

## The American Legend

Paul Charles Morphy (22 June 1837 – 10 July 1884) was born in New Orleans, in the state of Louisiana. His father came from a distinguished Creole family of Spanish and Irish extraction, while his mother was French. In Paul's family, chess was played by all the men: his grandfather, father, elder brother and his Uncle Ernest, one of the strongest players in the town. After learning to play chess at the age of ten, already when he was twelve he inflicted a spectacular defeat on the local maestro Russo (this was Morphy's first published game), and soon he also defeated Löwenthal, who was on a tour across the southern states of the USA.

Paul was a real child prodigy: he astonished his family with his memory and with his quick grasp of everything. His play was distinguished by its inventiveness, precise calculation and the methodical implementation of his plans. And most important, gradually the young Morphy became the most erudite player of his time. Fluent in French, English, Spanish and German, he read Philidor's *L'analyse*, the Parisian magazine *La Régence*, Staunton's *Chess Player's Chronicle*, and possibly also Anderssen's *Deutsche Schachzeitung* (at least, he knew all of Anderssen's published games). He studied Bilguer's 400-page *Handbuch* – which consisted entirely of opening analyses in tabular form, and also Staunton's *Chess Player's Handbook*. 'These books,' considers Fischer, 'are better than modern ones; there has been no significant improvement since then in King Pawn openings, and Morphy's natural talents would be more than sufficient for him to vanquish the best twentieth century players.'

(Fischer is eccentric always and in everything, including his opinions. In the 1960s the theory of the open games may indeed 'not have advanced' yet, but by the start of the 21st century it had undergone revolutionary changes!)

After shining at college, in two years Paul completed the entire course at Louisiana Uni-

versity and at the age of 20 he became a qualified lawyer. But since in the USA it was possible to work in this field only from the age of 21, for the moment he decided to devote himself entirely to his favourite game – seeing as the chess boom reigning after the first international tournament in London had also reached the New World. In the autumn of 1857 the first American Chess Congress took place, attracting the 16 best players in the country. Like the London tournament, it was held on the knockout system: mini-matches of the first to win three games, and in the final – five.

Morphy easily reached the final (9 wins and one draw!), where he crushed (+5 -1 =2) the well-known German master Louis Paulsen, who was then living in the USA. Moreover, he played quickly, as usual, whereas his opponent played very slowly, and since the time for thinking was not restricted, the games lasted 10-11 hours, and the drawn second game as long as 15 hours (out of which Paulsen thought for 12!). The most famous game of the match is the sixth.

### Game 6

#### L. Paulsen-P. Morphy

First American Congress, New York 1857

*Four Knights Game C48*

**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙b5 ♙c5**

Much quieter is 4...♙b4, while the Marshall-Rubinstein move 4...♘d4 was still half a century away.

**5 0-0**

If 5 ♘xe5 it is considered quite safe to reply 5...♘xe5 (but not 5...♙xf2+?! 6 ♙xf2 ♘xe5 7 d4) 6 d4 ♙d6 (after 6...♙b4 7 dxe5 ♘xe4 8 ♗d4! Black fails to equalise) 7 f4 (7 dxe5 ♙xe5 is equal) 7...♘c6 (inferior is 7...♘g6?! 8 e5 Janowski-Lasker, Cambridge Springs 1904) 8 e5 ♙b4 9 d5 (9 exf6 ♗xf6 is equal) 9...♘e4! 10 ♗d3 ♘xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♙e7.

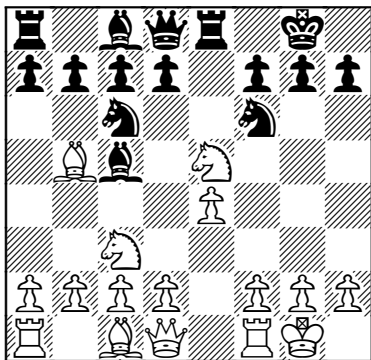
**5...0-0**

Morphy sacrifices a pawn. If 5...d6, then 6

d4 exd4 7 ♖xd4 ♕d7 8 ♗f5! (Paulsen-Zukertort, Leipzig 1877).

**6 ♗xe5 ♜e8?!**

For the pioneers it is always difficult. Later both 6...♕d4?! (Schlechter) and 6...♗d4?! (Marshall) were tried, but the main variation became 6...♗xe5 7 d4 ♕d6 8 f4 (8 dxe5 ♕xe5 is level, as in Paulsen-Winawer, Baden-Baden 1870) 8...♗c6 9 e5 ♕e7! (9...a6 10 ♕e2 Short-Adams, England 1991; after 9...♕b4 10 d5 it is no longer possible to play 10...♗e4, and 10...a6 11 ♕e2 ♕c5+ 12 ♖h1 ♗xd5 13 ♗xd5 d6 nevertheless favours White) 10 d5 (10 exf6 ♕xf6 is equal) 10...♗b4 (10...♕c5+ 11 ♖h1 ♗d4 12 exf6 ♗xf6 13 ♗e4 ♗e7 14 ♕d3 ♕b6 15 f5 with an attack, Paulsen-Anderssen, Leipzig 1877) 11 exf6 (11 d6!? cxd6 12 exf6) 11...♕xf6 12 a3 (12 ♗e4!?) 12...♕xc3 13 bxc3 ♗xd5 14 ♗xd5 c6 15 ♗d3 cxb5 16 f5 with a slight initiative.



**7 ♗xc6?!**

7 ♗f3! gives an advantage, for example: 7...♗xe4 8 d4 (8 ♗xe4 ♜xe4 9 d3 ♜e8 10 d4 is also good) 8...♗xc3 9 bxc3 ♕f8 (9...Be7?! 10 d5 ♗b8 11 ♕f4 Maróczy-Pillsbury, Nuremberg 1896) 10 d5 ♗e5 11 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 12 ♕f4 ♜e8 13 ♗f3 c6 14 ♕d3 or 7...♗d4 8 e5 ♗xf3+ 9 gxf3! (Teichmann-Rubinstein, San Sebastian 1912).

**7...dxc6 8 ♕c4 b5** (but not immediately 8...♗xe4? in view of 9 ♗xe4 ♜xe4 10 ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 11 ♗f3+) **9 ♕e2**

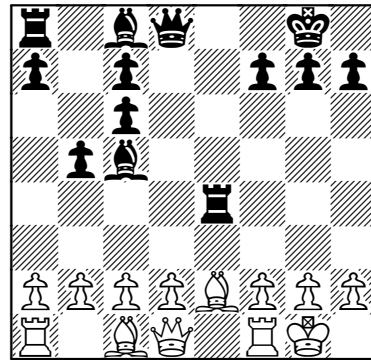
9 ♕b3?! ♕g4 10 ♗e1 b4 11 ♗d1 ♜xe4 12

♗e3 is hardly advantageous to White.

**9...♗xe4 10 ♗xe4**

Of course, not 10 ♕f3? ♗xf2! 11 ♜xf2 ♗d4 12 ♗e4 (12 ♗f1? ♗xf2+! 13 ♗xf2 ♜e1 mate) 12...♜xe4! and wins.

**10...♜xe4**

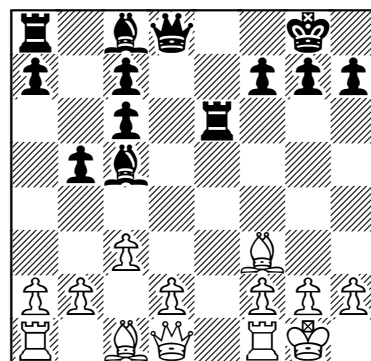


**11 ♕f3**

According to Steinitz, 11 c3 is better, when 11...♗h4 is acceptable, for example: 12 d4 ♕d6 13 g3 ♗h3 (threatening ...♜h4) 14 f4 ♕d7 15 ♕f3 ♜e7 (and ...♜ae8), or 12 g3 ♗e7! (inferior is 12...♗h3 13 d3! ♜e8 14 ♕f3 ♕d7 15 a4) 13 ♕f3 ♕h3 14 d4 ♕xf1 15 ♕xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♗xf1 ♕d6 with a comfortable game.

**11...♜e6 12 c3?**

A simply hideous move: who would think of allowing the queen in at d3? Especially since 12 d3 retains a normal position.



**12...♗d3!**

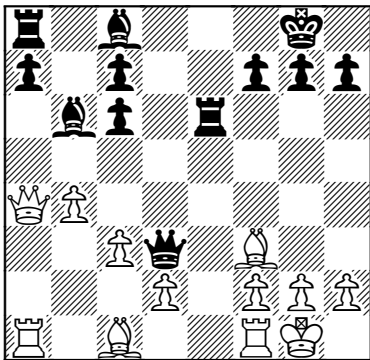
Of course: the queen completely paralyzes

White's position.

**13 b4?!**

This is also dubious. 13 ♖e1 ♜xe1+ 14 ♜xe1 looks better, although after 14...♙f5! (14...♙d7 15 ♜f1) 15 ♙xc6 (15 ♜e2 ♜d8!) 15...♜d8 16 ♜e5 ♜c2! (16...♙d6? 17 ♜xb5 ♜c2 18 ♜a4) 17 ♙f3 ♙d6 18 ♜xb5 ♙d3 19 ♜c6 ♙f8! Black still has the advantage.

**13...♙b6 14 a4 bxa4 15 ♜xa4**



**15...♙d7?**

A mistake in reply. Black could have won by 15...♙b7! (maintaining control of a6) 16 ♜a2 ♜ae8 17 ♜d1 ♙a6! 18 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 19 d4 ♜c4 20 ♙d2 a5.

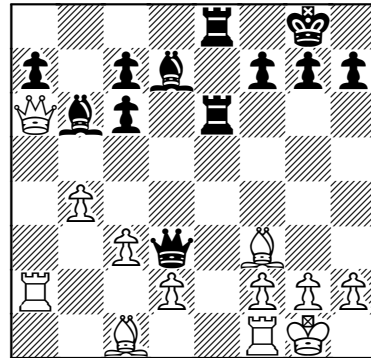
**16 ♜a2?**

A fatal error. The queen should have been dislodged from d3 by 16 ♜a6!, when the advantage could have passed to White: 16...♜xa6?! 17 ♜xa6 ♜ae8 18 ♙g4 (but not 18 d4? c5! 19 bxc5 ♙b5) 18...♙c8 (18...♜6e7?! 19 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 20 d4) 19 ♜a1 ♜f6 20 ♙xc8 ♜xc8 21 d4, or 16...♜f5 (inferior is 16...♜g6?! 17 d4 ♜ae8 18 ♙f4) 17 d4 ♜ae8 18 ♙e3 c5 19 bxc5 ♙xc5 20 ♜b7 (not 20 ♜a5? ♜g6 21 ♙h1 ♜xf3 22 gxf3 ♙c6 and wins; whereas 20 ♜e2 ♙b6 21 ♙g4 ♜xe3 22 ♙xf5 ♜xe2 23 ♙xd7 is level) 20...♙b6 21 c4. Instead of winning, Black would have had to defend...

**16...♜ae8** (with the threat of ...♜xf1+) **17 ♜a6**

Also hopeless is 17 ♜d1 c5 (17...♜e5?! Neishtadt) 18 bxc5 ♙xc5 19 ♙a3 (19 ♙g4 f5) 19...♙xa3 20 ♜xa3 ♙b5. Paulsen found the

correct idea after all, but for some reason a move later. At that time tempo play was still unusual!



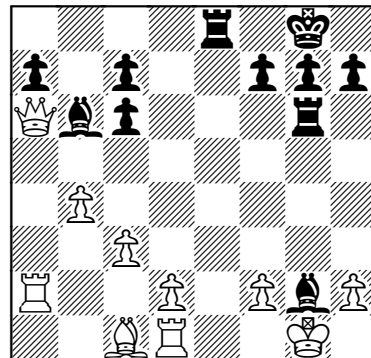
**17...♜xf3!!**

A very pretty refutation.

**18 gxf3 ♜g6+ 19 ♙h1 ♙h3 20 ♜d1**

Or 20 ♜d3 (20 ♜g1? ♜xg1+ 21 ♙xg1 ♜e1+) 20...f5! 21 ♜d1 (21 ♜c4+ ♙f8!) 21...♙g2+ 22 ♙g1 ♙xf3+ 23 ♙f1 ♙xd1 and wins.

**20...♙g2+ 21 ♙g1 ♙xf3+ 22 ♙f1 ♙g2+** (the 'quiet' 22...♜g2! would have won more quickly: 23 ♜d3 ♜xf2+ 24 ♙g1 ♜g2+ 25 ♙h1 ♜g1 mate – Zukertort) **23 ♙g1**



**23...♙h3+** (Black could have mated by 23...♙e4+ 24 ♙f1 ♙f5! 25 ♜e2 ♙h3+ 26 ♙e1 ♜g1# Bauer) **24 ♙h1 ♙xf2 25 ♜f1 ♙xf1 26 ♜xf1 ♜e2 27 ♜a1 ♜h6 28 d4 ♙e3 0-1**

On becoming USA champion, for a time

comparable with the great scientific discoveries of the 19th century.

### 'The Modern Calabrese'

Steinitz was born in a Prague ghetto, into the family of a petty hardware merchant, in which he was child number nine; the next four all died in early childhood and he, the last remaining, maintained that he was the 13th all through his life. He learned chess by watching his father play. After finishing school in the mid-fifties, he continued his education in Vienna, which had ancient chess traditions (it is sufficient to recall the names of Allgaier, Hamppe and Falkbeer). When in London and Paris the fame of Morphy and Anderssen was at its height, in a small Vienna café a certain poor student was making a living by playing for stakes...

Chess captivated Steinitz entirely. For the sake of it he gave up the higher polytechnic school, which promised the comfortable life of a qualified engineer, and soon he was the strongest player in Vienna. And when in 1862 an invitation arrived from London to the second international tournament, the Vienna Chess Society decided to send their 26-year-old champion to it.

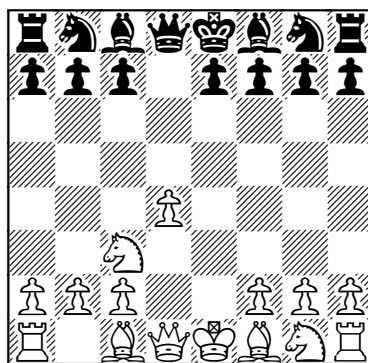
Steinitz's international debut was not bad: sixth prize out of 14 participants (all of five pounds sterling!), but the main thing was his memorable win over Mongredien. The winner of the tournament, the legendary Adolf Anderssen, acknowledged it to be 'the most bold and brilliant game', and Steinitz 'a rising chess star'. In turn, the organisers called the game 'the diamond of the Austrian champion' and awarded it a special prize, as the most brilliant in the tournament.

*Game 11*  
**W.Steinitz-A.Mongredien**  
 London 1862  
*Scandinavian Defence B01*

**1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗d8?!**

A move that is mentioned back in ancient manuscripts. More popular and natural is 3...♗a5 with definite counter-chances, as even occurred in the Kasparov-Anand match (New York 14th matchgame 1995).

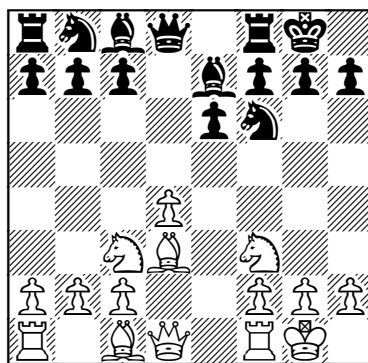
**4 d4**



**4...e6** (after 4...♘f6 Fischer played 5 ♘c4 ♘f5 6 ♗f3!, and after 4...g6 – 5 ♘f4 ♘g7 6 ♗d2!) **5 ♘f3 ♘f6 6 ♘d3 ♘e7 7 0-0**

7 ♗e2 ♘c6 8 ♘e3 ♘b4 9 ♘c4 ♘bd5 is unclear.

**7...0-0**



A 'French' type of position has arisen, but with an extra tempo for White. In Mongredien's justification it can be said that a similar position (with the bishop at c4) occurred in the game Alekhine-Schlechter (Carlsbad 1911).

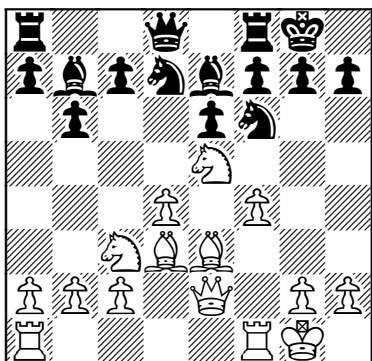
**8 ♘e3** (the alternative is 8 ♗e2 ♘c6 9 ♗d1 ♘b4 10 ♘c4 ♘bd5 11 ♘e4 or 8 ♘e5!? c5 9

dx5) **8...b6**

Or 8...♖bd7 9 ♗e5!

**9 ♗e5 ♗b7 10 f4 ♗bd7** (10...♗c6!?) **11 ♖e2**

'11 f5 came into consideration.' (Neishtadt) However, I am not sure that White has any advantage after 11...exf5 12 ♖xf5 (12 ♗xf5 ♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♗d5) 12...♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♗d5 14 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 15 ♖g4 g6.

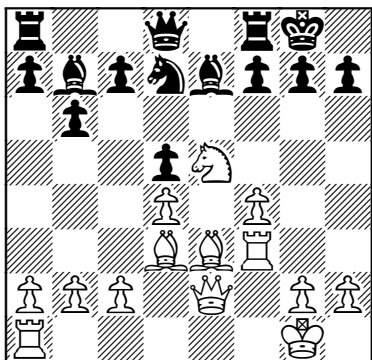


**11...♗d5?!** (11...c5 is more logical, although after 12 ♖ad1 White is a little better) **12 ♗xd5 exd5**

If 12...♗xd5, not shutting in the bishop and controlling the f3-square, then 13 c4 ♗b7 14 ♖ad1.

**13 ♖f3**

With the classic threat of 14 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15 ♖h3+ and ♖h5. Neishtadt also considers 13 ♖h5! ♗f6 14 ♖h3 with the idea of 14...♗c8 15 f5!



**13...f5!**

Avoiding the rout that is possible after 13...♗xe5?! 14 fxe5 f6 15 ♖h3 (15...g6 16 ♖xh7!) or 13...♗f6?! 14 ♖h3 (with the threat of g2-g4-g5) 14...♗c8 (14...♗e4 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 16 ♖h5 h6 17 ♖g3! etc.) 15 f5 ♗d6 16 ♗g5! h6 17 ♗h4 ♖e8 18 ♗b5! ♗xf5 19 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 20 ♖f3 ♗g4 21 ♗xf6 ♗xf3 22 ♖xf3 gxf6 23 ♗g4.

**14 ♖h3** (better is 14 ♖af1! with an enduring positional initiative) **14...g6**

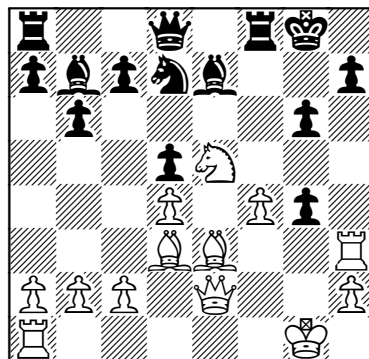
Parrying ♖h5 and intending ...♗f6. Bad is 14...c5? (14...♖e8? 15 ♗b5) 15 ♖h5 ♗f6 16 ♖xf5 ♗c8 17 ♖xh7+! ♗xh7 18 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 19 ♗g6 mate.

**15 g4?!**

According to Lasker 'vigorous and enterprising play', but in my view debatable, to say the least.

**15...fxg4?**

Essential was 15...♗xe5 16 fxe5 ♗c8! (but not 16...fxg4? 17 ♖xh7!, as in the game) 17 gxf5 ♗xf5, and White has absolutely nothing! Now, however, the defence collapses.



**16 ♖xh7?!**

The start of a bold combination, which brought Steinitz the brilliancy prize. But was the rook sacrifice correct? Did Black not have a better defence, or White a bloodless way to win?

After giving these questions to readers of the *Los Angeles Times* and *Welt am Sonntag*, which published extracts from the forthcoming

ing book, I switched on my computer and began comparing my preliminary conclusions with the opinions of previous commentators of this game. My 'iron friend' Fritz, as always, caused surprise with its interesting variations, not reflected in chess literature. I think that even the great Steinitz did not suspect how many exciting adventures remained off-stage in this 'hit' game!

First, it transpired that the simple 16 ♖xg4!, threatening sacrifices on g6 and h7, is decisive. After 16...♟f6? Neishtadt suggested 17 ♖g2, and if 17...♟c8, then 18 ♜xh7! ♟xh7 19 ♖xg6+ ♟h8 20 ♟h1, but more forcing is 17 ♖e6+! ♟g7 18 f5 ♟c8 (18...h5 19 ♟xg6 ♜f7 20 ♟h6+) 19 ♟h6+ ♟h8 20 ♟xg6+ hxg6 21 ♟xf8+ ♟h5 22 ♜xh5+ gxh5 23 ♖h6+ ♟g8 24 ♖g7 mate (Fritz).

Therefore there only remains 16...♟xe5. Now it is important not to be tempted by 17 ♖e6+? ♟f7? 18 ♟xg6 ♟h4 19 ♖g4 hxg6 20 ♖xg6+ ♟h8 21 ♟h1! (but not 21 ♖h5+ ♟g7 22 ♜xh4 because of 22...♟c8 23 ♟h1 ♟f5 Fritz) 21...♜g8 22 ♖xf7 ♜g7 23 ♖h5+ ♜h7 24 ♖e5+ ♟f6 (24...♖f6 25 ♜xh4!) 25 ♜xh7+ ♟xh7 26 ♖f5+ ♟g7 (or 26...♟h8 27 ♖h3+ ♟h4 28 ♜g1 ♟c8 29 ♖g2 ♖f8 30 ♖g6) 27 ♜g1+ ♟f7 28 ♖h7+ ♟e6 29 f5+ ♟d6 30 ♜g6! ♖e7 31 ♜xf6+ ♖xf6 32 ♟f4+ ♟c6 33 ♖xc7+ ♟b5 34 ♖xb7 ♖xd4 35 a4! ♟a5 36 ♖xa8 and White wins. The surprising 17...♜f7!! refutes the bold queen sortie: 18 ♟xg6 (the only chance: 18 fxe5? ♟c8 or 18 ♖xe5? ♟f6 19 ♖e6 ♟c8) 18...hxg6 (18...♟xg6 19 ♜xh7 is not so clear) 19 fxe5 ♟c8 20 ♖xg6+ ♜g7, when the attack peters out and White is behind in material.

Correct is 17 dxe5! (but not 17 fxe5? ♟c8! 18 e6 ♜f6 and wins) with the threat of ♟xg6, and Black has no defence: 17...♖c8 18 e6 ♜f6 (18...♖e8 19 f5) 19 f5 ♖f8 20 fxg6 hxg6 21 ♟xg6 ♖g7 22 ♜g3 wins or 17...♟c8 18 e6 ♜f6 19 f5 ♖f8 (19...♟c5 20 ♟xc5 bxc5 21 ♜e1 ♖e8 22 fxg6 wins, while if 19...c5 there is both the modest 20 fxg6, and the extravagant 20 ♜xh7 ♟xh7 21 ♖h3+ ♟g8 22 fxg6 ♜xg6+

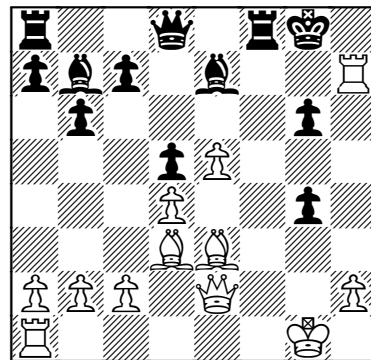
23 ♟xg6 ♟h4 24 ♟f7+ ♟h8 25 ♖g4) 20 ♟g5 ♟c5+ 21 ♟h1 ♜xf5 (21...gxh5? 22 ♟xf6+ fxg4 23 ♟xh7 mate) 22 ♟h6 ♖f6 23 ♟xf5 ♖xf5 24 ♖xf5 gxh5 25 ♜g3+ ♟h8 26 e7 etc.

Second, it was confirmed that the rook sacrifice also wins, although this is a more thorny path to the goal.

#### 16...♟xe5

Or 16...♟xh7 17 ♖xg4, and 17...♟xe5 18 fxe5 has to be played, since 17...♟f6? is bad: 18 ♖xg6+ ♟h8 19 ♖h6+ ♟g8 20 ♟h1! and wins.

#### 17 fxe5



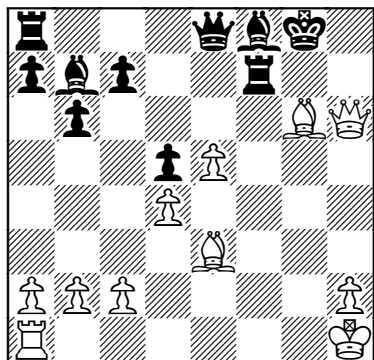
#### 17...♟xh7

After the desperate 17...♟g5?! (17...♟a6?! 18 ♜h6!) there is a pleasant choice between 18 ♟xg5 ♖xg5 19 ♜xc7 g3 (or 19...♟c8 20 ♟h1) 20 hxg3! (20 ♜xb7? ♜f2) 20...♖xg3+ 21 ♖g2 ♖e3+ 22 ♟h1 ♖h6+ 23 ♖h2 and 18 ♟xg6 ♜f3 (incidentally, 17...♜f3 18 ♟xg6 ♟g5 would have come to the same thing) 19 ♟f2! (but not 19 ♟xg5? ♖xg5 20 ♜xc7 ♖xg6 21 ♜xb7 ♜af8 22 ♖g2 ♖e4 and ♖f4 with sufficient counterplay) 19...♟f4 20 ♟h4 ♟g5 21 ♖g2!! ♟c8 22 ♜f1!, and in both cases White is in charge.

#### 18 ♖xg4 ♜g8?

This loses without any questions, as does 18...♜f5? – after 19 ♟xf5 gxh5 20 ♖xf5+ ♟g7 (20...♟h8 21 ♖h5+) 21 ♟h1! the black king is finished off by a check from g1. But the best defence 18...♖e8! would have forced White to play very accurately: 19 ♖h5+ ♟g7! (not

19...♔g8 20 ♖xg6 ♜f7 21 ♘h1 ♙f8 22 ♜g1 ♙g7 23 ♙h6! and wins) 20 ♜h6+ ♔g8 21 ♖xg6 ♜f7 22 ♘h1! ♙f8.



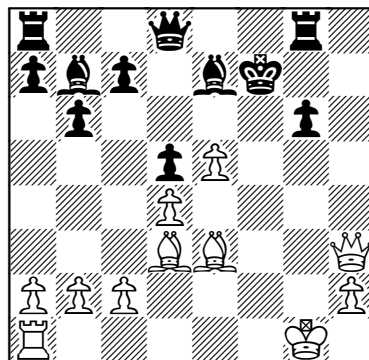
**Analysis diagram**

Here the readers of the afore-mentioned newspapers together with the computer discovered two attractive possibilities:

1) 23 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 24 ♜g1+ ♙g7 25 ♜f6! ♜e8 26 ♙h6 ♜xf6 27 exf6 ♜e1! 28 ♜xe1! (after 28 ♙xg7 ♜xg1+ 29 ♘xg1 ♔f7 30 ♔f2 ♙c8 31 ♔e3 ♙f5 32 c3 ♔e6 the endgame is not so clear: the bishop at g7 is passive, and only a special analysis can establish whether or not the white king will break through on the queenside) 28...♙xh6 29 ♜e7 ♙f4 30 h4 – Black is not able to coordinate the actions of his bishops, and the white king comes into play with decisive effect.

2) 23 ♜h5, and Black has no defence: 23...♜d7 (or 23...♜e6) 24 ♜g1 ♙g7 25 ♜h7+ ♔f8 26 ♙xf7 ♜xf7 27 ♜xg7 ♜f1+ 28 ♜g1 ♜f3+ 29 ♜g2 ♜f1+ 30 ♙g1, or 23...♙g7!? 24 ♜g1! (24 ♜h7+ ♔f8 25 ♙h6 gives only perpetual check: 25...♙xh6! 26 ♜xh6+ ♔e7 27 ♜g5+ ♔f8) 24...♔f8 25 ♜g3!! (the only move; after 25 ♙xf7 ♜xf7 26 ♜g6 ♜f1+ 27 ♜g1 ♜f7 Black saves the game) 25...♜f1+ 25 ♔g2 and wins (Fritz).

**19 ♜h5+ ♔g7 20 ♜h6+** (of course, not 20 ♜xg6+? ♔h8!) **20...♔f7 21 ♜h7+ ♔e6** (21...♜g7 22 ♙xg6+ ♔f8 23 ♜h8+ ♜g8 24 ♙h6 mate) **22 ♜h3+! ♔f7**



**23 ♜f1+**

23 e6+ would have also concluded the pursuit of the king, forcing mate in eight moves.

**23...♔e8 24 ♜e6 ♜g7 25 ♙g5** (dual solutions – 25 ♙b5+ and 25 ♙h6!) **25...♜d7**

Or 25...♙c8 26 ♜c6+ ♙d7 27 ♜xg6+ ♜xg6 28 ♙xg6 mate.

**26 ♙xg6+ ♜xg6** (26...♔d8 27 ♜f8+ and mate) **27 ♜xg6+ ♔d8 28 ♜f8+ ♜e8 29 ♜xe8 mate**

‘Games that were deemed brilliant in recent international tournaments were no match for this one,’ declared Chigorin in 1890.

After the tournament Steinitz settled in London, one of the chess capitals of the world, and quickly won over the public with his aggressive, uncompromising play. The elderly English master Walker even called him ‘the modern Calabrese’ (this was how Greco had been called long ago – as coming from Calabria). Yes, the early Steinitz was a fervent supporter of Anderssen and looked a worthy successor to him, playing in the good old combinative style...

In matches played in 1863 he crushed the young Joseph Blackburne (+7 -1 =2) and the Belgian Frederich Deacon (+5 -1 =1) and the same August Mongredien – incidentally, Morphy’s last match opponent. Steinitz managed to surpass the American’s achievement (+7 =1), winning seven games without reply. One of these victories is still instructive.

## The Ageing Lion

And so, Steinitz conceded the throne, thus becoming the first... ex-world champion in the history of chess. The years had taken their toll. But in individual games the old lion could still show his claws, reminding everyone of his former might.

At the height of Hastings 1895, that genuine 'tournament of the century', the 59-year-old ex-king won a sparkling game, which received the first brilliancy prize. Up till then his opponent Kurt Bardeleben had been undefeated with 7½ out of 9 (including a win against Lasker!).

### Game 33

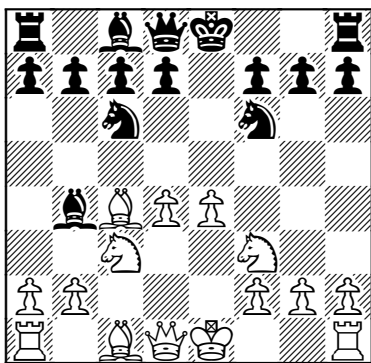
#### W. Steinitz-K. Bardeleben

Hastings 1895, 10th round

*Giuoco Piano C54*

**1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♘c4 ♘c5 4 c3 ♗f6 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 ♙b4+ 7 ♗c3!?**

Greco's ancient gambit variation. The 'main' continuation 7 ♘d2 ♘xd2+ 8 ♗bxd2 d5 9 exd5 ♗xd5 10 ♖b3 is harmless in view of 10...♗a5! (this is simpler than 10...♗ce7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖fe1 c6) 11 ♖a4+ ♗c6 with equal chances.



### 7...d5?!

Bardeleben avoids repeating the game Steinitz-Schlechter, played at the start of the tournament, where after 7...♗xe4! 8 0-0 ♘xc3 9 bxc3 d5 10 ♘a3?! ♘e6? 11 ♙b5 ♗d6 12

♘xc6+ bxc6 13 ♗e5 0-0 14 ♗xc6 ♖f6 Black with difficulty maintained the balance. The correct way for him was found later, in the Steinitz-Lasker return match (Moscow 3rd matchgame 1896): 10...dxc4! 11 ♖e1 ♘e6 12 ♖xe4 ♖d5 13 ♖e2 0-0-0 14 ♗e5 ♖he8, remaining a sound pawn to the good.

I should add that in 1899 the clever Møller Attack 9 d5!? (instead of 9 bxc3) made its appearance, while exactly one hundred years later two noteworthy games on this theme were played in Fritz 6-Anand (Frankfurt rapidplay 1999):

1) 9...♘f6 10 ♖e1 ♗e7 11 ♖xe4 d6 12 ♘g5, and here instead of 12...0-0? 13 ♘xf6 gxf6 14 ♖d2 Black should have preferred 12...♘g5 13 ♗xg5 h6 14 ♖e2 (Black stands better after 14 ♗f3 0-0 or 14 ♙b5+ ♘d7 15 ♖e2 ♘xb5! 16 ♖xb5+ ♖d7 17 ♖e2 ♗f8 Bérczay-Portisch, Hungary 1969) 15...hxg5 15 ♖e1 ♘e6! 16 dxe6 f6 with sharp play;

2) 9...♗e5! 10 bxc3 ♗xc4 11 ♖d4 0-0! (but not 11...♗cd6? 12 ♖xg7 ♖f6 13 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♖e1+; also not good is 11...f5, Schlechter-Lasker, London 1899) 12 ♖xe4 ♗d6 (12...b5!? is sharper, Djindjhashvili-Karpov, Mazatlan rapidplay 1988) 13 ♖d3 b6! (this had already been played many times) 14 ♘a3 ♖f6 15 ♖d4 ♖xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♙b7 17 ♘xd6 cxd6 18 ♗f5 g6 19 ♗xd6 ♘xd5, and Black converted his extra pawn. This is the modern way of combating gambits: the timely return of part of the 'booty', – and it is all over...

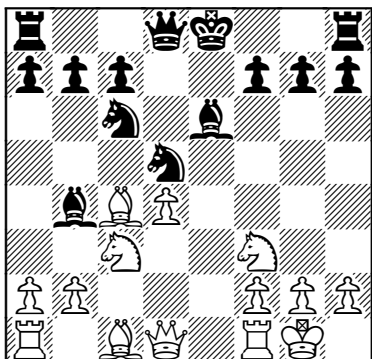
This opening information explains why the classical 'Italian' with 4 c3 and 5 d4 occurs so rarely nowadays.

### 8 exd5 ♗xd5 9 0-0! ♘e6

White stands better after 9...♘xc3 10 bxc3 0-0 11 ♖c2 h6 12 ♖e1 ♘e6?! 13 ♘xh6! (Steinitz-Schiffers, Rostov-on-Don match 1896), or 9...♗b6 10 ♖e1+ ♘e7 11 ♙b3 0-0 12 d5 ♗a5 13 ♘c2 ♗ac4 14 ♖d3 f5 15 ♙b3 ♗d6 16 ♘f4 ♗d7 17 ♖e3 ♖f7 18 ♗d4 ♗f6 19 ♖ad1 (Steinitz-Blackburne, Nuremberg 1896). Black also does not gain complete equality with 9...♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♘e7 (not



10...♙xc3? 11 ♖b3! ♙xa1 12 ♙xf7+ ♕f8 13 ♙a3+ ♗e7 14 ♖xa1) 11 ♙f4 (Bilguer).



### 10 ♙g5 ♙e7?!

In the light of what follows, 10...♗d7 is better, for example: 11 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 12 ♖e1+ ♕f8! (12...♙e7? 13 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 14 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 15 ♖e2 ♗d6 16 ♖b5+) 13 ♖c3 ♙xc3 (or 13...f6 14 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 15 ♙f4) 14 bxc3 f6 15 ♙f4 ♖e8 16 ♗d2 with a slight advantage to White.

### 11 ♙xd5! ♙xd5 12 ♗xd5

If 12 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 13 ♖e1 0-0 14 ♖xe7, then 14...♙xf3! 15 ♖e1 ♙c6 16 ♖e5 ♖e8 with equal chances.

### 12...♖xd5 13 ♙xe7 ♗xe7

After 13...♕xe7 White retains a clear advantage by 14 ♖c1 ♖he8 (14...♕d7 15 ♖a4!) 15 ♖c5 ♗d6 (15...♖xa2 16 ♖c2 ♕d6 17 ♖b5) 16 ♖c2, although in Weiss-Seibold (correspondence 1933) he was successful with 14 ♖e1+ ♕f8 15 ♖e2 f6 16 ♖ac1 ♖c8? (16...♕f7!?) 17 ♖c5 ♗d6 18 ♖c4 (18 ♖b5!?) 18...♗d8 19 ♖d5 ♖c6 20 ♖e2! ♗f7 21 ♖e7+ ♕g8 22 ♖d7 ♖c4 23 d5!

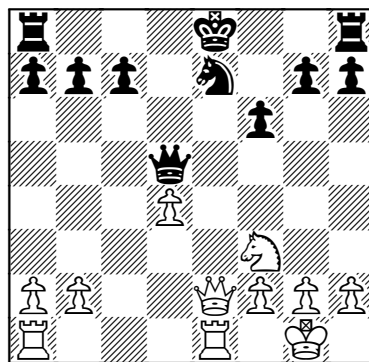
### 14 ♖e1 f6

The critical position of the opening variation.

### 15 ♖e2?!

An imperceptible 'scratch on a sparkling diamond'. For nearly a whole century commentators looked for a more efficient way of attacking. In 1978 Igor Zaitsev suggested 15 ♖a4+, but after 15...♕f7 (15...c6? or 15...♗d7

– 16 ♖b4!, while if 15...♕d8?! there is a choice between 16 ♖c2, 16 ♗d2 and 16 ♖b4 ♖e8 17 ♖ac1) he came to a standstill: 16 ♖ac1 ♗d6! 17 ♖b3+ ♗d5 or 16 ♖b4 ♖he8 17 ♖ac1 a5! 18 ♖a3 ♗c6 etc. And only in 1983 did Geller discover 16 ♗e5+! fxe5 (16...♕f8 17 ♗d3! with the threat of ♗f4, while if 17...g5, then 18 ♖ac1 c6 19 ♖a3 wins) 17 ♖xe5 ♗d6 18 ♖c4+! ♕f8 19 ♖ae1 ♗g8 (19...♗g6? 20 ♖f5+ and 19...♖e8 20 ♖1e4 g6 21 ♖e6! are both winning for White) 20 ♖d5 ♖c6 21 ♖b4+! ♕f7 22 ♖c5 ♗d6 23 ♖c4+ ♕f8 24 ♖xc7 and wins.



### 15...♗d7

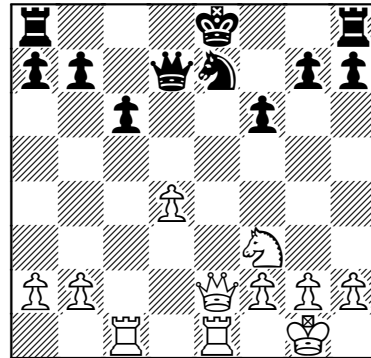
But not 15...♗d6? in view of 16 ♖b5+ ♖c6 17 ♖b4 ♗d6 18 ♖xb7.

### 16 ♖ac1

Here Keres suggested 16 ♖e4 c6 17 ♖e2 ♕f7 18 ♖ae1 ♗d5 19 ♖h4 with some pressure, and Romanovsky – 16 d5 ♕f7 17 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 (17...♖hd8!?) 18 ♖e6+! (18 ♗d4 ♗xd5) 18...♖xe6 19 dxe6+ ♕g6 20 ♗h4+ ♕h5 21 ♖d7 ♗d5 22 ♖xd8! (22 ♗f5 ♖xd7 23 exd7 ♖d8 24 ♗xg7+ ♕h6! is equal) 22...♖xd8 23 ♗f5 ♕g6 24 g4 with an extra pawn, but there is still the question of whether it is enough for a win.

16 ♖ad1!? also looks logical. Now, according to analysis by Zaitsev, bad are both 16...♕f7 (16...♕d8 17 d5) 17 ♖c4+ ♕f8 (17...♗d5? 18 ♗e5+! fxe5 19 dxe5 and wins) 18 d5 with a great advantage, and 16...♖d8 17 ♖c4 c6 (17... ♕f8 18 ♖b4 c6 19 d5! cxd5 20

♖d4 ♜f7 21 ♜e6 ♜de8 22 ♜g4 ♜f5 23  
 ♜xg7 wins) 18 ♜d3 ♜f8 19 ♜g5! fxg5 20  
 ♜f3+ ♜f5 21 g4 g6 22 gx5 fx5 23 ♜c5+ etc.  
 However, after 16...♜f8! 17 d5!? (17 ♜c4  
 ♜d5! 18 ♜d2 ♜f7 19 ♜e4 ♜he8 and 18 ♜e2  
 c6 19 ♜de1 ♜f7 are both equal) 17...♜d5 18  
 ♜g5! ♜e8 (inferior is 18...fxg5 19 ♜f3+ ♜f7  
 20 ♜xd5 or 18...c6 19 ♜e6+ ♜g8 20 ♜f4  
 ♜d8 21 ♜h5 ♜f7 22 ♜f3) 19 ♜f3 c6 20  
 ♜a3+ ♜g8 21 ♜e4 (21 ♜h3 ♜c8!) 21...b6 22  
 b4! White has no more than the initiative for  
 the pawn. True, Black has to play very accu-  
 rately: for example, 22...f5? is bad on account  
 of 23 ♜g5 ♜xe1+ 24 ♜xe1 g6 (24...h6? 25  
 ♜xa7 wins) 25 b5!

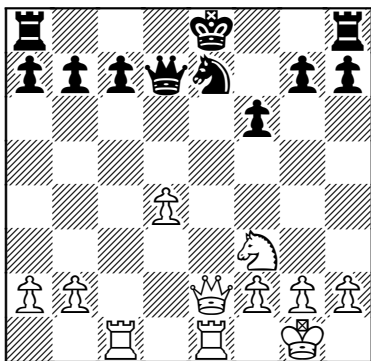


### 17 d5!!

A classic breakthrough in the centre,  
 strictly in accordance with Steinitz's own the-  
 ory: the player holding an advantage is obliged  
 to attack! Especially if this wins by force...

### 17...cxd5

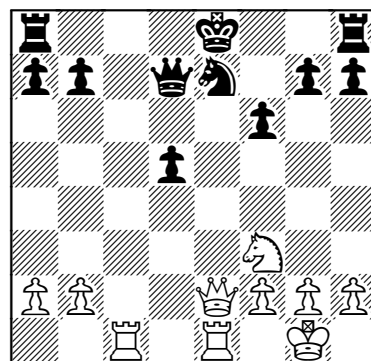
Fortunately for chess, Bardeleben had no  
 suspicion of Steinitz's brilliant idea, otherwise  
 he would surely have played 17...♜f7. How-  
 ever, even here after 18 dxc6 bxc6 (18...♜xc6  
 19 ♜cd1) 19 ♜ed1 (19 ♜c4+ ♜d5 20 ♜xd5+  
 cxd5 21 ♜c7 ♜he8 22 ♜d4 is also unpleasant)  
 the computer everywhere indicates 'winning  
 for White': 19...♜e6 20 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 21  
 ♜d4+ ♜f7 22 ♜xc6 etc. or 19...♜d5 20 ♜d4  
 ♜ac8 21 ♜c4 with the unavoidable ♜xc6 (for  
 example, 21...♜g4 22 h3 ♜f4 23 g3 ♜e4 24  
 ♜e1 ♜g6 25 ♜xc6).



### 16...c6?

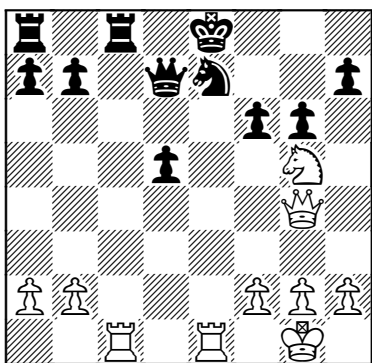
16...♜f7! was essential, not fearing the ex-  
 change sacrifice 17 ♜xe7+?! ♜xe7 18 ♜xe7+  
 ♜xe7 19 ♜xc7+ in view of 19...♜d6 20 ♜xg7  
 (even worse is 20 ♜xb7? ♜hb8 21 ♜xg7 ♜xb2  
 22 h3 ♜xa2 23 ♜xh7 a5! etc.) 20...♜ac8! 21 g3  
 ♜c7, when Black has a good endgame. And if  
 17 ♜c4+ there is (in contrast to the variation  
 with 16 ♜ad1) the reply 17...♜d5. The imme-  
 diate knight sacrifice also gives nothing real:  
 17 ♜e5+ fxe5 18 dxe5 ♜e6 19 ♜xc7 ♜hd8! 20  
 ♜xb7 ♜g8 or 17 ♜g5+ fxg5 18 ♜f3+ ♜f5! 19  
 g4 ♜he8 (Neishtadt).

I have tried to find an advantage after 17  
 ♜d2, but without success: 17...c6 18 ♜e4 b6!  
 (restricting the knight) 19 ♜c4+ ♜g6! 20 ♜d3  
 (or 20 ♜c3 ♜f5) 20...♜f7 21 ♜b3+ ♜d5 22  
 ♜c3 ♜ac8 is level.



**18 ♜d4 ♜f7 19 ♜e6** (with the threat of  
 ♜c7) **19...♜hc8**

Black also fails to save the game by  
 19...♖ac8 20 ♖g4 g6 21 ♘g5+ ♕e8 22 ♜xc8+  
 or 19...♗c6 20 ♗c5! ♜f5 (20...♜c8 21 ♜h5+)  
 21 ♗xb7 ♜d7 22 ♗c5 ♜f5 23 ♗e6 ♜ac8 24  
 ♜a6 ♗e7 25 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 26 h3 ♜c4 27 f3!  
**20 ♜g4! g6 21 ♗g5+ ♕e8**

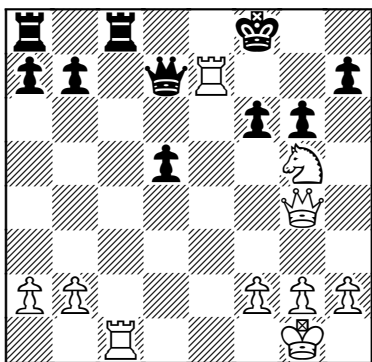


**22 ♜xe7+!**

An astounding combination!

**22...♕f8!**

After 22...♕xe7 Steinitz calculated the  
 variation 23 ♜e1+ ♕d6 (23...♕d8 24 ♗e6+  
 ♕e7 25 ♗c5+) 24 ♜b4+ ♕c7 25 ♗e6+ (or 25  
 ♜c1+) 25...♕b8 26 ♜f4+ ♜c7 27 ♗xc7 ♜xc7  
 28 ♜e8 mate, but the computer shows that 23  
 ♜b4+ would have won more quickly: 23...  
 ♕e8 24 ♜e1+ ♕d8 25 ♗e6+ or 23...♜d6 24  
 ♜xb7+ ♜d7 25 ♜e1+ ♕d6 26 ♗f7+.



**23 ♜f7+!**

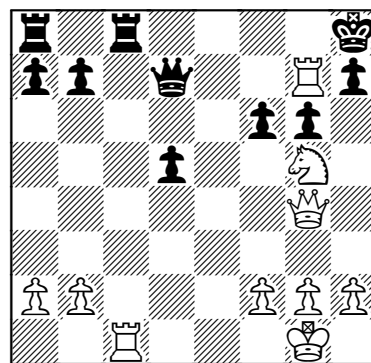
Of course, not 23 ♜xd7?? ♜xc1+ and not  
 23 ♜xc8? – why, we will see in the note to

White's 25th move.

**23...♕g8!** (23...♜xf7 24 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 25  
 ♜xc8+ ♜e8 26 ♗xh7+ is hopeless for Black)

**24 ♜g7+! ♕h8!**

Avoiding 24...♕f8 25 ♗xh7+! ♕xg7 26  
 ♜xd7+.



**25 ♜xh7+! 1-0**

The final point! More precisely, Bardeleben... suddenly stood up and silently walked out of the room (later he sent by special delivery a note tendering his resignation).

But Steinitz willingly demonstrated to the spectators that which awaited Black: 25...♕g8 26 ♜g7+! ♕h8 27 ♜h4+ ♕xg7 28 ♜h7+ ♕f8 29 ♜h8+ ♕e7 30 ♜g7+ ♕e8 (30...♕d8 31 ♜f8+ ♜e8 32 ♗f7+ and 33 ♜d6 mate; 30...♕d6 31 ♜xf6+, and the rook at c1 prevents the king from escaping onto the c-file) 31 ♜g8+! ♕e7 32 ♜f7+ ♕d8 33 ♜f8+ ♜e8 34 ♗f7+ ♕d7 35 ♜d6 mate.

Here I can't help but recall the elevated words of Hannak, the biographer of the first world champion: 'This was Steinitz's final flash of a dream about his former youth, brilliance, greatness and happiness, when towards the end of a hot day on 17 August 1895 he won the most brilliant game of his life.'

Hastings 1895 designated the five strongest players in the world: 1. Pillsbury – 16½ out of 21 (the sensation of the tournament!); 2. Chigorin – 16; 3. Lasker – 15½; 4. Tarrasch – 14; 5. Steinitz – 13. But which of these was

No.1? For a short time a kind of 'chess republic' was established.

Soon in St Petersburg (1895/96) a six-cycle match-tournament of the four giants was held (alas, Tarrasch declined to play), ending in an unequivocal triumph for Lasker. And yet in one of the games the young champion suffered a bitter disappointment.