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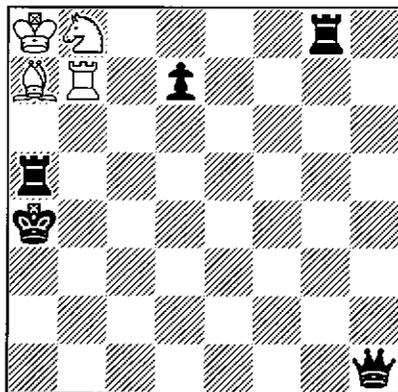
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Some studies by

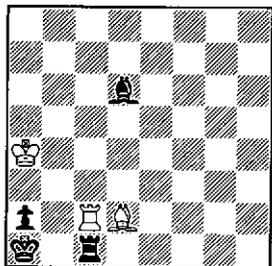
Frédéric Lazard



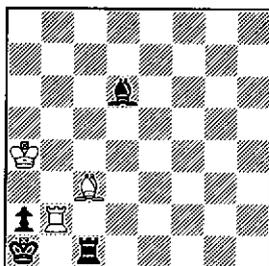
A stalemate with three men pinned

Some studies by Frédéric Lazard

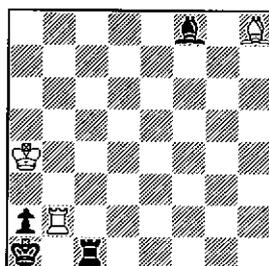
The recent writing of an article for *diagrammes* reminded me of the French chess all-rounder Frédéric Lazard (1883-1948). Lazard was second to Chéron in the 1926 French Championship, he composed problems in quantity, and nearly 140 of his studies are in Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database 2000" (plus a few by his brother Gustave). Many are the creations of a problem composer rather than of an endgame analyst, but the best have a character and piquancy not often encountered.



1 - win

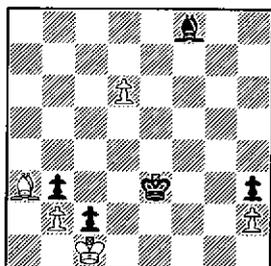


1a - after 2...Ka1

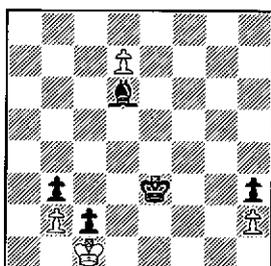


1b - after 5 Bb8

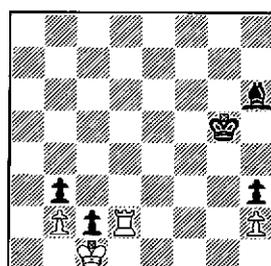
1 appeared in E. Barthélemy's 1940 book *Galérie des problémistes de France* (Harold tells me that the source given in "Endgame study database 2000" is incorrect). Captures on c1 lead nowhere (1 Rxc1+ Kb2 and the pawn will cost the rook, 1 Bxc1 Kb1 2 Rb2+ Kxc1 3 Rxa2 Kd1 and the king is safely away from the "bad" corner), and the way forward is **1 Bc3+ Kb1 2 Rb2+ Ka1** (see 1a). Now 3 Rc2+ merely repeats, but **3 Bf6!** hides the White bishop behind the Black (if instead 3 Bg7/Bh8 then 3...Rc7/Rc8 and Black escapes). There follows **3...Be7** (3...Rf1 4 Rf2+) **4 Bg7 Bf8 5 Bh8** (see 1b) **Bg7** (nothing better - 5...Rc7 6 Rb7+ Bg7 7 Bxg7+ transposes, and 5...Ba3 6 Rb3+ Bb2 7 Rxb2 Rc8 8 Rb8+ comes to the same) **6 Bxg7 Rc7 7 Rb7+ Rxg7 8 Rxg7** (now it's book) **Kb2 9 Rg2+ Kb1 10 Kb3 a1N+ 11 Kc3** and wins.



2 - draw



2a - after 3...Bxd6

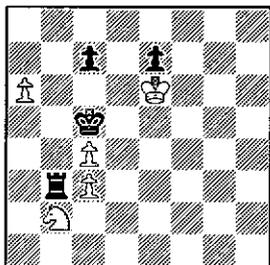


2b - after 9 Rd2

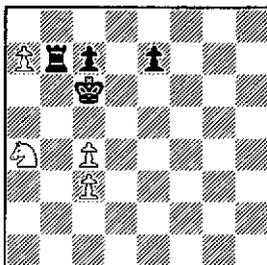
2 (2 Pr *L'Opinion* 1935) appears in several collections. Play starts **1 d7 Bh6 2 Bf8! Bf4!** (2...Bxf8 3 d8Q Bh6 4 Qd2+ and wins, 2...Bg5 3 Be7 Bxe7 4 d8Q Bxd8

stalemate) **3 Bd6** and White appears to have a perpetual opposition, but Black can break the pattern by **3...Bxd6** (see **2a**) because now **4 d8Q** is met by **4...Bf4 5 Qd2+ Kf3/Ke4**. All right, so we take a rook: **4 d8R!!** Black is now curiously helpless. **4...Bf4** can be met by **5 Rd2**, and now a king move gives stalemate; and if say **5...Bg5** then **6 Rd5 Kf4 7 Rd2 Bh6 8 Rd6 Kg5 9 Rd2** and so on (see **2b**). If instead **4...Bxh2** then **5 Rd3+** and another stalemate.

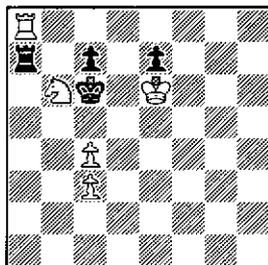
This combination of rook promotion and pin stalemate has long been a favourite theme of mine. Readers will remember Albert van Tets's setting which I quoted in March 2001: **wKh1, Pg7 (2), bKb7, Rc6, Ba8, Ph2 (4)**, achieving it with **K+P** only.



3 - win

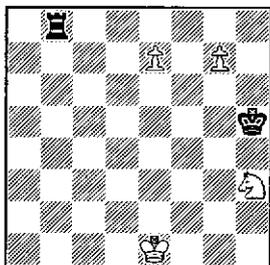


3a - after 2...Rb7

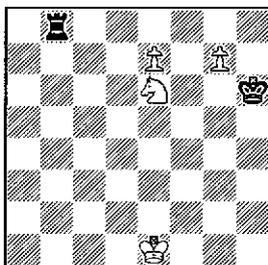


3b - after 4 Nb6

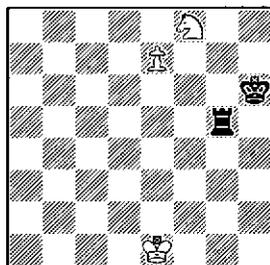
3 (*Le Monde des Échecs* 1946) has the boot on the other foot. **1 Na4+ Kc6** (**1...Kxc4 2 a7** etc) **2 a7** forces promotion, but **2...Rb7** sets up a pin (see **3a**) and **3 a8Q** will be stalemate. All right, **3 a8R**, but **3...Ra7!** forks rook and knight and sets up another stalemate. The answer is stunning: **4 Nb6!!** (see **3b**). **4...Rxa8** gives no trouble (**5 Nxa8 Kb7 6 Kxe7** etc), but **4...Kxb6** demands care: **5 Rxa7 Kxa7 6 Kxe7 Kb6** is only a draw. White must interpolate **5 c5+** gaining a tempo, and now everything is straightforward: **5...Kb7/Ka6 6 Rxa7+ Kxa7 7 Kxe7** and so on.



4 - win



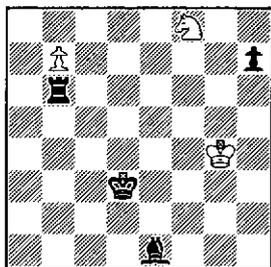
4a - after 2 Ne6



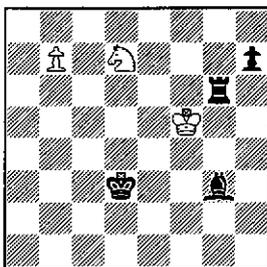
4b - after 4...Rg5

4 (2 HM *Shakhmatnoye Obzreniye* 1910) is in *Endgame magic*, but it is an eminently practical little study that bears repeating. **1 Nf4+ Kh6** (**1...Kg5 2 Ne6+**, **1...Kg4 2 Ng6**) **2 Ne6** (threat **3 Nf8**, see **4a**) **Re8** (now **3 Nf8** is met by **3...Rxe7+**) **3 g8Q Rxg8 4 Nf8** (forcing promotion, but...) **Rg5!** (now **5 e8Q** is met by **5...Re5+ Qxe5** stalemate, see **4b**) **5 Ng6!!** and Black is helpless.

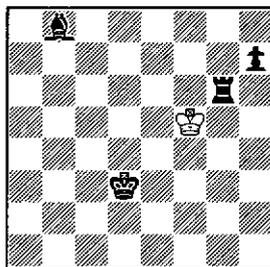
Lazard took a particular delight in stalemate studies. A few were of the classical type where the beauty of the stalemate is an end in itself, but most accepted some untidiness at the end as a fair price for piquancy and surprise in the lead-in play.



5 - draw



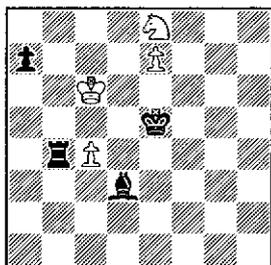
5a - after 2 Kf5 Bg3



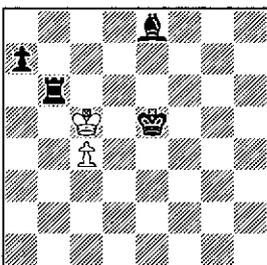
5b - 4...Bxb8 stalemate

5 (*La Stratégie* 1918) is by Lazard's brother Gustave. 1 Nd7 defends the pawn indirectly (1...Rxb7 2 Nc5+), but Black can play 1...Rg6+ followed by 2...Bg3 bringing the bishop to bear on the promotion square (see 5a, say) and now what is White going to do?

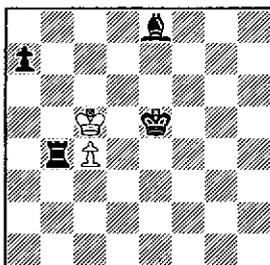
He plays 2 Kf5 as in the diagram, and after 2...Bg3 he plays 3 Ne5+ forking king and rook. Black must capture, 3...Bxe5, and now 4 b8Q forces a second capture: 4...Bxb8 with an elegant stalemate (see 5b). An extreme purist might criticize the fact that the Black king and pawn are both in position at the outset (in principle, the stalemate could be set lower on the board, allowing the Black pawn to move into place during play), but even if further moves are possible it is difficult to see how they could be added without resorting to a clumsy opening position and forced captures.



6 - draw

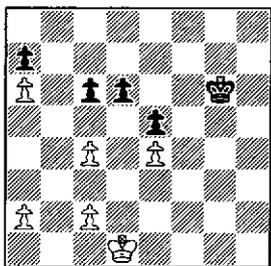


6a - 1...Rb6+, after 4...Bxe8

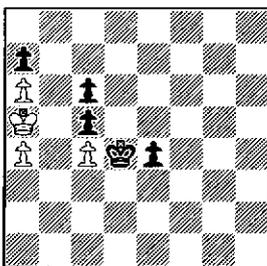


6b - main line, after 4 Kc5

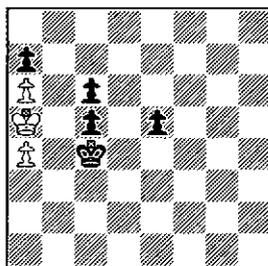
6 (*SHM L'Italia Scacchistica* 1923) uses similar material, but the play unfolds quite differently. 1 Nd6 threatens promotion, and after 1...Rb6+ 2 Kc5 Bg6 3 Nf7+ Bxf7 4 e8Q+ Bxe8 we have a stalemate (see 6a). But Black doesn't have to help White by interpolating 1...Rb6+; can he not play 1...Bg6 straight away? Yes, he can, but after 2 Nf7+ Bxf7 3 e8Q+ Bxe8 4 Kc5! we have 6b, and where is the rook to go? Black must rescue it, because he has the wrong bishop for his a-pawn, and any safe retreat again gives stalemate.



7 - draw



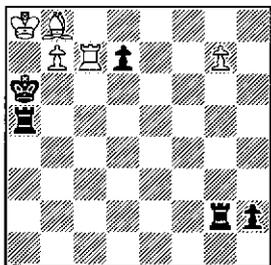
7a - 6...e4, after 7 a4



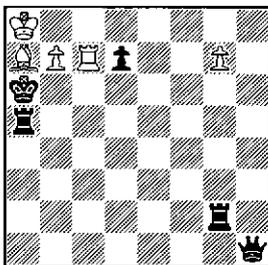
7b - 6...Kxc4, after 7 a4

7 (*L'Échiquier de Paris* 1946, version) appears hopeless for White; his position will be turned after 1 Ke2 Kh5 2 Kf3 Kh4, and 1 c5 seems no more than a spite sacrifice. But Black must play 1...dxc5, and after 2 c4 White can bury his king: 2...Kg5 3 Kc2 Kf4 4 Kb3 Kxe4 5 Ka4 Kd4 6 Ka4 e4 7 a4 (see 7a), and Black cannot relieve the stalemate. Nor does it help Black to bring his king across instead of advancing the e-pawn: 6...Kxc4 7 a4 gives 7b, and again Black has no good move.

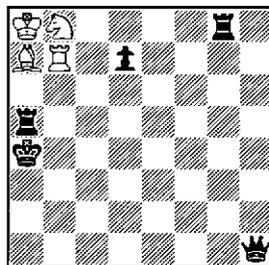
The original setting had the second White pawn on c3, and appeared to allow an alternative draw by 1 Kc2 c5 (1...Kg5 2 c5 transposing, 1...Kf6 2 Kb3 etc) 2-4 Kb5 Kxe4 5 Kc6 Kd3 6-7 Kxa7 e3 8 Kb6 e2 9 a7 e1Q 10 a8Q. Fortunately a simple remedy was available. The need to incarcerate the White king is far less obvious than is usual with this theme, and the loss of the study would have been a pity.



8 - draw



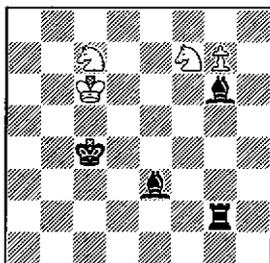
8a - after 1...h1Q



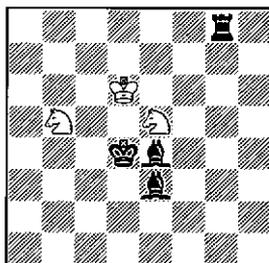
8b - 4...Rxc8 stalemate

8 (6 Pr *La Stratégie* 1912) has become a classic. 1 Ba7 threatens 2 b8Q etc, and neither 1...Rb5 nor 1...Rxc7 leads anywhere: 1...Rb5 2 Rc1 Rxb7 3 Ra1+ Kb5 4 Kxb7 Rxc7 5 Rb1+ Kc4 6 Rh1 etc, or 1...Rxc7 2 Rc1 Rg8+ 3 b8Q Rxb8+ 4 Kxb8 and even 4...Rb5+ fails to win (5 Kc7! Rb7+ 6 Kd6 Kxa7 7 Ra1+! Kb8 8 Rh1 Rb2 9 Kxd7 and draws) Hence 1...h1Q (see 8a), after which we have 2 b8Q Rb2+ (simplest) 3 Rb7 Qxb7+ 4 Qxb7+ Rxb7 5 g8Q Rxa7+ 6 Kb8 Kb5+ 7 Kc8 Ra8+, or 2 Rc6+ dxc6 3 b8Q Rb5 4 Qc8+ Ka5 and White's checks will soon be exhausted.

But White also has 2 b8N+, and now everything goes like clockwork: 2...Kb5 3 Rb7+ Ka4/Kc4 4 g8Q(+) Rxc8 and we have our front cover position (see 8b). The idle pawn on d7 is a pity, but without it 2 Rc6+ would lead to perpetual check.

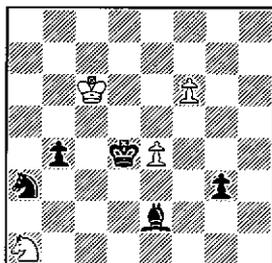


9 - win

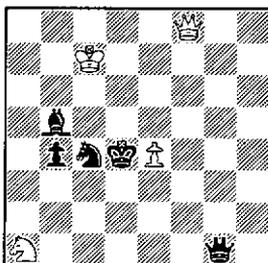


9a - 4 Nb5 mate

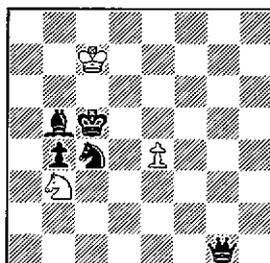
An immediate 1 g8Q in 9 (2 Pr *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* 1923) will be met by 1...Be4+ and 2...RxQ, so White plays 1 Ne5+. 1...Kb4/Kc3 allow 2 Nd5+ shielding the White king and 1...Kb3 is met by 2 g8Q+, so Black plays 1...Kd4. After 2 g8Q Be4+ he duly wins the queen, but the cost is high: 3 Kd6 Rxg8 4 Nb5 mate (see 9a).



10 - win

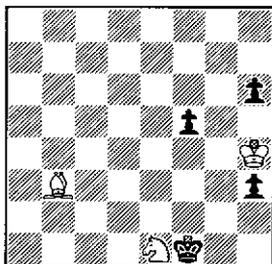


10a - after 4...g1Q

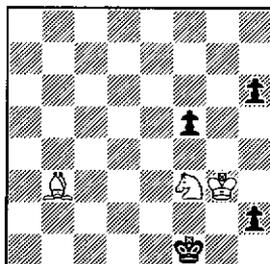


10b - 6 Nb3 mate

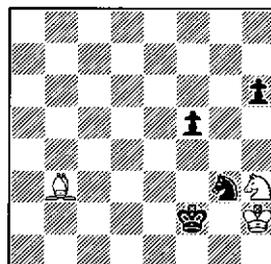
Play in 10 (4HM *Suomen Shakki* 1946) starts 1 f7, and the natural 1...g2 2 f8Q g1Q allows the skewer check 3 Qc5+. So Black chases the White king away from c5, 1...Bb5+ 2 Kb6 Ne4+ 3 Kc7, and now 3...g2 4 f8Q g1Q appears safe (see 10a). But it isn't; White plays 5 Qc5+! anyway, and if 5...Kxc5 then 6 Nb3 is mate (see 10b).



11 - win



11a - after 2 Kg3

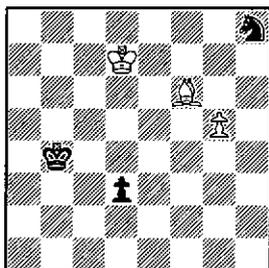


11b - after 5 Nh3+

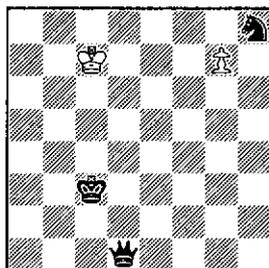
11 (*Le Monde des Échecs* 1946) shows some unexpected cut and thrust. 1 Nf3 looks to have settled matters, because if 1...Kg2 to usher the h-pawn forward then

2 Bd4 h2 3 Ng5+ Kg1 4 Nh3+ Kf1 5 Kg3 and it falls. But Black can advance at once, 1...h2, and if 2 Nxh2 then 2...Kg2 and the knight is lost. Now the pawn's promotion cannot be stopped, but White has 2 Kg3 threatening mate (see 11a). All right, 2...h1N+, but is this one of those positions where B+N win against N?

Indeed it is. 3 Kh2 puts the Black knight under pressure, since 3...Nf2 will be met by 4 Bc4+ forcing a sacrificial interposition, and the counterattack 3...Kf2 gives only temporary relief: 4 Ng1 Ng3 (now or never) 5 Nh3+ (see 11b) Kf3 6 Bd1+ Ne2 (loss of the knight is now inevitable, but this sets a last trap) 7 Ng1+ Kf2 and not 8 Nxe2?? Ke1 but 8 Bxe2.

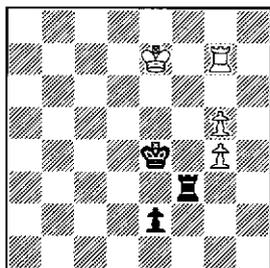


12 - draw

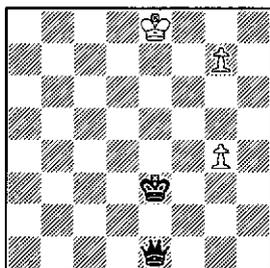


12a - after 4 Kc7

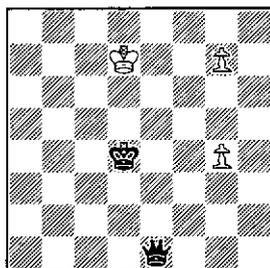
12, also from *Le Monde des Échecs* 1946, is an amusing trifle. 1 g6 threatens 2 Bg5, hence 1...d2, and Black's promotion cannot be stopped. So is 2 Bc3+ merely a spite check? No, because after 2...Kxc3 3 g7 d1Q+ we find that it has lured the Black king to an awkward square; White can play 4 Kc7! (see 12a) and the promotion of his pawn cannot be prevented.



13 - draw

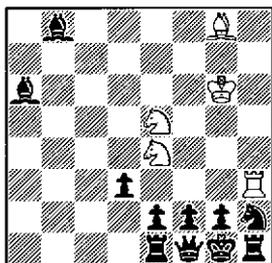


13a - after 5 g7

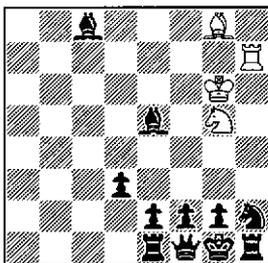


13b - after 5...Kd4+ 6 Kd7

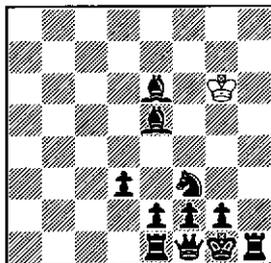
The posthumous 13, published in 1958 in *L'Échiquier de France*, is similar in spirit if rather different in detail. White needs to clear e7 for a skewer check and a move to the d-file will be met by 1...Rd3+ and 2...Rd5, hence 1 Ke8, and Black naturally blocks the line by 1...Re3. There follows 2 Re7+ Kf4 (say) 3 Rxe3 Kxe3 4 g6 e1Q 5 g7, and we have 13a. Black cannot now play to control g8 straight away, but perhaps he can discover check first... No, 5...Kd4+ 6 Kd7! and there is no further check (see 13b), or 5...Kf4+ 6 Kf7.



14 - draw

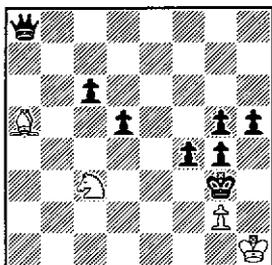


14a - after 2...Bc8

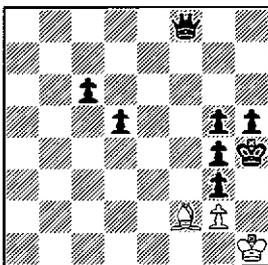


14b - 5...Nxf3 stalemate

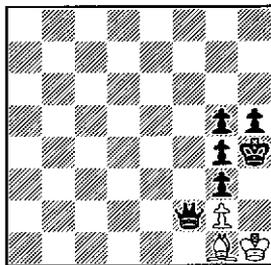
Let's finish with a couple of Lazard's more problematic studies. 14, from *Le Monde des Échecs* 1946, is an unashamed grotesque. 1 Ng5 threatens mate in two on f3, and if 1...Bb7 then 2 Re3 adds a threat on h3 and the defence is overwhelmed. Hence 1...Bxe5, and 2 Rh7 again puts a threat on h3. Black's knight must stay at h2 to guard f3, so he can only play 2...Bc8, and we have 14a. White now simply throws away his pieces, 3 Rd7 (renewing the threat on h3) Bxd7 4 Be6 Bex6 5 Nf3+ Nxf3, and it's stalemate (see 14b).



15 - draw



15a - after 4 Bf2



15b - after 7...Qf2

15 (2 Pr, de Barbieri Memorial 1947) is of heavier metal. 1 Ne4+ forces 1...Kh4 (if instead 1...dxe4 then 2 Be1 is mate), and 2 Ng3! threatens mate on f4. If the king captures, 2...Kxg3, 3 Be1 is again mate, and if 2...fxg3 then 3 Bb6 with play very like that in the main line. Black therefore tries 2...Qf8 guarding f4 (2...Qc8 leads to the same play), but White continues 3 Be1 and now 3...fxg3 is forced. White continues 4 Bf2!! and we have 15a.

4...Qxf2 now gives stalemate at once, and 4...gxf2 5 g3+ will force Black to stalemate next move. Black can temporize by 4...d4, but 5 Bxd4 simply takes it. He can temporize again by 5...c5, but 6 Bxc5 again takes it (the recapture will be stalemate). He can give check on the bottom rank, 6...Qf1+, but after 7 Bg1 he must retreat to release the stalemate. As a final throw, he can try 7...Qf2 (see 15b), but it is to no avail; 8 Bxf2 gxf2 9 g3+ and after 9...Kxg3/Kh3 it is again stalemate.

As always, my thanks to Harold van der Heijden's invaluable "Endgame study database 2000" and to the library of the British Chess Problem Society. - JDB