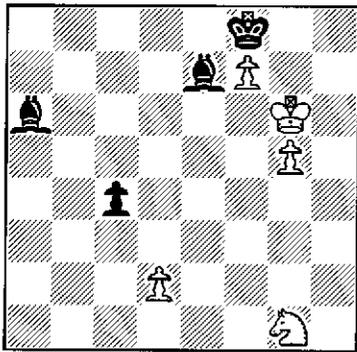
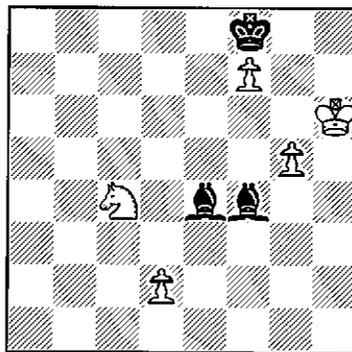


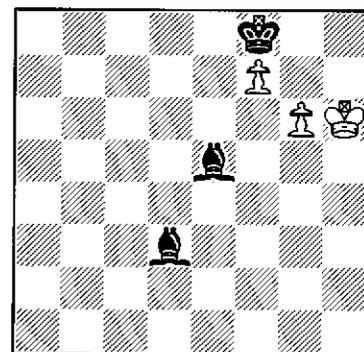
Recently published British originals



1 - draw



1a - after 4...Bf4



1b - after 7 g6

The annual international problemists' meeting usually includes some study composition tournaments, and this year Jonathan Mestel joined forces with Israel's Ofer Comay, one of his predecessors as World Solving Champion, to achieve a rare part-British success. *EG* does not record the theme set, but the honoured compositions use at most ten men with no queens or rooks. Jonathan and Ofer took fifth prize with 1.

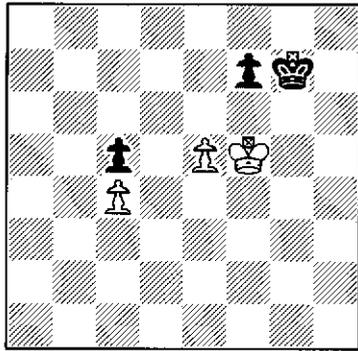
Time was when all White would have had to do here would have been to capture bPc4, but we now know 2B v N to be a win (if we ignore the fifty-move rule) and this totally changes the logic of the play. Now it is White's pawns which are under attack, particularly that at f7, and their capture will be enough to win even if bP goes as well. Hence 1 Nf3 (to play Ne5, giving wPf7 a second support) Bb7 (ready to chase away wK) 2 Ne5 Be4+ 3 Kh6 (threatening to bring up a third defender by 4 g6) Bd6 (temporarily preventing this by attacking wN) 4 Nxc4 Bf4 (now preventing it by pinning wPg5) and we have 1a.

Now wPf7 seems doomed, but White has 5 d3 Bxd3 6 Ne5 (threatening both Nxd3 and Ng6+ and so forcing bB to unpin wPg5, but surely at an unacceptable cost?) Bxe5 7 g6 with an unexpected positional draw (see 1b). Black can squeeze wK away from wPg6, say by 7...Bf4+ 8 Kh7 wait 9 Kh8, but its capture will give stalemate.

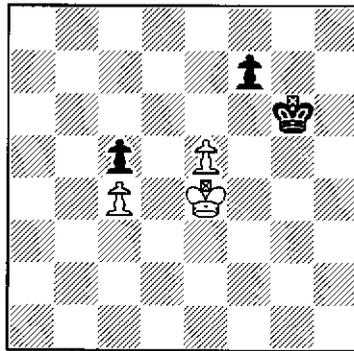
If White plays 5 Ne5 instead of 5 d3, Black replies 5...Bxd2, after which wPf7 will soon go and 2B will win against N + Pg5; if Black plays 5...Bf5 instead of 5...Bxd3, White still plays 6 Ne5 (he threatens to consolidate by 7 d4, so 6...Bxe5 is still forced, and the positional draw applies even with an extra wP); if White plays 6 Nd6 instead of 6 Ne5 he threatens nothing, and Black can wait by 6...Bb1 and then capture wPf7. *EG* gives no analysis, and I am grateful to Jonathan for explaining what happens after 5 Ne5 and 5 d3 Bf5. My original exposition was some way wide of the mark.

I have recently been so short of material for my column in *diagrammes* that I have had to use some of my own work, and 2 appeared in the April-June issue. The natural move 1 Ke4, going for bPc5, can be met by 1...Kg6 2 Kd5 Kf5 and a counterattack on wPe5, and if White tries 1 e6, hoping for 1...fxe6 2 Kxe6 Kf8 3 Kd5 etc, Black can hold out by 1...Kf8 (2 Kf6 fxe6 3 Kxe6 Ke8 and Black will answer Kxc5 with ...Kc7).

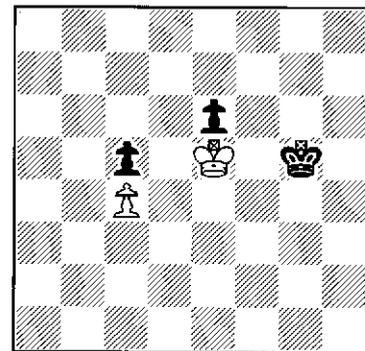
However, the position after 1 Ke4 Kg6 turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang, and the answer is therefore 1 Kf4 Kg6 2 Ke4, reaching e4 in two moves instead of one



2 - win



2a - reciprocal zugzwang

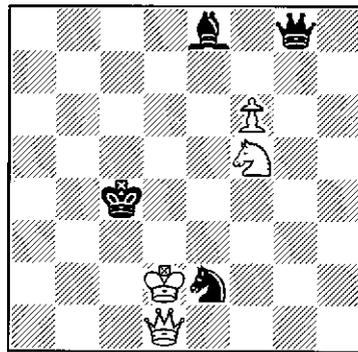


2b - after 4 Ke5

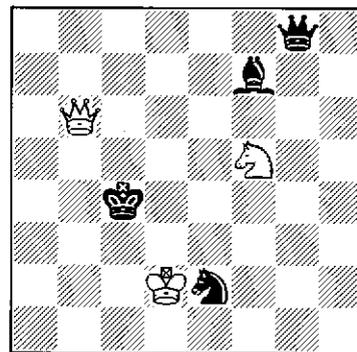
(see 2a). Black must play **2...Kg5** to continue to threaten **wPe5**, and now comes **3 e6! fxe6 4 Ke5** and **wK** will take both **bPs** and force the win (see 2b). The point is that 2b is won for White only if **bK** is on **g5** (or on the **h-file**); if it is on **g6** or **g4**, Black to play can hold the draw.

There are some minor lines. If Black tries **2...f6** in 2a, **3 e6** wins; if **2...f5+**, **3 Kf4** wins offhand. If after **1 Kf4** Black tries **1...Kh6** hoping to win the zugzwang fight (**2 Ke4? Kg6**), **2 e6** wins; if **1...Kf8**, **2 Ke4 Ke7 3 Kd5** and **4 Kxc5**; if **1...f6** hoping for **2 exf6**, simplest is **2 Kf5**. And if White plays **1 Ke4 Kg6** and tries to recover by **2 Kf4**, hoping for **2...Kg7 3 Kf5** which would win, Black has **2...f5**.

Both Harold van der Heijden and I are surprised that this little trifle does not appear to have been discovered before, but so it would seem. I have found it a good study to show to friends in cafés.



3 - win

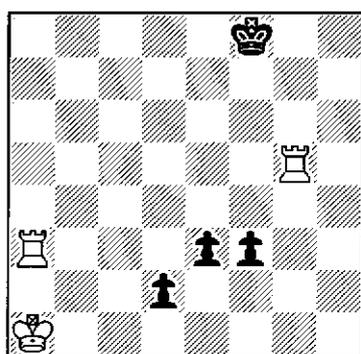


3a - after 4 Qb6

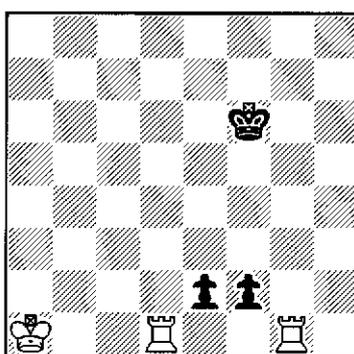
But even if other British composers are sadly inactive, Mike Bent continues to provide a steady flow of material suitable for publication: not normally deep, but always good to solve. 3 appeared in the same issue of *diagrammes*. Play starts **1 f7+ Bxf7** (**1...Qxf7 2 Nd6+**, **1...Qg5+ 2 Ne3+** and **3 fxe8Q**) **2 Qa4+ Kc5 3 Qa5+ Kc4** (**3...Kc6 4 Ne7+**) and now comes a typical Bent quiet move: **4 Qb6!** (see 3a). This threatens mate by **5 Ne3**, and White now wins quickly: for example, **4...Qg5+ 5 Ne3+ Qxe3+ 6 Kxe3** (**6 Qxe3** also wins) **Bh5 7 Qd8** followed by a fork. Unfortunately one of my solvers has missed **4 Qb6** and has sent me reams of analysis claiming to prove that White can win after playing **1 Qxe2+**. I don't think he can be right, but explicitly refuting him is not so easy. Don't ever become a study editor!

Some studies by David Gurgenzidze

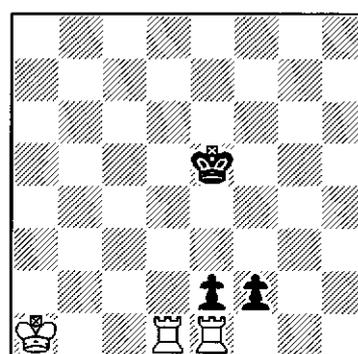
The problemists' meeting at St Petersburg confirmed the decisions controversially made at Pula last year to establish "World Champion" titles for chess composition and to award the study composition title for 1989-91 to David Gurgenzidze of Georgia. Whatever may be thought about the establishment of these titles and the method by which they are awarded, there can be no doubt that this particular title has gone to a composer of genuine stature. I have personally kept an eye open for his work ever since he came to our notice as a young student in the early 1970s.



1 - win



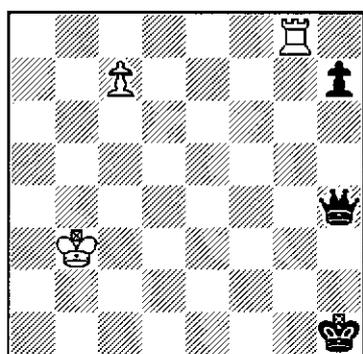
1a - after 6 Rgg1



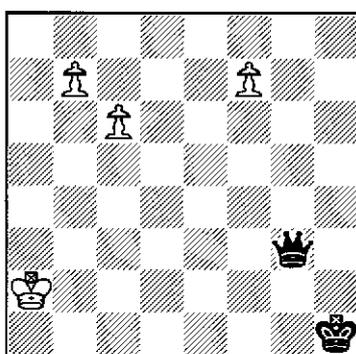
1b - after 7 Rge1

Gurgenzidze composes studies of most kinds, but he is perhaps best known for his rook studies. I have quoted 1 (2nd prize, Roycroft Jubilee 1978) several times, but not in *BESN* (assuming that I can trust my own indexes). Let us remedy the deficiency.

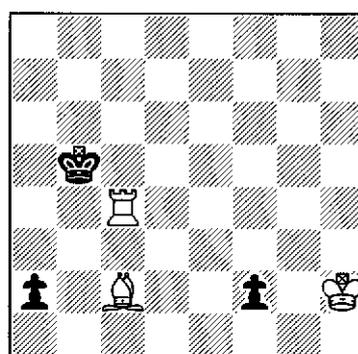
Play starts **1 Rg1 f2** (1...e2 2 Rxf3+ Ke- 3 Re3+) **2 Rf1 d1Q+** (2...e2 3 Rxf2+ Ke- 4 Rxe2+ etc, or 3...Kg- 4 Rg3+ and mates) **3 Rxd1 e2 4 Rf3+ Kg7** (4...Ke- 5 Re3+ and 6 Rxe2) **5 Rg3+ Kf6 6 Rgg1!** (see 1a). This striking move stops all promotions for the moment, but what happens if bK comes down the board to support his pawns? If say **6...Ke5** hoping for 7 Kb2 exd1Q 8 Rxd1 Ke4 9 Kc2 Ke3, we have another striking move, **7 Rge1!** pinning bPe2 (see 1b), and if **6...Kf5** then **7 Rdf1** similarly.



2 - Black to play



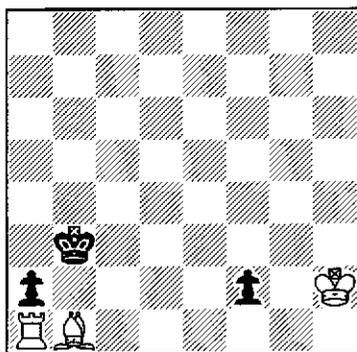
3 - win



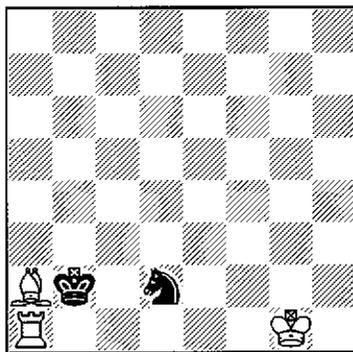
4 - win

My next example is a personal one, and although slightly flawed is instructive. In 1972, I published a study based on 2, in which bQ is helpless provided that wK

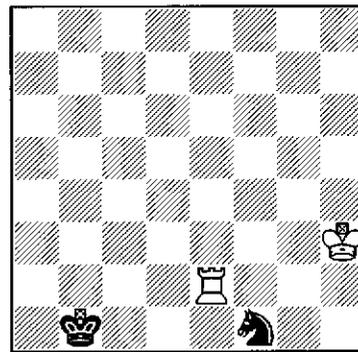
keeps to the b-file (1...Qh3+ 2 Kb4 Qh4+ 3 Kb5 Qh5+ 4 Kb6 Qh6+ 5 Kb7 and wins). But I would like to have created wR by underpromotion, Black (assumed now to be without bPh7) being able to meet g8Q by a stalemate-provoking fork on g3, and a satisfactory setting eluded me. John Roycroft showed the study to Gurgenzidze at a meeting in 1975, and Gurgenzidze promptly produced **3** (*EG*, 1976). The underpromotion here is simple enough, but what is interesting is that the theme is doubled, something I had not even considered (after **1 f8R Qg2+** wK must play **2 Ka3**, after **1...Qh2+** he must play **2 Kb3**, and so on up the board). The wP on c6 prevents the setting from being perfect, since with wQ on h3 wK can go to a4 as well as to the intended b4 (this is an unfortunate geometrical effect of the 8 x 8 board, since a similar setting on a 10 x 10 board would be perfect), and no doubt it is this defect which has prevented Gurgenzidze from including the study in either of his *Best studies* books. Even so, it is an interesting illustration of the difference in approach between the master composer and those of us who are more ordinary.



4a - after 4 Bb1



4b - 5 Kg1, after 6...Kb2



4c - main line, after 7 Re2

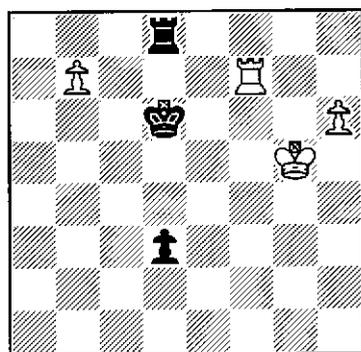
4 (5th Prize, Gantiady Sports Club, Tbilisi, 1977) has no such defect; everything fits together perfectly. Play starts **1 Bd3 Ka5** (1...a1Q 2 Rc1+) **2 Rc1 Kb4** (Black's only chance is to bring bK down to support bPa2), and if 3 Bc4 then 3...f1Q 4 Bxf1 Kb3 and Black will draw. **3 Ra1**, therefore, and if 3...Ka3 then 4 Bc4 and White will win easily enough. **3...Kb3** sets more problems, because 4 Bc4+ is clearly unplayable, and in fact the only answer is the curious move **4 Bb1** (see **4a**).

Now 4...axb1Q 5 Rxb1+, 4...Kb2 5 Rxa2+, and 4...f1Q 5 Bxa2+ all lose quickly, but **4...f1N+** is trickier than it looks. Where is wK to go? If he tries 5 Kg2, Black has 5...Ne3+ 6 K-- axb1Q 7 Rxb1+ Kc2, and the attack on wR gives Black time to rescue bN. If 5 Kh1, Black has 5...Ng3+ and the same. 5 Kg1 looks more promising, since bN has no check and 5...axb1Q will lose immediately, but after 5...Nd2 6 Bxa2+ Kb2 we find that wK obstructs wR (see **4b**) and we have a most unexpected draw by perpetual harassment: 7 Rd1 (nowhere else is safe) Kc2 8 Ra1 Kb2.

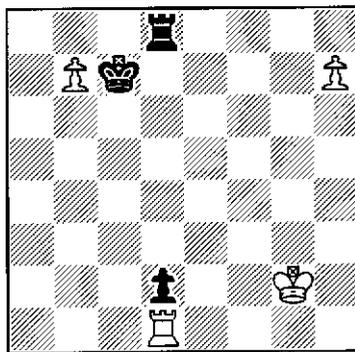
So White must play **5 Kh3**, which puts no pressure on bN and gives Black time to play **5...Kb2**. This wins a White piece, but after **6 Rxa2+ Kxb1 7 Re2** we see that White has had the last word (see **4c**): 8 Re1+ is threatened, and bN has no good move.

A composer of character, whose work has elegance and piquancy. Would that there were more like him.

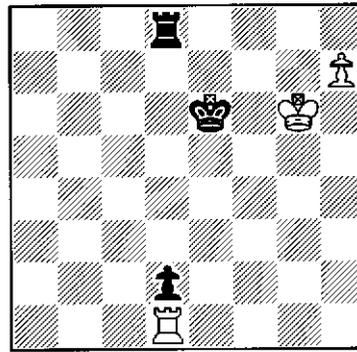
From the world at large



1 - win



1a - 2 Rf1, after 6...Rd8



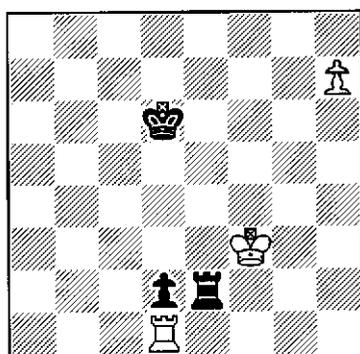
1b - 3...Ke7, after 5...Rd8

1 (O. Lapkin, 1st HM 64 1995) is a remarkable rook study which I found in *EG* 129. The natural start is **1 h7 d2** and now **2 Rf1** looks strong (White threatens **3 Rd1** and **4 Rxd2**, winning **bP** since **bR** is tied to the eighth rank), but Jürgen Fleck points out that after **2...Kc7 3 Rd1** Black can start checking and drive **wK** to the second rank, say **3...Rd5+ 4 Kg4 Rd4+ 5 Kg3 Rd3+ 6 Kg2**, and then return **bR** to the eighth rank, **6...Rd8** (see **1a**), since **Rxd2** will now be met by **...Rxd2+** with check. And if **Kg1**, Black simply plays **...Rh8**.

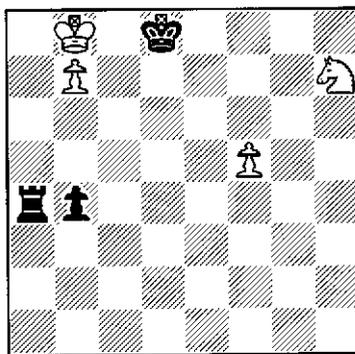
But White can divert **bR** by **2 b8Q+!** and after **2...Rxb8 3 Rf1** Black has two defences. Firstly, he can move **bK** towards **wP** and put **bR** behind **bP**, **3...Ke7 4 Kg6 Ke6** (**4...Rd8** will transpose) **5 Rd1 Rd8** (see **1b**). White cannot now win by **6 Rxd2 Rxd2 7 h8Q** since Black will reply **...Rg2+** and **...Rh2+** and capture the new **wQ**. However, Black is only just holding out, and if it were his move either **bR** or **bK** would have to relinquish its advantageous position. No sooner said than done: **6 Kg7 Rd7+ 7 Kh6! Rd8** (nothing better) **8 Kg6** and the move has been duly passed.

Alternatively, Black can play **3...Re8** and try for perpetual check. Now it is White's turn to make use of the second rank; after **4 Rd1 Re5+ 5 Kg4 Re4+ 6 Kg3 Re3+ 7 Kg2 Re2+** White can come to the f-file, **8 Kf3!** (see **1c**), since **8...Rh2** is met by the checking fork **9 Rxd2+**.

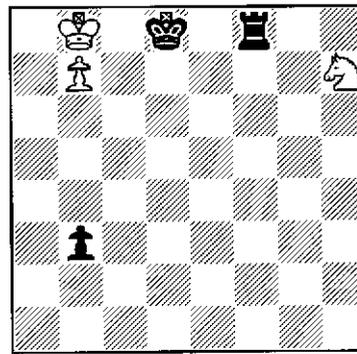
The purpose of *BESN* is to entertain rather than to teach, but there are some instructive lessons for practical play here.



1c - 3...Re8, after 8 Kf3

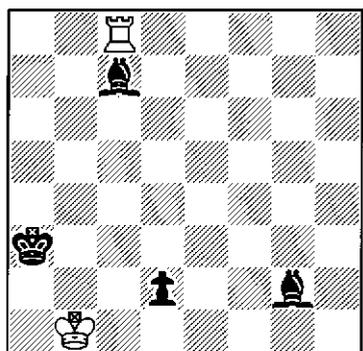


2 - win

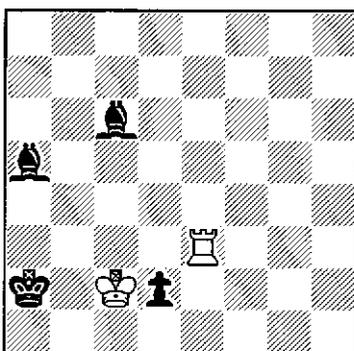


2a - after 3...Rf8

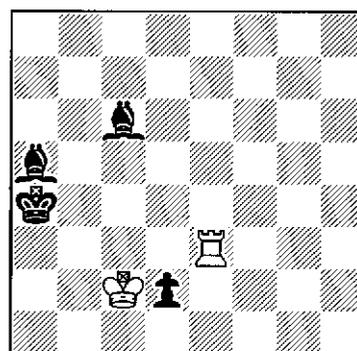
Also instructive, though much lighter, is Ignace Vandecasteele's 2 (*Schakend Nederland* 1994). 1 f6 b3 2 f7 Rf4 3 f8Q+ Rxf8 gives 2a, and now 4 Nxf8 b2 and 4 Ka7 Rf7 both fail. This leaves 4 Ka8, but after 4...Re8 the pawn cannot promote on account of the pin (5 b8Q+ Ke7). However, White interjects 5 Nf6 Rf8, and now he can stand the pin because wN can play round to c8 and interrupt it: 6 b8Q+ Ke7 7 Ng8+! Kf7 8 Nh6+ Ke7/Kg7 9 Nf5+ Kf7/Kg8 10 Nd6+/Ne7+ and 11 Nc8. The usual task of the knight in N v R promotion battles is to shield the promotion square before the promotion, but here we see a successful shielding after the event. This study was dedicated to Hans Bouwmeester, whose book *Modern end-game studies for the chess-player* (Bell, 1959) has long been one of my personal favourites; do grab a second-hand copy if one comes your way.



3 - draw



3a - after 3...Ka2



3b - after 3...Ka4

3 (*EG* 1979, being a correction of a Roycroft Jubilee tourney entry of 1978) is also by Vandecasteele. I originally selected it to illustrate *Flemish miniatures* in our last issue, but discarded it on the grounds that Timothy Whitworth and I had already used it as an example in *Endgame magic*. However, on checking I find that this is not so (it was one of many fine studies which we drafted for the book but eventually did not use) and it is too good not to quote. We could have produced an excellent book from what we left out of *Endgame magic*, and perhaps one day we will do so.

Play starts 1 Kc2 Ba5 (1...Bf4 2 Rd8) 2 Re8 Bc6 (it is not immediately obvious that this is Black's best move, but it turns out to give him the most options later on) 3 Re3+, and Black has two sensible choices. If 3...Ka2 (see 3a) White plays 4 Re2 (not 4 Rd3, after which 4...Ba4+ wins), and 4...Ba4+ 5 Kd3 Bb5+ can be met by 6 Kc2 since 6...Bxe2 is stalemate. If Black plays 3...Ka4 (see 3b), the move 4 Re2 fails on account of 4...d1Q 5 Kxd2 Bf3 pinning wR (this line was not available to Black with bK on a2 since 5 Kxd2 would have given check), but Black cannot now play 4...Ba4+ and so 4 Rd3 works. Black can still pin wR, 4...Be4, but White retreats by 5 Kd1 and the capture 5...Bxd3 gives another stalemate. Polished two-part studies of this kind are a Vandecasteele speciality.

Those who read *EG* will have been amused to see the praise recently lavished on the Ryabini study which I criticized in March. I have reread what I wrote, and I stand by every word. Others are entitled to their own view of what a first-class study should be, and what features are and are not desirable; I shall continue to hold to mine.

