

British Endgame Study News

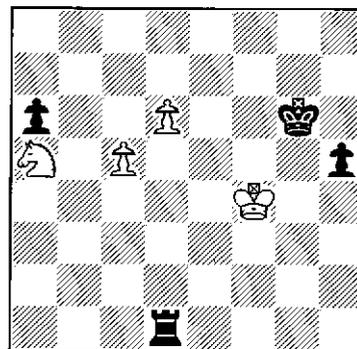
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by Hermann Mattison
White to play and win

This issue. Recent months have seen fewer British originals than usual, but there is a special number covering our originals from 1990-91 and a review of the new edition of Timothy Whitworth's book on Mattison. In the study above, play 1 c6 Rxd6 2 c7 Rf6+; now, how are you going to force the promotion of the last wP against the rampaging bR?

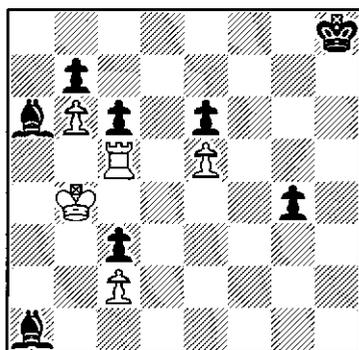
Spotlight. Two points on the Caputto book (see December, page 63): (a) Alain Pallier, quoting the Lamare collection, points out that the Daniel study appeared in 1926; (b) the pre-Réti dating of the Adamson pawn study was not really the author's fault, since he relied on a 1967 article in *Schach-Echo* by the normally reliable John Selman. He says so in the book, but not reading the language I failed to appreciate it.

Non-response to correspondence. My post is frequently heavy, and a couple of recent letters escaped attention and came to light only when Sue sneaked in behind my back and tidied the pile. If you fail to receive a response within a reasonable time, please accept my apologies and send me a chaser. *BESN* itself is normally despatched to reach UK addresses by the first day of March, June, etc, and non-arrival within a day or two (readers abroad please allow extra postal time) is again cause for enquiry.

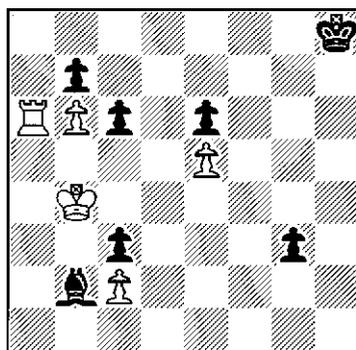
More on duals. Brian Gosling adds his voice in support of the proposition that a relatively obscure and difficult dual does not spoil a study when there is a direct and clear-cut win. He suggests that many well-known studies would be found on close examination to contain such "duals", and this may well be true. Once one has found a simple and clear win, one tends not to look for anything else.

Adam Sobey felt unable to contribute to the discussion, since it was his study which prompted it, but he has now sent me his own thoughts. He too favours tolerance: "my view of duals in general is this: if they return more or less to the main line with delay, they are not important." He considers, surely correctly, that readers and solvers will have been pleased that his study appeared, even if a strict critic claims a technical flaw. He points out that the composer could artificially specify "mate in n" and Alain Pallier remarks that Halberstadt has used "find the quickest win" (Kc6/Rc5 v Kd8/Ne3, *Parallèle 50* 1952), but I think few would want to see this in general.

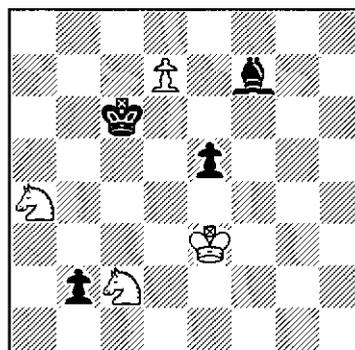
Recently published British originals (and a book)



1 - draw



1a - after 2...g3



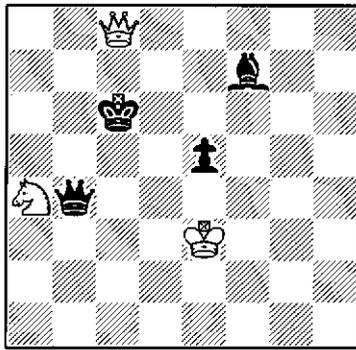
2 - win

Paul Michelet's **1** was among the studies used in the recent World Solving Championship, and although it is a little too static to make a first-class study it served well enough in the context. White must stop the g-pawn, hence **1 Ra5 Bb2 2 Rxa6**, but after **2...g3** (see **1a**) we find that **3 Ra8+ K-- 4 Rd8** and **5 Rd1** will not be sufficient; Black will bring **bB** into play by **4...Bc1**, and will gather his forces together and eventually win. The answer is our old friend the stalemate: **3 Ra4! g2 4 Ka5 g1Q 5 Rh4+ Kg- 6 Rg4+ Qxg4**. Other promotions are clearly no better.

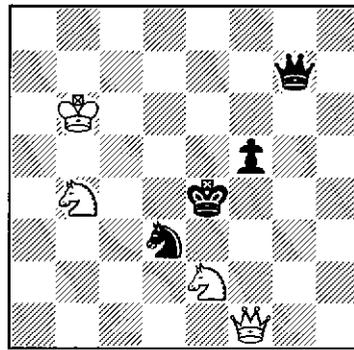
Brian Stephenson, the director, needed three sound original studies for this event, and thanks to Paul, and to a couple of originals awaiting publication in *diagrammes* that I was able to forward, he got them. Even so, I stand by the opinion that endgame studies are fundamentally unsuited to competitive solving at this level. The sooner the study round is dropped, and the WCSC is honestly and openly presented as the problem-solving competition which in truth it is, the better for all concerned.

Apart from Paul, it is really only Mike Bent who has been flying our flag in recent months. **2** is a simple but neat mating study which appeared in *The Problemist* in July. The pawns promote, **1 d8Q b1Q**, and now **2 Nb4+!** lures **bQ** to a bad square. **2...Qxb4** is clearly necessary (**2...Kb5** allows a fork, **2...Kb7** a quick mate), and after **3 Qc8+** the awkward position of **bQ** is apparent (see **2a**): now and later, **...Kd6** will be met by **Qf8+**. Black must therefore play **3...Kb5** (if **3...Kd5** then **4 Nc3+** and **4...Kd6** is forced), and after **4 Nc3+** his better move is **4...Ka5** (if **4...Kb6** then **5 Qb8+** at once). However, **5 Qa8+** forces **5...Kb6**, and although White cannot play **6 Nd5+** it doesn't matter; **6 Qb8+** forces **bK** back, **6...Ka5/Kc5**, and mates by **7 Qa7/Qc7** follow. The mates are far from new, but the setting and lead-in play are pleasant.

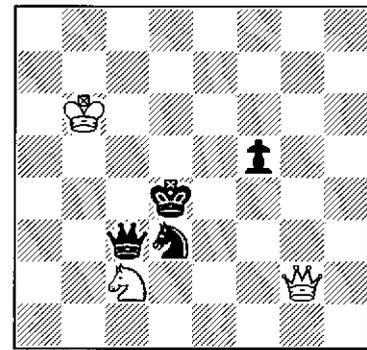
3, from the April-June *diagrammes*, is another neat Mike Bent lightweight. King and two knights only draw against a bare king, but king, queen and two knights win against king and queen; the stronger side gathers his force and carefully advances, and the weaker side cannot force the exchange of queens. So Black might as well answer **1 Nc3+** by **1...Qxc3** since **1...Ke5 2 Nxd3+** and **1...Kd4/Ke3 2 Qxd3+** will lead to slow but certain death (the extra pawn does not help Black). But again **bQ** has been lured to an awkward square, and exploitation soon follows: **2 Qg2+ Kd4** (**2...Ke5 3 Qg7+**, **2...Ke3 3 Nd5+**) **3 Nc2+** (see **3a**). **3...Ke5 4 Qg7+** still loses the queen, and if



2a - after 3 Qc8+



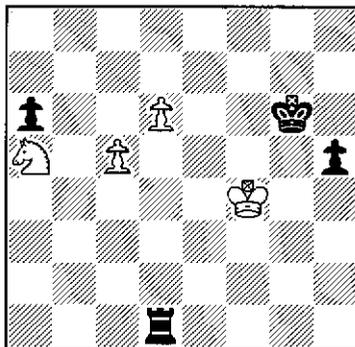
3 - win



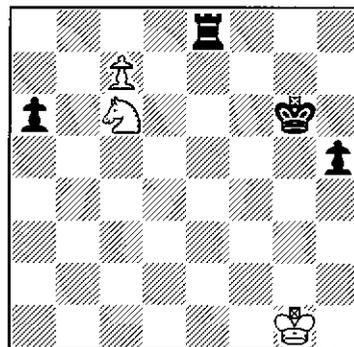
3a - after 3 Nc2+

Black plays **3...Kc4** to save it he finds he has lost the king instead: **4 Qg8 mate**.

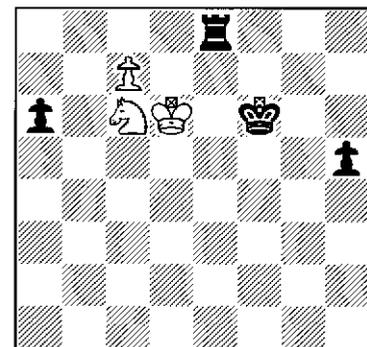
The shortage of recent originals leaves me space to write about the new edition of Timothy Whitworth's book *Mattison's chess endgame studies*. The differences from the first edition are not great, but a certain amount of information has come to light since 1987 and Timothy likes to get things right. Mattison's best studies are well known (there are four in *Endgame magic*), but his lesser works also deserve attention; the proportion of weaker material is smaller than with most composers.



4 - win



4a - after 6...Re8



4b - after 11...Kf6

Particularly interesting are the studies where one side is trying to promote a pawn, and **4** (*Jaunakas Zinas*, 1927) is highlighted in Timothy's introduction. Studies are often criticized for their limited relevance to practical play, but anyone who can reproduce the manoeuvres used here will win games as a result. Play starts **1 c6 Rxd6 2 c7 Rf6+**, and now **3 Ke5** fails against **3...Rf5+**; the lower d-file is poisoned (**4 Kd4 Rf8 5 Nc6 Kf6 6 Nd8 Ke7 7 c8Q Rxd8+**), and **4 Kd6 Rf6+ 5 Kc5** also fails (**5...Rf8 6 Nc6 Kh7 7 Nd8 Rf1 8 c8Q Rc1+**). The wK must hide on g1(!); and it cannot go there directly, because **3 Kg3** is met by **3...h4+** (for example, **4 Kxh4 Rf8 5 Nc6 Kh6 6 Nd8 Rf4+** and **7...Rc4**). Hence **3 Ke3** (quickest) **Re6+ 4 Kf2 Rf6+ 5 Kg1 Rf8 6 Nc6 Re8** (hoping for **7 Nd8 Re1+** and **8...Rc1**, see **4a**) **7 Kf2** (now wK comes back) **Rf8+ 8 Ke3 Re8+ 9 Kf4 Rf8+ 10 Ke5 Re8+ 11 Kd6 Kf6** (a last try, see **4b**) **12 Nd8 Re1 13 c8Q Rd1+ 14 Kc7 Rc1+ 15 Nc6** and this time wK is shielded.

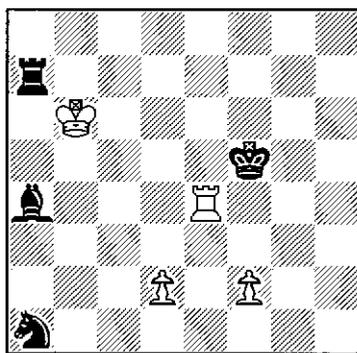
The book is beautifully printed by A-Type, Ripponden, HX6 4DS, and is obtainable at £10 including UK postage either from myself or direct from Timothy (6 Sedley Taylor Road, Cambridge CB2 2PW). Do buy it.

What are studies *for*?

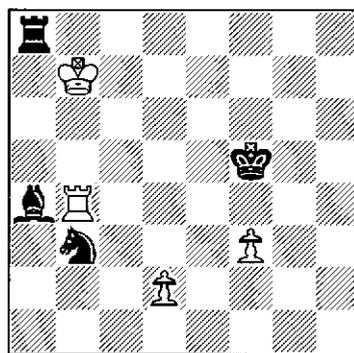
“Well, that depends on what the study is *for*, doesn’t it,” wrote Paul Byway in a recent letter to me. He followed this remark with a personal credo which seems to me to deserve a wider audience. Editing slightly for publication, let me quote.

“My personal view of the study is that I’m offering a poem or sketch to be admired, not challenging with a puzzle to be solved. That may be why I shocked [...] one day with a disparaging remark about some of the more obscure offerings of Kasparyan! As a player I take the view that I get all I want of difficult analysis at the board. My ideal is as-Suli, Réti (*the P* study), and Barbier-Saavedra. Impossible unless you see an idea, and then trivial: but only trivial analytically - they will live long and give me pleasure to contemplate until I die.” The as-Suli, Réti, and Barbier-Saavedra studies are all in *Endgame magic*, and there is no doubt that Yuri Averbakh did the chess world a notable service by rediscovering and publishing the solution to as-Suli. Paul asks me to make clear that his lack of enthusiasm for Kasparyan is restricted to his more obscure works: “one could hardly hope to find anything more artistic than the first Kasparyan study in the first issue of *BESN*.”

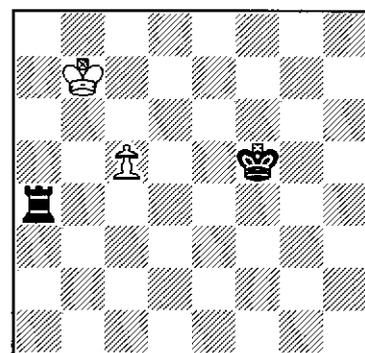
To create a classic study such as as-Suli, Réti, or Barbier-Saavedra is of course a once-in-a-lifetime achievement, and requires luck as well as compositional skill. Most of us find that any idea which is even mildly piquant has been anticipated, and the most that we can hope for is some attractive novelty in the setting. Even so, I cannot help feeling that modern tourney judges tend to praise the wrong things, valuing complexity and even mere length above shape and character.



1 - draw



1a - after 5 Kb7

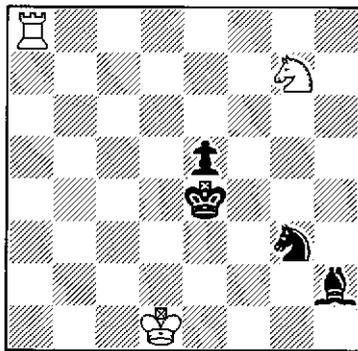


1b - after 9...Rxa4

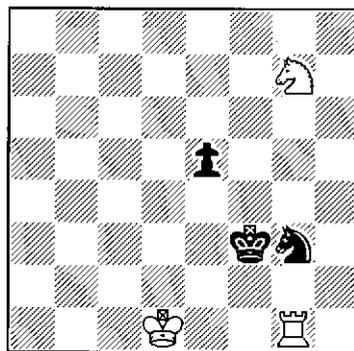
1, by Nikolai Ryabinin, not only achieved first prize in *64* for 1989 but was given the highest marks of all the studies chosen for the 1989-91 *FIDE Album*. In fact it seems to me to provide a good illustration of what a study should *not* be. Play starts **1 f3** (1 Kxa7 Kxe4 is hopeless, 1 Rh4 Ra8 2 Kb7 Kg5 3 Rh1 Ra5 4 Rxa1 Bc6+ and 1 Rc4 Ra8 2 Kb7 Ra5 3 Kb6 Bb3 are given to refute wR moves, and we shall see in due course why 1 d3 doesn’t work) **Ra8 2 Kb7 Ra5 3 Kb6 Nb3 4 Rb4 Ra8 5 Kb7** and we have **1a**. Now 5...Ra5 6 Kb6 Ra8 7 Kb7 will repeat, so bR must abandon bB. True, an immediate capture will allow ...Nc5+, but a preliminary d4 will stop this and bB cannot run because it is tied to the defence of bN. The natural 5...Rd8, to prevent

6 d4, permits a counterattack (6 Rxa4 Nc5+ 7 Kc7), but Black has **5...Rh8 6 d4 Rh4** (pinning the pawn) **7 f4 Rxf4 8 Rxa4 Nc5+ 9 dxc5 Rxa4** (see 1b). Thanks to the pin, Black has regained most of his material advantage, but now we have an elementary draw with P v R which is here played out to the end: **10 c6 Rb4+ 11 Kc8 Ke6 12 c7** and either **12...Ke7 stalemate** or **12...Kd6 13 Kd8 Rh4 14 c8N+**. I haven't seen the original source, and am taking the solution from the Album. If 1 d3, Black can play **5...Re8** and **6...Re4**, after which White cannot sacrifice the f-pawn and there is no stalemate.

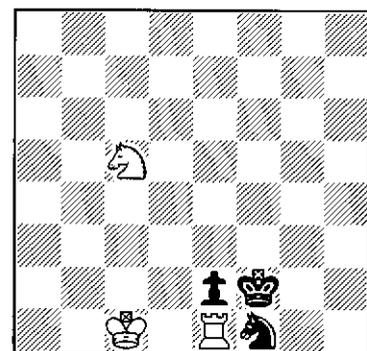
Why am I not impressed by this? Partly because of its static nature (in particular the capture of the unmoved bBa4, a crude feature which should surely have kept the study out of the highest places), partly because there is no really sparkling idea at any point. The Album indexes the thematic content as "pat modèle avec Pion bloqué ou sous-promotion en Cavalier après manoeuvre de choix", but the stalemate and knight promotion occur in a known basic draw (one might as well talk about "pat modèle avec Pion bloqué" in every study which comes down to Pa7 v Q) and "manoeuvre de choix" is hardly an earth-shaking concept. It presumably refers to the need to play precisely 1 f3, but only the differentiation between 1 d3 and 1 f3 is of interest; the rest is mere analysis to prove that unwanted alternatives do indeed fail.



2 - win



2a - after 3 Rxf4



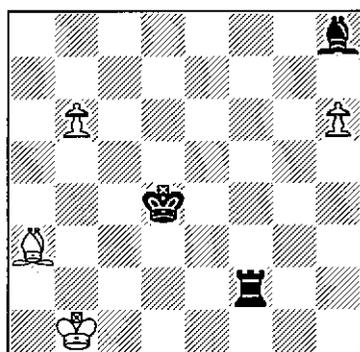
2b - after 8 Kc1

Let's have a contrast. The most recent *EG* contains a translation of an interview with Vitold Yakimchik (1911-77), and among the studies quoted is Mark Liburkin's 2. This comes from an earlier generation of *64* (1935) and only obtained 2nd/3rd prize, but what a difference in quality! Again we have an introductory capture of a black bishop, **1 Ra2 Bg1 2 Rg2 Kf3 3 Rxf4** (see 2a), but this time it has not waited passively on its original square; again we have the hounding of a cramped rook by a king, **3...Kf2 4 Re1**, but this time both king and rook have moved into position during the play; and after Black has pressed his attack to apparent success, **4...e4 5 Ne6 e3 6 Nc5 e2+ 7 Kd2 Nf1+ 8 Kc1** (see 2b), he suddenly sees to his horror that **8...Kxe1** will be met by **9 Nd3 mate**. A light setting; at least one move by every man on the board; and a true touch of sparkle in the lone-knight mate at the end.

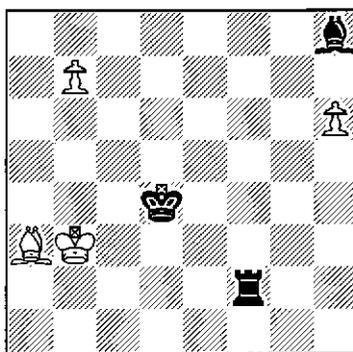
Well, what *is* a study for? I am with Paul. It is *not*, in my view, to show how clever the composer is and how many obscure moves he can string together, but to delight: to charm, to give pleasure, to add that touch of magic to the mundane world of everyday chess.

From the world at large

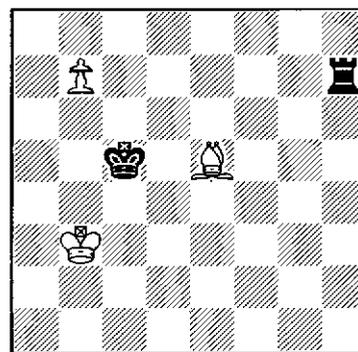
I had not intended mentioning the recent World Chess Composition Tournament here, since its leading studies have been grossly over-exposed elsewhere, but I have recently been examining it for my column in *diagrammes* and one study in particular caught my eye. It achieved only 16th place and perhaps could not realistically have expected more, but it was far more attractive than the works which were placed above it.



1 - win



1a - after 3 Kb3



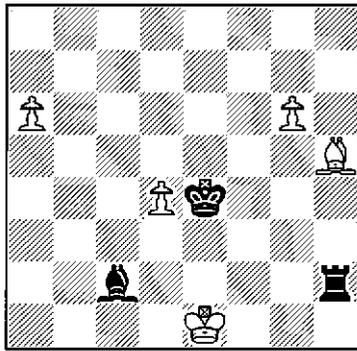
1b - after 6...Rxb7

The tournament theme required White to win by avoiding a mid-board stalemate, and too many entries left me with a feeling of anticlimax: it was not as if White had played cleverly and won, but that Black had played cleverly yet still failed. This criticism does not apply to Andrzej Lewandowski's **1**. White plays **1 b7**, and the simple line is **1...Be5 2 h7 Rh2 3 Bb2+**. Now **3...Rxb2+ 4 Kxb2** leaves bB overloaded, and if bK moves then White plays **4 Bxe5** and the b-pawn will promote.

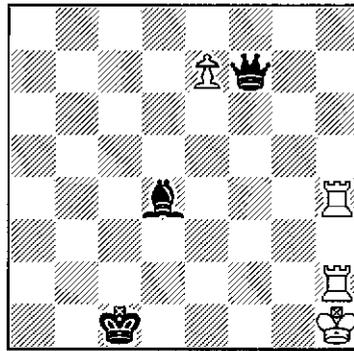
Black seeks to improve on this by driving wK to b3 and setting up a stalemate. The first step is **1...Rf1+**. Now **2 Kb2** obstructs b2, which kills the line above, and if White tries **2 Ka2** Black has **2...Kc4!** which threatens mate and forces **3 Bb2**, after which bR can play to f8. **2 Kc2**, therefore, followed by **2...Rf2+ 3 Kb3** (see **1a**). Now comes **3...Be5 4 h7 Rh2 5 Bb2+** as before, and we see the point. If Black plays **5...Kc5** and meets **6 Bxe5** by **6...Rxb7**, giving **1b**, the b-pawn cannot promote: **7 b8Q Rb7+ 8 Qxb7** will be stalemate, and no other promotion gives White a winning advantage. But White has a counter: **7 Bg7!** After **7...Rxb7 8 b8Q** there is no stalemate, and after **7...Rh3+ 8 Bc3** promotion can no longer be stopped.

This really is a very fine little study. The setting is light, the play unfolds naturally, every man moves, and there is a true climax. It is a great pity that the conditions of modern tourney competition appear to condemn such works to a lowly place.

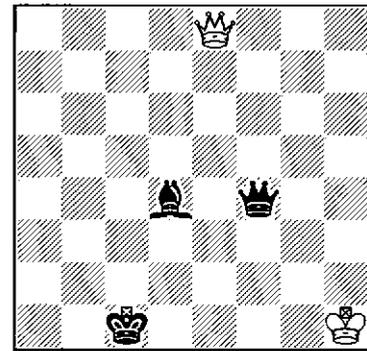
2, by M. Muradov, was placed 15th. We have exactly the same idea, **1 a7 Rh1+ 2 Kf2 Ra1 3 g7 Bb3 4 d5 Ra2+ 5 Kg3 Bxd5 6 Bf3+ Kf5** etc. The judge wrote of **2**, "Solution agréable, mais linéaire," and of **1**, "... le jeu est plus pauvre." I would have ranked **1** above **2**. It is essential to the later play that bB be forced to d5 or e5, and Lewandowski gets it there in the natural course of play whereas Muradov resorts to the sacrifice of a wP which is on the board for no other purpose. One of the skills of study composition is the forcing of a man to a crucial square *without* a capture, and a



2 - win



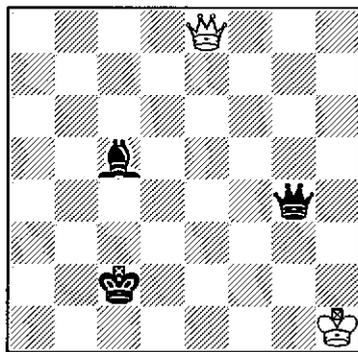
3 - draw



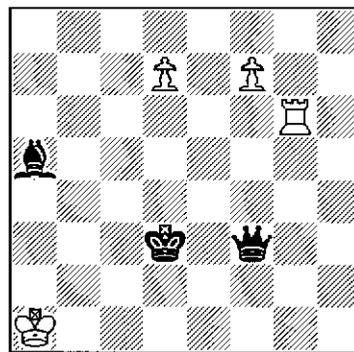
3a - after 3 e8Q

setting which achieves this will normally be valued by me above one which does not.

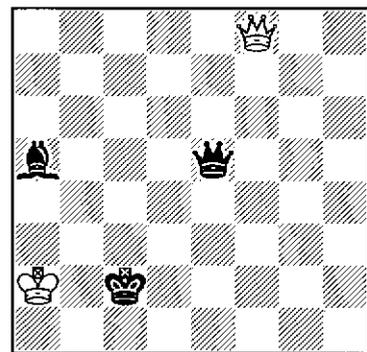
One of my predecessors as study columnist of *diagrammes* was Jean Roche, and he has been favouring me with a steady succession of good things. **3** was published during 1997, and had a good reception at an *EG* readers' meeting prior to publication. White has more than enough material to draw, but he is threatened with mate and must sacrifice both rooks to stay alive: **1 Rf4 Qxf4 2 Rc2+ Kxc2**. (The order is important; if **1 Rc2+ Kxc2 2 Rf4**, Black has **2...Qxe7**.) Now comes **3 e8Q** and we have a book draw on material (see **3a**), but wK is so badly placed that Black cannot be blamed for playing on. In fact he has a fine attack: **3...Qh4+ 4 Kg2 Qg4+ 5 Kh2** (5 Kf1 Qg1+ 6 Ke2 Qd1 mate) **Bg1+ 6 Kh1 Bc5** (see **3b**). This quiet move stops all checks and appears to force mate (the threat is **7...Qg1**, and if **7 Kh2** then **7...Bd6+ 8 Kh1 Qh3+ 9 Kg1 Bc5+**). But White has an answer, of course: **7 Qe2+**, after which the capture gives stalemate. White, in a miniature, has sacrificed Q + 2R.



3b - after 6...Bc5



4 - draw



4a - after 5...Kc2

According to the interview mentioned on page 69, Yakimchik's favourite among his own compositions shows the same theme. **4** (64, 1969) only received a 5th commendation, but, as he rightly says, honours aren't really what count. The opening sacrifice **1 Rg3+ Qxg3** is perhaps obvious, though the reason for it is not **2 Qf8**, after which **2...Bc3+** leads to a win for Black (the given line is **3 Ka2 Qg2+ 4 Ka3 Qb2+ 5 Ka4 Qa2+ 6 Kb5 Qa5+ 7 Kc6 Qa6+ 8 Kc7 Be5+ 9 Kd8 Qa8+ 10 Ke7 Bd6+**), but **2 d8Q+ Kc2 3 Qd1+** because now **...Qxd1+** is unavailable. There follows **3...Kxd1 4 f8Q Qe5+ 5 Ka2 Kc2** with a strong attack (see **4a**), but **6 Qb4** sets up a stalemate and leaves only **6...Qd5+ 7 Ka1 Qe5+ 8 Ka2** etc: draw by repetition.

News and notices

Other magazines. The international endgame study magazine *EG* (four issues a year) can be obtained for 1998 by paying £12 to Walter Veitch, 13 Roffes Lane, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5PU (cheques payable to W. Veitch, please). The British Chess Problem Society is primarily concerned with problems, but endgame studies are part of its remit and its library offers a Thompson endgame database look-up service to members. The 1998 UK subscription is £18 (£15 for new members); contact R. T. Lewis, 16 Cranford Close, Woodmancote, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 4QA.

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday March 27** (please note the date, *not* the usual first or second Friday in the quarter) at 6.00 pm. Non-subscribers are welcome, but please bring £5 towards the cost of the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

World Chess Composition Tournament. Given the apparent own-country bias of the judging in the last WCCT, composers cannot be blamed for showing limited enthusiasm for the present one, but British study composers wishing to contribute in spite of this are reminded that their entries should reach Colin Crouch, 98 Elms Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BT, in time for the *EG* readers' meeting in March. As at the January meeting, nothing had been received (three entries are permitted).

Other tourneys. Alain Pallier brings to my attention the Lazard Memorial, which he will be judging. There are two sections: (a) king and pawn studies on any theme (promotion in play allowed); (b) White mates after a sacrifice, one or more squares in the mate being blocked by men which move into position during the play. Entries to Denis Blondel, 19 rue de Rome, 94510 La Queue en Brie, France, by 18 November.

Composite indexes. Annual indexes to *BESN* are supplied automatically, but if any reader is binding his copies and would like a composite index covering more than one year it can easily be supplied. Let me know, please.

Books. My annual book list accompanies this issue of *BESN*, and also lists other British suppliers of study books. Notice to authors and publishers: I am normally willing to stock any study book written in English (foreign writers are assured that unidiomatic phrasing, and even extensive errors of grammar and spelling, are ignored provided that the sense is clear) and anyone wishing to use me as an outlet to readers in Britain is invited to get in touch. My list goes out with *BESN* once a year.

More good things on the Internet. Brian Gosling, whose home page is at

<http://members.aol.com/brigosling>

has started putting a weekly ending there: sometimes a game ending, sometimes a study, but always something to entertain. If you have a connection, do tune in.

Anybody wishing to give notice here of any event, product, or service should contact the Editor. There is no charge and no account is taken of whether the activity is being pursued for commercial profit, but notices are printed only if they seem likely to be of particular interest to study enthusiasts. Readers are asked to note that the Editor relies wholly on the representations of the notice giver (except where he makes a personal endorsement) and that no personal liability is accepted either by him or by any other person involved in the production and distribution of this magazine.