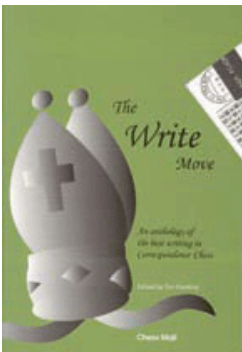




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The Boden-Kieseritsky Gambit

The biggest difference between chess as it was played 100-150 years ago and now is probably the standard of defensive play. The quality of play in all aspects of the game has risen of course, and the depth and breadth of opening theory has expanded enormously, and even the detailed knowledge of endgames has grown although most of the basic principles were well understood before 1900.

When you come to the cut-and-thrust of actual play, especially at the level of the average to strong amateur player, the most obvious thing looking at old games is how often unsound sacrificial attacks succeeded. Even after the heat of battle, when the games were analysed in magazines, defences were often overlooked. Consequently the judgments of positions to those games are distorted, and this is something you always have to bear in mind when reading old books and journals.

The annotator's view of the whole game, or its critical phase, may be completely suffused by the view that White has a winning attack, when in fact Black should have refuted it, or (less commonly) the other way around. Sometimes endgames are misjudged too, but comedies of errors (unnoticed by the annotator) are more common in complications from the middle game. Here is an example.

E. M. Jones – W. M. Brooke

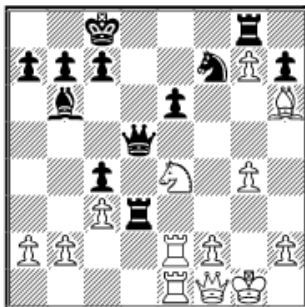
Correspondence match Four-Leaved Shamrock vs. BCCA, 1913

First published in the *BCCA Magazine* number 16 (December 1913) and afterwards in the *Weekly Irish Times* (4 April 1914), where it was called 'a fine game', yet in the complications after move 22 numerous mistakes are made and Black throws away an easy win at move 28.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 d4 exd4 5 0-0 Bc5 6 e5 d5 7 exf6 dxc4 8 Re1+ Be6 9 Ng5 Qd5 10 Nc3 Qf5 11 Nce4 0-0-0

The *BCCA Magazine* says this was first played in a match in Vienna in 1913, but a much earlier issue had already condemned the older ...Bb6 and recommended castling.

12 Nxe6 fxe6 13 g4 Qe5 14 fxg7 Rhg8 15 Bh6 d3 16 c3 d2 17 Re2 Bb6 18 Qf1 Rd3 19 Rd1 Nd8 20 Nxd2 Qd5 21 Rde1 Nf7 22 Ne4



Now the fun starts.

22...Nxh6

Surely 22...Qd8 is better.

23 Nf6 Qg5 24 Rxe6?

This should lose whereas 24 Nxg8 Nxg8 25 Rxe6 is quite playable.

24...Nxg4?!

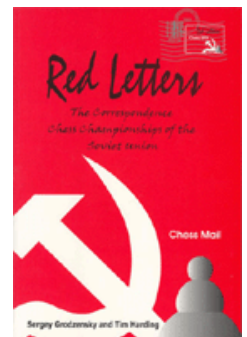


One annotator gave this an exclamation

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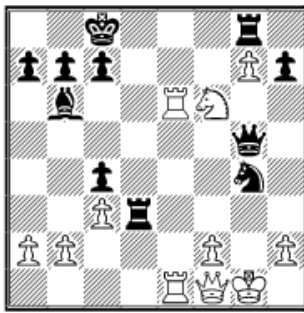
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mark, but 24...Rgd8 is better.

25 Re8+

Now Black is winning. Instead, 25 Nxc8! is equal after 25...Nxc2+ 26 Qg2 (26 Kxh2 Qh4+ 27 Kg1 Rg3+ 28 Qg2 Rxc2+ 29 Kxc2 Qxf2+ also leads to perpetual check.) 26...Nf3+ 27 Kf1 Nd2 + 28 Kg1 Nf3+ etc.

25...Rd8 26 Rxd8+

As White eventually wins, and the alternative 26 Nxc8 Ne3+ 27 Kh1 Rxe8 is only objectively slightly better, maybe Jones did the right thing here! When you are losing, try to force your opponent to make choices.

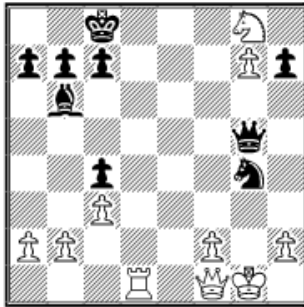
26...Kxd8?

The wrong choice; 26...Rxd8 is much better.

27 Rd1+?

White is still worse after 27 Nxc8, but this sets a trap.

27...Kc8 28 Nxc8



28...Bxf2+??

Oh dear! Why did the annotators not spot that 28...Nxf2+ 29 Qg2 Nxd1+ wins immediately for Black?

29 Kh1 Qxg7 30 Qxc4 c6 31 Ne7+ Kc7 32 Qf4+ 1-0

Now we go to the main theme of the month, the misjudgements players and analysts use to make about the chances in complicated gambit positions, illustrated by the Boden-Kieseritsky Gambit.

Henry Bird's *Chess Openings* (1878) discussed 'Mr Boden's Attack' on pages 115-6. He said it 'yields a very strong attack, which requires great care in answering. The second player, however, ought to maintain the Pawn, and the game should be in his favour.' That would be in accord with modern thinking, but the variation on which he based his judgement had an enormous hole. In this case it was the opposite of the above: he overlooked a strong blow by the attacker. So, unlike most writers of his day, he was over-optimistic for the defence rather than the attack.

The gambit arises by:

The gambit arises by:

1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nxe4 4 Nc3

The first editor of the German *Handbuch des Schachspiels* said this was introduced by Kieseritsky in 1848. Then in 1851 Boden recommended it in his (anonymous) book *A popular introduction to the study and practice and chess, forming a compendium of the science of the game, by an amateur*. Later, however, Boden was sceptical about the value of gambits.

4...Nxc3

Doubling White's pawns is the only way to continue without losing time, but 19th century players probably liked the idea that several lines are thereby opened for the attack.

5 dxc3 f6

Instead, 5...Nc6 6 0–0 is a version of the Two Knights Defence (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Nxe4 5 O-O Nxc3 6 dxc3), when 6...Be7 is the safest way to equalise according to Palkövi. He says trying to hold the pawn is risky – for 6...f6 see lines below (5...f6 6 O-O Nc6).

After 6...Be7, 7 Qd5 0–0 Black returns the pawn, but has better pawn structure and equality after 8 Nxe5 Nxe5 9 Qxe5 d6 (or 9...c6 10 Bf4 d5).

We shall look at some other lines with 5...f6 soon, but first examine Bird's example. After **6 O-O**, he gave **6...d6**, reinforcing the e-pawn.

This is a good move. It is surprising how often 6...c6? has been played instead, allowing the coup 7 Nxe5!. This ancient trap caught yet another victim in A. Schinke-D. Jungmichel, Mecklenburg 1996. Then if 7...Qa5 8 Nf7 is very strong, while if Black plays 7...fxe5 or almost anything else, White has Qh5+.

Bird's line continued **7 Nh4 g6** (To prevent both Qh5+ and Nf5) and now the standard **8 f4**, attempting to break up Black's central pawn salient.

8...Qe7

This is similarly motivated to the 6...Qe7 line we shall see below. Black wants to reinforce e5 and give the king a flight square at d8.

9 f5 and here Bird gives the reply **9...g5**.



2005.

Now Bird's continuation is 10 Qh5+ Kd7 11 Nf3 Qe8 with a good game for Black. Unusually for analysts of his time, Bird has missed something for the attacker. Instead, Black should play 9...Qg7! 10 Qd3 (or 10 Qf3 Be7 with an edge to Black according to Polugaevsky, in *ECO* 3rd edition) 10...g5 (10...c6!?) 11 Nf3 Be7 (11...c6!?) 12 b4 c6 13 Bb3 d5 and White is not getting anywhere (0–1, 45) K. Koczog-G. Szilardfy, Budapest

Go back to the diagram; what can you see?

10 Bxg5!

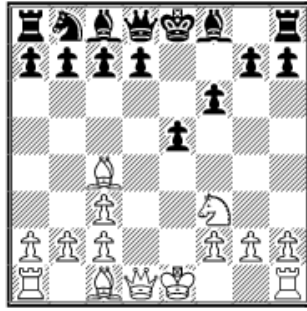
Also possible is 10 Qh5+ Kd8 11 Ng6, which Bird does mention, but after 11...Qe8 he gives White the bad move 12 Qh3 instead of 12 Be2!, winning the exchange. Bird was one of the strongest players of his day in England – but not as strong as an analyst perhaps.

The move 10 Bxg5 was, I found, actually played in an obscure postal game in 1903; maybe Black had the misfortune to find a copy of Bird's old book. If Black takes the piece, there follows 10...fxg5 11 f6 Qd8 12 Qh5+ Kd7 13 Bd5 Qe8 14 Bf7 Qd8 15 Qg4+ Kc6 16 Qc4+ with a very strong attack: 16...Kb6 (or 16...Kd7 17 Be6+ Ke8 18 Qg4) 17 Qb3+ Kc6 18 Bd5+ Kd7 19 Be6+.

So Black tried 10...Bg7? and there followed 11 Qh5+ Kf8? 12 Rf3 Bd7 13 Be3 Bc6 14 Rg3 d5 15 Rxg7 Qxg7 16 Bc5+ 1–0 (16...Kg8 17 Bxd5+ Bxd5 18 Qe8+) W. R. Nelthropp-J. H. Bullock, corr 1903.

Now let us look at this gambit in some more detail and see what other mistakes people made about it.

1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 3 Nf3 Nxe4 4 Nc3 Nxc3 5 dxc3 f6



With 5...f6, Black protects his extra pawn at the cost of what, to nineteenth century players, probably looked like compensating weakness on the white squares around the king. It takes quite careful play to show that this move is playable.

The first point to note is that if White replies 6 Nxe5?? Black must not take the knight; instead he traps the trapper by 6...

Qe7.

In the position after 5...f6, White has two ways to go:

A: 6 Nh4

B: 6 O-O

Staunton once suggested the dubious 6 Be3, as we shall see.

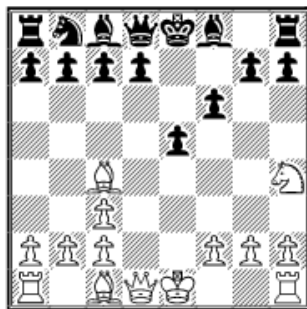
In 1877, volume 6 of the *Huddersfield College Magazine* (the precursor to *British Chess Magazine*) carried a two-part article by William Timbrell Pierce on 'The King's Knight's Defence to the King's Bishop's Opening'. The following appeared in the October issue on page 18 (transposed here to algebraic notation):

'Mr Staunton in his *Praxis* considers the King's Bishop's Opening the very best the first player can adopt, and after 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nf6 advises White to play 3 Nf3 reducing the opening to a position in the Petroff's Defence, and on Black's reply 3...Nxe4 advocates the move 4 Nc3 as better than 4 d3 recommended in the *Handbuch*. In his late posthumous work, edited by Wormald, called *Chess Theory and Practice*, page 115, he says, "I am now disposed to prefer 4 d3 though I still think White may play 4 Nc3 without disadvantage," and he endeavours to sustain his opinion by the following line of play: 4 Nc3 Nxc3 5 dxc3 f6 (best) 6 Be3? Qe7 (best) 7 Nh4 g6 8 O-O d6 9 f4 concluding that White has at least as good a game as Black. This, however, is not satisfactory, as Black can now reply with 9...f5 as pointed out in Wormald's *Chess Openings*, page 154.'

So much for 6 Be3?. We now examine the main moves in turn.

A:

6 Nh4!?



This was the original crude idea: White creates immediately the threat of Qh5+ and also prepares f2-f4 in some lines. Novices today of course are taught not to move their knights to the edge. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe 6 Nh4 is the right move!

6...g6

Although this is not the only move, nothing else can refute the gambit.

a) 6...d5 gives back the pawn without fully freeing the game after 7 Bxd5;

b) 6...Qe7 is playable, but it concedes a small edge: 7 Nf5 (7 Qh5+!? Kd8 8 g4! is unclear; not 8 Ng6?? Qe8.) 7...Qc5 8 Bb3 (8 Qg4!?) when:

b1) 8...e4 and the following line is given in the *Handbuch*: 9 Ng3 f5 10

Be3 Qa5 11 f3 Bd6 12 fxe4 f4 13 Nf5 fxe3 14 Qh5+ Kd8 15 Qg5+ with advantage to White.

b2) 8...g6 is probably better, despite the opinion 9 Be3 Qa5 10 Ng3 'White has a fine attacking position' – *Handbuch*, 8th ed.

7 f4!

You might ask who has the looser position now? White is definitely creating some chances, though.

Instead, 7 Nf5? does not work. Black does not of course reply 7...gxf5 8 Qh5+ Ke7 9 Qf7+ Kd6 10 Qd5+ Ke7 11 Bg5! Qe8 12 Qxe5+ Kd8, when Staunton gave 13 Bxf7+, but simply 13 Qxe8+ Kxe8 14 Bxf6 is most effective.

Yet just 7...d5! and Black wins as Staunton showed.

Instead of 7 f4, White could castle, but in that case 6 O-O would seem sensible, keeping all options.

After 7 0-0 some transposition to the 6 O-O lines are likely, e.g. after 7...d6 or 7...Nc6 or even 7...Qe7 (Löwenthal).

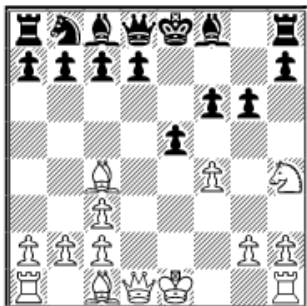
Black has also played 7...c6, when 8 Nxg6 is clearly unsound: 8...hxg6 9 Qg4 d5 10 Qxg6+ Kd7 11 f4 e4 (M. Pichler-F. Farachi, Rimini 1993). Also if 8 Re1 d5 9 Bb3 Be6 10 f4 Nd7 11 fxe5 fxe5 12 Nf3 Bg7 and Black is solid (A. Dohr-A.Smole, Austria 1996), or 8 Kh1 d5 9 Bb3 Bg7 10 Qe1 g5 and now the desperate sacrifice 11 f4 gxh4 did not work in V. Benavent-F. Adell Cortes, Provincial 1995.

After 7...c6, the only move to give White any joy has been 8 Bb3, when:

a) 8...d5 9 Qe2 Bd6 (9...Bg7!? unclear) 10 Bh6 Be6 (better is 10...Qe7) 11 f4 e4 12 f5 Bf7? (better is 12...gxf5) 13 Bg7 Rg8 14 fxg6 Rxg7 15 gxf7+ Rxf7 16 c4 Be5? (16...Bc5+ is correct.) 17 Rad1 Qb6+ 18 Kh1 dxc4? 19 Qxc4 Qc7 1-0, H. Blumberg-J.Rennie, USA 1909; White mates in four. Black missed many improvements. Also he could postpone ...d5 and play 8...Qe7 9 Re1 Bg7 as in A. Zitek-O. Sturz, Svetla 1995.

The bottom line is clear: if you are going to play 6 Nh4!?, don't chicken out but persevere with sharp play.

So let us return to 7 f4:



I am not convinced by the usual moves here.

7...exf4!? was never considered in the 19th century, but it could be hard to refute. If you are going to try this line, you need to analyse it.

The variations that have actually been played seem to offer White some hope, even if he has nothing clear against best

defence.

7...Qe7

7...c6!? is more ambitious, but perhaps not quite clear: 8 f5 d5 9 fxg6 dxc4 10 Qh5 Kd7 and now:

a) 11 g7 Bxg7 12 Qg4+ (12 Bh6 'with a clear plus' said Hooper, but it does not look clear for anyone but Black if you are Fritz, e.g. 12...Qf8 13 Qg4+ Ke7 14 Qxg7+ Qxg7 15 Bxg7 Rg8) 12...Kd6 13 Qxg7 Qf8 (Goebel-

Koskivirta, corr 1990) 14 Qg3 with compensation (Yusupov).

b) 11 gxh7 (Keres) is perhaps no better after 11...Qe8 12 Ng6 Kc7 13 g4!, when Black has two ways of giving some material for a promising position. Either 13...Bg7 14 Nxb8 Qxb8 or 13...Bxg4 14 Qxg4 Rxb7.

8 f5 Qg7

Not 8...g5?? 9 Qh5+ Kd8 10 Ng6.

So the alternative is 8...c6 9 fxg6 d5 10 Qh5 Kd8 11 0-0 Qg7 12 Rxf6 hxg6 13 Qxe5 Bc5+ 14 Kh1 Nd7 15 Rf8+! Qxf8 16 Bg5+ Be7 17 Bxe7+ (I. Kuznetsov-Dementiev, Russia 1992) 17...Ke8 18 Qd4 c5 19 Qxd5 Qxe7 20 Nxg6 Rxb2+ 21 Kxb2 Qh7+ 22 Kg1 Qxg6 unclear (Kuznetsov, Informator 57). White has sacrificed a piece for only two pawns but it's his move and look at that black rook out of play. White can play Rd1, Re1 + or Bb5; he is not worse here.

9 fxg6!

9 0-0 d6 is similar to 6 0-0 lines. It gives Black a tempo to sort himself out.

9...hxg6

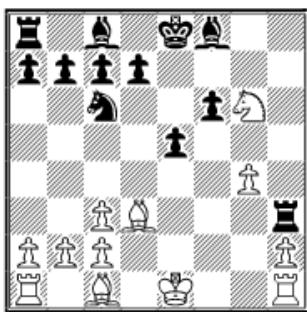
Black could also play 9...d5 10 Qxd5 hxg6 when 11 Nf3 is unbalanced with chances for both sides.

10 Qg4 Nc6

Black can also avoid the queen exchange by 10...g5 11 Nf5 Qg6 12 Bd3 (Szell-Fedorov, West Berlin 1987) 12...Qg8 unclear – Yusupov, *ECO* 3rd edition.

11 Qxg6+ Qxg6 12 Nxg6 Rh5 13 g4 Rh3 14 Bf1 Rh7 15 Bd3 Rh3

Here a 'chicken' draw was agreed in I. Kuznetsov-Potapov, Russia 1992.



16 0-0 d5 17 Kg2

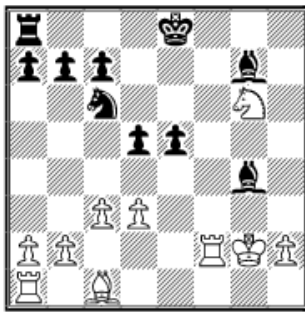
White can also consider 17 Nxf8 Kxf8 18 Kg2 and Yusupov's exchange sacrifice on d3 seems less plausible since Black lacks the dark-squared bishop. However 18...Bxg4!? may be playable: 19 Rxf6+ Ke7 20 Rg6 Rb8 21 Rg7+ Ke6 22 Rxb4 Rxb2+ 23 Kf1 e4 24 Be2 Ne5 25 Rg1 (only move). This may be survivable for White, but it is tricky

to defend.

17...Rxd3!? 18 cxd3 Bxg4 19 Rxf6 Bg7

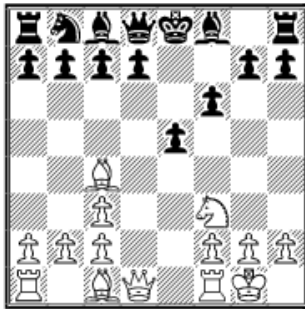
With compensation – Yusupov, *ECO* 3rd ed.

20 Rf2



Although White is behind on development, it is not clear to me what Black has for the exchange in the long run, or how he can capitalise on his temporary activity.

B:
6 0–0



Now we are back to the line considered by Bird and Pierce. Castling at move six became the accepted way to play for advantage – get the king into safety and try to open the e-file. Yet the tempo it gives Black for development may be fatal.

Black does not have a wide choice of moves because now White's king is safe, he is threatening Nxe5, as noted early in the article.

Since Black does not want to play 6...g6 (another potentially weakening pawn move) the moves usually considered (and which we shall examine below) are 6...d6 (the move Bird recommended), 6...Nc6 and 6...Qe7, all of which lend much-needed support to the e-pawn.

First, though, spare a thought for Fritz 8's suggestion 6...d5, which returns the gambit pawn to get an endgame in which White's hampered queenside pawn structure could be a serious disadvantage. However after 7 Bxd5 c6 8 Bf7+ Ke7 9 Qxd8+ Kxd8 there is a lot of play left before that matters and White is ahead on development. This variation cannot be called more than equal without practical tests.

So now we look at:

B1: 6...d6

B2: 6...Nc6

B3: 6...Qe7

B1:

6...d6

Bird's preference, but given a “?” in the 8th edition of the *Handbuch*.

7 Nh4

This move keeps coming up in the Boden-Kieseritsky Gambit.

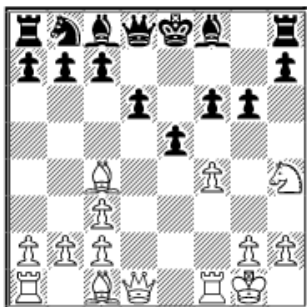
The alternative 7 Re1 was seen in B. Escandell-J. S. Morgado, Buenos Aires 1967, which continued 7...Nc6 8 b4 Qe7 9 Qd5 Nd8 10 Nd4 c6 11 Qf3 g6 12 a4 Qg7 13 a5 Be7 14 Nb3 d5 15 Bf1 a6 16 Bd2 0–0 17 c4 Be6 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 b5 axb5 20 Bxb5 Rc8 21 c3 d4? (21...f5 is better) 22 cxd4 Qf7 23 Rab1 Nc6 24 Bxc6 Rxc6 25 dxe5 Bd5 26 e6 Rxe6 27 Qd3 Rd8 28 Nd4 Bc4 29 Qc3 Rxe1+ 30 Rxe1 Bc5 31 Be3 Qd5 32 Ne6 ½–½.

7...g6

Continuing to follow Bird's line.

7...Qe7 is also known and may be good. Then 8 Qh5+ (8 f4 Be6 Löwenthal, 1861) 8...Kd8 9 f4 Be6 10 Bxe6 Qxe6 11 fxe5 fxe5 (11...dxe5 12 Ng6 Bc5+ 13 Kh1 Re8 14 Qxh7 Qg8 15 Qh5 Nd7 16 b4 Bd6 17 Be3=*Handbuch*) when perhaps White should just play 12 Nf3. Instead a game Hering-Imbusch, in *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1900 page 18, went 12 Bg5+ Kc8 (12...Be7? loses to 13 Bxe7+ Qxe7 14 Ng6 Qe8 15 Qh4+ or 13...Kxe7 14 Qg5+ and Qxg7.) 13 Rf7 Nd7 (13...g6 14 Nxg6 Qxf7 seems playable, for if 15 Qg4+ Qd7 16 Qxd7+ K or Nxd7 17 Nxh8 d5 and Black's better pawns could prove more important than White's lead in development.) 14 Raf1 c6? (Instead 14...d5! is critical.) 15 Ng6! Nf6 (15...Qxg6 16 Qg4 Be7 17 Rxe7 Rd8 18 Rf8! Kc7! 19 Rxd8 Rxd8 20 Rxg7!) 16 Bxf6 hxg6 17 Qxh8 Qxf7 18 Bxg7 and White wins.

8 f4



Now we are back where we started, For 8...Qe7 see above. Instead:

8...f5!? 9 Nf3

9 Nxf5?! first occurred in Spitzer-Szén, Pest 1857 (to be found in the *Berlin Schachzeitung* 1857 page 237 according to Löwenthal's book on Morphy.), when if 9...Bxf5 (or 9...gxf5 10 Qh5+) 10 Qd5 'with a fine attack'. See the *Chess*

Player's Chronicle 3rd series p. 30. Actually don't bother looking it up, because 9...d5! refutes White's ninth. Hence the knight retreat.

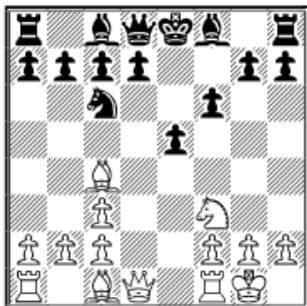
9...d5

Not 9...e4?? 10 Qd4. After Black returns the pawn, the position seems about equal: **10 Bxd5 Bc5+ 11 Kh1 c6 12 Bc4 Qxd1 13 Rxd1 e4 14 Ne5 Nd7** (draw, 42 in F. Konieczka-G. Andruet, Bundesliga 1985-6).

So unless 7...Qe7 is good, 6...d6 is not a danger to White, and if ...Qe7 is good then, why not play it at move 6 instead? Before examining that, however, there is another variation to consider.

B2:

6...Nc6



This position has quite often arisen via the Two Knights Defence, when Black plays 5...f6 instead of 5...Be7 as recommended above.

The eighth edition of the *Handbuch* says this is the correct defence, as was shown in the Berlin 1897 tournament (Schlechter-Marco); as Schlechter was editor, you'd better believe it. See below.

7 Nh4

Is this too late?

7 Re1 d6 leads to Escandell-Morgado, above.

7...g6!

a) 7...Qe7 also gets a ? in the *Handbuch*, under the influence of a famous but not very sound win by Paul Morphy: 8 Nf5 Qc5 9 Bb3 (9 Ne3, to

prevent Black's next, may be better.) 9...d5 10 Be3 Qa5 11 Nh4 Be6 12 Qh5+ g6 (12...Bf7!?) 13 Nxg6 Bf7 14 Qh4 Bxg6 15 Qxf6 Rg8 16 Rad1 Be7 17 Qe6 Bf7 18 Qh3 Nd8 19 f4 e4?! (Why not 19...Bc5.) 20 Rxd5! (This combination by Morphy has been much praised. It is an ingenious resource, but he should still have lost.) 20...Bxd5 21 Qh5+ Kf8! (Maybe better 21...Rg6 22 Bxd5 Bc5 23 Kh1! Qa6 unclear) 22 Bxd5 Rg7 23 b4 Qa6 24 f5 Nf7?? (A mistake that perhaps has never been pointed out.) 25 f6! Bxf6 26 b5 Qd6 27 Bxf7 b6 28 Bh6 and White eventually won in Morphy-Barnes, London 1858. Instead Barnes should have found his only move, 24...Qf6, when 25 Bd4 Qg5 26 Qe2 is unclear, but Black fights on.

b) 7...Ne7?! definitely seems bad after 8 Bd3! (instead of 8 f4 d5 Kolisch-G. B. Fraser, 1860) 8...g6 9 f4 Bg7 10 fxe5 fxe5 11 Bg5! and White won quickly in P. A. Saburov-W. M. Luce, corr 1904, another example from the *Handbuch*.

8 f4

8 Qd5 leads nowhere after 8...Qe7.

8...f5! 9 Nf3

Not 9 Nxf5? d5.

9...e4 10 Ng5 Bc5+ 11 Kh1

Now:

a) 11...Qe7 12 Bf7+ Kf8 (not 12...Kd8?? 13 Ne6+) 13 b4 (Murka-Sachnienko, corr 1963) 13...Bb6 unclear – *ECO*.

b) 11...Qf6 12 Bf7+ Ke7 13 Bd5 d6 14 Re1 Kf8 15 g4 Ne7 16 gxf5 Nxd5 17 Qxd5 gxf5 18 Be3 Bxe3 with advantage to Black (0–1, 39) Schlechter-Marco, Berlin 1897.

So this is a problematic line for White. How can he improve? The Boden-Kieseritsky with 6 Nh4 (line A) can be used against the Petroff, but the version with 6 O-O Nc6 arising via the Two Knights does not look playable for White.

B3:

6...Qe7



7 Re1!

7 Nh4 g6! looks too slow for White: 8 Bb3 (or 8 Re1 Nc6 Keres) 8...d6 9 f4 Be6 Fedden-Thorold, corr 1869 (0–1, 30).

H. M. Phillips-W. P. Shipley, cable match, Manhattan CC v Philadelphia Franklin CC 1905, went instead 7 b4 d6 8 Re1 Be6 9 Bxe6 Qxe6 10 Nd4 Qd7 11

f4 Be7 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 Qh5+ g6 14 Qh6 Bf8 15 Qh4 Bg7 16 Bh6 0–0 17 Bxg7 Kxg7 18 Nb3 b6 19 Rad1 Qf7 20 Qe4 c6 (adjudicated drawn after 49 moves; Black did not move his knight until move 45).

After 7 Re1 Black has:

B31: 7...c6

B32: 7...d6

Or 7...Nc6 leading to some of the 7...d6 lines.

B31:

7...c6

This leads to lively tactical play. Returning to the article we quoted earlier from the *Huddersfield College Magazine*, Pierce commented that instead of Staunton's 6 Be3,

'Mr Gossip, in his *Chess Player's Manual*, pages 659 and 81, recommends the following mode of conducting the attack, 6 O-O Qe7 (best) 7 Re1 c6 8 Bg5 d6 &c., but "believes Black ought ultimately to secure the advantage". It has occurred to me that White may obtain a winning attack after the moves 7 Re1 c6 by boldly sacrificing his R and relying upon his superior position and the rapid development of all his forces.'

In this passage it is evident how the modern style of academic chess theory debate with (usually full) citations of references was already well developed. The article was concluded in the November issue with a sample game as follows,

What is most evident in Pierce's "analysis" is his over-optimism for the attacker and lack of rigour in considering all the defence's possibilities. Especially he tends to consider obvious replies that attempt to meet White's threats directly but fails to notice awkward *zwischenzugs*, such as pawn moves that block or attack White's pieces. This was probably a typical fault of the period. Nowadays, analysing such variations with a computer engine such as Fritz, it becomes noticeable how the computer notices such distractions whereas the human player wanted to concentrate on the enjoyable main line.

8 Rxe5?!

As mentioned above, this was an attempt to improve on Gossip's 8 Bg5. In the 1880s, Pierce's idea was the preferred move, but seems to be unsound.

8 Nxe5 is better, with roughly equal chances: 8...fxe5 9 Qh5+ g6 10 Qxe5 d5 11 Qxe7+ Bxe7 12 Bg5 0-0 13 Bxe7 dxc4 14 Bxf8.

8...fxe5 9 Bg5



9...Qc5

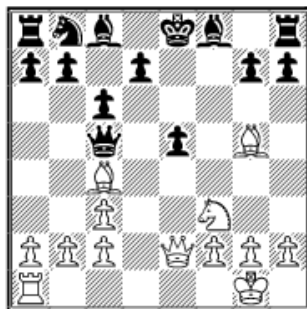
Pierce thought 9...Qd6 was a mistake, but Black seems OK after 10 Qe2 Be7 (10...b5 11 Rd1 bxc4 12 Rxd6 Bxd6 13 Nxe5 Bxe5 14 Qxe5+ Kf7 will probably end in perpetual check.) 11 Rd1 Qc7 and now:

a) 12 Nxe5 d5 ('or B takes B') 13 Qh5+ g6 14 Nxg6 (Pierce just gives "&c"

implying White wins; he apparently overlooked...) 14...Bg4! 15 Qxg4 hxg6 and Black is clearly better, e.g. 16 Bf4 Qd7 (or 16...Qb6 17 Qxg6+ Kd8) 17 Qxg6+ Kd8 18 Be2 Qe8 19 Qe6 Nd7 20 c4 Bd6 21 Qxd6 Qxe2 22 Ra1 Qe4.

b) 12 Bxe7 is given as an alternative by Pierce but again he overlooks Black's correct defence: 12...Kxe7 13 Nxe5 "&c" says Pierce, but although White is better, he is not clearly winning by force after 13...d5 14 Ng6+. Anyway, Black can improve by 12...d5!

10 Qe2



This came with a detailed analysis in *Huddersfield Chess Magazine* claiming White advantage, or winning. But surely Black is winning.

10...d5?!

White won several games after this.

10...d6? is bad (says Pierce, correctly) because of 11 b4 Qb6 12 Nxe5 winning

easily.

b) 10...Be7! should be best. It might be answered (he said) by:

b1) 11 b4 was his other idea, but now 11...Qd6! needs analysis. Pierce only considers 11...Qb6?? 12 Qxe5 Qd8 13 Qxg7, which forces mate; he gives 13...Rf8 14 Re1, but 13...d5 postpones the mate by several moves.

b2) 11 Nxe5 Bxg5 (Here 11...d5 also comes into consideration.) 12 Qh5+ etc. but now, although humans would surely think there should be something for White here, I have not found anything yet to trouble Fritz: 12...g6 13 Qxg5 d5 14 Bd3 Qd6 15 Nxg6 (15 Re1 0-0) 15...hxg6 16 Bxg6 + Kf8 and Black has a threat on h2.

11 Nxe5

This does seem good for White but more analysis is needed. (Not 11 Qxe5 + Kd7 and Black escapes – Pierce.) Now:

a) 11...Be6? and now:

a1) 12 Qh5+?? g6+ 13 Nxg6 hxg6 14 Qxg6+ Kd7 15 Re1 Qd6 16 Qf6 Qxh2+ (Strangely Pierce's article in HCM November 1877 did not give this move, but instead 16...Be7 17 Qxh8 Bxg5 18 Bd3 Bd8.) 17 Kf1 Qh1 + 18 Ke2 Qh5+ 19 Kf1 Bd6 20 Qg7+ Kc8 21 Bd3 Re8 22 Be3 Be5 23 Qg5 Qxg5 24 Bxg5 Bf7 0-1, W. T. Pierce-Archdall, corr 1877 [*Illustrated London News* 24 November 1877].

a2) Pierce soon found the improvement 12 Ng6! Kd7 (Otherwise White plays 13 Nxh8) but now he gave the inferior 13 b4 in *Huddersfield College Magazine* and the same move was shown afterwards by P. T. Duffy in the *Illustrated London News*. Black could then play 13...Qd6 instead of the line they mention, ending in an elegant mate, which is 13...Qb6? 14 Re1 c5 (14...Bf7 15 Nxf8+ Rxf8 16 Qe7+) 15 Bxd5 Bxd5 16 Qe8 + Kc7 17 Bf4+ Bd6 18 Re7+ Nd7 19 Rxd7+ Kc6 20 Rxd6+ Kc7 21 Rc6#.

Instead of 13 b4, White has 13 Re1! hxg6 14 Qxe6+ Kc7 15 Bf4+ Bd6 (Even worse is 15...Kb6? as in Bournemouth Chess Club vs. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, corr 1891, losing to 16 b4.) 17 Qxd6+ Kb6 18 Qc7+ Ka6 19 Qa5# 1-0, Rev. E. B. Brackenbury-J. W. Morling, corr ca. 1891.

'At this point, Black has two other defences worth noticing, namely 11...Qd6 and 11...Be7' – Pierce in HCM.

b) 11...Qd6 'To the first White may reply 12 Bd3 or 12 Re1'. The latter looks the stronger of Pierce's two suggestions since 12 Re1 Be7 is none too clear.

c) 11...Be7 12 Qh5+ g6 (12...Kd8? is refuted by 13 b4 or 13 Nf7+ I think.) 13 Nxg6 when instead of 13...hxg6? 14 Qxh8+ Kd7 15 Qg7 Kd8 16 Qf8+ Kd7 17 Qf7 Kd8 18 Re1 winning, there is 13...Bg4! although White is still better after 14 Qxg4 hxg6 15 Qc8+ Kf7 16 Qxh8 Bxg5 17

Qh7+ Kf8 18 Qxb7 dxc4 19 Qxa8.

B32:

7...d6



'Seems to be his best move' wrote Pierce in the *Huddersfield College Magazine*, November 1877 p. 49.

8 Nh4

For 8 b4, see 7 b4 d6 8 Re1 (Phillips-Shipley).

Pierce also examined 8 Nd4 (which seems to have been the move first tried

here) and now:

a) 8...Bd7 9 b4 c6 10 a4 d5 11 Bb3 Qd6 12 Qf3 Be7 13 b5 e4 (The simple move of 13...Qc7 is best.) 14 Bf4 Qc5 15 Qg3 0-0 16 Rxe4 f5 17 Re6 cxb5 18 Rae1!? (White, a strong Birmingham player, said 18 Rxe7 Qxe7 19 Bxd5+ Kh8 20 Bxb7 Bc6 21 Bxc6 Nxc6 22 Nxc6 wins easily, 'but I thought that the text move would make it the most interesting as I was sure of a piece.') 18...Nc6 19 axb5 Nxd4 20 Rxe7 Rf7 21 Rxf7 Kxf7 22 Bd6 Re8 23 Rxe8 Bxe8 24 Qe5 (If 24.Bxc5 Ne2+ and Black regains the queen though he still loses the game.) 24...Qxb5 25 cxd4 Bc6 1-0, W. Bridgwater-E. Kirby, corr 1881 [*BCM* 1882 p. 144].

b) 8...g6 9 f4 and now:

b1) 9...Nc6 10 Bb5 Bd7 11 Qf3 Nd8 12 fxe5 fxe5 13 Qg3 Bxb5 14 Bg5 Qg7 (14...Qd7 15 Rxe5+) 15 Nxb5 Ne6 16 Be3 a6 17 Nd4 Nxd4 18 cxd4 0-0-0 19 Bg5 Re8 20 Re4 Qf7 21 Rf1 Qd5 22 Qg4+ Kb8 23 Bf6 Rg8 24 b3 Bg7 25 c4 Qe6 26 Qh4 Bxf6 27 Rxf6 Qe7 28 dxe5 dxe5 29 Qf2 Qd8 30 Rf3 Rg7 31 b4 Rd7 32 h3 Rd4 33 Rfe3 Rxe4 34 Rxe4 Qd7 35 Qe2 Qg7 36 c5 c6 37 a4 Qc7 38 a5 Qg7 39 Qd3 Qc7 and drawn in 48 moves (W. T. Pierce-G. W. Farrow, Nash's corr tourney 1877).

b2) 9...Bg7 10 Qf3 Kd8 11 b3 c6 12 Ba3 Kc7 13 Rad1 Rd8 14 Qd3 Bg4 15 Rd2 Qd7 16 h3 Bf5 17 Nxf5 gxf5 18 Qg3 d5 19 fxe5 fxe5 20 Rxe5 Bxe5 21 Qxe5+ Kb6 22 Qd4+ Kc7 23 Qf4+ Kb6 24 Be2 a5 25 Qf2+ Kc7 26 Bc5 Na6 27 Bb6+ Kb8 28 Bxd8 Qxd8 29 Bd3 Qg5 30 Re2 Kc7 31 Qxf5 Qxf5 32 Bxf5 h6 33 Re7+ Kb6 34 Rh7 Rf8 35 Bg6 Rf6 36 Rxh6 Nc5 37 h4 Ne4 38 h5 Kc5 39 Rh8 Nxc3 40 Rg8 Ne2+ 41 Kh2 Nf4 42 g4 Ne6 43 Kg3 Kb4 44 h6 Nf8 45 h7 Nxe7 46 Bxe7 Ka3 47 Rb8 1-0, Edinburgh-Glasgow, corr 1898 [*The Field* 1 October 1898; *ILN* 22/10/1898].

8...Be6



a) 8...g6 was analysed in the *English Mechanic* for 1 January 1892. 9 f4 f5 (9... Be6 10 Bd3 Nc6 11 f5 g5 12 fxe6 gxh4 13 Qh5+ Kd8 14 Rf1 Qxe6 15 Rxf6 etc.; but maybe 14...Bg7 is better?) 10 fxe5 Qxh4 11 exd6+ Kd8 12 Bb5 Bxd6 13 g3 Qf6 14 Qd4, but the analyst overlooked 14...Qxd4+ was a winning check and gave 15 Bg5+ in reply! Instead, 10 Nf3 is perhaps all right.

b) 8...Nc6 9 Qh5+ Kd8 and now:

b1) 10 f4 Bd7 11 Bd5 Be8 12 Qd1 g5 13 fxg5 fxg5 14 Nf3 h5 15 Bxc6 Bxc6 16 Nxe5 Qg7 17 Qd4 Bd7? 18 Nf7+ 1-0, E. Brackenbury-H.

Briggs, *Dublin Evening Mail* corr tourney-4 1894.

b2) 10 Bd3 Be6 11 Ng6 (Brackenbury-Johnson, same event) when 11... Qf7 seems best.

9 Bd3 Nc6

Perhaps best. Others:

a) 9...g6 was analysed in the *English Mechanic*: 10 f4 Nd7 (or 10...Bf7 11 Qf3 c6 12 fxe5 fxe5 13 Rf1 Nd7 14 Bg5 Qxg5 15 Qxf7+ Kd8 16 Nf3 Qe3 +?! 17 Kh1 Be7 18 Rae1 Qb6 19 Nd4 etc.; here 12...dxe5 is perhaps better.) 11 Bxg6+ hxg6 12 Nxg6 Qh7 13 Nxh8 Qxh8 14 f5 Bf7 (if 14... Bxf5 15 Qf3 etc.) 15 Re3 'and the queen is likely to be harassed'.

b) 9...Bf7 'White may proceed 10 Qg4 threatening Nf5 as well in the check at c8 etc. 10...Qd7 11 Bf5 Qc6 12 Bxh7 threatening mate in two moves.' Better 11...Qe7, but White does have an edge.

c) 9...Qf7!?, not considered in the old analysis, may be best.

10 Qh5+ Bf7?



As in the old analysis. 10...Qf7 was not considered, perhaps being rejected on account of 11 Bg6? (11 Qe2 d5) 11... hxg6 12 Qxh8 which 'wins' the exchange for a pawn – only to lose outright after 12...g5 13 Nf3 Bf5 when it will be very expensive to extricate the white queen.

11 Ng6 Bxg6

If 11...Qd8 12 Qh3.

12 Bxg6+ Kd8

White definitely has the advantage here through dominating the light squares and having the safer king, e.g. 13 Qh3, 13 Bf5 or 13 Be4.

Yet pre-occupied by material (and in a very short-sighted way) the nineteenth century analyst gives 13 Bxh7?? Qe8?? (Black could win the bishop by ...g5 or ...g6.) 14 Qxe8+ Kxe8 15 Bg6+ 'and the game seems even'.

To sum up, there are some enticing ideas in this gambit, but I really do not think it can be trusted in serious play. In blitz or casual Internet play at fast speeds, however, why not give it a try?

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