

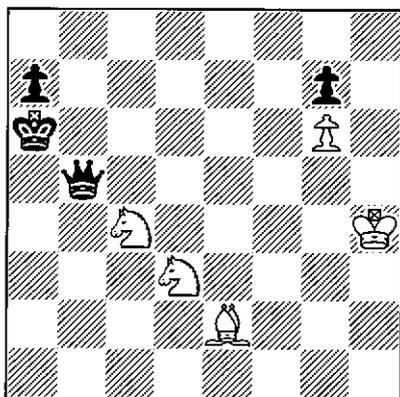
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Some more foreign studies from 1850-1913

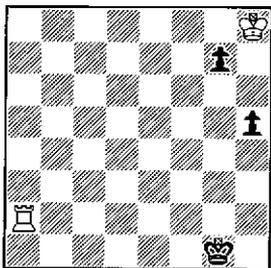


Nineteen squares, and none of them is safe

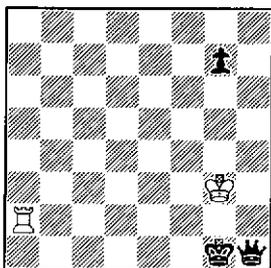
Some more foreign studies from 1850-1913

Last year, Yakov Vladimirov and Andrey Selivanov produced "The Golden Book of Chess Composition" containing 1112 problems and endgame studies from the period 1850-1913. There is commentary in Russian and English, but the latter is not always easy to follow, and it is a pity that some native-speaker assistance was not enrolled. However, this is the least of the book's weaknesses. Some Latin-script names appear to have been transliterated back from Cyrillic without checking against Latin-script sources, the presence of unsound studies and faulty notes suggests that there has been little verification of the analysis, and much of the commentary is so superficial that it would have been of little value even if properly translated.

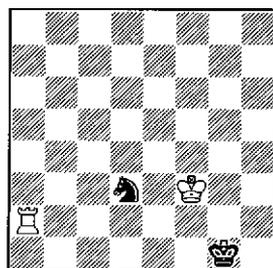
But if the presentation is unfortunate, there are some fine studies here. Some are in *Endgame Magic*, others have already appeared in *BESN*. Here are some that have not.



1 - win



1a - after 4...h1Q 5 Kg3

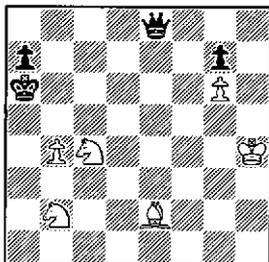


1b - 4...g5, after 8...Nd3

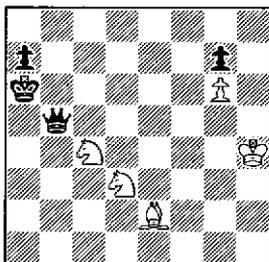
Josef Moravcc's 1 appeared in *La Stratégie* in 1912. 1 **Kh7!** (we shall see why) **h4 2 Kg6 h3 3 Kg5** (Kf5 and Kh5 also work) **h2 4 Kg4** (or Kf4), and the main line continues **4...h1Q 5 Kg3**. This gives 1a, and we see why White left the pawn on g7.

But Black does not have to make a queen. 4...h1N sets no problems (5 Kf3 g5 6 Rd2 g4+ 7 Kxg4 Nf2 8 Kf3 and the knight soon falls), but 4...g5 is harder: 5 Kg3 h1N+ 6 Kf3 g4+ 7 Kxg4 Nf2+ 8 Kf3, and with the rook still on a2 Black has 8...Nd3! (see 1b). Can he escape? No, but it can take up to eleven moves to capture the knight and we have room for little more than a specimen line: 9 Ra4 (quickest) Nc5 (9...Kh2 holds out as long) 10 Rc4 (say) Nd3 (10...Nb3/Nd7 hold out as long) 11 Rd4 Nc5 12 Rd5 Ne6 (12...Nb7/Na6/Na4/Nb3 hold out longer but are clearly hopeless) 13 Kg3 Kf1 14 Rf5+ Kg1 15 Re5. If instead 10...Ne6 then quickest is 11 Kg4 etc.

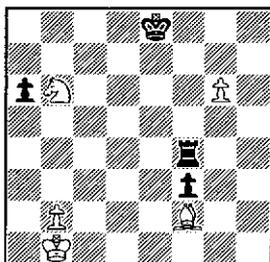
The "Golden Book" considers 4...h1N, but not 4...g5 5 Kg3 h1N+. Does this line add to the study, or detract from it? My personal opinion is that it detracts, because the length and complexity of the play distract attention from the 4...h1Q line (surely the main line because it so strikingly explains the refusal to capture on g7), but I am aware that some think differently. On the other hand, I am in complete agreement with the composer that White's alternatives at moves 3 and 4 are irrelevant. When the overall point of a study was sufficiently striking, Moravcc, perhaps more than any other composer, was unworried by minor alternatives like this.



2 - win



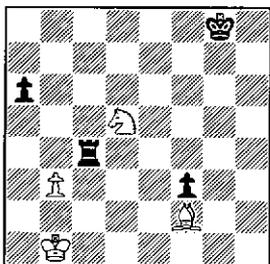
2a - after 2 Nd3



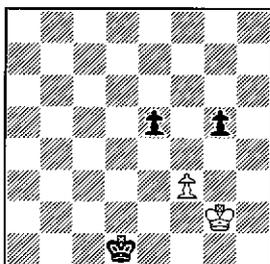
3 - win

V. and M. Platov's 2 gained an HM in *Tidskrift för Schack* in 1910. **1 b5+ Qxb5 2 Nd3!** and where is the queen to go (see 2a)? White to play could do nothing, but Black to play has to give her away within a few moves.

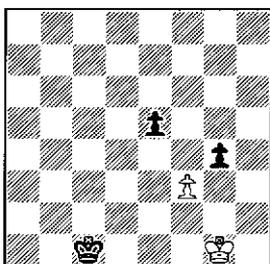
Henri Rinck's 3 took first prize in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* in 1911. **1 Nd5 Rc4** (1...Rf5 2 g7 Rg5 3 g8Q+ Rxc8 4 Nf6+, 1...Ra4 2 Bc5 f2 3 Nf6+ Kd8 4 Bxf2 and the g-pawn will promote) **2 g7 Kf7 3 g8Q+ Kxc8 4 b3** and the rook is helpless although completely unobstructed (see 3a).



3a - after 4 b3



4 - draw

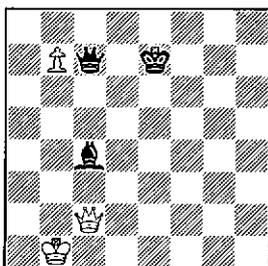


4a - 1...Kc1, after 2...g4

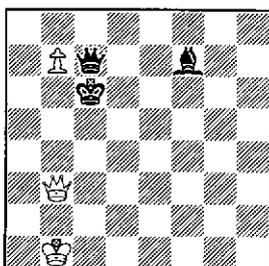
H. Neustadt's 4 (*International Chess Magazine* 1890) is a classic pawn study. We looked at it briefly in September 2000, but our treatment then was somewhat cursory and it deserves a fuller exposition.

White must claim and keep the opposition, and **1 Kf1** does the first but not the second: 1...Kd2 2 Kf2 Kd3 3 Kg3 Ke3 4 Kg2 Kc2 5 Kg3 Kf1 etc. Correct is **1 Kh1!** with say **1...Ke1 2 Kg1 Ke2 3 Kg3 Ke3 4 Kg3**, and if 4...Kd4 then simplest is 5 Kg4 though 5 Kg2/Kh2 also hold the draw. And there is a nice touch if Black tries **1...Kc1 2 Kg1 g4**, see 4a, which really deserves to be highlighted as an additional main line: **3 Kg2!** An immediate 3 fxg4 loses to 3...e4 etc, but 3 Kg2 leaves Black nothing better than **3...Kd2**, and now the capture **4 fxg4** does draw because 4...e4 no longer leads to promotion with check.

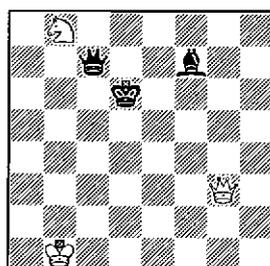
The ultimate king-to-the-corner study with this set-up is of course Artur Mandler's gem from *Prager Presse* 1929, White Kh5, Pd4/f4 (3), Black Kb7, Pe6 (2), win by **1 Kh6 Kb6 2 Kh7 Kb7 3 Kh8! Kb8 4 d5! exd5 5 f5** etc. But if Mandler added the final touch, others had prepared most of the ground.



5 - win

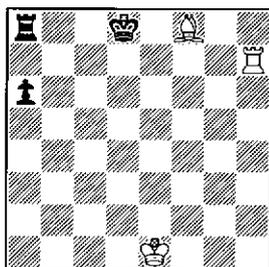


5a - after 4...Kc6

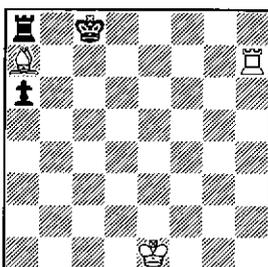


5b - after 6 Qg3+

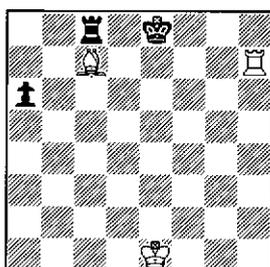
White needs to command b8 in Troitsky's 5 (*Shakhmatny zhurnal* 1901), and play goes 1 Qh7+ Bf7 (1...Kd8 2 Qh8+ and 3 b8Q, 1...Kd6 2 Qh2+ and again 3 b8Q) 2 Qh4+ Ke6 (2...Kd7 3 Qa4+ Kc6 4 Qb3+ Kd7 5 Qb5+ and 6 b8Q) 3 Qh3+ Kd5 4 Qb3+ Kc6 (see 5a) 5 b8N+! with the elegant skewer 5...Kd6 6 Qg3+ (see 5b).



6 - win

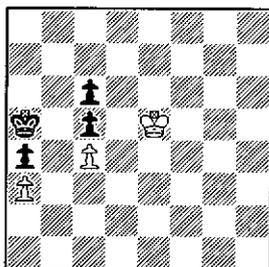


6a - 1...Kc8, after 2 Ba7

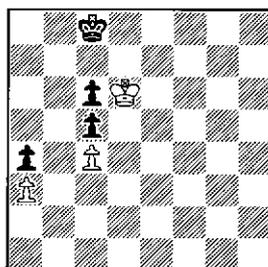


6b - 1...Rc8, after 3 Bc7

Leonid Kubbel's 6 (*Rigaer Tageblatt* 1909) doubles a Horwitz domination theme. 1 Bc5 threatens 2 Rh8+, and if 1...Kc8 then 2 Ba7 and Black will have to concede his rook as soon as his pawn moves have run out (see 6a). If instead 1...Rc8 then 2 Bb6+ Ke8 3 Bc7 with an echo (see 6b). And if 1...Rb8 then 2 Rh8+ Kc7 3 Bd6+.

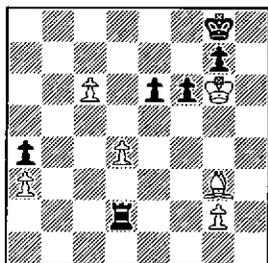


7 - win

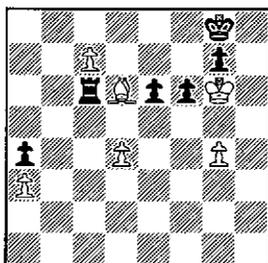


7a - after 6 Kd6

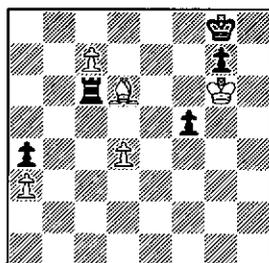
F. Sackmann's 7 (*Deutsche Arbeiter Schachzeitung* 1912) is worth having just for its first move: 1 Kf5!! But the reason is soon seen: Black will play ...Ka6 or ...Kb6,



13 - win



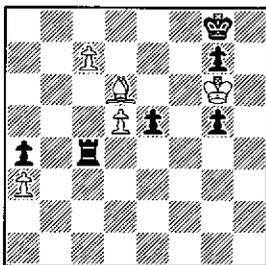
13a - after 3 g4



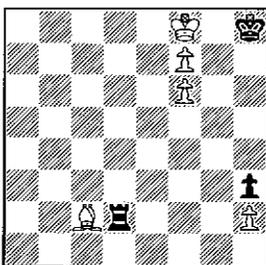
13b - 3...f5, after 4...exf5

O. Bernstein's 13 (*Shakhmaty vestnik* 1913) poses a curious problem. Play starts 1 c7 Rc2 2 Bd6 (threat 3 Bc5) Rc6 3 g4 giving 13a, and now given is 3...f5 "!" 4 gx5 exf5 (see 13b) 5 d5 "!" Rc2 6 Bc5 "!!" (6 Be5 Kf8) Rxc5 7 d6 with a win. However, my computer thinks that 5 Kxf5 Kf7 6 Ke5 Ke8 7 Ke6 g5 8 d5 Rc4 9 Be5 provides an alternative win without the sacrifice on c5, whereas if Black plays 3...e5 the sacrifice is forced. Play now continues 4 d5 Rc4 5 g5! (an essential preliminary, because if 5 Bc5 Rxc5 6 d6 at once then 6...e4! threatens mate on g5) fxg5 giving 13c, and we have the desired climax: 6 Bc5! Rxc5 7 d6. There is still work to be done, because after 7...Rc6 8 Kxg5 Kf7 9 d7 Rxc7 10 d8Q White has only Q + P v R + 3P, but the pawn on a4 soon goes and I don't think there is any doubt that the win is there.

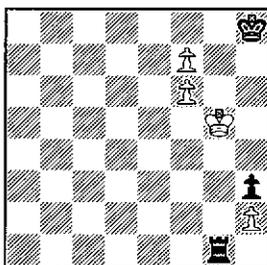
All this is most odd. I haven't seen the original source, but the "Golden Book" and Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" both give just the bare line 1 c7 Rc2 2 Bd6 Rc6 3 g4 f5 4 gx5 exf5 5 d5 Rc2 6 Bc5 Rxc5 7 d6.



13c - 3...e5, after 5...fxg5



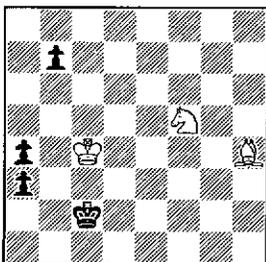
14 - win



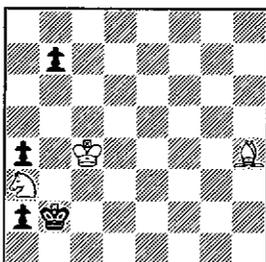
14a - after 6 Kg5 Rg1+

W. von Holzhausen's 14 appeared in *Deutsches Wochenschach* in 1905. Black threatens 1...Re2 shutting in the White king, and if White tries 1 Ke7 then 1...Rd7+ and 2...Rxf7 exploits the stalemated position of the Black king (but not 1...Re2+, when 2 Be4 Rxc4+ relieves the stalemate and White has a straightforward win).

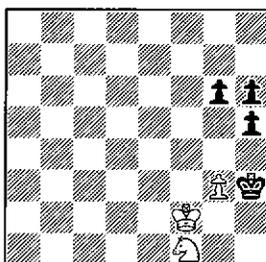
This leaves 1 Bd3 and 1 Bd1, and 1 Bd3 again allows a stalemate defence: 1...Rf2 2 Ke7 Rxf6 etc, or 2 Bf5 Re2. Hence 1 Bd1 Rxd1 (nothing better) 2 Ke7 (simplest) Re1+ 3 Kd6/Kd7 Rd1+ 4 Ke6 (White must shelter on the h-file, and if 4 Ke5 then 4...Rd8 draws) Re1+ 5 Kf5 Rf1+ 6 Kg5/Kg6 Rg1+ (see 14a) 7 Kh5! (7 Kh4 Rg8 and draws, 7 Kh6 Rg6+ and once more stalemate) Rg8 8 fxg8Q+ Kxg8 9 Kg6 and wins.



15 - win



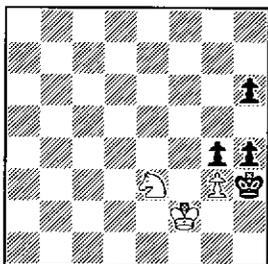
15a - after 3...Kb2



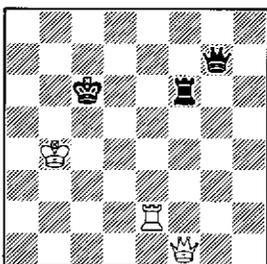
16 - win

We finish with three lightweight Troitsky studies. 15 and 16 are two of his "one minor piece" wins. Play in 15 (*Novoye vremya* 1897) starts **1 Nd4+ Kb1** (other moves allow **2 Nb5** and **3 Bf6** gaining control of a1) **2 Nb5 a2 3 Na3+ Kb2** (see 15a), and we have the key moment: **4 Bf6+! Kxa3 5 Ba1! b5+** (5...b6 loses more quickly) **6 Kc3 b4+ 7 Kc2/Kc4 b3(+)** **8 Kc3 b2 9 Bxb2 mate**.

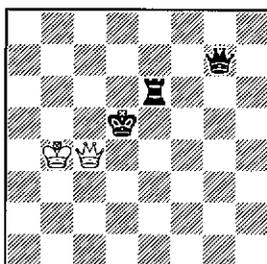
In 16 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1906), Black must force off White's pawn if he is not to suffer a slow death, and after **1 Ne3 g5 2 Kf3 g4+ 3 Kf2 h4** it looks as if he has succeeded (see 16a). Indeed he has, but White has **4 Ng2!** and Black finds that the capture of the apparently crucial pawn has availed him nothing: **4...hxg3+ 5 Kg1 h5 6 Kh1 h4 7 Nf4 mate**.



16a - after 3...h4



17 - win



17a - after 3 Qc4+

17 (*Shakhmatny zhurnal* 1898) is a one-move spectacular: **1 Re6+!** But after **1...Rxe6 2 Qa6+** all becomes clear: **2...Kd5 3 Qc4+** (see 17a) **Kd6** (**3...Ke5 4 Qc3+**) **4 Qc5+ Kd7 5 Qa7+**. Black's extra rook is not only useless, it turns out to cost him his queen.

So despite the defects of its presentation, the "Golden Book" has reminded me of several good things. It also contains some classic problems, for those whose tastes lie in that direction, though the superficiality of the commentary is even more to be regretted there than it is in relation to the studies.

As always, my thanks to Harold van der Heijden's invaluable "Endgame study database III" and to the BCPS Library. - JDB