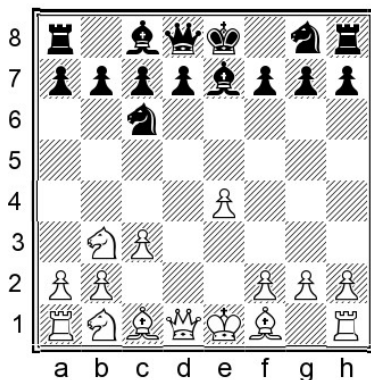
5...Bb4+

5...Be7. After this strange manoeuvre Black reaches positions, which are similar to these we have analysed in Chapter 1, variation C, but with two important differences: 1) White does not have the resource Nxc6 (Black does not have – Nc6xd4), 2) White's knight is on b3 and not in the centre on the d4-square. Meanwhile, all this cannot change the fact that White has more space and a slight edge. 6.Nc3 Nf6 6...d6 7.Be2 Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 – see 6...Nf6) 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 d6 9.Be3 Re8 10.f4 (About 10.f3 Be6 – see Chapter 1, variation C, 4...Be7 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 Bd7 9.Nb3 Re8 10.f3 Be6.) 10...Bf8 11.Bf3 Be6 (11...a5 12.a3 a4 13.Nd4²; 11...Bd7 12.Re1²; 12.Bf2 a5 13.a4 Nb4 14.Re1 Be6 15.Nd4² Barbosa – Mekhitarian, Santos 2011) 12.Nd4! (12.Qe2 a5 13.Rad1 a4?! 14.Nc5±) 12...Bc4 (12...Nxd4 13.Bxd4 c6 14.Qd2 b5 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 Nd5 17.Ne4²) 13.Re1² d5?! 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.e5 Nd7 16.b3 Ba6, Troianescu – Dittmann, Erfurt 1955, 17.Qd2± (17.Na4!?, with the idea c4).

6.c3

It is not so logical for White to play here 6.Nc3 – his knight is pinned and Black obtains practically by force counterplay, which is sufficient to maintain the balance. 6...Nf6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0 Re8 9.Bg5 Bxc3 10.bxc3 h6 11.Bh4 g5. White's queenside pawn-structure has been compromised and now he loses his central pawn. 12.Bg3, Negi – Melkumyan, Germany 2012 (Following 12.f4 gxh4 13.e5, the simplest for Black would be to give back his extra piece and to seize the initiative by playing 13...d6 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.Qh5 h3.) 12...Nxe4! This principled move is practically forced; otherwise, it would be difficult to understand why Black has weakened his king. 13.f4 (There arises a very complicated and unclear position after 13.Qh5 d6 14.Qxh6 Bf5 15.f4 Nxc3÷, or 14.f4 Bf5 15.Qxh6 Nxc3 16.hxc3 Re6 17.Qh5 Qf6÷) 13...Nxc3 14.hxc3 Qf6 15.Qh5 Rf8 16.Rae1 d6 17.Nd2 Qg7 18.Nc4 (18.Ne4 d5 19.Nf2 Bd7÷) 18...Bd7 19.Ne3 Rae8 20.Kf2 Ne7÷ White has some compensation for the pawn indeed, but it is insufficient, since he can hardly organise an attack against the enemy king, moreover that Black's pieces are very well placed.

6...Be7



7.f4

After 7.f4, Black has great chances of equalising. 7...Bg5!? The trade of the dark squared bishops is in favour of Black. 8.Bg3 d6 9.Bd3 (Following 9.f4 Bh4 10.Qf3 Bxg3+ 11.Qxg3 Qf6 12.N1d2 Nge7, Black has quite sufficient space to deploy comfortably his pieces, while in the variation 9.Bb5 h5 10.h4 Bh6 11.0-0 Nge7 12.N1d2 a6 13.Be2 his bishop would remain active, while its white counterpart would be completely isolated from the actions.) 9...h5!= This resource promises Black an excellent game. 10.h3 h4 11.Bh2 Qf6 12.Nd4 (After 12.0-0 Bf4 13.Bxf4 Qxf4, Black would be completely dominant on the dark squares on the kingside.) 12...Nge7 13.0-0 Bf4 14.Bxf4 Qxf4÷ Arzumanian – Romanishin, Kharkov 2007. In this complicated position, White will have a problem to develop his knight on b1 to a good square.

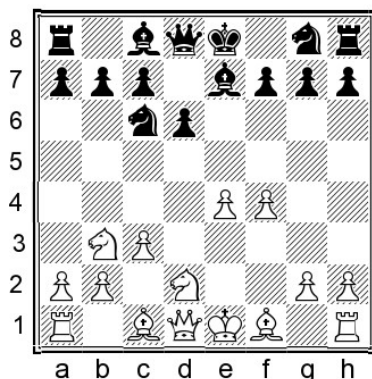
7...d6

7...f5? After this move Black will not obtain compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 8.exf5 Nf6 9.Bd3 d5 10.Be3 (It is also good for White to play here 10.0-0!?, but he wishes to preserve the possibility

to evacuate his monarch to the queenside.) 10...0-0 11.N1d2 Qe8 (Following 11...Ne8 12.Qh5 Rf6 13.0-0-0±, White's attack against the enemy king will be faster.) 12.Qf3± Swinkels – Van Gool, Amsterdam 2006.

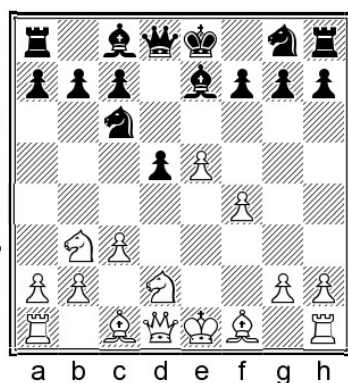
7...Nf6 8.Bd3 0-0 (About 8...d5 9.e5 Ne4 10.0-0 0-0 11.N1d2 – see 8...0-0) 9.0-0 d5 (9...d6 10.N1d2 – see variation **B**.) 10.e5 Ne8 (10...Ne4 11.N1d2, now in the variation 11...Bf5 12.Nxe4 dxe4 13.Bc2 Qxd1 14.Rxd1², Black will have unavoidably problems with the protection of the pawn on e4, while after 11...f5 12.Nxe4 fxe4 13.Bb5², White will have good chances of blocking the dark squares c5 and d4.) 11.N1d2 f6 (11...g6. Black wishes to activate his knight on e8, by transferring it to f5. 12.Nf3 Ng7 13.Be3 Bf5 14.Bxf5 Nxf5 15.Qe2 a5 16.Rad1 a4 17.Nbd4 Ncxd4 18.Nxd4² White has won the fight for the central squares and this provides him with a comfortable game.) 12.Nf3 fxe5 13.fxe5 Bg4, Cangioti – Pachman, Reggio Emilia 1975. The best way for White to emphasize the defects of the placement of the enemy knight on e8 is to play the calm move 14.Be2² – Black can capture the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps his position, presenting the opponent with the two-bishop advantage, but this would not diminish White's edge.

8.N1d2



We will analyse now: **A) 8...Nh6** and **B) 8...Nf6**.

8...d5. Black's decision to inflict a strike at the enemy centre is quite reasonable. 9.e5



9...a5 10.a4²

9...Bf5 10.Nf3 Nh6 11.Bd3 0-0 12.0-0 Qd7 (White's pawn on e5 cramps the enemy position and if Black tries to get rid of it with 12...f6 13.Bxf5 Nxf5 14.g4! Nh6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.h3±, then he would weaken the position of his king.) 13.Be3 Rad8 14.h3 f6, Lefebvre – Romanishin, Vlissingen 2018, 15.Nc5!? Bxc5 (15...Qc8 16.Qe2 fxe5 17.fxe5 Bxd3 18.Nxd3 Nf5 19.Bf2²) 16.Bxc5 Rfe8 (16...fxe5 17.Bb5!±) 17.exf6 gxf6 18.Nh4±

9...d4 10.Nf3 dxc3 11.Qxd8+ Nxd8 12.bxc3 Nh6 (Black might try to consolidate his dominance over the f5-square with the move 12...h5, but after 13.Bd3 Nh6 14.Nfd4², the only way for him to get rid of the enemy control over

that square would be to continue with 14...c5 15.Nb5 0-0 16.Nc7 Rb8 17.Nd5 Nc6 18.Nxe7+ Nxe7 19.Nxc5 Rd8 20.Bb1², but White would remain with an extra pawn after all.) 13.Bd3 (White has a good alternative here – 13.Bb5+ c6 14.Bd3 0-0 15.0-0², with a very insidious trap. If Black tries to trade the light-squared bishops, which seems favourable for him, then he would be in a serious trouble after: 15...Bf5? 16.Bxf5 Nxf5 17.g4 Nh6 18.f5± Black's knight would remain isolated from the actions for a long time, while after 18...Nxc4 19.h3 Nh6 20.f6+–, he would lose a piece.) 13...0-0, Muzychuk – Koneru, Sochi 2015, 14.Kf2 Ng4+ (Following 14...f6 15.Re1 fxe5 16.Nxe5 Bd6 17.Kg1², or 14...a5 15.a4 Ng4+ 16.Kg3 h5 17.Rd1², White's powerful centralisation would provide him with better prospects.) 15.Ke2!? f6 (15...h5?! 16.h3 Nh6 17.g4! hxg4 18.hxg4 Nxc4 19.Bh7+ Kh8 20.Be3± – The queens have been exchanged indeed, but Black would still have problems to defend his king.) 16.h3 Nh6 17.exf6 Bxf6 18.Ba3 Re8+ 19.Kf2² White's pieces are obviously much better coordinated.

A) 8...Nh6

Black plans to advance quickly f7-f5 after castling.

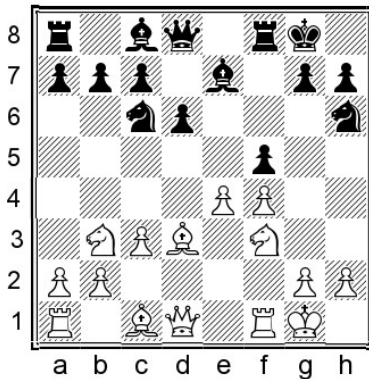
9.Nf3

About 9.Bd3 0-0 10.0-0 f5 11.Nf3 – see 9.Nf3.

9.Bc4 0-0 (It is much better for Black to choose here 9...Bh4+ 10.g3 0-0 11.0-0², although even then White's slight space advantage would promise him a

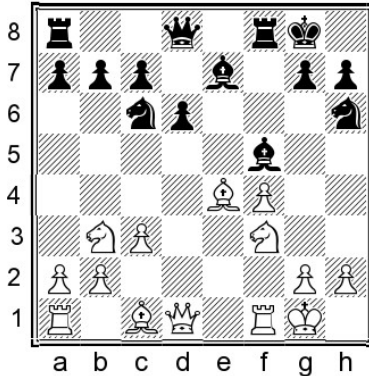
comfortable game.) 10.0-0 Be6 11.Bxe6 fxe6, Karpatchev – Romanishin, Bad Woerishofen 2015, 12.Qe2 d5 13.g3 a5 14.a4 Qd7 15.Nf3² Black can hardly organise any active actions.

9...0-0 10.Bd3 f5 11.0-0



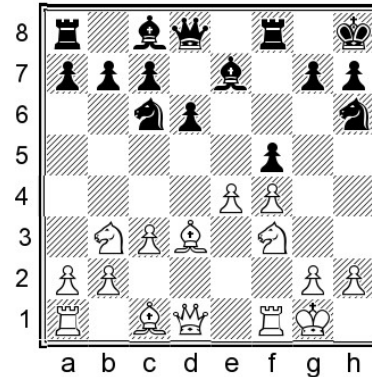
11...Kh8

11...fxe4 12.Bxe4 Bf5



13.Qd5+ Kh8 14.Bd2 a5 15.Bxf5 Nxf5, Valsecchi – Romanishin, Forni di Sopra 2014. Here, it is essential for White to fix the queenside pawn-structure with the line: 16.a4 Qc8 (16...Qd7? 17.Nc5 Qc8 18.Ne6 Rf6 19.Rae1+–) 17.Rae1² White maintains a stable advantage thanks to his dominance over the only open file and the possibility to advance at an opportune moment his pawn-majority on the kingside.

13.Bd5+ Kh8 14.h3 (14.Nbd4?! Nxd4 15.Nxd4 c6 16.Bf3 d5= Bartel – Romanishin, Warsaw 2014. White must play very carefully now; otherwise, he might end up in an inferior position without even noticing...) 14...Qd7 15.Rf2² White is ready to play g2-g4, cramping his opponent not only in the centre, but also on the kingside.



12.Bd2

12.Re1 fxe4 13.Bxe4 Bf5 14.Bxf5 Nxf5 15.Qd3²

12.h3 fxe4 13.Bxe4 Nf5 14.Kh2 Bh4 15.Nxh4 Qxh4 16.Qd3 Nfe7 17.Bd2 Bf5 18.Rae1 Bxe4 19.Rxe4 Qf6 20.Rfe1 Ng8 21.Qb5 Rab8, Vallejo Pons – Bruzon Batista, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011. The dominance over the only open file provides White with a stable advantage after 22.Re6!? a6 23.Qd3 Qf5 24.Qxf5 Rxf5 25.c4 Rbf8 26.g3² – Black's position is cramped.

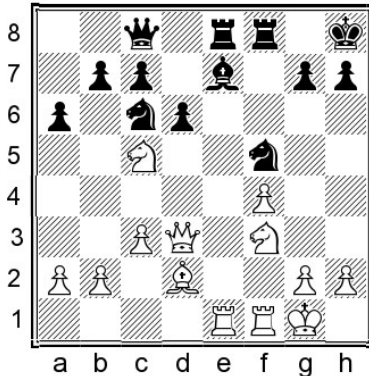
12.Be3!? White is not afraid of the enemy knight-sortie Ng4. 12...fxe4 (After 12...Ng4 13.Bd2, White wins an important tempo, since Black's knight will have to go back to h6 in order to control the f5-square.) 13.Bxe4 Bf5 (13...Ng4 14.Bd2 Nf6 15.Bd3² Black's camp is cramped and lacks space.) 14.Bxf5 Nxf5 (14...Rxf5

15.Nbd4±) 15.Bf2² There has arisen a standard position with a slight space advantage for White. He will seize unavoidably the e-file and will advance after that his kingside pawns.

12...fxe4 13.Bxe4 Bf5 14.Qc2 Qd7 15.Rae1 Rae8 16.Bxf5 Nxf5 17.Qd3

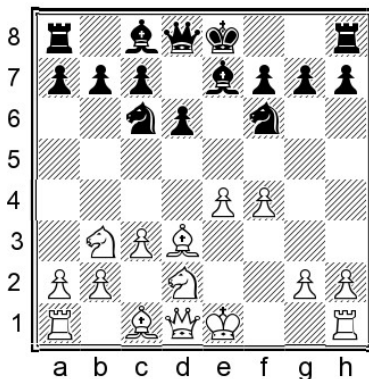
This move is played with the idea to continue with Nc5.

17...a6 18.Nc5 Qc8



19.Ne4! (In the game Salgado Lopez – McShane, Riyadh 2017, there followed 19.Ne6 Ne5! 20.fxe5 Qxe6=, with complete equality.) **19...Qd7 20.c4 Nh4 21.Bc3²** White dominates in the centre and can begin to seize additional space on both sides of the board.

B) 8...Nf6 9.Bd3

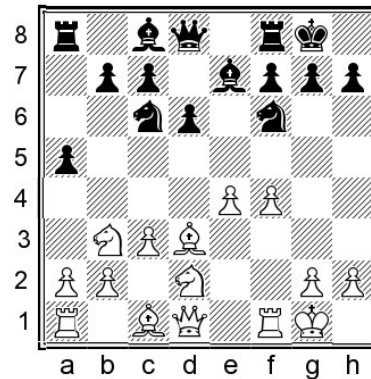


9...0-0

9...h5 10.0-0 h4 11.h3!? He fixes the enemy weakness. (11.Nf3 h3 12.g3 Ng4, Zacarias – Sosa, Asuncion 2015, 13.Nfd4 Nxd4 14.cxd4²) 11...Nh5 12.Nf3 Ng3 13.Re1 0-0 14.Be3 Bd7 15.Nbd2± On his next move White will play Nf1, neutralising his opponent's most active piece – the knight on g3.

10.0-0 Re8

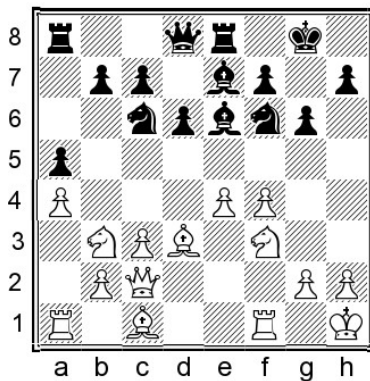
10...a5



11.Qc2!? Nd7 (White is not afraid of the further advance of the enemy pawn, because in the variation 11...a4 12.Nd4 Nxd4 13.cxd4 c6 14.Kh1 h6 15.f5f, he seizes additional space, leads in development and obtains excellent attacking prospects.) 12.a4 g6 13.Nf3 Bf6 14.Be3 b6 (14...Bg7 15.Rad1 Qe7 16.Rfe1 b6 17.Bf2 – see 14...b6) 15.Rad1 Qe7 16.Rfe1 Bg7 17.Bf2 Bb7 18.Bc4 Rae8, Muzychuk – Ozturk, Ankara 2012. White is perfectly prepared to inflict a strike in the centre: 19.e5! dxe5 20.Bh4 Bf6 21.Bxf6 Nxf6 22.fxe5 Nh5 23.e6±

11.a4. He fixes Black's potentially dangerous pawn. 11...g6 (11...Re8 12.Qc2 Be6 13.Nf3 g6 14.Ng5 – see 11...g6;

12...Bd7 13.Nf3², White is threatening to win the pawn on h7 with e4-e5 and plans the following moves Bd2+Rae1.) 12.Qc2 (It also deserves attention here for him to try 12.Nf3!? Re8 13.Qc2 Bf8 14.Bd2 Bg7 15.Rae1², with a clear space advantage, while in the variation 12...d5 13.e5 Ne4 14.Qc2 f5 15.Be3², Black's only good piece – his knight on the e4-outpost, does not compensate the passivity of the rest of his pieces.) 12...Be6 13.Kh1 (It seems again rather dangerous for Black if White plays 13.Nf3!? Re8 14.Ng5 Bd7 15.Bc4 Rf8 16.Re1² He wishes to advance e4-e5, increasing his space advantage and if he manages to push e5-e6, he would have good attacking chances too.) 13...Re8 14.Nf3



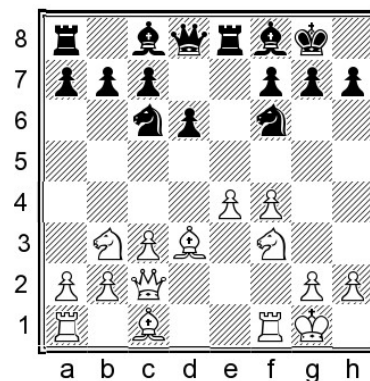
White has more space, so Black's only reasonable way of neutralising this would be: 14...d5 15.e5 Ne4. Now however, White can develop powerful initiative with 16.Nfd4 Nxd4 17.Nxd4 Bc8 (It would be worse for Black to opt here for 17...c6 18.Nxe6 fxe6 19.Be3 Qc7 20.Bxe4 dxe4 21.Qb3![±] Salgado Lopez – Romanishin, Forni di Sopra 2012, his pawn on e4 would not run away, so White wishes at first to squeeze the enemy pieces with the protection of the pawn on e6 and then to seize the d-file.) 18.f5 (It is less precise for White, but still possible, to choose 18.Bxe4 dxe4 19.f5 c5 20.fxc6 hxc6 21.Nb5² – Black will have problems with

the protection of his king.) 18...c5 19.fxc6 hxc6 20.Nf3 (It is also possible for White to try here the more aggressive move 20.e6!? and after 20...Rf8 21.exf7+ Rxf7 22.Rxf7 Kxf7 23.Nf3[±], Black would have a bare king and serious problems with his development, while following 20...f5 21.g4! cxd4 22.gxf5 Bf6 23.Qg2,, White would have a very powerful attack for the sacrificed piece.) 20...c4 (20...Kg7 21.c4 f5 22.cxd5 Qxd5 23.Bc4 Qd8 24.Bf4[±]) 21.Bxe4 dxe4 22.Qxe4 Bf5 23.Qf4[±] Black's two-bishop advantage does not compensate the sacrificed pawn, since the dark squares around his king have been irrevocably weakened.

11.Qc2 Bf8

About 11...g6 12.Nf3 Bf8 13.Bd2, or 11...h6 12.Nf3 Bf8 13.Bd2 – see 11...Bf8.

12.Nf3



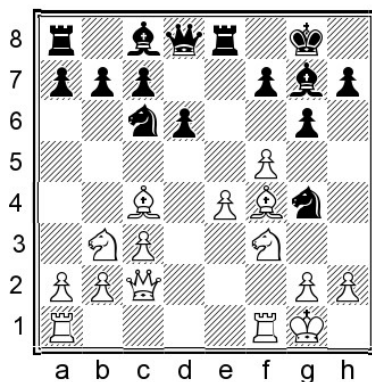
12...g6

12...Qe7 13.Re1 Bg4 14.Qf2 Bxf3 15.Qxf3 g6 16.Bd2 Bg7 17.Re2² Banawa - Ali Marandi, Saint Louis 2019.

After 12...h6, White's game is much simpler. 13.Bd2 Bg4 (Black's alternatives here lead to similar positions: 13...a5 14.a4²; 13...Be6 14.Rae1²; 13...Bd7 14.Rfe1²; 13...a6 14.Rae1 Nd7, Ruiz – Fandino Reyes, Havana 2013, 15.a4²) 14.Rae1 Bxf3?! (It is preferable for Black to choose 14...Nd7 15.h3², although even then he would lack space.) 15.Rxf3 Nd7, Volokitin – Sanikidze, Hagenau 2013. Now, it deserves attention for White to begin a piece-attack by transferring both his rooks to the kingside: 16.Rg3!? Be7 17.Rf1 Bh4 18.Rh3 Be7 19.Rff3 a5 20.Rfg3,

13.Bd2

Black must also consider here the possibility 13.f5 – White gives up the control over the e5-square, but obtains attacking chances. 13...Ng4 (13...Nd7 14.Bf4²; 13...Bd7 14.Bg5²) 14.Bf4!? (Following 14.Bg5 Be7 15.Bf4, Vallejo Pons – Ki.Georgiev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, Black would have an interesting defensive resource – 15...g5!?) 14...Bg7 15.Bc4

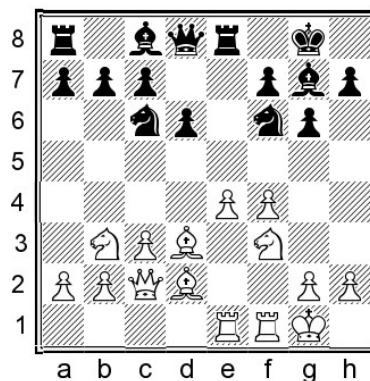


15...Nge5? 16.Bxe5 Nxe5 17.Nxe5 Rxe5 18.fxg6+-

15...Nce5!? 16.Nxe5 dxe5 17.Bd2 Qh4 18.h3 Nf6 19.Be1 Qg5 20.fxg6 hxg6 21.Qf2, threatening Bd2.

15...gxf5 16.exf5 Nce5 17.Nxe5 Nxe5 (17...dxe5 18.Qe2± Santo Roman – Kharitonov, Royan 1988) 18.Bxe5 Bxe5 19.f6 Kh8 20.Nd4 (20.Bxf7?! Rf8 21.Bc4 Rxf6÷ White's knight on b3 is isolated from the actions, so Black should gradually equalise.) 20...Bxf6 21.Bxf7 Rf8 22.Bb3² Black's king is permanently vulnerable, so White maintains long-lasting initiative, but still, Black's bishops are very powerful and he has chances of defending successfully.

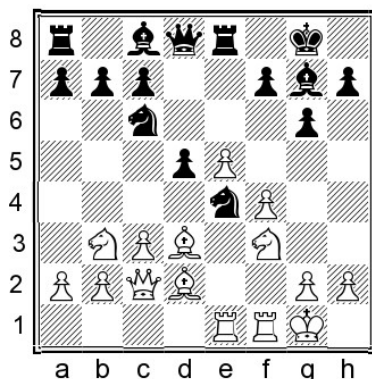
13...Bg7 14.Rae1



14...a6

After 14...Bg4 15.h3 Bxf3 16.Rxf3², Black reduces the number of pieces on the board and this is important for him since he lacks space. White obtains however the two-bishops advantage and this is essential in a position with a mobile centre.

Black can begin active operations in the centre with 14...d5 15.e5 Ne4

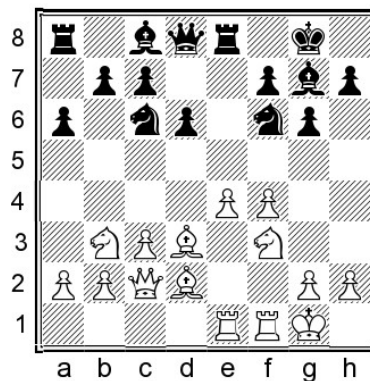


16.Be3!? (White can capture a pawn here: 16.Bxe4 dxe4 17.Qxe4 Bf5 18.Qe3² Volokitin – Babula, Austria 2013, but he wishes to achieve even more...) 16...f5 (Following 16...Bf5 17.Nc5 Nxc5 18.Bxf5 Ne6 19.Bg4±, White has a powerful bishop-pair and a mobile centre.) 17.exf6 (It is also interesting here to try 17.a3!?, with the idea to undermine Black's outpost with the move c3-c4.) 17...Qxf6 18.Ng5 Bf5 (After 18...Nxc5 19.fxc5 Qe7 20.Bb5 Bf5 21.Qd2±, the vulnerability of the dark squares in Black's camp would become a very important factor.) 19.Qd1 Rad8 20.g4 Bc8 21.Bxe4 dxe4 22.Qe2² Black's e4-pawn is weak and his king is nor safe at all.

14...b6 15.Nbd4 Bb7 16.e5 (It might be interesting for White to try here the sharper move 16.Ng5!? Black would lose after the rather naive move 16...h6? 17.Nxc6 Bxc6 18.Nxf7! Kxf7 19.e5 Nd5 20.Bxg6+ Kg8 21.Bxe8 Qxe8 22.c4 Ne7 23.Bc3+-, while in the variation 16...Nxd4 17.cxd4 d5 18.e5 Ne4 19.Bb5 c6 20.Nxe4 dxe4 21.Bc4 Qxd4+ 22.Be3 Qd7 23.Rd1 Qf5 24.h3 Rad8 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.g4 Qd7 27.f5±, he would have great problems with the safety of his king and with the protection of his weak pawns on e4 and f7.) 16...dxe5, Zemlicka – Franzen, Tatranske Zruby 2017, 17.fxe5 Ng4

(17...Nxd4 18.cxd4 Nd5 19.Bc4± White has a powerful centre and exerts pressure against the f7-square.) 18.e6!?

After this move there arises practically by force a very pleasant endgame for White. 18...fxe6 19.Nxe6 Qd6 20.Bxg6 hxg6 21.Qxg6 Rxe6 22.Rxe6 Qc5+ 23.Kh1 Nf2+ 24.Rxf2 Qxf2 25.h3 Nd4 26.cxd4 Bxf3 27.Re7 Qxg2+ 28.Qxg2 Bxg2+ 29.Kxg2 Bxd4 30.Rxc7 Bxb2 31.Be3² There is just a few material left on the board, but Black's king has been cut off, while White's pawn on h3 is a potentially dangerous passed pawn. Black's queenside pawns are still under pressure and cannot advance without material losses.



15.a4

15.Nbd4!? Bd7 (Following 15...Nxd4, White can fortify his centre with 16.cxd4! d5 17.e5 Ne4 18.Bxe4 dxe4 19.Qxe4² and he would end up with an extra pawn and good chances of exploiting the weakened dark squares in the enemy camp. Still, Black's light-squared strategy should not be underestimated.) 16.e5 dxe5 (16...Nd5 17.Nxc6 bxc6 18.c4 Ne7 19.Bc3±) 17.fxe5 Ng4 18.Bg5 Qc8 19.Qb3 Na5 20.Qb4 b6 (20...Nc6? 21.Nxc6 Bxc6 22.e6 f5 23.Qf4. White's next few moves would be: Nd4 and Bxf5!, with a powerful attack.) 21.e6 fxe6 22.Nb3 e5 23.Nxa5 bxa5 24.Qb3+

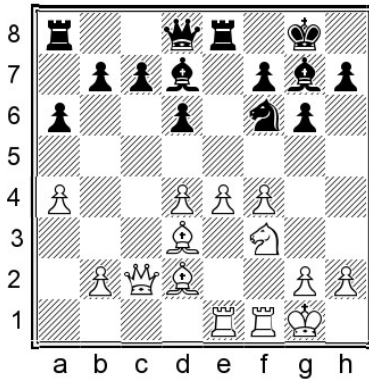
Be6 25.Qc2² Black has too many weaknesses in his camp to worry about.

15...Bd7

15...Bg4 16.h3 Bxf3 17.Rxf3² White has a slight space advantage and a powerful bishop-pair as well.

16.Nbd4 Nxd4 17.cxd4

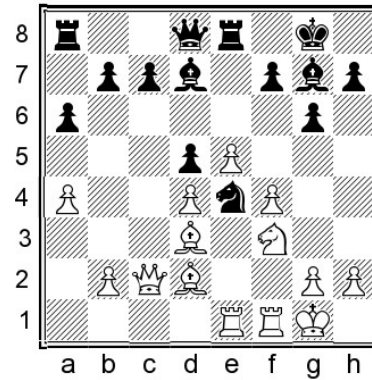
17.Nxd4? c5 18.Nf3 b5. Black has excellent prospects on the queenside.



17...d5

The move 17...c5?! enables White to break in the centre. 18.e5 Nd5 19.Be4 Bc6 20.f5!? (20.dxc5 dxe5 21.Nxe5± The only way for Black to regain the sacrificed pawn would be to give up the most important defender of his own king – the dark-squared bishop.) 20...dxe5 21.dxe5± White is threatening e5-e6, breaking the pawn-shelter of the enemy king, while Black's greedy attempt 21...Bxe5?, would enable White to begin a decisive attack by sacrificing his bishop: 22.fxg6 fxg6 23.Nxe5 Rxe5 24.Bxg6+–

18.e5 Ne4



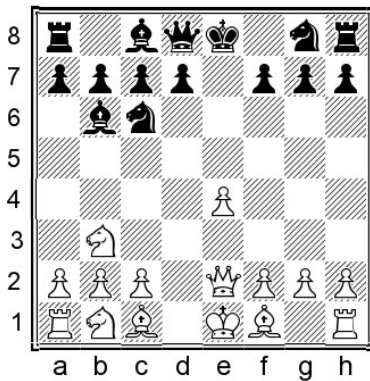
19.Bxe4

After 19.Rxe4 dxe4 20.Bxe4, Martinez – Roa Alonso, Madrid 2014, 20...c6÷, White naturally would have compensation for the exchange, but whether it would be sufficient remains unclear.

19...dxe4 20.Qxe4 Bc6 21.Qe3² White is threatening the tremendously dangerous pawn-advance f4-f5, with a terrific kingside attack, so Black cannot capture the pawn on a4.

Chapter 7

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3 Bb6 6.Qe2**



White plays this move with the idea to follow quickly with Be3. The difference with the order of moves with 6.Nc3 is that now, the consequences of the move 6...Nf6 are not so clear.

We will analyse in details: **A)** 6...a5 and **B)** 6...Qf6.

About 6...Nge7 7.Nc3 – see Chapter 8.

About 6...d6 7.Be3 – see Chapters 9-10.

After 6...a6 7.Be3 Bxe3 8.Qxe3 d6 9.Nc3, SerS – Guest, Cafe 2017, 9...Nf6 10.0-0-0 11.f4², there arises a typical situation with a mobile pawn-mass and a space advantage for White.

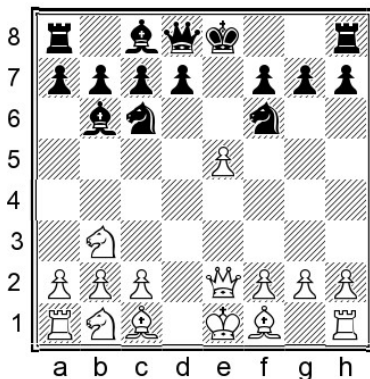
Following 6...Nd4 7.Nxd4 Bxd4 8.c3, White continues the chase after the enemy bishop. 8...Bb6 9.Na3 a6 (9...Ne7 10.Bg5 h6 11.Bh4 0-0 12.0-0-0 Qe8 13.g4

Ng6 14.Bg3 d6 15.f4, Tomazini – Tomnikova, Skopje 2019; 10.Be3 0-0 11.g3 d5 12.0-0-0 c6 13.Bg2²) 10.Nc4 Ba7 11.e5. White impedes Black's development (11.Be3!? Bxe3 12.Nxe3 d6 13.0-0-0²). 11...b5, Dembo – Stefanova, Rijeka 2010 (11...Ne7 12.Nd6+ cxd6 13.exd6 Kf8 14.dxe7+ Qxe7 15.Bf4² and White will have a perfect pawn-structure in the arising endgame.). He can regroup his forces here in a very favourable way: 12.Qe4 Rb8 13.Be3 Bxe3 14.Nxe3 Qe7 15.Qf4 d6 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.Qxd6 cxd6 18.0-0-0² with an easy game for White on the open file against the enemy weaknesses.

The move 6...Qe7 seems senseless. 7.Nc3 Nf6 (7...f5 8.a4±; 7...Qe6 8.Be3 d6 9.Nd5²) 8.Bg5 Qe6. Black's queen only impedes the movements of his own pieces (We can see the same situation in the lines: 8...d6 9.Nd5 Qe6 10.Bxf6 gxf6, Kulkarni – Seraoui, Caleta 2017, 11.a4±, or 8...h6? 9.Nd5 Qe5 10.Bxf6 gxf6 11.0-0-0± Ambartsumova – Mira, Novi Sad 2016.). 9.0-0-0 0-0 (9...h6 10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.Nd5 Qd8 12.e5 0-0 13.Qe4± It is impossible to see how Black can cover the attacking diagonal of the enemy queen.) 10.f3 (10.f4!?) 10...d6 11.Kb1 Bd7 12.g4 Nxg4? 13.fxg4 Qg6 14.Qd2 Bxg4 15.Be2 Bxe2 16.Nxe2± Yanovsky – Harris, ICC 2014.

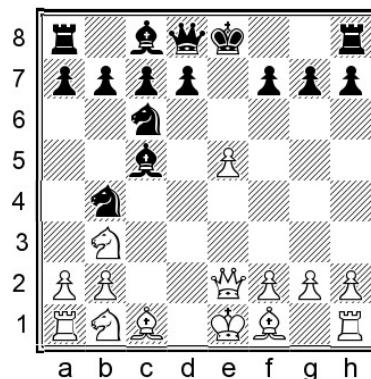
6...Nf6. This move has not been tested in practice yet. This is easily understandable. After the natural advance of the central pawn, Black must be well prepared for the actions in the centre (The retreat of his knight to the g8-square is obviously not principled.), since White would be threatening c2-c4-c5, trapping

the enemy bishop. So, Black cannot play like this without preparation, moreover that he would have to suffer only for a pawn. 7.e5



Black should be reluctant to retreat his knight back to its initial square. 7...Ng8 8.Nc3 (8.c4!?) 8...Qe7, Ivanisevic – Peranic, Mali Losinj 2017 (Here, if Black may prefer to castle as quickly as possible, his queen would remain passive. 8...Nge7 9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0-0 Re8 11.f4 d5 12.Qf2 Bg4 13.Rd2 Na5 14.h3 Nxb3+ 15.cxb3 Bc8 16.Bxb6 axb6 17.a3² Here, it would be simpler for White to attack with his pawn-majority, while Black must consider permanently the possible pin.) 9.a4 Nd4 10.Nxd4 Bxd4 11.Nb5! (11.f4 Bxc3+ 12.bxc3 Qe6 13.Qf2 d6 14.Bb5+ c6 15.Bd3 dxe5 16.0-0±) 11...Bxe5 12.Ra3! We have already seen this resource. White's rook enters the actions and Black would be faced with problems which would be rather difficult for him to solve. 12...Kd8 (12...d6 13.f4 a6 14.fxe5 axb5 15.exd6 Qxe2+ 16.Bxe2 cxd6 17.Bxb5+ Bd7 18.Bxd7+ Kxd7 19.0-0±) 13.Re3 f6 14.f4 Qb4+ 15.Kd1 Qxf4 16.Nxc7 d5 17.h3 Rb8 18.Nxd5 Qxa4 19.b3 Qe8 20.Qd2 Bd7 21.Bb2+- White's monarch is perfectly safe in the centre and frees the way for his rook to the e1-square, while Black's king will perish under the combined attack of White's forces.

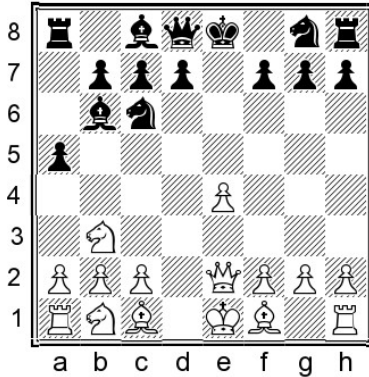
7...Nd5 8.c4 Ndb4. This is the right move! (Black's knight should not retreat: 8...Nde7 9.c5 Ba5+ 10.Nxa5 Nxa5 11.Nc3 d6 12.exd6 cxd6 13.cxd6 Qxd6 14.Nb5 Qd8 15.Bf4 0-0 16.Bc7 Qd5 17.Bxa5± Burg – Papadopoulos, Porto Carras 2018; 11...0-0 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bh4 b6 14.Nd5 g5 15.Nf6+ Kg7 16.Bg3 d6 17.h4 g4 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Rd1 d5 20.Qe3 Be6 21.Bd3+-) 9.c5 (Black is already threatening to begin a counter attack after 9.a3 Na6 10.Qg4 Kf8, as well as following 9.Nc3 0-0 10.c5 Nxe5! 11.cxb6 axb6 12.Qd1 d5 13.a3 Bg4 14.f3 Bxf3! 15.gxf3 Qh4+ 16.Kd2 Nc4µ) 9...Bxc5



10.a3!? (After 10.Nxc5 Nd4 11.Qg4 Ndc2+ 12.Ke2 Kf8 13.Na3 d6 14.Qc4, there would arise a tremendously complicated position.) 10...Na6 11.Qg4 (11.Nc3 Bb6! 12.Qg4 Qe7 13.Qxg7 Qxe5+ 14.Qxe5+ Nxe5³) 11...Bf8 12.Nc3. White is threatening to play Bb5, 0-0, completing quickly his development after which Black's problems would become very difficult for him to solve. There might arise the following developments: 12...Qe7 (12...d6 13.Qe4; 12...d5 13.Qg3) 13.Be3 (13.Bxa6!? bxa6 14.0-0) 13...Qxe5 14.0-0-0 Bxa3 15.Bd2 d6 16.Qa4 Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Nc5 18.Nxc5 Qxc5 19.Be3 Qb4+ 20.Qxb4 Nxb4 21.Nd5 Nxd5 22.Rxd5± Black has already four pawns for the piece, but he would be doomed to a very difficult defence. White will at first

compromise his opponent's queenside pawn-structure and then will begin to reap the harvest.

A) 6...a5



7.a4

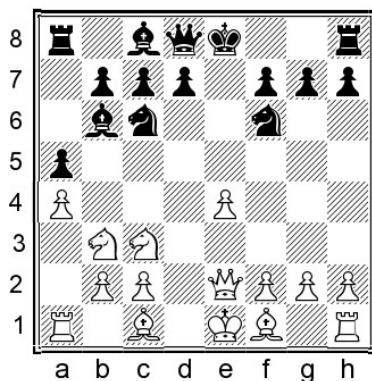
White must keep his knight on the b3-square.

After 7.Nc3, the World Champion demonstrated convincingly how Black should equalise. 7...Nf6 8.e5 0-0! 9.exf6 a4 10.Nd5 (10.Ne4 axb3 11.fxg7, Sengupta – Zhang, Xingtai 2019, 11...Re8–+) 10...Re8 11.Be3 axb3 12.Qg4 g6 13.Bc4 Nb4 14.Nxb4 (14.Qg5? Nxd5 15.Bxd5 bxc2 16.0-0 d6 17.Bxb6 cxb6 18.f4 Bf5µ Darini – Mchedlishvili, Bandar-e Anzali 2016. Black's pawn on c2 is like a bone in White's throat.) 14...d5 15.Qf4 dxc4 16.0-0 bxc2 17.Nd5 Re6 18.Qxc4 Bxe3 19.fxe3 b5! Black's bishop is freed at last! 20.Qc5 Bb7 21.Ne7+ Kh8 22.Qxc2 Raa6, Vachier – Carlsen, Saint Louis 2014, 23.Rad1 Rad6= Black attacks the g2-square in a straightforward way and White must already play very accurately.

We will analyse now: **A1)** 7...Nf6 and **A2)** 7...d6.

Black could have developed his knight to the e7-square, preserving the possibility to follow with the pawn-advance f7-f5. 7...Nge7 8.Be3 Bxe3 (8...d5 9.Bxb6 cxb6 10.exd5 Qxd5 11.Nc3 Qf5 12.0-0-0²) 9.Qxe3 0-0, Martin Rodriguez – Aguado Rodriguez, Madrid 2010, 10.Nc3 f5 (10...d6 11.0-0-0 f5 12.f4² fxe4, Ruiz – Cruz, Pocos de Caldas 2013, 13.Bc4+ Kh8 14.Rhe1 Bg4 15.Rd2 Nc8 16.Nc5 Nb6 17.Bb5²; 15...Nf5 16.Qxe4 Qh4 17.g3 Qh5 18.Qg2. Black has deployed his pieces relatively well, but has some problems due to the vulnerability of his queenside pawns.) 11.0-0-0 fxe4 12.Bc4+ Kh8 13.Nxe4 d5 (13...d6 14.Rhe1) 14.Rhe1 Bf5 (14...Be6 15.Nec5 Bg8 16.Bb5²) 15.Nec5 (15.Nc3!? Qd6 16.Bxd5 Nxd5 17.Nxd5 Qxh2 18.Nd4 Nxd4 19.Qxd4² White's centralised knight is not inferior to the enemy bishop and his major pieces have been advantageously activated.) 15...b6 16.Ne6 Bxe6 17.Qxe6 Rf6 18.Qe3 Qf8 19.Bb5 Rxf2 20.Rf1 Rf6 21.Qg3² White sacrifices temporarily a pawn and seizes firmly the initiative. Black has practically no useful moves. He can protect his pawn on c7, more or less reliably, with the move Rc8, but his rook would remain passive there and might be attacked later by the enemy bishop.

A1) 7...Nf6 8.Nc3

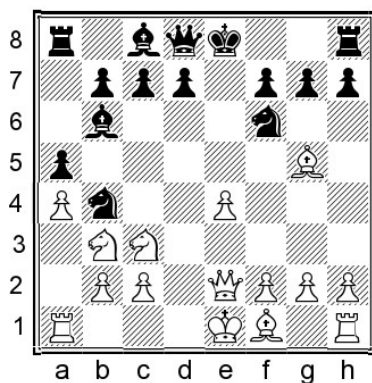


8...0-0

About 8...d6 9.Bg5!? Nb4 10.0-0-0 – see 8...Nb4.

After the exchange 8...Nd4? 9.Nxd4 Bxd4 10.Nb5 Bb6 11.e5 Nd5 12.Qg4, Black's dark-squared bishop would be too far away from his king.

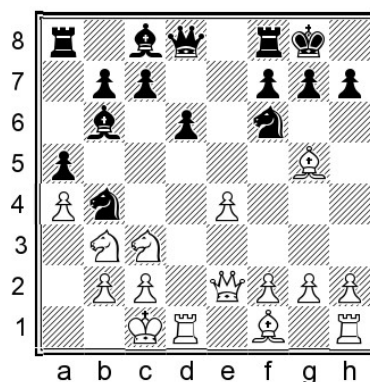
8...Nb4. Here, as usual, a second move with the same piece in the opening would not be justified without any concrete achievements. 9.Bg5



The inclusion of the moves 9...h6 10.Bh4, in principle would not change anything. 10...d6 (10...0-0 11.0-0-0 d6 12.h3 – see 9...0-0) 11.0-0-0 Qe7 12.f3 Bd7 (12...Be6 13.Nd4 0-0-0 14.Ncb5² White's pieces have been deployed to

very active positions.) 13.Kb1 0-0 (13...g5?! 14.Bf2 Bxf2 15.Qxf2 Be6 16.Nd4± Volokitin – Eljanov, Kiev 2013. Black's king would be endangered on both sides of the board.) 14.g4 Rfe8, Rudolf – Ozturk, Mamaia 2016. Now, White can consolidate his advantage with the multi-purpose move 15.Qg2², avoiding the strike d6-d5 and preparing the pawn-advance g4-g5, freeing the diagonal for his light-squared bishop.

9...0-0 10.0-0-0 d6



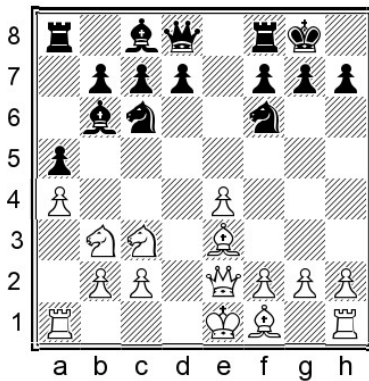
11.h3 h6 (11...Re8, Aaron – Brown, Chicago 2017, 12.Qf3 Bd7 13.Nd4², with a space advantage for White and pressure against the miserable enemy knight.) 12.Bh4 Re8 13.Qf3 (Having in mind that White has a target on h6, he can advance his pawn: 13.f4 Bf5 14.Qf3 d5 15.Bd3² Nxd3+ 16.cxd3 Be6 17.f5 Bd7 18.Rhe1, with powerful centralisation and pressure against the pinned enemy knight.) 13...Bd7 14.Bc4² Now, just like before, the pin of the knight creates great problems for Black.

White can also play in the centre, building the typical pawn-chain. 11.f3 Re8 12.g4 Qe7 (After 12...h6, White will have a target for his pawn-offensive: 13.Be3 c6 14.Qf2²) 13.Kb1 (The move 13.Be3 is likely to be a loss of time in comparison to the habitual schemes. He had played Bc1-e3, instead of the usual Bc1-e3, but White would still maintain a slight edge.)

13...c6 14.h4², followed by the advance of his pawn-mass.

9.Be3

If White plays now 9.Bg5, then Black can make use of the fact that his knight has remained on the c6-square. 9...h6 (He can play immediately here 9...Nd4 10.Qd2 Nxb3 11.cxb3 h6 12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.Nd5 Qd6 14.Qc3 Re8 15.0-0-0 Bc5=) 10.Bh4 Nd4 11.Qd3 Nxb3 12.cxb3 c6 13.0-0-0 d5÷ Vitiugov – Oparin, Linares 2018.

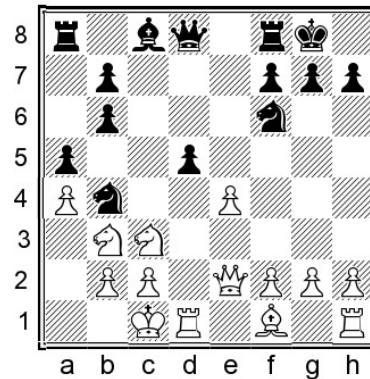


9...d5

Black can also undermine the enemy centre after the trade of the bishops. 9...Bxe3 10.Qxe3 d5 (10...d6 11.0-0-0 Qe7 12.f3 Nb4 13.g4 c6 14.g5 Nfd5 15.Qd2 Nxc3 16.bxc3 Na6 17.Qxd6 Qxg5+, Beerdsen – Van Meegen, Dieren 2016, 18.Kb2² Black's knight has been isolated at the edge of the board for a long time...) 11.0-0-0 Nb4 12.exd5 (12.Bc4 Ng4 13.Qg3 Nxf2 14.Qxf2 Qg5+ 15.Qd2 Qxd2+ 16.Nxd2 dxc4 17.Nxc4 Be6=) 12...Re8 13.Qd2 Bf5 14.Nd4 Ne4 15.Nxe4 Bxe4 16.Bb5² It is not now so easy for Black to regain his pawn, since his pieces would remain pinned in numerous variations.

10.Bxb6 cxb6 11.0-0-0 Nb4

11...Re8, Carlsson – Hector, Borlange 2014, 12.Qe3 Bd7 (12...Nb4 13.Bb5 Bd7 14.f3 – see 11...Nb4) 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 (or 13...Nxe4 14.Bb5, with the idea Qxb6) 14.Rxd5 Nb4 15.Rd2 Qc7 16.Bb5 Bxb5 17.axb5 a4 18.Nd4. There has arisen a very interesting position on the board in which Black has some counter chances for the sacrificed pawn. They are mostly connected with the threat a4-a3 and the sharpening of the situation around the enemy king.



12.Qe3

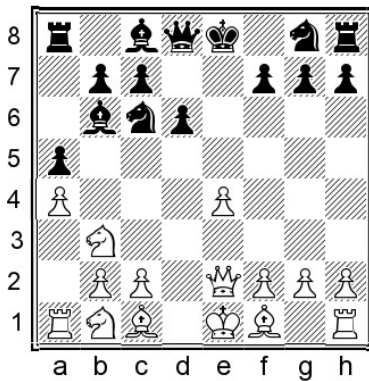
White should free his bishop just in this way, preserving the pin.

After 12.Qd2, Black can continue with 12...Nxe4!? 13.Nxe4 Bf5 14.Ng3 Bxc2 15.Nd4 Rc8 16.Nxc2 Rxc2+ 17.Qxc2 Nxc2 18.Kxc2 h5÷ and his queen would be tremendously active, as well as with 12...Be6 13.e5 Ne4 14.Nxe4 dxe4 15.Qxd8 (15.Nd4? Qd5µ Beerdsen – Vrolijk, Wijk aan Zee 2018.) 15...Rfxd8 16.Rxd8+ Rxd8 17.Nd2 Bd5=, equalising completely.

12...Re8 13.Bb5 Bd7 14.f3 dxe4
15.Bxd7 Nxd7 16.fxe4² White's rook-pawn has been advanced, but still his king is reliably protected. The open d-file and the squares that are covered by his isolated pawn are a more important factor. If the queens are exchanged Black would suffer due to the vulnerability of his pawn-structure.

A2) 7...d6

Black avoids the possible pin of his knight.

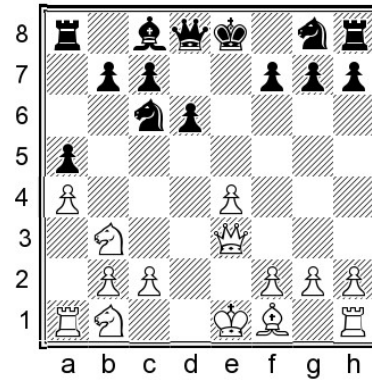


8.Nc3

This position can also be reached after the move-order: 6.Nc3 d6 7.Qe2 a5 8.a4.

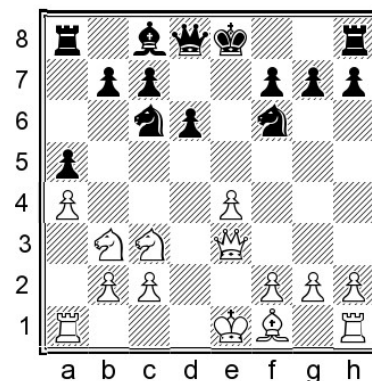
It is very important for this line, so we will analyse the second possible acceptable variation for White.

8.Be3 Bxe3 9.Qxe3



There arises a very problematic position after 9...Be6N, Black is threatening to compromise his opponent's queenside pawn-structure. 10.Bb5!? (White's standard response 10.Nd4 would not help him here in view of 10...Nxd4 11.Qxd4 Qf6= His other possibility is to play a position with doubled pawns. 10.Nc3 Bxb3 11.cxb3 Nf6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Bc4. It is still far from clear whether White has an edge here.) 10...Nf6 11.Nd4 0-0!? (11...Bd7 12.Nc3²). Now, White can possibly grab a pawn. He would have to return it later, though... 12.Bxc6 bxc6 13.Nxc6 Qd7 14.Nd4 d5 (14...Rae8 15.f3 d5 16.Nc3 dxe4 17.0-0-0 exf3 18.gxf3÷) 15.Nc3 Nxe4 16.Nxe4 dxe4 17.Nxe6 Qxe6 18.0-0-0 Rad8. It looks like Black is close to equality.

9...Nf6 10.Nc3



10...Be6 11.Nd4 11...Bd7?! (About 11...0-0 12.0-0-0 – see 10...0-0; 11...Nxd4 12.Qxd4 0-0, Aubert – Can, Manavgat

2018, 13.0-0-0 Qe7 14.f4²; 11...Ng4 12.Qd2 Qf6, Savitskiy – Meskovs, chess.com 2019, 13.Bb5 Bd7 14.Nb3 0-0 15.h3 Nge5 16.Nd5 Qd8 17.f4±; 12...0-0 13.h3 Nge5 14.0-0-0²) 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.f3 Re8 14.g4 Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Bc6 16.Bc4 (16.g5 Nd7 17.h4, White prevents the activation of the enemy queen.) 16...Nd7 17.h4 Qf6 18.Qe3 Nb6 (Black should better play here 18...Ne5 19.Be2 Ng6. He ousts White's bishop from the attacking diagonal.) 19.Bb3 Rad8 20.g5 Qe5 21.h5 d5. This strike in the centre is too late. 22.g6 Qf6 23.gxf7+ Qxf7 24.h6+- Zawadzka – Trifan, Arad 2018.

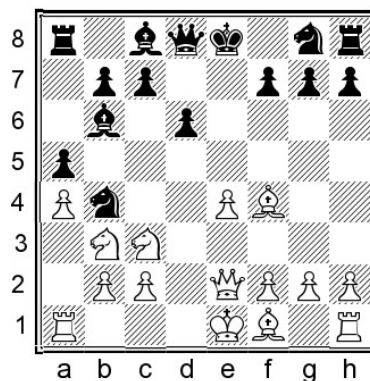
10...0-0 11.0-0-0 Re8 (11...Be6 12.Nd4 Ng4 13.Qg3 (13.Qd2? Now, White will have a problem with the protection of his pawn on f2. 13...Nxd4 14.Qxd4 Qg5+ 15.Kb1 Qc5 16.Qxc5 dxc5 17.Rd2 Rad8³ Mahitosh – Thaga, Mumbai 2017.) 13...Nxd4 14.Rxd4 Qg5+ 15.Rd2²) 12.f3 (12.Bb5!? Bd7 13.Kb1²) 12...Qe7 (12...Nd7 13.g4 Nb6 14.Nd4 (14.h4!?) 14...Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Bd7 16.h4 Qe7 17.b3 Rad8 18.Kb2 Bc6 19.Bb5 Bxb5 20.axb5± Hakobyan – M.Petrosyan, Manavgat 2018. White has excellent attacking prospects and his knight is much stronger than its counterpart.) 13.g4 Be6 14.Bb5 Nd7 (14...Bxb3 15.cxb3 Nd7 16.Nd5 Qd8 17.Qc3²) 15.Nd4 Nxd4 16.Qxd4 Red8 17.Bxd7 Rxd7 18.f4 f6 19.Rde1² Ducarmon – Vrolijk, Netherlands 2017. The threats f4-f5 and g4-g5, in any move-order, would be very unpleasant for Black.

8...Nb4

8...Be6 9.Nd5 Ba7 (9...Nd4 10.Nxd4 Bxd4 11.Bf4²) 10.h4!? The inclusion of the moves h4 – h6 would be very useful for

White in the organisation of his future kingside attack. Without the move h7-h6, Black would hardly manage to develop his knight on f6. 10...Nge7 (10...Nf6 11.Bg5; 10...h6 11.Be3 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Nf6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 15.f3f) 11.Be3 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 0-0 13.0-0-0 f5 (13...Bxd5 14.exd5 Nb4 15.Bc4 Re8 16.Rhe1 Qd7 17.Bb5 c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.Bc4 Ned5 (19...d5?! 20.Bf1) 20.Qd2 h6 21.c3²) 14.Nf4 Bf7 15.h5 h6 16.Bb5 Re8 17.f3 fxe4 18.fxe4 Ne5 19.Nd4!?² White's pieces have occupied important outposts and he preserves attacking prospects against the enemy king.

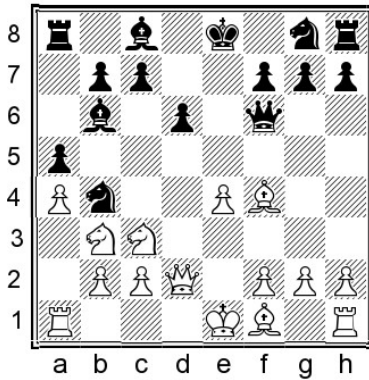
9.Bf4



9...Nf6

9...Ne7 10.0-0-0 0-0, Ivic – Krstulovic, Zalakaros 2017, 11.Be3!? Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 f5 13.Bc4+ Kh8 14.e5 f4 15.Qd2²

9...Qf6!? Black not only attacks the enemy bishop, but also takes the d4-square under control. 10.Qd2

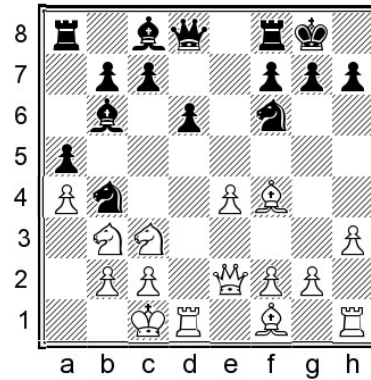


10...Be6 11.0-0-0 Ne7 (11...Bxb3?!
12.cxb3 Qg6 13.h4 h5 14.Rh3 0-0-0
15.Rg3 Qh7 16.Bd3 Nxd3+ 17.Rxd3 Ne7
18.e5±) 12.g3 Bxb3 13.cxb3 Nec6 (13...0-0
14.Bg5 Qe6 15.Bc4²; 13...Nbc6 14.Nd5
Nxd5 15.exd5 – see 13...Nec6) 14.Nd5
Nxd5 15.exd5 Nb4 16.Bb5+ Kf8 17.Rhe1²

10...Ne7 11.0-0-0 (11.Bg5!? Nxc2+
12.Kd1 Nxa1 13.Bxf6 Nxb3 14.Qg5 gxf6
15.Qb5+ Nc6 16.Qxb3±; 11...Qe6 12.0-0-0
0-0 13.f3 h6 14.Be3 Bxe3 15.Qxe3² Black
would need some more time in order to
develop his bishop.) 11...Ng6?! (about
11...Be6 12.g3 – see 10...Be6) 12.Be3 Bxe3
13.Qxe3 0-0 14.g3 Bg4 15.Be2 Bxe2
16.Qxe2 Rfe8 17.f4± Sethuraman –
Melkumyan, Jermuk 2018. White has
restricted the enemy pieces and begins an
advance of his kingside pawns, having in
mind the possible break in the centre e4-
e5.

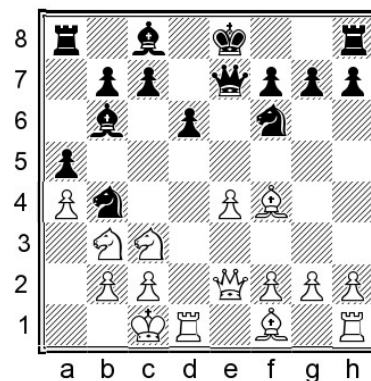
10.0-0-0 Qe7

Black should better castle here. 10...0-0,
Tomazini – Gonda, Pardubice 2018
11.h3!?, with the idea Qf3, g2-g4.
(11.Bg5?! Re8)



11...d5 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bh4 g5 (13...d4?
14.Qf3) 14.Bg3 c6 15.exd5 cxd5 16.Qf3
Be6 17.Be5 Ne4 18.Nd4² Black wishes to
free his position and must comply with
the weakening of the shelter of his king.

11...Be6 12.Nd4 d5 13.Bg5 h6 14.Bh4
c6 15.exd5 Bxd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.c3 Rc8
18.Qe5 Re8. Now, White can force a
transition to a better endgame. 19.Bxf6
Rxe5 20.Bxd8 Bxd8 21.Bb5 Nc6 22.f4 Re4
23.Nf5 Rxf4 24.Nd6 Rc7 25.Rxd5² Black's
knight has been restricted and White has
good chances of penetrating with his
rooks to the 7th and 8th ranks. After
coordinated actions of all his forces, he
can annihilate quickly his opponent's
queenside pawns and advance his own
passed pawns.



11.Be3!?

11.Qd2 0-0 12.f3 Be6 13.Nd4 d5
14.exd5 (14.e5?! Bxd4 15.Qxd4 Nd7³)

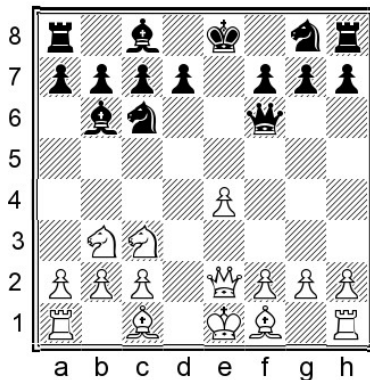
Dominguez Perez – Topalov, Saint Louis 2019) 14...Nfxd5 15.Nxe6 Nxc3 16.bxc3 fxe6 17.Bc4÷

11...Bxe3+ (11...Nd7 12.f3 0-0 13.g4f) 12.Qxe3 0-0 13.Be2 Be6 (13...Ng4 14.Qg3 f5 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Nd4²; 13...Re8 14.Rhe1 Bd7 15.Qd2²) 14.Nd4 Rfe8 (14...Rae8 15.Rhe1 d5 16.e5 Nd7 17.f4f) 15.Rhe1 (15.f4? Bd7 16.Rhe1 d5) 15...d5 (15...c6 16.f4f) 16.e5 Nd7 17.Ncb5² White occupies an important outpost on time and fixes the enemy pawn on c7, since after its advance he will have the powerful resource Nd6.

B) 6...Qf6

Black's desire to activate his strongest piece is easily understandable, but his queen might be rather unstable later there.

7.Nc3

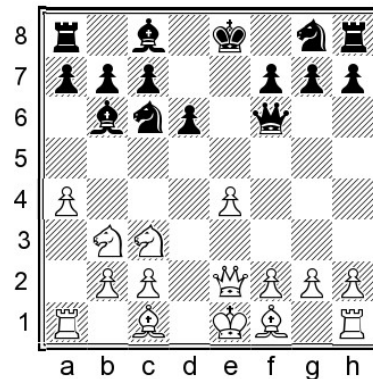


7...Nge7

The move 7...Nd4 provides White with extra tempi for his development, so the game may end very quickly. 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 (8...Bxd4? 9.Nd5 Qd8 10.Bf4 Bb6 11.Qg4 g6 12.Qg3 d6, Pribek – Zsigmond, Hungary 2010, 13.Qc3 f6 14.Bc4+-) 9.Be3 Qb4 10.0-0-0 Ne7 (10...c6, Rusconi – Borrellas Comellas, Barcelona 2018,

11.Bf4, with the idea 12.Bd6+-; 10...Bxe3+ 11.Qxe3 Qb6 12.Qg3 Nf6 13.Nb5 Kd8 14.Qxg7 Re8, Chulivska – Guda, Dnipropetrovsk 2003, 15.f3+-) 11.a3 Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 Qb6 13.Qg5 Qg6, Van der Poel – Schroeder, Netherlands 2015, 14.Qe5± d6?? 15.Nd5+-

Following 7...d6 8.a4 (8.Nd5!? Qe6 9.Be3 Qd7 10.0-0-0 Nge7 11.Kb1²), Black would be lost due to the unfortunate placement of his queen and bishop.

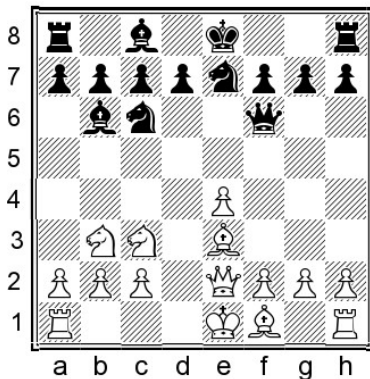


8...a6 9.Nd5 Qd8 10.Nxb6 cxb6 11.Bf4± 8...Nge7 9.a5 Bc5 (9...Nd4? R.Sax – Martinovsky, Illinois 1993, 10.Qd2 Nxb3 11.cxb3 Bc5 12.Nb5 0-0 13.b4 c6 14.Nc7 Bd4 15.Nxa8 Bg4 16.h3±) 10.Nd5 Nxd5 11.exd5+ Ne7 12.Ra4! This exquisite activation of the rook wins immediately. 12...0-0 13.Rf4 Qg6 14.Nxc5 Nxd5 15.Rd4+-

8...Be6 9.Nd5 Qd8 (9...Bxd5 10.exd5+ Nce7 11.a5 Bd4 12.Nxd4 Qxd4 13.Qb5+ Kf8 14.Bc4± White has numerous pluses in his position. He has castled quickly, has two powerful bishops and initiative on the queenside.) 10.a5 Nd4 (After 10...Bd4, White inflicts suddenly a double-strike and annihilates the entire enemy flank. 11.Qb5 Bd7 12.Qxb7 Rb8 13.Qxc7 Qh4 14.Nxd4 Qxe4+ 15.Be3 Qxd5 16.Nxc6 Rc8 17.Nb4+- Wagner – Heyme, Germany 1993; 10...Bc5 11.Nxc5 dxc5 12.Bf4 Rc8

13.a6 b6 14.Qe3±) 11.Qd2!? Bxd5
 12.Nxd4 Bxd4 13.Qxd4 Bc6 14.Qxg7 Qf6
 15.Bh6+- Allard – Vandemeulebrouck,
 Herlies 2000.

8.Be3



8...0-0

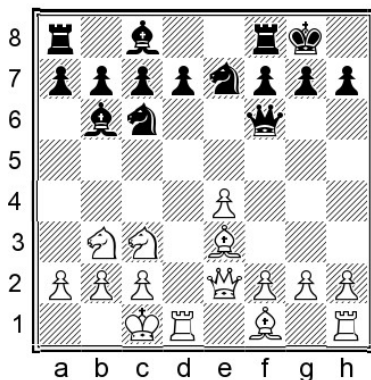
About 8...Bxe3 9.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9.

8...Na5 9.Bxb6!? axb6 10.e5 Qg6 11.Nd4
 0-0 12.0-0-0 d5 13.exd6 Qxd6 14.Ndb5
 Qc5 15.Na4 Qg5+ 16.Qd2± White's
 cavalry is so active that Black's queenside
 crumbles.

8...Nd4, Giles – Cleary, Telford 2018.
 Here again White's attempt to seek
 simplifications would be premature.
 9.Qd2 Nxb3 10.axb3 0-0 (10...Bxe3
 11.Qxe3 Nc6 12.0-0-0!? d6 13.f4 0-0
 14.Be2± Black can still defend against the
 sortie of the enemy knight into the centre,
 but he would be practically helpless
 against White's kingside pawn-offensive.)
 11.Bg5!? Qe6 12.0-0-0 Ba5 13.Bc4 Qe5
 14.h4± White begins an attack and
 preserves the possibility to continue the
 chase after the enemy queen.

8...d6 9.0-0-0 Be6 (About 9...0-0 10.Kb1
 – see 8...0-0; 9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 – see
 Chapter 9; 9...Ne5 10.h3²) 10.Nd5 Bxd5
 11.exd5 Ne5. There has arisen a position
 with a fixed pawn-structure in the centre
 and a space advantage for White. Even if a
 couple of bishops are exchanged, White's
 light-squared bishop would remain on the
 board and would be much stronger than
 the restricted enemy knight. 12.Kb1 (The
 move 12.f4 would allow an aggressive
 sortie of the enemy knight, but White
 would still maintain an edge: 12...Nc4
 13.Qxc4 Bxe3+ 14.Kb1 0-0 15.Bd3 Bb6
 16.Rhe1 Ng6 17.g3 Rfe8 18.a4 a5
 19.Rxe8+ Rxe8 20.Qb5 Ra8 21.Re1 Qd8
 22.Nd2± Beerdsen – Ciornei, Vlissingen
 2017. Black's pieces are passive, his
 bishop is doing nothing and after the
 move Nc4, his a5-pawn would come
 under an attack. He cannot solve his
 problems either after 15...Qxf4 16.Qxc7
 Nxd5 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Rxd5²) 12...0-0
 13.f4 Nd7 (13...N5g6 14.Bxb6 axb6 15.g3
 c6 16.Bg2 b5 17.Rhe1 Rfc8 18.Qd3±
 Plater – Sanchez, Moscow 1956. The
 mobility of Black's pieces has been
 severely restricted.) 14.Bc1 Rfe8 15.Qf3
 c6. Black opens the position in an attempt
 to organise counterplay, but White would
 be happy after these developments, since
 he has a powerful bishop-pair. 16.dxc6
 bxc6 17.g4 d5 18.g5 Qd6, Mujunen –
 Fonseca, ICCF 2012, 19.h4!? a5 20.h5 a4
 21.Nd2 Nf5 22.Nc4 Qc5 23.g6 fxg6
 24.hxg6 h6 25.Qg4 Nf6 26.Qxf5 dxc4
 27.Qxc5 Bxc5 28.Bxc4+ Kh8 29.f5+-

9.0-0-0



9...d6

About 9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9.

The move 9...Ne5 turns out to be a loss of time for Black. 10.h3 c6 (10...d6 11.Qd2 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Be6 13.f4 N5c6 14.g4,) 11.Kb1 d6 12.f4 Nc4 13.Bc1 Na5 14.g4 Nxb3 15.axb3 Ng6 16.g5 Qe7 17.h4 Re8, Palac – Kostic, Nice 2004, 18.h5 Nf8 19.Qg2, It has become quite obvious that White's attack is crushing.

10.Kb1

White's plan includes the pawn-advance f2-f4, with powerful initiative on the kingside.

Naturally, it would be bad for White to play here immediately 10.f4?, because of 10...Bg4.

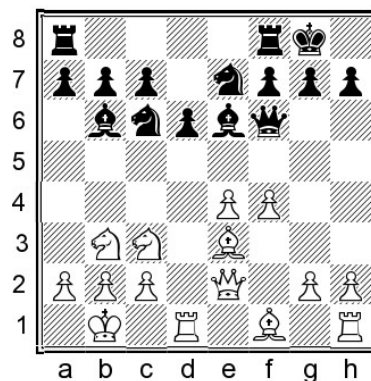
10...Be6

About 10...Bd7 11.f4 Bg4 12.Qxg4 – see 10...Be6.

10...Bxe3 11.Qxe3 a6 12.Be2 b5 13.g4 b4 (13...Re8 14.a3 b4 15.g5 Qe6 16.axb4 Nxb4 17.Nd4±) 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Ne7

16.g5 Qe5 17.Qxe5 dxe5 18.Rhe1² The pawn-structure of both sides is similar, but White's pieces have entered the actions before their counterparts and have more possibilities to attack the enemy pawn-islands.

11.f4



11...Bg4

11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Bg4 13.Rd2 Rfe8 14.Qf2± and later White will oust Black's queen and bishop.

Following 11...Rfe8, White will attack immediately his opponent's vulnerable pawn. 12.Bxb6!? axb6 13.Nb5 Ra4 (13...Rac8 14.g3 Na5 15.Nxa5 bxa5 16.Bg2 Bd7 17.e5 Bxb5 18.Qxb5 dxe5 19.Bh3 Rb8 20.fxe5±; 13...Rec8, Tazlar – Husarik, Czech Republic 2019, 14.g3 Na5 15.Nxa5 Rxa5 (15...bxa5 16.Bg2±) 16.a3 Bd7 17.Nc3 Bc6 18.Bg2± White has completed his development and holds the centre in a steel grip. Black has no real counterplay at all. 18...b5 19.Rhe1 b4!? (19...Rca8 20.e5 dxe5 21.Bxc6 Nxc6 22.fxe5 Qf5 23.Nxb5±) 20.axb4 Ra7 21.b5± White can be quite optimistic about the future having an extra pawn. His king is safe enough and can be evacuated to the side

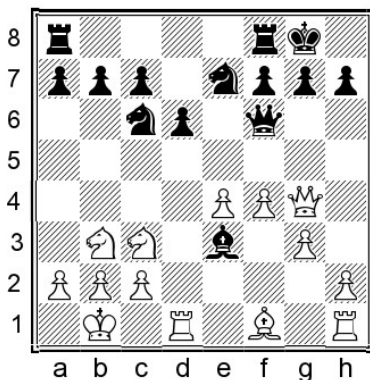
in case it is endangered.) 14.Nxc7 Rc8, Biolek – Zvara, Marianske Lazne 2006, 15.Nxe6 Qxe6 16.Qd2 Qxe4 17.Bb5 Rb4 18.Bxc6 Nxc6 19.g3± It looks like Black will be incapable of holding on to his numerous pawn-islands.

11...Bxb3 12.axb3 Ba5 (12...Nd4 13.Qg4± Nec6? 14.Nd5 Qd8 15.Nxb6 axb6 16.Bxd4 Nxd4 17.Rxd4+– Loisel – Rivollier, ICCF 2016) 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.exd5 Nb8 (14...Nb4 15.Bd2 Qf5 16.Bc3 c5 17.dxc6 Nxc6 18.Qb5±) 15.Qf3 Nd7 16.Qh3 Nc5 17.g4, White's pawns are advancing, his bishop will be centralised on the d4-square and Black will hardly manage to counter this pressure.

12.Qxg4 Bxe3

Now, White must simply protect his pawn. He will complete his development and will prepare the advance of his pawn-centre. Black's queen will unavoidably come under an attack.

13.g3



13...a5

13...Nd4?! Moreby – Quinn, Glasgow 2016, 14.Na5 Ndc6 15.Nc4 Bc5 16.e5 Qg6 17.Qxg6 hxg6 18.exd6 cxd6 19.Ne4± and White wins a pawn.

13...Rfe8 14.Bc4 a6 15.Rhf1± White is eyeing straightforwardly the f7-square in

the vicinity of Black's king. 15...b5 16.Nd5 Qg6. Now, Black must enter a very difficult endgame in order to avoid the loss of a pawn. (16...Qh6 17.Bxb5 axb5 18.Nxe3±) 17.Qxg6 Nxg6 (17...hxg6 18.Nxe3 bxc4 19.Nxc4±) 18.Be2 Bb6 19.Nxb6 cxb6 20.Rxd6 Nge7 21.e5 Rac8 22.Bf3 Rc7 23.Rfd1 h6 24.c3 Rb8 25.Be4 g6 26.Rd7 Rbc8 27.Rxc7 Rxc7 28.Rd6 Kf8 29.Nd4 Nxd4 30.cxd4 Nc8 31.Rd8+ Ke7 32.Rh8 Kd7 33.Bd5 Ke7 34.Bxf7+– Yu Yangyi – Pourkashiyani, Jakarta 2011.

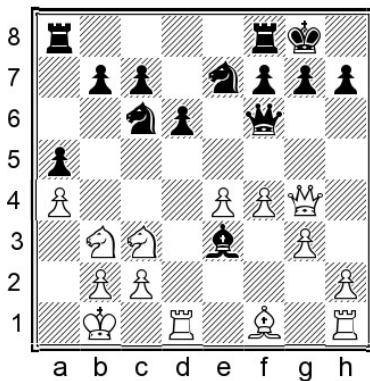
13...Rad8 14.Bd3 (White can choose another line here, but it might slow down the temp of his attack: 14.Qf3!? Bb6 15.h4 Nd4 16.Nxd4 Bxd4 17.Ne2 Bb6 18.Bg2²) 14...Rfe8 15.Rhf1 Bb6 16.Qh3 (threatening Nd5) 16...h6 17.e5 (17.Bc4!?, with the idea e5 17...Na5?! 18.Nxa5 Bxa5 19.e5 Qg6 20.f5 Qh7 21.f6 gxf6 22.Rxf6+–) 17...Qe6 (Black may try to save the game by sacrificing the exchange 17...dxe5 18.Ne4 Qf5 19.g4 Rxd3 20.cxd3 Qc8 21.f5 f6 22.Qf3±, but he would be practically helpless against the opening of files on the kingside.) 18.f5 Qc8 19.e6 Ne5 (19...fxe6 20.f6+–) 20.f6 (20.exf7+ Nxf7 21.Qh5+–) 20...N7g6 (20...Qxe6!? 21.Qxe6 fxe6 22.fxe7 Rxe7±) 21.exf7+ Kxf7 22.Bf5 Qb8 23.Nd5 c6 24.Nxb6 axb6 25.Nd4 gxf6 26.Qxh6+– Amonatov – Kovalev, Moscow 2011.

14.a4

White reacts in a standard fashion, without being afraid of the appearance of weaknesses in his position. It would be practically impossible for Black's pieces to create threats against the enemy king.

White can also choose another very convincing line here: 14.Bb5!? Nd4 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 (16...Qxe5? 17.Nxd4 Bxd4

18.Qxd4+-) 16...Qf3 17.Qxf3 Nxf3 18.Rd3 Nf5 19.Rf1 Nxe5 20.Rd5 Nxc3 21.hxc3 f6 22.Nxa5± Rxa5? 23.Rxe5+-



14...Bb6

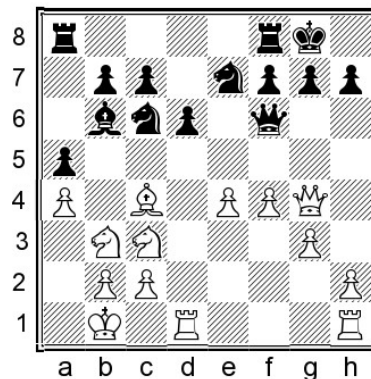
14...Nb4 15.Nb5 (15.Bc4!? Bb6 16.Nd2, with the idea Bb3, Nc4. 16...Nec6 17.Rhe1±) 15...Rfd8 (15...Rfc8 16.Bg2 Nec6 17.Rhe1 Bb6 18.Nd2±, with the idea Nc4) 16.c3 c6, Pflighthofer – Jell, Germany 1986, 17.Na3 Na6 18.Bxa6 bxa6 (18...Rxa6 19.e5) 19.Nc4 Ba7 20.e5 dxe5 21.fxe5 Qg6+ 22.Qxc6 hxc6 23.Rd6+-

14...Nd4 15.e5!? Qf5 (15...dxe5 16.fxe5 Qc6 17.Nxd4 Qxh1 18.Nf3 Rad8 19.Bd3 Qg2 20.Qe4 Rxd3 21.Rxd3 Bb6 22.e6 f5 23.Qxb7+-) 16.Qxf5 Nexf5 17.Bh3 dxe5 18.Rd3 exf4 19.Nxd4 Nxd4 20.gxf4 Nxc2 21.Nd5 Bxf4 22.Nxf4 Nb4 23.Rd7± White will capture for sure another pawn and Black will not have compensation for the piece.

15.Bc4

White can also fianchetto his bishop in order to support his centre: 15.Bg2!? Nb4 (15...Rad8 16.Nd2, with the idea Nc4. 16...Qd4 17.Bf1 d5 18.Nb3 Qf6 19.Nxd5

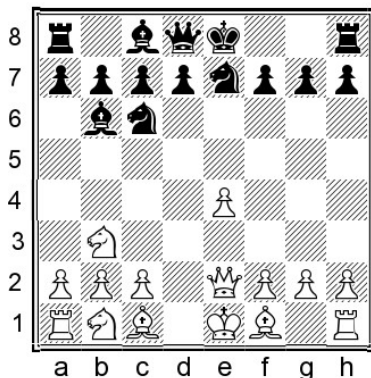
Nxd5 20.exd5 Nb4 21.Bg2±) 16.Nb5 Rad8 (16...d5 17.c3 Na6 18.exd5±) 17.Na3. In this rather strange way White again plans to transfer his knight to the c4-square. 17...Nec6 18.Nc4 Qe6 19.Qxe6 fxe6 20.Nxb6 cxb6 21.Nd2 (Another knight is coming to the coveted c4-square.) 21...d5 22.Rhe1± White centralises his pieces and plans to obtain an extra pawn on the kingside.



15...Nb4, Wieczorek – Fodor, Krakow 2011 (15...Rad8 16.Rhe1 Nb4 17.Nd2, with the idea Bb3, Nc4. 17...c6 18.Bb3 d5 19.Nf3± The centre will be opened sooner or later and White's pressure against the f7-square will become very powerful.) **16.Nd2** (16.Rhe1 c6?! 17.e5±) **16...Bd4** (16...Rad8 17.Bb3, with the idea Nc4) **17.Nb5 Bb6 18.Bb3 d5** (18...c6? 19.Nc4±) **19.exd5±** White's bishop is perfectly poised against the enemy king, while its counterpart is attacking empty space... Black cannot regain his pawn, because White will follow with Ne4 and Rhe1 and his pieces will penetrate into the enemy camp with a decisive effect.

Chapter 8

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3 Bb6 6.Qe2
Nge7

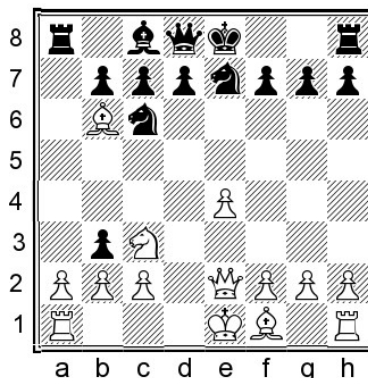


In this variation Black usually tries to counter White's pawn-majority in the centre with the move f7-f5 and he must do that very quickly, before his opponent has castled and played f4, e5. The opening of the e-file may lead to some simplifications, but even then White would be better thanks to his more active pieces and more mobile kingside pawns.

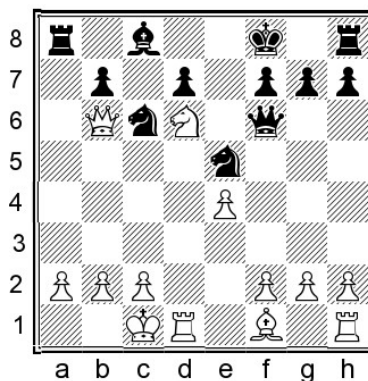
7.Nc3

We will analyse in details now the moves: **A)** 7...0-0 and **B)** 7...d6.

7...a5 8.Be3 a4 (8...Bxe3 9.Qxe3 a4 10.Nd4 a3 11.b3² Having in mind his opponent's latest actions on the queenside, White may castle kingside now.) 9.Bxb6! (9.Nd2 Ba5 10.Nb5 0-0 11.0-0-0 f5 12.f4 fxe4 13.Nxe4 d5 14.g4² White's cavalry creates havoc inside the enemy camp, moreover that Black has been deprived of the important f5-square.) 9...axb3



10.Nb5!?. This sudden penetration of White's knight to the d6-outpost will cramp the entire complex of Black's pieces. 10...cxb6 11.Nd6+ Kf8 12.Qc4 Ne5 13.Qxb3 N7c6 (13...g5 14.h4) 14.0-0-0 Qf6. Black prevents f2-f4 and is threatening Qxf2. (14...Qg5+ 15.Kb1 Qg4 16.Rd5 f6 17.a3 g6 18.h4 h5 19.Qe3 Qe6 20.g3 Nf7 21.Bh3 f5 22.Qd2; 17...Qe6 18.Bc4 Nxc4 19.Qxc4 g6 20.Qc3 Kg7 21.Rhd1; 18...g6 19.Rhd1 Kg7 20.f4 Nxc4 21.Qxc4±) 15.Qxb6



15...Rxa2 16.Kb1 Ra8 17.Bb5 Qd8 (17...Kg8 18.f4 Qxf4 19.Bxc6 Nxc6 20.Rhf1 Qg4 21.Nxf7 Qxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Kxf7 23.Qb3+ Ke8 24.Qc3 Rg8 25.b4² White is attacking his opponent's most active piece – his knight.) 18.Qc5 Kg8 (18...Qe7 19.f4 Ng4 20.e5²) 19.f4 Qa5 20.c3 Nd3 21.Rxd3 Qa1+ 22.Kc2 Qxh1. Black has captured the enemy rook with a brave queen-sortie, but White continues cold-bloodedly his attack. 23.Qd5 Qxg2+ 24.Rd2 Qg6 25.f5

Qf6 (25...Qh5 26.Be2+-) 26.e5 Qe7 27.f6
 Qe6 28.Qg2 g6 29.Bc4+-

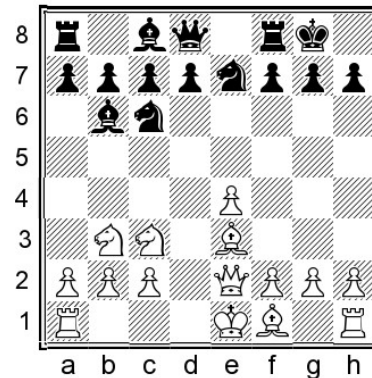
15...Qd8 16.Qb3 Qf6 17.a3!? This prophylactic is necessary for White in order to have his hands free for the calm improvement of his position. (17.Be2 Qe6 18.f4 Qxb3 19.axb3 Ng6 20.g3²) 17...Qxf2 (17...h5 18.Be2 g5 19.g3 g4 20.h3 Rg8 21.hxg4 hxg4 22.Rh5±; 17...b6 18.f3!? (18.Qxb6 Ng4! with the idea 19.Bb5 Qxf2 20.Qc7 Qa7) 18...h5 (18...Ba6 19.Bxa6 Rxa6 20.Kb1²) 19.Kb1 Kg8 20.Rg1 Kh7 21.Qe3 g5 22.h4± The files are opened and White's attack may soon become crushing.) 18.Bb5 f6 19.Rhf1 Qxg2 20.Qe3 Qxh2. Black's queen is his only piece in action and this would not end well for him. White's pressure will soon become decisive and he will manage gradually to attack the weak spot in his opponent's position – the f7-square. 21.Qc5 b6 22.Qxb6 h6 23.Bxc6 Nxc6 24.Qb3 Ne5 25.Rd2 Qh5 26.Rf5 Qg6 27.Rxe5 fxe5 28.Rf2+ Ke7 29.Rf7+ Qxf7 30.Nxf7+-

After the move 7...Nd4, Black will fail to fight effectively for the centre. 8.Nxd4 Bxd4 9.Bd2 (White could have ousted immediately the enemy bishop with 9.Qd3!? Bb6 10.Be3 0-0 11.0-0-0² His attacking prospects seem preferable here.) 9...0-0 10.0-0-0 d6 11.f4 a6 12.Kb1 Re8 13.Qh5 b5 14.Ne2 g6 15.Qf3 Bg7 16.g4 d5 17.e5 c5 18.h4 Be6 19.h5 d4 20.Bg2 Qd5 21.Qxd5 Bxd5 22.Bxd5 Nxd5 23.g5² The exchange of the queens cannot provide Black with complete equality, since his bishop has been restricted and he has numerous weaknesses in his position, for example the d6 and f6-squares for the possible penetration of White's knight. The possibility for the d and h-files to be opened is also in favour of White.

A) 7...0-0

Now, we will only analyse the lines in which Black does not play d5-d6 with the idea to advance his f-pawn as quickly as possible. It can even go to the f4-square, but White can undermine it later with the move g2-g3.

8.Be3



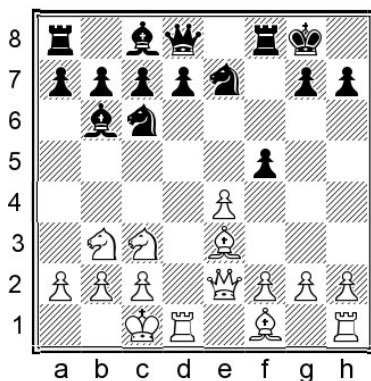
8...f5

About 8...d6 9.0-0-0, or 8...Ng6 9.f4 d6 10.g3 Re8 11.0-0-0 – see variation **B**.

The move 8...d5?! is premature. 9.0-0-0 d4 10.Nb5 Ng6 11.N5xd4 Nxd4 (11...Qe7 12.f3 Rd8 13.Nxc6 Rxd1+ 14.Kxd1 bxc6 15.Kc1±) 12.Nxd4 Qe7 13.f3± Bakos – Kiss, Budapest 2015. Black has lost a pawn without any compensation.

8...Bxe3 9.Qxe3 d5? (9...f5 10.0-0-0 – see 8...f5; 9...d6 10.0-0-0 – see Chapter 9, variation **B**) 10.0-0-0 Bd7 (10...Be6? Bojc – Pachon, Kemer 2009, 11.exd5 Bxd5 12.Qg3! Qd7 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.c4+-) 11.exd5 Nf5 12.Qf4± Jakab – Marica, Mamaia 2012.

9.0-0-0



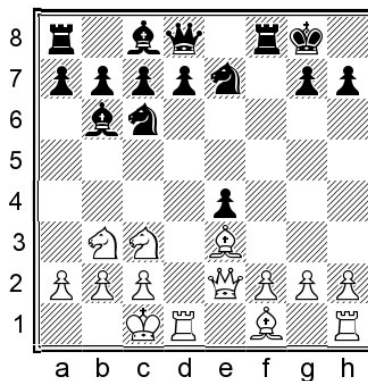
9...fxe4

About 9...d6 10.f4 – see 7...d6.

9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 f4 10...d6 11.f4 – see Chapter 9, variation **B**) 11.Qd2 d6, Darini – Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, Doha 2016, 12.h4. This is a typical move with which White wishes to compromise his opponent's pawn-structure. 12...Ne5 13.h5 h6 14.f3 a5 15.Kb1² White's plan includes the elimination of the enemy blockade with the help of the move g2-g3, or by a direct attack with Rh4, Ne2.

9...f4 10.Bxb6 axb6 11.Kb1 (It is bad for White to choose here 11.g3?! d6 12.gxf4 Rxf4 13.Rg1 Ne5³, and Black will occupy the important f4 and e5-squares, Kulkarni – Kamsky, Bastia 2017. White has a very interesting alternative here – 11.Qd2!? d6 12.h4 Bd7 13.h5 h6 14.f3 Qe8 15.Bc4+ Kh8 16.Kb1 Ne5 17.Bf1 Qf7 18.a3 N7c6 19.Nd5 Be6 20.Qc3 Rac8 21.g3!? fxg3 22.f4² He has broken the blockade on the dark squares and plans to exert pressure against the g7-square in combination with the idea e4-e5.) 11...d6 12.Qd2 Kh8, Pridorozhni – Iljushenok, Moscow 2016, 13.h4 Be6 14.h5 h6 15.Nd5 Bxd5 16.exd5

Ne5 17.Nd4² The light squares in Black's position are vulnerable and his pawns may be used as targets by White in order to open files. He can also eliminate his opponent's beautiful knight on e5 at an opportune moment by an exchange-sacrifice.



10.Bxb6!?

After 10.Nxe4 d5!?, White would not achieve much. 11.Nc3 Qd6 12.g3 Bf5÷ Black's pawn on d5 provides him with some dominance in the centre.

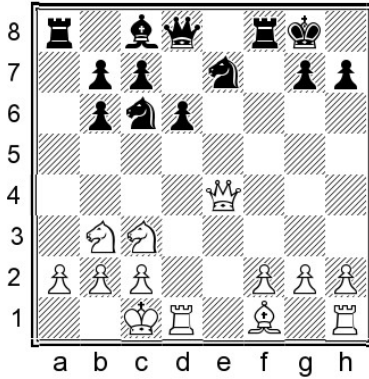
10...axb6 11.Qxe4

White captures with his queen and prevents the move d5. Now however, he must consider accepting the sacrifice as well as the attempt for Black to enter the main line of this variation.

11...d6

11...Rxf2 12.Bd3!?. Black must play tremendously accurately after accepting the sacrifice if he wishes to have any chances of equalising. 12...Ng6 (12...Rf5? 13.g4 d5 14.Nxd5 Rxd5 15.Qxh7+ Kf8 16.Bc4 Rxd1+ 17.Rxd1+-; 12...g6 13.Rhf1 Rxf1 14.Rxf1 d5 15.Qf4 Bf5 16.Bxf5 Nxf5 17.g4 Ng7 18.Qf7+ Kh8 19.Nb5 Rc8 20.N3d4 Nxd4 21.Nxd4 Qe8 22.Qxe8+

Rxe8 23.Rf7² All White's pieces are active, while Black's queenside pawns are vulnerable, so White maintains an advantage.) 13.Rhe1 d6 14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.Qe8+ Rf8 16.Qxd8 Rxd8 17.Nd5 Rxa2 18.Nxc7 Nge5 19.Bb5. Black still has some problems to worry about.

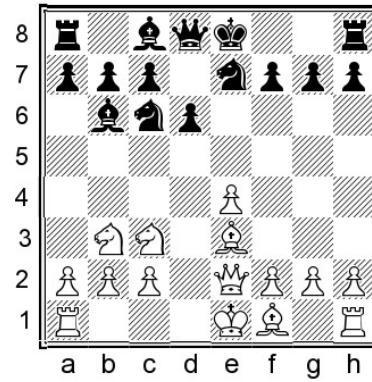


12.f3!?

Here, White may transpose to the main line with the move 12.f4 – see variation B, but can also try this move as well.

12...Bf5 (12...Nf5 13.Kb1 Re8 14.Qf4²; 12...Ng6 13.Kb1 Bf5 14.Qe3² It would be easier for White here to develop initiative on the kingside than for Black to create threats on the queenside.) **13.Qe1 Kh8** (Black would lose a couple of tempi after 13...Nb4?! 14.Nd4² It is essential now that Black cannot play 14...Nxa2+?, since he would lose his rook after 15.Nxa2 Rxa2 16.Bc4+) **14.a3 Qe8** (Following 14...Ng6 15.g3! Nge5 16.f4², Black would be deprived of the super-important e5-square and he would have no time to occupy the weakened e4-square.) **15.Qd2 Qf7 16.Nb5 Rac8 17.Be2f**

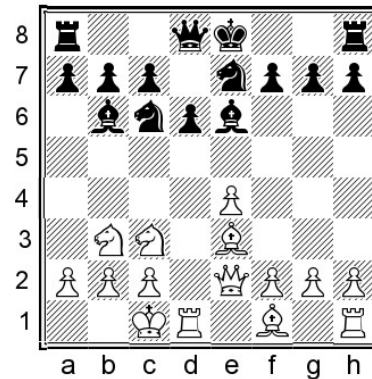
B) 7...d6 8.Be3



8...0-0

About 8...Bxe3 9.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation B.

8...Be6 9.0-0-0



About 9...0-0 10.f4 – see 8...0-0.

9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation B.

9...a5? 10.Bxb6 cxb6, Bodrozic – Lechnauer, Germany 2012, 11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.Rxd4 0-0 13.f4± White will combine his kingside offensive with the attack of his opponent's numerous weaknesses.

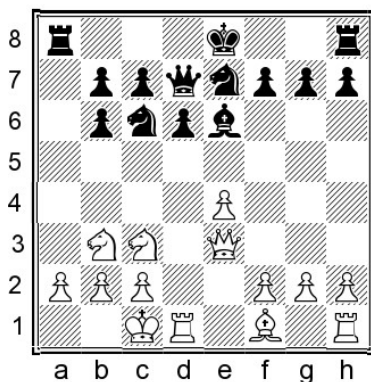
Black can try here the move 9...Ne5?! with the idea to occupy the c4-square, but this logical move would turn out at the end to be only a loss of time for him. 10.h3 0-0 (10...Bc4 11.Qe1 Bxf1 12.Rxf1 0-0 13.f4 Nc4 14.Bxb6 Nxb6 15.g4,) 11.f4 Nc4 12.Bxb6 Nxb6 13.Kb1² f5 14.Nd4±

After the retreat of the bishop, White will play e4-e5 breaking his opponent's defensive line.

9...f5 10.e5 Bxb3 (10...Nxe5 11.Bxb6 axb6 12.f4 Bxb3 13.fxe5 Bf7 14.exd6 cxd6 15.Qb5+ Kf8 16.Qb4± Black's king is endangered and he would prefer that most of his pawns had remained on their initial positions.) 11.exd6 Bf7 12.Nb5 0-0 13.dxe7 Qxe7 14.Bxb6 axb6 15.Qxe7 Nxe7 16.Rd7 Ng6 17.a3 c6 18.Nd6 Be6 19.Rc7²

9...Ng6 10.f3 Qe7 11.Qd2 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 0-0-0 13.Bb5 Bd7? (13...Kb8? 14.Bxc6 bxc6 15.Na5 Bd7 16.Nd5+-; 13...Bxb3 14.axb3 Kb8±) 14.Bxc6 Bxc6 15.Qxa7 Qg5+ 16.Kb1 Qxg2. The exchange of the a7-pawn for the g2-pawn has turned out to be in favour of White. 17.Nc5+- L.Szabo – Tsyhanchuk, Heraklio 2002.

9...Qd7 10.Bxb6!? Black determines too early the placement of his queen and plans to castle queenside. White however, can change the character of the fight (After 10.g3 0-0-0 11.Bg2 Bh3, Black will reduce the pressure of his enemy pieces by exchanges and will gradually equalise. 12.Bxh3 Qxh3= Kovalev – Murtazin, Pardubice 2017.) 10...axb6 11.Qe3, with the idea to deploy his bishop on the b5-square.

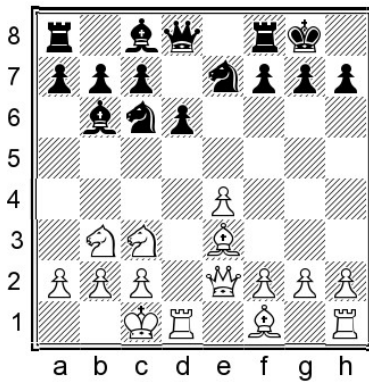


11...0-0 12.f4 f5 13.g4!? With this energetic pawn-sacrifice White begins an immediate attack against the enemy king. 13...fxg4 (Black should better comply here

with the slightly inferior, but still seemingly quite defensible position after 13...Bxb3 14.cxb3 fxe4 15.f5², or 13...fxe4 14.f5 Bf7 15.Qxe4²) 14.h3 gxh3 15.f5 Bxb3 16.cxb3. White intends to place his bishop on the important a2-g8 diagonal and Black's king will be attacked on the opened h-file 16...Ne5 17.Qxh3 h6 18.Qg3 Qe8 19.Rxh6+-

11...0-0-0. The basic drawback of this move is that Black loses completely the chance of creating any counterplay on the queenside. 12.Bb5 Bxb3 (12...Kb8 13.Nd4 Rhe8 14.f4 f5?! 15.e5; 12...f5 13.Nd4 fxe4 14.Nxe4²) 13.axb3 Rhe8 14.f4 (14.Rhe1!? Qg4 15.g3 f5 16.b4², with the idea to follow with Be2, b5 and to cramp considerably his opponent's position on the queenside.) 14...f5 (14...Qg4 15.h3 Qxg2?? 16.Rdg1+-; 15...Qg6 16.Qf3² White is ready to begin an offensive on the kingside with the pawn-advance g2-g4.) 15.Rhe1 fxe4 16.Qxe4 d5 (Black's attempt to protect his pawn with the move 16...g6 would not be good after 17.Qa4 Kb8 18.Kd2!, with the idea Ra1 and the only thing that Black's king can do is to wait for being checkmated...) 17.Qxh7 Qg4 18.g3 Rh8 19.Qd3 Rxh2 20.Bxc6 Nxc6 21.Nxd5 Kb8 22.Qe3² White will hold on to his extra pawn, but its realisation would not be an easy task, since Black's pieces have become very active.

9.0-0-0



9...f5

About 9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation B.

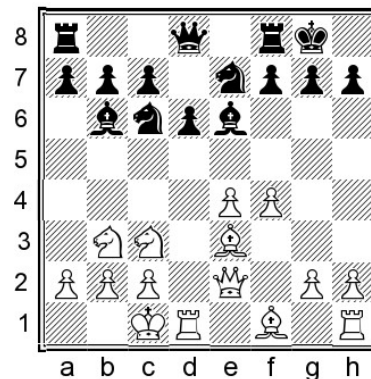
9...Re8 10.f4 Ng6 (10...Be6 11.Bxb6 – see 9...Be6) 11.g3 Be6 12.Bg2 Bxe3+ 13.Qxe3² The mobility of Black's pieces has been restricted.

9...Ne5 10.h3. White cannot continue the game without this move, because he must advance f2-f4, so he must cover the g4-square. (10.Kb1!?) 10...Re8 11.f4 N5g6 (11...Nc4 12.Bxb6 Nxb6 13.Qf2 Bd7 14.g4,) 12.g4 Bd7 13.g5 Qc8 14.Bxb6 axb6 15.Qf2 Bc6 16.Rg1± Sorin – Ozturk, Rhodes 2013. White has deprived his opponent's queen of any active squares and plans to advance his rook-pawn.

9...Kh8 10.f4. White must attack on the kingside and deprives the enemy pieces of the important e5-square just in case. (He could have also played here at first 10.Bxb6, for example: 10...axb6 11.f4 Be6 12.Kb1 f6 13.g4 Qd7 14.Rg1 Bg8, Kolotilina – Fernandez Aguado, Donostia 2016, 15.Qg2!? Na5 16.Nd4±; 15...d5 16.exd5±) 10...f6 (10...Bd7 11.Bxb6 axb6

12.Qd2²) 11.Kb1 (11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Kb1²) 11...Be6 12.Rg1 (12.Bxb6!? axb6 13.g4,) 12...Na5, Moiseenko – Nyback, Finland 2013 (Following 12...Qd7 13.f5, Black will be faced with a rather unpleasant choice – to come under an attack in the variation 13...Bg8 14.g4 Ne5 15.g5,, or to continue playing with a horrible weakness on the e6-square after 13...Bc4 14.Qf2 Bxf1 15.Rgxf1±) 13.g4 Nxb3 14.axb3 d5 15.exd5 Nxd5 16.Bxb6 axb6 17.Nxd5 Bxd5 18.Bg2 c6 19.Bxd5 cxd5 20.Rd4± White exerts pressure against his opponent's isolated pawn and will penetrate on the opened e-file at an opportune moment attacking his enemy other queenside weaknesses.

9...Be6 10.f4



10...Bg4?! 11.Qxg4 Bxe3+ 12.Kb1 Qc8 13.Qf3 Bb6 14.g4 a5 15.a4 Nb4 16.h4 Qe6 17.h5 Rfe8, Espinosa Veloz – Camaton Borbor, Santa Clara 2019, 18.Nd2 Nec6 19.Bc4 Nd4 20.Qg3 Qd7 21.g5, with the idea g5-g6.

10...Bxe3+ 11.Qxe3 Re8 12.Qf3² White is preparing an offensive on the kingside beginning with the moves g2-g4, or even f4-f5, moreover that Black must also consider the possible advance of his opponent's e-pawn.

10...Kh8 11.Kb1. White removes his king away from from the field of the

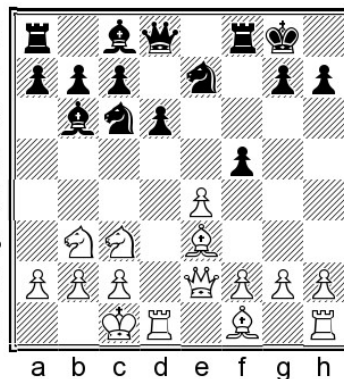
eventual battle. (11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Kb1) 11...Qe8 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.g4 f6 14.h4 Qf7 15.f5 Bxb3 16.cxb3 Ne5 17.g5 Rad8 18.Bg2 Rd7 19.Rhf1 (It also seems reasonable here for White to transfer his knight to the e6-square with 19.Nb5!? Re8 20.Nd4±) 19...Rfd8, Radjabov – Tomashevsky, Plovdiv 2010. The position is ripe for decisive actions and White can begin to open files on the kingside with 20.g6!? hxg6 21.fxg6 N7xg6 (21...Qxg6 22.Bh3±) 22.Bh3 Re7 23.Nd5 Ree8 24.h5 Nf8 25.h6 g6 26.Nxf6+–

10...f6 11.f5. Now, before the beginning of the march of his g-pawn, White fixes the target on f6. (11.h3 Kh8 12.g4 Qe8, Kilic – Mazur, Ordu 2019, 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.Qf2±) 11...Bf7 12.g4 Qe8 13.Rg1 Rd8 14.Bxb6 axb6 15.g5 fxg5, Kanmazalp – Esen, Lienz 2017 and here, after the natural response 16.Rxg5!? Bxb3 17.axb3 Kh8 18.Qg2±, White will create powerful threats on the g-file.

Now, Black's well-familiar attempt to undermine the enemy centre with the move 10...f5 would not be working due to the unfavourable placement of his queen. 11.e5 d5 12.Qf2 Qe8 13.Kb1 Qf7 14.Be2 Rfd8 15.Nb5± Van Osch – De Boer, Groningen 2014. White will occupy the d5 and c5-squares and will be preparing g2-g4.

10...Qe8 11.Bxb6 (11.g3!? f5 12.Bg2 Qf7 13.Rhe1 Rfe8 14.Kb1² Yanovsky – Kranjc, Las Vegas 2015; 13.exf5!? Bxe3+ 14.Qxe3 Bxf5 15.Nd4²) 11...axb6 12.f5!? This is White's most principled move and it is played with the idea to oust the enemy bishop from its active position and to deprive Black, in the process, from the possibility to advance f7-f5. 12...Bxb3 13.cxb3 Ne5 14.Kb1 c6!?. Black has covered the d5-square and wishes to push b7-b5. (14...N7c6?! 15.g4,) 15.Rxd6 b5 16.Qd2 Nc8 17.Rd4 Qe7, De Seroux –

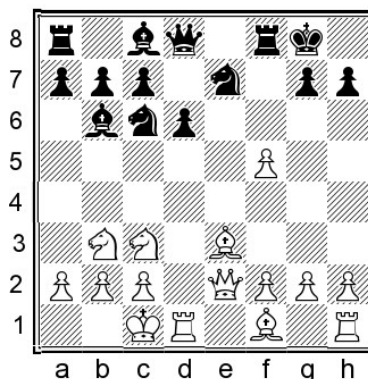
Maierov, Cappelle-la-Grande 2014, 18.a3 (18.Be2!? b4 19.f6 Qxf6 20.Rxb4²) 18...c5 19.Rd5 b4 20.axb4 cxb4 21.Na4² Black's attack has reached its dead end and he has remained a pawn down.



10.f4

After 10.g3 fxe4, Black will gradually equalise. 11.Nxe4 Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 a5 13.Nd4 (It would not be so good for White to choose here 13.a3 Bg4 14.Be2 Nf5 15.Qd2 Bxe2 16.Qxe2 a4 17.Qc4+ Kh8 18.Nbc5, Rublevsky – Tomashevsky, Olginka 2011, 18...Na5 19.Qe2 Qe8 20.Nd3 Nd4³, Black has good attacking prospects.) 13...Nxd4 14.Qxd4 Nc6 15.Qe3 Bg4 16.Be2 Bf5= He has a very comfortable game.

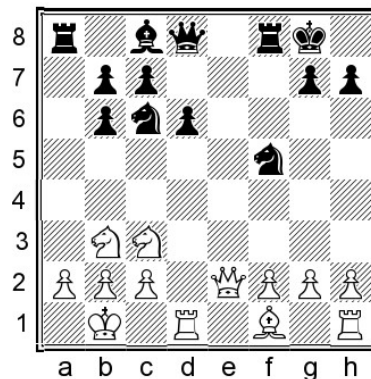
10.exf5!? White wishes to clarify immediately his opponent's intentions.



10...Bxe3+ 11.Qxe3 Nxf5, Swiech – Franckowski, Lazy 2017 (11...Bxf5 12.f4 Kh8 13.g3 Qd7 14.Bg2²; 12...Qd7 13.Qd2 Kh8 14.g3 Rae8 15.Bg2²; 14...a5 15.Bb5²) 12.Qd2 a5 13.Bb5 Nce7 14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.a4. White is not afraid to weaken the b4-square with a black knight on e7. 15...c6 16.g4 Nh4 (16...Nh6. Now, Black's knight will not enter the actions any time soon. 17.h3 d5 18.Bd3 Nhg8 19.f4 Be6?! 20.Rhe1 Bf7 21.Nd4±) 17.Be2 Be6 (17...Rxf2?! 18.Qxd6 Qxd6 19.Rxd6 Rf8 20.Rhd1±) 18.Qxd6!? Qxd6 19.Rxd6 Bxb3 20.cxb3 Rxf2 21.Rhd1± White attacks on the queenside with superior forces. His a-pawn will become a powerful passed pawn in the future. His bishop will play an important role in his actions, since it would support his pawn and will restrict the enemy pawns on the other side of the board.

10...Bxf5 11.h3. White maybe wishes to play g2-g4, or is just threatening the opponent...? (11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.a3 Bg6 13.g3 Re8 14.Bg2²; 12...Kh8 13.f4 Qd7 14.Qd2 Rad8 15.Bb5²; 12...Qd7 13.Qd2 Be6 14.f4 Rad8 15.g3 d5 16.Nb5²) 11...Bd7. Black retreats his bishop in advance, opening the f-file for his rook. Still, this is just a prophylactic operation, so White changes his plan and postpones the pawn-advance g2-g4 for better times. 12.Qd2. He frees the diagonal for his bishop. (Following 12.g4 Ng6 13.Nd5 Kh8, White's prospects in the centre are not clear, while Black has an easy game against the enemy pawns on f2 and g4. He had better prepare for that position by playing 11...Kh8 earlier.) 12...Bxe3 13.Qxe3 Kh8. This is another prophylactic move. (Black had better play here 13...Qe8, followed by Qf7, or Qg6, activating his queen.) 14.Bd3 Qe8 15.f4 Qf7 16.Rhf1 Rae8 17.Qd2 Nb4 18.Be4² Radjabov – Tomashevsky, Moscow 2012.

10...Nxf5 11.Bxb6 axb6 12.Kb1



After 12...Re8 13.Qd2 Be6, Srbis – Crepan, Nasice 2013, White can complete his development with 14.Bb5 Qf6 15.Rhe1² and will maintain an advantage thanks to his perfectly placed pieces and active prospects on the kingside.

Following 12...Na5 13.Qd2, Black will fail even to double his opponent's pawns on the queenside, because in reply to 13...Nxb3, White will play 14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.Bxb3² His bishop has fortified the shelter of his king and will exert pressure against the enemy kingside, while after 13...c6, with the idea b6-b5, it would be perfect for White to continue with 14.Nxa5 Rxa5 15.g4 Nh6 16.h3 d5 17.f4²

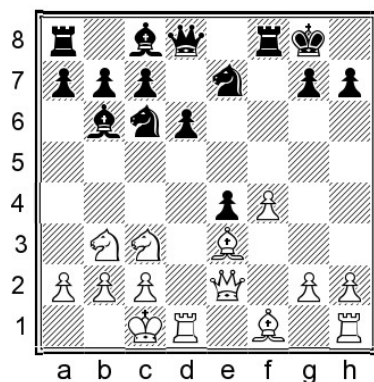
12...Qf6 13.f4 (13.Qd2!? Qf7 14.f4 Kh8 15.g4 Nh6 16.h3 Qxf4 17.Qxf4 Rxf4 18.Nb5© Rf7 19.Bc4 Re7 20.Rhe1 Ne5 21.Nd2 Ng8 22.Bb3 Nf6 23.Nf3 h6 24.Nxe5 dxe5 25.Rd8+ Kh7 26.Nc3f) 13...Nfe7?! Liang – Sapozhnikov, Wheeling 2014 (13...Be6 14.Qd2 Kh8 15.Nb5²; 13...Kh8, Tatai – Kraidman, Beersheba 1978, 14.g4 Nfd4 15.Nxd4 Nxd4 16.Qf2 Nc6 17.f5² Now, the bishop can occupy the long diagonal, his knight has access to a central outpost and White will gradually advance his pawns.) 14.Nb5. Black's will lose now the base of his pawn-chain – the c7-pawn. 14...Qxf4 15.Nxc7 Bg4 16.Qc4+ Kh8 17.Qxf4 Rxf4 18.Nxa8 Bxd1 19.Bb5 Bh5 20.Nxb6±

10...fxe4

About 10...Be6 11.e5 – see 9...Be6.

If Black does not capture the pawn on e4, it might advance: 10...Kh8, Ballester Llagaria – Barbero Senidic, Barcelona 2016, 11.e5 d5 12.g3 Na5 (12...Bxe3+ 13.Qxe3 a5 14.Bg2 a4 15.Bxd5 axb3 16.Bxc6 bxa2 17.Nxa2 Nxc6 18.Rxd8 Rxd8 19.Kb1+-) 13.Nc5 c6 14.Bg2 Nc4 15.Bf2 Ba5 16.Nb1±

10...Qe8, Redondo Benavente – Manova, Porto Carras 2018, 11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Nb5 (12.g3 fxe4 13.Qxe4 – see 10...fxe4) 12...Qg6 13.Nxc7 Rxa2 14.Qc4+ Kh8 15.Kb1 Ra7 16.Bd3² Black's pieces are scattered on the board and he cannot exploit the opened a-file. He has numerous weaknesses in his position.



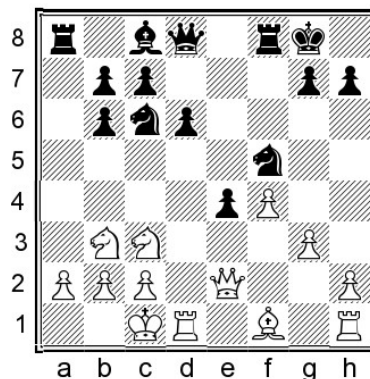
We will analyse now: **B1)** 11.g3 and **B2)** 11.Bxb6.

B1) 11.g3 Bxe3+

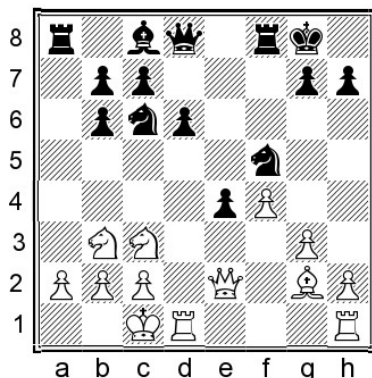
11...Bf5 12.Bg2 Qd7, Skalsky – Lanc, Stare Mesto 2016, 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.Bxe4 Bxe4 15.Qxe4²

11...Qe8 12.Bxb6!? axb6 13.Qxe4 Bf5, Samaridis – Kadianis, Rio 2018 13...Kh8 14.a3 Bf5 15.Qc4, with the idea to exert pressure against the pawn on c7. 15...d5 16.Qe2 Qg6 17.Bg2 Rfe8 18.Qf2± Carnicelli – Kadianis, Porto Carras 2018. Black loses his d5-pawn.) 14.Qe2 Qf7 15.a3 Kh8 16.Bg2² White begins an offensive on the kingside and can attack at an opportune moment the enemy c7-pawn – the base of his queenside pawn-chain.

11...Nf5 12.Bxb6 axb6



13.Kb1!? Kh8 (13...Na5 14.Nxa5 Rxa5, Evstigneev – Eremin, ICCF 2013, 15.Qxe4²; Black's attempt to preserve his extra pawn would not end up well for him: 13...e3, Negi – Maiorov, Cappelle-la-Grande 2012, 14.Rg1 Na5 15.Nxa5 Rxa5 16.g4 Nh6 17.Qxe3 Nxc4 18.Qg3 Qf6 19.Bc4+ Kh8 20.Nd5 Qf7 21.b4 Ra4 22.Bb3± White is threatening to retreat his knight to the e3-square. Black's only chance of countering this is to play Ra3, but after Kb2, he would have to give up the exchange.) 14.Bg2 e3 15.Be4 Be6 16.g4 Nh6 17.f5 Bf7 18.h3 Qg5 19.Rhe1 Rae8 20.Qxe3 Qxe3 21.Rxe3² 13.Bg2



13...Na5 14.Nxa5 Rxa5 15.Bxe4 c6,
Gonzalez Perez – Fernandez Aguado,
Barcelona 2015, 16.g4 Nh6 (16...Nh4
17.Rhf1²) 17.h3 Rxf4 18.Qd3 Kh8 19.Bxh7
Re5 20.Qd2²

13...b5 14.Kb1 b4 15.Nxe4 h6 (15...Na5
16.Nxa5 Rxa5 17.Qc4+ Kh8 18.Rhe1 h6
19.Qxb4 b6 20.Qd2 Bb7 21.Nc3 Bxg2
22.Qxg2 Qd7 23.Qe4 Raa8 24.g4 Nh4
25.f5 Qd8 26.a3+– Harikrishna – Tisdall,
Rhodes 2013) 16.Rhe1 Kh8 17.Qf2²;
17.Qb5²

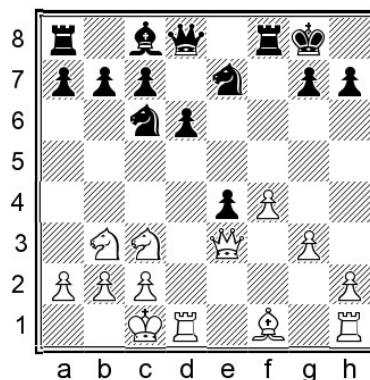
13...Nh6 14.Bxe4 (Or 14.a3!? with the
idea to impede the move d6-d5. 14...Bg4
15.Qc4+ Kh8 16.Rde1²) 14...Bg4 15.Qc4+
Kh8 16.Rde1 Qd7 (16...Ng8!? 17.Bg2 Nf6
18.Kb1 Qd7 19.h3 Bh5 20.g4 Bf7 21.Qd3
d5²) 17.a3 Bf5 18.Bxf5 Rxf5, Dudas –
Juhasz, Budapest, 2015, 19.Re2 Re8
20.Rhe1 Rxe2 21.Rxe2²

13...e3 14.Rhf1 (14.Be4!?!; 14.Kb1!?!)
14...Re8 (14...Na5 15.Nxa5 Rxa5 16.g4
Nh4 17.Bd5+ Kh8 18.h3²; 14...Be6 15.g4
Nh4 16.Bh1 Re8 17.Kb1 Na5 18.Nxa5
Rxa5 19.b3 c6 20.Rd3²; 14...Kh8 15.Kb1!
Re8 16.g4 Nh4 17.Bh1 Bd7 18.h3 Na5
19.Nxa5 Rxa5 20.Rd3²) 15.g4 Nh4 16.Be4
Be6 17.Kb1 Kh8 18.f5 Bxb3 19.cxb3 Qg5
20.Bh1² Konstantinov – Reshef, ICCF
2015.

11...Kh8 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.Bg2 Re8
(13...Ng8 14.Bxe4 Nf6 15.Bf3 Re8 16.Qg2

– see 13...Re8; 13...Be6, Paulek – Sikora,
ICCF 2013, 14.Rhe1 Qd7 15.Bxe4!?! Rae8
16.Bf3 Nd5 17.Ne4²; 13...b5 14.Kb1 b4
15.Nxe4 h6 16.Rhf1 Qe8 17.g4 Bd7
18.Nc1!?!² White’s pawn on a2 has been
reliably protected and he can begin an
attack on the kingside.) 14.Bxe4 Ng8
15.Qg2 Nf6 (15...Be6 16.Bxc6 bxc6
17.Qxc6!?!²) 16.Bf3 b5 17.Nxb5!?! (17.Kb1
b4 18.Nd5 Nxd5 19.Bxd5 Bd7 20.Rhe1
Qf6 21.Qd2² Velker – Kostanjsek, ICCF
2015) 17...Rxa2 18.Na3. Black’s rook is
trapped. 18...Be6 (18...Bf5 19.Rhe1 Nb4
20.Qd2 c5 21.g4 Be4 22.Qxd6 Qxd6
23.Rxd6 Bxf3 24.Rxe8+ Nxe8 25.Rd8 Bc6
26.Kb1² White has obtained an active
rook and several pawns for two minor
pieces.) 19.Kb1 Bxb3 (19...Rxa3!?! 20.bxa3
Qa8 21.Rhe1 Qxa3 22.Bxc6 Bxb3 23.cxb3
Rxe1 24.Rxe1 Qxb3+ 25.Qb2 Qd3+ 26.Qc2
Qd4 27.Re8+ Nxe8 28.Bxe8² White has in
fact a piece for two pawns, but obviously
his king would have to evacuated to the
other side of the board.) 20.Bxc6 bxc6
21.cxb3 Rxa3 22.bxa3 Re3, Varga – Gonda,
Zalakaros 2011, 23.Ka2 Qe8 24.Qb2²

12.Qxe3

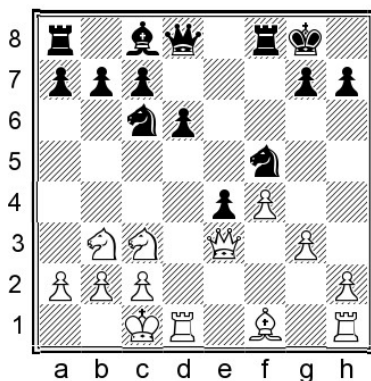


12...Bg4

12...a5 13.a3 Nf5 14.Qxe4 Re8 15.Qa4
(15.Qd5+ Kf8! Black equalises with this

rather non-standard decision, since White cannot play now Bd3, because of Ne3. 16.Bc4 Be6 17.Qd3 Bxc4 18.Qxf5+ Kg8=) 15...Ne3 (15...Nce7 16.Nxa5 Ne3 17.Re1 N7f5 18.g4 Bd7 19.Qb3+ Kh8 20.gxf5 Rxa5 21.Bb5²) 16.Re1 Kh8 (16...Bf5 17.Bb5 Nxc2 18.Rxe8 Qxe8 19.g4 Nxa3 20.Bxc6 Qxc6 21.Qxc6 bxc6 22.gxf5²; 16...Nxf1 17.Rhxf1 Bh3 18.Rg1 Qd7 19.Qb5² The queen on b5 will force Black to play sooner or later b6, but then it would be much easier for White to organise an attack against the enemy pawn on c7.) 17.Bb5 Bf5 18.Re2 Bg4 19.Rd2 Re7 (19...Bf3 20.Rg1 Re7 21.Rd3 Na7 22.Re1 Nxb5 23.Rdxe3 Nxc3 24.bxc3 Rxe3 25.Rxe3 Bc6 26.Qc4 Qg8 27.Qe2 a4 28.Nd4 Bd7 29.Kb2² White has taken the control over the only open file. If Black decides to trade the major pieces, then his bishop would be incapable of protecting his pawns against White's mobile knight.) 20.h3 Bf3 21.Rg1², with the idea g4, f5.

12...Nf5

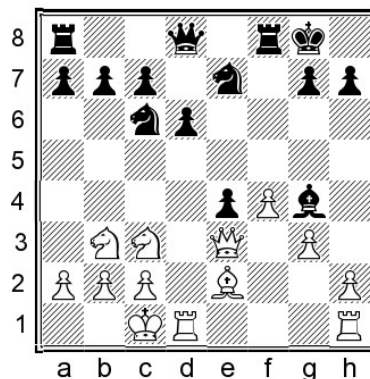


13.Bc4+ Kh8 14.Qe2 e3 15.Rhf1, Navara – Laznicka, Prague 2019 (15.Rhg1 a5 16.a4, Bauer – Votava, Norderstedt 2016, 16...Nb4÷) 15...a5!? 16.a4 Re8 17.g4 Nh6 18.h3 Nb4 19.f5 c6÷

13.Qxe4 Re8, Paveto – Villca, Buenos Aires 2018, 14.Qd5+ Kh8 (14...Be6 15.Qf3) 15.Qd2² If Black exchanges his

opponent's bishop, then White will have the powerful resource f4-f5-f6: 15...Ne3 16.Re1 Nxf1 17.Rhxf1.

13.Be2



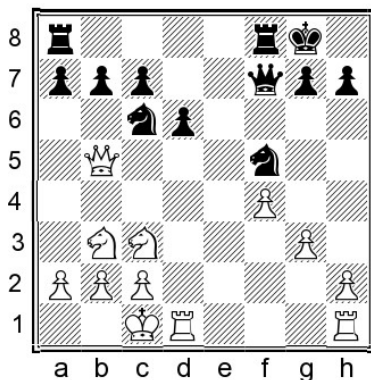
13...Nf5

Here, the exchange 13...Bxe2 would provide White with a choice with what piece to capture Black's bishop. 14.Qxe2 Qe8 15.Nxe4. The best place for White's knight is the g5-square. 15...Qg6 16.Ng5 Rfe8, Arribas Lopez – Stefanov, Dallas 2018, 17.Rhe1±

14.Qxe4 Bxe2 15.Qxe2 Qe8

15...Re8 16.Qf3 Qd7 (16...Kh8 17.Nd5 a5, Revuelta – Vega Gutierrez, Linares 2018, 18.Rhe1² a4? 19.Rxe8+ Qxe8 20.Nxc7 Qd8 21.Nxa8 axb3 22.Qxb3 Qxa8 23.Qe6 Nfe7 24.Rxd6+-) 17.Rhe1² We have already seen that in similar variations White's pawns are much more mobile than their black counterparts.

16.Qc4+ Qf7 17.Qb5



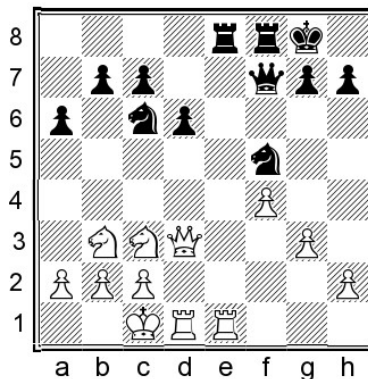
17...Rab8

17...Nd8 18.Ne4 a6 (18...h6 19.Rhe1²)
 19.Qd3 Ne6 20.Rhf1 h5 21.h3. White is
 preparing g4, f5. 21...Qg6 22.Kb1 d5
 23.Ng5 (23.Nec5!? Nxc5 24.Nxc5 Qc6
 25.Qb3 Nxb3 26.Rg1 h4 27.Rxd5 Qb5
 28.Nxb7 Qxb3 29.axb3 Rxf4 30.Nc5²)
 23...Nxb7 24.fxc5 Ne7 (24...c6 25.Nc5²)
 25.Qc3 Qc6 26.Qe3 Nf5 27.Rxf5 Rxf5
 28.Nd4 Qg6 29.Nxf5 Qxf5 30.Qb3 Rd8
 31.Qxb7 Qf3 32.Rc1 Qxg3 33.Qxa6 Qxh3,
 Hansen – Feldborg, ICCF 2015, 34.g6 Qc8
 35.Qd3± White combines the threats
 against the enemy king with the advance
 of his passed rook-pawn. The material is
 equal indeed, but Black's defence would
 be very difficult.

18.Rhe1 a6

18...Nfe7 19.Kb1 (19.Re4 a6 20.Qd3²)
 19...a6 20.Qd3 Rbe8 21.a3 h6 22.Nc1
 (After 22.Rf1!?, with the idea to advance
 g4, 22...Qf5 23.Qd2 Qh3 24.Rde1², Black's
 choice would not be great at all. The
 moment his knight abandons the e7-
 square, White's knight will be headed for
 the d5-outpost.) 22...Nc8 23.Nd5² Hansen
 – Singeisen, ICCF 2017.

19.Qd3 Rbe8



20.a3

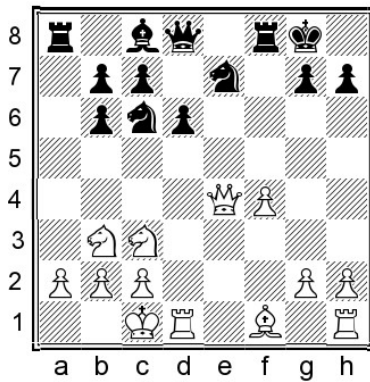
20.Nd5!? White is eyeing the enemy c7-
 pawn and is threatening g3-g4. Black
 prevents this, but weakens the g5-square.
 20...h5 21.a3 Rxe1 22.Rxe1 Ncd4? Black is
 trying to simplify the position, since he
 does not have much of a choice of other
 useful moves. 23.Ne7+ Nxe7 24.Nxd4±
 Perunovic – Abramovic, Skopje 2018.

20...b5?

20...Rxe1 21.Rxe1 Nfe7 22.Kb1² White
 still has the possibility to improve his
 position, for example: Nd4, trading a
 couple of knights with the idea to occupy
 the d5-outpost.

21.Nd5. Now, Black's knights on c6 and
 f5 would be hanging, as well as his pawn
 on c7. **21...Rc8 22.Qc3 Nce7 23.Nxe7+**
Nxe7 24.Qa5± Giri – Navara, Belfort
 2012. White has plenty of positional
 pluses and here, he has acquired a
 material advantage as well.

B2) 11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Qxe4



12...Bg4

12...Ng6, Kalogeris – Stojcevski, Porto Carras 2018, 13.Bc4 (13.g3!? Bf5 14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.Qg2 Qd7 16.h3 Rae8 17.a3²; 13...Kh8 14.a3 Bf5 15.Qe3 Qd7 16.Qd2²) 13...Kh8 14.g3 Bg4 15.Rde1 Bf5 16.Qg2² White has restricted both the enemy knights and begins a pawn-offensive.

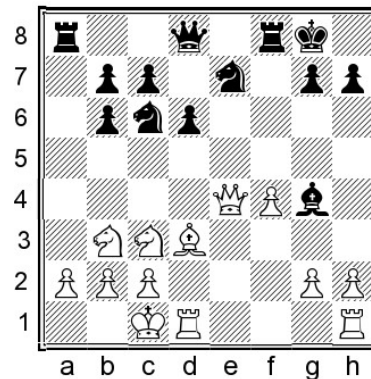
12...Kh8 13.a3 Bg4 (13...Ng8 14.Bc4 Nf6 15.Qd3²; 13...Na5 14.Nxa5 Rxa5 14...bxa5 15.Bd3 Bf5 16.Qd4²) 15.Bd3 Bf5 16.Qe3 Bxd3 17.Rxd3²) 14.Be2 Bxe2 (14...Bf5 15.Qe3 Qd7 16.Rhe1 Rae8 17.Qd2 Ng6 18.g3 Bg4 19.Bxg4 Qxg4, Fercec – Zecevic, Bol 2013, 20.Qd3 Qd7 21.Nd2 Rxe1 22.Rxe1 Re8 23.Nde4±) 15.Nxe2 Qd7 16.g3² White's knight will be gradually coming to attack the e6-square.

12...Bf5 13.Qf3 (13.Qe3 Qe8 14.Bc4+ Kh8, Bontempi – Arnaudov, Zagreb 2012, 15.h3!? Qg6 16.g4 Bxc2 17.f5 Nxf5 18.gxf5 Bxf5 19.Nd4²; 15...Ng6 16.Qxe8 Raxe8 17.Rhf1² White's pieces are slightly more active and he will create a passed pawn much easier.) 13...Qd7 14.h3 Nb4 (14...Be6 15.g4 Nb4 16.a3 Qc6 17.Qxc6 Nbx6 18.f5 Bd7 19.Bc4+ Kh8 20.Rhe1±; 18...Bxb3 19.cxb3 g6, Sankalp – Bracker,

Stockholm 2017, 20.fxg6 Nxg6 21.Nb5 Rac8 22.Bd3 Nce7 23.Rhe1±) 15.a3 Bxc2 (15...Nxc2?! 16.g4 Bg6 17.Bc4+ Kh8 18.f5 Nxa3 19.bxa3 Bf7 20.Bxf7 Rxf7 21.Kb2±) 16.Bc4+ Kh8 17.axb4 Bxd1 18.Rxd1 Nc6 19.b5 Ne5 20.Qe4 Nxc4 21.Qxc4 c6 22.g4²

13.Bd3

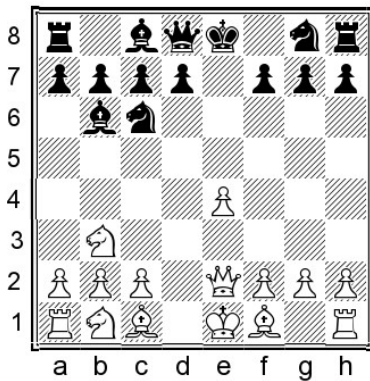
13.Bc4+ Kh8 14.Rd2 Ng6 (14...Ng8 15.h3 Nf6 16.Qe1 Re8 17.Qf2 Be6 18.Bxe6 Rxe6 19.Re1 Rxe1+ 20.Qxe1²) 15.g3 Re8 16.Qg2 Re3 17.Be2 Bf5 18.Bf3 b5 19.Nd5 (19.Re2!?) 19...Re8, Ducarmon – Bok, Netherlands 2013, 20.Re2 Rxa2 21.Nxc7±



13...Ng6 14.Rdf1 Re8 (14...Qf6 15.g3 Bf5 16.Qe2 Rae8 17.Qd2 Bxd3 18.Qxd3²; 14...Kh8 15.f5 Qg5+ 16.Kb1 Rfe8 17.Qc4 Nge5 18.Qf4 Qxf4 19.Rxf4 Nxd3 20.cxd3 Bh5 21.Kc2² White has an edge thanks to his more compact pawn-mass.) 15.Qd5+ Kh8 16.a3 Nge7 17.Qg5 Qd7 18.h3 Be6 19.g4f White's attack has developed very quickly and Black will be faced with a rather difficult defence.

Chapter 9

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3 Bb6 6.Qe2

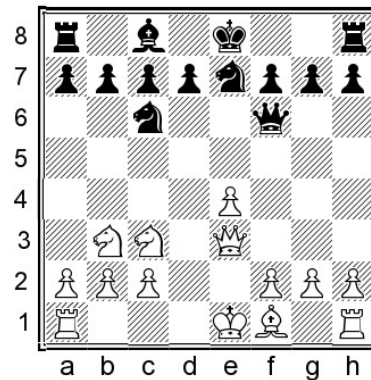


In this chapter we will analyse schemes in which Black exchanges on e3. In general, this happens when he has a pawn on d6 and a queen on d8 – **B**) 6...d6, but sometimes also when he has a queen on f6 and a knight on e7 – **A**) 6...Qf6. In the first case Black's queen may come under a juxtaposition with White's rook on d1, while in the second line after a pawn-offensive by White.

A) 6...Qf6 7.Nc3 Nge7 8.Be3 Bxe3

8...d6 9.0-0-0 Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 Be6,
Khamrakulov – Meana Fernandez, Seville
2005 (10...Bd7 11.Nb5!?, preventing
Black from castling queenside) 11.Nd5!?
Bxd5 12.exd5 Ne5 13.f4 Qh6 14.Qd2 Nd7
15.Re1±

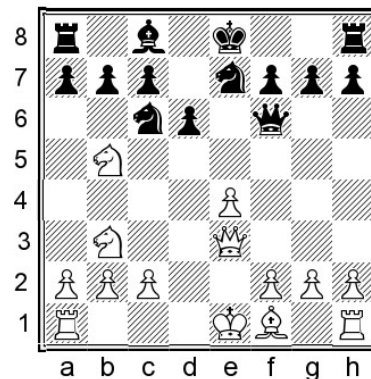
9.Qxe3



9...a6

Black's early queen-sortie has weakened the c7-pawn, so he prevents the move Nb5.

He should not ignore this possibility:
9...d6?! 10.Nb5



In the variation 10...Kd8 11.0-0-0 a6
12.Nc3±, Black's king remains stranded in
the centre.

In all the other lines White ends up
with a solid extra pawn:

10...Nb4 11.0-0-0 0-0, Tomazini –
Kerschbaumer, Wolfsberg 2014 (11...Na6
12.Nc3 0-0 13.f4±) 12.Nxc7 Bg4 13.Rd2
Rac8 14.Nb5 Nxa2+ 15.Kb1 Nb4 16.c3
Nbc6 17.Nxd6±;

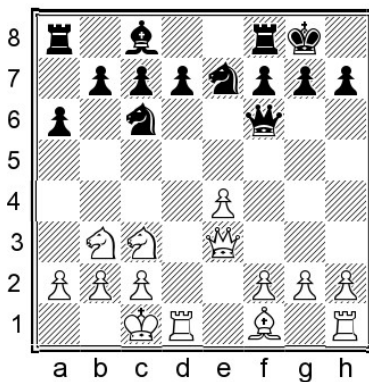
10...0-0 11.0-0-0 b6 (11...Be6 12.Nxc7
Rac8 13.Nxe6 Qxe6 14.Kb1± Theodoulidis
– Vallianos, Didymoteicho 2015) 12.Nxc7
Rb8, Alexakis – Tsouli, Achaea 2016,
13.f4±

9...Nb4?! 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.a3 Na6,
Kyrkjebo – Johnsen, Baerum 2019
(11...Nbc6?! 12.Nb5) 12.g4!? d6 13.g5 Qg6
14.h4,

9...0-0 10.0-0-0 a5 (10...a6 – see 9...a6;
10...d6 11.Nb5 – see 9...d6) 11.a3 (White
should not allow the enemy pawn-
advance a5-a4-a3.) 11...Nd8 12.e5 Qg6
13.Bd3 f5, Fakhiridou – Van Weersel,
Rijeka 2010 (13...Qh5 14.f4±) 14.Nb5+–

10.0-0-0 0-0

10...d6. There would not be too many
players who would comply with the loss
of the castling rights. 11.Nd5 Nxd5
12.exd5+ Ne7 13.Re1 Kd8 14.Qd2²
Prizant – Loughran, Dublin 2011.

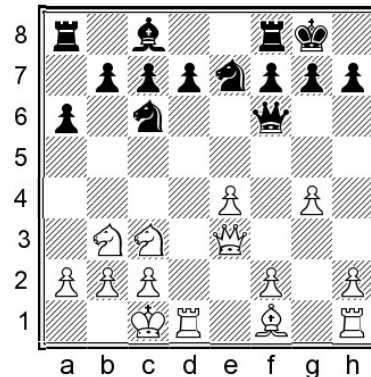


11.f4

11.h4 d6 12.Be2 b5 13.g4 Re8,
Scheuermann – Bernhardt, Germany 2009
(13...b4 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Ne5 16.g5
Qd8 17.Rde1±). White must preserve his
knight on c3 in order to support his
central pawn and to be threatening at an
opportune moment to play Nd5. Later, he

will advance his kingside pawns, followed
by opening of files. 14.a3! Rb8 15.g5 Qe6
16.h5, White has at his disposal some
attacking ideas h5-h6, g5-g6, f2-f4. Black
will continue with an offensive on the
opposite side of the board, but with only
limited forces.

11.g4!?

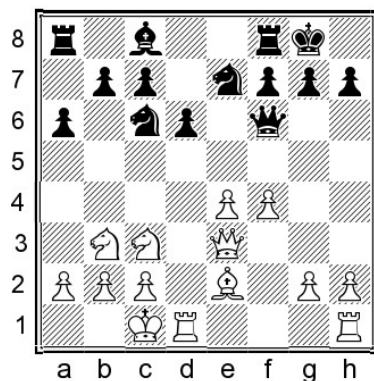


11...Qh4, Uvarov – Njirjak, Zagan 1995,
12.h3 d6 13.Bg2 Be6 14.f4 Rad8 15.Nd2
d5 16.Nf3 Qh6 (Black's aggressive move
16...Qg3 would lead to the loss of his
queen: 17.Ne2! Qxg2 18.Rh2 Qxh2
19.Nxh2±) 17.e5± Black obviously lacks
space and his queen might remain
constantly isolated from the actions.

11...Ne5 12.Be2 N5g6, Polihroniade –
Lematschko, Buenos Aires 1978, 13.Nc5!?
d6 (13...Nf4 14.Nxd7±) 14.Nd3±

11...d6 12.g5 Qe6 (12...Qg6 13.h4 f5?
14.Bc4+ Kh8 15.h5 Qe8 16.h6 Qg6 17.f4+–
Haussernot – Mangei, Germany 2017)
13.h4 f5, Harceg – Mynar, Slovakia 2000,
14.Nd4!? Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Nc6 16.Qc4²
White maintains an edge thanks to his
space advantage and the great mobility of
his pawn-mass.

11...d6 12.Be2



12...Qh4

Black is trying to penetrate with his queen inside the enemy camp and to prevent his attack.

12...Ng6?! It is far from clear why Black places his knight under an eventual attack by the enemy pawn. 13.Nd5 Qd8 14.f5 Nge7 (14...Nge5 15.f6±) 15.Nf4 Ne5 16.Nh5 (16.f6 N7g6 17.fxg7 Re8, Unseld – Bohnhoff, Bayern 2004, 18.g3±) 16...f6 17.g4,

12...b5 13.Bf3 Re8 (13...Rb8 14.g4 Bb7, Strohmman – Visschedijk, Germany 2014, 15.h4 a5 16.h5 a4 17.g5 Qe6 18.Nd4 Nxd4 19.Qxd4 f5 20.h6 Qf7 21.a3; 14...Qh4 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.exd5 Ne7 17.f5± Black's minor pieces are too passive.) 14.Rhe1 Rb8 15.Kb1² White controls the centre and is ready to begin an offensive on the kingside.

12...Qe6 13.g4 f5?! S.Gonzalez – Campos Lopez, Tunja 1981 (13...b5 14.Qf2 f6 15.Nd5±) 14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Qf6 16.Qxf6 Rxf6 17.exf5±

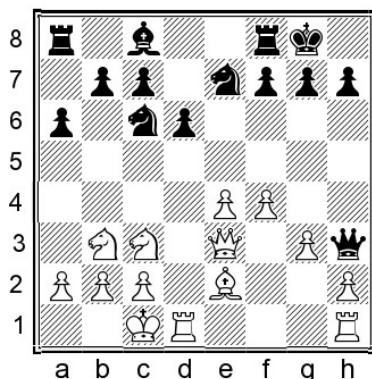
12...Qg6. Black's queen is very unstable on the sixth rank. 13.g4 f6 14.h4 Bd7 15.Rdg1 (15.h5 Qf7 16.h6 g6 17.Qd2±) 15...Qe8 16.f5 b5, Urbonaviciute –

Janulynas, Klaipeda 2014, 17.a3 Ne5 18.g5,

12...Re8 13.g4 (13.Bf3!? Qh4 14.g3 Qh3 15.Rd2 Be6 16.Re1 Rad8 17.Qf2² Black will hardly manage to organise any meaningful counterplay.) 13...Qh4 14.Rhg1 b5 15.a3. White's knight supports his centre, so he should better preserve it on the c3-square. (15.Bf3 b4 16.Ne2 Rb8 17.Nbd4, Schachinger – Kuba, Austria 2016. Here, Black could have obtained an excellent and quite understandable game by playing 17...Nxd4 18.Nxd4 a5,) 15...b4 16.axb4 Nxb4 17.Rg3 Nec6 18.g5 d5 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.Rxd5 Be6 21.Rc5 Bxb3 22.cxb3±

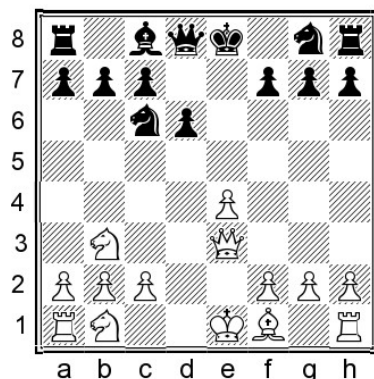
12...Be6. Later, Black exchanges his bishop for the enemy knight, but this would not bring him any substantial pluses. 13.g4 Bxb3 (13...Ng6, M.Popovic – Krsovnik, Rijeka 2012, 14.Rhf1 Bxb3 15.g5 Qd8 16.axb3±) 14.axb3 Qe6 (14...Rae8, Orejuela Chango – Rincon Gonzalez, Merida 2010, 15.g5 Qe6 16.Qg3 b5 17.Rhe1 f5 18.Bh5±; 14...Qh4 15.Rhg1 Rae8 16.Rg3 Qf6 17.g5 Qe6 18.Qf2 Kh8 19.f5 Qe5 20.Rh3 1-0 Karpatchev – Bohnert, Deizisau 2014) 15.Rhf1 (15.Rhe1!? Rae8 16.Qg3) 15...Rad8 16.f5 Qd7? (16...Qe5 17.f6 gxf6 18.Nd5±) 17.f6 Ng6, Raach – Jacke, Idar Oberstein 2000 (17...gxf6 18.Qh6) 18.h4 Nce5 19.Nd5 c6 20.fxg7 cxd5 21.gxf8=Q+ Nxf8 22.exd5+– The defender of the light squares is badly missed by Black in all the variations, since it was voluntarily exchanged for the passive enemy knight on b3.

13.g3 Qh3



14.f5 (White's other possibility here would be to fix the pawn-structure in the centre and to begin active actions on the queenside. 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Na7, Mihalik – Stepanyan, Telford 2018, 16.Na5!?² White prevents the activation of the enemy bishop on c8 and is planning to attack the pawn on c7.) **14...f6 15.Qf2** (15.Nd4 Bd7 16.Nf3 b5 17.Ng1 Qh6 18.Qxh6 gxh6 19.Nh3²) **15...Ne5 16.Rhg1 Qh6+ 17.Kb1 b5 18.g4** (It is possibly stronger for White to play here the calmer move 18.a3!?, preventing the enemy from the possibility to oust the knight on c3 from its base.) **18...b4 19.Nd5 Nxd5 20.exd5 g6 21.fxg6** (21.Nd4!? gxf5 22.gxf5+ Kh8 23.Rg3,) **21...Qxg6 22.Nd4** (22.Bd3!? Nxd3 23.Rxd3± With queens present on the board, Black's bishop is only a defender of the dark squares in his camp.) **22...Kh8 23.Nc6 Nxc6 24.dxc6 Be6**, Hamdouchi – Cristofari, Ajaccio 2012, **25.Bd3 Qg7 26.Rde1±** White's pieces are active and his pawn on c6 may become very powerful, while Black has numerous weaknesses in his position.

B) 6...d6 7.Be3 Bxe3 8.Qxe3

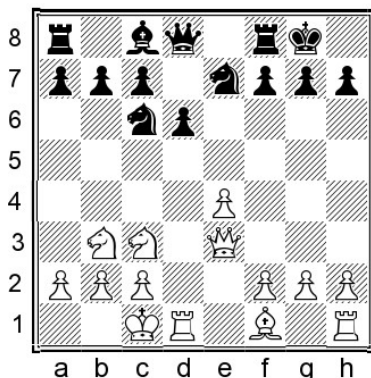


8...Nf6

This is the most natural development of Black's knight.

8...a6 9.Nc3 Be6 10.0-0-0 Qe7, Khudovekova – Borisovaite, Klaipeda 2013, 11.Qg3 Qf6 12.Nd5 Bxd5 13.exd5 Nce7 14.f4² Black will have difficulties to develop comfortably his pieces and he has obvious problems with the safety of his king, for example: 14...0-0-0? 15.Na5 Nh6 16.Nxb7 Kxb7 17.Qb3+ Ka7 18.Qa4+-, or 14...Nh6 15.Qf3± White will soon begin a pawn-offensive on the kingside, while on the queenside he will exert massive positional pressing with the ideas to play Na5 and to transfer his major pieces on the b-file.

8...Nge7 9.Nc3 0-0 (9...a5 10.Bb5!? 0-0 11.0-0-0 – see 9...0-0; 9...Be6 10.0-0-0 – see 8...Be6) 10.0-0-0



10...Bd7 11.f4 Qe8, Michelle – Curran, Glasgow 2014, 12.Be2 a5 (12...a6 13.Bf3±) 13.a3 a4 14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Nc6 16.Qd2± White is well prepared to begin an offensive on the kingside, while Black must consider on every move the enemy pawn-advance e4-e5.

10...Ng6 11.f4 (11.Be2!? f5 12.f4 fxe4 13.g3±) 11...Bg4 (Following 11...Re8, White has a very pleasant choice between the natural line: 12.Be2 a5 13.a3± and the provocation 12.Bb5!? a6 13.Be2 b5 14.e5 b4 15.Bf3± The advance of Black's queenside pawns has only weakened the light squares in his camp.) 12.Rd2!? Re8 13.Qf2 Be6 14.h4±

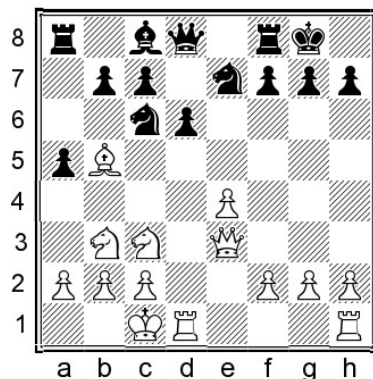
10...Be6 11.f4 (It is also good for White to play here the calmer line: 11.Kb1!? a5 12.a3 a4 13.Nd2±) 11...Bxb3 12.axb3 a6 13.g4 b5 14.h4 b4 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.exd5 Re8 17.Qd2 Ne7 18.h5 Qd7 19.h6+– Harding – Dudeney, ICCF 2015.

10...a6 11.f4 Qe8 (11...b5 12.e5²) 12.Bd3 b5 13.Rhe1 Bd7 14.Kb1 Kh8 15.Qf3 (15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 Bg4 17.Rd2 Rd8 18.h3²; 15.h3!? f5 16.exf5 Nxf5 17.Qf2±) 15...Qc8 16.h3 b4 17.Nd5 a5 18.Nxe7 Nxe7 19.e5 Ng6, Ni Shiqun – Pogonina, Tehran 2017, 20.Be4±

10...f5 11.f4. On this square White's pawn deprives the enemy pieces of the important e5-square. (11.Bc4+!? Kh8 12.f4 fxe4, Blazeka – Nishant, Pune 2014 13.Qxe4²; 11.exf5 Bxf5 12.f4!?²) 11...fxe4

12.Qxe4 Ng6 13.g3 Bf5 14.Qg2 Qe8 15.Bc4+ Kh8 16.Rhe1 Qd7 17.Nc5 Qc8 18.Be6 Bxe6 19.Nxe6 Rf6, Van den Boogaart – Norman, Vale 2015, 20.Qe2± Black's rook is still isolated from the actions, while White is threatening to play Nd5 and g3-g4 increasing his pressure, as well as Qh5 and Ng5, creating serious threats against the enemy king.

10...a5 11.Bb5 (11.a3!? a4 12.Nd2 Bd7 13.f4 Kh8 14.Nf3± Sankalp – Harshavardhan, Jammu 2018; 12...f5 13.f4! fxe4 14.Ndxe4 d5 15.Bc4 Ra5, Mosadeghpour – Iovcov, Porto Carras 2015, 16.Qf3±; 11...f5 12.f4! fxe4 13.Qxe4² White has prevented the appearance of the enemy pawn on the f4-square, which would have provided his pieces with the excellent e5-outpost; 11...Be6 12.Kb1!?; 12.f4 Re8, Draganic – Vujosevic, Pljevlja 2015, 13.Bb5²)



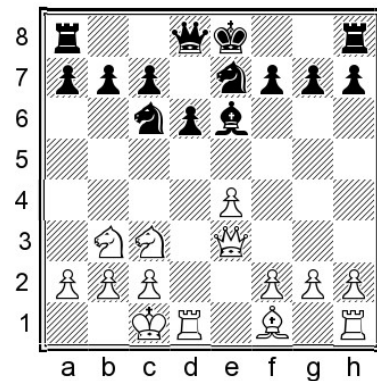
11...Ne5 12.f4 Nd7 (12...Ng4, Vidic – Gazikova, Maribor 2012, 13.Qd4 Be6 14.Nd2 Nf6 15.Nf3²; 13.Qg3 c6 14.Be2 Nf6 15.Nd4²) 13.a3 c6 14.Be2 Qc7 15.h4² White will create soon dangerous threats on the kingside.

The move 11...f5 would only facilitate White to open files. 12.f4 fxe4 13.Qxe4 Bf5, Vocaturo – Vega Gutierrez, Benasque 2018 (13...Kh8 14.a3²) 14.Qe2 Kh8 (14...Nb4 15.Nd4 c6 16.g4 Bd7 17.Ne6 Bxe6 18.Qxe6+ Kh8 19.Rxd6 Qc7 20.Qd7 Qxd7 21.Rxd7 cxb5 22.Rxe7 Rxf4 23.Rxb7

Rf2 24.Rxb5±) 15.a3 Qe8 16.Rde1 Qf7 17.g4 Bd7 18.Rhf1² White exerts the standard pressure in the centre and on the kingside.

11...Bd7 12.f4. He cannot continue the game without this move (12.Rhe1!? Nc8 13.f4 Nb6 14.Nd2²; 12.a3 Nc8 13.f4 Re8 14.Kb1²) 12...Nb4 (12...Na7 13.Bxd7 Qxd7 14.f5²) 13.Bxd7 Qxd7 14.a3 Nbc6 15.f5 (White maybe does not need to be in a hurry. The calmer move 15.Rhe1!? preserves all his active possibilities.) 15...f6? Black prevents the pawn-strike f5-f6, but the penetration of the enemy knight proves to be even more dangerous. 16.Nc5 Qc8 17.Ne6 Rf7 18.Nb5+- Delgado Ramirez – Asfora, Guarapari 2006.

8...Be6 9.Nc3 Nge7 (9...Nf6 10.0-0-0 – see 8...Nf6; 9...Nb4?! This is a loss of a tempo and maybe even two... 10.0-0-0 Ne7? De Jesus Rosa – Nova Gomez, Santo Domingo 2015, 11.Qd4 Nbc6 12.Qxg7 Kd7 13.Nc5+ Kc8 14.Nxe6 fxe6 15.Bc4+-) 10.0-0-0



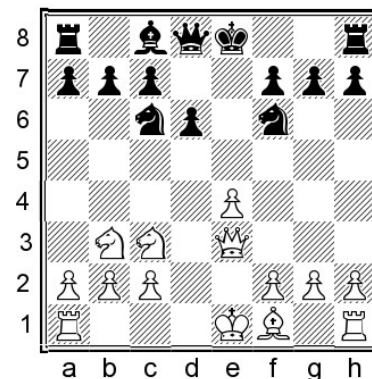
About 10...0-0 11.f4 – see 8...Nge7.

10...a5, Costantini – O.Smith, Mallorca 2004, 11.f4!? a4 12.Nc5 a3 13.Nxe6 axb2+ 14.Kxb2 fxe6 15.Bc4 0-0 16.Bxe6+ Kh8 17.Bb3± White's b-pawn has disappeared off the board, but his bishop has occupied favourably its place, having captured in the process the central enemy pawn.

Following 10...Bxb3 11.axb3, Black would miss badly his light-squared bishop. 11...0-0 (11...Qd7 12.f4²) 12.h4 Qc8 13.h5 Ne5 14.h6 g6 15.f4 Ng4 16.Qg3 Nf6 17.Qg5 Qe6 18.Bc4 d5 19.exd5 Qd6 (19...Qf5 20.Qh4+-) 20.Nb5 Ne4 21.Nxd6 Nxc5 22.Nxb7+- Backwinkel – Pusch, Bochum 1979.

10...Qd7 11.f4 (White can also play calmly here: 11.Kb1!?) 11...f6, Ares Campo – Perez Castellano, Novetle 2008 (The move 11...Bxb3?! would weaken considerably the light squares. 12.axb3 f6 13.Qg3 Ng6 14.Be2 0-0 15.Bg4 Qd8, Lutard – Chaignet, Lille 2013, 16.Be6+ Kh8 17.Qxg6! hxg6 18.Rd3, with the unavoidable 19.Rh3# to follow...) 12.Qg3 Bxb3 (12...0-0 13.Nc5 Qc8 14.Nxe6 Qxe6 15.Be2±) 13.axb3 0-0 14.Be2² White's light-squared bishop has remained without an opponent and is completely dominant on the light squares. He can soon begin his standard pawn-offensive on the kingside, or continue with Nd5, forcing the opening of files and occupying the e6-outpost.

9.Nc3



We will analyse now: **B1)** 9...Be6 and **B2)** 9...0-0.

Both these moves are quite natural and Black cannot continue the game without them.

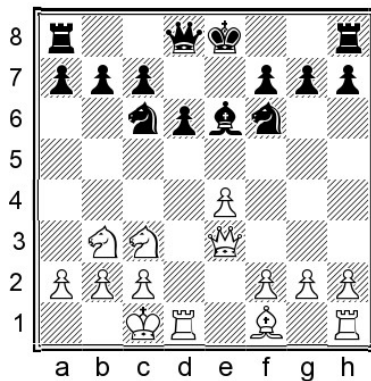
About 9...Qe7 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.f3, or 9...Ng4 10.Qd2 0-0 11.0-0-0, or 9...a5 10.a3 0-0 11.0-0-0 – see variation **B2**.

9...a6 10.0-0-0 Qe7, Hernandez – Guipi Bopala, Montreal 2019, 11.f4 Bg4 12.Rd2 0-0 (12...0-0-0 13.g3 h5 14.Bg2±) 13.h3 Bf5 14.Bd3 Rfe8 15.Re1± Nxe4? 16.Nxe4 d5 17.Nf6+–

B1) 9...Be6

Black increases his control over the important d5-square. The evacuation of his king away from the centre is postponed for the moment.

10.0-0-0



10...Qe7

This is another useful move for him. About 10...0-0 11.f3 – see variation **B2**.

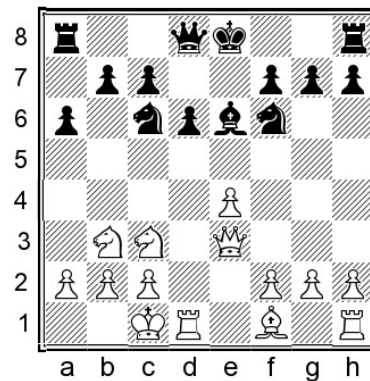
10...Ng4?! 11.Qg3 0-0 (11...h5, Georgiou – Gkikas, Nikaia 2017. 12.h3± h4? 13.hxg4+–) 12.f4±

10...Qd7 11.f4 0-0-0, Dellert – Nizamova, Erfurt 2017, 12.Nd4 Nxd4 13.Rxd4 Qc6 14.Be2± White controls the centre and can begin active operations on both sides of the board.

10...Bxb3 11.axb3 0-0, Horvath – Szukics, Balatonlelle 2009, 12.h3 Re8 13.g4 Qe7 14.Bg2 a5 15.f4²

10...Qd7 11.f4 0-0-0, Dellert – Nizamova, Erfurt 2017, 12.Nd4 Nxd4 13.Rxd4 Qc6 14.Be2± Now, even after castling on the same side of the board, White has good attacking prospects, due to his well deployed pieces and the dominance over the fourth rank for the manoeuvres of his pieces.

10...a6. Black plans to advance his queenside pawns.



11.f4. White is threatening now e4-e5. 11...Qb8!? 12.Be2 Qa7 13.Qxa7 Nxa7 14.e5 dxe5 15.Bf3 c6 16.Nc5²

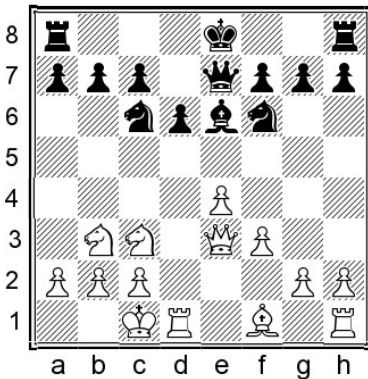
11.Nd4 Nxd4 (11...Bd7? Fritz – Kitzberger, Ueberlingen 2000, 12.Nxc6 Bxc6 13.e5±) 12.Rxd4 0-0 13.Be2 Re8 14.Rhd1² White's pieces are perfectly mobilised and he will soon advance his kingside pawns.

11.f3. He fortifies his e4-pawn and plans a kingside assault. 11...b5 12.g4 h6 13.h4 b4 14.Nd5 a5? (14...Bxd5 15.exd5+ Ne7 16.Bc4±) 15.Bb5 Bd7, Oglaza – Vs.Timofeev, St Petersburg 2017, 16.Nc5!? This temporary knight-sacrifice

forces a transition to a winning endgame for White. 16...dxc5 17.Qxc5 Nxd5 18.Rxd5 Qe7 19.Bxc6 Qxc5 20.Bxd7+ Kd8 21.Rxc5 Kxd7 22.Rd1+ Kc8 23.Rdd5+-

11.f4!?

It is also good for White to play here 11.f3.



About 11...0-0 12.g4 – see variation **B2a**.

11...0-0-0?! 12.Bb5 Bxb3 (12...Bd7 13.Bxc6 Bxc6 14.Qxa7± – Black is a pawn down and his king is endangered.) 13.axb3 Kb8 14.Bxc6 bxc6 15.Qd4 Rhe8 (15...Ka8? Black plans to fortify his castling position by transferring his rook to the b6-square, but he will fail to do that. 16.Qa4 Qe8 17.e5!? dxe5 18.Rxd8+ Qxd8 19.Qxc6+ Kb8 20.Qb5+ Ka8 21.Qxe5±; 17.Rhe1 Rb8, Kyrychenko – Kamchytski, Porec 2015, 18.e5!? dxe5 19.f4 e4 20.Nxe4 c5 21.Nxf6 Qxa4 22.bxa4 gxf6 23.Rd7+-) 16.Qc4 Kb7 17.Qb4+ Ka8 18.Qa4 Qd7 19.Rhe1 Re5 20.f4± White exploits quite effectively the combination of his break in the centre with the pressure against the compromised position of the enemy king. 20...Rc5? 21.e5 Nd5 22.Ne4 Rb5 23.c4+- Ortiz Verdesoto – Rivas Lugo, Cali 2015.

11...a6 12.Qd2 0-0-0 (After 12...0-0 13.g4², Black will have problems to

counter the pressure of White's pawns on the kingside.) 13.Nd5 Bxd5 (13...Qd7 14.Nxf6 gxf6 15.Qc3 f5 16.exf5 Bxf5 17.Nc5. White is threatening to capture on a6. 17...Qe8 18.Nxa6 bxa6?? 19.Bxa6+ Kd7 20.Bb5+-; 17...Qe7 18.Nxa6 Qg5+ 19.Rd2 Rhe8 20.Bb5² White has ended up with an extra pawn.) 14.exd5 Nb8 15.Re1 Qd7 16.Bd3 h6 (16...Nxd5? 17.Qg5+-) 17.c4²

11...a5 12.Bb5 (12.g4 0-0 13.h4 – see variation **B2a**; 12...a4 13.Nd4 a3 14.b3 0-0 15.g5 Nd7 16.Nxe6 Qxe6 17.Nd5±; 16...fxe6. Black closes the e-file, but loses all his chances of organising counterplay. 17.f4 Qf7 18.Bh3 Nc5 19.Rhf1²) 12...Bxb3 (12...0-0 13.g4 – see variation **B2a**) 13.cxb3 (It would be worse for White to choose here 13.axb3 0-0 14.g4 Nb4 – this black knight would be very annoying for White, but he would be incapable of ousting it from there.) 13...0-0 14.g4 Nb4 15.Kb1 c6 16.Be2 Rfd8 (16...b5 17.Rhe1²) 17.Qb6² White combines his active actions on the kingside with an attack against his opponent's weak pawns.

11...0-0

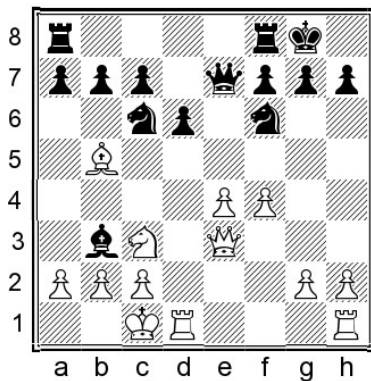
11...0-0-0? As usual, this decision provides White with attacking chances without any risk for him. 12.Bb5! Bxb3 13.axb3 Kb8 14.Bxc6 bxc6 15.Qd4±

12.Bb5

12.Be2 Rfd8 13.Nd4 Nxd4 14.Rxd4²

12...Bxb3

12...Bg4. This move will soon help White to begin an attack on the kingside with tempo: 13.Rde1 Rfe8 14.h3²



13.cxb3!?

White must preserve the possibility to oust the enemy knight from the b4-square with the move a2-a3.

Accordingly, it would be worse for him to choose here 13.axb3 Nb4 14.Rhe1 c6 15.Qd4 a5 16.Be2 Rfd8 17.Kb1 b5,,

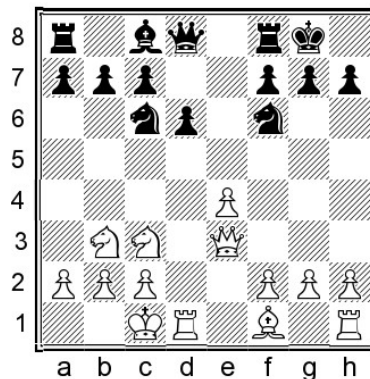
13...Rfe8

13...Nb4 14.Rhe1 c6 15.Bf1 a5 (15...Rfd8 16.a3) 16.a3 Na6 17.e5 dxe5 18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.fxe5 Ng4 20.Bxa6 Rxa6 21.h3 Nh6 22.g4 Raa8 23.Ne4± White's knight is ready to occupy some key-squares and Black would be helpless against that.

13...a6 14.Bxc6 (The move 14.Be2!?, prepares an offensive on the kingside.) 14...bxc6 15.Rhe1²

14.Rhe1 Qd7 (14...a6 15.Bc4² b5? 16.Nd5 Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Qd7 18.Qc3+–) **15.Qf3 a6 16.Be2±** White is perfectly prepared to play g2-g4 with a dangerous attack on the kingside.

B2) 9...0-0 10.0-0-0



Black must try to attack the enemy pawn on e4. He has the possibility to do that with the moves: **B2a)** 10...Qe7 and **B2b)** 10...Re8.

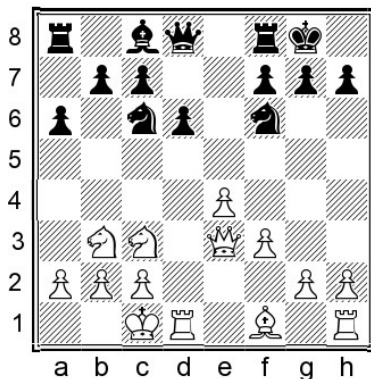
10...Ng4 11.Qd2 Qf6 (11...f5, Molina – Guimaraes, Florianopolis 2016, 12.h3 Nf6 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.g4 Be6 15.Bg2±) 12.f4± Black's knight on g4 might get lost.

10...a5 11.a3! (Following 11.Bb5 Ne7! 12.a4 c6 13.Bc4 d5 14.Rhe1 b5!,, Black will have excellent chances of seizing the initiative.) 11...Be6 12.Kb1 Re8 (12...Qe7 13.Bd3 a4 14.Nd2²) 13.f3 Ne5 14.Nd4 Qe7 15.g4 c6 16.g5 Nh5 17.f4 Bg4 18.Re1 c5 19.Ndb5 Nf3 20.h3 Nxe1 21.hxg4+– Zherebukh – Puranik, chess.com 2018.

10...Be6 11.f3 (11.f4!?) 11...a5 (11...Bxb3 12.axb3 a6 13.g4 Nb4 14.h4 Re8 15.g5 Nd7, Birmann – O'Brien, ICCF 2014, 16.h5,) 12.g4 (12.Bb5!? Qe7 13.Kb1²; 12.Nc5 Qe7 13.Nxe6 fxe6 14.Kb1²) 12...a4 (12...Ne5 13.Nd4 Bd7 14.h4 c5 15.Ndb5 Bxb5 16.Nxb5 Ne8 17.g5, Romero Echeverria – Custodio, Sao

Paulo 2010) 13.Nd4 Nxd4 (13...a3 14.b3 Nxd4 15.Rxd4²) 14.Qxd4 Ra5, Gjertsen – Juriloo, Fagernes 2014, 15.a3² White increases effortlessly his pressure, while the mobility of Black's pawns is seriously restricted.

10...a6 11.f3 (11.f4!? Re8 12.Be2²)



11...Re8 12.g4 – see variation **B2b**.

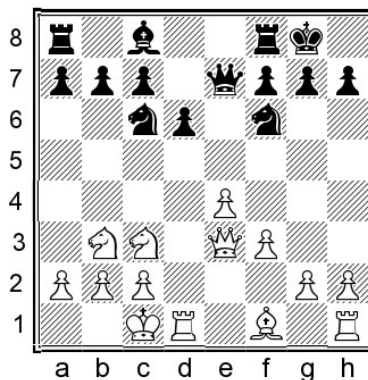
11...Be6 12.g4 Nd7 13.h4 a5?! (It is not easy to understand why Black has lost an important tempo for the move a7-a6. Still, even after the accurate reaction 13...Qe7 14.h5f, White would have excellent attacking prospects.) 14.Bb5 Nde5 15.g5 Bc4 16.f4 Bxb3, Bontempi – Bradaric, Split 2011, 17.axb3 Nd7 18.e5 Nc5 19.h5+–

11...b5 12.g4 b4 13.Ne2 Re8. (We have here an example of the typical development in this variation. Both sides are trying to come ahead of the opponent in the beginning of the active actions. Black could have played here immediately 13...a5 14.g5 Nd7 15.Nbd4 Nce5 16.Ng3 Nb6 17.f4 Bg4 18.Re1 c5 19.Ndf5f, but even then, White would have been clearly ahead in the creation of concrete threats.) 14.g5 Nd7 15.Ng3 (15.h4!?!; 15.f4 Qe7 16.Ng3 Nb6, Guerrero Rodriguez – Spicak, Warsaw 2012, 17.h4 f5 18.Bg2 fxe4 19.Qxe4 Bg4 20.Rd3²) 15...a5 16.Bb5 Bb7 17.Bxc6 (17.h4!?) 17...Bxc6 18.Nd4 Bb7

19.Ndf5. This move is played with the idea to follow with Nh5. 19...g6? (19...Kh8 20.h4,) 20.Nh6+ Kf8 21.f4 Qe7 22.Qd4 Qe6 23.Kb1 Nb6 24.Rhf1 Ke7 25.f5 Qe5 26.Qxe5+ dxe5 27.fxg6 fxg6 28.Rf7+, Muzychuk – Lagno, Rostov on Don 2011. It is amazing, but Black will be checkmated after the exchange of the queens: 28...Ke6 29.Rf6+ Ke7 30.Ngf5+ gx5 31.Nxf5#

B2a) 10...Qe7 11.f3

11.h3!? Be6 12.Bb5f



11...Be6

About 11...a5 12.Bb5!?! Be6 13.g4 – see 11...Be6.

11...a6 12.g4 Be6 13.Nd4 (13.h4!?!; 13.Kb1!?! Rad8 14.h4?! Bxb3 15.axb3 d5,,; 14.Qf2 Bxb3 15.axb3 d5?! 16.g5±) 13...Nxd4 14.Qxd4 Rfd8 15.g5 Ne8 16.f4 b5 17.Nd5 Bxd5 18.exd5 g6, Pribek – Nemeth, Hungary 2013, 19.Bh3² Black's knight is practically deprived of any mobility and White will enhance his attack with a march of his rook-pawn.

11...Ne5 12.g4 c6 13.h3 b5 14.f4 Ng6,
 Palac – Vucic, Neum 2004, 15.f5!? Ne5
 16.g5 Nfd7 17.h4 b4 18.Ne2 a5 19.f6 gxf6
 20.Ng3 a4 21.Nf5 Qd8 22.Nbd4 b3
 23.cxb3 axb3 24.Nxb3 Rxa2 25.Qg3 Kh8
 26.Nxd6±

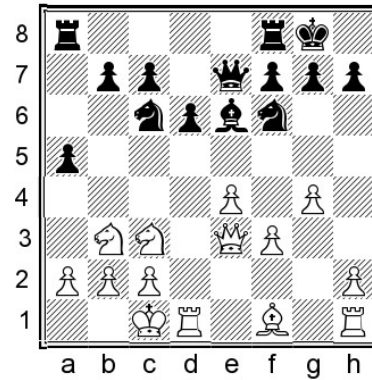
12.g4

12.Kb1!? Rfd8 (12...a5, Avedisian –
 Barandiaran, Montevideo 2015,
 13.Bb5f) 13.Bb5 Bxb3 14.cxb3 d5 15.Bxc6
 bxc6 16.Rhe1² White has a superior
 pawn-structure.

12...Nd7

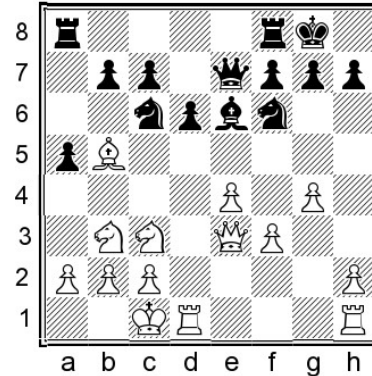
12...Bxb3 13.axb3 (In response to
 13.cxb3, Zorko – Szukics, Mureck 2010,
 Black has a very attractive resource –
 13...d5 14.g5 d4 15.gxf6 Qxf6 16.e5 Qh4
 17.Qe4 Qh6+ 18.f4 dxc3 19.bxc3² White's
 bishop is stronger than the enemy knight,
 but White's king is much more vulnerable
 than its counterpart.) 13...d5 14.g5 d4
 15.gxf6 Qxf6 16.e5 Qh4 17.Qe4 Qh6+
 18.f4 dxc3 19.bxc3± This move is played
 with the idea to create a passed pawn on
 the e-file, or to continue with h4-h5, in an
 attempt to entrap the enemy queen.

12...a5



13.h4. White begins an immediate
 attack. 13...a4 14.Nd4 Nxd4 (14...Nd7
 15.g5 – see 12...Nd7) 15.Rxd4 a3 16.b3
 Rfe8 17.g5 Nd7 18.f4 (18.h5!?,) 18...c5?
 (18...Nc5 19.h5±) 19.Rd2 f5 (19...Nb6
 20.Bb5 Bd7 21.Bxd7 Qxd7 22.Rhd1+–)
 20.exf5 Bxf5 21.Qxe7 Rxe7 22.Rxd6 Re1+
 23.Kd2+– Rae8?? 24.Bc4+ 1–0 Frank –
 Penz, Marz 2013.

13.Bb5. White develops his pieces and
 is trying to impede Black's active actions
 on the queenside.

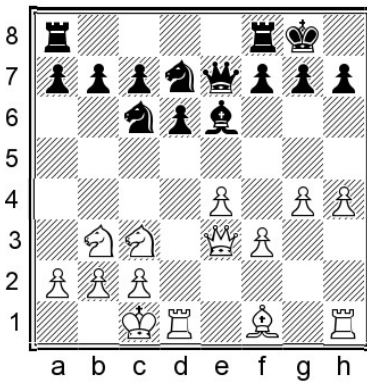


13...Nb4, Zimina – Mareckova,
 Merlimont 2011, 14.Nd4!? Nxa2+ 15.Nxa2
 Bxa2 16.Nf5 Qe5 17.Qg5 g6 18.Rhe1 Ne8
 19.Qh6 Qf6 (19...gxf5? 20.gxf5 Ng7
 21.f4+–) 20.Rg1 Ng7 21.g5 Qe5 22.Qxg7+
 Qxg7 23.Nxg7 Kxg7 (23...a4 24.Ne8+–;
 23...c6 24.Be2 a4 25.Nh5 gxh5 26.Rxd6±)
 24.b3±

13...Na7 14.Be2 Nc6 (14...b5 15.g5 Nd7,
 Kuehn – Van Roon, Maastricht 2015.
 White can simply grab a pawn here with

16.Bxb5 Nxb5 17.Nxb5 a4 18.N3d4±
 Black will be incapable of regaining it,
 because after 18...Bxa2? 19.Nc6 Qe6
 20.Nxc7 Qc4 21.Ne7+ Kh8 22.Nxa8 Rxa8
 23.Rxd6+-, he would lose much more
 material.) 15.Nd4 Nxd4 16.Qxd4 (White
 will have very good attacking prospects
 after 16.Rxd4!? Nd7 17.f4f) 16...Rfd8
 17.g5 Ne8 18.Qe3 (18.f4!?) 18...c6 19.f4
 b5 20.Rhf1 (20.Rhe1!? Nc7 21.f5 Bxf5
 22.Bxb5 Bd7 23.Ba4² Black's active
 actions on the queenside have reached
 their dead end and White can begin his
 kingside offensive.) 20...a4 21.f5 Bc4
 22.Bxc4 bxc4 23.a3 Rdb8 24.Rd4 Qa7
 (24...Qb7 25.Nd1±) 25.Nd1 Qc5 26.Qd2
 Nc7 27.Rxd6 Nb5 28.Rd7 Nxa3 29.g6 c3
 30.gxf7+ Kf8, Daulyte – Mamedjarova,
 Mamaia 2016, 31.Nxc3 Nc4 32.f6 g5
 33.Qd4 Qxd4 34.Rxd4 Ne5 35.Rf5 Nxf7
 36.Nxa4+-

13.h4



13...a5

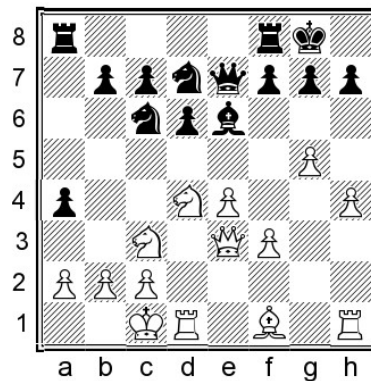
13...Bxb3 14.axb3 Nb6, Sos – Cotic, Split
 2015, 15.Kb1 (White has some good
 alternatives here: 15.h5!? – see 13...Nb6;
 or 15.f4 f5 16.gxf5 Rxf5 17.Qg3f, with
 excellent attacking prospects.) 15...Rad8
 (15...a5 16.Bb5±) 16.Qf2 Nb4 17.f4 d5
 18.Bg2 dxe4 19.Bxe4 c6 20.h5,

13...Nb6 14.h5 (14.Kb1 Rad8, Kessler –
 Froewis, Vienna 2010, 15.Bb5 a6 16.Bxc6
 bxc6 17.Qd3) 14...Bxb3 15.axb3 f5 16.gxf5
 Rxf5 17.f4 Raf8 18.Ne2² Black obviously
 suffers due to the absence of his light-
 squared bishop and his attempts to solve
 his problems in a tactical fashion would
 lead after 18...Nd5?! 19.Qf3 Rxf4 20.Nxf4
 Nxf4 21.Bc4+ Kh8 22.Rdf1±, to the loss of
 an exchange for him. He would not obtain
 full compensation for it, since in the
 middle game his king might come under
 an attack, while in the endgame the
 enemy rook would be much more mobile
 than his knight.

14.g5

It also seems good for White to opt here
 for the standard move 14.Bb5!?

14...a4 15.Nd4



15...Nxd4

15...Nc5 16.a3 (16.h5!? a3 17.b3 Nxd4
 18.Rxd4 Rae8 19.f4 f6 20.g6 h6 21.Be2²
 White's attack is over, but he preserves
 excellent chances of capturing the enemy

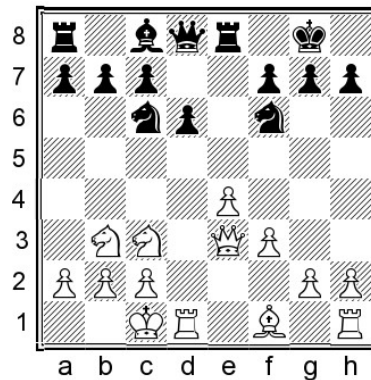
a3-pawn in the endgame.) 16...Nxd4
 17.Qxd4 (17.Rxd4!? f6 18.Be2²) 17...f6
 18.Qe3 Qf7 19.Be2 Ra5, Hros – Talla,
 Banska Stiavnica 2016 and here, it would
 be very good for White to choose 20.f4!?
 f5 (without this move White will play f4-
 f5 and his bishop will come to the c4-
 square) 21.exf5 Qxf5 22.Rdf1±, with the
 ideas Nb5-d4, or h5, Rg1, Bg4 clearing the
 way forward of his passed pawn.

16.Qxd4

16.Rxd4!? f6 (16...a3 17.b3 f6 18.f4 Nc5
 19.Be2²) 17.a3 Nc5 18.Be2² White's rook
 is more active on d4 than on the d1-
 square.

16...f6 (16...a3 17.b3 f6 18.Qe3 – see
 16...f6) **17.Qe3 a3** (17...fxg5 18.hxg5 Ne5
 19.f4 Nd7 20.Rd2 g6 21.Rdh2 h5 22.gxh6
 a3 23.b3 Rae8 24.Bh3± White has
 excellent attacking prospects and an extra
 pawn as well.) **18.b3 fxg5 19.hxg5 Qf7?**
 Vusatiuk – Cerbulenco, Balti 2015 (It is
 preferable for Black to choose here 19...c6
 20.f4 Nc5 21.Rh4,, with the idea to follow
 with Be2, Rdh1.) **20.Nb5 Nc5 21.f4 Qxf4**
22.Qxf4 Rxf4 23.Nxc7 Rc8 24.Nxe6
Nxe6 25.Bc4± Black is forced to give up
 the exchange on the c4-square and later
 he would unavoidably lose all his
 queenside pawns.

B2b) 10...Re8 11.f3



11...Be6

About 11...Qe7 12.g4 Be6 13.g5 – see
 11...Be6.

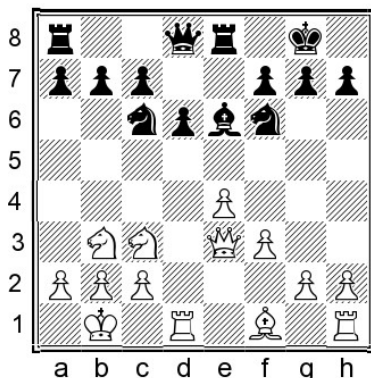
11...a6 12.g4 b5 (12...a5 13.Bb5f) 13.g5
 Nd7 14.h4 Nb6 15.h5 Ne5? (15...f6²)
 16.f4!? (16.h6 b4 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.Rxd5
 Bb7 19.Rd4 Qe7, Karjakin – Zubov,
 Alushta 2001, 20.Rxb4±) 16...Nec4
 17.Bxc4 bxc4 18.Nd2 d5 19.Nf3 Bg4 20.h6
 f5 21.g6+–

11...a5 12.Bb5 Bd7 (12...Nd7 13.g4 Nb6,
 Mokal – Kozak, Zalakaros 2015, 14.Nd4
 Bd7 15.Nf5 Qf6 16.Kb1 a4 17.a3± White is
 clearly ahead of his opponent in the
 development of his queenside initiative
 and controls reliably the centre.) 13.g4 a4
 14.Bxa4 Ne5 15.Bxd7 Nfxd7, S.Lalic –
 Bhatia, England 2012, 16.f4!? Nxd4
 17.Qg3 Ngf6 18.Rhe1² White can improve
 his position in many different ways: e4-
 e5, the transfer of the knight to the f5-
 square and to exert pressure on the open
 file against the enemy king.

12.g4

This is his most aggressive move.

Still, we think it would be worth
 analysing 12.Kb1 as well.



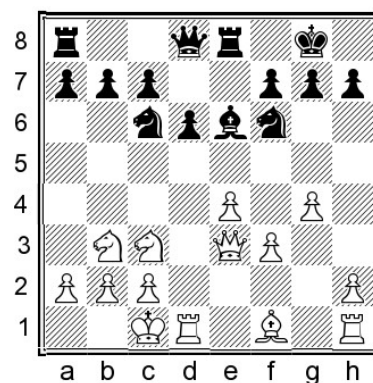
12...a6 13.g4 b5 14.h4 (14.g5!? Nh5 15.f4,) 14...b4 15.Ne2 Bxb3 16.cxb3 a5 17.Ng3 (17.g5!? Nh5 18.Bh3,) 17...Re5 18.g5 Nd7 19.f4 Rc5 20.h5 a4 21.g6 a3 22.e5+- Bernotas – Krustkalns, Riga 2019.

12...a5 13.Nc5 Bc8, Terbe – Juhasz, Budapest 2015, 14.g4 Qe7 15.N5a4± White is perfectly prepared to begin an offensive on the kingside, while Black cannot advance his queenside pawns due to the weakening of the b5-square.

12...Nd7 13.g4 a5 14.h4 (14.Bb5!?) 14...a4 15.Nd4 Nxd4 16.Qxd4 a3 17.b3 Ne5 18.Be2² Black will not reach the b2-square in this game and he would be incapable of checkmating, so he would lose his a3-pawn in the endgame.

12...Qe7 13.g4 Rad8 (13...a5 14.Bb5 Red8 15.h4 Na7 16.Be2 a4, Kochetkova – Mazur, Czech Republic 2013, 17.Nd4 a3 18.g5 Nd7 19.b3± Black will not come to the b2-square in the nearest future.) 14.g5 (14.Bb5!? a6 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Na5 Bd7 17.Rhe1 Rb8 18.h3 Qe5 19.Nb3² Black has weaknesses on the queenside, while White is planning a pawn-offensive on the kingside. Black's aggressive move 19...a5?! would only lead to the loss of a pawn for him: 20.f4 Qe6 21.Nxa5+-) 14...Nd7 (14...Nh5 15.f4 f5 16.Be2 Bf7 17.Rhg1 fxe4 18.f5±) 15.f4 (15.h4!? Nb6 16.Bb5²) 15...Nb6 (15...f5 16.gxf6 Nxf6 17.Bg2 Qf7 18.Qd2 a5 19.Nd4² White

controls the centre and has already opened the g-file. 19...Nxd4 20.Qxd4 b5 21.e5 Nh5 22.Rhf1 b4 23.f5 bxc3 24.fxe6 Qe7 25.Qxc3+-) 16.Qf3 Rd7 (16...a5!? 17.Nc1²) 17.Bg2 (It is more energetic for White to play here 17.h4!?) 17...Red8? (17...f5²) 18.Nd5 Qf8 19.h4 Ne7 20.f5 Bxd5 21.exd5 f6 22.Nd4 Qf7 23.Ne6 Rc8 24.Rhg1 Kh8 25.Bh3+- E.Andreev – Volcko, Bardejov 2014.



12...Nd7

Black is not waiting for the move g4-g5 and sends immediately his knight to the queenside.

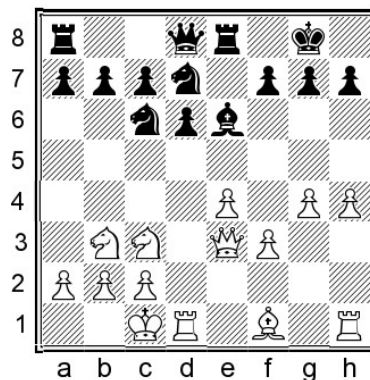
12...a5 13.Bb5 Nd7, Evsyukov – Popova, Voronezh 2013, 14.h4 Nb4 15.a3 c6 16.Be2 Bxb3 17.cxb3± White wins a pawn and doubles his rooks on the open file.

12...Bxb3 13.axb3 (13.cxb3 d5, K.Horvath – Fazekas, Miskolc 2010, 14.Bb5 d4 15.Qf4 a6 16.Bxc6 bxc6 17.Na4 Rb8 18.Qd2± Black is losing a pawn, so White can switch to a positional play.) 13...a5 (13...d5 14.Bb5 d4 15.Qf4 a6 16.Bxc6 bxc6 17.Na4± Black has numerous weaknesses on the queenside.) 14.g5 Nd7 15.h4 Nb6, Stefanovic – Mojzes, Vrnjacka Banja 2013, 16.Bb5± White has seriously impeded his opponent's counterplay and is also ready to compromise his pawn-structure at any opportune moment.

12...a6 13.h4 (13.g5!? Nd7 14.h4f)
 13...b5 14.h5 b4 (14...Ne5? This knight
 will be attacked with tempi. 15.g5 Nfd7
 16.f4± White's attack is running
 effortlessly. 16...Nc4? 17.Bxc4 Bxc4,
 Nuzzolo – D.Kovalenko, Murmansk 2016,
 18.Na5 b4 19.Nc6 Qc8 20.h6 g6 21.Qd4+-;
 16...b4 17.Na4 Nc6± Black has practically
 no counterplay at all.) 15.Ne2 Bxb3
 (15...h6 16.Ned4 Nxd4 17.Nxd4 Bd7
 18.Rg1, Black is helpless against the
 threat g5.) 16.axb3 a5, Okkes –
 Timmermans, Netherlands 2011 (16...h6
 17.Ng3 a5 18.g5 hxg5 19.Bb5+-) 17.g5
 Nd7 18.g6 fxe6 19.hxe6 hxe6 (19...h6
 20.Ng3+-, with the ideas Bc4, or Nf5xh6.)
 20.f4 a4 21.Nd4 Nxd4 22.Bc4+ Ne6
 23.Bxe6+ Rxe6 24.Rh8+ Kxh8 25.Qh3+.

12...Qe7 13.g5 Nd7, Kathmale –
 Khusenkhojaev, Mumbai 2019 (13...Nh5
 14.f4 f5 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Qxe7 Nxe7
 17.Bc4+ Kf8 18.Nd4± Black's knight is at
 the edge of the board, so White can
 continue with dominating forces to attack
 the centre and the enemy queenside.)
 14.h4 Nb6 15.Nd4 (It is also very good for
 White to opt here for 15.h5!? f5 16.gxf6
 Qxf6 17.f4f) 15...Bd7 16.h5,

13.h4



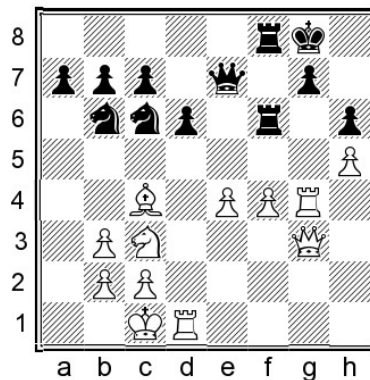
13...Bxb3

In response to 13...a6, it is good for
 White to play 14.Kb1!?, as well as 14.g5.

14.axb3 Nb6 15.g5 Qe7 16.h5 f6 17.Rg1 Rf8 18.f4 fxe5 19.Rxe5 h6

White has won the opening battle, since
 he has a powerful centre and excellent
 attacking prospects.

20.Rg4 Rf6 21.Qg3



21...Kh8

Black's king must run away from the
 checks in advance.

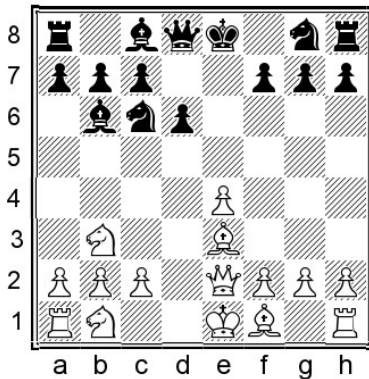
Black was in a very difficult situation,
 due to a tactical nuance, connected with
 the possible penetration of White's knight
 to the d5-outpost, in the game Panarin –
 Riabtsev, Belorechensk 2012 and he lost

quickly after: 21...Raf8? 22.Bc4+
(22...Nxc4 23.Nd5 Qf7 24.Rg1+-) 22...Kh8
23.Rg1 g5 24.hxg6 Kg7 25.Rh4! White's
attack is winning. 25...Rh8 26.f5 Qe5
27.Ne2 Nxc4 28.bxc4 Nd4 29.Nxd4 Qxd4
30.Rgh1 Qe5 31.Qh3+-

22.Kb1 Rf7 23.Bd3± White is ready to
begin the decisive offensive. His three
major pieces will occupy the g-file and his
knight will go to the g6-square via e2.

Chapter 10

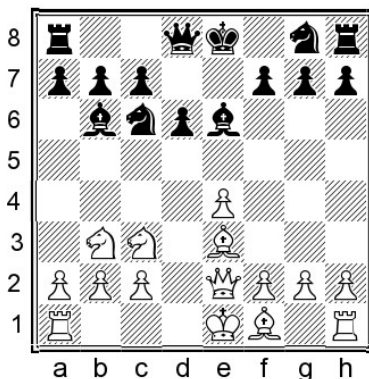
**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3 Bb6 6.Qe2
d6 7.Be3**



7...Nf6

This is a natural decision for Black.

7...Be6 8.Nc3



About 8...Nge7 9.0-0-0 – see Chapter 8.

8...Bxe3 9.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9.

8...Nf6 9.0-0-0 or 8...Qe7 9.0-0-0 0-0-0
10.g3 Nf6 11.Bg2 – see 7...Nf6.

8...Qf6 9.Nd5! Bxd5 (White's b2-pawn is
poisoned: 9...Qxb2? 10.Bc1 Qe5 11.f4+-;
9...Qd8 10.0-0-0 Nge7 11.h4 0-0 12.Nf4²)
10.exd5 Nce7 11.0-0-0 Qe5 (11...0-0-0?!
Klein – Duijker, Hoogeveen 2011, 12.Bxb6
axb6 13.g3 Nh6 14.Bh3+ Kb8 15.Rhe1
Rhe8 16.Qb5± White is threatening to
advance his a-pawn, as well as to

redeploy his pieces – Qa4, Nd4-b5.)

12.Qb5+ Kf8 13.Bd4²

8...Qd7 9.0-0-0 0-0-0 10.Bxb6 axb6
11.Nd4 (11.Qe3!? Bxb3 12.axb3 f5 13.g3
fxe4 14.Qxe4 Nf6 15.Qa4²) 11...Nge7
(11...Nxd4 12.Rxd4 Ne7 13.Qe3²) 12.Qe3
Rhe8 (Black will end up with great
difficulties after 12...Na5 13.Bb5 c6
14.Nxe6 fxe6 15.Be2 b5 16.Qa7 Qc7,
Kravtsiv – Rzayev, Kazan 2013, 17.Bg4+-)
13.Ndb5 Kb8 14.Qg3 Rg8 15.Be2²

8.Nc3

Now, Black can choose to castle
kingside **A**) 8...0-0, or to continue with the
development of his queenside pieces with
the idea to castle later on the queenside –
B) 8...Qe7.

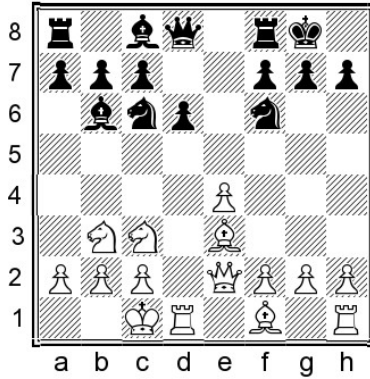
About 8...h6 9.g3!? (9.0-0-0) 9...Be6
10.Bg2 Qe7 11.0-0-0 – see variation **B**.

8...Be6 9.0-0-0 Ng4 (About 9...0-0
10.Kb1 – see 8...0-0; 9...Qe7 10.g3 – see
8...Qe7; 9...Bxe3+ 10.Qxe3 – see Chapter
9.) 10.Bxb6 axb6 11.f4 0-0 12.h3 Nf6
(Black would not achieve much after the
pseudo-active line: 12...Qh4?! 13.g3! Qh6
14.Kb1 Nf6 15.Bg2 Rfe8 16.Qf2 Nd7 17.g4
f6, M.Popov – Grebenshikov, Tiumen
2013, 18.Nd5±) 13.g4 Nd7 14.Kb1 Re8 (if
14...f6, then 15.h4±) 15.Qf3 Qb8 16.g5
Nc5 17.Nc1! White's play is energetic and
quite natural, but he still needs to play
accurately with precise calculation of the
variations at the important moments.
17...Ra5 18.h4 b5 19.Bxb5 Nxe4 20.Bxc6
Nxc3+ 21.Qxc3 Rc5 22.Qxc5 dxc5 23.Bxe8
Qxe8 24.Rhe1± Perunovic – Romanishin,
Biel 2017. White's two rooks are much
stronger than the enemy queen.

A) 8...0-0

Black shows that he is well prepared for the sharp fight in a position with an opposite sides castling, but objectively speaking, White is better in this line.

9.0-0-0



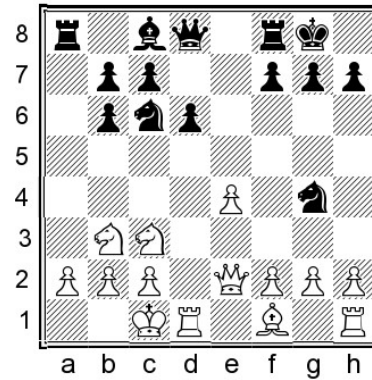
9...Be6

About 9...Bxe3 10.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation **B2**.

About 9...Qe7 10.f3 Be6 11.g4 Bxe3+ (11...Nd7 12.Kb1 – see 9...Be6) 12.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9.

9...Re8 10.f3 Ne5 (10...Be6 11.Kb1 – see 9...Be6; 10...h6? 11.g4 Be6 12.h4 Qe7 13.g5 Nh5, Betkowski – Karpus, Lazy 2019, 14.Rg1 hxg5 15.Rxg5 g6 16.f4,; 14...Kh7 15.Qf2 Nf4 16.Qd2 Ng6 17.f4,) 11.Qd2 (11.Kb1!?, 11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Qd2²) 11...Be6 (Following 11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Be6, White has the resource 13.Nc5²) 12.Be2 Bc4 (12...Nc4 13.Bxc4 Bxc4 14.g4²) 13.f4!? (13.g4 Bxe3 14.Qxe3 c6 15.g5, Ivanchuk – Topalov, Monte Carlo 2004, 15...Nd5! 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.h4 Qb6 18.Qxb6 axb6 19.Bxc4 dxc4 20.Nd4 c3÷; 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.Bxc4 Nxc4 15.Qd4 Ne5 16.Rhe1²) 13...Bxe2 14.Qxe2 Bxe3+ 15.Qxe3 Ng6 16.Qf3²

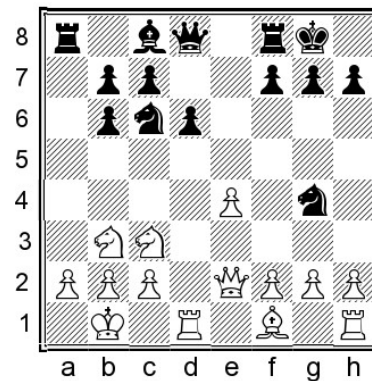
9...Ng4 10.Bxb6 axb6



There arise standard positions with a slight edge for White after 11.Qd2 Nf6 12.Kb1 Be6 13.f3²

11.h3 Qg5+ (11...Qh4 12.g3 Qh6+ 13.Kb1 Be6 14.f4 – see 8...Be6) 12.Kb1 (12.Qd2 Qxd2+ 13.Rxd2 Nf6 14.a3² Sharma – Ervan, Johor 2017) 12...Nf6 13.Nb5 Ne8 14.g3 Be6 15.Rg1²

11.Kb1



11...f5 12.h3 Nf6 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.g4 Re8 15.Qd2²

11...Nf6 12.f3 Be6 13.g4 Nd7 14.Qe3 Nc5 15.h4 Nxb3 16.cxb3² Black's attempt to begin active operations on the a-file might backfire: 16...Ra5 17.h5 Qa8?! 18.h6 g6 19.Nd5! Rxa2 20.Qc3 Ne5 21.f4+–

11...Re8 12.f3 Nge5 (12...Nf6 13.Qe3 Nd7 14.g4 Nc5 15.Bb5²) 13.Qd2 Be6 14.Bb5! Nd7 15.Rhe1 (15.g4!?) 15...Na7 16.Bxd7 Qxd7 17.e5 Bxb3 18.axb3 Re6 19.f4 Nc6 20.Nb5² Satosuo – Teeriaho, ICCF 2006.

11...Be6 12.f3 Bxb3?! (12...Nf6 13.g4 – see 11...Nf6) 13.cxb3! The right decision in similar positions would be to leave the a-file closed and to try to oust the enemy knight away from the b4-square with the help of the move a3. 13...Nf6 14.g4 Nd7 15.h4 Kh8 16.Bh3! (White needs to play precisely if he wishes to attack effectively the enemy c7-pawn. If he tries the move 16.Nb5, he would fail after 16...Na7, while the move 16.g5 would be parried by Black with 16...f5.) 16...f6 17.g5!± Nde5 18.f4 Ng6 19.Qh2 (with the idea to deploy the knight on the d5-outpost) 19...fxg5? 20.hxg5 Rxf4? 21.Bf5+–

10.Kb1!

It is essential for White here to choose the right order of moves. In general, he plans to place a pawn on f3, but he should better begin with some necessary prophylactic. If Black plays 10...Nd7, then White can play immediately 11.f4.

The modest move 10.g3 would not promise much to White. 10...Re8 11.Bg2 Bg4! 12.f3 (12.Bf3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Bxe3+ 14.Qxe3, Caruana – Malakhov, Tromsø 2013, 14...b5 15.Nxb5 Nxe4,,) 12...Nxe4!? 13.Nd5 Nb4! 14.Nxb4 Bxe3+ 15.Qxe3 Nxc3÷

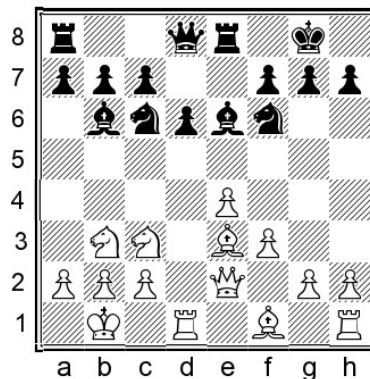
10...Re8

About 10...Qe7 11.f3 Ne5 (11...Rfe8 12.g4 or 11...Nd7 12.g4 Rfe8 13.Bxb6 – see 10...Re8) 12.Nd4²

10...Bxe3 11.Qxe3 a5 (11...Re8 12.f3 – see Chapter 9, variation **B2b**) 12.Nc5²

10...Nd7 11.f4!? Re8 (11...Qe7 12.Qf2 Bxb3 13.cxb3 Nc5 14.Qc2²) 12.Qf2²

11.f3



We will analyse now: **A1**) 11...Qe7 and **A2**) 11...Nd7.

About 11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation **B2b**.

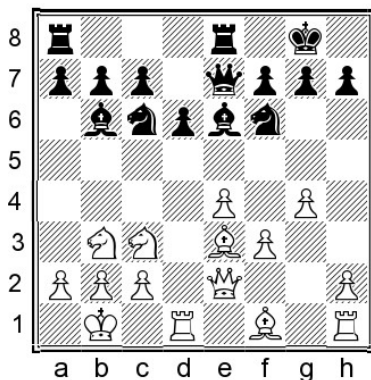
11...Bc4 12.Qf2 Bxf1 13.Rhxf1 Bxe3 14.Qxe3 a5 15.a3² After the exchanges of the bishops, White still maintains the initiative.

11...Ne5 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.Qf2 (13.Nd4?! Alonso – Romero Barreto, Buenos Aires 2019, 13...c6) 13...Qe7 14.h3 Nfd7 15.f4 Nc6 16.Nd2! (16.Nd4 Nxd4 17.Qxd4, Alexakis – Papadopoulos, Heraklion 2016, 17...Nc5!? 18.Bd3 Bd7÷) 16...Nc5 17.Bb5 Bd7 18.Rhe1 Nb8 (18...Kh8 19.g4±) 19.Bc4±

A1) 11...Qe7

This is a logical move. Black connects his rooks and plans to fortify his position in the centre.

12.g4

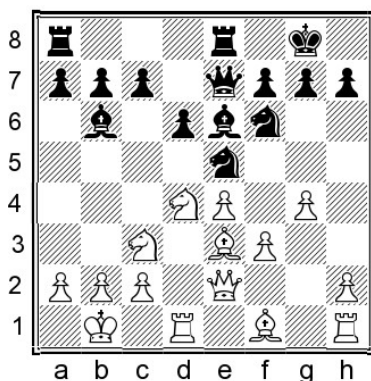


12...Nd7

About 12...Bxe3 13.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation **B2b**.

12...Rad8 13.g5 (13.h4?! Bxb3 14.axb3 Bxe3 15.Qxe3 d5!,,; 13.Bxb6!? axb6 14.h4. There is no white bishop on the e3-square any more, so it would not work for Black to play 14...Bxb3 15.cxb3 d5?!, because of 16.g5±) 13...Nd7, Sukandar – Lacrosse, Vlissingen 2016, 14.h4!? f5 15.gxf6 Nxf6 16.Bg5! Kh8 (16...Qf7 17.Qg2±; 16...h6 17.Qg2! hxg5 18.hxg5±) 17.Qg2±, with the idea to advance the f-pawn later.

12...Ne5 13.Nd4

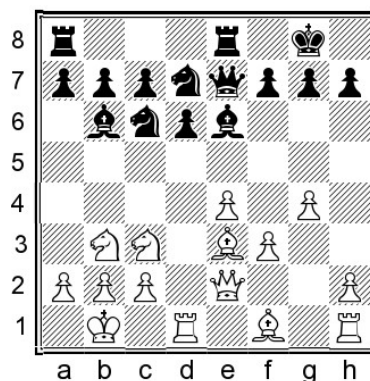


13...Bc4 14.Qg2 Bxf1 15.Qxf1 Bxd4
(without this move White's knight will go

to the f5-square) 16.Bxd4 Ng6 17.h4 Nf4, Ferrec – Fodor, Pula 2012. Black fails to occupy the f4-square. White may continue with 18.h5!? h6 19.Be3 Ne6 (19...Qe5 20.Qg1+-, threatening Qh2 and g5) 20.Qg2±

13...Nfxg4 14.fxg4 Bxg4 15.Qd2 Bxd1 16.Qxd1²

13...Bxd4!? 14.Bxd4 a6 15.Be3 (15.h3 Nc6 16.Bf2 b5 17.Qe1 b4 18.Ne2²) 15...Nexg4 16.Bg5! Ne5 17.Rg1 Ng6 18.Qg2 d5 19.h4! h6 20.exd5 Bf5 21.h5 hxg5 22.hxg6 Bxg6 23.Qxg5²



13.Bxb6!?

In this line White should choose the right moment to exchange the dark-squared bishops; otherwise, Black would organise counterplay.

After the imprecise move 13.g5?!, Black might reply with 13...a5 14.a3 a4 15.Nd2 (Here, after an exchange of the bishops on the b6-square, White's pawn on g5 would be hanging.) 15...Ba5! 16.Nb5 d5,, Low – Farid, Golden Sands 2014.

Here, besides 13.Bxb6, it also seems good for White to try the following order of moves: 13.h4 a5 14.a3 a4 15.Bxb6! Nxb6 16.Nd4 Nxd4 17.Rxd4²

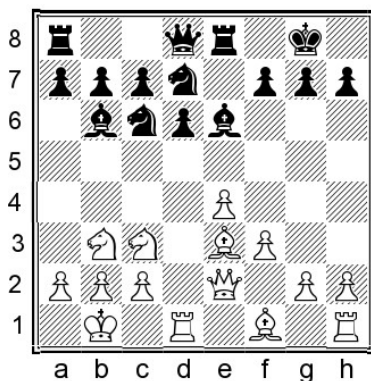
13...Nxb6

Following 13...axb6, it would be promising for White to choose 14.Qg2!?, so that after 14...Nc5, he can play 15.Nd5 Qd7 16.Bb5!, without being afraid of 16...Rxa2 17.Bxc6 bxc6 18.Kxa2 cxd5 19.exd5 Qa4+ 20.Kb1 Bd7 21.Nxc5 bxc5 22.Rd3² Black's pieces are active indeed, but this cannot compensate fully his exchange-sacrifice.

14.Qf2. This is the ideal square for White's queen, since it cannot be attacked and supports at the same time the future pawn-offensive on the kingside.

14...Rad8. Black prepares a pawn-advance in the centre, but White is well prepared for similar developments. (After Black's alternative 14...a5 15.a3 Bxb3 16.cxb3 Ne5 17.Be2², White will also maintain the initiative.) **15.h3 d5 16.Bb5 dxe4 17.Rxd8 Rxd8 18.Bxc6 bxc6 19.Nxe4**² Black has managed to deflect his opponent from active actions, but has created chronic weaknesses in his position and White's advantage is doubtless.

A2) 11...Nd7



Now, Black can counter the move f4 with f5, but White has also some other ideas up his sleeve.

12.g4

12.Bxb6!? Nxb6 (12...axb6 13.Qf2 Nc5 14.Bb5 Nxb3 15.cxb3 Bd7 16.g4²; 13...f5 14.exf5 Bxf5 15.Bc4+ Kh8 16.g4 Nde5 17.Bd5 Be6 18.h3², followed by f4) 13.Qf2 Qf6 (13...Qe7 14.Bd3!? Nb4 15.Bb5 c6 16.Be2 Rad8 17.Rhe1²) 14.Be2² White maintains a clear space advantage and this facilitates for him the planning of his further actions.

12...a5

Black wishes to begin active operations on the queenside, but weakens his control over the b5-square.

About 12...Bxe3 13.Qxe3 – see Chapter 9, variation **B2b**.

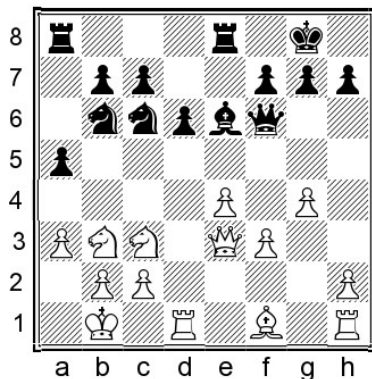
13.a3

White must act accurately now.

He can try to play with the same idea – to stop the advance of the enemy rook pawn, the line: 13.Nd2!? a4 14.a3 – see 13.a3.

He should not weaken however, the b4-square with the move 13.a4?! Black can counter this with 13...Qe7 (13...Bxb3!? 14.cxb3 Nb4÷) 14.h4 Bxb3 (In the game Areshchenko – Fedorchuk, Lviv 2015, Black exchanged mistakenly the dark-squared bishops and after 14...Bxe3?! 15.Qxe3 Bxb3 16.cxb3 Nb4 17.g5 Nb6 18.h5², White seized the advantage.) 15.cxb3 Nb4 16.g5 Rad8÷ – Now, White must consider seriously his opponent's move Qe6.

13.Bxb6!? Nxb6 14.a3 Qf6 (14...Qe7
15.Qf2 – see 14...Qf6; 14...Qh4 15.Qe3²)
15.Qe3

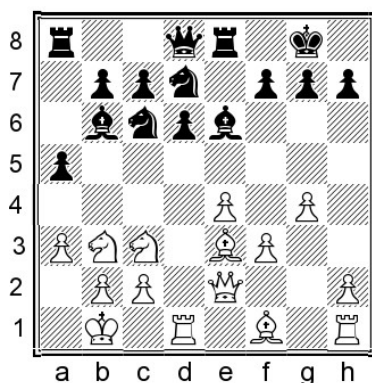


Now, the variations below show that White would have always a slight but stable edge:

15...Bxb3 16.cxb3 a4 17.b4²

15...Red8 16.Nb5 (16.Bb5 Bxb3 17.cxb3
Qe6 18.Ne2 Na7 19.Nd4 Qe5 20.Bf1²)
16...Qe7 17.N3d4 Nxd4 18.Nxd4 Bd7
19.Rg1²

15...Qe7 16.Qf2 Red8 17.Nd5! (White
prevents the move d5, which would
equalise for Black.) 17...Bxd5 18.exd5 Ne5
19.Nd4! g6 (19...Nxd5? 20.Nf5 Qe6
21.Rxd5!+-) 20.Qg3! Nec4 (20...Nxd5?!
21.f4 Nc6 22.Nf5! gxf5 23.Rxd5+-)
21.Bxc4 Nxc4 22.Rhe1 Qd7 23.f4²



13...a4

After 13...Bxb3 14.cxb3², White's king is completely safe, while the absence of Black's light-squared bishop might hurt him in the future.

The move 13...Qh4 impedes the advance of White's kingside pawns only temporarily. 14.h3 (14.Bxb6!? Nxb6 15.Qe3², with the idea to play at first g5 and then f4.) 14...Bxb3 15.cxb3 Bc5 16.Rg1², followed by f4.

13...Bc4 14.Qf2 (White will preserve an edge even in a position with bishops of opposite colours: 14.Qxc4 Bxe3 15.h4²) 14...Bxf1 15.Rhxf1 Bxe3 (or 15...a4 16.Nd2²) 16.Qxe3 a4 17.Nd4 Nxd4 18.Qxd4² Black has managed to simplify the position a bit, but he has to protect his a4-pawn in addition to his other problems.

14.Nd2!

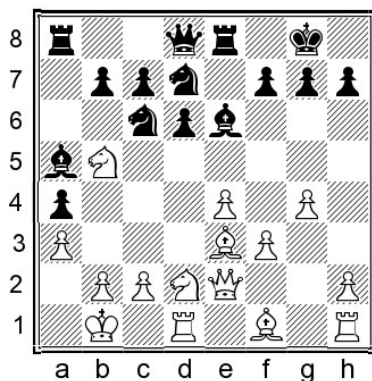
White has in mind that his opponent's position is cramped and chooses the right move.

Following 14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 Ba5!?,,, Black can create real counterplay, including the circumstance that he can advance his c-pawn.

14...Ba5

14...Qh4 15.h3 Ba5 16.Nb5²

15.Nb5



15...d5

It would be premature for Black to play here 15...Nde5, because after 16.h3, White will advance f4 with tempo.

15...f6 16.Rg1!? Kh8 (16...Qe7 17.Nc4²) 17.Nc4²

White can counter 15...Qe7 with 16.Qg2 Rad8 (16...d5 17.f4! Nf6 18.f5 Bd7 19.Bg5! dxe4 20.Nc4 Red8. White was threatening to capture on f6. 21.Qg3² and he has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 17.Nc4 Nde5 18.Nxa5 Nxa5 19.f4! Nec4 (19...Nxc4? 20.Bd4+-) 20.Bc1 c6 21.Nd4²

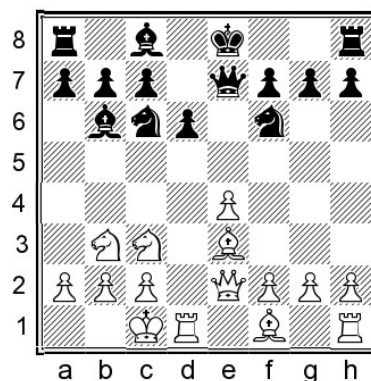
16.h3!? The basic idea behind this move is the preparation of the thematic pawn-advance f4, as well as to free the h2-square, which might be useful for White's queen. **16...dxe4** (After 16...Nb6, it would be very good for White to continue with 17.Qh2! Re7 18.f4 and following 18...d4 19.Nf3 Bc4 20.e5², Black's d4-pawn will turn out to be vulnerable.) **17.Nxe4 Qe7 18.Qf2²** Black has managed to accomplish the freeing pawn-break in the centre, but has failed to equalise. White's pieces have been more actively and harmoniously

deployed, while Black must worry about the safety of his pawn on a4, which is too far away from the rest of his forces, in addition to his other problems.

B) 8...Qe7

This line is much safer for Black. He lacks space, so he should better avoid positions with castling on opposite sides of the board.

9.0-0-0



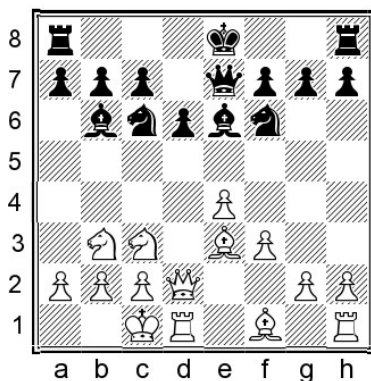
9...Be6

When White has castled queenside, Black should place his bishop just on the e6-square. We will see that in this case he will be better prepared for White's typical scheme of playing with a pawn on f3.

About 9...0-0 10.f3 – see 8...0-0.

9...Bd7 10.g3 (10.Bxb6!? axb6 11.f3; 10.f3 0-0-0 11.Bxb6 axb6, Tomazini – Kraeutler, Graz 2011, 12.Qd2 Kb8 13.Bb5 Qe5 14.Kb1 Rhe8 15.Nc1²) 10...0-0-0 11.Bxb6 axb6 12.Bg2 Kb8, Kubik – Holecek, Frydek Mistek 2015, 13.h3 Rhe8 14.Kb1²

Black's attempt to provoke the move f2-f3 with 9...Bg4 is still a loss of a tempo and this would hurt him later. 10.f3 Be6. Here, White can begin with the useful move 11.Qd2!, in order to clarify his opponent's plans (11.g4 h6 12.Kb1 0-0-0 13.g5 hxg5 14.Bxg5 Rde8÷ Solodovnichenko – Valsecchi, Padova 2013).



Now, Black risks coming under a dangerous attack after 11...0-0 12.g4², as well as following 11...0-0-0 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.Nd5 Bxd5 14.exd5 Ne5 15.a4! Kb8 16.a5 bxa5 17.Nxa5±

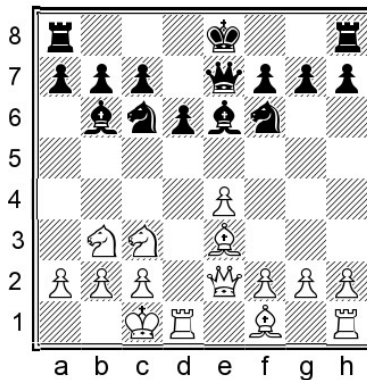
11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 a6 (12...0-0-0 13.Bb5 Bxb3 14.axb3 Kb8 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Qd4 Ka8 17.Qa4 Qe8 18.Rhe1 Rb8, Kyrychenko – Kamchytski, Porec 2015, 19.e5! dxe5 20.f4±; 16...Rhe8 17.Qc4 Kb7 18.Qb4+ Ka8 19.Qa4 Qd7 20.Rhe1± Ortiz Verdesoto – Rivas Lugo, Cali 2015) 13.g4 0-0-0 (13...h6, Kulkarni – Savanovic, Abu Dhabi 2016, 14.Nd4! Nxd4 15.Qxd4² 0-0-0?! 16.Qa7±) 14.Nd4! (14.g5 Nd7 15.h4 Kb8 16.f4 Nb6= Pridorozhni – Musakaev, Pavlodar 2012) 14...Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Kb8 16.h4² White has extra space and can attack comfortably his opponent's weaknesses on both sides of the board.

10.g3!?

This is an important moment. I believe that Black will have serious problems after this move.

After White's standard approach 10.f3 0-0-0 11.Bxb6 (11.Nd4 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 Rhe8 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.Qe3 d5,, Wang – Jakovenko, St Petersburg 2012) 11...axb6 12.Nd4 Kb8 13.Qe3, Black can cope with his difficulties with the help of the move 13...d5! (After the less precise move 13...Rhe8, White can still hope to obtain an advantage with 14.Bb5 Bd7 15.Nde2 Qe5 16.Qf4 Qxf4+ 17.Nxf4 Ne5 18.Bxd7 Rxd7 19.b3 c6 20.a4 Kc7 21.h4² Carlsen – Tkachiev, Moscow 2009.) 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Rxd5 16.Nxc6+ bxc6= Yu Yangyi – Malakhov, Ningbo 2011.

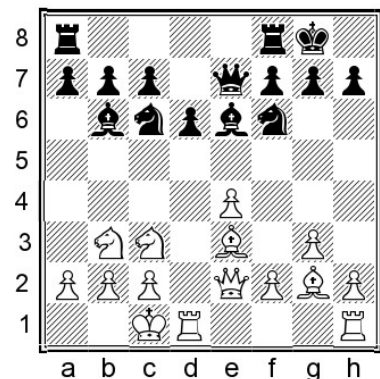
The move 10.Kb1 will be justified if Black castles kingside, but he should play 10...0-0-0 and if 11.Nd5, then 11...Bxd5 12.exd5 Nb8! (This is stronger for Black than 12...Ne5 13.Bxb6! and White would be better after 13...axb6 14.Qb5 Nfg4 15.Qa4 Kb8 16.Rd2±, as well as following 13...cxb6, Wan Yunguo – Adams, Tromsø 2013, 14.f4 Ng6 15.g3²) 13.Nd4 Rhe8÷ (13...Nxd5? 14.Nf5 Qe6 15.Rxd5! g6 16.Qf3±; 13...Qe4!?).



10...0-0-0

10...h6 11.Bg2 Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 a5
 13.Nd4 Ng4 14.Qe2 Nxd4 15.Rxd4²
 Mastrovasilis – Gjergji, Tirana 2018.

Black has tried in practice sometimes 10...0-0. With this rarely played order of moves, Black has forced his opponent to choose a non-standard set-up on the kingside. In general, instead of g3 and Bg2, White's pawns are already on the f3 and g4-squares, but it would be difficult to assert that Black has achieved much. His principled plan of organising counterplay is connected with the moves Be6, Re8 and Nd7 and it would work effectively only with a queen on the d8-square. So, both sides are following a not so principled line. 11.Bg2

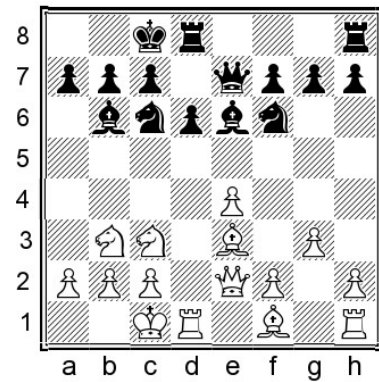


11...Ng4 12.Bxb6 axb6, Nasuta – Bhakti, Anogia 2018, 13.f4² It is essential here that Black cannot play 13...f5?, because of 14.exf5 Bxb3 (14...Bxf5 15.Bd5+ Kh8 16.Qxe7 Nxe7 17.Bxb7±) 15.Qxg4±

11...Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 a5 (12...Ne5 13.f4 Nc4, Mounib – Naumkin, El Ksiba 2019, 14.Qe2²) 13.Nd4 Nxd4 (Black's active attempt 13...Ng4 14.Qe2 Nxd4 15.Rxd4 Qf6 16.Rd2 a4 17.a3 Ne5, Alonso – Della Morte, Mar del Plata 2014, can be countered by White with 18.f4! Nc4 19.f5!

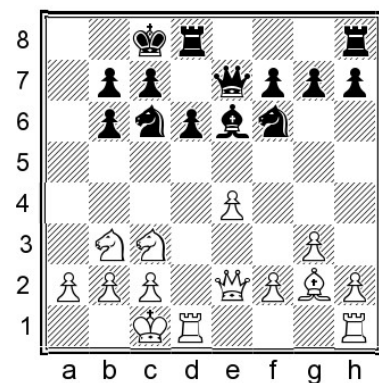
Nxd2 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.Qxd2 Qf2 22.Bh3±)
 14.Qxd4 Rfe8 15.f4²

11...Rfe8 12.Rhe1 (12.Bxb6 axb6 13.a3 Nd7 14.f4²) 12...Bxe3+ 13.Qxe3 Ng4 (13...a5 14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.Qxd4 Bg4 16.f3 Bd7 17.f4 Bc6 18.Qd2 Red8, Warakomska – Mareckova, Jastrzebia Gora 2015, 19.Bf3² White is preparing g4) 14.Qd2! (He does not need to worry too much about the fate of his pawn on h2.) 14...a5 (14...Nxb2?! 15.f3±) 15.Nd4 Nxd4 16.Qxd4 Nxb2 (In this line Black will manage to collect three pawns for the piece, but this still would not be sufficient compensation for it.) 17.f3 Qg5+ 18.Rd2 Qxg3 19.Qf2 Qxf2 20.Rxf2 c6 21.Rh1 Ng4 22.fxg4 Bxg4 23.Rd2²



We will analyse now: **B1) 11.Bxb6** and **B2) 11.Bg2**.

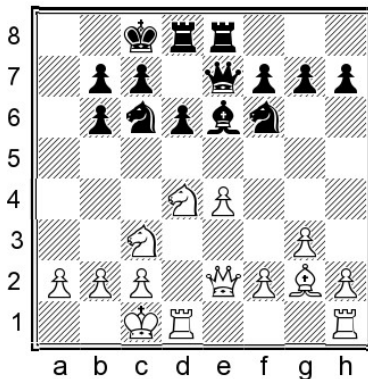
B1) 11.Bxb6!? axb6 12.Bg2



12...Kb8

12...h5 13.Rhe1 (13.Nd4!? Nxd4
14.Rxd4 h4 15.Ra4f) 13...h4 14.Nd5
(14.Qf1!?) 14...Qd7 15.Qf1 hxg3 16.hxg3
Bh3 17.Bxh3 Qxh3 18.Qc4 Nxd5 19.exd5
Ne5 20.Qc3 g5 21.Nd4 Qd7, Zherebukh –
Borisek, San Francisco 2018, 22.Qb4 Rh2
23.f4 gxf4 24.gxf4 Ng6 25.Nb5 Rdh8
26.Qa4 Kd8 27.b3²

12...Rhe8 13.Nd4

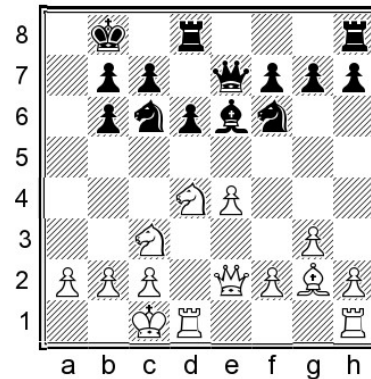


The radical decision 13...d5, Akhmetov – Nukin, Tomsk 2013, can be put in doubt by White with the help of the move 14.exd5, for example: 14...Nxd5 (14...Bxd5 15.Qxe7 Nxe7 16.Nxd5 Nfxd5 17.Bh3+ Kb8 18.Nf3², with a stable edge for him in this endgame.) 15.Nxd5 Bxd5 16.Qg4+ Kb8 (16...Qd7 17.Nf5 Ne5 18.Nd6+! cxd6 19.Qxd7+ Rxd7 20.Rxd5²) 17.Bxd5 Rxd5 18.Qxg7² Black has remained a pawn down, but still has some chances of saving the game.

13...Nxd4 14.Rxd4 Bd7 (14...Kb8 15.f4 – see 12...Kb8) 15.Rhd1 Kb8 16.h3 Bc6 17.Qd2!? (17.b4 g5!?, followed by Rg8) 17...h6 18.b4! White plans to continue with a direct attack on the a-file and realises it in an exemplary fashion. 18...g5 19.Kb2 Rg8 20.a4 Rde8 21.Ra1 Qe5 22.Bh1 (White removes in advance his bishop from the g-file with the idea to

prepare the pawn-advance f4.) 22...Nh5 23.b5 Bd7 24.a5± I.Popov – Naumkin, Moscow 2018. Now, Black is already beyond salvation. His play can be improved somewhere of course, but White's attack would be crushing anyway...

13.Nd4



13...Nxd4

13...Bd7 (Black intends to exchange on d4 and to place later his bishop on the c6-square.) 14.Ndb5 Bg4 15.f3 Be6 16.Rhe1 Rhe8 17.Qf2 Na7 18.Nxa7 Kxa7 19.f4², with a stable advantage for White, Yang Kaiqi – Naumkin, Backi Petrovac 2018.

After 13...Rhe8, White has the powerful argument 14.Ndb5!? He plans to cramp his opponent's position even more with the move f4 and Black can hardly prevent that. 14...Ne5 (14...d5 15.e5! Bf5 16.f4 Qe6 17.Rhe1 Bg4 18.Bf3 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Ne4 20.b3²; 15...Ng4 16.Bxd5 Ngxe5 17.Bxe6 Qxe6 18.Rxd8+ Rxd8 19.f4 Ng6 20.Qxe6 fxe6 21.Re1 e5 22.f5 Nge7 23.g4² Black is doomed to defend long and hard an inferior endgame.) 15.f4! Bg4 (15...Bc4 16.Qe3 Nfg4 17.Qe1 Bxb5 18.Nxb5 Nc6 19.h3 Nf6 20.Nc3²) 16.Qf1 Bxd1 17.fxe5 dxe5 18.Nxd1²

About 11...Kb8 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.Nd4 – see variation **B1**.

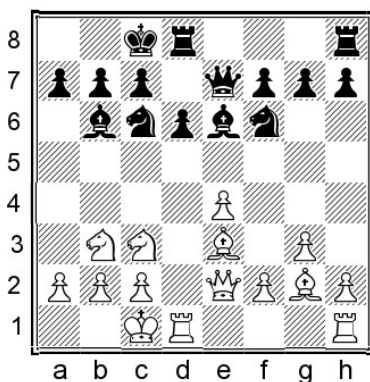
14.Rxd4

14...Rhe8 15.f4 g5 16.Rhd1²

14...h5 15.h4 Rhe8 16.Rhd1 Bg4 17.f3 Bd7 18.Qd2 g6, I.Popov – Dvirnyy, Jerusalem 2015, 19.Kb1 Qe6 20.f4²

14...g5 15.Rhd1!? (15.Kb1 g4 16.Qe3, Caruana – Malakhov, Tromsø 2013, 16...h5÷) **15...g4** (15...Nd7 16.f4²) **16.e5! dxe5 17.Qxe5 Rxd4 18.Qxd4 Re8** (18...h5 19.h4! gxh3 20.Bxh3 Bxh3 21.Nd5. It would not work for Black to play here 21...Nxd5?, in view of 22.Qxh8+ Ka7 23.Rxd5 Qe1+ 24.Rd1 Qxf2 25.Qd4+– and White wins, because the move 25...Qxg3 would enable him to finish off the game in a spectacular checkmating way... 26.Qa4+ Kb8 27.Rd8+ Bc8 28.Rxc8+! Kxc8 29.Qe8#) **19.Re1 Qd8 20.Qf4²**

B2) 11.Bg2



11...Rhe8

11...Bg4 12.f3 Be6 13.Rhe1 Bxe3+ 14.Qxe3 Rhe8, Roebers – Van Weersel, Amsterdam 2019, 15.Nd4!? Nxd4 16.Qxd4 a6 (16...Kb8? 17.Nb5 b6 18.Qa4 a5 19.b4+–) 17.Qa7 c6 18.Rd4 Qc7 19.Red1±

11...Bxe3+ 12.Qxe3 Bxb3 (12...Kb8 13.Nd4²) 13.axb3 Kb8 14.Rhe1!? Rhe8, L.Hansen – Dahm, ICCF 2016, 15.Qd2²

12.Rhe1

White is not in a hurry to trade the dark-squared bishops, although it would be still possible for him to transfer to a position we have already analysed above with the line: 12.Bxb6 axb6 13.Nd4 – see 11.Bxb6.

12...Kb8

12...h6 13.h3 Qf8. Black plans to simplify the position in a tactical way. (13.Bxb6!? axb6 14.Nd4 Nxd4 15.Rxd4 Kb8 16.f4. He has no space and has difficulties because of that. 16...c6 17.Red1 b5 18.a3 Bg4 19.Bf3 Bxf3 20.Qxf3 Rd7 21.g4 Qe6 22.h3²) 14.f4 (14.Kb1!?) 14...Bxb3 15.axb3 Bxe3+ 16.Qxe3 Nxe4 17.Nxe4 d5 18.Nd6+ (18.c3!?! Kb8 19.Qc5 dxe4 20.Qxf8 Rxf8 21.Rxe4 Rxd1+ 22.Kxd1² The fight continues on both sides of the board and this implies that the bishop is stronger than the knight, moreover with rooks still present on the board.) 18...Qxd6 19.Qxe8 Rxe8 20.Rxe8+ Kd7 21.Re3!?!² Ponomariov – Bogdanovich, Kiev 2013.

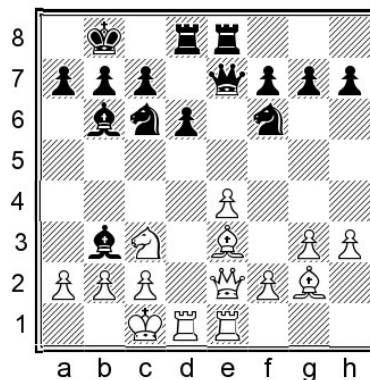
12...Qf8 13.Bxb6 (13.Bg5!? Kb8 14.f4 h6 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Qh5² Black has serious problems due to his numerous pawn-weaknesses.) 13...axb6 14.Nd4 Nxd4. This simplification is quite logical. (14...Bg4 15.f3 Bd7 16.Ndb5! Be6 17.Qf2 Kb8 18.f4² Dubov – Inarkiev, Kocaeli 2014) 15.Rxd4 Nd7 16.Red1 f5 17.exf5 Qxf5 18.Ra4 Nc5 (18...Bxa2? 19.Be4+-) 19.Ra3 (threatening b4) 19...Bb3 20.Qd2²

13.h3

White restricts the enemy pieces and prepares the advance of his f-pawn.

13...Bxb3

After 13...Nd7 14.f4 f6, it would be interesting to check White's provocative move 15.Bf3!? He can increase his pressure at an opportune moment by deploying his queen on the g2-square, while capturing the pawn on h3 might involve considerable risk. It is also important that after an exchange on e3, White would have an additional resource, connected with the pawn-advance e5. (15.Kb1 Qf7 16.Qf2² Liuba – Kratochvil, Prague 2013) 15...Bxh3 (15...Bxe3+ 16.Qxe3 Bxh3?! 17.e5!±, with a powerful attack against the enemy king; 15...g6 16.Kb1 Bxh3?! 17.g4 Bxe3?! 18.Nd5! Qf8 19.Nxe3± White is threatening not only to trap his opponent's bishop, but also to begin an attack with the move e5.) 16.g4 h5 (16...Bxe3+? 17.Qxe3 h5 18.e5! Bxg4 19.Bxc6 Bxd1 20.Na5! dxe5 21.Nxb7+-) 17.gxh5²

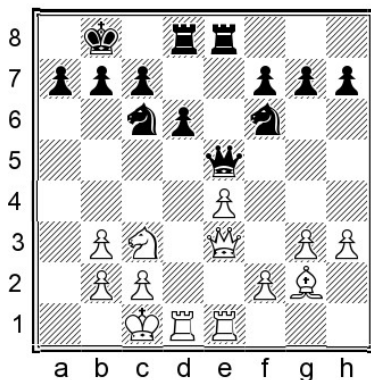


14.axb3

14.Bxb6!? axb6 15.cxb3!? White plans to advance his pawns on a3 and b4. (15.axb3 Qe5 16.f4 Qa5 17.Kb1 Nb4 18.Qf1!?) 15...Qe5?! This move is not justified. In this pawn-structure Black has less chances of organising counterplay, but his alternatives are too passive. 16.f4 Qc5 17.Kb1 (17.a3!?) 17...g5 (White would be much better after 17...d5 18.e5±). 18.Nd5! (18.a3 gxf4 19.gxf4² Saric – Sukandar, Helsingor 2017) 18...Nxd5 (18...Nxe4 19.Bxe4 f5 20.Nf6±) 19.Rxd5 Qxd5 20.exd5 Rxe2 21.Rxe2 Nd4 22.Re4 Nf5 23.fxg5 Nxc3 24.Rg4! Nf5 25.Be4 Ne3 26.Rg3 Nf1 27.Rd3±

14...Bxe3+ 15.Qxe3 Qe5

Black plans to transfer his queen to the queenside in order to create some threats against the enemy king at an opportune moment.



16.Nd5

This is a principled move for White preventing his opponent's ideas.

The straightforward attempt 16.f4 Qa5 is also aiming at obtaining an advantage after the precise move 17.Qf2! White removes his queen away from the X-ray juxtaposition on the e-file and parries the threat d5. If 17...Qa1+, then 18.Nb1 Nd7 (otherwise, White would unpin with the help of the moves c3 and Kc2) 19.e5! dxe5 (19...Nb4? 20.c3+-) 20.Bxc6 bxc6 21.fxe5²

16.Kb1 Qa5 17.Nd5 (After 17.f4, it would be good for Black to choose 17...d5!, but White has an interesting resource 17.h4!?, having in mind that after 17...d5, he can play 18.Qg5!²) 17...Nb4 18.Nxb4 Qxb4, Lefebvre – Glud, Cappelle-la-Grande 2013, 19.Rd4! Qa5 20.b4 Qb6 21.Red1² g6 (21...Rd7? 22.Qg5!+-) 22.Qd2 (Now, the advance of the c-pawn is a part of White's plan.) 22...Rc8 23.Qf4!? White wins a pawn, but allows the opponent to activate his pieces. The analysis shows however, that Black's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient. (23.c4²) 23...Ng8 24.Qxf7 Rf8 25.Qxh7 Rxf2 26.Bh1 Nf6 27.Qxg6 a6 28.e5! (It is essential for White to activate his light-squared bishop.) 28...dxe5 29.Rc4 Qe6 30.Qd3. Black cannot play here 30...Qxh3?, in view of the spectacular

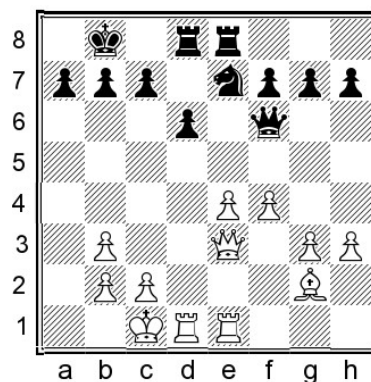
response 31.Bxb7! Kxb7 32.Rc6! Ra8 (32...Kxc6? 33.Qxa6#) 33.Rxc7!+- with a winning attack for White. After Black's alternatives, White would have a powerful trump – his couple of connected passed pawns on the kingside.

16...Ne7

16...Nxd5 17.Rxd5 Qe6 18.f4 f6 (18...Qxd5?! 19.exd5 Rxe3 20.Rxe3 Nd4 21.g4±; 18...Ne7 19.Rd3²) 19.Kb1²

16...a6, SerS – Guest, Cafe 2017, 17.Qd2! Ne7 18.f4 Qe6 19.Nb4!? (19.Nxe7 Qxe7 20.Qb4²) 19...Nd7 20.Qc3 f6 (20...Qf6?! 21.Qf3±) 21.Kb1², White maintains powerful pressure.

17.Nxf6 Qxf6 18.f4

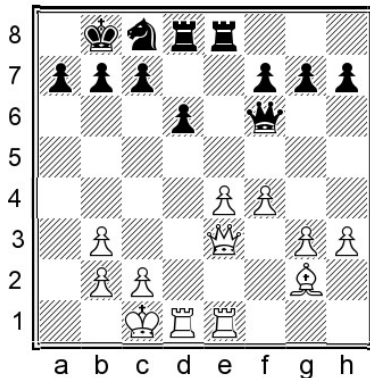


Here, White has a considerable space advantage, but it would be worth mentioning that he should advance his flank pawns very accurately. For example, after g4, Black can reply with g5, winning the battle for the central e5-outpost.

18...Nc8

18...g6 19.Kb1 Nc6 20.h4²

After Black's active attempt 18...Qg6 19.Kb1 f5, it becomes evident that White can be perfectly prepared for the opening of the e-file after 20.Re2 Nc8 21.Rde1 fxe4 22.Bxe4 Qf7 23.Qd3² Black will have a worrisome position and after the careless move 23...g6?, White will have the powerful argument 24.Qb5!±, threatening not only to checkmate, but also to capture the pawn on g6.



19.Rd4!?

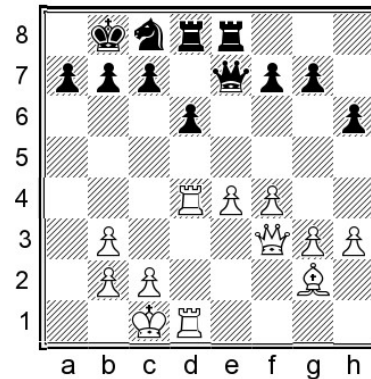
In this position, White has several possibilities to manoeuvre, which are about equally strong, for example:

19.h4 Qe7 20.Kb1 f6 21.h5!? Nb6 22.Qf3 c6 23.Qc3 (White has occupied in advance space on the kingside and has provoked his opponent to push his c-pawn. Now, White can place his queen on c3 from where it would support favourably his queenside actions.) 23...Nd7 24.Re3 Nc5 25.b4 Na4 26.Qd2 Nb6 27.b3 Nc8 28.Bf3²,

or 19.Qf3 c6 20.Qd3 g6 21.Kb1 Qe6 22.g4 f6 23.Qd2² White is playing in a prophylactic fashion, restricting the possible freeing manoeuvres of his opponent. At the same time, he is ready to

begin active actions on both sides of the board.

19...Qe7 20.Red1 h6 21.Qf3²



This is a position from the game Karjakin – Ponomariov, Zug 2013. White maintains a slight but stable edge thanks to his extra space and well deployed pieces. Now, Black must consider the possibility e5. He might place his pawn on c6, with the idea that his central d6-pawn would be easily protected, but in this case White may continue to manoeuvre freely, eyeing his opponent's weaknesses on the other parts of the board. Meanwhile, Black has no active counterplay whatsoever.

Part 3

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6

In the third part of our book we shall begin the analysis of the variations arising after the move 4...Nf6. Nowadays it is precisely this move (developing the knight with tempo) which is the main line for Black, according to the statistics for its results and its popularity (at least at the master level).

Nevertheless, there is a peculiar circumstance which explains why at lower levels the move 4...Bc5 remains at least as popular as before. The point is that after 4...Bc5, in most of the variations Black does not need to have a thorough knowledge of a large number of lines but can just apply common sense, without much risk of ending up in anything worse than a position than the standard “+=” evaluation and with relatively easy play.

After the move 4...Nf6, though, this approach does not work at all. The pawn-structure is non-standard in this variation and if Black does not play precisely he can easily end up around move 15 in a strategically hopeless position. Concrete theoretical knowledge is therefore immensely important in this line. Admittedly the situation is not as critical as in some of the sharp lines of the Sicilian defence, but still there is a great risk that Black might not manage to complete his development and might clearly lose the opening battle.

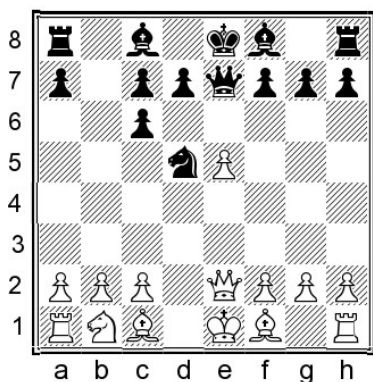
We have to admit however that White also needs to play accurately and cannot just do as he pleases... If he tries to play too inventively and does not know the theory of this variation well, he not only risks losing the chance of gaining an advantage but can even end up in an inferior position. For this reason we have paid great attention in this part of the book to numerous concrete variations, while strategy and alternative lines are not discussed as thoroughly.

It is worth mentioning here that all this applies to the lines arising after 4...Nf6 5.Nxc6, which are the focus of this book. White can also play in another way – 4...Nf6 5.Nc3, with which he can try to obtain just a small edge, by positional means as a rule. In the present book we are trying to create maximal pressure from the very first moves and so here we have concentrated on the line – 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5.

In Chapter 11 we analyse variations arising after 6...Ne4. Black does not block the diagonal of his dark-squared bishop, while his knight will eventually occupy the comfortable e6-square in most variations. However, the manoeuvres of the knight take too much time, while Black's pawn-weaknesses remain on the board. White has quite enough time to develop his pieces freely and actively, and his advanced e5-pawn is quite safe. We suggest here that White should choose between the moves 7.Nd2 or 7.Qf3; both of them promise him a quite concrete opening advantage.

In Chapter 12 we deal with the immediate move of Black's knight to d5. Once again, the diagonal for Black's bishop on f8 remains free, but this is just about the only positive thing that can be said about this move. Following 7.c4, the roaming of Black's knight will continue and while it might find a safe haven, White is able to comfortably complete his development, preserving all the pluses of his position. We should mention, however, that White can achieve this only by means of a specific and accurate order of moves.

Next we begin the analysis of the position arising after 6.e5 Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5.



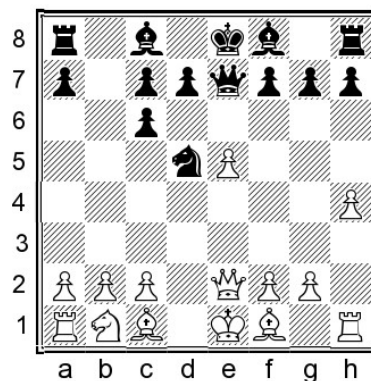
This is no doubt the critical position of the entire Scotch Game, so it would be useful to mention here some details and nuances, as well as discussing the general character of the forthcoming struggle.

The situation of the queens somewhat impedes the comfortable development of the kingside and this applies to both sides. White has the simple choice between playing g3, Bg2 and 0-0, or developing his queenside first and preparing to castle there. Black has more options, but there is no universal set-up for him which is suitable for all possible move-orders. It may well be possible to find good and useful moves for Black in all the situations arising, but this would not

be easy over the board, so some concrete knowledge of theory is necessary.

In Chapter 13 we analyse the variations 8.Nd2 and 8.h4. This particular developing move with the knight was played as far back as the 19th century but it returned to contemporary tournament practice at the top-level during the 1990s, thanks to the efforts of Svidler and Shirov. Nowadays, Nepomniachtchi and So have played this way numerous times. Black has reliable ways to reach equality but these are all far from obvious and many of the evaluations of the arising positions need clarification.

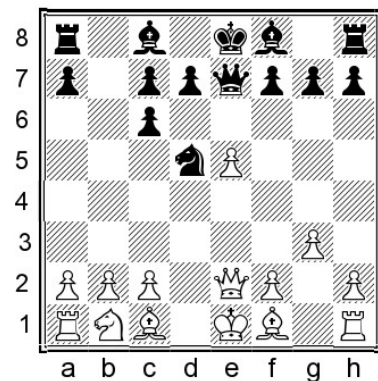
The provocative move with the rook's pawn is naturally in the spirit of the hyper-modern treatment of the opening. The Dutch grandmaster van der Wiel played 8.h4



for the first time with White in 1987, but the variation only became popular later, when in 2015-16 Morozevich began to play it regularly against strong opponents, and quite successfully at that. The real bomb however exploded a year later, in December 2017, at the super tournament in London. In the game Nakamura – Carlsen, after 8.h4 White developed his rook to h3 and then his second rook's pawn joined in the fight several moves later. Not only was White not punished for playing like this against the World Champion, but just the

opposite occurred! After move 25 Nakamura had a decisive material advantage. Somehow Carlsen still managed to save this game, but that was another story... Objectively speaking, the basic pluses of the variation with 8.h4 are that it is rather provocative and very unusual. If we consider however the psychological factor that whereas the player with Black was maybe relying after 1...e5 on playing the Berlin endgame after move 10, or setting up his usual scheme in the Closed Spanish, he became involved instead in a position of complete chaos, we have to admit that this variation might well find numerous adherents.

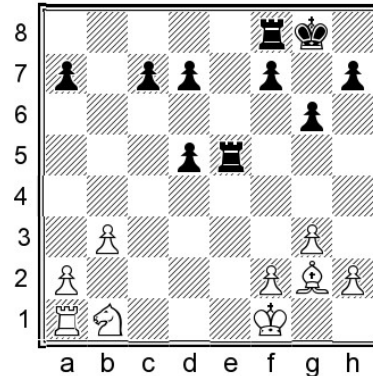
In Chapter 14, we shall begin the analysis of a variation which has not yet attracted the attention of the chess elite, which is rather amazing. Nevertheless, we believe it might be White's most dangerous weapon (together with the main line 8.c4, or maybe even in general...) against the main line for Black in the Scotch Game; this is the move – 8.g3.



White plans to complete his development simply and patiently and then to begin active operations in the centre. After a thorough analysis of this approach, it turns out that Black has no comfortable choices and in fact there is

just one very narrow path for him which might lead to equality. However, not every player with Black might like this... We believe that in all the other variations after 8.g3 White maintains an advantage.

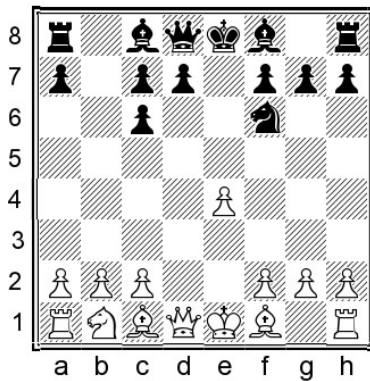
The narrow path to equality for Black is the endgame arising after 8.g3 g6 9.c4 Ba6 10.b3 Bg7 11.Bb2 0-0 12.Bg2 Rae8 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 cxd5



and our Chapter 15 is devoted to this. Having in mind that the position may also arise after the order of moves beginning with 8.c4 Ba6, a great quantity of practical material has been amassed. We have tried to systematise it, adding several new (or relatively new) ideas for White. The evaluation of the position remains more or less the same. After best play for both sides the game should end in a draw, but still it seems that Black faces some problems, which might well cause him difficulties in a practical game¹

Chapter 11

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6**



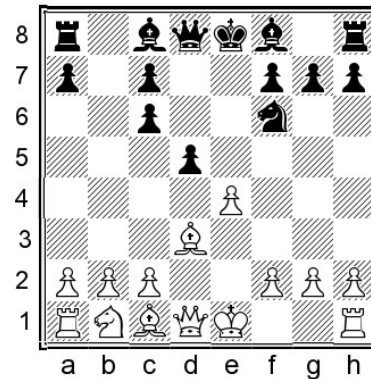
6.e5

His alternatives would not create any serious problems for Black.

6.Qe2 d5!? He is ready to sacrifice a couple of pawns in order to develop quickly his pieces. (Black can also play safer here 6...Rb8 7.e5 Nd5 8.c4 Bb4+ 9.Nd2 Nf4 10.Qe2 Ng6÷ De la Riva Aguado – Wesley So, Baku 2016) 7.exd5+ (7.e5 Nd7 8.Bf4 Rb8 9.Nd2 Rxb2µ Antal – Erdos, Hungary 2015) 7...Be7 8.dxc6 0-0 9.Nc3 (9.Qd3 Nd5 10.a3 Bg5 11.c4? 11...Bxc1 12.cxd5 Qg5–+ Konnyu – Banusz, Hungary 2018; 11.Nc3 Bxc1 12.Nxd5 Qg5 13.Be2 Bxb2 14.Rb1 Qxg2 15.Qf3 Qg5 16.Nxc7 Rb8 17.Kf1 Qh4÷) 9...Bb4 10.Qd3 Qe7+ (10...Nd5 11.Bd2 Bxc3 12.bxc3 Qe7+ 13.Be2 Rd8 14.0-0 Nf4 15.Qxd8+ Qxd8 16.Bxf4 Qf6 17.Bxc7 Ba6 18.Be5 Qxe5 19.Bxa6 Qxc3 20.Bb7 Rd8=) 11.Be2 Re8 12.Be3 Rd8 13.Bd4 (13.Qb5 Ne4=) 13...Bg4 14.f3 Bf5 15.Qe3 Rxd4 16.Qxd4 Re8 17.0-0-0 Bxc3 18.Qxc3 Qxe2

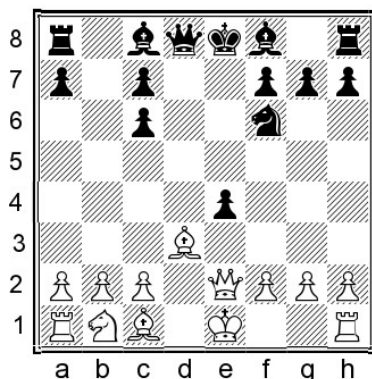
19.g4 (19.Rhe1? Qxg2 20.Rxe8+ Nxe8 21.Rd8 Qg1–+) 19...Be6÷

6.Bd3 d5



7.e5?! Ng4 8.0-0 Bc5 9.Qe2 (9.Bf4 g5 10.Bd2 0-0 11.Nc3 Nxe5 12.Qh5 Nxd3 13.cxd3 f6³ Vachier Lagrave – Anand, Paris 2018) 9...Qe7 10.Bf4 g5 11.Bd2 (11.Bg3 h5µ) 11...Nxe5 12.Re1 Bd6 13.f4 (13.Qh5 h6 14.h3 Kf8 15.Nc3 Qf6 16.Ne2, Aabling Thomsen – Johannessen, Helsingor 2011, 16...g4 17.Ng3 Nxd3 18.cxd3 gxh3 19.Bc3 d4 20.Bd2 Rb8 21.b3 Rb5–+) 13...gxf4 14.Bxf4 f6 15.Nd2 0-0 16.Kh1, Shrutarshi – Dhulipalla, Bhopal 2017, 16...Kh8³ 7.0-0 dxe4 8.Qe1 (8.Re1 Be7 9.Bc4 Qxd1 10.Rxd1 0-0³) 8...Qe7 9.Qc3 Qc5 (9...Bd7 10.Bg5? exd3 11.Re1 Ne4 12.Qa5 Nxc3 13.Rxe7+ Bxe7–+ Yogesh – Kravtsov, Visakhapatnam 2012) 10.Re1 Be6 11.Bxe4 Nxe4 12.Rxe4 0-0-0 13.Re1 Bd6 14.h3 Rhe8 15.Be3 Qh5 16.Na3 Bd5µ Laine – Lucki, ICCF 2012.

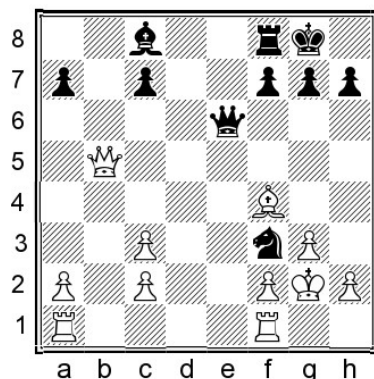
7.Qe2 dxe4



8.Nd2?! Bb4 9.Bxe4? (9.0-0 Bxd2 10.Bxd2 0-0 11.Bc4 Qd6. Now, White must try to prove that he has compensation for the pawn.) 9...0-0 10.Bxc6 (10.c3 a5 11.cxb4 Ba6 12.Qf3 Re8 13.b5 Bxb5 14.a4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Bd3-- Kolin – Laurencena, corr. 1987) 10...Bb7! 11.Bxb7 Re8 12.Bxa8 Qxa8 13.f3 Nd5 14.c3 Rxe2+ 15.Kxe2 Qe8+ 16.Ne4 f5 17.cxb4 fxe4--+

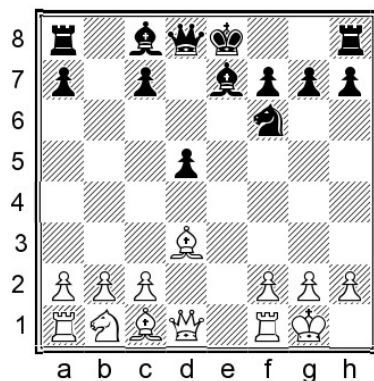
8.Bxe4 Nxe4 9.Qxe4+ Qe7= 10.Qxe7+ Bxe7 11.Bf4 (11.0-0 Bf5 12.c3 0-0-0 13.Be3 Kb7=) 11...Bf5 12.Bxc7 (12.Nd2 0-0-0=) 12...Bxc2 13.Nc3 0-0 14.Rc1 Bf5 15.0-0 Rac8= Nepomniachtchi – Anand, Saint Louis 2017.

The move 8.Nc3 leads by force to a position in which White must parry his opponent's initiative. 8...Bb4 9.Bxe4 0-0 10.Bxc6 Rb8 11.0-0 Qd6 12.Bb5 Ng4 13.g3 Bxc3 (13...Ne5 14.Rd1 Qe6 15.Bd3 Bc5 16.Be3 Bxe3 17.Qxe3 Nxd3 18.Qxd3 Rxb2 19.Nd5 Bb7 20.Qa3 Bxd5 21.Qxb2 Siikaluoma – Perevertkin, ICCF 2014 21...Qe4=) 14.bxc3 Ne5 15.Bf4 Rxb5 16.Qxb5 Nf3+ 17.Kg2 Qe6



18.Kxf3 (18.Rad1? c6 19.Qa4 Nh4+ 20.Kg1 Qh3 21.Qxc6 Bg4 22.Rd3 Bf3 23.Qxf3 Nxf3+ 24.Rxf3 Qe6μ; 18.Rfd1?! c6 19.Qa4 Nh4+ 20.gxh4 Qg4+ 21.Kf1 Qf3 22.Rd3 Qh1+ 23.Ke2 Qxa1³ Rublevsky – Banusz, Ruma 2017.) 18...Bd7 19.Qe5 Qc6+ 20.Ke3 Re8 21.Qxe8+ Bxe8 22.Kd2 f6÷ Vykouk – Kantor, Budapest 2018.

7.exd5 cxd5 8.0-0 Be7



9.h3 0-0 10.Nd2 a5 11.Re1 Bb7÷ Jobava – Vallejo Pons, Gallipoli 2018.

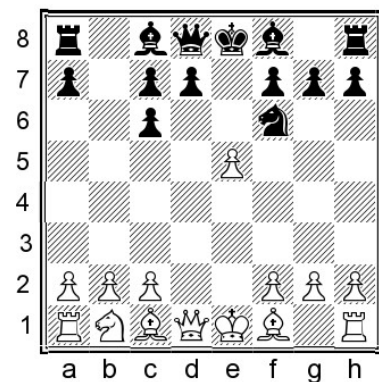
9.Bg5 0-0 10.Re1 h6 11.Bh4 Rb8 12.b3 Be6=

9.Bf4 0-0 10.Nd2 (10.Nc3 – see 9.Nc3) 10...Bg4 11.Be2 Be6 (11...Bxe2!? 12.Qxe2 Bd6 13.Bg5 Re8 14.Qf3 Be5 15.c3 Qb8,,) 12.Nb3 c5 13.Re1 Qb6³ Azimov – Lysyj, St Petersburg 2017.

9.c4 0-0 10.cxd5 Bb7 11.Bc4 (11.Nc3 Nxd5 12.Bd2 Nb4=) 11...Bxd5 12.Bxd5

Nxd5 13.Nd2 c6 14.Re1 Rb8,, Fedoseev – Jakovenko, Satka 2018.

After 9.Nc3 0-0, there often arise well familiar positions, but not in the best version for White. Black usually manages to advance c7-c5 immediately, obtaining quite sufficient counterplay. 10.Re1 (10.Bg5 c5 11.Re1 Be6 12.Qf3, Savitskaya – Aleksandrov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, 12...Rc8÷) 10...c6!? This is a position from the popular variation 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 d5 8.exd5 cxd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 c6 11.Qf3 Be7, but with a tempo down for White, since his queen is still on the d1-square.



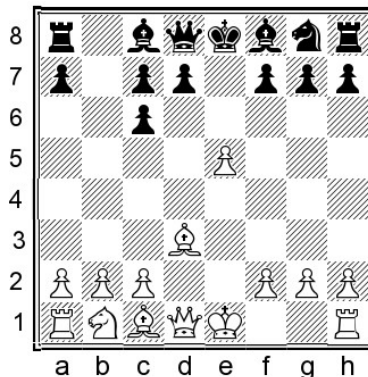
6...Ne4

There arise principled positions after 6...Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5, but in the next two chapters we will analyse the last possibilities for Black to avoid the modern theoretical lines.

They are tested only very seldom in practice, but still, even strong grandmasters play like this sometimes: Spassky, Korchnoi, Ivan Sokolov, Ivanishevic, Savchenko and some others. What are the reasons for that? Black wishes to avoid positions in which the opponent is better prepared and just the opposite, to force the adversary to enter schemes with which Black is better acknowledged, or even some other

reasons, which are not so important. White manages to obtain an edge after a precise play indeed, but that task is far from being simple.

6...Ng8 7.Bd3



7...g6?! 8.0-0 Bg7 9.Nc3 (9.Re1!?) 9...d6 10.Qf3 d5 (10...Bd7? 11.Bc4 d5 12.Nxd5+-) 11.Re1 Be6 12.Na4 Qh4 13.b3 Nh6 14.g3 Qh3 15.Bf1 Qg4 16.Qc3 0-0, Lopez Andujar Ocana – Khamrakulov, Madrid 2001, 17.h3 Qh5 18.g4 Qh4 19.Bf4±, with the threats Qe3, or Qxc6. Black will lose his weak pawns on the c-file, his pieces have been restricted and he would be incapable of creating meaningful counterplay.

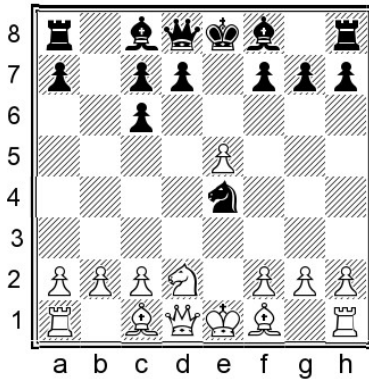
7...d5 8.0-0 Bc5 9.Nc3 Ne7 10.Na4 Bb6 11.Qh5± White will be attacking the enemy kingside with superior forces and he may follow with Bd2, Re1, f4-f5.

7...d6 8.Bf4 Ne7 9.Qe2 Be6, Heidrich – Ginsburg, Germany 1996, 10.exd6 cxd6 11.0-0 Nd5 12.Bg3 Be7 13.c4 Nb4 14.Be4 d5 15.Bf3 dxc4 16.a3 Nd5 17.Qxc4 0-0 18.Qc2 Qd7 19.Nd2² White has an advantage thanks to his pressure on the c-file.

Following 6...Ne4, White can fight for an edge in the opening in the relatively simple position, arising after **A)** 7.Nd2, or

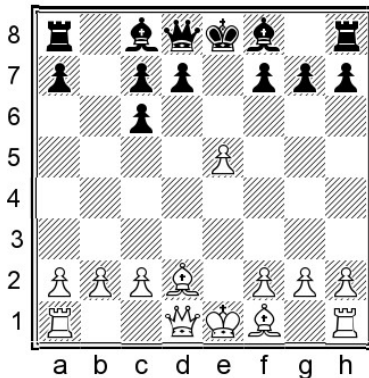
can choose to enter a more complicated fight after the move **B) 7.Qf3**.

A) 7.Nd2



7...Nc5

After the exchange of the knights 7...Nxd2, White's task – to emphasize the defects of his opponent's pawn-structure on the queenside, would be much easier. 8.Bxd2



8...Bc5? 9.Qg4 Kf8 10.Qg3 (10.h4!? d6 11.Qa4±) 10...d5 11.0-0-0 Rb8, Smid – Smutny, Prague 2017, 12.h4,

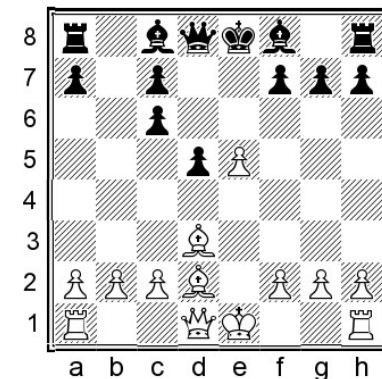
8...Be7 9.Qg4 g6, Minasian – Kaidanov, Yerevan 1996, 10.Qa4!? White prevents the advance of the enemy d-pawn. 10...0-0 11.0-0-0 Rb8 12.h4,

8...Qh4 9.Bd3 Bc5 (9...d5 10.0-0 – see 8...d5) 10.0-0 0-0 11.Qf3 Rb8, Adamek –

Zvara, Ceske Budejovice 1997, 12.g3 Qe7 13.Rae1± This is a preparation for White's decisive actions. 13...Rxb2? 14.Qh5 g6 15.Qh6 f5 16.Bc4+ Kh8 17.Bg5 Qg7 18.Qh4 Rb4 19.c3+–

8...Rb8 9.Bd3!? Rxb2 (9...Qh4 10.0-0 Bc5 11.g3 Qh3 12.Qf3 g6 13.Rfe1 0-0 14.Re4 Rxb2 15.Rh4 Qe6 16.Bc3 Rb8 17.Bc4 Qe7 18.Qf4 g5 19.Qf5 gxh4 20.Bd3+–) 10.0-0 Qh4 (10...Be7 11.Qg4 0-0 12.Bh6 g6 13.Bxf8 Bxf8 14.Rab1± Black has only a pawn for the exchange and it is doubled... 14...Rxa2? 15.Rb8) 11.Re1 Bc5 12.Qf3 0-0 13.Re4 Qe7 14.Qh5 Qe6 15.Bc3 Rb8 16.Rc4+–

8...d5 9.Bd3. White has shown that he plans to develop his initiative on the kingside as well, for example after Qd1-h5, so Black reacts more often with the move Qd8-h4, preventing this possibility.



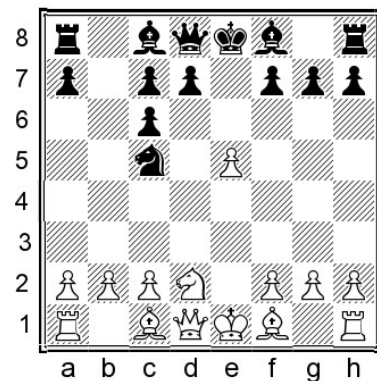
9...Be6 10.0-0 Qd7 11.f4 Bc5+ (11...Bf5 12.Qf3 Bc5+ 13.Kh1 – see 11...Bc5+) 12.Kh1 Bf5 13.Qf3 (13.Qh5 g6 14.Bxf5 Qxf5, Zelcic – Baumegger, Portoroz 1998, 15.Qe2 0-0 16.g4 Qd7 17.f5 Rfe8 18.e6 fxe6 19.fgx6 hxg6 20.Rf6 Qg7 21.Raf1±) 13...0-0 14.Bxf5 Qxf5 15.Qc3 Bb6 16.Qxc6± Hnydiuk – Franzen, Police 2012.

9...Be7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 d4 (11...dxc4 12.Bxc4 Qd4 13.Qc2²) 12.Qc2 h6, Dworakowska – Trabert, Buehlertal 2000, 13.f4 f5 14.c5 Be6 15.Ba5± Black will hardly manage to preserve his central

pawn, which has been isolated from its base.

9...Rb8 10.Rb1 Qh4 11.0-0 Bc5 12.b4 Bb6 13.a4 0-0 14.Bc3 a6 15.Qf3 Qg5 16.Rfd1 Re8 (16...Bg4?! 17.Qg3 Qh5 18.Re1±) 17.h3 Bb7 18.a5 Ba7 19.Ba1 Red8, Lupynin – Simakov, ICCF 2006, 20.c4± Black is faced with a long and laborious defence. Even if he manages to correct his doubled his pawns, he will have weaknesses to worry about.

9...Qh4 10.0-0 Bc5 11.c4! White exerts immediate pressure against the enemy queenside. 11...0-0 (11...dxc4? 12.Qa4±) 12.Rc1 Bd4 13.Bc3. He exchanges one of Black's most active pieces. 13...Bxc3 (13...Bb6 14.b4±) 14.Rxc3 Be6 15.f4. White maintains a stable advantage thanks to Black's vulnerable queenside pawns. 15...Rad8 16.c5!. This is White's most practical decision. He closes the centre and prevents his opponent's possible counterplay on the d-file as well as the activation of his bishop. 16...Rb8 17.Qd2 f6 18.f5 Qd4+. Black cannot comply with the building of the pawn-wedge f5-e6 and is forced to sacrifice a piece. 19.Rf2 fxe5 20.fxe6 e4 21.Ba6! Qxf2+ 22.Qxf2 Rxf2 23.Kxf2 Rxb2+ 24.Kg3 Kf8 25.Bc8 Rxa2 26.Rc1+- Vallejo Pons – Korchnoi, Vera 2004. Black is helpless against the threat Rf1.



8.Be2!?

8.Nf3 d5. Black should not delay this pawn-advance. (8...Ne6 9.Bd3 d5, Parligras – Loginov, Eforie Nord 1998, 10.0-0 Be7 11.c4²; 8...Be7 9.Nd4 0-0 10.Be2 f6, Ammon – Singer, Tegernsee 2018, 11.exf6 Bxf6 12.0-0²; 10...Re8 11.0-0 Bf8 12.f4 d6 13.Bf3 Bb7 14.b4 dxe5 15.fxe5 Na4?! Schmittziel – Gostisa, Buekfuerdo 1995, 16.Nxc6 Qxd1 17.Rxd1 a5 18.b5±) 9.Be2 Be7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 Bg4 12.Be3 Ne6 13.Qa4 Rb8, Savouroux – Simonet, ICCF 2015, 14.Rad1 Rxb2 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qxg4 Rxe2 17.Nd4 Nxd4 18.Rxd4 Rxa2 19.Bh6 g6 20.Bxf8 Bxf8 21.e6² Black's king and his pawns are vulnerable, but he still preserves chances of saving the game, since there are just a few pieces left on the board.

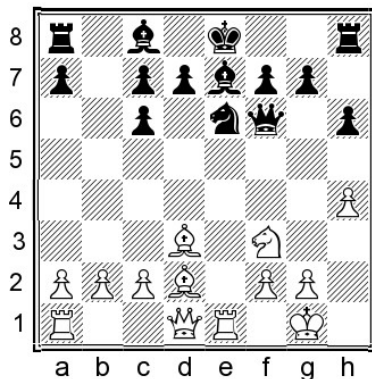
8...Be7

8...d6 9.Nc4 Be6 9...d5 10.Na5 Bd7 11.0-0 Be7 12.c4±) 10.0-0 Bxc4 11.Bxc4 dxe5, Buchicchio – Hebden, London 2013, 12.Qe2 Bd6 13.f4 e4 14.b4 Nd7 15.Qxe4+ Qe7 16.Qxc6±

8...d5 9.0-0 Be7, Nilsson – Bosman, Olomouc 2007, 10.Nb3 Nxb3 (10...Ne6 11.f4 f5 12.exf6 Bxf6 13.f5 Ng5 14.Bxg5 Bxg5 15.Bh5+ Kf8 16.Qf3 Qd6 17.Rae1 Bd7 18.Nd4+-) 11.axb3 0-0 12.Bd3 f5 13.exf6 Bxf6 14.b4± Black's queenside pawns are fixed and weak, while White has a solid extra pawn on the kingside.

8...Qg5!? 9.0-0 Qxe5. Black's extra doubled pawn is practically irrelevant at the moment and White has the initiative in all the variations. 10.Re1 Qf6 (10...Be7 11.Rb1 0-0 12.b4 Ne6 13.Bd3 Qd4 14.Nf3

Qg4 15.Re5°) 11.Bd3+ Be7 (11...Ne6
 12.Ne4 Qd8 13.Qh5,) 12.Nf3 Ne6 (12...h6
 13.Qe2 Nxd3 14.cxd3°) 13.h4 h6 (13...g6
 14.Bg5 Qxb2 15.Bxe7 Kxe7 16.Bc4°)
 14.Bd2!

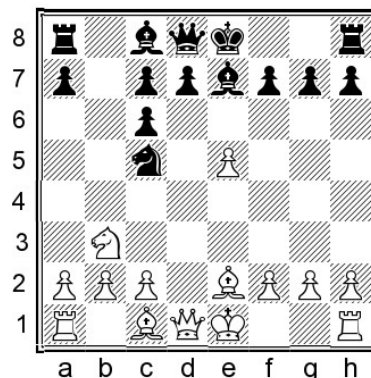


14...0-0 15.Bc3 Qf4 16.Re4 Qd6 17.Ne5
 f5 18.Re1 Bf6 19.Qf3 Bxe5 20.Rxe5 g6
 21.h5+–

14...d5 15.Bc3 Qf4 16.g3 Qd6 17.Be5
 Qc5 18.c3 (18.Rc1!? 0-0 19.c4) 18...0-0
 19.b4 Qb6 20.Bc2 Bd6 21.Qd3 f5 22.Nd4
 Nxd4 23.Bxd4 Qb5 24.Qf3 Bd7 25.a4 Qb8
 26.b5± Black's king shelter is hopelessly
 weakened and his queen is too far from
 the field of actions.

14...Qxb2 15.Ne5 Qd4 16.Rb1 0-0
 17.Qh5± Once again, there is no way back
 for Black's queen. 17...Bxh4 18.Ng4 f5
 19.Rb4 fxg4 20.Rxd4 Bxf2+ 21.Kh1 Bxd4
 22.Bxh6 gxh6 23.Qg6+ Bg7 24.Qh7+ Kf7
 25.Bg6+ Kf6 26.Bh5+–

9.Nb3



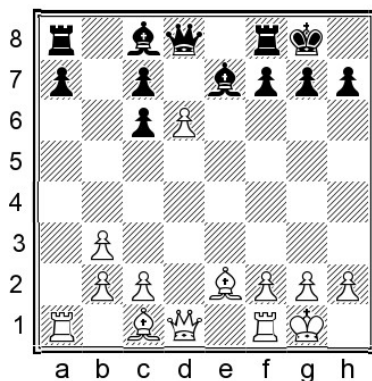
White is ready to exchange the knights
 on the b3-square, since after that his rook
 on a1 will attack immediately Black's
 weak a-pawn.

9...Nxb3 10.axb3 0-0 11.0-0 d5

11...d6 12.Bf4 f6 13.exd6 cxd6, Getz –
 Prieto, Philadelphia 2012, 14.c3 d5
 15.b4± Now, White can proceed with
 active actions on both sides of the board.
 He can compromise even more his
 opponent's pawn-structure with the
 moves Bd3 and Qc2, eyeing at the same
 time Black's backward pawns on a7 and
 c6.

12.exd6

12.Be3!? Bf5 13.Ra5. White seizes the
 control over the c5-square and plans c2-
 c3, b3-b4. 13...Re8 14.f4 f6 15.Ra6 Bf8
 16.Rxc6±



12...Bxd6?!

Black's pawns will be a sorry sight after this move and his hopes to rely on the activity of his pieces would not be justified, since White has no weak spots in his position.

12...cxd6 13.b4 d5 14.c3²

13.Ra4

The fourth and the fifth ranks are excellent routes for his rook.

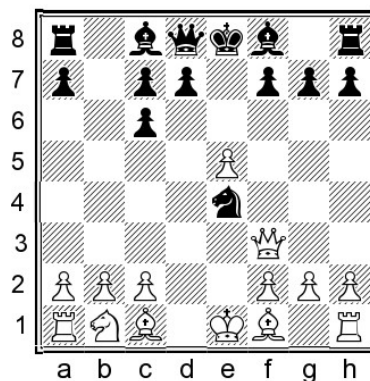
It is also good for White to play here 13.Ra5!?, preventing the appearance of the enemy bishop on the f5-square.

13...Be6 14.Bf3±

13...Bf5 14.Bd3. Black's queenside pawns become weaker and weaker with every exchange. **14...Bxd3** (It is more active for Black to play here 14...Qf6!?) **15.Qxd3 Qf6 16.g3 Rfe8 17.Kg2 Bc5 18.Rf4 Qe6 19.Rd1 Bd6?!** Black's bishop has nothing to do on this square and he had to transfer it to b6. **20.Rc4 c5 21.Qf3!** White takes an immediate control over the opened diagonal. **21...Rab8 22.Bd2!** White prevents the move Rb4. **22...f6 23.Ra1±** You can see

now the consequences of the capturing Nxb3 and Bxd6. **23...Rbd8 24.Be3 Qe5 25.Rc3!?** Now, or even on his previous move, White could have begun the destruction of Black's queenside, but he would like much more to restrict maximally his opponent's counterplay, preserving all his pawns. **25...Ra8 26.Ra5 Qe4 27.Bxc5 Qxf3+ 28.Kxf3 Be5 29.Re3 Bxb2 30.Rxa7 Rxe3+ 31.Kxe3 Rxa7 32.Bxa7+-** Morozevich – Bezgodov, Tomsk 1998. White can win easily this bishop-ending by just creating an outside passed pawn.

B) 7.Qf3



Black's knight can occupy the e6-square either after **B1) 7...Nc5 8.Bc4 Ne6**, or with tempo following – **B2) 7...Ng5 8.Qg3 Ne6**, but then White will develop his light-squared bishop to a more useful square.

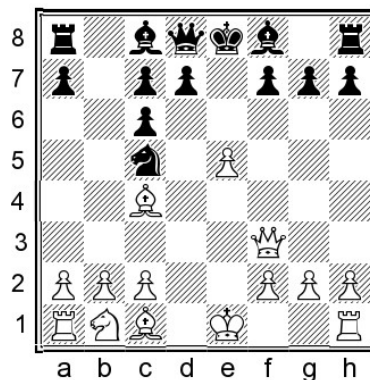
7...f5?! 8.Nd2 Ng5 (8...Qe7 9.Qxf5 d5 10.Qf4 g5 11.Qe3 Qxe5 12.Nxe4 dxe4, Velez Betancourt – Gomez Fontal, Cuba 1988, 13.Be2 Be6 14.Bd2 Bc5 15.Bh5+ Kf8 16.Bc3 Qd5 17.Qe2±; 8...d5 9.exd6 cxd6 10.Nxe4 Qe7, Roschina – Bezgodova, Kolontaevo 1997, 11.Qc3 Qxe4+ 12.Be3 Rb8 13.0-0-0 Qb4 14.Rd3± After this

move one of the attacked black pawns will perish.) 9.Qxf5 d5 10.Qd3 Bc5 11.f4 Ne6, Milov – Zvara, Pardubice 1993, 12.Nb3 Bb6 13.f5 Nc5 14.Nxc5 Bxc5 15.Bf4±

7...Qh4 8.g3 Ng5 9.Qe2 Qe4 (9...Qd4 10.Bg2 Be7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Rd1 Qb6, Edouard – Naudier, Besancon 2006, 13.Nc3 Ne6 14.Na4 Qa5 15.b3± White is eyeing Black's pawns on d7 and c6 and thus impedes the development of his pieces.) 10.Qxe4 Nxe4 11.Bg2 Nc5, Adamek – Smid, Czech Republic 2003, 12.Be3² The defects of Black's queenside pawn-structure will have long-term consequences for his prospects in this position.

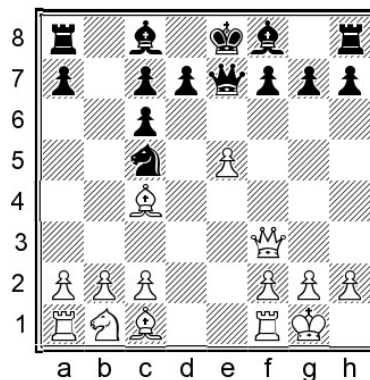
7...d5 8.exd6 Nxd6 9.Qxc6+ Bd7 10.Qf3 Be7 (10...h5 11.Nc3 Bg4, Wetterling – Lanzerath, Blankenburg 2008, 12.Qg3 Be7 13.h3 Bf5 14.Qxg7 Bf6 15.Qg3 Bxc2 16.Be2±) 11.Bd3 0-0 12.0-0 Re8 (12...Rb8, Lapin – Khokhriakov, Sterlitamak 2011, 13.Nc3 Bf6 14.Bd2 Rxb2 15.Nd5 Rb8 16.Ba5 Bxa1 17.Bxc7 Qg5 18.Bxd6±) 13.Nc3 Bf6 14.Nd5 Be5 15.Bf4 Bxb2 16.Rab1 Bd4 17.Rb4. Now, it becomes evident that Black's bishop has no good square to retreat to. 17...Bf6 (17...Bc5?! 18.Bxh7+ Kxh7 19.Qh5+ Kg8 20.Bg5 Bxb4 21.Bxd8 Raxd8 22.Nxb4+-) 18.Bxd6 cxd6 19.Rb7 Be5 20.Nc7±

B1) 7...Nc5 8.Bc4



8...Ne6

8...Qe7?! After this move Black can develop relatively quickly his bishop on the g7-square. White's pieces are very active however and the weakness of the dark squares (d6, f6) would hurt seriously Black in the future fight. 9.0-0

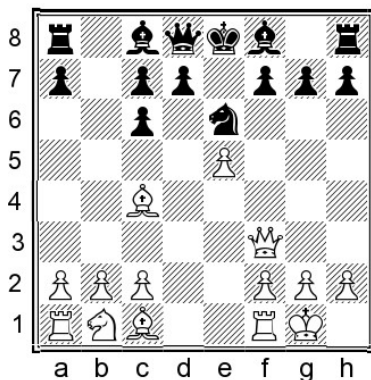


9...Ne6 10.b3 Bb7 11.Nc3 d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Ba3 Qd7, Ladner – Reis, Adelaide 1988, 14.Bxe6 fxe6 15.Rfe1 0-0-0 16.Rad1± White's knight is headed for the e4-square, neutralising the activity of the enemy light-squared bishop and provoking the advance of his hanging pawns. Black's dark-squared bishop is very likely to be exchanged soon and his other bishop would not be any threat for White. After that he will block the enemy pawns and will begin to create threats against Black's king.

9...Ba6 10.Bxa6 Nxa6, Boey –
 Sigurjonsson, Lugano 1968, 11.Nc3!? Qe6
 12.a3 Be7 13.b4 0-0 14.Bd2 Qxe5 15.Rfe1
 Qd6 16.Rad1 Rae8 17.Qe2 Nb8 18.Bg5
 Qe6 19.Qf1± Black will have to give up his
 queen for a rook and a bishop and his
 position will probably become impossible
 to defend having in mind his knight,
 isolated on the b8-square.

9...g6 10.Nc3!? (10.Be3 Ne6 11.Nc3 Bg7
 12.Qg3 d5, Coimbra – Gregorova, Dresden
 2008, 13.exd6 cxd6 14.Bxe6 Qxe6
 15.Bh6±; 14...Bxe6 15.Bg5 Qd7 16.Ne4 0-
 0 17.Rad1±) 10...Ne6 (10...Bg7 11.Bg5
 Qxg5 12.Qxf7+ Kd8 13.Qxg7 Re8
 14.Qxh7+-) 11.Ne4 Bg7 12.Nf6+ Bxf6
 13.exf6 Qc5 14.Bxe6 dxe6 15.Be3 Qd5
 16.Qf4. Black's king is helpless now.
 16...e5 17.Qh6 Bd7 18.Rad1 Qe6 19.Bc5
 Qxf6 20.f4 0-0-0 21.fxe5 Qxe5 22.Bd4+-

9.0-0



9...Qh4

9...d5 10.exd6 Bxd6 11.Qxc6+ Bd7,
 Krulich – Poppeler, Munich 1985, 12.Qd5
 0-0 13.Nc3±

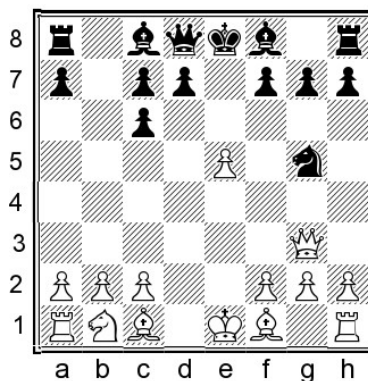
9...Be7 10.Bxe6 fxe6 11.Nc3 d5 12.exd6
 cxd6 13.Qxc6+ Bd7 14.Qf3 Bf6, Kuznetsov
 – Bacherikov, Nizhnij Novgorod 1999,

15.Bf4 e5 16.Be3± White uses his
 outposts on e4 and d5 and restricts the
 mobility of Black's bishops.

9...Bc5 10.Nc3 0-0 11.Ne4 Bd4 12.Qg3±
 f5?! Murariu – Vicente Cabanas, Las
 Palmas 2003, 13.Rd1 fxe4 14.Rxd4 Qe7
 15.Rxe4+-

10.Nd2 Bc5 (10...Be7 11.Ne4 0-0 12.g3
 Qh3 13.Rd1 Nc5 14.Bg5! d5, Buscher –
 Preuschoff, Germany 2000, 15.exd6 Bxd6
 16.Nxd6 cxd6 17.Rxd6±) **11.Ne4 0-0**
 (11...Qe7? 12.Bxe6! fxe6 13.Qh5+! g6
 14.Qh3 h5 15.Qg3 Kf7 16.Bg5+-
 Polugaevsky – Zilber, Leningrad 1951)
12.g3 Qd8 (12...Qh3 13.Rd1 with the idea
 Bf1) **13.Nxc5 Nxc5 14.Be3±** All White's
 pieces are active, while their Black's
 counterparts are practically squeezed.

B2) 7...Ng5 8.Qg3

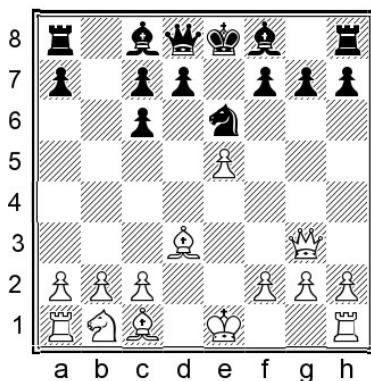


8...Ne6

8...Ne4 9.Qe3 Nc5 10.Nd2 Be7 11.Nb3
 Ne6, V.Sveshnikov – Westerkamp,
 Guernsey 2010, 12.f4!? g6 13.Bd3²
 White's idea f4-f5 is tremendously
 dangerous for Black.

8...Be7 9.Bd3 0-0 (about 9...d5 10.f4 Ne6 11.0-0 – see 8...Ne6) 10.0-0 f5, Rytshagov – Norri, Finland 1996 (10...d5 11.f4 Ne4 12.Bxe4 dxe4, Ruiz – Betaneli, Santa Clara 2014, 13.Nc3 Bf5 14.Rd1 Bc5+ 15.Be3 Qe7 16.h3 Bb6 17.Bxb6 axb6 18.Qe3²) 11.Bxg5 Bxg5 12.f4 Be7 13.Nc3 d5 14.Rad1 Rb8 15.Na4 c5 16.Qf3² White's plan includes the possibility to provoke the move c7-c6, then to place his pawns in the way – b2-b3 and c2-c4, after which he would try to force the move d5-d4 by attacking the enemy c5-pawn. The pawn-structure is static and Black's bishops are bound to remain passive, while White will begin to prepare active actions on the kingside.

9.Bd3

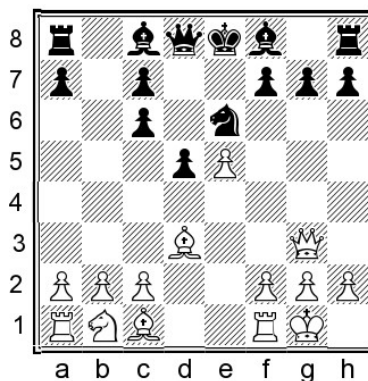


Here, Black can choose with what pawn-structure to continue the game. He can play either **B2b)** 9...d6, exchanging the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps his position, but ending after that with doubled isolated pawns on c7 and c6, or choose **B2a)** 9...d5, keeping the position closed, but providing his opponent with a passed pawn on the e-file.

About 9...g6 10.Nc3 d6 11.0-0 – see 9...d6.

9...Nc5, Zakharov – Danov, Nizhnij Novgorod 2013, 10.0-0 Nxd3 11.cxd3 Ba6 12.Nc3±

B2a) 9...d5 10.0-0



10...Bc5

10...h5, Plat – Nemeth, Mali Losinj 2017, 11.h3!? h4 12.Qf3 Rb8 (12...Be7 13.c4 0-0 14.Nc3 dxc4 15.Bxc4 Nd4 16.Qf4±) 13.c4²

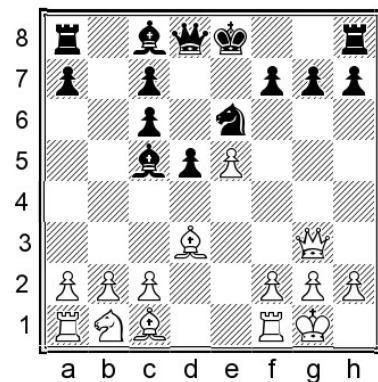
10...g6 11.f4 Nc5 (11...Nd4, Radeva – Kochukova, Khanty-Mansiysk 2016, 12.Qf2 Nf5 13.g4±) 12.Be3 Nxd3 13.cxd3 Be7 14.Qf2 a5 15.Bc5² White has fixed reliably his opponent's weak pawns.

10...Be7 11.f4 g6 (11...Bh4 12.Qf3 Nd4 13.Qe3 Nf5 14.Qc5 Bd7 15.Bxf5 Bxf5 16.Qxc6+ Kf8 17.Rd1± Meshkov – Medvedeva, Obninsk 2009; 11...h5 12.f5 h4, Kauzky – Muri, La Pineda 2004, 13.Qg4±) 12.f5 gxf5 13.Be3 (13.Bxf5 Ba6, Padevsky – Malchev, Sofia 1952, 14.Bd3²) 13...Bh4 14.Qf3 Bg5 15.Bxf5²

10...c5, Blackburne – Zukertort, London 1881, 11.c4 c6 12.Nc3 Be7 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.f4± c4 15.Bc2 d4 (15...Bh4 16.Ba4+ Bd7? 17.Bxd7+ Kxd7 18.Qf3+-) 16.f5 dxc3 17.fxe6 Bxe6 18.Rd1 Qb6+ 19.Be3 cxb2 20.Rab1 Bc5 21.Qxg7 Bxe3+ 22.Kh1+-

10...Nc5, Sartorio – Ceresoli, Crema 2001, 11.h3 a5 12.Nc3 Nxd3 13.cxd3 Bf5 14.d4 Bg6 15.Bg5 Qd7 16.Rac1± and White's knight is headed for the blocking square.

10...Rb8 11.f4 Nc5 12.f5 Nxd3 13.cxd3 g6 (13...c5? 14.Nc3 Rb4 15.Bg5 Qd7 16.e6 Qc6 17.e7 Bxe7 18.Bxe7 Kxe7 19.Qxg7 1-0 Mussanti – Pirotzky, Nueve de Julio 2000) 14.f6 Bc5+ 15.Kh1 h5 16.Rf4 Rb4 17.Rxb4 Bxb4 18.d4 h4 (18...c5 19.a3 Ba5 20.dxc5 c6 21.b4±) 19.Qb3 Bf8 20.h3 c5 21.Be3² White's pawn-wedge e5-f6 separates the enemy forces into two isolated groups.



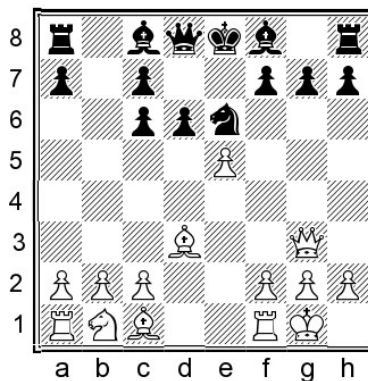
11.Nc3

White can also develop his knight with 11.Nd2, planning later either a blocking strategy (Nb3, Be3), or with Nf3+Ng5 (Nf3+Bg5) to develop his initiative on the kingside. 11...0-0 12.Nf3 f6 13.Qh4 g6 14.Bh6 Ng7 15.Rae1 fxe5 16.Bg5 Qd6

17.Nxe5 Bf5, Louis – Kvendseth, Oslo 2017, 18.Ng4 Bxg4 19.Be7 Qd7 20.Bxc5±

11...0-0, Puljek Salai – Macek, Pula 1989, **12.Na4 Be7** (12...Bb6 13.Bd2 f5 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.Rae1 Bd7 16.Nxb6 axb6 17.Bc3 d4 18.Bb4 c5 19.Bd2. This move is played with the terrible threat f4-f5. 19...Nf4 20.Bc4+ Kh8 21.Bxf4 Qxf4 22.Qxf4 Rxf4 23.Re7²) **13.f4 f5 14.exf6 Bxf6** (14...Rxf6 15.Be3 Bd6 16.Qh4 g6 17.Rae1²) **15.Be3 g6 16.Rad1 Ng7 17.Qf3 Nf5 18.Bf2 Nd4 19.Qe3 Nf5 20.Qd2²** Black's pawns are weak and static, while White's superiority on the kingside will become an important factor in the future battle.

B2b) 9...d6 10.0-0



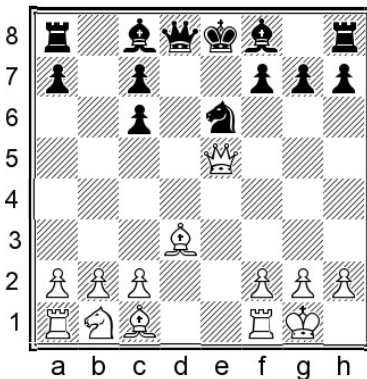
Black should think now how to solve the problem with the development of his kingside and at first what to do with his dark-squared bishop.

10...g6

The simple development 10...Be7, would not help, because after 11.f4, White would begin an attack on the kingside.

10...Nc5 11.Bg5 (11.exd6!?) 11...Qd7
 12.Nd2 d5 (12...Nxd3 13.cxd3 Qg4 14.Qe3
 Be6 15.h3 Qb4²) 13.h3 h6 14.Be3 d4
 15.Bf4± g5? 16.e6 Nxe6 17.Be5 Bg7
 18.Bxg7 Nxg7, Korneev – Marholev, Porto
 San Giorgio 2007, 19.Rae1+ Kf8 20.Qf3+–

After the exchange 10...dxe5 11.Qxe5,
 White's queen will occupy a powerful
 position in the centre and if Black attacks
 it, for example with Bd6, then White will
 have another very good square for it – e4.



After the rather modest move 11...Be7,
 White can be happy with piece-
 domination in the centre. 12.Rd1 Bd7
 13.Nc3 0-0 14.Ne4 Qe8 15.Be3±

11...Qd5 12.Qe2 Be7 13.Nc3 Qd7
 14.Re1±

11...Qh4, Ashley – Sagalchik, New York
 1994, 12.g3 Qd4 13.Qe2 Bd6 14.Nd2 0-0
 15.c3 Qe5 16.Qxe5 Bxe5 17.Be4 Bd7
 18.Nc4 Bf6 19.Rd1 Rad8 20.Na5±

11...Qd6 12.Qe2 Be7, Lalic –
 Westerkamp, Guernsey 2001, 13.Re1 Nd4
 14.Qh5 Qd5 15.Qd1 Be6 16.Nc3 Qd8
 17.Ne4 0-0 18.Ng3±

11...Bd6 12.Qe4 Bd7 13.Nc3 Rb8,
 Andreev – Brikov, Tula 2004, 14.Re1 Qf6
 15.Rb1±

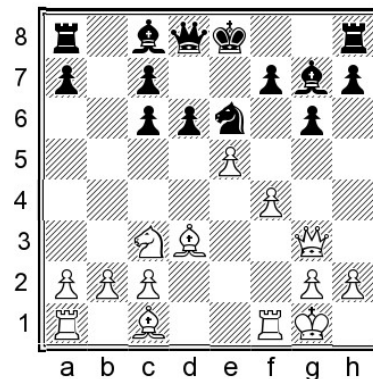
11...Rb8 12.Re1 Be7 13.Nc3 0-0
 (13...Qd4 14.Qxd4 Nxd4 15.Na4 Be6 16.c3
 Nb5 17.Be3 0-0 18.Be4±) 14.Qe4 g6,
 Hawkins – Hebden, London 2015,

15.Bc4!? White is not greedy to capture a
 pawn and develops his pieces to the best
 positions. 15...Bd6 16.Bh6 Re8 17.b3 c5
 18.Rad1 Bb7 19.Qg4± Black's king is
 vulnerable and his queen has no good
 square to go to.

11.Nc3

11.Nd2!? with the idea to play Nd2-c4
 after the capturing. 11...dxe5 (11...Bg7
 12.Nc4 Ba6 13.exd6 0-0 14.dxc7 Qxc7
 15.Qxc7 Nxc7 16.Re1²) 12.Nc4!? This is an
 interesting pawn-sacrifice with the idea
 to impede Black's development. 12...f6
 (12...Bg7 13.Nxe5 Qd6 14.f4 0-0 15.Be3±;
 12...Qf6 13.Be4 Bb7 14.Na5±) 13.Rd1©

11.f4!? White preserves his pawn on e5
 and is threatening to play later f4-f5.
 11...Bg7 12.Nc3 (12.f5 gxf5! 13.Rxf5 Bxe5
 14.Rxe5 dxe5 15.Nc3, Savchenko –
 A.Smirnov, Samara 2004, 15...Qe7 16.Ne4
 f5 17.Qxe5 Rf8÷).



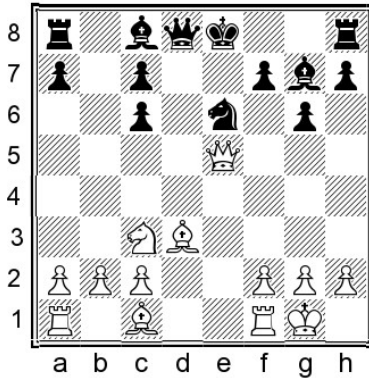
12...Nc5 13.Be2 Rb8 14.b3 0-0 15.Be3
 Nd7 16.Ne4²; 13...0-0 14.Be3 Nd7
 15.Rad1² dxe5? 16.f5! Qe8 17.Ne4 Nf6
 18.Nxf6+ Bxf6 19.Bc4 Kg7 20.fxg6 fxg6
 21.Bc5+–

12...0-0 13.Be3 f5 14.exf6 Bxf6
 (14...Rxf6 15.f5 gxf5 16.Bxf5±) 15.f5 Be5

16.Qg4 Nc5 17.Bg5 Qd7 18.Qc4+ Qf7
 19.fxg6 Qxc4 20.gxh7+ Kg7 21.Bxc4 Be6
 22.Bxe6 Nxe6 23.Be3 Kxh7 24.g3² Black's
 active pieces would impede considerably
 White's realisation of his material
 advantage.

destruction of his pawn-structure, or
 must retreat his knight, but then, White
 will have the resource Nc5 with a
 paralysing effect.

11...dxe5 12.Qxe5 Bg7



13.Qa5

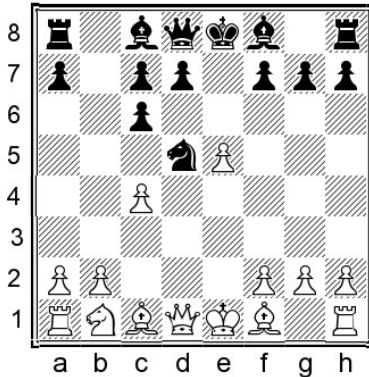
This is an active and safe square for
 White's queen.

13.Qe4 0-0 14.Qxc6 (14.Be3 Rb8
 15.Rab1 c5÷ Svidler – Gabriel, Newark
 1995) 14...Rb8 15.Qa4 a6 16.Be3 Rxb2
 17.Qa3 Rb8 18.Rad1 Qh4 19.Nd5 Bb7÷
 Kamsky – Korchnoi, Buenos Aires 1993.

13...0-0 14.Be3 Qh4 15.Rae1 Bb7
16.Qa4 (16.Ne4 c5 17.Nxc5 Bxg2=
 Agopov – Ovsejevitsch, Aghios Kirykos
 2001. White can oust the enemy queen
 with: 16.g3 Qh3 17.Be4 Rab8 18.Bg2 Qf5
 19.Qxf5 gxf5 20.Rb1² If we compare
 Black's pawn-mass to a rock, here we
 have just pieces of it left on the board...)
16...Qxa4 17.Nxa4 Rfe8 18.f4² White's
 threat f4-f5 is very powerful. Black must
 either comply with the further

Chapter 12

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Nd5 7.c4**



Black must decide now how to complete the development of his kingside. His main lines are: **A)** 7...Ne7 – transferring his knight to the g6-square with the idea to attack his opponent's central pawn; **B)** 7...Bb4 – the preliminary exchange of the bishops, planning to castle as soon as possible; **C)** 7...Nb6 8.Nc3 Bb4 – with the idea to capture the enemy knight and to compromise his pawn-structure.

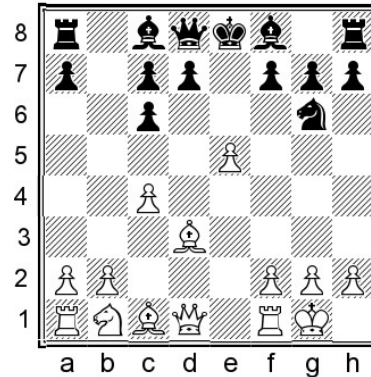
7...Nb4?! 8.a3 Na6 9.b4. White has a space advantage, while Black's knight on a6 is misplaced. 9...d6 (9...Qe7 10.Bb2 d6 11.Bd3 dxe5 12.0-0 f6 13.f4+-) 10.Bb2!?, Be6, Estevez Hernandez – Diaz Garcia, Tenerife 2009, 11.exd6 cxd6 12.Bd3 Be7 13.Bxg7 Rg8 14.Bb2± Rxc7? 15.Qf3+-

A) 7...Ne7 8.Bd3 Ng6

The drawback of Black's plan is that it is too slow. He has made eight moves and half of them are with his knight.

8...d6 9.exd6 cxd6 10.Bg5!? White prevents Black's natural development. 10...Qa5+ 11.Bd2 Qe5+ 12.Be2 Qxb2 13.Bc3 Qb7 14.0-0 Ng6 15.Nd2 f6 16.Nb3 Be7 17.Na5 Qc7 18.Nxc6±

9.0-0



9...d6

White's e5-pawn cramps Black's position, so it would be logical for him to try to trade it.

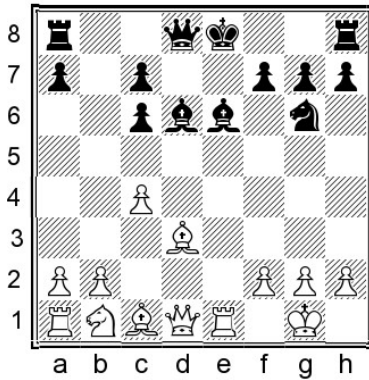
9...Bc5 10.Qh5 0-0 11.Nd2² d6?
12.Ne4± Hracek – Pechac, Batumi 2018.

9...Be7 10.Re1 (10.Bxg6 hxg6, Casellas – Reyes, Bogota 2012, 11.Nc3 0-0 12.Bf4 d6 13.Re1²) 10...0-0 11.Nc3 d6 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Be3 Ne5, Belka – Anderson, ICCF 2012, 14.Bc2 Be6 15.b3²

10.Be4!?

White forces the issue exploiting his opponent's lag in development.

White can continue to play in a positional fashion preserving a considerable plus. 10.exd6 Bxd6 11.Re1+ Be6



12.Be4?! 0-0 13.Bxc6 Rb8,, Vajda – Ivanisevic, Cetinje 2009.

12.Qc2 Qh4!? 13.g3 Qh5 14.Be2 Qe5 15.Bd2 0-0 16.Bc3 Qg5 17.Nd2 Nf4, Pezelj – Brenjo, Valjevo 2011, 18.Bf1 Nh3+ 19.Bxh3 Bxh3 20.Qa4 c5 21.Ne4 Qh5 22.Qc6 Rad8,,

12.Nc3 0-0 13.Ne4 (13.Qc2 Qh4 14.g3 Qh5 15.Be2 Bg4 16.Bxg4 Qxg4÷) 13...Bb4 14.Bd2 Qxd3 (14...Bxd2 15.Qxd2 Ne5 16.Bf1 Nxc4 17.Qc3© Vorobiov – I.Zaitsev, Moscow 1996) 15.Bxb4 Qxd1 16.Raxd1 Rfb8 17.Bc3 Bxc4 18.Ng3 (18.b3!? Bd5 19.Ba5) 18...Rd8 19.Rxd8+ Rxd8= Zwirs – Ivanisevic, Dieren 2018.

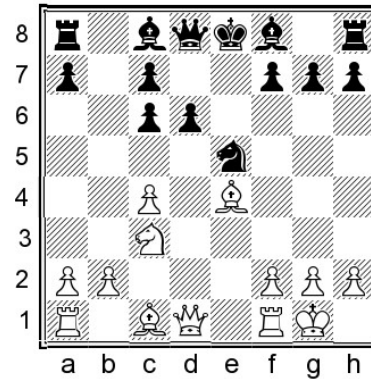
12.c5. It is essential for White to prevent in advance the threat Qd8-h4. 12...Be7 13.Qc2 0-0 14.Be3 Bg5 15.Nc3 Qe7, Norrelykke – Weissleder, ICCF 2009, 16.Bxg5 Qxg5 17.Ne4 Qh4 18.g3 Qg4 19.Be2 Qf5 20.f4 Bd5 21.Bd3 Rfe8 22.Re3 Re7 23.Rae1 Qd7 24.Nc3²

10...Nxe5

Black will suffer anyway, so he should better do it for something!

10...Bd7, Stoica – Vaisman, Bucharest 1978, 11.f4 Be7 12.Nc3 0-0 13.Be3 f5 14.exd6 cxd6 15.Bf3² Black's compromised queenside is under the pressure of White's bishops.

11.Nc3



The threat f2-f4 is very unpleasant for Black.

11...Be7

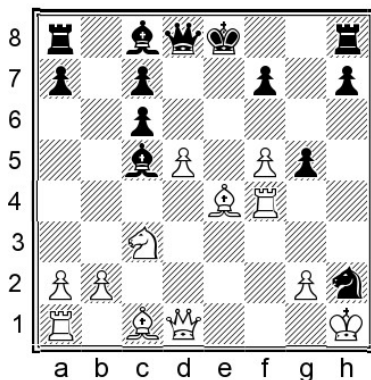
White is better after the tactical skirmish 11...Bd7 12.f4 Nxc4 13.Qe2 Qe7 14.Qxc4 d5 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Qxd5 Qc5+ 17.Kh1 Rd8 18.Be3 Qxd5 19.Bxd5±

12.f4 d5 13.cxd5 Bc5+ 14.Kh1 Ng4 15.f5 Nxe2

Black must try to seek counter chances by attacking the shelter of the enemy king.

15...Nf2+? 16.Rxf2 Bxf2 17.d6! 0-0 18.Bxc6 Rb8 19.d7 Ba6 20.Ne4 Bb6 21.f6+- Now, practically all the defenders of Black's king are too far from it.

16.Rf4 g5



17.Qh5!

Naturally, White is reluctant to open the h-file. It is better for him to give up some material, but to continue the attack by complete mobilisation of his forces.

17...gxf4 18.Bxf4 Bd6 19.Qxh2 Rg8 20.dxc6

White has very powerful initiative for the sacrificed exchange and his pawn on c6 is an excellent asset in his position.

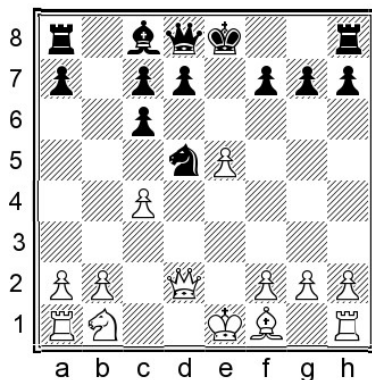
20...Rg4 21.Bxd6 Rh4 22.Bxc7 Qf6

22...Rxh2+ 23.Bxh2+–, with the threat c6-c7, which would be impossible for Black to parry.

23.Re1 Ba6 24.Bf3+ Kf8 25.Bd6+ Kg8 26.c7 Rxh2+ 27.Bxh2 Rc8 28.Nd5 Qh4 29.Re3±

Black has some material advantage indeed, but his king is vulnerable, just like before, while White's pieces are perfectly coordinated and his passed pawn has squeezed his opponent's forces

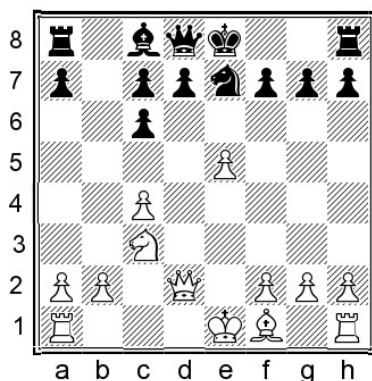
B) 7...Bb4+ 8.Bd2 Bxd2+ 9.Qxd2



9...Nb6

White can develop quickly his queenside and castle there, therefore, Black's knight should be placed on b6 in order to attack the enemy pawn and to support eventually the pawn-advance a5-a4.

9...Ne7 10.Nc3

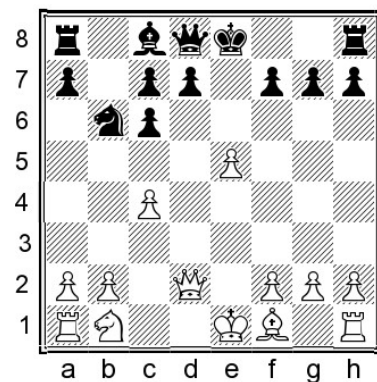


10...Ng6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.f4 d6. Black is trying to free his position; otherwise, White will manage to advance h4-h5. (12...f6 – see 10...0-0 11.0-0-0 Ng6; 12...Qe7? 13.h4 Nxh4 14.Bd3 f5, Bolacky – Skapikova, Tatranske Zruby 2018, 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.g3 Ng6 17.Ne4 Qd4 18.Ng5+–) 13.Be2 Bb7 14.exd6 cxd6, Kantans – Labuckas, Panevezys 2012, 15.Rhf1± White is threatening to capture a pawn as well as f5-f6.

10...d5 11.exd6 Qxd6 12.0-0-0 Qxd2+ 13.Rxd2 Be6 14.Ne4 0-0 15.Nc5 Nf5

16.Be2 Rad8 17.Rhd1 Rxd2 18.Rxd2 Bc8
19.Bf3 Nd6 20.b3± Parligras –
Organdziev, Istanbul 2002.

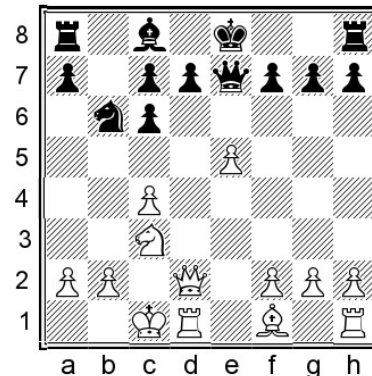
10...0-0 11.0-0-0 Ng6 (11...Rb8 12.h4 f6
13.exf6 Rxf6 14.Ne4 Rf8 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bc4
Kh8 17.f3 d6 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Bxd5 cxd5
20.Qxd5±; 11...f6 12.exf6 Rxf6 13.Ne4 Re6
14.Bd3 h6 15.Rhe1 d5 16.Nc5 Rf6 17.Qe3
Rf7, C.Mamedov – Mirzakouliev, Baku
2000, 18.h3± White has restricted the
mobility of the enemy pieces and has
prepared a pawn-offensive.) 12.f4. His
advantage is quite obvious. White is
threatening again h2-h4-h5, in order to
attack the enemy knight. 12...f6 (12...Rb8
13.h4 Nxh4, Meyer – Bhawoodien, Bruma
Lake 1998, 14.Bd3 f5 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.g3
Ng6 17.Ne4 Qd4 18.Ng5+-; 12...Re8 13.g3
Rb8 14.c5 Qe7 15.Ne4 f5 16.Bc4+ Kh8
17.Ng5 Qxc5 18.Nf7+ Kg8 19.Qc2±) 13.e6
d6 14.f5 Ne5, Baumegger – Rolletschek,
Mureck 2001, 15.g4!? Nxg4 16.Rg1 Ne5
17.Bd3 Qe7 18.Ne2 Nf3 19.Qh6+- White's
pawn-wedge f5-e6 has squeezed the
enemy forces to such an extent that he
needs only a few pieces to finish off the
game with a decisive attack. 19...Nxg1
20.Rxg1 Kh8 21.Qh3 Rb8 22.Nf4 Kg8
23.Ng6 Qe8 24.Rg3 a6 25.Qxh7



10.Bd3

The moment Black has determined the
placement of his knight, White's king is
evacuated to the other side of the board.

10.Nc3. He plans to castle queenside.
10...Qe7 (10...0-0 11.0-0-0 d6 12.exd6 Be6
13.dxc7 Qxc7 14.Qd6 Qb7 15.Qf4 Rab8
16.Rd2 Rfd8 17.Rxd8+ Rxd8 18.Be2 Rb8
19.b3 a5 20.Rd1 a4 21.Qd4 h6 22.c5 axb3
23.cxb6 bxa2 24.Kb2 Qxb6+ 25.Qxb6
Rxb6+ 26.Ka1+-; 10...d5 11.exd6 Qxd6
12.0-0-0 Qxd2+ 13.Rxd2²; 10...c5 11.a4 d6
12.a5 Nd7 13.exd6 0-0 14.dxc7 Qxc7
15.Be2 Bb7 16.0-0 Rad8 17.Nb5 Qb8
18.Qd6±) 11.0-0-0



11...a5 12.Qd4 Bb7 13.Ne4 0-0-0
14.Bd3 c5 15.Nxc5 Bxg2 16.Rhg1 Bf3
17.Rde1± Lajthajm – Novoselski, Vrnjacka
Banja 2008.

11...0-0 12.f4 a5 13.Qf2 (13.Bd3 Ba6
14.Qe2² Granara Barreto – Guidali,
Montevideo 2018) 13...Rb8 14.Bd3 d6
15.Rhe1 d5 16.f5 Qg5+ 17.Qd2 Qxd2+
18.Rxd2 dxc4 19.Be4 Bb7 20.Bf3² White
cannot penetrate into the enemy position,
so he maintains only a minimal edge.

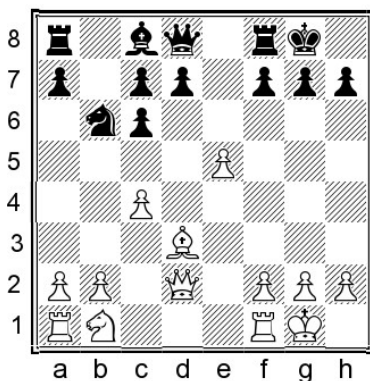
10...0-0

10...Qe7 11.0-0 Bb7 12.Re1 c5 13.a4!?
a5 14.Nc3± Black's pieces are stuck to
protect his weak queenside pawns and
his knight is too far away from the
coveted b4 and d4-outposts.

10...Qh4 11.0-0 0-0 (11...c5, Benda – Valent, Feffernitz 1999, 12.f4 Bb7 13.a4 a5 14.Nc3±) 12.Na3 d6 13.Rae1² Now, in order to parry the direct threats against his king, Black will be forced to exchange on e5, leaving his queenside pawns chronically weak.

10...d5 11.cxd5! (White also preserves better prospects after 11.exd6 cxd6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Nc3 Qh4 14.b3 Be6 15.Rfe1 d5 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.g3 Qb4 18.Rac1 Rad8 19.Re4²) 11...cxd5 12.0-0 0-0 13.Nc3 c6 14.Rfe1 Re8 15.f4 Bd7 16.b3² He parries the only possible active counterplay for Black.

11.0-0



Both sides are completing their development. The knight on b6 does not beautify Black's position at all and his pawn-structure is chronically weak.

11...d5

Here, besides this move, Black can simplify in the centre in several other ways, but neither of them is sufficient for him to equalise.

11...f6 12.c5 Nd5 13.Nc3± If Black captures the pawn, White will follow with

Bc4 and Black's king and rook would come under an attack.

11...d6 12.Re1 dxe5 13.Qc2 h6 14.Rxe5²

11...Ba6 12.b3 d6 13.Rd1!? d5 14.Nc3 Qe7 15.cxd5 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Rad8 17.Qe4 cxd5 18.Nxd5±

11...Bb7 12.Re1 d6 13.exd6 cxd6 14.Nc3 d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qf4², with the ideas Qd4, or Nb5.

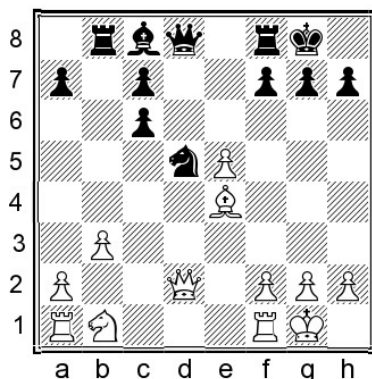
11...Re8 12.Re1 d5 (12...Ba6 13.b3 d6 14.Qa5 Bb7 15.exd6 Rxe1+ 16.Qxe1 cxd6 17.Nc3²) 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.Qc2² with pressure against Black's backward pawn.

11...Qe7 12.Re1 Ba6 (12...f6 13.exf6 Qxf6 14.Nc3 d6 15.Ne4 Qd4 16.Ng3² Black's king shelter is not reliable and his bishop and knight are misplaced.) 13.Qc2 g6 14.Nd2± Van Beek – Bakker, Hengelo 1994.

12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.Be4 Rb8 14.b3

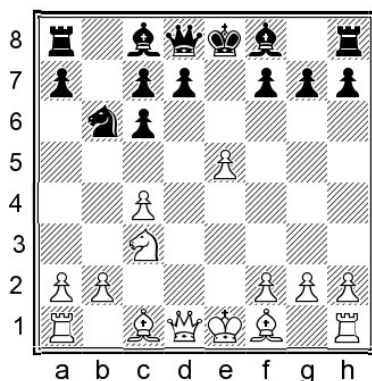
White is preparing the transfer of his knight to c4, or to f3, with the idea to support his central pawn.

14.Nc3 Qe7 15.Rfe1 Be6²



14...Re8 15.f4 Qe7 16.Qf2 f6 17.Nd2 fxe5 18.fxe5 Ba6 19.Rfe1± Black's pawns are weak as well as the squares in front of them, so White has an advantage also thanks to his powerful passed e-pawn.

C) 7...Nb6 8.Nc3



It would not be so easy for Black to solve the problem with the development of his dark-squared bishop, because if he makes a move with it, White will reply with Qg4.

8...Bb4

This is the most active move with Black's bishop.

8...Qe7 9.Bf4² The development of Black's queen to the e7-square is senseless, since White is not obliged to place his queen on e2 in a "mirror fashion"...

8...d6 9.c5!/? Now, Black's pawn-structure would be irrevocably compromised. 9...dxc5 10.Qf3 Nd5 11.Bc4 Be6, Luukkonen – Satukangas, Jarvanpaa 1998, 12.Be3 Nxe3?! (12...Be7 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.Nxd5 Bxd5 15.Bxd5 cxd5 16.Qxd5±) 13.fxe3 Bxc4 14.Qxc6+ Ke7 15.Qxc5+ Ke7 16.Qc6+ Ke7 17.Qxc4+--

8...Be7 9.Qg4 g6, Bashkite – Jermolina, Tallinn 2006 (9...Kf8 10.Qf3 d5 11.exd6 cxd6 12.Be2²) 10.Bh6 d5 11.Qg3± White would be better after castling on either side, since Black has a much greater problem with the evacuation of his own king.

8...Bc5 9.Qg4 Kf8 (9...Rg8? 10.Bd3±; 9...g6 10.Bh6 Qe7 11.0-0-0 Qxe5 12.Bd3 d5 13.Qf3 Be6 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.Rhe1 Qh5 16.Qxh5 gxh5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Bb5+ Kd8 19.Bc6 Rb8 20.Bxd5±) 10.Qe4 d6 11.exd6 cxd6 12.Be2² Black will have a hard time to accomplish an artificial castling.

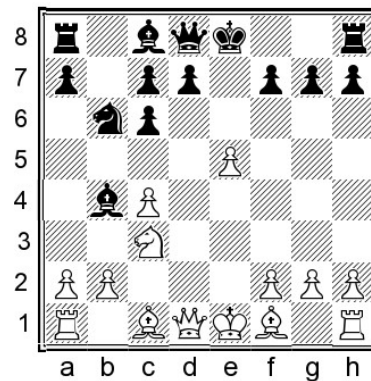
Black is not well prepared for the central move 8...d5, since he lags in development. 9.cxd5!/? (White would maintain only a slight edge after 9.exd6 Bxd6 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0 Re8 12.Re1 Rxe1+ 13.Qxe1 Be6 14.b3 Bb4 15.Bf1²) 9...cxd5 10.Bb5+ Bd7, Nabaty – Kozlitan, Rijeka 2010, 11.0-0 Bxb5 (11...Be7 12.Qg4 0-0 13.Bxd7 Qxd7 14.Qxd7 Nxd7 15.Nxd5±; 11...Bc5 12.Bd3 0-0 13.Qc2 h6 14.Nxd5±) 12.Nxb5 c6 (12...Qd7 13.a4 Be7 14.Qc2 c5 15.Nd6+ Bxd6 16.exd6

Qxd6 17.Re1+ Kf8 18.Bf4! Qxf4 19.Qxc5+ Kg8 20.a5 Nd7 21.Qxd5+-) 13.Nd4 c5 14.Nb5 a6 15.Nc3 Be7 16.Qg4f Black would have a problem to castle, while White can improve patiently his position with f2-f4-f5, or Rd1.

8...g6 9.Ne4 (It is also simple and strong for White to continue here with 9.Be3, threatening c4-c5. 9...Bb4 10.Qc2 0-0 11.a3 Bxc3+ 12.Qxc3 Re8 13.Bd3± Black's dark squares are horribly weak and the opening of the position may lead to checkmating threats against his king.) 9...Qe7 (9...Be7? 10.c5 Nd5 11.Bc4 0-0 12.Bh6 Re8 13.0-0 Bf8 14.Bxf8 Kxf8 15.Qd4 Qe7 16.f4 f5 17.Bxd5 cxd5 18.Nf6+-) 10.Bg5 Qxe5 11.Qe2 Bb4+ 12.Kd1. White has lost his castling rights, but he still maintains the initiative, because the threat Nf6 is very unpleasant for his opponent. 12...Qe6 13.Nf6+ Kf8 14.Bh6+ Ke7 15.Bg7 Ba6 (15...Rd8 16.Nxh7 Rg8 17.Bd4±) 16.Rc1 Rhb8 17.a3 Bd6 18.Nxh7± Black's king remains endangered even after the trade of the queens. White's pieces are perfectly coordinated and are ready to support the passed h-pawn.

8...Ba6 9.b3 Bb4 10.Bb2 0-0 (10...Qg5 11.Qd4 d5. Without this move White will manage to oust the enemy bishop and to follow with Ne4, depriving his opponent of any active possibilities. 12.h4 Qe7 13.cxd5 Bxf1 14.Kxf1 cxd5 15.Nxd5 Nxd5 16.Qxd5 0-0 17.Rh3 Rad8 18.Qe4²; 10...Qe7 11.Be2 Qxe5 12.Qc2 0-0 13.0-0. White has very good compensation for the sacrificed pawn – Black's bishop on a6 and his knight on b6 are isolated from the actions. 13...Rfe8 14.Bd3 Qh5 15.Ne2 d5 16.Nf4 Qg4 17.c5 Qxf4 18.Bxa6 Nd7

19.Bb7 Rad8 20.Bxc6 Qe4 21.Rfc1²) 11.Qc2 Re8 12.f4 Qh4+ (12...d5 13.0-0-0 Qh4 14.g3 Qh6 15.c5 Bxf1 16.Rdx1 Bxc5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Qxc5 c6 19.Kb1²) 13.g3 Qh6 14.Be2. If White succeeds in completing his development his advantage would become obvious. 14...d6 15.a3 Bxc3+ 16.Bxc3 dxe5 17.fxe5 Nd7 18.0-0 Nxe5 19.Rae1 Re7 20.Bg4 Qd6 (20...Rae8 21.Qf2 f6 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.Rxe5 Rxe5 24.Qxa7 Qe3+ 25.Qxe3 Rxe3 26.Rf3²) 21.Bxe5 Rxe5 22.Qf2 f6 23.Rxe5 Qxe5 24.Re1 Qc3 25.Re7 Qxb3 26.Qe2 Qb8 (26...Bxc4?? 27.Re8+ Kf7 28.Bh5+ g6 29.Qe7#) 27.Qe6+ Kh8 28.Qf7 Qf8 29.Be6 Qxf7 30.Bxf7 g6 31.Rxc7± White has created a passed pawn and his king will quickly come to help it.



9.Bd3

After the aggressive move 9.Qg4!? Kf8, Black would lose his castling rights, but he had no choice anyway. (9...g6?! 10.Bg5 Be7 11.Bh6 d5 12.Qg3±; 9...Bxc3+? 10.bxc3 g6 11.Bg5 d5 12.Qh4 Qd7 13.Bf6 Rf8 14.c5+-) 10.Qg3!? (10.Be2 h5 11.Qf4 d6 12.a3 Bxc3+ 13.bxc3 f6²) 10...d5 11.Be2 Nxc4 (11...d4 12.a3 Be7 13.Ne4 Bf5 14.Qf3 Be6 15.b3 a5 16.0-0 a4 17.b4 Nxc4 18.Bf4 h5 19.Rfe1 Qd5 20.Bxc4 Qxc4 21.Bg5² White obtains an outpost on c5 for his knight and attacks the vulnerable enemy pawns.) 12.Bxc4 dxc4 13.0-0 Be6

14.Rd1 Qe8 15.Ne2² Black's rook is isolated from the actions, so he will hardly manage to defend his weak pawns on the c-file.

9...d6

White maintains positional pressure even after the exchange of his central pawn. The alternatives for Black would not equalise for him either.

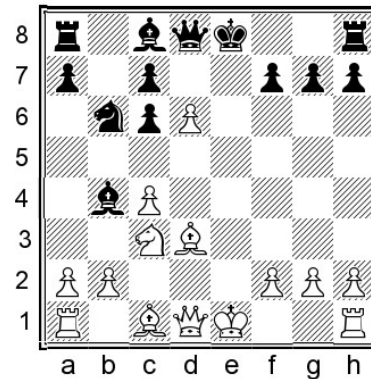
9...d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.0-0 0-0 12.Nb5 c6 13.Nd4² c5?! 14.Nc6 Qc7 15.Nxb4 cxb4± Williams – Han, Victoria 2011.

9...Qh4 10.0-0 Bxc3 (10...0-0 11.Ne4± 11.bxc3 Ba6 12.Re1 Qe7, Hassan – Elsayed, Cairo 1996, (12...0-0 13.Re4 Qe7 14.a4±) 13.c5 Bxd3 14.cxb6 Bf5 15.bxc7± White's pawn has been advanced so far that the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board would not help Black.

9...0-0 10.0-0 Bxc3 (10...Qe7 11.Re1 Bxc3 12.bxc3 Re8 13.Re4 c5 14.Qh5 g6 15.Qh6 Qf8 16.Qh4 d5 17.Bh6 Qe7 18.Bg5 Qf8 19.Re3±) 11.bxc3 d6 12.exd6!? White has superior prospects thanks to his powerful bishop-pair in this open position. (12.Bf4 Be6 13.Qh5 g6 14.Qh6 dxe5 15.Bxe5 f6 16.Bd4 Bxc4 17.Bxg6 Qd7 18.Rfd1 hxg6 19.Bxb6 Qg7 20.Qxg7+ Kxg7 21.Bxc7²) 12...Qxd6 13.Qc2 g6 (13...h6 14.Be3 Qa3 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bh7+ Kh8 17.Bd4 Rb8 18.Be4 Be6 19.Rfe1± Black's queen has been cut off away from the kingside and White brings his major pieces into the attack.) 14.Be3 Ba6 15.Rad1 Qa3 16.Rfe1 Bxc4 17.Bxc4 Nxc4

18.Bh6 Rfe8?! 19.Rxe8+ Rxe8 20.Qe2! Qf8! 21.Rd8! Rxd8 22.Bxf8 Rd2 23.Qf1+–

10.exd6



10...Bxc3+

Black can do nothing better with his bishop.

10...cxd6 11.0-0 0-0 12.Qc2 f5 13.Ne2 Bc5, Firouzja – Bosiocic, Anzali 2019, 14.Bd2 a5 15.Rae1 Qf6 16.Nf4± Black's king is vulnerable, while White's pieces have been harmoniously deployed and can break the enemy defence by advancing his h-pawn as a wedge.

10...Bxd6. Black has lost so many tempi with his bishop (Bf8-b4-d6) that White can complete calmly his development and castle queenside. 11.Be3 Nd7 12.Qc2 Qh4 13.g3 Qh5 14.Be2 Qg6 15.Qxg6 hxg6 16.0-0 0-0 17.Ne4 Be7 18.f4 f5 19.Nc3 Nc5 20.Bf3± Now, even if Black manages somehow to defend his weaknesses, his pieces would remain very passive. Later, White's king will join into the attack against his opponent's weak pawns.

10...Qxd6 11.0-0 Bxc3 12.bxc3 0-0 13.Qc2 h6 14.Be3 c5 15.Rad1 Qe7

16.Rfe1. We have to mention here how the position has been changed during the last four moves. White brings new forces into the battle, creating some small threats in the process, while Black will be busy to play with his queen and pawns.

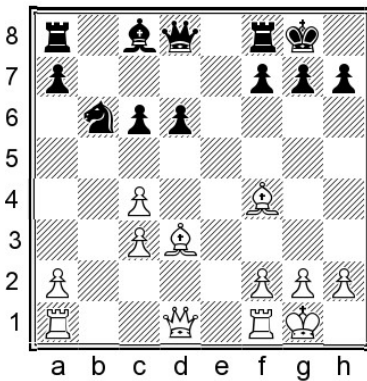
16...Be6 17.Bf4 Rfe8 18.Re3 Qh4 19.Bg3 Qe7 20.Qe2 Rad8 21.Re1. White transfers his rook from one open file into another... 21...Qd7 22.Bh4 Rb8 23.f4± Here, all White's pieces take part into the attack against the enemy king and his f-pawn will break irrevocably Black's defence.

bishops, while Black's king has been weakened.

11.bxc3 cxd6

About 11...Qxd6 12.0-0 – see 10...Qxd6.

12.0-0 0-0 13.Bf4



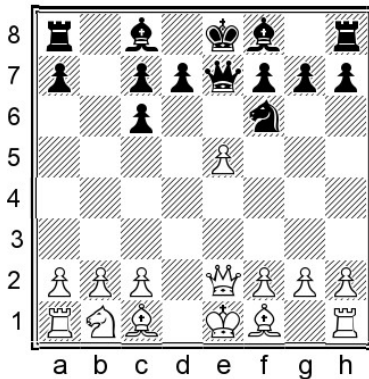
The threat of capturing on d6, as well as Qh5, forces Black to advance one of the pawns in front of his king.

13...f5 14.Re1±

White maintains a stable advantage here thanks to several small pluses. He has better development, dominates on the open file and has a couple of active

Chapter 13

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2



7...Nd5

The passive retreat 7...Ng8 would present White with numerous promising possibilities. 8.Nc3!? (Naturally, he could have continued here with standard set-ups like: b3, Bb2, as for example in the game Sorin – Agdestein, Cappelle-la-Grande 2000.) 8...Qe6 (Now Black's knight does not control the f4-square, so after undermining moves like d6, f6, White can simply reply with Bf4: 8...d6 9.Bf4; 8...f6 9.Bf4; 8...g6 9.a3!? Bg7 10.Bf4 Rb8 11.0-0) 9.f4 (9.g3!? Bb4 10.Bd2²) 9...f6 (9...Bc5 10.Ne4 Bb6 11.Ng5 Qe7 12.Bd2±; 9...Bb4 10.Qf3 f6 11.Bd3 fxe5 12.0-0±; 9...Nh6 10.Bd2 Be7 11.0-0-0±) 10.Bd2 fxe5 (10...d6? 11.0-0-0 dxe5 12.Qe4+-; 10...d5 11.0-0-0±) 11.fxe5 d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.0-0 Qxe2 14.Nxe2±

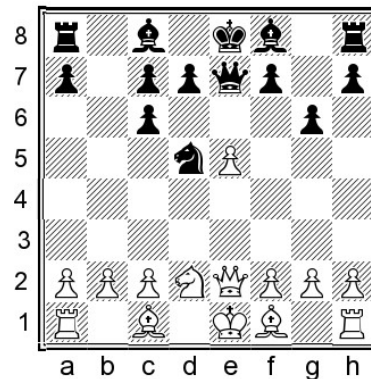
8.h4!?

This is a multi-purpose move. White can bring his rook into the actions with Rh1-h3, or advance his pawn even further

h4-h5, or attack the enemy queen with the move Bg5. The opponent's forces have not entered yet in a direct clash, so Black has a choice between numerous possibilities. Still, not all of them would provide him with an acceptable game. In this line there often arise very complicated and unclear positions about which there would not be necessary long explanations, but just good knowledge of the right moves.

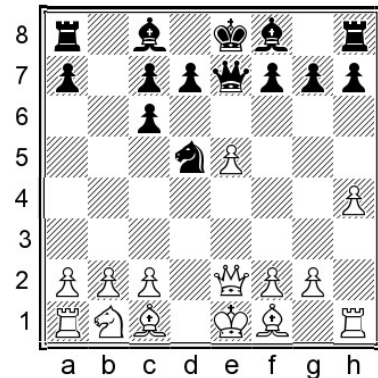
In our following chapters we will analyse in details the moves 8.g3 and 8.c4.

Still, White plays here sometimes 8.Nd2, with the idea to transfer his knight to the f3-square in order to protect the pawn on e5. 8...g6



9.c4 (He fails to realise immediately his idea in the line: 9.Nf3?! Bg7 10.c4 Nb6 11.b3, Mozharov – Morozevich, Moscow 2015, 11...0-0 12.Bg5 Qe6³) 9...Nf4!? Now, it would be already White who must fight for the draw. (Following 9...Ba6, there would arise a popular position from the variation 8.c4 Ba6 9.Nd2 g6, but Black is not forced to play like this.) 10.Qe3 (10.Qe4?! Ne6. He is threatening after Bg7, 0-0, Nc5, to capture White's pawn on e5. 11.Be2 Bg7 12.f4 0-0 13.0-0, Simacek – Caletka, Ostrava 2017, 13...f5!? 14.Qe3

d6³) 10...Bh6 11.Kd1! (11.Qc3?! Bg7 12.Nf3 Ne6 13.Bd3 f6³ Abergel – Dimitrijeski, Palma de Mallorca 2015) 11...0-0 12.h4 (with the threat 13.g3 Nh3 14.f4, winning Black's knight) 12...d5! 13.g3 (13.h5? Chigaev – Smirnov, Kemerovo 2013, 13...Bg5 14.Nf3 Bg4μ) 13...d4 14.Qf3 (14.Qe1? Nh5 15.Bg2 Rb8 16.b3, Rieger – Dragnev, Graz 2017, 16...Re8μ) 14...Nh5 15.g4 Bxd2 16.Bxd2 Ng7÷ Howell – Kryvoruchko, Warsaw 2011.



After the move 8.h4 we will analyse in details **A) 8...h6, B) 8...Bb7, C) 8...f6, D) 8...d6, E) 8...a5 and F) 8...Qe6.**

8...Nb6. White's plan includes the pawn-advance c2-c4 and Black retreats his knight in advance, depriving the opponent of the possibility to play that move with a tempo. 9.Nc3!? Black's knight has been removed from the centre, so White does not need to waste time for the pawn-advance c2-c4. (After 9.b3 Black obtains sufficient counterplay with a flank operation. 9...a5 10.Ba3 Qe6 11.Bxf8 Kxf8 12.Nc3 a4 13.0-0-0 axb3 14.cxb3, Morozevich – Smagin, Sochi 2016, 14...Qe7 15.Kb1 h5÷) 9...d6 (About 9...d5 10.exd6 – see 9...d6) 10.exd6 Qxe2+ (10...cxd6 11.Be3²) 11.Bxe2 cxd6 (11...Bxd6?! 12.Be3 0-0 13.0-0-0±) 12.Be3

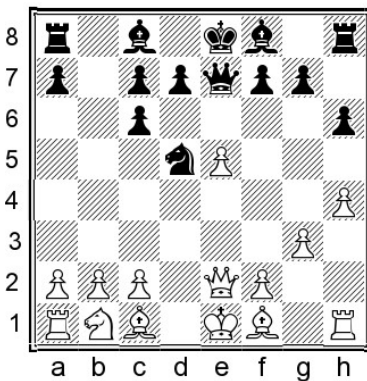
d5 (12...Be7 13.0-0-0²) 13.0-0-0 Bd6 14.Ne4 Bc7 15.Nc5 0-0 16.Rhe1²

8...Rb8 9.c4 (After 9.g3?!, there arises the standard endgame from Chapter 15, in which White has played the not so necessary move h2-h4: 9...g6 10.c4 Ba6 11.b3 Bg7 12.Bb2 0-0 13.Bg2 Rfe8 14.0-0 Bxe5 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.Bxe5 Rxe5 17.cxd5 Bxf1 18.Kxf1 cxd5) 9...Qb4+ (9...Ba6 10.b3 f6 11.Bb2 Nf4 12.Qe3²; 10...d6, Van Hoorn – Van der Werf, Assen 2018, 11.g3 dxe5 12.Bg2²; 10.Rh3!? Qb4+ 11.Kd1 Qc5 12.Qe4 Be7 13.Nd2 Nb6 14.Re3 0-0 15.Bd3 g6 16.Rb1±) 10.Nd2 (10.Kd1!? Nb6 11.b3 Be7 12.Rh3 d5 13.exd6 Qxd6+ 14.Rd3 Qe6 15.Re3 Qd6+ 16.Nd2²) 10...Nf4 11.Qe3 (11.Qe4. On this square White's queen would come under an attack after d7-d5 and he would not have the move Bd3, because of Nc5. 11...Ne6 12.Be2 d5÷ Epstein – Esserman, Seattle 2003) 11...Ne6 12.Bd3. Black's major pieces have been concentrated on the b-file and it has become evident that White should evacuate his king to the kingside. 12...d5 (12...Bc5 13.Qg3 Bd4 14.0-0 d6 15.Nf3 dxe5 16.Nxd4 exd4 17.f4 f5 18.Bxf5 0-0 19.Bc2±) 13.exd6 (13.0-0 Be7 14.Qg3 Ba6 15.Rb1²) 13...Bxd6 14.0-0²

8...Qb4+ 9.c3 (9.Nd2!? Rb8 10.a3 Qa4 11.Qe4 Qxe4+ 12.Nxe4²; 9...Nf4 10.Qe3 Ne6 11.c3²) 9...Qa5, Llaneza Vega – Diaz Caramazana, Asturias 1999 (9...Qb6 10.Nd2 a5, Sharovatova – Karacsony, Budapest 2000, 11.Qf3 a4 12.Nc4 Qc5 13.h5²) 10.Nd2 Rb8 (10...Qb6 11.h5!?) 11.Qf3 Ba6 12.h5! (12.Bxa6 Qxa6 13.b3 Be7 14.h5f) 12...Bxf1 13.Kxf1 h6 14.Rh4±

8...g6. This move is played with the simple idea Bf8-g7, not only with the intention to castle, but also to attack the enemy pawn on e5. 9.c4 Ba6 10.Rh3 Qb4+ (10...Bg7 11.Ra3 Nb4, Gouma – Van Loy, Haarlem 2006, 12.Ra4 Bxe5 13.Kd1 d5 14.f4 0-0-0 15.Nd2+-; 10...Nb6 11.b3 Bg7 12.Bg5²) 11.Nc3 (11.Kd1!? Nb6 12.b3 0-0 13.Qd2 d5 14.exd6 Rxd6 15.Rd3 Rxd3 16.Bxd3 Qxd2+ 17.Nxd2²) 11...Bg7 (11...Ne7? 12.a3 Qb8 13.Ne4+- Debowska – Wang, Szczyrk 1989; 11...Nxc3 12.Rxc3²) 12.a3 Qb6 (12...Qe7 13.Bg5 Nxc3 14.Rxc3 Qe6 15.0-0-0²) 13.Ne4 0-0 14.Qc2 f5 15.exf6 Nxf6 16.c5 Qb7 17.Nxf6+ Bxf6 18.Rb3 Qc8 19.Be3²

A) 8...h6 9.g3!?



Black has lost time for a not so necessary move and White can complete the mobilisation of his forces with: Bg2, 0-0, or just develop his bishop, creating pressure on the long diagonal and then castling queenside.

9...d6

9...a5 10.Bg2 Ba6 11.c4 Qb4+ 12.Nd2 Bc5 13.Be4 (with the idea Bd3) 13...Bd4 14.Bd3 Bxb2 15.a3 Qc3 16.Bxb2 Qxb2 17.0-0 Nc3 18.Qe3 Qb6 19.Qf3 Qb2

20.Ne4 Nxe4 21.Qxe4 Qb8 22.Rae1 Qd8 23.Re3f

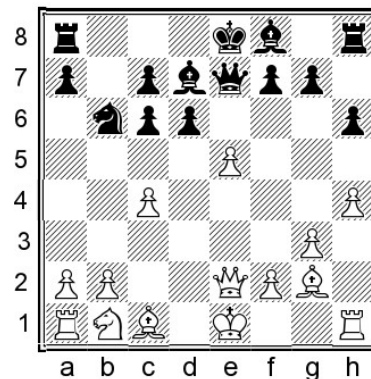
9...Bb7 10.Bh3 0-0-0 11.Nd2 f6 (11...Re8 12.Nc4) 12.e6 dxe6 13.Nb3 f5 14.Bd2 g5 15.Bg2 Bg7 16.Na5! (16.0-0-0²) 16...e5 17.Qf3 Qf6 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.Rxh8 Bxh8 20.g4 Nf4 21.Bf1±

9...g6. Black's desire to complete his development is understandable in order after the move Bg7 to attack the important enemy pawn. Still, White can exploit this weakening and play h4-h5 at an opportune moment. 10.c4 Ba6 (10...Nb6 11.b3 Bg7 12.Bb2 Rb8 13.Bg2 0-0 14.0-0 d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.f4±) 11.h5 0-0-0 (11...g5 12.Qe4 Nb6 13.Nc3 Bg7 14.f4 Bb7 15.Bd2 0-0-0 16.0-0-0²) 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.Nc3 (13.f4!?) 13...Nxc3? 14.bxc3 Qe6 (14...Bg7 15.f4 d6? 16.Rb1+-) 15.f4 Bc5 16.Be3 Bxc4 17.Qxc4 Bxe3 18.Qxe6 dxe6 19.Bc4 Rde8 20.Ke2 Bb6 21.Rad1+-

10.c4 Nb6

10...Ba6? 11.Bg2 dxe5 12.Qe4 Qc5 13.Nd2 Ne7 14.0-0±

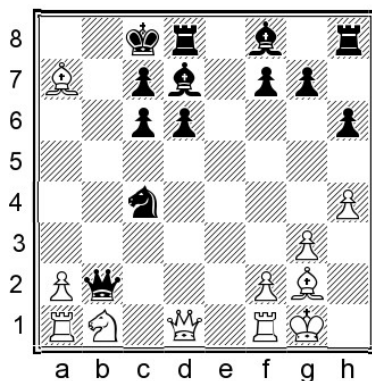
11.Bg2 Bd7



12.0-0

12.c5!? Nd5 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.0-0 dxe5
 15.Re1 f6 16.Nc3 Be6 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.f4
 e4 19.Bxe4 dxe4 20.Qxe4±

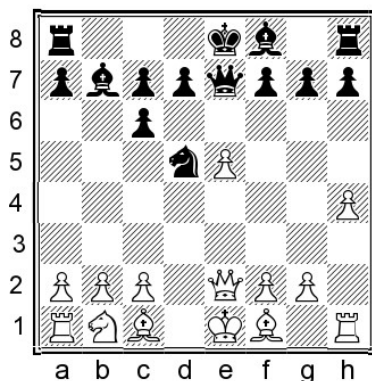
12...Qxe5 13.Qd1 0-0-0 14.Be3!?
 Nxc4 15.Bxa7 Qxb2



Now White can organise a powerful attack on the b-file.

16.Nd2!! Nxd2 (16...Qxd2?? 17.Rb1+-
 Be8 18.Qg4+; 16...Qa3 17.Nxc4 Qxa7
 18.Rb1,) 17.Qxd2!! Qxd2 18.Rab1 Bf5
 19.Bxc6 Bxb1 20.Rxb1 Qd1+ 21.Rxd1
 Rd7 22.Rb1 Kd8 23.a4+-

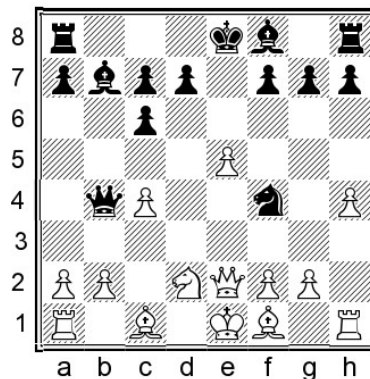
B) 8...Bb7



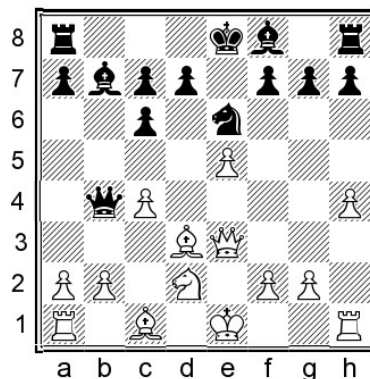
This move is played with the idea to castle quickly on the queenside.

9.c4 Nb6

It would not be so easy for Black to obtain a promising position after 9...Qb4+ 10.Nd2 Nf4.



Here, White should better chose the seemingly modest move 11.Qe3N (His queen would come under an attack with tempo after h7-h5. 11.Qg4 Ne6 12.Bd3 Be7! Black plans to organise quickly counterplay after h5, g5. 13.0-0 h5 14.Qg3 g5 15.hxg5 h4 16.Qg4 h3 17.a3 Qa4÷; 12.Rh3? h5 13.Qd1 Qa5³ and White's pieces have occupied not so adequate positions, Katashuk – Sabuk, Lviv 2015.) 11...Ne6 12.Bd3



12...Be7 13.0-0 Bxh4 (13...0-0? 14.Ne4 Qb6 15.Qg3) 14.Ne4 Be7 15.Bd2 Qb6 16.Qh3±

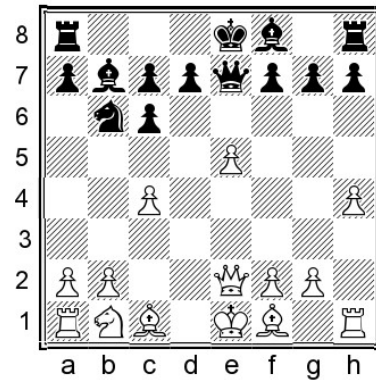
12...g6 13.0-0 Bg7 14.Nb3± 0-0 15.f4,
 12...Bc5 13.Qg3 Be7 (13...Bd4 14.0-0±;
 13...0-0-0?! 14.a3 Qa4 15.b3 Qa6 16.Bb2±
 with the idea b4; 13...0-0 14.a3 Qa5 15.0-0

f5 16.exf6±) 14.0-0 0-0-0 15.a3 Qb6 16.b4 Qd4 17.Nb3 Qxh4 18.Qxh4 Bxh4 19.Be3© a6 20.Na5 d6 21.Rab1 dxe5 22.Be4 Nd4 23.b5 f5 24.bxc6 fxe4 25.cxb7+-

12...0-0-0 13.0-0 Be7 (13...d6 14.Bf5 dxe5 15.Bxe6+ fxe6 16.Qxe5 Bd6 17.Qe2²; 13...f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.Ne4²) 14.Ne4 Qb6 15.b4 Bxb4 (15...Qxe3 16.Bxe3 Bxb4? 17.c5+-) 16.Qg3 c5 17.a3±

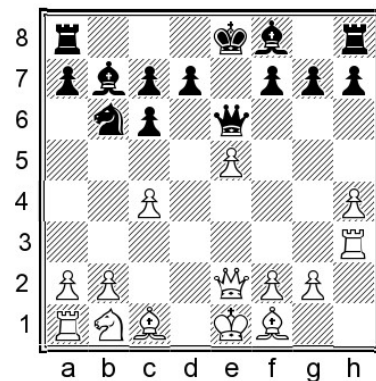
12...Qb6 13.Qg3 Be7 14.0-0²

12...d5 13.0-0 Rd8 (13...Be7 14.Nb3²; 13...Ba6 14.Re1 Qb6 15.Qg3 Be7 16.Bf5²) 14.Qg3 (14.Kh2!? with the idea 15.f4) 14...Ba6 (14...Be7 15.a3 Qb6 16.h5 0-0 17.Nf3f) 15.cxd5 Bxd3 16.dxe6 Bxf1 (16...fxe6 17.Re1 Be7 18.Nf3 0-0 19.Bh6 Rf7 20.b3 Kh8 21.Bd2²) 17.exf7+ Kxf7 18.Nxf1²



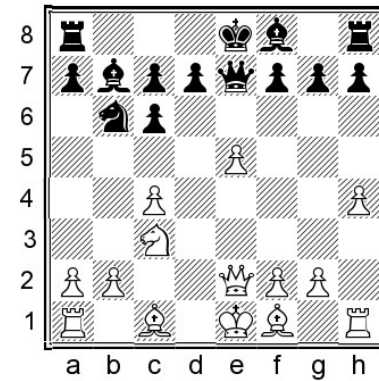
10.Nc3

10.Rh3 Qe6



11.f4 0-0-0 (11...Be7!? 12.Bd2 0-0-0 13.Nc3 f6,,) 12.a4 d5 13.a5 Nxc4 14.b3 Bb4+ 15.Kf2, Nakamura – Carlsen, London 2017, 15...Bc5+! 16.Kg3 Bg1÷

11.Nd2!? 0-0-0 (11...Bb4 12.b3 a5 13.a3 Be7 14.a4 0-0-0 15.Bb2 Rhe8 16.0-0-0 f6 17.exf6 Bxf6 18.Qxe6 Rxe6 19.Bxf6 Rxf6 20.f3 d5 21.Re1²; 11...a5!? 12.f4 0-0-0 13.Nf3 f6 14.Bd2 fxe5 15.fxe5 Ba6 16.Ng5 Qg8 17.b3²) 12.a4 a5 (12...d5 13.exd6 Qxd6 14.a5 Nd7 15.a6 Ba8 16.Re3 f5 17.g3 Qf6 18.Bh3 f4? 19.Ne4+-) 13.Nb3 Bb4+ 14.Bd2 Bxd2+ 15.Qxd2 Qxe5+ 16.Re3 Qf6 17.Nxa5 Rhe8 (17...Ba6? 18.c5 Bxf1 19.cxb6 Ba6 20.bxc7 Rde8 21.0-0-0+-) 18.0-0-0 Rxe3 19.Qxe3²



10...Qe6

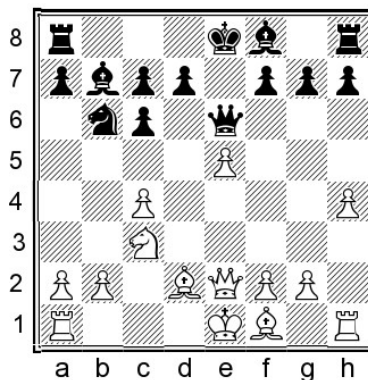
10...Ba6, Lyell – Marjanovics, Budapest 2014, 11.b3 0-0-0 12.Rh3 (12.Bb2!? f6 13.a4 fxe5 14.Qc2©) 12...Re8 13.Bb2 f6 14.exf6 Qf7 15.Re3 Bc5 16.Re4 Rxe4 17.Nxe4 Bb4+ 18.Kd1 gxf6 19.a3 Be7 20.Kc2²

10...h6 11.Bf4 Qe6 (11...0-0-0 12.0-0-0 f6 13.exf6 Qxf6, Vatkali – Imeeva, Athens 2012 14.Bg3²) 12.0-0-0 a5 13.g3 (13.Be3!? Qxe5 14.c5 Nd5 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Qd2±) 13...0-0-0, Rodriguez Boado – Havik, Caleta 2012 (13...Ba6 14.Bh3 Qxc4 15.Qc2 Bb4 16.e6 dxe6 17.Bxe6 fxe6

18.Qg6+ Kf8 19.Be5 Rg8 20.Rhe1 Bxc3
 21.Bxc3+-) 14.f3 (14.Qc2!?²) 14...f6
 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.Qf2± Bb4 17.Ne4 Qf7
 18.Kb1 Nxc4? 19.Qa7+-

After 10...0-0-0, Black must consider at first the possibility 11.Bf4!? (11.Bg5 f6 12.exf6 Qf7?! Zherebukh – Sasikiran, Moscow 2012 13.0-0-0 Re8 14.Qf3²; 12...gxf6 13.Qxe7 Bxe7 14.Be3 Bb4 15.0-0-0, James – Masango, Cape Town 2015, 15...Bxc3 16.bxc3 d6 17.c5 Nd5 18.Bd2 dxc5 19.Rh3²; 14...d5 15.0-0-0 dxc4 16.Rxd8+ Rxd8, Liodakis – Lekic, Chania 2014, 17.Be2 Bd6 18.Ne4 f5 19.Nxd6+ cxd6 20.g4f; 14...Ba6, Bocharov – Goganov, Chelyabinsk 2018, 15.c5!? Bxf1 16.Kxf1 Nc4 17.Bd4 Nxb2 18.Ne4 Nc4 19.Rc1 Ne5 20.Rh3f; 17...d6 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.b3±) 11...Ba6 12.b3 Qa3 13.Qc2 Re8 (13...Bb4, Vavulin – Sychev, Moscow 2017, 14.Rh3 f6 15.Be2 fxe5 16.Bc1 Qa5 17.a3 d5 18.Bb2 Bxc3+ 19.Bxc3 Qc5 20.Bb4 Qd4 21.Rd1 Qf4 22.c5 Bxe2 23.Qxe2 Nd7 24.Qa6+ Kb8 25.Qxc6±) 14.Be2 g6 15.Rh3 Bg7 16.Re3 f5 (16...Re7?! 17.Qd2, with the idea to trap the enemy queen after Nb1+-) 17.Qc1 Qc5 (17...Qe7? 18.c5! Bxe2 19.cxb6 Ba6 20.Nd5+-) 18.a4 d6 19.a5 Nd7 20.e6 Ne5 21.Ra4 Bb7 22.Qd1. White deprives Black's queen of the d4-square. 22...a6 23.b4 Qa7 24.c5 (24.Ra3!?) 24...Rxe6 25.cxd6 cxd6 26.Ra2 Ng4 27.Bxg4 Bxc3+ 28.Kf1 Rhe8 29.Rae2 Be5 30.Bf3±

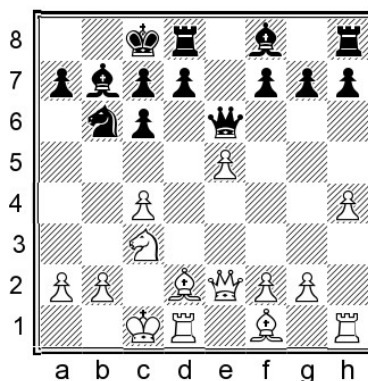
11.Bd2



11...0-0-0

11...a5 12.h5 (12.Qe4!? Ba6 13.b3 a4 14.Bd3±) 12...Be7 (12...Ba6 13.b3 Bb4 14.h6 g6 15.Ne4²; 12...Bb4 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.Rh4 h6 15.Qe4 f5 16.exf6 Rxf6 17.Bd3 Qxe4 18.Nxe4 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 Rff8 20.b3²) 13.Rh3 (13.Qe4 0-0-0 14.0-0-0²; 13.0-0-0 Ba6 14.b3 a4 15.Kc2²) 13...0-0 14.Qe4 d5 15.exd6 cxd6, Ciganovic – Jaja, Porec 2005, 16.Qxe6 fxe6 17.h6 g6 18.Ne4²

12.0-0-0



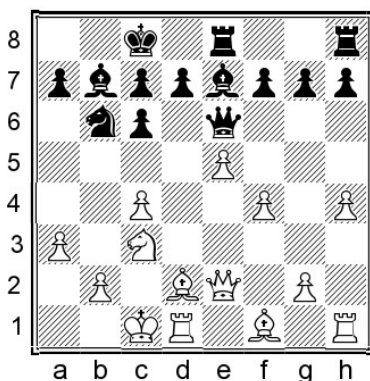
12...Re8

12...Kb8 13.h5 Be7 14.h6 g5 15.Ne4²

12...Ba6 13.b3 Re8 14.f4 f6 15.Re1 Ba3+ 16.Kc2 fxe5 17.Qh5!? (17.Qxe5 Qg6+ 18.f5 Rxe5 19.fxg6 Rxe1 20.Bxe1 hxg6 21.Bd3 d5 22.Bxg6 dxc4 23.h5²) 17...d6 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.g3 g6 (19...Kb8 20.Bh3 Qe7 21.Rhf1²) 20.Qg5 h6 21.Qe3 Kb8 22.Bg2²

12...Be7 13.Rh3 Rhe8 (13...Kb8 14.Bg5!? Bxg5+ 15.hxg5 c5 16.a4 a5 17.Qe3 Rde8 18.f4 d6 19.Nb5! dxe5 20.Qc3 Rd8 21.Re1 Rd7 22.Qxa5 Rhd8 23.Qa7+ Kc8 24.a5 Nxc4 25.a6 Be4 26.Bd3+-) 14.Re3 Bxh4 15.f4 Ba6 16.b3 Be7 (16...Kb8 17.Qf3 Bb7 18.c5 Nd5 19.Re4²) 17.Ne4 Kb8 18.Re1 Ba3+ 19.Kb1 Qe7 20.Qd3²

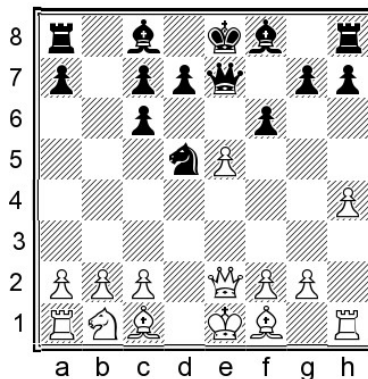
13.f4 Bb4, Laznicka – Velicka, Hustopece 2012 (13...f6 14.exf6 Qf7 15.Qf2 Qxf6 16.c5 Nd5 17.g4±) **14.a3** (14.Qf2!? Nxc4? 15.f5; 14...f6 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.a3²; 15...gxf6 16.c5 Nc4 17.f5 Qf7 18.Bf4² Bxc3 19.bxc3 Re7 20.Rd4 Ne5 21.Qb2 a5 22.Be2+-) **14...Be7** (14...Bxc3 15.Bxc3 c5 16.Qf2 Nxc4 17.Qxc5 Nb6 18.Bd3²)



15.a4 (15.Qf2 c5 16.b3 f6 17.Re1 fxe5 18.fxe5²; 16.a4 d6 17.exd6 Bxd6 18.Bd3²) **15...d6** (15...Bb4 16.Ne4 Bxd2+ 17.Qxd2±; 15...a5 16.Qf2 d6 17.exd6 Qxd6 18.Ne4 Qg6 19.Bd3 Rd8 20.h5 Qg4 21.Bxa5±; 17.f5!? Qxe5 18.Re1 Qc5 19.Qxc5 dxc5

20.b3±) **16.a5** (16.g4 f6 17.exd6 Qxe2 18.Bxe2 Bxd6 19.Rhe1²) **16...Nd7 17.g4 f6 18.exf6 Qxe2 19.Bxe2 Bxf6 20.Bd3 Nc5 21.Bc2²**

C) 8...f6



Here, White can fight for the advantage with the move: 9.exf6, in an attempt to maintain an edge in the endgame thanks to his superior pawn-structure, or he can enter the very complicated middle game, arising after 9.c4 Ba6 10.Rh3.

9.c4

9.exf6 Qxe2+ (9...Nxf6 10.Nd2 d5 11.Nb3 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Bd6 13.Be3 0-0 14.0-0 Bg4 15.Ba6 Rab8,, Chernobay – I.Frolov, Sochi 2018; 10.Be3!? d5 11.Nd2 Qe6 12.Nb3 Bd6 13.Nc5 Qe7 14.Bd4 Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 a5 16.0-0-0 a4 17.Rhe1 Kf7 18.Bf3²) 10.Bxe2 Nxf6 11.Nc3 Rb8 (11...Bb4 12.Bd2 d5, Granda Zuniga – Ninov, Ulcinj 1998, 13.Ne4 Bxd2+ 14.Nxd2²; 11...Bc5 12.Na4 Bb6 13.Bf4 d6 14.Bf3 Bd7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Nxb6 axb6 17.a4²) 12.0-0 d5 13.b3 Bd6 14.Na4. Now, White has a chance to create problems for his opponent. For example, there may arise the following developments: 14...0-0

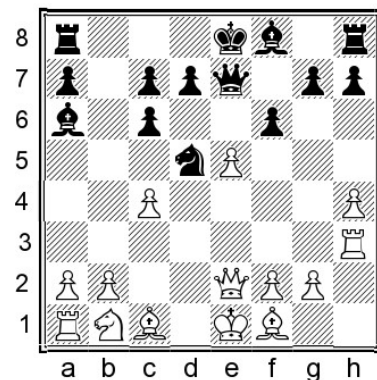
15.Be3 a5 (15...a6. The pawn may come under an attack by the enemy bishop on this square. 16.c4 Bg4 17.Bd3 Rfe8 18.cxd5.) 16.Rfe1÷ and Black is still too far from solving all his problems.

9...Ba6!

9...Nb6?! 10.exf6 (10.Rh3?! fxe5 11.Nc3 d6³ Nepomniachtchi – Aronian, chess.com 2017) 10...gxf6 (10...Qxe2+?! 11.Bxe2 gxf6 12.0-0 Ba6 – 12...h5!?² – 13.Bh5+ Kd8 14.b3± Bd6 15.Nd2 Be5 16.Rb1 c5 17.Nf3 d6 18.Nxe5 fxe5 19.f4 exf4 20.Rxf4 Nd7 21.Bb2 Rf8 22.Rxf8+ Nxf8 23.Rf1 Ne6 24.Rf7 1-0 Morozevich – Anand, Doha 2016) 11.Nc3 (11.Rh3 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 d5 13.Re3+ Kd8 14.b3, Iljiushenok – Belyakov, Taganrog 2018, 14...d4 15.Re4 c5÷; 11.Be3!?!; 11.b3!? d5 12.Ba3 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 dxc4 14.Bh5+ Kd8 15.0-0f) 11...Ba6 12.b3 d5 13.Bb2!? d4 (13...dxc4?! 14.Ne4) 14.Ne4²

10.Rh3

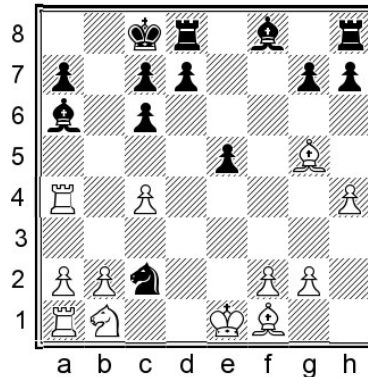
This is a fighting attempt. It would be sufficient for White to equalise with the move 10.exf6.



We will analyse in details **C1)** 10...Nb6 and **C2)** 10...fxe5.

10...Qb4+?! Samolins – Vicas, Liepaja 2018, 11.Nc3 0-0-0 12.a3 Qb6 13.Qc2 Nxc3 14.Rxc3 Bc5 15.Be3 Bxe3 16.Rxe3 c5 16...fxe5? 17.c5 Qb7 18.Rb3 Bb5 19.Qe4+–) 17.0-0-0²

10...0-0-0. This move leads by force to a position in which Black's knight is horribly isolated on the a1-square. He would need to try to save it by all means. All this might still be possible, but it seems just senseless for him to enter a line like this. 11.Ra3 Nb4 12.Ra4 Qxe5 (12...Bb7? 13.a3 Na6 14.b4 Qf7 15.Be3 Re8 16.c5 Nb8 17.Rxa7+– Chigaev – Pogonina, Moscow 2018) 13.Qxe5 fxe5 14.Bg5 Nc2+ (14...Re8 15.Kd1 Bb7 16.a3 Na6 17.b4²)



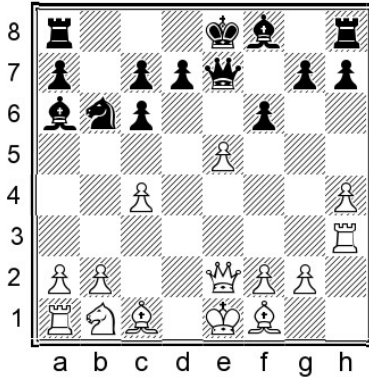
15.Kd1 (15.Kd2?! After this move the diagonal is closed for the dark-squared bishop to retreat after Bxd8-Bg5 and Black's reply h7-h6. 15...Nxa1 16.Bxd8 Bb7 17.Bg5 Bc5 18.Be3 Bxe3+ 19.fxe3 Rf8 20.Be2 c5 21.Nc3 Rf2÷; 16...Bc5 17.Bg5 Bb7 18.f3 h6!; 18.Be3 Bxe3+ 19.fxe3 Rf8 20.Be2 c5³) 15...Nxa1 16.Bxd8 Kxd8 (16...Bc5? 17.Bg5 Bb7 18.f3+–) 17.Rxa6 Bc5 18.f3 Rf8 19.Ra5 Bd4 (19...d6?! 20.Nd2 Rf4 21.Rxc5! dxc5 22.g3 Rf8 23.Be2 Ke7 24.Ne4+–) 20.Nd2 Bxb2 21.Rxa7© Ke7 (21...Rf4 22.Rb7 Bd4 23.g3

Rf8 24.Rb8+ Ke7 25.Rxf8 Kxf8 26.Bd3 g6
27.g4) 22.Rxc7 Rb8 23.g3 Kd8 24.Ra7 Bd4
25.Ra5.

16...gxf6 17.Bxf6 Rf8 18.Re3+ Kf7=
Elgersma – De Zwart, Vlissingen 2018.

13.Re3+ Kf7?! (13...Kd8÷) 14.fxg7 Bxg7
15.Bh5+ Kf8 16.Rf3+ (16.Nd2 Bd5÷
Cheparinov – Jones, Hengshui 2019)
16...Kg8 17.Nc3²

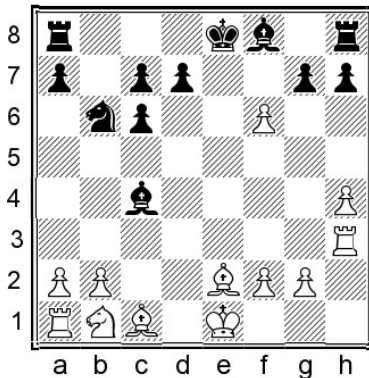
C1) 10...Nb6!?



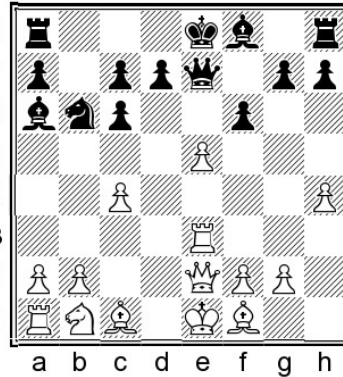
11.Re3

By playing like this, White would have to sacrifice a pawn for the initiative.

11.exf6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Bxc4 (12...gxf6?
Jozwiak – Pita, Thessaloniki 1988,
13.Re3+ Kd8 14.b3±)



13.Bxc4 Nxc4 14.b3 (14.Nd2 Nxd2
15.fxg7 Bxg7 16.Bxd2 Bxb2 17.Rb1 Bd4
18.Bc3 Bxc3+ 19.Rxc3 0-0-0³) 14...Nb6
15.Bb2 (15.Re3+ Kf7 16.fxg7 Bxg7
17.Rf3+ Ke8 18.Nc3 Rf8 19.Rxf8+ Kxf8
20.Bb2 Kf7=) 15...Bb4+ (15...gxf6 16.Bxf6
Rg8 17.Kf1 Nd5= Shcherbin – Lavrov,
Pardubice 2008) 16.Kf1 (16.Nd2 gxf6
17.Bxf6 Rf8 18.Re3+ Kf7 19.Bc3 a5=)



11...f5

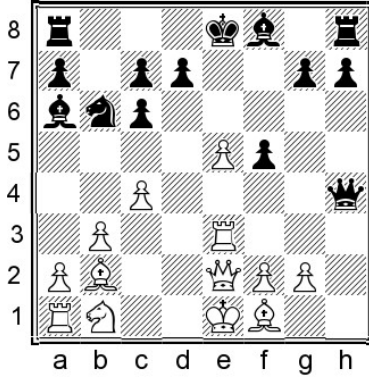
We will see that it would not be good for Black to capture immediately the pawn on c4, because of the move exf6, while now, he is ready to capture it, so White has no time to protect his pawn on h4 (12.g3? Nxc4).

11...Nxc4? 12.exf6 Nxe3 13.fxe7 Bxe2
14.exf8Q+ Rxf8 15.Bxe3 Bxf1 16.Kxf1±

11...0-0-0 12.Qc2 Qe6. The move 13.a4!? leads to great complications after which White remains with a couple of bishops against a rook with pawns with some chances of realising his advantage. (13.exf6 Qxf6 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Bxg2 16.bxa7 Bb4+ 17.Bd2 Bxd2+ 18.Nxd2 Kb7=) 13...Nxc4 (13...fxe5 14.a5 Nxc4 15.Ra4 d5 16.b3 Bc5 17.Re2 Bb5 18.bxc4 Bxa4 19.Qxa4 Rhf8 20.Ba3 Bxa3 21.Qxa3²) 14.exf6 Qf7 (14...Bb4+ 15.Bd2 Nxe3 16.Bxa6+ Kb8 17.fxe3 Qxe3+ 18.Kf1 Qb6 19.Qc4²) 15.Nd2 Bb4 16.b3 Rhf8

17.Qf5 Nxe3 18.Bxa6+ Kb8 19.fxe3 Qe8
 20.Qg4 Qxe3+ 21.Kd1 Bc3 22.a5 Rxf6
 23.Ra4 c5 24.Qc4 Qg1+ 25.Kc2 Bxd2
 26.Bxd2 Qxg2 27.Qb5+ Ka8 28.Rg4.

12.b3 Qxh4 13.Bb2

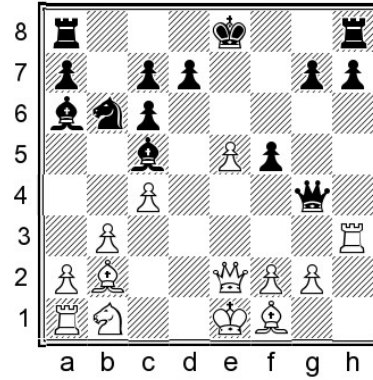


13...Bc5

13...Bb4+ 14.Nd2 0-0 15.Rh3!? (15.0-0 Qe7 16.f4©) 15...Qg5 16.a3 Bxd2+ 17.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 18.Kxd2 c5 (18...d5? 19.c5 Bxf1 20.cxb6 Bxg2 21.Rg3 Be4 22.e6 g6 23.f3 cxb6?? 24.Rxg6+ hxg6 25.Rh1+-) 19.a4 Rad8 20.Bd3. There are no queens on the board, but White can develop quickly a powerful attack, for example: 20...d6? 21.a5 Nc8 22.Rah1 (22.e6 d5 23.Rah1 dxc4 24.Rxh7 Rxd3+ 25.Ke2) 22...h6 23.e6 Rde8 24.Rg3 Re7 25.Rxh6.

13...0-0-0 14.Rh3. Without this move Black will manage to develop his bishop on c5 and then retreat his queen to the e7-square. 14...Qg4 15.Nd2 Bb7÷

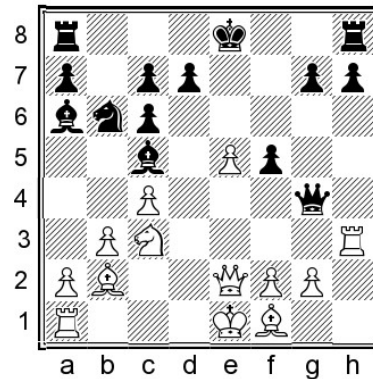
14.Rh3 Qg4



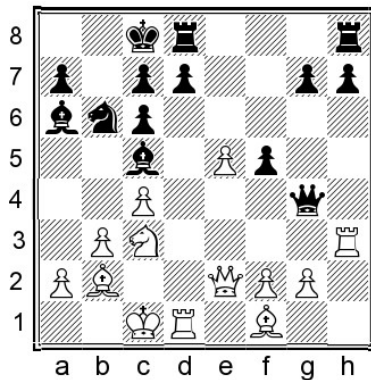
15.Nd2!?

15.Rf3?! 0-0-0 16.Nc3 d5µ Chekurov – Vujic, Szombathely 1993.

15.Nc3

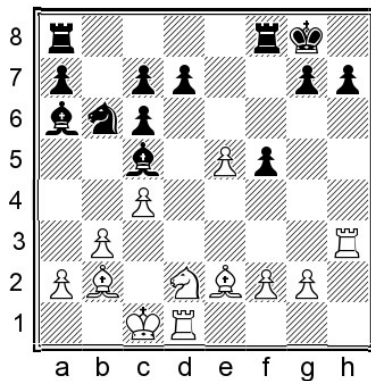


15...0-0 16.0-0-0 d6 (16...Qxe2 17.Bxe2 Bxf2 18.a4 Rad8 19.a5 Nc8 20.Na4 f4 21.Bd3 h6 22.Rf3 Be3+ 23.Rxe3 fxe3 24.Nc5±) 17.exd6 Qxe2 18.Bxe2 cxd6 (18...Bxd6 19.Bf3 Bb7 20.Ne2²) 19.Bf3 Rac8 20.Ne2 d5 21.Nd4 Rf7 22.Bh5 Rf6 (22...g6? 23.Ne6 Bxf2 24.Bxg6+-) 23.b4 Bxb4 24.Nc2 Bc5 25.Bxf6 gxf6 26.Rg3+ Kf8 27.Nd4²
 15...0-0-0 16.0-0-0



16...Qxe2 17.Bxe2 Bxf2 18.Rf3 Bc5
19.Rxf5²
16...d5 17.exd6 Bxd6 18.Qc2!? Be5
(18...Bb7 19.Kb1 Kb8 20.Rhd3 Rde8 21.a4
Nd7 22.b4f) 19.Rhd3 c5 20.g3 Bd4
(20...Bb7? 21.Nb5 Bxb2+ 22.Qxb2 Rxd3
23.Bxd3 a6?? 24.Qe5+-) 21.a4f
16...Kb8!? 17.Qc2 d5 18.exd6 Rxd6=

15...0-0 16.0-0-0 Qxe2 17.Bxe2



17...Bxf2

17...Nd5 18.g3 Rad8 19.Rh2²
17...Rad8 18.Bd3!?

18.Bd3

With the idea g4+-

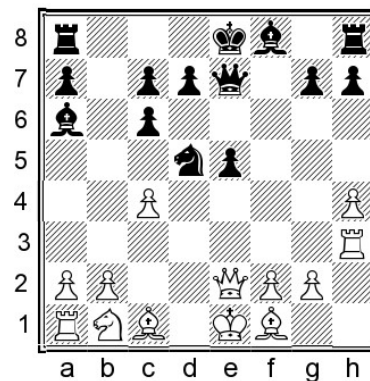
18...c5

18...g6 19.g4 fxg4? 20.Rxh7 Kxh7
21.Rh1+ Kg8 22.e6 dxe6 23.Bxg6+-

**19.g4 fxg4 20.Rxh7 Bb7 21.e6 Bd4
22.Bxd4 cxd4 23.c5 dxe6 24.cxb6 axb6
25.a4²**

C2) 10...fxe5

Black will have to solve difficult
problems after this move.

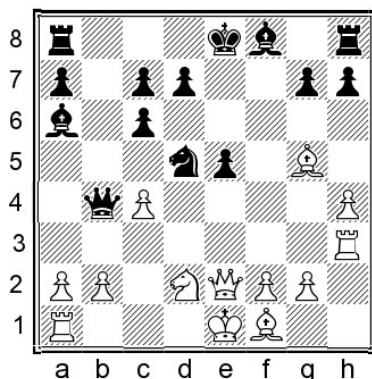


11.Bg5

11.Ra3?! Nb4 12.Nc3 Qxh4³ Van der
Wiel - Timman, Amsterdam 1987.

11...Nf6

11...Qb4+ 12.Nd2



12...Qxb2 13.Rb1 Qd4 14.Rhb3 Nf4
 15.Bxf4 Qxf4 16.g3 Qf5 17.Rb8+ Rxb8
 18.Rxb8+ Kf7 19.Ne4 h6 20.Qc2f

12...Bd6, Morozevich – Matlakov, Sochi
 2016, 13.Rb3! Qa4 14.Qh5+ g6 15.Qd1
 Nb6 16.h5±

12...Nf6 13.0-0-0 (13.f4!? Qxb2 14.Rd1
 e4 15.Rb3 Qxa2 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Qxe4+
 Kf7 18.Qf5 Re8+ 19.Kf2 h5 20.Bd3±)
 13...0-0-0 (13...Be7? Tuncer – Ozer,
 Istanbul 2019, 14.Rb3 Qc5 15.Ra3 Bb7
 16.Re3 d6 17.Bxf6 gxf6 18.Ne4 Qb6
 19.c5+-) 14.Ra3 Qb6 15.Be3 c5 16.g3 Bb7
 17.Nb3±

12.Re3 0-0-0

12...d6 13.g3 (13.Qf3!?) 13...h6 14.Bg2
 Qd7 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Qc2 Rb8 17.Ra3
 (17.Qa4 Rb6 Morozevich – Sharafiev, St
 Petersburg 2016 18.Nc3 Bc8 19.Rd1
 Be7÷) 17...Rb6 18.Nd2±

12...Qb4+ 13.Nd2 d6, Khamrakulov –
 Sturt, chess.com 2019 (13...0-0-0 14.a3²
 Qxb2? 15.Rb1 Qd4 16.Reb3+-) 14.Qf3 Kf7
 (14...0-0-0 15.Rb3 Qc5 16.Be3+-; 14...Kd7
 15.Qf5+ Ke7 16.Rf3+-) 15.Bxf6 gxf6
 16.Rb3 Qc5 17.0-0-0 Bg7 18.Ne4 Qa5
 19.Ra3 Qb6 20.Qh5+ Ke7 21.c5+-



This is the critical position of the
 variation.

13.Nd2!?

Now Black's queen will not occupy the
 favourite e6-square.

13.Ra3 Bb7 (13...Qb4+?! 14.Nc3² Bb7
 15.0-0-0 Bc5, Morozevich – Adhiban,
 Berlin 2015, 16.Rb3 Qa5 17.Bd2 Qa6
 18.Qxe5±) 14.Rxa7 Qe6 (14...Qb4+?!
 15.Nc3 Qb6 16.Be3 Bc5 17.Bxc5 Qxc5
 18.Ra4 Rhe8 19.0-0-0, Darini – Sibashvili,
 Bandar-e Anzali 2018, 19...e4÷; 18.Ra3.
 White leaves the a4-square for his knight.
 18...Rhe8 19.0-0-0 e4 20.g4 g5 21.Na4
 Qe5 22.Qd2± gxh4? 23.Rb3 d5 24.Qb4+-)
 15.Nd2 Bb4 16.0-0-0 (16.a3 Bc5 17.Ra5
 d6 18.Rxc5 dxc5 19.g3© Fees – Jung, ICCF
 2017) 16...c5! (16...d5 17.Nb3 Kb8 18.Ra4
 c5 19.Na5 Bxa5 20.Rxa5 dxc4 21.Rxd8+
 Rxd8 22.Qxc4 Qd6 23.Be2± Cheparinov –
 Aravindh, Abu Dhabi 2018) 17.Ne4 Qc6
 18.Bxf6 (18.a3 Qxe4 19.Qxe4 Bxe4
 20.axb4 cxb4 21.Re1 Bb7 22.Rxe5 Rde8=)
 18...gxf6÷

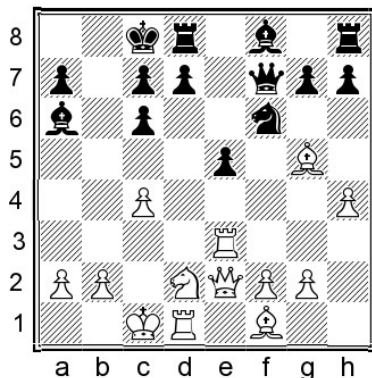
13...Qf7

13...d6? 14.Qd1 c5 15.Qa4 Bb7
 16.Qxa7+-

13...Qe6? 14.Rxe5.

14.0-0-0

14.Rxe5, Scerbin – Petran, Budapest 2000, 14...h6 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Qh5 Qxh5 17.Rxh5 Re8+ 18.Kd1 Re5=

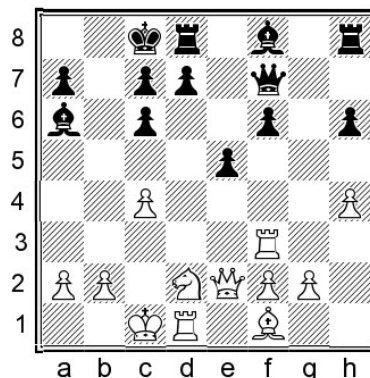


14...h6

14...Bc5 15.Rb3 (15.Rf3 Qe6 16.Nb3 Bb6 17.Qc2 c5 18.a4 Bb7 19.a5 Bxf3 20.gxf3 c6 21.axb6 axb6 22.Bd3²) 15...Bd4 16.Ra3 (16.g3 Rhe8 17.Ra3 Bb7 18.Nb3 c5 19.Rxa7²) 16...Bb7 17.Nb3 c5 18.Rxa7 Kb8 19.Ra5²

14...Bb4 15.Qd3 d5 (15...h6 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Qc2 Bc5 18.Rf3²; 15...Bb7 16.Nb3²) 16.Qf5+ Qd7 17.Qc2 (17.Rxe5 Qxf5 18.Rxf5 Rhf8 19.g3²) 17...dxc4 18.Rxe5 (18.Rb3 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 Qe6 20.Ra3²) 18...Rhe8 19.Rxe8 Qxe8 20.Bxc4 (20.a3²) 20...Bb5 21.Be3²

15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Rf3



16...Bb4

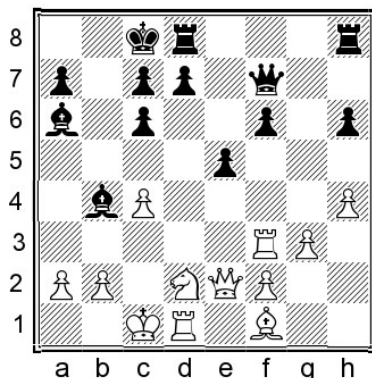
16...Qe6 17.Qe3 c5, Elgersma – Timmermans, Vlissingen 2018, 18.Bd3 Bb7 19.Bf5 Qa6 20.Rg3 Qxa2 21.Qe2±

16...Be7 17.Qe3! Kb8 (17...c5 18.Qa3 Qe6 19.Bd3²) 18.Qc3 Bb7 19.Nb3 c5 20.Na5 Ba8 21.Qb3+ Kc8 22.Bd3 e4 23.Bxe4 Bxe4 24.Rd5 d6 25.Qb7+ Kd7 26.Qc6+ Kc8 27.Rb3+–

16...Bc5 17.Nb3 Bb6 (17...Qe7 18.Qe1 Bb7 19.Nxc5 Qxc5 20.Ra3,) 18.Qe4 Qe7 19.Rc3 f5 20.Qc2 c5 21.a4 c6 22.a5 Bc7 23.Qxf5 Rhf8 24.Qc2 Kb8 25.g3 Bb7 26.Kb1 Rf6 27.Bg2 Rdf8 28.Rd2²

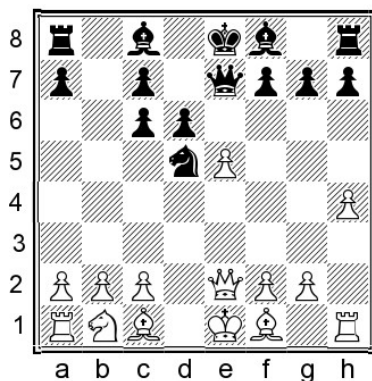
16...h5 17.Qe3 c5 18.Qa3 Qe6 19.Rb3 f5 20.Nf3²

17.g3!?



17...Qe6 (17...d5 18.Bh3+ Kb7 19.Rb3 c5 20.a3 dxc4 21.Bg2+-; 17...Qe7 18.a3 Bc5 19.b4 Bd4 20.Nb3 c5 21.bxc5 Bxc5 22.Nxc5 Qxc5 23.Qb2 Bxc4 24.Rc3 d5 25.Rxc4+-) **18.Qe3 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 Bxc4 20.Qxa7 d6 21.Bg2 Kd7 22.Rc3 Bb5 23.b3±**

D) 8...d6



After the practically forced moves 9.c4 Nb6, White exchanges the pawns 10.exd6. Black will have a choice between the immediate trade of the queens **D1)** 10...Qxe2+, or waiting to see when White will do that and play **D2)** 10...cxd6. After this move however, Black risks the possibility that his opponent may choose **D2b)** 11.Be3, playing in a middle game. It looks like he must remain psychically resolute, because after the exchange 10...Qxe2+, White will manage to play

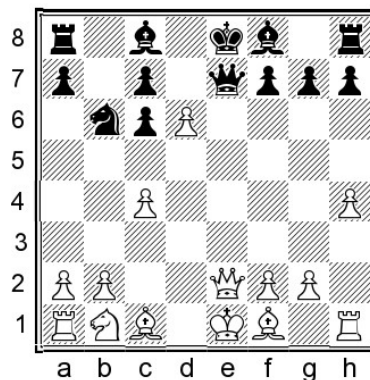
12.Bf3, with good chances of maintaining an advantage.

9.c4 Nb6

9...Nb4 10.a3 Na6 11.exd6 cxd6 (11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Bxd6 13.b4²) 12.b4² Ponkratov – Romanov, Sochi 2017.

After 9...Ba6, we may see the realisation of one of the ideas behind the move h4: 10.Bg5 (10.exd6 cxd6 11.Qxe7+ Nxe7 12.Nc3 0-0-0 13.Bf4²) 10...f6 11.exf6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Nxf6 13.Nc3 (13.Bxf6 gxf6 14.Bh5+ Kd7 15.Nd2 f5 16.0-0-0, Scerbin – Magafurov, Nalchik 2014, 16...Bh6÷) 13...0-0-0 14.0-0-0²

10.exd6



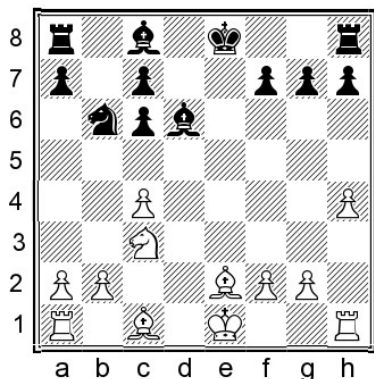
We will deal now with **D1)** 10...Qxe2+ and **D2)** 10...cxd6.

D1) 10...Qxe2+

Without this move, White might refrain from exchanging the queens.

11.Bxe2 cxd6

11...Bxd6 12.Nc3 (12.Nd2 0-0 13.Nf3 Re8÷ Aronian – Guliev, Istanbul 2003)



12...Bf5 13.Be3 Be5 14.Rc1 0-0-0 15.b3²

12...0-0 13.Be3 Bb4 14.0-0 Bxc3

15.bxc3 Be6 (15...Ba6 16.Rfb1²) 16.c5 Nd5 17.Bd2²

12...Be5 13.Bd2!? (13.c5 Nd5 14.0-0 Be6 15.Bf3 0-0÷ Van der Wiel –

Chiburdanidze, Lugano 1989) 13...Bf5

14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.c5!? Nd5 16.Nxd5 Rxd5

17.Ba6+ Kb8 18.Be3 Rhd8 19.Rxd5 cxd5

20.Re1²

12...Be6 13.b3 0-0-0 14.Bb2 Rhe8

(14...Kb7 15.Ne4 Bb4+ 16.Bc3 Bxc3+

17.Nxc3 Rd4 18.Rd1²; 14...Be5, Molner –

Dedebas, Barcelona 2018, 15.Na4 Bxb2

16.Nxb2 Rhe8 17.Rd1²) 15.0-0 (15.0-0-0?! Bf5

16.g3 Nd7) 15...Be7 16.Bf3 Rd2

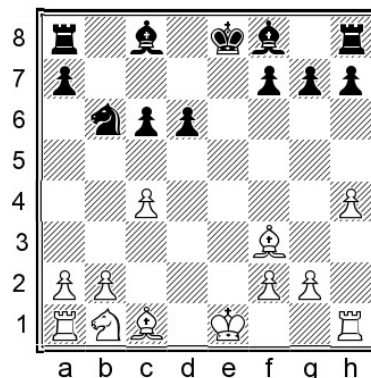
(16...Kb7 17.Ne2 Bxh4 18.Bxg7 f6

19.Rad1²) 17.Nd1 Bxh4 18.Bxg7² Inarkiev

– Abdusattorov, Sharjah 2018.

12.Bf3!?

About 12.Nc3 – see variation **D2a**.

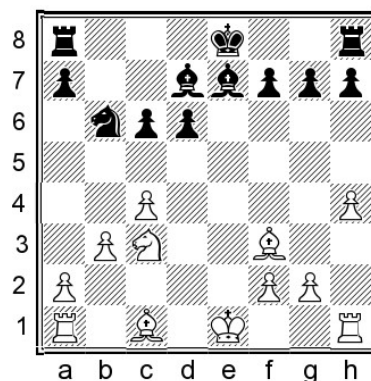


12...Bd7

12...d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 (13...Nxd5 14.Nc3 Be6 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Be3²) 14.Nc3 Be6 15.0-0 Be7 16.Bg5!²

12...Bb7 13.b3 0-0-0 (13...d5 14.0-0 dxc4? 15.Re1+; 14...0-0-0 15.cxd5 Nxd5, Sebe – Arngrimsson, Balatonlelle 2000, 16.Nd2 Bb4 17.Nc4²) 14.Bf4!? (14.Bb2 d5 15.cxd5 Bb4+ 16.Kf1 Rhe8 17.Nc3²) 14...Be7 (14...c5 15.Bxb7+ Kxb7 16.Nc3²) 15.Nd2 Rhe8 16.0-0-0²

13.b3 Be7, Tadic - Dimitrijeski, Belgrade 2019 (13...d5 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.0-0 Be7 16.Bg5 f6 17.Bd2 Kf7 18.Nc3²) 14.Nc3



14...Bf6

14...0-0 15.Be3 Bf6 16.Rc1²

14...0-0 15.Bg5 Bxg5 16.hxg5 Rfe8+
17.Kd2 Rad8 18.Rae1 (18.Rh4!? d5 19.c5
Na8 20.Rah1±) 18...Rxe1 19.Rxe1 Kf8
20.Rh1 Kg8 21.Ke3 Re8+ 22.Kf4 Re5
23.Be4+–

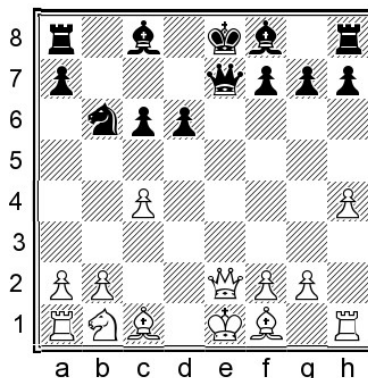
**15.Bd2 0-0 16.0-0 Bxh4 17.Rad1 Be7
18.Rfe1 Rfe8 19.Bf4 Rad8**

19...d5 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.Nxd5 Nxd5
22.Bxd5 Rad8 23.Bc7 Rc8 24.Bxf7+ Kxf7
25.Rxd7+–



20.Rxe7!? (20.c5 Nc8 21.Na4 d5
22.Bc7 Bf6 23.Bxd8 Rxd8 24.b4²; 21...Bf8
22.Rf1! h6 23.Bd2 Re5 24.Ba5 Rde8
25.Bc7²) **20...Rxe7 21.Bxd6 Re6 22.c5
Be8 23.cxb6 Rxd6 24.Rxd6 Rxd6
25.bxa7 Rd8 26.Nd5! Ra8 27.Nc7 Rxa7
28.Nxe8 Rxa2 29.Bxc6±**

D2) 10...cxd6



We will deal now with **D2a) 11.Nc3**
and **D2b) 11.Be3!?**

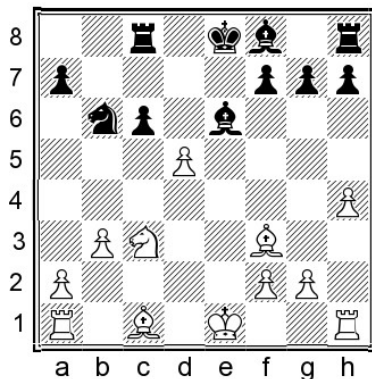
D2a) 11.Nc3 Be6!?

11...Bg4, Iljiushenok – Provotorov,
Voronezh 2018, 12.f3!? Be6 13.b3 d5
14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Bxd5 16.Qxe7+
Bxe7 17.Ba6 Bf6 18.Rb1 0-0 19.Kf2 Rfe8
20.Bf4²

11...Ba6 12.b3 d5 (12...g6,
Pietruszewski – Grochulski, Warsaw
2018, 13.Bb2 Bg7 14.0-0-0 Qxe2 15.Bxe2
0-0-0 16.Bf3±) 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.cxd5
Bxf1 15.Kxf1 Nxd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bf4
0-0 18.Rd1 Rfd8 19.Ke2²

11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Be6 (12...Be7 13.Bf3
Bb7 14.b3 0-0-0 15.Bg5!?! f6 16.Bf4²;
15.Bb2 c5 16.Bxb7+ Kxb7 17.0-0-0 Bf6,
Perunovic – Zajic, Ruma 2017, 18.Rh3²;
16.Rh3!?! Rhe8 17.0-0-0² Bf6?! 18.Nb5
Bxb2+ 19.Kxb2 d5 20.cxd5 Bxd5
21.Nxa7+ Kb8 22.Nb5±) 13.Bf3 (If the
moves Bf3 – Rc8 are not included, Black
will manage to equalise much easier:
13.b3 d5 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.Bd2 Ba3 16.0-0
0-0= Beerdsen – Predojevic, Karlsruhe
2019; 15...Rd8 16.Ne4 Nb4 17.0-0 Bf5

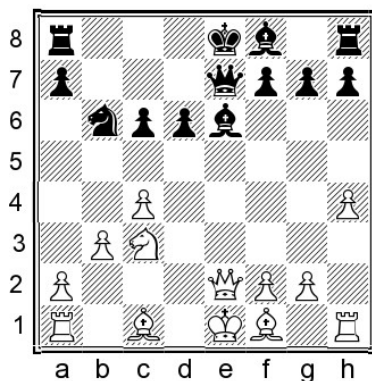
18.Bxb4 Bxb4 19.Bf3 0-0 20.Rfc1 Rd4
 21.Ng3 Be6 22.h5 c5 23.Ne4 Ba3 24.Rc2
 Bf5 25.Re1 Rfd8 26.g4 Be6 27.Re3 Bb4=
 Nepomniachtchi – So, Leuven 2017)
 13...Rc8 14.b3 d5 15.cxd5



15...Bb4 16.Bd2 Bxd5?! (16...Nxd5
 17.Nxd5 Bxd2+ 18.Kxd2 cxd5 19.Rhc1²)
 17.Nxd5 Nxd5 18.Bxb4 Nxb4 19.0-0-0 0-0
 (19...Nxa2+? 20.Kb2 Nb4 21.Rhe1+ Kf8
 22.Rd7+–) 20.a3 Nd5, Kapnisis –
 Katopodis, Anogia 2018, 21.Kb2±

15...Nxd5 16.Nxd5!? (16.Ne2!? Be7
 17.Bg5 Bb4+ 18.Bd2 Bxd2+ 19.Kxd2 Ke7
 20.Bxd5!? Bxd5 21.Nf4 Rhd8 22.Kc3²)
 16...cxd5 (16...Bxd5 17.Ke2 Bc5 18.Bxd5
 cxd5 19.Rd1 Rd8 20.Bf4 0-0 21.Rac1²
 Rfe8+ 22.Kf3 Bb4 23.Rd4 Be7 24.g3 Bf6
 25.Ra4 Rd7 26.Rc7 Rxc7 27.Bxc7 d4
 28.Rxa7 d3 29.Bf4+–) 17.0-0 Bc5 18.Rd1
 0-0 19.Bf4²

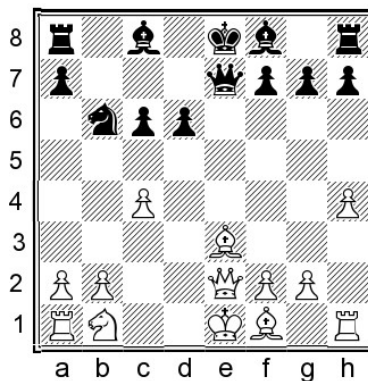
12.b3



12...d5 (12...Nd7?! 13.Ba3 Qd8 14.g3
 Qa5 15.Bb2 d5, Ugas – Sanchez Jerez,
 Spain 2006, 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Bh3±)
13.cxd5 Nxd5 (13...Qf6, Sredojevic –
 Brenjo, Kragujevac 2016, 14.Bb2 Bb4
 15.0-0-0 Bxc3 16.dxe6 Bxb2+ 17.Qxb2
 Qxb2+ 18.Kxb2 fxe6 19.Ba6 0-0 20.Rd2
 Rad8 21.Rc2±) **14.Bb2 Qb4=** Tukhaev –
 Rajesh, Mumbai 2017.

D2b) 11.Be3!?

White avoids the trade of the queens.



11...d5

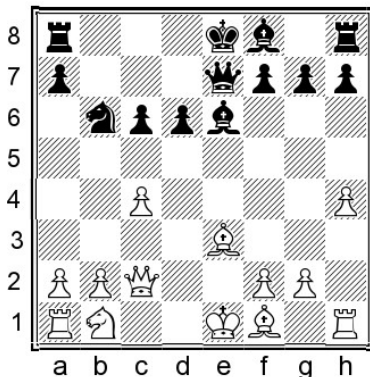
11...Ba6 12.Nd2 d5?! Jozwiak – Strzalka,
 Poznan 1989 (12...g6²) 13.0-0-0 dxc4
 (13...Nxc4? 14.Nxc4 Bxc4 15.Qc2) 14.Qf3
 Qf6 15.Qxf6 gxf6 16.Ne4±

11...Bf5, Suarez Real – Guichard,
 Daventry 2018, 12.Nc3 Qe6 13.Qf3 Rc8
 14.Be2 h5 (14...Be7? 15.g4 Bg6 16.h5+–)
 15.0-0 Be7 16.Rfe1±

11...Qe6 12.Nc3 (12.Nd2 Be7 13.Nf3
 Bf6?! 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.Qc2 g6 16.h5f Ris –
 Hjartarson, Reykjavik 2019; 13...0-0 14.0-0
 0-0 d5,,) 12...Be7 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.Bg5 f6
 15.Bf4 d5 (15...Rd8 16.Re1 Qxe2 17.Bxe2
 Bf8 18.Bf3 Bd7 19.b3²) 16.cxd5 Nxd5

17.Qf3 (17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Qxe6+ Bxe6
19.Ba6²) 17...Nxf4 18.Qxf4 Qe5, Firouzja –
Karthikeyan, Moscow 2019, 19.Qxe5 fxe5
20.Bc4+ Kh8 21.f3²

11...Be6 12.Qc2



12...Qf6 13.Nd2 (13.Nc3!? Bf5 14.Bd3
Bxd3 15.Qxd3 Be7 16.0-0-0±) 13...Bf5
14.Bd3 Bxd3 15.Qxd3 Qg6 16.Qe2
(16.Qc3!? Be7 17.h5 Qg4 18.h6 Bf6 19.Qc2
0-0-0 20.Kf1 Rhe8 21.hxg7 Bxg7 22.Re1±)
16...Be7 17.0-0 Qe6 18.Rfe1 0-0 19.Qd3
Qd7 20.Nf3² Perunovic – G.Schnider,
Austria 2017.

12...Qd7 13.Nd2 d5 (13...Be7 14.0-0-0
0-0 15.Bd3²) 14.0-0-0 d4 15.Ne4
(15.Bf4!? Be7 16.Bd3 h6 17.Nf3f) 15...c5
16.Bf4 (16.Bd2!? with the idea f2-f4.
16...Be7 17.Bd3 h6 18.Rde1 0-0-0 19.f4f)
16...Be7 17.Bd3 h6 18.Rde1 0-0-0 19.h5±
Cheparinov – Alekseev, Batumi 2018.

After 12...g6 there would arise a much
more complicated position. 13.Qc3 Rg8
14.Nd2 (14.Bg5 Bg7= Ivanisevic –
Ki.Georgiev, Mali Losinj 2017) 14...Bg7
15.Qc2 Nd7 (15...Rb8 16.Be2 Nd7 17.Rd1
Rxb2 18.Qa4 f5 19.0-0 Kf7 20.Rfe1²)
16.Rd1!? (16.Nb3, Globus – Mindlin, Israel
2018, 16...Bf5 17.Bd3 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 Ne5
19.Qe2 f5 20.0-0-0 Kf7 21.Bg5 Qd7
22.h5²) 16...Nc5 (16...Bf5 17.Bd3 Bxd3
18.Qxd3 Ne5 19.Qe2 f5 20.Nf3 0-0-0
21.Nxe5 dxe5 22.0-0² Rxd1 23.Rxd1 Rd8

24.Rxd8+ Qxd8 25.Qc2) 17.Ne4 Nxe4
(17...Bf5?! 18.Nxd6+ Qxd6 19.Rxd6 Bxc2
20.Rd2 Bxb2 21.Rxc2 Ba3 22.g3±)
18.Qxe4 d5 19.cxd5 Bxd5 20.Qa4 Kf8
(20...Qe4 21.Qxe4+ Bxe4 22.f3 Bd5
23.b3²) 21.Bc4² Bxg2? 22.Rg1 Bf3 23.Kf1
Bxd1 24.Qxc6+–

12.Nd2

12.cxd5?! Nxd5 13.Bg5 f6 14.Qxe7+
Bxe7 15.Bd2 Rb8 16.b3 Nb4³ Florstedt –
Kucza, Gorzow Wielkopolski 2018.

12...dxc4 13.g3



13...Be6

13...Nd5 14.Bg2 Bb7 15.Qxc4 Qe6,
Sindarov – Arjun, Moscow 2019, 16.0-0²

14.Bg2 Qc7

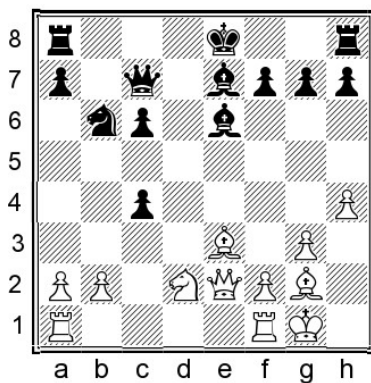
14...Bd5?! 15.0-0 Qe6 16.Rfe1 Be7?
17.Qh5±

15.0-0 Be7

Black has greater chances of equalising after 15...Bb4, for example: 16.Bxb6!? (16.b3 c3 17.Ne4 0-0 18.a3 Be7 19.Nxc3 Bxb3 20.Rab1 Be6 21.Rfc1 Qe5÷) 16...axb6 17.Nxc4 0-0 (about 17...Bc5 18.Ne5 0-0 – see 17...0-0) 18.Ne5 Bc5, transposing to the game Van Foreest – Gledura, Brest 2018 (18...Bd5 19.Bxd5 cxd5 20.Nd3 Bd6 21.Rfc1 Qb7 22.Qf3²) 19.Kh2 Bc8!? (This endgame, with a knight against a bishop, turns out to be in favour of White: 19...Bd5 20.Bxd5 cxd5 21.Nd3 Rfe8 22.Qf3 Re4 23.Rac1 Qe7 24.Rfd1 Rxa2?? 25.b4+-; 24...Rd8 25.Nf4 d4 26.Kg2²) 20.Rfe1 (20.Bxc6 Ra5 21.Rfc1 Ba6 22.Qe1 Bxf2 23.Qxf2 Rxe5=; 20.Qe4 Ba6 21.Rfc1 Rad8 22.f4 Rd2 23.b4 Bd4 24.Nxc6? Qd7-+) 20...Bb7÷

16.b3!?

16.Bxb6 axb6 17.Nxc4 0-0 18.Ne5 Bc5= Van Foreest – Gledura, Brest 2018.

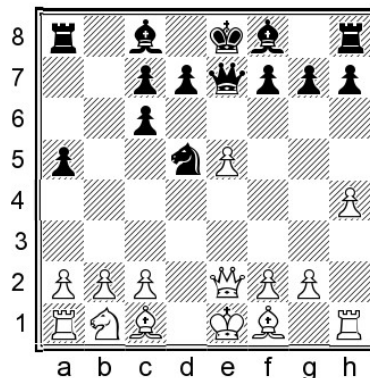


16...cxb3

16...0-0 17.Nxc4 Nxc4 18.bxc4 Rac8 (18...Rab8 19.Rac1 Rb4 20.Rfd1) 19.c5!? Qe5 20.Rac1 Rfd8 21.Rfe1²; 16...Nd5 17.Bd4 0-0 (17...cxb3? 18.Bxg7) 18.Nxc4²

17.Rac1 0-0 18.Nxb3 Nd5 19.Nd4 Qd7 20.Bd2© Rac8?! (20...Bg4 21.Qa6 Bb4 22.Bxb4 Nxb4 23.Qc4 Rab8 24.Nxc6 Nxc6 25.Bxc6 Qf5 26.Qa6²) 21.Nxe6 Qxe6 22.Qxe6 fxe6 23.Bh3±

E) 8...a5



The consequences of this symmetrical move cannot be evaluated so easily. Black obtains the additional possibility to develop active actions after Ba6, or a4, but on the other hand his a-pawn is weak and castling queenside would be rather dangerous for him. As a result, Black's task is not easy at all.

9.g3

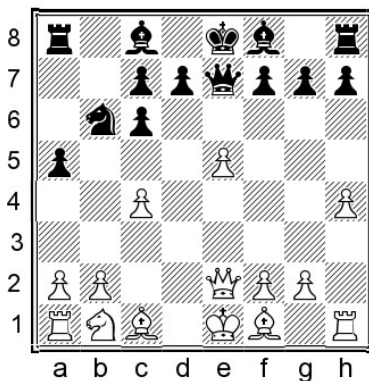
This is the most precise order of moves. White's queen impedes the development of his light-squared bishop, so he solves immediately this problem. In addition, he avoids the rather unpleasant variation 9.c4 Nb6!?, followed by Qe6, as Black played in the relatively recent game Nakamura – Robson, Saint Louis 2018.

Now, in comparison to Chapter 14 (8.g3), White has played h2-h4, and Black – a7-a5, and all this is in favour of White. In Chapter 14, Black's only move, providing him with chances of equalising, was 8...g6, while here, White would

manage to counter this with h4-h5, seizing the initiative.

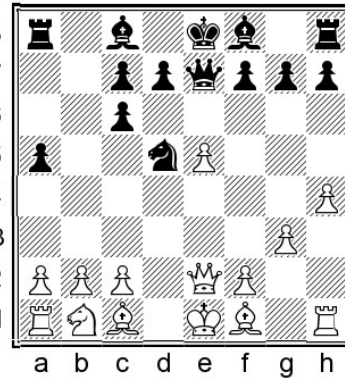
9.Nd2 f6 (About 9...Qe6!? – see 8...Qe6 9.Nd2 a5; 9...Ba6 10.Qe4 Bxf1 11.Kxf1 Qe6÷ Ris – Vedder, Netherlands 2019) 10.Nf3 fxe5 11.Bg5 Qe6 12.Qxe5 Bb4+ 13.Bd2 (13.Kd1?! Qxe5 14.Nxe5 0-0³ Lopez Martinez – McShane, Batumi 2018) 13...Qxe5+ 14.Nxe5 0-0 15.0-0-0 Rxf2 16.Bc4©

9.c4 Nb6!



10.g3?! Nestorovic – Marn, Sarajevo 2019, 10...Qe6!N (About 10...a4 – see 9.g3 a4) 11.Nd2 (11.Be3 Bb4+ 12.Nd2 0-0 13.Bxb6 cxb6 14.0-0-0 d5 15.exd6 Qxd6³) 11...Bb4 12.a3 Bxd2+ 13.Bxd2 Ba6 14.b3 (14.Rc1 0-0μ) 14...a4 15.Bh3 f5 16.exf6 Qxe2+ 17.Kxe2 axb3 18.fgx7 Bxc4μ 10.Nc3 Qe6, Hector – Zadruzny, Norrkoping 2019, 11.Be3 Qxe5 12.0-0-0 Bb4 13.Qd2 0-0 14.Bd4 Qe7 15.Re1 Qd6= 10.Nd2 Qe6!? (10...a4 11.g3 – see 8...a5 9.g3 a4 10.c4 Nb6 11.Nd2; or 10...Ba6 11.b3 a4 12.g3 – see 9.g3; 11.Qe4 Qe6÷ Blohberger – Degraeve, Riga 2018) 11.Nf3 (11.Qe4 d5 12.exd6 Bxd6÷) 11...Bb4+ 12.Bd2 (12.Kd1?! Ba6 13.b3 0-0-0μ) 12...Bxd2+ (12...0-0!?³) 13.Nxd2 0-0 14.0-0-0 Re8 15.f4 d6 16.Rh3 Qh6 (16...Rb8!? 17.Re3 d5,,) 17.Re3 Qxf4 18.Re4 Qg3

19.exd6 Be6 20.dxc7 Qxc7 21.Nf3 Nd7 22.Ng5 Nf8 23.Qf2 Rad8 24.Bd3 h6 25.Nxe6 Rxe6 26.Qf3 Red6 27.Ree1 Rd4 28.g3 Ne6= Nakamura – Robson, Saint Louis 2018.

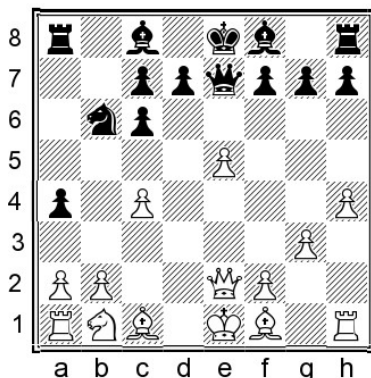


9...Ba6

About 9...f6 10.c4 Ba6 11.Nd2 – see 9...Ba6.

9...Nb6 10.b3 (10.Nc3!? Ba6 11.Qe4 Bxf1 12.Kxf1 Qe6 13.h5f) 10...a4 11.Ba3 Qd8 12.Bxf8 Kxf8 (12...Rxf8!? 13.Nd2 axb3 14.cxb3 Qe7÷) 13.Nc3 Qe7 14.Qe3 axb3 15.cxb3 Qb4?! (15...Ra5 16.f4 f6,,) 16.Bg2 Nd5 17.Bxd5 cxd5, Idani – Sychev, Moscow 2019, 18.a3!? d4 (18...Rxa3 19.Rxa3 Qxa3 20.0-0 Bb7 21.Rd1±) 19.axb4 Rxa1+ 20.Ke2 dxe3 21.Rxa1 exf2 22.Ra7±

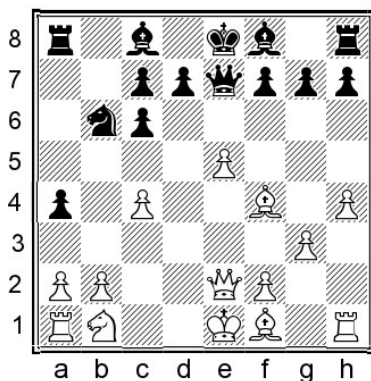
9...a4!? After this move, if White continues in a standard fashion with c4, Nd2, then he would not obtain any advantage. 10.c4 Nb6 (About 10...Ba6 11.Bh3 – see 9...Ba6 10.c4 a4)



11.Nd2 Ra5 (11...d5!? 12.Bg2 g6 13.0-0 Bg7 14.Re1 0-0÷; 11...Ba6 12.b3 – see 9...Ba6 10.c4 a4 11.Nd2 Nb6 12.b3) 12.f4 Ba6 13.Rh2?! Shirov – Agdestein, Gausdal (m/4) 1992 (13.Kf2) 13...Qe6! 14.Bh3 Qg6 15.Ne4 Bxc4 16.h5 Bb4+ 17.Kf2 Bxe2 18.hxg6 Bd3³

11.Bg2?! Qe6 12.Nd2 Bb4 13.0-0 0-0 14.Ne4, Baklan – Aleksandrov, Kramatorsk 2001, 14...Qxc4 15.Qh5 Ra5! 16.Bf4 f6³

11.Bf4!?N



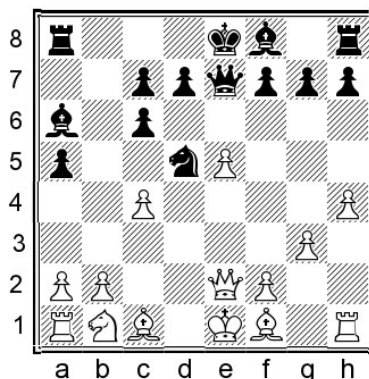
11...Qb4+?! 12.Nd2 Bc5 13.Bg2 Qxb2 14.0-0 0-0 15.Rfb1 Qd4 (15...Qa3 16.Ne4 Bd4 17.Re1±) 16.Nf3 Qxc4 17.Qxc4 Nxc4 18.Rc1 Ba6 19.Bf1 Ba3 20.Rxc4 Bxc4 21.Bxc4±

11...d5 12.exd6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.Bxd6 cxd6 15.Nc3 Be6 16.0-0-0 Kd7 17.Rd4²

11...Qe6 12.a3!? Be7 (12...d5 13.exd6 Bxd6 14.Bxd6 Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 cxd6 16.Nc3 Be6 17.0-0-0²) 13.Nd2 0-0 14.0-0

0 d5 (14...Ba6 15.Qe4 d5 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Qxe6 fxe6 18.c5 dxc5 19.Bxa6 Rxa6 20.Rhe1²) 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Re1 d5 17.Qd1 Qd7 18.Qc2 Ba6 19.Bd3 h6 20.g4 Nxc4 21.Bh7+ Kh8 22.Bf5 Qa7 23.Nxc4 Bxc4 24.g5 h5 25.Be5 Kg8 26.Bh7+ Kh8 27.Qd1+–

10.c4



This position is usually reached after 9.c4 Ba6 and then 10.g3.

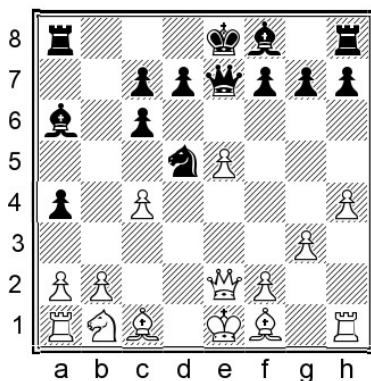
10...Nb6

10...g6 11.h5 0-0-0 (11...Bg7 12.f4 f6 13.h6 Bf8 14.b3²) 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.Nc3 Nb6 (13...Nxc3? 14.bxc3 with the idea Rb1, Qe3-a7) 14.b3²

10...Qe6 11.b3 (About 11.Bh3 Bb4+ 12.Nd2 Qe7 13.0-0 Nb6 14.b3 – see 10...Nb6) 11...Bb4+ 12.Bd2 0-0 13.Bh3 f5 14.0-0 Rae8 15.Bxb4 axb4 16.Re1 Nb6 17.a3 d6 18.axb4 Bc8 19.Nc3²

10...Qc5 11.Nd2 Qd4 (11...0-0-0 12.Qe4² f5 13.Qxf5 Ne7 14.Qe4± Van Dael – De Schampheleire, Netherlands 2018) 12.Qe4 Nb4 (12...Qxe4+ 13.Nxe4 Nb4 14.Kd1²) 13.Qxd4 Nc2+ 14.Kd1 Nxd4 15.Nb3²

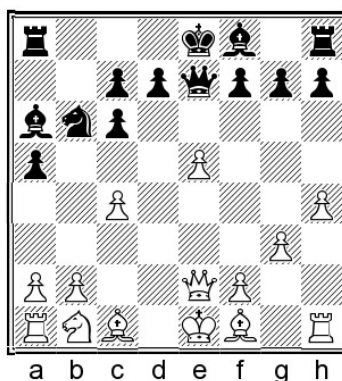
10...a4



11.Nd2 Nb6 12.b3 (12.Bh3 f6, Morozevich – Ragger, Berlin 2015, 13.0-0! Qxe5 14.Qd1 0-0-0 15.Re1 Qa5 16.a3 c5 17.b4 axb3 18.a4 Bxc4 19.Nxc4 Nxc4 20.Bf4+-; 12...g6!? 13.b3 Bg7 14.Bb2 0-0 15.0-0 a3 16.Bd4 c5 17.Bc3 Nd5 18.Ba5 d6 19.Bg2 Bc8 20.cxd5 Rxa5 21.Nc4 Ra8÷) 12...Bb7 13.Bb2. Now, after White's move 17, there arises a standard position from Chapter 21 (8.c4 Nb6 9.Nd2 a5 10.b3 a4 11.Bb2 axb3 12.axb3 Rxa1+ 13.Bxa1 Qa3 14.Qd1 Bb4 15.Bd3), in which he has played g3, h4, while Black's bishop is on b7 instead of on the c8-square. 13...axb3 14.axb3 Rxa1+ 15.Bxa1 Qa3 16.Qd1 Bb4 (16...c5 17.Rh2 Be7 18.Bd3 0-0, Dalaud – Le Goff, Sautron 2018, 19.Qb1 h6 20.f4²) 17.Bd3 Qa2, Morozevich – Dominguez Perez, Doha 2016, 18.Bc2!? Qa5 (18...0-0? 19.0-0 c5 20.Ne4,; 18...c5?! 19.0-0 Bxd2 20.e6! f6 21.Bb1 Qa8 22.Qxd2 dxe6 23.Qe3 Kf7 24.Qxc5²) 19.Ke2 d5 20.exd6 0-0 21.Ne4 cxd6 22.Qd4 f6 23.Rd1²

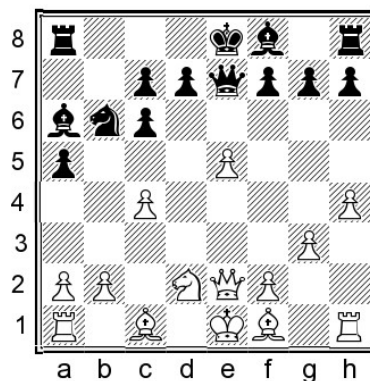
11.Bh3!?N 11...g6 (11...Nb6 12.b3²) 12.0-0 Bg7 13.Qc2!? Nb4 (13...Nb6 14.Re1²) 14.Qd1 0-0 15.a3 Bxc4 16.axb4 Bxf1 17.Bxf1 Qxe5 18.Na3 Qd5 19.Qxd5 cxd5 20.Ra2 Rfb8 21.Nb5² c6 22.Nc7 Ra7 23.Na6 Re8 24.Be3 Rb7 25.Rxa4 Bxb2 26.Nc5±

10...f6 11.Nd2 fxe5 (11...Nb6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.b3 d5 14.Bb2 Kf7÷) 12.b3 0-0-0?! (12...Nb4!? 13.Ne4 d5 14.a3 dxe4 15.axb4 Qxb4+ 16.Bd2 Qxb3 17.Qxe4 Bb4=; 17.Qh5+ Kd8 18.Bh3 Bxc4 19.Qf5 Qd3÷) 13.Ne4 Nf6 14.Bh3 h6 15.0-0 g5 (15...Kb8 16.Nxf6 gxf6 17.Qe1f) 16.Ba3 Qf7 17.Bxf8 Qxf8 18.b4 Nxe4 (18...axb4 19.a3,) 19.Qxe4 Qf6 20.bxa5 (20.Rab1 a4? (20...Kb8!²) 21.b5 Bb7 22.Bg2 gxh4 23.c5±) 20...gxh4? (20...Kb8²) 21.Rab1! hxg3 22.fxg3 Qd6, Cheparinov – Predke, Skopje 2019, 23.Rb2+-



11.b3

11.Nd2. Perhaps b2-b3 is better and White will decide later where to develop his knight.



About 11...a4 12.b3 – see 10...a4.

11...Qe6 12.b3 – see line F2a.

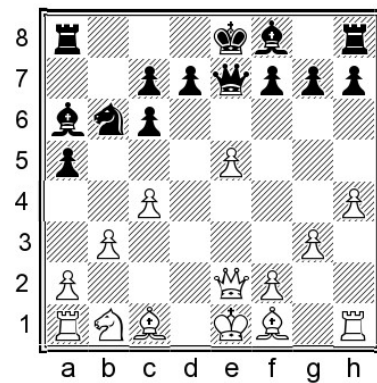
11...g6 12.h5 Bg7 13.f4 Rg8 14.hxg6 (14.b3 0-0-0 15.h6!? Bh8 16.Bb2 Rge8

17.Bg2 f6 18.0-0 fxe5 19.fxe5 Bxe5
20.Qxe5 Qxe5 21.Bxe5 Rxe5 22.Rf7.

White's h6-pawn is very powerful.)

14...hxg6 15.b3 d5 16.Qf3 (16.Bb2!? dxc4
17.Qf3 0-0-0 18.0-0-0) 16...0-0-0 17.Bb2
(17.cxd5?! Bxf1 18.Kxf1 Rxd5 19.Ne4 f6
20.Be3 fxe5,, Morozevich – Kovalev,
Berlin 2015) 17...dxc4 18.0-0-0 g5 19.Be2
Kb8 20.Nxc4 Nxc4 21.bxc4²

11...d5!? 12.exd6 (12.b3 dxc4 13.bxc4
Qe6 14.Bh3 f5 15.exf6 Qxe2+ 16.Kxe2
gxf6 17.Re1 Kf7 18.Kf1 Bd6÷) 12...Qxe2+
(Here, it is more precise for Black to play
12...cxd6, forcing White to consider the
possible defences of his pawn on c4. 13.b3
d5 14.Bb2 f6 15.0-0-0 Qxe2 16.Bxe2 a4,,
Now it turns out that White must play
11.b3 in order to fight for the advantage.)
13.Bxe2 cxd6, Nepomniachtchi – Giri,
Leuven 2017, 14.0-0 d5 15.cxd5 Bxe2
16.Re1 Nxd5 17.Rxe2+ Be7 18.Nc4 0-0
19.a4 Bb4 20.Bd2²



11...a4

About 11...d6 12.exd6 – see 11...d5.

It has become obvious that Black will
fail to develop his bishop after the move
11...g6?!, for example: 12.Ba3 (12.Bg2!?
Bg7 13.f4 0-0 14.Ba3 d6 15.Bxc6) 12...Qe6
13.Bh3 f5 14.Bxf8 Kxf8 15.Nc3 d6 16.exd6

Re8 17.Qxe6 Rxe6+ 18.Kd2 cxd6 19.Bg2
d5 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.Rhe1±

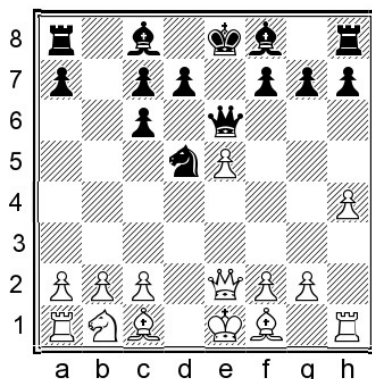
11...Qe6 12.Bh3 (About 12.Nd2 – see
8...Qe6 9.Nd2 a5 10.g3 Ba6 11.c4 Nb6
12.b3) 12...f5 (12...Bb4+ 13.Nd2 – see
8...Qe6 9.Nd2 a5 10.g3 Ba6 11.c4 Nb6
12.b3 Bb4 13.Bh3) 13.0-0²

If Black plays here 11...d5, which would
have been the best move for him after
11.Nd2, then White will develop his
knight on c3. 12.exd6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2
Bxd6 14.Nc3²

11...0-0-0, Sebe Vodislav – Manea,
Tusnad 2001, 12.Bh3!? f6 (12...Kb8
13.Nd2 f6 14.Bb2 fxe5 15.0-0 d6 16.Bg2±
Bb7 17.c5 dxc5 18.Nc4 Nxc4 19.bxc4+–)
13.e6 (13.Bb2²) 13...dxe6 14.0-0 Kb8
15.Nc3 e5 16.Bg2±

12.Bg2 (12.Ba3 Qe6 13.Bxf8 Kxf8
14.Bh3 Qe7 15.0-0±) **12...Qe6 13.0-0 d5**
14.Nd2 Be7 15.Nf3 Qg4, Cheparinov –
Xiang, China 2018, **16.Qd1 axb3 17.axb3**
0-0 18.Be3 dxc4 19.Nd4 Qxd1
20.Rfxd1±

F) 8...Qe6



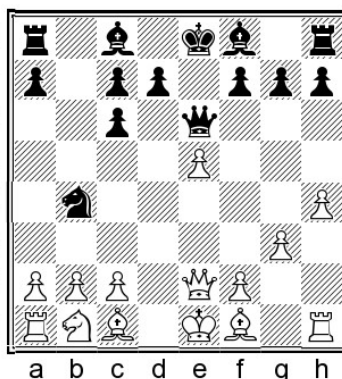
Black has played this move with the idea to follow with d7-d6, and after the capturing 10.exd6, to choose 10...Bxd6, completing his development.

We will deal now with **F1) 9.g3** and **F2) 9.Nd2**.

9.c4?! Nb6 10.Nd2 (10.b3, Marosi – K.Horvath, Balatonlelle 2018, 10...Bb4+ 11.Bd2 a5 12.g3 0-0 13.Bh3 Qe7 14.0-0 d5³) 10...Be7 (About 10...a5 11.Nf3 – see 8...a5 9.c4 Nb6 10.Nd2 Qe6 11.Nf3) 11.Nf3 Bb4+ (11...f6!?,) 12.Bd2 (12.Kd1 Ba6 13.b3 0-0-0³) 12...Bxd2+ 13.Qxd2 Nxc4 14.Qf4 Nb6³

F1) 9.g3 d6!

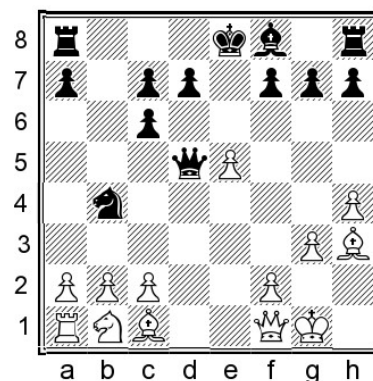
9...Bc5!? 10.Bh3 Qe7 11.Nd2 0-0 12.0-0, Ibarra Jerez – Diaz Castro, Seville 2019, 12...d6,, 9...Nb4



10.a3?! Diaz – Arencibia Rodriguez, Las Tunas 1996, 10...Ba6 11.c4 Bxc4 12.Qxc4 Qxc4 13.Bxc4 Nc2+ 14.Kd2 Nxa1 15.Kc3 a5 16.b3 a4 17.bxa4 Be7³

10.c4 Ba6 11.Bf4?! (11.b3 Qg6÷) 11...d5 12.a3 Bxc4 13.Qd1, Tomczak – Kramnik, Batumi 2018, 13...Qf5 14.Bxc4 dxc4 15.0-0 Nd3μ

10.Bh3!?N 10...Qd5 11.0-0! Ba6 12.Qd1 Bxf1 13.Qxf1©

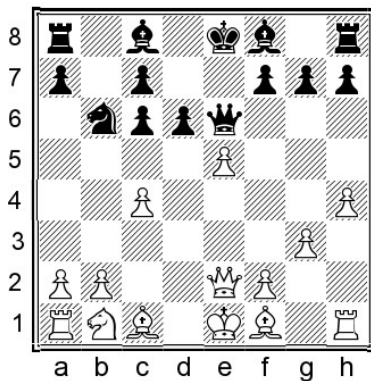


13...Nxc2 14.Nc3 Qd4 15.Rb1 Nb4 (15...Bb4? 16.Bf4) 16.a3 Nd5 17.Bg5 Be7 18.Rd1 Qc5 19.Bxd7+ Kxd7 20.Be3 Qa5 21.Qc4+-

13...Be7 14.Qe2 0-0 15.a3 Qa5 16.Bxd7 Rad8 17.Bg4²

13...Qe4 14.c3 Nc2 (14...Nd3 15.Nd2 Qg6 16.Nb3 Nxc1 17.Rxc1 Be7 18.Nd4²) 15.Nd2 Qxe5 (15...Qe1 16.Rb1 Bc5 17.Qxe1 Nxe1 18.Bf1±) 16.Rb1!? (16.Nc4 Qe4 17.Bg5 Nxa1 18.Nd2 Qe5 19.Nc4 Qe4=) 16...Bc5 17.Nb3 Qxg3+ 18.Bg2 Bb6 19.Qe2+ Kf8 (19...Kd8 20.Qxc2) 20.Qxc2©

10.c4 Nb6

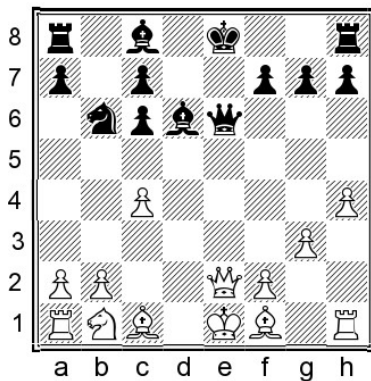


11.Bg2!?

In his fight for the opening advantage, it seems reasonable for White to sacrifice a pawn in order to complete his development as quickly as possible. Still, it looks like Black's defensive resources would be sufficient for him to maintain the balance.

11.b3 dxe5 12.Bb2 Bb4+ 13.Nd2 0-0 14.0-0-0 Re8 15.Bg2 a5f Santos Latasa – Pultinevicius, Skopje 2019.

11.exd6 Bxd6



12.Bg2?! 0-0 (12...Qxe2+ 13.Kxe2 Bg4+ 14.Bf3 f5³) 13.Qxe6 Bxe6 14.Bxc6 (14.0-0 Bxc4 15.Bxc6 Bxf1 16.Bxa8 Bd3 17.Bf3

Re8³) 14...Rab8 15.Nd2 Nxc4μ Ponkratov – Grischuk, Riyadh 2017.

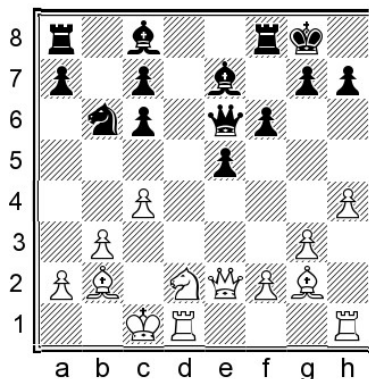
12.Nd2 0-0 13.Bg2 Qxe2+ 14.Kxe2 Re8+ 15.Kf1 Bd7³

12.Be3 0-0 13.Nd2 (13.Nc3 Ba6 14.Bxb6 axb6 15.Qxe6 fxe6 16.Rc1 Bc5³) 13...Ba6 14.Bh3 Qe5³ Nepomniachtchi – Kramnik, Leuven 2017.

11...dxe5 12.Nd2 Be7

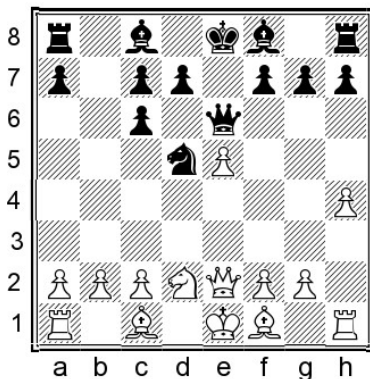
12...Bb4!? 13.0-0 0-0 14.a3 Bxd2 (14...Be7 15.Re1; 14...Bd6 15.b4 Be7 16.c5 Nd5 17.Bb2 f6 18.Nc4Ⓞ; 17...Bf6 18.Rfe1Ⓞ) 15.Bxd2 Nxc4 16.Bb4 Rd8 17.Rfc1 a5 18.Qxc4 Qxc4 19.Rxc4 Be6 20.Rxc6 axb4=

13.b3 0-0 14.Bb2 f6 15.0-0-0



15...a5 16.f4 a4 17.Bh3 Qf7 18.Bxc8 Raxc8 (18...Rfxc8!? 19.fxe5 Re8 20.e6 Qf8 21.Rhe1 Bb4 22.h5 axb3 23.axb3 Ba3 24.Nb1 Bxb2+ 25.Qxb2 Qb4÷) 19.fxe5 fxe5 20.Rhf1 Qg6 21.Qxe5 Bb4? (21...Rxf1 22.Rxf1 axb3 23.axb3 Bd6 24.Qe4 Qxe4 25.Nxe4²) 22.h5 Qh6 23.Rxf8+ Rxf8 24.Qxc7± Idani – Sasikiran, Astana 2019.

F2) 9.Nd2

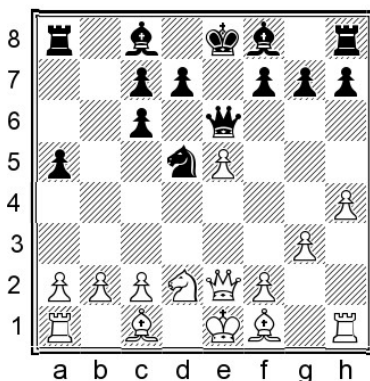


We will deal now with **F2a) 9...a5** and **F2b) 9...d6**.

9...Nb4 10.Nf3 Ba6 11.c4 d5 12.a3 Bxc4 13.Qd1 Bxf1? (13...Na6 14.b4²) 14.Kxf1 Na6 15.b4 c5? 16.Qa4+ Kd8 17.Ng5+-
Morozevich – Sychev, Moscow 2016.

F2a) 9...a5 10.g3

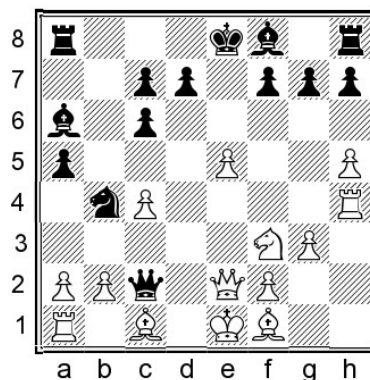
10.c4 Nb4 11.Nf3 c5 12.Ng5 Qc6 13.Ne4 Bb7 14.f3 Qg6 15.h5 Qf5 16.g3 Qxe5 17.Bf4²; After 10...Nb6!, White ends up in the same position which he was trying to avoid in the variation **E** – see 8...a5 9.c4 Nb6 10.Nd2 Qe6.



10...Ba6

It is possible that move not to be the best.

10...Nb4!?! 11.Nf3 Ba6 12.c4 Qg6 (12...d5 13.Nd4 Qg6 14.h5 Qe4 15.Qxe4 dxe4 16.Bd2 c5 17.Nb5 Bxb5 18.Bxb4 Bc6 19.Bc3²; 13...Qe7 14.Bg5 Qc5 15.Rd1 dxc4 16.Qe4 Qd5 17.Bg2 Nd3+ 18.Kf1 Qxe4 19.Bxe4 Bb7 20.Kg2 h6 21.Be3 Nxe5 22.Nf5 Nd3 23.b3²; 15...Qxc4 16.Qf3 Nc2+ 17.Nxc2 Qxc2 18.Bxa6 Bb4+ 19.Kf1 Rxa6 20.Kg2 0-0? 21.a3; 20...Qg6 21.Rc1÷) 13.h5 Qc2 14.Rh4

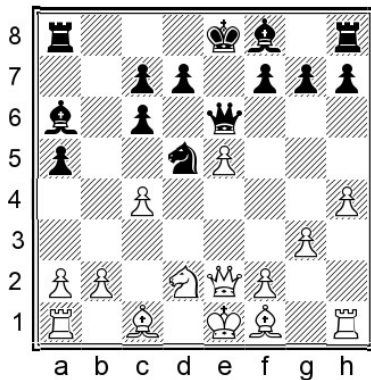


14...Bc5 15.Be3 (15.a3?? Nd3+ 16.Qxd3 Bxf2#) 15...Qxe2+ (15...Be7 16.Bg5 see 14...Be7) 16.Kxe2 Be7 17.Bg5 Bxg5 18.Nxg5 h6÷

14...c5 15.a3 Qxe2+ 16.Kxe2 Nc6 17.Bd2 Be7 18.Rf4 g5 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Bg2 0-0-0÷

14...Be7 15.Bg5 Bxg5 16.Nxg5 Qxe2+ (16...h6 17.Nf3 c5 18.Rd1 Qxe2+ 19.Bxe2 Nxa2 20.Ra1 Nb4 21.Rxa5 Bb7 22.Rxa8+ Bxa8=) 17.Kxe2 h6 18.Nf3 c5 19.Bg2 Bb7 (19...0-0-0 20.a3 Nc6 21.Re1 d5 22.exd6 cxd6=) 20.a3 Nc6 21.Rd1 Rb8=

11.c4

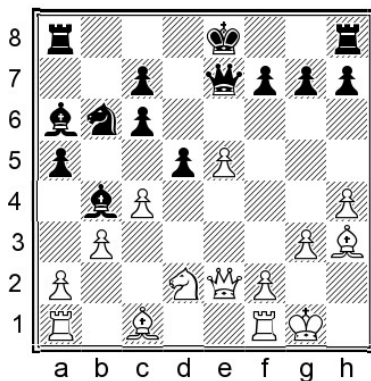


11...Nb6

11...Bb4 12.Bh3 Qg6, Zilka – Pechac, Radenci 2019 (About 12...Qe7 13.0-0 0-0 14.Nf3 Nb6 15.b3 d5 – see 11...Nb6) 13.Qf3 Bxd2+?! (13...Ne7 14.h5 Qg5 15.Qe2±) 14.Kxd2 Ne7 (14...Bxc4? 15.Bf5 Qh6+ 16.Kd1 g5 17.Bxg5 Qf8 18.Bxd7+ Kxd7 19.Qg4+ Ke8 20.Qxc4+-) 15.b3 d5 16.h5 Qe4 17.Qxe4 dxe4 18.Kc3+-

12.b3 Bb4 13.Bh3 Qe7 14.0-0 d5

14...0-0? 15.Ne4 Rae8, Beerdsen – Ravuri, chess.com 2019, 16.a3 Bc5 17.Nxc5 Qxc5 18.a4±

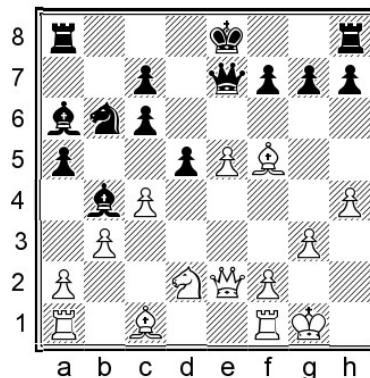


15.Bb2

15.Nf3 0-0 16.Qc2 (16.e6 dxc4 17.Qe4 cxb3 18.exf7+ Kh8 19.Be6 Nd5÷; 16.Nd4 dxc4 17.Nf5 Qe8 18.Qg4 Qxe5 19.Bf4 Qf6

20.Bg5 Qe5=) 16...dxc4 17.Ng5? (17.Bg5÷) 17...g6 18.Ne4 Qxe5 19.Bb2 c3 20.Nxc3 Bxf1 21.Ne4 Bd3+- Beerdsen – Leko, Muelheim 2018.

15.Bf5!?N (with the idea after d5xc4, to have the move Qe4, with a double attack against the c6 and h7-squares; or after 0-0, Black can accomplish the manoeuvre Bd3+Qe4.)

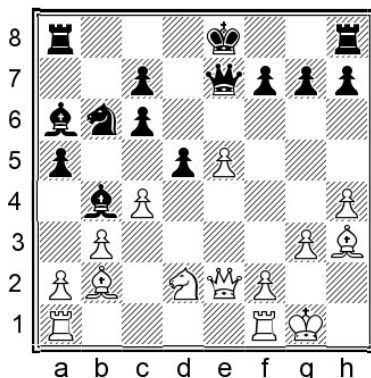


15...Bxd2? 16.Bxd2 dxc4 17.Qe4 Bb7 18.Bg5.

15...dxc4 16.Qe4! 0-0 17.Bxh7+ Kh8 18.Nf3 cxb3 19.Bg5 Qe8 20.axb3 Bc3 21.h5,

15...0-0!? This castling is a difficult decision for Black, since there may soon appear too many enemy pieces in the vicinity of his king. Still, this looks like the right move for him. 16.Nf3!? h6 17.a3 Bc3! (17...Bc5 18.Re1f) 18.Rb1 c5 19.Qd3 d4 20.e6 Bc8 21.exf7+ Rxf7 22.Be4 Bg4 23.Bf4 Bxf3 24.Bxf3 Raf8,,

15...a4

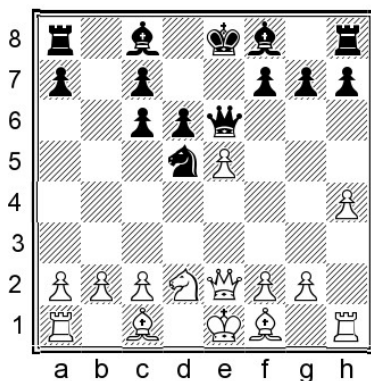


15...Bxd2? 16.Qxd2 dxc4 17.e6±

15...0-0 16.Rac1 dxc4 (About 16...a4 17.Nf3 – see 15...a4) 17.Nxc4 Rad8 18.Rfd1 Rxd1+ 19.Rxd1 f5 20.e6!?! (20.Qc2) 20...Nxc4 21.bxc4 Bc8 22.a3 Bc5 23.Qe5 Bxe6 24.Re1©

16.Rac1 0-0 17.Nf3 axb3 18.axb3 c5 19.e6 Rae8?! (19...f5 20.Ng5 d4±) 20.Ng5 (20.Qd3!?! dxc4 21.bxc4 f6 22.h5±) 20...f6? 21.Nxh7 Kxh7 22.Bf5+ g6 23.Qh5+ Kg8 24.Bxg6+– Beerdsen – Roobol, Netherlands 2018.

F2b) 9...d6



10.exd6

10.c4?! Nf4.

10.Nf3 dxe5 11.Qxe5 (11.c4?! Nf6!?) 12.Qxe5 Bc5f; 11...Bb4+ 12.Bd2 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2 Qh6+ 14.Ke1, Shahinyan – Harutyunian, Jermuk 2019, 14...Ne7 15.Qxe5 Bg4 16.Be2 0-0-0 17.Qxe7 Bxf3³) 11...Qxe5+ (11...Rb8 12.Bc4) 12.Nxe5 Nb4,,

10...Bxd6

10...cxd6 11.Nc4 Be7 12.Bg5 Nb4?! (12...Nf6 13.0-0-0 d5 14.Qxe6 Bxe6 15.Ne5) 13.0-0-0 d5 14.Qd2± Kraus – Mesaros, Radenci 2019.

11.Nc4

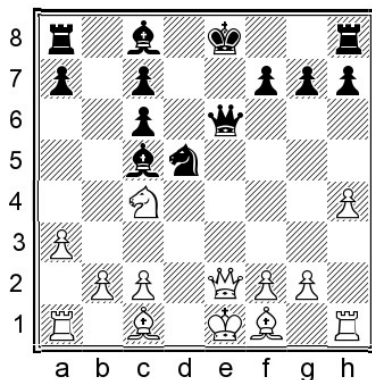
11.Qxe6+ Bxe6 12.Ne4 Be7 (12...Nb4 13.Nxd6+ cxd6 14.Kd1 Bf5 15.Bd2 Nxc2 16.Rc1 Nd4 17.Be3 c5 18.Bxd4 cxd4 19.Rc7 0-0 20.Ba6©) 13.Bd2 Nb4 14.0-0-0 Nxa2+ 15.Kb1 Nb4 (15...h6 16.c3²) 16.Ng5 Bxg5 17.hxg5©

11...Bc5

11...0-0?! 12.Qxe6 Bxe6 (12...fxe6 13.Nxd6 cxd6 14.Bd2²) 13.Nxd6 cxd6 14.Bd2 Bg4 15.f3 Rfe8+ 16.Kf2 Be6 17.c4² Aravindh – Kravtsiv, Abu Dhabi 2018.

12.a3

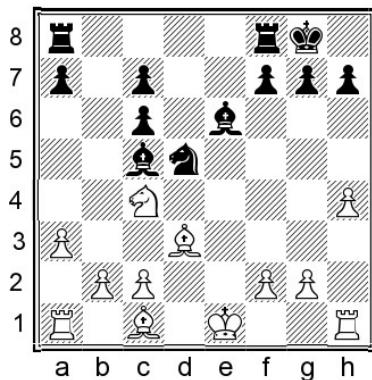
12.Bd2 0-0=



12...0-0!

12...Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 0-0 14.Be3!? (14.0-0 Bf5 15.Na5!?) 14...Nxe3 15.Nxe3 f5 (15...Rb8 16.0-0-0²) 16.b4 Bd4 (16...Be7 17.Bf3 f4 18.Nc4 Ba6 19.Nd2 Bb5 20.a4 Bf6 21.Ra3 Rae8+ 22.Kd1 Ba6 23.Bxc6²) 17.0-0-0 c5 18.Nd5 Bxf2 19.Nxc7 Rb8 20.b5²

13.Qxe6 Bxe6 14.Bd3



14...Rfe8

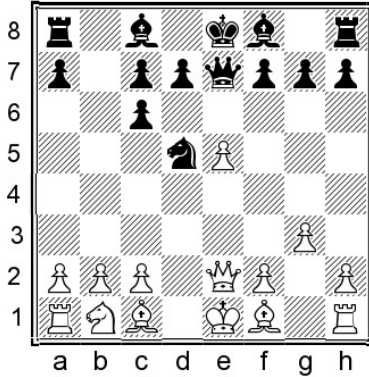
14...Nf6 15.0-0 (15.Be3!? Bxe3 16.Nxe3 g6 17.0-0-0²; 15...Bxc4 16.Bxc5 Rfe8+ 17.Kd2 Bxd3 18.cxd3²) 15...Ng4 (15...Rfe8!?) 16.Bf4 Bxc4 17.Bxc4 Bd6 18.Bxd6 (18.Bd2 Bh2+ 19.Kh1 Be5 20.Rab1 Rad8 21.Bg5 Rb8 22.b3²) 18...cxd6 19.Rfe1 Rfe8 20.Ba6 Rab8

21.Rxe8+ Rxe8 22.Rd1² Perunovic - Fressinet, Hersonissos 2017.

15.0-0 a5 16.Re1 Nb6 17.Ne5 Bd5 18.Be3 Bd6 19.Bd4 c5 20.Bc3 c4 21.Bf1 Na4 22.Bd4 c5 23.Bxc4 Bxe5 24.Bxd5 Bxd4 25.Bc6 Rxe1+ 26.Rxe1 Rd8 27.Bxa4 Bxb2= Caruana - Robson, Saint Louis 2019.

Chapter 14

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.g3**



Now Black must decide how he will fight for the centre. We will analyse in details the move: **A) 8...g5** – which is an attempt to isolate White's pawn on e5, which is away from its base; **B) 8...f6** – This is the fastest way for Black to trade the enemy pawn; **C) 8...g6** – with the idea to develop quickly and to exert pressure against the enemy e5-pawn.

Still, at first we have to mention some other alternatives for Black.

8...Nb6?! He is not waiting for the move c2-c4 and retreats voluntarily his knight. This move practically makes the development of his queen to the e7-square obsolete. 9.Bg2 g6 (9...a5 10.b3 a4 11.Bb2²) 10.b3 Bg7 11.f4. White manages to complete his development and his advantage becomes evident. 11...0-0 12.Ba3 d6 13.Bxc6 Rb8 14.Nc3 Bh3 15.Nb5 a5 16.0-0-0±

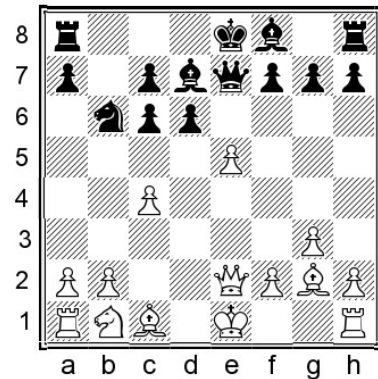
8...Qb4+. This early queen-sortie for Black is not justified and his strongest

piece will not manage to remain on this square for long. 9.Nd2!? (9.c3 Qb6 10.c4 Ba6 11.a3 Qa5+ 12.Nd2 Nb6 13.b3²) 9...g6 10.c4 (10.a3 Qe7 11.c4 Ba6 12.Bg2 Bg7 13.0-0 0-0 14.Re1 f6 15.b4 Nc3 16.Qe3 Qxe5 17.b5f) 10...Ba6 11.e6 0-0-0 (Black cannot capture the pawn, because of the move 12.Qe5.) 12.exd7+ Rxd7 13.Qe8+ Rd8 14.Bh3+ f5 15.Qe6+ Kb8 16.0-0²

8...Bb7. This passive move enables White to continue unopposed his development and to seize even more space. 9.Bg2 0-0-0 10.c4 Nb6 11.0-0 Re8 (11...f6, Plat – Sparenberg, Groningen 2017, 12.Qc2 Qxe5 13.Bf4 Qd4 14.Nd2 Bb4 15.Be3 Qg4 16.Ne4 f5 17.a3 Be7 18.Nd2 Rhf8 19.Rfe1 Rde8 20.b4 Bf6 21.Rac1f White plans to open files in order to organise a direct attack against the enemy king. Its defenders will either be attacked, or will be exchanged.) 12.Re1 f6 (12...Qe6 13.b3 f6 14.Bb2 Bb4 15.Rc1 Bf8 16.a4 d6, Akhmadeev – Gafner, St Petersburg 2000, 17.b4!? fxe5 18.a5 Nd7 19.Nc3 h5 20.b5 cxb5 21.Bxb7+ Kxb7 22.cxb5 h4 23.b6+-) 13.Qc2 fxe5 14.Nd2 Qf7 15.c5 Nd5 16.Ne4 Be7 17.b4± Black's extra pawn on e5 is in fact isolated and has been reliably blocked. White will prepare patiently an offensive against the shelter of the enemy king.

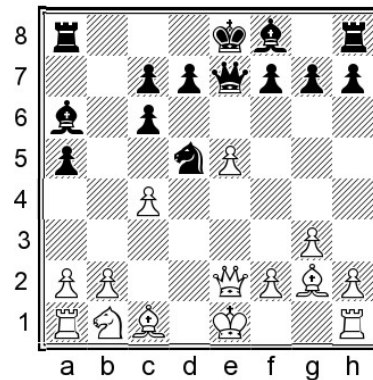
8...d6 9.c4 Nb6 (9...Ba6?! 10.Bg2 dxe5 11.0-0 g6 12.Qc2 Nb4 13.Qa4 0-0-0 14.a3 Bxc4 15.axb4 Bxf1 16.Bxf1+-; 11...0-0-0 12.Nd2 Nb6 13.b4!? Qxb4 14.Qxe5±; 11...e4 12.Qc2 Nb4 (12...Nb6 13.Bxe4 0-0-0 14.b3±; 12...Nf6 13.Nc3 0-0-0 14.Re1 Bxc4 15.Bg5±) 13.Qa4 Bb7 (13...Bxc4 14.a3 Bb5 15.Qxb4 Qxb4 16.axb4 Bxf1 17.Kxf1±) 14.Nc3 f5, Rublevsky – Aleksandrov, Polanica Zdroj 1997,

15.Re1!? 0-0-0 16.Bh3±) 10.Bg2 (10.exd6 Qxe2+ 11.Bxe2 cxd6, Krauss – Launert, Frankfurt 2010, 12.Bf3 Bd7 13.b3²) 10...Bd7 (10...Bb7 11.0-0 Qxe5, Vives Rodriguez – Vega, San Jose 2005, 12.Qc2 Be7 13.Bd2 Qe6 14.Re1 Qxc4 15.Bc3 Qg4 16.Nd2 Kf8 17.Nb3± Here, after the unavoidable threat Na5, Black's queenside will crumble.)

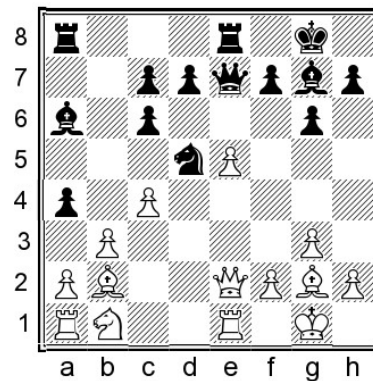


11.c5! This is a typical strike. White opens the position even more and is trying to compromise his opponent's pawn-structure. 11...Nd5 12.cxd6 cxd6 13.0-0 Qxe5 (13...dxe5 14.Re1 f6 15.Nc3 Nxc3 16.bxc3 Qe6 17.Rb1 Be7 18.Qh5+ Qf7 19.Qd1 Rd8 20.Rb7 Qxa2? 21.Rxd7 Rxd7 22.Bxc6+-) 14.Qd1 Be7 15.Re1 Qf6 16.Bxd5 cxd5 17.Nc3 Bc6 18.Be3 Qg6 19.Bf4± Plat – Velicka, Czech Republic 2015. Black's isolated pawn is very weak and he has problems to find a safe haven for his king.

8...a5, with the idea Bc8-a6. 9.Bg2 Ba6 (9...Qe6 10.0-0 Ba6 11.c4 Nb6 12.b3 – see 9...Ba6; 9...a4 10.0-0 Nb6 11.Re1 Qe6, Tonndorf – Zajogin, Tegernsee 2017, 12.Be3 Ba6 13.Qd1 Be7 14.Bxb6 cxb6 15.Nc3 a3 16.Nd5 Ra7 17.Nf4 Qh6 18.b3 0-0 19.Qd2² White's central e5-pawn cramps the enemy forces.) 10.c4



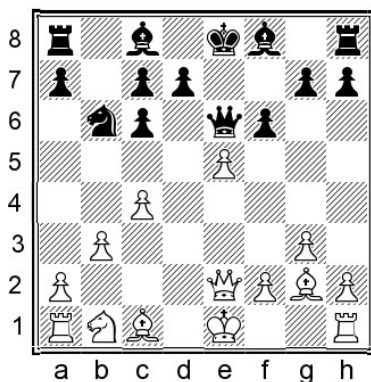
10...g6 (10...Qb4+ 11.Nd2 Bc5 12.a3 Qb6 13.0-0 0-0, Tonndorf – Zude, Apolda 2017, 14.Ne4²; 10...Nb6 11.b3 Qe6 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Nc3±; 12...a4 13.Nd2 Bb4 14.Ne4 0-0 15.Ng5±; 12...d5, Grabarczyk – Zielinski, Kolobrzeg 2010, 13.Nd2 Bb4 14.Nf3²) 11.0-0 Bg7 12.Re1. Black has lost time for the move a7-a5, so White has managed to protect his important e5-pawn. 12...0-0 13.b3 Rfe8 14.Bb2 a4 (14...f6 15.Qd2 Nb6 16.e6±).



After the move 15.Bd4!?, with the idea to run away with the queen from the pin, White plans to continue with c4-c5, impeding Black's undermining move d7-d6. 15...Rad8 (15...f6 16.Qd2 Nb6 17.Nc3 fxe5 18.Bxb6 cxb6 19.Nxa4 b5 20.Nb6 Ra7 21.cxb5 Bxb5 22.a4 Ba6 23.b4 Rb8 24.a5±) 16.Qd2 c5 17.Bb2 Nb4 18.a3! Nc6 19.Nc3 Rb8! 20.Nd5 Qd8 21.Nf6+ Bxf6 22.exf6 axb3 23.Rxe8+ Qxe8 24.Re1 Qf8 25.Qxd7 Nd4 26.Bxd4 cxd4 27.Qxd4²

15.Qd2 Nb6 16.Na3 axb3. Without this move White might prevent the opening of the rook-file and Black's position would remain horribly cramped. (16...Bb7 17.b4!? d6 18.exd6 Qxd6 19.Qxd6 cxd6 20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.b5 Rxe1+ 22.Rxe1 Rc8 23.Rb1 Nd7 24.Rd1²) 17.axb3 Bb7 18.Nc2² Now, White can improve patiently his position. For example, his knight might be transferred to the kingside. 18...Rxa1 19.Bxa1 Rb8, SerS – Guest, Cafe 2017, 20.Ne3 c5 21.Bxb7 Rxb7 22.Ng4± Black's pieces have been severely restricted and his rook has no squares for penetration. White may play Nf6 and later h4-h5.

8...Qe6. Black is preparing Bf8-e7, or Bf8-c5. 9.Bg2 f6 (9...a5 10.0-0 Ba6 11.c4 Nb6 12.b3 – see 8...a5; 9...Be7 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 Nb6 12.b3 a5 13.Nc3²; 9...Bc5 10.0-0 0-0 11.Nd2 Re8 12.Re1 d6? 13.Nb3 Bb6 14.c4 Nb4 15.a3 Ba6 16.Bf1+–; 11...d6 12.c4 Nf6 13.Re1 dxe5 14.Nb3 Bb4 15.Bd2 Bxd2 16.Qxd2 Rb8 17.Qc3 Nd7 18.Na5±) 10.c4 Nb6 11.b3!? White sacrifices a pawn and obtains as compensation a superior development and active pieces.

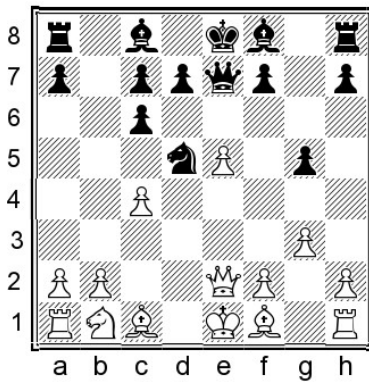


11...fxe5 12.0-0 Bc5 13.Be3! Bxe3 (13...Be7 14.Nc3 0-0 15.Rad1©) 14.fxe3 Bb7 15.a4 a5 16.Nc3 0-0-0 17.c5 Nd5 18.Nxd5 cxd5 19.b4 axb4 20.Rfb1,

11...Bc5 12.Bb2 0-0 13.0-0 Re8 (13...fxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Re8 16.Bc3²) 14.Nd2 fxe5 15.Rae1 d5 (15...Ba6 16.Qh5 Bb4 17.Rxe5²; 15...Qh6 16.Qd1 Bb4 17.f4²) 16.Qh5 Ba6 (16...Bd6 17.c5 Ba6 18.cxd6 Bxf1 19.Rxe5 Qf7 20.Qxf7+ Kxf7 21.Kxf1 cxd6 22.Rf5+ Kg8 23.Nf3±; 16...g6 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.Rxe5 Bb7 20.Ne4 Rxe5 21.Nf6+ Kf7 22.Bxe5 Be7 23.Nxh7±) 17.Rxe5 Qf7 18.Qxf7+ Kxf7 19.Nf3 Bd6 20.Rg5 g6 21.Ne5+ Bxe5 22.Rxe5 Rxe5 23.Bxe5 Re8 24.Bxc7 dxc4 25.Rc1 cxb3 26.axb3² White maintains an advantage thanks to his powerful bishop-pair and a superior pawn-structure.

11...Qxe5 12.Qxe5+ fxe5 13.0-0 Bb7 (= Bologan) (13...Bc5 14.Bb2 0-0 15.Bxe5 – see 11...Bc5; 13...d5 14.Bb2 e4 15.Rc1 Bd7 16.Be5 Kf7 17.cxd5 Nxd5 18.Bxe4 Re8 19.f4²) 14.Bb2 d6, SerS – Guest, Cafe 2017, 15.Nd2f White is a pawn down indeed, but his position is better. He has the plan to open the position with the moves c4-c5, or f2-f4. 15...0-0-0 (15...Nd7 16.b4f a5?! 17.b5 Rb8 18.bxc6 Bxc6 19.Bxc6 Rxb2 20.Nb3²) 16.c5! Nd7 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.Rac1 c5 19.Ne4 Be7 20.Rfd1 d5 (20...Nb6 21.a4 Kb8 22.a5 Nc8 23.b4 cxb4 24.Rc4,; 20...Bxe4 21.Bxe4² White's two bishops are just totally dominant on the long diagonals, while Black's pawns are static. White can begin active actions on the queenside with the move b3-b4.) 21.Nxc5 Bxc5 (21...Nxc5 22.Bxe5 Kd7 23.Bh3+ Ke8 24.Bxg7 Rg8 25.Bd4 Ne4 26.Rc7 Ba6 27.Kg2²) 22.b4 d4 23.Bh3 Bf3 24.Rd3 Be4 25.Rd2 Kb7 26.bxc5 Bf3 27.c6+ Bxc6 28.f4 exf4 29.gxf4f

A) 8...g5 9.c4



9...Ba6

Black plans to complete his development and to encircle the enemy central pawn. Still, this rather ambitious idea has a serious drawback. With a pawn on g5, he would have to forget about castling kingside. After castling queenside however, White can easily sacrifice a pawn and then his queen will go with tempo to the a5-square and his attack will be running effortlessly.

Black's passive move 9...Nb6 would enable White to open a file for his rook and will thus emphasize another defect of Black's set-up. 10.h4 (10.b3 Bg7 11.Bb2 Bb7 12.Bg2 0-0-0 13.0-0²) 10...Bg7 11.hxg5 Bxe5 (11...Qxe5 12.Qxe5+ Bxe5 13.Nc3²) 12.f4 Bg7 13.Qxe7+ Kxe7 14.Nc3² White's pieces are very active, while Black has numerous weaknesses in his position.

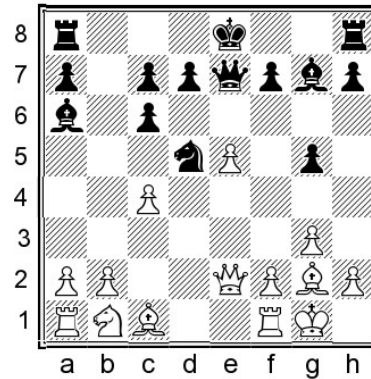
10.Bg2

10.h4?! Bg7 11.hxg5 Bxe5÷

10...Bg7

10...Qb4+?! 11.Nd2 Bg7 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.a3!? Qe7 14.Re1 Nb6 15.b4± White's attack is developing much faster.

11.0-0



11...Nb6

Black's knight has abandoned the centre and after White has castled he can choose a comfortable square for his queen to run away from the pin.

11...0-0-0 12.Re1 Rde8 13.Qc2 Qc5 (13...Nb6?! 14.c5! Nd5 15.Qa4 Kb7 16.Nc3 Qxc5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Qxd7±) 14.Na3 Nb6 15.Be3 Qxe5 (15...Qe7 16.c5 Nd5 17.Qa4 Bb7 18.Bd4±) 16.c5 Nd5 17.Qa4 Kb7 (17...Bb7 18.Nc4 Qf5 19.Qxa7+-) 18.Rad1. White's powerful centralisation and his attack against the enemy king settle the issue quickly. 18...Re7 (18...Qf5 19.Nc2 Re5 20.Rxd5 Rxd5 21.Nb4+-) 19.Bxd5 cxd5 20.c6+ dxc6 21.Qb4 Ka8 22.Bc5+- Mukhametov – Lykov, Omsk 1996.

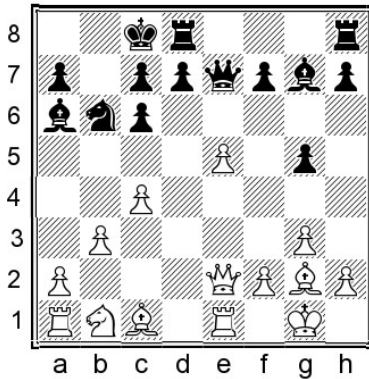
12.b3 0-0-0

12...Rb8 13.Ba3 c5 14.Nc3 0-0 15.Rae1±

12...Bxe5 13.Re1 f6 (13...Bd6? 14.Qd2 Be5 15.Qa5+-) 14.Bxg5 0-0 15.Bh6 Rfe8 16.Qg4+ Kh8 17.Qh5± Black's king is

vulnerable and most of his eventual defenders are isolated on the other side of the board.

13.Re1

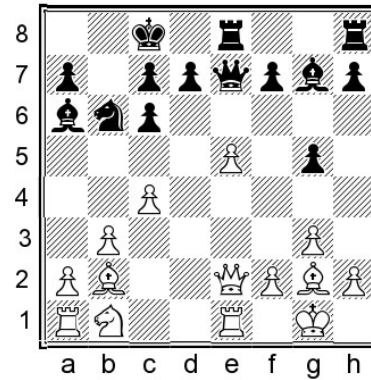


White has a very simple plan to improve his position: a2-a4-a5, or b3-b4-b5, attacking the enemy knight on b6 and the bishop on a6, as well as the idea to transfer his queen on the route Qe2-d2-a5. Black has a real problem to organise any meaningful counterplay.

13...Rde8

If Black develops his other rook in the centre 13...Rhe8, then he will have to forget about the idea to organise counterplay with the move h5-h4 and must begin to only defend in this position. 14.Bb2 f6 15.a4 fxe5 16.Nc3 Kb8 (after 16...d5 17.Qg4+ Kb8 18.cxd5 Nxd5 19.Ne4±, Black's pawns would be a sorry sight...) 17.a5 Nd5, Manca – Perez Candelario, Kusadasi 2006, 18.Na4 Nb4 19.Qd2 c5 20.Bc3± Black is incapable of holding on to the important c5 and b4-squares.

14.Bb2



14...Qc5

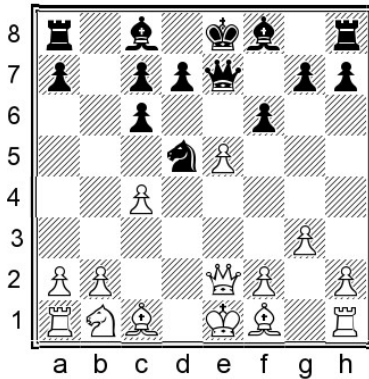
After really hard efforts, Black finally manages to capture the enemy central pawn!

14...h5 15.Qd2 h4 (15...f6 16.Qa5 Kb7 17.Na3 fxe5 18.Nc2+-) 16.Qa5 Bb7 (16...Kb7 17.Na3+- with the idea Na3-c2-b4) 17.Qxa7 hxc3 18.hxc3 f5 19.Nd2 f4 20.Ne4 fxc3 21.Nxc3. White's knight has replaced his missing pawn in the function of defending. 21...g4 22.Re2 Rh3 23.Bd4 Rxc3 24.fxc3 d6 25.a4 Bxe5 26.Bf2+- White's bishops are perfect defenders as well as attackers at the same time. Later, his a-pawn will begin its triumphant march.

15.Nd2 Bxe5 (15...h5 16.Ne4 Qe7 17.Qd2 h4 18.Qa5 Bb7 19.Ba3 Qxe5 20.Nc5+-) **16.Bxe5 f6 17.Ne4 Qxe5 18.Qd2**. This is the moment of truth. White is threatening c4-c5, followed by the knight-sortie Ne4-d6 and Black will not have any satisfactory defence. **18...h6** (18...Qf5 19.a4 d6 20.c5 dxc5 21.Qa5+-; 18...d6 19.c5 dxc5 20.Qa5 Bb7 21.Nxc5 Qd6 22.Red1 Qe5 23.b4 Kb8 24.Nxb7 Kxb7 25.Bxc6+ Kxc6 26.Qa6+-) **19.c5 Nd5 20.Nd6+ cxd6 21.Rxe5 Rxe5 22.cxd6 Nb6 23.f4 gxf4 24.Qxf4 Rhe8 25.Qxh6 Re1+ 26.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 27.Kf2**

Re2+ 28.Kf3 Nd5 29.Bf1 1-0 Narciso
Dublan – Cubas Pons, Linares 1996.

B) 8...f6 9.c4



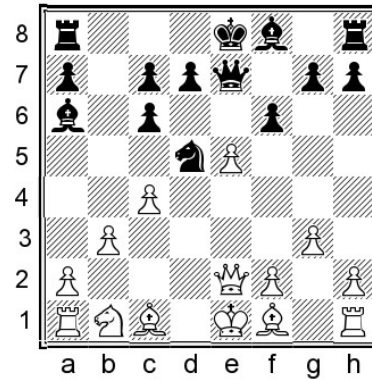
9...Ba6

This line can be often encountered even at the top level. The chess principles advise to evacuate the king away from the centre as early as possible.

9...Nb6 10.exf6 gxf6, Olsson – Gramer, Stockholm 1993, 11.Be3 (White does not need to avoid the exchange of the queens, because the endgame is in his favour: 11.Nc3 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Bb4 13.Bd2 0-0 14.0-0-0²; 11.b3 Bb7 12.Bb2, Olsson – Gramer, Stockholm 1993, 12...Kf7!? 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.Be2 h5 15.0-0 h4²) 11...Ba6 12.Nd2 0-0-0 13.0-0-0² White has a superior pawn-structure on both sides of the board.

10.b3!?

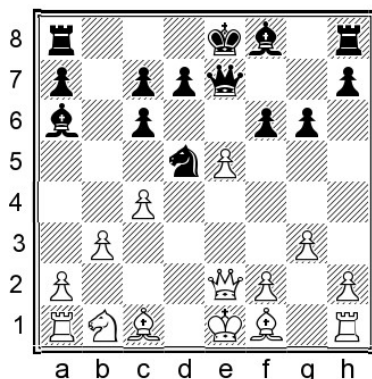
No need to play 10.e6 because this position may also arise after the move-order 8.c4 Ba6 9.b3 f6 10.g3.



10...0-0-0

10...fxe5. This is Black's most principled move. 11.Bg2 Nf6 12.0-0 Qe6 (12...e4 13.Qe1 Qe6 14.Qa5f; 12...d5 13.Qe1 Bb7 14.Qa5 Qc5 15.Qxc7 Qe7 16.Qxe7+ Bxe7 17.Bb2 e4 18.Rc1²) 13.Bb2 (13.Qd2!? Bc5 14.Ba3 Bxa3 15.Nxa3 0-0 16.Qa5 Bc8 17.Qxc7 d5 18.Rad1 e4 19.Nc2² White has a powerful outpost on the d4-square and will create in the future a dangerous outside passed pawn.) 13...Bd6 (13...Bc5 14.Nc3 0-0 15.Na4 Bb6 16.Nxb6 axb6 17.Qxe5 Qxe5 18.Bxe5 Ra7 19.Rfe1 Bc8 20.a4± Ponomariov – Gyimesi, Pula 2000) 14.Nd2 0-0, Nataf – Rolletschek, Austria 2000, 15.Ne4 Nxe4 16.Qxe4 Rae8 (16...Rfe8 17.Rfe1) 17.Qe3² White regains the pawn on a7 and will preserve better chances. His passed a-pawn will become the cause of great worries for Black.

10...g6

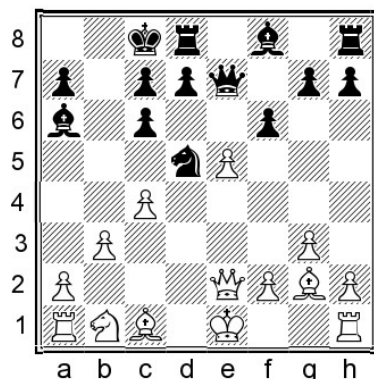


11.exf6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Nxf6 13.Bb2 Bb4+ (13...Kf7 14.Nc3 Bg7 15.0-0 Rad8 16.Bf3 c5?! Bobras – Bernasek, Ceska Trebova 2007, 17.Rd3±) 14.Bc3 Bxc3+ 15.Nxc3 0-0-0² White's pawns are very compact, while Black's bishop is passive.

11.Bb2!? fxe5 (11...Bg7 12.Bg2 – see 8...g6) 12.Qxe5 Nf6 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.Nd2 0-0 15.Bh3 h5, Schmitzer – Zude, Doernigheim 1994, 16.0-0-0² White's pieces are noticeably more active, while Black's counterplay, connected with the move Ng4, would be too risky, since after the exchange, White will open quickly the rook-file.

11.Ba3 Qxa3!? (11...d6? 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Qxe7+ Nxe7 14.Bxd6 0-0-0 15.Bh3+ f5 16.Be5 Rg8 17.0-0± Mussanti – Fonseca de Olivera, Dos Hermanas 2003; 11...Nb4 12.Bb2 fxe5 13.a3 Nd5 14.Qxe5 Nf6 15.Qxe7+ Bxe7 16.Nd2²) 12.Nxa3 Bb4+ 13.Qd2 Bxd2+ 14.Kxd2 Nb4 15.exf6 0-0 16.Nc2 Nxc2 17.Kxc2 Rxf6 18.f4²

11.Bg2



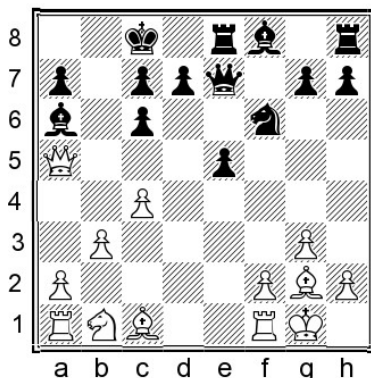
11...fxe5

White parts easily with his central pawn aiming at mobilising his forces as quickly as possible. Black's pawn on e5 will not run away and what it can do is to restrict the activity of White's bishop on g2.

11...Nb4?! 12.Bb2 fxe5 13.0-0 Bb7 (13...e4 14.Bxe4 Nd5 15.Qd3±) 14.a3 Na6 15.b4±

11...h5. Black will lose too much time in order to open the file and in this particular situation the centre is much more important. 12.Ba3 Qf7 13.0-0 h4 14.Bxf8 Rdx8 15.Nd2 hxg3 16.fxg3± This move is played with the ideas Qf2, Ne4-c5.

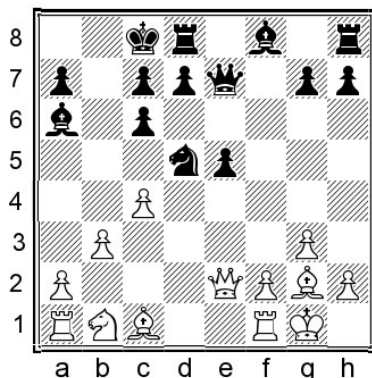
11...Re8 12.0-0 fxe5 13.Qd2 Nf6 (13...Nb6. We already know that Black's knight on b6 turns out often to be misplaced. 14.Qa5 Kb7 15.Ba3 Qf6 16.Bxf8 Rhxf8 17.Nc3 d6?! 18.Bxc6+ Kxc6 19.Qxa6+- Dworakowska – Dabrowska, Brzeg Dolny 2000.) 14.Qa5f This transfer of White's queen to the a5-square is typical for this pawn-structure.



14...Kb7. After this move, both Black's king and his bishop will remain static and White will manage to attack them sooner or later. 15.Ba3 Qf7 (15...Qe6 16.Bxf8 Rhxf8 17.Nc3 e4 18.Rae1 d5 19.Rc1 d4 20.Nxe4 Nxe4 21.Rce1±) 16.Bxf8 (16.Bb2!? Qe7 17.a3 e4 18.Nd2±) 16...Rhxf8 17.Nc3 e4 18.Rae1 Qg6 19.Nxe4 Nxe4 20.Rxe4 Qf6 (20...Rxe4 21.Bxe4 Qxe4? 22.Qb4+) 21.Rf4 Qe7 22.Rd4 Rf7 23.b4 Qe5 24.Qxe5 Rxe5 25.b5+- Bobras – Janocha, Poraj 2003.

14...Bb7. Now, Black loses his a7-pawn. 15.Ba3 Qe6 16.Qxa7 e4 (16...Qg4 17.Bxf8 Rhxf8 18.Na3 h5 19.Nc2 h4 20.a4 h3 21.Bh1 Ne4 22.a5 c5 23.Ne3 Qg6 24.a6 Bc6 25.Nd5 Bxd5 26.cxd5+- G.Hernandez – G.Garcia, Guarapuava 1991) 17.Bxf8 Rhxf8 18.Nc3 e3 19.f4. White ignores his opponent's brave passed pawn, having in mind to capture it later. 19...e2 20.Rfe1 Qe3+ 21.Qxe3 Rxe3 22.Rac1 Rfe8 23.Rc2 Rd3 24.Bh3² Black's pieces are active indeed, but this does not compensate the loss of a pawn for him.

12.0-0



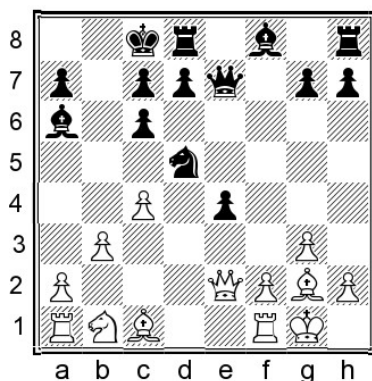
12...Nf6

After some moves with the knight, it comes back to its most natural square.

About 12...Re8 13.Qd2 – see 11...Re8.

12...g6 13.Qd2 Nb6 14.Qa5 Kb7 15.Ba3 Qe6 16.Bxf8 16.Re1, Lyell – Griffiths, England 1997, 16...d5 17.Nc3 Bxa3 18.Qxa3 Qf6 19.Rac1±) 16...Rhxf8 17.Nc3 d5 18.Rab1 Qc8, Dovzik – Vrana, Slovakia 2006, 19.Na4 Ka8 20.Nc5 Bb7 21.a4, Later, the queen will free the way forward for his rook-pawn and Black's pieces will come under an attack one after the other.

12...e4



13.Bb2 e3 (about 13...Nf6 14.Nd2 – see 12...Nf6) 14.Nc3 exf2+ (14...Re8 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Bxd5 Qc5 17.Qh5 exf2+ 18.Rxf2 g6 19.Qf3 Bh6, Thorhallsson – Naes, Reykjavik 2000, 20.b4 Qxb4 21.Bxh8 Rxh8 22.Qf6+-; 14...Nf6 15.fxe3 Qe6, Vlasak – Jirka, Prague 2016, 16.e4 h5

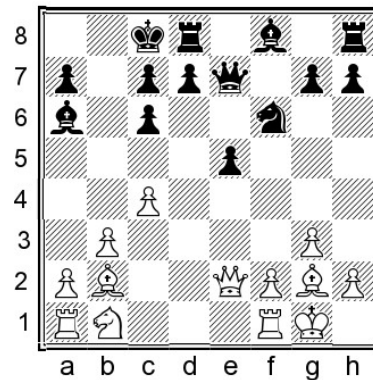
17.e5 h4 18.exf6 Bc5+ 19.Rf2 hxg3
 20.hxg3 Qxf6 21.Ne4 Bxf2+ 22.Nxf2 Qh6
 23.Qg4 Qh2+ 24.Kf1±) 15.Qxf2 Ne3
 16.Rae1 Ng4, Ponomariov – Jenni,
 Lausanne 2000, 17.Qd4 Qc5 18.Na4
 Qxd4+ 19.Bxd4 Bb4 20.Rd1²

13.Qd2! Nf6 (13...e3? 14.Qa5 Kb7
 15.cxd5 Bxf1? 16.Bxe3+- Motylev – Naes,
 Ubeda 2000; 13...Qb4?! 14.cxd5 Qxd2
 15.Bxd2 Bxf1 16.Bxf1 cxd5 17.Nc3 c6
 18.Ba6+ Kc7?? 19.Nxd5+ cxd5 20.Ba5+-;
 18...Kb8 19.b4±; 13...Nb6 14.Qa5 Kb7
 15.Bg5 Qc5 16.Qxc5 Bxc5 17.Bxd8 Rxd8
 18.Nc3 – 18.a4!? – 18...d5 19.Rfd1 Be7,
 Gutierrez – Pacheco, Lima 2002, 20.a4
 dxc4 21.Rxd8 Bxd8 22.Rb1±) 14.Qa5 Kb7
 (14...Bb7 15.Bf4 Ne8, Szieberth – Aziem,
 Tanta 2001, 16.a3 Qc5 17.Qa4 Qb6 18.b4
 Qa6 19.Qc2± Black's bishop and knight
 are often isolated on the queenside in this
 line and now his queen joins them.)
 15.Bf4 d5, Pavasovic – Jenni, Leipzig
 2002, 16.Nd2!? g5 (16...Nh5 17.b4 Nxf4
 18.gxf4 dxc4 19.Nxe4+-) 17.Bxg5 Rg8
 18.Bxf6 Qxf6 19.b4 Qc3 20.Nxe4! dxe4
 21.Rac1+-

13.Bb2

13.Ba3?! Qe6 14.Qd2 Bxa3 (14...Bb7!?)
 15.Nxa3 Bb7 16.Qa5 Kb8÷ Geryk – Barta,
 ICCF 2003.

13.Nd2!? d5 (13...Re8 14.Bb2 – see
 13.Bb2) 14.Bb2 (14.b4!?) 14...e4 15.b4 –
 see 13.Bb2.



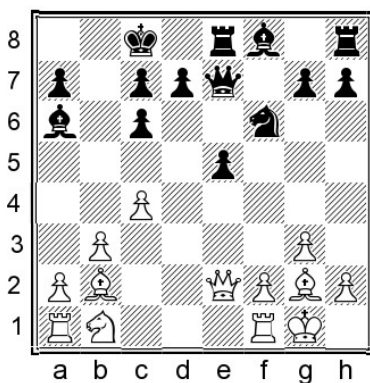
13...Re8

13...g6 14.Re1!? (14.Qd2 Bb7 15.Re1
 Qf7 16.Bxe5 Bg7, Tønning – Petersen,
 Zagan 1995, 17.Na3± with the idea Qa5)
 14...Bb7 (14...Re8 15.Qd2 and Qa5)
 15.Nd2 Bg7 16.b4 e4 (16...Qxb4!?)
 17.Rab1,) 17.Rab1± White is ready to
 counter the move d7-d5 with the pawn-
 break b4-b5.

13...e4 14.Nd2. White's knight supports
 his pawn on c4 and free its neighbour for
 an energetic advance. 14...d5 15.b4
 (15.Rfd1 Kb8, Guillermo Gonzalez –
 Fernandez de la Hoz, Las Palmas 2019,
 16.b4 h5 17.b5 cxb5 18.cxb5 Bb7
 19.Nb3²; 15...h5!?) 15...Qxb4? 16.Bxf6
 gxf6 17.Rab1 Qe7 18.Bh3+ Rd7, Van der
 Poel – Mostertman, Dieren 2004, 19.Qd1
 f5 20.Qa4 Bb7 21.Rxb7+-

13...d5 14.Nd2 h5 15.Bxe5 Re8 16.Nf3
 h4 (16...Ng4 17.Qd2 Nxe5 18.Nxe5 Qxe5?
 19.Rfe1+-) 17.Qc2 hxg3 18.Bxg3!±
 White's minor pieces protect perfectly his
 king and are also eyeing the enemy king
 too. After the opening of the c-file, his
 major pieces will join into the actions as
 well.

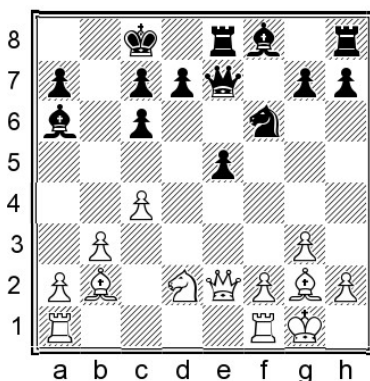
13...h5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 d5
 16.Nd2 h4 17.Rfc1 (17.Rad1 Bc5,, Moiseev
 – Kulicov, Bolkhov 2017) 17...hgx3
 18.hgx3 Bc5 19.Bxf6 gxf6 20.cxd5 Bd4.
 Black has almost equalised with a rather
 inventive play, but White still has
 something up his sleeve... 21.Rxc6! Bxa1
 22.Rxa6 Bc3 23.Nc4 Kb8 24.Ra4² Black's
 dark-squared bishop is not attacking
 anything, while White's pieces just
 surround it.



14.Re1

White is not in a hurry to decide where
 he will place his knight, because in some
 variations it would be better for him to
 place at first his queen on the a5-square.

White would maintain a slight edge
 after the move 14.Nd2.



About 14...Bb7 15.Rfe1 – see 14.Re1.

14...Qf7, Matsuura – Saavedra, Sao
 Paulo 1998, 15.Rab1!? h5 16.b4 Bxb4
 17.Qe3 c5 (17...Bxd2? 18.Qxa7+-) 18.Ba3
 Bxc4 19.Nxc4 Qxc4 20.Bxb4 cxb4 21.Qxa7
 Kd8 22.Rfe1±

14...d5, Macieja – Borkowski, Wroclaw
 2011, 15.Rfe1!? e4 16.b4 h5 17.Qe3 Kb8
 18.Bd4±

14...h5 15.Rfe1 h4 (15...Qf7 16.Qe3 Kb8
 17.Bxe5 Bd6 18.Qf4 Rxe5 19.Rxe5 Bxe5
 20.Qxe5 Re8 21.Qf4²; 17.h3 Bb7, Delorme
 – Pingue, Sautron 2006, 18.b4 Bxb4
 19.Rab1 h4 20.Bc3 Bxc3 21.Qxc3 Ka8
 22.Re3 hxg3 23.fgx3, White's queen and
 rook will occupy the coveted a-file.)
 16.Qxe5 hxg3 (16...Qf7? 17.Qa5 Rxe1+
 18.Rxe1 Bb7 19.Be5 Bd6 20.Bxd6 cxd6
 21.Qxa7 hxg3 22.hgx3 Re8 23.Rxe8+ Qxe8
 24.Qe3 Qxe3 25.fxe3± Rublevsky –
 Kurpiewski, Warsaw 2010) 17.hgx3 Qxe5
 18.Rxe5 Rxe5 19.Bxe5 Bc5²

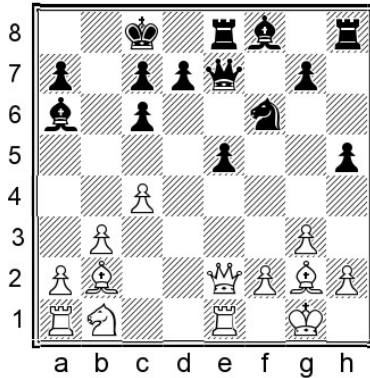
14...h5

Black must try to organise some
 counterplay as quickly as possible;
 otherwise, White will simply cramp the
 enemy position after b3-b4-b5.

14...e4 15.Nc3 e3 16.Na4 h5 17.Qxe3
 Qxe3 18.Rxe3 Rxe3 19.fxe3 h4 20.e4 hxg3
 21.hxg3² with the idea to occupy the f-file.
 21...Nh5?! 22.Bf3 Nxg3? 23.Kf2 Nh5
 24.Rh1+-

14...Bb7 15.Nd2 Qf7 (15...d6?! 16.c5 d5,
 Ragger – Jakovenko, playchess.com 2006,
 17.b4 h5 18.Qxe5±, with a transfer later
 of the knight to the d4, or to the a5-
 squares; 16.b4!? Nd7 17.Nb3 d5 18.Na5
 Qxb4 19.Nxb7 Qxb7 20.Bh3+-; 16...d5
 17.Rab1 Qd7 18.c5 e4 19.Nb3 h5 20.Na5
 h4 21.b5 hxg3 22.hgx3 cxb5 23.Bxf6 gxf6

24.Rxb5±) 16.a3 e4 (16...h5 17.Qf3 h4
18.Bxe5 hxg3 19.hxg3 Bc5 20.Bb2²) 17.b4
c5 18.Bxf6 gxf6, M.Mueller – Wegner,
Germany 1992, 19.Nxe4± f5? 20.Ng5+–



15.Qd2

White is threatening Qa5.

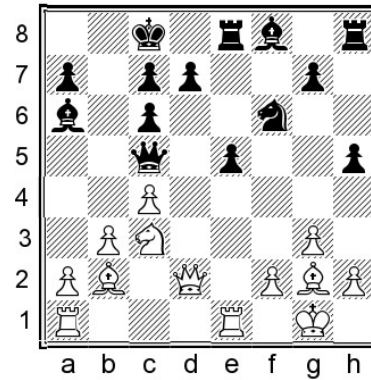
About 15.Nd2 – see 14.Nd2.

15...Qc5

Black avoids the trade of the queens and covers the a5-square hoping to create a double-edged position.

15...Qb4 16.Rxe5 Rxe5 17.Bxe5 Qxd2
18.Nxd2 Bb4 19.Nf3. White has begun active actions on the kingside with superior forces. 19...Re8, Jones – Hebden, Sunningdale 2007, 20.Bd4 d5 (20...Kb8 21.Nh4±) 21.a3 Bf8 22.cxd5 cxd5 23.Bxa7 Ne4 24.Be3± His plan includes the trade of the knights and fixing the mobile enemy pawns.

16.Nc3



16...Qd6

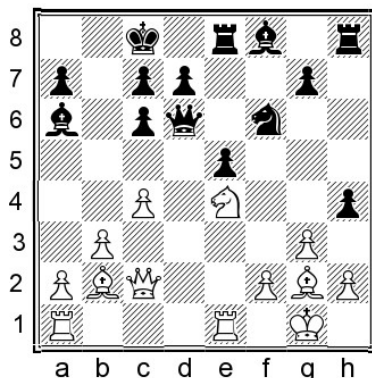
This is a naïve attempt by Black to enter an endgame with an extra pawn.

16...h4?! It is now too late for this move.
17.Na4 Qb4 18.Bc3 Qd6 19.Qe3 hxg3
20.hxg3 Ng4 (20...Kb8 21.Bxe5 Qb4
22.Qc1±) 21.Qxa7 Bb7, Burg – Salnikov,
Salekhard 2007, 22.Re4. White's rook joins into the actions with a decisive effect on the fourth rank. 22...Nf6 23.c5 Qd3 24.Rc4 Rh5 25.Re1 e4 26.Nb2 Qd5 27.Rb4+–

16...Kb8, Docx – Froeyman, Ghent 2017,
17.Na4 Qb4 18.Bc3 Qd6 19.Qg5± White regains his pawn, while Black has not even completed his development yet.

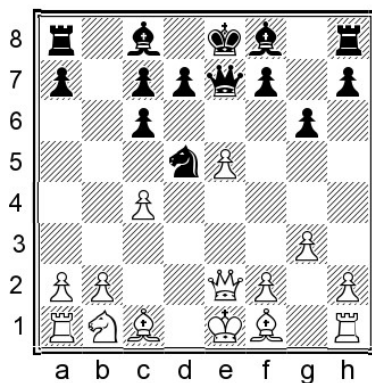
16...Qb4. This queen-sortie is suicidal for Black. 17.a3 Qxb3?! 18.Rab1 Bc5 19.Bc1 Bxf2+ 20.Kxf2 Ng4+ 21.Kg1 Qxc4 22.Qb2± Black has collected already four pawns for the piece, but his king will be in a real trouble now...

17.Qc2 h4 18.Ne4



18...Nxe4 (18...Qe7!?²) 19.Rxe4 hxg3 20.hxg3 Bb7. It has become obvious that White will soon regain his pawn, so Black must try at least to trade his “bad” bishop. His threats on the h-file are harmless since White’s king has a leeway on the f1-square. **21.Qe2 c5 22.Rxe5 Rxe5 23.Qxe5 Bxg2 24.Kxg2 Qc6+ 25.Qd5 Qxd5+ 26.cxd5²** White occupies the e-file and preserves better chances thanks to the activity of his pieces.

C) 8...g6 9.c4

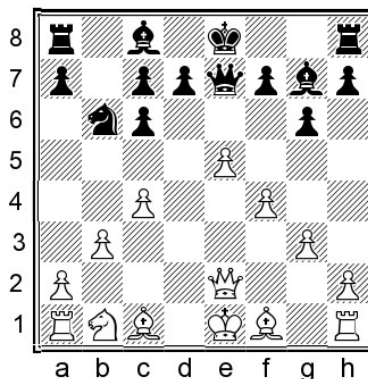


9...Ba6

This is the only way for Black to maintain the tension and to hope to obtain an acceptable position.

9...Nb6. Retreating the knight voluntarily from the centre, without any

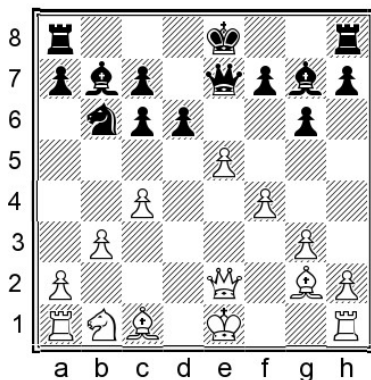
urgent necessity, cannot be recommended. 10.b3 Bg7 11.f4



11...f6 12.a4! (12.Ba3? d6 13.Bg2 fxe5 14.Bxc6 Bd7. Black can leave easily his rook unprotected, because its white counterpart on a1 is also under an attack. 15.Bxd7 Qxd7 16.Nd2 0-0μ Plat – Jackson, Daventry 2018) 12...fxe5 13.a5. Suddenly, it turns out that Black’s knight has no square to retreat to. 13...Nxc4 (13...e4 14.Ra2 Qb4+ 15.Kf2²; 13...Qb4+ 14.Bd2 Qxb3 15.axb6 0-0 16.c5²) 14.bxc4 0-0 15.Bg2 Re8, Czebe – Sindarov, Budapest 2018, 16.0-0 exf4 17.Qxe7 Rxe7 18.Ra4 Bd4+ 19.Kh1 fxg3 20.hxg3²

11...Bb7. Black is trying to develop comfortably and then to inflict a strike against the enemy centre. 12.Bg2 0-0-0 13.Ba3 Qe6 14.Bb2 d6 (14...f6 15.exf6 Rhe8 16.Qxe6 Rxe6+ 17.Kf2 Bxf6 18.Bxf6 Rxf6 19.Nd2²) 15.c5!? Now, either White’s centre would remain untouchable, or Black would have to comply with the opening of files against his king. (15.0-0 dxe5 16.Nd2 Rhe8, Erwich – Ernst, Amsterdam 2002, 17.f5 gxf5 18.Bh3²) 15...Nd7 (15...dxc5. Black’s position would be horrible with a passive bishop on b7. 16.Nd2 f6 17.Ne4 fxe5 18.Nxc5 Qe7 19.Rc1±) 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.Nd2 dxe5 18.0-0² Black’s king shelter has been compromised. The bishops of both sides have been deployed symmetrically, but White’s bishop is much more active.

11...d6 12.Bg2 Bb7



13.Ba3 f6, Areshchenko – Rogovski, Alushta 2002 (13...Rd8, Kulhanek – Mazur, Prague 2001, 14.0-0 0-0 15.Nc3 Rfe8 16.Rad1±) 14.exd6 Qxe2+ 15.Kxe2 f5 16.Nd2 Bxa1 17.Rxa1 cxd6 18.Bxd6 0-0-0 19.c5²

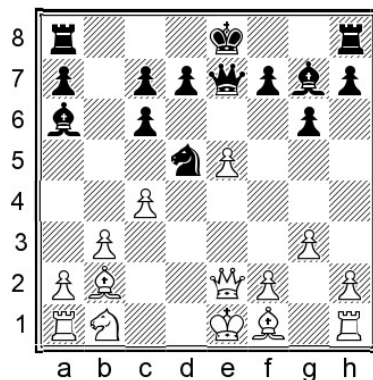
13.Bb2 0-0 14.0-0 Rfe8. Black has removed his rook away from the possible attack against it on the diagonal and eyes the enemy pawn, but this makes White's idea f4-f5 very powerful. 15.Nd2 f6 16.Rae1 fxe5, Capezza – Karjakin, fide.com 2002, 17.f5 gxf5 18.Rxf5f White can use the light squares as bases for his pieces and can organise a dangerous piece-attack against the enemy king. 18...Nd7 19.Nf1 d5?! 20.Ne3±

10.b3 Bg7

About 10...f6 11.Bb2 Bg7 12.Bg2 – see 10...Bg7.

10...Nb6?! 11.Bg2! (11.Bb2 Bg7 12.Bg2 – see 10...Bg7) 11...Bg7 12.0-0 0-0 (12...0-0 13.Bb2 – see 10...Bg7 11.Bb2 Nb6 12.Bg2 0-0-0 13.0-0) 13.f4± Relange - Waters, Buenos Aires 1992.

11.Bb2



We will analyse in details now: **C1)** 11...0-0-0 and **C2)** 11...0-0.

About 11...d6 12.Bg2 0-0 13.0-0 – see variation **C2**.

11...d6 12.Bg2 0-0-0!? (12...dxe5? 13.Qd2 Nb4 14.a3; 12...0-0 13.0-0 – see variation **C2)** 13.Nc3 Nxc3 14.Bxc3 dxe5 15.Qb2 Bb7 16.0-0. Now, in the most principled line, there arises a material ratio of a white queen against two black rooks. Black's prospects are worse however, because of his weak pawns. 16...f5 17.Rfe1 Rd7 18.Bxe5 Re8 19.Bxg7 Qxe1+ 20.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 21.Bf1 Rdd1 22.Kg2 Rxf1 23.Kh3 c5 24.Kh4 Rh1 25.Kg5 Rxh2 26.Be5 Rd7 27.Bf4 Be4 28.Kf6 Rh1 29.Qa3²

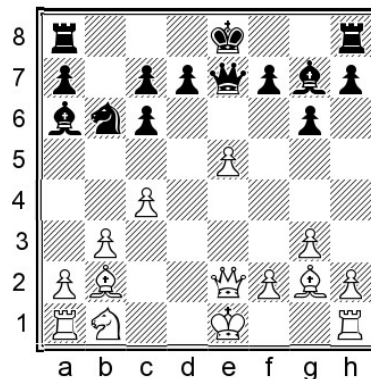
11...f6 12.Bg2 (White would not achieve much after 12.exf6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Nxf6 14.Nd2 0-0 15.0-0-0 Rae8 16.Rde1 Ne4 17.Nxe4 Rxe4= Shovunov – Seitaj, Elista 1998.) 12...fxe5 (12...0-0-0? 13.Qd2 Nb6 14.Qa5 Bb7 15.Qxa7+–; 12...0-0?! 13.Qd2 – see variation **C2)** 13.Qd2!? Nb6 14.Ba3 (After 14.0-0, Black will manage to parry his opponent's initiative after an accurate play: 14...Bb7 15.a4 a5 16.Nc3 0-0 17.Ba3

d6 18.c5 Nc8 19.Rad1 Qf7 20.Qc2 Qf5+ Vajda – Forgo, Zalakaros 1997) 14...Qf7 (14...Qf6 15.Nc3 e4 16.Rc1 d5 17.0-0 0-0 18.Na4 Kb8 (18...Nxa4 19.Bh3+ Kb8 20.bxa4±) 19.Bb2 Qe7 20.Bxg7 Qxg7 21.Nc5 Bc8 22.a4² Black's central pawns are static, so his main task is to restrict the enemy bishop. After a4-a5 and b4-b5, Black's king will be seriously endangered.) 15.0-0. Black has failed to castle on the kingside and castling queenside for him would be practically a suicide. 15...h5 (15...0-0-0? 16.Qa5 Bb7 17.Qxa7 e4 18.Nd2 Bxa1 19.Nxe4+-) 16.h4 Bb7 (16...Bxc4?! 17.bxc4 e4 18.Nc3 Nxc4 19.Qc1 Bh6 20.Qc2 Nxa3 21.Qxe4+ Kf8 22.Qb4+ Qe7 23.Qb3 a5 24.Rad1 Rd8 25.Bxc6 dxc6 26.Rxd8+ Qxd8 27.Qxa3+ Qe7 28.Qxa5±) 17.Nc3 0-0-0 18.Ne4² The a5 and c5-squares would be excellent outposts for White's pieces.

11...Qb4+ 12.Qd2 (If White does not exchange the queens Black would manage to organise effective counterplay: 12.Nd2 0-0 13.a3 Qb6 14.Qg4 Ne7÷) 12...Qxd2+ 13.Nxd2 Nb4 (13...Ne7 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.Ne4 Rfd8, Ershov – Shivokhin, Zhukovsky 2011, 16.Bg2±) 14.0-0-0! White completes his development in this way and will attack his opponent's backward pawn on d7. 14...Nxa2+ 15.Kb1 Nb4 16.Ne4 0-0 (16...0-0-0 17.Bh3 Rhe8 18.e6+-) 17.Bh3 d5 18.exd6 cxd6 19.Rxd6± In this way White ensures the occupation of the open file and the c5, or f6-squares would remain for his knight. (19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Nxd6²) 19...Bc8 (19...Bxb2 20.Kxb2 Bc8 21.Bxc8 Rfxc8 22.Rhd1±) 20.Bxc8 Rfxc8 21.Nf6+ Bxf6 22.Bxf6± The couple rook + bishop is usually superior to the tandem rook + knight. White's king can also support his army, while its counterpart cannot do

that, since it might come inside a checkmating net.

11...Nb6 12.Bg2



About 12...0-0 13.0-0 – see variation C2.

12...0-0-0?! Black is playing with fire. 13.0-0 Rhe8 (13...d5?! Stock – Ebenfelt, Oropesa del Mar 2001, 14.Na3!? f6 15.Qe1 fxe5 16.Qa5 Kb7 17.Nc2 c5 18.Ba3 Bf8 19.Rab1+-; 13...Rde8 14.Re1 f6, Mikulas – Krajcovic, Slovakia 2001 (14...h5 15.a4!? Nd5 16.Na3 Nb4 17.Qe3 c5 18.Nb5±) 15.Qd2 (15.a4!? fxe5 16.Nc3±) 15...fxe5 16.Qa5 Bb7 17.Qxa7 e4 18.Nc3±) 14.Re1 f6 15.Qd2! This is a typical manoeuvre. White's queen is transferred to the a5-square. 15...Bb7 (15...Kb8 16.c5 Nd5 17.Nc3±) 16.a4 d5 17.a5 dxc4 18.Qe3 Rd3, Zakharov – Brikov, Tula 2000, 19.Qe2+-

12...d5 13.0-0 0-0, Vistisen – Pedersen, Esbjerg 1997, 14.Re1 Rfe8 15.Nd2 Rad8 16.f4 Qc5+ 17.Kh1 f6 18.e6. White's central passed pawn should be advanced, particularly because of the fact that the enemy king has been weakened. 18...Rd6 19.Bh3 dxc4 (19...f5? 20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.Qe5+ Kg8 22.Bxf5 gxf5 23.Qxf5+-; 19...Bc8? 20.f5 gxf5 21.Qh5 Rdx6 22.Rxe6 Rxe6 23.Bxf5) 20.Ne4 Qd5 21.Qg2 f5 22.Bxg7 Kxg7 23.Nxd6 cxd6 24.Qxd5 cxd5 25.Rad1 Kf6 26.Kg1 Rxe6 27.Kf2± After the trade of the rooks

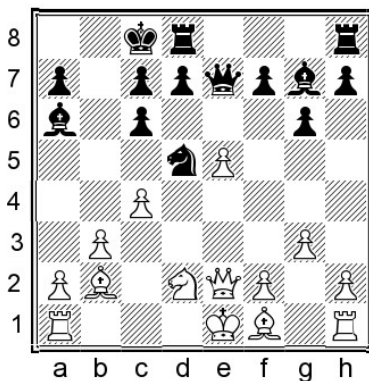
White's king is headed for the d4-square and his rook will penetrate inside the enemy camp.

12...Rd8 13.0-0 0-0 14.Re1 Rfe8 15.Qd2 (15.Qc2!? d5 16.Nd2²) 15...d5 16.Qa5 Bxc4 (It would be too passive for Black to play here 16...Bc8, Anthoniussen – Justinussen, Faroe Islands 1999, 17.Nc3 dxc4 18.Bxc6 Bd7 19.Nd5 Qe6 20.Bb7 Nxd5 21.Bxd5 Qb6 22.Qc3± cxb3? 23.Bxf7+! Kxf7 24.e6+-) 17.Nd2 Bd3 18.Rac1 Nd7 19.Rxc6 Nxe5 20.Rxc7 Qd6 21.Ba3 Qb6 22.Qxa7 Qxa7 23.Rxa7 Ra8 24.Bc5 Rxa7 25.Bxa7 Ra8 26.Bd4 Rxa2 27.Bxe5 Bxe5 28.Rxe5 Rxd2 29.Bxd5² Black's king has been cut off and this provides White with excellent winning prospects.

C1) 11...0-0-0

Black has castled and is ready to attack his opponent's e5-pawn. If White continues with his development in the natural fashion (12.Bg2) – there might arise an endgame on the board, analogous to the main variation with 11...0-0 12.Bg2 Rae8 13.0-0 Bxe5 etc. (see Chapter 15) and Black's king would be ready to support his pawn-mass on the queenside.

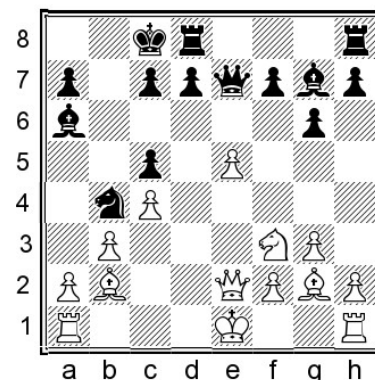
12.Nd2



12...Rhe8

12...Rde8. After this move Black's king will have some breathing space. 13.0-0-0 Nb6 14.f4 f6, Suarez Real – Moreno, Burguillos 2008 (14...Kb8?! 15.Qf2 f5? 16.c5 Bxf1 17.cxb6 Ba6 18.bxc7+ Kxc7 19.Qxa7+- Magem Badals – Montolio, Linares 2002; 15...c5 16.a4 f6 17.a5 Na8 18.Bg2 fxe5 19.Rhe1±) 15.a4!? fxe5 16.a5 Na8 (Instead of retreating Black had better sacrifice a piece here: 16...exf4 17.Qxe7 Bxb2+ 18.Kxb2 Rxe7 19.axb6 axb6 20.gxf4 Rf8 21.Bd3 Rxf4 22.Rhf1 Rh4 23.Rf8+ Kb7 24.Nf3 Rh3 25.Bf1 Rh5 26.b4²) 17.Re1. White has obtained an obvious advantage having ousted the enemy knight to the edge of the board. 17...Qb4 18.Kc2 Qxa5 19.Qf2 Qb6 20.c5 Qb7 21.Bxa6 Qxa6 22.Ra1 Qb7 23.Ra3 Rhf8 24.Rha1 Kb8 25.Nc4 Bh8 26.Qd2 exf4 27.Bxh8 Rxh8 28.gxf4 Rhf8 29.Ne5+-

12...Nb4 13.Nf3 c5. Black must free a square for the retreat of his knight. (13...Rhe8? 14.a3 Nd5, Zezulkin – Simek, Czech Republic 2012, 15.Bg2 f6 16.Qc2 Nb6 17.0-0 fxe5 18.Rae1 e4 19.Bxg7 Qxg7 20.Rxe4±) 14.Bg2



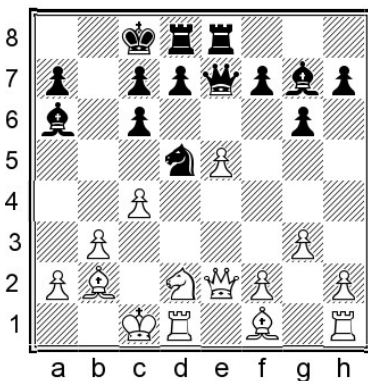
14...Bb7 15.0-0 f6, Bejtovic – A.Smith, Valby 2008, 16.a3! Nc6 17.b4. This is the right way to open files on the queenside with a white rook on a1. 17...fxe5 18.bxc5

Rde8 19.Rab1 Nd8 20.Qe3 Rhf8 21.c6 Nxc6 22.Nd2,

14...Rde8 15.0-0 f6, Snyder – Steel, San Francisco 2000 (15...Bb7 16.a3 Nc6 17.b4!? Nxe5 18.Nxe5 Bxe5 19.Rfe1 f6 20.Bxb7+ Kxb7 21.Qf3+ c6 22.Rad1²) 16.a3 Nc6 17.b4± cxb4? 18.axb4 Nxb4 19.Ba3 Bb7 20.Bxb4 Qxb4 21.Rfb1 Qc5 22.Qb2+–

14...Rhe8 15.0-0. White's attack is running effortlessly: a3 and b4. 15...Nc6 (15...f6 16.a3!? Nc6 17.b4 Nxe5 18.Nxe5 fxe5 19.Qe4 c6 20.Rfd1±) 16.Rfe1 f6, Manhardt – Hartl, Austria 2019, 17.b4! Nxb4 18.a3 Nc6 19.Qc2 Qf7 20.Rab1+– Black's pieces are blocking the possible escape of his own king and White's attack is crushing.

13.0-0-0



White fails to castle kingside, but his king is quite safe on the queenside.

13...Nb6

13...Kb8. After this rather passive move, White has a comfortable game in the centre. 14.f4!? Nb6 15.Bg2 f6 16.Nf3 d5 17.Rhe1 fxe5 (17...dxc4? 18.exf6 Qxe2 19.Rxd8+ Rxd8 20.Rxe2+–) 18.Bxe5 dxc4 19.Bxg7 Qxg7 20.Ne5 Rxd1+ 21.Rxd1 Bb7 22.Bxc6 Rxe5 23.Rd8+ Nc8 24.Qxe5 Qxe5 25.fxe5 Bxc6 26.bxc4± Black's kingside

pawns are weak, while White's passed pawn is very powerful and his king might come to assist it.

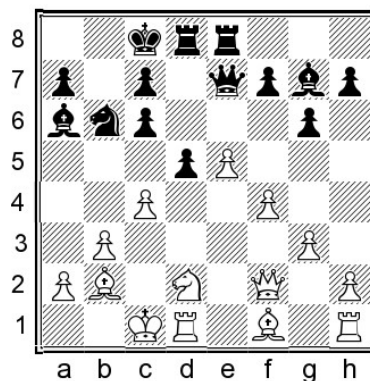
Black's knight-sorties here would be just ridiculous 13...Nb4 14.a3 Nd5, Bozinovic – Markovic, Belgrade 2006, 15.f4 Nb6 16.Qf2 d6 17.Bg2 Bb7 18.c5 dxc5 19.Ne4 c4 20.b4 Rxd1+ 21.Rxd1 Rd8 22.Bd4± His bishops are pathetic.

14.f4 d5

Black's only hope is to open the centre before White has completed his development.

14...f6 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Qxe7 Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Rxe7 18.a4 (18.Bh3!? c5 19.a4²) 18...Kb8 19.a5 Nc8 20.Bd3 Rde8, Corrales Jimenez – Priyadharshan, Philadelphia 2016, 21.Ne4 Nd6 (21...Rxe4 22.Bxe4 Rxe4 23.Rhe1. After the trade of the rooks, the remaining black pieces are too passive.) 22.Nf6 Rf8 23.Ng4 Rfe8 24.Rhf1² White has covered reliably the squares for penetration inside his camp and will improve methodically his position.

15.Qf2



15...f6

15...Kb8, Vysochin – Grabarczyk,
Bydgoszcz 2000, 16.c5 Bxf1 17.Rhxf1 Nd7
18.b4±

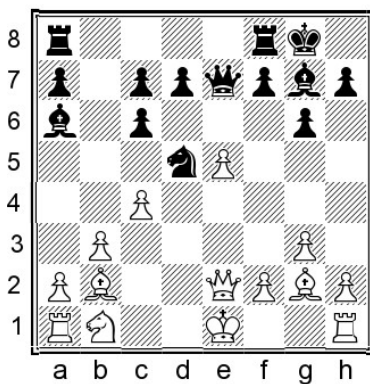
15...dxc4 16.Bxc4 Bxc4 17.Nxc4 Nxc4
(17...Rxd1+ 18.Rxd1 Rd8 19.Na5²)
18.bxc4 Kb7 19.Bd4² The static factors
are in favour of White, but the fight is still
tense with queens present on the board,
since neither king is safe. 19...Qa3+?!
20.Qb2+ Qxb2+ 21.Kxb2 g5 22.Kc2 gxf4
23.gxf4 Bh6 24.Be3± White's pawn-
majority in the centre parries the activity
of Black's bishop.

16.c5. White parts with his two-bishop
advantage, but captures his opponent's
important f6-pawn. **16...Bxf1 17.cxb6**
Bh3 18.bxc7 Qxc7 19.exf6 Bf8 20.Kb1
Qb6 21.Bd4 Qa6 22.Rde1² White's
prospects are preferable thanks to his far-
advanced f6-pawn.

12...Qb4+ 13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Nxd2 Nb4
15.0-0² The trade of the queens has
emphasized White's static advantage.
15...Nd3?! 16.Ba3 Bxe5 17.Rad1 Rfe8
18.Nf3+-

12...f6?! 13.Qd2 Nb6. Black captures a
pawn, but White will easily regain it
thanks to the threat Ba3. 14.0-0 fxe5
(14...Bxc4? The vulnerability of Black's
king will lead to his demise in this tactical
skirmish. 15.bxc4 Nxc4 16.exf6 Bxf6
17.Bxf6 Qxf6 18.Qxd7 Qxa1 19.Qe6+ Rf7
20.Qxc4+-) 15.Ba3 d6 (15...c5?! 16.Nc3
Rab8 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.Qxd5+ Rf7 19.Bxc5
d6 20.Bxa7±) 16.Bxc6 Rab8 (16...Rad8
17.Nc3 Bc8 18.Qe3 Bd7 19.Bg2 c5, Fluvia
Poyatos – Vidal Zamora, Vilanova i la
Geltru 2017, 20.Rad1±) 17.Nc3. White has
completed his development, while Black's
pieces are misplaced. 17...Bb7 18.Bxb7
Rxb7 19.Ne4 Rd8 20.Rad1 Rbb8 21.c5
dxc5 22.Qc2 Qf7 23.Bxc5 h6 24.Be3±
Kamsky – Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1992. Black's
king is vulnerable, his bishop is "bad" and
he has three pawn-islands.

C2) 11...0-0 12.Bg2



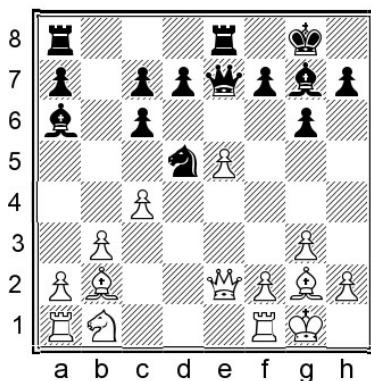
12...Nb6

12...d6 13.0-0 dxe5 (13...Rfd8 14.Qd2
Nb6 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Bxg7 Kxg7
17.Bxc6±; 13...Bxe5 14.Rd1!? Bxb2
15.Qxb2 Qf6 16.Qxf6 Nxf6 17.Bxc6 Rab8
18.Nc3²; 14.Bxe5 dxe5 15.Qd2 Nf6 16.Qa5
Bb7 17.Nc3. White has good
compensation for the pawn. Black's
bishop on b7 is isolated from the actions
and his pawns are an excellent target for
White's attack. 17...e4 18.Rfe1 c5 19.Na4
Nd7? 20.Qxc7 Rab8 21.Rad1 1-0
Tischbierek – Unzicker, Germany 1997;
19...Bc6 20.Qxc5 Qe6 21.Nc3 Rfd8
22.Rad1² The material balance has been
restored and Black's pieces have been
squeezed with the defence of his

weaknesses, just like before.) 14.Qd2 Rfd8 (14...Nb6 15.Ba3 c5 16.Bxa8 Rxa8 17.Nc3 Bb7 18.Qe3 Qe6 19.Rad1 e4 20.Bxc5 Nd7 21.Nd5 Qh3 22.Bd4+- Petr – Kulhanek, Zdar nad Sazavou 2007) 15.Qa5 Nb4, Nurkiewicz – Chojnacki, Dzwirzyno 2004, 16.Bc3. White ousts the important enemy knight, since it is the key-piece for his defence. 16...Nc2 17.Bxc6 Nxa1 18.Bxa1±

12...Rfe8. It is weaker for Black to occupy the e8-square with this rook, because in comparison to the main variation (see the next chapter) his rook on a8 will come under an attack in the endgame and White will manage to develop his pieces.

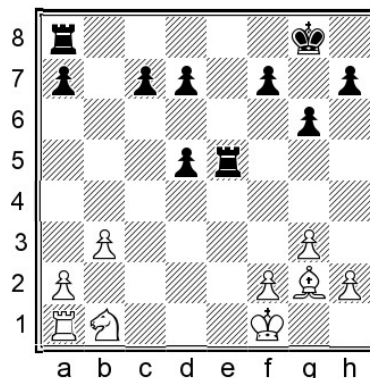
13.0-0



About 13...Nb6 14.Re1 or 13...Rab8 14.Re1 Nb6 15.Qc2 – see 13...Nb6.

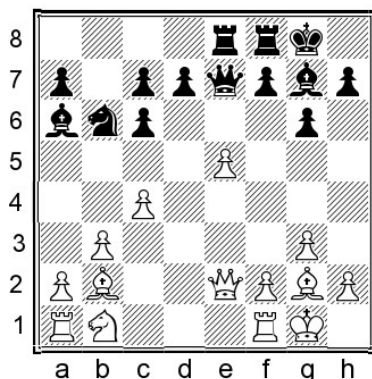
13...f6 14.Qd2 Nb6 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Bxf6 Qxf6 17.Nc3 d5 18.Rfe1 dxc4 19.Ne4± Qg7? 20.Qa5 Bb5 (20...Bc8 21.Nf6+-) 21.a4 Re5 22.axb5 cxb3 23.Qc3+- Ptacnik – Samec, Czech Republic 2000.

13...Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 cxd5



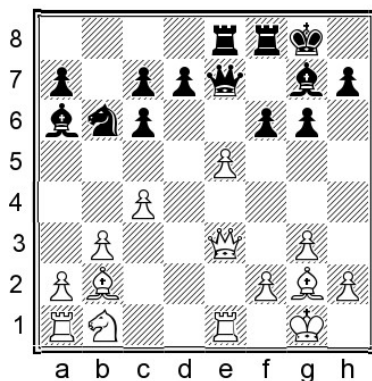
18.f4 Re3 19.Bxd5 Rae8 (19...c6 20.Bf3 Rxf3+? 21.Ke2± Sindarov – Ganguly, Hamedan 2018) 20.Nd2 Re2 (20...Rd3 21.Ne4 Kg7 22.Bc4 Rd4 23.Nc3 Rd2 24.Rd1 Rc2 25.Ne2 Rd8 26.a4 Rb2 27.Ke1 c6 28.Rd6 Kf8 29.Kd1 Ke7 30.Rd3 d5 31.Re3+ Kd6 32.Kc1 Ra2 33.Bd3 Rb8 34.Bb1 Ra3 35.Kc2²) 21.Rd1 Rxb2 22.Bg2 Re7 (22...d6 23.Kf2 Rh5, Zezulkin – Biolek, Czech Republic 2002, 24.b4²) 23.b4 Rh5 24.Ne4!? Kg7 25.a4 Rf5 26.Kf2² Motylev – Moiseenko, Moscow 1999.

12...Rae8 13.0-0 Nb6 (About the main move for Black here 13...Bxe5 – see the next chapter; 13...f6? 14.Qd2 fxe5 15.cxd5 Bxf1 16.Bxf1 cxd5 17.Qxd5+ Kh8 18.Qd2 e4 19.Bxg7+ Qxg7, Galstian – Smeets, Cannes 1997, 20.Nc3 c6 21.Bg2 d5 22.Rc1 Rc8 23.b4±; 16...e4 17.dxc6 e3 18.Bc4+ Kh8 19.fxe3 dxc6 20.Bxg7+ Kxg7 21.Nc3 Qxe3+ 22.Qxe3 Rxe3 23.Ne2± White has occupied some key-squares and has prevented the penetration of the enemy rook inside his camp.)



14.Nd2!? f6 (14...Bxe5 15.Rae1 Bd6 16.Qd1 Qd8 17.Rxe8 Qxe8 18.Re1 Qd8 19.Ne4 Be7 20.Qd4 f6 21.c5 Nd5 22.h4±; 17...Rxe8 18.Ne4 Be7 19.Qd4 f6 20.Re1±; 15...Qb4 16.Bxe5 f6 17.Nf3 fxe5 18.Nxe5²) 15.a4 fxe5 16.Ba3 c5 17.a5 Nc8 18.Qd3², with the idea Qd5. 18...e4 19.Nxe4 Bxa1 20.Qd5+ Rf7 21.Rxa1 Nd6 22.Nxc5 Bc8 23.Nd3± Now, Black must be constantly on the alert about the dangers on the a1-h8 diagonal.

14.Re1 f6!? (14...d5 15.Qd2! Qd7 16.c5 Nc8 17.Nc3 f6, Vajda – Gonzalez Garcia, Budapest 1995, 18.Nxd5 cxd5 19.Qxd5+ Qxd5 20.Bxd5+ Kh8 21.exf6 Rxe1+ 22.Rxe1 Bxf6 23.Re8+-; 14...Bb7 15.Qd2 f6 16.Ba3 d6 17.c5 Nc8 18.Qb4 fxe5 19.Qxb7 e4 20.Nc3 Bxc3 21.Rxe4 Qf7 22.Rf4± A.Gusev – Sosulin, Tula 2001; 18...Ba8 19.e6 f5 20.Nc3 f4 21.Rad1 fxg3 22.hxg3 d5 23.Re2²) 15.Qe3! (15.f4? fxe5 16.fxe5 Bxc4μ Adamczyk – Nester, Raciborz 2019)



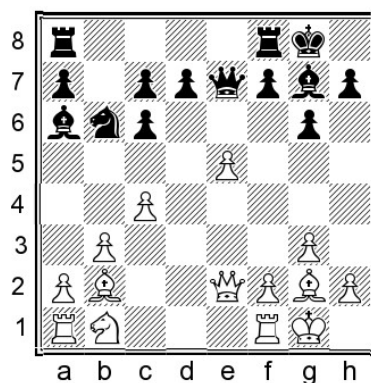
15...Qe6 16.Ba3 Rf7 17.Nc3 fxe5 18.Ne4 Qg4 19.h3 Qh5 20.Ng5 Bh6 21.f4 Bxg5 22.fxg5 Bxc4 23.bxc4 Nxc4 24.Qxa7 Qxg5 25.Kh2± Even – Piccoli, ICCF 2014.

15...c5 16.a4 fxe5 17.a5 Nc8 18.Nc3 d6 19.Bc6 Rd8 20.f4 Rf5, Godlauskas – Krivonosov, Plateliai 2000, 21.Nd5±

15...Qf7 16.Nd2 fxe5 17.Ba3 d5 (17...d6 18.Bxc6 Rb8 19.Ne4± Areshchenko – Kharitonov, Oropesa del Mar 1999) 18.Bxf8 Rxf8 19.Rad1± Tomczak – Amin, Gaziantep 2008.

15...fxe5 16.Ba3 c5 (16...d6 17.Bxc6±) 17.Bxc5 d6 18.Ba3 e4 19.Nc3 Qf7, Simacek – El Taher, Olomouc 2005, 20.Rac1!? Bxc4 21.Nxe4 Bd5 22.Qd2², followed by Bb2.

13.0-0



13...Rfe8

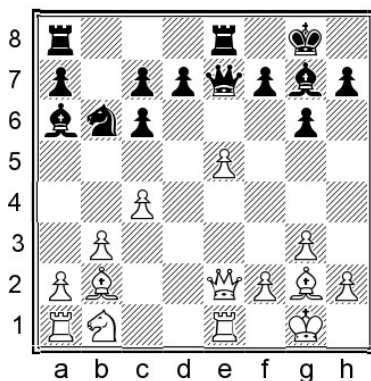
Black develops his rook, parrying in the process the threat Ba3.

About 13...Rae8 14.Nd2!? – see 12...Rae8.

13...f6? 14.Ba3± Bhakti – Hesse, Prague 2019.

13...d5 14.Re1 (14.f4 Qc5+ 15.Qf2 Qxf2 16.Rxf2 f6 17.c5 Nc8 18.exf6 Bxf6 19.Bxf6 Rxf6 20.Nd2 Re6 21.Nf3± Lyell – Midhun, Hastings 2019) 14...Rfd8 (14...Rad8?! 15.Ba3 c5 16.Nc3 dxc4 17.f4 f6 18.Ne4 fxe5 19.Bxc5±) 15.Ba3. White's bishop is transferred to a blocking square. 15...Qd7 16.Nc3 dxc4 17.Rac1 Qc8 18.Qe4 cxb3 19.axb3 Bb7 20.Na4. He lacks a pawn, but is not afraid to enter simplifications. The rest of Black's pieces would remain very passive. 20...Nxa4 21.bxa4 Rb8 22.Bc5² White has restricted the enemy bishop on b7 and can begin to exploit his pawn-majority on the kingside.

14.Re1



14...d5

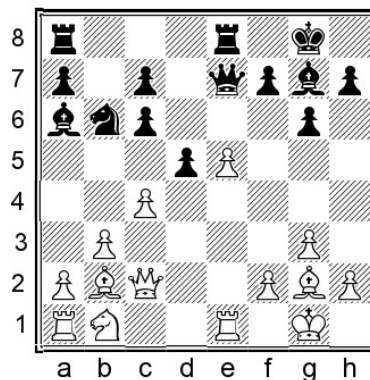
With this move Black shows that he does not intend to fight at the moment against the enemy e5-pawn and focuses his attention on the pawn on c4. Meanwhile, White has a very good position.

14...f6 15.Qd2 fxe5 16.Ba3 Qe6 (16...Qf7 17.Nc3 e4 18.Rad1² ; 18.Nxe4 Bxc4, Tomilova – Derbentseva, St Petersburg 2005, 19.bxc4 Nxc4 20.Qd3 Bxa1 21.Rxa1 Nxa3 22.Qxa3 Re7 23.Rf1 Rae8 24.Ng5±) 17.Nc3 Bb7 18.Rad1 Rad8 (18...d6 19.c5±) 19.Ne4 d6. This is the only way

for Black not to let the enemy knight to occupy the c5-square. 20.c5 Nd5 21.Qa5± White regains the pawn and preserves his pressure. 21...a6? 22.cxd6 cxd6 23.Ng5 Qf5 24.Rxd5! cxd5 (24...Qxg5 25.Rxd6+–) 25.Bxd5+–

14...Rab8, with the idea later to follow with c6-c5 if necessary. 15.Qc2 f6, Stoljarov – Ginzburg, Rimavska Sobota 1996, 16.Nd2 fxe5 17.a4 c5 18.a5 Nc8. Black's unfortunate knight cannot find a good square. It is not amazing that with his cut-off queenside, he would be incapable of preserving his e5-pawn. 19.Bd5+ Kh8 20.f4 Nd6 21.fxe5 Nf5 22.Nf3² White deploys his rooks on the central files and combines his attack against the weak enemy pawns with the threat e5-e6.

15.Qc2!



15...Qc5

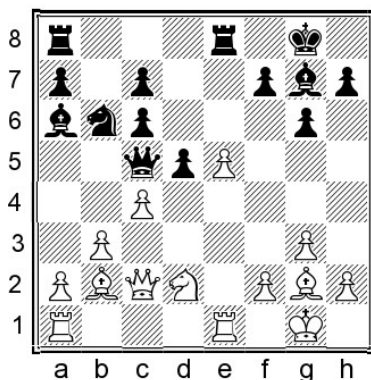
Black continues in the most active possible fashion.

15...Rad8 16.Nd2 Bc8 (16...Qc5 17.Rac1 – see 15...Qc5) 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Rac1± Black lacks just a single tempo to manage to develop his bishop to the f5-square.

15...Rab8 16.Nd2 Red8 17.cxd5 cxd5
18.Rac1 Rbc8, Jongasma – Erwich, Leiden
1997, 19.e6 fxe6 20.Bh3 Rd6 21.Ba3±

15...Nd7 16.Ba3 (16.cxd5 Nxe5!?:
16.f4!?) 16...Qe6 17.f4²

16.Nd2



16...Rad8

Black has completed his development indeed, but he has no reasonable plan at all.

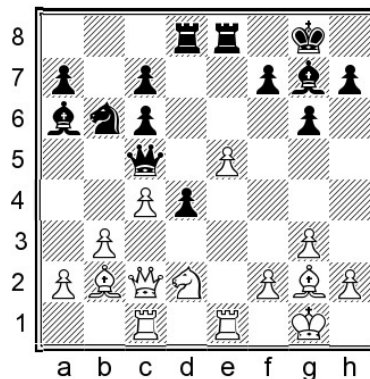
16...dxc4 17.b4 Qxb4 18.Bxc6 Rad8
19.Bc3 Qc5 20.Bxe8 Rxe8 21.Ne4 Qc6
22.Nf6+ Bxf6 23.exf6± Re6? 24.Qd2+-
Dovzik – M.Braun, Nyiregyhaza 2001.

16...Bc8 17.Rac1 Bf5 18.Qd1 Qe7 19.Nf3
Be4 20.cxd5 cxd5, Rizouk – De la Paz
Perdomo, Albacete 2002, 21.Bh3!? c5
22.Ba3 Bxf3 23.Qxf3 Bxe5 24.Bxc5±

17.Rac1 d4?

Now, the pawn chain a2-b3-c4 has become unbreakable. Black's pieces on a6 and b6 are horribly isolated.

17...dxc4 18.bxc4 Bxe5. This is the only possibility for Black to provoke some complications (18...Re6 19.Nb3±). 19.Nb3 Qxc4 20.Bxe5 Qxc2 21.Rxc2 Rxe5 22.Rxe5 Rd1+ 23.Bf1 Rxf1+ 24.Kg2±



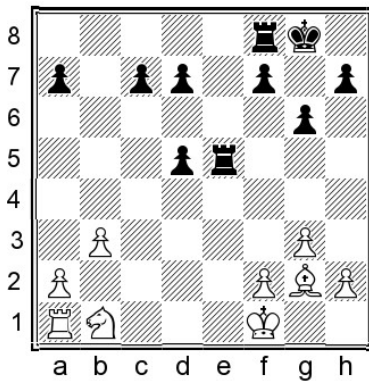
18.Nf3 d3 19.Qd2 (19.Qc3!? Bc8
20.Rcd1±) 19...Bc8 20.h3! White prevents the appearance of the enemy bishop on the g4-square. 20...h5 21.Rcd1± Kasparov – I.Sokolov, Yerevan 1996.

Chapter 15

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
 Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.g3 g6 9.c4
 Ba6 10.b3 Bg7 11.Bb2 0-0
 12.Bg2 Rae8 13.0-0 Bxe5
 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5
 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1

17...cxd5

It is bad for Black to play here
 17...Rfe8?!, because of 18.Nc3 cxd5
 19.Nxd5±



There has arisen a position with
 dynamic balance.

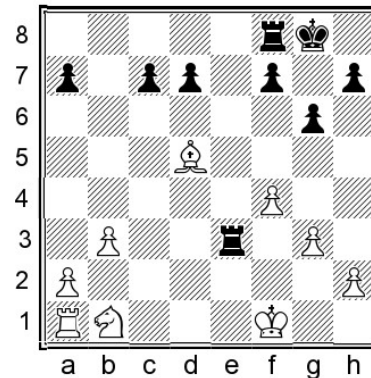
If you play against a stronger opponent,
 then the simplest for White would be to
 choose **A) 18.f4**. After this move the most
 likely result would be a draw after a
 repetition of moves.

Naturally, White can continue the game
 with some other moves like: **B) 18.Na3**, or
C) 18.Nc3. It is worth mentioning that he
 must exchange the rooks only if he has
 some direct advantages; otherwise, he
 should play on with rooks present on the
 board. His task would be to transfer the
 rook to the a4-square, for example on the
 route Rd1-d4-a4. Then, it would be

reasonable for Black to leave his rook in a
 passive position, in order to protect his
 pawn on a7. White will then deploy his
 pawns on a3 and b4 and his knight on d4.
 This is how White placed his pieces in the
 game Rublevsky – Geller (see variation C).

A) 18.f4 Re3 19.Bxd5

White must capture immediately the
 enemy pawn on d5; otherwise, Black will
 manage to protect it.



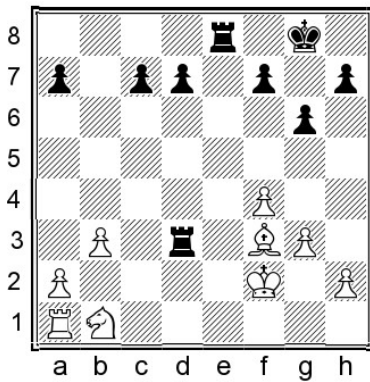
19...g5!?

This move is played with the idea that
 after 20.fxg5 Rd3, White's bishop would
 be incapable of retreating to the f3-
 square.

About 19...Rfe8?! 20.Nd2 – see 12...Rfe8.

White maintains an edge after 19...c6
 20.Bf3 Rfe8 (Black cannot play here
 20...Rxf3+?, because of 21.Ke2 and his
 rook would be trapped.) 21.Nd2 Rc3
 22.Rd1 Rc2?! 23.Ne4, followed by Rd2.

After 19...Rd3 20.Bf3, the game would
 usually end quickly in a draw. 20...Re8 (It
 is again bad for Black to play now
 20...Rxf3+?, because of 21.Ke2.) 21.Kf2



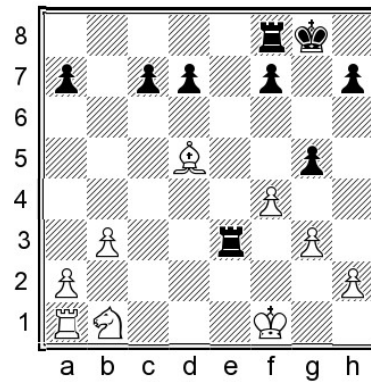
Black has several reasonable alternatives here, preserving the balance on the board:

21...c6 22.Be2 Rde3 23.Bd1 Rd3= Carlsen – Aronian, Moscow 2010.

21...a5 22.Be2 Rde3 23.Bd1 Rd3=

21...d5 22.b4 c6 (It is a mistake for Black to choose here 22...a5? 23.bxa5 c5 24.a6 – White’s passed a-pawn is more powerful than Black’s two passed pawns. 24...c4 25.a7 Ra8 26.Be2 Rd4 27.Nc3 Rd2, Londyn – Simacek, Trinec 2003, 28.Nb5 Rb2 29.a4 c3 30.Rc1 c2 31.Bf3+-) 23.Be2 Rde3 24.Bd1 Rd3=

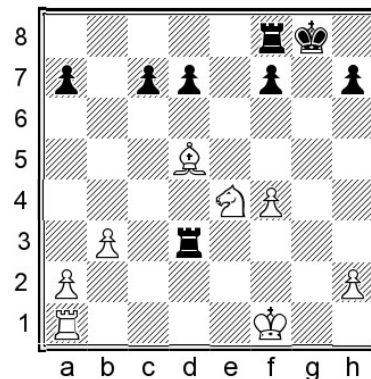
21...Kg7 22.Be2 Rde3 (If Black avoids the repetition of the moves, he might be in trouble: 22...Rd4?! 23.a3 Rde4, Andreev – Gonda, Budapest 2013, 24.Ra2 Re3 25.b4 c6 26.Bf3² Later, White will develop his knight and his two minor pieces would be stronger than the enemy rook.) 23.Bd1 Rd3 24.Be2 Rde3 25.Bd1 Re1 26.Nd2 R8e2+ 27.Bxe2 Rxa1 28.a4 d5 29.Bf3 c6 30.Ke3 Kf6= Black’s pieces are still very active, so he has sufficient counter chances.



20.Nd2!?

20.fgx5?! Accepting the pawn-sacrifice would present the initiative to Black. 20...Rd3 21.Be4!?. White must hold on to the c2-square. (21.Bc4 Rd1+ 22.Ke2 Rc1 23.Bd3 Re8+ 24.Kf2 Re5³ White’s rook and knight are isolated from the actions.) 21...Rd1+ 22.Ke2 Rc1 23.a4 (23.Bd3 Re8+ 24.Kf2 Re5 25.h4 Rd1 26.Bc2 Rh1 27.Bd3 d5³) 23...Re8 24.Kf3 Re1 25.Bc2 R8e3+ 26.Kg4 c5 27.Ra2 Kg7 28.Bf5 Rxb3 29.Nd2 Rb4+ 30.Kf3 c4³ Black’s connected passed pawns, supported by his active rooks, are very powerful.

20...gxf4 21.gxf4 Rd3 22.Ne4

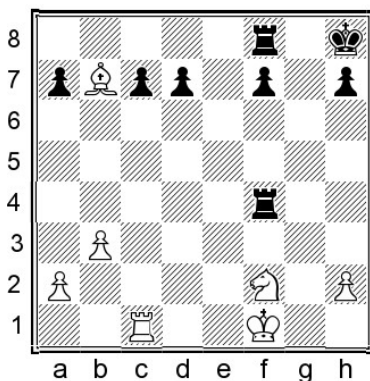


There has arisen an approximately equal position. White’s minor pieces are active, while Black’s rook is quite mobile as well.

22...Kh8

22...c6 23.Nf6+ Kg7 24.Be4 (24.Nh5+ Kh6 25.Be4 Rd4 – see 24.Be4; 24.Nxd7 Rxd5 25.Nxf8 Kxf8 26.Kf2 Rd2+ 27.Kg3 Ke7 28.h4 Kd6= The activity of Black's rooks compensates his weaknesses on c6 and a7 and the potential activity of White's king Kg4-f5.) 24...Rd4 25.Nh5+ Kh6 26.Bf3 Re8 27.Nf6 Re6 28.Nxd7 Rxd7 29.Bg4 Rd2 30.Bxe6 fxe6 31.Re1 Rxa2 32.Rxe6+ Kh5 33.Kg1 a6= The material is equal and the activity of both rooks is comparable, so the drawish outcome of the game is very likely.

23.Bb7 Rf3+ 24.Nf2 Rxf4 25.Rc1



White has given up a pawn, but has completed his development and begins to attack his opponent's weaknesses.

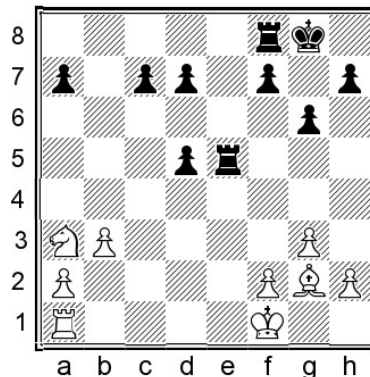
25...c6 26.Rd1 d5 27.Re1

It is also possible for White to choose here 27.Bxc6 Rc8 28.Bb5 Rc2 29.Be2 Rxa2 30.Rxd5 Kg7, with approximate equality.

27...Rf6 28.Rc1 Rb8 29.Rxc6 Rxf2+ 30.Kxf2 Rxb7 31.Rc5 Rd7 32.Ke3 Kg7 33.Kd4 Kg6 34.Rxd5 Rb7= The

prospects of both sides are about equal in this endgame. White can create a passed pawn on the queenside, while Black has a passed f-pawn.

B) 18.Na3!?



This is an interesting set-up for White. His rook will go on the route Rd1-d4 and his knight will retreat at first Na3-c2, covering the b4, d4 and e1-squares. Then he will transfer his rook to the a4-square and White's minor pieces will support the advance of his pawns on a3 and b4.

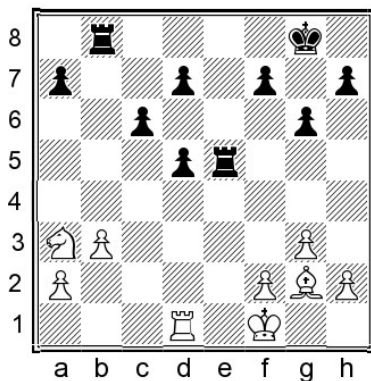
18...c6 19.Rd1

We will analyse now: **B1)** 19...Rb8 and **B2)** 19...Rfe8.

After 19...f5, Sindarov – Kravtsiv, Abu Dhabi 2018, the simplest move for White would be 20.Bf3 and if Black plays analogously to the game, with the move 20...f4, then after 21.g4 White will soon begin to advance his h-pawn as further as possible, with the idea to create a protected passed pawn on the kingside. If Black tries to prevent this with – 21...g5, then White will regroup his forces and will advance soon h2-h4, for example: 22.Nc2 a5 23.Rd4 Rb8 24.Ne1. His knight is headed for the f3-square. 24...Ree8

25.Bd1 Rb4 26.Rd3 Kf7 27.Nf3 h6 28.h4
Kf6 29.h5! At the end, White will transfer
his knight to the f5-outpost.

B1) 19...Rb8



Black plans to bring his rook into the
actions via the b4-square.

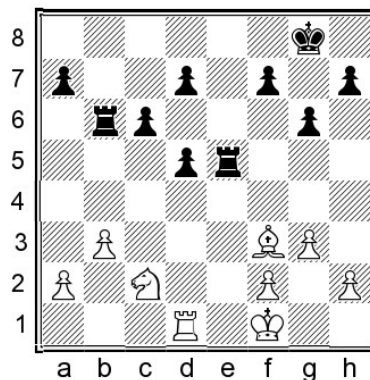
20.Bf3

White should better avoid here 20.Rd4?
Rbe8. Black is threatening to penetrate to
e2, or to e1 and White is incapable of
covering simultaneously both squares.
21.Bf3 Re1+ 22.Kg2 Ra1 23.Rd2 Ree1³

20...Kf8

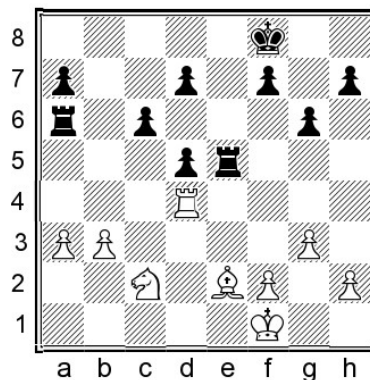
20...Rb6 21.Be2 Kf8 22.Nc2 a5 (22...Rb8
23.Rd4 Re4= Mamedov – Jakovenko,
Poikovsky 2019) 23.f3 Ke7 24.Rd4 Rb8
25.Ra4 Ra8 26.f4 Re4 27.b4 Kd6 28.Bd3
Ree8 29.bxa5 c5,, Black's c and d-pawns
provide him with good counterplay.

20...Rb4 21.Nc2 Rb6



22.Be2!? White prevents the enemy
rook from occupying the a6-square.
22...Kf8 23.f3, with the idea Rd4, avoiding
the possible trade of the rooks after Re5-
e4. 23...a5 24.Rd4 Rb8 25.Ra4 Ra8 26.Bd3,
with the idea b4. 26...Ree8=

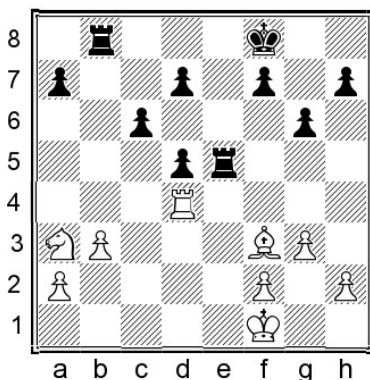
22.Rd4 Ra6!? (22...a5 23.Ra4 Rb5
24.Ne3 Rc5 25.Ke1 Rc2 26.Rxa5 Re6
27.Ra4 f5 28.Kf1 Rd2=) 23.a3 Kf8 24.Be2



24...Rb6 25.b4 Ke7 26.Bd3 Kd6 27.Ne3
Kc7 28.Ke2 Rb8 29.Kd2 f5 30.b5 Kb6
31.Rh4. White weakens his opponent's
queenside pawn-structure. 31...h5 32.Rb4
c5 (32...Kc7? 33.Ra4 Rb7 34.Ra6. Black's
pieces are misplaced. His rook had to stop
the enemy a-pawn, while his king had to
deal with the c-pawn. 34...Kd6 35.Ng2 g5
36.f4 gxf4 37.Nxf4 Re8 38.a4+-) 33.Ra4
c4. The minor complications would lead
soon to dynamic balance. 34.Bc2 (34.Bxc4
Rxe3 35.fxe3 dxc4 36.Rxc4 d5 37.Rc6+
Kxb5 38.Rxg6 a5=) 34...Rbe8 35.Bd1
(35.Ra6+? Kxb5 36.Rxg6 d4+-) 35...g5

36.Bf3 Kxb5 37.Rxa7 d4 38.Nc2 d3
 39.Nd4+ Kc5 40.Rxd7 R8e7 41.Rd8 Re8=
 24...Ra5! 25.b4. Without this move
 Black will activate his rook with Ra5-c5.
 25...Ra4, with the idea a5 and it would be
 White who must worry about maintaining
 the balance. 26.Ke1?! a5 27.b5 cxb5
 28.Rxa4 bxa4 29.Kd2 Re6 30.Bb5 Rf6
 31.f4 g5!

21.Rd4

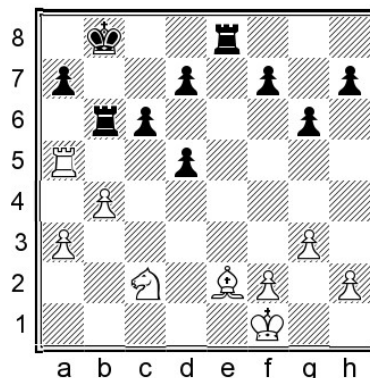


21...Ke7?!

Now, Black's rook will remain very
 passive on the b7-square.

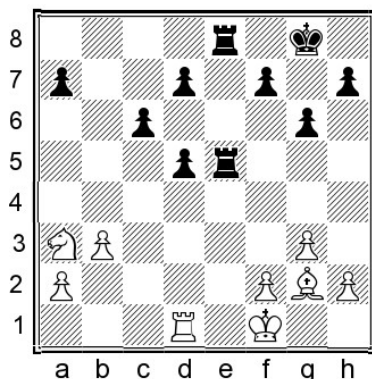
It was preferable for Black to choose
 here 21...Ree8 22.Rh4 h5 23.Ra4, Klepek –
 Kuczka, Polanica Zdroj 2018, 23...a5=

22.Ra4 Rb7 23.Nc2 Kd6, Iljiushenok –
 Ponkratov, Moscow 2018, **24.b4 Kc7**
25.Ra6. White prevents the activation of
 the enemy king after **Kb6**. **25...Kb8**. Black
 protects his pawns and is preparing **Rb6**.
26.Be2 Rb6 27.Ra5 Re6 28.a3 Re8



Black is waiting with the idea that
 White would be incapable of improving
 his position. **29.Ke1**. White is transferring
 his king to the queenside, then he will
 place his knight on c5 and will cramp
 maximally his opponent's pieces. **29...Re6**
30.Kd2 Re8 31.Nd4 Re4 32.Nb3 Re7
33.Bd3 Re8 34.Nc5 Re7 35.b5!? f5
36.Kc3. White may not have a direct win
 yet, but Black's defence, if he stays
 passive, would become more and more
 difficult. **36...Rf7 37.Kd4 Re7 38.Na4**
Rb7 39.Ra6 cxb5 40.Nc5 Rb6 41.Ra5 d6
42.Na6+ Kb7 43.Nb4 a6 44.a4
 (44.Nxd5? Re1) **44...Re5 45.axb5 axb5**
46.Nxd5 Ra6 47.Rxb5+ Kc8 48.Rb1 Ra5
49.Bc4 Re4+ 50.Kd3 Ra3+ 51.Nc3 Re7
52.Kd4± There is a sufficient number of
 pawns on the kingside, so White's
 prospects are preferable.

B2) 19...Rfe8

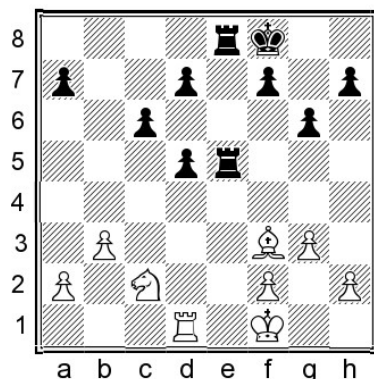


Black plays this move with the idea Re5-e2. Naturally, White should not allow that.

20.Bf3 Kf8

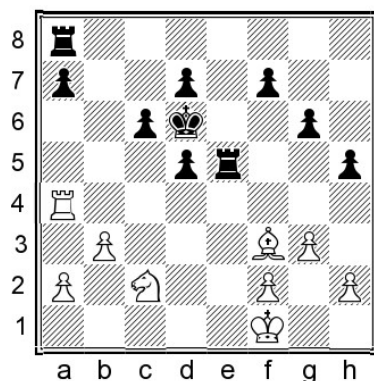
20...h5 21.Nc2 a5 (21...Kf8 22.Rd4 Rb8 23.Ra4 Rb7. Here, in comparison to the above mentioned game Iljiushenok – Ponkratov, Moscow 2018, instead of Ke7, Black has played h5. In order not to allow here h5-h4, the simplest for White would be to reply with h2-h4 and then play analogously to the variations from this game. 24.h4 Ke7 25.b4²) 22.Rd4 Rb8, with the idea to protect his pawn from the b5-square. 23.Ra4 Rb5 24.Ne1 (24.Ne3 Rc5 25.Ke1 Rc2 26.Rxa5 Rb2 27.Kf1 Kg7=) 24...Re8 25.Nd3 Kf8= Iljiushenok – Dai, St Petersburg 2017. Black has deployed quite well his forces on the queenside and the position has become completely equal.

21.Nc2



21...Rb8

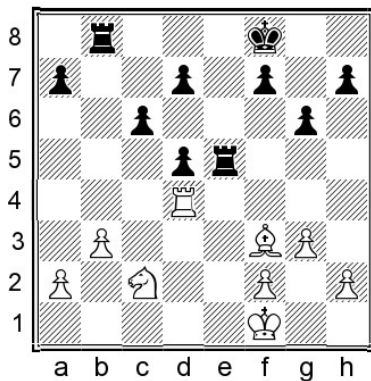
21...Ke7 22.Rd4 Kd6 23.Rh4. White weakens his opponent's kingside pawns just in case... 23...h5 24.Ra4 Ra8



Now, in comparison to the game Iljiushenok – Ponkratov, Moscow 2018, Black's rook is placed on a8 and not on b7. 25.Ra6!? White does not allow his opponent to equalise immediately with the move a7-a5. (25.Ne1, Salgado Lopez – Kryvoruchko, Riyadh 2017, 25...a5=) 25...Kc7 26.b4 Kb7 27.b5 Rc8 (27...cxb5 28.Rf6 Rc8 29.Nb4²) 28.Nb4 Rf5 29.Kg2 cxb5 30.Ra3 Rc5 31.h3 Kb6 32.g4 hxg4 33.hxg4 Rg5 34.Ra6+ Kb7 35.Rd6 Kc8 36.Be2, with the idea f2-f4. 36...Rc4 (36...Kc7 37.Rf6) 37.Kg3!? Rxb4 38.f4 Rb2 39.Bf3 Rxc4+ 40.Kxc4² White's bishop works perfectly on both sides of the board. Black's pawns are weak and his defence would be very difficult.

25.Be2

22.Rd4



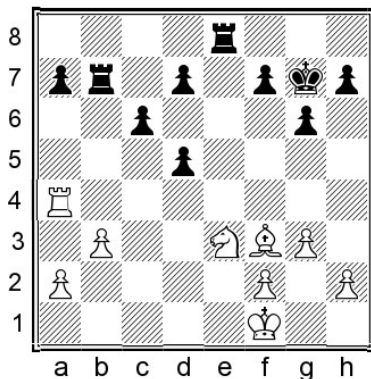
22...Kg7?

22...a5!? 23.Ra4 Rb5 24.Ne3, with the idea Be2. 24...Rc5 25.Ke1 Rc2 26.Rxa5 Re6 27.Ra4 Ke7 28.Bd1 Rb2 29.Bf3 Rc2, with dynamic balance.

23.Ra4 Rb7 24.Ne3

It is also good for White to play here 24.Be2 f5 25.h4. He ensures the f4-square as a base for his knight. 25...Kf6 26.Bd3 Re8 27.Nd4 Ke5 28.Ne2 Kd6 29.Ke1 Ra8 30.Ra5 Kc7 31.Kd2²

24...Re8

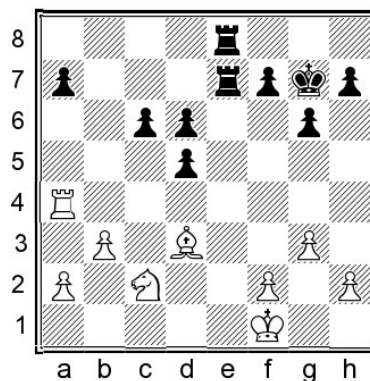


25.Ke2?! Iljiushenok – Goganov, Taganrog 2018. Now, Black can regroup actively his forces with: a5, Ra7. 25...a5! This pawn cannot be captured, because of d5-d4. 26.Kd3 Ra7 27.b4 Rea8³

25...d6

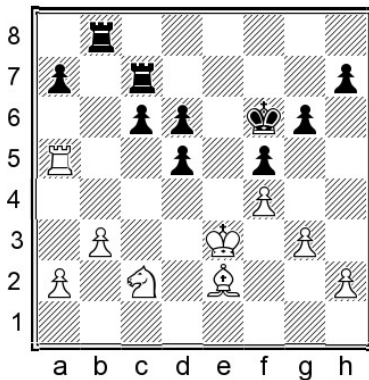
25...Re4 26.Ra5 Re7 27.Bd3 f5 28.Nc2² White plans to continue with b4, a3, Nd4, improving gradually his position.

26.Nc2 Rbe7 27.Bd3



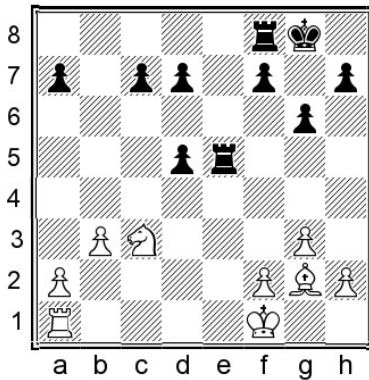
Black has a problem to organise adequate counterplay, since his queenside pawns are weak and static.

27...Rb8 28.Ra6 Rb6 29.Ra5 Rc7 30.f4 f5 31.Kf2 Kf6 32.Be2 Rb8 33.Ke3



White brings his king towards the centre. **33...Re8+ 34.Kd3 h6 35.b4 g5.** Black has a hard time doing nothing... **36.Bf3 Rb8 37.a4 Rcb7 38.Ra6 Rc7 39.a5 gxf4 40.gxf4 h5 41.h4 Kg6 42.Kc3±** White will gradually break Black's pawn-wedge c6-d5. His pieces are passive and he will have to fight long and hard for a draw.

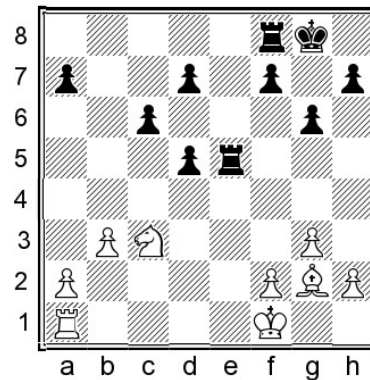
C) 18.Nc3



18...c6

It is essential for Black to preserve an elastic pawn-structure.

18...d4?! 19.Nd5 Rc8? 20.Nf6+ Kg7
21.Nxd7 Ra5 22.Bc6±



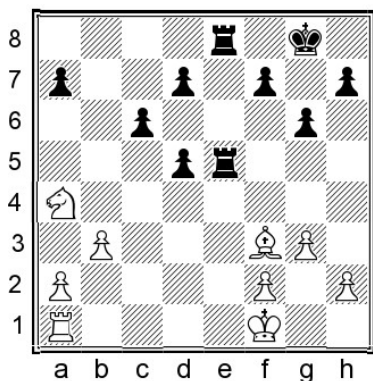
19.Rd1

White plays this with the idea to develop his rook to an active position via the d4-square.

The move 19.Bf3 is usually a part of White's plan, but he should not begin with it, because Black will not lose time for the move Rfe8, but will transfer immediately his rook along the route b8-b4: 19...Rb8 20.Ne2 Rb4³

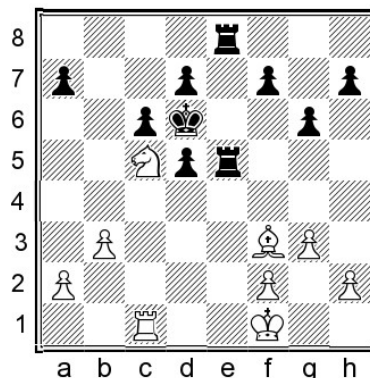
19.Rc1 Rb8 20.Na4 Kf8 21.Bf3 Ke7. Black does not allow b3-b4-b5 and prevents the transfer of White's rook to a5, so the prospects of both sides are about equal. 22.Nc5 Kd6 23.Nd3 Re6 24.Rc5 Rb5 25.Rxb5 cxb5. There have appeared weak d-pawns in Black's position. 26.Be2 a6 27.Ke1 d4 28.Kd2 a5 29.Nb2 Kc5 30.Nd3+ Kd6 31.a3 Re8 32.Nf4 Kc5 33.Bd3 b4 34.a4 d5 35.h4. The situation on the queenside has been stabilised and White begins active actions on the kingside. 35...Kd6 36.Be2 Rc8 37.Bf3 Rc5 38.Bd1 Rc3, Wang – Ringoir, Dubai 2014, 39.Ne2 Rf3 40.Ke1 Kc5 41.Nxd4 Rc3 42.Ne2= White has even managed to regain one of his pawns, but Black's pieces are centralised and active.

19.Na4. White plans to continue with Nc5. 19...Rfe8 (19...Rb8 20.Rc1 Rb4 21.Nc5 Re7 22.Bf3 Kg7 23.Be2 h6 24.Rc2 Rd4 25.a3 d6 26.Na6 Rb7 27.b4 Rb6 28.a4. He is threatening to play a5, ousting the enemy rook and capturing the pawn on c6. 28...c5 29.bxc5 dxc5 30.Nxc5²) 20.Bf3



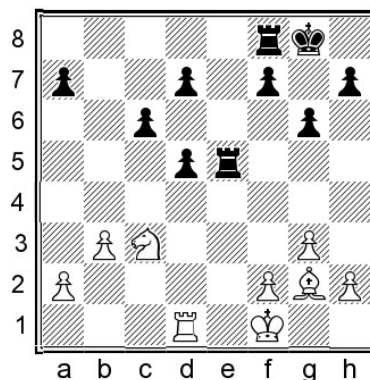
20...f5 21.Nc5 R5e7 22.Rc1 Kg7 23.Nd3 Rb8 24.Rc5 Rb6. Black's rook is misplaced on this square. 25.Be2 Kf6 26.Ke1 d6 27.Rc2 g5 28.Kd2 Ke6 29.Rc1 Kd7, Gaponenko – Bluhm, Germany 2019, 30.f4!? g4? 31.Ne1, with the idea Bd3, Ng2(c2)-e3; 30....gxf4 31.Nxf4²

20...Kf8 21.Nc5 Ke7 (After 21...R5e7, Amrutha – Panchanathan, New Delhi 2009, White must prevent Black's possible counterplay with Rb8, a5 and play 22.Na6!, depriving the enemy of the b8-square. If Black is not in a hurry to centralise his king 22...f5 23.Rc1 Kf7, then after 24.b4, followed by b5, White will seize the initiative. 24...Re5 25.b5 cxb5 26.Nb4²) 22.Rc1 (After 22.Nd3 Re6, the game may end in a draw if White is happy with the line: 23.Nc5 Re5 24.Nd3 Re6. After 23.Rc1 Kd6 24.b4, the position would be different from the one, analysed after the move 22.Rc1, because Black's rook is on e6, instead of on the e7-square. This is in fact irrelevant.) 22...Kd6



23.b4? Now, Black's second rook will manage to retreat to the eighth rank and this would have a decisive effect for the evaluation of the position. 23...Rb8 24.Nd3 Ree8 25.Rc5 a5! 26.Rxa5 Ra8μ Baklan – Erwich, Hoogeveen 2004.

23.Nd3 R5e7 24.b4 Rb8 (24...Ra8 25.a4 a5 26.b5, Leko – Almasi, Ubeda 1997, 26...Rb8= 27.Rc5? Re4! 28.Bxe4 dxe4 29.Ne5 cxb5-+) 25.Rc3 Ree8 26.Ra3 Rb7 27.Ra5 Ra8 28.a4 Re8= Kislov – Stempin, Krynica 1997. White can hardly improve his position now. After Be2 and Ke1, Black would have the possibility – Re4.

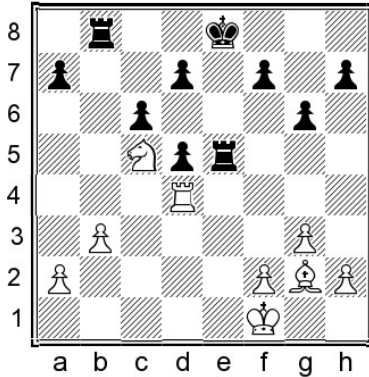


19...Rfe8

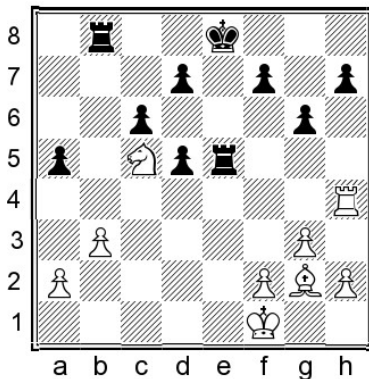
About 19...f5 20.Bf3 Rfe8 21.Ne2 a5 – see 19...Rfe8 20.Bf3 a5 21.Ne2 f5.

19...Rb8 20.Na4 Kf8 (20...Rb4 21.f4 Re7 22.Kf2 Kf8 23.Nc5 a5 24.Na6 Rb6 25.Nc5

Ke8 26.Nd3 Kd8=) 21.Nc5 Ke8 (21...Re7
 22.Rd4 Rbe8 23.Bf3 Re1+ 24.Kg2 Rc1
 25.Nxd7+ Kg7 26.h4, Arzumian –
 Malaniuk, Krasnodar 2005, 26...h5 27.Ra4
 Ree1=; 22...Rb5!? 23.Nd3 Re8 24.Ra4,
 Yildiz – Nemcova, Gaziantep 2008,
 24...a5,,) 22.Rd4



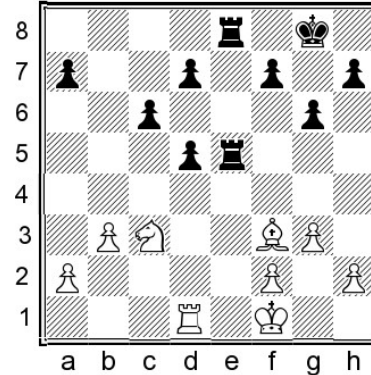
22...a5?! (22...Rb5. Black ousts the
 enemy knight from the c5-square. 23.Nd3
 Re7 24.Ra4 a5. The pieces of both sides
 have been well placed and the position is
 approximately equal.) 23.Rh4. White
 attacks the enemy weakness on h7.
 (23.Bf3 Rb5 24.Nd3 Re7 25.Rh4 f6 26.Rf4
 f5 27.h4 h5?! Black's kingside pawns have
 been fixed now and can be attacked by
 White's pieces, so Black must play very
 accurately. 28.Ra4 Kf7 29.Be2 Kf6 30.f3
 Re8 31.Kf2 Re7 32.Ke1 Re8 33.Kd2 Re7?
 34.Nf4 Rc5 35.Ba6 d4 36.Rxd4 1–0
 Rublevsky – Stern, Berlin 2015)



23...h5 (23...Rb4 24.Rxb4 axb4 25.Nd3
 Rh5 26.h4 d4 27.Nxb4 Ra5 28.Ke1 c5

29.Nd3 Rxa2 30.Nxc5² White preserves
 the possibility to advance his outside
 passed pawn and to attack the vulnerable
 enemy pawns.) 24.Nd3 Re7 25.g4f Now,
 he can obtain a pawn-majority on the
 kingside.

20.Bf3

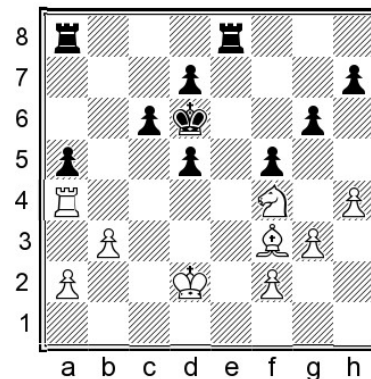


White is preparing Ne2.

20...Kf8

About 20...f5 21.Ne2 a5 22.Rd4 – see
 20...a5.

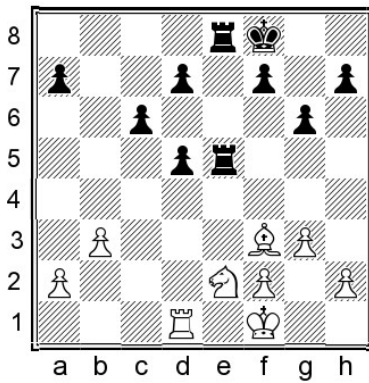
20...a5 21.Ne2 f5 22.Rd4 Ra8 23.Ra4
 Ree8 24.Nf4 Kf8 25.h4 Ke7 26.Ke2 Kd6+
 27.Kd2



There has arisen an approximately
 equal endgame, but Black's play in it
 would not be so simple. White's king is
 closer to the centre, but Black has solved
 his main task – not to allow the pawn-

advance b3-b4-b5. 27...Kc5 28.Nd3+ Kb6
 29.Rf4 Re7 30.h5 Rae8 31.a3 Kc7 32.Kc3
 Kb6 33.hxg6 hxg6 34.g4 fxg4 35.Rxg4 Rf7
 36.Bg2 Rf6 37.Rg5 Re2 38.Bh3 Kc7
 39.Bg4 Re7 40.Bd1 Kd6 41.Rg3 Re4
 42.Rh3 c5?! This activity is not to be
 recommended, because Black's pawn-
 mass loses its flexibility. 43.a4 44.bxc4
 Rxc4+ 45.Kd2 Rd4 46.Rh8² Szamoskozi –
 Malachi, Rijeka 2010. Black has numerous
 weaknesses in his position and White will
 begin to exploit this.

21.Ne2

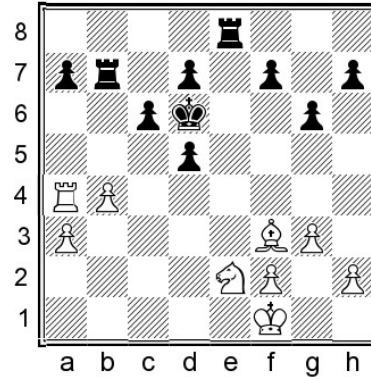


21...Ke7

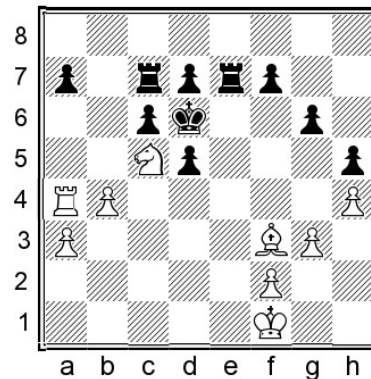
21...Rb8 22.Rd4 a5 23.Ra4 (After
 23.Rh4, White must consider the move
 23...Rb4!?) 23...Rb5 24.Nf4 Re8 25.Nd3.
 Black must think about a plan for his
 actions. If he remains idle, then he might
 lose very quickly, for example: 25...Re7
 (25...Ke7!?! 26.Ke2 Kd6+ 27.Kd2 Ra8 28.h4
 Rbb8= Van Overdam – Floor, Utrecht
 2019) 26.Be2 (with the idea Ke1-d2)
 26...Kg7 27.Ke1 Re8 28.Nf4 Rc5 29.Kd2
 and he will fail to defend without material
 losses against the threats 30.Ba6 and
 31.Nc5, trapping the rook.

22.Rd4 Kd6

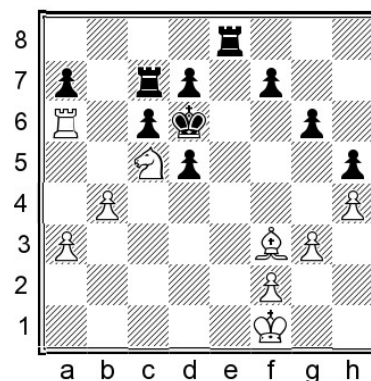
22...Rb8?! 23.Ra4 Rb7 24.b4 Kd6 25.a3
 Re8?! Here, Black has to bring his king as
 quickly as possible to the protection of his
 a-pawn, in order to free his rook from this
 function.



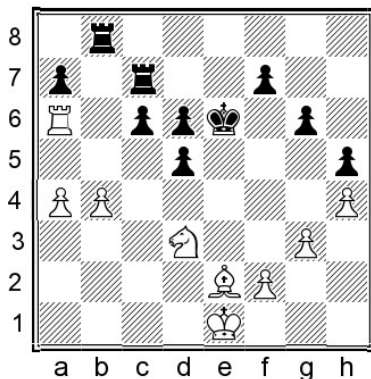
26.Nd4 h5 27.Nb3. White is
 transferring his knight to the c5-square.
 27...Re7 28.Nc5 Rc7 29.h4



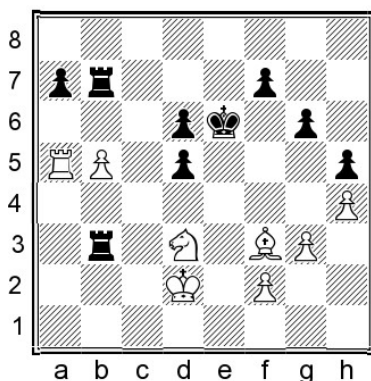
Black has no active counterplay, while
 White can gradually improve his position.
 29...Re5 30.Ra6 Re8



31.Be2! White covers the e-file in order to bring his king closer to the centre.
 31...Ke5 32.Ke1 d6 33.Nd3+ Ke6 34.a4 Rb8



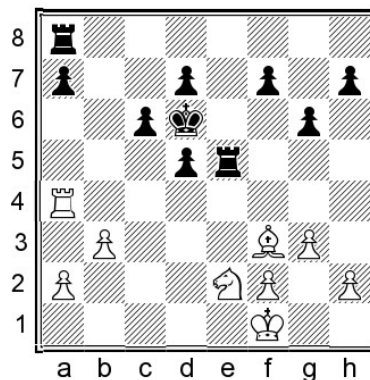
35.b5! He destroys his opponent's pawn-structure. 35...Rb6 36.Ra5 cxb5 37.axb5 Rbb7 38.Bf3 Rc3 39.Kd2 Rb3



40.Bxd5+! This is a beautiful end of the game. White's pawn promotes. 40...Kxd5 41.b6+ Kc4 42.Ra4+! 1-0 Rublevsky – Geller, Sochi 2004.

23.Ra4 Ra8

23...Rb8?! Black sacrifices a pawn with the idea to trade his opponent's rook.
 24.Rxa7 Ree8, Smerdon – Dias, Tromso 2014, 25.Ke1 Ra8 26.Rxa8 Rxa8 27.Nc1. Later, White will bring his king to the c3-square and will begin to advance his queenside pawns.



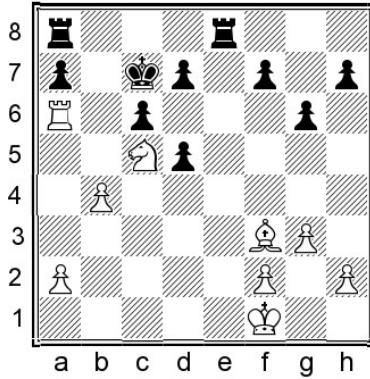
24.Nf4

24.b4 Ree8? (24...Kc7!, with the idea to protect the a7-pawn with the king and to activate his rook. Here, White had to play Ra5, transposing to the game Rublevsky – Tseshkovsky, which we have already analysed; otherwise, after 25.Nd4 Kb6 26.Be2 Rae8, Black would regroup his forces and his position would be at least equal. 27.f3?! Re3 28.Kf2 Rc3³ White – Cox, England 2012) 25.Ra5 f5 26.a3 Kc7 27.Ra6 Kb7 28.b5 Rac8 29.a4 Rc7 30.Nd4² Zelic – Bozanic, Pula 2000.

24.Ra5 Kc7 25.b4 (25...Kb6 26.Nc3 f5?! 27.Na4+ Kb7 28.Nc5+ Kc7, Roberts – Jameson, Cardiff 2014, 29.Ra6! Now, Black is very passive and must wait patiently to parry his opponent's threats.) 25...a6 26.Nc1 Kb6 27.Nb3 Ra7 28.Be2 f6, Rublevsky – Tseshkovsky, Sochi 2005, 29.Bd3. White has removed his bishop from the possible capture Rxe2 and is threatening now to play Nc5, winning the enemy pawn on a6. 29...d6 30.a3!?. He fortifies his important pawn on b4 just in case. 30...f5 31.Nd4 c5 32.Nf3 Ree7 33.Nd2² White plans to continue with Be2-f3, in order to attack the weakened enemy pawn on d5. In the process, after Be2, he will have the possibility to

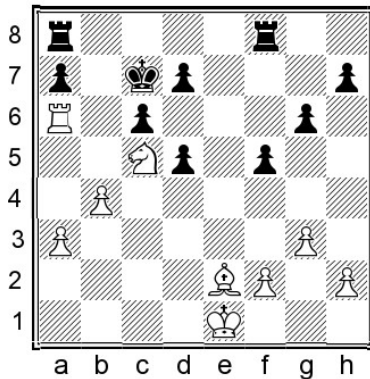
transfer his king to the queenside: Ke1-d2.

**24...Kc7 25.Nd3 Ree8 26.Ra6 Kb7
27.Nc5+ Kc7 28.b4**



Black has allowed, without any fight, his opponent to build maximally quickly his ideal set-up on the queenside.

**28...Reb8 29.a3 Re8 30.Bd1 Reb8
31.Be2 f5 32.Ke1 Rf8**

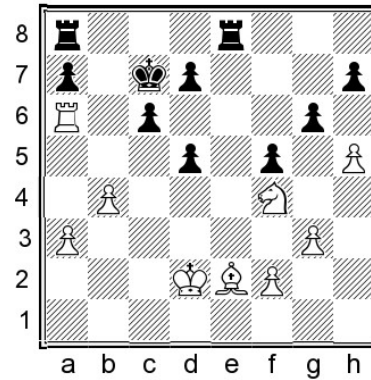


33.f4

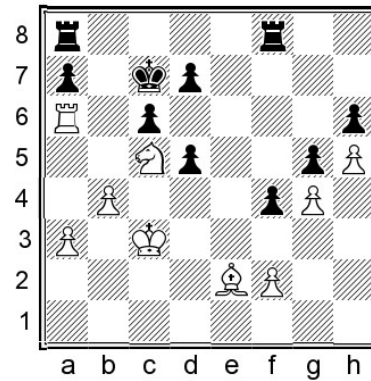
This decision is a bit controversial...

In fact, Black did not need to remain passive and to lose the wonderful outpost on the f4-square.

It was very interesting for White to try here 33.Nd3!?, for example: 33...Rfb8 34.Kd2. He brings his king closer to the centre. 34...Re8 35.h4 Reb8 36.Nf4 Re8 37.h5



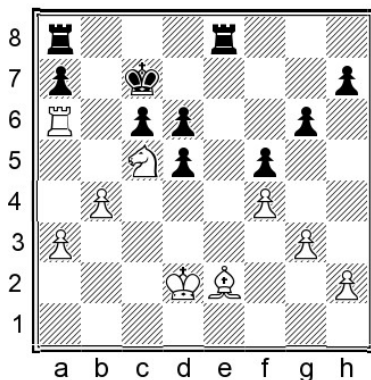
Now, Black has another weak pawn on g6 and this time it is on the kingside. If he tries to play actively – 37...g5 38.Nd3, and then protects his pawn with 38...h6, then following 39.Nc5 Rf8 40.Kc3 f4 41.g4



White obtains the excellent f5-square for his knight and will be also threatening b4-b5 (He can also increase his pressure by transferring his bishop to the a4-square.) and this pawn cannot be captured, because the h6-pawn would be hanging. If Black leaves his pawn on h7, then after for example: 38...Rf8 39.Bd1 Rfb8 40.Bc2 Rf8 41.Nc5, White's bishop will exert pressure against the enemy pawns on f5 and h7.

33...Rfe8 34.Kd2 d6?!

Black is already fed up with just waiting...



35.Nb3

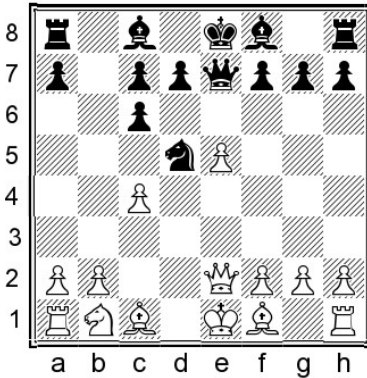
White could have created here more problems for his opponent with the move 35.Na4, preventing him from reconstructing his position with Reb8-b6. 35...Kb7 36.Bf1. Black was threatening Rxe2. 36...Re7 37.b5! Rc8 38.Ra5. After this move White practically wins one of his opponent's d-pawns.

**35...Reb8 36.Nd4 Rb6 37.Ra5 a6
38.Bd3 Kb7 39.Ne2 Kc7 40.Nc3 Rbb8
41.Bf1**, draw, Aronian – Amin, Berlin
2019.

Part 4

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4**

The fourth part of our book is devoted to a detailed analysis of the position arising after 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5 Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4.



Here we encounter a really rare case, since this position was reached in tournament practice way back in the year 1881(!) in two games from the Blackburn – Zuckertort match, and it still remains tremendously important and topical even today.

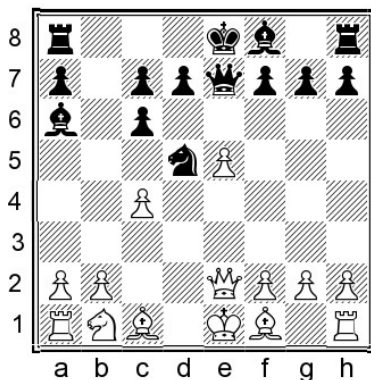
Bearing in mind a few details (see the previous section), we must admit that this variation is critical for practically the entire Scotch Game in general. The peculiarities of the pawn-structure, in particular the advanced white e5-pawn and the doubled c-pawns for Black, as well as the non-standard placement of both queens, lead to a situation in which neither side can afford to play in routine fashion. If Black just relies on common-sense moves, this can easily result in an immediate catastrophe for him (and meanwhile White must also be on the alert...). Therefore in this position what is most important for both sides is exact

knowledge of the theory of the line and excellent calculation of the variations arising. So, knowing all this, you should not be surprised that the main exponent of this line and the Scotch Game in general, the player who restored the Scotch to a position among the fashionable openings, back in the 1990s, was not just anyone, but Garry Kimovich Kasparov himself!

The resulting positions also have deep strategic content and even the most powerful contemporary computer programs are incapable of providing us with definitive evaluations. So the theoretical debates, at all levels, including the top, continue even today. The authors have tried to draw conclusions from all the available information and to provide some guidelines.

In chapter sixteen we analyse some seldom played lines for Black. His choice is not great, since his knight is hanging, so here only the move 8...Qb4+ deserves detailed analysis. With this clever trick, Black simplifies the task of developing his kingside and later transfers his knight to the comfortable e6-square. However, these are just about all the merits of the move 8...Qb4+. Black's manoeuvres are time-consuming and White is able to complete his development comfortably. Then it turns out that Black's queen has been left isolated from the focus of the operations on the board and this becomes decisive for the evaluation of the position.

Our next chapters are devoted to a move which for a long time was considered to be Black's basic reply and 100% reliable: – 8...Ba6.

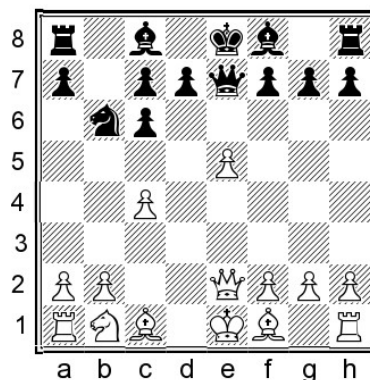


At first sight this seems a very good move. Black develops a piece, his knight can remain centralised and his king is ready to be evacuated away from the centre, while White can only dream of that at the moment. And yet... – if we try to evaluate this position a bit more deeply, then some questions arise that need to be answered... (In fact many players began to have doubts about this line, not only the authors, and Black's bishop-move has ceased to be the most popular). It turns out that the placement of the bishop on the a6-square is not ideal, either from the positional point of view or based on tactical considerations. Black's knight will have to retreat sooner or later, while castling queenside, in this pawn-structure, will not ensure the safety of the black king – in fact just the opposite...

Now we need come to some more concrete analysis. After 9.Nd2 (Chapter 17), White has scored very good results lately, but this has been mostly due to factors which have almost nothing to do with the opening. Black still has numerous comfortable possibilities to choose from and they can provide him with an acceptable game.

After White's main move 9.b3, which is analysed in the following chapters, things are not so simple, however. Black has tried numerous moves in practice, including some rather eccentric lines such as 9...Qh4 and 9...g5 (Chapter 18), as well as the seemingly logical move 9...0-0-0 (this was what Black played back in 1881 – see Chapter 19), but he remains too far from complete equality. So the latest trend for Black here is to play the fundamental move 9...g6 (see Chapter 20), but even then White has a wide range of possibilities. He can play 10.g3, transposing to variations which we have already analysed in the previous sections of our book (we have in mind the super-complicated endgame with a bishop and a knight against a rook and two pawns), as well as many other interesting alternatives (the most promising being 10.f4) and all of these require from Black a very precise response.

In the light of all this, it should come as no surprise that lately attention has been focused on the seemingly modest retreat of Black's knight – 8...Nb6.



Naturally, this cannot be considered a perfect square for the knight, but he has solved a concrete problem for the moment and later Black's knight will come back into play somehow (as a rule,

by creating pressure against the enemy c4-pawn), while his light-squared bishop might be developed later to a more appropriate square, b7. There is also another point here, which might be not so easy to notice but is very important – Black’s a-pawn has been left free to advance. This means that White’s thematic move in many variations, b2-b3, will be countered by Black in almost all lines with an advance of the black a-pawn, all the way to the a4-square, creating counterplay on the queenside, which will solve Black’s problems in most cases.

This pawn-advance is the main theme in Chapter 21, in which we analyse all White’s alternatives to 9.Nc3. Even though the march of Black’s a-pawn is not a universal receipt (for example, after 9.Nd2 he has other simple and comfortable moves...), it is usually very helpful.

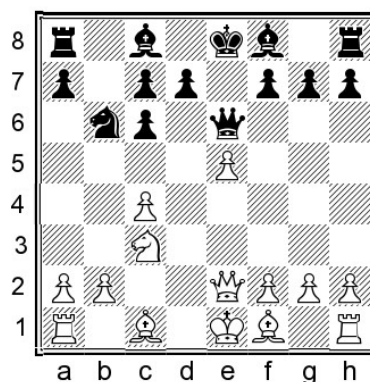
In general, it might seem that the retreat of the knight to the b6-square, followed by the advance of the a-pawn should be a comfortable universal set-up; however, it does not always work so well for him. After 9.Nc3 a5 (Chapter 22), White continues with 10.f4, after which it becomes evident that Black must still lose time in order to provoke the move b2-b3, which enables White to complete his development while preserving all the pluses of his position.

Our Chapter 23 is devoted to the seemingly less logical variation 9.Nc3 Ba6. After a detailed analysis of this position it turns out that Black’s concrete approach (White’s knight has been

developed on the c3-square, so Black can increase his pressure against the enemy c4-pawn) is really effective. The play in many variations is very sharp, however, with many forced lines, and Black needs to play with tremendous precision. It would be worth mentioning that in one of the critical lines his king will have to travel along the route e8-d7-c6-b6-a6-a5-b4-a3-a2-b2 and only then does it become clear that he has avoided the checkmating threats and the game should end in a draw by perpetual check.

In Chapter 24, we deal with a very solid set-up for Black. After 9.Nc3, he replies with 9...Bb7, trying to castle queenside as quickly as possible. The game then develops in a much calmer positional fashion but White’s superior pawn-structure provides him with a slight but stable advantage.

Finally our last six chapters are devoted to the main line of the entire system at the moment, based on the moves 9.Nc3 Qe6.



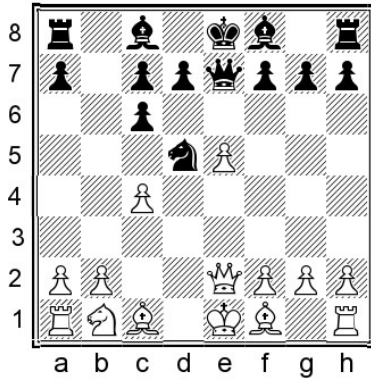
We should like to mention here that the move 10.Bd2!? (Chapter 25) has not become popular yet but is full of venom and Black’s problems might turn out to be much greater than they appear at first sight. However, after White’s main

response 10.Qe4 (Chapters 26-30), although it appears that Black has a wide choice of playable possibilities, this multitude of options might lead him to make mistakes in the forest of variations.

In summary, there is no revolutionary situation in this opening at the moment. The authors are reluctant to promise the readers a clear-cut advantage for White in all variations. Still, in the majority of lines there arise very complicated and non-standard positions, in which readers will have the chance to show imagination and creativity, while in many lines it is easy for your opponents to go astray. This will be particularly true if you have read and developed a deep understanding of the contents of this book.

Chapter 16

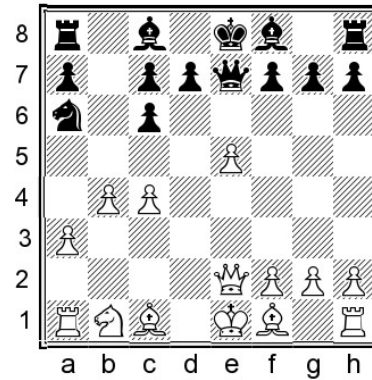
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4



8...Qb4+

This move cannot promise equality to Black, since it contradicts one of the basic opening principles – to avoid the early development of the queen, because it can be attacked by the enemy pawns and pieces.

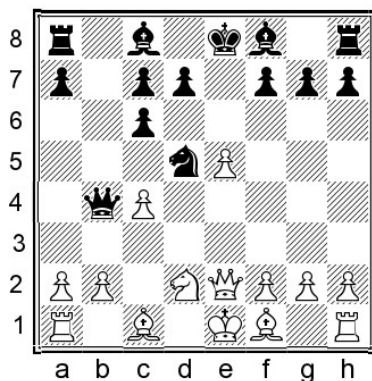
It is just bad for Black to opt here for 8...Nb4, because after 9.a3, his knight will be forced to retreat to the edge of the board. 9...Na6 10.b4. This move deprives Black's knight of the c5-square and prepares at the same time the development of White's bishop to b2 from where it would add to the protection of the pawn on e5.



10...d6 11.Bb2 Bb7 (11...Be6 12.g3±)
12.Nd2 c5 13.b5 Nb8, Holroyd – Harding,
Philadelphia 2010. Black has lost too
much time on manoeuvres with his knight
and it has ended up isolated at the edge of
the board. 14.Nb3 (with the idea Na5)
14...a5. This move does not help Black,
since following 15.Bc3±, he would be
incapable of controlling the a5-square.
15...a4 16.Na5 Bc8 17.g3 g6 18.Bg2 Ra7
19.Nc6 Nxc6 20.Bxc6+ Bd7 21.Bxd7+
Qxd7 22.e6+–

10...g6 11.f4. White fortifies the e5-
square. (It seems also good for him to
choose here 11.g3!?, trying to develop the
bishop on f1 as quickly as possible and to
castle. 11...Bg7 12.Bb2 d6 13.Bg2 Bd7
14.0-0 dxe5 15.Nd2 0-0 16.c5± Black's
knight is horribly misplaced and his
queenside pawn-structure has been
seriously compromised.) 11...Bb7 12.Bb2
Bg7 13.Nc3 0-0 14.0-0-0 Rfe8,
Groenegress – Bilo, Brackwede 1984.
Black's attempt to undermine the enemy
central pawn with the move 14...f6, would
not facilitate his task, because after
15.exf6 Qxf6 16.Rxd7 Qxf4+ 17.Kb1 Qf5+
18.Qd3±, he would not even come closer
to solving his main problem – to activate
his bishop on b7 and his knight on a6.
15.c5 Nb8 16.Qd2 a5 17.Bc4±

9.Nd2



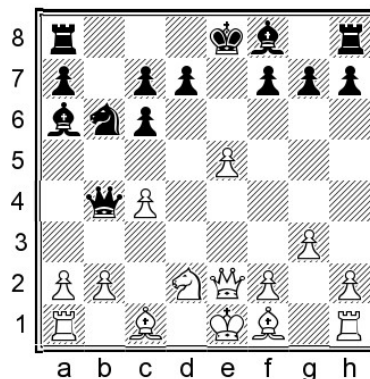
9...Nf4

This move is at least consequent for Black. He wishes to exploit the loss of the control of White's bishop on c1 over the f4-square in order to organise some counterplay.

9...Ba6 10.Qe4 (10.Qg4!? Nb6 11.Bd3 d5 12.0-0± Black can hardly complete successfully the development of his kingside pieces, because White's queen exerts rather unpleasant pressure against the pawn on g7.) 10...Nb6 (10...Ne7 11.Bd3 g6, Rosito – Felizes, Sao Paulo 2003, 12.0-0±) 11.Bd3 g6 12.0-0 Bg7, Polihroniade – Liu, Valetta 1980, 13.Qh4 Qe7 14.Qxe7+ Kxe7 15.b3² White can play for a win here without any risk thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

9...Nb6. Black's immediate plans are connected with the organisation of piece-pressure against the enemy pawn on c4. 10.g3 Ba6 (10...Be7. It seems here inconsistent for Black to refrain from the move Ba6, because he cannot create any counterplay without it. 11.a3 Qa5, Simanaitis – Gagiskis, Lithuania 2012, 12.Bg2!? 0-0 13.0-0 Re8 14.b3 Bf8 15.Bb2± White has managed to complete the development of his pieces and to evacuate his king away from the centre,

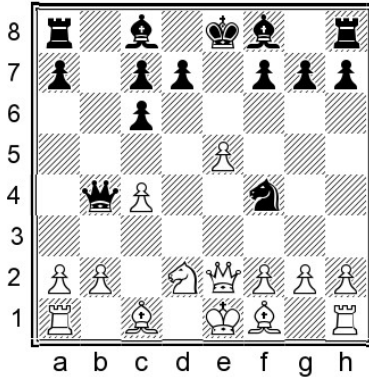
so he has preserved all the advantages of his position.)



11.b3. White protects immediately his pawn on c4 and is not afraid of the enemy queen-sortie to the c3-square. 11...Qc3 (11...Rb8. Black is threatening Nxc4. 12.Qe3 Bc5 13.Qd3 0-0 14.Be2 Rfe8 15.0-0 Rxe5? 16.Nf3 Rxe2 17.Qxe2 Nxc4 18.Bf4 d6 19.bxc4 Bxc4 20.Qe7 Bxf1 21.Rxf1± Khorunzhy – Sileika, ICCF 2016. Here, Black should better refrain from winning material and play instead 15...Bf8², although even then he would be far from reaching equality, since he lacks space for the manoeuvres of his pieces.) 12.Rb1 Rb8 13.Bb2 Qc2, Rogovski – Gevorkyan, Kharkov 2003. Black's queen is very active, but it is his single operational battle unit. 14.Qe3 Nd5 15.Qe4 Qxe4+ 16.Nxe4 Bb4+ 17.Kd1 f5. His attempt to play actively leads only to the appearance of pawn-weaknesses in his camp. 18.cxd5 Bxf1 19.Rxf1 fxe4 20.dxc6 dxc6 21.Ke2±

11.a3 Qe7 (11...Qa5!? Black preserves the pin against the enemy knight. 12.Qe4 0-0-0, Laubsch – Krajina, Germany 2008, 13.c5 Bxf1 14.b4. White protects his pawn on c5 and maintains better prospects. 14...Qb5 15.Rxf1 Nd5 16.f4²) 12.Bg2 0-0-0 13.b4 (13.b3!? d6 14.Bb2 dxe5 15.0-0± Black has an extra pawn indeed, but his position remains very difficult. His king is not safe on the queenside and his bishop on a6 and his knight on b6 are restricted

by the enemy pawn on c4.) 13...Nxc4 (13...Bb7? 14.0-0 d5, Pascual Palomo – Bellon Fernandez, Malaga 2009, 15.c5 Nd7 16.Bb2+-) 14.f4 d5 15.0-0² The shelter of Black's king seems tremendously vulnerable.

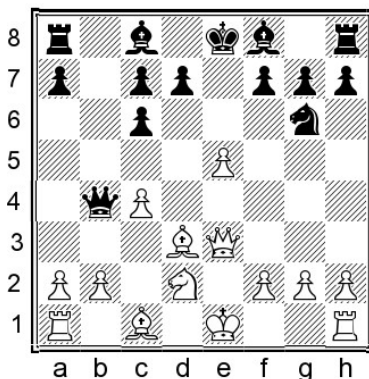


Now, White can retreat his queen to two different squares and both possibilities are about equally applicable: **A) 10.Qe3** and **B) 10.Qe4**.

A) 10.Qe3 Ne6

Black's knight has occupied a blocking square in front of the enemy pawn and he would not need to worry about any tactical threats connected with the pawn-advance e5-e6.

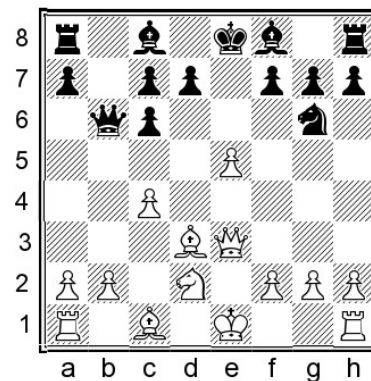
10...Ng6. From here, Black's knight will exert pressure against the enemy pawn on e5. 11.Bd3



11...Be7 12.0-0 Qb6 13.Nf3. White is reluctant to trade queens on the b6-square, since Black will thus get rid of his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside. 13...0-0 14.Rb1², White is preparing Bd2. Black can hardly find here any active plan for his further actions.

11...Bc5 12.Qg3 0-0 13.0-0 d6, Sadeghi – Filippov, Teheran 2004. White's pawn on e5 cramps horribly the enemy position, so Black must try to remove it as quickly as possible. (Following 13...d5 14.a3 Qb7, White has an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 15.b4 Bd4 16.Rb1 Bxe5 17.f4 Bd4+ 18.Kh1. Black's pieces are badly coordinated and he can hardly counter his opponent's plan, connected with the advance of his f-pawn and the joining of his knight on d2 into the attack. 18...Bd7 19.f5 Ne7 20.Nf3 Bf6 21.Ne5 Qc8 22.Ng4 Bd4 23.Nh6+ Kh8 24.f6+-) 14.Nb3. White sacrifices temporarily a pawn and completes the development of his queenside pieces. 14...dxe5 15.Bd2 Qb6 16.Ba5 Qa6 17.Bxc7² White's pieces have been more actively deployed and he has a superior pawn-structure.

11...Qb6



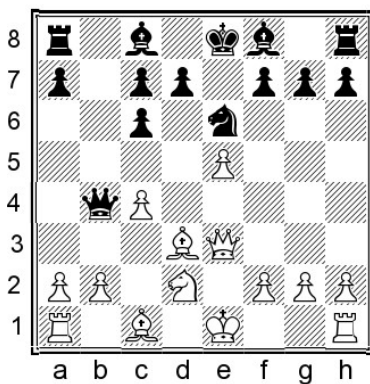
12.Nf3. White loses his advantage after this move, because after 12...Bb4+, he would have to worsen the position of his king, or just weaken his pawn-structure. 13.Kf1, Kristjansson – Korchnoi,

Reykjavik 2003 (13.Bd2 Qxe3+ 14.fxe3 Bxd2+ 15.Kxd2 c5÷) 13...0-0÷

12.Qe4 Bc5. Black's bishop will soon be attacked by the enemy knight on this square (Nb3). (12...Be7 13.Nb3 Bb7 14.0-0 0-0²) 13.0-0 0-0 14.Nb3 Re8 15.Bd2. White sacrifices a pawn and wishes to occupy the e-file with his major pieces. 15...Rxe5 16.Qf3 Bf8 17.Rae1 Rxe1 18.Rxe1² Alzola – Fonseca Gonzalez, ICCF 2007. Black has a material advantage indeed, but his defence is very difficult.

12.Qg3 Be7 13.0-0 (13.Nf3!? 0-0 14.0-0 d6 15.Bg5 Bxg5 16.Nxg5 dxe5 17.b3² White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit.) 13...Bh4. Black wishes to prevent the move Nf3. 14.Qf3 0-0 15.Qh5 (Following 15.Nb3 Nxe5 16.Bxh7+ Kxh7 17.Qh5+ Kg8 18.Qxh4, the position would be simplified and Black's defence would become much easier. 18...c5=) 15...Qd4 16.Bf5 Bd8 17.Nf3 Qxc4 18.b3 Qa6 19.Bg5 d5 20.Bc2² Giroux – Llagaria Vidal, ICCF 2015. The activity of White's pieces increases with every move and Black's extra pawn is absolutely immaterial.

11.Bd3



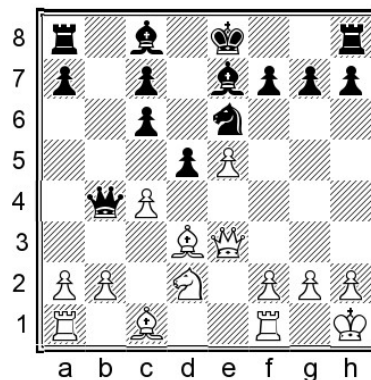
11...Qb6

Black is trying to exchange the queens.

He plays sometimes with the same idea the move 11...Qc5, for example: 12.Nb3 Qxe3+ 13.Bxe3. Black's pawn-structure has been compromised and he is faced with a long and laborious defence. 13...a5 14.f4 (14.Nd4!?²; 14.0-0!?²) 14...a4 15.Nd4 Bb4+ 16.Kf2 Nxd4 17.Bxd4 c5 18.Be3 d6 19.Be4 Ra6 20.exd6 cxd6 21.f5 0-0 22.Bf4² Rublevsky – Gligoric, Novi Sad 2000.

11...Be7 12.0-0 Bb7, Klawe – Kiesel, Germany 2000, 13.Ne4 0-0 14.Nf6+ (White can also win with the prosaic move 14.Qh3+-) 14...Bxf6 (14...gxf6 15.Qh6+-) 15.exf6 Rae8 16.Qg3 g6 17.Bh6+-

11...d5 12.0-0 Be7 13.Kh1. Now, before playing f2-f4, White must remove his king away from the g1-a7 diagonal.



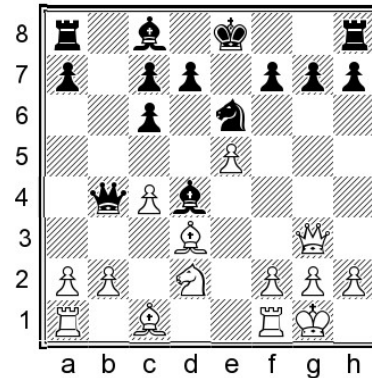
13...g5. Black prevents his opponent's plan, but weakens considerably his kingside. 14.Rd1 (It would be even stronger for White to play here 14.Nb3!? dxc4 15.Qe4±, regaining his pawn and maintaining an overwhelming advantage.) 14...Bb7 15.Bf5² Relange – Boudre, Strasbourg 1992. Black's defence would be very difficult, because he would hardly find a safe haven for his king.

If Black ignores the advance of the enemy f-pawn, his position might turn quickly into being hopeless:

13...Bb7 14.f4 d4?! Now, White's knight gains access to a wonderful outpost at the middle of the board. 15.Qh3 Qb6, Debus – Keller, Hessen 1994, 16.Ne4 0-0-0 17.b4+–

13...Qb6 14.Qg3. White avoids the trade of the queens, because the placement of the enemy king seems rather unsafe at the middle of the board and if Black castles kingside, White's pawn-advance f4-f5 would be obviously even stronger. 14...h5 15.h3 h4 16.Qf3 Qd4 17.Re1² White's pawn-structure is evidently more elastic.

11...Bc5. With this move Black only sends the enemy queen to the g3-square, from where it would exert powerful pressure against the pawn on g7. 12.Qg3 Bd4 (12...Ba6 13.0-0 h5 14.a3 Qb6 15.b4 Bd4 16.Rb1 h4 17.Qg4 Bxe5. Black has won a pawn, but now, White ousts the enemy pieces from their active positions. 18.Nf3 Bf6 19.Re1 0-0-0 20.Be3 Qb8 21.a4+– Clavell Hernandez – Cervello Tost, Vilaseca 2012; 12...h5 13.0-0 h4 14.Qg4 d6 15.Nb3 Bd7 16.Bd2 Qb6 17.Ba5 Qa6 18.exd6. The opening of the game is in favour of White, since he has a much better development. 18...cxd6, Mueller – Lochte, Germany 2017, 19.Rfd1+–) 13.0-0



13...Rb8 14.Nb3 c5 15.Bd2. Now, before playing Nxd4, White develops his bishop with tempo. 15...Qb6 16.Nxd4 cxd4 17.f4 g6 18.f5 (18.b4+–). Black is incapable of preventing the penetration of the enemy pieces into his own camp. 18...Nc5, Szieberth – Szell, Hungary 1994, 19.fxg6 fxg6 20.Rf6 Qb7 21.Bxg6+–

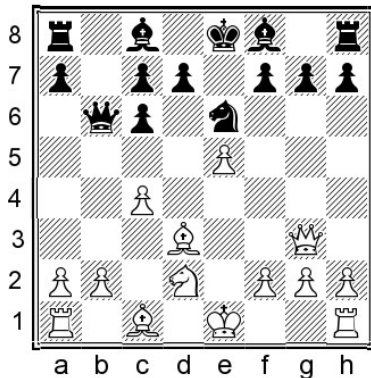
13...Ba6, Mamoori – Harandi, Iran 1992, 14.a3 Qb6 15.Rb1 d6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Nf3±

13...d5 14.a3 Qe7 15.Nb3 0-0 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Nxd4 (After winning a pawn 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qd3±, Black still preserves some chances of saving the game, because of the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board.) 17...Nxd4 18.b4± White's bishops are tremendously powerful in this open position.

11...Bb7 12.0-0 c5. Black opens the diagonal of his bishop on b7 and begins a fight for the central d4-square. (Following 12...Qb6 13.Ne4 0-0-0, Galyas – Nemeth, Szombathely 2003, 14.Qf3 f6, White has a pawn-sacrifice, which is standard for similar positions: 15.b4,) 13.Nb3! From here, his knight will cover the d4-square against the penetration of the enemy pieces. (White's other possible plan is to transfer his knight to d5: 13.Rb1 Qb6, Swathi – Pita, Bled 2002, 14.Ne4 0-0-0

15.Nc3±, followed by Nd5, Bd2, b2-b4, opening the b-file and beginning a direct offensive against the enemy king.) 13...a5 14.Bd2 Qb6 15.Qe1 a4 16.Na5 Bc8 17.f4± It would be rather difficult for Black here to complete the development of his kingside pieces, because on the e7-square his bishop would come under an attack after f4-f5-f6.

12.Qg3



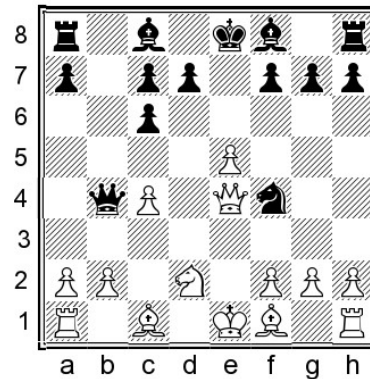
12...h5

12...Bb7 13.0-0 Bc5 14.b4! White sacrifices a pawn and wishes to open the b-file for his rook. 14...Bxb4 15.Rb1 Qa5, Zaichik – Bereolos, Philadelphia 2001, 16.Ne4 Ba6 17.Be3+–

12...d5 13.0-0 a5 14.Kh1 (14.Nf3!?) 14...h5 15.h4 g6? This move leads to an irrevocable weakening of the dark squares on Black's kingside, moreover that he would have to consider permanently the enemy threat Bxg6. (It would be better for him to opt here for 15...Nc5 16.Bc2²) 16.Nf3± Smagin – Murey, Vienna 1991.

13.h4 Ba6 14.0-0 Qd4 15.Rd1. Black can hardly parry here White's threat Ne4, followed by Be3. It is possible that the least of evils here for Black to enter the endgame after: **15...Qg4 16.Qxg4 hxg4 17.g3²**

B) 10.Qe4

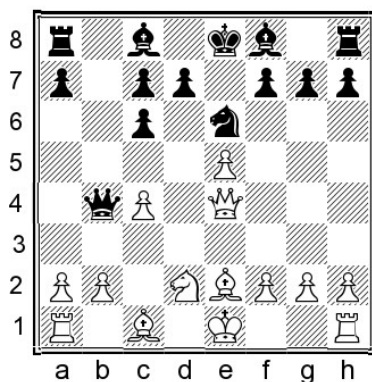


10...Ne6

10...Ng6 11.Bd3. White is in a hurry to evacuate his king away from the centre as quickly as possible. (11.a3!? Qa5 12.f4²). 11...Be7 (11...Bb7 12.0-0 Qb6 13.Nf3 Be7, Catalkilic – T.Petrosyan, Turkey 2009, 14.Re1 c5 15.Qg4² White has a freer game, while Black must consider permanently the possible advance of his opponent's rook-pawn h4-h5.) 12.0-0 0-0 13.Nf3 f5 (13...d5 14.exd6 Qxd6 15.Rd1²) 14.exf6!? (14.Qe2!? d5? Farnault – Barakoff, Calvi 2007, 15.Bd2 Qb6 16.b4±, followed by c4-c5, isolating the enemy queen from the actions.) 14...Bxf6 15.Bd2 Qc5 (15...Qxb2? 16.Rfb1 Qa3 17.Bb4+–; 16...Qxa1 17.Rxa1 Bxa1 18.Nh4+–) 16.Rad1² White has a superior pawn-structure, which promises him a stable advantage and his b2-pawn remains still untouchable: 16...Bxb2? 17.Ng5±

11.Be2

11.a3!? White ousts immediately the enemy queen. 11...Qb6 (11...Qe7 12.b4 g6²) 12.b4 (It would not be so precise here for White to opt for 12.Be2 Bb7 13.0-0 c5 14.Qe3 d6÷ Black has obtained good counterplay.) 12...Qd4 13.Rb1. White would not mind trading the queens, but is reluctant to wait for his opponent to capture on e4. (He would lose his advantage after 13.Qxd4 Nxd4 14.Bd3 a5 15.Bb2 Ne6 16.b5 cxb5 17.cxb5 Bb7÷ Onoprienko – Gabriel, Bad Wiessee 1997.) 13...a5 (13...Rb8 14.Qxd4 Nxd4 15.Bd3²) 14.Bd3 Qxe4+ 15.Nxe4 axb4 16.axb4 d5, Diepeveen – Lamby, Belgium 2007, 17.exd6 cxd6 18.0-0² Now, Black must consider permanently the possibility of White creating an outside passed pawn with b4-b5.



11...Bb7

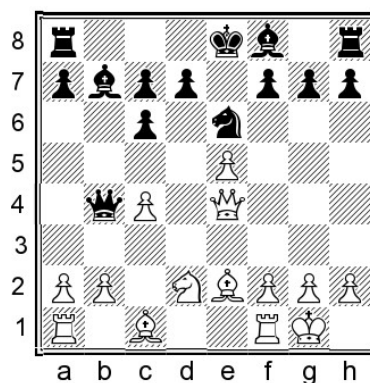
11...Be7 12.0-0 0-0, Wozniak – Wrobel, Wroclaw 2010, 13.Nb3²

11...a5 12.0-0 a4 13.Nf3 Be7, Kolodziejski – Jozefini, ICCF 2009, 14.Re1!? This rather mysterious rook-

move is played with the idea that after the removal of White's bishop from the e2-square, he would have an additional possibility to protect the strategically important e5-square. His imminent plans include the transfer of his bishop to the c3-square. 14...Bb7 15.Bd2 Qb6 16.Bc3²

11...Bc5 12.0-0 a5 (This activity is rather premature 12...Nd4?! 13.Bd3± and Black's problems become greater after it.) 13.Rb1 Be7 14.b3 0-0 15.Nf3² White has managed to deploy harmoniously his pieces and in the middle game he can begin an attack against his opponent's pawn-weaknesses.

12.0-0

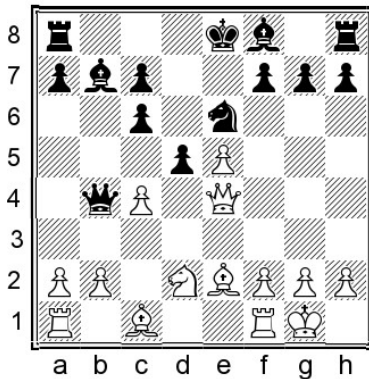


12...c5

12...Qb6, Doehner – Brandt, Wingst 2006, 13.Bf3. White impedes the enemy pawn-advance c6-c5 (13.b4!? c5 14.bxc5 Bxc5 15.Qh4²; 13...Bxb4 14.Rb1 c5 15.Qe3 Qa6 16.a3 Bxd2 17.Bxd2 0-0 18.Bd3 d6 19.Qh3 g6 20.f4,) 13...Ng5 (13...Be7?! 14.Nb3±; 13...Qd4 14.Qe2 Nf4 15.Qd1 Be7 16.Re1²) 14.Qf4 Nxf3+ 15.Nxf3. Black has succeeded in exchanging the powerful enemy bishop, but has lost too much time on manoeuvres with his knight. 15...Be7

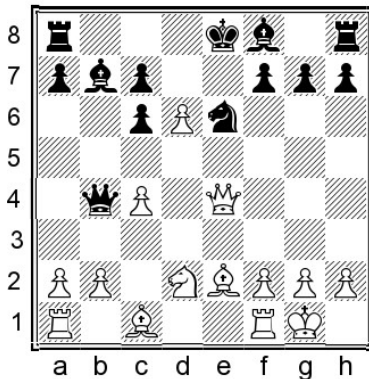
16.Qg3², White exerts powerful pressure against the enemy kingside.

12...d5



13.Qe3!? a5 (13...Bc5 14.Qg3±, with the idea a3, b4; 13...Ba6 14.Qg3²; 13...Be7 14.Nb3²) 14.Kh1 Bc5 (14...g5 15.Rd1²) 15.Qg3 0-0 16.Nb3² White will develop his bishop to d2 in the next few moves after which his advantage would be doubtless.

13.exd6. White determines immediately the pawn-structure in the centre.

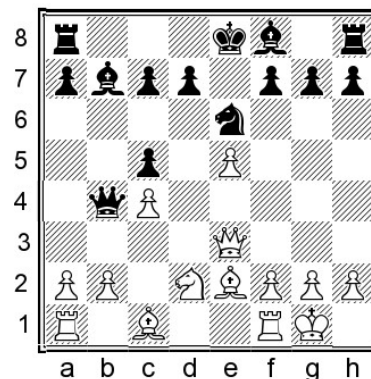


13...cxd6?! This move does not contribute to the development of Black's pieces. 14.Bh5 (14.Nf3 c5. He opens the diagonal for his bishop, but weakens the d5-square. 15.Qg4 Be7 16.Bd2 Qb6 17.Bc3² Nataf – Gligoric, Cannes 1998; 14.a3!? Qb6, Abbasi – Lopez Mateo, Albacete 1994, 15.Bh5 g6 16.Bg4 Bc8

17.Bxe6 Bxe6 18.c5! With this energetic pawn-sacrifice White wins a tempo for the development of his bishop on b2. 18...Qxc5 19.b4 Qd5 20.Bb2 Qxe4 21.Nxe4 d5 22.Nf6+ Kd8 23.Nxd5 Rg8 24.Nf6±) 14...g6 15.Bg4 (15.a3!? Qb6 16.Bg4±) 15...d5 16.Qe2 Bc8 (16...Qd6 17.Rd1±) 17.cxd5. The placement of Black's king at the middle of the board becomes even more dangerous after every move, since the position is beginning to be opened. 17...cxd5, Afromeev – Krasnov, Tula 2006, 18.Bxe6 Bxe6 19.Qe5 Rg8 20.Nf3±

13...Bxd6 14.a3 Qb6 15.Bf3 (The seemingly promising pawn-sacrifice 15.c5!? would enable Black to hold the balance with a series of precise moves: 15...Qxc5 16.Nc4 Qd5 17.Nxd6+ cxd6 18.Qxd5 cxd5 19.b4= White's two-bishop advantage and his superior pawn-structure compensate his minimal material deficit, but not more than that...) 15...0-0 16.b4 Ng5 17.Qg4 Nxf3+ 18.Nxf3 c5,, Black exchanges the powerful enemy bishop and obtains an acceptable game, Brustkern – Balint, Budapest 2013.

13.Qe3

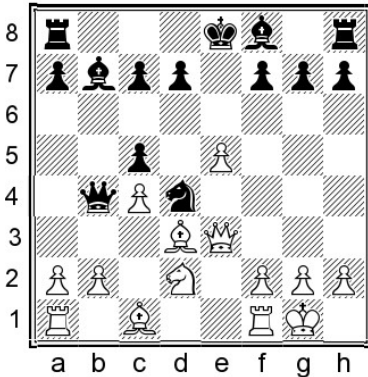


13...Be7

13...0-0-0. This is not the best decision for Black. His king would be seriously

endangered on the weakened queenside.
 14.Nb3 Qb6 15.Bf3 d6 16.Bxb7+ Qxb7,
 Bauer – Korchnoi, Switzerland 2002,
 17.Bd2 Be7 18.Bc3±

13...Nd4. Black centralises immediately
 his knight. 14.Bd3



14...Qb6, Grosar – Gabriel, Portoroz
 1993, 15.Nb3!? White trades the powerful
 enemy knight at the price of a pawn.
 15...Nxb3 16.axb3 Qxb3 17.Ra3 Qb6
 18.Bd2 Be7 19.f4© White has very good
 attacking possibilities as compensation
 for the sacrificed pawn.

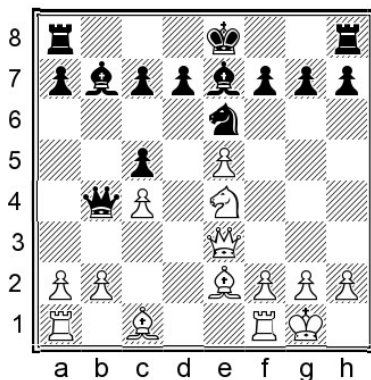
14...Be7 15.Ne4 0-0-0 16.Bd2 Qb6
 17.Bc3 (17.Rab1. White plans to advance
 b2-b4 at an opportune moment. 17...d5
 18.exd6 Bxd6 19.Qh3² He not only has a
 superior pawn-structure, but his king is
 much safer than its counterpart. After
 17...a5, Estrin – Levenfish, Gorky 1950, it
 seems good for White to transfer his
 knight to the d5-outpost: 18.Nc3 f6
 19.Nd5±) 17...f5 (17...Ne6 18.Rae1±)
 18.exf6 Bxf6 19.b4 Bxe4 20.bxc5 Qxc5
 21.Qxe4 Qc6, Konnyu – Mozes, Hungary
 2007, 22.Qd5² White's couple of powerful
 bishops provides him with an advantage
 in the middle game as well as in the
 endgame.

14...0-0-0 15.Nb3 (15.f4!? Qb6 16.Nb3²)
 15...Qb6 16.Be4 (16.Bd2!? f6 17.exf6 gxf6
 18.Be4² White wishes to trade the

bishops in order to deprive his opponent
 of the possibilities connected with
 exerting pressure against the g2-square.)
 16...Kb8 (16...d6 17.Bxb7+ Kxb7 18.Qg5!
 Ne6 19.Qf5±; 18.Qe4+ Kb8 19.Nxd4 cxd4
 20.Rd1 – 20.Qd5!?± – 20...dxe5 21.Rd3²
 Bejtovic – Sisatto, Copenhagen 2009.
 Black is faced with a difficult defence,
 because his king's shelter has been
 seriously compromised.) 17.Rd1 Be7
 18.Nxd4 cxd4 19.Qd3 d6 20.Bxb7 Qxb7
 21.Bf4 (It is also possible for White here
 to protect his pawn with his rook –
 21.Re1!?±) 21...dxe5 22.Bxe5 Bd6
 23.Qxd4 f6 24.Bg3 Qc6 25.Qc3 Rhe8
 26.Bxd6 (26.b4!?±) 26...Rxd6, Amonatov –
 Guskov, Kaluga 2003, 27.h3± White not
 only has an extra pawn, but can
 eventually organise an attack against the
 vulnerable enemy king.

14.Ne4

The move 14.f4 would lose the
 advantage for White. 14...f5! (14...Nd4
 15.Bd3 g6 16.Ne4 0-0-0, Moiseenko –
 Alekseev, Sochi 2016, 17.Nc3. He is
 preparing the transfer of his knight to the
 d5-square. 17...d6 18.Nd5² Now, Black is
 faced with a rather unpleasant choice. He
 must either put up with the powerful
 centralised enemy knight, or he must
 exchange it with the important defender
 of his own king. 18...Bxd5 19.cxd5 dxe5
 20.fxe5 Rxd5 21.Bd2 Qb6 22.Bc4±)
 15.Nb3 a5. Black defends against the
 threat Bd2, followed by Na5. 16.Bd2 Qb6
 17.Bc3 a4 18.Nd2, Parameswaran –
 Balinas, Hangzhou 1981, 18...0-0÷ Black is
 well prepared to penetrate with his
 knight to the d4-square.



14...d6

After Black's alternatives, he must permanently consider the possible enemy manoeuvre Nc3-d5.

14...Qb6 15.Bd3 0-0-0, Villarreal – Swanson, Mexico 1978, 16.Nc3²

14...0-0-0 15.Bd2 (15.Nc3!?) 15...Qb6, Lopez Gonzalez – Fernandez Guillen, Cuba 2012, 16.Nc3 Nd4 17.Nd5 Qe6 18.Ba5²
The activity of White's pieces increases with every move.

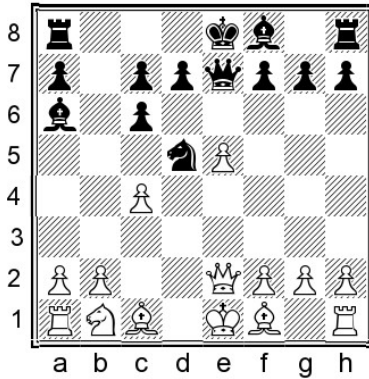
14...0-0. This is a calm move. Black's king will be safer on the kingside than on the opposite flank of the board. 15.Bd2 Qb6, R.Smith – Sarapu, Dunedin 1992, 16.Bd3² White's superior pawn-structure provides him with a stable advantage.

15.Bd2 (It is also possible for White to play here 15.f4, without being afraid of the appearance of an isolated pawn in his position. 15...dxe5 16.fxe5 Rd8 17.Bd2 Qa4 18.Nc3 Qd7 19.Rad1², followed by Nd5, Bc3, Qg3.) **15...Qb6 16.exd6 cxd6**, Vajda – Gabriel, Budapest 1994, **17.Rae1 0-0 18.Bd3 Rae8 19.Qh3²** White's pieces exert powerful pressure against the

position of the enemy king. In addition, Black's pawn-weaknesses on a7 and d6 hurt him seriously. He would be faced with a long and laborious defence. For example: the careless move **19...h6?** loses immediately after the simple tactical strike **20.Bxh6!+-**

Chapter 17

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Ba6**



9.Nd2

This is a flexible move. Later, depending on what Black is doing, White can complete the development of his queenside with b3, Bb2, 0-0-0, or play Nf3, not only protecting his e5-pawn, but also preparing Bg5.

9.g3. If White wishes to fianchetto early his light-squared bishop, he had better play 8.g3, restricting his opponent's possibilities.

It does not make much sense for White to follow a plan, connected with the move 9.Qe4?! He relies on the repetition of moves after 9...Nf6 10.Qe2 Nd5=, or on 9...Nb6 10.Nc3 – see Chapter 23. Black can try to play for a win, however: 9...Nb4!? The threat d7-d5 would be very unpleasant for White. 10.Nc3 (10.a3? d5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.Qg4 Nc2-+) 10...Rd8! 11.Kd1. White is forced to bring his king

into the protection of the c2-square, but the centre of the board is not the best place for it in the middle game... 11...d5 12.exd6 Rxd6+ (12...Qxe4. This voluntary exchange of the queens, with the enemy king in the centre, does not seem logical at all. 13.Nxe4 Bxd6 14.a3 Be7+ 15.Nd2 Nd3 16.Bxd3 Rxd3 17.Kc2 Rd7 18.b3 0-0+ Drozniak – Smolka, Jastrzebia Gora 2018.) 13.Bd2 Re6 14.Qf3 c5 15.Qa8+ Qd8 16.Qxd8+ Kxd8 17.Nb5 Be7 18.Nxa7 Kd7 19.f4 Rd6 20.Kc1 Bf6³ Carlier – Harabor, ICCF 2017. White's defence is difficult even in the endgame, because his pieces are very badly coordinated.

After the move 9.Nd2, we will analyse:

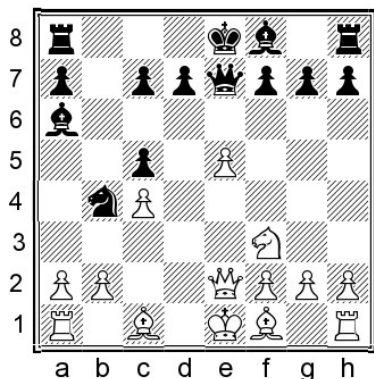
A) 9...Nb6, B) 9...0-0-0 and C) 9...g6.

9...Nf4. This transfer of the knight to the e6-square looks rather slow. 10.Qe3 Ne6 11.Bd3 Qh4 12.0-0 Bc5, Sochacki – Petkov, Maranello 2013, 13.Qf3 0-0 14.Ne4²

9...Rb8 10.Qe4 Nb6, Nasuta – Kucza, Chorzow 2019, 11.b3 d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Be2²

It would not be reasonable for Black to play here 9...Nb4. It is possible that he might manage to equalise after a while, but White will have a command over the events on the board. 10.Nf3 c5 (Following 10...d5 11.a3 Bxc4, Black wins a pawn indeed, but White maintains a long-term positional pressing. 12.Qd1 Bxf1 13.Kxf1 Na6 14.Be3 Nc5 15.Qc2 Rd8 16.Nd4 Qd7 17.Rc1±; 14...Qd7 15.e6 Qxe6 16.Qa4 Nb8 17.Re1 Kd7 18.Bd4 Qf5 19.Ne5+ Kc8 20.h4 Bd6 21.Rh3 Re8 22.Rf3 Qh5 23.Nxc6 Rxe1+ 24.Kxe1+- Orekhov – Triana Martinez, ICCF 2012; 15...fxe6

16.Ne5 Qe7, Yaremko - Kravtsiv, Lvov 2006, 17.Qa4 Nb8 18.Rc1 Qd6 19.Bf4±)



11.g3. White should better oust immediately the active enemy knight with the move a3. 11...Qe6 (11...d5. This move is premature. 12.Qd1 0-0-0, Diepeveen – Geenen, Belgium 2006, 13.a3 Nc6 14.cxd5 Bxf1 15.Kxf1 Nxe5 16.Kg2² After the exchange of the light-squared bishops Black's king has become rather unsafe.) 12.a3?! It is already too late for this move. White only helps his opponent to exert pressure against his e5-pawn. (12.b3 Qg6= Zhang Jilin – Otikova, Batumi 2018) 12...Nc6 13.Bd2 Bb7!?! It has become evident now that White has failed to play Bg2 and 0-0. (13...0-0-0 14.0-0-0, Kryvoruchko – Almasi, Varadero 2016, 14...Be7÷) 14.Bg2 Nxe5 15.0-0 Nxf3+ 16.Bxf3 Qxe2 17.Bxe2 0-0-0² White does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

11.a3 Nc6 12.Bd2. He plans to transfer his bishop to the c3-square in order to protect his pawn on e5. 12...Qe6 (12...g6? Now, before White's bishop has abandoned the c1-h6 diagonal, Black should better refrain from weakening the f6-square. 13.Bg5 Qe6 14.Bf6± Nasuta – Navara, Poland 2017. The move 12...d6 leads to an endgame without any good prospects for Black. 13.exd6 Qxe2+ 14.Bxe2 Bxd6 15.Bc3 0-0 16.0-0-0² Sklyarov – Sammalvuuo, Finland 2013;

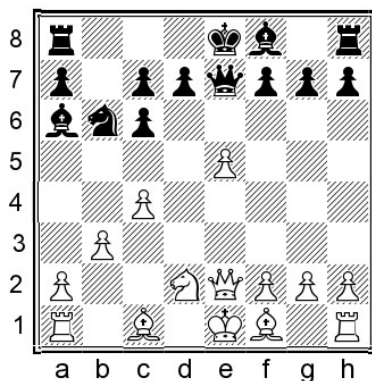
12...0-0-0 13.0-0-0 h6 14.Bc3²; 12...Bb7 13.Bc3, Gaehwiler – Jenni, Winterthur 2008, 13...0-0-0 14.0-0-0²; 12...f6 13.exf6 gxf6 14.Bc3 Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 Bg7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.Nh4 Rhe8 18.Rhe1² Verheyen – Dauw, Wachtebeke 2019) 13.Bc3 Be7 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.Qe4² Kobo – Mikhalevski, Israel 2019 (or 15.h4!?², preparing Ng5, Sutton – Pallett, ICCF 2017).

9...f6. Black relies on simplifying the position. 10.Qe4 Nb6 11.exf6 Qxe4+ 12.Nxe4 gxf6 13.Nxf6+ (If White refrains from capturing the pawn, this might only lead to additional difficulties for him. 13.b3?! 0-0-0 14.Bb2 Bb4+ 15.Kd1 d5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Rxf1 Rxd5+. Black has numerous pawn-weaknesses indeed, but his pieces have been deployed much more actively than their white counterparts. 18.Kc2 Re8 19.f3 f5 20.Bc3 fxe4 21.Bxb4 exf3³ Fluvia Poyatos – Krysa, Barcelona 2018) 13...Kf7 14.Ng4 Re8+ 15.Ne3 Nxc4 (15...Bxc4 16.Bxc4+ Nxc4 17.0-0 Re4 18.Nxc4 Rxc4, Shankland – Swiercz, Saint Louis 2018, 19.Rd1!?) 16.Be2 Bb4+ 17.Kd1 Nxe3+ 18.Bxe3 Bxe2+ 19.Kxe2 Bc5= Sawlin – Mesaros, Celje 2016.

A) 9...Nb6

After this voluntary removal of the knight from the centre, Black will have problems to fight for equality.

10.b3

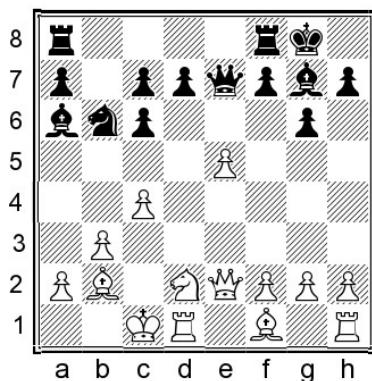


10...d5

About 10...Qe6 11.Bb2 – see Chapter 18, variation C.

10...0-0-0 11.Bb2 – see Chapter 19, variation A2.

10...g6 11.Bb2 Bg7 12.0-0-0 0-0 (12...0-0 13.g3 – see Chapter 19, variation A2).

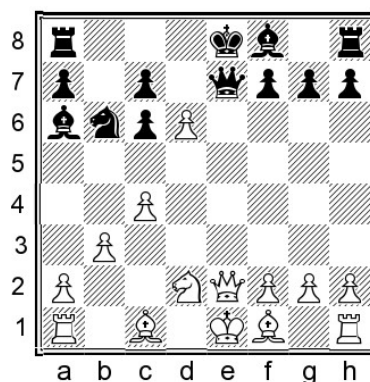


13.f4. White has no time to fortify his important pawn. 13...d5! (After the indifferent move 13...Rfe8, Jones – Urkedal, Reykjavik 2014, White can advance his h-pawn, beginning an attack against the enemy monarch: 14.h4!? d6 15.h5 dxe5 16.Re1,) 14.h4 (The position will be simplified after 14.exd6 Bxb2+ 15.Kxb2 Qxd6, Doehner – Jakoby, Ellwangen 2002, 16.Qe5 Rfe8 17.Qxd6 cxd6=) 14...dxc4 15.Qe4 c3 16.Bxc3 (16.Bxa6 cxb2+ 17.Kxb2. After the bishop

on b2 has disappeared off the board, the position of White's king has become much less safer. 17...f6 18.Nf3 fxe5 19.fxe5 Rae8÷) 16...Bc8 17.Bb4. This is a reliable move. White is reluctant to let the enemy queen to occupy the a3-square. (After 17.h5 Qa3+ 18.Bb2 Qxa2 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Bd3 Bf5, he has nothing better than to enter an endgame: 21.Bb1 Bxe4 22.Bxa2 Bd5÷ White has a better pawn-structure, but Black's bishop on d5 has been deployed much more actively than its white counterpart.) 17...c5 18.Ba3 Bf5 19.Qc6 (19.Qf3 h5=) 19...Rfd8 20.Bxc5 Rd6 21.Nc4. (The queens must be exchanged; otherwise, White might come under a dangerous attack in the middle game: 21.exd6?? Qf6–+) 21...Rxc6 22.Bxe7 Be6=

It is possible that White's best decision in this position may be 13.h4!?N, for example: 13...Rfe8 (13...d5 14.exd6 Bxb2+ 15.Kxb2 Qxd6 16.Nf3±) 14.f4 d6 15.h5 dxe5 16.Re1f The threat of an attack on the h-file is very unpleasant for Black.

11.exd6



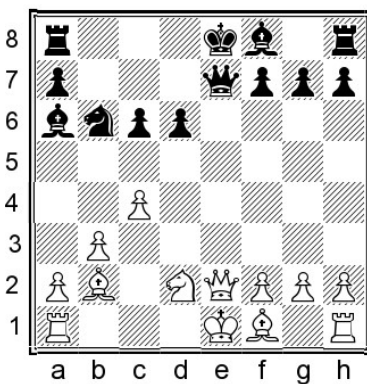
The e-file is being opened and this is in favour of White, since this would help him to trade the queens. In the endgame, he will have a small but stable edge thanks to his superior pawn-structure.

11...cxd6

Black is not in a hurry to exchange on e2 in order not to enhance the development of the enemy bishop on f1.

11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 cxd6 13.Bb2 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 d5 (The move 14...Kc7?! would worsen Black's position even more. 15.Rhe1 Bc8 16.Nf3 f6 17.Nd4 Bd7, Leko – Osipiak, Rimavska Sobota 1992, 18.a4±; 14...f6 15.Nf3²) 15.Nf3 (It is less precise for White to choose here 15.Rhe1, because after 15...dxc4 16.Nxc4 Nxc4 17.Rxd8+ Kxd8 18.Rd1+ Kc7 19.Bxc4 Bxc4 20.Be5+ Kc8 21.bxc4, the position would be considerably simplified and his edge would evaporate. 21...Bc5 22.Bxg7 Rg8 23.Bd4 Bxd4 24.Rxd4 Rxg2= Sveshnikov – Genocchio, Presolana 2011.) 15...Bd6 16.Nd4² Black is faced now with a rather unpleasant defence. 16...dxc4?! (16...Rhe8 17.Bf3²) 17.Nxc6 Bf4+ 18.Kb1 Rxd1+ 19.Rxd1 Kc7, Zuidema – Scholl, Leeuwarden 1970, 20.Nd4 Re8 21.a4± Black is incapable of preventing the pawn-advance a4-a5 and will soon lose his pawn on c4.

12.Bb2



12...f6

Now, Black must weaken his position even more; otherwise, he would lose his g7-pawn.

About 12...Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 – see 11...Qxe2+.

12...d5 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.cxd5 Bxf1 15.Kxf1 0-0-0 16.Nf3 Rxd5 17.Bxg7± Lundstrom – Aronsson, Sweden 2013.

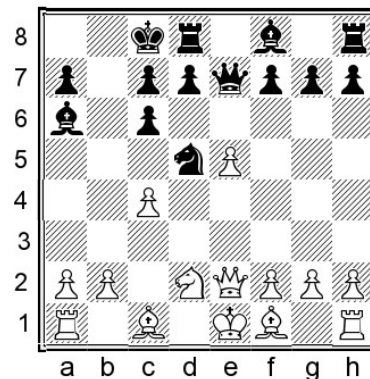
13.0-0-0 Qxe2

Following 13...0-0-0, White can avoid the exchange of the queens, because Black's king is rather unsafe on the queenside. 14.Qf3!? Bb7 15.Bd3 Kb8, Harsha – Babu, Chennai 2012, 16.Kb1 Qc7 17.Rc1 Be7 18.Rhe1 Rde8 19.Qg3±

14.Bxe2 Kf7, Holzke – Gabriel, Bad Wiessee 1998 (14...0-0-0 15.Nf3²)

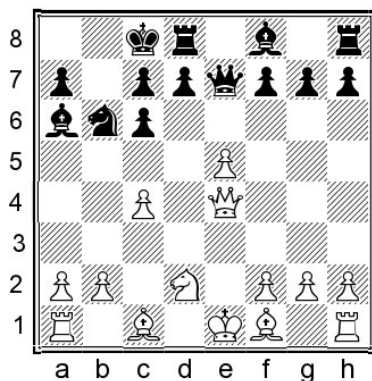
15.Bh5+!? This is a very useful check. White wishes to provoke g7-g6, in order to be able later to attack the enemy f6-pawn with the move Ne4. 15...g6 16.Bf3 d5 17.cxd5 Nxd5 18.Ne4²

B) 9...0-0-0



10.b3

After 10.Qe4, Black seizes the initiative.
10...Nb6

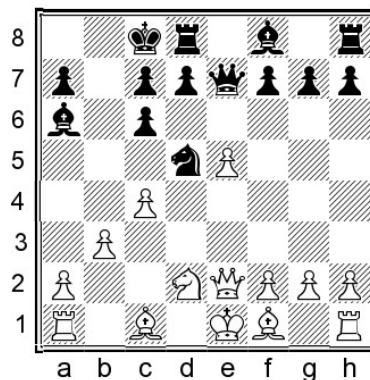


The tactical complications after 11.c5 turn out to be in favour of Black. 11...Bxf1 12.cxb6 Ba6 13.bxa7 Kb7. White's pawn on a7 is harmless for Black and the basic factor for the correct evaluation of the position is White's king, stranded in the centre. 14.Nb3 f6 15.f4 fxe5 16.fxe5 Re8³ Timman – Karpov, London 1984.

11.f4 f6÷

After 11.Be2 Re8 12.Nf3 Qe6 13.b3 Bb4+ 14.Bd2 Bxd2+ 15.Kxd2 c5f, there arises a position in which White's game is much more difficult, Andrews – Francisco, Hendersonville 2007.

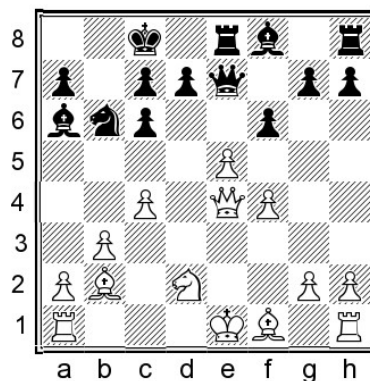
11.b3 d5 12.cxd5 Bxf1 13.Kxf1 Rxd5 14.Nf3 Rd1+ 15.Ne1 Qb4÷ Yagupov – Plat, Olomouc 2015. Black's queenside pawns have been weakened, but his pieces are deployed much more actively than their white counterparts.



10...g5

The move 10...d6 may lead by force to an equal endgame. 11.Qg4+ Kb8 12.cxd5 Qxe5+ 13.Qe4 Qxa1 14.Qb4+ Bb5 15.Bxb5 Qxc1+ 16.Ke2 Qc5 17.Qxc5 dxc5 18.Bxc6 Bd6= Howell – Svidler, Amsterdam 2010. White's powerful bishop on c6, which deprives the enemy rooks of important squares, as well as the presence of numerous pawn-weaknesses in Black's camp is good compensation for White's exchange-sacrifice.

10...Re8 11.Bb2 f6 (11...g6?! 12.0-0-0 Bg7 13.Kb1±) 12.Qe4 (White does not need to transfer to the line with 10...f6 with 12.0-0-0 fxe5 13.g3.) 12...Nb6 13.f4 (13.Be2!?N 13...fxe5 14.0-0²)



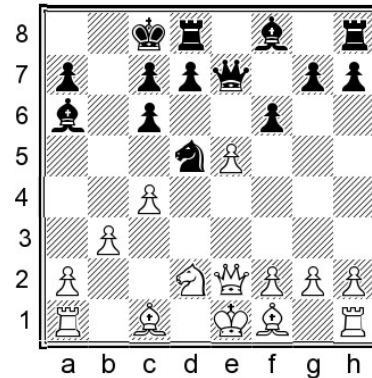
13...fxe5 14.fxe5 Bb7 15.0-0-0 (About the move 15.Bd3!?, with the idea to castle kingside – see 13...Bb7.) 15...g6 16.Bd3 Bg7, Prandstetter – Kovacs, Decin 1978,

17.Rhe1² White has managed to protect his pawn on e5 which cramps the enemy pieces.

13...g5. Black attacks the enemy pawn on f4, but weakens considerably his kingside. 14.0-0-0 (14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba6 16.bxa7 Kb7. Now, contrary to the already analysed position from the game Timman – Karpov, White’s king can abandon quickly the centre of the board. 17.0-0-0 gxf4 18.exf6 Qxe4 19.Nxe4 Rxe4 20.f7 Re7 21.Bxh8 Rxf7 22.Kb2² Black’s bishops are very powerful, but still his compensation for the exchange is insufficient.) 14...Bg7, Nafri – Asabri, Tunis 2013, 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Qxe7 Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Rxe7 18.fgx5±

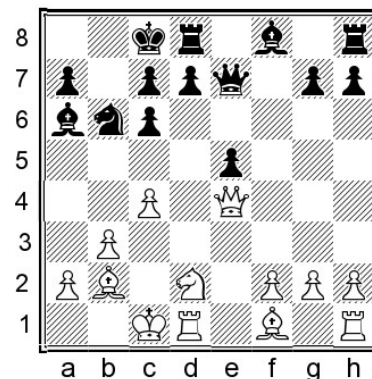
13...Bb7 14.Bd3. White does not determine yet the future placement of his king. (It would not be so elastic for him to choose 14.0-0-0 c5 15.Qd3 Qe6 16.a4 fxe5 17.a5 e4, Zenari – Lumachi, Verona 2019, 18.Qe2 Na8 19.g3 Be7 20.Bg2 Bf6. There has arisen a position, which is rather difficult to evaluate, since both sides have their trumps.) 14...fxe5 15.fxe5 Qg5 (15...g6 16.0-0!?) 16.0-0-0 (16.Qe2!?) White does not sacrifice his pawn on g2 16...c5?! 17.0-0±) 16...Bb4 (In the line: 16...c5 17.Qe2 Qxg2 18.Qxg2 Bxg2 19.Rhg1 Bc6 20.a4Ⓞ, White would have good compensation for the minimal material deficit.) 17.a3 Bxd2+ 18.Rxd2 Rhf8 19.h4 Qe7 20.Qxh7± Mezcuca Coronil – Gallego Eraso, Mesa 1992.

10...f6!? Black attacks immediately the enemy pawn on e5.



11.Bb2 fxe5 12.0-0-0 Re8. Black has no reason to refrain from protecting his central pawn. (The humble approach 12...Nf6?!, would lead to an inferior endgame for him: 13.Qxe5 Qxe5 14.Bxe5 Ng4 15.Bd4 c5 16.h3 cxd4 17.hxg4 Bb7 18.f3 h6 19.Bd3² Yu Yangyi – Stefansson, Reykjavik 2013.) 13.g3 Nf6 (Black would lose his advantage after 13...Kb8 14.Bg2 Qf7, Zumsande – I.Sokolov, Reykjavik 2012, 15.Qf3 Nf6÷) 14.Bh3 Kb8 15.Rhe1 Qf7³ Nedev – Elsness, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010. White has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

11.Qe4 Nb6 (11...Nb4 12.Bb2 Bb7 13.exf6 gxf6 14.Qxe7 Bxe7 15.Kd1 c5= Wolf – A.Ivanov, ICCF 2008) 12.Bb2 fxe5 13.0-0-0 (It is also possible for White here to follow a plan with castling kingside: 13.Be2 Kb8 14.Qc2 d5 15.0-0 e4= Candy – Narkun, Email 2013)



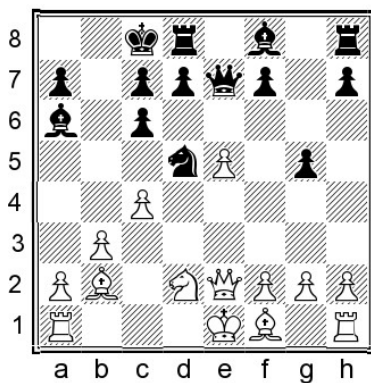
13...d5!? Black gives back the extra material, but simplifies the position.

14.Qxe5 Qf7 15.cxd5 Bxf1 16.Rhxf1 Rxd5
17.Qe4 Bd6=

13...d6 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 (15.Rhxf1 d5
16.Qf5+ Nd7 17.b4 e4÷) 15...Ba6 16.bxa7
Kb7= Lutz – Unglaub, Erlangen 1994.
Black's king is vulnerable, but the power
of his bishops should not be
underestimated.

After 13...Re8 14.Nf3 Qf6 (14...Bb7?!
Salles – Sachdev, Reykjavik 2019, 15.Qxe5
Qf7 16.Qg3²) 15.Bxe5 Qh6+ 16.Kc2 Bd6,
White can begin an attack with the move
17.c5, but the activity of his pieces would
be sufficient only for a perpetual check.
17...Bxf1 18.cxb6 Bxg2 19.Qa4 Bxf3
20.Qa6+ Kd8 21.bxc7+ Bxc7 22.Bxc7+
Kxc7 23.Qxa7+ Kc8 24.Qa8+ Kc7=

11.Bb2



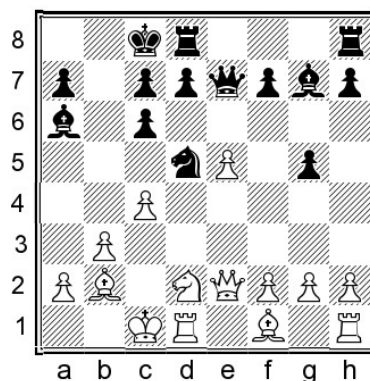
11...Bg7

11...Nb4!?N Now, if White castles, Black
would be happy to capture on a2. 12.Ne4
c5 13.0-0-0 Nxa2+ 14.Kb1 Nb4 15.g3.
White maintains the tension in the fight.
(15.h4 Bb7 16.hxg5 Qe6 17.f3 Be7÷; after
15.e6, Black can force a perpetual check
being a queen down... 15...Rg8 16.exd7+
Rxd7 17.Qg4 Qxe4+ 18.Qxe4 Rxd1+
19.Bc1 Bb7 20.Qg4+ Kb8 21.Qxd1 Be4+
22.Ka1 Bg7+ 23.Bb2 Nc2+ 24.Ka2 Nb4+
25.Ka3 Nc2=) 15...Bb7 16.Bh3 Bg7
17.Rhe1 Kb8÷ White has compensation

for the sacrificed pawn, but not more than
that.

11...Nf4. Black wishes to exploit his
knight in order to create pressure against
the g2-square. 12.Qe3 Bb7 13.h4 c5
14.Rh2 (White maintains an edge after
the exchange of the g-pawns. Still, he does
not need to do that if he can simply win a
pawn! 14.0-0-0 Nxg2 15.Bxg2 Bxg2
16.Rhg1 Bc6 17.hxg5²) 14...Bg7 15.hxg5
Ng6 16.0-0-0±

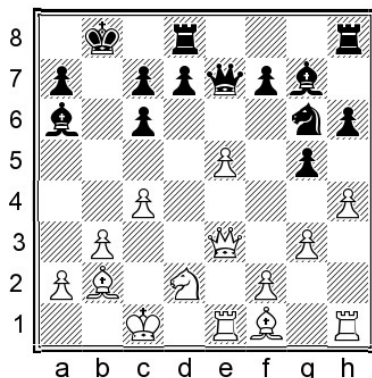
12.0-0-0



12...Nb6

12...Kb8, Mussanti – Lezama,
Montevideo 2018, 13.h4 Nf4 14.Qe3²

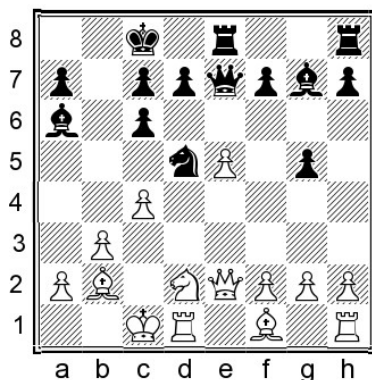
12...Nf4 13.Qe3 Kb8 14.h4 h6 15.g3 Ng6
(15...Ne6?! 16.Ne4 g4 17.c5 Bxf1 18.Rhxf1
h5 19.Kb1 Rhe8 20.f4 gxf3 21.Rxf3±
Abdulyazanov – Belousov, Uljanovsk
2008. Black's king is vulnerable as well as
his pawns on f7 and h5.) 16.Re1!? (16.f4)



16...Rhe8 17.Nf3 g4 (17...gxh4 18.Nxh4 Nxh4 19.gxh4 d6 20.f4²) 18.h5 gxf3 19.hxg6 fvg6 20.Bd3²

16...gxh4 17.f4 d6 (17...Rhe8 18.Nf3 hxg3 19.Nd4 Bh8 20.Qxg3²) 18.Nf3 Rhe8 (18...Bb7 19.gxh4 h5 20.Nd4 Bf8 21.Nf5 Qe6 22.Bh3 dxe5 23.fxe5 Ne7 24.Ng7 Qg6 25.Rhg1 Qh7 26.Qg5 Rd3 27.Bf1 Rd8 28.e6 fxe6 29.Bh3±; 18...c5 19.gxh4 h5 20.Bd3²) 19.Nd4 Bb7 20.Nf5 Qf8 21.Nxg7 Qxg7 22.gxh4²

12...Rde8

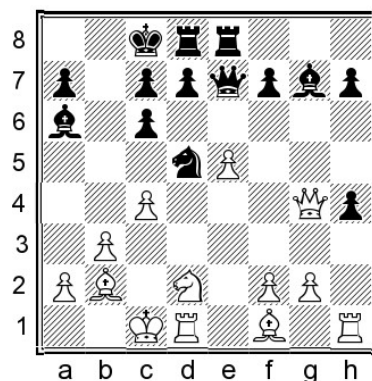


13.Re1!? Nf4 (13...d6?? 14.Qg4+ Kb8 15.cxd5+- Kostitsina – Pastuszko, Herceg Novi 2008) 14.Qe3. White attacks the pawn on a7 and wins a tempo to oust the enemy knight from the f4-square. 14...c5 15.g3 Ng6 (After 15...Bb7, White can sacrifice the exchange: 16.gxf4 Bxh1 17.f3 g4 18.fvg4 Bb7 19.Ne4² Black will have problems to activate his rooks, because

there are no open files on the board.) 16.Bg2 Bxe5 17.Kc2 c6 (17...Bxb2?? 18.Qf3+-) 18.Qd3 f6 19.h4 g4 20.Be4± Black has so many pawn weaknesses in his position that he must think about how to save the game.

13.Kb1 Kb8?! (13...Nf4 14.Qe3 Kb8 15.h4 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Rxe5 18.hxg5²) 14.h4 (The move 14.g3!? deprives Black's knight of the f4-square.) 14...h6?! (Black should better choose here 14...Nf4 15.Qe3 – see 13...Nf4.) 15.Qg4 (15.g3!?) 15...Nf4 16.g3 Ng6?! (16...Ne6 17.Ne4 Bb7) 17.f4 gxf4, Smistik – Potapov, Pardubice 2007, 18.h5 Bxe5 19.hxg6 Bxb2 20.Kxb2 Qf6+ 21.Kc2 fvg3 22.gxf7 Qxf7 23.Qxg3±

12...Rhe8 13.h4! Black's rook has abandoned the h-file and White exploits this immediately. 13...gxh4 (13...Nf4 14.Qe3 Bxe5 15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Rxe5 17.hxg5 Rvg5 18.Rxh7² Black's defence is very difficult, for example: 18...Nxg2? 19.Ne4 Rg6 20.Nc5 Bb7 21.Nxd7 Nf4 22.Rxf7 Rd6 23.Rxf4 Rxd1+ 24.Kxd1 Rxd7+ 25.Kc2±) 14.Qg4

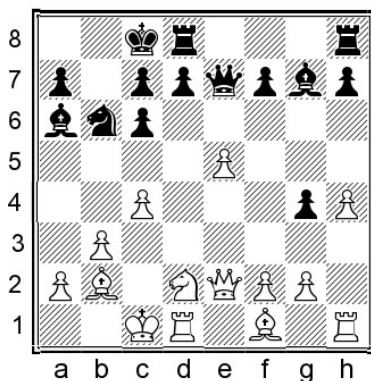


14...f5 (14...Bxe5 15.cxd5 Qc5+ 16.Kb1 Bxf1 17.Rhx1 Bxb2 18.Kxb2 Qxd5 19.Rh1±) 15.Qd4 Nb4 16.Qxa7. White's queen is very dangerous in the vicinity of the enemy king, so this creates disharmony in the actions of Black's

pieces. 16...Bb7 17.a3 Na6 18.b4 c5
 19.Nb3 Bxe5 20.b5 Qf6 21.Bxe5 Qxe5
 22.Rh3! This rook has achieved its goal
 just in time! White has brought his rook
 to the protection of his king via the third
 rank. 22...Nb8, Najer – Sulskis, Pardubice
 2004, 23.Nxc5 Ba8 24.Kc2+-

13.h4! g4

Following 13...h6, by exerting pressure
 against the pawn on e5, White will
 manage to provoke the pawn-advance g5-
 g4 anyway. 14.Qe3 Kb8 15.Nf3 g4
 16.Nd4± Black is incapable of preventing
 the penetration of the enemy knight to
 the f5-square.



14.Qe3!N

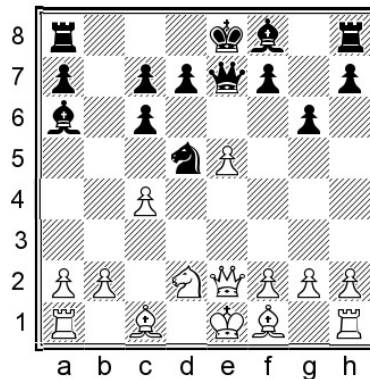
This move is played with the idea to
 follow with c4-c5.

After 14.f4, White would lose a great
 deal of his advantage. 14...gxf3 15.Nxf3 c5,
 Radjabov – Topalov, Nanjing 2009,
 16.a4!/? Kb8 17.g4 Bb7 18.Bg2²

14...c5 15.Ne4 Bxe5 16.Nxc5 Bxb2+
 17.Kxb2 Qxe3 18.fxe3 Bb7 19.Nxb7
 Kxb7 20.Bd3 d5 21.cxd5 Nxd5 22.Be4
 c6 23.Bxd5!/? cxd5 24.Rhf1± In this

endgame with four rooks Black would
 need to defend the numerous pawn-
 weaknesses in his position.

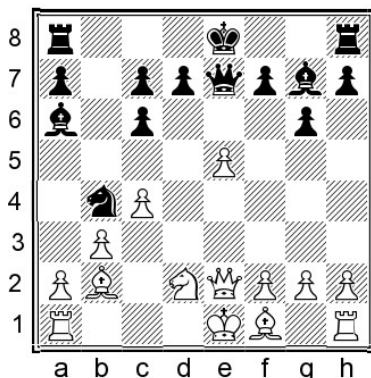
C) 9...g6



10.Nf3

10.Qe4?! White's queen will soon come
 under an attack on this square after the
 move d7-d5. 10...Nb6 11.b3 Bg7 12.Bb2
 d5 13.cxd5 (13.Qe3 0-0³) 13...cxd5 14.Qe3
 Bxf1 15.Kxf1 0-0³ Foldi – Lukacs, Hungary
 1995. He would have to lose plenty of
 time in order to connect his rooks and to
 evacuate his king to a safe place.

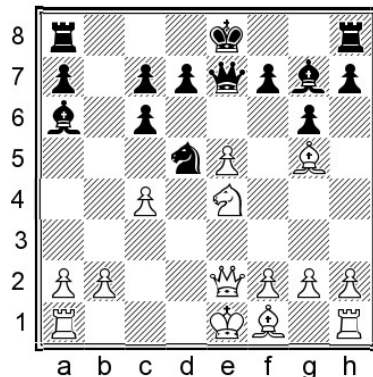
10.b3. This move does not combine
 well with White's previous move. He may
 have problems after it. 10...Bg7 11.Bb2
 Nb4!/? Black is trying to seize the initiative
 (11...0-0 12.0-0-0 Rfe8= Sveshnikov –
 Volzhin, Novgorod 1995).



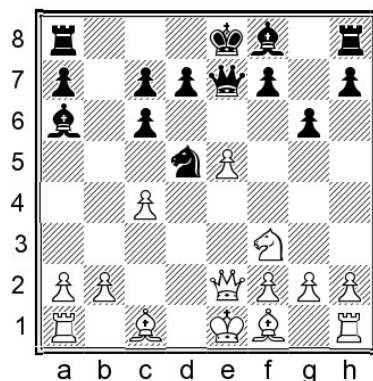
12.0-0-0. White evacuates his king away from the centre at the price of a pawn. 12...Nxa2+ 13.Kb1 Nb4 14.Ne4 0-0 15.Qf3 Rfe8 16.Nf6+ Bxf6 17.exf6. He bases his hopes on an attack on the dark squares, but Black can parry easily his opponent's pressure. 17...Qc5 18.h4 d5 19.Qf4 (19.h5 g5) 19...dxc4 (After 19...Bc8!? Black can obtain a slight edge in the endgame: 20.Qh6 Qf8 21.Qxf8+ Kxf8³) 20.Qh6 (20.bxc4? Carlsen – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2011, 20...Bc8 21.g4 Rb8–+) 20...Qf8 21.Qxf8+ Kxf8 22.h5 g5 23.Bd4 Rab8³ After the exchange of the queens White's attacking chances have disappeared altogether and he would need only to defend in the arising endgame.

12.Nf3 c5 13.g3 0-0 14.Bg2 d5 (It is less energetic for Black to choose here 14...Rae8 15.0-0 d6 16.Ne1, Hjartarson – Portisch, Reykjavik 1991, 16...d5=) 15.0-0 Rad8 16.Rfd1 Rfe8 17.a3 Nc6³ White will have problems with the protection of his pawn on e5. 18.Qc2 d4. This is the point! Now, White's bishop on b2 cannot help in the protection of his pawn on e5 and it will be soon lost. 19.Re1 Qd7 20.b4 Nxe5 21.b5 Bc8 22.Nxe5 Rxe5 23.Rxe5 Bxe5μ Svidler – Adams, Tilburg 1997. Black has an extra pawn despite its being doubled.

10.Ne4. With this move White creates tactical threats, but Black parries them easily. 10...Bg7 (10...0-0-0 11.Qc2 Qxe5 12.cxd5 Bxf1 13.Kxf1 Re8 14.dxc6 Qxe4 15.cxd7+ Kxd7 16.Qxe4 Rxe4 17.Be3 Bd6= Petr – Hracek, Legnica 2013) 11.Bg5

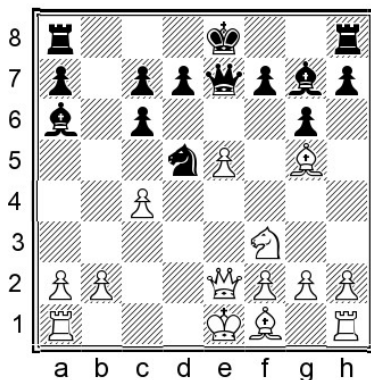


11...Qxe5 (Here, Black has at his disposal an interesting piece-sacrifice: 11...Bxc4!? 12.Qxc4 Qxe5 13.Be2 0-0÷) 12.Nc5 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Nb4= 14.Bd2?! This move is too passive. Now, Black can even fight for the advantage. 14...d6 15.Bxb4 dxc5 16.Bxc5 Bxb2 17.Rb1 Bc3+ 18.Kd1 0-0-0+ 19.Kc2 Bd4 20.Bxd4 Rxd4³ Forcen Esteban – Narciso Dublan, Zaragoza 2012. He has an extra pawn, although it is doubled. In addition, White's pawn on c4 would need permanent protection.



10...Qb4+

10...Bg7 11.Bg5

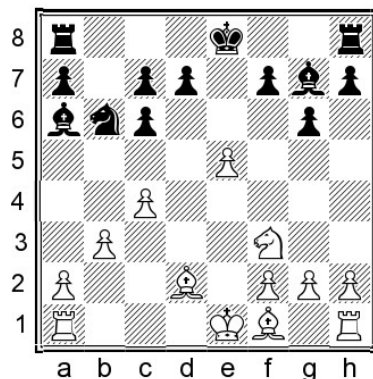


11...Qc5? 12.Qd2 Nb6 (12...h6, Hamidov – Guner, Antalya 2002, 13.cxd5 hxg5 14.Bxa6+-) 13.b4 Qf8 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Bxg2 16.0-0-0 Bh3 17.bxc7 Rc8 18.e6 d5 19.e7 Qg8 20.Bf4+-

11...f6 12.exf6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Nxf6. White's edge here is just symbolic, because he cannot exploit the pawn-weaknesses in his opponent's position. 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.Be3 (15.Nd2 c5 16.Bf3 d6 17.Rhe1, Giri – Dominguez Perez, Baku 2016, 17...h6 18.Re7 hxg5 19.Rxg7 g4 20.Bc6 Rdg8=; 15.Rhe1 Rde8 16.Nd2 c5 17.Nb3 Bb7 18.g3 d6= Ponkratov – Sasikiran, Moscow 2015.) 15...Rde8 16.Rhe1 (16.Bd3 d6 17.c5 Bxd3 18.Rxd3, Caruana – Kramnik, Moscow 2012, 18...Ne4 19.cxd6 cxd6= Black's actively deployed pieces compensate the weaknesses in his pawn-structure.) 16...d6 (16...Ne4 17.Bd3 c5 18.h4 d6 19.Ng5 Nf6 20.f3² Gong Qianyun – Xiao, China 2018; 18.Ng5!? Nxd5 19.Bxg5) 17.c5 (17.Nd4? c5 18.Nc6 Bb7 19.Bf3 Kd7 20.Nxa7 Bxf3 21.gxf3, Sveshnikov – Hungaski, Moscow 2006, 21...Rh8 22.Nb5 Nh5μ; 17.b4!?) 17...Bxe2 18.Rxe2 Nd5 19.Ree1 Kd7= Azarov – Hracek, Rhodes 2013. The powerful knight on d5 "cements" Black's position.

11...Qb4+. He would not mind trading the queens, because Black relies on holding the arising endgame with a

precise defence. 12.Qd2 Qxd2+ 13.Bxd2 (13.Kxd2?! h6 14.cxd5 Bxf1 15.Raxf1 hxg5 16.Nxg5 Rb8 17.b3 cxd5 18.f4 a5 19.h4 a4³, with powerful pressure against White's position, Ni Hua – Shirov, Saratov 2011.) 13...Nb6 14.b3

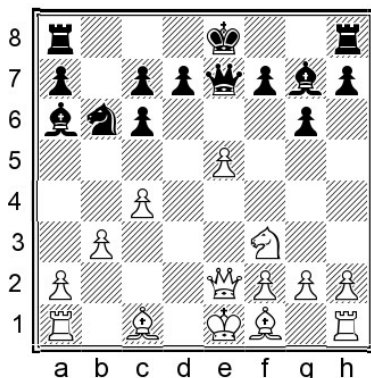


14...d5?! 15.cxd5 Bxf1 16.Kxf1 cxd5 17.Rc1 Rc8, Furmston – Kretschmar, corr. 1973, 18.Rc5 c6 19.Ra5 Ra8 20.Nd4 Kd7 21.f4 Rhc8 22.Ke2±

14...d6 15.0-0-0 d5 (15...dxe5 16.Nxe5 Bxe5 17.Re1. Black cannot hold on to his material advantage, so his position is already worse due to his inferior pawn-structure on the queenside. 17...f6 18.f4 Nd7 19.fxe5 Nxe5 20.Bc3² Ni Hua – Adhiban, Vietnam 2012) 16.e6!? (16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Rhxf1 cxd5, Oglaza – Kantor, Roquetas de Mar 2019, 18.Rfe1²) 16...fxe6 17.Ng5 Bc8 18.cxd5 Nxd5 (18...exd5? 19.Re1+ Kd7 20.g3+-; 18...cxd5 19.Bb5+ Bd7 20.Nxe6±) 19.Re1Ⓞ

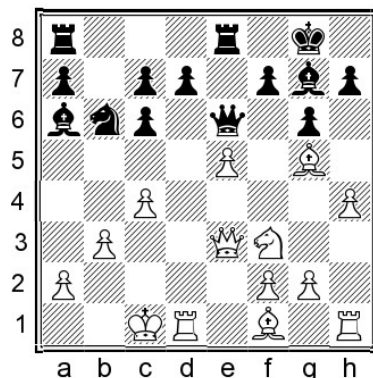
14...0-0!? 15.0-0-0 d5 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Bf4 d5 18.cxd5 (18.c5 Bxf1 19.Rhxf1 Nd7 20.Bd6, Saurabh – Rakesh, Bhubaneswar 2019, 20...Rfc8,,) 18...Bxf1 19.Rhxf1 Nxd5 20.Be5 a5= Nikolovski – Mazur, Hersonissos 2017. In his next few moves – a5-a4 and axb3 Black will get rid of his weak a-pawn.

10...Nb6 11.b3 Bg7



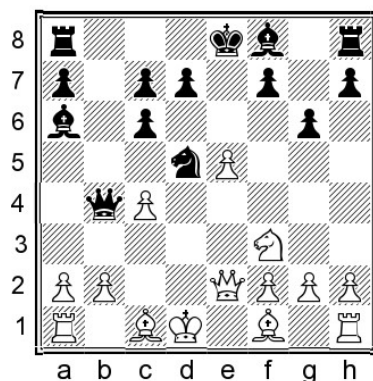
The rather indifferent move 12.Bb2?!, would lead to difficulties for White. 12...0-0 13.0-0 Bb7 (It is weaker for Black to play here 13...Rab8, because after 14.Qd2, with the idea Qa5, he will have difficulties with the protection of his pawn on a7. 14...Rfd8 15.Qa5 Bb7 16.c5! White prevents the activation of the enemy bishop on b7 after. c6-c5. 16...Nd5 17.Bc4 d6 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Rhe1 dxe5 20.Bxe5 Bxe5, Nepomniachtchi – Ganguly, Bilbao 2014, 21.Nxe5² Black's pawns on a7 and c6 are weak and his bishop is very passive.) 14.h4 a5 15.Qc2 a4 16.Kb1 axb3 17.axb3, Nepomniachtchi – Grischuk, Beijing 2014, 17...Ra7!? 18.h5 Rfa8 19.Bd3 Ra2. (with the idea d6) 20.hxg6 hxg6μ White can hardly manage to parry his opponent's threats on the a-file.

12.Bg5 Qe6 (Following 12...Qa3 13.Qd2 d6, White can trade the dark-squared bishops with 14.Bf6 Bxf6 15.exf6, but Black's king would be perfectly placed on the queenside. 15...0-0-0 16.Be2 Rhe8 17.0-0 d5 18.Ng5 dxc4 19.Qf4 Nd5 20.Qg4+ Rd7 21.Bxc4 Nxf6÷ Wei Yi – Ganguly, Liaocheng 2017. Black has captured the enemy pawn on f6 and has obtained an excellent position.) 13.0-0-0 14.Qe3 Rfe8 15.h4



15...d5. He is following the classical principles – to counter a flank attack with a strike in the centre. 16.exd6 Qf5 17.Qd2 cxd6 (17...Qc5, Di Nicolantonio – Repka, Radenci 2019, 18.Kb1÷) 18.Bd3 Nxc4! Black sacrifices a piece and compromises the position of the enemy king. 19.Qb4 (19.bxc4? Qc5) 19...Qg4 20.Bxc4, Arribas Lopez – Paravyan, Moscow 2016, 20...d5 21.Nh2 Qc8 22.Bxa6 Qxa6 23.Rd2? (23.Qa4 Qb6÷) 23...h6 24.Be3 c5. Black wishes to open a file against the enemy king. White has an extra piece indeed, but his defence would be very difficult. 25.Bxc5 Re4 26.Qa3 Qf6 27.Qb2 Rc8 28.Qxf6 Rxc5+ 29.Kb1 Bxf6³ Black's bishop would be much stronger than White's knight in a fight on both sides of the board.

11.Kd1

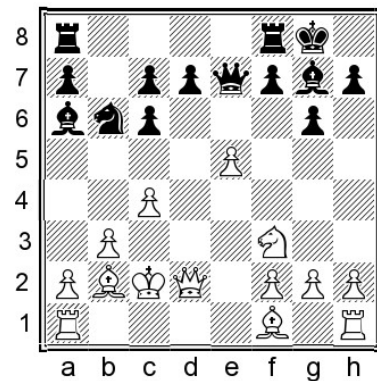


11...Rb8

Black will have to solve some problems after this move.

11...0-0-0. Black's king would be much less safe on the queenside than on the kingside. 12.Qc2 Nb6?! (12...Ne7) 13.Bd2 (13.Bg5! and Black would lose immediately after 13...Re8?!, because of 14.a3 Qa5 15.Bd2+-) 13...Qa4 14.Qxa4 Nxa4, Nepomniachtchi – Grigoriants, Berlin 2015, 15.Ng5± Black is incapable of protecting his pawn on f7.

11...Nb6 12.b3 Bg7 13.Qd2 Qe7 (It is better for Black to play here 13...Qxd2+ 14.Bxd2 – see 11...Bg7) 14.Bb2 0-0 15.Kc2



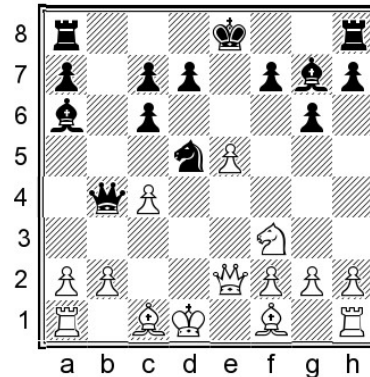
15...Bb7 16.Bd3 c5 17.h4 a5 18.a4 Qd8, Svacek – Brodda, ICCF 2012, 19.h5 d5 (19...Bxf3 20.gxf3 d5 21.f4 dxc4 22.bxc4±) 20.hxg6 fxg6 (20...hxg6 21.e6+-) 21.Ng5 dxc4 22.bxc4±

15...d5 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Re1 Qd8 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.h4 d5, Haslinger – Hawkins, Blackpool 2011, 20.c5 Bxf1 21.Rexf1 Nd7 22.h5 Qf6 23.hxg6 Qxg6+ 24.Kb2 Qf6+ 25.Nd4 Rfe8 26.Qc3±

15...c5 16.h4 (16.Bd3!? d5 17.exd6 cxd6 18.Rae1 Qd7 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.h4 h5 21.Qc3+ Kg8 22.Qf6±; 16...Qd8 17.Bc3 d5 18.exd6 cxd6 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.h4f) 16...d5 17.exd6 Qxd6 (17...cxd6? 18.Re1 Qd7 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.h5+-) 18.Bxg7

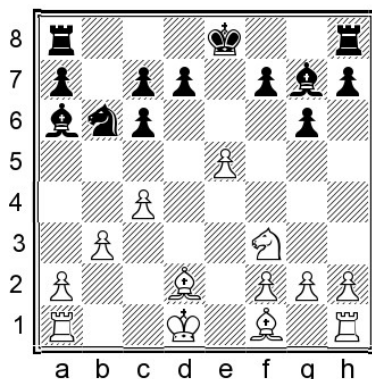
Qxd2+ 19.Nxd2 Kxg7 20.Ne4 Nd7 21.Rd1 Bb7 22.Nc3 Nf6 23.f3² Nepomniachtchi – Svidler, Moscow 2010.

11...Bg7!?



12.Qc2?! This move is too slow. 12...Nb6! Black's knight is better placed here than on the e7-square, since it attacks the enemy pawn on c4. (12...Ne7 13.Qb3 c5 14.Qxb4 cxb4 15.Bd3 0-0 16.Re1 Nc6= Morozevich – Matlakov, St Petersburg 2014) 13.b3 0-0 14.a4 (Following 14.Bb2, Black obtains an excellent position after the energetic strike against the enemy centre: 14...d5 15.cxd5 Bxf1 16.Rxf1, Nestorovic – Blagojevic, Skopje 2011, 16...cxd5µ White's king has turned into a juicy target for Black's pieces.) 14...Qe7 15.Ba3 c5 16.a5 Nc8 17.Qe4 Rb8. The advance of White's a-pawn has weakened his b3-pawn. 18.Qe3 d6µ Carreto Nieto – Panchanathan, Philadelphia 2016.

12.Qd2. This is a more reliable move for White. 12...Qxd2+ 13.Bxd2 Nb6 14.b3



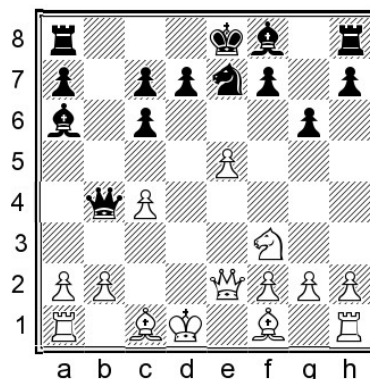
14...Bb7, Cheparinov – Vocaturo, Caleta 2018, 15.c5!? Nd5 16.Bc4 0-0 17.Rc1²

14...0-0 15.c5! White must play energetically here. (The timid move 15.Kc2?! not only loses the advantage for White, but would soon lead to difficulties for him. 15...d5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Rhxf1 cxd5 18.Rac1. He misses just one tempo to prevent the enemy pawn-advance c7-c5. 18...c5 19.Rfe1 Rfe8 20.Kb1 Nd7 21.Be3 Bf8 22.Red1 d4³ Siva – Kravtsiv, Sharjah 2017) 15...Bxf1 16.Rxf1 Nd5 17.Rc1 f6 (17...Rfe8 18.Re1 Re6 19.Rc4 Rae8 20.Ra4 Ra8, Parvanyan – Silber, Wuerzburg 2018, 21.Ra6²) 18.exf6 Rxf6 19.Rc4 Rf5 20.Ne1! White's knight is transferred to the d3-square from where it would protect the pawn on c5. 20...Ne7 21.Nd3² Caruana – Jakovenko, Rhodes 2013.

14...c5 15.Kc2 0-0 16.Re1 Bb7 17.Bd3 d5! (17...Rae8 18.Bf4 h6 19.h4 Nc8, Tomazini – Luft, Skopje 2018, 20.Re2²) 18.cxd5 Bxd5 19.Be4 c6 20.Ba5 Rfe8= Volokitin – Kryvoruchko, Kiev 2013. The position is still within equality, but Black must play precisely; otherwise, his pawn-weaknesses might become a telling factor in the future developments.

14...d6!? 15.Kc2 0-0 16.Re1 Rfe8 17.exd6 Rxe1 18.Bxe1 cxd6 19.Bc3 c5 20.Bd3 Bb7= Senzacqua – Schakel, ICCF 2012.

There will be interesting developments after 11...Ne7!



12.Qc2?! c5 13.Bd3 Bg7 14.Re1 0-0 15.Qb3 Nc6 16.Bd2 Qb6 17.Qxb6 axb6 18.Kc2 Rad8 19.a3 d6 20.exd6 Rxd6 21.Bc3 Na5 (21...Rfd8!?) 22.Bxg7 Kxg7³ Jones – Kramnik, Douglas 2017. White's bishop is restricted by the pawn on c4 and may turn out to be "bad".

12.b3 Bg7 13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Bxd2 c5 15.Kc2 Bb7 16.Bc3 0-0 17.Rd1 Rad8 18.Bd3 Bxf3 19.gxf3 Nc6 20.Rhe1 d6= Melaa – Stella, Oslo 2018.

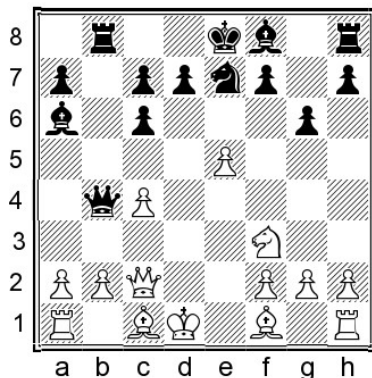
12.Bg5 Bg7 13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Bxd2 c5 15.Bd3 Bb7 16.Re1 0-0= Tsydygov – Guijarro, Moscow 2019.

12.Qc2

12.a3. This is an ambitious plan, connected with the preparation of the pawn-advance b2-b4. 12...Qb6 13.Qc2 Ne7 14.b4 c5 15.Bd3 Bb7!? (15...cxb4. After this move a file is opened for White's rook. 16.axb4 Bb7 17.b5 Bg7 18.Re1 0-0 19.Be3 Qe6 20.Rxa7, Ponkratov – Svidler, Riyadh 2017, 20...Bxf3+ 21.gxf3 Qxe5 22.Bc1 Qh5= White has a couple of powerful bishops and actively placed rooks, but his king is

horribly vulnerable at the centre of the board in view of the active enemy pieces.) 16.Re1 Bg7 17.Be3 Bxf3+ 18.gxf3 Bxe5 19.Bxc5 Qf6 20.Ra2 d6 21.Bxa7. White has managed to win a pawn, but his king has no safe haven. 21...Ra8 22.Be3 0-0 23.f4 Bc3 24.Re2 Rfe8© Savchenko – Khairullin, Khanty-Mansiysk 2012.

12...Ne7



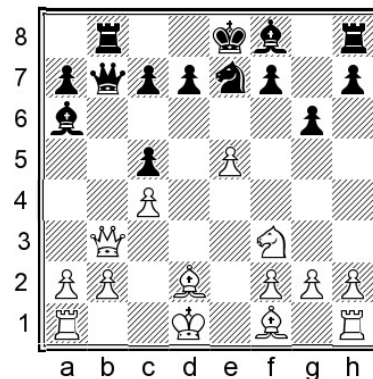
13.b3

White is preparing Bd2, protecting his c4-pawn in the process.

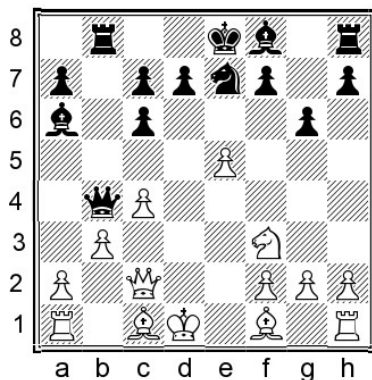
13.Bd3 Bg7 14.a3 Qb7 15.Re1 0-0 16.Bg5 Rfe8 17.b4 d5,, Radjabov – Aronian, Moscow 2010. Black's game is much simpler, because White must worry constantly about the safety of his king, stranded at the centre of the board.

13.Qb3. It has become obvious that White is playing for equality. The maximum that he can dream about is to trade the queens and to try to equalise completely in the endgame. 13...c5 14.Bd2 (14.Bd3 Qb6!?) 15.Kc2 Bg7÷; 14.Qxb4 cxb4 15.Bd3 Bg7 16.Re1 0-0 17.Kc2 Nc6 18.b3 d5. Black opens the game in the centre relying on the activity of his pieces. 19.cxd5 Bxd3+ 20.Kxd3 Rfd8 21.Bf4 Rxd5+ 22.Ke4 Ra5. The pressure against the pawn on a2 is rather unpleasant for

White. 23.Rac1 Nd8 24.Rxc7 Ne6= Howell – Adams, Sheffield 2011. Black has quite sufficient compensation for the minimal material deficit.) 14...Qb7



15.Bc3 (15.Qxb7 Bxb7 16.Bc3 Bg7 17.Kc2 0-0 18.Rd1 Rfd8 19.b3 Bxf3 20.gxf3 Nc6= D.Petrosian – Grigoryan, Jermuk 2012.) 15...Bg7 16.Bd3 Qa8!? Black avoids the trade of the queens and relies on exploiting the vulnerable placement of the enemy king in the middle game. 17.Qa3 Bb7 18.Qxc5 0-0 (18...Bxf3+ 19.gxf3 Qxf3+ 20.Kc2 0-0 21.Rae1 Rfe8÷) 19.Qe3 (19.Qxe7. White's attempt to gobble material might lead him quickly to a hopeless position. 19...Bxf3+ 20.gxf3? Qxf3+ 21.Kc2 Qxf2+ 22.Bd2 Rxb2-+; 19.Be2? Nf5 20.Qxc7 d6. The opening of the game in the centre would be disastrous for White's king. 21.exd6 Bxc3 22.bxc3 Rbc8 23.Qa5 Nxd6µ Tomazini – Anton Guijarro, Tallinn 2016. White's king will come soon under the attack of the enemy major pieces.) 19...f6 20.e6 dxe6 21.Qxe6+ Rf7 22.Kc2 Bxf3 23.gxf3 Qxf3÷ The weak pawn on f2 would squeeze one of White's pieces to protect it.



13...Bg7

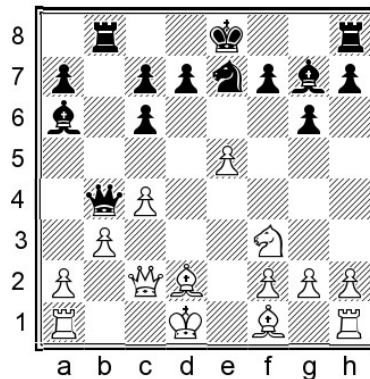
Black is tricky sometimes and begins with 13...c5 and only after 14.Bb2 plays 14...Bg7. Now, White must play very accurately. 15.h4!? (15.Bd3?! 0-0 16.Re1 Qb6 17.Ke2 Nc6 18.Bc3, Sankalp – Havasi, Zalakaros 2017, 18...Nd4+ 19.Bxd4 cxd4³; 18...Nb4 19.Bxb4 cxb4³) 15...0-0 (15...h5. Black prevents the further advance of the enemy h-pawn, but weakens the g5-square and White can place there his knight advantageously. 16.Bd3 0-0 17.Ng5f) 16.h5 Bb7 17.Bd3 Qb6 18.Ke1 a5 19.Bc3 Bxf3 20.gxf3 d6 21.f4 a4, L.Hansen – Gomez Galan Areense, ICCF 2015 (21...Rbd8 22.Be4 a4 23.Kf1 axb3 24.axb3² Nc6? 25.hxg6 hxg6 26.e6+–) 22.bxa4!? dxe5 23.h6 Bh8 24.fxe5 Rbd8 (24...Nc6 25.a5! Qa6 26.f4 Nb4 27.Qe2 Qxa5 28.Be4±) 25.Rd1²

14.Bd2

White's only chance of obtaining an advantage in the opening in this variation is to exploit the misplacement of the enemy queen.

14.Bb2 0-0 15.Bd3 d5 16.exd6 Bxb2 17.Qxb2 cxd6 18.Qd2 Qa3 19.Qc1 Qb4

20.Qd2 Qa3= Duda – Baramidze, Ruzomberok 2014.

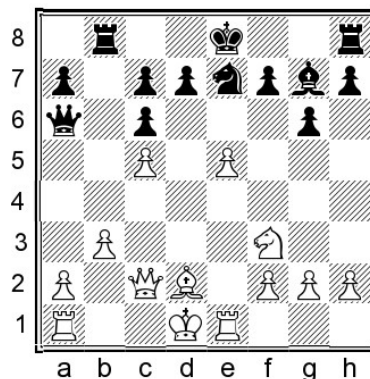


14...Qb6

14...Qa3 15.Bc3 0-0 16.Bd3 d5 17.exd6 cxd6 18.Bxg7 Kxg7, Barbosa – Mekhitarian, Campinas 2011, 19.Re1²

15.c5 Qb7 16.Bxa6 Qxa6 17.Re1

17.Qc4. White exchanges the queens, but weakens his pawn-structure. 17...Qxc4 18.bxc4, Ponomariov – Leko, Dortmund 2010, 18...f6 19.Re1 fxe5 20.Nxe5 Rf8=

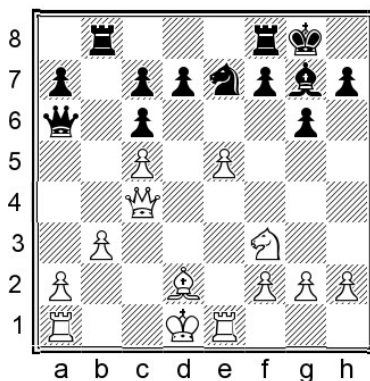


17...0-0

The position might seem about equal, but Black must still play very precisely; otherwise, he might simply lose his queen.

17...Nd5?! 18.Qc4 Qa3 19.Nd4! 0-0
 20.Nc2 Qb2. Black's queen is horribly
 misplaced inside the enemy camp. 21.f4!
 (White can force a draw here if he so
 wishes: 21.Bc1 Qc3 22.Bd2 Qb2= Nedev –
 Petkov, Skopje 2011) 21...a5 22.g3.
 White's game is much easier in this
 position. He does not risk at all, contrary
 to his opponent and can always force a
 draw with Bc1-d2. Black must worry
 constantly about the safety of his queen.
 22...Nb4, Arndt – Riess, Willingen 2019
 (22...g5 23.Ke2 gxf4 24.gxf4 Nxf4+
 25.Qxf4 Qxc2 26.Rac1 Qb2 27.Kd3 Qxa2
 28.Rg1±) 23.Bc1 Qxc2+ 24.Qxc2 Nxc2
 25.Kxc2²

18.Qc4



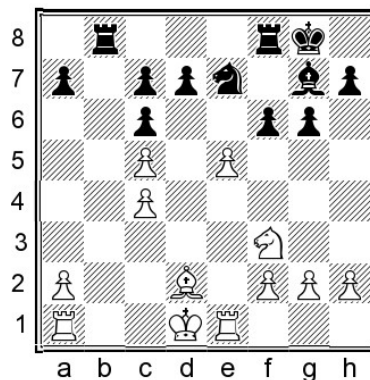
18...Qxc4

This is his simplest road to equality.

About 18...Qa3 19.Nd4 Qb2 20.Nc2 Nd5
 21.f4² – see 17...Nd5.

18...Qb7 19.Rc1 Nd5 20.Ke2 Rfe8
 21.Kf1² Svidler – Hracek, Aix les Bains
 2011.

19.bxc4 f6!?



20.e6

20.Bc3 fxe5 21.Bxe5 Nf5 22.Kc2 Bxe5
 23.Rxe5 d6 24.cxd6 Nxd6 25.Rb1 Rxb1
 26.Kxb1 Nxc4 27.Rc5 Nb6 28.Rxc6 Nd5
 29.Ra6, Draw, Walter – Kornev, ICCF
 2016. Black has one more pawn-island
 than his opponent, but this is not so
 important, since there is just a few
 material left on the board.

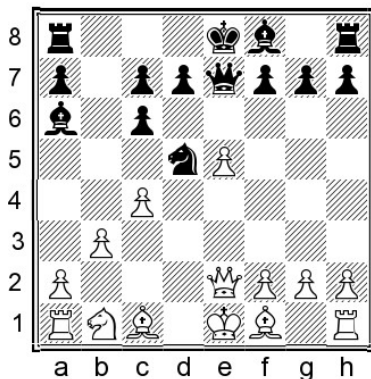
20...f5

20...dxe6 21.Rxe6 Kf7, Frank – Kreiner,
 Woerth 2014, 22.Re2!? Rfe8 23.Kc2 Nf5
 24.Rxe8 Rxe8 25.Rb1²

21.Rc1 d5 22.cxd6 cxd6 23.Bf4,
 Murin – Weldon, ICCF 2016, **23...c5**
24.Ke2 Nc8. White has slight initiative
 indeed, but Black can gradually equalise
 after an accurate play. **25.Rb1 Rxb1**
26.Rxb1 Re8 27.Rb8 Rxe6+ 28.Kd3 Re8
29.a4 h6 30.h4 Kf7 31.a5 Ke6=

Chapter 18

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Ba6 9.b3

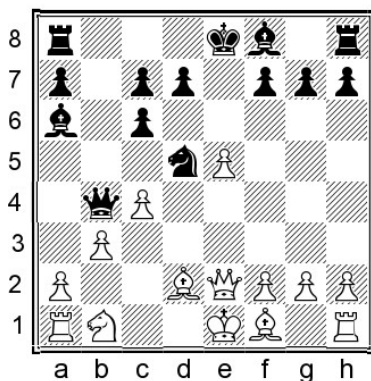


In this chapter we will analyse some seldom played variations for Black: **A)** 9...Qh4, **B)** 9...g5, **C)** 9...Nb6.

About 9...f6 10.g3 – see Chapter 14, variation **B**.

9...d6?! 10.Qe4 Nb6 11.Qxc6+ Qd7
12.Qxd7 Nxd7 13.exd6±

9...Qb4+?! With this Black loses too many tempi on moves with his queen.
10.Bd2



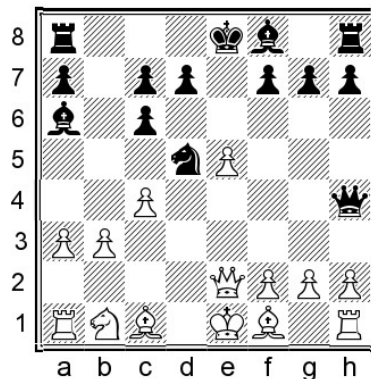
10...Qc5 11.Qe4 Nb4 (It is possible that the least of evils for Black here is the line: 11...Nb6 12.a4²) 12.Bc3 Bb7? (His last chance of activating his pieces was 12...d5 13.exd6+ Kd7 14.Kd1 Qxd6+ 15.Kc1 Re8 16.Qg4+ Kd8±) 13.a3 Na6 14.b4 Qe7 15.c5+– Kallio – Radulov, Budapest 2001.

10...Qb6 11.Qe4 f5, Crouan – Geenen, Mans 2001. Black sacrifices a pawn with the idea to complicate the position. (11...Nb4 12.Bd3?! 0-0-0 13.0-0 d5 14.exd6, Kovchan – Sulskis, Kharkov 2003, 14...Bxd6 15.Be3 Qa5 16.Qf5+ Qxf5 17.Bxf5+ Kb8 18.Nc3 Be5÷; 12.Be3 Qa5 13.Nd2 0-0-0 14.a3± with the idea Bd4+–; 12...Bc5, Cvicela – Harasta, Slovakia 1998, 13.a3 Bxe3 14.fxe3 Qa5 15.Nd2±) 12.Qxf5 Be7 13.Qe4 (13.cxd5? Rf8 14.Qh5+ g6 15.Qxh7 Qxf2+ 16.Kd1 Bxf1 17.Qxg6+ Kd8³) 13...0-0 14.Bd3 Qxf2+ 15.Kd1 g6 16.cxd5. White captures a piece under the most favourable circumstances. 16...Bxd3 17.Qxd3 Qxg2 18.Re1 cxd5 19.Re2 Qg1+ 20.Kc2 c6 21.Bc3±

A) 9...Qh4

This is a very tricky move. Playing in this fashion Black relies on the possibility that his opponent is not well acquainted with the opening theory and he will manage to confuse him with the help of the moves Qd4, Bc5, or Bb4+.

10.a3!?



This is White's simplest decision. Now, he would not need to consider the move Bb4+.

10...Bc5

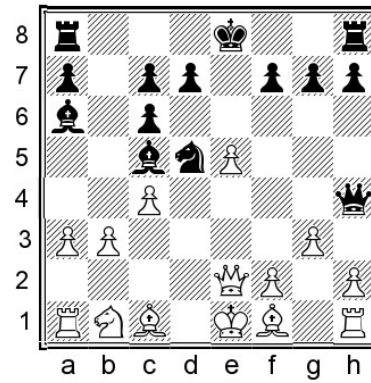
Black is preparing a strike against the f2-square, but this only makes his task even more difficult.

Following 10...Nf4 11.Qe4 Ng6 12.Qxh4 Nxb4, there arises an endgame in which White can play for a win without any risk thanks to his superior pawn-structure. 13.Bb2 (13.Nd2 c5 14.Bb2 Bb7 15.Rg1 Be7 16.f4 Nf5 17.Bd3² Reinaldo Castineira – Granados Gomez, Sanxenxo 2004; 13...Bb7 14.g3 c5 15.Rg1 Nf3+ 16.Nxf3 Bxf3, Aryan – Adhiban, Xingtai 2019, 17.Be2²) 13...Be7 (13...0-0-0 14.Nd2 c5 15.g3 Nf5, Wiersma – Van Veen, Hoogeveen 2005, 16.Bg2²) 14.g3 Nf3+ 15.Ke2 Ng5 16.Nd2 0-0 17.f4 Ne6 18.Kd3² Tseshkovsky – Werner, Thessaloniki 2010.

10...Rb8. White can parry easily the attack against his pawn on b3. 11.g3 Qe7 (11...Qd4 12.Bb2 Qb6 13.Nd2 Bc5 14.Ne4±) 12.Nd2 g6, Rangel – Franco Valencia, Bogota 2013, 13.f4 Bg7 14.Qf3 Nb6 15.c5 Bxf1 16.cxb6 Ba6 17.bxc7. This was the essence of White's idea. Now, his knight will manage to occupy the excellent outpost on d6. 17...Rc8 18.Ne4 0-0 19.Be3 Bd3 20.Nd6 Rxc7 21.Bc5±

10...0-0-0. Black's king would not be safe at all on the queenside. 11.g3 Qe7 12.Bg2 f6 13.0-0 fxe5 14.Bb2 Re8, Palacz – Janocha, Wroclaw 2006, 15.Qc2 Nb6 16.Re1±

11.g3!

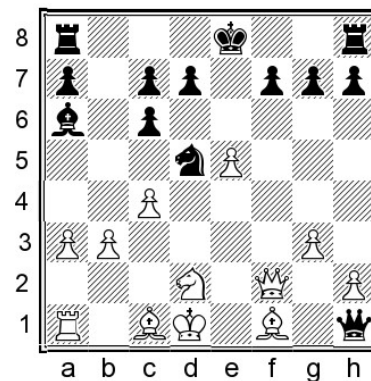


11...Bxf2+

Black wins the exchange and... ends up in a nearly hopeless position.

11...Qe7 12.Bb2 Nb6 13.Nd2 (White has a good alternative here 13.Qc2!? f6 14.Bd3 fxe5 15.0-0±) 13...Qe6? Black's queen will not be well placed on this square and will be soon attacked after Bh3. 14.Ne4 Be7 15.h4 0-0-0 16.Bh3 Qg6 17.h5 Qh6 18.Qf3 c5, Tseshkovsky – Khoroshev, Tashkent 2010 (18...Rh8 19.Bc1 g5 20.hxg6 Qg7 21.gxh7 Qxe5 22.Ra2 f5 23.Bb2 Qxe4+ 24.Qxe4 fxe4 25.h8Q Rxb8 26.Bxb8+-) 19.Bc1 g5 20.Bxg5 Bxg5 21.Nxc5+-

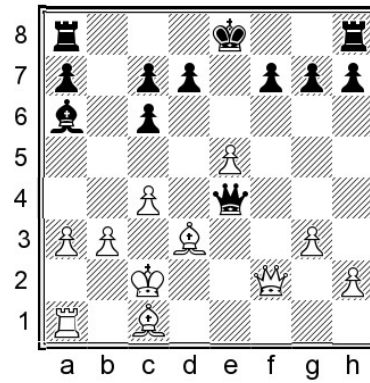
12.Qxf2 Qe4+ 13.Kd1 Qxh1 14.Nd2



14...Nc3+

16.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 17.Bd3

Following 14...0-0, Black should better take immediately the c3-square under control. 15.Kc2. His position is horribly difficult. 15...f6 (15...f5 16.Bb2 f4 17.cxd5 fxd3 18.Bxa6 Qxa1 19.Qxg3 Qh1 20.e6 1-0 Josse – Jameson, England 2013; 17...Bxf1 18.Rxf1 Qxd5 19.gxf4±) 16.e6 dxe6 17.Bb2 Ne3+ (17...f5? 18.Re1+–) 18.Qxe3 Qxh2, Carnicelli – Loiacono, Salerno 2018, 19.Bd3±



17...Qg4

14...f5?! 15.Kc2 (After 15.cxd5, White loses a great part of his advantage. 15...Bxf1 16.Qxf1 Qxd5 17.Bb2 0-0 18.Kc2²) 15...f4 16.gxf4 Nxf4 17.Bb2! (17.e6!?) 17...Rf8, Zhang – Van der Burght, Belgium 2007, 18.e6 dxe6 19.Bh3 Nxb3 20.Qg3 Qxa1 21.Bxa1 Nf4 22.Qxg7+– Black's pieces are not well coordinated and he is incapable of countering the mobility of his opponent's queen.

17...Qxe5. This move only helps White to activate his dark-squared bishop. 18.Bb2 Qg5 (18...Qd6 19.Bxg7 0-0-0 20.Qxa7 Bb7 21.c5 Qe6 22.Ba6 Qg6+ 23.Kc1 Qg5+ 24.Kb1 Qg6+ 25.Ka2+–) 19.h4 Qh6 20.Re1+ Kf8 21.Rf1 Qe6, Simonsen – Joensen, Oyrabakki 2000, 22.Bf5 Qe7 23.Re1 Qd8 24.h5+– Black is incapable of coordinating his pieces.

After 14...f6, it seems very promising for White to sacrifice a pawn with 15.e6 dxe6 16.Kc2 e5 17.Bb2 Ne3+. Black would lose his queen without this move. 18.Qxe3 Qxh2 19.Bd3 0-0-0 20.Be4 Bb7 21.Rh1. Now, once again, Black must comply with losing material in order to save his queen. 21...Rxd2+ 22.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 23.Kxd2 h6, Jones – Lund, Klaksvik 2010, 24.a4+–

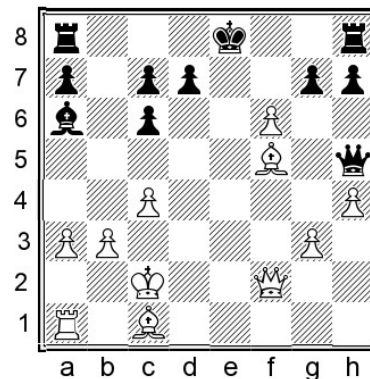
15.Kc2 Ne4

This is the essence of Black's idea. Now, his queen is somehow evacuated away from the enemy camp. Still, he has lost too much time on manoeuvres with his knight and White manages to mobilise quickly his forces and to begin an attack against the enemy king.

18.Bf5 Qh5 19.h4

The threat g3-g4 forces Black to weaken his kingside.

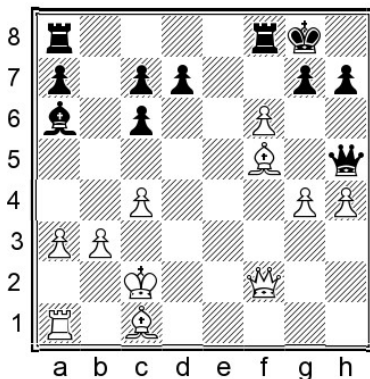
19...f6 20.exf6



20...gxf6

20...0-0-0. Black's defensive task would not be easier at all if he tries to evacuate his king to the queenside. 21.g4 Qf7
22.Qxa7 Bb7 23.Bf4 Rhe8, Garma – Gatus, Manila 2008, 24.Qa5+-

20...0-0 21.g4



21...Qf7 22.fxg7 Qxg7 (22...Rfb8??
23.Bxh7+ Kxg7 24.Bh6+-; 22...Rfe8
23.Bxh7+-) 23.Bb2. Black is completely helpless against his opponent's attack on the a1-h8 diagonal. 23...Qh6 24.Re1 Rae8
25.g5 Qh5 26.Qd4+- Tomazini – Spalir, Wolfsberg 2014.

21...Qe8 22.Bb2 gxf6 (22...Rxf6. Black would not save the game if he tries to give up an exchange. 23.Bxf6 gxf6 24.g5 fxg5
25.Rg1 h6 26.hxg5 h5 27.g6+-; 22...g6
23.Re1 Qd8 24.Bxg6 hxg6 25.h5+-)
23.Rg1, with the idea g5. 23...h6 (23...Kh8
24.g5+-) 24.g5+- Kotsur – D.Frolov, Tomsk 1997.

21.Bb2 0-0

21...0-0-0 22.Bxf6± Rhf8 23.g4 Qf7
24.Qxa7 Bb7 25.Bxd8 Rxd8, Grabics – Majigsuren, Medellin 1996, 26.h5+-

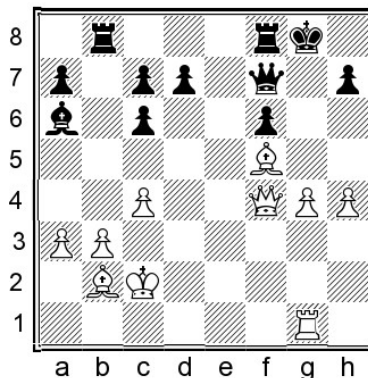
22.g4

White is preparing g4-g5, with the idea to crush Black's last fortifications on the kingside.

22...Qf7 23.Rg1 Rab8

23...h6 24.Qf4 Qg7 25.g5 Rae8,
Meinhardt – Lochte, Dresden 2007,
26.Qh2+-

24.Qf4



24...Rfe8

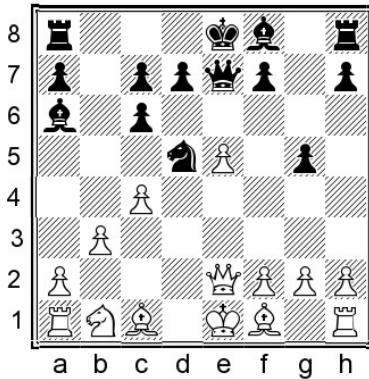
24...Qe7 25.Rg2 Rf7 26.g5 fxg5
27.Rxg5+ Kf8 28.Qg4 Qe3 29.Bd4 Qxb3+
30.Kd2 Bxc4 31.Bc2 1-0 Sharapov – Sevostianov, Evpatoria 2009.

24...d5. Black's counterplay in the centre is obviously too late. 25.g5 dxc4
26.gxf6+ Kh8 27.Rg7+- Dochev – Gigov, Velingrad 2004.

25.Bd3 d5 26.Bxf6 Re4 (26...dxc4
27.bxc4 Rbd8 28.Qg5+ Kf8 29.Bxd8+-
Marra – Santos, Brasilia 2007) 27.Bxe4
dxe4 28.Rf1 e3 29.h5 h6 30.Qxh6.
White has a material advantage and an attack. 30...Qh7+ 31.Qg6+ Qxg6+
32.hxg6+- Brandenburg – Drenchev,

Groningen 2007. Black is helpless against the threat Rh1-h8.

B) 9...g5



Black prepares the development of his bishop to the g7-square and prevents f2-f4, but weakens considerably his kingside in the process.

10.Bb2

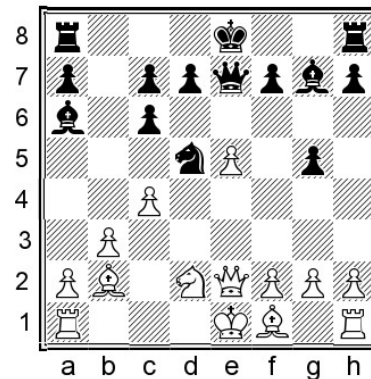
Here, it would be senseless for White to play 10.g3, because after 10...Bg7 11.Bb2 0-0-0 12.Nd2 Nb4 13.Nf3 Rhe8 14.a3 g4÷ Rublevsky – Karjakin, Poikovsky 2010 or 14.Bh3 h5 15.a3 Nd5÷ Jones – Gajewski, Heraklio 2007, he would not have any advantage and would need to enter an endgame: 12.Bg2 Rde8 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 cxd5, in which it would hardly manage to obtain any advantage.

10...Bg7

Following 10...Nf4 11.Qe3 Bg7, White should attack immediately the enemy pawn on g5. 12.h4!?! (12.Nd2?! Ng6 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Bxe5 Qxe5 15.Qxe5+ Nxe5 16.Re1 d6 17.Ne4 h6 18.h4 g4³ Taddei – Amin, Saint-Quentin 2014) 12...h6 13.Nd2 (White preserves an edge too after 13.g3

Ng6 14.Nd2 Bxe5 15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5+ Nxe5 17.hxg5 0-0-0 18.gxh6±) 13...Ng6 14.0-0-0± The inclusion of the moves h4 and h6 has turned out to be obviously in favour of White. 14...Nxb4. He has sacrificed his h-pawn and has managed to weaken the pressure of the enemy pieces against the pawn on e5. Now, White succeeds in protecting it. 15.g3 Ng6 16.f4 Bb7 17.Ne4 gxf4 18.gxf4 h5, Wells – Mannion, Halifax 2005, 19.Bh3+–

11.Nd2



11...0-0

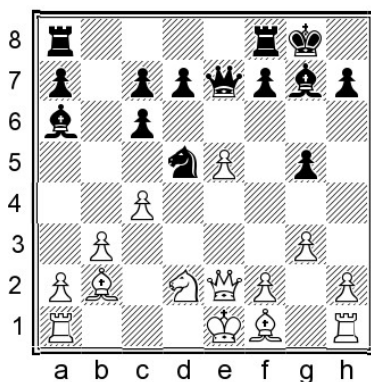
About 11...0-0-0 12.0-0-0 – see Chapter 17, variation B.

11...Nb4. Black can parry easily the threat Nc2. 12.Ne4 0-0-0 13.a3 Nd5, Bobras – Azarov, playchess.com 2005 (After 13...Bxe5 14.axb4 Bxb2 15.Rxa6, he would not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed piece. 15...d5 16.Qxb2 Qxe4+ 17.Be2 Rhe8 18.Rxa7 Qxg2 19.Rf1+–) 14.Ng3. White prepares the penetration of his knight to the f5-square with the idea to emphasize the defects of the move 9...g5. 14...Rhe8 15.Nf5 Qf8 16.Nxg7 Qxg7 17.0-0-0 Nf4 18.Qe3 Kb8 19.g3 Ne6 20.Bg2± White's bishops are very powerful, while Black has plenty of pawn-weaknesses in his position.

11...Nf4 12.Qe3 Ng6 (Following 12...d6 13.h4 Bb7 14.hxg5 Bxe5 15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5+ dxe5 17.0-0-0±, Black's numerous pawn-weaknesses will soon force him to defend only passively. It seems also good for White to play here 13.g3, planning after 13...Ng6, to develop his bishop with tempo. 14.Bg2 Bb7 15.0-0² Hendriks – Berkvens, Dieren 1998.) 13.h4!? White sacrifices a pawn with the idea to gain tempi for the fortification of the e5-square. 13...gxh4 (13...Nxb4?! 14.0-0 Ng6 15.Re1± Black can hardly find a safe haven for his king.) 14.f4 f5 15.0-0-0² Peczkowski – Mukherjee, ICCF 2017. White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

12.g3

White plays this move with the idea to follow with h2-h4.

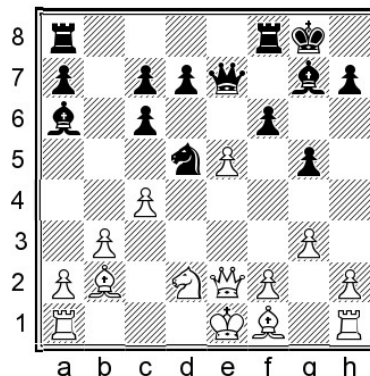


12...Nb4

12...Rfe8? 13.0-0-0 Nb6 14.f4 gxf4 (14...d5 15.h4 gxf4 16.gxf4+-) 15.gxf4 f6, Nataf – Pelletier, Bermuda 1999, 16.Qh5 fxe5 17.Bd3+-

12...d6 13.0-0-0 (13.h4!? dxe5 14.hxg5 Qxg5 15.Ne4f) 13...Bxe5, Sclacmender – Erwich, Belgium 2011, 14.Nf3 Bf6 15.Qxe7. White would not mind a transfer into an endgame, since he would manage to restore the material balance after that. 15...Bxb2+ 16.Kxb2 Nxe7 17.Nxg5² He has a much better pawn-structure.

12...f6



13.Qh5 Nb4 14.h4 g4 15.Kd1 c5 16.a3f Kasparov – Nikolic, Linares 1997.

13.Bg2 fxe5 14.0-0 Nb6 (14...d6? 15.Qh5 Nb6 16.Be4+-) 15.a4²

White has an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 13.0-0-0!? fxe5 14.h4 h6 (14...Rae8 15.Ne4 gxh4 16.Rxh4±, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the h-file) 15.Qe1 Nb6 16.hxg5 Qxg5 17.Bd3 d5 18.f4²

13.h4!?

This is an interesting exchange-sacrifice. White must play very energetically; otherwise, Black would fortify his kingside and White's attack against the enemy king would be unlikely to succeed.

13...Nc2+

If Black refrains from winning the exchange, this would not solve his defensive problems at all: 13...d5 (13...Rae8?! 14.0-0-0) 14.hxg5 Qxg5 (14...Rfd8 15.f4 Nc2+ 16.Kf2 Nxa1 17.Qh5 Qb4 18.e6+-) 15.Nf3 Qf5 16.Nh4 Qc2 17.Rd1²

14.Kd1 Nxa1, Calzetta Ruiz – Jirka, Olomouc 2001, **15.Qh5**

15...d5? 16.hxg5 Rfd8 17.Qxh7+ Kf8 18.Bd3 c5 (18...dxc4? 19.Qh8+ Bxh8 20.Rxh8+ Kg7 21.e6+-) 19.g6 dxc4 (19...fxg6?? 20.Bxg6 dxc4 21.Rh4+-) 20.gxf7 Qg5 21.Qg8+ Ke7 22.f8Q+ Rxf8 23.Qd5 Qg4+ (23...cxd3 24.Qxc5+ Kf7 25.Qd5+ Ke7 26.Ba3+-) 24.Be2 Qd7 25.Qxc5+ Kf7 26.e6+-;

15...h6 16.f4 g4 17.Bd3 f5 18.Bxf5±

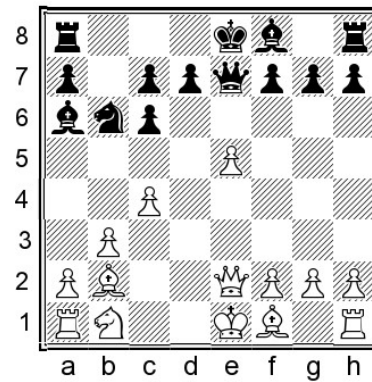
15...g4. Black sacrifices a pawn and thus avoids the opening of the h-file.

16.Bd3 f5 17.Bxf5. The activity of White's pieces increases with every move and Black is forced to part with his extra exchange. **17...Rxf5 18.Qxf5 Nxb3 19.axb3**² Black has problems to activate his bishop on a6 and in addition he must worry permanently about the safety of his king, since its shelter has been compromised.

C) 9...Nb6

The retreat of Black's knight to the b6-square is usually connected with the development of his bishop to b7.

10.Bb2

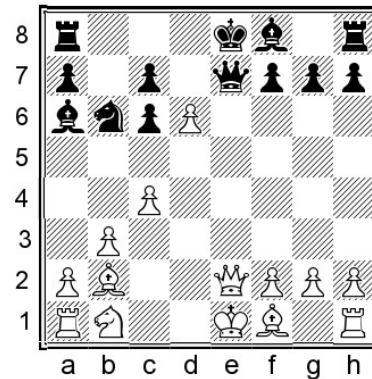


10...Qe6

About 10...g6 11.g3 Bg7 12.Bg2 – see Chapter 14, variation C.

10...0-0-0 11.Nd2 – see Chapter 19, variation A2.

The move 10...d5 leads to an endgame, which is in favour of White. 11.exd6



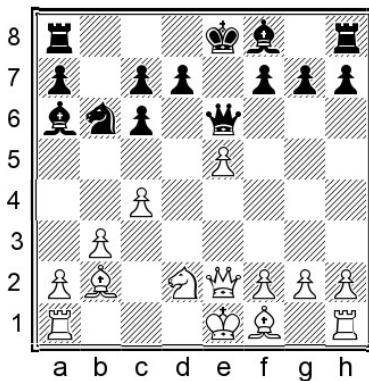
11...cxd6 12.Qxe7+ (12.Nc3!?) 12...Kxe7 13.Nc3. Black's pawn-structure is vulnerable, so he must concentrate on fighting for equality. 13...Bb7 (13...f6 14.0-0-0 Kf7 15.g3 Bb7 16.Bg2 Be7, Nedev – Wijesuriya, Bled 2002, 17.Rhe1²) 14.0-0-0 c5. Black exerts pressure against the pawn on g2 and wishes to impede the development of the enemy bishop on f1. 15.Nb5 Kd7 16.Bd3! White is not afraid to play this move! 16...a6 (It turns out now that the pawn on g2 is untouchable:

16...Bxg2? 17.Bf5+ Kc6 18.Rhg1 Bf3
 19.Rd3 Bh5 20.Be4+-) 17.Bf5+ Kc6
 18.Be4+!? (After 18.Nc3, White loses a
 part of his advantage. 18...Kc7 19.Be4 Be7
 20.Bxb7 Kxb7 21.Ne4² Kolev – Rahnev,
 Albena 2010.) 18...d5 19.cxd5+ Kxb5
 20.a4+ Kb4 21.Kc2. Black has an extra
 piece for a pawn, but his king is in a
 checkmating net. 21...c4 22.Bc3+ Kc5
 23.Bd4+ Kd6 24.Bxb6±

11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 cxd6 13.0-0 0-0-0
 (13...Nd7 14.Re1 0-0-0 15.Bf3 Bb7 16.Nc3
 h5 17.Rad1± Black's pieces have been too
 passively deployed. 17...Rh7? Lunau –
 Wuttke, Germany 1998, 18.Ne4 Kc7
 19.Ng5+-; 13...d5, Torres – Letelier, Chile
 2003, 14.Rd1 0-0-0 15.Bg4 – see 13...0-0-0;
 14...dxc4 15.Bf3 Rc8 16.Nd2±) 14.Rd1
 d5 (14...Bb7 15.Nd2²) 15.Bg4+ Kb8
 16.Nc3 (16.a4!?) 16...Bd6 17.cxd5 cxd5
 18.Ne2² Black's isolated d5-pawn will
 create plenty of problems for him.

11.Nd2

11.Nc3!?



11...Bb4

About 11...0-0-0 12.0-0-0 – see Chapter
 19, variation A2).

11...Bc5, Masiya – Molepo, Sandton
 2019, 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.Ne4 Be7 14.h4 d5
 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Nxd6±

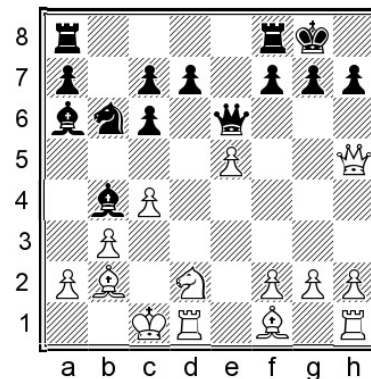
The move 11...Be7 is too passive. 12.0-0-0 Bb7, Gargatagli – Larsson, Barcelona 2017 (About 12...0-0-0 13.f4 – see Chapter 19, variation A2.) 13.Ne4 0-0-0 14.Qc2 f5 15.exf6 gxf6 16.Bd3± Besides Black's pawn-weaknesses on the queenside, he must worry now about his kingside pawns as well.

12.0-0-0 0-0

About 12...0-0-0 13.a3 – see Chapter 19,
 variation A2.

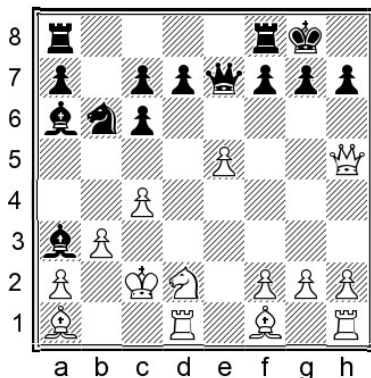
12...Qe7 13.Ne4 (13.Qg4!?) 13...0-0-0
 14.Qg4 Kb7, Harutjunyan – Deshpande,
 Mumbai 2013 (14...Bb7 15.Qxg7 d5,
 Avtsynov – Sizintsev, Voronezh 2013,
 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Qg5±). Now, White can
 capture bravely the enemy pawn:
 15.Qxg7!? d5 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxa6+
 Kxa6 18.Kb1±

13.Qh5

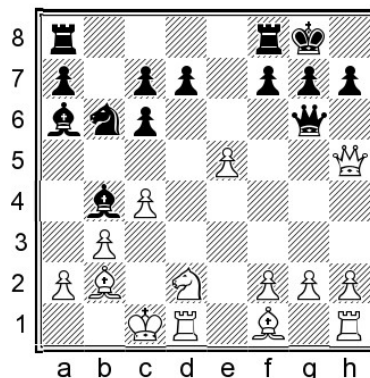


13...Qg6

13...Qe7 14.Kc2!? This is White's most precise move. It is essential for him to control the d3-square. (Following 14.Kb1 Ba3 15.Ba1 d5 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.Ne4 Qg6 18.Qxg6 hxg6 19.Bd3², White's advantage would not be so great, Neumeier – Nickl, Oberpullendorf 2002.) 14...Ba3 (14...d5 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Bd3 g6 17.Rhe1. Black has a very difficult position and the move 17...Qxe1? loses immediately by force: 18.Qh6 Qxd1+ 19.Kxd1 f6 20.Bxg6 hxg6 21.Qxg6+ Kh8 22.Ne4+-) 15.Ba1.



White should better preserve his dark-squared bishop, because it might be very useful in the future in an eventual attack against the enemy king. 15...f5 (Here, the move 15...d5 would not work for Black, because after 17.c5 he would not be threatening a check from the d3-square. 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.c5+-) 16.exf6 Rxf6 17.Bd3. White should better avoid accepting the exchange-sacrifice here and just continue to increase his pressure. 17...Rh6 18.Qa5 Bb7 19.Rhe1 Qc5 20.Qc3 Qf8 21.Re3 Bb4 22.Qe5±

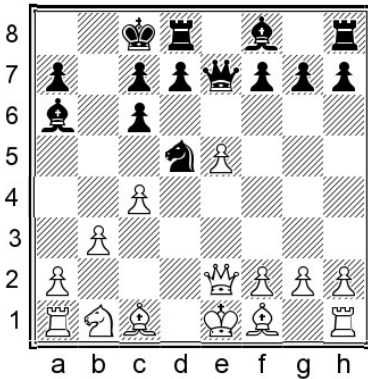


14.Qxg6 (14.Qh4!? Rae8 15.f4±)

14...fxg6. Black's pressure against the pawn on f2 can be easily parried by White. **15.Ne4 d5** (15...Rfe8 16.c5 Bxf1 17.Rhx f1. Black's bishop on b4 might get trapped, so he is forced to weaken his position even more in order to save it. 17...d5 18.cxb6 dxe4 19.bxc7 Ba5 20.Rd4 e3 21.fxe3 Rac8 22.Rd7 Rxc7 23.Rff7 Rxd7 24.Rxd7+-) **16.exd6 cxd6 17.a3 Rae8 18.axb4 Rxe4**, Muzychuk – Padjen, Bled 2008, **19.Rxd6 Rxf2** (19...Re1+ 20.Kd2 Rb1 21.Kc2 Re1 22.Bd4+-) **20.Bd3 Re7** (20...Re8 21.Rxc6+-) **21.Rd8+ Rf8 22.Rxf8+ Kxf8 23.Bd4 Ke8 24.Kd2+-**

Chapter 19

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Ba6 9.b3
0-0-0**



Black's king will not be so reliably placed on the queenside. Now however, he will manage to exert pressure quickly against the enemy e5-pawn after Re8 and f7-f6.

We will analyse now: **A) 10.Bb2** and **B) 10.g3**.

A) 10.Bb2

White defends his pawn on e5, but weakens his control over the c1-h6 diagonal.

We will deal now in details with: **A1) 10...Re8**, **A2) 10...Nb6**, **A3) 10...Nf4** and **A4) 10...Qg5**.

10...Qb4+?! 11.Nd2 Nf4 12.Qe3 Ne6 13.Qxa7± Van der Poel – Bouwmeester, Netherlands 2016.

10...g6 11.Nd2 Bg7 12.0-0-0 c5. This move weakens to long diagonal (about **12...Rhe8 13.g3 Nb6 14.f4** – see **10...Nb6**)

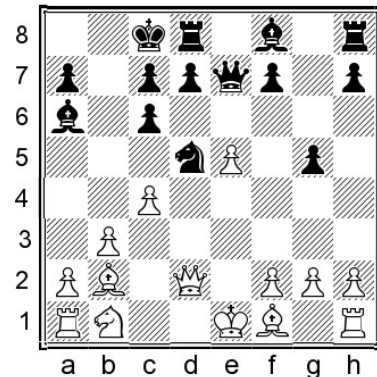
13.g3 Nb4 14.Bg2 Nxa2+?! Black loses too much time to win the enemy rook-pawn, which is practically completely useless.
15.Kb1 Nb4 16.Qf3 Nc6 17.Ne4±

10...f6 11.Qd2!? (**11.Qe4 Nb6 12.Nd2 fxe5 13.0-0-0 d6,**) **11...Nb6 12.Be2 fxe5 (12...Kb8 13.0-0 fxe5 14.a4** – see **12...fxe5) 13.0-0**. White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Black must consider permanently the threats **Qa5** and **a2-a4-a5**. **13...d5**. His attempt to play actively in the centre would lead to the weakening of the position of Black's king. (**13...Kb8**, Ciganikova – Beil, Prague 1995, **14.a4 Nc8 15.Nc3²; 13...Bb7 14.a4f; 14.Re1!?) 14.cxd5 Bxe2 15.Qxe2 cxd5**, Predojevic – Sokolov, Sarajevo 2005, **16.Bxe5**. This is the simplest decision for White. Now he will have an attack in a position with material equality. **16...Nd7 17.Qa6+ Kb8 18.Bxc7+!** White sacrifices his bishop and brings the enemy king into the open space. **18...Kxc7 19.Qxa7+ Kc8 20.Qa8+ Kc7 21.Rc1+ Nc5 22.Qa5+ Kb7 23.Nc3±** and White's threats are tremendously difficult for Black to parry.

10...Kb8. This move is too slow. **11.g3 f6 (11...Nb6 12.Bg2 Re8 13.0-0 h5**, Dias – Healey, Uxbridge 2009, **14.Nd2 h4 15.Ne4±) 12.Bg2 fxe5 13.0-0 Re8 14.Qd2 Nf6 15.Re1 Qd6 16.Qc2 e4**, Trifonov – Silkin, Volgograd 2010, **17.Nc3!?** **e3 18.Nd1 exf2+ 19.Nxf2 Rxe1+ 20.Rxe1**. Black has an extra pawn, but his pieces are scattered all over the board. **20...Qc5 (20...Be7? 21.b4 c5 22.Re5 cxb4 23.c5+-) 21.Bxf6 gxf6 22.Re8+ Bc8 (22...Kb7 23.Qd3 Qd6 24.Qf5 Bg7 25.Rxh8 Bxh8 26.Qxh7 Qf8 27.Qxd7+-) 23.Qd3 Bg7 24.Rxh8 Bxh8 25.Qxh7 Qf8 26.Bh3±** Black's pieces are near to the edge of the

board and he will be faced with a very difficult defence in this endgame.

10...g5 11.Qd2 (In this version White does not need to enter the variations with 11.g3 – see variation **B2**, or 11.Nd2 – see 9.Nd2 0-0-0 10.b3 g5 11.Bb2, Chapter 17; 11.h4!? Bg7 12.Nd2² Palac - Giorgadze, Pula 1997.)

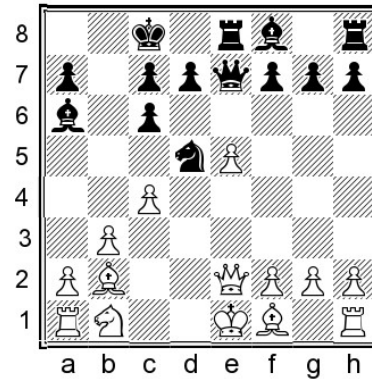


11...Nb6. Black's knight cannot enter soon the active actions from this square. 12.Be2 Bg7 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Bxe5 Qxe5 15.Nc3 Kb8 (15...Bb7 16.Rfe1²; 15...Qa5 16.a3 Rhe8 17.Rfe1 Bb7 18.b4 Qf5 19.Bd3²; 15...Rhe8 16.Rfe1 Bb7 17.a4f) 16.Rfe1 Qf4 17.Qxf4 gxf4 18.a4² Black's extra pawn does not compensate fully the weaknesses of his pawn-structure and his passively deployed minor pieces.

11...Nf4 12.g3 Ng6 13.Bg2 Nxe5 (13...Bg7 14.0-0 Bxe5, Kurenkov – Michalczak, Pardubice 2006, 15.Bxe5 Nxe5? 16.Qa5 Bb7 17.Nc3±; 15...Qxe5 16.Nc3 Rhe8 17.Rae1 Qf5 18.Ne4 h6 19.Qb4± White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit.) 14.0-0 f6 (14...Bg7 15.Qa5 Bb7 16.Nc3±) 15.Re1 (15.Qa5!?) 15...Bb7 16.Nc3 g4 17.Ne4© Black has an extra pawn indeed, but his defence would be very difficult. 17...d6 (17...Kb8? 18.Nxf6 Qxf6 19.Bxe5; 17...Qf7 18.Rad1±) 18.Qa5

a6 19.Nxf6 Qxf6 20.Rxe5 dxe5 21.Bxe5 Qf7 22.Bxh8±

A1) 10...Re8?!



The straightforward attack against the enemy e5-pawn would only increase Black's difficulties.

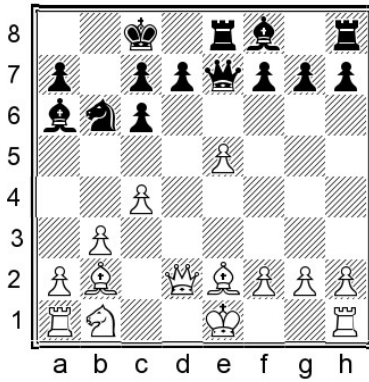
11.Qd2!

White wishes to clarify immediately the placement of Black's knight.

11...Nb6

11...Nf6. This move looks too artificial. 12.Be2 Ne4 13.Qe3 (It is possibly even stronger for White to play here 13.Qc2!? Qb4+ 14.Nc3 Rxe5 15.0-0 Nc5 16.Na4 Re8 17.Bc3 Qa3 18.Rad1 Nxa4 19.bxa4. Now, Black must consider constantly his opponent's checkmating threats on the b-file. 19...Bd6 20.Bd3 Qc5 21.Rb1 Be5 22.Bb4 Qd4 23.Rfd1±) 13...Qb4+ 14.Nd2 Nxd2 15.Qxd2 Qxd2+ (15...f6? 16.Bc3 Qe7, A.Fernandes – P.Dias, Lisbon 2003, 17.0-0 fxe5 18.Bg4±) 16.Kxd2 Bb4+ 17.Kc2 f6 18.a3 Bc5 19.f4² White has an advantage in this endgame thanks to his superior pawn-structure and more actively deployed pieces.

12.Be2



12...f6

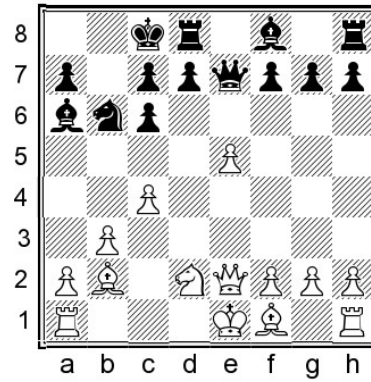
After 12...g6, Morozevich – Karpov, Dagomys 2008, White must continue with the energetic move 13.a4!?, trying to oust the enemy knight to the edge of the board as quickly as possible. 13...Bg7 14.a5 Na8 15.0-0 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 Qxe5 17.Nc3±

13.0-0

13.a4!? Kb8 14.a5 Nc8 15.exf6 gxf6 16.Nc3 Qe6 17.0-0 Rg8 18.Rfe1 Bb4 19.Bf3 Qf5 20.Rxe8 Rxe8 21.Qd1± Black has pawn-weaknesses on the queenside and now, he will have the same on the kingside as well.

13...fxe5 14.a4 Kb8 15.a5 Nc8 16.b4 Qf7 17.Na3 Nd6, Dworakowska – Shen, Ningbo 2009, **18.c5 Ne4 19.Qe1 Bxe2 20.Qxe2 Nf6 21.Qa6** (21.Rfe1±) **21...Nd5 22.Rab1 Ka8 23.Bxe5 Rb8 24.Qc4±** White has regained his pawn preserving all the pluses of his position.

A2) 10...Nb6 11.Nd2



11...d6

Black wishes to open the centre before his opponent's king has castled.

About 11...d5 12.exd6 – see 11... d6.

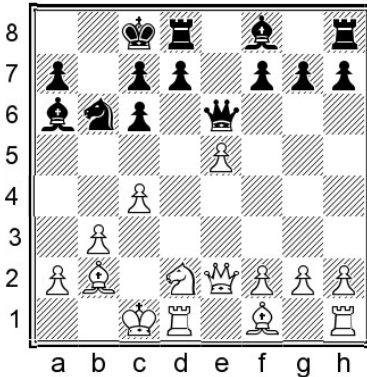
11...g6 12.g3 Bg7 13.0-0 Rhe8 14.f4 – see Chapter 14, variation C1.

11...h5 12.0-0-0 Rh6, Genocchio – Efimov, Montecatini Terme 1998. The inclusion of Black's rook into the actions via the sixth rank looks somewhat artificial, 13.h4 (13.f4!? Kb8 14.g3²) 13...Kb8 14.Ne4²

11...Re8 12.0-0-0 d5, Tukhaev – Ajrapetjan, Alushta 2006 (12...f6 13.f4 fxe5 14.Qxe5 Qf7, Karasek – Steiner, Ceske Budejovice 2019, 15.Qa5! Bb7 16.Bd3 Qxf4 17.Qh5!? Re6 18.Bf5±; 17...Bb4 18.Bxg7 Rhg8 19.Bxh7; 17...Qe3 18.Rhe1 Qxe1 19.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 20.Kc2 c5 21.Nf3 Bxf3 22.Qxf3±; 12...Qe6 13.f4 f6 14.g3 fxe5 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.fxe5±; following 12...c5 13.f4 Bb7, White manages to evacuate his strongest piece away from the juxtaposition with the enemy major pieces. 14.Qf2 f6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.Bd3 Bh6 17.Bf5±) 13.f4 f6 14.Kb1

fxe5 (14...dxc4 15.Qe4) 15.fxe5 Qe6
 16.Qf3² dxc4 17.Rc1± On his next move
 White will restore the material balance
 and will begin to attack Black's pawn-
 weaknesses on the queenside.

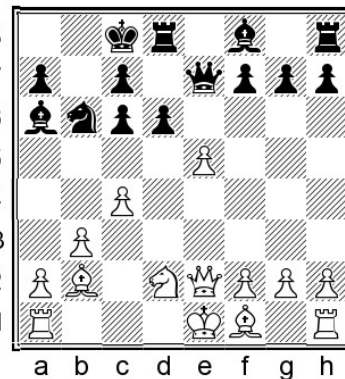
11...Qe6 12.0-0-0



12...Bb4 13.a3 (13.Qe3!?) 13...Be7,
 B.Rodrigues – Pirola, Cuiaba 2013,
 14.Qe3. On this square, contrary to e4,
 White's queen will not be attacked with
 tempo after Bb7, c6-c5. (White would
 maintain an edge too after 14.Ne4!/? d5
 15.exd6 cxd6, and Black would lose after
 16.Qc2 f6?, because of 17.c5 Bxf1 18.cxb6
 Bb5 19.Rhe1+–) 14...Bb7 15.Bd3±

After 12...Kb8, the simplest for White
 would be to reply with 13.Qe3!?,
 preparing Nf3-g5. (It is also possible for
 him to choose here 13.f4, although then
 his edge would not be so great. 13...Bb4
 14.Nf3 Qe7 15.Kb1 Nd5, I.Smirnov –
 Annageldyev, Alushta 2004, 16.Qd3 Nxf4
 17.Qe4 Ne6 18.c5 Bxf1 19.Qxb4+ Bb5
 20.a4. Now, in order to get rid of the pin
 of his bishop, Black will have to give back
 his extra pawn. 20...a5 21.Qxa5 Be2
 22.Rc1 Kb7 23.Qb4+ Ka6 24.Qe4 Bxf3
 25.Qxf3² Black's king is horribly
 vulnerable.) 13...Bb4 14.a3 Be7 15.Nf3 c5
 16.Ng5 Bxg5 17.Qxg5 Bb7 18.Bd3± White
 has a powerful bishop-pair as well as a
 space advantage.

12...Be7 13.f4 (13.Ne4!/? f6 14.exf6 gxf6
 15.Qc2) 13...Rhe8 (Black fails to
 undermine the pawn on f4, because after
 13...g5? 14.Qf2 gxf4, White would have
 the standard tactical strike for similar
 positions – 15.c5! Bxf1 16.cxb6 Ba6
 17.bxc7 Kxc7 18.Qxa7+ Bb7, Tomasek –
 Vechet, Czech Republic 2005, 19.Nc4 Ra8
 20.Qb6+ Kb8 21.Rxd7 Qxd7 22.e6 Qxe6
 23.Be5+–) 14.Qf2!?, with the idea Ne4
 (14.Qf3 Bb7 15.Bd3² Waldmann – Jacob,
 Austria 1999) 14...Bb7 15.Ne4± Black's
 pieces obviously do not have sufficient
 operational field.



12.exd6

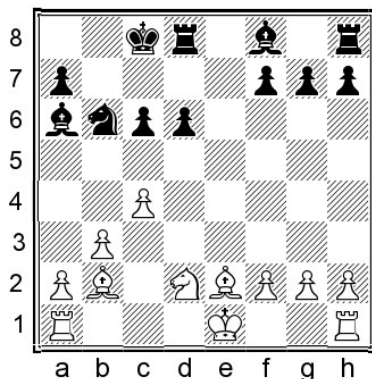
If White is reluctant to enter an
 endgame, he can try a promising pawn-
 sacrifice: 12.g3!/? dxe5 13.Bg2 h5 14.0-0-
 0²

12...Qxe2+

12...Qxd6 13.0-0-0 Qh6, Kral –
 Karacsony, Hungary 1995, 14.Qf3 Kb8
 15.Bd3² Black has too many pawn-
 weaknesses in his position.

13.Bxe2 cxd6

13...Re8? This pawn-sacrifice is obviously bad for Black. 14.dxc7 Nd5, Broekmeulen – Gorter, Venlo 2007, 15.Kd1 Kxc7 16.Re1 Nf4 17.Bf1 Rxe1+ 18.Kxe1±



14.0-0!?

This is stronger than the castling queenside. Now, if Black tries to free his position with the move d6-d5, White would have the resource Rfc1.

14.0-0-0 d5 15.Rhe1 dxc4 16.Nxc4, Sveshnikov – Genocchio, Presolana 2011, 16...Bxc4 17.Rxd8+ Kxd8 18.Bxc4 Nxc4 19.bxc4 f6=

14...Nd7

14...Be7?! 15.Bxg7 Rhg8, Napoli – Kokai, Senta 2008, 16.Bc3 d5 17.Rfe1±

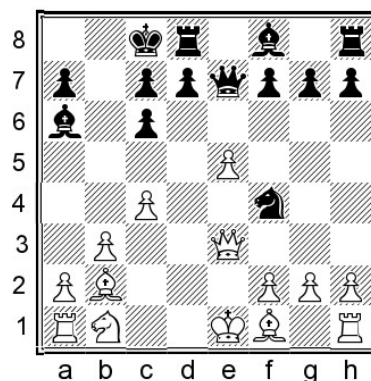
14...d5 15.Rfc1 dxc4 16.Nxc4 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 Bxc4 18.Rxc4 Kb7 19.Rac1² Black's weak pawns on a7 and c6 doom him to a long and laborious defence.

15.Rac1 Bb7, Davydov – Pissarev, Halle 2004 (15...f6 16.Rfe1±) **16.Rfe1±** Black can hardly begin any active operations in this endgame without creating additional weaknesses in his position.

A3) 10...Nf4

He transfers his knight to the g6-square in order to attack the enemy pawn on e5.

11.Qe3



11...Ng6

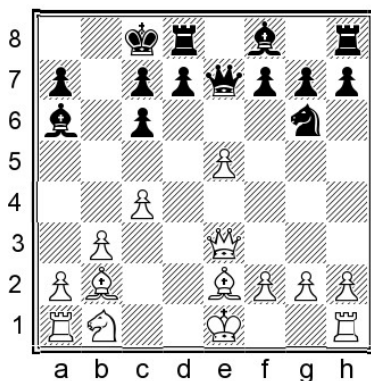
11...Qg5 12.g3 Ne6 13.Qxg5 Nxc5 14.Nd2 Bb7 15.Bg2²

11...g5. This attempt by Black to preserve his knight on the f4-square leads to a considerable weakening of his entire kingside. 12.h4 Rg8 (12...Bb7 13.hxg5 Qxg5 14.g3 Ne6 15.Qxg5 Nxc5 16.Rh5 Nf3+ 17.Ke2 c5 18.Nd2² Black's defence will be very difficult in this position.) 13.g3 Ne6 14.Nd2 d6, Mendonca – De Carvalho, Mogi das Cruzes 2013, 15.Qxa7 Bb7 16.c5!± White gives back his extra pawn, but begins a decisive attack. 16...Nxc5 17.b4 Ne6 18.0-0-0 Bh6 19.Nb3+–

11...Ne6. From this square Black's knight attacks the enemy pawn on e5, but can also be under threats after f4-f5.
 12.Qxa7 Bb7 13.Nd2 Qh4 (After 13...Qg5, the simplest for White would be to enter an endgame after: 14.Qe3 Qxe3+ 15.fxe3 Bc5 16.Kf2 d6 17.Bc3²) 14.g3 Qh5 (14...Qg4 15.Qe3 Bc5 16.Qe2²) 15.Qe3 Bc5 16.Qf3² Black's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient.

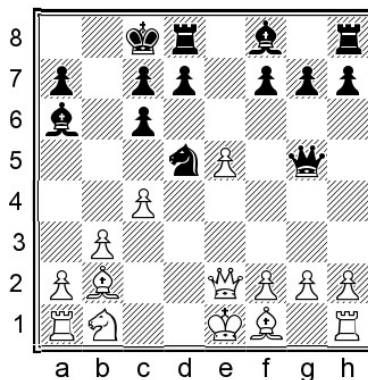
12.Be2

12.Nd2!? Menzel – Boudre, Lyngby 1989, 12...Nxe5 13.Bxe5 Re8 14.Bb2 Qd8 15.Ne4²



12...Re8, Totsky – Khassanov, St Petersburg 2000, **13.0-0 Bb7** (13...Nxe5 14.Qxa7 Bb7 15.Nc3 Ng6 16.Rae1² White's queen is in the dangerous vicinity of Black's king.) **14.Re1 Nxe5 15.Nc3 Ng6 16.Qd2 Qd6 17.Bg4 Re7 18.Qc2²** Black's pieces are totally dis-coordinated and despite the extra pawn, he must fight for equality.

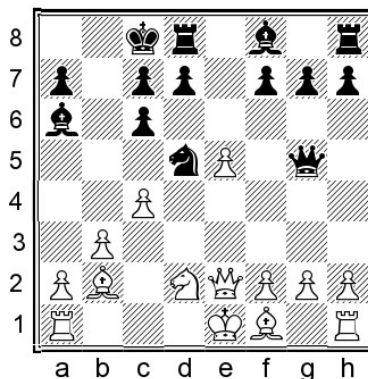
A4) 10...Qg5



11.h4!?

White plays this move with the idea to follow with g3, Bh3.

11.Nd2

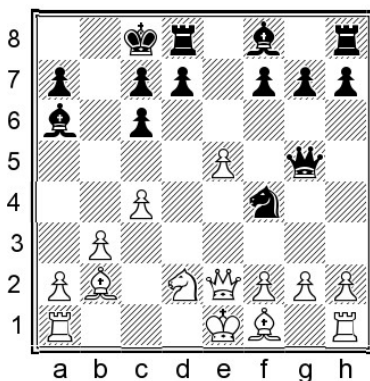


11...f6 12.h4 Qh6 13.0-0-0. White's king will be perfectly placed on the queenside.
 13...Bc5 14.Qf3 Nf4 15.exf6 gxf6 16.g3 Ne6 17.Qxf6 Qh5, Hort – Unzicker, Germany 1984, 18.g4!/? Qxg4 19.Bh3 Qh5 20.Bxe6 dxe6 21.Qg5 Qxg5 22.hxg5 Rhg8 23.Rxh7 Bxf2 24.Bf6+–

11...Bb4 12.g3 Nc3 (12...Rhe8 13.f4 Qg6 14.a3 (14.0-0-0!/? Nechitailo – Moliboga, Kiev 2002, 14...Bc5 15.Re1. White takes some measures in advance against the penetration of the enemy knight to the e3-square. 15...Ne3 16.Qd3 Nxf1 17.Qxg6 hxg6 18.Rhxf1²) 14...Bc5, Petr – Krejci, Czech Republic 2012, 15.b4 Bb6 16.Qe4 Qxe4+ 17.Nxe4. Black fails to defend against the threat c4-c5. 17...Ne3 18.c5

Bxf1 19.Rxf1 Nxf1 20.Kxf1 d6 21.cxb6
 axb6 22.Re1 dxe5 23.fxe5² In this
 endgame White's two minor pieces would
 be stronger than Black's rook and pawns.)
 13.f4 Qg6 14.Bxc3 Bxc3 15.0-0-0 d5. Black
 wishes to activate his bishop on a6.
 (15...Bb4, Liberman – Predke, Samara
 2011, 16.Kb2 f6 17.Nf3 Rhe8 18.Qe3²)
 16.Nf3!? (16.Qf3 Bb4 17.Bd3 Qe6 18.Qe2
 Qe7 19.Nf3² Tomczak – Ragger, Gaziantep
 2008) 16...Bb7 (16...dxc4. Black opens
 files immediately, but he will hardly
 manage to organise an attack against
 White's king... 17.bxc4 Bb4 18.Kb2 Rxd1
 19.Qxd1 c5 20.a3 Ba5 21.Bd3 Qc6 22.Rf1
 Bb7 23.Ng5²) 17.Qc2 Qxc2+ 18.Kxc2 Bb4
 19.Ng5² White's knight exerts powerful
 pressure against the enemy position.

11...Nf4!? This is the only way for Black
 to equalise.



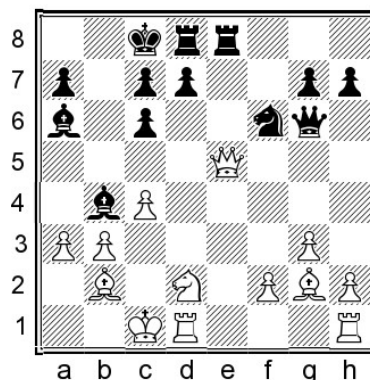
12.h4. White would not achieve much
 by sacrificing his g2-pawn. 12...Nxb2+
 13.Bxb2 Qxb2 14.0-0-0 c5 15.Ne4 Bb7
 16.Ng5 Be7 17.Nxf7 Qf3 18.Qxf3 Bxf3
 19.Nxh8 Rxh8 20.Rh3 Bxd1 21.Kxd1 Rf8
 22.Ke2 h5= The position has been
 considerably simplified and White's
 advantage in this endgame would be just
 symbolic.

12.Qe3 Nxb2+ 13.Bxb2 Qxb2 14.0-0-0
 c5 15.Ne4 Bb7 16.f3 Qh3 17.Rhf1 d6
 18.exd6 Bxd6 19.Bxb7 Rhe8 20.Nxd6+
 cxd6 21.Qf4 Qe6 22.Rfe1 Qxe1 23.Rxe1
 Rxe1+ 24.Kb2 Rf1 25.Bf6 Rxf3 26.Qh6

Re8= Black has managed to coordinate his
 pieces and his rooks are not inferior to
 White's queen at all.

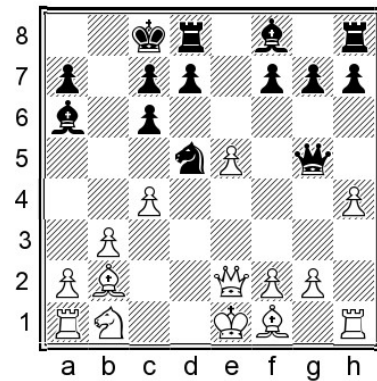
12.Qf3 Ng6 13.Ne4 (13.Qe4 Bb7 14.h4
 Qh6 15.0-0-0 c5÷) 13...Qh6 14.Qf5 (14.c5
 Bxf1 15.Kxf1 Re8÷) 14...Bb4+ 15.Kd1.
 White's knight is very powerful at the
 centre of the board, but his king has lost
 its castling rights and obviously does not
 beautify his position. 15...Nh4! 16.Qg4 f5.
 Black opens the position with the idea to
 organise an attack against the enemy
 king. 17.exf6 gxf6 18.g3 (18.Bc1 Rhg8
 19.Qxg8 Qh5+ 20.Be2 Qe5 21.Qg4 Qxa1
 22.Kc2 Qxa2=) 18...Rhe8. Black's rook on
 d8 will support the pawn-advance d7-d5.
 19.Kc2 (19.Bc1 Qg6 20.Qxg6 Nxb2 21.a3
 Bf8 22.Nd2 Ne5÷) 19...f5 20.Qg5 Qe6
 21.Nd2 d5 22.cxd5 cxd5 23.gxh4 Qc6+
 24.Kd1 d4 25.Qxf5+ Kb8 26.Bxa6 Qxa6
 27.Nc4 Qc6 28.Rf1 d3 29.f3 Rf8= The
 horrible placement of White's king will
 prevent him from realising his extra
 piece.

After 11.g3, Avtsynov – Makarkin,
 Voronezh 2011, 11...f6!?, Black solves all
 his problems. 12.Nd2 fxe5 13.0-0-0 Qg6
 14.Bg2 Bb4 15.Qxe5 Nf6 16.a3 Rhe8



17.Qd4 (17.Qf4 Bd6 18.Qd4 c5 19.Qc3
 Bb7 20.Bxb7+ Kxb7 21.f4 Re7 22.Rhe1
 Rde8=) 17...c5 18.Qf4 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 Bb7.
 White will soon lose his two-bishop

advantage and his edge will evaporate completely. He can enter an endgame with major pieces, or an ending with a bishop against a knight. In both cases Black is quite likely to hold successfully his defence. 20.Bxb7+ (20.Bxf6 gxf6 21.Bxb7+ Kxb7 22.Qf3+ Re4 23.Re1 (23.Rhd1 d6 24.b4 cxb4 25.axb4 Rde8=) 23...f5 24.Re3 c6 25.Rxe4 fxe4=) 20...Kxb7 21.Rhd1 (21.Qf3+ Ne4 22.Rhd1 Qh6 23.Kb1 Qc6=) 21...d6 22.Qf3+ (22.Bxf6 gxf6 23.b4 cxb4 24.axb4 Re4 25.Qf3 Rde8 26.Rc2 f5=) 22...Re4 23.Re1 (23.Bxf6 gxf6 24.b4 cxb4 25.axb4 Rde8=) 23...Rde8 24.Rxe4 Rxe4=

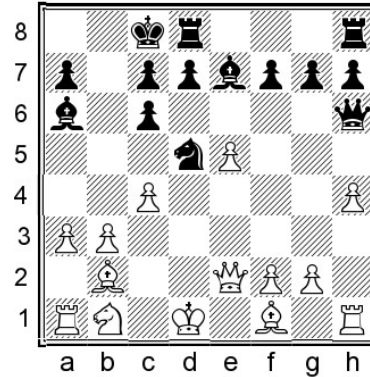


11...Bb4+

The move 11...Qf5 would not be so precise for Black. 12.g3 (Following 12.Qd3?! Van Rosmalen – Schneider Zinner, Vienna 2011, Black would seize the initiative. 12...Qxd3 13.Bxd3 Nf4 14.Be4 Bb4+ 15.Nc3 d5f) 12...Nb4 (12...Bb4+ 13.Kd1 Nb6 14.Bh3 Qg6 15.a3 Be7 16.Qg4!?) 13.Na3 Bc5 (13...f6 14.Bh3 Qg6 15.h5 Qe8 16.0-0²) 14.Rd1 Rhe8 15.Bh3 Qg6 16.h5. White cannot castle at the moment, because of Black's attack against the g3-square. 16...Qg5, Garau – Dedina, ICCF 2016, 17.Nb1. White is transferring his knight to the centre of the board. 17...Nxa2 18.Nd2 f5 (18...Bb4?! 19.Kf1 Bxd2 20.Qxd2 Qxd2 21.Rxd2±)

19.Ra1 Nb4 20.Ra4² Black's bishop on a6 is misplaced, since it is restricted by his own c4-pawn.

12.Kd1 Qh6 13.a3 Be7



This position was reached in the game Livshits – Jirka, Israel 2009.

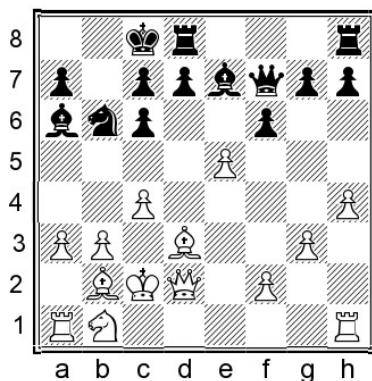
14.g3 Nb6

Black has managed to deprive his opponent of his castling rights, but after that his pieces were forced to retreat from their active positions.

15.Kc2 f6

15...Kb8 16.Qd2 Qe6 17.Nc3² Here, Black had better refrain from 17...Qxe5?, because after 18.Nd5 Qd6 19.Nxe7 Qxe7 20.Re1 Qf8 21.Qa5 Bb7 22.c5 Nc8 23.h5 f6 24.Bc4±, White's bishops would become tremendously active.

16.Qd2 Qg6+ 17.Bd3 Qf7



18.Qa5

White forces the enemy king to protect the bishop on a6.

18...Kb7

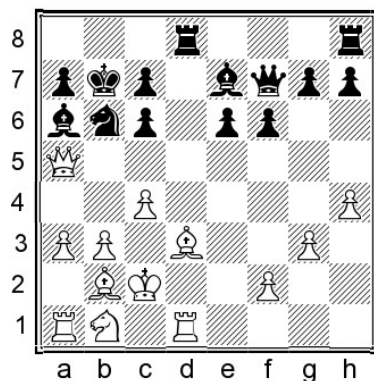
After 18...Bb7?, Black would be almost lost. 19.c5 Qd5 20.exf6 gxf6 21.Rf1 Qxc5+ (21...Rhf8 22.b4+-) 22.Qxc5 Bxc5 23.Bxf6± He cannot help losing the exchange.

19.e6!?

White continues to increase the tension.

He would not achieve much after 19.Nd2, because after 19...fxe5 20.Qxe5, Black would have the energetic resource 20...d5! 21.Qxg7 Qxf2.

19...dxe6 20.Rd1



20...Rd6

Black prepares the doubling of his rooks on the d-file.

20...e5 21.Nc3 Qe6 (21...Nd7 22.Na4²) 22.Bc1²

It is possible that Black might try to equalise in the variations arising after 20...Rd7 21.Nc3 Rhd8 22.Be4 e5 23.Rxd7 Rxd7 24.Rd1 Rxd1 25.Nxd1. His knight on b6 and his bishop on a6 are very passive. So, it would be reasonable for Black to sacrifice a piece. 25...Bxc4!? 26.bxc4 Qxc4+ 27.Nc3 Qd4 28.Bd3 Qxf2+ 29.Ne2 g6 30.Kb1÷ White has two powerful bishops, so he has good winning chances.

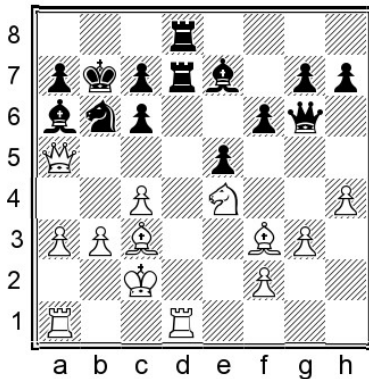
21.Nc3 Rhd8 22.Ne4 R6d7 23.Bc3 e5

After 23...f5 24.Nc5+ Bxc5 25.Qxc5 Kb8 26.Rd2 Bb7 27.Rad1², White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit. Black does not have clear equality and will have to comply with a long and difficult defence.

24.Be2 Qg6

24...Rxd1 25.Rxd1 Rxd1 26.Kxd1 Nd7
27.Nd2²

25.Bf3



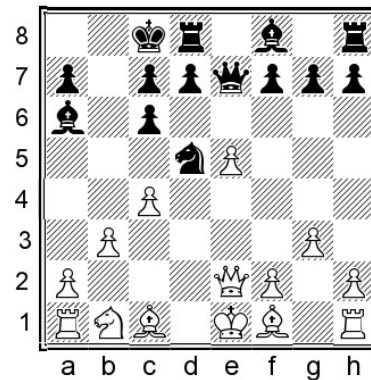
25...Rxd1

25...Qf5 26.Bg2 g6 27.Rab1 Rxd1
28.Rxd1 Rxd1 29.Kxd1 Qd7+ 30.Nd2²

Black does not have clear equality either after 25...f5 26.h5, for example; 26...Qe6 27.Nc5+ Bxc5 28.Qxc5 Rxd1 29.Rxd1 Rxd1 30.Bxd1 Nd7 31.Qe3 g6 32.Qh6 Qf7 33.Kb2 e4 34.f3 exf3 35.Bxf3² White's two bishops are tremendously powerful in this open position.

26.Rxd1 Rxd1 27.Kxd1 f5 28.Nd2 e4 29.Be2² Later, Black will have a hard time to activate his bishop on a6, so despite his extra pawn he would not have full equality.

B) 10.g3



We will analyse now: **B1) 10...Re8** and **B2) 10...g5**.

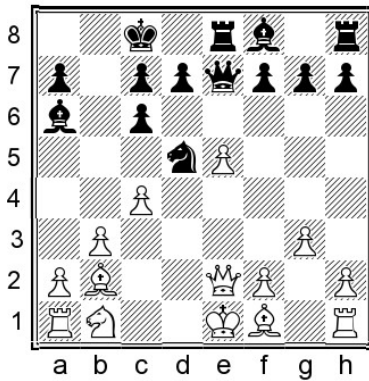
About 10...f6 11.Bg2 – see Chapter 14, variation **B**.

10...g6 11.Bb2 Bg7 12.Nd2 – see Chapter 14, variation **C1**.

10...Qb4+ 11.Bd2 (It is possibly the simplest for White to choose here 11.Qd2!?, with the idea to exploit Black's pawn-weaknesses in the endgame. 11...Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2 Ne7 13.Nc3²) 11...Qb6 12.Qe4 (12.Nc3 Nxc3 13.Bxc3 Bb4 14.Qd2 c5 15.Bxb4 Qxb4 16.Qxb4. Now, the transfer into an endgame would not be so good for him, because Black would correct his pawn-structure. 16...cxb4 17.0-0-0 Bb7 18.Rg1 Rhe8 19.f4 d6,, Muzychuk – Sulskis, Gibraltar 2008. Black's prospects are not worse, because White's queenside pawns have been fixed on squares with the same colour as his bishop.) 12...f5. Black sacrifices a pawn with the idea to deflect the enemy queen from the protection of the d4-square. 13.Qxf5 Qd4 14.cxd5 Bxf1 15.Bc3, Carlsen – Sulskis, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, 15...Qd3 16.Qxd3 Bxd3 17.dxc6 dxc6 18.Nd2 Bc5 19.h4 Rd5 20.Rh2 Rhd8© White has an extra pawn indeed, but his game is not so

simple, since Black's pieces are very active.

B1) 10...Re8 11.Bb2



11...f6

11...g5. This move is strategically risky. Black prevents the move f2-f4, but weakens his kingside in the process. 12.Nd2 (12.Qd2!? Nb6 13.Bh3 Bg7 14.0-0 Bxe5 15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.Nc3 f5 17.a4± White has very powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn.) 12...Nb4 (about 12...Bg7 13.0-0-0 – see variation **B2**, 12...Rde8) 13.0-0-0! White evacuates his king away from the centre and ignores the loss of his rook-pawn. 13...Nxa2+ 14.Kb1 Nb4 15.Ne4 Bg7? (15...Qe6±) 16.Bh3 Rd8 17.Qe3 Kb8 18.Qxg5 f6, Kislinsky – Khruschiov, St Petersburg 2009, 19.Qh4+–

11...h5. This plan with the advance of the h-pawn does not seem to be well prepared. 12.Bg2 h4 (It is not logical for Black to opt here for 12...f6 13.Qd2 Nb6 14.0-0 fxe5 15.Re1 Qb4 16.Rxe5 Rxe5 17.Bxe5± Suarez Real – Daillet, France 2006.) 13.Nd2 f6 14.Qg4²

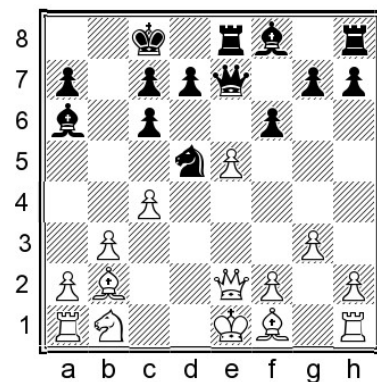
11...Qg5. White wishes after Nd2, to transfer his queen to c2, but this manoeuvre would take too much time. 12.Nd2 Qg6 13.Bg2 Qc2 14.Ne4 Qxe2+ 15.Kxe2. In this endgame Black's defence would be difficult, because he has no compensation for his numerous pawn-weaknesses. 15...f5, Vuckovic – Tseshkovsky, Zlatibor 2006, 16.Ng5!? Be7 17.Nh3 g5 18.Kd2 g4 19.cxd5 gxh3 20.Bxh3 cxd5 21.Bxf5 Rhf8 22.g4 Bg5+ 23.Kc2± The tactical complications are over and White has a solid extra pawn.

11...g6 12.Nd2 Bg7 13.0-0-0 Nb6. Capturing the pawn on e5 would have led to the loss of a piece for Black, so he must remove at first his knight away from the centre. This would provide however White with an important tempo to protect his e5-pawn. 14.f4 f6, Suarez Real – Naranjo Moreno, Burguillos 2008, 15.a4. This move emphasizes the misplacement of the knight on b6. 15...d6 16.Qf2 fxe5 17.a5 exf4 18.gxf4! This is the simplest move for White. He is not in a hurry to play axb6. 18...Bxb2+ 19.Kxb2 Qf6+ 20.Kc2 Nd7? Black should not have allowed the penetration of the enemy queen inside his camp, but his position was difficult anyway. 21.Qxa7 Bb7 22.a6+–

11...Nb6 12.Nd2 f6 (12...h5 13.Bg2 f6, Macak – Rybansky, Slovakia 2000, 14.0-0 fxe5. Black has won a pawn, but in the meantime White has succeeded in evacuating his king away from the centre and now the activity of his pieces increases with every move. 15.Nf3± e4 16.Ne5) 13.Bg2 fxe5 14.0-0 g6 (After 14...d5 15.Nf3 e4 16.Ne5, Black has problems with the protection of his pawn

on c6. 16...Qf6 17.f3 Rxe5 18.f4±) 15.a4 Nd5, Zorko – Ramic, Obrenovac 2004, 16.Rfe1 Bg7 17.Ba3±, followed by Ne4. White is a pawn down, but his position is overwhelming.

11...Qb4+ 12.Nd2 Qa5 (12...Nc3? 13.a3 Qa5 14.b4) 13.a3!? This is a reliable move (After 13.Bh3, White must consider 13...Nc3, for example: 14.Qf3 Qxe5+ 15.Kf1, Armas – G.Garcia, Matanzas 1992, 15...Ne4 16.Qxe4 Qxe4 17.Nxe4 Rxe4 18.Rd1 Bd6 19.Bf5 Re7 20.Bxg7 Rhe8² He has restored the material balance, but Black has completed his development.) 13...Bd6 (Following 13...Nc3 14.b4 Bxb4 15.axb4 Qxb4 16.Ba3, Black will not have sufficient compensation for the piece. 16...Qa5 17.Nb3 Nxe2+ 18.Nxa5 Nxb3 19.fxg3 Rxe5+ 20.Kd2 Rxa5 21.Bd3±) 14.b4 Qa4 15.b5. White closes the diagonal for the enemy bishop on a6 and wins material. 15...Bxe5 16.Bxe5 f6 17.Nf3 fxe5 18.cxd5 e4 (18...Bxb5 19.Qe3 Qa5+ 20.Nd2±) 19.Nh4 e3 20.fxe3 Bxb5 21.Qd2± White lags horribly in development, but Black has just one pawn for the piece.



12.Bg2

He plays this move with the idea to evacuate his king quickly away from the centre.

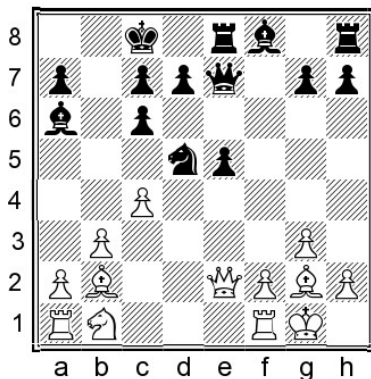
The move 12.Qd2 would lead to complications, which White should better avoid. 12...Nb6 13.a4 Qb4!? (Following the passive move 13...Kb8, White's previous play would be completely justified: 14.a5 Nc8 15.Bh3 fxe5 16.Qxd7 Qf6 17.0-0 Bc5?! 18.Nc3± Morozevich – Xie, Pamplona 1998.) 14.a5 Qxb3 15.axb6 Bb4 16.bxa7 Kb7. Black has sacrificed a piece and has activated noticeably his forces, so now White has become the defending side. 17.a8=Q+ Rxa8 18.Nc3 Bxc4, Scetinin – Ponkratov, Biel 2001, 19.Be2 (19.Rb1 Rhe8 20.Bxc4 Qxc4 21.f3 Rxe5+ 22.Kf2 Kc8 23.Rhc1 Bc5+ 24.Kg2 Be3 25.Qe2 Qxe2+ 26.Nxe2 Bxc1 27.Bxe5 Ra2 28.Kf1 Bd2. Black has three passed pawns for the piece in this endgame. 29.Rb2 Rxb2 30.Bxb2 c5=) 19...Rxa1+ 20.Bxa1 Bxe2 21.Kxe2 Ra8÷ White has a knight for two pawns, but his king is not reliably placed.

12...fxe5

12...Qb4+?! This check is not given at the right time and only worsens Black's position. 13.Qd2 (White can also fight for the advantage in the middle game too: 13.Nd2 Bd6 14.a3 Qb6 15.0-0 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 Rxe5 17.Qg4 Rg5, Charbonneau – Safin, Istanbul 2000, 18.Qf3± After the retreat of Black's knight from the centre, White will begin an attack with the moves Qc3, b3-b4, Nb3.) 13...Qxd2+ 14.Nxd2 Nb4 15.Be4! With this move White defends against Nc2+ and covers the e-file. 15...Bb7 16.a3 Na6 17.exf6 Nc5 18.fxg7 Bxg7 19.Bxg7 Rhg8, P.Nielsen – Prakash, Mamaia 1991, 20.f3 Rxg7 21.Kf2±

13.0-0

13.Nd2 h5 14.0-0-0 Nf6!?



13...Nf6

13...h5 14.Qd2! Nf6 15.Re1 – see 13...Nf6.

13...Nb6 14.Re1 Qf7 15.Qd2 (15.Nd2!? Kb8, Von Meijenfeldt – Naiditsch, Vlissingen 2011 16.Qf3±) 15...Bxc4?! (15...Bb7 16.Rxe5±) 16.bxc4 Nxc4 17.Qc2 Bc5 18.Nc3 Qxf2+ 19.Qxf2 Bxf2+ 20.Kxf2 Nxb2 21.Bf1+–

14.Re1 h5 15.Qd2

Black has an extra pawn, but he can hardly parry the threats Qa5 and Rxe5.

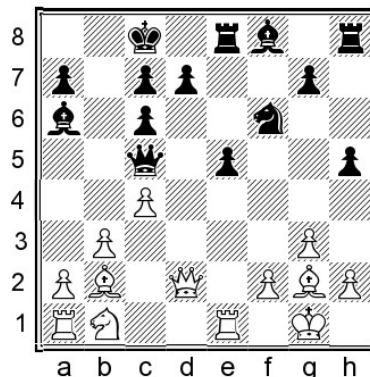
15...Qc5

After Black's alternatives White will restore quickly the material balance and will maintain an advantage thanks to his more elastic pawn-structure.

15...Qd6 16.Qa5 c5 17.Na3 Qb6 18.Qxb6 axb6 19.Bxe5²

15...h4 16.Rxe5 Qf7 17.Qa5 Bb7 18.Rxe8+ Qxe8 19.Nd2² Bissmann – Sawatzki, Email 2007.

15...Qb4 16.Rxe5 Rxe5 17.Bxe5 Qxd2 (17...h4 18.Nc3 hxg3 19.hxg3 Qa5 20.Bd4²) 18.Nxd2 Bb4 19.Nf3 Re8, Jones – Hebden, Sunningdale 2007, 20.Rd1±



16.Nc3

16.h4!? Bb7 17.Nc3 Qa5 (17...Qd4 18.Qc2±) 18.a3 c5. This move cannot prevent White from advancing b3-b4. 19.Bxb7+ Kxb7 20.b4, After the opening of the b-file, White's rooks will take part in the attack against the enemy king.

16...Kb8

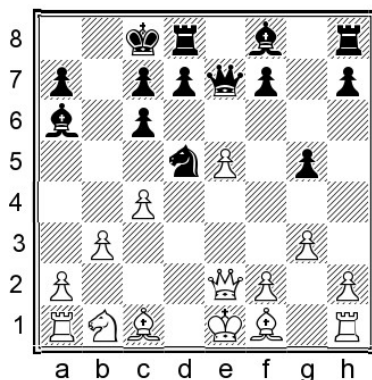
16...Qd6 17.Qe3 Qc5 18.Na4 Qxe3 19.Rxe3²

16...h4 17.Na4 Qb4 18.Bc3 Qd6 19.Qe3 hxg3 20.hxg3± Burg – Salnikov, Salekhard 2007. The opening of the h-file has not brought anything much to Black, because White's bishop on g2 protects quite reliably his king,

17.h4 (17.Na4!? Qb4 18.Bc3 Qd6 19.Qg5±) 17...Bb7 18.Na4 Qb4 19.Qc2 e4 20.Bd4 d5 (The move 20...Rh6 enables

White to retreat his bishop with tempo. 21.a3 Qd6 22.Be3±) **21.a3 Qd6 22.Nc5 Nd7 23.b4**. Black's defence is not easy at all, because he cannot exchange on c5, since that would lead to the fatal opening of the b-file for him. **23...Rg8? 24.cxd5 cxd5 25.Qa4+-** Docx – Froeyman, Ghent 2017.

B2) 10...g5!?



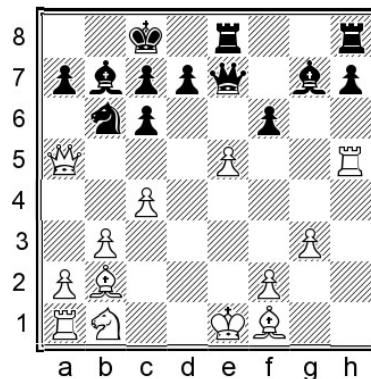
Black not only prepares the move Bg7, but also impedes the enemy pawn-advance f2-f4.

11.Bb2

Following 11.Ba3 Nb4, White must play very accurately (11...Qxa3!? This is not a queen-sacrifice, but a forced transition into an endgame. 12.Nxa3 Bb4+ 13.Qd2 Bxd2+ 14.Kxd2 Ne7 15.h4, Paravyan – Ivlev, Moscow 2018, 15...g4!?) 12.Bb2 Bg7 13.Bh3 Rhe8 14.0-0 c5. Black wishes to capture the e5-pawn under the most favourable circumstances. 15.Re1 Bb7 16.Bf5 Nc6³ Doukhine – D.Frolov, Samara 2003.

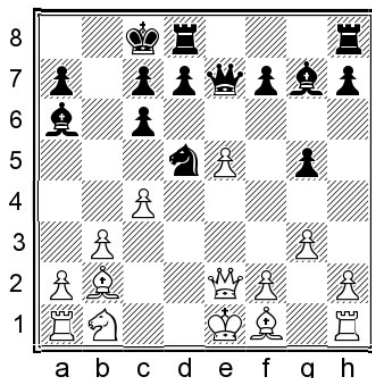
11.h4. White wishes to emphasize immediately the defects of his opponent's previous move. Still, he would be

incapable of obtaining an advantage, because of his lag in development. 11...gxh4 12.Rxh4 Bg7 13.Bb2 Rde8 14.Rh5 f6 15.Qd2 Nb6 16.Qa5 Bb7, Vitoux – Kosten, Pau 2008.



17.Qxa7 (17.c5 Qf7 18.Rh4 Qd5 19.Nd2 Rxe5+ 20.Kd1 Qxc5 21.Qxc5 Rxc5 22.Ne4 Rf5 23.Bd3 Kb8÷ Black's rook is misplaced on the f5-square, but this is compensated by his extra material.) 17...Qf7 18.Rh4 fxe5 19.c5 Rhf8 20.Rh2 Nd5 21.Ba6. It may look like White has achieved a lot. Still, Black may leave his bishop on b7 unprotected for the moment, evacuate his king away from the centre and begin a counter attack against the enemy monarch. 21...Kd8 22.Qxb7 e4 23.Nc3 Nxc3 24.Qc8+ Ke7 25.Qxc7 Nd5. Here, White has nothing better than to force a draw by a perpetual check. 26.Qd6+ Kd8 27.Qb8+ Ke7=

11...Bg7



We will analyse now: **B2a) 12.Nd2** and **B2b) 12.Bh3!?**

12.Bg2. After this move there arises a standard endgame but with a black pawn on g5 and not on the g6-square. 12...Rde8 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 cxd5 18.Nc3 (Here, it seems less energetic for White to choose 18.Na3 c6 19.Nc2 h5 20.Rd1 h4 21.Nd4 hxg3 22.hxg3 f6= Areshchenko – Hebden, Gibraltar 2008.) 18...c6 19.Rc1 Kd8 20.Ne2, with the idea f2-f4 20...g4 21.f3 h5 22.Kf2 Rhe8 23.Rc2 Kc7?! (Black had better choose here 23...a5.) 24.f4! (24.b4!?!; 24.h4 gxh3 25.Bxh3 h4!= Morozevich – Mikhalevski, Zuerich 2009) 24...Re3 25.Bxd5± After the loss of the d5-pawn, Black will be doomed to defend a position without any good prospects.

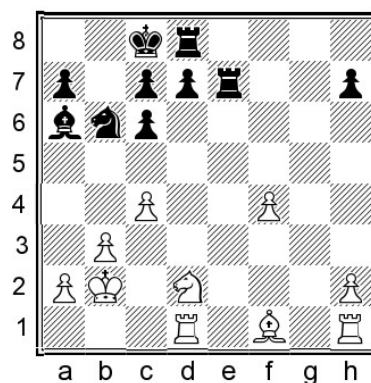
B2a) 12.Nd2 Nb4

Black is trying to impede his opponent's castling queenside by exerting pressure against his pawn on a2.

12...Rde8. This move has the drawback that if Black advances later d7-d5, this would not be so effective, because of the absence of his rook on the d8-square. 13.0-0-0 Nb6 14.f4 Kb8 (Following

14...gxf4 15.gxf4 f6, Khusnutdinov – Singh, Mumbai 2010, White has the very interesting pawn-sacrifice: 16.e6!? dxe6 17.Bg2f) 15.Kb1 Bb7 (The move 15...d5 would lead to the considerable weakening of the c6-square in Black's position. 16.Nf3 gxf4 17.gxf4 dxc4 18.Bg2±) 16.Ne4 h6 17.Qc2 (17.Qf2!?) 17...Rhg8 18.Bg2 gxf4 19.gxf4 c5, Nataf – Netzer, France 2004, 20.Rhe1± White's pieces have been very harmoniously deployed and he has the outcome of the game in his hands.

Following 12...Rhe8 13.0-0-0 Nb6, White manages to fortify his e5-pawn. 14.f4 gxf4 15.gxf4 f6 16.exf6. With the help of some tactics he transfers the game into an ending with a slight edge. 16...Bxf6 17.Qxe7 Bxb2+ 18.Kxb2 Rxe7

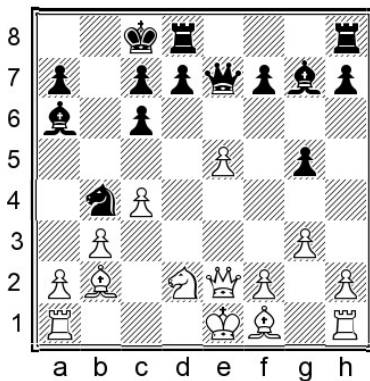


The move 19.Bh3 loses the advantage for White. 19...Rf8 20.Rhe1 Rxe1 21.Rxe1 Rxf4 (21...Kd8 22.f5 Bc8 23.Nf3 c5 24.Rg1 d5 25.Ng5 h6 26.Nh7, Rublevsky – Ponomariov, Foros 2006, 26...Re8²) 22.Re8+ Kb7 23.Ne4 d6= De la Riva – Candelario, Ayamonte 2006.

19.Bd3. This is a reliable move. After White plays f4-f5, his bishop will take part in the protection of his pawn. 19...Rf8 20.Rde1 (There would arise a much sharper position after the pawn-sacrifice 20.Ne4 d5 21.Nc5 dxc4, Garcia Porlan –

Perez Candelario, La Roda 2015, 22.Be4 cxb3 23.axb3 Bb5 24.f5©) 20...Ref7 21.f5f

19.a4. White wishes to oust the enemy knight away from the b6-square as quickly as possible in order to diminish his opponent's pressure against the pawn on c4. 19...d5 (19...Kb8 20.a5 Nc8, Hector – Timman, Malmo 2001, 21.Bd3²) 20.a5 Nd7 21.Bh3 Re2, M.Mueller – Jenni, Zuerich 2006, 22.Bg4 Rf2. Black bases his hopes on his actively placed rook on the penultimate rank. 23.Rhf1 Rg2 (23...Rhx2. Black wins a pawn, but will be attacked with tempo after Nf3-e5. 24.Ka3 h5 25.Nf3 Re2 26.Bf5±) 24.Rg1 Rf2 25.Ka3 Rxf4 26.Nf3 Kb7 27.cxd5 Nb8 28.Ng5f



13.0-0-0

White sacrifices his pawn on a2. Still, the absence of that pawn would enable Black to accomplish the manoeuvre Qa6-a2 at a decisive moment and to equalise.

13.Kd1? c5 14.Bg2 Bb7 15.Bxb7+ Kxb7 16.f4 gxf4 17.gxf4 d6 18.Rg1?! (18.Qg2+ Kb8 19.Qxg7 dxe5 20.Bc3 Qd7µ) 18...Bh6 19.Qg2+ c6 20.exd6 Qxd6 21.Bxh8, Delchev – Piorun, Saint-Quentin 2019, 21...Rhx8–+

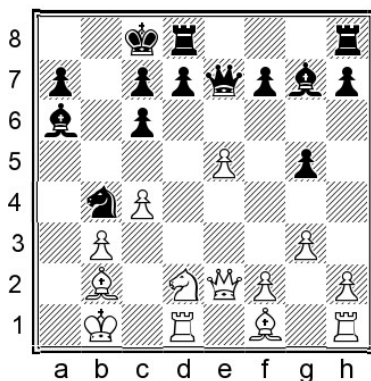
The move 13.Nf3 is not so active for White. 13...Rhe8 14.a3 (14.Bh3?! h5) 14...g4 15.Nh4 (The move 15.axb4 would

be in Black's favour. 15...gxf3 16.Qe3 Qxb4+ 17.Bc3 Rxe5! This is the point. Now, White will have to try to save the game in an inferior endgame. 18.Bxb4 Rxe3+ 19.fxe3 Bxa1 20.Bh3 Be5 21.0-0, Rublevsky – Onischuk, Foros 2007, 21...Kb7!? 22.Rxf3 d5!³) 15...Bxe5 16.0-0-0 Na2+ 17.Kc2 Qf6. Black has an extra pawn, but his knight has been isolated on the a2-square. 18.Bxe5 Rxe5 19.Qd2 Rde8 (19...Re6?! Reefat – Ganguly, Kelamabakkam 2000, 20.Qd4 Qg5 21.Bd3 Rde8 22.b4 Rd6 23.Qxa7 Bb7 24.Rhe1²) 20.Bd3 (The tactical complications after the move 20.Kb1 would lead to a draw by a perpetual check: 20...Re2 21.Qxd7+ Kb7 22.Bxe2 Rxe2 23.Rd2 Qxf2 24.Kc2 Qe3 25.Rb1 Nc3 26.Rxe2 Nxe2 27.Qd3 Nd4+ 28.Kc3 Ne2=) 20...d5 21.Rhe1 d4 22.Rxe5 Rxe5= Rublevsky – Karjakin, Poikovsky 2010.

13...Nxa2+

If Black does not capture the pawn 13...c5, he would come under very unpleasant pressure. 14.Bg2 (14.f4 Bb7 15.Bg2 Nd3+ 16.Qxd3 Bxg2 17.Rhe1 gxf4 18.gxf4 Bh6 19.Re2 Bc6 20.Rf1 Qh4, A. Kolev – Postny, Kallithea 2009, 21.Ref2 Rhe8 22.Qf5 Kb8÷) 14...d5 (14...Bb7 15.Bxb7+ Kxb7, Zezulkin – Thannheiser, Germany 2007, 16.Rhe1 Rhe8 17.f4 gxf4 18.gxf4²; 14...Nxa2+ 15.Kb1 Nb4 16.Qf3 Nc6 17.Rhe1f) 15.a3 Nc6 16.f4 Nd4 17.Qe3 gxf4 (The move 17...f6, Berg – Vuilleumier, Sarajevo 2010, would lead to the appearance of a weakness on e5 in Black's camp. 18.fxg5 fxe5 19.Bxd5±) 18.gxf4 f6 19.e6 f5 20.cxd5 Bb7 21.Nc4 Bxd5 22.Bxd5 Rxd5 23.Rhe1² White's pawn on e6 cramps considerably Black's position.

14.Kb1 Nb4

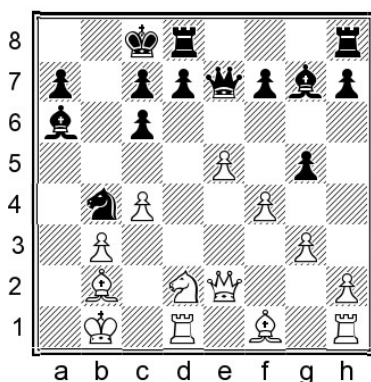


15.Ne4

White has sacrificed a pawn in an attempt to begin an active piece play.

15.Qe3. White is eyeing the enemy pawn on a7. 15...c5 (15...Bb7 16.Bg2 d5, Manakova – Olsarova, Belgrade 2013, 17.Bd4 a5 18.Bh3+ Kb8 19.Rhe1 dxc4 20.Nxc4 Nd5 21.Qd2 c5 22.Bb2 Nb4÷) 16.Ne4 (16.Bg2 d5 17.Rhe1 Rhe8 18.f4 Muzychuk – Kulon, Moscow 2008, 18...gxf4 19.gxf4 Kb8÷) 16...Bb7 17.Bh3 f5 18.Bxf5 Rhf8 19.g4 Bxe5 20.Rhe1 Bxh2 21.f3 Bxe4+ 22.Bxe4, Frigderi – Flying Saucers, playchess.com 2006, 22...Kb8÷

15.f4



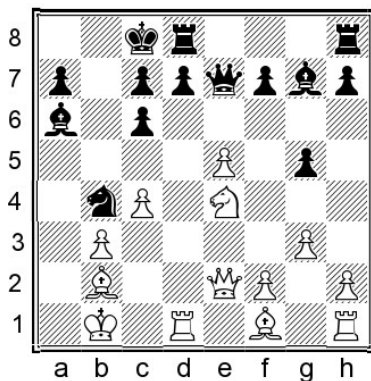
15...Rhe8 16.Ne4 gxf4 17.gxf4 Kb8!? (17...c5. The c4-square has been reliably protected by White, so Black plans to transfer his bishop on a6 to the long diagonal. 18.Bg2 Bb7 19.Rhe1 Kb8 20.Qf2, Nedev – Irwanto, Dresden 2008. White exerts powerful pressure against the enemy pawn on c5, but this would be still insufficient for him to maintain an advantage. 20...Qe6. Black gives back his extra pawn but activates his queen. 21.Nxc5 Qf5+ 22.Be4 Bxe4+ 23.Nxe4 Bf8 24.Bc3 d5,,; 24.Qe2, with the idea Bc3, 24...c6 25.Bc3 d5 26.cxd5 Nxd5÷) 18.Bg2 (The move 18.Qe1?! is too slow. 18...c5 19.Rg1 Bh8 20.Bg2 Bb7³ Vajda – Akhayan, Belgium 2008) 18...Bb7 19.Rhe1, Malinovsky – Hofirek, Brno 2012, 19...Qh4 20.Bc3 a5÷ White's pieces have been more harmoniously deployed, but Black has still an extra pawn.

15...d5!? He would not mind entering an approximately equal endgame. 16.exd6 Qxe2 17.Bxe2 Bxb2 18.Kxb2 gxf4 19.Bg4+ Kb8 20.dxc7+ Kxc7 21.Ne4 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Bc8= Black covers the d7-square against the penetration of the enemy rook. White has a superior pawn-structure, but there are just a few pawns left on the board.

15...gxf4 16.gxf4 Rhe8 17.Ne4, Nedev – L'Ami, Plovdiv 2008, 17...d5. Black's pieces have been too passively deployed and it would be essential for him to open the centre even at the price of sacrificing material. 18.exd6 cxd6 19.Nxd6+ Rxd6 20.Rxd6 Qxe2 21.Bxe2 Bxb2 22.Bg4+ Kc7 23.Rd7+. White has removed his rook under the attack with tempo. Now however, Black is threatening Bc8. 23...Kb6 24.Kxb2 (24.c5+ Kxc5 25.Kxb2 Bc8 26.Rc1+ Kb5 27.Rxf7 Nd3+ 28.Kc2 Nxc1 29.Bxc8 Nxb3 30.Bg4 Kc4 31.Rxa7 Nd4+ 32.Kd2 Nb3= The tactical complications are over and there is

just a few material left on the board for any of the sides to play for a win.) 24...Bc8 25.Rhd1 Bxd7 26.Rxd7 Re3 27.Rxf7 Nd3+ 28.Ka2 Re4=

15...Qc5!? This is Black's most consistent line. He transfers his queen to the a2-square. 16.Ne4 Qa5, Savitskiy – Postnikov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, 17.Qd2 gxf4 18.gxf4 d5 19.Bh3+ Kb8 20.Bc3!. Now, White must try to simplify the position, since his king is too vulnerable. 20...dxe4 21.Bxb4 Rxd2 22.Bxa5 Rxd1+ 23.Rxd1 Bh6 24.f5 Bc8=



15...Bb7

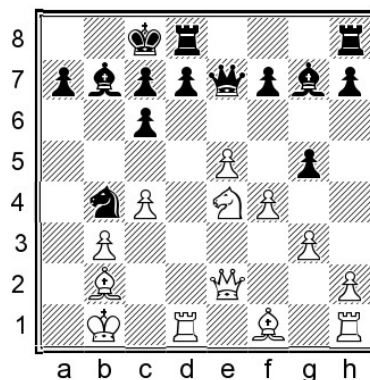
15...c5 16.Bh3 (16.f4 Bb7 17.Bg2 gxf4 18.gxf4 – see 15...Bb7) 16...Bb7 17.Rhe1 Kb8 18.Bf5 Rhe8 (18...Bxe4+?! 19.Bxe4 Rhe8 20.Bxh7 Rh8 21.Bf5 Rxh2 22.Qf3² Myers – Grennefors, LSS 2010) 19.f4 gxf4 20.gxf4 f6 21.exf6 Bxf6 22.Nxf6 Qxe2 23.Rxe2 Rxe2 24.Nxd7+ Ka8 25.Nb6+ axb6, Sigfusson – Trofimov, ICCF 2013, 26.Rxd8+ Ka7 27.Rd7 Re1+ 28.Bc1 Nc6=

15...g4. White's threats Bh3 and f2-f4 are not so dangerous for Black, so he did not need to sacrifice a pawn. 16.Qxg4 Bxe5 17.Ba3 Bb7 18.Bh3 c5 19.Rxd7 Rxd7 20.Qxd7+ Qxd7 21.Bxd7+ Kb8 22.Bf5² Black has too many pawn-weaknesses in his position.

15...Bxe5. He captures another pawn, but now the activity of White's pieces will increase with every move. 16.Qe3 Kb8 17.Nc5 d6 18.Nxa6+ Nxa6 19.f4 gxf4 20.gxf4 Bf6 21.Qxe7 Bxe7 22.Bxh8 Rxh8 23.Be2² There are several open files on the board, so White's rook will be more powerful than Black's knight and two pawns in this endgame.

16.Bh3

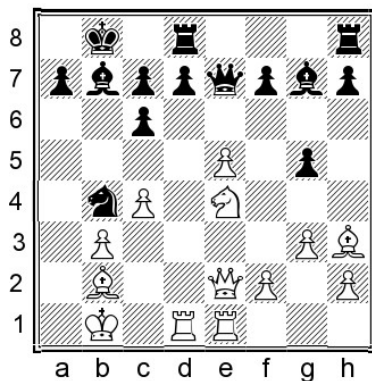
16.f4



16...gxf4 17.gxf4 c5 (The move 17...Na6? is too passive. 18.Rg1 Rhg8 19.Bh3± Hamilton – Levi, Sydney 2010) 18.Rg1 Rhg8 19.Bh3 Kb8 20.Rg3. White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 20...d5 (20...d6?! 21.Rdg1±; 20...f5 21.Nc3!?) 21.cxd5 Nxd5 22.Qf2 c4 23.Nc5 Nc3+ 24.Bxc3 Rxd1+ 25.Kb2 Rd5 26.Bb4 c3+ 27.Rxc3 Qd8 28.Rg3 Bh6 29.Nxb7 Kxb7 30.Bg2± 16...c5! 17.Bg2 gxf4 18.gxf4 Kb8 19.Rhe1 Rhg8 20.Qf2 Qe6 21.Nxc5 Qf5+ 22.Ka1 (22.Be4 Bxe4+ 23.Nxe4 Bf8 24.Qe2 Qh3= Simonenko – Olofsson, ICCF 2009) 22...Nc2+ 23.Ka2 Bf8 (23...Nb4+ 24.Ka3 Nc2+ 25.Ka4 Nxe1 26.Bxb7 Bf8 27.Bd5 Bxc5 28.Qxc5+-) 24.Nxb7 Nb4=

16...Kb8 17.Rhe1!?

It is not so good for White to choose here 17.f4, E.Andreev – Amin, Al Ain 2013, 17...c5 18.Rhe1 gxf4 19.gxf4 d6³



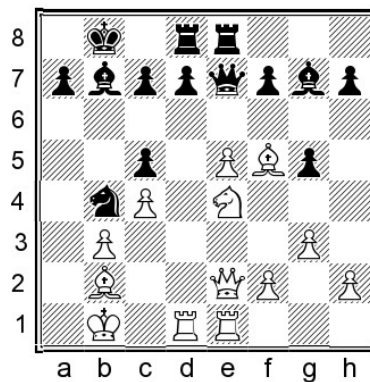
17...c5

After 17...Rhe8, it would be very strong for White to continue with 18.Qe3, preparing Nc5. 18...Bxe5 19.Nc5 d6 20.Bxe5 dxe5 21.Bd7 Rg8 22.Qxe5 Qxe5 23.Rxe5 Rg6 24.Bg4² Black has an extra pawn, but his prospects are inferior, because his pawn-structure has been considerably compromised.

18.Bf5

After 18.f3 Rhe8 19.Qf2 Bxe4+ 20.Rxe4, White's two-bishop advantage compensates his missing pawn, but not more than that. 20...Qf8 21.f4 d6 22.Ree1 gxf4 23.gxf4 dxe5 24.Bd7 Re7 25.Bf5 Rxd1+ 26.Rxd1 Re8 27.Qg3 f6 28.fxe5 fxe5 29.Bxh7 Bh6= The position has been considerably simplified and the most likely outcome of the game would be a draw.

18...Rhe8



19.Qh5

White would not have chances of maintaining an edge after his alternatives, for example:

19.Qe3 d6 20.exd6 Bxe4+ 21.Qxe4 Qxe4+ 22.Rxe4 Rxe4 23.Bxe4 Bxb2 24.dxc7+ Kxc7 25.Rxd8 Kxd8 26.Kxb2 h6= White's king will hardly manage to penetrate inside the enemy camp.

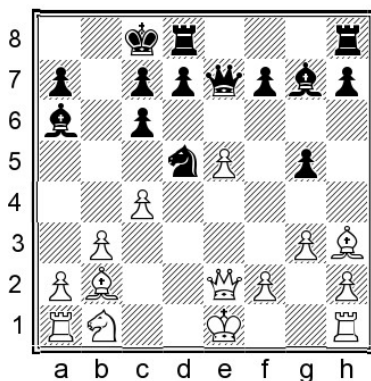
19.f4 gxf4 20.gxf4 d6 21.exd6 Bxe4+ 22.Bxe4 cxd6 23.Bxg7 f5= Black has restored the material balance and has obtained a quite acceptable position.

19...Bxe5 20.Nxg5 Qf6 21.Qxf7 Qa6 22.Rxe5 Rxe5 23.Bxe5 Qa2+ 24.Kc1 Qxf2 (with the idea **Qe3**). White has nothing better here than to repeat the position with **25.Kb1 Qa2=**

B2b) 12.Bh3!?

The idea for this move for White is to obtain a more favourable endgame (than the one analysed in Chapter 15). His bishop on h3 attacks the pawn on d7 and prevents Black's pawn-advance f7-f5 and his pawn on g5 is much rather a liability than strength.

It is difficult to evaluate this position correctly, without sufficient tournament practice, there is none until now..., but still there remains an impression that White can create some problems for his opponent in this fashion. If this is true, then Black will have to defend only the scheme with 8.c4 Ba6 9.b3, which would lead to a satisfactory game for him – 9...g6.



12...Rde8

Black plays this move with the idea to capture the enemy pawn on e5.

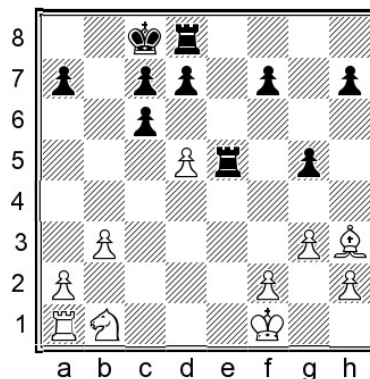
After 12...f6?, White will transfer his queen to the queenside with tempo.
 13.Qd2 Nb6 14.Qa5!? (14.0-0²; 14.a4!?)
 14...Bb7 (14...Kb7 15.Na3 fxe5 16.Nc2 e4
 17.Bxg7 Qxg7 18.0-0±) 15.c5 Nd5
 16.Qxa7±

12...Kb8. Black defends against Qd2-a5, but loses valuable time in the process.
 13.0-0 Rhe8 (13...d6 14.Nd2 dxe5 15.Bf5 c5 16.b4,) 14.Nd2!? (14.Re1²) 14...Bxe5?!
 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.Bxe5 Rxe5 17.Nf3 Re7
 18.Rfe1 Rxe1+ 19.Rxe1 Nb4 20.Nxg5±

12...h5 13.0-0 h4 14.Bf5 hxg3 15.fxg3
 Qc5+ 16.Qf2 Qxf2+ 17.Rxf2 Ne3 18.Nd2

Rhe8 19.Bh7 Ng4 20.Rxf7 Bxe5 21.Bxe5
 Nxe5 22.Rg7 d5 23.cxd5 cxd5 24.Rc1²

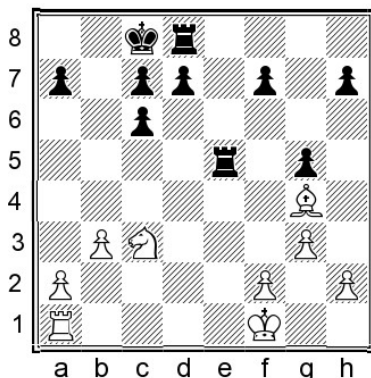
12...Rhe8 13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5
 15.Bxe5 Rxe5 16.cxd5 Bxf1 17.Kxf1



After making his move 12, White was striving to obtain just an endgame of this type.

17...cxd5 18.Nd2. In this version of an endgame, Black's kingside pawns are vulnerable and White will obtain an advantage by attacking them. 18...h6
 19.Nf3 Ree8 (19...Re7 20.Rc1 Kb7 21.Bf5 Kb6 22.h4 gxh4 23.Nxh4 c6 24.Bd3 Re6 25.Nf5 a5 26.Kg2²) 20.Bf5 c6 (20...Kb7 21.Rd1 c6 22.h4 f6 23.h5 a5 24.Nh2 Re5 25.Bg6 f5 26.Nf3²) 21.Rd1 Kc7 22.Rd4 a5 23.h4² gxh4 (23...f6 24.h5 with the idea Nh2-g4) 24.Rxh4 Rh8 25.Ne5 Rdf8 26.Nxd7±

After capturing with the rook 17...Rxd5, Black's queenside pawns will remain static for long. If he advances his f-pawn, then he would weaken his position on the kingside even more. 18.Nc3 Re5 19.Bg4.

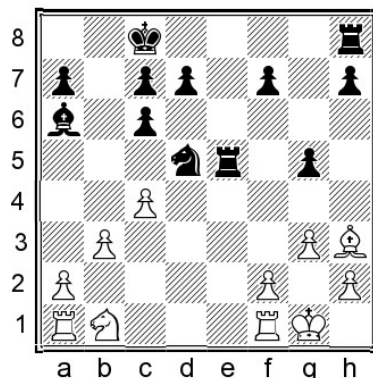


From this square White's bishop prevents the appearance of Black's pawn on the h5-square and is ready to go to e2 to ensure the accomplishment of the manoeuvre Ke1-d2.

19...f5 20.Be2 Rde8 (20...Rf8 21.Rc1 f4 22.Bg4) 21.Ke1. White is centralising his king. 21...f4 (21...R8e6 22.Kd2 Rd6+ 23.Bd3²) 22.Kd2 f3 (22...c5 23.Bd3²; 22...Kb7 23.g4²; 22...fxg3 23.hxg3 Rf8 24.f3²) 23.Bd3 h5 24.h3 Kd8 25.Rc1 c5 26.Nd1²

19...Rde8 20.Rc1. White prevents the enemy counterplay with the move c6-c5 just in case (20.Be2 c5!?). 20...f5 (20...c5? 21.f4) 21.Be2 (with the idea Ke1-d2) 21...R8e6 (21...f4?! 22.gxf4 gxf4 23.Bg4² h5 24.Bf3 h4 25.Ne2) 22.Rc2 Kd8 (22...Rh6 23.Na4 Rxh2? 24.f4 Rhxe2 25.Rxe2 Rxe2 26.Kxe2+-; 23...Kd8 24.Kg2 Rhe6 25.Bc4 Re7 26.Nc3²) 23.Na4 Rd6 24.Nc5 Rd4 25.Nd3 Red5 26.Rc3 Ke7 27.f4 h6 (27...gxf4 28.Nxf4²) 28.Ne1 gxf4 29.Nc2 Rd2 30.gxf4 Rd6 31.Ke1 Kf6 32.h4 a5 33.h5²

13.0-0 Bxe5 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.Bxe5 Rxe5



16.Nd2

In this version, with a rook on h8 and a pawn on g5 – White does not need to enter the standard endgame in this position.

16...h5!?

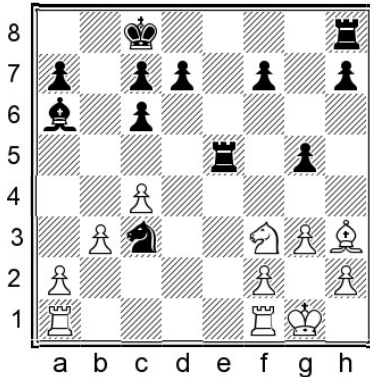
Black is ready to sacrifice his pawn on g5, but after that, with Rg8, Nf4, he wishes to exchange his opponent's dangerous bishop for his knight.

After the retreat 16...Nb6, White will maintain easily the advantage. 17.f4 Re2 (17...gxf4 18.Rxf4²) 18.Rad1²

Following 16...Rg8, with the idea to oust the enemy bishop with the move g5-g4, this pawn on g4 would need protection, since White might attack it by transferring his knight to e3 and his rook to the d4-square. 17.cxd5!? Bxf1 18.Kxf1 g4 (about 18...Rxd5 19.Nc4 g4 20.Bg2 – see 18...g4) 19.Nc4 Rh5 (19...Rxd5 20.Bg2 Rh5 21.Re1 Kd8 22.Re4 Rxh2 23.Rd4 c5 24.Rd5 d6 25.Rf5 Ke7 26.Bd5 Rg7 27.Ne3 Rh6 28.Rf4+-) 20.Bg2 cxd5 21.Ne3 c6 22.Rd1. Black's pawn on g4 would need permanent protection and if he fortifies it with the move 22...f5 (22...Rxh2 23.Rd4 Rh6 24.Nxg4 Re6 25.Rf4±), then White will transfer his bishop to d3 and his rook to the f4-square, attacking already the

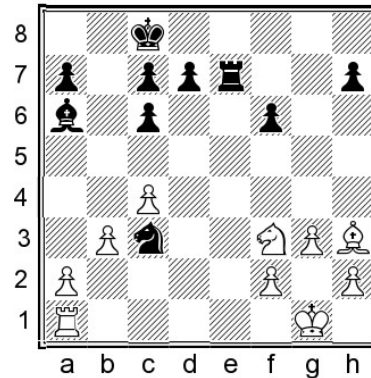
enemy f-pawn. 23.Kg1 Re8 (23...Kc7?
 24.Bxd5 cxd5 25.Nxd5+ Kd8 26.Nf6 Rhg5
 27.Nxg8 Rxxg8 28.Rd5 Rf8 29.Ra5±) 24.Bf1
 Kc7 25.Bd3 Re5 26.Bc2 Rg5 27.Rd4²

16...Nc3. Black's knight would not be comfortable on this square. 17.Nf3



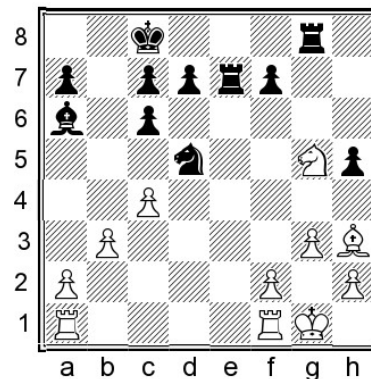
17...Ra5. Black is attacking the enemy a2-pawn, but he will fail to capture it under comfortable circumstances. 18.Rfe1 h5 (18...Rxa2? 19.Rxa2 Nxa2 20.Nxg5 f6 21.Ne4 Nb4 22.Nxf6+--)
 19.Ne5 g4 20.Bf1 Re8 (20...f6 21.Ng6 Rh6 22.Re8+ Kb7 23.Nf4 Rxa2? 24.Rc1 and Black's knight will be lost; 23...Re5 24.Rd8 d6 25.a4 with the idea b4-b5.) 21.Nxf7 Rxe1 22.Rxe1 Rxa2 23.h4!/? White fixes the weak enemy pawn on h5 and advances his own pawn closer to the ultimate rank. 23...d6 (23...gxh3 24.Bxh3 Rb2 25.Ne5 Rxb3 26.Nxd7 Kd8 27.Nc5 Ra3 28.Bd7+--)
 24.Bd3 Ra3 25.Bc2 c5 26.Ng5 d5 (26...Bb7?? 27.Bf5+ Kd8 28.Nf7#) 27.Bg6 Rxb3 28.Ne6 Bxc4 29.Nxc5+--

17...Re7. Black gives up his pawn on g5 in an attempt to seize the initiative. 18.Rfe1!? Rhe8 19.Rxe7 Rxe7 20.Nxg5 f6 21.Nf3



21...Re2 (21...Ne4?! 22.Re1 Kd8 23.Bf5 Ng5 24.Rxe7 Nxf3+ 25.Kg2 Kxe7 26.Kxf3±) 22.Bf5 h6 23.h4. White's hopes are again based on his h-pawn. 23...Rxa2 (23...Nxa2 24.h5 Nb4 25.Nh2 Re8 26.Ng4 Rh8 27.Rd1+--)
 24.Re1 Rb2 25.Re8+ Kb7 26.Bxd7 Kb6 (26...Rxb3? 27.c5+--)
 27.Re6 Bb7 28.Rxf6 Rxb3 29.Rxh6 a5 30.Re6 a4 31.Re3 a3 32.Nd2 Rb1+ 33.Nxb1 a2 34.c5+ Kxc5 35.Nxc3 a1Q+ 36.Kg2. White's knight and rook hold convincingly Black's c-pawn, while his three passed pawns on the kingside are impossible for Black to stop. 36...Kb6 37.Bg4 c5+ 38.Bf3 Ba6 39.Nd1 Qg7 40.g4 c6 41.Nc3±

17.Nf3 Re7 18.Nxg5 Rg8



19.Nh7!/?

19.Nf3 Nf4 20.Bg2 Nxg2 21.Kxg2 d5,,

19.f4 f6 20.Rfe1 Rxe1 21.Rxe1 fxg5
22.cxd5 cxd5=

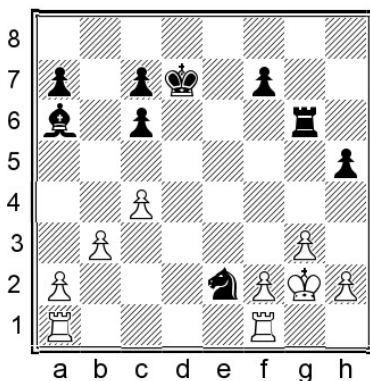
19...Nf4 20.Bxd7+!?

After this exchange operation, White ends up with a rook and a pawn against two minor pieces for Black, which are horribly misplaced.

20...Rxd7 21.Nf6 Rg6

21...Ne2+ 22.Kg2 Rgd8?! 23.Nxd7 Rxd7
24.Rae1 Rd2 25.Kf3 Nc3 26.Re8+

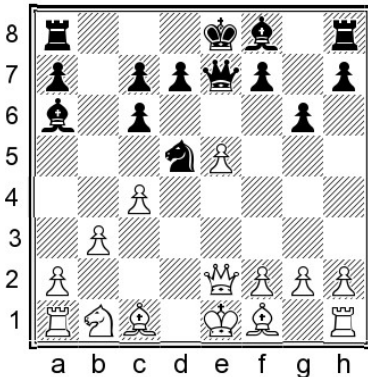
22.Nxd7 Ne2+ 23.Kg2 Kxd7



24.Rad1+ (24.Rfe1!? Nd4 25.Re5 c5
(25...Bb7 26.c5) 26.f4 Bb7+ 27.Kf2 h4
28.Rxc5 hxg3+ 29.hxg3 Rd6 30.Rc1 Ne6
31.Rf5 Ke7 32.Ke3 a6 33.b4) **24...Rd6**
25.Rxd6+ cxd6 26.Kh3 d5 27.Re1 Nd4
28.cxd5 c5 29.g4. White will create a
passed h-pawn. Black will probably
manage to trade it for his f-pawn, but then
White's f-pawn would go forward...

Chapter 20

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Ba6 9.b3
g6



This is Black's most popular move. His queen on e7 impedes the development of his bishop on f8, so he wishes to develop it to g7 from where it would exert pressure against the enemy pawn on e5.

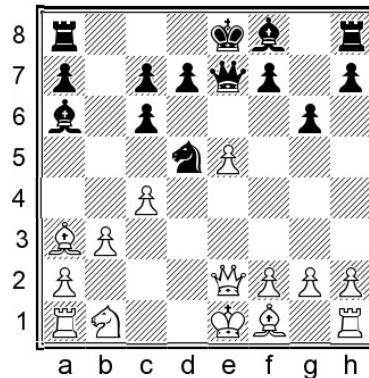
We will analyse now: **A) 10.Ba3** and **B) 10.f4**.

It is possible that here White's most practical line is: 10.g3 Bg7 11.Bb2 – see Chapter 14, variation C.

10.Bb2 Bg7 11.Nd2 (11.g3 – see Chapter 14, variation C) 11...Nb4 12.Nf3 (12.0-0-0. The sacrifice of the a2-pawn in this line turns out to be in favour of Black. 12...Nxa2+ 13.Kb1 Nb4 14.Ne4 0-0 15.Qf3. White is threatening Nf6, but after 15...Rfe8 16.Nf6+, Black can simply capture the enemy knight with his bishop: 16...Bxf6 17.exf6 Qc5³ Carlsen – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2011. Black can always

parry the transfer of the enemy queen to the h6-square with the move Qf8, while his queenside activity: d7-d5, Rab8, may turn out to be very dangerous for White.) 12...c5 13.g3 0-0 14.Bg2 d5 15.0-0 Rad8± Svidler – Adams, Tilburg 1997. Black has managed to advance d7-d5 and has obtained good prospects against the enemy pawn on c4.

A) 10.Ba3



10...Nb4!

This is the best for Black. He covers the a3-f8 diagonal without weakening his pawn-structure.

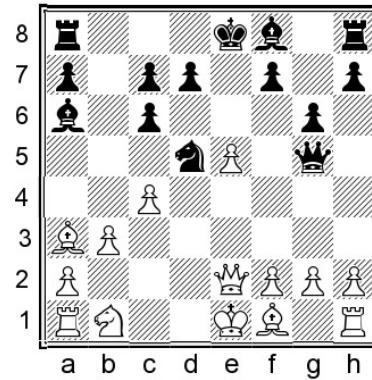
It is obviously weaker for him to opt here for 10...c5?!, since this weakens considerably the h1-a8 diagonal. 11.g3 Bg7 12.f4 Nb4 13.Bg2 Rd8 14.Nc3 0-0, Kasparov – Wesley So, Saint Louis 2016, 15.Rd1± Now, Black must consider permanently the threat of the penetration of the enemy knight to the d5-outpost.

Following 10...d6, White has a very promising exchange sacrifice: 11.exd6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Bg7 13.cxd5 Bxe2 14.Kxe2 Bxa1 15.Rc1 0-0-0 16.f4. It would be useful for him to deprive his opponent of the possibility Be5. 16...c5 17.Bxc5 Kb7

18.Nd2 cxd6 19.Be3², followed by Nc4-a5-c6. White has powerful initiative. 19...Bg7 20.Nc4 Ka6, Chigaev – Lobanov, Sochi 2019, 21.Kd3±

The move 10...Qh4 leads at the end to a position without any good prospects for Black. 11.Bb2 Bb4+ 12.Nd2 Nc3 13.Qe3 Ne4. It might seem that he has achieved a lot, but White has the powerful argument 14.g3!, for example: 14...Bxd2+ 15.Qxd2 Nxd2 16.gxh4 Nxf1 17.e6 f6 18.Rxf1 (18.exd7+ Kxd7 19.0-0-0+ Ke6 20.Rhx1 Bc8 21.Rfe1+ Kf7 22.Rd3 Bf5 23.Rde3 Rhe8 24.Rxe8 Rxe8 25.Rxe8 Kxe8 26.Bxf6 h5= Ducarmon – Ernst, Vlissingen 2013. In this endgame with bishops of opposite colours White's extra pawn is practically irrelevant.) 18...d6 19.Bxf6 0-0 20.Bg5 Rae8 21.e7. Black is forced to defend passively and to try to parry his opponent's attempts to improve his position. 21...Rf5 22.0-0-0 Kf7 23.Rg1 h6 24.Bxh6 Rxe7 25.f4 Re2 26.Rd2 Rxd2 27.Kxd2² Landa – Stern, Germany 2011. Here, contrary to the endgame, which we have analysed before, there are still rooks present on the board, so Black's defence will be difficult.

The active queen-sortie 10...Qg5 is still insufficient for Black to equalise completely.



After the move 11.g3, the World Champion demonstrated a forced line to reach a draw: 11...Bxa3! 12.Nxa3 0-0-0 (12...Nc3?! 13.h4!²) 13.Qe4 Qe7 14.Nc2 f5 15.Qd4 Nb4 16.Nxb4 Qxb4+ 17.Qd2 Qc5. Black has a better development, so he avoids the transfer into an endgame. 18.f4 d6 19.b4 Qb6 20.c5 Qb7 21.Bxa6 Qxa6. Placed on this diagonal, Black's queen impedes his opponent's castling kingside. 22.cxd6 cxd6 23.exd6 Rhe8+ 24.Kf2 Rxd6. Black sacrifices a rook and forces a perpetual check. 25.Qxd6 Qe2+ 26.Kg1 Qe3= Shirov – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

11.h4!?N White's idea is to worsen the placement of the enemy queen. 11...Qf5. Now, White does not need to consider any more the possible check from the c1-square, after an eventual exchange of the bishop on a3. In addition, Black's queen on f5 might soon come under an attack after the move Bh3. 12.g3 Nb4 13.Kd1 Bb7 14.Bh3 (White does not need to be in a hurry to play this move and can advance at first 14.f4²) 14...Qd3+ 15.Qxd3 Nxd3 16.Rf1 Bxa3 (16...d5 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.f4 c5 19.Bg2 0-0-0 20.Nc3²) 17.Nxa3 0-0-0 18.Kd2² Black's hanging pawns will need permanent protection.

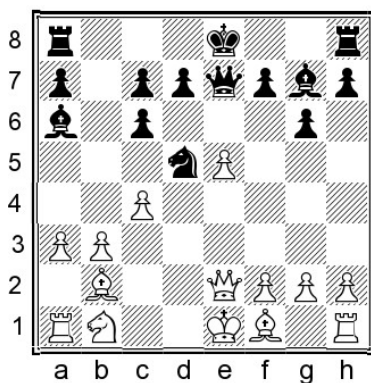
10...Qxa3?! 11.Nxa3 Bb4+ 12.Qd2 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2. This endgame seems without any good prospects for Black,

because his pawn-structure has been compromised and his bishop, restricted by the pawn on c4, is not active. 13...Nf4 (13...Nb4 14.g3 0-0-0 15.Bh3 Kb8 16.Nc2 c5 17.Nxb4 cxb4. He has got rid of his doubled pawns, but this is just small consolation for him. 18.a3 d6 19.axb4!? (19.e6 fxe6 20.Bxe6 Bb7 21.Rhe1 bxa3 22.Rxa3² Kupreichik – Kolesnik, Minsk 2004.) 19...dxe5+ 20.Kc3 Bb7 21.Rhe1 Rhe8 22.b5 e4 23.Bf1 Re6 24.c5±, followed by c5-c6, Bc4 and doubling of the rooks on the a-file.) 14.g3 Ne6, A.Smirnov – Bjelobr, Melbourne 2018, 15.f4 0-0-0 16.Bh3²

11.Bb2

After the routine move 11.g3?, Black can inflict a well concealed tactical strike: 11...Nc2+! 12.Qxc2 Qxe5+ 13.Qe2 Qxe2+ 14.Kxe2 Bg7 15.Nc3 Bxc3³ White's compensation for the pawn is insufficient.

11...Bg7 12.a3 Nd5



13.Nd2

After the move 13.g3, there arises a standard endgame in which White has played the weakening move a3. If he

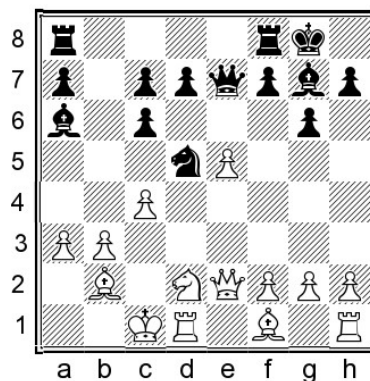
wishes to play like this, he should better do that on moves 8 or 10. 13...0-0 14.Bg2 Rae8 15.0-0 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Rxe5 18.cxd5 Bxf1 19.Kxf1 cxd5= Andreikin – Lysyj, Moscow 2012.

13...0-0

13...c5 14.g3!? Nb6 15.Bg2 0-0 16.a4²

13...Nb6. This voluntary retreat of Black's knight away from the centre cannot be recommended. 14.g3 0-0 15.Bg2 Rae8 16.0-0² and Black cannot play 16...Bxe5?!, because of 17.Rae1±, with a rather unpleasant pin of his bishop.

14.0-0-0

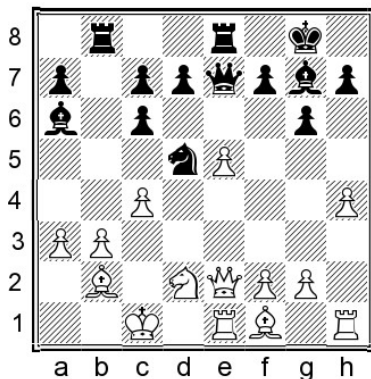


White has a superior pawn-structure, but his king is not safe at all on the queenside.

14...Rfe8!

14...Nb6, Vovk – Gasanov, Zhytomyr 2017, 15.h4 15...d5 (15...Rae8 16.f4 d6 17.h5÷) 16.exd6 Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Qxd6 18.Qd3!? Qf6+ 19.Qc3 Qxf2 20.h5 c5 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.Bd3 Qd4 23.Nf3 Qxc3+ 24.Kxc3 Rae8 25.Ng5²

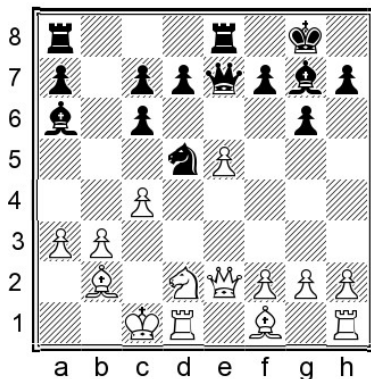
14...Rab8 15.h4 Rfe8 16.Re1



16...d6 17.Qf3 Nf6 (17...Nb6? 18.c5 Bxf1 19.cxb6 Ba6 20.bxa7 Ra8 21.Qxc6 Rxa7 22.exd6 Qxe1+ 23.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 24.Kc2 cxd6 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.Qxd6+-) 18.h5 Nhx5 19.g4 Nf6 20.exf6! Qxe1+ 21.Kc2 Bf8 22.Bd3 Qe6 23.Bf5+-

16...Nb6 17.h5!? (17.f4 d5 18.Qf3 dxc4 19.h5÷) 17...d5 (17...d6 18.Qf3 Bxe5 19.Kc2 Nd7 20.hxg6 fxe6 21.Qxc6 Bb7 22.Qxc7 Rec8 23.Qa5 Rc5 24.Qc3 Qf7 25.Rxe5!? dxe5 26.f3f) 18.f4 dxc4 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Qf3²

16...Nf4 17.Qe3 Ne6 18.h5 c5 (18...d6 19.hxg6 fxe6 20.Bd3 dxe5 21.Qh3 Nf8 22.f4²) 19.f4 Nd4, Hrubaru – Germanes, FICGS 2010, 20.Qh3,



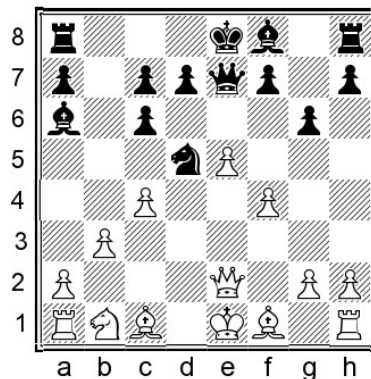
15.Qf3!

15.Qg4?! Solodovnichenko – Heimann, Drancy 2016, 15...Nb6 16.f4 d6μ

15.g3?! Nb6 (15...d6! 16.f4 dxe5³) 16.f4 d6 17.Bg2 d5, Landa – Leko, Sochi 2012, 18.h4!? f6 19.h5 fxe5 20.fxe5 Bxe5 21.Qxe5 Qxe5 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24.Rh6 Kg7 25.Rdh1f

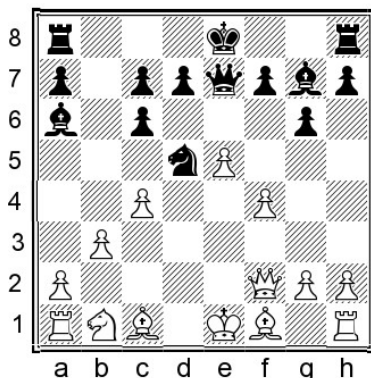
15...Nb6 16.Ne4 Bxe5 (16...d5?! 17.Nf6+ Bxf6 18.exf6f) **17.Bxe5 Qxe5 18.Nf6+ Kf8 19.Nxe8 Qa1+** (19...Rxe8? 20.Kc2) **20.Kc2 Qa2+ 21.Kc1 Qa1=** Chigaev – Predke, Yaroslavl 2019.

B) 10.f4



Here, Black can choose what enemy pawn he wishes to attack: **B1)** 10...f6, **B2)** 10...g5 or **B3)** 10...d6.

Following 10...Bg7?! 11.Qf2, Black would fail to equalise, no matter where his knight would retreat to.



11...Nb4?! 12.a3 Bxe5 13.fxe5 Qxe5+ 14.Qe2 Nc2+ 15.Kf2 Qxe2+ 16.Bxe2 Nxa1 17.Bb2 0-0 18.Bxa1± Proettel – Kersic, ICCF 2004.

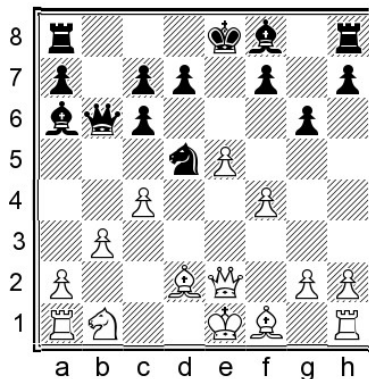
11...Nb6 12.Ba3 d6 (12...Qe6? 13.c5 Bxf1 14.cxb6 Ba6 15.bxc7± f6 16.Nc3 fxe5 17.0-0-0+– Balinov – Brnas, Pula 1997; 13...Bxe5 14.fxe5 Qxe5+ 15.Kd2 Qxa1 16.Kc1 Nc4 17.Qe1+ Kd8 18.Bxc4 Bxc4 19.Bb2 Qxa2 20.Qh4+ Kc8 21.Qxc4± Ljubicic – Skalicky, ICCF 2013) 13.Nc3 (White should better avoid the tactical complications after 13.c5, because he is not well developed. 13...Bxf1 14.cxb6 Ba6 15.bxc7 c5 16.Nc3 Qxc7 17.0-0-0 Qa5,, Jesse – Bruedigam, Berlin 2018. The position is opened and Black's bishops are likely to become a telling factor in the future developments.) 13...0-0 14.Be2!? (14.0-0-0 Rfe8, Corrales Jimenez – Panchanathan, Dulles 2019, 15.c5 Bxf1 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.Bxd6 Qe6 18.Rhxf1±; 14...c5 15.Bd3 f5²) 14...Bb7 (14...c5 15.Bf3 dxe5 16.Bxc5 Qe6 17.0-0 exf4 18.Rae1+– Simacek – Kislik, Prague 2011; 15...Rae8 16.0-0 g5 17.Rae1± O'Toole – Boda, Email 2013) 15.0-0. White has succeeded in evacuating his king away from the centre preserving all the advantages of his position. 15...c5 16.Rad1 a6 17.Bf3 Bxf3 18.Qxf3 Rfe8, Afromeev - Saulin, Moscow 2006 (18...dxe5 19.f5!) 19.Rde1²

11...Nf6 12.Ba3 (12.Be2!?) 12...d6 (12...Ng4 13.Qe2 Qe6 14.Nc3 d6 15.h3

Nh6 16.0-0-0 0-0-0, Shabalov – Granda Zuniga, Buenos Aires 2005, 17.Qf2 dxe5 18.Bd3 exf4 19.Rhe1 Qf6 20.Bb2±; 12...Qe6 13.Nc3 Ng4 14.Qf3 0-0-0? 15.0-0-0 d6 16.h3 Nh6 17.c5 Bxf1 18.cxd6+–; 16...h5, Lomasov – Predke, Sochi 2019, 17.Be2 Nh6 18.c5 Bxe2 19.Qxc6 Bxd1 20.Nb5 Qe7 21.Nxa7+ Kb8 22.Qb5+ Kxa7 23.c6+–; 14...f6 15.Be2 Nh6. Black has lost too many tempi on moves with his knight and after 16.Ne4 fxe5 17.Rd1±, White seizes completely the initiative.) 13.Nc3 0-0 14.0-0-0. Now, Black's knight is forced to retreat to the edge of the board in order to protect the pawn on d6. 14...Ne8 15.g3 Bb7 16.Bg2 f6. He is trying to activate his bishop on g7, but White is not forced to capture on f6. 17.exd6 Nxd6 (17...cxd6 18.Rhe1 Qc7, Kuhn – Doll, Deizisau 2018. Here, White had to continue with 19.f5!±, preventing f6-f5.) 18.c5 Nf5 19.Rhe1 Qf7 20.Bf1+– Nepomniachtchi – Tomashevsky, Moscow 2016.

10...0-0-0 11.Ba3 Nb4 12.Bb2 c5, Kislinsky – Todorovic, Obrenovac 2013, 13.Nc3²

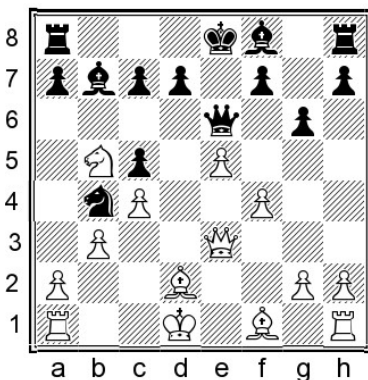
10...Qb4+ 11.Bd2 Qb6. Black is threatening Qd4, but the manoeuvres of his queen seem rather artificial.



12.Nc3 Bb4 13.Nxd5 (13.Qf3 Nxc3 14.Bxc3 Bb7 15.0-0-0 c5,, Gelfand – Karpov, Linares 1992; 13.Qd3 Nxc3 14.Bxc3, Hector – Ernst, Lidkoeping 1999, 14...0-0÷) 13...cxd5 14.Bxb4 Qxb4+ 15.Qd2 Qxd2+ 16.Kxd2 dxc4 17.Bxc4, Ssegwany – Amin, Abidjan 2018, 17...Bxc4 18.bxc4 0-0-0=

After 12.Qe4 f5 13.Qf3, there arises the same position as after the move 12.Qf3, but with a useful move for Black f5, since his pawn exerts control over the important central e4-square. 13...Nb4 14.Kd1. White is forced to worsen the placement of his king in order to control the c2-square. 14...Bb7 15.Nc3 c5 16.Nd5 (16.Qe3 Qe6÷) 16...Qc6÷ De la Paz Perdomo – Otero Acosta, Havana 2001. White has more space, but his king is rather vulnerable at the centre of the board.

12.Qf3!? White wishes to counter Qd4 with the move Nc3. 12...Nb4 (12...Qd4 13.Nc3 Nxc3 14.Qxc3 Bc5 15.0-0-0²; 14...c5, Lautier – Bacrot, Cannes 2002, 15.Rd1!²) 13.Kd1 Bb7 14.Nc3 c5 15.Qe3 Qe6 (15...0-0-0 16.a3 Na6 17.Nd5 Qe6 18.Kc2 d6 19.Bc3 Bg7, Vuckovic – Panchanathan, ICC 2006, 20.Re1± Black's pieces are scattered on the flanks and are not well coordinated.) 16.Nb5



White is attacking the pawn on c7 and wishes to provoke the retreat of the enemy knight from the b4-square.

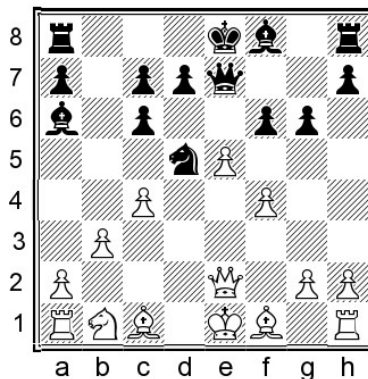
16...Na6 17.Kc2 Bg7 18.Re1 0-0, Lautier – Fontaine, Aix les Bains 2003, 19.a3. It is useful for White to take the b4-square under control, so that Black's knight cannot come back there. 19...f6 20.Qg3 fxe5 21.fxe5 Rae8 22.Bc3², followed by Bd3. Black's knight, placed at the edge of the board, does not beautify his position at all.

16...Kd8. It seem awkward for Black to protect his c7-pawn with his king. 17.Be2 a6 18.Nc3 Qf5?! White parries easily the threat of the penetration to the c2-square. (Still, even after Black's better line: 18...Bxg2 19.Rg1 Bb7 20.Na4², he will have problems with the protection of the pawn on c5.) 19.Rc1± Nedev – Gyimesi, Plovdiv 2003.

16...0-0-0!N 17.Nxa7+ Kb8 18.Nb5 d5 19.exd6 Bxd6 20.Qxe6 fxe6 21.Kc1 Be4. White has an extra pawn and a superior pawn-structure, but Black's pieces are so active that White has nothing better than to repeat the moves 22.a3 Nc2 23.Rb1 Nd4 24.Nxd6 Rxd6 25.Rb2 Rhd8 26.Be3 Nf5 27.Bd2 Nd4 28.Be3 Nf5=

B1) 10...f6

This is not the best defence for Black, but he can still try to equalise having a pawn for the exchange.

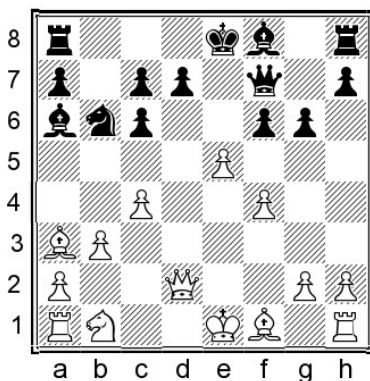


11.Ba3

11.exf6?! Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Kf7 13.Bd2 Nxf6 14.Nc3 d5 15.0-0-0 dxc4 16.bxc4 Bc8÷ Pfretzschner – Morgado, ICCF 2013.

11...Nb4!

11...Qf7? 12.Qd2! Nb6 (The move 12...Bxa3?! leads to an endgame with major pieces, which is rather difficult for Black. 13.cxd5 Bxf1 14.Nxa3 Bb5 15.Nxb5 cxb5, Sunyasakta – Ashwini, Chennai 2011, 16.0-0 0-0 17.Rac1± White has a powerful pawn-centre, while the shelter of Black's king has been compromised.)



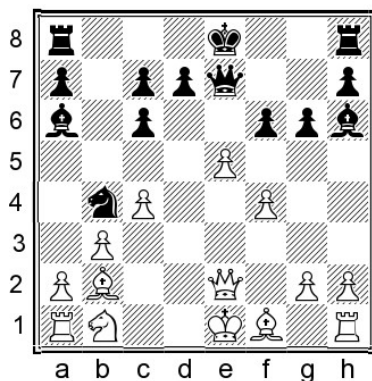
13.c5. This is not the strongest move for White, but it has some historical importance, since in this variation one of the games between Kasparov and Karpov was played. 13...Bxf1 14.cxb6 Ba6 (14...axb6? 15.e6!? dxe6 16.Bxf8 Rd8 17.Qb2± Kasparov – Karpov, Tilburg 1991; the move 14...Bxa3? allows the line: 15.b7 Rb8 16.Nxa3 Bb5 17.Nxb5 cxb5 18.0-0± and Black's king is too vulnerable in this endgame with major pieces.) 15.bxc7 fxe5 (15...Bxa3? 16.Nxa3 fxe5 17.Qa5±) 16.Qa5 (16.fxe5 d5!? 17.Qa5 Bxa3 18.Nxa3 0-0 19.0-0-0 Qf4+ 20.Kb1 Be2=) 16...Bb5! This is the right move for Black! (White maintains a stable

advantage after 16...Qxf4 17.Qxa6 Qe3+ 18.Kd1 Qd4+ 19.Kc2 Qe4+, Kucera – Berzinsh, Mlada Boleslav 1992, 20.Qd3 Qxg2+ 21.Nd2 Bxa3 22.Rhf1±) 17.Qxa7 Rc8 18.Qb7 Bxa3 19.Qxc8+ Ke7 20.Qxh8. Here, Black sacrificed two rooks in order to begin a counter attack. 20...Bb4+ 21.Nd2 Qxf4 22.c8=N+ (22.Qxh7+? Kd6 23.Qxg6+ Kxc7-+) 22...Ke6 23.Qe8+ Kf6 24.Qd8+ Ke6=

13.Qa5 Bxa3 14.Nxa3 Bb7 (14...fxe5 15.Qxa6?! Qxf4=; 15.Qxe5+ Qe7 16.Qxe7+ Kxe7 17.g3² White's pawn-structure is more elastic, while Black's minor pieces are passive.) 15.Bd3 (White would lose his advantage after 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.Bd3 fxe5 17.fxe5 Qe7 18.Rd2 c5 19.Re2, Amonatov – Obukhov, St Petersburg 2003, 19...d5 20.exd6 Qxd6 21.Rd1 Rae8 22.Rxe8 Rxe8 23.g3 Qe5=; 15.Be2!? He prepares castling kingside. 15...0-0 16.0-0 fxe5 17.fxe5 Qe7 18.Bf3²) 15...0-0 16.0-0 fxe5 17.fxe5 Qe7, Korell – Friedrich, corr. 1996, 18.Rae1² White's queen on a5 exerts powerful pressure against Black's queenside. His attempt to activate his bishop on b7 with the move 18...c5?! would lead to the weakening of the b5-square and White's knight would be immediately headed there: 19.Nb5±

13.Be2!?N. White is trying to develop his pieces as quickly as possible. 13...fxe5 14.0-0 Bxa3 15.Nxa3 0-0 16.Qa5 Bb7 17.fxe5 Qg7 18.Rae1 d6 19.Bf3 dxe5 20.Nc2± Black's position is very difficult in view of his numerous pawn-weaknesses.

12.Bb2 Bh6!

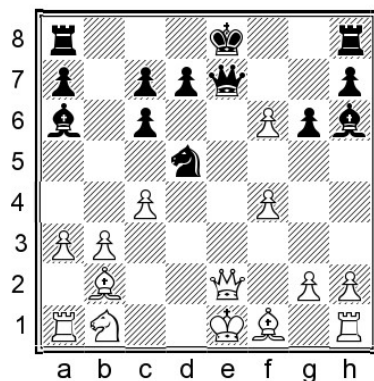


13.a3

The move 13.g3 leads to a very complicated endgame in which White would even need serious efforts to maintain the equality. 13...0-0 14.a3 Nd5 15.Qe4 Nb6 16.Nd2, Rombaldoni – Grandelius, Reykjavik 2009, 16...Rae8 (16...d5 17.exd6 Qxe4+ 18.Nxe4 Rae8 19.0-0-0 Rxe4 20.c5 – see 16...Rae8; 16...fxe5 17.Qxe5 Qxe5+ 18.Bxe5 d6 19.Bc3 Rae8+ 20.Kf2 g5,) 17.0-0-0 d5 (17...Bg7. This move enables White to simplify advantageously the position. 18.exf6 Bxf6 19.Qxe7 Bxb2+ 20.Kxb2 Rxe7 21.a4²) 18.exd6 Qxe4 19.Nxe4 Rxe4 20.c5 Bxf1 21.cxb6 Bh3 22.d7 Bxd7 23.Rxd7 axb6 24.Rxc7 Rxf4=

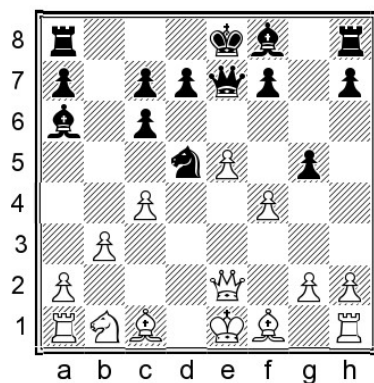
13...Nd5 14.exf6

14.g3 0-0 15.Qe4 – see 13.g3.



14...Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 Nxf4 16.f7+ Kxf7 17.Bxh8 Rxh8 18.0-0 Kg7 © Black has good compensation for the sacrificed exchange. 19.Nc3 Rb8 20.Rab1 Nxe2+?! (The threat is often stronger in chess than its execution. Therefore, Black had better play here immediately 20...d5 and if White avoided the exchange of his bishop 21.Bf3, then Black could have played 21...Nd3=, threatening Be3+.) 21.Nxe2 Be3+ 22.Kh1 d5, Danin – Sbarra, Dresden 2012, 23.Nf4 Re8 (23...dxc4? 24.Ne6+ Kg8 25.Nxc7 Bc8 26.bxc4+-) 24.Rbe1 d4 25.h3² Black's pieces are very actively placed, but still, his compensation for the exchange is insufficient.

B2) 10...g5!?



11.Ba3

After White's alternatives, White would weaken the protection of his central e5-pawn. He will have to fight not for the advantage, but for equality.

11.fxg5 0-0-0 (11...h6?! Iljiushenok – Jakovenko, St Petersburg 2018, 12.Qe4 Bg7 13.Bb2 Nb6 14.g6²; 11...Bg7!? 12.Bb2 Nf4 13.Qe4 Qxg5÷) 12.Nd2 (12.h4 h6÷ Navara – Jakovenko, Saint-Quentin 2014. White has an extra pawn, but lags in development.) 12...Qxg5 13.Nf3 Qg4 14.Bd2 Nb4 15.0-0-0 Nxa2+ 16.Kb1 Nb4 17.Ng5 Qf5+ 18.Qe4 Qxe4+ 19.Nxe4. The tactical complications are over. There has arisen an approximately equal endgame in which Black's material advantage compensates the vulnerability of his pawn-structure. 19...c5 20.Be2 Bb7 21.Bf3 Bxe4+ 22.Bxe4 Bg7 23.Bf4 Nc6 24.Bxc6 dxc6 25.Rde1 Rhe8= Yu Ruiyuan – Gao Rui, China 2017.

11.f5 0-0-0 12.Bb2 (Now, White should possibly try to equalise with the line: 12.Ba3 d6 13.f6 Qd7 14.e6 fxe6 15.Bb2 e5÷) 12...Nf4 (In the correspondence games in the last several years Black often tries here 12...Qc5!? and White does not always manage to make a draw after 13.Nd2 Ne3 14.Ne4 Qb6 15.Qf2 Bh6 16.Qd2 g4 17.c5 Nxf1 18.cxb6 Nxd2 19.bxa7 Kb7 20.Nxd2 Rhe8 21.Ne4 Bf4 22.Kf2 Bxe5 23.Bxe5 Rxe5μ Lecha Gonzalez – Vera Ruiz, ICCF 2017. Black will soon capture the pawn on a7 and will have a material advantage.) 13.Qe3 d5 14.Nd2 d4 15.Bxd4 Rxd4!? Black sacrifices the exchange and annihilates the important defender of his opponent's dark squares. 16.Qxd4 Bg7 17.Nf3 Rd8 18.Qe4 g4 19.Qxf4 gxf3 20.f6, Berg – A.Smith, Gothenburg 2010, 20...Bxf6!?

This is his simplest road to equality. Now, White's king is incapable of avoiding the perpetual check. 21.Qxf6 Qb4+ 22.Kf2 Qd2+ 23.Kxf3 Qc3+ 24.Bd3 Qxd3+ 25.Kf2 Qd2=

11...Qd8

The move 11...Nb4!? leads here to a much more complicated game. 12.Bb2 (12.f5? Bakalchuk – Sutovsky, Israel 2019, 12...Nc2+ 13.Qxc2 Qxe5+ 14.Qe2 Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 Bg7μ) 12...gxf4, D.Volkov – Berczes, Philadelphia 2017 (12...Bg7? 13.a3 Nd5 14.f5±) 13.Nc3 0-0-0 14.0-0-0 Bg7 15.a3 Nd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Qf2 Bxe5 18.Qxa7 Bb7 19.cxd5 Bxb2+ 20.Kxb2 Rhg8 21.Rd2 Rg5÷ It is difficult to play this position for both sides in a practical game, but objectively speaking it is about equal, since neither king is safe...

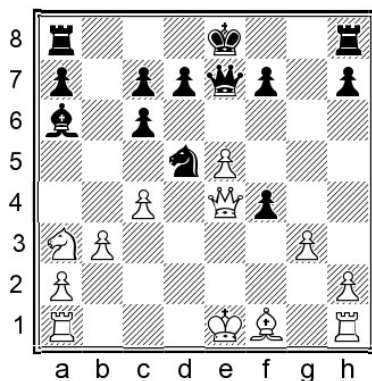
12.g3 Bxa3

Naturally, Black should preserve the possibility to castle kingside. 12...gxf4 13.Bxf8 Rxf8 14.Qe4²

13.Nxa3 gxf4 14.Qe4

14.Nc2 fxg3 15.Qe4 Nb6 16.Qf4÷ White's positional pluses are compensated by Black's extra pawn.

14...Qe7

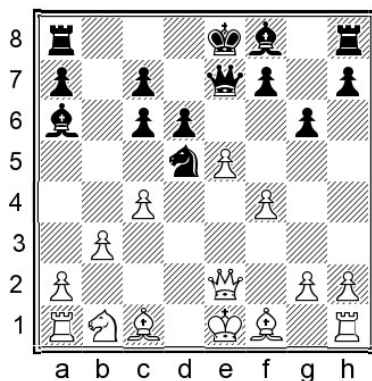


15.cxd5

15.Nc2 Nb4 16.0-0-0 fvg3 17.Nxb4 Qxb4 18.hxg3 0-0-0 19.Qe3 Kb8 20.c5 Bxf1 21.Rhxf1 Rhe8 22.Rxf7 Qg4 23.Rf4 Qe6 24.Re4 Re7= This endgame with major pieces is objectively drawish, but White can still play for a win, because Black must worry constantly about the compromised position of his king.

15...cxd5! (15...Qxa3? Motylev – Ivanchuk, Moscow 2002, 16.dxc6 0-0 17.Bxa6 Qxa6 18.cxd7 Rfd8 19.gxf4+-)
16.Qd4 (16.Qxd5? Qb4+ 17.Kd1 Bb7+-)
16...Qxa3 17.e6 0-0-0 18.exd7+ Kb8 19.Bxa6 Qxa6=

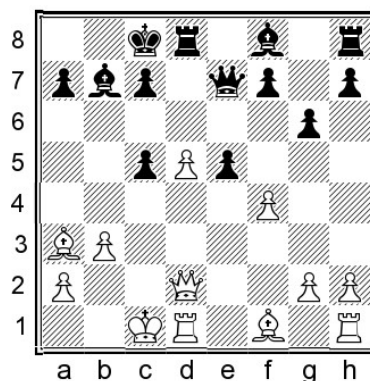
B3) 10...d6



11.Qf2

White wishes to oust the enemy knight away from the centre as quickly as possible.

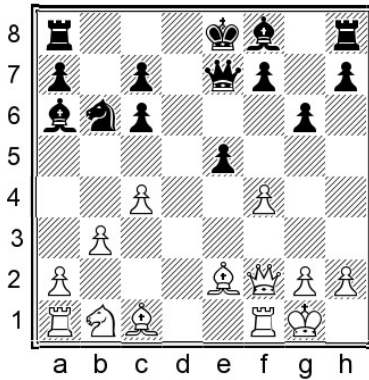
With the same idea he uses much more rarely the other retreat of his queen.
 11.Qd2 Nb6 12.Ba3 c5. Black deprives his opponent of the tactical motifs, connected with the move c4-c5, but weakens in the process the d5-square. 13.Nc3 dxe5 14.0-0-0 Bb7 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.cxd5 0-0-0



White is threatening a check from the b5-square, so Black does not have time to prepare castling kingside. 17.Bc4 Bxd5 18.Qa5 c6 19.Rxd5. White's initiative seems to be very powerful, but it is only sufficient for a perpetual check. 19...Rxd5 20.Bxd5 cxd5 21.Rd1 d4 22.Kb1 Qc7 23.Qa6+ Kb8 24.Qb5+ Ka8 25.Qe8+ Kb7= Mirkowski – Hauenstein, ICCF 2016.

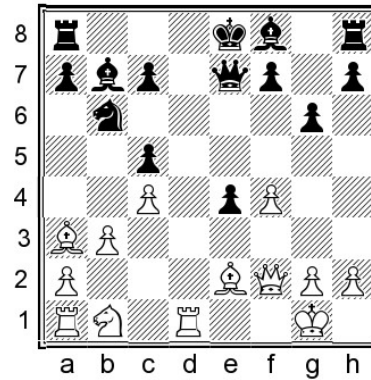
11...Nf6

11...Nb6 12.Be2. White must evacuate his king away from the centre as quickly as possible. 12...dxe5 13.0-0

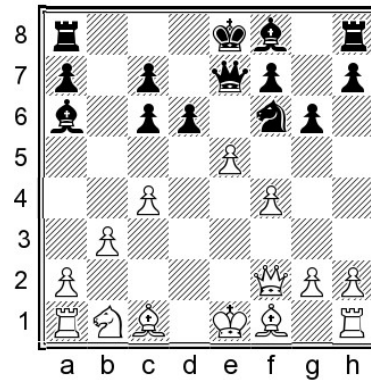


Following 13...Bg7, White can weaken his opponent's kingside with 14.f5 gx f5 15.Qxf5 e4. Black's counterplay is based on the vulnerable placement of White's rook on a1. 16.Bg5 Bc8 17.Qf4 Qc5+ 18.Kh1 0-0 19.Nd2 Bxa1. Black wins material, but his king is seriously endangered. 20.Nxe4 Qe5 21.Nf6+ Kh8 22.Qh4 Bf5 23.Bg4 Bg6. Black has succeeded in protecting his h7-square, tempo after tempo, but White can simply with the enemy queen with 24.Nxh7 Bxh7 25.Bf6+ Qxf6 26.Rxf6 Bxf6 27.Qxf6+ Kg8 28.h4±, followed by h5-h6, continuing the attack against Black's king.

13...e4 14.Ba3 c5 15.Rd1!?, with the idea Nc3-d5 (After the immediate move 15.Nc3, Black can hold the defence after an accurate play. 15...0-0-0, Yang - Zhao, Canberra 2012, 16.Rad1 e3 17.Rxd8+ Qxd8 18.Qxe3 Bg7 19.Bxc5 Re8 20.Qh3+ Qd7 21.Re1 Qxh3 22.gxh3 f5= White has an extra pawn indeed, but his kingside pawn-structure has been considerably compromised.) 15...Bb7

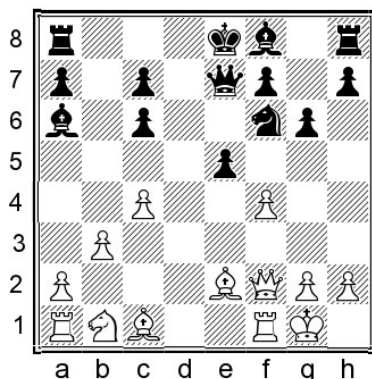


16.Qe3 (16.Nc3!? e3 17.Qg3 Bg7÷) 16...f5 17.Nc3 Rd8 (17...Rg8 18.Rab1 Rd8 19.Rxd8+ Kxd8 20.b4. Now, White must try to open the game on the kingside in order to organise an effective attack against the enemy monarch. 20...cxb4 21.Bxb4 c5 22.Ba3 Kc8÷) 18.Rxd8+ Kxd8 19.Rb1©, followed by b3-b4. White has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but it is only the future tournament practice that can clarify whether it would be sufficient for him to maintain an advantage in the opening.



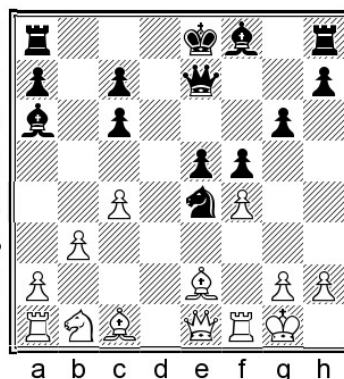
12.Ba3

12.Be2 dxe5 13.0-0 (Here, it is possible that the best for White is 13.Ba3 Qe6 – see 12.Ba3.)



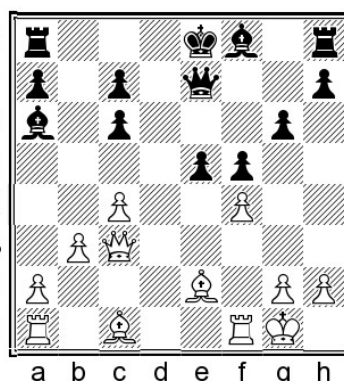
13...Qc5. Black plans to trade the queens with the help of some tactics.
 14.Be3 Ne4 15.Qf3 Qxe3+ 16.Qxe3 Bc5
 17.Qxc5 Nxc5 18.fxe5 0-0 19.Rd1 (19.Nc3 Rfe8 20.Bf3 Bb7 21.Rae1 Nd3 22.Re3 Nxe5 23.Ne4 Nxf3+ 24.Rxf3 Rxe4 25.Rxe4 c5 26.Re5 Bxf3 27.gxf3 Rd8= Van Foreest – Sargsyan, Skopje 2019; 19.Nd2 Rfe8 20.Nf3 Ne6 21.Bd3 Bb7 22.Be4. Without this move Black would play c6-c5. 22...Nc5 23.Bc2 Ne6= So Wesley – Sargissian, Wijk aan Zee 2011.) 19...Rad8 20.Nc3 Bc8 21.Bf3 Nd3. Black would not mind the exchange of the weak pawns, after which the position would become completely equal. 22.Bxc6 Nxe5= I.Popov – Kryvoruchko, Novi Sad 2016.

13...Ne4!? This is an ambitious move. Black wishes to play a middle game.
 14.Qe1 (14.Qf3 f5 15.Nc3 exf4 16.Nxe4 Qxe4 17.Qxe4+ fxe4 18.Rxf4 Bc5+ 19.Kh1 0-0-0= Nepomniachtchi – Grischuk, chess.com 2018) 14...f5!? He fortifies his knight. (14...Qc5+!? 15.Kh1 Qd4 16.Bf3 Qxa1. Black wins a rook, but his queen will have a hard time getting away from the a1-square. 17.Qxe4 Bb7 18.Qc2 Bc5 19.Nc3 Bd4 20.Na4 Be3 21.Nc3 Bd4=; 19.Bb2 Qxa2 20.Nc3 Qa5 21.Ra1 Qb6 22.Na4 Qa5 23.Nc3 Qb6 24.Na4 Qa5=)



Now, it is bad for White to choose here
 15.Bf3 0-0-0 16.Bxe4 (16.Bb2 Bg7 17.Bxe4 fxe4μ Husbands – Rohl, Port of Spain 2017) 16...fxe4 17.Nc3 exf4 18.Rxf4 Bg7 19.Rxe4 Qc5+ 20.Kh1 Qf5 21.Bb2 Rhf8³; as well as 15.Bb2 Bg7 16.Nd2 (16.Bf3?! 0-0 17.Bxe4 fxe4 18.Ba3 Qd7 19.Bxf8 Rxf8 20.Nd2, Darini – Kryvoruchko, Dubai 2013, 20...e3 21.Rd1 exf4-+) 16...Nxd2 17.Qxd2, Zhao – Gustafsson, Pattaya 2013, 17...e4!? 18.Bxg7 Qxg7³ White has no compensation for the pawn.

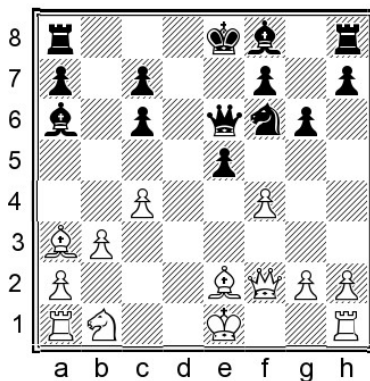
15.Nc3. This is White's most precise move. He should better exchange immediately his opponent's centralised knight. 15...Nxc3 (15...Nc5 16.Ba3 Qe6 17.Qf2 Nd3 18.Bxd3 Bxa3 19.Rfe1 0-0 20.Rxe5 Qf6= Kurgansky – Pheby, ICCF 2016) 16.Qxc3



16...0-0-0 (16...Bg7?! 17.Qa5 exf4 18.Bf3 0-0 19.Rb1 Bb7 20.Bxf4²; 16...Bb7!? 17.Bb2 0-0-0 18.Bf3=) 17.fxe5

Qb4 18.Qg3 Bg7 19.Bf4 Qc5+ 20.Kh1 Rhe8 21.b4!? White is preparing the transfer of his queen to the queenside via the third rank. 21...Qe7 22.Qa3 Bb7 23.Qxa7 Bxe5 24.Bxe5 Qxe5 25.Bf3 Rd3÷ Now, unfortunately for White, the straightforward move 26.b5? would not work because of 26...Rxf3 27.gxf3 c5μ and he would be helpless against the threats Qf4, Re3.

12...Qe6 13.Be2 dxe5



14.fxe5!?

White exploits the fact that if the opponent captures with his queen, he could simply castle and capturing of the rook would be just bad.

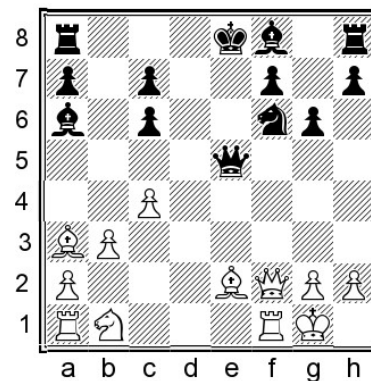
It is weaker for White to play here 14.Bxf8 Kxf8 15.0-0 and he would need to play very accurately in order to maintain the balance. 15...exf4 (15...Kg7 16.Nc3 exf4 17.Qxf4 – see 15...exf4; 16...e4!?) 16.Qxf4 Kg7 17.Nc3 Rae8 (17...Rhe8!? 18.Bf3, Bakalchuk – Khmelniker, Israel 2019, 18...Rad8 19.Rad1 Rxd1 20.Rxd1 Bc8³ Now, White must still prove that he has compensation for the pawn.) 18.Bf3 Qe3+. Black exchanges the queens, but White restores the material balance and the position becomes completely equal.

19.Qxe3 Rxe3 20.Na4 Bc8 21.Bxc6 Rd8= Svidler – Carlsen, Saint Louis 2017.

14.0-0 Ne4!? (14...Bxa3 15.Nxa3 0-0 16.Rae1, Gundavaa – Batchuluun, Ulaanbaatar 2019, 16...e4÷) 15.Qh4 (15.f5?! Qd7 16.Qe3 Qd4 17.Qxd4 exd4³) 15...Bxa3 16.Nxa3 f5÷

14...Bxa3

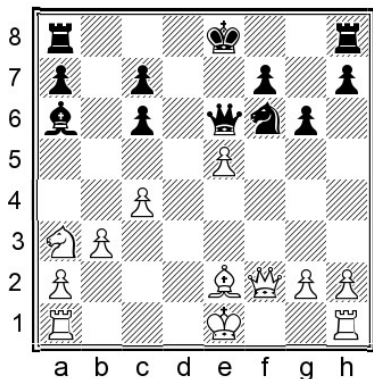
Following 14...Qxe5 15.0-0,



Black cannot play 15...Qxa1?, because of 16.Qe3+, for example: 16...Kd8 (16...Kd7 17.Bxf8 Rhxf8 18.Nc3 Qb2 19.Rxf6+–) 17.Nc3 Qxf1+ 18.Kxf1 Bxa3 19.Qd4+ Kc8 20.Qxf6. Black has sufficient compensation for the queen, but loses due to the horrible coordination of his pieces and the lack of a safe haven for his king. 20...Rf8 21.b4! Bxb4 22.Nd5 cxd5 23.Qxa6+–

Black should better choose here 15...Bxa3 16.Nxa3 – see 14...Bxa3, or 15...0-0-0 16.Bxf8 Rhxf8 17.Qxf6 Qxe2 18.Nc3 Qe3+ 19.Kh1 Rfe8 20.Rf3 Qd2 21.h3 Bb7=, followed by Re3, or c6-c5. Naturally, White will always manage to play Qxf7, but he would only regain in this fashion the pawn that he had sacrificed before.

15.Nxa3

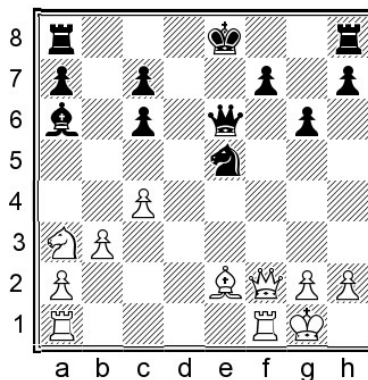


15...Nd7!?

Black wishes not only to regain his pawn, but also to transfer his knight to the centre of the board.

15...Qxe5 16.0-0 0-0 17.Bf3 Rad8
18.Nc2 (Here, it would not work for White to play 18.Bxc6?, because of 18...Ng4; after 18.Qxa7!?, White still preserves his chances of obtaining an edge: 18...Bc8 19.Rae1 Qd6 20.Nc2 c5 21.Ne3) 18...c5 19.Ne3 Bc8 20.Rae1 Qc3 (20...Qd4=) 21.Nd5 Nxd5 22.Bxd5 (22.Rc1 Qf6 23.cxd5 Bb7 24.Qxc5 Qb6=) 22...Qd4 23.Re7 Rd7= Brattain – Amin, chess.com 2018. The activity of White's pieces compensates fully the sacrificed pawn.

16.0-0 Nxe5



17.Nc2

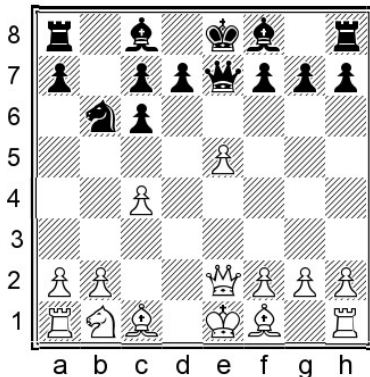
White's knight was too passive at the edge of the board.

It is also quite possible for White to transfer his knight along the route b1-c3: 17.Rae1 0-0 18.Nb1 Qe7 (18...f5 19.Nc3 Bc8 20.Na4 Qd6=) 19.Nd2 f5 20.c5 Bxe2 21.Rxe2 Qf6 22.Qf4 Rad8 23.Ne4 Qe7 24.Nf2 Rfe8 25.Rfe1 Rd5 26.b4 Qg7 27.Kh1, with a rather unpleasant pin on the e-file, Golubenko – V.Popov, ICCF 2018.

17...0-0, Muzychuk – Zhao Xue, Jiangsu Wuxi 2012, **18.Nb4 Bb7 19.Rad1**©

Chapter 21

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6



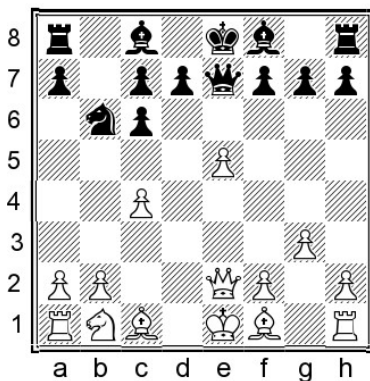
Black is reluctant to keep his knight at the centre of the board and removes it immediately to a safer place.

We will deal now with **A) 9.g3**, **B) 9.b3**, **C) 9.Nd2**.

Still, White develops more often here his knight to the c3-square and we will analyse this in our next chapters.

A) 9.g3

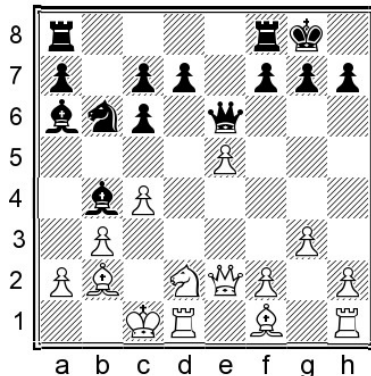
White wishes to trick his opponent by transposing the move-order.



9...Qe6!

About 9...g6?! 10.b3 – see Chapter 14, variation C.

9...Ba6 10.b3 Qe6 (10...g6?! 11.Bg2 – see Chapter 14, variation C; 10...0-0-0 11.Bb2 Re8 12.Nd2 or 12.Bg2 f6 13.0-0 fxe5 14.Re1 see Chapter 19 variation **B1**; 10...d5 11.exd6 cxd6 12.Bb2 f6 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.Nc3 d5 15.cxd5 Bxf1 16.Kxf1²; 12...Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 0-0-0 14.Nc3 Be7, Totsky – Syrchikov, Perm 1997, 15.0-0-0²) 11.Bb2 Bb4+ 12.Nd2 0-0 13.0-0-0



13...Rfe8 (13...Qe7, Roller – Puri, Toronto 2011, 14.Ne4 Ba3 15.Bxa3 Qxa3+ 16.Qb2± Qxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Rfe8 18.f4) 14.Qh5 Qg6 (14...Qe7, Prizant – O'Toole, Telford 2005, 15.Kc2! (with the idea 15...Ba3 16.Ba1) 15...d5 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Bd3 g6 18.Qh6+–) 15.Qxg6 hxg6 16.Bg2 Rac8 (16...Bb7 17.Ne4±) 17.Ne4 Red8, Khabinets – Khoptiany, Shepetivka 2011, 18.c5 Nd5 19.a3+–

10.b3

Now Black obtains a target to attack on the queenside.

The move 10.Nd2 enables Black to pin rather unpleasantly the knight with 10...Bb4 and White will have problems with the development of the bishop on f1, since it would need to protect the pawn on c4. 11.a3 Bxd2+ 12.Bxd2, Clemente

Llamero – Tonteri, Cagliari 2019, 12...0-0
 13.f4 (13.0-0-0 c5÷ 14.Bg2? Rb8 15.Ba5
 Ba6μ) 13...a5,,

10...a5

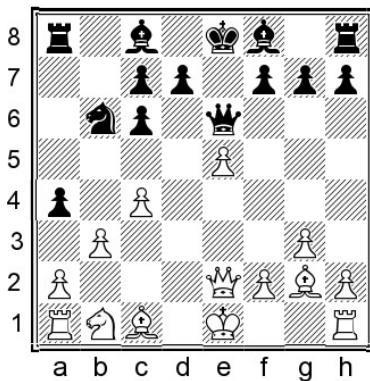
10...Bb4+ 11.Bd2 a5 12.Bg2 0-0 13.0-0
 d5 (13...Re8=) 14.cxd5 cxd5= Ladron de
 Guevara Pinto – Sundararajan, Spain
 2017.

11.Bg2

11.Bb2 Bb4+ 12.Nc3?! a4μ Arencibia –
 Becerra Rivero, Cocoa Beach 2019.
 11.Nd2!? – see variation C.

11...a4

11...Bb4+ 12.Bd2 – see 10...Bb4+



12.Ba3

The move would lead to simplifications

12.Bb2 Bb4+ 13.Nd2 – see variation C,
 9.Nd2 Qe6 10.b3 a5 11.Bb2 a4 12.g3 Bb4
 13.Bg2.

12...Bxa3

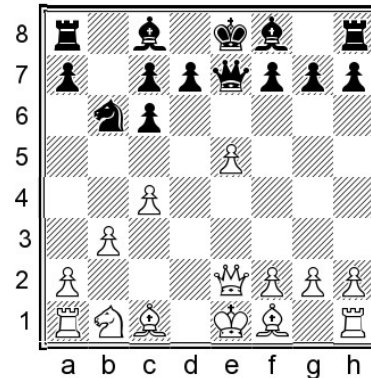
12...axb3 13.axb3 Bb4+ 14.Bxb4 Rxa1
 15.0-0 d5 (15...Bb7 16.Qb2 Ra7 17.Bc5±
 Iljiushenok – Christiansen, St Petersburg
 2018) 16.Qb2 Ra8 17.Nd2² Iljiushenok –
 Mikhalevski, St Petersburg 2018.

13.Nxa3 Qe7

13...Bb7 14.0-0 0-0 15.Nc2²
 Goryachkina – Batsiashvili, Tbilisi 2018.

**14.Nc2 axb3 15.axb3 Rxa1+ 16.Nxa1
 0-0 17.0-0 Re8=** Iljiushenok –
 Balajayeva, Moscow 2018.

B) 9.b3



9...a5

This move is played with the natural
 idea a5-a4, attacking White's queenside.

9...d5 10.exd6 cxd6 11.Nc3 d5 12.cxd5
 cxd5 13.Be3 (13.Nb5!?) 13...Be6?
 Barbeau – Kraiouchkine, Montreal 2008,
 14.Qd2±

opening of the e-file and the trade of the queens.

9...Bb7!? Black is preparing c6-c5, in order to impede the development of the enemy bishop on g2. 10.Bb2 0-0-0 11.g3 (11.Nd2 g6 – see 9.Nd2) 11...c5 12.f3 d6,,

9...Qe6!?, followed by Bb4+. 10.g3 (About 10.Nd2 Bb4, or 10.Bb2 Bb4+ 11.Nd2 0-0 – see 9.Nd2; 10.a3 a5; 10...d5!?) 10...Bb4+ 11.Bd2 a5 12.Bg2 0-0 13.0-0 d5= – Black has a comfortable position. 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Re1, Ladrón de Guevara Pinto – Sundararajan, Spain 2017, 15...Re8 16.f4 Nd7 17.Nc3 c6=, followed by Ba6, Nc5-d3. White must play accurately now; otherwise, Black would seize completely the initiative.

10.Bb2

The move 10.a4?! would lead to the weakening of the b4-square. 10...Qe6³

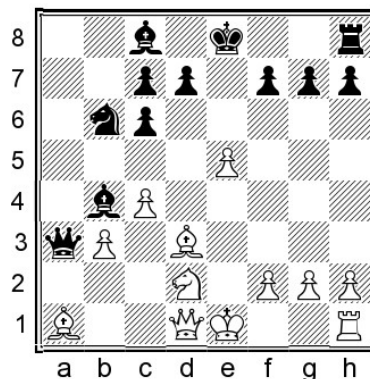
10.g3 a4 11.Bb2 axb3 12.axb3 Qb4+ 13.Nd2 Rxa1+ 14.Bxa1 Qa3 15.Qd1 Bb4 16.Bd3 Qa5= Black has pinned the enemy knight on d2 and impeded White's castling.

10.Ba3 Qe6 11.Bxf8 (11.g3 Bb4+ 12.Bxb4 axb4. Black's rook on a8 exerts powerful pressure against the enemy a2-pawn. 13.Bg2 0-0 14.0-0 d5,,) 11...Rxf8. Now, Black will be incapable of castling kingside, but White's king cannot be evacuated from the centre of the board anytime soon. 12.Nd2 a4 13.Rd1 axb3 14.axb3, Ambarcumova – Zaiatz, Sochi 2004, 14...f6,, Black would not mind the

10...a4 11.Nd2

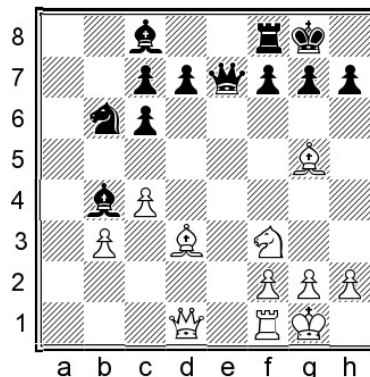
11.Qe3 axb3 12.axb3 Rxa1 13.Bxa1 Qb4= Now, White cannot play 14.Qc3?, because of the crushing tactical strike: 14...Na4! 15.Qxb4 Bxb4+ 16.Kd1 Nc5 17.Kc2 d6µ Muzychuk – Vajda, Bled 2005.

11...axb3 12.axb3 Rxa1+ 13.Bxa1 Qa3 14.Qd1 Bb4 15.Bd3



15...Qa5

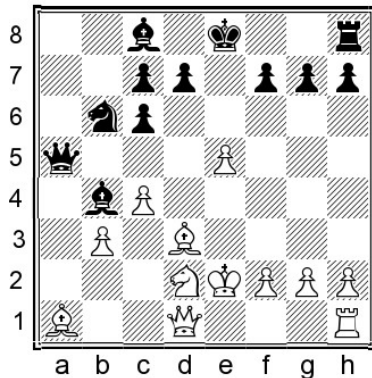
15...Qa2!? 16.Bd4 (16.Bc2?! Qa5) 16...0-0 (16...Bxd2+? 17.Qxd2 Qxb3 18.e6 dxe6 19.0-0 0-0?? 20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.Qg5+ Kh8 22.Qh6+-; 19...f6 20.Rb1±) 17.Be3 Qa5 18.0-0 Qxe5 19.Nf3, Van der Weide – Ris, Haarlem 2007, 19...Qe7 20.Bg5



20...Qe8!? (20...Qd6 21.Qc2 g6 22.Bh6 Re8 23.Qb2 f6 24.Qc2 f5 25.Qb2 Qe7 (= Bologan) 26.c5! Nd5 27.Bc4 d6 28.cxd6 cxd6 29.Rc1+–) 21.Bc1 (21.Bf4 d6÷; 21.Bd2 Bxd2 22.Qxd2 d6÷; 21.Nd4 Qe5=; 21.Qc2 h6 22.Bc1 d6÷) 21...d6÷

16.Ke2!

Without this move White cannot unpin his pieces.



16...d6

His king is horribly misplaced and Black opens the centre.

16...0-0 17.Qc2 d6 18.Bd4 Bxd2 (18...dxe5? 19.Ra1+–) 19.Qxd2 Qa3 20.Qb2 Qxb2+ 21.Bxb2² S.Zhigalko – Balogh, Aix les Bains 2011.

16...d5 17.Qc2 Be6?! (17...Bxd2 18.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 19.Kxd2 dxc4 20.bxc4 Be6 21.Rc1 Kd7 22.Bd4 Ra8,,) 18.Bd4 dxc4 19.bxc4² Bxd2? 20.Ra1 Qb4 21.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 22.Kxd2 Kd7 23.Bxb6 cxb6 24.Ra7+ Kd8 25.Ra8+ Bc8 26.Bf5 Kc7 27.Bxc8+– Palac – Marciano, Biel 1998.

17.Nf3

17.f4? dxe5 18.fxe5 Bg4+ 19.Nf3 Nd7³ Macieja – Kosten, Izmir 2004.

17.Qc2 dxe5 18.Nf3 (18.Bb2?! Qc5 19.Nf3, So Wesley – Mamedyarov, Shamkir 2017, 19...g6!?³) 18...Bg4 – see 17.Nf3.

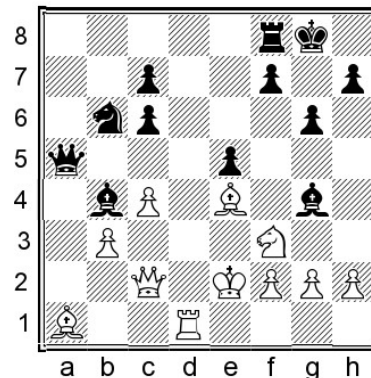
17...Bg4 18.Qc2

18.h3 Bxf3+ 19.Kxf3 dxe5= Vuckovic – Ivanisevic, Zlatibor 2007.

18...dxe5 19.Rd1

After 19.Be4?! Black does not need to lose a tempo to protect his pawn on h7: 19...0-0 20.Bxh7+ Kh8³ Stojanovski – Kosten, Izmir 2004.

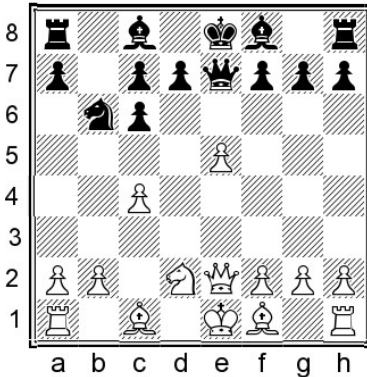
19...g6 20.Be4 0-0



21.h3 (21.Bxc6? Dovzik – Ambrus, Szeged 1998, 21...Bf5 22.Be4 Bxe4 23.Qxe4 Qa2+ 24.Kf1 f6³) **21...Bxf3+ 22.Bxf3 Qc5**. White will hardly manage to achieve anything meaningful out of his two-bishop advantage. **23.Qe4 Ra8 24.Kf1 f6 25.Bb2 Ra2**, Danin – Semcesen, Pardubice 2011, **26.Qb1!? Ra8 27.g4 Re8 28.Be4 Kg7 29.h4f**

C) 9.Nd2

White plays this move with the idea to castle queenside after b3, Bb2. With this order of moves he avoids the variation with 9.b3 a5, followed by a5-a4, a4xb3, Rxa1.



We will analyse in details: **C1) 9...a5**,
C2) 9...Qe6 and **C3) 9...Bb7**.

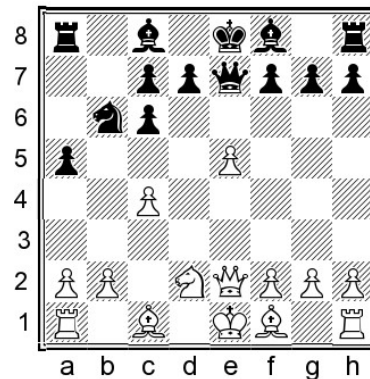
About 9...g6?! 10.Ne4 – see Chapter 22, variation **B** (9.Nc3 g6 10.Ne4).

9...d5 10.exd6 – see 9...d6.

9...d6. This move is a bit passive and Black turns into the defending side. 10.exd6 (10.c5. This move does not enjoy great popularity, since White can fight for the advantage by much simpler means. 10...dxc5 11.Qe4 g6 12.Qxc6+ Bd7 13.Qf6 Qxf6 14.exf6 Bc6= Now, White must play very carefully; otherwise, he might lose his f6-pawn, which is cut off too far away from the rest of his forces. Black may also decline the pawn-sacrifice here: 10...Nd5 11.cxd6 cxd6 12.exd6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.0-0 0-0 15.Nc4 Bc7 16.Bf3 Be6 17.b3 Nb4= White can hardly achieve

anything meaningful out of the vulnerability of the enemy pawns on a7 and c6, because Black's pieces have been actively deployed.) 10...cxd6 11.b3 Bg4 (11...d5 12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.Bb2 Bg4 14.f3 Be6 15.0-0-0 – see 11...Bg4; 11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Be7 13.Bb2 0-0 14.0-0 d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Nf3² Hua – Issani, Mississauga 2018) 12.f3 Be6 (12...Bf5 13.Bb2 Qxe2+ 14.Bxe2 d5, Danin – Pajeken, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse 2019, 15.cxd5 Nxd5 16.Rc1²) 13.Bb2 d5 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.0-0-0 Qg5 16.h4 Qe3 17.Kb1 Be7 18.Rc1. Black's weak c6-pawn will be the cause of constant worries for him in this endgame. 18...0-0 19.Qxe3! (19.g4 a5,, Kasimdzhanov – Ponomariov, Zug 2013.) 19...Nxe3 20.Ba6 Rad8 21.Ne4²

C1) 9...a5



It is a very logical reaction. Later, Black is going to push this pawn forward.

10.g3

In contradistinction to 9.b3, White has the opportunity here not to contribute his opponent's plans (10.b3 a4 – see 9.b3), but simply to continue the development of the kingside. However, with a careful play, Black quickly gets enough counter play in the center. But if there is a desire to get away from an equal game, then you can think about 10.h4!?, going into the

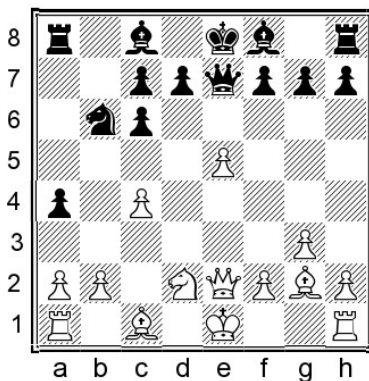
scheme 8.h4 (see Chapter 13, 8.h4 a5 9.c4 Nb6 10.Nd2), but not in the best version.

10...Qe6

10...Ba6?! 11.b3 Qe6 (11...a4 12.Bg2 0-0-0?! 13.0-0 f6 14.Nf3 Re8 15.Bb2 fxe5, Moiseenko – Tsaruk, St Petersburg 2017, 16.Nxe5 Qf6 17.Qh5±; 11...d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Bb2 Qxe2+ 14.Bxe2 d5, Hanley – Hebden, England 2011, 15.0-0 0-0-0 16.Rfc1±) 12.Bg2 Bb4 13.0-0 0-0, Haring – Nagy, Le Castella 2018, 14.Nf3 d5 15.Nd4²

10...g6 11.Bg2 Bg7 12.0-0 0-0 13.Re1 (13.Nf3 f6 14.e6 Qxe6 15.Qxe6+ dxe6 16.Nd4 Nxc4 17.Nxc6 Bd7 18.b3 f5 19.Rb1 Bxc6 20.Bxc6 Rab8÷) 13...Re8 (13...a4!? 14.Rb1 – see 10...a4) 14.Nf3 Ba6 15.b3 d5 16.Qc2 dxc4 17.Nd4 Bb7 18.Nxc6 Qe6, Gashimov – Meszaros, Litohoto 1999, 19.Ne7+!? Rxe7 20.Bxb7 Rb8 21.Bg2²

10...a4!? 11.Bg2

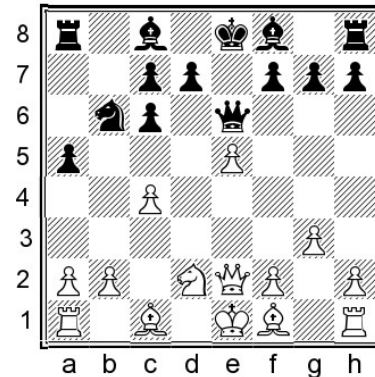


11...Ra5?! 12.0-0! Ba6 13.Rb1 (with the idea b2-b3) 13...Rxe5 (13...Qxe5? 14.Qd1 Be7 15.Re1 Qd6 16.b4 axb3 17.axb3 Ra2 18.Bb2 0-0 19.Qg4 f6 20.Ne4 Qb4 21.Bc3 Qa3 22.Bd4+–) 14.Qd3 Qd6 (14...Re1

15.b3 Rxf1+, Rizouk – Hirsch, Essen Borbeck 2001, 16.Nxf1 axb3 17.axb3 Qd8 18.Bb2 f6 19.Be4+–) 15.Qc3 Re6 (15...Be7 16.Ne4 Qe6 17.Bf4 f6 18.Bxe5 fxe5 19.b3± Rublevsky – Svidler, Frankfurt 2000; 15...f6 16.b3 Be7 17.Nf3 Re4 18.Qc2 Re6, Mueller – Hebden, Cappelle-la-Grande 2001, 19.Bf4 Qc5 20.Bh3 0-0 21.Bf5 g6 22.Bxe6+ dxe6 23.Be3±) 16.Qa5 Bc8 17.b4 Qd3 18.Bh3 Be7 19.Bxe6 fxe6 20.Qe5² Percze – Daus, IECG 2005.

11...Qe6 12.Rb1 Bb4 13.b3 axb3 14.axb3 0-0 15.0-0 d5= Danin – Zude, Nuremberg 2012.

11...g6 12.0-0 Bg7 13.Re1 0-0 14.Rb1 Re8 (14...Rb8?! Mela – Bitelmajer, Argentina 2006, 15.Ne4 Qxe5? 16.Bf4±; 15...Ba6 16.b3²; 15...Bxe5 16.Bg5 Qe6 17.b3²) 15.f4 d5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Nf3 Bf5 18.Ra1 c5,, Arzumian – Varavin, Alushta 2001.



11.b3!?

Just now, after the queen leaves the a3-f8 diagonal, Black has no the plan a5-a4xb3, Rxa1, Qa3.

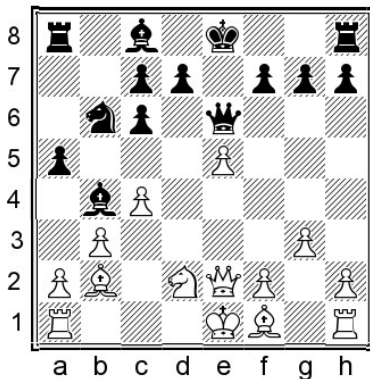
If b2-b3 is hold over for one move, then after 11.Bg2 Bb4 White will have to consider with Bb4-c3 (11...a4 12.0-0 Bb4 13.Ne4 h5 14.Bd2!? Bxd2 15.Nxd2 h4 16.Rae1±; 14.Ng5 Qg4 15.Qc2 Be7 16.c5 Nd5 17.h3 Qd4, Barnsley – Sosa Patino, corr. 2002, 18.Rd1 Qxc5 19.Qf5 Rf8

20.Ne4 Qb4 21.Qxh5 Ba6 22.Bg5 0-0-0
 23.a3 Qa5 24.Bxe7 Nxe7 25.Rac1+-).
 12.0-0 0-0 (12...Bxd2 13.Bxd2 Nxc4
 (13...Qxc4 14.Qh5 0-0 15.Rfe1 Qe6 16.Be4
 g6 17.Qh6 f5 18.exf6 Qxf6 19.Bc3 Qf7,
 Punnett – Bogdan, England 2017,
 20.Re3+-) 14.Bc3 Ba6 15.Rfe1 Nb6, Borge
 – Fedorov, Tastrup 1992, 16.Qd2!? 0-0
 17.Re4 Bc4 18.Rh4 Bd5 19.Bh3 Qg6
 20.Bf1f) 13.b3 (13.f4?! f6 14.b3 fxe5
 15.fxe5 Rxf1+ 16.Nxf1 d5,, Warakomski –
 N.Petrov, Lisbon 2018) 13...Bc3 (13...a4
 14.Rb1 d5 15.Nf3 Ba6, Schuetz – Arndt,
 Unna 2014, 16.Rd1 axb3 17.axb3 dxc4
 18.Ng5 cxb3 19.Qe4 Qg6 20.Qxb4 Qxb1
 21.Be4 c5 22.Qd2 Qa1 23.Bxh7+ Kh8
 24.Qf4+-; 13...d5!? 14.Bb2 – see 11.b3)
 14.Rb1 Bxe5 Chernyshov – Galeev,
 Harkany 1994 15.Nf3 Bf6 16.Qd1 d6
 17.Nd4 Bxd4 18.Qxd4© c5 19.Qc3 Ra7
 20.Bb2 Qg6 21.Rbe1 Nd7 22.Re7 Qf6
 23.Qxf6 Nxf6 24.Rd1²

11...Bb4

11...a4 12.Bb2 Bb4 13.Bg2 – see
 11...Bb4.

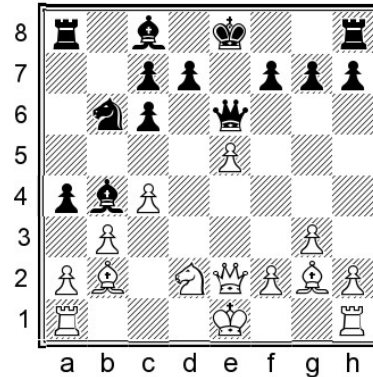
12.Bb2



12...0-0

To get a satisfactory game, Black must quickly start counter play in the center: Ba6, d5.

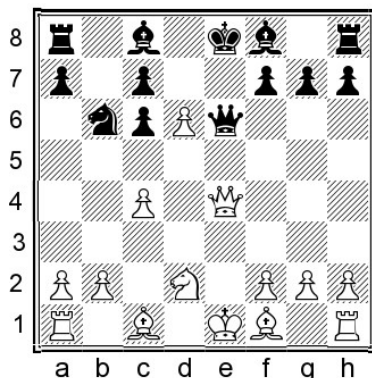
If Black loses time on a5-a4, then they have no time to get enough counter play for the equalization. 12...a4 13.Bg2



13...a3?! 14.Bd4 Ra5 (14...c5 15.Bxa8
 Nxa8 16.Be3 Bb7, Mastoras – Barkhagen,
 Gausdal 1992, 17.0-0 0-0 18.Qd3±) 15.0-0
 c5 16.Be3 Qxe5 17.f4 Qe7 18.f5 f6 19.Rf4
 0-0? (19...Kd8 20.Re4 Qf7 21.Bf4©)
 20.Re4 Qf7 21.Bf4 1-0 Nedev – Tisdall,
 Panormo 2001.

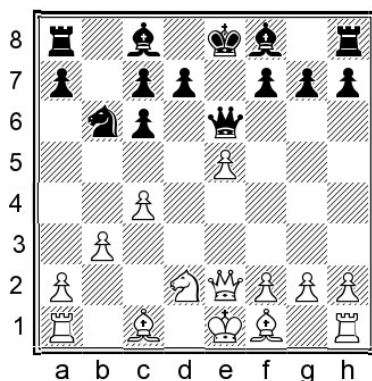
13...axb3 14.axb3 Rxa1+ 15.Bxa1 0-0
 16.0-0 d5 (16...f6?! 17.Nf3 c5, Danin –
 Semcesen, Pardubice 2012, 18.Qc2±)
 17.Nf3 Qh6, Danin – Nisipeanu, Bad
 Wiessee 2013, 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Qc2 c5
 20.Bc3 Bxc3 21.Qxc3 Nd7 22.b4²

13...0-0 14.0-0 d5 15.Rfc1 (15.Nf3? a3
 16.Bd4 c5 17.Be3 Ba6 18.Qc2 h6 19.cxd5
 Nxd5 20.Bxc5 Bxf1 21.Nd4 Qxe5 22.Rxf1
 Ne3 23.fxe3 Bxc5 24.Kh1, Pacholsky –
 Nagy, Slovakia 2005, 24...Rae8-+; 17.cxd5
 Qxd5 18.Rfd1 Ba6 19.Qe3 Rad8 20.e6 fxe6
 21.Ng5 cxd4 22.Bxd5 dxe3 23.Bxe6+ Kh8
 24.Nf7+ Rxf7 25.Rxd8+ Rf8 26.Rxf8+ Bxf8
 27.fxe3, Da Silva Filho – Herzog, LSS 2009,
 27...Bd6-+) 15...Ba6 (15...axb3 16.axb3
 Rxa1 17.Bxa1 dxc4 18.Nxc4 c5 19.Rd1²
 Danin – Ahlander, Cappelle-la-Grande



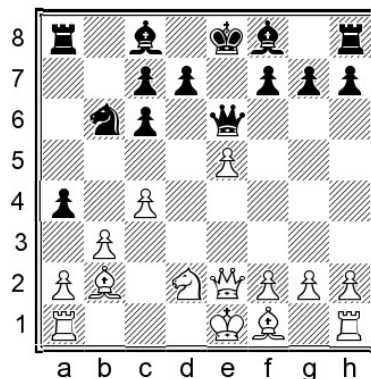
11...cxd6, Tomazini – Salimova, Zadar 2018, 12.Bd3 Qxe4+ 13.Bxe4 d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Bd3. White prevents his opponent from occupying the a6-f1 diagonal with his bishop. (15.Bf3 Ba6,,) 15...Be7. White cannot achieve anything in this endgame out of the relative weakness of the enemy d5-pawn. 16.0-0 0-0 17.b3 Nd7! Black's knight was very passive on the b6-square, therefore, he is preparing its transfer to the c5-square. 18.Bb2 Nc5 19.Be2 a5,,

11...Bxd6!? Black is trying to develop his pieces as quickly as possible hoping thus to compensate the defects of his pawn-structure. 12.Bd3 (The move 12.Qxe6+? would only help Black to mobilise his forces. 12...Bxe6 13.Be2 0-0-0 14.0-0 Bb4µ) 12...f5 13.Qe2 (13.Qxe6+ Bxe6 14.0-0 0-0-0f) 13...Qxe2+ 14.Bxe2 0-0= Siefring – Taylor, ICCF 2009.



10...Bb4

10...a5 11.Bb2 a4 (11...Bb4?! 12.a3 Bxd2+ 13.Qxd2² d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Rc1 0-0 16.Rxc7 Qg6 17.f3± Kasparov – Karpov, Lyon/New York 1990)



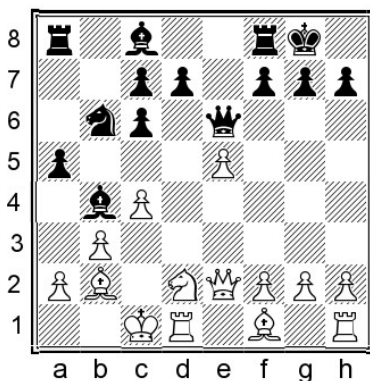
12.Qe3. White prepares the development of his bishop on f1. 12...Bb4 (12...d5?! 13.c5 Nd7 14.b4 Be7 15.f4 f6 16.Nf3 fxe5 17.fxe5 0-0 18.a3± Mroziak – Kowalczyk, Wroclaw 2018; 12...axb3?! 13.axb3 Rxa1+ 14.Bxa1 Bb4 15.Bd3 0-0 16.0-0 f5 17.Nf3± Koykka – Karttunen, Helsinki 2018) 13.Be2 (13.Bd3 with the idea f4-f5. 13...d6 14.0-0-0 axb3 15.axb3 d5 16.f4, Fogarasi – Varavin, Kobanya 1992, 16...Qh6!? Black prevents his opponent's plans and obtains an advantage. 17.Qf3 0-0³) 13...axb3 (13...d6 14.0-0 a3 15.Bc3 Bxc3 16.Qxc3 Qxe5 17.Qxe5+ dxe5, Lichtenberg – Fridman, Chessfriend.com 2003, 18.Rae1 f6 19.f4 exf4 20.Bf3+ Kf7 21.Bxc6 Rb8 22.Rxf4±; 18...Bf5 19.Bf3 Nd7 20.Bxc6 0-0-0=) 14.axb3 Rxa1+ 15.Bxa1 c5!? Without this move Black would need to consider permanently his opponent's possibility c4-c5. 16.0-0 d5 17.cxd5 Nxd5 18.Qe4 Bxd2 19.Rd1 Bb4 20.Rxd5 0-0=, followed by Ba6, exchanging the active enemy bishop and obtaining an acceptable position.

12.g3 Bb4 13.Bg2 0-0!? Black is not in a hurry to exchange on b3, so White would

have to consider the possible pawn-advance a4-a3 (13...a3?! 14.Bd4² Svjatocho – Zhukova, Minsk 2018; 13...Rb8 14.Rc1 0-0 15.0-0² Afanasiev – Drygalov, Moscow 2018; It would be sufficient for Black to equalise with 13...axb3 14.axb3 Rxa1+ 15.Bxa1 0-0 16.0-0 d5 17.Nf3 Qh6= Danin – Nisipeanu, Bad Wiessee 2013.). 14.0-0 d5 (14...f6!?) 15.Rfc1 (15.Nf3?! a3 16.Bd4 c5 17.cxd5 Qxd5³ E.Andreev – J.Nilsen, Prague 2015) 15...axb3 16.axb3 Rxa1 17.Bxa1 dxc4 (17...Ba6 18.Nf3 Qh6 19.Rd1 dxc4 20.Nd4² Danin – Hacker, Germany 2017) 18.Nxc4, Danin – Ahlander, Cappelle la Grande 2016, 18...Rd8 19.Rd1 Rxd1+ 20.Qxd1 Qd7 21.Qxd7 Bxd7. In this endgame White's pawn-structure is superior, but this promises him only a symbolic advantage. 22.Kf1 c5 23.Ke2 Be6=

11.Bb2 0-0 12.0-0-0 Qe7

12...a5, with the idea a5-a4.

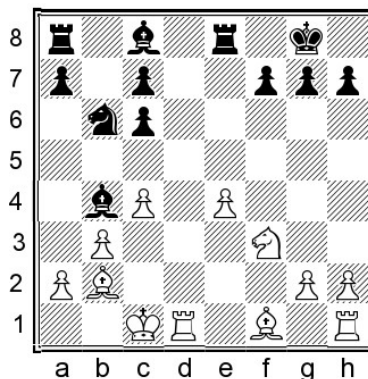


13.f4?! a4 14.Ne4 axb3 15.axb3 d5 16.exd6 cxd6³ Goryachkina – Vijayalakshmi, Riadh 2017.

13.a3 Bxd2+, Vallejo Pons – Korchnoi, Vera 2004 (13...Be7!?) 14.Qxd2 a4 15.c5 Nd5 16.b4²

13.Qh5 a4 14.Bd3 h6 (14...g6? 15.Qh6 a3 16.Ba1 Bxd2+ 17.Rxd2+- Thimon – Jeanjean, France 1998) 15.f4 d5 16.f5 Qd7 17.Rhf1 axb3 18.e6! fxe6 19.f6! e5 (19...bxa2 20.Nb3 dxc4 21.fxcg7+-) 20.Qg6 e4 21.Nxe4 Qf7 22.fxcg7 Qxcg6 23.gxf8=Q+ Bxf8 24.Nf6+ Qxf6 25.Rxf6 bxa2 26.Rg6+ Kf7 27.Rf1+ Ke8 28.Re1+ Be7 29.Kc2 dxc4 30.Be4±

12...d5 13.exd6 Qxd6 14.Nf3 Qh6+ 15.Qe3 Qxe3+ 16.fxe3 Re8 17.e4



17...Bg4?! 18.e5 (18.h3²) 18...Nd7 19.h3 Bxf3?! (19...Bf5!? 20.Nd4 Be4 21.Bd3 Bxd3 22.Nxc6! Be4 23.Nxb4 Nxe5 24.Rhe1 f5 25.Re3²) 20.Rxd7 Be4 21.Bd3 Bxg2? (21...Bxd3 22.Rxd3 Rad8±) 22.Rg1 Bxh3 23.e6 Bxe6 (23...Rxe6 24.Rxcg7+ Kf8 25.Rdxg7+ Ke8 26.Rf3+-) 24.Bxc3+ Kf8 26.Bxb4+ Re7 27.Bxh7+- Morozevich – Arkhipov, Moscow 1992.

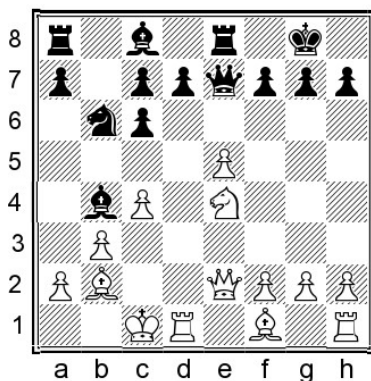
17...Nd7 18.e5 a5 19.Bd3 Nc5 20.Bc2 a4 21.Nd4 axb3 22.axb3 Ra6 23.h3, Kasparov – Piket, Dortmund 1992, 23...g6 24.Rhf1 h5÷

13.Ne4

13.Kb1 Ba3 14.Bc3 Bb4= Rublevsky – Beliavsky, Vrnjacka Banja 1999.

13...Re8,,

It is essential for Black to be able to play Qf8 after an eventual sacrifice of the knight on the f6-square.



14.Rd4

14.f4? d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Ng3, Arvola – Sowray, England 2018, 16...a5 17.f5 a4--+

The move 14.Nf6+? would not work: 14...gxf6 15.Qg4+ Kh8 16.exf6 Qf8 17.Qh4 d5 18.Bd3 Qg8 19.c5 Bxc5 20.Rhe1 Bg4 21.f3 Bd7μ Ivanchuk – Almasi, Havana 2014.

14.Qc2? This move is too passive. 14...d5! With this energetic strike in the centre, Black seizes the initiative. 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Nc3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 c5μ Yu Yangyi – Bruzon Batista, Tsaghkadzor 2015. Black has a clear cut plan for an attack against the enemy king: d5-d4, Be6, Rac8, c5-c4.

14.Qh5 d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Nf6+ gxf6 17.exf6 Qc5+ 18.Kb1 d4 19.Qh6 Qf8

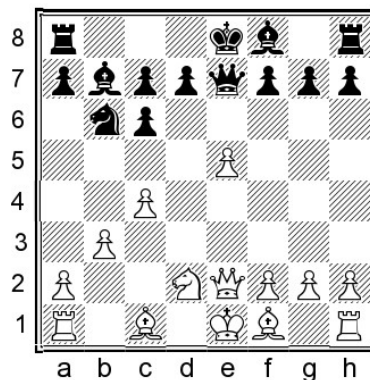
20.Qg5+ Kh8 21.Rxd4 Qg8. It is better for Black here not to hold on to his material advantage, but to try to parry the threats against his king by exchanging the queens. 22.Qxg8+ Kxg8 23.Rxb4. He is two pawns down, but Black now has the initiative. 23...Bf5+ 24.Kc1 Re1+ 25.Kd2 Rb1 26.Bd4 Rd8 27.Ke2 Nd5μ

14...Ba3 (14...Qxe5? 15.Nf6+) 15.f4 Bxb2+ 16.Qxb2 c5 17.Rd3 Bb7 18.Re3 Bxe4 19.Rxe4 a5,, followed by a5-a4. After the opening of the a-file Black's prospects would not be worse.

C3) 9...Bb7

Black wishes simply to complete his development. He will castle queenside on his next move.

10.b3



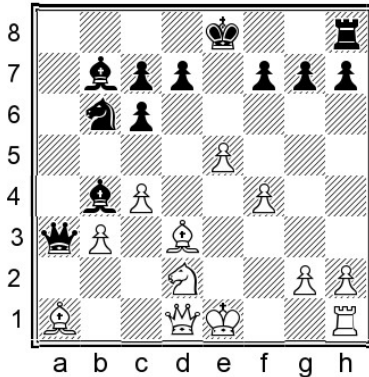
10...0-0-0

This is probably the simplest way to equality.

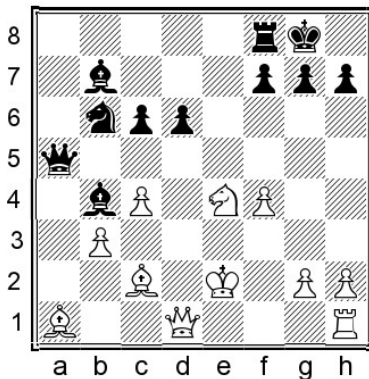
About 10...g6 11.Bb2 Bg7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.f4 – see 10...0-0-0.

10...a5. This plan works better after 9.b3 a5. Now, White has some chances of

obtaining an edge. 11.Bb2 a4 12.f4
 (Following 12.Qe3, Black can send his
 queen inside the enemy camp. 12...axb3
 13.axb3 Rxa1+ 14.Bxa1 Qa3 15.Bc3 Bc5
 16.Qd3 Qc1+ 17.Ke2 Ba6 18.g3 Nd5÷
 Brumen – Krstic, Zagreb 1997.) 12...axb3
 13.axb3 Rxa1+ 14.Bxa1 Qa3 15.Qd1! Here,
 contrary to 12.Qe3, White can cover the
 c1-square against the penetration of the
 enemy queen. 15...Bb4 16.Bd3



16...Qa2 (16...Qa5 17.Ke2 c5 18.Bb2!?:
 18.Qc2. White sacrifices a pawn for the
 initiative. 18...Bxg2 19.Rg1 Bxd2 20.Qxd2
 Bf3+ 21.Ke3 Qxd2+ 22.Kxd2 g6 23.f5f
 Robson – Moradiabadi, Princeton 2012)
 17.Bc2 Qa5 18.Ke2 d5 19.exd6 cxd6
 20.Ne4 0-0 (= Bologan)



21.Kf2f White must remove his king
 away from the opened e-file as quickly as
 possible. 21...f5 22.Ng5 (22.Nxd6 Rd8
 23.Nxb7 Bc5+ 24.Ke2 Rxd1 25.Nxa5
 Rxh1= The pawn on c6 is beyond
 salvation, but the activity of Black's rooks

would be sufficient for him to maintain
 equality.) 22...h6 (22...Re8 23.Kg3²,
 followed by h3, Kh2, after which White's
 king will be completely safe. 23...Re3+
 24.Nf3f) 23.Ne6 Rf7 24.Bd4 Nd7 (24...c5?
 25.Bxg7 Rxg7 26.Nxg7 Kxg7 27.Qxd6+-;
 24...Nd5 25.Nxg7 Nxf4 26.Nxf5 Kf8
 27.Rf1+-) 25.Qe2±

11.Bb2 g6!?

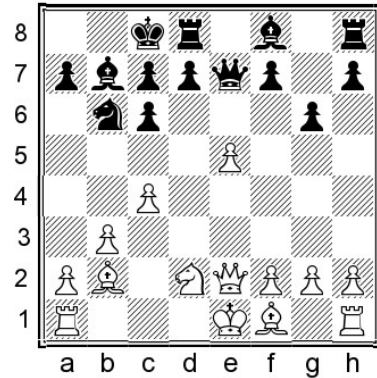
11...f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.Qxe7 Bxe7,
 Brattain – Sachdev, chess.com 2018, 14.0-
 0-0²

11...Re8 12.0-0-0 f6 (12...g6 13.f4 Bg7
 14.Re1²) 13.exf6 Qf7 (13...Qxe2 14.Bxe2
 Rxe2 15.Rhe1! Rxe1 16.Rxe1 d6 17.Re8+
 Kd7 18.f7 c5 19.Bxg7 Bxg7 20.Rxh8 Ke7
 21.f8Q+ Bxf8 22.Rxh7+ Kf6 23.Rxc7 Bxg2
 24.Rxa7+-; 14...gxf6 15.Bh5 Re6 16.Bg4
 Re8, Bozinovic – Ruiz Romero, Gran
 Canaria 2019, 17.Rhe1±) 14.Qf3 Rg8
 (14...gxf6 15.Qxf6 Qxf6 16.Bxf6 Rg8
 17.Bh4±) 15.fxg7 Qxf3 16.Nxf3 Bxg7
 17.Bxg7 Rxg7 18.Re1 Rxe1+ 19.Nxe1 c5
 20.Rg1± Yu Yangyi – Veltkamp, Caleta
 2013.

11...Qe6 12.0-0-0 Be7 (12...Bb4 13.Ne4
 Qe7, Revo – Stetsko, Minsk 2012, 14.Qc2!?)
 Ba3 15.Nd6+ Bxd6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.a4f)
 13.f4 (13.Qe3!? Rhe8 14.Bd3²) 13...Rhe8
 (13...f6 14.exf6 Qxe2 15.Bxe2 Bxf6,
 Tringov – Parma, Belgrade 1967, 16.Bxf6
 gxf6 17.Ne4 c5 18.Nxc5 Bxg2 19.Rhg1
 Rhg8 20.Bd3 h5 21.Rde1±) 14.Qf2
 (14.Nf3?! c5 15.Qc2 Qh6 (15...d5!?)
 16.Bd3 Qxf4+ 17.Kb1 g6 18.Rhf1,
 Padevsky – Kholmov, Dresden 1956,
 18...d5,) 14...d6 (14...d5? 15.c5 Nd7

16.b4±) 15.f5 Qh6 16.f6 gxf6 17.exf6 Bf8
18.Bd3²

11...c5 12.0-0-0 d6 13.exd6 (13.Rg1!?
Re8 14.Qg4+) 13...Qxd6 14.Qg4+ (14.h4
Rg8 15.Rh3 g6 16.g4 Kb8 17.Rd3 Qxd3
18.Qxd3 Rxd3 19.Bxd3 Be7 20.g5 Rd8
21.Kc2 Nd7, Migala – Jasinski, Poland
1996, 22.Re1²) 14...Kb8 15.Be2 h5 16.Qf5
Qh6 17.Bf3 Bc8, Chandler – Adams,
Hastings 1991, 18.Qc2 Bd6 19.Rhe1²



12.0-0-0

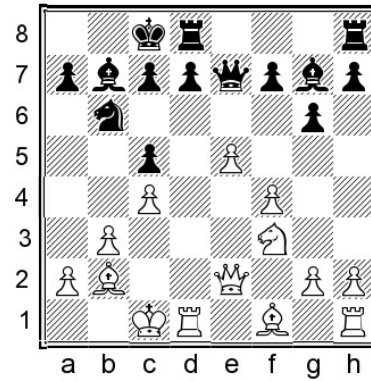
The move 12.a4 will lead to the
weakening of the b4-square. 12...a5÷
13.Bc3?! White is trying to gobble a pawn,
but this is detrimental to his development
and will create problems for him. 13...Bg7
14.f4 Rhe8³

12...Bg7 13.f4 c5

13...d6, Kulaots – Sepp, Kilingi Nomme
2002, 14.c5!? dxc5 15.g3°

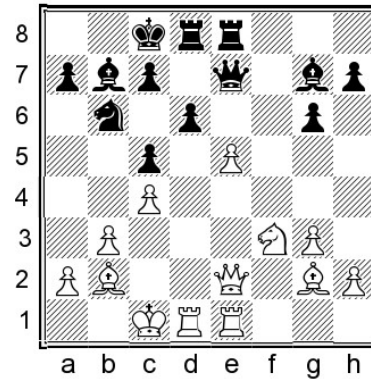
13...Rhe8 14.g3 Kb8, Vavulin – Erdos,
Batumi 2018 (14...c5 15.Bg2²) 15.Bg2 f6
16.Nf3 d6 17.e6² Qxe6?! 18.Qxe6 Rxe6
19.Nd4 Re7 20.Nxc6+

14.Nf3



14...d6

14...Rhe8 15.g3 f6 (15...g5?! 16.Bg2 gxf4
17.gxf4 d6, Danin – P.Smirnov, Voronezh
2012, 18.Nd2!? dxe5?? 19.Bxb7+ Kxb7
20.Qg2+-; 18...Bxg2 19.Qxg2 f6? 20.a4
fxe5 21.a5 Nd7 22.a6+-; 19...f5 20.Rhe1
dxe5 21.fxe5±) 16.Bg2 d6 (16...fxe5?!
17.Nxe5 d6 18.Bxb7+ Kxb7 19.Qf3+ Kc8,
Rublevsky – Adams, Frankfurt 2000,
20.Nc6 Bxb2+ 21.Kxb2 Qe2+ 22.Qxe2
Rxe2+ 23.Kb1 Rde8 24.Nxa7+ Kb7 25.Nb5
Rf2 26.Nc3²) 17.Rhe1 fxe5 18.fxe5

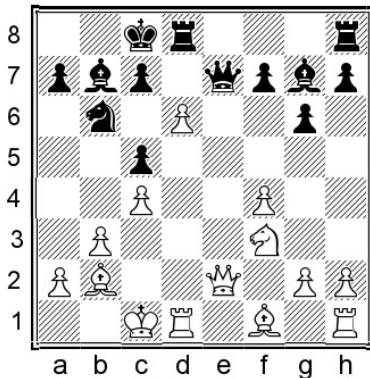


18...dxe5?! 19.Rxd8+ Rxd8 20.Bh3+
Kb8, Karimov – Faizulaev, Tashkent 2015,
21.Nxe5±

18...Nd7, Babic – Stevic, Zagreb 2017,
19.e6!? Kb8 20.Rd3 Bxb2+ 21.Kxb2 Nf8
22.Re3 Bc8 23.Ng5!? Qxg5 24.e7 Rxe7

25.Rxe7 Be6 26.Rxe6 Nxe6 27.Qe4 d5
 28.Qxe6 Qd2+ 29.Kb1 Qxg2 30.Qc6=
 18...Kb8, Silva Filho – Mroczek, Email
 2011, 19.Nd2!? Bxg2 (19...Nd7 20.Bxb7
 Kxb7 21.Qf3+ c6 22.exd6 Qxe1 23.Rxe1
 Rxe1+ 24.Kc2 Bxb2 25.Kxb2 Ne5 26.Qf6
 Rd7÷) 20.Qxg2 Bxe5 21.Bxe5 dxe5
 22.Qc6©

15.exd6



15...Bxb2+

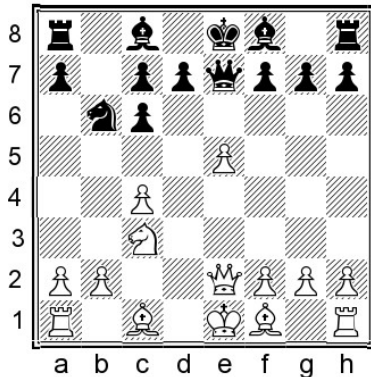
It is less precise for Black to play here
 15...Qxe2, because this exchange will
 enhance the development of White's
 kingside. 16.Bxe2 Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Rhe8
 18.Rde1 Rxd6 19.Bd1 Rxe1 20.Rxe1²
 Rublevsky – Svidler, Tomsk 2001. White's
 superior pawn-structure promises him a
 slight but stable edge.

**16.Kxb2 Qf6+ 17.Qe5 Qxe5+ 18.Nxe5
 Rhf8= 19.d7+ Nxd7 20.Nxd7 Rxd7
 21.Rxd7 Kxd7 22.Rg1 Re8.** Black's
 actively placed pieces compensate
 completely the slight weakness of his
 queenside pawns.

Chapter 22

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3

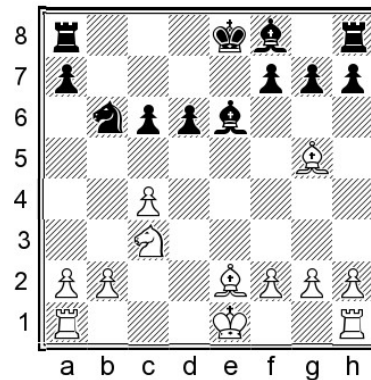
This is the usual way for White to try to obtain an advantage.



In this chapter we will analyse in details some of Black's possibilities, which are not the best for him: **A) 9...d6**, **B) 9...g6** and **C) 9...a5**.

9...Qb4. This early queen-sortie seems to be rather risky. 10.a3 Qb3, Van der Weide – Michalczak, Senden 2004, 11.Qe4 Bb7 12.Be2 0-0-0 13.0-0 Re8 14.Qf5² White's king is much safer than its counterpart. 14...Nxc4? 15.Qxf7 Re6 16.Bf4+-

9...d5 10.exd6 cxd6 (About 10...Qxe2 11.Bxe2 cxd6 12.Bf4 – see 10...cxd6) 11.Bg5 Qxe2+ (11...f6?! Vas – Ebenfelt, Vadso 2008, 12.Be3²; after 11...Qe5, the simplest for White would be to choose 12.Bf4, suggesting again to his opponent to capture on e2. 12...Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 Be6, Baum – Jevtic, Veliko Gradiste 2018, 14.Bf3², with powerful pressure against Black's queenside.) 12.Bxe2 Be6



13.Bf3!?. This is White's best move. (13.b3 d5 14.cxd5 Nxd5=) 13...Rc8 14.b3 Be7 15.Bxe7 Kxe7 16.0-0-0 Rhd8 (16...a5 17.Rhe1!?!; 17.Kb2 a4, Ganguly – Sorokin, Hyderabad 2000, 18.Ne2 Rb8 19.Kc3 c5 20.Rhe1²) 17.Rhe1 (17.Rd4!?! d5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Kb2 Rc5 20.Rhd1 Rdc8 21.R1d3² Black's isolated d5-pawn would create great problems for him in this endgame.) 17...Nd7, Tomazini – Spalir, Ptuj 2015, (17...Kf8 18.Ne2. Black's bishop is very well placed on the e6-square, so White plans to oust it from there with the moves Nd4, or Nf4. 18...Bf5 19.g4 Bg6 20.h4 h6, Arndt – Straetker, Kiel 2017, 21.Kb2± It is possible that the best for Black here would be to play actively immediately: 17...d5!?! 18.cxd5 Nxd5 19.Nxd5+ cxd5+ 20.Kb2 d4 21.Re4 d3²) 18.Kb2 Ne5 19.Be4² Black has problems to find an active plan for his actions. For example, it would not work for him to opt for 19...f5?!, because of 20.Bxf5 Bxf5 21.f4±

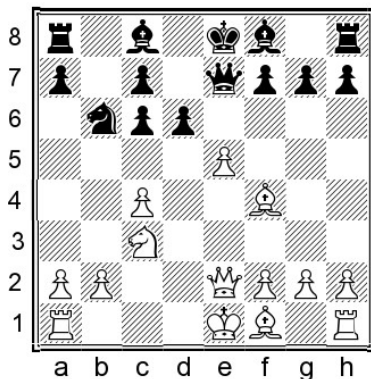
A) 9...d6

Black clarifies immediately the situation in the centre. Still, after the exchange of the pawns on d6, his doubled pawns on c7 and c6 would become isolated.

10.Bf4

Draskovic – Batricevic, Cetinje 2009,
18.Rhe1 Rfe8 19.Bf4 Bf6 20.Nb5±

About 10.exd6 – see 9...d5 10.exd6.



10...d5

The position becomes now closed and it would be rather unclear whether Black would manage to evacuate his king away from the centre.

10...Nd7? 11.exd6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 cxd6
13.0-0-0± Butvilaite – Pociute, Plunge
2011.

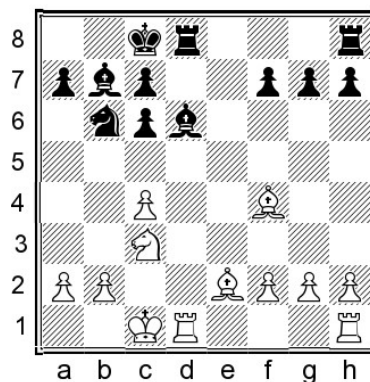
10...Bd7, Hakimifard – Williams, Belfort
2005, 11.0-0-0 dxe5 12.Bxe5 Nxc4
13.Bxc7 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 Be6 15.Rhe1.
Black's pawns on a7 and c6 are weak,
moreover that he lags in development.
15...Be7 16.Rd4 Nb6 17.Bg4 0-0 18.Bxe6
fxe6 19.Bg3±

10...dxe5 11.Qxe5 Qxe5+ 12.Bxe5 Be6
13.0-0-0 Rc8 (13...Nxc4!? 14.Bxc7 Bc5²)
14.b3. Now, White would not need to
consider any more the threat of capturing
on c4. (14.Re1!? Nd7 15.Bd4 c5 16.Be3
Bd6 17.Ne4² Black's pawn-weaknesses on
the queenside would need permanent
protection.) 14...Nd7 15.Bd4² This
endgame seems to be very difficult for
Black. 15...c5 16.Be3 Be7 17.Be2 0-0,

10...Be6 11.exd6 cxd6, Marks – Fox,
Port Erin 2004, 12.0-0-0 d5 (12...Nxc4?!
13.Qf3) 13.Qf3² The opening of the
position has turned out to be in favour of
White, since he has already castled.

10...Bf5 11.0-0-0 Rd8 12.exd6 Qxe2
(The move 12...cxd6? enables White to
avoid the trade of the queens and to begin
an attack. 13.Qf3 Qd7, Perez Garcia – Siria,
Seville 2006, 14.c5 Nc8 15.Qg3 d5
16.Rxd5!+–) 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.Bxd6 cxd6
15.Rhe1 0-0 16.b3²

10...Bb7 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.exd6
(White's queen impedes the development
of his bishop on f1, so it would be sensible
for him to transfer his queen to the g3-
square with tempo: 12.Qg4+!? Qd7
13.Qg3 d5 14.Be3 Qe6 15.f4²) 12...Qxe2
13.Bxe2 Bxd6 (Following 13...cxd6?, Black
would have enormous difficulties with the
protection of the d6 and f7-squares:
14.Ne4 Kc7 15.c5 Nc8 16.Ng5 Rd7
17.Bg4+– Khamrakulov – Montolio
Benedicto, Andorra 2001.)



14.Rxd6!?. This is an interesting
sacrifice for White of an exchange for
initiative (14.Bg3²). 14...cxd6 15.c5 (After
15.Ne4, White does not risk anything, but

he would be still unlikely to win this position. 15...Nxc4 16.Bxc4 d5 17.Nd6+ Rxd6 18.Bxd6 dxc4 19.Re1 Rd8 20.Bc5 a6 21.Bb6 Rd6 22.Re8+ Kd7 23.Rg8 g6 24.Rg7 Rf6 25.Bd4 Rf5 26.g4 Rf3 27.Rxh7 Kd6 28.Rh8² White has a superior pawn-structure, but there is just a few material left on the board.) 15...Nd5 (If Black accepts the pawn-sacrifice 15...dxc5, White's pieces would become tremendously active: 16.Bg4+ Nd7 17.Ne4±) 16.Bxd6 Nc7 17.b4 g6 18.a4² White has more than sufficient compensation for the minimal material deficit, but it would be still rather unclear whether this would prove to be good enough for him to win the game.

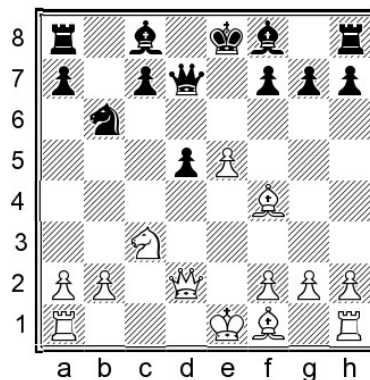
11.cxd5

After 11.Qf3 g5 12.Be3 g4 13.Qg3 Qb4÷, Black obtains good counterplay.

11...cxd5

In the line: 11...Nxd5 12.Qf3 Rb8 13.Bc4 Qb4 14.Bxd5 cxd5 15.0-0², White will maintain a considerable lead in development.

12.Qd2 Qd7

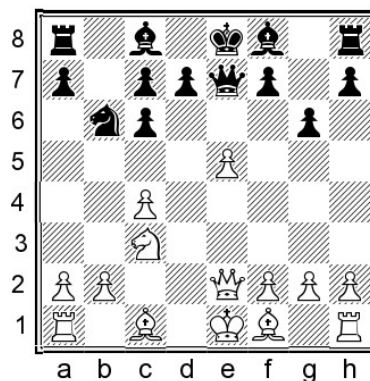


13.Bd3!?

13.Bb5. White provokes 13...c6, but it is possible that the move is useful for Black, since his d5-pawn would be now well protected. 14.Bd3 Be7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Qc2 g6 (Black would weaken considerably his king with the rather questionable move 16...h5? Kinnmark – Lundin, Eksjo 1974, 17.Rae1±) 17.Rad1 Rd8 18.b3² White has a freer game.

13...Be7 14.Qc2. He thus impedes Black's castling. 14...h6 (After 14...d4, White's knight gains access to a wonderful outpost at the middle of the board: 15.Ne4 0-0 16.0-0²) 15.0-0²

B) 9...g6

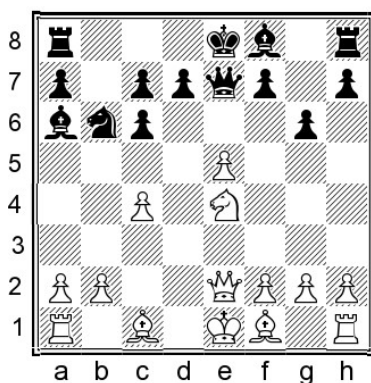


This move might look strange, since it presents White with the attractive possibility Ne4, Bg5, Nf6. It is not a good decision for Black to play a position like this. He has no chances of seizing the initiative and has much simpler ways of playing for equality, for example, if he wishes to fianchetto his bishop, he had better choose 9...Qe6 10.Qe4 g6.

10.Ne4

We will analyse now: **B1) 10...Ba6, B2) 10...Qe6 and B3) 10...Bg7.**

B1) 10...Ba6



11.Nf6+!?N

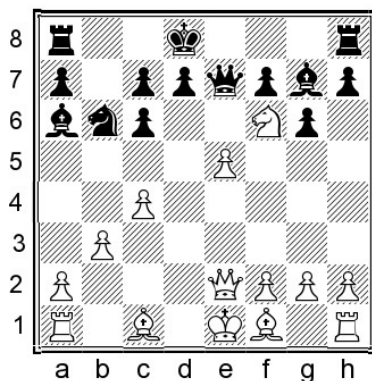
It is amazing, but this natural move has not been tested in the tournament practice yet.

Black is not afraid of 11.Bg5, because after 11...Qb4+, the threat of a check on the f6-square does not seem to be dangerous for him. 12.Qd2 (12.Kd1 Be7 13.Nf6+ Kd8. Both sides have lost their castling rights, so there will be a fierce, double-edged fight ahead in the middle game. 14.Rc1 h6 15.Be3 d5,,; 14.b3 d5 15.Qd3 h6 16.Bd2 Qa3÷) 12...Qxd2+

13.Kxd2. The queens have been exchanged early; nevertheless, the position still remains very sharp. (13.Nxd2. This voluntary retreat of White's knight from the centre provides Black with sufficient time to prepare castling kingside: 13...Bg7 14.0-0-0 0-0÷) 13...f5. He frees the f7-square for his king. 14.Nf6+ Kf7÷ Jaksland – D.Pedersen, Denmark 1997. White will hardly manage to bring his bishop on f1 into the attack, because Black's minor pieces maintain reliable control over the c4-square.

The move 11.b3 is too slow. Black evacuates his king to the queenside 11...0-0 and White will have to consider permanently the pawn-advances d7-d6(d5), as well as f7-f5. 12.Bb2 Bg7 13.f4 Rhe8 14.Qf2, Tomczak – Lukasiewicz, Trzcianka 2014 (14.Qd2?! Lutikov – Nezhmetdinov, Cheliabinsk 1959. The transfer of White's queen to the a5-square, when he has not castled yet seems to be obviously premature. 14...f5!? 15.Qa5 Bb7 16.Nf2 d6. White's e5-square is under terrible pressure. 17.0-0-0 dxe5µ; 14.0-0-0, Luo – Sarquis, Buenos Aires 2002, 14...d5 15.Nd2 Kb8÷) 14...f5 15.Nc5 d6!? Black sacrifices a bishop and shows his resolution to begin an attack against the enemy king. (15...Bb7 16.0-0-0 d6 17.Nxb7 Kxb7 18.c5÷) 16.Nxa6 dxe5 17.Be2. White must evacuate his king away from the centre as quickly as possible, but after 17...exf4 18.Bxg7 Qxg7 19.0-0 Rd2 20.Rae1 Re3f, it becomes clear that he cannot avoid the pin of his bishop without material losses. 21.Nb4 c5 22.Nd3 Rxd3 23.Qxf4 Qd4+ 24.Qxd4 Rxd4³

11...Kd8 12.b3 Bg7



13.Bb2

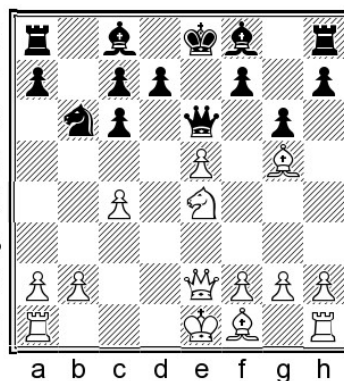
White prepares his immediate castling.

He would not achieve much after 13.h4 d5 14.Bf4 dxc4 15.Rc1 Bxf6 16.exf6 Qxe2+ 17.Bxe2 Re8 18.Be3 Nd5÷, as well as following 13.f4 d5 14.Bb2 Qb4+ 15.Qd2 Qxd2+ 16.Kxd2 Bxf6 17.exf6 dxc4 18.Rc1 Re8÷ In both lines White will preserve his two-bishop advantage, but will still need to regain the sacrificed pawn.

13...Rb8 14.0-0-0 Bxc4. Black sacrifices a piece and begins an attack against the enemy king, but this proves to be insufficient even for equality. **15.bxc4 Bh6+ 16.Kb1 Na4 17.Rxd7+ Qxd7 18.Nxd7 Rxb2+ 19.Qxb2 Nxb2 20.Nc5 Bf8 21.Ne4 Na4 22.Be2²** Now, in fact, White has an extra pawn on the kingside.

B2) 10...Qe6 11.Nf6+

11.Bg5



About 11...Bg7 12.Nf6 – see 10...Bg7.

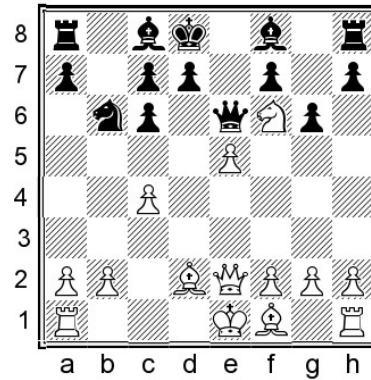
11...Ba6 12.b3 Bb4+ 13.Kd1!? White should better avoid the exchange of his bishop, since it prevents the opponent from castling queenside, being on the g5-square. (13.Bd2 Bxd2+ 14.Kxd2 d6,, Grabliauskas – Hofstetter, ICCF 2002.) 13...f5 14.exf6 0-0-0. Black sacrifices a pawn and has the possibility to evacuate his king to the queenside. 15.a3 Bf8 (15...Qe5 16.Ra2 d5 17.axb4 dxe4+ 18.Bd2 Qc3 19.Ke1 Qxb3 20.Rxa6 Rxd2 21.Qxd2 Rd8. Black's initiative seems to be very powerful, but is still insufficient to compensate fully the sacrificed rook. 22.Qc1 Qxb4+ 23.Ke2 Nxc4 24.Ra2 Qb5 25.f4! White is not afraid of the discovered check! His king will avoid the chase along the route f2-g3-h4. 25...Ne5+ 26.Kf2 Qb6+ 27.Kg3 Qb3+ 28.Kh4 g5+ 29.fgx5 Qxa2 30.Qe3±) 16.Qe3 (16.Nd2!?) The centre of the board is not the best place for a king in the middle game, so White wishes to trade the queens. 16...Qf5 17.Qe3 h6 18.Bf4 d6 19.Qh3 Qxh3 20.gxh3² He has managed to exchange the queens and now, his king is safe against any possible attacks.) 16...h6 17.Bf4 Re8 (17...g5 18.Bg3²) 18.Nd2 Qf7 19.Qc3 Re6 20.Bd3 Rg8 21.Bg3²

11...Bb4+ 12.Kd1. White's pieces remain on active positions. 12...Be7 (12...Ba6, Kozamernik – Osolin, Slovenia 2002, 13.Nf6+ Kf8 14.Bh6+ Ke7 15.Qe4

Bxc4 16.Rc1 d5 17.Qh4+-) 13.Bxe7 Qxe7
 14.Qe3 0-0 (14...Bb7? 15.Nf6+ Kd8.
 Black's king has become an excellent
 target for White's pieces. 16.Kc2 Kc8
 17.c5!? Nd5 18.Qd4±; 17.Be2 c5 18.Rhg1
 Bc6 19.Rad1 Kb7 20.Bf3± O.Maiorov –
 Malaniuk, Krasnodar 1999. After the
 trade of the light-squared bishops, Black's
 king will not be safe at all.) 15.Nf6+ Kg7
 16.Qg5 Qd8. Now, White has nothing
 better than to force a perpetual check:
 17.Nh5+ Kh8 18.Nf6 Kg7=

11.Bd2!? White prevents the move Bb4.
 11...Bg7 (11...Ba6, Leakovic – Dabo
 Peranic, Bosnjaci 2001, 12.Nf6+ Kd8
 13.b3 Bg7 14.Bg5 h6 15.Bh4 g5 16.Bg3²
 He has parried the threat against his
 pawn on c4.) 12.Nf6+ Bxf6 13.exf6 Ba6.
 Black is waiting for the exchange on e6, so
 that after fxe6, he would have the
 possibility to attack the enemy pawn on
 f6. (13...0-0, Khamrakulov – Iruzubieta
 Villaluenga, Lisbon 2001, 14.Qxe6!? fxe6
 15.h4 Rxf6 16.h5f) 14.b3 0-0 15.Qxe6
 fxe6, Berg – Grabarczyk, Stockholm 2000,
 16.h4 Rxf6 17.h5. White's two powerful
 bishops and his elastic pawn-structure
 are quite sufficient compensation for the
 sacrificed pawn. 17...d5 18.hxg6 hxg6
 19.cxd5 Bxf1 20.Kxf1 Nxd5 21.Re1² Black
 has deprived his opponent of the two-
 bishop advantage, but has weakened his
 pawn-structure even more...

11...Kd8 12.Bd2



12...Ba6

12...c5 13.0-0-0 Bb7 14.f3 Bg7 15.Bc3²

12...Bb7 13.Bc3 Bg7 (13...c5 14.0-0-0
 Bh6+ 15.Kb1²) 14.0-0-0 c5 15.f3²

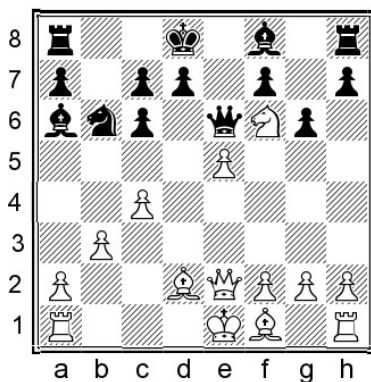
12...Rb8 13.h4 Be7 (13...Bg7 14.b3 d6
 15.0-0-0 Bxf6 16.exf6²) 14.0-0-0 Na4
 15.b3² Black can hardly organise an
 effective attack against the enemy king,
 because his rook on a8 and his bishop on
 c8 do not participate in the actions.

12...Bg7 13.Ne4. White is planning
 Bg5+. 13...d6 (13...h6. Black covers the g5-
 square, but now White succeeds in
 protecting reliably his pawn on e5. 14.f4
 Re8 15.Qf2²) 14.exd6 cxd6 15.Bg5+ f6. It
 is useful for White to cover the diagonal
 for the enemy bishop on g7, since it was
 exerting powerful pressure against
 White's queenside. 16.Bf4 d5 17.0-0-0²

12...Be7 13.h4. This is a multi-purpose
 move. White not only wishes to play h4-
 h5, but can also bring his rook on h1 into
 the actions via the third rank at an
 opportune moment. 13...h6, Lopepe –

Hofstetter, ICCF 2005 (13...Bxf6 14.exf6 Re8 15.Qxe6 Rxe6+ 16.Be3 d6 17.0-0-0²) 14.0-0-0 Rb8 (14...Ba6 15.b3 Bxf6 16.exf6 Qxf6 17.Qd3 Qa1+ 18.Qb1 Qxb1+ 19.Kxb1²; 17...Re8 18.Qc3 Qxc3+ 19.Bxc3 Kc8 20.h5 d5 21.g4 dxc4 22.g5!+-) 15.Rh3!? Na4 16.Rb3 Rxb3 17.axb3 Nc5 18.Qe3² Now, Black is faced with a rather difficult choice. He must either try to parry his opponent's attack in the middle game, or after Bxf6, trade the queens and try to save an inferior endgame.

13.b3



13...d5

13...Kc8?! Black loses too much time on manoeuvres with his king. 14.Bc3 Kb7 (14...Be7 15.0-0-0 Kb7 16.a4±) 15.a4. White has the powerful threat c4-c5, ousting the enemy knight to the edge of the board. (15.0-0-0!? Be7 16.Qf3 Bxf6 17.exf6±) 15...Rb8 (15...Be7±) 16.a5 Nc8 17.0-0-0 Ba3+ 18.Kb1 (18.Kc2!?) 18...Rd8 19.Ka2 Bc5, Berthelot – Govciyan, Montpellier 2006, 20.g4 d5 21.exd6 Nxd6 22.Qxe6 fxe6 23.f3+-

After 13...Be7, it would be good for White to try 14.h4, with the ideas Rh3, or g3, Bh3 (14.Qe3!? Bxf6 15.exf6 Re8 16.0-

0-0 Qxf6 17.Bc3 Qf5 18.Qd2² White has very good compensation for the minimal material deficit.) 14...Kc8 15.Rh3 Bxf6 16.exf6 Qxe2+ 17.Bxe2 Kb7 18.Re3 Rae8 19.Rc1 d6, Dorer – Quattrocchi, ICCF 2007, 20.Rcc3! (20.g4! White plans to protect his pawn on f6. 20...Nd7 21.g5 c5 22.h5 Kb6 23.f4²) 20...Nd7 21.Re7 Rxe7 22.fxe7 Re8 23.Re3 Nb6 24.Bf3 Nc8 25.Bg4 f5 26.Bf3 Rxe7 27.Rxe7 Nxe7. Black has managed to win a pawn, but White's bishops are tremendously powerful. 28.Bg5 Nc8 29.g4 fxg4 30.Bxg4 d5 31.c5+- Black's pieces are practically stalemated and he is helpless against his opponent's threat Kd2-c3-d4-e5-f6-g7.

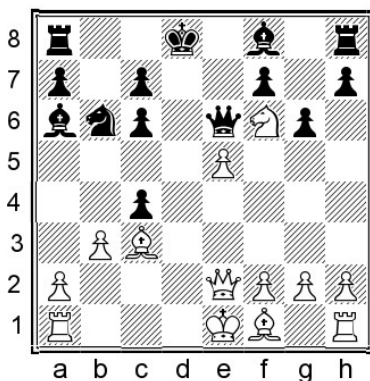
13...Bg7, Fedec – Roza, Perth 2012, 14.Qe3. With the idea 0-0-0 (It is less precise for White here to play immediately 14.0-0-0, because after 14...Bxf6 15.exf6 Qxf6, he would not have the move Bc3. He can also maintain an edge after 14.h4!? Kc8 15.Rh3 Bxf6 16.exf6 Qxe2+ 17.Bxe2 d5 18.Rc1 Re8 19.Bb4², followed by Be7.) 14...Kc8 (Or 14...Bxf6 15.exf6² and Black cannot play 15...Qxf6??, in view of 16.Bc3+-) 15.g3 Bb7 16.Bg2 d6 17.0-0 dxe5 18.Ne4 Nd7 19.Rad1² Black's extra pawn cannot compensate the exposed position of his king.

14.Bc3

14.Qe3!? White plays this move with the idea to castle kingside as quickly as possible. 14...Be7 (14...dxc4 15.Be2±) 15.Be2 Bxf6 16.exf6 Re8 17.0-0² Here, White's king would be safer than on the queenside.

14...dxc4

14...Kc8 15.Qe3 dxc4 16.Be2 h5 17.0-0²
Senzacqua – Parente, ICCF 2015. Black's position is under powerful pressure.



15.Qd2+

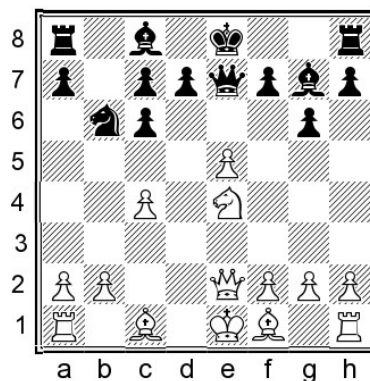
White frees with tempo the diagonal for his bishop on f1.

15.Qe4 Be7 16.Be2 h5 17.Qf3 Kc8
(17...Bxf6 18.exf6 Kc8 19.0-0-0² Zezulkin – Grabarczyk, Polanica Zdroj 1997) 18.0-0 Kb7 (18...Bxf6 19.exf6 Kb7 20.Rfe1 Qd5, Rizouk – Grabarczyk, Cappelle-la-Grande 2001, 21.Qf4!?) White has more chances of obtaining an advantage in the middle game, because his king is much safer than its counterpart. 21...Rhe8 22.Bf3 Rxe1+ 23.Rxe1 Qd3 24.Re7 Rc8 25.Qe3. After the penetration of his rook to the c7-square, White would not mind trading the queens. 25...Qb1+ 26.Be1 Qxa2 27.b4² Black has two extra pawns indeed, but his defence will be very difficult, since his pieces are rather passive, contrary to their white counterparts.) 19.Ne4, Hnydiuk – Grabarczyk, Ksiaz 1998, 19...Qf5 20.Nd2 Qxf3 21.Bxf3 Rhd8,, The vulnerability of Black's king would not be so important in this endgame.

15.Qf3!? Be7 16.Be2²

15...Kc8 16.Be2. White is threatening Bg4. **16...Kb7** (Here possibly Black should try to prevent radically his opponent's plans with the line: 16...h5!? 17.Ne4 Be7 18.0-0 Rd8 19.Qb2 Rb8 20.Qc1 Kb7.) **17.0-0** (17.Bg4 Qe7 18.0-0 Rd8 19.Qc1²) **17...h5**, Van der Wiel – G.Garcia, Wijk aan Zee 1996, **18.a4 cxb3 19.Bxa6+ Kxa6 20.a5 Nd5 21.Qe2+ Kb7 22.Nxd5 cxd5** (22...Qxd5? 23.e6+-) **23.Rfb1²**

B3) 10...Bg7



11.Bg5

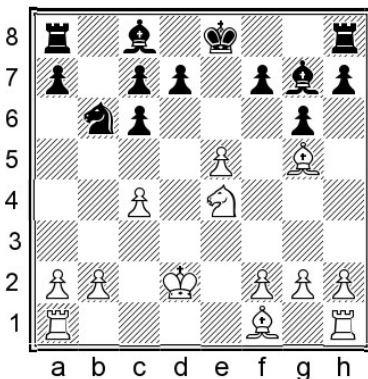
After 11.Nf6+, Black is not obliged at all to give his bishop for the enemy knight: 11...Kd8! (11...Bxf6?! 12.exf6 Qe6 13.Bh6 Ba6 14.b3 0-0-0 15.Qxe6 dxe6 16.Be2² Jones – Otchiyev, chess.com 2018) 12.Bf4 Nxc4 (12...Ba6. Black pins the enemy pawn and prepares the move Nd5. 13.b3 Nd5. White is incapable of keeping his knight on the f6-square. 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.0-0-0 dxc4 16.Qe4 Rb8 17.Bxc4 Bxc4 18.Qxc4 Bxe5 19.Bxe5 Qxe5. White cannot exploit the placement of the

enemy monarch at the centre of the board, because the situation with his own king cannot be envied at all. 20.Qxf7 Qa1+ 21.Kc2 Qxa2+ 22.Kc3 Qa5= The activity of Black's queen would be sufficient only for a perpetual check.) 13.0-0-0 Bxf6 14.exf6 Qxe2 15.Bxe2 Nb6, T.Christensen – Semcesen, Ballerup 2012, 16.Bf3 d5÷ White must still prove that he has full compensation for the pawn.

11...Qe6

But not 11...Qxe5? 12.Bf6+– Qa5+ 13.Nd2+ (13.Nc3+? Kf8 14.Qe7+ Kg8 15.Qe8+ Bf8 16.Bxh8 d5 17.0-0-0? Muzychuk – Lei Tingjie, Hengshui 2019, 17...Bf5÷) 13...Kf8 14.Qe7+ Kg8 15.Qd8+ Bf8 16.Bxh8+–

11...Qb4+. Black is trying to enter an endgame, but all this is too passive. 12.Qd2 Qxd2+ 13.Kxd2

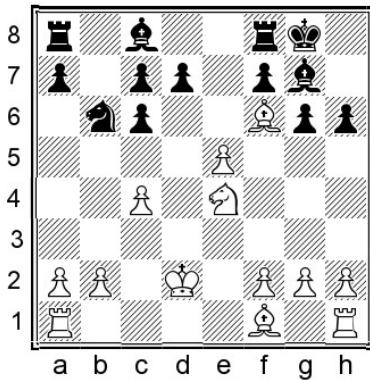


13...0-0?! 14.Nf6+ Kh8 (14...Bxf6 15.Bxf6 d6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Be7 Re8 18.Bxd6. Now, in order not to lose material, Black must play 18...Nxc4+ 19.Bxc4 Rd8, but this would not solve his problem either. 20.Kc3 Rxd6 21.Rad1 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Bf5 23.f3± Narayanan – Linda, Kolkata 2013.) 15.h4 h5. Black

defends against the pawn-advance h4-h5 (Unfortunately for him, he cannot oust the enemy bishop from the g5-square, because after 15...h6?, White can reply with 16.h5! Bxf6 17.Bxf6+ Kh7 18.Bd3. It is an endgame indeed, but White's attack is impossible to parry. 18...d5 19.hxg6+ fxg6 20.Rxh6!+– Iruzubieta Villaluenga – San Roman Fernandez, Getxo 2017.) 16.g4. Black is incapable of holding on to the h5-square. 16...d6 17.gxh5 dxe5 18.h6 Bxf6 19.Bxf6+ Kh7 20.Bxe5 Be6 21.b3± D.Evans – Rozenblum, ICCF 2008. White's bishops are tremendously powerful.

13...Bxe5. Black accepts the sacrificed pawn, but falls back considerably in development. 14.Nf6+ Bxf6 (14...Kf8, Kubik – Kraus, Czech Republik 2014, 15.Bh6+ Ke7 16.Bg7 Bf4+ 17.Ke2 Rd8 18.Nxh7±) 15.Re1+. Now, before regaining his bishop, it would be useful for White to deprive his opponent of his castling rights. 15...Kf8 16.Bxf6 Rg8 17.Bd8. White wishes to restore immediately the material balance (It is possible that it might be even stronger for him to continue exerting pressure: 17.Re7 d5 18.Rxc7 dxc4 19.Rxc6 Be6 20.Be2 Bd5 21.Rd6 Bxg2 22.Rg1 Bd5 23.Rg4+– Burovic – Tifferet, Porto Carras 2018.) 17...d5 18.c5 Nc4+ (18...Nd7 19.Bxc7 Kg7 20.Bd6 a5 21.Re7± Suarez Real – Tourner, France 2006.) 19.Kc3 (19.Kc1 a5 20.b3 Na3 21.Bxc7 Bf5 22.Bd6+ Kg7 23.Be5+ Kh6 24.Rg1 Nc2 25.Rd1 Rge8 26.Bc3 g5 27.g4 Be4 28.Rg3± Baklan – Blagojevic, Budva 2002.) 19...Be6 20.Bxc7 a5 (After 20...Rc8 21.Bf4 Kg7 22.b3, Black would lose his knight at the end. 22...Na3 23.Ba6 Nb5+ 24.Kb2 g5 25.Bg3 Rcd8 26.a4+– Howell – Eljanov, Riyadh 2017) 21.a4 Ra7, Feygin – Mikhalchishin, Dortmund 1999, 22.Bg3+– Black has no defence against 23.Rxe6 fxe6 24.b3.

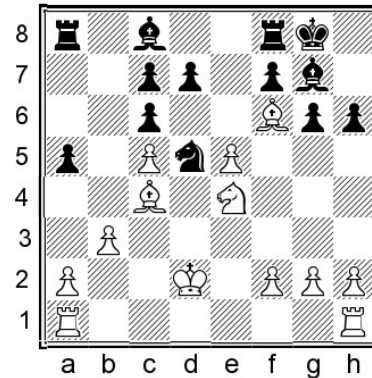
13...h6 14.Bf6. This is the essence of Black's idea. Now, White cannot play Nf6+. 14...0-0



Here, White has a pleasant choice. He has two lines leading to an advantage for him.

With 15.Rd1, he prepares Kc1. 15...a5 (After 15...d5 16.exd6 Bxf6 17.Nxf6+ Kg7 18.d7 Rd8 19.Bd3², Black can regain his pawn in different ways, but this would not help him to get rid of his queenside pawn-weaknesses.) 16.Kc1!? This is White's most precise move. He wishes to use his rook on d1 in order to prevent his opponent from undermining the pawn on e5 with the move d7-d6. (16.Bd3 Bxf6 17.Nxf6+ Kg7 18.f4 d6,, Vugt – Wharrier, ICCF 2009) 16...Re8 (16...Bxf6? 17.Nxf6+ Kg7 18.c5± Now, in order to avoid the worst, Black is forced to give up a pawn.) 17.Bd3² Here, White not only has an elastic pawn-structure, but his pieces are also very harmoniously deployed.

With the move 15.c5!? White cramps his opponent's position even more and prepares the development of his bishop to the c4-square. 15...Nd5 16.Bc4 a5 17.b3



17...Bxf6 18.Nxf6+ Nxf6 19.exf6 d6 20.Rhe1 a4 21.b4. White has managed to prevent the activation of the enemy rook on a8. 21...Ba6 22.Bxa6 Rxa6 23.Re7 dxc5 24.bxc5 Rd8+ 25.Ke3 Raa8 26.Rc1²

17...Nxf6 18.exf6 Bh8 19.Rad1 d5. Without this move Black's bishop on h8 will remain isolated from the actions for long. 20.cxd6 cxd6 21.Nxd6 Bxf6 22.Rhe1² White's superior pawn-structure and his perfectly placed pieces compensate fully his opponent's two-bishop advantage.

17...Ba6 18.Bxd5 cxd5 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Nf6. Black cannot protect simultaneously his two attacked pawns. 20...Rfd8 21.Nxd5 Bb7 22.Ne3 Re8 23.f4 d6 24.cxd6 cxd6 25.exd6 Red8 26.Ke2 Rxd6 27.Rhd1 Re6 28.Kf2² The bishop is usually stronger than the knight in a fight on both flanks, but this is still insufficient to provide Black with full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

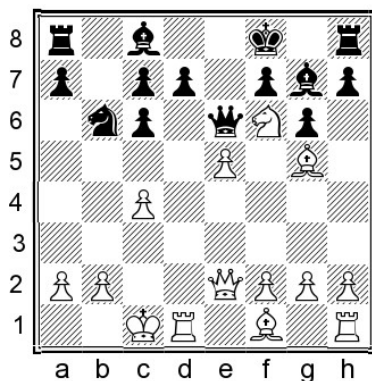
12.Nf6+

It is also possible for White to choose here 12.h4!?, postponing his castling. 12...0-0 13.Nf6+ Bxf6 (Black must part now with his bishop, since he loses immediately after 13...Kh8?? 14.h5+-) 14.exf6 d6 15.0-0-0 Qxe2 16.Bxe2²

12...Kf8

Black's further plans include undermining the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps his position, and an attempt to organise counterplay on the b-file.

13.0-0-0



13...d6

13...Ba6?! Bedouin – Bazart, Pau 2000, 14.b3 h6 15.Bh4 g5 16.Bg3 d6 17.Qb2±

14.f4

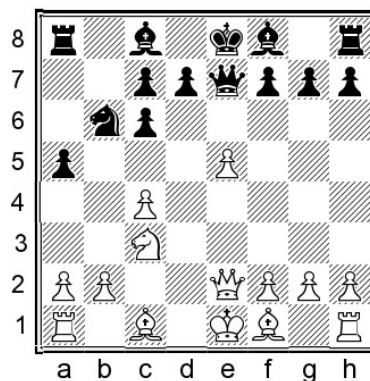
It is also good for White to try here 14.f3!? – basing his hopes on the two-bishop advantage. 14...h6 15.Bh4 g5 16.Bg3 Bxf6 17.exf6 c5 (17...Qxf6 18.c5 Nd5 19.Qd2 Kg7 20.h4f) 18.Qc2 Qxf6 19.Bd3 Ba6 20.Kb1 Rb8 21.b3 Na4 22.Rde1²

14...h6 15.Bh4 g5. Black undermines the base under the enemy pawn on e5. **16.fxg5 hxg5 17.Bxg5 Nxc4 18.exd6 Nxd6 19.Qxe6 Bxe6.** He has managed to activate considerably all his forces, but now all his pawns are weak. **20.h4 Bxa2**

21.g4 Be6 22.Be2 Bh6 23.Bxh6+ Rxh6 24.g5 Rh8 25.h5² Black's extra pawn is practically irrelevant, because White has seized completely the initiative.

C) 9...a5

Now before playing Ba6, Black advances at first his pawn.



10.f4!

In this position, sometimes even strong players make a mistake by playing 10.Qe4. It would be sufficient for White to remember a simple rule in order to avoid this mistake. This is – before Black has played Qe7-e6, White should not follow with Qe2-e4 and should look for another way to improve his position. After 10...g6!?, it becomes evident that the knight will fail to occupy the e4-square. 11.Bd3 (11.Be3 Bg7 12.f4 0-0=) 11...Bg7 12.0-0 0-0. Now, the pawn on e5 is hanging. After White's bishop protects it, Black would be able to play with tempo the move Qe7-b4 (We remember that he has not placed his queen on the e6-square...), attacking the enemy pawn and opening the X-ray juxtaposition of a rook against a queen on the e-file. 13.Bf4 Ba6 14.Rac1 Rfe8 15.Rfe1 Qb4! 16.b3 (The pawn on c4 would not have been hanging with a white queen on the e2-square...) 16...d5,,

10.Bd2 Ba6! (10...Qe6 11.Qe4 – see Chapter 25, variation A; 10...a4 11.0-0-0 Ba6 12.Qe4 Qe6 13.f4 g6 14.g4f Radjabov – Adams, Tripoli 2004; 10...g6 11.Ne4 Bg7 12.Nf6+ Kd8 13.0-0-0 Ba6, Radjabov – Topalov, Shamkir 2019, 14.Qf3²) 11.b3 (11.Qe4 g6!?) 11...a4 (11...Qe6 12.Qe4 – see Chapter 25) 12.Qe3 g6 13.Ne4 Bg7 14.Nf6+ Bxf6 (14...Kd8!?) 15.exf6 Qxe3+ 16.Bxe3, Sutovsky – Ivanisevic, Subotica 2008, 16...d5,,

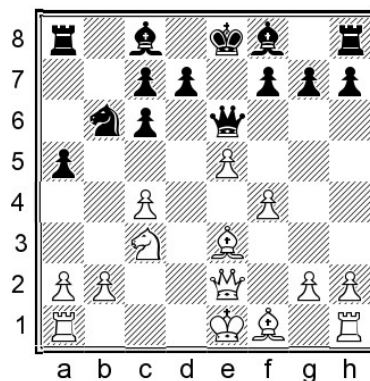
10...Ba6

10...a4. This pawn-advance would be much more effective with a white pawn on b3. 11.Be3!?, with the idea 0-0-0. 11...Qb4 (11...g6? 12.Ne4) 12.a3 Qb3 13.Rc1. White must take some urgent measures to protect his pawn on c4. 13...Ba6 14.Nd1!? (14.Bxb6 Qxb6 15.Nxa4 Qb3© Zhou – Hebden, England 2011. White has won a pawn, but Black's pieces are very active.) 14...Nd5 15.Bd2 Bc5 16.Qg4 Nb6 17.h4! The quickest way for White to activate his rook on h1 would be via the third rank. 17...0-0-0 18.Rh3 Qa2 19.Bd3²

10...g6. After White's pawn has occupied the f4-square and the move Bg5 has become impossible, Black decides to weaken the f6-square. 11.Ne4 (11.Be3!? Bg7 12.0-0-0²) 11...Bg7 (11...Ba6 12.Qc2 Bg7 13.Be3²) 12.Be3 Ba6? (It seems much better for Black to choose here 12...0-0 13.0-0-0, although even then White would have a freer game.) 13.Bc5 Qe6 (Following 13...Bxc4, Black loses material: 14.Qxc4 Nxc4 15.Bxe7 Kxe7 16.Bxc4 d5

17.exd6+ cxd6 18.Nc3+–) 14.b3 0-0-0 15.Qe3 Kb7, Muzychuk – Batchimeg, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014, 16.0-0-0± Black's bishop on a6 and his knight on b6 are too far away from the focus of the actions.

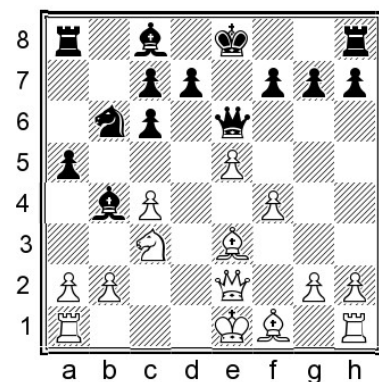
10...Qe6 11.Be3 (11.Qe4 Bb4=)



11...Ba6. Now, White does not need to play the move b2-b3. 12.Bxb6 cxb6 13.0-0-0 Be7 14.Qd2 (14.Ne4!?!; 14.Qe4 f5 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Qxe6+ dxe6. Black's bishop-pair compensates the slight weakness of his pawn on e6. 17.Ne4 Rd8 18.Rxd8+ Bxd8 19.c5. White exchanges the bishops, but this would not be enough for him to obtain an edge. There is just a few material left on the board. 19...Bxf1 20.Rxf1 Ke7 21.Re1 h6 22.g3 Rf8 23.Rd1, Nedev – Blagojevic, Podgorica 2011, 23...e5! This move is energetic and strong! Black gets rid of his weak pawn and equalises completely. 24.fxe5 Ke6=) 14...Rd8 (After 14...0-0, Black would not have compensation for the pawn. 15.Qxd7 Rad8 16.Qxe6 Rxd1+ 17.Kxd1 fxe6 18.g3±) 15.c5!? Bxf1 16.Rhxf1 Bxc5 17.f5. White has seized completely the initiative and Black must try to exchange the queens. His kingside pawn-structure however, will be horribly weakened in the process. 17...Qh6 18.Qxh6 gxh6 19.Ne4 Be7 20.Kc2²

11...Rb8. Black is preparing an attack against the b2-square in anticipation of White's castling queenside. 12.0-0-0 Be7 (12...Ba6? This move does not combine well with Black's previous move. 13.Bxb6 Rxb6 14.Qe3 Rb7. He would need to lose an important tempo to defend against White's pawn-advance c4-c5. 15.Ne4 Be7 16.Nc5 Bxc5 17.Qxc5 Qe7 18.Qxa5± Nguyen – Van Hoolandt, Tromso 2014; 15.g4!? Bb4 16.f5 Qe7 17.Na4±) 13.g4 (13.Qf2!? From this square the queen will support c4-c5 and f4-f5. 13...0-0 14.c5 Nd5 15.Bc4 d6 16.Bxd5 cxd5 17.Nxd5² It becomes clear now that Black cannot regain his pawn: 17...dxe5? 18.f5+-) 13...Ba6 14.Bxb6 Rxb6 15.Qe3 Rb4 16.a3. The weakening of the b3-square is irrelevant here. 16...Rb7 17.f5 Qh6 18.Qxh6 gxh6 19.Ne4± Edouard – Khmelniker, Biel 2006.

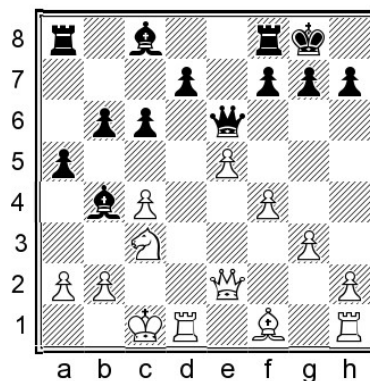
11...Bb4. Black's bishop will be more actively placed here than on the e7-square.



12.0-0-0!? Bxc3 13.bxc3 Rb8 (13...c5? This pawn-sacrifice is not justified and Black's position deteriorates rapidly after that. 14.Bxc5 Rb8 15.Ba3 Qf5 16.Rd4± c5 17.g4! Qe6 18.Rd6 Qe7 19.Qb2+- Howell – Hebden, Hastings 2011.) 14.Bxb6 Rxb6 15.c5. It is essential for White not to allow his opponent to play c6-c5. (15.Qf2 c5 16.Qxc5 Qf5 17.Bd3 Qxf4+ 18.Kc2 Rc6,, Frijling – Raessler, ICCF 2012. Black has

not castled yet, but White has too many pawn-weaknesses in his position.) 15...Rb8 16.Qc4 Qg6 17.Qd3² It would be very difficult for Black to activate his "bad" bishop on c8.

12.Bxb6. This move is played with the idea to provoke a weakening of the d6-square, but White will hardly manage to transfer his knight there, since it is pinned at the moment. Black will succeed in undermining the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps considerably his position, with the moves d7-d6, or f7-f6, obtaining a quite acceptable game. 12...cxb6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.g3!? (Following 14.Qc2, Black's task looks quite simple. 14...d6 15.exd6, Rublevsky – Sutovsky, Poikovsky 2009, 15...Bxd6÷; 14.Qf3 f6 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.g3 Re8÷)



14...f6 15.exf6 Qxf6 16.Qc2 Bxc3 (16...d6 17.Ne4²) 17.Qxc3 Qxc3+ 18.bxc3² White maintains an edge, because of his opponent's backward d7-pawn.

14...Bxc3 15.bxc3. Black is incapable of exploiting the vulnerability of the enemy king, since his queenside is not developed. 15...f6 16.Rd6 Qe7 17.Qe4²

14...Re8!?!÷ Black is preparing a retreat for his bishop on b4.

11.b3



11...a4

This is the critical position of the variation with 9...a5. Black is threatening to play Qb4 and to attack simultaneously the enemy knight on c3 and his pawn on b3.

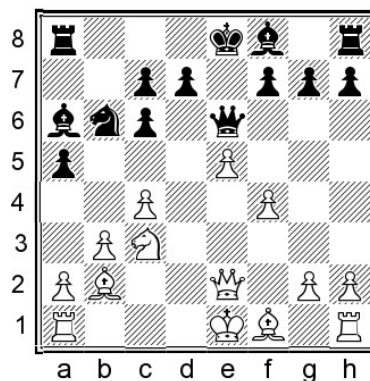
The move 11...d5 would lead to an inferior endgame for Black. 12.exd6 Qxe2+ (12...cxd6, Izso – Turzo, Budapest 2007, 13.Kf2±) 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.Ne4 Bb4+ 15.Bd2²

11...0-0-0 12.Qf3!? (12.Be3 d5,, Puccini – Kuybokarov, Melbourne 2018) 12...f6 (12...d5 13.cxd5 Bxf1 14.d6 Rxd6 15.Rxf1²) 13.Bb2 fxe5 14.0-0-0 Bb7 (14...exf4 15.c5 Bxf1 16.cxb6 Ba6 17.Rhe1 Qc5 18.bxc7 Kxc7 19.Qxf4± Bd6? 20.Rxd6 Qxd6 21.Nd5+ cxd5 22.Be5+) 15.fxe5 Qxe5 (15...g6 16.Qe3 c5 17.Nd5 Qe6 18.Qd2²) 16.Ne4 Qe6 17.Bd3©

11...g6 12.g3 (12.Ne4. White's knight is headed for the f6-square. 12...Bg7 13.Nf6+!? Kd8 14.Ne4 d6 15.Bb2 dxe5 16.g4©; following 13.Bb2, Black manages to evacuate his king away from the centre: 13...0-0 14.0-0-0 Rfe8 15.Qf2 d5,, Bejtovic – Ong, Sweden 2010.) 12...a4 (12...Bg7 13.a4. White not only makes the move a5-a4 impossible, but also prepares Ba3. 13...0-0 14.Ba3 d6 15.Bg2 Rab8 16.0-

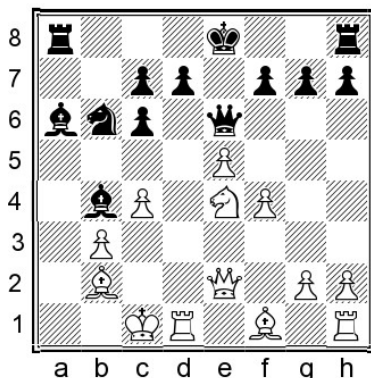
0²) 13.Bg2 Qb4 14.Qc2 Qa5. Black is threatening to compromise his opponent's pawn-structure, but White can simply reply with: 15.Rb1 Bb4 16.Bd2 0-0 17.0-0²

11...Qe6. Black is preparing the development of his bishop on f8. 12.Bb2



12...Bb4 13.0-0-0. White should better evacuate here his king immediately away from the centre. (In the line: 13.Qc2?! a4 14.Rc1 Black can provoke a weakening of his opponent's kingside with the move 14...Qh6, for example: 15.g3 0-0 16.Bd3 d5,, Rublevsky – Adams, Rethymnon 2003.) 13...d5 (about 13...a4 14.Ne4 – see 12...a4) 14.exd6 Qxe2 15.Nxe2! Now, Black is incapable of maintaining the material balance, since his g7-pawn is hanging. 15...0-0 16.dxc7 Rac8 17.Ng3. White's knight is headed for the f5-square and this would increase his positional advantage even more. 17...Na8 18.Nf5 f6 19.c5 Bxf1 20.Ne7+ Kh8 21.Nxc8+- Sutton – Rosser, ICCF 2014.

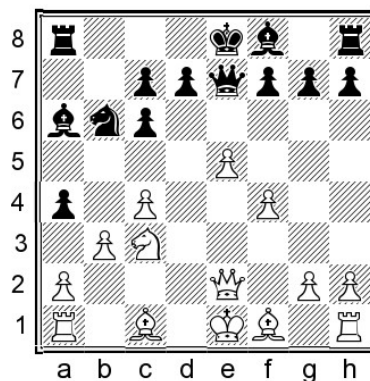
12...a4 13.0-0-0 Bb4 14.Ne4 axb3 15.axb3



15...0-0 16.Qe3 (It is also very good for White to try here 16.Qc2, preparing a knight-sortie to the g5-square. 16...d5 17.exd6 cxd6 18.Ng5 Qe3+ 19.Kb1. Black cannot avoid the weakening of the position of his king. 19...f5 20.Bd3±) 16...Qh6 (After 16...Rfb8, White can try an interesting pawn-sacrifice: 17.f5!? Qxf5 18.Bd3f) 17.Bd3 d5 18.exd6 f5 19.Ng3± Ljubicic – Berecz, ICCF 2008. White's pieces have been much more actively and harmoniously deployed.

15...Bb7 16.Qf2 Qe7. Black's queen avoids the attack with f4-f5, but he will be faced with a rather unpleasant surprise. 17.Nd6+!? This is a spectacular knight-sacrifice. (It would be worth mentioning that here White can obtain a considerable advantage even without sacrificing material: 17.Kb1 c5 18.Bd3 Ba3 19.Bxa3 Rxa3 20.Kb2 Ra5 21.Qg3 Kf8 22.f5± Miciak – Egan, ICCF 2010.) 17...cxd6 18.exd6 (18.Qxb6? Bc5 19.Qxb7 0-0 20.Bd3 Ra7 21.Qxa7 Bxa7 22.exd6 Qe3+ 23.Kc2 Bc5µ) 18...Qd8 (18...Qe6. Black does not hold on to the extra material. 19.Qxb6 Bxd6 20.g3? Rublevsky – Vajda, Budva 2004, 20...Ba3=; 20.Kb1! Bxf4 21.Bd3 0-0 22.Rhe1 Qg4 23.g3± Black cannot remove simultaneously both his bishops.) 19.Bxg7! White does not allow the enemy monarch to find a safe haven on the kingside. 19...f6 20.Be2 (The move 20.Bxh8? would enable Black to begin a

counter attack. 20...Ra1+ 21.Kb2 Rxd1 22.Qe2+ Kf7 23.Qxd1 Qxh8÷ Black's two minor pieces are not inferior to White's rook and two pawns.) 20...Kf7 21.Bh6! (21.Qg3?! Rublevsky – Zhang, Moscow 2004, 21...Ra5 22.f5 Rxf5 23.Rhf1 Rg8 24.Rxf5 Rxg7 25.Qe3±) 21...Ra5 22.f5 1-0 Lupynin – Haznedaroglu, ICCF 2006.



12.Ne4!?!N

White's knight, which could have been a target for an attack, has been transferred to a strategically important outpost, impeding Black's development.

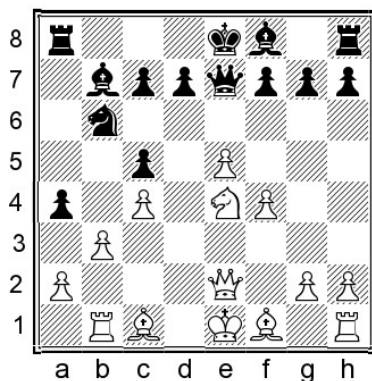
12...Bb7

12...0-0-0 13.Qc2±

12...Qe6 13.Kf2 d5 (13...Be7 14.Bb2²) 14.exd6 cxd6 15.Qc2²

12...Qb4+ 13.Kf2 axb3 (13...Nd5 14.Bd2 Qb6+ 15.Kg3 Nb4 16.h3²) 14.axb3 Qxb3 15.h4 c5 16.Rh3 Qb4 17.Re3+-

13.Rb1 c5



14.h4!?

This move is played with the idea to follow with Rh3.

14...axb3

14...d6 15.g4!? dxe5 16.Bg2 0-0-0
17.bxa4 exf4 18.0-0±

14...Bc6 15.Rh3²

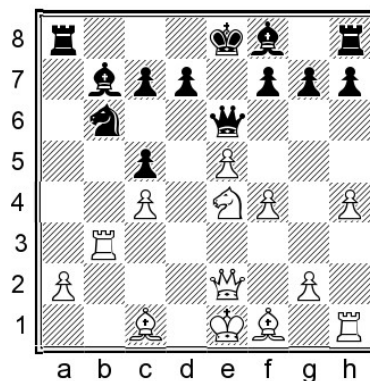
14...Qe6 15.g4 axb3 (15...h5 16.g5 d5
17.Bh3 Qc6 18.Ng3 dxc4 19.bxc4 Qf3
20.Qxf3 Bxf3 21.0-0²) 16.axb3 Bxe4
(16...d5 17.Ng5±) 17.Qxe4 Qxg4 18.Be2
Qg3+ 19.Kf1²

14...f5 15.Nc3 Qe6 16.Nb5 Rc8
(Following 16...0-0-0, White will at first
open the b-file 17.bxa4 and then will
transfer to it his rook from a1, beginning
a decisive attack. 17...Nxa4 18.Rh3 Be7
19.Rhb3+-) 17.bxa4 Nxa4 18.Rh3!
(18.Nd6+ Bxd6 19.Rxb7 Be7 20.g3²)
18...Be4 19.Rbb3 Be7 20.Ra3 Nb6 21.Ra7
Qc6 22.h5²

15.Rxb3!? Qe6

15...Bc6 16.h5 (After 16.Rhh3!² Black
will hardly manage to find a safe haven
for his king.) 16...Qe6 (16...0-0-0?! 17.a4
Nxa4 18.Qa2,) 17.Ng5 Qh6 18.Rg3²

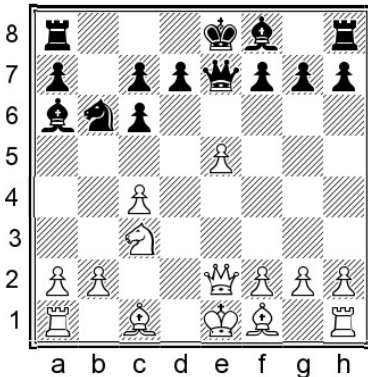
15...Kd8 16.Ba3 (16.Nd6!?) 16...Ra5
17.Nd6 cxd6 18.Rxb6 Bc6 19.Qb2 Kc7
20.Rb8 Ra6 21.Bxc5 dxc5 22.Rh3 g6
23.Ra3 Bg7 24.Rxh8 Bxh8 25.Rxa6+-



16.Rhh3 (16.Qc2!?) **16...Be7** (16...Ba6
17.Qc2²) **17.g4 0-0** (17...d5? 18.exd6
Bxe4 19.dxe7 Qc6 20.Rhe3+-; 17...Ba6
18.Rbc3²; 17...0-0-0 18.Nc3²) **18.Ng5**,

Chapter 23

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Ba6**



We will deal now with: **A) 10.Qe4** and **B) 10.b3**.

A) 10.Qe4 g6

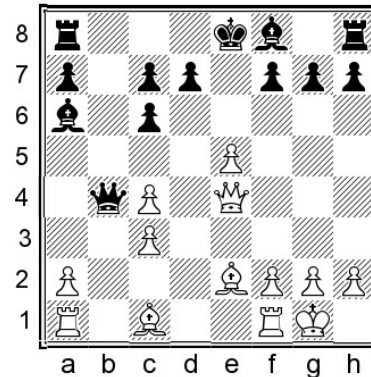
Black prepares the development of his bishop to the g7-square and a very complicated fight will follow.

About 10...Qe6 11.b3 – see 9...Qe6.

10...0-0-0?! This move enables White's pawn to advance to the a7-square. 11.c5 Bxf1 12.cxb6 Ba6 13.bxa7 Kb7 14.Be3 d5 (14...Ka8 15.0-0-0±; 14...g6 15.0-0-0±; 14...Qb4 15.0-0-0±) 15.exd6 Qxd6 (The transfer into an endgame would not facilitate Black's defence 15...Qxe4 16.Nxe4 cxd6 17.0-0-0 Be7 18.Rhe1± In't Veld – Gawle, Vlissingen 2010.) 16.Rd1 Bd3, Namyslo – Metaxasz, Budapest 2002 (16...Qf6 17.h4! h6 18.Rh3) 17.a8=Q+ Kxa8 18.Qa4+ Kb7 19.Qa7+ Kc8 20.f3± The pin of the bishop on d3 and the

unsafe position of Black's king make his position nearly hopeless.

10...Qb4?! This move is too optimistic. 11.Be2 (11.a3 Qb3 12.Be2) 11...Na4 (11...0-0-0 12.0-0 Kb8 13.a3 Qb3 14.Qf5 Kb7 15.Ne4 Bxc4 16.Nd2 Be6 17.Qb1 Qd5 18.Nf3 Be7 19.Be3. White maintains powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. 19...d6 20.Rd1 Qa5 21.b4 Qa4 22.Nd4± Bell – Graham, ICCF 2007.) 12.0-0 Nxc3 (12...Nc5 13.Qg4±) 13.bxc3



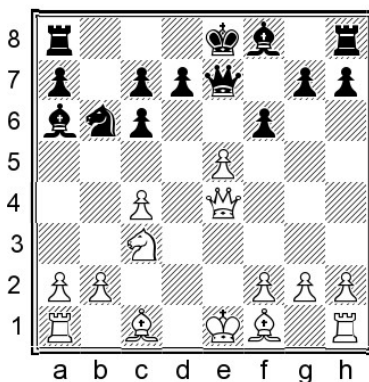
13...Qa5 (13...Qxc3. It would be too risky for Black to accept this pawn-sacrifice. 14.Rb1 Qa5 15.Rd1 Rd8, Zhang – Pruijssers, Hoogeveen 2004, 16.Bd2 Qa4 17.Bg5+-) 14.Rd1 0-0-0, E.Rodrigues – Sztokbant, Brazil 2012, 15.Rb1 Bc5 16.Qxc6!! White crushes his opponent's defence with this spectacular queen-sacrifice. 16...dxc6 17.Bg4+ Rd7 18.Bxd7+ Kd8 19.Bg5+ f6 20.exf6 Bxf2+ 21.Kh1+-

10...f5. The exchange of the pawns is in favour of White, since now, he does not need to worry about the protection of his pawn on c4. 11.Qxf5 Bxc4 12.Bxc4 Nxc4 13.0-0 Qf7 (13...g6 14.Qe4 Qe6 15.Re1 Rb8, Sveshnikov – I.Zaitsev, USSR 1975, 16.Ne2 d5 17.Nd4±) 14.Qe4 Be7, Villaluenga – Figuero Toro, La Roda 2017, 15.b3 Nb6 16.f4 0-0 17.Bb2± White is

perfectly prepared to use the march of his f-pawn to break Black's defence.

10...Bb7. The combination of the moves Ba6 and Bb7 is obviously bad for Black. 11.Be3 (11.Bd3 g6 12.0-0 Bg7, In't Veld – Fateev, St Petersburg 2008, 13.Bf4 0-0 14.Rfe1² White has a freer game. 11...d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.0-0 Qxe4 14.Nxe4. Black has serious problems with the protection of his pawns on d6 and c6. 14...Ba6 15.Re1 Kd7 16.b3± Batsanin – Bojarinov, Nizhnij Novgorod 1999; 11...0-0-0 12.0-0 g6, Naranjo – Pena, Bogota 2006, 13.Bf4 Bg7 14.Rfe1² Black's king is rather unsafe on his compromised queenside.) 11...g6 (11...d5? 12.exd6 cxd6, Lagarde – S.Andreev, Sibenik 2007, 13.0-0-0±) 12.0-0-0 (12.f4 0-0-0?! 13.c5 Nd5 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.Qa4± Ponter – Cooper, Paignton 2007) 12...Bg7, Arutyunova – Gorbatenko, Kharkov 2005, 13.f4 0-0 (13...0-0-0?! 14.c5) 14.h4,, Black has failed to undermine in time the enemy pawn on e5 with the moves d7-d6, or f7-f6 and now his defence would be very difficult.

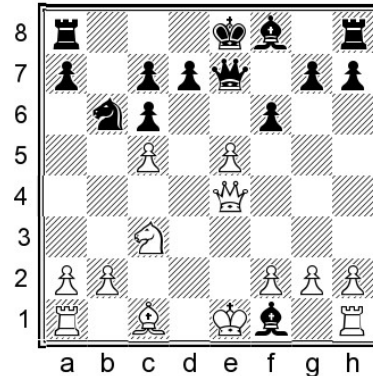
10...f6



11.exf6. The transfer into an endgame would not bring anything to White. 11...Qxe4+ 12.Nxe4 gxf6 13.Nxf6+ Kf7 14.Nh5 (14.Ng4 Re8+ 15.Ne3 Bxc4

16.Bxc4+ Nxc4 17.0-0, Shankland – Swiercz, Saint Louis 2018, 17...Nb6=). Here, before regaining his pawn on c4, Black should better give an intermediate check against White's king. 14...Bb4+ (14...Re8+!? 15.Kd1 Bxc4 16.Bxc4+ Nxc4 17.b3 Ne5÷ Obregon – Real de Azua, Villa Martelli 2016) 15.Kd1 Bxc4 16.Bxc4+ Nxc4= Hracek – Karjakin, Tromso 2014.

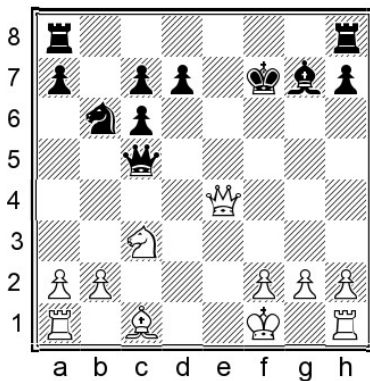
The move 11.c5 would lead to a more complicated fight. 11...Bxf1



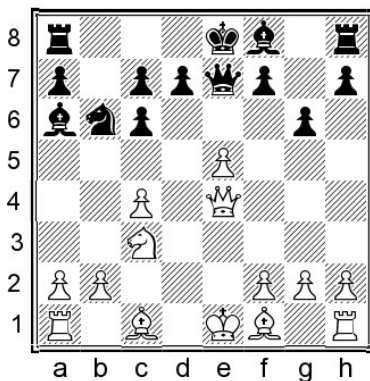
12.Rxf1 Qxc5! (The endgame is without any good prospects for Black after 12...Nd5 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Qxd5 c6 15.Qe4 Qxe5 16.Qxe5+ fxe5 17.Be3 Rb8 18.b3 Be7 19.Ke2 Rf8 20.Rac1² Wang Hao – Zhao Jun, China 2016. White has seized firmly the initiative. Later, he can exert pressure with his rooks against the enemy pawns on a7, d7, or e5.) 13.exf6+ Kf7 14.Be3 Qc4 15.fxg7 Bxg7 16.0-0-0 Qxe4 17.Nxe4 Rhe8 18.Bxb6 axb6 19.Rxd7+ Kf8 20.f3 Rxa2 21.Rf2 Re7 22.Rxe7 Kxe7=

12.Kxf1. Here, there may often arise an endgame with a bishop for White against a knight for Black (with rooks also present on the board). It is well known that the bishop is stronger than the knight, with actions on both flanks, but it is questionable whether this is a real plus for him in this position...Still, it is evident that White is better. 12...Qxc5 13.exf6+ Kf7 14.fxg7 (14.Qf3 gxf6 15.g3 h5 16.Ne4

Qe5 17.Bd2 Kg6 18.Nxf6 Bg7 19.Bc3 Qf5
20.Qxf5+ Kxf5= Vachier Lagrave – Adams,
Bilbao 2014) 14...Bxg7



15.h4 (15.Qf3+. White helps his
opponent to evacuate his king to the
queenside where it would be safer than
on the kingside. 15...Ke7 16.h4 Kd8
17.Rh3 Kc8 18.Rg3 Be5 19.Rg4 Kb7
20.Be3 Qa5÷ Sutton – Limbert, ICCF
2016) 15...Rae8 (15...Bxc3 16.bxc3 Qc4+
17.Qxc4+ Nxc4 18.Rh3²; 15...Qc4+
16.Qxc4+ Nxc4 17.Rh3. White protects his
knight on c3. Now, he is perfectly
prepared to oust the enemy knight from
its active position. 17...d6 18.b3²) 16.Qf3+
Kg8 17.Be3 Qc4+ (17...Qf8 18.Qg3) 18.Kg1
(18...h5 19.Rd1²) 18...Qf7, Bakalchuk –
Bacrot, Karlsruhe 2018, 19.Qd1 Nc4
20.Rh3 Nxe3 21.fxe3!² Black's king has
no pawn-shelter and is much more
endangered than its white counterpart.



11.Bf4

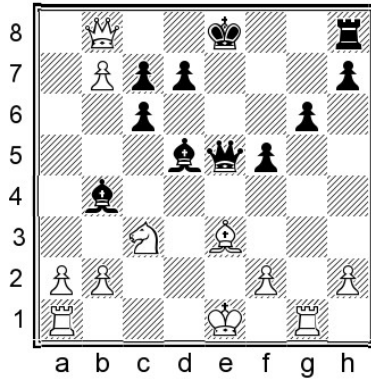
11.Be3 f5 12.exf6 Qxe4 13.Nxe4 Bxc4÷

After 11.Bd2, Black can increase his
pressure against the enemy c4-pawn.
11...Qe6!? (Meanwhile, it would be
sufficient for Black to equalise with
11...Bg7 12.0-0-0 0-0, Saurabh – Prajesh,
Taleigao 2018, 13.c5!? Bxf1 14.cxb6 Ba6
15.bxc7=) 12.c5 – see Chapter 30,
variation **B**.

11.f4. This move does not contribute to
the development of White's pieces. 11...f5
(After 11...Qb4, Black's position would
remain cramped. 12.c5 Qxe4+ 13.Nxe4
Bxf1 14.Rxf1 Nd5 15.Bd2 Bg7 16.Rc1²,
followed by Rc4. Black can hardly find a
good plan for active counterplay.) 12.exf6
Qxe4+ 13.Nxe4 Bxc4 14.Bxc4 Nxc4 15.Ke2
Nd6 16.Nf2 Kf7 17.Ng4 Ne8 18.Ne5+.
White's knight is unbelievably mobile and
prevents Black from capturing the f6-
pawn. 18...Ke6 19.Kf3 d6 (19...Nxf6?
20.Re1±) 20.Nxc6 Kd7 21.f7 Kxc6
22.fxe8Q+ Rxe8 23.Bd2 Bg7 24.Rac1+ Kd7
25.Bc3 Bxc3 26.Rxc3 a5= Black has one
pawn-island more than his opponent, but
this is not so important in the arising
endgame with four rooks.

11.c5 Bxf1 12.cxb6 f5! With this
intermediate move Black shows that he
also plans to fight for the initiative.
(12...Ba6? 13.bxc7 Rc8 14.Be3 Rxc7, Ebert
– Saad, ICCF 2006, 15.0-0-0 Bg7 16.f4 0-0
17.Qa4 Bb5 18.Qa5±; 13...Bg7 14.Bf4 0-0
15.0-0-0 Rfe8 16.Rhe1 Bc8 17.Qa4+–;
15...f6 16.e6 d5 17.Qa4 Bb7 18.Rhe1±
Frischmann – Rogic, Germany 2016.
White's passed pawn do not give any
respite to Black.) 13.b7 (about 13.Qe3
Bxg2 14.Rg1 Bd5 15.b7 Rb8 – see 13.b7)

13...Rb8 (13...Rd8, Nataf – Kryvoruchko, Chartres 2017, 14.Qa4 Bb5 15.Nxb5 cxb5 16.Qxb5 Qb4+ 17.Qxb4 Bxb4+ 18.Ke2 Rb8 19.Rd1 Rxb7 20.Rd3 Bc5 21.b3. Black is already close to equality, but still White's game is more pleasant thanks to his superior pawn-structure.) 14.Qe3 Bxg2 (14...f4? 15.Qxa7+-) 15.Rg1 Bd5 16.Qxa7 Qxe5+ 17.Be3 Bb4 18.Qxb8+.



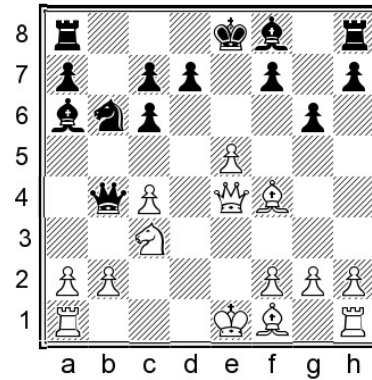
The fight has reached the peak of its intensity.

18...Ke7?! 19.Qxh8 Qxh8 20.0-0-0 Bxc3 21.Rxd5 Bxb2+ 22.Kb1 Ba3?? (22...Qb8 23.Rd3 Qxb7 24.Rb3 Qa6 25.Kxb2 Qe2+ 26.Ka1 d6² White has too many pieces for the queen and it is only he who can play for a win in this endgame.) 23.Bd4! This intermediate move clarifies the situation. 23...Qb8 24.Re1+ Kf8 25.Rxd7 Qxb7+ 26.Ka1 Qb8 27.Bf6+- Stevic – Dragnev, Batumi 2018.

18...Kf7! Black's king is quite reliably placed on this square. 19.Qc8 Bxc3+ 20.Kf1 (20.Kd1 Bf3+ 21.Kc2 Be4+ 22.Kb3 Bd5+ 23.Kc2 Be4=) 20...Bc4+ 21.Kg2 Bd5+ 22.Kf1= White is incapable of avoiding the perpetual check.

11...Qb4

About 11...Bg7? 12.c5 Bxf1 13.cxb6 Ba6 14.bxc7 – see 11.c5.



12.0-0-0!?

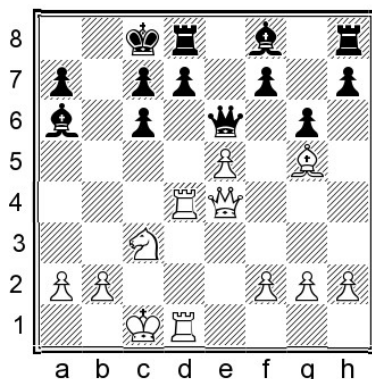
If White is reluctant to force a perpetual check after 12.e6, this is his only alternative. It is not sufficient for a win, though...

12.e6 Qxb2 13.exd7+ Kxd7 14.Qd4+ Nd5 (14...Bd6?! 15.Rb1²) 15.cxd5 Qxa1+ 16.Kd2 Bxf1 17.dxc6+ Kxc6. Black has a great material advantage, but his king is fighting alone against three of White's pieces. 18.Qd5+ Kb6 19.Na4+ Ka6 20.Qc6+ Ka5 21.Bxc7+ Kb4. White's threats seem to be very dangerous, but still, he does not have more than a perpetual check. 22.Qe4+ Ka3 23.Qf3+ Kxa2 24.Nc3+ Ka3 25.Na2+ Ka4 26.Qc6+ Ka3 27.Qf3+ Ka4= Nepomniachtchi – Svidler, Loo 2014.

12...Rb8!

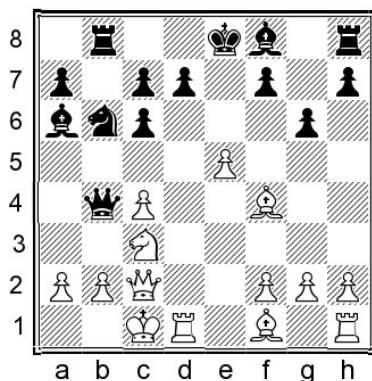
This move is energetic and strong! Black wishes to squeeze his opponent's pieces with the protection of the b2-square as quickly as possible.

12...Nxc4 13.Bxc4 Qxc4 14.Rd4 Qe6 15.Rhd1. White has powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. 15...0-0-0 16.Bg5²



16...Be7 (16...d5 17.Qc2 Rd7 18.Bf6 Rg8 19.Ne4²) 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.Ra4 Bb7 (18...Kb7? 19.Ra5+-, Black is helpless against the threat Qa5.) 19.Rxa7. White has restored the material balance and his attack continues. 19...Qc5 (19...Kb8 20.Ra3 Rhe8 21.Qa4 Kc8 22.Qa7 Qg5+ 23.Kb1 Rxe5 24.Rb3 Rb5 25.Nxb5 cxb5 26.a4+-) 20.Qa4 Kb8 21.Ra5 Qxf2, Ciornei – Van Beek, Netherlands 2014, 22.Rd4+- and in view of the threat Rb4, Ra8#, White's attack is winning.

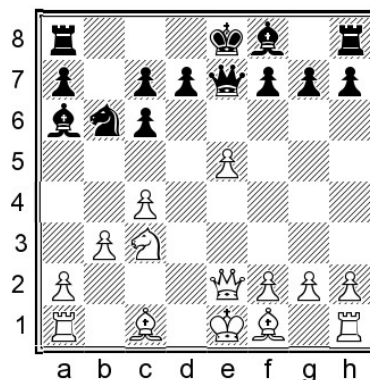
13.Qc2



13...Qa5 (13...Bxc4? 14.Rd4+-) 14.Qb3 Rb7 15.Ne4 (15.Nb5 cxb5÷) 15...Be7 (Following 15...Bg7?!, White can impede his opponent's castling with the line: 16.Bd2 Qxe5 17.Qa3 Nxc4 18.Bxc4 Qxb2+ 19.Qxb2 Bxb2+ 20.Kc2 Bxc4 21.Rb1² Black would not have sufficient compensation for the piece in this

endgame.) 16.c5 Nc4. This is his most precise move. Now, Black will manage quickly to make a draw. (Following 16...Nd5?!, he would need to fight long and hard to save the game. 17.Bd2 Rxb3 18.Bxa5 Bxf1 19.Rhxf1 Rb5 20.Bd2 0-0 21.Kc2 f5 22.exf6 Bxf6 23.b3 Bg7 24.f3²; 21...Rfb8 22.b3 a5 23.Rc1² With the idea Kd3. 23...a4 24.bxa4²; 23...Kg7 24.Rfd1 h6 25.Kd3²) 17.Qc3 Qxa2 18.Bxc4 Bxc4 19.e6 Qa1+ 20.Kc2 Qa4+ 21.Kc1 Qa1=

B) 10.b3



White wishes to play Bb2 as quickly as possible and to evacuate his king away from the centre.

10...0-0-0

10...Qe6 11.Qe4 – see Chapter 27.

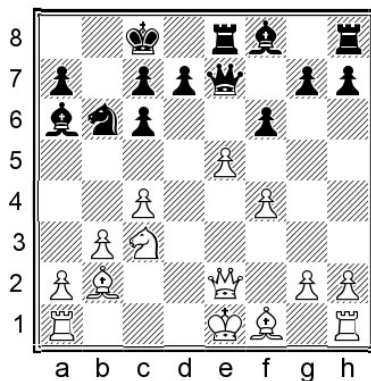
10...d5 11.exd6 cxd6 (11...Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 cxd6 13.Be3 d5 14.cxd5 Bb4 15.Bd2 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 Bxe2 17.Kxe2 Nxd5 18.Bxg7 Rg8, Pobor – Kalac, Podgorica 2018, 19.Be5±) 12.Bg5 f6, Khamrakulov – Torres Tellez, Campillos 2005, 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7 14.Be3²

10...g6 11.Bb2 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 Bg7
 13.f4² f6?! Kaleoglu – Okay, Bursa 2011,
 14.Qe3 fxe5 15.c5 Bxf1 16.cxb6 Bxg2
 17.bxc7 Rde8 18.Qxa7 d5 19.Rhg1 Bf3
 20.Rd3+-

11.Bb2 Re8

11...Qe6 12.0-0-0 Re8 13.f4± d5?
 14.cxd5 Bxe2 15.dxe6 Bxd1 16.Ba6+ Kd8
 17.exf7 Re7 18.Rxd1+ Rd7 19.e6+- Nedev
 – Kizov, Struga 2002.

12.f4 f6



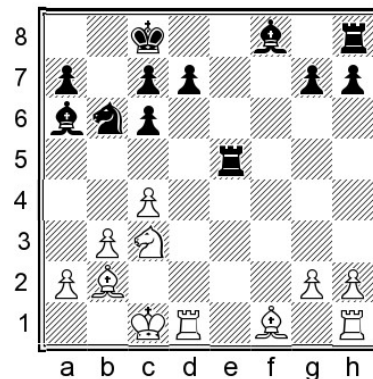
13.0-0-0

He would not equalise with 13.Ne4 d5
 14.Nd2 (14.Qg4+?! Kb8 15.cxd5 Qb4+
 16.Nd2 Bxf1 17.a3 Qc5 18.Rxf1 Qc2µ
 Morshedi – Sachdev, Reykjavik 2015;
 17.Rxf1 fxe5. Now, White must sacrifice a
 pawn to remove his king away from the
 centre of the board. 18.0-0-0 cxd5 19.Qh5
 Bc5µ Tasdogen – Lopez Gonzalez,
 Tarvisio 2017) 14...fxe5 15.fxe5 g6!
 (15...Qg5 16.0-0-0 Bd6 17.h4 Qf4÷
 Tomazini – Gozzoli, Le Castella 2018)
 16.0-0-0, Yeoh – Nguyen, Vietnam 2013,
 16...Bg7 17.Nf3 c5 (17...dxc4 18.Qe3 Kb7³)
 18.Qc2 dxc4 19.Kb1 Qe6³ White does not
 have sufficient compensation for the
 pawn.

13...fxe5 14.fxe5

About 14.Qxe5 Qxe5 15.fxe5 Rxe5 – see
 14.fxe5.

14...Qxe5 15.Qxe5 Rxe5



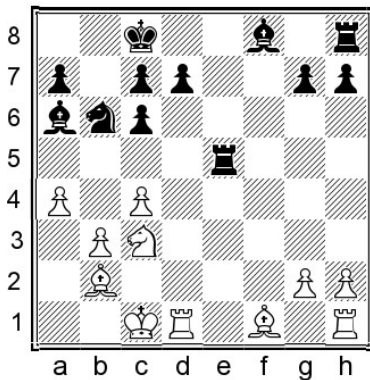
16.a4!?

White wishes to oust the enemy rook
 away from the fifth rank after which he
 will play a4-a5 sending Black's knight to
 the edge of the board.

16.c5? Black obtains the two-bishop
 advantage after this move. 16...Bxf1
 17.cxb6 Bxg2 18.bxa7 Ra5 19.Rhg1 Bh3µ
 Lohvinov – Pajeken, Neustadt an der
 Weinstrasse 2019.

16.Bd3 Re3 (Following 16...Re8
 17.Rhf1, Black can simplify the position,
 but he would need to part with his extra
 pawn in order to do that. 17...d5 18.cxd5
 Bxd3 19.Rxd3 Nxd5 20.Nxd5 cxd5
 21.Rxd5 Bd6 22.Bxg7 Rhg8 23.Rf7 Re2
 24.Rd2 Rxc7 25.Rxc7 Bf4 26.Rgd7 Rxc7=
 Karjakin – Kramnik, Dortmund 2012)
 17.Kd2 (17.Rhf1? d5 18.Rf7,
 Nepomniachtchi – Karjakin, chess.com

2017, 18...dxc4 19.Bf5+ Kb7μ; 17.Rhe1 Rxe1 18.Rxe1 d5³) 17...Re8 18.Kc2 (18.Rde1?! White should not remove his rook from the d-file. 18...Be7 19.Ne4?! d5 20.cxd5 Bb4+ 21.Nc3 Bxd3 22.Kxd3 cxd5 23.a3 Be7μ Wang Hao – Karjakin, Moscow 2013) 18...d5 (18...Re3?! 19.Rhe1. The bishop is protected by the king, so Black would not achieve much after the exchange of the rooks and the move d7-d5.) 19.cxd5 Bxd3+ 20.Rxd3 cxd5 21.Nxd5 Re2+ 22.Kb1 Rxc2 23.Rc1 Nxd5 24.Rxd5 Be7 25.Be5 c5 26.Bd6. After the trade of the bishops, White regains the pawn on c5 and the position becomes completely equal. 26...Bxd6 27.Rxd6 Rf8 28.Rxc5+ Kb8 29.Rc2=



16...Kb8!

Now, after a4-a5, Black's knight will be able to retreat to the c8-square.

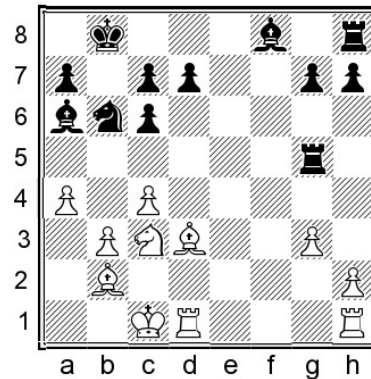
16...Rg5? 17.h4 Rg3 18.a5 Na8, Ziaziulkina – Paehtz, Vysoke Tatry 2018, 19.Rd3 Rxd3 20.Bxd3± The placement of Black's knight on a8 is just ridiculous.

16...Bd6?! 17.Bd3 Re3 18.Kc2 Rf8?! Haring – Pranav, Pardubice 2017, 19.Rhf1 Rxf1 20.Rxf1± White has seized completely the initiative.

16...d6. Black frees the d7-square for his knight. 17.g3 Re8 18.Bh3+ Nd7

19.Rhe1 Rxe1 20.Rxe1 Kd8, Jones – Ragger, Wijk aan Zee 2017, 21.Ne4. This move forces Black to weaken his position. 21...h6 22.Rf1© White's actively placed pieces compensate fully his minimal material deficit.

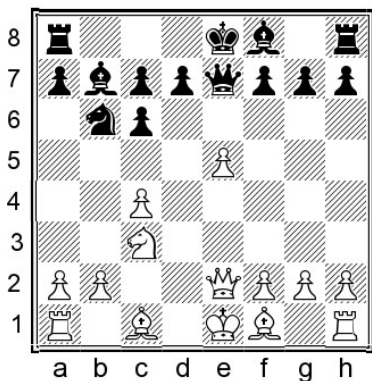
17.Bd3 Rg5 18.g3



18...d5 19.cxd5 Bxd3 20.Rxd3 Nxd5 21.Nxd5 cxd5 22.h4 Rg4 23.Be5 Bd6 24.Bxd6 cxd6 25.Rhd1= Homont – Plas, ICCF 2016. Black's doubled pawns on the d-file are very weak and this precludes him from realising his material advantage.

Chapter 24

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Bb7

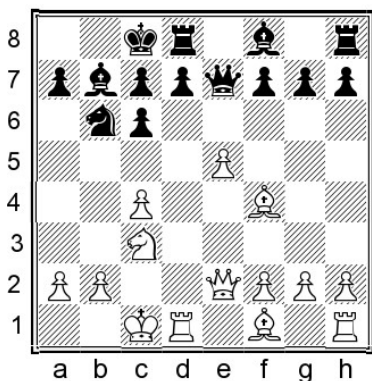


We will deal now with: **A) 10.Bf4** and
B) 10.Bd2.
10.h4!? – see Chapter 13, line **B**.

A) 10.Bf4 g6!?

Black is reluctant to evacuate his king to his weakened queenside.

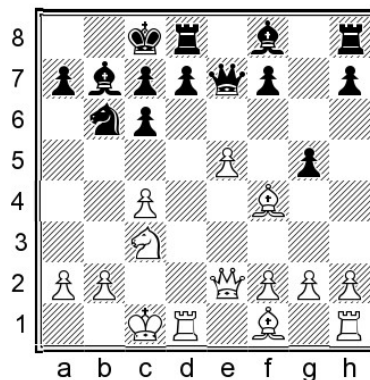
After 10...0-0-0 11.0-0-0, Black must solve very difficult tasks (11.h4 – see Chapter 13, 8.h4 Bb7 9.c4 Nb6 10.Nc3 0-0-0 11.Bf4).



11...f6 12.h4!? (12.Qe3 Re8 13.exf6 Qf7,, Soumya – Shyam, Korinthia 2012)
12...Re8 13.exf6 Qf7 14.Ne4 gxf6 15.Qc2²
White's superior pawn-structure provides him with a slight edge.

11...Re8 12.h4. This move is aimed at preventing g7-g5, Bg7. (It is also possible for White to choose here the prophylactic line: 12.Bg3 h5 13.h4 g6 14.Qc2 Qe6 15.Ne4. His knight is headed fir the g5-square, weakened by Black's move 12. 15...c5 16.Ng5²) 12...f6 (12...Ba6. This attack against the c4-pawn can be easily parried by White. If Black wished to place his bishop on a6, he had to do that at once. 13.Qe4 Kb7 (13...f6? 14.c5! Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba6 16.Qa4+-) 14.Qd4 f6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.Bd3²) 13.exf6 Qf7, Stenner – Tate, Katowice 2017 (13...Qxe2 14.Bxe2 gxf6 15.Bd3²) 14.Qc2 Qxf6 15.Bg3 d6 16.Bd3²

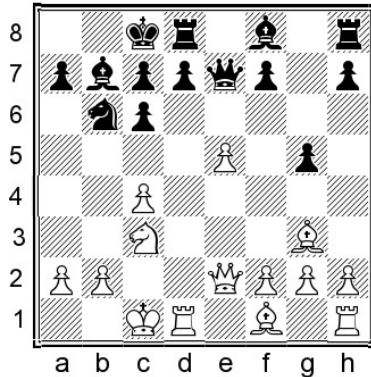
11...g5. This is Black's most energetic move. Now, White must play very precisely in order to obtain even a minimal advantage.



12.Be3!? This move is played with the idea c4-c5. White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. 12...c5. Black had possibly to refrain from winning material. (12...Qxe5 13.Bd4 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 Rg8 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bd3²; 13...Qf4+ 14.Rd2 Rg8 15.c5 Nd5 16.g3 Qf5 17.Qc4 Bg7 18.Bd3 Qe6 19.Bxh7² White has regained the sacrificed pawn and has preserved all the advantages of his position.) 13.h4 gxh4

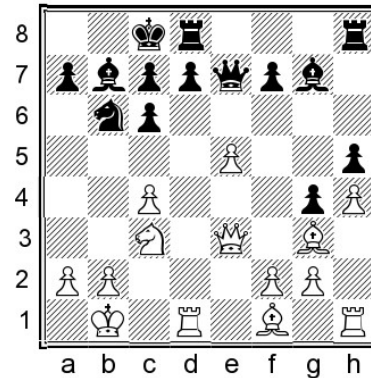
14.a4 a5, Van Damme – Reichgeld, ICCF 2016, 15.Nd5 Qxe5 16.Rxh4. Black's extra pawn is practically irrelevant, since White has seized completely the initiative. 16...Nxd5 17.cxd5 Bxd5 18.Qa6+ Bb7 19.Qxa5²

12.Bg3. White wishes to preserve his pawn on e5, which cramps the enemy position.



12...Bg7 13.h4 Rde8 (13...h6 14.Re1²) 14.Re1 (The move 14.hxg5 enables Black to simplify the position. 14...Qxg5+, Rewitz – Pedersen, Denmark 1995, 15.Qd2 Qxd2+ 16.Kxd2 Bxe5 17.Bxe5 Rxe5 18.Re1 Rxe1 19.Kxe1 d5 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.Rh6 c6= White will naturally regain the pawn on h7, but there is just a few material left on the board, so the most likely outcome of the game would be a draw.) 14...h5 15.hxg5 Qxg5+ 16.Qd2² Black cannot equalise, because in addition to his pawn-weaknesses on the queenside, he has similar on the kingside as well.

12...h5 13.h4 g4 14.Kb1 Bg7 15.Qe3

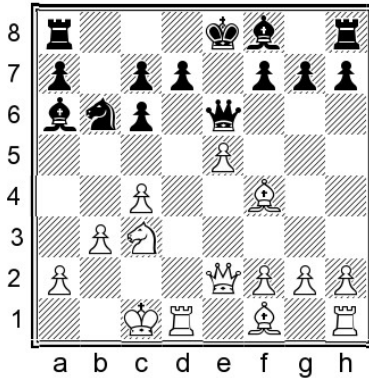


Black will hardly manage to equalise 15...d6 16.c5!, for example: 16...dxc5 (After the move 16...Bh6, there arises by force an endgame in favour of White. 17.cxd6 Bxe3 18.dxe7 Rxd1+ 19.Nxd1 Bh6 20.f4 gxf3 21.gxf3 Re8 22.f4²) 17.Rxd8+ Kxd8 18.f4 (18.Be2 Nd5 19.Rd1 Kc8 20.Qe4 Kb8÷) 18...gxf3 19.gxf3 Kc8 (19...Nd5 20.Qe4) 20.Qg5² Black has an extra pawn, but his position is worse, since his pawn-structure has too many defects.

15...c5. Black opens the diagonal for his bishop on b7, but weakens his control over the d5-square. 16.a4. White is threatening to push a4-a5, in an attempt to provoke an advance of the enemy a-pawn, which would weaken his position. 16...a5 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.cxd5 Rhe8 19.Bc4 d6 (19...Bxe5 20.Bxe5 Qxe5 21.Qxc5 Qe4+ 22.Ka1± Qxg2? 23.Qa7+–) 20.Rhe1 Bxe5 21.Bb5²

15...Rde8 16.c5!/? White prevents c6-c5. (Following 16.Re1 c5!, Black creates counterplay, which would be sufficient to maintain the balance. 17.a4 d6 18.a5 Nd7 19.Nb5 Nxe5 20.Qb3, Nakamura – Sasikiran, Istanbul 2012, 20...a6 21.Rxe5 Be4+ 22.Rxe4 Qxe4+ 23.Bd3 Qb7,, Black's queen has come to help in the defence of his king just in time.) 16...Nd5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Qa3² White's king is much safer than its black counterpart.

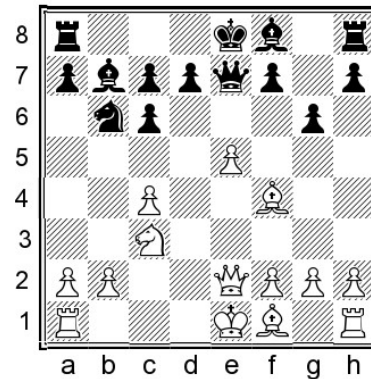
10...Qe6 11.0-0-0 Ba6 (11...a5. Without White's move b2-b3, this pawn-advance does not seem logical. 12.Be3!? Be7 13.f4 0-0 14.Qf3 Rab8 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bc4 d6, Tiekens – Langer, ICCF 2013. Black is trying to get free from his opponent's positional bind, but only creates new weaknesses in his position. 17.exd6 cxd6 18.Rhe1²) 12.b3



12...Ba3+ 13.Kc2 0-0 14.Qh5. White is threatening to begin an attack against the h7-square with the move Bd3. 14...f5 15.Bd3 Bb4 16.a3 Bc5 (16...Bxc3. Black wishes to save a tempo for the retreat of his bishop, but now the vulnerability of the dark squares would hurt him very much. 17.Kxc3 d5 18.exd6 Qf6+ 19.Kc2 cxd6 20.Bg5²) 17.Rhg1 g6 18.Qe2² Tsirakovsky – Kikot, ICCF 2011. Black's position is cramped and he will hardly find an active plan for his actions.

12...Rb8 13.Qf3 Ba3+ (13...Bb4 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba3+ 16.Kd2 Ba6 17.bxc7 Rc8 18.Rhe1 0-0 19.Re4² Black has no compensation for the weakness of his backward d7-pawn.) 14.Kc2 0-0 15.Bd3 f5, Bartalini – Secondi, ICCF 2013, 16.Rhe1± White's pieces are much more actively and harmoniously deployed than their counterparts. Black's only active plan (the piece-sacrifice on the c4-square) would not work at the moment.

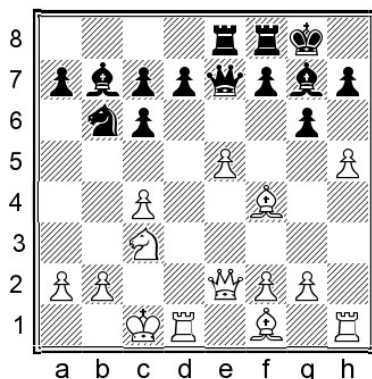
10...g5 11.Bg3 (11.Be3!? c5 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.h4 – see 10...0-0-0) 11...0-0-0 (11...Bg7 12.h4! This move is energetic and strong. White attacks immediately the enemy g5-pawn. 12...Ba6 13.hxg5 Nxc4± Halyavskiy – Golovchenko, Serpukhov 2004.) 12.h4!? (12.0-0-0 – see 10...0-0-0) 12...Re8 13.hxg5 Bg7 14.f4 d6 15.0-0-0 dxe5 16.Qg4+ Kb8 17.f5. White prevents the opening of the e-file and the a1-h8 diagonal for Black's pieces. 17...Bc8 18.Ne4 f6 19.Qf3 Ref8 20.Bh4 Nd7 21.Qb3+ Ka8 22.Bf2 fxe5 23.g4+–, followed by Bg2, Qa4, Rd3-a3, beginning a direct offensive against the enemy king, Kurayan – Popovic, Sunny Beach 2014.



11.Qe3

About 11.0-0-0 Bg7 12.h4 – see 11.h4.

11.h4. White begins immediate active actions on the kingside. 11...Bg7 12.0-0-0 (12.h5 0-0 13.0-0-0 – see 12.0-0-0) 12...0-0 13.h5 Rae8



14.Re1?! This transfer to a passive defence does not combine well with White's previous actions. 14...Ba6 15.Qe4. He will lose his c4-pawn anyway, so this is the best possible version for it. (15.Qe3 Bxc4 16.Qh3 Qe6µ Aitbayev – Khamrakulov, Tashkent 2011; 15.Qg4 Bxc4 16.hxg6 fxc6 17.Bg5 Qf7 18.f4, Tarasov – Tchernyi, Moscow 2011, 18...Bxf1 19.Qh3 h5 20.Rhxf1 Qc4µ) 15...Qc5 16.Bg3 Bxc4 17.hxg6 fxc6 18.Na4, Nepomniachtchi – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2011, 18...Qb5 19.Nc3 Qb4³ White has managed somehow to weaken the shelter of the enemy king, but still has not full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

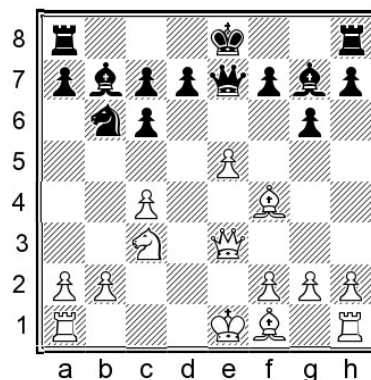
14.Qg4 Bxe5 15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.Bd3 (with the idea 17.hxg6 fxc6 18.Rxh7+-) 16...Qe6 17.Qh4 Qe7. Black is seeking all the time the exchange of the queens, because White's attack on the n-file may turn out to be very dangerous in the middle game. 18.Qg3 (18.Qf4 Qe5; 18.Qh2. White avoids the exchange, but worsens the placement of his queen 18...d5,,) 18...d5 19.hxg6 fxc6 20.Rh6 Qe5=

14.Qd2. White plans to trade the important defender of the enemy dark squares with Bh6. 14...Ba6 15.Bh6 Qxe5 16.hxg6 (16.Bxg7 Qxg7 17.Rh4 d5 18.c5 Nc4 19.h6 Qe5 20.Qd4 Qxd4 21.Rhxd4 Bc8 22.Bxc4 dxc4 23.Rxc4 g5=, followed by Re6, with counterplay which is

sufficient for equality.) 16...fxg6 17.Bxg7 (17.c5 Bxf1 18.Bxg7 Qxg7 19.Rhxf1 Nc4 20.Qxd7 Qe5 21.Rh1 h5 22.Qxc6 Re6 23.Qb5 Na3=) 17...Qxg7 18.c5 Bxf1 19.Rhxf1 Nc4 20.Qxd7. White has restored the material balance, but Black has no passive pieces any more. 20...Qe5 21.Rh1 h5 22.Qxc6 Re6 23.Qb5 Qf4+ 24.Kb1 c6,, followed by Rb8, Osterman – Bescos, ICCF 2012. The activity of Black's pieces compensates fully his minimal material deficit.

11...Bg7

11...Qb4? This queen-sortie, which is detrimental to Black's development, is obviously bad for him. 12.0-0-0 (12.Bg5!? Qxb2? 13.Rb1 Qa3 14.Bf6 Rg8 15.Be2+-; 12...Be7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.c5 Nd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Qd4±) 12...Nxc4 13.Bxc4 Qxc4, Ruan – Lagno, Rostov on Don 2011, 14.Bg5± The activity of White's pieces increases with every move. 14...Bg7 15.Rd4 Qe6 16.Ne4 Qxa2 17.Nf6+ Bxf6 18.exf6+ Kd8 19.Qe7+ Kc8 20.Qxd7+ Kb8 21.Bf4+-



12.Bd3

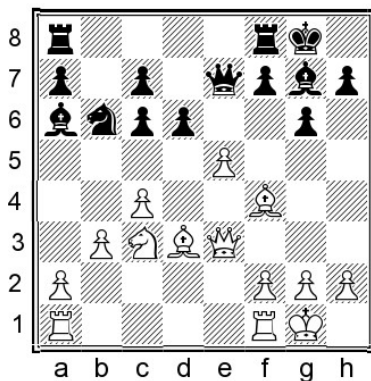
12.h4 0-0 13.h5 Rae8 14.0-0-0 Bxe5 15.Bh6 Bg7 16.Qd2 Qf6 17.hxg6 fxc6 18.Bxg7 Qxg7 19.c5 Nd5 20.Bc4 Qf7=

12.c5 Nd5 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Bd3. White fails to block the pawn on d5 with the move Qd4 and Black exploits this immediately. 14...d4,,

12...0-0 13.0-0

13.c5 Nd5 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.0-0 a5 16.Rfe1 Rfe8= Black is perfectly prepared to activate his bishop with the move Ba6.

13...Ba6 14.b3 d6



15.Rae1

White should better remove his rook away from the juxtaposition with the enemy bishop on g7.

White fails to obtain sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn after 15.Ne4?! dxe5 16.Bg5 (16.Nc5 Bc8³) 16...f6³

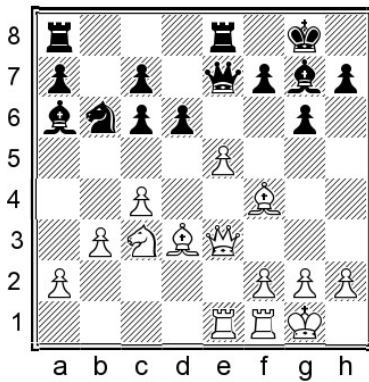
15.Rfe1 Nd7. Black continues to increase his pressure against the enemy pawn on e5. (15...Rfe8?! 16.c5) 16.Qf3 dxe5 17.Qxc6 Qc5 18.Qxa6 exf4. White's more elastic pawn-structure cannot

compensate fully the vulnerability of the dark squares in his position. 19.Rac1 Bd4 20.Ne4 Qe7 21.c5 Rad8 22.Qa4 Ne5³ Sutela – Witzschel, ICCF 2014.

15...Rfe8

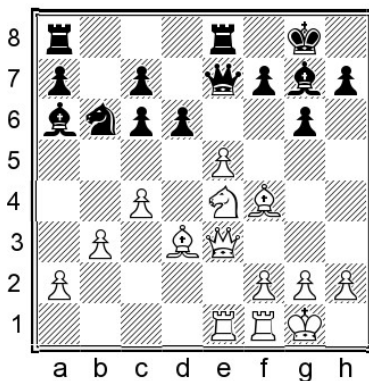
15...Nd7. This move leads to the exchange of the pawn on c6 for the enemy pawn on e5. 16.Qf3 dxe5 17.Qxc6 Qc5 18.Qxd7 (18.Qxa6 exf4 19.Nd5 Rae8 20.Nxf4 Rxe1 21.Rxe1 Qd4 22.g3 Bh6. White will hardly manage to preserve his extra pawn. 23.Bf1 Bxf4 24.gxf4 Nf6 25.h3 Rd8=, with the rather unpleasant threat Nh5-f4. Black's game now is much simpler, because his king is safer than its counterpart.) 18...exf4 19.Nd5 Rad8 20.Qh3 Bb7 21.Bxg6 (21.Nxf4 Rd4 22.Nd5 Bxd5 23.cxd5 Qxd5 24.Bc4 Qd6 25.Qf3= White's edge is purely symbolic.) 21...fxg6 22.Ne7+. White is a piece down, so he is forced to make a draw by a perpetual check. 22...Kh8 23.Nxg6+ Kg8 24.Ne7= Petr – Bacrot, Deizisau 2012.

15...Rae8 16.c5 Bxd3 17.Qxd3 Nd7 (It also seems good for Black to choose here 17...dxc5 and later he will try to get rid of his tripled pawns with the move c5-c4. 18.Bg3 Qe6 19.Qc2 c4÷) 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Ne4 (19.e6 Ne5 20.Bxe5 Bxe5 21.exf7+ Qxf7= White has a superior pawn-structure, but Black's long-range bishop is more mobile than White's knight in a fight on both sides on the board.) 19...d5 (19...dxe5 20.Be3©) 20.Nd6 Rd8 21.Qe3 Nxe5 22.Nf5 gxf5 23.Bxe5 Qxe5 24.Qxe5 Bxe5 25.Rxe5 a5= Even – Wegelin, ICCF 2014. White cannot exploit effectively Black's weaknesses.



16.Be4

White should maybe try here 16.Ne4. It is possible that Black might manage to hold this position, but this would be very difficult.

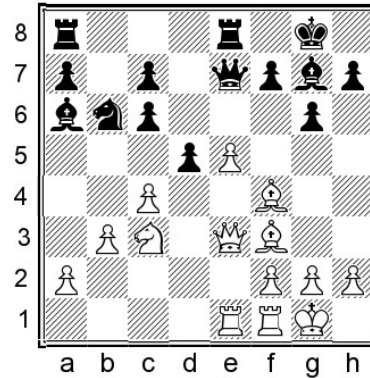


16...d5 17.Nf6+!?. Bxf6 18.exf6 Qxe3 19.Rxe3 dxc4 20.bxc4 Rxe3 21.fxe3 Rd8 (21...Bxc4 22.Bxc4 Nxc4 23.Rc1² The pawn on f6 impedes the activation of Black's king.) 22.Be2 Rd2 23.Bh6 c5 24.Rb1² White's bishop-pair provides him with a stable advantage. 24...Rxe2?? 25.Rd1+-

16...Bxe5. After the exchange of the bishops, the position if Black's king would not be so safe. 17.Bxe5 Qxe5 18.f4 Qg7 19.f5 Nd7 20.Qh3©

16...dxe5. This is Black's most reliable move. 17.Bg5 f6 18.Bh4 Qf8 (18...g5 19.Bg3 Rad8 (19...h6 20.Nc5 Bc8 21.Bg6 Rd8 22.h4f) 20.h4©) 19.f4 exf4 (19...f5 20.fxe5 Rxe5 21.g4 Rae8 22.gxf5 gxf5 23.Qg3f) 20.Rxf4 Nd7÷ The activity of White's pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

16...d5 17.Bf3



17...Qe6?!

White obtains good compensation for the pawn after 17...Bb7 18.Qc1 Qb4 19.Re2 (19.Bd2 Qf8 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.e6 c6 22.exf7+ Qxf7= T.Schmidt – Belanoff, ICCF 2013) 19...dxc4 20.bxc4 Rab8 21.Rfe1 Qxc4 22.Rc2© Sutton – Laine, ICCF 2013.

Following 17...Nd7!?, Black's defensive resources seem quite reliable. 18.Nxd5 cxd5 19.Bxd5 Nf8! He does not allow White to play e5-e6. (After the careless move 19...Rad8? 20.e6, Black's position crumbles. 20...fxe6 21.Qxe6+ Qxe6 22.Rxe6 Rxe6 23.Bxe6+ Kh8 24.Bxc7 Rc8 25.Bg3 Rd8 26.Rd1+-) 20.Bg5 Qd7 21.Bxa8 Rxa8 22.Bf6 Qf5÷ Black's two minor pieces do not look worse than White's rook with two pawns.

17...dxc4!? This is Black's simplest move. 18.Bxc6 cxb3 19.axb3 Bxf1 20.Kxf1 Qe6 21.Bxa8 Rxa8 22.Nb5 Nd5=

18.Qc5!

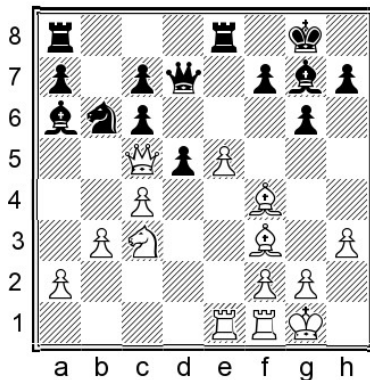
White's queen is headed for the a5-square.

18...Qd7

18...Bb7 19.cxd5 Nxd5 (19...cxd5 20.Nb5) 20.Bg3²

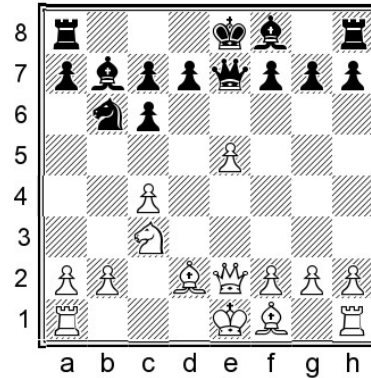
19.h3

It is also possible for White to play here immediately 19.Qa5!? Bb7 20.Bg3 (20.cxd5!?) 20...dxc4 21.Ne4 cxb3 22.Nc5 Qc8 23.axb3± Black has an extra pawn, but his queenside is practically paralysed.



19...h5 (19...Bb7 20.Qa3²) **20.Qa5 Qc8 21.Ne2 Bxe5 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.Nd4 Rxe1 24.Rxe1 Bb7 25.c5**. After this move Black's bishop on b7 turns into a "big pawn". **25...Nd7 26.Bxh5 Qf8** (26...gxh5 27.Nf5 Qd8 28.Re7+–, followed by Qd2) **27.Qxc7 Nxc5**, Yu Yangyi – Moradiabadi, Mashhad 2011, **28.Nf5! gxf5 29.Re7+–**

B) 10.Bd2



We will analyse now **B1) 10...Qe6, B2) 10...g6** and **B3) 10...0-0-0**.

The move 10...d5?! leads to an endgame without any good prospects for Black. 11.exd6 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 cxd6, Zelic – Kozarcenin, Bol 2011, 13.a4!? a5 (13...d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Nb5+–) 14.0-0-0² He lags in development and his pawns on c6 and d6 would need permanent protection.

10...a5?! This move is a loss of time. 11.Qe4 (11.0-0-0!?) 11...g6, Istona – Berezjuk, Senica 2015 (11...0-0-0 12.0-0-0²) 12.0-0-0 Bg7 13.h4 0-0 14.h5 Qxe5 15.Qh4,

After 10...f6?!, there appear new pawn-weaknesses in Black's position. 11.c5 Nd5 12.Nxd5 cxd5 13.exf6 gxf6 14.Be3 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 Kb8 16.Qb5 Qe6 17.Qa5 f5 18.Rd3. White's rook joins into the actions and this will be decisive for the outcome of the game. 18...a6 19.Rb3 Kc8 20.c6 Qxc6+ 21.Rc3+– Soumya – Khademalsharieh, Chengdu 2017.

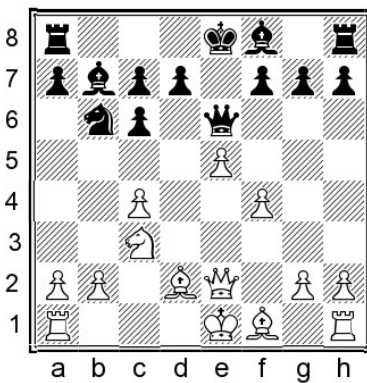
B1) 10...Qe6?!

This move looks much better in combination with the development of the bishop to the a6-square.

11.f4

White protects reliably his pawn on e5.

11.0-0-0 Ba6. This loss of a tempo in the opening will hurt Black for sure. (11...0-0-0 12.h4 – see variation **B3**) 12.b3 Ba3+ 13.Kc2 0-0 14.Qe4 (14.Qh5!? White is trying to provoke a weakening of the position of Black's king. 14...g6 15.Qg5 Be7 16.Qe3²; 14...Rae8 15.Re1 Qg6+. Now, in order to avoid coming under an attack in the middle game, Black enters an inferior endgame. 16.Qxg6 fxc6 17.f4²) 14...d5 (14...f5, Gusain – Reza, Warsaw 2017, 15.Qf4²) 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Bd3 Qxe4 17.Bxe4 d5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Bd3 Bxd3+ 20.Kxd3² Black will have to defend his pawn-weaknesses in this endgame.



11...Be7

About 11...0-0-0 12.0-0-0 – see variation **B3**.

11...a5 12.Qe4 (12.0-0-0!?) 12...g6 13.Bd3 Bg7 14.0-0 (14.Qe2!? with the idea Ne4. After 14...0-0, Black will come under a permanent positional bind. 15.Ne4 Bc8 16.c5 Nd5 17.0-0±; 14...f5. This move

prevents White's plans. 15.c5 Nd5 16.0-0-0 0-0 17.Rhe1²) 14...0-0 15.Qe2 d6 16.Ne4 Qe7, Zelcic – Rogic, Zadar 2005, 17.f5 Bxe5 (17...gxf5? 18.Rxf5+–) 18.f6 Bd4+ 19.Be3 Qe5 20.Qd2 c5 21.Bxd4 Qxd4+ 22.Rf2. White's threat Qh6 would be impossible for Black to parry. 22...Bxe4 23.Qh6+–

11...c5 12.a4!?N (12.Nb5 Qc6 13.0-0-0 a6 14.Nc3 0-0-0 15.Rg1² Pavasovic – Rogic, Zadar 2005) 12...Be7 13.a5. White ousts the enemy knight away from the b6-square and weakens Black's control over the d5-square. 13...Nc8 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.Nd5 Bxd5 16.cxd5 Qxd5 17.Bc3 Qc6 18.Qg4, and White's threats e5-e6 and f4-f5-f6 would be almost impossible for Black to parry.

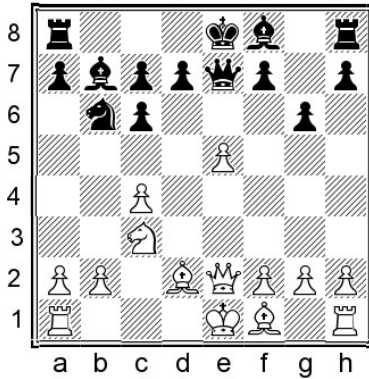
11...Bb4 12.a3. White has weakened the b3-square, but this would not be important at all. 12...Be7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.Qf2. From here White's queen will support the pawn-advances c4-c5 and f4-f5. 14...f6 (14...c5 15.a4²) 15.c5 Nc4 16.f5 Qg8 17.e6 Ne5 (17...Nxd2? 18.Rxd2 dxe6 19.Bc4 Rxd2 20.Qxd2± Gaponenko – Janzelj, Douglas 2018) 18.exd7+ Rxd7 19.Be2² White's pawns on c5 and f5 cramp Black's position and his bishop on b7 suffers most because of that.

12.0-0-0 0-0 (12...0-0-0 13.Qf2 – see variation **B3**) **13.Re1 f6**. Black should better attack immediately the enemy pawn on e5. (Following 13...Ba6 14.Qe4 d5 15.Qf3 Bxc4 16.f5 Qd7 17.f6 Bb4 18.Qg3±, White's attack is running effortlessly.) **14.exf6 Qxe2 15.Bxe2 Bxf6 16.c5²** Roques – Keevil, Email 2010. Black's pawn-structure is weak and his

bishop on b7 is passive, so he cannot equalise at all.

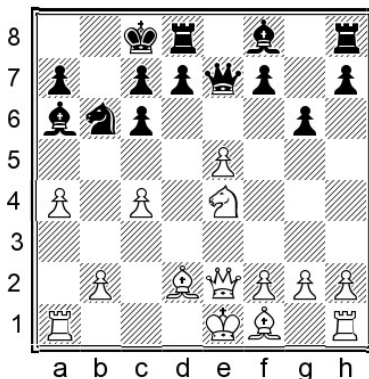
B2) 10...g6?!

Black weakens the f6-square and enables the opponent to organise an attack after h4-h5.



11.0-0-0

11.Ne4!? 0-0-0 (11...Bg7 12.Nf6+ Kd8 13.0-0-0²) 12.a4 Ba6. Black not only attacks the c4-pawn, but also prevents a4-a5-a6. (12...Qxe5 13.Bc3 Bb4 14.Bxb4 Rhe8 15.0-0-0 Qxe4 16.Qxe4 Rxe4 17.f3 Re5 18.a5 Na4 19.f4 Re3 20.Rd3 Rxd3 21.Bxd3 d6 22.Re1² White's bishops are very powerful.)



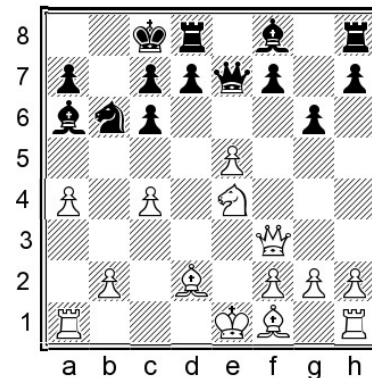
13.a5 Nxc4 14.Ra4 Bg7 15.Rxc4 Bxe5 16.Nc5 d5 17.Nxa6 dxc4÷ Guerra – Lloyd, ICCF 2013. White lags in the development

of his pieces, so Black's prospects are not worse.

13.f3. White wishes to play Qf2 and a4-a5 and to win the enemy pawn on a7, but accomplishing all that would not be simple at all. 13...Bxc4 14.Qf2 Bxf1 15.Kxf1 Qe6 (15...d5? 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Bg5 Qe6 18.a5 Nd5 19.Qxa7 Be7, Jones – Bedouin, Bastia 2011, 20.a6+-) 16.a5 Qc4+ 17.Kg1 Qa6÷ M.Bauer – Romero Rodriguez, ICCF 2012.

13.Qe3 Qxe5 14.Bc3 Bb4 15.Bxb4 Rhe8 16.f3 d5, Shirov – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2001. Now, White must begin to fight for equality. 17.0-0-0 (17.cxd5 Bxf1 18.Kxf1 f5³) 17...dxe4 18.Rxd8+ Rxd8 19.Qxe4 Qxe4 20.fxe4 Bxc4 21.a5 Bxf1 22.Rxf1 Nc4 23.b3 Ne5 24.Bc3= White has succeeded in equalising indeed, but it is understandable that he should not be so happy about all this.

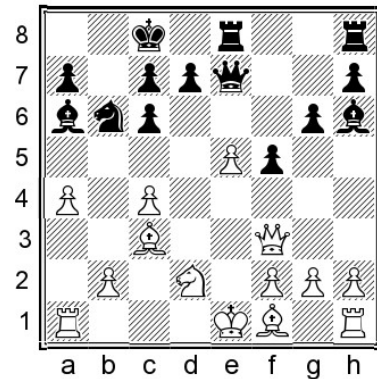
He should choose here the move 13.Qf3!?



It would be too dangerous for Black to accept the pawn-sacrifice here 13...Qxe5?! 14.c5 Bxf1 15.Bc3 Qe6? (15...Qd5²) 16.Kxf1 Nc4 17.Ng5 Qe7 18.Nxf7. He is losing unavoidably material. 18...Bg7 19.Nxd8 Rxd8 20.Qe2 Qxe2+ 21.Kxe2+- Nedev – Mitkov, Skopje 2011.

The move 13...Bg7 allows White's pawn to advance all the way up to the a7-square. 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba6 16.bxa7 Kb7 17.Qe3²

13...Re8 14.Bc3, with the idea Nf6.
 (14.Bd3 Bg7 15.0-0 Bxe5 16.c5 Bxd3
 17.Qxd3 Nd5 18.Rae1 f5 19.Ng5 Qg7
 20.Rb1 h6 21.Nf3©, followed by b2-b4-
 b5, Mueller – Langer, LSS 2012; 18...Kb8!?
 19.b4 f5 20.Ng5 Qf6÷ Ruwette – Cvetnic,
 ICCF 2015.) 14...f5 15.Nd2 Bh6 (,
 Bologan) (15...Bg7?! 16.c5 Bxf1 17.cxb6
 Ba6 18.bxa7 Kb7 19.0-0-0±
 Nepomniachtchi – Bacrot, Eilat 2012)

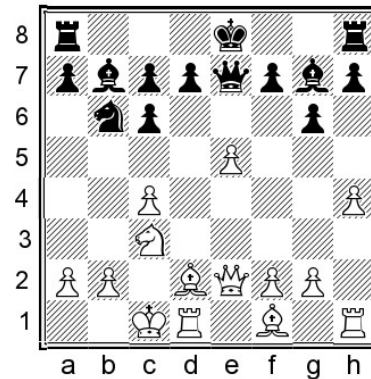


16.Kd1!?!N (After 16.Bd3 Bxd2+
 17.Kxd2 Bxc4 18.a5 Qg5+ 19.Ke1 Bxd3
 20.axb6 Bb5 21.bxa7 Kb7=, Black
 manages to hold his opponent's
 dangerous passed pawn, Henderson –
 Laine, ICCF 2013.) 16...Bxd2 (16...d5 17.c5
 Bxf1 18.cxb6 Bxd2 19.bxa7 Kb7 20.Bxd2
 Bc4 21.Re1 d4 22.Rc1 Bd5 23.Qd3²;
 16...d6 17.c5 Bxf1 18.cxb6 Ba6 19.bxa7
 Kb7 20.Nb3 Ka8 21.Na5 Qd7 22.Kc2±;
 18...Bxd2!? 19.Bxd2 Ba6 20.bxa7 Kb7
 21.Rc1²) 17.Bxd2 Qxe5 (17...Bxc4 18.a5²)
 18.Bc3 Qc5 (18...Qd6+ 19.Kc2 Bxc4
 20.Bxc4 Nxc4 21.Bxh8 Qd2+ 22.Kb3 Na5+
 23.Ka3 Rxh8 24.Rac1² The position is
 open, so Black's knight and two pawns
 cannot be equal to White's rook.) 19.b3
 Rhf8 (19...d5 20.a5 Nd7 21.Bxh8 Rxh8
 22.Qe3²) 20.a5 Nxc4 (20...Na8? 21.b4 Qe7
 22.b5+–) 21.bxc4 Bxc4 22.Bd2 Bb5
 23.Ra3² White has parried somehow
 Black's pressure, but the enemy bishop
 looks stronger than White's three pawns.

11...Bg7

About 11...0-0-0 12.h4 – see variation
B3.

12.h4



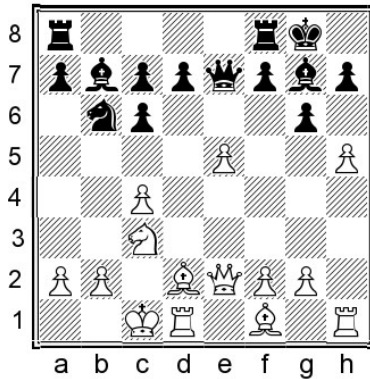
12...0-0

About 12...h6 13.f4 (13.Qe3!?) 13...0-0-0
 14.h5 – see line **B3**.

12...Ba6. White can parry easily the
 attack against his c4-pawn. Besides that,
 after the removal of his queen away from
 the f1-a6 diagonal, Black must consider
 permanently the possible enemy pawn-
 advance c4-c5. 13.Qe4 (13.Qg4!?! 0-0
 14.h5 Bxe5 15.Re1 f5 16.Qd1± After the
 opening of the h-file, White's attack would
 be impossible for Black to parry. 16...f4
 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Bd3 Kg7 19.Bxg6+–)
 13...0-0 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba6 16.bxc7
 Rac8 17.Bf4. White should preserve here
 his pawn on e5, since it restricts
 considerably the enemy bishop on g7.
 (17.Bg5 Qxe5 18.Qxe5 Bxe5 19.Rxd7 Rxc7
 20.Rxc7 Bxc7÷ Yu Ruiyuan – Wen Yang,
 China 2015. Black's couple of powerful
 bishops compensates fully his queenside
 pawn-weaknesses.) 17...Rxc7 18.h5 Rb7

19.h6 Bh8 20.Rd6 Rfb8 21.Rhd1± White's rooks exert strong pressure against the pawn on d7.

13.h5



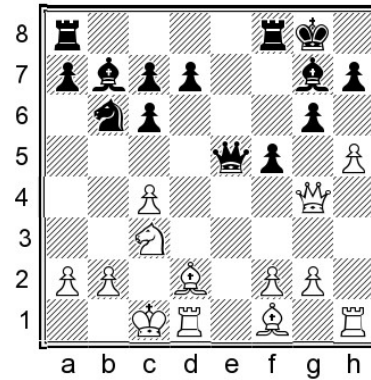
13...Qxe5

After 13...Bxe5 14.Re1, White maintains powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. 14...Rae8 15.f4!? Bf6 16.Qf3² Tomczak – Fraczek, ICCF 2015.

14.Qg4 f5

Black frees in advance the f7-square for the retreat of his king.

14...d5? 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.c5 Nc4 17.Bxc4 dxc4, Negi – Sriram, Aurangabad 2011, 18.Qh4. White's attack on the h-file looks winning. 18...Qh5 (18...Rfe8 19.Bf4 Qh5 20.Qxh5 gxh5 21.Rxh5+-) 19.Qxc4 Qe5 20.Qh4 Rfe8 21.Bf4+-



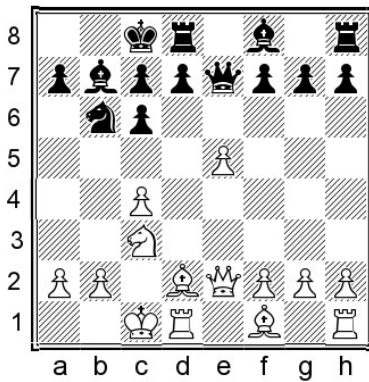
15.Qh4!

Here, the difference, in comparison to the possible retreat of White's queen to the h3-square is that after 15...c5 16.hxg6 hxg6 17.Re1, Black would not be able to play 17...Qf6, due to 18.Bg5.

15.Qh3 c5 (15...d5? 16.Bd3 Rae8 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.g4 Bc8, Kessler – Tomazini, Balatonszarszo 2017, 19.Qh7+ Kf7 20.Rh6 Qf6 21.g5 Qe6 22.Re1 Rh8 23.Rxe6 Rxh7 24.Rxe8 Bxh6 25.Rxc8 Nxc8 26.gxh6±) 16.hxg6 (16.Bd3 Rae8÷) 16...hxg6 17.Re1 Qf6÷ Black's defence would be a hard nut to crack for his opponent.

15...c5. Black should possibly try here to save the game with the line: **15...Rae8 16.Bf4²**, although even then White will maintain long-term initiative. **16.hxg6 hxg6 17.Re1 Qd4 18.Qh7+ Kf7 19.Rh6 Qf6 20.Rxg6 Qxg6 21.Re7+ Kxe7 22.Qxg6 Bf6 23.Bh6 Rf7 24.Be2+-**, followed by **Bh5**. Black's defence crumbles.

B3) 10...0-0-0 11.0-0-0

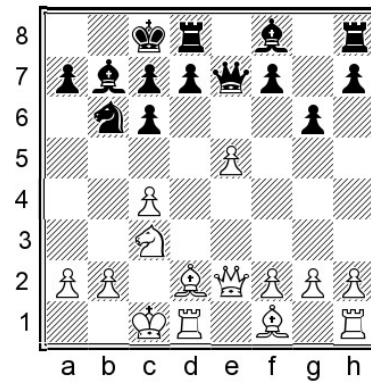


11...Kb8!

11...d5 12.exd6 Qxe2 (12...cxd6, Kiss – Rogulj, Austria 2012, 13.Bf4 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 h5 15.Rhe1±) 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.Ne4 Be7 15.Be3²

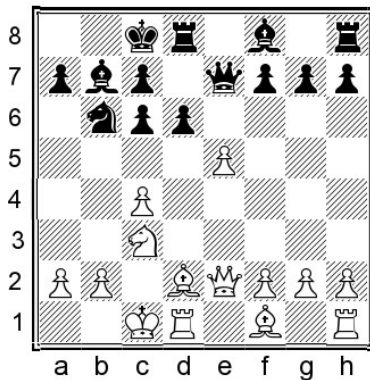
11...f6 12.exf6 Qxf6 (12...Qf7 13.fxg7 Bxg7 14.c5 Nd5 15.Nxd5!? cxd5 16.f3 Rhe8 17.Qd3 Qf6 18.Qa3²; 15.Ne4 Rde8 16.Qc4 Rhf8 17.f3 Be5 18.Qb3± Michelle – Ashwini, Thrisur 2013. Black has no compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 13.h4 Qf7 (13...h6 14.Rh3) 14.Rh3 Re8 (14...Ba6 15.Rf3 Qg8, Filev – Georgiev, Veliko Gradiste 2018, 16.Rf4!? Bd6 17.Re4 Bc5 18.Qg4²) 15.Rf3 Qg6 16.Qd3 Qxd3 17.Bxd3 c5 18.Rg3 g6, Khairullin – Ki.Georgiev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2013, 19.Kc2 (19.Rh1!? with the idea h4-h5) 19...Bd6 20.Rg4 Be5 21.Rh1² Black's pawn-structure has been compromised, so he will have to defend long and hard in this endgame.

11...g6



12.f4 Bg7 13.Qf2. White is preparing c4-c5. 13...d6 14.exd6 (14.c5 dxc5 15.Be2 f6, Coimbra – Savina, Gaziantep 2012, 16.Ne4 Rhe8 17.Be3 Qe6 18.exf6 Bf8 19.Rxd8+ Rxd8 20.Nxc5 Qxa2 21.Rd1 Nd5= The shelter of White's king has been weakened, so he will hardly manage to avoid the perpetual check in the forthcoming battle.) 14...cxd6 15.Bd3 f5 16.Rhe1 Qf7 17.b3 Kb8, Abdil – Zaja, Bosnjaci 2012, 18.Nb1 c5!? 19.Bc3 d5= 12.h4!? h6 13.f4 (13.h5!? g5 14.Rh3 Bg7 15.f4² Thurrott – Oliger, Email 2012) 13...Bg7 (13...d5 14.exd6 cxd6, De la Villa Garcia – Korneev, Mondariz 2000, 15.Qxe7 Bxe7 16.h5²; 14...Qxe2 15.Bxe2 Bxd6 16.h5²) 14.h5 (14.Ne4 c5, Gargatagli – Pallisse, Barcelona 2011, 15.g4 d6,,; 14.Qg4 h5 15.Qh3 Kb8÷ Sharma – Aleksandrov, New Delhi 2019) 14...g5 (14...Kb8 15.Be3²) 15.Re1²

11...d6

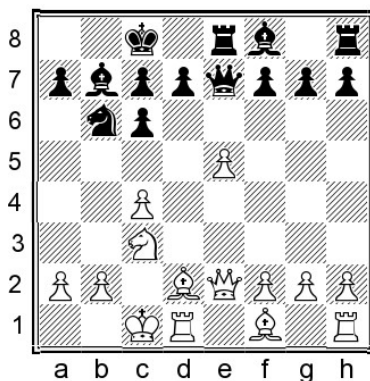


12.Qg4+. White frees with tempo the way forward of his bishop on f1.
 12...Qd7!? (12...Kb8 13.exd6 cxd6 14.Qg3 Ka8 15.Bd3² Simeone – Lindberg, ICCF 2004) 13.Be2 Qxg4 14.Bxg4+ Kb8 15.exd6 Bxd6 16.b3² There has arisen an endgame without any good prospects for Black.

12.c5 dxc5 13.g3 Kb8 14.Bh3© Adair – Hommeles, Hersonissos 2018. White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit.

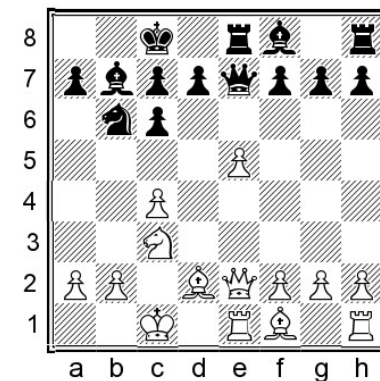
12.exd6!? This is his simplest move. White wishes to enter a better endgame.
 12...Qxe2 13.Bxe2 Bxd6 14.Ne4 Be7 (14...Be5 15.Nc5) 15.Be3²

11...Re8



12.f4 f6 (12...d6 13.exd6 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 Bxd6 15.b3 c5, Braun – Mueller, playchess.com 2012, 16.Rhe1² Black has no compensation for his weak queenside pawns. 13.c5!? – This is an interesting

pawn-sacrifice with the help of which White preserves his pawn on e5. 13...dxc5 14.g3 Qe6 15.h4²) 13.exf6 Qf7 (13...gxf6 14.Qh5 Rd8 15.Bd3 Qg7, Motylev – Zhang, Linares 2001, 16.c5 Nd5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Be3± Black has too many weaknesses in his position.) 14.Qf2! (14.Qd3 gxf6 15.b3 d5,, Kumar – Pradip, Taleigao 2018) 14...gxf6 15.Bd3 f5 16.Rhe1 Bg7 17.Qc5 d5 18.cxd5 cxd5, Wong – Chakravarthi, Puchong 2017, 19.Kb1 a6 20.Bc1. White wishes to transfer his knight along the route Ne2-d4 and defends the b2-square in the process. 20...Rhf8 21.Ne2±
 12.Re1



12...Qe6 13.f4 Bb4 (The move 13...Be7 is too passive. 14.Qf2 f5, Aagaard – S.Hansen, Helsingor 2012, 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bc4±) 14.Qf2 (14.a3!? Bxc3 15.Bxc3 c5 16.h4², White is preparing the activation of his rook on h1 along the third rank.) 14...d5 (14...c5 15.a3 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 Nxc4 17.Qxc5± The position is opened and this is in favour of White, who has a powerful bishop-pair.) 15.a3 Bxc3 (15...Bf8? 16.c5 Nd7 17.b4) 16.Bxc3 dxc4, Maciejka – Steflitsch, Kallithea 2002, 17.f5²

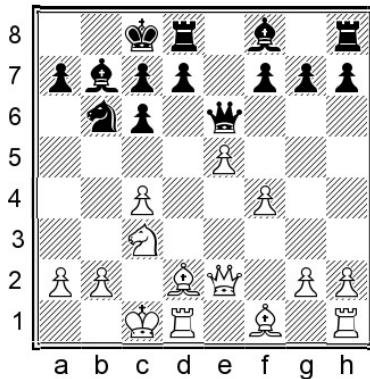
12...d5. After this move Black will enter an endgame without good prospects for him. 13.exd6 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 (14.d7+ Nxd7 15.Bxe2²) 14...Bxd6 15.Bd3²

12...Qb4, Saric – Almasi, Rio 2018, 13.Qd3 (13.Qe4!? Qc5 14.Qf5 Re7 15.Re4²) 13...f6 14.Ne4 Qa4 15.exf6 gxf6

16.Qb3 (16.c5 Nd5 17.Qc4 Qxc4+ 18.Bxc4 f5 19.Nd6+ Bxd6 20.cxd6 cxd6 21.Bxd5 cxd5²) 16...Qxb3 17.axb3², with a much better pawn-structure for White.

12...Ba6 13.Qe3!?N (13.Qg4 h5 14.Qf4 g5 15.Qxg5 Bxc4 16.Qxe7 Bxe7 17.Bxc4 Nxc4= Grebenshchikov – Doroshenko, ICCF 2012) 13...Qc5 14.b3 Qa3+ 15.Kb1 Bc5 (15...f6 16.Qg3 Bb4 17.Bd3 fxe5 18.Rxe5 Rxe5 19.Qxe5² White's pieces have been much more harmoniously deployed.) 16.Qg3 Bd4 17.Bd3 c5 (17...Kb8 18.Nd1²) 18.Re2², followed by Rhe1, or Rc1.

11...Qe6 12.f4 (12.h4 Re8 13.f4, Laznicka – Velicka, Hustopece 2012, 13...Ba6 14.b3 f6 15.a4 Kb8÷)



12...g5?! Muzychuk – Kosteniuk, Huai'an 2017, 13.fxg5 Bg7 14.c5 Nd5 15.h4± Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Bxe5 17.Bd3 Nxc3 18.Bxc3 Bxc3 19.bxc3+-

12...c5 13.Rg1 Be7 14.g4 f6, Fercec – Jovanic, Umag 2000, 15.a4 d5 16.exd6 Qxe2 17.Bxe2 Bxd6 18.a5 Nd7 19.Nb5² Black can hardly find an active plan for his actions in this endgame.

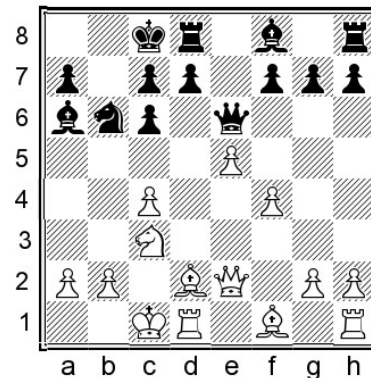
12...Bb4 13.a3 Bxc3 14.Bxc3 c5 15.Qf2 Na4, Debevec – Janzelj, Sentjur 2013, 16.Be1. White is understandably reluctant to part with his two-bishop advantage. 16...d6 17.Qc2 Nb6 18.Bd3 Kb8 19.Bh4²

12...Be7 13.Qf2 c5 14.a4 d5 15.cxd5 Nxd5 16.Bc4²

12...Re8, Szieberth – Pilgaard, Budapest 2002, 13.Qf2 d5 (13...c5 14.a4) 14.f5 (14.c5!?! White is trying to thwart the activation of Black's pieces. 14...Nd7 15.Na4²) 14...Qe7 (14...Qxe5? 15.Re1) 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Kb1 Qc5 17.Be3 Qa5 18.Qg3² White has a freer game.

12...d5 13.exd6 cxd6 (or 13...Qxe2 14.Bxe2 Bxd6 15.Rhe1²) 14.Qxe6+ fxe6 15.Re1 (15.Be2 d5 16.Rhe1 h5 17.Bd3 Nd7? 18.Na4 Nf6 19.Rxe6± Jones – Abdumalik, Sharjah 2017; 15.c5!?! dxc5 16.Be2©) 15...Kd7 16.c5. This is a very promising pawn-sacrifice. 16...dxc5 17.Ne4. The activity of White's pieces increases with every move. 17...Nd5 18.Ng5 Re8 19.g3 c4 20.Nxe6± After White restores the material balance, Black will have no compensation for his pawn-weaknesses, Sari – Kirali, Antalya 2017.

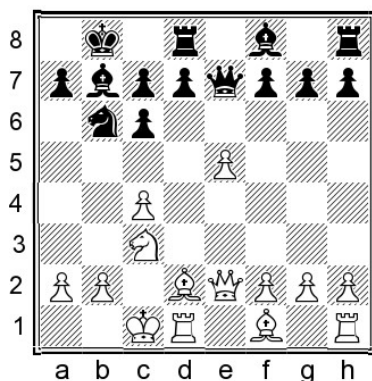
12...Ba6



13.b3 Ba3+ (13...f6, M.Kopylov – Zieher, Saarbruecken 2013, 14.a4!?! This move is played with the idea to follow with a4-a5 and to oust the enemy knight to the edge of the board. 14...Kb8 15.a5 Nc8 16.Na4²) 14.Kc2 d5 15.exd6 Qxe2 (15...Qxd6 16.Qg4+ Rd7?? 17.Bc1+- Zuriel – Sambuco, Lopez 2004; 16...Qd7 17.Qxd7+ Rxd7 18.Bd3±) 16.d7+! With the help of this intermediate check, White does not

allow his opponent to get rid of his doubled pawns. 16...Nxd7 17.Bxe2 Nf6 18.Bf3 Bb7 19.Be3 Rhe8 20.Rxd8+ Rxd8 21.Rd1 Be7 22.Rxd8+ Bxd8 23.Bxa7+- Yeoh – Ramakrishnan, Penang 2015.

13.Qe3!? The pawn on c4 is untouchable. 13...Bxc4 (13...Nxc4? 14.Qxa7+-; 13...Kb7 14.c5 Bxf1 15.Rhxf1 Nd5 16.Qd4²; 13...c5 14.b3 d6 15.Be2²) 14.f5! Qxf5 15.Bxc4 Nxc4 16.Qxa7 d5 17.Rhf1 Qe6 18.Bg5. White has numerous threats, which are impossible for Black to parry. 18...Be7 19.Bxe7 Qxe7 20.Nxd5! cxd5 21.Qa8+ Kd7 22.Qxd5+-



This is the critical position of this variation. White has tried here numerous different moves, but neither of them would provide him with an advantage if Black defends correctly. Therefore, we would like to recommend a new move.

12.Qe3!?!N

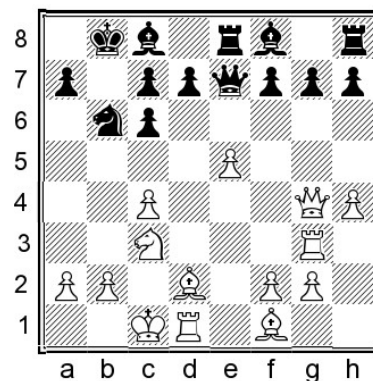
This move is played with the idea Bd3 and also to support the pawn-advance c4-c5 at an opportune moment.

The move 12.Kb1 seems rather slow. 12...Qe6 13.f4 (13.Bf4 c5 14.Bg3 g6÷) 13...c5 14.Bc1 g6 15.h4 h5 16.Rh3 Bg7 17.Qc2 d6÷ Cvak – Benes, ICCF 2013.

12.Re1 f6 13.exf6 Qxf6 14.h4 (14.Ne4 Qe6÷) 14...h6 15.Rh3 d5 16.Rf3. Here, Black can simply capture his opponent's

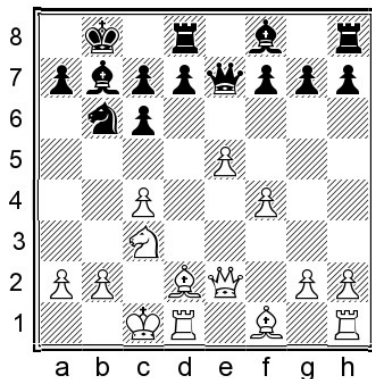
defenceless pawn: 16...Qxh4 17.Rf4, Benetti – Pedersen, ICCF 2012, 17...Qh2÷

12.h4. White wishes to join his rook into the actions on the third rank, which is standard for similar positions. In this situation however, this would enable Black to obtain a comfortable game. 12...Re8 13.Rh3 (13.Re1 Qc5 14.Qf3 Rxe5 15.Bd3 f6 16.Ne4 Qe7 17.c5 Nd5÷ Pugh – Cardelli, ICCF 2015. The activity of White's pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.) 13...Ba6 (The move 13...c5? Zumsande – Gupta, London 2013, leads to a horrible weakening of the d5-square. 14.a4 f6 15.a5 Nc8 16.Nd5 Qe6 17.Rb3 fxe5 18.g3, with the idea Bg2+-) 14.Qg4 Bc8 15.Rg3



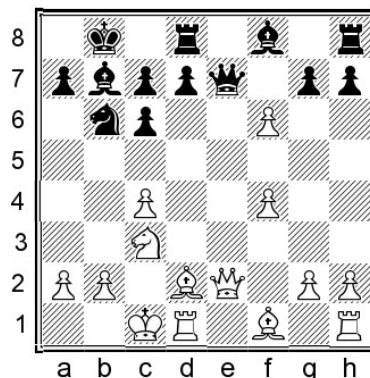
15...g6!?! This is the right move for Black! (He would not equalise after 15...d6 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.Qf3 Qe6 18.c5 Nd7 19.b4²; as well as following 15...Qc5, Sjugirov – Sasikiran, Moscow 2012, 16.Qf4!?) and it would not work for Black to play 16...Rxe5?!, in view of 17.b4 Qe7 18.c5 Nd5 19.Nxd5 cxd5 20.Qd4± White is perfectly prepared to transfer his rook into the attack against the enemy king with the move Ra3.) 16.Bg5 Qc5 17.Bf6 (17.Qf3 Rxe5 18.Ne4 Qa5 19.Qf6 Rxe4 20.Qxh8 Bd6 21.Rb3 Qxa2 22.Qc3 Ka8 23.Bd3÷) 17...Bh6+ 18.Kb1 d5,,

12.f4



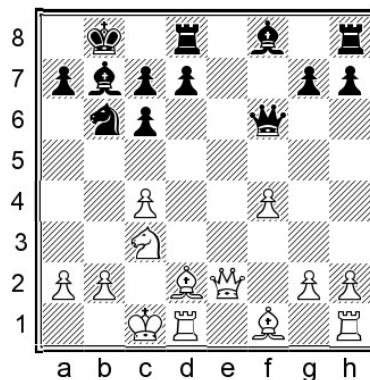
12...g6, Wong – Ong, Penang 2017,
 13.Qf2!? d6 (13...f6?! 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.c5
 Nd5 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bc3) 14.exd6 cxd6
 15.Re1 Qc7 16.f5f
 12...Re8 13.Qf2. White removes his
 queen away from the X-ray juxtaposition
 with the enemy rook. 13...f6 (13...d5
 14.exd6 Qxd6 15.Be3² Black's doubled
 pawns on the queenside do not beatify his
 position at all.; 13...d6 14.Bd3 dxe5
 15.Rhe1 Qd7 16.Bc2 exf4 17.c5 Rxe1
 18.Rxe1 Nd5 19.Nxd5 cxd5 20.Qd4²
 White has powerful initiative for the two
 sacrificed pawns, while Black's kingside
 pieces have not been developed yet.)
 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bc4 (16.Bd3!?
 Nb4 17.Bb1²) 16...Qf5, with the idea Nb4
 (16...Nxc3? 17.Bxc3 Qf5 18.g4 Qxg4
 19.Rhg1 Qh3 20.Rg3 Qh4 21.Rxd7+–
 Cheparinov – Lalith, Caleta 2018.)
 17.Bxd5 cxd5÷ Black's two-bishop
 advantage compensates the defects of his
 pawn-structure.

12...f6! White's e5-pawn cramps the
 enemy position, so Black should better
 exchange it immediately. 13.exf6 (13.h4
 fxe5 14.fxe5, Carreto Nieto – Tate, Caleta
 2019, 14...Re8÷)



13...Qf7. This pawn-sacrifice is not
 sufficient for Black to equalise. 14.fxg7
 Bxg7 15.c5 Rhe8 (15...Nd5?! 16.Qc4 Qf6
 17.g4 Rhe8 18.g5 Qf8 19.Bd3 d6, Wang –
 Sasikiran, Zaozhuang 2012, 20.Na4±)
 16.Qd3 Nd5 17.Nxd5 cxd5, Kristensen –
 Semcesen, Copenhagen 2012, 18.Qa3 Ka8
 19.Bd3²

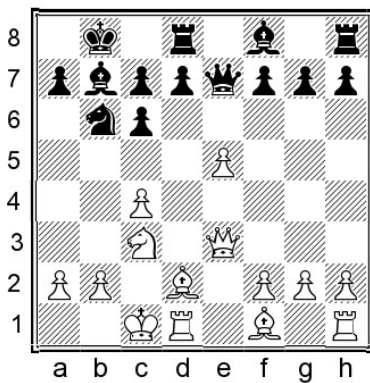
13...Qxf6



14.Ne4 Qe6!? (14...Qg6 15.c5 Nd5
 16.Qf3 d6? Muzychuk – Derakhshani,
 Munich 2016, 17.f5 Qf7 18.Ng5 Qf6
 19.Ne6±; 16...Be7²) 15.Ng5 Qg8÷ Black
 will at first oust the enemy knight from
 the g5-square with the move h7-h6 and
 then will open the diagonal for his bishop
 on b7 with c6-c5, obtaining a quite
 acceptable position.

14.Qf2 d6 (14...c5 15.Bd3 Qf7. Black
 attacks the enemy c4-pawn and forces a
 weakening of White's king shelter. 16.b3
 g6 17.Rhe1 d5 18.cxd5 Bg7 19.Bc4 Bd4
 20.Qf1 Rhe8 21.Rxe8 Rxe8, Senzacqua –

Majuwana, ICCF 2016, 22.g4!?) 15.Bd3 Qf7 16.b3 (16.f5 Be7 17.b3 d5 18.c5 Nd7 19.Be3 Ne5 20.Bd4 Nxd3+ 21.Rxd3 Rhf8 22.Rf3 Bc8 23.Kb2 Bf6= Sethuraman – Gupta, Philadelphia 2012) 16...g6 17.Rhf1 Bc8 (17...d5 18.c5 Nd7 19.Be3 Bg7 20.Bd4 Rhe8, Velker – Broadway, ICCF 2016, 21.Kb1!?) 18.f5 d5. Black opens the game in the centre in an attempt to organise an attack against his king. 19.Bg5 dxc4!? Black seizes the initiative with this exchange-sacrifice. 20.Bxd8 cxd3 21.Qd4 Ba3+ 22.Kb1 Re8 23.f6 Bf5. His bishops are tremendously active. 24.g4 c5 25.Bxc7+ Qxc7 26.f7. The tension in this position has reached its peak. 26...cxd4 27.fxe8=Q+ Bc8 28.Rf7 Qxh2 29.Rd2. White sacrifices a rook, deflects the enemy queen away from the h2-b8 diagonal and ends the game with a perpetual check. 29...Qxd2 30.Qe5+ Ka8 31.Qe4= Svocek – Gerola, ICCF 2015.



12...Re8

12...d6 13.exd6 Qxd6 14.Be2²

12...f6 13.exf6 Qxf6 14.Ne4 Qe6 15.c5 Nd5 16.Qf3 g6 17.Re1²

The move 12...Qe6 allows the opponent to entrap Black's bishop. 13.c5 Nc4

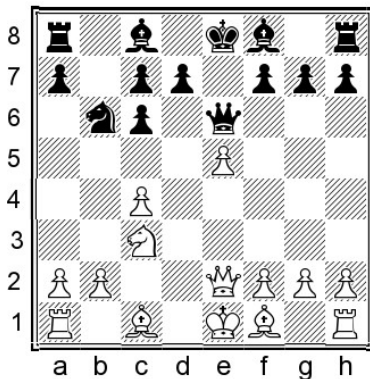
(13...Nd5 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.Kb1²; 14...Qxd5 15.b4 Qxa2. Black wins a pawn, but White will soon organise a decisive attack against the enemy king on the a-file. 16.Qc3 Ba6 17.Bxa6 Qxa6 18.Kb2 Be7 19.Ra1 Qe2 20.Rhe1 Qxf2 21.Qd3 d5 22.Kb3+- Black has no defence against Rxa7.) 14.Qd4 Nxd2 15.Rxd2 f6 (15...d5 16.Kb1 f6 17.exf6 Qxf6 18.Qxf6 gxf6 19.b4 a5 20.a3 f5 21.Bd3²; 15...Be7 16.f4) 16.exf6 Qxf6 17.Qb4 Ka8 18.Ne4÷ White has a much freer game.

12...c5. Black exerts pressure against the pawn on g2 and wishes to impede the development of his queenside pieces. 13.f3 (13.a4 Qe6 14.b3 Nc8 15.Bd3 Bxg2 16.Qg5 Bxh1 17.Qxd8 Bf3 18.Nd5 Bxd5 19.cxd5 Qe7 20.Qxe7 Nxe7 21.Be4© White has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 13...Re8 14.Re1 Qd8 15.Qf4 f6 16.exf6 Rxe1+ 17.Bxe1 Qxf6 18.Qxf6 gxf6 19.Bf2² White's superior pawn-structure provides him with a stable advantage.

13.Re1 Qc5 (13...Qb4 14.Qf4) **14.Nd1**. With the idea Qc3. **14...g6** (14...Qxe3 15.Rxe3 d5 16.exd6 Bxd6 17.Bd3²) **15.Qc3 Bg7 16.f4 Qf8 17.Qb3 Ka8** (17...d5 18.Qc2) **18.Bd3 d6** (Following 18...Rb8, White should better remove immediately his queen from the X-ray juxtaposition on the b-file: 19.Qc2 d6 20.Rhf1²) **19.c5 Nd5** (19...dxc5 20.Ne3©) **20.exd6 Rxe1 21.Rxe1 cxd6 22.Bc4 dxc5 23.Nc3 Bxc3 24.Bxc3 f6 25.g3©** White's two powerful bishops and his superior pawn-structure compensate with an interest the sacrificed pawn.

Chapter 25

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6



10.Bd2!?

This move is played with the idea to follow with 0-0-0. Black has two basic replies (10...a5, 10...Ba6), so White changes his plan and intends to castle kingside.

If he wishes to avoid the complicated variations, arising after the main line: 10.Qe4, then he has an interesting alternative with this seldom played move. He can hardly obtain an advantage with it, but he would not be worse and he would exert some positional pressure, instead of coming under it...

The move 10.b3 is too straightforward. 10...a5 11.Bb2 (11.f4 Bb4, Van Dooren – Becx, Eindhoven 2019, 12.Bb2 0-0÷; After 11.Qe4, White will fail to keep his queen at the centre of the board: 11...Bb4 12.Bd2 0-0 13.Bd3 f5 14.Qe2 d5=) 11...a4 12.0-0 13.axb3 13.axb3 Ba3. Black exchanges the bishop with the idea to emphasize the unreliability of the shelter of the enemy king. 14.Qe4, Sarenac – Nestorovic,

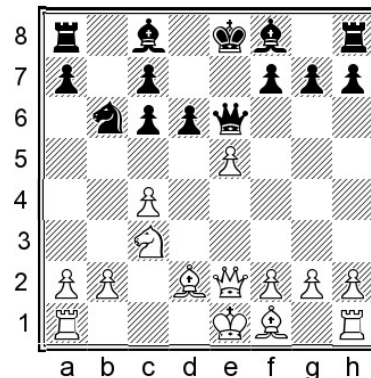
Subotica 2007, 14...Qe7 15.Bxa3 Rxa3 16.Kc2 Qb4 17.Rb1 0-0 18.Bd3 g6 19.h4! White must play energetically here in order to organise a counter attack on the h-file, with the idea to deflect his opponent's pieces away from an attack against his own king. 19...d5 20.exd6 cxd6 21.h5 Bf5 22.Qf3 Bxd3+ 23.Qxd3 d5 24.Qe3 dxc4 25.bxc4 Qa5 26.hxg6 Qf5+ 27.Kc1 Nxc4 28.gxh7+ Qxh7 29.Qg3+ Qg6 30.Rh3=

We will analyse now **A)** 10...a5 and **B)** 10...Ba6.

About 10...Bb4 11.Qe4² – see Chapter 29.

10...Bb7 11.f4 (or 11.0-0-0) – see Chapter 24, variation **B1** (11.h4 – see Chapter 13, variation **B**).

10...d6



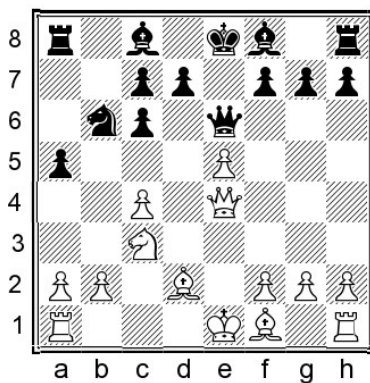
11.exd6 Nxc4 12.Qxe6+ (12.0-0-0 Qxe2 13.Bxe2 Nxd2 14.dxc7 Bd6 15.Kxd2 Kd7 16.Bg4+ Kxc7 17.Bxc8 Raxc8= Nasuta – Stevic, Zagreb 2017) 12...Bxe6 13.Bxc4 Bxc4 14.dxc7 Bd6 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.Rhe1 Bxc7= Van der Poel – Goossens, Netherlands 2012. Black's bishop-pair compensates for him the slight weakness of his queenside pawn-structure.

11.c5!? dxc5 (11...Nd7. If Black refrains from winning a pawn he would end up in an endgame without any good prospects. 12.exd6 Qxe2+ 13.Bxe2 cxd6 14.cxd6 Bxd6 15.0-0 0-0 16.Rfd1²) 12.f4 Qg6, Ivekovic – Peranic, Biograd na Moru 2018, 13.Qf2 Be7 14.Be2 0-0 15.0-0© White has managed to preserve his important e5-pawn and maintains powerful initiative.

A) 10...a5

Black clarifies his plans a bit too early and now White should prudently refrain from his plan, connected with castling queenside.

11.Qe4



11...g6

About 11...Bb4 12.Bd3 – see Chapter 26, variation A.

11...d5. If Black is striving for entering an endgame, he does not need to advance his pawn to the a5-square. 12.exd6 Bxd6 13.0-0-0 (13.Bd3 0-0 14.0-0 f5, Schroll – Froewis, Austria 2019, 15.Qh4²; 13...f5 14.Qe2 0-0 15.0-0 Qg6 16.Rfe1 Bd7 17.Qf3 a4 18.Rac1 Rad8 19.h3² Macieja – Bojkov, Kallithea 2008) 13...0-0 14.Qxc6 Bd7 15.Qe4 f5 16.Qxe6+ Bxe6 17.b3 a4

18.Bd3± Bergmann – Steele, IECG 2002. In both lines Black does not have compensation for his numerous pawn-weaknesses.

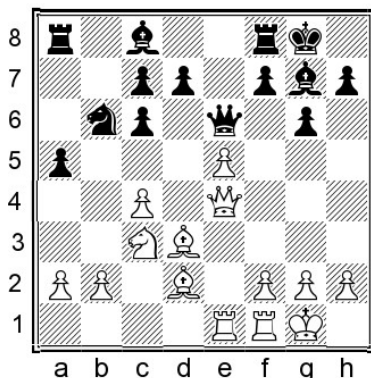
11...Ba6 12.b3 0-0-0 (About 12...g6 13.Bd3 – see 11...g6; 12...Bb4 13.Bd3 – see Chapter 26, variation A; 12...d5 13.exd6 cxd6 14.Qe3 d5 15.0-0-0 Ba3+ 16.Kc2 Nd7 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Bb5± Bergmann – Elburg, IECG 2002.) 13.Bd3!? After this move White still has chances of maintaining an advantage. (13.Be2 Re8 14.0-0 Qxe5 15.Qc2 Bd6 16.g3 Bb7 17.Bf3 Qf6 18.Bg2 Qg6 19.Ne4 Bb4= Van Foreest – Almasi, Hersonissos 2017. White's pieces have been actively and harmoniously deployed, but all this is just only good enough to compensate his sacrificed pawn.) 13...Re8 (13...f6 14.0-0 Qxe5 15.Qf3 Bd6 16.Qh3©; 13...d6 14.Be2 Qxe5 15.Qc2©) 14.f4 f6 15.0-0 fxe5 16.Rae1 Bc5+ 17.Kh1 exf4 18.Qxe6 Rxe6 19.Rxe6 dxe6 20.Ne4 Be7 21.Rxf4 Rd8 22.Bc2 Bg5 23.Rf2 Bxd2 24.Nxd2 h6 25.Ne4 Nd7 26.Rf7² Black has an extra pawn indeed, but is faced with a rather unpleasant defence in the endgame.

12.Bd3 Bg7

About 12...Ba6 13.b3 Bg7 14.0-0 0-0 15.Rae1 – see 12...Bg7.

12...Bb4 13.0-0 – see Chapter 26, variation A.

13.0-0 0-0 14.Rae1



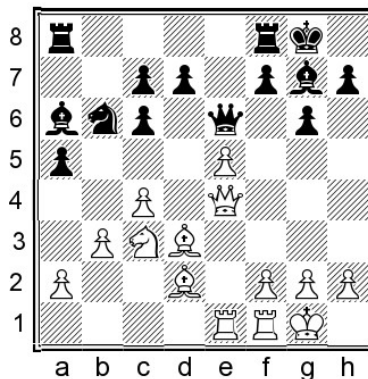
Now, in comparison to Chapter 30 – 10.Qe4 g6 11.Bd3 Bg7 12.0-0 0-0, Black has played the unnecessary move a7-a5, while White has managed to place his rook on a1 to the e1-square and his rook on f1 will support the advance of his f-pawn.

14...Ba6

Following 14...d5 15.cxd5 cxd5, Pavasovic – Rogulj, Bizovac 2006, White does not need to capture en passant in order to simplify the position. It would be much more promising for him to choose 16.Qe2!?, for example: 16...Nd7 17.f4 Nc5 18.f5 Qxe5 19.Qxe5 Bxe5 20.Rxe5 Nxd3 21.Re7 Bxf5 22.Nxd5. White has here the rather unpleasant threat Nf6, Bc3. 22...Rfd8 23.Nf6+ Kg7 24.Bc3 Nb4 25.g4 Be6 26.a3 Nc6 27.Re8±

14...a4 15.c5 (15.Qh4!? d5 16.f4 Qg4 17.Qf2 Nxc4 18.h3 Qd7 19.Bxc4 dxc4. Black has won a pawn, but White has obtained an excellent outpost for his knight at the centre of the board 20.Ne4²) 15...Nd5, Nabaty – Thorfinnsson, Eforie Nord 2010, 16.Bc4 Bb7 17.Re2² White's pieces exert powerful pressure against the enemy position.

15.b3



15...Rfe8

15...Rfd8? This rook was necessary for the protection of Black's king. 16.Qh4 d6, Zorko – Ponkratov, Urgup 2004, 17.Ne4 h5 18.Bg5 Re8 19.exd6+-

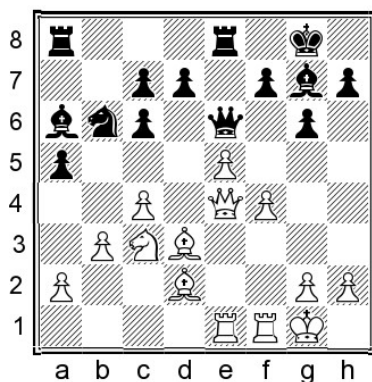
15...a4 16.Qh4 (16.Re2!? with the idea Rfe1) 16...d5 17.Bh6 (If White would be happy with just a minimal but stable edge, he could have played here 17.exd6!? Qxd6 18.Re3²) 17...f5? (17...axb3!? 18.axb3 Bxh6 19.Qxh6 f5) 18.cxd5 cxd5, Rojas Keim – Subirats Ruiz, Sabadell 2011, 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Bxa6 Rxa6 21.Nb5 Rf7 22.Rc1± White exerts pressure against the enemy pawn on c7 and wishes to provoke its advance in order to gain access for his knight to the wonderful d6-outpost.

15...d5 16.exd6 Qxd6. White's knight is restricted by the enemy pawn on c6, so it would be sensible for him to prepare its transfer to e4 (f3). 17.Nb1 (17.Rd1 Rfd8 18.Bc2²) 17...a4 18.Bf4 Qd7, Sermier – Jussupow, Switzerland 2011, 19.Nd2!? Rfe8 20.Qf3²

20.fxg6 fxg6 21.Qf7+ Kh8 22.Bc3+-
Herrou – Bianchi, France 2009.

16.f4

16.Qh4!? White removes immediately his queen away from the possible pawn-attack d7-d5. 16...d5 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Bxa6 Rxa6, Zherebukh – Tang, chess.com 2018, 19.f4² a4 20.f5. He sacrifices a pawn in order to compromise considerably the shelter of the enemy king. 20...gxf5 21.Nb5 Qe7 22.Qf2. White is not in a hurry to capture on f5, since he wishes to transfer his knight there (Nd4-f5). 22...axb3 23.axb3 Bxe5 24.Nd4,



16...d5

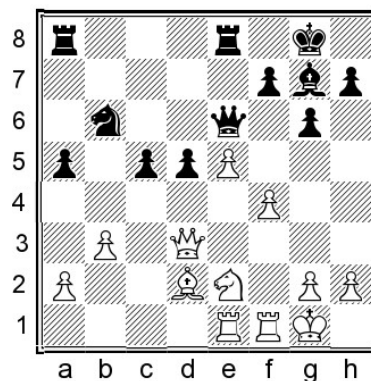
It would be too slow for Black to choose here 16...Qe7? 17.Qf3 d5, Pavasovic – Nemeth, Hungary 2004, 18.f5 Bxe5 19.fxg6 fxg6 20.Bxg6! White destroys Black's castling position. 20...hxg6 21.Rxe5 Qxe5 22.Qf7+ Kh8 23.Rf3+-

16...a4? Black does not have time for active actions on the queenside, because his own king will soon come under an attack. 17.Qf3 Qe7 18.Ne4 (18.f5!?) 18...Qa3 19.f5 Rxe5. White sacrifices a pawn in order to reach the f7-square.

17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Qf3 Bxd3 19.Qxd3 c6 20.Ne2

White prevents the move Nd4, but weakens the b5-square in the process.

20...c5



Black defends against Nd4, but allows the enemy queen to occupy the b5-square.

21.Qb5 Rec8 22.f5 Qc6

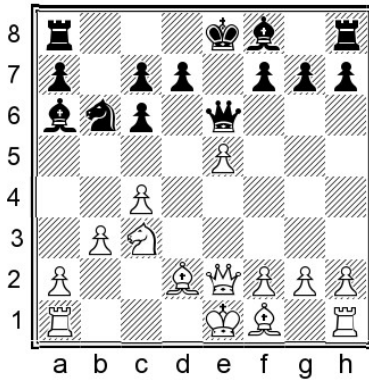
22...gxf5 23.Nf4 Qc6 24.Qd3, The position of Black's king has been seriously weakened.

23.Qxc6 Rxc6 24.f6 Bf8 25.Nf4 c4

25...g5 26.e6 gxf4 27.e7 Bxe7 28.fxe7 Re8 29.Rxf4² White has a more pleasant game, but Black should manage to make a draw after a precise defence, since there is just a few material left on the board.

26.e6 Bc5+? (26...c3 27.Be3²) **27.Kh1 Kf8**, Pavasovic – Rogic, Austria 2004, **28.Rf3+-** Black is helpless against 29.Rh3 h5 30.g4.

B) 10...Ba6 11.b3



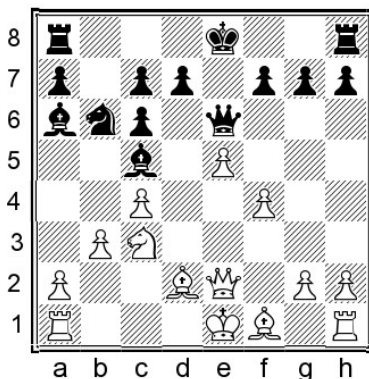
11...Ba3!?

It looks like only this move would enable Black to equalise.

About 11...Bb4 12.Qe4 – see Chapter 29, variation D.

11...g6?! This move weakens the f6-square and White can exploit this immediately. 12.Ne4 Ba3 (12...0-0-0 13.Bc3 Ba3 14.Qe3²) 13.Nf6+ Kd8 14.Bc3 Kc8 15.g3 Kb7 16.h4 Rad8, Leakovic – Dabo Peranic, Bosnjaci 2001, 17.Bh3 Qe7 18.0-0 d6 19.Rfe1+-

11...Bc5. Black's bishop might come soon under an attack on this square after Ne4. 12.f4!?



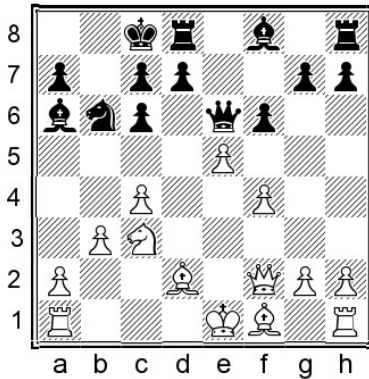
12...0-0-0 13.Ne4 (13.0-0-0!? Rhe8 14.Qf3²; 13...f6 14.a4 d5 15.exd6 Qxd6

16.Kc2²; 14...d6 15.exd6 Qxd6 16.Kc2² Black's pawn-structure is clearly worse, moreover that his bishop on a6 and his knight on b6 are severely restricted by the enemy pawn on c4.) 13...Bd4 (13...Ba3 14.Qf3 d6 15.Be2 dxe5 16.f5 Qe7 17.f6 gxf6 18.0-0© The activity of White's pieces increases with every move.) 14.0-0-0 d5 15.exd6 Rhe8 (Following 15...cxd6 16.Bb4 c5, White can organise a quick and dangerous attack against the enemy monarch with the help of an exchange-sacrifice. 17.Rxd4 cxd4 18.f5 Qd7 19.Nxd6+ Kb8 20.Qe5 f6 21.Qg3 Qc7 22.Nf7+-) 16.Re1 cxd6 17.Qd3 Bf6 18.Qg3±

12...0-0 13.0-0-0 (13.Ne4 Be7 14.Qf3 f6 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.0-0-0 Qe7, De Waard – Potrata, ICCF 2000, 17.Nxf6+ Qxf6 18.Bc3 Qxf4+ 19.Qxf4 Rxf4 20.g3 Rf7 21.Bg2² White's two powerful bishops and his superior pawn-structure compensate with an interest his minimal material deficit.) 13...f6 (After 13...Ba3+ 14.Kc2 Rfe8 15.Qh5 Rab8 16.Bd3 g6 17.Qg5, Black is forced to sacrifice a piece in order to organise any meaningful counterplay. He would not obtain sufficient compensation for it, though... 17...Bxc4 18.Bxc4 Nxc4 19.f5 Qxe5 20.Rhe1 Qd4 21.Rxe8+ Rxe8 22.bxc4± Neacsu – Adamczyk, IECG 2004) 14.Re1, Neacsu – Collins, IECG 2003, 14...fxe5 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.Rxe5 d6 17.Re1 Rae8 18.Rxe8 Rxe8 19.a4² Black has no compensation for the weaknesses in his queenside pawn-structure.

11...0-0-0 12.f4. White often sacrifices a pawn in similar positions. After f7-f6 and the capturing f6xe5, he continues with f4-f5! and then places his knight on the blocking e4-square. He thus obtains an overwhelming position only at the price

of a pawn. (12.Qe4?! Re8 13.c5? Bxf1
14.cxb6 Ba6 15.bxa7 Kb7μ Shankland –
Onischuk, Saint Louis 2009) 12...f6
13.Qf2!? (13.Qe4 Bb7 14.0-0-0 Re8
15.Re1 fxe5 16.fxe5 g6÷ Abdulov – Lenic,
Minsk 2017)



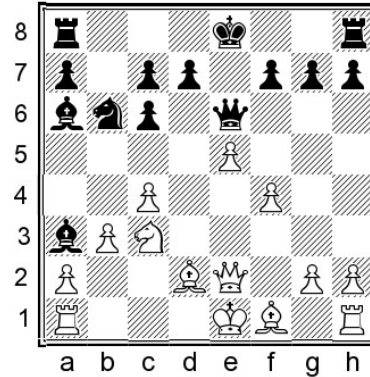
13...fxe5?! Black does not prevent his
opponent's plan. 14.f5 Qf7 15.c5 Bxf1
16.cxb6 Ba6? 17.bxc7 Kxc7 18.Qxa7+ Bb7
19.Na4+-

13...Kb7. Black loses a tempo for the
protection of his bishop, but deprives
White of the tactical motifs, connected
with the move c4-c5. 14.Ne4 (14.Bd3!?
fxe5 15.0-0 Qd6 16.Bc2©; 14.a4 d6÷)
14...Ka8 15.Bc3 d5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Bxa6
dxe4 18.Qe2 Nd5 19.Bc4 Nxc3 20.Bxe6
Nxe2 21.Kxe2 fxe5 22.fxe5², with a
superior pawn-structure for White.

13...Bb7 14.a4. Now, Black must take
some measures against the further
advance of this enemy pawn. (14.Bd3 fxe5
15.0-0 exf4 16.Bxf4 Bd6 17.Rae1 Qf6
18.Ne4 Qxf4 19.Qxf4 Bxf4 20.Rxf4 Rde8
21.Ref1©) 14...a5 (14...Kb8? 15.a5 Nc8
16.a6 Ba8 17.c5 fxe5 18.f5 Qe7, Francisco
– Adamson, Charlotte 2019, 19.b4 d6
20.Rb1+-) 15.c5! (15.Bd3 d6÷) 15...Nd5
16.Be2!? (16.Bc4 g5=) 16...fxe5 17.f5 Qe7
18.Ne4 Nf6 19.Nxf6 gxf6 20.b4 d5 21.0-0,
White has good compensation for the
sacrificed pawn.

12.f4!?

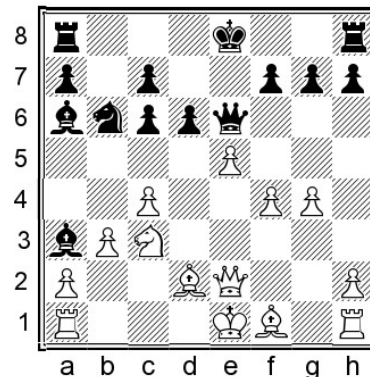
12.Qe4?! 0-0 13.Bd3 f5! 14.exf6 Qxe4+
15.Bxe4 d5 16.cxd5 Bb2 17.Rd1 Bxc3
18.Bxc3 Rfe8μ Papp – Batsiashvili, Caleta
2018.



12...0-0

12...0-0-0. White's king would not be
safe on the queenside. 13.Qf2 c5 (13...Bb7
14.c5 Nd5 15.Bc4²) 14.Be2 d6 15.0-0
dxe5 16.f5 Qe7 17.Be3²

12...d6 13.g4! After d6xe5, White's
idea is to sacrifice a pawn with f4-f5, Nc3-
e4. (Naturally, he might play more
prudently here – 13.exd6 cxd6 14.g3 0-0
15.Qxe6 fxe6 16.Bh3÷)

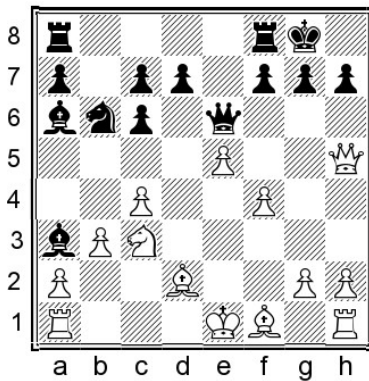


13...0-0 14.f5 Qxe5 15.Qxe5 dxe5
16.Bg2©

13...dxe5 14.f5 Qe7 15.Bg2 0-0-0 16.0-0 Nd5 17.Ne4 Nf4 (17...Nf6 18.Bg5©) 18.Bxf4 exf4 19.Qf2 Bb7 20.Qxf4÷ Black's powerful bishop-pair compensates the defects of his pawn-structure.

13...0-0-0 14.Bg2 dxe5 15.f5 Qd6! (15...Qe7 16.0-0 – see 13...dxe5) 16.Rd1 Nd5 (It is also possible for Black here to follow a plan, connected with winning the pawn on a2: 16...Bb2 17.Ne4 Qa3 18.0-0 Bd4+ 19.Kh1 Qxa2 20.Qf3÷; or to centralise his queen: 16...Qd4 17.Qf3 e4 18.Nxe4 Rde8÷) 17.Ne4 Qe7 18.0-0 Nf4 19.Qf2 Nxe2. Black gives up his pawn on a7, but manages to trade the important enemy bishop. 20.Qxa7 Bb7 21.b4 Bb2 22.Nc5 Bd4+ 23.Rf2 Bxf2+ (23...Bxc5? 24.bxc5 Qh4 25.Rb1±) 24.Kxf2 Rxd2+ 25.Rxd2 Qh4+ 26.Kxg2 Qxg4=

13.Qh5



13...d6

About 13...f5 14.Bd3 d6 15.0-0 – see 13...d6.

The move 13...g6?! would lead to a serious weakening of Black's kingside. Now, White would have two attacking plans: Ne4-f6(g5) and h2-h4-h5. 14.Qh6 Rae8 (14...f6 15.Bd3 fxe5 16.0-0 exf4

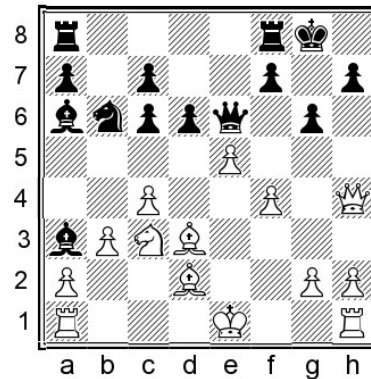
17.Ne4 Bb2 (17...Qe7 18.Rae1) 18.Rae1 Qe7 19.Bb4 Qxb4? 20.Ng5+–) 15.Bd3 f5 16.h4f

14.Bd3 g6

It is more reliable for Black to choose here 14...f5!?, defending against the checkmate and avoiding the weakening of the f6 and h6-squares. 15.0-0 dxe5 16.Qh3 Rae8÷

15.Qh4!?

15.Qh6 dxe5 16.Ne4, Mai – Timman, Helsingor 2018, 16...Be7÷



15...dxe5

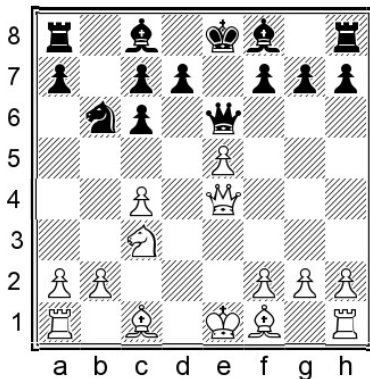
15...Rae8 16.0-0²

15...f5 16.g4! White sacrifices a pawn and wishes to open files against the enemy king. 16...fxg4 17.h3 g3 18.0-0 Bc8 19.f5 gxf5 20.Rf3 dxe5 21.Rxg3+ Kh8 22.Bh6 Rg8 23.Rxg8+ Qxg8+ 24.Kh1 Bf8 25.Rg1 Qf7 26.Bxf8 Qxf8 27.c5,

16.f5 Qd7 (16...gxf5? 17.0-0+–) **17.Qh6**
Be7 18.Be4 Rad8 19.Rf1, The activity of
White's pieces compensates with an
interest his minimal material deficit.

Chapter 26

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6 10.Qe4



In this chapter we will analyse some seldom played moves for Black: **A) 10...a5** and **B) 10...Bb7**.

10...Be7 11.Bd3 d5. He has no good prospects after this move. (11...Bb7 12.0-0 – see 10...Bb7) 12.exd6 cxd6 13.0-0 Qxe4 14.Bxe4 Bb7 15.b3 0-0 16.Be3 d5 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Bf3 Rfc8 19.Ne2² Real de Azua – Valerga, Buenos Aires 2004. Black is clearly worse due to the vulnerability of his d5-pawn.

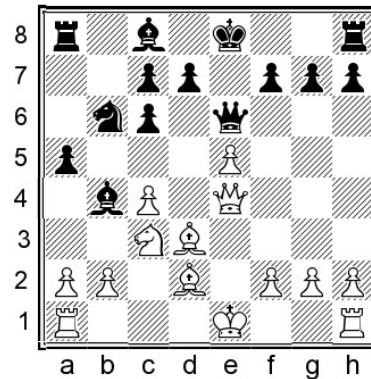
A) 10...a5 11.Bd3 Bb4

About 11...g6 12.0-0 Bg7 13.Bd2 0-0 14.Rae1 – see Chapter 25, variation A.

11...Ba6. This attack against the pawn on c4 is easily parried by White. 12.b3 g6 (12...Bb4 13.Bd2 – see 11...Bb4) 13.0-0 Bg7 14.f4 0-0 15.Ba3. White develops his bishop with tempo and seizes completely the initiative. 15...Rfe8 16.Qf3 d5 17.cxd5

cxd5 18.Bxa6 Rxa6 19.Nb5 Qd7 20.Qd3 Raa8 21.Rac1± Khantuev – Naylor, Coulsdon 2007. White wishes to provoke the advance of the enemy c7-pawn in order to occupy the d6-square with his knight.

12.Bd2



12...Ba6

12...a4 13.0-0 Ba6 14.b3 a3, Hakimifard – Mohana, Teheran 2006, 15.Rfe1±

About 12...Bb7 13.0-0 – see variation B.

12...a4 13.b3 Ba6 14.0-0 – see 12...Ba6.

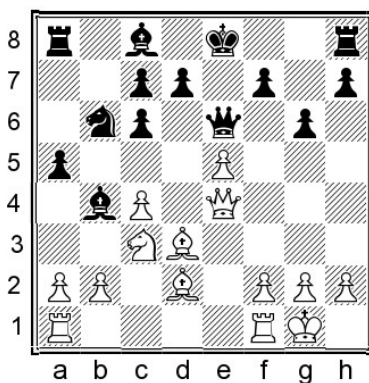
12...d5 13.exd6 cxd6 14.0-0-0 (14.0-0 Qxe4 15.Bxe4 Bd7, Protaziuk – Pinkas, Mrzezyno 2011, 16.b3 0-0 17.Rfd1²; 14.a3!? Bxc3 15.Bxc3 Nxc4 16.Bxg7 Rg8 17.Bc3² White not only has the two-bishop advantage, but also a superior pawn-structure.) 14...Qxe4 15.Nxe4 0-0 (15...d5 16.cxd5 cxd5, Vuelban – Petkov, Cesenatico 2010, 17.Ng5²) 16.Be3 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 d5 18.a3 Be7, Haslinger – Hebden, Halifax 2010, 19.Bd3 dxe4 20.Bxe4 Be6 21.Rhe1² The weak pawn on

c6 dooms Black to a long and difficult defence.

12...Rb8?! Two of Black's pieces are placed on the b-file, so he would hardly manage to exert pressure with his rook against the b2-square. 13.0-0 (13.b3 d5 14.exd6 cxd6 15.0-0 Qxe4, Patil – Debashis, Dharamshala 2014, 16.Bxe4²) 13...Bb7 14.f4 (14.Rfe1±) 14...c5 15.Qe2 f5. Black defends against f4-f5, but after 16.Nb5 Na8 17.Be3, it becomes evident that in order to save his bishop on b4 he would need to part with his pawn on c5. 17...a4 18.a3 Ba5 19.Bxc5+- Delchev – Ferguson, Benasque 1997.

12...Bxc3. This voluntary exchange of the bishop for the knight is obviously bad for Black. 13.Bxc3 Na4 14.Bd4. Naturally, White is reluctant to part with his two-bishop advantage. 14...Rb8, Luong – Vo, Vietnam 2002, 15.b3± Nb6 16.0-0+-

12...g6. With a pawn on g6, Black should better fianchetto his dark-squared bishop. 13.0-0 (13.0-0-0!?)

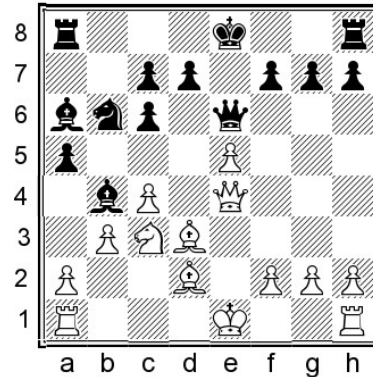


13...Ba6 14.b3²

13...Bb7, Pritchard – Millar, ICCF 2009 14.Bg5!? Be7. Now, he must lose a tempo for the retreat of his bishop; otherwise, he would fail to protect his dark-squared bishop. 15.Qf4±

13...0-0 14.Rfe1!? If White places his other rook on this square, he would not have the possibility to oust the enemy bishop with the move a2-a3. (14.Rae1, Aagaard – Ashton, England 2016, 14...f5 15.Qf4 Ba6 16.b3 d6÷) 14...f5 15.Qf4 Ba6 16.b3 d6 17.a3 Bc5 18.Bf1²

13.b3



13...d5

13...a4 14.0-0 0-0-0? (14...a3, Hakimifard – Mohana, Teheran 2006, 15.Rfe1±) 15.c5 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Bxc5, Korkmaz – Onem, Antalya 2019, 17.Nxa4 Qxe5 18.Bf4 Qxf4 19.Qa6+ Kb8 20.Nxc5+-

13...0-0-0 14.a3 Be7 15.0-0 d6 16.Qf3 g6 17.Nd5 (Here, White can also determine immediately the pawn-structure with 17.exd6 Qxd6 and begin active actions on the queenside: 18.Nd5 cxd5? 19.c5+-; 18...Nxd5 19.c5 Qxc5 20.Bxa6+ Kb8 21.b4,) 17...dxe5?! 18.Nxe7+ Qxe7 19.Bxa5± A.Horvath – Kallio, Budapest 2012.

The defects of the move 13...g6 can be emphasized by White by advancing the h-pawn. 14.h4 0-0 15.0-0-0 d5 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.h5 f5 18.Qf3± Rad8, Sharma – Tabatabaei, Abu Dhabi 2018, 19.Kc2±

After the exchange on g6, White can begin an attack against the enemy king.

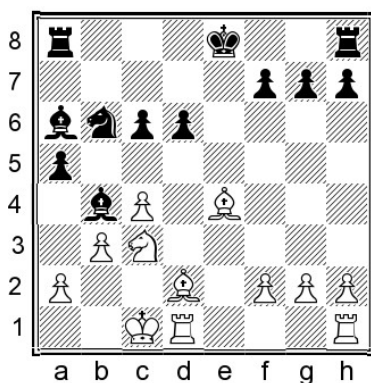
14.exd6 cxd6 15.0-0-0

15.a3 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 a4, Dzhumaev – Jumabayev, Voronezh 2010. Black is trying to organise counterplay against the enemy c4-pawn. (16...0-0²) 17.0-0-0!? Qxe4 18.Bxe4 d5 19.Bf5 axb3 20.Bxg7 Rg8 21.Rhe1+ Kd8 22.cxd5 Nxd5 23.Bd4 Kc7 (23...Rxc7?? 24.Bb6#) 24.g3± White's bishops are tremendously powerful in this open position.

15...Qxe4

But not 15...Bb7? D'Avino – Razzano, Biella 2015, 16.Qd4+–

16.Bxe4



16...Rc8

The move 16...Bb7? is too passive.. 17.Nb5 0-0-0 18.Bf5+ Kb8 19.Bxb4 axb4 (19...cxb5 20.Bxa5 Ka7 21.cxb5+– Draskovic – Lagerman, Sunny Beach

2011) 20.Nxd6 Rhf8 21.Rhe1+– Drenchev – Janchev, Varna 2015.

16...Kd7 17.Rhe1²

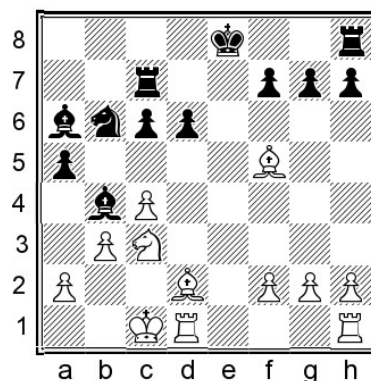
16...Ba3+ 17.Kb1 d5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Nxd5 Nxd5, Rewitz – D.Pedersen, Denmark 1996, 20.Bxa5±

17.Bf5

White's bishop frees a square for his knight with tempo. His idea is to attack the pawn on d6.

17...Rc7

17...Rd8. Black protects his pawn on d6, but after 18.Rhe1+, he would fail to interpose against the check with his rook. 18...Kf8, Jimenez Fraga – Infante Machin, Havana 2007, 19.Be4±



18.Rhe1+

It is useful for White to deflect the enemy rook to the e7-square.

He would lose a part of his advantage after the line: 18.Ne4 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 d5 20.Nd6+ Kd8 21.Re1 Re7 22.Rxe7 Kxe7 23.c5² Stepovaia – Makropoulou, Dresden 2007.

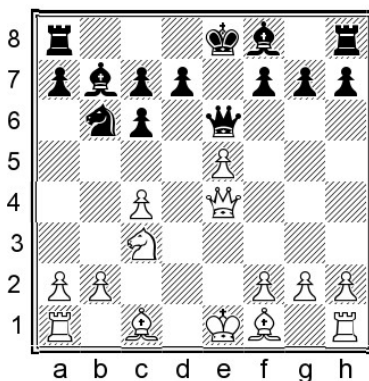
The seemingly quiet move 18.Kb2 is in fact connected with an insidious trap: 18...g6? 19.Rhe1+ Re7, Llaneza Vega – Rios Parra, Canovelles 2008, 20.Bg5+– This move has become possible, because White's king protects his knight.

18...Re7 19.Ne4 Ba3+

19...d5 20.Bxb4 axb4 21.Nd6+ Kd8 22.c5. Black is practically stalemated. 22...Na8 23.Rxe7 Kxe7 24.Re1+ Kf6 25.g4 Nc7 26.f4+– Narayanan – Ashish, Bhopal 2017.

20.Kc2. Black's position is hopeless, because he cannot castle in view of the move Nf6+. **20...a4 21.Bc3 1–0** Kovchan – Domogaev, Tula 2007.

B) 10...Bb7



11.Bd3

11.b3?! After this move, White's knight on c3 is defenceless. 11...Bb4 12.Bd2 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 c5 14.Qe3 Rhe8. Black has deployed harmoniously his forces and has all the chances of seizing the initiative. 15.f4 d6 16.Bd3 dxe5 17.Rhe1, Swiercz – Grischuk, Tromsø 2013, 17...f5 18.Nb5 (18.fxe5 f4 19.Qe2 Bxg2µ) 18...Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 a6 20.Nc3 e4 21.g4 (21.Qxc5?? Qf6) 21...Qf6µ White has no compensation for the pawn at all.

If he wishes to play Bd2, 0-0-0, he should better do that immediately, without weakening his castling position with the move b2-b3. 11.Bd2 0-0-0 (About 11...Bb4 12.a3 – see Chapter 29, line C; 11...g6 12.Bd3 – see Chapter 30, line B) 12.0-0-0 Re8 (12...c5 13.Nd5?! d6; 13.Qe2 Re8 14.a4÷; 13...Kb8 14.a4÷) 13.Re1 Bb4 (It is also interesting here for Black to transfer his bishop to the d4-square: 13...Bc5!? 14.f4 Bf2. It would be useful for him to worsen the placement of White's rook. 15.Re2 c5 16.Qd3 Bd4÷) 14.Bd3 (14.Qf4!?) 14...c5 15.Qf4 g5. Black wishes to deflect the enemy queen from the protection of the pawn on c4, but weakens his kingside with his last move. 16.Qf6 (16.Qxg5 Nxc4 17.Bf5 Qa6÷) 16...h6 17.f3² Z. Agmanov – Makhnev, Almaty 2018.

11...Bb4

This is a tricky order of moves. If Black begins with 10...Bb4 11.Bd2 Bb7, White would have the additional possibility 12.a3 – see Chapter 29.

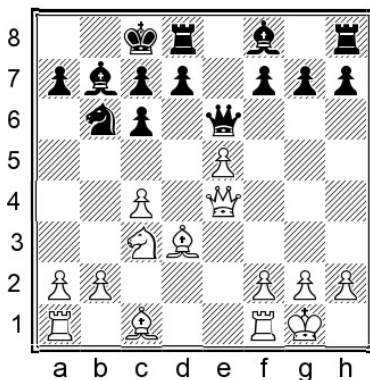
About 11...d5 12.exd6 – see 11...d6.

11...d6. This move leads to an endgame without any good prospects for Black.
 12.exd6 cxd6 13.0-0 Qxe4 14.Nxe4 h6, Yu – Li, Hebei 2001 (14...0-0-0? 15.Ng5+-; 14...Ba6 15.Re1 Kd7 16.b3 h6, Batsanin – Bojarinov, Nizhnij Novgorod 1999, 17.Bf4±) 15.Re1 0-0-0 16.Be3² Black has in inferior pawn-structure and is faced with a long and difficult defence in the endgame.

11...g6 12.0-0 Bg7, Surewaard – Winants, Roosendaal 2012, 13.Qh4. This move prevents Black from castling queenside. 13...0-0 14.Ne4 Qxe5 15.Bd2f White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

11...Be7 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.Qe2 (13.Re1!? Rhe8 14.Qe2) 13...d5 14.cxd5 cxd5, Kalteinen – Hyvarinen, Vantaa 1996, 15.Nb5 c5 (15...c6?? 16.Nd4) 16.Bf4² White's king is much safer than its black counterpart.

11...0-0-0 12.0-0



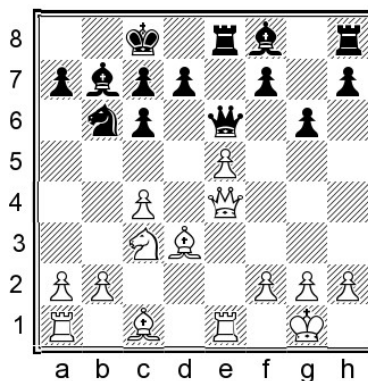
12...f6 13.exf6. Now, White does not need to worry about the protection of his pawn on e5. 13...Qxf6, Slingerland –

S.Ernst, Hoogeveen 2008, 14.Qe2 Kb8 15.Ne4 Qe5 16.Bd2²

12...h6, Jones – P.Short, Bunratty 2009, 13.Re1 Kb8 (13...d5?! 14.exd6 Bxd6 15.Qxe6+ fxe6 16.Bf1) 14.b3 Bc5 15.Bb2² With a bishop on c5, Black cannot play c6-c5, opening the diagonal for his bishop on b7.

12...Kb8 13.Bf4 (13.Re1!?) 13...h6 14.Bg3 g5 15.Qe2! (15.Rfe1 h5, Price – Valentine, Birmingham 2001, 16.h3 Bb4÷) 15...h5 16.h3² White has a freer game, but he must be constantly on the alert about the advance of Black's pawns on the kingside.

12...Re8 13.Re1 g6 (13...c5 14.Qe2 g5, Hill – Mihajlov, London 2014. Here, White can simply capture a pawn: 15.Bxg5 Bxg2 16.Kxg2 Rg8 17.f4 h6 18.h4 hxg5 19.hxg5 Be7 20.Ne4 Rh8 21.Qf3+-)

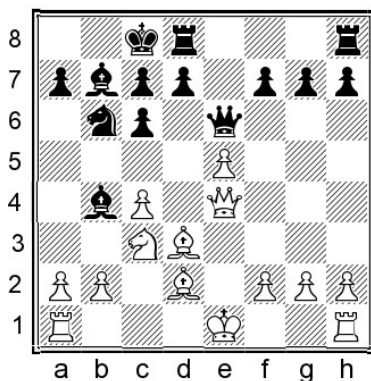


14.a4. White begins immediate active actions on the queenside. 14...a5 (14...d5. He is well prepared to counter this pawn-advance. 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qe2 Nd7 17.Qc2 a6 18.Bf4² The position of Black's king is rather unsafe.) 15.Bd2 Bb4 16.Qe2 d6 (After 16...Ba6, Ciocan – Bucur, Calimanesti 2015, it would be very good for White to play 17.Ne4±, with the idea Bxb4, Nc5.) 17.Na2 c5 18.Nxb4 cxb4 19.exd6 Qxd6 20.Be3² White maintains a stable advantage thanks to his bishop-pair.

14.Bf4. This is a reliable move. White fortifies his e5-square. 14...Bb4 (14...Bg7, Yalcin – Kraft, Bayern 2013, 15.c5 Nd5 16.Bg3 h5 17.h3±) 15.Rac1 d6 16.Bf1²

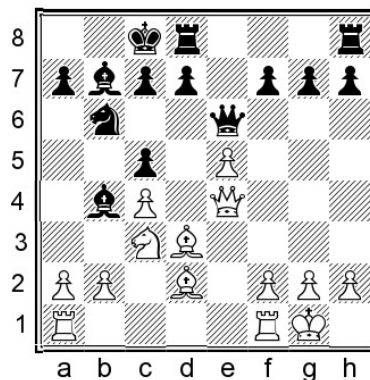
12.Bd2 0-0-0

12...a5, Mikes – Kociscak, Ostrava 2019, 13.0-0!? 0-0-0 (13...d5. Still, the arising endgame would be without any good prospects for him, since he would have no compensation for his pawn-weaknesses. 14.exd6 Qxe4 15.Nxe4²) 14.a3 Bc5 15.b4!? axb4 16.axb4 Bxb4 17.Qe2 Rhe8 18.Ne4 Bxd2 19.Qxd2 Qxe5 20.c5 Nd5 21.Rfb1+–



Now, White must make a decision where to castle: **B1)** 13.0-0, or **B2)** 13.0-0-0.

B1) 13.0-0 c5



14.Qh4

He removes immediately his queen away from the possible juxtaposition with the enemy major pieces on the e-file.

14.Qf4. White's queen will come under an attack on this square after 14...g5, for example: 15.Qg3 Nxc4!? (15...Rhg8, Khukhashvili – Kosteniuk, Antakya 2010, 16.b3²) 16.Bxc4 Qxc4 17.Rac1 h5 18.Bxg5 h4 19.Qh3 Rdg8 20.f4 Rh5f Black is preparing an exchange-sacrifice on the g5-square at an opportune moment. His bishop on b7 exerts powerful pressure against the g2-square.

14.Qe2 d6! After the capturing on e5, Black wishes to bring his rook on d8 into the actions. (14...f6 15.Rfe1 Rhe8, Remiro – Baron Rodriguez, Aragon 1999, 16.a3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3²) 15.a3 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 dxe5. White cannot regain his pawn, because his bishop on d3 is not sufficiently protected. 17.b3 e4 (17...f5!? 18.Bc2 Rhe8÷) 18.Bc2 f5 19.Rae1 Qf7 20.f3 exf3 21.Qe7 Qxe7 22.Rxe7 Rhe8 (22...fxg2 23.Bxf5+ Kb8 24.Rfe1 Rhf8 25.Be5 Na8 26.Bxh7÷) 23.Bxf5+ Kb8 24.Rxe8 Rxe8 25.gxf3 Re3 26.Bxg7 Rxb3 27.Bxh7 Rxa3 28.h4 Bxf3= V.Ivanov – Ponomarenko, ICCF 2014. White's bishops are very active, but Black has all the chances of

making a draw, because there is just a few material left on the board.

14...d6

14...Ba6? Kotronias – Kosteniuk,
Moscow 2011, 15.Ne4 Bxd2 16.Nxc5 Qh6
17.Qxh6 Bxh6 18.Nxa6±

Following 14...Qxe5 15.Bf4, White
obtains good compensation for the
sacrificed pawn, for example: 15...Qf6
16.Qg3 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Qc6 18.f3©

15.Bg5

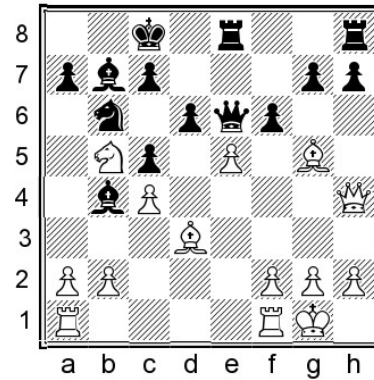
15.exd6 Rxd6 16.Rae1 Rd4 17.Qxd4
cxd4 18.Rxe6 dxc3 19.Rxb6 axb6 20.bxc3
Bd6© Kugler – Terreaux, ICCF 2016.
White has an extra pawn, but his
queenside pawn-structure is horribly
compromised.

15...Rde8

There arises a much more complicated
position after 15...Rd7 16.Nd5 Nxd5
17.cxd5 Bxd5÷

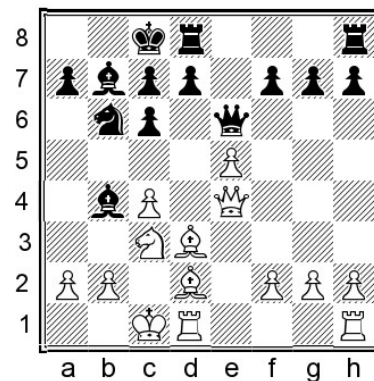
16.Nb5 f6

16...a6?! 17.Nxc7 Kxc7 18.a3²



17.exd6! This is an interesting piece-
sacrifice for the initiative. Still, after a
precise defence Black can hold the
position. 17...fxg5 18.Qxg5 Qe5 19.Bf5+
Kb8 20.dxc7+ Ka8 21.Rad1 h6 22.Rd8+
Nc8 23.Bxc8 hxg5 24.Bxb7+ Kxb7
25.c8=Q+. White has managed to
promote a new queen. Now however,
Black begins a counter attack and forces a
perpetual check. 25...Kb6 26.f4 Qe3+=
27.Rf2 (27.Kh1? Qxf4--+) 27...Qe1+
28.Rf1 Qe3=

B2) 13.0-0-0



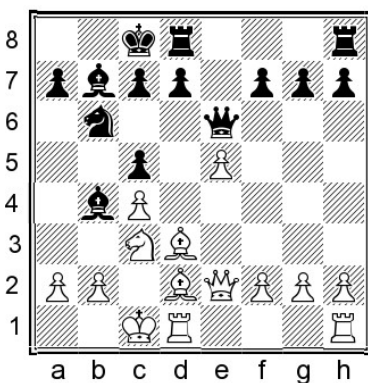
This move seems quite reasonable, at
least because White's rook will enter
immediately the actions via the d1-
square.

13...c5!

13...Bxc3. This voluntary exchange of the bishop for the knight is obviously bad for Black. 14.Bxc3 Na4 15.Ba5 Nc5 (15...c5 16.Qf4 Rde8?? 17.Bf5+- J.Pedersen – Nakken, Hastings 2005) 16.Qd4 Nxd3+ 17.Rxd3 d6 18.exd6 Rxd6 19.Qf4 g5 20.Rxd6 cxd6 21.Qd4± Black has too many pawn-weaknesses in his position. 21...Re8?? 22.Re1 1–0 Halvax – Hiermann, St Veit 2018.

14.Qe2

White should possibly comply here with the equality after 14.Qf4 g5, Muzychuk – Harika, Antakya 2010, 15.Qf6 Qxf6 16.exf6 Bxg2 17.Rhg1 Bf3 18.Rde1 h6 19.Re7© The activity of his pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.



14...Bxc3!?

Black not only wins a pawn, but also compromises his opponent's pawn-structure on the kingside.

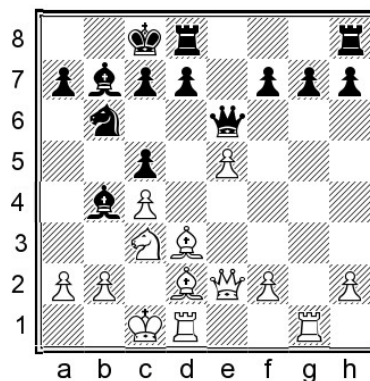
14...Rhe8 15.f4. White protects simultaneously two of his pawns with this move. (It is obviously weaker for him here to choose 15.Rhe1 Bxg2 16.a3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 Qc6 18.Qe3 d5 19.cxd5 Nxd5 20.Qg5 Bh3 21.Be4, Mamedov – Smirnov,

Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, 21...g6³) 15...d6 16.a3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 g6 18.Rhf1 (18.Rhe1!?) 18...Na4 19.Ba5 dxe5 20.fxe5. White exerts powerful pressure against the enemy position. 20...f5? (20...Nb6) 21.exf6 1–0 Caruana – Granda Zuniga, Tromsoe 2013.

15.Rhg1

15.Rhe1 f6 16.a3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 Na4 18.f3 Nxc3 19.bxc3 Bh3 20.f4 Bf5. Now, White must force a draw in order to avoid the worst.. 21.Bxf5 Qxf5 22.Qg2 Kb8 23.e6 dxe6 24.Qb2+ Kc8 25.Qg2=

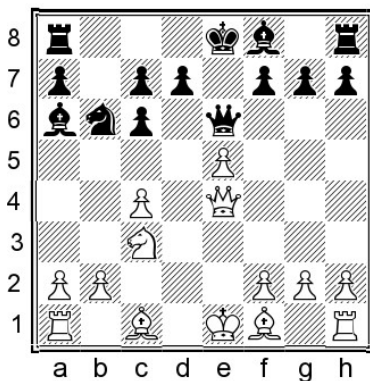
15...Bb7



16.f4 (16.Rxg7 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Ba6÷; 16.a3 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 Rhe8 18.f4 g6÷) **16...g6**. Black prevents the further advance of the enemy f-pawn. **17.a3 Bxc3 18.Bxc3 Rhe8÷** Nakhapetiane – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011. White's powerful bishop-pair compensates fully his minimal material deficit.

Chapter 27

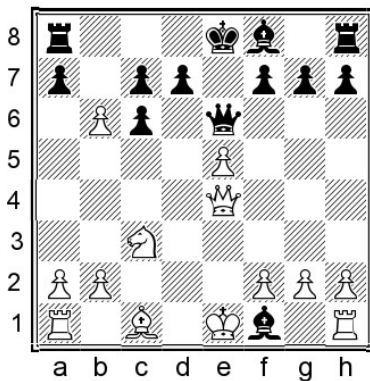
**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6 10.Qe4 Ba6**



11.b3

White not only protects his pawn, but also prepares the development of his bishop. This is the way for him to fight for the opening advantage.

The move 11.c5 would lead to a draw if Black plays correctly. 11...Bxf1 12.cxb6



12...Bxg2? 13.b7 Rb8 14.Qxg2+-

12...Bc4 13.bxc7 d5 14.exd6 Bxd6

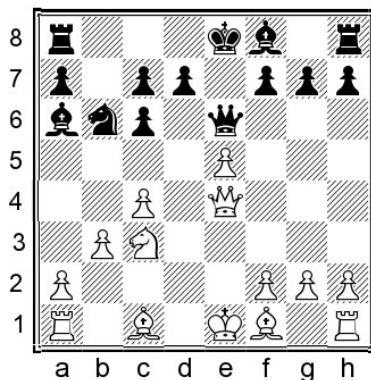
15.Qxe6+ Bxe6 16.Be3 0-0 17.0-0 Bxc7=

Sveshnikov – Krylov, Moscow 2011.

Black's two powerful bishops compensate the weaknesses in his pawn-structure.

12...Ba6 13.bxc7 Rc8 (13...Bc5? 14.Be3 Bxe3 15.Qxe3 0-0, Alimova – Mihelic, Porec 2015, 16.0-0-0±; 13...Be7?! Amon – Ibrahimli, Konya 2018, 14.Be3 0-0 15.Rd1 Rfc8 16.f4 Bf8 17.Qa4 Bb7 18.Ne4 Rxc7 19.Bc5±) 14.Be3 (14.f4!?) 14...Rxc7. Black has restored the material balance, but White can seize completely the initiative by advancing his f-pawn. 15.f4 Rb7 16.f5 Qc4, Lothian – Berry, Dundee 2017, 17.0-0-0²

12...f5. This is the most precise way for Black to equality. He takes measures against an eventual advance of the enemy f-pawn – f2-f4-f5. 13.b7. It is essential for White to leave the enemy a7-pawn defenceless. (13.Qe3 Bxg2 14.Rg1 f4 15.b7 – see 13.b7) 13...Rb8 14.Qe3 Bxg2 15.Rg1 f4. Black is not afraid of the capturing on a7, because he can give a perpetual check after a well calculated sacrifice of two rooks: 16.Qxa7 Qxe5+ 17.Be3 Bb4 18.Qxb8+ Kf7 19.Qxh8 Bxc3+ 20.bxc3 Qxc3+ 21.Ke2 Qc2=



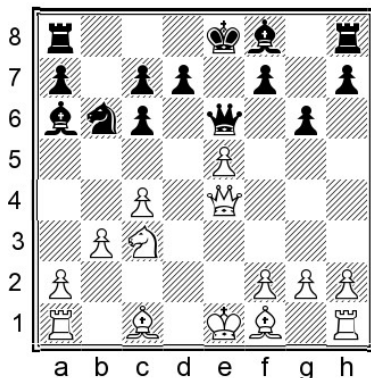
11...0-0-0!

About 11...Bb4 12.Bd2 – see Chapter 29, variation **D**.

The move 11...d5 would lead to a position without any good prospects for Black. 12.exd6 cxd6 (12...Qxe4+ 13.Nxe4

cxd6, Roubaud – Colin, Saint Affrique 2010, 14.g3!?² White's plan is quite simple: Bg2, 0-0, Bf4, Rad1, Rfe1.) 13.Be2 Qxe4 14.Nxe4. Black's d-pawn would be weak on d6, as well as on the d5-square. 14...d5 15.cxd5 Bxe2 16.Kxe2 cxd5 17.Nc3 0-0-0 18.Rd1 Bb4 19.Be3² Tonne – Baciak, ICCF 2007.

11...g6



12.Bb2 Bg7 13.f4 d5?! Now, Black loses a pawn due to the defencelessness of his bishop on a6. (13...0-0 14.0-0-0²) 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Nxd5 Qxd5 16.Qxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxa6± Lutard – Van der Lingen, Durban 2014.

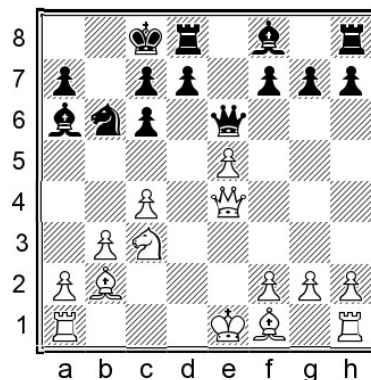
12.f4!/? Bb4. After this development of the bishop, the move g6 would not be so useful for Black. (about 12...Bg7 13.Bd3 – see Chapter 30, variation **C1**; 13.Ba3!?) 13.Bb2 f5 14.Qf3 0-0 15.0-0-0 Bb7 16.c5! White sacrifices a pawn and wishes to exploit the placement of the enemy king and queen on one and a same diagonal. 16...Bxc5 17.Na4 d6, Asnaashari – Moghaddam, Mashhad 2010. Now, Black can defend against the appearance of the enemy bishop on the c4-square with the help of the move d5, without being afraid of the capturing en passant, but after the simple line: 18.Nxc5 dxc5 19.Ba3±, White would maintain a stable advantage, since his bishops are very active, while Black

has numerous pawn-weaknesses in his camp.

12.Bb2

12.f4 Bb7 (12...Re8 13.Bb2 – see 12.Bb2) 13.Bd3 d6 14.c5 dxc5÷

12.c5? This is a standard move for the Scotch Game, but in this position it is not timely and would lead to difficulties for White. 12...Bxf1 13.cxb6 d5! This is the point. Black frees with tempo the d7-square for his king. 14.exd6?! (14.Qf4 Bxg2 15.bxa7 Kd7! 16.Rg1 Bd6! 17.Na4 Qxe5+ 18.Qxe5 Bxe5 19.Bb2 Bxb2 20.Nxb2 Be4³ White's a7-pawn is very weak, so he will have to fight for a draw.) 14...Qxe4+ 15.Nxe4 Bxg2 16.bxa7 Kb7 17.Nc5+ Ka8! (17...Kxa7 18.Rg1 cxd6 19.Rxg2 dxc5³) 18.Rg1 Bd5µ Van der Wiel – Van den Doel, Rotterdam 2000.



We will analyse in details now: **A)** 12...Bb7 and **B)** 12...Re8.

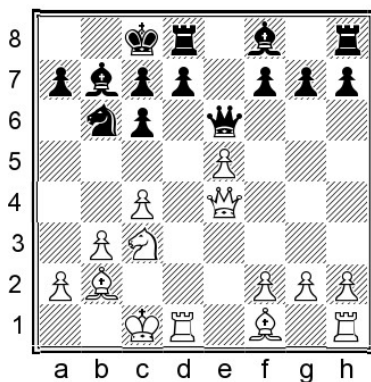
12...Bc5 13.Bd3 f6 14.0-0!/? White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. (14.exf6 Qxf6 15.0-0 Rde8 16.Qf5 Qxf5 17.Bxf5 Bd4. He has a superior pawn-structure, but Black's bishop on d4 is very

active. 18.Na4 c5. He would not mind exchanging the bishops, but is waiting for White to capture on d4. 19.Bxd4 cxd4 20.Nb2 g6 21.Bh3 Kd8÷, followed by d7-d6, c7-c5, Black protects his pawn on d4 and obtains a quite acceptable position, Brandenburg – Smeets, Hilversum 2008.) 14...fxe5 15.Qe1²; 15.Rab1²

12...c5N. Black's bishop on a6 is restricted by the pawn on c4, so he plans to transfer it to the long diagonal. 13.Bd3 Bb7 14.Qe3 Bxg2 15.Rg1 Bb7 16.Ne4f White has good compensation for the minimal material deficit.

12...f6!? 13.f4 (13.exf6 Qxf6 14.0-0-0 Qxf2 15.Kb1 Kb8= Roques – Hervet, ICCF 2011. White's pieces have been actively deployed, but he is still a pawn down.) 13...Re8 14.0-0-0 fxe5 15.fxe5 (15.c5 – see variation B) 15...Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Rxe5 – see Chapter 23, variation B.

A) 12...Bb7 13.0-0-0

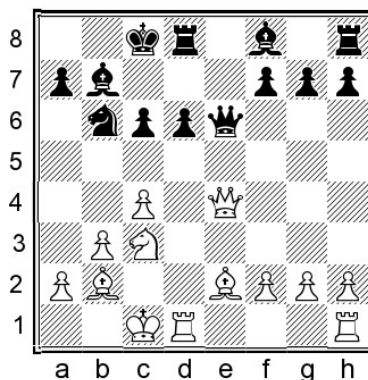


13...Re8

13...Bb4, Stepovaia – Ubiennykh, Elista 2003, 14.Bd3 Rde8 (14...c5?! After the

exchange of the pawns on the g-file White's rook will become much more active. 15.Qf4 Bxg2 16.Rhg1 Bc6 17.Rxg7±) 15.Rhe1² White's pieces have been actively and harmoniously deployed.

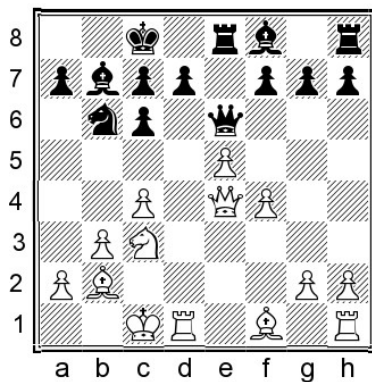
Following 13...d5?! 14.exd6 cxd6, Black will become the defending side. 15.Be2 (White can fight for the advantage in some other ways as well: 15.Qf4!?, or 15.Qxe6+!? 15...fxe6 16.Ne4.)



15...Kb8 16.Qxe6 fxe6 17.Ne4 d5 (The move 17...Be7? enables White to inflict a tactical strike 18.Nxd6 Bxd6 19.Rxd6 Rxd6 20.Be5+–) 18.Ng5 Re8 19.Bh5 Re7 20.Rhe1±

15...Qxe4 16.Nxe4 f6. This move seems to be more precise than 16...h6, because it is essential for Black that in many variations White's bishop would be incapable of capturing the pawn on g7. (16...h6? 17.c5! dxc5?? 18.Bg4+ Nd7 19.Rxd7 Rxd7 20.Rd1+–; 17...Nd5 18.Nxd6+ Bxd6 19.cxd6 Rxd6 20.Bg4+ Kd8 21.Bxg7±) 17.c5!? Nd5 (17...dxc5 18.Rxd8+ Kxd8 19.Nxf6!±) 18.Nxd6+ Bxd6 19.cxd6 Rxd6 20.Rhe1² Motylev – Sofronie, Eforie Nord 2000. White's bishop-pair provides him with a stable advantage, but there is still plenty of fight ahead.

14.f4



14...d5

Black must immediately play actively in the centre.

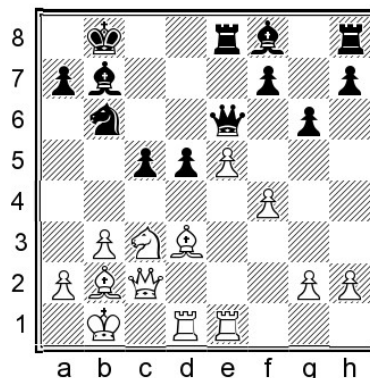
14...g6?! 15.Bd3 (It is also good for White to choose here 15.g3!?, with the idea Bg2.) 15...Bh6, Willemze – Mikhalevski, Vlissingen 2000, 16.c5 Nd5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Qd4±

15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qc2 Kb8

16...Qh6. Black's attack against the enemy f4-pawn, which is detrimental to his development, would only worsen his position. 17.a4 Qxf4+ 18.Kb1 Bb4 (18...Rxe5? 19.Nb5+-) 19.Na2 Be7 20.a5 Nd7 21.Nc3±

17.Kb1

17.Bd3 c5 (17...d4!?) 18.Kb1 g6 19.Rhe1



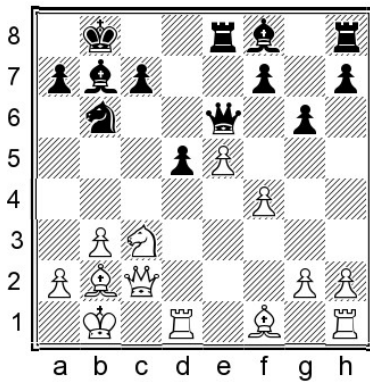
19...f5?! 20.exf6 Qxe1 21.f7 d4 22.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 23.Bc1 Bd6, Haslinger – Van den Doel, Delft 2014, 24.g3 dxc3 25.Qxc3 Rxc1+ 26.Kxc1 Rf8 27.Qg7± After the disappearance of the pawns on h7 and g6 off the board, White's four passed pawns on the kingside should be sufficient for him to win the game.

19...d4. Black frees the d5-square for his knight, but allows the enemy knight to occupy the e4-outpost. 20.Ne4 Rc8, Haslinger – Van den Doel, Haarlem 2013, 21.Ng5 Qe7 22.Rc1 Nd5 23.g3 Nb4 24.Qe2²

19...Be7 20.f5. White gives up the blockade against the enemy pawn on e5. 20...gxf5 21.Bxf5. It is well known that the queen is not a good blocking piece, so here, it is forced to retreat. 21...Qc6 22.e6 fxe6 23.Rxe6 Bd6, Kalaitzoglou – Sofronie, Kallithea 2006, 24.Ne4 Rxe6 25.Nxd6 Rxd6 26.Bxh8²

17...g6

17...Be7 18.Nb5 c5, Beerdsen – Van den Doel, PlayChess 2016, 19.Nd6 Bxd6 20.exd6² The position is beginning to be opened and that would be in favour of White, since he has the two-bishop advantage.



18.a4!?

Now, Black must consider permanently his opponent's pawn-advance a4-a5-a6.

18.Be2 c5 19.Bf3 Be7 (19...d4!? 20.Ne4 Rc8÷) 20.g4 d4 21.Bxb7 Kxb7 22.Ne4 Rc8÷ Kasparov – Adams, Internet 2000. The position is double-edged. White is preparing f4-f5, while Black is ready to push: c5-c4.

18.Nb5. White provokes an immediate crisis in this position. 18...c5. Black prevents the enemy knight from occupying the d4-square, but it can go to d6. (18...c6 19.Nd4 Qc8 20.Qd2 c5 21.Nb5 a6 22.Qa5± Black's king is not safe at all on the queenside.) 19.Nd6 (19.f5 Qxf5÷) 19...Bxd6 20.exd6 Qxd6 21.Bb5. White develops his bishop with tempo. He can give up his bishop on b5 for a rook, but his other bishop would be very useful in the protection of his king. 21...d4 22.Bxe8 Rxe8 23.Rhe1 Rc8, Zelic – Van den Doel, Heraklio 2007, 24.b4² The position is quite open and the power of White's rook is likely to become a telling factor in the future.

18...a6

Following 18...c5? Timman – Sofronie, Budva 2009, White can realise his plan immediately: 19.a5 Nd7 20.a6 Ba8 (20...Bxa6 21.Bxa6 Qxa6 22.Nxd5+-) 21.Nxd5 Bxd5 22.Rxd5 Qxd5 23.Bb5 Rd8 24.Rd1 Qe6 25.Qe4 Qf5 26.Qxf5 gxf5 27.e6+-

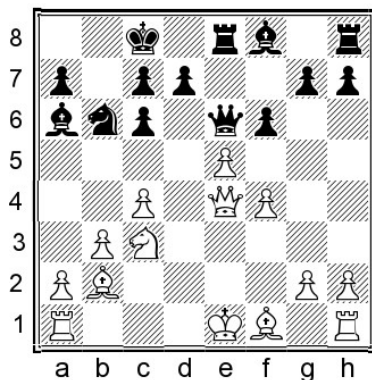
18...Bb4 19.Nb5 Qe7 20.a5. This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice after which White develops his bishop to the a3-f8 diagonal. 20...Bxa5 21.Ba3 Bb4. Black has nothing better here than to part with his c7-pawn. 22.Bxb4 Qxb4 23.Qxc7+ Ka8 24.Qc3² The isolated pawn on d5 would create problems for Black both in the middle game as well as in the endgame.

19.Be2 Rg8 20.Bf3!? White prepares the transfer of his knight to the d3-square. 20...c6 21.Ne2 (21.g4!?) 21...h5 (21...Bb4 22.Nc1±) 22.Rhf1 h4 23.Nc1 Nd7 24.Nd3 Qe7 25.Bg4 Ka8 26.Rde1 Nb8 27.f5± Ottesen – Lanin, ICCF 2012. White breaks his opponent's defence on the kingside and obtains excellent chances of winning the game.

B) 12...Re8 13.f4 f6

Black attacks immediately the e5-square.

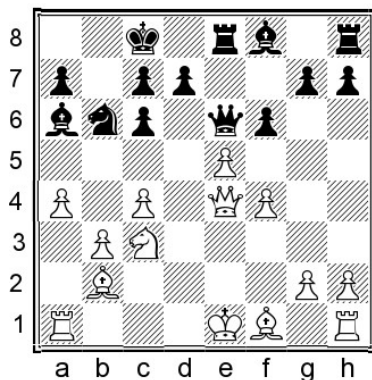
About 13...Bb7 14.0-0-0 – see 12...Bb7.



14.0-0-0

About 14.c5 Bxf1 15.cxb6 Ba6 16.bxa7 Kb7 17.0-0-0 fxe5 – see 14.0-0-0, 17.bxa7.

White should possibly advance 14.a4!? here.

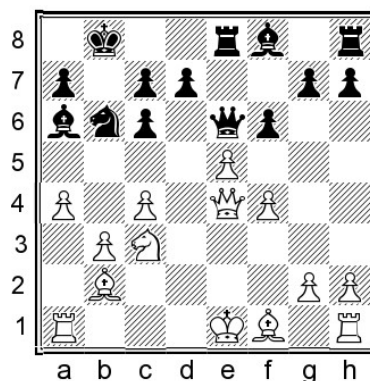


14...d6. Black increases his pressure against the enemy centre. 15.0-0-0 Nd7 (15...fxe5?! 16.c5! Bxf1 17.cxb6 d5 18.bxa7 Kb7 19.Nxd5! cxd5 20.Rxd5 Qc6+ 21.Kb1 exf4 22.a8Q+! Rxa8 23.Rxf1±) 16.exf6 Qxe4 17.Nxe4 Rxe4 18.fxg7 Bxg7 19.Bxg7 Rg8 20.Bc3², with the two-bishop advantage.

14...fxe5 15.f5. Naturally, White should avoid the opening of the e-file, having his king stranded in the centre. 15...Qh6 16.a5 Na8 17.Bc1!? He transfers with tempo his bishop to the g1-a7 diagonal. (17.Be2 Bc5 18.Na4 Be3 19.Rd1² Hoge – Zarnescu,

ICCF 2016) 17...Qf6 18.Be3 Bb4 (18...g6 19.c5 Bxf1 20.Rxf1 gxf5 21.Rxf5 Qe6 22.g4² Qxb3?! After this move the b-file is opened in favour of White. 23.Qd3±) 19.Kd2 Qe7 (19...d5?! This move only weakens the position of Black's king. 20.cxd5 Bxc3+ 21.Kxc3 Bxf1 22.Rhxf1 cxd5 23.Qxd5 c6 24.Qc5±) 20.Ra4 (20.Kc2 Rd8 21.Bxa7 20...Kb8 21.c5 Bxc3+ 22.Kxc3 Bxf1 23.Rxf1 a6 24.g4± Black has an extra pawn, but this cannot compensate the pathetic position of his knight on the a8-square.

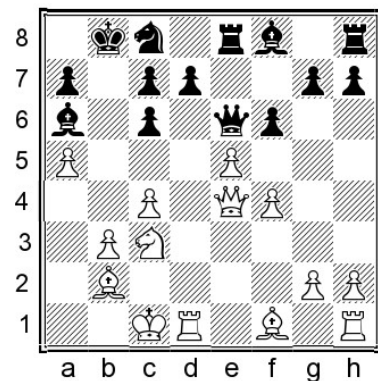
14...Kb8



15.0-0-0 fxe5 (After the move 15...Bb4, Black will fail to prevent the pawn-advance a4-a5 anyway. 16.Na2 Bc5 17.a5 Nc8, Perez Ferris – Drake Alvear, ICCF 2011, 18.b4 Bf8 19.f5. White's pawns continue to cramp the enemy pieces even more. 19...Qe7 20.c5 Bxf1 21.Rhxf1 fxe5 22.Kb1±) 16.a5 Nc8 17.Qxe5 Qxe5 (17...Qf7 18.Qd4 Bb4, Robson – Onischuk, Lubbock 2010, 19.c5 Bxc3 20.Bxc3 Bxf1 21.Rhxf1± Qxb3 22.Rf2 Ka8 23.Rb2 Qa3 24.Qc4+–; 17...Bd6 18.Qxe6 Bxf4+ 19.Kc2 Rxe6 20.g3 Bd6 21.Bh3 Re7 22.Rhe1 Rhe8 23.Rxe7 Rxe7 24.Na4 c5 25.Ba3²) 18.fxe5 Rxe5 19.Rxd7. After the fall of the pawn on d7, Black still has numerous weaknesses on the queenside. (19.Na4 Rxa5 20.Rxd7 Nd6 21.Rd8+ Bc8 22.Bd3 – see 19.Rxd7) 19...Nd6 20.Rd8+ Bc8 21.Na4 Re1+ (21...Rxa5 22.Bd3 Nf7

23.Re8 Nd6 24.Re2©) 22.Kd2 Re7
 23.Ba3² Nickel – Schuetze, ICCF 2014. It
 would be very difficult for Black to hold
 this position in a practical game.

With the move 15.a5!? White ousts
 immediately the enemy knight. 15...Nc8
 (15...d5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Qc2 Nd7 18.Bxa6
 Qxa6 19.Nxd5²; 16.Qe2 Nc8 17.cxd5. This
 is White's most practical move. After the
 exchange of the queens there will arise
 and endgame, favourable for him, in
 which he can play for a win without any
 risk. 17...Bxe2 18.dxe6 Bxf1 19.Rxf1 Rxe6
 20.0-0-0² fxe5?! 21.Rd8 exf4 22.Na4±)
 16.0-0-0

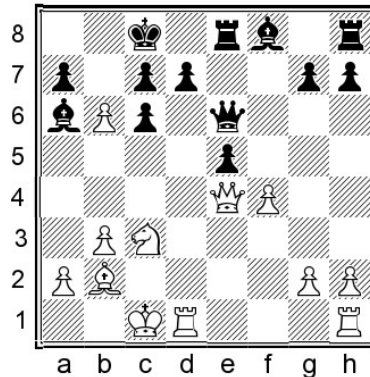


16...Nd6 (16...fxe5 17.Qxe5 – see 15.0-0-0) 17.Qc2 (17.exd6 Qxe4 18.Nxe4 Rxe4 19.c5 Bxf1 20.Rhxf1 cxd6 21.cxd6² Black can hardly manage now to develop his kingside pieces. 21...h5 22.Ba3 g6?! 23.Rfe1 Rxf4? 24.Re8+ Kb7 25.Rd8+-; 23...f5 24.Rxe4 fxe4 25.Re1±, followed by Rxe4.) 17...fxe5 18.c5 Nb5 (18...Bxf1 19.cxd6 Ba6 20.dxc7+ Kxc7 21.Rhe1 d6 22.fxe5 dxe5 23.Na4² Black's king is seriously endangered.) 19.Nxb5 (19.f5 Qe7 20.Ne4 Bc8 21.Bd3 Nd4 22.Bxd4 exd4 23.Rhe1 Qe5) 19...cxb5 20.fxe5 Be7 21.Bd3² Black's bishop on a6 is restricted by his own pawn on b5.

14...fxe5 15.c5!?

About 15.fxe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Rxe5 – see Chapter 23, variation B.

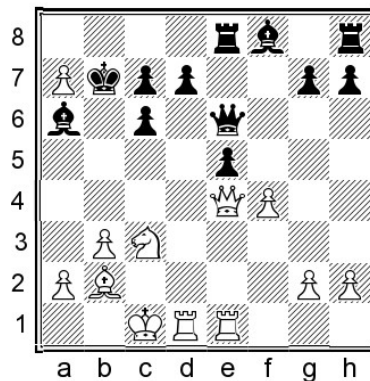
15...Bxf1 16.cxb6 Ba6



17.Qa4!?

White conceals his plans for the moment and preserves the possibility to capture on a7, as well as on c7.

17.bxa7 Kb7 18.Rhe1 (18.fxe5 d5 19.Qf4 Qxe5 20.Nxd5 Qd6 21.Qf7, Gutsche – Schranz, ICCF 2001, 21...Qh6+ 22.Qf4 Qd6=)



18...Bd6 19.Qa4 (19.a8=Q+. White sacrifices a pawn and deflects the enemy rook. 19...Rxa8 20.fxe5 Rhe8 (20...Be7, Pavasovic – Rogic, Bizovac 2005, 21.Qc2!?) 21.Na4 Be7 22.g3 h5 23.Kb1 g5 24.Qc2. White's game is much simpler, since his king is better protected. 24...Rf8 25.Bd4 Rf3 26.Kb2 Bb4 27.Nc5+ Bxc5

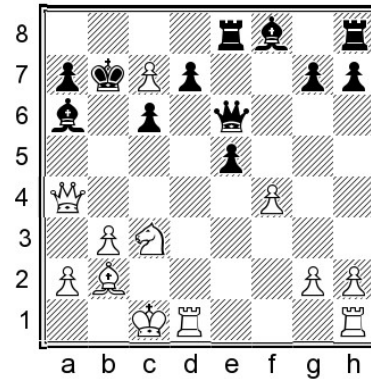
28.Qxc5 Kc8 29.Rd2 g4 30.Bc3² d6?? This is an attempt by Black to break his opponent's positional bind, but it leads to an immediate catastrophe for him.

31.exd6 Qxe1 32.Qxc6 1-0 Cid Gallego – Kyhos, ICCF 2007.) 19...Qh6 20.Ne4 Qxf4+ (20...Rhf8 21.Nxd6+ cxd6 22.Qb4+ Kxa7 23.Rxd6 Qxf4+ 24.Qxf4 exf4 25.Rxd7+ Ka8 26.Red1² Rasmussen – Laube, ICCF 2008. White's rook is very active on the penultimate rank and this provides him with a slight edge.) 21.Kb1 Qf5? This move is too slow. Black does not prevent the transfer of White's bishop to the e3-square. 22.Qa5 Re6 23.Ka1 Qf8 24.Bc1 Qc8 25.Be3 Ka8 26.Bc5± Pierron – Bontems, ICCF 2008. Black will hardly manage to neutralise the activity of White's pieces.

18...d5! After this energetic move, played against one of the greatest specialist in the Scotch Game for White, the position transfers to an approximately equal endgame. 19.Qxe5 Qxe5 20.fxe5. After the trade of the queens Black does not need to worry any more about the safety of his king. 20...Bc5 (20...Bb4! 21.Rd4 Be7 22.Na4, Gburek – Dos Santos, ICCF 2010, 22...Bb5=) 21.Na4 Bf2 22.Bd4 Bxe1 23.Rxe1. White has two powerful protected passed pawns for the exchange and controls the dark squares. 23...Re7 24.Bc5 Re6 25.Bf2 Rg6 26.g3 Re8 27.e6!? Re7 28.Bd4 Ka8 29.Nc5 Kxa7 (29...Bc8? 30.Rf1±) 30.Nd3+ Kb8 31.Nf4 Rg5 32.Bc5 Re8 33.e7 Bc8 34.Kd2 Rf5 35.b4 Rf7 36.a4 Kb7 37.Re5. It might seem that White has an overwhelming advantage, but the defensive resources in the game of chess are really great sometimes. Here, Black can hold successfully his position. 37...Bf5 38.h4 g6 39.Ke3 h6 40.a5 g5 41.hxg5 (41.Ne6 Bxe6 42.Rxe6 gxh4 43.gxh4 h5=) 41...hxg5 42.Ne6 Bxe6 43.Rxe6 g4 44.Kd4 Rf3 45.Rg6 Rxf3 46.Ke5 Rg2 47.Kf6 Kc8

48.a6 Kd7 49.a7 d4! 50.Bxd4, Draw, Morozevich – Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

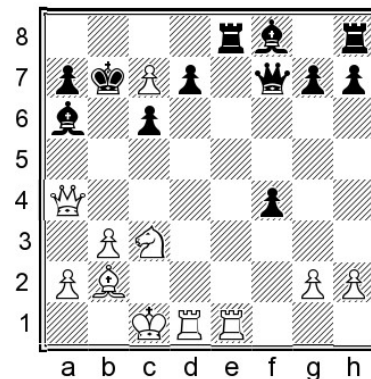
17...Kb7 18.bxc7



18...d5

18...e4? Zorko – Hrenic, Kranj 2005, 19.Nxe4 Bb5 (19...Qxe4 20.c8Q+ Kxc8 21.Qxa6+ Kb8 22.g3±) 20.c8=Q+ Rxc8 21.Qa5 Ka8 22.Rhe1±

18...exf4. The opening of the e-file provides White with additional tactical possibilities. 19.Rhe1 Qf7 (19...Qxe1? 20.c8=Q!+-)

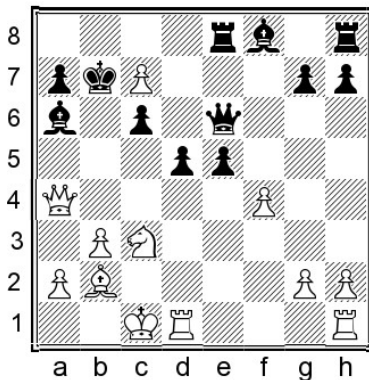


20.Ne4 d5 21.Ng5 Qd7 22.Rxe8 Qxe8 23.Qxf4 Qd7 24.Nf7 Rg8 25.Re1 Qxc7 26.Nd8+ Kc8 27.Qe3 Qd7 28.Ne6 Bb4 29.Nc5 Qf5= Despite all White's tricky

efforts, Black has managed to maintain the balance.

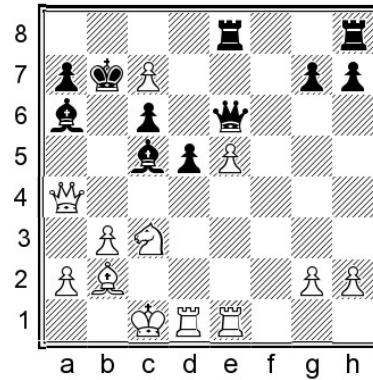
20.Re5 Rxe5 21.Qxa6+ Kxc7 22.Qxa7+ Kc8 23.Na4 Rb5 24.Nb6+ Rxb6 25.Qxb6 Qe7! Now, Black can trade the queens on e3, or on the c5-square. 26.Qa6+ Kb8 27.Rd4 Qc5+ 28.Kd2 Qg5 (28...Be7 29.Bc3±) 29.Rxd7. Black's king is in a checkmating net, but now it is his turn to give checks. 29...Bb4+ 30.Kc1 Qc5+ 31.Kb1 Qf5+! This is the point! White is forced to remove his rook from the 7th rank. 32.Rd3 Kc7 33.Qa7+ Kc8 34.Kc2 Qe4 35.Bc1 Qxg2+ 36.Kb1 Qe4 37.Qd7+ Kb8 38.Qd4 Qxd4 39.Rxd4 Ba5=

20.Rxe8 Qxe8, Zorko – Chau, Urgup 2004, 21.Ne4 Bb5 22.Qa5 Qxe4 23.Bd4 Ba3+ 24.Qxa3 c5 25.Qxc5 Qc6. Black has managed at the end to force the exchange of the enemy queen. Still, after 26.a4 Qxc5+ 27.Bxc5 Bc6 28.Bd6², he would need to fight long and hard in this endgame with bishops of opposite colours and rooks, since White has succeeded in protecting his far-advanced passed pawn.



19.Rhe1

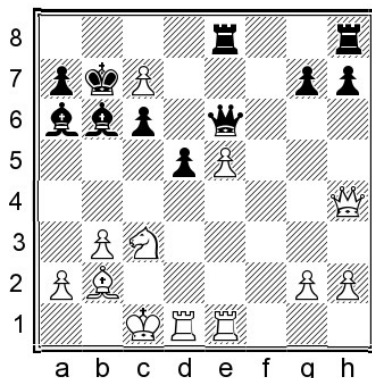
19.fxe5 Bc5 (19...Be7, Pavasovic – Balinov, Deizisau 2006, 20.Kb1!?)
20.Rhe1



Here, Black has a choice between two about equally reasonable lines.

20...Rhf8. This move prepares the penetration of his rook to the penultimate rank. 21.Kb1 Rf2 22.Rc1 Bb6 23.Qb4 Qf5+ 24.Ka1 Rf4 25.c8Q+ Rxc8 26.Qd6 Rd8 27.Qe7+ Rd7 28.Qa3 Qf8. Black's king position has been compromised, so the exchange of the queens would be in his favour. 29.e6 Qxa3 30.Bxa3 Rd8 31.Na4 Bd4+ 32.Bb2 Bxb2+ 33.Kxb2 Rf2+ 34.Ka1 (34.Ka3 Kc7 35.Nc5 Bb5=) 34...Kc7 35.Nc5 Bc8 36.b4 Rxg2 37.b5 Re8 (37...Rxb2 38.Nb3² 38.Nb3 Bb7 39.Rf1 Kb6 40.bxc6 Ba6 41.Rf7 Rxe6 42.a4 Bc4 43.a5+ Kxc6 44.Nd4+ Kd6 45.Nxe6 Kxe6 46.Rxa7 Rxb2 47.Rc3 g5=) The position remains sharp, but the most likely outcome of the game would be a draw.

20...Bb6. This is a reliable move for Black. He transfers his bishop to a more stable position. 21.Qh4. White is trying to break his opponent's defence. (21.Qa3 Re7 22.Kb1 Rxc7 23.Na4 c5 24.b4 cxb4 25.Qxb4 Rc6=) Black's bishops cover reliably his king. After 22.Na4, he should not let White's knight to occupy the c5-square. 22...c5 23.Kb1 Rxc7=; 22.Rd2 Rc8 23.Na4 c5 24.b4 cxb4 25.Qxb4 Rxc7+ 26.Kb1 Rc6=).



21...Qh6+. This move is too straightforward. Black wishes to enter an endgame, but weakens his pawn-structure. 22.Qxh6 gxh6 23.Ba3 Bxc7 24.Bd6 Rhg8 25.Na4 Kb8 26.Nc5 Bc8 27.Rf1² White has managed to transfer his knight to the c5-outpost and Black is faced with a rather unpleasant defence.

21...h5!? Black plans to trade the queens with the move Qg4. 22.Na4 (22.h3 Qf5) 22...Qg4 23.Qxg4 hxg4= His rook has entered the actions and exerts pressure against the enemy pawn on h2.

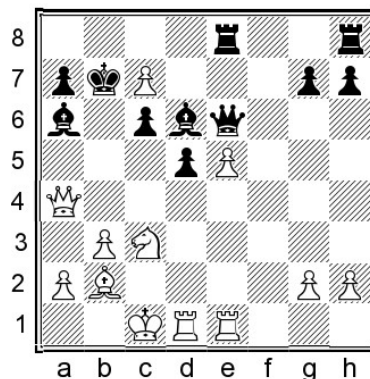
19...Bd6

19...e4? 20.Nxe4! Bb5 (20...dxe4 21.Rd8 Kxc7 22.Rxe8 Qxe8 23.Qxa6+-) 21.Qa5,

19...Bc5!? Black wishes to activate his pieces. 20.Rxe5 Qg6 21.c8=B+ (21.Rdxd5. This rook-sacrifice is interesting, but still insufficient for White to obtain an advantage. 21...cxd5 22.Qd7 Rc8 23.Re6 Be3+ 24.Rxe3 Rxc7 25.Qxd5+ Qc6 26.Qxc6+ Rxc6 27.Re7+ Rc7 28.Rxc7+ Kxc7 29.Nd5+ Kb7÷ Zelic - Rogic, Pula 2007. In this open position Black's rook can fight successfully against White's knight and two pawns.) 21...Rxc8 22.Ne4 Be3+ 23.Kb1 Bb5 24.f5 Qxg2 25.Nd6+ Ka8 26.Qh4 Qf3 27.Re1 Bf2 28.Qe7 Rb8 29.Nxb5 Rxb5= Klauner - Freeman, ICCF

2011. White's pieces are actively placed, but he can hardly achieve anything concrete.

20.fxe5

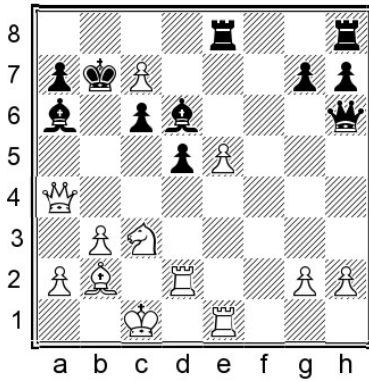


20...Qh6+

Black removes his queen with check away from the X-ray juxtaposition with the enemy rook.

20...Bxc7?! After this move Black loses his control over the b4-square and White exploits this immediately. 21.Qb4+ Ka8 (21...Bb6 22.Na4 Qe7 23.Qxe7+ Rxe7 24.Ba3 Re6 25.Nc5+ Bxc5 26.Bxc5² Zelic - Sermek, Croatia 2002) 22.Na4 Rb8 (22...Qh6+ 23.Kb1 Qxh2?! 24.Nc5 Bc8 25.Qa4 Bb7 26.Rc1,) 23.Nc5 Qg6 24.Qa3² Konnyu - Szwaj, ICCF 2007. White's knight exerts powerful pressure against the enemy position.

21.Rd2



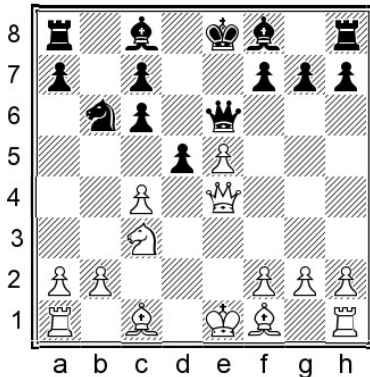
21...Bxc7

21...Rxe5?! 22.Rxe5 Bxe5 23.Qb4+ Ka8
 24.Qa5 Bb7 25.Na4. White's idea is to
 leave the opponent with a "bad" bishop
 on b7, which would be useless for him in
 the protection of the dark squares.
 25...Bxb2+ 26.Kxb2 Qe3 27.Rd1 Re8
 28.Rc1 Qe5+ (28...Qf2+ 29.Ka3 Re2
 30.Ra1 Qf8+ 31.Qc5 Qe7 32.Rf1 Rxa2+
 33.Kxa2 Qe2+ 34.Ka3 Qxf1 35.c8=Q+ Bxc8
 36.Qxc6+ Kb8 37.Qd6+ Ka8 38.Qxd5+ Kb8
 39.Qe5+ Ka8 40.Qxg7²) 29.Ka3 Qd6+
 30.Rc5 a6 31.g3² Ljubicic – Kostanjsek,
 ICCF 2007. Defending this position would
 be very unpleasant for Black, because his
 bishop has turned into "a big pawn".

22.Qb4+ Ka8 23.Na4 Rb8 24.Qc5,
 Ljubicic – Gysi, ICCF 2007, **24...Bb5**
25.Bd4 Rb7 26.Nc3 Ba6= White can
 hardly find any attractive objects to
 attack, since Black has protected reliably
 the a7-square.

Chapter 28

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6 10.Qe4 d5



Black wishes to avoid a complicated fight in the middle game and is trying to enter a slightly worse, but quite defensible endgame.

11.exd6

We will analyse now: **A) 11...Bxd6**, **B) 11...cxd6** and **C) 11...Qxe4**.

A) 11...Bxd6

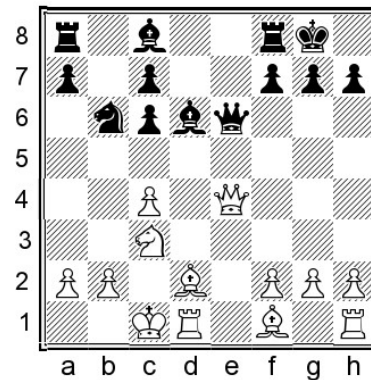
After this move Black remains with a compromised pawn-structure and this provides White with a long-term advantage.

12.Bd2!?

He is not in a hurry to trade the queens, so that Black does not obtain a tempo for the development of his bishop.

12...f5

12...0-0 13.0-0-0

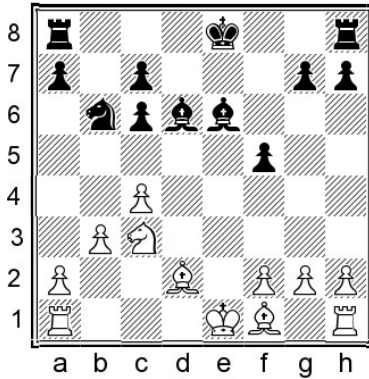


13...Rb8 14.Bd3 f5 (14...Qg6 15.Rhe1²)
15.Qxe6+ Bxe6 16.b3 Nd7. The b6-square is not the best place for Black's knight, so he wishes to transfer it to a more active position. (16...Nxc4. He sacrifices a knight for the initiative. 17.Bxc4 Bxc4 18.bxc4 Ba3+ 19.Kc2 Rb2+ 20.Kd3 Rd8+ 21.Ke2 Bb4 22.Nb1 Rxa2 23.h4² Now, White can bring his rook into the actions via the h3-square. Black does not have sufficient compensation for the piece.) 17.f4 Nc5 18.Be3 (White fails to prevent the exchange of his bishop, because after 18.Bc2, Black will have a perpetual check: 18...Bxc4!? 19.bxc4 Nd3+ 20.Bxd3 Ba3+ 21.Kc2 Rb2+ 22.Kc1 Rb3=) 18...Nxd3+ 19.Rxd3²

13...Re8 14.Re1 Bd7 15.Bd3 f5
16.Qxe6+ (16.Qf3!? White relies on obtaining an advantage in the middle game. 16...Qf7 17.b3 a5 18.Rxe8+. He should better exchange the rooks; otherwise, after a5-a4 and axb3, Black's counterplay on the a-file would become very dangerous. 18...Rxe8 19.Re1 Rxe1+ 20.Bxe1²) 16...Bxe6 17.b3 Nd7 18.Ne2 (18.Na4!? White does not allow the enemy knight to occupy the c5-square. 18...Rad8 19.Re2 Kf7 20.Rhe1²) 18...Nc5 19.Bb1 Bd7 20.f3. Black's knight is prevented from taking the e4-square. 20...g6 21.h4 Re7, Marquardt – Semenov, ICCF 2009, 22.b4!? White begins

immediate active actions. 22...Ne6 23.c5
Be5 24.h5 Be8 25.g4f

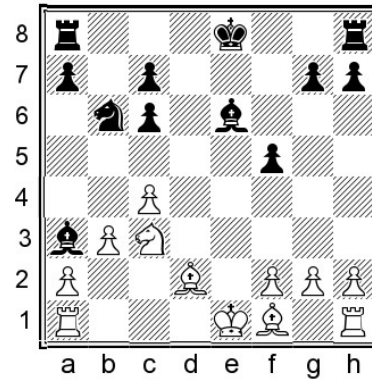
13.Qxe6+ Bxe6 14.b3



14...Ba3

14...0-0 15.Be2 Rae8 16.0-0 Nd7
17.Rfe1 Bf7 18.Na4 Nf6 19.Bd3 (White is
not afraid of the penetration of the enemy
knight to the e4-square, because later he
will manage to oust it from there with the
move f2-f3, but he could have played
immediately 19.f3!?²) 19...Ne4 20.Be3
Bb4 21.Rec1 a5 22.f3² Mauro –
Klimakovs, ICCF 2010.

14...Bc5 15.0-0-0. White sacrifices a
pawn for the initiative. (We can
recommend to the adherents to quieter
positions the line: 15.f4!? 0-0-0 16.0-0-0²)
15...0-0-0 (Following 15...Bxf2, the activity
of White's pieces compensates with an
interest his minimal material deficit.
16.Bf4 Rc8 17.Be2 0-0 18.Bf3 Bd7
19.Kc2±, with the idea 20.Rhf1 Bc5
21.Na4 Nxa4 22.Rxd7.) 16.f4 Rhe8 17.Be2
Kb7 18.Bf3 Nd7 19.Rhe1 Nf6 20.Re5²
Black is faced with a very difficult defence
in this endgame, Sarakenidis – Huzita,
ICCF 2013.

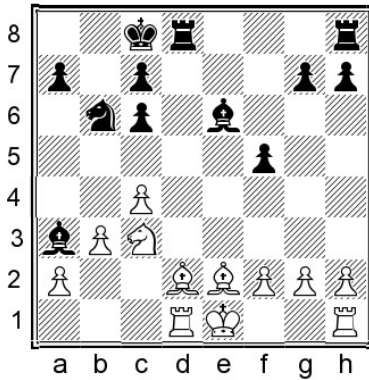


15.Be2

Black plans to protect his queenside
weaknesses with his king, so it would be
sensible for White to remove his king to
the opposite side of the board, freeing his
hands for a pawn-offensive on the
queenside.

Here, even after the move 15.Kd1,
White will maintain an advantage thanks
to his superior pawn-structure. 15...Bc5
16.f4 (16.f3!? 0-0-0 17.Kc2 Rhe8 18.Bd3²)
16...0-0-0 17.Kc2 Kb7 (17...Nd7 18.Be2
Rhe8 19.Bf3 Kb7 20.Rhe1²) 18.Be2 g6
(18...Rd7 19.Bf3 Rhd8 20.Rad1 a6 21.Ne2
h6 22.Rhe1 Nc8 23.Nc3 Bf7 24.Na4 Ba7
25.Re5± De Blois Figueredo – Salonen,
ICCF 2008) 19.Bf3 Rhe8 20.Rad1 Bf7
21.Ne2 Nd7 22.Bc3 Bd6 23.Nd4 Nb8
24.g3 Kb6, Senzacqua – Benetti, ICCF
2012, 25.Ne2!?, with the idea Bf6, Nc3-a4,
or Nc1-d3. Black has no active plan for his
actions, so he is forced to watch patiently
how White is improving his position.

15...0-0-0 16.Rd1

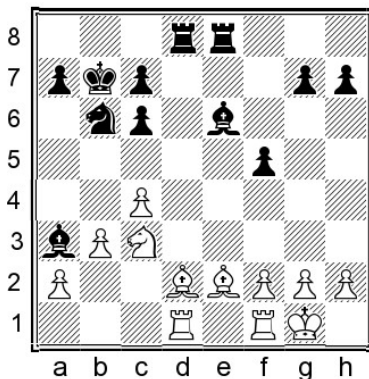


16...Rhe8

16...Bf7 17.0-0 Kb7 18.g3 (18.Bg5!? Rxd1 19.Bxd1 Bb4 20.Ne2 h6 21.Be3 g5 22.g3²) 18...h6 (18...Bb2 19.Nb1 Nd7 20.Be3²) 19.Bc1 Be7 20.Kg2² Tieken – Benetti, ICCF 2012.

17.0-0 Kb7

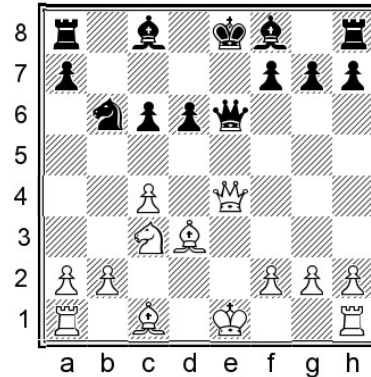
17...Bb4. Black can worsen the placement of the enemy knight, but this achievement would be only temporary. 18.Ne4. Black was threatening Rxd2. 18...Be7 19.Ng3 g6, Bissmann – De Verdier, ICCF 2010, 20.Bf3 c5 21.Ne2², followed by Nf4, Rfe1.



18.Be3 (18.Bf3 Bb4 19.Nb1 Bxd2 20.Nxd2 Bf7= Michallet – Garau, ICCF 2012) **18...Bb4 19.Rxd8 Rxd8 20.Rc1 h6 21.g3²** Black has no compensation for his numerous pawn-weaknesses.

B) 11...cxd6 12.Bd3

Now, after the exchange of the queens, White will capture with his bishop, occupying the long diagonal and attacking the enemy pawn on c6.



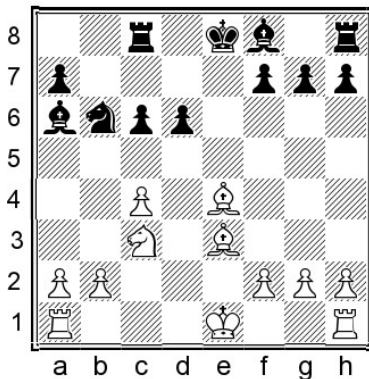
12...Qxe4+

12...f5 13.Qe3!? g6 14.0-0. White is waiting until Black develops his bishop by exchanging on e3. 14...Qxe3 15.Bxe3 Bg7 16.Rac1 Be6 17.b3 Kf7 18.Rfd1 Rhd8 19.Be2 (19.Ne2!? From this square White's knight may go to d4, or to f4. 19...d5 20.Bg5 Re8 21.cxd5 Bxd5 22.Nf4²) 19...d5 20.cxd5 (The move 20.Bg5 would lose the advantage for White: 20...Bf6 21.Bxf6 Kxf6 22.c5 Nd7÷ Mamedov – Safarli, Kirishi 2007.) 20...Nxd5 21.Nxd5 Bxd5 22.Bf3!? Bxf3 23.Rxd8 Rxd8 24.gxf3² Black cannot protect simultaneously his pawns on a7 and c6.

12...Be7 13.0-0 Qxe4 (13...Bd7, Goossens – Schwicker, France 2008, 14.b3 Bf6 15.Bd2²) 14.Bxe4 Bb7 15.b3 0-0 16.Be3 d5 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Bf3 Rfc8 (18...Bf6 19.Rac1 Rad8, Hagenlueke – Atri, Pinneberg 2007, 20.Bc5 Rfe8 21.Nb5 Ba6 22.Nc7 Bxf1 23.Nxe8 Rxe8 24.Kxf1±)

19.Ne2² Bc5, Real de Azua – Valerga, Buenos Aires 2004, 20.Bg4 Rc6 (20...Rc7 21.Rfc1±) 21.Nd4 Bxd4 22.Bxd4± Black has no compensation for White's two-bishop advantage, moreover that his minor pieces are severely restricted by his own d-pawn.

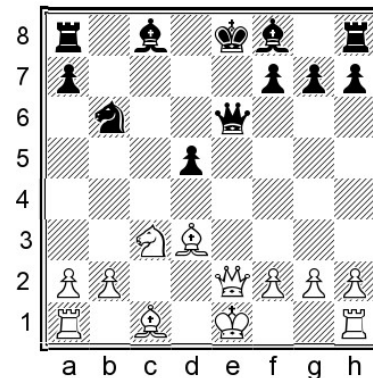
12...Ba6. Black attacks immediately the enemy pawn on c4. 13.Be3 Qxe4. White was threatening to capture on c6. 14.Bxe4 Rc8



15.c5! White sacrifices a pawn and seizes the initiative. (The move 15.b3 is too slow. 15...d5 16.Bf5 Bb4 17.Bd4 Rd8 18.c5 0-0 19.cxb6 c5 20.Be5 Rde8 21.0-0-0 Rxe5 22.Nxd5 axb6=; 17.Bd2 Rd8 18.0-0-0, Zhu – Qiao, Suzhou 2001, 18...0-0 19.cxd5 cxd5÷ Black's bishop on a6 prevents the enemy knight from occupying the blocking d4-square in front of the isolated pawn.) 15...dxc5 (After the move 15...Nc4, White has the powerful argument 16.Bd3, threatening Bf4, or b3. 16...Rd8 17.Bg5 f6 18.Bc1 dxc5 19.Be2 Bd6 20.f4. White prevents the move Be5. 20...Bc7 21.Kf2 g5 22.b3±) 16.0-0-0 Be7 17.Bf5 Rd8 18.Rxd8+ Kxd8. It seems best for White here to play 19.Rd1+ (He would not achieve much with 19.Bf4 Bc8 20.Rd1+ Ke8?! 21.Be4² Hnydiuk – Pinkas, Polanica Zdroj 2004; 20...Bd7 21.Bxd7 Nxd7 22.Ne4 Re8= White's pieces have

been actively deployed, but he has not regained his pawn yet.) 19...Kc7 20.Bf4+ Kb7 21.Re1 Bd8 (21...Bf6 22.Ne4 Bd4 23.Nd6+ Ka8 24.Be4 Nd5 25.Bxd5 cxd5 26.Be3 Bxe3+ 27.Rxe3²) 22.Ne4 Bc4?! (22...Ka8 23.Nxc5 Bc8²) 23.Nxc5+ Ka8, Sutovsky – Van den Doel, Plovdiv 2003, 24.b3 Bd5 25.f3² Black has no compensation for his numerous pawn-weaknesses on the queenside.

12...d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 (13...Nxd5. After this move Black remains with a weak pawn on c6. 14.0-0 Be7 15.Re1 Qxe4 16.Bxe4 Be6 17.Bd2 Rd8, Perez Garcia – Urbina Perez, Lucena 2012, 18.Nxd5 cxd5 19.Bd3 Bf6 20.Rab1 0-0 21.b4² White has a very simple plan here – to advance his queenside pawns and to create there an outside passed pawn.) 14.Qe2. With a bishop on d3, White is not forced to exchange on e6.



14...Qxe2+ 15.Bxe2 Bb4 16.0-0 Bxc3 17.bxc3²

14...Bd6, Nastase – Tomici, Calimanesti 2013, 15.Bb5+ Bd7 16.Bxd7+ Nxd7 17.Nxd5²

14...Bb4 15.0-0 (15.Be3 0-0 16.0-0 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Nc4 18.Bd4²) 15...Bxc3 (15...0-0, Andreozzi – Bellincampi, Italy 2018, 16.Qc2 h6 17.Be3²) 16.bxc3. Now, the vulnerability of the pawns on c3 and d4 is about balanced, but Black has no

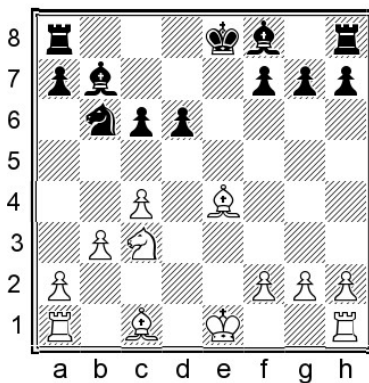
compensation for his opponent's two-bishop advantage. 16...Qxe2 17.Bxe2 0-0 18.Ba3 Re8 19.Rfe1 Bf5 20.Ba6 Re6 21.Rxe6 fxe6 22.Bc5² Gonzalez Perez – Naredo, Sanxenxo 2018.

After 14...Be7, White can deprive his adversary of the possibility to enter an endgame with the line: 15.Be3 0-0 16.0-0 Bb7 (16...Bf6 17.Nb5²) 17.Rfe1 (17.Nb5!?) 17...Bf6, Luukkonen – Moiseenko, Hamina 2016, 18.Qc2 Rfe8 19.Nb5± Black has reached a very bad version of a position with an isolated pawn.

13.Bxe4 Bb7

13...Bd7 14.b3 0-0-0 (14...Be7 15.Be3²) 15.0-0 Be7 16.Be3 (16.a4!?) 16...Rhe8 17.Rac1 Kc7 18.Rfd1 Bf6 19.Bf3± White has a better pawn-structure and harmoniously deployed pieces, while Black must consider permanently the possible pawn-advance c4-c5. For example: 19...Bf5? Rublevsky – Kunte, Bled 2002, 20.c5 dxc5 21.Nb5+! cxb5 (21...Kb7 22.Nd6+; 21...Kb8 22.Bf4+ Kb7 23.Nd6+) 22.Rxc5+ Kb8 23.Bf4+–

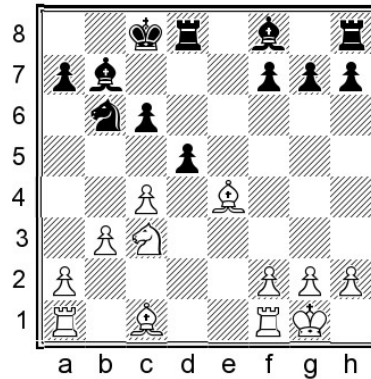
14.b3



14...d5

14...g6 15.Bb2 Bg7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.Bf3 (17...f5 18.Rhe1²; 17...c5, Pavasovic – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2004. Black manages to exchange his passive bishop on b7, but now White has a target to attack – the pawn on d6. 18.Bxb7+ Kxb7 19.Rhe1 Rd7 20.Ne4²) 17...Rhe8 18.Ne4 Bxb2+ 19.Kxb2 Kc7 20.Nf6 Re5, Obregon – Dos Santos, Buenos Aires 2014, 21.Rhe1²

14...0-0-0 15.0-0 d5



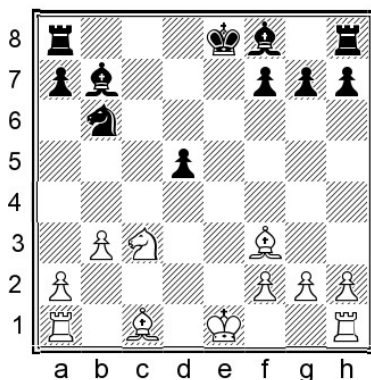
16.Bf5+ Kb8 17.Bg5 (It is also possible for White to play here 17.Bf4+!? Bd6 18.Bxd6+ Rxd6 19.c5 Rf6 20.cxb6 Rxf6 21.bxa7+ Kxa7 22.Rfe1² He dominates on the e-file. If White manages to play b3-b4 and Na4-c5, his advantage would increase even more.) 17...f6 18.Bf4+ Ka8 19.cxd5 Nxd5 20.Nxd5 cxd5 21.Rfc1² Bredenhof – Geus, ICCF 2009.

16.cxd5 cxd5 (16...Nxd5 17.Bb2²) 17.Bd3 Bc6 18.Bb2 Kb7 19.Rac1 f6 20.Nb5 (20.Rfd1!?) 20...Rc8 21.Nd4. Black has no counterplay at all and must defend patiently his weaknesses on a7 and d5. 21...Bd7 22.Rxc8 Bxc8 23.g3 Bd6 24.Nb5± Kovac – Geus, ICCF 2009.

15.cxd5 cxd5

15...Nxd5. The trade of the knights cannot facilitate Black's defence. 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bf3 0-0-0 18.Bg5 (18.Bf4 Bb4+ 19.Kd1 Bc6, Rasmussen – Moreira, ICCF 2007, 20.Be5!? f6 21.Bd4²) 18...Re8+ Ottesen – Vestergerd, ICCF 2009, 19.Kf1 Ba6+ 20.Kg1 Ba3 21.g3², followed by Kg2, connecting the rooks and beginning an attack against the enemy d-pawn.

16.Bf3



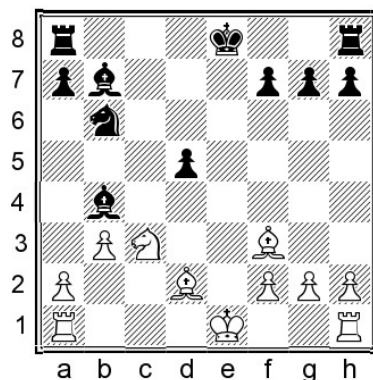
16...Bb4

The move 16...Rc8 does not prevent White's plan, connected with the transfer of his knight to the d4-outpost. 17.Nb5 (17.Bd2² Bb4? 18.Nb5) 17...a6 18.Nd4 Bd6?! Baroin – Plenkovs, ICCF 2005 (18...Bb4+!? 19.Bd2 Bc5 20.Be3 Nd7²) 19.0-0 0-0 20.Nf5 Bc5 21.Bb2± White wishes to provoke the move f7-f6, after which Black would have to worry about the vulnerability of the e6-square in addition to his other problems.

16...Be7 17.Be3 (17.0-0!? 0-0 18.Be3 Bf6 19.Rac1) 17...Bf6 18.Rc1 Rc8 (18...0-0 19.0-0 Rab8 20.Rfd1±) 19.Kd2 d4 (Following 19...0-0 20.Nb5², Black cannot try to play actively by sacrificing a pawn with 20...d4, Movsesian – Kharlov,

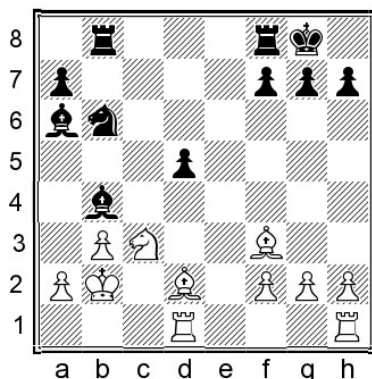
Kallithea 2002, since this would only worsen his position: 21.Nxd4!? Bxf3 22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Nxf3± White remains with a solid extra pawn.) 20.Bxd4 Bxf3 (20...Bg5+ 21.Be3 Bxf3 22.gxf3±) 21.Bxf6 Bxg2 22.Rhe1+ Kf8 23.Be7+ Ke8 (23...Kg8? 24.Rg1+-) 24.Ba3+ Kd8 25.Re7± White has seized completely the initiative.

17.Bd2



17...0-0

17...Ba6. This move prevents White from castling kingside, but his king would be perfectly placed on the queenside as well. 18.0-0-0 0-0 19.Kb2!? (In the line: 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.Bxd5 Ba3+ 21.Kb1 Bd3+ 22.Ka1 Rad8 23.Bc1², there appears a feeling that White has not played accurately and has lost a part of his advantage.) 19...Rab8 (19...d4 20.Nd5 Nxd5 21.Bxd5 Bc3+ 22.Bxc3 dxc3+ 23.Kxc3± Black has no compensation at all for the lost material.)



20.Be3 (20.Nxd5!? White is not afraid of the check from the c4-square. 20...Bxd2 21.Nxb6 Rbd8 22.Nd5 Ba5 23.b4±; 20...Nc4+ 21.bxc4 Bxd2+ 22.Ka3± Black's bishop-pair cannot compensate his missing pawn, because White's knight is very powerful at the centre of the board.) 20...Rfc8 21.Nxd5 Nxd5, Rublevsky – I.Sokolov, Kallithea 2002, 22.Bxd5. This is White's most precise move. He is not afraid to sacrifice the exchange. 22...Bc3+ 23.Kb1 Be2 24.Bxa7 Bxd1 (24...Rb5 25.a4 Ra5 26.Bb6+–) 25.Rxd1± White's two powerful connected passed pawns provide him with excellent winning chances in this endgame.

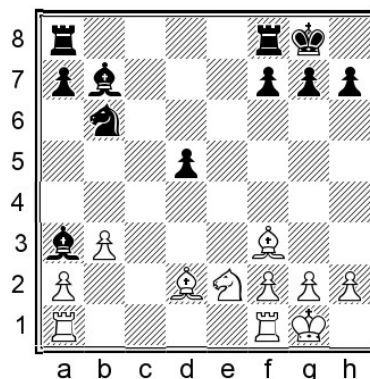
18.Ne2

18.Nb5!? Bc5 19.Rc1 Rfc8 20.0-0²

18...Ba3

18...Bd6 19.0-0 Nd7 20.Nf4 Nf6 21.Be3² Black's pieces are squeezed with the protection of his pawn on d5.

19.0-0



19...Rac8

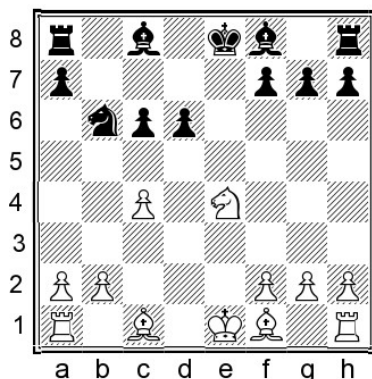
19...Rfe8 20.Rfe1 (20.Rfd1!?) 20...Rac8 21.Bg4 Rcd8 22.Rad1 h6 23.Ba5² Borwell – Placido, ICCF 2011. Now, White has the pleasant choice between two plans: Nd4, blocking the enemy pawn on d5, or Nc3 – planning simply to capture it.

20.Be3 Ba6 21.Rfd1 Rfd8 22.Nf4 Bb7 23.Bd4² Mukhametov – Muco, Bern 1995. Black has no counterplay at all and is doomed to a long and laborious defence.

C) 11...Qxe4+!

This is Black's most precise move. He trades the queens before White has developed his bishop to the d3-square and has not the possibility to capture Bxe4.

12.Nxe4 cxd6



Black is slightly worse at the moment, but later, after a precise play, he might equalise after all...

We will analyse in details now: **C1)** 13.b3, **C2)** 13.Bf4, **C3)** 13.Bd2.

13.Be2. This is a quiet move, but now, Black can exploit the fact that his opponent does not protect his pawn on g2 any more. 13...Be6 14.b3 d5 15.cxd5 Bxd5 16.f3 f5 17.Nc3 Bb4 18.Bb2 (18.Bd2 Bf7 19.Rc1 Rd8 20.Rc2 0-0. The threat Rxd2 prevents White from castling. 21.Nb1 Nd5 22.Kf2 f4. Black is trying to exploit the weakening of the e3-square, which is a consequence of White's forced move 16. 23.Bxb4 Nxb4 24.Rb2 Rfe8 25.Rc1 h6 26.Nc3 Re5 27.a3 Nd3+ 28.Bxd3 Rxd3= Kurylo – Hinz, ICCF 2017. The activity of Black's pieces compensates fully the vulnerability of his queenside pawns.) 18...0-0 19.0-0-0 Bf7 20.Bd3, Cvak – Heiermann, ICCF 2015, 20...c5. Black sacrifices a pawn on f5 and begins a counter attack on the queenside. 21.Bxf5 c4f, with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

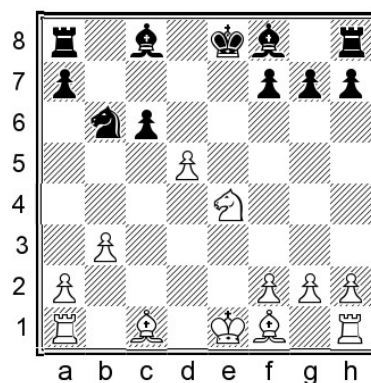
13.Be3 Bf5 (13...d5!? 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.Bc5 Bf5 16.Bxf8 Kxf8 17.Nd6 Bg6 18.0-0 Ke7= Burovic – Rengifo Blancas, Porto Carras 2018) 14.Nc3 Be6 (14...Be7. Here,

before advancing d6-d5, Black completes the development of his kingside pieces. Still, this plan looks rather slow. 15.Be2 0-0 16.0-0 Be6 17.b3 d5 18.cxd5 Nxd5 19.Nxd5 Bxd5 20.Ba6 Rfd8 21.Rac1 Rd7 22.Rfd1 Rad8 23.f3²; 20...Ba3 21.Rad1 Rfe8, Kurayan – Rietze, Berlin 2014, 22.Rd4² White still preserves the initiative.) 15.b3 d5 16.c5. White is trying to prevent the further simplifications. (Following 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Nxd5 Bxd5 18.f3 a5 19.Kf2 Be7 20.Bc4 a4 21.Bxd5 cxd5 22.Rhd1 axb3 23.axb3 Rxa1 24.Rxa1 Kd7=, there would be too few material left on the board for any side to play for a win, Van der Weide – Haslinger, Seville 2012.) 16...Nd7 17.b4 Be7!?! (The careless move 17...a5, would enable White to obtain a far-advanced passed pawn. 18.b5 Nxc5 19.bxc6 Ne4 20.Nxe4 dxe4 21.Bb5 Bb4+ 22.Ke2² Castineira – Juncal, Sanxenxo 2006.) 18.Ne2 a5 19.b5 cxb5 20.Nd4 Bxc5 21.Bxb5 Bxd4 22.Bxd4 0-0 23.0-0© White's two powerful bishops compensate the sacrificed pawn, but not more than that.

C1) 13.b3 d5

Black gets rid immediately of his opponent's positional bind.

14.cxd5

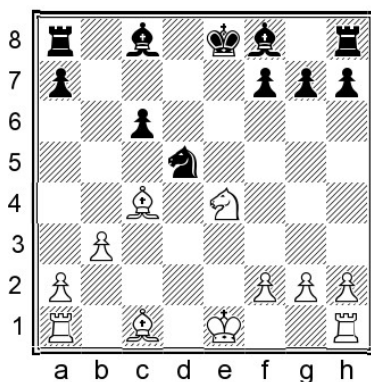


14...Nxd5

14...Bb4+ 15.Bd2 Nxd5 16.Bc4 Bxd2+ 17.Nxd2 0-0 18.0-0. White completes the development of his pieces. The powerful placement of Black's knight at the centre of the board cannot compensate fully his numerous pawn-weaknesses. 18...Be6 19.Rac1 Nf4 20.g3 Rad8 21.Nb1 Bxc4 22.Rxc4 Ne2+ 23.Kg2² and despite all Black's tactical tricks, his position remains worse, Haslinger – Espejo Hava, Seville 2012.

14...cxd5 15.Bb5+. White is playing against his opponent's isolated pawn, so the exchanges of pieces are in his favour. 15...Bd7 16.Bxd7+ Kxd7 17.Ng3 g6, Bakos – Szell, Ajka 2005, 18.0-0 Bg7 19.Rb1 Rac8 20.Rd1 Rc2 21.a4²

15.Bc4

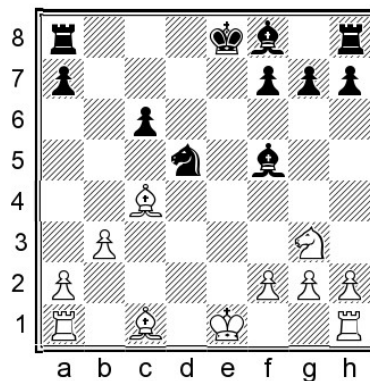


15...Bf5

15...Be7 16.Bg5 (After 16.0-0 Bf5 17.Re1 0-0 18.Ng3 Be6, White can hardly achieve anything real out of Black's pawn-weaknesses on the queenside, since his powerful knight on d5 "cements" his position. 19.Bb2 Rfe8 20.Re4 Bf8 21.Nh5 f6 22.Rae1 Bf7 23.Rxe8 Rxe8 24.Rxe8

Bxe8 25.Nf4 Bf7 26.Nxd5 Bxd5 27.Bxd5+ cxd5 28.Bd4 a6= Weil – Weiss, ICCF 2016.) 16...Bb4+ (16...Ba3 17.0-0 0-0 18.Rad1 Re8=) 17.Bd2 a5 18.Bxb4 axb4 19.Bxd5 cxd5 20.Nc5. White wishes to attack the enemy pawn on b4 with the move Nb3, but Black has sufficient resources to protect his weaknesses. 20...0-0 21.Nd3 Rb8 22.Kd2 Bf5 23.Nf4 Rb6=

16.Ng3



16...Bb4+

16...Bg6 17.0-0 0-0-0, Baldyga – Wyjcik, ICCF 2014, 18.h4!? h5 (18...Bd6 19.Bd2) 19.Bb2 Kb7 20.Be2², followed by Bf3. Black must still work hard in order to equalise completely.

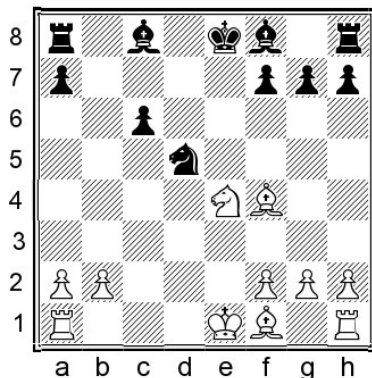
17.Bd2 Bxd2+ (17...Bg6?! Black's bishop will not be so well placed on this square as on e6, since it would not participate in the protection of his knight on d5. 18.Bxb4 Nxb4 19.0-0-0 0-0, Del Castilho – Strugnell, Baku 2016, 20.Rd2²) 18.Kxd2 Be6 19.Bxd5 0-0-0 20.Kc3 Rxd5 21.Rad1 Rhd8 22.Rxd5 Rxd5 23.Re1 Rc5+ 24.Kb2 Kc7= Pascoal – Glaser, ICCF 2015. Black's pawn-structure is worse, but his bishop will be stronger

than the enemy knight in a fight on both sides of the board.

C2) 13.Bf4

White attacks immediately his opponent's weak d6-pawn, but Black can hold successfully the defence with an accurate play.

13...d5 14.cxd5 Nxd5



15.Bd2

After 15.Bg3, Black has a rather unpleasant check at his disposal: 15...Bb4+ 16.Nd2 Bg4 17.a3 0-0. His bishop is untouchable, while White, in order to defend against the check from the e8-square, will be forced to weaken his e3-square. 18.f3 Rfe8+ 19.Be2 Ba5 20.fxg4 Rad8. White is incapable of preserving his extra piece. 21.0-0 Bb6+ 22.Bf2 Rxe2 23.Nc4 Rde8= Hoogkamer – Tripp, ICCF 2016. Black's pieces are very active and his prospects are not worse.

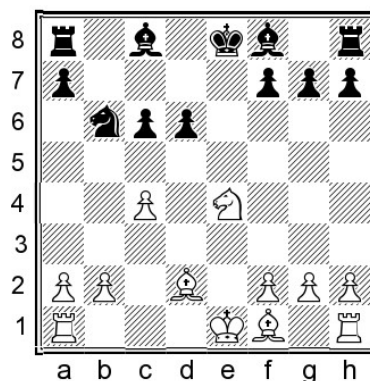
15.Bd6 Bxd6 16.Nxd6+ Kd7 17.Nxc8 Re8+ 18.Kd2 Raxc8 19.Rd1 Kc7= Senzacqua – Schreurs, ICCF 2016. The powerful placement of Black's knight at the centre of the board enables him to protect easily his weakness on c6.

15...Rb8 16.0-0 Be7 17.Bc4 h6

18.Rhe1 Be6 19.f3!? (19.Kb1 0-0 20.Rc1 Rfd8 21.Bb3 Bf5 22.Ba5 Rd7= Hamilton – Ackley, ICCF 2016) **19...0-0 20.Kb1 Rfd8 21.Bb3 Rb7 22.Rc1 Nc7 23.Bxe6 Nxe6 24.Be3f** Orekhov – Weiss, ICCF 2018.

Black's position is quite defensible, but he will have to solve problems all the time.

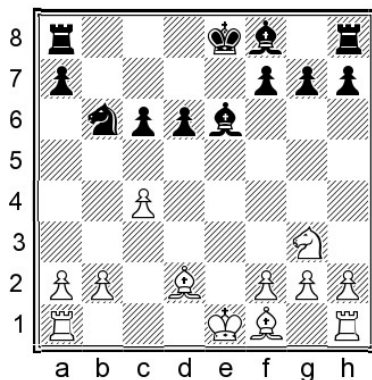
C3) 13.Bd2



13...Be7

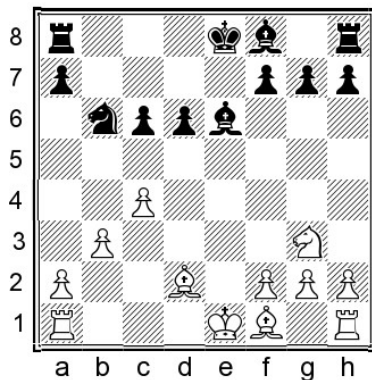
13...f5. Black ousts immediately the enemy knight away from the centre, but weakens his kingside. 14.Ng5 Be7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Bf4 d5. This move weakens the e5-square. (16...Re8 17.Bd3 h6 18.Nf3 g5 19.Be3 c5²) 17.cxd5 cxd5, Shishkov – Malyshev, ICCF 2010, 18.Bd3 h6 19.Nf3 Bc5 20.Rhf1 Bd7 21.Be5², followed by Bd4. Black will be faced with a rather unpleasant defence.

13...Bf5. With this move Black also ousts White's knight from the centre, but avoids the creation of additional weaknesses. 14.Ng3 Be6



15.Rc1 0-0-0 (15...g6!?÷, with the idea Bg7) 16.Be2 d5 17.cxd5 Bxd5 18.Ba6+ Kc7 (18...Kb8!? 19.0-0 Bxa2 20.Be3 Bd5÷) 19.0-0 Bxa2 20.Bc3 Nd5 21.Ba5+ Nb6 22.Ne2 (22.Ra1 Be6 23.Rfc1 Bd6 24.Bc3 f6 25.Bf1 Ra8 26.Ne4©) 22...Be6 23.Rfe1. The maximum that White can achieve, thanks to the activity of his pieces, is to restore the material balance. 23...Bc8 24.Bc4 f6 25.Bb5 Rd6 26.Bb4 Re6 27.Nd4 Rxe1+ 28.Bxe1 c5 29.Nb3 c4= Cvak – Hrzina, ICCF 2016.

15.b3



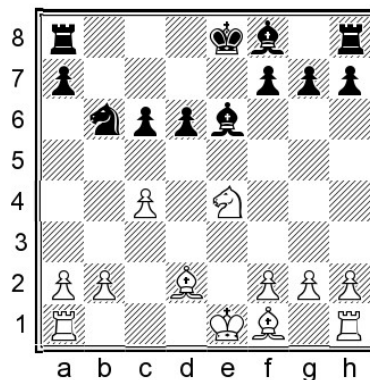
15...d5!? Black determines immediately the pawn-structure in the centre. 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Bc4 Bc5 18.Ne4 Bb6 19.Ng5 Bf5 20.0-0 0-0÷

15...Be7 16.Be2 0-0 17.0-0 a5 (17...Rfc8, Cornette – Schroeder, Rhodes 2015, 18.Nh5!?f, with the idea Nf4.) 18.Nh5!? (18.Bf3 d5 19.Be3 Rab8÷; 18...Rfc8 19.Be3 Nd7 20.Rad1 a4,, Burke – Chandra, Saint Louis 2018) 18...a4 19.Nf4 Bf5 20.b4÷

White does not have an advantage indeed, but Black must play very precisely; otherwise, he may end up in an inferior position.

15...a5. Black wishes to play a5-a4 at an opportune moment, exchanging his weak pawn. 16.Bd3 (16.Be3 Rb8 17.Ne2 Be7 18.Nf4=) 16...d5 17.cxd5 Nxd5 18.0-0 Bb4= Fakhrutdinov – Azarov, Skopje 2019.

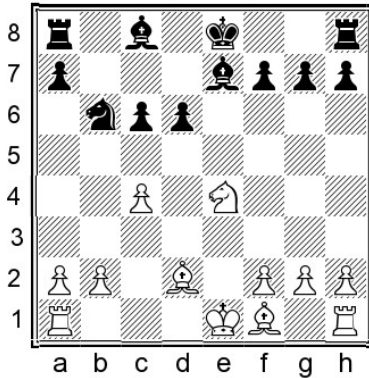
13...Be6. This is not the most accurate move for Black. He should better complete at first his development and continue only then with Be6, d5.



14.Rc1 Be7 (14...h6 15.Be2 Be7 16.0-0 0-0 17.Rfd1 Rfe8 18.Kf1 d5 19.cxd5, Kiss – S.Vajda, Hungary 2017, 19...Bxd5=; 15.Ng3!?, with the idea after 15...d5, to be able to transfer his knight along the route Nf5-e3. 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.Nf5²) 15.Be2 0-0 16.0-0 d5!? (16...Rac8, Richter – Nabavi, Leipzig 2013, 17.b3 d5 18.cxd5 Bxd5 19.Nc5 Rfe8 20.Ba6 Rcd8 21.Bf4² White not only has a superior pawn-structure, but also his pieces have been much more actively deployed.) 17.cxd5 Bxd5 18.Nc3 Be6 19.Rfe1 Rfe8 20.Bf3 Rac8 21.b3= White's edge is just symbolic.

14.b3 h6 (The move 14...Rd8 is too slow. 15.Ng5 Bf5 16.0-0-0 Be7 17.Re1 h6 18.Nf3²) 15.Be2 (15.Rc1 d5 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.Nc3 Ba3 18.Nxd5 Bxc1 19.Nc7+ Kd7

20.Nxa8 Bxd2+ 21.Kxd2 Rxa8 22.Be2= White would fail to realise his minimal advantage if Black defends accurately.) 15...d5 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.f3 Be7, Lyell – Vajda, Budapest 2015, 18.Rc1!? 0-0 19.Be3 Rfb8 20.Ba6 Re8 21.0-0. White still has some edge, for example: 21...Ba3 22.Rc2 Bxe4 23.fxe4 Rxe4 24.Bc1 Bxc1 25.Rfxc1 Nd5 26.Rxc6 Nb4 27.Rc8+ Re8 28.Rxe8+ Rxe8 29.Bc4² White's bishop is stronger than the enemy knight in this open position.



14.Be2

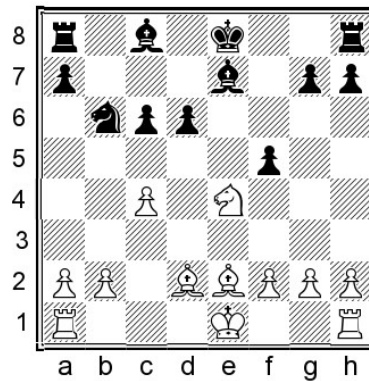
14.Bb4. White wishes to provoke the move c6-c5, in order to exploit later the vulnerability of the d5-square. He loses too much time however, on manoeuvres with his bishop. 14...c5 15.Ba5 Bf5 16.Nc3 Bf6 17.b3 d5 18.cxd5 0-0 19.Bb5 Bxc3+ 20.Bxc3 Nxd5 21.Be5 Nb4 22.0-0 Bd3 23.Bxd3 Nxd3=, followed by Rfd8, Rac8, c5-c4 and Black equalises completely.

14.b3 0-0 (about 14...a5 15.Be2 a4 16.0-0 0-0 – see 14...0-0) 15.Be2 a5 16.0-0 a4 17.Rac1 axb3 18.axb3. After Black has exchanged his weak a-pawn, he has no difficulties whatsoever. 18...Ra2 19.Ra1 Rxa1 20.Rxa1 d5 21.cxd5 Nxd5= Talpak – Rubinas, ICCF 2013.

14.0-0-0 Bf5 15.f3 (15.Bd3?! Zumsande – Strugnell, Pardubice 2016, 15...Nxc4 16.Rhe1 d5³; 15.Re1 0-0 16.Ng3 Be6 17.Nf5 Bxf5 18.Rxe7 Be6 19.Bb4 Rfd8= Belka – Reinhart, ICCF 2017) 15...Bxe4 (15...d5 16.cxd5 cxd5÷) 16.fxe4 Bf6 17.Bf4 Be5 18.g3 0-0-0 19.Bd2 Kc7 20.b3 Ra8 21.Ba5 h5,, Pierron – Tripp, ICCF 2016. The blocked isolated pawn on e4 impedes White to open the position for his bishops.

14...f5

14...0-0 15.Rc1 f5 (about 15...Be6 16.0-0 – see 13...Be6) 16.Bg5 Bxg5 17.Nxg5 h6 18.Nf3, Garau – Fagerbekk, ICCF 2016, 18...Re8,,



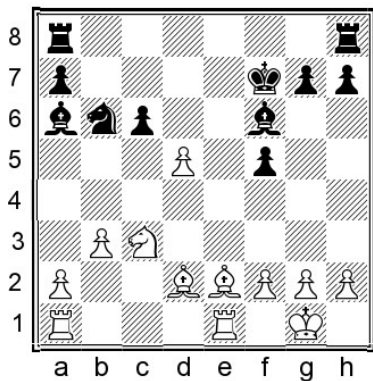
15.Nc3 Kf7

15...0-0 16.b3 Be6 17.0-0 d5 18.Rfe1²

16.b3

16.0-0-0 Be6 17.b3 Rhe8 18.Rhe1 Bf6,, Black's pieces are very active. He only needs to prepare d6-d5, or a7-a5-a4 at an opportune moment in order to equalise completely.

16...Bf6 17.0-0 Ba6 18.Rfe1 d5
19.cxd5

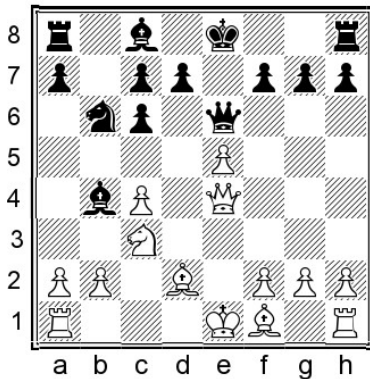


19...Bxe2 20.Rxe2, Roques - Fraczek,
ICCF 2016, 20...Rhd8!?!÷ Black wishes to
regain the sacrificed pawn under the most
favourable circumstances.

Chapter 29

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6 10.Qe4 Bb4 11.Bd2**

White is reluctant to allow a weakening of his queenside pawn-structure.



We will analyse now: **A) 11...Bxc3, B) 11...0-0, C) 11...Bb7 and D) 11...Ba6.**

About 11...a5 12.Bd3 – see Chapter 26, variation **A**.

11...d6 12.a3 Bxc3 13.Bxc3 dxe5
(13...Bb7 14.0-0-0 – see 11...Bb7)
14.Qxe5²

11...d5 12.cxd5 Nxd5, Scott – Chapman, The Kaf 2001, 13.Bd3² Black has no compensation for his numerous pawn-weaknesses.

11...Rb8. He is trying to organise counterplay against the enemy pawn on b2, but is doing this ignoring his development. 12.Bd3 Bxc3 13.Bxc3 Na4 14.0-0 Ba6, Fier – Lekic, Zuerich 2013, 15.f4 Nc5?! (15...f5 16.Qd4²) 16.Qd4 Nxd3 17.b3!± This is the point. White has

managed to protect his c4-pawn and has thus prevented the activation of the enemy bishop on a6. 17...Nxe5 18.Rae1 c5 19.Qxc5 Qb6. Now, Black must enter a very difficult endgame; otherwise, he might get checkmated in the middle game. 20.Rxe5+ Kd8 21.Ba5 Qxc5+ 22.Rxc5 Rc8 23.Bc3 Rg8 24.Ra5±

A) 11...Bxc3

This voluntary exchange of a bishop for a knight cannot bring equality to Black.

12.Bxc3 d5

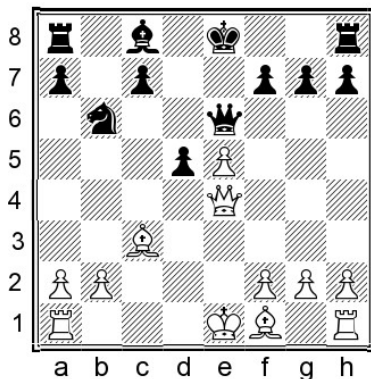
The move 12...0-0 enables White to develop his bishop with tempo. 13.Bd3 f5 14.Qe2 d6 15.exd6 Qxe2+ 16.Bxe2 cxd6 17.0-0-0 d5, Merot – Flecher, ICCF 2009, 18.Rhe1 (18.c5!? Nd7 19.Bd4²). In this endgame White not only has a superior pawn-structure, but also the two-bishop advantage 18...dxc4? 19.Bxc4+ Nxc4 20.Re7+–

13.cxd5

This is a calm move.

It is also possible for White to sacrifice a pawn here. 13.Qh4 dxc4 (13...Qg4 14.Qxg4 Bxg4. Black has no compensation for the weaknesses in his pawn-structure. 15.cxd5 Nxd5 16.Rc1 0-0 17.Bc4 Be6 18.0-0² Nf4, Coladangelo – Magistri, Milan 2009, 19.Bd2±) 14.Be2 0-0 15.0-0. White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit. 15...Ba6? Iwasaki – Ciganovic, Zupanja 2007, (15...Qg6²) 16.f4± White begins an attack exploiting the fact that his opponent has weakened his control over the f5-square.

13...cxd5



14.Qb4

14.Qe3 0-0 15.Bd3 Na4 16.0-0 c5
17.Bc2 Nxc3 18.bxc3 Ba6, Velcheva –
Dervishi, Cutro 2000, 19.Rfe1²

14...Nd7

14...Rb8, Kurilin – Leonov, Donskoj
2007, 15.Qc5²

The move 14...Bb7 is too passive.
15.Bb5+ Bc6 16.Be2 a5 17.Qa3 a4 18.0-0.
Black's king will be misplaced in the
centre, as well as on the queenside. 18...0-
0-0 19.Bd4+- Naumann – Lehner, Austria
2006.

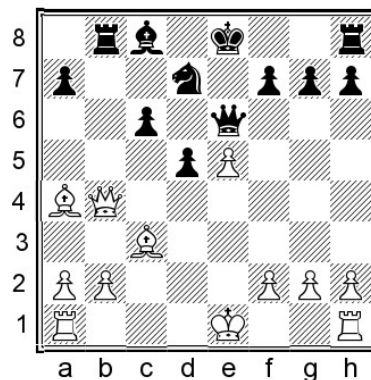
14...Bd7. Black defends against Bb5.
15.b3 Qe7. White's two-bishop advantage
would be even more important in the
endgame than in the middle game. Black
is forced however to exchange the
queens, since the shelter of his king is
unreliable. 16.Qxe7+ Kxe7 17.Bb4+ Kd8
18.Bd3± Franco – Quintero, Medellin
2000.

15.Bb5 c6

Following 15...Ba6 16.Ba4 0-0-0 17.0-0-
0 Nxe5, Sadvakasov – Ziatdinov,
Philadelphia 2003, White should better
restore immediately the material balance:
18.Qd4 f6 19.Qxa7 Bb7 20.Kb1²

16.Ba4 Rb8

It is just bad for Black to play here
16...Nb6, since he reduces the pressure
against the enemy central pawn. 17.Bc2
Nd7 18.0-0 Ba6 19.Rfe1 c5 20.Qh4 g6,
Spencer – Varnam, England 2011, 21.f4
d4 22.f5! Black's play is too slow, so White
begins a decisive attack. 22...gxf5 23.Qh3
dxc3 24.Bxf5 Qc6 25.e6+-

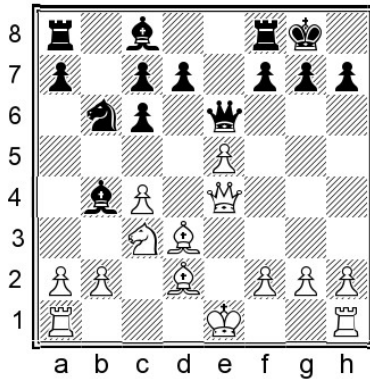


17.Qa3

It is less accurate for White to opt for
17.Qd6 Qxd6 18.exd6, Motylev – Vajda,
Bucharest 2000, 18...d4,, – he cannot
capture on d4, because he would lose his
bishop.

17...Nb6 18.Bc2² White has succeeded in preserving his bishop-pair, as well as his control over the a3-f8 diagonal.

B) 11...0-0 12.Bd3



12...f5

The move 12...g6 would only weaken the shelter of Black's king. 13.0-0 Re8 (13...a5 14.Rfe1 – see Chapter 26; 13...Ba6 14.b3 – see Chapter 30, variation **C1**) 14.Rae1 Bb7, Damaceno – Quintiliano Pinto, Sao Paulo 2019, 15.Qh4,, followed by Ne4.

13.exf6 Qxe4+

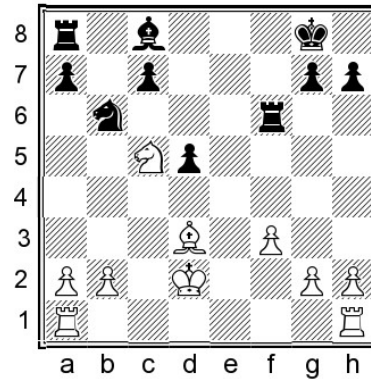
After 13...Rxf6 14.0-0-0, Black will enter an endgame under less favourable circumstances, because in the line: 14...Qxe4 15.Nxe4 Bxd2+, White will be able to capture on d2 not only with his king, but also with his rook. 16.Rxd2 Rg6 17.f4± Oll – Rozhdestvensky, Parnu 1982.

14.Nxe4 Bxd2+ 15.Kxd2 d5

It would be useful for Black to get rid of his doubled pawns.

After 15...gxf6?!, there will appear new pawn-weaknesses in Black's position. 16.b3 (16.Rac1!? d6 17.c5±) 16...d6, Tari – Hakobyan, St Petersburg 2018, 17.Rae1±

16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Nc5 Rxf6 18.f3



18...Bf5

Black's bishop is very passive, so his desire to exchange it is easily understandable.

18...Rb8 19.b3 Nd7 20.Rac1 Nxc5 21.Rxc5 c6 22.Ra5 a6 23.Re1 Kf7, Bojkovic – Hund, Batumi 1999, 24.Ra4± Black is forced to a long passive defence due to his weaknesses on a6 and c6.

18...Nd7 19.Rac1 Nxc5 20.Rxc5 c6 21.b4 Bd7, D.Petrosian – Khudiakov, Alushta 2007, 22.Ra5±, squeezing Black's rook to the protection of the a-pawn.

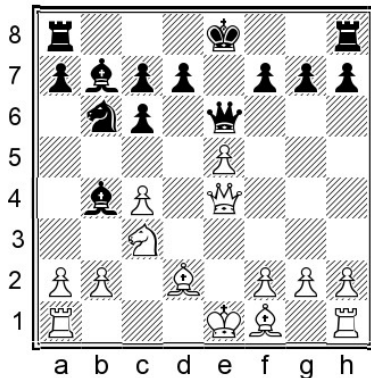
19.Rhe1

It is possibly even stronger for White to choose here 19.b3 Rd8 20.Rac1 Bxd3 21.Nxd3 Rd7 22.Rhe1± – Black will hardly manage to hold his numerous pawn-weaknesses. After the careless move

22...h5? Frander – Meleghegyi, Hungary
2001, his position would just crumble:
23.Re8+ Kf7 24.Rh8+-

19...Bxd3 20.Kxd3 Kf7 21.b3 Rd8
22.Rac1² Van Foreest – Van der Werf,
Netherlands 2016.

C) 11...Bb7



12.a3!

After 12.Bd3 0-0-0, White does not need to transfer to Chapter 26, since he would hardly manage to obtain an advantage there.

12...Bxc3

12...Be7 13.Bd3 0-0-0 14.0-0 c5 15.Qe2
d6 16.exd6 Bxd6 17.Bg5²

13.Bxc3 d6

13...d5 14.Qh4 (White can try here a very promising pawn-sacrifice: 14.cxd5!? cxd5 15.Qb4 a5 16.Qc5 Bc6 17.Be2 Na4

18.Qd4 Nxc3 19.Qxc3 0-0 20.0-0²)
14...dxc4 15.Be2 c5, Cafolla – Pantaleoni,
Gibraltar 2009, 16.0-0², followed by f4-f5,
or Bg4.

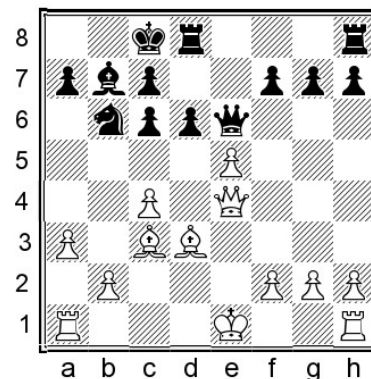
13...Na4 14.Ba5. White is reluctant to part with his two-bishop advantage just like this... 14...0-0-0 15.0-0-0 Rhe8 (15...c5 16.Qc2 Nb6 17.Re1²) 16.Qc2 (16.f4!?) 16...Nb6 17.Re1²

14.Bd3

14.0-0-0!? d5, Scheuermann – Blauhut,
ICCF 2002, 15.Qh4² (15.Qd4²)

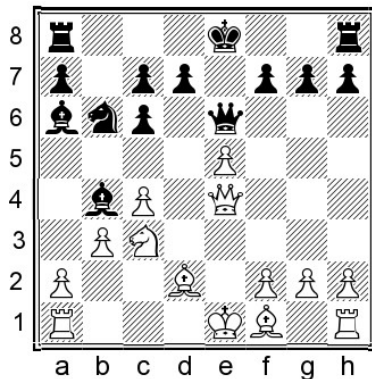
14...0-0-0

14...Na4 15.0-0² White is not afraid of the capturing on c3, because then he plans to bring his rook into an attack against the enemy king on the opened b-file. (15.exd6 Qxe4+ 16.Bxe4 Nxc3 17.d7+ Kxd7 18.bxc3 Rae8 19.0-0-0+ Kc8 20.Bf5+ Kb8 21.Rhe1 c5÷) 15...Nxc3 16.bxc3 dxe5 17.Rfe1 0-0-0 18.c5±



15.0-0-0 Na4 16.exd6 Qxe4 17.Bxe4 Nxc3 18.Bf5+ Kb8 19.dxc7+ Kxc7 20.bxc3² White has an extra pawn despite its being doubled.

D) 11...Ba6 12.b3



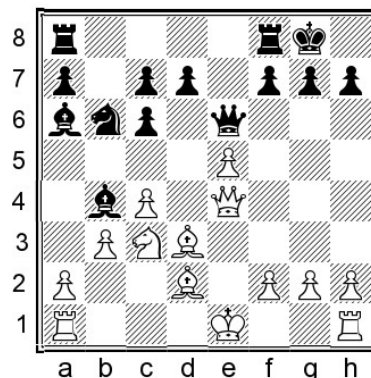
12...Bxc3

This move is played with the idea to deprive White of the possibility to capture en passant after d7-d5.

12...Ba3 13.f4 g6, Bui T Mai – Vo, Dong Thap 2001, 14.c5! Bxf1 15.cxb6 d5 16.exd6 Ba6 17.bxc7 Bxd6 18.0-0-0±

The move 12...0-0-0?! enables White to continue with a pawn-advance, which is typical for similar positions. 13.c5! Bxf1 14.cxb6 Bxc3 (14...Bxg2? 15.bxa7 Kb7 16.Qxb4+ Ka8 17.Rg1+- Aksentijevic – Becelic, Belgrade 2003) 15.Bxc3 d5 (15...Ba6? Seyb – Ter Akopyan, Oberhaching 2006, 16.bxc7 Kxc7 17.0-0-0+-) 16.Qd4 Bxg2 17.Rg1±

12...0-0 13.Bd3



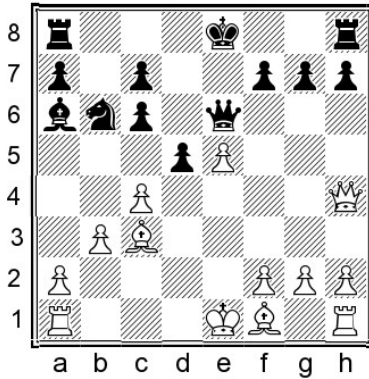
13...Qg6 14.Qf3 Qe6? After this move Black wins the pawn on e5, but White's pieces become tremendously active. (It would be more reliable for Black to choose here 14...f5 15.0-0-0²) 15.0-0 Qxe5 16.Rfe1 Qd4 17.Re4. White transfers with tempo his rook into an attack against the enemy h7-pawn. 17...Qf6 18.Qxf6 gxf6 19.Rg4+ Kh8, Dostal – Novak, Czechia 2008, 20.a3 Bc5 21.Rh4±

The move 13...g6 only weakens the shelter of Black's king. 14.0-0 f6 (14...d5 15.cxd5 cxd5, Ch.Gibson – Ca.Gibson, ICCF 2013, 16.Qxb4 Bxd3 17.Rfe1±) 15.a3 Bc5, Bonay Toscas – Learte Pastor, ICCF 2009, 16.Rae1 (16.Qh4 fxe5 17.Ne4 Be7 18.Qg3 d5 19.cxd5 cxd5 20.Bxa6 dxe4 21.Rae1²) 16...fxe5 17.Qh4 Qd6 18.Qh3± White's threats (mostly Ne4-g5) are very unpleasant for Black.

13...f5. This is possibly his best decision. Black cannot equalise in this endgame indeed, but he does not risk any more to come under an attack in the middle game. 14.exf6 Rxf6 (14...Qxe4+ 15.Nxe4 Bxd2+ 16.Kxd2 gxf6 17.Nc5 Bc8 18.Rhe1± Bressac – Diermair, Vienna 2015) 15.0-0-0 Qxe4 (The move 15...g6, Schelle – Hoeller, Munich 2017, would create a target for an attack for White on the kingside. 16.h4 Rxf2 17.Qxe6+ dxe6 18.h5 Rxg2 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Rh3±) 16.Nxe4 Ba3+ 17.Kc2 Rff8 18.Be3 Rae8 19.Nc3² with a superior pawn-structure

for White, Mihailidis – Kokkinakis, Chalkidiki 2002.

13.Bxc3 d5 14.Qh4



14...dxc4

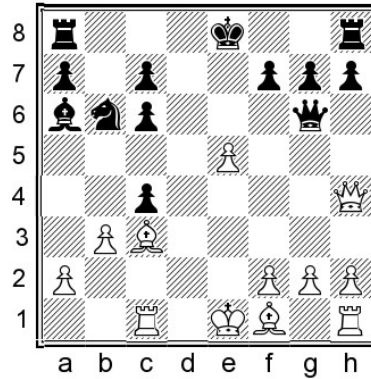
14...Bc8 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Bd3 c6 17.h3 (17.0-0!? Qg4 18.Qxg4 Bxg4 19.Bd4±) 17...h6 18.0-0 0-0 19.f4 f5 20.exf6 Qe3+ 21.Kh1 Qxd3, Vidic – Mihelic, Radenci 2019, 22.Rf3 Qh7 23.fxg7 Re8 24.f5 d4 25.Bxd4 Nd5 26.Raf1+-

14...0-0 15.Be2 (15.cxd5!? Nxd5 16.Bxa6 Nxc3 17.f4²) 15...Qg6 (15...dxc4 16.0-0 Nd5 17.Bxc4 Bxc4 18.Qxc4²) 16.Bd4 Rfe8 17.0-0 dxc4 18.f4² White has excellent attacking prospects for the sacrificed pawn. 18...Qe4 19.Qf2 Rad8 20.Rad1 Qc2, Silva Filho – Sanchez, ICCF 2008, 21.e6! He sacrifices a pawn and opens files for his pieces. 21...fxe6 22.f5! Qxf5 23.Qh4+-

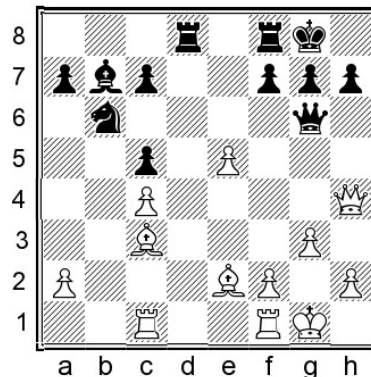
15.Be2!?

White does not need to present his opponent with the additional possibility 15...Qg6, beginning with 15.Rc1 Qg6,

because here does not promise much to White.



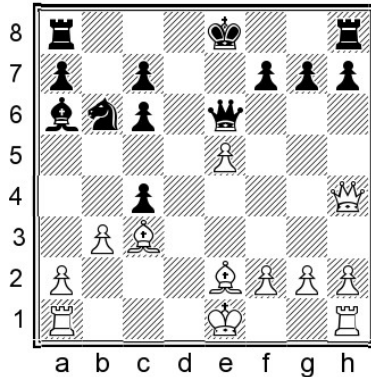
16.Bb4 f6 17.Qh3 Bc8!? 18.Qf3, Carlsen – Karjakin, Moscow 2010 (18.Qg3, Wang Hao – Karjakin, Al Ain 2008, 18...cxb3 19.Qxg6+?! hxg6 20.axb3 Rh4 21.Bc3 Re4³; 19.exf6 Qxf6 20.axb3 Qe6+ 21.Kd2 Qh6+ 22.Qe3+ Qxe3+ 23.fxe3 Bb7 24.Bd3 0-0-0÷; 21.Be2 Ba6 22.Qe3 Qxe3 23.fxe3 Bxe2 24.Kxe2 Nd5 25.Bc5 Rb8=) 18...Qg5 19.Rc3 (19.Qe3 Qxe3+ 20.fxe3 a5 21.Bc3 f5 22.bxc4 Na4 23.Ba1 c5 24.Bd3 Be6÷) 19...Nd5 20.Rxc4 Nxb4 21.h4 (21.Rxb4 Qc1+ 22.Qd1 Qc3+ 23.Qd2 Qa1=) 21...Qh6 22.Rxb4 Qc1+ 23.Qd1 Qc3+ 24.Qd2 Qa1= 16.g3 0-0 17.Be2 c5 (17...Rfe8?! 18.0-0² f6? 19.Bh5 Qh6, Van der Poel – Timman, Spakenburg 2019, 20.exf6 gxf6 21.Bxf6+-; 20...g6 21.f7+ Kxf7 22.Qf6+ Kg8 23.Bf3+-) 18.0-0 Bb7 19.bxc4 Rad8 (19...Rfe8!? 20.Rfe1 Nd7÷ Yu Yangyi – Ponomarev, Danzhou 2014)



20.Rcd1 Rxd1 21.Rxd1 Qc2 22.Rd8,
Motylev – Jakovenko, Poikovsky 2016,
22...f6=

20.Qg4 Qc6 21.f3 Bc8 22.Qh5 Na4÷

20.Rfe1 Na4 21.Ba1 (21.e6 fxe6 22.Be5
Rd2 23.Qe7 Nb6 24.Rcd1 Rxe2 25.Rxe2
Bf3=) 21...Rd2 22.Bh5 (22.Rcd1 Rxe2!?)
22...Qc6 23.f3 Qh6 24.e6 fxe6 25.Bg4
Qxh4 26.Bxe6+ Kh8 27.gxh4 Bxf3=

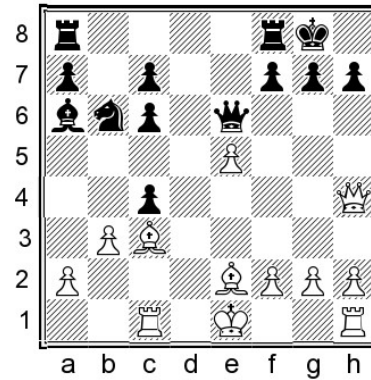


We will deal now with: **D1)** 15...0-0 and
D2) 15...Nd5.

15...Qf5 16.0-0 0-0 17.Rac1 (17.Rfe1!?
Nd5 18.Bxc4 Bxc4 19.Qxc4²) 17...Rad8,
Murariu – Barkhagen, Budapest 2003
(17...Nd5 18.Bxc4) 18.Bg4 Qg6 (18...Qf4
19.g3.) 19.e6 fxe6 20.Rfe1± White's
bishops are tremendously powerful in
this open position.

D1) 15...0-0 16.Rc1

This move is played with the idea after
Nd5, to retreat simply the bishop to the
a1-square.



16...Nd5

16...c5 17.0-0 Bb7, Hracek – Balogh,
Germany 2013 (17...Nd5 18.Bxc4 Bxc4
19.Qxc4²) 18.Bg4 Qg6 19.f4±

16...Nd7?! Macieja – Korchnoi, Mallorca
2004, 17.f4 f6 (17...Nc5 18.0-0 cxb3
19.Bxa6 Nxa6 20.f5 Qh6 21.Qc4 c5 22.f6
b2 23.Rce1 Nb4 24.fxc7+-; 18...Qf5
19.Bg4 Qd3 20.Rf3 Qd8 21.Qh3 Bc8 22.e6
Bxe6 23.Rg3 Bxg4 24.Qxg4 g6 25.f5+-)
18.0-0 fxe5 19.Bg4. Black fails to protect
his pawn on e5. 19...Qf6 20.Qh3 Nc5
21.Bxe5 Qe7 22.Bf5. White wishes to
weaken the position of the enemy king
even more. 22...g6 23.Bg4 cxb3 24.Bd4
Bxf1 25.Bxc5 b2 26.Be6+ Rf7 27.Bxf7+
Qxf7 28.Rxf1 Rb8 29.Qd3± Black does not
have sufficient compensation for the
sacrificed piece.

16...Rfd8 17.0-0 Nd5. Black weakens
the protection of his c4-pawn and White
can exploit this immediately. (17...Bb7?
Bauyrzhan – Zhou, Caldas Novas 2011,
18.f4+-, Black is helpless against the
threat f4-f5.) 18.Ba1²

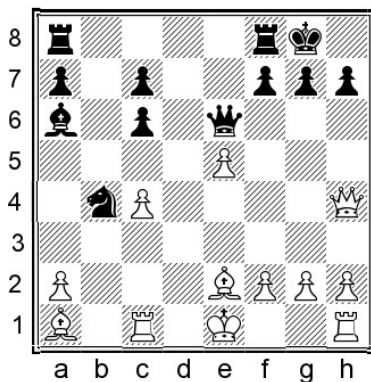
16...f6. Black wishes to get rid quickly of the enemy pawn on e5, which cramps his position. 17.0-0 fxe5 18.Rfe1 Rae8 (18...Nd5, Tomczak – Chojnacki, Poznan 2007, 19.Bxc4 Bxc4 20.Qxc4²) 19.Qg3 Nd7, Kovernikov – Piccardo, ICCF 2011 (19...Qh6 20.bxc4²) 20.Rcd1!? Re7 21.h3 Rfe8 22.Bh5² White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material.

17.Ba1

White preserves his two-bishop advantage.

17.Bxc4!? Bxc4 18.Qxc4 Rfe8 19.Ba1 f6 20.0-0 fxe5 21.Qxc6 Rad8 22.Rfe1² Naumann – Gustafsson, playchess.com 2006. Black has too many pawn-weaknesses in his position.

17...Nb4 18.bxc4



18...Rad8

18...Nxa2. He loses too many tempi on moves with his knight. 19.Rd1 Nb4 (19...f5 20.0-0 Nb4 21.Rd2±, followed by Rfd1, seizing the control over the d-file.) 20.0-0 c5?! 21.f4 f5 (21...Qf5 22.Bg4+-) 22.exf6! White sacrifices a bishop and

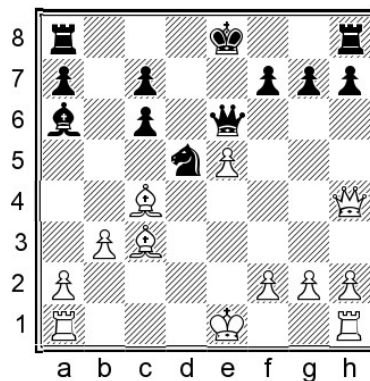
succeeds in attacking the g7-square with his major pieces. 22...Qxe2 23.Rd7 Rf7 24.Rxf7 Kxf7 25.Re1+- Kolev – Van der Veen, Hoogeveen 2005.

19.0-0 Nd3 (19...c5 20.f4f) **20.Rc3 Nxe5 21.Re3 Ng6** (21...f6 22.Qe4 Rd2 23.f4 Rxe2 24.Rxe2 Qxc4 25.Rfe1±; 22...Qf7 23.Bxe5 fxe5 24.Qxc6 Rd6 25.Qc5±) **22.Qg5! Qd7** (22...Qc8 23.h4,) **23.h4 f6** (23...Rfe8 24.h5 Rxe3? 25.hxg6+-; 24...f6 25.Qg3±) **24.Qa5 Qc8**, Radjabov – Karjakin, Dos Hermanas 2005 (24...Bc8 25.h5²) **25.Re1f**

D2) 15...Nd5

Black is not even trying to hold on to his extra pawn.

16.Bxc4

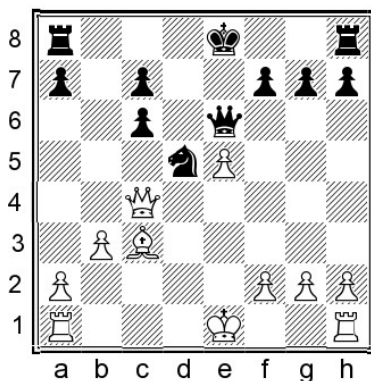


16...g5

16...Bb5. This move is too slow for Black in order for him to fight for equality. 17.0-0 (17.Rc1 0-0 18.0-0 Rfe8 19.Rfd1²) 17...g5, Maciejka – Timman, Willemstad 2001, 18.Qg3. This is White's simplest decision. He avoids the complications and refrains from opening of the g-file for the enemy major pieces. 18...0-0-0 19.Bd2²

Ruiyuan – Yang Kaiqi, China 2013, 26.Qc3
 Qe6 27.Qe3 g4 28.Rec2 gxh3 29.Rxc6 Qd5
 30.Rxc7+ Kb8 31.Qxh3 Qxe5+ 32.Qg3±

16...Bxc4 17.Qxc4



17.Bxd5

It would not be reasonable for White to play here 17.Qd4, because following 17...Bxc4 18.Qxc4, there would arise positions just like after 16...Bxc4, but without a tempo for him.

17...0-0-0 18.Rc1 (18.0-0, Wang – Ruan, Wuxi 2006, 18...Nxc3 19.Qxc3 Rd5 20.Rac1 Rxe5 21.Rce1 f6 22.Rxe5 fxe5 23.Qc5 Kb7= There has arisen a transfer to an endgame with major pieces in which Black's extra pawn compensates the defects of his pawn-structure.) 18...Kb7 19.0-0 Nxc3 20.Qxc3 Rd5 21.Rce1 (21.f4 Rhd8 22.h3²) 21...Rhd8 22.Re4 c5 23.Re3² White has managed to maintain the material balance and Black has no compensation for his pawn-weaknesses.

17...Qxd5

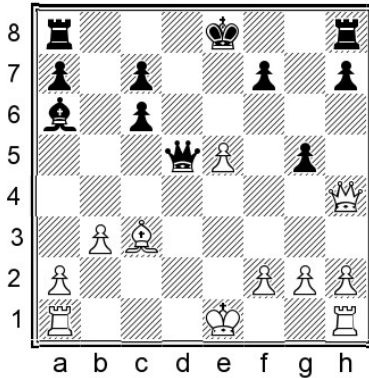
After 17...cxd5, White can play the rather unpleasant move 18.Qa4+ and Black will be forced to lose his castling rights. 18...Kd8 (18...Kf8 19.Qd4±, with the idea 0-0-0, h4) 19.0-0-0 Bb7 20.f4 gxf4 21.Rhf1± Lorentzen – Elent, ICCF 2002.

17...g5. White is preparing Nf4. 18.0-0 (It is also possible for him to choose here 18.g3, preventing radically his opponent's plans.) 18...0-0-0? Black is castling directly under a checkmating attack... (18...Nf4!? 19.Qxe6+ Nxe6) 19.Qa6+ Kb8 20.Bd4 Nb6 21.Be3 Qxe5 22.a4 Rd6 23.Rac1 Rhd8 24.a5 Nc8 25.Bc5 Rh6 26.h3 Qd5 (26...g4? 27.Rc4+-) 27.Rc4± Ragger – Baumegger, Hartberg 2003.

After the trade of the queens 17...gxh4 18.Bxe6 fxe6, Black will have to enter an endgame without any good prospects for him. 19.Rd1 (19.0-0-0 c5 20.Bd2 Rg8 21.g3 Be2 22.Rde1 Bf3 23.Rhg1 h3 24.Re3 Bd5 25.Rc3 0-0-0 26.Rxc5² Melaa – Lund Oslo 2018 or 19.Bd4 0-0-0 20.Bxa7 Rd5 21.Be3 Rxe5 22.0-0-0 Rg8 23.g3 Be2 24.Rd4 Bf3, De Homont – Husak, ICCF 2012, 25.Rg1²; 21...Rg8 22.Rg1 c5 23.f3 Rxe5 24.Kf2 c4 25.bxc4 Rd8 26.a4 Rd3 27.Rge1 h3 28.g4 Bxc4 29.a5² Kristjansson – Colin, ICCF 2016. In both these lines the only thing that Black can rely on are the drawish tendencies of the positions with bishops of opposite colours.) 19...Rg8 20.g3 Rd8 21.Rxd8+ Kxd8 22.Kd2 (22.Bd4!?) 22...c5 23.Ke3

17...Nxc3 18.Qxc3 0-0-0. Now, Black must evacuate his king to the weakened queenside. (Without this he would fail to maintain the material balance: 18...0-0 19.0-0 Rad8 20.Rac1 f6 21.Qxc6 Qxc6 22.Rxc6 fxe5 23.Rxc7± Kulaots – Sepp, Puhajarve 2001.) 19.0-0 Rd5 20.Rae1 Rhd8 21.h3 Rd4 22.Re2 (22.f4!?) 22...g5 23.Rc1 Kb7 24.Qg3 Qf5 25.Kh2 h5, Yu

Kd7 24.Rc1 Rd8 25.Rd1+ Ke7 26.Rxd8
Kxd8 27.g4 h3 28.f4 Bb7 29.f5±
Nepomniachtchi – Ponomariov, Beijing
2013.

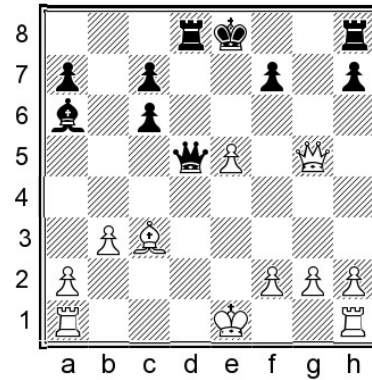


18.Qxg5

18.Qd4. After the exchange of the queens White will preserve some psychological advantage. Still, Black has chances of holding the position with an accurate defence 18...Qxd4 (18...0-0-0 19.0-0-0 Qxd4 20.Rxd4 Rxd4 21.Bxd4 Kb8 22.e6 Re8 23.exf7 Rf8 24.Re1 Rxf7 25.Re8+ Kb7 26.Rg8 h6 27.Be3²) 19.Bxd4 0-0-0 20.0-0-0 Rhe8 21.h4 (21.Bxa7 Rxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Rxe5 23.Be3 f6 24.Kc2 Rd5 25.Rd4 Re5 26.Kc3 c5 27.Rd1 Bb7 28.g3 g4 29.Rc1² Bach – Fritsche, ICCF 2016. Black has managed to save this endgame after all...) 21...g4 (21...c5 22.Bxc5 Rxd1+ 23.Kxd1 Rxe5 24.Bxa7 g4 25.Be3 Ra5 26.a4 Bb7 27.Rg1 Be4 28.Kc1² Mirkowski – Weiss, ICCF 2013) 22.Bxa7 Rxd1+ 23.Rxd1 Rxe5 24.Bd4 Re2 25.Rd2 Re6 26.g3 Be2 27.Be3² Godena – Dervishi, Bratto 2004.

18...Rd8

White has an extra pawn, but his king cannot castle.



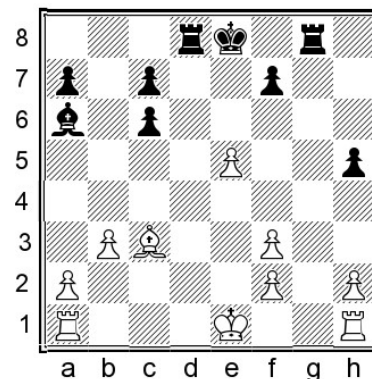
19.Qg4

19.Rg1 Qb5 (19...c5 20.Qg4 Qd3 21.Rc1 c4 22.b4²) 20.Qg4 Rd3 (20...Rd2? 21.Bxd2 Qxe5+ 22.Kd1 Qxa1+ 23.Bc1±) 21.Rc1 Qc5 22.Qb4 Qd5 (22...Re3+? 23.Kd1 Rd3+ 24.Kc2 Qxf2+ 25.Kb1±) 23.Qa4 Bb5 24.Qg4 Qc5= It is practically impossible to see how White can improve his position.

19...h5 20.Qf3 Qxf3 21.gxf3 Rg8

Black's pieces have been actively deployed, but still his compensation for the sacrificed pawn is insufficient.

21...Rd3 22.Bd2 Rxf3 23.Be3 Rg8 24.0-0-0 Ke7 25.Bxa7 Ke6, Janko – Zavadil, Brno 2008 26.Kb2²

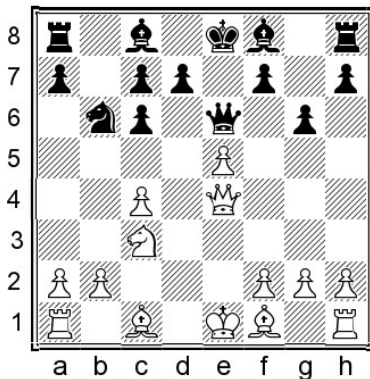


22.Rd1 Bd3 23.Rc1 Rg6, Sutovsky – Karjakin, Pamplona 2004, **24.Ba5 Rd7**

25.Rc5 Bb1 26.Ke2 Bxa2 27.Rc3 Rd5
28.Bxc7 Rb5 29.Ra1 Bxb3 30.Rxa7²

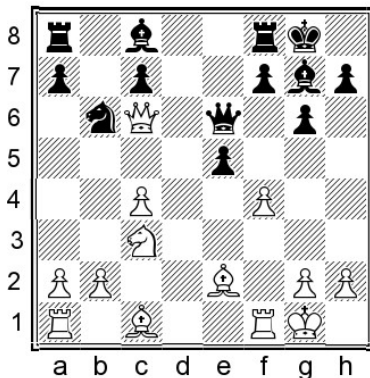
Chapter 30

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 bxc6 6.e5
Qe7 7.Qe2 Nd5 8.c4 Nb6 9.Nc3
Qe6 10.Qe4 g6



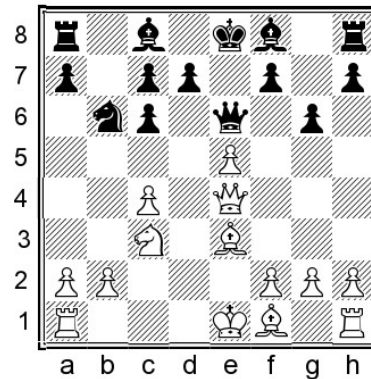
We will analyse in details now: **A)** 11.f4, **B)** 11.Bd2 and **C)** 11.Bd3.

11.Be2 Bg7 12.f4 0-0 13.0-0 d6
(13...Ba6?! 14.b3²) 14.Qxc6 dxe5



15.Qxc7?! White's attempt to win material will lead to difficulties for him. (15.Bf3!? e4 16.Qxe4 Qxe4 17.Bxe4 Rb8÷) 15...Ba6 (15...exf4!?) 16.Nd5 exf4 17.Bd3 g5μ Topalov – Caruana, Paris 2016. White is incapable of completing the development of his queenside pieces and preserving the material balance at the same time.

11.Be3. This is an active move. Now, Black must consider permanently the possible pawn-advance c4-c5.

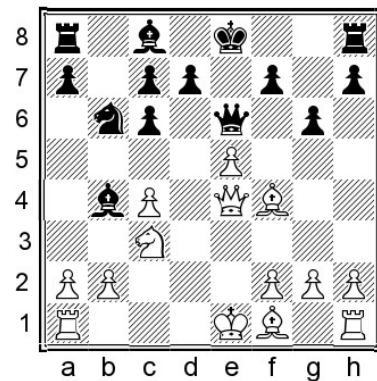


11...Bb4 12.c5 (12.f4 Rb8; 12.0-0-0 Bxc3 13.bxc3 f5÷) 12...Nd5 13.Bd4 (13.Bc4? Nxc3μ; 13.a3 Bxc3+ 14.bxc3 Nxe3 15.Qxe3 0-0 16.Bd3. The pawns on e5 and c5 cramp Black's position, so he should play immediately 16...d6÷) 13...0-0 14.Bc4 Nxc3 15.Bxc3 Bxc3+ 16.bxc3 Qe7 17.Qd4 d5 (17...Re8 18.0-0-0 Qg5+ 19.f4 Qxg2 20.Rhg1 Qh3= Black's bishop on c8 has not been developed yet, but he has an extra pawn.) 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Qxd6 Qg5÷ with good compensation for Black for his minimal material deficit.

11...Bg7 12.f4?! (White should better continue his strategy here with the move 12.0-0-0! 0-0 13.c5 Nd5 14.Nxd5 cxd5 15.Qxd5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Bxe5 17.Bc4= He has a freer game indeed, but Black should manage to hold this endgame without too many problems.) 12...0-0 (12...d6?? 13.Bxb6+-) 13.0-0-0 d6 14.Qxc6 (14.Bxb6? axb6 15.Qxc6 Ra5. White has won a pawn, but the activity of Black's pieces increases with every move. 16.Qxc7 dxe5 17.Rd6 Qg4 18.Qxb6 Ra6 19.Qc5, M.Hansen – Haubro, Ballerup 2017, 19...Qxf4+ 20.Kb1 e4+-) 14...dxe5 15.Qxc7 (15.Qxe6 Bxe6 16.fxe5 Nxc4³) 15...Ba6³ Novikov – Aleksandrov, Moscow

2007. Black is perfectly prepared to bring his rooks into the actions on the a and b-files.

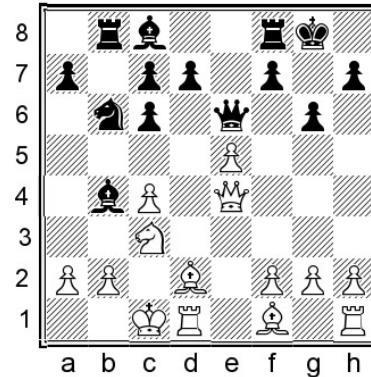
11.Bf4 Bb4 (Here, Black should refrain from the routine move 11...Bg7?!, since following 12.0-0-0 Bb7 13.c5! Nd5 14.Bc4 Nxc3 15.bxc3, he would end up in a cramped position. In addition, White has a clear cut plan for actions, connected with the advance of his h-pawn. 15...Qe7 16.Qe3 0-0 17.h4 Rfe8 18.h5, Ruiz Sanchez – Estrada Nieto, Cuernavaca 2014; 14...0-0 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Bxd5 Bxd5 17.Qxd5 Rab8 18.Qxe6! fxe6 19.Bg3± Rb5 20.Rxd7 Rxc5+ 21.Kb1 Bxe5 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.Rxc7+-; 12.c5!? Nd5 13.Bc4 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Qe7 15.Qe3²)



12.Rc1 Na4. White continues to increase his pressure. 13.Bd2. In this way he preserves the compactness of his pawn-structure. (13.Qc2 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Ba3 15.Rd1 0-0 16.Bd3 Re8,, White has a freer game, but his queenside pawns are vulnerable.) 13...Nxc3 14.Bxc3 Bxc3+ 15.Rxc3 0-0 16.Re3 (16.Be2 Rb8 17.b3 c5 18.Rh3 f6! Black takes measures in advance against his opponent's attack against the pawn on h7. 19.Qh4 Rf7 20.0-0 Qxe5÷ The activity of White's pieces compensates the sacrificed pawn but not more than that.) 16...Rb8. Black's main problem is his "bad bishop", but he

intends to develop it to the b7-square. 17.b3 c5 18.Be2 Bb7= Tomczak – Chirila, Szeged 2008.

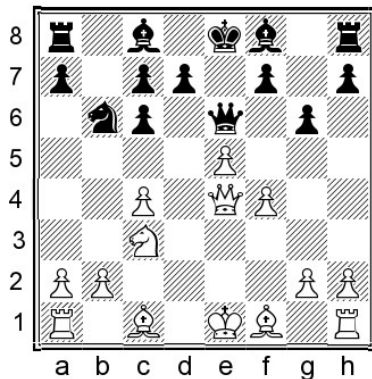
12.Bd2. Now, there arises a position from the line with: 9.Nc3 Qe6 10.Qe4 Bb4 11.Bd2, but with the additional move g7-g6, which is much rather in favour of Black. 12...0-0 13.0-0-0 Rb8



14.Bd3 Ba6 15.b3 d5 16.exd6 Qf6! (16...cxd6 17.Qd4!?) 17.Kc2 cxd6÷ 14.Qf4 Bxc3 15.Bxc3 Na4 16.Qd2, Sinka - Ducret, ICCF 2003, 16...Re8!? 17.f4 d6,, 14.a3 Bxc3 15.Bxc3, Homske – Tritt, ICCF 2008, 15...Ba6!? 16.Bb4 (16.c5 Nd5 17.Bxa6 Nxc3µ 18.bxc3?? Qa2-+) 16...c5!? 17.Bxc5 Rfe8,, 14.h4?! Ba6 (14...d5!?) 15.c5 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 (The careless move 16.Bxa6? would enable Black to sacrifice a piece: 16...Bxb2+ 17.Kxb2 Na4+ 18.Ka3 Nxc5 19.Qc4 Rb6-+; 18.Ka1 Nxc5 19.Qc4 Nxa6µ) 16...Nd5! This is the point! Black can simply leave his bishop on a6 under an attack. 17.Bd4 (17.Bxa6? Nxc3 18.bxc3 Qxa2-+) 17...Bxf1 18.Rhxf1, Lautier – Leko, Cap d'Agde 2003, 18...f5µ The majority of White's pawns are placed against the rules – on squares with the same colour as his bishop. Therefore, in the middle game he will have problems with the protection of the light squares in his camp.

A) 11.f4

White fortifies his e5-pawn in advance, but does not take any measures against the pin of his knight.

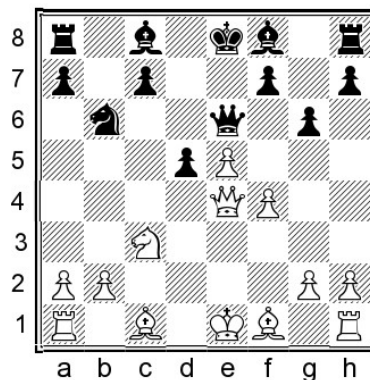


11...Bb4!

11...Ba6 12.b3 Bb4 13.Bb2 f5 (13...0-0? 14.c5 Bxc3+ 15.Bxc3 Bxf1 16.cxb6 Bb5 17.bxc7 Kxc7 18.Ba5+- Kummerow – Neubauer, Cologne 1994) 14.Qf3² Asnaashari – Alavi Moghaddam, Mashhad 2010.

11...Bc5, Wiesinger – Pruijssers, Ortisei 2018, 12.Be3!? Bxe3 13.Qxe3 Nxc4 14.Qd4 Nb6 15.Ne4©

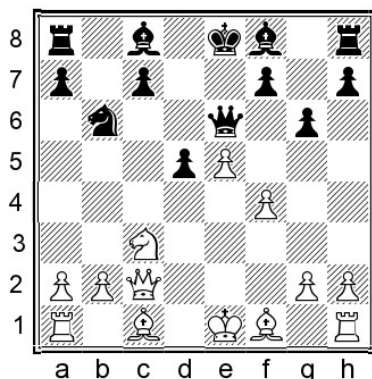
11...d5 12.cxd5 cxd5



13.Qd4!?

13.Qf3 Bb7 (13...c6. Black fortifies reliably his pawn on d5. 14.Bd3 Bg7 15.0-0 16.Ne2!? (16.Be3 f6 17.Bc5 Rf7 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf6 Qxf6 20.Rae1 Bd7÷ Frijling – Maack, ICCF 2010. White has managed to regain the pawn on f5, but the position has been considerably simplified in the meantime.) 16...c5. Black defends against Nd4. 17.b3. After this move he will have difficulties to undermine the enemy pawn on e5. 17...f6? 18.f5 Qxe5 19.fxf6+-) 14.Bb5+ c6 15.Bd3 f5. It is essential for Black not to allow his opponent to play in the middle game f4-f5, eliminating the blockade against the pawn on e5. 16.Qf2 (16.0-0 Qd7 17.Rd1 d4. Black has advanced his pawns and his prospects do not seem worse any more. 18.Bf1 Rd8 19.a4 Be7 20.a5 c5,, Naeter – Degtyaryov, ICCF 2016.) 16...c5 17.0-0 Be7 18.Nb5 Qc6 19.Bd2 (19.b3!? d4 20.Ba3) 19...a6, Groot – De Blois Figueredo, ICCF 2012, 20.Nd6+. White sacrifices a pawn and forces the opponent to exchange his bishop on e7. 20...Bxd6 21.exd6 0-0 22.b4 c4 23.Be2 Qxd6 24.Bc3© Black can hardly manage to protect effectively the dark squares in his camp.

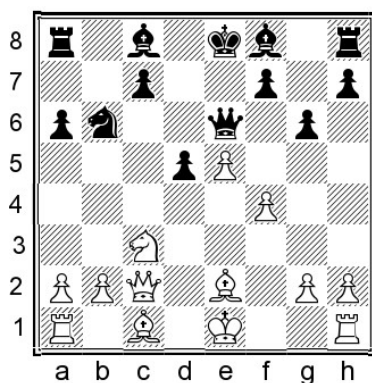
13.Qc2. This is the best move for White. Now, Black will have to lose a tempo to defend against the move Nb5.



13...c6 14.Be3 Be7 15.Bd3 0-0 16.0-0 c5 17.Nb5 Qc6 18.b3. Black will hardly manage to organise counterplay here. For example, after 18...c4, White's knight will gain access to the wonderful d4-outpost. 19.Nd4 Qc7 20.Be2 Bd7 21.Bf3² Vivante – Sowter – Warren, ICCF 2017.

13...Bc5!? 14.a3?! (14.Ne4 Be7 15.Bb5+ Bd7 16.Nc5 Bxc5 17.Qxc5 Bxb5 18.Qxb5+ Nd7 19.Be3 0-0=) 14...a5 15.Bd2 Nd7? (15...0-0!) 16.h4 Bb6 17.h5 0-0 18.0-0-0 Nc5 19.hxg6 hxg6, Silva Filho - Schenning, LSS 2012, 20.g4!? d4 (20...Qxg4 21.Nxd5+-) 21.f5 Qb3 22.Bg5+-

13...a6 14.Be2. White wishes to play Bf3, in order to impede the enemy pawn-advance d5-d4. (14.Bd3 c5 15.b3 f5 16.Be2 d4 17.Nd1 Bb7 18.0-0 Be7 19.Nb2 0-0÷ Tsheskovsky – Golod, Biel 2007.)



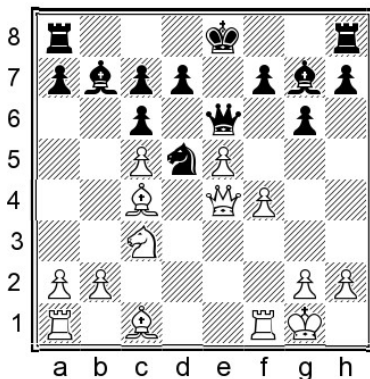
14...Bg7 15.a4 (15.Be3!?) 15...0-0 16.Bf3 c6, Dorer – Canal Oliveras, ICCF 2007, 17.a5², followed by Na4-c5.

14...c5. Black begins immediate active actions, but now his pawns on d5 and c5 would become excellent targets for White's pieces. 15.0-0 Be7 16.Bf3 (16.a4!?) 16...Bb7 17.a4 (17.h3!?! 0-0 18.Bg4) 17...Rb8 18.a5 Nd7, Seyb – Banusz, Dresden 2018, 19.Qd1² Black will fail to hold the d5-square.

14...Be7 15.0-0 0-0 16.b3 (16.Nd1. The transfer of White's knight to the f2-square seems a bit artificial. 16...Bd7 17.Nf2 f6 18.Bg4 f5 19.Bf3 c5 20.b3 Rab8 21.Ba3 Rfc8÷ Sferle – Cleto, ICCF 2008; 16.Bf3 Rb8 17.b3 Bb7 18.Ne2 c5 19.f5! Black has managed to cover the d4-square, therefore White is seeking other objects to attack. 19...Qxf5 20.Qxf5 gxf5 21.Bh5 Bc8 22.Ng3 f4 23.Bxf4 Be6 24.Be3÷, followed by Nf5, Miciak – Anderson, ICCF 2009. White still maintains some initiative.) 16...Bb7 17.Bf3 Rad8 18.Ne2 c5 19.Ba3 Rc8 20.Qd2² Heika – Zvara, Bayern 2011.

11...Bg7 12.c5 Nd5 (Following 12...d5, Black would not obtain sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material. 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.Qxc6+ Bd7 15.Qxd6 Qxd6 16.exd6 0-0 17.Be3 Na4?! Sadvakasov – Peng Xiaomin, Las Vegas 1999, 18.Nd5 Rab8 19.Ba6 Rxb2 20.0-0±; 18...Nxb2 19.Rc1²; 17...Rab8!?) 18.Bd3 Rfe8 19.Kf2 Nc8 20.Rhb1 Nxd6 21.Bxa7 Rb4 22.Kg1 Rxf4 23.a4² Black is likely to fail to cope effectively with White's connected passed pawns.) 13.Bc4 Bb7 (13...Nxc3?! 14.bxc3 Qe7 15.Be3± Vidic – Balajayeva, Porto Carras 2018) 14.0-0 (14.Be3 d6 15.cxd6 cxd6 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bb5+ Kf8 18.Qb4 d4, Saurabh – Laxman, Mumbai 2019, 19.Qxd4 dxe5 20.Qb4+ Kg8 21.0-0²; 16.Bxd5!?! cxd5 17.Qa4+ Qd7 18.Qxd7+ Kxd7 19.0-0²; 14...0-0 15.0-0 d6 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bxd5 Bxd5 18.Qxd5

dxe5 19.Qxe6 fxe6 20.fxe5 Bxe5 21.Rd7 a5 22.Rhd1² Burg – Werle, Netherlands 2009. White has a superior pawn-structure and an active rook on the penultimate rank. 14...f6 15.exf6 Bxf6 16.Qxe6+ dxe6 17.Bd2 Bd4 18.0-0-0 Bxc5 19.Rhe1, Borzenko – Har-Even, ICCF 2008, 19...0-0-0 20.Rxe6² Black has no compensation for the pawn-weaknesses on his queenside.)



14...Qe7? Kushagra – Soumya, Abu Dhabi 2018, 15.Be3! Nxe3 16.Qxe3 f6 17.Ne4 fxe5 18.f5+-

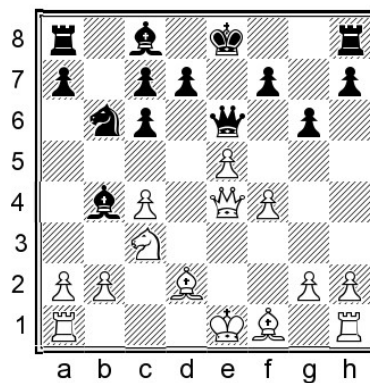
14...0-0-0? 15.Rd1. Now, Black loses at least a pawn due to the pin of his knight. 15...f5 16.Qf3 g5 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Bxd5 Bxd5 19.Rxd5+- R.Nielsen – Blagojevic, Zadar 2018.

14...0-0. Black's king will be much safer here than on the queenside. 15.Rd1 Qe7 (15...d6!? 16.exd6 Qxe4 17.Nxe4 Rfe8 18.Nc3 cxd6 19.cxd6 Nb6 20.Bb3 c5 21.d7 Nxd7 22.Bxf7+ Kxf7 23.Rxd7+ Re7 24.Rxe7+ Kxe7 25.Be3² Demchenko – Pisakov, Moscow 2008. Black is a pawn down, but thanks to his couple of powerful bishops he can rely on a favourable outcome of the game.) 16.Be3!? White continues to increase his pressure. (It would be too straightforward for him to choose here 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Bxd5 Qxc5+ 18.Be3 Bxd5 19.Rxd5 Qe7 20.Qd3 d6 21.exd6 cxd6 22.Rb1 Rfe8 23.Bd2, Brandenburg –

Richter, Haarlem 2007, 23...Rac8!?) 16...Nxe3 17.Qxe3 g5!? Black is trying by all possible means to organise some counterplay. (17...Rad8 18.Ne4±; 17...Kh8 18.Ne4 Rad8 19.Qh3±) 18.e6 fxe6 (18...dxe6 19.fxc5±) 19.Rxd7 gxf4 20.Rxe7 (20.Qxe6+ Qxe6 21.Bxe6+ Kh8 22.Rxc7²) 20...fxe3 21.Rxc7 Rab8 22.Rf1² White's rook is very active, so his prospects seem preferable.

12.Bd2

Following 12.Be3 f5, Black would seize completely the initiative. 13.Qd3 Ba6 14.b3 d5 15.Qc2 dxc4 16.Kf2, Nabaty – Golod, Haifa 2010, 16...g5µ



12...0-0

12...Bb7 13.a3 Be7 14.Bd3 0-0-0. Black is well prepared to open the diagonal for his bishop on b7 with the move c6-c5. 15.0-0-0 c5 16.Qe2, Prasca Sosa – Pena, Cali 2007, 16...d6 17.Rhf1 f5÷

12...Rb8 13.b3 0-0 14.Bd3 f5 15.Qe2 d6 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Qxe6+ Bxe6 18.Ne2 a5,, Tate – Stevic, Porto Carras 2011. He is trying after a5-a4 to get rid of his weak pawn.

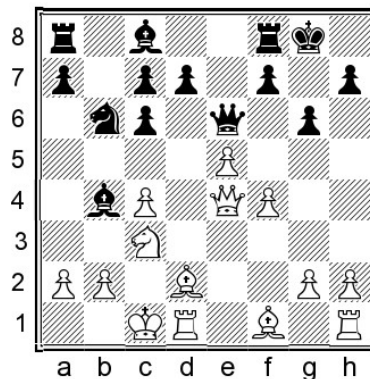
12...a5 13.Bd3 (13.a3!?) 13...0-0 (13...Ba6 14.b3 0-0 15.0-0 d5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Qe2 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 – see 14...0-0; 14...d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qe2 Bxd3 17.Qxd3 0-0 18.0-0 c5 19.Nb5 Qc6, Kanarek – Schreiner, Athens 2012, 20.Be1!?, with the idea Bf2, Rac1. 20...f6 21.Bf2 fxe5 22.fxe5 c4,,) 14.0-0 (14.0-0-0 f5!?)÷ Black prevents radically the enemy pawn-advance f4-f5; 14...d5!?) 14...f5 15.exf6 Qxe4 16.Nxe4 d5 17.Bxb4 axb4 18.cxd5 cxd5. After Black has got rid of his doubled pawns, he can be quite optimistic about the future. 19.Nc5 Rxf6 20.Be2 Na4 21.Nxa4 Rxa4 22.Rfc1, Balakrishnan – Burke, Saint Louis 2018, 22...c6=

13.0-0-0

The move 13.h4 would lead to a double-edged fight. 13...a5 14.h5!? Ba6 (14...d5 15.Qf3) 15.b3 a4 16.Rd1÷ White attacks on the h-file, but his own king is stranded in the centre and might come under an attack by the enemy pieces.

13.Bd3 Ba6 (13...f5 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.0-0 d6 16.Kh1 Bf5 17.Qf3 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 Qf5 19.Qxf5 gxf5= Pfretzschner – Iotov, ICCF 2013. White has a superior and more elastic pawn-structure, but he can hardly achieve anything meaningful out of this.) 14.b3 f5 15.Qf3 d6 16.Qxc6 Rab8 17.Nb5!? (Following 17.0-0-0 Bb7, Black will restore quickly the material balance, while White's queen will have problems to return safely into his own camp. 18.Qb5 a5 19.Rhe1 Bxg2µ Brandenburg – Nijboer, Groningen 2008) 17...Bb7

18.Qxc7 Na8 19.Bxb4 Nxc7 20.Nxc7 Qf7 21.Bxd6 Rfc8 22.Nb5÷ White's two minor pieces with three pawns are good compensation for the sacrificed queen.



13...Rb8

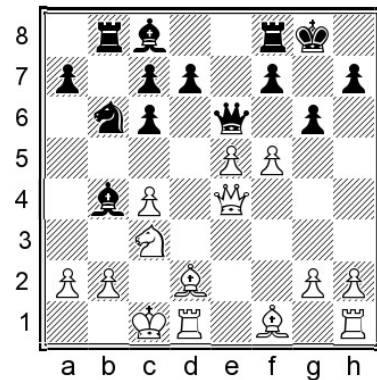
13...f5 14.exf6 Qxe4 15.Nxe4 Bxd2+, Saurabh – Bellia, Abu Dhabi 2017, 16.Nxd2!? Rxf6 17.c5 (17.g3²) 17...Nd5 18.g3² Black's bishop on c8 is very "bad", so he will have to fight long and hard for equality.

13...a5. Now, before playing Ba6, Black lets at first his pawn forward. 14.f5. White sacrifices temporarily a pawn and breaks his opponent's defence on the kingside. 14...Qxf5 15.Qxf5 gxf5 16.Bd3 Ba6 17.Rhf1 (17.Bxf5 Rfe8 18.Rhe1 Bxc4 19.Ne4 Bxd2+ 20.Rxd2. White's pieces have been very harmoniously and actively deployed, but the maximum that he can achieve out of this is to regain the pawn on h7. 20...Red8 21.a3 Kg7 22.Re3 Bd5 23.Nf6 Kf8 24.Nxh7+ Ke7 25.Rf2 a4÷ Relyea – Komarica, ICCF 2016.) 17...Bxc4 18.Bg5!? (18.Bh6 Rfe8 19.Rxf5 Bxd3 20.Rxd3 Re6. Black defends against the checks on the g-file. 21.Bg5 Bxc3 22.Rxc3 Rae8 23.Bd2 a4 24.Rh5 Nd5 25.Rc4. Now, White has a new object for his attack – the pawn on h7, but Black's rooks manage to come to

help. 25...f6 26.Rg4+ Kh8 27.Rgh4 R8e7 28.exf6 Rxf6 29.Rxa4 Rf1+ 30.Kc2 Rf2= Llopis – Holec, ICCF 2017) 18...Bxc3 19.bxc3 Bxa2 20.Bxf5 f6. Without this move, White would have played Bf6 and his attack would have become very powerful. 21.Bh6 Rfe8 (21...Rf7 22.exf6 Rxf6?! 23.Bxh7+) 22.exf6 a4 23.Rd4 Kf7 24.Bxd7 Re5 25.Bxc6 Rg8 26.Bf4 Rc5 27.Bf3 Be6 28.Kc2 a3= Black's far-advanced passed a-pawn provides him with counterplay sufficient for a draw.

14.f5

The careless move 14.b3? would enable Black to accomplish a pawn-break in the centre: 14...d5 15.cxd5 Ba3+ (15...Nxd5!?!; 15...Qe7!?!μ) 16.Kb1 cxd5 17.Qc2, Wan – Adams, Tromsøe 2013, 17...c5μ



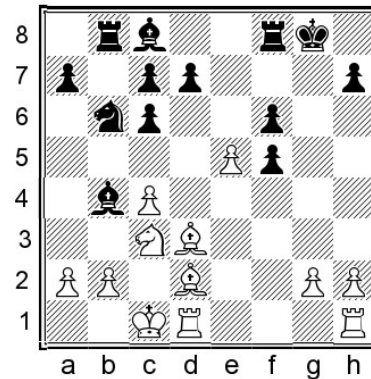
14...Qxf5

Black is trying prudently to enter an endgame.

Following 14...gxf5 15.Qh4, Black must worry permanently about the safety of his king. 15...Be7 (15...Bxc3 16.Bxc3 Na4 17.Rd3 Nxc3 18.bxc3 Qxe5÷; 17.c5 Nxc3 18.Qg3+ Qg6 19.Qxc3 Qg5+ 20.Kb1² White's bishop is much more active than

its counterpart.) 16.Bg5 Bxg5+ 17.Qxg5+ Kh8 18.c5!? (18.Bd3 Qxe5 19.Rhe1 Qg7, Van der Poel – Riemersma, Amsterdam 2017, 20.Qxg7+ Kxg7 21.c5 Nd5 22.Nxd5 cxd5 23.Bxf5 c6 24.Rd3© White has compensation for the pawn, but not more than that.) 18...Nd5 19.Nxd5 cxd5 20.Qf6+. Now, he has nothing better than to enter an endgame. 20...Qxf6 21.exf6 d6 (21...Bb7 22.Bd3²) 22.cxd6 cxd6 23.Rxd5 Bb7 24.Rxd6 Rfc8+ 25.Kd1 f4= White's kingside pieces are not developed and he has no chances of fighting for an advantage.

15.Qxf5 gxf5 16.Bd3 f6



Black wishes to exchange one of his weak pawns.

17.Bh6

17.exf6 Rxf6 18.Ne2 Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2 Ba6 20.b3 d5 21.cxd5 Bxd3 22.Rxd3 Nxd5. All Black's pawns are weak, but one of them is still extra... 23.Rf1 Nb4 24.Rd2 Rd6= Walter – Novak, ICCF 2016.

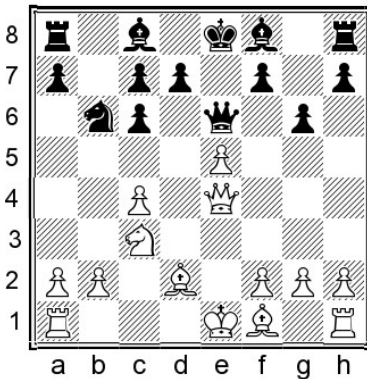
17...Re8 18.exf6 d6 19.Ne2 Na4 20.Nd4 Bc5 21.Nb3 Kf7 22.Rhf1 Be3+

22...a5. With this move Black only creates an additional target for his opponent to attack. 23.Rde1 Rxe1+

24.Rxe1 Be6 25.Kc2 Kxf6 26.Rf1 Rg8
 27.g3 Bd7 28.a3 Bb6 29.Bd2 h5 30.Rf4
 Rg4 31.Be2 Rxf4 32.gxf4 h4 33.Bf1 Bg1
 34.h3 Bf2 35.Bg2 Ke6 36.Nxa5 d5 37.b3²
 Gburek – Biedermann, ICCF 2010. Here,
 White can play for a win for a long time
 thanks to his outside passed a-pawn.

**23.Bxe3 Rxe3 24.Bxf5 Bxf5 25.Rxf5
 Re2=** Titzhoff – Grego, ICCF 2015. Black's
 rook is very active on the 2nd rank and
 provides him with sufficient counterplay
 to maintain equality.

B) 11.Bd2!?



In the main variation (**B2**), White
 sacrifices at first a pawn and then the
 exchange, but manages to create
 dangerous threats against the enemy
 king.

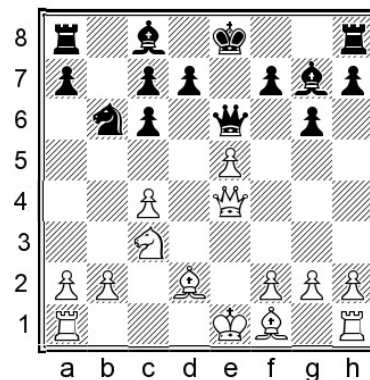
We will deal now with: **B1)** 11...Bg7
 and **B2)** 11...Ba6.

About 11...a5 12.Bd3 – see Chapter 25,
 variation A.

11...d5 12.exd6 cxd6 13.Be2! (13.Bd3
 f5 14.Qxe6+ Bxe6 15.b3 Bg7. Black has an
 inferior pawn-structure, but his bishops
 exert powerful pressure against the
 enemy queenside. 16.0-0 Kf7 17.Rac1 a5
 18.Be2 a4,, Hagara – Schachinger, Austria
 2011) 13...Bg7 (13...Bd7 14.Qd4 Qe5
 15.Be3 Bg7 16.0-0-0²; 13...Qxe4 14.Nxe4
 Be7 15.0-0 0-0 16.Rac1²) 14.Qxc6+ Bd7
 15.Qf3 0-0 16.0-0 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 Qxc4
 18.Nd5. White is preparing Nf6 and Bc3.
 Without this, Black's bishop on g7 would
 be tremendously active. 18...Be6 19.Nf6+
 Kh8 20.Bc3²

11...Bb7 12.Bd3 0-0-0. Black's king
 would not be safely placed on his
 weakened queenside. (12...Bg7 13.0-0 0-0
 14.c5 Nd5, Solak – Kovalev, Skopje 2019,
 15.Rfe1 Rfe8 16.f4²) 13.0-0 c5 14.Qe2 Bg7
 15.Rfe1 Rde8 16.Bf4 g5 17.Bxg5 (17.Bg3
 h5 18.h3 h4 19.Bh2, Rusan – Miron, Arad
 2018, 19...f5,) 17...Qxe5 18.Qxe5 Rxe5
 19.Rxe5 Bxe5 20.Re1 f6 21.Bd2² Black's
 minor pieces are very actively deployed
 indeed, but cannot compensate his
 numerous pawn-weaknesses.

B1) 11...Bg7



12.c5!

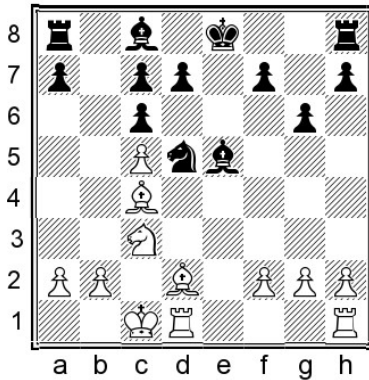
Now, Black cannot develop his bishop on the a6-square and will end up in a cramped position.

12...Nd5 13.Bc4 Qxe5

This is not a win of a pawn, because White can easily restore quickly the material balance if he so wishes.

13...Bb7 14.0-0 (14.0-0-0 0-0 15.Rhe1 Rfe8, V.Schneider – J.Pinter, Hungary 2011, 16.Qd3 Nb4?! 17.Qf1 Nd5 18.f4±; 16...a5 17.a3²) 14...0-0 (14...0-0-0 15.Rae1 Rde8 16.f4 f6 17.exf6 Bxf6 18.Qd3 Qf5 19.Ne4² Vosahlik – Pugh, ICCF 2008) 15.Rfe1 Rfe8 16.Bf4² Black has difficulties here to find an active plan for his actions. For example, it would not work for him to try 16...d6, because of 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.exd6 Bxc3 19.Bxd5 Qxe4 20.Rxe4 Bxb2 21.Rae1 Rxe4 22.Bxe4+- Christiansen – Makhnev, Tarvisio 2017.

14.Qxe5+ Bxe5 15.0-0-0



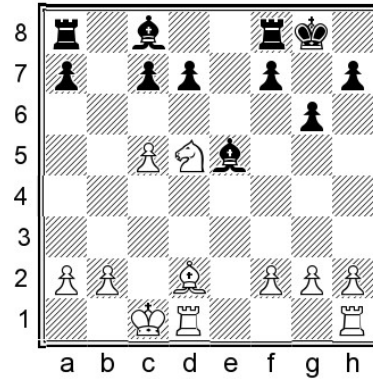
15...0-0

15...Nxc3 16.Rde1²

16.Bxd5

White would not achieve much if he refrains from capturing on d5: 16.Rhe1 Nxc3 17.Bxc3 Bxc3 18.bxc3 a5 19.Kb2 a4 20.Ka3 Ra5 21.Kb4, Staudner – Vajda, Austria 2007, 21...Ra7=

16...cxd5 17.Nxd5



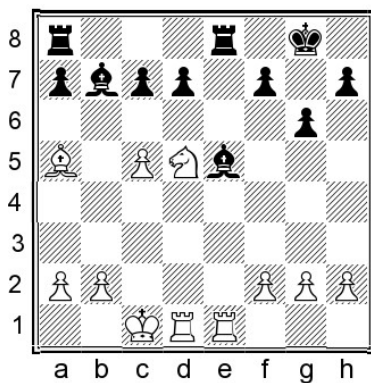
17...Bb7

17...Rb8 18.Bc3. It would be reasonable for White to deprive the opponent of his two-bishop advantage (18.b3 Bb7 19.Ba5 – see 17...Bb7). 18...Bxc3 19.Nxc3 Re8 20.Rhe1 (20.Rd4!? Re6 21.b4) 20...Rxe1 21.Rxe1. He has a superior pawn-structure and this provides him with a stable advantage. 21...Bb7 22.g3 Bc6 23.Kc2 Kg7 24.b3 g5 25.a3 a5 26.Rb1 Kf6 (26...Bf3 27.b4 Bg4 28.Kd2²) 27.b4 axb4 28.axb4 Kf5 (28...d6!? 29.b5 Bf3 30.cxd6 cxd6 31.Kd3² White has an outside passed pawn indeed, but he will have problems to realise his advantage, since there is just a few material left on the board.) 29.b5 Be4+? (Black had better choose here 29...Bf3.) 30.Nxe4 Kxe4 31.Kc3± Yu Yangyi – Dominguez Perez, Doha 2016.

18.Ba5 Rfe8

18...Rab8 19.b3 Bxd5 (19...Rfe8 20.Rhe1² White exerts powerful pressure. After the careless move 20...Re6?, Black would lose material: 21.Rxe5 Rxe5 22.Nf6+ Kg7 23.Nxd7 Ree8 24.Nxb8 Rxb8, Jirasek – Ke, Berkeley 2018, 25.Bxc7 Rc8 26.Rd7 Bxg2 27.Be5+ Kg8 28.b4+–) 20.Rxd5 Rb5 21.b4 d6 22.a4 Rb7 23.c6 Rbb8 24.Kc2. White has managed to advance quickly his queenside pawns and to fix the enemy weakness on the c7-square. 24...Rbc8, V.Schneider – Tarasova, Rijeka 2010, 25.Rb5 a6 26.Rb7 d5 27.Rd1 Rfd8 28.Ra7+–

19.Rhe1



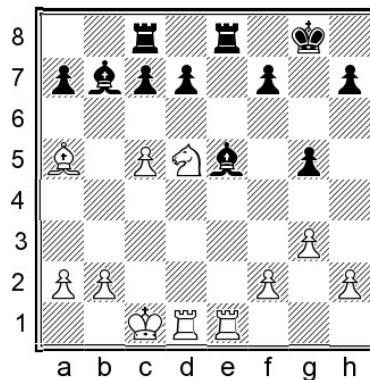
19...Rac8

19...c6 20.Ne3 Bf4 21.Kc2 Bxe3 22.Rxe3 Rxe3 23.fxe3 Bc8. Black's position is very passive, but White will have difficulties to break it. 24.g4 h6, Wang – Bojkov, Richardson 2011, 25.Rd6![?] Kf8 26.h4 Ke7 27.h5.

19...Bxd5 20.Rxd5 Bf4+ 21.Kd1 Rxe1+ 22.Kxe1 Re8+ 23.Kd1. Now, in comparison to the main line, Black's position is worse, since there are bishops of

of same colour left on the board and not of opposite colours. 23...Re7 24.g3 Be5 25.f4 Bxb2 26.Bxc7± f5 27.Bd8 Rf7 28.Kc2. White wins a tempo to activate his king. 28...Bg7 29.Kd3 Kf8 30.Bg5 Bb2 (30...h6?? 31.c6+–) 31.Kc4 Kg7, with the idea Bb2–f6 32.Rd6+– Saric – Skembris, Achaea 2017.

20.g3 g5

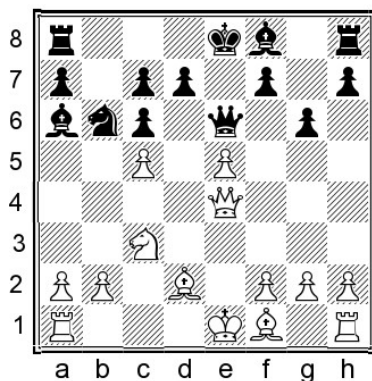


21.Nxc7

White can refrain from winning a pawn here and just continue to increase his pressure: 21.Re3!? Kf8 22.Kc2 Re6 23.Rd2 h6 24.b3 Ke8 25.a4 f6 26.b4f Lomasov – Mitsis, Skopje 2019.

21...Bxc7 (21...Re7 22.b4²) 22.Rxe8+ Rxe8 23.Bxc7² Haslinger – Gupta, Hoogeveen 2008. Black still has some chances of saving the game thanks to the presence of bishops of opposite colours on the board.

B2) 11...Ba6 12.c5!?



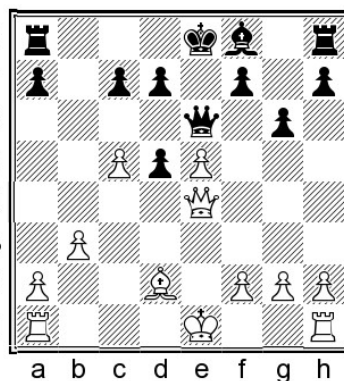
12...Nc4

It is obviously worse for Black to opt here for 12...Bxf1 13.cxb6 and his position cannot be envied. 13...Bc4 (13...f5 14.b7 Rb8 15.Qe3 Bxg2 16.Rg1 Rxb7 17.Rxg2 Rxb2 18.Qd3 Qxe5+? 19.Kf1 Be7 20.Re1; 18...Bg7 19.f4 0-0 20.Nd1± Black's three pawns for the piece cannot be sufficient compensation for him in this middle game.) 14.bxc7 Bg7 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.Bf4±, followed by the doubling of the rooks on the d-file, Aryan – Raahul, Abu Dhabi 2018.

13.Bg5

White wishes to preserve his dark-squared bishop and sacrifices a pawn for the initiative.

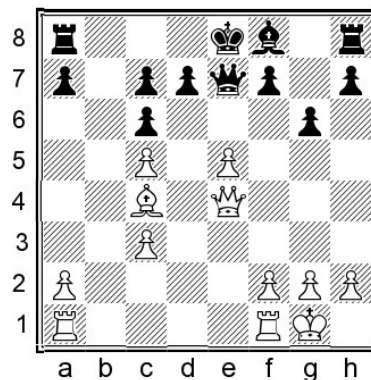
13.Bxc4 Bxc4 14.b3 Bd5. Black should better comply with the loss of his two-bishop advantage. (Following 14...Ba6 15.Qe3!? d5 16.exd6 Qxe3+ 17.Bxe3 cxd6 18.Ne4², White would have powerful initiative.) 15.Nxd5 cxd5



16.Qd4 (16.Qe3 Bg7 17.0-0 0-0 18.Rae1 f6,, Brandenburg – Adhiban, Wijk aan Zee 2012) 16...Bg7 17.Bc3 0-0 18.0-0 d6.

Black continues to try to simplify the position. 19.cxd6 cxd6 20.f4 Rfe8= Hsylvsson – Ingorsol, ICCF 2014.

13.Be3 Nxe3 14.Bxa6 Nd5 15.Bc4 Nxc3 16.bxc3 Qe7, Belka – Jacot, ICCF 2016, 17.0-0



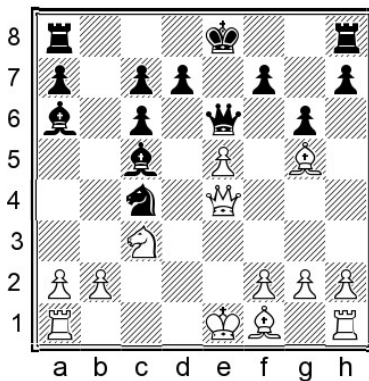
17...Qxc5. This move is too risky. 18.Rad1 Bg7 19.Rfe1 (19.Bxf7+. White sacrifices a piece and activates radically his forces. 19...Kxf7 20.Rxd7+ Kg8 21.Re1 Qxc3 22.h4 Rf8 23.h5 Qc5 24.Re2±; 22...Re8 23.h5 Rxe5. Now, Black has nothing better than to give back the extra piece and to seek salvation in a rook and pawn ending with a pawn down. 24.Rxg7+ Kxg7 25.Qxe5+ Qxe5 26.Rxe5 Rf8 27.Rc5 Rf6 28.Ra5 Rf5 29.Rxa7 Rxh5 30.Rxc7+ Kg8 31.Rxc6 Ra5 32.Rc2²) 19...0-0. Black's king has been stranded in the centre for too long, so he should

better not postpone his castling.

(19...Rd8? 20.Bxf7+! Kxf7 21.e6+ Kg8
22.Qh4 Rf8 23.exd7 Bf6 24.Qxf6 Rxf6
25.d8=Q±) 20.Rxd7 Rae8 21.e6 fxe6
22.Re3²

17...Bg7 18.Qe3 (18.Rad1 0-0 19.Bb3
Bxe5 20.Rfe1 Rae8 21.Qc4. White's
pressure against the f7-square
compensates the sacrificed pawn, but not
more than that. 21...Qf6 22.Re3 d5. This is
the simplest for Black. He is not reluctant
to part with the extra material. 23.cxd6
cxd6 24.Qxc6 Kg7 25.g3=) 18...0-0
19.Rae1 Rae8 20.f4 d6 21.cxd6 cxd6
22.Kh1 dxe5 23.f5 Kh8÷ White's bishop is
obviously more active than its
counterpart, but Black has an extra pawn.

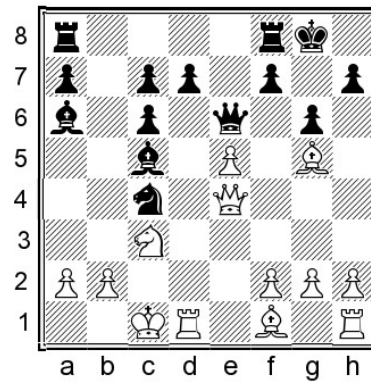
13...Bxc5



14.0-0-0

14.b3 Bb4 15.Rc1 d5 16.Bxc4 dxe4
17.Bxe6 fxe6 18.Bf6. The activity of
White's pieces is only sufficient for him to
maintain the balance. 18...0-0 19.a3 Bxa3
20.Ra1 Bb4 21.Rxa6 Bxc3+ 22.Ke2 Rab8
23.Rxc6 Rxb3 24.Rxc7 Rfb8 25.Rg7+ Kf8
26.Rxh7 Bd4=

14...0-0

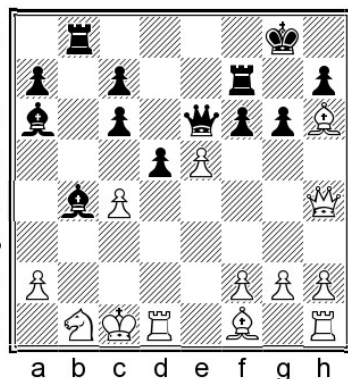


15.Qf4

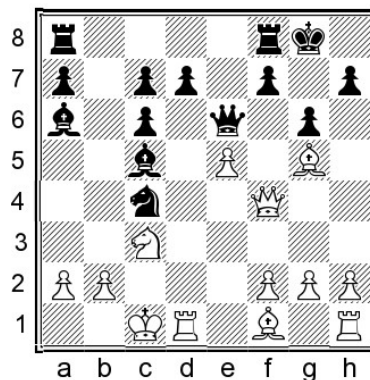
15.Qh4 Nxb2! 16.Ne4 (16.Kxb2 Rab8+
17.Kc2 Bxf1 18.Rhxf1 Qf5+ 19.Ne4 Rb4
20.f3 d5 21.exd6 cxd6= White cannot rely
on having an edge, because his king is too
vulnerable. 16.Bxa6 Nxd1 17.Ne4 Bxf2!
Black removes his bishop from the attack
with tempo and manages to play f7-f5.
18.g3 f5 19.Nxf2 Qxe5 20.Bc4+ d5
21.Nxd1 dxc4 22.Qxc4+ Qd5=) 16...f6
17.Nxc5 Qxe5 18.Qd4 Nxd1 19.Qxe5 fxe5
20.Bxa6 Nxf2 21.Rf1 d6 22.Nd7 Ne4
23.Rxf8+ (23.Nxf8 Nxc5 24.Nd7 Rd8³)
23...Rxf8 24.Nxf8 Nxc5 25.Nd7 Nf7= Black
has sufficient equivalent of pawns for the
sacrificed piece.

15.Bxc4 Bxc4 16.Qh4 Bxa2 17.Rd3 f5.
After this move Black will not be afraid of
the attack against his pawn on h7.
18.Nxa2 Qxa2 19.Rxd7 h5 20.Bf6 Rf7
21.Qg3. White's attack might seem to be
very powerful, but his king is vulnerable,
so Black will have counterplay sufficient
to maintain the equality. 21...Rxd7
22.Qxg6+ Kf8 23.e6 Qa1+ 24.Kc2 Qa4+
25.Kc1 Qf4+ 26.Kb1 Qe4+ 27.Kc1 Qxe6
28.Bg7+ Ke7 29.Bf6+ Kf8=

15.b3 Bb4 16.Nb1 f6 17.Bh6 d5 18.Qh4
Rf7 (Following 18...fxe5 19.Bxf8 Bxf8
20.bxc4, Black must play very precisely in
order to preserve the equality. 20...Rb8
21.Rd3. White wishes to play Rb3.
21...Be7 22.Qh3 Bg5+ 23.Kc2 Qe7. Black's
pieces are very active, while White's king
has no pawn-shelter. Black has full
compensation for the sacrificed rook.
24.Rb3 Rf8 25.Qc3 Rxf2+ 26.Kd1 d4
27.Qg3 Rf8 28.h4 Bf4 29.Qe1 e4 30.Nd2
Bxd2 31.Kxd2 e3+ 32.Kd1 Bc8 33.Bd3 Rf2
34.h5 Bg4+ 35.Kc1 Bf5 36.Bxf5 gxf5
37.Qa5 Qd6 38.c5 Qf4 39.Re1 Rxc2=
Straka – Kugler, ICCF 2015) 19.bxc4 Rb8



20.exf6 Bd6 (20...Rxf6 21.Be3²) 21.Qd4
c5 (21...dxc4 22.Qxa7 Qc8 23.Nc3±)
22.Qd2 Be5 23.Nc3. White continues to
play for a win. (23.Qxd5 Qb6 24.Qd8+ Rf8
25.Qd5+, Zmokly – Cerrato, ICCF 2014,
25...Rf7=) 23...Qb6 (23...Bxf6? 24.Re1 Qb6
25.Nb5 Bh8 26.Re3; 23...Qxf6 24.Nxd5
Qh8. Black's threats Be5-f4 and Qa1+
leave White with no choice. 25.Ne7+ Rxe7
26.Qd5+ Rf7 27.Qd8+ Rf8 28.Qd5+ Rf7=)
24.Bd3 (24.Nb5 c6=) 24...Bxc4 (24...dxc4?
25.Be4 c6 26.Rde1) 25.Bxc4 dxc4. Now,
once again, White has nothing better than
a perpetual check. 26.Qd8+ Rf8 27.Qd5+
Rf7 28.Qd8+ Rf8=



15...d5

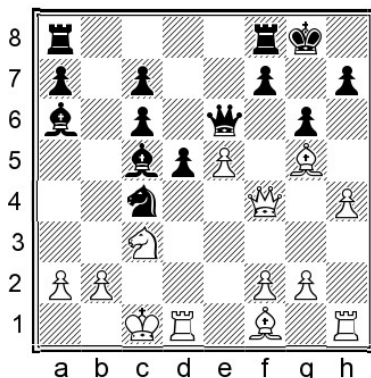
15...f6?! Black is afraid not to get
checkmated after Bf6 and Qh6, so he gives
immediately a pawn, but this would not
equalise for him. 16.Bxf6 d5 17.h4 Be7
18.h5 Bxf6 19.exf6 Rxf6 20.Qh4 gxh5
21.Qg5²

15...Nxb2. We are already familiar with
this piece-sacrifice. 16.Kxb2 Rab8+
17.Ka1 Rb4 18.Qf3 Bxf1 19.Rhxf1 Bd4?!
(19...Rfb8 20.Bf6 Bd4 21.Rxd4 Rxd4
22.Rb1 Rxb1+ 23.Nxb1 Ra4 24.Nc3 Rg4
25.Qe3 Qc4 26.Kb2 Qb4=) 20.Rxd4 Rxd4
21.Qe3 Rb4 22.Bf6 Qc4 23.Rd1 Rfb8 24.h3
h6 25.Be7 Rb2 26.Rc1 R2b7 27.Bc5 Qe6
28.g4² Calio – Petruzzelli, ICCF 2016.
White has managed to parry the direct
threats against his king.

16.exd6

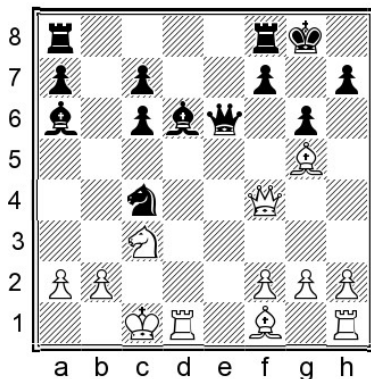
16.b3 f6 17.Bxf6 Rab8 18.h4 Be7
19.Qd4 Bc8 20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.bxc4. White
wins a piece, but now Black begins a
direct attack against the enemy king.
21...Qa3+ 22.Kd2 Rb2+ 23.Ke1 Rbxf2=
Werner – Packroff, ICCF 2016.

16.h4!?, with the idea h4-h5.



16...Rae8?! 17.Bf6 Nxe5 18.Bxa6 Bd6
 19.Bxe5 Bxe5. Black has not obtained
 sufficient compensation for the piece.
 20.Qf3 (20.Qa4 Rb8 21.Rhe1 Qf6 22.Rd3²)
 20...Rb8 21.Rhe1 Qd6 22.Bf1 Qb4 23.Re2²
 16...Rfb8 17.b3 (17.Bxc4 Rb4!?)
 17...Ba3+ 18.Kc2 Bc8 19.Nb1 (19.Re1 a5,)
 19...Bb2 (with the idea Bxe5) 20.Nc3 Ba3=

16...Bxd6



17.Rxd6 cxd6

17...Qxd6? 18.Qxd6 cxd6 19.b3±

18.Bf6 d5

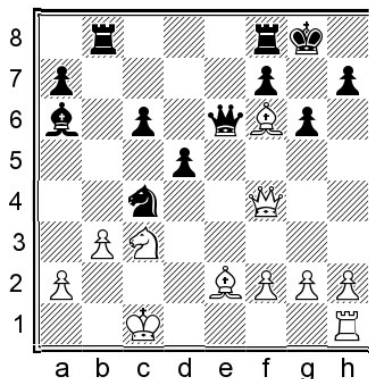
18...Qe1+? This move loses precious
 time for Black. 19.Kc2 Qe6 20.b3±

18...Rae8!? 19.Bxc4 Bxc4 20.Ne4 Bf1!
 Black frees the c4-square for his queen.
 21.Qh6. White lacks just a tempo in order
 to checkmate the enemy king. 21...Qc4+
 22.Nc3 Re1+ 23.Kc2 Re2+ 24.Kc1 Re1=

19.b3 Rab8

Black is preparing in advance for the
 opening of the b-file.

20.Be2



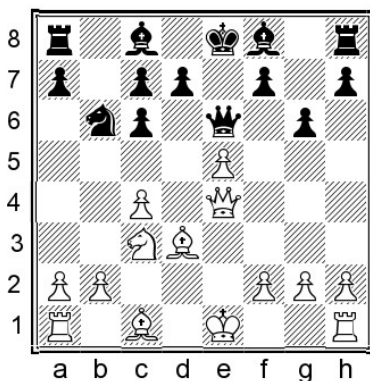
20...c5?

20...Na3? 21.Bxa6 Rb6 22.Bd3 c5
 23.Be5 Re8 24.Re1 c4 (24...d4 25.Ne4±)
 25.bxc4 f6 26.c5 Rc6 27.Qb4 Nc4 28.Bxc4
 dxc4 29.Nb5 fxe5 30.Nd4 Qd5 31.Nxc6
 Qxc6 32.Qxc4± Now, White has very good
 winning chances thanks to his passed c5-
 pawn.

After 20...Rb4!, Black would have
 maintained the balance. 21.bxc4 c5 22.a3
 Rxc4 23.Bxc4 Bxc4 24.Kd2 (24.Qe5 Qa6
 25.a4 Bb3=) 24...d4 25.Ne4 Ba6 26.Rc1
 Qa2+ 27.Rc2 Qxa3 28.Qh6 Qd3+ 29.Kc1
 Qf1+ 30.Kb2 Rb8+ 31.Ka3 Rb3+! 32.Kxb3
 Qb5=

21.Rd1 Rfe8? This move loses immediately. (21...Rb4 22.Nxd5 Nd6 23.Nxb4 cxb4 24.Bxa6+-) **22.Nxd5** 1-0 Van Foreest – Tari, Wijk aan Zee 2018.

C) 11.Bd3



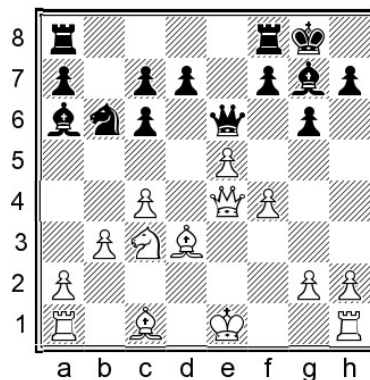
We will deal now with: **C1)** 11...Ba6 and **C2)** 11...Bg7.

C1) 11...Ba6?! 12.b3 Bg7

The move 12...Bb4 does not combine well with g7-g6. 13.Bd2 0-0 14.0-0 (14.f4?! f5! Black prevents f4-f5. 14...15.Qf3 d6. He sacrifices a pawn and seizes completely the initiative. 16.Qxc6 Rab8 17.0-0-0 Bb7 18.Qb5 a5³ Brandenburg – Nijboer, Groningen 2008.) 14...Rfe8 (14...f5 15.Qe2 d6 16.a3 Bc5 17.exd6² White's superior pawn-structure promises him a stable advantage.) 15.Rfe1 f5 16.exf6 Qxf6 17.Qxe8+ Rxe8 18.Rxe8+ Kf7 19.Re3 Kg7 20.Rf3 Qd4 21.Re1. Black's queen is helpless against White's perfectly coordinated rooks. 21...d5 22.Nb5. Black loses unavoidably material. 22...Qc5 23.Be3+- Brunello – Pace, Porto San Giorgio 2004.

13.f4 0-0

13...d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Nxd5?! (15.Qe2 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 0-0 17.0-0, or 17.Ba3 Rfd8 18.0-0 Rac8 19.Rae1 c5 20.Nb5 – see variation **C2a2)** 15...Nxd5 16.Qa4+ (16.Bxa6 Qxa6 17.Qxd5 0-0 18.Kf2 Rad8 19.Qc4 Qxc4 20.bxc4 f6= Abergel – Bhat, Palma de Mallorca 2009) 16...c6 17.Bxa6 Bxe5 18.fxe5 Qxe5+ 19.Kf2 Qf6+. White cannot avoid the perpetual check. 20.Kg3 Qc3+, Amin – Baramidze, Antalya 2013, 21.Kf2 0-0 22.Bh6 Qc5=



14.Ba3

White would not achieve anything after 14.0-0 – see variation **C2a**.

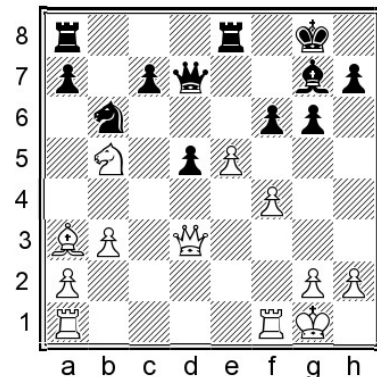
14...f5

14...Rfc8?! White can exploit the removal of Black's rook from the kingside by transferring his knight to the g5-square and the pawn-break f4-f5. 15.Qe2 (15.0-0?! d5) 15...f5. Black is trying to thwart his opponent's plans, but White has a very interesting pawn-sacrifice. 16.g4! fxg4 17.Ne4 d6 18.Ng5 Qe8 19.Qxg4 dxe5 20.0-0-0 Rd8 21.f5 Bc8,

Jones – Gupta, London 2010, 22.Qh3! h6
23.Ne6 Bxe6 24.fxe6+–

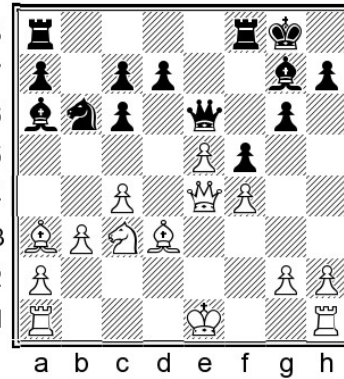
14...d5 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qd4² Bxd3
17.Bxf8 Bxf8 18.Qxd3± Black's
compensation for the sacrificed exchange
is insufficient.

14...Rfe8 15.0-0 (15.Qf3 d6 16.0-0 f5
17.g4 – see 14...f5) 15...d5 (15...f5 16.Qf3
d6 17.g4 – see 14...f5; 15...Bb7? 16.Qf3 d5
17.cxd5 cxd5 18.Nb5 Qd7 19.Rac1 Rec8,
Vuckovic – Blagojevic, Niksic 2018, 20.f5!
White begins a decisive attack. 20...Bxe5
21.Rfe1 f6 22.fxg6 Qg7 23.Qg4+–) 16.cxd5
cxd5 17.Qd4 (17.Qf3 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 – see
17.Qd4) 17...Bxd3 18.Qxd3 f6. Black
undermines the enemy pawn on e5 in
order to activate his bishop on g7. 19.Nb5
Qd7



20.exf6 (20.Rac1. White exerts
pressure against the pawn on c7 with the
idea to force a weakening of the d6-
square. 20...c6 21.Nd6 fxe5. White's
knight on d6 is so powerful that Black
must sacrifice the exchange for it. 22.Nxe8
e4 23.Qc2 Rxe8 24.Qxc6 e3 25.Qxd7 Nxd7,
Klokas – Antoniou, Ermioni Argolidas
2006, 26.Rfe1±, followed by the transfer
of the king to the d3-square. Black does
not have sufficient compensation for the
sacrificed material.) 20...Bxf6 21.Rac1 c6

22.Nd4 Re4 23.Nxc6 Rc8 24.Ne5±
Baratosi – Vajda, Predeal 2007. Naturally,
Black can regain the sacrificed pawn, but
then he would be checkmated quickly on
the opened a1-h8 diagonal.



15.Qf3

15.Qe2!? d6 16.0-0-0 c5 (16...Rfe8
17.c5! White manages just in time to
eliminate the pawn-attack against the e5-
square. 17...Bxd3 18.Qxd3 dxc5 19.Bxc5
Bh6 20.Be3 a5 21.Kc2 a4 22.Bxb6 cxb6
23.g3 axb3+ 24.axb3 Ra3= Borowiec –
Schuster, ICCF 2006; 21.Kb1!? a4 22.Bxb6
axb3 23.Bxc7 bxa2+ 24.Ka1! White's king
uses the enemy pawn on a2 as a shield
against his opponent's major pieces.
24...Re7 25.Qd6 Qc4 26.Rc1² Black does
not have sufficient compensation for the
piece.) 17.Rhe1 (17.Bb2!? dxe5 18.Nd5
Nxd5 19.cxd5 Bxd3 20.Rxd3 Qe7 21.fxe5²
Now, White's prospects seem preferable
thanks to his powerful central pawns.)
17...Rfe8, Glaser – Mudra, ICCF 2012
(17...dxe5 18.fxe5 Rfe8 19.Nd5 Qxe5
20.Qxe5 Bxe5 21.Rxe5 Rxe5 22.Nxc7 Bb7
23.Nxa8 Bxa8 24.g3²) 18.g4!? White
sacrifices a pawn and gains access to the
wonderful e4-square for his minor pieces.
18...fxg4 19.Be4 Rad8 20.Nd5²

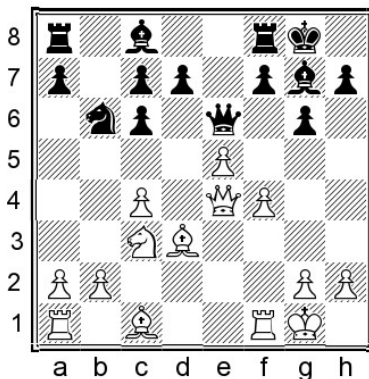
15...Rfe8

13...Ba6

About 12...Ba6 13.b3 – see variation **C1**.

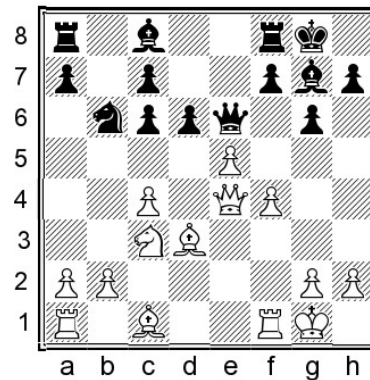
13.0-0

The move 13.c5 enables Black to transfer his knight on b6 to the centre of the board. 13...Nd5 (13...d5!? 14.exd6 Bxc3+ 15.bxc3 Qxe4+ 16.Bxe4 Re8³; 14.Qe3 Nd7 15.0-0, Tyutyunnik - Simmelink, LSS 2007, 15...Qe7 16.Na4 Re8³) 14.0-0 (14.Bc4 Bb7 15.Be3 d6 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.0-0 Nxc3 18.bxc3 d5 19.Qb1, Rasmussen - K.Hansen, ICCF 2008, 19...Qe7³ Black has succeeded in getting rid of his doubled pawns, while White must worry about a new weakness in his position – the pawn on c3.) 14...d6 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Nxd5 cxd5 17.Qxe6 Bxe6 (17...fxe6. Black fortifies reliably his pawn on d5. 18.cxd6 Rd8 19.Rb1 Bd4+ 20.Kh1 a5 21.Bd2 Rxd6= Van der Weide - De Jong, Hilversum 2006.) 18.cxd6 Rfd8. Black will soon restore the material balance and the position would become completely equal after that. 19.Rb1 (19.f5 gxf5 20.Bxf5 Bxf5 21.Rxf5 Rxd6 22.Bf4 Rb6 23.Rxd5 Rxb2= Paehtz - Nemcova, Plovdiv 2008) 19...Bd4+ 20.Kh1 Rxd6 21.Bd2 Rc8= Van der Weide - Nijboer, Dieren 2007.



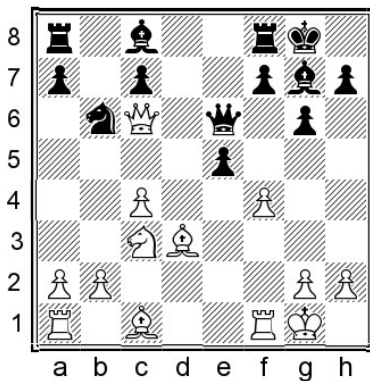
13...f5 14.Qe2 (White should not open the diagonal for the enemy bishop: 14.exf6?! Qxf6³ Brown - Adams, Bournemouth 2016.) 14...d6 15.c5 (15.exd6?! cxd6 16.Bd2 Qxe2 17.Bxe2 Ba6 18.b3 d5µ Ampie - Bruzon Batista, Baku 2016) 15...Nd5 (15...dxc5 16.Qf2²) 16.Nxd5 (16.exd6 cxd6 17.Nxd5 Qxe2 18.Bxe2 cxd5 19.c6 Re8 20.Bf3 Be6 21.Be3 Bxb2 22.Rab1 Bc3= Robertshaw - Tofan, ICCF 2015) 16...cxd5 17.exd6 (17.cxd6 cxd6 18.Re1 dxe5 19.fxe5 f4 20.Bd2 Bb7= Sankalp - Raja, Zalakaros 2017) 17...cxd6 18.Qxe6+ Bxe6= Morelli - Peigney, ICCF 2014. White has a superior pawn-structure, but Black's bishop on g7 exerts powerful pressure against the b2-square.

13...d6



14.c5 d5?! Black closes the position, but his weaknesses on c6 and c7 would remain... (14...Nd5 15.exd6 – see 13.c5). 15.Qf3 Nd7 16.Be3 Rb8, Zhuk - Severina, St Petersburg 2014, 17.Ne2! White does not lose time for the protection of his pawn on b2 and prepares the immediate transfer of his knight to the centre of the board. 17...f6 (17...Rxb2 18.Nd4 Qe8 19.Nxc6±) 18.Nd4 Qe8 19.e6 Nxc5

20.Nxc6 Qxc6 21.Rac1 Qxe6 22.f5! gxf5
 23.Bxc5f
 14.Qxc6 dxe5

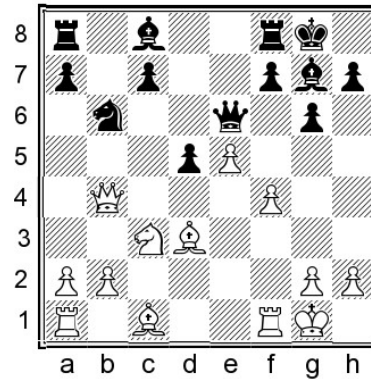


15.Qf3 Rb8 16.c5 Nc4 17.Qe2 (17.f5 gxf5 18.Qe2 Na5 19.Bxf5 Qa6 20.Bd3 Qe6 21.Be4 Kh8÷ Now White must play very accurately, so that Black's f- and e-pawns do not advance.) 17...Nxb2 18.f5 (18.Bxb2? exf4 19.Rae1 Qxe2 20.Rxe2 Bg4³ Negi – Wen, Sharjah 2014) 18...gxf5 19.Bxb2 e4 20.Bb5 c6 21.Ba4 Ba6 22.Qxa6 Rxb2 23.Ne2 Be5÷ Black has good compensation for the sacrificed piece.

15.Qxc7 f5 16.c5 Rf7 17.Qd8+ Rf8 18.Qh4 e4 19.Bc2. White prepares a transfer of his bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal. 19...Nc4 (19...Bd4+ 20.Kh1 Ba6 21.Bb3 Nc4 22.Rd1 Bxc5 23.Na4 Be7 24.Qf2± Venkatesh – Silva, Lisbon 2018. The pin of the knight is very unpleasant for Black.) 20.Rd1 Qc6 21.Qe7. White is reluctant to give up his pawn on c5 just like that... 21...Bxc3 22.Bb3 Be6 23.Bxc4 Bxc4 24.bxc3. In this position Black must play very carefully; otherwise, White's attack might become very dangerous in this position with bishops of opposite colours. 24...Rfe8 (24...Bd3 25.Be3. White transfers his bishop to the d4-square with excellent attacking prospects. 25...Rfe8 26.Qh4 Rab8 27.Rd2 a5 28.a4 Rb3 29.h3 Qe6 30.Bd4± Burne – LeBled, ICCF 2015) 25.Qd6 Qxd6 26.Rxd6. Black does not

need to worry about the safety of his king in this endgame. 26...e3 27.Ba3 Rac8=

13...d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Qb4. White impedes his opponent's pawn-advance c7-c5.



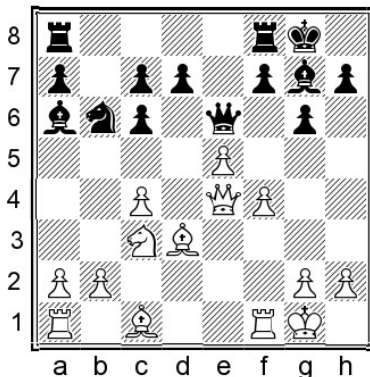
15...Re8. Black is preparing Bf8. 16.Nb5 (16.Be3!?) 16...Bf8, Van der Weide – Kantorik, Triesen 2007, 17.Qe1 Nc4 18.Nc3²

15...c6 16.Ne2 Rd8 17.Be3 Bf8 18.Bc5 Bxc5+ 19.Qxc5 Nd7 20.Qa5² Moe – Pakmor, Helsingor 2018.

15...a5. Black wishes to deploy his bishop on the a6-square and this is his simplest way of equalising. 16.Qc5 Ba6 17.Bxa6 Rxa6 18.Qxc7 Rc8 19.Qb7 Raa8 20.Rd1 Rcb8 21.Qc7 Rc8=

15...f6. He not only attacks White's e5-pawn, but also prepares the defence of his pawn on c7 with his rook. 16.Nb5 Rf7 17.f5 gxf5 18.Qh4 (18.Bxf5 Qxe5 19.Bxc8 Rxc8 20.Nxa7 Ra8 21.Nc6 Qe4÷ Kramer – Banusz, Karlsruhe 2018. White has restored the material balance, but there are just a few pawns left on the board.) 18...Nc4 19.Kh1. It would be useful for White to remove his king away from the g1-a7 diagonal. 19...Qb6 (19...fxe5? 20.Nxc7 Rxc7 21.Bxf5+-) 20.e6 Bxe6 21.Nd4 Ne5 22.Bxf5 Bxf5 23.Nxf5 Bf8÷ White's knight has occupied a perfect attacking position on the f5-square.

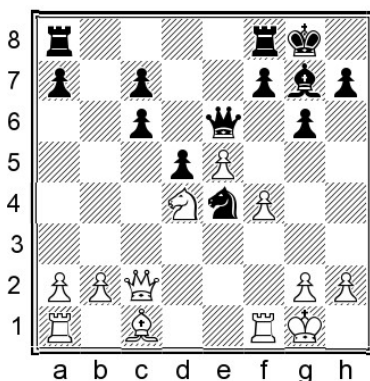
Black's king is vulnerable indeed, but he has an extra pawn after all...



White can provoke a crisis in this position with **C2a1) 14.c5**, or can just protect his pawn on c4 **C2a2) 14.b3**.

C2a1) 14.c5 Bxd3

The intermediate move 14...d5 can create problems only for Black, since he would have difficulties to activate his bishop on g7. 15.Qe2 (15.cxd6 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 cxd6 17.Qxd6 Qxd6 18.exd6 Bd4+ 19.Kh1 Rad8 20.f5 Rxd6= Kiss – Schloffer, Austria 2014) 15...Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Nd7 17.Ne2. White does not lose time for the protection of his pawn on c5. He wishes to attack Black's weaknesses on the queenside as quickly as possible. 17...Nxc5 18.Qc2 Ne4 19.Nd4



19...Qe8 20.Qxc6 Qxc6 21.Nxc6 Rae8 22.Be3 f6 23.Rac1 fxe5 24.fxe5 Rxf1+ (After Black's rather passive approach 24...a6 25.Rfd1 Bxe5 26.Nxe5 Rxe5 27.Rxc7 Rf7 28.Rc6², White's bishop would be much stronger than the enemy knight in a fight on both sides of the board, Fass – Anderson, ICCF 2008.) 25.Kxf1 a5 26.b3 Kf7= White has also a weak pawn here – on e5.

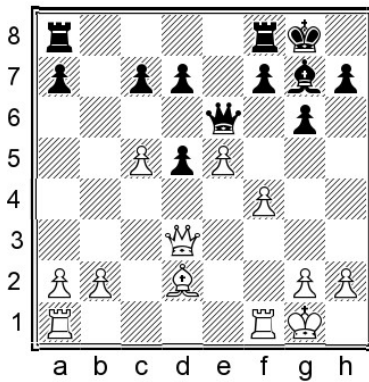
19...Qd7 20.Qxc6 Rfd8 21.Be3 f6 22.exf6 Nxf6 23.Qe6+ Kh8 24.Qxd7 Rxd7 25.Nc6 Ng4 26.Bc5 Bxb2 27.Rab1 Bc3 28.Rfd1 d4= Farkas – Mortensen, ICCF 2009. White can regain his pawn at any moment, but he would not have any winning chances, since there would be just a few material left on the board.

15.Qxd3 Nd5 16.Nxd5

16.Rd1 d6 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Qxd5 dxe5 20.Qxe6 fxe6 21.fxe5 Bxe5 22.Rb1 Rfc8 23.b4 Rc2 24.a3 Rac8= Engelhard – Neder, ICCF 2010. White cannot achieve anything out of his superior pawn-structure, since Black's rooks are tremendously active.

16...cxd5 17.Bd2

17.Be3 f6 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf6 Bxf6. Black's king is vulnerable, but the activity of White's pieces is only sufficient for him to have good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. 20.Rae1 Qe4 21.Qd2 c6 22.Rf4 Qe6 23.Bd4 Bxd4+ 24.Rxd4 Qf6 25.Ra4 Rf7= Dedina – Jedinger, ICCF 2010.



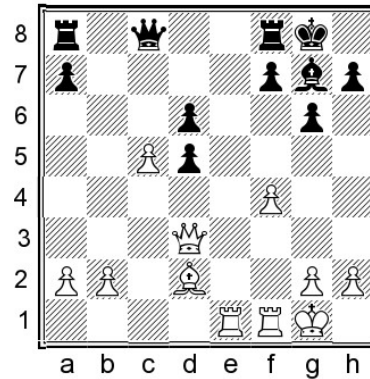
17...d6

17...a5 18.Bc3²

17...f6, Van Helvoort – Swinkels, Bussum 2013. This move would look much stronger after the preliminary c7-c6. 18.f5 gx f5 19.ex f6. Black's d5-pawn is not sufficiently protected, so he cannot capture on f6 with his queen. 19...Rxf6 20.Bc3 Rf7 21.Rae1²

17...c6. Now, Black's plan includes the undermining of the enemy pawn on e5 with the move f7-f6. 18.Rae1 f6 (18...Qe7 19.Qa3 f6 20.Bc3 Qf7 21.b4 fxe5 22.Bxe5 Bxe5 23.Rxe5 Rfe8=) 19.Bc3 (19.f5. This is an interesting move, but still insufficient for White to obtain an advantage. 19...gx f5 20.ex f6 Qxf6 21.Bc3 Qf7 22.Rf3 f4=, Black prevents Rg3 and obtains a quite acceptable position.) 19...fxe5 20.Bxe5 Qf7 21.Bxg7 Qxg7 22.b4. White's king is safer, but he cannot achieve anything meaningful out of this... 22...Rae8 23.Qd2 Rxe1 24.Rxe1 Qf7=, followed by Re8, Eshuis – Schneider, ICCF 2015. After the exchange of the rooks the vulnerability of Black's king would be irrelevant.

18.exd6 cxd6 19.Rae1 Qc8

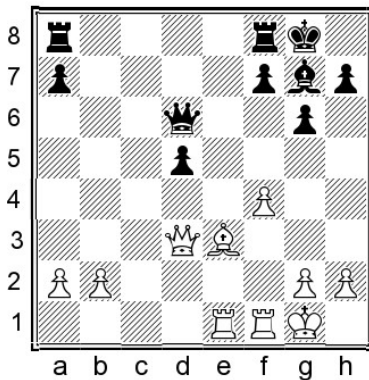


20.cxd6

20.Qxd5 dxc5 21.Bc3 Bxc3 22.bxc3, Arnold – Villarreal, ICCF 2010. White's queen is more active than its counterpart, but Black's defensive resources are quite sufficient. 22...Rd8 23.Qg5 Rb8 24.f5 Rd5=

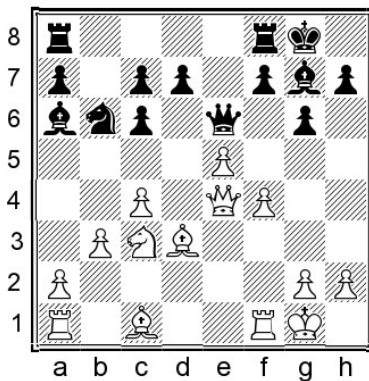
20...Qc5+ 21.Be3 Qxd6

21...d4 22.Bd2 Qxd6 23.b4 Rac8 (23...Rfe8 24.a4 Qd5 25.Rxe8+ Rxe8 26.Rc1 Bf6 27.a5 Kg7 28.h3 a6 29.Rc5 Qe6= Stolz – Berend, ICCF 2011) 24.b5 Qd5 25.f5 Rfe8 26.Rxe8+ Rxe8 27.a4 Be5 28.fxg6 hxg6 29.h3 Bd6= Van tricht – Cerrato, ICCF 2011. White has pawn-majority on the queenside, but cannot achieve anything concrete out of this.



22.Bd4. Had White's pawn been on the f2-square, he could have still fought for the advantage, but here Black's position would be quite comfortable. **22...Qb4** (It would be also good for Black to enter here a rook and pawn ending with the line: 22...Rfe8 23.Bxg7 Kxg7 24.Qd4+ Qf6 25.Qxf6+ Kxf6= Jonvik – Berg, ICCF 2016.) **23.Bxg7** (23.Rd1 Rfe8 24.f5 Bxd4+ 25.Qxd4 Qxd4= Carbonell Bofill – Salzmann, Email 2010) **23...Kxg7** **24.Qxd5 Rfe8** **25.Rb1 Rad8** **26.Qf3 Rd2**, Hughes – D'Andreamatteo, ICCF 2010, **27.Rf2 Red8**= The activity of Black's pieces compensates fully his minimal material deficit.

C2a2) 14.b3

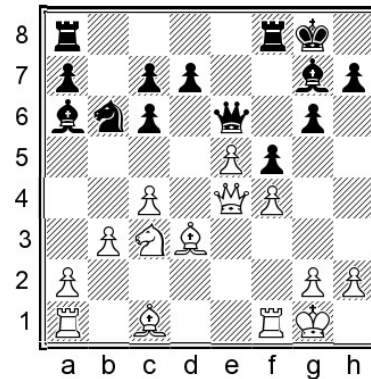


14...d5

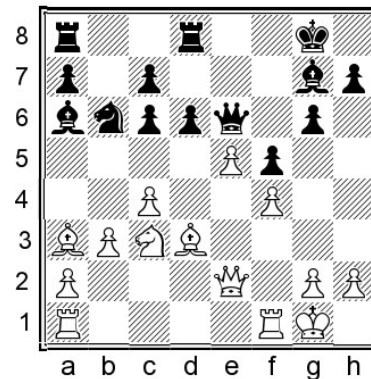
Black wishes to get rid of his doubled pawns immediately.

14...Rfe8?! Zivkovic – J.Pinter, Pula 2001, 15.Qe2 d6 16.Ne4 Rad8 17.Ba3±

14...f5. Black ousts the enemy queen away from the centre.



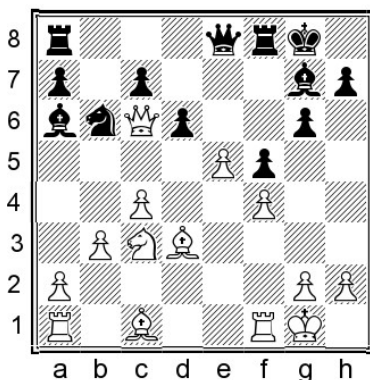
15.Qe2 d6 16.Ba3 Rfd8, Bressac – Gascon del Nogal, Lorca 2017 (16...c5. Black prevents the enemy pawn-advance c4-c5. 17.Nb5 Bxb5 18.cxb5 dxe5 19.Rac1 e4 20.Bxc5 Qd5 21.Bc4 Nxc4 22.Qxc4 Qxc4 23.Rxc4 Rfb8= Pugh – Klausen, ICCF 2015. His protected passed e4-pawn compensates fully the vulnerability of Black's queenside.)



17.g4!? White is ready to sacrifice material in order to open the game on the kingside. 17...dxe5 (17...fxg4. Black weakens his control over the f5-square. 18.Rae1 dxe5 19.f5f) 18.gxf5 gxf5 19.fxe5 Qxe5 20.Rad1 Qxc3 21.Qe6+ Kh8 22.Qxf5

Rxd3. Black is now forced to give back a part of his extra material. 23.Rxd3 Qe5 24.Qxe5 Bxe5 25.Rf5 Bg7 26.Bc5÷ In general two minor pieces are stronger than a rook, but here, Black's bishop on a6 and his knight on b6 are misplaced.

15.Qf3. White keeps his queen on the h1-a8 diagonal and wishes to impede Black's move d7-d6, which would undermine White's centre. Still, Black can play it anyway. 15...d6! 16.Qxc6 (16.Ba3 dxe5 17.Bxf8 e4 18.Qe3, Perez – Della Morte, Villa Martelli 2014, 18...Rxf8÷, with a good compensation for the sacrificed exchange.) 16...Qe8



17.Nd5 dxe5 18.Qxe8 Rfxe8. Black is not afraid of the knight-fork on the c7-square. (18...Raxe8 19.Nxc7 e4 20.Ba3 exd3 21.Bxf8, Quispe – Paveto, Buenos Aires 2014, 21...Bd4+ 22.Kh1 Re2 23.Nxa6 Bxa1 24.Rxa1 Kxf8. Black has lost some material, but his passed d3-pawn is tremendously powerful. 25.Kg1 Nd7=) 19.Nxc7 e4 20.Be2 Bd4+ 21.Kh1 Bxa1 22.Nxa6. Black has already an extra exchange. Still, now he must defend; otherwise, White's passed pawns on the queenside might advance quickly. 22...Rac8 23.Be3 Bf6 24.c5 Na8 25.b4 Red8 26.Kg1 Kf7= Winter – Fernandez, ICCF 2015.

17.Qxe8 Rfxe8 18.Bb2. White protects his knight on c3 and deprives his opponent of the tactical possibilities,

connected with the diagonal a1-h8. (18.Be3 dxe5 19.Rac1 exf4 20.Bxf4 Bd4+ 21.Kh1 c5= L.Hansen – Tofan, ICCF 2015) 18...dxe5 19.fxe5 Rad8 20.Rfd1. White prepares a square for the retreat of his bishop on d3. (After the routine line: 20.Rad1 Bxe5 21.Be2 Rxd1 22.Bxd1 Bd4+ 23.Kh1 Bb7 24.Na4 Bxb2 25.Nxb2, Bodrozic – Lokander, Novi Sad 2015, 25...Kf7³, White's bishop on d1 would be awkwardly placed.) 20...Bxe5 21.Bf1 c5 22.Rxd8 Rxd8 23.Rd1. Black has some initiative indeed and White must already think about equalising. Meanwhile, he should manage to do that quite easily. 23...Rxd1 (23...Bd4+ 24.Kh1 Re8 25.Ba1 Kf8 26.Nb5. Black's bishop on d4 is too active, so White should better exchange it immediately. 26...Bxa1 27.Rxa1 Bxb5 28.cxb5 Nd5 29.Kg1. White should not ignore the safety of his king in this endgame. 29...Ne3 30.a4 Ke7 31.Re1 Kd6= Kramer – Sasikiran, Helsingor 2017.) 24.Nxd1 Bxb2 25.Nxb2 Bb7= Yu Yangyi – Zhou Jianchao, Xinghua 2013. White has a superior pawn-structure, but his bishop is not so active.

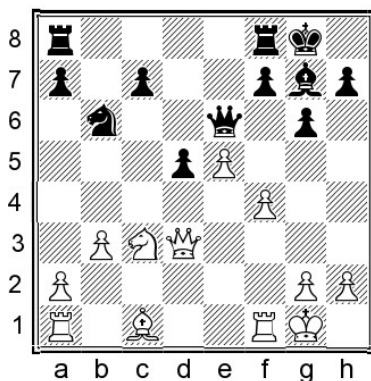
15.cxd5

15.Qf3. This is an interesting pawn-sacrifice, but it is insufficient for White to obtain an advantage. 15...dxc4 16.Be2 f6 17.Ba3 Rfe8 18.Ne4 fxe5 19.f5! He prevents the activation of the enemy bishop on g7. 19...gxf5 20.Qxf5 Qxf5 21.Rxf5 Nd5 22.Rf3 Red8 23.Bf1 Nf4= Belka – Williamson, ICCF 2017. White's pieces have been deployed actively and harmoniously, but he is already two pawns down.

15...cxd5 16.Qf3

About 16.Qe2 Bxd3 17.Qxd3 – see 16.Qf3.

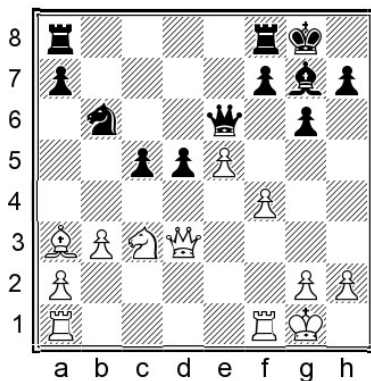
16...Bxd3 17.Qxd3



17...f6

Black must trade as quickly as possible the enemy pawn on e5, since it cramps considerably his position.

It would be too slow for Black to choose here 17...c5?! In addition he would weaken the d6-square. 18.Ba3



18...Qc6 19.Rac1 f6, Zhang – Shen, Beijing 2008, 20.Nb5 (20.e6!? f5 21.Rfd1 Bd4+ 22.Kh1 Qxe6 23.Re1² White has more than sufficient compensation for his minimal material deficit.) 20...c4 21.Nd4 Rfe8 22.Nxc6 cxd3 23.Ne7+ Kh8 24.Rcd1±

Black will fail to hold on to his d3-pawn, after which he would have no compensation for his weaknesses on a7 and d5.

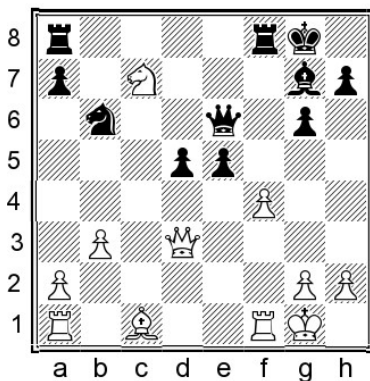
18...Rfc8 19.Rad1 a5 20.Nb5 Bf8. He covers the d6-square against the penetration of White's knight. 21.Rde1 (White does not need to lose time for the protection of his pawn on e5: 21.f5!? Qxe5 22.Rde1 Qf6 23.fxc6 Qxc6 24.Qd1², followed by Re3-g3, beginning an attack against the enemy king.) 21...c4 22.Qe3. White leaves the d4-square for his knight. (22.Qd4 Bxa3 23.Nxa3 cxb3 24.axb3, Rublevsky – Pavasovic, Rogaska Slatina 2011, 24...a4=) 22...Bxa3 23.Nxa3 cxb3 24.f5 gxf5 25.axb3 a4 26.Nb5 axb3 27.Nd4 Nc4 28.Qxb3 Qb6 29.Qg3+ Qg6 30.Qf2² Black will have to find additionally several precise moves in order to equalise.

18...Rac8. Now, after Nb5-d6, Black will have to lose a tempo to retreat his rook from the c8-square. 19.Nb5 Rfd8 (19...f6 20.Nxa7 Ra8 21.f5 gxf5 22.Bxc5 fxe5 23.Bxf8 Rxf8 24.Rac1± Cormack – McMillan, ICCF 2012) 20.Rae1 f5. White prevents radically the pawn-advance f7-f5. (20...Qd7 21.Nd6 Rc6 22.Rc1!?!; 22.f5 Bxe5, Vera Siguenas – Estrada Nieto, Lima 2013, 23.fxc6 fxc6 24.Rxe5; 23...hxg6 24.Nxf7 Bd4+ 25.Kh1 Re8 26.Ng5² Black's king would need permanent protection.) 21.Nd6 (21.exf6 Qxf6 22.f5 gxf5 23.Rxf5 Qg6, Van der Weide – De Boer, Amsterdam 2006, 24.Re3²) 21...Rxd6 22.exd6 Qxd6 23.Re2 (23.g4!?) 23...d4 24.Rfe1± Black's compensation for the exchange is insufficient.

18.Nb5

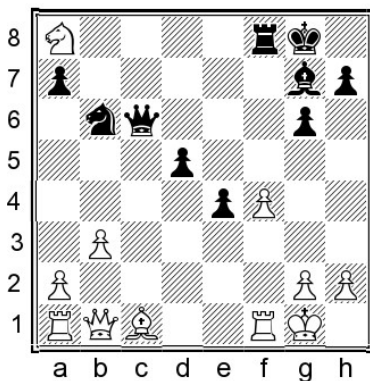
White's attempt to win the exchange with the move 18.Ba3?! would lead to difficulties for him. 18...fxe5 19.Bxf8 e4 20.Qc2 Rxf8³ Retailleau – Bauche, Avoine 2018. Black's central passed pawns are tremendously powerful. In the main variation White also wins the exchange, but preserves his bishop, which would be very useful for him for the sake of the blocking of the enemy passed pawns.

18...fxe5 19.Nxc7



19...Qd6

19...Qc6 20.Nxa8 e4 21.Qb1

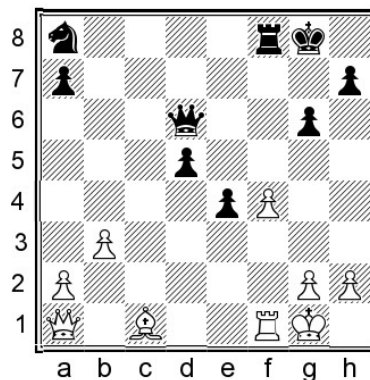


21...Bxa1?! Black restores the material balance, but at the price of the considerable weakening of the dark squares. 22.Qxa1 Nxa8 (22...Rxa8 23.Qd4 Rc8, Bordi – Tournier, France 2001, 24.Be3 Qc3 25.Rc1 Qxd4 26.Rxc8+ Nxc8

27.Bxd4± White's bishop will be much stronger than Black's knight in a fight on both sides of the board.) 23.Be3 Nc7 24.Rc1 Qd7 25.Qe5 Ne6. Black prevents Bd4. Later however, after White advances f4-f5 under the most favourable circumstances, his bishop will be perfectly placed on h6. 26.Rd1 Rd8 27.f5 gxf5 28.Qxf5 Qd6 29.Bh6± Vishnu – Andersen, Can Picafort 2013.

21...Qxa8 22.Bb2 d4 23.Qd1 (23.Qe1? e3 24.Qb1, Brandenburg – Van den Doel, Dieren 2007, 24...Nd5µ) 23...Qd5 24.Rc1 Rf7 25.Kh1 Qf5, Butkiewicz – Zilka, Czech Republic 2015, 26.Bxd4 (26.b4 Qd7 27.Re1 e3 28.Qd3=) 26...Rd7 27.Bxb6 Rxd1 28.Rfxd1 axb6 29.Rd8+ Kf7 30.Rc7+ Ke6 31.Rxg7 Qxf4 32.Re8+ Kd6 33.h3. White's two rooks may turn out to be stronger than the enemy queen, so Black has no reason to refrain from giving a perpetual check. 33...Qc1=

20.Nxa8 e4 21.Qb1 Bxa1 22.Qxa1 Nxa8



23.Qc3

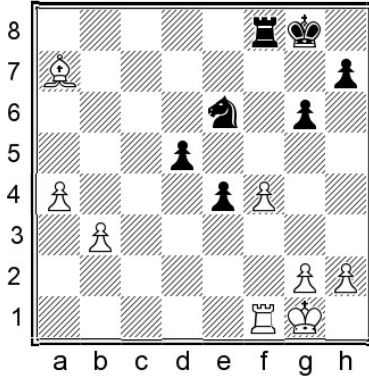
23.Qd4. Black will manage later to oust the enemy queen from that square with the move Nc7-e6. Still, after 23...Nc7 24.Qxa7 Ra8 25.Qe3 Ne6, Fonseca – Malyshev, ICCF 2012, 26.f5 gxf5 27.Rxf5 Rxa2 28.b4², White will maintain some initiative, because Black must worry

permanently about the safety of his king. In addition, White's outside passed b-pawn may become dangerous.

23...Qc7 24.Qd4 Qb6

After the trade of the queens, Black would not have problems with the protection of his king.

25.Be3 Qxd4 26.Bxd4 Nc7 27.Bxa7 Ne6 28.a4



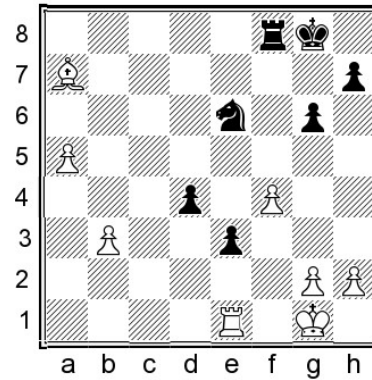
28...d4

Black wishes to advance his pawns as much forward as possible.

The immediate regaining of material with 28...Nxf4 would not ensure for Black clear equality. 29.Rf2 Ra8 30.Bb6 Nd3 31.Rf1 Re8 32.Rd1 Kf7 33.a5² Bauer – Fernandez Vicente, ICCF 2009.

29.a5 e3 30.Re1

White prevents the further advance of the enemy e-pawn.

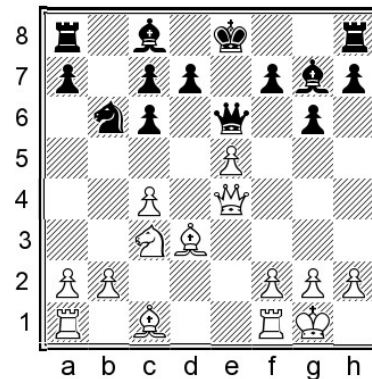


30...Rc8

Now again, Black should not lose a tempo to restore the material balance: 30...Rxf4 31.Bb6 Rf2 32.a6 Ra2 33.a7 Kf7 34.b4 Ra6 35.b5² Cuccumini – Senzacqua, ICCF 2012. White's passed pawns have managed to advance too far forward...

31.g3 g5 32.b4 gxf4 33.gxf4 Rc2=
Glaser – Dedina, ICCF 2012.

C2b) 12.0-0



In this line we will analyse schemes for White in which he does not play f2-f4.

12...0-0

12...Bxe5. Black accepts the pawn-sacrifice, but comes under powerful pressure. 13.Qh4 0-0 (13...Bf6? 14.Bg5 Bxg5 15.Qxg5 0-0 16.Rfe1 f6, Manca – Sorcinelli, Genova 2004, 17.Qa5 Qf7 18.c5 Nd5 19.Nxd5 Qxd5 20.Qc3+-) 14.Re1!? (14.Ne4 h5 15.Bh6 d5 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Bxf8 Kxf8 18.Nc3 c5÷ Buken – Douglas, ICCF 2009. Black has good compensation for the exchange.) 14...Bg3 15.hxg3 Qxe1+ 16.Kh2. Black has won the exchange but the dark squares in his camp have been seriously weakened. Now, he must transfer as quickly as possible his queen to the h5-square; otherwise, he might get checkmated rather quickly. 16...Qe5 17.Bf4 Qh5 18.Qxh5 gxh5 19.c5 Nd5 20.Nxd5 cxd5 21.Bxc7 Bb7 22.b4f Fournier – Mondino, ICCF 2016. Black still needs to defend very accurately.

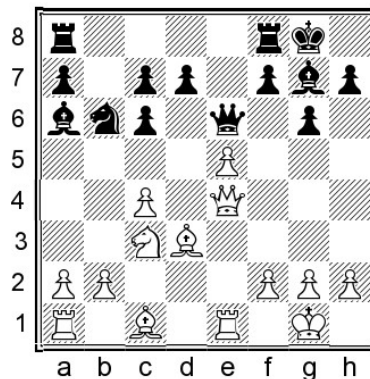
13.Re1

About 13.f4 – see variation C2a.

13...Ba6

13...f5. Black takes precautionary measures against the possible advance by White's f-pawn. 14.exf6 (After his alternatives White will even fail to equalise: 14.Qh4?! Ba6 15.b3 Bxe5³; or 14.Qe2 Ba6 15.b3 d6 16.Bf4 Rfe8³ Baroin – Klimakovs, Email 2009.) 14...Qxf6 15.Re2 Qf7 (Black has some good alternatives here 15...d5÷, or 15...Ba6 16.c5 d5 17.cxd6 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 cxd6 19.Be3 d5 20.Rae1 Qf7÷). 16.Qh4 Ba6 17.Bg5 Rfe8 18.Rae1 d5 19.Re7 Bf8. White's king does not have a leeway, so Black is striving for tactical complications,

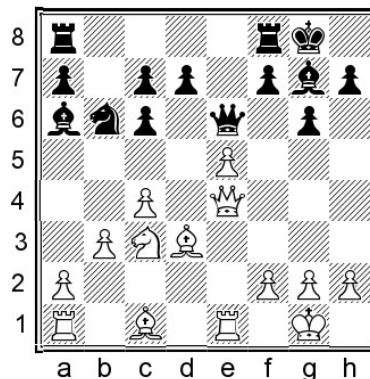
but White has his trumps as well. 20.Bxg6!? Qxg6, Homont – Willow, ICCF 2016, 21.R1e6 Rxe7 22.Rxg6+ hxg6 23.Bxe7 Re8 24.Qg3 Rxe7 25.Qxg6+ Bg7= The advance of the h-pawn is quite sufficient for White to give a perpetual check. It would be too dangerous for him to play for a win, because Black has too many pieces for the queen.



14.c5

This move clarifies the situation immediately.

14.b3



Black should better refrain from 14...f6, since this move would weaken the position of his king. 15.Qh4 (15.Ba3!?) 15...d6 16.Ne4 Qxe5 17.Bd2 (17.Bf4 Qf5 18.Rac1²) 17...Rae8 18.Bc3 Qf5. White has powerful initiative for the sacrificed pawn. 19.Re3² He is transferring his rook to join into the attack. 19...Qd7? 20.Rh3

h6 21.Nxf6+ Rxf6 22.Bxf6 g5, Amonatov – Varavin, Vladimir 2002, 23.Bxg5 Bxa1 (23...hxc5 24.Qh7+ Kf8 25.Rf3+-) 24.Bd2 Bg7 25.Rg3+-

14...d5! This move is energetic and strong! 15.Qh4 (After the careless move 15.cxd5? cxd5 16.Qf3 Bxd3 17.Qxd3 f6³, White would lose his central pawn, Dancevski – Bojkov, Valjevo 2010.) 15...dxc4 16.Bf1 (16.Ne4 Qxe5 17.Bd2 Qd5μ) 16...Bxe5 17.Bf4 Qf6 18.Bg5 Qh8 19.Rxe5 Qxe5 20.Ne4. White has created threats against the enemy king and forces Black to sacrifice his queen. 20...Qxa1 21.Nf6+ Qxf6 22.Bxf6 Nd5 23.Bd4 Rfe8÷ Black has more than sufficient material compensation for the queen, but must worry permanently about the safety of his king.

14...Bxd3 15.Qxd3 Nd5

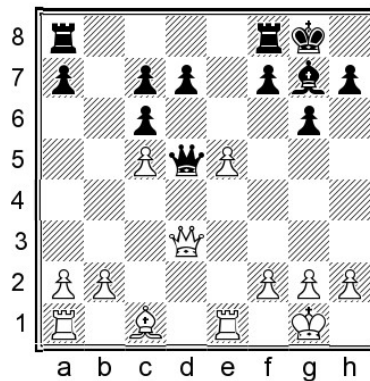
About 15...Qc4 16.Qe3 Nd5 17.Nxd5 Qxd5 18.Qc3 – see 15...Nd5.

16.Nxd5 Qxd5

Black continues to simplify the position.

16...cxd5 17.Bd2 a5. He prevents Bd2-a5. 18.Bc3 a4 19.f4 c6 20.Re3 Rfb8 21.f5 Qxf5 22.Qxf5 gxf5. There has arisen an approximately equal endgame. Still, Black must play very accurately in order to neutralise the activity of his opponent's pieces. 23.Rg3 f4 24.Rg4 h5 25.Rg5 Kh7 26.Rf1 Bh6 27.Rxh5 Kg6 28.g4 Bf8 29.Rxf4 Bxc5+ 30.Kg2 d4 31.Bxd4 Bxd4 32.Rxd4 Rxb2+ 33.Kg3 Ra7= Horwitz –

Mihailovs, ICCF 2015. Black has managed to simplify the position even more and to activate one of his rooks.



17.Qc3

After the transfer into an endgame 17.Qxd5 cxd5, it would be only White who might have problems. 18.b4 Rfe8 19.Bb2 Rab8 20.a3 a5 21.Bc3 axb4 22.axb4, Moiseenko – Khalifman, St Petersburg 2016, 22...d6 23.f4 (23.cxd6 cxd6 24.f4 dxe5 25.fxe5 Rbc8³ White's weak pawns on b4 and e5 would require permanent protection; 23.Ra7 Bxe5 24.Bxe5 Rxe5 25.Rxe5 dxe5 26.f4 exf4 27.Rxc7 Rxb4³ White will be faced with a rather unpleasant defence in this rook and pawn ending.) 23...dxe5 24.fxe5 d4 25.Bxd4 Rxb4 26.Rad1 Rc4 27.Kf2 Bf8³ The best that White can dream about in this rook and pawn ending is to have two pawns against three on the same flank of the board.

17...d6 18.Bf4 Rfe8 19.cxd6 cxd6 20.Rad1 Qe6 21.Qxc6 dxe5 22.Qxe6 Rxe6= White has preserved a purely symbolic edge thanks to his pawn-majority on the queenside.

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