



C O L U M N I S T S

## *The Kibitzer*

Tim Harding

## One Hundred Years Ago: Chess in the Year 1901

As regular readers know, my January column always looks back to the chess scene of 100 years ago. Because it was a such a momentous year in other ways, a little background will be useful.

In the year 1901, the world was celebrating the start of the 20th century, because in those days the popular culture counted for less than the opinions of the intelligentsia. 1900 was considered to be the final year of the 19th century not the first of a new one.

Indeed it was 1901 that saw the greater political and social changes. In England and the British Empire, it was not so much the changing of the year prefix from 18 to 19 twelve months earlier as the death of Queen Victoria on January 22 at the age of 81 that brought an era to an end. She had reigned for 63 years, the longest of any British monarch. Her eldest son, the Prince of Wales, became King Edward VII in his 60th year and ushered in the Edwardian era which saw many social changes. This was the liberal decade when the suffragettes campaigned for votes for women and the power of the House of Lords was drastically curtailed.

Britain was still fighting the Boer War in South Africa. General Roberts returned to England in January 1901 believing the war won but Afrikaner guerrilla resistance kept the fighting going for another 18 months or so.

In the USA, change came more dramatically still. Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as President on September 14, when William McKinley died of wounds sustained when he was shot by an anarchist eight days earlier. McKinley had only begun his second term of office in January.

In the world of the 64 chequered squares, Emanuel Lasker was world champion but played no matches or tournaments; he was mostly working on his doctoral thesis. He did make an exhibition tour of the USA and also played some offhand games in England. His great rival Dr Siegbert Tarrasch was also inactive in 1901 and of course Steinitz had died in 1900. The other world class player who might be considered to be close to his peak at this time was Harry Nelson Pillsbury. However, 1901 was the year he got married and he did not travel to Europe for chess. (Graham Burgess's book *Chess Highlights of the 20th Century*, records that Pillsbury dominated a tournament in Buffalo, scoring 9/10).

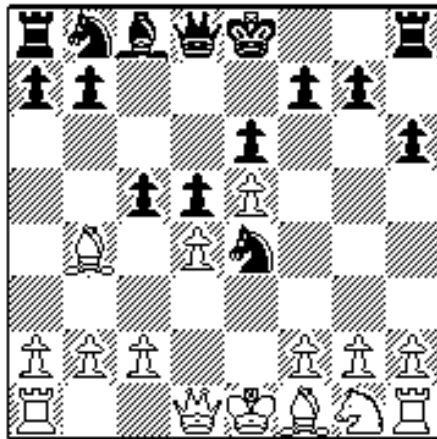
As Burgess points out, the future of chess was being shaped too in this year. Max Euwe was born and the 12-year-old Jose Raul Capablanca won a match

against the Cuban champion Corzo. However, I am surprised that Burgess singles this out as the principal chess news of the year; it's interesting as a pointer to the years ahead but I preferred to concentrate on the substantial events of 1901. If one wants to look forward, it's also right to mention that the young Rubinstein was cutting his teeth against Polish opposition at this time; he was not to emerge on the world stage for another couple of years.

From April-November 1901, Pillsbury played a two-game thematic correspondence match with John Lindsay McCutcheon to test the latter's variation of the French. Pillsbury won one and drew one, but McCutcheon was no patzer. He was to play further matches of this kind, scoring 1-1 with Emanuel Lasker in 1904. Here is the game Pillsbury won

***McCutcheon, J - Pillsbury, H French Defence [C12] Thematic postal match, 1901***

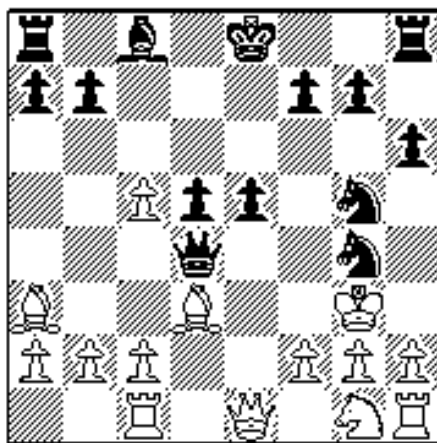
**1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4 5 e5 h6 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 Bxc3** This is still occasionally seen but 7 bxc3 is usually reckoned to be better as White may be able to make use of the b-file later. McCutcheon generally did much better on the black side of his variation; as White, he probably just wanted to experiment with untested lines. **7...Ne4 8 Bb4?** Fischer tried Kopaev's idea 8 Ba5 without success against Petrosian. The following year, McCutcheon tried 8 Qg4 in a postal match against Kenneth S. Howard. Then 8...Kf8 is probably best, as in the famous postal game Seibold-Keres from the 1930s. The critical moves are 8 Bd2!? (Djuric-Knaak, Manila izt 1990) and 8 Ne2. **8...c5** (*See Diagram*)



With the main point that if 9 dxc5? Nxf2 10 Kxf2 Qh4+ and 11...Qxb4. **9 Ba3?!** The books now give 9 Bxc5 Nxc5 10 dxc5 Qc7 11 Nf3 Nc6 12 Qe2 Qa5+ 13 Qd2 Qxc5 14 Bd3 0-0 with an edge to Black in Smyslov-Chistyakov, Moscow 1938.

**9...Nc6 10 dxc5 Qa5+ 11 Ke2** If 11 c3 d4 attacks. **11...Nxe5 12 Qe1 Qa4 13 Rc1 Qc4+ 14 Ke3 Ng4+ 15 Kf3 Ng5+ 16 Kg3 Qd4 17 Bd3 e5** with a winning attack. As is to be expected, once the

GM gets on top, he wins easily. (*See Diagram*)



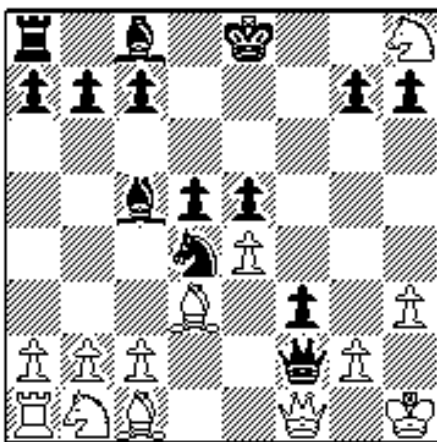
18 Ne2 h5 19 h4 Ne4+ 20 Bxe4 Qxe4  
21 Qd2 f5 22 f3 f4+ 23 Kh3 Ne3+ 24  
Kh2 Qg6 25 g3 0-0 26 Rhg1 Qf5 27  
g4 hxg4 28 fxg4 Nxg4+ 0-1.

The competitive chess scene of 1901 appears somewhat lacklustre on first inspection. Europe was still the stage where each year the top players were expected to contest top honours and without the aforementioned big guns in action, some lesser lights (albeit strong players) got their chance to shine.

Professional commitments sometimes kept players out of action for a season; that seems to be the case with Tarrasch and Maroczy in 1901. However, Maroczy did win the following entertaining miniature in Hungary that year.

**L. Fözö - Geza Maroczy Latvian Counter Gambit [C40] Nagytétény, 1901**

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 f5 3 Bc4 Nc6 4 d3 Bc5 5 Ng5 f4 6 Nf7 Qh4 7 0-0 Nh6 8  
Nxb8 Ng4 9 h3 Nxf2 10 Rxf2 Qxf2+ 11 Kh1 d5 12 d4 Nxd4 13 Bd3 f3  
14 Qf1 (See Diagram)



14...fxg2+ 15 Qxg2 Qe1+ 16 Bf1  
Qxc1 17 Nd2 Qxa1 18 Qxg7 Be6 19  
Qxc7 Nf3 20 Qxb7 Nxd2 21 Qxa8+  
Ke7 22 Qb7+ Kf6 0-1

At the start of 1901, the 2nd All-Russian Tournament was ending in Moscow; it was comfortably won by the great Chigorin who was now in his early 50s and had only a few more years to live. Since Chigorin went on to take third prize in the won the year's most important tournament, Monte

Carlo, 1901 can be counted a successful year for him.

However, it was Dawid Janowski, the Polish-born French master, who can claim the top honours since he took first prize there. This (played February 3-March 1), was the first of a series of events that ran until 1906 in the Mediterranean principality of Monaco, of which the 1902 event is generally reckoned the strongest.

It was a hard-fought event in which nobody remained unbeaten. Even Janowski lost two games to Alapin and Mason. Only the local amateur Didier was outmatched.

A peculiarity of the scoring system was that while draws were replayed with reversed colours, as in many earlier events, only half a point was at stake in the second game, so that the point could be split three-quarters to one-quarter if the second game was decisive after an initial draw. The point was split equally if both games were drawn.

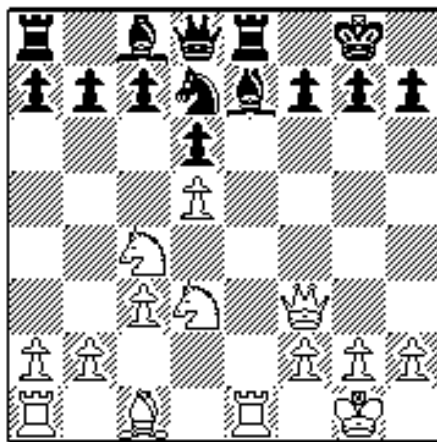
Final totals were Janowski 10¼/13, Schlechter 9½, Chigorin and von Scheve 9, Alapin 8½, Mieses 7, Blackburne and Gunsberg 6½, Marco 6, Marshall 5½, Reggio 4¾, Mason 4¼, Winawer 4, Didier ¼.

As Owen Hindle observes in his booklet *J.H. Blackburne, the Final Years*, when the great Englishman sat down facing Simon Winawer, it was an unusual experience for him (in the 20th century) that he faced an opponent older than himself. Blackburne was "only" 59 whereas Winawer celebrated his 61st birthday just after the end of the tournament. The older man lost on time in a hopeless position.

Here are some games from the Monte Carlo event, beginning with the winner's important victory against the runner-up.

### ***Carl Schlechter - Dawid Janowski Ponziani Opening [C44] Monte Carlo (rd. 12), 1901***

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 c3 Nf6 4 d4 Nxe4 5 d5 Nb8 6 Bd3** Former US correspondence champion David C. Taylor, in his book *Ponziani Power*, says this move is not recommended for White, and should be replaced by 6 Nxe5. **6...Nc5 7 Nxe5 Nxd3+ 8 Nxd3 Be7 9 0-0 d6 10 Qf3 0-0 11 Nd2 Nd7 12 Re1** 12 Nc4 Re8 13 Na5 was apparently suggested by Yudovich but after 13...Bh4 14 Be3 Qf6 15 Qxf6 Bxf6 16 Rae1 b6 17 Nc6 Ba6 18 Ndb4 Bb7 Taylor likes Black's position. **12...Re8 13 Nc4** (*See Diagram*)



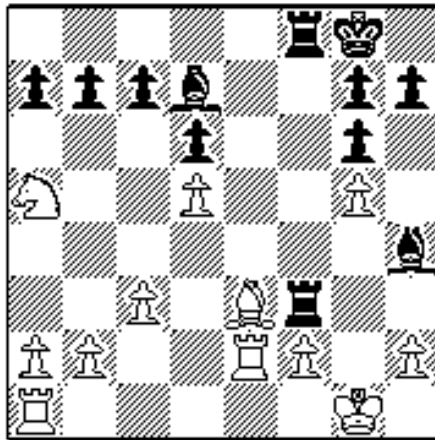
With a couple of minor transpositions, this position actually is dealt with on page 22 of Taylor's book although he doesn't mention the present game.

**13...Nf8** Taylor recommends 13...Nb6! 14 Na5 Qd7 15 c4 Qg4 16 Qf4 Qxf4 17 Nxf4 Bf5 with an edge to Black who "will have excellent diagonals for his bishops while White's knight on a5 is out of play". **14 Nf4?! 14 Bf4** is a better try, as given in my 1984 Chess Digest book on the Ponziani. There can follow 14...a5 15 Re2 Bf6 16 Rxe8 (16

Rae1!? Yudovich) 16...Qxe8 17 Re1 Qa4 18 Na3 b6 (and not 18...b5? 19 b3! Qxa3 20 Re2 Bxc3 21 Bc1; if 18...Bxc3!? 19 Re4! Bb4 20 Re7 with pressure) 19 Re4 and White may have an edge but there is plenty of play for both sides.

**14...Bf5 15 g4?** Another step in the wrong direction, weakening the kingside. **15...Bd7 16 Bd2 Ng6 17 Nxc6 fxc6!** Black can use the f-file to punish White's g4 move. **18 Na5 Rf8!** Janowski ignores the threat to his

b-pawn as he piles the pressure against f2 and later g4. **19 Qe4 Bh4 20 Re2 Qf6 21 Qg2 Qf3 22 Qxf3 Rxf3 23 g5 Raf8 24 Be3** (See Diagram)

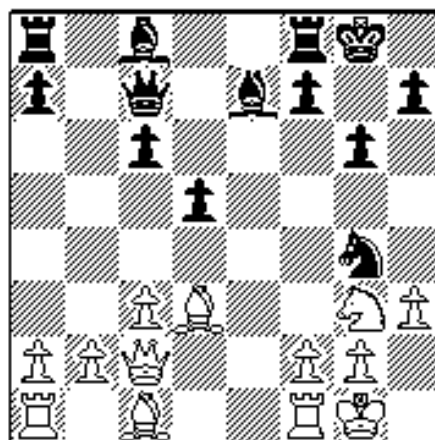


For the moment White has his kingside pawns protected. Must Black now defend his queenside? **24...Bh3!** A strong move that intensifies the pressure and induces an error from the defender. **25 Nb3?!** Schlechter the draw-master is willing to give up a pawn to relieve the pressure, reckoning that Black's extra g-pawn won't be decisive in an ending. His problem is that he won't reach an ending. **25 Nxb7** is more consistent but after **25...R3f5 26 c4** (26 Rd1? Bg4) **26...Re8** Black

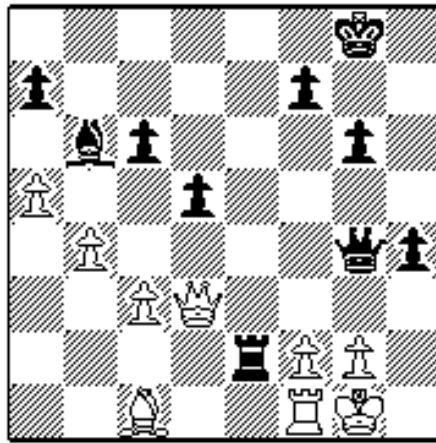
has the initiative and can regain his pawn at will. **25...R3f5 26 Nd4 Rxd5 27 f4** This holds together the kingside and leaves the bishop on h4 precariously placed. Janowski has a simple solution to this, however **27...Re8!** Threatening to win material by...Bg4. **28 Nf3** The unpin manoeuvre **28 Nc2 Bg4 29 Rd2** fails to **29...Rxd2 30 Bxd2 Re2 31 Rd1 Rf2** Presumably Schlechter overlooked this at move 25. **28...Bg4** Wins the exchange and the game. **29 Nxb4 Bxe2 30 Kf2 Rd3 31 Ng2 Bg4** 0-1.

### *James Mason - Joseph Blackburne Sicilian Defence [B45] Monte Carlo, 1901*

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 Bd3** Nowadays White would play **7 e5** here but the Irish-American player Mason chooses an innocuous line and soon loses the initiative. **7...d5 8 exd5 exd5 9 0-0 Be7 10 Ne2 0-0 11 Ng3?!** Blackburne exploits this well. **11...Qc7 12 c3** If **12 Nf5 Bxf5 13 Bxf5 Bd6** followed by seizing the e-file. **12...Ng4 13 Qc2 g6 14 h3?** Better **Re1**. Mason admitted in *British Chess Magazine* that he failed to see in time what Black was up to. (See Diagram)



**14...Bc5** Threatening **Nxf2** so leaving White little choice but to give up a pawn. **15 hxg4 Qxg3 16 Be2 Bxg4 17 Bxg4 Qxg4 18 Bd2 Rfe8 19 Rae1 Re2! 20 Qd3 Rae8 21 Rxe2 Rxe2** Blackburne prefers to keep queens on. **22 Bc1** If **22 g3** (hoping for relief by **Ng2**) Blackburne saw **22...Rxd2! 23 Qxd2 Qxg3+ 24 Kh1 Qh3+ 25 Kg1 Bd6 26 f4 Bc5+**. **22...h5 23 b4 Bb6 24 a4 h4 25 a5** Finally driving the bishop off the diagonal? (See Diagram)

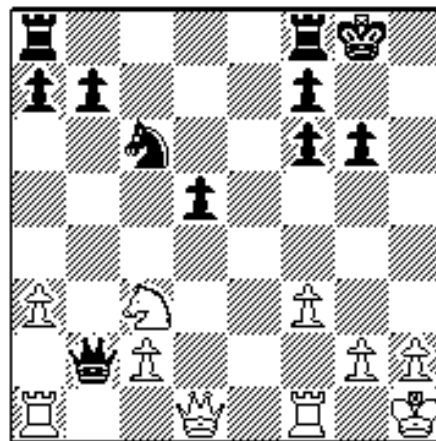


**25...Be3!** No! Blackburne finds a new tactical shot, on the interference theme. As 26 Bxe3? h3 27 g3 Qf3 mates, Mason must give up his queen for rook and bishop. **26 Qxe2 Qxe2 27 Bxe3 a6 28 Bd4 g5 29 f3 f5 30 Rf2 Qd3 31 Kh2?** A final mistake that simplifies Black's technical task. **31...Qd1! 32 Ra2 Kf7 33 Rf2 Kg6 34 f4 g4 35 g3 Qd3 36 Rg2 hxg3+ 37 Rxg3 Qd2+ 38 Rg2 Qxf4+ 39 Kg1 Qf3 40 Rf2 Qg3+ 0-1.**

The brilliancy prize should have gone to Blackburne for that effort but instead was awarded to Mieses for the following flawed game.

**Georg Marco - Jacques Mieses Sicilian Defence [B45] Monte Carlo, 1901**

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Ndb5 Bb4 7 a3 Bxc3+ 8 Nxc3 d5 9 exd5 exd5 10 Bf4** Theory today recommends 10 Bd3 0-0 11 0-0 with an edge to White. This occurred at Monte Carlo in the game Janowski-Blackburne, won by White. **10...0-0 11 Bd3 Bg4 12 f3** This is the first slight weakening of the white position. **12...Bh5 13 0-0 Bg6** Mieses accepts doubled pawns as he hopes to use the h-file later. **14 Bxg6 hxg6 15 Bg5 Qb6+ 16 Kh1 Qxb2** This looks risky, but Black wants to put his king on g7 so he "wins" a pawn to provoke Bxf6. He is also happy to trade off his weak isolated d-pawn. **17 Bxf6 gxf6** (See Diagram)

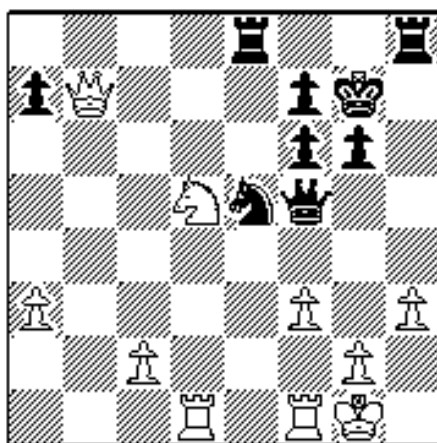


White now tries to trap the queen. **18 Qd2** This however gives Black a tempo to retreat the queen. [18 Nxd5 looks playable.] **18...Qb6 19 Nxd5 Qd8 20 Rad1 Kg7 21 Qf4 Ne5** It seems that Black has everything covered and there is no dangerous discovery the knight can make. White is now pushed back. **22 Qb4 Rh8 23 h3?**

A pusillanimous move that weakens the king position further and deserves

its punishment. 23 Qxb7 would have forced Mieses to justify the conception he began at move 16: 23...Qd6 24 Nc7 (24 Nf4!? would be a double-edged winning try.) 24...Nxf3 (not 24...Rxf2+ 25 Kg1) 25 Ne6+! Qxe6 26 Qxf3 offers more drawing chances.

**23...Qc8** The queen switches to light squares to attack the new target at h3. **24 Qe7 Qf5** 24...Rxf3+ is inconclusive because of 25 Kg1 when both h3 and f6 are hanging. **25 Kg1 Rae8 26 Qxb7** (See Diagram)



With the second rook in play, the time is now ripe. **26...Rxb3! 27 gxh3?** As Burgess shows in some detail, White should have refused the rook and played 27 Nc7 when there are various possibilities, leading to a draw (27...Re7 or 27...Reh8) while 27...Nxf3+ is unclear. **27...Qg5+?** Black should have won prosaically by 27...Nxf3+! 28 Rxf3 Qxf3 with decisive threats and no brilliancy prize. This appears to have been overlooked by Mieses and his contemporaries, and

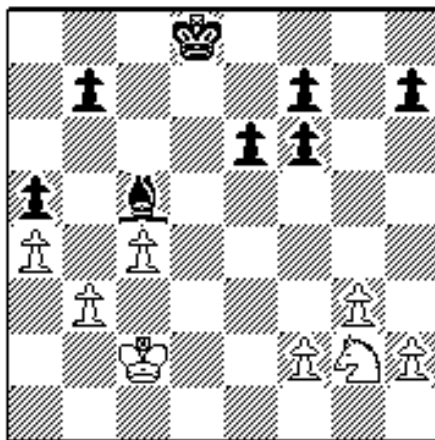
the move he actually played (while it does set up a nice finish) is not as strong as appears to have been believed at the time.

**28 Kf2?** Not 28 Kh2? Nxf3+ 29 Kh1 (29 Rxf3 Re2+ 30 Kh1 Qg2#) 29...Re2 threatening mate on both g2 and h2. However, 28 Kh1! is a better defence. P.Wenman's book *Games from Monte Carlo* (Whitehead & Miller, Leeds 1945) says that if 28 Kh1 then "...Qg3 or...Rh8 is a winning attack". In fact I doubt if 28...Qg3 really wins at all, for example a) 29 Nf4!? Qxf4 30 Qe4 (not 30 Qxa7 Rh8 31 Kg2 Qf5 with strong threats against the exposed king) 30...Qg3 31 Rd2 (31 h4? f5) 31...Qxh3+ (31...Rh8 32 Rh2) 32 Kg1 Rh8 and Black has a strong attack, but no forced win that I can see. b) 29 Ne3 and it is hard to see anything better than 29...Rh8 30 Ng2 Rxb3+ 31 Kg1 Qh2+ 32 Kf2 Qg3+ 33 Kg1 (safest) and Black has only perpetual check. So the right move must be 28...Rh8 29 Kh2 (29 Nf4 Qxf4 30 Kg2 Qg5+ comes to the same.) 29...Qh4 and White must surrender his knight to continue the struggle. I see no absolutely clear win but Burgess thinks Black's attack is strong enough. The main line goes 30 Nf4 Qxf4+ 31 Kg2+ Qg5+! (If 31...Rxb3 32 Ke2 White is still worse but might hang on.) 32 Kf2 Qh4+ 33 Ke2! (33 Ke3 Re8! 34 Kd2 Qf4+ 35 Kc3 Qe3+ wins as given by Burgess) 33...Qc4+ 34 Kd2 Rxb3 and Burgess stops here. White must play 35 Kc1! and after 35...Rh2! (35...Qc3 36 Qb2 Qe3+ 37 Kb1 may hang on) 36 Qb3 or 36 Qb2 White is obviously worse but there is still some play left.

Instead of going in for this, White overlooked the coup de grace and played the king to the fatal square f2. The end was **28...Nd3+!** It is mate in 5. **29 Rxd3** If 29 cxd3 Qh4+ 30 Kg1 Qg3+ etc. **29...Qh4+ 30 Kg1 Qg3+ 31 Kh1 Qxh3+ 32 Kg1 Qg3+ 33 Kh1 Rh8** mate 0-1.

Among other events later in the year, Marco won a 10-game match in Vienna against Albin, who is best known for inventing (or co-inventing) two gambits 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e4 (the Albin Counter-Gambit) and 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e5 Nfd7 6 h4!? (the Albin-Chatard-Alekhine Attack in the French Defence). Twice Albin took the lead but was hauled back. After 7 games, they were level but then Marco (1863-1923), a noted Austrian chess writer, pulled out the stops to win with Black in games 8 and 10 and take the match 6-4.

The endgame in Game 7 is of some interest. (*See Diagram*)



All four rooks have just been traded on d8 and now Marco (White) offers a king and pawn endgame. Albin presumably stands a little better with his bishop versus knight and was probably trying to win but was gradually outplayed.

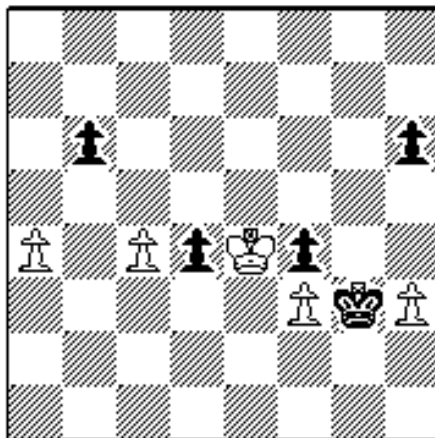
**26 Ne3 f5 27 Kd3 Ke7 28 Ke2 Kd6 29**

**Nc2** Marco withdraws his offer of a pawn ending and waits to see what Black will try. **29...Ke5 30 f3 f4** A mis-step. The black pawns start to

arrive on the same colour squares as Albin's bishop. **31 g4 Be7 32 Kd3 Bc5 33 Ke2 b6 34 Kd3 h6 35 h3 f6 36 Kc3 Kd6 37 Kd3 Ke5 38 Kc3 f5 39 gxf5 Kxf5** Now Black is threatening to create a passed pawn so White must play his trump card. **40 b4 axb4+ 41 Nxb4 e5?!**

Black could have bailed out here. 41...Bxb4+ 42 Kxb4 e5 seems safe although White queens with check, e.g. 43 c5 bxc5+ 44 Kxc5 e4 45 fxe4+ Kxe4 46 a5 f3 47 a6 f2 48 a7 f1Q 49 a8Q+ Ke3 (All other moves loses the queen to a skewer.) 50 Qe8+ Kd2 with a draw, e.g. 51 Qd7+ Qd3. Either Black miscalculated or was still trying to win.

**42 Na6 Bf2** Not 42...e4 43 Nxc5 bxc5 44 a5 exf3 45 Kd2 and White wins. **43 Kd3 Kg5 44 Ke4 Bd4 45 Nb4 Kh4 46 Nc6 Kg3??** A terrible blunder. He had to try 46...Be3 when his h-pawn gives hope although White now has much the better minor piece. **47 Nxd4 exd4** (*See Diagram*)



Marco now forces the win. **48 c5! bxc5 49 a5 d3 50 Kxd3 Kxf3 51 a6 c4+ 52 Kxc4 Ke2 53 a7 f3 54 a8Q f2 55 Qe4+ Kf1 56 Kd3 Kg1 57 Qg4+ 1-0**

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