

British Endgame Study News

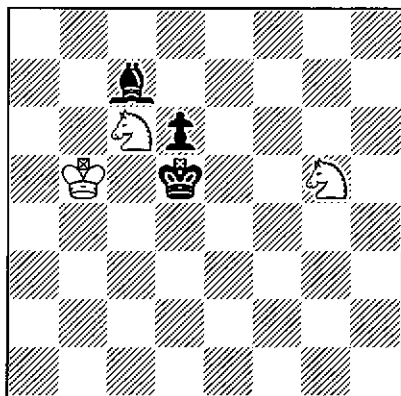
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The Problemist years - the win studies

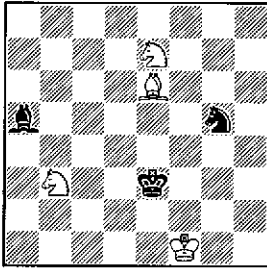
by Adam Sobey



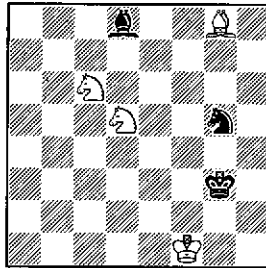
Black to move loses, White to move cannot win...

The Problemist years - the win studies

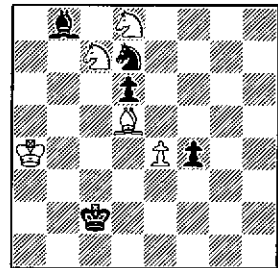
Win studies lead either to eventual or more immediate mate. This common goal is rarely achieved because - by convention - the study is considered 'over' when a recognised decisive material superiority is obtained. Our first two studies are of this type. Mike Bent's 1 (1 Pr. 72-3) reduces to 3 minor pieces against one.



1 - win



1a - after 6 Bg8

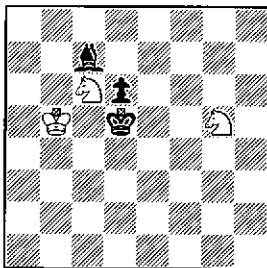


2 - win

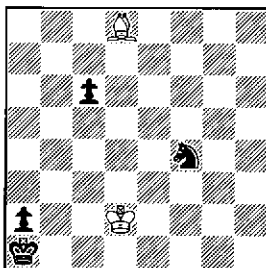
1 Bf5 Bd8 2 Nd5+ Kf3 3 Nd4+ Kg3 4 Nc6 Nf7 5 Be6 Ng5 6 Bg8 (1a). The first move is strong, but the B must be saved. 1 Bf5 severely constricts the BK, enabling domination of the BB. Here is simplicity that conceals great art.

2 by Sergei Tkachenko and Andrei Frolkin (May 97) leads to a 'won' 2N/P ending: **1 Nce6 Nb6+ 2 Kb4 Nxd5+ 3 exd5 f3 4 Nd4+ Kd3 5 Nxf3 Ke4 6 Nc6 Bc7 7 Ng5+ Kxd5 8 Kb5 (2a).** After 7 Ng5+ B must choose between a P-ending a piece down and the witty position of 2a winning the BB. 2 Kb5? leads to 2a with W to play.

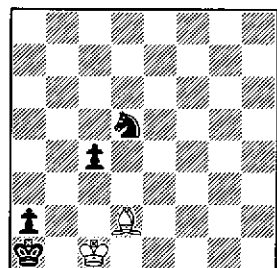
The next five studies feature mate. Andrew Miller's 3 (3 Pr. 72-3) requires very precise moves to thwart B's stalemate threats.



2a - after 8 Kb5



3 - win

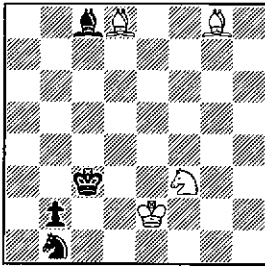


3a - after 4 Bd2

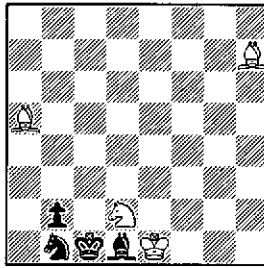
1 Kc2 Nd5 2 Kc1 c5 3 Bg5 c4 4 Bd2 (3a) c3 5 Be1 c2 6 Bd2 any 7 Bc3 mate.

The next three studies all feature side board mates by minor pieces. Leonid Topko's 4 (May 97) leads to an ideal mate with only Pb2 unmoved.

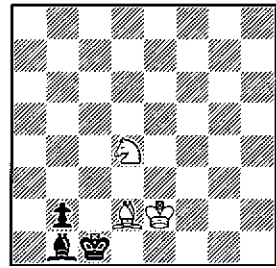
1 Ba5+ Kc2 2 Bh7+ Kc1 3 Nd2 Bg4+ 4 Ke1 Bd1 (4a) 5 Bxb1 Bc2 6 Ke2 Bxb1 7 Nb3+ Kc2 8 Nd4+ Kc1 9 Bd2 mate (4b).



4 - win

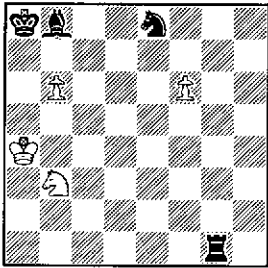


4a - after 4...Bd1

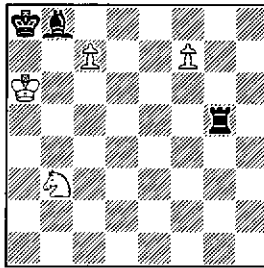


4b - 9 Bd2 mate

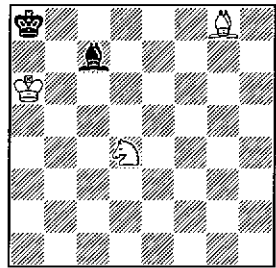
David Gurgenzidze's study 5 took First Prize in 84-5, with its stalemate defence, underpromotion and ideal mate, all in a dynamic solution.



5 - win



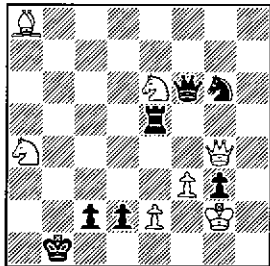
5a - after 4 bxc7



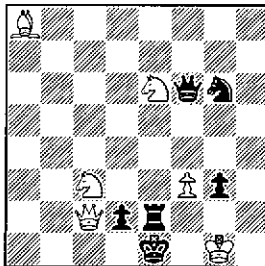
5b - after 6 Nd4

1 f7 Rg4+ 2 Ka5 Rg5+ 3 Ka6 Nc7+ 4 bxc7 (5a) Rg8 5 fxg8B Bxc7 6 Nd4 (5b) Kb8 7 Nc6+ Kc8 8 Be6 mate.

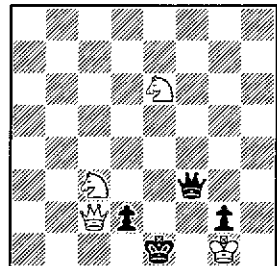
Sergei Tkachenko's 6 (July 00) has a lively introduction with combative piece play. W forces B to play g2 to bring about the stunning position after W's 11th move. A magnificent reduction to a 2N mate.



6 - win



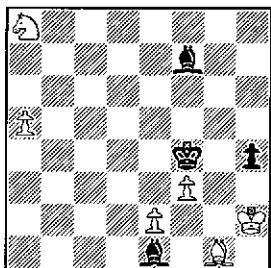
6a - after 5 Kg1



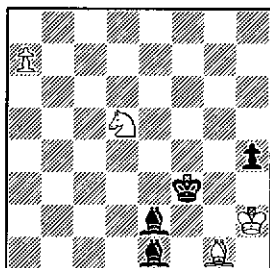
6b - after 9...Qxf3

1 Qb4+ Kc1 2 Qb2+ Kd1 3 Nc3+ Ke1 4 Qxc2 Rxe2+ 5 Kg1 (6a) Rg2+ 6 Kxg2 Nh4+ 7 Kh1 g2+ 8 Kg1 Nxf3+ 9 Bxf3 Qxf3 (6b) 10 Qd1+ Qxd1 11 Nd4 and 11...Qg4/Qh5 12 Nc2 mate or 11...Qa4 12 Nf3 mate.

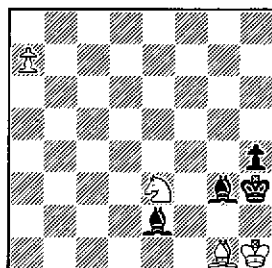
The next study 7 by Aleksei Sochniev (1-2 Pr. *ex aequo* 82-3) shows a mid-board mate with minor pieces about which the judge, David Hooper, wrote 'Almost all one could ask of a study: economy, counterplay, underpromotion, and a surprise finish. Only the h-pawn stands unmoved, but it also serves.'



7 -



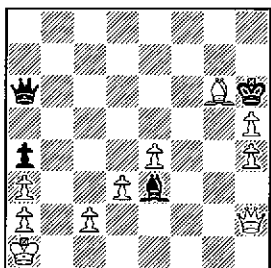
7a - after 4 a7



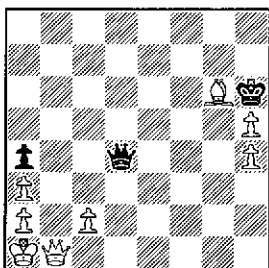
7b - after 6...Kh3

1 a6 Bc4 2 Nc7 Bxe2 3 Nd5+ Kxf3 4 a7 (7a) Bg3+ 5 Kh1 Kg4 6 Ne3+ Kh3 (7b) 7 a8B Bf2 8 Bg2+ Kg3 9 Bh2 mate.

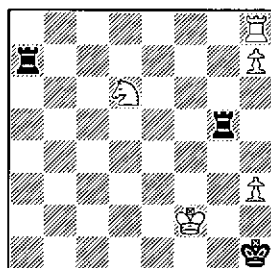
Sometimes a study has a number of reasonable tries, as well as B defences, all of which have to be examined to establish its integrity. Unless the subsequent play is interesting, such moves are shown in () without further analysis. Sometimes it is necessary to explore W's blind alleys and B's other defences in order to appreciate the quality of a study. Not to do so is to have 'had the experience, but missed the meaning'. Of course a composer may highlight his intended main line but must demonstrate the ineffectiveness of alternative play. Wakashima's 8 (Sep 90) has several plausible tries.



8 - win



8a - after 6...Qxd4+



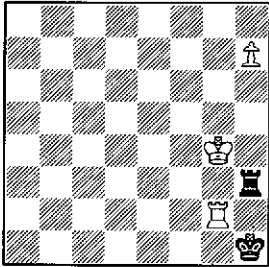
9 - win

1 Qe5 (1 e5? 1 c3? 1 Qc7? 1 Qb8?) Bd4+ 2 Qxd4 Qf6 3 Qb2 (3 c3?) Qf1+ 4 Qb1 Qf6+ 5 e5 Qxe5+ 6 d4 Qxd4+ (6...Qe3) (8a) 7 c3 Qxc3+ 8 Qb2 Qe1+ 9 Bb1 Qe5 10 Be4 and if 10...Qxe4 11 Qh8+ is mate. White defeats B's stalemate threats.

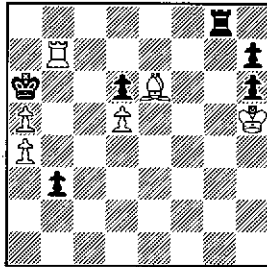
Similarly in 9, by David Gurgendize (1 Pr. 74-5) W has to guard against sacrificial rooks. The judge, John Roycroft, commented 'A thriller from start to finish with every rook having a chance to sacrifice itself.' Remarkably the Ra7 has nothing to offer on the a-file! **1 Rg8 Rg2+ 2 Rxg2 Rf7+ 3 Nf5 Rxf5+ 4 Kg3 Rf3+ 5 Kg4 Rxh3**

(9a) 6 Rg1+ Kh2 7 Rh1+.

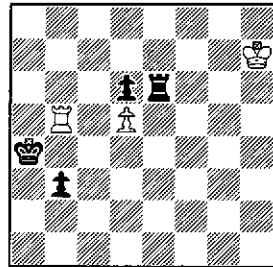
To introduce humour into the grim process of securing a win is a rare art. Alexander Stavritsky provides ample compensation for the 'B. to move' stipulation in his witty 10 (Nov 96), where the rooks imitate each other. This sort of manoeuvre is not uncommon in draw studies, but quite rare in win compositions. Note how the B-P is rendered impotent.



9a - after 5...Rxh3



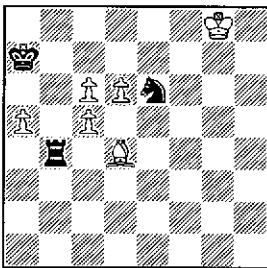
10 - win (Black to move)



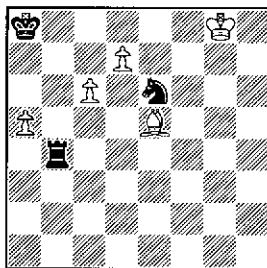
10a - after 5...Kxa4

1...Rg5+ 2 Kxh6 Rg6+ 3 Kxh7 Rxe6 4 Rb6+ Kxa5 5 Rb5+ Kxa4 (10a) 6 dxe6 Kxb5 7 e7.

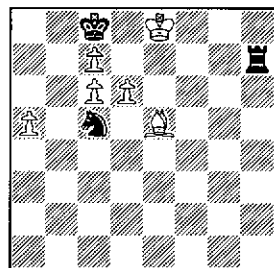
Occasionally a study splits into two main lines, as Sergei Osintsev's 11 (Sept 97) does at move 1. Here there are several side lines to negotiate, but a composer need not cloud his solution with such distractions as long as it is sound.



11 - win



11a - 1...Ne7, after 4...Ka8



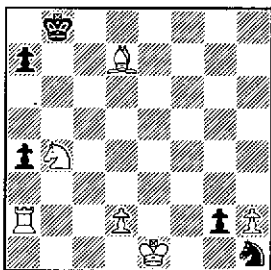
11b - 1...Kb7, after 6 Ke8

After 1 c7 we have a) 1...Nxc7 and b) 1...Kb7.

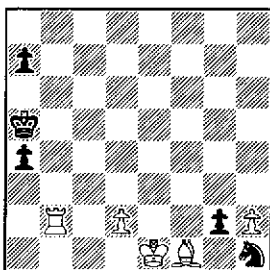
a) 1...Nxc7 2 c6+ Kb8 (2...Rxd4 3 dxc7 Rg4+ 4 Kf7 Rf4+ 5 Ke7 Re4+ 6 Kd6 Re8 7 Kd7) 3 Be5 (3 Ba7+?) Ne6 (3...Rb5 4 d7 Rd5 5 Kf7, 3...Kc8 4 d7+) 4 d7+ Ka8 (11a) 5 c7 (5 d8Q? Nxd8 6 c7 Nc6 7 c8Q+ Rb8 8 Bxb8 Ne7+) Nxc7 6 Kf7 Rb8 7 Bxc7 Rh8 8 Kg7 Kb7 9 Kxh8 Kxc7 10 a6. Exciting side variations and a final K+P ending!

b) 1...Kb7 2 c6+ Kc8 3 Be5 Ne5 4 Kf7 (4 Kf8? Re4 5 a6 Ne6+ and 6...Nxc7) Rh4 (4...Re4 5 a6 Rxe5 6 a7 or 5...Nd7 6 cxd7+ Kxd7 7 c8Q+ Kxc8 8 Ke6 Re2 9 d7+ Kd8 10 a7) 5 Ke7 Rh7+ 6 Ke8 (11b) and B is in zugzwang. If 6...Rxc7 7 dxc7 Na6 8 Bd6 Nxc7+ 9 Ke7. Extraordinary stuff!

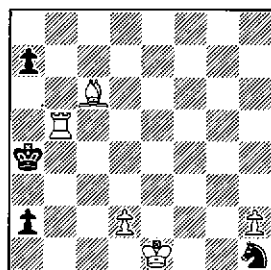
Battery play is a familiar theme in the problem world, and has been used in studies too. Building a battery is difficult enough, but to reassemble it on another axis is a great achievement. 12 is Cedric Sells' First Prizewinner 70-1, which brought the following comment from the judge, Pauli Perkonoja: 'The main theme of this study has been demonstrated very effectively. In all, three batteries in one study is a remarkable achievement. The building up of the decisive battery by a brave manoeuvre of the bishop is especially splendid. The play is heightened by the trap 3 Bh3? cancelled by alert play by Black. Altogether a fine masterpiece.'



12 - win



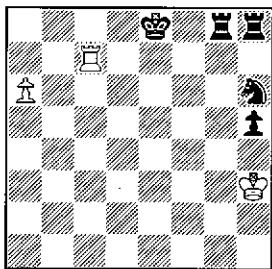
12a - after 4 Bf1



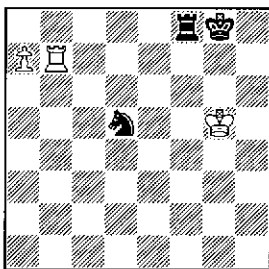
12b - after 7 Bc6

1 Na6+ Kb7 2 Rb2+ Kxa6 3 Bb5+ Ka5 4 Bf1 (12a) a3 5 Rb5+ Ka4 6 Bxg2 a2 7 Bc6 (12b) a1Q+ 8 Rb1+. The composer's 6...a2 may not seem the most natural choice, but all other moves lose, and this shows the theme.

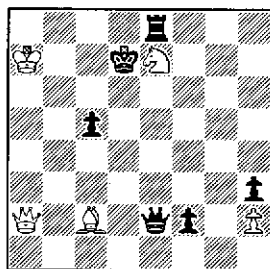
13, by Yuri Gusev and Oleg Pervakov (Mar 90) has unusual material, but W's overpowering threat forces B to desperate ends: neither 2...0-0 nor 2...Nf5+ are any use, hence 2...h4+. However W's 7 Kg5 puts B into zugzwang, 'the knell, that summons us to heaven or to hell'.



13 - win



13a - after 7 Kg5

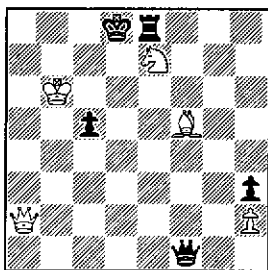


14 - win

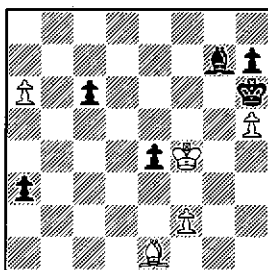
1 a7 Rg3+ 2 Kxg3 h4+ 3 Kxh4 Nf5+ (3...0-0 4 Rb7 Rf4+ 5 Kg5) 4 Kg4 0-0 5 Rb7 Ne3+ 6 Kh5 Nd5 7 Kg5 (13a) Nf4 8 Kg(h)4 (8 Rb8 Ne6+) 9 Kg3.

14 is Amatzia Avni's 3rd Prizewinner, 80-1, of which the judge, John Nunn, wrote 'I have a soft spot for studies in which both sides play actively. Here both sides offer spectacular Q sacrifices, justified by play of some analytical complexity. The finish was too crude to finish higher.'

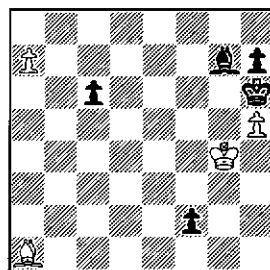
1 Bf5+ Kd8 2 Kb6 Qb5+ 3 Kxb5 f1Q+ 4 Kb6 (14a) Kxe7 5 Qe6+ Kf8 6 Qf6+ Kg8 7 Bh7+ Kxh7 8 Qxf1.



14a - after 4 Kb6



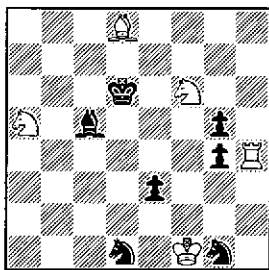
15 - win



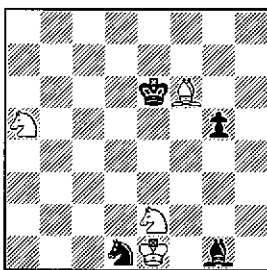
15a - after 4...exf2

15 is Marek Kwiatowski's First Prizewinner 92-3 of which the judge, Jonathan Levitt, wrote: 'The solution features fine turbulent flow, combined with paradox.'
1 a7 (1 Kg4? 1 Bd2?) **a2 2 Kg4** (2 Bd2? 2 a8Q?) **e3** (2...a1Q?) **3 Bc3 a1Q 4 Bxa1 exf2** (15a) **5 Bf6** (5 a8Q? f1Q 6 Qxc6+ Bf6 7 Qxf6+ Qxf6 8 Bxf6 is stalemate) **Bxf6 6 a8Q f1Q 7 Qf8+ Bg7 8 Qxf1.**

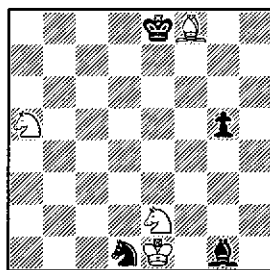
The next study **16**, published in September 00, has a challenging introduction but ultimately leads to a duel between the BK and WB. It is by Nicolae Micu and features the Roman theme, in which a piece takes two moves to reach a square it could reach in one move in order to decoy a piece (BK). 'Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold', nor, indeed, can W capture on g1 by the K.



16 - win



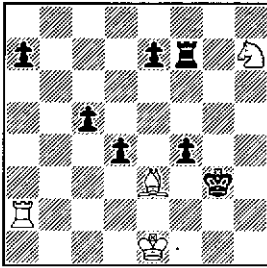
16a - after 7...Ke6



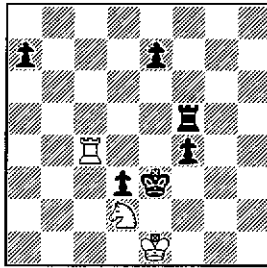
16b - after 15...Ke8

1 Ne4+ Ke5 (1...Kd5 2 Rxc4 e2+ 3 Ke1 Ne3 4 Nc3+ Ke6 5 Rxc1 Nc2+ 6 Kd2 Bxc1 7 Nxe2 Kd7 8 Bf6 Ke6 9 Bb2) **2 Rxc4 Kf5** (2...e2+ 3 Ke1 Ne3 4 Nc4+ Nxc4 5 Nxc5 or 4...Kf5 5 Nxc3+ Bxe3 6 Nf6 Bd4 7 Rg3 Bc5 8 Nd5) **3 Rxc1** (3 Rxc5+ Kxe4 4 Rxc5 e2+ 5 Ke1 Nh2) **e2+ 4 Ke1 Bxc1 5 Ng3+ Ke6 6 Nxe2 Kd7 7 Bf6 Ke6** (16a) **8 Bg7!** Now comes the key try **8 Bh8?** Bh2 9 Kxd1 Be5 10 Nd4+ Kd5. Similarly if 9 Nc4 Kd5 10 Nb6+ Kc6 11 Bd4 Nb2. Equally 8 Ba1 fails to win after 8...Ne3 9 Nxc1 Nc2+. On we go with the duel: **8...Kf7 9 Bh8** (9 Be5?) **Kg8** (9...Bb6) **10 Bf6 Kf7 11 Bd8 Ke8 12 Bc7** (12 Nb7? Nf2) **Kd7 13 Bb8 Kc8 14 Bd6 Kd7 15 Bf8** (15 Ba3(b4) Ne3) **Ke8** (16b) and now **16 Bh6** wins. A tour de force.

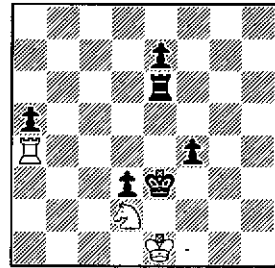
17 by Vladimír Pachman took 3rd Prize in 82-3 and after a lively introduction devolves into a duel between the R's, requiring precise play. Note that the f-P cannot move after 6 Rxc4 on account of 7 Nf1 mate.



17 - win



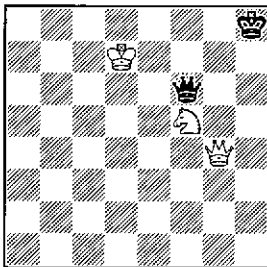
17a - after 6 Rxc4



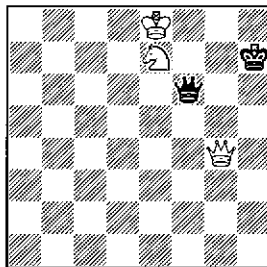
17b - after 12 Ra4

1 Ng5 Rf5 2 Ne4+ Kf3 3 Nd2+ Kxc3 4 Ra3+ d3 5 Ra4 c4 6 Rxc4 (17a) Re5 7 Ra4 Re6 8 Rb4 a6 9 Rc4 Re5 10 Ra4 Re6 11 Rb4 a5 12 Ra4 (17b).

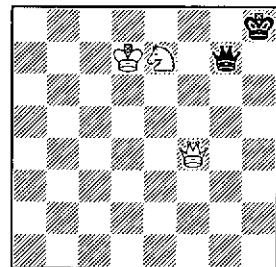
It would be inappropriate to end this review without reference to the importance of the computer as an aid to composition. Over the last thirty years increasingly complex positions have been resolved following the work of Ken Thompson and others. As this review is being written, the whole of the 5-man field has been resolved, including the Q+P/Q endings which have proved so difficult for the human analyst. The pawnless 6-man endings are rapidly being sorted out, and the publication of extensive lists of positions of mutual zugzwang now offers the composer important objectives in composition. Our final study, from November 91, makes use of the Q+N/Q data base. It is by John Nunn, an early pioneer in computer aided composition, who has skillfully interrogated the data base to establish a position 18 with a long running duel between the K,Q,N and K,Q.



18 - win



18a - after 8 Ke8



18b - after 14 Kd7

Nunn (E552) : 1 Qh3+ Kg8 2 Ne7+ Kf8 3 Qe3 Kf7 4 Qb3+ Kg7 5 Qg3+ Kh7 6 Qh3+ Kg7 7 Qg4+ Kh7 8 Ke8 (18a) Qa6/Qb6 9 Qh5+ Qh6 10 Qf5+ Kh8 11 Qe5+ Qg7 12 Qh2+ Qh7 13 Qf4 Qg7 14 Kd7 (18b) Kh7 15 Qh4+ Qh6 16 Qe4+ Kh8 17 Qa8+ Kg7 18 Nf5+.

And what of the future? 'It is enough that there is a beyond.'