



COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

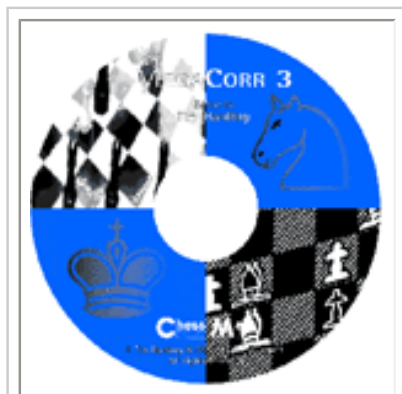
Tim Harding

The Search for Truth in the Evans Gambit (Part 1)

The history of the Evans Gambit in the 19th century is of a succession of champions who developed the opening into a fearsome weapon for White over several decades — until at the end of the century Emanuel Lasker found the answer. The last of these was M.I. Chigorin, who emerged as a major player circa 1800; his approach to the gambit will be considered in part 2 next month. This column will deal with roughly the first 50 years of Evans theory.

The gambit was invented by a Welshman, Captain William Davies Evans (1790-1872) who (from 1819) was the captain of a packet boat bringing the mails between Waterford in Ireland and Milford Haven in Wales. On his ship he devised and analysed in secret his way of regenerating the old Guiooco Piano, 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5, with an early b2-b4. Eventually, in 1827 or possibly late 1826, he got some leave and travelled to London to try out his idea — with immediate success. He was rightly lionized in London chess society for inventing this “gift of the gods to a languishing chess world”.

Traditionally the following is the first game played with the gambit, in which the loser was reputed to be the strongest chess player in the British Isles around this time. I was surprised to note that it is not in ChessBase’s Big and Mega



Order

*Mega Corr 3**Edited by Tim Harding*

databases, so I reproduce it here.

Captain Evans - Alexander McDonnell
London, 1827

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 0-0 d6

Evans opened this game somewhat inaccurately but soon 4 b4 became recognized as the preferable moment to play the gambit. After 4 0-0 Nf6, although 5 b4 has been known it is not as powerful because White has to reckon with the attack on his e-pawn.

5 b4!?

White offers his b-pawn to gain time and open lines.



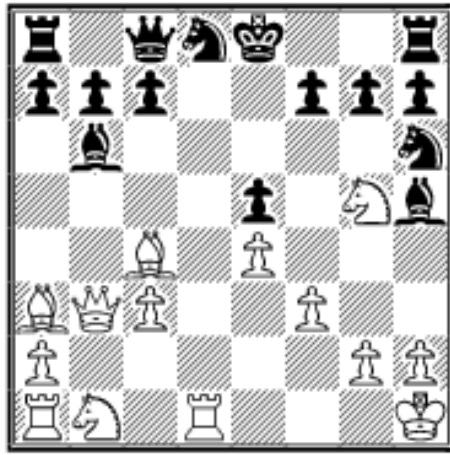
5...Bxb4 6 c3 Ba5 7 d4 Bg4 8 Qb3 Qd7?

8...Bxf3 was stronger, as a in a game Santasiere-Marshall, New York 1926.

9 Ng5

The point of Black's last move was that 9 Qxb7? would lose to 9...Rb8 and White must give up his bishop on f7 to rescue the queen, in view of 10 Qa6 Rb6.

9...Nd8 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 Ba3 Nh6 12 f3 Bb6+ 13 Kh1 Bh5 14 Rd1 Qc8



15 Rxd8+?!

Captain Evans plays a slightly unsound combination. 15 Qb5+ Nc6 16 Bd5 would have won more prosaically and more certainly.

15...Qxd8

15...Kxd8 16 Ne6+! fxe6 (16...Ke8 17 Nxg7+ Kd8 18 Nxh5) 17 Bxe6 and Black must give up his queen because of 17...Bf7 18 Qd1+.

16 Nxf7! Qh4??

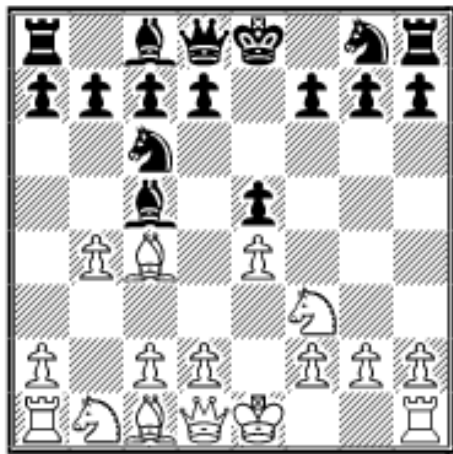
Black threatens a crude mate but allows one of White's own. 16...Nxf7 17 Bb5+ forces mate 17...c6 18 Qe6+; 16...Bxf7 17 Bxf7+ Nxf7 18 Qe6+; 16...Qf6! is the correct defence, offering the rook on h8 in order to castle queenside. White still has a lot of work to do to win then. 17 Qa4+ c6 18 Nd6+ followed by Nxb7 may be best, to leave the black king homeless.

17 Qb5+

17 Bb5+ would be one move quicker.

17...c6 18 Qxe5+ Kd7 19 Qe6+ Kc7 20 Bd6 mate (1-0).

The next champion of the Evans was Alexander McDonnell himself. The Ulster master, having suffered defeat in the very first game to 'Evans of the Gambit' enthusiastically adopted the opening himself, but with the improved more order, 4 b4.



Unlike the King's Gambit, White does not compromise his own king position in offering a pawn. After 4...Bxb4 5 c3 the black bishop must move again and White has prepared a springboard for opening the centre by d2-d4 as well as a route for his queen into the game at b3 (or sometimes

c2/a4).

McDonnell sprang this move on Charles Mahé de la Bourdonnais in the first game of their second match (the 26th game in their overall sequence of contests) in 1834.

Although his play was generally inferior to the Frenchman's, McDonnell had surprise and preparation on his side; he not surprisingly went on to win that game. Impressed, Labourdonnais himself played the Evans several times after that. Overall, White made a big plus score in the games between them in the gambit (in which the Frenchman was White more often than not). In their contests, the defences 5...Ba5, 5...Be7 and 5...Bd6 were all seen for the first time. Here is one of the shorter games they played.

Alexander McDonnell - Charles M. de la Bourdonnais
7th game of their 6th match, London 1834

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 0-0 Bb6 7 d4 exd4 8 cxd4 d6



This formation, which can arise by various move orders, soon became known as the Normal Position. In the matches between Labourdonnais and McDonnell, it arose several times with the Irishman favouring the next move, which avoids a pin of king's knight but at the cost of a tempo.

Labourdonnais mostly played 9 d5 or 9 Bb2.

9 h3 Nf6 10 e5!?

In 1971 the Italian GM Sergio Mariotti beat Gligoric using a slow-build up, starting with 10 Re1 here. McDonnell's move is too sharp but typical of its era.

10...dxe5 11 Ba3



11...Bxd4?!

Black probably has several moves preferable to this.

12 Qb3 Qd7 13 Ng5!?! Nd8 14 Nc3 c5?

14...h6 would have forced the knight to beat a retreat, which means that 13 Nxd4 was objectively better.

15 Nxf7 Rf8

5...Nxf7? would have been possible with the black pawn on c7 but now would come 16 Bb5.

16 Nxe5!

This is a typical Evans Gambit line-opening sacrifice.
Black's defences are wrecked and he cannot survive long.

16...Bxe5 17 Rfe1 Nc6 18 Bxc5 Qf5 19 Nb5 Bd7? 20 Nd6+ 1-0.

The Evans Gambit shortly afterwards encountered its first crisis. Looking back on the history of the opening in 1874, Zukertort wrote an important article entitled *Forty years in the Life of a Favourite*, published in the *Westminster Papers*. He said that the move 6...Nf6 (after 5...Ba5 6 0-0) was introduced as an improvement in 1836 and was “specially practiced by the English chess leaders”.



La Bourdonnais recommended the reply 7 Ng5 in 1838 “entirely oblivious of the fact that George Walker published, a year before, a perfectly satisfactory defence against this move, invented by Mr Burnett of Edinburgh”. The line usually given is 7...0-0 8 f4 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 followed by 10 Qb3 Be6! or 10 d4 h6 or 10 Ba3 Nxf4!.

Accordingly, said Zukertort, the Evans Gambit was almost given up because of unfavourable results, although the “redoubtable defence” (as he called it) could be avoided by 6 d4 — as pointed out by Stanley in the ‘American Magazine’ (1847) for example, while another American breathed new life into White’s chances following 6 0-0 Nf6 by means of 7 d4 which became known after him as the Richardson Attack.

Morphy for example, seemed equally happy to play 6 d4 or

6 0-0 as White. Of course the moves are equivalent if Black intends to head for the Normal Position but they offer the defender quite different possibilities otherwise. Anderssen occasionally played 6 0-0 but preferred the sharper 6 d4 on almost all occasions.

In the same article, Zukertort argued that 5...Ba5 was Black's best move, since it was just as good as 5...Bc5 if he wanted to play the Normal line, while it also afforded additional opportunities.

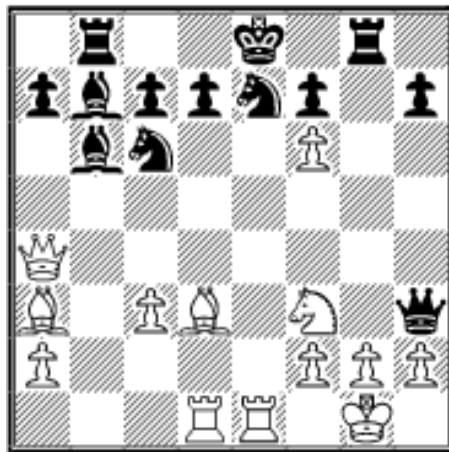
One of the most puzzling things about the Evans Gambit praxis of the 19th century is why so many players chose the move 5...Bc5 although it has no advantages to the modern eye — unless Black believes the variation 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 Bb4+ to favour the second player. Presumably this was the reason why some of them chose to meet 5...Bc5 by 6 O-O. Yet the English master Henry Bird used to prefer 5...Bc5 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 Bb6 8 0-0 d6 as his route to the Normal Position; his arguments in favour of this move order are not convincing.

In the light of the modern view that if Black wants a steady solid defence, then he should play either 5...Be7 or 5...Ba5 6 d4 d6 (while against 6 0-0 he can adopt the Lasker Defence, 6...d6 7 d4 Bb6) and the fact that if he wants a sharp fight with equal chances he can play 5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 O-O Nge7, much of the 19th century debates appear beside the point.

Theory developed steadily through the mid-century without really resolving these issues. Amateur games of the 1840s and 1850s show Black experimenting with various defensive ideas, including 4...d5, 4...Bxb4 5 c3 Bd6 (no inhibitions in those days about blocking the d-pawn), 5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 O-O Bxc3? and the Compromised Defence, 5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 O-O dxc3 as well as a good

helping of the Normal Position. If White played 6 O-O then 6...Nf6 was the most usual reply unless Black headed for the normal with moves like 6...d6. Several games were played with an early Qb3 for White (notably some by James Kipping against Anderssen, Manchester 1857). In 1855 one of Paul Morphy's early opponents, T.Ayers of Alabama, defended by 5...Ba5 6 d4 d6 (a glimpse into the future) but he spoiled it by answering 7 Qb3 by 7...Qe7.

Another fairly popular method of defence, 5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 O-O d3, was seen in the famous Evergreen Game, for which I refer you to Kibitzer 76 in the Chess Café Archives. I should like to point out that in that article I show how Black missed a clear draw after Anderssen's famous 19 Rad1, by means of 19...Qh3! (see diagram), a move which is not mentioned in the much-vaunted new book by Kasparov on his great contemporaries. Kasparov has indeed made some discoveries in several historic games but his treatment of this one was exceedingly lazy.



(This would have been the position in the Evergreen Game if Dufresne had replied to 19 Rad1 by 19...Qh3.)

Now 20 g3? Rxc3+! 21 hxg3 Qxc3+ is not a draw as Sid Pickard claimed in his book on Anderssen (If 22 Kf1 Qxf2 mate or 22 Kh1 Bxf2 instead of

taking a draw with 22...Qxf3+), so White doesn't seem to have anything better than a repetition of moves by 20 Bf1 Qf5 21 Bd3 Qh3 etc. (not 21...Qxf3? 22 Rxe7+! as in the actual game, while 21...Qxf6 is unnecessarily unclear).

It seems that the famous 1889 analysis by Lipke (and hence Pickard) thought Black stood better after 20 Bf1 Qf5 21

Qe4 Qxf6 22 Bb5 Nb4!. They both overlooked that the bishop could renew its attack on the queen and that she in turn could renew the mate threat on g2. At least they did better than Kasparov who didn't consider 19...Qh3 at all.

A significant anticipation of a major modern defence against the gambit was seen in one of a series of games between James Thompson and Charles Dillingham Mead in New York, 1857. After 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 O-O Nge7?! (the right idea in the wrong place). White's best reply is 7 Ng5, as Thompson indeed played in two games, but in the third he continued 7 d4 whereupon 7...exd4 (see diagram) brings about a position nowadays reached via 6 d4 exd4 7 O-O Nge7!.

Thompson-Mead continued 8 cxd4 d5 (the point of the...Nge7 move) 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Qb3 Nce7?! 11 Ba3 c6 12 Bxe7! Kxe7 but now Thompson played 13 Nbd2 (draw in 40 moves) instead of 14 Bxd5! Qxd5 15 Qa3+ when some postal games from the 1970s and 1980s showed that Black's defence is very difficult, if not impossible.

The variation 5...Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 Nge7 is nowadays considered an important defence, but most of the games were played in the last quarter of the 20th century after Bernard Cafferty, George Botterill and I highlighted it in books published at that time. In the 19th century this defence was virtually unknown, probably because when Dr S. Mieses played it against Anderssen in two games in Breslau in 1867, he unfortunately (though not surprisingly) lost them. Had he beaten Anderssen the world might have taken note. (The same year the problemist Sam Loyd did win one of two games with Black in this line in Paris but his follow-up was not exemplary.)

By the way, will the editors of ChessBase's Bigbase and Megabase please note that Black in these games was *not*

Jacques Mieses; he was only two years old at the time!

In one of the games, Dr Mieses improved on Thompson-Mead with 10...Be6 11 Qxb7 (Black is not worse after 11 Ba3 Qd7 but the pawn grab is risky.) 11...Ndb4 12 Bb5 O-O (Here Botterill's 12...Bd5 also looks strong.) 13 Bxc6 Rb8 14 Qxa7 Nxc6 15 Qc5 Bd5 16 ba3 Re8 17 Nbd2 and now GM Murray Chandler has suggested 17...Bb6!.

In the other game, Anderssen tried 8 Ng5 d5 9 exd5 Ne5 and now 10 Bb3 0-0 11 cxd4 Ng4 12 Ba3. Here Dr Mieses went wrong with 12...Nxd5?! but correspondence grandmaster Simon Webb found 12...Nh6! 13 Nd2 b5! in a 1996 IECG email game and eventually got a reasonably comfortable draw.

During the late 1850s and 1860s, Anderssen, briefly Paul Morphy, and then Anderssen again raised the standard of both the attacking and defensive play in the Evans Gambit. Morphy's approach to the Normal Position is a good example. Instead of 9 h3 or 9 d5, he preferred direct developing moves and so he favoured 9 Nc3. He began by refuting the popular reply 9...Nf6 in several games. Here is one of his last efforts.

Paul Morphy – Celso Golmayo
Havana, 1864

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Bc5 6 0-0 d6
 7 d4 exd4 8 cxd4 Bb6 9 Nc3 Nf6?! 10 e5!**



Labourdonnais had played 10 Bg5 here but Morphy doesn't think that is the best square for the bishop. He proceeds to open lines, especially the e-file and the a3-f8 diagonal, in order to catch the black king in the centre.

10...dxe5

10...d5 11 exf6 dxc4 12 fxg7 Rg8 13 Re1+ led to a White win in Morphy-A. de Riviere, Paris 1858.

Also 10...Ng4 11 h3 Nh6 12 Bg5 Qd7 13 e6 is also very good for White, in view of 13...fxe6 14 Bxe6 Qxe6 15 Re1 (Euwe).

11 Ba3 Bxd4

There are other possibilities in this sharp position.

11...Bg4 12 Qb3 Bh5 13 dxe5 Ng4? 14 Rad1 Qc8 15 e6! fxe6 16 Qb5 Bg6 17 Bd5! 1-0 was Morphy-Hampton, London 1858. Instead 13...Na5 was recommended by Cafferty but the computer refutes it with a continuation worthy of Morphy himself: 14 Qa4+ Qd7 15 Bb5 c6 16 Rad1 cxb5 17 Nxb5 or 16...Nd5 17 Rxd5.

The move 11...Na5 (recommended by Unzicker in ECO) occurred in a Perigal-Popert, London game which is dated 1840 by the MegaBase 2003 (though I thought it was 1851-2). Now 12 Nxe5 is probably stronger than Perigal's 12 Re1.

12 Qb3 Be6

12...Qd7 is better although 13 Rae1 should give White some

advantage. Morphy might have preferred 13 Ng5, which is very sharp and unclear.

13 Bxe6 fxe6 14 Qxe6+ Ne7 15 Nxd4 exd4 16 Rfe1



16...Qd7

After 16...Nfg8 17 Nd5 Qd7 the capture 18 Bxe7, played in Morphy-Stanley, New York 1857, loses most of White's advantage. Instead 18 Qxd7+ Kxd7 19 Nxe7 wins a piece but may not be best. The computer program Junior 7 suggests 18 Qe5 (or Qe4) 18...0-0-0 19 Nxe7+ Nxe7 20 Bxe7 Rde8 21 Rad1 when Black does not have enough for the bishop, which will eventually be safe after White escapes the pin.

17 Qxe7+ Qxe7 18 Rxe7+ Kd8 19 Rd1 b6 20 Rxd4+ Kc8

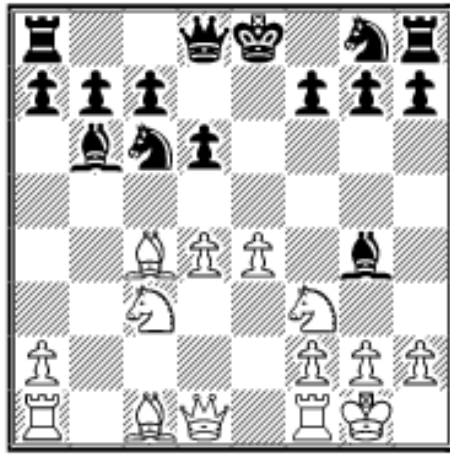
Morphy is a piece ahead and mops up effectively.

21 Nb5! Kb8 22 Rxc7 Re8 23 g3 a6 24 Bd6 Ne4 25 Rxe4 Rxe4 26 Re7+ Kc8 27 Rxe4 axb5 28 Re8+ Kb7 29 Rxa8 1-0.

With 9...Nf6 refuted, players began to prefer 9...Bg4. After all, had it not previously been thought necessary to prevent this pin on the white knight by 9 h3? Here is an important game in that variation.

Gustav Richard Neumann – Victor Knorre
Berlin, 1864

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Bc5 6 0-0 d6 7 d4 exd4 8 cxd4 Bb6 9 Nc3 Bg4



10 Bb5

Morphy believed in this counter-pin, which indirectly protects the threatened d-pawn. Later the Fraser-Mortimer Attack, 10 Qa4, was introduced but it involves a piece sacrifice that may be unsound.

10...Kf8

Black gets out of the pin and renews the threat to d4 but he hems in his own king's rook.

The simple unpin 10...Bd7 can be well met by 11 e5! (introduced by Philip Hirschfield in 1863) but Morphy tried first 11 Re1 and later 11 Bg5.

If Black plays instead 10...Bxf3 then after 11 gxf3 White can make use of the g-file later.

A less explored option is 10...a6.

11 Bxc6 bxc6 12 e5!?

This move was new. It is almost certainly an improvement on 12 Ba3 played in a famous Blackburne-Steinitz, played in London the previous year.

12...c5?

At first sight 12...Bxf3 13 Qxf3! Bxd4 looks strong but after 14 exd6 cxd6 15 Ba3! c5 (or 15...Be5 16 Rad1 Ne7 17 Rfe1,) 16 Nb5! there are difficult times ahead for Black whether or not he grabs the rook on a1.

13 Ba3 cxd4 14 Ne4 f5?! 15 exd6 cxd6 16 Nxd6 Ne7 17

Re1 Rb8 18 Qb3 Bh5 19 Qe6 1–0

The most critical answer to the Morphy variation is 9...Na5 instead, as seen in the next game.

George Henry Mackenzie – Louis Paulsen

5th match game, London 1862

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Bc5 6 d4
exd4 7 0–0 d6 8 cxd4 Bb6 9 Nc3 Na5**



Although Paul Morphy now played 10 Ng5?! in some early games, we don't know what his mature view of the line was. He was never put to the test in this line by a strong player. However, around 1867 his uncle Ernest Morphy invented 10 Bxf7+, which obviously should be unsound.

The most popular reply in the later 19th century was 10 Bg5, as introduced in 1870 by Von Minckwitz against Steinitz at Baden-Baden. Steinitz replied 10...Qd7, a move that has never really been properly examined, but the usual choice later was 10...f6 with occasional outings for 10...Ne7. As we are proceeding chronologically, I will examine these lines in detail in the next article.

In most of the early games with 9...Na5, White preferred to retain his light-squared bishop and regroup it menacingly on the b1-h7 diagonal, albeit at the cost of time and the loss of some control over the centre.

10 Bd3!?

On the rare occasions when Adolf Anderssen tried 9 Nc3

and his opponents chose 9...Na5, he invariably replied with this move which, in my opinion, is under-rated. Since the main line of 10 Bg5 is drawish, 10 Bd3 is the right move if White wishes to play for a win.

10...Ne7

This is considered the main line in established theory but 10...Bg4 may be objectively better.

11 e5

This was the usual move in the 19th century, but several others were tried, e.g. 11 Bg5 f6 12 Bh4 Ng6 13 e5 Nh4 = Burden-Steinitz, London 1866. However, 11 d5 leads to 9 d5 lines good for Black. The most interesting alternative is 11 Nd5!? as played by Bird against Chigorin in 1899.

11...dxe5

An example of how things can go rapidly wrong for Black is 11...0-0 12 Bg5!? Qd7 13 Ne4 Ng6 14 h3!? dxe5 15 dxe5 Nc6 16 Nf6+!? gxf6 17 Bxf6 (Threatening Qd2-h6) 17...h6?? (Not 17...Nd4? 18 Ng5+- either but 17...Nf4 defends, e.g. 18 Qd2 Qxd3 19 Qxf4 Qf5) 18 Ng5! 1-0 Neumann-Zukertort, Breslau 1864 (18...hxg5 19 Qh5 mates or 18...Nxe5 19 Qh5! Nxd3 20 Qxh6). Note how the h3-pawn prevents 19...Ng4 as well as restricting Black queen.

12 dxe5! 0-0

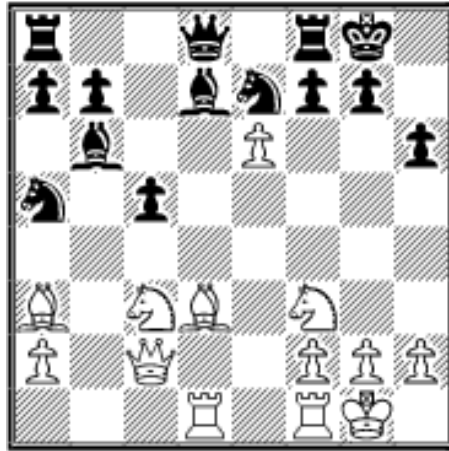
This was perhaps Black's last chance to save himself. Developing the queen's bishop was imperative as now the king has castled into an attack.

13 Qc2 h6

Boden's 13...Ng6 is superior, avoiding Pawn weaknesses,

but I still prefer White's chances after 14 Na4 or 14 Rd1.

14 Ba3 c5 15 Rad1 Bd7 16 e6!



16...fxe6

Black has to create a new weakness at g6 because he would lose the queen after 16...Bxe6?! 17 Bh7+.

17 Bh7+ Kh8 18 Ne5 Nd5 19 Nxd5 exd5 20 Rxd5!

Even better than 20 Ng6+; Black must suffer heavy material losses.

20...Bf5 21 Rxd8 Bxc2 22 Rxf8+ Rxf8 23 Bxc2 1-0

Before 9 Nc3 became thoroughly tested, the focus in the Normal Position was on 9 d5, which was what Adolf Anderssen almost always played. Sometimes 9 Bb2 was seen but it often transposed to 9 d5 lines.

The following game might be considered the apotheosis of the Anderssen variation. He achieved one of his most brilliant victories, against his pupil and successor, but the very next day with the black pieces he refuted his own attack.

Adolf Anderssen – Johannes Zukertort
Barmen (8th West German congress), 1869

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 Bb6 8 cxd4 d6 9 d5 Na5 10 Bb2 Ne7 11 Bd3 0-0 12 Nc3 Ng6 13 Ne2 c5 14 Qd2

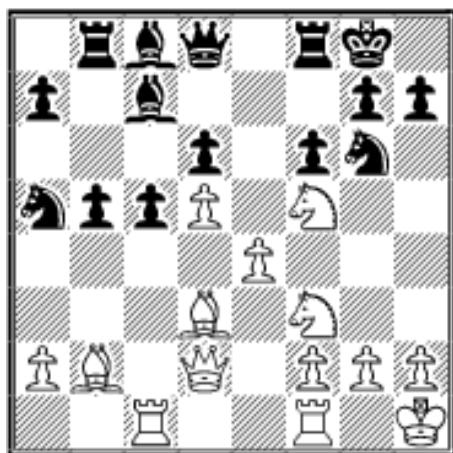
White's compensation is questionable to modern eyes but

Anderssen was happy to play this position with both sides in the same tournament!

14...f6

14...Bc7 (W.Paulsen-Anderssen in the following round) transposed to the note below to Black's 18th after 15 Rac1 Rb8 16 Ng3 f6 17 Nf5 b5 18 Kh1.

15 Kh1 Bc7 16 Rac1 Rb8 17 Ng3 b5 18 Nf5



18...b4?!

This move is insufficiently forcing; Anderssen won two famous games against it.

Among the later suggestions for improving Black's play were:

a) 18...Ba6!? (regrouping) 19 Rg1 Nb7 (instead of 19...c4 as in Zukertort-Lehmann, Poznan 1867) 20 g4 Ba5 21 Qe3 Bb6 "and Black has good prospects" was an untested suggestion of C.H.O'D. Alexander.

b) 18...Bxf5!? 19 exf5 Ne5 (19...Ne7 may be about equal) was recommended in Estrin's 1983 gambit book as the refutation of White's plan. However, 20 Bxe5 dxe5 (or 20...fxe5 21 Ng5 given in the 19th century openings book by Wormald) 21 Rxc5 reveals the point of White's 16th move!

19 Rg1

Else Black might play 19...c4 exploiting the skewer 20 Bxc4 Nxc4 21 Rxc4 Ba6 (a good reason for preferring...Rb8 to...a6 at move 16).

19...Bb6

In case you thought that long theoretical variations extending to about move 20 were a late 20th century phenomenon, I will point out that there was nothing new until here and the players were aware of it. 19...Bxf5 had been played in Anderssen-Steinitz (9th game), London 1866. White won in 46 moves. So 19...Bb6 was Zukertort's "prepared improvement"? No, actually, the first new move was Black's 22nd!

20 g4! Ne5 21 Bxe5 dxe5?

A serious error according to Suetin, pointing out that 21...fxe5 would lessen the effect of the coming g4-g5. Presumably Zukertort did not want to allow 22 Ng5 but now the square f6 is available for his queen or rook.

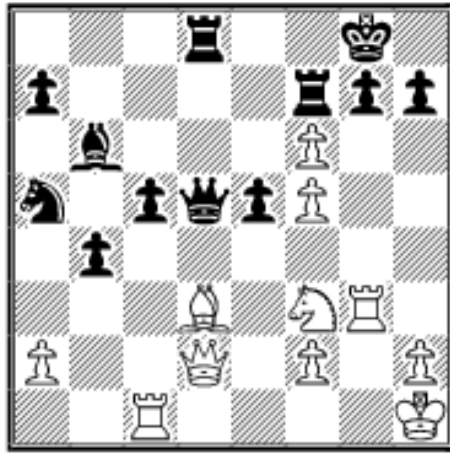
22 Rg3 Rf7

This is the real novelty. Zukertort was trying to improve on an earlier friendly between the two players with 22...Bxf5 and 23...Rb7.

23 g5! Bxf5 24 exf5 Qxd5?

24...Rc8 or 24...Kf8 had to be tried.

25 gxf6! Rd8



Sid Pickard's book *The Chess Games of Adolf Anderssen* claims an advantage for Black by 25...Rxf6?? 26 R1g1 Kh8 but Anderssen would not have overlooked the crushing refutation 26 Bc4!. Zukertort stops this threat by guarding the queen and at the same time he reinforces the pin on the d-file,

but that turns out to be illusory. 25...Qc6 was perhaps a somewhat better defence but probably Black is already lost.

26 Rcg1!

Anderssen doesn't fall into the trap 26 Qh6?? Qxf3+ when his rook is diverted. By putting his second rook on the g-file, he makes Qh6 a real threat.

26...Kh8

26...Qxd3 loses to 27 Qh6!.

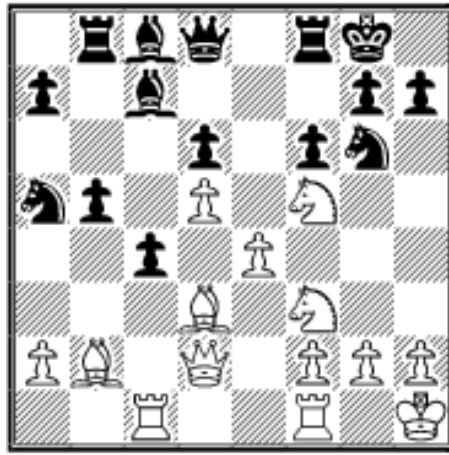
27 fxg7+ Kg8

If 27...Rxc7 White forces mate in at most 8 moves by 28 Rxc7! (clearer than 28 Qh6!?) 28...Qxf3+ 29 R1g2 e.g. 29...Qh5 30 Be2! or 29...e4 30 Rg8+! Rxc8 31 Qb2+.

28 Qh6! Qd6 29 Qxh7+! Kxh7 30 f6+ Kg8 31 Bh7+ Kxh7 32 Rh3+ Kg8 33 Rh8# 1-0

So what happened next day? Going back to the diagram at move 18 in the above game, Anderssen produced his own "TN":

18...c4



The game W.Paulsen-Anderssen continued 19 Bb1 b4 20 Bd4 Ba6!, and Black won in 55 moves.

It was nearly a quarter of a century later that a possible improvement for White was shown:

19 Be2! b4 20 Bxc4!! (This is a very modern-looking exchange sacrifice idea to revive White's attack. 20 Bd4 c3 had been analysed by Zukertort as unclear/better for Black.) 20...Nxc4 21 Rxc4 Ba6 22 Rxc7 Qxc7 23 Rc1 Qd7 24 N3d4 and White had good compensation in Heinrichsen-Asharin, Riga 1893. Black, in turn, has better, however, with 19...Re8 and if 20 Qc2 Nf4 (Sokolsky). Therefore, I do not recommend the Anderssen variation.

Strangely, Anderssen's opponents mostly avoided this line in the last decade of his life. Next year (1870) he won the tournament in Baden-Baden, at the age of 52. This was basically an 8-man double round-robin against most of the world's best players, except that von Minckwitz played in one cycle and de Vere in the other. Anderssen had White against both. (I don't know why this happened).

Anderssen scored +8 =2 -4. This tournament victory is really more impressive than his win in the first chess tournament in London 1851, although I suppose it possibly helped that he had eight games with White and only six with Black.

Anderssen was still playing the Evans Gambit but he made a minus score with it (+2 -3) and his opponents avoided the critical line. De Vere played the Sicilian and Blackburne chose the French.

Rosenthal beat Anderssen with the Evans Declined but when von Minckwitz repeated 4...Bb6, Anderssen won. Then Steinitz defended the Normal but in answer to 9 d5 he played 9...Nce7?! instead of 9...Na5, and Anderssen won. It seems the win with White against Zukertort had created a bigger impression than the one against Paulsen. Later in the tournament, Winawer beat Anderssen with 9...Nce7 after mistakes by White. Perhaps Anderssen himself suspected the truth, however. In some of his last games he actually switched to playing 9 Nc3 Na5 10 Bd3, an admission that he could not revive “his” variation.

In the last round, Anderssen switched to the Ruy Lopez to beat Louis Paulsen. During the 1870s, he chose the Ruy Lopez frequently when White against 1...e4.

At Baden-Baden, Neumann beat Anderssen with the Compromised Defence and that was the line Zukertort banked on the next year in his second match with his great compatriot. Both men originated from Breslau, which is now Wroclaw in Poland. Anderssen was essentially German; Zukertort had emigrated to England, chiefly for the better chess opportunities.

In the 1871 match, Zukertort suffered two losses with the Compromised Defence before he won with it. His “banker” for this match was the Vienna Game with White, which brought him three wins out of three.

The next great player to be involved in Evans Gambit games was Johannes Zukertort, but like Steinitz he preferred Black on the whole (in his mature years) and cannot be regarded as a champion of the gambit. He wrote extensively on the Evans in English magazines as well as playing it himself to some good effect in minor games. However, he was rarely seen on the white side in tournaments, preferring different open games as well as

experimenting with closed games.

The Compromised Defence that Zukertort favoured suits defenders with a good nerve. White's queenside pawns are destroyed so he has no long-term prospects and is committed to all-out attack. The attack is indeed very strong when conducted accurately, but if Black is the stronger player then he can expect to exploit inaccuracies and ultimately win on material. However, a slip by the defender can be catastrophic.

Adolf Anderssen – Johannes Zukertort
5th match game, Berlin 1871

**1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4
 exd4 7 0–0 dxc3**



It took some time for White to establish the best reply to this greedy adventure.

8 Qb3

8 Ba3!? was played in a famous blindfold simultaneous game by Paul Morphy (New Orleans 1858) which Reti annotated in

Masters of the Chessboard.

8 e5?! was introduced by Steinitz in 1859, threatening Qb3 but losing time. Black can answer 8...Nge7 or 8...d5.

8...Qf6

8...Qe7 9 Nxc3 is also good for White, especially if Black walks into 9...Nf6? 10 Nd5! as in the Fischer-Fine skittles game included in *My 60 Memorable Games*.

9 e5

9 Bg5 was seen in several games but the bishop really belongs on a different diagonal, namely a3-f8.

9...Qg6 10 Nxc3 Nge7

10...b5?! was rejected after Kolisch-Anderssen, London 1861, but the course of that game was unconvincing.

10...Bxc3 11 Qxc3 reduces material but White's attack increases, e.g. 11...Nge7 12 Ba3 (12 Ng5!? is also promising.) 12...0-0 (Lasker analysed

12...b6 without forming clear conclusions.) 13 Rad1 was ultimately successful in Neumann-Anderssen, Berlin 1860. White can also win back one pawn with good chances by 13 Bd3 Qh6 14 Bxe7 Nxe7 15 Qxc7.

11 Ne2!?

This is an interesting manoeuvre but later Wilfried Paulsen's 11 Ba3 came to be considered the main line.

11...b5

Offering back a pawn to get the black rook active on the b-file is a common tactic for Black in the Compromised Defence but in this case the pawn should be refused.

12 Bd3 Qe6 13 Qb2 Ng6 14 Nf4 Qe7

14...Nxf4 is better, as was tested in games later in the century, e.g. Taubenhaus-Tarrasch, Nuremberg 1892.

15 Nd5 Qe6

15...Qc5 16 Be4!? 0–0 17 Be3 Qc4 18 Qb1 was unclear in the first match game but Anderssen eventually won after mistakes on both sides.

16 Qxb5

16 Be4 0–0 17 Qc2 Bb7 18 Rb1 a6 19 Nf4 Nxf4 20 Bxh7+?! Kh8 21 Bxf4 Nb4! led directly to a win for Black in the 7th game. The improvement 17 Bd2 was suggested by Anderssen, later but Black's resources may still be sufficient.

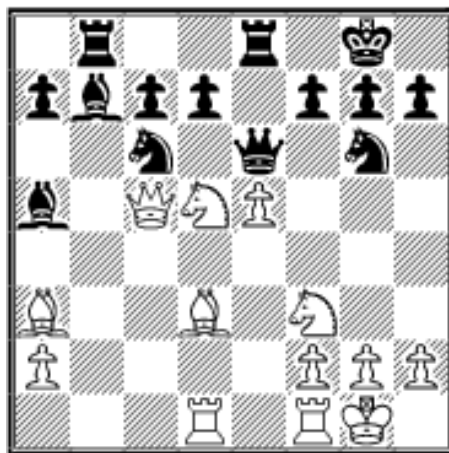
16...0–0 17 Ba3

17 Nf4 looks better.

17...Rb8 18 Qc5 Bb7

18...Bb6?! 19 Nxb6 axb6 20 Qc2 Re8 21 Rae1 led to another white win in the 3rd game, once more after messy play.

19 Rad1 Rfe8



Black's development is complete and the tension reaches a peak. White has no real attack and his e-pawn is besieged. Tactical tricks are his only hope.

20 Be4 Bb6 21 Qc1 Ncxe5 22 Ng5 Qg4 23 h3 Qh4 24 Nxb6 Bxe4

This move is good enough and usually gets an ! but Black

had something stronger: 24...Nf4! (threatening the g5-N) and if 25 Bxh7+ (after 25 g3 Nxb3+ 26 Kg2 Bxe4+ 27 Nxe4 Qxe4+ 28 Kxh3 Rxb6 Black wins a piece) 25...Kh8 when White's pieces hang and g2 is about to cave in.

25 f4

If 25 Nxe4 Qxe4 26 Nxd7 Nh4 or 25 g3 Qxg5.

25...Bxg2! 26 Kxg2 axb6 27 Rde1 Nd3 0-1.

To summarise, the main debate in the 19th century (at least up to the end of the 1870s) was about whether Black should play 5...Bc5 or 5...Ba5, and in the latter case whether White should continue 6 O-O or 6 d4.

In the variation 5...Ba5 6 d4 the issue was whether Black could safely take all the pawns (the Compromised Defence). Clearly, if the pawns can all be eaten then Black should prefer 5...Ba5 to have the opportunity of eating them (this was Zukertort's view) while in turn White must not offer them, and this means playing 6 0-0 against...Ba5.

By the mid-1870s the Evans Gambit was not looking healthy for master play, while no doubt it still remained a good point-scorer against weak opposition.

The greatest champion of the Evans Gambit, however, was just about to appear on the scene: Mikhail Ivanovich Chigorin (31.10.1850-12.1.1908). In the next article we shall see how he faced a series of challenges to the soundness of the gambit and how ultimately he failed to overcome the last and greatest challenge.

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