

British Endgame Study News

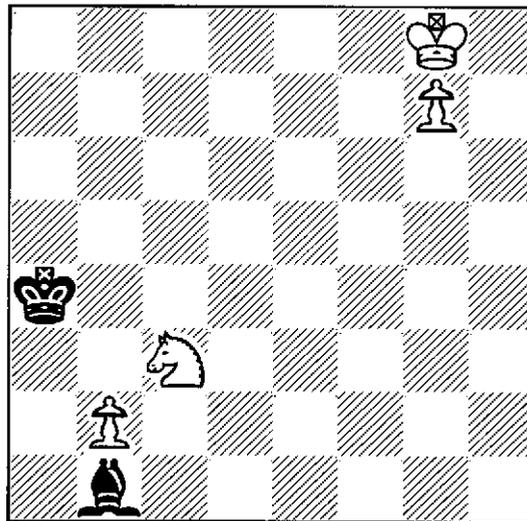
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Gleanings from Europe



White to play and win - a team effort!

Strip cartoon *by Wouter Mees*

Some studies by Paul Heuäcker

Strip cartoon

by Wouter Mees

One of our regular features in British Endgame Study News is an article in which a composer describes the story behind one of his compositions. Here we have a story of a different kind. One of the activities at meetings of the Dutch study organization ARVES is a competition in which groups of composers get together to produce studies to a set theme, and the present article, from the December 1995 issue of the Dutch study magazine EBUR, describes the activities of one such group (Jaap de Boer, Ton van Oosterhout, Ed van den Gevel, and Wouter Mees himself). Our thanks to Wouter and to ARVES for allowing us to reproduce it, and to David Friedgood for assisting with translation. Omitted from the present version are two introductory paragraphs in which Wouter links his article to other material in EBUR and explains his title. He has presented it in strip cartoon style, to me very attractive: "a series of diagrams showing the positions which appeared on the board during the session, where necessary completed and retouched, and lightly annotated." - JDB.

A theme was stipulated: "Delaying promotion"; this can be approached in various ways. An idea, this is always the first step in composing. For this reason, I wonder whether Jaap van den Herik is right when he says (in the October 1995 issue of *Schakend Nederland*): "The time is not far off when computers will be composing studies." Computers don't have ideas, nor do they have the will to compose.

OK then, "delaying promotion." What motivation could white (or black) have to refrain from the immediate promotion of a pawn?

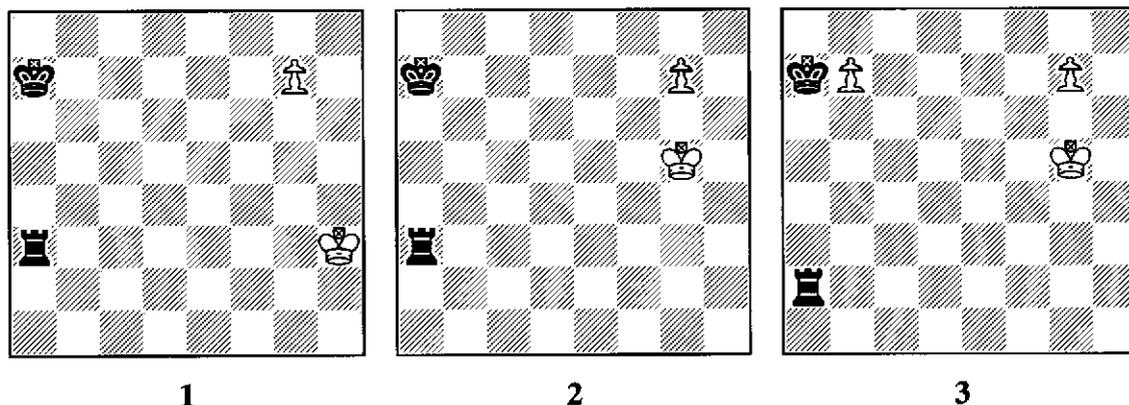
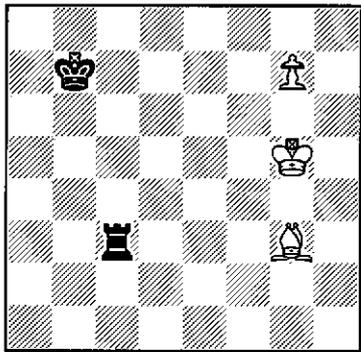


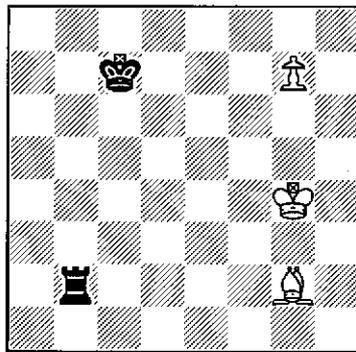
Diagram 1 - We soon agreed that the "delay" had to be unforced, and there could be no talk of this with the WK in check. White wins by **1 Kg(h)2**, and the ensuing well-known King-march down the f-file to f7. Above all, not **1 Kg(h)4**?

Diagram 2 - In this instance we can certainly talk of delay. At any rate as far as the first move is concerned: **1 Kf4!** (1...Ra4+ 2 Kf5 Ra5+ 3 Kf6 Ra6+ 4 Kf7).

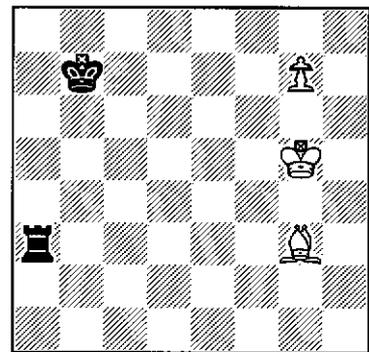
Diagram 3 - Exploring further. Here the WK is unable to rescue himself from the BR. But by **1 b8Q+** (1...Kxb8) the BK is decoyed to the back rank, so that **2 g8Q+** can occur with gain of tempo. Not particularly subtle!



4



5

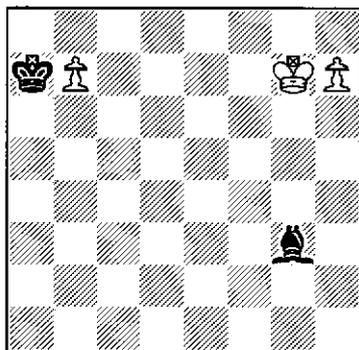


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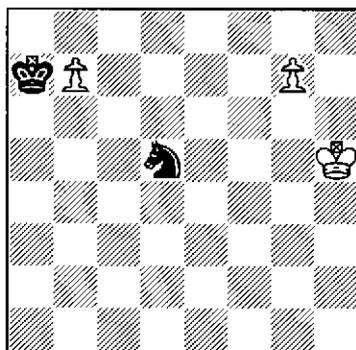
Diagram 4 - One of our major objectives, naturally, was to make the delay longer than one move. This seemed to be impossible without extra material. White cannot permit 1...Rc8 and tries **1 Bc7** (1...Rxc7 2 g8Q, 1...Kxc7 2 Kf4). But after 1...Rc1! there is no win: 2 Kh4? Kxc7 3 g8Q Rh1+ and 4...Rg1+. Note that 1 Bd6 is insufficient (1...Rc8 2 Bf8 Rc1!).

Diagram 5 - This is how we had to shift things around. The BR gets less space in the nether regions: above all, the BK must move house in order to afford the WK a safe haven on f7: **1 Bb7 Rb1 2 Kg3 Rb3+ 3 Kf4** and on to f7!

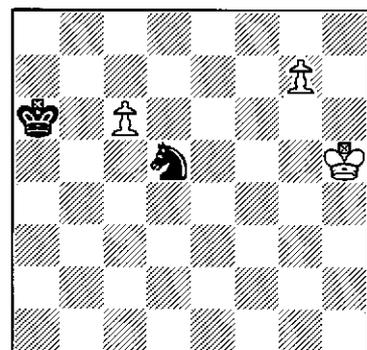
Diagram 6 - Another possibility, noticed after the event: **1 Bb8! Kxb8 2 g8Q+**, prettier than Diagram 3 and with 1...Ra1 2 Kg4 Ra4+ etc and 2...Rg1+ 3 Bg3. Where have we seen this before?



7



8

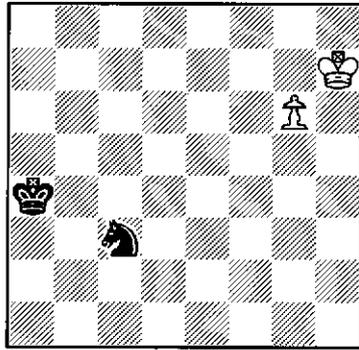


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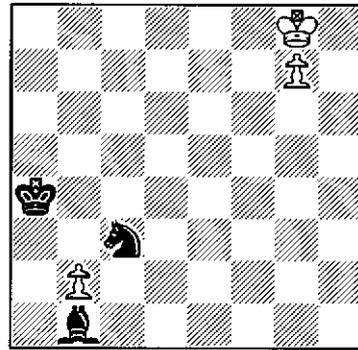
Diagram 7 - However, we decided to try for something like Diagram 3 with different material. The replacement of BR by BB appeared to offer few prospects. This position, like 6, was set up after the event, to demonstrate that the move order **1 Kf6, 2 b8Q+** and **3 h8Q+** could be forced. Because...:

Diagram 8 - Here both **1 b8Q+** and **1 Kg6 Ne7+ 2 Kf7 Nf5 3 b8Q+** succeed.

Diagram 9 - An attempt to "do something about it" made the situation even worse. Not only does **1 c7** work (1...Kb7 2 c8Q+ or Kg6), but so does **1 Kg6 Ne7+ 2 Kf7 Nf5 3 c7**; and on top of all this there is a monster of a dual: (3 c7) **Nh6+ 4 Kg6** etc, or **4 Ke6(7) Kb7 5 Kd7**; a hint of "Réti", this. It appealed to us very much, but we doubted whether we could find a sound setting: we would have had to put all our eggs into one basket. (Continued overleaf...)



10



11 - win

Diagram 10 - Shifting the WK to h7 allowed us to dispense with the c-pawn, much to our surprise. After 1 g7 Nd5 white wins with 2 Kg8! (threatening 3 Kf7) Ne7+ 3 Kf8! or 2...Nf6+ 3 Kf7 (3...Ng4 4 Kg6). Where have we seen this before?? Worry about that later!

Diagram 11 - A simple introduction: 1 b3+ (against 1...Ba2) Kb4 2 Kh8 Bh7 3 Kxh7 Nd5 4 Kg8 etc. And that, as far as I was concerned, was the end of the story.

Some observations:

a) A strip cartoon is usually presented in the form of a serial: "To be continued". The other teams from the meeting will be able to take care of this.

b) It is apparent that the theme offers a lot of scope - the other teams found the same - but it is also clear that a great deal, a very great deal, has already been discovered. In connection with Diagram 5 I have found a study by Mattison, with Diagram 9 a study by Benkő, and with Diagram 11 a pair of articles by Harold van der Heijden in *EBUR* (1993, numbers 2 & 3: "Anti-Anticipatie"). There is sufficient material here for a survey article.

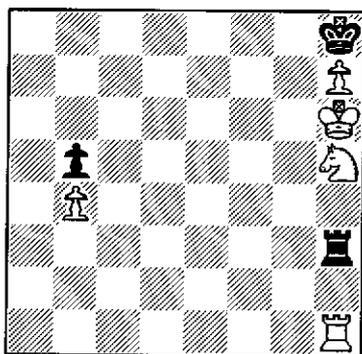
c) So there is nothing new under the sun. But those starting composition must not let themselves be discouraged by this. Indeed, they are on the right track, "...because the development of the player runs parallel with that of the game of chess itself" (Dr Max Euwe, *Practical chess lessons*, Introduction to Part IV).

Yes, a lot has indeed been discovered along these lines, and a session of a couple of hours, however talented the group, was never going to achieve more than a neat but relatively simple rendering of the theme. The Benkő escapes me, but the Mattison is in both Test tube chess and Endgame magic, and Harold van der Heijden's articles quote "king in front of pawn" manoeuvres from a 1984 game Szabó - Grószpéter and studies by Rinck, Grin, Asaba, Brieger, and Kalyagin - Kirillov - Selivanov.

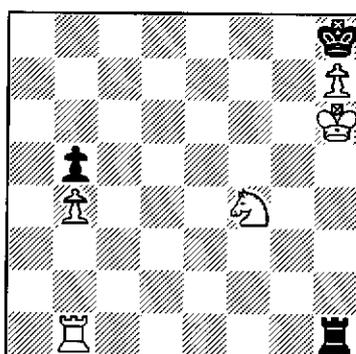
On a more general issue, I whole-heartedly endorse Wouter's advice to beginners not to be discouraged by the risk of anticipation. Not every editor takes this view, but I personally tell composers to worry about quality first and anticipation second. It may be galling to spend time perfecting a setting only to discover that someone else has got there first, but this risk is present anyway and a fresh mind sometimes finds a little twist or improvement that previous workers have overlooked. A good composition always has a chance of being valuable; a bad one has none, whether it is anticipated or not.

Some studies by Paul Heuäcker

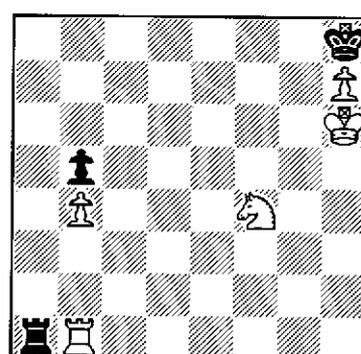
Endgame magic includes two studies by the German composer Paul Heuäcker (1899-1969). I showed more on July 12, and they were enjoyed; let me repeat them here.



1 - win

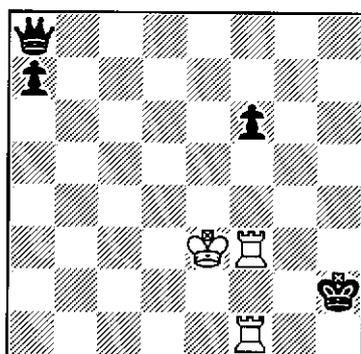


1a - 1 Re1, after 3...Rh1+

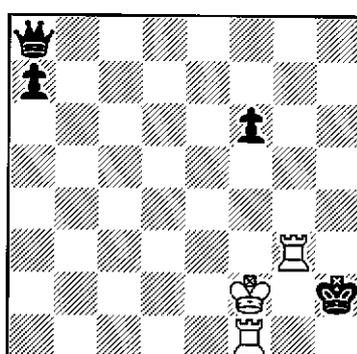


1b - main line, after 3 Nf4

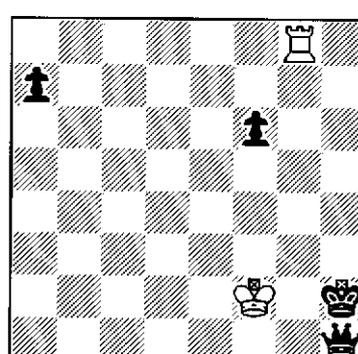
White has a winning material advantage in 1 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1927) but bK is stalemated and Black is trying to sacrifice bR. Try for example 1 Re1 Re3 2 Nf4 threatening mate; Black can play 2...Re6+, when a capture gives stalemate and a wK move relaxes the mate threat and allows 3...Rxe1. Try 1 Rb1, since after 1...Rb3 2 Nf4 the check 2...Rb6+ will not be available; no good, Black can play 1...Rh1 with perpetual rook opposition (2 Rb2 Rh2 3 Rb3 Rh3 etc). All right, try 1 Re1 Re3 2 Rb1, since 2...Re1 can now be met by 3 Nf4; still no good, Black has 3...Rh1+ (see 1a) and will capture wR next move. The line that works is **1 Ra1 Ra3 2 Rb1**. 2...Ra6+ is met by 3 Kg5, so Black must play **2...Ra1**, and now **3 Nf4** does win (see 1b) since 3...Rh1+ is no longer available. It is an excellent logical study.



2 - win

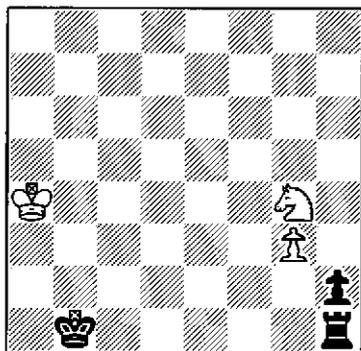


2a - after 5 Rf2

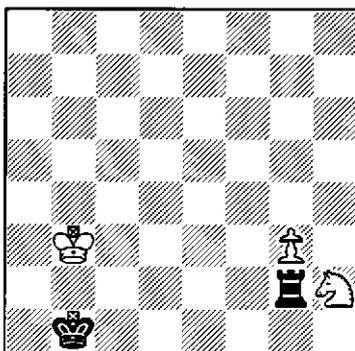


2b - threat, after 7 Rg8

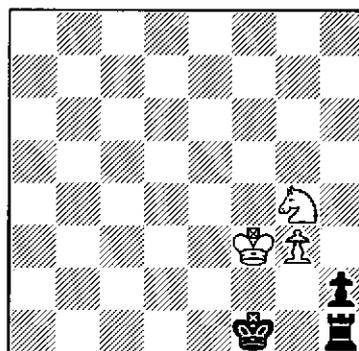
An immediate 1 Kf2 leads nowhere in 2 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1953). It may threaten 2 Rh1+ Kxh1 3 Rh3 mate, but Black can simply defend h3. Better is **1 Rf2+ Kh1** (if 1...Kg1 then 2 Rg3+ at once) **2 Rh3+ Kg1 3 Rg3+ Kh1 4 Rf1+ Kh2 5 Kf2** (see 2a). The threat is now **6 Rh1+ Qxh1 7 Rg8** (see 2b), the diagonal a1-h8 being blocked by bPf6, and if Black plays 5...f5 to free this diagonal we have **6 Rh1+ Qxh1 7 Rg7** instead. If bQ ceases to guard g2 we have mate by 6 Rg2+ and 7 Rh1.



3 - draw



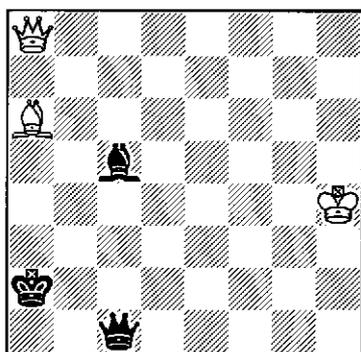
3a - 1 Kb3, after 2...Rg2



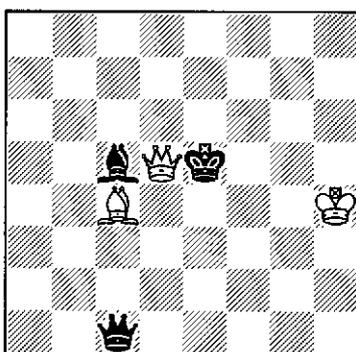
3b - main line, after 5 Kf3

In 3 (*Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, 1938), Black would like to bring bK across to the right-hand side and wK must hold him off, but the third rank is poisoned: 1 Kb3 Rg1 2 Nxh2 Rg2 (see 3a) 3 Nf1 Rf2 4 Ne3 Rf3 and wN falls. 1 Kb4 also fails, but for a different reason: 1...Kb2, putting White in zugzwang. The wK cannot venture on to the a- or c-file without allowing bR to quit h1 with check, so 2 Kb5 is his only safe move, and after 2...Kb3 3-5 Kb8 Kb6 he has no safe move at all.

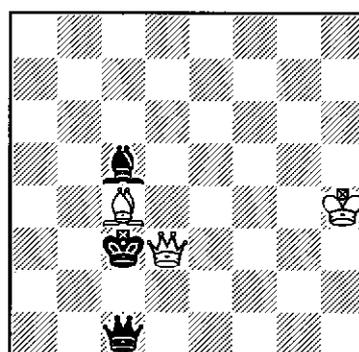
All this leaves only 1 Kb5, and now White can indeed hold bK at bay. Black can try 1...Kc1 hoping for 2 Kc4, after which 2...Kc2 will again put White in zugzwang, but White has 2 Kc5. Now 2...Kd1 will allow 3 Nf2+ forking bK and bR, so bK must come to the second rank, 2...Kd2, and at last wK can close in: 3 Kd4. There follows 3...Ke2 4 Ke4 Kf1 5 Kf3 (see 3b), and if Black tries 5...Kg1 he is stalemated by 6 Ne3; so he must retreat, 5...Ke1, and 6 Ke3 rounds off the draw.



4 - win

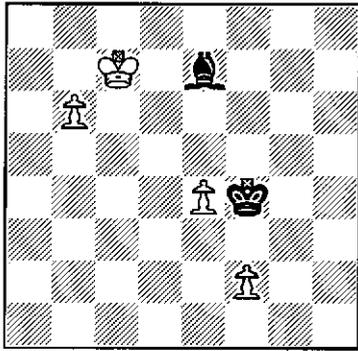


4a - after 5 Qd5+

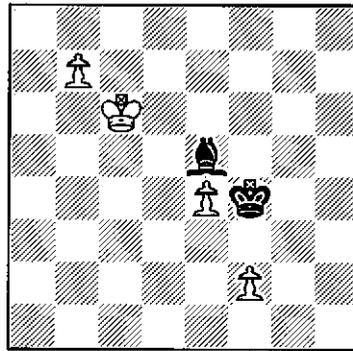


4b - after 9 Qd3+

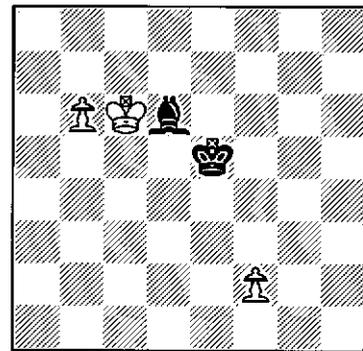
Studies with queen and bishop against queen tend to be too deep for popular appeal, but 4 (*Deutsche Schachblätter*, 1939) is more amusing than most. We have a simple start, 1 Bc4+ Kb2 2 Qa2+ Kc3 3 Qb3+, and now 3...Kd2 allows mate in two (4 Qd3+ and 5 Qe2). Black plays 3...Kd4, therefore, but after 4 Qd3+ Ke5 5 Qd5+ (see 4a) he finds that 5...Kf4 will lose bQ (6 Qg5+). So he tries 5...Kf6, and now 6 Qf7+ starts driving him back again. 6...Ke5 is forced, and there follows 7 Qe6+ Kd4 (6...Kf4 7 Qh6+) 8 Qd5+ Kc3 (7...Ke3 8 Qg5+) 9 Qd3+. This has given 4b, and Black is near his end: he can succumb to mate by 9...Kb4 10 Qb3+ Ka5 11 Qb5 or by 9...Kb2 10 Qb3+ Ka1 11 Qa2. We may note that wK, although apparently so distant from the action, has played a crucial role in the play.



5 - win



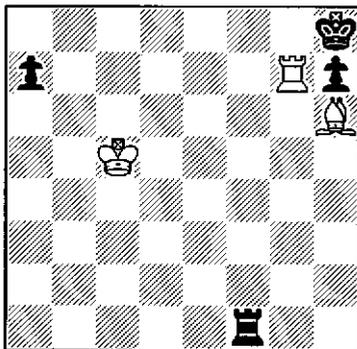
5a - 1 b7, after 2...Be5



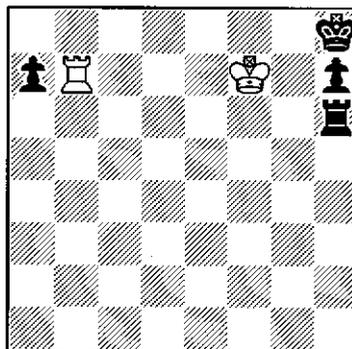
5b - main line, after 2...Bd6

The obvious move in 5 (*Deutsche Schachblätter*, 1939) is 1 b7, but it fails against 1...Bf6 2 Kc6 Be5 with an effective blockade (see 5a). What is surprising is that 1 e5 works. The reason is that bBd6 guarded by bK is a less reliable defensive formation than bBe5 guarded by bK, because the White f-pawn can be brought into play: 1...Kxe5 2 Kc6 (2 Kd7 Bc5 3 b7 Ba7, 2 b7 Bd6+) Bd6 (see 5b - Black can also try 2...Ke6, but 3 f4 Bd6 leads to the same position) 3 f4+ Ke6 4 f5+ Ke5/Ke7 5 f6(+) Ke6 6 f7 and the defenders are overloaded (6...Ke7 7 f8Q+ Kxf8 8 Kxd6).

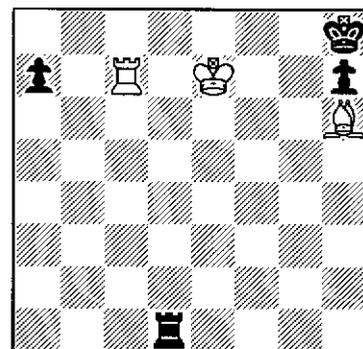
It seems to me that pawns against pieces still provide a fertile field for the composition of natural and attractive studies. In expert hands, there is considerable scope for apparently pointless but in fact crucially disruptive sacrifices, and the fewer the men on the board the greater is the effect of any sacrifice that may be made.



6 - win

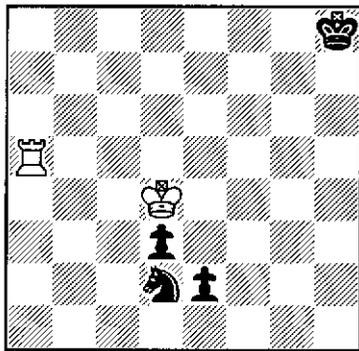


6a - 1 Rb7, after 4 Kf7

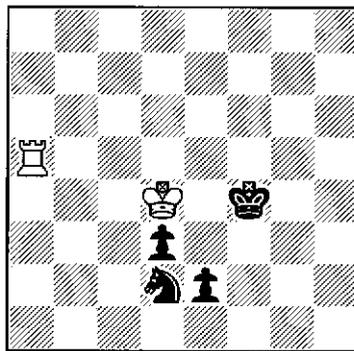


6b - see text

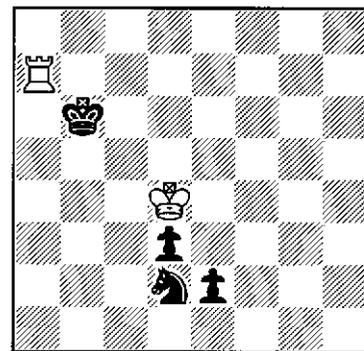
The natural move in 6 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1957) is 1 Rxa7 threatening mate on a8, and if 1...Kg8 then 2 Ra8+ Kf7 3 Rf8+ winning bR. But Black can play 1...Rf5+, and if 2 Kd4 then 2...Kg8 (3 Ra8+ Kf7 4 Rf8 Kg6 and bR is defended, or 3 Ke4 Rf6 attacking wB). So White must try 2 Kd6, ready to meet 2...Kg8 by 3 Ke6 and 2...Rf6+ 3 Ke7 Rxf6 by 4 Kf7, but Black has 3...Rf7+ and stalemate. All right, try 1 Rb7, leaving the a-pawn on the board; but after 1...Rf5+ 2 Kd6 Rf6+ 3 Ke7 Rxf6 4 Kf7 (see 6a) Black has 4...Rb6. The right move is 1 Kc7, and now everything works: 1...Rf5+ 2 Kd6 Rf6+ 3 Ke7 Rxf6 4 Kf7 and mate. And there is more; Black can play 1...Rg1, leading to 2 Kd6 Rg8 3 Ke7 a5 4 Kf7 a4 5 Rc8, or 2...Kg8 3 Rc8+ Kf7 4 Rf8+ Kg6 5 Rg8+, or 2...Rd1+ 3 Ke7 (see 6b) Re1+ 4 Kf8 Rf1+ 5 Rf7. This is why White cannot play 1 Kd7: if wR is on d7 in 6b, Black can capture it.



7 - draw

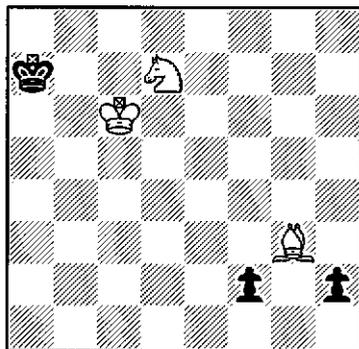


7a - after ...Kf4

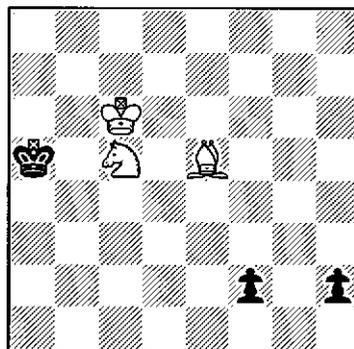


7b - after ...Kb6

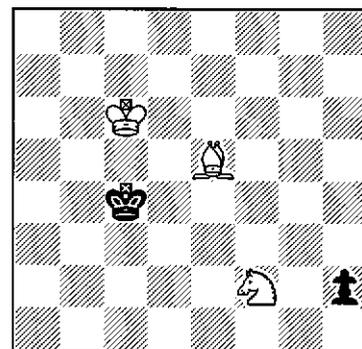
7 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1956) is another of Heuäcker's logical studies, and perhaps the finest of all. If White tries 1 Ra1, the answer is not 1...Nb3+ (2 Kxd3 Nxa1 3 Kxe2) but 1...Nb1, since 2 Rxb1 can be met by 2...d2 with a win for Black. Similarly, if White tries 1 Re5, the answer is not 1...Nf3+ but 1...Ne4 (2 Rxe4 d2). What else is there? Well, White can start checking: 1 Ra8+ Kg7 2 Ra7+ Kf6 3 Ra6+. Black can escape from these checks by coming down to the fourth rank, say 3...Kf5 4 Ra5+ Kf4 (see 7a), but this exposes him to check from e4 and White can take advantage by playing 5 Re5. Now 5...Ne4 can be met by 6 Rxe4+ and Black will actually lose, so he must settle for the draw by 5...Nf3+. Alternatively, Black can escape from the checks by coming across to the b-file, say 3...Ke7 4 Ra7+ Kd6 5 Ra6+ Kc7 6 Ra7+ Kb6 (see 7b), but this exposes him to check from b1 and White can take advantage by playing 7 Ra1 (7...Nb1 8 Rxb1+ etc).



8 - win



8a - after 3 Be5



8b - after 4...Kc4 5 Nxf2

8 provides a charming trifle with which to finish. It appeared in 1961 in *Schachdelikatessen*, which I take to be a celebratory booklet of some kind. How are we going to catch those pawns? 1 Bb8+ Ka6 (1...Ka8 2 Kc7 and mate next move) 2 Nc5+ Ka5 3 Be5 (threatening mate by 4 Bc3, see 8a) Kb4 (essential, but it allows a fork) 4 Nd3+ K-- 5 Nxf2 and the job is done (see 8b). The knight is not always as short-legged as it might seem.

All these studies are in the book *Phantasie im Endspiel* by Gerald Braunberger, which I recently bought from Barrie Ellen (262 London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 7JG, telephone 01702-338763) for around £8.50 including postage. If he has any more in stock, it would be well worth obtaining one.