HYPERMODERN CHESS

AS DEVELOPED IN THE GAMES OF ITS GREATEST EXPONENT, **ARON NIMZOVICH**

EDITED BY FRED REINFELD

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NO OTHER master's games are so rich in human interest and dramatic appeal as are those of Aron Nimzovich. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he not only had to win his games against his opponents, but in addition he had to win over a hostile chess world. At every one of his games there was a specter, an unseen enemy. It added a cruel burden to the crushing tasks which tournament play imposes under the best of conditions.

I do not propose to repeat my description of Nimzovich's career which appeared in a recent volume.* In the present work, such a description would be doubly superfluous, as the games speak eloquently for themselves. Arranged chronologically, they demonstrate in a very exciting way why Nimzovich became one of the most famous and most eagerly imitated masters.

Because the planning of this work required that the games should have this graphic quality, a great deal of thought went into their selection. I frankly aimed at a "popular" book, one which could be relished by all chessplayers, regardless of their playing ability. I avoided over-long games, which (let it be confessed for once!) tend to bore the reader. I wanted relatively short, sharp, witty encounters which make their point in an unforgettably drastic manner. I attempted to give as many games as possible which have not appeared in *My System*. Yet where the merit of the games was so outstanding that duplication was unavoidable, I sought to vary the notes; to adopt a different standpoint, to

* Nimzovich: *My System*. Edited by Fred Reinfeld. David McKay Company. Philadelphia, 1947.

make the comments fuller, to adapt them to the needs of the average chessplayer.

These are games which do not yield up all their subtlety and savor on the first examination. They bear re-playing. The reader will always find new facets in them. I was familiar with Nimzovich's theories and with some of his masterpieces long before *My System* was published in English; and today I can look back over almost a quarter of a century of absorbed study and keen enjoyment of Nimzovich's games. There are some which I must have played over at least twenty times. Yet their magic still lives on, and with every re-playing, some new fine point comes to light. If some of the pleasure is communicated to the reader by this book, I shall feel well repaid.

New York,
August 22, 1947

FRED REINFELD

HYPERMODERN CHESS

1. *"The Child is Father of the Man"*

IN THIS, the earliest known game of Nimzovich, we see three notable features of his later games: a surprising sacrifice in an apparently blocked position, delightfully subtle play with the Knights, and brilliant exploitation of a passed Pawn.

VIENNA GAME

Coburg, 1904
("B" Tournament)

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich* BLACK: *W. Hilse*

1	P—K4	P—K4
2	Kt—QB3	Kt—QB3
3	B—B4	B—B4
4	P—Q3	

In this rather romantic opening, which Nimzovich never adopted in his mature period, 4 Q—Kt4 is a good alternative; if then 4 . . . Q—B3; 5 Kt—Q5 *!* with a powerful attack.

4	. . . .	P—Q3
5	P—B4	Kt—B3
6	P—B5	P—KR3

To prevent the annoying pin B—KKt5; but the text creates a target for a Pawn-storming advance by White. Mieses specialized in this procedure.

7	P—KKt4	Kt—QR4
8	Q—B3	Kt × B
9	P × Kt	P—B3
10	B—Q2	P—R3
11	O—O—O	P—QKt4

Both sides play sharply for attack.

12	KKt—K2	B—Kt2
13	P—KR4	Q—K2
14	P—Kt5	Kt—Q2
15	Kt—Kt3	P—B3

Nimzovich has offered his Pawn at QB4 because he has no good way to guard it, and he does not care to play BP × P, which opens an attacking file for Black. His opponent, on the other hand, sees no tangi-

ble gain from capturing the Pawn—although he changes his mind next move.

16 B—K3 *!* KtP × P

Black's best course is 16 . . . O—O—O, getting his King to a reasonably safe place and connecting his Rooks. The text is risky, and the same would be true of 16 . . . RP × P; 17 RP × P, R × R (better 17 . . . O—O—O); 18 R × R, B × B *ch*; 19 Q × B, BP × P; 20 R—R5 etc.

17 Q—R5 *ch !* K—Q1

Relatively better is 17 . . . Q—B2; 18 Q × Q *ch*, K × Q; 19 B × B, Kt × B; 20 R × P, RP × P etc. After the text, Black's game becomes difficult because his King is insecure.

18	B × B	Kt × B
19	Q—K2	K—K1

. . . K—B2 at once saves time. If, however, 19 . . . BP × P; 20 P—B6 *!*, Q × P; 21 KR—B1 with a winning attack.

20	P × BP	P × P
21	Q × P	P—QR4

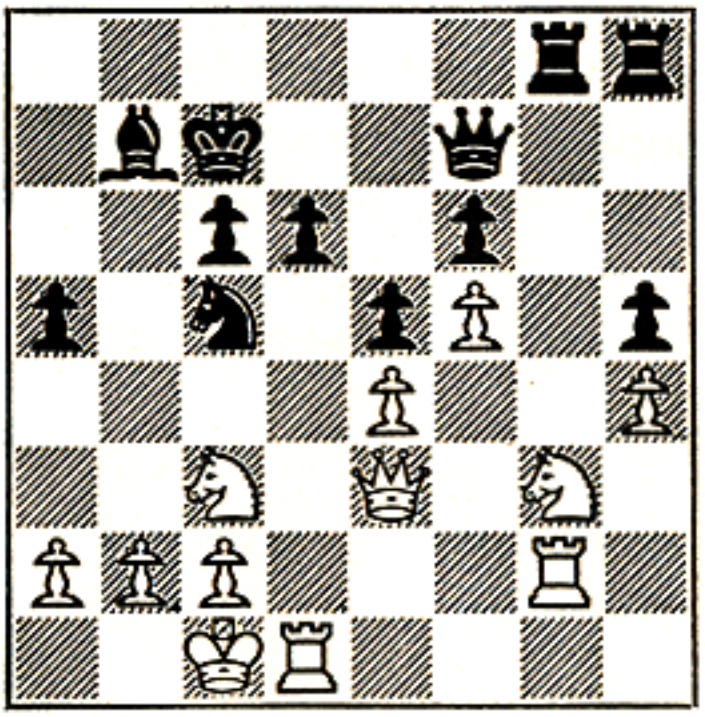
Threatening . . . B—R3.

22	Q—K2	K—Q2
23	R—R2	QR—KKt1
24	Q—K3	K—B2

Black has finally provided for his King and brought out his Queen's Rook—but at considerable cost of wasted time.

25	R(2)—Q2	R—Q1
26	Kt—R5	Q—B2
27	Kt—Kt3	P—R4
28	R—Kt2	QR—KKt1 *?*

The other Rook should have played here; but Nimzovich's startling reply was not easy to foresee.



29 R × P *!!* K × R

Schlechter points out that if 29 . . . R × Kt; 30 Q × Kt,

R × R; 31 Kt—Kt5 *ch*, K—B1 (or 31 . . . K—Kt1; 32 Q—R7 *ch*, K—B1; 33 R × P *ch*); 32 R × P *ch !*, B × R; 33 Kt—Q6 *ch* wins!

30 R—Q2 *ch* K—B2

If 30 . . . K—K2; 31 Q × Kt *ch*, K—K1; 32 Kt(Kt3)—K2 and the threat of 33 R—Q6 gives White a winning position.

31 Q × Kt K—Kt1

Here is the final point of the combination: If 31 . . . R × Kt; 32 Kt—Kt5 *ch* leads to the win of Black's Queen! A Nimzovich finesse!

32	Q—Q6 *ch*	K—R1
33	Kt(Kt3)—K2	R—Q1
34	Q—B5	R × R
35	Q × P *ch*	K—Kt1
36	K × R	Q—Q2 *ch*
37	K—B1	R—Q1

The upshot of Nimzovich's combination is that he has two Pawns for the exchange, plus lasting pressure on Black's exposed King.

38	P—Kt4	Q—QB2
39	Q—B5	R—Kt1
40	P—R4	Q—Q1 *?*

Black plays this phase weakly. He should either place his Rook in the vicinity of his King, or else try . . . R—Kt5, so as to create a formidable counterchance in the shape of a passed Rook Pawn. Such positions call for fighting chess.

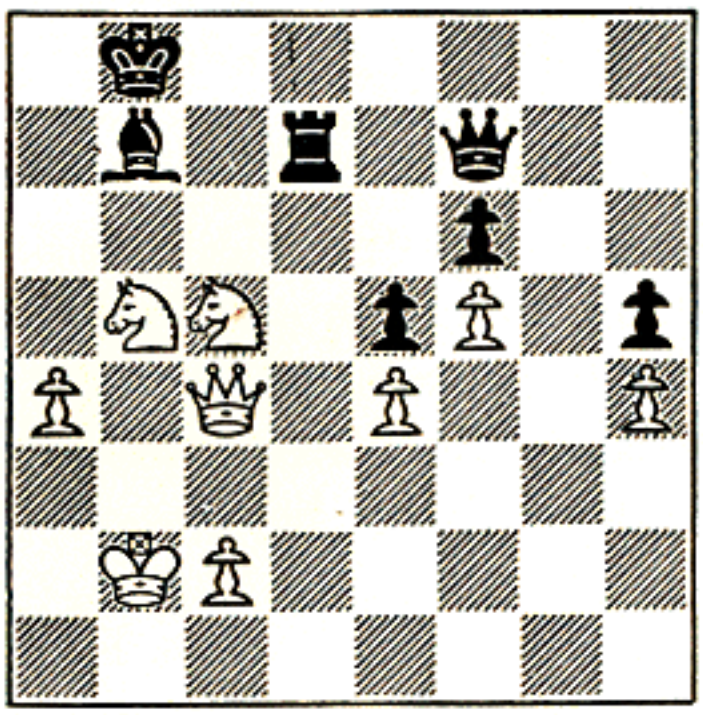
41	P—Kt5	P × P
42	Q × P	K—R1
43	Q—B5	R—Kt2 *?*

43 . . . R—Kt5 forces White to take a draw with 44 Kt—Kt5, K—Kt1; 45 Q—R7 *ch*, K—B1; 46 Q—B5 *ch*, K—Kt1; 47 Q—R7 *ch* etc.

44	K—Kt2	K—Kt1
45	Kt—B1	R—QB2
46	Q—Kt5	K—B1
47	Kt—Kt3	Q—Q2
48	Q—K2	Q—B2
49	Kt—Kt5	R—Q2
50	Kt—B5	R—Q1

Black has given his opponent time to post the Knights invincibly. He soon pays the penalty.

51	Kt—K6	R—Q2
52	Q—B4 *ch*	K—Kt1
53	Kt—B5 *! !*	



An astonishing position! If 53 . . . Q × Q; 54 Kt × R *ch*, followed by 55 Kt—Kt6 *ch* in reply to a King move.

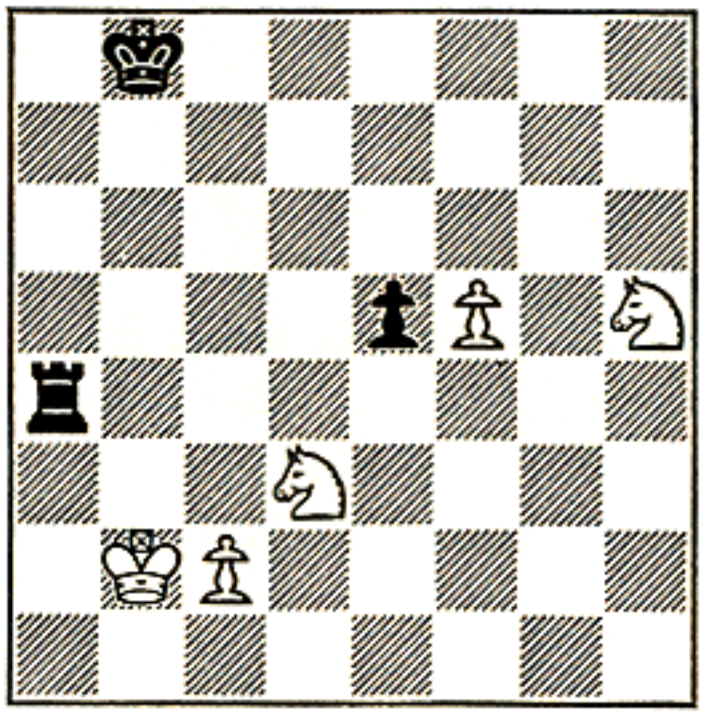
53	. . . .	R—K2
54	Q × Q	R × Q
55	Kt—Q6	R—Kt2
56	Kt(5) × B	R—Kt5

The only chance . . . such as it is. 56 . . . R × Kt *ch;* 57 Kt × R, K × Kt is hopeless.

57	Kt—B5 !	R × RP
58	Kt—Q3 !	R—Kt5
59	Kt—K8 !	

The Knight moves are all part of a forced win. Now that the Rook is cut off from KB5, White's King Bishop Pawn will march in.

59	. . . .	R × P
60	Kt × BP	R × P
61	Kt × RP	



61	. . . .	P—K5

Equally delightful is 61 . . . R—Kt5; 62 Kt × P, R—Kt4; 63 Kt—Kt7 !, R × Kt (. . . R × P is not good enough, as White still has one Pawn for mating purposes!); 64 P—B6, R—Kt2 *ch;* 65 K—B1 and wins: the Rook must be given up for the advanced Pawn.

62	P—B6 !	R—R4
63	P—B7	R—KB4
64	Kt—K5 !	P—K6

If 64 . . . K—B1; 65 Kt—Kt7, R—B3; 66 Kt—K6 !

65	Kt—Kt3 !	Resigns

A delicious ending.

2. *The Old Order Changeth*

IN ANY given period, the chess world is ruled by outstanding masters in their prime who are so famous that it is difficult to imagine their ever being dethroned. Yet, as old age creeps up on the reigning players, new names and new faces appear and create sensations by their revolutionary victories against the ruling hierarchy.

Thus it was during the first decade of this century, when the Age of Tarrasch was coming to an end. For some fifteen years the theories of Tarrasch had governed master chess. Suddenly new, fresh powers began to appear on the scene. Two of the most important newcomers were Nimzovich and Spielmann. Like a refreshing breeze their bright games swept away the stale air of the deadening technique of Tarrasch.

FALKBEER COUNTER GAMBIT

Match, 1906

WHITE: *R. Spielmann* BLACK: *A. Nimzovich*

1	P—K4	P—K4
2	P—KB4	P—Q4
3	KP × P	P—QB3 *!?*

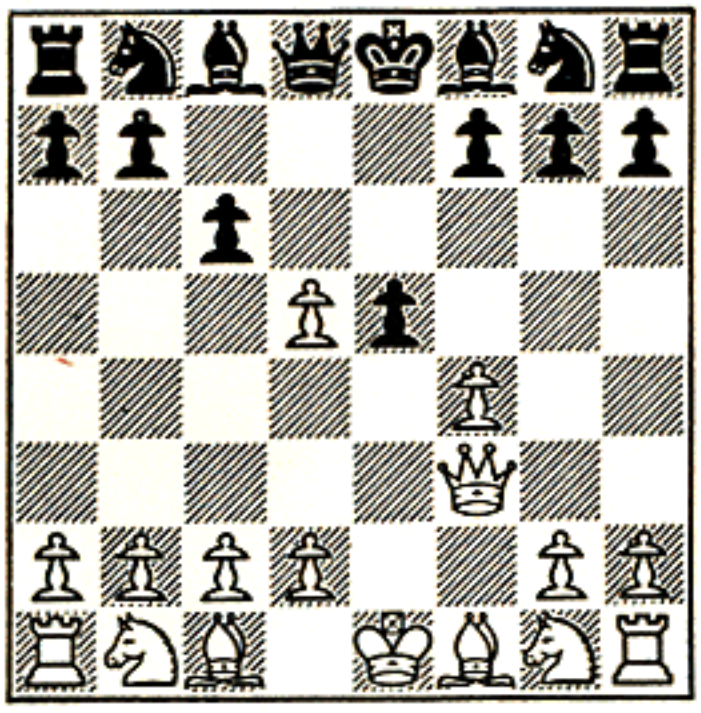
Nimzovich must be quite eager to snatch the attack from his opponent. The best reply is probably 4 Kt—QB3, BP × P; 5 P × P, P—Q5; 6 Kt—K4, Q—Q4; 7 B—Q3 *!*, Kt—QB3; 8 Q—K2 with advantage for White (Euwe).

4 Q—B3

This turns out badly.
(*See diagram on next page*)

4 . . . . KP × P

More in the spirit of this line of play is the two-Pawn sacrifice for development: 4 . . .



P—K5 *!?*; 5 Q × P *ch*, B—K2; 6 P × P, Kt × P followed by . . . Kt—B3 and . . . O—O.

5 **P × P**

And now 5 P—Q4 gives White better prospects of completing his development in a rational manner.

5 . . . . **Kt × P**
6 **B—Kt5**

Here Janowski recommends 6 P—B3 followed by 7 P—Q4. The opening play is certainly erratic!

6 . . . . **Kt—B3** *!*

Tempting White to lose valuable time with 7 B × Kt *ch*, P × B; 8 Q × P *ch*, B—Q2 etc.

7 **P—Q4** **B—Q2**
8 **Kt—K2** **Q—Kt3** *!*

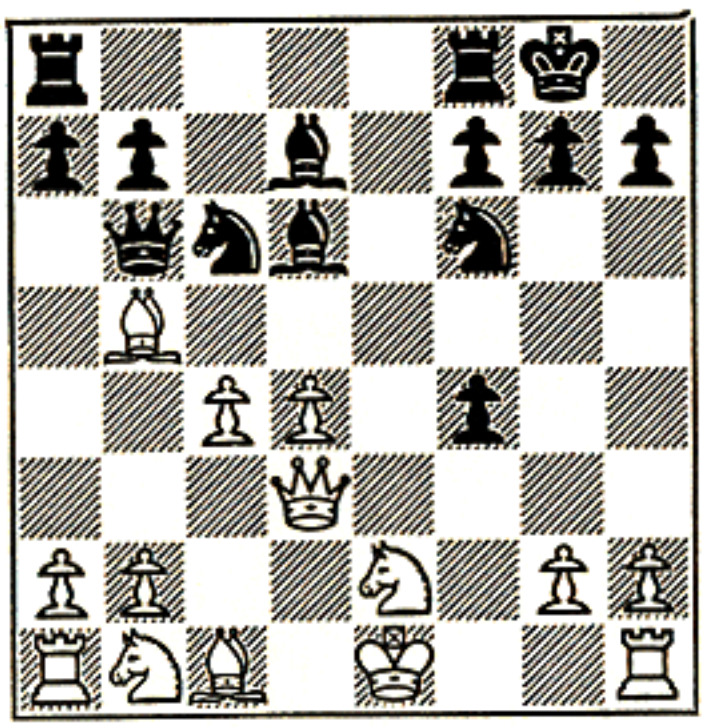
Just at the right moment: White's King Bishop and Queen Pawn are menaced, and 9 B × Kt, B × B is obviously in Black's favor.

9 **Q—Q3** **B—Q3**
10 **P—B4** *?*

Loosening up his Pawn position for the sake of playing to win a piece. 10 O—O was safer.

10 . . . . **O—O** *!*

He accepts the challenge.



11 **B × Kt**

The immediate 11 P—B5 is effectively answered by 11

. . . Q—R4 *ch;* 12 B—Q2, Kt—QKt5.

11	. . . .	B × B *!*
12	P—B5	

White braves the attack, for after 12 O—O, QR—Q1 he would have a poor game.

12	. . . .	B × BP
13	P × B	Q × BP
14	B × P	KR—K1

Despite his material advantage, White has a lost game: his opponent's pieces are posted too powerfully. The immediate threat is 15 . . . B—Kt4.

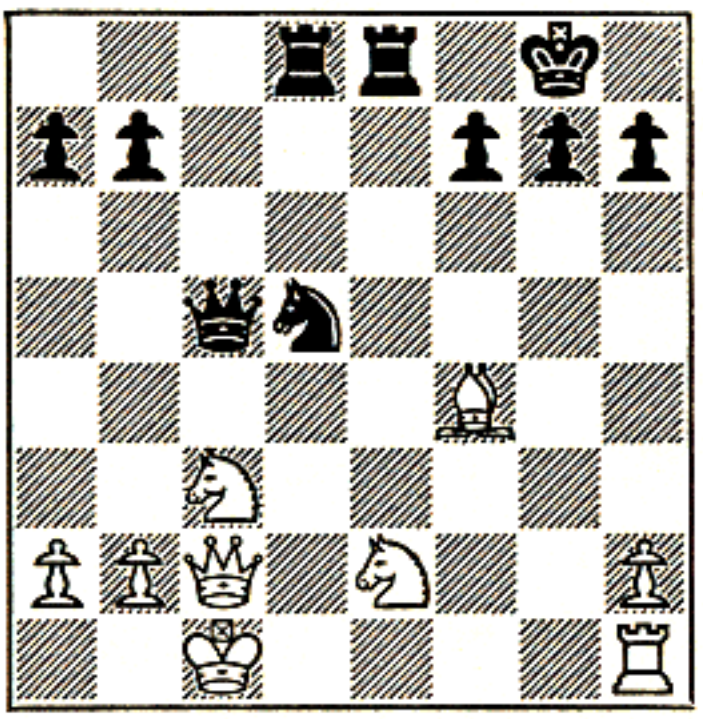
15	Kt—B3	B × P
16	O—O—O	

White gives up hope too readily: He should have tried 16 KR—B1 (16 KR—Kt1 *??*, Q × R *ch*), QR—Q1; 17 Q—Kt5, Q × Q; 18 Kt × Q, B × R; 19 K × B and while White is completely on the defensive, he can put up a stubborn fight. A likely continuation would be: 19 . . . Kt—R4 *!;* 20 B—B1 (if 20 R—Kt3, R—Q7 is very strong), R—Q8 *ch;* 21 K—B2, R—R8; 22 K—Kt2, R—K8; 23 Kt(2)—B3, Kt—B5 *ch;* 24 B × Kt (else 24 . . . Kt—Q6), R × R etc.

16	. . . .	B × R
17	R × B	QR—Q1
18	Q—B2	

Although Black's forces have come into action too strongly, 18 Q—B3 might have offered somewhat better resistance.

18	. . . .	Kt—Q4 *!*



19	B—Q2	

If 19 Kt × Kt, Q × Q *ch;* 20 K × Q, R × Kt *ch;* 21 K—Q3, R—K2; 22 K—B4, R—K5 *ch;* 23 K—Q3, P—B4 and wins (Janowski). After the text, Black winds up neatly.

19	Kt—Kt5 *!*	*21* K—Kt1	Kt—B7
20 Q—Q1			

Or 20 Q—Kt1, R × Kt etc.

20	Kt—Q6 *ch*

White resigns. The ingenious Knight play is characteristic of Nimzovich's games.

3. *Deus Ex Machina*

EVEN as an inexperienced youngster, Nimzovich had the ability, in common with such masters as Lasker, Duras and Reshevsky, of discovering a diabolical resource in apparently hopeless positions. It was this ability which led the mature Nimzovich to include "the heroic defense" in his system. Tartakover's ironic aphorism "No one has yet managed to win a game by resigning" sums up the matter.

FRENCH DEFENSE

Zurich, 1906

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich* BLACK: *Dr. G. Fluess*

1 P—K4	P—K3	
2 P—Q4	P—Q4	
3 Kt—QB3		

Later on Nimzovich was to proclaim the value of 3 P—K5 as a sovereign remedy against this defense.

3	Kt—KB3
4 B—Kt5	B—Kt5
5 P × P	

This gives Black no trouble at all. White can either strive violently for the initiative with 5 P—K5 or else play for a minimal advantage with 5 Kt—K2.

5	Q × P
6 B × Kt	B × Kt *ch*

In later years, a good alternative was found in 6 . . .

P × B; 7 Q—Q2, Q—QR4 etc. Black has an easy game.

7	P × B	P × B
8	Kt—B3	Kt—B3
9	B—K2	

Leads to trouble. As he intends King-side castling, he can obtain a much more secure position with 9 P—Kt3 followed by 10 B—Kt2, which incidentally saves time and gives the Bishop a far more active post.

9	. . . .	KR—Kt1
10	O—O *!?*	

"Castling into it!"

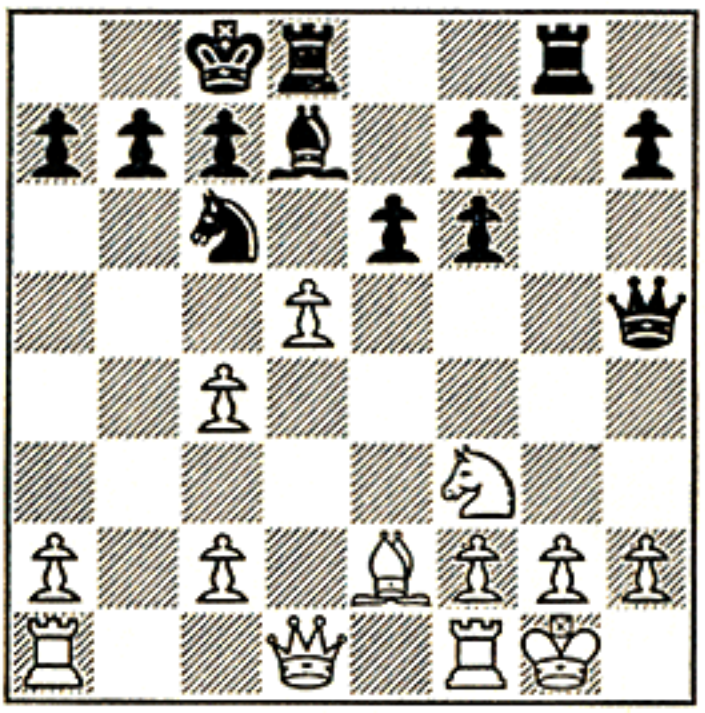
10	. . . .	B—Q2
11	P—B4	

He seeks to disengage Black's attention from the King-side, but only drives the Queen to a more aggressive spot.

11	. . . .	Q—KR4
12	P—Q5	O—O—O *!*

(See diagram in next column)

Now Nimzovich has an opportunity to achieve negative



immortality with 13 P × Kt *?*, B × P; 14 Q—B1, R × P *ch!*; 15 K × R(or 15 K—R1, R × P *ch*), R—Kt1 *ch* etc.

13	Kt—Q4 *!*	

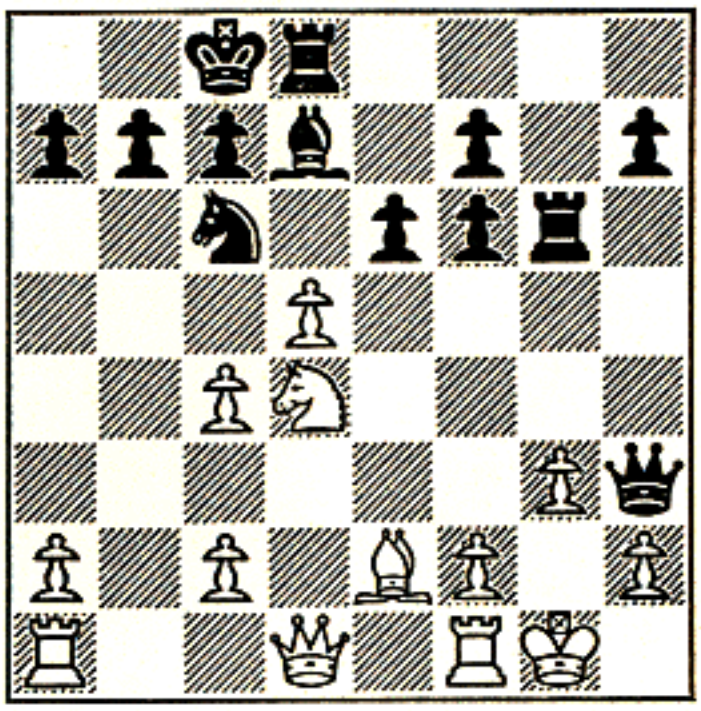
This deprives his King of an important defending piece. But it is part of a fiendish plan. Most players would consider White's game hopeless.

13	. . . .	Q—R6

One can hardly blame Black for thinking that he has victory within his grasp, but 13 . . . Q—Kt4; 14 B—B3, Kt—K4 was a better course.

14	P—Kt3	R—Kt3

With the brutal threat 15 . . . R—R3. White seems lost.



15 P × Kt *!!* B × P

Lasker dismisses the more tenacious 15 . . . R—R3 with an interesting refutation: 16 P × P *ch!* (not 16 P × B *ch*, R × P; 17 B—R5, R × B; 18 R—K1, Q × RP *ch;* 19 K—B1, Q—R8 *ch;* 20 K—K2, Q—K5 *ch* and wins), K—Kt1 (if 16 . . . K × P; 17 B—B3 *ch* and White beats off the attack); 17 Kt—B6 *ch*, K × P; 18 Kt × R *ch*, K—B1; 19 Q × B *ch*, K × Q; 20 KR—Q1 *ch* followed by B—B3 and White's material advantage should prove decisive.

16 Kt × B *!*

But not 16 B—B3 *?* (or 16 P—KB3 *?*, R × P *ch;* 17 P × R, Q × P *ch;* 18 K—R1, R—Kt1 etc.), R × Kt; 17 Q—K2, R—R5; 18 KR—K1, Q × RP *ch;* 19 K—B1, Q—R8 *ch !;* 20 B × Q, R × B mate!

16 . . . . R × Q

17 KR × R *!*

The right Rook!

17 . . . . P × Kt

"And now my good friend Fluess leaned back as who should say, 'The ending isn't easy, to be sure, but we'll find a way.'" (Nimzovich)

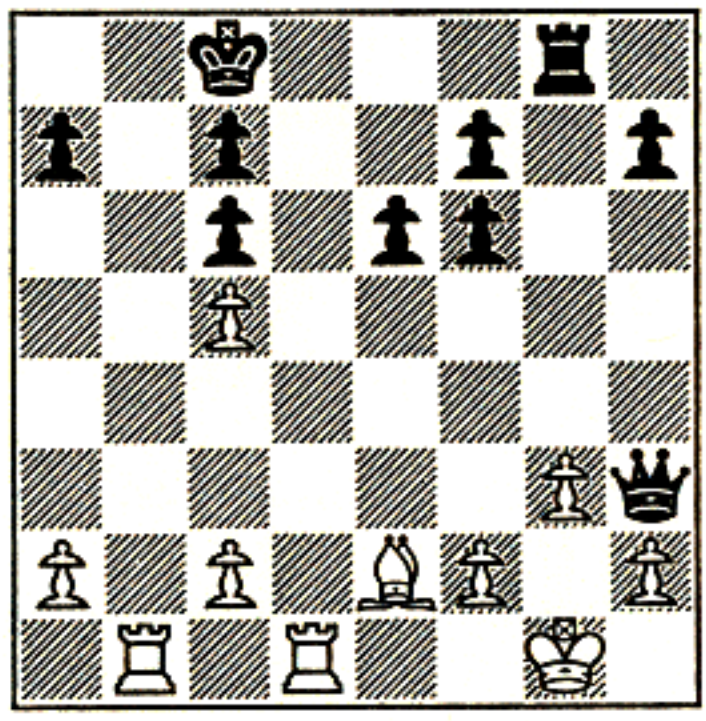
18 P—B5 *!*

Threatens mate in two!

18 . . . . R—Kt1

Or 18 . . . K—Kt1; 19 QR—Kt1 *ch* and mate next move.

19 QR—Kt1 *!*



Black resigns, as he is helpless against the threat of 20 B—R6 mate. Nimzovich: "Never shall I forget the comical look of horror on my opponent's face as he realized his plight."

4. *He Who Vacillates is Lost*

THE TEXTBOOKS emphasize the importance of planning; good advice, but not always easy to take. Sometimes a position lacks character, making it difficult to formulate a plan. Other times, a choice must be made between two or more plans. In some cases, it is essential to defer making a choice.

It was in these unclear positions that Nimzovich displayed an unrivalled mastery. He was inimitable in the art of keeping all possibilities open, and it is just this strategy which is the key to some of his most "mysterious" games. How rare an art this is, may be seen from Schlechter's disastrous preoccupation with two distinct plans in the following game.

RUY LOPEZ

Carlsbad, 1907

WHITE: *C. Schlechter*		BLACK: *A. Nimzovich*
1 P—K4	P—K4	
2 Kt—KB3	Kt—QB3	
3 B—Kt5	P—QR3	
4 B—R4	Kt—B3	
5 Kt—B3	B—Kt5	

Good enough, although the moderns prefer 5 . . . P—QKt4; 6 B—Kt3, B—K2.

6 Kt—Q5	B—K2	
7 O—O	O—O	

7 . . . Kt × P can lead to trouble after the opening of the King file by 8 P—Q4.

8 R—K1 P—Q3
9 Kt × Kt *ch*

The Knight must make a decision sooner or later. 9 Kt × B *ch* gives White two Bishops, but at the cost of removing a piece which is not very useful to Black.

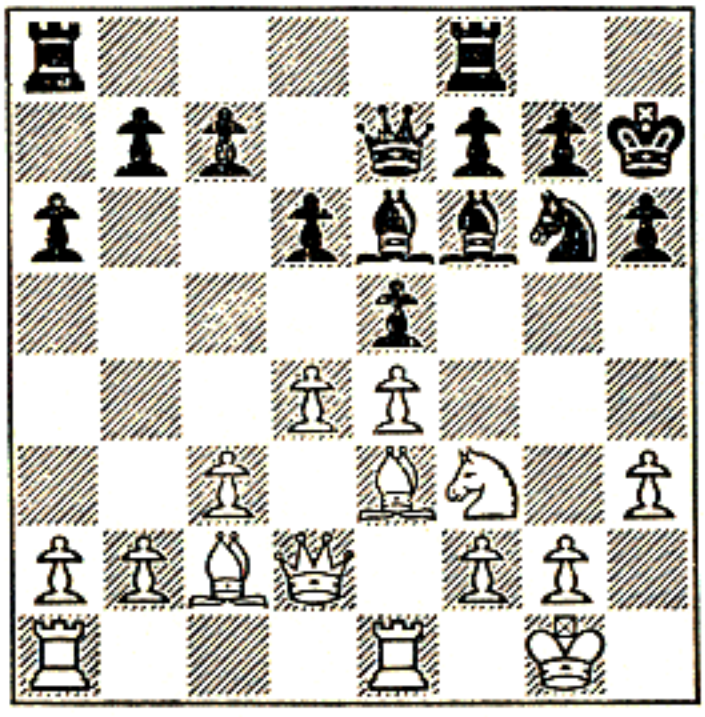
9 . . . . B × Kt
10 P—B3 P—KR3

Apparently incomprehensible. Nimzovich does not want to embark on a definite course of action until Schlechter has committed himself.

11 P—KR3 Kt—K2
12 P—Q4 Kt—Kt3
13 B—K3 K—R2

Still waiting.

14 Q—Q2 B—K3
15 B—B2 Q—K2



White has three possible plans:

I. He can play P × P, opening the Queen file and permitting wholesale exchanges on that file. This drawish course does not appeal to Schlechter.

II. He can play P—Q5 followed by a general Queen-side advance: P—B4 followed by P—QKt4, intending the eventual P—B5. Black has fair defensive resources, and can react strongly by preparing for . . . P—KB4.

III. He can prepare for P—KB4 himself. The necessary preliminaries for this advance would have to be elaborate.

16 P—Q5

Schlechter appears to have decided in favor of the second plan.

16 . . . . B—Q2
17 K—R2

. . . But he vacillates! Now Schlechter flirts with the idea of playing P—KB4 after all.

17 . . . . Kt—R1 *!*

This queer-looking retreat is explained by the following

move. Schlechter must have been puzzled!

18	Kt—Kt1	P—KKt4
19	P—KKt3	Kt—Kt3

A hot fight is being waged around the possibility of advancing the King's Bishop Pawn. If now 20 P—KB4*?*, KtP × P; 21 P × P, P × P (not 21 . . . Kt × P*?*; 22 B × Kt, P × B; 23 P—K5 *ch* winning a piece); 22 B × P, Kt × B; 23 P—K5 *ch* (23 Q × Kt*??* loses the Queen), Kt—Kt3 and Black comes out a Pawn ahead.

20	Q—Q1	B—Kt2
21	Q—B3	P—QR4*!*

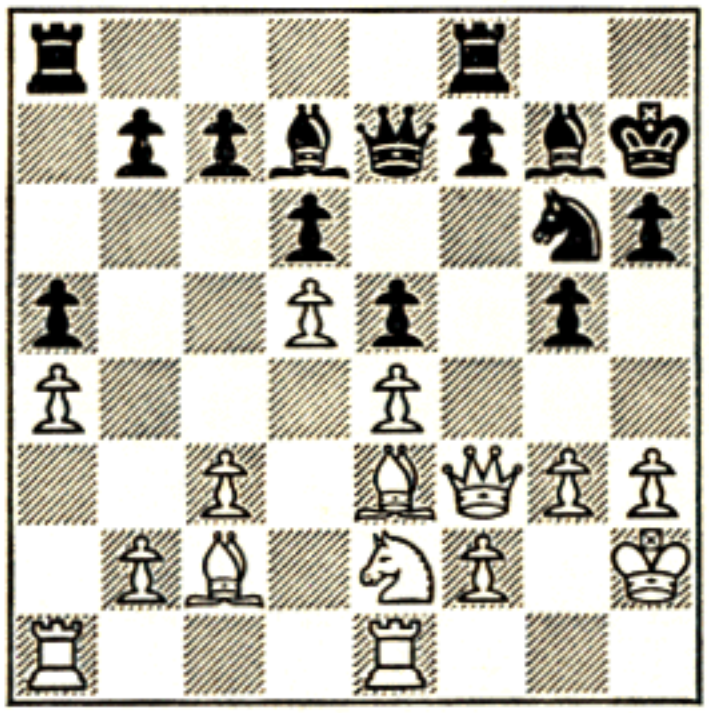
Very subtle: he prevents P—QKt4 as a follow-up to P—B4. Hence Schlechter renounces all further Queen-side ambitions and redoubles his efforts on the other wing.

22	Kt—K2	B—Kt4*!*

Another crafty move: if White's Queen retreats to make room for P—KB4, that advance can be met by . . . B × Kt, winning a Pawn.

23	P—QR4	B—Q2

Now Queen-side action by White is blocked for good.



24 R—R1*!*

Intending to open the King's Rook file by P—R4, at the cost of a Pawn.

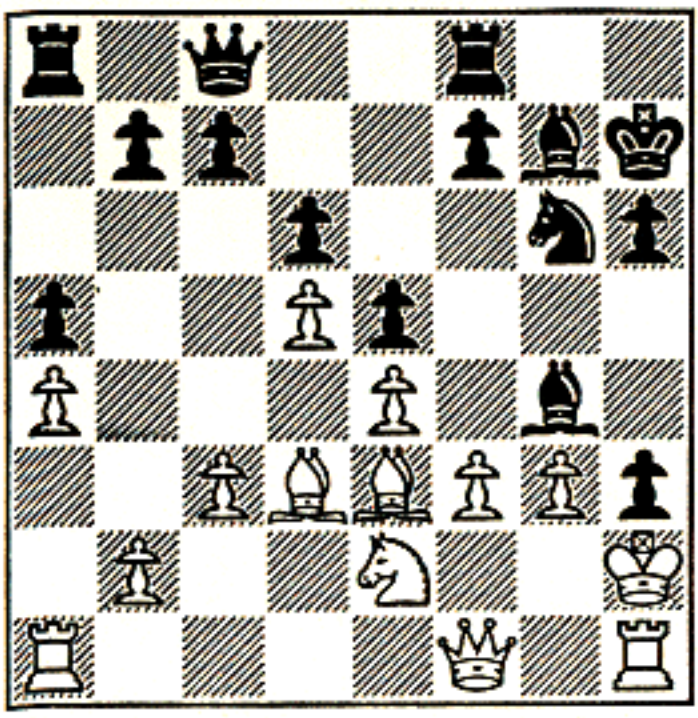
24	. . . .	Q—K1*!*

So that if 25 P—R4, Q—B1*!* threatening to win with . . . B—Kt5. Or if 25 P—KKt4, Kt—R5; 26 Q—Kt3, P—KB3 followed by . . . P—R4 with the initiative.

25	P—R4	Q—B1*!*
26	B—Q3	B—Kt5
27	Q—Kt2	P × P
28	P—B3	P—R6*!*
29	Q—B1	

Schlechter has played clev-

erly and appears to have attained his objective; for if now 29 . . . B—Q2; 30 P—KKt4 followed by 31 Q × P with a devastating attack.



29 . . . . P—KB4 !

30 P × B

Despair. After 30 Kt—Kt1 a likely continuation is 30 . . . P—B5; 31 P × P, P × P; 32 B—Q2, B—Q2; 33 Kt × P, Q—Q1 !; 34 B—K1 (or 34 Q—B2, B—KB3 ! with a winning position), Q—K1; 35 P—Kt3, Kt—K4; 36 B—K2, Q—R4 and White cannot hold out much longer.

30 . . . . P × KP

31 Q × P P × B

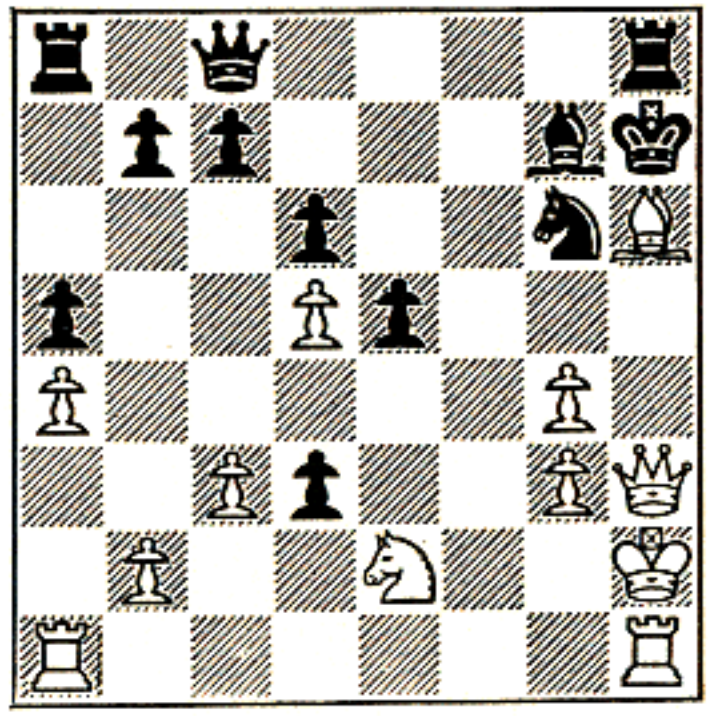
32 B × P

Surrendering to the inevitable: if 32 Kt—Kt1, P—K5 !; 33 K—Kt2 (33 B × P is answered as in the text), Kt—K4; 35 B × P, Q × P and wins.

32 . . . . R—R1 !

Just as conclusive as . . . P × Kt. White resigns, as he loses a piece without compensation. One of Nimzovich's most profound games!

Final Position



5. "The Soul of Chess"

WHEN Philidor announced that the Pawns were the soul of chess, his contemporaries listened respectfully but were mystified. Almost a century passed before Steinitz clarified the statement of his great predecessor. Nimzovich had the historic task of popularizing this concept so widely that today even quite weak players are familiar with the importance of Pawn positions.

SCOTCH GAME

Hamburg, 1910

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich* BLACK: *R. Spielmann*

1	P—K4	P—K4
2	Kt—KB3	Kt—QB3
3	P—Q4	P × P
4	Kt × P	Kt—B3

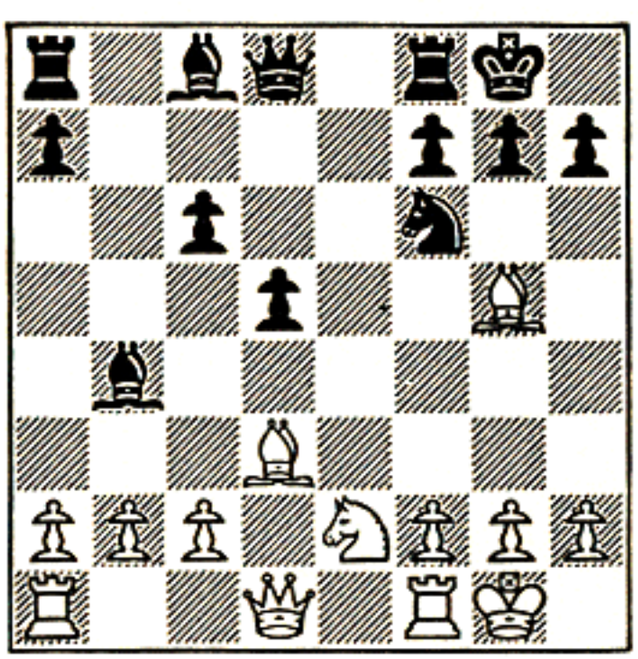
This opening has virtually disappeared from tournament play because it presents Black with too many equalizing opportunities.

5	Kt—QB3	B—Kt5
6	Kt × Kt	KtP × Kt
7	B—Q3	P—Q4
8	P × P	P × P

By interpolating 8 . . . Q—K2 *ch* Black virtually has a draw for the asking. But an attacking player like Spielmann naturally shuns such simplifying possibilities.

9	O—O	O—O
10	B—KKt5	P—B3
11	Kt—K2	

Nowadays 11 Q—B3 is the favored move.



11 . . . . R—K1

An excellent alternative is 11 . . . B—Q3 *!* (threatens 12 . . . B × P *ch*); 12 Kt—Kt3 *?* (better 12 Kt—Q4), P—KR3 *!;* 13 B—Q2, Kt—Kt5 *!;* 14 B—K2 (not 14 P—KR3 *?*, Kt × P; 15 K × Kt, Q—R5; 16 Q—B3, P—KB4 followed by . . . P—B5 regaining the piece advantageously), Q—R5; 15 B × Kt, B × B (Steinitz—Zukertort, Match, 1886) and Black has decidedly the better game.

12 Kt—Q4 Q—Q3
13 Q—B3 Kt—K5
14 B—K3 B—Q2
15 QR—Q1 Q—Kt3

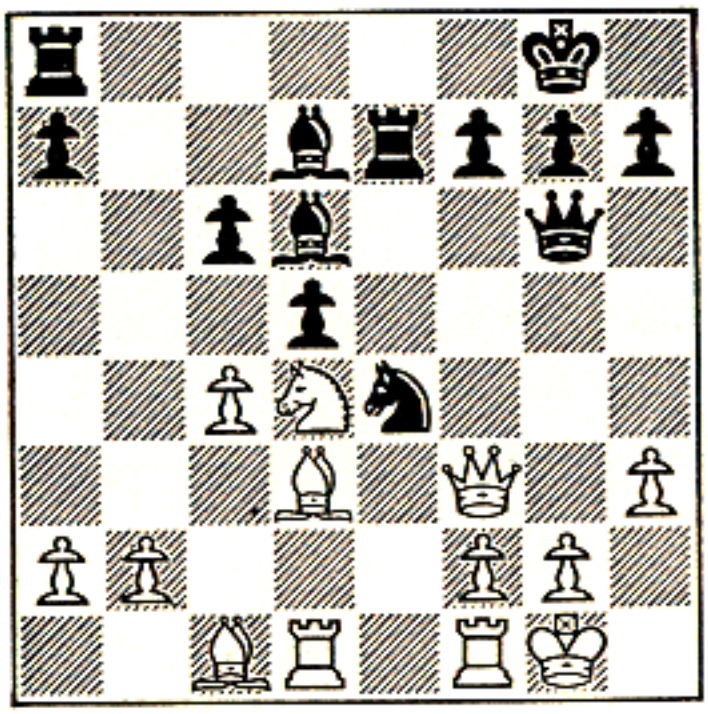
Threatening . . . B—Kt5. Black has an aggressive development, but his Pawn position is shaky. This is the crucial point about which the coming play revolves.

16 P—KR3 B—Q3
17 B—B1 *!*

Unimpressed by Black's excellent development, Nimzovich prepares to undermine the Queen's Pawn.

17 . . . . R—K2

18 P—B4 *!*



The critical position. Rather than allow himself to be burdened with an isolated Pawn, Spielmann advances boldly.

18 . . . . P—QB4
19 Kt—K2 P—Q5
20 B—B4

Despite the superficially favorable impression created by Black's position, Nimzovich demonstrates that the center Pawns are *still* weak!

20 . . . . B—B3
21 Kt—Kt3 *!*

Clears the air: 21 . . . Kt × Kt *?* is refuted by 22 Q × B *!* and wins.

21 . . . . B × B

22 Q × B Kt × Kt

So that if 23 B × Q?, Kt—K7 *ch* wins a piece.

23 P × Kt Q—K3?

Plausible as this move seems, it proves fatal. 23 . . . B—K5! gave drawing chances.

24 Q—B5! P—Kt3

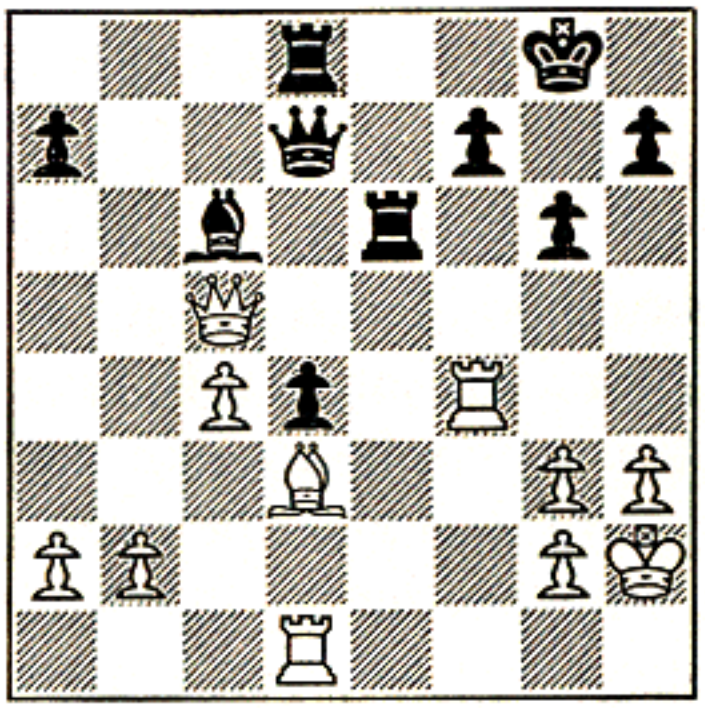
Or 24 . . . Q × Q; 25 R × Q and Black loses a Pawn with no counterplay.

25 Q × P

So the Queen's Pawn is isolated after all!

25 . . . . R—Q1
26 K—R2 Q—Q2
27 R—B4! R—K3!?

Realizing that after 27 . . . R(2)—K1; 28 B × P!, RP × B; 29 R(4) × QP, Q—B1; 30 R × R, R × R; 31 R × R *ch*, Q × R; 32 Q × B the ending is child's play, Spielmann hopes for a "swindle." But his opponent's powerful position is fool-proof against surprises.



28 B × P! R—K7!?

Capturing the Bishop is ruinous because of 29 R(4) × QP.

29 B × BP *ch*! K—Kt2

If 29 . . . Q × B; 30 Q—Kt5 *ch*! wins; or if 29 . . . K—R1; 30 R—B2!!, R × R (if 30 . . . R—K2; 31 R × P! or 30 . . . R—K6; 31 B—Q5! or 30 . . . R—K5; 31 B—Q5!); 31 Q—K5 *ch* and mate follows!

30 Q—Kt5 *ch* K—B1
31 B—R5 *ch*! Resigns

Spielmann has been beaten with his own weapons!

6. *Clash of Temperaments*

ONE could not imagine two men more unlike than Nimzovich and Marshall. Whereas Nimzovich always searched painstakingly for the hidden finesse which was the subtle solution to even the simplest problems, Marshall generally relied on an intuitive but often phenomenally accurate appraisal of even the most difficult positions. It is symptomatic of the profoundly mysterious character of chess that Marshall's method proved effective so often.

Remarkably enough, Marshall achieved an excellent lifetime score in his games with Nimzovich. One may reasonably conjecture that Marshall's easygoing ways irritated Nimzovich and thus prevented him from doing his best. Marshall was an elemental force of nature, Nimzovich was a seeker after eternal truths.

QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING

Hamburg, 1910

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich*		BLACK: *F. J. Marshall*
1 P—Q4	P—Q4	
2 Kt—KB3	P—QB4	
3 P—B4	BP × P	
	4 P × P	Q—R4 *ch*

3 . . . P—K3 transposes into the Tarrasch Defense. The text, on the other hand, leads to one of those quasi-symmetrical positions in which the advantage of the first move can be made to tell by refined play.

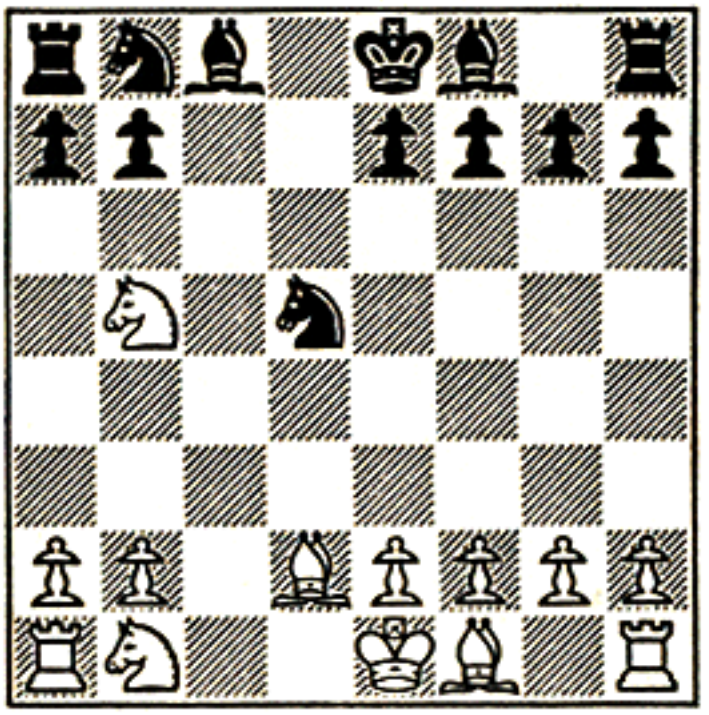
Black has saddled himself with an unrewarding task: he must work hard in order to obtain no more than equality. However, if 4 . . . Q × P; 5 Kt—B3 followed by 6 Kt × P or 6 Q × P with a considerable lead in development.

5 Q—Q2 *!*	Q × Q *ch*	

The exchange turns out badly, but if 5 . . . Q × QP; 6 Kt—B3 etc.

6	B × Q	Kt—KB3
7	Kt × P	Kt × P
8	Kt—Kt5 *!*	

Exploiting his advantage in development. The simplicity of the position is deceptive.



8		Kt—R3

He has no choice, for if 8 . . . P—QR3; 9 P—K4 *!*, B—Q2 (9 . . . P × Kt loses a Pawn); 10 P × Kt, P × Kt (if 10 . . . B × Kt; 11 B × B *ch*, P × B; 12 Kt—B3, P—Kt5; 13 Kt—Kt5 winning a Pawn); 11 Kt—B3, P—Kt5; 12 Kt—Kt5 with marked advantage.

9	QKt—B3	KKt—Kt5

If 9 . . . Kt × Kt; 10 B × Kt and the position is much in White's favor.

10	R—B1	P—K3
11	P—QR3	Kt—B3

Black's development is inferior. The position of his Queen's Knight is particularly unfortunate.

12	P—KKt3 *!*	B—Q2

Protecting himself as best he can against White's threat of posting his Bishop very strongly on the long diagonal. Most players would now continue 13 B—Kt2, but Nimzovich has a stronger line:

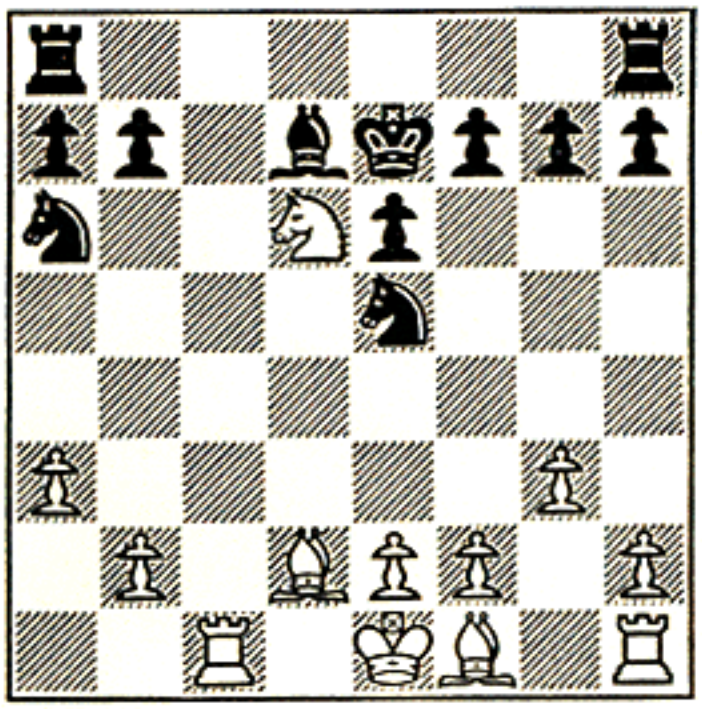
13	Kt—K4 *!*	Kt—K4 *!*

Cleverly guarding against the threatened Kt—Q6 *ch* (13 . . . O—O—O was out of the question).

14	Kt(4)—Q6 *ch*	B × Kt
15	Kt × B *ch*	K—K2

If now 16 Kt × KtP *??*, B—B3. But Nimzovich has a powerful refutation.

It requires a really imaginative player to search for complications in such a "simple" position.

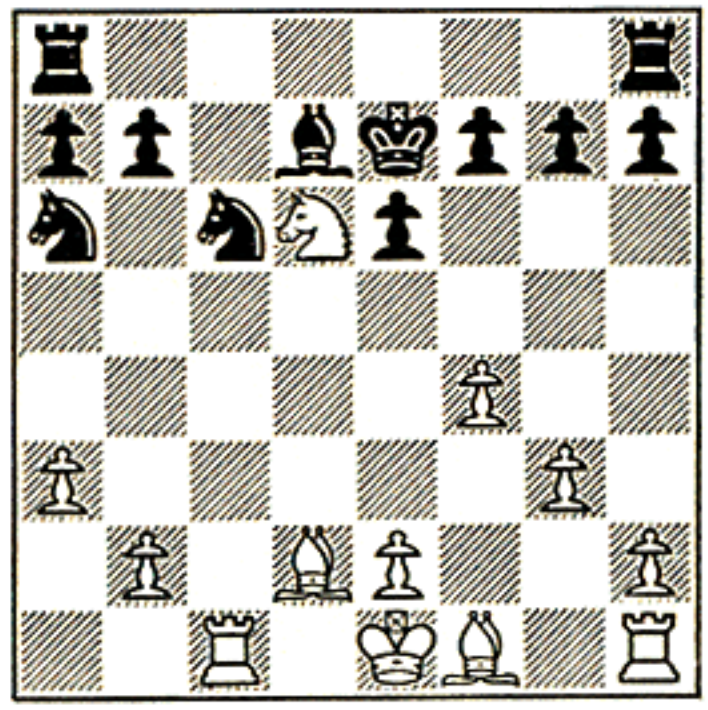


16 P—B4 *!!* Kt—B3

Other moves are no better: I 16 . . . K × Kt; 17 P × Kt *ch*, K × P; 18 B—Kt2 *!* with a winning game.

II 16 . . . B—B3; 17 P × Kt *!*, B × R; 18 P—K4, KR—QKt1 (if 18 . . . B—B6; 19 K—B2, B—R4; 20 Kt × KtP, Kt—Kt1; 21 R—B7 *ch* and Black can resign); 19 P—QKt4 *!*, P—B3 (else P—Kt5); 20 B × Kt, P × B; 21 R—B7 *ch*, K—Q1 (if 21 . . . K—B1; 22 P × P and Black is lost, for example 22 . . . R—Kt3; 23 R—B7 *ch*, K—Kt1; 24 R × P *ch*, K—B1; 25 B—R6 *!*, R × Kt; 26 R × QRP *ch* and mate follows); 22 R × KtP winning easily.

16 . . . Kt—Kt3 was probably best.



17 Kt × KtP *!!* QR—QKt1

On 17 . . . KR—QKt1 Nimzovich intended 18 B—Kt2 *!*, R × Kt; 19 R × Kt *!* and wins.

18	Kt—R5	Kt × Kt
19	B × Kt	R × P
20	B—B3	R—Kt6
21	B × P	R—QB1

Or 21 . . . R—KKt1; 22 B—Q4 retaining his material advantage.

22	R × R	B × R
23	B—Q4	R × RP
24	B × P	B—Kt2
25	R—Kt1	K—Q3

Black remains a Pawn down without compensation.

26	K—B2	B—Q4
27	B—R3	Kt—Kt5

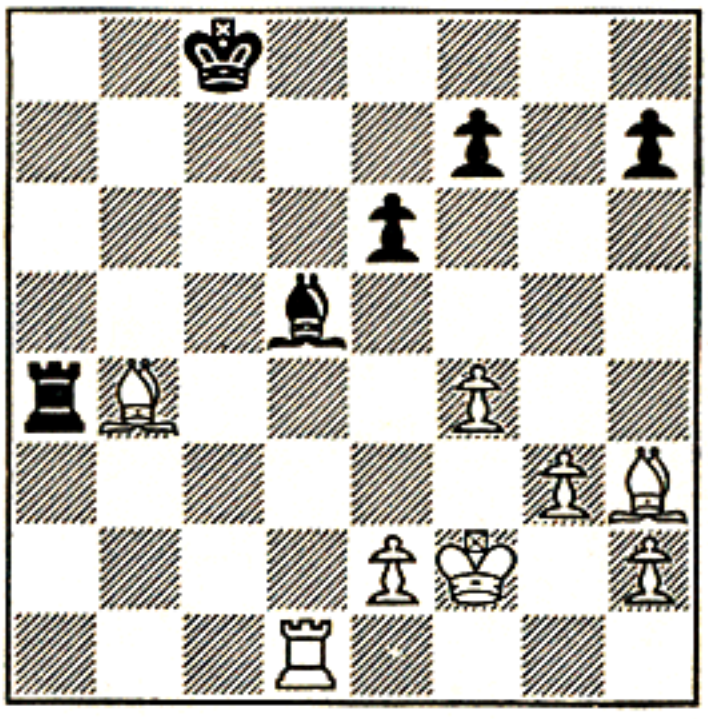
28 B—Kt8 *ch* K—Q2
29 R—Q1 K—B1 ?

Losing a piece; but if 29 . . . K—K1 (29 . . . K—B3; 30 R—B1 *ch*); 30 B—Q6 with a fairly easy win.

30 B—Q6 ! R—R5
31 B × Kt Resigns

For if 31 . . . R × B; 32 R × B.

Final Position



7. *Style*

THE STYLE is the man himself," says Buffon, and nowhere is the famous phrase (*Le style est l'homme même*) more appropriate than in chess. Many men, many styles; and what is chess style but the intangible expression of the will to win? The universe of the chessmaster is not without its grimmer aspects, for it is a world of dog-eat-dog. Beauty in chess (like virtue) is its own reward; it is only the incidental by-product of relentless struggle.

In such an atmosphere, the quality of objective appreciation is not seen too frequently. Yet differences in style may produce queer paradoxes. Thus Vidmar, always a thoroughly orthodox player and often a colorless one, was among the first to recognize and admire Nimzovich's blazing originality.

In this respect Vidmar showed to advantage, for it is a wise man who knows his own style. Dullards fancy them-

selves as combinative geniuses; others who enmesh themselves in mazes of complexity, preen themselves on their straightforward play.

PHILIDOR'S DEFENSE

San Sebastian, 1911

WHITE: *R. Teichmann* BLACK: *A. Nimzovich*

1	P—K4	P—K4
2	Kt—KB3	P—Q3
3	P—Q4	Kt—KB3

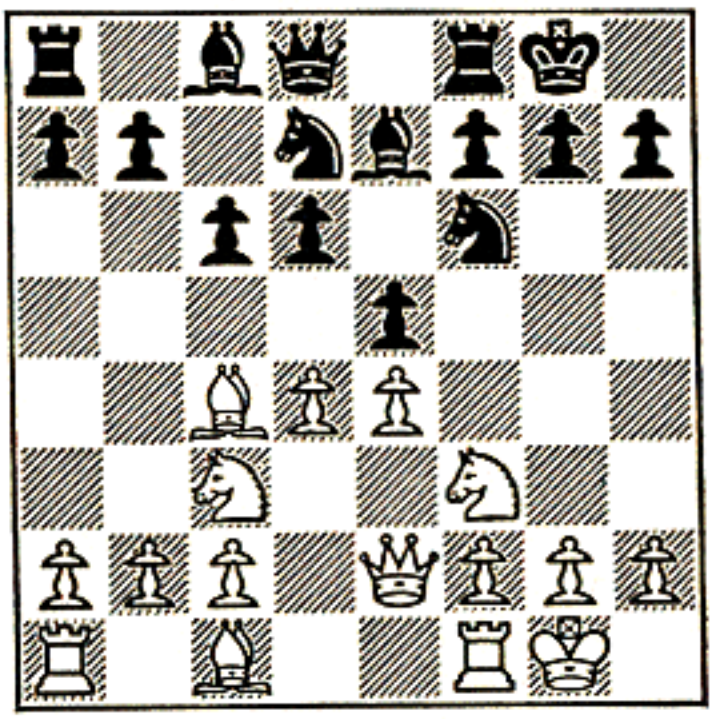
An interpolation, popularized by Nimzovich, which gave this venerable defense a temporary lease on life. Today it is well known that after 4 P × P, Kt × P; 5 Q—Q5, Kt—B4; 6 B—Kt5 White remains with a marked initiative.

4	Kt—B3	QKt—Q2
5	B—QB4	B—K2
6	O—O	O—O

The alternative method of not castling also has its drawbacks (see Game 19).

7	Q—K2	P—B3

This "Hanham" formation is not to everyone's taste, as it leads to a sadly cramped position. But it is a line which is full of finesse.



8	B—KKt5	

A thoughtless "developing" move which allows Black a free hand on the Queen-side. Necessary was 8 P—QR4! preventing Black's expansion by . . . P—QKt4 and leaving White with a fine game.

8	. . . .	P—KR3
9	B—R4	Kt—R4!

Giving White a cruel choice: parting with the two Bishops or freeing Black's game with

10 B × B, Q × B; 11 P—KKt3, Kt—Kt3; 12 B—Kt3, B—Kt5 etc.

10	B—KKt3	Kt × B
11	RP × Kt	P—QKt4
12	B—Q3	P—R3

Neutralizing the disorganizing effect of P—Q5 and/or P—R4. We can now see that White's omission of 8 P—QR4 was a serious lapse.

13	P—R4	B—Kt2
14	QR—Q1	Q—B2 *!*

Nimzovich is too old a hand to be taken in by the possibility 14 . . . KP × P; 15 Kt × QP, P—QB4 (winning a piece—so it seems!); 16 Kt—B5, P—B5; 17 Q—Kt4 *!* and White's game is positionally won.

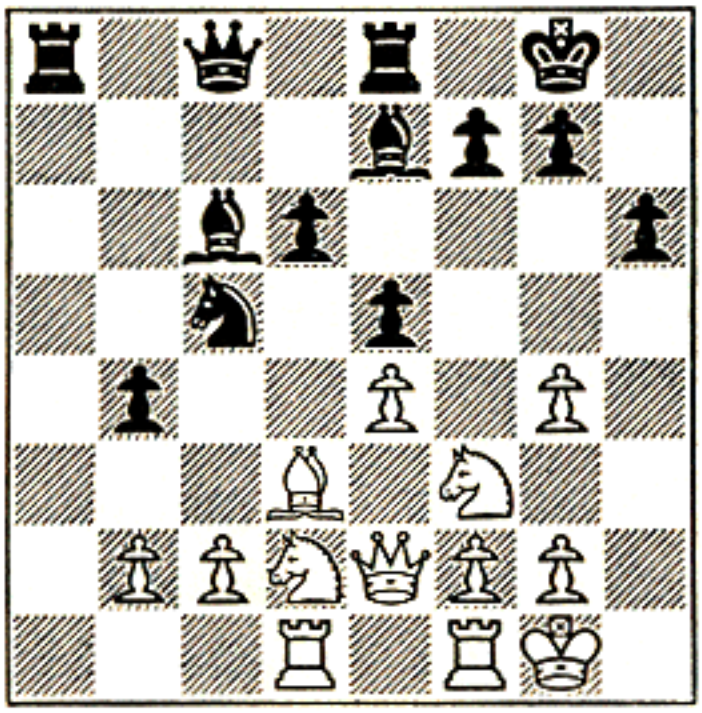
15	RP × P	RP × P
16	P—KKt4	

Teichmann expects to play P—KKt3, K—Kt2, R—KR1 and eventually P—Kt5. The way in which Nimzovich snatches the King Rook file for himself and operates on the other wing at the same time is really fascinating.

16	. . .	KR—K1

The presence of this disagreeable adversary for White's Queen provokes the following reply.

17	P—Q5	P—Kt5
18	P × P	B × P
19	Kt—Kt1	Kt—B4
20	QKt—Q2	Q—B1 *!*



The process by which Nimzovich steadily increases the pressure makes the coming play highly instructive. White crumbles imperceptibly.

21	B—B4	P—Kt3

Naturally avoiding the simple trap 21 . . . Q × P; 22 B × P *ch* and at the same time furthering his long-range plans.

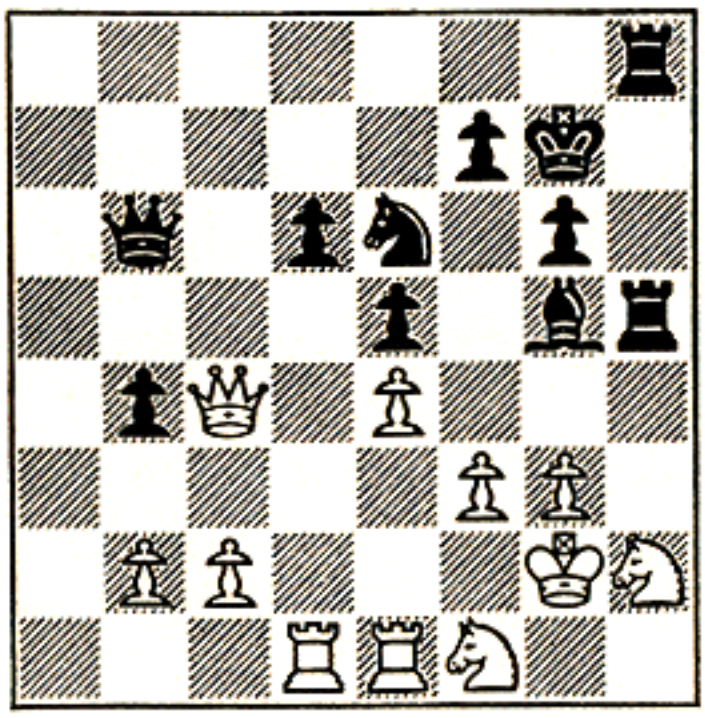
22	P—KKt3	K—Kt2
23	Kt—R2	B—KKt4 *!*

This Bishop cannot be driven away from his commanding position; for if 24 P—B4, P × P; 25 P × P, B—B3 and a Pawn falls.

24	P—KB3	Q—B2
25	KR—K1	R—R1 *!*
26	Kt(Q2)—B1	P—R4 *!*
27	P × P	R × P

Now Black has the open King Rook file at his disposal. Passive defense and simplification are the order of the day for his opponent.

28	B—Q5	QR—R1
29	B × B	Q × B
30	Q—B4	Q—Kt3 *!*
31	K—Kt2	Kt—K3



Apparently Black is only interested in getting his Knight to Q5. Actually he is plotting a diabolical combination: 32 . . . R × Kt *ch!!;* 33 Kt × R, R × Kt *ch;* 34 K × R, Q—B7 *ch;* 35 K—R3, B—B5 *!;* 36 KR—Kt1, Kt—Kt4 *ch* and mate follows!

32	R—K2	Kt—Q5

Forcing the Rook off the second rank, for if 33 R—B2, B—K6 *!* is crushing.

33	R(2)—K1	Q—Kt2 *!*

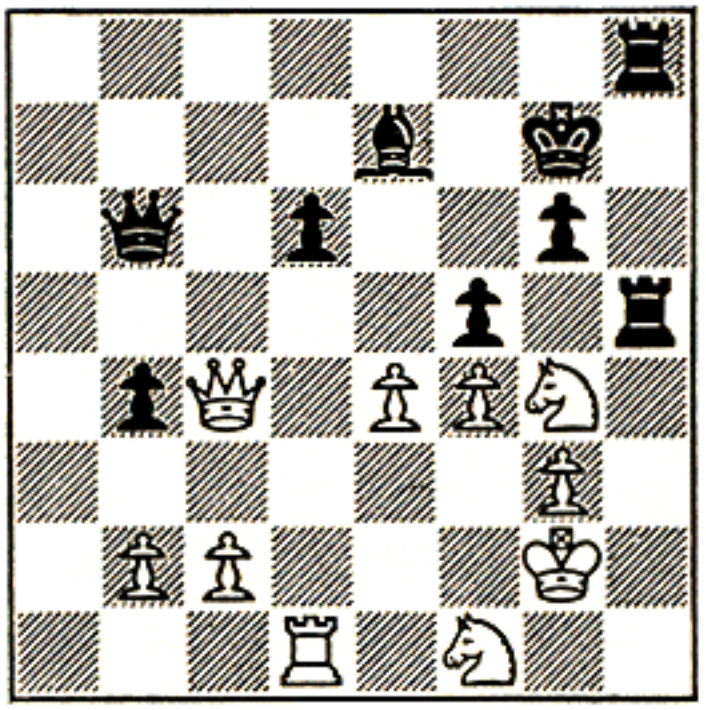
If now 34 P—B3 (the threat was 34 . . . R—QB1), P × P; 35 P × P (or 35 Q × P, R—QB1 etc.), Q—Kt7 *ch* etc. and White must resign.

34	R × Kt	P × R
35	Kt—Kt4	

35 Q × QP *ch*, B—B3; 36 Q × QP, R—Q1 is likewise without long-term prospects for White.

35	. . . .	Q—Kt3
36	P—B4	B—K2
37	R—Q1	P—B4 *!*

Now it is Black who wants exchanges. The text clears the atmosphere.



38	Kt—B2	P × P
39	Q × P *ch*	Q × Q
40	R × Q	P—Q4
41	P—Kt4	B—B4 !

More simplification.

42	R—Q1	R—R5
43	R × P	B × Kt
44	K × B	R × P
45	K—K3	R—QB1 !

So that if 46 R—Q4, R × QBP; 47 R × KtP, R—Kt8 and wins.

46	K × P	R—B5 *ch*
47	K—Q3	R(B5) × KBP

The rest is easy:

48	Kt—K3	R—Kt6
49	R—K5	K—B3
50	R—K8	K—B2
51	R—K5	R—B3
52	P—B4	P—Kt6
53	K—K4	R—K3
54	R × R	K × R
55	Kt—Q5	P—Kt4
	Resigns	

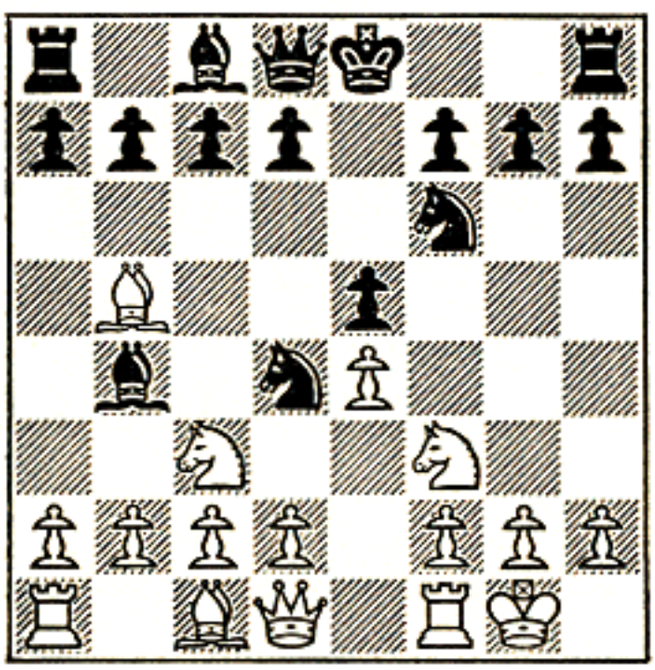
8. *"Lightning"*

IN LIGHTNING or rapid-transit chess the modern expert has his opportunity to vie with the old masters. It is a pity that the brilliancies which are produced in these brief moments rarely see the light of day. An idea of what present-day masters can produce in ten-second chess is seen in the following game, which was played in a few leisure moments during a great tournament. The whole game must have taken some five minutes!

FOUR KNIGHTS' GAME

Carlsbad, 1911

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich*	BLACK: *Dr. S. Tartakover*
1 P—K4	P—K4
2 Kt—KB3	Kt—QB3
3 Kt—B3	Kt—B3
4 B—Kt5	B—Kt5
5 O—O	Kt—Q5



Black confuses two distinct variations. The text looks attractive, as it threatens to win a piece. Yet, if Black wanted to move the Knight, he should have played 4 . . . Kt—Q5.

6 Kt × Kt *!*	P × Kt
7 P—K5	

This Pawn sacrifice yields a powerful attack.

7	P × Kt
8 QP × P	B—K2

If 8 . . . B × P*?*; 9 P × B, Kt—Kt1; 10 B—R3 with a won game.

9 P × Kt B × P

Likewise after 9 . . . P × P; 10 R—K1 Black's position is very difficult.

10 R—K1 *ch* K—B1

Or 10 . . . B—K2; 11 Q—K2, P—QB3; 12 B—Q3, P—Q4; 13 B—KKt5, P—B3; 14 Q—R5 *ch* with a powerful attack.

11 B—QB4 P—Q3

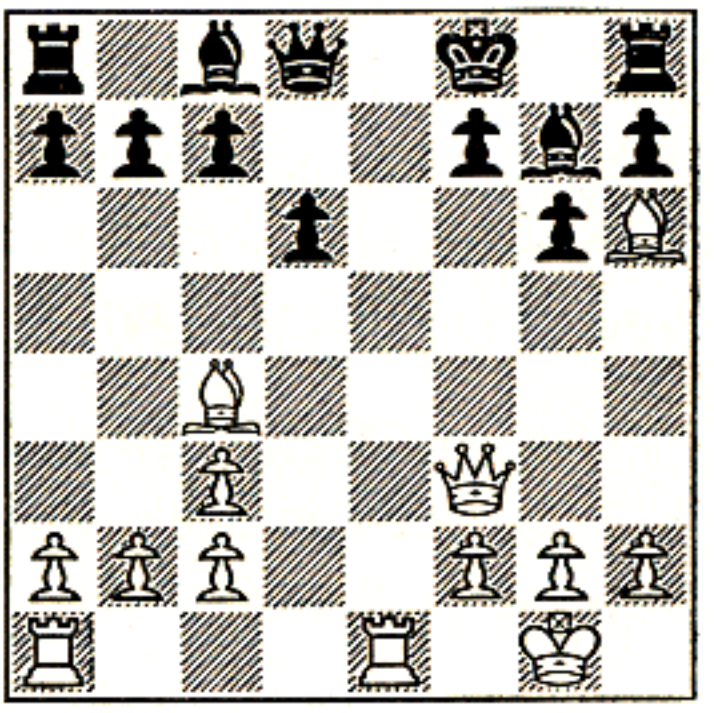
11 . . . P—B3 had to be tried here, in order to break the Bishop's diagonal with . . . P—Q4.

12 Q—R5 P—KKt3
13 B—R6 *ch* B—Kt2

This leads to immediate disaster, but if 13 . . . K—Kt1; 14 B × P *ch* forces mate in two: 14 . . . K × B; 15 Q—Q5 *ch*, B—K3; 16 Q × B mate. But Black's days are numbered in any event.

14 Q—B3

Astonishing as it may seem at such an early stage, Black is already defenseless! The extra Pawn is meaningless.



14 . . . . Q—Q2

If 14 . . . P—KB3; 15 R—K8 *ch*!!, K × R (if 15 . . . Q × R; 16 Q × P *ch* and mate next move); 16 B × B with a winning position.

15 Q—KB6! KR—Kt1

Forced!

16 B × B *ch* R × B

Now it seems that he is momentarily out of danger.

17 B × P!! Resigns

If 17 . . . R × B; 18 Q—R8 mate, or 17 . . . Q × B; 18 Q—Q8 *ch* and mate next move. A good example of the dangers of Pawn-grabbing in the opening, especially in speed chess.

9. *Deceptive Appearances*

PERHAPS Chajes would not have pounced on the win of the exchange so readily if he had been familiar with the famous couplet from *H. M. S. Pinafore*:

> Things are seldom what they seem.
> Skim milk masquerades as cream.

True, in this game, Nimzovich turns the lines inside out; for what seems to be a naive blunder, turns out to be the beginning of a far-sighted combination.

SICILIAN DEFENSE

Carlsbad, 1911

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich*		BLACK: *O. Chajes*	
1	P—K4		P—QB4
2	P—QB3		Kt—QB3

For 2 . . . P—K3 see Game 12.

3	P—Q4		P × P
4	P × P		P—Q4
5	P × P		Q × P

Black's game looks promising, but in order to maintain his Queen at its present commanding post, he will have to allow his opponent the two Bishops.

6	Kt—KB3		P—K4
7	Kt—B3		B—QKt5
8	B—Q2		B × Kt
9	B × B		P—K5

Probably best, as it curbs the power of White's Queen Bishop. The alternative 9 . . . P × P; 10 Kt × P, Kt—B3 (10 . . . Kt × Kt; 11 Q × Kt gives White an ideal two-Bishop position); 11 Kt × Kt, Q × Kt (else he is left with a weak Pawn on the open Queen's Bishop file); 12 B—Kt4! is not good for Black.

10	Kt—K5		Kt × Kt

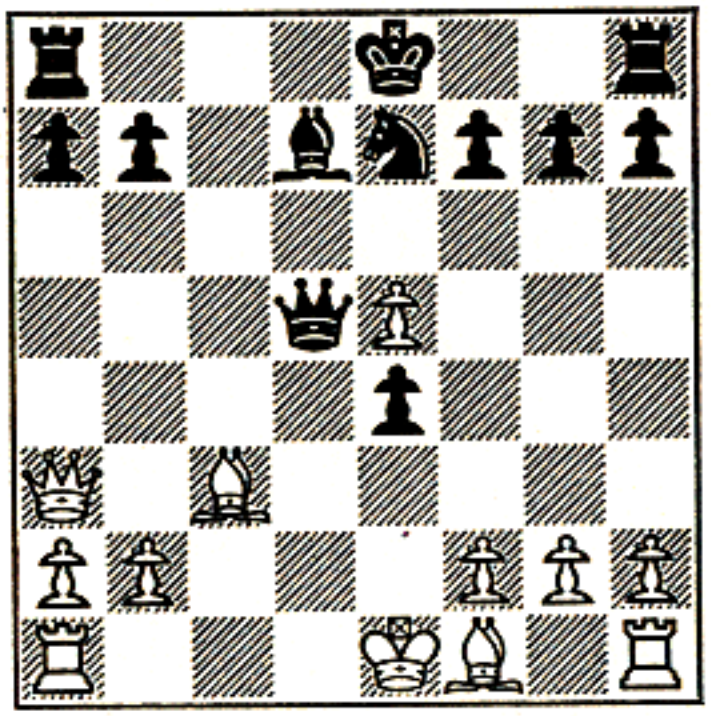
White was threatening 11 B—B4.

11 P × Kt Kt—K2

11 . . . Q × Q *ch;* 12 R × Q gives White too powerful a position.

12 Q—R4 *ch* B—Q2
13 Q—R3

Nimzovich's Queen maneuver, intended to create difficulties in Black's castling, succeeds because Chajes counters weakly.



13 . . . . P—K6 *?*

The right way, says Schlechter, is 13 . . . Q—K3 and if 14 R—Q1, O—O; 15 R—Q6, Q—B4.

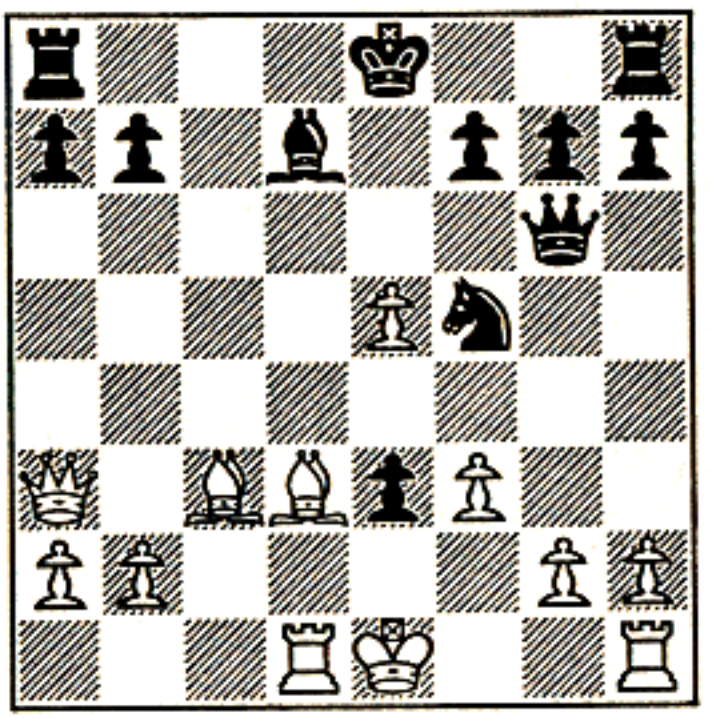
14 P—B3 *!* Q—K3

15 R—Q1 *!* Kt—B4

Nimzovich has cleverly exploited his opponent's inexactitude: if 15 . . . O—O *?;* 16 R—Q6, Q—B4; 17 B—Q3. So Chajes decides to embark on dubious adventures.

16 B—Q3 Q—KKt3 *! ?*

Setting two subtle traps.



The first trap: if 17 P—KKt4 *?*, Q—R3; 18 B × Kt, Q—R5 *ch;* 19 K—K2, Q—B7 *ch;* 20 K—Q3, B—Kt4 *ch;* 21 K—K4, B—B3 *ch* with at least a draw.

17 O—O *!*

"Falling" into the second trap.

17 . . . . P—K7

18 B × P Kt—K6

Wins the exchange—at a price.

19 K—B2 ! Kt × R *ch*

Forced, for if 19 . . . Kt × R; 20 P—K6 !, P × P (if 20 . . . Q × P; 21 B × Kt with the decisive threat 22 R—K1; or if 20 . . . B × P; 21 B—Kt5 *ch* and wins); 21 R × B !, K × R; 22 B—Kt5 *ch*, K—B2; 23 Q—B5 *ch*, K—Q1; 24 Q—Q6 *ch* and mate in two.

20 R × Kt Q—Kt3 *ch*

To forestall P—K6; but his King is left stranded in the center.

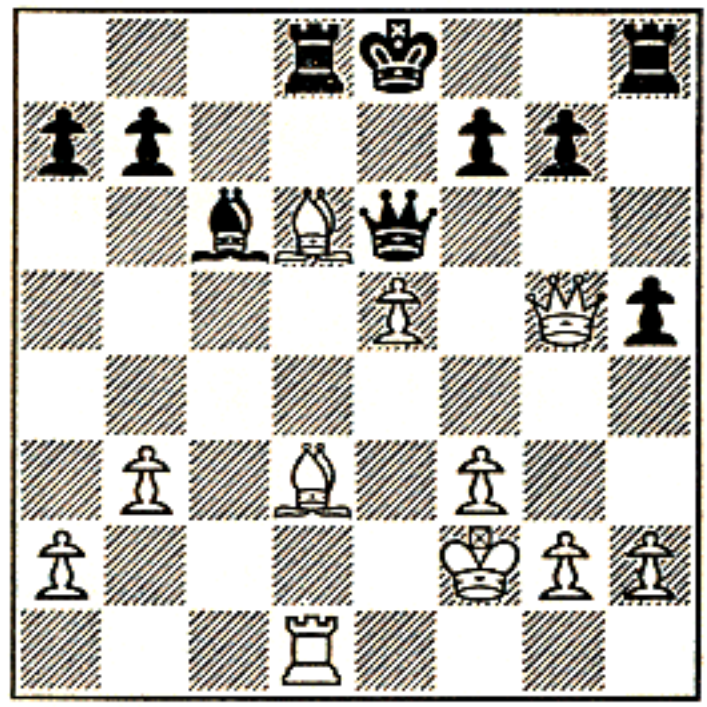
21 B—Q4 Q—K3
22 P—QKt3 ! B—B3
23 B—B5 Q—B4

After 23 . . . Q × KP the opening of the King file is fatal.

24 Q—B1 ! R—Q1
25 B—Q6 P—KR4

Or 25 . . . R × B; 26 P × R, O—O; 27 Q—K3 with a winning game.

26 B—Q3 Q—K3
27 Q—Kt5 !



27 . . . . R—Q2

Capitulation; but if 27 . . . P—KKt3; 28 B—B4, Q—Q2; 29 P—K6 !, P × P; 30 B—R3 !, Q—QB2; 31 Q × P *ch* and Black can resign.

28 B—KB5 R × B

Or 28 . . . Q—R3; 29 B × R *ch* with a quick mate.

29 P × R P—B3

If 29 . . . Q—B3; 30 Q—K3 *ch* is deadly.

30 Q—Kt6 *ch* Q—B2
31 P—Q7 *ch* B × P
32 Q × Q *ch* Resigns

A game out of the ordinary.

10. *Originality as a Chore*

FAMOUS as he was for originality, Nimzovich really outdid himself in this game. Even so staunchly orthodox a critic as Leopold Hoffer, editor of the famous column in "The Field," was enchanted with Nimzovich's play.

And more remarkable than Nimzovich's originality, perhaps, is his conscientious attitude: he deliberately sets himself an inordinately difficult technical task, and carries it through flawlessly. At the end he triumphs with one of his typically piquant creations. Once more his favorite Knights carry off the honors.

FRENCH DEFENSE

Carlsbad, 1911

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich*		BLACK: *G. Levenfish*
1	P—K4	P—K3
2	P—Q4	P—Q4
3	P—K5	P—QB4
4	P—QB3	Kt—QB3
5	Kt—B3	P—B3

Wrong, says Nimzovich. He should continue the attack on the *base* of the Pawn-chain with 5 . . . Q—Kt3 as in Game 11.

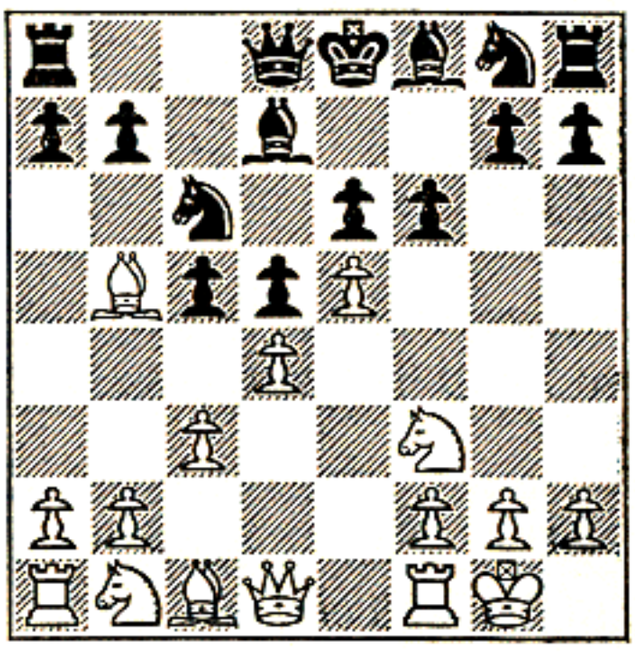
6 B—QKt5

Anticipating a later blockade on K5, he plans to remove Black's protective Knight.

6 . . . . B—Q2

Threatening to win a Pawn.

7 O—O *!*



7 . . . . Q—Kt3

Very discreet. On 7 . . . Kt × KP Nimzovich intended 8 Kt × Kt, B × B; 9 Q—R5 *ch*, K—K2; 10 Q—B7 *ch*, K—Q3; 11 P × P *ch!*, K × Kt; 12 R—K1 *ch*, K—B4; 13 Q—R5 *ch*, P—Kt4; 14 P—Kt4 mate!

8 B × Kt P × B
9 KP × P Kt × P

A superficially attractive developing move. He might have been better off to guard his K4 with 9 . . . KtP × P.

10 Kt—K5 *!* B—Q3
11 P × P B × P
12 B—Kt5 *!*

Preventing Black from playing . . . O—O. The blockade on K5, which is also slated to appear in Game 11, is now fully established.

12 . . . . Q—Q1
13 B × Kt *!*

Heresy! White is left with two Knights against two Bishops.

13 . . . . Q × B
14 Q—R5 *ch!*

Forcing a weakening of the black squares which will be useful later on.

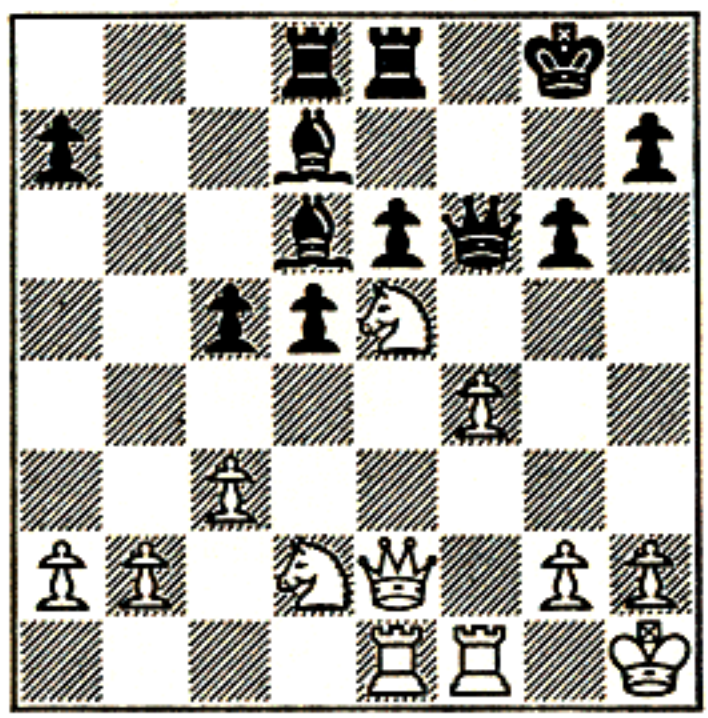
14 . . . . P—Kt3
15 Q—K2 R—Q1

Or 15 . . . B—Q3; 16 P—KB4, B × Kt; 17 P × B and White's control of the King Bishop file and the black squares will prove decisive.

16 Kt—Q2 O—O
17 QR—K1 KR—K1
18 K—R1

In order to intensify his grip on K5 by playing P—KB4.

18 . . . . B—Q3
19 P—KB4 P—B4



20 P—B4

Nimzovich later decided that 20 Q—R6 would have been even stronger. However, the text poses a serious problem for Black, as 20 . . . P—Q5 would give K4 to White's pieces and imprison the King's Bishop.

20	. . . .	B—KB1 *?!*
21	P × P	B—B1

But not 21 . . . P × P *??*; 22 Kt × B and wins.

22	Kt—K4	Q—Kt2
23	P × P *?!*	

With 23 P—Q6 *!* Nimzovich would have obtained a decisive positional advantage. The text, on the other hand, permits the Bishops to become dangerously mobile.

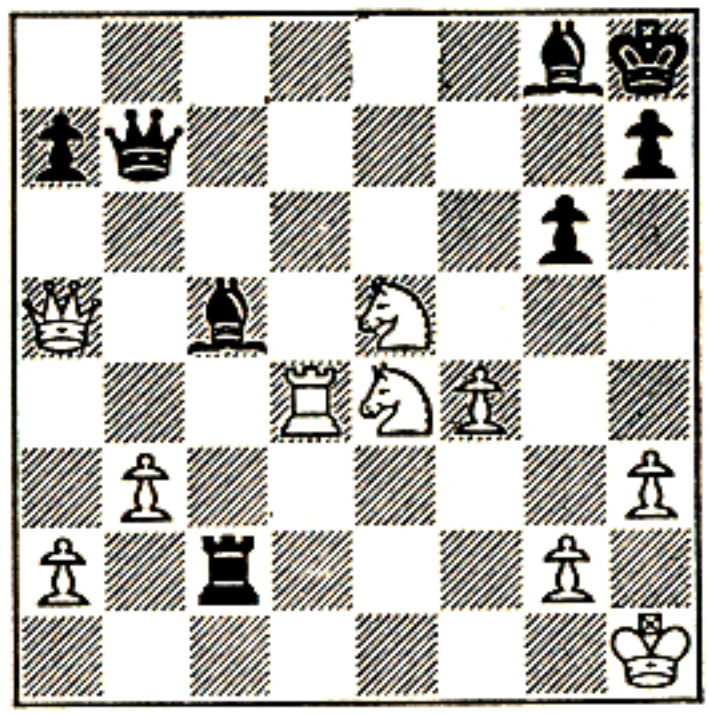
23	. . . .	B × P
24	Q—R6	K—R1
25	R—Q1	B—Kt1

Best, for if 25 . . . B—Q4; 26 Kt—QB3, B—R1 (not 26 . . . Q—Kt2 *?*; 27 Q × Q, B × Q; 28 R × R, R × R; 29 Kt—B7 *ch*); 27 Kt—Kt5 with strong pressure.

26	P—QKt3	R—Q5 *!*
27	R × R *!*	P × R
28	Q—R5	R—B1

Now that . . . R—Q1 has been prevented, Black takes the open file. The position seems ideal for the Bishops.

29	R—Q1	R—B7
30	P—KR3	Q—Kt2
31	R × P	B—B4



White is apparently lost, for if 32 R—R4, B—Kt3; 33 Q—K1, B—Q4. But Nimzovich has calculated everything to a hair, relying on the powerful centralized position of his Knights.

32	Q—Q8 *!!*	B—K2

And not 32 . . . B × R; 33 Q × B, Q—Kt2; 34 Kt—Q6 *!!* and there is no defense against

the threatened 35 Kt—K8! The text is a necessary parry to the menace of 33 R—Q7.

33	Q—Q7	Q—R3
34	R—Q3 !	

Guards against Black's mating threat, and provides for Q—Q4.

34	. . . .	B—B1
35	Kt—B7 *ch*	B × Kt

If 35 . . . K—Kt2; 36 Q—Q4 *ch !* and mate in two!

36	Q × B	R—B1
37	R—Q7	Resigns

A beautiful finish.

11. *World Premiere*

OF THIS game Nimzovich later wrote in *My System*, "A most instructive game from A to Z, one which I regard as the first in which my new philosophy of the center was exhibited."

It should be borne in mind that Nimzovich's play here was so revolutionary that it earned him little more than contempt. Few critics were able to appreciate the fine points of the game.

FRENCH DEFENSE

Carlsbad, 1911

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich* BLACK: *G. Salve*

1	P—K4	P—K3
2	P—Q4	P—Q4
3	P—K5 ! ?	

An old continuation favored by Steinitz. In 1911 the move had been absent from tournament play for almost a quarter of a century, as a result of Tarrasch's "refutation" in 1888.

3 . . . . P—QB4

Can White maintain his grip on K5 and work up a King-side attack as a result?—or can Black smash the Pawn-chain by means of the text and eventually . . . P—B3 . . . ?

4 P—QB3

Later on Nimzovich discarded this move in favor of 4 Kt—KB3 or 4 Q—Kt4.

4 . . . . Kt—QB3
5 Kt—B3 Q—Kt3
6 B—Q3

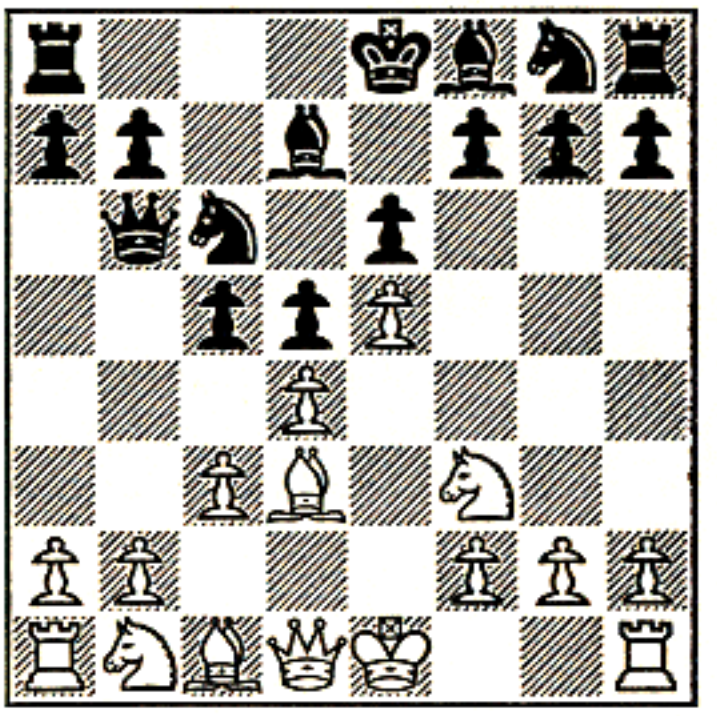
6 B—K2 is more accurate, as will become apparent later.

6 . . . . B—Q2?

Salve of course realizes that he cannot win a Pawn by 6 . . . P × P; 7 P × P, Kt × QP?; 8 Kt × Kt, Q × Kt?? because of 9 B—Kt5 *ch* winning the Queen. The proper course, however, is 6 . . . P × P; 7 P × P, B—Q2 as in Game 12, to which the reader is referred for a full exposition of that variation.

In playing the text, Salve is gratified at the cruel alternative which faces White: either loss of tempo with 7 B—K2, or giving up the center with 7 P × P and allowing Black to develop with gain of time (7 . . . B × P).

What is Nimzovich's choice to be? *This is one of the most dramatic moments in the history of chess!*



7 P × P!!

For this move, one of the deepest ever played, Nimzovich was roundly damned by the chess world.

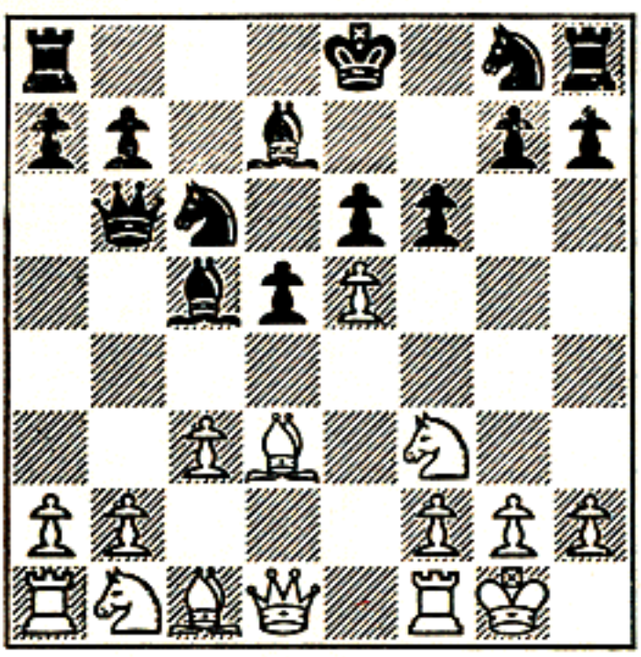
7 . . . . B × P
8 O—O

If Salve could have foreseen what was coming, he would now have played 8 . . .

P—QR4 to maintain his King Bishop's position.

8 . . . . P—B3

Logical, consistent and . . . all wrong!



9 P—QKt4 ! !

This ugly move is based on a profound understanding of the position. Black wants to remove the hostile King's Pawn, after which he can develop freely. Nimzovich wants to demonstrate that the disappearance of his center Pawns will be compensated for by the occupation of Q4 and K5 by *pieces*. These pieces will *blockade* the later advance of Black's Queen Pawn and King Pawn, so that his game will remain constricted. But how can these ideas (which were completely unknown in 1911!) be carried out?

The obvious move is 9 Q—K2, but after 9 . . . P × P; 10 Kt × P, Kt × Kt; 11 Q × Kt, Kt—B3 Black's development is satisfactory; he will eventually drive away the Queen and play . . . P—K4; and the White Queen Bishop cannot move because the Pawn at QKt2 must be guarded.

Nimzovich's last move is the brilliant solution: the Black Bishop is driven back, the QKtP no longer needs protection, the Queen Bishop is ready to take up his blockading duties.

9 . . . . B—K2

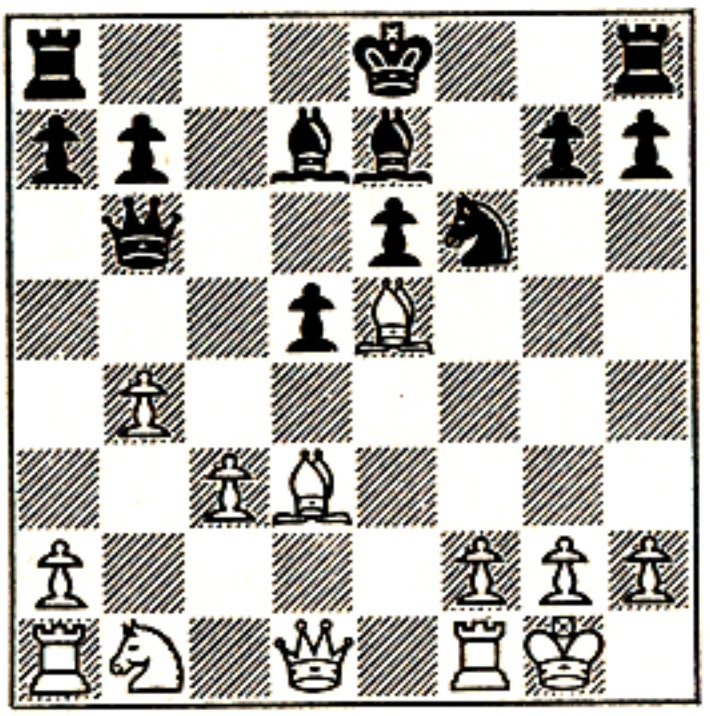
Salve must have been delighted with this position: look at White's backward Queen Bishop Pawn on the open file!

10 B—KB4 P × P
11 Kt × P Kt × Kt
12 B × Kt

The blockade of the King Pawn has now been established!

12 . . . . Kt—B3

Many a tactical finesse is needed to maintain the blockade; thus 12 . . . B—KB3 is refuted by 13 Q—R5 *ch*, P—Kt3; 14 B × P *ch*, P × B; 15 Q × P *ch*, K—K2; 16 B × B *ch*, Kt × B; 17 Q—Kt7 *ch* and wins.



13 Kt—Q2 *!*

Nimzovich does not agree with Oscar Wilde's "I can resist everything but temptation." 13 Q—B2 looks attractive, for if 13 . . . O—O; 14 B × Kt, R × B; 15 B × P *ch*, K—R1; 16 B—Q3 and White has won a Pawn. *But he has given up the blockade*, and after 16 . . . P—K4 Black's strong center and pressure on the weak QBP would go far in neutralizing the Pawn minus.

13 . . . . O—O

Note how magnificently the centralized Bishop is functioning: it not only blockades the King Pawn—it also guards the Queen Bishop Pawn.

14 Kt—B3 B—Q3

But not 14 . . . B—Kt4 (trying to exchange the inferior Bishop); 15 B—Q4, Q—R3; 16 B × B, Q × B; 17 Kt—Kt5, Q—B3; 18 R—K1 winning the King Pawn. Such is the power of the blockade!

15 Q—K2 *!*

Always the most accurate! If 15 B—Q4, Q—B2; 16 Q—K2, Kt—Kt5 *!*; 17 P—KR3, P—K4 *!* and Black frees himself.

15 . . . . QR—B1

Baffled but still optimistic, Salve seeks counterplay. The alternative 15 . . . QR—K1 and 16 . . . B—B1 is not attractive.

16 B—Q4 Q—B2

17 Kt—K5 B—K1
18 QR—K1

Over-protecting the strong point K5. The blockade is crushing.

18 . . . . B × Kt

Removing the paralyzing Knight, but exposing himself to the grip of the united Bishops. There is little choice: if 18 . . . Kt—Q2; 19 Kt × Kt, B × Kt; 20 Q—R5 wins.

19 B × B Q—B3
20 B—Q4 *!*

Compelling Black's Bishop to choose one of the diagonals.

20 . . . . B—Q2
21 Q—B2 *!*

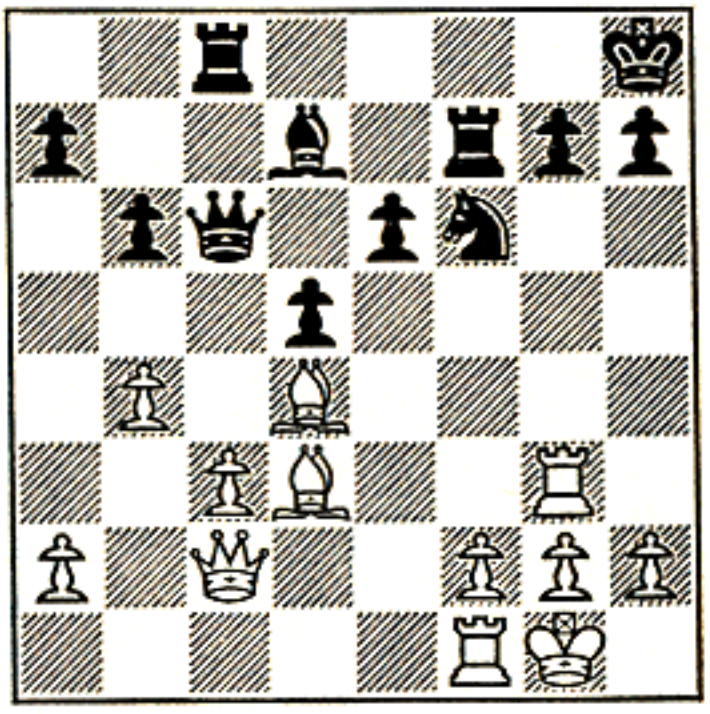
Threatening to win a Pawn and thus gaining time for the further deployment of the Queen Rook.

21 . . . . R—KB2

So as to answer 22 B × Kt with . . . P × B. Advancing one of the King-side Pawns would create a fatal weakness.

22 R—K3 P—QKt3
23 R—Kt3 K—R1

White was again threatening to win a Pawn. But even the text does not help.



24 B × RP *!* P—K4 *!*

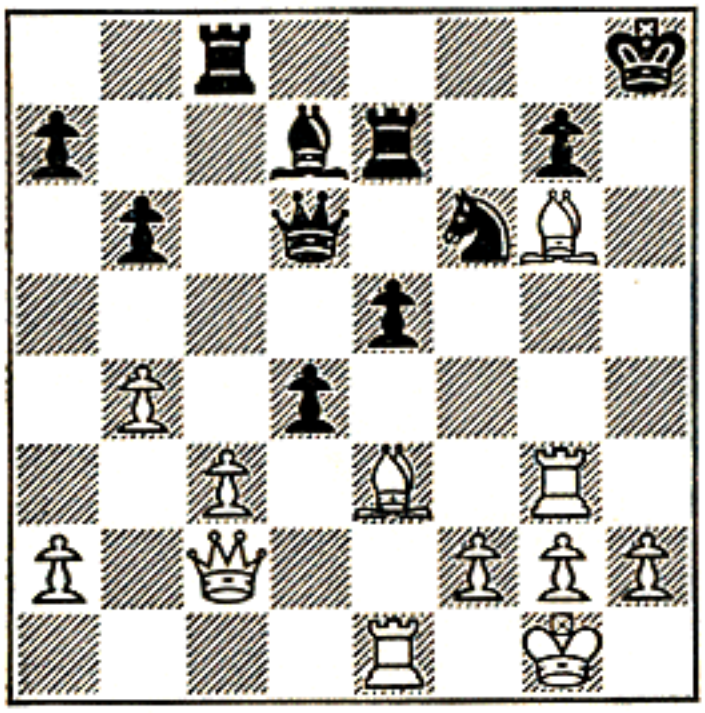
Apparently winning a piece, but Nimzovich slips out. If instead 24 . . . Kt × B; 25 Q—Kt6 *!* (not 25 R—R3, R—B4; 26 P—Kt4, P—K4 *!!*), K—Kt1; 26 B × KKtP, Kt—B1; 27 Q—R6, Kt—R2; 28 B—B6 *ch* and wins.

25 B—Kt6 *!* R—K2
26 R—K1 Q—Q3
27 B—K3

But not 27 R(3)—K3 *?*, Kt—Kt5!

27 . . . . P—Q5

White seems to have involved himself in one of those dangerous reactions which often follow a gain of material. But Nimzovich avoids all difficulties by simplifying adroitly.



28 B—Kt5 R × P

Else 29 Q—Q1 ! follows.

29 R × R P × R

30 Q × P K—Kt1
31 P—QR3 K—B1
32 B—R4 ! B—K1
33 B—B5 Q—Q5

White's threat of 34 B—Kt3 was too strong.

34 Q × Q P × Q
35 R × R K × R
36 B—Q3

Still blockading!

36 . . . . K—Q3
37 B × Kt P × B
38 K—B1 B—B3
39 P—KR4 ! Resigns

With Black tied down by the passed King Rook Pawn, the ending is hopeless for him. A game that made chess history!

12. *Right and Wrong*

ONE of the most delicious forms of irony appears in human affairs when a man gets the right results for the wrong reasons. The following game, like the previous one, is one of the most dramatic played in the history of chess; for in this game Nimzovich, who never lacked courage, boldly adopted a much disputed variation against the great authority who was the leader of the anti-Nimzovich forces.

Yes, it required courage; for Tarrasch was a famous master, with the prestige of a notable career of more than two decades' duration. Yet Nimzovich did not shrink from the critical encounter, despite the hounding and ridicule which his startling theories had already brought upon his head.

The irony of the encounter lies in this: in the present instance, *the critics were right and Nimzovich was wrong!* Yet his burning faith and courage carried him safely through the ordeal. The result was that even his enemies sang his praises after the game—although they had previously reviled him for his justly earned successes!

FRENCH DEFENSE

(in effect)

San Sebastian, 1912

WHITE: *A. Nimzovich* BLACK: *Dr. S. Tarrasch*

1 P—K4 P—QB4

Psychologically very interesting. Here one would expect 1 . . . P—K3, in order to give Nimzovich the opportunity to play his favorite variation.

2 P—QB3

As pointed out in the notes to Game 9, this advance is weaker than the usual 2 Kt—KB3; but it had the merit (in Nimzovich's eyes) of making possible a transposition into the French Defense.

2		P—K3

Apparently Tarrasch has had a change of heart: 2 . . . P—Q4 is perfectly correct, but if he plays it, he is branded by the whole chess world as having evaded the crucial test of his controversy with Nimzovich.

3	P—Q4	P—Q4
4	P—K5	

Thus we arrive at the thorny variation after all! However, the transposition makes us feel that while Nimzovich is eager for a fight, Tarrasch is entering the struggle in a hesitant and reluctant mood.

4		Kt—QB3
5	Kt—B3	Q—Kt3
6	B—Q3	

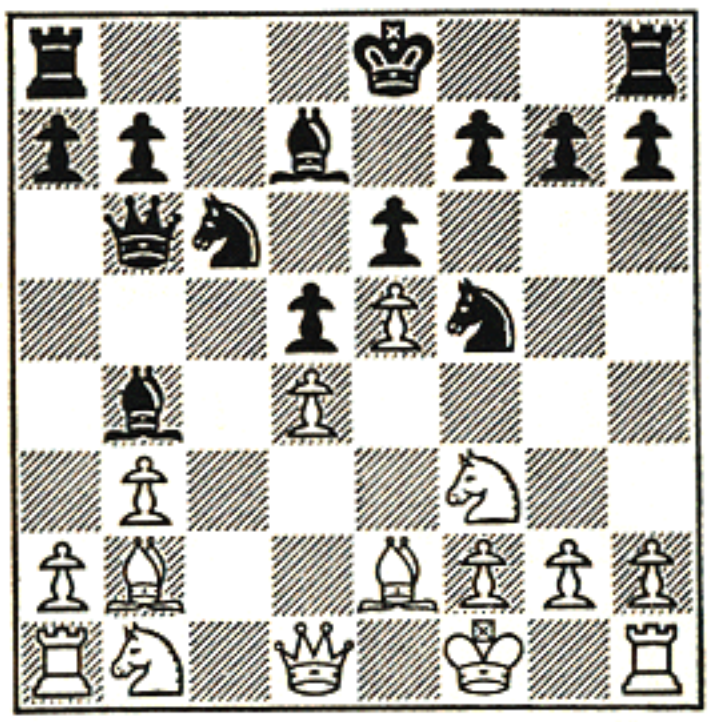
Following Game 11. In later years, however, Nimzovich resorted to the more accurate 6 B—K2. Despite this improvement, the variation ultimately proved unworkable, necessitating a new line of play.

6		P × P *!*
7	P × P	B—Q2
8	B—K2	

After Black's last move, the base of White's Pawn-chain (his Queen's Pawn) requires additional protection.

8		KKt—K2
9	P—QKt3	Kt—B4
10	B—Kt2	B—Kt5 *ch*
11	K—B1	

Interposition would lose the Queen Pawn. White has to make substantial concessions to keep this Pawn alive.



11		B—K2

Too tame. Nimzovich himself later suggested the following aggressive procedure: 11 . . . O—O *!;* 12 P—Kt4, Kt—R3; 13 R—Kt1, P—B3 *!;* 14 P × P, R × P *!;* 15 P—Kt5, R × Kt; 16 B × R, Kt—B4; 17 R—Kt4, and now there are two leading possibilities: 17 . . . B—K1 *!;* 18 Q—K2, QKt × P; 19 R × Kt, Kt × R; 20 Q—K5, B—Kt4 *ch;* 21 K—Kt2, Kt—B4; 22 B × P, P × B; 23 Q × Kt, R—KB1; 24 Q × QP *ch,* R—B2 *!;* 25 Q—Q4, B—B4 and wins (Nimzovich) or 17 . . . R—KB1; 18 P—QR4, K—R1 *!;* 19 Kt—R3, P—K4; 20 Kt—B2, KKt × P with a winning game (Edward Lasker).

If White avoids the vigorous 12 P—Kt4, Black plays . . . P—B3 just the same, obtaining a strong attacking formation with his well-placed pieces. The less energetic text gives White a breathing spell.

12 P—Kt3 P—QR4 *?*

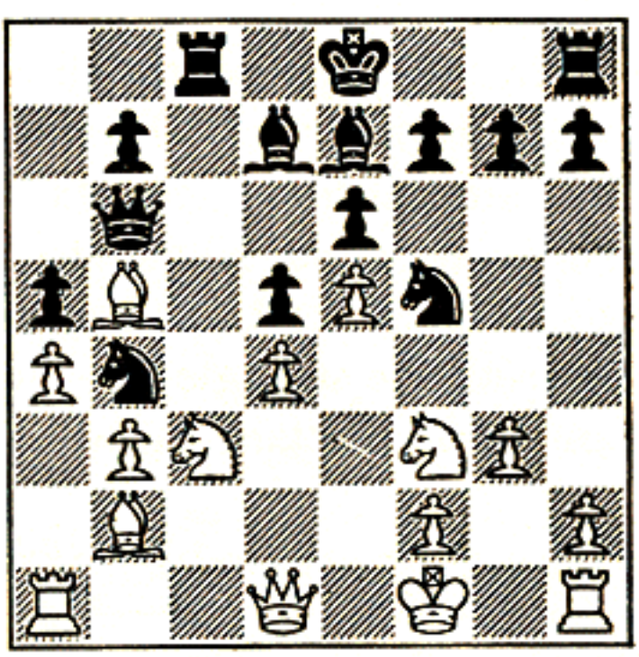
Playing by rote: Tarrasch is following one of his famous games. . . . O—O and . . . P—B3 was still the preferable course.

13 P—QR4 QR—B1
14 B—Kt5 Kt—Kt5 *?*

Weak: 14 . . . Kt—R2; 15 B × B *ch* (or 15 B—Q3, O—O; 16 B × Kt, P × B followed by . . . P—B3), K × B gives Black a good game.

15 Kt—B3 *!*

Nimzovich's improvement on the famous game Paulsen—Tarrasch, Nuremberg, 1888, which ran 15 B × B *ch ?*, K × B; 16 Kt—B3, Kt—B3; 17 Kt—QKt5, Kt—R2; 18 Kt × Kt *?* (18 Q—Q3 *!*), Q × Kt with a distinct positional plus for Black.



15 . . . . Kt—QR3 *?*

Only now does Tarrasch realize that he has been out-

generaled by his sly opponent: the apparently decisive 15 . . . B × B *ch;* 16 Kt × B, Kt —B7 is refuted by 17 R—B1, Kt—K6 *ch;* 18 P × Kt, Kt × KP *ch;* 19 K—K2, Kt × Q; 20 R × R *ch,* K—Q2; 21 R × R, Kt × B; 22 R—QB1 *!*, B—Q1 (what else?); 23 R—B2.

But 15 . . . B × B *ch;* 16 Kt × B, O—O would still have left Black with a fine game.

16	K—Kt2	Kt—B2 *?*

Again . . . B × B should be played.

17	B—K2 *!*	

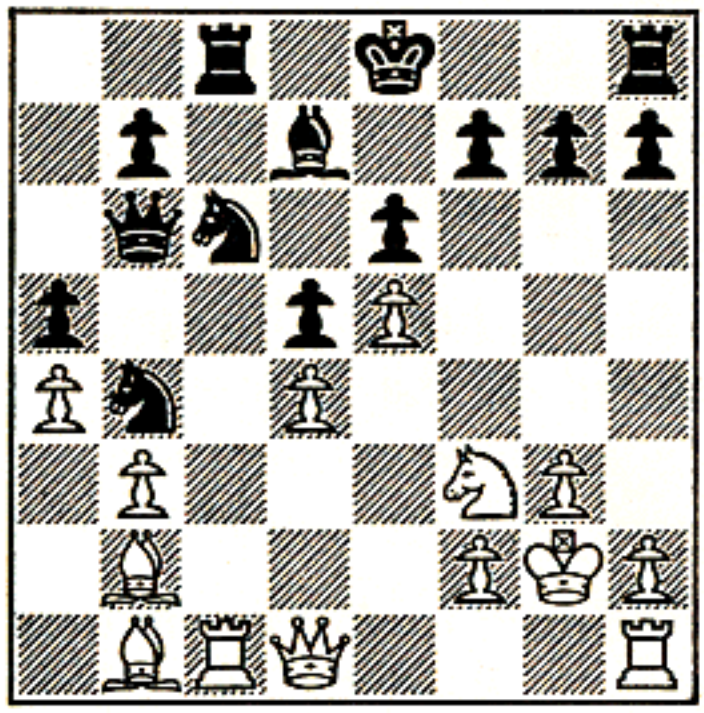
Rightly perceiving that his King Bishop will be more useful than Black's Queen Bishop.

17	. . . .	B—Kt5
18	Kt—R2	Kt—QR3
19	B—Q3	Kt—K2 *?*

Tarrasch must be demoralized. It cannot be good policy to allow the exchange of the precious King Bishop. Later this piece will be missed.

20	QR—B1	Kt—B3
21	Kt × B	Kt(R3) × Kt
22	B—Kt1 *!*	

Nimzovich, of course, does not imitate his opponent's mistake: he conserves the King Bishop because of the resulting King-side attacking chances.



22	. . . .	P—R3

Tarrasch is rightly afraid to castle, which would give White a winning attack: 22 . . . O—O *?;* 23 Kt—Kt5 and he forces a breach in Black's rampart of Pawns in front of the King.

23	P—Kt4 *!*	Kt—K2

Dr. Lasker, who was an expert at defending such uncomfortable positions, recommends the cold-blooded 23 . . . K—K2, with a more elastic defensive formation.